

DECEMBER 2018

MAGAZINE OF THE MARINES

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By Terry A. Williamson An elite NVA regiment moved from its base in the mountains bordering Laos to strike South Vietnam's second-largest city in late February 1969. Standing in their way, however, was 3rd Bn, 7th Marine Regiment.

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By Sara W. Bock As a member of an indigenous tribe in Vietnam's Central Highlands, LCpl Anem Ramah grew up hearing stories of his grandfather and thousands of other Montagnards assisting U.S. Special Forces during the Vietnam War. Due to persecution in Vietnam, Ramah and his family fled to the U.S., where his friendship with a retired Marine colonel paved the way to citizenship and enlistment.

50 Resilience *By LtCol Thomas Przybelski, USMC*

Recovering from injuries suffered in Fallujah in October 2006, a Marine learns a lot about resilience through family and friends but also through what Marines can do for each other and for themselves.

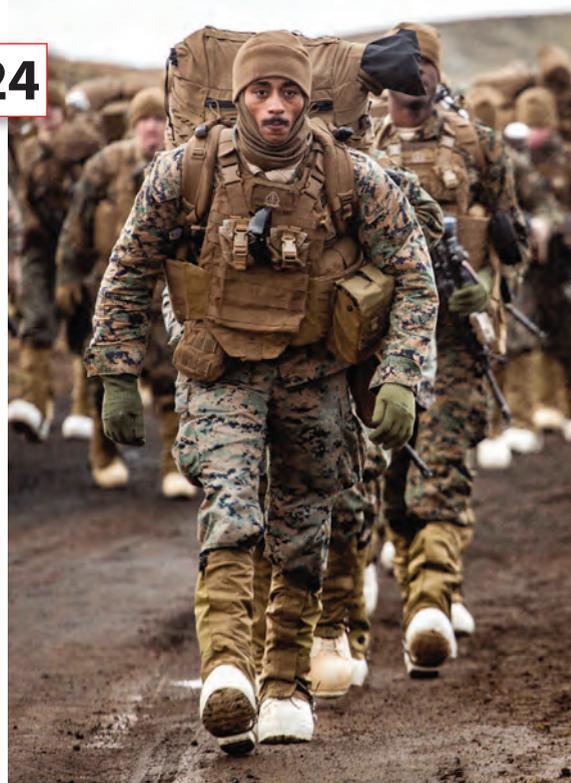
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By MSgt Jeff Dacus, USMC (Ret) Nearly 150 years ago, Marines were engaged on the Korean peninsula. In the ensuing violence, many Americans and Koreans died.

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COVER: GySgt Charles Wolf, USMC (Ret) created *Leatherneck's* December cover. Gunny Wolf's illustration is a lighthearted example of how "Marines lead from the front." Visit his website www.sempertoons.com to view more of his art. Copies of the cover may be obtained by sending \$2 (for mailing costs) to *Leatherneck Magazine*, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134-0775.

Letter of the Month

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

Earlier this year 1st Battalion, 27th Marines commemorated the 50th anniversary of their service in Vietnam at a reunion held in Alexandria, Va. During one of the evenings, individual Marines shared stories with the rest of us which were especially interesting. One such story was told by Corporal Charley Eckerson. He had been seriously wounded outside Hue City early during our tour and evacuated back to the Naval Hospital in Portsmouth, Va. His talk was very well received and I suggested that he submit it to Leatherneck. He agreed and later forwarded his story to me for submission.

Col Frank P. Eller Jr., USMC (Ret)

In the spring of 1968, I was a corporal in Headquarters and Support Co, Comm Platoon, 1st Battalion, 27th Marines, just outside of Hue City, Vietnam. My MOS was field radio operator, not a boring job at all.

On April 17, I was seriously wounded in a mortar attack on our battalion command post. I was medevaced to Phu Bai where I had lung and intestinal surgery. Two days later I was flown to a military hospital in Yokohama, Japan, where I had a second surgery. After being there for two weeks, I was flown back to the States to the Naval Hospital in Portsmouth, Va. They kept me

for weeks and at one point they started letting me out on liberty, so I'd walk to a bar, drink beer then return to the hospital.

One weekend they gave me a "96," four days of liberty over a weekend. I had an older sister, Anne, who lived in a very small town about 70 miles north so I decided to hitchhike to her house for some good home cooking. That evening during supper I mentioned that I had heard "Chesty" Puller, then retired, lived somewhere in that region of Virginia. My sister said, "Well, you've heard right. He lives right here in Saluda."

Shocked, it took a minute for that to sink in then I asked my sister where specifically in Saluda did Chesty live. She said, "Right across the street." I hesitated then asked, "What street?" She gave me her usual older sister look then sarcastically said, "You know how our sidewalk starts at our front door then ends at the pavement? That street, cross it, then one house to the right." Then she added, "You should go visit him tomorrow morning." I couldn't believe my ears. She said she had talked with him briefly on occasion and that he was very pleasant and that she and Mrs. Puller had traded some recipes and what a sweet lady she was.

I remembered reading Chesty's biography by Burke Davis in the early 1960s and how Chesty loved the enlisted man. My sister told me that Chesty would walk to the post office around 10 o'clock to get his mail and to just give him time to read it then go over and ring their doorbell.

The next morning I showered, shaved and looking as sharp as possible in my

hitchhiking civvies, I headed down the world's longest sidewalk, crossed the street and walked up to the general's door. I rang the doorbell and the general himself opened the door. He said, "Good morning," with a cautious expression. I responded, "Good morning, Sir. Sir, I am the brother of your neighbor, Anne Corley, and I'm a corporal in the Marine Corps." His countenance changed immediately and we shook hands. Smiling, he put his hand on my shoulder and said, "Come in here, son, we'll talk."

The general said *we'll* talk but *we* didn't talk, *he* did. He asked me what unit I was with in Vietnam and when and how I was wounded. Then he started in on Vietnam. He wanted to go over there so badly he could taste it. Remember, this was 1968, and he had been retired since 1955 at the age of 57 with 37 years of service. He said, and I remember this word for word, "If they would give me two regiments, the boys and I would go over there, and we'd be back home in 30 days; war over." That was the main topic of his conversation. He was nearly 70 years old and still ready for a fight.

After our 45-minute visit I left, still in shock that I had been in the presence of every Marine's hero, Lieutenant General Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller, the most decorated man in Marine Corps history.

Charles F. "Charley" Eckerson
USMC, 1965-1968
West Pueblo, Colo.

Silver Star Information

I write this not as a complaint, but to try to correct what I think is an error. In the article, "Battle of St. Mihiel: American-Led Victory Boosts Morale" [September issue], it states that a Marine machine gunner, Private Florian L. Frillman, received a Silver Star.

Years ago while reading an article on General McArthur and his "ego," there was information in it about his nine Silver Stars. The author included information about the Silver Star. The 1932 "conversion" article stated it had to be approved by commanding generals. The "Citation Star" could be kept by the person or converted to the Silver Star. McArthur's ego jumped on this as a chance to get more medals. It pointed out that he in fact approved his own Silver Star awards.

I have included the following info. Please note that the Silver Star was not

USMC Birthday Photos

Leatherneck is looking for a few good Marine Corps Birthday photos to run in the November 2019 issue. Did you take a photo at your Marine Corps Birthday celebration that captured a special moment with your fellow Marines? Was there a special guest in attendance with whom you snapped a photo? Whether it was in a grand ballroom or a small intimate setting or in the field, please send it in so we can share it with *Leatherneck's* readers. Be sure to include the location and date of the celebration, and identify the people in the photo. Send your photo to:

Patricia Everett at: **Leatherneck Magazine, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134** or email them to: **p.everett@mca-marines.org**.

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approved for the U.S. Navy until Aug. 7, 1942. I have read a lot of articles stating that a person was awarded a Silver Star, when in fact it did not exist during that time period. Also, I see articles where it would state Silver Star with "V" for valor. The "V" is not awarded with a Silver Star. The Silver Star can only be awarded for combat action.

The Silver Star Medal (SSM) is the successor award to the "Citation Star" ($\frac{3}{16}$ silver star) which was established by an Act of Congress on July 9, 1918, during World War I. On July 19, 1932, the Secretary of War approved the "conversion" of the "Citation Star" to the SSM with the original "Citation Star" incorporated into the center of the medal.

Authorization for the SSM was placed into law by an Act of Congress for the U.S. Navy on Aug. 7, 1942, and an Act of Congress for the U.S. Army on Dec. 15, 1942. The current statutory authorization for the medal is Title 10 of the United States Code (USC), 10 USC 3746 for the U.S. Army, 10 USC 8746 for the U.S. Air Force, and 10 USC 6244 for the U.S. Navy.

The U.S. Army and Air Force award the medal as the Silver Star. The U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard continue to award the medal as the Silver Star Medal. Since Dec. 21, 2016, the Department of Defense refers to the decoration as the Silver Star Medal.

I mean no disrespect for any Marine or for that fact, any veteran. I am 70 years old and in my youth knew several World War I vets, though none were Marines. I wish now I had spent more time listening to their stories.

Walter E. Seneff
Rayville, La.

Iwakuni Orphanage

I read in the September issue of *Leatherneck* [Sea Stories] Marines at MCAF Iwakuni in the 1960s got a large refrigerator for a Japanese orphanage. In the 1950s, at the same base, the outgoing squadron returning to CONUS asked us if we would continue supporting a Japanese orphanage that they had supported. I readily agreed. The orphanage was located near Hiroshima. The children were A-bomb survivors.

Once there I noticed the children slept under thin cotton blankets. Back at the base I looked around the supply dump and saw crates the size of trucks. Told by the Navy they were full of Korean War sleeping bags, I asked if I could have them and was told yes.

I got the squadron motor pool to lend me two trucks and told the Navy I only wanted the inner wool, not the outer cover. We took two trucks full to the orphanage

where I asked the children to get their scissors and cut out the zippers. We then had a flat wool blanket. After dry cleaning them, each child had many wool blankets.

This was just one of our projects for the orphanage.

Capt Peter M. Walker
Welches, Ore.

One Last Visit

In January I received a telephone call from the son of a veteran Marine captain and friend, Andrew "Mac" McFarlane. He stated that his father was dying and one of his last requests was that I perform his wake and funeral mass. I'm an ordained deacon in the Catholic Church and could assist at his mass. I requested to see Mac but his son stated that he was in and out of consciousness.

I arrived at his home and, along with his son, approached his bed. He did not appear to be conscious, but I took his hand and said, "Semper Fi, Mac, it's Nick Valdez." He shook my hand, opened his eyes and smiled at me. I prayed over him and then left his home. Forty-five minutes later I received a telephone call from his son stating that his father had passed away. His son went on to say that Mac wanted to see me one last time before he died. I guess it's true; no Marine dies alone.

SSgt Nick Valdez
Wood-Ridge, N.J.

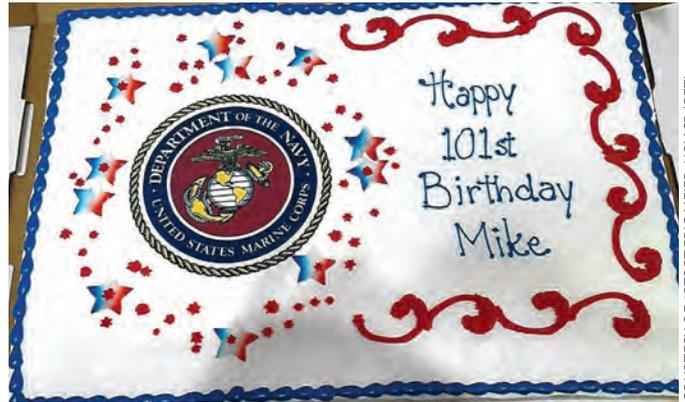
WW II Vet Celebrates 101st Birthday

Leonard Bruno "Mike" Sendlein was born on June 17, 1917, in North St. Louis, Mo. After the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, Mike went down to the Marine Corps recruiter and joined on Dec. 8, 1941. He found that one had to be 5 foot 8 inches to be a Marine during the depression years. He was only 5 foot 5, but Mike persuaded the recruiter to enlist him, and entered active duty at MCRD San Diego in September 1942. After boot camp and graduation, Mike stayed in San Diego and was assigned to Radio School. This was a disappointment to him as he had enlisted for aviation, or the new enlisted pilot training program. Mike had a few hours as a private pilot in the civilian world prior to enlisting. At any rate, Mike found himself training with the Navajo Code Talker at the training school.

After graduating from Radio School, he was assigned to the newly formed 1st Marine Division at Camp Pendleton, and then off to the South Pacific as a replacement on Guadalcanal with 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment's Headquarters Company's communications section. He saw action on Peleliu on the 5th wave, as well as during the invasion of Okinawa



COURTESY OF 1STSGT ERIC MEIER, USMCR (RET)



COURTESY OF 1STSGT ERIC MEIER, USMCR (RET)

PFC Mike Sendlein celebrates his 101st birthday with Eric Meier at the Meramec Arnold Elks Lodge in Imperial, Mo.

on the 1st wave. When asked about his war experience in World War II, Mike commented that Peleliu was the most difficult. He was also involved in the operations on Cape Gloucester and other smaller island operations.

His tour in WW II ended with the 1st Marine Division landing on mainland China and going through occupation exercises and the like. Mike never made it past private first class (E-2), however his love of the Corps, his country and community indicate that this man functions at a higher level.

Mike's favorite story is his meeting

Colonel "Chesty" Puller in a shellhole somewhere on Peleliu who barked erroneous orders to him about his "authenticating process while communicating." Mike response, "Sir, don't you think the [Japanese] know we are here by now?"

After Mike's mustering out in 1946, he got involved in the family business, got married and raised a family. His dedication to his community and his city, state and country has been an inspiration to literally thousands in his long civilian career and short WW II timeframe. He is also a dedicated, loving father and friend. He is a life member of the Marine Corps League,

Det. 183, in South St. Louis, Mo. Think of all the people he has helped, customers served, volunteer hours attended, and teaching moments mentored. What a life, Mike Sendlein!

1stSgt Eric Meier, USMCR (Ret)
1976 to 2000
Manchester, Mo.

Question About Right of Line

I hope you can answer this question with reference to the display of the Military Seals. I'm referring to the proper position of the Marine Corps and Navy positions when all five seals are in a straight line

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from left to right. I have been informed that they should be displayed as: Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard. This is due to a protocol called "Right of Line."

Our Delaware Veterans Memorial Cemetery for years had the seals in its Medal of Honor display area as: Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force and Coast Guard. Thanks and credit to, Major Thomas Kelly, USMC (Ret), the seals were corrected after a lot of who is right and who is wrong conversations. Maj Kelly's position was to use "Right of Line." The Delaware Veterans Memorial Cemetery corrected its Medal of Honor display. Another question, why is the Air Force Seal before the Coast Guard?

I would like the proper ruling for the Marine and Navy positioning because the Delaware Vietnam Veterans Memorial in New Castle County has the Navy in the number two position. The memorial is located in Wilmington, Del., in Brandywine Park. It is a New Castle County monument and the Delaware State Park Service is responsible for Brandywine Park's maintenance but they do not know who is to make the correction, the state or the county.

I need your help to prove to the State Park Services that the monument is in

need of correction. I am sure there are many more incorrect displays of the seals and your help would be appreciated.

Cpl Paul L. Cathell Jr.
USMC, 1956-1958
Wilmington, Del.

• *While I can't give a "proper ruling," both the Department of Defense Directive 1008.5 and the Marine Corps Drill and Ceremonies Manual list the order of precedence and the order of formation for the military services as the United States Army, the United States Marine Corps, the United States Navy, the United States Air Force, and the United States Coast Guard.—Editor*

Uniform Changes Were Constant

I know I am getting old but I haven't lost it all just yet. In the September issue [Sound Off] Mr. Brook stated the change from cordovan to black was about 1959 or 1960. Not so as it happened during his watch. In 1964 the Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara in the interest of saving defense dollars required the Marine Corps to change its uniform items to black which would be in line with the other services. Shoes, socks, emblems, buttons on our blouses and barracks covers all
[continued on page 70]

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Corps Connections

Compiled by Sara W. Bock

Lafayette, La.

Vietnam Veteran Honors the Memory Of Beirut Bombing Victim

Nearly 35 years after the Oct. 23, 1983, bombing of the Marine Barracks in Beirut, Lebanon, a Marine veteran in Lafayette, La., is striving to honor the life a fellow Louisianan who died in the tragedy and help reassure his parents that their son will never be forgotten.

Ronald Crowley, center, the Louisiana Department Commander, Military Order of the Purple Heart, presented a plaque to Percy and Shirley Trahan in Lafayette, La., July 19, in memory of their son, Lance Corporal Lex D. Trahan, who lost his life in the Beirut bombing. A few weeks later, on National Purple Heart Day, Crowley, a veteran of the Vietnam War, again visited the Trahans and presented them with a silver ring that he had purchased from a company that had provided rings for all of the families of the Beirut bombing victims. The Trahan family had never received their rings. Crowley also honored LCpl Trahan at the 85th National Convention of the Military Order of the Purple Heart by



COURTESY OF KAREN FONTENOT

presenting his name for a reading by the organization's national chaplain and has worked to place a monument honoring him in the local veterans park. He also planned to escort the Trahans to the dedication of a Gold Star Families Memorial Monument at the Louisiana State Capitol.

Submitted by Karen Fontenot

Lexington, Ky.



COURTESY OF LEXINGTON VA HEALTH CARE SYSTEM



PFC Franklin R. Sousley



Pvt Troy Bowling

VA Renames Lexington Campuses in Honor of Two Iwo Jima Veterans

Family members of Private First Class Franklin R. Sousley and Private Troy Bowling, Marines from Central Kentucky who served during World War II, were present at a renaming ceremony for the campuses of the Lexington VA Health Care System, Aug. 9. During the ceremony, the facility's Leestown Division was renamed in honor of Sousley, while the Cooper Division was renamed in honor of Bowling.

"We are honored to rename our campuses after two heroic Marines from our service area," said Emma Metcalf, Lexington VA Health Care System director. "These veterans didn't just inspire the people who knew them best—they inspired countless others who have come to know their stories."

The renaming was a result of work by Congressman Andy Barr, whose Sixth District Veterans Coalition suggested the renaming in 2014.

"We can never repay Private First Class Franklin Sousley and Private Troy Bowling for their service to our nation, but renaming these VA campuses in their honor ensures their memory and sacrifices are never forgotten," said Barr.



Bowling, who passed away in 2017, fought in the Battle of Iwo Jima. After the war, he devoted more than 78,000 hours of volunteer service at the Lexington VA Medical Center over more than 66 years. Sousley also fought in the Battle of Iwo Jima and was one of the Marines pictured in the iconic flag-raising photograph taken by Joe Rosenthal atop Mount Suribachi. He was killed in the battle on March 21, 1945.

Submitted by Hope Nelson

Little Falls, Minn.

New Mural Depicts History of the Corps

Members of the Marine Corps League Valhalla Detachment #171 formed an honor guard at the unveiling and dedication of the USMC Memorial Mural in the Committal Hall at the Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery in Little Falls, Minn., just outside Camp Ripley, May 26. The mural is one of five 8 x 10-foot oil paintings planned for the monument, each depicting the history of the Marine Corps, Army, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard. The Minnesota State Veterans Memorial Association commissioned artist Charles Gilbert Kapsner of Little Falls to create the murals. Previously completed were the Army, Navy and Coast Guard paintings, with the Air Force mural scheduled for unveiling in 2019.

Submitted by GySgt Andrew Fenwick, USMC (Ret)

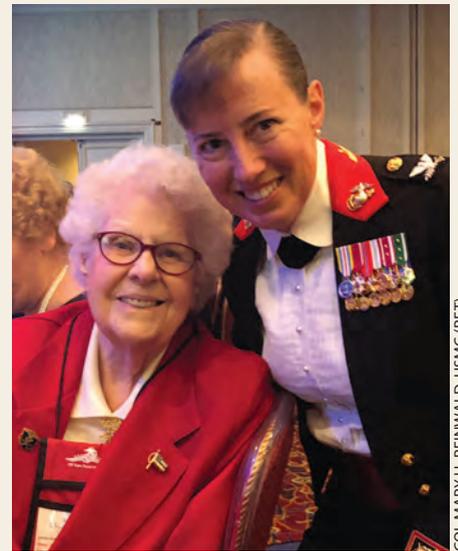


PHIL RINGSTROM

Arlington, Va.



COL. MARY H. REINWALD, USMC (RET)



COL. MARY H. REINWALD, USMC (RET)

Marines From All Eras Connect at WMA 100th Anniversary Celebration

Lieutenant General William M. Faulkner, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Marine Corps Association & Foundation, met the winners of the Women Marines Association's essay contest, co-sponsored by MCA&F, at the closing banquet of the WMA's 30th Biennial Convention and Professional Development Symposium, commemorating the centennial of female Marines, held in Arlington, Va., from Aug. 30 to Sept. 3. Lieutenant Colonel Beth Wolny was the first-place winner of the essay contest, while

Captain Jessica Giusti and Captain Nicole Kreis received second and third place, respectively. More than 700 female Marines from all eras attended the convention and symposium including Sergeant Major Grace A. Carle, pictured above with Colonel Julie Nethercot, the executive assistant to the Commandant of the Marine Corps. A veteran of World War II, SgtMaj Carle served as the last Sergeant Major of the Women Marines and celebrated her 96th birthday with her fellow Marines at the event.

Col Mary H. Reinwald, USMC (Ret)

CLARIFICATION: The October 2018 Corps Connections entry which showcased the rifle detail provided by the Marine Corps League Verde Valley Detachment #1176 for a Memorial Day ceremony at the Verde Valley Military Service Park in Cottonwood, Ariz., did not clearly explain that "Rosie the Riveter" refers to women who supported defense industries and contributed to the war effort during World War II. These women, though not servicemembers, greatly contributed to the war effort by working in manufacturing facilities or filling positions that had been vacated by men who joined the fight.

Many thanks to *Leatherneck* reader Keith Vogler for pointing that out to us.

"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: Sara W. Bock, *Leatherneck* Magazine, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134, or email them to s.bock@mca-marines.org. Submission does not guarantee publication, and we cannot guarantee the return of photos. 



SgtMaj John L. Canley Receives the Medal of Honor

In a long-overdue ceremony at the White House in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 17, Sergeant Major John L. Canley, USMC (Ret) received the Medal of Honor for his gallantry and intrepidity from Jan. 31 through Feb. 6, 1968, while serving with “Alpha” Company, 1st Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment in the Republic of Vietnam. Then-Gunnery Sergeant Canley assumed command of the company and led numerous attacks against fortified positions. He repeatedly exposed himself to enemy fire as he carried numerous Marines to safety despite his own wounds.

Sergeant Major Canley initially received the Navy Cross for his heroic actions, but the award was upgraded to the nation’s highest award for valor after a prolonged campaign by his fellow Marines from Alpha Co, 1/1.

(Editor’s note: To learn more about the process of upgrading SgtMaj Canley’s award, see page 14.)

Born in Caledonia, Ark., John Canley joined the Marine Corps at the age of 15 after using his older brother’s paperwork to enlist. He served for more than 28 years and retired as a sergeant major. His personal decorations include the Bronze Star with combat “V,” the Purple Heart, the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with combat “V,” and the Combat Action Ribbon. Additional awards and decorations include seven Good Conduct Medals, the Rifle Expert Badge (11th Award) and the Pistol Expert Badge (16th Award).

Compiled from press releases

Above: SgtMaj John L. Canley, USMC (Ret) is introduced by President Donald J. Trump at the ceremony in which SgtMaj Canley received his Medal of Honor at the White House in Washington, D.C., Oct. 17.



WHITE HOUSE



The President of the United States in the name of The Congress takes pleasure in presenting the MEDAL OF HONOR to
GUNNERY SERGEANT JOHN L. CANLEY
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty in action against the enemy while serving as Company Gunnery Sergeant, Company "A," First Battalion, First Marines, First Marine Division from 31 January to 6 February 1968 in the Republic of Vietnam. Company "A" fought off multiple vicious attacks as it rapidly moved along the highway towards Hue City to relieve friendly forces that were surrounded by enemy forces. Despite being wounded in these engagements, GySgt Canley repeatedly rushed across fire-swept terrain to carry his wounded Marines to safety. After his commanding officer was severely wounded, GySgt Canley took command and led the company into Hue City. At Hue City, caught in deadly cross fire from enemy machine gun positions, he set up a base of fire and maneuvered with a platoon in a flanking attack that eliminated several enemy positions. Retaining command of the company for three days, he led attacks against multiple enemy fortified positions while routinely braving enemy fire to carry wounded Marines to safety. On 4 February, he led a group of Marines into an enemy occupied building in Hue City. He moved into the open to draw fire, located the enemy, eliminated the threat and expanded the company's hold on the building room by room. GySgt Canley then gained position above the enemy strong point and dropped in a large satchel charge that forced the enemy to withdraw. On 6 February during a fierce firefight at a hospital compound, GySgt Canley twice scaled a wall in full view of the enemy to carry wounded Marines to safety. By his undaunted courage, selfless sacrifice, and unwavering devotion to duty, GySgt Canley reflected great credit upon himself and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.



CPL DAISHA JOHNSON, USMC

President Donald J. Trump places the Medal of Honor around the neck of Sergeant Major John L. Canley, USMC (Ret), at the White House in Washington, D.C., Oct. 17. Canley was the 300th Marine to receive the MOH.

Right: Deputy Secretary of Defense Patrick M. Shanahan inducts SgtMaj John L. Canley, USMC (Ret), into the Hall of Heroes at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 18. Gen Robert B. Neller, left, Commandant of the Marine Corps; Secretary of the Navy Richard V. Spencer, second from right; and SgtMaj Ronald L. Green, right, also participated in the ceremony.



SGT AMBER L. SMITH, USA





CPL DAMON MCLEAN, USMC

Left: SgtMaj John L. Canley, USMC (Ret), renders a salute during a parade held in his honor at Marine Barracks Washington, D.C., on Oct. 19. It is tradition for the Barracks to host a parade for Marines who receive the Medal of Honor.



CPL DAISHA R. JOHNSON, USMC



SGT ROBERT KNAPP, USMC

Above: Gen Robert B. Neller, Commandant of the Marine Corps, left, presents the Medal of Honor Flag to SgtMaj John L. Canley, USMC (Ret), during a parade in his honor on Oct. 19 at Marine Barracks Washington, D.C.

Left: SgtMaj John L. Canley, USMC (Ret), gathered with fellow Marines from 1st Bn, 1st Marines at the White House on Oct. 17. The Marines were members of A/1/1 in Vietnam when Canley served as their company gunnery sergeant in 1968. Mrs. Dolia Gonzalez, mother of Sgt Alfredo Gonzalez, who posthumously received the Medal of Honor for his own heroic actions while serving with 1/1 at the time, in the wheelchair to the right of SgtMaj Canley, also attended the ceremony.

OPERATION GUNNY

A Marine's Dedication to Honor SgtMaj John L. Canley

By John Ligato

Editor's note: The following is a personal account of one Marine's dedicated efforts to ensure the heroism of Sergeant Major John Canley was appropriately recognized. John Ligato's frustrations and anger at the process are evident throughout this article as is his perseverance and loyalty to his fellow Marine. His efforts came to fruition on Oct. 18, when SgtMaj Canley was presented with the nation's highest award for valor, the Medal of Honor, by the President of the United States, Donald J. Trump.

My Mission

There are three missing days in our nation's history. It's taken the last 13 years to add this lost narrative, and along the way, I've encountered apathy, naysayers, incompetence and bureaucratic pettiness. My name is John Ligato and on Jan. 31, 1968, I was a Marine lance corporal as-

signed to "Alpha" Company, 1st Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment. It was the Tet Offensive and I had the honor to witness the valor of two Medal of Honor recipients—up close—for three days. I have dedicated more than a decade of my life to ensure that history remembers these Marines and appropriately honors them for their valor and sacrifice.

Vietnam

We arrived at Phu Bai after being in the field for four months. Most of us had parasites in our belly, jungle rot, dysentery and attitude. After the 1967 siege at Con Thien on the Demilitarized Zone and our recent contact with the enemy at Quang Tri, we Marines were beyond salty—or so we thought. At Phu Bai, we enjoyed lukewarm chow, hot beer and cold showers after months of sloshing through rice paddies and sleeping with jungle critters. The air base seemed like paradise.

Sometime in the middle of the night, Captain Gordon Batcheller ordered Co A to "saddle up." I asked the captain where we were headed, and he said, "Going to help some CAG [Combined Action Group] up the road. We'll be back by noon."

Most of us never did return to Phu Bai. We were an undersized rifle company of 150 mud Marines. The bulk of Co A remained at Quang Tri and was scheduled to join us the next day. Awaiting us in Hue City were 10,000 North Vietnamese Army (NVA) regulars.

We rolled north on Highway 1 aboard trucks and eventually transferred to tanks. A short time later, NVA rockets, mortars and automatic weapons opened up from the west. Several of the tanks were destroyed so we jumped off and found a 3-foot-deep muddy ditch for cover. As we returned fire and tended to our wounded, my brain slipped back into combat mode and said, "This ain't so bad." I had no idea that it would get worse—much, much worse.

A Marine lay wounded on Highway 1 but NVA fire made any rescue a suicide mission. Our company commander, Captain Batcheller, was an All-American football player from Princeton University. He had taken command on Christmas Day of 1967, just some five weeks prior, so the jury was still out on him. It did not take the CO long to gain our respect. Capt Batcheller ran out into a hail of AK-47 rounds and shielded the prone Marine with his body. Four AK rounds peppered Batcheller's body, ripping flesh and bone from his leg, inner thigh and arm. Three of us dragged him from the killing zone, but my unofficial prognosis was imminent death. Captain Batcheller was slowly slipping into shock but continued issuing orders for a counterattack. The corpsman, Doc Ker, injected a few silver cylinders of morphine into the captain and his voice became a whisper. Captain Batcheller received a well-deserved Navy Cross but his severe wounds have plagued him for 50 years.

Enter "The Gunny." Gunnery Sergeant John Canley had already earned his combat reputation at Con Thien and Quang Tri. We witnessed the gunny ignore NVA



COURTESY OF KEN JORDAN

GySgt John L. Canley, left, and 2ndLt Ray Smith of Co A, 1/1 in Vietnam in 1968. Smith later retired from the Marine Corps as a major general. Canley later retired as a sergeant major and recently received the Medal of Honor.

bullets, mortars and rockets. His fatalistic philosophy was, "If today's my day, then come get me." Since our three second lieutenant platoon commanders were back in Quang Tri and Da Nang, Gunny Canley assumed command of Co A. His executive officer by default was Sergeant Alfredo Gonzalez.

The gunny gathered up the company and we continued north toward Hue City to continuous enemy fire from the west, but we still had that muddy ditch for cover and concealment. As we approached the outskirts of the city, NVA machine guns opened up from the north. An open rice paddy was to the east and the NVA blocked any southern retreat back to Phu Bai. Co A was now stuck in a deadly crossfire with no options, so we hunkered down and waited.

Gunny Canley and Sgt Gonzalez understood our predicament and lobbed a few LAW rockets at the machine-gun positions then headed out into the open rice paddy. They kept up a barrage of M16 fire accompanied with LAW rockets until they were in range of tossing hand grenades. They eliminated those NVA machine guns and cleared our path north into the city. Had they not taken that action, I would not be alive today.

Gunny Canley and Sgt Gonzalez continued those heroic acts day after day as the battle for Hue City lasted for 31 days. They distinguished themselves at the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) compound, the battle at the Han Hoi Bridge and the ferocious encounter at the St. Joan of Arc school on Feb. 4 where Sgt Gonzalez's heroism would later be recognized with a Medal of Honor (posthumously). SgtMaj Canley would later receive the Navy Cross for his own heroic actions during this period.

Co A Reunions

I returned home after a hospital stay in the Philippines. Since Vietnam was America's only replacement war, we didn't travel as units who trained, deployed and returned together. Vietnam veterans had no support system so most of us put the war in our rearview mirror. We rarely discussed the war with our friends, co-workers and family and I returned to college and buried my head in the sand. Most of my college friends weren't aware that I was a Marine and a Vietnam veteran.

Sometime in the 1980s and 1990s,

SgtMaj John L. Canley, USMC (Ret)



SgtMaj John L. Canley, USMC (Ret) was awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroic actions during the Battle of Hue City. (Photo by Sgt Erik Estrada, USMC)

Vietnam veterans began to reach out to their combat brothers and we slowly reunited. I was invited to one such reunion that took place at a bar outside the front gate of Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va. I had been stationed at Quantico, both as a Marine and an FBI agent, and was familiar with this particular dive. Predictably, we drank shots of whiskey and began reminiscing. Most conversations included the words, "The Gunny."

At about this same time, the battle for Hue City became fashionable and books began hitting the shelves at bookstores. The gunny refused to provide any first-person accounts of Vietnam but almost

every other Co A Marine spoke of Gunny Canley's valor. Their stories were not different perspectives of the same event but were their own unique eyewitness accounts of separate acts of gallantry.

John Canley is a humble and introspective individual. Canley was a primary author for Gonzalez's Medal of Honor citation, but with Sgt Gonzalez deceased, no witnesses were forthcoming to tell Canley's tale of those missing three days. There's a good reason for that oversight. Enlisted non-career Marines in Vietnam were not mindful of awards and decorations. Our goals for a tour in Vietnam were simple: get home alive and whole.

Enter "The Gunny." Gunnery Sergeant John Canley had already earned his combat reputation at Con Thien and Quang Tri. We witnessed the gunny ignore NVA bullets, mortars and rockets. His fatalistic philosophy was, "If today's my day, then come get me."

Even that proved difficult for many Co A Marines. The majority of the initial contingent of the 150 Marines who entered Hue City held the rank of corporal and below. We were not attuned to documenting acts of heroism, although at Hue City, I witnessed hourly acts of valor by Marines. Only seven Marines who entered Hue on Jan. 31, 1968, left that city unbloodied. The rest of us were on the quick track to military separation whether due to wounds, reassignments, early outs or death.

Many years later, I discovered that Gunny Canley had been awarded a Navy Cross for his actions at Hue, but even that had its bureaucratic snafus. Most of the award statements from Hue City were lost, and it took more than a year for Second Lieutenant Ray Smith, now a retired major general, to resubmit the paperwork based on actions after Feb. 2, 1968.

But there were still those three days that only we witnessed. Those were the three days when Gunny Canley's actions at Hue City indicate a Marine who, by all eyewitness accounts, exceeded conspicuous gallantry beyond the call of duty—not just on one occasion, but on many occasions.

An idea began to germinate in my brain when I attended a 1st Battalion reunion. When the Gunny walked into the hospitality suite, heads turned and all conversations ceased. The Marines of Co A gathered around Canley and began reminiscing. All had a Gunny Canley story and the majority

included Canley doing something heroic. There were six or seven eyewitnesses to the Gunny carrying wounded Marines to safety, the Gunny confronting enemy automatic weapon positions, and many testimonials of, "You saved my ass, Gunny."

It was time to officially document those anecdotal acts of valor and I volunteered to lead the effort. The biggest battle was never based on whether the Gunny deserved the Medal

**But there were
still those three days
that only we witnessed.
Those were the three days
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actions ... exceeded
conspicuous gallantry
beyond the call of duty.**

of Honor, it was simply persevering through the tedious bureaucratic land mines. So why did it take 13 years? Many retired Marines warned me that "they" make it difficult since the MOH is our nation's highest award for valor. I couldn't figure out who "they" were, but I had 13 years to figure it out.

2005-2008: The Beginning

In 2005 "Operation Gunny" commenced. Was it possible to nominate Sergeant Major John Canley for the Medal of Honor many decades later? That question required in-depth research on the Medal of Honor. It included researching how to document those missing three days and inspire someone in authority to run with the ball. It proved an almost impossible task. One item not written in any policy manual is the Rules of Engagement.

My research confirmed that government guidelines require new eyewitness ac-counts as part of the process to request to upgrade a Navy Cross to the Medal of Honor. I found an example with Army Sergeant Benavidez who had his Dis-tinguished Service Cross upgraded to the Medal of Honor some 15 years later based on one new eyewitness account. At this point, the Gunny's clock was approaching 40 years.

I spent the majority of 2005 researching, seeking advice and making calls. The literature was confusing, my government inquiries were frustrating and my advice from retired Marine officers was basically, "Forget about it." Having served in gov-ernment for 37 years, I understood that I needed paper before any action occurred. I wrote my statement, which was especially significant since upon assuming command of Co A, Gunny Canley had ordered me to stick close to him. I had previously completed Vietnamese language school, and during those first three days in late January-early February 1968, we came across a variety of civilians and soldiers from the Army of the Republic of Vietnam. It was total chaos and required some quick interrogations to determine friend, foe, or intel source. This placed me in close proximity to the Gunny during those initial days at Hue.

It took me three full years to locate Co A Marines who had scattered to points unknown. My contact guru was Sergeant Major Eddie Neas, USMCR, now retired, with whom I served when he was a lance corporal and a Co A machine gunner. Eddie became the unofficial historian for Co A and was the best source of information.

Finally armed with a few names and contact info, I began the journey. Many numbers were dry holes or disconnected, and some of my brothers had passed away. If I did connect with a Co A Marine, we spent time reminiscing about Vietnam. I eventually asked for their help, explaining, "It's for the Gunny."

I explained the three-step process of writing statements, getting them notarized and sending the documents to me. I love my combat brothers but sometimes, "No problem," involved frequent reminders and cases of



SGT DANIEL JEAN-PAUL, USMC

Vietnam veteran SgtMaj Canley, left, talks with a Marine officer during a Vietnam Veteran Pinning Ceremony, in Charlotte, N.C., on Sept. 7 during Marine Week Charlotte.



SgtMaj Canley, left, and a local boy pose for a photo after they participated in a physical training session during Marine Week in Charlotte, N.C., Sept. 7.

Again, I received no response so I looked for other legislators.

A radio commercial alerted me that Senator Sherrod Brown was being interviewed in a Cleveland downtown bar by personality Mark “Munch” Bishop. I arrived mid-interview and waited until Munch signed off then I approached the senator. Brown listened patiently and agreed to help while passing me off to his aide who gave me a card and said, “Give me a call and we’ll get the ball rolling.” I called and called and you guessed it. I felt defeated and convinced that the Gunny’s Medal of Honor packet would never even reach officials who could judge its merits.

2011-2014

In 2012, I moved from Cleveland to Jacksonville, N.C., home of MCB Camp Lejeune. I began golfing with many retired Marines. The consensus was essentially, “It won’t happen.” Many provided examples of failed attempts, including personal attempts, of securing valor awards years after the act. I showed a few my summary of action and their feedback was not encouraging.

I still required a legislator and heard that Congressman Walter Jones planned to address the Jacksonville Rotary Club. I decided I would give this Medal of Honor thing one more try and attended the luncheon. I had no idea what a Rotary Club did but as soon as Jones finished his speech, I approached the dais and went through my rehearsed pitch. The congressman nodded, agreed that Canley was a brave Marine, and referred me to his aide who gave me her card and said, “Call me.” I called and called and you guessed it.

I attempted another call to Congresswomen Bass’s office. The staffer I had previously spoken to was no longer there and I asked to speak to the congresswoman, but she was unavailable. I quit again and resolved that my efforts failed.

Five months later, the Gunny called. I hadn’t informed him that I had exhausted every avenue in my bureaucratic arsenal. I was both embarrassed and angry. The Gunny casually mentioned that he had moved to Oxnard, Calif., so as soon as we finished the phone call, I looked up congressional districts and determined that Oxnard was within the district of Representative Julia Brownley. I called Congresswoman Brownley’s office, repeating my abridged version of Gunny Canley’s valor in Vietnam, and the staffer

individuals going MIA for months at a time. I also met with some legitimate hesitancy from guys who had no desire to relive their combat experiences. After all, these Marines had participated in one of America’s bloodiest and fiercest battles. They witnessed horrors that most Americans only view on cable TV.

2008-2011

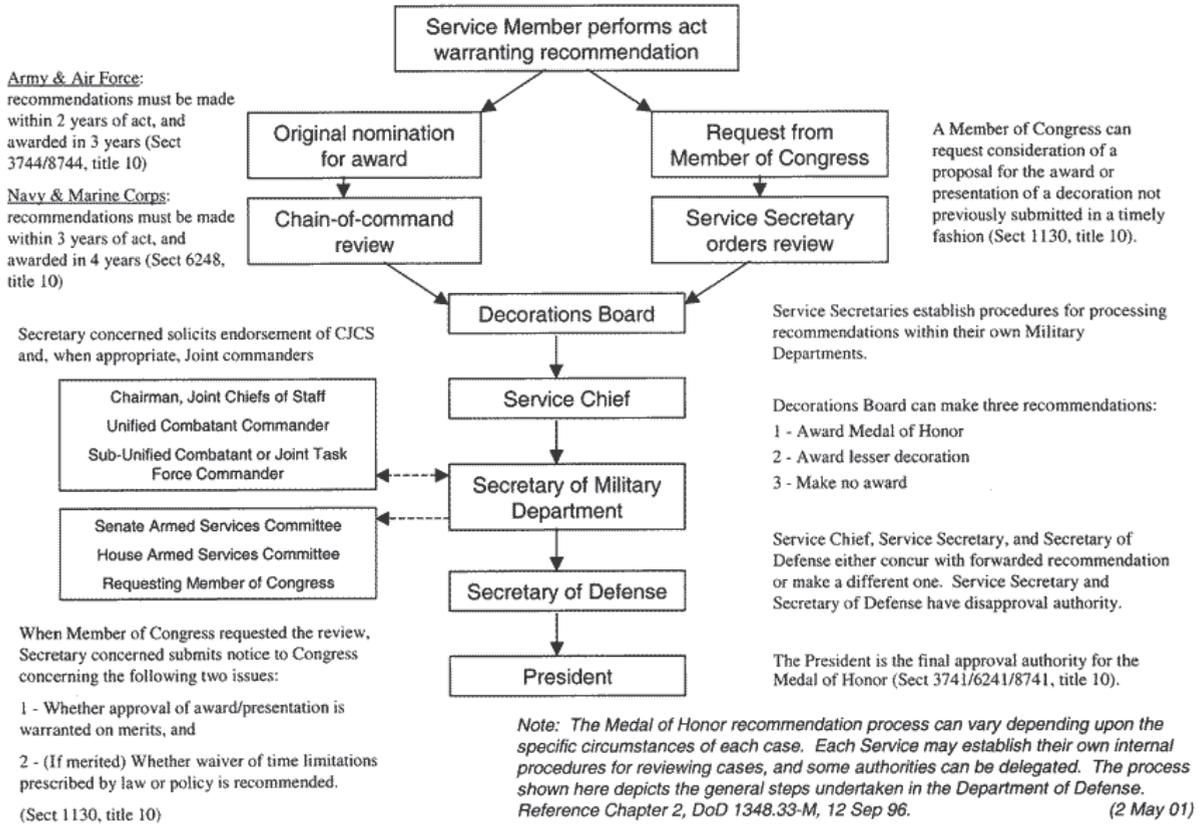
I received a few usable statements while others contained general praise of Canley but lacked specific acts of valor. Some were outside the time period. My plan was to keep reaching out to former Co A Marines while simultaneously locating a legislator to agree to sponsor the effort.

Canley was currently residing in the California district of Congresswoman Karen Bass, so I called her office fre-

quently and left messages. Finally, I spoke with a staff member who was outwardly cooperative, but basically had no idea how to proceed. I sent the staffer a thick packet including notarized statements, legal precedence for the 44-year delay, and a summary of action. When we spoke one month later, she repeatedly recited the submission criteria from a government manual while explaining the complexities involved in the process. It seemed as if she hadn’t read the documents I submitted which described in detail how and why Canley could have his Navy Cross upgraded to the Medal of Honor. Then the staffer went “underground,” not returning calls for close to a year. After many months of neglect, I sent an email asking her to please notify me if Congresswoman Bass had decided not to assist in helping me.

CPL CAREAF HENSON, USMC

Medal of Honor Recommendation Process: Procedures within the Department of Defense



requested I send the packet, which I did. Four months passed, and I called again asking for the veterans caseworker. Justin Rosa, who just happened to be a veteran Marine, was the new guy and he immediately understood the gravity of my request having had experience with the process of upgrading a Navy Cross to the Medal of Honor. He mentioned that the packet I submitted contained copies and he required original documents. Since I submitted the originals to Bass' office, I contacted them with the simple request that they forward the original packet to Brownley's office. Somehow all of the original documents disappeared, and my new mission was to reacquire original affidavits. This was not a quick or simple fix.

I called my combat brothers who had previously submitted notarized statements. Some were handwritten and some were computer generated, but for some reason, only one Marine had made copies. It took another 10 months to obtain original affidavits. The new packet was ready for submission to some government entity for evaluation. Justin had left Brownley's office in the interim, and the packet was eventually sent to Headquarters Marine Corps where it sat for a year. During this time, I'd contact Brownley's office asking, "Can you check on its status?"



Dreanna Perkins at The Marine Shop in Quantico, Va., assists SgtMaj Canley with his dress blues on Oct. 16, the day before he received the Medal of Honor at a White House ceremony.



LCPL DAISHA JOHNSON, USMC

SgtMaj Canley, back row, center, met with his fellow Marines from 1st Bn, 1st Marines, in McLean, Va., Oct. 15.

My concern, which I made known in every conversation, was that Canley was approaching 80 and had already battled prostate cancer. I made repeated attempts to speak with Congresswoman Brownley to no avail. I will admit to a few times when I'd raise my voice, "We're not talking about fixing a traffic ticket here, it's the ... Medal of Honor and it'd be the most significant accomplishment your congresswomen will ever do!"

2015-2018

After a year, I would occasionally use my "outside" voice on the phone and demand that Brownley's office conduct a status check. They finally made a call and discovered that the packet had been gathering dust on a desk for the past year. They were instrumental in encouraging Headquarters Marine Corps to conduct the appropriate review.

Laura was my new point of contact at Brownley's office, and my conduit to the bureaucracy. She would receive the frequent inane, absurd and ridiculous glitches then call me.

The intake officer at Headquarters Marine Corps stated that his checklist mandated all the required signatures before he could forward the packet ... Laura countered, "But they're dead."

"John, I received a call from Captain M. and they rejected the packet."

"What was it this time?"

"The endorsement form you submitted was incomplete."

"No, it wasn't."

I had completed a government form that required the endorsement signature of every officer in the gunny's chain of command in 1968. This form took three

months to complete since there were 13 officers in the chain of command from the platoon leaders to the Commandant of the Marine Corps. Eleven of the 13 were dead, so I researched date of birth and date of death, and noted that information on the form. Colonel Batcheller and Major General Smith signed the form, so I thought this meant the mission was accomplished. Not so fast.

The intake officer at Headquarters Marine Corps stated that his checklist mandated all the required signatures before he could forward the packet to the Awards and Decorations Unit.

Laura countered, "But they're dead."

"Doesn't matter," the young officer explained, "The form is incomplete."

The packet was once rejected due to a lack of commissioned officers who witnessed the new and relevant information. My packet frequently mentioned that Co A had no officers for the period in question. They were medically evacuated or elsewhere.

This obvious lapse in common sense took several additional months to correct.



SGT ROBERT KNAPP, USMC

SgtMaj Canley renders a salute during a parade held in his honor at Marine Barracks Washington, D.C., Oct. 19.

Once the Awards Branch at Headquarters Marine Corps processed the upgrade, the packet was sent to the Commandant of the Marine Corps. The Commandant then forwarded his endorsement to the Secretary of the Navy. I was convinced that the Secretary of the Navy would forward the packet instantly since the Marine Corps has very stringent requirements for the Medal of Honor. I was wrong again. It sat at the Department of the Navy for close to a year.

During this time, I contacted everyone from a gunnery sergeant who just happened to answer the phone at Headquarters Marine Corps to staff in the office of the Secretary of the Navy. Every call included the caution that Canley was 80 years old with prostate cancer and it would be a national disgrace if he received this award posthumously. No one cared. They would never provide me a reason for the standoff. At the conclusion of every call I almost pleaded, "Could you please just check it out and get back to me? You can tell me, 'we're working on it,' 'a few more months,' or 'don't call me again.'" Every official promised to call me back but not one did.

It turned out that the Department of the Navy did not have a confirmed secretary for many months after President Trump

After the Senate passed the bill, a staffer from Senator Sullivan's office called and informed me that his immediate supervisor would not approach the senator since Canley was not his constituent.

was inaugurated and the acting secretary would not endorse the upgrade to the Medal of Honor.

When the Secretary of the Navy finally approved and sent the packet to the Secretary of Defense, retired Marine General James Mattis, he approved the upgrade in record time with the caveat that both the House and Senate must pass a bill waiving the five-year requirement. Laura cautioned me that this could take up to 10 months since they usually attach this type of bill to another bill. On Dec. 21, 2016, the House passed H.R. 4641, a bill

that would waive the five-year period on submission of the Medal of Honor once passed by the Senate and signed by the president.

In early January of 2018, I began contacting senators, including the three senators who were also Marines. I figured that they could speak with leadership for one of their brothers. I left messages with staff of Senator Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut, Senator Dan Sullivan of Alaska and Senator Todd Young of Indiana. I patiently explained to their staffs how these Marine Senators could assist a Marine legend. I was not requesting they do anything official but just mention the situation to Senate leadership. "Could you please call me back and let me know if the Senator will help?" All promised a return call. Not one kept their promise but after the Senate passed the bill, a staffer from Senator Sullivan's office called and informed me that his immediate supervisor would not approach the senator since Canley was not his constituent. Congresswoman Brownley worked hard and helped push the bill through both houses in about a month. She has my sincere gratitude.

On July 9, 2018, President Donald Trump called SgtMaj John Canley to inform him that he would be receiving the Medal of Honor. The ceremony took place on Oct. 17.

Our history books may not be complete, but they will at least have those three missing days at Hue City when a Marine gunnery sergeant led his men against overwhelming odds and distinguished himself on the battlefield.

Author's bio: John Ligato is a retired FBI special agent and a veteran Marine who was with the initial contingent of Marines who entered Hue City on Jan. 31, 1968. John received three Purple Hearts for his service in Vietnam. He is an author and college professor. His latest book, "The Near Enemy," is a story of a few former Marines who become law enforcement officers and fight lone wolf terrorists. A book titled, "The Gunny," is now available on JohnCanley.com. It is an inspirational account of how 147 mud Marines led by GySgt John Canley entered Hue City on Jan. 31, 1968, with 10,000 NVA troops waiting.

Editor's note: A congressional office can submit a request for an award upgrade, but the request goes through multiple offices for verification and approval. Strict ethics rules prevent congressional offices from pressuring a federal agency to make favorable decisions for a constituent. 🇺🇸

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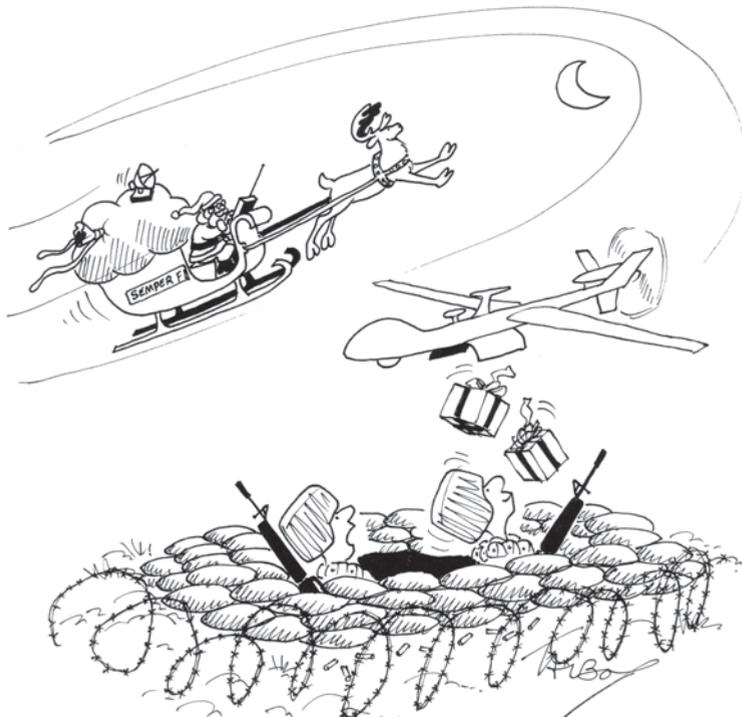
Leatherneck Laffs



No, I don't think if we hang up stockings Santa will come."



"Let me get this straight. You want to rename all the reindeer?"



"Looks like Christmas going high-tech is complete."



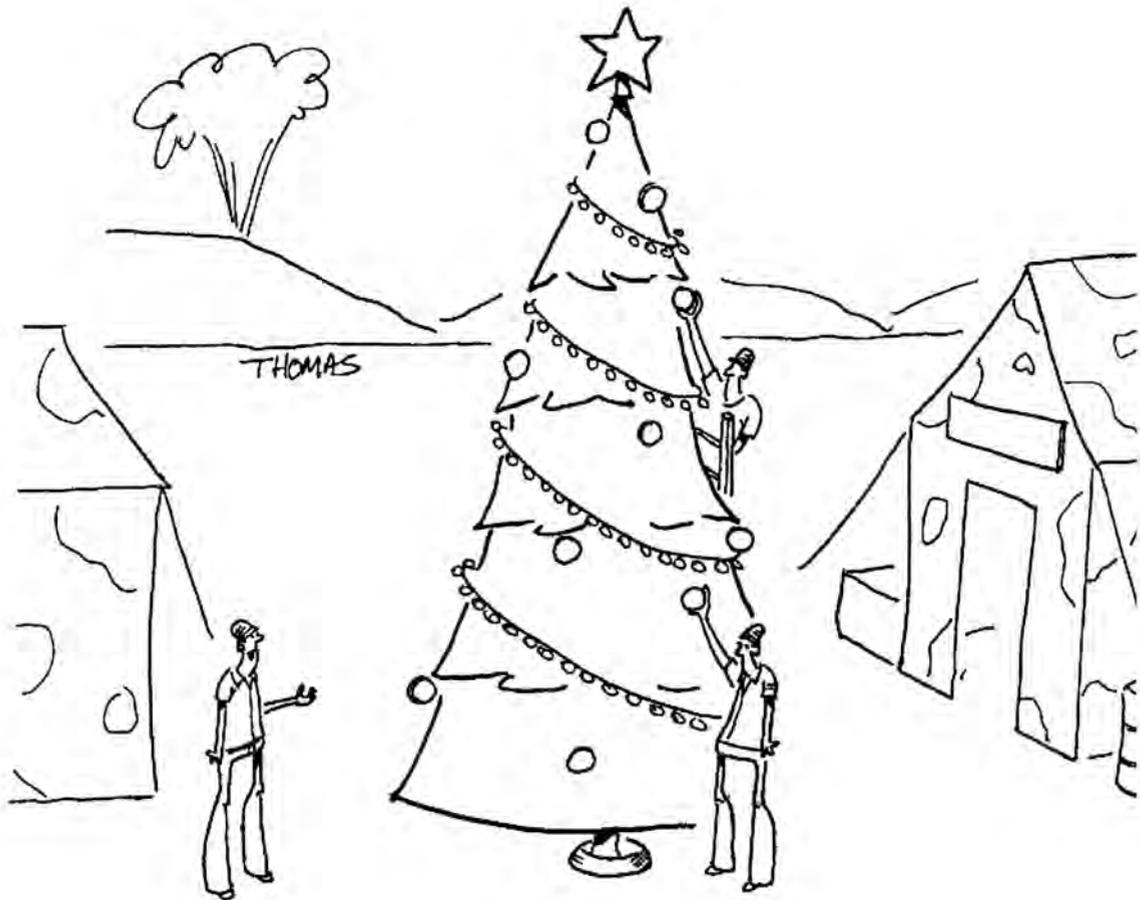
"Gunny took away my Good Conduct Medal the day after he found out I dated his daughter."



"How can you take apart your rifle and put it back together, yet you're no help with this IKEA chair?"



"It's not a fit night out for man nor beast, but it's just right for Marines."



"I know it's Christmas, but it's giving our location away."

In Every Clime and Place

Compiled by Sara W. Bock

AFGHANISTAN F-35B Strike Marks Historic Moment in CENTCOM AOR

The Marine Corps F-35B Lightning II conducted its first combat strikes in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility in support of Operation Freedom's Sentinel in Afghanistan, Sept. 27.

The ground force commander deemed the airstrike, conducted in support of ground clearance operations, a success.

"The F-35B is a significant enhancement in theater amphibious and air warfighting capability, operational flexibility and tactical supremacy," said Vice Admiral Scott A. Stearney, USN, the commander of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command. "As part of the *Essex* Amphibious Ready Group, this platform supports operations on the ground from international waters, all while enabling maritime superiority that enhances stability and security."

The 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit is the first combat-deployed MEU to replace the AV-8B Harrier with the F-35B Lightning II. The F-35Bs from Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 211 are embarked on the *Wasp*-class amphibious assault ship USS *Essex* (LHD-2) as part of *Essex* Amphibious Ready Group.

"The opportunity for us to be the first Navy-Marine Corps team to employ the F-35B in support of maneuver forces on the ground demonstrates one aspect of the capabilities this platform brings to the region, our allies and our partners," said Colonel Chandler S. Nelms, commanding officer of the 13th MEU.

USMC

KEFLAVIK, ICELAND Air Assault Rehearsal Kicks Off Trident Juncture 18

The 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit executed an air assault rehearsal aboard Keflavik Air Base, Iceland, Oct. 17, which allowed the MEU and *Iwo Jima* Amphibious Ready Group to rehearse ship to shore maneuver as an integrated Navy-Marine Corps team prior to executing an amphibious rehearsal in Norway for Exercise Trident Juncture 18.

Activities like the Iceland portion of Trident Juncture 2018 demonstrate the United States' commitment and enduring relationship with its NATO allies and partners.

During the air assault, CH-53E Super Stallions and MV-22B Ospreys transported nearly 100 Marines from USS *Iwo*

Jima (LHD-7) to a landing zone aboard Keflavik Air Base. The intent of the exercise was to increase the proficiency of the air assault force by securing a landing zone, which sets the conditions for follow-on aircraft.

"Conducting the air assault in Iceland provided the Marines and Sailors of the 24th MEU and *Iwo Jima* ARG with the opportunity to exercise our amphibious capabilities in a unique environment," said Lieutenant Colonel Misca Geter, the executive officer for the 24th MEU. "In order to increase proficiency, we need to exercise our capabilities in different locations so we can plan for different variables. The weather and terrain of Iceland forced us to plan around those factors."

The assault force Marines were with 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, currently serving as the Battalion Landing Team for the MEU. The Marines quickly set up security for the landing zone after they exited the aircraft, showcasing the speed and agility of Marines operating from the sea.

"During the air assault we landed on an airfield and immediately set up security, which allowed for the aircraft to leave



PO1 Rey White, USN, an aviation boatswain's mate handler with *Essex* ARG, launches an F-35B Lightning II with VMFA-211, 13th MEU, from the *Wasp*-class amphibious assault ship USS *Essex* (LHD-2) before the F-35B's first-ever combat strike in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility, Sept. 27.



Above: One of several MV-22B Ospreys aboard USS *Iwo Jima* (LHD-7) for Exercise Trident Juncture in Iceland, Oct. 17. (Photo by LCpl Brennon Taylor, USMC)

Right: Marines prepare to board an MV-22B Osprey aboard USS *Iwo Jima* (LHD-7) to conduct an air assault over Icelandic terrain, Oct. 17. Training in the unique terrain and climate of Iceland allows Marines to be better prepared for rapid deployment in support of NATO allies and partners. (Photo by LCpl Margaret Gale, USMC)



safely. We then conducted a movement to a compound where Marines set up security to allow U.S. and Icelandic coordination,” said Corporal Mitchell Edds, a squad leader with 2/2. “Conducting the air assault allowed us to rehearse and better prepare for our assault in Norway. The training we conducted today allowed Marines to operate in an environment that we have not had much experience in as a company.”

Iceland provides a distinctive cold weather environment, which offers more valuable training and experience for the Marines, who were greeted with frigid temperatures in the landing zone.

“I think training in Iceland adds value as opposed to training in the U.S., because it’s a change in climate we don’t usually

get to see. The climate Iceland offers allows us to test our gear in colder weather rather than just the heat,” said Cpl Riley Woods, an MV-22B crew chief with Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 365. “We are also able to fly with different gear, such as dry suits, which we don’t usually have the opportunity to train with. It’s an amazing experience working in other countries.”

Following the air assault rehearsal, the Marines and Sailors focused on cold weather training before departing for Norway to complete Trident Juncture 2018.

According to the Marines who participated, the Iceland portion of Trident Juncture will make the 24th MEU more capable in the future.

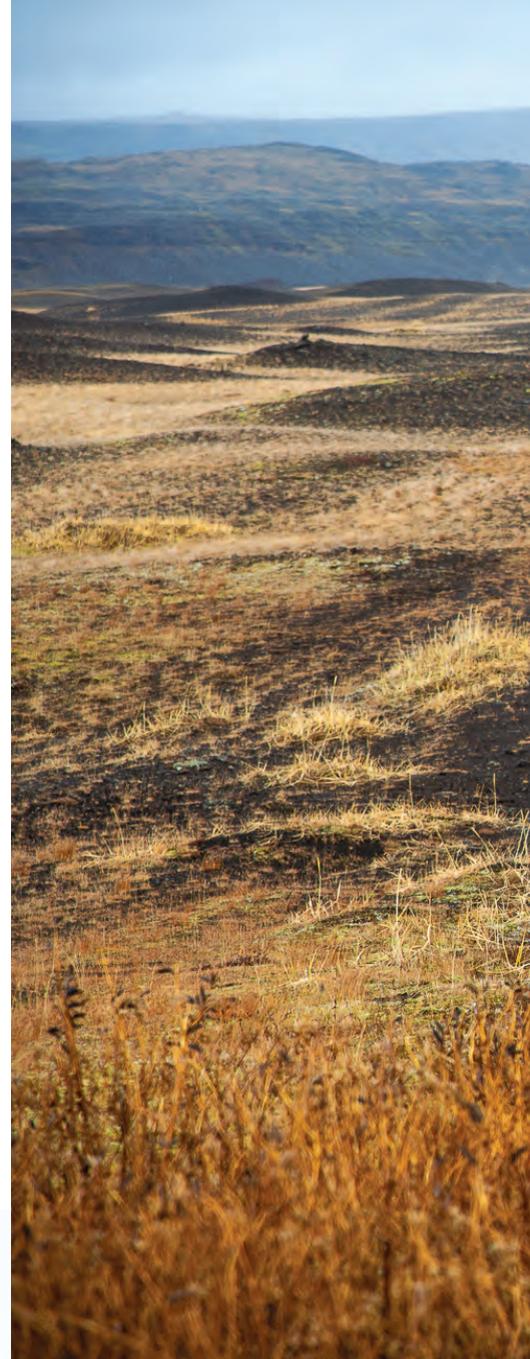
LCpl Margaret Gale, USMC

Right: U.S. Marines with the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit hike to a cold weather training site in Iceland, Oct. 19 during Exercise Trident Juncture 2018. (Photo by LCpl Menelik Collins, USMC)

Below: Assembling tents in the wind in Iceland, U.S. Marines prepare for NATO's Exercise Trident Juncture 2018. The main phase of Trident Juncture started in Norway on Oct. 25.



COURTESY OF ALLIED JOINT FORCE COMMAND NAPLES



COURTESY OF ALLIED JOINT FORCE COMMAND NAPLES

Left: U.S. Marines with the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit arrive in Iceland for Exercise Trident Juncture 2018. The exercise brought together almost 50,000 personnel from 29 allies plus partners Finland and Sweden.

Right: A U.S. Marine, left, and a military observer with the Russian Federation, watch a demonstration on Oct. 30 during Exercise Trident Juncture 2018. As a member of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Russia was invited by NATO to observe the exercise.



Marines on Liberty Cause Beer Shortage in Reykjavik

As tens of thousands of troops from almost 30 NATO countries participated in Exercise Trident Juncture 18, NATO's largest military exercise since the Cold War, U.S. servicemembers created one significant problem for their Icelandic hosts.

When Marines and Sailors from the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit arrived in Reykjavik for some well-deserved liberty, they created a beer shortage. Some bars ran out of beer completely while others made "emergency" runs to their warehouses for a resupply.

The Marines and Sailors especially enjoyed the local brews and were well-behaved guests; the local Icelanders said they were eager to have the Americans return.

Compiled from media reports



Right: A line of 350 U.S. Marines with the 24th MEU begins to march across the Icelandic terrain Oct. 19 during Exercise Trident Juncture. (Photo courtesy of Allied Joint Force Command Naples)





Left: U.S. Marines with Marine Rotational Force-Europe 19.1 and Norwegian Army soldiers conduct close-air support in Setermoen, Norway, Oct. 25.

Below: A U.S. Marine with 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit pauses atop a High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle during Exercise Trident Juncture 18 in Alvund, Norway, Oct. 29. (Photo by Sgt Averil Coppa, USMC)



CPL ASHLEY MCLAUGHLIN, USMC

Below: Marines establish a bivouac location during Exercise Trident Juncture 18 on Alvund Beach, Norway, Oct. 29, after being delivered ashore from USS Iwo Jima.



LCPL MARGARET GALE, USMC

BAHRAIN

Expeditionary DJC2 Essential To CENTCOM Mission

The bedrock characteristic of Naval Amphibious Force, Task Force 51/5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade is “forward operating.” As a force that conducts expeditionary operations, robust communications are central for effective command and control. A detachment of Reserve Marines from 6th Communications Battalion embodies the nature of Task Force 51/5, providing a tactical command and control solution ashore for the command to operate effectively from any given place in the Middle East.

The 6th Comm Bn Marines comprise the Deployable Joint Command and Control System (DJC2), co-located with Task Force 51/5 in Bahrain.

The detachment enables the commander to establish a self-contained, self-powered, network-enabled operations center or Joint Task Force Headquarters anywhere in theater within 24 hours of arrival.

“DJC2 is Task Force 51/5’s mobile command and control unit,” said Master Sergeant Keith Rainer, the DJC2 staff noncommissioned officer in charge. “Depending on the mission requirements, the suite can be modified to provide support at sea, from the sea and ashore.”

The trademark features that distinguish DJC2 from organic communications are the unit’s unmatched sense of readiness and its scalable packages, which carry a small footprint once in place.

“Navy and Marine Corps forces dispersed across the U.S. CENTCOM area of operations require intricate and robust communications,” said Captain Marshall Boggess, the DJC2 officer in charge. “DJC2’s role is to be warmed up in the bullpen, ready to establish an expeditionary tactical communications infrastructure for Task Force 51/5 to command and control those units around the clock from outside Bahrain.”

The Marines regularly conduct rehearsal drills and spend countless hours learning the intricacies of their respective specialties, said Rainer, adding that when the need arises, DJC2 will be ready to answer the call with unparalleled proficiency.

There are four sections within the organization: networks, systems administration, transmissions and infrastructure. Each section plays a vital role and together they are able to provide a wide range of services, including video teleconference, classified and unclassified web services, e-mail support video feeds and various applications.

The current detachment, which rotates every six months, is comprised of 27 Marines from a multitude of military occupational specialties.

Sergeant Victor Liguicota is transmissions chief with DJC2, a billet that carries the responsibility of supervising planning, installation operation and maintenance of all radio and transmission systems. The mobilization in support of Task Force 51/5 is his first deployment with DJC2.

“I enjoy that every day is different with regard to working on transmission terminals,” Liguicota said. “There is always something new we are troubleshooting on our end and the terminal’s distant end, and we annotate every troubleshooting procedure.”

Liguicota explained that his favorite aspect of the job is seeing the positive results of their work and the contributions to mission accomplishment.

“Knowing we are supporting a real-time mission and helping our brothers and sisters on the receiving end execute the mission is just an amazing feeling,” Liguicota said.

Although the DJC2 Marines often work behind the scenes, their work does not go unnoticed.

“For many of the Marines, this is their first deployment,” Boggess said. “They have put in a lot of work, often in the early hours of the morning. I have enjoyed leading this group of Marines and I have seen them grow personally and professionally.”

Capt Monica Witt, USMC

OKINAWA, JAPAN

Fuel Distribution Key to Readiness

As the sun broke through the clouds over Camp Hansen, Marine Corps Base Camp Smedley D. Butler, Okinawa, Japan, on Oct. 2, Marines rushed to quickly assemble a fuel site, their boots thundering across the ground.

Bulk Fuel Company, 9th Engineer Support Battalion, 3rd Marine Logistics Group conducted fuel support operations training to further develop proficiency in fueling support operations for 3rd MLG’s upcoming exercises and deployments.

Warrant Officer John Paul A. Runge, the platoon commander for 2nd Platoon, Bulk Fuel Co, 9th ESB, said that the company is the main provider for fuel distribution throughout 3rd MLG.

“Our mission as a company is to provide petroleum products to the MLG and its supporting units,” said Runge. “We need to be able to set up anywhere and establish these sites anywhere the Marine Corps sends us.”

During the exercise, Marines used water to simulate petroleum products, which allowed them to safely pump inert liquids during training. The bulk fuel specialists were timed on their ability to quickly set up and tear down modular systems, as well as their ability to find faster ways to assemble fuel sites.

“We like to train with water because it gives the Marines a simulated idea of getting the lines filled up with an actual product, as opposed to laying down hoses that are completely empty and rolling them



Sgt Victor Liguicota, transmissions chief with DJC2, conducts routine fieldwork during a rehearsal on portable command and control systems in Bahrain, Sept. 10. The DJC2 unit supports Task Force 51/5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade by providing services necessary to establish a self-contained, self-powered, network-enabled operations center anywhere in the U.S. CENTCOM area of operations.

Marines with Bulk Fuel Co, 9th ESB, 3rd MLG, unroll a fuel hose from the back of a Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement 7-ton truck during fuel support operations training at Camp Hansen, MCB Camp Butler, Okinawa, Japan, Oct. 2. The Marines unrolled the hose to connect the fuel site and the fuel pump to distribute water, which is used during training evolutions instead of fuel.



LCPL ARMANDO ELIZALDE, USMC

Below: During fuel support operations training, Marines with Bulk Fuel Co, 9th ESB, 3rd MLG, unfold a collapsible fuel bladder at Camp Hansen, MCB Camp Butler, Okinawa, Japan, Oct. 2.



LCPL ARMANDO ELIZALDE, USMC

back up,” said Staff Sergeant Bradley W. Hoffman, the platoon sergeant for 2nd Plt, Bulk Fuel Co.

The training began with Marines unrolling collapsible fuel bladders and connecting multiple lengths of hoses in order to direct water from storage bladders to

distribution valves. The modular system, using multiple hoses connected to one another, stretched from the grassy field in front of the Bulk Fuel Co warehouse to a concrete lot in the back, 200 yards away, where a bladder full of water was set up.

“We are able to push product between

our bags here, or push it several miles down the road to another tank system,” said Hoffman.

The Marines also patrolled lines from fuel sites to distribution points to ensure everything flowed properly with no breaks or stoppages.

“Our hoses can reach up to 400 feet [when necessary],” said Hoffman. “We walk the line to make sure it’s not leaking. If we are losing product, then we are not going to be able to complete our mission.”

The training exercise enabled the bulk fuel specialists to practice quickly building and operating fuel distribution points in various environments, which can be controlled training environments, combat zones or in challenging terrain where natural disasters have occurred. In real-world scenarios, this allows the company to fuel various vehicles and heavy equipment in support of both combat operations and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts in other countries.

“We are making sure our Marines are prepared for any type of mission that will come down from the MLG,” said Hoffman. “The Marines can set up in any place in austere environments to store, receive, transfer and dispense fuel to our supporting units.”

LCpl Armando Elizalde, USMC



SEA STORY OF THE MONTH

Coin-Operated Shoe Shine

I was the commanding officer of "Lima" Company, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines (Rein), 1st Marine Brigade, MCAS Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, from June 6, 1964, to April 6, 1965. At one point during this period all personnel underwent tedious efforts in preparation for an upcoming Inspector General (IG) inspection. Hours were spent undergoing preparatory "things on the springs," locker box, personnel and rifle inspections. Needless to say, each Marine was well-prepared for and welcomed the upcoming inspection.

Less than an hour into the "things on the springs" inspection, an irate red-faced captain who was part of the inspection team came storming into my office to berate, in the strongest manner, a private first class wearing dull unpolished dress shoes. Needless to say, after all the preparation for the inspection, I was shocked. After calming the captain down, I asked him to describe what had taken place.

He said that after seeing the shoes, he demanded to know why the Marine did not properly polish his shoes in preparation for the inspection. The PFC asked permission to speak and stammered that he couldn't afford to polish his shoes. The irate captain asked why and the young Marine pointed to a new can of shoe polish in his foot locker and picked it up so the captain could see it. He then pointed to the directions on the side of the can which read, "Insert coin and twist to open." The Marine then

stated, "I don't have a coin."

I must admit, the captain left my office even more frustrated and red-faced, because I nearly fell out of my chair from laughing so hard.

Nevertheless, we passed the inspection with flying colors with no IG notation regarding the incident.

Frank H. Whitton
USMC (Ret)
1956 to 1978
Carlsbad, Calif.

What Christmas Tree?

I was returning to 4th Civil Affairs Group Headquarters at the Quang Tri Combat Base with 10 to 12 newly minted Marines in my charge on Christmas Eve of 1969. We had just completed a two-week customs and language class in preparation for our Combined Action Platoon assignments. Knowing

**A short while later
the MPs burst
through the hatch
like gangbusters.
I guess they
thought they would
catch us with a
Christmas tree.**

from past experience what these young Marines were in for, I hatched a plan for a Christmas Eve party. Teams were tasked with locating various items. Most important was locating anything we could turn into a Christmas tree.

Teams started returning with material for ornaments and tinsel as well as liquid refreshments. The tree hunters returned a little

later with, to my surprise, a real 4-foot Christmas tree, ornaments and all. Before I could inquire where the tree came from, they produced a canvas backed folding chair and two unopened bottles of Johnny Walker. They said they couldn't find anything suitable in our compound so they went to the Army side where they found all of this in an empty tent.

The chair and booze I could see as maybe not being a problem but that tree had me worried.

The evening went by uneventfully until about 2000 when the hooch landline rang. The commanding officer called to inform me that a squad of Army MPs (military police) was on their way over looking for a Christmas tree and chair belonging to Brigadier General Burk, USA.

"When they get here, they had better not find them," he said. I could only reply, "They will not find them here, Sir." We spent the next 10 minutes getting rid of the evidence in the dark. Everyone was to hit the rack and, when the MPs showed up, to just play dumb.

A short while later the MPs burst through the hatch like gangbusters. I guess they thought they would catch us with a Christmas tree while sitting around a Yule log singing Christmas carols.

Unfortunately, one of the Marines had gone to sleep and the ruckus woke him. Startled, he drew down on the MPs. They were unnerved by this and conducted a quick inspection with flashlights, finding nothing.

In the morning, we found broken ornaments and tinsel everywhere. Luckily, the red-tinted flashlights had

failed to reveal much of anything.

After chow I got a call from the XO. He stated, "I don't want that to happen again." Not knowing if he was referring to the possible shootout with the MPs, the tree incident, or both, I could only reply, "It won't, Sir."

I was just glad he never came out and asked me directly if we had the tree. He left me a way out and I was grateful.

SSgt Steve Sorkness
USMC, 1966-1974
Katy, Texas

Marine Corps Birthday Celebration

Back in 1959, I was a lowly U.S. Marine Corps recruit undergoing boot camp training at MCRD Parris Island as a member of 3rd Recruit Battalion. We were deep into our training and we could see the light at the end of the boot camp tunnel. Then we were assigned mess duty in the 2nd Recruit Bn area. It was a humbling experience helping to prepare the food, serving it to recruits and Marine Corps training staff, and cleaning up afterward. Six fellow recruits and I lucked out and were assigned to the senior staff noncommissioned officers (NCO) quarters; a smaller and more intimate venue.

It was the week of the Marine Corps Birthday. Naturally the senior staff NCOs had an exceptionally special lunch that day. As I recall, it was pot roast with lots of side dishes capped off with a huge birthday cake for dessert; a truly sumptuous repast.

After the meal, as was the practice, we recruits got to eat. The mess cook in charge decided on this special day he would leave us to our meal and cleaning duties so

he could visit the Enlisted Club for his own celebration. He reminded us of our duties and that he would be back to check on us. He said that after our meal we could have dessert, but only one serving, no seconds. But, he didn't specify what size plate to use and we chose dinner plates. Dessert that day consisted of a huge piece of birthday cake topped with strawberries, chocolate sauce, ice cream and whatever else we could find—there might have been some whipped cream topped with a cherry or two. We absolutely stuffed ourselves. We devastated the remains of that huge birthday cake. When the mess cook returned, he couldn't help but smile and shake his head when he saw what we had done. He then proceeded to have us scrub down the kitchen from top to bottom.

The next morning the senior Staff NCOs were disappointed not to have any leftover birthday cake with their morning coffee.

Cpl Larry Simeone
USMC, 1959-1965
Watertown, Mass.

I'm Not Who You Think I Am, Sir

Back in the early 1970s I was a Marine infantry officer serving as a company commander in the 2nd Marine Division at Camp Lejeune. We were considerably under strength at the time so we were receiving priority from the Division Personnel Officer in assignment of newly reporting Marines. Unfortunately, this priority also included a raft of unauthorized absence returnees, to include some Marines who had been gone for more than a year. Our policy was to get these returnees up to speed as soon as possible through the issue of new uniforms, individual combat gear, a rifle and assignment to a rifle platoon.

The returnees had to

pay a penalty for their unauthorized absence. The penalty varied depending upon the number of previous absences (if any) and the length of the latest absence. The penalty process started with non-judicial punishment held by me. I had several options, the most severe of which was recommending special courts-martial.

One individual whom I will never forget had been gone for more than two years and was not really fitting in very well. It took about a month to receive his old military record from headquarters in Washington, D.C. After being informed of his rights under the Uniform Code of Military Justice and the charges against him, he was brought before me. Standing in front of my desk, he seemed very

I told him I was going to recommend he receive a special courts-martial, which could include up to six months in the brig.

nervous, an understandable condition considering the circumstances. I asked him a few questions about why he had gone and where he had been. He indicated he had been unhappy being a Marine and had spent a couple of years traveling around his home state doing odd jobs. He could not explain why he had decided to come back. Since he was not performing very well and did not seem to be really interested in living up to his responsibilities as a Marine, I told him I was going to recommend he receive a special courts-martial, which could include up to six months in the brig,

forfeiture of two-thirds of pay and allowances, and a bad conduct discharge. He was greatly taken aback and uttered, "I'm not who you think I am, Sir. I'm my brother!"

Turns out that is exactly who he was. He had an identical twin brother who had deserted the Marine Corps a couple of years before and he had returned in his brother's place. Since he matched the photograph in the military record perfectly and there was no mention of a brother in those records, we believed that he was who he claimed to be. He was quickly turned over to Criminal Investigation Division for proper identification and return to civilian life. I don't know what ever happened to him or if his brother ever came back to the Marine Corps, but the whole incident was the talk of the battalion for quite some time.

LtCol Thomas L. Barrows
USMC (Ret)
Norwalk, Ohio

Happy Thanksgiving To the Gunny

After rifle qualifications Thanksgiving week at MCRD Parris Island in 1954, we drew mess duty. I was a "galley slave" Thanksgiving eve. The duty cook, after preparations, placed me in charge of roasting 26 turkeys. After the troops were served their holiday meal, another recruit who was working in the scullery came in and asked if we could take dinner to our senior drill instructor who had volunteered to take the duty so others could spend the holiday with their families. One word led to another and an entire turkey evolved.

A GI can was steam cleaned and lined with clean newspapers. The whole bird was placed inside and covered with the lid. With one of us on either side of the can we marched with said turkey to the DI's room.

The gunny answered the door and was invited to lift the lid. As he proceeded to lift the lid, another recruit said, "Will there be anything else, Sir?" The gunny answered, "Carry on," and then we did a proper about face and marched in formation back to the galley to resume our duties.

God bless, Gunny.

Paul E. Rockhold
Belen, N.M.

Don't Drink the Water

After landing at Inchon on Sept. 15, 1950, and proceeding to Yondong-po, South Korea, carrying 81 mm mortar ammunition for about two days with a dry canteen, I was thirsty. While others were drinking beer from a "liberated brewery," being a non-drinker, I found a nice clear well complete with bucket and rope. I soon drank a canteen cup full of cool clear water. I then filled my canteen and put in two iodine tablets to purify it as previously instructed.

The next day I was given the nickname of Frog, as a result of the position I assumed every 30 yards for an entire day as the well water had been contaminated. Finally a driver picked me up and gave me a clean set of his utilities.

Jack King
Fayetteville, Ga.

Do you have an interesting story from your time in the Corps that will give our readers a good chuckle? Maybe it's a boot camp tale or a good old sea story that will have us in stitches? We would love to hear your stories and see any accompanying photographs. Write them down (500 words or less) and send them to: Patricia Everett, *Leatherneck* Magazine, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134, or email them to p.everett@mca-marines.org. We offer \$25 or a one-year MCA&F membership for the "Sea Story of the Month." Spread the word! 🐼

Tet 1969: The Battle for Da Nang

Story by Terry A. Williamson • Photos courtesy of the author



LtCol Francis Quinn, CO of 3/7, left, poses with, from left, Capt James Hall, CO of Co I; Capt Fred Fagan, CO of Co K; 2ndLt Byron Weber, CO of Co I; Capt Paul Van Riper, CO of Co M; 2ndLt Terry Williamson, CO of H&S Co, and Col Herbert Beckington, 7th Marines CO, in January 1969.

Battered by aggressive Marine operations in southern I Corps, the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) nonetheless was eyeing Da Nang in December 1968 as part of a strategy that Communist leaders hoped would capitalize on the growing war weariness in America following the Tet Offensive.

Central to this strategy would be an attack by the elite 141st NVA Regiment, which would move from its base in the mountains bordering Laos to strike South Vietnam's second largest city in late February 1969 during Tet. Standing in the way, however, was 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment (3/7), which in five days of close-quarters fighting with rifle butts and CS (tear) gas, crushed the regiment and forced it to leave 137 enemy dead on the battlefield.

The Hieu Duc District, immediately south of Da Nang, had long been a hotbed of enemy activity. Dotted with hamlets,

rice paddies and dense tree lines, the district had a well-developed Viet Cong (VC) infrastructure for NVA units traveling from the western Que Son Mountains to bring in weapons and supplies before returning with rice to their enclaves.

The 3/7 headquarters was situated on Hill 10, an amoeba of scrapped brown earth about 6 miles southwest of the Da Nang Airfield and the 1st Marine Division headquarters on Hill 327. Led by Lieutenant Colonel Francis X. Quinn, a bulldog of a Marine who earned a Silver Star as a platoon commander in Korea, the battalion focused on concentrated patrolling to keep the NVA off balance and break up VC infrastructure. The saturation tactics in the district would prove an early warning for the coming battle.

The plan developed in late 1968 by NVA senior officers of Group 44—military headquarters for Quang Nam Province, which included Hieu Duc—called for four

regiments and local main force VC units to besiege Da Nang, primarily from the west and the south. The main thrust of the attack called for the 141st Regiment to destroy 3/7 and force the Division to commit remaining resources to the area. NVA strategists assumed that South Vietnamese, Korean and other Marine units would have their hands full with attacks by other enemy units and be unable to help.

The battalion's interdiction tactics paid off about midnight on Feb. 22, 1969, when a Marine monitoring a seismic intrusion system detected movement amid the barbed wire of the Da Nang defensive barrier, which was the southern version of McNamara's Line. He quickly alerted a squad from Company M, which was set up in the area. About an hour later, the waiting Marines killed eight NVA, including their company commander, near Hill 10 and 2 ½ miles west of the Bo Bans

Bo Bans area where the company would be heavily engaged later that morning.

That same morning, 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines attacked enemy troops approaching the two Son Cau Do bridges south of the airfield, killing 47 VC and halting any attempt to control two critical highway approaches to Da Nang. The 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines repulsed an attack on their command post—located almost 4 miles south of Marble Mountain—by about 70 enemy soldiers from the 3rd Sapper Battalion, killing 15 VC and NVA.

An early assault by satchel-carrying enemy penetrated the 1st Marine Division Headquarters before being driven off by a Marine counter-attack. The 26th Marine Regiment staved off a similar attack on the northern slope of Hill 327, and 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines, protecting the right flank of the headquarters, faced sappers in the perimeter wire but beat back the attack, killing or capturing 75.

Meanwhile, Marines from Second Lieutenant Bill Donaldson's 3rd Platoon of "Mike" Co, spread out in ambush sites about 2 miles east of the battalion CP, were reporting extensive movement, including sightings of about 100 NVA traveling north and a group of 40 in boats crossing a small finger lake. Donaldson, who later flew F-4s before retiring as a major, called in a fire mission as they crossed.

One 3rd Plt fire team sprung an ambush northeast of the village of Durong Lam 2, near the Song Tuy Loan (river), and quickly ran low on ammunition in the ensuing firefight.

Captain Paul K. Van Riper, who retired as a lieutenant general, had been monitoring the radio from Hill 10 and already was on the way via Route 504, the main paved road to Da Nang, with his command group and 2ndLt Lou Piatt's 2nd Platoon. The Marines moved off the road and started sweeping online through dried rice paddies and tall grass, moving cautiously toward the tree line bordering the village.

Corporal Charles Chaussy's first squad was on the right with Cpl Gary Walker's second squad on the left. A dozen NVA soldiers were about 100 yards away, lying in the grass and behind rice paddy dikes that crisscrossed the area. Enemy soldiers and the Marines saw each other about the same time.

Sergeant Maxey Gilleland, the platoon sergeant, was on the right side of the line. "We knew we were going to have to sweep through them," he said. "The discipline was good and we started moving pretty



The 3/7 headquarters was on Hill 10, approximately 6 miles southwest of the Da Nang airfield in Quang Nam Province in southern I Corps.

quick, not running until we started hitting pockets of resistance."

Van Riper recalled, "I'd never seen anything like it. You usually don't get that close in a firefight."

LCpl Lester Weber, an M60 machine-gun squad leader attached to the 2nd platoon, rushed ahead of the attack and came upon an NVA soldier, raking the assaulting Marines with his AK-47 automatic rifle. Weber cut him down with a burst from his M16. With Marines and

advancing toward a fifth soldier when he was killed—just a few days before he could have rotated home. For his action, Weber was awarded the Medal of Honor.

"You would come up on them so quick, it was really who pulled the trigger first," noted Gilleland. Marines burned through ammunition and there sometimes wasn't enough time to change magazines. "You know you could have just as easily kicked them as you could have shot them," Gilleland said.

Indeed, Walker did just that when he came upon an NVA looking in a different direction. "I didn't have a chance to swing my rifle so I just started kicking him before I shot him," he said.

About 75 yards north of the action, Cpl Jim Meyer and his third squad saw the skirmish unfold, but were not in any position to help. He had noticed enemy soldiers trying to move around the Marines' left flank before the assault and radioed Piatt, who ordered the squad leader to head them off.

The squad eventually reached a slightly raised cemetery and spotted NVA moving amid village huts. The Marines dropped to the ground and "we just sat there, leaning against the small gravestones, and it was like shooting ducks in a pond," Meyer said. Pressing his attack, Meyer and his Marines clambered over a low embankment and started collecting rifles of the slaughtered NVA.

Eventually, the squad was ordered to



LCpl Lester Weber

Weber wrenched an AK-47 from one of the NVA and used it to bludgeon both soldiers. Weber was advancing toward a fifth soldier when he was killed—just a few days before he could have rotated home.

NVA engaged at close range, Weber coolly decided not to fire his weapon and instead used the butt of his rifle to pummel a second NVA. Turning from his fallen foe, he charged another 20 yards and jumped over a dike to land on top of two startled soldiers.

Either because he had an empty clip or he was too close, Weber wrenched an AK-47 from one of the NVA and used it to bludgeon both soldiers. Weber was



A cemetery provided cover for the Marines of Co M as they engaged the NVA outside of the village.



Marines rest outside a religious shrine, the scene of fierce fighting as elements of Co M attempted to assault the village of Duong Lam 2. It was dubbed “the boathouse” because villagers used it to store their small craft.

rejoin the platoon but was halted by devastating automatic weapons fire from the concealed NVA. During the ensuing fire-fight, everyone in the squad was wounded or killed. Those who could made it back to an embankment outside the village.

Even though Walker lost three of his own squad in the hand-to-hand melee, he was ordered to move to the left flank to help the third squad. When Walker eventually reached Meyer’s position, he found the squad leader wounded in the thigh and noticed dead and wounded Marines lying in the open. Meyer appealed to him to try

to bring the wounded to safety, despite the fact that others had tried and failed.

Walker raced across 50 yards to reach one of the Marines. He tied a battle dressing around his head, threw him on his shoulder and stumbled back to Meyer’s squad. The corporal received a Silver Star for his action that day.

With Meyer and Walker occupied on the left flank, the assault on the village would have to be handled by the remaining Marines, primarily from Chaussy’s first squad. The Marines moved north toward a structure dubbed the “boathouse,” a

well-known concrete religious shrine with steps and open sides where villagers sometimes stored their small vessels.

On the other side of the shrine was a ditch that ran roughly north and south in an open area. It was parallel to a thick hedgerow of bamboo and brush near the village infested with so-called spider holes—one-man fighting positions concealed in the roots of vegetation to form natural fortified positions.

The plan was to use the ditch as concealment, come online and assault the village. The Marines didn’t advance very far before “rounds were coming from everywhere. I don’t even remember which side they were coming from” recalled PFC Ray Everest. Taking cover in the ditch, the Marines returned fire and PFC Louis “Billy” Underwood would later receive a posthumous Silver Star for fearlessly leading his fire team during the assault.

With his fire team leader dead and the two members of an M60 gun team wounded, Everest burned through both his ammo and Underwood’s. He continued firing furiously with the M60 gun, which became overheated. Eventually the barrel warped. “And then I started tossing grenades,” he said.

The second platoon tried a second time to assault the village against scathing automatic weapons fire. The lieutenant ordered “those that have them to pull the pin on the grenades,” LCpl Bill Faulkenberry said, “We’re going to throw them and we’re all going to get up and take the tree line. As soon as we stood up, AK-47s on full auto opened up and people went down.” Those that were able again took refuge in the ditch.

As Piatt’s position became untenable, he ordered a withdrawal and grabbed an M60 machine gun to deliver suppressive fire until he exhausted the ammunition and used a Light Anti-tank Weapon (LAW) to “assure that all casualties had been evacuated,” according to the officer’s Navy Cross commendation.

The assault left in its wake a number of wounded Marines, who Gilleland said were “bleeding out.” The sergeant raced across the fire-swept field at least six times to get the wounded to safety to earn the second Navy Cross of the day. “I did my job ... they were hurt and needed assistance. I carried some back and some others I helped walk,” Gilleland recalled.

Walker’s squad, which was pinned down with Meyer, managed to maneuver inside the village later in the day where they killed at close range four or five NVA hiding in fighting holes. Co M had accounted for 30 NVA KIAs, three POWs and several weapons captured, but the

company lost 10 Marines and numerous wounded.

West of Van Riper's company, Co L was facing an enemy force that would prove the most stubborn during the five-day engagement. The action for Lima's Jim Trenam had started the night of Feb. 23 when his squad was on the way to their ambush site and killed two NVA.

Early the next morning, the 18-year-old private first class was carrying a radio for the acting squad leader, Cpl Ray Cole, as the unit headed back to Hill 10. Cole made sure his Marines were spread out along the route of march and had Trenam do a head count, including the three "tail-end Charlies" who were carrying long, Bangalore tubes that could be assembled and used to blow tunnels. At about 2:30 p.m., the squad emerged into a clearing along western branch of the Song Tuy Long near the An Tan Ridge, about a half mile northwest of Hill 10.

"When our point man went down, I thought first it was friendly fire until I saw the NVA cooking fires," Trenam noted. An unknown group of Marines was on the squad's left in a tree line and had been informed the squad was moving

The impending dark also brought another problem. The Marines realized that the three Marines traveling at the end of the squad file, all barely in country a week, were missing.

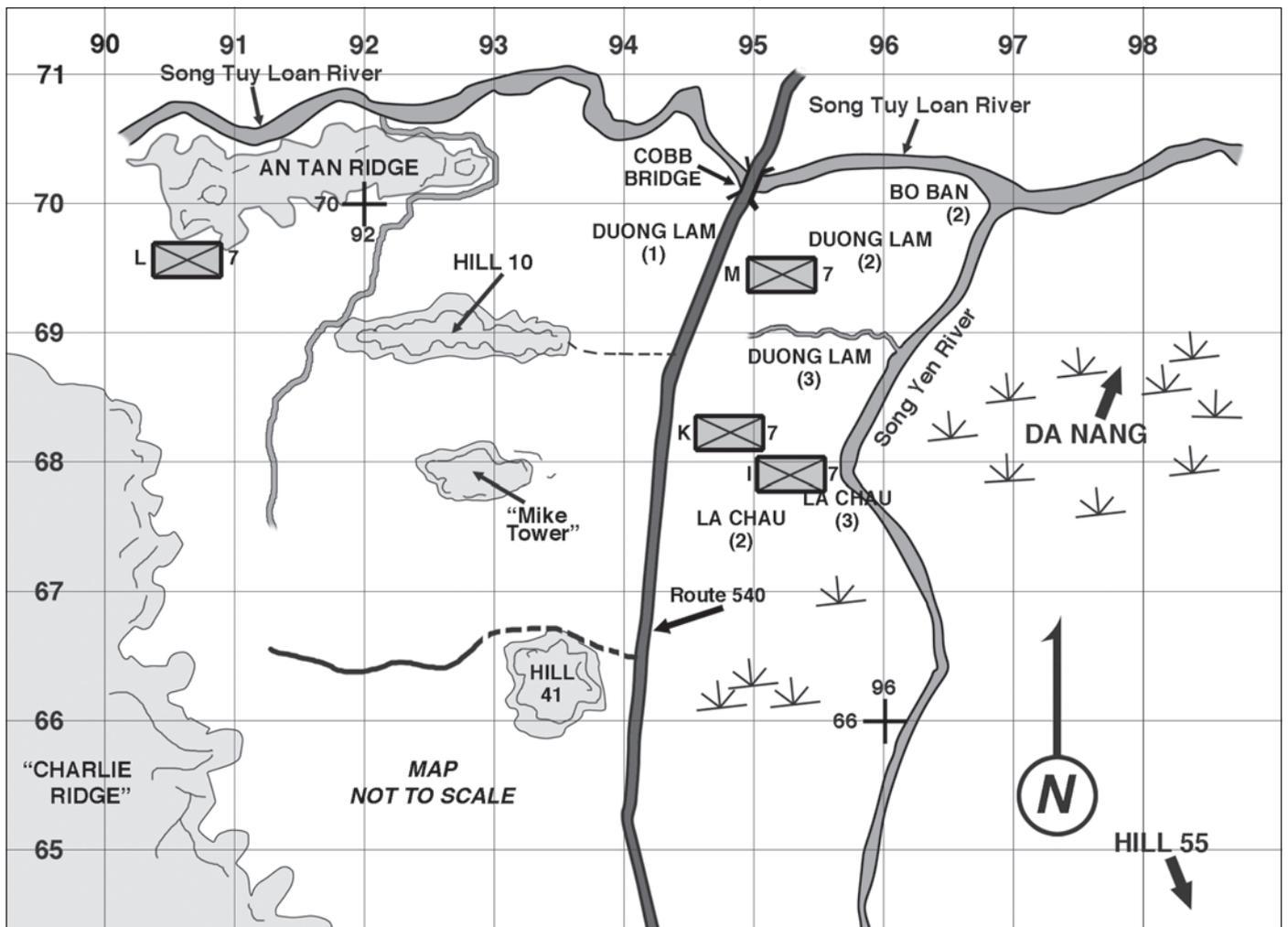
near them. Cpl Jeremiah Johnson was hit in his right leg and hollered, "We're Lima Company. We're Marines."

Shot again in the thigh, Johnson was bandaged by a corpsman and then went to get help "because we thought we had been pinned down by our own men. I crawled up on the hill and there were two NVA dug in, looking at me." Johnson rolled away into a nearby ditch, and for some reason, the NVA didn't pursue him or the prized M79 grenade launcher he carried. By that time, his squad leader was dead and much of the squad was out of action.

Co L's 3rd Plt was sent to help and ran into trouble at a nearby tree line, adding to the mounting casualties needing evacuation. Three helicopters tried to set down nearby but were forced to abort as gunfire swept the hastily set up landing zone. It was growing dark before a CH-46 helicopter hovered with its "chin" light illuminating the landing zone. The NVA responded with Chicom grenades and fired their AK-47s, getting close enough at one point that "the pilots were shooting their 38s [pistols] out the window to defend themselves," Trenam said.

The impending dark also brought another problem. The Marines realized that the three Marines traveling at the end of the squad file, all barely in country a week, were missing. A Hughes OH-6—a light, two-man observation helicopter—discovered the bound bodies days later, half-buried near a bomb crater along the squad's patrol route. The Marines counted earlier by Trenam still had belts of M60 machine-gun ammo around their chests but it was clear that they had been tortured.

Elements of Co L continued in close contact on Feb. 23 near the An Tan Ridge and bottled up a stubborn enemy deter-



mined to keep a route open for remaining NVA to escape westward into the mountains. It eventually quieted down and the Marines settled in for the night.

About 8 p.m. on Feb. 23, things were heating up for Co I when a squad ambush turned into a major engagement in the southern part of battalion's TAOR near the village of Lau Chau, about a mile southeast of Hill 10. Co I had been engaged in a running gun battle with the North Vietnamese since the day before and cornered the enemy in well-entrenched positions. The company mounted a squad-sized reaction force led by First Lieutenant Paul Darling, the company executive officer, who was wounded in the engagement. The Marines eventually pulled back to a defensive position in a mud-walled cemetery.

The next morning, Co I's CO, 1stLt R.W. Ramage, and his command group joined the beleaguered Marines for a final push against the enemy, often fighting bitterly at close range. With this second group was LCpl Edward Wolfendale, who had earlier turned in his weapon and was waiting to rotate home. Attempting to reduce the enemy positions one by one, the Marines encountered an especially resilient emplacement where four wounded Marines without ammunition were pinned down in a small depression about 30 yards away.

Wolfendale rushed across the killing ground with a single LAW and soon

realized he could only get a shot off with the hand-held rocket launcher by exposing himself to fire. The NVA fired desperately at the kneeling Marine who was killed by a rocket-propelled grenade round. "His gallantry under fire enabled the rest of his platoon to destroy the bunker and evacuate the wounded Marines," read the Silver Star citation presented nearly 30 years later to his mother after squad leader Tom Smith and fellow Co I Marines worked to get him the recognition they felt he greatly deserved.

LtCol Quinn, who would later retire as a major general, ordered Captain (later Colonel) Fred Fagan's Co K to move from Hill 41, about 2 miles south of Hill 10 to reinforce Co I, which had lost seven Marines to interdict the fleeing NVA. One Co K unit noticed a large group of NVA moving in the vicinity and called in a fire mission from one of 11th Marines' batteries which resulted in 15 enemy dead.

Meanwhile, elements of Co L continued to press the attack on Feb. 24 against the bottled-up NVA near An Tan Ridge, employing heavy artillery and air strikes. The area was honeycombed with tunnels and anti-aircraft emplacements that were firing at helicopters and jets when they made their strafing bombing runs.

Co L's command group and another unit, led by the company CO, Captain James K. Hall, reinforced the Marines. The advance stalled and Hall crawled

forward. The captain, who was on an extended second tour, raised his head to look for the source of the holdup and was killed. He was only a few days from rotating home.

The loss of their leader was unsettling, but there wasn't any time to mourn. Trenam said, "When Capt Hall got killed, I remember how demoralized we were, but we had to continue [the attack]." The next morning, Feb. 25, Co L made some headway. Although nine NVA were killed, the company could not dislodge the entrenched defenders and held in place for the night.

The fighting continued on Feb. 24 and 25. Co L tried at first to sweep the An Tan ridge line toward the river. "We knew where the fire was coming from as we kept running into resistance," Trenam said. Closer to the river, NVA were entrenched and had at least one heavy 12.7 mm machine gun, comparable to the U.S. .50-caliber machine gun. "We were using a lot of LAWs. Guys were bringing out the tube-like rocket launchers on amtracs."

Cleaning out the enemy positions was a nasty, close-in business. "We used 'Willy Peter' [white phosphorus] grenades," machine gunner Phil Valenzuela said. "We hugged the bank right next to the river and we threw Willy Pete inside the holes, then threw a frag, and after it went off, our gun team opened up. We were killing everything."

Co I and Co K were still kicking up NVA on Feb. 25 near the La Chaus. About 6 a.m., Co I Marines moved to check out a possible rocket launching site near the combat area that had come under attack with heavy small arms and automatic weapons fire the day before. After artillery and air preparation, the platoon moved forward and killed four NVA and captured two prisoners.

One of the NVA was armed with a 9 mm pistol and stuck in a small fighting hole under a tree. "It was either die or give up," Smith said. In spite of his tattered shorts and bandaged calf, it was clear that this NVA was somebody special. He was taller than most Vietnamese and carried himself with an arrogant demeanor, suggesting someone in authority. Attempting a ruse that he was a company commander, Senior Captain Nguyen That Tanh finally relented during interrogation at the 1stMarDiv Headquarters and admitted that he was the commanding officer of the 141st Regiment.

Some of the heaviest fighting of the five-



National Police Force soldiers guard three NVA soldiers captured on Hill 10 in early 1969.



Above left: The E8 Tactical CS Launcher, which was carried as a backpack, could send 16 CS projectiles toward a target and was used during the assault from An Tan Ridge.

Above right: Members of 2nd Platoon, Co M, are at the boathouse after patrolling in the area in early 1969. From left: PFC Paul Barnes, PFC Billy Underwood, Cpl Gary Walker and PFC Jerry Taylor. LCpl Freddie Tipton is kneeling in the doorway. Underwood, Taylor and Tipton were killed on Feb. 23.

day period occurred at Lima Company's position as the company attempted flanking attacks and a frontal assault on the NVA positions near the river. Co L lost 14 Marines and its combat effectiveness was severely hampered. Quinn assigned the mission to Co M and ordered Van Riper to eliminate the NVA.

Van Riper concluded there was no other viable option than a frontal assault. Supporting arms were not a panacea and even aircraft with 500- and 700-pound bombs had not made a dent against the enemy's defenses. The captain knew he needed to flush the NVA out to face his Marines and chose CS tear gas to be delivered by portable E8 tactical launchers.

In the early light of Feb. 26, Co M moved from Hill 10 northwest through the flat paddies to the southern slope of An Tan Ridge where it linked up with two platoons from Co L. The area was prepped with artillery and air strikes, employing napalm and 500-pound "snake eye" bombs.

When the company's machine guns and mortars were in place to provide supporting fire, Van Riper gave the order to don gas masks and fire the E8 launchers, each of which can send 64 projectiles toward the target. Conditions were optimal with no wind and high humidity. In minutes, clouds of billowing gas blanketed the entire objective. Some of the NVA soldiers immediately bolted to face fire from the Marines on the ridge, and an OV-10 Bronco—a small observation

airplane—released its rockets on enemy soldiers struggling in the river.

Rushing forward, Marines panted and gasped for breath through the stifling gas masks while shooting the emerging NVA soldiers. They used CS M79 rounds and CS hand grenades to flush the more stubborn.

Van Riper gave the order to don gas masks and fire the E8 launchers, each of which can send 64 projectiles toward the target.

"The gas caught them off balance, but the resistance stiffened as it started to dissipate," Van Riper said. Marines moved slowly to isolate fortified fighting positions and take them out in fire team and squad rushes supported by direct fire from tanks and a 106 mm recoilless rifle mounted on an Amtrak. Half of the objective was taken before the attack stalled at nightfall.

The attack resumed the morning of Feb. 27—this time, the three platoons moved from the high ground to the objective. Following an intense air and artillery bombardment, which removed almost all the remaining trees and vegetation, the lead platoon moved quickly under CS

gas and cut the objective in half to reach the river. The two trace platoons then rolled up the flanks to the east and west. For the next few days, Marines hunted down small groups of enemy soldiers, who had no clear route of escape as they aimlessly moved in the Dia La Pass-Tuy Loan Village area.

Throughout the engagement, a total of 137 NVA were killed and nine were captured. For February, the battalion's command chronology report noted Marine losses as 35 killed and 121 wounded—most of which, if not all, occurred in this five-day period. By mid-March, all elements of the 141st, which ceased to exist as an effective force, and 31st NVA regiments had left the 7th Marines TAOR.

Unfortunately for the 141st Regiment, they would face the battalion a month later during Operation Oklahoma Hills as 7th Marines and other units chased the NVA in the rough terrain and dense vegetation of "Charlie Ridge" west of Hill 10. During that two-month campaign, Marines rooted out base camps serving the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos, relying in part on intelligence gained from Nguyen That Tanh, captured by Co I Marines on Feb. 24.

Author's bio: Terry A. Williamson served as an infantry officer with the 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines in 1968-1969. He is the author of "Rocks and Fists: The Decimation of the 141st Regiment." He lives in Glenside, Pa. 🐼

Constructed by U.S. Navy Seabees in 1964, this 2,300-foot airstrip was located in the Montagnards' ancestral homeland in the Central Highlands of Vietnam. During the war, the area became strategically important to U.S. forces, and many units relied heavily on the assistance provided by the Montagnards.



A four-man Special Forces team, consisting of two American soldiers and two Montagnard soldiers, center, served as a cross border hunter-killer-recon team in Kontum, Vietnam, in 1972. It is believed that approximately 40,000 Montagnards served alongside U.S. servicemembers during the Vietnam War. (USA photo)

Leaving Vietnam:

For Montagnard Refugee Family, U.S. Provides Safety, Inspires Service



COURTESY OF COL TOM SCHMIDT, USMC (RET)

From the left, Nak Ramah, Anem Ramah, Col Tom Schmidt, USMC (Ret) and Anui Ramah celebrate Anem's U.S. citizenship ceremony on Sept. 15, 2015.

By Sara W. Bock

There are a few days in his 22 years of life that stand out in Lance Corporal Anem Ramah's memory.

Sept. 22, 2017—the day he graduated from boot camp at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C. Another is Sept. 15, 2015—the day he officially became a citizen of the United States.

And there's the day in February 2001 when, as a young child, he watched his father, Anui, climb out the back window of their family's home in Vietnam to evade arrest for his involvement in a peaceful protest. It would be five years before they were reunited in the U.S. Anem, just 9 years old at the time, suddenly found himself in New Bern, N.C., in a country that was foreign to him, immersed in an

unfamiliar culture where people spoke a language he didn't know or understand.

Today, he communicates with ease and carries himself with such confidence that it's hard to picture the younger, more timid version of himself that he describes as he recounts his first days in America. And as he tells his story, there's one individual who continually appears in it: retired Marine Colonel Tom Schmidt, a veteran of the Vietnam War who resides in nearby Havelock, N.C., just outside the gates of Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point. It was Schmidt, says Anem, who helped him become a citizen and a Marine, and who has advocated for the Ramah family and others like them for more than a decade.

Anem and his family are Montagnards—French for “highlanders” or “hill people”—a name given to the indigenous mountain-

dwellers in the Central Highlands of Vietnam during the French colonization of Indochina from the mid-19th century until World War II. The Montagnard people have adopted the term, but traditionally had called themselves “Dega.” Both are blanket terms for members of various native tribes in Vietnam who are of different ethnicity than the Vietnamese people and who each have their own native tongue. Anem and his family come from the Jarai tribe and speak a dialect of the same name. Their society is largely agrarian, and most Montagnards are skilled farmers who have traditionally relied on their crops for subsistence. They also generally are devout followers of Protestant Christianity, which the government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam has not allowed them to freely practice.

An unexpected relationship between the United States and the Montagnard people was forged more than 50 years ago during the Vietnam War. As the Central Highlands—the Montagnards’ ancestral land—became a pivotal region in South Vietnam’s defense against the invading North Vietnamese, the Republic of Vietnam’s government allowed U.S. Army Green Berets to train the small Montagnard tribal militias that had been formed to bolster their own defense against the Communists, whose oppression of the Montagnards had grown steadily since the 1954 Viet Minh victory and subsequent partitioning of Vietnam.

“What the SF [Special Forces] soldiers found in the mountains of Vietnam was a group of people unparalleled in fierce fighting skills, personal courage and loyalty to allies,” wrote Amy Fabry, a documentary film producer, in a 2010 article published by the Defense Media Network.

An estimated 40,000 Montagnards served alongside the U.S. military during the war. Among them was Anem Ramah’s grandfather—Anui’s father—whose legacy would be continued in a way he likely never would have imagined when his grandson earned the title of United States Marine. Throughout his childhood, Anem recalls his father often telling him stories about his grandfather fighting for the Americans. Among the Green Berets who served with the Montagnards, there are countless stories of the Montagnards laying down their lives for U.S. troops, conducting dangerous scouting missions and hiding American soldiers from enemy forces.

In 1975, as the U.S. military exited Southeast Asia and the Republic of Vietnam fell to the North Vietnamese Army,



PFCE E. HILDRETH, USMC

In 1968, members of the 26th Marine Regiment delivered 16 head of livestock to members of the Bru tribe of Montagnards as a token of friendship. The Bru, described as loyal allies, were resettled in the Cau Valley in Vietnam and received protection from the 26th Marines against Communist aggressors at Khe Sanh.

the previously marginalized and oppressed tribes became even more persecuted in retaliation for their brave support of U.S. forces during the war. Their ancestral homelands were seized and their villages upended. Books—especially Bibles—written in their native languages were burned. They were forbidden to speak their native languages and were required to send their children to Vietnamese schools. This systematic oppression has persisted, and the number of Montagnards in Vietnam has significantly dwindled to the extent that many would consider genocide.

It wasn’t until 1986, more than a decade after the U.S. had left Vietnam, that some

Montagnards who served with the Green Berets were offered refugee status in the U.S. The majority of them resettled in North Carolina, due in large part to the presence of the U.S. Army Special Forces Command at Fort Bragg and the soldiers’ gratitude for the support the Montagnards provided them during the war. Today, North Carolina is home to the largest population of Montagnards outside of Vietnam—more than 8,000, according to Save the Montagnard People, Inc., an organization based in Asheboro, N.C.

In February 2001, Anem’s father Anui and other Montagnards in and around the city of Pleiku, where the Ramah family resided, banded together to peacefully protest against the oppressive Vietnamese government, demanding equal rights and religious freedom for their marginalized native tribes. Within four days, the police had caught and arrested all of the organizers of the protest and were actively seeking out others who had been involved. It was midnight when they arrived at the Ramah home to arrest Anui, who escaped through the back window and hid in the nearby forest for a month. He wasn’t alone. His brother—Anem’s uncle—and roughly 100 other protestors were also hiding in the vicinity.

At his graduation from Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., in September 2017, Private First Class Anem Ramah, left, stands proudly alongside his brother and father, Anui. The family entered the U.S. on refugee status to escape persecution in Vietnam.



COURTESY OF COL. TOM SCHMIDT, USMC (RET)



COURTESY OF NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND

Montagnards offload a delivery of food, clothing, building material and books donated by Americans from a U.S. Navy C-47 transport at Dalat Airstrip in the Central Vietnam Highlands on Jan. 15, 1966. The donations were distributed among members of a resettled Montagnard tribe that had escaped Viet Cong encirclement.

After a month in the forest, Anui and his brother were listening to the radio when they heard about a United Nations refugee camp across the border in Cambodia. The large group divided up, realizing that separating into small teams was the best way to avoid getting caught. Anui and six others began the arduous 24-hour trek, traversing mountains and swimming across rivers until they successfully crossed into Cambodia.

Upon arrival at the refugee camp, Anui's brother became so ill he feared he would die if he stayed. He made the decision to return back to Vietnam. Others in the group were lured back across the border with a promise from the government: that they would return their land and allow them religious freedom. It was an empty promise, said Anui. But as he waited, he began to wonder what would happen to him and his family.

"There was no communication, no phone," recalled Anui, with the help of an interpreter, of the months he spent in the refugee camp. "My family didn't know for six months that I was alive."

Left to fend for herself and support her four children, the youngest of whom was 8 months old, Anem's mother Nak would spend the next five years as a single parent. Anem and his brother were forced to grow up quickly as they tried to fill their father's shoes and put food on the table, hunting and fishing often to provide for their family.

As he waited in Cambodia, Anui was constantly plagued by the threat of repatriation to Vietnam. Some of the people who were sent back, he said, were never heard from again.

"I still fear," said Anui when asked if he would ever return to Vietnam. "A lot of the people I protested with have died, or they are still in jail now. Some have been released, but with broken legs, eyes that have been taken out, arms that aren't normal. They've been beaten and tortured.

Some have been poisoned and die or are paralyzed."

In 2002, Anui was among a large group of roughly 900 Montagnards who went through the extensive vetting process required of refugees seeking safety in the United States. Due to mounting pressure from Washington, D.C., and by various human rights organizations, they were permitted to leave the camp in Cambodia and travel all the way to the United States, where most would settle in North Carolina.

The process for earning refugee status is rigorous, involving medical exams and interviews with relatives, said Susan Husson, the director of Interfaith Refugee Ministry, a resettlement agency in Eastern North Carolina that has worked to help ensure smooth transitions for refugees from "hot spots" all over the world.

"Everyone who comes has been vetted

There are countless stories of the Montagnards laying down their lives for U.S. troops, conducting dangerous scouting missions and hiding American soldiers from enemy forces.

and has to prove that they are in danger in their own country. They have to have fled their own country because of persecution—because of race, religion, ethnicity,” said Husson. “Refugees are vetted about as thoroughly as anybody could possibly be vetted.”

Along with approximately 30 others, Anui resettled in New Bern, N.C., where the Interfaith Refugee Ministry had been able to track down a Montagnard man in the area who could speak both English and Jarai, and he agreed to work as an interpreter. Eastern North Carolina, said Husson, is an optimal area for refugees to resettle due to the low cost of living, educational opportunities and a wide variety of manufacturers offering industrial jobs.

Local churches stepped up to volunteer, each “hosting” a small group of Montagnards, who they would assist in securing housing, finding employment, learning English and adjusting to a culture far different from the one they left behind. For many, Anui included, it was also an adjustment to life without the family they left behind in Vietnam.

Colonel Tom Schmidt, USMC (Ret), is a member of First United Methodist Church in Havelock, N.C., where Anui was assigned. He never interacted with Montagnards in Vietnam, where he piloted the F-4 Phantom, but his familiarity with the country allowed him a level of insight into their background that most other Americans wouldn’t have.

“Throughout the time in Cambodia I was full of fear, so knowing somebody here to watch out for me, I felt safe,” said Anui of Schmidt, who was instrumental in helping him gain employment at poultry producer Sanderson Farms, where he continues to work on the night shift today.

According to Schmidt, one of the biggest challenges Montagnard refugees face in the U.S. is the language barrier. Jarai is such an unusual dialect, you can’t look it up on a translation website or easily find an interpreter.

“I run into that all the time in trying to help them. You go to social services and say, ‘Well, they don’t speak English,’ and they say, ‘Well, we’ve got translators,’ ” said Schmidt. “I don’t think so!” he added with a laugh.

Schmidt’s friendship and support would become even more of an asset to the Ramah family when, after several years of paperwork, applying for visas and saving the necessary funds, Anui was finally able to bring his wife and children to North Carolina to join him in 2006. Schmidt and others from the church would take Anem and his siblings to baseball games and other



COURTESY OF COL. TOM SCHMIDT, USMC (RET)

Col Tom Schmidt, USMC (Ret), left, congratulates new Marine PFC Anem Ramah at his boot camp graduation at MCRD Parris Island, S.C., in September 2017. Ramah credits Schmidt, who has offered friendship and support to the Ramah family since they arrived in the U.S., for helping pave his way to become both a citizen and a United States Marine.

events in an effort to get to know them and expose them to American culture.

Anem recalls the opportunity he and his brother had to attend a month-long summer camp shortly after their arrival, which gave them a full immersion in the English language. He remembers his first year of school in North Carolina, which he said was hard but allowed him to learn and progress every day.

After graduating from New Bern High School in 2014, Anem became a U.S. citizen in 2015, an opportunity that he says wouldn’t have happened without Schmidt’s guidance and support.

“Tom helped me with the citizen papers, and he came with me to my citizenship ceremony,” said Anem, who spent two years working in the Moen factory in New Bern before enlisting in the Marine Corps. “I worked and went to school at the same time, but after two years I got tired of that and wanted to try something different, something with more opportunity—wanting to set an example for my people.”

Schmidt helped guide Anem through the enlistment process with the help of Colonel Pat Faulkner, USMC (Ret), who also is a veteran of the Vietnam War who attends First United Methodist and has for years assisted the Montagnards who have resettled in the area. Col Faulkner introduced Anem to his son, Lieutenant General Mark Faulkner, who, now retired, serves as the CEO of the Marine Corps Association & Foundation. Schmidt and LtGen Faulkner accompanied Anem to the recruiting station, where they didn’t reveal their identities to the recruiter, Anem recalled with a laugh.

Along with Anem’s proud parents and five siblings—two of whom were born in the United States—these supportive Marines proudly attended Anem’s boot camp graduation ceremony last September.

Today, Anem serves as an infantryman with 3rd Battalion, 6th Marines, and is stationed at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., just an hour from the home in New Bern that his parents have purchased. He visits them often. In their backyard, a plentiful garden reminds them of the agricultural life they left behind in Vietnam. They continue to speak

Jarai, but understand English well and continue to make progress in learning the language. And one thing is for sure: they are tremendously proud of their son and his service to the United States.

It’s the challenge the Marine Corps offers, said Anem, that made him aspire to join its ranks.

“There’s a job opportunity, you get to learn stuff, you build up a career and a future and you can set an example for others to be a part of it too,” said Anem. “I always think about my grandfather and how he fought alongside the Americans, and I want to be a part of it too.” 🇺🇸

According to Schmidt, one of the biggest challenges Montagnard refugees face in the U.S. is the language barrier. Jarai is such an unusual dialect, you can’t look it up on a translation website or easily find an interpreter.



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Ship's sponsors Alicia J. Petersen, left, and D'Arcy Neller, right, christen the guided-missile destroyer USS *Frank E. Petersen Jr.* (DDG-121) in Pascagoula, Miss., Oct. 6. Also pictured are Gen Alfred M. Gray Jr., USMC (Ret), the keynote speaker at the christening; Brian Cuccias, president of Ingalls Shipbuilding; and Gen Robert B. Neller, Commandant of the Marine Corps.

Navy Christens New Guided-Missile Destroyer Named for Marine Aviator

During a ceremony at Huntington Ingalls Industries shipyard in Pascagoula, Miss., Oct. 6, the Navy christened its newest guided-missile destroyer, USS *Frank E. Petersen Jr.* (DDG-121).

The destroyer is the first ship named in honor of Marine Corps Lieutenant General Frank E. Petersen Jr., the first African-American Marine Corps aviator and the first African-American Marine to become a general officer. When he retired in 1988 after 38 years of service, he was, by date of designation, the senior-ranking aviator in both the Marine Corps and the United States Navy.

The principal speaker at the ceremony was General Alfred M. Gray Jr., USMC (Ret), the 29th Commandant of the Marine Corps. D'Arcy Neller, wife of General Robert B. Neller, Commandant of the Marine Corps, and Dr. Alicia J. Petersen, LtGen Peterson's widow, served as the

ship's sponsors. In a time-honored Navy tradition, the two christened the ship by breaking bottles of sparkling wine across the bow.

"The future USS *Frank E. Petersen Jr.*, will serve for decades as a reminder of LtGen Petersen's service to our nation and Navy and Marine Corps team," said Secretary of the Navy Richard V. Spencer prior to the ceremony. "This ceremony honors not only Petersen's service, but also the service of our nation's industrial partners who, for centuries, have helped make our Navy the greatest in the world."

USS *Frank E. Petersen Jr.* is the Navy's 71st *Arleigh Burke*-class destroyer and the fifth of 21 ships currently under contract for the DDG-51 program. Configured as a Flight IIA destroyer, it enables power projection, forward presence and escort operations at sea in support of low-intensity conflict/coastal and littoral offshore warfare, as well as open ocean conflict.

The destroyer will be equipped with the Navy's Aegis Combat System, the

world's foremost integrated naval weapon, and also will incorporate Cooperative Engagement Capability that, when combined with the Aegis Combat System, will permit groups of ships and aircraft to link radars to provide a composite picture of the battle space, effectively increasing the theater space. The capability is designed to provide the Navy with a 21st-century fighting edge.

The nearly 9,500-ton *Frank E. Petersen Jr.* is 509.5 feet in length, and has a waterline beam of 59 feet and a navigational draft of 31 feet. Four gas turbine engines will power the ship to speeds in excess of 30 knots.

USN

Combat Assault Bn Deactivates During October Ceremony

The 3rd Marine Division's Combat Assault Battalion was officially deactivated during an Oct. 12 ceremony at Camp Courtney, Marine Corps Base Camp Smedley D. Butler, Okinawa, Japan.

Its units, which include a Combat Engineer Company, a Light Armored Reconnaissance Company, an Assault Amphibian Vehicle Company and Headquarters and Service Company, will be spread throughout the Division. The majority of Marines will now belong to the 4th Marine Regiment.

Initially activated on Feb. 16, 1942, at New River, N.C., Combat Assault Bn has existed in many locations and been known by various names, including 1st Amphibian Track Battalion with 1st Marine Division at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif. It was assigned to the 3rdMarDiv in 1965 and in 1967 was moved to its final location on Camp Schwab, Okinawa, Japan.

“The Combat Assault Battalion provided light armored vehicles to provide reconnaissance and amphibious assault vehicles to provide the armored protective capability of a self-deploying amphibious vehicle to the division,” said Lieutenant Colonel Jacob Robinson, the commanding officer of Combat Assault Bn.

The battalion fought in major conflicts including World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Its mission has included conducting amphibious assault, light armored reconnaissance and combat engineer operations across the Pacific to support the Marine Air-Ground Task Force.

The deactivation of this historic and unique unit comes with new strategies the Corps has begun to implement.

“Marine Corps Force 2025 is a strategy

the Marine Corps is working towards that provides additional operational capabilities to fight in future combat environments,” said Robinson, who used the term “creative destruction” when referring to the relocation of the battalion’s units to other commands. “I would like to give

my thanks to those who are currently serving and have served in the Combat Assault Battalion for their support, commitment and their contribution to our nation and to the 3rd Marine Division,” Robinson added.

PFC Dylan Hess, USMC

Marines with Combat Assault Bn, 3rdMarDiv, conduct a deactivation ceremony at Camp Courtney, MCB Camp Butler, Okinawa, Japan, Oct. 12. The battalion served in major conflicts since 1942, and its units will now be dispersed throughout the Division.



SGT HAILEY D. CLAY, USMC

ACMC—Gen Gary L. Thomas speaks to attendees at his promotion ceremony after pinning on a fourth star at the Home of the Commandants, Marine Barracks Washington, D.C., Oct. 2. Gen Thomas, a Marine aviator and former Deputy Commandant for Programs and Resources, is the new Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps and will serve as the second highest-ranking officer in the Corps.



LCPL D'ANGELO YANEZ, USMC

SPMAGTF Camp Named For Marine Hero

For years, Marines assigned to the Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force–Southern Command have deployed to a small compound of wooden huts on Soto Cano Air Base, Honduras. This semi-secluded area has been known for years as “Alpha Block,” but that recently changed with its recent renaming to Camp Manion, after First Lieutenant Travis Manion, who posthumously was awarded a Silver Star for drawing fire away from wounded Marines in Al Anbar Province, Iraq, in April 2007.

Early in their deployment, Marines from the logistics element of SPMAGTF–SC built a new gateway into the compound with a scarlet and gold sign that reads “Camp Manion.”

“This is the first SPMAGTF led by a logistics regiment, and 1stLt Manion was a logistics officer, so his role in his unit is near and dear to our mission here,” said Lieutenant Colonel Erich Bergiel, SPMAGTF–SC executive officer. “As Marines we like to make things our own and we’ve done that here by honoring a very worthy hero of our own.”

The Marine Corps is also known for its small size in comparison to other services, and one officer with the SPMAGTF had the honor of crossing paths with Manion.

“I replaced the good lieutenant as the

motor transport officer at 1st Recon Bn when I was a young lieutenant myself,” said Major Stephen Bartoszak, a logistics officer with SPMAGTF–SC. “All of his Marines became my Marines and I suggested we name the camp after him because of the lasting effect that he had on those Marines and on the Marine Corps as an institution.”

Now, the example Manion set for his Marines will live on as part of the Marine Corps tradition for every Marine and Sailor who serves as part of SPMAGTF–SC.

“Manion embodied leadership,” Bartoszak said. “His methods and quality of leadership makes him a great example for Marines of all grades and ranks to emulate. Having a whole camp named for him feels like a well-deserved recognition of a great Marine leader.”

The Marines of SPMAGTF–SC live and work out of Honduras to provide disaster relief, humanitarian assistance and crisis response to Central and South American countries.

SSgt Frans Labranche, USMC

Aboard USS *Wasp*, NCOs Complete Corporals Course

While underway in the South China Sea, Marines with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit completed the Corporals Course professional military education (PME) program aboard the amphibious

assault ship USS *Wasp* (LHD-1), Sept. 27.

The Corporals Course is unique to the Marine Corps and is part of the continuous professional development required of Marine leaders.

The course, which challenges Marines to push themselves physically and mentally, is typically three weeks long but is condensed into two weeks while deployed.

During the course, Marines with Battalion Landing Team, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines; Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 262 (Reinforced); Combat Logistics Battalion 31; and the 31st MEU Command Element learned about warfare, operational planning, tactical communications, sword and guidon manual, land navigation and small-unit leadership principles.

The lessons learned during the Corporals Course help junior noncommissioned officers (NCOs) learn and refine small-unit leadership principles, according to Sergeant Bradly Evenson, a faculty advisor for the Corporals Course and a rifleman with BLT 2/5.

“Corporals Course helps remind them of the basics of just being a Marine,” said Evenson. “If the Marines don’t know the basic concepts they’re not going to be able to lead their Marines properly. It all falls back to the basics.”

NCOs, the foundation of the Marine Corps’ leadership hierarchy, lead from the front and hold a special trust and



SSGT FRANS LABRANCHE, USMC

The newly renamed Camp Manion takes up a small corner of Soto Cano Air Base in Honduras, providing working space and housing for the Marines of SPMAGTF–SC, who are on call to provide disaster relief, humanitarian assistance and crisis response to Central and South American nations.



LCPL HANNAH HALL, USMC

Cpl Corinne W. Filippelli, an electronics analyst with the 31st MEU, receives a Corporals Course graduation certificate while underway in the South China Sea aboard USS Wasp (LHD-1), Sept. 27.

Fleming, a dog handler with the 31st MEU who participated in the course.

“As the backbone, we are here to enforce regulations and keep structure for junior Marines,” said Fleming. “We memorize the noncommissioned officers’ creed and live by it. We continue to challenge ourselves to our limits while also setting the proper example for other Marines.”

The Marines in the Corporals Course learned that as NCOs, they have to know their Marines, seek self-improvement, set the example, make sound decisions, be technically and tactically proficient, be responsible and seek responsibility, Fleming said.

“Corporals Course helped expand our knowledge,” said Fleming. “It gave us a better understanding of what being a good leader is. This course molded us into not only stronger NCOs, but better Marines.”

LCpl Hannah Hall, USMC



confidence—they are the “backbone” of the Corps, said Evenson. As the first link in most junior Marines’ leadership chain, corporals are expected to set the standard of both personal and professional conduct.

“NCOs play the role of the fighter-leader concept,” said Evenson. “We have to be the example.”

During the course, the Marines were given multiple lessons about leadership principles. One of the lessons was about ensuring tasks are understood, supervised and accomplished. This means inspecting what is expected, but ensuring that any task given to the Marines are correctly completed and executed, said Corporal Jessica

Crazy Caption Contest

Winner



CPL JASON JIMENEZ, USMC

“That’s the camouflage you’re going with?”

Submitted by:
Robert W. Armao
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LtCol Thomas Przybelski paddles his kayak near Asheville, N.C. The kayaking aphorism, “No matter how bad it gets, keep paddling,” was a constant reminder to keep moving forward in his recovery.

RESILIENCE

Story by

LtCol Thomas Przybelski, USMC
Photos courtesy of the author

I couldn't walk but I could stand, so I did when the Commandant of the Marine Corps pinned the Purple Heart onto my green sweatshirt. I was at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md. It was late October of 2006 and the Marines' wing, Ward 5 East, was full of casualties from Iraq. As he stood in front of me, General Michael Hagee could have said a lot of things to me, but what he did say was, “Keep leading Marines.” This was not a casual remark, as it would have been clear to him that I couldn't walk due to significant blast injuries to my legs and the loss of an eye. But I took it as an order from the Commandant and started coming back.

In recovering from injuries suffered in Fallujah in October 2006 I've learned a lot about my personal resilience. I hope Marines and Marine leaders can benefit from that experience. Family and friends were, of course, vital, but this story is about what Marines can do for each other and for themselves.

Getting evacuated from Iraq was a dark experience—literally dark—as I couldn't see anything for the first week following the blast and subsequent

firefight. I remember hazy scenes involving the fear of having nowhere to go as the camp's “Big Voice” alarm system announced, “Incoming! Incoming!” while I lay naked on a stretcher, a chaplain praying over me. The pain medications—morphine I assume—kept things spotty and at a distance.

The first stop outside Iraq was a four-day layover in Germany. The best part was petting a golden retriever that was

**I said I planned to get out
of the Marine Corps.**

**Given my injuries,
it seemed obvious that**

I could not stay.

**Without missing a beat,
he said, “No, you're not!”**

making the rounds as a comfort dog. Dogs aren't worried about what you look like or how broken you feel. Maybe I read too much into it, but there was amazing empathy in the dog's unconditional interest in me. It was going to be a long road back, but spending a few moments with that dog was the first step.

At Bethesda, my first Marine visitor

was Colonel Bob Petit. He had been my battalion commander the year prior and was then attending the Naval War College in Rhode Island. He flew down at his own expense to check on me and arrived the same day I was admitted. He walked into the room briskly, and without any attempt at small talk, asked me what I planned to do. I said I planned to get out of the Marine Corps. Given my injuries, it seemed obvious that I could not stay. Without missing a beat, he said, “No, you're not!” and I took another step.

In the hospital, I shared a room with Corporal Criddle, a feisty, funny Marine from my battalion who was wounded around the same time I was wounded. We joked easily about the war, but mostly about the food, the smell of the ward and the surgeries we were both getting wheeled out for every couple days. He had a couple of friends from home who were kind enough to spend hours each day laughing with us and treating us like we were normal. We certainly were not at the time, but their kindness and beauty—in the full sense of the word—helped carry us forward.

My favorite regular visitor was Col David Berger, my regimental commander. He would meet me in my room and together we would walk the corridors of Bethesda. Mostly, he listened to me talk, when I felt like it, about how the mission in Fallujah was going, and otherwise walked quietly beside me as I crutched along. I remember feeling valued and respected by his presence.

After about a month at Bethesda and some convalescent leave, I was back at 8th Marine Regiment headquarters at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C. It was odd being back. I realized that nothing was hard but everything was harder. Some days were better than others. Sometimes one minute was better than the last minute. I was learning a little each day and each week about what I could still do and what would need to change. I learned I could still have a driver's license.

I picked up somewhere that physical activity was both the best preventative and best cure for depression, so I started walking as much as I could. Sleep was critical, and I made sure I was getting enough, which is something I still do today. I heard at one point about research linking boating to speedier mental recovery—it was something about the need to maintain balance. Having been a long-time ocean kayaker, I started paddling again around Camp Lejeune

despite the late-season weather. Getting back on the water also reminded me of the kayaking aphorism, “No matter how bad it gets, keep paddling.” In a boat, forward momentum allows for steering, improves stability and puts bad water behind you. This holds true in life: forward momentum is vital.

Throughout this period, I developed a profound respect for the value of hope. I found hope in reading about cutting-edge medical research. It seems clear to me that the techniques used to treat battlefield injuries are undergoing a significant transition. Rather than pursuing increasingly refined damage control, they are moving toward true reconstruc-

tion and regeneration. I was, unsurprisingly, most interested in research into vision recovery. That exploration led me to a retired Marine, Rich Godfrey, who worked at a vision research institute affiliated with Harvard Medical School. He spent a long time talking with me and I have been making contributions—I think of them as investments in my future—ever since. I don’t think I’ll have to “live with this forever,” as some medical professionals seemed to feel the need to explain to me. Instead, I have considerable hope in being cured. Finding hope in the future has given me something to navigate toward during tough times.

Within my first few days back at the regiment, Col Berger asked to see me. When I went into his office, he asked me, simply, what I wanted to do. Having thought a long time about the Commandant’s charge, I told him I wanted to go back to Iraq to my team. He didn’t ask why. Instead, he stared into his hands for a while. I like to think that in another era, he would have been slowly packing tobacco into a pipe to give himself time to think. Finally he said, “An officer has to be able to shoot, move, and communicate. How are you doing on those?” I said, “Well, I can communicate.” He sent me off with instructions to come back when I could run a first-class Physical Fitness Test and re-qualify on rifle and pistol. I left determined but uncertain if I could do either.

Although going to work at 8th Marine Regiment, I was assigned to the newly created Wounded Warrior Battalion under its first commander, Lieutenant Colonel Tim Maxwell. Prior to deployment, I had been living in the officer quarters that became the unit’s first home and had been unceremoniously kicked out of the barracks when it moved in. Six months later, I was back

Przybelski, (below) on the roof of an Iraqi battalion headquarters (inset) was wounded in Fallujah, Iraq, in 2006 while serving with 8th Marines.





Prior to being wounded in Fallujah, Iraq, Przybelski trained near Taji, Iraq, in 2006.

in my old room as an official member of the battalion. The barracks was an important base for me for getting to follow-on medical appointments and had a good gym. I kept running and lifting and was able to get the Physical Fitness Test score I needed within a month.

Shooting was harder. I have one eye and the vision in that one is not quite correctable to 20/20. I could at least still shoot right-handed with the pistol and was able to shoot expert on the first range-day I could find. With a rifle, I had to learn to shoot left-handed in order to see through the optic properly. To do

With a rifle, I had to learn to shoot left-handed in order to see through the optic properly. To do that, I needed to relearn weapons handling.

that, I needed to relearn weapons handling and did—methodically getting the movements to feel OK, if not natural. By the middle of December, I was able to qualify with a rifle. I wasn't the expert shot I had been, but I felt good about taking another step.

I went back to see Col Berger and let him know I was ready. He made good on his word. Three months after being evacuated, I was on a plane back to Iraq. It was much longer before I really felt right again but getting back to Iraq, to the advisor team I had left, and the mission, was important for me.

Since then, I've tried to keep getting stronger in whatever ways I can. I ran the Marine Corps Marathon on the one-year anniversary of my injuries and the John F. Kennedy 50-miler the year after that. I've deployed again for a year in Afghanistan. I've been in other firefights and blast zones. I've done recruiting duty and earned a master's degree at Naval War College. My injuries are a challenge every day, but I am not defined by those limitations.

During my time at Bethesda, the Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and his wife, Joyce, were reliable visitors to Ward 5 East. After a talk in my room one day, the Secretary had already turned to leave and his wife, pausing for a moment, said quietly to me, "Where do we find such great Americans?"

Humbled, I said, "Ma'am, I'm just an average Marine." Average Marines are great Americans. Marines can come back from incredible challenges themselves and can help each other do the same.

Author's bio: LtCol Thomas Przybelski is an infantry officer who previously served as the Inspector-Instructor for 2nd Battalion, 24th Marines, 23rd Marine Regiment in Chicago, Illinois. He has deployed multiple times under both Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

Helpful Steps on the Long Road Back

There are things you can do for Marines when it's not your turn to be the casualty.

First, be there for an injured or ill Marine. It's not easy walking into hospital rooms to visit Marines without knowing what their injuries are and where distraught family members are waiting. For me, even the peculiar smell of Ward 5 East made it hard to go back there, but I pushed through it. I've held the hand of a Marine while he died. Do your part when the hand reaches out to you.

Secondly, believe in the Marine. Challenge and expect Marines to move forward, and help them rebuild a sense of belonging. Some of the most terrifying times and the times when I needed to grow the most were when I realized that my leaders had not lowered their expectations for me. Standing in high schools on recruiting duty a year after being injured was an exceptional challenge for me, but the District Commander, Colonel Brian Manthe, had made it clear that failing to make mission was not an option. So, I made mission. Many more times than I've recounted here, another Marine has believed in me more than I did in myself. Do that for each other.

For Marines, when you are the casualty, keep going! Keep paddling, keep learning, keep substituting healthy for unhealthy choices, sleep well, run as far and as fast as you can, find something to hope for, and always pet a dog when you can.

LtCol Thomas Przybelski

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Conflict on the Korean Peninsula—1871

By MSgt Jeff Dacus, USMC (Ret)

Tensions are high in Korea and a Korean leader has cut his country off from the rest of the world. He threatens his neighbors and even kidnaps Americans. Some die in his custody. Allied with China, Korea defies the United States when its ships cruise close to its coastline. Finally the strain is too much, and in the ensuing violence, many Americans and Koreans die.

Is it 2018? No, the violent encounter

described took place in 1871, as the result of similar complex political tensions.

The country of Korea, spelled “Corea” in the reports of the time, deserved the title of “Hermit Kingdom.” Attempts were made on several occasions to establish diplomatic and economic connections with the Koreans, but ended in no tangible results although as early as 1853, an American ship traded in Korea and Koreans assisted shipwrecked American sailors.

A change of leadership in the Asian

country in 1864 brought violence on foreigners and the few native Christian converts. In 1866, France launched a punitive expedition against Korean forts on Ganghwa Island along the Selee River but their efforts ended in defeat. Russia also made demands on Korea, which were rebuffed without violence.

Amid all of these events, an American merchant ship, *SS General Sherman*, sailed up the Taedong River in July of 1866 in an effort to start a trade relationship with the isolated Koreans. Over a period





Inset: Naval officers hold a council of war aboard USS *Colorado*, off the coast of Korea in June 1871 prior to the Korean expedition. The expedition's commander, RADM John Rodgers, is pictured at the far right leaning over the table.

Below: This photo shows USS *Monocacy*, left, and USS *Palos*, right, in the Han River, in Korea, May 1871. (USN photo)

USN





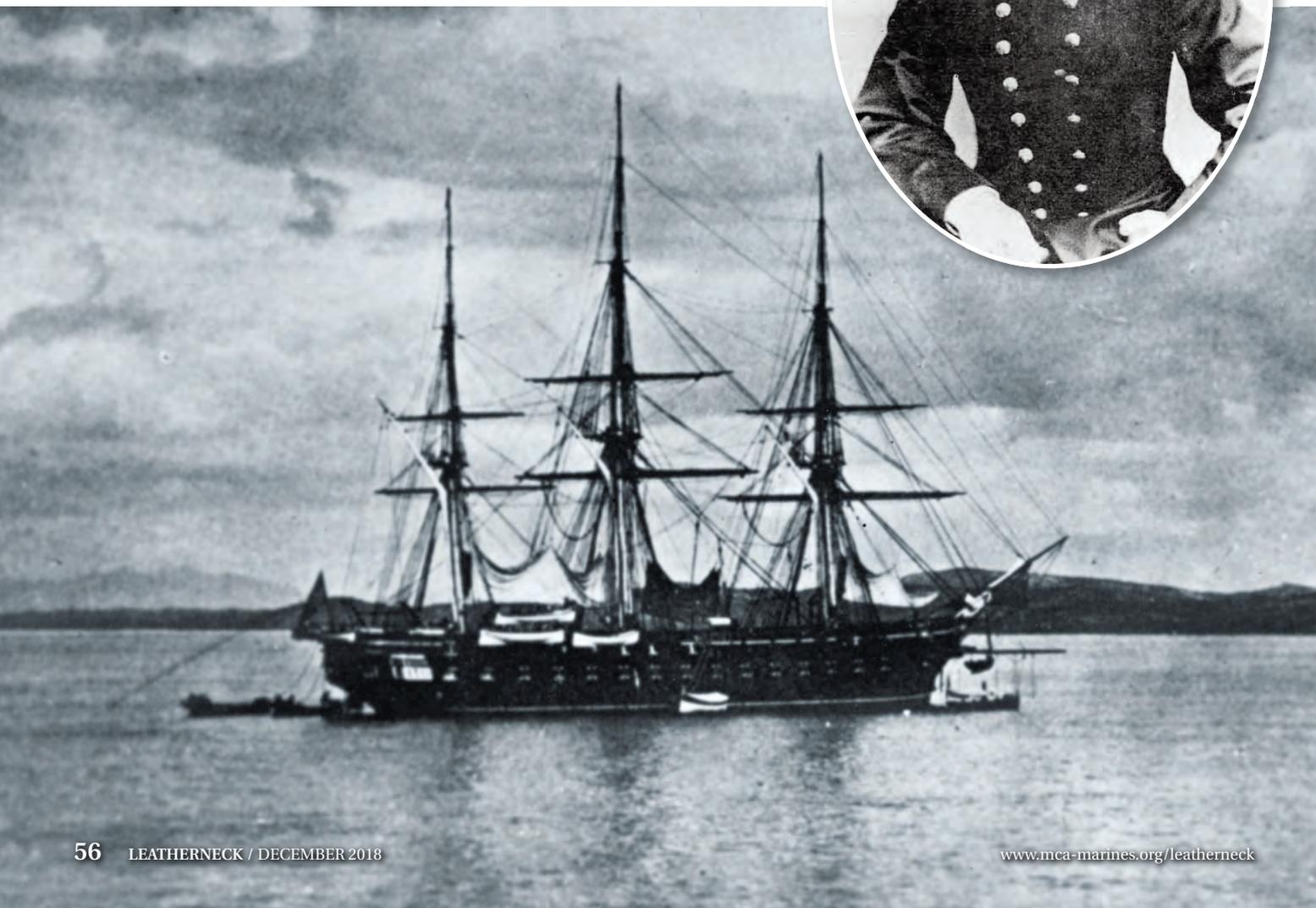
Left: Frederick F. Low, right, U.S. Minister to China, Edward Drew, and interpreters on board USS *Colorado* off Korea in 1871.

Below: McLane Tilton, pictured here as a lieutenant colonel later in his career, commanded the Marines involved in the attacks on the Korean forts. (USN photo)

USN



Below: USS *Colorado* anchored in the Han River in Korea during the Korean expedition in 1871. (USN photo)



of two weeks, the crew of the ship—four Americans and 16 Chinese or Malaysian crewmen—managed to alienate and insult the locals. In return, the locals refused to engage in friendly relations with the foreigners. Misunderstandings led to violence and the ship was burned, killing the entire crew. Some were beaten to death after swimming ashore from the wrecked vessel.

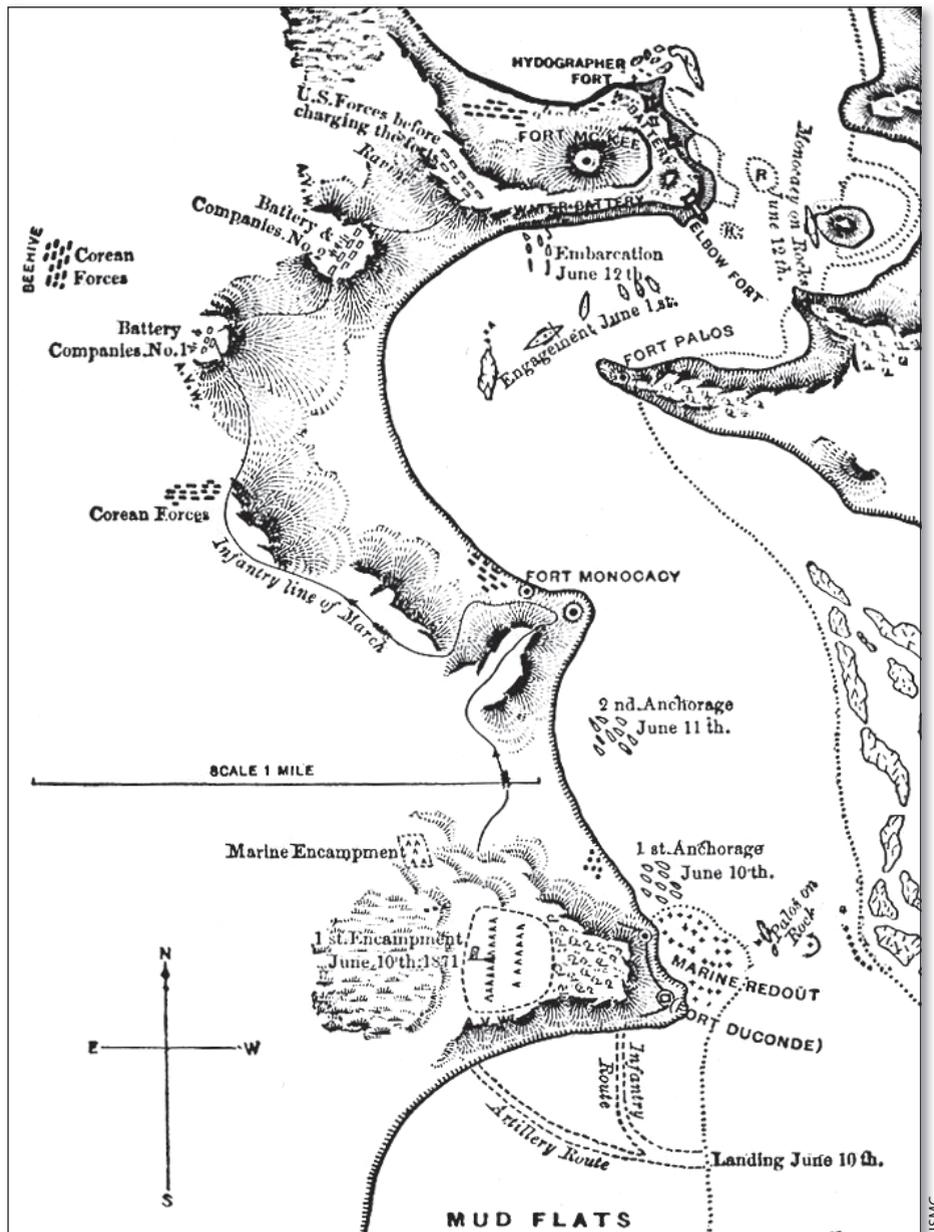
An attempt to obtain information about the disappearance of *General Sherman* in 1868 resulted in the news of the total loss of ship and crew. The U.S. government made the decision to open up formal trade relations with Korea to avoid further problems. In 1871, Rear Admiral John Rogers set sail for Korea with five ships: the flagship *USS Colorado*, and *USS Alaska*, *USS Monocacy*, *USS Benecia*, and *USS Palos*. Also aboard the flagship was the U.S. Minister to China, Frederick Low.

The ships arrived off the coast of Korea on May 23, 1871, and began charting and sounding the waters off Inchon to improve navigational information. Moving farther north, between Ganghwa Island and the mainland, the little fleet was met by some lower-ranking officials of the Korean government. Low sent his secretary to meet the Korean delegation and indicated that he wished to deal with higher-ranking bureaucrats, but he advised the three Koreans that the Americans were there peacefully, explaining the reasons for the visit. His secretary, Edward Drew, informed the Koreans that the ships would continue their navigational work and the Koreans departed.

On June 1, one day after the meeting, several small vessels moved farther into the Selee River, or Ganghwa Straits, to take soundings and navigational information. *Palos* and *Monocacy* followed the little boats with the bulk of the small fleet anchored out of the straits due to the shallow depth of the water.

Five launches, one from each ship, and a steam cutter from *Colorado*, turned a corner into the river that brought the island's defending forts into view. Along the coastline was a series of forts, connected by a stone wall. As the launches continued their work, a single cannon fired as if serving as a signal. Immediately after, guns from the forts as well as hidden batteries opened fire. *Monocacy* and *Palos* moved up and returned fire, allowing the smaller craft to withdraw and ending the engagement.

RADM Rogers decided to launch a punitive expedition but Minister Low convinced him to give the Koreans 10 days to explain their actions and apologize. Water conditions would also improve in



a few days, allowing the entire fleet to engage the forts if necessary.

Ten days later, and with no apology, RADM Rogers ordered a landing party to attack the Korean forts, instructing them to "... take and destroy the forts which have fired on our vessels, and to hold them long enough to demonstrate our ability to punish such offenses at pleasure."

Palos pulled a group of small boats containing the landing party, nearly 700 Sailors and Marines, to a point on the coast away from direct enemy fire. Unfortunately, the ground was "unfavorable to [their] purpose" consisting of soft knee-deep mud. Nevertheless, the Marines, 109 officers and men loaded down with 100 rounds of ammunition and two days' rations, struggled through the ooze until they reached solid ground and set up a defensive line. The main body of Sailors followed them, covered by fire from the guns of *Monocacy*.

Leading the Marines was Captain McLane Tilton of *USS Colorado*. Born in Maryland, Tilton was 34 when the fleet sailed into Korean waters. He was a veteran of the Civil War and had spent time onboard ships and on barracks duty. After the war he was commander of the Marine Detachment at the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis. Typical of the time period, Tilton had been a captain for nearly seven years when the fleet deployed to Korea.

The Marines formed a skirmish line and trotted forward to take the first fort, called Choji, in the flank. They were not fired upon and found the fort to be unoccupied when they entered. *Monocacy's* guns had shattered the walls and sent the defenders fleeing. The landing party destroyed stores and equipment found in the fort, tore down the walls and pushed the cannon over the parapet down the hillside. After a short advance, the Marines were recalled in



the late afternoon and the entire force set up camp near the captured fortifications. The ruined fort was renamed “Marines’ Redoubt.”

The next morning, the landing party moved out against a second fort with Tilton and the Marines in the vanguard as skirmishers. The fort, called Dukjin, had been softened up by the gunfire of *Monocacy* and the leathernecks erupted into another deserted bastion. The Sailors and Marines tore the fort apart and dismantled the guns. They renamed the bastion “Fort Monocacy” in honor of the supporting vessel.

A third fort, called Kwangsonchin by the Koreans and “the Citadel” by the Americans, would prove to be much tougher than the others. The terrain was difficult. Tilton described it as

“Indescribable, resembling a sort of ‘chopped sea,’ of immense hills and deep ravines lying in every conceivable position.”

Fatigued by the difficult advance and harassed by intermittent musket fire, the Marines and Sailors stopped behind a small hill about 150 yards from the walls of the position. Lieutenant Commander Casey, the overall ground commander, ordered the advance and the Marines went over the top of the hill and raced toward the fort. Howitzers, dragged through the dense foliage and difficult terrain, fired over the heads and to the sides of the Marines as they broke into the clear on the approach to the fort. One of the guns drove off flanking parties of Koreans.

The Korean fire intensified as the Marines came into view and the fire was

kept up until the Marines were nearly in the fort. The first casualty of the day was Private Dennis Hanrahan, felled by a bullet outside the walls of the fort. As the Marines climbed the parapets, the Koreans began throwing rocks down on them, then used wooden clubs and flintlock muskets when the Marines topped the walls. RADM Rogers noted the Koreans “... fighting with the greatest fury.” Tilton agreed, saying the Koreans “... fought like tigers!”

Rocks were no match for the bayonets of the Marines who swarmed into the fort, accompanied by eager masses of bluejackets. Navy Lieutenant Hugh McKee and Private Hugh Purvis were the first over the wall. McKee was wounded as he crossed the parapet and killed as he fell into the fort, shot and stabbed to



Left: Marines and Sailors stand atop Fort Deokjin, renamed Fort Monocacy, after its capture on June 10, 1871.

Below: A scene at Fort McKee just after its capture by the Navy landing party, June 11, 1871. The fort was taken during the 1871 Korean expedition. In the foreground are two of the 243 Koreans killed in action. (USN photo)



Below: Sailors and Marines on the banks of the Han River, Korea, June 1871.





death. A Sailor fell amidst the swarms of Koreans and Private John Coleman fought his way through the mass of fighting to rescue the man. His rifle knocked from his hands, Private Michael McNamara grabbed the musket from an oncoming Korean, wrenched it away from the man and proceeded to use it as a club to kill him. Another Marine, Private Michael Owens, was shot but fought on despite his inability to stand.

The leader of the defenders, General Eo Jae-yeon, tried to rally his men but was shot and killed by Private James Dougherty. Capt Tilton, Corporal Charles Brown and Pvt Purvis dashed through the melee and tore down a large yellow

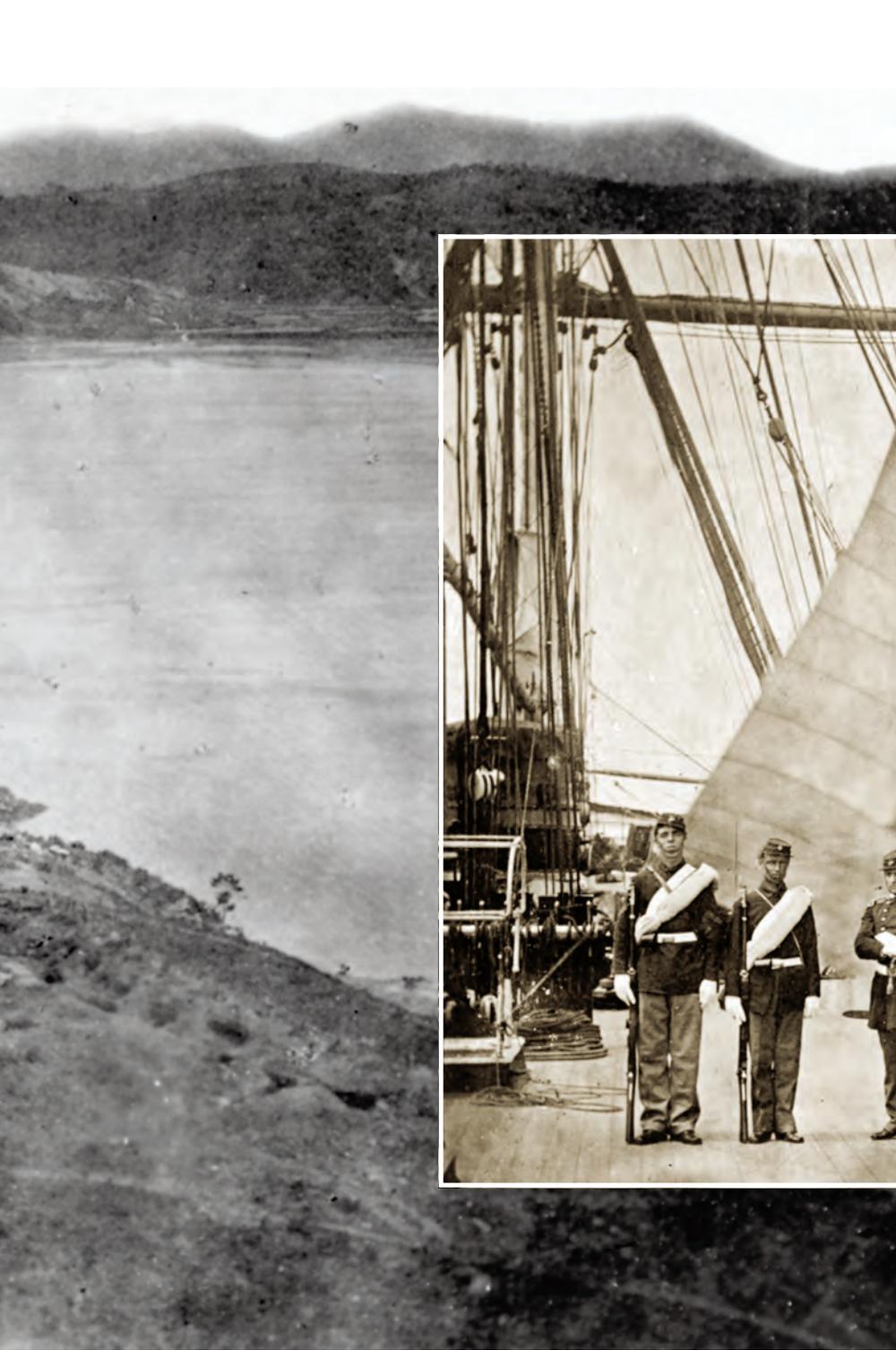
flag—about 12 feet by 12 feet—the symbol of Eo Jae-yon. Carpenter Cyrus Hayden planted the American flag and the surviving Koreans fled, leaving behind 243 bodies. Three Americans, including one Marine, were killed, and 10, including another Marine, were wounded.

After spending the day tearing down the forts, dismantling the gun carriages, and pushing the gun tubes into the sea, the landing force retreated to the landing point and was withdrawn the following day. Tilton recalled the futility of the mission: “Our mission to Korea has been a perfect failure; they won’t have anything to do with us, not even the fisherman. The local authorities refuse to send our letters to

the King, and all are returned to us on the end of a pole stuck up on the beach, where we send a boat for them.”

The Koreans did not respond to any overtures by Low but also made no threats or military movements toward the fleet. Twenty wounded prisoners were offered as bargaining chips to initiate negotiations but the Koreans told the Americans to keep the prisoners. The fleet remained in the area until July 3 and then set sail for China.

The “Hermit Kingdom” returned to its shell. A treaty of trade was finally signed in 1882 but the Japanese made implementation impossible when they took over Korea in 1905. They burned



Left: Elbow Fort is one of the defenses on the Han River. The photo was taken from Fort McKee, shortly after its capture on June 11, 1871.



Inset: Cpl Charles Brown, left, and Pvt Hugh Purvis, center, with Capt McLane Tilton aboard USS Colorado, off Korea in June 1971. Brown and Purvis were awarded the MOH for their actions during the fighting.

the Korean copy of the treaty in the street.

RADM Rogers praised the efforts of the Marines in his report, writing: "To Captain Tilton of the USS *Colorado* and his [Marines] belongs the honor of the first landing and last leaving the shore, in leading the advance on the march, in entering the forts and in acting as skirmishers; chosen as the advanced guard on account of their steadiness and discipline and looked to with confidence in case of difficulty, their whole behavior on the march and in the assault proved that it was not misplaced." In particular, he pointed out the leadership of his Marines. "The officers of the [Marines] were Lieutenants Breese, Mullany, and

McDonald, who were always to be found in the front." Tilton also took the time to point out those enlisted men deserving of special consideration. Six Marines and nine Sailors received the Medal of Honor.

As an interesting aside, Tilton found that many of the 1,600 rounds expended by the Marines failed to fire. He investigated and pointed out in his report that cartridges packed in "paper" boxes failed to fire at a rate of about 25 percent compared to those packed in wooden boxes.

McLane Tilton remained with the Asiatic Fleet until 1873. He served on a variety of shore assignments and sea duty aboard USS *Trenton*, retiring as a lieutenant colonel in 1897.

The Marines who landed at Inchon in 1950 were only a few miles from the scene of the first Marine landings in 1871. Sadly, despite years of conflict and stalemate, the situation in Korea today, as in 1871 and after the armistice in 1953, has not reached a satisfying or complete conclusion. McLane Tilton would find the situation very familiar.

Author's bio: MSgt Jeff Dacus, USMCR (Ret), lives in Vancouver, Wash., where he teaches 8th grade history. His 23 years as a Marine include a combat deployment during Operation Desert Storm as a tank platoon sergeant.

Books Reviewed

FIRST TO GO: THE HISTORY OF THE USMC COMBAT CORRESPONDENTS ASSOCIATION. By Jack T. Paxton. Published by Saint Johann Press. 366 pages. \$31.50 MCA Members. \$35 Regular Price.

In 1987, at the request of the then-governing board of the United States Marine Corps Combat Correspondents Association (USMCCCA), a book, “Last to Know, First to Go,” was published. The book, edited by Gary Cameron, became the Combat Correspondents Association’s unofficial history. Now the updated volume, “First to Go,” is available to those interested in the rich history and personal stories of combat reporters up through and including those who serve in the present-day war on terrorism.

Marine combat correspondents, i.e. USMCCCA writers, artists, photographers, broadcasters, telecasters, cinematographers, and public relations personnel, are tasked with bringing public attention to the activities of the United States Marine Corps in peace and war. They are specialists, and their exploits are the stuff of legends. The product of the very same hard-hitting Marine Corps training as the leathernecks they cover, these Marines are assigned to report the activities of Marines, wherever they serve. The combat correspondent’s mission is to report the Marine Corps story, while underscoring the value of our beloved Marine Corps to the American taxpayer. Additionally, their splendid work helps ensure that the Corps continues to attract and recruit the best men and woman of each new generation.

As far back as 1911, the Marine Corps realized the need for publicity; therefore

a professional public relations bureau was established. By World War I, the exploits of our gallant Marines captured the imagination of the country and the world. A rigid policy of providing the public with the truth about our Corps served to help write the textbook on the establishment of a standard for the future military code of ethics. The Marines perfected the art of publicizing their deeds, while other services strive to emulate the Corps’ public relations efforts.

Today’s Marine combat correspondent can trace his or her pioneering history to World War II and Brigadier General Robert L. Denig. The general put the challenge to all future combat correspondents when he declared: “Give most of your time and attention to the enlisted man, what he says, thinks and does.”

Legendary reporters of the war in the Pacific had impacts far beyond the Corps. Jim Lucas’ report on the desperate battle for Tarawa was printed in newspapers all across the country. Lou Lowery’s photo of the flag raising taken on Mount Suribachi will be quickly recognized by Americans for generations to come.

World war also brought innovations to the field including combat art and broadcasting. By war’s end, the primary consideration for the postwar publicity centered around a continuous recruiting effort, and the buildup and development of the modern Marine Corps Reserve.

Then came Korea. Many combat correspondents found themselves involved in a combat situation and fought right alongside fellow Marines, often assisting the wounded. The mission came first, and the story would come later. Numerous combat correspondents distinguished

themselves during the Chosin Reservoir breakout and beyond.

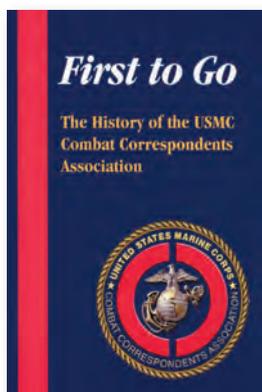
From August 1953 until America became involved in the Vietnam War, there were dozens of engagements involving U.S. Marines. Most of these events were reported by combat correspondents as attached reporters, or by a unit’s internal information specialist.

Early in the American commitment to Vietnam, stories and photos by combat correspondents were picked up by civilian newspapers and *Leatherneck* magazine. Typical of the new age “grunt-writers-photographers” was Dale Dye. Dye recalled what a buck Sergeant Douglas Tyrone Bland told him about the combat correspondent’s job: “It was truly a freewheeling gig,” he said, “assuming a person had a vivid imagination, a modicum of talent, some facility with the English language and enough tenacity to endure the agony of requesting a change of MOS, you just couldn’t beat the ISO deal as a way to experience the Corps ... and see something other than the back of another guy’s pack.” And, as the America experience winded down, who could ever forget the powerful photographic coverage of “Operation Frequent Wind,” as the last Marines were evacuated from the U.S. Embassy in Saigon.

During America’s war on terrorism, Major Megan McClung became the first female media affairs officer killed in Operation Iraqi Freedom. She was killed by a roadside bomb in Ramadi, Iraq on Dec. 6, 2006.

Chapter 8, “*Leatherneck Magazine and the Marine Corps Combat Correspondents Association*,” was skillfully written by former *Leatherneck* Editor, Colonel Walter Ford, USMC (Ret). Ford states that the USMCCCA and *Leatherneck* magazine have been joined at the hip since the USMCCCA’s founding in WW II. *Leatherneck*—Magazine of Marines, now in print for more than 100 years, was first published in 1917 as *The Quantico Leatherneck*.

The USMCCCA has come a long way in its mission to effectively represent the Marine Corps to the world. The Combat Correspondents Association has an active foundation, awards distinguished performance awards, and provides scholarships and grants to deserving students and researchers. The association provides training, symposiums and other related activities for our active-duty Marines at



Does your Marine already have plenty of power tools, socks, and ties?

Give them a gift with meaning while supporting today’s Marines. Buy a gift membership in MCA&F and your Marine will receive *Leatherneck*—Magazine of the Marines.

www.mca-marines.org



an annual conference takes place in the fall of each year. The association's website is: www.usmccca.org.

"First to Go," is an excellent read for those with an interest in the hard work performed by our dictated combat correspondents.

Bob Loring

WAR ANIMALS: THE UNSUNG HEROES OF WORLD WAR II. By Robin Hutton. Published by Regnery History. 466 pages. \$27 MCA Members. \$29.99 Regular Price.

Robin Hutton, the author of "Sgt. Reckless: America's War Horse," now turns her writing skills to recounting the heartwarming stories of some of the most unusual heroes of World War II. The new book, "War Animals," casts a bright light on a host of furry and feathered animals that served the Allied cause during the war.

In 1943, during the Second World War, the British veterinary association PDSA (People's Dispensary for Sick Animals) introduced a new military decoration which honored selected "heroic animals" who served the Allied cause. Every animal Robin Hutton included in this book has been awarded the coveted Dickin Medal. This prestigious medal is the highest medal for gallantry an animal can achieve for acts of bravery in battle. Although the Dickin Medal was initially a British award, some of the WW II recipients include animals born and bred in the United States.

The book recounts the stories of various English war dogs that performed critical duties including bomb detection and helped locate victims buried in rubble during the London Blitz.

Many countries employed dogs within their militaries during WW II but America was initially unprepared to use them. A civilian dog breeder, Arlene Erlanger, helped ignite the push toward mobilization by creating, Dogs for Defense, Inc. By January 1942, the volunteer organization recruited America's first K-9 Corps for use by the Army which soon became a vital element of the U.S. Quartermaster Corps.

Americans contributed by volunteering their pets and more than 10,500 dogs were accepted for military service. Dogs helped guard American military bases and war plants, and they proved to be excellent guardians of America's vast coastline.

Authorized by no less than Lieutenant General Thomas Holcomb, 17th Commandant of the Marine Corps, a Marine Corps dog training facility was established at Camp Lejeune, N.C.

The first American dogs utilized during combat war served with the 2nd Marine Raider Battalion. On Nov. 1, 1943, the

"Devil Dogs" hit the beaches of Bougainville in the Solomon Islands. Three German Shepherds, Caesar, Jack, Thor, and a well-trained Doberman named Andy, stood out. The dogs were hoisted over the side of USS *George Clymer* (AP-57) and lowered into Higgins boats for the trip to the beach. Caesar is credited with being the first dog to carry a message in combat. He made nine official runs carrying messages through intense sniper fire but was one of the three dogs wounded during the ruthless struggle for the jungle island. On D+2 Caesar detected the approach of the enemy. He launched out of the foxhole at the intruders but was shot and in the shoulder and hip by the enemy. Lost in the bush, the dog handlers frantically followed the blood trail until they located Caesar. The National Museum of the Marine Corps has a bronze statue of Caesar standing guard on display to this day.

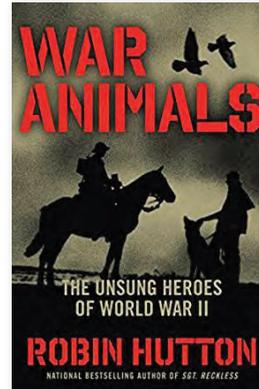
Hooved animals were needed to help supply the needs at the front. Horses and mules were extremely helpful when transporting supplies, ammunition and

casualties over harsh terrain where wheeled, or tracked, vehicles could not easily move. Pigeons carried critical messages between military commanders. Oh yes, even cats joined the fight. Robin Hutton also includes the charming account of Able Seaman Simon, also known as, "The Captain's Cat!"

Collectively, the true tales of this fascinating period in our history contain many fun stories of these oft-overlooked furry and feathered heroes. The author cheerfully announces that a national War Animals Museum is in the planning stages. The museum will feature animal heroes who, "despite having had no say-so over their service, bravely and tirelessly assisted American Armed Forces." Information on the museum is available online at WarAnimals.com. So grab a copy of *War Animals & Grow!*

Bob Loring

Author's bio: Readers will recognize Marine veteran "Red Bob" Loring as a frequent Leatherneck reviewer, who has had more than 100 book reviews published in the magazine. 🐾



The Recruit & The Squirrel

by Joseph P. Putkowski
Illustrated by Toby Mikle

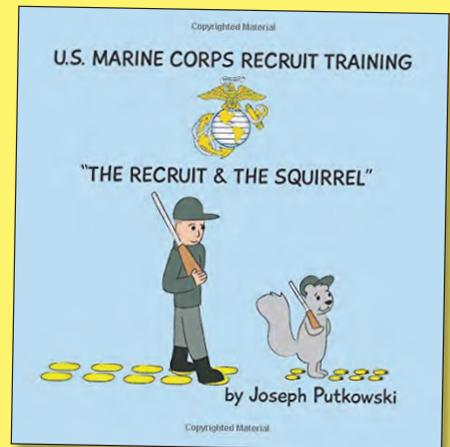
"The Recruit and The Squirrel" follows a young United States Marine Corps recruit through his boot camp journey. As he navigates this new phase in his life, he finds comfort in an unlikely friend who helps him get through tough times.

Purchase Your Copy Today!
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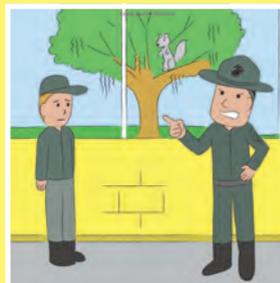
\$12.99

Paperback: 26 pages

Dimensions: 8.5 x 0.1 x 8.5 inches



A children's book



EXCERPT

Inside the barracks I am standing on the red line at attention. I am looking straight ahead out a window, watching a squirrel playing in the tree. I think to myself, "I wish I could trade places with that squirrel. This drill instructor is hard as nails".

Passing the Word

Compiled by Sara W. Bock



CPL SARAH STEGALL, USMC

Marine recruit Dillon Carroll runs with ammunition cans during the “maneuver under fire” portion of the CFT at MCRD Parris Island, Feb. 15. In 2019, the rest period between CFT events will decrease from five minutes to three minutes, making the CFT more challenging.

Fitness Test Changes Coming In 2019

On Sept. 24, Headquarters Marine Corps released a Marine Administrative Message (MARADMIN) announcing three major changes to the standard Physical Fitness Test (PFT) and Combat Fitness Test (CFT). The changes will take effect Jan. 1, 2019, for the PFT, and July 1, 2019, for the CFT, and are intended to increase the Corps’ overall physical fitness and combat effectiveness.

The first change will be to the rest times between CFT events. A three-minute rest period will take the place of the current five-minute rest period, decreasing the time it takes to complete the test as well as making the CFT more challenging.

The minimum passing score for both the PFT and CFT has also changed. Marines need to meet more than the minimum requirement in at least one event in order to receive a passing score. The minimum passing score will be 150 for both tests.

The third change involves the minimum and maximum number of pull-ups for each age group of female Marines. After two years of evaluating data, the Corps has concluded that female Marines continue to increase in their pull-up propensity and average number of pull-up repetitions. All aspects of the general fitness tests will continue to be evaluated and appropriate adjustments will be made where required.

This announcement is part of a larger, ongoing institutional effort to modernize the force and help Marines become more combat credible in lethality and readiness.

In addition to announcing these changes, Training and Education Command will be training more Force Fitness Instructors for assignment throughout the Corps. These trainers will assist commanders in more rapidly elevating their unit fitness levels and helping prepare Marines for the new fitness changes.

“Every aspect of our general fitness testing has been reevaluated and looked at, and the ultimate aim is to make it as

challenging as possible for Marines, but still test their overall fitness,” said Colonel Stephen Armes, the director of the Marine Corps Force Fitness Division. “We’ve increased the standards. Although scores may dip a little, Marines will respond to the challenge to get their numbers back up. It’s going to make the Marines more lethal and ready for combat,” said Armes.

For more details, see MARADMIN 539/18.

LCpl Marcos Alvarado, USMC

Summit Provides Career Tools, Resources to Military Spouses

The National Military Spouse Network (NMSN), an organization that supports the professional and personal growth of America’s military spouses, hosted its Capital Military Spouse Career Summit, presented by USAA, in Springfield, Va., Oct. 12-13.

The summit featured a slate of nationally recognized speakers including Nancy Belmont, CEO of Vessence Corporation, and Brooke Arnold Robinson, an Air Force veteran and former military White House social aide. The two-day event focused on a wide range of topics important to military spouses, from active duty to civilian life, as well as companies and organizations looking to reach military spouses.

The first day focused on entrepreneurship and creating connections while the second day offered guidance on building a “career spouse tool kit.”

“Programs such as the Military Spouse Career Summits provide opportunities for military spouses to grow their networks, resources and personal brand,” said



GARRETT HOPPIN PHOTOGRAPHY

Marine spouse MJ Boice, right, and Army spouse Tatyana Ray, left, were among the attendees at the NMSN Capital Military Spouse Career Summit in Springfield, Va., Oct. 12-13.

Maggie Hahn, military advocacy director at USAA and military spouse. “Too often, the career challenges military spouses face are overshadowed by the other challenges of military life.”

The October summit was the second such career and entrepreneurial program presented by NMSN in 2018. For the first time, the organization presented two career conferences in one year, the first of which was held in Colorado Springs, Colo., in June.

“It’s no secret that being a Marine spouse is challenging, but solution-focused organizations like NMSN allow us to secure our careers as we secure the home front,” said M.J. Boice, a Marine spouse who attended the summit.

The summits provide career-focused military spouses with an opportunity to develop their professional and life skills and grow connections with like-minded spouses in a dynamic, hands-on environment that connects them with business leaders from around the country, entrepreneurs and nationally recognized industry experts who discuss and examine a wide range of hot-button issues relevant to military spouses. The two-day events are designed to educate, mentor and inspire military spouses in all stages of military life and in their careers, from active duty to transitioning to civilian life. In addition, the events are an important way for companies and educational institutions to connect directly with the military spouse community.

Founded in 2010, the National Military Spouse Network delivers ongoing personal and professional development for military spouses by providing quality content, mentoring, networking opportunities and resources, including a monthly newsletter and a free biannual digital magazine. NMSN creates a community of military spouse professionals, business, academics and media to share expertise and craft innovative solutions on both balancing a viable career with the military lifestyle and laying the foundation for a successful career post-military life. For more information, visit www.nationalmilitaryspousenetwork.org.

Laura Liebeck

As Wildfire Approaches, Young Dependent Assists Evacuation Efforts

During a “National Night Out” event at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., Oct. 2, the Camp Pendleton Fire Department recognized 11-year-old Gavin Zeek with a certificate for his actions during a July 6 wildfire that threatened the South De Luz housing area on the base.

A series of wildfires prompted the base



CPL DYLAN CHAGNON, USMC

Gavin Zeek and his family attend a National Night Out event at the De Luz Community Center, MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., Oct. 2. During the event, Zeek was recognized by the Camp Pendleton Fire Department for assisting his neighbors during a wildfire evacuation in July.

to issue a mandatory evacuation, and Zeek took it upon himself to alert his neighbors to the approaching danger and help them gather their belongings so they could evacuate safely.

“I was evacuating a lot of our residents during the fire, and it was said to me by several residents that a young man was knocking on doors and helping strap children into their seats,” said John Lopez, maintenance manager of the De Luz housing area. “While he was shaken and scared, he was still helping his friends and their families make it out safe.”

This was not the first wildfire Zeek and his family experienced during their time living on Camp Pendleton. He said he

recalled the anxiety he faced as a younger child when a similar event occurred, which inspired him to rush to his neighbors’ aid.

The Pendleton Complex Fire ultimately burned more than 1,600 acres. As firefighters with the Camp Pendleton Fire Department successfully pushed the fire away from both housing areas before it could cause any damage, residents were allowed to return home the following day.

“I was amazed at the fact that he took charge and decided to help people—save lives even,” Lopez said of Zeek. “You can’t put it into words ... it goes without being said that he is a local hero.”

Cpl Dylan Chagnon, USMC



Major General Lawrence H. Livingston

Major General Lawrence H. Livingston, 77, who was awarded the Navy Cross and the Silver Star for his bravery and leadership under fire during the Vietnam War, died Sept. 28, in Bonsall, Calif.

“MajGen Livingston was an incredible leader and teacher who shaped my entire life and career as a Marine,” said Colonel Shawn M. Reinwald, USMC (Ret), who was a second lieutenant platoon commander in 3rd Bn, 4th Marines when then-LtCol Livingston served as the battalion commander.

As a captain in 1972, Livingston served as a senior advisor to the 1st Vietnamese Marine Corps Infantry Battalion during a heliborne assault into an enemy-held area near Quang Tri City, Republic of Vietnam on July 11, 1972. As the battalion disembarked in the landing zone, heavy enemy fire ensued resulting in numerous casualties. Captain Livingston moved through the scattered positions and formed the Marines into an assault force. Despite heavy hostile fire, he launched an assault on the enemy. According to his Navy Cross citation, “although blown from his feet by explosions and periodically delayed to reform and redirect his casualty-riddled force, he forged ahead, leading the Vietnamese Marines into the enemy infested trench lines of the objective and a subsequent hand-to-hand battle. Upon seizure of the initial portion of the trench line, Capt Livingston shed his combat equipment, emerged from the trench line and exposed himself to a hail of enemy fire to reach and carry his wounded naval gunfire spotter to a position of relative safety.”

Capt Livingston’s actions earlier in his assignment as an advisor resulted in the award of a Silver Star. According to his Silver Star citation, on April 12, 1972, when all but two of the friendly forces in the immediate area were killed or wounded during an ambush, “Capt Livingston braved intense enemy fire to recover the body of the Vietnamese officer and to remove several wounded to a protected area.” He then questioned an enemy prisoner, learned the location of the enemy and organized the men he was advising to drive off the North Vietnamese.

MajGen Livingston was born in Defiance, Ohio, and attended Defiance College before enlisting in the Marine Corps in 1960. In 1966, he was assigned

to the 1st Marine Division in the Republic of Vietnam, where he served as a squad leader, platoon sergeant, platoon commander and company gunnery sergeant.

Fred Vogel, a fellow Marine who served with Livingston in Vietnam, told *Leatherneck* about an occasion when the 1st Force Recon team had to be extracted from a landing zone due to heavy enemy fire. According to Vogel, the team was able to withdraw from the area without casualties largely due to the leadership of then-Staff Sergeant Livingston.

In 1968 Livingston was commissioned via the Meritorious Commissioning program. After completing The Basic School, he was assigned to the 5thMarDiv, 5th MEB and 3rdMarDiv. He was reassigned to the Basic Infantry Battalion in 1970, where he served as a mortar platoon commander, company commander, battalion operations officer and executive officer. He then served as the first operations officer for the newly formed Infantry Training School.

During Operation Desert Storm he commanded the 6th Marines, who led the assault to recapture Kuwait City.

His final assignment before his 1998 retirement was as the Commanding General for 2ndMarDiv.

He attended Chapman College and earned a degree in economics and business administration. He was also a graduate of National War College.

In addition to the Navy Cross and Silver Star, his other awards include the Legion of Merit with combat “V” and one gold star, Bronze Star with combat “V” and three gold stars, and Purple Heart with four gold stars.

Clyde J. Apodaca, 83, of Albuquerque, N.M. He was a Marine Corps veteran of the Korean War.

James H. Bowen, 71, of Aberdeen, S.D. He was a corpsman during the Vietnam War.

1stLt Robert J. Brandenberger, 98, of Philadelphia, Pa. He served in the Pacific and saw action in the Marianas, Palau and Guam. He later served as a Catholic priest for more than 60 years.

Charles D. Breme, 73, of Fredericksburg, Va. He was commissioned in 1969. His assignments included a tour as provost marshal for MCB Quantico. After his 1990 retirement, he worked as the chief appeals examiner for the Virginia Employment Commission.

Sgt Robert L. “Bob” Brown, 86, of Louisville, Ky. He was assigned to MAG-14 during the Korean War.

LtCol Vincent W. Carpenter, 98, of Billings, Mont. He was a student at Yale University when WW II began. He joined the Marine Corps and served in the South Pacific flying F4U Corsairs with the “Black Sheep” of VMF-214. After the war, he completed his education and for 21 years was the head of the music department at Macalester College.

Melvin Carroll Jr., 67, of Middletown, Ohio. He served in the Marine Corps.

The Marine Corps builds men.



Ask
a Marine

SSgt Dale C. Clark, 78, of Freeland, Mich. His 11 years in the Marine Corps included two tours in Vietnam. He was a DI from 1966-1968 and was featured on the “Ask a Marine” recruiting poster pictured above. His awards include the Purple Heart.

Theodore D. “Ted” Cooley, 71, of Yakima, Wash. He was a Marine who served two tours in Vietnam.

Cpl William P. Crozier, 87, of North Weymouth, Mass. He served with 2nd Bn, 5th Marines during the Korean War.

Merton W. DeBoer, 70, of Emporia, Kan. He was a Marine Corps veteran of the Vietnam War. He later was assigned to the Presidential Protection Unit at Camp David.

Cpl William M. Glazier, 93, in Kent, Ohio. He dropped out of high school to enlist in the Marine Corps two weeks after the attack on Pearl Harbor. He was assigned to the 4thMarDiv and served in the South Pacific. He was wounded during the Battle of Iwo Jima. He later attended college and graduate school, earning a

Ph.D. in civil engineering. During the Korean War he was a first lieutenant in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Sgt James W. "Bill" Graves, 92, of Columbia, Mo. He was a Marine who served in WW II and the Korean War. He had a 32-year career as a letter carrier.

James A. Goode Jr., 93, of Roanoke, Va. He was a Marine who fought in WW II and the Korean War.

SgtMaj George Greene, 95, of Morganton, N.C. He was the first Eagle Scout in his district in North Carolina. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in July 1941 and served for 30 years. He was a veteran of WW II and survived the sinking of USS *Wasp* (CV-7) after she was torpedoed by a Japanese submarine. He later served in the Korean War. After his 1971 retirement from the Marine Corps, he was the general manager of North Carolina Outward Bound School.

Cpl David D. Harbin, 70, Albuquerque, N.M. He was assigned to 2nd Bn, 5th, Marines during the Vietnam War and was awarded the Silver Star for his actions during the Battle of Hue City where he was wounded while serving as a squad leader with "Hotel" Co. According to his award citation, he "aggressively moved across the open, fire-swept area, delivering a heavy volume of fire against hostile

positions until he reached the doorway of one of the buildings. Throwing hand grenades and delivering accurate M-16 rifle fire, he then fearlessly moved through the rooms to clear enemy resistance."

Colby M. Head, 43, of Holcombe, Wis. He enlisted in the Marine Corps after his 1994 graduation from high school and served for four years.

Cpl Patrick R. Herrera, 67, of Espanola, N.M. During the Vietnam War he served with 1stMarDiv.

Paul F. Hoffer, 97, of Gulfport, Miss. He served in the Pacific during WW II and later worked in the railroad industry.

1stLt Orel D. Irby, 95, in Tulsa, Okla. He served in the South Pacific during WW II.

GySgt Douglas A. Johnson, 88, of Hartford, Wis. During WW II he served with 2ndMarDiv on Saipan and Okinawa. During the Korean War, he was with the 7th Marines at Inchon, Seoul and the Chosin Reservoir. He was wounded near Koto-ri on Dec. 6, 1950.

After retirement he was active in conservation work and was the president of the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation.

Charles E. "Cork" McCloud, 71, in Cleveland. He served in the Vietnam War and was a member of the MCL.

Maj Raymond McManus, 83, of

Spring Valley, Calif. During his 27 years in the Marine Corps he served as an EOD disposal technician. His awards include two Bronze Stars, with combat "V."

Col Thomas E. Murphree, 94, in Morehead City, N.C. He was a Marine aviator who served for 27 years and flew combat missions during the Korean War and the Vietnam War. During the Vietnam War, he was the CO of MAG-13 at Chu Lai. His awards include the Distinguished Flying Cross, six Air Medals and a Purple Heart.

Richard H. Price III, 57, of Albuquerque, N.M. He was a veteran Marine and a retired FBI agent.

CORRECTION: Gale Wallace Siders was 98 at the time of his passing, not 88 as the October issue incorrectly stated.

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 or n.lichtman@mca-marines.org. 🇺🇸



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Reader Assistance

Edited by Sara W. Bock

Reunions

• **East Coast Drill Instructors Assn.**, April 11-14, 2019, Parris Island, S.C. Contact SgtMaj Kenneth D. Miller, USMC (Ret), (828) 757-0968, usmcpidi@charter.net, www.parrislanddi.org.

• **Marine Corps Aviation Assn. Donald E. Davis Squadron**, March 21-24, 2019, Pensacola, Fla. Contact Wayne Miller, (973) 441-3636, millerwayne559@gmail.com.

• **Iwo Jima Survivors (Marines, Navy and all other WW II veterans)**, March 20-24, 2019, Camp Pendleton, Calif. Contact Dan Zepeda, (951) 201-6251, zepeda012@msn.com.

• **Black Marines Heritage Group**, June 20-23, 2019, Alexandria, Va. Contact Bernard Colebrook, (540) 720-2633, Bobby Wallace, (352) 259-2435, or Patricia Mims, (760) 717-2949, www.blackmarinereunion.com.

• **B/1/5 and C/1/5 (RVN, 1966-1967)** are planning a reunion. Contact SSgt Jim Proulx, USMC (Ret), (904) 343-4850, bertojoto1@gmail.com.

• **H/2/7 (RVN, 1965-1970)**, June 20-24, 2019, San Diego, Calif. Contact Dan Steiner, (618) 567-4077, dsteiner49@yahoo.com.

• **Mortar Btry, W/2/12**, Jan. 28-Feb. 1, 2019, N. Clearwater/Dunedin, Fla. Contact Mike "Doc" Mallach, 16 Torie Jordan Ct., Ocean View, DE 19970, (302) 339-7479, mallachmj@yahoo.com.

• **1st Provisional Marine Brigade ("The Fire Brigade," Korea, 1950)** is planning a 65th anniversary reunion. Contact Col Warren Wiedhahn, USMC (Ret), Military Historical Tours, 13198 Centerpointe Way, #202, Woodbridge, VA 22193, (703) 590-1295, jwiedhahn@aol.com, www.miltours.com.

• **38th/39th OCC, TBS 3-66/4-66**, Oct. 7-11, 2019, Newport, R.I. Contact Jack Sheehan, (401) 255-0387, jacksheehanjtown@me.com, www.usmc-thebasic-school-1966.com.

• **TBS, Co K, 9-68**, is planning a reunion. Contact Jim Stiger, (206) 999-1029, jimstiger@earthlink.net.

• **TBS, Co E, 5-69**, is planning a 50th

anniversary reunion in June 2019. Contact Joe Howard, 21 Snow Meadow Ln., Stafford, VA 22554, (540) 720-0259, jlheach1@cs.com.

• **TBS, Co H, 8-69 (50th Anniversary)**, June 6-9, 2019, Arlington, Va. Contact Dennis Mroczkowski, m4ski@comcast.net, or Thomas Molon, ncmolons@suddenlink.net, www.facebook.com/basicsschoolhotelcompany69.

• **TBS, Co F, 6-79**, is planning a reunion. Contact LtCol Tom Conners, USMC (Ret), (919) 303-2697, (919) 418-5757, tconners3@yahoo.com.

• **Warrant Officer Screening Course, 1st Plt, Co D, January 1974**, is planning a reunion. Contact Capt Joseph C. Chiles, USMC (Ret), (619) 729-9562, joseph.chiles@gmail.com.

• **"Kilo" Co (Plts 277, 278, 279 and 280), Parris Island, 1961**, is planning a reunion. Contact MSgt Martin D. Smith, USMC (Ret), 10 Lee Ct., Stafford, VA 22554, (540) 720-3653, martann843@gmail.com.

• **Plt 98, Parris Island, 1948**, is plan-



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ning a reunion. Contact SSgt Jim Proulx, USMC (Ret), (904) 343-4850, bertojoto1@gmail.com.

• **Plt 171, Parris Island, 1966**, is planning a reunion. Contact J.P. Kuchar, 33 Sheridan Ave., Metuchen, NJ 08840, (732) 549-6468, jpkuchar@mac.com.

• **Plt 244, Parris Island, 1967**, is planning a reunion. Contact former Sgt J.D. Croom III, (704) 965-8521, jcroom47@aol.com.

• **Plt 245, San Diego, 1965**, is planning a reunion. Contact David S. Alvarez, (209) 735-2601, srt8o06@yahoo.com.

• **Plt 266, Parris Island, 1962**, is planning a reunion. Contact Donald A. Welch, 129 Hawthorne Pl., Ithaca, NY 14850, (607) 256-0554, don814u@hotmail.com.

• **Plt 329, Parris Island, 1967**, is planning a reunion. Contact Thomas Payne, 2220 Flat Branch Rd., Ellijay, GA, 30540, (706) 635-4540, corap@ellijay.com.

• **Plt 431, Parris Island, 1945**, is planning a reunion. Contact 1stSgt George P. Cavros, USMC (Ret), (262) 782-7813, gcavros88@gmail.com.

• **Plt 1018, San Diego, 1968 (50th Anniversary)**, is planning a reunion in Salem, Ore. Contact Dan Stombaugh, (541) 606-0398, dwstombaugh@msn.com.

• **Plt 1040, San Diego, 1968**, is planning a reunion. Contact Stephen Norpel, 206 N. 7th St., Bellevue, IA 52031, (563) 451-8417, snorpel@yahoo.com.

• **Plt 1059, San Diego, 1967**, is planning a reunion. Contact Dave Jamieson, (805) 896-7404, daveyo_jamieson@msn.com.

• **Plt 1098, Parris Island, 1970**, is planning a reunion. Contact Michael Shea, (786) 280-8202, mikek2709@comcast.net.

• **Plt 2023, San Diego, 1983**, is planning a reunion. Contact Jeffrey R. Johnson, 3751 Merced Dr., Unit 4D, Riverside, CA 92503, jrj430@yahoo.com.

• **Plt 2030, Parris Island, 1965-1966**, is planning a reunion. Contact John E. Lyford, (518) 654-6073, reniejohn@roadrunner.com.

• **Plt 2077, San Diego, 1966**, is planning a reunion. Contact SgtMaj Raymond Edwards, USMC (Ret), 100 Stephens St., Boyce, LA 71409, sgtmajedretired@gmail.com.

• **Plt 2086, San Diego, 1966**, is planning a reunion. Contact Bill Kennedy, (707) 527-8319, wm.kennedy98@yahoo.com.

• **Plt 3042, San Diego, 1968**, is planning a reunion. Contact Gary Berry, (614) 679-1499, gnberry21@gmail.com.

• **Plt 3108, San Diego, 1966**, is planning a reunion. Contact MSgt Bob Rees, USMC (Ret), (619) 940-9218, bobrees86@gmail.com.

• **Plt 4035, "Papa" Co, Parris Island,**

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2000, is planning a reunion. Contact Tammy (Manyik) Epperson, (571) 451-7263, tammy.epperson@gmail.com.

• **Distinguished Flying Cross Society**, Sept. 15-19, 2019, Dayton, Ohio. Contact Warren Eastman, (760) 985-2810, weastman@dfcsociety.org.

Ships and Others

• **USS Inchon (LPH/MCS-12)**, May 4-9, 2019, Nashville, Tenn. Contact David Fix, ussinchon@gmail.com.

Mail Call

• Cristine Strom, 142 Kingswood Ct., Reno, NV 89511, cristinestrom@icloud.com, to hear from Marines who served with her father, **Joe ANTONICHUK**, with the **V Amphibious Corps** at **Kwajalein, Eniwetok, Tinian, Rabaul or Saipan** during WW II.

• Michael Rafferty, mike.rafferty42@gmail.com, to hear from or about **LCpl Michael HAMMEL**, who served in **Da Nang, RVN, 1970-1971**.

• Gene Spanos, (847) 532-2963, genethemarine@gmail.com, to hear

from **3rdMarDiv veterans** who reside in **Illinois** and are interested in forming a statewide chapter of the 3rdMarDiv Association.

Wanted

Readers should be cautious about sending money without confirming authenticity and availability of products offered:

• GySgt Darla Richardson, USMCR, (615) 246-1477, darla.richardson@cheathamcountyttn.gov, wants a **July 1967** issue of **Leatherneck**.

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 s.bock@mca-marines.org, or write to Reader Assistance Editor, *Leatherneck* Magazine, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134. 🇺🇸

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SOUND OFF

[continued from page 7]

needed to be black. M Nu was used for the metallic items and dye for the leather. Our clothing allowance did not cover the expense of changing over and as a corporal making \$184 a month buying all new replacement items was out of the question.

In boot camp I was issued an "Ike" jacket which I had for two years. It was

later phased out and had to be replaced with a regular Marine Corps blouse. We also went through the evolution of a wide field scarf to a narrow field scarf then back again. During that period uniform changes seemed to be the norm for the Marine Corps.

Capt Dan Macsary, USMC (Ret)
1962 to 1982
Trent Woods, N.C.

Old Marine Artist

I just read the article, "Sculptor Mark Byrd: Standing Tall in Bronze," in the September issue. He's a very talented man and I admire his work.

He brings to mind a fellow Marine who served in Vietnam who is also a sculptor. Cliff Leonard only does busts of fallen Marines and the docs who saved many of us. You may consider an article on him.

I have been a faithful reader of *Leatherneck* since 1966 and my wife knows that when a new one appears, I'll be busy for the rest of the day.

J. Michael Green
Tucson, Ariz.

PLC Flashback

Gunny Piserchia's letter about the poem/song sung to the melody of "Ghost Riders in the Sky," [October issue] immediately

returned me to the summer of 1964 during my Platoon Leaders Class (PLC) junior summer training at Camp Upshur aboard MCB Quantico. One of our fellow officer candidates, who had prior enlisted time, frequently sang a few of those verses. It's been my "sing in the shower" song for some 54 years. I believe the fellow candidate's last name was Sergeant.

We college boys amused ourselves by yelling (and sometimes cursing) at Sergeant, being always careful to address him as "Candidate" Sergeant. We candidates did not wish to bring the wrath of our DI, Staff Sergeant Yoder, upon us. Moreover, I have always considered myself fortunate to have had SSgt David L. Yoder, later Sergeant Major Yoder, as both my PLC junior summer and PLC senior summer Drill Instructor.

Capt Everett A. "Ed" Robinson III
Pagosa Springs, Colo.

Infantry Squad

The article, "Changes to the Marine Corps Rifle Squad Organization—One Marine's Opinion," in the September issue by Kyle Stubbeman was quite interesting. His reasons for keeping the existing organization were spot on.

I joined the 5th Marines at Camp Pendleton out of ITR in June of 1965 and



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later transferred to MCAS Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii. From there, on into Vietnam. I do not recall ever having a sergeant squad leader. Corporals were the norm until we needed replacements, which were few and far between. I served as a lance corporal fire team leader in Vietnam. I understand the Corps had more on their plate than to worry about promotions. For a brief two- or three-week period I was a lance corporal squad leader awaiting a corporal replacement. It was during that time that a sergeant from supply transferred in wanting some "trigger-time." First thing our platoon commander told him was to take the rank off his collars and assigned him to my squad as a rifleman. He was informed that when he showed leadership he would be assigned accordingly. That did not sit well with him. Without going into detail or names, his conduct in his first firefight got him shipped back to supply, at his request, faster than he arrived.

Jon Johnson
Sidney, Ohio

Mementos from Belleau Wood

I have had the honor of being the commanding officer of the Carroll County Young Marines located in Westminster, Md. One of our Young Marines, Staff Sergeant Joe Gogol, took the trip of his life

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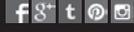
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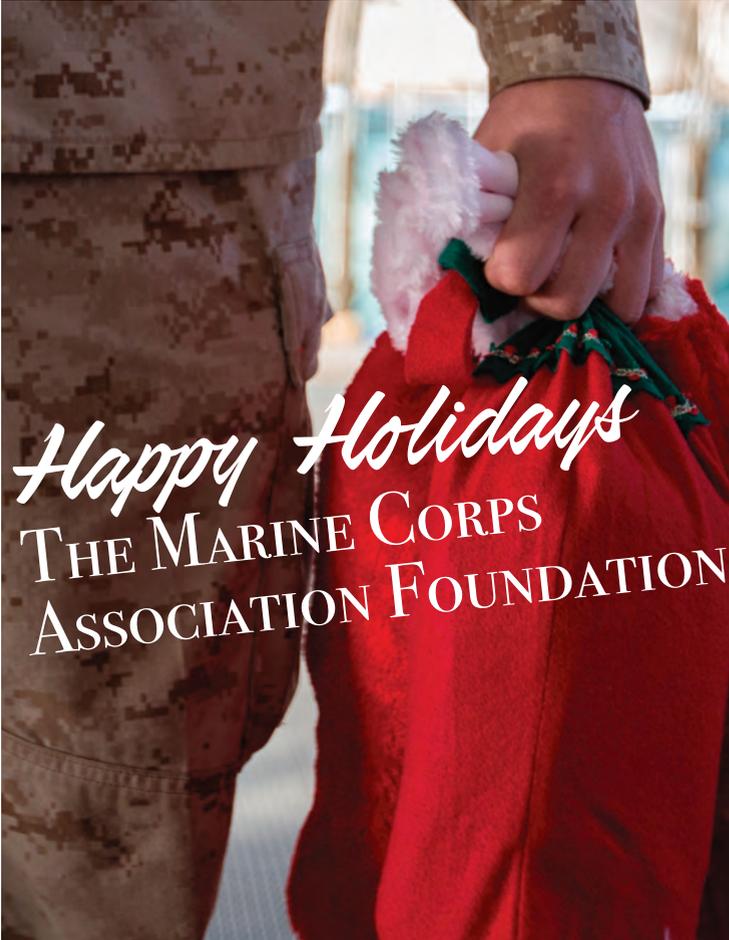
when he and a group of Young Marines received a trip to France.

While there, he gathered up sand from Omaha Beach, drank water from the Devil Dog Fountain and picked up dirt from where the Battle of Belleau Wood was fought and brought them back to me. If not for our Young Marines, I never would have received these special gifts.

I feel honored to have such great mementos that the Marines were fighting for before my time. Thank you for your great service.

SSgt Gary Hammett
USMC, 1964-1970
Manchester, Md.

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.—Editor 



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Saved Round

By Maj Allan C. Bevilacqua, USMC (Ret)



USMC

LtGen Alan Shapley (above) survived the attack on USS *Arizona* (right) as a major and later commanded all the Marines in the Pacific.



USN

MAN YOUR BATTLE STATIONS—On Sunday, Dec. 7, 1941, Major Alan Shapley was the outgoing commander of the Marine Detachment, USS *Arizona* (BB-39) tied up on Battleship Row at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. He had already turned over command of the detachment, but as coach of *Arizona's* baseball team, Maj Shapley remained aboard one more day for a scheduled game between *Arizona* and USS *Enterprise*.

When the Japanese attacked that morning, Maj Shapley sprinted for his battle station in the Alternate Combat Information Center high atop *Arizona's* forward superstructure, the highest point on the ship.

At the same time Maj Shapley was racing up the ladder for his battle station, a Japanese dive bomber pilot loosed an armor-piercing 16-inch naval shell rigged as a bomb. The bomb penetrated *Arizona's* foredeck and detonated in the forward magazine. The resulting explosion tore *Arizona* apart, killing more than 1,100 of her crew.

Maj Shapley had just reached his battle station at the moment of the explosion. He was flung completely out of the ship to land without a scratch in the water at Pearl Harbor. He swam to shore, first taking time to rescue two wounded shipmates, an act that brought him an award of the Silver Star.

Years later, in 1957, Major General Alan Shapley was commanding general of 3rd Marine Division on Okinawa. At that time I was a staff sergeant assigned to the Rifle Range Detachment known as Easley Range, where Camp Hansen stands today. MajGen Shapley often paid unofficial visits to units of the Division to speak informally with enlisted Marines. It was no great surprise to see him stride unannounced into the detachment office.

As the only one on duty that morning I stood and reported myself to the general. Noting my framed photograph of the ship I had served on, USS *Wisconsin* (BB-64), Gen Shapley asked if I had been a battleship Marine. I replied that I had, and that my battle station aboard *Wisconsin* had been the same as the general's on *Arizona*. I added that I had read of the general's experience on that Sunday morning and that it must have been something remarkable and memorable.

MajGen Shapley replied that he had no memory of the huge explosion or a great flash of light, nor was there any sense of being thrown through the air. Everything that happened that day was etched as distinctly in his memory as though it had taken place yesterday, except those few seconds when he had been blown out of the ship. That brief time was a total blank.

MajGen Shapley also said that over the years he had attempted to force himself to reconstruct in his mind everything that happened on Dec. 7, 1941, at Pearl Harbor, from the time he had awakened until he found himself in the water. As to how he had gotten to the water—that was still a complete void.

From the height MajGen Shapley had been flung from *Arizona*, hitting the water would not have been much different from hitting concrete. The impact should have killed him. It didn't.

Alan Shapley commanded a Raider battalion and an infantry regiment in the Pacific. He eventually wore three stars and commanded all Marines in the Pacific. The Marine who should have died on Dec. 7, 1941, answered his final roll call on May 13, 1973. Some things defy any logical explanation. 🇺🇸



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