

DECEMBER 2017

MAGAZINE OF THE MARINES

Leatherneck

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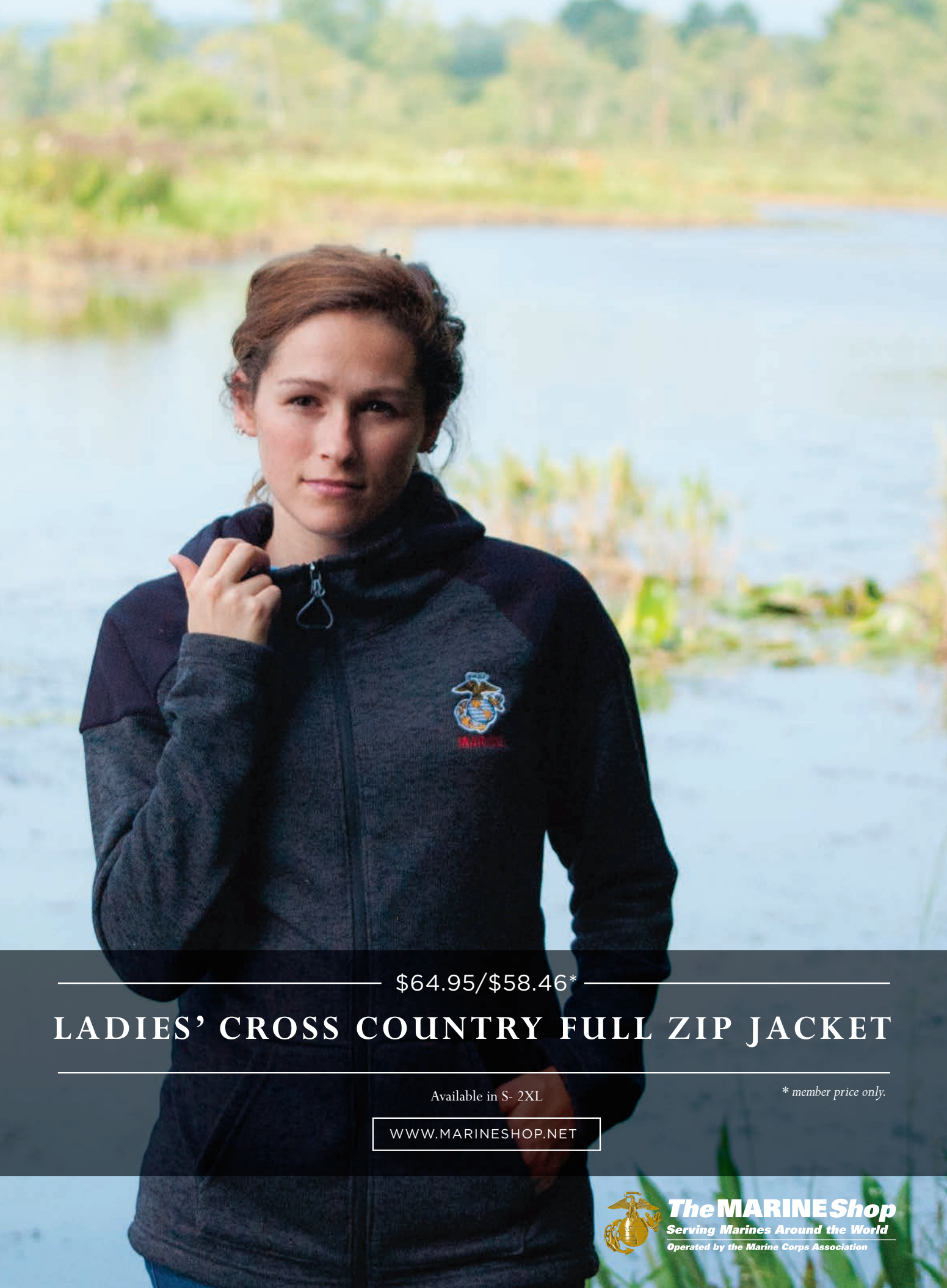
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What's Involved
In Restoring These
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Now's the Time
To Prepare

Bougainville—
Raiders Seize
Contested Piva Trail
From Japanese

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COVER: A Marine’s sword remains one of the Corps’ most recognizable symbols, rich in heritage and tradition as the oldest employed weapon in the history of the USMC. As time goes by, and despite impeccable craftsmanship, a sword can lose its original, unblemished finish; *The MARINE Shop* solves that problem. See “Sword Refurbishing” on page 30. Photo by Tina Boyd. Copies of the cover may be obtained by sending \$2 (for mailing costs) to *Leatherneck Magazine*, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134-0775.

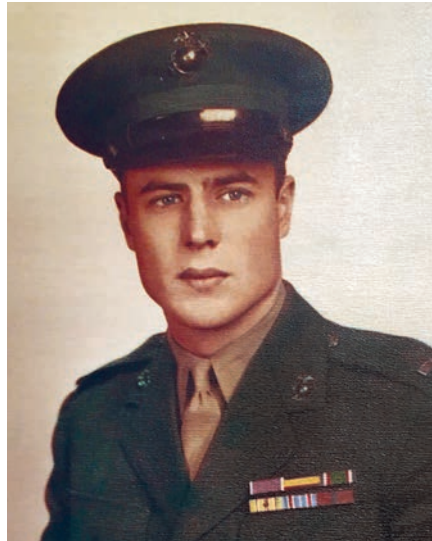
Letter of the Month

(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.)

A few months ago I arrived at work early and noticed the message light blinking on my desk phone, so I entered the password and listened. I never could have guessed the journey that would ensue, as the content of the message froze me to my chair. "Hi, my name is Mike Maddox. I'm a former Marine and live in West Virginia. I'm calling to see if this is the Jeff Pinkham related to Lieutenant Sherman Pinkham who served in the 4th Marine Division on Iwo Jima. If so, please give me a call because my neighbor was in your dad's company and remembers him well."

My emotions were a swirling gust of wind. Dad rarely talked about his time on Iwo, at least not until the last years of his life. As we sat in our cabin in Northern Minnesota sharing some good bourbon, stories started to trickle out—it was like listening to something that happened to a person I didn't know. Landing in the first wave on Blue Beach, the nightmarishly slow going under heavy fire through volcanic sand that was sharp as razor blades and as firm as quicksand, taking cover behind a dead Marine whose body protected him as bullets ripped into the sand, and taking an enemy life close enough he remembered the mole on the cheek. Dad was shot on day 4 after the invasion when he and one of his men were ahead of the front line to direct fire. He was shot through his chest and remembered looking over, not seeing his arm, and thought it had been blown off. In reality, it was under his back but there was no feeling in it. The sergeant that was there threw him over his shoulder, carried him to the beach through heavy fire, and had to flag down the hospital ship shuttle to return and pick Dad up.

I called Mike back and struggled to find the right words. Mike's neighbor was Hobie Wright, who all these years thought Dad had been killed on the island, and he had stories about him he would like to tell me. I made plans to drive to Alpine Lake, W.Va., and my brother, Andrew, decided to fly from California to Columbus to join me. I packed a few things that I thought Hobie would find interesting: A book



COURTESY OF DR. JEFF PINKHAM

Lt Sherman Pinkham, 4thMarDiv



COURTESY OF DR. JEFF PINKHAM

Lt Charles Giffin

entitled, "Iwo Jima, Legacy of Valor," with notes in the margins written by Dad describing what was happening to him at that time; comments on people he knew mentioned in the book; his .45-caliber sidearm and box of cartridges from the campaign; a Marine Corps shot glass filled with sand from the Iwo Jima beach and sealed with a Marine Challenge Coin; a newspaper article announcing Dad's wounding; and his dog tag.

Hobie was a wonderful, crusty, 94-year-old Marine who served us bottles of wine as we listened and learned more about our father's unit, what the landing was like, and some personal things about Dad. Seems there were several battle-hardened

men in the company who looked at Dad as yet another greenhorn college boy who was made an officer despite having no war experience. Hobie said Dad did what he was supposed to do, which was move ahead of the front line to be able to direct fire then lead them forward. It was quite a day, but another surprise waited. I had always wanted to know the identity of the mystery man who saved Dad's life. It turned out Mike had done some research and surprised us with documents that had the answer. Sergeant Charlie "Giff" Giffin was the man and was awarded the Silver Star for his actions. I looked at his picture for a very long time, and wondered if he had any family still alive. Now it was my turn to do some research.

After several false starts and dead ends, I sent a Facebook message to a Bob Giffin who lived in the area where Giff was buried and asked if he was related. Seeing his affirmative response, we set up a call that would be one of the most emotional conversations I've ever had. I provided some background to Bob as to how the call came about, but the heart, soul and core was this: "Had your Dad not carried mine to the beach, I would not be talking to you today. I want you to know how grateful I am for your father's amazing act. I, my brothers and sisters, our children, our children's children, and family yet to come have lived or are alive because of Sgt Giffin's heroism. I want you to know about all the wonderful things, the deep love, and the contributions that Dad's offspring have done. The cascading impact of Charlie's act has changed things in a wonderful way since that day in 1945, and for generations to come. I know the two of them are smiling together even as I say this."

I was crying. There was silence on the other end, then the sound of soft sobs. I asked for the email addresses of any family member who might want to hear the story, and followed up with 11 relatives.

And so, after 72 years there was closure. I saw the ghosts of the battlefield turn, walk toward the horizon and slowly fade, but their story was now firmly cemented and as complete as it can be for my family, Hobie, Mike, and the Giffin family. We are in a sense now members of the same family, all started long ago by a band of brothers on a far away, bloody island that now sleeps peacefully in the Pacific.

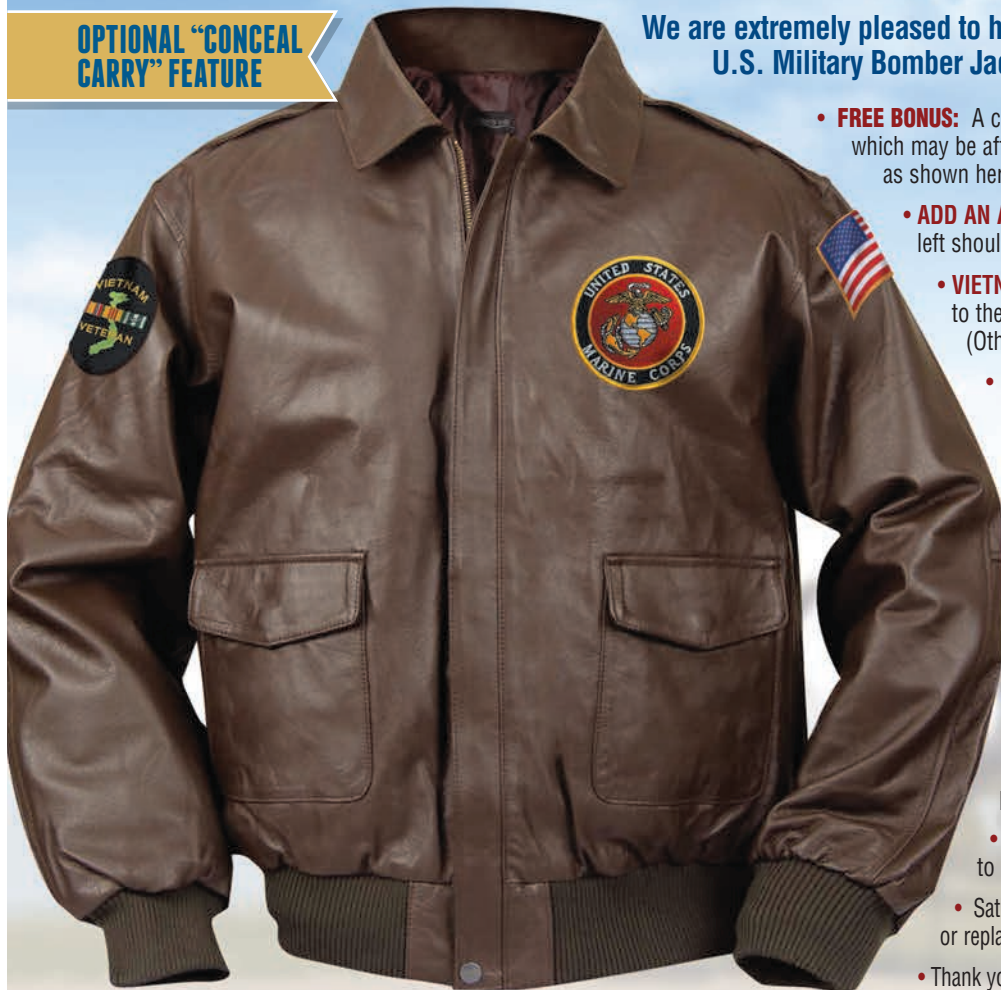
Dr. Jeff Pinkham
Dublin, Ohio

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Chicago: (312) 236-4900
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Dear John

The "Sea Story" about "Dear John" [August issue], reminded me of something that happened when I was a young Marine, just sort of the opposite side of this kind of situation. A corporal who had recently returned from a deployment to the Philippines asked me if he could go to the S-1 office to get some help filing an allotment for his brand new Filipina bride. One of the helpful S-1 clerks mentioned that he could help since he had done the same thing not too long ago.

As they were going through the form, they noticed a coincidence in that the two brides had the same name. What? They also had the same address. They compared photos of their brides and not only was it the same girl; it was the exact same photograph.

At this point, I lost track of the proceedings, but I suspect the young lady lost two allotments that day and probably two marriage annulments were filed shortly thereafter. I always wondered just how many servicemen she married in total.

GySgt Ray Harris
USMC, 1967-80
Alpine, Calif.

"My Life, My Story" Program

On Dec. 23, 2013, I underwent a right lung transplant at the William S. Middleton VA Hospital in Madison, Wis., for pulmonary fibrosis. Without it, I would have been dead three years ago.

While in the hospital I was one of the early participants in a new program called, "My Life, My Story." Fast forward to today; at 71 years old I'm a part-time VA employee writing for the program. I thought your readers would be interested in it as it is being replicated at other VA hospitals across the country.

It works like this. A staff member like myself or a volunteer interviews interested veterans about their life stories. Then, we write the story up and bring it or mail it back to the veteran for corrections, additions or deletions, and final approval. The veterans are in complete control; they are their stories. Once approved, it goes into the veteran's confidential medical records so the doctors, nurses and other providers can get a better understanding of their patients. Research suggests that the more a provider knows about patients, the better care they get. My providers still say, "Hey, I read about you, you did this or that." We find that every veteran has an interesting story to tell. The veteran also receives copies to give to family and friends.

If you are not signed up with the VA, you should do so in order that the care will be there if you need it in the future.

If you are already a VA patient, I urge you to contact your local VA hospital. If they have a "My Life, My Story" program, participate. If not, urge them to start one.

SSgt Robert A. Hall
Madison, Wis.

Camp Mathews Rifle Range Monument

After boot camp I was ordered to Marine Rifle Range Camp Mathews as a coach of recruits from MCRD San Diego, Calif.

The range was phased out in 1964 due to civilian encroachment. I heard there is a small monument there dedicated to the coaches and personnel. I have never seen it and at my slight advanced age of 87, it's possible I never will. Perhaps someone can give me the word.

Sgt Joe J. Champagne, USMC
Gold Bar, Wash.

Meade River

Thank you for the great story "For Their Gallantry and Intrepidity: The Marines of 3/26 Operation Meade River" [August issue]. I was with "India" Co, 3/26 in late November 1968. We were replacements for guys completing their tour in Vietnam. I was not active in action at Meade River. I was the "new guy" with the weapons platoon. My MOS was 0331, M60 machine gun. I and the other new guy stayed back at outpost "Rock Crusher Base" outside of Da Nang to protect our base perimeter. I lucked out being in the rear with the gear. That probably saved my life.

Captain Ron Hoover, our CO of India Co, was great and a Marine's Marine. He retired as a captain with lots of medals and ribbons including the Silver Star and two Purple Hearts. His second Purple Heart was for wounds received on March 9, 1969, the same time I received mine. We both ended up at the Naval hospital in Guam that month. Capt Hoover took care of his troops and made sure Karl Taylor was put in for the Medal of Honor.

Capt Hoover is still active with the Marine Corps League in Pa. I'm making copies of your story on Meade River to show to my Marine friends who I have breakfast with twice a week. They are World War II, Iwo, Korean, Iraq vets and an Air Force guy—we make him pour our coffee. We have privates to a two star general who sometimes attends.

John T. Dempsey
Diamondhead, Miss.

The New Guy

I'm writing in regards to Michael Walsh's "The New Guy," [May Issue]. I was touched by the story and very surprised when Esau Whitehead's name



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was revealed at the end of the article. Esau and I were in boot camp together at Parris Island in platoon 342 from June until September 1965. Two years ago, all the men from 342 that we were able to locate gathered at Parris Island to celebrate the 50th anniversary of our graduation. Thanks to the reunion, I was able to send 17 copies of Esau's story to my boot camp buddies.

Welcome home and rest in peace, Esau.
Ray Kelley
USMC, 1965-69
Worcester, Mass.

Has *Leatherneck* Changed?

Captain James B. Coan's letter "Has *Leatherneck* Changed" [August issue], was way off base and rereading any recent issue would certainly corroborate the editor's rebuttal. I look forward to reading the lesser-known aspects of our Corps as much as learning details about long-ago fought battles. Your magazine is anything but "ho-hum." Keep doing what you do best!

Bill Ober
USMC, 1961-67
Huntington, N.Y.

As a Marine veteran of Vietnam I could not let Capt James Coan's letter go by



COURTESY OF CPL CARL J. STECKLER, USMC

Cpl Carl J. Steckler pictured returning from night patrol.

without comment. As a collector of all things Marine I find the articles on the history of equipment to be fascinating and a welcome addition to *Leatherneck* articles. With our traditions steeped in history I cannot understand why any Marine would not be interested in the history of the equipment and uniforms we carried or wore. So keep the articles

coming. In fact you could do an entire article on the M-1941 pack system alone for that matter. I have collected all of the 782 gear I had in Vietnam and thoroughly enjoyed doing so, with one glaring exception. I have a photo of myself, below, at age 19 having just returned from a very wet night patrol and as you can see the equipment I was issued. But one thing sticks out. In the side pouch sticking out is the handle of a right angled flashlight. I would like to know where and why the Marine Corps issued a pink flashlight and where can I find one?

Keep up the good work and keep the equipment articles coming.

Cpl Carl J. Steckler
USMC, 1966-72
Dryden, N.Y.

As much as we appreciate "constructive criticism" here at Leatherneck, we also love letters from our readers letting us know what we are doing right. Our staff works very hard to publish a magazine worthy of our readers and we're very happy when we're successful.—Editor

Following Dad's Footsteps

My dad, David R. Murray, served in Vietnam from 1967 to 1969, with 1/9. He was wounded for the third time during Operation Dewey Canyon on Feb. 18, 1969, and was awarded the Silver Star for his actions during that battle. I do not know much about the Vietnam War because we rarely talked about it. It wasn't until a few years ago that I actually heard for the first time some of what my Dad went through when one of my boys interviewed him for a school project on the Vietnam War. I'm a big history nerd, but have stayed away from the Vietnam era until now.

Dad is 70 years old and my 14-year-old wants to follow in my Dad's shoes and join the Marine Corps. He is in 9th grade at The Marine Military Academy in Harlingen, Texas.

Tara Carroll
Eustice, Fla.

Division in Motion

I found the article "Division in Motion" from the *Leatherneck* archives of March 1965, reprinted in the September issue, to be a compact history of the 3d Marine Division and an opportunity to look back on my tour with H&S, 1/12.

In late 1956 I reported for duty at South Camp Fuji, Japan as a Marine private, field radio operator. The base was essentially run by our senior NCOs. The town of Fujioka was just outside the gate, and we bunked in reasonably comfortable barracks. In early 1957 we moved to Camp

Hauge, Okinawa where we lived in Quonset huts and were introduced to Cinderella liberty. However, I enjoyed both duty stations due to the camaraderie of my fellow Marines and because of everything I was taught by those senior NCOs, many of whom had served during World War II and Korea.

Regarding the *Sound Off* letter in the September issue discussing lance corporals and squad leaders—I was another of those Marines who finally made E-3 corporal only to subsequently have my two stripes replaced with the one stripe of the new lance corporal rank. An ego quickly deflated.

George Collias
Venice, Fla.

I enjoyed the archive article “Division in Motion,” which appeared in the September *Leatherneck*. Life in 1965 in Okinawa was much the same as in 1969 and 1970 when I was posted there as a second lieutenant. The Third Force Service Regiment was commanded then by Brigadier General Jimmy Jones who sent me to Camps Courtney and McTureous as a platoon commander responsible for rations, POL and maps.

About a week after my arrival, a monster typhoon hit the island and tore off

the roof of the warehouse that stored tens of thousands of maps, many of them top secret with key locations identified in Vietnam and Taiwan. The result was maps blowing throughout the area in the midst of torrential rains. I emptied the barracks and about 40 of us spent several hours collecting soggy maps from throughout the area while getting soaked to the bone. My first fear was that I could be court martialed for this major breach of security. We successfully retrieved almost all of the maps, which were so wet that they were unserviceable and had to be destroyed. A few probably ended up in the East China Sea. Thankfully, there were no repercussions and my Okinawa tour ended with many great memories including an amazing typhoon experience.

Capt Joseph H. Doenges
USMCR, 1966-71
Georgetown, Texas

First Special Basic Class

The Letter of the Month in the June issue tells about the First Special Basic Class. I would like to supplement the roster of distinguished careers with two more prominent individuals who were in our class. They were Judge Robert H. Bork and religious leader Pat Robertson.

[continued on page 66]



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Compiled by Sara W. Bock

DJIBOUTI

“Train as We Fight”

Marines, Sailors Conquer the Heat During Alligator Dagger

Clouds of dust were so thick that visibility was distorted as Marines from the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit arrived ashore from amphibious transport dock ship USS *San Diego* (LPD-22), bringing with them everything they needed for combat operations and sustainment for the two weeks they would spend conducting Exercise Alligator Dagger in Djibouti, Sept. 4-20.

Marines unloaded tanks and equipment in temperatures nearing 110 degrees. Neither Mother Nature nor the Marines showed any sign of yielding as members of the 15th MEU continued to press on in the extreme environment.

“I’ve never felt heat like this before,” said Corporal Pablo Lopez, a field artillery cannoneer with the 15th MEU. “Performing our jobs under these conditions means that we need to be ready to operate on another level. I can’t imagine another way to better prepare us for real-world operations in our new battle space than to practice it out here.”

Heavy armored vehicles carrying Marines and equipment set out on a convoy

across the open desert in search of a location to be used as a temporary outpost.

“This is a full mission rehearsal for combat operations in severe conditions,” said Major Toby Hlad, future operations officer for Naval Amphibious Forces, Task Force 51, 5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (TF 51/5). “Alligator Dagger allows for a full demonstration of the Navy and Marine Corps team in action preparing for combat operations in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility ... Alligator Dagger allows us to integrate adjacent forces in theater, rehearse likely and planned operations and provide a highly capable force for crisis response and combat operations.”

Exercise Alligator Dagger was the largest regional amphibious exercise to integrate and synchronize the warfighting capabilities of TF 51/5 with those of adjacent U.S. Naval Forces Central Command and Special Operations Forces units. It allowed USS *America* (LHA-6) Amphibious Readiness Group and the 15th MEU to rehearse critical amphibious combat proficiency training launched from international waters off the coast of Djibouti. The land portion was conducted in the vicinity of Arta Beach to ensure they were postured and prepared to execute opera-

tions at sea, from the sea and ashore.

The country of Djibouti sits at the “seam” between the CENTCOM and the U.S. Africa Command areas of responsibility. Through cooperation with AFRICOM, Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa and the government of Djibouti, the *America* ARG and the 15th MEU Sailors and Marines made use of the arid ranges near Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, as well as the camp’s facilities and resources to conduct the exercise.

“Alligator Dagger affords our men and women the chance to demonstrate the modernization of ship-to-shore operations in this area of responsibility,” said Lieutenant Andrew Reichard, USN, the Naval Beach Group 1 representative for the *America* ARG staff. “This exercise makes you appreciate the resilient nature our Navy and Marine Corps possess in getting the mission and training accomplished.”

Halfway through the convoy, Marines encountered a natural choke point—a perfect location to practice counter-ambush techniques by posting security. As they moved into position, they quickly discovered they were not alone.

“At one point we were surrounded by donkeys,” said Sergeant Keith Lake, a field artillery cannoneer with the 15th MEU. “We even saw a couple of camels, whose curiosity got the better of them and they came over to see what we were doing. It was something we hadn’t planned for but it lightened the mood and served as a reminder that we need to be flexible and prepared to respond to unplanned events.”

With security drills and small arms training completed, the Marines continued their journey in search of shelter for the night.

“We’re self-sufficient out here because we have to be,” said Lake. “When we are called to respond to a crisis in the region, we don’t have the luxury of having immediate support on the ground. We need to train as we fight and Alligator Dagger provides us with that sense of urgency we would have in a real crisis.”

Within an hour of arriving at their destination, the Marines transformed once-barren land into a forward operating base equipped with command and control, sleeping quarters, hot meals and 24-hour security patrols. They began working on turning non-potable water into drinking water in order to be sustained throughout the exercise.



TSgt JOSEPH HARWOOD, ANG

During Exercise Alligator Dagger, 15th MEU Marines convoy troops and supplies in Djibouti, Sept. 6. The two-week exercise allowed members of the Navy and Marine Corps’ MEU and TF 51/5 team to integrate and synchronize their warfighting capabilities in the U.S. Central Command area of operations.



Marines and Sailors with the 15th MEU encountered various challenges during Exercise Alligator Dagger, including the presence of local wildlife like the donkeys pictured here during a beach landing exercise in Djibouti, Sept. 5. (Photo by TSgt Joseph Harwood, ANG)

The Marines spent the rest of the exercise practicing a variety of capabilities, including additional amphibious maneuvers; visit, board, search and seizure; tactical recovery of aircraft and personnel; and air assault evolutions.

LCDR Sandra Arnold, USN

said Captain John Quail, USMC, the operations advisor to the Afghan National Army 215th Corps. “They cleared the Yakchal area, which has historically had high levels of enemy presence. It was a joint effort between the [Afghan National] Police, the National Directorate of Security and the 3rd Brigade, 215th Corps.”

The ability of numerous ANDSF components to combat and clear the enemy from districts throughout Helmand Province has proved to be crucial in recent success against insurgency.

“Because we had good cooperation between ANDSF, we were able to clear the villages and the enemy sustained a

GERESHK, AFGHANISTAN **In Helmand Province** **Marine Advisors Assist** **During Counterinsurgency Ops**

Multiple elements of the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) worked together to clear the area around Gereshk, Helmand Province, Afghanistan, of insurgency during Operation Maiwand Six, which began Sept. 23.

U.S. Marine advisors with Task Force Southwest assisted their Afghan counterparts during the operation. Several advisors relocated to the Gereshk area to support the Afghans with battle tracking and command and control for the duration of the mission.

“They’ve made substantial progress,”

A U.S. Marine advisor with Task Force Southwest, left, meets with an Afghan counterpart near New Garmsir, Afghanistan, Sept. 27, to learn about the capabilities of the ANDSF’s information operations soldiers.



SGT JUSTIN T. UPDEGRAFF, USMC

lot of casualties. They were completely demoralized and unable to fight against the ANDSF,” said Brigadier General Mohammed Ghani, ANA, the executive officer of 215th Corps.

The advisors were simultaneously battle tracking the Afghans while developing command and control nodes for 3rd Brigade.

“They cleared north to south, all the way back to Lashkar Gah, which was huge. It really went past our expectations ... they followed that up with local clearing operations around Gereshk as well, continuously putting the enemy on their heels,” said Quail.

According to Ghani, Afghan forces destroyed 15 improvised explosive device-making facilities during the first phase of the operation.

“We were really successful in our first plan and are preparing to complete our second,” Ghani said during the operation.

A second group of Task Force advisors also worked to build the capabilities of their 1st Brigade counterparts at Camp New Garmsir as part of the recently released South Asia strategy.

“We are right here with them doing it

every step of the way,” said Quail. “We advise at the Corps level, and in this case at both the Corps and brigade level, which is very important, and we’ve already seen a lot of benefits just by being out here with them.”

Enhancing tactics, techniques and procedures at subordinate echelons will be an enduring task throughout Helmand and will allow for more consistent growth of 215th Corps as a whole.

Advising at the lower levels gives ANA leaders and U.S. Marine advisors a better understanding of what the problems are throughout the 215th Corps. Getting out to the brigades and seeing the issues firsthand allows them to transfer those issues back to the Corps level and fix the problems.

Task Force Southwest and ANDSF are committed to strengthening governmental influence and destroying the enemy within the province.

“We will continue to do these operations throughout Helmand Province,” said Ghani. “Our aim is to provide a safe, secure environment for all of the people here.”

Sgt Lucas Hopkins, USMC

ANDERSEN AIR FORCE BASE, GUAM

31st MEU Comes Ashore, Conducts Unit-Level Training

Marines with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit aboard USS *Ashland* (LSD-48) arrived in Guam Aug. 29 to conduct unit-level training throughout the bases and ranges there as part of their fall patrol.

While in Guam, *Ashland* received routine, scheduled maintenance while Marines with “India” Company, Battalion Landing Team, 3d Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment and Combat Logistics Battalion 31 honed their crisis response and war-fighting capabilities with daily training events, as well as participated in service projects with local communities.

First Sergeant Frank Hernandez, the company first sergeant, said at the beginning of the exercise that the Marines were looking forward to not only the training opportunities but also the chance to learn about Guam’s history and culture.

“I know the Marines are looking forward to seeing Guam and spending time on the beach as a unit,” said Hernandez. “There are also battle site tours available and the Marines are going to take advantage of

TIMOR LESTE



LCPL JUAN C. BUSTOS, USMC

UP AGAINST THE WALL—Sergeant Elvis Nunez, a rifleman with 3d Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment attached to Task Force Koa Moana 17, assesses an area during a raid for the culminating event of Exercise Crocodilo in Metinaro, Timor Leste, Sept. 13. Koa Moana 17 was designed to improve military-to-military relations and interoperability with partner nations in Southeast Asia, as well as expose the Marine Corps forces to different types of terrain for familiarity in the event of a natural disaster in the region.



CPL AMAIA UNANUE, USMC

Marines with BLT 3/5 clear an abandoned house during MOUT training at Andersen AFB, Guam, Aug. 30. As the ground combat element of the 31st MEU, the unit regularly trains in different environments to maintain readiness.

that opportunity to learn some Marine Corps history.”

Marines with Combat Logistics Battalion (CLB) 31, the logistics combat element of the 31st MEU, worked to perfect their tactics, techniques and procedures during convoy training, refine their marksmanship skills through live-fire ranges, and enhance their crisis response skills through simulated noncombatant evacuation operations.

Major Daniel Struzik, the operations officer for CLB-31, said that due in large part to regularly scheduled training in places like Guam, the MEU is ready for anything.

“I like to think of [the 31st MEU] as the MEU that never sleeps,” said Struzik. “If there are typhoons, earthquakes, tsunami or any type of crisis ... the American people can rest assured that CLB-31 and the rest of the 31st MEU are prepared to respond.”

Cpl Amaia Unanue, USMC

said Corporal Camden Baker, a squad leader with the unit. “Once the enemy’s bunkers were destroyed, we were able to cover the rest of the ground with our own suppression and assault through the objective.”

“In my opinion, the fire team is the most important because if your team doesn’t work well together, then it makes the squad leader’s job more difficult,” said Cpl Baker. “When I have fire team leaders that are capable and knowledgeable of my intent, it makes my job easier so I can focus on the things I need to do to keep my Marines safe.”

While the exercise focused on basic knowledge and tactics, it also enhanced the Marines’ confidence to perform well on a live-fire range where they experience the noises of gunfire and chaos of the battlefield.

“We have a fairly new company so it takes time and effort to teach the Marines how to work together and lean on each

other,” said Sergeant Cory Espejo, a machine-gun section leader with the unit. “Everyone has their strengths and weaknesses, so it’s important to build that cohesion. You don’t know how fast the guy to your left is or how much weight he can carry at first, but you develop an unspoken level of trust after a while.”

Although many of the Marines in the unit lack combat experience, the squad attack training helped them understand the stressors of operating in a deployed environment and how to make quick decisions.

“You’re walking away and no one is hurt or killed,” said Baker. “This kind of training ensures you are as prepared as you possibly can be when you actually have rounds coming at you, so it’s a good day to be us.”

Cpl Ashley Lawson, USMC

HOHENFELS, GERMANY 6th ANGLICO, Georgian Soldiers Prepare for Deployment To Afghanistan

U.S. Marines with 6th Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company (ANGLICO), Force Headquarters Group, Marine Forces Reserve, and soldiers with the 31st Georgian Light Infantry Battalion (Republic of Georgia) conducted a mission rehearsal exercise as part of the Georgia Deployment Program—Resolute Support Mission (GDP-RSM) aboard the Joint Multinational Readiness Center, Hohenfels, Germany, Aug. 16-22.

CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C. Rounds Down Range: 2/8 Conducts Squad Attack

Marines with 2d Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment conducted a squad attack at Golf Six Range, Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., Sept. 14.

The Marines used the M203 grenade launcher, M4 rifle, M240B machine gun, M27 infantry automatic rifle and shoulder-launched multipurpose assault weapon throughout the training.

A mortar section provided 10 minutes of suppression, allowing machine guns to get into position.

Meanwhile, the riflemen moved out of the tree line and began their assault on the objective.

“We used fire and movement tactics to gain ground with the enemy still under support of the machine guns,”



CPL ASHLEY LAWSON, USMC

During a squad attack at MCB Camp Lejeune, leathernecks with 2/8, 2dMarDiv sprint out of the tree line, Sept. 14. This exercise provided a simulated combat experience for the unit’s Marines, many of whom have never operated in a deployed environment.



CPL KIMBERLY AGUIRRE, USMC

Reserve Marines with 6th ANGLICO and soldiers with the 31st Georgian Light Infantry Battalion discuss troop movements over a terrain model after conducting a patrol at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center, Hohenfels, Germany, Aug. 16. The patrol was part of a Mission Rehearsal Exercise to prepare the battalion for a deployment to Afghanistan.

The GDP-RSM is a seven-month training program that prepared the 31st Georgian Light Infantry Battalion to deploy to Afghanistan in support of Operation Freedom's Sentinel. The mission rehearsal exercise was the culminating event to build readiness and certify the 31st Georgian Light Infantry Battalion for that deployment, which began in October. They are accompanied by many of the same U.S. Marines who were involved in the predeployment training, including members of 6th ANGLICO.

The Georgia Liaison Team (GLT) and Georgia Training Team (GTT) advised and assisted the Georgian battalion throughout their training. The Marine Corps Security Cooperation Group was the coordinating agency between the Georgia Liaison Team and the Georgia Training Team and provided logistics, communication and operational support throughout the mission rehearsal exercise. The GLT was composed of core advisors, enablers and the 6th ANGLICO Supporting Arms Liaison Team. The role of the 6th ANGLICO was to serve as the battalion's fire support coordination center and to plan, coordinate and execute surface-to-surface fires, air-to-surface fires and assault support to help the battalion accomplish its mission.

The exercise was the final evaluation after the seven-month training program with the Georgians, said Captain Ryan

McGrail, the operations officer for GLT Rotation Six.

"We can compare all of this to a combat readiness evaluation. We're in our final seven days of training and after this we're going to Afghanistan to conduct the mission that was given to us. So we're here being evaluated one last time to make sure we can identify any kinds of weaknesses and improve on that, as well as maintain our strengths and improve on them as well," said McGrail.

Other training events conducted included close air support coordination training, in which the 6th ANGLICO and Georgian soldiers rehearsed coordination of air evacuations and targeting enemy combatants.

Prior to arriving in Hohenfels, Germany, the GLT and GTT participated in a host of exercises in the Republic of Georgia. The Marines built a cohesive bond with the Georgian Armed Forces through mentorship and hard work, breaking a cultural barrier between two vastly different countries.

"The entirety of these exercises is to prepare our light infantry battalion for future operations in Afghanistan," said Georgian Major Mikheil Mazmishvili, the civil military operations officer for the 31st Georgia Light Infantry Battalion. "We've been doing squad and platoon training, troop leading procedures and a host of other exercises. With this training, we

hope to better understand the environment and our coalition forces, as well as the Marine Corps."

The GDP-RSM launched in 2009 under the name Georgia Deployment Program-International Security Assistance Force. Including time spent in Afghanistan in support of Operation Freedom's Sentinel, Marines typically spend 12-16 months attached to the Georgian soldiers. Originally planned as a two-year engagement, the success of past missions has extended the partnership.

As of August, Marine Forces Reserve had already mobilized 813 Reserve Marines in 2017 and provided 4,500 Marines for a multitude of theater-specific exercises and security cooperation events. These operations and exercises greatly increase the reserve component's interoperability with the active component, joint forces and America's allies.

"This has been an overall rewarding experience," said McGrail. "Something that the Marine Corps is getting into a lot is the advise and assist missions. And they definitely chose the right Marines and Sailors to attack this mission. We still have a seven-month deployment ahead of us. We're all really looking forward to it and we'll see what comes next."

Cpl Dallas Johnson, USMCR



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BOUGAINVILLE

Battle of Piva Trail

By Dick Camp

Prologue

On Nov. 1, 1943, the 1st Marine Amphibious Corps (I MAC), including the Second Raider Regiment, landed on the island of Bougainville in the Solomon Islands. Part of the regiment's mission on D-day was to establish a roadblock astride the Piva Trail to prevent its use by the Japanese and protect the eastern flank of the Marine perimeter. Little more than a pathway—just wide enough for two men

to walk abreast—the Piva Trail was one of a series of trails that wound through the dense jungle and swampland covering the island and making any cross-country movement extremely difficult.

“The humidity was intense; the odor of jungle rot, putrid,” recalled Marine F.A. Cannistraci. “There was no breeze, no air. You sank into the soft, mushy, damp ground and those damn long vines with hooks grabbed you. You hoped the jungle noises were animals and not [the Japanese] signaling to each other.”

Major Richard Washburn, Commanding Officer of the 2d Raider Battalion, described the jungle as “extremely dense and loaded with bugs of all types. All the physical disorders you can imagine were here and there was constant rainfall. The next time someone wants to start a war they should make him spend a week or so fighting in a tropical jungle. He'll change his mind quickly enough.” Technical Sergeant Frank Devine, a Marine combat correspondent, tried to write something of interest. “Bougainville, Nov. 1, 2, 3,



USMC

4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9—it rained today.” Raider Brian Quirk commented, “About every 20 minutes you had to bail out the foxhole with your helmet.”

Piva Trail Roadblock

Captain Francis I. “Ham” Cunningham’s Company M, 3d Raider Bn, was ordered to set up a roadblock on the Piva Trail, known by the Marines as the Beaver Trail, about 1,500 yards from the main perimeter. “[We] weren’t involved in the original landing,” Cunningham reported,



USMC

Above: Marines wading ashore on D-day, Nov. 1, 1943, at Bougainville as seen from a beached LCVP.

Left: Marine Raiders and their jungle-trained Doberman pinscher dogs move along a jungle trail at Empress Augusta Bay, Bougainville in November 1943.

“so there wasn’t any action for my company until late in the afternoon. The company killed several Japanese but was able to set up the roadblock 300 yards west of the Piva-Numa Numa Trail junction.”

Andy, a 75-pound black and brown Doberman pinscher scout dog, was known as “Gentleman Jim” because of his aristocratic demeanor and aloofness with the other dogs from the 1st War Dog Platoon. He accompanied Co M and proved to be invaluable. Not only did the dog detect hidden enemy soldiers, but his presence gave the Raiders confidence. Private First Class Richard H. Carter recalled that a Doberman and his handler were in a foxhole next to his. “That night the dog started to growl real low. Pretty soon I heard ‘click’; the handler let him go off the leash, and boom, away he goes. He got ahold of something. There was a lot of noise, and then the handler called him back. The next morning we went out there and found some blood, but that was all.”

Andy’s handlers, Privates First Class Robert E. Lansley and John B. Mahoney, allowed the dog to range 25 yards ahead of the point. “We both had complete faith in Andy,” Lansley said, “and knew he would spot whatever was out there.” Andy alerted three times, looking from right to left—his signature alert—during the march, giving the Marines time to

eliminate the enemy threat, including one machine-gun nest.

Late in the afternoon, Co M dug in. Cunningham recalled, “[I] had people out in front of the lines to warn us of any [Japanese] approaching. When it got dark, I drew them back. One of the men forgot his rifle, and without saying anything, he went back to get it and he didn’t come back. By then it was dark and we couldn’t go look for him. I think he must have been grabbed immediately because he was alone. And I didn’t know he was doing this until it was too late.”

During the night, the Japanese intensified their efforts to infiltrate the roadblock. Twice, they were discovered by a German shepherd named Caesar, a messenger dog, who alerted his handler, Private First Class Rufus Mayo. The first time, Mayo awoke just as a Japanese hand grenade landed in his foxhole. Acting reflexively, he grabbed the grenade and hurled it into the jungle. The second time, just before dawn, an infiltrator crept close to PFC Mayo’s foxhole. Though not trained to attack, Caesar charged the Japanese, but Mayo called him back. Caesar was shot twice as the animal turned to obey. Although painfully wounded, Caesar returned to his second handler, PFC John Kleeman, at the battalion command post, and was treated for his wounds.



Marines moving to the front lines on Bougainville (above) were hampered by the exceptionally muddy conditions. Members of the 2d Raider Bn (right) catch a few moments of rest in the miserable, unrelieved wetness that all troops experienced as soon as they advanced inland in the Bougainville operation. (Photo by Cpl C. Dave Ohman, USMC)

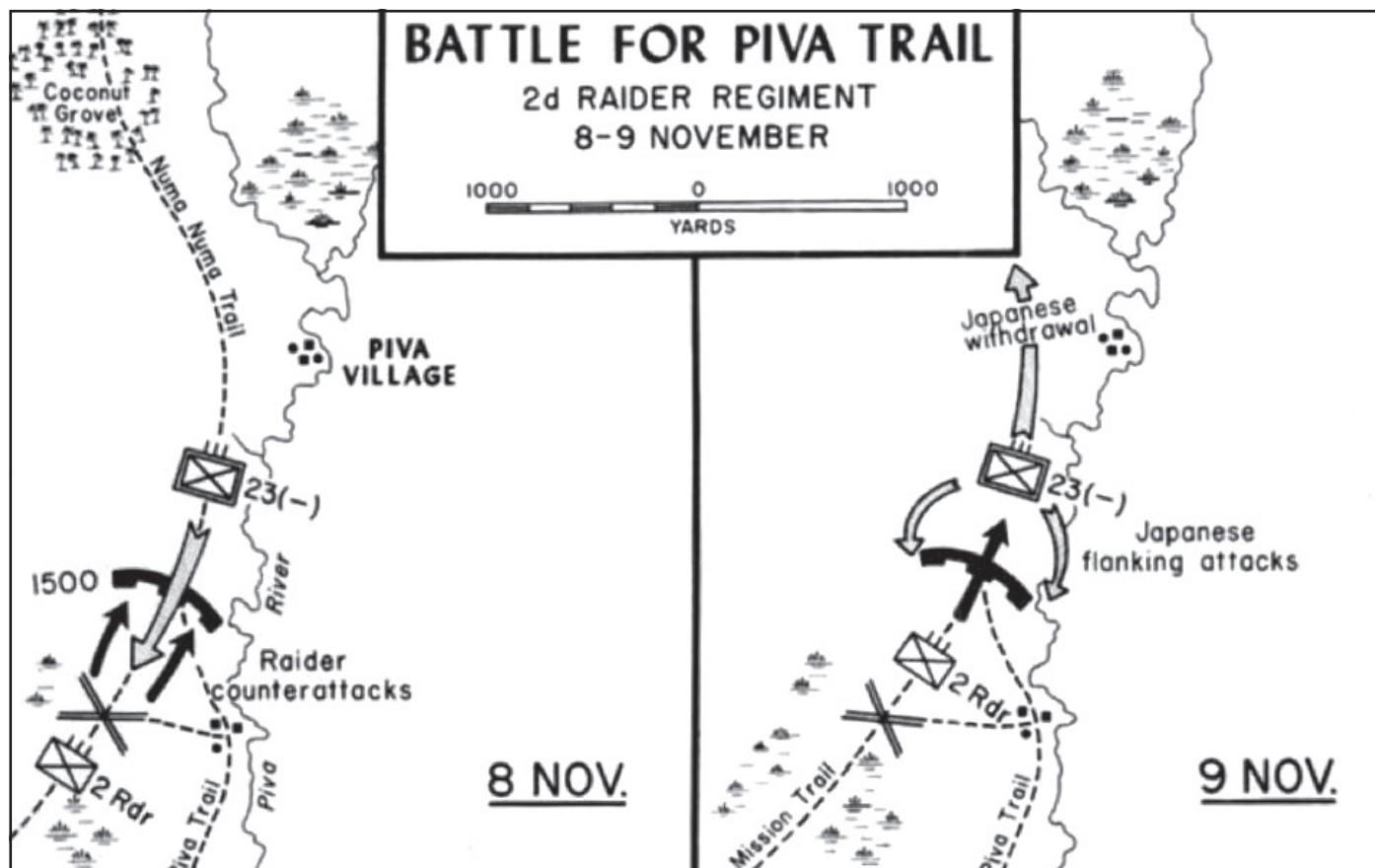
On Nov. 3, Co E, 2d Raider Bn relieved Co M in what was to become a standard company rotation—Nov. 6-Co F; Nov. 7-Co. H; Nov. 8-Co G. With the continued expansion of the perimeter, the roadblock now lay only 600 yards ahead of the front lines. On Nov. 4, the Raider Regiment was attached to the 9th Marines under Colonel Edward A. Craig, but still retained responsibility for the roadblock. Col Craig noted, “They were supported by my regimental weapons company and some tanks.”

Co E had little enemy contact until 10 p.m. and again at 11 p.m. on the night of Nov. 5 and 6, when the Japanese struck in two probing attacks. Co E beat them off with small arms, machine guns, and mortars, killing 10 Japanese. Intelligence gathered from the Japanese bodies in-



icated they belonged to the 23d Infantry Regiment and were veterans of the war in China. They were larger, in superior physical condition and better equipped than the enemy previously encountered. Their uniforms were clean and well-maintained, an indication that their unit was a disciplined force with high morale.

An undetermined number of enemy soldiers managed to evade the trail block and infiltrate to the rear of the Raiders, a standard enemy tactic intended to sow confusion in the rear areas. The regiment operations order noted: “There should be no firing at night. In case of enemy infiltration, firing will only cause confusion.



COURTESY OF DICK CAMP

Knives and bayonets should be used exclusively.” Capt Cunningham related how “the [Japanese] would roam around and try to break in [the perimeter]. We operated under the premise that anybody moving without acknowledging their presence was [Japanese]. We knew there were [Japanese] around, but none of us had come in contact with them.” PFC Carter recalled, “Sometimes at night you knew when the Japanese were infiltrating because you would hear ‘click, click, click.’ They would take bamboo sticks and tap them together so the ones who were infiltrating could tell which way to go. It was so dark, you couldn’t see your hand if you put it right in front of your face.”

Col Craig believed that the assaults against Co E were preliminary to a main Japanese attack along the Piva Trail and ordered additional Raiders to reinforce the roadblock. On Nov. 7, Co H, under Captain R.W. Burnett, rushed forward and assumed responsibility for the roadblock from Co F. Not long after the relief, Burnett’s company was attacked by a company of Japanese. Staff Sergeant Raymond L. Merrill, a Browning Automatic Rifleman recalled, “The corporals and lieutenants wanted us to dig new foxholes. Some of the old Raiders said “We better get our a-- in gear before the [Japanese] hit. The [Japanese] hit us about 4 p.m. and we had a hot firefight. I was carrying a Browning Automatic Rifle

(BAR). It started to rain and rained all night. It filled our foxholes. We were in the water-filled foxholes 16 hours. The [Japanese] were right in front of us firing mortars. When they got really close, we’d just duck under the water until they passed.”

As the fighting intensified, Co G was ordered forward as reinforcements. Together, the two Raider companies, aided by 81 mm mortar fire from 2d Bn, 9th Marines, beat off the attacks. The Japanese withdrew to a position near Piva village and dug in but continued to launch several small-scale attacks during the afternoon, which also were beaten off. During the night, the enemy rained down 90 mm and knee mortar fire on the Marine positions while infiltrators attempted to penetrate their lines.

Japanese Main Attack

Unbeknownst to the Raiders, the Japanese began massing an assault force. The 1st and 3d Bns and the 7th Co of the 23d Infantry Regiment, augmented by antitank and mortar units and supported by a battery of the 6th Field Artillery Bn, gathered just east of the Piva River for an assault on the roadblock.

Shortly after daybreak on Nov. 8, a patrol from Co H ran into a group of Japanese about 300 yards from the roadblock. Private First Class James W. Singley, the point man for the patrol, recalled that

he “got into the clearing ... and saw dozens of [Japanese] setting up camp.” Another patrol encountered small groups of Japanese. Based on the patrol reports, the Raiders knew that an attack was imminent.

The Japanese opened the battle with a four-hour mortar barrage along with machine-gun fire, followed by an infantry assault by an estimated two battalions against Co G. One Raider recalled, “I was in a water-filled foxhole and when the [Japanese] would fire their knee mortars, I would duck under the water.” By 11 a.m., Co G was hard-pressed by the Japanese assault. Two additional Raider companies, E and L, rushed forward from reserve positions and launched a counterattack. After suffering heavy casualties in a two-hour firefight, the companies were forced to withdraw and set up a defensive perimeter for the night.

During the fighting, Col Craig recalled that he left his “CP to go to the front to visit the Raider Bn where it was engaged with the [Japanese]. Because of the deep mud and lack of roads, it was impossible to use a jeep. After a tiring hike through the mud and jungle, I finally reached the front lines and talked with Lieutenant Colonel Fred D. Beans, the battalion commander. I gave directions for the Raider Bn to continue the attack next morning.

“I was on my way back to the Division headquarters when I passed what I have always thought was the most gruesome



USMC

Demolition men of the 3d Raider Bn landed on Torokina Island on Nov. 3, but found that supporting arms fires had already killed or driven off all Japanese.

sight that I witnessed during the war. A light tank going to the rear with wounded Raiders strapped to the outside was mired down in a swamp off the trail. It could not move, and I could see the bandaged men with blood dripping down the side of the tank lying there helpless. They were serious cases and to make matters worse, snipers in the vicinity had pinned the crew inside the tank and the wounded were lying in the open unable to help themselves. It was a most pitiful sight. There was nothing I could do but to get back to Division and try to get them to send a platoon out to rescue them.”

Raider Counterattack

On the morning of Nov. 9, after a 30-minute artillery bombardment, companies L and F kicked off a counter-attack that was immediately met by heavy enemy machine gun and mortar fire. Private First Class James W. Woods remembered, “We hadn’t gone 100 yards when we saw two big banana leaves covering two Marines who had been killed. Going up a little [farther], we finally got into the heat of the action. Right in the middle of firing, I jumped into a foxhole and got as low as I could get when two shots hit right in front of my eyes, about 3 inches from me. The shot splashed muddy water in my face. Shortly after that, a machine-gun burst went right down the right side of me.”

According to the Raider Regiment

battle report, “The artillery barrage was very effective on rear area Red troops. The barrage was brought down to 250 yards of our roadblock. However, the enemy had crept up to about 25 yards of our front lines during the night. They kept quiet and hidden until the barrage lifted. Then when we commenced the attack we were met by enemy automatic and rifle



USMC

Cpl William Coffron fires at a sniper on Puruata Island during landing operations in Empress Augusta Bay, Bougainville, November 1943.

fire. They could have opened up previous and during the attack as there was much moving about on our part getting into position for the jump off. However, they held fire and suppressed us with so much fire on the jump off as we did not expect them to be inside our barrage.”

LtCol Beans noted that, “Being pinned down at the roadblock at the time of the ‘jump off,’ I had an excellent opportunity to watch our superior firepower gradually take effect on the enemy firepower. They opened up with all they had in the way of small arms. We replied with all we had (each rifle squad has three BARs and seven M1s). After 20 minutes of this, the enemy couldn’t stand up under it and they withdrew.”

First Lieutenant John A. Sabini’s platoon was quickly pinned down from several well-concealed emplacements. According to his Navy Cross citation, Sabini “rose from cover and ran back and forth in the rear of his platoon, shouting at the Japanese in an attempt to draw their fire and discover their location.” Sabini was wounded twice before the enemy positions were located and destroyed.

The counterattack had hardly begun before Corporal Brian J. Quirk’s squad ran into a series of machine-gun nests that the Japanese had established within 30 yards of the roadblock. Quirk’s Navy Cross citation notes, “Although wounded four times ... he not only refused evacuation but also led his men in a bold assault against one of the key nests, courageously destroying the enemy and enabling his platoon to advance on the others in the area.”

While the Raiders were slowly advancing along the Piva Trail, the Japanese attempted to flank the assault force. Privates First Class Donald G. Probst and Henry Gurke manned a foxhole in line with the enemy maneuver. “When a Japanese grenade dropped squarely into the foxhole, PFC Gurke, mindful that his companion manned an automatic weapon of superior firepower and therefore could provide more effective resistance,” according to his Medal of Honor citation, “thrust him roughly aside and flung his own body over the missile to smother the explosion.” Gurke was killed by the blast but Probst was spared and continued to fire his weapon. Probst was later killed in action.

Suddenly, at 12:30 p.m., Japanese resistance crumbled and the Raiders pressed forward against only scattered resistance. By 3 p.m., they reached the junction of the Piva and Numa Numa Trails and established defensive positions. Later in the afternoon, the Raiders, supported by 81 mm mortars from the 2d Battalion,



9th Marines, beat off several small-scale attacks. During the night, the enemy rained down 90 mm mortar fire on the trail block and sent infiltration groups into the Marine lines. The counterattack cost the Raiders 12 Marines killed, 30 wounded, and one missing in action.

PFC James W. Woods recalled, “We saw a 2d Bn Raider who was attached to us. He was lying out front wounded, hit in the back, and suffering. Nobody could get to him. He kept yelling for help and this went on for about five minutes. Leon Johnson, who was a good Marine, and I looked at each other. I said, ‘I’ll go if you will.’” The two Raiders got up in the middle of the firefight. “We grabbed this guy,” Woods said, “and started pulling him back.” They were targets for the Japanese. “We dropped him and jumped into foxholes right beside him. Luckily, he didn’t get hit again—they were shooting at us pretty bad. Again, we jumped up, pulled him back about 30 more yards, and this time we had some cover.” The Japanese left more than 100 bodies on the field.

Mopping Up

On Nov. 10, two battalions of the 9th Marines, led by Col Craig, passed through the Raiders’ lines and continued the attack to Piva Village. The advance was unopposed, although scattered enemy equipment, ammunition, and weapons—a 75 mm gun and a 37 mm gun, as well as rifles, and machine guns—were found. Col Craig established his command post at the junction of the Numa Numa Trail and the Piva Trail. He recalled that, “Landing Vehicles Tracked (LVT) churning through the mud at the trail junction had unearthed some Japanese dead who the Raiders had buried the day before in shallow graves.” The next morning, he splashed his face from a helmet full of water “and immediately smelled a terrific odor of a dead body.” His orderly had unknowingly dipped the water from a “pool full of dead Japanese.”

The battle for the Piva Trail officially ended on Nov. 10, at which time the Raiders were pulled off the line and sent into reserve. Bougainville was the Raiders’ last combat action. On Feb. 1,

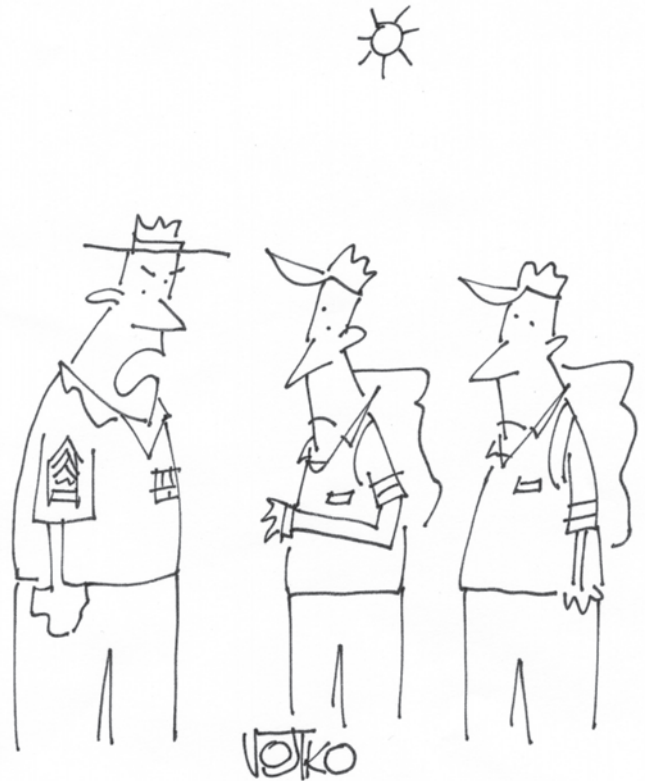
Raiders pose next to one of the Japanese dugouts they cleared on Cape Torokina during a lull in the battle on Nov. 1. (USMC photo)

1944, they were disbanded and reformed as the 4th Marine Regiment. The 9th Marines fought on until Dec. 28, when the entire 3d Marine Division was replaced by the Army’s America and 37th Infantry Divisions. The American combat units were replaced in turn by the Australian II Corps. Combat operations continued until Aug. 21, 1945, when the remaining Japanese garrison surrendered.

Author’s bio: Dick Camp, a retired Marine colonel, is the former director of operations for the National Museum of the Marine Corps, former deputy director and director (acting) of the Marine Corps History Division and a prolific author. He is a frequent contributor to Leatherneck.



Leatherneck Laffs



"We can't halt just because your wrist tracker says you have all your steps in."



"Oww!"
"Breakfast in bed!"



"Actually, I think our foxholes are supposed to be open at the top."



"A salute will suffice, Marine."



"Your first test is if you'll eat your own cooking."



"Imagine, Chesty. One day we'll guard heaven like Grandpa!"



"Oh, yes, he's proud of his medals, but personally, I think the top row was only for participation."

Images of Battles Won

Marines Participate in New York Photo Exhibition

By SSgt Bryan Nygaard, USMC

During September, several combat correspondents had the privilege of representing the U.S. Marine Corps at Photoville, a photography exhibition in the DUMBO neighborhood of Brooklyn. Considered by the *New York Times* to be New York's premier photo festival, this year marked the sixth year Photoville was held. Over the course of two weeks, thousands of people visited the exhibition, which was set up under the Brooklyn Bridge in a small shanty town of more than 50 refurbished shipping containers stacked on top of each other.

Photographs mounted on the walls inside each container were shot by photographers from around the world and told a variety of stories. The photos depicted the effects of climate change, the Syrian refugee crisis, mineral excavation in Myanmar, and even the recent protests in Charlottesville, Va.

"It's to get photography stories out in the public, to connect us with everyone from around the world," said Dave Shelley, one of the founders of Photoville. "Everybody can see that we are one planet, one condition, one people, and we share a lot of similar interests that connect us together as a society."

The Marine Corps container featured 17 photos that were shot by Marine



CPL AARON PATTERSON, USMC

PFC Tevin J. Poulson, 1st Battalion, 3d Marine Regiment, carries a simulated casualty during Operation Island Viper on MCB Hawaii, Sept. 28, 2016.



CPL JOHN MARTINEZ, USMC

Sgt Andrew Hodgkins, Company B, 1st Battalion, 2d Marine Regiment, talks to locals during a security patrol in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, Sept. 29, 2014.



Above: Photoville, a photography exhibition in Brooklyn, N.Y., Sept. 24, 2017, is set up under the Brooklyn Bridge in shipping containers stacked on top of each other. (Photo by Sgt Bryan Nygaard, USMC)

Right: New Yorkers view images shot by Marine Corps photojournalists during Photoville. The Marine Corps participated in the exhibition for the first time by showing photography that embodied "Battles Won."



SGT BRYAN NYGAARD, USMC



Left: SSgt Alfred V. Lopez, a Marine photojournalist, stands next to his photo displayed in Brooklyn.

Below: LCpl Mann, a dog handler with Co A, 1st LAR Bn, helps Sgt Floresmaritines, assistant squad leader with Co A, 1st LAR, out of a canal during a patrol in Sre Kala, Afghanistan, Feb. 16, 2012.

SSGT BRYAN NYGARD, USMC



SSGT ALFRED V. LOPEZ, USMC

photographers and embodied the theme “Battles Won.” Each image depicted different battles fought by Marines from skirmishes against a physical enemy on an actual battlefield to internal battles against self-doubt and battles to better one’s community. The carousel of images illustrated the Marine Corps’ experience from recruit training, counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan, to humanitarian relief.

Photojournalist Teru Kuwayama, who had extensively documented Marines in Afghanistan seven years ago, proposed the idea of including Marines’ photography in the exhibit. Kuwayama, now the Insta-

gram community manager, helped put Shelley in contact with Marine Corps Recruiting Command. According to Major Neil Ruggiero, the director of the Marine Corps Communications Office in New York, Kuwayama and Shelley met with him and simply suggested, “Why not the Marines?”

A photography exhibition in Brooklyn, the hipster capital of New York, doesn’t necessarily seem like a natural fit for the Marine Corps but the general reception of everyone who saw the Marines’ photos was overwhelmingly positive. The stories told by Marine Corps photographers were not that much different from stories told

by the other photographers at the event.

Throughout the exhibition, Marine photographers spoke to hundreds of people about the images they were displaying. Many native New Yorkers were especially enamored with the photo showing Marines running off a landing craft onto the beach of Breezy Point in Queens to assist in the relief efforts following the devastation of Hurricane Sandy in 2012. Many remembered the Marines being there during that time. There were some who had no idea that the Marines did anything other than engage in combat, so the photographers helped to inform many visitors about Marine Corps capabilities.



SSGT BRYAN NYGAARD, USMC

Marines and Sailors from the 26th MEU step off a landing craft utility vehicle at Breezy Point in New York City, Nov. 9, 2012.



SSGT JOSEPH DIGIROLAMO, USMC

Marines observe as explosives detonate at Crow Valley, Philippines during Amphibious Landing Exercise 15, Oct. 8, 2024.



LCPL JORGE ROSALES, USMC

Marines with Co G, BLT, 2d Bn, 4th Marines conduct splash-and-recovery drills from USS *Germantown* (LSD-42), Aug. 23, 2016.

The majority of Photoville attendees who visited the Marine Corps display were impressed by the quality of the photos, but had no idea that the Marines had photographers in their ranks, or that combat photographer was an actual job in the Marine Corps.

Marines officially began documenting their exploits through photography at the outset of World War II when the Marine Corps created its first public relations division. Marines were trained to be photographers, known as combat cameramen

and combat correspondents, and sent to the Pacific theater of war. It was there that these jarhead journalists produced images that showed the American public that Marines were winning hard-fought battles in places like Saipan, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa. Since then, Marine photographers have continued to tell the Marine Corps' story of winning the nation's battles at home and overseas.

"A lot of people don't understand that we are photojournalists," said Staff Sergeant Alicia Leaders, a Marine photojournalist

from Menifee, Calif. "They think that we're just Marines taking photos on the side, but this is actually our job: to tell the Marine Corps story and we do that through a lens."

Diana Tabak, a retired patient educator from Toronto, said she was impressed by the Marines' images, but more so by talking to the Marines who took the photos. "What strikes me is, this is very important, the community interaction," said Tabak. "It's so wonderful. It brings everything to the human level. I think, in this day and



CPL ISAAC LAMBERTH, USMC

Cpl Chan Lathung, HMH-362, 3d MAW (Forward), scans the surrounding area for insurgent activity during a general support flight over Helmand Province, Afghanistan, July 27, 2012.



LCPL JERED STONE, USMC

Marines from MAG-28 conduct an underwater gear shed during a basic swim qualification course at MCAS Cherry Point, N.C., March 16, 2016.



LCPL JOSEPH JACOB, USMC

DIs from Co C, 1st Recruit Training Bn, shout commands to recruits as they battle with pugil sticks at Parris Island, S.C., July 21, 2017.

age, with all that's going on, we need as much mutual understanding as possible."

That is the power of photography, the power of storytelling. As Marine Corps combat correspondents and photo-journalists continue to tell the Marine Corps story, the American people will gain a better perspective of the Marine Corps support to and defense of the nation.

Author's bio: SSgt Bryan Nygaard was raised in Ocala, Fla. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in March 2009 and was designated as a combat correspondent. He deployed with II MEF to Afghanistan from 2011 to 2012 and was attached to the 26 MEU in support of Hurricane Sandy Relief efforts. He served at Recruiting Station Baltimore as the marketing and communications chief from 2013 to 2017. He currently is serving as the digital engagement and content management chief for Marine Corps Recruiting Command.



CPL AARON PATTERSON, USMC

Marine photojournalists Sgt John Martinez, then-Sgt Bryan Nygaard, SSgt Alfred Lopez, and SSgt Alicia Leaders, stand inside their photo display container at Photoville in Brooklyn, Sept. 21, 2017.

Arnold DeSenna, left, and his wife Maria own Ideal Plating and Polishing Co., in Providence, R.I., which handles the gold plating of brass components of swords that come to *The MARINE Shop* for refurbishing.



ROSLYNN DESENNA



After a process that involves stripping, "vibing," polishing and plating, these gold-plated brass components of a Marine officer's sword have been restored to like-new condition at Ideal Plating.

ROSLYNN DESENNA

PHOTO BY LCPL LUKE HOOGENDAM, USMC

Sword Refurbishing

Trusting the Experts Makes All the Difference

By Sara W. Bock

There's nothing that quite compares to the gleaming, flawless finish of a Marine Corps sword, especially when juxtaposed against a crisp, dark set of dress blues. Two distinct swords—one for officers and one for NCOs—differ in style but share the unmistakable acid-etched stainless steel blades and gold-plated hilts and fittings. They are ceremonial accoutrements that have no function in modern-day combat yet remain one of the Marines' most recognizable traditions, rich in heritage and symbolism as the oldest employed weapon in the history of the Corps.

But as time goes by, and despite impeccable craftsmanship, a sword can lose its original, unblemished finish. Improper storage, infrequent cleaning or exposure to the elements can cause both the swords and their scabbards to become dull and tarnished, and the gold-plated brass components can become "pitted" with small holes caused by corrosion.

Arnold DeSenna, owner of Ideal Plating and Polishing Co., Inc., in Providence, R.I., has seen it all.

"Some of the pieces look like they've been underground for 100 years. Some of them are pretty nasty looking before we get them," said DeSenna. And he's doing his part to help make sure that these invaluable mementos of Marine Corps service—even those in terrible disrepair—can survive as family heirlooms, able to be passed down for generations to come. DeSenna's excellent reputation in the plating industry led to a partnership with *The MARINE Shop* three years ago as part of its sword refurbishing service.

The MARINE Shop in Quantico, Va., operated by the Marine Corps Association & Foundation, has for decades been known for its high-quality service and products, knowledgeable employees and the most precise uniform tailoring services available. Between the Quantico store, its satellite location at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., and its website, *The MARINE Shop* sells a high volume of Marine swords manufactured by Weyersburg, Kirschbaum and Company (WKC) of Germany, to newly commissioned second lieutenants and to enlisted



ROSLYNN DESENNA

Using a technique called "stringing," the staff at Ideal Plating hangs the hilts and scabbard fittings from Marine swords, shown here after being coated with nickel and submerged in the plating solution. Each item is numbered and tracked to ensure that customers' sword pieces don't get mixed up.

Marines entering the noncommissioned officer (NCO) ranks. Generations of Marines have trusted *The MARINE Shop* for their uniform needs, recognizing that no one else can do it better. And there's certainly no other establishment that can be as trusted to disassemble, refurbish and reassemble a Marine sword.

Because *The MARINE Shop* doesn't have the facilities or the capabilities to fully complete the refurbishing process, they outsource several steps of the process

to carefully selected artisans: the best and most knowledgeable in their fields. Scabbards, the sheaths that hold the swords, are sent to Hanlon Plating in Richmond, Va. There, chrome scabbards are re-plated and stainless steel scabbards are "buffed out" to look new. If a sword's plastic grips are cracked or deteriorated and need to be replaced, *The MARINE Shop* has partnered with two different craftsman who fabricate new ones to the sword's exact specifications. The stainless steel



ROSLYNN DESENNA

An employee at Ideal Plating prepares to string a sword hilt onto a rack to be replated. According to DeSenna, the prep work done prior to the actual plating is the most important step to ensuring the final product's finish is smooth and flawless.



ROSLYNN DESENNA

After the prep work is completed and the sword components have been strung, they are ready to be coated with nickel and plated in 24-karat gold.

blades remain at *The MARINE Shop* for cleaning, the final step in reassembly.

DeSenna and his 16-person staff at Ideal Plating restore, or “re-plate,” all of the 24-karat gold-plated brass finishes—the hilt, scabbard fittings and “toe boot,” the end of the scabbard—from the swords that *The MARINE Shop*’s patrons either bring to Quantico or mail in for refurbishing. It’s a family affair: DeSenna’s wife, two daughters, sister-in-law and brother all work in the shop. Most of his other employees have worked for him for more than a decade.

At the young age of 15, DeSenna was forced to quickly learn the ins and outs of the plating business. Both of his parents had passed away, and he suddenly was on his own. He was hired to work as a plater at Regal Plating, a large operation in Providence with a 30,000-square-foot plating warehouse.

“I kind of lied about my age a little bit and they hired me, and I was a good worker

so they kept me. I learned everything. I had no choice,” recalled DeSenna, adding that he had to come up with \$32.50 each week to pay the rent for his apartment. “You know, you kind of fall in love with something—something that you like to do, and it was the best thing for me.”

The manager of the shop took DeSenna under his wing, treated him like a son and taught him everything he knew about plating. Eventually, DeSenna became the manager of the shop himself, but decided in the 1990s to branch out on his own. He purchased Ideal Plating, which at the time was extremely small, and grew it into a 7,500-square-foot facility: “a little giant,” he calls it. He’s proud of the business he’s grown and appreciates the opportunity to work on swords that come to him from *The MARINE Shop*.

Plating, which is the term for adding a thin layer of metal—gold, in the case of Marine swords—to the outside of an object, is a trade that requires comprehen-

sive knowledge and attention to detail. A large portion of DeSenna’s work involves plating home hardware like cabinet pulls and door hinges, particularly for clients who buy historic homes and want to keep the original hardware but restore it to its original condition. Not only do they make old pieces look new, but they also can make new pieces look old.

When the sword parts arrive in Providence for re-plating, DeSenna and his staff begin a multi-step process to ensure the highest-quality finish on the final product. First, the parts must be stripped of any old plating, lacquer or other buildup from oils, fingerprints and other elements. Occasionally this involves removing paint that people have applied in an effort to improve the sword’s appearance. It’s a time-consuming process: more for some swords than others. Every piece is treated individually and is given the appropriate treatment for its condition.

“It’s all in the prep work,” said DeSenna, insisting that the tedious steps prior to plating are vital to getting an impeccable final product. After the components are stripped, they are “vibed” in a vibratory machine, which smooths them out and gives them what he calls a “pre-finish.” They are then polished using a polishing machine. Sometimes that process needs

Does Your Sword Need Refurbishing?

For questions regarding the sword services provided by *The MARINE Shop*, including information about repair evaluations and price quotes, email tms@mca-marines.org, call (877) 640-7195 or visit the Quantico location at 300 Potomac Ave., Quantico, VA 22134.

to be repeated before the piece is ready for plating. The platers then “string” the brass sword components on a rack, coat them with nickel and then plate them with 24-karat gold. The entire process requires a comprehensive knowledge of metallurgy and a considerable degree of precision.

It’s hard these days to find a plater who is willing to re-work old pieces, said DeSenna, because it’s such an involved process. Most would rather have new pieces because it’s easier. But he enjoys the challenge and hates to turn down anyone’s business, he said with a laugh, referring to times when customers have come to him with pieces that no other platers were willing to work on. There’s a special kind of fulfillment, he said, in making old pieces look brand new. DeSenna and his staff take their work seriously and won’t stop until they’re confident they’re delivering products of the highest caliber. And while sometimes pits are too deep or significant to be fully stripped or polished out, the final piece is still a remarkable improvement from its previous state, and an optimist would say that small imperfections add character to the sword.

In the years since he took over Ideal Plating, DeSenna has watched several large plating businesses in the area go under, including Regal, where he first learned the trade. Imports from China have hurt the plating industry in the U.S., he said, because many people just want cheap products and aren’t particularly concerned about quality. Increased environmental regulations have also changed the process over time. Certain chemicals and lacquers they once used are now banned and the disposal process has changed. When he began working as a plater, they would dump excess metals down the drain, he said, but regulations now require them to be recycled. As a result, said DeSenna, the Providence River is the cleanest it’s been in 100 years. Times have changed, he said, and he’s made every effort to change with them. He’s happy to have a shop that stays busy and has a reputation for excellent craftsmanship.

When the finished gold-plated pieces arrive back at *The MARINE Shop* from Ideal, as well as the pieces from the other vendors, they go straight into the hands of the store’s resident sword expert, Major Randy Stegner, USMC (Ret). A former communications officer, Stegner is not only responsible for sword refurbishing services but is also the store’s lead sales associate for uniform packages, swords and professional reading. A wealth of knowledge regarding all things ceremonial, Stegner has a decade of experience with sword refurbishing. Watching him



ABIGAIL WILSON

Among *The MARINE Shop's* recent sword refurbishing customers is LtGen W. Mark Faulkner, USMC (Ret), CEO of the MCA&F, who examined the final product in the shop’s “sword room” in Quantico, Va., Aug. 29. LtGen Faulkner’s sword is an heirloom gifted to him by his father, Col James P. Faulkner, USMC (Ret), who purchased it in 1959 for \$59 at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi, Texas, where he was a flight student. Over the years, the sword, which had spent a good amount of time stored away in a box, became tarnished and pitted, but thanks to the expertise of *The MARINE Shop* staff and the craftsmen it has partnered with, it’s regained its gleaming finish and will be displayed proudly by the Faulkner family.

at work in the store’s “sword room,” it becomes immediately evident just how much he knows about the way the swords are constructed.

Interestingly, there’s a great amount of variation in the way Marine swords are constructed, depending on the year they were fabricated and who manufactured them. Even within the span of a few years,

said Stegner, a specific manufacturer may change or alter certain aspects of the sword’s makeup while still maintaining the same visual style. Due to this variation and the fact that swords arrive for refurbishing in varying degrees of condition, Stegner treats each sword individually.

“It was a fun learning curve to get into the inner secrets of how these swords are



Sword blades, hilts and other extra pieces are stored in the “sword room” of *The MARINE Shop* in Quantico, Va. For years, Marines have trusted their swords to the shop’s staff, particularly Maj Randy Stegner, USMC (Ret), who is the organization’s resident sword expert. (Photo by Sara W. Bock)

put together and how to take them apart,” said Stegner, adding that they typically refurbish between 50 and 70 swords each year.

It’s a trial-and-error process, during which he may run into unexpected challenges, but Stegner always has a solution and a workshop full of tools and solvents that can loosen even the most stubborn pieces. He also keeps on hand a stockpile of spare pieces, parts, fittings and hardware.

On a limited basis, *The MARINE Shop* will accept swords from other services for refurbishing, but Marine swords tend to lend themselves more to being able to be disassembled and reassembled. It’s all in the construction.

“Marine swords, as a whole usually tend to get put together better than some of the other services’ [swords], just because every Marine learns how to handle a sword and the officers are required to

have one, so a little more care, ingenuity and engineering goes into how they’re put together,” said Stegner.

Customers can either bring their sword into the shop in Quantico, or can mail them in for refurbishing. Their condition varies—according to Stegner, some swords really are in pretty decent shape but the owners just want them looking pristine, particularly for wall displays. Others come in terrible disrepair. After



SARA W. BOCK

Stegner disassembles the hilt of a sword that was sent in by a customer for refurbishing. For Stegner, the most rewarding part of the job is watching the reaction of customers when they see their newly refurbished sword for the first time.



SARA W. BOCK

various natural disasters, particularly Hurricane Katrina, Stegner recalls, they've received swords that had been submerged in water and exhibited extensive corrosion. Occasionally, but not often, they've been so damaged by corrosion that they are not repairable.

It's challenging work, but between Stegner's knowledge and expertise and the excellent craftsmanship of vendors like DeSenna who contribute to the process, Marines can rest assured that by bringing a sword to *The MARINE Shop* for refurbishing, it's in the most capable hands.

"We've got the corporate knowledge and expertise here to know how the swords are put together, we've got the familiarity ... and the regularity of working with them," said Stegner, who added that there really isn't any reason why anyone else in the commercial market would have the correct parts on hand or truly have a grasp on the particulars of Marine swords.

The DeSenna family and the rest of the staff of Ideal Plating don't get the pleasure of seeing the look on the faces of Marines or their families when they see their newly restored sword for the first time, but they enjoy imagining what that moment looks like.

"They must have a big smile on their



GSYGT ROBERT BROWN, USMC

face ... It's a good feeling, you know?" said DeSenna.

For Stegner, handing off the final product to its owner is a highlight of his job and surely the most rewarding.

He's observed many moments he considers touching; especially when "legacy swords"—swords belonging to a parent or grandparent who served in the Corps—return from refurbishing and are passed down to the family's newest Marine right there in the store.

Cpl Kyle Cushman, a motor transportation mechanic with Combat Logistics Battalion 11, conducts the "order, sword" drill movement during a Corporals' Course while at sea with the 11th MEU aboard USS Somerset (LPD-25), Oct. 26, 2016. While swords are no longer used in combat, sword manual is still a component of many Marine Corps schools.

He recalls another instance in which a retired sergeant major in Pennsylvania sent his sword in after his home suffered a devastating fire. The blade of his NCO sword was the only thing left intact, and he sent it to *The MARINE Shop* to see if they could do anything to help. With the help of their trusted artisans and craftsmen, they completely rebuilt a sword from scratch that would fit the blade. It's just one of the many examples over the years in which they've gone above and beyond to make their customers happy.

Those moments, said Stegner, make all the hard work worthwhile.

Editor's note: To learn more about the history of the Marine Corps' sword traditions, see "Saved Round" on page 72.



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SSGT PENNY SNOOZY, USMC

“Now’s the Time”

The Commandant Cautions Marines to Be Ready to Go

By Col Mary H. Reinwald, USMC (Ret)

Gen Neller speaks to Marines with the 11th MEU and Sailors assigned to the amphibious assault ship USS Makin Island (LHD-8) on the ship’s flight deck in the Gulf of Aden, Dec. 23, 2016.

Editor’s Note: The editor of the Marine Corps Gazette, Colonel Christopher Woodbridge, USMC (Ret), and I conducted an interview with General Robert B. Neller, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, on Aug. 23, 2017, in his office in the Pentagon. Gazette published an article on the interview in its November issue which can be accessed at mca-marines.org/gazette/2017/11/learning-without-losing.

Described as “no-nonsense” and “direct” by former Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus, General Robert B. Neller, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, is exactly what many civilians envision when they think of a Marine general. What isn’t immediately apparent to those who don’t know him is how deeply the Corps’ senior leader cares for his Marines. Asked what he enjoys most about serving as the 37th Commandant, Gen Neller responded with a wry smile, “I can help people. I can fix things.” He continued, “And we

can solve problems to the benefit of the Marine or their family.” And Gen Neller has jumped right in to “fix things.”

In a Marine Corps that has undergone significant changes in the last decade, ranging from the implementation of a variety of new technologies to addressing increased threats throughout the full spectrum of military operations to opening combat arms assignments to female Marines, it’s especially appropriate to have the Corps’ most senior Marine willing to make the often hard but necessary changes to “fix” the Corps.

“Stuff like promotion panels and changing the PFT and the force fitness instructor program and some of the changes that we’re going to do with entry level training—I think success is going to be a series of small changes which in the collective sense are going to overall make us a better Marine Corps,” Gen Neller said.

“I Don’t Want to Lose to Learn”

He is quick to remind all Marines that each has a role to play in ensuring the Corps’ future

success as the lessons learned, whether on the battlefields in Iraq and Afghanistan or in the cyber world, are learned the *right* way, not necessarily the *hard* way. A recent visit with Steve Hanson, the coach of the All Blacks, New Zealand's national rugby team, had the Commandant reflecting on some interesting remarks made by the team leaders. "One thing that really stuck with me—"I don't want to lose to learn." I think a lot of us think that we have to have a failure. We always learn from a failure, but I think the sign of a good organization is they are willing to learn without having a failure. You have to be introspective; you have to be self-critical and analytical. I think we are that kind of organization, but we can always get better. We should never be satisfied."



SGT GABRIELA GARCIA, USMC

Everyone Has a Job to Do

Achieving success in the dynamic environment the Corps faces today is challenging in itself, but the Commandant is also facing some unique circumstances in his own chain of command which has suddenly become very Marine-heavy. Gen Joseph F. Dunford is serving as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and both the Secretary of the Navy and the Secretary of Defense are Marines. Richard V. Spencer, the current SECNAV, served five years as a Marine CH-46 helicopter pilot, and Defense Secretary James N. Mattis is a retired Marine four-star general. The Marine Corps team doesn't stop there. The White House Chief of Staff, John F. Kelly, is another retired Marine four-star general. So how does the presence of so many senior Marines in the highest levels of both the Department of Defense and the White House impact the Commandant and his day-to-day responsibilities? Not as much as one might expect.

"I've had a number of people come up to me excited that Marines are in senior civilian positions within the government. And to me, it's an interesting historical phenomenon. I don't think it makes the job of the Commandant easier or harder. They have their view of what the Marine Corps is or should be or was. And in some ways it's less difficult for me to explain things and make them understand certain nuances. But on the other side, if our views don't align . . . I work for Joe [Dunford]. I worked for Secretary Mattis before. John Kelly's the chief of staff for the president. Mr. Spencer is a former Marine and is now our secretary of the Navy. He's going to be a great partner, but he's got to do his job. Secretary of Defense has to do his job. CMC's got to do his job. Everybody's going to do their job."

The idea of everyone doing their job resonates with Gen Neller. "That's what Marines do, right? We help each other out. We solve problems. And we make it work. We do our jobs. We all have jobs to do. That's the mantra for me. Do your job."

One constant in any meetings or engagements with Gen Neller is stories about Marines with whom he's served. Another is his sharp wit. His stern visage masks a droll and dry sense of humor that can take people by surprise when they meet him. At the Marine Corps Association & Foundation's

2017 C4 Awards dinner, Gen Neller related a story about meeting a junior Marine at Camp Pendleton while visiting the maintenance area at 11th Marine Regiment. When the general asked the young leatherneck about his job, the lance corporal started discussing GCSS-MC (Global Combat Support System—Marine Corps, a family of systems used to track logistics and supply information), the general asked him to slow down saying, "Hey Marine, I'm still a MIMMS/SASSY guy!" The Marine informed the Commandant that those systems were long gone and GCSS-MC was the replacement. The Commandant's response? "Some major probably got an MSM for changing those names!"

At the same event, Gen Neller made a point of recognizing a veteran Marine who he had last seen in 1988 in Panama during Operation Just Cause. His pleasure in renewing old bonds and reveling in the camaraderie of being among Marines was palpable. He finished off his speech lamenting that while the other services often sing their service hymns, Marines simply stand at attention. Asking the crowd, "Remember when you were at recruit training? What did you do at night? You sang 'The Marines' Hymn!'" As the crowd's fervent applause and rambunctious "oorahs" finally died down, the

Above: The CMC, talking with young Marines during a stop at MCB Quantico, Va., Oct. 1, 2015, consistently reminds Marines that they should be prepared to deploy at a moment's notice.

Below: With more than 40 years of service as an infantry officer, the CMC's assignments have taken him all over the world, including Korea for Exercise Team Spirit in 1977 when he served with Co "L," 3d Battalion, 4th Marines.



COURTESY OF GEN ROBERT B. NELLER, USMC



SSGT GABRIELA GARCIA, USMC

Gen Neller, left, and the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, SgtMaj Ronald L. Green, center, tour a facility at MCB Hawaii, Nov. 20, 2015.



COURTESY OF GEN ROBERT B. NELLER, USMC

2ndLt Dirk R. Ahle and 2ndLt Robert B. Neller at NAS Cubi Point, Philippines in November 1976.



SSGT SEAN K. HARPER, USA

During a passage of command ceremony at Marine Barracks Washington, D.C. Sept. 24, 2015, Gen Dunford, left, relinquished command to Gen Neller. Now the CJCS, Gen Dunford is one of several senior Marines the CMC works with both inside and outside DOD.

Gen Neller continued, “I think someone ought to tell the Commandant that we should sing ‘The Marines’ Hymn’! So, we’re going to start tonight!” Hundreds of Marines, most wearing suits and well into their post-Marine Corps careers, jumped to their feet and began singing a very enthusiastic version of the Hymn.

Background

A career infantry officer, Gen Neller was commissioned in 1975 after graduating from the University of Virginia. He has served in all three divisions and each Marine Expeditionary Force. His record includes participation in Operations Just Cause (Panama), Restore Hope (Somalia) and Iraqi Freedom where he served as the commander of I MEF (Forward). In addition to serving with the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe and on the Joint Staff as the Director of Operations, he has commanded at all levels, including serving as the commanding officer of both 3d Light Armored Infantry Battalion and 6th Marine Regiment and as the commanding general of Marine Forces Command, Marine Forces Europe, and Marine Forces Central Command. He has also served as the President of the Marine Corps University.

His assignment leading the Corps’ academic commands was especially appropriate given the example Gen Neller has set throughout his career as to the importance of reading and writing as forms of professional development and education. He has written numerous articles in the *Marine Corps Gazette* since he was a captain—his “An Open Letter to the ‘Young Turks’ ” in the November 2011 issue is especially thought-provoking. The Commandant reads the Corps’ professional journal each month, and when he finds an article interesting, he has been known to track down the author.

“In two of the last three months, because of articles written, I felt compelled to call the lieutenants who wrote them and ask what the hell they were talking about!” And he jokingly continued, “So if you’re feeling a little froggy out there and want to have a conversation that will never be recorded, join the MCA and write an article for the *Gazette*, and we might become close personal friends!”

He is sincere in his desire to hear from Marines whether in person or via formal writing submissions. “I would encourage anyone to write; we have a lot of junior Marines writing for the *Gazette*, and they have a lot of good ideas. They are used to communicating on social media; for them to write a letter or article is not a whole lot different than posting on whatever venue they use to communicate with

“A few minutes ago, Bob Neller became my Commandant. He has the energy and vision to take us into the future.”

—General Joseph F. Dunford at the 2015 passage of command ceremony on Sept. 24, 2015



SSGT GABRIELA GARCIA, USMC

their friends—just as long as they don’t use emojiis!” he said with a sly grin.

“I think it’s [the *Gazette*] an important venue as professionals to exchange ideas constructively. I think one of the best articles was written by Brute Krulak [“A Soldier’s Dilemma,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, November 1986] about how to dissent if you don’t agree,” Gen Neller added.

“If you don’t agree, you are compelled as a professional to express your disagreement, but you should also have an alternative course of action,” Gen Neller said. And differing opinions should be expressed appropriately. “You should be able to do that in a professional, tactful way so we can maintain our professionalism.”

Despite his busy schedule, the Commandant makes time to read while traveling to bases throughout the Corps and even while working out. “If I’m going somewhere, I read a book. I use the elliptical trainer and have my Kindle so I can read. I’ve been reading more while I’m on the thing and I’m doing my old-man PT.” After attending the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation awards ceremony in April, he made sure to read several of the award-winning books. “I already had read ‘White Donkey’ by Max Uriarte because I already had a relationship with him because I’m a big ‘Terminal Lance’ fan. But I read ‘Notes to the Man Who Shot Me,’ and I read ‘We Will Hold.’ ”

His voracious reading is an influence on his goal of reviewing the Commandant’s Professional Reading List each year in order to ensure the right blend of both classics and new books is consistently maintained.

Before an evening parade at “8th and I,” July 22, 2016, Gen Neller, left, and his wife, D’Arcy, greet Gen John F. Kelly and his wife, Karen Kelly. Gen Kelly, now the White House Chief of Staff, served as the parade’s guest of honor.

He considers Lieutenant General Victor H. “Brute” Krulak’s “First to Fight: An Inside View of the U.S. Marine Corps” as one of the classics which will be on the Commandant’s Professional Reading List for years to come but also recognizes that there is much to be gained by reviewing other more recent books which can provide fresh and more in-depth looks at Marine Corps history. “Mark Bowden just wrote the new book on Hue [“Hue 1968: A Turning Point of the American War in Vietnam”]... He’s writing it from both the U.S. [perspective] and the view of the Vietnamese and the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese. There’s so many good books out there”

Encouraging Young Marines

Both the Commandant and Sergeant Major Ronald Green, the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, have made numerous trips over the last

Gen Neller, center, meets with II MEF leaders at Camp Lejeune, N.C., Oct. 8, 2015, to discuss the operating forces’ issues and concerns.



CPL SAMANTHA K. DRAUGHON, USMC

General Neller is “a tested warrior and innovative strategist who never hesitates to act. Whether he was commanding a Marine security force company or the 3rd Marine Division, he’s led with conviction and has earned the respect of every Marine under his charge.”

—Ashton B. Carter, 25th Secretary of Defense



A member of the staff at MBW briefs Gen Neller, then-Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter, and then-Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus on the passage of command ceremony, Sept. 24, 2015.

few years throughout the Corps and have met Marines who have not been shy about telling the Corps’ senior leaders what they think or asking questions about future deployments. “A lot of the younger ones want to know when they’re going to get to go back to Afghanistan or Iraq or some other place. We went out to see the 31st MEU, and one of the Marines asked me, ‘What’s the chance of us going to Korea?’ ” said Gen Neller. He thoughtfully reflected on the last 10 years when Marines knew it was only a matter of time before they were sent to Iraq or Afghanistan. “It was easier to gain their attention and focus; it’s a little more challenging now, but my answer to them is, you joined a warfighting organization so your job is to get ready to go to war. If I called you tonight at midnight, and said ‘Pack your trash, grinder 6 o’clock, here’s the gear list, we’re leaving,’ are you ready to go mentally? Is your family ready for you to leave?” He specifically mentioned the Marines on Okinawa. “If you’re in the Pacific, three of the five challenges to the government of the United States and peace and security of the world are right there—terrorism, the Democratic Republic of Korea aka North Korea and the People’s Republic of China. If there was ever a time when you have to be mentally prepared to go, now’s the time.”

The Commandant, however, is not eager for war. As evidenced by his two Combat Action Ribbons,

he’s been to war and has experienced its horrors firsthand. “Am I happy I don’t have to go to Al-Taquaddum or Al Asad surgical and to watch you in the emergency room split from your tail to your head while some guy is trying to put your ass back together or put your pieces back on you? I am. I do not miss that.” He emphatically repeated, “I do not miss that. So be careful what you ask for. I respect and understand and love them for wanting to go because it can’t be any other way. But at the same time, they have to be professional enough to know this is not some big ‘oorah, oorah’ thing because if you go, people are going to get hurt. So keep your eyes wide open and pay attention.”

His concern for Marines, whether they stay in the Marine Corps for one tour or serve until mandatory retirement, is evident. “I’ve told Marines for the last two years since I’ve been in this office, my goal is for you to be successful in your life. That’s my responsibility. Your responsibility is to work hard to try to achieve that success. The job of leadership is to facilitate you achieving your goal of success. I’ve never met anybody that joined the Marine Corps to not be successful.”

Marines today, like their forefathers, must face adversity head on. “If nothing else, [the Marine Corps] teaches you ... you’re going to have adversity. Hey look, I’ve got to figure this out. I can’t quit—it’s just not an option. No surrender. No quit.”

His recent trip to Guadalcanal to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the battle was on his mind as he said, “I’m sure the guys at Guadalcanal when they were out there being attacked by the Japanese—you know they really didn’t like being there and there wasn’t enough food, the bugs were bad. They all got malaria. So what are you going to do? Fight. You can’t quit. It’s not permitted.”

He is also quick to remind Marines that the Corps’ strength is knowing that every Marine will be there for each other regardless of ethnicity, race, gender or religion. Remembering his days as a young lieutenant in the 1970s, Gen Neller remarked, “I’ve been in the Marine Corps where we hated each other because of the color of our skin. All sides. And we were killing each other, literally killing each other.” Such hatred cannot be tolerated especially given the possibility of combat operations in the near future. “If I’m laying out there in the street wounded, I have to know that you’re going to come out there and get me. And if you are out there, you have to know I’m going to come out there and get you—no questions asked. Whether I’m a man or a woman; I’m black, I’m Asian, I’m Latino or I’m white or whatever I am—Hindu, Catholic, Protestant, Jew, Muslim, Wiccan. It doesn’t matter.” He continued, “You’re a Marine. All the rest of that stuff gets checked at the door. You’re a Marine; you’re American. It can’t be any other way. That’s been our strength.”

While encouraged about the Corps’ future and confident in the operational abilities of Marines throughout the Corps, the Commandant does have some concerns about some destructive behavior displayed by Marines in recent years.

“The thing that concerns me are the things that Marines do that are not productive to their success in life or our operational capability. We lose about 150 Marines a year through accidents, suicides, bad luck, sickness. They don’t achieve their objective in life whatever that is. And I think that the primary contributing factor is alcohol. If I could change anything, I would have Marines be more responsible and respectful of their use of alcohol.

“I’m not telling them not to drink. They’re grown men and women; I trust them. But we all need to make better decisions. If I said to you, I’m going to give you some advice that I believe has a 100 percent chance of improving your success on this earth, would you be interested in taking that advice? And the answer is ‘Yes, what is it?’ You need to be more conscious of how much alcohol you consume. I have yet to have somebody come up to me and tell me how drinking a lot of alcohol is going to make me better in any way shape or form. And I’ve tried to convey that message, the idea of protect what you’ve earned, protect what we’ve earned. Every negative behavior that I’ve seen Marines do, whether it’s sexual assault, domestic abuse, suicide, illegal drug use—the great majority of all those events start with alcohol abuse and alcohol.”

The Commandant and countless others are standing by to make sure that Marines succeed. “You earned the title Marine so you’re in the club. We all have equity in making sure you’re successful.



CPL SAMANTHA K. BRAUN, USMC

There are tens if not hundreds of thousands of Marines out there that want to help every other Marine so you’re not here by yourself. Get your head up. There’s a solution to every problem. Let’s define the problem, just like you were taught. Come up with a course of action. Execute the plan and move on. And the sun will come up tomorrow, and you’re still a U.S. Marine. There’s no other option.”

And while he is proud of his Marines and confident that the Corps is postured for any contingencies in the future, Gen Neller cautions Marines that they cannot rest on their laurels. “Everyone understands that it’s going to take every Marine to be smarter, more cognitive, more adaptive, more disciplined, more sober and industrious, willing to commit like we always have. We need a little more from all of us.”

“Define the problem.” “Execute the plan.” “Work hard.” “Be prepared to go.” Simple words with a strong message from a no-nonsense, direct Commandant who leads by example and diligently “does his job.”



Above: Gen Neller, left, speaks with Marines before a football game at Spartan Stadium, East Lansing, Mich., Sept. 9, 2017. A Michigan native, the CMC attended college at the University of Virginia.

Below: BGen Bain McClintock, right, promoted the future commandant to the grade of captain at MCRD San Diego on Jan. 4, 1980.



COURTESY OF GEN ROBERT B. NELLER, USMC



SGT DAVID BICKEL, USMC

Sgt Michael Vura, left, and Cpl Austin Cox, right, helicopter mechanics with HMLAT-303, were attending the Route 91 Harvest music festival in Las Vegas, Oct., 1, when a gunman opened fire, killing 58 people and wounding hundreds of others. The two Marines used the training and skills they learned in the Corps to help care for the wounded and escort concertgoers to safety.

In Las Vegas, Off-Duty Marines Run Toward Gunfire

In the wake of the mass shooting at the Route 91 Harvest music festival in Las Vegas, Oct. 1, Sergeant Michael Vura and Corporal Austin Cox, mechanics with Marine Light Attack Helicopter Training Squadron (HMLAT) 303, based at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., were among the concertgoers—and found themselves in the right place at the right time. Utilizing the skills they acquired during their Marine Corps training, the two assisted in victim evacuation and casualty care.

“We heard the initial shots and didn’t know if it was the speakers making noise or actual gunfire ... then the shots went off again, and we knew there was a threat,” said Cox.

After identifying which side of the stage was targeted, both Marines ran toward the gunfire and started assisting in the evacuation of the crowd.

“People were trying to get out of the area but were trapped in by crowd control barricades,” said Vura. “We positioned ourselves in between the stage and the barricades and started assisting people in climbing the barricade and running for cover.”

In the process of assisting people who were trying to take cover, the Marines

came across several individuals who had sustained gunshot wounds. Vura and Cox proceeded to evacuate the injured individuals while applying pressure and makeshift tourniquets when needed.

According to Vura, they saw a man who had been shot in the chest. They instructed his companion to apply pressure on the wound until rescue personnel could assist.

“As we turned to walk away, we found a girl that had a gunshot wound to her neck,” said Cox. “We immediately pulled her over the barricade and started applying pressure to her neck. There was more blood coming from another wound, and we found that she had been hit in the back as well.”

At that point, the pair of Marines separated. Cox stayed with the wounded woman and assisted in getting her to the hospital.

“I remember the last thing she did when we got to the hospital was give me a thumbs up,” recalled Cox. “I knew she was going to fight and that I could leave her in the hands of the doctors.”

Vura continued helping concertgoers escape and treated more wounded victims until the rescue teams arrived on scene.

“I started making my way around the barricades, and myself and another individual made some makeshift stretchers to carry the wounded to safety,” said Vura.

“During that process, we carried around five to six wounded individuals as well as several deceased bodies out. At that point, SWAT arrived and secured the area ... I just walked to the strip, sat down and tried to process everything that just happened.”

Neither Marine is looking for any special recognition.

“I went to this country concert to get away from all my life’s problems, and it became the realest moment of my life,” said Vura. “Remember the basics and know that something like this could happen at any moment.”

“With Sgt Vura there, I had more courage than I would have had on my own,” said Cox. “We were there when the people affected needed us ... we are Marines 24/7.”

Sgt David Bickel, USMC

Future of Flight: Marines Test 3-D Printed SUAS

Marines with 2d Marine Division tested remote-controlled aircraft made through additive manufacturing, also known as 3-D printing, at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., Sept. 26-27.

The technicians and engineers with U.S. Army Research Lab gathered Marines from different military occupational specialties to demonstrate the usefulness and convenience of small unmanned aircraft systems (SUAS) manufactured by 3-D printers.

Unlike systems the military has in use already, the additive-manufactured SUAS can be created more quickly and with specific missions in mind.

“At this point we are focusing on intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance missions,” said Eric Spero, a team leader in the vehicle technology directorate of the U.S. Army Research Lab. “We have different cameras such as an infrared and a day camera; there are different things



we can do like stream the video to systems or a heads-up display and record it for later viewing.”

Researchers have created a catalog that allows servicemembers to select an SUAS that is tailored to fit the needs of the mission. They simply pick the SUAS that fits their mission objectives and download the information that allows the parts to be created by the 3-D printer. An additive-manufactured SUAS can be created, constructed and ready for operations in approximately 24 hours.

“Basically what we are doing is combining two emerging technologies,” said John Gerdes, a mechanical engineer at the U.S. Army Research Lab. “We have taken 3-D printing and quad-copters and created a means of giving troops a customized vehicle right when they need it, with the capabilities they need from it, on demand.”

Instead of fitting Marines to systems that are already in use, such as the RQ-11 Raven or the RQ-20 Puma, and forcing them to compromise to complete the mission, they can create a vehicle specific to the job, said Gerdes.

“These craft are the future because they’re protected [from] obsolescence,” said Gerdes. “We are able to give troops the technology almost immediately by printing new parts and making slight adjustments so they will always have a craft that is able to complete the mission.”

LCpl Taylor Cooper, USMC



LCPL TAYLOR SCHWAMB, USMC

PFC Blamo Barlue, a postal clerk, works at the Camp Courtney Post Office, MCB Camp Butler, Okinawa, Japan. Originally from the Ivory Coast, Barlue moved to the U.S. after Marines and Sailors on a humanitarian mission saved his life as a child. Today, he proudly serves as a U.S. Marine.

From War Victim to Warfighter: Saved by U.S. Marines, PFC Feels Compelled to Serve

“I was on my deathbed—I was going to die, but those Marines and Sailors saved me,” Private First Class Blamo Barlue recalled.

Barlue is a postal clerk stationed at Marine Corps Base Camp Smedley D. Butler, Okinawa, Japan, but his story

began along the Ivory Coast of West Africa. His childhood was spent hiding from the unforgiving sun and running around in open-toed shoes. He was better off than most, owning three sets of clothing: one for church, one for school and one for daily use.

His parents worked hard to provide for their large family. His mother owned a vendor stand, selling the family’s produce, like handmade peanut butter or the rice they harvested. His father was an English teacher who became a principal at a local school. This was their life until the region erupted into civil war. Barlue’s parents were forced to quit their jobs and move the family to a nearby refugee camp in an effort to keep their children safe. But in 2003, a few months after they moved into the camp, many of the children died during an outbreak of measles. The viral infection killed more than 500,000 children worldwide in 2003, more than any other vaccine-preventable disease. Due to the harsh conditions and lack of necessary medical advancements, the measles death toll in Africa skyrocketed.

Barlue, age 6, lay on his deathbed at the refugee camp’s makeshift hospital, a cramped tent filled with cots, for four months. His mother watched helplessly as she lost another one of her sons, Barlue’s twin. Just when all hope seemed lost, the U.S. Marine Corps and Navy arrived, bringing a life-saving vaccine and constructing houses for people as part of a humanitarian assistance disaster relief mission.

“That vaccine they gave me saved my life,” said Barlue. “I might have been



Marines test SUAS manufactured by 3-D printers at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., Sept. 27. Working with technicians from the U.S. Army Research Lab, the Marines had the opportunity to learn the capabilities and practical applications of the systems, including testing goggles connected to them. (Photos by LCpl Taylor Cooper, USMC)



one of thousands of children that got that vaccine that day, but that vaccine saved my life and I will always remember that.”

Barlue’s hardworking family left Africa and settled in the United States. With time, he perfected his English and he took cooking classes in high school. He credits all of his success to the nation that gave his resilient family a second chance. As his high school years came to a close, he struggled with his plans for the future.

“I wanted to do culinary and I was so passionate about that, but I felt that sense of duty to join the Marine Corps and that sense was overwhelming. I felt like I needed to do this.

“I felt this need to serve because America has given us everything,” continued Barlue. “I came with the clothes on my back and they gave us food, a home, an education. Americans are the reason that I have what I have.”

In 2016, Barlue enlisted in the Marine Corps and arrived in Okinawa in 2017.

“I want to go on a humanitarian mission,” said Barlue. “I may not physically save someone’s life, but just being there can impact someone’s life without you even realizing. The little things that you do in life, that you think you have no purpose, always do.”

Barlue will never forget the Marines who saved his life.

“If I could say anything to the Marines, I would try and say thank you for being there,” said Barlue. “I’d tell them what they did, the sacrifices they made, did not go unnoticed. They protected people and they saved them, healed them. I’d tell them that I joined the Marine Corps because of them. I’m not good with words but I want to do what they did for me. They were my hero—no, they are my hero.”

LCpl Tayler Schwamb, USMC



During Marine Week Detroit, a mural paying tribute to the Montford Point Marines was unveiled on the side of the MCL, Montford Point Detachment 158 building, Sept. 9. Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Ronald L. Green, left, and George G. Cranberry Jr., right, a Montford Point Marine veteran, were among those in attendance. (Photos by LCpl Danny Gonzalez, USMC)

Marines Unveil Mural During Marine Week Detroit

On Sept. 9, five Marines with Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force Detroit unveiled the mural they painted for Marine Week Detroit.

The mural was painted on the side of the Marine Corps League, Montford Point Detachment 158 building in Detroit. It depicts the history and accomplishments of the Montford Point Marines, who served in a segregated Marine Corps from 1942 to 1949.

“We have the past Marines from Montford Point, and then we have the present Marines ... it shows how far we’ve come as far as segregation and gender equality, and it means a lot,” said Lance Corporal Meghan Millott, one of the mural artists.

The mural reads: “For outstanding perseverance and courage that inspired

social change in the Marine Corps.”

The five Marines on the mural team expressed how honored they were to have the chance to give back to the community and highlight an important part of the history of the Corps.

“Our unveiling ceremony is a core event of our Marine Weeks, wherever we go,” explained Brigadier General William H. Seely III, Director, Office of Marine Corps Communication. “It is a physical and enduring reminder of what your Marine Corps does, but it’s also a small gift to say ‘thank you’ for what you have done for your community.”

Marine Week Detroit took place from Sept. 6-10. The purpose of Marine Week is to bring Marines to cities that typically wouldn’t have firsthand interaction with Marines and the Marine Corps.

LCpl Samantha Bray, USMC

MCAS Cherry Point Wins Recreation Management Award

The Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) program at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C., was recognized as the winner of the 2017 National Gold Medal Grand Plaque Award for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management for the Armed Forces during a ceremony in New Orleans, Sept. 27.

The recognition came during the general session of the annual conference of the National Recreation and Park Association, a national not-for-profit organization committed to the advancement of public parks, recreation and conservation.

“By receiving this prestigious award, Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point has demonstrated a commitment to excellence,” said Chris Nunes, president of the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration.

“It is an honor to be the 2017 NRPA Armed Forces Gold Medal winner. The hard work and dedication the entire team puts in daily is paramount in supporting the mission of the installation, to include offering wonderful recreational facilities

and ensuring conservation efforts are maintained, just to name a few,” said Kimberly Johnston of Semper Fit. “Marine Corps Community Services Cherry Point is thrilled to be recognized at the NRPA conference.”

The Armed Forces Recreation Gold Medal Award, founded in 2012 and presented by the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration in partnership with the National Recreation and Park Association, recognizes the contributions of military recreation providers and the work they do to enrich the lives of servicemembers, their families, and their local communities.

Among the three other installations nominated for the gold medal for 2017 were Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif., along with Fort Carson, Colo., and Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, Kittery, Maine.



Two representatives from MCAS Cherry Point, N.C., accepted the Armed Forces Recreation Gold Medal Award during a ceremony in New Orleans, Sept. 26. Vera Campbell, left, director of Marine and Family Programs, and Kimberly Johnston, right, director of Semper Fit, display the gold medal for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management for the Armed Forces.



Crazy Caption Contest

Winner



LCPL ZACHARY M. FORD, USMC

“I’ll let you up, but call me a BAM again and I’ll put you in sick bay.”

Submitted by
Ron Ryan
Fort Wayne, Ind.

This Month’s Photo



PFC RHITA DANIEL, USMC

(Caption) _____

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____ ZIP _____

Dream up your own Crazy Caption. *Leatherneck* will pay \$25 or give a one-year MCA membership for the craziest one received. It’s easy. Think up a caption for the photo at the right and either mail or email it to us. Send your submission to *Leatherneck* Magazine, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134, or email it, referencing the number at the bottom right, to leatherneck@mca-marines.org. The winning entry will be published in two months.

SEA STORY OF THE MONTH

A Lesson in Radio Discipline

While working as a tower air traffic controller at MCAS Beaufort, S.C., on Christmas Eve in 1973, we had to stay late for the arrival of a single F-4. No other traffic was anticipated.

Finally, the radio crackled and a voice came over the speaker, "Beaufort Control, guess who?" Frank, our local controller that night, grabbed the mic and responded, "Calling Beaufort Control, say ID."

The pilot again responded, "Beaufort Control, guess who?" This continued until Frank reached over and turned off the master lighting control switch for the airfield, plunging the entire airfield into darkness and replied, "Calling Beaufort Control, guess where?" The pilot immediately responded, "Beaufort Control, this is Shamrock 314 requesting landing instructions!"

William Ziegler
Ijamsville, Md.

"E" Club Band Plays a Request

During the 1950s we still traveled to Hawaii by ship. We were in a draft of 76 Marines, no officers or SNCOs. We shipped out of Naval Station Treasure Island, San Francisco, Calif., and I was the senior sergeant in charge of the draft.

On the last evening in the States, I suggested that a few of us head for the "E" club. While there, Sergeant Harris asked a young lady if she would like to dance and she readily accepted. While they were dancing, her boyfriend, a Sailor, happened to show up and started raising his voice and pushing Sgt

Harris. As the sergeant in charge, I stepped up and tried to stop the situation from getting out of hand.

I approached the Sailor and placed my left hand on his right shoulder and said, "Settle down pal, he didn't mean anything." The Sailor went to push my hand off his shoulder and slapped my face in the process. That was something I never tolerated, and before thinking, I punched the Sailor. By that time the entire club was in a rather large confrontation. I stepped up on the bandstand, grabbed the microphone and said, "All Marines in Draft # XXX fall out on the deck outside the club." They were having a good old time and didn't want to fall out.

I then told the band leader to play "The Marines' Hymn," and he said, "What?" I said, "Dammit! Play 'The Marines' Hymn!'" He had the band play our hymn and every Sailor and Marine came to attention. At that I ordered all the Marines outside on deck. This time they followed my orders. I marched them back to our barracks.

About an hour after we returned to the barracks, the officer of the day showed up and asked for me. I immediately thought I was going to the brig. Instead, he said, "Sgt McCourt, that was the finest example of leadership I have ever seen in my 28 years in the Marine Corps. How did you ever think about playing "The Marines' Hymn?" I said, "It just came to me, Sir." At that, he shook my hand and said, "A job well done. Enjoy your cruise to Hawaii."

Capt Edward "Machete
Eddie" McCourt Jr.
USMC (Ret)
Henderson, Nev.

Alligator Patrol

I had the pleasure of serving with Master Sergeant F. William "Bill" Mormile several times in our journey as Marines. One incident I remember took place at Cherry Point, N.C., back in 1958 when I was flying the R4Q-2.

Mormile was in our engine shop and was one of the few junior enlisted Marines who was married. Because money was very tight, he had an outside job. He contracted with a company to provide live alligators to them, which they sold to zoos. Besides flying R4Qs I was also flying search-and-rescue helicopters on the weekends.

One Saturday Bill came to the flight line as we were getting ready to exercise our bird and asked if he could fly along and look for alligators out in the swamp. We took him along and the search began.

Soon we found a group of alligators and he asked to be let down on the hoist. He was "armed" with a piece of rope, a knife and a sack. We left him in the middle of a group of alligators but kept him in sight at all times. He caught a 5-foot long alligator, put the sack over its head and tied its legs so it couldn't get away.

We flew back overhead and he came up the hoist. He asked permission to bring the gator on board. I told him we were NOT going to have the gator in the helicopter! He asked, "Why not?" I told him that the gator would get loose and chew my leg off! He asked if we would sling the gator on the hoist and carry them both to the road. I again told him no for the same reason! He then asked if we would let him down and point to the direction of the road

and then fly circles to keep him on track to the road. We would do that. He then went down the hoist, put the alligator on his back and walked out of the swamp to the road as we flew overhead and kept him on track.

After reaching the road, we picked him up, leaving the alligator hidden by the side of the road, and returned to the airfield where he got into his car and went back out to pick up the alligator.

This is just one of many stories I could tell about him. He was fearless, a tireless worker, always willing to go the "extra mile" to help someone, and always thinking about others, especially his family.

Steve Dumovich
Collinsville, Texas

Attention! Officer in the Area

In 1961 I was stationed at Marine Corps Supply Center, Barstow, Calif., as a criminal investigator. Sergeant Andrew P. Rupchock and I were assigned to a civilian police school at the air base in San Bernardino. While there, we were billeted in the Air Force barracks.

After chow one evening as Andy and I were headed back to our rooms, we saw an airman, or so we thought, coming toward us down the hall. All of a sudden Andy calls "Attention!" and we froze against the wall.

What we had come across was an Air Force brigadier general. The general, apparently unaware of us and upon hearing the order, dropped to a knee and spun, uttering the words, "What in the *&\$% is going on?"

Then the general spotted us and looked perplexed. Andy said, "Officer in the area, Sir!" The general

relaxed, looked us over and with a grin said, "You guys are Marines, ain't ya?" We said, "Yes, Sir." He then asked, "Now what?" Andy said, "By your leave, Sir." He let us go.

As we left, I turned around and saw the general's shoulders moving up and down as he shook with laughter. I imagine he had a story for the officers' club that night.

Sgt Darwinn B. Rutz
1957-64
Greeley, Colo.

Dressed for the Occasion

As an infantry first lieutenant on peacekeeping duty in Beirut, I served as liaison officer for a month with the adjacent British unit, C Squadron, Queen's Dragoon Guards (QDG). While the BLT dug in around the airport, the QDG treated Beirut like Northern Ireland or Cyprus, fortifying a compound around a four-story building on a hillside and using it as a patrol base. I slept on the 4th floor and used my gas mask wrapped in a dirty towel as my pillow, made even less comfortable with a .45 under it.

While the BLT and QDG had "adjacent" battle space, our "lines" were not adjacent as an Israeli Mech Co had established a patrol base halfway up the hillside below the QDG compound. One night I awoke to the swoosh and bang of a small rocket clearing the 4th floor and impacting the hillside behind us. We later decided this was RPG fire directed at the Israelis from the bottom of the hill but shooting an RPG uphill in the dark is not good for accuracy. A couple of more RPGs followed the same pattern, barely clearing the QDG building. At the time it did seem possible the QDG compound was under attack, so the typical British call, "To arms, to arms" was shouted through the building. Donning my helmet and flak jacket, and grabbing my .45,

I ran into the hallway only to encounter the QDG sergeant major barreling toward me in "full kit" at port arms. After colliding, he sized me up, and said in calm and dry Queen's English, "Mr. Decker, you may need trousers for this one."

Mike Decker
Florissant, Mo.

Private Reports To Captain

It was in September 1962 and I was off to Parris Island, S.C., after joining the Marine Corps Reserve unit of Toledo, Ohio. All went well for my six months of active duty and return to the unit in Toledo. Nobody in this unit knew who I was, just another private to fill the ranks.

The first summer camp (1963) was Little Creek, Va., and we were to go out to sea and make a helicopter landing. The ship was an aircraft carrier. I'd give you its name but it's best not to embarrass a ship's captain. Our battalion boarded late in the afternoon and we found we would not sail until morning tide. Since we had little to keep us busy, I was wandering around the flight deck.

A fellow Marine said to me that the base policeman on the wharf was pointing to me. I waved and, after requesting permission, left the ship to join the officer in his police car.

We toured the Norfolk base for a short time and then the policeman stopped at the club and came out with a six pack. He dropped me off at the bow of the ship where I opened a can of beer and gave five to other Marines. After drinking the beer, I headed for the ship where I was told that the ship's captain wanted to see me.

I was led into a nice interior room with red carpet and one desk and the captain in his proper seat. As I looked around, every officer on that ship, both Marine and Navy,

was standing in that room. I'd been outmatched, outmanned and outgunned before and now I was being out-officered. The captain asked me who I was. I answered "Private Tull." He did not believe me.

The captain then said they watched me leave the ship and they watched me come back to the ship. It then hit me that what they saw and their conclusion wasn't a correct interpretation of the facts. I asked them to call base police and verify that it was my cousin who was on the base police and he was the driver that I toured the base with. His name was Don Tull and he knew I was on that ship. It was now the captain's turn to explain to all the officers in the room why he got so excited when the base police come around.

He wasn't worried about the police but rather was worried that I was an undercover Navy Inspector assigned to board the ship in order to write a formal report about the ship and her captain's leadership.

Remember that nobody knew me, and while I was away, they searched the ship for someone that could ID this new private. No one, not the battalion's officers, my squad leader or my fire team leader knew who I was.

That ship captain sure had a story to tell over drinks in the officers' club.

Louis F. Tull
USMCR, 1962-68
Medina, Ohio

With Respect to the U.S. Army

In the summer of 1969, I was serving with "Charlie" Company, First Battalion, First Marines in the Republic of South Vietnam. I had been sent to the Navy hospital in DaNang to replace my eyeglasses. At that time returning back to our battalion area was left up to us. The most common way was to go out to the gate area and hitch a ride.

As I was standing at

the gate, a jeep with U.S. Army markings pulled up. A soldier was driving and his passenger was a young Army second lieutenant. The lieutenant, clearly not happy with the delay, asked the driver why he was stopping; the soldier told him that they should give me a ride because if they took fire, having an extra weapon on board would be a good thing.

As I climbed into the back, the lieutenant looked me over and seeing I was wearing a green tee shirt that was really dirty said, "Soldier, you're out of uniform."

I was lighting up a smoke and before I could respond, the soldier said, "Sir, he's a Marine and they all dress like that. They're always out in the bush and never carry extra uniforms, just a lot of ammo."

When we got to the turnoff, I climbed out with my weapon and 782 gear in my right hand. I said, "Thank you, Sir;" and saluted with my left hand. This really fired up the lieutenant, and he asked if all Marines saluted with their left hand. I replied, "Only Army officers, Sir."

Raymond L. Plummer
USMC, 1968-70
Antioch, Ill.

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!



Marines in uniform were a common sight on American college campuses during WW II thanks to the V-12 Navy College Training Program. Here, a Marine walks out of a building at Villanova University in Villanova, Pa., in 1945. (Leatherneck file photo)



V-12 Marines in World War II

The Corps Needed Officers and the Nation's Universities Answered the Call

By Sara W. Bock

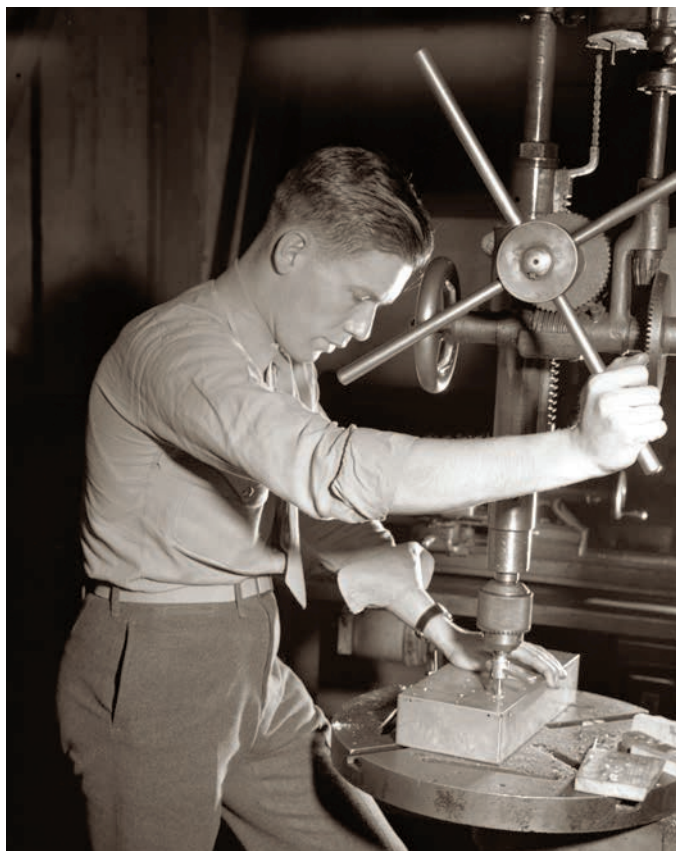
The date was Sept. 2, 1945. Marine veteran John Ledes was nearing his boot camp graduation at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., when he saw the newspaper headline: “VICTORY!” The Japanese had surrendered to the Allies, bringing World War II to an end, and he hadn’t made it to the front.

Ledes, who resides in New York, recently turned 92—and he recalls that moment with exceptional clarity, accompanied by an array of emotions.

“So here I was, a Marine at Parris Island boot camp while the Marines are dying in the Pacific ... I was so lucky. My buddies who didn’t want to become officers, many of them are still there at Guadalcanal, Tarawa and Iwo Jima,” said Ledes, a solemn tone in his voice. “I’m sitting there

at Parris Island, a Marine in recruit training finally, and I’m reading the newspaper and I say, ‘the Japanese have surrendered.’ ”

While Ledes didn’t see combat during the war, he hadn’t joined the Corps “too late.” He had been wearing the uniform at Yale University in New Haven, Conn., since 1943, as one of approximately 15,000 Marines who were sent to colleges and universities across the nation as



LEATHERNECK FILE PHOTO

Pvt John D. Browne works on a radio chassis, part of engineering courses at Villanova University in 1945. One out of every five V-12 Marines was selected for the engineering program, which was designed specifically with military applications in mind.



A Marine reads in his dormitory room at Princeton University in Princeton, N.J., in 1945. During the war, V-12 Marines and Sailors filled dormitories and fraternity houses that had grown increasingly empty due to the lowered draft age. (Leatherneck file photo)

part of the V-12 Navy College Training Program. Created in an effort to ensure that the high demand for qualified Navy and Marine Corps officers could be met, the V-12 program, which existed from 1943 to 1946, offered more than 100,000 Marines and Sailors the opportunity to attend college.

It gave aspiring Marine officers, “a partial education now, a commission for the duration and a chance to finish school after the war—those are the main attractions in V-12,” wrote Technical Sergeant James Hague in the September 1945 issue of *Leatherneck*.

The program provided participants with accelerated college courses designed specifically for the Navy and Marine Corps. For many of them, a college education would otherwise have been out of their reach due to their economic status. While the Marines would not earn their degrees as part of V-12, many participants would return after the war to complete their college studies. But for the time being, the program was the gateway to a six-month commission and, aside from a field commission, was a Marine’s best chance to earn second lieutenant bars.

V-12 fostered a unique symbiotic relationship between the Armed Forces and

institutions of higher education. Like many other facets of life on the “home front,” American colleges and universities were put to the test and rose to the challenge, committing their resources to aid in the fight. It was similar to the way the nation’s industrial sector rose to meet the military’s high demand for tanks, cars, airplanes, weapons and ammunition; or the manner in which individual Americans supported the war effort by planting victory gardens, buying war bonds and saving metals. Out of patriotism, coupled with the goal of surviving in an era when so many college age men were serving in the military, schools across the country opened their doors to the Navy and Marine Corps and devoted their assets to the training of future officers.

There were many factors that contributed to the growing need for a clear, well-established partnership between the Department of the Navy and America’s institutions of higher education but none were as significant as the lowering of the minimum draft age from 21 to 18 on Nov. 11, 1942. Arguably, it was then that the impact of the war on American colleges and universities was felt the most strongly.

The first peacetime draft in U.S. history—the Selective Training and



COURTESY OF JOHN LEDES

John Ledes, right, and fellow V-12 Marine John Dietz, left, are pictured here at Yale University in New Haven, Conn., in 1944. Ledes transferred from Columbia to Yale to become a V-12 Marine, and was in recruit training at MCRD Parris Island, S.C., when the war came to an end.



LEATHERNECK FILE PHOTO

A V-12 Marine plays catch on the lawn at Villanova University in 1945. Despite being required to wear the uniform at all times and performing required PT and other military skills training, V-12 students still had time for recreation and fun.

Service Act of 1940, known also as the Burke-Wadsworth Act—was a start, but the U.S., no longer a neutral observer in WW II, needed to grow its ranks if the Allies had any hope of victory.

The Armed Forces had for some time been recruiting prospective junior officers at colleges across the nation; the Marine Corps, in particular, had begun sending procurement teams to universities in February 1942. But in this model, the

Corps was competing against the Army and Navy for potential officers, and by all accounts, it was a somewhat disorganized and chaotic system.

In “A Brief History of Marine Corps Officer Procurement, 1775-1969,” Bernard C. Nalty and Lieutenant Colonel Ralph F. Moody, USMC, describe efforts to “scour the campuses” for “students enrolled in a course leading to a recognized degree ... who were physically fit and between the

ages of 17 and 27, might enlist in the reserve and with the anticipation of remaining on inactive status until graduation.”

Known at that time as the Marine Corps College Training Program, the system had its flaws. The Marine Corps couldn’t promise that the student wouldn’t be called to the front before graduation, and the “competition” among the Armed Forces for potential officers caused issues that were significant enough to necessitate a change. In June 1942, the Secretaries of War and the Navy had come up with a straightforward solution: the Army would focus on the schools with ROTC courses and the Navy would focus on those with NROTC courses. And in what some would consider typical, the Marines would get what was left—the schools that had neither course.

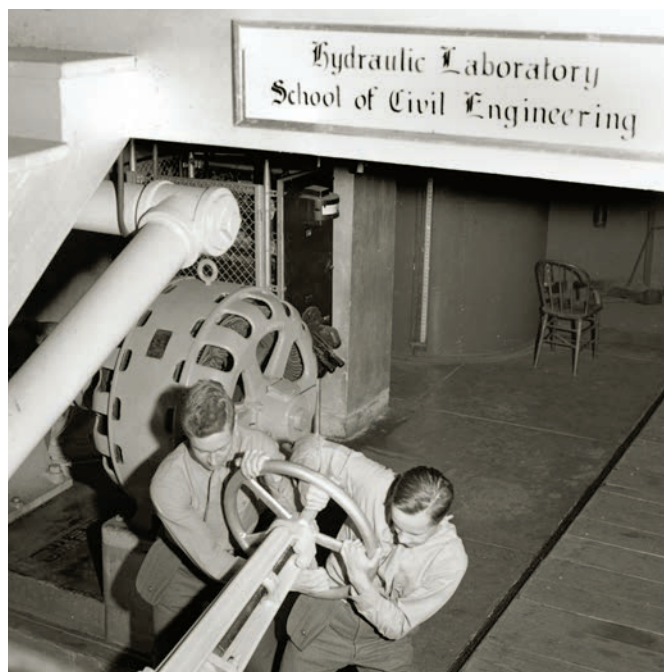
By 1943, the impact of the lowered draft age manifested itself visibly on college campuses nationwide, from the Ivy Leagues and large state schools to small-town colleges and everywhere in between. Dormitories, fraternity houses and lecture halls were increasingly empty as young students were volunteering for the war effort, enlisting or being drafted. This not only posed a threat to the longevity of higher education, but also the future of the Army, Navy and Marine Corps, as a lack of future military officers became more of a reality. The need for officers to fulfill crucial billets was one both immediate and distant.

The Navy’s V-1, V-5 and V-7 programs had been fairly effective and well-run, but



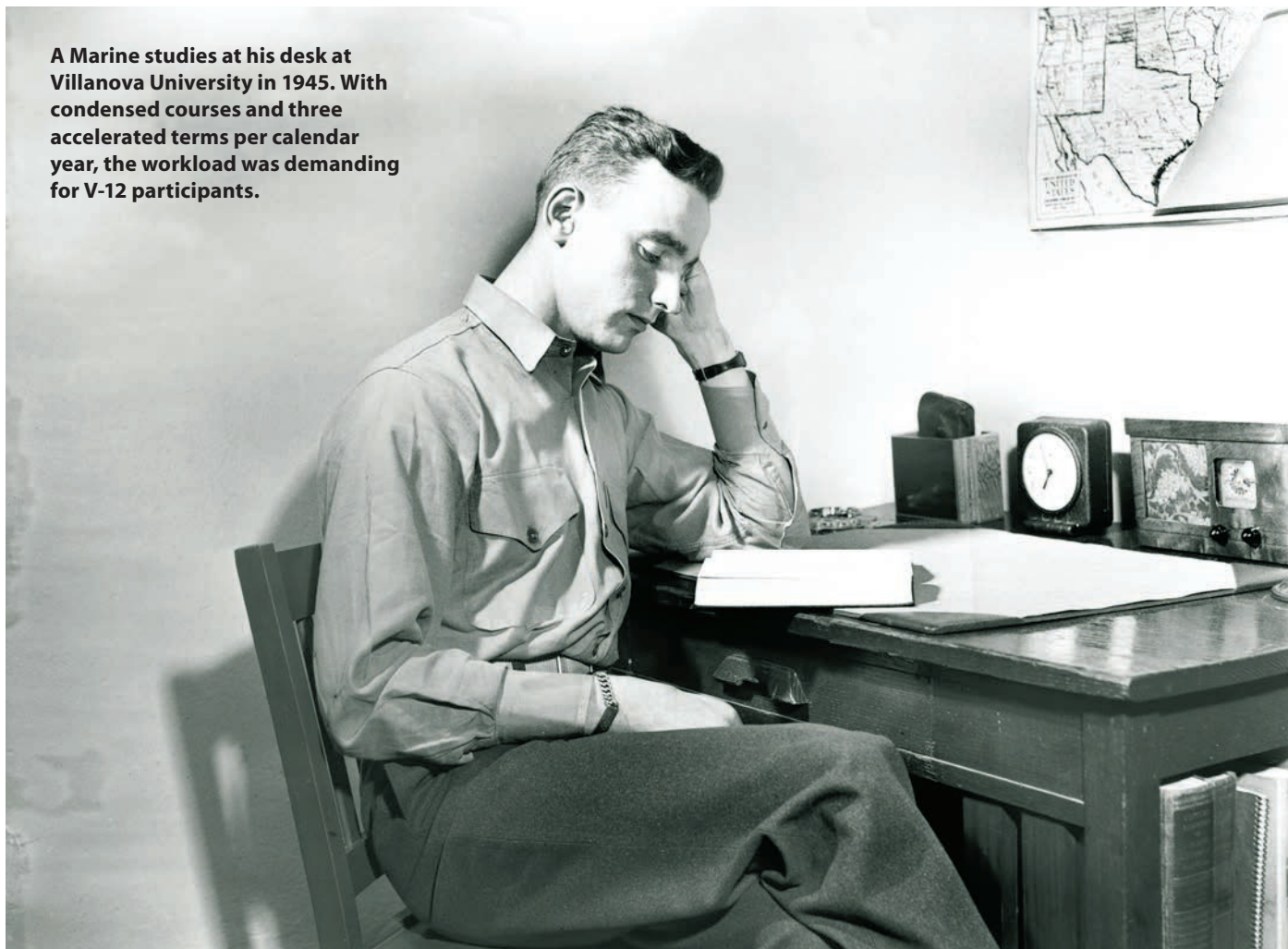
LEATHERNECK FILE PHOTO

Sgt Charley Trinkner, a veteran of Pacific action, reported for duty in West Lafayette, Ind., in July 1943, to attend Purdue University as part of the V-12 program. Like all others who entered the program from active-duty, he was required to take a rank reduction to private upon arrival.



V-12 Marines studied hydraulics as one of the phases of the advanced civil engineering course at Purdue University in 1943. (Leatherneck file photo)

A Marine studies at his desk at Villanova University in 1945. With condensed courses and three accelerated terms per calendar year, the workload was demanding for V-12 participants.



LEATHERNECK FILE PHOTO

the ideal remedy would be somewhat more comprehensive, absorbing these programs and the Marine Corps College Training Program into one with clear and specific guidelines and standards.

The Department of the Navy's solution, V-12, was initiated at 131 colleges and universities on July 1, 1943. Just prior to the program's implementation, the Navy held a conference for college administrators and professors at Columbia University in New York City, many of whom had questions and concerns about the program and the impact it would have on their respective institutions.

The keynote speaker at the conference was Vice Admiral Randall Jacobs, USN, who gave these words to the attendees:

"This is a *college* program! Its primary purpose is to give prospective Naval officers the benefits of college education in those areas most needed by the Navy. We desire, insofar as possible, to preserve the normal pattern of college life. We hope that the college will give regular academic credit for all or most of the Navy courses, and we desire that college faculties enforce all necessary regulations to keep academic standards high. We are contracting not merely for classroom, dormitory and mess

hall space and for a stipulated amount of instruction, but for the highest teaching skill, the best judgment and the soundest administration of which they are capable. We desire our students to have the benefits of faculty counseling, of extracurricular activities—in short, the best undergraduate education the colleges can offer."

Conference moderator, Captain Arthur S. Adams, USN, heralded by many as the "Father of the V-12 Program," made sure to emphasize that the Navy and Marine Corps were not proposing a "takeover" of the colleges, as some may have feared; rather, they hoped to benefit from the resources, experience and knowledge found on their campuses.

Of the schools that the Navy contracted with for the program, a select few were pinpointed as ideal locations for combined Navy-Marine Corps units. The Marine students were then divided among these specific colleges, placed in detachments and ordered to active duty during the summer of 1943. Every Marine in the program who had previously served was ordered to take a rank deduction to private.

Some were enlisted Marines who had been recommended by their command; others were high school seniors who

qualified due to their performance on a standardized exam. The students who had previously been enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserve as future officer candidates and were already attending various colleges and universities were screened and reevaluated as to their eligibility for the new program. Their transcripts were examined, recommendation letters were collected and their abilities were measured by a qualifying exam. From that group, the top contenders were selected, and those who did not make the cut could choose whether to attend boot camp and serve as enlisted Marines, or be discharged from the Corps. If they were selected but their school did not offer a Marine V-12 unit, they were assigned to a comparable school that had one.

Ledes was a mechanical engineering student at Columbia University in New York, but he had always wanted to be a Marine.

"And my father was adamant about it!" he said.

At the age of 17, Ledes gave up his scholarship at Columbia, and before he knew it, his father was dropping him off in New Haven, Conn., at a "foreign school called Yale," Ledes said with a chuckle.

Once at Yale, he became a resident of Branford College and a Marine in the V-12 program.

“I was in uniform every moment ... I was a Marine. We were dressed as Marines. I never wore civilian clothes at Yale,” he said.

As a V-12 Marine, Ledes continued to study mechanical engineering just as he had at Columbia. He did not have to pay tuition, or room and board; he also collected 21 dollars each month in basic pay.

He and the other Marine V-12 students were expected to conduct themselves with consummate military discipline.

“Although in many ways these young men are regular college students, they are never to forget that they are Marines,” wrote Capt John V.A. Fine, USMCR, in the September 1943 *Marine Corps Gazette*. “They are receiving their education and clothing at government expense and they are paid at the same rate as any other Marine privates. Consequently, since the public eye will be closely focused on them, it is all important that they strictly adhere to the Marine code of discipline and conduct,” he added.

They carried a workload 17 credit hours in courses that were specific to the V-12

program, with a strong emphasis on math and science. Rather than the traditional two-semester academic years, there were three terms each year, each 16 weeks in length. The “General Duty course” in the V-12 program was made up of four of these terms for a total of a year and one-third devoted to academics. Those in the engineering program, for which one out of every five Marines was chosen, would complete eight 16-week semesters rather than four. No matter the course of study, the program was fast-paced and demanding, requiring courses such as naval organization, drawing and descriptive geometry, history, economics and physics, among others. Certain courses were considered to be general and required for all, while others could be chosen based on the individual Marine’s interests.

Academics aside, the Marines participated in rigorous physical training and were required to pass swim qualification tests in order to complete the program. They were subject to inspections and they were allowed liberty time during certain evenings and weekends as long as they didn’t appear on the weekly “scholastic delinquency” list.

Those who played on the college or

university’s major sports teams were excused from physical training (PT). Ledes was a member of the Yale football team for one season in 1943, an experience he treasures.

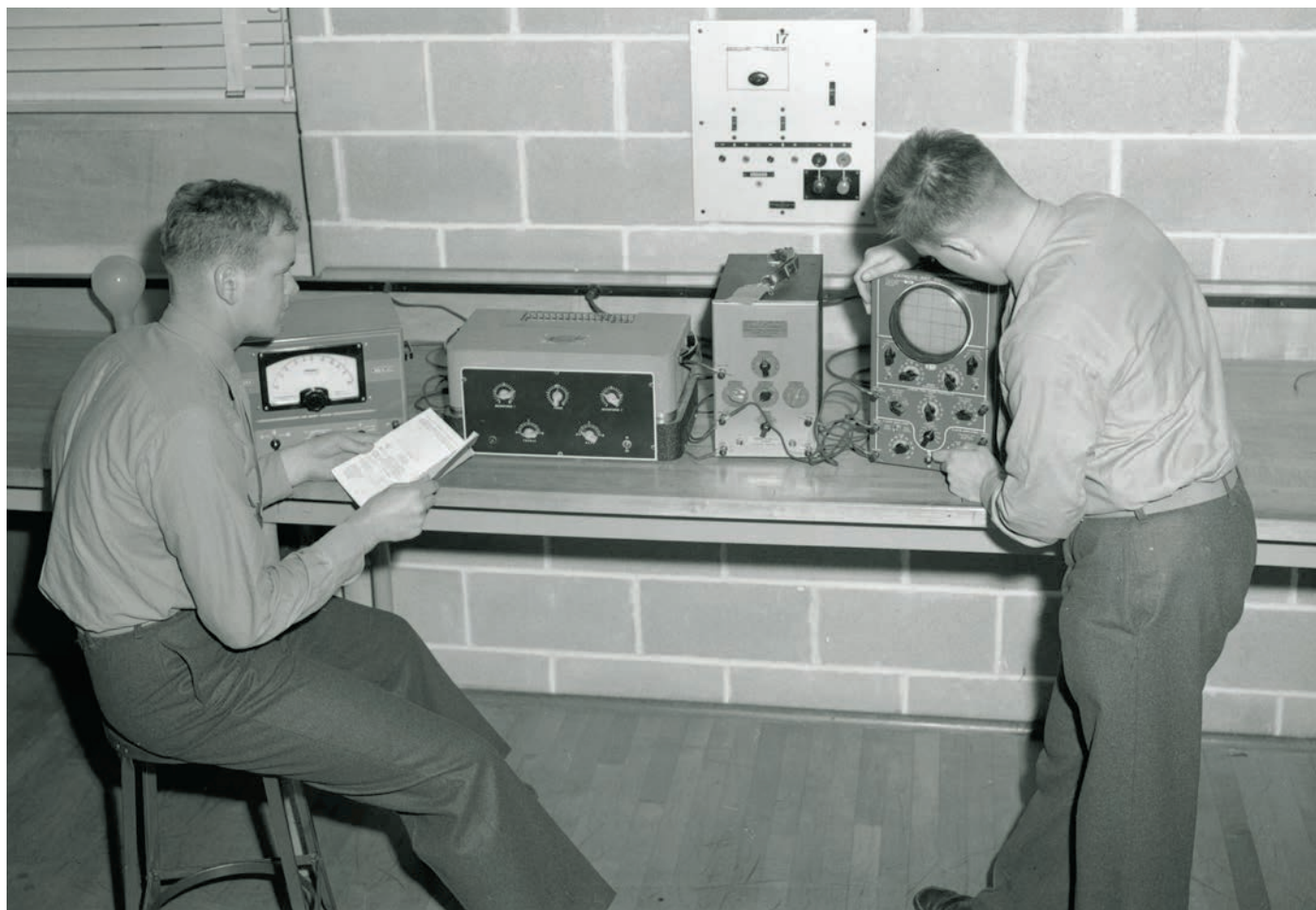
Marine noncommissioned officers led the V-12 Marines in PT and drill, conducted indoctrination and performed administrative tasks. Working under a Navy officer who served as the commanding officer of the combined Navy-Marine Corps unit was a Marine officer, responsible for the Marines in the unit.

Late in 1943, members of the *Leatherneck* staff visited the V-12 Marines at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Ind., to get an idea of what life was like as a “college student in uniform.”

The magazine reported in its January 1944 issue that the day began around 0550 with calisthenics, chow and assembling for colors.

“For the rest of the day these Marines are students—their only distinguishing mark from their classmates being their forest green uniforms,” the article read. “If the life of V-12 Marines doesn’t sound very G.I., it’s because it isn’t supposed to be.”

Participation in the V-12 program cer-



LEATHERNECK FILE PHOTO

Electrical engineering students work on electronics in the lab at Purdue University in 1943. The general duty V-12 course consisted of four terms while the engineering program consisted of eight.

tainly guaranteed the student a more regimented college experience than that of the average undergraduate; however, Ledes looks back on his time at Yale with great fondness and lots of memories of kicking back and enjoying the “college life.” He spent many a night drinking Heineken—“never Budweiser!” he jokes—with his fellow Marines at the Duncan Hotel in New Haven. But it was very sobering, he said, to know that while they were having a good time, their fellow Marines were losing their lives in the Pacific theater. Even at Yale, the war hit close to home.

Following completion of the V-12 program, the Marines would attend boot camp and then the 12-week Officer Candidate Course at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., where they would finally become officers of Marines.

For Ledes, who was still at MCRD Parris Island in 1945, the end of the war meant an end to his Marine Corps training. He was sent home to New York where he remained in the Marine Corps Reserve. Several years later, he was called back to active duty during the Korean War; however, as fate would again have it, he would never see combat. The transport aircraft he was on from Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., to San Francisco, by way of St. Louis, experienced a mechanical failure and crashed. Ledes was among those who survived the crash and was honorably discharged due to severe injuries to his shoulder, extensive enough that he never fully regained its use.

He worked for fellow Greek-Americans and movie industry moguls the Skouras brothers in New York and later became well-known in the publishing industry as publisher and editor of *Cosmetic World* and *Beauty Fashion*. But in light of all of his successes as a civilian, he’s very proud of his years as a V-12 Marine at Yale.

The V-12 program officially came to an end on July 1, 1946. In peacetime, America’s demand for military officers had diminished. Those still in the program who had completed seven or eight semesters could accept a reserve commission, with the choice between inactive duty or a short active duty tour, from which they could apply for a regular commission. Those not eligible for the commission could transfer to an NROTC unit, to “general duty,” or were permitted to resign. The program may have been relatively short lived, but according to James G. Schneider in his book “The Navy V-12 Program: Leadership for a Lifetime,” it provided the nation with educational and military leaders for the pivotal 40 years after the war ended.



LEATHERNECK FILE PHOTO

The pharmacy school at Purdue University allowed V-12 Marines to manufacture pills and medications dispensed by the school’s student health service.



LEATHERNECK FILE PHOTO

At Villanova University in 1945, Marines complete a PT session. Generally, the V-12 Marine units would conduct an hour of PT each day with strength tests given to measure progress and performance.



**THANK
YOU**

“I was very grateful to the Marine Corps Association & Foundation for keeping my uncle’s legacy alive.”

—Mike Lopez, MCA&F donor and nephew to 1stLt Baldomero Lopez, posthumous recipient of the Medal of Honor, Inchon 1950

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 Joseph M. Lopez
 Peter G. Lordi Jr., USMC Veteran
 Col Robert E. Love, USMC (Ret)
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 Suki McClatchey
 LtCol Kelly A. McConnell, USMC
 Mr. Peter M. Mesrobian
 Mr. Charlie Micallef
 MGySgt Russell B. Miller, USMCR
 Sgt B. L. Morton, USMC
 LtCol Mark Lorin Mullinix, USMCR (Ret)
 Joseph M. Murphy, USMC Veteran

Cpl Jimmy Ray Nelson, USMC
 Col Daniel O'Brien, USMC (Ret)
 MajGen Douglas V. Odell Jr., USMC (Ret)
 Gen Peter Pace, USMC (Ret)
 Stephen E. Parkerton, USMC Veteran
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 MajGen Eugene G. Payne Jr., USMC (Ret)
 Elizabeth A. Percival
 Dennis Pfeil, USMC Veteran
 Cols Shawn & Mary Reinwald, USMC (Ret)
 Cpl Mark A. Richards, USMC
 PFC D. N. Richards, USMC
 Thomas Robinson, USMC Veteran
 Mr. & Mrs. Ramon L. Ruona
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 Mr. & Mrs. James E. Schaeffer
 Robert Schaffer III, USMC Veteran
 MSgt LeRoy D. Schmaus, USMC (Ret)
 SSgt Frank Scopa Jr., USMC (Ret)
 Craig Sim, USMC Veteran
 Edward Stark, USMC Veteran
 LtCol Michael J. Taylor, USMC (Ret)
 BGen John R. Thomas, USMC (Ret)
 Col Frederic L. Tolleson, USMC (Ret)
 Col Malcolm S. Underwood, USMCR (Ret)
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 Sgt Eric T. Almquist, USMC (Ret)
 SSgt Stephen A. Anderson, USMC (Ret)
 Cpl Anthony J. Arjil Jr., USMC
 Maj Edgar D. Aronson, USMC (Ret)
 Margaret Arundel
 LtCol Victor F. Balasi, USMC
 LtCol E. Ball III, USMC
 Mark Banks
 Douglas Bareham
 Col Harvey Barnum, USMC (Ret)
 Cpl G. Beck, USMC
 Raymond L. Berkau, USMC Veteran
 SgtMaj Douglas E. Berry Sr., USMC (Ret)
 Ralph and Kathryn Biddle
 Ollie Dean Bingaman, USMC Veteran
 Britta Bloedel
 LtCol G. Brennan, USMC (Ret)
 W. P. Bridges Jr., USMC Veteran
 Cpl William C. Brodie, USMC
 Donald Burton
 LtCol John E. Carroll Jr., USMC (Ret)
 Nicholas T. Carton, USMC Veteran
 MSgt Wesley D. Clark, USMC (Ret)
 Col Robert M. Clark Jr., USMC (Ret)
 Elizabeth Clifford
 Robert T. Conley, USMC Veteran
 Mr. & Mrs. Jon S. Cook
 Michael T. Crawford
 BG James P. Daley, USA (Ret)
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 William Fitzgibbons
 Jefferson Flanders
 GySgt Lynn Fulton, USMC (Ret)
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 James Michael Higgins, USMC (Ret)
 Maj Alan S. Hill, USMC (Ret)
 Philip H. Hodapp Jr., USMC Veteran
 MGySgt Timothy L. Hoernig, USMC (Ret)
 Sarah Holcomb
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 Col G. W. Houck, USMC (Ret)
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 Maj Robert R. Keadle, USMC (Ret)
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 Maj Lenn Lanahan, USMC
 SSgt Christopher D. Larson, USMC

Wilma J. Lively
 Bruce R. Loewen, USMC Veteran
 Neil Looker
 Col John Jude Lowrey, USMCR (Ret)
 Thomas E. Lynch, USMC Veteran
 Maj Joseph R. Lyon Jr., USMC (Ret)
 John Mack, USMC Veteran
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 LtGen Fred McCorkle, USMC (Ret)
 Bruce A. McKannay, USMC Veteran
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 David Montgomery
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 LtCol Ralph B. Neal, USMC (Ret)
 Capt John M. O'Neill Jr., USMC (Ret)
 Paul Offill, USMC Veteran
 Nelson Olf, USMC (Ret)
 Mrs. Mark D. Orem
 Col C. J. Peabody, USMC (Ret)
 Mr. & Mrs. Wayne A. Pecht
 CWO4 Anthony L. Perez, USMCR (Ret)
 Stephen N. Potter
 Col Sara J. Pritchett, USMC (Ret)
 Mike Rainer
 LtCol Percy D. Ratcliff, USMC (Ret)
 SgtMaj Michael D. Rew, USMC
 MGySgt Allen R. Roth, USMC (Ret)
 John Salkowsky, USMC Veteran
 MajGen C. Dean Sangalis, USMC (Ret)
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 Jason M.D. Sharpe

Sgt Jacob Shein, USMC
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 LtCol Duane Van Fleet, USMC (Ret)
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 MajGen Burke W. Whitman, USMC
 Steven Williamson
 GySgt Alan D. Wyatt, USMC (Ret)
 John Young
 MGySgt Richard J. Zahn, USMC (Ret)
 Sgt David J. Zapata, USMC (Ret)



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Together We Served

Website Helps Veterans Preserve Their Military Records, Reconnect With Each Other

By Col Mary H. Reinwald, USMC (Ret)

In attics and basements across America, many pictures, letters and keepsakes of Marines gather dust. Photographs from a Marine's tour in Vietnam, letters sent to a beloved son in Korea, and copies of award citations from a deployment to Okinawa—all relics of times spent in service to both the nation and the Corps but rarely seen by the Marines or their families. Often the Marines are too modest about their accomplishments or don't want to burden their families with the hardship or challenges they faced or memories that can be too painful to discuss.

The *Leatherneck* staff regularly receives letters or phone calls from family members of veteran Marines who recently have discovered their Marine's treasure trove of service, often after the Marine has passed away. The callers frequently say the same thing—"We didn't know." In other cases, Marines and their families know the records and memorabilia are stashed in boxes somewhere but they are at a loss as to how to organize their own artifacts and records of service or even know where to begin. While most Marines are known for their respect for history, archiving their own past often is a daunting task. That's where Together We Served (TWS) comes in.

TWS, the largest online exclusively veteran community, was launched on Nov. 10, 2003, to help provide a means by which Marine veterans

could digitally capture records, photos, and other items as a chronicle of their military service. In addition, it is an easy way to find and connect with other members who went through boot camp with them or served in the same unit or participated with them in a specific operation or location.

Since its inception, the popular website has grown to include veterans from all services, and its membership rolls have swelled to almost 1.7 million veterans—more than 400,000 of whom have served in the Marine Corps from World War II through Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom in Iraq and Afghanistan. Membership in TWS is restricted to those who received an honorable discharge, were retired, or are still actively serving.

Individual Pages

TWS captures a veteran Marine's entire military service from boot camp to retirement or discharge. Individual Military Service pages can be created by the Marine using the step-by-step guide, and even Marines who aren't computer savvy will find it easy to join, create their page, and load their historical documents. Each Military Service Page can display uniform photos, rank insignia, badges, medals, awards and other insignia, plus names, dates, and locations of recruit training, MOS and other formal schools, and units assigned. Combat operations and deployments can also be listed.

One of the best features of the individual page

While most Marines are known for their respect for history, archiving their own past often is a daunting task. That's where Together We Served (TWS) comes in.

The screenshot shows the website's layout with a dark header and a light-colored main content area. The header includes the site logo and navigation links. The main content area is divided into several sections: a welcome message for the Marine Corps Association (MCA), a 'SITREP' (situation report) section with a news item, a 'TOGETHER WE SERVED' section with a descriptive paragraph, a 'Reflections of The Day' section with two profile cards, a 'Latest Personal Messages' section, and a 'Newest Members' section with a list of recent users. The interface is clean and organized, with clear navigation and content sections.

It is an easy way to connect with other members who went through boot camp with them or served in the same unit or participated with them in a specific operation or location.

is the ability to upload an unlimited number of photos to the personal photo album section. TWS contains an archive of more than 4 million personal service-related photographs uploaded by its members. Another is the step-by-step self-interview section called “Reflections.” Reflections assists veterans with recalling memories of people, places and events that made an impact on their lives and time in the Marine Corps. The result is a rich, visual presentation of each Marine’s entire military service, displayed in a unique “shadow box” format. The presentation can be stored digitally, shared electronically and even printed out and framed. Over the years, thousands of servicemembers have told TWS that preserving their stories and memories has been exceptionally rewarding and even cathartic in some cases.

Find People You Served With

One of the most satisfying results of creating an Individual Military Service Page on TWS is that it enables Marines to connect with other veterans with whom they have served. TWS has the capability of automatically data matching the service information each veteran enters on their individual page with the service information on the pages of all other TWS members. Members can then review matching members and connect with those they know. Those who have entries that match the same time frame are presented in a list providing each veteran with the opportunity to connect with those they know from their time in the Corps. This powerful feature is especially beneficial when names are forgotten and provides a convenient way to recognize other Marines.

Another benefit of the search capability is that it enables those who are looking for help in finding witnesses to events that occurred during their service for Veterans Affairs medical claims or even for possible award submissions can use the feature. With so many members and more joining daily, the possibilities of finding old friends and colleagues is large.

Roll of Honor

Each service’s portion of TWS is divided into three sections under the “Roll of Honor.” The first provides a list of “Living Veterans” with links to their individual pages. The second is the “Fallen Marines” pages where more than 26,000 Marines who died on active duty are listed. This sobering page is an incredible testament to their lives and service and is a strong reflection of the price America has paid over the last 75 years. The final section is the listing of “Deceased Marines,” Marines who died subsequent to their service. Each Marine, regardless of what section they are aligned to, has a Military Service Page.

Forums

As a veteran-only website, TWS also provides a platform for all veterans to freely engage with their fellow Marines and Sailors in forums not found in other public online environments. The TWS forums have something for everyone whether it is recalling Camp Courtney in the 1960s or recruit training at Parris Island in “Places, Bases, and Memories” or debating the latest political issues in the lively Political Forum. Some TWS members share challenges with PTSD and other health issues.

How to Join

Joining Together We Served is relatively easy even for those whose Marine Corps service was in the days of the manual typewriter. Register by going to TogetherWeServed.com and clicking the “Join Now” button. Once registered, the Military Service Page, as sparse or as detailed as the Marine wants, can be created. The more service history

Even Marines who aren’t computer savvy will find it easy to join, create their page, and load their historical documents.



entered, the greater the likelihood that a connection will be made with other Marines with whom the veteran served.

And what’s the cost of joining TWS? It’s absolutely free. Premium memberships are available for a low annual fee for those who want to view full Service Pages on all 5 TWS service branch websites. Use the promocode OY50 for a 50 percent discount.

Today’s Marines are connected in a variety of ways to their fellow leathernecks and will remain so long after they have been discharged. Older Marines did not have the advantage of social media or even email during their service, so once they were discharged, keeping in touch with their buddies became harder and harder. TWS helps reconnect Marines while also providing a place where they can capture their memories of some of the best times of their lives. And to Marines, those are two of the most important needs they have especially as they get older. TWS makes it easy to fulfill both and is a true digital reminder of Semper Fidelis.

TWS contains an archive of more than 4 million service-related photographs uploaded by its members.



L.I.N.K.S. Celebrates 20 Years Of Service to Marine Families

Marines and spouses from the San Diego area gathered to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Lifestyle, Insights, Networking, Knowledge and Skills (L.I.N.K.S.) program at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., Sept. 8.

For two decades, the L.I.N.K.S. program has been providing spouses and families at MCAS Miramar and across the Corps the opportunity to make valuable connections with chaplains, mentors and other resource providers to assist in better understanding the military lifestyle.

“Installations across the Marine Corps are all celebrating the 20-year anniversary of the L.I.N.K.S. programs,” said Maria Lengerke, MCAS Miramar family readiness branch head.

This event highlighted what the L.I.N.K.S. program has done for military spouses and their families, and provided an opportunity to recognize the civilian and active-duty volunteers who keep the program running.

“L.I.N.K.S. volunteers make our program exceptional,” said Randi Salvati, a Marine Corps family teambuilding trainer at the air station. “Both military spouses and Marines give countless hours to ensure the military community is well-

informed about resources available to enhance their lifestyle.”

L.I.N.K.S. assists the military community by providing classes, training and a valuable network for families with helpful resources and the reassurance they are not alone.

“This program has spent 20 years empowering spouses with knowledge and allowing them to network,” said Lengerke. “This allows them to really take a dive into what life in the Marine Corps has to offer them.”

For more information on the L.I.N.K.S. program or for information about volunteer opportunities, visit or contact Marine Corps Community Services at your local base or station.

Sgt David Bickel, USMC

TRICARE Changes Coming: Beneficiaries Take Note

Effective Jan. 1, 2018, changes to TRICARE will be implemented, marking one of the most significant transitions in decades for beneficiaries of the military’s health care system, said Tom McCaffery, the acting assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, who announced the Interim Final Rule that charts the way forward for transforming TRICARE, Sept. 28.

“We are at a really important point in

time for our beneficiaries and the overall military health system in terms of changes and reforms,” McCaffery said.

The changes grew out of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2016, which mandated the transition to TRICARE managed care contracts. The changes make sense for the health system’s 9.4 million beneficiaries, said McCaffery.

Changes include:

- The rule implements TRICARE Select, which replaces and combines TRICARE Standard and TRICARE Extra. It sets up an automatic enrollment process, so on Jan. 1, 2018, beneficiaries in TRICARE Prime will automatically be enrolled in Prime and beneficiaries in TRICARE Standard or Extra will automatically be enrolled in the new TRICARE Select.

- The Defense Health Agency will establish an annual open season enrollment period during which beneficiaries can choose their health care plans for that year. There are exceptions—certain qualifying “life events” that allow beneficiaries to make changes outside the open season. These include changes to marital status, births, adoptions, changes in service status, among others.

- 2018 will be a transition year and enrollment changes will be available throughout the year.



SGT DAVID BICKEL, USMC

L.I.N.K.S. volunteers receive awards for their service during the program’s 20th anniversary celebration at MCAS Miramar, Calif., Sept. 8. Through the hard work of volunteers, the program is able to support military spouses and their families.

- Administration of the TRICARE program will now be based on the calendar vice fiscal year, which will streamline the changes.

- TRICARE Select beneficiaries will see a change in their “cost share,” which will no longer be a percentage but a fixed dollar amount for specific services.

For more information about the upcoming changes to TRICARE, visit <https://tricare.mil/About/Changes>.

Jim Garamone, DOD News

Running for the Fallen: Fisher House Hosts “Run, Walk or Roll”

While some were sleeping, thousands of others participated in the sixth annual Fisher House 8-kilometer (8K) “Hero and Remembrance Run, Walk or Roll” on Ford Island aboard Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, Sept. 9.

The Fisher House Foundation is best known for a network of comfort homes adjacent to military treatment facilities where families can stay at no cost while their active-duty or veteran servicemember is receiving medical care. The 8K provided another way for the organization to show support for servicemembers and their families, particularly those who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

“I wanted to raise awareness for what our mission is, which is taking care of military families,” said Theresa Johnson, the Fort Hood Fisher House manager and founder of the Hero and Remembrance Run. “Everyone runs so we decided to go with that.”

Johnson came up with the idea to place boots along the race route with photos of fallen service members. She was inspired by the loss of a family friend, Private First Class Timothy Vimoto.

“I wanted to do something to honor not only him, but all of the fallen servicemembers,” Johnson said, adding that there were nearly 8,000 boots placed along the route for the 2017 run.

Rain or shine, the event is always held on the Saturday before 9/11.

“I think it is important for us to remember those who came before us,” said First Sergeant Roland McGinnis, Headquarters and Service Company, 2d Battalion, 3d Marine Regiment. It’s important to represent those who gave the ultimate sacrifice, he added, so that today’s Marines can live on through their legacy. “Some people when they hit that 3-mile marker, they tend to shut down ... I think allowing us to see the boots along the way really sent the message home.”

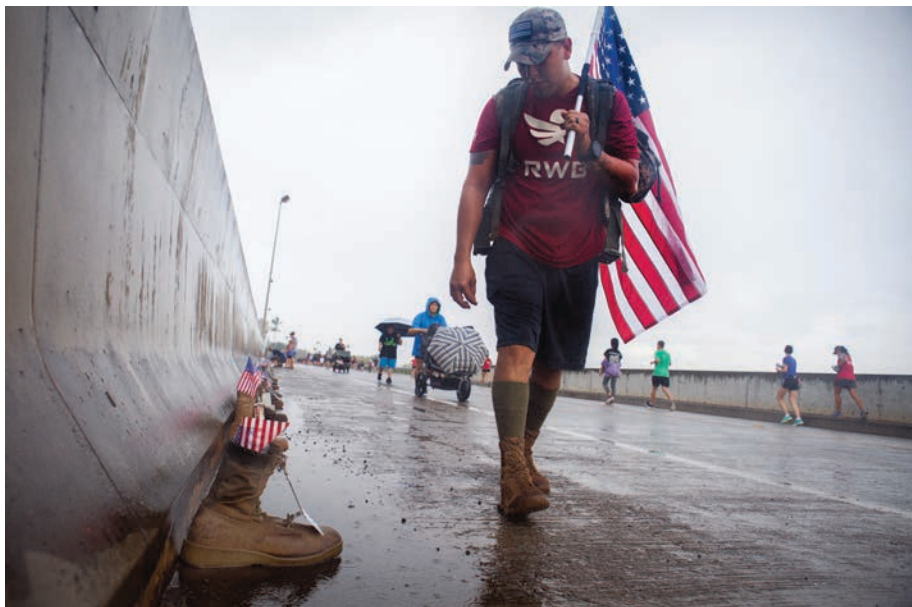
McGinnis said all the Marines who participated in the run from his unit were volunteers—no one was forced to go.



SGT ZACHARY ORR, USMC

Above: More than 7,500 combat boots, each adorned with a flag and a photo of a fallen servicemember, lined the course of the Fisher House “Hero and Remembrance Run, Walk or Roll” 8K at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Sept. 9.

Below: A run participant pauses to look at a boot during the event, which was sponsored by the Fisher House Foundation to remember those servicemembers who have lost their lives since 9/11 and to raise awareness for the foundation’s efforts to take care of military families.



SGT ZACHARY ORR, USMC

“This is my second year in a row running it,” said First Lieutenant Benjamin Griffith, the executive officer for H&S Co, 2/3. “Running it this year was just as special as running it last year.”

Griffith said that seeing the “price tag” of human sacrifice is a reminder of their purpose and why it is that Marines do what they do.

“I think, more than anything, it is a motivating factor for our Marines and Sailors to participate in this event. It makes it real for them and shows the sacrifices required to keep our families and all Americans safe.”

Griffith believes that those who participated will carry that motivation through the next workups and deployment.

“The run is a very small part,” said Johnson. “The run is about bringing people together. I think more people need to come out and see this; it’s a healing thing.”

To learn more about the Fisher House Foundation, visit www.fisherhouse.org.

Sgt Zachary Orr, USMC



In Memoriam

Compiled by Nancy S. Lichtman

Harriet W. (Burnham) Anderson, 93, of Hoffman Estates, Ill. She was a Marine who served during WW II.

MSGt Rodney J. Beauchamp, 84, of Woodstock, Va. During his 21 years on active duty, he saw action in the Korean War and the Vietnam War. He also was an MSG Marine. His awards include two Purple Hearts.

William B. Borgeson, 90, of Portland, Ore. He enlisted in the Marine Corps during WW II by exaggerating his age. He was wounded in combat on Iwo Jima. After the war he completed college and law school.

SSgt Norman R. Bousquet, 89, of Punta Gorda Isles, Fla. He was a WW II veteran who served from 1945-1949 and was assigned to the Marianas and Guam.

George Caron, 95, of Avon, Conn. He served with 3/25, 4th MarDiv during WW II. He made landings on Roi-Namur, Saipan, Tinian and Iwo Jima. He was wounded by small arms fire on Iwo Jima. After the war he worked for an aerospace firm.

Sgt Ralph S. "Bucky" Carpenter Jr., 95, of Auburn, Mass. He was a Marine Corps veteran of WW II who saw action on Saipan.

George A. Caruso, 91, of Florham Park, N.J. He was a Marine who served in the South Pacific during WW II. He fought in the Battle of Sugar Loaf Hill on Okinawa where he was wounded. His awards include a Purple Heart.

After the war he worked for Lionel and Western Electric.

Col Joseph Della-Corte, 71, of Punta Gorda, Fla. During his 31-year Marine Corps career, he completed multiple combat tours. He also was on the staff of the Joint Chiefs. After his retirement,

he was the director of international marketing for Raytheon.

Sgt Vincent N. DiRenzo, 88, in Ashburn, Va. He enlisted in the Marine Corps after graduating from high school in Shenandoah, Pa.

He served from 1948-1952 in Hawaii, Guam and the Philippines.

He later graduated from college with a degree in geography and chemistry. He then went to work for the CIA as a photo interpreter examining the images being taken by the U-2 aircraft. In 1962 he was the leader of the photo interpreter team that discovered and correctly identified Soviet missile systems on Cuba.

MSGt Richard Dupre, 75, of Universal City, Texas. He was a Marine who served in Vietnam. After his retirement, he was a Marine Corps JROTC instructor for 30 years. His awards include the Purple Heart.

James A. "Jim" Farmer, 78, of LeClaire, Iowa. He was a Marine who served on board USS *Bennington* (CV-20) as a helicopter crew chief.

Robert G. Freshwater, 90, in Hot Springs, Ark. He was a Marine who served in the Pacific during WW II and saw action on Tinian and Iwo Jima.

GySgt Donald H. Gee, 77, of Chalfont, Pa. Following his 20-year career in the Marine Corps, he was a public affairs officer with the VA in Philadelphia. He was on the Bucks County WW II Memorial committee and was involved with many organizations in support of veterans. He was active with the USMCCCA. He was a member of the American Legion, the VFW and the MCA&F. He was a longtime friend of *Leatherneck*.

MGEn Armand M. Hammer, 75, of Mount Juliet, Tenn. He was a Marine

before he transferred to the Tennessee National Guard.

1stLt William Haskell, 72, of Washington, D.C. He was a Marine who served during the Vietnam War. He was awarded the Silver Star for his actions as a platoon commander in March 1969.

According to his award citation, "he skillfully maneuvered his platoon across the fire-swept terrain, boldly shouting words of encouragement to the men and directing their suppressive fire upon the hostile unit. Undaunted by the enemy rounds impacting nearby, he fearlessly adjusted supporting arms fire upon the North Vietnamese emplacements and coordinated the movement of tanks and infantry units until the enemy was forced to flee in panic and confusion."

His other awards include the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star with combat "V."

Capt William T. Hocart Jr., 81, of Essex Fells, N.J. During the Vietnam War he served with the 9th Engineer Bn.

Sherrill L. Hodson, 86, of Cheboygan, Mich. During the Korean War, he was a BARman at the Chosin Reservoir with the 1stMarDiv. After the war he became a teacher and coach. He was a member of the MCL.

Sgt Nathaniel "Nat" Holmes, 69, of Bella Vista, Ark. He enlisted in 1966 and served in Vietnam with Co A, 1st Bn, 7th Marines. His awards include the Purple Heart, Navy Achievement Medal with combat "V" and the Combat Action Ribbon. He later had a 25-year career in law enforcement.

LtCol Lemuel "Chip" W. Houston Jr., 79, of Chesterfield, Va. He was commissioned after his 1961 graduation from Virginia Tech and attended motor transport school. He was deployed aboard USS *Sandoval* (APA-194) during the Cuban Missile Crisis. In 1964 he left active duty and joined the Marine Corps Reserve where he was the company commander of a truck company. In his civilian career he worked in the transportation field, mainly the trucking industry.

Richard W. Kluser, 87, of Bronson, Fla. His 28-year Marine Corps career included two tours in Vietnam. His awards include two Purple Hearts.

GySgt William P. Laforge, 79, of Manchester, N.H. His 20-year career in the Marine Corps included a tour in Vietnam.

Sgt Ronald E. Langvin, 87, of Ludlow,

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Mass. He was a Marine who served during the Korean War. He later had a career in the TV industry as a producer and director.

GySgt William Z. Leach, 84, of Minneapolis, Minn. He was a Marine who served for 20 years. He was a volunteer firefighter for 16 years.

Frank J. Matthews, 91, in Stafford, Va. During WW II he was a flame thrower in the Battle of Iwo Jima; he was wounded several times during the fighting. After the war he earned his bachelor's degree and completed officer training at MCB Quantico. He was recalled to active duty during the Korean War.

Col Bruce F. Meyers, 91, of Seattle, Wash. He commanded a rifle company in Korea and was the commander of the first Force Recon Co in 1957. During the Vietnam War, he commanded the 26th Marines at Khe Sanh during the Tet Offensive in 1968.

After his retirement from the Marine Corps he began a career as an attorney, litigating cases and serving as the associate dean of a law school. He wrote several books and articles about military history.

GySgt Earl J. Nelson, 85, of Bloomington, Calif. He enlisted in the Marine Corps at age 17 and served for 20 years. He was a

tank mechanic and a veteran of the Korean War and the Vietnam War.

David Patterson Sr., 94, in Rio Rancho, N.M. From 1943-1945 he served in the Marine Corps as one of the Navajo code talkers.

Capt Harold J. Riley, 85, of Belpre, Ohio. He was a veteran of the Korean War and the Vietnam War. During his 21 years in the Marine Corps he was a DI, a marksmanship instructor, and an instructor at OCS.

IstLt Joseph P. Sassano, 85, of South Bend, Ind. He was the coach of the Parris Island football team. He later was the athletic administrator and a broadcaster at Notre Dame.

Philip W. Steorts, 80, of Martinsburg, W.Va. He was a Marine Corps veteran. He later had a career in law enforcement. He was a member of the MCL Det. No. 1143.

GySgt Grady G. Thompson, 73, of Moore, S.C. In 1963 he served as a member of the honor guard at the coffin of President John F. Kennedy. He served in Vietnam from 1965-66 where he was wounded. His other assignments included drill instructor duty at Parris Island and as a recruiter in Denver, Colo. He retired after 20 years of active-duty service and then served as a reservist for 10 more years.

Sgt Grant F. Wolfkill, 94, of Shelton, Wash. He was a combat correspondent who served from 1942-1946. He was wounded in action on Peleliu while photographing Marines with the 1stMarDiv. He was with the 6thMarDiv during the Battle of Okinawa where he was wounded again. He later was sent to document Marine occupying forces in Nagasaki.

After the war he worked filming documentaries. In May 1961, he was working in Laos for NBC news as a cameraman when he was captured and held for 460 days. He was later presented with the Medal of Freedom by President John F. Kennedy.

He was a Porsche enthusiast and raced the cars competitively for many years.

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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Books Reviewed

1000 YARD STARE: A Marine's Eye View of the Vietnam War. By Marc C. Waszkiewicz with Lea Jones and Crista Dougherty. Published by Stackpole Books. 328 pages. \$35.96 MCA Members. \$39.95 Regular Price.

The young Marine stares directly at you. His emotion is striking. Fear. Pressure. Heart-thumping energy. Beneath his Kevlar, the light captures his sweat-soaked face.

This Marine, like all the troops whose photos are scattered throughout the pages of the new book, "1000 Yard Stare," is frozen in time. The poetic caption underneath his photograph says little, but explains all: "The intensity of being under fire just choked the youth out of us."

Armed with cameras and a letter-writing pad, Marc C. Waszkiewicz went to Vietnam knowing he was part of history. After more than 40 years, the images that he captured are here for the world to see.

"1000 Yard Stare" is part of Waszkiewicz's multimedia project that includes a film, memoir and music soundtrack. More information on the multimedia project, called "Vietnam: An Inner View," can be found at www.vietnaminnerview.com.

"I hope my photographs offer my fellow vets a means for self-expression; for civilians, I hope the photos provide openings for conversation with veteran relatives and friends."

Waszkiewicz, a veteran Marine Corps sergeant, served three combat tours in Vietnam from 1967-69. The photobook—which uses pictures the Marine took during his tours as an artillery forward observer—was put together with the help of musician Lea Jones and designer Crista Dougherty.

The book organizes Waszkiewicz's photographs along certain themes; each theme serves as a different section in the book. The titles of many of the sections are self-explanatory. For example, "Under Fire" features scenes of combat including napalm strikes and artillery fire; "Downtime" has photos of Marines overcoming boredom; and "The People and Their Land" shows civilian life.

What makes the book unique is the raw, unfiltered nature of the photos.

Waszkiewicz didn't hold back in what he chose to capture and, years later, publish. As a result, the reader becomes a witness to the true realities of war—not only its horrors, but also its lighter side (i.e. young Marines acting their age). One section of the book is appropriately subtitled: "Kids Will be Kids, Even in War."

In this section, more than one photograph shows Marines posing naked, with only a hat, a leaf, or a guitar to ensure their modesty. Another photograph shows two Marines staging their own deaths within their fighting position. The caption reads, in part, "Poor taste, to say the least. I can only wonder what someone's mother would have thought if she had seen this picture while we were still over there."

The silliness will make you crack a smile, if not laugh out loud.

On the other end of the spectrum are photos showing the bitter fruit of Marines' labor. Prisoners of war are

shown sitting on the ground—shirtless and blindfolded. Some photos show the bodies of enemy soldiers.

In one photo, a young Waszkiewicz is sitting on a log, surrounded by the bodies of what appear to be Vietnamese boys.

"Only moments before, these soldiers were trying to kill me," the caption reads. "They were all cut down exiting the same bunker doorway."

Waszkiewicz's book doesn't have to be a cover-to-cover read. You can dive into the young Marine's war from any page and discover something new at each sitting. The photographs vary in quality—most likely from the various cameras he used on his deployments. But that difference in quality is what draws the reader in. It expresses authenticity, and sometimes captures the intensity of the moment. For example, the blurred image of a towed howitzer firing gives you a sense of the weapon's power.

What Waszkiewicz's photographs do best is capture the humanity in every moment. From the Marines to the civilians, it's the people and their expressions that stand out. In the section titled "The

Stare," we see the expressions of Waszkiewicz as he poses in the jungle, in fighting positions, in his barracks, and other places.

In one photograph, Waszkiewicz stares directly at the camera lens. He's dressed in flak and Kevlar, and his expression spells stress and fear. It's in this photograph—that we find meaning in the book's title. Waszkiewicz, no doubt, has the 1,000-yard stare.

PFC Kyle Daly, USMC

Author's bio: PFC Daly is a Southern California native who joined the Marine Corps after working as an editor and reporter for various publications, including the Pacific Daily News in Guam. He lives in Jacksonville, N.C.

THE GUN CLUB: USS Duncan at Cape Esperance. By Robert Fowler. Published by Winthrop & Fish. 336 pages. \$14.40 MCA Members. \$15.99 Regular Price.

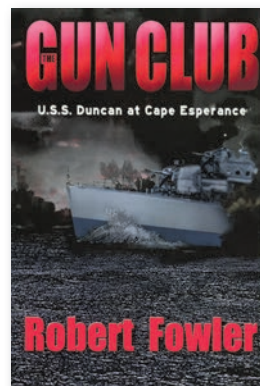
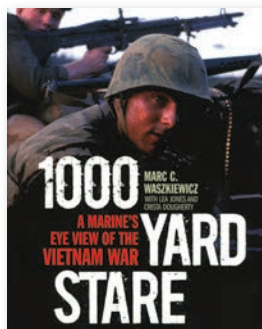
"A direct hit in *Duncan's* fire room was probably the first serious one received by any United States ship since Pearl Harbor—and the destroyer collected plenty more," wrote Rear Admiral Samuel Eliot Morison, USNR, handpicked by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to serve as official historian of U.S. Naval Operations in World War II.

"*Duncan* had but a few hours left of life's fitful fever. The details of her death struggle had no influence on the battle, but what her men did, and how they suffered through the night of October 11 and 12, 1942, will paragon forever the courage of the American Sailor. The results of their rescue efforts were most gratifying—195

officers and men recovered in waters heavily infested with sharks against 48 lost."

Because the memory of his father's death in that explosion haunted his youth, Robert Fowler, a documentary filmmaker, off-Broadway producer, screenwriter and director, spent years researching the death of Lieutenant Junior Grade Robert Ludlow Fowler III and the demise of the ship on which he served.

"My goal, almost 75 years later, was to understand what really happened.





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I endeavored to cover all aspects of the battle, from both sides, and which elements shaped the stalemate, including the minor actions leading to the sinking of the USS *Duncan*, and its aftermath," says the younger Fowler.

And, indeed, he did.

"The Gun Club: The USS *Duncan* at Cape Esperance" is so clearly and comprehensively written, supported by a wealth of carefully gleaned detail from Japanese and American naval archives, while drawing upon the memoirs of the participants, that the reader comes away feeling what it is to live through such a ferocious engagement. Almost unequalled in its vibrant, crystal clear depiction of the incredibly difficult fight involving thousands of American Sailors, readers stand shoulder to shoulder with the leadership of both the American and Japanese fleets, as well as that of a single boat. We, too, are on their bridges observing the losses, on our side, two cruisers and six destroyers; on their side, two battleships, two heavy cruisers, and an astonishing 117 Japanese troop transports headed for northwest Guadalcanal. When the Battle of Cape Esperance is over, we grudgingly admit, along with all the naval experts of Japan and America, that the outcome was indecisive and unsatisfactory in the bid for supremacy of the vital, strategic island.

Esperance was the U.S. Navy's first actual planned battle in the Pacific in World War II. *Duncan* was the first Allied ship to penetrate a Japanese battle line. The description of the slow, sad, inexorable agony of the *Duncan* sliding into the cold depths of an angry ocean

had to be heartbreaking for the son of a father who may have yet been clinging to a hope of life.

Robert's own children, thanks to resoluteness of their dad, will now know a grandfather so lovingly revealed in one of the three best Pacific War books so far this century. No longer need his memory haunt.

Don DeNevi

Author's bio: Don DeNevi writes about World War II topics for Leatherneck, when not involved in writing his own books. After more than 35 nonfiction titles, he has enjoyed the recent publication of his first historical novel, "Faithful Shep—The Story of A Hero Dog and the Nine Texas Rangers Who Saved Him" (Texas Review Press, April 2017). His sequel is ready for publication in the spring.

PROUD TO BE A MARINE: Stories of Strength and Courage From the Few and the Proud. By C. Brian Kelly with Ingrid Smyer. Published by Cumberland House. 416 pages. \$17.10 MCA Members. \$18.99 Regular Price.

Noted author, Ingrid Smyer, and her partner, C. Brian Kelly, teamed up to present us with a charming anecdotal history of the United States Marines. In the introduction, the team thunders: "The United States Marines! What a story! We try to tell it here but can only offer the highlights, alongside the little-known personal drama. We don't go into the politics behind this or that deployment ... let others debate those. Rather, we hope to have captured at least some of the magnificent USMC fighting spirit ..."

The book's easy-to-read mini-history is broken down into four major sections: "The Early Wars," "The World Wars," "The War Upon Wars," and "The Twenty-

First Century Wars." Within each subchapter each short historical account is enhanced and illuminated alongside the personal stories of participating Marines. What book of Marine lore could be complete without the presence of leatherneck luminaries such as Presley O'Bannon, John Philip Sousa, Dan Daly, Victor Krulak, Smedley Butler, "Chesty" Puller, and John Lejeune? The book also includes the fascinating stories of many, until now unsung, or perhaps too-soon-forgotten, heroes of the Corps.

This fine tribute to the history of the Corps also includes the stories of how women and African Americans were successfully, but not without difficulty, integrated into the Corps.

Women were first recruited during World War I when the Commandant of the Marine Corps, Major General George Barnett, recognized the need to replace men in garrison with a highly motivated work force and decided to enlist women into the Marine Corps Reserve. In all, only 305 women actually joined the Woman Marine Corps Reserve during the war, but the stage was set for the proud Women Marines of the future.

Until WW II, the Corps had no African-American personnel serving in its ranks. The times and the demands of total war changed that forever. By the time of the landings on Peleliu, African-American Marines off-loading munitions, soon found themselves filling in the ranks as reliable riflemen. Welcoming their support, one white Marine noted they functioned "to beat back a nighttime Japanese counterattack."

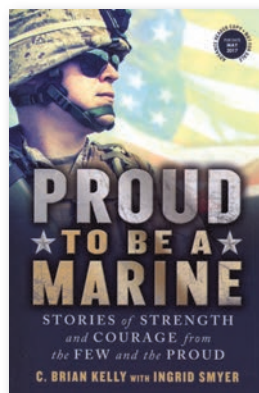
The book's authors leaned heavily on the research available in the *Leatherneck* and *Marine Corps Gazette* archives.

In the book's final section titled, "And Never to be Forgotten," the authors pay tribute to a host of other Marines whose stories they were not able to tell due to space restrictions.

This fine book is as easy to read as it is enjoyable. High on Marine lore and low on the "blood and guts" factor, this first-rate volume would make an ideal gift for any Marine, his children, or anyone fascinated by Marine Corps history and tradition.

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.





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[continued from page 7]

As a U.S. Circuit Court Judge, Bork was nominated for a seat on the Supreme Court of the U.S. by President Ronald Reagan. At that time the U.S. Senate was dominated by anti-conservative members. During the committee hearings, Bork was totally savaged. It was the first of the ideology based Senate committee hearings on a Supreme Court nominee. Bork's name actually became a verb, as in he was "borked," to refer to candidates who were destroyed in the Senate confirmation process.

Pat Robertson went on to establish himself as one of the best-known religious leaders, educators and public figures of our time.

Capt Melvyn J. Huber, USMCR (Ret)
Blacksburg, Va.

Sgt Barbosa's Heroic Actions Warranted Medal of Honor

After reading the letter from Colonel Lynn A. Stuart, USMC (Ret), in the August issue about Sergeant Arthur Barbosa, I would like to add my thoughts. I am one of the survivors of the firefight on OP 3.

What Sgt Barbosa did that night was the most heroic, selfless action you could



1stSgt Arthur G. Barbosa, USMC (Ret)

imagine. When most of his squad was either killed or wounded, he kept up a steady fire burning out one barrel after another. He could have pulled back to a less exposed position, but he did not. He just kept firing. The number of dead Chinese in front of his position was enormous. By all logic, if there were 40 dead, there would have been 80 to 100 wounded.

Bart Dauberman is 100 percent correct. He should have gotten our highest award. All of us who survived that night owe our lives to Barbosa.

I always thought medals were awarded on merit, not a coin flip or a limit of one

to a unit. What if they had decided to give the Medal of Honor to Barbosa? Would that have made Dewey's sacrifice any less? Duane Dewey deserved his Medal of Honor, but so did Sgt Barbosa.

Artie Barbosa passed away a few years ago. Is there a way to have the Pentagon Commissions Award Board review his actions and see fit to award the Medal of Honor? Even though it would be posthumously, his children and grandchildren would be most appreciative.

In 2002, five of us went back to Korea to commemorate that firefight on April 15, 1952. On OP Quillete, which was OP2 in 1952, we left a plaque engraved with the names of the KIAs who died that night. We could see OP3 from that site. OP3 is now in North Korea. For me it was quite emotional. During that informal dedication, we all thanked Artie Barbosa for our lives.

Jerome "Jerry" Natt
Tucson, Ariz.

Vandegrift Often Misspelled

I recently watched an old movie starring James Cagney as Admiral Halsey during World War II in the South Pacific. Another actor in the movie played General A.A. Vandegrift. In the movie they called him "Vandergrift" and that reminded me of an



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1. Publication Title: Leatherneck Magazine
2. Publication Number: 0 0 2 0 - 9 8 1 X
3. Filing Date: October 1, 2017
4. Issue Frequency: Monthly
5. Number of Issues Published Annually: 12
6. Annual Subscription Price: \$35.00
7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication: Marine Corps Association & Foundation PO Box 1775 Quantico VA 22134
8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher: Same as above
9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor: Christopher Woodbridge, USMC (Ret) - Marine Corps Association & Foundation; Col Mary Reinwald, USMC (Ret) - Marine Corps Association & Foundation
10. Owner: Marine Corps Association & Foundation
11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders: None
12. Tax Status: Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months

Table with 3 columns: 13. Publication Title (Leatherneck Magazine), 14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below (September 2017), and 15. Extent and Nature of Circulation. Rows include Total Number of Copies, Paid Circulation (Mailed Outside-County, Mailed In-County, Outside Mail, Other Classes), Free or Nominal Rate Distribution, Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution, Total Distribution, Copies not Distributed, Total (Sum of 15f and g), and Percent Paid (15c divided by 15f times 100).

* If you are claiming electronic copies, go to line 16 on page 3. If you are not claiming electronic copies, skip to line 17 on page 3.

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16. Electronic Copy Circulation table with 3 columns: Description, Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months, and No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date. Rows include Paid Electronic Copies, Total Paid Print Copies + Paid Electronic Copies, Total Print Distribution + Paid Electronic Copies, and Percent Paid (Both Print & Electronic Copies).

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17. Publication of Statement of Ownership: If the publication is a general publication, publication of this statement is required. Will be printed in the December issue of this publication.

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experience I had many years ago.

I joined the Marine Corps in April 1945 as a 17-year-old just out of high school. After boot camp in San Diego, Calif., I was sent to Camp Pendleton and then back to San Diego for Sea School.

All the Marines were screened for a new duty station. We were asked if we could type and since I took typing in high school, I raised my hand. I was sent to

Henderson Hall at Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps to the disbursing office. My assignment was typing the payroll checks for the Marine Corps officers stationed at HQMC. I was thrilled at typing up the checks for our Commandant, General A.A. Vandegrift.

I remember Warrant Officer Draper hand-delivering the check to Gen Vandegrift. Ten minutes later a very red-faced WO Draper stormed into my work station and yelled at me that I had typed "Vandergrift."

I guess I was lucky not being transferred to lower Slavolia. I never again forgot the correct spelling.

MSgt Richard J. Rose
USMC, 1945-53
Roseville, Calif.

The Marines Are Here!

As newly minted Marine parents, we are so proud of the fine job our United States Marine Corps did in helping with rescues and the relief efforts post Hurricane Harvey. It was quite a sight seeing the tracked vehicles and Marines staging in our area and heading down the streets.

Our family was blessed even though we came within fractions of an inch (at least a half of an inch away at the weep

holes) to being flooded in our home in Pearland, Texas, where 49.2 inches of rain were recorded. We never lost power during or after the hurricane, and our son who was stationed at school in California continued to send us as many alerts and weather reports as he could.

Thanks also to the support systems in place so that those Marines who had families in Texas were taken care of as well. We are again so grateful for the job our Marines did to help our communities along the Gulf Coast and Florida.

Semper Fidelis and God Bless our United States Marines!

Ronald D. Meyer Sr.
Pearland, Texas

Have a question or 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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Edited by Sara W. Bock

Reunions

• **Iwo Jima Survivors (Marines, Navy, Coast Guard, Army Air Corps)**, Feb. 15-17, 2018, Camp Pendleton, Calif. Contact Dan Zepeda, (951) 201-6251, zepeda012@msn.com.

• **1/27 (1stMarDiv FMF, RVN, 50th Anniversary Reunion-all other 27th Marines battalions welcome)**, July 18-22, 2018, Alexandria, Va. Contact Felix Salmeron, (469) 583-0191, mar463@aol.com.

• **2/4 (all eras, 50th Anniversary of victory at Dai Do-Gold Star family members welcome)**, April 30-May 3, 2018, Quantico, Va. Contact Becky or Frank Valdez, (714) 306-2329, fxala@hotmail.com.

• **B/1/5 and C/1/5 (RVN, 1966-67)** are planning a reunion. Contact SSgt Jim Proulx, USMC (Ret), (904) 343-4850, bertojotol@gmail.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.

• **Battle of An-Nasiriyah (15th Anniversary)**, March 23-25, 2018, Fort Worth, Texas. Contact Dion Brugger, tftreunion@gmail.com, www.tftreunion.org.

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

• **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 94, Parris Island, 1955**, Oct. 19-21, Parris Island, S.C. Contact Miles Martin,

(386) 315-2115, mcmartin@bellsouth.net, Orville Hubbs, (513) 932-5854, onpahubbs@gmail.com, or Dale Wilson, (434) 944-7177, wzeke35@aol.com.

• **Plt 98, Parris Island, 1948**, is planning a reunion. Contact SSgt Jim Proulx, USMC (Ret), (904) 343-4850, bertojotol@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 340, Parris Island, 1963**, is planning a reunion. Contact Garrett W. Silvia, (508) 992-7392, gwsil@comcast.net.

• **Plt 431, Parris Island, 1945**, is planning a reunion. Contact 1stSgt George P. Cavros, USMC (Ret), (262) 782-7813, gcavros88@gmail.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 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, 1965-66**, 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, tagpresident@verizon.net.

• **Plt 4035, "Papa" Co, Parris Island, 2000**, is planning a reunion. Contact Tammy (Manyik) Epperson, (571) 451-7263, tammy.epperson@gmail.com.



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Mail Call

• Frank Bolen (also known as Cpl Kelly), frankieb@mchsi.com, to hear from **William OLOONEY, Roberto MENDEZ and Robert POLASKO**, who served with “Fox” Co, 2/4, RVN, 1968-69.

• Steve Hicks, (502) 994-1724, slhicks62@yahoo.com, to hear from **C.L. WOODWARD, PALMER** and any Marines who served with “Easy” Btry, 3/11, 1stMarDiv, Korea, 1952-54.

• Sgt Peter P. Joulivos, judy.joulivos@gmail.com, to hear from members of **Plt 147, San Diego, 1955**.

• Carl Cutrone, ccutrone@comcast.net, to hear from members of **Plt 333, Parris Island, 1956**.

• Richard Souza, (508) 314-1917, richardjsouza1944@gmail.com, to hear from Marines who served with **Comm Plt, HQ Co, 3d Marines, at Camp Schwab, Okinawa, 1964-65**. The CO was **Capt NICHOLS**, and the unit flew to **DaNang, RVN, in February or March 1965**.

• Roy Hale, 1609 Barolo Place, Santa Maria, CA 93458, rescuetac@hotmail.com, to hear from members of **Plt 1069, San Diego, 1980**. He would also like to hear from Marines who served with him on **MSG duty in Vienna, Austria; San Salvador, El Salvador; and Kingston, Jamaica**.

• Luben Montoya, luben.montoya@gmail.com, to hear from or about **Charles W. KERSHAW**, who he served with on **USS Ranger (CV-61) in 1977**.

Wanted

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

• Jason Blackstone, (347) 782-1049, jtblackstone@gmail.com, wants a **platoon photo and recruit graduation book for Plt 2013, Parris Island, 1989**.

• Michael Lynn, a905h@aol.com, wants a **recruit graduation book for Plt 228, San Diego, 1961**.

• Ben Walker, 73059 Rd. 436, Bertrand, NE 68927, (308) 991-0053, benwalker679@gmail.com, wants a **recruit graduation book for Plt 2066, San Diego, 1975**.

• Anthony Majusiak, gunnyjake@gmail.com, wants a **platoon photo for Plt 2057, Parris Island, 1987**.

• Michael Hicks, (760) 672-4203, michael.p.hicksmh@gmail.com, wants **July 1967-July 1970 issues of Leatherneck**.

• Arturo Avalos, arturoavalos@live.com, wants a **platoon photo for Plt 2081, San Diego, 1976**.

• Douglas Scrivner, (513) 887-6266, docascriv@gmail.com, wants an Infantry

Training Regiment photo from **K Co, 2d Bn, Recruit Training Regiment, July 1967**.

Sales, Trades and Giveaways

• MSgt Bruce Van Apledoorn, USMC (Ret), bvanapeldoornsr@gmail.com, has a **recruit graduation book for Plt 1075, Parris Island, 1969**, to give away.

• Ron Maxson, ghmc782@comcast.net, has an **M-1903 .32 ACP pistol** for sale that belonged to **LtGen Roy S. Geiger, USMC (Ret)**. It is marked “U.S. Property” side arm with two holsters, one stamped “R.S.G.” with paperwork and book. Serious inquiries only.

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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ABIGAIL WILSON

FACT OR FICTION—Historians and scholars have often debated the validity of a central tenet of Marine Corps lore: The presentation of a mameluke sword to First Lieutenant Presley O'Bannon by Pasha Hamet Karamanli, who was reinstated as ruler of Tripoli in 1805 after the capture of a Barbary pirate fortress by O'Bannon and his Marines. Legend has it that Hamet was so in awe of O'Bannon's exploits that he presented him with a jeweled mameluke sword, on which the traditional Marine Corps officer's sword was later modeled. Many believe this story to be true, while others have pointed out various inconsistencies in the story or the lack of evidence of such an exchange.

Regardless of whether the O'Bannon story is rooted in truth or not, the mameluke-type sword was made part of the officer's uniform exactly 20 years after the supposed exchange between Hamet and O'Bannon.

In 1825, not long into his 38-year tenure as the 5th Commandant of the Marine Corps, then-Lieutenant Colonel Commandant Archibald Henderson ordered that all officers carry a mameluke sword, "a plain brass scabbard sword or saber, with a mameluke hilt of white ivory and a gold tassel," according to the uniform regulations. No matter where LtCol Henderson's inspiration came from—O'Bannon or otherwise—it certainly has made a lasting impact on generations of Marine officers, nearly all of



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whom have been issued or required to purchase a mameluke sword.

With the exception of a hiatus from 1859 until 1875, during which the Marine Corps got rid of the mameluke sword requirement for officers and instead adopted the Army infantry officer's sword, and a brief pause during World War II, due to the metal shortage, the mameluke-style officer's sword has continued to be one of the most revered and recognizable traditions of the Corps.

Henderson's mameluke sword from 1826, pictured here, is now on display at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle, Va., at the entrance to the exhibit entitled "1775-1865: From the Halls of Montezuma" The primary difference between his sword and the more modern Marine officer sword is a yellow brass scabbard, rather than one that is stainless steel or chrome-plated.

To learn about refurbishing of Marine Corps swords, see "Sword Refurbishing: Trusting the Experts Makes All the Difference" on page 30.

