

FEBRUARY 2012

MAGAZINE OF THE MARINES

Leatherneck

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War on Terror

It Comes Down to
Counterinsurgency

Iwo Jima: There Was
Much More to It
Than Suribachi

Blount Island: Home of
Corps' MPF Program

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MARINE RESERVE



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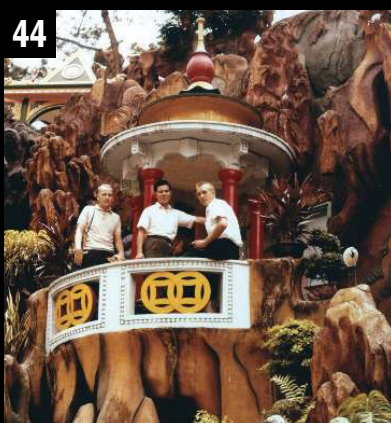
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COVER: LCpl Brian Castillolinaréz, a Co A, 1st Bn, 6th Marines M249 squad automatic weapon gunner, provides security during a late November 2011 patrol in Sangin District, Afghanistan. Photo by Cpl James Clark. Copies of the cover may be obtained by sending \$2 (for mailing costs) to Leatherneck Magazine, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134-0775.

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Sound Off

Edited by R. R. Keene

Have a question or feel like sounding off? Address your letter to: Sound Off Editor, *Leatherneck* Magazine, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134, or send an e-mail to: r.keene@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 e-mails must contain complete names and postal mailing addresses. Anonymous letters will not be published.—Sound Off Ed.

Letter of the Month

(*Leatherneck* will pay \$25 for the Sound Off Letter of the Month.)

I was married to Jane Long about a year before I shipped out for a two-year tour in the South Pacific during World War II.

When I returned to Dallas where my wife lived, we wanted to spend our first night together at the Baker Hotel, but were told by the clerk that the hotel was booked solid and there was no room for us.

I told the clerk I had just returned to the States from the South Pacific. She said, "I believe you on account of your Marine uniform and your deep, dark suntan, but we have no room for you and your wife."

A man then stepped from behind a partition and said, "I think we can find you all a room." He handed me the room key and off to the elevator we went. When we entered the room, I started to return the key, for I had never seen a more luxurious room and I knew I did not have enough money for such a room, but we stayed just the same. At dinner that night at the Baker Hotel, we were served a bottle of champagne. I told the waiter we did not order the champagne. He said it was the compliments of a man at the hotel.

When we checked out the next morning, the clerk said there was no charge for the dinner or the room. I will be forever grateful to the management of the Baker Hotel in Dallas.

Bob Carr
2dMarDiv
Texarkana, Texas

More on Roscoe the African Lion Mascot of the 28th Marines

"*Sound Off*," December 2011, carried the letter "A Lion Named Roscoe: Pride of the 28th Marines." Marine veteran Jim Browne had previously done some history and sent this:

When I first heard about Roscoe, I was intrigued by the story of just how an African lion wound up as a living mascot of a Marine regiment, how the Marines acquired him, and how they got him on board ship and to Camp Tarawa on the Big Island.

Thanks to Alice Clark of the Pacific



Roscoe on the hood of a jeep reviewing the troops during a parade in Hawaii.

War Memorial Association and Maile Melrose of the Waimea Main Street program, the Camp Tarawa oral history project, and their personal interviews with Major General Fred Haynes, USMC (Ret), we now know more. Maile Melrose's interview with MajGen Haynes was in 1995, and Alice Clark's interview was in 1996. Here is how the late MajGen Haynes remembered Roscoe:

"Roscoe was a great lion. I'm sorry he isn't with us today, 50 years later. We bought him for \$25 from the Los Angeles Zoo (Griffith Park). He was a little bitty cub. I mean he was as cute as he could be. I don't think you could buy a lion from any zoo these days.

"We took Roscoe to our initial training camp, which was at Camp Pendleton, Calif., and when we were ordered overseas, we ... conned the Navy into letting us bring Roscoe to Hawaii, and we settled him in at Camp Tarawa here in Waimea. He was still a fairly small cub, but when we went to Iwo, the Navy wouldn't let us take him aboard ship, which probably [was] good luck for him.

"He was a great howler: he could out-

howl the band! We had a good band in the Division. It was led by Bob Crosby, Bing Crosby's brother. ... [W]e would have these little parades over at the athletic field ... Roscoe would drape himself over the hood of a jeep and go over to the parade ground, and the band would play and he would howl or growl madly, much to the discomfort of band leader Bob Crosby. It was like being in darkest Africa to hear him let fly.

"[Roscoe] was a big, friendly guy, but we wouldn't let the average Marine go near him—only the three or four Marines who bought him and brought him to Camp Pendleton and really knew him. One or two of them had been wounded at Iwo and returned home, but there were a couple of them left when we came back, and he was very friendly to them. They would go and feed him, and he would growl ... that he was happy they were there.

"There was an adjutant in our regiment ... who decided he would learn to play the bagpipes ... Now he was an insomniac and would play the bagpipes until 2 or 3 in the morning, and of course Roscoe would join right in. So we moved both of

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In 1927, President Coolidge didn't send the United States Marine Corps into Nicaragua to make friends. The Marines stepped into the Central American country ready for anything they might encounter. That was their job. It always has been and always will be. Perhaps for a moment they were anxious. After all, they were going up against enemy guerrillas who knew the terrain and the value of an ambush. If they were in the jungle, it was easy to get disoriented. It was even easier to get killed.

The U.S. Marines were already legends on the battlefield. Extraordinary victories in the Great War earned them a reputation as fierce warriors. The world knew they were tough. But the Marines still had to prove it with every deployment. Wars were not won by reputation alone. It took courage. Conviction. And firepower. Nicaragua proved to be more than just another successful operation for the Marines; it was the beginning of a legendary partnership. The mission proved that the only thing more dangerous than a United States Marine was a United States Marine wielding a Thompson submachine gun.

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it was the perfect weapon for the Marines, who built their reputation on engaging the enemy face-to-face. The Thompson gave them a huge advantage in close combat fighting and helped turn the tide of countless firefights. Its portability proved crucial to the Marines leading their men up the beaches in the Pacific campaign. Anywhere the Marines saw action; you could hear the roar of the Thompson.

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The receiver features the familiar "Eagle, Globe and Anchor" decorated in gleaming nickel. Each side also features two important banners. On the left is "Lest We Forget," a reminder of the sacrifices made by the U.S. Marine Corps in defense of freedom. The right side features "First to Fight", signifying the Marine Corps readiness to be the frontline in defense of freedom around the world.



▼ On the left side, you'll find a trio of scenes showing Marines and the Thompson in combat. First is a scene of Marines raising the flag atop Mount Suribachi, at Iwo Jima, a historic event! Next, taking the beach during a Pacific island landing, Marines dragged the Thompson through seawater and sand, a scene repeated many times across the Pacific. Once they reached enemy positions, the last thing they needed was a misfire. The trusty Thompson rarely let them down. At the center, a Marine stands at the ready with his Thompson. Few sights were more intimidating to the enemy.



▲ The right side features an illustration of a Marine taking aim with his Thompson. The rest of the action on the right side of the receiver depicts scenes of the Marines in action during the Korean and Vietnam Wars. On the front lines in Korea, the Marine Corps distinguished itself with one of history's most impressive amphibious assaults at Inchon. And though the struggles and harsh conditions in Korea would push every American to the limit, the fighting spirit of the Marines carried on. In Vietnam, decades after the Marines debuted the Thompson in Central America; the firearm once again proved itself a weapon of choice for close-quarter fighting. Though appearances of the Thompson weren't as common, its presence was definitely welcomed in the hands of Marines on patrol or pinned down in a firefight.

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them far enough away where they could enjoy one another's music and let the rest of us get some sleep.

"In any event, we came back [from Iwo Jima] and here was Roscoe weighing about 300 to 350 pounds ... [He] grew and grew and got to be 100 percent African-lion size, weighing 400 pounds and [he] ate a huge amount of food. We got meat from the Parker Ranch for him, and we also took scraps from the mess halls ... He was well-fed and we had him here for at least four or five months, and then distemper got ahold of him, he became quite ill, and the veterinarians put him to sleep."

MajGen Haynes concluded by saying: "He is buried somewhere on the Big Island. Down near the camp, but I wouldn't recognize the spot ... That's my story of Roscoe, a great lion, and he lies here on the Big Island of Hawaii. We ought to erect a little memorial to this male African lion that has now become part of our Big Island history."

Jim Browne

Commandant, Camp Tarawa Det. #1255, MCL
Waikoloa, Hawaii

• *Jim Browne also wrote: "We think that we may have a lead on where Roscoe is buried. If the lead works out, our detachment, with the permission of the Parker Ranch, would like to place a headstone on his grave site."—Sound Off Ed.*

They Eventually Got to Korea And Witnessed Helo Ops

Congratulations to Warren Thompson on the great article in the January *Leatherneck* on "Marine Helicopter Operations in Korea." As a young private first class in June 1950, in the Fifth Marine Regiment at Camp Pendleton, Calif., I don't believe we had ever seen a helicopter, except in pictures. As a member of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade, we worked 24/7 getting ready to load out of San Diego when President Harry S. Truman ordered the Marines into the war.

Soon after sailing in USS *Henrico* (APA-45), one of the boilers went out and we limped into Oakland to get it repaired. That was the good news. The bad news is that with all the lights of San Francisco beckoning, "Liberty Call" was never sounded.

The initial plan was to land in Sasebo, Japan, and get "organized." With the situation getting worse in Korea, the decision was made for us to sail directly to Pusan. As we approached the harbor, a helicopter appeared on the horizon and dropped a pallet of maps on the deck. Unfortunately, all the maps were in Japanese. (We had Japanese linguists in the

brigade, who had been trained during World War II.)

From then on, we saw helicopters almost daily, mostly evacuating casualties. I used to wonder which would be worse, to be injured or being lashed to the outside of a Bell helicopter on a stretcher. Yes, outside, one on each side of the "bird" for balance!

As we progressed to Inchon, the Liberation of Seoul and then into the Chosin Reservoir, the appearance of the helicopters became more frequent and they were, as the article so clearly indicates, the very lifeline for many wounded and the beginning of their use in war.

As a sidebar: When I served in Vietnam (1968-69), helicopters were always around and on call. Many more lives were saved, and it was interesting, for me, to have been in the first war (Korea) when helicopters came into their own.

Col Warren Wiedhahn, USMC (Ret)

5th Marines, 1stMarDiv, Korea, 1950
Annandale, Va.

The Toys for Tots Bucket Brigade

On Sat., Dec. 3, 2011, the Marines and Associates of Detachment 144, Marine Corps League, Worcester, Mass., conducted our annual Toys for Tots "bucket brigade" at two locations.

Through the generosity of those contributing, we were able to collect \$6,165.10. In addition, the Worcester Police Department motorcycle club, known as "The Law Dogs," generously contributed \$100 plus \$57 from the Military Order of Devil Dogs. An additional \$210 and hundreds of toys have been donated at our headquarters, bringing the total cash contribution to \$6,532.10 and several thousand dollars' worth of new toys. Our totals eclipsed last year's totals by more than \$300 and a couple hundred new toys.

This generous donation will go a long way in helping less fortunate families in our community have a better holiday season.

Joseph J. George

Sr. Vice Commandant

Worcester Det., MCL, Mass.

Anybody Remember the Flag Raising On Tarawa?

Tarawa: On day four or five, while in loose formation en route to the beach assigned for pickup and return to our ship, my company was ordered to halt. There flying gently in the sea breeze was Old Glory atop a 20-foot coconut tree whose entire top had been sheared by a U.S. naval shell.

Standing nearby were a few Marines who evidently had just raised our symbol of victory. It brought a tear or two to many

and a memory that remains in heart and mind forever. In the 68 years since I witnessed that emotional event, I've never seen a photograph or read a story of the flag raising that took place on that day. That is the reason I'm reporting this historical incident to *Leatherneck*; hopeful that someone out there has a photo and a story of that wonderful achievement to satisfy the long-standing desire in my heart for it.

Also, I would like to hear from Private Finley (Kentucky), who took a bad hit in the thigh. One well-aimed shot from my M1 eliminated the Japanese who had killed Pvt Stubbs just before Pvt Finley's hit. I removed my web belt and applied a tourniquet to Finley's thigh to stop the gush of blood. Pvt Strother's (Chicago) M1 sounded like a machine gun firing into that bunker to protect Pvt Moskowski and me as we carried Finley to the beach for care.

I would like to hear from anyone about the incidents noted above.

Cpl John Vogt
Tulsa, Okla.

• Nicki Jones wrote us: "My father, John Vogt, is an 87-year-old Marine veteran who fought in the Pacific at Guadalcanal and Tarawa. He is feeling remorse and

Sgt Grit
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FEBRUARY 2012 LEATHERNECK

5

Postal Delivery Problems

We have received an increase in calls from our members regarding timely postal service delivery of their Marine Corps Association and Foundation magazines, *Leatherneck* and *Marine Corps Gazette*. Originally this issue was limited to Southern California but has spread to other states over the course of the last two months. After reviewing the delivery chain, we have learned that the problem rests squarely with the Post Office.



We have complained about the late deliveries to the USPS and have solicited solutions from our printer as well. We apologize for the delay in delivery of the printed magazines but rest assured you can still access both publications digitally prior to the arrival of the print publication. Although we are dependent on the postal service to implement a solution to their delivery problem, we will work with our printer to develop alternate courses of action.

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regret for not trying sooner to locate those he fought side by side with. On Jan. 11th, my father and I headed for Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego to witness my son, his grandson, become a U.S. Marine. My dad played an integral role in my son's decision to choose this branch of the military by not only sharing stories of his time as a Marine, but by simply being the wonderful man, father and grandpa that he is; no doubt the Marine Corps played a big part in this."—Sound Off Ed.

The Old Corps: It Is All True

I just finished reading and chuckling about the "Old Corps Marines" article in the November 2011 issue. It is all true.

However, it dawned on me that there is one very critical missing conformation that defines an "Old Corps Marine," which is extremely important, but omitted from Mr. Hall's article.

According to an excellent USMC source, Colonel Bruce M. MacLaren, USMC (Ret), the following is true. Colonel "Mac" states that all Marines are sharpening their Ka-Bars, sitting by the phone, waiting for the Commandant of the Marine Corps to call them back to active duty to serve their country.

Shery Nelson Gwinn
Graham, Wash.

Is There a Difference Between a Vietnam Vet and a Vietnam-Era Vet?

With reference to Captain Glausier's letter "Call Them Marines, Amen" in the December 2011 issue, I always felt that describing myself as a "grunt" was showing pride in my unit. I served in the best fire team, in the best squad, in the best platoon, in the best company, in the best battalion, in the best regiment, in the best division, no matter which of those units I was serving in at the time, in the Marine Corps, which, of course, is the finest fighting force and military organization ever.

When I meet other Marines, it is usually with a "Semper Fi" or "Oorah" from the younger breed, followed by an exchange of dates of service, military occupational specialties and locales. None of it is meant as a put down, for each did what the Corps asked, regardless of time of war or peace. I am honored to be a part of that brotherhood.

What does trouble me, however, is a tendency among some Vietnam veterans, all branches of the armed forces, to distinguish between those who served in country and those who did not, by using the terms "Vietnam vet" or "Vietnam-era vet" to separate the veterans. This doesn't seem to apply to any other conflict except Vietnam. The ribbons I have define my Vietnam service, and, if I have more than others, it doesn't mean I did more or they did less, it just shows that each of us did what we were called upon to do by the Corps.

On Sept. 11, 2001, firefighters, police officers and emergency responders went into the World Trade Center and never came out. Among them were honorably discharged peacetime veterans and active reservists. Should we call into question the quality of their service because they never served in a combat zone?

I believe the same respect should be shown to all military personnel who served honorably. I am not entitled to any greater respect than any other Marine.

Sgt Joe Doyle

USMC, 1964-70

Clarksville, Va.

• I think you may be a little overly sensitive. I edit obituaries each month. When someone sends an obit, it sometimes says "World War II veteran of the Pacific" and there's usually a list of combat actions. Sometimes the obit says they served during WW II, and upon reading further you know they served without seeing combat. It is the same for the Korean War. Nothing derogatory is meant. It is merely stating facts.

What also is a fact is they all are brother and sister Marines. They usually have no say as to where they are assigned, yet

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COMING SOON TO MARINET



they do the best job possible. Each rates respect and the pleasure of going down that ritualistic greeting following "Semper Fi," when we meet.—Sound Off Ed.

Good Story, but Minor Corrections

Thanks for the great article on "Firefight at New Ubaydi, Iraq" in the November 2011 issue. Also, thanks to then-Gunnery Sergeant Mike Fay for the outstanding coverage of the battles and bringing this story to life.

Indeed, as noted by the writer, it was "a little-known but deadly battle where all were heroes." I would like to add two corrections to the article. Corporal John M. Longoria was the first Marine killed in "Fox" Company on Nov. 14, 2005. He was wounded immediately upon entering to clear the building. LCpl Christopher M. McCrackin also was severely wounded on the same day and died of his wounds on the early morning of Nov. 15. Also on Nov. 16, the number of company wounded in action was 18, not 11.

SgtMaj P. A. Orellano
CLB-6, Afghanistan

• SgtMaj Orellano was the "Fox" Co First Sergeant during Operation Steel Curtain.—Sound Off Ed.

A Christmas Tree in Baltimore

I was once a sergeant of Marines with the 4th Combat Engineer Battalion. I currently teach at Our Lady of Mount Carmel School in Baltimore. Every year I put up a Christmas tree in my classroom, and this year I added my own personal touch.

My Marine Corps tree was decked out



COURTESY OF KARL DOTTERWEICH

Teacher and former Sgt Karl Dotterweich added his "gung ho" touch to the tree in his classroom.

in red and gold with a helmet for a topper and my boots underneath. The students loved it, as many of them have a million questions for me about the Corps, and many more have relatives serving or who have served in the Marine Corps. Happy New Year!

Karl Dotterweich
Baltimore

Should the Purple Heart Be Awarded For PTSD?

I think it's absurd to even consider awarding a Purple Heart to someone who claims mental anguish. Anyone who's been in a war zone experiences uncomfortable moments, emotions, anguish, even guilt, upon return to the "world." Those thoughts, fears, sadness never really go away. Most of us learn to cope. They are real life experiences and will never go away. You learn to deal with it.

What about the guys who received their "Hearts" posthumously? To equate post-traumatic stress with a mortal wound cheapens the sacrifices of dead Marines.

I never even heard of post-traumatic stress disorder until recently. I've got six buddies on "The Wall" and over the years remember them on All Souls Day and, when close, visit their graves. I've cried. I'm still jumpy with loud noises or



MARINE CORPS CENTER FOR LESSONS LEARNED

STRENGTH THROUGH EXPERIENCE



Amid the high risk and uncertainty of combat, shared experience—especially lessons hard earned—should be promulgated laterally as quickly as possible so that the learning curve of the entire organization is elevated by the creativity or misfortune of individual units.

— Marine Corps Operating Concepts 2010

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surprises. I'm glad there is help for those who need it. But an award tantamount to a Purple Heart is wrong.

My son sent me a *Leatherneck* subscription as a Christmas gift a couple years back. It was a great gift. He's serving at Camp Leatherneck today.

LCpl Frank R. O'Rourke
RVN, 1968-69
Marinette, Wis.

• *In December's 2011 "Sound Off," we stated that the Department of Defense rejected the idea that troops suffering from PTSD should be awarded the Purple Heart; however, DOD did issue new Purple Heart standards for brain injuries. What do you readers think?—Sound Off Ed.*

Sleeves Up, Sleeves Down, An Unnecessary Conundrum?

This debate of wearing utility jacket sleeves up or down would vanish if the Marine Corps ordered Marines to stow their utilities in their lockers and break them out for field duty and working, as the utilities are meant to be used.

Unfortunately, the Corps has been seduced by the "General Alfred M. Gray [29th Commandant of the Marine Corps] Syndrome." We know we're warriors, one

and all. It is not necessary to scream it to the world. As sure as I sit here and type, the next evolution will be seeing Marines traipsing through airports and bus stations sporting their Marine Corps "cammies" like that other service our current Marines are beginning to emulate.

In the years I spent on Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., my recruits strived to emulate their drill instructors and be able to someday wear the service and dress uniforms of the Corps.

1stLt Bernie Eveler, USMC (Ret)
Beaufort, S.C.

I find it distressing to see Marines in field clothing in public places such as airport terminals and even at award ceremonies. All such uniforms look alike, and you can't tell what service a person is in unless you get in their face. Marines should stand out, always.

Marines always have had the best uniform and looked sharp. Let's get back to high dress standards in public places.

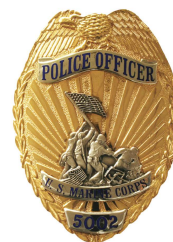
Former Sgt John Cavallero
Sarasota, Fla.

• *I have a tendency to agree with both of you, except to point out that there is still a potential terrorist threat, requiring gate guards to wear utility uniforms and*

accompanied gear with appropriate weapons. But I do think you are confusing Gen Gray's belief in reminding the nation and reminding the Corps' Marines of their warrior heritage with the very real threat that came with 9/11.

It is still forbidden to wear the utility uniform in public places such as air terminals. You are right in that as we return from Afghanistan, perhaps it's time to get back into distinctive and sharply worn service uniforms. Again, readers, what say you?—Sound Off Ed.

Reader Asks If Civilian Police Officers Should Be Called Civilian Marines



CIVILIAN MARINES—
Securing the Future

I have seen the ad in *Leatherneck* pertaining to civilian police officers. I made a trip back to Camp Lejeune, N.C., last year and noticed the civilian officers and Marine military police at the gate.

The civilian officers were businesslike, and I didn't see anything wrong with their behavior. Having been an MP for a short time on Okinawa, I personally don't think we should be doing

[continued on page 66]

Show a Special Marine Your Appreciation

For My Marine Dog Tag Necklace

Semper Fidelis—always faithful—and ready to serve. This USMC motto says it all. Marines have always been there for us, ready to make the ultimate sacrifice. Now, you can show this person of courage and commitment just how much you care and how much he is appreciated with the “For My Marine” Dog Tag Necklace.

A Magnificent Achievement in Craftsmanship and Design

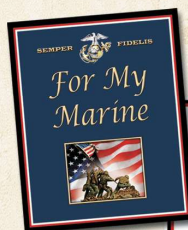
With our exclusive necklace, we’ve taken the look of a standard Marine-issue dog tag and added distinctive design elements to create an attractive and meaningful piece of jewelry. Crafted of tough-as-a-Marine stainless steel, the dog tag necklace features a genuine black onyx stone strategically positioned at the center of a symbolic cross. In sculpted raised-relief on the black onyx is the Corps emblem of eagle, globe and anchor, gleaming in golden and silver tones.

Adding to the meaning and value, the necklace is engraved on one side with “USMC”, and on the reverse side with “SEMPER FIDELIS”, the Marine Corps emblem, and the Corps’ values of “HONOR, COURAGE, COMMITMENT.” As a final touch, the dog tag necklace is handsomely presented in a deluxe jewelry pouch and gift box, along with a special sentiment card.

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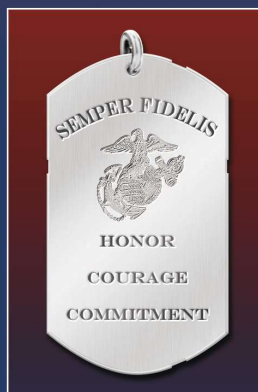
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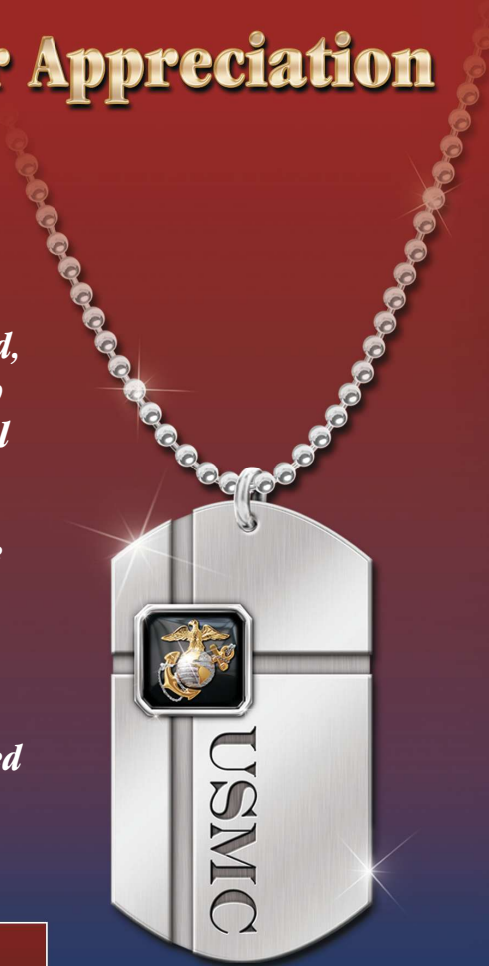
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THE WAR ON TERROR

Edited by R. R. Keene



CPL REECE LODDER

These 2d Plt, L/3/3 leathernecks at Patrol Base Barcha rescued nine Afghans from a canal Dec. 2, 2011. Front to back: Sgt Matt Garst, LCpl Ryan Gerrity, LCpl James Blomstran and LCpl Nicholas Dumke.

OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM **■ Kuchiney Darvishan** **Marines Plunge Into Frigid Canal** **To Rescue 9 Afghans**

Marines on patrol with Afghan soldiers saved a soldier and a family after a vehicle accidentally hit an Afghan soldier who was patrolling with them and then plunged into a canal Dec. 2, 2011, near Patrol Base Barcha, in Kuchiney Darvishan, Afghanistan.

Dimly illuminated by moonlight, eight men quietly patrolled a gravel road set next to a swift flowing canal.

At the front of the squad, Afghan National Army soldier Zaheed deliberately moved a metal detector from side to side, cautiously sweeping the road for improvised explosive devices. Fellow ANA soldiers and leathernecks from 2d Platoon, Company L, 3d Battalion, Third Marine Regiment followed closely.

On Dec. 2, they had departed Patrol Base Barcha to resupply Marines at a nearby observation post. With their mission complete, the partnered patrol trekked through the chilly night back to the patrol base. A vehicle approached, and as the headlights became larger, Zaheed stepped

into the middle of the road. He waved his arms and yelled for it to stop. The speeding driver panicked, swerved and smashed into Zaheed, plunging both soldier and vehicle into the canal.

Sergeant Matt Garst, the squad leader, shouted for the Marines to drop their gear. He instructed three ANA soldiers to provide security, then he jumped into the frigid, murky water as the vehicle rapidly submerged.

"I saw the problem, saw the security we needed and sent everyone else into the canal," Garst said. Lance Corporals Ryan Gerrity and Nicholas Dumke jumped in behind Garst. LCpl James Blomstran, accompanied by his IED detection dog, Sage, provided security.

"It took a split second to realize what happened," said Dumke, a rifleman. "We train for firefights, not for a vehicle going into a canal ... we just snapped into reacting to a high-stress situation and did what we had to do."

Gerrity grabbed Zaheed and swam to shore. Dumke fought against the sweeping current to try to get to other victims, but to no avail. He returned to the shore, grabbed

a 4-foot piece of cloth, using it to pull a child ashore and then a man.

Garst reached the vehicle as passengers struggled to exit the shattered windshield. He saw two women and an infant drowning. He dove beneath the surface to push them above water, wrapped them in his arms and kicked toward shore.

Gerrity and Blomstran employed a sickle stick—a bamboo pole used to detect IED wires—to bring in another woman and child. Garst quickly returned to the vehicle, grabbed a man and dragged him to safety. Gerrity treated the injured Zaheed. "The vehicle's windshield had shattered from his head [hitting it]," Gerrity, a fire team leader, said. "I didn't know what injuries he might've had, so I wanted to help him right away."

Gerrity elevated Zaheed's shattered left ankle and then pulled gauze wrap from his first aid kit, using it to cover several lacerations on the soldier's head. Garst used two antennas to fashion a makeshift splint for Zaheed's shattered ankle, wrapping it with gauze.

In the absence of an interpreter, Garst used hand signals and his limited Pashto vocabulary to ask the driver if his entire family was now safe. They counted two men, three women, two children and an infant. The man nodded yes. "Once we got the family out and on the shore, I felt good ... like I hadn't let anybody down," said Garst.

As Garst radioed in the casualty report to PB Barcha, Gerrity stopped a passing vehicle and had the driver take Zaheed, and another Afghan soldier for security, back to PB Barcha.

Only one hour after the accident, a helicopter arrived at PB Barcha to evacuate Zaheed to Camp Dwyer's Combat Support Hospital.

"We're proud to serve with the 2d Platoon Marines," said one Afghan soldier. "They're training us well, but we're also improving because of their example. The Marines are warriors and heroes for saving those lives."

Cpl Reece Lodder
Combat Correspondent, RCT-5

■ Nimroz Province
Zaranj Shows Promise for Future

Leaders of the Support Operations section at Camp Leatherneck met with Nimroz province officials in Zaranj, Dec. 2, 2011, to discuss future development in the region, as “Tranche II” remains in effect.

Tranche II, the second part of a four-phase operation in Nimroz province, is an ongoing transition toward infrastructure and security development in the region. The significance of the Tranche II effort lies in the fact that it is being led by Afghan provincial leaders as coalition forces take a backseat and merely facilitate the newly empowered government.

Zaranj, the capital of Nimroz province, is located in the extreme southwest corner of Afghanistan and acts as a major hub for commerce between Afghanistan and Iran. In previous months, the city was a primary exporter of illegal narcotics into Iran, but has become more stable with an enforced governing presence.

“All of the security they have provided down there, they have done 100 percent on their own,” said Major Robert Howard, the deputy Nimroz provincial coordination team leader. “They train their own people, they pay their own people, and they equip their own people. They have pulled all of this money out of hide and done all this on their own with very little ISAF [International Security Assistance Force] assistance.”

The governmental independence shown by the provincial government of the Nimroz province governor, Abdul Karim Brahawi, has not been completely hands-free. However, the mentor/mentee relationship between coalition and Afghan leaders has blossomed, according to Nimroz’s senior provincial leader.

“Our interaction with our [ISAF] partners has always been positive,” said Karim Brahawi. “Every time we have a problem, we take it to our mentors, and if they have guidance, they provide it so we can work it out together.”

The Support Operations section’s most recent visit to Zaranj targeted infrastructure development in the city, which would ultimately spread throughout the province. Although the capital city plays a vital role in pumping economic growth into Nimroz province’s six districts, roads are poorly constructed and there is only one fully capable hospital. Fresh water is seldom available to the approximately 148,000 people who live throughout Nimroz. It is collected by individuals who can take only what they can carry.

“Most of the water comes from the Lashkari Canal and is distributed into dirty jugs and cooking oil containers,” said Howard. “If the people are lucky,



A Marine equipped with a Thor II backpack-mounted counter-IED jammer provides security for ISAF and Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan representatives during a visit to Zaranj in Nimroz province to discuss security and infrastructure in the region. (Photo by Cpl Timothy L. Solano)

they can boil the water ahead of time, but if not, that is just what they drink.”

In addition to starting a comprehensive city water project in Zaranj that would ultimately consist of water treatment facilities and wastewater treatment plants, the border town has recently broken ground on a site that is slated to become a commercial truck inspection station.

New security measures at the truck inspection station will aim to provide more efficient search of commercial vehicles that come and go from Iran for illegal narcotics and weapons, using detection kits and possibly an X-ray scanner. It is expected to improve traffic flow, open

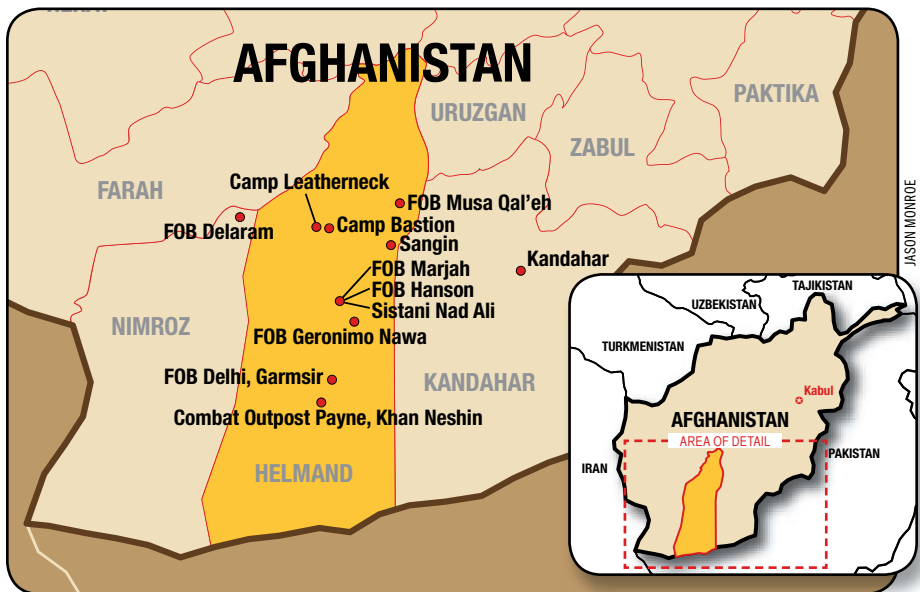
up the region’s busiest commercial route and aid in connecting the other districts in the province.

For many Afghan and ISAF leaders, hopes are high for the future of Zaranj, whose growth is symbolic of a brighter future in Nimroz.

“In 10 or 20 years I see Zaranj being comparable to Dubai,” said Brahawi.

According to Howard, approximately 1 percent of what is spent in Helmand province is equivalent to NATO’s total contribution to Nimroz, a clear sign to many that the province needs less and will soon be ready to stand on its own.

“The end goal here is to see Nimroz



function completely independent of ISAF assistance,” said Howard. “One of the most important things that we have seen is that the people of Nimroz province can do the best with what they’ve got.”

Cpl Timothy L. Solano
Combat Correspondent, II MEF (Fwd)

■ Khan-Neshin

Almost “Touch and Go” Marine Air Supports Afghan Border Patrol

As a CH-53 Sea Stallion touches down, it whips up moon dust, creating a sand-storm obscuring the landing zone. A squad of Marines disembarks the “bird” in a well-choreographed show of force and begins moving toward a nearby vehicle: the air interdiction force (AIF) has landed.

Marines and sailors of 1st Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment and 2d Bn, 11th Marines conducted an AIF mission in support of an Afghan Border Police-led clearing operation in Helmand province, Afghanistan, Dec. 7-8, 2011.

“Insurgent forces were fleeing to the south during the operation,” said Captain Stephen Bartoszak, Company C, 1/25 executive officer. “Our mission was to stop any of those forces and deny them freedom of movement in the open desert.”

As the border police conducted the clearing operation in Khan-Neshin District, southwest of the Helmand River, the AIF circled in the air, searching for suspicious people and vehicles.

“We were searching for insurgent activity enablers,” said Capt Darren Wallace, the C/1/25 company commander. “The area is a hotbed for smugglers transporting weapons, improvised explosive device components and narcotics.”

Once a target has been identified, the team lands and moves toward the vehicles or individuals in question.

“It’s a very dynamic situation,” said Bartoszak. “We have to treat everyone we encounter as a threat, but we still have to be professional with them.”

The task at hand was not an easy one; the team often had to search large groups of people and vehicles in a very short time. The members of the AIF also collected biometric data from everyone, which is added to a databank used to identify insurgents.

The largest group the AIF stopped included almost 35 individuals, Wallace said. Having performed numerous missions of the same scope, the AIF has the experience to deal with challenges, such as communicating in the noisy confines of their helicopter and through the “brown-outs” created by sand during their extractions.

“It’s very difficult to communicate while we’re in the bird,” said Bartoszak. “So, we developed basic hand-and-arms signals to let each other know what targets we have on the ground.”

The AIF acts as a quick reaction force from above, playing a unique role in support of counterinsurgency operations in southern Helmand province.

“With the limited time we have on the ground, it’s our job to find weapons and improvised explosive device components to deter these insurgents,” said Wallace.

Mission success for the AIF depends heavily on the speed, discipline and professionalism of its Marines and sailors.

Cpl Alfred V. Lopez
Combat Correspondent, RCT-5

■ Now Zad

Operation Western Gambit Clears Insurgents

On Nov. 26, 2011, Operation Western Gambit began as Marines from 2d Battalion, Fourth Marine Regiment loaded into MV-22 Ospreys, helicopters and trucks from their bases in Now Zad and Musa Qal’eh districts to enter into villages where coalition forces had never been. Their mission: disrupting insurgent forces currently controlling the area.

“There is a lot of enemy activity and a lot of things to expect. We expect direct and indirect fire; the threat is really real,” said First Lieutenant Okechukwu Ihenacho, 2d Platoon commander, Weapons Company, 2/4, before the operation. “The biggest threat, obviously, is the [improvised explosive device] threat. The Taliban knows that we are in Now Zad and have anticipated our movement. They have likely established IED belts in our direction of travel, in plans to mitigate our movements into those towns. They are not necessarily fighters, but do facilitate IED making and IED emplacement.”

This threatening insurgent stronghold is actually home to mostly impartial Afghan citizens. Their lives are ruled by an impeding insurgent presence ultimately controlling their lives with threats of pain and death. Operation Western Gambit opened the door for the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) to help bring order and justice.

“We will introduce the Afghan National Army to the outskirts so they can [establish] the security bubble around the area,” Ihenacho said. “We will introduce the Afghan National Police to the population centers so they can control ... and influence the populace. The tribal elders, [who] are linked to the central government, will be brought into the fold. We will introduce them to GIROA and, hopefully, that will lead into the development of those areas.”

The operation began with night inserts from an MV-22 Osprey into the desert, several kilometers outside the villages. The Marines trudged through the uneven terrain, aided by night vision goggles, making their way to the villages at sunrise. The plan for disrupting enemy forces was to go through the villages and, with the aid of the ANA, clear houses, ridding any remaining traces of insurgent supplies.

“Clearing will take no more than four days from the start, but the continuous operations will be ongoing until certain conditions are met,” Ihenacho said. “We want to build up the ANSF and GIROA forces in the area ... There is a clear delineation between the insurgents and the local populace. The insurgents don’t



Marines with an air interdiction force search a vehicle Dec. 7, 2011, in Khan-Neshin, Helmand province looking for weapons, IEDs and narcotics. Air interdiction operations allow a Marine unit to cover a vast amount of territory supporting the Afghan Border Police.



CPL CLAYTON VONDERAHE

Marines of Wpns/2/4 carry Javelin missiles on patrol during Operation Western Gambit in the Now Zad District.

field, impacting in the dirt around the Marines who instinctively fell to their stomachs.

The barren area offered no cover from the incoming fire, save for a small hill. Marines and Afghan soldiers found cover behind the hill approximately 3 feet tall and 20 feet wide where they treated a casualty who received a neck wound. Miraculously, the bullet wound was superficial.

“It went as it was supposed to; we landed and started clearing three towns without any exchange of rounds,” said Sergeant David Pedroza, the 1st Squad leader, 2d Plt. “We were about to come back and set up a patrol base . . . when we started taking rounds from Rhazdan Sofa. My squad moved and started returning fire until the enemy retreated over a hill. There was a *shura* with town elders talking with Marines. The insurgents shot right into the direction of that *shura*. It is most disrespectful, and hopefully that will show the elders that we are there to protect them while it demonstrates that the insurgents will shoot at them.”

The firefight lasted nearly 15 minutes. It stopped the Marines from returning to

really have a lot of sympathizers, [the local people] are pretty much fence sitters, they’re going to go with whoever the winning side is. Once we show that we’re the winning side, they’re going to come to our table. It is that simple.”

The movement began unhindered through three adjacent villages in the first day of the operation. The 2d Plt, Weapons Co leathernecks inserted by helicopter and cleared their way through two villages

by mid-afternoon. They encountered no resistance or improvised explosive devices. At the third village, they met with other platoons from Weapons Co for a *shura*, or meeting, with the village elders.

It was then that the once serene operation turned into a hail of gunfire aimed at the Marines. A small group of insurgents fired from behind walls in a neighboring village, approximately 1,000 yards away. Orange tracers streaked across an empty



Tactical columns and formations haven’t changed much over the years. Leathernecks of 4th Marines move through the desolation of Afghanistan in November 2011 during Operation Western Gambit. (Photo by Cpl Clayton VonDerAhe)



CPL CLAYTON VONDERAHE

These Marines and their IED detection dog have engaged in several firefights with insurgent forces in the Now Zad District. Knowing they may be suddenly engaged again, they set up a security perimeter at an isolated village.

the first village they had cleared to establish a patrol base and place to sleep for the night. A convoy of trucks altered its mission and spent the night on the top of a hill, wrapped around the tired leather-necks. They had followed the rule of “pack light, sleep cold at night” for the operation due to the large amounts of ground they planned to cover by foot. Early in the morning, Nov. 28, the Marines began a two-hour hike to another village in the area, the last main objective left in Wpns Co’s clearing operation.

The sun had nearly cleared the horizon as the Marines approached the village. The patrol moved through a freshly tilled field. The ground was soft from the recent

storms, and Marines sank boot deep in mud under the weight of their combat loads.

Their senses were heightened from the day before, and much like the day before, insurgents exploited the opportunity to unleash machine-gun fire on the Marines as they crossed barren fields where no cover was available.

Marines again rushed through a torrent of gunfire; the orange tracers were once more splashing into the mud around them as they worked through the thick sludge to get within accurate firing range.

“Right now it appears that no one really wants us here, and they’re doing a good job of slowing us,” said Corporal Eric Mugica, a fire team leader, as he dodged enemy fire. “It had been raining the past couple of days, so the fields are flooded. Myself, I was stuck about knee-deep in mud when we were taking small-arms fire and was unable to get out while we were taking fire. I eventually pulled out of the mud and got myself some cover.”

The insurgents had cleared the village of its inhabitants the night before in order to effectively fight the Marines. Gunshots shattered the silence intermittently as Marines maneuvered through the urban environment. One round crashed into the top of a mud wall; the bullet ricocheted with a frightening hum just past the head of an Afghan soldier.

Marine snipers maneuvered along the sides of the surrounding mountains, hoping to eliminate the enemy and free a squad of Marines pinned down by machine-gun fire. Rounds crashed off the walls a squad of Marines used for cover.

A Harrier jet silenced all threats as it roared overhead.

“As soon as air came on station the potshots ceased,” remarked Mugica. “We are now trying to clear this village [Tange Sofla] as quick as we can.”

Locals to the area began to trickle in shortly after the firing ceased. When questioned, the villagers said that they are victims of the insurgent rule and have no other option but to go along with the insurgents’ ideology.

Within hours, the area was filled with its occupants once again. Children flooded the streets and played with the Marines. The adults conversed with the Afghan soldiers in the streets and asked for things the insurgents could not provide, such as medical treatment.

The inhabitants displayed a strong interest in working with GIROA officials to help integrate their area into the folds of the district and become part of a bigger whole. The reaction of the area’s population reflected the strong likelihood of the operation’s success, but only time will be able to tell for sure.

Cpl Clayton VonDerAhe
Combat Correspondent, RCT-8

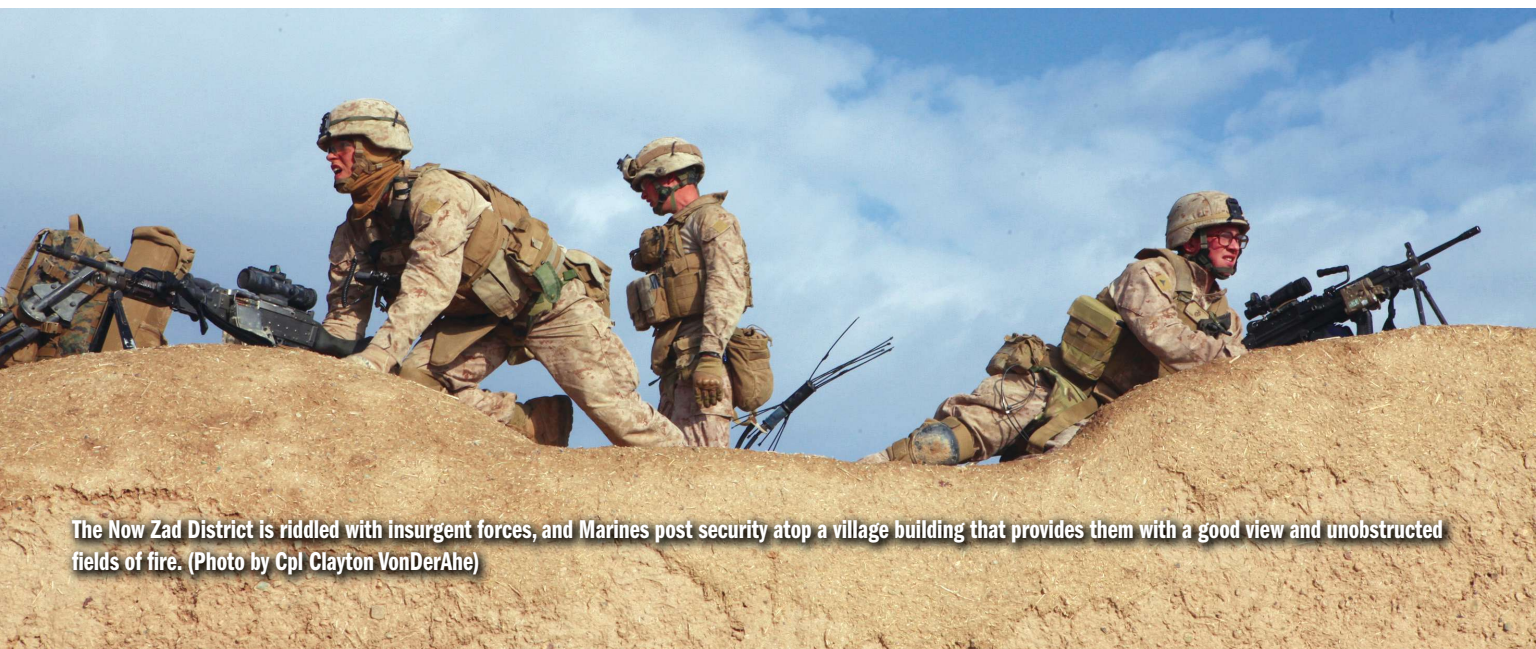
■ Sar Banadar Marines Save, Heal Afghan IED Victim

Nine months ago, a quiet 15-year-old Afghan boy had the last normal morning of his life.

As he walked along a road near his village of Sar Banadar in search of a day’s work, Sayed Gul was hit with a 20-pound improvised explosive device.

The sound was unmistakable to Marines nearby at Patrol Base 00. A squad of infantrymen with 2d Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion set out to investigate and found the mangled boy. The blast had blown off the lower half of his left leg, peppering what remained with shrapnel.

They treated the injured farmer’s son, calling in a medical evacuation to transport him by helicopter to the Combat Support Hospital at Camp Dwyer. While these events unfolded, Gul’s father, Alai Noor,



The Now Zad District is riddled with insurgent forces, and Marines post security atop a village building that provides them with a good view and unobstructed fields of fire. (Photo by Cpl Clayton VonDerAhe)



CPL REECE LODDER

Sayed Gul, a 15-year-old amputee, departs Patrol Base 00 with his father, Alai Noor, following a medical visit with U.S. Navy corpsmen. Gul lost half of his leg to an IED. Marines medically evacuated the lad to a three-week stay at Camp Dwyer's advanced care casualty collection hospital.

was away from home and unaware of his son's injuries.

"I didn't know about it until the Marines had already taken him away for treatment," Noor, from the Baluch Jan tribe, said. "I'm grateful for the help of the Marines. I'm a poor man, and I could do nothing about my son's injuries."

At the Dwyer CSH, Gul's leg was amputated above the knee, and he received three weeks of further care. His body had changed drastically, but he was still alive.

After recuperating at Camp Dwyer, the tall, black-haired boy returned to his humble farming village in Garmsir.

Months passed. Gul's condition deteriorated. The less than sanitary surroundings and the lack of medical care caused a skin infection to leak into his bloodstream.

Concerned again for his son's life, Noor returned to PB 00 to ask the Marines for help. Through tears, he pleaded with the base's senior enlisted man, Gunnery Sergeant Todd Leahey, to help fix his son. Noor said there was no hospital or clinic nearby. His son, who was sweating and shivering from fever, would die without treatment.

"I'm a father myself, and I can't imagine how he felt," said Leahey, the 81 mm mortar platoon sergeant for Weapons Company, 3d Battalion, Third Marine Regiment. But

the "gunny" was unable to find Gul transportation to nearby Patrol Base Torbert for treatment.

"We care about the Afghan people beyond just fighting the insurgents," Leahey said. "We see how bleak, dirty and austere they have it here. We're only here seven months. Sayed will be here the rest of his life, so this was an opportunity where we could better his situation."

Leahey took the boy to one of his Marine vehicle checkpoints and flagged down a mullah driving through from the north. He implored the religious leader to drive Gul to Torbert and the man agreed.

Gul received antibiotics from U.S. Navy Hospital Corpsman Second Class Maxwell McGill, Wpns Co, and Gul's condition quickly improved.

The scars on Gul's leg have nearly healed, although they'll always be a reminder of his last normal morning. He lived through it and is thankful to be alive.

"If the Marines weren't here, maybe I'd have lost my life because nobody else would've been able to help me," he said.

The IED attack that injured Noor's son was similar to many others in southern Helmand. The men responsible for planting these lethal devices do not typically discriminate between targets. In this case, their device maimed a teenage boy.

"Before the Marines came, the Taliban put IEDs in the ground and shot at our people," Noor said. "My son was innocent, but the enemies of Afghanistan don't care who they hurt. They just want to kill people."

On Gul's Dec. 2 visit to PB 00 where he and his father go once a week for him to receive care from Wpns Co corpsmen, Gul found a reason to smile. HM3 Rangelangelo Kilgore took off the sock covering Gul's leg and saw only a dime-sized open wound. Likewise, the shrapnel wounds in his thigh were healing well. The corpsman rebandaged Gul's leg and gave him some extra dressings.

On a set of thin steel crutches, Gul labored through a thin layer of dust toward the base's exit. The quiet boy moved past the opening of Hesco barriers and concertina wire, beginning the 600-meter journey back to his family's hut. Gul turned his head and flashed his father a smile as the pair made their way home, side by side.

Noor said, "My son is still here because of the Marines."

Cpl Reece Lodder

Combat Correspondent, 1stMarDiv

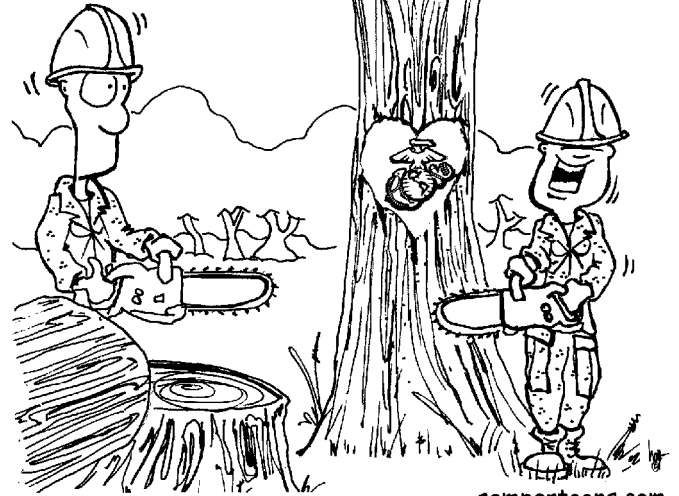


Leatherneck Laffs



"Marbles! I'm looking for marbles! 'Gunny' said I lost some."

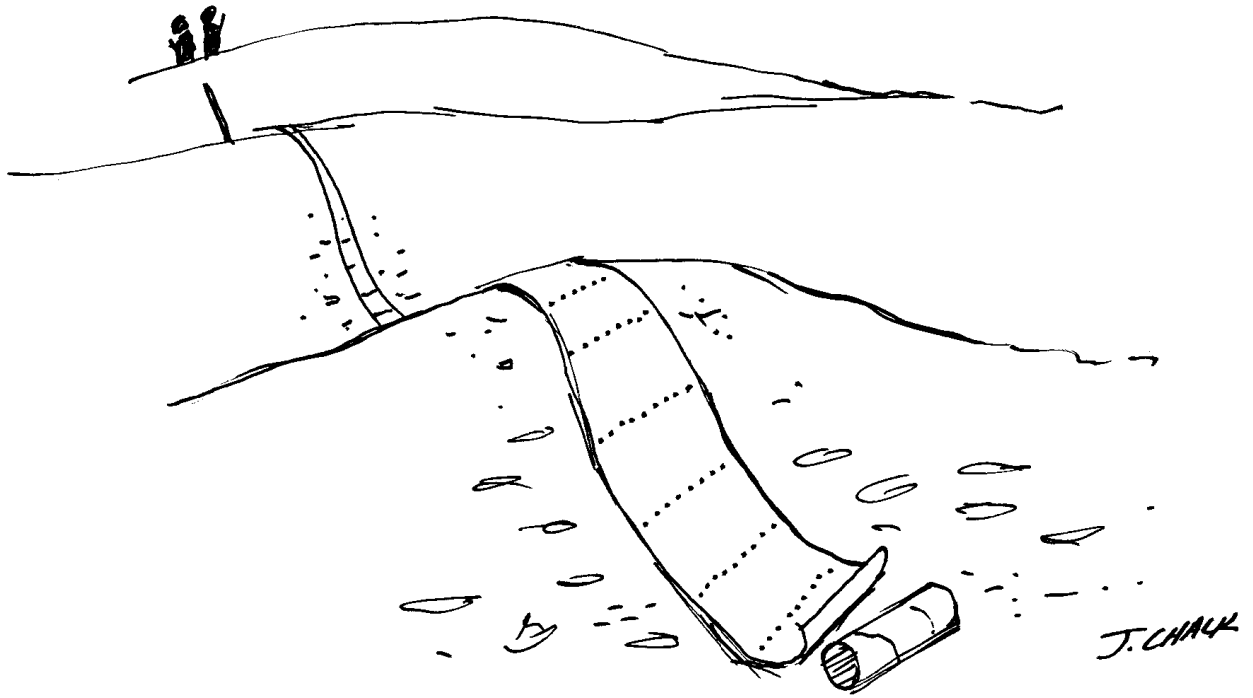
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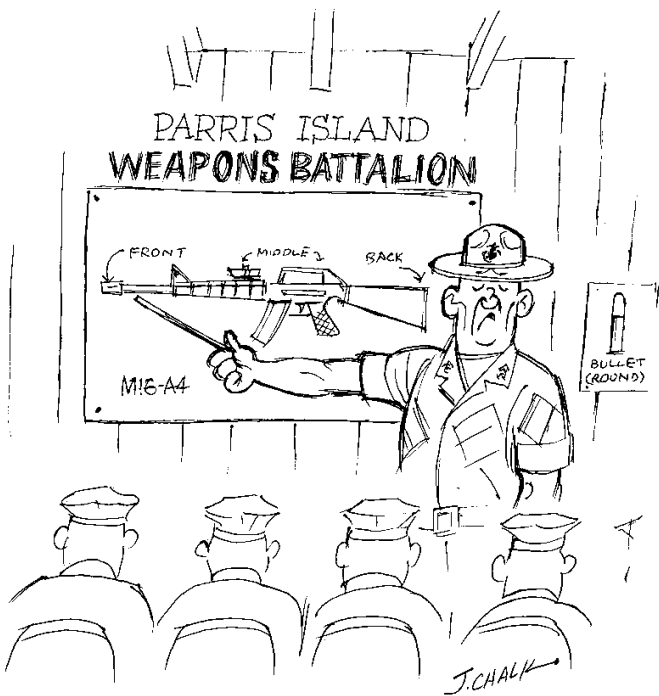
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"Forget it! You're not getting the Justin Bieber look."



"I don't have it. You used it last."



"OK, let's review today's lesson: The flat end goes against the shoulder, the end that looks like a pipe points to where you want the bullet to go"



"Seriously, I need you to sign for those, Pookie."



Blount Island Marines

By CWO-4 Randy Gaddo, USMC (Ret)

Blount Island was not in the original master plan of the universe. Before 1930, it wasn't even an island, just disjointed marshlands on the St. Johns River near Jacksonville, Fla.

No one could have predicted it would become more than 1,200 acres of terra firma and home to the Marine Corps command that is a cornerstone of the foundation supporting United States maritime forward presence and crisis response:

Maritime Prepositioning Force (MPF) and Marine Corps Prepositioning Program-Norway (MCPN).

The wedge-shaped island, home to the Marines' Blount Island Command (BIC) aboard Marine Corps Support Facility-Blount Island (MCSF-BI), was formed between 1930 and 1975 from the sediment dug up when dredging the river channel. The scuttlebutt is that the idea of using Blount Island as the site of the unique operation came about when Marine planners were reviewing East Coast bases for

a suitable location and were tipped off to the location of the island one night in a hotel bar.

The land originally was leased from a private company in 1986 for the MPF program, adding the Norway prepositioning program later. The final planning, analysis and acquisition of permanent interests in land and facilities were completed in 2004, and the installation was designated MCSF-BI. It is, in fact, the Marine Corps' newest facility, and it exists to support and sustain strategic prepositioning and



USNS Sgt Matej Kocak is a tight fit at the Marine Corps Support Facility-Blount Island pier, but she, like all Maritime Prepositioning Force ships, rotates into the facility for equipment maintenance and replacement and then forward deployment to key global positions. (Photos by CW0-4 Randy Gaddo, USMC (Ret))



operational logistics support to the operating forces.

The Marines, sailors and civilian staff of both commands are logistical ringmasters of a gigantic multiple-ring production. They do their jobs as perfectly as humanly possible, with a 98 to 99 percent readiness rating on all operational use of gear for crises and exercises in the field.

Responsible for some 57 million pieces of war equipment and supplies valued at more than \$4.4 billion, these logistics gurus manage weapons, equipment and

supplies for the Marine Corps prepositioning programs.

“These are distinct but complementary programs designed to provide the geographic-combatant commanders with prepositioned equipment and supplies to outfit and sustain Marine air-ground task forces (MAGTFs),” explained Colonel Christopher J. Michelsen, the commanding officer of both BIC and MCSF-BI.

“This provides commanders forward-deployed, crisis-response capability sets suited for the full range of military opera-

tions,” said the colonel, who reports to the Commanding General, Marine Corps Logistics Command Albany, Ga., on MPF/MCIPP-N issues and to the commanding general of Marine Corps Installations East at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., on installation-related items.

He also receives policy guidance and direction from several Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps departments. However, day-to-day planning and execution of the MPF and MCIPP-N resides with him at Blount Island.

The MPF is an afloat prepositioning program that comprises three maritime-prepositioning-ship squadrons (MPSRONs), each with four to five maritime prepositioning ships (MPSSs). The prepositioning program in Norway is an ashore prepositioning program located in central Norway.

The prepositioned gear includes weapons, equipment and supplies. Each ship squadron has a full array of those materials to outfit the command element and the ground, aviation and logistics combat elements of task-organized Marine air-ground task forces. Each squadron has a capacity to support a Marine expeditionary brigade (MEB), about 15,000 troops, for 30 days.

The Norway program is organized to support a brigade-sized force for 30 days with stock stored in six climate-controlled cave complexes and aviation assets at two host-nation airfields in Norway.

The mission for Marines, sailors and civilians at Blount Island is to provide



COURTESY OF BLOUNT ISLAND COMMAND

Weapons like the .50-caliber machine guns being checked by Blount Island Marine GySgt Paul Palmeri (above) and small low-density items like the generator (below) are inspected and updated so they will be ready when needed.



COURTESY OF BLOUNT ISLAND COMMAND

prepositioning programs and operational logistics support to Marine Corps and Department of Defense forces, enabling them to rapidly conduct missions ranging from combat to humanitarian relief or disaster assistance and to recover quickly.

The wide mouth of Blount Island's slipway juts into St. Johns River and narrows back to form the port containing five berths for giant MPF cargo ships of the Military Sealift Command (MSC), each about the length of three football fields end to end. The Marine Corps and Navy utilize those MSC ships in several different classes, each with its own set of capabilities that collectively provide an amazing array of options to serve the needs of current and future field commanders.

Each of the three MPSRONs is responsible for covering a different strategic

geographical area. While the ships are government owned, the crews who run them are U.S. merchant mariners who work for private ship operating companies contracted by MSC.

In fact, contracted services are a major part of operations at Blount Island. The command's staff oversees contracts with several major defense contractors employing nearly 800 contract employees.

More than 1,100 personnel are connected to and support the massive mission, with contractors forming the majority. The others are either civilian Marines, as the civilian permanent staffs who are part of the command are called, or employees of several different civilian contractors. For the most part, the 100 or so Marines and sailors operating aboard BIC are planners, managers and quality-assurance experts



in their particular areas of expertise, ensuring that contractors are complying with the terms of contracts.

For logistics Marines, it is a unique assignment, and they accept a great deal of responsibility when they assume duties at Blount Island.

"When our NCOs [noncommissioned officers] check in, it's like they're drinking from a fire hose," said Col Michelsen. "This duty is unlike any other in the Marine Corps. They have to absorb a lot of new information. By the time they leave, they are very well prepared to go into the operating forces with excellent logistic and maintenance knowledge and skills."

Marines are on hand for all phases of loading and unloading the enormous Military Sealift Command ships that cycle in and out of Blount Island on a 36-month cycle.

"The ships spend three years at sea, strategically positioned, then return to Blount Island for unloading before they

These vehicles and heavy equipment items are staged and ready for loading on MPF ships. (Photo courtesy of Blount Island Command)



go back to a shipyard for maintenance and refitting,” said Sergeant Dain Cole, embarkation NCO for port operations. “The unloading process can take five to seven days, and the maintenance cycle for the ships is about 60 to 90 days.”

When the weapons, equipment and supplies are offloaded at Blount Island, the ships all have a complete maintenance and operational check to ensure everything is in good working order. Huge maintenance buildings dubbed “Big Blue” and “Little Blue” contain testing and calibration equipment capable of preparing everything from tanks to avionics gear for reloading on another ship.

But just because the equipment is packed on board ships doesn’t mean it’s not getting tender loving care. Even when the ships are deployed, the Blount Island staff is watching over them.

“While ships are on their 36-month deployment, we place contract maintenance crews on them, as many as five to 10 per

ship, depending on the need,” said Chief Warrant Officer 3 James Weathers, port operations officer in charge. “They touch and test every piece of noncontainerized equipment multiple times during those three years. In turn, we send out civil-service staff, one for each MPSRON to oversee those contractors.

“People don’t realize the level of maintenance attention needed for this equipment when it is on board ships for months or even years at a time or after it has been used and loaded back onto the ships,” he said. “The equipment maintenance process is extensive and involves Marines, sailors, civilian Marines and contractors.”

While keeping track of that enormous inventory is a monumental feat in itself, the fact that every piece of warfighting equipment that leaves Blount Island is 100 percent combat ready is even more astounding. That means troops in the field know that if it’s coming from Blount Island Command, they will be getting

well-kept, fully functional gear. That is something troops in the field place at the top of their priority list.

Col Michelsen pointed to effective teamwork by all hands as the key to achieving that perfect record.

“Our defense-contractor partners are skilled artisans, and roughly 80 percent of them have prior military experience,” the colonel said. “Every member of the team fully appreciates that the life of every Marine and sailor in the field depends on the quality of the work performed here at Blount Island. ... Keeping this in mind every day is our touchstone.”

The process of unloading (or loading) those massive, multidecked ships is staggering to observe. During a recent unloading of U.S. Naval Ship (USNS) *Matej Kocak*, a 360-degree view of the area revealed activity going on in every direction.

At the bow of the ship, huge shipping containers 20 feet long by 8 feet high and wide were being unloaded vertically by

“Big Red,” the huge, red mobile pier-side crane. Those containers weigh more than 2 tons empty, and each can be loaded with nearly 25 tons of materials. Big Red can reach down several decks, pluck out the containers and place them on waiting trucks at a rate of dozens per hour.

At the other end of the ship, tanks, trucks, engineering vehicles, amphibious assault vehicles and other heavy equipment were being driven down a ramp for staging or maintenance checks.

In the middle of the ship, the huge on-board cranes were preparing to lift lighterage from the deck to the shore. “Lighterage” is the term used for barges that shuttle equipment from the ship to prepared beach landing sites when no port facility is available.

Through all of this activity, the Blount Island staff members were seen all over the ship and on shore, going smoothly about their business of overseeing every aspect of the offloading. It is like a well-choreographed stage production, with each player having his or her own special part. Safety is the No. 1 concern, and all players watch out for each other.

During loading and unloading, each deck of the multideck ships is assigned to one NCO. They follow precise procedures that ensure contractors are sticking to the plan.

Marine Corps prepositioning programs are designed to move troops rapidly to crisis areas and link them with prepositioned or shipboard equipment and supplies tailored for a specific mission. For the past few decades, anywhere Marines or other joint forces were engaged operationally, their weapons, equipment and supplies probably originated at or passed through Blount Island at some point.

That gear includes anything from trucks to tanks, crew-served weapons to artillery, medical supplies to ammo, humvees to dirt bikes and aviation equipment to mechanics tools. Everything is prepositioned in bulk.

Since 1990, the resources deployed from Blount Island have been used in operations such as Desert Shield and Desert Storm (Middle East), Fiery Vigil (Philippines), Restore Hope (Somalia), Water Pitcher (Micronesia), Vigilant Sentinel (Kuwait), Allied Force (Kosovo), Enduring Freedom

(Afghanistan), Iraqi Freedom (Iraq) and Operation Unified Response (disaster relief in Haiti).

After equipment is used operationally, it must be examined, maintained or replaced and returned to the prepositioned inventory in order to reconstitute the capability sets for the next contingency. Funding for that type of operation is challenging.

“The MPF program encompasses both Marine Corps and Navy prepositioned equipment and supplies, and each service supports its contribution as part of the service chief’s Title 10 responsibility to ‘train and equip,’” said Col Michelsen.

“There have been occasions where this command has been directed to issue sustainment in support of a humanitarian-assistance or disaster-relief operation. Operation Unified Response [Haiti disaster relief] is the most recent example. The funding for these missions typically flows from DOD Overseas Humanitarian Disaster and Civic Aid resources.”

Because the colonel is running two commands, he and his staff are responsible for not only the prepositioned equipment and supplies, but also for the infrastructure that Blount Island Command uses to accomplish its mission.

“The \$4.4 billion represents the investment in the prepositioned equipment and supplies in both of the Marine Corps prepositioning programs,” Col Michelsen explained. “It does not represent the value of the real property, such as land, buildings, ships, et cetera. In fiscal year 2011, the BIC budget was nearly \$68 million.”

Blount Island is not isolated. It is, in fact, in the midst of a larger military-industrial complex, which is just across the channel from multimillion-dollar housing developments.

Sharing part of the same territory is the Jacksonville Port Authority, which owns and operates an 867-acre marine terminal located west of and adjacent to BIC. That’s “marine” as in nautical, not Corps. It is an auto import-export center with more than 350 acres devoted to vehicles and other commercial cargo.

The Blount Island complex area was constructed originally by a conglomerate called Offshore Power Systems with the intent to build floating nuclear-power plants. However, financial, legal and environmental issues halted the project in 1979. Gate Petroleum Company purchased the complex and began leasing part of it to the Marine Corps in support of the MPF program in 1986.

To the north and east of the island, just a stone’s throw away across the St. Johns River, are pricy single-family dwellings. Encroachment is not an issue, thanks to



USNS *Matej Kocak* is unloaded by “Big Red,” the pier-side crane used by Blount Island Command when servicing MPF equipment.



The Improved Navy Lighterage System, self-propelled barges like these, can be linked together to form task-oriented barge systems. Then on-board cranes can offload MPF shipping at sea or in ports without pier and crane facilities. (Photo courtesy of Blount Island Command)

proactive community relations.

“Encroachment is not a major concern, but it is always a consideration that we manage by staying engaged with our neighbors, the business community, environmental organizations and local elected officials,” said Michelsen.

Prior to purchasing the property, the primary encroachment concern related to jurisdictional authority because Blount Island Command did not have control of the property it occupied. In addition, it didn’t have authority over the property within the explosive safety arc, a cautionary area designated when a Maritime Prepositioning Force ship is in port and being loaded or unloaded with ordnance. That also was mitigated by the land purchase.

The MPF operation has a significant economic impact on the surrounding community. It is a major employer, with a combined annual payroll for military, civil service and contractors of nearly \$77 million for both commands. The total economic impact on the area is estimated to be \$336 million when factoring in what is spent in local economies for goods and services, plus work for about 340 vendors throughout the Southeast.

The Blount Island Marines, sailors and civilians also support the community in other important ways, such as involvement with color guards, special community events, funeral details and support of local

veterans organizations.

The concept of prepositioning warfighting gear at strategic locations is not a new one, but actually spawned from the Cold War era.

The idea to pre-stage equipment closer to high-threat areas came about in the late 1970s in the wake of the Iran hostage crisis. The first program was called the Near Term Prepositioning Force. That force used existing operating force equipment and supplies to load on available ships belonging to the Military Sealift Command. Those ships were based in Diego Garcia, and initial equipment and ship maintenance was done in Naha, Okinawa, and Subic Bay Naval Base, Philippines.

The Near Term Prepositioning Force was a means to ensure that troops could respond quickly to a crisis by air. The heavier weapons and equipment they needed on any particular mission could be taken in separately. The system was responsive, flexible and could be tailored to meet multiple types of missions. The Navy and Marines saw the advantage to that process and continued to develop it.

When the United States and Norway decided to locate the equipment in Norway, it was first kept outside near shipping ports. Six storage caves were bored and blasted into the sides of mountains in central Norway, completed circa 1988. Although the Cold War ended shortly afterward,



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the caves still are in use today. Three are for weapons, equipment and supplies, and three are for ammunition.

The capacity of the caves is astounding, with 25 acres of floor space and a total of more than 3½ miles of tunnels. The amount of equipment, weapons and ammunition is generally enough to support a Marine expeditionary brigade for 30 days of combat.

Norwegians are required to maintain the equipment at a minimum 90 percent operational-readiness rating by Marine Corps standards, but ultimately Blount Island Command is responsible for en-



In addition to equipment staged on board ships in key areas around the world, Blount Island Command supports U.S. strategic initiatives with Norway by maintaining prepositioned equipment, weapons and ammunition in secure caves in Norway. (Photos courtesy of Blount Island Command)

properly award and administer our myriad contracts we rely on for mission accomplishment” requires constant oversight.

Blount Island operations are unlike any other in the Marine Corps. They require close synchronization, planning and execution requirements among the prepositioning programs; Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps; the Navy and the operating forces. “It is a very complex process,” Col Michelsen said.

The job may be complex, but Marines and support forces of the Blount Island Command and Marine Corps Support Facility-Blount Island are part of a unique organization that leverages the advantages of public-private programs to deliver a critical service in support of the warfighter.

Whatever the future brings, at the home of Marine Corps strategic prepositioning programs on Blount Island, Marines, sailors, civilian Marines and contractors stand ready to deliver the goods.

Editor’s note: CWO-4 Randy Gaddo retired from active duty in 1996.



ensuring that happens. Teams of Marines and civilian Marines are dispatched to inspect the equipment and work with Norwegian partners to ensure that the equipment will be ready when needed.

“The MCPP-N program has proven to be a strong, viable equipment source for the Marine Corps,” said an official with BIC in a 2008 article about the program. “It has been used to support both real-world operations in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as training missions and home-station shortfalls.”

The face of the enemy has changed since the inception of the Maritime Prepositioning Force programs in the 1980s, and the MPF continues to change as needed to accommodate the threat. The future of

MPF is tied inextricably to the future nature of warfare. Getting the right force with the right tools to the fight to get the job done will be critical to success.

How the future will impact the mission at Blount Island is unknown, considering that budgetary challenges will have a significant impact on final plans.

In fact, good use of constrained funding and resources is a key consideration as Blount Island’s leadership looks to the future. Col Michelsen noted that one of the day-to-day operational challenges is “maximizing the effectiveness of our fiscal resources in support of the prepositioning programs and the Marine Corps Support Facility-Blount Island.”

He also explained that “the process to

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Colonel John H. Glenn Jr.

Combat-Tested Pilot and First American to Orbit the Earth

By Mike Hoeflerlin

Fifty years ago this month, on the morning of 20 Feb. 1962, millions of people throughout the world were riveted by the televised images and radio accounts of a soon-to-be launched Mercury space capsule from Launch Complex 14 at Cape Canaveral, Fla. The small one-man capsule, *Friendship 7*, was connected to an Atlas 6 rocket. That rocket and that capsule were poised to put, for the first time, an American astronaut into orbit around the Earth. Not surprisingly, inside the capsule was Lieutenant Colonel John H. Glenn Jr., a decorated Marine fighter pilot and test pilot who was again risking his life in service to his country.

“As I look back on that day some 50 years ago—it seems like only yesterday—I distinctly remember every aspect of the launch, the orbits and the splashdown,” Glenn said recently. Before, during and after the successful mission, John Glenn never forgot that he was representing the Marine Corps. He knew that his Marine Corps training would serve him well as the first American in orbit.

Images of a confident and smiling Marine being strapped into the Mercury



Astronaut John Glenn, shown dressed in his Project Mercury space suit and helmet for his formal NASA portrait in January 1962.

capsule were replaced by the sights and sounds of the powerful Atlas rocket blasting off at 9:47 a.m. EST. America's hearts, thoughts and prayers were with Glenn as he rocketed into space and his rendezvous with destiny. For the next 4 hours, 55 minutes and 23 seconds, America and the world were captivated by the

progress of that Marine and that mission, during which the spacecraft reached speeds of up to 17,544 miles per hour.

Glenn was not merely a passenger in a small capsule hurtling through space. He actually piloted the spacecraft for most of the harrowing flight, during which huge, blazing chunks of the heat shield were disintegrating and passing by his window. According to the National Archives, “With great skill, courage, and grace, Glenn piloted the spacecraft manually as the autopilot function failed, and Mission Control wondered whether the capsule's [loose] life-saving heat shield would hold while re-entering the atmosphere.” Without Glenn's precision piloting, the capsule and astronaut surely would have been incinerated.

After three history-making orbits, *Friendship 7* re-entered the Earth's atmosphere and parachuted into the Atlantic Ocean near Grand Turk Island. The capsule and the astronaut were promptly recovered by the destroyer USS *Noa* (DD-841), which was on station only three miles from the splashdown site.

After the mission, John Glenn became one of the most recognizable and revered men in the country; an American hero. Seemingly overnight, he became part of the fabric of American folklore.

John Glenn the man and John Glenn the Marine are inextricably intertwined by the training and esprit de corps that are common to all Marines. In reflecting on his military experiences, Glenn said, “Let's just say that my Marine background and training ... gave me a dedication ... [that] is just expected in the Marine Corps.”

The legend of Col John Glenn, USMC (Ret), patriot, decorated fighter pilot, test pilot, astronaut, U.S. Senator, statesman and educator, began years prior to his Mercury mission. In 1943, he was commissioned a Marine officer and earned his wings of gold and designation as a naval aviator. Not long thereafter, he flew 59 combat missions in the F4U Corsair against the Japanese in the skies over the Pacific Ocean.

In Korea, he flew 63 combat missions in the Grumman F9F Panther jet, mostly in ground support roles, often returning



Marine aviator John Glenn pilots an F4U Corsair (N-51) in Marine Observation Squadron (VMO) 155 during WW II, around 1944. VMO-155 was redesignated Marine Fighting Squadron (VMF) 155 on 31 Jan. 1945.



John Glenn points to a bullet hole in the canopy of his VMF-311 F9F Panther jet during the Korean War, 1953. (USN photo)



"MiG Mad Marine" Maj John Glenn sits on the wing of his F-86 Sabre while assigned to the U.S. Air Force's 25th Interceptor Squadron in 1953.



Candidate John Glenn's official portrait used during his U.S. Senate race in 1964. (John Glenn Archives, Ohio State University)

to base with numerous large holes in his aircraft from enemy anti-aircraft fire. Near the end of the Korean War, he finally got his chance at air-to-air combat as an exchange pilot with the U.S. Air Force, flying 27 missions in the F-86 Sabre jet. "Before the war ended in July 1953," Glenn recalled, "I had three MiG kills to my credit." His Air Force jet was aptly named "MiG Mad Marine."

Leading up to his work as an astronaut, Glenn completed Navy Test Pilot School and worked on various projects, including the F-8 Crusader program, during which he set a transcontinental speed record while flying from Los Angeles to New York in 3 hours and 23 minutes at an average speed of greater than Mach 1, the speed of sound. "We termed the mission 'Operation Bullet' because the aircraft average cross-country speed was faster than the muzzle velocity of a round fired from a service .45-caliber automatic," he said.

"In early 1959," Glenn said, "I, along with three Navy pilots and three Air Force pilots, were selected as one of our nation's

first group of astronauts. Our assignment was Project Mercury, a mission to prove that the United States could put a man into space and that he could function productively there. For me the culmination of Project Mercury came on February 20, 1962, in my spacecraft *Friendship 7*, when I became the first American to orbit the Earth."

During his Marine Corps career, Glenn was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross six times, and the Air Medal with 15 gold stars and two oak leaf clusters, indicative of 18 awards. He also has numerous other military and civilian awards, citations, decorations and medals, including the Congressional Gold Medal, one of the nation's highest civilian awards.

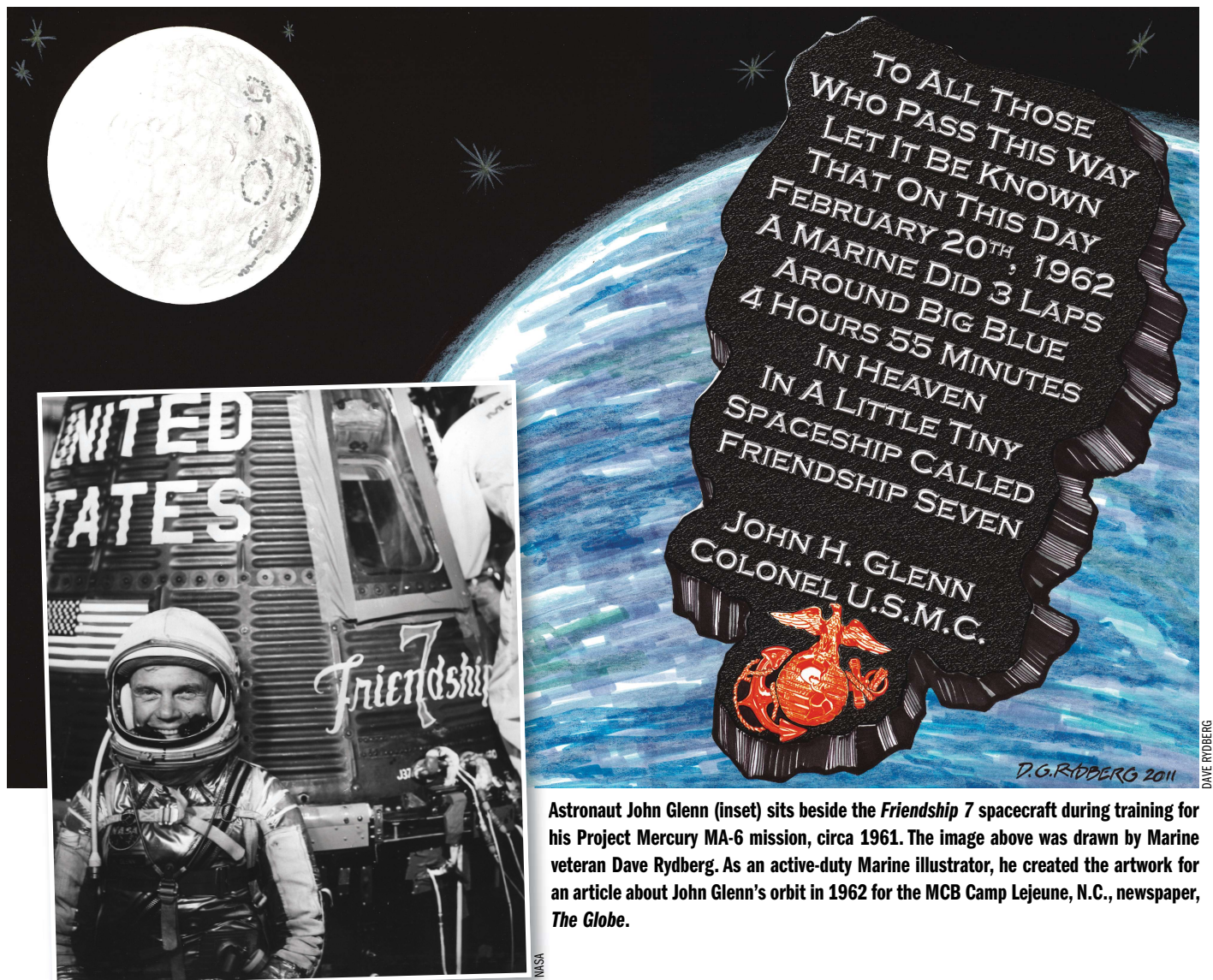
Glenn retired from the Marine Corps in 1965 and became a business executive until he again heeded the call of his country. In 1974, he was elected to the United States Senate, and served for 24 years, representing his home state of Ohio. In 1998 Glenn, at age 77, became the oldest person to go into space—this time as a

crew member on the space shuttle *Discovery*.

He has logged almost 219 hours in space while making 137 Earth orbits. Today, he is on the faculty of the John Glenn School of Public Affairs at The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.

Although the world has changed drastically during the 50 years since John Glenn first blasted off into space, one constant remains: John H. Glenn Jr. is the epitome of a Marine. His remarkable achievements and service to his country will never be forgotten.

Editor's note: Mike Hoeflerlin commanded at the platoon and company levels in the 1stMarDiv in Vietnam and later was a helicopter pilot in 3d MAW. He is a former military editor of McGraw-Hill's Aviation Week & Space Technology magazine. He earned his Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts in journalism from the University of Missouri.



Astronaut John Glenn (inset) sits beside the *Friendship 7* spacecraft during training for his Project Mercury MA-6 mission, circa 1961. The image above was drawn by Marine veteran Dave Rydberg. As an active-duty Marine illustrator, he created the artwork for an article about John Glenn's orbit in 1962 for the MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., newspaper, *The Globe*.



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The Fleet Returns to Fleet Week — San Francisco —

By Ed Vasgerdian

The origins of Fleet Week can be traced back to San Diego's 1935 California Pacific International Exposition. However, it was different in form and nature from today's celebration. A Marine Corps color guard led the parade, officially opening the exposition while, to enhance recruiting, an armada of U.S. Navy ships laid open their hatches for visitors. The exposition was an opportunity to support the local economy which had fallen on bad times during the Great Depression.

The event was a success, and visitors enjoyed entertainment, restaurants and shopping. There were exhibits featuring history, the arts, horticulture, ethnic cultures, science and industry. The concept of Fleet Week continued as a symbol of patriotic readiness and an opportunity for rest and recreation for Marines and sailors who had been training under simulated combat conditions.

A more modern concept of Fleet Week began in San Francisco in 1981 and has provided the model for other cities. New York, Seattle, Boston and Fort Lauderdale, Fla., among others now infuse military

appreciation with community programs such as emergency preparedness. Marines and sailors have become more visible while participating in local charity affairs such as golf tournaments, softball games and blood drives. Always on the agenda are tours of Navy ships and military demonstrations, which remain a popular exhibition in each city.

Blue Angels

Under the leadership of Major General James M. "Mike" Myatt, USMC (Ret), president and chief executive officer of the Marines' Memorial Association, Fleet Week 2011 was spectacular in concept and production. After the successful completion of Exercise Dawn Blitz, a flotilla of six U.S. Navy, two U.S. Coast Guard and four Canadian ships sailed under the Golden Gate Bridge and into San Francisco Bay. For many, the ships' entrance on Oct. 8, 2011, went unnoticed, despite the 15-gun salute from USS *Carl Vinson* (CVN-70) and her accompanying tugboats.

Not so on the following day when F/A-18 Hornet jets flown by the Blue Angels, the Navy's flight demonstration team, zoomed over the city. To many, the Blue Angels mark the opening of San Francisco Fleet

Week. The sound of jets defied Bay Area citizens to find them, as heads turned and necks twisted with accompanying "oohs," "ahs" and the question, "Where did they go?"

For Vickie Hennessy, a retired San Francisco undersheriff, the appearance of the Blue Angels triggered a special memory. Her uncle was Lieutenant Junior Grade Jack H. Robke, USN. A veteran of 65 combat missions during World War II and 120 combat missions during the Korean War, Robke was one of the replacements for the original Blue Angels team.

Another Bay Area resident added praise in a local newspaper, saying that the Blue Angels do more than thrill spectators with aerial acrobatics. They make it a point of visiting schools and hospitals, "giving immeasurable hope and encouragement to many youngsters they see."

Marines on the Streets Of San Francisco

This year's crowd numbered more than 1 million. The event drew visitors from cities near and far. Marines and sailors were greeted by friendly people with offers of free drinks and dinner or, if nothing else, a warm welcome. Hundreds of Ma-



During Fleet Week 2011, Marine CH-53 helicopters transport San Francisco police officers, firemen and emergency medical personnel to USS *Bonhomme Richard* (LHD-6) on Oct. 5, 2011, to observe Marine and Navy capabilities to respond to a natural disaster. (Photo by LCpl Joshua Young)

rines and sailors enjoyed a 49ers football game at Candlestick Park. On the field at halftime, a swearing-in ceremony for Marine and Navy enlistments took place.

In another part of the city, the First Marine Division Band hosted a high-school band competition at Golden Gate Park where 12 competing bands vied for a \$10,000 cash prize donated by the Fleet Week Association.

Early Accounts

As seen through the eyes of most Americans, Marine combat operations are metaphors of heroic feats accompanied by automatic gunfire, bayonets and hand-to-hand fighting. Thus, setting up water-purification systems after a hurricane, or shoring up a building after an earthquake, fails to live up to movie images of Marines. Whether in Haiti, Turkey, China or Louisiana, lives are at stake, and the difference is only in perception.

A chronology of the Marine Corps rendering peacetime humanitarian and disaster relief on behalf of our country and foreign nations is far too lengthy to address. In California, however, where there is always the threat of an earthquake and the potential for the “big one” is a common thought, disaster response plays a significant role.

According to the I Marine Expeditionary Force Public Affairs Office, in 1906, following the devastating San Francisco temblor “Marines were more than the first to fight. They were first to fight fires, rescue earthquake victims and restore order ... martial law was never declared, Marines were among the soldiers and sailors who mobilized across the city.”

In the quake of 1989, aka the World Series Earthquake, cross-Bay bitter rivals, the San Francisco Giants and the Oakland A's, were locked in battle for the World Championship. The third game of the series never began. The earthquake killed 63 people throughout northern California, injuring 3,757 and leaving 3,000 to 12,000 people homeless. Marines from USS *Schenectady* (LST-1185) aided local relief efforts.

Training on Treasure Island

Treasure Island, once a name synonymous with U.S. Navy and Marine Corps commands, today is an island of civilian inhabitants and the training center for the San Francisco Fire Department. Preparation for disaster relief and humanitarian assistance comes in many forms. During Fleet Week, a combination of 21 Marines and 14 sailors of various military occupations received an introductory course on working around collapsed buildings and learned basic techniques in urban



ED VASGERDSIAN

Above: From the left, PFC Mark Deletski, Cpl Alfonso Morales and LCpl (now Cpl) Nicholas Richards, water support technicians, prepare to install and operate pumps and water filtration and purification equipment, which will convert 1,500 gallons of sea water into 200 to 500 gallons of drinkable water each hour.

Below: Sgts Joshua Baca and Kathleen Dallas, saxophonists in the 1stMarDiv Band, play at a free concert during Fleet Week San Francisco 2011.



CPL MICHELE WATSON

search-and-rescue operations from their fire-department instructors.

A casual observer immediately would note that the interest shown by students was matched by the fire department’s positive attitude during a question-and-answer period. Lance Corporal Stephen Lewis of Santa Rosa, Calif.; LCpl Steven L. Mendez of Riverside, Calif.; LCpl Juan Carlos Torres of Santa Ana, Calif.; and Sergeant Christopher Ryan Smith of Almont, Mich., participated in lifting and moving concrete slabs, shoring up col-

lapsed buildings (cribbing) and using rope-and-pulley systems.

Private First Class Jose Flores of Milwaukee and PFC Luke Verlooy of Superior, Wis., received safety instructions on the operation of a pneumatic-drill apparatus. Although an intensive training agenda was implemented last year for other Marines who will return to their respective units as instructors, those Marines learned some fundamental disaster-relief techniques.

On the Marina Green

More than what meets the eye goes into keeping people aware of the military’s capability to respond to a disaster area. The Marina Green, a 74-acre-long flat strip along the bay with a view of Alcatraz, was the site for many of the military’s static displays of water-purification systems, medical relief, foodstuff preparations and heavy equipment. The Navy and Marine Corps shared the site with private fast-food vendors and purveyors of knickknacks and doohickeys of various descriptions.

A private security firm provided 24-hour external security around the site, and one of its security officers was an eight-year Marine veteran, Daniel Lynde. Lynde has experienced two Fleet Weeks. “The company requested me because of my background. They [the security firm] wanted someone to interact with the Marines, and I was happy and proud to do it,” said the 28-year-old Lynde.

Originally from Wichita, Kan., Lynde joined the Marine Corps in 2002 and spent nine months as a machine-gunner in Kuwait assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, Seventh Marine Regiment. “There was a great sense of pride when we saw Saddam’s statue topple,” he said. With a huge smile, this large and friendly Marine



The Marina Green, with its widespread lawns, is a magnet for tourists and strollers alike; a perfect opportunity for the eye-popping Marine recruiters' humvee during Fleet Week San Francisco 2011. (Photo by Ed Vasgerdsian)

veteran moved about introducing himself to others, and one had the feeling he never left the Corps.

It was there, not too far from the humanitarian village in the marina district, that four people died during the 1989 quake. From over the tent tops of the two field trauma hospitals, there was an almost surreal background of San Francisco rooftops and homes. The fully furnished trauma units were popular with visitors who entered and saw a lifelike mannequin lying on a stretcher. Nearby, U.S. Navy medical staff answered questions, including the length of time necessary to set up a Forward Resuscitative Surgical System. The answer: less than an hour.

Food and Water

How do you care for a population where water is contaminated and food is almost unobtainable? The Tray Ration Heating System (TRHS) is a fully mobile heat-on-the-move system capable of feeding 250 hot tray ration meals in remote areas or 500 meals in a ration day. A single TRHS field unit is about 26 inches in height, 23 inches wide and a little longer than 4 feet.

The system doesn't have the bells and whistles that would draw spectators to wonder what the stainless-steel hot-water tank is supposed to do, but once asked, Marine food-service specialists Sgt Ronald Vaughn, a veteran with 18 years in the Marine Corps, including four deployments; Sgt Maria Allen of Whittier, Calif., a nine-year veteran of the Marine Corps; and LCpl James Treller, who recently re-

enlisted and has had one Afghanistan deployment, answered all questions easily.

Water, often called the most essential element to life and an absolute necessity after a disaster, must be available almost immediately. One of the displays in the humanitarian village site was a water-purification unit. What looked like a simple fire hose extending from the bay, where debris floated, was connected to a

generator distilling 1,500 gallons per hour into 200 to 500 gallons of drinkable water from the bay. There was no distinguishable difference in taste or quality from a commercially sold bottled-water product.

Mission Accomplished

Because of San Francisco's inescapable foggy weather, on the final day of Fleet Week, the Blue Angels yielded to the demands of safety and regretfully cancelled their Sunday show. The ships with crew and troops left their dockside moorings, and life returned to normal.

The event was more than a celebration of thanks and gratitude, football and band concerts; it was more than men and women parading in uniform. It was more than a display of warships and more than the Blue Angels skyrocketing over the bay. Planners of the event succeeded in getting the word out that Fleet Week 2011 was an opportunity to share, as well as learn, new techniques in humanitarian assistance and disaster response. It was a job well done by all.



LCPL JOSHUA YOUNG

Cpl Jordan E. Williams, a radio operator with 3d Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion and currently a patient at the Palo Alto Veterans Affairs Hospital, describes his injury to fellow Marines.

Editor's note: Leatherneck contributing editor and Marine veteran Ed Vasgerdsian reported on Marine MEB-sized Exercise Dawn Blitz while embarked in USS Bonhomme Richard (LHD-6) and rejoined that force up the California coast in San Francisco to report on Marines in Fleet Week San Francisco. See his Dawn Blitz article in the January 2012 Leatherneck.



In the Highest Tradition

Edited by R. R. Keene and Lawralynn Diehl

Today the Streets of Sangin Are Safe And People Can Drive to Musa Qa'lah, Because of Marines Such as These



Two infantrymen with 3d Battalion, Seventh Marine Regiment, who, during separate engagements, came under heavy enemy fire and took on overwhelming insurgent forces in Afghanistan in 2010, were awarded Silver Stars during a ceremony Dec. 15, 2011, at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle, Va.

Captain Ryan B. Cohen and Gunnery Sergeant Verice W. Bennett, both currently assigned to Manpower Management Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., were presented their awards by Lieutenant General Richard P. Mills, Deputy Commandant for Combat Development and Integration, MCB Quantico. Capt Cohen also was awarded a second Purple Heart for wounds received June 4, 2010.

There have been only 125 awards of the Silver Star presented to Marines for combat actions in Iraq and Afghanistan. These two men earned theirs in the heart of the

Pashtun insurgent stronghold.

Cohen was Commanding Officer, Company K, 3/7 on June 23, in southern Musa Qa'lah, when his force came under heavy machine-gun and mortar fire, and according to his citation, he “disregarded enemy fire to provide front-line leadership.”

With rounds impacting around his position, he personally led his Marines in assault on the enemy, repeatedly exposing himself to draw fire and locate their positions. He also coordinated effective air support while leading the assault. His actions eliminated an estimated 20 enemy fighters.

Then on July 20, while seizing key terrain near the Helmand River, Cohen’s Marines were stopped by withering enemy machine-gun and mortar fire. According to Cohen’s citation, “With complete disregard for his own safety, he calmly moved through the fire and encouraged his Marines to assault the enemy. He then grabbed a Marine and personally led him through enemy fire to a firing position, and directed a shoulder launched missile strike on the enemy’s machine gun position,” and si-

lenced the enemy fire.

GySgt Bennett, then a staff sergeant, was a platoon commander in I/3/7 on Sept. 13, 2010, when, after seizing a key bridge crossing, he set his platoon into a battle position inside the Southern Green Zone of the Sangin District. The company began to receive heavy fire from all directions as it became surrounded by more than 100 Taliban fighters armed with small arms, rocket-propelled grenades and medium machine guns. Bennett’s unit quickly became the focus of the enemy attack.

For the next 10 hours, Bennett displayed exceptional resolve employing his platoon to repel numerous enemy advances. He exposed himself to enemy fire in order to gain positive identification of enemy targets and direct fires and supporting arms. At one point during the attack, the enemy closed to within 10 meters. Bennett led a grenade attack from the top of a walled compound to disrupt the enemy’s assault. His platoon suffered no casualties, but killed 18 insurgents and wounded more than a dozen.



From the left: Capt Ryan B. Cohen and GySgt Verice W. Bennett are presented their Silver Stars by LtGen Richard P. Mills during a Dec. 15, 2011, ceremony at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle, Va.

Personal Combat Awards

The awards records in the Marine Corps' Award Processing System (APS) and Improved Awards Processing System were used to populate this list, which reflects personal combat awards from the start of the global war on terrorism presented to Marines and sailors serving with U.S. Marine Corps forces only. This list may not reflect certain personal combat awards processed outside of either system and/or

approved by another branch of service. Any questions on the content should be submitted in writing to the Personal Awards Section (MMMA-2) at Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, Manpower Management Division, MMMA-2, 2008 Elliot Rd., Quantico, VA 22134.

The following awards were announced in November 2011:



Silver Star



LCpl Cody R. Goebel, 3d Battalion, Seventh Marine Regiment, First Marine Division

LCpl Jake A. Hill, 3/7, 1stMarDiv

SSgt Paul B. Worley, 3/1, 1stMarDiv



Bronze Star With Combat "V"



Sgt Ryan C. Coacher, 2/8, 2dMarDiv

HM3 Jaime A. Ellis, 2/8, 2dMarDiv

Sgt Elliot C. Lander, 2/8, 2dMarDiv

Cpl Edgar H. Lobley III, 1/8, 2dMarDiv

Capt Frank P. Mease Jr., 2/8, 2dMarDiv

SSgt Johnny W. Morris II, 7th Engineer Support Bn, First Marine Logistics Group

Capt Kevin P. Rice, 1st Marine Special Operations Bn, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Special Operations (MARSOC)

SSgt Earl J. Wakonabo, 1st MSOB, MARSOC



Air Medal With Combat "V"



Sgt Justin K. Barfieldsmith, Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 264, Marine Aircraft Group 26, Second Marine

Aircraft Wing

Capt Matthew A. Cave, VMM-264, MAG-26, 2d MAW

Cpl John M. Cederholm, VMM-264, MAG-26, 2d MAW

Capt Thomas M. Keech, VMM-264, MAG-26, 2d MAW



Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal With Combat "V"



SSgt Joshua S. Adams, 3/4, 1stMarDiv

Sgt James M. Adkins III, 3d Reconnaissance Bn, 3dMarDiv

SSgt William C. Amey, 3/5, 1stMarDiv

1stLt Antoine Bates, 1/5, 1stMarDiv

1stLt Mark A. Batey, 1/5, 1stMarDiv

1stLt Michael K. Battle, 3/8, 2dMarDiv

GySgt Stephen Bellville, 1st MSOB, MARSOC

Capt John F. Campbell, 1/8, 2dMarDiv

LCpl Caleb N. Childers, 1/5, 1stMarDiv

1stLt Robert J. Christensen, 3/4, 1stMarDiv

Cpl Michael A. Cochran, 2d Combat Engineer Bn, 2dMarDiv

Sgt Jacob L. Delagarza, 1/5, 1stMarDiv

Sgt Shawn M. Donovan, 1/5, 1stMarDiv

SSgt Stephen J. Dunning, 7th ESB, 1st MLG

LCpl John F. Farias, 1/5, 1stMarDiv

Sgt Adam C. Galaviz, 1/12, 3dMarDiv

HN Blake R. Garner, 1/5, 1stMarDiv

LCpl William K. Gilliam Jr., 1/5, 1stMarDiv

Sgt Jamie L. Williams, 3/6, 2dMarDiv

1stSgt Gregory D. Harting, 3/4, 1stMarDiv

Sgt Grady Kurpasi, 2/5, 1stMarDiv

Cpl John P. Luebke, 3/4, 1stMarDiv

LCpl Ethan C. McElwee, 3/6, 2dMarDiv

Sgt Joseph M. Mecham, 1/12, 3dMarDiv

Cpl Brice Y. Michalek, 1/5, 1stMarDiv

Cpl Michael T. Minor, 1/5, 1stMarDiv

LCpl Matthew J. Mistretta, 1/5, 1stMarDiv

LCpl James R. Moreno Jr., 1/5, 1stMarDiv

Capt Daniel F. O'Brien, 1/8, 2dMarDiv

LCpl Nicholas S. O'Brien, 1/5, 1stMarDiv

Sgt Andrew Rodriguez Jr., 3/2, 2dMarDiv

Cpl Brandon C. Rumbaugh, 1/8, 2dMarDiv

Sgt Steven R. Sanchez, 3/5, 1stMarDiv

Sgt Joshua P. Seiple, 3/2, 2dMarDiv

Cpl Ryan D. Sheets, 1/5, 1stMarDiv

Sgt Jeremy P. Shirey, 3/2, 2dMarDiv

HN Marcus C. Washington, 1/5, 1stMarDiv

Cpl Daniel A. Wheeler, 1/5, 1stMarDiv



Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal With Combat "V"

Sgt Faris J. Amra, 3/4, 1stMarDiv

Cpl Erik A. Anaya, 1/12, 3dMarDiv

SSgt Michael P. Andela, 1/3, 3dMarDiv

Cpl Nathaniel D. Anderson, 1/5, 1stMarDiv

Sgt Antwan D. Ansley, 1/5, 1stMarDiv

Cpl Zechariah R. Barnes, 3/5, 1stMarDiv

HM3 Ryan S. Beall, 1/5, 1stMarDiv

1stLt Robert W. Bohn, 1/5, 1stMarDiv

SSgt Aren C. Brandfass, 1st MSOB, MARSOC

Capt Christopher S. Brock, 3/4, 1stMarDiv

GySgt Brandon S. Brooks, 1/8, 2dMarDiv

Cpl Nicholas A. Bruns, 1/5, 1stMarDiv

Sgt Julio C. Castellanos, 3/4, 1stMarDiv

Cpl Tony R. Castillo III, 1/5, 1stMarDiv

HM2 Jonathan D. Chandler, II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward)

Sgt Caleb R. Davisson, 3/2, 2dMarDiv

LCpl Alex F. Domion, 2d CEB, 2dMarDiv

SSgt Alexander M. Echols, 8th Marines, 2dMarDiv

Sgt Myron L. Ellis, 1/12, 3dMarDiv

HM2 Richard A. Erfurth, 1/5, 1stMarDiv

SSgt Jonathan Espinoza, 3/4, 1stMarDiv
LCpl Daniel A. Evans, 3d Recon Bn, 3dMarDiv
LCpl Michael R. Fallon, 1/5, 1stMarDiv
HN Chad T. Fillinger, 1/5, 1stMarDiv
LCpl Jesse J. Finneman, 2d CEB, 2dMarDiv
Sgt Kory M. Fitzpatrick, 2d Light Armored Reconnaissance Bn, 2dMarDiv
Cpl Christopher I. Fobes, 3/4, 1stMarDiv
Cpl Tyler J. Fox, 1/5, 1stMarDiv
Cpl Max D. Gauthier, 1/5, 1stMarDiv
Cpl Kevin M. Gilbert, 1/5, 1stMarDiv
1stLt Keaton E. Gleason, 1/5, 1stMarDiv
Cpl John K. Goeken, 3/4, 1stMarDiv
Sgt Daniel D. Gurr, 3d Recon Bn, 3dMarDiv
LCpl Jerome M. Hanley, 3/2, 2dMarDiv
Sgt Brandon D. Harper, 3/4, 1stMarDiv
Cpl Bryce A. Haupt, 3d Recon Bn, 3dMarDiv
Sgt Tad R. Hodges, 3/2, 2dMarDiv
Sgt Leslie E. Horner Jr., 3/2, 2dMarDiv
Cpl Joshua B. Horton, 1/5, 1stMarDiv
Cpl Murphy D. Hueston, 1/12, 3dMarDiv
Sgt David A. Ketron Jr., 1/8, 2dMarDiv
Cpl Benjamin L. Krausse, 2d CEB, 2dMarDiv
HM3 Colin J. Kroeker, 3/4, 1stMarDiv
LCpl Jeremy J. Lezama, 1/5, 1stMarDiv
LCpl Douglas E. Lirette Jr., 3/4, 1stMarDiv
1stLt Dwayne M. Littlejohn, 3/4, 1stMarDiv
LCpl Jason E. Lutcavage, 3/2, 2dMarDiv
Sgt Richard J. Mainville II, 2d CEB, 2dMarDiv
LCpl David R. Makara, 1/5, 1stMarDiv
LCpl Joseph P. Malone, 3/8, 2dMarDiv
Cpl Ryan M. Martin, 3/4, 1stMarDiv
1stLt Gregory R. Mayer, 2d CEB, 2dMarDiv
1stLt Aaron W. Meek, 1/12, 3dMarDiv

Cpl Geoffrey P. Merker, 3/4, 1stMarDiv
HN William A. Millar IV, 1/5, 1stMarDiv
Sgt Kyle T. Moriarity, 1/12, 3dMarDiv
Cpl Matthew A. Myers, 3/4, 1stMarDiv
HM3 Michael R. Norris, 3/5, 1stMarDiv
Sgt David Nunez, 1/12, 3dMarDiv
Sgt Luis H. Ochoa, 1/12, 3dMarDiv
LCpl Timothy J. O'Reilly, 3/4, 1stMarDiv
Cpl Josue L. Ortizmelara, 3/4, 1stMarDiv
LCpl Skyler R. Oxendine, 3/4, 1stMarDiv
HM2 Jason M. Pajarillo, 1/12, 3dMarDiv
LCpl Corey A. Parana, 1/8, 2dMarDiv
Sgt Levi P. Peck, 8th Marines, 2dMarDiv
Sgt Rafael A. Peguero, 1/8, 2dMarDiv
Cpl James K. Peters, 3/4, 1stMarDiv
LCpl Phillip M. Rea, 1/8, 2dMarDiv
Capt Scott F. Riley, 3/4, 1stMarDiv
Sgt Jonathan M. Rose, 3/4, 1stMarDiv
Cpl Robert L. Roskowski, 1/12, 3dMarDiv
Cpl Jerry Salinas, 3/4, 1stMarDiv
SSgt Shamus T. Schroeder, 3/5, 1stMarDiv
Sgt Michael A. Skelly, 1/8, 2dMarDiv
Sgt Jason R. Slattery, 7th ESB, 1st MLG
SSgt Anthony J. Smith, 1/12, 3dMarDiv

Sgt David I. Sowell, 3/4, 1stMarDiv
Sgt Jeffrey W. Speaks, 1/5, 1stMarDiv
LCpl Gerardo Stanford, 3/4, 1stMarDiv
LCpl Joseph L. Starrett, 3/6, 2dMarDiv
Cpl Kyle E. Stewart, 3/4, 1stMarDiv
LCpl Lawrence E. St. John Jr., 3/4, 1stMarDiv
LCpl Daniel C. Styffe, 3/4, 1stMarDiv
1stLt William H. Sweeney Jr., 1/12, 3dMarDiv
Sgt Ian M. Tawney, 3/5, 1stMarDiv
Sgt Evan M. Thomas, 1/12, 3dMarDiv
Cpl Ernest F. Tubbs III, 2d CEB, 2dMarDiv
LCpl Peter M. Uncapher, 1/3, 3dMarDiv
Cpl James L. Vallee, 3/4, 1stMarDiv
Cpl Jorge R. Vera, 3/8, 2dMarDiv
1stLt Emery J. Wager, 1/8, 2dMarDiv
HM3 Derrick R. Ward, 3/4, 1stMarDiv
Sgt Brandon L. Wells, 2d CEB, 2dMarDiv
HN Curtis Z. Wells, 1/5, 1stMarDiv
SSgt Robb M. Wilges, 2/8, 2dMarDiv
Sgt Sean M. Williams, 3/4, 1stMarDiv
Cpl Steven C. Wolf, 1/8, 2dMarDiv
Sgt Joseph W. Wooden, 1/5, 1stMarDiv

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Iwo Jima—Airfield No. 2

And Third Marine Division's March to the Sea

Story by Capt Clifton J. Cormier, USMC (Ret) · Photos and map courtesy of Susan Strange

"All you'll need is about one regiment to walk ashore and bury the dead," was the summation of an Army Air Forces photo interpreter in General Curtis LeMay's Bomber Command on Guam. His opinion was expressed to Third Marine Division officers viewing aerial photos of Iwo Jima during the pre-invasion bombardment.

A month or so later, those Marine officers must have reflected ruefully on the bombardier's words as the landing craft carrying the 21st Marine Regiment circled and bobbed in stormy seas off Iwo Jima on the second day of the fight. For sure, they weren't going in just to bury the 500 or more dead from the previous day's assault landing by the Fourth and Fifth Marine divisions. The 21st Marines was needed to plug a vulnerable seam between the two divisions south of Airfield No. 2.

A worse day could not have been chosen to go ashore. For starters, there wasn't space

to land a regiment on beaches clogged with mangled steel and wooden carcasses of landing craft and amphibian tractors from the previous day's carnage. A cold drizzle fell from gray skies, and the sea roughened. Huddled in boats that circled endlessly, the troops shivered. Seasick victims were draped over the gunwales. Warrant Officer George Green and his forward-observer (FO) team from the 12th Marines (artillery) were attached to 3d Battalion, 21st Marines.

Green remembered that miserable day, 20 Feb. 1945, when the thought of landing and facing the enemy was preferable to that boat ride. "We spent the whole day going in circles and getting sick from diesel fumes," Green recalled. With darkness approaching, the landing was aborted, and it was back to the troopships and a hazardous climb up swaying cargo nets from boats pitching and yawing on monster waves.

From the deck of a troopship at anchor some 500 yards offshore, I had witnessed the struggle on D-day with powerful field glasses focused on 5thMarDiv beaches. Japanese commander Gen Tadamichi Kuribayashi's defenders had held their fire on the assault waves for several minutes. With the beaches congested to his liking with men and amphibian tractors, Kuribayashi responded with a thundering barrage of heavy mortars and artillery fire.

Fountains of sand and smoke erupted. Bodies were flung into the air like rag dolls; tracked vehicles tried in vain to climb a terrace of black sand. Plumes of black smoke rose from others.



“Nowhere in the Pacific war have I seen such badly mangled bodies—many cut in half,” reported veteran *Time* correspondent Robert Sherrod, who had gone ashore with an assault wave.

Kuribayashi knew the outcome would not be determined on the beaches and that he ultimately must defend Iwo Jima all the way to Kitano Point. With that in mind, he decreed that before any Japanese soldier had died, he must kill 10 Americans.

Reboating early on the third day, 21 Feb., under ideal weather conditions the 21st Marines landed in columns through a narrow opening over the 4thMarDiv beaches. Just north of Airfield No. 1, they occupied the left sector of the 4thMarDiv’s line. The terrain was a rolling landscape of black dunes hollowed by the deep craters of battleship gunfire and laced with interconnected bunkers. Ahead was the south extension of the runway of Airfield No. 2. Later, intelligence officers of V Amphibious Corps would declare that sector as the heart of Kuribayashi’s defenses.

For two days, 3d Bn, under Lieutenant Colonel Wendell H. Duplantis, struggled in the dunes against an invisible enemy. Weapons were clogged with wet ash. With

meager gains measured in yards, 3d Bn was prepared to screen 100 or so tanks in a major assault.

The tanks never arrived, but a tremendous preparatory barrage of artillery fire was laid down. With or without tanks, Duplantis wasn’t going to let the barrage go to waste. Relying on bayonets and grenades, Marines advanced behind the barrage, pausing to hurl grenades through the firing ports of bunkers. Flamethrowers attacked with tongues of fiery napalm. The battalion surged over the dunes for some 700 yards. Two company commanders were among heavy troop losses.

Stripped of vegetation, Iwo Jima had been described in a number of ways, none being complimentary. A Japanese soldier wrote to his family that Iwo was “a place where not even a sparrow sings.” Marines thought it was hell with the fires put out.

On the main deck of the troopships, sailors and Marines cringed in fear as a disabled U.S. Navy torpedo bomber appeared from over the island, trailing smoke and headed straight for a ship. In the final agonizing seconds, the plane banked away, and two men with burning chutes dropped into the sea. The plane plunged into the

water and sank, leaving a black circle of burnt fuel and no sight of the crew. Slow-moving torpedo bombers were used effectively by naval-gunfire spotters. The aircraft that crashed carried Captain John Friday, who had been our battery executive officer on Guam before volunteering as a naval gunfire spotter.

On my fifth day of observing the battle, I was ordered ashore with a makeshift FO team. We were to replace the team of First Lieutenant Douglas Millsap embedded with the 21st Marines. Millsap had been wounded by a shell that killed his scout sergeant.

From among the replacement troops in the ship, two telephone wiremen and a radio operator assembled on the quarterdeck. The weather was clear, and we enjoyed a leisurely ride over a calm sea to the beach still clogged with shattered boats and amtracs. A shore-party officer directed us to the regimental command post a couple of hundred yards in. As we tied our telephone wire to their switchboard, a major urged us to hurry. Company K leathernecks were about to attack across the strip of Airfield No. 2.

Sucking air from racing through deep sand, we found 1stLt Raul J. Archambault and his company poised in a skirmish line along the berm of the strip, which was raised about 4 feet. I introduced myself, but there wasn’t time for pleasantries. Archambault nodded curtly. He was a man of few words, but he did not lack courage. Twice before that day, his company had charged across to attack a sandstone outcropping known as Hill 199.

It was a jagged 50-foot mound left standing between two intersecting strips. I thought it resembled those giant African anthills occasionally pictured in *National Geographic* magazines. Twice that day “King” Co had been repelled by the stubborn Japanese soldiers. They were counting on the superstition that the third time would be the charm.

Archambault raised and dropped his arm. His company bounded onto the clay-packed runway and began a sprint to the opposite side. They were used to the routine. The ground was littered with jagged shell fragments that tore at our boondockers. I vaulted over the body of a Marine flamethrower operator, blackened from the explosion of his own tank of lethal fuel. Mortar shells and the cracking of small-arms fire overhead urged us on.

Following Archambault’s coattail, my FO team crossed the field intact. Co K already was attacking Japanese in a trench behind the anthill. It was a no-holds-barred, hacking, screaming melee of hand-to-hand fighting with automatic fire, grenades, bayonets, rifle butts and even entrenching



Leathernecks of Company L, 3/21, 3dMarDiv move forward under heavy mortar and machine-gun fire in an attempt to take Motoyama Airfield No. 2 on 24 Feb. 1945. They had just relieved 4thMarDiv units. (Photo by Cpl W. G. Page)

shovels. The official 3dMarDiv report described it as “one of the most freakish nightmares of the Iwo battle.”

There was no need for artillery fire, so I stood alongside Archambault as a spectator. A wide-eyed young Marine, not more than 17 years old, emerged from the fray, clutching a smoking Browning Automatic Rifle. The brim of his steel helmet had been chewed off on one side by Japanese rounds. Consumed with adrenaline and grinning broadly, he sidled up to his commanding officer, seeking acknowledgment. Archambault nodded in recognition.

The savage fight lasted no more than 10 minutes during which the Marines killed about 50 Japanese. For his leadership and tenacity, Archambault was awarded the Navy Cross. Second Lieutenant Dominick J. Grossi, a platoon leader in the attack, was killed and posthumously awarded the Navy Cross.

We gouged shallow foxholes in the unyielding clay and prepared for a Japanese response. As dusk was settling in, a bulldozer towing a trailer was grinding its way through the dunes. The operator unknowingly was headed into Japanese territory until stopped by WO Green. To his delight, Green determined that the trailer contained containers of hot chow. Not wasting the opportunity for his first hot meal since wading ashore, Green fished out his mess gear, shouting, “Come and get it.” There weren’t many takers among the tired warriors preparing for a night of uncertainty under the anthill.

The Japanese counterattacked throughout the night to no avail. We awoke to a bright sunrise and the sight of 9th Marines poised across the airstrip from where we had made our attack. Having landed the previous evening, 9th Marines would effect a passage of lines, taking our positions

as we withdrew. Some men held long poles with bundles of TNT at the ends. The Japanese must have salivated at the sight of two Marine regiments exchanging positions, and down came a barrage of mortars, rockets and artillery on both sides of the strip.

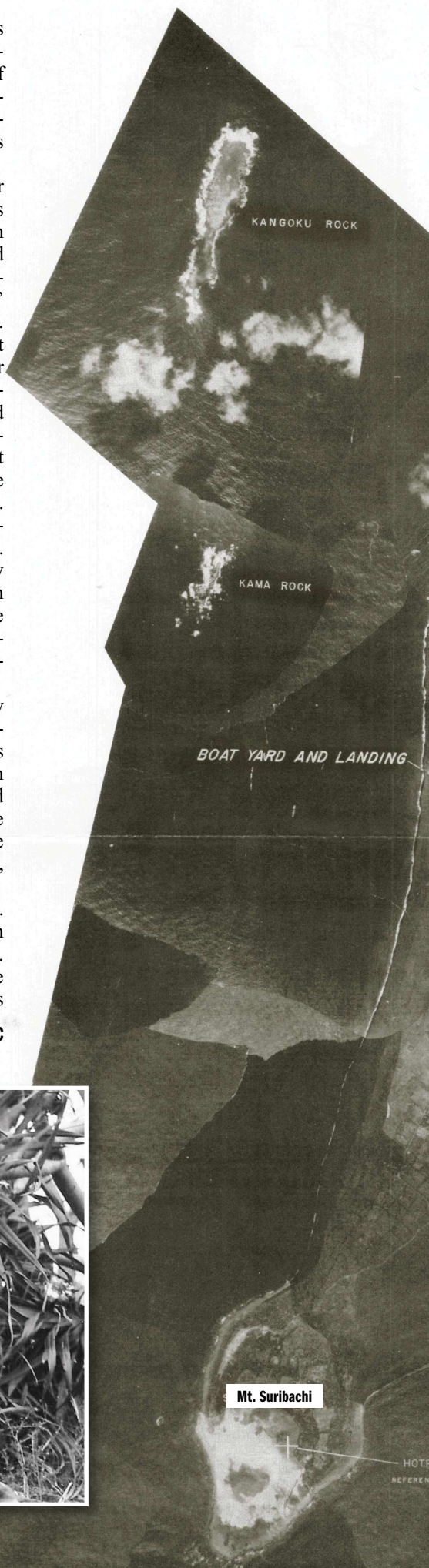
We pressed our bodies deeper in our shallow foxholes as shell fragments screamed overhead. My artillery battalion had not yet been landed, so I had counted on being patched over from the 21st Marines’ switchboard to the 14th Marines’ artillery regiment. I cranked the phone. There was no resistance, indicating that the wire had been cut. The radio operator was frantically twisting dials on his SCR-300 radio. His efforts were in vain; he had not been given the frequency for 14th Marines. In the fog of war, 3dMarDiv had not exchanged communication annexes in the operation order with the other two divisions.

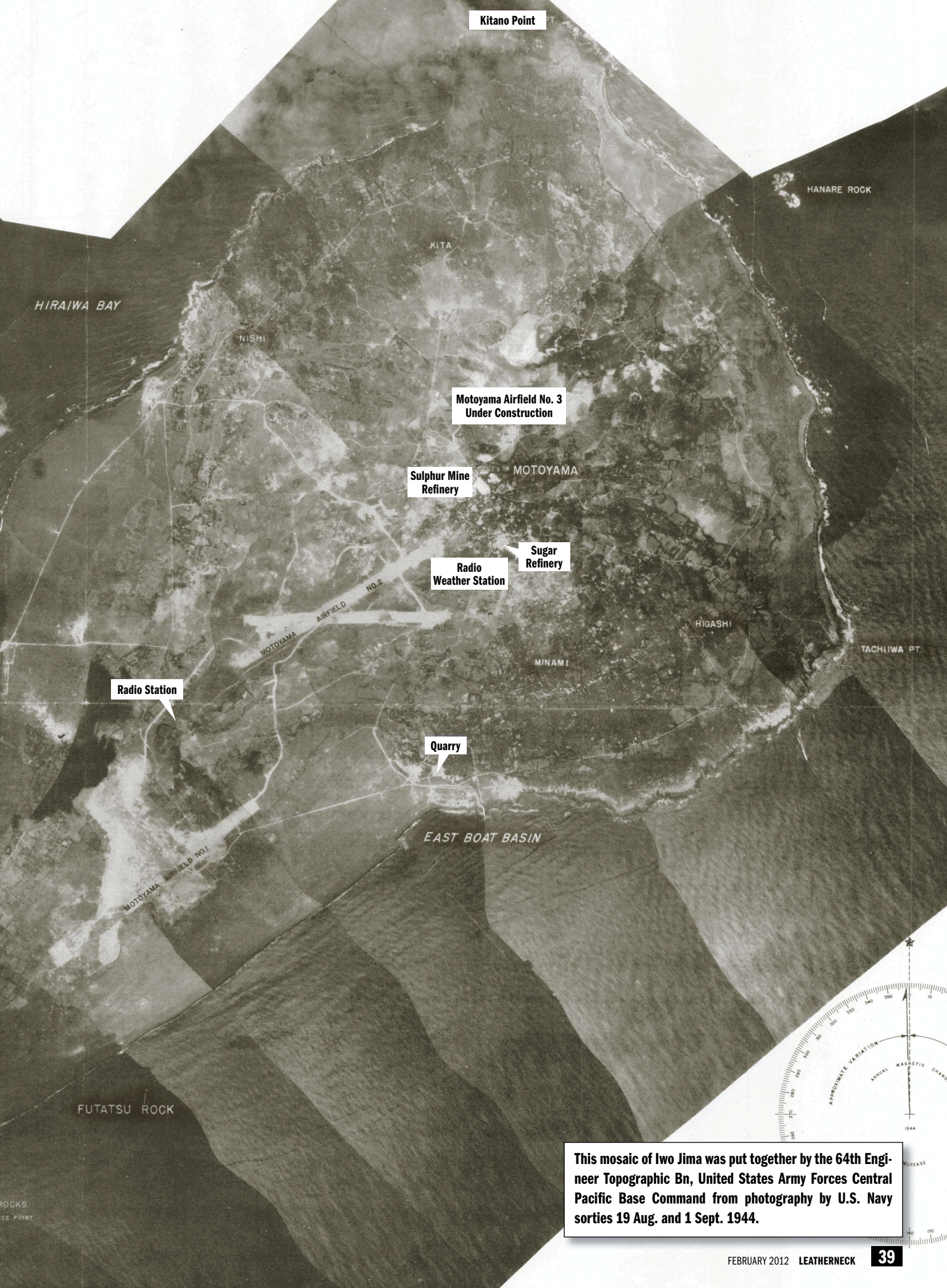
Had we been able to contact the artillery, I wondered what we would shoot at. The Japanese were hitting us from every direction. Eventually, there was a lull in the shelling. The 9th Marines crossed the airfield, and we retreated to a reserve position in an area of dunes. Exhausted Marines dropped in shell craters.

A familiar figure was picking his way through the craters. With two of his regiments in the battle, Major General Graves B. Erskine had come ashore to establish his 3dMarDiv command post. I jumped to my feet, saluted and asked if I could be of any service. “Who are these men?” he snapped gruffly. “Twenty-first Marines, sir. We just came from ...”

He stalked off before I could finish. “Big E,” as he would come to be known on Iwo, had little patience for inactivity. As 3dMarDiv began its march through the center of the island, troop commanders

The Marine below is among those moving up on Motoyama Airfield No. 2 on 21 Feb. 1945. (Photo by PFC J. T. Dreyfuss)





Kitano Point

HANARE ROCK

HIRAIWA BAY

KITA

NISHI

Motoyama Airfield No. 3
Under Construction

Sulphur Mine
Refinery

MOTOYAMA

Radio
Weather Station

Sugar
Refinery

NO. 2

HIGASHI

TACHIWA PT.

Radio Station

MOTOYAMA
AIRFIELD

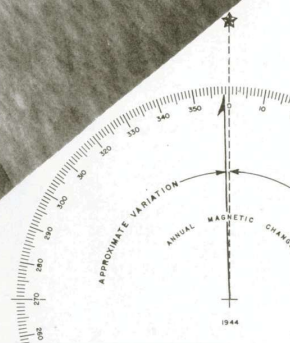
MINAMI

Quarry

EAST BOAT BASIN

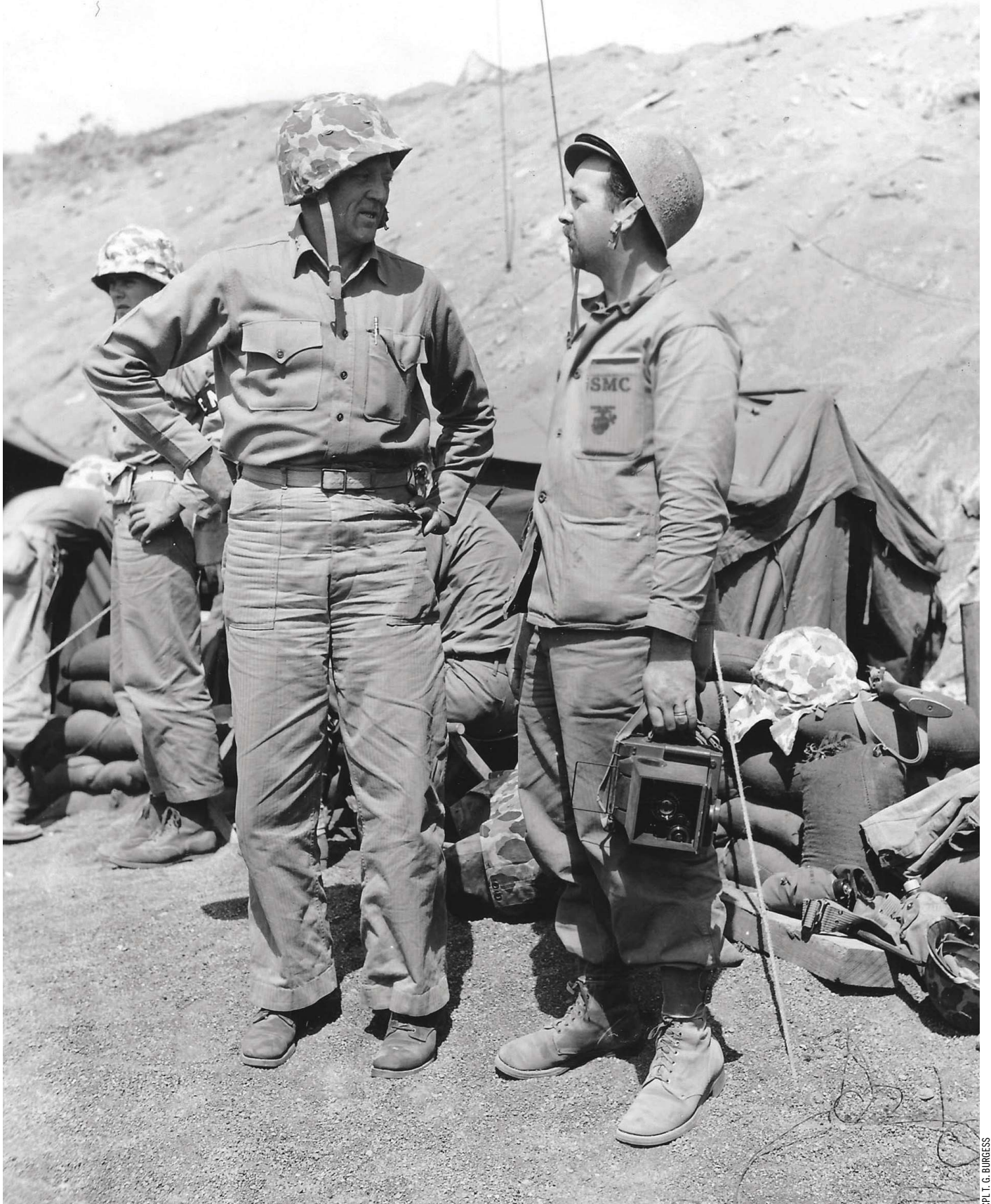
MOTOYAMA
AIRFIELD NO. 1

FUTATSU ROCK



This mosaic of Iwo Jima was put together by the 64th Engineer Topographic Bn, United States Army Forces Central Pacific Base Command from photography by U.S. Navy sorties 19 Aug. and 1 Sept. 1944.

MajGen Graves B. "Big E" Erskine, CG, 3dMarDiv, speaks with International News Service photographer Paige Abbott on 29 Feb. 1945. Note that Abbott, a civilian, is wearing Marine dungarees.



CPL T. G. BURGESS

coined a mantra: “Japs ahead, big problem. Big E behind us, bigger problem.”

MajGen Erskine’s impatience resulted in a heated exchange with LtCol Lowell E. English, commanding 2d Bn, 21st Marines. English had pulled his decimated troops from the line for a rest. “Tell that damned English to get back,” Erskine barked to his operations officer. The offended English shot back, “You tell that son of a b---- I’ll be there.”

Erskine’s man on the phone probably censored the message to read, “He said he’d be there.” English took a bullet in his knee and was evacuated afterward, thereby avoiding any consequences of his rash response. Reservist and Wall Street banker Maj George Percy took over and led the battalion to the end of the fight.

MajGen Erskine had his own troop problems with higher-ups. Dissatisfied with the performance of replacement troops that were fed into the line like cannon fodder, he asked that his 3d Marines, still in floating reserve, be committed. Both the Expeditionary Force commander, Vice Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner, and the Fleet Marine Force, Pacific/Commanding General, Expeditionary Troops, Lieutenant General Holland M. “Howlin’ Mad” Smith, concurred in denying the request. “You’ve got enough Marines ... too damned many now,” came their answer.

After a short rest, 21st Marines rejoined 9th Marines in the attack which had surged through the north end of Airfield No. 2 into what remained of Motoyama Village, a small Japanese settlement that operated a sulphur mine and a sugar refinery. Its civilian residents, who cultivated small vegetable plots, sugar cane and pineapples, had been evacuated before our landing. Scattered cement blocks, timbers and sheets of corrugated roofing tin were all that remained of the village. Sulphur fumes that stank like rotten eggs rose in sands hot from subterranean volcanic activity. Deposits of clay in vivid green, blue and yellow gave the area a hellish appearance.

“The hideous unreality of it gripped us all,” LtCol Duplantis recalled.

The devil’s ovens below worked to our advantage. We buried cans of rations and canteens of instant coffee in shallow holes and enjoyed our first warm meal since coming ashore. At night in foxholes, we turned our bodies like rotisseries to avoid being blistered by hot sands. Appropriately, “Iwo Jima” was the Japanese translation for “Volcano Island.”

The Japanese fiercely defended Motoyama with rockets and 320 mm spigot mortars that lobbed shells the size of ash cans. While adjusting fire on a rocket that was launching projectiles the size of welding bottles all the way to the beach, I spied

a huge mortar round overhead tumbling end over end and dove into the nearest shell crater. It landed a few feet from my sanctuary, and I was tossed from the crater by the explosion.

When I came to, I was unhurt, but my ears were ringing. After directing several volleys of 75 mm shells from my own battery, which finally had come ashore, we caught the rocket launcher out of its cave. Advancing the next day, we found a

tillery barrage heralding a new attack that soon was followed by plaintive cries of “Corpsman!” We began seeing small clusters of men, sobbing and moaning uncontrollably, being led out of the line by corpsmen. We hung our heads both in compassion and fear of any possibility that observing combat neurosis was contagious.

I was summoned to a briefing of troop commanders at regiment. We sat in a half circle as the operations officer began



These “Love” Co, 3/21 leathernecks are checking out the area prior to trying once more to take Motoyama Airfield No. 2, 24 Feb. 1945. (Photo by Cpl W. G. Page)

crude trough made of heavy timbers with wheels that rode on rails in and out of a cave. Its four-man crew was dead.

At night the Japanese taunted us with cries of “Malines, you die.” After a rainy night we awoke immersed in a thick blanket of fog. Emboldened by the protection, we walked upright instead of the hunched-over silhouettes we had been presenting.

A hot sun melted the fog by midday, and we resumed our apelike postures. As Japanese resistance weakened, our advance quickened. We adjusted artillery defensive concentrations at sundown each day and buttoned up for long nights. As darkness fell, destroyers patrolling offshore began firing illumination flares that lit up the battlefield as they floated earthward on small parachutes. The swaying motion of the flares in their descent created fleeting shadows from among the boulders. Nervous Marines swore that the shadows were the Japanese.

Each day started with a thundering ar-

pointing at a map. He was interrupted by a distraught figure who staggered in, his carbine dangling on its sling from one shoulder. I recognized 1stLt Thomas Pottenger, FO with 3d Bn. His eye searched the group until he recognized me. He blurted out, “The Chief, Scoundras, just had his head cut off. He was standing right next to me.”

The group fell silent; 1stLt James Scoundras, an artillery FO from our battalion, was affectionately nicknamed “Chief” because of his Native American features. Actually, he was Greek and had been a star athlete at Holy Cross. A large shell fragment had decapitated him.

Three of us had settled in for a night in an abandoned Japanese mortar pit large enough to stretch our legs. We cringed and held our breath at the familiar fluttering sound of an incoming shell. An instant later, there was a thud inches behind my head, and dirt flew into my eyes. The damned thing had landed in our pit. By

Leatherneck—On the Web

See more photos of 21st Marines on Iwo and the 21st Marine Regiment Action Report for 23 Jan.-16 March 1945 at www.mca-marines.org/leatherneck/21stMarines

the grace of God, it was a dud. Any closer and my skull would have been crushed. We bailed out of the hole. By the light of a flare I read the yellow U.S. ordnance markings. It was a 60 mm mortar shell, and it didn't take much investigation to determine that it was a "friendly" round.

I walked back to the company CP to report the incident and request that they clean their tubes. From continuous firing, the tubes of mortars and artillery pieces become clogged with a gummy residue of gunpowder if not swabbed periodically. In our case the fouled tube had reduced the velocity of the shell to the extent that its fuze had not been activated.

On 9 March, D+18, a 3dMarDiv patrol descended the cliff on the north end of the island. After a dip to wash away the grime of battle, they filled a canteen with seawater to be sent back to MajGen Erskine. Attached was a tag with the words "For inspection, not consumption." It was symbolic that in reaching the sea, the division had split Japanese defenses in half. Based on captured documents, it was determined that in its drive, 3dMarDiv had faced a combined Japanese troop strength totaling 6,830 men.

We halted on a steep cliff where we gazed at the sight of the blue Pacific just beyond Kitano Point, the northern extremity of the island. The plateau below us was a desolate panorama of broken boulders and tortured earth with no sign of human activity. Gazing at the placid sea had a therapeutic effect on edgy nerves

after days of terror and apprehension. We were rudely jerked out of our reverie when the ground began shaking like an earthquake. A heavy-machine-gun position next to our observation post suddenly was blown up, killing three of its crew.

The first mail had just reached us, and blood-spattered letters from home were blown by the wind. The mysterious blast had come from a cave at the bottom of the cliff hundreds of feet below us when a Marine flamethrower ignited a Japanese ammunition dump.

The phone rang. It was LtCol Thomas R. Belzer at regiment. His operations section painstakingly had put together a fire plan on their plotting board, massing the entire corps of artillery. Being the only FO with a view of Kitano Point, I was to be the triggerman for one last massive barrage. I again surveyed the tortured landscape of sundered boulders and plowed-up earth. The only things moving were the midday heat waves. Iwo Jima was dead, along with some 20,000 Japanese.

"I see nothing to shoot at, and, besides, there are probably friendly patrols out there," I reported. Belzer sighed in disappointment, and his voice trailed off, "Well, if you're sure." It was like getting all dressed up and the party being canceled.

Organized resistance had ended, and mopping-up operations began. A truck from Easy Battery, our ride home, labored up the hill. We had lost track of time, but from our best estimates we had been in the battle 21 days. We joked and laughed

during the ride back, but the Japanese had one last crack at us. Passing through a cut on the crest of a small hill, a shell exploded, and Sergeant Andrew Sabol reached for his bloody leg. We safely transported him to an aid station.

At the battery position, an airmail edition of *Time* magazine was being circulated. We got our first look on the cover at Joe Rosenthal's iconic photo of the flag raising on Mount Suribachi.

A lieutenant inquired if I had brought back any souvenirs of the battle. "Here they are," I said, reaching under my jacket and dangling my two dog tags, "the only reminders I want of this place."

Editor's note: Susan Strange is a freelance researcher with an interest in Marine Corps history. She spends quite a bit of time at the National Archives and Records Administration and found these photos and the Action Report available on our digital edition. Maj Norm Hatch, USMC (Ret) introduced Susan to Leatherneck.

After Iceland, Capt Cormier served with 3dMarDiv in the Pacific Ocean island-hopping campaign, including Iwo Jima where he was a forward observer with 21st Marines. He then served with 1stMarDiv in North China and commanded an artillery battery in the Korean War. When he retired from the Corps, he became a newspaper reporter, editor and columnist. Vanguard Press published his memoir, "A Post Card From Joseph," in 2002.



The "Love" Co leathernecks are stalled in their 24 Feb. attempt to take Motoyama Airfield No. 2. (Photo by Cpl W. G. Page)



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The Journey Continues

Vietnam and Shufly

By David H. Hugel

Part II of a three-part series

Early one morning, on board USS *J. C. Breckinridge* (T-AP-176), nearly three weeks after leaving San Diego in late April 1963, a land mass appeared off in the distance that had to be Japan. The ship entered the port of Yokohama a few hours later. The long sea voyage had come to an end, and I was anxious to get off the ship to head for my new duty station, Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni.

Unexpectedly, a number of us were told that our orders had been changed. We would not be going to Iwakuni but to Marine Aircraft Group (MAG) 16 in Futema, Okinawa. After a brief liberty in Yokohama, I returned to the ship for the two-day trip to Okinawa.

At the port of Naha, Marines destined for the Third Marine Division boarded trucks and headed for bases in the northern part of the island, while those of us being assigned to MAG-16 had a shorter bus ride to the Marine Corps Air Facility at Futema. There, at a parking lot beside the mess hall, we were greeted by a corporal I knew from the Quantico, Va., air station. The administrative chief for MAG-16, he directed Marines to areas of the parking lot designated by signs representing the units



LCPL DICK DAWSON

Cpl David H. Hugel, with his 4x5 Speed Graphic camera, covers Marine operations in support of ARVN forces in Vietnam's I Corps Tactical Zone in the summer of 1963.

to which they were being assigned.

When he finished, six of us had not been assigned to a unit, prompting me to ask where we were going. His response took me by surprise, "Don't unpack your seabag, Hugel; you're going south." When I inquired where "south" was, he responded in his Kentucky twang: "Vee-et-naam."

All six of us received orders for six-month tours at the Marine air base in Da Nang, as part of Task Element 79.3.3.6, code-named Shufly.

A couple of days later we were driven to Kadena Air Base where we boarded a four-engine transport plane, a GV-1, now known as the C-130. The plane was making one of the semiweekly flights between Iwakuni and Da Nang that stopped at Kadena to refuel and to pick up Marines and supplies destined for Vietnam. I squeezed into one of the cargo seats that lined the outside bulkheads of the plane, joining Marines who had boarded the plane at Iwakuni and were seated amid portable generators and other bulky supplies.

The aircraft had taken off from Iwakuni at 7 o'clock that morning and, after another refueling stop at the Cubi Point Naval Air Station in the Philippines, would arrive in Da Nang about 7 that night. I didn't know it, but the plane carried another vital commodity that I soon would look forward to receiving when this lifeline to the outside world made its twice a week resupply runs to Da Nang—mail from home.

My first impression of Da Nang in late April 1963 proved to be an accurate preview of the climate. After our plane landed and taxied off the runway, the rear hatch was opened. We were blasted by the hot



DAVID H. HUGEL



DAVID H. HUGEL

Above left: U.S. troopships pulled into the port of Yokohama, Japan, to disembark troops headed for Japan and Far East assignments during the early 1960s.

Above right: Shufly barracks and administrative buildings were at the Da Nang airfield during the summer of 1963.



DAVID H. HUGEL

Cpl Bob Silverberg (left) and LCpl Bill Speckels (right) visit one of Hong Kong's most popular tourist attractions, Tiger Balm Gardens, with a tour guide. The leathernecks were on R&R with the author during the summer of 1964.

muggy temperatures we'd live with every day for the next six months. The only change in weather was during the dreary, wet monsoon season when it wasn't as hot, but it rained for days on end.

After deplaning, I threw my seabags into a waiting truck and boarded a battered olive-drab school bus for the short trip from the airfield to the barracks compound. Knowing that we hadn't eaten for several hours, they kept the mess hall open. By the time I finished chow, it was growing dark, and I still needed to draw sleeping gear and find a place to bed down for the night.

Sleeping gear consisted of a folding canvas cot with wooden rigging from which a mosquito net was hung, an inflatable air mattress, sheets, a pillow and pillowcase. During the process I met my new boss, Cpl Charlie Tuthill, the noncommissioned officer in charge (NCOIC) of the photo lab, who found me space in the barracks for my cot and showed me how to set it up. By then I had grown weary and didn't take the time to mount the mosquito net over the cot. Instead, I blew up the air

mattress, covered it with a sheet, climbed onto the cot, pulled another sheet over me and draped the mosquito net on top of the sheet.

That was a big mistake. I regretted it

The building had an old air conditioner that seldom worked, making the darkroom a steam bath.

throughout that long night, as I became an easy target for those ravenous flying bloodsuckers that made run after run against my exposed, defenseless body. I didn't get much sleep, but I did learn an important lesson. The next day I assembled the mosquito-net rigging and that night tucked the net under the air mattress to form a mosquito-free sleeping environment.

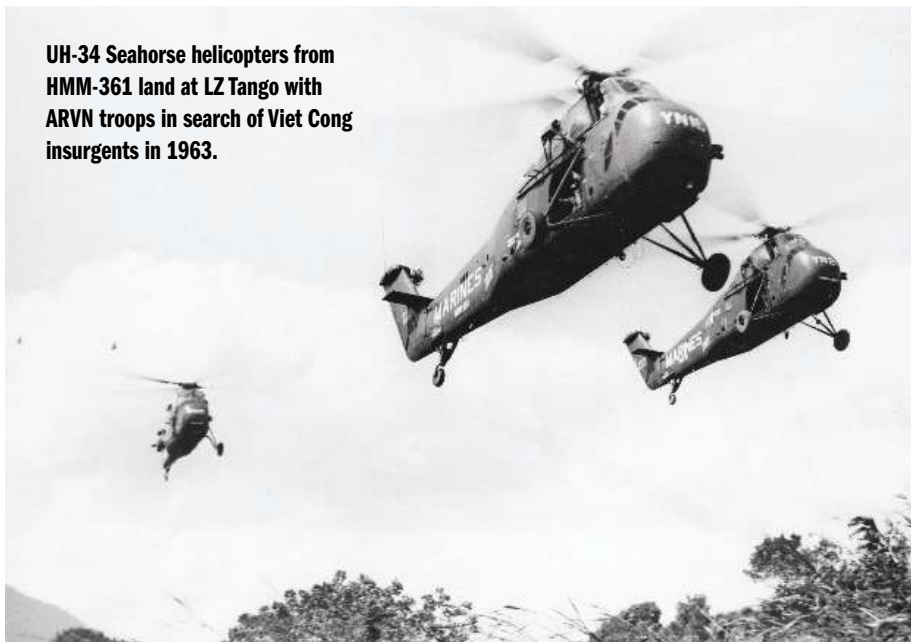
Daylight brought my first view of the

barracks compound. It consisted of about 40 concrete buildings with a faded yellow stucco finish and red tile roofs that I later learned had been built during the French colonial period. After chow, I headed for the photo lab, located less than 50 feet from my barracks. The photo lab's primary mission during those early days was processing and printing reconnaissance film for intelligence analysis and mission planning.

As Marine photographers, we also performed traditional photographic duties from taking pictures for I.D. cards and passport applications to covering promotions, award ceremonies and VIP visits.

The photo lab featured standard, if somewhat time-worn, processing equipment, but lacked one vital feature: running water. Water had to be carried in 5-gallon military gas cans from a nearby portable water tank. The building had an old air conditioner that seldom worked, making the darkroom a steam bath and nearly impossible to maintain processing chemicals at recommended temperatures. Through experience we found that film development

UH-34 Seahorse helicopters from HMM-361 land at LZ Tango with ARVN troops in search of Viet Cong insurgents in 1963.



DAVID H. HUGEL

times were about half of what they would be under normal conditions. The high temperatures sped up the development process; however, the negatives tended to be grainier than usual.

Shuffy's photoreconnaissance missions were flown by aerial observers (AOs) and pilots using the Cessna OE-1 single-engine aircraft. My predecessors had developed a simple yet effective system for quickly processing the film. Pilots returning from a mission would make a low pass over the compound and drop a canister containing the film, attached to a small parachute. A photographer would retrieve the canister and process the film. By the time the plane had landed and the AO had driven from the flight line to the photo lab, the nega-

tives had been developed, dried and were ready for viewing.

An AO, usually in consultation with our S-2 officer, would identify the negatives of possible landing zones or suspected Viet Cong (VC) encampments they wanted printed, and we would print multiple enlargements of those negatives for more detailed intelligence analysis and use at daily mission briefings.

Beginning in June with the arrival of Marine journalist Lance Corporal Dick Dawson, Shuffy photographers began going into the field to photograph helicopter operations in support of our Army of the Republic of Vietnam allies. The missions during those early years involved airlifting ARVN troops into landing zones

near suspected VC guerrilla activity, transporting troops back from those landing zones, resupplying outposts and evacuating the wounded.

In August 1963 I was promoted to corporal, and following the death of Cpl Tut-hill in a helicopter crash in October, I became NCOIC of the photo lab. I continued to fly along on missions, some of which would result in memorable photos of early Marine Corps operations in support of our South Vietnamese allies. In late November, I boarded one of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron (HMM) 361's UH-34s for one such mission into a landing zone, known as "LZ Tango," southwest of Da Nang. I flew into the LZ on one of the lead helicopters and jumped out to photograph ARVN troops disembarking from helicopters to pursue suspected Viet Cong in the area.

Photos I shot that day appeared in numerous publications, including a full-page spread in the 7 Dec. 1963 issue of the Pacific edition of *Stars & Stripes*. My biggest surprise came 43 years later when I discovered two of the photos from that mission on display as part of the Vietnam exhibit at the National Museum of the Marine Corps.

During those early days of the Vietnam War there weren't many options for R&R. Having heard numerous stories of Hong Kong, a couple of my buddies, Bob Silverberg and Bill Speckles, and I signed up for a flight to that fabled port of call. The flight from Da Nang to Hong Kong on an Air Force prop-driven transport was uneventful, not unlike a commercial airline flight back home. Landing at Kai Tak airport, however, provided some anxious moments as the plane flew low over the water to touch down on the runway built on a narrow strip of fill land extending out into the harbor. It was a thrilling experience.

Shuffy Marines stayed at the Clover Hotel on Nathan Road in the Kowloon section of the city. Once we cleared customs and immigration, a driver with a sign was there to meet us. After gathering our luggage and squeezing into his small van, we were driven to the hotel. We enjoyed a complimentary beer as we checked in, before being whisked off to a local tailor shop. Suits and shoes were made to order and custom fitted in three days at bargain-basement prices, but there was much, much more to see and do in this fascinating city.

The bright lights, strange language and sounds of this vibrant port city beckoned us to enjoy our brief stay before boarding the plane back to the reality of Vietnam, and we were determined to make the most of it. By day we visited the well-known tourist sites, from the Star Ferry to Tiger



DAVID H. HUGEL

In 1964, Hong Kong's newly opened 25-story Hilton Hotel, a popular Vietnam R&R site (near the center of the photo), was the tallest building in the British Crown Colony.

I was assigned to provide photographic coverage of Gen Greene's visit.

A couple of days later I boarded a plane headed down to Saigon.

Balm Gardens and Victoria Peak to the floating junk city of Aberdeen and the New Territories, where from a hillside we could peer across the river into Communist China. We also spent time shopping for jewelry, cameras, stereo tape recorders and other electronic gadgets. At night we had delicious meals and were entertained at the city's many fine nightclubs.

My most memorable photo assignment came in early January 1964 as I was nearing the end of my extended tour in Vietnam. My squadron commanding officer called me to his office to tell me that the new Marine Corps Commandant, General Wallace M. Greene Jr., would arrive in Vietnam that week for an inspection tour. I was assigned to provide photographic coverage of Gen Greene's visit.

A couple of days later I boarded a plane headed down to Saigon, where the Commandant would touch down. A sense of excitement filled the air as Gen Greene's plane rolled to a stop on the tarmac of Saigon's Tan Son Nhut airport, and he stepped out to be greeted by U.S. and Vietnamese military officials. The most notable was Army GEN Paul D. Harkins, commanding the U.S. Military Assistance Command in Vietnam.

One personal surprise was being greeted by the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, Thomas J. McHugh. I had known him from his previous tour of duty as Sergeant Major of MCAS Quantico. He took one look at me and said, "We're a long way from Quantico, aren't we, Hugel?" Early the next day we began a whirlwind tour of Vietnam, which went from remote outposts in the Mekong Delta to the Central Highlands and beyond to the country's northernmost I Corps Tactical Zone that stretched to the Demilitarized Zone separating South from North Vietnam.

In addition to touring the Da Nang air base, where he dined at the officers' mess, talked with enlisted Marines and awarded medals, Gen Greene met with I Corps Commanding General, Nguyen Khanh. As the generals and their entourages met in private at Gen Khanh's villa near Da Nang, I spied a large stuffed tiger in the living room. I persuaded one of Khanh's aides to move the tiger onto a nearby patio,



DAVID H. HUGEL

Above: The third Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, SgtMaj Thomas J. McHugh, sips from a jug during a welcome ceremony at a native village in Vietnam's Mekong Delta while on tour with Gen Wallace M. Greene during the Commandant's 1964 inspection tour of Vietnam.

Below: Gen Wallace M. Greene Jr., CMC, awards Air Medals to pilots and crewmembers of HMM-361 during his January 1964 visit to the Marine air base in Da Nang, RVN.



DAVID H. HUGEL



DAVID H. HUGEL

Gen Wallace M. Greene Jr., Marine Corps Commandant (left); Col Andre D. Gomez, Shuffy commander (center); and Nguyen Khanh, ARVN I Corps commanding general, flank Gen Khanh's tiger. Less than three weeks after this photo was taken, the 36-year-old Khanh staged a bloodless coup to become South Vietnam's Prime Minister.

which I thought was a better setting for the picture.

When the meeting broke up, the generals and Colonel Andre D. Gomez, the commanding officer of the Shuffy Task Element, agreed to pose for a few photos standing beside the tiger. After the party returned to our base in Da Nang, I developed the film and made several prints of the better shots for my scrapbook before turning the negatives over to a public information officer traveling with Gen Greene who was to transport them to the States.

I was on my way to chow back at Futema a few weeks later when I spotted a familiar face staring at me from the cover of *Stars and Stripes*. It was my photo of Gen Khanh, minus the tiger and the Marine officers who had been neatly air-brushed away, under the banner headline: "NEW VIET COUP: General Khanh Seizes Control." I bought a copy of the paper to learn more details, including the fact that during the early morning hours of the preceding day, Khanh had led the bloodless coup to oust Gen Duong Van "Big" Minh, who had been in power a mere three months following the ouster and assassination of President Ngo Dinh Diem in November 1963.

Encouraged by my academic success at the Naval Photo School, the extensive reading I had done in my off-duty time and travels to several countries, going to college after I left active duty in September 1964 became my goal. I had no idea how to begin the process. After talking with a couple of Marine buddies, I decided to ask a friend back home to contact the state

I spied a large stuffed tiger in the living room. I persuaded one of Khanh's aides to move the tiger onto a nearby patio.

college not far from where my folks lived to get me enrollment information and an application for admission. As I waited for the information, I counted down the days until my tour in the Far East would be over, and I would return to the States. That day came in late April when I once again boarded a troopship, this one bound for San Diego.

Disembarking in San Diego and based

NEW VIET COUP

General Khanh Seizes Control; 4 Top Junta Members Arrested

SAIGON (UPI)—Dissident members of the ruling military junta seized control of the capital in a bloodless pre-dawn coup Thursday, U.S. military sources said.

Tanks surrounded junta headquarters and the residence of junta chairman Gen. Duong Van Minh.



PACIFIC
STARS AND STRIPES
OKINAWA EDITION
ON APPROXIMATE PUBLICATION OF THE U.S. ARMED FORCES IN THE FAR EAST
Vol. 20, No. 30
Friday, Jan. 31, 1964

19-Ton Satellite Orbiting by U.S.

CAPE KENNEDY, Fla.—A Saturn I upper stage propelled the world's heaviest satellite into orbit Wednesday and presumably vaulted the United States over Russia in the race for space rocket supremacy. Forerunner of rockets which will boost American satellites to the moon, the 180,000-lb. rocket boosted the launching pad with a push of flame and sent a thunderous shock wave rattling across Cape Kennedy as it blasted off on its final 111-mile test flight.

Downed Jet, Russ Admit

By The Associated Press. Moscow (UPI)—The Soviet Union admitted that one of its fighters downed a U.S. F-105 in the Gulf of Tonkin last week, according to a statement by the Soviet press.

Alan Ladd Dies at 50

By The Associated Press. Los Angeles (UPI)—Actor Alan Ladd died of a heart attack last week, according to a statement by his family.

F-102 Squadron at Itazuke Will Return to U.S. by July

By The Associated Press. Tokyo (UPI)—The U.S. Air Force announced that the F-102 squadron at Itazuke Air Base, Japan, will return to the United States by July.

to MCRD, I was surprised and pleased to learn that because I had less than 120 days left on my enlistment I would be receiving a convenience-of-the-government discharge. On 27 May 1964, I left active duty and began my journey home, ready for a relaxing summer before beginning college in the fall. I had enjoyed my experiences in the Marine Corps and seen several Asian countries and history being made in Vietnam, but just a few months shy of my 22nd birthday, I was looking forward to college and beginning the next phase of my life.

Editor's note: David Hugel has been a longtime contributor to Leatherneck magazine. He enlisted in the Marine Corps following graduation from high school in 1960 and later served with the 1st MAF where he covered early Marine Corps operations in Vietnam while stationed in Da Nang as part of Shuffy. This is the second in a series of articles based on his service in the Marine Corps and his career spanning the following 45 years. The articles are excerpted from his forthcoming memoir.



"USMC Freedom Fighter"

Men's Hoodie

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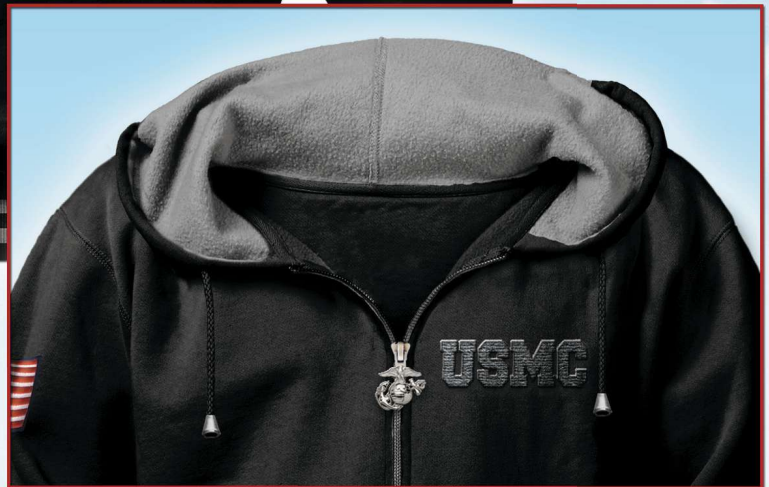
Versatile hoodie style crafted in easy-care, comfort knit



Features front pockets, knit cuffs and hem



The back is emblazoned with a bold patch showcasing the freedom fighting strength of the Marines with images of the majestic eagle, the American flag and the USMC emblem



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Wrap yourself in Marine Corps pride and casual comfort with our "USMC Freedom Fighter" Men's Hoodie. Crafted in easy-care black cotton blend knit, with brushed fleece on the inside, it showcases a back patch featuring a stirring cameo of a spirited eagle and American flag along with the Marine emblem of eagle, globe and anchor. The front features "USMC" on the chest, and the right sleeve bears an American flag patch. There's plenty of design detail throughout this apparel exclusive, like contrasting gray lining in the hood, generous front pockets, knit cuffs and hem with gray stripes, a full front zipper with metallic USMC emblem zipper pull, and chrome-look metal tippets on the hood drawstrings. Imported.

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Metallic Marine emblem zipper pull hangs from the full-length front zipper

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We—the Marines

Edited by Clare A. Guerrero



LCPL GABRIELLE BUSTOS

BGen Loretta "Lori" Reynolds (right), Commanding General, Eastern Recruiting Region and MCRD Parris Island, S.C., and MSgt Ramon P. Gallimore, 6th MCD recruiting contact team chief, cut the ribbon at the opening ceremony of the 6th MCD's new Recruiting Historic Exhibit at MCRD Parris Island, Nov. 9, 2011.

6th Marine Corps District Dedicates Exhibit to Recruiting

■ The 6th Marine Corps District held a ribbon-cutting ceremony at its headquarters building to celebrate the opening of the new Recruiting Historic Exhibit at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., Nov. 9, 2011.

The exhibit features subjects such as women Marines and the Montford Point Marines, as well as a collection of original recruiting posters and *Leatherneck* magazine articles.

"The exhibit is meant to fill that gap between recruiting people and creating Marines and offer a historic perspective on Marine recruiting," said Master Sergeant Ramon P. Gallimore, 6th MCD contact team member.

"There's so much hard work, blood, sweat and tears that go into recruiting the world's-finest warriors, and this exhibit will hopefully inform people of that hard work," said Gallimore.

The exhibit was completed in early November 2011, just in time for the 236th Marine Corps Birthday.

Colonel Paul Timoney, Commanding Officer, 6th MCD, gave a presentation on the advancement of recruiting and the vital effects it has had on shaping the

Corps. "The same reasons people joined back in World War I are the same reasons of today—recruiters are there to remind you what they are," said Timoney.

The exhibit includes posters dating back to different times during Marine Corps history. "Many are originals that were donated to the exhibit by several different people. All except one poster are original copies, giving the exhibit that overall genuine and unique presence," said Gallimore.

Sergeant Major David Robles, USMC (Ret), founder of the historical society on Parris Island, attended the ceremony, and he saw some of his donated artifacts displayed.

"I'm very impressed by how everything turned out," said Robles. "Now people can see all the hard work that recruiters go through, because we all know that without recruiters there would be no recruits, and without recruits, we wouldn't have Marines—meaning no Marine Corps."

Robles' wife, Sue, said that she was moved by the exhibit and enjoyed the female Marines portion. "One of my biggest regrets was not joining the service, but seeing all the history of the women that did join, and reading about their journeys just makes me so proud."

The exhibit has several unique artifacts on display that no other museum or Marine Corps establishment is in possession of, including a very rare recruiting service patch. Marine recruiters wore the patch during World War II; it was attached to an armband or directly to the uniform, and its rarity makes it a highly desirable Marine Corps collectors' item.

A piece of steel from the World Trade Center was donated to the recruiting exhibit and is proudly displayed in the center of the room.

"I think it shows great representation not only of the 6th Marine Corps District, but also the Marine Corps Recruiting Command, that we took the initiative to create this exhibit. This could be the first step to finally putting recruiting on the map, where it should be," said Gallimore.

Gallimore said that he couldn't be happier with how the exhibit turned out and is looking forward to adding more to the project.

The 6th Marine Corps District Recruiting Historic Exhibit is open to the public.

LCpl Gabrielle Bustos
PAO, 6th MCD

III MEF Continues Assistance to Thailand

■ The U.S. Pacific Command sent the III Marine Expeditionary Force flood-relief command element to the Kingdom of Thailand, Nov. 14, 2011, to provide command and control for follow-on U.S. forces to support and assist the Royal Government of Thailand.

Major Jonathan A. Derosier, the engineering planner for the flood-relief command element, said that Thailand has experienced significant rainfall during its monsoon season, which has created major flooding issues throughout the country.

The command element, consisting of military personnel from several branches of the U.S. military, will ensure that the military works in coordination with the Royal Government of Thailand to support the recently flooded areas with aid and recovery.

"We are tasked with the goal of assessing how we can properly support Thailand's flood-damaged areas," said Brigadier General Craig C. Crenshaw, commander of the flood-relief command element and commanding general for

Third Marine Logistics Group, III MEF.

“A team of five communication Marines are going and will be using the rapid-response kit while in Thailand,” said Sergeant John F. Watkins, a data expert with the command element. “The rapid-response kit’s capabilities are data, voice and video-teleconference.” The kit allows communication to be established in a timely manner facilitating rapid-relief response.

The III MEF trains throughout the year during annual exercises in the Asia-Pacific region, to include Exercise Cobra Gold, which enables effective response and coordination with our long-standing U.S. allies and partners, including the Royal Government of Thailand.

“With the flood-relief command element set up in Thailand, we’ll have boots on the deck, which will speed the reaction time if Thailand and U.S. officials decide to send additional III MEF servicemembers,” said Sergeant Major Lawrence P. Fineran, sergeant major of the III MEF flood-relief command element and the 3d MLG.

The III MEF’s actions are part of a larger U.S. initiative to support Thailand as U.S. forces are committed to working and assisting their Thai allies and partners.

LCpl Alyssa N. Hoffacker

PAO, Marine Corps Installations Pacific, Okinawa, Japan



AQUITA BROWN

Cpl Sean Venezia and his mount prevent a heifer from rejoining the herd during the Wounded Warrior Cutting Horse Classic II, Oct. 18-21, 2011, in Nokesville, Va.

Healing With Horses: Marines Compete in Classic

■ The United States Marine Corps Wounded Warrior Regiment partnered with the Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund and D&M Cattle Company to host the Wounded Warrior Cutting Horse Classic II, Oct. 18-21, 2011, in Nokesville, Va. Ten Marines and one sailor learned how

to saddle, care for and ride horses before the competition.

The training helped prepare the riders to successfully “cut” cattle while on horseback during the competition. Cutting is the equestrian sport of separating a cow from the herd; it mimics a skill used by cattle herders to vaccinate or treat cattle.

This is the second cutting horse com-

HMC Nick Hall, a search-and-rescue corpsman assigned to the U.S. Navy’s Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron 14, joined the III MEF humanitarian assistance survey team to evaluate flooded neighborhoods during an aerial assessment of areas north of Bangkok, Thailand, Oct. 28, 2011. (Photo by Cpl Robert J. Maurer)





CPL JAD SLEIMAN

SICILY-BASED MARINES CLIMB EUROPE'S TALLEST ACTIVE VOLCANO—A Marine with Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force 12 makes his way up the slopes of Europe's tallest active volcano, Mount Etna, on Oct. 25, 2011. The hike was designed to teach a lesson in the rigors of operating in a mountainous environment to about 20 Marines with Security Cooperation Team Tactics 2, SPMAGTF-12.

petition created by Colonel John L. Mayer, commanding the Wounded Warrior Regiment. Col Mayer, along with retired Army COL Don York, D&M Cattle Company owner, teamed up to start the program. Top-notch trainers and contenders from the National Cutting Horse Association were brought in to give these young men and women an accelerated learning experience. Mayer and York, both avid horsemen, formed the Wounded Warrior Cutting Horse Classic to motivate and teach a skill to wounded, ill and injured Marines and sailors.

The event presented 10 riders from WWR battalions with the opportunity to learn the sport for three days and gain the skills to compete against one another on the fourth and final day. The participants also learned stall maintenance, brushing and washing horses, flag drills, herding and basic riding. Riders were assigned to two divisions, amateur and non-pro. Division placement was based on how riders performed during prequalification runs. Of the 10 riders, four placed in the non-pro division.

Hospital Corpsman Second Class (FMF) Melissa Jamarillo was one of the four riders to qualify as a non-pro. Jamarillo had never ridden a horse before the clinic and was extremely nervous on the first day of the camp. With the help of expert horsemen such as Brian Wideman, Mo Smith and lead trainer Jim McDonough, she was able to place second in her di-

vision. She was second only to Sergeant Israel Franco by just half a point.

McDonough made reference to the expertise of the trainers time and time again, stating that it takes months to prepare for competition; these Marines and sailors were able to train for three consecutive days and compete on the fourth.

The event received outstanding reviews from the staff and participants. Corporal Camilo Rojas, a rider from Wounded Warrior Battalion-West, said the competition was "good for my mind, body and spirit." Rojas is a rifleman who transferred to the wounded warrior battalion from 3d Battalion, Fifth Marine Regiment.

At the conclusion of the competition, Sgt Franco was announced the champion

for the non-pro division, and Cpl Noah Felding, the winner of the amateur division.

Major Jeff Salzeider said that from the regimental staff point of view, the best part of the clinic was seeing the change in the Marines and sailors and watching them grow.

For more information about the Wounded Warrior Regiment, visit www.woundedwarriorregiment.org.

Sgt Justin Smith
PAO, Wounded Warrior Regiment

24th MEU, PHIBRON 8 Conduct Second At-Sea Training Exercise

■ The 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit and Amphibious Squadron (PHIBRON) 8 linked up off the coast of Marine Corps



LCPL MICHAEL PETERSHEIM

Cpl Jareth Falls, a scout sniper with Headquarters and Service Company, Battalion Landing Team, 1st Bn, Second Marine Regiment, 24th MEU, sights in his M40 A5 sniper rifle Dec. 3, 2011, during the 24th MEU/PHIBRON 8 Composite Training Unit Exercise that took place off the coast of MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C.

Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., in December 2011 to conduct the second of three at-sea training exercises to prepare for their deployment scheduled for early 2012.

The Composite Training Unit Exercise that ran through Dec. 21 tested the Navy-Marine team's ability to rapidly plan and execute a number of missions based off scenarios they could possibly face once deployed.

The training gave the 24th MEU the opportunity to exercise its abilities as a Marine air-ground task force, synchronizing the ground, air and logistics elements of its battalion landing team, aviation squadron and combat logistics battalion.

Approximately 2,100 Marines with a variety of equipment including tanks, artillery, helicopters and other motor vehicles were loaded onto the amphibious assault ships USS *Iwo Jima* (LHD-7), USS *New York* (LPD-21) and USS *Gunston Hall* (LSD-44), using Navy hovercraft at the Port of Morehead City, N.C.

The 24th MEU/PHIBRON 8 team traveled between North Carolina and Florida to execute several scenario-based missions that included humanitarian assistance, tactical recovery of aircraft and personnel, and an amphibious assault.

The training objective was to develop cohesion between the 24th MEU and PHIBRON 8 during amphibious operations, crisis response and limited contingency operations while operating from the sea. (Note: *Leatherneck* embarked a writer for the exercise and will have additional coverage in a future issue and on the web at www.mca-marines.org/leatherneck.)

Capt Robert Shuford
PAO, 24th MEU

Quick Shots Around the Corps

Multiservice Office to Advance Air-Sea Battle Concept

■ The Air-Sea Battle Office, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, reports that the Department of Defense announced on Nov. 9, 2011, the creation of a new office to integrate air and naval combat capabilities in support of emerging national security requirements. On Aug. 12, 2011, Navy Admiral Jonathan W. Greenert, Marine Corps General Joseph F. Dunford and Air Force Gen Philip M. Breedlove established the Air-Sea Battle Office (ASBO), creating a framework to implement the ASB concept.

The ASB concept will guide the services as they work together to maintain a continued U.S. advantage against the global proliferation of advanced military technologies and anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) capabilities. ASB will leverage military and technological capabilities that reflect unprecedented Navy, Marine and Air Force collaboration, cooperation, integration and resource investments.

Marines Land en Masse on Ie Shima

■ Lance Corporal Ronald K. Peacock, Public Affairs Office, Marine Corps Installations Pacific, Okinawa, Japan, reports that Marines with the First Marine Aircraft Wing participated in Exercise Ryukyu Warrior that took place Dec. 5-8, 2011, on Ie Shima, Okinawa.

The exercise is an annual Marine air command and control systems training evolution, which gives squadrons and personnel with the 1st MAW, and units from other services, the opportunity to be involved in simulated exercises, familiarize personnel with equipment and give new Marines an opportunity to gain experience.



Crazy Caption Contest

Winner



LCP1 JUSTIN HAZARD

Submitted by
Butch Bachand
Chatsworth, Calif.

**"I sure appreciate the lift,
but can you jarheads really land this thing on a roof?"**

This Month's Photo



LCP1 JOSHUA YOUNG

(Caption) _____

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____ ZIP _____

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

The National Museum of the Marine Corps

World War II and the Origins of Diversity

By Owen L. Conner and Charles Grow

On 1 May 1944, Gunnery Sergeant Perry Fischer reported to the 8th Marine Ammunition Company at Montford Point, New River, N.C. Young and confident, Fischer exhibited the spirit of many Marines of the “greatest generation.” Born into a Jewish family on the tough streets of Chicago, he loved the Marine Corps and had excelled during his brief career. He had risen steadily through the ranks within four short years. In the process, GySgt Fischer had acquired a reputation for being tough, fit and fair with all of his Marines.

However, serving in administrative and ceremonial duties in Washington, D.C., was not what he had wanted. Like many Marines, Fischer yearned to do his part and be closer to the fighting.

With no previous knowledge of the unit to which he had been assigned, GySgt Fischer could not conceal his surprise upon arrival at Montford Point. Black Marines marching up and down the parade ground outside his new command was almost the last thing he expected to see. He wondered aloud to his fellow white enlisted staff if he was being punished for an indiscretion of which he was unaware. Most of them had wondered the

same thing. Until their new assignment, the majority of them were not even aware that African-Americans were allowed to join the Marine Corps. It seemed impossible to many that black and white Marines could work efficiently together, let alone prepare for the rigors of warfare in the Pacific.

At the start, tensions within the 8th Marine Ammunition Co were high. Black noncommissioned officers (NCOs) who had led their men through basic training had to stand by silently until they could ascertain the degree of authority their new white superiors would allow them. White staff, both NCO and officer alike, with varying levels of conviction, made mistakes in attempting to gain their men’s trust. Slowly but surely, however, men like Fischer and the rest of the unit began to embrace the Marine Corps’ unifying spirit of discipline and pride. Despite fears from both sides, the Marines at the small-unit level started to see beyond racial differences and recognized each other as comrades in a common cause. Their duty, not their color, came to be what truly mattered.

mitment, accomplishments and sacrifices of all Marines.

In order to appreciate better the diversity accomplishments of the Marine Corps today, we have to look historically at how we began such integration. Through current exhibits and future enhancements to the World War II gallery, which will occur during the next three years, the National Museum of the Marine Corps, located in Triangle, Va., near the Quantico Marine base, is dedicated to presenting the history of diversity.

Examining the legacy of the Montford Point Marines within the rich history of

Exhibiting the Story of Diversity

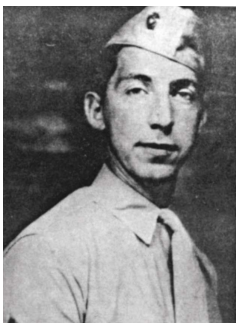
Since opening its doors on 10 Nov. 2006, the National Museum of the Marine Corps’ mission has been to honor the com-



Col Julia Hamblet



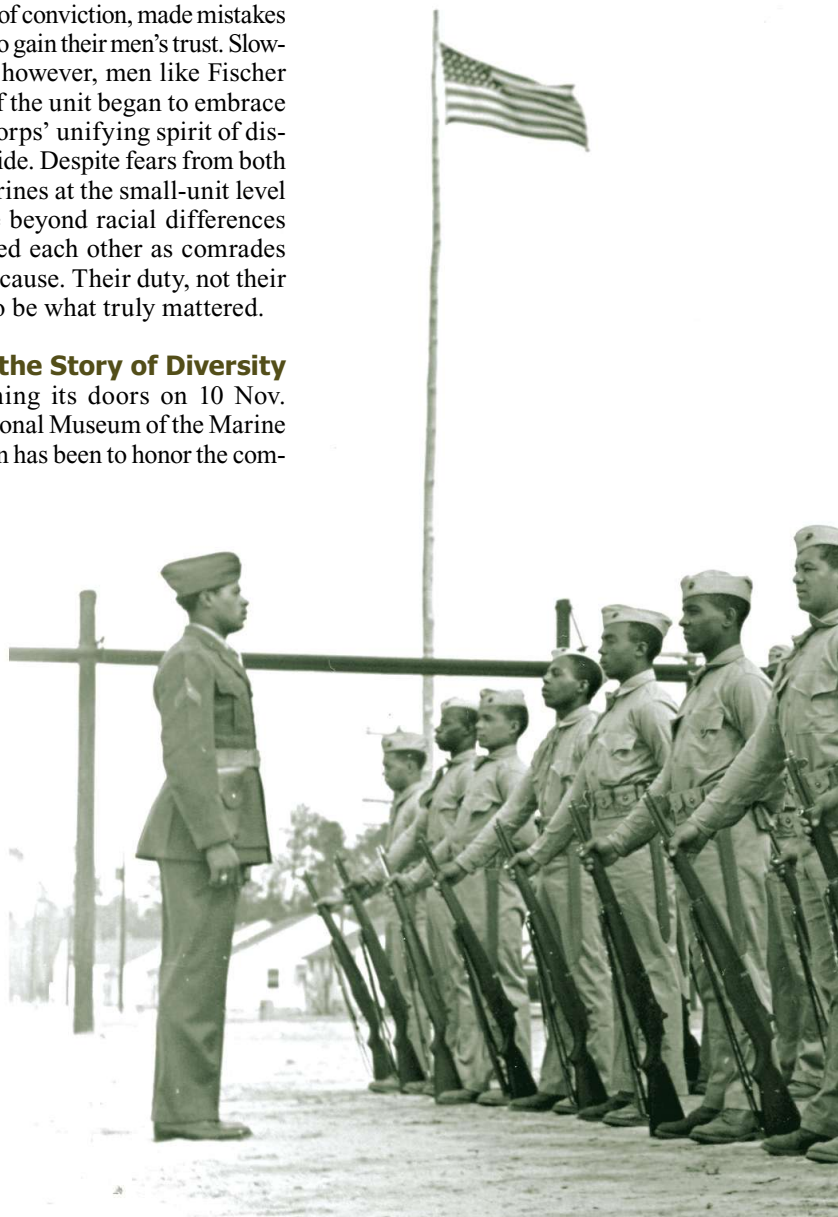
PFC Harold Gonsalves



GySgt Perry Fischer



LtGen Pedro del Valle



WW II provides inspiration and a greater understanding of the path our country took to diversity. The honoring of WW II black Marines with the Congressional Gold Medal and the interest expressed in their history by the Commandant, General James F. Amos, has served to highlight how the military led social and cultural integration within the wider American experience. The museum proudly assists that effort by highlighting not only the great battles and figures of Marine Corps history, but the key moments (both high and low) of the men and women who helped build the present-day Corps.

While touring the museum's WW II gallery, visitors become immersed in the Marine Corps' greatest military struggles and victories. The inspiring narrative focuses primarily on the Pacific War, but there are many other inspirational stories to tell. In the coming year, new artifacts are planned for display that will recognize prominent Montford Point Marines. Enhanced interactive exhibits will highlight rarely seen archive images of black Marines during the war. A selection of com-



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MARINE CORPS

Cpl Edna Juan-Wells served at the Marine Corps Motor Transport School at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., in 1944.

PELLING oral histories will educate museum visitors about how an all-white, all-male Marine Corps entered America's greatest war and emerged socially and culturally transformed—beginning to resemble the Marine Corps of today.

Starting with wartime expansion and

the Corps' first significant acceptance of African-American Marines, the museum's exhibits will explore the genesis and tribulations involved in the progression of African-American recruits, from the humble origins of segregated life at Montford Point to the battlefields of Saipan and Iwo Jima. African-American Marines originally were assigned to ammunition and supply units as a means of enforcing segregation, and a planned museum exhibit will highlight the significant contributions they made to those support units and their valor in combat.

Current story lines commemorate the important contributions of the Women Marine Reserve to the war effort. The planned addition of an American Samoan Marine defense battalion uniform will highlight the unique service of Pacific Islanders. Additional enhancements to the Iwo Jima and Okinawa exhibits also will note the important strides made within the Corps for Marines of Hispanic heritage and the service of Native Americans in WW II.

While the level of individual achieve-

Black Marine recruits fall out for inspection at Montford Point, New River, N.C. (USMC photo)



ments and struggles may have varied in light of the enormous size and scope of WW II, the history of those Marine diversity pioneers is a vital and inspirational story.

Wartime Expansion and the Pioneers of Change

Muster and payrolls from the Revolutionary War indicate at least three black Americans served in the Continental Marines. Their brief efforts in pioneering diversity quickly were lost to the past. On 25 May 1942, the Commandant of the Marine Corps first issued formal instructions to recruit “colored male citizens,” and the course of history was altered significantly.

The Commandant’s order came with reservations. In March 1943, Classified Letter of Instruction No. 421 stated in stark terms the types of challenges facing black Marines. Clearly showing they would not be accepted as equals, the order bluntly stated that “in no case shall there be colored noncommissioned officers senior to enlisted men in the same unit.” The Commandant’s previous declarations that blacks were “trying to break into a club that doesn’t want them,” and his preference that they “satisfy [their] aspirations for combat in the Army,” left little doubt about the official attitude of the Marine Corps.

Confronted with the prevalent mindset of the era, the black Marines of Montford Point found inspiration and solidarity within their own ranks. Aably led by a hastily assembled cadre of noncommissioned officers such as Edgar R. Huff and Gilbert H. Johnson, they persevered in

the face of internal and external prejudice.

In the 1993 book “Blacks and Whites: Together Through Hell,” author Perry Fischer (with co-author Master Gunnery Sergeant Brooks Gray) documents his wartime experiences and how he learned to take great pride in being selected to lead black Marines with the 8th Marine Ammunition Co. As one of only 144 white Marine noncommissioned officers selected



A “cruise book” was produced for the black Marines at Montford Point in 1943.

from the entire Marine Corps to lead black Marines, Fischer learned to see the potential in his assignment and men. When viewed in the difficult context of the time, their book is a remarkable inspiration.

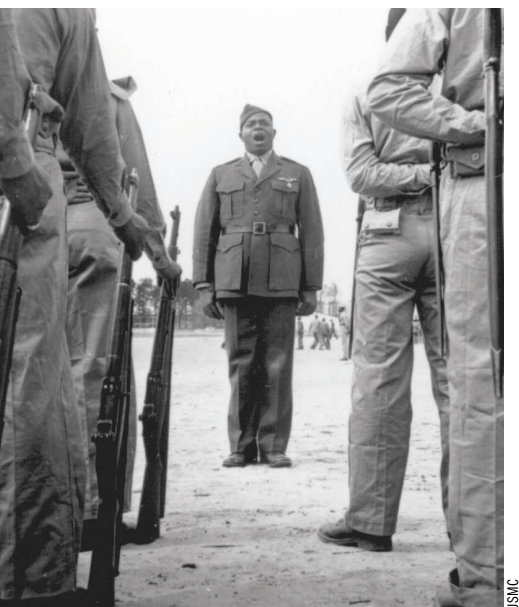
Camaraderie at the unit level would serve the segregated Ammunition and Depot Co Marines well in the Pacific. Intended to serve as a source of labor, but

never in direct combat, the realities of the war in the Pacific proved otherwise for black Marines. The units saw action at Saipan, Tinian, Guam, Peleliu, Iwo Jima and Okinawa, and they served with pride and valor both in combat and support roles. Accepted reluctantly under the needs of wartime expansion, each of the four black Marine companies present at Iwo Jima was cited for exceptional bravery and service under fire.

Black Marines, however, were not the only pioneers of diversity in WW II. With the need for additional manpower came the creation of the Women Marine Reserve. In 1918, a small number of women had been allowed to serve in clerical duties in the Marine Corps. The role of women in WW II, however, would be significantly enhanced. Established in February 1943, the organization freed nearly 20,000 men to fight. In contrast to the limited duties of WW I, women Marines served in approximately 225 specialties and filled 85 percent of the enlisted duties at Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps by war’s end.

They were led by pioneers such as Colonel Julia Hamblet. Among the first to enter the ranks of the Women Marine Reserve in 1943, Hamblet had an impressive career spanning 22 years. When she retired in 1965, she had served two times as the Director of Women Marines. Like black Marines, women Marines rose above the questioning at the highest levels of their service and were forerunners of the Marine Corps of today.

Perceptions of ethnicity in the Marine Corps during WW II also changed. Interspersed among white units, Marines of



Gilbert H. “Hashmark” Johnson had served in the Army and the Navy when he joined the Corps in late 1942. He became a DI as a PFC and was a recruit first sergeant at Montford Point in 1943.



GySgt Edgar Huff also was at Montford Point. Huff was the III Marine Amphibious Force sergeant major in Vietnam during 1970-71.



The training at Montford Point served the Marines and the Corps well in the Pacific campaigns of WW II. (USMC photo)



MONTFORD POINT MUSEUM

Above: As a corporal, Edgar Huff (center, bottom row) was the drill instructor for these black recruits at Montford Point.

Right: The Corps WW II diversity included Samoans of the 1st Samoan Bn, recruited to help defend American Samoa.

Hispanic heritage fought in every major battle in the Pacific theater. Among their greatest stories was that of Medal of Honor Marine Private First Class Harold Gonsalves. A hardened Marine veteran at the age of 19, PFC Gonsalves sacrificed his life for his fellow Marines when he flung himself on an enemy grenade during the Battle of Okinawa.

At the higher levels of command, Pedro del Valle became the first Hispanic-American general in the Marine Corps in 1942. A distinguished combat officer at Guadalcanal and Guam, Lieutenant General del Valle was awarded the Navy Distinguished Service Medal in recognition of his leadership as the commanding general of the First Marine Division during the Battle of Okinawa.

The Marine Corps Today and the Museum Tomorrow

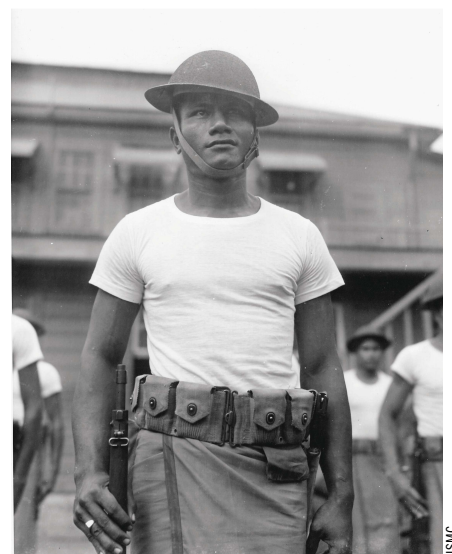
From the beginning, the Marine Corps' story has been one of transformations. From a small force of shipborne detachments to the modern-day Marine expeditionary units, the mission and scope of the Corps constantly is evolving. While

Marines of every era enjoy a sense of continuity and camaraderie in their title, the concepts of those who were allowed to enter this realm have changed.

Today, the United States Marine Corps is composed of men and women of every place and creed and is representative of the diversity of the American people. Considering the Marine Corps' pre-1942 segregated history and the demographics of minorities and women proudly serving today, this is an amazing accomplishment: one that makes a strong argument for the U.S. Armed Forces as the true "melting pot" of American society.

Author's note: Here is a tremendous link to even more information on the Montford Point Marines: www.jdnews.com/articles/montford-95116-point-marines.html. Its author, Dr. Gina Francis, DVM, is the daughter of the late Montford Point Marine Glenn White and a life member of the Montford Point Marine Association Ladies Auxiliary.

As the WW II generation passes on, there is a risk of their history being lost. If you have artifacts, photos or papers you



USMC

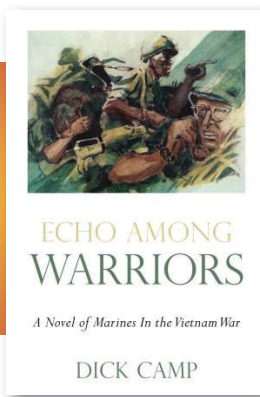
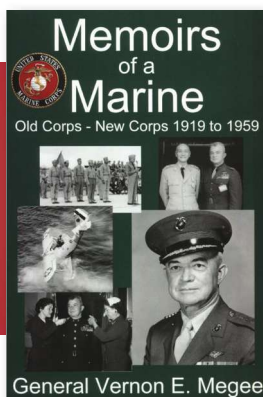
would like to preserve within your family or donate to the museum, to learn how, visit the National Museum of the Marine Corps' website at www.usmcmuseum.com.

Editor's note: Owen Conner is a Uniforms and Heraldry curator at the National Museum of the Marine Corps, specializing in World War II history. Charles Grow is a retired Marine captain and combat artist and currently is the deputy director of the National Museum of the Marine Corps.



Books Reviewed

Unless otherwise noted, these books may be ordered from the MCA Bookstore. Subscribers may use members' prices. Include \$5.99 for shipping. Virginia residents add 5 percent sales tax; North Carolina residents add 6.75 percent. Prices may change. Make check or money order payable to: MCA, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134, call toll-free: (888) 237-7683, or shop online at www.marineshop.net.



MEMOIRS OF A MARINE. By Gen Vernon E. Megee. Published by Atriat Press. 250 pages. Softcover. Stock #1933177284. \$17.96 MCA Members. \$19.95 Regular Price.

Marine General Vernon E. Megee, born in the Indian Territory near Tulsa, Okla., served in the Marine Corps from 1919 to 1959. Starting as an enlisted man, by the end of his brilliant 40-year career, he had served two years as the Assistant Commandant/Chief of Staff at Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps and commanded Fleet Marine Force, Pacific.

As a young “slick-sleeve” private, Megee was selected to attend the U.S. Army’s Motor Transport School near Baltimore. This basic training in motorized mechanics set the stage for his entry into the early days of Marine aviation. Selection to the “meritorious noncommissioned officers” program propelled him to Officer Candidates School. Megee declared that his unusual background had “disclosed to [him] a first-hand panorama of America’s development, from the oxcart to the airplane.”

Entirely appropriate for this centennial year of Marine Corps aviation, Gen Megee’s open cockpit biography takes readers from the “canvas and wire” days of aviation through the experimental days when the doctrine of close air support was developed and into the age of helicopters and jet-powered aircraft.

With early tours in Haiti, China and Nicaragua, the young officer served with many icons of the “Old Corps.” His time in the

pre-war fleet included a tour on board the old *Saratoga* (CV-3) as the commander of the famed Marine Fighting Squadron Two. This experience afloat set the stage for the future when he would command Marine aviation in the northern Pacific.

In the chapter titled “The Peruvian Interlude,” he nimbly described his two-year posting as assistant chief of the newly established United States Air Mission to Peru. He and his family moved to Peru and enjoyed the culture. However, some of his most harrowing flight experiences occurred while flying through the rarified air of the Peruvian Andes.

In 1944, as a senior colonel with 25 years of service, Megee was set to fill his wartime destiny; first, as an observer of the Marine landings on Peleliu, and later as the air support commander during the invasions of Iwo Jima and Okinawa.

For Iwo Jima, Megee commanded the first Landing Force Air Support Control Unit (LFASCU) ever deployed in combat. As he fully understood, the future of Marine aviation depended on how his team was able to control these close-in airstrikes during the bitter battle ahead. “Scrape your bellies on the sand” became the byword established for Megee’s Marine and Navy fighter-bomber pilots.

In January 1953, now a general officer, Megee assumed command of the First Marine Aircraft Wing in Korea. The wing provided close air support for the 8th Army, of which the First Marine Division was

then a part. This mission included air defense of the southern part of Korea and support for the 5th Air Force’s strategic bombing campaign. Gen Megee wrote: “Although higher rank and greater responsibility were to come my way, the apex of my military career was reached in Korea.”

If war can be considered perilous, then, too, can be the treacherous ascent to the highest ranks of military command structure. By 1956, Gen Megee was promoted to lieutenant general and became Assistant Commandant and Chief of Staff at Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps. It was considered remarkable for any Marine aviator to attain this exalted position, and from this position, Gen Megee provides extremely interesting insights into the personalities of the Corps’ senior leaders.

Gen Megee’s book illuminates much of our Corps’ most memorable history. Notably, this memoir was designed specifically for release after the general’s death. Within the covers of the book, this nonsense Marine tells his tale. And he does so with exacting historical detail, dabs of humor and an enormous amount of personal integrity.

Military biographies are a dime a dozen, but Gen Megee’s book soars with the “guts and glory” of the fledgling days of Marine aviation. From the earliest times our daring Marines took flight, through the now legendary preinvasion “beach strafing” close air support tactics, Gen Megee’s book, “Memoirs of a Marine,” unfailingly recalls what those high-flying glory days meant to the development of Marine Corps aviation.

Robert B. Loring

Editor’s note: Marine veteran “Red Bob” Loring is a frequent reviewer for Leatherneck and a tireless worker to better the lives of the less fortunate in East Pasco County, Fla. He reports that for the December holidays, he and fellow Toys for Tots workers “provided toys, skivvies and a food allotment for 1,200 East Pasco families and something like 4,000 tots.”

ECHO AMONG WARRIORS: A Novel of Marines in the Vietnam War. By Dick Camp. Published by IPS Books (Digital only). 292 pages. Kindle download price \$9.99. Buy at The Marine Shop's Digital Bookstore (Note: custom link: <http://astore.amazon.com/maricorpasso-1-20/detail/B005IUQWYK>)

Dick Camp has made going out to buy a Kindle or Nook e-reader worth the price, if only to read his "Echo Among Warriors: A Novel of Marines in the Vietnam War."

Camp served as a Marine infantry officer for 26 years, retiring as a colonel in 1988. But he remembers being "in country," where as a 25-year-old captain, he commanded "Lima" Company, 3d Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment in those tumultuous times in 1967 and 1968 along Vietnam's Demilitarized Zone. His tour in Vietnam shaped the rest of his life.

His combat experience was perhaps not the only motivation, but was nonetheless key in awakening a passion for history, which eventually led him to become Deputy Director of the Marine Corps' History Division and then the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation's Vice President for Museum Operations at the National Museum of the Marine Corps, from which he retired last month.

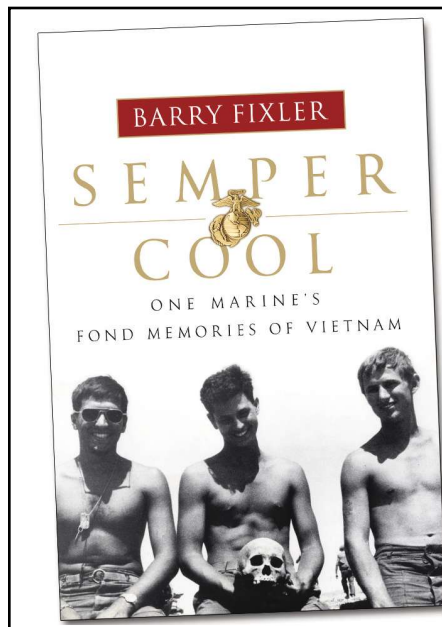
It also made him a respected historical writer. He has published more than 70 military articles for various magazines, including *Leatherneck* and the *Marine Corps Gazette*. He also has written several books including his autobiographical account, "Lima-6, A Marine Company Commander in Vietnam," which has become a classic among Marine infantrymen.

"I had always wanted to do a novel," Camp said. "I've read countless war novels. There's a lot written by people who have never seen combat, and I knew I could do better. I sat down and started. I used those incidents in Vietnam that I remembered and introduced some characters."

He elaborated: "I had just gotten to Vietnam and we went down this valley, and there was a North Vietnamese Army bunker complex. That's how I started this book, only I introduced a lieutenant going down in there and getting somebody badly hurt."

Camp earlier had written: "'Echo Among Warriors' is a story of close combat in a life-and-death struggle between two opposing, equally committed adversaries. It represents just one of perhaps thousands of deadly encounters that reflect the reality of battle—a mind-numbing, intensely personal experience that forever changes the participant."

He takes it one step further: he gives the reader both sides of the combat. He tells of the men of the NVA 325C and 304 divisions who resolutely maneuvered to corner and destroy three infantry battalions



**Now Available in
Bookstores Nationwide**

**'the Siege of Khe Sanh
through the eyes of a grunt'**

"Fixler seems to have loved every minute of his time in the U.S. Marine Corps, including sustained vicious combat in Vietnam... His blunt recreating of his war-time experiences is well done and evocative."

—Marc Leepson, *The VVA Veteran*

of the 26th Marines and a battalion of the 9th Marines.

Camp puts readers in the hills under the jungle canopy and under the tension around Khe Sanh with both forces and leads them to the inevitable killing field. One can visualize and almost smell a mud-spattered, dog-tired and scared Marine as he faces the North Vietnamese.

"They [the characters] are rather like a kaleidoscope reflecting a million pieces of colored glass—no one in particular, yet everyone together," said Camp. "The story unfolds from the initial contact to a horrific ending. In war, every action has a beginning and an end."

He explained with simple eloquence: "[A war veteran knows] that words are insufficient to describe the destructive power of weaponry and the resulting horrific wounds, the pain of a lost comrade, and the sudden realization that it could have been him. War causes a visceral, emotional impact on those who fight it. Profanity is like combat humor—both an integral part of the real and fictional combat picture. Veterans will already be familiar with war terminology—'Arty, Arty, Arty,' 'Shot,' 'Corpsman'—the green-horn can refer to the glossary."

When it came to telling the tales of the NVA, Camp was influenced by a retired Marine colonel named Tom Campbell, who wrote a book in 1995 called "The Old Man's Trail, A Novel About the Vietcong" (sic). Campbell used a similar technique to accurately view the war through the eyes of the North Vietnamese soldiers.

"I taught platoon tactics at The Basic School here in Quantico, Virginia," said Camp. "Most of us who served know what the North Vietnamese tactics were. In Vietnam, you learned and expected the

Vietnamese would act in certain ways. Tom Campbell, who was an advisor, had some Vietnamese terms and I used them."

The main combatants in "Echo Among Warriors" are so vivid and compelling that Marine readers immediately will recognize them. They've served with other Marines exactly the same from Parris Island to Khe Sanh. You can still see them at parade rest in formation at Camp Lejeune or on post behind a machine gun in Afghanistan. Most of them would rather be anywhere than in combat, and some have no business there at all. We learn it wasn't much different in the ruggedly lean, pith-helmet-wearing ranks of the NVA. The antagonists for all their nations' expostulation and evangelic indoctrination are the same although under two flags.

In war, human nature being what it is, how could it be any different? It is a lesson Dick Camp relentlessly drives home. "Combat is not for the faint of heart," he reminds us and adds: "And neither is this book."

Remember "Echo Among Warriors," Camp's first novel, and a first-rate one, is an e-book. You can't read this book except through e-readers: But it is only \$9.99.

R. R. Keene

Editor's note: The Marine Shop's Digital Bookstore via Amazon contains listings for available audiobook and digital editions. With every purchase made through the MCA's Amazon Store, you still help generate revenue for the Marine Corps Association to use for awards programs that acknowledge the professional accomplishments of Marines and sailors.



Leatherneck Line

Edited by Clare A. Guerrero

Marines Hike 1,000 Miles For Wounded Warriors

A group of leathernecks from Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., recently hiked the 1,000-mile Mountains-to-Sea Trail (MST) to raise awareness and support for wounded warriors.

The Fortunate Sons, a group of 18 active-duty Marines, set out from Clingman's Dome in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park on Oct. 2, 2011, for the journey that lasted 42 days. The hike concluded at Jockey's Ridge on the Outer Banks of North Carolina.

The leathernecks paired up to hike an average of 150 miles a week, with rotations occurring every Sunday.

"The switch-outs allowed the Marines to still fulfill duty assignments at the School of Infantry," said Captain Mark A. Greenlief, the commanding officer of Company E, Infantry Training Battalion, School of Infantry-East. "Our daily routine continued on as we pushed a class of Marines through the school and kept focus on the trail."

At the start of the hike, there was ice and snow on the trail, and the thermometer registered 27 degrees Fahrenheit.

"It was definitely an eye-opener for us," said Staff Sergeant Jeremiah B. Johnson, the weapons platoon commander with Co E. "When we were no longer in the flat swamplands of Lejeune, we started to face the elements."

Johnson said the weather did not dampen their spirits. "We were excited to get started; the weather had little effect on us because of our adrenaline and motivation to get on with the event."

During the journey, the leathernecks often camped along the trail, but also received help from local churches and many people who would invite the Marines into their homes and offer food and water.

Despite the physical challenges on their bodies, a demanding trail and bad weather, the group finished its mission on schedule and arrived at the Outer Banks on Nov. 13, 2011. There, family, friends and supporters, including the 30th Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Carl E. Mundy Jr., greeted them.

"There was never a question of whether or not we were going to complete the hike," Greenlief said. "I knew it wasn't going to be an easy endeavor, but at the same time, the cause and loyalty we had

to each other made it a great experience."

Greenlief said the trail never had a negative impact on the hikers, as they were able to accomplish it and fulfill their regular duties.

"Individually, these Marines have been given the opportunity to push themselves past any physical limits they had, which has made them mentally and physically stronger and in turn increased their proficiency in their job," Greenlief said.

"It's because of the personal experience we have that we decided to raise money for these hikes and donate to the [Injured Marine] Semper Fi Fund," he added. "We've all been affected by someone being injured."

The Fortunate Sons will never forget their injured friends and will continue to raise awareness in the surrounding communities. The group plans to hold similar events annually to benefit various charities.

"We're fortunate enough to be able to do what we do," Greenlief said.

To find out more about the Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund, visit the organization's website at <http://semperfund.org/>.

LCpl Daniel A. Wetzel
DivPA, HQMC



Left to right: Capt Mark Greenlief, SSgt Matt Piano, SSgt Ray Veach, SSgt Chris McManus, Sgt Austin Duke, SSgt David Seymour, Sgt Richard Brandana, GySgt Jeremiah Johnson, Sgt Adam Byrd and Cpl Taylor Hetrick are members of the Fortunate Sons, a group of 18 active-duty Marines at SOI-East, Camp Geiger, N.C., who hiked 1,000 miles across the Mountains-to-Sea Trail, Oct. 2-Nov. 13, 2011, to raise money for the Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund.

2012 Navy-Marine Corps Relief Ball To be Held in Washington, D.C.

The 2012 Navy-Marine Corps Ball hosted by the Washington auxiliary of the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society (NMCRS) will be held on March 24 at the Washington Hilton in Washington, D.C.

Since its inception in 1914, the Navy-Marine Corps Ball has raised millions of dollars as a fund-raiser for the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society.

Funds raised through the ball have provided financial assistance to millions of Marines, sailors and their families for emergency aid, education, visiting nurse services and other vital assistance at home and abroad.

For more information about attending the ball or to make a donation to NMCRS, visit the NMCRS website at www.nmcrs.org. For tickets, call the Navy-Marine Corps Ball Committee office at (202) 889-8112/3, or send an e-mail to navmcball@aol.com.

Juanita Land

Warrior Kids Series Provides Relief, Resources for Military Youth

More than 20 children between the ages of 5 and 18 attended a Warrior Kids Series event Nov. 30, 2011, that was hosted by the Readiness and Deployment Support (RDS) Program and Combat Logistics Battalion 1 at the Marine Corps Family Readiness Center, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif.

According to Tabitha Perez, an RDS trainer, the event was designed to help children express their concerns and feelings about their deployed family member and to connect with others going through the same process.

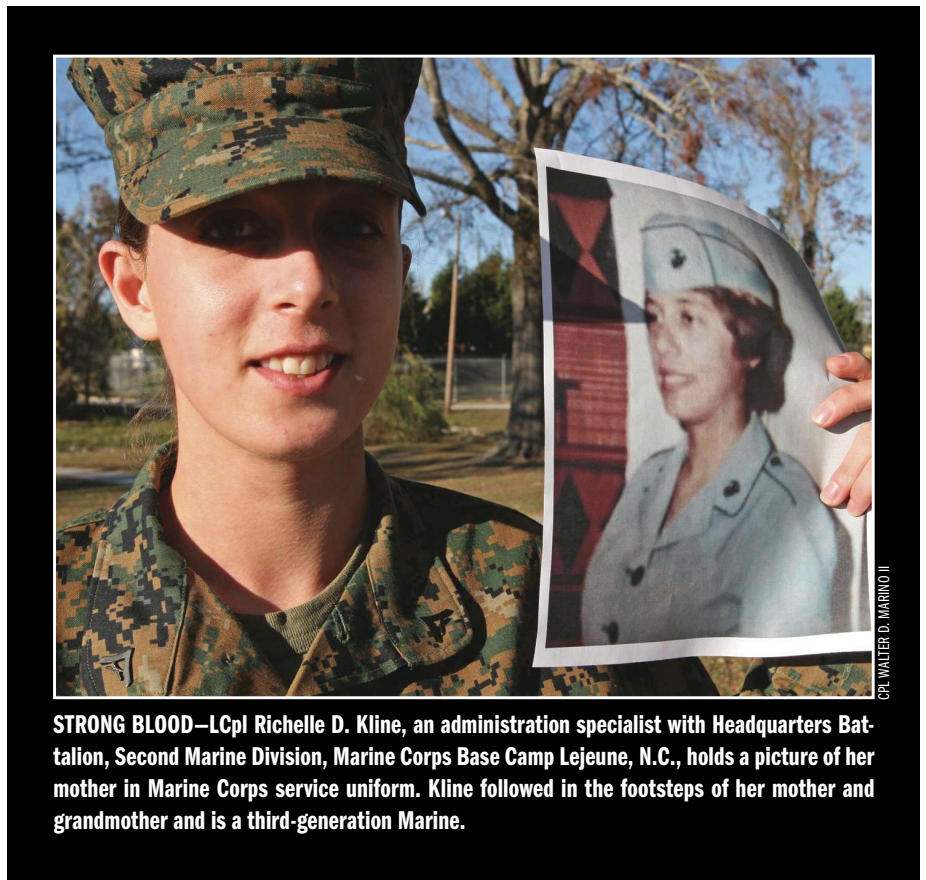
“Our main goal is to help families identify and express their emotions before, during and after their Marine’s deployment,” said Perez. “During this series, we provide training not only for the children, but also for spouses, to make sure everyone is speaking the same language.”

The series is broken down into three modules that cover the stages of the deployment process: predeployment, mid-deployment, and return and reintegration.

RDS trainer Katie Perlin said that each training module is a vital piece to the overall program and produces visible results in the children who participate.

“We’ve had kids who were acting out attend the class and make a complete turnaround,” said Perlin. “A lot of the time, children have problems expressing themselves. This series gives them the tools and the know-how to communicate effectively.”

During the event, a representative from the Families OverComing Under Stress



STRONG BLOOD—LCpl Richelle D. Kline, an administration specialist with Headquarters Battalion, Second Marine Division, Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., holds a picture of her mother in Marine Corps service uniform. Kline followed in the footsteps of her mother and grandmother and is a third-generation Marine.

Project (F.O.C.U.S., www.focusproject.org), a component of Marine and Family Programs, delivered a presentation that taught the children how to use a journal and “feeling thermometer” to help identify and communicate their mood to those around them.

Instructing children on how to share



Shannon Morell, an outreach coordinator and family resiliency trainer with F.O.C.U.S., helps children at MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., write their names on a poster during a Warrior Kids Series event Nov. 30, 2011.

their feelings, especially during a parent’s deployment, helps the child and the entire military community as a whole, said RDS trainer Scott Becherer.

“If we can teach just one child how to deal with [his or her] feelings, and [that child passes] that knowledge on to another child who’s going through the same thing, then our entire community is benefiting,” said Becherer.

Perez said that the program also serves Marines throughout their deployment.

When families are participating in this program, Marines can keep their minds focused on the mission because they know their child and spouse are being taken care of emotionally, said Perez. “It really does provide peace of mind.

“We want children and their parents to walk away knowing that they are not alone,” she said. “There are resources and a network of people here to assist and support them until their Marine is safely home.”

For more information on the Warrior Kids Series, contact Readiness and Deployment Support at (760) 763-1337 or the Marine Corps Family Team Building at (760) 725-9052.

Cpl Jovane M. Henry
PAO, MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif.



In Memoriam

Edited by R. R. Keene

“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, units served in, dates of service and, if possible, a local or national obituary. Allow at least four months for the notice to appear.

Operation Enduring Freedom: Marine Casualties, Nov. 1-30, 2011

The following were listed as having died while supporting combat operations:

Staff Sergeant Vincent J. Bell, 28, of Detroit, with 2d Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, First Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., Nov. 30, 2011, in Helmand province, Afghanistan.

Corporal Adam J. Buyes, 21, of Salem, Ore., with 3d Reconnaissance Bn, 3dMarDiv, III MEF, MCB Camp Butler, Okinawa, Japan, Nov. 26, 2011, in Helmand province.

Lance Corporal Joshua D. Corral, 19, of Danville, Calif., with 3/7, 1stMarDiv, I MEF, Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif., Nov. 18, 2011, in Helmand province.

LCpl Nickolas A. Daniels, 25, of Elmwood Park, Ill., with 3d Combat Engineer Bn, 1stMarDiv, I MEF, Twentynine Palms, Nov. 5, 2011, in Helmand province.

Cpl Zachary C. Reiff, 22, of Preston, Iowa, with 3/7, 1stMarDiv, I MEF, Twentynine Palms, Nov. 21, 2011, of wounds suffered Nov. 18 in Helmand province.

William H. Lanagan Jr.

Brigadier General William H. “Bill” Lanagan Jr., USMC (Ret)—veteran of sea duty during World War II, battalion commander in Vietnam, and who commanded the Second Marine Division as a brigadier general—died Dec. 5, 2011, in Westerly, R.I. He was 88.

He enlisted in 1943, was commissioned in 1944 and served at sea in the Marine Detachment, USS *New Jersey* (BB-62). After World War II, he served at Marine Barracks Washington, D.C., and with the Naval Reserve Officers’ Training Corps, Stanford University.

In Korea, he commanded a rifle company in the First Marine Division. Subsequent assignments included duty as an instructor at The Basic School, Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Va., and Operations Officer, National Military Command Center, Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Washington, D.C.

In 1965, he commanded 1st Battalion and later 3d Bn, Third Marine Regiment, 3dMarDiv in Vietnam. For this service, he was awarded the Legion of Merit with Combat “V.”

He later served as Fleet Marine Officer on the staff of the Commander in Chief, U.S. Naval Forces, Europe. He was serving as Special Assistant and Marine Corps aide to the Secretary of the Navy when selected for promotion to brigadier general in 1971. His next assignment was as Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff, J-3 (Operations), U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, for which he was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal.

In 1972, BGen Lanagan was named Director, Marine Corps Reserve, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, Washington, D.C. In 1973, he was Assistant Division Commander, 2dMarDiv at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., and

then commanded the 2dMarDiv from December 1973 until June 1974, when he resumed duty as Assistant Division Commander.

Upon his retirement in 1975, he was awarded a gold star in lieu of a second award of the Legion of Merit.

Herbert B. Newman

First Sergeant Herbert B. “Herb” Newman—veteran of World War II, the “Shoot Out” at Hsin Ho in China, and the Korean War—died Dec. 15, 2011, in Woodbridge, Va. He was 85.

He enlisted in 1943, following his father who had been a Marine in WW I. Private Newman became one of the original members of “Baker” Company, 1st Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment, Fourth Marine Division and embarked in 1944 for Namur.

Newman was a Browning Automatic Rifleman on Saipan in late June 1944 and was wounded in the arm, but jumped the hospital ship, USS *Solace* (AH-5), where he was being treated, and rejoined his unit while still covered in bandages. He fought on Saipan and in the subsequent campaign for Tinian.

As a corporal, he fought at Iwo Jima in 1945. He lasted four days: he had just reached the lip of the Rock Quarry when he was shot in the leg. Members of the regimental band carried him to the beach on stretchers.

He was a sergeant in China guarding the ammunition supply point at a place called Hsin Ho when Communist forces attacked the magazine bunkers in the early morning darkness of April 5, 1947. Five Marines were killed and 16 wounded, among them Sgt Newman who took a piece of shrapnel in the back. A fellow Marine told him, “You’ve got a Purple Heart.” Newman replied jokingly, “No, thanks, I

already have two. I’m holding out for the Navy Cross.” It was several decades later, but the Marine Corps awarded a retired 1stSgt Newman his third Purple Heart.

His other campaigns and duty stations included the Marshall Islands and Solomon Islands during WW II. He was with the First Marine Division in Korea; served in Japan; Quantico, Va.; Camp Pendleton, Calif.; and Camp Lejeune, N.C. He retired in 1963 with 20 years of service.

When he wasn’t active in the 4thMarDiv Assn. and working with the National Marine Corps Council, he was devoted to his late wife, Cora, his son, James Newman, three grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren and one great-great grandchild.

He was a great friend, who always took the time to drop by the *Leatherneck* office and say “Semper Fi.”

Chester Biggs

Master Sergeant Chester M. Biggs Jr., a retired North China Marine and World War II prisoner of war, died Dec. 7, 2011, in Hope Mills, N.C. He was 90.

He recounted his China and POW time to the Marine Corps History and Museum Division’s oral historian, the late Richard A. Long, and followed it up with his illustrated memoir, “Behind the Barbed Wire,” published by McFarland & Company.

Biggs was a Marine embassy guard in the Chinese capital of Peiping when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and WW II began. Totally surrounded by the Japanese and cut off from relief or evacuation, the Marine detachment was surrendered Dec. 8, 1941.

An online biography indicates the “North

China Marines believed that they would be exchanged for Japanese prisoners in the United States in accordance with the terms of the Boxer Protocol of 1901. Their commanding officer, Colonel William W. Ashurst, surrendered the Peiping garrison with this understanding. However, it appeared that the State Department did not pursue this prerogative, and the North China Marines were interned as prisoners of war."

At first, they were quartered in their barracks in Peiping, then moved to Tientsin and on to the Woosung POW Camp near Shanghai. At Woosung, the embassy Marines were imprisoned with a few of the surviving Marines, sailors, soldiers and civilian construction workers from Wake Island. Late in 1942, all Woosung prisoners were transferred a few miles south to the newly constructed Kiangwan Prison Camp.

In the spring of 1945, after three years of internment in China, Biggs, along with a majority of the other prisoners, was transported overland and then by ship or ferry to mainland Japan, and "eventually to the northernmost home island, Hokkaido. From the town of Akabira, their complement was split into small details, his preceding another five or six miles into the mountains to the coal-mining camp at Uteshinai."

On Aug. 17, 1945, when most of the Japanese guards left the camp, Biggs and his fellow prisoners gained some freedom.

Allied prisoner release teams reached their area on Sept. 11. After 3½ years as a POW, Biggs had lost 65 pounds, and as he said, his "ribs and hips stood out like those on a drought-stricken cow." Six days later, Biggs and his group began their way to the United States.

He later served in Korea and eventually retired from the Corps and became an elementary school teacher, an audiovisual director and a published author. He was a member of the Shawn Kinsley Det. of the MCL, a life member in the Greater Fayetteville Chapter One American Ex-POW organization, and a member of the Marine Corps Historical Foundation and the China Marine Association

Capt W. Keith Andler, 75, of Salem, Ore. He served three years and later worked in marketing for American Oil. In 1968, he opened Vip's restaurants in Salem. In 1989, he opened Café Today restaurants.

William L. "Bill" Brown, 85, of Fort Washington, Md. He was a member of the 4thMarDiv in WW II and fought in the Battle of Iwo Jima.

Alvin L. "Lewis" Burrige Jr., 91, in Haverhill, Mass. He was an experienced multi-engine aircraft pilot and, during WW II, was a B-25 and B-26 flight instructor at MCAS Cherry Point, N.C. He was sent to the Pacific late in the war and volunteered to serve with General Claire Lee Chenault in the Civil Air Transport (CAT), the first commercial air service in the Far East after the war.

Burrige worked as a CAT operations executive and a pilot supporting the Chinese forces of Chiang Kai-Shek. He later was stationed in Tokyo during the occupation and founded the Asian division of Sterling Drug Company,

acting as its Asian division president for 30 years.

He also was stationed in Hong Kong and Manila and was president of the Asian Pacific American Chamber of Commerce. He advised the State Department and the CIA during the Korean and Vietnam wars and was recognized in 2007 by the CIA for his extraordinary service record.

James Capoot, 45, in Vallejo, Calif. He was a 19-year police veteran who was shot during a foot chase after a bank robbery suspect lost control of his car. A suspect has been arrested and jailed.

Capoot served in the Corps from 1985 to 1989 and was stationed at Mare Island Naval Shipyard. He later became a California Highway patrolman and joined the Vallejo Police Department in 1992. His decorations as a police officer include two Medals of Courage for engaging armed suspects. He was the 2000 Vallejo Police Officer of the Year and received the Life Saving Medal for rendering CPR to an injured motorist. He also coached the girls' basketball team at Vallejo High School and led them to a section championship in 2010.

Joseph A. Cox, 87, in Fishersville, Va. He served in the Pacific during WW II in the battles for Guadalcanal, New Britain and Peleliu, where he was wounded. After recuperation, he was a drill instructor at MCRD Parris Island, S.C. He moved to Staunton, Va., in 1947 and was employed by Merita Bread Company and by Dod Distributing and Blue Ridge Beverage Company. He also was a licensed pilot.

He was an assistant Sunday school superintendent at Saint Paul's United Methodist Church and a charter member of the Stonewall Det. of the MCL. He planted and cared for flowers at the south entrance to College Circle for 40 years. He and his wife visited homebound and nursing home residents for 20 years.

Jarod K. Cravens, 32, of Providence Village, Texas. He was killed Oct. 29, 2011, during a suicide attack on an armored personnel carrier in which he was traveling in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Cravens enlisted in the Corps in 1998 and served until 2006. His awards include the Navy Commendation Medal for saving a young boy who was drowning. At the time of his death, he was working for Fluor Corporation in Kabul as part of the U.S. Army's Logistics Civil Augmentation Program.

Norbert P. Eberhardy, 87, of Schofield, Wis. He served 21 years, which included WW II in the South Pacific, Japan, China and Korea. He later worked for International Harvester.

GySgt George L. Figone Jr., 32, in Wilmington, N.C. He was assigned to 2d Marine Special Operations Bn, MARSOC, MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C. He died at New Hanover Hospital in Wilmington. He was a native of Stockton, Calif., and was found unresponsive in his home and died of complications. The cause of death is under investigation.

GySgt Figone joined the Corps in 1997 and became an infantry rifleman. He passed the Reconnaissance Indoctrination Course and the Basic Reconnaissance Course in 1998. While on deployment with the 15th MEU in 2001, he was meritoriously promoted to sergeant.

He deployed to Iraq twice from 2002 to 2006, once with the 13th MEU and again with 1st Force Recon Co.

He left the Corps in 2007 and re-entered in 2008 to join MARSOC. He made one deployment to Afghanistan while with MARSOC. His personal awards include a Purple Heart, the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with combat "V," the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal and two Combat Action Ribbons.

GySgt John "Gunny Jawn" Harmon, 94, in Barstow, Calif. He served from 1941 to 1964 and while a private joined the *Leatherneck* staff in October 1941 as a researcher.

He later served at Guadalcanal, New Guinea and Cape Gloucester. Named Recruiter of the Year in 1951, he retired in July 1964. He was employed by the San Diego County Social Service Office and later, in Sonoma, he was active in various community endeavors. He was a life member of the U.S. Marine Corps Combat Correspondents Association. In September 2011, the USMCCCA recognized him with the President's Award for his strong support of the association over the years.

Paul N. Heckt, 58, of Minneapolis. As the son of a Marine, he served on the board of directors of the U.S. Marine Raiders Foundation. He was passionate about the history and mission of the Marines and a longtime subscriber to *Leatherneck*. He traveled to Guadalcanal and Okinawa on behalf of the Raider foundation.

Heckt graduated from the University of Minnesota Law School and worked as Special Assistant Attorney General for the state of Minnesota, and then legal counsel for H.B. Fuller Company before starting his own law practice in 1997. Focusing on special needs estate planning, he was an advocate for those who cannot advocate for themselves.

CWO-4 Joseph E. Intaschi, 93, of San Jose, Calif. He was the son of Italian immigrants and served with motor transport during WW II and the Korean War. He also served in Iceland and New Zealand. After retiring from the Corps, he was a fleet supervisor for Daly City until he retired in 1977.

William R. "Bill" Jackson, 79, of Sioux City, Iowa. He served as a Marine during the Korean War and worked for Kaplan Wholesale Grocery and later the U.S. Air Force Reserve as a technician at Offutt AFB, Omaha, Neb.

He was on the board of directors for Jackson Pumping Service and a member of the MCL and a volunteer for the Sioux City VA Clinic. He was an elder and deacon in the Presbyterian Church and coached the church basketball league. He was with Sioux City Senior Little League Baseball for 15 years and president for three. His younger brother, Jim, was a Marine squad leader in Vietnam.

Bill Jackson was a special friend of *Leatherneck*. Every month, he clipped the newspaper obituaries of Marines he knew from the Siouxland area and sent them to the magazine for publication. We are saddened to have his name appear in this column, but appreciate his service to Corps, country and family.

Dwain V. "Ole" Olson, 86, in Spirit Lake, Iowa. He enlisted in 1943 and participated in

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major campaigns in the South Pacific during WW II. He served with 5th Marines on Peleliu and later fought in the recapture of Guam. He owned and operated Olson's Grocery and later worked at HyVee food stores.

GySgt Albert J. "John" Petry, 75, of Newport News, Va. He served as an infantryman in E/2/9 in Vietnam and at Khe Sanh in 1968. In hand-to-hand combat with an NVA soldier, he took a bayonet to the arm and was subsequently awarded the Purple Heart. Marines visiting his home were often shown the souvenir "deuce gear" he recovered from the dead NVA soldier.

He later served as a Marine reservist with MACS-24 at Quantico, Va. In civilian life, he worked for base maintenance at MCB Quantico and at the Quantico FBI Academy in its Practical Application Unit (Hogan's Alley). He was a commander of the Quantico MCL.

Joseph Raup, 85, of Warminster, Pa. He was a WW II veteran who fought at Iwo Jima. He later became a member of the Coast Guard Auxiliary. He worked as a heavy equipment operator, bartender, bus driver, property manager and aircraft and auto-body mechanic. He also ran several businesses of his own including soda delivery, brick-cork producer, catering and restaurateur, architect and home builder.

He coached and refereed high school soccer, performed in local theater productions and often flew a single-engine aircraft.

Albert A. "Al" Seals, 65, of Morristown, N.J. He was a veteran of the Vietnam War who served in I/3/9. His awards include two

Purple Hearts and the Navy Commendation Medal. He was instrumental in the fundraising and placing of the Larry Macey Memorial in Chester, N.J.

Cpl Charles H. Thompson, 89, in Auburn, Calif., in an auto accident. He was a WW II Marine who served with Carlson's 2d Raider Bn as an intelligence scout on Bougainville.

Later, he was involved in public relations in the Hollywood movie industry and radio announcing on national NBC shows. He was a member of the MCL and the U.S. Marine Raider Association.

LtCol Rex Wilson, 90, of Dallas. A veteran of three wars, he was a fighter pilot during WW II who flew combat missions in his F4U Corsair over Okinawa. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross as a reconnaissance pilot during the Korean War and, in 1965, flew the F-4 Phantom II over Vietnam.

His second career was as an aeronautical engineer working for the space program. He later found gratification as a high school teacher in Houston and Grand Prairie where he taught electronics and computer science.

SSgt Roger L. "Tunney" Workman, 83, of Graniteville, S.C. He was a combat veteran of WW II and the Korean War and served for 30 years.

He went to work with Independent Life and also was the owner of Tunney's Bar-B-Que. He retired from the Gregg Division of the Graniteville Company.



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SOUND OFF

[continued from page 8]

away with MPs as security at the gates of our bases.

The ad in *Leatherneck* does not say if there's a requirement for the civilian police officers to have served in the Corps.

Also, unless these officers were in the Marine Corps, why would we call them "Civilian Marines?" Did they go to Marine Corps boot camp?

If the Commandant of the Marine Corps says we need civilians at the gates, I won't be the one to argue with him. I just don't think they should be called Marines unless they did honorable time in the Corps.

Doug Scrivner Jr.
 Hamilton, Ohio

Editorial Irish Pennant Cold War Recognition Certificate

• The January *Leatherneck*, page 66, provided information on requesting a Cold War Recognition Certificate. Unfortunately, the contact we provided was outdated. The U.S. Army remains the executive agent for the Cold War Recognition Program; however, the U.S. Army's Human Resources Command now is responsible for issuing the certificate.

Find out more on how to receive your

Cold War Recognition Certificate at: <https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/active/tagd/coldwar/default.htm>, or email: cwrs1@conus.army.mil.

You also may write to U.S. Army Human Resources Command, Cold War Recognition Program, ATTN: AHRC-PDP-A, 1600 Spearhead Division Ave., Fort Knox, KY 40122-5408.

Leatherneck appreciates Marine veteran John D. Carrigan's initiative in bringing this to our attention.—Sound Off Ed.

Reunions

Reunions are run on a space-available basis. Information should be submitted no later than four months in advance of the reunion.

- **Marine A-4 Skyhawk Assn.**, May 17-20, Oxon Hill, Md. Contact Mark Williams, 400 Howell Way, #102, Edmonds, WA 98020, (425) 771-2030, roger.wilco@comcast.net.

- **East Coast Drill Instructors**, May 3-6, Parris Island, S.C. Contact SgtMaj Kenneth D. Miller, USMC (Ret), (828) 757-0968, usmcpidi@charter.net, www.parrislanddi.org.

- **TF Delta, MCAS Rose Garden, Nam Phong, Thailand**, May 25-28, Quantico, Va. Contact Harold Delamater, 169 Ketchamtown Rd., Wappingers Falls, NY 12590, (845) 297-8865, hgd1025@aol.com.

- **Iwo Jima (Marines, sailors, Army Air Corps veterans and their families and friends)**, Feb. 16-18, Camp Pendleton, Calif. Contact Dan Zepeda, (951) 201-6251, zepeda012@msn.com.

- **1/6 (1983-87)** is planning a reunion. Contact Max Roark, 4517 Crestfield Rd., Knoxville, TN 37921, (865) 679-8437, maxroark@bellsouth.net.

- **1/27 (and supporting units, RVN, 1967-68)**, Sept. 20-23, San Diego. Contact Felix "Sal" Salmeron, 1406 Nighthawk Dr., Little Elm, TX 75068, (469) 583-0191, mar463@aol.com.

- **H/3/5 (and attached units, 1950-53)**, May 2-7, Kansas City, Mo. Contact James Skidmore, (316) 721-2876, jsbs1@cox.net.

- **C/1/6 (Desert Shield/Desert Storm)** is planning a reunion. Contact Michael Kilbride, (516) 375-5691, mkiller0311@aol.com.

- **I/3/7**, April 25-29, Myrtle Beach, S.C. Contact Dennis E. Deibert, 6007 Catherine St., Harrisburg, PA 17112, (717) 652-1695.

- **L/3/9 (RVN, 1967-69)**, Sept. 6-9, Colorado Springs, Colo. Contact Robert Citron, 16365 Crescent Dr., Southfield, MI 48076, (248) 569-4771.

- **"Kilo" Btry, 4/13 (RVN)**, May 2-7, Wilmington, N.C. Contact Tom Gafford,

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- **Co B, 1st Tanks, 1stMarDiv (RVN, 1966-68)**, May 16-20, St. Charles, Mo. Contact Ron "Snoopy" Davidson, 65 Beasley Dr., Lexington, TN 38351, (815) 764-0124, bravo34@charter.net.

- **Marine Ammo Co (all units, all eras)**, May 2-5, San Antonio. Contact Tom Crotty, (513) 451-4694, tomandcar@fuse.net.

- **MarDet, USS Juneau (CL-119)**, Aug. 29-Sept. 2, Branson, Mo. Contact William S. Gerichten, 141 Pinelawn Dr., Kernersville, NC 27284, (336) 993-5415.

- **MSG Bonn, Germany**, is planning a reunion. Contact Capt Lloyd L. Loy, USMC (Ret), 5281 Navaho Dr., Alexandria, VA 22312, (703) 354-8456, ul.loy@verizon.net.

- **15th Special Basic Class (1952)**, Feb. 6-9, San Diego. Contact Neil Reich, (714) 526-0627, neilnr@yahoo.com, or Bob Lukeman, (405) 842-3601, jrlukeman@aol.com.

- **21st Special Basic Class (1953)** is planning two reunions for 2012. Contact Shirley Fry, (703) 469-3750, ssfry@juno.com.

- **Plt 115, Parris Island, 1965**, is planning a reunion for 2012. Contact SgtMaj D. J. Farrell, USMC (Ret), (918) 689-1989, or Steve Holton, (301) 375-6036.

- **Plt 339, Parris Island, 1962**, is planning a reunion for 2012. Contact LtCol Bob Mullins, USMC (Ret), (740) 417-9112, rmullins11@columbus.rr.com.

- **Plt 1089, Parris Island, 1986**, is planning a reunion. Contact Mark Smith, P.O. Box 828, Columbus, MS 39703, (662) 549-7712, msmith@cpi-group.com.



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• **VMFA-212 (1977-80)**, April 21-22, Pensacola Beach, Fla. Contact J. D. Loucks, P.O. Box 1, East Jewett, NY 12424, vmfa212reunion@aol.com.

Ships and Others

• **USS Iwo Jima (LPH-2/LHD-7)**, June 6-10, McLean, Va. Contact Robert G. McAnally, 152 Frissell St., Hampton, VA 23663, (757) 723-0317, yujack@megalink.net.

• **USS Portsmouth (CL-102)**, April 26-30, Herndon, Va. Contact Walt Hohner, 448 Hillside Ave., Piscataway, NJ 08854, (732) 463-1745, wphohner@aol.com.

• **USS Providence (CL-82, CLG-6, SSN-719)**, May 2-6, Washington, D.C. Contact Jim Chryst, (717) 284-6996, jchryst@embarqmail.com, ussprovidence.org.

• **USS Smalley (DD-565)**, May 15-19, Savannah, Ga. Contact Sid Gilbreath, 110 Breen Ln., Cookeville, TN 38506, (931) 526-7283, sgilbreath@tntech.edu.

• **USS Tarawa (CV-40/LHA-1)**, April 19-22, Nashville, Tenn. Contact Ken Underdown, 31 Islet Rd., Levittown, PA 19057, (215) 547-0245, or Walter Tothoro, 106 N. Tranquil Trl., Crawfordsville, IN 47933, (765) 362-6937, walsue@accelplus.net.

• **NOB/NAS Trinidad Reunion Assn. (including FASRON-105, VPB-208, VPMS-8, VP-48, VPB-213, VP-34,**

Seabee Dets and USMC), Aug. 29-Sept. 1, Washington, D.C. Contact F. D. Barrett, ADCS, USN (Ret), 1448 W. Highway 16, Witts Springs, AR 72686, (870) 496-2285, barrett27@dishmail.net.

• **East Coast All-Seabees**, Feb. 24-26, Hampton, Va. Contact Bruce MacDougall, (804) 921-4753, seabeemacd40@comcast.net.

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• Retired French Marine LtCol Pierre Desmasures, 3 chemin des Dames, 44210 PORNIC, France, pierniclaurbault2@wanadoo.fr, wants **uniforms, medals, documents and books** for his USMC collection. He will send French Marine, Foreign Legion and Airborne crests, badges, uniforms and books.

• MSgt Richard Elston, USMC (Ret), 1036 Van Buren Ave., Dyer, IN 46311, (219) 322-4797, wants a **Paramarine jump knife with a 4-inch, bright, fixed blade engraved "USMC" and a pocket knife with bone panels and a round disk engraved "USMC."**

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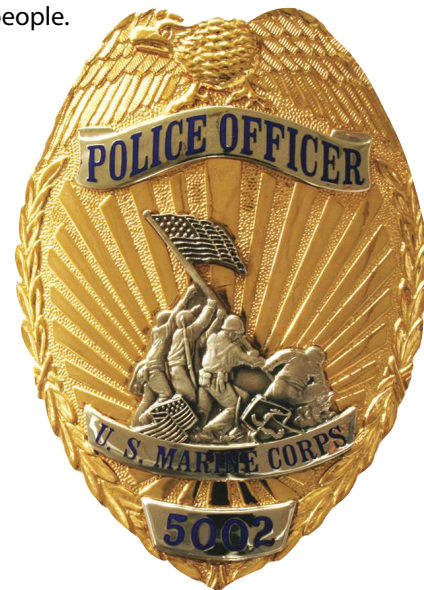
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• Ben Kristy, Aviation Curator, National Museum of the Marine Corps, (703) 784-2606, benjamin.kristy@usmc.mil, wants **photographs of VMFA-115 aircraft, between August 1990 and September 1991, particularly the F/A-18A Bureau Number 161970, for a restoration and display effort.**

• Marine veteran Richard J. Rano, (614) 832-8787, dicky18@juno.com, wants a **recruit graduation book for Plt 212, San Diego, 1955.**

• Marine veteran Dennis Weems, 5515 E. Meadow Dr., Bossier City, LA 71112, (318) 742-2545, wants a **recruit graduation book for Plt 1028, San Diego, 1969.**

• Marine veteran David L. Hill, 803 Mountain Vista Cir., Steamboat Springs, CO 80487, (970) 870-2953, dkhill@resortbroadband.com, wants a **recruit graduation book for Plt 3095, San Diego, 1978.**

• Marine veteran Larry M. McGrath, (520) 885-5344, larrymtucson@juno.com, wants a **Parris Island 1957 recruit graduation book.**

• Marine veteran Patrick Moore, (215) 348-2530, patrick.moore288@gmail.com, wants a **recruit graduation book for Plt 381, Parris Island, 1970.**

• Marine veteran Dewey Maxwell, (336) 226-5643, dewmax21@aol.com,

wants a **recruit graduation book for Plt 3092, Parris Island, 1966.**

• Former Sgt John Urene, (714) 961-1274, jeurene@roadrunner.com, wants a **recruit graduation book for Plt 161, Parris Island, 1962.**

• Marine veteran Clayton Zeller, (701) 748-3610, crzeller@westriv.com, wants a **recruit graduation book for Plt 1037 or 1038, San Diego, 1979.**

• Former Cpl Leland D. Pearson, 5712 Waterbury Way #D, Salt Lake City, UT 84121, (801) 272-0924, wants a **recruit graduation book for Plts 140 and 141, San Diego, 1954, a 1955 MarDet cruise book for USS *Essex* (CVA-9) and a 1956 MarDet cruise book for USS *Shangri-La* (CVA-38).**

Sales, Trades and Giveaways:

• J. M. McCarthy, (626) 940-7390, dare2Bgreat4@yahoo.com, has **recruit graduation books and photos for Plt 2014, San Diego, 1975.**

• MSgt Richard Elston, USMC (Ret), 1036 Van Buren Ave., Dyer, IN 46311, (219) 322-4797, has a **recruit graduation book for Plts 278 and 279, San Diego, circa 1957.**



Mail Call

Edited by Clare A. Guerrero

“Mail Call” entries 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 e-mail to: leatherneck@mca-marines.org, or write to: Mail Call Editor, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134.

• MSgt Richard Elston, USMC (Ret), 1036 Van Buren Ave., Dyer, IN 46311, (219) 322-4797, to hear from **Capt H. ITCHKAWICH, Co A, 1st Combat Engineer Bn, 1967.**

• Former Sgt William S. Brooks, 23015 Brouwertown Rd., Howey-in-the-Hills, FL 34737, brookssen@wmconnect.com, to hear from those who served with **VMB-433, 1945.**

• Maj Everett Hampton, USMC (Ret), 1308 Wildwood Dr., Chapel Hill, NC 27517, (919) 929-3063, to hear from members of **Plt 531, Parris Island, 1942. The DI was Sgt McFARLAND.**

• Marine veteran Gene Spanos, (847) 770-9049, genethemarine@gmail.com, to hear from those who served with **3d Combat Engineer Bn, 3dMarDiv, and BLT 1/9, Okinawa, 1971.**

• SgtMaj Kenneth D. Miller, USMC (Ret), (828) 757-0968, usmcpidi@charter.net, www.parrislanddi.org, **East Coast**

Drill Instructors Association (a non-profit, fraternal organization), Parris Island Chapter, to hear from **current or former drill instructors** interested in becoming members.

• GySgt John W. Simma, USMC (Ret), 303 Onyx Ct., Jacksonville, NC 28546, (910) 353-4219, jsimma@ec.rr.com, to hear from those who served with **5th Comm Bn, RVN, 1965-70.**

• MSgt William J. Dugan Jr., USMC (Ret), (603) 424-9517, duganb_p@comcast.net, to hear from those who enlisted at **Marine Corps Recruiting Station, 110 Tremont St., Boston, 1970-74.**

• MSgt Vernon A. Smedley, USMC (Ret), P.O. Box 1597, Flowery Branch, GA 30542, (770) 965-7097, to hear from **William B. GREEN Jr., Marine Barracks San Juan, Puerto Rico, 1964-67.**

• Marine veteran Fred Hanke, (509) 422-4099, hanke@communitynet.org, to hear from those who served with **Co B,**

1st Bn, 4th Marines, 3dMarDiv, RVN, 1966-67.

• Marine veteran Roy M. Foster, 3135 Belvedere Dr., Henderson, NV 89014, (702) 435-9636, to hear from or about members of **Plt 188, MCRD San Diego, 1941.**

• Marine veteran Lincoln “Blinky” Gunton, P.O. Box 431, Laurel, FL 34272, (941) 484-2586, to hear from **Brian JENSEN, “Bravo” Co, 1st Bn, 5th Marines, 1stMarDiv, whom he met on Hill 51, RVN, 1967.**

• Mark J. Sheehan, 14382 Clearview Ave., Gainesville, VA 20155, (800) 538-3538, Ext. 105, or (703) 400-7770, markandlaurensheehan@comcast.net, to hear from anyone who served with his father, **William J. SHEEHAN, H&S Co, 3d Bn, 24th Marines, 4thMarDiv at Roi-Namur, Saipan and Tinian and in Co L, 3/24, 4thMarDiv on Iwo Jima.**



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Contact **G. Scott Dinkel**, Leatherneck Advertising Director: **s.dinkel@mca-marines.org** or (718) 715-1361



MC3 MATTHEW R. COLE, USN

Gyrene Gyngles

Edited by Clare A. Guerrero

Please submit copies of original poems with first publishing rights and author's permission to print granted to *Leatherneck*. Poems may be edited or shortened, as necessary. Due to volume received, submissions will not be acknowledged or returned.

Three Score Years Plus Seven

Before the dawning of each new day,
As we slowly begin to wake,
Our minds flash back to those turbulent days
On a volcanic island we had to take.

Three score years plus seven have passed
Since we stormed that distant beach;
We were young, strong, ready to fight
And trained to use all that our leaders could teach.

The slaughter that took place
On the bloody volcanic shore
Became the supreme test
For weapons and man forevermore.

High on top of Mount Suribachi,
Our flag went up on D-plus-four;
Six thousand Marines, who saw and cheered,
Before the battle's end, would see their flag no more.

Those of us who survived
Live on for those who gave it all,
Wondering how and why we came through
Unscathed and standing tall.

History will probably treat us well,
And memorials will forever stand,
To remember those who died
And were buried in that volcanic sand.

The brutality of battle is burned in our minds
Even after all those years;
Reflecting back on those who died
Still brings out tears.

Along with Valley Forge and Belleau Wood,
The savage battle for Iwo is now in the history book.
Our flag still flies over our land of the free
Because of actions our country took.

Yes, my friends, we remember well those horrendous days
As we awake at the approach of dawn,
Even though three score years and seven
Have come and gone.

Marshall E. Harris

Blessings

I almost lost my son
To a buried IED
In the desert of Afghanistan,
As a United States Marine.

His MATV ran over a mine,
Causing a blast of intensity;
With metal shearing and body tearing
Came war's reality.

His injuries were extensive,
A lost organ, broken bones.
The surgeries were forever—
On a long and bumpy road.

I almost lost my son that day,
In a far and hostile land.
I almost lost this precious gift,
My infant, my child, a man.

The pain of war came hitting home,
For a son injured, who survived.
I pray that God blesses him,
The wounded, and those who died.

Henry Donnerstag

(Dedicated to the poet's son, Capt Daniel J. Donnerstag)

Treasures

Some people speak of possessions,
Such as the land that they own.
Others will talk of their silver and gold
In a rather superior tone.

Some people who live in a mansion
Will mention quite frequently
That they also inhabit a second home,
Overlooking a sunny sea.

Some people will tell of their travels
To exotic and distant lands,
And let it be known that all they own
Wears the most exclusive of brands.

And there is the most selective group,
Unlike any other you've seen,
Who will tell you their greatest treasure,
Is just being called "Marine."

R. A. Gannon





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