

JULY 2020

MAGAZINE OF THE MARINES

Leatherneck

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Honing Skillsets
26th MEU Conducts
Amphibious Training

Brothers in Arms—
Marine Works to Bring
Interpreter to the U.S.

Joseph McCarthy:
Shedding Light on a
Controversial Figure

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

Vietnam War was Worth it

I would like to respond to the letter, "Operation Utah," sent in by Jerry R. Wininger in the May issue in which he described a battle in March 1966, in which 42 Marines were killed. He closed his letter with the comment, "They gave their lives for nothing." Having spent 14 years in Southeast Asia, 3 1/2 as a Marine in Vietnam, I have a different perspective.

I would argue that their sacrifice was far from futile and that it was worth the price they paid. Every mother's son who lost his life in that conflict paid in blood for a better world. Hindsight may be 20/20, as they say, but it can also be blurred by the passage of time. It's easy to forget that communism and totalitarianism were on the march in the 1950s and 1960s. And these ideologies were of a particularly brutal nature. Witness the genocide in Cambodia and the horrific suppression of South Vietnam when the revolutionaries seized power. Would anyone have had that horror visited upon the rest of the world? It wasn't. And it wasn't because the U.S.—that is, you and me and all of our comrades—took a stand, pledged our lives, our fortunes, our sacred honor, to oppose, to stem the tide, to declare as a people that we would not abide a world descending into an abyss of barbarism.

We gathered allies, or at least tacit support, from around the region, from nations that felt themselves equally and immediately threatened. I'll grant you that some of these countries were not exactly paragons of virtue themselves. But they threw in their lot with us in this struggle. And make no mistake about it, it was an epic struggle of truly historic proportions. It changed the world. Yes, Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos fell to the communists. But Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, all with active communist insurgencies themselves, did not. In our struggle we drew a line in the sand and prevented a Pacific basin dominated by tyrants and murderous despots. Something like a quarter of the earth's surface. At Verdun, the French said, "On ne passe pas!"—"They shall not pass!" And so it was in Southeast Asia; they did not pass.

If you think the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia were the epitome of evil, let me tell you something about the revolutionaries in Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia. You've probably never heard of them, and you probably never will. Those movements withered because we stopped them in Indochina, fostered democratic institutions (however imperfect) in the neighboring countries, and gained the commitment of nations and peoples to an ideal which we espoused and fought for.

Look at Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia today. Cambodia has rejected communism while Vietnam and Laos pay it lip service only. Did we need to shed so much blood to achieve this? Well, the short answer is yes, because it never would have happened if we had not held the line; if we had not demonstrated the enduring values of our own social and political systems. Remember that when Hanoi took over the South, it essentially displaced all the southern cadre, the VC [Viet Cong] themselves, because they felt they could not trust them. The VC were considered to be tainted from exposure to U.S. systems. In Laos, the Lao make very half-hearted communists. They say that all a Lao man really needs to be happy is a cold beer, a warm bowl of rice and a soft woman. All I can say after my time in Laos is how true.

I understand Mr. Wininger's anguish and the soul-searching so many have endured for so many years. There are so many souls, living and dead, who still wander the mountains and jungles of that far-away land, forever searching for the illusive enemy, or perhaps for their own lost youth. There are so many dead, those buried in cemeteries across the land, those to this day lying in the mud with their boots on and their faces toward the foe, and, yes, those walking among us still, awaiting only the final release, and peace, of their own passing.

Was it worth it? Yes, it was worth it. Would I do it again? I went in the first place because it was the right thing to do. It still is.

Name Withheld

The Marine Corps Never Let Go of Him

Many years ago, when my wife and I first moved to the home we now live in, I made a point of walking through the neighborhood. One home always had a small Marine Corps flag flying in a patio garden. One morning, the lady who lived

there, Evelyn Santana, was in her garden and I stopped to chat with her explaining that I was a Marine. She told me that her husband, Bill, now very ill, was a Marine and she was flying the flag in his honor. And then she proceeded to tell me his story.

Bill Santana had been on board one of the transports that ferried Marines to Iwo Jima. He did not land immediately, but when he came ashore, he was assigned to carry mortar ammunition up from the congested beachhead to a mortar platoon. And soon enough, he was dropping mortar rounds down the mortar tubes as the battle raged on.

Bill survived the battle and when he was discharged, he said, "That's it! I am done with the Marine Corps and I am never going to take another order!" And now he was ill, and his wife was honoring him with the flag. He passed away shortly after. I never met him, and the flag came down after that.

In the days before the Marine Corps Birthday [in] 2006, on my morning walk, I passed Evelyn again and she asked if I was going to the dedication of the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle, Va. I admitted that I had thought about it as a number of my fellow retired reservists were flying back east for the ceremony, but that I had decided instead to visit my daughter and her husband in Texas. She said she was surprised as proud as I was of being a Marine, she thought I would really want to be there. I was caught off guard, a bit embarrassed and shuffled my feet. I said that I was planning on going sometime in the future.

She then really surprised me by saying she was flying to Virginia for the dedication and she explained why. "I want to understand what this Marine Corps is all about. How did this organization that my husband wanted no more to do with grab a hold of him and never let him go? It was always part of him, and I am going to see why."

And so, on Nov. 10, 2006, I was in Texas, watching the dedication of the museum on TV and listening to the late Jim Lehrer, the beloved newscaster for PBS's evening news and speaker for the dedication, conclude his remarks. Mr. Lehrer ended his remarks that day with these words, "Ready on the right. Ready on the left. All ready on the firing line." Words that all Marines hear in our sleep as we undergo the quintessential Marine Corps



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James G. Elliott Co. Inc.
New York: (212) 588-9200
Chicago: (312) 236-4900
Los Angeles: (213) 624-0900

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TELEPHONE EXTENSIONS
Editorial Offices: 115 • Business Office: 121

MEMBER SERVICES
Phone: toll-free (866) 622-1775
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POSTMASTER

Send address changes to: *Leatherneck* Magazine, Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134.



Leatherneck (ISSN 0023-981X) is published monthly by the Marine Corps Association & Foundation, Bldg. #715, MCB, Quantico, VA 22134. Copyright 2020 by MCA&F.

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experience, qualifying on the rifle range, because every Marine is a rifleman. Memories just washed over me, and I knew that I should have been at the dedication. There would be many more happy trips to see grandchildren in Texas but only that one dedication ceremony in Quantico.

Soon after my return home, I met my neighbor working in her garden. She asked me to stay a moment, excused herself and went into her home. When she returned, she gave me a program from the dedication of the museum and I was humbled by her thoughtfulness. Mission accomplished. She now understood how the Marine Corps, "Got a hold of her husband." And she was proud that she had honored her husband by seeing the museum. She is now long gone too, but I remember her fondly on every November 10th.

Col Bob Douglass, USMCR (Ret)
Fremont, Calif.

Jim Lehrer Retrospective

I just finished reading the March issue of *Leatherneck*. Nancy Lichtman's piece in the In Memoriam section about Jim Lehrer reminded me of his not-too-distant passing and of course, for those of us of a certain generation, having watched Jim Lehrer and Robert MacNeil on their evening news report. Since he was asked to give the keynote speech for the opening of the National Museum of the Marine Corps, small wonder he expended considerable time and effort in preparing for his speech. The fact that the audience included the President of the United States, George W. Bush, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Peter Pace, it must have been quite a speech. Since only a relative few got to hear it, is there any chance *Leatherneck* could publish the speech in a future issue?

Many thanks and keep pumping out those great issues of *Leatherneck*.

Cpl Ed Barewich
USMC, 1964-1968
North Reading, Mass.

• *That's an outstanding idea. We'll see if we can publish the speech in an upcoming issue.—Editor*

Shootout at Hsin Ho

I received my copy of the *Leatherneck* for the month of April and I was very pleased to find in it the article, "Shootout at Hsin Ho," by R.R. Keene. It is a well-written piece and it matches an article I had sent into *Scuttlebutt* magazine many years ago. In my last paragraph of that article I asked that anyone who had actually been there, on site, to write about it for those of us who only had secondhand information on the battle.

I was at the area in mid-morning as a replacement guard. I was from "Baker" Co. We did not go to help Charlie Co because we had a warehouse of small arms ammo in our own compound. We expected an attack from the riverfront, but it didn't happen. If we had all rushed off to help Charlie Co, then it might have been different.

Leo E. Lawrence
Mendon, Vt.

The Day the General Cried

This letter is in reference to the story, "The Day the General Cried," in the May issue of *Leatherneck*. As for background, in the late 1980s, I was restoring an M5A1 Stuart tank, the same model used by Company B at Namur, and made many phone calls looking for informative tricks in restoration. One call referred me to a retired lieutenant colonel living in Sierra Vista, Ariz., who had been the executive officer of the 4th Tank Battalion on Namur.

When his wife answered and asked who was calling, I said, "Bob Bunting, I am a Marine." In the background, I heard a deep male voice growl, "Bob Bunting? Hell, he got killed on Iwo Jima!" He grabbed the phone and said excitedly, "Who the hell is this?" We finally established that I had not been killed on Iwo, because I was only 3 at the time. He then told me that Bob Bunting of Co C had been one of his best friends and was killed in an M4A2.

We talked for a long time about M5A1s, Namur, Iwo Jima, and a long list of items, including that my brother was a tanker in the Korean War and had commanded an M46 Patton. The colonel was a terrific guy, and a great source of information and compelling detail.

The lieutenant colonel told me that Company B's tanks under Capt Denig were Hothead, Hornet, Heater, and Hunter, Capt Denig's own tank, and two more that he could not recall the names of.

I had already obtained a copy of the photo on page 18 that accompanied Master Sergeant Jeff Dacus' fine story showing the knocked-out Hunter and asked him about it. He remembered it well because it still plainly pained him, but he said clearly that the tank had gotten a bit too far ahead of infantry covering fire, and that the Japanese did indeed swarm it, trying to pry open hatches which could be done on Japanese tanks. The lieutenant colonel then said that a following tank, possibly the Hornet, and some infantry managed to spray the tank and knock the Japanese off. But then a Japanese with a magnetic mine ran up to the port side of the still moving tank and clamped it on then slipped or was shot and fell into the bogey wheel as the mine went off.

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Looking closely at the photo in the article, the hole in the side from the mine can be seen, and the dead Japanese is tangled and mangled by the bogey wheel. As the tank was stopped, another Japanese mounted the tank and stuffed a grenade in the signal port, which exploded as he was shot, but that damage was minimal compared to the force of the mine blast which killed the driver, jammed the turret ring and badly wounded the captain along with fragments from the grenade.

I wanted to provide this added firsthand detail not in refuting anything that MSgt Dacus has written, but I believe that most readers will find the supplement adds to and helps authenticate the story and validates the photo.

The lieutenant colonel also stated that the grunts were furious that they had not prevented the loss but vowed after that to coordinate better with the tankers.

Please convey to MSgt Dacus my congratulations on a fine story. Keep up the good work!

Robert V. Bunting
Mesa, Ariz.

A-6E Intruders

Above is a picture of five A-6E Intruders stacked below the KC-10 air refueler post refueling taken by the boom operator in



COURTESY OF GYSGT THOMAS TEUSCHER, USMC (RET)

Five A-6E Intruders after refueling on their way to Sigonella, Sicily, in 1989.

the spring of 1989. The aircraft are from Marine All Weather Attack Squadron 332. They were on their way to Sigonella, Sicily. I, at the time, was a member of the squadron.

GySgt Thomas Teuscher, USMC (Ret)
Orlando, Fla.

Alpha Service Cover

In the May *Leatherneck*, on page 32 a story titled, "Honorary Marine Dedicated to Telling Story of the Corps," [We—the Marines], was very interesting. What caught my eye in the photo was the color guard were using the chin straps on their

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“Alpha” covers. I have never seen this with all the Marine Honor Guards at various functions; 8th & I, funerals, etc. Is there a regulation for when you wear the strap or not? Just trying to keep up with the regulations and rules.

Sgt Mike Skorich, USMC
Leesburg, Fla.

• *I have seen chin straps used on numerous occasions by color guards, usually during outside ceremonies with high winds. The Uniform Regulations have no prohibitions on using the chin strap.—Editor*

Final Resting Place of Flag Raisers

In reference to Master Sergeant Carl M. DeVere Sr.’s letter in Sound Off of the March issue, the Marine buried in Halingen, Texas, is Corporal Harlon Block. Cpl Block was killed in action on March 1, 1945, on Iwo Jima. Cpl Block was interred in the 5th Marine Division Cemetery on the island. In 1949 Cpl Block was reinterred in his hometown of Weslaco, Texas. He was moved a final time to the Marine Military Academy Grounds in Harlingen, Texas. He was one of six second flag raisers on Iwo Jima.

Private First Class Rene Gagnon died on Oct. 12, 1979, and was interred in

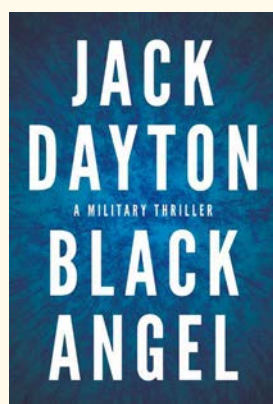
Manchester, N.H. He was moved to Arlington National Cemetery in 1981. There is a plaque on his headstone stating he was an Iwo Jima flag raiser. It is ironic that it was recently discovered that he was not a flag raiser, but it was PFC Harold Keller instead.

Sgt Jake Donovan
USMC, 1967-1971
Sent via email

With regard to the Sound Off letter in the April issue from Sergeant Lloyd Stimson concerning flag raisers Rene Gagnon and John “Doc” Bradley, here are my thoughts. I was probably less than a

mile to the north of the extreme left flank of Mount Suribachi when we heard the ships horns and whistles blowing when the flag was raised. There were two ships off to our rear and to the left—a light cruiser and destroyer, I believe. I tried to think of what would be going on at the top of the mountain. It sure wasn’t as peaceful as a few pictures show.

As we know, it was well after the flag raising that the authorities came looking for the living flag raisers to be featured in a war bond drive back in the States. “Doc” Bradley was recovering from wounds in the naval hospital in Guam when they
[continued on page 66]



Black Angel: Murder at Quantico

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Islands Provide Ideal Terrain For 26th MEU, SPMAGTF-CR-CC Sustainment Training

The 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit, embarked aboard the *Bataan* Amphibious Ready Group (BATARG), conducted routine amphibious assault training on the islands of Karan and Kurayn, Saudi Arabia, April 20-22.

The training was planned and coordinated through the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and provided approximately 800 Marines and Sailors the opportunity to train in amphibious operations in a realistic environment.

Over the course of three days, the BATARG and 26th MEU planned and conducted a variety of the MEU's mission-essential tasks, including amphibious raids and amphibious assaults. Amphibious raids involve swift incursions and withdrawals, while amphibious assaults can result in occupation of an objective and preparing for follow-on operations.

"Through support in planning, establishing maritime dominance, executing ship-to-shore evolutions and preparing for a simulated shipboard weapons shoot, the BATARG was able to receive valuable training and enable the success of the 26th MEU's mission ashore," said Lieutenant Commander Grace Reilly, USN, assistant operations officer with the BATARG.

The BATARG consists of the flagship amphibious assault ship USS *Bataan* (LHD-5), amphibious transport dock ship USS *New York* (LPD-21) and dock landing ship USS *Oak Hill* (LSD-51), and is supported by guided missile destroyer USS *Stout* (DDG-55).

The BATARG and 26th MEU team concurrently utilized air and surface assets to transport forces and equipment to the two islands. This capability is unique to the Amphibious Ready Group Marine Expeditionary Units (ARGMEU) and enhances versatility when conducting amphibious operations in the maritime domain. The MEU has an aviation combat

Compiled by Sara W. Bock

element, which is equipped with fixed-wing, rotary-wing and tiltrotor aircraft capable of operating over land or over water alongside ship-to-shore connectors such as assault amphibious vehicles and other landing craft.

The integration of the Navy-Marine Corps team was an essential element of the training on the islands. As a cohesive team, the ARGMEU transported forces and firepower to Karan Island and facilitated fire support by utilizing artillery assets.

During this training, Marines with the Battalion Landing Team were flown to Kurayn Island and conducted a simulated raid, while other Marines executed an amphibious assault on Karan Island's beach. The training on the two islands was invaluable to the MEU's readiness as islands present unique challenges not usually encountered by ground-based units.

In preparation for training on the islands, reconnaissance Marines conducted



SGT KYLE TALBOT, USMC

Marines assigned to SPMAGTF-CR-CC carry a simulated casualty during a TRAP exercise on Karan Island, Saudi Arabia, April 23. The exercise allowed the SPMAGTF an opportunity to sustain its critical mission capabilities, demonstrate its ability to rapidly respond to emergent threats and crises, and improve its ability to project power in the maritime domain.

hydrographic surveys under the cover of darkness, provided amphibious reconnaissance and surveillance, and maneuvered combat rubber raiding craft throughout the littoral region. As the Maritime Raid Force (MRF) they are capable of controlling key maritime areas in time of conflict.

“The control of key maritime terrain requires specially trained Marines,” said Captain Cory Moyer, company commander for the MRF. “The MRF provides the MEU a force that can deliver decisive victories that reduce enemy capabilities, induce confusion and create a gap to exploit with follow-on combat power.”

Sourcing combat power ashore from a sea-based platform allows the ARGMEU to be flexible, expeditionary and postured to shape actions across the full range of military operations in remote, marginally accessible environments.

In conjunction with the BATARG and 26th MEU, the Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force–Crisis Response-Central Command 19.2 also conducted a full mission profile, tactical recovery of aircraft and personnel exercise on Karan and Kurayn Islands on April 23.

The exercise afforded SPMAGTF–CR–CC an opportunity to sustain and improve its critical mission capabilities, as well as demonstrate its ability to rapidly respond to emergent threats and crises.

“I extend my sincere appreciation to



SGT KYLE TALBOT, USMC

A Marine with SPMAGTF–CR–CC relays a message over a radio while participating in a TRAP mission, part of a 26th MEU training exercise, on Karan Island, Saudi Arabia, April 23.

the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for providing this unique and effective training opportunity for the *Bataan* Amphibious Ready Group, the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit and Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force–Crisis Response-Central Command,” said Vice Admiral James Malloy, USN, Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command. “These

training evolutions not only contribute to our readiness to respond to crisis but also demonstrate the Navy-Marine Corps team’s significant contribution in ensuring freedom of navigation, the free flow of commerce and lawful control of the maritime domain in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility.”

Courtesy of Task Force 51/5th MEB



SGT KYLE TALBOT, USMC

While training in conjunction with the 26th MEU, a Marine with SPMAGTF–CR–CC provides security during a TRAP exercise on Karan Island, Saudi Arabia, April 23.



LCPL NATALIE GREENWOOD, USMC

A U.S. Marine and a servicemember with the Australian Defence Force fire M4 carbines on the WTSS at Robertson Barracks in Darwin, NT, Australia, April 29. The Marine service rifle was used on the Australian WTSS for the first time, and the training made it possible for servicemembers to maintain readiness while observing social distancing guidelines.



LCPL NATALIE GREENWOOD, USMC

Cpl Isaiah Fraser, a data system administrator with MRF-D, shoots an M4 carbine while training in the Australian Defence Force's WTSS, April 29. Fraser and other participating Marines were part of a 54-member advance party which arrived in Australia prior to border closures associated with COVID-19, which caused the full rotation to be postponed until later this year.

NORTHERN TERRITORY AUSTRALIA

Weapons Training Continues— With Modifications

Click. Click. Pop. A slight vibration sent through the shoulder. Focus on the next moving target. Pop. One more to go. Pop. Unload, show clear. “End of Scenario” fades in white letters as the screen goes black.

Marines with Marine Rotational Force—

Darwin worked with Australian servicemembers as they familiarized themselves with each other's weapon systems while training in the Weapons Training Simulation System (WTSS) at Robertson Barracks in Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia, April 29.

While the COVID-19 pandemic postponed the full MRF-D rotation until later this year, U.S. and Australian servicemembers worked to find new ways to stay

ready and capable as an interoperable fighting force.

“Our ability to understand each other's capabilities is paramount, and that's one of the main reasons we have the MRF-D as a rotation,” said Major Johnathon Ronayne, Australian Defence Force liaison to MRF-D. “Interoperability and, more to the point, the ability for forces to cooperate at large is part of the operation that is the MRF-D. So in order to be capable as best as we can be to stop any threats or to be postured to respond to any, we should know and understand intimately each other's weapon systems.”

Beyond just familiarization, the Marines integrated the M4 carbine with the WTSS for the first time. Ronayne said testing in the M4 in the WTSS is a new capability that “gives us a broad cross section to allow us to continue to train, which is especially important in this day and age.”

When a loud voice says, “I need two for the drill coming next!” Marines and Australian soldiers set up and load one magazine. “Scenario Begins” appears on the screen and it's “go time” again.

The WTSS is a fully featured simulation system. Servicemembers fire battery-powered weapons at a three-screened, cinema-sized projection on the wall standing about 10 meters away. Wind machines and light effects provided a realistic and adaptable training environment. Marines and Australians trained side by side in compliance with the regulations set in place by both countries. The WTSS was operated at half capacity to maintain the social distancing and disinfecting measures put in place.

“In order for us to properly follow the guidelines, they are having us in every other space which is about 6 feet, probably a little bit more, between each shooter to better distance ourselves and still get effective training in,” said Corporal Nitselly Henriquez, an administrative specialist with MRF-D. “We are being especially mindful about cleaning the weapons off as we use them and not passing them off to each other.”

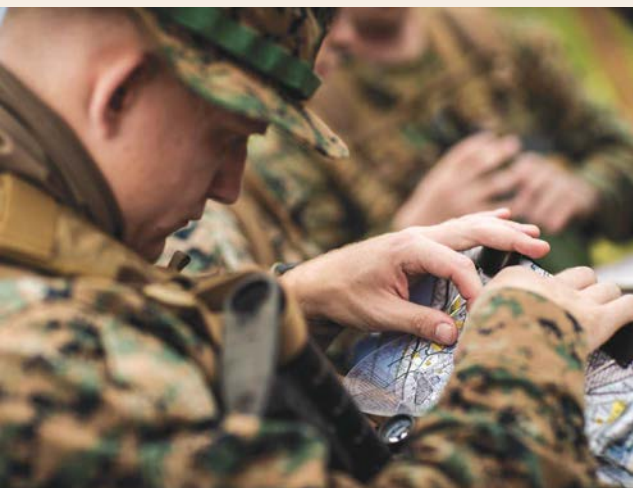
The WTSS can be compared to the U.S. Marine Corps' Indoor Simulated Marksmanship Trainer-Enhanced. The ISTME, like the WTSS, allows troops to practice shooting and live-fire scenarios indoors before ever firing live ammunition.

“In my opinion, the WTSS does a great job of putting you in a scenario where you have to think on your feet,” said Lance Corporal Samuel Pekula, a landing support specialist with MRF-D. “I believe it captures the unpredictability that a lot of training just doesn't have.”

LCpl Alexandria Nowell, USMC

Back to the Basics: 1st ANGLICO Conducts Field Exercise

Marines with 1st Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company conducted a brigade platoon field exercise at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., April 7-8. The training was designed to sustain and enhance basic warfighting skills such as land navigation, day and night patrolling, and long-range communication capabilities.



SGT MANUEL SERRANO, USMC



SGT MANUEL SERRANO, USMC

Above: Sgt Wyatt Prentice, left, a fire control team chief, and Capt Kate Pearson, a firepower control team leader assigned to 1st ANGLICO, communicate with higher headquarters during a brigade platoon field exercise at MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., April 7.

Left: LCpl Jacob Gaskell, a forward observer with 1st ANGLICO, uses a map to locate grid coordinates.



SGT MANUEL SERRANO, USMC

Marines participate in a foot patrol during 1st ANGLICO's brigade platoon field exercise at MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., April 7.



CPL BENJAMIN LARSEN, USMC

LCpl Ismael Renteria, a heavy equipment operator with SPMAGTF-SC, operates a skid steer to mix sand and gravel during a command post exercise at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., April 8. The training allowed the Marines of the task force to show their capabilities in a controlled environment and prepare for their deployment to Latin America and the Caribbean.

CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C.

Despite Pandemic, Marines Certify for Deployment

Marines and Sailors with Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force—Southern Command certified for a crisis response deployment to the Latin American and Caribbean region, April 23.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, SPMAGTF-SC elements implemented social distancing guidance throughout their training schedule and ensured that the lives and safety of the servicemembers remained a priority.

“Marines and Sailors are trained for the unexpected,” said Colonel Vincent Dawson, commanding officer of SPMAGTF-SC. “The curve ball that COVID-19 has thrown at the SPMAGTF for predeployment training was met with an agile mindset and flexibility, enabling us to accomplish the necessary requirements for certification.”

Servicemembers wore cloth face coverings when they couldn’t maintain 6 feet of social distancing in public areas and work centers during the certification exercises in accordance with guidance from Headquarters Marine Corps.



SGT ANDY MARTINEZ, USMC

LCpl Daniel Bordenave, a water support technician with SPMAGTF-SC, sets up a lightweight water purification system at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., April 8. At the conclusion of their training, the task force was certified for its crisis response deployment.



SGT ANDY MARTINEZ, USMC

Marines with SPMAGTF–SC conduct a final check of their plot points on a map before stepping off for land navigation training at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., May 4. They completed many training events and qualifications to enhance their ability to provide humanitarian aid assistance and engineering projects alongside partner nation military forces.



CPL BENJAMIN LARSEN, USMC

The SPMAGTF–SC medical team’s Navy corpsmen also ensured and supported the safety precautions when they held sick call every morning and screened servicemembers for COVID-19 when necessary while still supporting the ongoing Marines’ field training exercises.

“Communication and prevention have been the keys to success for the medical team,” said Petty Officer 2nd Class Jenna Bentle, a hospital corpsman with SPMAGTF–SC. “We ensure that the servicemembers are screened for the appropriate symptoms without causing panic, and we continue to be proactive with the prevention of the virus.”

The medical team stepped up their efforts to ensure safety by staffing corpsmen to be on call around the clock and by posting informative posters about hygiene and virus prevention guidelines throughout the Marines’ living and working spaces, said Bentle.

Although they faced challenges due to the global pandemic, the SPMAGTF–SC completed a command post exercise, a general exercise and a final certification exercise in preparation for the work they will do during their deployment. The task force is now on standby to rapidly respond to and assist Latin American and Caribbean partner nations in the event of a crisis.

1stLt Heather Chairez, USMC

Engineers construct a roof during SPMAGTF–SC predeployment training at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., April 17. The training included engineering projects and evacuation control center training scenarios that prepared the Marines for their final certification exercise.

SOUTH CHINA SEA

Naval Integration Training Enhances Readiness In Indo-Pacific Region

The 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit conducted Marine air-ground task force full mission profile rehearsals, aerial reconnaissance and simulated close-air support while maintaining a presence in the South China Sea aboard amphibious assault ship *USS America* (LHA-6), April 17-24.

During one evolution, the MEU conducted a combat mission rehearsal with two rifle companies from the MEU's Battalion Landing Team, 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, going through the process of mustering the assault force with full combat load in the hangar bay of *America*, test-firing weapons, and embarking both companies on two waves of MV-22B Osprey tiltrotor aircraft for flight operations. According to Major Jeremy Fisher, company commander of "Bravo" Company, BLT 1/5, drills like this are essential in mitigating friction when it's time to execute real-world missions.

"Organizing, staging, loading and launching two companies of Marines from the ship is not a small task. This training rehearses our Marines, the ship's crew, and other supporting components of the



CPL ISAAC CANTRELL, USMC

JTACs with the 31st MEU coordinate fires with F-35B Lightning II fighter aircraft during a Tactical Air Control Party exercise aboard *USS America* (LHA-6), April 21. JTACs provide a critical battlespace sharing capability to the MEU by communicating directly with air support assets to call for fire in support of maneuver elements.

MAGTF so that if we were to execute a quick reaction mission real-world, we've already identified and addressed any friction that might arise," said Fisher.

Later, in the East China Sea, the MEU rehearsed a proof of concept with cargo

nets, draping the nets over the side of the ship in order to debark a platoon of Marines into an 11-meter Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat. This exercise demonstrated the ability of the MEU to capitalize on the extra space that *USS America* has without



SGT AUDREY RAMPTON, USMC

An F-35B Lightning II takes off from the flight deck of *USS America* (LHA-6), April 23. *America*, flagship of the America Expeditionary Strike Group, 31st MEU team, is operating in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations to enhance interoperability with allies and partners and serve as a ready response force to defend peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

a well deck and remain capable of surging Marine combat power ashore via multiple methods, according to First Lieutenant Kenneth Crowder, a platoon commander with BLT 1/5.

“This naval integration training harkened back to the Marine Corps’ method of debarkation during the island-hopping campaigns of World War II. Through deliberate planning and execution with our Navy brothers and sisters, we showed that even old school methods, when well-executed, can be applied to new problem sets in this area of operations,” said Crowder.

In addition to the vertical assault rehearsal and tactical debarkation, Marine Corps and Navy aviation assets conducted daily flight operations to ensure readiness. F-35B Lightning II fighter aircraft flew daytime and nighttime sorties to sharpen their skills in support of the MAGTF, running aerial reconnaissance missions throughout the South China Sea as they projected Marine Corps air power in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific region. Additionally, MV-22B Osprey tiltrotor aircraft ran daily missions with reconnaissance Marines aboard.

During one F-35 sortie, Joint Terminal Attack Controllers (JTACs) with the 31st MEU simulated calling in close air

support on maritime targets in order to sustain their proficiency as well as the pilots’ proficiency.

“Throughout this deployment, the 31st MEU’s JTACs have been constantly exposed to unique and challenging ways to sharpen their skills and remain current in all qualifications. Having the opportunity to utilize all the capabilities of the F-35B while underway was an excellent way to validate our proficiency in a dynamic maritime environment,” said Captain Ryan Poitras, Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company detachment officer in charge and JTAC evaluator with the 31st MEU.

The ability to execute missions such as these demonstrates the powerful and flexible presence that III Marine Expeditionary Force is able to maintain in the South China Sea and throughout the Indo-Pacific, directly in line with the planning guidance laid out last year by General David H. Berger, Commandant of the Marine Corps.

“III MEF will become our main focus-of-effort, designed to provide U.S. Indo-Pacific Command and the Commander, 7th Fleet with a fight-tonight, stand-in force capability to persist inside an adversary’s weapon systems threat range, create a mutually contested space, and facilitate the larger naval campaign.

When modernized in a manner consistent with the vision above, III MEF will be a credible deterrent to adversary aggression in the Pacific,” wrote Gen Berger in his message to the force.

As III MEF’s crisis response force, the 31st MEU provides this power projection capability that the U.S. depends on throughout the Indo-Pacific, according to Colonel Robert Brodie, the 31st MEU commanding officer.

“Our 31st MEU and Amphibious Squadron 11 combine our forces to make a ready team capable of lethal effects. Our flexibility and adaptability matched with the highly skilled Marines and Sailors affords us the surgical ability to address high-end conflict or assist those in need. Whether it’s our F-35s conducting an expeditionary strike, our riflemen raiding an objective, or our combat logistics Marines supporting humanitarian assistance, the MEU stands ready to support our nation’s call—ready, partnered and lethal,” said Brodie.

The 31st MEU, the Marine Corps’ only continuously forward-deployed MEU, provides a flexible and lethal force ready to perform a wide range of military operations as the premier crisis response force in the Indo-Pacific region.

2ndLt Jonathan Coronel, USMC



LCPL JOSHUA BRITTENHAM, USMC

Marines with BLT 1/5, 31st MEU, receive a main pack during a tactical debarkation from USS America (LHA-6), April 28. The exercise served as a proof of concept for the Navy-Marine Corps team to demonstrate proficiency in a proven, reliable method of amphibious debarkation from an amphibious assault ship to surface connectors.



COURTESY OF NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Marines served at the Charlestown shipyard beginning in 1801, but the first barracks was not constructed until 1810. It was less than 2 miles from the barracks to the prison.

“YOU HAVE THREE MINUTES!”

Marines End a Prison Riot

By MSgt Jeff Dacus, USMCR (Ret)

During its long and illustrious history, the Marine Corps has been called upon to support the civilian government during domestic problems. In 1831, President Andrew Jackson called out the Marines to protect public buildings in Washington, D.C. In 1833, President Jackson called on the Marines again, this time to protect the Treasury building after a fire. Archibald Henderson successfully defeated the Plug Uglies in Washington, D.C., in 1857. Marines under Robert E. Lee defeated and captured the insurrectionist, John Brown,

in 1859. During the 1920s, Marines were required to guard the U.S. mail. Among all of these domestic responses was a little-known incident that occurred during a dangerous riot in Massachusetts in 1824.

The Massachusetts state prison at Charlestown was opened in 1805. Built as a strong stone structure, it stood on Lynde's Point near the Charles River. At the time, the point was almost an island, connected by a short causeway to nearby Charlestown. Granite was transported from Quincy to the prison, where inmates used the workshop to chisel and finish the stone so that it could be used in projects throughout the community.

At first, there were 90 cells, surrounded by a stout, high wall. The cells were small, with just enough space to allow a small cot as both bed and furniture. Cells had no windows, and the inmates were allowed a small bucket as a toilet. Typical of the time period, there was no running water, and they emptied their honey buckets during their exercise hour. The penitentiary was almost escape-proof. Digging a tunnel was fruitless as the water table was 3 feet below the surface of the prison yard. Some guards were frequently abusive, using small rule infractions as an excuse to punish prisoners severely.

On May 12, 1824, conditions reached



COURTESY OF NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

a breaking point. Prisoners became sullen and refused to follow directions of staff. Three prisoners had committed small infractions and, in accordance with the rules of the institution, were to be publicly whipped. All three were confined to solitary confinement to await the administration of their punishment. One of the prisoners feigned illness, and when a guard opened the cell door to check on him, the criminal overpowered the man and locked the guard in the cell. The inmate opened the cells, releasing the other two prisoners awaiting a whipping. Soon, dozens of other prisoners were released, and more joined from the workshop armed with crude weapons and tools. Retreating guards quickly sealed off the prison to prevent any inmates from leaving the grounds. The prisoners assembled in the dining area, the largest room in the prison. They had enough tools to break down doors or smash through walls but had no leadership to formulate a plan of action.

Crowded into the dining hall were dozens of prisoners, clad in blue and red uniforms. A newspaper account later estimated 238 prisoners participated in the riot. They were armed with a variety of crude weapons and determined to defy

authority but unsure of what to do next. Some shouted for justice in the case of the three men in solitary confinement. Others wished to try and break out.

The inmates took the captured guard from the cell and marched him to the guardroom where firearms were stored. They wanted the man to go to the door and ask the guards on the other side to open up so the prisoners could rush in and

The inmates took the captured guard from the cell and marched him to the guardroom where firearms were stored.

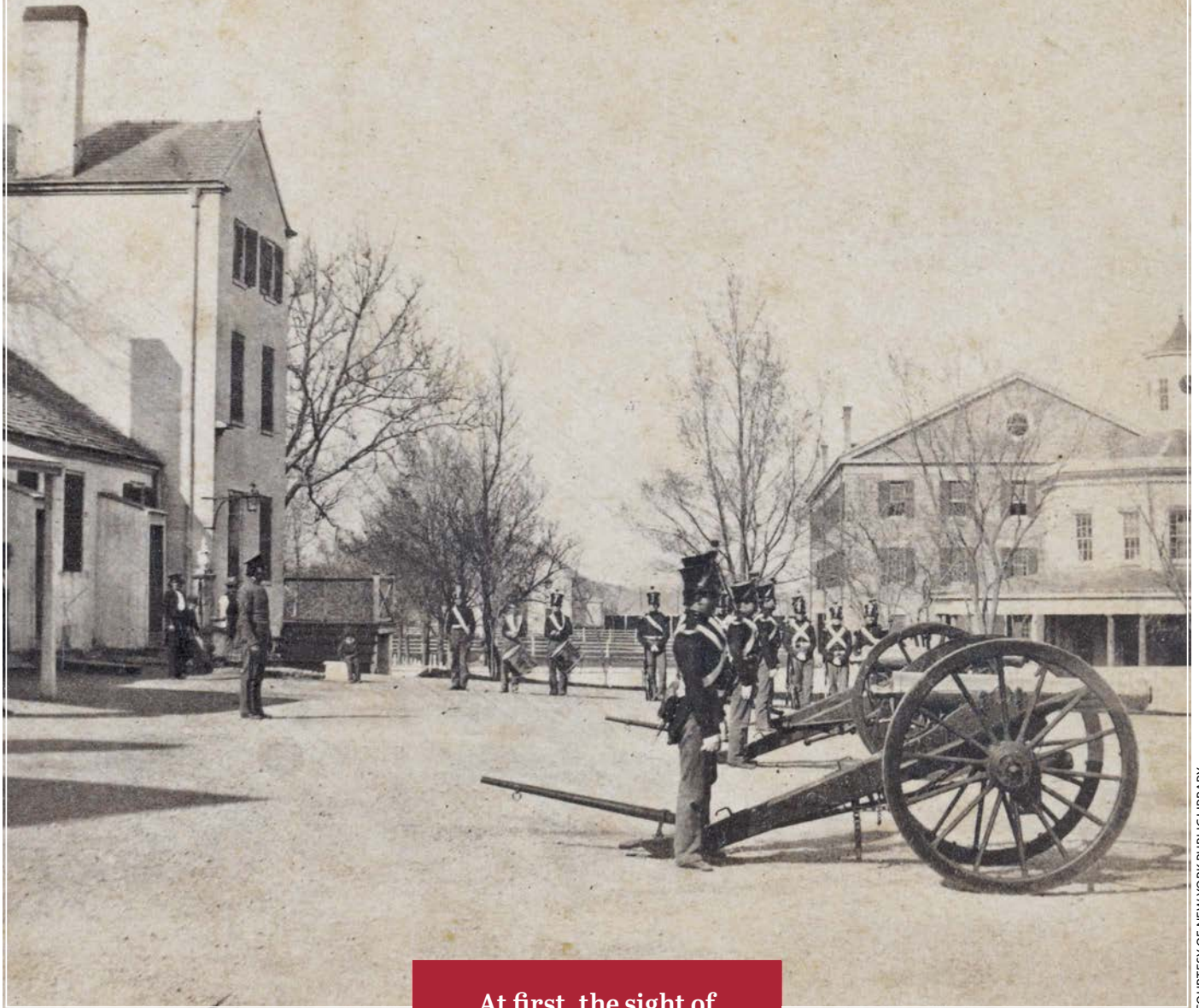
capture more hostages as well as guns. He refused to assist them. One prisoner, armed with a file sharpened into a knife, wanted to kill the uncooperative guard, but the other two, wisely as it would later turn out, refused to use the man violently. They returned him to the cell.

News of the riot spread throughout the town, and a crowd of curious citizens assembled outside the great stone walls.

The acting warden and other prison officials met outside the dining hall, wondering about the best course of action. Should the guards try to storm the hall to take the prisoners? The few guards would suffer severe losses, as would the convicts. Should they negotiate with the inmates? Should they send word to the mayor of Boston or the governor of Massachusetts? No consensus was reached, and the shouts from inside grew louder with threats to break out and kill the guards. One official, without waiting for orders from the warden or other officials, sent a messenger to the nearby Marine Barracks at Charlestown (Boston) Navy Yard to give a quick explanation of events and ask for help.

The commander of the Marine Barracks at the Boston Navy Yard was Captain Robert D. Wainwright. Born in South Carolina, with the calm demeanor and speech of a typical Southerner, Wainwright joined the Marine Corps May 9, 1800, and earned a commission in 1812. On March 3, 1823, he was given the brevet rank of major. When the prison messenger arrived, Wainwright immediately put together a detachment of 30 Marines, issued them muskets and ammunition, and followed the messenger back to the

The Marine Barracks at the Navy Yard in Charlestown, Mass., in 1857.



COURTESY OF NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

At first, the sight of the armed, disciplined Marines took the prisoners by surprise, and they retreated back into the shadows at the far end of the long, dimly lit dining hall.

prison. The Marines had less than a mile to go and quickly closed in on the prison.

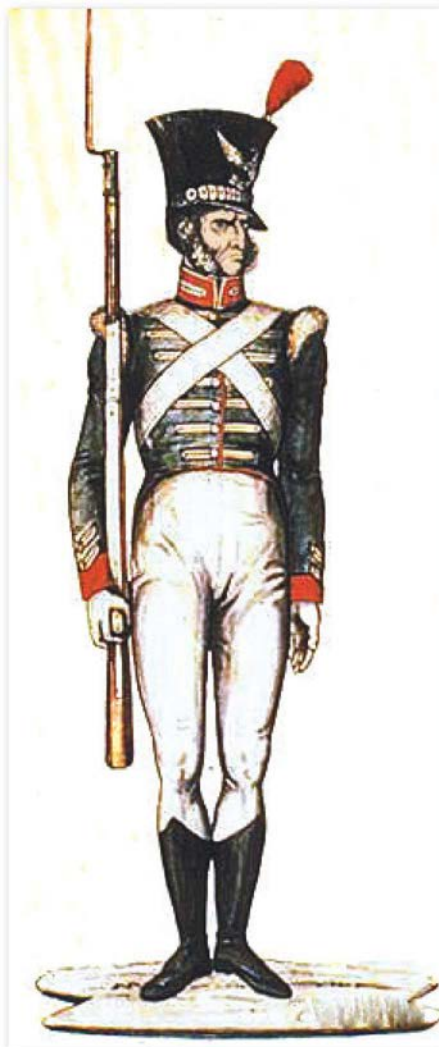
During the time the messenger was dispatched to the barracks, a single, unarmed official entered the large hall in an attempt to negotiate with the prisoners. The dining hall was dimly lit with the horde of prisoners at the end of the hall furthest from the door, their numbers hidden by the darkness. The official asked for their demands, but amid the shouts, the only coherent reply was the removal of punishment for the three prisoners. Some of the prisoners called out that they would rather die than continue their imprisonment. Others threatened to kill the official or take him hostage. The prison official's questions were met with only

grumbling, and the prisoners advanced out of the shadows to surround him.

Just as the attempt at negotiation failed, the door behind the official opened, and the inmates could see the shadows of more men entering the room. The official

quietly left the room, pulled out by fellow guards.

The warden had requested that Wainwright place his men on the roof above the small windows that looked down into the dining hall. The warden felt they could fire down with just powder first and then reload to fire with powder and ball. Any casualties would be unfortunate but necessary. Wainwright waved the man away. After forming his men in a column in the hall outside the dining area, the door was opened to allow the official to escape, and Wainwright ordered his men to quickly and quietly enter the room. The prisoners looked into the dim light to see two ranks of men armed with bayonets. Clad in their navy blue uniforms trimmed



COURTESY OF MARINE CORPS ART COLLECTION

This 1824 illustration by Marine Lt Charles R. Floyd features a Marine private wearing the 1822 uniform and carrying a Springfield flintlock musket.



COURTESY OF U.S. MARINE CORPS HISTORICAL COMPANY

This is a reproduction of the Shako (above) worn by company grade officers and enlisted men during the 1820s. The all-leather head covering is known as the "tar bucket shako" or "bell crown shako" and it featured an eagle plate (below) and a red plume.



COURTESY OF U.S. MARINE CORPS HISTORICAL COMPANY



COURTESY OF U.S. MARINE CORPS HISTORICAL COMPANY

A period illustration, painted around 1827 by a Marine, depicts an orderly sergeant wearing the 1822 uniform.

in red, white crossed belts across their chests, and giant black leather shakos with tall red plumes on their heads, the 30 Marines made an impressive sight.

At first, the sight of the armed, disciplined Marines took the prisoners by surprise, and they retreated back into the shadows at the far end of the long, dimly lit dining hall. Calmly, Wainwright asked the prisoners to lay down their weapons and disperse as the Marines would not leave until all of the prisoners returned to their quarters. After a short pause, a few of the boldest inmates pushed forward and began insulting the Marines. Many indignantly said they would never be taken alive. A few, more tentatively, stated they would disperse when the three prisoners' punishment was rescinded. Others encouraged the group to attack the Marines, stating their numbers would tell as they outnumbered the Marines about eight to one.

The Marines stood still with their Springfield muskets and bayonets facing toward the rebellious convicts. Arrayed in two ranks, Wainwright ordered the first rank to kneel. Wainwright calmly ordered the detachment to load their muskets. He slowly and dramatically stretched out the commands, ordering the Marines to show their cartridges to the inmates before biting the ends to pour the powder in the pan and down the barrel. A second, deliberate command had the Marines lift the musket ball above their heads to show it to the prisoners before dropping it down the muzzle of their weapon. Purposefully, they rammed home the ball and powder before replacing their ramming staff under their musket. Finally, they cocked their pieces. Wainwright gave the order to aim their pieces at the mob.

The Marines presented their muskets and sighted in on their targets at the other end of the room. Many of the inmates

remained defiant, shouting that they would never surrender. Wainwright took three steps forward and stopped. Pulling himself to attention, he told the Marines to sight in on the prisoners and fire when he gave the command. He looked down pensively at his watch, noting the time. Then he turned toward the agitated mob and calmly addressed them in his smooth, Southern drawl: "You must leave this hall. I give you three minutes to decide. If at the end of that time, a man remains, he shall be shot dead. I speak no more." Then he stood, impassively watching the milling throng of prisoners.

After a few seconds, Wainwright glanced at his watch, then resumed his stare at the inmates. The room was silent, the indecisive prisoners milling about. After what seemed a minute, a low grumble emanated from the darkened end. The prisoners shuffled nervously. Again, Wainwright looked at his timepiece. Again, he looked



COURTESY OF NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

A detachment of Marines forms up for guard mount in front of the barracks at the Charlestown Navy Yard. This photo was probably taken late during the Civil War, or just after the war's end.

intently at the prisoners. When it seemed that two minutes had passed, the less obstinate prisoners in the back of the room headed toward a side door. Guards quickly subdued them. Not a sound passed from Wainwright or his Marines who gripped their muskets purposely. After a few more seconds, realizing the Marines intended to fire when ordered, the rest of the prisoners meekly laid down their makeshift weapons and fled from the room.

Without waiting for thanks or further conversation, Wainwright formed his men and marched them from the penitentiary. Once outside, the sergeants supervised the unloading of the muskets. Fortunately, no one was hurt in the entire episode.

The action at the prison was only noted in a short article in the "New England Galaxy;" however, generations of school children from 1837 well into the 20th century read of the exploits of the Marines during the Charlestown riot in the pages of the famous "McGuffey's Fifth Eclectic Reader." In telling the story of the leathernecks' part in ending the crisis, with a great deal of embellishment, the book attempted to teach a lesson to its readers: "Thus the steady firmness of moral force and the strong effect of determination, acting deliberately, awed the most savage men, and suppressed a scene of carnage, which

would have instantly followed the least precipitancy or exertion of physical force."

Wainwright enjoyed a lengthy career in the Marine Corps. He greeted the Marquis de Lafayette when the old French Revolutionary War hero visited Boston in August of 1824. As a brevet lieutenant colonel, he was essentially the Assistant

After a few more seconds, realizing the Marines intended to fire when ordered, the rest of the prisoners meekly laid down their makeshift weapons and fled from the room.

Commandant of the Marine Corps on June 1, 1836, when Commandant Archibald Henderson went south to fight the Seminole and Creek tribes. Wainwright remained at Marine Barracks Washington with little more than a corporal's guard and a few clerks.

The prison at the Navy Yard would

eventually be closed in 1955. Today, the site is the location of Bunker Hill Community College. The action at the Massachusetts State Prison at Charlestown was not the last such action for the Marine Corps. In May of 1946, two platoons of Marines from Marine Barracks Treasure Island would be called upon to help quell a prison riot at Alcatraz in San Francisco Harbor. Just as the Marines' role in the Charlestown riot was remembered by a generation due to "McGuffey's Reader," the Marines' action in the Alcatraz operation would become famous as part of the Burt Lancaster film, "The Birdman of Alcatraz."

Massachusetts' Charlestown Navy Yard and its Marine Barracks were closed in 1974. The National Park Service assumed control over the site which is home to the USS *Constitution* and open to visitors. Today the Barracks are used for offices as part of Boston National Historical Park.

Author's bio: MSgt Jeff Dacus, USMCR (Ret) lives in Vancouver, Wash. He is a retired history teacher. His 23 years as a Marine include a combat deployment during Operation Desert Storm as a tank platoon sergeant. 🇺🇸



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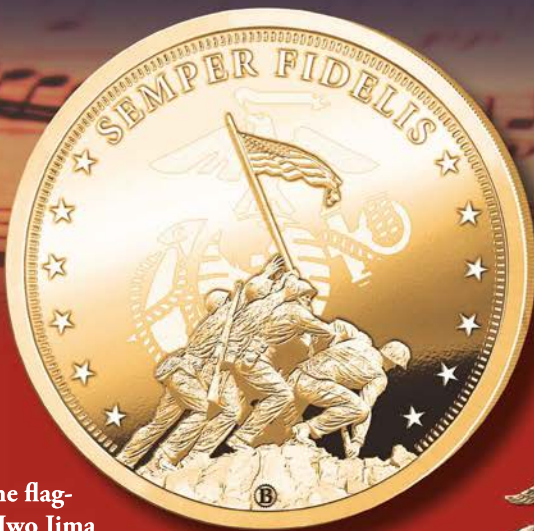
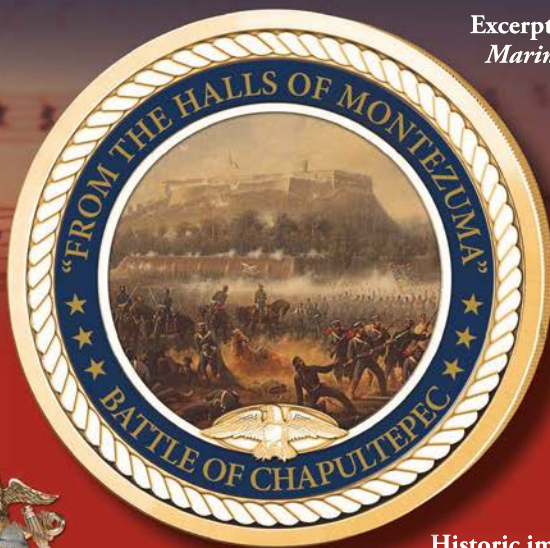


Image of the flag-raising on Iwo Jima and the USMC Eagle, Globe, and Anchor emblem



Excerpt from the *Marines' Hymn*

Historic imagery of USMC at Chapultepec



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"Oow, I got the Happy Meal MRE."



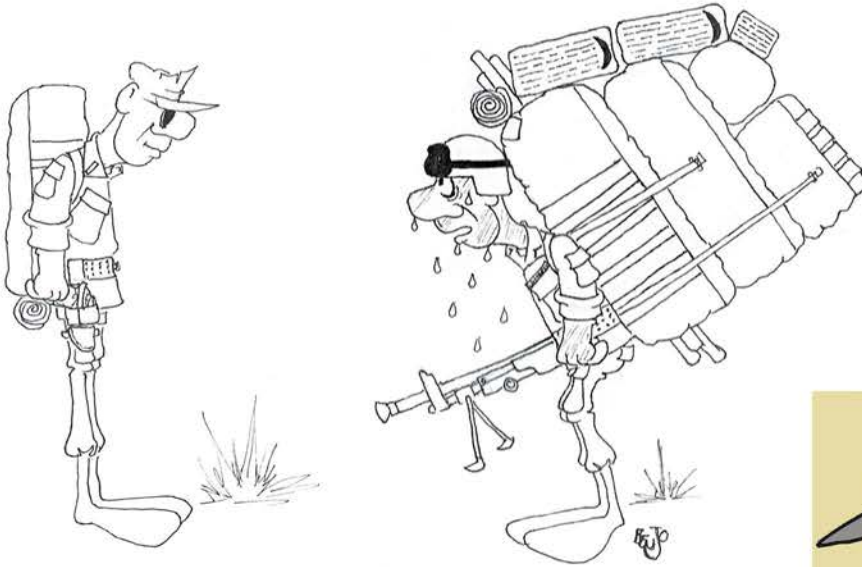
"Sir, where can I charge my phone?"



"Still fits, right?"



"These rifles are made from recycled materials."
 "What materials were used?"
 "Toy soldiers."



"Doesn't the Marine Corps have any trucks?"



"Guess I'm not on the fast track for PFC."



"Are you serious? I just became a sergeant."



"Sir, we're practicing social distancing, so I took you off of Twitter."

JOSEPH MCCARTHY— United States Marine

By Larry Tye

Editor's note: The following is an excerpt from "Demagogue: The Life and Long Shadow of Senator Joseph McCarthy" by best-selling author Larry Tye. The biography of one of the most infamous politicians of the 20th century includes "first-ever reviews of his personal and professional papers, medical and military records" many of which focus on his service as a Marine in World War II. "Demagogue" will be available July 7 at all booksellers.

Barely three years into Joseph Raymond McCarthy's first term as a circuit judge in Wisconsin, the Empire of Japan sucker-punched the United States of America, unleashing a crippling assault on the Naval fleet at Pearl Harbor and letting loose a stampede of American boys raring to pound back. Jurists like Joe, however, were deemed to be doing their part already, and most watched from the sidelines with nobody doubting their manliness or their patriotism. That was not enough for Joe McCarthy. He believed in public service, which was one reason he'd run twice for office while studying law at Marquette University, and two more times soon after graduation. He also was unabashedly ambitious, which had him eyeing Carl Zeidler, the wunderkind mayor of Milwaukee who could someday be a rival for statewide office and who, in early 1942, scored page-one headlines by enlisting in the Navy. There was always more than one thing driving Joe, and now it was defending his country and one-upping his imagined opponent. The way to do that, he reasoned, was to sign on with the most hallowed of the armed services: the leathernecks of the U.S. Marine Corps.

McCarthy's enlistment produced his first wartime fib. "I went down and was sworn in as a private ... I never did apply for a commission," he told reporters later, although in actuality, he wasn't a private and he did apply, two days before the first headline appeared. He repeated that phony version over the years, including in the



Joseph McCarthy's graduation portrait in 1930 from Little Wolf High School in Manawa, Wis., where he finished four years of work in a single year.

"Congressional Directory," calling himself a "buck private" to underline that he'd gotten no special favors in accepting the lowliest of military ranks. His military records, however, make clear that in June 1942, he did ask to be made an officer, that he was appointed a first lieutenant that July and reported for active duty in August. The Marines were thrilled to have him, even at the comparatively advanced age of 33. Submitting his application on official Circuit Court Chambers stationary let everyone know he was Justice Joe, not just some average Joe. It worked: a mere two days later, his file was forwarded to the Marine Corps Commandant. "This applicant is considered as possibly the most outstanding applicant for commission that has applied to this recruiting office during the past year," Major Saxon W. Holt Jr., officer in charge at Marine headquarters in Milwaukee, wrote in his cover letter. "His acceptance by the Marine Corps should result in favorable publicity in this area."

Journalists would gradually unmask those embellishments, and newly released files from the Marine Corps and the McCarthy Archives at

A poster for Joe McCarthy's 1939 campaign for circuit judge. He beat the incumbent who had served for 24 years in a bare-knuckle campaign that sought to capitalize on his opponent's advanced age.

ELECT
**JOSEPH R.
McCARTHY**
QUALIFIED BY GENERAL
EXPERIENCE

FARM—Born and raised on a dairy farm in Town of Grand Chute, Outagamie County.

LABOR—Worked at common labor for a number of years before becoming lawyer.

BUSINESS—Operated a store at Shiocton, Outagamie County.

LAW—Had wide range of experience as trial lawyer as a member of the firm of Eberlein & McCarthy (formerly Eberlein & Larson).

CIRCUIT JUDGE
LANGLADE, OUTAGAMIE AND SHAWANO COUNTIES
ELECTION APRIL 4th

AUTHORIZED AND PAID FOR BY JOSEPH R. MCCARTHY, SHIOCTON, WIS.

Joe McCarthy in the tail gunner's seat of a Douglas SBD Bomber. By the time his resignation from the Marines took effect in March 1945, McCarthy, then 36, had spent a full year serving his country abroad and more than 29 months on active duty.



COURTESY OF WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Marquette confirm that his media critics were right in their conclusions, if not all the specifics. But those records, many of which were under lock and key for 60 years and were made available for the first time to this author, also make clear that Joe wasn't trying to duck his duty. "Mr. McCarthy expressed a strong desire to serve with troops in combat," noted Holt. Months before, Joe launched a fusillade of confidential letters to Marine Corps headquarters saying he was willing to take a leave from or even resign his judicial office, and to serve without pay, if they would please, please take him. "I am not concerned with whether I enter as a private or as a commissioned officer," he

**Joe launched a fusillade
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Marine Corps headquarters
saying he was willing to
take a leave from or
even resign his judicial office,
and to serve without pay,
if they would please,
please take him.**

wrote. "Having no dependents, I can get along quite well on a private's pay." That documented flag-waving, done with guile yet without fanfare, would have made an even more compelling narrative than Joe's fairytale as he went on to become a U.S. senator and America's most notorious Cold War Commie-hunter. But his impulse to embroider, then as later, was irresistible.

He gave in to it again while explaining how he fractured his left foot and burned that leg in a way that bred foul-smelling, stinging infections. He'd hurt them "while helping to remove a pregnant woman from off a submarine," he told a crowd back in Wisconsin. No, wait, he'd injured them

when a dive-bomber “ground-looped, overturned and burned.” Escaping the plane, he informed a *Saturday Evening Post* reporter, “and, refusing medical attention, headed for the intelligence shack to make his report.” A home-state newspaper said his wounds came “in line of duty in the southwest Pacific” and were bad enough that he “is in a military hospital” and “is expected to remain there about eight weeks.” Sometimes he blamed the Japanese and said their shrapnel—10 pounds of it—was embedded in his damaged limb. To other audiences, he insisted “there wasn’t a [Japanese soldier] within 300 miles when it happened,” nor was he carrying around any shell fragments. His earthiest answer came when best pal Urban Van Susteren asked, and Joe lifted his foot, pulled down his sock to expose his scar, and pronounced, “There, you son of a bitch, now let’s hear no more about it.” His most restrained rendition was under oath: “Oh, a minor—I forget what it was. I did suffer some minor injury.”

In truth, he was seriously injured, but it happened 600 miles away from, and 10 weeks before, his first combat assignment. USS *Chandeleur* (AV-10) was ferrying his squadron to the Pacific islands in a voyage notable for what didn’t happen—



COURTESY OF WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

In 1942, six months after the assault on Pearl Harbor, Joe McCarthy secured a commission as a first lieutenant in the Marine Corps. He served in the Solomon Islands as an intelligence officer and sometimes as a tail gunner.

no German submarines, no Japanese bombers, not even a general-quarters alert. The skipper thought things were so safe that, on June 22, 1943, he authorized seasoned Shellback troops to stage the traditional initiation for Joe and other Pollywogs who’d never before crossed the equator. Shave your heads, they were told, then put on your pajamas and take off your shoes. “Rank meant nothing, of course, as we were paddled, soaked with hoses, speared by the electric trident and generally abused,” reported one novice, who asked to go unnamed. Joe had nearly survived his hazing, but while walking down a ladder with a bucket strapped to his right foot, he slipped. His other foot caught a lower rung, and he fell backward. “Three bones were broken,” the friend said, “and I watched them put a cast on his foot. It was either then, or that night when we were drinking together, that Joe said to me, ‘Don’t tell Maybelle I broke my foot in this silly way.’ ”

The fracture wasn’t the worst of it. When it was time to remove his cast, the medical corpsman used acetic acid instead of vinegar to soften the plaster. The acid burned Joe’s leg, leaving a substantial scar that was a long time in healing. A month later, he complained to his diary, “The burns on my leg acting up a little but the



COURTESY OF WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Joe McCarthy, far left, at the 1945 wedding of his best friend, Urban Van Susteren, far right, at Syracuse Army Air Force Base. Helen Burke, the maid of honor, is to McCarthy’s left, and Margery Conway Van Susteren and her husband, Urban, are on the right.

In 1952, Dwight D. “Ike” Eisenhower, who was running for president, and Joe McCarthy, who was seeking re-election to the Senate, appeared together on the rear car of the Eisenhower special whistle-stop train.

broken foot coming along O.K.,” and two days after that, “Damn infection in my leg acting and stinking up.”

Most maladies during his war years—and there were plenty—are documented not just in those newly unveiled, real-time journals, but also in his Marine Corps records. He arrived with a history of sinusitis going back to when he was 11 and had a tonsillectomy in 1929 and an appendectomy in 1936. His hairline was receding now, and his waistline was expanding. The scales showed him at 199 pounds, which was 40 more than he’d had on the farm and 30 more than when he was healthy. During his second year in the Pacific, that list ballooned to include myositis (inflamed muscles), cellulitis (a bacterial skin infection) and scoliosis (curved spine), along with stomach distress, shortness of breath and ongoing lower back pain. He reported to sick bay often enough, with symptoms they couldn’t explain, that his doctors reached for terms like “loss of energy,” “nervous” and “tense,” which seemed more suited to mental than physical disorders. His diary around that time also talked about how the unrelenting swelter and clamminess were taxing “to the point you feel your ambition slowly draining away.” None of that was uncommon in a battle theater as unforgiving as the Pacific, with unwholesome food, chronic dehydration, little chance for sleep, hard-to-navigate terrain, monsoon rains and a seesawing between extreme terror and acute boredom. His complaints hinted at malingering or maybe battle fatigue, but the medics concluded it was “not misconduct.” After they looked him over and let him rest, he typically was “discharged to duty,” although once he was transferred to a Navy base hospital “for treatment and disposition.”

His official overseas assignment was to debrief returning pilots so their next missions could be more on the mark, but in practice, he often was in the thick of the battle himself, and not just in the skies. “The day Batdorff got hit with shrapnel when the [Japanese] were throwing mortar on to the strip, you and Bill Weir, Cropley and I were all in the same foxhole, sweating it out,” Major Robert “Ric” Barvoets, who served alongside Joe in the South Pacific, wrote after the war and at Joe’s behest. Another letter testifying to Joe’s willingness to engage the enemy



MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL PHOTO COURTESY OF WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

came from a fellow leatherneck in Marine Scout Bombing Squadron 235 identified only as “Coop.” “I took the mess cook named Helmuth Aab—who could ever forget the name—and you were riding in the same section perhaps with Pat Casey, and Aab was so afraid he never got off a shot while you set some sort of record and completely emptied the twin 30s. I particularly remember the pilot commenting that he couldn’t get you to stop shooting and was afraid you would burn out the guns. Incidentally, Aab is not recorded in my log either.”

Not all who served with him were fans.

His official overseas assignment was to debrief returning pilots so their next missions could be more on the mark, but in practice, he often was in the thick of the battle himself.



Recently elected Senator Joseph McCarthy tasting a favorite pheasant dish.

MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL PHOTO COURTESY OF WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY



COURTESY OF WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Members of United Packinghouse Workers Local 40 sign a “Joe Must Go” petition in 1954, part of an unsuccessful bid to recall Senator McCarthy.

Master Sergeant Jerome Wander told an earlier McCarthy biographer that Joe was “an opportunist” who wanted a combat record to spruce up his political resume, flew mainly milk runs and angered his pilot hosts, who preferred an experienced gunner to a wannabe one.

In the end, did he deserve the 11 medals, commendations and ribbons that the Armed Services awarded him? No member of the military has ever had that question asked about them as often as Joe McCarthy. Two Presidents who hated the Marine-turned-senator, Harry Truman and Dwight Eisenhower, surely would have relished the chance to prove him a fraud, even if that meant second-guessing the senior officers who approved the citations. Given the way McCarthy’s combat flights frequently were kept off the books, there is no way of knowing definitively whether he had enough to qualify for each of his honors. The way his own tallies climbed over the years—from 14 to 17 to 32—rightfully raised eyebrows and hackles. But the newly unveiled letters from Joe to his squadron mates asking

In the end, did he deserve the 11 medals, commendations and ribbons that the Armed Services awarded him? No member of the military has ever had that question asked about them as often as Joe McCarthy.

them to tap their recollections and log-books suggest a serious effort to assemble evidence. Its aim was transparently self-serving—to refute those charging him with fraud—but in the process, it filled in missing facts. Joe concluded that he was on 30 different bombing flights in 1943 and 1944, during 14 of which he experienced anti-aircraft fire. Targets ranged from gun positions and pillboxes to enemy convoys, ammo dumps, bridges

and airfields. “Note that many of these targets were clearly outside of simple intelligence missions,” he wrote.

Further confirmation that his awards were deserved came from his Marine Corps bosses. “We fought together on Guadalcanal, Bougainville, and Munda in the South Pacific. Mac was a captain and the squadron intelligence officer. And believe me, he was certainly no coward. He was a brave Irishman. And he did a great job for us. He was a hell of a man,” Major Glenn Todd, Joe’s commanding officer, told a reporter years later. “Mac didn’t give a damn about any medals. But he came up with the logbook, and I wrote him up for the two air medals. Now, I knew Mac was hot politically, and you can be damn sure when I made those recommendations I didn’t want to do anything that would bounce ... At that time, you could get credit for any kind of mission. But where Mac was concerned, I only counted those missions he got fired on or dropped bombs.” The Marines’ highest-ranking officer agreed, telling the Secretary of the Navy that,



COURTESY OF WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Left to right: G. David Schine, Senator Joe McCarthy, and Roy Cohn at the 1954 Army-McCarthy hearings.

despite the lack of written records, “it is the opinion of this Headquarters” that “McCarthy participated in combat flights in addition to those used as the basis for the recommended awards.”

Others defined heroism differently. Real valor would have been staying home rather than signing up, according to Harold F. Murphy, chairman of Wisconsin’s Board of Circuit Judges. “I still believe you are making a mistake and that the important

judicial business of your circuit is going to suffer by your absence from the Bench,” Murphy wrote McCarthy a week before he was commissioned. “Oftentimes great courage is required to hold fast to an extended duty even though it be less colorful than another opportunity to be of service.” Two years later, Gerald Jolin, a county judge in Wisconsin and Joe’s friend, suggested that Murphy’s fears were being realized. “There has been another murder



COURTESY OF AL MUTO/BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES

McCarthy consults with his aide Robert F. Kennedy, shortly after the Senate voted to condemn its renegade member.

in the County and which is to be tried in your Court, and again, the need for your presence on the bench has become acute.”

Author’s bio: Larry Tye, a former reporter at The Boston Globe, is the author of “Demagogue: The Life and Long Shadow of Senator Joe McCarthy” and seven other books. 🐾

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COURTESY OF SAM FOLSOM

Sam Folsom and his F4F-4 Wildcat on Faeloa in American Samoa. The nose art, painted by Folsom, shows the cartoon character Popeye wearing Marine Corps dress blues.

*Nearing his 100th birthday, Sam Folsom,
a VMF-121 Marine, Remembers the Cactus Air Force*

Guadalcanal Fighter Pilot

By Patrick Reed

As he flew through the formation of Japanese G4M Betty bombers in the skies over Guadalcanal, Sam Folsom, then a second lieutenant, recalled, “I rolled over on my back to dive down on them and spun out!” Not having had enough speed on his dive, Folsom had lost control. Recovering his aircraft and returning to the bombers, he said, “I flew around, did everything just right, got right on the tail of the Japanese plane, pressed the trigger and nothing happened.” His guns had literally frozen up. “So my first experience with the Japanese was spinning through a formation of 12 to 15 Bettys,” Folsom recalled. “They were on both sides of me, and there was nothing I could do but look!”

This was the first combat experience for many of the Marines of VMF-121, a Marine Corps fighter squadron introduced to the fierce fighting on Guadalcanal in October of 1942. The guns on Folsom’s F4F-4 Wildcat had frozen at the bombers’ altitude of 24,000 feet, the Marines unaware that lubricant would cause them to do so at such a height. Aside from being their first engagement with the enemy, this was also the first time many of the Marines had flown above 10,000 feet, breathed oxygen through a mask, or fired at an aerial target. Though inexperienced, these men would soon become legends for their role in the taking of Guadalcanal as members of the Cactus Air Force—Guadalcanal’s amalgamated force of

aircraft from the United States Army Air Force, U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps and Royal New Zealand Air Force.

Early Training

When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, Sam Folsom was an aviation cadet in Jacksonville, Fla. He had wanted to fly since he was a young child, influenced by the ballyhoo surrounding Charles Lindbergh’s 1927 trans-Atlantic flight. After completing training on the obsolete Grumman F3F, Folsom joined VMF-121 in March 1942 during their training at Camp Kearny Mesa, little more than a dirt strip with tent housing. Here, he and other Marines of VMF-121 had mere months to train for overseas combat with





COURTESY OF MARINE CORPS HISTORY DIVISION



COURTESY OF SAM FOLSOM

Above: A hangar on Henderson Field billows smoke after a Japanese bombardment, September 1942.

Left: Sam Folsom, far left, stands in front of an F4F Wildcat with other aviators of the Cactus Air Force on Guadalcanal.

Japanese G4M Betty bombers fly low over the water to attack American ships at Guadalcanal.



USMC

just a few F4F-4 Wildcats belonging to the squadron. In September of 1942, the largely inexperienced flyers and the squadron's ground echelon embarked on ships headed for Guadalcanal. By the time they were shipped overseas, Folsom had accumulated only 25 flight hours in the Wildcat, a number higher than many of his squadronmates, some of whom had as little as 14 flight hours. In Folsom's own words: "We were absolutely, positively, greenhorns."

Guadalcanal and the Cactus Air Force

The capture of Guadalcanal immediately stopped Japanese expansion toward Australia and served as the first rung in an offensive ladder toward the Japanese stronghold of Rabaul. Marines of the 1st Marine Division landed on Guadalcanal on Aug. 7, 1942, just nine months after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. By Aug. 8, they had captured the island's incomplete airfield, and within a week, the airfield, code-named "Cactus," was expanded and ready for use. Henderson Field's Marine aviators began to call themselves

the "Cactus Air Force." The nickname stuck. The arrival of aircraft in late August was a relief to the Marines on the ground. They had been exposed for nearly two weeks with no protection from enemy aircraft or ships. By Oct. 10, 1942, Folsom's VMF-121 was at fighting strength on Guadalcanal. As fighter aircraft, their mission was to keep Japanese bombers away from Henderson Field and Allied ships as well as support Marines on the ground.

"There was no such thing as a squadron flying as a squadron," Folsom remembered. Aircraft from multiple squadrons would go up and fly together, using as many available aircraft as were needed for the day's mission. Each pilot would fly roughly every other day and spend his spare time dodging bombardments, trying to make living conditions a little nicer or resting from the struggles of life on the island. Often, 15 to 20 Japanese bombers

Sam Folsom at Henderson Field after returning from the strike on *Hiei*. Note the patches on the aircraft. Each patch represents one or more bullets from a Japanese fighter. (Photo courtesy of Sam Folsom)





COURTESY OF THE COLONEL CHARLES H. WATERHOUSE ESTATE, ART COLLECTION OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MARINE CORPS

This painting by Col Charles H. Waterhouse, USMC (Ret), depicts aviators on Henderson Field running to their aircraft.

would attack Henderson Field from a high altitude of roughly 25,000 feet with a fighter escort. Marines at Henderson Field often had early warning from a combination of coastwatchers and an air-search radar system delivered by the Navy.

The day that Folsom claimed his first aerial victories, however, the Japanese came in low. Waiting for the bombers at 30,000 feet, the Marines were surprised to hear over the radios that the Japanese were attacking the fleet anchored below. The Marines dove toward the enemy aircraft.

"I came down and saw two Betty bombers right on the surface, literally 15 or 20 feet off the water," Folsom recalled. Lining up behind one, Folsom said, "I shot him down. He hit the water with a great big splash right in front of me."

Sliding to one side, Folsom lined up behind another Betty, which he downed as well. At this point, having spent all of his ammunition and with bullets from the swarming Japanese fighter aircraft bouncing off his seatback armor plate, he flew evasively. He managed to return to the fighter strip at Henderson Field, albeit with his airplane's throttle shot away and many holes in the fuselage. It was a lucky escape for Folsom, and it wouldn't be the only time he would return to Henderson

Field with a beat-up plane. "I got shot up more than I shot down," Folsom joked, noting that the fresh American pilots were facing a far more experienced enemy who possessed a faster and more agile aircraft.

Alone With the Japanese

He found himself in a similar position in November 1942 on a mission to sink the Japanese battleship *Hiei*, which had been crippled by American ships in a naval battle. Folsom had identified *Hiei* on a scouting mission prior to this attack, and now he and other fighter pilots were set to strafe the smaller Japanese warships defending it while dive-bombers attacked the floundering battleship itself. After completing the strafing run, Folsom, the last in the line of the attacking fighter aircraft, realized that he had made a mistake. "I pulled up and went back to look, and everybody else had dove down and gone back home."

He found himself alone in the sky in the midst of a formation of Japanese fighters.

"They shot the hell out of me," Folsom recalled. "I was ashamed of them, shooting up a poor guy like me!" he joked. After escaping into some nearby clouds for a while, he popped back out, only to be caught once again by the enemy air-

craft. At this point, Folsom flew away from Guadalcanal in an effort to lose his pursuers. Eventually nursing his smoking plane back to Henderson Field and nearly crashing on his approach, a wounded Folsom was greeted by his wingman who, while picking his teeth, casually remarked, "Where you been?"

Danger and Drudgery On the Ground

The danger didn't stop for the Marine pilots once they'd landed. As soon as he had stepped out of the plane upon his arrival to Henderson Field some weeks earlier, Folsom was handed a shovel and told to dig in. Japanese bombers relentlessly pounded the airfield, attacking at a regular time nearly every afternoon. The Japanese Navy shelled the airfield, notably with the 14-inch guns of their battleships. Folsom recalled sitting shoulder to shoulder in trenches dug in a coconut grove during a naval bombardment. "Until you've heard one of those slide over your head, you haven't lived!" Folsom recalled, referring to a 14-inch shell. "It's quite an experience."

The bombings were occasionally effective, destroying planes and materiel and causing casualties among the Ma-



Mud and thick foliage were commonplace on Guadalcanal. The rains also led to an abundance of mosquitoes; all but two Marines in VMF-121 contracted malaria.

COURTESY OF MARINE CORPS HISTORY DIVISION



A Marine on Guadalcanal digs a trench to provide some protection from the Japanese bombardment of the island.

COURTESY OF MARINE CORPS HISTORY DIVISION

lines. “You didn’t think about it, it just happened, you put up with it.” Folsom said. “You sat there and said ‘Jesus, that was close!’ ”

Along with experiencing regular shelling and bombing, the Marines also had to contend with the elements. Like everywhere else on Guadalcanal, Henderson Field turned to mud anytime it rained, and sleeping in floorless tents, it was a battle for the aviators to stay dry. When the rain stopped, the sun baked the field, turning it into a fine powder that blew

around with the breeze. Marion Carl, an ace with VMF-223, once remarked that Guadalcanal was “the only place on earth where you could stand up to your knees in mud and still get dust in your eyes.”

Most Marines had few extra clothes, if any, and lived in the same uniform for months at a time. Aside from the physical and psychological toll the adverse conditions took on the men, the mud and dust wrought havoc on the aircraft, keeping ground crews constantly working to maintain them. The rains also led to an abun-

dance of mosquitoes and all but two Marines in VMF-121, contracted malaria. Folsom and his wingman were the lucky two. Food was not plentiful, and all dealt with frequent bouts of diarrhea. This was life at Henderson Field.

Though subject to great losses, the men of the Cactus Air Force didn’t have the time or luxury to grieve the loss of a friend or worry about what might happen to them. Folsom remembers his fellow Marines being nervous, but not too torn up about the potential of being injured or killed, something he attributes to naivety.

“It had nothing to do with bravery,” Folsom recounted. “We were just sent out to do something and we did it.”

VMF-121 would lose 17 of its 40 pilots in enemy action on Guadalcanal. The squadron would go on to produce the most aces and have the highest number of aerial victories of any Marine Corps fighter squadron in World War II. Folsom flew with one of these legendary Marine aviators, Joe Foss, a Medal of Honor recipient for his actions with the Cactus Air Force, and a member of VMF-121. Folsom himself earned a Distinguished Flying Cross and a Purple Heart during his time with the squadron, and before leaving Guadalcanal, added a third victory to his tally after he shot down a Japanese Val dive bomber.

After “Cactus”

After Guadalcanal, Folsom spent time in Samoa and Funafuti, an atoll with little but a coral runway. After returning to the United States, he became an instructor in the F4U Corsair and eventually worked his way into a night fighter squadron, hoping to get back to combat. He wound up as the executive officer of VMF(N)-533 during the Battle of Okinawa and became its commanding officer in July 1945. On Okinawa, VMF(N)-533 helped to pioneer the use of radar intercept night fighting and became the top-scoring night fighter squadron of the war. Still on Okinawa when the war ended, Folsom was soon sent to occupation duty in Japan and eventually back to the United States. He spent time at the Naval Air Test Center in Patuxent River, Md., where he tested the Navy’s brand new partial pressure suit which would eventually be developed into the suit John Glenn wore on his first spaceflight. He flew a multitude of aircraft, including some of America’s first jets.

Korea and the “Frozen Chosin”

Folsom would face war one more time in the skies over Korea. Originally slated to be a night fighter pilot, he was transferred to a staff job as the wing intelligence officer where he was able to fly an F4U

Chinese troops attack a U.N. position during the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir.

Corsair alone, with no wingman. It was in this role that he flew over the Chosin Reservoir on a bright November day in 1950.

"It had snowed the night before. It was a beautiful, sunlit day. The ground was absolutely white," Folsom remembered. "I could see just about everything that took place on the ground, the dark people against the white snow." He found himself with a front-row seat to the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir. As he flew alone over the snowy landscape, Folsom could see encircled Marines on the ground sticking together to repulse Chinese attacks. At the direction of a Marine forward air controller called "Boyhood 14," Folsom found an Army unit, part of "Task Force Faith," trapped on the road with Chinese soldiers attacking down the steep hills above.

"I expended all my ammunition and my rockets," recalled Folsom, holding back tears, "and I was so desperate I was thinking of cutting them down with my propeller ... It was an earth-shaking experience."

Folsom later connected with an Army officer who had been trapped on that road and who told him that his attack had enabled some of the soldiers to escape across the ice to the Marine lines on the other side of the reservoir.

"I hope I helped," Folsom said.

Legacy

Folsom finished his time in Korea as part of an F9F squadron, attacking ground targets in Chinese-occupied territory. After Korea, he finished out his career



COURTESY OF CHINESE MILITARY SCIENCE ACADEMY

in the Marines with a tour in Norway as the assistant naval attaché and then a tour as commanding officer of VMF-312.

"It's something I have never forgotten, and I never regretted, in all my life, spending my years in the Marine Corps," Folsom, soon to turn 100, said, reflecting on his service. Though he's received nationwide attention for his military service, especially his service on Guadalcanal, he doesn't attribute this attention to anything particularly heroic about his service. "There's nobody left, that's why," he says. "In the 1950s, I was a war veteran. Now I'm *the* war veteran."

As the number of WW II veterans in our nation declines, keeping their stories

alive is becoming more crucial. Sam Folsom has been an eyewitness to critical moments in our nation's history, and his memories will serve to inform and inspire Americans for years to come.

The legacy of the Cactus Air Force, too, will live on. Their role in the taking of Guadalcanal was pivotal, having secured Henderson Field from repeated Japanese attempts to destroy it, and helping the Marines on the ground secure the island. In the course of almost three months, from late August to mid-November of 1942, the more experienced and better-equipped Japanese were repulsed in a savage war of attrition by the freshly minted pilots of the Cactus Air Force. The total losses to the Cactus Air Force were high—148 planes lost, with 84 pilots killed. But thanks to the skill, courage and tenacity of the men of the Cactus Air Force, a blow had been dealt to Japanese air power from which they would never recover. "We just did what we had to do," Folsom said. "We got into combat, we did what we could, and we got back if we were lucky."

Author's bio: Patrick Reed is currently an undergraduate student of history at Abilene Christian University and a graduate of Westwood High School in Austin, Texas. He is an active member of the Commemorative Air Force Central Texas Wing and has authored multiple research papers, and one other article for Leatherneck. His interest in Marine Corps aviation and history has taken him across the nation to interview veterans, including many WW II aviators.



COURTESY OF SAM FOLSOM

As an air wing intelligence officer during the Korean War, Folsom flew missions in the F4U Corsair.



SSgt Ben Wormington, pictured in the above left photo, was in Iraq for his third deployment in 2008 when he befriended Ted, an Iraqi interpreter attached to 1st Recon Bn, pictured in the above right photo on the far left. (Photos courtesy of Ben Wormington)

An American Dream:

After 12-Year Process, Iraqi Interpreter Begins New Life in the U.S., Credits Marine Who Refused to Leave Him Behind

By Sara W. Bock

Author's note: To protect the identity of Ted and his family members, their real names have been withheld from the following story.

Five years after he returned home from his third deployment to Iraq, Marine veteran Ben Wormington logged in to his Facebook account and was overjoyed to find a request from “Ted,” an Iraqi interpreter he had befriended in 2008 while serving with 1st Reconnaissance Battalion.

Ted was one of many Iraqi nationals who worked alongside American troops following the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. He and others like him provided mission-critical translation and

interpretation and helped establish trust between local communities and U.S. servicemembers. It was an exceptionally dangerous role to assume. Iraqis like Ted who worked for the Americans are widely viewed as traitors, and they and their families have lived for years in constant fear of threats from militants linked to al-Qaida, the Islamic State and other terrorist groups. To this day, many former interpreters have bounties placed on their heads and are attacked, abducted or killed because of their previous associations with U.S. forces. Many have been forced to move away from their hometowns in order to avoid being identified by insurgents.

As the U.S. began to withdraw its troops from Iraq, Congress authorized a Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) program in 2008 for Iraqis who had embraced American ideals and served as interpreters and in

other vital roles, offering them, their spouses and minor children a pathway for entry into the United States where they could “safely and expeditiously resettle” without fear of retaliation. A year later, in 2009, the program was extended to include Afghan nationals who were serving alongside American troops and faced similar threats from the Taliban.

When Wormington and Ted parted ways at the end of 2008, Ted had already begun his special immigrant visa application; so when the two reconnected online in 2013, Wormington figured it was safe to assume that Ted had already begun a new life in the United States.

“Where are you?” Wormington typed in a message to Ted, awaiting a response that he was sure would be somewhere not too far away, like “Texas” or “California.” He was not even remotely prepared for the answer he’d receive: Ted was still in Iraq.

“I’m not safe. The situation’s not good,” Ted typed back.

Wormington immediately knew he had no choice but to take action. He calls it an “aha moment,” and compares it to another he had after 9/11—one that led him to enlist in the Marine Corps. He knew right then that he’d do whatever it took to bring Ted to America.

“I felt like we left a Marine behind,” he says.

He had no idea where to start, and no way of knowing that he was embarking on what would become a seven-year battle—a frustrating and costly one—to bring Ted, his wife and two daughters to the U.S. to live their American dream. But his perseverance paid off on March 7 this year when that dream finally became a reality.

From Ted’s family’s new apartment in Wormington’s hometown of Omaha, Neb., the two “brothers” spoke with *Leatherneck* earlier this year, sharing stories from their time together in Iraq and the events that passed during the 12 years that led up to their heartwarming reunion. A deeply emotional Ted says of Wormington, “I never would have made it here if he hadn’t been there.”

Wormington had participated in the initial invasion of Iraq in 2003 and returned in 2004, assigned to the personal security team for then-Brigadier General John F. Kelly. By 2008, when he met Ted, things in Iraq were “quieting down” and the withdrawal of U.S. troops had begun. It was in this context that he began to wonder what the outcome of America’s involvement there might be.

“I had so many questions about how Iraqis felt about us,” recalled Wormington. “I was just trying to make sense out of everything that had happened there.”

Then a staff sergeant, Wormington was attached to a heliborne reaction force—1st Platoon, “Bravo” Company, 1st Recon Bn—as a joint terminal attack controller. Ted also was assigned to the platoon, which was based at a combat outpost near the Sinjar Mountains in northwestern Iraq, along the Syrian border.

Relying heavily on helicopter transport, the platoon was tasked with disrupting the smuggling of weapons and black-market goods across the border of Iraq and Syria. Wormington coordinated



COURTESY OF BEN WORMINGTON

Wormington, left, and Ted kneel for a group photo with members of 1st Plt, Co B, 1st Recon Bn, in Iraq in 2008.

“Where are you?” Wormington typed in a message to Ted, awaiting a response that he was sure would be somewhere not too far away, like “Texas” or “California.” He was not even remotely prepared for the answer he’d receive: Ted was still in Iraq. ★

the unit’s air support and aerial surveillance and worked closely with Ted to keep the platoon commander and the platoon sergeant abreast of the situation on the ground.

“They’re saying, ‘Hey Ted, what are you seeing, what are you identifying?’ ‘Does this look normal, or off?’ ‘Is this guy telling the truth?’ ” said Wormington.

Ted not only advised the platoon commander, but also knowingly put himself in harm’s way to assist the Marines. His actions earned him numerous awards, commendations, and letters of recommendation that he planned to include in his visa application. One commendation presented



LCPL J.P. SOTELO, USMC

With the help of an Iraqi translator, a Marine captain speaks to a citizen of Ar Rifa, Iraq, in 2003. During the war in Iraq, many English-speaking Iraqis like Ted worked with U.S. servicemembers, putting themselves at great risk of threats and bodily harm by al-Qaida and other terrorist organizations.

to Ted detailed his exposure to enemy fire as he facilitated the surrender of an insurgent. Due to Ted's efforts, the insurgent surrendered unharmed, and Ted assisted in extensive questioning during which he "was able to extract invaluable information that helped shape the platoon's scheme of maneuver to decisively end the engagement," according to the commendation issued by the battalion's commanding officer.

Wormington and Ted grew close due to the interconnectedness of their roles with 1st Recon, and a friendship was formed. During their off-duty hours, Wormington and Ted—who almost always had an English dictionary in hand—would spend hours sitting outside talking. Wormington would answer questions about the usage of English words, and Ted would answer questions about his background and his thoughts

Local militia members cornered him [Ted] and issued a warning. "They threatened me and said, 'Hey, we'll kill you if you don't knock it off. Don't speak with the Americans. We're going to kill you.'" ★

on the often-philosophical questions that plagued Wormington, like "What's next for Iraq?"

Their conversations ranged from serious to lighthearted. Wormington laughs as he describes the sense of humor and dry sarcasm that Ted acquired by watching American sitcoms like "Friends" and "Frasier."

Ted, originally from northern Iraq, gained fluency in English by watching those TV shows and others from the 1990s and early 2000s. He was a particular fan of the show "Becker," whose title character was played by Ted Danson—which is why he decided his interpreter name would be "Ted."

Ted and his family fervently supported the U.S.-led invasion and the toppling of Saddam Hussein's regime.

"We are really grateful for that," he said. "The way I look at it is that you guys just saved us."

In 2006, Ted, who had earned an associate's degree in Iraqi law from the University of Baghdad, would occasionally approach coalition forces patrolling through his neighborhood, relishing the opportunity to practice his English conversational skills. But after a few of these encounters, local militia members cornered him and issued a warning.

"They threatened me and said, 'Hey, we'll kill you if you don't knock it off. Don't speak with the Americans. We're going to kill you,'" Ted, whose cousin had been killed by al-Qaida that year, recalled. He couldn't let himself fall victim to the same fate, and he knew the militants wouldn't hesitate to follow through.

Realizing he couldn't stay there, Ted fled to Syria for 10 months, where he worked painting houses until after his family had relocated to a relatively safer area of Iraq.

After his return to Iraq, Ted didn't let his previous brush with the militia dissuade him from taking an assessment to qualify as an interpreter for a U.S.-based defense contractor. He passed both the verbal and oral examinations with flying colors and traveled to the Green Zone in Baghdad—the government center of the coalition provisional authority—where he received an assignment to Camp Fallujah to work with the Marines.

Ted rotated among the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Recon Battalions until the end of 2008, when a new status of forces agreement detailed that going forward, only units combined with Iraqi forces could operate outside the wire.

"We weren't built to do that," said Wormington of 1st Recon. So he and Ted parted ways, unsure if they would ever see each other again. The platoon was transferred to Al Asad Air Base to ride out their deployment, and Ted was assigned to an Army unit training Iraqi security forces near Basra in southeastern Iraq.

While training with the Army, Ted jumped from a vehicle and suffered a severe back injury, rendering him unable to continue his work. In the absence of proper medical support, he spent the next eight months trying to recover by lying flat on his back at home.

And though Ted had already begun the process of applying for the SIV program before he was let go from his interpreter job, his health problems—and lack of internet access due to Iraq's weakened infrastructure—meant he couldn't access incoming emails from the U.S. State Department's National Visa Center, which requested additional documentation.

"He didn't have the physical mobility to be going to internet centers," said Wormington. "And then you add on the fact that ISIS started to take over, and it wasn't safe for him to be going out and gallivanting around and putting on some random computer that he's worked with the U.S. troops, and scanning documents and mailing them to the

National Visa Center. The system itself, it doesn't take into account the danger that they're in. That's still the case with Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria."

By the time Ted reconnected with Wormington via Facebook in 2013, he was married and had a wife and children. To the extent that he could, he continued to work on the lengthy application for a visa that would allow him and his family to seek refuge in the U.S., but many of the email communications contained jargon that was difficult to understand, and a long series of roadblocks inhibited the visa's timely processing.

While many Iraqi and Afghan interpreters had received their special immigrant visas and were now living in the United States, there was a backlog of tens of thousands of applicants who, like Ted, were seemingly caught in a web of bureaucratic red tape. As the presence of ISIS grew in Iraq, the U.S. State Department saw an influx in applications for special immigrant visas from those who had worked for the Americans and were now facing heightened threats. But a temporary halt in refugee processing due to reduced staffing at the U.S. Embassy meant that applications were stalled, and some individuals were forced to start over.

Ted was able to send his documentation to Wormington, who exhausted every possible avenue in an effort to somehow expedite the process. He contacted the National Visa Center on behalf of Ted, called his congressional representatives in Nebraska, and spoke with an immigration attorney, but never seemed to make any headway.

A breakthrough came after he contacted every major national news outlet—CNN, Fox News, MSNBC—as well as his local news outlets. Most of his attempts were met with silence, but a reply from James Wilcox, a news anchor with KETV Channel 7, the local ABC affiliate in Omaha, would



LCPL ANDREW WILLIAMS, USMC

set Wormington on course to finally bring Ted to America.

After Wilcox's short news segment aired, detailing Wormington's efforts to get Ted's visa approved, people began to reach out. One individual in particular connected Wormington with the International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP), which provides legal advocacy for refugees. An attorney who was knowledgeable about the process of obtaining special immigrant visas took on Ted's case. It was a step in the right direction, but the journey was far from over.

In order to collect and submit the extensive documentation and paperwork required, including police records that proved he did not have a criminal history, Ted had to make numerous trips from his home in southern Iraq to the capital in Baghdad.

"The situation is kind of dire there, the militia

GySgt Heidi Schuerger listens as an Iraqi interpreter communicates information from the local police in Al Kut, Iraq, in 2003.



COURTESY OF BEN WORMINGTON

The Marines of 1st Recon Bn's heliborne reaction force in 2008 included Iraqi interpreter Ted and SSgt Ben Wormington, who was attached to the unit as a JTAC.



COURTESY OF BEN WORMINGTON

Local Omaha, Neb., news anchor James Wilcox, left, first covered Wormington's efforts to bring Ted to the U.S., and his broadcasts helped connect Wormington with the right people and organizations to make his dream a reality. Ted had the opportunity to meet Wilcox in March, and Wilcox even provided Ted's family with a furnished condo to stay in while they secured a more permanent residence.

activity going on there," said Ted. "The government is corrupted in Iraq. I can't trust anyone."

Not only were his trips to Baghdad dangerous, they were also costly. To take a taxi to Baghdad cost about \$300 round trip. Wormington began to send money to Ted through an Iraqi interpreter living in the U.S. who had worked with Ted, had applied for his SIV after Ted and had been in the U.S. long enough to have been granted citizenship. Using a "middleman" was a necessary measure as Ted's safety would have been jeopardized had he received wire transfers from someone with an American name.

The years crept by, and as Ted's application inched closer to approval, shifting policies following the 2016 U.S. presidential election resulted in a steep decline in the number of Iraqi interpreters receiving visas, a consequence of an overall reduction in the number of refugees granted entry. And a travel ban instituted by the Trump administration on refugees coming from several Muslim-majority countries ground the process to a near halt.

"We had lost hope a couple times," said Wormington. "But I leaned on Ted and he leaned on me, and we said, 'We're not going to quit, we're going to find a way.'"

In March 2019, Ted was granted an appointment at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad to go over his application and paperwork and find out which additional documentation he needed in order to receive a final decision. He received approval to schedule the required medical assessments for himself and his family. The assessments, however, weren't available until early January 2020.

In September 2019, as the appointment date drew closer, there was another glimmer of hope. A federal court ruled that the delays faced by thousands of Afghans and Iraqis like Ted who worked for American forces and were waiting for their special immigrant visas to be processed were both "unreasonable and unlawful."

"In 2013, Congress mandated that SIV applicants should receive a decision within nine months of submitting their application" read a statement from the International Refugee Assistance Project. Ted was one of thousands who had been waiting much longer than nine months, and the U. S. government was now required to come up with a plan to process the delayed applications in a quick and efficient manner.

But just days before Ted and his family were scheduled to travel to the capital for their medical screenings, supporters of the Iran-backed militia Kata'ib Hezbollah attacked the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad on Dec. 31, 2019. Three days later, on Jan. 3, the U.S. carried out the assassination of Iranian Major General Qasem Soleimani at Baghdad International Airport, fueling the fire of anti-American sentiment throughout the region.

Not only were operations at the embassy now on hold, but in Ted's hometown, one of the Iranian-backed militia leaders made a proclamation at the local market, stating that anyone who had worked with Americans would be hunted down and killed.

At that point, there was no question: Ted and his family had to get out of Iraq as soon as possible. A text message from a fellow Marine veteran who was working in Baghdad as a government security contractor confirmed what Wormington already knew.

"I cannot stress enough, Ted and his family need to leave now," the text read.

With the help of his attorney from IRAP, Ted was able to get approval from the National Visa Center to transfer his case from Baghdad to Ankara, Turkey. He, his wife and children were granted visas to leave Iraq and fly there, where they could safely wait while his case continued to be processed.

Fortunately, Wormington had already rallied an army of supporters in a Facebook group, and they had managed to raise money to help cover the family's medical screenings, flights out of Iraq and other necessary costs. But now it was far too dangerous to be receiving large sums of money from an American account, so Ted borrowed \$3,000 from several people to pay for his family's airfare to Turkey, promising to repay them as soon as possible.

Ted found an apartment in Ankara for his family, and Wormington was amazed by the generosity of individuals who sent him money via Venmo

to transfer to Ted to cover their expenses. He created a Facebook page in January, after the family arrived in Ankara, which he named “Ted’s American Dream.” In his frequent updates to the page’s followers, he shared the family’s needs—which were met with generous donations—as well as his own heartfelt sentiments.

“My faith in the American project has been debatable time and time again, but every time I look into Ted, his wife and his children’s eyes, I believe again,” Wormington wrote in a Jan. 25 post. “I believe in our collective project. I believe in our common values. Party lines fall away. The ‘news story of the day’ falls away. What remains is the aim to, together, be better than we are alone. This is what drives me. Ted’s hope, his belief in us, his hope in us ... for his family ... for his future, renews my strength.”

As Ted and his family waited for appointments to be scheduled at the U.S. Embassy in Ankara, they enjoyed simple freedoms like being able to go outside without fear—but they had nothing with them aside suitcases they’d brought from Iraq, and no idea how long they’d be waiting there.

And while fleeing Iraq was a huge victory, there was still an uphill battle ahead. Ted’s lawyer from IRAP was having trouble getting a response from the embassy about scheduling Ted’s necessary appointments. In a long shot, another veteran Recon Marine and supporter of Ted contacted the office of U.S. Senator from Pennsylvania, Pat Toomey.

“Next thing we know, Ted’s got an appointment scheduled in Ankara at the embassy, and then the approval to get his medical appointments.”

Then there was another problem: Ted had copies of his required documents, but left the originals behind in Iraq in an effort to avoid suspicion as he exited the country. He was able to coordinate with an Iraqi who was traveling from Baghdad to Istanbul and was willing to pick up the documents and bring them to Turkey. Ted got on a plane to Istanbul to retrieve them and boarded a plane right back to Ankara, where his family waited. He brought the documents to his next embassy appointment and finally their visas were approved, just as the COVID-19 pandemic became a looming global threat.

Wormington saw the writing on the wall and knew there was no time to waste. Rather than wait for funding for the family’s travel expenses from the International Organization for Migration, he used some of the donations he’d received on behalf of Ted and his family to purchase their airfare to America.

“I am so grateful. I’m speechless,” said Ted, whose family members are now learning English and are settling in to their new life in Omaha.

When their plane touched down in Nebraska on March 7, they were greeted by Wormington, his wife and two children, as well as dozens of people wearing red, white and blue and holding signs in both English and Arabic that read “Welcome



COURTESY OF BEN WORMINGTON



COURTESY OF BEN WORMINGTON

Above: Wormington introduces Ted to a crowd of supporters gathered to give him a “hero’s welcome” at Omaha Eppley Airfield, March 7.

Left: After 12 years apart, Wormington and Ted embrace each other upon Ted’s family’s arrival to the United States, where they finally have begun a new life without fear of retaliation for his work with American troops.

Wormington rallied the large group of supporters in an effort to give Ted a “hero’s welcome” like the ones he had received when he came home from his deployments to Iraq. ★

Home.” Wormington rallied the large group of supporters in an effort to give Ted a “hero’s welcome” like the ones he had received when he came home from his deployments to Iraq.

“He needs to see that, and his family needs to see what Ted has done for our country, and what he’s done for their country and for them, and what he’s done continuously to keep the faith and keep fighting and not give up,” Wormington said.

During Ted’s first few days in the U.S., Wormington had what he says is “the greatest honor of his life.” In an effort to protect his young children, Ted had never told them that he was an interpreter for American troops.



COURTESY OF BEN WORMINGTON

Above: The emotion is visible on their faces as Ted and Wormington introduce their wives and children to each other at Omaha Eppley Airfield, March 7.

Right: Wormington's daughter holds her "welcome" sign for Ted and his family prior to their arrival in Omaha. The families instantly bonded and "blended into one," said Wormington.



COURTESY OF BEN WORMINGTON

"I was able to sit there in my living room with my mom and my wife and my children, and Ted was the interpreter, and I was able to tell them what their dad had actually done for their country, before he even had a wife and children, but he did it for them," said Wormington.

The two families immediately blended into one—"they fit right in!" says Wormington. His mother, Monica, even hosted Ted and his family, in her home while they waited to move to a more

For Wormington, who served on active duty for eight years and struggled to put his time in Iraq in context after returning home, working to help bring Ted and his family to America has reinforced his faith in humanity ★

permanent apartment. And James Wilcox, the news anchor who initially reported about Ted's plight, graciously provided them with another transitional home in his vacation rental before their apartment was available.

As she spent time with Ted and his family, her son's efforts to bring him to America made even more sense to Monica Wormington.

"I know why Ben and Ted are connected—because they are the same," she said. "They're cut from the same cloth."

Ben Wormington continues to be amazed by the generosity of others, as well as the support Ted has received from the local interfaith community in Omaha. The woman in charge of the family's resettlement is Muslim, like Ted, but his case is managed by Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska, and a local Jewish synagogue offered to furnish the family's entire apartment. An anonymous donor contributed \$10,000 to buy the family a car so they could have reliable transportation. And he was able to transfer the remainder of the money he'd raised for the family into a savings account in their name.

While the coronavirus pandemic temporarily impeded Ted's ability to get a job, take his driver's assessment and enroll his children in school, he is deeply grateful to finally be safe and free in America and is eager to contribute to society as soon as possible.

For Wormington, who served on active duty for eight years and struggled to put his time in Iraq in context after returning home, working to help bring Ted and his family to America has reinforced his faith in humanity and, he says, was a way for him to be of service to others even though his military service has ended.

He sees Ted as being in the center of what he calls a "hurricane of generosity," created by lots of Americans contributing in ways that may seem small or insignificant to them because they don't get to see the collective, combined benefit that he has had the opportunity to view up close.

"It's flowing around us—it's breathtaking to see what little bits of good done by a lot of people, what that result is," Wormington said. "It's been humbling for me. When anybody wants to talk about America being divided, or that we're more divided than we've ever been, no. Just give people something worth spending their time on. We still have what it takes, as a nation, to live up to the ideals we were founded on. America's as beautiful and amazing as it ever has been [...] I'll never second guess the power of what good people can do together."

As Ted settles in to his new home, Wormington is at peace knowing that through his perseverance and refusal to give up, he played a role in finally bringing home the Marine he left behind 12 years ago.

"Ted has always been my family," said Wormington. "I could do nothing else for the rest of my life and die a happy man. I got my wife and kids, I served in the Marines, and I helped get Ted and his family to America. If it all ended now, that's a life I'd be proud of." 🐾



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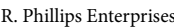
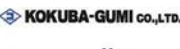
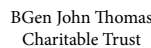
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From the left, Capt Daniel Kult, Sgt John Dietrick and PFC Alexander Meinhardt, assigned to 1/6, arrived at Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport, May 4. The three Marines were traveling from Japan to Texas when they detained a hostile passenger on their flight until the pilot could make an emergency landing in Los Angeles. (Photos by Cpl Joseph Garriss, USMC)

Marines Subdue Hostile Passenger Mid-Flight

Three Marines made national news after they detained a hostile passenger on a flight from Japan to Texas, May 4.

Captain Daniel Kult, Sergeant John Dietrick and Private First Class Alexander Meinhardt of 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force, were traveling to the U.S. from a unit deployment program (UDP) in Okinawa, Japan, on a flight from Tokyo to Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport when a passenger barricaded himself inside the lavatory and made threatening comments.

“While watching a movie during my flight from Japan to Texas, I started to hear screaming coming from the restroom on board,” said Dietrick, an infantry assault section leader. “When I took off my headphones, I heard a man sounding very distraught and screaming from the bathroom.”

Acting quickly, the Marines stacked up outside the lavatory and prepared to subdue the passenger while a flight attendant unlocked the door. The Marines seized the passenger and restrained him with flex ties.

“I knew I had to step in when he became a danger to others and himself,” said Meinhardt, a mortarman with 1/6. “I didn’t think twice about helping restrain him through the rest of the flight.”

The Marines secured the unruly passenger to a seat and continued to provide security for the remainder of the flight.

“We are well-trained, and it paid off today,” said Kult, an infantry officer. “We just assessed the situation and acted.

Working with the flight crew, we got the door open and from there worked together to subdue him. We didn’t take time to talk it over. We just got ready and did what we needed to help.”

“The three Marines were onboard and able to restrain the unruly passenger,” said a spokesperson from the Los Angeles Airport Police. “Great job done by those Marines!”

The flight was diverted to Los Angeles International Airport where the passenger was transported to a local hospital for a mental evaluation.

“Honestly, I’m not surprised,” said 1/6 commander, Lieutenant Colonel Chris Niedziocha, of the Marines’ actions. “I happen to know all three of them, two of them well, and they are what I would call ‘men of action.’ I’m continually amazed by and grateful for the people we have in this battalion.”

The Marines were halfway through a six-month UDP at Camp Schwab, Okinawa, Japan, when for differing reasons, each was cleared via a combatant commander-endorsed exemption-to-policy waiver for essential travel back to the U.S.

As of May 5, the incident was pending investigation by the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Central District of California and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

2ndLt Kayla Olsen, USMC

At Sea, 31st MEU Marines Honor the Fallen

An intense unit workout aboard the flight deck of amphibious assault ship USS *America* (LHA-6) on the morning of March 14 served as more than just an average physical training session for the Marines of Battalion Landing Team, 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit. The workout, referred to as a “Murph,” afforded the Marines the opportunity to honor their fallen brothers and sisters—in this case, two recently fallen Marine Corps Special



Marines with BLT 1/5, 31st MEU challenge themselves during a “Murph” workout aboard USS *America*, March 14. The special workout was held in memory of GySgt Diego Pongo and Capt Moises Navas, two Marine Raiders who were killed in Iraq on March 8.

LCPL KOLBY LEGER, USMC



COURTESY OF GYSGT DANIEL KARCZEWSKI, USMC

BACK-TO-BACK “WORLD CHAMPS”—Relying on hard work, dedication and determination, the Aviation Supply Department Warehouse Management Division Marines of Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron (MALS) 11, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, based at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., defied all odds and received a near perfect score of 99 percent on their 2019 functional area inspection, a feat they repeated again in 2020.

“This has never been done in the community before,” said Gunnery Sergeant Daniel Karczewski. “What they did was no easy task and surely took hard work, dedication and determination. They have set the example for all other MALS to emulate.”

Prior to the inspection, the Aviation Supply Department faced an uphill battle in reshaping the entire warehouse to fit a new retail supply chain modernization that combined two warehouses into one, all while supporting seven flying squadrons and at times up to eight detachments around the globe.

Operations Command (MARSOC) Raiders, Gunnery Sergeant Diego Pongo and Captain Moises Navas.

Pongo, who served as a sniper team leader with 1/5 on a deployment to Afghanistan in 2004, served as a rifleman before earning the title of Marine Raider in 2011. Navas enlisted in 2004, achieving the rank of sergeant before becoming a commissioned officer through the Marine Enlisted Commissioning Education Program (MECEP). After rigorous training, Navas was selected to become a Marine Raider in 2016 and spent the last four years as a team commander and company executive officer with 2nd Marine Special Operations Battalion.

The two Raiders died on March 8 after being wounded by enemy small-arms fire during a mission to eliminate an Islamic State stronghold in Ninewah Province, Iraq. Their valiant sacrifice in combat inspired the BLT Marines to complete the Murph Challenge in their honor.

For Staff Sergeant Michael Staten, a platoon sergeant with 1/5, the challenge had an added significance, as he had pre-

viously served with 2nd Marine Raider Battalion and personally knew both Marines.

“The entire Raider community is inspiring,” Staten said. “Captain Navas and Gunnery Sergeant Pongo were no exception. Raiders do leadership right.”

The challenge, which is named after Lieutenant Michael Murphy, a Navy SEAL who made the ultimate sacrifice during a mission in Afghanistan, required the Marines to run a mile and then complete 100 pull-ups, 200 push-ups and 300 squats prior to running a final mile.

The Marines who completed the Murph challenge pushed their bodies to the limit, wearing plate carriers with front and back ballistic plates to simulate the weight that servicemembers would have on their shoulders in combat.

“The least we could do for them is spill a little sweat for those that spilled all of their blood for us,” Staten said.

As a leader, Staten feels that Marines and Sailors need to know that what they do is much more than a typical “9-to-5” job.

“We are a family, a brotherhood of war-

riors,” Staten said. “Nothing is about the individual. I wanted my Marines and Sailors to know that a blow to one of us is a blow to all of us.”

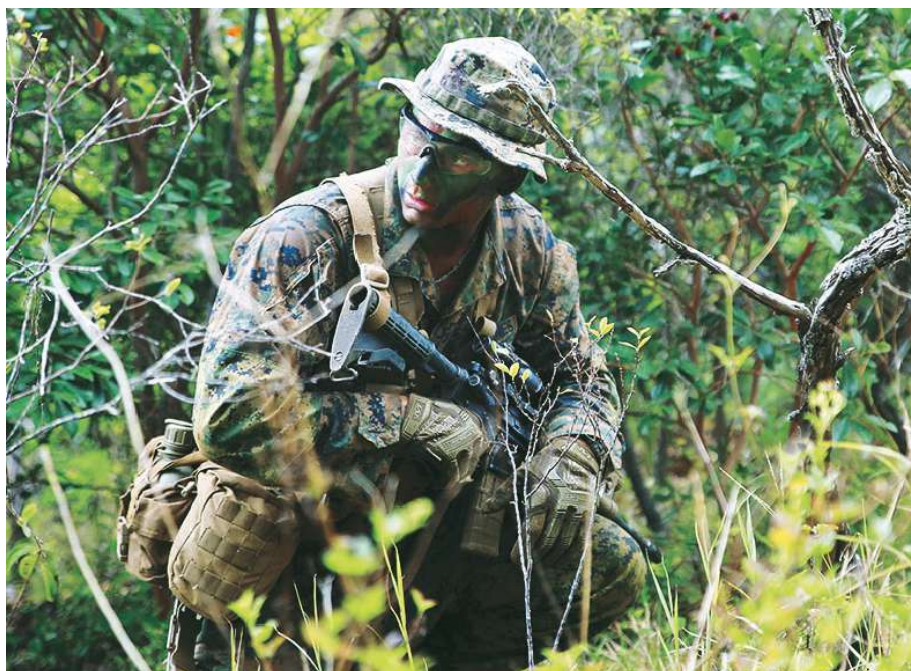
America, flagship of the *America* Expeditionary Strike Group, 31st MEU team, is positioned in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations to enhance interoperability with allies and partners and serve as a ready response force to defend peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

LCpl Kolby Leger, USMC

Later This Year, Corps to Field New Tropical Uniforms

On April 14, Marine Corps Systems Command (MCSC) released a Request for Proposals (RFP) to industry for new tropical uniforms for Marines to wear while training or embarking on missions in warm-weather climates.

The Marine Corps Tropical Combat Uniform (MCTCU) is a rapid-dry, breathable uniform that can be worn for prolonged periods in hot, humid and wet environments. The MCTCU will provide an alternative to the current Marine Corps



MONIQUE RANDOLPH

An infantry Marine with 3rd Bn, 3rd Marines conducts a patrol wearing a prototype tropical utility uniform during a user evaluation in October 2017. MCSC released an RFP to industry in April for the new tropical uniforms, which will be worn by Marines training and operating in warm weather climates.

Combat Utility Uniform and the Marine Corps Combat Boot.

“This new tropical uniform allows Marines to be more comfortable and less fatigued while focusing on the mission at hand,” said Lou Curcio, MCSC’s MCTCU project officer.

The MCTCU includes trousers, a blouse and a pair of boots. The trousers and blouse—the focus of the RFP—are made of the same blend of cotton and nylon as the MCCUU and feature the same camouflage pattern. The difference is in the weave and weight, resulting in a lighter material that dries more quickly. Both items are treated with permethrin to provide protection from insects.

The boots, awarded on a separate contract, are also lightweight, with self-cleaning soles to improve mobility in a tropical environment. They are more than a pound lighter than the current boot fielded by the Marine Corps.

“MCTCU will bring many advantages during training and combat in tropical environments,” said Curcio. “For all the sacrifices and challenges they endure, Marines deserve a uniform like this one.”

Between June and September 2017, hundreds of Marines participated in various user evaluations to assess the durability, fit and function of a prototype tropical uniform.

MCSC’s program manager for infantry combat equipment leveraged the feedback from the evaluations to inform industry solicitations and other decisions.

“Many Marines said the MCTCU feels

like pajamas, appreciating how lightweight it is,” said Curcio. “They also noted how quickly the uniform dries upon getting wet.”

Based on January 2020 market research and responses to a November 2019 Request For Information, the Marine Corps should see a potential cost reduction of at least 25 percent and as much as 60 percent per uniform.

MCSC plans to purchase 70,000 trousers, blouses and pairs of boots for the

MCTCU to support Marines training or operating in tropical climates. The command procured more than 10,000 sets of blouses and trousers under a Manufacturing and Development effort.

Fielding of the MCTCU is slated for the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2020.

Matt Gonzales

“No Gym, No Problem”: Squadron Challenge Encourages Marines To Stay Fit During Pandemic

With gyms shut down and large-scale physical training suspended for many Marines throughout April and May due to the coronavirus pandemic, units across the Corps found unique ways to keep Marines active. For Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 262, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, based at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, Okinawa, Japan, it meant creating the “Flying Tiger Running Challenge.”

“VMM-262 started the Flying Tiger Running Challenge on April 1 to promote physical fitness and combat these unique COVID times through individual fitness, motivation, confidence building and good old competition,” said Sergeant Major Paul Hannaway, the squadron’s sergeant major. “The goal is to run 75 miles on the road—no treadmills—before the end of April. Those who complete the challenge get bragging rights and a Flying Tiger Running Club t-shirt, and those who run 100 miles get a ‘100 miler’ shirt. Proof of run completion via fitness apps is verified by staff noncommissioned officers or officers in charge. I thought that only a dozen or so would sign up, but it resulted



LCPL RYAN PERSINGER, USMC

Cpl Kyle Daly, left, the frontrunner in VMM-262’s Flying Tiger Running Challenge, and 1stLt Sam LaPorte, right, who created the squadron’s challenge, stand in front of an MV-22B Osprey at MCAS Futenma, Okinawa, Japan, April 28. As gyms shut down and large-scale training was suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic, VMM-262 was just one of the many units that came up with inventive ways for Marines to stay active.

in half of the squadron voluntarily participating, from the commanding officer down.”

By late April, the squadron’s Marines had already logged more than 3,800 miles.

“To put it into perspective, we’ve run from MCRD San Diego out to MCRD Parris Island and we’re now over halfway back as a squadron. We’ve got a little over a week left and are on track to make it back to San Diego and then some,” said First Lieutenant Sam LaPorte, who organized the challenge at the squadron.

“Eighteen Marines and three Sailors already completed the 75-mile challenge, and three Marines have run close to 200 miles each,” said Hannaway. “The Marines’ motivation has been contagious. Night crew Marines are crushing half marathons at midnight after their shift. One Marine on the Body Composition Program lost two percent body fat in 10 days.”

“I wish it was my idea. I actually got it from a gunny I worked with at my last billet,” explained LaPorte. “This is something he initially put together, and I realized it would fit our operational tempo. The amount of hours we work makes

whole squadron physical training sessions hard to logistically set up already, with Marines being in and out all the time.”

LaPorte described the challenge as an outlet for Marines to set their own goals and milestones while being able to compete with other Marines in the unit that they may not usually train with under normal circumstances.

“This challenge captures the resiliency of 1st MAW Marines, their continued passion to pursue excellence, and the warrior spirit that exists in all Marines,” added Hannaway. “We are finalizing our fitness challenge for May and it looks like 1,250 pull-ups will be the task, along with running 50 miles and virtually completing the Murph Challenge prior to the Memorial Day 96.”

LaPorte also claims that in the future there will be a long-term six-month fitness challenge, allowing Marines to develop long-term goals and fitness plans.

As of April 27, the challenge leader was Corporal Kyle Daly, a Marine who grew up in Southern California and graduated with a bachelor’s degree in journalism before joining the Marine Corps. He is a frequent contributor to *Leatherneck* and

was the recipient of the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation’s 2019 Master Sergeant Tom Bartlett Award for feature writing by an enlisted Marine.

“Initially, I wasn’t planning on making this a career; I just wanted to serve,” said Daly. “My dad was in the Marines and it’s kind of a family legacy thing. I’m currently looking at the officer route for the future.”

“I’m a big-time runner. I’ve done half marathons, marathons and two ultras before I joined the Marines,” said Daly. “I’m not a fast guy, but I love the endurance of running. It’s kept me in shape all these years, and I’m on the older side, actually, being 31 years old. So I have to keep up with these younger guys. Running has always allowed me to stay in shape and compete with other Marines that could be 10-plus years younger than me.”

Daly hoped to set the example at the highest standard by clocking in an astonishing 200 or more miles a week before the challenge deadline.

“I wake up motivated to go running because of this challenge,” Daly said.

LCpl Ryan Persinger, USMC



Crazy Caption Contest

Winner



CWO BOBBY YARBROUGH, USMC

“I’m not coming down! That swamp rat was huge!”

Submitted by:
Vance Poole
Rochester, N.Y.

This Month’s Photo



CPL ISAAC CANTRELL, USMC

(Caption) _____

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____ ZIP _____

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

Warfighting Exercise Presented Leadership Opportunities For Corps' Junior Leaders

NCOs Served as Primary Staff at MWX

By CWO-2 Brett J. Parvin, USMC

2nd Assault Amphibian Battalion (2nd AA Bn) deployed to Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif., for Marine Air Ground Task Force Warfighting Exercise (MWX) Oct. 1-20, 2019. Because the battalion was gapped an intelligence officer, the main facilitation of the push-pull relationship with higher and adjacent units fell on the shoulders of the intelligence chief, a young, driven corporal. She was quickly able to determine what the commander needed to know, when he needed to know it, and how to prioritize reports she received and generated. The field environment mandated that she take the lead on numerous patrols in support of Battalion Support Area (BSA) operations, use thermals and night vision optics to evaluate signature management, and relay qualita-

tive and quantitative data in a timely fashion to the battalion command team. As the intelligence chief, she stepped up because she understood she was a one-of-one capability in a critical billet and failure was not an option. The prolonged operational field time at MWX provided a chance for her to step up in a way not usually possible.

The intelligence chief was not the only NCO to step up within the battalion during the course of MWX. The S1 legal chief found herself in a division-level field exercise without an adjutant or administrative chief present. The battalion's forces were dispersed over a large area with limited communications capabilities in a complex operational environment. Tracking the battalion's force laydown was a full-time job that required a dedicated team to keep the battalion commander informed. The legal chief recognized the gap in personnel, the reporting requirement and the importance of

timely information flow and got to work. She used creative ways to contact units, confirm personnel numbers and keep the battalion informed in an ever-changing, communications-degraded environment. In short order, she learned an aspect of her job that took her out of her comfort zone and directly contributed to the battalion's success at MWX. The command team in 2nd AA Bn gained confidence in their NCOs due to the scale and complexity of MWX, a training opportunity that proved extremely valuable.

Author's bio: CWO-2 Parvin is CBRND officer and assistant operations officer for 2nd Assault Amphibian Battalion out of Camp Lejeune, N.C.

A Bond Greater Than a Post

By Sgt Jacob M. Perry, USMC

"Driver, move out." With that command, my 19-year-old driver, a lance corporal from Texas, took control of a 68-ton Main Battle Tank and placed me right where I wanted to be—directly in the enemy's engagement area. Using my M1A1 Abrams as a mobile, support-by-fire platform and cover for the infantry Marines, the platoon was able to move across the street and begin clearing the town. "Gunner, coax center building, second story, first window," I instructed as my gunner, a 21-year-old father of one, laid the gun on the target. "Identified," he called out. I gave the command, "Fire and adjust," and with those words, he let out a menacing burst of 7.62 mm into the window, killing the target.

"Hey! Right building, enemy troops, first floor!" That voice belonged to my loader, a 21-year-old corporal of Marines, hailing from California, who has an affinity for oldies music. At any other moment, he would be relaxed and quick to tell a joke, but when it was time to work, he worked. "I got it," I announced to the crew as I slew my stabilized .50-caliber machine gun over to the building. My loader was right, and after getting a



SGT STORMY MENDEZ, USMC

LtGen Brian Beaudreault, the commanding general of II MEF, speaks to Marines with 2ndMarDiv at Camp Wilson, MCAGCC Twentynine Palms, Calif., Oct. 25, 2019. LtGen Beaudreault visited 2ndMarDiv during MAGTF Warfighting Exercise 1-20 in order to observe the extensive training being conducted by Marines and Sailors from throughout the Division.



LCPL JUAN MAGADAN, USMC

An M1A1 Abrams tank with “Charlie” Co, 2nd Tank Bn, 2ndMarDiv, is staged in a motor pool at Camp Wilson, MCAGCC Twentynine Palms, Calif., Oct. 15, 2019, during MAGTF Warfighting Exercise 1-20.

positive ID, I instructed my crew to watch and scan the other sectors. They knew I would kill the target, and I knew they would cover my six. This is what makes us a solid crew.

The anecdote above occurred during our urban assault training package while conducting the largest training event I have experienced in my six years as a tank crewman, the Marine Air Ground Task Force Warfighting Exercise (MWX). My crew and I have been together longer than many other crews within the company and our battalion. We have spent many hours training together in close quarters. Tank crewmen know their crews, not just by the rank on their collars or by the billets they hold, but also by the attitude and character of the men and women with whom they work and rely on heavily, day in and day out. In a four-man crew, there is no “gray-area” Marine. A tank crew sleeps, eats, works and lives together. It is a family, and as a tank commander, it is my job and obligation to take care of my family. This seemingly eternal bond was forged and strengthened when we removed personal electronic devices (PEDs) from our tanks.

Personal electronics in a combat environment, or simulated combat environment, for that matter, are nothing more than a distraction. There is no tactical value

to using PEDs, and in the modern battlespace, their presence alone creates a formidable and very real threat. Above all, we need Marines who are focused on their jobs to ensure mission accomplishment. The removal of PEDs from the tactical situation increased our combat effectiveness and instilled cohesion among the tank’s crew. Without the hindrance of cell phones or personal computers, we focused on the mission and mitigated the distraction

my time as a Marine were the ones spent with other Marines. The bond formed in a tank among the crew is one of trust and confidence, and it is a relationship that cannot be achieved through “re-tweets” or “likes.” It is time spent and invested into your fellow Marines. Training them, staying involved in their lives and not just knowing what they do, but who they are, is paramount. Trust is the foundation of combat effectiveness as a crew, and

The removal of PEDs from the tactical situation increased our combat effectiveness and instilled cohesion among the tank’s crew. Sgt Jacob M. Perry

tion of social media. During white space training and downtime, instead of getting sucked into whatever apps or games we usually default to, we were able to communicate, forge bonds and complete assigned tasks, leading to an increase in our lethality as a crew.

The greatest highlights of my career are not on Facebook or Instagram. I have few pictures from training, deployments, awards and other key moments during a Marine Corps career. The best moments in

through trust, we reiterate the importance of engaged leadership.

Removing personal electronic devices from the field has been a great benefit to our force. We need aggressive, focused Marines who have forged strong bonds within their unit—that is what wins battles. We have the most technologically capable generation of Marines currently, and we should be directing and testing their skills through military technology. We need to capture that interest and

Marines with the commanding general's Jump Plt from 2nd Light Armored Reconnaissance Bn, 2ndMarDiv, repair a light armored vehicle prior to a convoy at Camp Wilson, MCAGCC Twentynine Palms, Calif., Oct. 26, 2019.

natural ability and apply it effectively within our force. With new technology being introduced to the Marine Corps every day, there are endless opportunities for our Marines to elevate that skill to the next level.

There is no moto-picture as cool as doing one's job the right way and seeing the effects that focus brings to the battlespace. As a small-unit leader, there is no online content worth the time I owe to my Marines. Stay clear, stay focused, and always have a plan to win.

Author's bio: Sgt Perry, 24, is from Columbus, Ohio, and enlisted in the Marine Corps in July of 2014. During his service, he has been assigned to 1st and 2nd Tank Bns. He has also taken part in numerous large-scale training events both CONUS and OCONUS. He currently works as a tank commander and platoon sergeant in "Charlie" Company, 2nd Tank Bn.

What We Learned Establishing Comms At MWX 1-20

By Cpl Theophile N. Janice III and
LCpl Bailey L. McCullough

Introduction

During MAGTF Warfighting Exercise 1-20 (MWX 1-20), Combat Logistics Regiment 2 (CLR 2) provided direct support and general support capabilities to 2nd Marine Division and its subordinate commands. After establishing CLR 2's Combat Operations Center (COC) at Camp Wilson, Corporal Theophile Janice and Lance Corporal Bailey McCullough were tasked to join CLR 2's liaison cell in 2ndMarDiv's G-4 at the austere location of 2ndMarDiv Forward's command and control node. This re-tasking drastically changed their MWX 1-20 experience.

Cpl Janice

I'd been at Camp Wilson for about three weeks, setting up tents and communications equipment, when my master sergeant told Lance Corporal McCullough and me to pack our gear and get ready to go out to Division Forward. Our mission was to ensure that Captain Madsen, the CLR 2 assistant operations officer, had multiple means of communication from Division Forward back to CLR 2's COC. As CLR 2's liaison officer (LNO), Capt Madsen



PFC PATRICK KING, USMC

was our commanding officer's eyes and ears at 2ndMarDiv's COC—she would need to inform the CO of any changes to 2ndMarDiv's operational plan. Our three-Marine LNO team was outfitted with a Secure Internet Protocol (SIPR) laptop, a Blue Force Tracker (BFT) Tactical Operations Center (TOC) kit and a Distributed Tactical Communications System (DTCS) radio. That way, if 2ndMarDiv's data network were compromised, we would still be able to use BFT chat to communicate with CLR 2's COC. If the BFT was compromised as well, we had the DTCS radio as a last resort.

It took us about four hours to drive out to 2ndMarDiv's first site. When we got there, I had to teach LCpl McCullough how to set up the BFT TOC kit. We conducted communication checks and began to settle into a battle rhythm with the G-4 staff. We spent about three days at the first site. During this time, LCpl McCullough and I alternated shifts on the BFT. The hardest part about the first few days was finding all of 2ndMarDiv and CLR 2's BFT call signs to make sure we were able to communicate with everyone. Based on my original mission, I was only supposed to

have to communicate with CLR 2's COC; however, we quickly discovered that some of the Division's units only had either BFT or radio communications.

There were no radios in the G-4 Tactical Logistics Operations Center (TLOC—the G-4 tent), and our BFT system was the only asset available to the G-4. The Marines in the G-4 had been walking back and forth to 2ndMarDiv's COC tent about once an hour to see if logistics requests had been sent to the COC. We had brought our BFT and set it up in the TLOC tent, which enabled G-4 to begin receiving logistics requests directly. Since LCpl McCullough and I were manning the BFT, we had to develop processes with the G-4 staff in order to ensure they were aware of any logistics requests. We began copying down all the logistics requests onto yellow canaries—basically just pieces of scrap paper—so that G-4 could transfer them over to transverse, which was the SIPR chatroom we used for all exercise communications. Because some of the units didn't have transverse capabilities, G-4 had to copy down responses to support requests that were passed over transverse so that LCpl McCullough and I could

If there was one thing we knew before this exercise, it was the importance of establishing communications as soon as we arrived in the field. Cpl Theophile N. Janice III

upload the responses into the BFT.

In the first few days at the initial location, LCpl McCullough and I learned what information was immediately important to the G-4 versus what could be processed normally. I had no previous experience with logistics request 10-line reports, vehicle recovery 15-line reports, Ground Transportation Requests (GTRs), or LogStats. It was good that we had the time to practice these processes at the first location because once the exercise started, our jobs became pretty challenging.

It took about 24 hours to tear everything down, pack all the gear into trucks and move to the next location. Once we unloaded the trucks at the second location, LCpl McCullough and I set up the BFT TOC kit again. If there was one thing we knew before this exercise, it was the importance of establishing communications as soon as we arrived in the field (or in this case, a different part of the field). Our BFT was the first communications asset to be fully functional out of the entire Division Forward. Once we realized this, LCpl McCullough and I went over

to Division's COC and helped get their BFT established so that the Division Forward could resume command and control quickly. After everything was set up, our work returned to "normal," and we began processing logistics requests with the G-4.

Around the second day in the new location, the exercise kicked off. That night, the 2ndMarDiv Commanding General, Major General David Furness, needed to use our BFT to communicate with his commanders. Some of the commanders didn't have SIPR service, so BFT was their only means of communication. The CG didn't want to use the BFT in the COC because this would interrupt the communication flow of time-sensitive information. I set up a chat room for the CG on our BFT and then stood by in case there were any technical issues. This became a daily requirement. LCpl McCullough and I made sure the chat room was set up, drafted the CG's messages on the BFT and helped troubleshoot and resolve any issues that came up during the CG's chats.

Overall, my time with 2ndMarDiv

Forward during MWX 1-20 was a very rich and rewarding experience. As a radio operator, I never had to process logistical information before. Even though I'm part of a logistics regiment, I hadn't ever really dealt with logistics the way that I did during MWX. It was also interesting to see how 2ndMarDiv conducts business and how they operate in the field.

LCpl McCullough

I'd spent a lot of time in Twentynine Palms before MWX 1-20, but I was excited to go back out there because I'd heard that we were going to get more time in the field. I was pretty disappointed to find out that my unit, CLR 2, would be staying at Camp Wilson for the whole exercise, but I made the best of it by staying busy during setup. I helped out my section by processing System Authorization Access Requests (SAARs) and troubleshooting issues to make sure that all of CLR 2's staff noncommissioned officers and officers had access to the non-classified internet protocol (NIPR) and SIPR networks. I programmed discrepancies on over 1,000 individual user accounts during the first few weeks of the exercise.

When I heard that Capt Madsen needed a communications Marine to go with her out to Division's position, I volunteered right away. I knew we would be living in pretty tough field conditions. I hadn't done that since Marine Combat Training

Marines with 1st Bn, 6th Marines, 2ndMarDiv, prepare to depart for the field from Camp Wilson, MCAGCC Twentynine Palms, Calif., Nov. 3, 2019. The infantry Marines provided ground support during MAGTF Warfighting Exercise 1-20.



LCPL REINE WHITAKER, USMC

A CH-53E Super Stallion, center, with 2nd MAW, taxis before takeoff from the Strategic Expeditionary Landing Field at MCAGCC Twentynine Palms, Calif., Oct. 23, 2019. The wing supported 2ndMarDiv in the execution of MAGTF Warfighting Exercise 1-20.



(MCT) and had never been to the field with Division units. I really wanted to go because I knew the experience would challenge me. Unfortunately, the mission requirement was for a radio operator to set up the BFT. I told my master sergeant that I could learn how to set up the BFT before we left and explained that I was ready to learn new things and test my skills independently. Because I was so persistent, my master sergeant was able to convince Capt Madsen to take me with her, in addition to Cpl Janice, because she would need both radio (BFT) and data (SIPR) capabilities.

Once we got out to Division's first location, I got some on-the-job cross-training from Cpl Janice in setting up the BFT. Then, as Cpl Janice said, we started taking shifts working on the BFT. I also had to learn a lot about logistics so that I could help transfer information from the BFT to the G-4 staff for processing. There was a lot that was different about being in the field with Division, but what was different for me was that I was the only lance corporal in the work section. Before we got there, the lowest-ranking Marines in the G-4 at Division Forward

were sergeants. The G-4 team consisted of a colonel, a major, a master gunnery sergeant, two master sergeants and three sergeants. Because most of the Division staff was at the Forward, we had high-ranking SNCOs and officers coming through the TLOC constantly, including the Division CG.

Once we moved to the second location, Cpl Janice and I had a pretty good understanding of what we needed to do to help the G-4 staff. I also got to do a little bit of my MOS by helping fix a couple of the computer issues Capt Madsen and the G-4 staff had. This was especially important when we were setting up at the new location, so I worked pretty closely with G-6's cyber and data Marines to make sure the TLOC got up on the network as

quickly as possible. After the G-4 and Capt Madsen had what they needed for communications, I went and helped some of the other Marines from Division dig fighting positions up on a nearby ridgeline.

We concealed the position pretty well by using rocks and cammie netting, including the trash truck (7-ton), the areas where we slept, and the slit trench. Everything that Marines used was covered in cammie netting to keep our position concealed from the enemy. Once the exercise started, we pretty much never left the netting unless we absolutely had to. We didn't have air superiority, so during the day, we didn't want to leave the netting because it was actually easier to see people walking around than it was to see the tents.

At night, we used extreme light dis-

I pushed myself outside my comfort zone by requesting to go forward with 2ndMarDiv, and because I did this, I learned more than I have in any other exercise or training event in my career. LCpl Bailey L. McCullough



PFC PATRICK KING, USMC

position was about as big as two to three of the biggest landing zones on Camp Lejeune. There was anywhere from 10 meters to 300 meters of distance between sets of netting, and there were only a few tents under each set. This made it less likely that the enemy would be able to find us because it wasn't one massive complex under a bunch of cammie netting, it was a lot of smaller positions in one general area. This was also why we didn't use two-man tents. Instead, we slept in fighting holes underneath the netting next to our work tents. Two-man tents take up a lot of space, they're harder to conceal, and they're not really necessary when you have cammie netting concealing your work tents. It made a lot more sense to use the netting for billeting because we had less gear to pack up each morning, and we could keep our personal gear packed in our main packs so we could pick up and move quickly if we needed to.

A couple of days after we got to the second position, we went on a convoy to get outfitted with Army Mobile Instrumented Training System (AMITS) gear.

Below: Marines from Jump Plt, 2nd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 2ndMarDiv, conduct a convoy at Camp Wilson, MCAGCC Twentynine Palms, Calif., Oct. 26, 2019. The Marines were tasked with providing security and transportation for the commanding general throughout MAGTF Warfighting Exercise 1-20.



PFC PATRICK KING, USMC

cipline. We weren't even allowed to use red lens because it's still pretty bright, and we didn't want to risk giving our position away. Just using night-vision goggles at night, I could see how well the netting worked. It was tough to find some of the other tents unless you knew exactly what you were seeking.

Division also used a lot more dispersion than I was used to seeing. The second

Somehow, I got lucky and got to be the a-driver for my vehicle on that convoy. I didn't have much experience with convoys even though that's CLR 2's main mission. It was interesting to get to experience a little bit of what most of the Marines in CLR 2 were doing constantly during MWX. I'd also never seen anything like the AMITS gear before. It's basically like a laser-tag system that you wear so

that when you're shooting blanks, you can still simulate force-on-force training. I was ready to defend the TLOC if we ever got attacked, but unfortunately, that never happened, so I didn't get to test the AMITS gear. It was still good to get exposed to some of the different technologies the Marine Corps uses to train. Now that I know about AMITS, I might be able to use something like it in the future to train my Marines.

Getting to go to the field with 2ndMarDiv for two weeks was honestly one of the coolest experiences I've ever had in my career. I had a great deal of knowledge bestowed upon me by the highly professional G-4 team, and I learned a lot of vital skills that can help Marines survive in a situation where the United States is fighting a near-peer enemy. It was really valuable to get some of the cross-training opportunities I had because I learned more about the communications field and logistics.

Since work in the field is so fast-paced, I gained a lot of proficiency in the set-up, troubleshooting and use of the BFT. I never thought that as a lance corporal, I would even meet a two-star general, much less directly assist one in communicating with his commanders. I was able to do this because I volunteered for a tough mission and because I was willing to expand my horizons and learn how to use platforms like the BFT that are outside my MOS. This goes to show that if Marines are willing to learn and are persistent in advocating for the opportunities that they want, these things can lead up to bigger and better experiences in one's Marine Corps career. I learned that it's best to try to do things outside my comfort zone and to be persistent in working toward my goals. I pushed myself outside my comfort zone by requesting to go forward with 2ndMarDiv, and because I did this, I learned more than I have in any other exercise or training event in my career. The things that I learned will help me achieve my future goals in my career. I got to see so many different aspects of the Marine Corps at MWX, and because of this, I want to continue on in my career so that I can keep learning and begin to teach other Marines some of the skills I've learned.

Editor's note: MajGen Furness awarded LCpl McCullough a Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal at the conclusion of MWX 1-20 for his exceptional contributions to the missions of 2ndMarDiv and CLR 2 throughout the exercise.

Authors' bios: Cpl Janice is a radio operator in CLR 2. LCpl Bailey McCullough is a data network administrator.

SEA STORY OF THE MONTH

The Rifle Inspection Didn't Go Well

I reported to MCRD San Diego on Dec. 3, 1959. Unfortunately, due to Christmas leave for permanent personnel, we didn't get to start the formal training cycle until after the holidays.

In mid-January 1960, we were having our third-week inspection. Our series officer, First Lieutenant Donald E. Schaet (now a retired colonel), was inspecting us. He stepped in front of me and made a left-facing movement. My senior drill instructor, Staff Sergeant Manford C. Short, was to his left. I promptly came to inspection arms, and 1stLt Schaet slapped the rifle out of my hands. As he inspected what I was praying was a pristine M1 Garand rifle, he was grilling me on several of the general orders of the interior guard. I was responding in a loud, clear and confident voice.

Just before handing my rifle back, he asked, "What is the serial number of this piece, Private?" I went completely blank but knew the seven-digit rhythm of the serial number and spouted out seven random digits using my loud, clear and confident voice. He looked at the base of the receiver, where the serial number on that M1 was imprinted in the metal, and said, "Are you sure about that, Private?" I sounded off, "Yes, Sir!" He handed me back the rifle and as he turned to move to the recruit to my left, I came back to order arms.

Now SSgt Short was in front of me. He leaned forward to where the bill of his campaign cover was

almost touching my head and whispered, "Port arms!" I came to port arms and he looked at the base of the receiver. I doubt I had even gotten one number right. He leaned forward again, campaign cover brim by my right temple, and whispered, "When this inspection is over, maggot, your ass is grass!"

"What is the serial number of this piece, Private?" I went completely blank but knew the seven-digit rhythm of the serial number and spouted out seven random digits.

When the inspection was over, I was standing in front of the door of his duty hut (our barracks were Quonset huts in those days) with that 9.5 pound (without bayonet) M1 rifle on the back of the wrists of my extended arms, sounding off to repeated cries of "I can't hear you!" for what seemed like forever. "Sir, the serial number of my rifle is 2229569!"

Years later, when my first wife and I were packing for a move, she came upon the pocket ring bound notebook we were issued in boot camp, "The Silent DI." She was looking through it and having frequently heard the above story, when she came upon my handwritten note of the serial number of that rifle, she asked me for the number. Without hesitation I repeated 2229569. My deeply religious wife said, "Son of a bitch, that story is true!"

This number is eternally imprinted on my Marine Corps soul.

LCpl David W. Long
Ventura, Calif.

This Marine is Drunk: No Charges

My father, Thomas J. Kennedy Jr., a Marine who served with the 6th Marine Division, and saw action in Okinawa in 1945, died several years ago. Now that his grandson, my son, has joined the Corps, I wanted to share one of my favorite stories about my dad and how the Marines shaped his life and outlook.

After World War II, my father was assigned to the Marine detachment aboard USS *Midway* (CVB-41). On one occasion, the ship pulled into Norfolk, and while in town on leave, my dad bumped into his father, who by that time was a commander in the Navy and who had spent the war overseeing convoys

on the Murmansk Run. Being of unequal rank, the two adjourned by taxi to an out-of-town bar, where they caught up on what had happened in the the three years since they had last seen each other. According to my dad, he didn't remember much of that night and later woke up in his bunk on *Midway*.

According to a fellow Marine who had the watch that night, around dawn, a taxi pulled up at the bottom of the carrier's very long and very steep gangway and a bundle came out. That bundle, after trudging up the gangway, revealed itself to be a Navy officer carrying my passed-out dad. Upon arriving at the top, the officer handed my dad over to the officer of the watch and declared, "This Marine is drunk: No charges." He then left, and my father and grandfather didn't see each other for another two years.

Decades later, after my



COURTESY OF BRUCE KENNEDY

Thomas J. Kennedy Jr.

dad died, we arranged a funeral mass for him at a beautiful church in a nearby town. I had hired a lobster boat to take us out to sea where we could scatter his ashes into the cold and very gray water.

Earlier at a bar we joked about holding a Viking funeral that would bring down the local authorities, but we ended up with a much more subdued yet appropriate ceremony, thanks in part to some phrases I had found in the Book of Common Prayer, about granting him peace and tranquility as we committed his earthly remains to the deep. Semper Fi, Dad.

Bruce Kennedy
Centennial, Colo.

Parris Island History Lesson

I was primed for the inspecting officer's questions having memorized my general orders and rifle serial number. Every move was executed perfectly when he approached and slapped the rifle out of my hands. As he was studying the serial number, he asked a question that I didn't know the answer to.

"What did Lieutenant Presley O'Bannon lose in the assault on Tripoli, Private?"

"Duh," says I.

"It was his left boot dummy. Get down and give me 20."

A lesson I'll always remember when I hear, "The Marines' Hymn" and they get to the part about the shores of Tripoli. I picture Lt O'Bannon crossing the burning sands, one boot on, one boot off, and me doing 20 push-ups because of it.

Norm Spilleth
Minneapolis, Minn.

No Novocain?

While attending Marine Security Guard school at Henderson Hall, Arlington, Va., in 1978, all of the students received any

required dental work to make certain that we were deployable. I needed to have two cavities filled. When I was sitting in the chair, the doctor asked me if I wanted Novocain. For no good reason I said no. And to say the least, it hurt. I have always wondered how many Marines that Navy dentist treated without Novocain.

Sgt Thomas A. Ring
USMC, 1975-1980
Virac, Philippines

I Stood My Ground

In 1959, after attending boot camp in San Diego and then Sea School, I was transferred to USS *Ranger* (CVA-61) for a 29-month tour. While on board the ship, there were several guards and security posts. I was standing guard at the entrance of the special weapons area when a Navy lieutenant commander approached me and said he was going into the weapons area. I asked him for his special weapons ID pass. He told me that he didn't need one. At this point, I side-stepped him to block the entrance. He insisted that he was going in. I then informed him that my orders were that no one was to enter without a pass. He said that I would be in the brig by the end of the day and walked off.

After my duty was over, I was told to report to the compartment of the CO of the Marine detachment. After knocking I entered, and the CO told me that the lieutenant commander had contacted him and was highly pissed about the encounter. He didn't mention any details of what was said, but I was commended for following orders and standing my ground. The CO also said that he didn't have any love for the lieutenant commander anyway.

Several days after that incident I was given the position of orderly for the ship's executive

officer (XO), Lieutenant Commander A.J. Rapp. One of the duties was to follow him when he was moving around the ship and inform him of any phone calls, etc. While offshore in Havana, the XO and I were observing flight deck operations. Several Navy and Marine Corps air units were conducting touch-and-go exercises. Some of the aircraft would do a low-speed go around. The Marine pilots would come in fast, and then go to full throttle on the go around. I

I asked him for his special weapons ID pass. He told me that he didn't need one. At this point, I side-stepped him to block the entrance. He insisted that he was going in.

was standing behind the XO as he said, "Rauner, those #\$\$% Marines are going to burn up my deck!" All I could say was, "Yes, Sir" with a smile.

Michael Rauner
Decatur, Ind.

It's Important to Follow What Your DI Taught You

The Korean War broke out shortly before I graduated from boot camp. My DI was a World War II veteran and on a long hike one day he told us about the war. Before heading back, we sat under a big old tree and he explained some useful things to us. One was about putting iodine tablets in drinking water for purification.

I finished boot camp on July 4, 1950. On Sept. 15, I was an ammunition carrier in the 81 mm mortar platoon at Inchon in South Korea as part of the 1st Division. A couple of days later, after carrying 60 pounds

of mortar ammo, my pack, rifle, canteen, etc., I was thirsty and out of water before we arrived at Yong Dong Po.

Some other Marines had liberated a beer brewery and after digging a prone foxhole, placed a keg of beer on the edge and left it dripping into their mouths. Since I was not a beer drinker, I found fresh water complete with a bucket and dipper. It was clear and cold, so I quickly drank the first canteen down and only then put the iodine tablets in when I filled it again. The next morning the call came to move out. I started walking but shortly had to stop and defecate about every 30 yards or so. I had messed my dungarees so badly that a kind jeep driver finally gave me a pair of his spare ones.

Although I didn't ever hear anything myself, many years later a buddy, John Savona, whom I patched up after he was shot through the kidney on April 23, 1951, at Horseshoe Ridge, told me that I was being called "Frog" from Yong Dong Po until we landed at Wonsan, N. Korea. Mind you, we had been to Chosin Reservoir and back to Mason before we were at Horseshoe Ridge, so I feel sure they dropped the name Frog way before then.

Cpl Jack King
Fayetteville, Ga.

Do you have an interesting story from your time in the Corps that will give our readers a good chuckle? We would love to hear them. Write them down (500 words or less) and send them to: Patricia Everett, *Leatherneck* Magazine, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134, or email them to p.everett@mca-marines.org. We offer \$25 or a one-year MCA&F membership for the "Sea Story of the Month." 🦎

The Marine Security Guards and the Evacuation of U.S. Embassy Caracas

By GySgt Daniel Best, USMC and LCpl Gavin Blisset, USMC



COURTESY OF GYSGT DANIEL BEST, USMC

Embassy evacuees board an aircraft after the Department of State announced that the U.S. Embassy in Caracas, Venezuela, would temporarily suspend operations and withdraw diplomatic personnel in March 2019.

Editor's note: The following article is the first-place winner of the 2020 Leatherneck Writing Contest. Major Richard A. "Rick" Stewart, USMC (Ret) sponsored the contest, which is open to enlisted Marines, through the Marine Corps Association & Foundation. Upcoming issues of Leatherneck will feature the second- and third-place winners and honorable mention entrants.

In March 2019, the Department of State announced that the U.S. Embassy in Caracas, Venezuela, would temporarily suspend operations and withdraw diplomatic personnel. Decisions of this magnitude affect important diplomatic relationships, displace hundreds of personnel, and cost millions of dollars. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo explained this decision by stating it "reflects the deteriorating situation." The strategically

important South American country had been dealing with political unrest for months over its contested presidential elections. Assigned to provide protection to mission personnel and prevent the compromise of national security information and equipment, the detachment of Marine Security Guards stationed in Caracas played a vital role in the withdrawal. These Marines epitomized the ethos of "adapt, improvise and overcome" by relying on their training, leadership, and personal drive to successfully evacuate the embassy.

In today's complex military environment, Marines are trained to handle every aspect of a mission, including the tactical withdrawal of forces. Though this was a unique situation, Marine Security Guards have assisted with these types of operations dating back to the evacuation of U.S. citizens at the embassy in Seoul in 1950. In 2012, the Marine Corps Embassy

Security Group shifted its mission to focus on the protection of mission personnel to prevent another attack like the one on the diplomatic post in Benghazi, Libya, that left four Americans dead. There were no Marines in Benghazi, but the lessons learned during that horrific event have influenced the current training and employment of Marines.

The Marine Corps has long relied on tough, realistic training to build the type of leaders required to step up when necessary to ensure success on any battlespace. As Marine Security Guards, that training starts at a state-of-the-art facility in Quantico, Va., where potential watchstanders are instructed on Department of State regulations and the memorandum of agreement between the State Department and Department of Defense (DOD). Students also learn Department of State-specific information like defensive tactics, use of force, maintaining classified material, room clearing and tactical movement procedures. This school has a higher than average attrition rate, which can be attributed to several factors including students not being prepared for a mentally and physically demanding curriculum, intrusive physiological testing, and a comprehensive background investigation required to attain a top-secret clearance. The training has been meticulously designed to provide outstanding Marines from every unit to represent the Corps as ambassadors in blue in 146 countries around the world.

Once the watchstanders are assigned to a diplomatic facility, they must continue to sustain those skills on a constant basis along with a plethora of other tasks that ensure these Marine Security Guards are prepared for any threat. The threats these Marines face vary widely depending on regional terrorist groups, suspected espionage and civil unrest. In Caracas, the State Department's decision to evacuate was caused by the latter.

Starting in 2018, the international com-

munity was concerned with the upcoming presidential elections in Venezuela and whether a peaceful transfer of power would occur if President Nicolás Maduro was not re-elected. As numerous issues concerning the election surfaced, the opposition called the election illegal and demanded that President Maduro relinquish his position to interim President Juan Guaidó. This bold action led to increased threats toward Americans, causing the embassy to raise the security posture and place everyone on alert. When the State Department made the decision to evacuate all non-essential American diplomats in January of 2019, the Marine Security Guards were asked to augment the security detail for the transportation of personnel to the airport, an unfamiliar but flawlessly executed task. These Marine Security Guards were then tasked to begin the initial phase of the destruction process in order to reduce classified holdings and non-essential equipment. In February, as the security, food, water and power situation continued to degrade, the

remaining embassy personnel began restricting movement throughout the city.

As the water and power infrastructures continued to collapse, the security situation significantly worsened for Americans, causing all remaining personnel to shelter in place at the embassy until the final decision was made to evacuate. The sheer amount of destruction that was required by the Marine Security Guards before departure was an enormous undertaking on its own. They destroyed more than \$50 million worth of equipment that could not be left behind or flown out. This led to several days of very little sleep as the destruction continued around the clock. This was done simultaneously with the myriad other tasks that were essential to maintain a strong security posture. Throughout this experience, every Marine displayed a level of professionalism and a work ethic that has become synonymous with the title Marine Security Guard.

A Marine's disposition toward adversity has less to do with an innate response to survive in a time of stress, but rather a

The sheer amount of destruction that was required by the Marine Security Guards before departure was an enormous undertaking on its own ... This led to several days of very little sleep as the destruction continued around the clock.



The American flag is displayed in front of the embassy in Venezuela March 13, 2019, the night before the embassy was temporarily closed and personnel evacuated due to unrest in the South American country.

**Imagine dealing with
a constantly changing
environment and the
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throughout the ordeal.**

**For weeks, these
Marine Security Guards
were unsure when or if
they would depart.**



product of determined and inspiring leadership. All organizations place value in leadership, but the Corps views it as the catalyst that has created a vast amount of victories, and the true warrior ethos that ensures success during times of heightened stress. Marines have been revered for their fighting spirit since their inception, but the myth of the Marine has evolved to include more than just a war-fighter but include titles such as humanitarian, guardian and even diplomat. In Caracas, the Marine Security Guard detachment faced hardships on a regular basis and relied upon each other along with institutional and personal leadership to get through the adversity together.

Imagine dealing with a constantly changing environment and the uncertainty that ensued throughout the ordeal. For weeks, these Marine Security Guards were unsure when or if they would depart. The decision changed as often as the situation, which made the planning process difficult for all involved. Then, anxiety is compounded by the Marine Corps and State Department requesting information in a relentless pursuit to guarantee all levels of leadership were informed and kept abreast of the progress.

Due to the unfamiliar nature of the evacuation and destruction protocols, there were obvious difficulties with the communications plan. By utilizing outside-the-box thinking, the detachment exploited their higher headquarters to field those inquiries, allowing them to focus on the mission. Keeping morale up was a priority for everyone, especially the

detachment commander Gunnery Sergeant Nibler, who stated, “We made sure that we came together as Marines and as a team. It got to the point where the only time we were not around each other was when we were sleeping. This was good as we all had the same frustrations and the same hardships to overcome together and not as individuals.”

GySgt Nibler’s experience, leadership and unwavering courage were vital attributes that allowed his Marines to remain composed during a highly fluid and chaotic situation.

On Marine Security Guard duty, there is a lot of time devoted to training and developing plans for emergencies without knowing if they will ever be used. Leaders must keep everyone engaged in training and during daily operations in the hopes that they will maintain that high state of readiness. When these Marine Security Guards responded in March 2019, it validated the training principles they had worked so diligently to refine. Their actions, though typical of Marines, resulted in the safe closure of the U.S. embassy and earned them appropriate recognition from the Marine Corps and the State Department. The legacy of the Marine Corps has been built on the backs of warriors who fought for more than just glory to the country. Just like Marines who are fighting around the world, Marine Security Guards risk everything based on a unique devotion to their country and fellow Marines. The essence of this duty focuses on being involved with something bigger than oneself. It is a brotherhood that is developed through the belief that each Marine will conduct valiant and selfless acts of loyalty in every situation.



MICHELE COLLINS

Marine Security Guards at the U.S. Embassy in Venezuela ensured an accurate accountability of weapons and equipment in January 2019.

Author’s bio: GySgt Best is a detachment commander on MSG duty with five years of experience currently serving in Bogota, Colombia. He joined the Marine Corps in 2004 as a supply clerk, earned a bachelor’s degree in management 2013, certified as a 3rd-degree martial arts instructor trainer in 2017, then in December 2019 he was the first enlisted graduate of EWS blended seminar and is currently 18 credits away from completing his MBA.

Author’s bio: LCpl Blisset enlisted in 2004 and is an MSG watchstander stationed in Bogota, Colombia, as his first post and has orders to Tunis, Tunisia. He is among the first participants of the Marine guard personnel exchange program where new infantry Marines volunteer to serve their first two years on the MSG program before finishing their five-year contract back in the FMF.

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Passing the Word

Compiled by Sara W. Bock

Families on the Homefront Make Masks for 31st MEU

Based out of Camp Hansen, Okinawa, Japan, the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit operates as the forward-deployed crisis response for III Marine Expeditionary Force in the Indo-Pacific region. While these Marines and Sailors stand ready to respond to any contingency, their families are finding unique ways to support the MEU and maintain future readiness by sewing protective face masks for the unit.

The Marines of the 31st MEU returned to a new world this spring when amphibious assault ship USS *America* (LHA-6) pulled into port in Okinawa after their participation in Exercise Cobra Gold 20 and naval integration training in Guam as well as the South and East China Seas. While the MEU had been conducting their training and real-world missions, COVID-19 became a global pandemic. As they headed back to land, the Marines were informed of the new requirement to wear protective masks, which they would have to fashion out of T-shirts or other fabric.

Knowing that all the Marines would need masks, family members back home sprang into action, creating face masks for many of the MEU's Marines and Sailors.

"We have an awesome Marine Corps family, and we wanted to protect our Marines and Sailors," said Kirsten Brodie, who spearheaded the families' effort to make masks for the Marines.

Brodie began by making several masks for Marines before expanding her efforts and enlisting the help of other members of the 31st MEU family to make masks for the entire MEU command element returning to Okinawa. Twelve women prepared 228 masks, spending 230 collective hours shopping for material, then cutting, sewing and assembling the masks, just in time for the Marines to disembark USS *America*.

"When I heard how many masks Kirsten Brodie needed to complete to achieve her goal, I knew I needed to try and help in any way I could," said Christa Mroszczak, who helped cut the material used for the masks.

The families faced many challenges as new restrictions were implemented to keep servicemembers on Okinawa safe. Maria Rock connected with the Marine Thrift Store to obtain woodland camouflage material for the masks as the bases in the area quickly sold out of fabric. While cutting the fabric, she found that not all the masks fit all faces and began experimenting with different styles and sizes.

"I was happy to help make masks for our Marines and Sailors. It's always a joy



Above: Kristen Brodie sorts face masks for the Marines and Sailors of the 31st MEU at Camp Butler, Okinawa, Japan, April 24. Brodie led a group of Marine spouses who volunteered to sew masks in the days leading up to the MEU's return to Okinawa.



Marine spouse Stefanie Lennon (above) cuts fabric for masks at her home in Okinawa, April 24. Amy Fisher (below) sews masks for the Marines returning home from the 31st MEU's deployment, April 24.



to see our MEU family come together and support each other,” said Stefanie Lennon, who helped cut the fabric for the masks.

“My greatest hope is that a sense of safety and alleviation of stress was provided to Marines and their families upon being provided with appropriate personal protective equipment,” said Amy Fisher, who lent her sewing expertise to the effort.

The 31st MEU returned home safely and the Marines and Sailors received their masks on the pier. Though the families who had dedicated their time could not hand out the masks themselves, the Marines expressed gratitude for their hard work. Their dedication will be remembered every time 31st MEU Marines wear their masks.

“It was nice to have masks made for us, in a way it was our own welcome home,” said Lance Corporal Cora Reichert, an intelligence specialist with the MEU.

For a unit like the MEU, which maintains a constant state of preparedness to execute essential missions in the Indo-Pacific region, it is the dedication of the families back home that helps the Marines and Sailors to stay ready for anything, even amidst a global pandemic.

Sgt Audrey Rampton, USMC

Rosalynn Carter Institute Expands Virtual Outreach Through New Partnerships

At a time when many Americans are feeling isolated and disconnected, the Rosalynn Carter Institute (RCI) is proud to partner with Caregivers on the Homefront, RallyPoint, and the American Red Cross Military and Veteran Caregiver Network (MVCN) to expand outreach to caregivers. Through these three exciting partnerships, RCI will provide virtual programming and tools to empower caregivers who support servicemembers and veterans across the U.S. and around the world.

Serving military families is a priority for RCI, which launched its signature military program, Operation Family Caregiver (OFC), nearly seven years ago. OFC provides free and confidential coaching to help the families of returning servicemembers and veterans develop new skills that make the difficult decisions they face feel more manageable and achievable. The program is tailored to the unique needs of military families. It helps caregivers find strength through their journey so they feel fully capable of living their best lives, regardless of what life throws at them.

“When the brave men and women of our military are called to serve, they do not serve alone. Caregivers help servicemembers and veterans to deal with the

physical, mental and emotional wounds associated with military service,” said Dr. Jennifer Olsen, executive director of RCI. “I am so grateful to our partners at Caregivers on the Homefront, RallyPoint and the MVCN for their leadership to empower caregivers across the United States.”

Caregivers on the Homefront provides in-person and, now increasingly, online support groups, educational workshops and mental health and wellness restorative weekends for caregivers of veterans and active servicemembers. In response to COVID-19, Caregivers on the Homefront has also sent out care packages to caregivers, including masks, hand sanitizer and self-care items and is preparing to offer mental health counseling—in person and virtually—starting by June 1.

“Like so many military spouses, I’m proud to support and provide care to my husband, a 23-year Army veteran who served his country with distinction. But as rewarding as caregiving can be, it can also be challenging and lonely,” said Shawn Moore, founder and executive director of Caregivers on the Homefront. “I started Caregivers on the Homefront to provide the kind of resources, support and connection that I thought was missing as a new caregiver, and it’s amazing to see our network continue to grow stronger through partnerships like this one.”

At the same time that Shawn launched Caregivers on the Homefront, she completed Operation Family Caregiver herself, working with an OFC coach who helped her put things in perspective and move forward. Among OFC’s greatest assets are the resources that coaches provide to caregivers. RallyPoint and the MVCN are also excellent resources for the military community, providing social outlets through their digital networking platforms.

RallyPoint is an online community open to military servicemembers, veterans, family members, supporters and caregivers, providing a peer-to-peer support network 24 hours a day. Members can ask and answer questions, share information and resources, and talk about the challenges and opportunities their community faces. During COVID-19, RallyPoint is now a hub for information sharing related to the pandemic.

Operation Family Caregiver, a veteran-focused program at RCI, has its own presence on the RallyPoint platform, where program participants can connect and everyone can learn more about OFC.

The MVCN also offers peer-based support for military and veteran caregivers

of all eras through an online community. An initiative of the American Red Cross, MVCN was developed to reduce social isolation among caregivers—even more so now during the COVID-19 public health crisis.

To learn more about RCI programs and resources, visit www.rosalynncarter.org, or learn more about Operation Family Caregiver at www.operationfamilycaregiver.org.

Rosalynn Carter Institute

New DOD Website Provides Financial Education For Military Spouses

Military spouses often are their families’ chief financial officers. From managing permanent change of station moves to unexpected emergencies and changes in pay, there is little doubt about the importance of understanding the unique circumstances of managing personal finances in the military life.

In recognition of military spouses and the important role they play in keeping the force financially ready, the Department of Defense Office of Financial Readiness introduced MilSpouse Money Mission, a new financial education resources just for military spouses.

MilSpouse Money Mission is the DOD’s primary resource to provide military spouses with trusted information they can use to be more empowered and actively involved in making financial decisions for their families’ financial wellbeing and achievement of financial goals.

The program offers military spouses accessible, free financial education and resources, including Money Ready, a guide that tackles a variety of financial topics; MilLife Milestones, a resource to empower spouses to make smart money moves during life’s big moments; videos featuring financial tips and tools from fellow military spouses; a blog with real conversations covering the latest money-related topics and issues; resources like military support links, financial calculators, quizzes and more; and a social media community of support.

MilSpouse Money Mission aims to create a community for military spouses and help them know where to turn for trusted financial education.

Follow MilSpouse Money Mission on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest or visit the DOD Office of Financial Readiness at <https://finred.usalearning.gov> for additional financial tools and resources.



Marine Nobody Knew



By TSgt Pete Zurlinden, USMC

This is the story of the Marine that nobody knew. It's the story of Private Norman Arsenault of Lawrence, Mass., who knew one moment of heroic greatness before Japanese bullets cut him down while he waded, hip-deep in reef waters off Saipan's shores, July 8, 1944.

Young, average-sized Arsenault looked older than his 18 years, yet it was probably because of youthful shyness that he wasn't much of a mixer. He did not smoke, nor did he curse. His buddies can recall little about him before that vivid afternoon when he gave his own life saving theirs.

Several times, they say, they had wondered whether his heart was in this grim

business of carrying the fight to the Japanese because, while he did his job and did it well, he seldom extended himself. Now they think he must have been saving himself for just exactly the kind of a situation that developed; a situation they'll never forget just as they'll never forget Pvt Arsenault as long as they live.

The Japanese were in a corner. The Marine advance up Saipan's western coast from Tanapag Harbor to Mount Marpi was moving inexorably to a conclusion. Arsenault and the 2nd Marine Regiment's 3rd Battalion suddenly executed a flanking movement; the plan—to sweep toward the sea and over the cliffs between Kaberra Pass and the ocean, then north again.

The 3rd Bn drove down to the water's

edge. Then it reformed its lines, but while this was being done, Japanese pockets, dug in the caves abreast the shore, had to be cleaned out.

Arsenault's platoon was ordered to go to work on a length of the coast that looked like an inverted capital "L." About 6 yards of crumbled limestone boulders separated a 7-foot cliff from the sea. His platoon scrambled over the cliff-face, dropping to the boulders.

Too late they saw that a deep crevice in the face of the tiny cliff was teeming with Japanese, prone on their bellies, who opened up with one of the most murderous rifle and machine-gun barrages the outfit yet had met.

Arsenault was on the extreme left flank. He, too, was pinned down among the



The Japanese were hiding in caves and crevices along the shoreline of Saipan, surprising 3rd Bn, 2nd Marines with one of the most murderous rifle and machine-gun barrages the battalion had encountered during its time in the Pacific.

boulders. Japanese bullets splattered limestone chunks down onto their helmets, sending up a tiny noise that sounded like somebody emptying a trash can into a wagon.

Because most of the outfit were machine gunners who had been ordered to arm with carbines for the mop-up, there wasn't a heavy weapon in the crowd. For 15 minutes, the Japanese peppered every Marine who attempted to move. There



The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the Navy Cross (posthumously) to
PRIVATE NORMAN ARSENAULT
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS RESERVE
for service set forth in the following citation:

For extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty while serving with the Third Battalion, Second Marines, Second Marine Division, during action against enemy Japanese forces at Saipan, Marianas Islands, on 8 July 1944. With his platoon pinned down by intense, concentrated hostile machine-gun and rifle fire from a well-concealed enemy emplacement during a perilous advance along the beach, Private Arsenault boldly exposed himself to the intense barrage to wade out into the ocean where he could observe the enemy and direct his effective fire into the entrenchment. After expending his ammunition, he fearlessly returned to the beach to replenish his supply then again resumed his position, drawing all hostile fire to himself and enabling his platoon to advance and launch an attack against the strategic cave. Ordered to return to his platoon, he was fatally struck down by bursting enemy shellfire while crossing the open expanse. By his valiant fighting spirit, great personal valor and self-sacrificing efforts, Private Arsenault had accounted for twenty Japanese soldiers and was directly responsible for the success of his platoon in capturing the strongly fortified hostile emplacement. His unwavering devotion to duty throughout the fierce engagement was in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.

apparently was nothing anybody could do about it until young Arsenault reached his decision.

From his place on the left, he bounded to his feet, carbine gripped tightly in his hands. Instead of making a dash to try for the safety atop the cliff, Pvt Arsenault ran speedily to the rear, striding some 20 yards out into the reef water.

When he had gone as far as he wished, he reversed himself, facing the Japanese in the caves and began to pump carbine bullets into the crevice. More than 50 enemy guns quickly were turned on him.

Nobody knows what saved him in those first few moments when hundreds of enemy bullets were zinging toward him, some rippling the water as they lashed into the surf in front of him. But he continued to fire until his ammunition was exhausted.

While the youngster was keeping the Japanese so occupied, almost half of his platoon scrambled from their positions behind the boulders and dashed to safety atop the cliff. But in this position they were powerless to help Arsenault.

Out of ammunition, he slogged through the water back to buddies still hoping to get out from under the gunfire, borrowed as many ammunition clips as he could, and went back to take up where he had left off.

Again the Japanese tried to pinpoint him in their murderous fire. But he kept firing his carbine almost as fast as an

automatic weapon until his platoon had been completely evacuated from in front of the cliff. A sergeant ordered him to come in out of the water, to try and make it up the cliff himself.

Arsenault laughed merrily, emptied another clip into the crevice and then started back. He had just taken his fourth step when they saw him stiffen, then saw the bullet wound in his head. He slumped slowly into the water until his buddies saw him disappear beneath the surface.

That night Pvt Arsenault was avenged. His platoon set up a line about 100 yards from the cliff, knowing the Japanese would come up rather than face dynamite and other demolition extermination the next morning. With plenty of mortar illumination, the platoon killed the Japanese by the handful the moment they became silhouetted against the water.

In the morning they recovered Arsenault's body. While they carried it back to the rear for burial, others in the platoon investigated the crevice into which he had poured more than 100 rounds of ammunition.

Japanese bodies were sprawled throughout it. More than 20 dead were certain victims of his carbine. Others might have been. The lad none of them had ever gotten to know had proved a real fighting Marine, one of their own beyond the shadow of doubt. 🇺🇸

WW II Marine Accounted For

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) recently announced that Corporal Oscar E. Koskela, 22, of Detroit, Mich., killed during World War II, was accounted for.

In June 1944, Cpl Koskela was a member of Headquarters Company, 29th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, when American forces fought the Japanese on Saipan. Koskela was wounded during the invasion and evacuated to USS *Solace* (AH-5) for treatment. He died onboard the ship on June 18, 1944, and his body was buried on Saipan.

After the war, his remains were recovered by the American Graves Registration Service but could not be identified at the time and were reinterred at the Manila American Cemetery in the Philippines. In 2017, those remains were disinterred and transferred to the DPAA laboratory in Hawaii where analysts identified Cpl Koskela.

DPAA

DPAA Identifies Tarawa Marines

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced recently that two Marines who were killed during the Battle of Tarawa were accounted for.

Sergeant Duane O. Cole, 23, of Niles, Mich., was a member of Company K, 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division. He was killed on the first day of the battle.

Sgt Jerome B. Morris, 22, of East St. Louis, Ill., was assigned to Co B, 1st Bn, 6th Marines, 2ndMarDiv. He was killed on the third day of the battle.

DPAA

Lucy B. (Cox) Abarno, 100, of Townshend, Vt. She was a Marine who served during WW II.

Henry F. Boyer, 95, of Massena, N.Y. He enlisted after his high school graduation and served in WW II. He was a member of the MCL and VFW.

Sgt William T. "Bill" Connors Jr., 90, of Farmington, Conn. He served during the Korean War. His awards include a Purple Heart.

Donald R. Farnham Sr., 94, of Riverside, Ill. He was a radio operator with 3rd Joint Assault Signal Co during WW II and participated in the battles on Guam and Iwo Jima.

James L. "Les" Gadbury, 96, of Monticello, Ill. He was working as an iron

worker when WW II began. He enlisted in 1942 and was assigned to "Charlie" Co, 1st Bn, 9th Marines, 3rdMarDiv. After training in New Zealand, he saw action in the Solomon Islands, Guam and Iwo Jima. After the war, he was one of the Marines assigned to assist sculptor Felix de Weldon with the construction of the Marine Corps War Memorial.

Sgt Dave Haferkamp, 78, of China Spring, Texas. His four years in the Marine Corps included a tour in Vietnam. His awards include a Bronze Star with combat "V."

Walter I. "Butch" Hardnock, 72, of Columbia, Mo. He was a corpsman attached to a Marine unit in Vietnam from 1968-1969. His awards include a Purple Heart.

Allen A. "Andy" Helton, 73, of Waco, Texas. He was a Recon Marine during the Vietnam War.

William Y. Johnston III, 97, of Eufala, Ala. He graduated from Duke University with a degree in mechanical engineering and was commissioned a second lieutenant. During WW II, he was assigned to 3rdMarDiv and served in the South Pacific where he saw action on Guam. He was recalled to active duty during the Korean War.

Cpl Melvin S. Kabik, 95, of Baltimore, Md. He enlisted in 1943 and was a radio operator with the 4th Marines, 6thMarDiv. He saw action on Guadalcanal, Guam and Okinawa.

Samuel L. Kennedy Jr., 96, of Winston-Salem, N.C. He was a combat veteran of WW II and the Korean War.

Charles E. Lane, 94, of Lawrence, Mass. During WW II, he was a radioman assigned to 4thMarDiv. He saw action in the Pacific, including during the Battle of Iwo Jima. He was discharged in 1946 and later had a career in the Army Reserve.

SSgt Robert P. Mendoza, 43, of San Diego, Calif. He enlisted in 1994 and went to boot camp at MCRD San Diego. He was a jumpmaster and a member of a scout sniper platoon. He deployed with the 15th MEU in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. His awards include the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal with one star and combat "V." In 2003 he left active duty for the Marine Corps Reserve. He was the owner of Tactical Defense Systems USA in Oceanside, Calif.

Maj John J. Miles, 87, of Prince

George, British Columbia, Canada. He enlisted when he was 18 and later was commissioned. He trained as a Marine aviator and during three tours in Vietnam, flew more than 600 combat missions.

Cpl Joe T. Morris, 94, of Plant City, Fla. He served from 1943 to 1946 in the South Pacific. He was assigned to 1stMarDiv and saw action on Peleliu and Okinawa. After the war ended, he served in China. He later had a 30-year career with Texaco.

Col Bob Nelson, 89, of Fountain Hills, Ariz. He was an Eagle Scout and was attending college when he left to enter the Naval Aviation Cadet program at NAS Pensacola, Fla. He was commissioned and flew fighter and attack aircraft at the beginning of his career. He later transitioned to helicopters and commanded several squadrons, including during the Vietnam War.

Col Larry D. Parsons, 75, of Dana Point, Calif. He was a helicopter pilot throughout his 30 years in the Marine Corps. During one mission in Vietnam, his UH-1E of HML-167 was shot down, and as the only survivor of the crash, he spent 19 days on his own evading the enemy.

LtGen Charles H. Pitman, 84, in Fort Worth, Texas. In 1973 he was commanding Marine Air Reserve Training Detachment in Louisiana when he learned that a gunman was shooting at civilian police officers from the rooftop of a hotel in the local area. Without waiting to receive permission from higher up his chain of command, he used one of the command's CH-46 helicopters and transported a team of police officers to the rooftop where they successfully neutralized the sniper.

His nearly 40 years as a Marine aviator included three combat tours in Vietnam where his actions earned him a Silver Star. According to the award citation, while a pilot with HMM-265, he led a section of two CH-46A transport helicopters and two UH-1E gunships on a nighttime emergency extraction of a reconnaissance team that was pinned down in a mountainous area south of Da Nang. Under intense enemy fire, he successfully evacuated the team and flew them to Marble Mountain.

In 1979-1980, he participated in Operation Eagle Claw, the attempt to rescue U.S. hostages from Iran. He accumulated more than 12,000 flight hours, made 575 carrier arrested landings, and survived seven helicopter shootdowns. In addition

to the Silver Star, his awards include four Distinguished Flying Crosses, Bronze Star with combat "V," 65 Air Medals, the Purple Heart and the Navy Commendation Medal with combat "V."

Michael J. Ruane, 97, of Northfield, N.J. He enlisted in 1942 and served in the Pacific during WW II. He saw action in New Georgia and the Solomon Islands. From 1944-1946 he was assigned to MCRD Parris Island.

Col Robert W. Schoning, 96, of Corvallis, Ore. He was the son of a WW I Marine and was commissioned a second lieutenant in 1945. He served one year in China but was recalled to active duty during the Korean War, where he saw action at the Chosin Reservoir. He retired from the Marine Corps Reserve in 1981. His awards include a Bronze Star with combat "V."

LCpl Robert J. "Bob" Shibley, 78, of Madison, Maine. He enlisted in 1959 served four years. He was assigned to "Alpha" Btry, 1st Bn, 12th Marines, 3rdMarDiv at Camp Hague, Okinawa and with the 2ndMarDiv at Camp Lejeune, N.C. He later had a successful career as a small business owner. He was a member of the MCL.

LtCol Richard B. Talbott, 91, of Winchester, Va. He enlisted in 1946 and

later completed college using the GI bill. He served during the Korean War and completed two tours in Vietnam.

Bud Whitney, 95, of Colby, Wis. He was an Eagle Scout who joined the Navy in 1942. He was a corpsman attached to 2ndMarDiv on Guam, Saipan, Tinian and Okinawa.

GySgt Raymond E. "Gunner" Wise, 85, of Jeffersonville, Ind. During his 20-year Marine Corps career, he was a DI and completed two tours in Vietnam. His awards include the Navy Commendation Medal with combat "V."

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



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SOUND OFF
[continued from page 7]

probably told him he was one of the flag raisers. And since he was on the mountain at that time, he truly believed he was involved and the same for Rene Gagnon.

In our company, E/2/27, 5th Marine Division, there was a Marine who was wounded on Iwo and survived and attended several annual division reunions and repeatedly said he did not remember anything about the campaign.

Cpl Walter P. O'Malley
Clinton, Mass.

• *"Doc" Bradley has been confirmed as one of the flag raisers of the first flag that went up on Mount Suribachi. I believe that when initially asked, he thought they were referring to that flag raising, and truthfully responded, "Yes." A Navy Cross recipient for his actions during that very battle, "Doc" Bradley had no reason to lie.—Editor*

Honorable Discharge Pin

Regarding Major Tony Mustapich's letter, "Honorable Discharge Pin," in the April issue, I received an honorable discharge pin when I was formally discharged in 1991. I wear it every day on my lanyard at work.



COURTESY OF MAJ TONY MUSTAPICH

I work in a high school and students often ask what the pins represent. I always start with the discharge pin, and some kids are shocked that I am a Marine. Sometimes they will slip and call me soldier. I respond, "That's it! You fail all classes this semester and have to repeat everything!" They either figure it out on their own or have a friend bail them out. I always preach that we are the world's finest and we exist to be heroes to the other branches.

Cpl Wade Price
USMC, 1985-1991
Mandeville, La.

Regarding the letter to Sound Off in the April *Leatherneck* by Major Mustapich titled "Honorable Discharge Pin," I received my pin exactly as pictured there when I discharged in 1970. I know of others that wore them too. Also, I worked TDY in admin for a month awaiting orders in 1968 and know that office gave Marines a discharge pin like this.

When I read his letter, I thought it strange that the major didn't get one of these.

I wore the discharge pin on my uniform when I was allowed to, and moved it to my hat or jacket lapel other times. Sadly, when I was travelling on a Greyhound bus in September 2017, having it on my U.S. Marine Corps veteran hat, along with my American Legion pin, my hat was stolen.

Anne Koskinen
Ely, Minn.

In reference to your letter about the honorable discharge pin, I asked around to several Marines about the pin, and only I and one other Marine got the pin. I found out the pins were sent to me by mail from the Department of Defense Navy personnel. I also would like to know why they gave the pin to some and not to others.

Sgt C. "Jix" Arrington
Whitesburg, Tenn.

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- Thurgood Marshall



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This is in reference to a letter from Major Mustapich in the April issue of *Leatherneck*. The Major had been shown an honorable discharge pin received by a friend when he was discharged in 1963 and asked if other *Leatherneck* readers were familiar with it. I was given this same pin along with a ruptured duck pin when I was

discharged in October of 1945, following my World War II service. I served as a radar operator with the 12th Defense Bn, during my 25 months overseas.

Cpl Vic Bond
USMC, 1942-1945
Lawrenceville, Ga.

• Maj Tony Mustapich's letter clearly struck a note with our readers as it generated 37 responses. In the past, each enlisted Marine who was honorably discharged and did not reenlist was issued a Marine Corps honorable discharge button or pin. According to LtCol Phil Wagner, USMCR (Ret), one of our readers, the discharge pin goes back as far as the 1920s. He found an illustration of the pin in both the 1929 and 1937 versions of the Uniform Regulations. Unfortunately, the pin is no longer issued upon being discharged according to the Separations and Retirement Branch at Headquarters Marine Corps. Retired Marines are still given a pin which reflects their status as a retired Marine.

The Marine Shop sells an Honorable Discharge tie tack that can also be worn as a lapel pin. It bears the words "U.S. Marine Corps Honorable Discharge" in gold lettering on white background. The center of the tie tack is black with a gold

eagle, globe & anchor. You can order one online at: <https://www.marineshop.net> or by calling 888 237-7683.—Editor

Two Good Marines Lost

In the April issue there is a letter titled, "Dangerous Flying Conditions" in Vietnam. The writer told of flying in an F-4 west of Da Nang while in clouds and almost hitting mountains.

In 1961 I was in a squadron in MAG-32 with fellow captain and close friend Joe Baldwin. Joe later went to Vietnam and flew in an F-4 in the same area also in the clouds at an altitude of 5,500 feet. He and fellow pilot Gregg Barnes, worrying about "rocks," requested a higher altitude but before permission was granted, hit a mountain and were killed.

The maps showed the mountain in question was 4,468 feet in elevation but it was actually 5,800. No one checked and discovered that the maps mistakenly showed the mountain was 1,332 feet lower than it was. Two good Marines and an F-4 lost for no good reason.

Peter M. Walker
Welches, Ore.

Errors in Geiger Article

I enjoyed Major Allan Bevilacqua's article, "Roy S. Geiger: A Marine for the

WAYS TO SOUND OFF



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Ages,” in the April issue, but boy did he get it wrong about the dates of the Battle of Okinawa and General Buckner’s death.

I have visited Okinawa twice in the last decade and made it a point to look up the location where Gen Buckner was killed. He was killed at a lava outcrop southeast of Itoman on June 18, after the Marines and soldiers had forced the Japanese in a small pocket at the southern end of Okinawa.

It would have been impossible for a Japanese spotter to see Buckner from Shuri Castle for two reasons. One was that Shuri Castle was 10 miles away. The second is that Marines had taken Shuri Castle on May 29th. The battle of Okinawa ended on or about June 22 and did not go into July as the article stated.

Nevertheless, I enjoyed the article about Gen Geiger, remembering that I went through Infantry Regiment Training at Camp Geiger in 1958.

As an aside, I was stationed from 1959 to 1961 with the 12th Marines at Camp Hauge which was named after a Marine who died during the assault on Shuri. Camp Hauge consisted of Quonset huts and was the headquarters of the 3rd Marine Division back then. I spent considerable time trying to find its location without any luck because the land was turned over to

the Japanese and is now occupied by a village. I couldn’t even locate the small volcanic hill that was located next to our communications shack.

Ted Kozak
USMC, 1958-1962
Fisherville, Ky.

FMF Term

It sure was nice to read in the April issue that the term FMF is back. The U.S. Marines do not go on expeditions, excursions or any other 25-cent word to describe a force that was our goal. Victory!

I always enjoy reading *Leatherneck* and reading about naval and Marine Corps history.

John Sanchez
Hanford, Calif.

Photos in *Leatherneck* Bring Back Memories

Your November 2019 issue carried the archived story, “The 9th Moves Out,” of 1/9 leaving Vietnam in 1969. I was with H&S Co, 1/9 as a wireman when we left the country. I still have the original *Leatherneck* magazine from November 1969 that carried the story. I am in two of the pictures. On page 17, I am walking behind the front Marine and am looking

to the right. This is when we were loading trucks at Vandegrift Combat Base.

In the picture at the top of page 20, I am in the top rack aboard USS *Paul Revere* (APA-248). Those pictures sure bring back memories. Sorry to say that the neck ribbon I received on the pier prior to boarding the ship got water damage and was trashed a few years ago.

Bruce Giersch
USMC, 1968-1971 and 1978-1986
Winnebago, Ill.

Editorial Irish Pennants

In the May issue of *Leatherneck* on page 53, the photo of the howitzer is listed as a 105 mm and should have been listed as a 155 mm howitzer.

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

Reader Assistance

Edited by Sara W. Bock

Reunions

Editor's note: The following reunion information was current as of June 1. Given that things are rapidly changing due to the spread of the COVID-19 virus, please continue to check with the reunion points of contact for the most up-to-date information.

• **Marine Corps Engineer Assn.**, Sept. 23-25, 2021, Fredericksburg, Va. Contact Maj Charlie Dismore, USMC (Ret), (512) 394-9333, www.marcorengasn.org.

• **Marine Corps Counterintelligence Assn.**, Aug. 24-28, Gatlinburg, Tenn. Contact Ralph "Buck" Wheaton, (304) 947-5060, buckmccia@hughes.net.

• **Marine Corps Cryptologic Assn.**, September 2021, Las Vegas, Nev. Contact Edgar Kitt, 2250 Heavenly View Dr., Henderson, NV 89014, (702) 454-1646, edgarkitt@earthlink.net.

• **Marine Corps Disbursing Assn.**, May 16-20, 2021, Reno, Nev. Contact MGySgt Kevin Gascon, USMC (Ret), (760) 458-2655, mojorisin68@hotmail.com, www.usmcdisbursers.com.

• **Marine Corps Mustang Assn.**, Aug. 11-16, Arlington, Va. Contact Jim Casey, (703) 349-0893, businessmnr@marinecorpsmustang.org, www.marinecorpsmustang.org/muster.

• **National Montford Point Marine Assn.**, Aug. 26-29, King of Prussia, Pa. Contact Eric Nelson, (703) 629-8839, or MGySgt Ron Johnson, (504) 202-8552, www.montfordpointmarines.org.

• **Marine Air Traffic Control Assn.**, Sept. 23-27, San Antonio, Texas. Contact Steve Harris, (509) 499-8137, sandkh2@gmail.com.

• **7th Engineer Bn Vietnam Assn.**, Sept. 10, Arlington, Va. Contact Norbert Johnson, 6100 Cochrane Rd., Marlette, MI 48453, (810) 300-0782, nwgj@outlook.com, www.usmc.org/7th/.

• **Marine Corps Air Transport Assn. (VMGR/VMR)**, Sept. 3-6, Chicago, Ill. Contact CWO-4 Dave Harshbarger, USMC (Ret), (630) 394-2568, reunion@mcata.org, www.mcata.com.

• **Force Logistics Command, Vietnam (all battalions/FLSG-A&B)**, Sept. 26-Oct. 1, Tucson, Ariz. Contact Mike Fishbaugh, 990 Little Lick Fork, East Point, KY 41216, (606) 789-5010, smfishbaugh@mikrtec.com.

• **11th Marine Regiment, OIF (20th anniversary)**, March 31-April 1, 2023, Camp Pendleton, Calif. Contact Casey Harsh, casey.harsh@gmail.com. Facebook group: The Cannon Cockers of OIF-1 (20-Year Reunion 2023 Group).

• **3rd Recon Bn Assn.**, Oct. 6-10,

Tucson, Ariz. Contact Floyd Nagler, (952) 440-1553, floydnagler@yahoo.com.

• **1/3 (all eras)**, Aug. 11-16, Arlington, Va. Contact Don Bumgarner, (562) 897-2437, dbumcl3usmc@verizon.net.

• **1/5 (1986-1992)**, Sept. 10-13, Macomb, Ill. Contact Scott Hainline, (309) 351-2050, ptimfi@yahoo.com.

• **1/27 (1968)**, Sept. 24-26, Las Vegas, Nev. Contact Felix Salmeron, (469) 583-0191, mar463@aol.com.

• **2/4**, Sept. 3-6, Pleasanton, Calif. Contact Brooks Wilson, brooks@adanceofflight.com, www.2-4association.org.

• **"Stormy's" 3/3**, Sept. 27-Oct. 1, Branson, Mo. Contact Burrell Landes, (303) 734-1458, bhanon@comcast.net, www.stormys33.com.

• **G/2/7 (RVN, 1965-1970)**, Sept. 2, Carson City, Nev. Contact Travis Skaggs, (775) 291-6813, tskaggs6@email.com.

• **3d 155s, M/4/12, 3rdMarDiv**, Sept. 13-17, Branson, Mo. Contact SgtMaj Gordon Niska, USMC (Ret), (770) 868-8694, sniska@windstream.net.

• **1st 8-inch Howitzer Btry**, Aug. 6-8, Tacoma, Wash. Contact Stanley Alpha, (253) 847-0850, stg66@netzero.net.

• **Marine Corps Security Forces, Naval Weapons Station Earle**, Sept. 25-27, Colts Neck, N.J. Contact Dusty Wright, (618) 553-2205, slickstuff@nwcable.net.

• **U.S. Naval Disciplinary Command Portsmouth, N.H. (Marine Detachment)**, Sept. 14-20, North Conway, N.H. Contact Don Ferry, (972) 334-0609, don.ferry1942@gmail.com.

• **Tri-State Detachment Marine Corps League (All-Service Reunion)**, Aug. 15, Youngstown, Ohio. Contact Chester Kaschak, (330) 533-6084, or Ed Levisaur, (330) 533-6084.

• **41st OCC/TBS 3-67**, Oct. 22, San Diego, Calif. Contact Paul Disario, (559) 273-9549, pdisario@comcast.net.

• **TBS, Co F, 6-70**, Oct. 22-25, Quantico, Va. Contact Tom Kanasky, (202) 366-3156, tlkanasky@earthlink.net, or Mitch Youngs, (703) 493-9435, mitchyoungs@verizon.net.

• **TBS, Co I, 9-70**, Aug. 20-22, Quantico, Va. Contact Scott Kafer, 16436 Turnbury Oak Dr., Odessa, FL 33556, (202) 403-7680, scottkaf@mac.com.

• **TBS, Co C, 3-72**, is planning a 50th-anniversary reunion. Contact Col Joe Mueller, USMCR (Ret), (818) 815-8331, jnm21213@yahoo.com.

• **Plt 1187, San Diego, 1969**, is planning a reunion. Contact T.E. Miller, (618) 520-

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9646, or Mark Elder, (314) 322-8516.

• **Plt 3028, San Diego, 1966**, is planning a reunion. Contact MSgt Bob Rees, USMC (Ret), (619) 940-9218, bobrees86@gmail.com.

• **VFA-125 (1980-1990)**, Sept. 15-17, NAS Lemoore, Calif. Contact MSgt Ben Spotts, (970) 867-8029, benjo1993@msn.com.

• **VMF/VMA-311**, Sept. 27-Oct. 1, New Orleans, La. Contact Jim Galchick, (610) 584-5654, jgalchick@neo.rr.com, <http://www.vmfvma311reunion.org>.

Ships and Others

• **USS Canberra (CA-70/CAG-2)**, Sept. 30-Oct. 4, Pittsburgh, Pa. Contact Ken Minick, 2115 Pride Ave., Belpre, OH 45714, (740) 423-8976, usscanberra@gmail.com.

• **USS Hornet (CV-8/CV/CVA/CVS-12)**, Sept. 16-20, Buffalo, N.Y. Contact Sandy Burket, P.O. Box 108, Roaring Spring, Pa., 16673, (814) 224-5063, (814) 3112-4976, hornetcva@aol.com.

• **USS Ranger (CVA/CV-61)**, Sept. 30-Oct. 3, Norfolk, Va. Contact Frank Thoms, (975) 595-6924, Kevin Auriemma, (973) 625-3893, or Tom Ballinger, (210) 403-3302.

Mail Call

• Richard Klawe, (321) 231-5989, partnersinparadise@yahoo.com, to hear from or about Marine veteran **Stephen Philip LANE**, who was born in Buffalo, N.Y., and served at **Khe Sanh, Vietnam**, then was stationed in North Carolina before he was discharged and moved to California.

• Ron Spratlen, (503) 250-4295, hawkdrumer@yahoo.com, to hear from or about a Marine with the last name **STEVENS** who rescued him on **Hill 689** in **Vietnam** at the end of **June 1968** while he served with **Plt C, D/1/1, 1stMarDiv**.

• Reuben Trevino, (361) 774-4685, rftrevino@cableone.net, to hear from members of **Co A, Plt 1013, Plt 1014, Plt 1015 and Plt 1016, San Diego, 1971**.

• John Koessler, (904) 259-9179, to hear from Marine **Capt KEITH** who served on **USS Canopus (AS-9), 1970-1971**.

Wanted

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

• Jessica Hicks, jayeusmc@yahoo.com, wants a **recruit graduation book for Plt 4005, Parris Island, 2003**.

• John Dunning, 2274 E. 7120 South, Salt Lake City, UT 84121, sierrasquid69@

gmail.com, wants **issues of Leatherneck** from **January-October 1969**.

Sales, Trades and Giveaways

• Carl Withey, (315) 689-3653, crwithey@twcny.rr.com, has a **USMC Ka-Bar** with the engraving "**Cpl T.E. Phillips, JUN 89 2ND OSE FEB 93**" that he would like to return to its owner.

• Howard Sweitzer, (954) 972-0555, 1417 NW 62nd Way, Margate, FL 33063, has a pair of **Desert Storm USMC boots** with a dog tag that reads "**Desouza, B.R.**" that he would like to return to their owner. He also has a pair of **khaki leather/canvas Belleville boots, size 8.5W**, two **Desert Storm T-shirts (1991)**, size large, one that reads "**USS Leyte Gulf (CG-55) Homecoming**" and one that says "**Scud Buster-Operation Desert Storm.**"

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

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Saved Round

By Nancy S. Lichtman



COURTESY OF 1STLT GERALD MERNA, USMC (RET)

HONORING KOREAN WAR VETERANS—On July 26, 1985, the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) held a ceremony in Washington, D.C., to issue the first postage stamp honoring veterans of the Korean War. The ceremony was held on the 32nd anniversary of the armistice that brought an end to the fighting on the Korean peninsula.

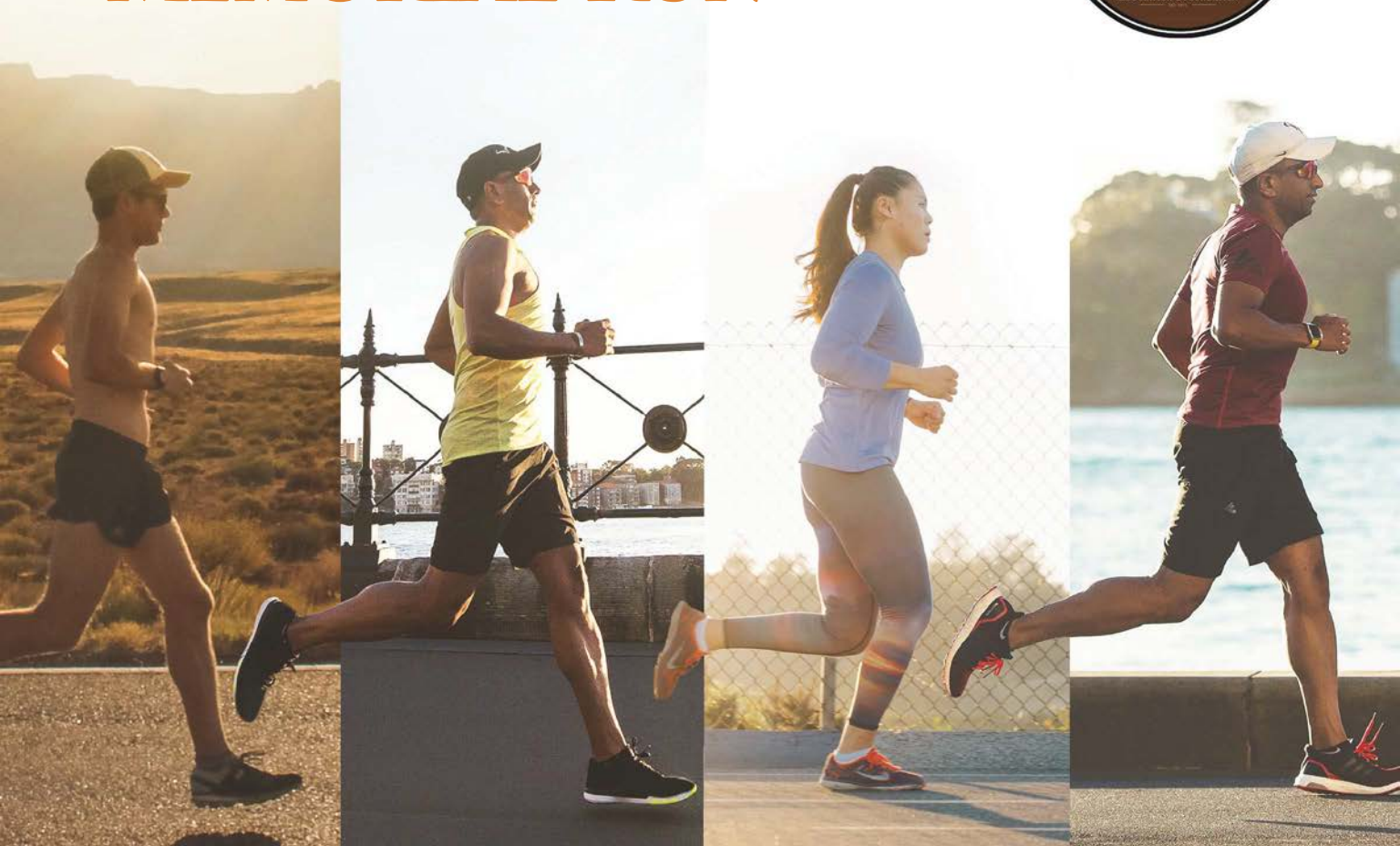
A 1950 photo taken by *Life* magazine photographer David Douglas Duncan, a Marine Corps veteran of World War II, inspired the design of the stamp. In Duncan's photo, battle-weary Marines leaving the Chosin Reservoir are looking back at their fallen comrades. Artist Robert Anderson created a pencil sketch based on that photo for the Bureau of Engraving and Printing which was used to create the "Veterans Korea" 22-cent postage stamp.

Two of the USPS officials who participated in the ceremony were Marine Corps veterans of the war.

Colonel Robert D. Taplett, USMC (Ret), far left, was the Postmaster for Washington, D.C., and had served as the commanding officer of 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines, 1st Marine Division at the Chosin Reservoir and later received the Navy Cross for his actions during the iconic battle. He was also the recipient of two Silver Stars for actions earlier in the war. First Lieutenant Gerald Merna, USMC (Ret), second from left, served with "Easy" Company, 2nd Bn, 5th Marines, 1st MarDiv, and was the Postmaster for Northern Virginia. On the right is Paul N. Carlin, the Postmaster General.

Merna, who also was the executive assistant to the Postmaster General, recently told *Leatherneck*, "Issuing stamps helps a great deal not only dealing with history but helps the veterans with so many remembrances. It's simply amazing how the story of America is captured in U.S. postage stamps." 🇺🇸

SUGAR BEAR MEMORIAL RUN



Run or walk 10 miles on July 22nd to honor the sacrifice and memory of LtCol Mario "Sugar Bear" Carazo. MCAF has partnered with the Sugar Bear Foundation to support Gold Star families, continuing Mario's legacy of service.

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The registration fee is \$25.



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