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MAGAZINE OF THE MARINES

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**COVER:** Marines from 2nd Bn, 10th Marine Regiment load a high-explosive round into an M777 Howitzer during a live-fire range near Setermoen, Norway, on March 4. Artillery Marines conducted the live-fire range in preparation for Exercise Cold Response, a Norwegian-led exercise designed to enhance military capabilities and allied cooperation in high-intensity warfighting in a challenging arctic environment. Photo by Cpl Menelik Collins, USMC. Copies of the cover may be obtained by sending \$2 (for mailing costs) to *Leatherneck* Magazine, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134-0775.

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# From the Editor's Desk

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CPL RACHEL YOUNG-PORTER, USMC

**HM2 Emilie A. Evans, a field medical technician with 2nd Medical Battalion, 2nd Marine Logistics Group, takes the temperature of a Marine at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C., March 24. The Marine was one of many leathernecks who had recently returned from deployment and who were screened for the coronavirus.**

taught us to set the example, take care of our fellow Marines, and that leaders eat last. We believe to the depths of our souls in the maxim of “one team, one fight,” and we’ve proven our own selflessness in countless ways but especially when we stepped on those yellow footprints at Parris Island or San Diego or crossed the railroad tracks onto Brown Field.

As I write this, it’s late March here in the Quantico headquarters of the Marine Corps Association & Foundation which also serves as the home of *Leatherneck*—Magazine of the Marines. I’m the only one on the *Leatherneck* staff in the office today as we have implemented social distancing in an attempt to help “flatten the curve” of the coronavirus pandemic. The rest of the staff is working from their homes in the local area with no loss in productivity and no delay of our deadline—your *Leatherneck* will continue to be published on time and with the same great articles and stories as always. Technology has made that possible in addition to the incredible dedication and drive of our small staff who are adjusting to the new normal. Our resident writer, Sara Bock, is the only one used to working like this. As the wife of a Marine major stationed at MCAS Yuma, Sara has been teleworking for years and makes it look easy, but she has her own challenges these days. Schools are shut down, and she is now managing the schoolwork for her two wonderful children, Addison and Ryder.

I can’t help but wonder what the world will be like by the time the May issue hits mailboxes throughout the country. Will we be past all of this and back to normal? Will we still be in the thick of shutdowns and quarantines? Will the hospitals be dealing with unprecedented numbers of patients and a lack of supplies? Or will we be saying we overreacted? I simply don’t know, and for a typical Marine Type A personality, that is exceptionally frustrating.

What I do know is that now more than ever America needs her Marines—her veteran and retired Marines especially. We’ve been through countless challenges and hardships and have emerged better because of them. We know how to lead and not to give in to hysteria and panic. We live by principles that have

Instead of hoarding toilet paper and emptying bread and milk from the grocery store shelves, I know my fellow Marines are working in their communities and neighborhoods to calm the hysteria and offer assistance wherever it is needed. We may complain amongst ourselves because that’s in our DNA, but I know you’re telling jokes to lighten the mood and sharing memes and gifs on social media to brighten someone’s day—my personal favorite so far is “Some of you have never had the government ruin your plans and it shows.” You’re sharing stories of your own “quarantines” on ships in the Med or on the Rock or during recruit training. You’re seeing who needs help and just pitching in with no questions asked and no expectation of thanks. You’re continuing to set the example and show the best of America through your actions, assistance, and basic decency.

I think it was General Charles C. Krulak who said that in addition to making Marines and winning battles, the other thing that the Marine Corps does well is make better citizens. And in a time of turmoil and stress and fear, we continue to do our part for our nation and our fellow citizens as we help solve the problem or at least make things easier for those we continue to serve. That’s what Marines do and who we are. And that’s who America needs today.

God bless you, Marines, and thank you for your continued service. You continue to personify, even in the worst of times, our motto of *Semper Fidelis*.

Mary H. Reinwald  
Colonel, USMC (Ret)  
Editor, *Leatherneck*



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## Letter of the Month

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

The day passed and, although it was a milestone, I didn't remember it until a few days later. Fifty years had passed—a lifetime. And so much depended on the milestone day, and so many changes came from it.

I was not a good student in high school. I loved high school, but I was simply not committed to doing what it took to get good grades.

There were two schools on my radar for colleges. One was Emory & Henry College in Emory, Va., and the other was Tennessee Wesleyan University in Athens, Tenn. Both were Methodist schools and both fielded football teams. Early on, it became obvious that I could not afford either and neither offered football scholarships for a full ride.

The third choice was East Tennessee State University (ETSU) in Johnson City, Tenn., and I knew that all I had to do was have a high school diploma and take the ACT and I could get in. And that's what I did.

The problem was that once I determined that I would rather just enjoy high school than study, I had failed to establish study habits. I managed to get through the first quarter at ETSU with one C, two Bs, and an A, but the next quarter saw me drowning. In fact, I was in serious danger of flunking out.

Flunking out meant two problems: the wrath and disappointment of my father and the military draft. My number in the draft lottery was 16. If I left school, the draft was a sure thing, but there was one solution. ETSU was a strong supporter of the military. If I presented military orders, I could be withdrawn from school passing (whatever my grades might have been), and I would receive a tuition refund for that current quarter.

It was a test in European history that made the decision for me. I sat for the exam on a Tuesday morning, and knowing that I was going to bomb on the test, I left the classroom and enlisted in the Marine Corps.

I waited while they cut my orders and then went back to the university to withdraw. I then had to go home to tell

my folks what I had done. Two days later, I boarded the bus for Parris Island, S.C. It was the first time I ever saw my father, a World War II U.S. Navy veteran, cry.

Early in the morning on Friday, Feb. 13, 1970, I stepped off the bus and onto a set of yellow footprints.

My life, as I knew it, was over, and the next 13 weeks were the most challenging I had ever faced—and worse than I had ever imagined. And yet, those 13 weeks changed my life. I did things I thought I'd never do—never could do—and I gained something that I thought I already possessed: discipline.

I was a good and squared-away Marine and stayed away from trouble. By the time I was honorably discharged, I had a wife and a very young son. I returned to East Tennessee State and graduated cum laude, much to the amazement of my high school teachers, I'm sure.

More importantly, I learned and found that I enjoyed learning. It wasn't easy, as I had to work during college while taking classes full-time but when I did graduate, I did it without financial help except for a \$1,000 loan which I paid back. Later, I went to grad school and the seminary and added a couple more degrees. I earned academic honors there, as well.

Something else I gained by my military experience was pride. I wasn't particularly cocky, but I was proud to be a Marine. It was, and still remains, the greatest accomplishment of my life. But it also gave me confidence. Not the "I can do anything" kind of attitude but the kind that, when things got really tough, I could look in the mirror and say to myself, "Look, you got through Marine Corps boot camp, you can get through this too!" And it worked. The experience introduced me to a fellowship that is likely unlike any other.

Once, some years ago, I went into a comic book shop to buy a few comic books. The guy behind the counter looked like a stereotype of a biker gang member with tattoos all over and long hair and a very full beard. I was wearing my clerical collar and, at that time, was clean shaven and had short hair. He looked at me with disdain and even gave a snort of disgust.

When I went to pay for the books, I noticed that he had a Marine Corps tattoo. I said, "Were you in the Marine Corps?" "Yeah, what's it to you?" he growled. "Parris Island or San Diego?" I inquired. He cocked his head and said,

"Parris Island." I asked, "Which recruit battalion?" "Third," he said. "I was in 2nd Battalion," I answered. "When were you there?" I sat down and we had a full hour of conversation, talking about our experiences and laughing over boot camp stories. You couldn't find two men more dissimilar, but we were bound together as Marines. As brothers.

I think that the older I have gotten and the further away I have come from those days, the more important they seem to me. I have two grandsons who are Marines now. They have put in a little over three years. One is in Hawaii and the other in Japan. I understand that, right now, the Marine Corps is a job to them—like any other job with all of its annoyances. But the day will come when they realize that they did something truly extraordinary, especially in this day when only one percent of the population is in the military, and the Marines are a small fraction of that one percent.

The term, "Once a Marine, Always a Marine," has been used for decades. However, the 35th Commandant of the Marine Corps, General James F. Amos, made it official Marine Corps doctrine when in 2010, he declared officially, "There is no such thing as a former Marine." He went on to say, "You're in a different phase of your life, but you'll always be a Marine."

So, it's been 50 years since I got off that bus and began an experience that has stayed with me to this day. Sometimes, in my mind, I can hear the cadence being called, feel the rumble of boots on the ground, hear the crack of the M-14 rifles, and I can still see and hear drill instructor Ferris T. Johnson as, by example, he demonstrates what it means to be a Marine.

Sometimes, I'm still that 19-year-old remembering those days. And then I look in the mirror and I'm 69 and balding and terribly out of shape, and on Medicare. But I'm still a Marine. Always will be. The general said so. And who am I to argue with the Commandant?

David Epps  
Senoia, Ga.

## Band of Brothers

I joined the Marine Corps in 1969 and retired as a master sergeant in 1989. During my 20 years of service, starting with Parris Island, S.C.; Vietnam; Marine Security Guard duty in Paris, France;

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Okinawa; and 10 years on recruiting duty in Pittsburgh, Pa.; Baltimore, Md.; and then finishing my career with the 4th Marine Corps District Contact Team, I heard we are a "band of brothers."

Every time I see fellow Marines wearing a piece of apparel with the Marine Corps emblem on it, I make it a point to shake his or her hand and say, "Semper Fi, brother." My kids asked me one day, "Daddy, why do you always say Semper Fi to everyone wearing a Marine Corps emblem?" I explained to them that unlike the other branches of service, the Marine Corps is a band of brothers.

Never was this more true than in October 2019. My daughter, Mary Kate, went to Rome, Italy, with the understanding that she would live with an Italian family as an au pair. Her duties, prior to accepting the au pair position, were explained as only to be speaking and teaching the English language to a 4-year-old Italian girl. However, when she arrived in Italy, the Italian family began to demand that she perform domestic chores. Mop the floor, fold the family's clothes, etc. My daughter called me for advice. I wanted to get on the next plane and fly to Italy to speak with the family myself, but I knew that wasn't practical, so I did the next best thing.

Being a former Marine Security Guard at the U.S. Embassy in Paris, France, from 1972 to 1975, I knew there were Marines in Rome. I called the embassy and spoke to the noncommissioned officer in charge, Gunnery Sergeant Hancock. We explained pleasantries and then I explained to Gunny Hancock my daughter's situation. Gunny said, "Top, tell your daughter to come to the embassy and ask for me."

The next day Mary Kate went to speak to Gunny Hancock. She called me immediately after their meeting and said, "Dad, Gunny spoke to me for two hours and during that time he had spoken to his wife, Janie, and they are taking me into their home until I can make a decision about when to come back home." I swelled with pride knowing that the United States Marine Corps is truly a band of brothers. I couldn't have been more comforted as a father to know that my daughter was now in good hands. How beautiful to know that I, a Marine, could pick up the phone and speak to another Marine, who is halfway around the world, who would take care of my daughter as though she was family. GySgt Hancock truly is my brother.

During the couple of months that Mary Kate stayed with Gunny Hancock and his wife, a friendship was formed. They took Mary Kate on weekend trips around Rome to take in the city's illustrious history. I'll

end by telling you the last unbelievable surprise Mary Kate shared with me. She called and asked me to guess where she was going—the Marine Corps Ball! The gunny's wife, Janie, shared one of her evening dresses, and Mary Kate sat with Gunny Hancock and Janie at the head table.

Mary Kate came back to the States in December but stays in touch with Gunny Hancock and his wife. We recently learned that Gunny Hancock and Janie may be stationed at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C., 25 minutes from my home in Beaufort, N.C. You can be sure that this retired master sergeant will insist that GySgt Hancock and Janie stay in our guest home so we can shake hands, eat a steak or two and wash it down with a few cold ones. GySgt Hancock exemplifies the essence of the meaning band of brothers. Once a Marine, Always a Marine, oorah!

Douglas Cawman  
Beaufort, S.C.

#### HMLA-269

I'm not sure if you realize this or not but in the past two months HMLA-269 has been in your magazine twice. Yes, Sir, I'm counting. Not complaining to be honest but it's like being struck by lightning twice.

I was with the 11th and 12th Marines, so what's my interest? I'm 61 years old. My son is 12 and in the 7th grade. Years ago, when he started elementary school, I would always attend the Veterans Day program. Every year one particular teacher would come up to me and shake my hand and say, "Semper Fi." My son's last year there, she was the guest speaker. Her name is April Bynum and she is a third-grade teacher. The speech by Mrs. Bynum was very emotional.

Her older brothers Lansden Good and Eric Good enlisted in the Marine Corps in the 1980s. Lansden's friends called him "Lannie." They both excelled in the Corps and both graduated boot camp as honor graduates. After receiving their dress blues, they were given the nickname the "Blues Brothers." Also, since their last name was Good, hence the motto, "a few 'Good' men," which served them well.

Lannie went to the air wing and was crew chief with HMLA-269, and Eric went to Okinawa with the 12th Marines. In May 1989, while on a training mission in France, Lannie's helicopter went down, killing all aboard.

My sister has gotten me into a lot of crafts over the years so every time I came up with a mug or cards, I would send it to Mrs. Bynum in honor of her brother.

I sent a picture of one of my cards and mugs to Lieutenant Colonel Thomas F.



Short, the commanding officer of HMLA-269, with Lannie's story and asked if they could name a helo in honor of him. LtCol Short got back with me and said it was done.

In a ceremony at MCAS New River, N.C., on November 2019, an AH-1W Super Cobra made its final flight before retirement. Also, there—a UH-1Y Venom with Lannie's name on it.

Michael K. King  
Paducah, Ky.

### Dong Ha Mountain, From My Point of View

There was an article in the March issue about "Lima" Company, 3/4, called, "Dong Ha Mountain." That was my company when I was part of it. However, it stuns me that people can tell war stories and just refer to "Charlie" Squad of "Lima" Co, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines and not mention which platoon.

Marines know, and you would think *Leatherneck* magazine editors would know, there is a "Charlie" Squad in each and every platoon.

The author, Master Sergeant Tom Bartlett, never mentions the date or year that this pullout activity was going on other than mentioning in the headline that it was from the *Leatherneck* archives,

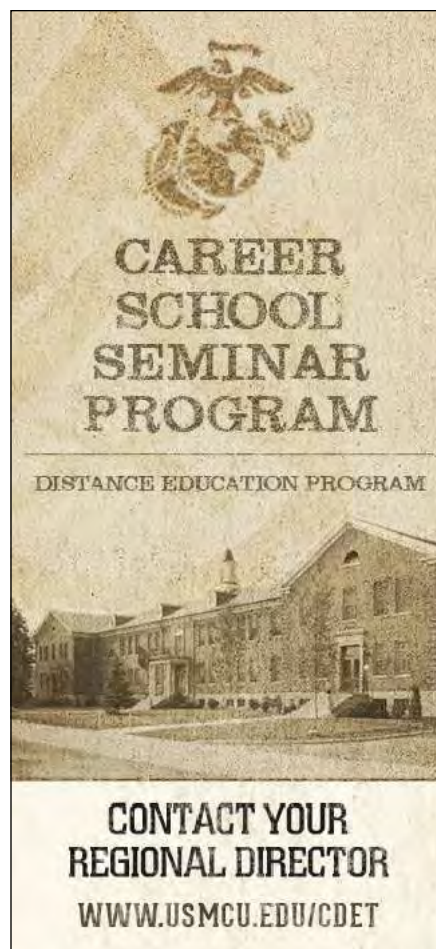
January 1970. He did say, "We got word in September that the Division was being redeployed." But in what year? And most importantly he never mentions that he is in first platoon and is only one third of the entire "Lima" Co.

Because of the pending withdrawal from Vietnam, "Lima" Co had been divided into three locations several miles apart. Second platoon was assigned to security at the Khe Gio Bridge on Route 9. Third platoon, my platoon, was parked atop a small hill right next to the roadway of Route 9, about 50 yards uphill. The hill was nicknamed "Chickenshit" because it did not amount to much.

Due to the fact that we were so separated and because guys from one squad of our platoon had hitched a ride into Dong Ha that morning to get their seabags and paperwork in order for us to be shipped out, only one or two of them returned that evening before watch. The others had gotten drunk at Steak Night at the club ... we were overrun! It was the last engagement with the enemy for the entire 4th Marine Regiment.

I was the bloopman whose position was the first hit by satchel charges and NVA coming through the barb wire.

The event is written about on page 166 of "U.S. Marines in Vietnam: High



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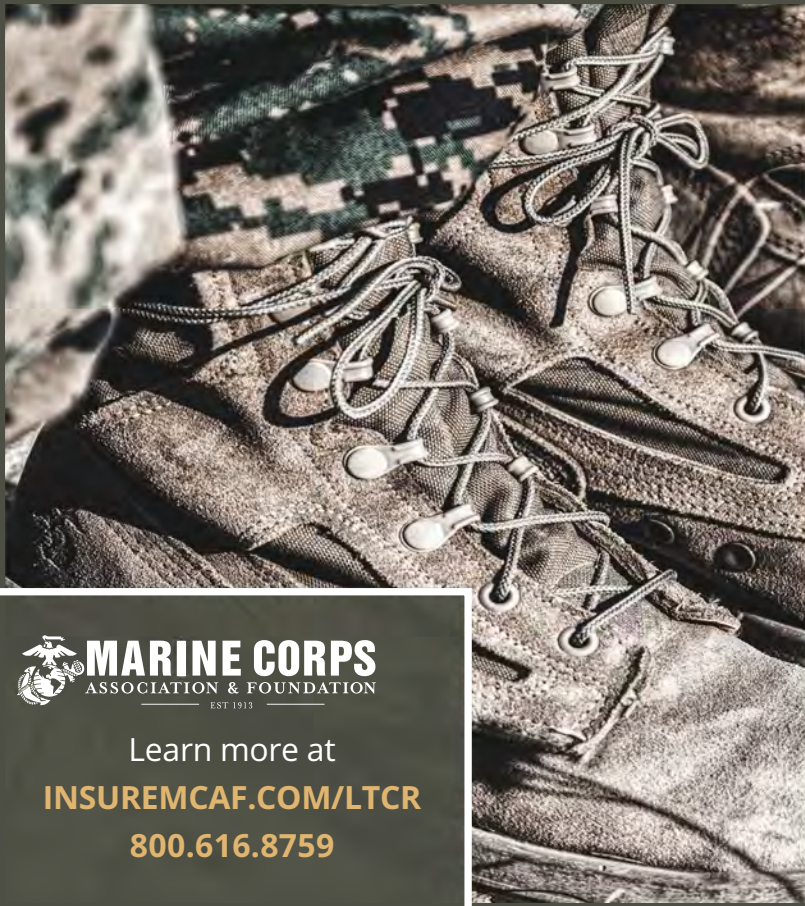


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Mobility and Standdown: 1969," written by Charles R. Smith. There is a book in the series for each year from 1965 to 1975.

You would think the author might have at least mentioned that his company's separation into several parts cost the lives of eight members of the entire company and 17 were wounded which included me.

First platoon had gotten the lucky straw and sat up high and safe away from the enemy. Second and third platoons did not get the benefit of secure bunkers and we lived in sandbag hooches a few feet from the wire.

At least when 3rd Plt got hit at midnight 2nd Plt came to help us out. First Plt was still sleeping safely in their bunkers high up on Dong Ha Mountain.

Cpl Ken Chambers  
Lincoln, Neb.

• *Thank you for adding your perspective to the "Dong Ha Mountain" article we reprinted from our archives. The article, which originally ran in the January 1970 issue of the magazine, is an outstanding example of the style of its author, MSgt Tom Bartlett, who is such an icon in the world of Marine Corps journalism that not one, but two awards are named for him. His use of the date at the top of the article was his style as he assumed readers would*

*understand that the year would provide context for the rest of the article. Your point is well-made about what is left out in the article—it's a common complaint we receive from readers. We here at Leatherneck, however, recognize that deadlines, word count limitations, and telling the story as the author sees it are not always conducive to pleasing every reader. We're thankful when readers like you can tell the rest of the story.—Editor*

### Montford Point

The *Leatherneck* magazine is wonderful. I enjoyed the article, "Sergeant Major Gilbert H. Johnson," in the February issue. I still laugh and cry about "Hashmark." I hope he will learn that there is no such thing as separate but equal. Someday Camp Johnson will fade away, but Montford Point is here to stay.

Charles Foreman  
Orlando, Fla.

### Rene Gagnon Original Burial Plot Questioned

The subject Sound Off letter, "The Untold Story of Iwo Jima," in the March edition of *Leatherneck* left me a little confused. The Marine's name shown as "Marine's Name" could not be Rene

**[continued on page 66]**

# DECISIVE ADAPTABLE COMMITTED

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# In Every Clime and Place

## RAS AL-KHAIR, SAUDI ARABIA Surface, Air TRAP Training Strengthens 26th MEU

Marines assigned to the Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel (TRAP) platoons with Battalion Landing Team, 2nd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, attached to the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit, conducted training in Ras Al-Khair, Saudi Arabia, in mid-February.

A TRAP is one of the MEU's mission-essential tasks, and TRAP platoons are charged with recovering downed pilots and aircraft or recovering isolated personnel. The TRAP training in Saudi Arabia was part of routine sustainment training and enhanced the MEU's capabilities.

"Typically we do an internal call-away by staging gear and refining the process at least once a week," said Second Lieutenant Connor Mahoney, the Combined Anti-Armor Team (CAAT) platoon commander

with 2/8. "Whenever we have access to training areas, we conduct contingency training such as a TRAP."

The two different types of TRAP platoons are air and surface. Each is executed differently but has the same outcome and intent, which is bringing back the downed personnel and any sensitive equipment. An air TRAP can be as small as a fire team-sized element or as large as a whole platoon and is inserted utilizing MEU aircraft while a surface TRAP is inserted utilizing ship-to-shore connectors.

Landing craft, air cushion (LCAC) vehicles departed ships and took the CAAT platoons ashore where the Marines were able to set up radio communications and locate the isolated personnel. While the TRAP platoons were executing their missions ashore in Ras Al-Khair, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command had the *Bataan* Amphibious Ready Group

Compiled by Sara W. Bock

operating in the area to provide maritime security, which allowed the forces to seamlessly go ashore.

"It is important to have one air TRAP and one surface TRAP," said Staff Sergeant Tanner Benjamin, CAAT section leader. "It is important because if pilots go down, we need to be able to get our military members back quickly."

The BLT brings many capabilities to the MEU, such as the ability to conduct a TRAP mission, and its TRAP platoons successfully completed both air and surface TRAP training while off the coast of Saudi Arabia. Combatant commanders rely on the MEU to train in order to ensure a swift recovery of downed aircraft and personnel. The TRAP training in Ras Al-Khair strengthened one of the MEU's essential tasks: reinforcing its crisis-response capabilities from the sea.

The 26th MEU is a Marine Air-Ground Task Force made up of approximately 2,500 Marines and Sailors supported by three major subordinate elements with the ability to provide agility in a dynamic security environment.

The *Bataan* ARG and 26th MEU are deployed to the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations in support of naval operations to ensure maritime stability and security in the Central Region, connecting the Mediterranean and the Pacific through the Western Indian Ocean and three strategic chokepoints.

SSgt Patricia Morris, USMC

## SATTAHIP, THAILAND Cobra Gold: U.S. and Thailand Committed to Partnership

The 39th iteration of Exercise Cobra Gold concluded in Sattahip, Kingdom of Thailand, March 6, wrapping up another year of bilateral cooperation between Royal Thai and U.S. Armed Forces.

While the exercise involved branches of service from 27 different countries, the bond between Royal Thai Marines and U.S. Marines is a special one.

During the 2020 iteration of Cobra Gold, which took place from Feb. 25 to March 6, the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, for the first time ever, was responsible for all U.S. Marine forces during the exercise. This unique leadership role for the Indo-Pacific's premier crisis response force facilitated bilateral training and partnership that sharpened combat readiness between the forces at training sites throughout the country.



SSGT PATRICIA MORRIS, USMC

Marines assigned to "Echo" Co, BLT 2/8, 26th MEU, don gear in preparation for TRAP training aboard USS *New York* (LPD-21) off the coast of Ras Al-Khair, Saudi Arabia, Feb. 15.

The first large-scale bilateral operation of the exercise occurred Feb. 28 with the Royal Thai Navy and Blue-Green team of the 31st MEU and the USS *America* Expeditionary Strike Group spearheading an amphibious landing on Hat Yao Beach in Sattahip. Notably, the 31st MEU's F-35B Lightning II made its first appearance over Thailand during this operation, providing notional close-air support for the maneuver forces in order to secure the beach for an M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) to conduct a dry-fire mission.

"This year the HIMARS are part of the 31st MEU in concert with the F-35s with ground forces. This is really taking it to the next level of warfare and demonstrating to our partners how we can combine our forces to increase our lethality and our capability," said Colonel Robert Brodie, the commanding officer of the 31st MEU and responsible commander for all U.S. Marine Corps forces participating in Cobra Gold.

During the second week of the exercise, U.S. and Thai Marines lived and trained together at various sites throughout Thailand, forging friendships and exchanging their expertise.

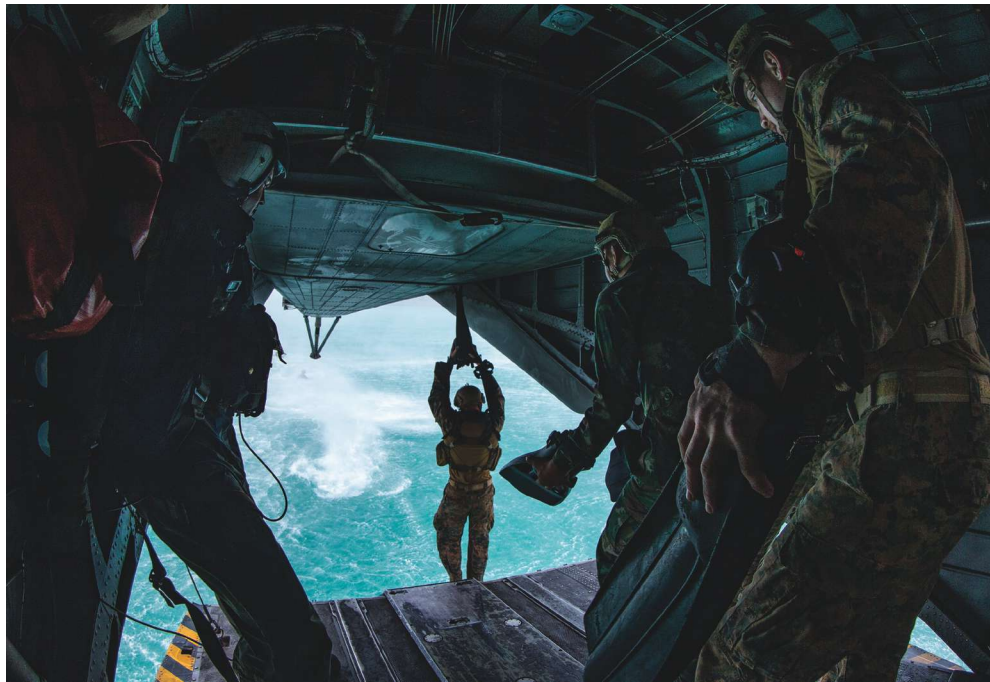
At Camp Lotawin in Sattahip, elite reconnaissance Marines from both nations conducted multiple live-fire events, parachute operations, helocasting and close-quarters tactics training in order to hone both their clandestine insertion and direct action raid skills.

Farther east, Royal Thai Marines in Ban Chan Krem, Chanthaburi Province, showed U.S. Marines the ropes in jungle survival training as the two forces took part in the time-honored tradition of drinking cobra's blood together in between bilateral live-fire and maneuver ranges.

At Ban Dan Lan Hoi, Sukhothai Province, the bilateral force concluded the exercise with a bang as HIMARS, M777 howitzers, 81 mm mortars, and the F-35B combined to destroy targets downrange. The bilateral planning and execution allowed the Thai and U.S. forces an opportunity to prepare for real-world contingencies, said First Lieutenant Mikal Ali, a fire support officer with the 31st MEU's Battalion Landing Team, 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment.

"The exercise proved to be an effective and efficient proof of concept on the ability for the allied nations to be more than capable of meeting any challenges that could arise in the Indo-Pacific," explained Ali.

At all three camps, Marines from both nations shared cultural traditions, formed bonds and sharpened interoperability at



**Leathernecks with the 31st MEU and Royal Thai Marines prepare to jump out of the back of a CH-53 Super Stallion helicopter with Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 265 (Reinforced), during helocast training at Hat Yao, Thailand, March 5, as part of Exercise Cobra Gold. (Photo by Cpl Isaac Cantrell, USMC)**



**A Royal Thai Marine fires a shoulder-launched multipurpose assault weapon next to a U.S. Marine during Exercise Cobra Gold at Ban Chan Krem, Chanthaburi, Thailand, March 5. The exercise, in its 39th year, is designed to advance security and ensure effective responses to regional crises in the Indo-Pacific region. (Photo by LCpl Kolby Legler, USMC)**

the lowest levels between the U.S. and its oldest ally in the region.

To Captain Ryan Poitras, a Joint Terminal Attack Controller with the 31st MEU and two-time participant in Cobra Gold, the chance for U.S. and Thai Marines to interact is a cherished one.

"The chance to work with the Royal Thai Marines is a special opportunity," said Poitras. "Whether it's over drinking cobra blood together, coordinating fire

support or just sharing a meal in the field, every year Marines make friendships at every level and strengthen the bond that the U.S. has with Thailand."

Exercise Cobra Gold demonstrates the commitment of the Kingdom of Thailand and the United States to their long-standing alliance as it also promotes regional partnerships and advances security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.

2ndLt Jonathan Coronel, USMC

## YUMA, ARIZ.

### Expeditionary Refueling Increases Lethality of F-35

Five minutes. That's the amount of time it took for Marines with Marine Wing Support Squadron (MWSS) 371 to refuel an F-35B Lightning II and get it back in the air. It was all part of a forward arming and refueling point (FARP) operation hosted by Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Ariz., during which the tactical aviation ground refueling system (TAGRS) was employed.

A FARP is set up by a support squadron and can have one or several distributive fuel points across a landing zone that enable aircraft to land and obtain both fuel and ordnance during a mission.

"Our mission today was to support VMFA [Marine Fighter Attack Squadron] 122 with a one-point static FARP," said Staff Sergeant Steve Anderson, a bulk fuel specialist with MWSS-371. "We issue fuel to aircraft that come in to support their objectives in the area."

The TAGRS was first implemented by MWSS-371 during Weapons and Tactics Instructor (WTI) course 1-19 in October 2018. The TAGRS team, led by Chief Warrant Officer 2 Chris Moser, the MWSS-371 fuels officer, succeeded in reducing the one-point FARP establishment time by 90 percent and the total refueling time by 50 percent. During this recent FARP operation, the MWSS-371 Marines refueled each F-35B Lightning II in less than 10 minutes.

The TAGRS includes all of the refueling components in one compact system, allowing for rapid setup and breakdown. This makes it essential for expeditionary advanced base operations (EABO), which seek to further distribute lethality in austere environments. The EABO concept advocates employing mobile, relatively low-cost capabilities such as the TAGRS to create a foothold in order to extend the area of operations.

Corporal Jesus Jimenez, a bulk fuel specialist with MWSS-371, explained of the TAGRS, "It can pump fuel faster than the helicopter expedient refueling system, and it has four filter separators in it to filter out water and sediment, along with two points and two fire extinguishers. So we're able to establish a FARP with just this system. All we need is a fuel source."

The TAGRS and its operators are capable of being inserted by air, making the asset expeditionary. It effectively eliminates the complications of embarkation and transportation of gear to the landing zone.

"What makes this system so unique is its mobility," said Anderson. "We can pack the entire system in the back of a trailer and tow it into MV-22 Ospreys, CH-53E Super Stallions or KC-130J Super Hercules, and drop it into an austere environment to extend the area of operations for aircraft so that they can attack further inland or piece directly into the heart of the enemy."

Not only is the TAGRS a faster refuel-



Marines with MWSS-371, 3rd MAW, operate a TAGRS during a FARP operation at MCAS Yuma, Ariz., Feb. 4. The TAGRS enables the squadron to rapidly establish a high-throughput, dual-point refueling site while maintaining critical mobility in austere locations.

LCPL JULIAN ELLIOTT-DROUIN, USMC

## UNITED ARAB EMIRATES



### U.S., UAE Gear Up For Crisis Response During Native Fury

Marines from across I Marine Expeditionary Force tested their capability to conduct maritime prepositioning force operations alongside U.S. Navy Sailors and U.S. Army soldiers during Exercise Native Fury 2020 in the United Arab Emirates, held throughout February and March. The exercise also increased proficiency, expanded levels of cooperation and promoted long-term regional stability and interoperability between the UAE and the United States. The exercise involved ship-to-shore offloads of personnel, equipment and humanitarian resources as well as a logistics convoy movement across the UAE.

**LCpl Enoch Perez, a rifleman with 1st Intel Bn, I MIG, executes a partner movement drill while preparing for Exercise Native Fury 2020 in the United Arab Emirates, Feb. 22. During the exercise, units from I MEF employed a variety of different techniques to accomplish several training objectives.**



SGT ALEXIS FLORES, USMC

**Left: Marines with 1st Transportation Support Bn, 1st Marine Logistics Group, stage Logistic Vehicle System Replacement Trucks to transport ammunition in support of Exercise Native Fury in the United Arab Emirates, Feb. 28.**



CPL JENNESSA DAVEY, USMC

**Above: CWO-2 Christopher Rogouski, left, an Explosive Ordnance Disposal officer with Combat Logistics Battalion 13, discusses gear with LtCol Marcus Melendez, the commanding officer of CLB-13, during Exercise Native Fury in the United Arab Emirates, March 16.**



LCPL BRENDAN MULLIN, USMC

**Below: Sgt Travis Knigge, an Explosive Ordnance Disposal technician with Combat Logistics Battalion 13, works with servicemembers from the UAE Armed Forces during Exercise Native Fury, March 15.**



CPL JENNESSA DAVEY, USMC



LCPL JULIAN ELLIOTT-DROUIN, USMC

**MWSS-371 and VMFA-122 Marines work together to refuel an F-35B Lightning II during a FARP operation at MCAS Yuma, Ariz., Feb. 4.**

ing system but it also requires half the manpower to operate than normally required to conduct a FARP operation.

“We’re able to employ the entire system, maintain good radio communication with not just the pilots but internally within the TAGRS team as well, provide limited security and sustain the entire FARP operation,” Anderson said.

The system is only as effective as the Marines who operate it. The TAGRS team is responsible for guiding the aircraft within the FARP and testing the quality of the fuel. They are also trained in navigation displacement techniques. The team leader plays a crucial role in maintaining the immediate airspace in place of a mobile air traffic control team.

The TAGRS has revolutionized the way the MWSS conducts its FARPs. As America’s “Force in Readiness,” Marines must remain ready. Modernization is essential in maintaining lethality on the battlefield, and the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing is leading the charge.

LCpl Julian Elliott-Drouin, USMC

**CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C.  
Cyber Fury: Marines Defend  
Against Electronic Warfare**

Marines with II Marine Expeditionary Force Information Group and Marine Forces Cyber Command participated in Exercise Cyber Fury at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., Feb. 17-28.

The exercise put to the test the Marines’ abilities to hunt down infiltrating adversaries and remove them from government

networks. The challenge: doing it all without shutting down the network.

“This exercise is important because we are trying to set a standard for the DCO-IDM [Defense Cyber Operations-Internal Defensive Measures] companies in the Marine Corps,” said Staff Sergeant Christian Booe, a cyberspace defensive operator with “Delta” Company, 8th Communication Battalion, II MIG. “We’ve been evaluated on that standard by implementing simulated adversaries who were

taking actions on a life network. This will help us refine our standard operating procedures and get a feel for what that would look like in a real-world scenario.”

DCO-IDMs enable and enhance the war-fighting abilities of a Marine commander in an increasingly contested operational environment, including operations in and through cyberspace. These capabilities include defense against computer network attacks, electronic warfare, information operations and military deception.

Simulated adversaries attempted to thwart the Marines through theft of important documents and data, uploading of malicious files embedded in scripts, and phishing of participants.

The Marines responded by gathering network traffic and sifting through the data to find anomalies. Once they discovered the anomalies, the Marines hunted down the adversaries and removed them from the network.

“This was a great training opportunity,” said Sergeant Samuel Solberg, a cyberspace defensive operator with Delta Co, 8th Comm Bn, II MIG. “We got to communicate and work with reservists, and we were able to accomplish the mission by combining our different perspectives and skill sets when confronted with a problem.”

As the Marine Corps continues to expand its presence in the cyberspace realm, the Marines are ready to mitigate the nation’s cyber threats whenever, wherever.

Cpl Stephen Campbell, USMC



LCPL HALEY MCMENAMIN, USMC

**“Team Spartan” Marines with 8th Comm Bn, II MIG, collaborate during Exercise Cyber Fury 2020 at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., Feb. 24. The annual training exercise allows Marines to simulate a series of cyber attacks by identifying and countering them.**



# EARLY RELEASE SALUTES THE DAY THAT WON THE WAR

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NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND

Maj Robert L. Denig poses for a photograph with family and friends after receiving the Army Distinguished Service Cross on March 14, 1919, at the Philadelphia Navy Yard.

# The Day the General Cried

By MSgt Jeff Dacus, USMC (Ret)

**B**rigadier General Robert Livingston Denig had a plan. As World War II engulfed the United States after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Denig was recalled from retirement to head the Marine Corps' Office of Public Relations. He decided that Marines drawn from related civilian occupations could make up their own press corps. Filmmakers, journalists, newspapermen and other members of the press were enlisted in the Marine Corps, went to boot camp, and were assigned as "combat correspondents" to accompany Marine combat units into battle. Armed and trained to fight with their fellow Marines, they would make movies, file press releases, and write books and magazine articles that chronicled the story of the leathernecks in action. Known as "Denig's Demons," they were an instant success. Carrying cameras, typewriters and re-

coding equipment, these Marines served throughout the war and made major contributions to the historical record of World War II. For his service, including originating the combat correspondents idea, he was awarded the Legion of Merit.

Born in 1884, Denig saw much of Asia as a youngster thanks to his father's service in the Navy. During high school, he had his first taste of military life when he enlisted in the Ohio National Guard. After graduating from the University of Pennsylvania, he joined the Marine Corps and was commissioned a second lieutenant on Sept. 29, 1905. When World War I broke out, Denig was a captain at Marine Barracks, Philadelphia, Pa. In May of 1917, he was given a temporary commission as a major and sent to France.

Strangely, he commanded an Army

infantry battalion for a month before he was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment as the commanding officer. After the Battle of Soissons, he was again given command of an Army battalion. He served at that post until the war ended. He was wounded during the battle at Medeah Farm on Oct. 3, 1918. He was awarded the Army's Distinguished Service Cross for his part in that action in addition to receiving the Navy Cross.

Permanently appointed to the grade of major after the war, he served in different assignments in the United States and the Caribbean. In Nicaragua during the great earthquake of 1931, he was severely injured but later received the Nicaraguan Presidential Merit for his part in the aftermath of the disaster. He finished his career at various stateside posts, retiring on June 30, 1941, only to be recalled to active duty shortly there-

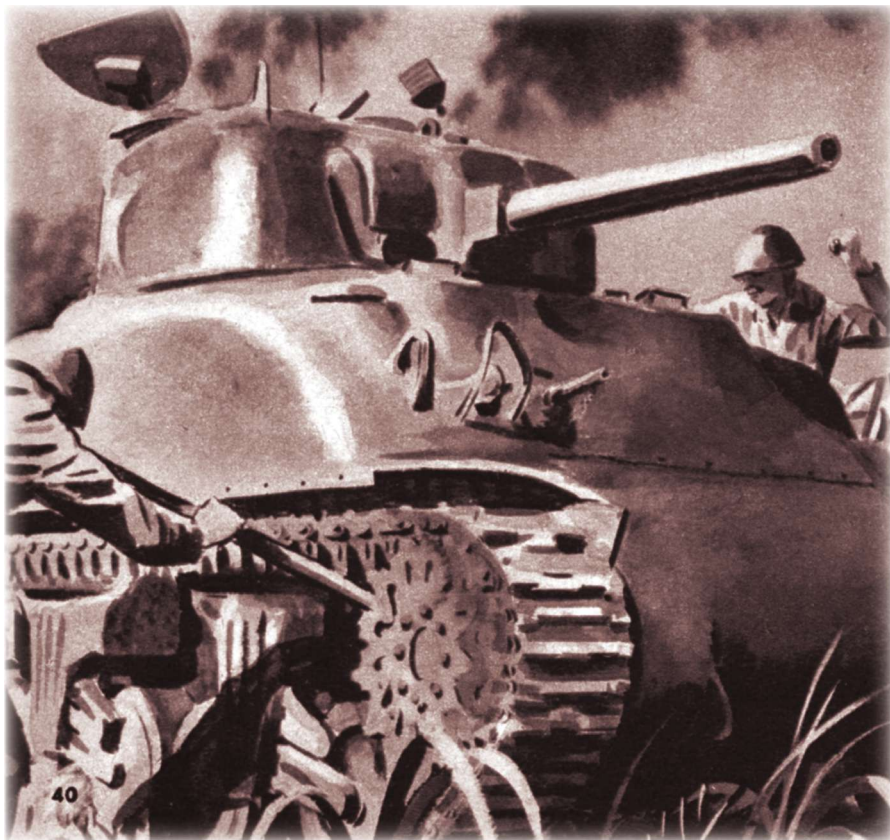
**It appeared that the Japanese had no heavy antitank weapons, and the light tanks proved impervious to the enemy's small arms fire.**

after to serve as the Corps' first Director of Information.

Robert and his wife Maud were the parents of three boys. Charles, the middle son, died tragically in 1928 at age 16. The oldest, Robert Jr., was a Marine when the war started and took part in the battle of Guadalcanal. By 1944, he was the executive officer of the Marine Corps tank school at Jacques Farm near San Diego, Calif. The youngest son James also was a Marine in the South Pacific.

James was born on Christmas Day in 1919. A smart, athletic young man, he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps Reserve in 1939 but was not called to active duty until Sept. 13, 1941. During his time as a reserve officer, he pointed out a possible problem if the United States should go to war with Japan. In the April 1940 issue of the Naval Institute's *Proceedings*, Denig wrote an article entitled "Food—Hawaii's Vital Problem," which spelled out the ease with which Hawaii could be cut off from food supplies. He received a regular Marine Corps commission in June of 1942 and was assigned as a captain in the 4th Tank Battalion in April of 1943.

The 4th Marine Division assaulted the twin islands of Roi-Namur on Feb. 1, 1944. The 23rd Marine Regiment at-



H. KOSKINEN

**This illustration of the attack on Capt James Denig's tank was featured in the article "Tanks" from the September 1944 issue of *Leatherneck*.**

tacked Roi, and the 24th Marines were tasked with taking Namur. Both regiments were supported in their attacks by tanks from 4th Tank Bn. Captain James Denig's B Company, 4th Tank Bn, was assigned to support the landing on Namur.

Capt Denig's first tanks landed on Namur at about 1 p.m. One tank moved off the beach and became disabled when it drove into a crater. The next two tanks became bogged down in the soft sand. Bulldozers plowed a path for the vehicles,

and they were pulled out by another tank. The rest of Co B soon landed, and they led the attack across the island.

It appeared that the Japanese had no heavy antitank weapons, and the light tanks proved impervious to the enemy's small arms fire. They were frequently frustrated by clumps of trees and brush and often were forced to stop and back-track before moving on with the infantry companies they supported. Tanks crashed into breadfruit trees again and again to knock them down. Due to the terrain, they were broken up and frequently unable to advance as a platoon or company. Their 37 mm guns fired canister rounds that shredded the vegetation and revealed hidden pillboxes or bunkers. High explosive rounds were fired into slits, or armor-piercing shells blasted holes in the emplacements, shattering the emplacements. Machine-gun fire cut down fleeing Japanese. Marine infantry followed along, also split up due to the broken terrain, and blasted the Japanese with their small arms.

**The Marine headquarters building at Campo de Marte in Nicaragua was completely gutted during the great earthquake of 1931. Maj Robert Denig was injured during the temblor.**



COURTESY OF BGEN M.L. CURRY, USMC (RET)



**“Hunter,” the wrecked tank of Capt James L. Denig, marks the farthest advance of Marine infantry on the first day they landed on Namur Island, Kwajalein Atoll. When the tank crew stopped, the Japanese attacked, knocking the tank out of action and fatally wounding Capt Denig. Notice one of the Japanese attackers pinned down by the tank’s track.**

It was hot work. The tankers were buttoned up with no ventilation, and the toll on their bodies was tremendous. Tank interiors filled with warm cordite smoke, almost choking the crews. Bathed in sweat, they glanced through their vision slits and periscopes, trying to see the enemy and friendly troops. On one occasion, a semi-blind tank crew opened fire on four Marines, killing three before realizing their mistake. Tanks had a “sig-

nal portal’ on top of the vehicle that was a vestige of the old days when tanks communicated with flags. Some of the tanks opened these to allow some of the heat and fumes to escape. Others briefly opened hatches, but not for long, as mortars and grenades landed on top of the M5A1s.

The M5A1 tanks of Denig’s headquarters platoon all had names painted on them starting with letter H. His tank

was “Hunter.” Hunter led another tank named Hornet toward a line across the island called Sycamore Boulevard until they became separated. After debarking from a clump of trees into an open area, Denig’s tank clanked around a fallen tree and became hung up on a stump.

Caught in the open without cover, the lone tank became the focal point of Japanese gunfire. Bullets bounced off the steel sides, and grenades exploded around it. Suddenly, six Japanese soldiers sprang from cover and swarmed onto the tank, pounding it with their fists and grabbing at it, trying to gain access.

Armed with a Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR), Private First Class Howard



USMC

E. Smith spotted the buttoned-up tank engulfed by enemy soldiers. Rising up from cover, he exposed himself to fire two full magazines of .30-caliber rounds at the vehicle. Riflemen joined in the attempt to clear the tank of enemy soldiers. Five of the six Japanese were torn apart and fell off the tank, but one survived just long enough to arm a grenade and stuff it down the open signal port. Then the doomed Japanese collapsed atop the vehicle. A muffled explosion followed. Fire and smoke poured from the interior.

Smith could hear yelling from the tank, and hands briefly appeared as the tank commander's and assistant driver's

hatches opened. Smith laid down his BAR and sprinted through enemy fire to the stricken vehicle. Climbing aboard, he helped the assistant driver, Corporal William Taylor, from his position in the front of the tank. With Taylor's aid, he pulled out the badly wounded captain and laid him on the back of the tank. The signal port was just to the front of the tank commander's position and the grenade had exploded at Denig's feet. Alive but unconscious, the lower half of his body was shattered, and he was badly burned.

Smith grabbed the back of the wounded gunner's coveralls and pulled him up through the tank commander's hatch. Taylor lent a hand as they lowered the gunner, Cpl Ben Smith, to the ground. They could not help the driver, PFC Sylvester Lasneske, as the tank turret was positioned so that the gun was over the driver's hatch, and it could not be opened. The trapped Marine burned to death. Smith later received the Navy Cross for helping to save the lives of the two tank crewmen who he was able to help.

Other Marines rushed from cover to help Smith evacuate the casualties as ammunition from the burning tank cooked off, showering them with fire and shrapnel. PFC Robert Williams helped carry Denig to cover and remembered the captain "was pretty well butchered up and burned pretty bad. Two of the fellows grabbed his legs; another grabbed the arm on the right. I grabbed the arm

on the left. We went to pick him up, and the skin just came right off from the burn." As it was late afternoon and darkness was creeping in, they did not attempt to move the mortally wounded captain any further. A corpsman did what he could to make him comfortable as Marine infantrymen dug in around him to watch out for intruders in the night. Denig died within the hour without having regained consciousness. He was posthumously awarded the Silver Star for his actions that day.

Capt Frank Garretson, the commander of Co F, 2/24, said after the action, "The

**PFC Robert Williams helped carry Denig to cover and remembered the captain "was pretty well butchered up and burned pretty bad.**

final drive against the enemy north shore positions began this morning around 9:30. Captain Denig was outstandingly heroic in leading his tanks directly into enemy fire. The cat-footed Japanese leaped atop the captain's tank and dropped a hand grenade into it." Garretson himself was wounded and earned the Navy Cross in the same action.

Namur was declared secured at 12:15 p.m. the next day. Those who died were buried on the island. As Roi-Namur was

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the Silver Star (Posthumously) to CAPTAIN JAMES L. DENIG, UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS for service as set forth in the following citation:



For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity while attached to the Fourth Marine Division in action against enemy Japanese forces on Namur Island, Kwajalein Atoll, Marshall Islands, on January 31, 1944. Assuming command of eight light tanks immediately upon landing, Captain Denig skillfully directed the vehicles in a closely coordinated attack by tanks and infantry and, laboriously pushing into dense woods and almost impenetrable underbrush, enabled some of the tanks to break through to more open terrain, routing out and destroying numerous Japanese during the hazardous advancement. When he halted his tank to reconnoiter and was fatally wounded as a result of a sudden, vicious enemy attack, his wrecked machine marked the farthest advance of the infantry that day. Captain Denig's great personal valor, inspiring leadership and indomitable fighting spirit contributed in a large measure to the progress of the infantry forces and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.



USMC

**BGen Robert L. Denig places a floral lei on his son's grave on Namur. In 1947, James Denig was reinterred in the cemetery on the grounds of the U.S. Naval Academy.**

part of the Japanese Empire since 1922, the dead Marines were the first to be buried under Japanese soil in WW II.

BGen Denig was in Washington, D.C., at the time of the Namur invasion. Asking a Navy public relations officer whether any casualty list had come in from Namur, he was told there was no word yet. The old general told the young officer, "I'm keeping my fingers crossed." Unfortunately, it was not much later that he learned the sad news of James' death. A few days later, he left on an inspection tour of Marine Corps installations in the Pacific which included Namur.

Arriving on the island, the elder Denig was led to the cemetery and shown the grave of his son. As a sign of respect to a grieving father, onlookers maintained their distance and silence, allowing the general to approach the grave alone. He walked slowly to the grave, at first tall and erect, but the waiting witnesses noticed the shoulders begin to stoop and shake as the white-haired old man

knelt at the foot of the resting place of his son. After a few quiet moments, the general took a bunch of Hawaiian leis and placed them over the white cross that marked the grave. A friend had thoughtfully packed the flowers on ice

**The waiting witnesses  
noticed the shoulders begin  
to stoop and shake as the  
white-haired old man  
knelt at the foot of the  
resting place of his son.**

for the trip, and they still appeared fresh. After a few more pensive, silent moments, BGen Robert L. Denig looked around the rest of the cemetery, and the onlookers closed in. Tears sent long trails down his cheeks.

"There's no distinction here," the general said, pointing to the other grave-markers. "Buried on either side of my son are Marine privates. A lieutenant colonel is buried nearby." The lieutenant colonel was A.J. "Jimmie" Dyess, who earned the Medal of Honor for his actions at Namur. Nearby was the grave of PFC Stephen Hopkins, the son of Harry Hopkins, a friend and advisor to President Franklin Roosevelt. "That's as it should be," said the visibly shaken but now composed officer. The general was not speaking only of Denigs or Livingstons. He was speaking of a bigger family—the kinship of those Marines and corpsmen who fought, and in many cases died, in battle.

*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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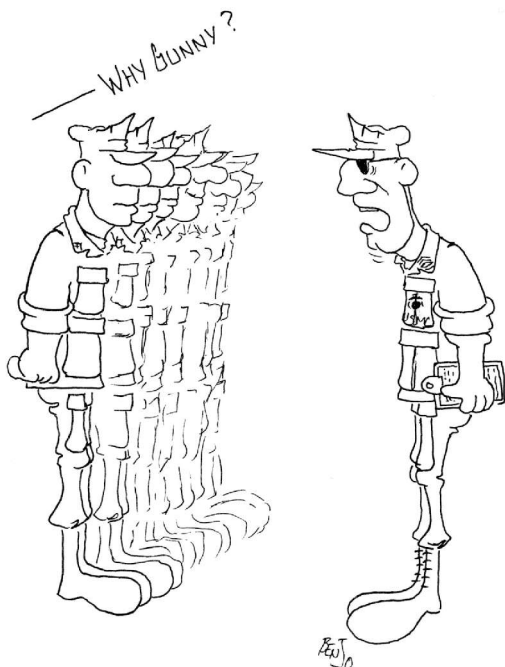
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"I need two volunteers.  
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"Sir, I didn't want to miss the bus."



"I prefer the term, 'Human Waste Immolation Engineer.'"



"I'm Senior Drill Instructor Carol ..."



"The blue energy drink pairs well with the new rations."

Mitchell bombers in a nine-ship formation on their way to the target. (Photo by Frederick Bower)



# The PBJ Mitchell Squadrons Of World War II

By Patrick Reed

**O**n March 15, 1944, the PBJ-1 Mitchell bomber first appeared in the hostile skies of the Pacific. The Marines flying the Mitchells, which must have appeared as small blue and white dots at their altitude, delivered a hefty punch. Eighty-two of the 84 500-pound bombs dropped struck the target—a Japanese supply dump just north of Rabaul. The Marines of VMB-413 took no casualties that day and began writing a chapter of the war's history that the Japanese would come to despise, and few Americans would know—that of the PBJ-1 Mitchell.

The PBJ-1 Mitchell bomber was the Navy version of the U.S. Army's B-25

Mitchell medium bomber. Powered by two Wright R-2600 Twin Cyclone engines, the PBJ had a maximum speed of 274 miles per hour and a range of 1,560 miles. Armed with up to 18 .50-caliber machine guns, the Mitchell was also variably equipped with up to 3,000 pounds of bombs or depth charges, an Mk-13 aerial torpedo, a 75 mm cannon, or high-velocity rockets to be used against surface targets, making it a versatile platform and perfect in a surface attack role. The Marine Corps medium bomber program was the culmination of an effort by the Marine Corps to have its own airpower that could effectively operate in support of ground forces, allowing the Marines on the ground to have air support from fellow leathernecks.

The Marine Corps operated their own

single-engine fighter and bomber aircraft, both of which had been proven effective in places like Midway and Guadalcanal. These aircraft suffered from a markedly short range, however. As the war continued, it became clear that continued amphibious landings would be required to defeat the Japanese. It also became clear that the Marine Corps needed aircraft that could take offensive action in rear areas to keep the Japanese continuously engaged, thus diverting and destroying troops and resources that may have been otherwise employed against American ground forces participating in amphibious landings. The desired aircraft would also need to be able to sustain constant ground support operations for those troops.

These demands of war required aircraft

with a greater range than the single-engine fighters and bombers operated by the Marine Corps were capable of and required an ability to be constantly present for the Marines, which the Army and Navy could not sustain. In mid-1942, the United States Army Air Corps and the U.S. Navy worked out a deal for the Navy to operate land-based bombers. Thus, a number of these bombers were transferred to the Navy, which made great use of the PV-1 Ventura and PB4Y-1 Liberator (the Naval designation for the B-24 Liberator). The Navy did not, however, have a pressing need for the B-25 Mitchell bombers, which had been redesignated as PBJ-1 Mitchells, transferred to them. Almost the entire allotment of 700 Mitchell bombers given to the Navy was transferred to the Marine Corps.

The Marines received their first PBJs in March of 1943. They set to work learning how to operate and employ them. These first PBJs were delivered to Marine Operational Training Squadron 8 at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C., and though frustrated at first by a lack of knowledge and skills regarding the new aircraft and operational concepts, Marines soon excelled in their use of the bomber. Eventually, when the instructors had learned to fly the aircraft, an eight-week training program was put in place. This program was divided into three phases. The first phase was a transition from single to twin-engine aircraft, the second was aimed at getting Marines acquainted with the PBJ, and the third was dedicated to tactical training of the crews in the use of the PBJ. The training also prepared Marines for the possibility of being in the operating area without resources, and crews had to learn how to service their



COURTESY OF MSGT ROBERT YANACEK, USMCR (RET)

**A PBJ-1D of VMB-413 drops its load of general purpose bombs during a WW II medium altitude mission.**

own aircraft. As each squadron was organized, they would engage in more training as a unit, with the added benefit of building crew and squadron cohesion.

It was also decided around this time that Marines would perform 'heckling' missions designed to keep the Japanese continuously engaged and unsettled. These missions, when performed in conjunction with daytime operations, would deny the Japanese rest and erode their will to fight. The designers of the new Marine medium

bomber operation also envisioned anti-shiping missions to cut Japanese supply routes and further undermine their will and ability to continue fighting.

With these missions set before them, it was also decided that the majority of PBJs would be fitted with the AN/APS-2 radar system (and later the AN/APS-3) formerly used in anti-submarine missions off the U.S. coast. These radar systems would allow the PBJ Mitchell to operate effectively against targets at night and



COURTESY OF MSGT ROBERT YANACEK, USMCR (RET)

**A VMB-413 PBJ on the ramp at MCAS Edenton, N.C., during training before overseas duty.**

Another of VMB-413's PBJs, the favorite of the Millington-Merriman crew, flies toward the target on March 15, 1944.



USMC

proved to be invaluable in navigation, especially when flying in nighttime storms so often encountered by PBJ crews in the Pacific. With no real precedent in place for the use of these radar systems in an offensive capacity like those for which the Marines were to be tasked, Marines were required to develop tactics and procedures for their use. The radar system was initially mounted in a ventral radome

on the belly of the aircraft, providing a 360-degree view.

Toward the beginning of radar training and tactic development, the system was redesigned to fit into a forward-facing radome on the nose of the aircraft. Mounted above the bombardier's station in the front of the plane and nicknamed the 'hose nose' or 'schnozzle,' this radar housing provided a 145-degree forward

sweep and significantly reduced the amount of interference from the sea below; however, most PBJ crews preferred the 360-degree sweep provided by the ventral radome. The radar images, available to the pilot through a 5-inch scope, were known to be very clear and were greatly appreciated by many crews seeking out targets and trying to get home during a nighttime mission. The radar would also find a special place in anti-shipping strikes carried out later in the war.

VMB-413, the first Marine medium bomber squadron, was commissioned at Cherry Point on March 1, 1943. As the first squadron of its type, VMB-413 faced unique challenges. Most of the men entering the new unit had no combat experience and came straight from flight training. Combining their "green" status with the lack of precedent they encountered in PBJ operations, these Marines were to be the trailblazers for the use of the Mitchell by the Marine Corps. The squadron spent time training at MCAS Edenton, N.C., in the autumn of 1943. Here, they would practice gunnery, bombing, navigation and formation flying skills. In October of 1943, the squadron was notified of its deployment and flew cross-country to North Island, Calif. After training here, the squadron departed for the Pacific in January of 1944. VMB-413 was headed to war with the additional burden of having to prove the effectiveness of the PBJ.

After a layover at Espiritu Santo and



COURTESY OF MSGT ROBERT YANACEK, USMCR (RET)

**A formation of PBJs from "The Flying Nightmares" drop their bomb loads during a medium altitude daylight mission. Note the varied radomes—some have the ventral radomes while others have the "hose nose" configuration.**



COURTESY OF J.W. LEGGIO

**1stLt Glen Smith's PBJ after being hit in the port engine by antiaircraft fire over Tobera on a May 5, 1944, mission. Smith and his crew crashed and were killed just 10 days before VMB-413 was pulled off the line and sent to Australia for R&R.**

six more weeks of training, the Marines arrived at Stirling Island, a small island in the Treasuries group. The target was to be Rabaul, a Japanese stronghold on the island of New Britain. The harbor had been practically blockaded, and the town itself had been turned into rubble by attacks from the U.S. Fifth Air Force. The Japanese moved their operations underground, building a network of hangars, repair facilities and barracks. Because of this, Rabaul and the airfields in the towns surrounding it were still a threat.

Since most operations conducted against the Japanese garrison were daylight missions, the Marine Mitchells were tasked with conducting night heckling missions aimed at denying reprieve to the enemy. The first missions flown by VMB-413

were traditional daylight raids flown in nine-ship formations to get PBJ crews familiar with New Britain's terrain.

After these, the night heckling missions began. In groups of just two or three aircraft each night, the hecklers would operate either from dusk to dawn or midnight to dawn, according to the squadron's war diary. They sought out targets of opportunity and attacked known Japanese installations with general-purpose and para-fragmentation bombs, as well as machine-gun fire. Very often, they had to fight their way through storms on the way to and from the target, with heavy winds and rain rocking the aircraft and making navigation and communication difficult. Over the target, the hecklers faced anti-aircraft fire, as well as the

occasional enemy fighter. The weather, though, was the main cause of casualties for PBJs. These nighttime heckling raids led to the squadron's nickname of "The Flying Nightmares."

The squadron also conducted daylight missions on every third day, sending PBJs on anti-submarine patrols or nine-ship formations on bombing raids. On May 15, 1944, VMB-413 was sent to Australia for much-needed rest and rehabilitation for a few months. They had paid a high price during their first tour, losing 33 Marines. They had, however, proven the effectiveness of the PBJ Mitchell. Before their first mission, Lieutenant Colonel Andrew B. Galatian, the commanding officer, had reminded the Marines of VMB-413 that their operations would set

the tone and standard for PBJ operations in the war. The Flying Nightmares did not fail.

The Marines of VMB-413 were relieved by those of VMB-423, which arrived at Stirling Island on May 14, 1944. Like 413, VMB-423's crews spent some time conducting daylight raids before continuing the night heckling missions and fruitless anti-submarine patrols. In June of 1944, the men of VMB-423 moved from Stirling to Nissan Island, the largest of the atolls in the group that was known as Green Island. Green Island was miserable for the Marines. Muddy and humid, it had no source of fresh water except for the frequent rain. The meals consisted simply of C-rations with very little supplement, if any. It was from tramping around in this saturated mess that the Marines of VMB-423 earned their nickname, "The Seahorse Marines."

Along with this move, in the summer of 1944 came a shift in mission type, with fewer nighttime heckling raids and more medium-altitude daylight raids on places all over New Britain's Gazelle Peninsula. Due to the squadron's training in skip

bombing and strafing, a couple of anti-shiping attacks also took place. The Seahorse Marines were effective in their strikes but at a significant cost. During their time overseas, the squadron lost five planes and all hands onboard. The men of VMB-423 would not get a full squadron reprieve, but instead, five crews at a time would get R&R in Australia.

In mid-July, VMB-433's first Marines arrived on Green Island in nine PBJs. By mid-August, the squadron's 15 aircraft were at Green Island, and the squadron began operations much in the same way as VMB-413 and VMB-423. The crews of VMB-433, who had dubbed themselves the "Fork-Tailed Devils," had been specially trained for flying at night in 12-ship formations, along with skip bombing and strafing.

In late August, they moved to Emirau, an island in the Bismarck Archipelago. In July, the advance echelon of VMB-443 arrived in Emirau, commencing operations in mid-August. Their operations followed much the same pattern as their three predecessor squadrons.

VMB-413 returned to the theater of

operations in July of 1944, and was based at Munda, New Georgia, away from the other three squadrons. From Munda, the Nightmares would heckle the coasts of Bougainville, perform medium-altitude missions over the Shortland Islands, and conduct low-level bombing and strafing runs on Choiseul. They continued these missions until October 1944 when they moved to Emirau to join Marine Air Group (MAG)-61.

MAG-61 was formed in July of 1943 to oversee all PBJ units in the neutralization of the Bismarcks. Made up of VMB-413, VMB-433, and VMB-443, it continued to hammer New Britain and the rest of the Bismarcks. VMB-423 was a part of MAG-14 and operated off of Green Island with Royal New Zealand Air Force PV-1s.

It was in November 1944 that VMB-611 arrived. Originally slated for the Caroline Islands, "Sarles' Raiders," named after their commander, Lieutenant Colonel George Sarles, were reassigned to Emirau and MAG-61. With Rabaul neutralized, VMB-611 set to work attacking other targets in New Ireland with MAG-61. VMB-611's PBJs had rocket launchers



COURTESY OF MSGT ROBERT YANACEK, USMCR (RET)

Mitchells with VMB-433 on a daylight strike against Rabaul, seen in the background.



**Above: It was difficult and dangerous work as this bomber crew with VMB-433, led by Capt Gene Bable, standing, center, racked up 24 missions, which they noted by painting bombs on the fuselage. (Photo by Courtesy of Henry Sory)**

installed and had developed a technique to operate them using radar. After sighting a target with radar, the rocket's trajectory was calculated, and the rocket launched from a certain altitude depending on the target's distance. Sarles' Raiders would remain with MAG-61 and continue the typical mission through the end of 1944. In February of 1945, VMB-611 was transferred out of MAG-61 and moved to Mindanao in the Philippines. MAG-61 would spend the rest of the war keeping the Japanese on Rabaul contained with the last combat mission flown in August of 1945. Though they were also supposed to operate in the Philippines, the war ended before they got the chance.

In the Philippines, VMB-611 was able to participate in close air support of Allied ground forces. The squadron conducted rocket attacks, strafing runs, and day and night bombing raids against Japanese emplacements and troop concentrations. VMB-611 proved invaluable in the Philippines, expending 245 tons of bombs, 800 rockets, and a tremendous amount of



**PBJs, most likely from VMB-433, on a low-level staffing and bombing run. PBJs were known to return from these missions with palm fronds in the engine cowlings after having clipped the treetops.**

machine-gun ammunition in support of troops on the ground just from April to May of 1945. The squadron participated in close air support until June 30, 1945, when organized Japanese resistance was declared over. From then on, the squadron dropped leaflets urging surrender and participated in mop-up operations until

the end of the war. The price for VMB-611 was costly: 35 Marines were killed, with LtCol George Sarles among them.

In the Central Pacific in October 1944, VMB-612 arrived on Eniwetok. Born of discussions between General Geiger and Lieutenant Colonel Jack Cram, the squadron was specially trained for low-

COURTESY OF MSGT ROBERT YANACEK, USMCR (RET)



This modified Marine PBJ bomber of VMB-612, piloted by LtCol Jack Cram, inset, prepares for a rocket run on a Japanese transport ship off Kobe, Japan, in June 1945.

level night missions over water. VMB-612, called "Cram's Rams" after their commander, operated in an anti-shipping role. Conducting nighttime attacks, the squadron utilized radar to find their targets and destroy them using rockets. With the removal of all but one .50-cal. gun in the tail, the bombers could fly for more than 10 hours and maintain a near-constant overwater presence. They operated in the area of Iwo Jima and the Volcano Islands, and later, when stationed on Iwo Jima and Okinawa, along the coasts of Japan.

The Marines of VMB-612 were also selected to test and use the 11.75-inch "Tiny Tim" rocket, which their PBJs could carry two of in external racks and which were much larger than the standard aircraft rocket. Besides these anti-shipping strikes, the squadron carried out electronic

countermeasures missions. Due to their unique mission, the PBJs of VMB-612 were painted a dark blue to blend with the nighttime sky. VMB-613 also operated in the Central Pacific from December 1944 under the command of Major George Nevils. Their aircraft, the PBJ-1H, were unique in that they were fitted with four .50-cal. machine guns and a 75 mm can-

non in the nose instead of a bombardier's compartment.

Participating in actions against bypassed Japanese islands and enemy shipping, the squadron did not see much action as they flew near-constant anti-shipping patrols and snooper flights, looking for targets of opportunity. Some of the unit's PBJs and crews went to VMB-612 to try the

**A PBJ-1J fitted with eight .50-cal. machine guns in the nose instead of the usual navigator-bombardier compartment. Few PBJs operated with this configuration, but they packed a punch on strafing and heckling missions. Note the wingtip radome which appeared on more PBJs later in the war.**





H-model against Japanese shipping, but that didn't last due to a lack of targets and maintenance problems. The cannon was effective against enemy shipping and emplacements, though it required a very steady aim and smooth aircraft handling to use effectively, demands that VMB-613 crews could meet. At the end of the war, MAG-61 reached the Philippines and VMB-611, but it was too late to contribute to the fighting.

On Nov. 30, 1945, the MAG-61 squadrons were decommissioned. VMB-613 had already been decommissioned on Nov. 21, and VMB-612 continued to test Tiny Tim Rockets. VMB-612 was decommissioned in March of 1946 as the last Marine PBJ squadron.

There were several Marine Bombing Squadrons that never saw combat, but nonetheless trained on and operated the PBJ Mitchell and suffered losses doing so. These were VMBs 453, 463, 473, 483, 621, 622, 623, and 624. The Marine Operational Training Squadrons (MOTS) were responsible for training the personnel on the PBJs, and as such, contributed greatly to the development and success of the Marine Medium Bomber program. VMB-614 made it to the Pacific, but not to combat, and ended the war at Midway. These Marines practiced torpedo runs and nighttime radar bombing. The PBJ was also used to test the feasibility of carrier landings with multiengine aircraft and other rocket systems.

Though tasked with some of the most frustrating and dangerous missions, PBJ crews lived an unassuming war. In total, 173 Marines and 45 PBJs were lost during the war, not including those who perished in the United States from any squadron. These Marines lived lives of struggle, working to prove the effectiveness of a workhorse airframe against a relentless enemy, often improvising to get the job done. They lived without glamour and engaged with the development of technologies used by our military today, such as rockets and radar. Many, if not all, lost friends that they considered brothers. The squadron epitaph recorded in the VMB-413 cruisebook and written by Captain E.J. Molloy sums it up best, not just for the Flying Nightmares, but for all of the Marine Bombing Squadrons: " 'I have been born for greater things.' The mills of evaluation in war grind slow. History, an exacting mistress, will in her own good time assess what VMB-413 accomplished. We of the squadron cannot say. We can produce no heroes. We can sing of no glories. The nature of our missions did not lend itself to the spectacular. It was difficult, dangerous, disheartening—and routine. The bulk of our attacks against



**MTSgt Lloyd Staggs of VMB-613 cleans a PBJ-1H's 75 mm cannon. Above his head are four .50-cal. machine guns, and rocket racks can be seen under the wings.**



**VMB-612's PBJs stood out in daylight photographs due to their midnight-blue paint scheme. Note the two Tiny-Tim rockets loaded on the belly racks.**

the enemy was at night. Occasionally a fire was started in Rabaul Town, an ammunition dump touched off, a bull's-eye scored on a cluster of searchlights. Infrequently an enemy night fighter gave chase. What could not be observed was the effectiveness of that constant heckling over enemy territory. What percentage did we contribute toward the final neutralization of Rabaul in hours of sleep lost, in personnel killed or wounded, in repair and maintenance work interrupted? Someday a line in a history book may give the answer."

*Author's bio: Patrick Reed is 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 written multiple research papers, one of which received a Phi Alpha Theta Honor Society conference award. His interest in Marine Corps aviation has taken him across the nation to interview veterans, including those of Marine Bombing Squadrons.* 🇺🇸



SGT DEVIN PHOMMACHANH, USMC

**Sgt Lakezia Ortiz, left, a recruiter from RSS Hendersonville, and Capt Kyle Cawthon, executive officer of RS Nashville, secure tarps on the roof of a damaged home in Nashville, Tenn., March 5. Marine recruiters in Tennessee worked with local authorities and volunteers during clean-up and recovery efforts after tornadoes devastated parts of Tennessee on March 3.**

cut fallen trees, clear large pieces of debris and distribute food and supplies to residents.

“We are everyday people that want to help the communities we live in,” said Sergeant Major Rena Bruno of RS Nashville. “The Marines are a part of the cities they work in, here to support the person to the left and right.”

Cleaning, donation, distribution and repairing efforts by professionals and local volunteers aided in the swift recovery of damaged property throughout Tennessee. Many of the volunteers traveled from surrounding counties to support their neighbors helping to justify Tennessee’s nickname “The Volunteer State.”

Sgt Devin Phommachanh, USMC

## **In Wake of Tornadoes, Nashville-Area Marines Help Community Recovery Effort**

Sirens sounded across Middle Tennessee early in the morning on March 3 as several tornadoes ripped across a 145-mile stretch of the state.

Mayor John Cooper of Nashville declared a State of Emergency immediately following an assessment of areas affected by the tornadoes, which caused death, injury and widespread property damage in multiple counties.

The Marines of Recruiting Station Nashville and its sub-stations, under the command of Major Kevin Nicholson, made time to support the cleanup and recovery efforts of the affected areas.

“A lot of Marines that live around here were not directly affected, but we all know someone that was,” said Nicholson. “We ceased daily operations and mobilized 25 Marines to local areas around Nashville to give a helping hand.”

Recruiting Sub-Station Mount Juliet was near the path of one of the tornadoes and was left without power for four days. Local authorities and volunteers worked tirelessly to respond to emergency situations and coordinate search parties. Much of the neighborhood damage was considered non-emergency; however, broken trees threatened to fall on already damaged power lines.

Marines and poolies from RSS Mount Juliet volunteered alongside the humani-

tarian aid organization, Samaritan’s Purse, on March 4. Working with other volunteers from the area, they cut and removed fallen trees and debris, including from the home of a Vietnam veteran who is a former prisoner of war.

Marines from Recruiting Sub-Stations in Clarksville and Hendersonville and the Nashville headquarters office volunteered with Zeal Church in North Nashville. Teams of volunteers worked together to nail tarps on top of roofs with holes,



**Videographer Barbara Mathews and 1stSgt Erick Velez stand in front of the 3rd Marine Regiment color guard during a ceremony bestowing Mathews with the title of “Honorary Marine” at MCB Hawaii, March 6. (Photo by Cpl Matthew Kirk, USMC)**



LCPL FERNANDO MORENO, USMC

**Gen David H. Berger, Commandant of the Marine Corps, left, shakes hands with retired CWO-4 and Medal of Honor recipient Hershel “Woody” Williams during the commissioning ceremony for USS *Hershel “Woody” Williams* (T-ESB-4) in Norfolk, Va., March 7.**

Mrs. Barbara Mathews earned this prestigious honor for volunteering more than 10 years of her time, talents and money capturing video footage of hundreds of Marine Corps ceremonies, including memorials and special events surrounding the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In 2005, Mathews took her support even further by embedding with 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment during their deployment to Afghanistan in order to tell the Marine Corps story in more vivid detail.

“Recognizing the risks, she nevertheless sought an ‘embed’ with our battalion during November 2005 in eastern Afghanistan,” Colonel James Donnellan, former battalion commander for 2/3, said in a statement.

“With energy rivaling Marines 40 years her junior, she was not content to stay on the Jalalabad Forward Operating Base. She traveled to as many outlying [areas] as tactically feasible to support the entire battalion,” Col Donnellan said.

By capturing, editing and producing more than 25,500 images and 5,700 video clips, Mathews provided an invaluable service to Marines, Sailors and their families.

“The Marine Corps was not the only beneficiary of Mrs. Mathews’ efforts. The families of the Marines featured in her works were given a rare opportunity to

witness the trials and triumphs of their loved ones. We are proud to have her officially join our ranks as an Honorary Marine,” said Major General William Journey, the commanding general of 3rd Marine Division.

The Honorary Marine title is designed to reinforce the special bond between the American people and the Marine Corps by recognizing individuals in the civilian community who have made extraordinary contributions to the Marine Corps. This title can only be awarded by the Commandant of the Marine Corps and has been bestowed upon fewer than 100 individuals throughout the history of the Corps.

Capt Eric Abrams, USMC

### **USS *Hershel “Woody” Williams* Commissioned as Navy Ship**

The expeditionary sea base USNS *Hershel “Woody” Williams* (T-ESB-4) was transferred from Military Sealift Command to the U.S. Navy and was renamed USS *Hershel “Woody” Williams* (ESB-4) during a commissioning ceremony in Norfolk, Va., March 7.

In attendance at the ceremony were General David H. Berger, Commandant of the Marine Corps; West Virginia Senator Joe Manchin; Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark A. Milley, USA; James Geurts, Assistant

Secretary of the Navy; and five Medal of Honor recipients.

The ship is named after Chief Warrant Officer 4 Hershel “Woody” Williams, USMC (Ret), who is the last surviving Medal of Honor recipient from the Battle of Iwo Jima. Williams delivered an address to attendees at the ceremony.

“I’m grateful to all those who have the expertise to put something like this together,” said Williams. “And may all those who serve aboard this ship that will bear my name be safe and be proud. And may she have God’s blessings for a long life of service to the greatest country on earth.”

Commissioning the vessel as a United States ship will make it a more versatile and flexible warfighting machine capable of a variety of sea missions.

The ship operates with a mixed crew of Navy Sailors, civil service mariners, and civilians and is uniquely designed, as only the second ship of its kind, to have an open operations deck below and a flight deck above.

After remarks and addresses from distinguished ship commissioning committee members, Williams personally presented the “long glass” to the officer of the deck, observing a time-honored naval tradition and officially setting the first watch.

LCpl Fernando Moreno, USMC

## Marines Test Grenade Launcher During Fielding Event

The Marine Corps has begun fielding its new grenade launcher.

The M320A1 is a single-fire system that can be employed as a stand-alone weapon or mounted onto another, such as the M27 Infantry Automatic Rifle. The weapon system will enable Marines to engage adversaries, day or night.

“The M320A1 is a 40 mm grenade launcher intended to replace the M203A2 currently used by the Marine Corps,” said Captain Nick Berger, Marine Corps Systems Command’s (MCSC) project officer for the M320A1. “It is a weapon

designed for the infantry fire team grenadier.”

In the second quarter of fiscal year 2020, the M320A1 program reached Initial Operational Capability when MCSC fielded the weapon and provided New Equipment Training (NET) to Marines from II Marine Expeditionary Force aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., Jan. 31.

“We’re teaching II MEF how to properly employ the M320A1,” said Berger.

The week began with classroom training during which Marines learned to maintain and operate the system. Participants learned to assemble, disassemble and

troubleshoot the weapon. Marines also participated in live-fire exercises that enabled them to configure, shoot and test various other aspects of the system.

Gunnery Sergeant Joseph Jackson, MCSC’s lead uniformed new equipment trainer for the event, said participants responded well to the training.

“They seemed to learn a lot about this new weapon,” he said. “They were really engaged and asked a lot of questions.”

Prior to the NET, the program office solicited assistance from MCSC’s Advanced Manufacturing Operations Cell (AMOC), enabling MCSC to field the M320A1 ahead of schedule.

AMOC serves as a 24/7 help desk for Marines who need assistance with 3D printing and other manufacturing solutions. Berger approached AMOC about 3D-printing a hammer strut tool used to remove the trigger from the M320A1.

“I sat down with Capt Berger, and he gave me a copy of the tool,” said Capt Matthew Audette, AMOC’s project officer. “I recreated the tool and made changes to the design to adhere to changes they wanted incorporated.”

As Audette explained, manufacturing the tool traditionally would have taken more than 300 days. While the manufacturer is still required to produce the parts, the program office preferred to expedite this process to field the system more quickly. AMOC produced a 3D-printable version in just a few hours.

The cell printed dozens of hammer strut tools and dummy rounds to be fielded with the grenade launcher for the system’s fielding.

“Without AMOC’s assistance, Marines couldn’t have maintained the system if it broke and [the Program Manager for Infantry Weapons] would have had to limit the number of weapons we put in the hands of Fleet Marines,” said Berger. “Thanks to AMOC, more than a dozen infantry battalions, [School of Infantry East], [School of Infantry West], and The Basic School will all receive M320A1s this fiscal year.”

During the NET, Gunnery Sergeant Jason Wattle, squad advisor for the Infantry Small Unit Leader course at SOI-E, raved about the advantages of the M320A1. He said the system is versatile yet simple and easy to handle. “Reloading it and unloading it are easy compared to other systems we’ve had in the past,” said Wattle.

Users load and unload the M320A1 from the side of the weapon rather than from underneath it as was the case with the legacy system. This is a major advantage because the breach of the weapon is clearly visible and the shooter can more



CPL AARON SMITH, USMC

**ALL HANDS ON DECK**—After an unprecedented surge in grocery purchases in mid-March as a result of concerns over the coronavirus pandemic, Col William C. Bentley III, Commanding Officer, Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., led a team of Marine volunteers to help the base commissary employees restock the shelves, March 17.



SAMANTHA BATES

**During fiscal year 2021, the Marine Corps will field the new M320A1 grenade launcher to infantry units across the fleet. Marines with II MEF are pictured here practicing with the new launcher at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., Jan. 31.**

easily load while in the prone position, said Berger.

“Additionally, if the Marine experiences a misfire and the round must be removed from the barrel, it is safer to have the barrel release from the side and retain the ammunition than to have it release and potentially fall to the ground [from underneath],” added Berger.

Lance Corporal Leondra Begay of “Bravo” Company, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment agrees the weapon is an overall improvement from the M203A3. She and other participating Marines appreciated the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the M320A1.

“I think it’s great that they allow some of the infantry units to get their hands on the weapon, learn more about it and even shoot it,” said Begay. “Some people who sat in on the class can then teach that information at the small-unit levels.”

Berger said the M320A1 should be completely fielded to infantry Marines in fiscal year 2021. Full operational capability is slated for the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2024.

Matt Gonzales



## Crazy Caption Contest

### Winner



SGT ALLISON LOTZ, USMC

“There are no fire hydrants on maneuvers. Deal with it, Marine!”

Submitted by:  
Tom Kozak  
Boone, N.C.

### This Month’s Photo



CWO BOBBY YARBROUGH, 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.

Sailors man the rails of USS *John Warner* (SSN-785) during the commissioning ceremony for the *Virginia* class attack submarine at Naval Station Norfolk, Va., Aug. 1, 2015.



## “Anchor to Windward”

For Former Secretary of the Navy and U.S. Senator John W. Warner, Service in Both the Navy and Marine Corps Charted His Course For a Lifetime of Service in Public Office

By Sara W. Bock

**I**n the library of his home in Alexandria, Va., former U.S. Senator John W. Warner often sits quietly and fixes his gaze on an old, weathered, green USMC “old Corps-style” field cap hanging on the wall. Next to it, on a shelf, rests a weathered white U.S. Navy Sailor’s cap, identical to the standard cover that recruits

receive today and have for more than a century.

“If only those hats could speak, you would hear memorable stories about the many accomplishments of the Navy-Marine team,” said Warner. He hasn’t worn either of those covers in decades, but time hasn’t erased the memories that go with them or the debt he feels he owes America for the privilege to have served.

“New bell bottom trousers and coats of Navy blue,” he recalled of the first day Navy Sailors receive their uniforms. “No Sailor worth his salt will ever forget that day, as fear gave way to pride, when you got your first order: ‘OK Sailor, it all fits, now you better damn well keep it that way!’”

At the age of 17, Warner was just one of many young Americans who, still in



COURTESY OF NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND

Then-Secretary of the Navy John W. Warner waits on the flight deck of the attack aircraft carrier USS *John F. Kennedy* (CVA-67) to observe air operations during the NATO Exercise Strong Express in September 1972.

At the age of 17, Warner was just one of many young Americans who, still in their teenage years, volunteered to the call of duty in late 1944 and early 1945 as the U.S. and its allies faced a series of heavy casualties.

their teenage years, volunteered to the call of duty in late 1944 and early 1945 as the U.S. and its Allies faced a series of heavy casualties, and there was no prediction of when war on either of the two fronts might end. As exciting as that first moment in uniform was, the gravity of the situation was not lost on them: they were replacements, but anxious to be trained and do their duty.

In 1946, Warner, then a Navy veteran attending Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Va., would listen intently as his classmates, a group largely composed of fellow World War II veterans, shared their harrowing stories of combat. From the beaches of Normandy to the far-off islands of the Pacific theater, they'd risked their lives and returned forever changed, carrying with them images their minds

SN CASEY HOPKINS, USN



COURTESY OF HUNTINGTON INGALLS INDUSTRIES

Jeanne Warner, left, wife of retired Senator John W. Warner, smashes a bottle of American sparkling wine across the bow of USS *John Warner* (SSN-785) during the submarine's christening ceremony in Newport News, Va., Sept. 6, 2014.

could never erase and memories of the friends they'd served alongside who never made it home. On the whole, they were grateful for the opportunity to serve, and greatly relieved that combat operations had ended earlier than projected.

As he listened to those tales of war, Warner heard a voice in the back of his mind—words that even now, at the age of 93, he recites as if no time has passed since his college days. “Did you really do your

elder statesman, known for reaching across the aisle and supporting bipartisanship. And he seems to be equal parts Virginia gentleman and quintessential Marine. With quick wit and a chuckle in his voice, he attributes the longevity of his career to “Marine Corps stamina!”

That unwavering sense of duty he felt as a 21-year-old undergraduate student—one that largely defined his entire generation of Americans—has been a steadfast

at war, was attending boot camp at Naval Station Great Lakes, Ill., in May 1945 when Germany surrendered to the Allies and was awaiting orders to participate in the invasion of Japan when the war in the Pacific came to a halt.

Those early years in the Navy had shaped and molded him, but Warner couldn't let go of the feeling that he had more to give.

One day, as he was walking up the hill on the Washington and Lee campus, he spotted a Marine captain in dress blues. As Warner approached the young officer and started a conversation, he learned that the Marine Corps Reserve was looking to recruit veterans who, like Warner, had received some military training during WW II and now were attending colleges and universities.

The Marine told him that if he enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserve while completing his undergraduate studies, he'd be required to attend a special boot camp.

“Well, I've been there!” Warner recalls saying, laughing at the blissful ignorance his younger self displayed in that moment, to which the captain replied, “that Navy boot camp doesn't count in the Marine Corps!”

Warner said he didn't get a wink of sleep that night as he pondered the decision,

## He'd always had a particular respect for the Marine Corps and had considered enlisting in 1944.

“I wanted to go into the Marines in the worst way.”

duty, Warner? It all ended so quickly,” he remembers thinking to himself.

We're seated in a conference room in the Washington, D.C., law firm Hogan Lovells, Jan. 8, where Warner now works as a senior advisor, and has for more than a decade since his retirement from the United States Senate after he served five consecutive terms. In doing so, he established a record for Virginia as its second-longest-serving U.S. Senator. In a show of exceptional endurance for an individual of his age, Warner comes in to the office regularly. He's still highly regarded as an

beacon throughout his entire life, guiding him from young Sailor to Marine officer, and from Secretary of the Navy to U.S. Senator and Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, serving his country in some capacity through every major war and conflict from WW II to Iraq and Afghanistan.

Like many of his classmates, Warner attended Washington and Lee thanks to funding from the original GI Bill, formally known as the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944. The young Washington, D.C., native, who came of age in an America



While serving as a U.S. Senator, Warner, a former Secretary of the Navy, participated in a groundbreaking ceremony for the United States Navy Memorial in Washington, D.C., in May 1984. From the left, ADM James D. Watkins, Chief of Naval Operations; Senator Warner; Secretary of the Navy John Lehman; former Secretary of the Navy J. William Middendorf; ADM William Crowe, Commander, Pacific Fleet; and William Leonard took part in the momentous occasion.





SGT MALLORY VANDERSCHANS, USMC

**Warner visits with Gen James F. Amos, 35th Commandant of the Marine Corps, right, and LtCol Kyle Ellison prior to the groundbreaking ceremony for the John Warner Center for Advanced Military Studies at Marine Corps University, Quantico, Va., May 2, 2013. It was Gen Amos' idea to name the building after Warner, and it took a year of insistence for Warner to agree to the honor, for which he says he is humbled and grateful.**

thinking to himself, "This will give me a chance to pay off my debt to America."

"And damn if I didn't go down the next day and enlist in the Marine Corps," he said.

He'd always had a particular respect for the Marine Corps and had considered enlisting in 1944. "I wanted to go into the Marines in the worst way. I had studied all kinds of books on the Marine Corps," he said.

But he settled on joining the Navy after his father, John W. Warner II, a doctor who had served as an Army surgeon during World War I and had treated countless wounded Marines, said, "I can't let my son put that uniform on. I'll never sleep a wink," Warner recounted. His mother, Martha, also had done her part during WW I as a Red Cross volunteer taking care of the wounded who were returning from France.

Consequently, his upbringing, like countless others of his generation, was "thoroughly rooted in the belief of service to country," he said, recalling with nostalgia his childhood in Northwest Washington, D.C., just a block from the Washington National Cathedral where his uncle was rector of the adjacent Episcopal chapel.

"I grew up riding my bicycle around, playing sandlot baseball—had the normal life of a kid," said Warner, who was born on Feb. 18, 1927. "And then suddenly World War II crept up on us. It was an extraordinary period of history."

He briefly closes his eyes as he re-

members the routine blackouts in Washington, the rationing of food and gasoline, and how the families put up a red, white and blue sticker, proudly displayed on their front doors indicating the military service of a beloved son, and the sobering gold stars that began to appear, sending a message that their son had given his life



COURTESY OF JOHN W. WARNER

**A young Warner is pictured here in his Navy uniform after returning home to Washington, D.C., in June 1946, following his release from active duty. As a Sailor, he attained the rank of Electronic Technician Third Class, which he says was "the most important promotion I ever received in my life."**

and would never return home. This was the context in which he began to recognize in himself a moral obligation to serve—and society's expectation of him to do so.

"That was the environment that I was raised in," said Warner of those formative years of his life. "The guys that came back on leave or wounded ... they'd look at the youngsters like myself and say, 'Man, you've got to get your ass in gear and join us in uniform.'"

With another full year of high school ahead of him and his parents' near insistence that he graduate before joining the fight, Warner and his father arrived at a compromise. If he attended St. Albans School, located adjacent to the cathedral, for one semester and achieved high marks—"I wasn't a particularly good student," he said—his father would sign off on the enlistment papers and he would join the Navy.

"I hit the ball out of the park," Warner said with a laugh. "He just shook his head and said, 'OK, son, you win. We'll pray for you and we're proud of you.'"

In December 1944, as the Battle of the Bulge reared its ugly head across the ocean in the Ardennes, Warner enlisted in the Navy during the week of Christmas, and after a slight delay in the training pipeline, boarded a train bound for Navy boot camp.

Warner and others who were selected for training in highly technical skills were pushed through the pipeline quickly, completing a slightly attenuated boot camp of three months rather than four so they could attend their follow-on schools and be sent to the fleet to meet the demand for those skills.

While still at boot camp in May 1945, Warner was one of 40 young Sailors selected for an extremely memorable assignment.

"This is going to be one of the most important moments of your life and you'll never forget it," a Navy captain briefed Warner and the other Sailors. He told them that in a radio broadcast, President Harry S. Truman would soon announce the surrender of Germany, and the excitement of Americans from coast to coast was almost sure to give way to the best sort of pandemonium. Warner and the other Sailors were assigned shore patrol duty in the city of Chicago. "Boys, draw on every bit of training and learning you've ever had in your life, but help make it happen and keep law and order as best you can," the captain instructed them. After being issued a whistle, a billy club and an armband that read "S.P.," the Sailors soon found themselves on a train to inner city Chicago.

"The magic of that day, it was just—



**Warner speaks to an audience of Marine Corps University students and staff and distinguished guests next to a portrait of BGen Edwin Simmons during an August 2015 ceremony dedicating the new MCU building in his name. BGen Simmons, the namesake of the Marine Corps History Center, had served as one of Warner's aides when he was Secretary of the Navy, where they began a decades-long partnership to advance the interests of the Marine Corps. Simmons passed away in 2007, but "we were reunited again with our names on the building," Warner said.**

it's been recorded better by others, but every bar was 'dry' by 8 p.m. I mean, there wasn't a drop of alcohol left in the whole city of Chicago," recalled Warner, fondly recalling streets filled with dancing, kissing and orderly celebrations. "It was just such an elation to have the European conflict lifted up off the families and the country."

Upon his return to Great Lakes, he said, "it took the officers about a day or two for them to pull boot camp discipline back together and down to reality."

As the war continued in the Pacific, Warner attended advanced radio technician school at the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory, and received what he describes as state-of-the-art training in electronics, which was an ever-rapidly emerging field in the Navy. He then was assigned to the U.S. Atlantic Fleet to await assignment to a ship headed for the Pacific when the

Japanese unexpectedly surrendered, and the Navy issued an ALNAV announcing the war was over and most ships would soon be returning to home ports.

"It was all over," said Warner. "And now America was faced with a real challenge. How do you take 16 million men and women in uniform and release them back into civilian life? And they went about it, I think, in a very responsible

and orderly way. There was no precedent for any challenge like this. It was basically a fair program: first to enlist, first to be released."

Warner was assigned to "decommission of ship" duty where he would dismantle their electronic equipment for storage.

When he finally returned home, Warner was faced with a loss that he says is the only thing in his life he's ever been cheated on. Just three months after his return, his father died at the age of 62. But days before he passed, he and his father made a phone call to the president of Washington and Lee University. The next thing Warner knew, he was on his way to Lexington to fulfill his father's final wish and the deal they made when he allowed him to quit school and enlist.

Like millions of other Americans who delayed their educational pursuits to perform military service during the war, Warner was grateful for America's investment in education in the form of the GI Bill.

"I doubt if a third of people who were eligible to go to college could have afforded it in those days," he said. "But everybody wanted to help veterans in those days."

At Washington and Lee, he sensed a common thread and a sense of mutual admiration among those who had served. "They came back a very serious and determined, but also a grateful and humble, group. They were so honored to have been a part of restoring freedom."

Warner also remarked on the distinct advantage those veterans had in the university setting because of the excellent educational programs many experienced in their military training. It's an observation that remained with him in the Senate as

**Senator Warner, center, talks with Senator John McCain, left, and Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, right, prior to a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing in February 2006. Warner served on the committee throughout his 30 years in the Senate, and for more than 15 years was either the chairman or ranking member. (Photo courtesy of National Archives)**





COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES

**Senator Warner, left, stands with fellow members of Congress behind President Ronald Reagan during a traditional bill-signing ceremony in February 1984.**

a co-sponsor and staunch advocate of the post-9/11 GI Bill, which greatly expanded the educational benefits for those who served on active duty after Sept. 10, 2001. Having personally benefitted from the GI Bill, with the clearest of conscience he supported the continuation and expansion of that program.

After graduating from Washington and Lee in 1949 with a degree in engineering, Warner volunteered to remain in the Marine Corps Active Reserve, accepting a commission as a second lieutenant. He attended a modified Basic School at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., which he says was “a marvelous experience,” and subsequently was assigned to Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMA) 321, a reserve squadron based at Naval Air Station Anacostia in his hometown of Washington, D.C. “We were weekend warriors!” he said.

But Warner soon was forced to suspend his legal education when war broke out in Korea in 1950, and he was one of approximately 300 Marine Corps Reserve officers who, as a group, were ordered to active duty and trained as the First Special Basic Class before being ordered to the Fleet Marine Force or to their specialty schooling.

“As I look back, I believe this rapidly

structured officer program was one of the Corps’ most notable decisions,” said Warner.

Over the next two years, Warner’s varied experiences in the Marine Corps, on active duty as well as reserve duty, would shape him and prepare him for the leadership roles in his future, such as the Secretary of the Navy and Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee. As he shares his stories, some lighthearted and some somber, he pauses and says, “The Marine Corps really was a powerful building block of my whole life, professionally.”

He becomes animated as he shares his

**As he shares his stories, some lighthearted and some somber, he pauses and says, “The Marine Corps really was a powerful building block of my whole life, professionally.”**

account of his unlikely role in the placement of the scale model of the U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial, depicting the flag raising on Iwo Jima, outside the main gate of Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va. The sculptor Felix de Weldon had created the smaller model as he worked to craft the full-size memorial now adjacent to Arlington National Cemetery. Warner, waiting to attend the basic communications officer

course, was at the time assigned as an aide to Lieutenant General Franklin A. Hart, the commandant of Marine Corps schools at Quantico.

Thanks to his engineering degree, then-First Lieutenant Warner was summoned to the office of General Clifton B. Cates, the 19th Commandant of the Marine Corps. He laughs as he describes being personally directed by the Commandant to devise a way to transport the scale model, which weighed several tons, from Headquarters Marine Corps to Quantico.

“I hadn’t seen it—none of us had. It had been kept under wraps. But boy, it was

very moving to look at it and stand next to it,” Warner said of the statue, adding that he could hear the reverence in his voice as Gen Cates, who had led the 4th Marine Division during the Battle of Iwo Jima, talked about how much it meant to the Corps and to him. But quickly the conversation between the young lieutenant and the Commandant turned back to business.



COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES

**On the deck of the decommissioned USS Wisconsin (BB-64), Senator Warner addresses a crowd during a 60th anniversary celebration at Hampton Roads Naval Museum in Norfolk, Va., in April 2004. Wisconsin was one of three battleships used in Korea that Warner saved from the scrap heap, and he was proud to transfer the deed from the Navy to the city of Norfolk.**

And the differences between active-duty and reserve Marines, said Warner, were indistinguishable while forward-deployed. He wouldn't have been able to observe this firsthand had it not been for a chance encounter in 1951.

Assigned as a communications officer at Marine Corps Air Station El Toro, Calif., after completing his MOS school, Warner was coming to terms with the fact that, yet again, he wasn't going to make it to the fight.

"Here I am, my second time in military service, and again, I have little prospect of getting overseas," he remembers thinking to himself one evening as he sat in the dimly lit bar of the air station's officers' club. He began "shooting the breeze" with Lieutenant Colonel Alfred Gordon, the commanding officer of Marine Attack Squadron (VMA) 121, which was scheduled to deploy to Korea on a carrier in two days' time. When Gordon learned that Warner was a communications officer, his eyes lit up. At the last minute, his "comm-o" was unable to deploy. Warner asked if he could take his place, and Gordon replied, "OK, I'll get you orders."

The next thing Warner knew, he was attached to VMA-121 as a ground officer serving the communication needs of the AD Skyraider squadron, and was aboard USS *Sitkoh Bay* (CVE-86), headed for Korea by way of Japan. As they crossed the Pacific, he picked up on the intense rivalry between the Sailors and Marines on board. "The Navy persecuted the Marines in every way," he said. "It was friction from day one!" It was another experience he would tuck away in the back of his mind, that he'd later be able to do something about.

Deployed to K-6 airfield at Pyontaek, Republic of Korea, VMA-121 pilots flew the Skyraider, which could accommodate 9,000 pounds of ordnance, supporting the infantry on missions lasting up to 14 hours.

"The squadron dropped more bomb tonnage during the Korean War than any other Navy or Marine Corps squadron, devastating enemy airfields, supply dumps, bridges and railroad yards," reads the unit's history.

Warner describes sleeping in tents, the

**"The Navy persecuted the Marines in every way. It was friction from day one!" It was another experience he would tuck away in the back of his mind, that he'd later be able to do something about.**

"If there's one crack in that thing while it's being transported, it's your ass!" Warner recalls Gen Cates telling him before snapping his swagger stick under his arm and marching off.

Warner succeeded in developing the plan to ensure that the statue, unveiled in 1951, arrived in one piece.

During that period of time, Warner observed what he describes as a pervasive bias against reserve Marines within the active duty component.

"The Corps really looked upon the reserves as second-class citizens," Warner said. It was an issue that, unbeknownst to him at the time, he'd one day be in a position to do something about.

Warner and other reservists who were called to active duty at the onset of the Korean War learned their trades and specialties quickly, he said, adding, "I'm proud of what America did, how they pulled their reserves in, what their reserves did."

air raid trenches, and serving alongside the squadron's Marines, who he called a "marvelous cadre of people."

In a conflict with no air-to-air fighting, the biggest dangers for the squadron's pilots were antiaircraft weapons and mechanical failures, said Warner solemnly.

On Nov. 18, 1951, a communication was received from LtCol Gordon, the squadron's commander and the same Marine who had pulled Warner into the squadron just before the deployment, during a bombing run. That communication resulted in a turn of events that he says will stay with him forever. "My plane's on fire, I'm going to jump," Gordon had said over the radio.

Using the coordinates from that last transmission, Warner was tasked with leading a retrieval team to find Gordon.

"We struggled up near the North Korean border and we found him," said Warner. Gordon's parachute had failed. "It was terrible. So I wrapped him up in his parachute and took him back. And it was just one of those things you'll never forget. In keeping with Marine doctrine, we Marines leave nobody behind."

"When I got to be Secretary of the Navy, I called his widow and told her that I wouldn't have gotten this job as Secretary had not her husband taken me aboard his squadron," Warner said.

Gordon's death wasn't the only loss in



COURTESY OF JOHN W. WARNER

**Warner, left, reunited with an old friend, Capt George Cole, during a chance meeting at a forward airfield in Korea in May 1952. Cole was killed in an aircraft crash the following day, and this photo is displayed prominently in Warner's home library as a reminder of the sacrifices that so many ordinary Americans have made in service to their nation.**

Korea that deeply impacted Warner. On May 18, 1952, Warner was flying around as an observer in an old torpedo bomber, which the squadron had stripped of torpedo gear to make room for a crew. Soon after they had stopped at a forward

airfield to refuel, Warner heard someone shout "Hey buddy!" from across the air strip. It was Captain George "Cozy" Cole, a pilot with VMF-321, the reserve squadron that Warner had been attached to in Washington. The two Marines, who he described as being "the best of friends," hugged and asked someone to take a photograph of them together. Cole, a teacher from Fairfax, Va., was headed home in a matter of days, with just one final flight ahead of him.

"One more to do, and then, John, it's your turn," Warner, with emotion in his voice, recalls Cole saying to him.

Several days later, as Warner scanned the casualty reports, he learned that Cole never returned from that last flight. The photograph they took together nearly 70 years ago became one of his prized possessions and takes a front-and-center place on the mantel in the library at Warner's home, next to a photo of the members of the Senate Armed Services Committee when he served as chairman. The sacrifice of Cole—and of so many other Americans like him—never was far from Warner's mind, even as he ascended into a high-profile life as a public figure.

He'd carry these stories with him as he sought to "repay the debt" he believed he owed to the Navy and Marine Corps for the leadership training he received during his service.



COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES

**Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, center, leads Senator Warner, right, and Senator Carl Levin, left, to the crash scene at the Pentagon in Arlington, Va., on Sept. 11, 2001. During his 30 years in the U.S. Senate, Warner was in a position of leadership during many pivotal moments in American history.**



COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES

**While serving as Secretary of the Navy, Warner, second from the right, and Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird, far right, watch as President Richard Nixon, left, shakes hands with former Congressman Carl Vinson in front of a model of the nuclear-propelled aircraft carrier that would be named after Vinson at Robins Air Force Base, Ga., Nov. 1, 1974.**

“I was just an average guy. Nothing heroic or anything,” Warner said. “I benefitted more from the Marines and what they did for me than I was ever able to do for them. So I had to make it up—I had a deficit to make up, and when I got to be Secretary of the Navy and Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, I doubled that debt.”

After returning home from Korea in 1952, Warner left active duty and returned to the University of Virginia School of Law, graduating in 1953 and remaining in the Marine Corps Reserve until 1961. After working in the legal field in a variety of capacities, including as an Assistant U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia and as a partner at law firm Hogan & Hartson—now Hogan Lovells, where he continues to work today—he joined

the campaign staff for President Richard Nixon.

After the election, President Nixon’s Secretary of Defense, Melvin Laird, approached Warner and told him that the president wanted to nominate him to serve as undersecretary of the Navy working for fellow Marine veteran John H. Chaffee, who had served both in World War II at

Guadalcanal and Okinawa, and in the Korean War.

Warner chuckles as he says that as a young Sailor chipping paint, swabbing decks and learning to fix radios, he never could have imagined that one day he would be running the entire Department of the Navy.

With Chaffee as the Secretary and

**Senator Warner, center, shares a laugh with Secretary of the Navy John F. Lehman Jr., left, and ADM Carlisle A.H. Trost, right, upon ADM Trost’s assumption of command as the Chief of Naval Operations at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md., in June 1986. Trost was one of several notable officers who served as an aide to Warner while he was SECNAV.**



COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES

**Senator Warner, right, then-Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and Senator Carl Levin, left, ranking member, ask questions of Donald C. Winter, the Secretary of the Navy, during testimony concerning the National Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2007 and the Future Years Defense Program in March 2006.**

Warner as his right-hand man, said Warner with a laugh, people “suddenly realized two Marines were going to run the Navy!”

“Chaffee and I bent over backwards not to show partiality, but no one tried to screw the Marine Corps once we were there,” Warner said.

As undersecretary from 1969 to 1972 and subsequently as Secretary of the Navy, Warner, the only secretary ever to have served in both the Navy and the Marine Corps, was in a position to advocate for the Corps during a crucial period in American history: the Vietnam War.

And though it wasn’t without its challenges, he considers it the “most fun job” he’s ever had, particularly during the three years he worked alongside Chaffee.

“We’re a family, the Marines. We’ll always be a family,” Warner said, referring to the friendship that grew between the two, who later served together in the U.S. Senate.

As undersecretary and later as secretary, Warner worked to reduce the animosity between the Navy and Marine Corps and ensure the longevity of the Marine Corps within the Department of Defense. “The adoration America now has for our Marine Corps, at one time was not shared by Presidents and powers that be,” said Warner.

During his tenure in the Department of the Navy, a number of remarkable Navy and Marine Corps officers worked as his aides. Among them were future editor of the *Marine Corps Gazette*, John Greenwood; William G. “Bill” Leftwich Jr., who was killed in a helicopter crash in Vietnam in 1970 and for whom the Marine Corps’ Leftwich Trophy for outstanding leadership is named; and Edwin H. Simmons, future brigadier general and renowned historian of the Marine Corps.

Surrounded by what he describes as the highest caliber of individuals, Warner made an effort to support the Marines and Sailors engaged in combat in Vietnam—and their families back home—as best he could. He regularly met with the wives of prisoners of war and traveled to Vietnam to visit the troops on Christmas Day, visiting 22 ships in 48 hours.

“I was lowered by helicopter on each of the decks,” Warner recalled, adding



COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

### **As undersecretary and later as secretary, Warner worked to reduce the animosity between the Navy and Marine Corps and ensure the longevity of the Marine Corps within the Department of Defense.**

that he wanted to shake hands with each and every Sailor.

It was one of a number of trips to Vietnam for Warner despite some resistance he encountered about putting himself in harm’s way. “I pushed the envelope,” said Warner. “I wanted to go up on this

fire base so I could check and see what the situation was. They came back to me and said, ‘The fire base is hot!’ ” he recalled. “And I said ‘Let’s go anyway!’ ”

At one particular fire base, wounded Marines and Sailors on stretchers awaited transport by helicopter. Warner walked



**As chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Warner, center, was photographed with the other members of the committee from the 109th Congress, Nov. 16, 2006. Front row, from the left: Jeff Sessions, Pat Roberts, James Inhofe, John McCain, John Warner, Carl Levin, Edward Kennedy, Robert Byrd, Joseph Lieberman. Second row, from the left: John Thune, John Cornyn, Elizabeth Dole, Lindsey Graham, James Talent, John Ensign, Susan Collins, Jack Reed, Daniel Akaka, Bill Nelson, Robert Menendez, Mark Pryor, Evan Bayh and Hillary Clinton. Pictured in the back row are two staff members. (Photo courtesy of John W. Warner)**

around and visited with the injured and recalls peeking at one Marine's toe tag, an identification marker on his foot.

"Hey man, the tag says you're going to be all right," Warner said to the Marine, who he says was drowsy and full of morphine. "I saw a little bit of a smile go across his face. So I went about my business."

Decades later, when Warner was a U.S. Senator, he was at the Naval Hospital Bethesda, Md., for a tonsillectomy. A nurse came in to his room as he was recovering and told him that the Chief of Naval Operations was coming to visit and bringing a guest. The guest was the 31st Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Charles C. Krulak who, unbeknownst to Warner, was the injured Marine he had spoken to on the fire base in Vietnam. Gen Krulak finally had a chance to repay the courtesy. He walked over, placed a tag around Warner's toe, laughed and said, "You're going to be all right."

After his tenure as Secretary of the Navy came to an end in 1974, Warner served as the administrator of the American Revolution Bicentennial. Later, his lifelong camaraderie with his fellow Marines continued when the people of Virginia elected him to the United States Senate in 1978. The newly minted Republican politician was one of nine Marines in the Senate at the time, serving alongside his friend and former Secretary of the Navy John H. Chaffee of Rhode Island; Henry R. Bellmon of Oklahoma; Adlai E. Stevenson of Illinois; John Glenn of Ohio; John C. Culver of Iowa; Dale Bumpers

of Arkansas; James R. Sasser of Tennessee; and Howell T. Heflin of Alabama.

"Boy, we had a block of votes, and like Marines, we hung together," Warner said of the cadre of Marines, made up of Democrats and Republicans. They were always on watch to protect or augment the needs of the Corps.

The group of Marines in the Senate, of which Chaffee and Glenn were the two "senior officers," continued to observe Marine Corps rank structure amongst themselves.

"Believe me, we followed protocol!" Warner said. "We would have quiet meet-

**"Boy, we had a block of votes, and like Marines, we hung together," Warner said of the cadre of Marines, made up of Democrats and Republicans. They were always on watch to protect or augment the needs of the Corps.**



ings with just the Marines, boy, no staff, no nothing—and plot our course for the Corps.”

For 30 years, Warner represented the Commonwealth of Virginia through five consecutive terms in the Senate, serving on the Armed Services Committee for the entirety his tenure. During the last 15 years, he served as either the chairman or ranking member of the committee, relying on his service in the Navy and Marine Corps to guide his steps.

In addition to advocating for the expansion of the GI Bill, Warner also was a leader in instituting “TRICARE for Life” coverage and was involved in procuring the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., and advocated for the awarding of the Purple Heart for servicemembers killed or wounded in terrorist attacks following the 1983 bombing of the Marine Barracks in Beirut, Lebanon. Immediately after the bombing, at the direction of President Ronald Reagan, Warner traveled to Beirut accompanied by then-Major and future Commandant of the Marine Corps, James L. Jones Jr., to visit with survivors and deliver a clear message on the president’s behalf that America would not withdraw.

Throughout his time as Secretary of the Navy and as a Senator, Warner said he was fortunate to have had cordial relationships with all of the Marine Corps Commandants. “Many of them became good close friends,” he said.

In 2006, Congress passed the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2007, authorizing the appropriations for the Department of Defense under his name in recognition of his decades of service.

Although he made the decision not to run for re-election in 2008, Warner wouldn’t leave the Senate without securing funding for one final project, one that truly would bring his life’s work full circle: the much-needed refurbishment of the Iwo Jima statue outside the gate of MCB Quantico that a nervous young 1stLt Warner had helped install in 1951. He couldn’t think of a better way to bring that chapter to a close.

In an honor befitting his contributions to the special relationship between the militaries of the United States and the United Kingdom, Warner was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II during a ceremony at Buckingham Palace in 2009.

He’s remained an important figure to the Navy and Marine Corps, and considers himself undeserving of the recognition that both have given him. The Navy christened the nuclear-powered *Virginia*-class attack submarine USS *John Warner* (SSN-785) in 2014. In 2015, Marine Corps



NANCY S. LIGHTMAN

**Warner, left, and LtCol Buzz Hefti, USMC (Ret), look at a copy of the Senate Armed Services Committee photograph pictured on the previous page while meeting with Leatherneck at Hogan Lovells in Washington, D.C., Jan. 8. After retiring from the Marine Corps, Hefti worked as the senator’s defense staffer from 1981 to 1982, and their friendship continues to this day.**

University hosted a dedication ceremony on its campus in Quantico for the John Warner Center for Advanced Military Studies, home of Marine Corps Command and Staff College, the School of Advanced Warfighting and the Brigadier General Edwin H. Simmons Marine Corps History Center, named for his former aide who became a close ally and friend.

As an individual whose life has been defined by the values of diligence, hard work and education—values that he said were his father’s, but that continued to be reinforced by his service—Warner, reflects back with humility, gratitude and the deepest admiration both for the Marines he worked alongside and the members of his duty-driven generation,

many of whom, though no longer with us, continue to serve as an inspiration for future generations of Americans.

Senator Warner still holds a special place in his heart for those with whom he served decades ago. “I’m honored to be interviewed by *Leatherneck* in honor of my generation of veterans, most of whom are long gone, in the hopes that some young Marines will say, ‘I can do better than that old grizzly rascal!’ ”

It’s fitting that he calls to mind a naval term to best describe the impact that the Corps and the Navy had on his life, setting him on a course to success: “The Navy and Marine Corps were always my anchor to windward in my adult life,” he said.



## SEA STORY OF THE MONTH

### Visions of Leavenworth Flashed Through My Mind

It was late spring of 1968 and I was working as communications supervisor at 1st Marine Division Headquarters in Da Nang. I had gone off watch at midnight and spent the next hour or so shooting the bull with the oncoming watch personnel.

Getting tired, I started to leave and hit the door at a dead run. All doors at division headquarters opened outward in case of rockets, mortars, etc., and Wham! The door hit someone coming in and knocked him down.

I leaned forward,  
helping him up  
while starting to  
say, "I'm sorry,"  
when I noticed the  
two stars on  
his collar.

I leaned forward, helping him up while starting to say, "I'm sorry," when I noticed the two stars on his collar. As he stood up I quickly braced and stood ramrod straight, eyes front. The general said, "Marine, you're going to remember this day for the rest of your life!" Thoughts of Leavenworth and sledge-hammers and turning large rocks into small ones flashed through my mind. He continued, "This is the day you knocked a major general on his ass and got away with

it. Now get outta here!"

I yelled, "Sir, yes, Sir." The first "Sir" was to his face, the "yes" was about 5 yards away, and the last "Sir" was 10 yards away and I was picking up speed.

Due to it being dark and of course my "eyes front," I never did get a good look at the general's face but the commanding general at the time was Major General Ormond Simpson. And the general was right. I will remember that day for the rest of my life.

Sgt P.J. Feltz  
USMC, 1966-1970  
Waynesville, Ohio

### Befriending the Colonel May Have Been The Wrong Move

At Camp Pendleton in early 1969, slightly behind 5th Marine Division headquarters, there was a low-slung wooden building where I worked at the Division print shop. Everything for which paper copies were needed came through us: orders, commendations, battle analyses, training evaluations. The shop contained three or four small printing presses with a couple of map-size copiers in back. There also was a parts and ink room and a small attached warehouse for reams, rolls and boxes of paper of all textures and colors. Behind a curtain past these supplies was the head.

Colonel Breen, the division inspector general, occupied the office next to ours. He had a sergeant major to keep people out and a corporal to do the work.

Col Breen was a tall, stately officer whose appearance and bearing were both military and patrician, but he was approachable and, because he came to our office several

times a day to use the head, we became familiar enough for me to greet him with "Hi, Colonel," and give him a grin.

It is said that familiarity breeds contempt, but it also gave birth, in my case, to temporary insanity. How else to explain the fact that I waylaid the colonel one day on his way to the head and asked if I could make an appointment to see him? He was of course surprised but told me to drop by that afternoon, which I did, much to the consternation of the sergeant major, who did not at all like being sidelined. Nevertheless, I was soon seated with the colonel in his office when he said, "What's on your mind, Corporal?"

I told him I had just over a year left on my enlistment and that meant I needed to go to Vietnam right now or I would run out of time. He asked how old I was, and what I planned to do in the future. He chuckled, and said he understood my desire to get into combat and he'd see what he could do.

The inevitable eruption began about an hour later when the company commander called my section head, Captain Wheatley, in an apoplectic rage and said that the division inspector general had just called him and wanted to know what the hell was going on down there! Capt Wheatley could barely contain a small smile as he chewed me up one side and down the other for flouting the sacred chain of command in such a flagrant and shocking way. I was dismissed with the admonition to keep my head down and my mouth shut.

In the end, I got what I wanted, but by other means. I asked a personnel clerk I

knew to watch for orders to Vietnam that I could fill. Two weeks later I had them.

The Marine Corps taught me to adapt, improvise and overcome; my application of that concept may have been faulty, but I accomplished my mission.

Bill Federman  
Southampton, Mass.

### Exploding TNT

The 1st Marine Division arrived on Okinawa as we prepared to move into Vietnam. I was the commanding officer of Engineer Support Company, 1st Engineer Battalion. The battalion commander knew I had been an instructor at Naval Amphibious Base, Coronado, so he assigned me the task of developing and teaching the Division's infantry Marines about booby traps, demolitions and other dirty trick devices that they could face in country. I had a small team of Marines and we worked to conduct classes for the infantry.

One day we were firing TNT blocks and Bangalore torpedoes. A young Marine was having trouble with his igniter so I told him to get up the hill where the rest of the troops were waiting and I trimmed the fuse and lit it off. I started running to the top of the hill when the torpedo went off. When I got to the hilltop, I saw that Staff Sergeant Charlie Cunningham had a cut on his cheek. Apparently a piece of the steel casing had blown over my head and hit the sergeant. We cleaned him up, bandaged it, and he was fine.

Later during that tour, I became the assistant division engineer and I went on engineer patrols in advance of any infantry operations. I came upon SSgt Cunningham, now a

platoon sergeant with the engineers. We chatted for a moment, then he pointed to his cheek and said, "See my Purple Heart, Cap'n?" I said, "Charlie, I gave you that!" "Yeah, I know, I really got hit in the a--, but I can't show that to anyone."

Master Gunnery Sergeant Charles "Charlie Tuna" Cunningham, if you're reading this, I wish you the very best.

Maj James L. Murphy  
USMC (Ret)  
Los Osos, Calif.

### **We Weren't Medics But We Saved His Life**

In the late 1960s my company was sent to the field for a communications exercise at Camp Lejeune. The exercise was winding down, and one of the sergeants said to his wire team, "Take five." The men proceeded to find a comfortable spot, sat down and began to smoke.

A sudden shout erupted from the group. A private first class had sat down on a snake. We discovered two very visible puncture wounds on him.

One of the men took out his K-bar and cut an "X" over one fang mark and another Marine did the other. I called the base for an ambulance and was told a medevac would meet us at Landing Zone Dove. We got him to the hospital with pressure bandages and he was very bloody and sore.

Two days later he returned to our barracks. He said the doctors had to put in 12 stitches and a drain because we had cut muscle. He had a no-work chit for three days and was black and blue. He thanked us with a few words and was upset that he couldn't show off his "battle wound" to the ladies.

CWO-4 David L. Horne  
West Palm Beach, Fla.

### **Test Flight for a Reason**

I was a radar intercept officer in the back seat of the F-4 Phantom in the late

1960s. One of the fun hops was getting a test flight, which was protocol after an airplane came out of any major maintenance. Often it was a clean plane (no fuel tanks), so higher G limits and more maneuvers to put the plane through were allowed. There was also no required flight plan so essentially it was a free flight.

While with a squadron at Iwakuni, Japan, I got a flight one Saturday morning. We launched and cranked the plane through a number of turns and rolls and then

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**... and with the stick  
forward, nosed over,  
creating zero G's.  
I realized that I had  
forgotten to lock  
down my harness as  
I floated up ...**

---

zoomed up to 20,000 feet, and with the stick forward, nosed over, creating zero G's. I realized that I had forgotten to lock down my harness as I floated up and had both hands on the canopy. We then rolled over, creating negative G's so I found myself plastered against the canopy looking down at the bay of Hiroshima. At that moment, the realization hit me that the reason for this test flight was that on the previous flights the back canopy had inadvertently ejected. This is what we call a true "Oh sh--" moment. Fortunately, the test flight was a success.

Capt R.D. Ramsay  
Steger, Ill.

### **Old Town Park**

In 1966 while going through Electronics School at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, things were different compared to today.

Some of my classmates were Private First Class C.D. Prikey of Missouri, PFC S.A. Dines of Colorado and PFC F.E. Fetzer of Illinois. I am from California. We all liked to drink, even though some of us were under the legal drinking age.

One warm summer night, all of us got some booze and headed to Old Town Park. Old Town Park is on the other side of the freeway from MCRD San Diego. There are some old Spanish buildings and grassy rolling areas under lots of trees and some old cannon on display there.

We found a nice spot under some trees and began to drink. Fetzer and I drank beer while Dines and Prikey drank hard booze. After a couple of hours Prikey was doing tumbling and somersaults in the grassy area. Dines was watching and laughing as Fetzer and I dozed off.

As the morning light woke me, I noticed Fetzer sleeping next to a bush. There were beer cans everywhere. I woke up Fetzer and we started policing up the area by picking up the cans and shoveling the empties into the barrels of the cannon. I bagged the full ones and hid them in the bushes. We looked all around for Dines and Prikey, but didn't see them.

Fetzer and I headed back to MCRD. As we walked by the duty noncommissioned officer (NCO), he was on the phone with a lady who was asking to talk to someone about PFC Prikey. I spoke with the lady and she said he was at her house and needed "some things." It seems that morning she had opened her door and there was Prikey wearing only his black dress socks.

Prikey got on the phone and gave me the combination to his locker and the lady gave me her address. Fetzer and I got his ditty bag pack that had some items in it, but we had to

throw in one of my T-shirts and a pair of boxer shorts. I noticed then that Dines was asleep in his bunk hung over. We got the clothes to Prikey and thanked the lady about five times.

Going back through the gate, Prikey had no ID card or liberty card and got cited. He gave the citation to the duty NCO and got a page 11 entry. He got a replacement for the ID card but it took another three weeks to get a liberty card replacement.

The following Sunday, Fetzer and I went back out to Old Town Park where we found the beers we had hidden in the bushes. After drinking a warm one, we cleaned out the cannon and threw the empty cans away. We walked around the park checking the bushes and along the path to the lady's house looking for anything that could have been Prikey's stuff, but found nothing.

Months later, about 30 days before Prikey was to PCS, he received a plain manila envelope. The contents were a belt, short sleeve shirt, his wallet with no money, his ID card, his driver's license and his liberty card.

Oh yeah, Pikey didn't have his replacement liberty card for the last 60 days due to some other events.

MGySgt Robert "Bob"  
Ripley, USMC (Ret)  
1965 to 1995

Twenty-nine Palms, Calif.

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."





# “FIRE MISSION!”

## 3rd Battalion, 12th Marines In the Battle of Dai Do

By Dick Camp

**E**arly in the morning of April 30, 1968, the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) launched a small arms and rocket propelled grenade (RPG) attack on a Navy landing craft utility (LCU) in the Bo Dieu River, killing three sailors and wounding five others. A platoon from Company H, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines (“The Magnificent Bastards”) was sent to reconnoiter An Loc, one of five hamlets

in the Dai Do complex, from which the attack occurred. Dai Do was a cluster of five evacuated hamlets (Dong Huan, Dai Do, An Loc, Dinh To and Thuong Do) located 2 1/2 kilometers northeast of the headquarters of the 3rd Marine Division at Dong Ha.

The platoon received heavy small arms, automatic weapons, mortar and rocket fire from what was estimated to be an NVA company in fortified positions. The forward observer (FO), Second Lieutenant Carl R. Gibson,

called in a fire mission on several NVA soldiers in the open. “Whiskey” Battery, 3rd Bn, 12th Marines, with its 4.2-inch mortars, responded with one round of white phosphorous (WP) and 14 rounds of high explosive (HE).

The commanding officer of 2/4, Lieutenant Colonel (later BGen) William Weise, call sign “Dixie Diner 6,” ordered the remainder of Hotel Co to go to the aid of the platoon, “turn south to Dong Huan,” and take the hamlet. “I felt uneasy,” Weise said. “Something

**Above: A 105 mm howitzer gun crew in action. Batteries under the control of 3/12 expended 36,443 rounds in direct support of Operation Napoleon/Saline in May 1968.**

big was happening. The enemy usually fired at the riverboats and ran. This time I had a feeling that the enemy would not run.” Weise was correct as the battle developed into a fierce meeting-engagement that pitted his understrength battalion against elements (48th and 52nd Regiments, supported by artillery and rockets) of the North Vietnamese 320th Division, which numbered approximately 8,000-10,000 men according to conversations BGen Weise had many years after the battle with the NVA general who commanded the forces arrayed against the 2/4 at Dai Do.

As Hotel Co prepared to assault Dong Huan, the NVA positions in the hamlet were softened up with artillery fire. Whiskey Battery again received the mission and fired 144 rounds of HE and 61 rounds of WP to screen the attacking force. Lt Gibson lifted the supporting fires when the assault was within 200 meters, which was enough to keep the NVA’s heads down until the company was right on their positions. Keith Nolan wrote in “The Magnificent Bastards, The Joint Army-Marine Defense of Dong Ha, 1968,” “... when the NVA raised their heads from their holes they saw a line of 80 screaming, firing-from-the-hip Marines rushing at them from out of the smoke.” The assault was a classic infantry-supporting arms maneuver.

### Artillery, King of Battle

For three days (April 30 to May 2), the cannoneers of 3/12 (Rein) fired thousands of rounds of HE rounds in support of 2/4 during the pivotal battle of Dai Do. On April 30, for example, the attached Battery C, 1st Battalion, 11th Marines, with its six towed 105 mm howitzers, fired a single mission of two rounds of WP and 569 rounds of HE on NVA bunkers. The entire battalion on that day fired more than 9,000 rounds of 105 mm ammunition—the battalion commander said, “We were pumping out rounds as fast as the calls for fire came in.” The battalion S-4, Captain Tony Nastri, and his team performed logistic miracles keeping the guns supplied with ammunition.

### 3rd Battalion, 12th Marines

The leathernecks of 3rd Battalion, 12th Marines were under the command of 38-year-old Lieutenant Colonel Joseph A. Como, a well-trained and experienced artilleryman and troop leader, and were in direct support (D/S) of 3rd Marines in the Cua Viet area during Operation Napoleon/Saline. “During the period of the battle for Dai Do, the battalion had four 105 mm howitzer batteries, one LVTH-6 (an amphibious tractor with a



**Maj Dave Vowell, Executive Officer, left, and LtCol Joe Como, Commanding Officer, 3rd Bn, 12th Marines, ensured constant fire support for 2/4 during the battle at Dai Do in 1968.**

turret-mounted 105 mm howitzer) platoon, one 155 mm howitzer battery consisting of two howitzers, one 4.2-inch mortar battery, and one 155 mm gun platoon which was in general support-reinforcing to 3rd Battalion, 12th Marines. I had twice as many batteries under my control as I would normally have,” Como said.



**Capt Tony Nastri, S-4, 3rd Bn, 12th Marines. His team played a crucial role in ensuring the battalion’s success.**

Como’s batteries were located in two locations:

#### Camp Kistler (LtCol Como):

- Battery C, 1st Bn, 11th Marines-six 105 mm howitzer, towed
- 1st Platoon, 1st Armored Amphibious Company-six 105 mm howitzer, self-propelled
- Mortar Battery, 2nd Battalion, 11th Marines-six 4.2-inch mortars
- Mortar Battery, Det, 1st Battalion, 12th Marines-three 4.2 mortars

#### Quang Tri Combat Base (Major David Vowell):

- Battery G, 3rd Battalion, 12th Marines-six 105 mm howitzer, towed
- Battery I, 3rd Battalion, 12th Marines-six 105 mm howitzer, towed
- Battery A, 1st Battalion, 40th Artillery 105 mm M108, self-propelled
- 1st Provisional 155 mm Howitzer Battery-M114, towed
- 4.2-inch Mortar Battery, 3rd Battalion, 12th Marines-six 4.2-inch mortars

“When I got the mission of supporting the 3rd Marines,” Como explained, “I established a second command post co-located with the 3rd Marines at Camp Kistler at the mouth of the Cua Viet River. I took some of my key people with me—Major Jim Deemer, 3/12 Fire Support Coordinator, who had the disposition that when all hell breaks loose, he was cool, calm and collected, and the perfect guy to have in that situation when things are going wild; Captain Sid Grimes, an experienced and well-trained artillery

officer, plus enough skilled Marines to form a Fire Support Coordination Center (FSCC) and a Tactical Fire Direction Center (FDC).” Como also couldn’t speak highly enough about his battalion executive officer, Major Dave Vowell. “Dave had essentially trained the FDC before becoming the executive officer and made it a highly trained organization. Most importantly, his presence in the Quang Tri CP during the battle afforded me the leeway to focus my efforts in the 3rd Marines TAOR.”

The FDC was located in the artillery battery and/or artillery battalion command post and computed firing data for the guns. The process consisted of determining the approximate target location based upon the information provided in the FO’s call for fire. In the FDC, the range and direction to the target from the guns’ location was measured on a map. Then firing data was calculated and transmitted to the guns. The FO made corrections as appropriate, and the process was repeated until the target had been “bracketed” with an “over” and an “under” set of adjusting rounds. Then the “bracket” was split in half, and the entire artillery battery “fired for effect” using all guns in the battery.

The firing data was computed manually

in the FDC, using special protractors and slide rules with precomputed firing data. Additional corrections to the basic firing data were added into the “gunnery solution” for conditions such as the difference between target and howitzer altitudes, propellant temperature, and atmospheric conditions.

Captain Sid Grimes, 3/12’s S-3 who was in charge of the battalion FDC, recalled, “I controlled the fires of all the batteries that were assigned to us. And that was quite enough because it was twice as many as we normally had.” Initially Grimes had a small tactical FDC unit at Camp Kistler, but by day two, it was beefed up to become both a tactical and technical FDC. He had his hands full. “I did not sleep, nor did I leave my desk [except to make a head call] for the three days of the battle. I knew what I had to do to control multiple batteries.”

Como discovered to his surprise that the two batteries at Camp Kistler “had to get ammunition resupply at the Dong Ha, which was more than half a day’s hazardous journey by river boat away, when they were within a quarter mile from the ammunition dump at the mouth of the Cua Viet.” He directed the battery commanders to use the beach dump despite orders to the contrary from the 12th

Marines S-4. His decision put him on the wrong side of his regimental commander who chewed him out for disobeying a staff officer. However, it proved to be the right decision. In mid-May, the ammunition dump at Dong Ha was blown up by NVA artillery, which curtailed the firing of all the 12th Marines battalions along the DMZ, except the 3rd Bn.

### **Good Men Doing What They Have Been Trained to Do**

“When the battle started,” Como explained, “we had no idea of the depth of it. We thought initially that it was the typical thing ... an ambush, send out a platoon to see what’s going on, but this time the platoon got waxed ... there were so many enemy dug in there, it was just unbelievable.” Grimes recalled, “The word started trickling in and by mid-day, we knew there was heavy fighting. The battalion’s forward observers reported that the NVA were dug in bunkers with connecting fires. They were not rice farmers, but NVA with heavy weapons.”

### **Eyes of the Battalion**

The “eyes of the artillery battalion,” the artillery FO teams, each with a second lieutenant or senior noncommissioned



**Enemy counterbattery fire was non-existent as noted by the lack of any protection around the gun pits of this 105 mm howitzer battery position.**



**Capt Sid Grimes, Operations Officer, 3rd Bn, 12th Marines, controlled twice as many batteries as he normally had during the 1968 battle at Dai Do.**

officer as the forward observer, a scout sergeant who was trained to call in fire, and two communicators, were attached to each of 2/4's rifle companies. Dai Do was not kind to 2/4's FOs. Gunnery Sergeant James Eggleston (Co E) and Second Lieutenant Peter A. Acly (Co G) were wounded on May 2, and 2ndLt J.M. Basel (Co F) was wounded on April 30. 2ndLt Carl R. Gibson (Co H), who had only been in country for a week, was killed on May 2.

The FO team's job was to direct artillery and mortar fire onto a target in the form of a "call for fire" to the FDC of the supporting artillery unit via the infantry battalion's FSCC located in the battalion's COC. The FSCC monitored all calls and would intervene (cancel/delay/modify the request) only when the call endangered other friendly units, conflicted with other fire missions, or was inappropriate for the target. Concurrent with the FSCC clearing the request, the FDC calculated firing data for the battery selected to fire the mission. From time to time the FSCC might initiate supporting arms strikes; for example, when planning a battalion attack, or when a threat unknown to rifle companies appeared in the battalion Tactical Area of Responsibility (TAOR).

### **Steel Fence**

Late in the afternoon of April 30, after the initial engagements by the infantry, Weise sent an extremely grim situation report via secure radio to Colonel Milton A. Hull, 3rd Marines regimental commander. In it, he gave an estimation of his casualties and how tenuous 2/4's tactical situation had become. Hull was very concerned and turned to Como and Grimes, and asked, "What can we do to help them [2/4] get through the night?" The two artillerymen responded, "Give us the coordinates of their perimeter and we'll put a 'steel fence' around them all night long."

The artillery fire plan they formulated employed three 105 mm howitzer batteries positioned in Quang Tri to fire HE shells with VT fuses (explodes the shell at a predetermined height above the ground) all night until morning. In addition, the plan included Harassment and Interdiction (H & I) fires utilizing two 105 mm howitzer batteries at Cua Viet to hit possible enemy assembly areas and trail networks. The plan was modified on the second day of the battle to include random Time on Target (TOT) by all artillery within range on suspected NVA assembly areas and trails. A TOT is the coordination of sev-



**A 105 mm howitzer gun crew at work.**



**Above: Pictured from left to right are Col Kyle, Air Liaison Officer, 3rd Marines; SgtMaj Ted McClintock, 3rd Marines; Col Milt Hull (back to camera), CO, 3rd Marines; and Maj Dennis Murphy, S-3, 3rd Marines, at Camp Kistler during a lull in the fighting at Dai Do.**



**The leathernecks of 3rd Bn, 12th Marines placed a steel fence of artillery around the perimeter of 2/4 throughout the evening of April 30, 1968, the first night of the battle.**

eral batteries so that, based upon time of flight, all munitions fired in the first volley hit the target at the same time. At Dai Do, this technique sometimes involved more than 40 cannon of various calibers.

### “Fire Max Sustained Rate with Every Tube”

Major William H. Dabney, a 3rdMarDiv staff officer, reported that “[Major] General [Rathvon M.] Tompkins, the Division commander, entered the division FSCC on the evening of the 30th of April and ordered the commanding officer, 12th

Marines, “to take every tube that is in range of Dai Do ... and shift its trail so that it is pointing at the Dai Do area and ... fire max sustained rate with every tube all night.”

Unfortunately, according to Weise, “Our main problem with artillery support was not the artillery units nor the artillery FDC. It was the 3rd Division Fire Support Coordination Center. The mission of the FSCC was to coordinate all supporting arms; however, rather than coordinate requests for artillery fire, with close air support, for example, the Division FSCC,

during the battle of Dai Do, would simply halt all artillery fire missions whenever a friendly aircraft was in the general area. For this reason, we did not request helicopter medevacs during the Dai Do Battle.”

Grimes and Acly echoed Weise’s concerns. Grimes complained, “Artillery was impacted by the air that was coming in. They [3rd Division FSCC] would stop us from shooting and we lost a lot of time for direct support of the infantry.” Acly agreed. “From the standpoint of artillery support, the first serious problem we encountered was that we were in what seemed to be an endless check-fire situation. Under check-fire, no artillery fires were permitted due to the risk incoming rounds might pose to aircraft in the area.

“On the morning of 1 May 68, Golf Company moved to join the developing Dai Do battle from the Mai Xa Chanh area on the Cua Viet River,” Acly explained. “We moved upriver (south) in a Navy LCM landing craft and debarked unopposed late morning. There had been heavy activity to the north and northeast, and jet aircraft were still pounding enemy positions in the village of Dai Do and surrounding areas. We tried to dig in but the ground was rock-hard.”

In the early afternoon, Captain Jay Vargas, “asked for a 30-minute prep fire to further soften up the target prior to Golf’s assault into the village,” Acly recalled. “This was sound tactics. Unfortunately, due to the check-fire, no artillery support was forthcoming prior to the assault. Golf Company launched its assault north into the village, without artillery support, across 300-400 meters of open ground with waist-high vegetation,” Acly explained. “The village was secured and a hasty defensive perimeter established. Suddenly the Marines were counterattacked by the NVA, coming from the west, and we redeployed moving east a few hundred meters into the village cemetery. There was a deep ditch at the west edge of the cemetery; that and the various gravestones and monuments provided welcome cover from enemy fire.”

“In this critical and deteriorating situation,” Acly recounted, “I was finally able to get a fire mission approved to the west of our positions. I incrementally adjusted the rounds back in, closer to our positions, and then maintained continuous fire by two 105 mm howitzers for an extended period (perhaps 30 minutes). This mission proved to be devastating to the NVA and was later credited as ‘forcing the enemy to break contact.’ ”

There was danger in shooting the mission according to Acly. “The battery assigned to fire the mission (call-sign Tee



Time Alpha) was located behind us, to the east at Camp Kistler at the mouth of the Cua Viet. Since the NVA were attacking from the west, this meant that Tee Time Alpha's rounds were coming in right over our heads; in artillery parlance, we were 'on the gun/target line.' As I walked the fire in closer and closer to our positions to better pound the NVA, the risk of killing Marines with 'friendly fire' increased. We could hear the whirring of the rounds as they passed close overhead ... the rounds were right on target with no Marine casualties."

Golf Co then hunkered down in hastily dug foxholes in Dai Do. As darkness settled down over the hamlet, NVA infantry moved in, firing AK-47s and automatic weapons. Acly called in fire mission after fire mission, including a devastating attack of VT that cut down many of the enemy soldiers. He continued to construct the "ring of steel" around the perimeter throughout the night, and when morning came, Golf Company was still lord of the hamlet.

In a 1999 Weise met with LtGen Tran Van Quang, commander of all Communist forces in Quang Tri and Thuy Thien Provinces. He told Weise that U.S. artillery caused more NVA casualties than close air support and small arms fire

combined, and that the H&I fires were extremely effective. In 1987, MajGen Dennis Murphy, formerly S-3, 3rd Marines, informed Weise that combat engineers had buried 1,568 enemy bodies three days after the battle. Grimes recalled, "They used bulldozers to bury them."

### 2nd Battalion, 12th Marines

On the second day of the battle, 2nd Battalion, 12th Marines was directed to provide reinforcing fires to 3/12. Captain Pete Winer, CO, Co D, 2/12 at Cam Lo remarked, "Our normal mission was direct support for the 9th Marines, shooting to the north. Suddenly, in the afternoon of 1 May, I received a radio call from LtCol "Rocky" Dunwell, CO, 2/12, saying that, it had hit the fan for 2/4, we would be reinforcing 3/12, and to get ready for heavy shooting."

Winer explained, "Our targets were deep targets—well beyond the Marine infantry's lines. Accordingly, we did not have to worry about hitting friendly troops. We turned our 105s east, 2/12 took fire missions from 3/12, and shot endlessly for the next 10 days, chasing the NVA division north as it retreated towards, and through, the DMZ. Almost every fire mission was fire-for-effect with five

or more rounds per gun (Battery Fives), meaning the battery fired a total of 30 or more rounds in approximately three to five minutes, landing on an NVA target. We often fired the first rounds of a fire mission at the exact command of the 2/12 FDC, indicating we were participating in multi-battery Time-on-Target massed fires with all shells exploding over the heads of the NVA troops at the same time.

"After the first few missions were fired, and the initial excitement wore off," Winer said. "I came to realize that my battery was actually a factory—a fragment factory!" For 10 or more days, 24 hours a day, we delivered large quantities of our deadly product—jagged little pieces of razor-sharp steel—with explosive and destructive force that tore into the enemy troops with deadly effect ... Yes, the artillery did make a difference at Dai Do."

*Editor's note: All photos are courtesy of LtCol Joe Como, USMC (Ret).*

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



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# On Target: The Future of Field Artillery Officer Basic Training



**Students at the Field Artillery Basic Officer Leaders Course, 2ndLt William Ostermeyer, left, and 2ndLt Daniel Lowery call for fire on May 12, 2016. Both officers and enlisted Marines in the artillery occupational field are trained at the Army's artillery school at Fort Sill, Okla.**

By Maj Jonathan Bush, USMC

**F**ield artillery is the bread and butter of the U.S. Army's Fort Sill located near Lawton, Okla. Since 1917, Marines have also walked this sacred ground arm-in-arm with Army and allied teammates. With the same mission, similar equipment and a shared burning pride in our technical proficiency, skilled and proficient artillery officers are created and trained. It may come as a surprise, however, that, until recently, Army and Marine officers (and our allies) were not training together.

Combined officer training began 70 years ago when, "Upon the request of the Commandant of the Marine Corps, on Oct. 26, 1950, Office, Chief, Army Field Forces, allocated a quota of 55 Marine students to the Associate Field Artillery Battery Officer Courses 7, 8, 9 and 10. In return, The Artillery School requested that 23 Marine Corps officers be detailed

as instructors during the period that the Marine students attended the school." This joint training continued for 66 years until divergences in service training priorities and standards separated the Army and Marine officer students.

Currently, new Army officers attend Field Artillery Basic Officer Leaders Course B (FA BOLC-B) and Marine officers attend the Marine Artillery Officers Basic Course (MAOBC). With the exception of a select few live fire events, these two courses are taught separately. The devolution of training between the Army and Marine Corps artillery officer basic training led to the separation, but efforts are underway to realign the two courses into a combined syllabus for both Army and Marine officers.

During the summer of 2019, the field artillery commandant's office reviewed the current Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) and directed a long-overdue ex-

amination and possible rewrite to facilitate joint USMC-USA training. The field artillery commandant's office and the Marine detachment at Fort Sill established a working group to review the differences and similarities between the Army and Marine officer courses in an effort to determine if, when, and how the two courses might be realigned and examine the current status of the support agreements between the schools, commands and services. There are, of course, significant structural and cultural challenges the services must overcome to combine the two courses. The discoveries will assist in the future adaptation of each course and potential to recombine them and have already revealed a number of informal but long-standing agreements that were not codified nor analyzed for the sake and budget of each service. The current situation indicates significant work yet to do.

The course manager for the Army's FA BOLC-B was traditionally a Marine major, and that the officer also serves simultaneously as the course manager for MAOBC.

In order to understand the previously combined course, we must first understand the framework behind it. The bulk of this course and other interservice training arrangements are guided by a document known as the "Standard Memorandum of Agreement between the USA and USN and USAF and USMC and USCG." This document is an interservice training review organization (ITRO) and practically specifies requirements for consolidated and collocated training both for the host service and participating service tenants. The ITRO is a high-level document that largely is common sense. For consolidated programs of instruction (POIs), all services must agree jointly on substantive changes, provide instructors for a specified amount of time, and, where applicable, abide by the host's rules and regulations among other things. By necessity, the ITRO is intentionally written necessarily vague and all-encompassing to facilitate and encourage more specificity in lower level and locally drafted agreements.

From the ITRO springs other MOAs signed by various levels of command

specifying requirements agreed upon by both services to “keep the peace” and execute courses that align with the individual services’ training standards, requirements, resource allocation (ammunition, manpower, equipment, etc.) and military occupational specialty (MOS) production plans. Generally, these MOAs are honored by all parties. Occasionally, however, they deviate on varying scales, but this generally occurs with the knowledge and concurrence of both parties. In the case of FA BOLC-B prior to the split, there were deviations by both parties that were detrimental to the artillery community writ large.

During 2015, the FA BOLC-B course consisted of four platoons of 40 students each. One platoon was traditionally designated as the “Marine Platoon.” Approximately half the student body consisted of Marine student lieutenants who were traditionally trained by Marine captains. With the exception of a few Army-specific classes, Marines and soldiers executed the POI, graduated and became artillerymen together; however, changes were already underway. At the time, the POI content was entirely under the purview of the U.S. Army Field Artillery School. Since it was not a multi-service course, the U.S. Army was well within its authority

to change the POI without the approval of the Marine Corps. As a result of changing priorities and Army policies specific to the school at the time, the Field Artillery School’s leadership did not seek concurrence from the Marine Corps.

This emerging situation at Fort Sill and growing concern by Fleet Marine Forces (FMF) commanders drove the

**During the summer of 2019, the field artillery commandant’s office reviewed the current Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) and directed a long-overdue examination and possible rewrite to facilitate joint USMC-USA training.**

commanding officer of the MARDET to assess the impact of the significant and rapidly changing POI with the Marine Corps Training and Readiness (T&R) Standards for a MOS 0802 Marine Artillery Officer.

The assessment revealed that as a result of the various changes to the FA BOLC-B POI, Marine lieutenants were instructed

and evaluated on only 30 percent of the required T&R Standards that an 0802 must obtain prior to serving in the FMF. In addition, the Field Artillery School had removed the stand-alone Joint Fires Observer (JFO) course that was conducted at the conclusion of FA BOLC-B. The JFO material was reapplied with 40 instruction hours into FA BOLC-B in order to provide exposure to the material, but unfortunately, no additional course length was added to the POI. This resulted in students not graduating with JFO certification. Since such time, JFO has been added as a stand-alone course at the end of FA BOLC-B for a portion of students who will utilize the certification upon graduation.

The detailed assessment also revealed that fire support instruction was deficient by as much as 80 percent of the required T&R Standards, and gunnery was as much as 20 percent to 30 percent deficient. Battery operations were not being taught at all. The MARDET received numerous complaints from FMF commanders that lieutenants were reporting to FMF units insufficiently trained, which, in turn, eroded readiness. Based on these findings, the MARDET CO directed the staff to identify viable courses of action (COAs) to remedy the problem.



**Capt Andy Richards instructs an FA BOLC-B class in fire support at Fort Sill.**

An analysis of the details of the Service MOA that dictated the requirements for both the Army and Marine Corps at Fort Sill was conducted. The Marine Corps is required to provide officer instructors and curriculum developers proportionate to a percent of the overall student throughput while the Army provides the necessary facilities and the opportunity for Marines to attend instruction. When it was written, artillery programs between the two services were nearly identical; however, as a result of the Army's Training and Doctrine Command driven inputs to the POI, emerging operational requirements, and a reluctance from both services to extend the course length, the two services' missions and how they trained for them began to diverge. As a result of the 2015 analysis that identified that Marine Corps T&R standards were simply not being met, the MARDET stood up a MAOBC follow-on course to cover the differences.

As service requirements continued to drift further apart, MAOBC simply could not keep up. To further exacerbate matters, the Fires Center of Excellence was considering removing manual gunnery from enlisted and officer training in an effort to "modernize gunnery." At the same time, the Fires Center of Excellence was developing a concept to combine field artillery with the air defense artillery as a

single fires branch. This combination was attempted in the 1950s and 1960s without success. This concept further strained the ability to create subject matter experts in fire support and field artillery operations.

As directed by the MARDET CO, the staff proposed three courses of action to

**After exhaustive deliberation, the staff was unable to develop a viable training schedule that facilitated a blended curriculum, so the MARDET leadership opted for the "break away" COA. The staff was directed to write the curriculum for a complete MAOBC program.**

bring artillery officer entry-level training back into standard with the T&R and address the FMF commanders' concerns:

- Keep Marine students in BOLC-B and grow MAOBC to cover all the differences in the POI. This would increase the course length which would prohibitively impact T2P2 (training, transients, patients and prisoners) for the Marine Corps.

- Keep Marine students in some of BOLC-B instruction (primarily gunnery)

while they attend MAOBC throughout the course to receive additional fire support and battery instruction. This COA was considered a "blended curriculum" and required inordinately complex scheduling while also depending on the Fires Center of Excellence's acquiescence to Marine scheduling requirements.

- Remove Marine students from BOLC-B altogether, and they would receive training in fire support, gunnery, and battery operations at MAOBC.

The courses of action were presented to TECOM with all the supporting details. Initial feedback was that the removal of manual gunnery was not acceptable. The MARDET CO made it clear that the Marine Corps would not remain part of artillery training at Fort Sill if manual gunnery was eliminated. TECOM declined to approve lengthening MAOBC as it was cost-prohibitive and course lengths must remain within the temporary duty under instruction time limits, which is less than six months. Therefore, either of the two latter COAs was viable, as long as 0802s were sent to the FMF fully trained in 1000-level T&R tasks.

Given the direction handed down by the U.S. Army at the time, the Fires Center of Excellence disagreed with the position on gunnery when the MARDET relayed the directives from TECOM, but understood the Marines' dilemma and were willing to accept the decision as long as the MARDET continued to provide Marine instructors at BOLC-B. The Fires Center of Excellence leadership also assessed that Marine students had a positive influence training with Army students, both academically and socially, and wanted to maintain as many "touch points" as possible. This view was shared by MARDET leadership. The reality, however, was that other than classroom instruction, the students did not spend much time together. After exhaustive deliberation, the staff was unable to develop a viable training schedule that facilitated a blended curriculum, so the MARDET leadership opted for the "break away" COA. The staff was directed to write the curriculum for a complete MAOBC program.

In early 2016, the instructors began writing the new curriculum. The course design was based entirely on T&R standards and followed a logical, concurrent progression of increasing complexity in both fire support and gunnery instruction. Battery operations were taught throughout, and the staff began working with both the enlisted and Warrant Officer Basic instructor cadres to ensure the standard techniques were taught across the Marine artillery community. Also, based on de-



COURTESY OF 1-30TH FIELD ARTILLERY BRIGADE

**Capt James Baird conducts FDC simulations with an FA BOLC-B class at Fort Sill.**



LCPL JULIEN RODARTE, USMC

**Students at the Field Artillery Basic Officer Leaders Course conduct firing drills at Fort Sill, Okla., May 11, 2016. Marine artillery officers spend five months at the school as part of their MOS training.**

mand from FMF commanders, the Marine Logistics Course was introduced to provide students with a basic understanding of artillery logistics. Finally, after completing the MAOBC POI, the students attended a contracted JFO course, which was not a graduation requirement. The first stand-alone MAOBC course began instruction in mid-2016.

Since the first course in 2016, both FA BOLC-B and MAOBC POIs have undergone changes as each course was adjusted and improved. The MARDET provides two to four instructors, occasionally and temporarily surging past four, to the FA BOLC-B that work solely with the soldier instructors and students. FA BOLC-B typically runs eight classes annually with a throughput of roughly 1,100 lieutenants.

MAOBC offers seven classes annually aligned with The Basic School's graduation schedule with a throughput of roughly 125 lieutenants. The courses are similar in length and instruction hours with 792 for the Marine Corps hours and 799 hours for the Army, but have varying requirements. Since Marine lieutenants attend TBS, the six months of training there permit the students and instructors at Fort Sill to focus solely on artillery.


In contrast, the FA BOLC-B receives lieutenants directly from their commissioning source. Regardless of commissioning source—Officer Candidate School, Reserve Officer Training Corps or West Point—newly commissioned officers arrive at FA BOLC-B and must execute Common Core training objectives that include, but are not limited to, rifle range, field craft, Army organization and many other classes covered at TBS. FA BOLC-B also includes a Combined Arms Division that instructs the lieutenants on the basics of maneuver and how to apply fires to support different types of units. Aside from these blocks of instruction, the material in the Gunnery, Fire Support, and Battery/Platoon Leader blocks are remarkably similar. The instructor to student ratio also differs by course with a ratio of 1-to-20 for the Marine Corps and 1-to-35 for the Army. While there are differences in the number of hours taught due to extra requirements for FA BOLC-B, and some differences in grading, the basic materials and skills are the same.

Today, the MARDET and the field artillery commandant's office remain committed to combining instruction of officers by working closely to mitigate existing and emerging challenges. The MOA working group is taking a methodical and purposeful approach at a framework to combine the courses and define the necessary

equitable inter-service support. Under the auspices of the G-3/5/7, the Fires Center of Excellence-8 (Comptroller) is actively working with the Marine Corps' Training Command and the Army's Training and Doctrine Command to draft the necessary Inter-Service Support Agreements to account for support provided and received by both parties under the existing ITRO.

At the local level, the two courses are still taught separately; however, certain touchpoints are in play to facilitate conditions to combine training where it is practical to do so. To that end, we continue to push forward with several initiatives designed to overcome some of the most basic challenges. One example is having MAOBC students routinely attend planned FA BOLC-B socials to mingle, share experiences, ideas and culture between the two services. Also, commencing in the spring of 2020, as part of a pilot program to practically and fully assess bringing the two schools back to joint training, several soldiers will attend MAOBC to provide the student's view of the course differences. Supervised by the Marine major who is the course manager for both BOLC-B and MAOBC, four Marine captains remain as part of the instructional staff for FA BOLC-B to provide teaming, leadership and mentorship to the future generations of Army artillery officers. The MARDET CO and the course manager remain invested in the success of both programs.

So what's next? While the future is still uncertain, the MOA Working Group continues its process to identify differences in the two courses and work together to overcome them. Naturally, some of these challenges lie beyond the scope and control of the MARDET, Field Artillery Commandant, and the Fires Center of Excellence, and they will require concurrence and approval from higher-level commands within both the Marine Corps and the Army. The fact remains, however, that the goal of Fort Sill is the same for both the Marine Corps and the Army: to produce the finest artillery officers possible for the good of our nation. This is a no-fail mission with which we remain committed.

*Author's bio: Maj Jonathan Bush is an artillery officer currently serving as the course manager for both MAOBC and FA BOLC-B. He has deployed and served in various training, command, and FMF billets during his career.* 



LCPL JULIEN RODARTE, USMC

**Marine 2ndLt Jolyon Gidari assists in a firing drill at the Field Artillery Basic Officers Leaders Course at Fort Sill, Okla., May 11, 2016. Students at the course learn how to calculate and transmit firing positions to quickly and proficiently fire at the target.**

## Stroudsburg, Pa.

### New Plaque Honors Memory Of Local Marine Raider of WW II

A plaque honoring a Marine killed in action during World War II was dedicated Aug. 30, 2019, in Stroudsburg, Pa. It memorializes Sergeant Gordon J. Giffels, a Marine Raider from 5th Marine Regiment, and hangs in the stadium at Stroudsburg High School, home of Gordon Giffels Field—named in 1942 for the fallen hometown hero who graduated from the high school before enlisting in the Corps.

Giffels was killed in action in the Pacific theater during the Battle of Tulagi, known as “The First Hell in the Pacific,” on Aug. 7, 1942. The battle marked the first offensive of Operation Watchtower.

“Among the first Marine Raiders deployed in World War II, Sgt Giffels pioneered commando-led reconnaissance, raids and other special, covert projects,” said John Schauweker of Long Beach, Calif., who learned of Giffels’ story while documenting the life of baseball player Gene Stemm, who was a Marine sergeant during the Korean War and who had pitched in games in 1950 at the original Gordon Giffels Athletic Field in Stroudsburg. “Sgt Giffels’ life and legacy delivered value and impact and a different or better global society,” he added.

Schauweker solely funded the new memorial after committing more than one year to document Giffels’ accomplishments as a Marine. He hopes the plaque will pay tribute to all Marine Raiders.

Submitted by John Schauweker



COURTESY OF JOHN SCHAUWEKER



COURTESY OF JOHN SCHAUWEKER

## Diamondhead, Miss.

### Iwo Jima Veteran is the Pride of “The Diamondhead Marines”

A close-knit group of Marine veterans in Diamondhead, Miss., known around their town as the “Diamondhead Marines,” gathered Feb. 21 to observe the 75th anniversary of the assault on Iwo Jima. The iconic World War II battle has a special place in the hearts of the Diamondhead Marines, who have had three Iwo Jima veterans among their ranks: Leonard Nederveld, who passed away in January; Mack McElveen, who passed in 2010, and Bob Walker, pictured here, who will celebrate his 100th birthday on June 25.

“After joining the Marine Corps I was sent to Iwo Jima. It was like hell. I spent four days on the front line before I was wounded. I never saw the enemy because they were hiding in caves or behind mounds of dirt. It was a stunning example of hardship all the Marines had endured and fortitude they displayed,” said Walker.

Retired Marine Sergeant Major Wes Melton is a proud Diamondhead Marine and is even more proud to call Walker a friend.

“Words are insufficient for the gratitude, respect and admiration for those that have the opportunity to know Bob! He has a magnetic personality and is larger than life—and lives his life to the fullest,” said Melton.

Submitted by SgtMaj Wes Melton, USMC (Ret)



NOLIN BRILEY

## Glastonbury, Ct.



COURTESY OF SGTMAJ JAMIE DEPAOLA, USMC (RET)

### MCL Det Commandant Recognized for Leadership, Community Service

Marine veteran Mike Monaco, the commandant of Marine Corps League Detachment #40 and co-owner and general manager of Monaco Ford, was recognized by the Connecticut River Valley Chamber of Commerce with the Jim Bougie Award for leadership and community service during a ceremony in Glastonbury, Ct., Jan. 22. Several detachment members attended.

Pictured from the left, Dr. Mike Lepore, Dean Bartolucci, Calvin Lewis, Dana Hyatt, Mike Monaco, Justin Palmer, Nancy Lepore, Justin Bazzano, Kevin Vander Wiede, John Cafazzo and Jonathan Debigare gathered for a group photo following the presentation of the award.

Monaco is proud of his accomplishments, but even more proud to be working for veterans.

"There are so many veterans in the room who I have seen succeed in the last few years. I want to show how well all veterans are doing. It's not about the guys who are struggling—we're going to help them. We get together, and it's all about camaraderie because that's what we're missing," Monaco said to the attendees at the ceremony. "I couldn't be prouder of the detachment's growth and accomplishments in the last few years."

Submitted by SgtMaj Jamie DePaola, USMC (Ret)

## Berkeley, Mich.

### MCL Detachment Celebrates 50th Anniversary

Marine Corps League member Don Lumsden remembers the day 50 years ago when the Department of Michigan Corporal Stanley L. Moore Detachment #159 received its charter. Lumsden, pictured in the photo on the right with the original charter, was one of its signers.

Chartered on Feb. 12, 1970, the detachment was named for Cpl Moore, the first Marine from the city of Troy, Mich.—the detachment's initial site—to be killed in action in Vietnam. Two of the original charter members, Lumsden and Glenn Siminski, still attend meetings and mentor the "boots" of the detachment.

For 50 years, the Marines of the Cpl Stanley L. Moore Detachment have preserved the tradition, promoted the interest and perpetuated the history of the United States Marine Corps, and have provided assistance to Marines, active-duty and veteran, surviving spouses, orphans and veterans from other branches of the Armed Forces.

The detachment now resides at the VFW Post in Berkeley, Mich., and conducts a variety of community outreach activities and events each year.

"The past 50 years have set a precedent for the future Marines



COURTESY OF JERRY MCKEON

that will represent the Cpl Stanley L. Moore Detachment as it has lived up to its 'Can Do' attitude," said detachment commandant Jerry McKeon. "Whether it's service for Marines, dependents, veterans or children, the detachment is carrying out its mission to foster love for the duties of citizenship and to serve just as ably as civilians as they did serving the nation while under arms."

Submitted by Jerry McKeon

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



**Military spouse Lucia Eisenhower attends a “Career Prep Rally” at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., in 2013. Recognizing the obstacles that military spouses face in the progression of their own careers, the DOD is working with state governments to help increase reciprocity of professional licenses among the states.**

## For Military Spouses, Professional License Reciprocity Is DOD Priority

Working with state governments, the Defense Department is making it easier for military spouses’ professional licenses to be accepted in their new state when servicemembers are transferred.

Marcus Beauregard, the director of the Defense-State Liaison Office, said that this is particularly important because military families move frequently, and many spouses need licensure reciprocity when they move.

About 53 percent of military spouses with professional licenses are in health-related occupations; 28 percent in education; 4 percent in crafts and trades; and 15 percent in other occupations, Beauregard told reporters at the Pentagon, Feb. 24.

The number of licenses required by any given state varies, he said. For example, North Carolina has 200 licensed occupations.

Ideally, Beauregard added, changes in state laws would include endorsement of current licenses from out of state, temporary licensing and an expedited application process for military spouses.

Reciprocity is made possible by state compacts—agreements among states that take precedence over individual states’

laws. Compacts can allow a licensed person to move from the issuing state and work in another state. Beauregard noted that compacts and state practices vary.

For example, he said, Arizona has adopted universal licensing, which has expanded license reciprocity to anyone who becomes a state resident. Once a background check is completed and a fee is paid, new residents can obtain a license from Arizona. Florida has a similar process.

Utah has an even more progressive approach, Beauregard said. Since 2012, Utah has allowed transferring military spouses to come into the state to work using the license issued by another state.

Texas has developed a standard of “substantial equivalency” for licensed occupations, he said. That means when a military spouse moves to Texas from another state, Texas’ appropriate professional board will know if the spouse’s original license is equivalent to the Texas license. If it is, Texas will issue a license to the military spouse without a lot of paperwork or undue delay.

Ohio, on the other hand, provides a temporary license provision, recognizing a license from out of state as valid for six years.

There’s been a lot of progress on reciprocity, but more work still needs to be done, Beauregard noted. The nurse licensure compact is probably the most progressive, he said. It has been approved in 34 states and is being considered by approximately 10 others.

“We’ve received lots of positive feedback from the governors that they want to continue working with us as a result of the letter we sent them,” he said.

Defense Secretary Mark T. Esper added family readiness as a line of effort in the National Defense Strategy. As part of that effort, the Defense Department delivered a report to Congress and state governors entitled “Military Spouse Licensure: State Best Practices and Strategies for Achieving Reciprocity.”

DOD has been working on this since 2011, Beauregard said, and a 2017 University of Minnesota study of these efforts found significantly mixed results.

“There were lots of circumstances where [licensure] boards may have interpreted the broad law differently than we had anticipated and really did not make it much easier for military spouses,” he said. “And we also found that implementation of those laws was not consistent throughout the states.”

In 2018, the Service secretaries wrote to the National Governors Association, saying the military spouse licensure and education would be considered as part of mission-basing in the future. “That got the attention of the states, and we saw a lot more activity happen in 2018 and 2019,” Beauregard said.

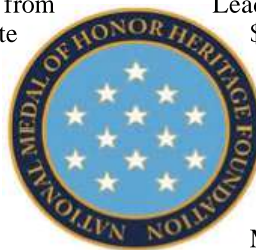
For an up-to-date look at military state policy, visit <https://statepolicy.military-onesource.mil/>.

David Vergun

## New Medal of Honor Center Will Educate, Inspire

The new National Medal of Honor Leadership & Education Center is a \$45 million project to be built at Patriots Point, Mount Pleasant, S.C., with a proposed completion date of July 2023. This state-of-the-art facility will include the official designated Congressional Medal of Honor Museum, which will provide a

dynamic portfolio of interactive exhibits and experiences to tell the stories of our American heroes, while also inspiring and educating our citizens by teaching





core examples of courage, integrity, commitment, sacrifice and patriotism.

This building will also serve as an educational and leadership center for Medal of Honor educational programs across the country. By providing an epicenter of learning, these programs will instill a better understanding of the essential leadership qualities that underpin our freedom and success as a society while paying homage to the extraordinary contributions of Medal of Honor recipients. A chapel, classrooms and event space will add to the transformative experience and offer multi-faceted use for people of all ages and from all places.

For more information or to make a contribution, visit [www.cmohmf.org](http://www.cmohmf.org).

National Medal of Honor Heritage Foundation

### DOD Official: “There’s Progress On Privatized Housing Improvements”

Providing quality housing to families is of high priority to the Defense Department, a DOD official said March 6.

Approximately 30 percent of servicemembers and their families live in privatized housing on military installa-

tions, while the remaining personnel reside off their installation or in barracks.

In the past, the DOD “took its eye off the ball” when it came to overseeing privatized housing on installations, the official said. Housing today is in much better condition than it was, but more work remains.

The official stated that some improvements include publication and implementation of a Tenant Bill of Rights; improved communications and transparency with servicemembers, lawmakers and the public; additional personnel to oversee the success of housing improvements; improved housing inspection; and focusing the attention of leadership and landlords on helping residents’ rights are respected.

The Tenant Bill of Rights commits the DOD to ensuring that tenants in privatized housing receive quality housing and fair treatment.

The Service secretaries joined Mark T. Esper, Secretary of Defense, in signing the Tenant Bill of Rights on Feb. 25. The document addresses 15 of the 18 rights that were set forth in law. The three that will require more time to implement are dispute resolution; providing the main-

tenance history for each housing unit; and withholding rent if the housing unit is not in good condition or if maintenance work was not satisfactorily completed.

The companies that run the privatized housing initiatives are willing to implement the last three; however, there are some financial concerns with lenders and bond holders that need to be addressed.

Although implementation of the last three will be challenging, “We’re working through that and hopefully it will get done quickly,” the official said, adding that the department wants an agreement that will not do more harm than good.

The Tenant Bill of Rights, which goes into effect May 1, includes meeting health and environmental standards and having working appliances and utilities; having easy-to-understand leases that outline any additional fees, identify the military tenant advocate and spell out the dispute resolution process; providing prompt and professional maintenance and repair; and providing common documents, forms and processes for housing units that will be the same for all installations.

DOD



LCPL DAVE FLORES, USMC

**For servicemembers who reside in privatized housing on military installations, including those who live in the homes pictured here aboard MCAGCC Twentynine Palms, Calif., DOD continues to make improvements in the areas of tenant rights and recently introduced a Tenant Bill of Rights to ensure that military families receive quality housing and fair treatment.**

## MARSOC Marines Killed in Iraq

Two Marine Raiders with Marine Forces Special Operations Command died while supporting Operation Inherent Resolve on March 8.

Captain Moises A. Navas, a special operations officer from Germantown, Md., and Gunnery Sergeant Diego D. Pongo, a critical skills operator from Simi Valley, Calif., suffered fatal wounds while accompanying Iraqi Security Forces during a mission to eliminate an ISIS stronghold in a mountainous area of north central Iraq. Both Marines were assigned to 2nd Marine Raider Battalion.

Capt Navas, 34, enlisted in the Marine Corps in 2004 and achieved the rank of sergeant before receiving his commission through the Marine Enlisted Commissioning Education Program in July 2010. Originally an administrative clerk, he was assigned to Marine Barracks Washington, D.C., before his selection to MECEP. Upon his commissioning and completion of The Basic School, he became an infantry officer and was assigned to 2nd Bn, 3rd Marine Regiment, where he supported two unit deployments to Japan and served as Company G's executive officer. In 2014, Navas was selected to attend the Army's Maneuver Captains' Career Course in Fort Benning, Ga. While awaiting orders to school, he completed MARSOC's Assessment and Selection process, securing his spot in a future class, which he completed in the spring of 2016, earning the special operations officer MOS. He spent the past four years assigned to 2nd Marine Raider Bn, where he served as a team commander and company executive officer, deploying in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Inherent Resolve.

His personal awards include the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal and the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal.

GySgt Pongo, 34, enlisted in the Marine Corps in 2004 and spent his initial years as a rifleman, deploying with the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit before completing the Scout Sniper Basic Course in 2008. He then deployed to Helmand Province, Afghanistan, with 1st Battalion, 5th Marines as a sniper team leader. In 2011, GySgt Pongo completed the Individual Training Course to become a critical skills operator. During his eight years as a Marine Raider, he completed deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan.

His personal awards include a Bronze Star with combat "V," a Purple Heart and two Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medals.

"On behalf of the Marine Raider Regiment and all of MARSOC, our most sincere condolences go out to the families of GySgt Pongo and Capt Navas," said Colonel John Lynch, Commanding Officer, Marine Raider Regiment. "They were intelligent, courageous and loyal. They were dedicated leaders, true professionals in their craft and willing to go above and beyond for the mission and their team."

Maj Kristin Tortorici, USMC

**Robert L. "Bob" Barrette**, 81, of Suamico, Wis. He enlisted in the Marine Corps and served for six years.

**Robert M. Cheadle**, 73, of Ada, Okla. He enlisted in 1966 and served until 1969. He completed a tour in Vietnam and saw action at Khe Sanh and Con Thien. His awards include a Purple Heart. He later held various leadership positions within the Chickasaw Nation, including that of tribal judge.

**SgtMaj Richard L. Forrest**, 64, of Spotsylvania, Va. After completing boot camp at Parris Island in 1973, he served as a combat engineer at MCB Camp Lejeune. During the next 30 years, he had a variety of assignments, including a tour as a marksmanship competitor with the Marine Corps Rifle and Pistol Team. He also served a tour on the drill field as a DI.

Later in his career, he was the sergeant major for H&S Bn at MCB Camp Lejeune, and in 2001, he was selected as the command sergeant major of Marine Corps Systems Command, Quantico, Va. He retired in 2003.

**Sgt Charles R. Gardiner III**, 87, of South Seaville, N.J. During the Korean War he was assigned to 2nd Bn, 5th Marines, 1stMarDiv. He was a member of the MCL and served as the commandant of the Daniel Giordano Det.

**James F. "Jim" Garth**, 91, of Albuquerque, N.M. He enlisted in the Marine Corps after his 1945 graduation from high school. He later served in the National Guard.

**Walter H. Grisevich**, 94, of East Hartford, Ct. During WW II, he enlisted at the age of 17 and was a member of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade on Guam.

**Edsel "Bill" Grogan**, 95, of Bonham, Texas. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in early 1941 before the attack on Pearl

Harbor. He was a member of the MarDet aboard USS *Vincennes* (CA-44) and saw action in the Battles of the Coral Sea, Midway and Guadalcanal.

He survived the carrier's sinking in 1942. He later saw combat again during the Korean War.

**Lester M. Hanson**, 82, of De Pèrre, Wis. After his high school graduation, he enlisted and served for two years.

**Richard F. "Jay" Jameson**, 81, of Green Bay, Wis. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1959 and served for three years.

**Terence J. "Terry" Keegan**, 76, in Green Bay, Wis. He joined the Marine Corps after his 1961 graduation from high school. He served at MCAS New River, N.C., as a helicopter hydraulics mechanic.

**John Kosticha**, 80, of Algoma, Wis. He enlisted after his 1957 high school graduation and served for two years.

**LCpl Louis J. Krummel**, 82, Redford, Mich. He enlisted in 1956 and was a helicopter hydraulics mechanic at MCAF Quantico.

**Cpl Joseph Lipichok**, 86, of Dunlap, Iowa. He was 16 when he graduated from high school and lied about his age so that he could join the Marine Corps. He served with the 5th Marines in the Korean War.

**Paul Maederer**, 70, of Abrams, Wis. He enlisted in the Marine Corps after his graduation from high school and served in Vietnam.

**Sgt Dave Novotny**, 67, of Strongsville, Ohio. He was a Marine who served from 1972-1976.

**Sgt Robert F. Ochs**, 96, in Wilmington, N.C. He was a freshman on the football team at Rutgers University when he left school to enlist in the Marine Corps. He served in the Pacific theater for nearly three years and saw action on Roi-Namur, Saipan and Okinawa. He was one of five members of his platoon to survive the war. After the war, he returned to Rutgers and football. After his graduation, he had a 30-year career with the university, eventually becoming the director of public safety and one of the university's vice presidents. He was a member of the MCL.

**Roger C. Olewinski**, 81, of Mishicot, Wis. He served in the Marine Corps after his 1957 graduation from high school.

**Fred B. Parker**, 93, Roanoke, Va. He joined the Marine Corps in 1943 and served for 22 years. During WW II, he saw action in the Pacific and also participated in the occupation of China. He later served in the Korean War.

**MGySgt Charles G. "Charlie" Pinder**, 81, of Winston-Salem, N.C. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1955. His 33-year career included two tours in Vietnam.

**Cpl John Scarfo**, 94, of Utica, N.Y. During WW II he was assigned to the 27th Marines, 5thMarDiv. He landed on Iwo Jima with the first wave of Marines and was wounded during the battle.

**Cpl Harry Schultz**, 99, of White Salmon, Wash. He was assigned to B/1/6, 2ndMarDiv during WW II, and served in the South Pacific. He saw action on Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Saipan and Tinian. After the war, he earned a bachelor's degree.

**Tommy Silva**, 69, of Greeley, Colo. He served in the Marine Corps and was a member of the MCL.

**Jay C. Smout**, 91, of Fredericksburg, Va. He enlisted in the Navy when he was 18. His 31 years on active duty included service with the 1stMarDiv during the landing at Inchon and at the Chosin Reservoir.

**Cpl Hervie "Al" Statler**, 95, of Kirkwood, Mo. During WW II he was a gunner assigned to a PBJ squadron in the South Pacific. After the war, he had a career in sales. He was a member of the MCL.

**Pvt Wendell Stevens**, 92, of Spring Hill, Fla. He enlisted in 1943 and saw action on Iwo Jima with G/2/25, 4thMarDiv. He was wounded twice during the battle. After the war, he had a 40-year career with the U.S. Postal Service.

**LtCol Paul J. Tighe**, 90, of Centralia, Wash. His 21 years in the Marine Corps included service in the Korean War and the Vietnam War. His awards include the Bronze Star with combat "V."

**John Ureckis Jr.**, 88, of Carleton, Mich. He was a Marine Corps veteran of the Korean War. He later worked for nearly 40 years for the *Detroit Free Press* newspaper.

**Joe VanBoxel**, 69, of Green Bay, Wis. He enlisted when he was 17 and served a tour in Vietnam at Marble Mountain.

**Maj Harry E. VanFossen**, 89, of Hagerstown, Md. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1948 after graduating from high school. He had a supply MOS and was later commissioned. He served in Hawaii and Okinawa, and also completed a tour in Vietnam. He retired in 1968.


**John M. Van Iten**, 75, of Green Bay, Wis. He enlisted in 1968 and was a helicopter maintenance Marine.

**GySgt Laurent J. Veilleux**, 59, of Fairlee, Vt. He was a Marine who served for 20 years.

**Maj Earl F. Whipple Jr.**, 89, in Cottonwood, Ariz. He was commissioned a second lieutenant after his 1954 graduation from the U.S. Naval Academy. During his 20-year career, he commanded artillery batteries at home and in Vietnam. He later earned a master's degree in management from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

Other assignments included serving as an instructor and lacrosse coach at the Naval Academy. After his retirement, he worked as a certified flight instructor in the San Diego area and as a docent at the Flying Leatherneck Museum at MCAS Miramar.

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](mailto:leatherneck@mca-marines.org) or [n.lichtman@mca-marines.org](mailto:n.lichtman@mca-marines.org).



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<b>JUN 1-9</b> 76th Anniversary D-Day: Normandy to Paris	<b>SEP 8-20</b> 50th Anniversary of the VN War-1970 I-Corps
<b>JULY 2-12</b> Russia WWII Eastern Front Moscow, Stalingrad & Kursk	<b>SEP 9-14 (POSTPONED TO 2021)</b> Midway Island Return Pearl Harbor & Waikiki
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<b>AUG 2-10</b> WWII Pacific "Turning the Tide" Battle of Guadalcanal	<b>NOV 28- DEC 9</b> Viet Nam War- "Delta to the DMZ"
<b>AUG 16-30</b> WWII Germany "Rise & Fall of the Third Reich" Munich, Berlin, Berchtesgaden, Dresden, Nuremberg, Prague	

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**SOUND OFF**  
[continued from page 8]

Gagnon, one of the flag raisers on Iwo Jima, Feb. 23, 1945. According to the *Lewiston Morning Tribune* on Oct. 13, 1979, Gagnon died on Oct. 12, 1979, in Manchester, N.H., and was interred at the Mount Calvary Cemetery and Mausoleum. His remains were relocated to Arlington National Cemetery on July 7, 1981.

Maj Earl Wayne Hacker, USMC (Ret)  
Blacksburg, Va.

**Father and Daughter Attend Marine Corps Birthday Ball**

Our 4-year-old great-granddaughter, Ainsley Towery, is all dressed up to accompany her dad, Staff Sergeant Bradley Towery, to his Marine Corps Birthday Ball on Nov. 2, 2019.

After serving nine months in Kuwait, SSgt Towery had just rejoined his wife Staci and their four children in October. To honor his return, they decided to make it a special father-daughter celebration.

This photo captures a rare moment in

**SSgt Bradley Towery attended the Marine Corps Birthday Ball on Nov. 2, 2019, with his daughter, Ainsley Towery.**



COURTESY OF LOETA TOWERY

the life of a Marine that neither parent nor child will ever forget. Anyone want to guess who is more proud here?

Loeta Towery  
Broken Arrow, Okla.

**This Says it All**

In 245 years, it's been said in many ways: "The Corps is the Marine and the Marine is the Corps." This pretty much says it all about us.

Sgt Bill Becker  
USMC, 1951-1954  
Kalamazoo, Mich.

**Operation Utah**

On March 4, 1966, our battalion received word that some Viet Cong had been discovered not far from our area. After receiving this information, we were helolifted to an area of rice paddies and cane fields. We moved through a village and waited.

Across a large rice paddy was a treeline with a large cane field behind the trees. Viet Cong had been spotted in the tree line so artillery was called in. After about 30 minutes, we got on-line and started sweeping across the paddy. About three-quarters of the way across, the Viet Cong opened up with rifle and machine-gun fire.

We finally got to the tree line and some-

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one knocked out the V.C. machine gun and a sniper in a tree. Four men in my company were killed. The companies to our left and right flanks suffered more casualties. "Hotel" Co on our right told us later that as they were moving up a small hill, they received fire from behind every bush.

The Marine Corps never retreats, but they do make a retrograde movement which is to pull back and regroup. That is what we did. As night began to fall, we dug in, not knowing what to expect. Through the night very little fire was received. The following day we had the gruesome task of retrieving dead Marines from over a large area.

It was hard to believe there were 42 bodies. These were men who had fought to help secure freedom for South Vietnam. Today that country is under communism, so it seems they gave their lives for nothing.

Jerry R. Winger  
Joplin, Mo.

**MGySgt Ron Keene,  
Associate Editor of *Leatherneck*  
Magazine Remembered**

Master Gunnery Sergeant Renaldo "Ron" Keene has executed his final PCS orders; all who knew him, worked with

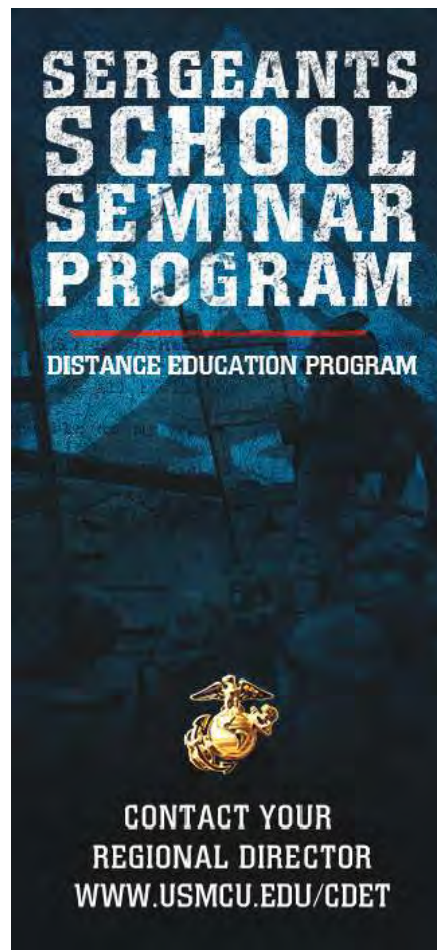
him or just sat out on the patio [at the Globe & Laurel Restaurant in Stafford, Va.,] smoking cigars with him feel the loss. I am grateful for having known Ron over the past few decades. His friendship has enriched my life and the lives of many others who were privileged to have known or served with him.

Ron spent all the years of his adult life, on active duty and in retirement, serving and supporting our Corps and his fellow Marines. He was a true professional, meticulous in his research and always seeking the true facts and checking his resources before signing off on any article or item about the Corps.

When he was editor of the Sound Off column for *Leatherneck* magazine, he occasionally mentioned seeking facts about the Old Corps from his hashmark PFC buddy who was a local barkeep. *Leatherneck* readers should be pleased to know that Ron, as a professional journalist, always used more than one source for his facts.


A proud Marine, but modest and generous, Ron was always glad to share his time and expertise with any young journalist or Marine needing help or seeking to learn.

During the many years I have known Ron, he was well-liked and well-respected.



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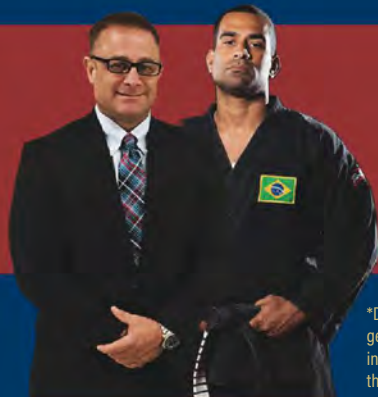
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Michael Ehline, Esq

Renato Laranja

"Whether you're a POG, a Raider, Force Recon or an O3 ground pounder, I love my Marines and I will go the extra mile for you and your family, DO OR DIE. When we are surrounded by evil doers, we fight in all directions to win your case. No retreat, no surrender"

- Michael Ehline, Esq.

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**Joe Rosenthal personally autographed a photograph of his iconic photo of the second flag raising on Iwo Jima for Lou Lowery who photographed the first flag raising.**

I've never heard anyone say a disparaging word about him. He will be missed.

As the months go by I will be eagerly awaiting my next copy of *Leatherneck* knowing that there is bound to be a "Posts of the Corps" article telling us what it is like when you report aboard and get assigned to guard duty. "... They will find the streets are guarded by United States Marines." The article will bear Ron Keene's byline.

Maj Richard "Rick" T. Spooner  
USMC (Ret)  
Triangle, Va.

### Memories of Lou Lowery

During my first assignment to Headquarters Battalion from 1974 to 1977, I met Leslie Lowery Sullivan, the daughter of Lou Lowery, through mutual friends

around the Alexandria, Va., area. On my subsequent transfer in 1978 to Hq Bn, I again had opportunities to meet Mrs. Sullivan and her friends for a casual dinner and drinks.

I initiated talks with her about her father. She told me that when her father passed away, she inherited the family home in Springfield, Va. Later, Leslie told me that the attic in the home contained many of her father's pictures, books and various other objects from his time in the Marine Corps and World War II. I mentioned to her that I would love to see some of these items. At one of the subsequent meetings, Leslie surprised me with many of the objects I had expressed an interest in. She gave me a copy of the original picture he took of the flag raising on Iwo Jima. In addition, she gave me

a copy of Joe Rosenthal's photo with a personal note to Lou. She also handed me many other memorable items which I would love to share with anyone who has an interest in Lou's history. My email address is: ul.loy@verizon.net.

Capt Lloyd L. Loy, USMC (Ret)  
Okatie, S.C.

### One Unforgettable Day

In late spring of 1973, I was counting the days until my release from active duty. I was serving as the noncommissioned officer in charge of the cash sales outlet at the Infantry Training School aboard Camp San Onofre, MCB Camp Pendleton, a corporal filling a staff noncommissioned officer's billet. I had an office at the front of an enormous Quonset hut that had once been filled with uniforms, utilities, boots and shoes.

I had enlisted in the Corps right after I graduated from college in 1971 on a two-year enlistment. They warned me at the Los Angeles Recruiting Station that I would regret not opting for a longer period of military service by going to Officer Candidates School when I was doing bends and thrusts in the Sand Pit at MCRD San Diego. Boy, were they right. But I was eager to continue my education and go on to graduate school after I fulfilled my military obligation to our country at a time when military service was compulsory.

While I was on active duty, I did decide to apply to go to law school. I registered for the Law School Aptitude Test (LSAT) and prepared for it by taking practice exams in the public library in San Clemente when I was off duty. I took the test one Saturday at UCLA and scored high enough to be admitted to Southwestern University School of Law, one of the four fully accredited law schools in Los Angeles. I was slated to enter the first-year class within weeks of my release from active duty.

One day a captain came into my office shortly after I was admitted to Southwestern Law School. On top of my desk was some paperwork. The captain saw the paperwork and with a very curious tone asked, "Corporal, who do those papers belong to?" And I replied, "Skipper, they're mine. I've been admitted to Southwestern Law School in Los Angeles." To this day I will never forget the expression on his face as he looked at me and said, "I applied too, Corporal, but I wasn't admitted."

Even now, after more than 40 years as a criminal defense attorney, that day has never faded from memory. Why? Did he assume that the papers belonged to another officer? Was my acceptance into

COURTESY OF CAPT LLOYD L. LOY, USMC (RET)

law school outside the realm of possibility for a much lower ranking Marine? Or, in his own way, did the officer acknowledge that I did in fact “improvise, adapt and overcome.” I might never know. Whatever it was, I know now that it was the self-discipline and determination that I learned in the Marine Corps that has sustained me throughout my law school education and career as an attorney.

William M. Paparian  
Pasadena, Calif.

### Gold Star Mother

I would like to share with you the following poem that I wrote which gave some comfort to my family after my brother, Private William Niader, USMC, was killed on June 12, 1945, at Kunishi Ridge, Okinawa, during World War II.

*I cried out in pain as I read the letter,  
My life from this day will never get better.  
The lines were blurred as I tried to see,  
The words that said my son died  
for country and me.*

*The years go by and I still call his name,  
The dream I had will never be the same.  
The memories that were of the son I had,  
Are now nightmares when my  
days are bad.*

*Part of me died when my son was killed,  
There is an emptiness that can  
never be filled.*

*Night after night as I lie in my bed,  
I still can't believe my son is dead.*

*But the love of a mother can never die,  
And I can't forget, and I sometimes cry.  
I keep on living, but I think of the past,  
The years go by ever so fast.*

*When my life on this earth is finally done,  
The emptiness will be gone for I'll be  
with my son.*

*In my thoughts I can see him still,  
In my dreams I call his name, Bill.*

Frank Niader  
Wayne, N.J.

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 🐻



COURTESY OF FRANK NIADER

**Pvt William Niader, H&S Co, 7th Regiment, 1st Division was KIA on Kunishi Ridge, Okinawa, June 12, 1945.**



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# Reader Assistance

Edited by Sara W. Bock

## Reunions

• **Marine Corps Engineer Assn.**, Sept. 17-19, Fredericksburg, Va. Contact Maj Charlie Dismore, USMC (Ret), (512) 394-9333, [www.marcorengasn.org](http://www.marcorengasn.org).

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

• **Marine Corps Cryptologic Assn.**, Sept. 7-10, Las Vegas, Nev. Contact Edgar Kitt, 2250 Heavenly View Dr., Henderson, NV 89014, (702) 454-1646, [edgarkitt@earthlink.net](mailto:edgarkitt@earthlink.net).

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

• **Marine Air Traffic Control Assn.**, Sept. 23-27, San Antonio, Texas. Contact Steve Harris, (509) 499-8137, [sandkh2@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:nwgj@outlook.com), [www.usmc.org/7th/](http://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](mailto:reunion@mcata.org), [www.mcata.com](http://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](mailto:smfishbaugh@mikrtec.com).

• **11th Marine Regiment, OIF (20th anniversary)**, March 31-April 1, 2023, Camp Pendleton, Calif. Contact Casey Harsh, [casey.harsh@gmail.com](mailto: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, [floyd nagler@yahoo.com](mailto:floyd nagler@yahoo.com).

• **11th Engineer Bn, 3rdMarDiv**, Aug. 10-16, Washington, D.C. Contact Gene Spanos, (847) 532-2963, [genethemarine@gmail.com](mailto:genethemarine@gmail.com).

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

• **1/27 (1968)**, Sept. 24-26, Las Vegas,

Nev. Contact Felix Salmeron, (469) 583-0191, [mar463@aol.com](mailto:mar463@aol.com).

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

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

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

• **MCAS "Rose Garden" Nam Phong, Thailand (1972-1973)**, June 12-16, Nashville, Tenn. Contact Harold Delamater, (845) 297-8865, [hgd1025@aol.com](mailto:hgd1025@aol.com).

• **U.S. Naval Disciplinary Command Portsmouth, N.H. (Marine**

# REUNIONS

Whether you are reuniting with boot camp buddies or hosting a Division level reunion, MCA&F has the information you need to start planning your event.

For more information visit:

[www.mca-marines.org/resource/marine-corps-reunions](http://www.mca-marines.org/resource/marine-corps-reunions)



Leatherneck is also standing by to help you get the word out. Send information about your upcoming reunion to [s.bock@mca-marines.org](mailto:s.bock@mca-marines.org)



  
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Detachment), Sept. 14-20, North Conway, N.H. Contact Don Ferry, (972) 334-0609, don.ferry1942@gmail.com.

• **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, tkanasky@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) 520-9646, 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>.



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#### 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.

#### Mail Call

• Richard B. Ellenberger, (206) 293-2770, richardellenberger13@gmail.com, to hear from the **Marines pictured in**

the below photo, which was taken in **Vietnam** while he was serving with **1/7, April 1969- March 1970**.

• David Henderson, daveahenderson3@gmail.com, to hear from Marines who served at the **TBS armory, MCB Quantico, Va., from 1986 to 1990**.

• W. John Fedora, (336) 813-6067, wjfedora@gmail.com, to hear from Marines who served with **MSgt William FEDORA**, who was in the Marine Corps from **1938 to 1952**. He is looking for **photographs and information** about his father, who was assigned to Parris Island, Quantico, the Pacific theater, Camp Pendleton and Camp Lejeune during his career as a Marine.

#### Wanted

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

• Milton J. Beyer, (979) 743-3685, ellenbeyer@gmail.com, wants a **platoon photo** for **Plt 361, San Diego, 1958**.

• Anthony Brown, (619) 721-1202, chilltony@yahoo.com, wants a **platoon photo** and **recruit graduation book** for **Plt 1073, San Diego, 1983**.

#### Sales, Trades and Giveaways

• Terry Nolan, terryenolan@gmail.com, has a recruit graduation book for **Plt 306, Parris Island, 1969**, to give to a member of the platoon.

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](mailto:s.bock@mca-marines.org), or write to Reader Assistance Editor, *Leatherneck* Magazine, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134. 🐼



Last year, *Leatherneck* reader Richard Ellenberger came across an undeveloped roll of film from his time with 1/7 in Vietnam, 1969-1970. The photos don't belong to him, and he would love to return them to one of the Marines pictured here.

COURTESY OF RICHARD B. ELLENBERGER

# Saved Round

By Nancy S. Lichtman



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**THE FASTEST MARINE IN THE SKY**—Aviation pioneer Orville Wright, left, congratulates Marine Corps pilot, Major C.A. Lutz, for winning the Curtiss Marine Trophy race, May 19, 1928, at the Anacostia Naval Station, Washington, D.C. At age 47, Maj Lutz was the oldest of the 14 seaplane competitors, arriving at the finish line in 38 minutes and 4.2 seconds—for an average of 157 miles per hour.

During the 1920s, aviation technology was developing at a breakneck pace, and airplanes were capable of flying at increasingly faster speeds, giving rise to the massive popularity of air races as a spectator sport.

According to an Associated Press story, nearly 10,000 people gathered along the shores of the Potomac River that day to “witness the thrilling turns at the home pylon as the pilots reversed their direction for the 10-mile sweep down the

river. It was at the turns that Major Lutz outstripped his younger rivals. He roared down on these at full throttle, jerking his ship about in a sharp angle, bringing gasps from the spectators.”

Orville Wright, who along with his brother is best known for inventing the airplane, joined Porter Adams, the president of the National Aeronautic Association, in the judges’ stand to watch the race. The 13th Commandant of the Marine Corps, Major General John A. Lejeune was also on-hand to watch the competition.

Lutz, the commanding officer of Brown Field, at Quantico, Va., flew a Curtiss Hawk F6C-3 airplane powered with a Pratt and Whitney Wasp engine to victory.

Tragically, Lutz was killed one year later in an airplane crash; he was flying a Fokker trimotor aircraft to Nicaragua, where he was set to take command of Marine aviators there. 🛩️

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From all they knew,  
With hearts of pride  
And courage true,

Vowed to serve  
As freedom's light,  
And through their strength  
Our nation's might,

They gave all  
Our brave defenders,  
Where poppies lie,  
**We will remember.**



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