

NOVEMBER 2020

MAGAZINE OF THE MARINES

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56 Free a Marine to Fight: The Silent Legacy of Sergeant Lena Riggi *By GySgt Alison V. Bardeguez, USMC* This honorable mention article from the 2020 *Leatherneck* Writing Contest tells of the life of Sgt Riggi before, during and after she met the love of her life, GySgt John Basilone, Medal of Honor recipient.

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COVER: Happy 245th Birthday, Marines! GySgt Charles Wolf, USMC (Ret) created *Leatherneck*’s November cover in honor of the Corps’ Birthday. Visit Gunny Wolf’s website www.sempertoons.com to view more of his art. Copies of the cover may be obtained by sending \$2 (for mailing costs) to *Leatherneck* Magazine, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134-0775.

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COURTESY OF STEPHEN V. LOPARDO

With Iwo Jima finally secured, commanders posed for a photo at Kitano Point, just above Bloody Gorge on March 25, 1945. From the left: Capt Robert Spangler, Capt Misty Rice, Maj Tolson Smoak, BGen Leo Hermle, Col Harry Liversedge, 1stLt Fiorenzo Lopardo, Maj Oscar Peatross and Lt Parker Stortz.

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.)

At the suggestion of my friend, Major General Anthony Jackson, USMC (Ret), I am submitting the attached letter to you for consideration for publication. It was written by my father, Fiorenzo V. Lopardo, to his brother on Feb. 3, 1943, upon Dad's completion of officer training

school at Quantico and shortly before his assignment to the 28th Regiment, 5th Marine Division.

The letter is both inspiring and prophetic in its description of the courage of Marines despite anticipated casualties. Two years after writing the letter, Dad, a 25-year-old Harvard law student, took over as company commander of "Howe" Company, 3rd Bn, 28th Marines when its original CO was killed two weeks after landing on Iwo Jima.

His company fought from Mount Suribachi down through Bloody Gorge to the sea where the battle ended on March 25, 1945. Of the original 240 men in the company, plus 120 replacements, Dad was one of only 11 who were not killed or wounded. As a whole, the 28th Regiment had gone into battle with 3,250 Marines of which 89 officers and 3,287 enlisted men were killed or wounded [including replacements], nearly 75 percent of the Regiment. That afternoon BGen Hermle, assistant commander, 5th Division, had the surviving officers pose for a photo taken on Kitano Point, Hill 165, immediately above Bloody Gorge.

After the war, Dad completed law school and worked as a trial lawyer until California Governor Ronald Reagan appointed him a Superior Court Judge in 1971. He served as a judge in different capacities for more than 25 years.

I have the original of this photo hanging in my office. Whenever I am feeling tired

We get up at six in the morning, work until noon at night and they go to bed at ten. The next day we get up and do it all over again.
Most people think that the Marine Corps is a pretty good outfit - well I'm in it and I know damn well that it's good. You know Jim, each day these kids are told

Fiorenzo V. Lopardo wrote a letter to his brother on Feb. 3, 1943, stating, "Most people think that the Marine Corps is a pretty good outfit. Well I'm in it and I know damn well that it's good. ... Each day these kids are told that the Marines ... fight against odds. They are told that 1/3 of all Marines that have fought in the Solomons have been killed yet these kids keep right on—they never flinch."

or frustrated with some overwhelming horrible problem, I look at this picture of eight Marines and realize I don't have any problems whatsoever.

Thank you for all you do for the Marines.

Stephen V. Lopardo
Fallbrook, Calif.

Well-Done 8th Tank Bn

I am requesting that in November 2020, *Leatherneck* print a simple "Well-Done" to the Marines and Sailors of the 8th Tank Battalion, 4th Marine Division for their outstanding performance of duty during hostilities in Southwest Asia, in February 1991. The 1,031 Marines and 17 Sailors representing 98 percent of the battalion's roster were activated. On Nov. 28 and 29, 1990, this battalion arrived at its initial staging area in Camp Lejeune, N.C., where it was augmented/attached to the 2nd Marine Division for eventual participation in combat operations in South West Asia. We departed Camp Lejeune, Dec. 21, 1990, for movement to Camp 15, Al Jubail, Saudi Arabia.

This battalion spearheaded breaching operations after a 70-mile road march from Camp 15 and occupied combat positions at al Kibrit while engaging Iraq armored units allowing elements of 2ndMarDiv and U.S. Tiger Brigade passage north at enemy strong points.

The battalion received 53 main battle tanks (M60A1s) and an additional 23

WAYS TO SOUND OFF



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COURTESY OF SGT ANGELINO, USMC

Marines with Co A, 8th Tank Bn, originally from Syracuse, N.Y., commanded by then-Capt James Evan, in Al Kibrit, Southwest Asia, Feb. 23, 1991. The battalion spearheaded breaching operations at Al Kibrit.

M60A1s for breaching operations within II MEF's area of operations. Although this doesn't appear in any Gulf War history book, we proved invaluable in the historic success of coalition forces during Desert Shield/Desert Storm.

The list of firsts this battalion accomplished are too many to list here. The companies are: H&S Co, Rochester N.Y.; and Tank companies from: Columbia, S.C.; Tallahassee, Fla.; Syracuse, N.Y.; and Ft. Knox, Ky.; and Anti-Tank Tow Missile Co, Miami, Fla.

Michael D. Cavallaro
Rochester, N.Y.

Sound Off Letters Caught My Eye

I received the August *Leatherneck* and upon reading it cover to cover, as usual, a couple of very interesting letters caught my eye. First, the Sound Off letter from a Colorado master sergeant. I do not agree with his comment about the Commandant's feelings on the Confederate battle flag. The general has a whole lot of things on his plate and I applaud his handling of that matter. I think the "Top's" opinion should have been kept in Colorado.

The next letter that got my attention was "Reflections." I read it several times and the poem sure fit me like a glove. The part that really got me was the last two lines which read: "That I was once a part of it, now it's a part of me." I left Vietnam in 1967 but it never left me and I'm still working at it. Thank you, Jay Massey,

for submitting this poem dedicated to the Vietnam Veterans of VFW Post 4194 in Stuart, Fla. Thanks *Leatherneck* for the outstanding magazine.

Sgt Lee K. Boothby
Davenport, Fla.

Thank you for your reply to the letter about the Confederate flag. I'm sure it was not easy but that's what Marines do. *Leatherneck* always makes me feel good every month especially the old Corps pieces.

One day I opened to a page and saw a picture of my dad in France during World War I. I got in touch with Master Guns Ron Keene, Associate Editor, *Leatherneck*, and he sent me a copy of the photo.

Another time, Master Guns Keene printed a picture of my LVT and my note asking for help. I received a letter from a gunny at the test and experimental unit at Camp Del Mar telling me he had the okay from the commanding officer to make copies of all the manuals they had for LVT-P6. FMC built six LVT-P6 prototypes. I worked on this same one in 1960. Two weeks later I had 40 pounds of manuals. It doesn't get any better than that.

Thank you all for what you do. God bless those Marines and corpsmen that went down in that Amtrac a few weeks ago. Thank you for your service and telling it like it is.

Cpl A.A. Anderson
USMC, 1959-1963
Oakland, Calif.

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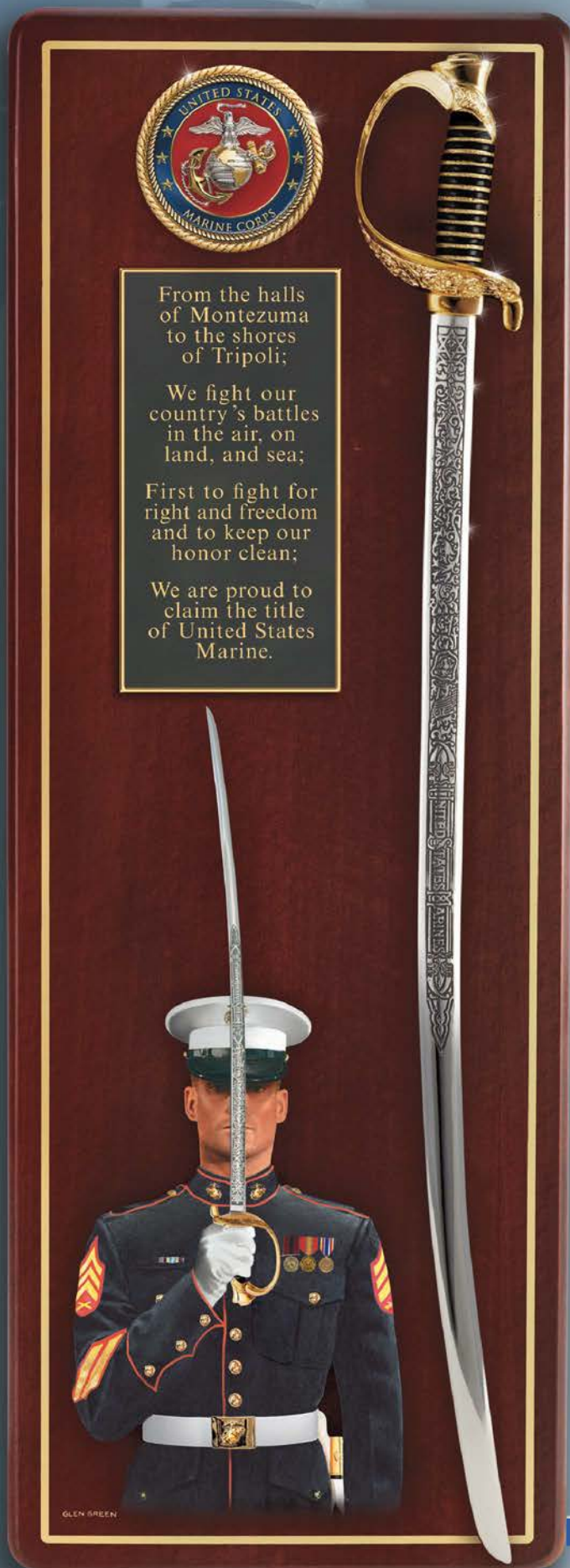
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COURTESY OF SGT JIM BIEGGER

Joann Biegger received the first piece of cake as the youngest woman Marine at Parris Island, Nov. 10, 1952.

Marine Corps Birthday

On Nov. 10, 1952, my sister, Joann Biegger, was the youngest woman Marine at Parris Island and received the first piece of cake from the base commanding general, Major General M.H. Silverthorn.

My brother Tony (1953), Frank (1962) and I (1964) followed her into the Marine Corps.

Sgt Jim Biegger
Elkhart, Iowa

Vietnam Tankers

In the September 2020 issue of our magazine, Marc Bloom has a very well-written and deeply heartfelt letter about his heroic World War II Marine father. I plan to reprint his letter in the quarterly magazine of the USMC Vietnam Tankers Association (VTA). I want to make one more attempt to have more of our 500 association members to consider writing their own stories about their time in Vietnam so that we can publish and share them with the membership and with our families. There is an old African saying that fits the situation, "When an old person dies, a library burns to the ground." The USMC VTA really wants to make at least some of the libraries available for our posterity.

Sgt John Wear
USMC, 1966-1969
Elbert, Colo.

A Spit Shine in Country?

As a USMC Vietnam veteran (1966-1968), I have a question regarding the photo on page 64 of the September issue. The photo is that of a Marine wearing his helmet with the jungle pattern cover, utilities, flak vest, jungle boots and an M16 across his lap. There is a "GP" tent in the background which was home to me and

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my gun section. I'm guessing because of the M16 this was taken sometime around or post-1969.

Here's my question. Can the Marine in the photo or any Marine who knows or was with him tell me why he would be "spit shining" his dress shoes in a combat zone? The only explanation I can come up with is he is preparing to go on R&R or he's looking for a meritorious promotion. Wax and a brush were all we needed to help slow the weather and element rotting to our boots.

Sgt John H. Allen
USMC, 1965-1974
Fountain Valley, Calif.

• *We asked the photographer, Bob Bowen, who was on assignment in Vietnam for Leatherneck at the time, about the particulars of that 1968 picture. He told us that the Marine, Corporal George L. Goodman, a sniper with a scout sniper platoon, was preparing to leave Vietnam to return home.—Editor*

Incident Onboard USS Constitution

I want to thank you for all the great information you sent me on the Charleston Navy Yard and Marine Barracks. I was surprised to learn from the article, "You Have Three Minutes! Marines End a

Prison Riot," in the July issue, about the Marines stopping a prison riot in 1924. I thought you might be interested in another story.

In the summer of 1972, four young men and a young lady boarded USS *Constitution* as tourists. They proceeded to the captain's cabin and locked themselves inside. The officer of the day (OD) immediately called the barracks OD and the admiral of the first district. A group was put together led by our senior sergeant. Three Marines armed with M14s were sent to the main gate and shut it down. Three more armed Marines were stationed at the gangway. The OD told them, "Get the hell off the ship!"

The reinforced fire team went to the captain's quarters and found the intruders. They were told that they were in violation of federal law and they needed to come quietly or be dragged off. A yard worker soon arrived with bolt cutters. The situation was soon resolved and although we continued to have protesters against the Vietnam War, that was the last time they came to the Navy Yard.

Again, thank you for the stories and thank the author, Master Sergeant Jeff Dacus, USMCR (Ret), for his work.

GySgt Edwin E. Martin, USMC (Ret)
Fredericksburg, Va.

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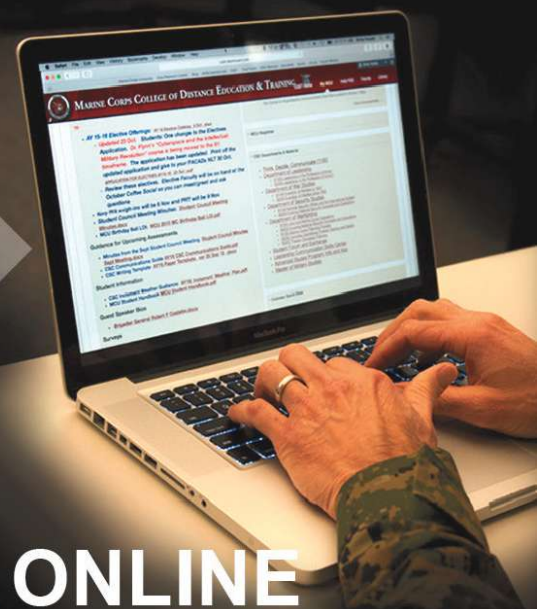
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COURTESY OF SGT PETE DARCY

Sgt Pete Darcy, a veteran artillery Marine, poses by his 105 howitzer in Vieques, Puerto Rico, in December 1966.

105 Howitzers

I was just reading the article, “TACP Exercise Equips 1/10 for Deployment,” [In Every Clime and Place] from the August issue, about “Charlie” Battery

1/10 at Camp Lejeune. I had the honor to serve in Bravo 1/10 and Echo 2/10 back in the mid-1960s. I was mesmerized by the sophistication and complexity of the 105s in the pictures. I assume they were 105s. I’ve enclosed a picture of what they looked like back in the 1960s. We had six- or seven-man gun crews. These bad boys look like you would need a platoon to muscle them around. Great stuff.

Sgt Pete Darcy
Sharpsburg, Ga.

Support Groups Never Let Grunts Down

I read Sergeant John Wear’s letter in September’s Sound Off and it got me thinking. Could we have won the Battle of Guadalcanal without our Marine support groups? I can’t answer that one, however, I had experience with depending on other services.

On Dec. 31, 1970, I was in the medevac hut waiting for our next mission. Our pilot got a call from an Army unit deep in the Que Son Mountains in Quang Nam Province. The Army unit had a priority one soldier (wounded and wouldn’t make it through the night) and could we help? They called Dust-off and were told the weather socked them in—no flights. We called the Air Force and were told they

didn’t go out at night. We were their last chance. Bottom line, that was our job that night.

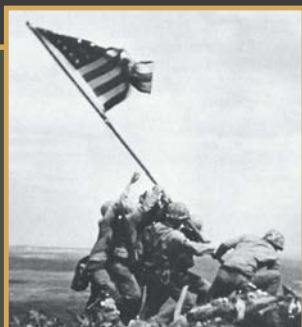
Our pilot coordinated with Marine Corps planes to help us get down the river valley and through a pass to the LZ. Yes, it was hairy and more so getting out of there. When we got back to Marble Mountain and my blood pressure started to drop, I started to think, what was wrong with this picture? That’s when it truly hit me about Semper Fidelis. Where was Dust-off? Were they too busy with their New Year’s Eve party? Doesn’t matter. We were there to support the grunts and we were going to complete the mission. In the 220 missions I flew in, we completed all those missions. They weren’t beer runs. Every mission was in support of our ground troops.

I hope the Marines in charge understand the power of caring the present-day Marines have, grunt or support groups. Marine Corps support groups will never let the grunts down. I really can’t say that about the other services based on my past. It is harsh but Dust-off was going to let that soldier die. I don’t understand that mentality.

Sgt George Staerker
Quincy, Ill.

[continued on page 66]

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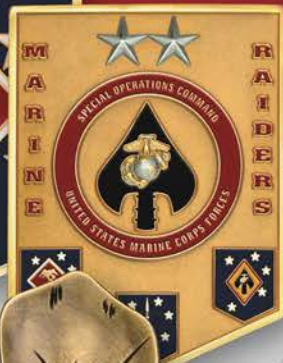
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10 NOVEMBER 2020



A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

If there were a watchword for 2020, the shortlist would certainly include ‘change,’ ‘uncertainty,’ and ‘adaptation.’ This new dynamic and uncertain environment has impacted how we recruit and train Marines, deploy aboard ship, and even how we honor our Corps’ hallowed traditions. But adapting to change and uncertainty is nothing new for Marines. It is what we have done for 245 years and what is expected of us as the Nation’s force-in-readiness. Where others see challenges, Marines see opportunities. We don’t take a knee. We will always be ready to answer the nation’s call, no matter the crisis.

In a world of seemingly relentless change and uncertainty, some things remain constant – our core values: Honor, Courage, and Commitment. These values are at the very heart of our ability to be, “most ready when the Nation is least ready.” It’s honor that gives us an uncompromising sense of personal integrity and accountability; courage that allows us to face any circumstance with an ironclad resolve to do what’s right; and commitment that binds us together as a family and drives us toward excellence. And while our core values might never change, the way we give life to them requires constant vigilance. This year’s national conversations about race remind us that we must all do better to embody our service’s values.

Commemorating the 245th birthday of our Corps offers us a chance to reflect on our history. We who serve today stand upon the shoulders of giants. While this year’s many challenges are significant and unique, they are not unprecedented, and it is important to remember that our Nation and Corps have endured difficult times in our past. This year, for example, marks the 75th anniversary of brutal battles in the Pacific; when soldiers of the sea defined the term “uncommon valor” on the black sands of Iwo Jima; the 70th anniversary of bitter fighting at Inchon and Chosin Reservoir; 55 years since Marines landed at Da Nang; and a decade since our struggle with the Taliban in the Helmand River Valley. We remember the service and sacrifice of



LCPL MORGAN L.R. BURGESS, USMC

all Marines, and honor the legacy passed down through generations. Our continuing obligation is to honor their legacy by making meaningful contributions to what they started.

From the past, we draw strength, pride, and a responsibility to carry on the warfighting heritage our predecessors built. We must also recognize our tradition of continuous adaptation – one that should inspire our current force modernization and innovation efforts. As has been the case in the past, today’s threats require us to fight as a cohesive team, and our ability to succeed will depend on the Honor, Courage, and Commitment of each individual Marine. From recruiting individuals of great intelligence, strength, spirit, and diversity, to evolving how we train, educate, and mentor Marines throughout their careers, we remain dedicated to developing the world’s finest warfighters, guided by our core values.

In a year of significant change and uncertainty, I am reminded of the words of American novelist, John Dos Passos, “In times of change and danger when there is a quicksand of fear under men’s reasoning, a sense of continuity with generations gone before can stretch like a lifeline across the scary present...” Never forget, what you do today becomes the foundation for the generations of Marines that will follow. There is no challenge we cannot overcome, together, by holding fast to our core values. Happy 245th Birthday Marines.

Semper Fidelis,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "D. H. Berger".

David H. Berger
General, U.S. Marine Corps
Commandant of the Marine Corps



YOUR ACTIVE SERVICE MAY BE ENDING BUT YOUR OPPORTUNITIES HAVE NOT

Transitioning? We're listening. See if the Direct Affiliation Program is right for you.

You're a Marine, and that will never change. But Marines feel most like Marines when they're still in the fight. So before you leave the service, we'd like to introduce you to a new way to serve. Through the Direct Affiliation Program, you can stay a Marine in a Reserve unit in your town. Opportunities include:

- No cost 6-month Tricare Prime extension
- Ability to transfer educational benefits
- Guaranteed billet
- Certain involuntary mobilization deferments for up to two years
- Lateral move opportunities

Ready to learn more about how the DAP provides transitioning Marines a guaranteed SMCR or IMA billet prior to reaching your EAS? Contact your local Prior Service Recruiter.

*For DAP details reference MARADMIN 279/20



MARINES

Corning, N.Y., and Okinawa, Japan

Historic Half Connects Civilian, Marine From Across the World

When Patty Campbell registered to run the 2020 Marine Corps Historic Half Marathon in Fredericksburg, Va., which was scheduled for May 17, she looked forward to the opportunity to run with and receive encouragement from Marines. The 60-year-old grandmother, who resides in Corning, N.Y., trained fervently for the 13.1-mile race, which was converted to a virtual event due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Then Campbell found herself hospitalized and in need of emergency surgery just weeks before the race. She transferred her bib to run the virtual "Semper Five" 5-mile race, which is held during the Historic Half weekend, hoping that she'd be feeling up to running a shorter distance.

Campbell shared some of the details of her plight in a Facebook post, looking for someone with a Marine connection who might be willing to run the race virtually with her. A friend, retired Marine Colonel Krista Crosetto, offered to share the post on her own personal page and was able to connect Campbell with an active-duty Marine across the world in Okinawa, Japan. First Sergeant Brett Steele, assigned to Combat Logistics Regiment 37, offered to run the 5 miles at the same time as Campbell to give her encouragement and a dose of "Marine Corps motivation."



COURTESY OF PATTY CAMPBELL



COURTESY OF PATTY CAMPBELL

The two connected via Facebook, agreed on a start time, connected by video over FaceTime, exchanged the "selfies" pictured above and began their run.

"He was so incredibly enthusiastic, encouraging and supportive," said Campbell of Steele. "Despite all the isolation we have all had to recently experience, I have never felt more connected."

For Steele, the experience was meaningful as well.

"The run was a great experience for me," Steele said. "I was able to meet a fantastic person and run alongside her from across the planet. She says I helped her run her personal record five-mile time, but I believe that she could have done it without me."

Submitted by Patty Campbell

San Salvador, El Salvador



COURTESY OF CPL WILLIAM ARMSTRONG, USMC

MSG Detachment Hosts First Zona Rosa Memorial Workout

Marine Security Guards and staff assigned to the U.S. Embassy in San Salvador, El Salvador, participated in the first-ever Zona Rosa Memorial Workout, June 19.

The workout consisted of four rounds—one in honor of each of the Marine Security Guards assigned to the embassy who were murdered by members of a terrorist organization while dining in a café in the Zona Rosa district of San Salvador on June 19, 1985. In

a tribute to the lives of Staff Sergeant Bobby Joe Dickson, SSgt Thomas Handwork, Sergeant Gregory Weber and Sgt Patrick Kwiatkowski, each round consisted of burpees, push-ups, squats, overhead presses and an 800-meter run.

Marine Security Guards all over the world participated in the rigorous workout along with those assigned to Detachment El Salvador. In San Salvador, during the six months leading up to the workout, the participants got together for a monthly embassy-wide workout to prepare for the memorial workout.

"These workouts built lasting relationships and established camaraderie throughout the Marine Detachment and all embassy personnel who

participated," said Cpl William Armstrong, a Marine Security Guard assigned to the U.S. Embassy in San Salvador.

Embassy personnel sponsored a large plaque that memorializes the Marines lost in 1985. The plaque was dedicated on the day of the workout—the 35th anniversary of the tragic loss—and now hangs in the embassy. The memorial workout is expected to become an annual event.

Submitted by Cpl William Armstrong, USMC



COURTESY OF STEVE BRADLEY

Antigo, Wis.

Marine Corps League Detachment Promotes Environmental Education Effort

The Timberwolves Detachment #354 of the Marine Corps League, Department of Wisconsin, presented a donation to the Unified School District of Antigo, Wis., June 10, to help fund the construction of an Environmental Education Center at the Noboken School Forest, which will be open year-round. The new education center will increase the use of the school forest, which the Marine Corps League hopes will foster a better understanding of our nation's natural resources and environmental issues.

From the left, pictured in front of the Langlade County Veterans Memorial, are Ron Wildman, John Szigat, Don Meidl, Noboken School Forest Coordinator Mike Werdeo, John Krajewski and Steve Bradley.

Submitted by Steve Bradley

Norfolk, Va.



COURTESY OF KENT RALSTON



COURTESY OF KENT RALSTON

Marine Returns to USS *Wisconsin*, Recreates Original Art

Exactly 30 years after he deployed aboard USS *Wisconsin* (BB-64) during the Gulf War in 1990, Sergeant Rickey Scott returned this July to the iconic battleship, which is now housed adjacent to Nauticus, an interactive maritime museum in Norfolk, Va. During his visit, Scott recreated the Eagle, Globe and Anchor he had painted on Mount 55 of the ship during Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm. The ship was decommissioned in 1991, and the "Marine Mount" had been painted over with another Eagle, Globe and Anchor that looked nothing like Scott's original work, pictured on the left, which had been intended as a tribute to the WW II and Korean War Marines who served aboard *Wisconsin*.

Kent Ralston, who served as the executive officer of the Marine Detachment USS *Wisconsin* during the Gulf War, has worked for years with Nauticus and *Wisconsin* project managers to return as much of the ship back to its original configuration as possible and


was proud to bring Scott back to personally recreate the art.

"Marines on the battleship had the primary responsibility of guarding 'special weapons.' However, we had other duties as well. We manned four .50-[calibers] aboard the ship and we also manned one of the ship's six 5-inch gun mounts. Mount 55 was our mount and it was located starboard and aft," said Ralston. "With the 30th anniversary of Desert Shield/Desert Storm approaching, I really wanted to see our gun mount fixed."

Scott makes it clear that while he doesn't consider himself an artist, he is honored and proud to have served aboard *Wisconsin* and to have had the opportunity to paint the Corps' beloved emblem on its Marine Mount, not once but twice.

"It's hard to put in words," said Scott, "Just very proud to be part of history and something so rare."

Courtesy of Kent Ralston

"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.boat@mca-marines.org. Submission does not guarantee publication, and we cannot guarantee the return of photos. 

In Every Clime and Place

Compiled by Sara W. Bock

KUWAIT

SPMAGTF Marines Implement Emergency Transfusion Program

Marines and Sailors from 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, assigned to Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force—Crisis Response-Central Command, standardized an emergency blood transfusion program across the ground combat element in August. The combat casualty technique allows the battalion to have a viable and pre-screened donor pool for emergency situations.

The Emergency Fresh Whole Blood (EFWB) program, originally utilized by members of the special operations community, allows pre-screened low titer group O whole blood (LTOWB) donors the ability to deliver lifesaving treatment at the point of injury to a servicemember to increase the chance of survival while awaiting transit to the next echelon of care. The U.S. Army used a similar program for the first time in Afghanistan earlier this year.

According to a Department of Defense study, from 2001 to 2011 during Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, there were approximately 887 deaths resulting from massive blood loss that were potentially survivable had additional blood been available before arrival at an expeditionary surgical suite. By enabling multiple on-the-spot donors, blood can be safely transfused from a mobile donor to a critical patient during transport or from a location shielded from hazard.

Navy Lieutenant Commander Sean Nardi, the force surgeon and emergency physician, noted that by pre-identifying LTOWB donors, Marines and Sailors can quickly find a donor and begin the EFWB transfusion.

“Our ground combat element has really spearheaded this program and brought it to the entire command,” said Nardi. “We, along with champions of the program stateside, are currently validating training plans and standard operating procedures in order to truly make it a program of record for conventional forces throughout the service.”

Prior to a deployment, each consenting Marine or Sailor with group O blood is screened. This screening confirms their blood type and titer levels and evaluates for transfusion-transmitted diseases. Once the screening is complete, and if the



SGT BRENDAN CUSTER, USMC

Above: LT Lauren Murray, USN, the surgeon assigned to 2/5, SPMAGTF-CR-CC, says that the new emergency transfusion program standardized by the battalion will decrease mortality rates in situations where casualties cannot be swiftly evacuated.



SGT BRENDAN CUSTER, USMC

HM3 Grier, a corpsman assigned to SPMAGTF-CR-CC, examines blood being transferred to a patient during EFWB transfusion training in Kuwait, July 30. The program is designed to place the whole blood transfusion capability into the hands of medical responders on the forward edge of the battlefield.

servicemember is deemed to be a LTOWB donor, the servicemember is provided a donor identification card to keep on their person at all times.

“The EFWB program gives the ground combat element a capability that it hasn’t had in the past,” said Navy Lieutenant Lauren Murray, the battalion surgeon. “Having the ability to resuscitate casualties with whole blood at the point of injury gives the ground combat element the ability to decrease mortality rates in situations where we are not able to evacuate casualties within the first hour after injury.”

Aside from the physical lifesaving aspect of the emergency transfusion, the commanding officer of 2/5, Lieutenant Colonel Isaac Moore, believes there is a stronger psychological impact and benefit it brings to forward-deployed Marines.

“Marines are always there for each other, and [the EFWB program] is one more way they demonstrate that,” said Moore. “One individual literally giving his blood to save a fellow Marine increases cohesion. In a sense, the unit can use the healthy life-blood of one Marine to sustain another. That’s a pretty powerful idea that makes a unit incredibly resilient.”

Each kit weighs less than one pound and costs approximately \$135 and includes a blood collection bag, needles, filtered surgical tubing and equipment to maintain cleanliness. Each qualified corpsman can carry two kits on top of their standard gear and equipment.

Medical professionals and Marines currently assigned to SPMAGTF-CR-CC intend to keep the EFWB program moving forward with the drive to make the lifesaving procedure and cost-effective equipment standard across the service.

SPMAGTF-CR-CC is capable of employing aviation, ground and logistics forces at a moment’s notice across the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility.

Capt Joshua Hays, USMC

OKINAWA, JAPAN

“Disasters Do Not Stop”: Amid Pandemic, Marines Conduct Rapid Deployment Drill

Marines with 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade conducted a Joint Humanitarian Assistance Survey Team (JHAST) rapid deployment drill in support of continued Alert Contingency Marine (ACM) air-ground task force training at Kadena Air

Base, Okinawa, Japan, Aug. 18.

The drill was conducted to ensure that the ACM remains postured and ready to deploy in response to crisis throughout the Indo-Pacific region in spite of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The MEB executed the drill with support from two MV-22 Ospreys from Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 265, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, based at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma.

In less than 12 hours, a contingency of about 30 Marines with 3rd MEB arrived at Kadena Air Base from their home stations across Okinawa and boarded an MV-22 Osprey, taking off in a simulated rapid deployment. Upon landing back at Kadena, the team established a secure communications link with the III Marine Expeditionary Force command center, simulating the first steps in a real-world deployment of the JHAST.

“Drills such as these ensure that 3rd MEB remains prepared to respond to a crisis on short notice,” said Colonel Michael Wylie, 3rd MEB chief of staff. “Whether we are asked to deploy to assist our partners and allies as a part of a foreign humanitarian assistance operation or in response to a contingency that is kinetic in nature, we need to be ready.”

When the ACM is activated, 3rd MEB assumes responsibility for immediate response to crises in the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command area of responsibility that require military action, ranging from



LCPL HANNAH HALL, USMC

GySgt Aaron Aiken, left, and Cpl Bailey Hart, both with 7th Comm Bn, conduct a radio check to establish a communications link with the III MEF command center during 3rd MEB’s rapid deployment drill at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, Japan, Aug. 18.

humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to armed conflict.

The JHAST is the expeditionary command team in charge of the U.S. military’s response to requests for humanitarian assistance. The JHAST remains on call and ready to deploy within 12 hours to disaster areas in order to establish an initial assessment of required support for follow-on assistance.

The decision to deploy the JHAST comes after close consultation between

U.S. Indo-Pacific Command and the U.S. State Department after humanitarian assistance is requested by disaster-affected nations.

In order to minimize the risk of exposure to COVID-19, strict health safety protocols were implemented throughout the rapid deployment drill.

“The purpose of this ACM drill is to validate standard operating procedures and ensure the MEB is prepared to execute its duties and responsibilities,” said

Marines with 3rd MEB board an MV-22B Osprey during a simulated rapid deployment in Okinawa, Japan, Aug. 18. The MEB continues to conduct essential, realistic training while adhering to strict COVID-19 safety protocols. (Photo by LCpl Hannah Hall, USMC)



Major Chad Pimley, the 3rd MEB current operations officer.

The INDOPACOM area of responsibility is one of the most disaster-prone areas in the world with 60 percent of the world's natural disasters, ranging from weather disasters to seismic events, occurring there. In recent years, 3rd MEB has responded to the 2015 earthquakes in Nepal, Typhoon Yolanda in the Philippines in 2013, and the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami in Japan in 2011.

"The MEB continues to conduct essential, realistic training while adhering to strict safety protocols to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. We are prepared to deploy in support of our allies and partners throughout the region," said Pimley. "Disasters do not stop just because the world is facing a serious pandemic."

Continuing to conduct drills like these postures 3rd MEB to help wherever needed in the region at a moment's notice and ensures the MAGTF is ready to fight now in support of U.S. allies and partners throughout the Indo-Pacific.

MSgt Jimmy Bention, USMC

CAMP PENDLETON, CALIF. Training Tests ATC Skills Under Deployed Conditions

During the month of August, Marines with 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing and Marine Corps Air Station Camp Pendleton, Calif., put their air traffic control skills to the test in an expeditionary environment.

Marines with Marine Air Control Squadron 1, Marine Air Control Group 38, 3rd MAW worked with Marines from Headquarters & Headquarters Squadron, MCAS Camp Pendleton, to set up an Air Traffic Navigation, Integration and Coordination System (ATNAVICS) and conducted their first flight check Aug. 11.

The ATNAVICS was set up in the middle of the Camp Pendleton flight line, giving the air traffic controllers the best possible view of the airspace around them and enabling them to control the airspace for 30 nautical miles.

The training simulated deployment conditions and helped the Marines become familiar with high-stress, real-time conditions.

"During this 30-day training exercise

we have our station Marines learning how to provide expeditionary services and precision approach radar services to any aircraft," said Staff Sergeant Aaron Mondloch, the air traffic control radar chief with H&HS, MCAS Camp Pendleton, during the training.

Over the course of four days, MACS-1 conducted a site survey and emplaced and set up the system. Once the Federal Aviation Administration flight check was completed, the Marines were certified to control all of the air traffic coming in and out of MCAS Camp Pendleton. While the Marines were all familiar with the airspace itself, controlling it from a small group of tents on the flight line was a new experience for most of them.

"If we take Marines to a place they have never been and equipment they have never worked with, there is going to be a learning curve," said Mondloch. "This is not just training they need to get familiar with on the flight line, but where the time calls for it as well."

This training not only applies in a combat environment, but also in other

MARHAM, UNITED KINGDOM



1STLT ZACHARY BODNER, USMC

ACROSS THE POND—From the left, Capt Dylan Larmonny, Maj Gregg Borman and Capt Craig Norris with Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 211, Marine Aircraft Group 13, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing stand in front of an F-35B Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter after completing a trans-Atlantic flight from Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, S.C., to Royal Air Force Station Marham, UK, Sept. 3. VMFA-211 is training with the Royal Air Force's 617 Squadron in preparation for next year's inaugural deployment together on HMS *Queen Elizabeth*.



LCPL ANDREW CORTEZ, USMC



LCPL ANDREW CORTEZ, USMC

Above left: Sgt Matthew Perry, an air traffic controller with H&HS, MCAS Camp Pendleton, observes aircraft using a precision approach radar system while under simulated deployment conditions on the air station's flight line, Aug. 11.

Above right: Cpl Samantha Surratt, an air traffic control radar technician with MACS-1, checks the ATNAVICS on the flight line at MCAS Camp Pendleton, Calif., Aug. 11.

scenarios where expeditionary airfield operations are necessary, such as when Marines are conducting humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations.

"It's nice that we get to do this in the comfort of our own backyard essentially," said Sergeant Anthony Latassa, the radar maintenance chief for MACS-1. "This is a nice runway that they get to practice on, but we train them to know that not every situation is going to be like this."

Allowing the Marines to conduct this training on an established air station permitted them to receive the full experience, from setting up to guiding in and landing actual aircraft.

"This training is amazing because it lets you see what you are actually doing when it comes to landing actual aircraft," said Latassa. "This is big picture stuff and exposing our junior Marines to it early is great because they will already be trained to handle the stress if they ever have to employ this system in the future."

LCpl Andrew Cortez, USMC

NORTHERN TERRITORY, AUSTRALIA

RQ-21 Soars Into History With First Australian Flight

A U.S. Marine Corps RQ-21A Blackjack took flight in Australia for the first time on Aug. 8 during Marine Rotational Force-Darwin's deployment "Down Under."

Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron 3, MRF-D's air combat element, launched the surveillance aircraft in support of bilateral training between the U.S. and Australian Defence Forces, marking a series of firsts for the Hawaii-based unit.

"This is the RQ-21A's first deployment

since we declared the squadron [fully operational]; it's very exciting for us," said First Lieutenant Trevor Ellingson, an unmanned aircraft systems officer with VMU-3.

The historical milestone comes in the midst of an unusual year for MRF-D. In order to ensure health and safety of Australians and U.S. servicemembers amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the rotation was delayed by two months and reduced from 2,500 Marines to roughly 1,000. The ACE, which was originally composed of several squadrons of manned aircraft,

including MV-22 Ospreys, was reduced to just 32 Marines.

The smaller footprint offered MRF-D an opportunity to exercise the capacity of unmanned systems to support expeditionary advanced bases and positions following modernization initiatives by the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General David H. Berger.

In line with Gen Berger's future operating concepts, Ellingson explained that the unit "didn't bring a lot of manpower. We made our detachment as small as possible to get the mission accomplished.



LCpl Brayden Broens and LCpl Dominick Rollan with MRF-D set up the ground data terminal at an RQ-21A spoke site in Bradshaw Field Training Area, Northern Territory, Australia, Aug. 9. (Photo by Cpl Harrison Rakhshani, USMC)



CPL HARRISON RAKHSHANI, USMC

UAS operator 1stLt Trevor Ellingson with VMU-3 prepares to receive operational control of the RQ-21A Blackjack at a spoke site in Northern Territory, Australia, Aug. 9. The unmanned aircraft took flight in Australia for the first time during bilateral training with the Australian Defence Force.

Out here, we're training to be fast, agile, to be able to set up, get a bird in the sky as fast as we can, and tear down quickly."

In a real-world mission, Marine air-ground task force elements would be swiftly and secretly deployed within striking range of adversaries. These small teams would provide specific mission-tailored capabilities in order to shape the battlefield for follow-on and larger naval forces.

The RQ-21 provides a very unique enabling capability within distributed operations. The aircraft can be rapidly deployed with a limited footprint and provide anything from route reconnaissance and target confirmation to intelligence collection for both unilateral and multi-lateral operations. These capabilities are amplified by the system's ability to extend its flight distance using "spoke sites" as a way of extending the hub site's reach.

"The spoke site, which enables UAS operators to fly the aircraft conveniently from the rear of a Humvee, also extends the range of the aircraft up to 150 nautical miles from the hub," said 1stLt Matthew Tatarka-Brown, a UAS officer with VMU-3.

During a timed training event, the Marines were challenged to deploy from the hub location and establish a spoke site. All the necessary equipment for the spoke site fit snugly into two high-back Humvees.

"I led a small group of Marines in detaching from the main body to set up the spoke site," said Tatarka-Brown. "We got it up within an hour and ten minutes, but we're always aiming to get it up quicker."

The RQ-21 is a valuable source of accurate, real-time intelligence for the U.S. and its allies, including Australia.

Tatarka-Brown explained that the spoke site is extremely valuable because "it's self-sufficient for a short period of time. It gives us the ability to have multiple aircraft doing separate missions simultaneously within the area of operations."

To test this concept, the Ace also pushed live video from the spoke-operated RQ-21 to MRF-D's command element.

"We're able to be that eye in the sky for long periods of time, providing battlefield situational awareness, pattern of life, whatever our joint force commander is looking for," said Ellingson.

Cpl Harrison Rakhshani, USMC



CPL HARRISON RAKHSHANI, USMC

Marines with MRF-D recover the RQ-21A Blackjack in Bradshaw Field Training Area, Northern Territory, Australia, Aug. 9.

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“WE ARE MARINES”

By Jim Lehrer

Editor's note: In celebration of the Marine Corps' 245th birthday, we are publishing the speech given by Jim Lehrer, veteran Marine and legendary journalist, at the dedication of the National Museum of the Marine Corps on Nov. 10, 2006 in Triangle, Va.

Mr. President, Generals, Colonels, Majors, Captains, Lieutenants, Warrant Officers, Sergeants, Corporals, Privates, ladies and gentlemen.

We are the Marines. And in this museum, our story is told. It is a single, monumental story, made up of 231 years of many separate stories of heroism and courage, of dedication and sacrifice, of service to our country and to our Corps, of honor and loyalty to each other in war and in peace. Two hundred thirty-one years of professionalism and pride, of squared corners and squared-away lockers, perfect salutes and good haircuts, well-shined shoes, and eyes right. Two hundred thirty-one years of Semper Paratus and DIs.

The first time I came to Quantico was 51 years ago. I came as an officer candidate, a PLC [Platoon Leaders Class] on the train from Washington, having just traveled from Texas on the first airplane ride of my life. On the orders of a drill instructor, a DI, I fell in at attention with 40 other candidates on the platform at the train station over at Quantico.

And the DI told us to answer up, “Here, sir!” when our name was called. And he got to mine, and he said, “Le-her-e-er-er.” And, like some kind of idiot, I blurted out, “It’s pronounced Lehrer, sir!”

There was silence, absolute silence. And then I heard the terrifying click, click, click of leather heels on the deck of that train station platform coming in my direction. And suddenly there he was, the DI, right in front of me, his face right

up in mine. And I paraphrase and cleanse it up a bit, but he said, “Candidate, if I say your name is Little Bo Peep, your name is Little Bo Peep! Do you hear me?” Oh, I heard him all right. And I think it was at that very moment that I really became a United States Marine.

I’m still one today, and I will remain one forever, as did my late father, and as is my older and only brother.

I came from a family of Marines into the family of Marines. My father served in the 1920s under the great Smedley Butler right here at Quantico. He saw combat in Haiti and came out a corporal. My brother and I were both 1950s Cold War Marines in the 3rd Marine Division in the Far East.

Since our Corps was founded on this

day in 1775, there have been more than 4 million men and women who have worn the uniform of a United States Marine. This museum is about all of them, including us three “Le-her-e-ers,” and even the Little Bo Peeps. That’s because this museum is about what it means to be a Marine, no matter the time, the length, place, rank, or nature of the service.

It’s about the shared experience and the shared knowledge that comes from being a U.S. Marine, such as knowing that you are only as strong and as safe as the person on your right and on your left; that a well-trained and motivated human being can accomplish almost anything; that being pushed to do your very best is a godsend; that an order is an order, a duty



The National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle, Va., was dedicated on Nov. 10, 2006, the 231st Birthday of the Marine Corps. Legendary broadcaster and veteran Marine Jim Lehrer was the keynote speaker at the dedication ceremony.

is a duty, that responsibility goes down the chain of command as well as up, as do loyalty and respect. That leadership can be taught, so can bearing, discipline and honor. That “follow me” really does mean “follow me”; and that that Semper Fidelis really does mean “always faithful”; and that “The Marines’ Hymn” is so much more than just a song.

My Marine experience helped shape who I am now personally and professionally, and I am grateful for that on an almost daily basis. And I often find myself wishing everyone had a similar opportunity to learn about shared dependence, loyalty, responsibility to and for others, about mutual respect and honor, and about the power of appealing to the best that’s in us as human beings, not the worst.

As a journalist, there has been one overriding effect of my Marine experience: While debates over sending Americans into harm’s way are always about issues of foreign policy, geopolitics and sometimes even politics, for me, they are also always about young lance

corporals and second lieutenants and other very real people in all branches of the U.S. military, people with names, ranks, serial numbers, faces, families, and futures that may never be.

When Marines stand for or sing “The Marines’ Hymn,” as we will at the conclusion of this ceremony, it’s never for ourselves personally. It’s always for the Marines who went before us, with us, and after us. First and foremost for those who gave their lives, their health, their everything at places such as Tripoli, Belleau Wood, Haiti, Wake Island, Guadalcanal, Peleliu, Iwo Jima, Chosin, Inchon, Da Nang, Khe Sanh, Beirut, and Baghdad, Fallujah and Ramadi.

The death rate among Marines in Iraq has been more than double that of the other services. That’s a first-

to-fight, first-wave pattern that has pretty much held since the Revolutionary War when 49 of the very first U.S. Marines of our country died in combat. Their mission was aboard ship; there are still Marines who serve at sea.



Jim Lehrer was commissioned a second lieutenant in 1956 and went on to become a highly respected news anchor for PBS. (USMC photo)

There are others who fly and maintain jets and helicopters, man the artillery, operate tanks and trucks, feed and supply the troops, compute and collate, train and inspect, march and make music, recruit, guard and escort, radio and communicate, patrol and snipe, as well as save tsunami, earthquake and other disaster victims around the world, collect toys at Christmas time for American kids in need, stage a marathon run through Washington, D.C., for charity, or do whatever else needs to be done, particularly if the need is for it to be done well and be done immediately.

We are the Marines. And in the language of the rifle range, we are always ready on the right, ready on the left, all ready on the firing line, whatever kind of firing is required, and wherever that line may be.

Author’s bio: Jim Lehrer was a journalist and author and was commissioned in the Marine Corps after graduating from the University of Missouri School of Journalism. He served for three years as an infantry officer. Lehrer is best known as the executive editor and anchor of the PBS News Hour. Initially called The MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour and later the News Hour with Jim Lehrer, he anchored the show from 1983 until 2011. Lehrer died in January at the age of 85.



Among those who had a front-row seat for Lehrer’s speech at the museum’s dedication ceremony were, from left to right, LtGen James Amos, deputy commandant for Combat Development and Integration; Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen Peter Pace; the 33rd Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen Michael W. Hagee; and President George W. Bush. (DOD photo)

JIM LEHRER’S RULES FOR JOURNALISTS

- » Do nothing I cannot defend.
- » Cover, write and present every story with the care I would want if the story were about me.
- » Assume there is at least one other side or version to every story.
- » Assume the viewer is as smart and caring and good a person as I am.
- » Assume the same about all people on whom I report.
- » Assume personal lives are a private matter until a legitimate turn in the story absolutely mandates otherwise.
- » Carefully separate opinion and analysis from straight news stories and clearly label everything.
- » Do not use anonymous sources or blind quotes except on rare and monumental occasions. No one should be allowed to attack another anonymously.
- » “I am not in the entertainment business.”

OPERATION CANNONBALL

Marine Aircraft Group 13 Pioneers USMC Aerial Refueling

By William M. Helvey
with LtCol Virgil “Duke” Brandon, USMC (Ret)

Author’s note: This article is based on the experiences of Lieutenant Colonel Virgil “Duke” Brandon who entered the Naval Aviation Cadet program in 1952, earned his wings as a naval aviator and was commissioned a Marine officer in 1953. He flew fighter aircraft throughout his career, starting with F2H4 Banshees and finishing with the F-4 Phantom II. Completing more than 200 combat missions in Vietnam, he also served as the executive officer of VMF-314. In the early 1970s, he commanded VMA(AW)-224 at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point.

The article focuses on Marine Corps developments in aerial refueling, in which LtCol Brandon was directly involved as a young pilot. Aerial refueling of tactical jets represented a big step toward giving the Marine Corps strategic mobility. Once this procedure was standardized, it gave the Marine Corps the capability to deploy strike jets rapidly over long distances and supported the Marine Corps’ promise of “first to fight.”

Today, the Marine Corps operates in a “Space Age” of high-tech satellites, global positioning systems, robotic drones, nuclear-powered aircraft carriers and giant transport aircraft, which routinely cross the planet’s largest oceans nonstop.

Between the end of World War II and the beginning of the Vietnam War (1945 to 1965), a primary mission of the American military, especially the Marine Corps and Navy, was to protect American allies in Asia, such as Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam and the Philippines. A recurring challenge was the need to reduce the time necessary to deliver men and weapons to far-flung Pacific locations. This was a critically important requirement for the Marine Corps in order to fulfill the role of the nation’s “first to fight” force.

For decades, only multiengine patrol and transport planes could “island hop” across the Pacific. Delivering single-engine fighter and attack planes—with

plane and pilot ready to fly missions—was still done by ship. The hope of flying such combat-ready squadrons across the Pacific in “TransPac” flights remained an elusive dream, but the dream never died. A new war, a new option and an old Marine tradition sparked a major advance in delivering combat-ready Marine pilots and planes farther, faster and safer.

Not until the Cold War, with the need for refueling transcontinental bombers, did aerial refueling become a regularly used capability of the U.S. Air Force. The



MajGen Paul J. Fontana led VMF-112 in combat during the Guadalcanal campaign and scored five enemy aircraft kills. He later commanded 2nd MAW and 1st MAW in Vietnam.

Strategic Air Command’s need to service long-range bombers resulted in tanker aircraft that used a long tube, or a “boom,” controlled by a crewmember aboard the tanker, to rapidly deliver large amounts of fuel to another aircraft. The more widely used “probe and drogue” system to refuel single-engine jets trailed development and availability, even in the Air Force.

The first reported operational use of such a system was very limited. In Korea, KB-29 tankers (converted B-29s) refueled F-84s that were flying long missions over



North Korea with the probe and drogue provided by Flight Refueling, Ltd., an English company. By mid-decade, many of the Marine Corps’ single-engine jet aircraft were equipped with refueling probes, including the two attack squadrons of FJ-4B Furies of Marine Air Group-13 (MAG-13), 1st Marine Brigade. A sudden crisis between Taiwan and the People’s Republic of China (PRC), with real threats of a nuclear war, were the circumstances under which the following sequence of events unfolded.

On Aug. 23, 1958, the PRC began an intensive artillery shelling of both the Quemoy and Matsu islands, which were occupied and staunchly defended by troops of Taiwan. These two islands, as well as Taiwan itself, were claimed by the PRC. Quemoy and Matsu were 5 miles from mainland China and 100 miles from Taiwan. Soon thereafter, an all-out air war commenced. Uncertain as to whether the PRC would invade the islands or even Taiwan, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles announced that if necessary, the U.S. would use nuclear weapons to defend Taiwan and the islands. While the PRC did not have nuclear weapons at the time, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics,



USN

which did have nuclear weapons, was led by Nikita Khrushchev, who publicly committed to fully supporting the PRC in any expansion of that war. The U.S. immediately proceeded to increase support to the U.S. fleet in the Taiwan Strait. Part of that support was the immediate relocation of MAG-11 from its home base at Naval Air Station Atsugi, located 20 miles west of Tokyo, to Taiwan, and the deployment of MAG-13 from Kaneohe, Hawaii to Atsugi, Japan.

In September, MAG-11 began flights from their Taiwan base, avoiding the air war unless fired upon. MAG-13 was directed to replace MAG-11 at Atsugi. In late September, VMF-232 and half of the FJ-4s and pilots of VMA-212 and VMA-214 boarded an aircraft carrier at Pearl Harbor and proceeded to Japan, a trip that would take nine to 10 days. It was also determined that the remaining aircraft—10 from VMA-212 and 10 from VMA-214—would fly to Japan. And so, the Marine Corps' first TransPac from Hawaii to Japan of a squadron of single-engine attack planes was planned and executed on short notice. From the day they were advised to "pack it up and go" until departure was about two weeks.



Above: A Marine FJ-4B Fury aircraft of VMA-214 takes on fuel from an Air Force Boeing KB-50J Superfortress.

Left: John F. "Jack" Bolt climbs into the cockpit of an FJ-4B Fury in 1957. He had scored six victories over Japanese aircraft in WW II while flying Corsairs with VMF-214. In the Korean War while flying the F-86 Sabre as an exchange officer in an Air Force squadron, he achieved six more kills during aerial combat with enemy MiG-15s.

USMC

By the first week in October, plans were finalized for 20 attack planes to fly from Hawaii to Japan, island-hopping in three days, utilizing air-to-air refueling by aerial tankers of the Air Force and the Navy. Even though the jets would be island hopping, the distance between islands was much greater than the range

of the fighter jets, thus the need to refuel during the flight.

The aerial refueling was called Operation Cannonball, named and led by Colonel Paul J. Fontana, commanding officer of MAG-13. Fontana had been a young squadron commander during World War II on Guadalcanal, where he became an



COURTESY OF PETER MERSKY

Close up of FJ-4B Fury similar to the ones flown by the Marine aviators of VMA-212 and VMA-214.

ace. Leading VMA-214 was Lieutenant Colonel John F. "Jack" Bolt Jr., a two-war ace. He got his first six kills during WW II when he was a member of the Black Sheep squadron. The next six were in the Korean War. The VMA-212 contingent was led by its commander, Lieutenant Colonel Clarence Moore.

On day one, Sunday, Oct. 5, 1958, 20 aircraft departed Kaneohe in the morning and landed at Midway Island, where they refueled and remained overnight. On day two, the pilots departed Midway bound for Guam with a rendezvous scheduled with Air Force tankers over Wake Island. The tanker was a KB-50, a modified B-50 bomber, which itself had been a modification of a B-29. All 20 of the planes refueled as scheduled, except one. That pilot had a rough day of it. Although many pilots required more than one try to plug into the tanker's hose, everyone else had refueled. One pilot and the Air Force tanker pilot were running out of time and distance. When the KB-50 pilot finally reported he would have to return to his base without successfully refueling the last plane, there followed a brief conversation between LtCol Bolt and the tanker pilot:

Bolt to the tanker pilot: "Sir, what is your rank?"

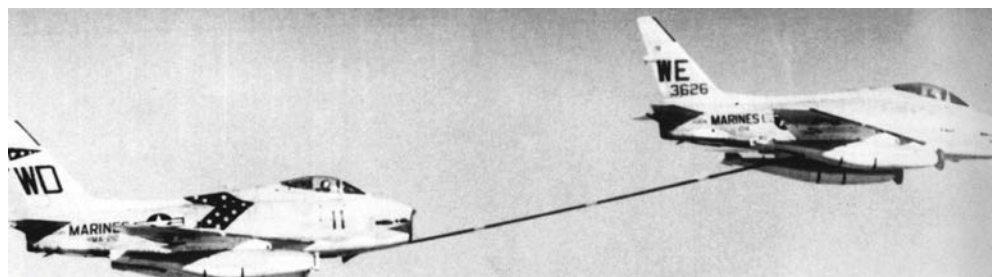
Tanker pilot to Bolt: "Major."

Bolt: "Major, this is LtCol John Bolt, and I am ordering you to put your plane in a 30-degree bank."

Bolt's "suggestion" allowed the tanker pilot to meet his need to return to base but to also continue to trail the drogue for a final attempt by the last pilot in the MAG to refuel. He made it, and by the end of the day, 20 Marine FJ-4Bs landed safely at Guam. Evidently, there was enough concern during the final attempt at refueling the last aircraft that there was talk of locating ships in the area in case that last pilot did not refuel and did not have fuel enough to return to Wake. So, it was, as they say, a close call.

On day three, the Marine pilots awoke to bad weather around Guam and the route

of flight. Two planes were sent as pathfinders. They climbed to 40,000 feet and still did not top the storm and icing conditions; the flight was rescheduled for the next day. On day four, 20 planes led by Col Fontana departed Guam in flights of four so the Navy tankers could service them over Iwo Jima. The AJ-2 Savage was a twin-engine (prop) nuclear bomber. It had been designed specifically for the Navy to fly from carriers with a nuclear weapon aboard to strike the enemy but had been modified to be an airborne refueler. By the end of the day on Wednesday, Oct. 8, 1958, all pilots and planes that had departed Kaneohe three days earlier were at Naval Air Station Atsugi, Japan. Atsugi would be their home for several months.



Marine FJ-4Bs from VMA-214 and VMA-212 refuel during flight. The two squadrons played key roles in the Corps' first TransPac from Hawaii to Japan. (Photo courtesy of Peter Mersky and Stephane Nicolaou)

Lieutenant Colonel Virgil “Duke” Brandon planned and participated in the Cannonball TransPac to Japan and a year later planned the Cannonball II from Kaneohe to Alameda. His experiences give insight into some of the challenges and risks of these two early flights:

According to Brandon, “As I remember the Atsugi flights, there were two USAF tankers for each squadron at Wake, and we had all qualified at Kaneohe on the KB-50. After refueling over Wake, both Bill Brothers and I had problems transferring fuel from our drop tanks. He only got half the fuel in each tank, and I had one tank that did not transfer at all. I calculated that I could make it if I jettisoned my tanks. The empty one fell off, but the full one did not. It became a little dicey then. I cruise climbed to 42,000 feet to save fuel and made it. The full tank finally fell off just off the coast of Guam. Brothers coaxed enough fuel out of his tanks to make it also. The final day, over Iwo Jima, we refueled off of AJ tankers provided by the Navy. Each AJ had a single drogue (each USAF tanker trailed two drogues), so we flew in flights of four with intervals between flights to allow the AJs to land and reload. My flight times logged for the entire TransPac from Kaneohe were:

Kaneohe to Midway: 3.4 hours

Midway to Guam: 6.2 hours

Guam to Atsugi: 3.5 hours

“I was the last plane out of Guam, and I had to hustle to catch the group before we entered an overcast but the last hour to Atsugi was CAVU [ceiling and visibility unlimited] and smooth flying. Two hundred miles out, we could see the sun on Mount Fuji.”

It is important to note that military leaders at high levels believed that without the use of nuclear weapons, the U.S. and Taiwan could not successfully repulse a communist attack on Quemoy and Matsu. The two attack squadrons of MAG-13 were specifically trained to deliver nuclear weapons. Their deployment represented more than just getting more fighter aircraft in the region. Although some tensions remained, a diplomatic solution was achieved, and 60 years later, no change in the status of these islands has occurred.

By December of 1959, MAG-13 had returned to Kaneohe and devised another plan, named Cannonball II, to fly their jets to Alameda, near San Francisco, using only squadron FJs, but equipped with “buddy” tanks whereby they could transfer fuel to another squadron plane. These buddy tanks were used in various ways. Strike jets could take off with a heavier load of ordnance, top off with fuel soon after takeoff from another jet with

a buddy tank and then have the gas to complete the mission. Or a jet with buddy tanks could refuel jets that might be short of fuel as they returned from a mission, a practice that was especially useful when operating from an aircraft carrier.

In 1959, MAG-13 planned to fly two planes to Alameda from Kaneohe for rework and overhaul. At that time, Bolt was in charge of flight planning, and Brandon was on his staff. They devised a plan to launch six planes—two for the 2,100 miles to the coast and four FJs with buddy tank—to refuel each TransPac plane twice. Tanker aircraft A and B refueled the TransPac aircraft and also refueled tanker aircraft C and D soon after taking off. Tankers A and B then returned to Kaneohe. Tanker aircraft C and D flew on with the TransPac jets, and when about 500 miles out from Hawaii, refueled the two TransPac planes again. Tankers C and D returned to Kaneohe while the TransPac FJs continued on to Alameda, 1,600 miles away. This unique “do it yourself” plan worked with the two FJ-4Bs arriving at Alameda with more than an hour of fuel remaining, and all four tanker FJ-4Bs returned safely to Kaneohe. The experience was not without incident—bent probes and a broken canopy were part of that learning experience.

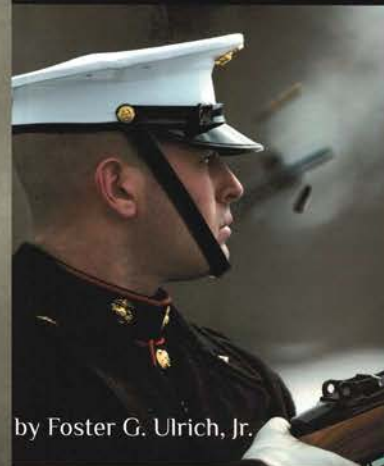
The Cannonball TransPac flights in 1958 and 1959 were, perhaps, small steps by MAG-13, but the Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1958, aerial refueling experience, and the age-old pursuit by the Marine Corps to be a self-sufficient military force all contributed to the acquisition of a squadron of KC-130 tankers. The KC-130s were designed for the Marine Corps and first delivered in 1961 to a new squadron designation: VMGR-352 (Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 352). In January of 1962, the new KC-130s moved 18 F-8Us of VMF-121 from MCAS El Toro to MCAS Iwakuni. By the time General Marion Carl led the 1st Marine Brigade into battle in Vietnam in 1965, the Marine Corps had its own tankers and experienced crews. Marines were routinely flying fighter and attack jets TransPac from California to Vietnam farther, faster and safer than ever before, and continue to do so with newer versions of KC-130s to this day.

Author's bio: William Helvey entered the U.S. Navy in 1957 and was a flight surgeon with MAG-13 from 1958-1960. He accompanied the trans-Pacific flight to Atsugi flying in an R4D (C-47) as part of the support group. He left the Navy in 1960 and went to work with for NASA in the Apollo program. 🇺🇸

**"To all the men
and women who
have ever worn
"The Eagle, Globe
and Anchor"
and who have had
the honor to
"Claim the title
of United States
Marine."**

AN AMERICAN STORY

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SEMPER FIDELIS.

SEA STORY OF THE MONTH

He Ended Up in the Corps by Accident

I was an Army medic with the 5/60th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division, in South Vietnam's Mekong Delta in November 1968. After a close encounter of the worst kind with a Viet Cong land mine, I wound up in an Army hospital in Yokohama, Japan. In the bed across from me was a Marine.

Though I had talked with this fellow many times, I had never seen his face. He had been shot in the chest several times, and it hurt to sit up, he said. Thus, I often conversed with the covered shape on his bed.

I inquired as to how he had been drafted. It was a year before, he said, when he had shown up late at the Air Force Examining and Entrance Station on the day of his induction. All went well until 1400 when all hands were taken into a big room to be sworn in. Before that happened, a sergeant came in and announced that four draftees were needed for the Marine Corps. Noting that four guys were late, including my new friend across the hospital aisle, he said, "You four are going into the Marines as draftees."

As he was relating this, my new friend forced himself up on his elbows, looked across at me, and said, "I'm proud to be a Marine, but I swear I'll never be late for anything the rest of my life!"

Mac Mackechnie
Anoka, Minn.

The Lightning Was Shocking

While attending "summer camp" at Camp Lejeune while in the Marine Corps

Reserve in the 1950s, a lightning strike that I experienced could have ended up as a tragedy. My squad had just finished a training exercise, and the company was waiting for the cattle cars to transport the troops in for evening chow. Since it was August and very hot, a heavy storm developed. One of my squad members alerted me that the timing between lightning strikes indicated that the storm was getting closer and we were in possible danger. I started to order my squad to move to the road adjacent to the range to get out of

**Before I could finish
my order, a bolt of
lightning bounced
off an electrical pole
landing right in the
middle of where we
were standing.**

danger. Before I could finish my order, a bolt of lightning bounced off an electrical pole landing right in the middle of where we were standing.

As the lightning bolt went into the ground, I momentarily felt an electrical shock followed by several members of my squad being picked up and thrown in different directions. Assessing the situation, I found that two of my Marines were injured, including one seriously. I again ordered my squad to the road and got help for the injured. One Marine who was carrying a ram rod was burned because the rod had been a conduit for the lightning to enter his body. The most seriously injured Marine had to be

transported to sick bay for treatment. I had no idea that my company commander witnessed the happening until he made a point to seek me out and commend me for a job well done.

Sgt Paul L. Carbone
Franklin, Mass.

Going AWOL?

One night in 1979 I was standing guard duty in the wee hours of the morning while I was in boot camp at Parris Island. While walking my post I saw a person walking toward me in the dark. I belted out, "Halt, who goes there?" He introduced himself as the officer of the day and gave his rank and name. I do not remember his name, but I believe he was a colonel.

"Advance and be recognized," I shouted, all the while shaking in my boots. As he approached, I rendered a salute. He proceeded to ask me a question which I *believed* to be, "Do you want to go for a walk?" "Sir, yes, Sir!" I shouted. "You want to go AWOL, recruit?" he yelled in my face. "Sir, no, Sir," I shouted, shaking even more. "What's your 5th General Order recruit?" he shouted. I recited the 5th General Order. "Resume your post, recruit," he said, and then he left. To this day I have never thought of going AWOL.

Cpl Larry Reynolds
USMC, 1979-1983
Portland, Ore.

The Army Never Knew What Hit Them

The Korean armistice took effect on July 27, 1953. The next morning, we were ordered to destroy all fortifications, trenches, bunkers, etc. After accomplishing this, 1st Marine Division moved several miles to the rear

and each unit set up their respective areas. I was a machine gunner with H/3/1. The 3rd Battalion had a fairly large rear area complete with sound tents, motor pool and sick bay.

Our platoon leader was First Lieutenant Romano, a Mustang World War II veteran of the island hopping campaigns and the best damn officer I ever served under.

Romano was moved to company XO and promoted me to company driver. One day I was summoned to the CO's tent which was filled with officers. Lt Romano took me outside out of earshot and prying ears, and said, "Have you noticed that battalion has electricity?" I had noticed. He then said, "It would sure be nice if we had it too, wouldn't it?" Being a gung-ho PFC, I agreed.

"How do we go about that, Sir?" I said. He pointed out that all we needed was a large portable generator. He mentioned the Marines didn't have any, but the Army did. He explained that there was a huge Army supply depot about 30 minutes away and said, "Whaddya think, Wes?" and walked back into the officer's tent.

I had my orders—sort of. I got a buddy of mine, Private John Condupi, and told him to get a clipboard and a few official-looking pieces of paper. The next morning, we set out for the Army supply depot. About a mile down the road I pulled over and promoted Condupi to second lieutenant.

Upon arrival at the supply depot we were stopped at the main gate by an Army MP. I explained that the lieutenant and I were tasked with picking up a portable generator and the lieutenant

had the paperwork. Condupi dutifully waved the clipboard and the MP told us where to find the generators. We found them and there must have been 30 or 40 of them. I backed up to one, Condupi hooked it to the hitch and off we went. When we got back to the gate, the MP saluted and simply waved us through.

Over the next several days Lt Romano had the generator painted Marine green with stenciled serial numbers covering the original Army olive drab. As the good Lord and Lt Romano said, "Let there be light!"

Several weeks later an Army jeep full of Army brass showed up looking for a missing generator. Our officers were polite in their response which was, "We have no idea what you're talking about." After they left, the good lieutenant sent a case of beer to our squad tent.

Sgt C.C. Westlake
USMC (Ret)
Bozeman, Mont.

Broken Breathalyzer

I had just taken command of an infantry company in the 2nd Division at Camp Lejeune in September 1976 and had yet to become acquainted with my Marines. The first weekend after taking command, I received a call from the Provost Marshall's Office (PMO) informing me that I needed to come and pick up one of my Marines. Not really knowing what to expect I drove to PMO and was directed to the master sergeant's office.

Seems that the troops had been playing cards in the barracks and a lance corporal had walked to the PX to pick up pizza for the group. On the way he was stopped by an MP because of the way he was walking. The MP just knew that the lance corporal was drunk in public as he couldn't walk in a straight line. The

MP administered the usual tests for someone under the influence, and just as he expected, the lance corporal couldn't walk straight. The MP took him to PMO and that is where the master sergeant had him blow into the breathalyzer. The master sergeant ended up going through three of the devices before he called me to come pick up my Marine.

The master sergeant was sitting at his desk with three breathalyzers and was

**I often wondered
how he made it
through boot camp
as he really couldn't
walk in a straight
line.**

fiddling with a fourth. Off to the side I saw the lance corporal who had his head bowed and his face was beet red. The master sergeant was really pissed as he was certain the lance corporal had been drinking and there had to be some major malfunction with the current crop of breathalyzers.

It took a great deal of talking but the master sergeant finally realized that the lance corporal wasn't drunk and that the breathalyzers were in fact reading true.

Getting to know the lance corporal over the next few months and watching him, I often wondered how he made it through boot camp as he really couldn't walk in a straight line.

Fast forward to our January deployment to MWTC. My company gunny and I taught the company how to ski. We were in the Wolf Creek area and began the lessons with walking on skis on flat and level ground. I was watching the company when the lance corporal who couldn't walk a straight line fell backwards

and hit the snow. The skis had sharp metal edges on the bottom, and he hit his right hand on the metal edging. Immediately blood started flowing and stained the snow around him. I skied over to him but by the time he was already on his feet. I asked him to show me his hand and he stuck out his left hand. I admired what he was trying to do but had him show me his right hand. He had cut his palm and thumb pad down to the bone. We got his hand bandaged up and I sent him to the medical facility in the base camp with instructions to stay in the lower base camp as I knew it was going to take many stitches.

At about 3 a.m. the next day, my company corpsman came to my tent and informed me that the lance corporal had walked back up the hill in the dark after going UA from the lower base camp and wanted to know what I wanted to do with him. He spent the night with the company and then was assigned to work with the company gunny the rest of the winter deployment. He did a super job for the company but didn't get on skis again.

Col Jerry L. Durrant
USMC (Ret)
Wildomar, Calif.

Anti-Guerrilla Warfare Training Went Awry

I was in VMGR-252 from August 1963 to August 1964. One day the squadron went through tear gas training where you practice using a gas mask inside a building filled with tear gas. After that, we were marched into the woods single file for anti-guerrilla warfare training with our gas masks, 782 gear and M14s with three blank rounds. Before heading into the woods an instructor told us that a likely place for an ambush is at a bend in the trail and that we would have a demonstration of that. We followed him along this path

into the woods. Seems to me there were 50 or so of us and I was somewhere in the middle of the pack thinking, "Hey, I'm in the air wing, why are we doing this?" Sure enough, a machine gun, loaded with blanks I assumed, opened up on the lead guys, and we were all told to hit the deck.

As I was lying in the leaves on the side of the path listening to the gun, I thought that maybe I could do something. I low crawled around a hill through the woods and came up behind the machine gun. There were three guys manning the gun, and their attention was down the path so I stood up and fired my blanks at the gunners as I walked toward them. The sergeant who was on the gun, stood up, yelled something about me not following orders and threw something my way.

It turned out to be a tear gas grenade that also started a fire in the dry leaves. I dropped to my knees clawing for my mask as the sergeant and his crew surrounded me. As the sergeant chewed me out for ruining his demonstration, he ordered me to stamp out the fire he started. I wish I had real ammo that day.

I mustered out on Aug. 5, 1964, the day of the Gulf of Tonkin incident. In retrospect I wished many times that I had shipped over.

Norm Spilleth
Minneapolis, Minn.

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." 🐻

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A veteran participates in an oral history interview during a VHP event at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., July 31, 2018. Over the past 20 years, the project, part of the Library of Congress' American Folklife Center, has added more than 100,000 veterans' stories to its collections in an effort to paint an "authentic picture" of military service.

By Sara W. Bock

The largest library in the world and home to the most extensive rare-book collection in North America, the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., has amassed more than 170 million items to date, including the presidential papers of 23 U.S. presidents, a 15th century Gutenberg Bible and a comprehensive array of newspapers, manuscripts, photographs, sheet music, audio recordings and more. Over the past 20 years, its collections have expanded to include another category of priceless articles: veterans' stories, told firsthand, which create a permanent record to help future generations understand the past.

Thanks to the Veterans History Project (VHP), part of the American Folklife Center of the Library of Congress, the library is now home to a growing collection of more than 110,000 personal submissions from U.S. military veterans—audio-and video-recorded oral history interviews, photographs, manuscripts, letters and artwork. Together, they form what the

project's director, retired Army Colonel Karen Lloyd, often refers to as "the people's collection."

The legislation that led to the creation of VHP was the brainchild of U.S. Congressman Ron Kind of Wisconsin, who, according to Lloyd, was at a family gathering when his father and uncle began reminiscing about their service during World War II. Kind asked them to pause for a moment so he could get his video camera to begin recording, saying of his two young children: "I want them to hear your stories from you."

In October 2000, Congress unanimously passed Public Law 106-380, sponsored by Kind and fellow Representatives Amo Houghton and Steny Hoyer, and U.S. Senators Max Cleland and Chuck Hagel. The legislation established the VHP as part of the Library of Congress and was signed into law by President William J. Clinton on Oct. 27. Sixteen years later, the Gold Star Families Voices Act expanded the scope of the project to include oral history interviews from the families of fallen servicemembers who died "as a result of their service during a period of war."

This photo, taken in 2007, provides an aerial view of two Library of Congress buildings on Capitol Hill—the Thomas Jefferson Building, center, the John Adams Building behind it, and the James Madison Building to the right. (Photo by Carol M. Highsmith)

What's perhaps most remarkable about VHP is that all veterans who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces, from World War I to present conflicts, are invited to contribute their personal stories, regardless of their military occupational specialty, how long they served, and whether or not they saw combat. And as Lloyd and her staff at the Library of Congress celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Veterans History Project this year, they hope that the collection will continue to grow as more veterans choose to participate.

Often, she said, all it takes is for them to know that someone wants to take the time to genuinely listen to what they have to say.

"I think so often our veterans are hidden in plain sight, and we really don't realize that we're surrounded by veterans who have done amazing things," said Lloyd. "We're interested in the full spectrum. We're not just interested in the ones who were at the tip of the spear or saw combat. We think that understanding the full picture really gives you a better sense of the selfless service. It can be selfless service in the mess hall [...] where they served isn't as important as their story and their telling us their story."

While recorded oral histories and interviews at least 30 minutes in length—in either audio or video form—are certainly the focal point of the collection and allow researchers or family members the added benefit of hearing the emotions in an individual's voice, Lloyd emphasizes that such recordings are not required. In lieu of a recording, a personal collection can be created with 20 pages or more of original memoirs, diaries or journals; collections of 10 or more letters; or collections of 10 or more original photographs or two-dimensional pieces of artwork. These types of materials also can be accepted on behalf of veterans who are already deceased. And those who do submit oral histories are also encouraged to submit items from those supplemental categories to "round out" their collection and provide a more comprehensive picture of their service. Once a collection has been started with at least one of the qualifying criteria met, the veteran can continue to add to it over time. For example, an individual who completes an interview may decide to hold off on the addition of original photographs until they are ready to part with them as the library does not accept scans or copies.

Relying on a volunteer-based network of individuals across the country, VHP is proud to provide interviewers to guide the veteran through the process of recording their story by responding to a series of questions. While



"We're not just interested in the ones who were at the tip of the spear or saw combat. It can be selfless service in the mess hall [...] where they served isn't as important as their story and their telling us their story."

—Col Karen Lloyd, USA (Ret)

veterans who wish to contribute are certainly welcome to visit the Library of Congress in person, traveling to Washington, D.C., is not necessary in order to participate. Individual volunteers and members of local organizations or Scout troops work within their communities to locate veterans and facilitate interviews to add to the VHP collection.

Becoming a volunteer is relatively easy. A "field kit" and required forms are available on the Library of Congress Veterans History Project website, along with an instructional video, as well as sample interview questions and information on how to submit interviews and other items. The Library of Congress also offers workshops in local communities for groups of 25 or more interested volunteers. This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, VHP has relied primarily on virtual workshops to equip volunteers to reach out to the veterans around them and resume collecting their stories once social distancing measures have relaxed.

For those conducting the interviews, the experience is particularly rewarding.

"Having that opportunity to sit down and connect with somebody on a different level is, to me, just such a tremendous gift," said Kerry Ward, a liaison specialist



A researcher visits the Library of Congress to access the Veterans History Project collections, which are available to professionals, family members and any other interested individuals.

COURTESY OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



Boy Scout Michael McPhie of Irvine, Calif., listens to the story of a veteran from his local community. McPhie was named the American Legion's Eagle Scout of the Year for 2020 for coordinating and conducting VHP interviews and collecting donations of food and personal care items to give to the veterans in his community who were interviewed for the project.

who works on the VHP staff and has conducted numerous oral history interviews.

The recordings and other items that veterans contribute to the project are stored in climate-controlled facilities and archived among some of America's most precious national treasures, where they're afforded the same level of professionalism and respect. Lloyd and her staff understand that people who contribute are in effect giving the library a "piece of their heart," and it's important to her that they rest assured that their personal collections will be well cared for.

"The preservation lab that is taking care of our collections are the same preservationists that are taking care of the draft of the Declaration of Independence," said Lloyd. "It's very well taken

care of, always to archival standards, and they're in good company."

According to Lloyd, roughly 20 percent of the VHP collection is digitized and accessible online through the Library of Congress. Thanks to generous funding by Congress, she anticipates that percentage to increase in the coming years. The VHP website also features compilations called "Experiencing War," which are groupings of individual collections based on subject matter, ranging from Tuskegee Airmen and chaplains to female aviators.

The importance of archiving these firsthand stories and preserving them for future generations cannot be overstated. It's also worth noting that when submitting to VHP, the veteran retains the copyright to their story, meaning it cannot be used in a profit-making venue without their permission, Lloyd said.

"We need those veteran voices. And participation is simple and it's meaningful and it creates a lasting legacy for your family. So if you're not going to do it for yourself, think about your family," said

Lloyd, who was the U.S. Army's first female medevac pilot and has a remarkable story of her own that comes from the course of 28 years of service. "It's a way of passing those family memories down, and these authentic stories, and authentic picture of what military service is all about."

Lloyd's personal experiences have shown her the importance of chronicling one's stories of service. Her husband, a Silver Star recipient who served as a helicopter pilot in Vietnam, died unexpectedly just three days after a visit to Normandy, France, during which he told her he was finally ready to tell his story.

"I have books that tell what he did in Vietnam, but I don't have his version of what happened," said Lloyd. "It is why I am driven to reach out and make sure that we don't lose stories in

"We need those veteran voices. And participation is simple and it's meaningful and it creates a lasting legacy for your family. So if you're not going to do it for yourself, think about your family."

—Col Karen Lloyd, USA (Ret)

With the help of a volunteer interviewer, a veteran records his story on video for submission to the VHP. The project relies heavily on the work of volunteers across the country to gather oral histories, photographs, journals and other items from the veterans around them.



the way that I feel like we've lost my husband's."

Of the approximately 110,000 stories that VHP has collected, only 10,000 are from Marines. "There's lots of room for improvement," said Lloyd, who encourages Marine veterans to participate so that the collection can present a full and clear picture of what it means to be a Marine and what each Marine's individual story contributes to the overall history of the Corps.

For those Marines still serving on active duty, Lloyd encourages them to keep their photographs in a safe place and to journal or find other ways to capture their story while events are still "fresh in their mind." While servicemembers are asked to wait to do an oral history interview until after separating from active duty or retiring, they can start their collections now with photographs, letters and other eligible items.

"Think of us as your attic," said Lloyd. "You're moving

around all the time. Think of us as that place that will keep your collections and your memories safe until you're ready to come and really talk about them and reflect upon them."

It's important, Lloyd believes, that veterans speak out about their experiences to create a true understanding of what military service is like. There's not a requirement to tell everything—rather, individuals are encouraged to tell only as much of their story as they are willing.

"This is about telling your story your way," said Lloyd. "We need to hear your voice. Everyone has a story, we're looking for the arc of your story, from where you were born, to why the heck did you sign up? And as importantly, we are after the reflections of how your service impacted your life."

The following are four of the thousands of Marine veterans who have shared their stories with VHP:



COURTESY OF DERL HORN

Derl Horn, Vietnam War Collection #112513

After being drafted into the Marine Corps in 1966, Derl Horn arrived in Da Nang, Vietnam, on a C-130 Hercules. As he and the other Marines disembarked the aircraft, they noticed a number of body bags staged for loading, which brought the Marines to a startling realization: they were replacements.

This story is just one of the many Horn, who served with "Bravo" Company, 1st Battalion, 9th Marines of the 3rd Marine Division, told during an hour-long oral history interview at the Library of Congress in 2018, conducted by liaison specialist Kerry Ward. The combat veteran, who resides in Springdale, Ark., was visiting Washington, D.C., for a reunion of 1/9 Marines—often referred to as the "Walking Dead"—and had been encouraged by members of his local veterans community to contribute his story to the Veterans History Project.

On July 2, 1967, Horn and his fellow Marines of Bravo Co were ambushed north of the DMZ, where they fought for their lives though the odds were significantly against them. Horn was one of only 26 Marines who survived.

After he returned home to Arkansas, many decades passed before Horn was ready to talk about the things he had done and seen in Vietnam. He regularly turned down requests to speak at schools and events, but eventually decided to tell his story through a book, "Blood, Sweat & Honor: Memoirs of a 'Walking Dead' Marine," which was published in 2015 and is now part of his personal collection at the Library of Congress. Since writing the book, Horn has accepted many local speaking engagements and hopes that his story will help those who haven't served to understand what he went through. And for his fellow veterans, he also hopes his story will be meaningful.

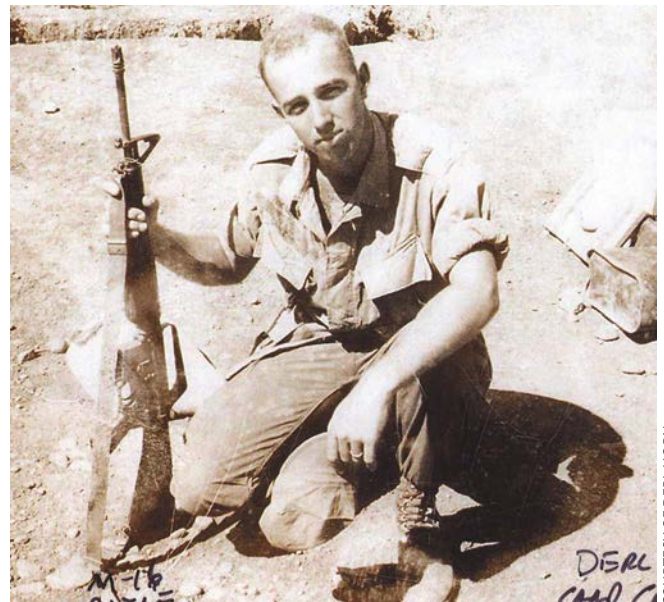
"I wanted to show my fellow veterans and other war veterans that we can survive after war without turning to drugs and alcohol," said Horn. "I try to encourage other veterans to tell their stories, and maybe even write something, because I realized how much it helps to do that."

Right: Horn, who was drafted in 1966, is pictured here at Camp Carroll, Vietnam, in 1967 when he was assigned to Bravo Co, 1/9.



COURTESY OF DERL HORN

Above: Marine veteran Derl Horn stands outside his home in Arkansas. Horn, who submitted his story to the VHP in 2018, encourages others to participate and tell their own stories of service—for their own benefit as well as the benefit of others.



COURTESY OF DERL HORN

LtCol Art Nalls, USMC (Ret)
Cold War
Collection #110568

Retired Marine Lieutenant Colonel Art Nalls is no stranger to adventure, and he tells the stories of his exploits both in and out of the Marine Corps during a two-and-a-half-hour recorded video interview with the Veterans History Project's Kerry Ward, which was recorded at the Library of Congress in March 2018. As a midshipman at the U.S. Naval Academy, he landed a Guinness World Record for building and riding the world's smallest rideable bicycle, which stood less than 5 inches tall.

The former AV-8 Harrier pilot and naval test pilot served in the Marine Corps from 1976 to 1998, and after retiring, started Nalls Aviation, which operates numerous aircraft on the air show circuit, including two Harriers, the first and only privately owned of their kind in the world.

Ward, who previously had worked in the air show business prior to joining VHP, encouraged Nalls to contribute his story—and for him, it was a no-brainer.

"It'll be catalogued, archived and preserved in perpetuity so that 100 years from now if someone wants to research you and they search on the Library of Congress, this interview will come up," said Nalls. "So if they're researching either me personally or, say, a great-great grandson wants to know about his great-great grandfather, it would be just like talking to me. He could see what I looked like, see what I sounded like and hear me talk about various experiences."



COURTESY OF LT COL ART NALLS, USMC (RET)

LtCol Art Nalls' passion for the AV-8 Harrier didn't go away when he retired in 1998, so he became the first and only civilian in the world to privately purchase two for his air show business, Nalls Aviation (below). Nalls, pictured in 1986 in front of a Harrier (left), shared his story with VHP in 2018.



COURTESY OF LT COL ART NALLS, USMC (RET)

Nalls is proud of his Marine Corps career and said he would do it all over again in a heartbeat. Participating in the VHP was meaningful to him, and his oral history interview brought up many different memories he hadn't talked about in years. He often encourages the veterans around him to start their own collections through the Library of Congress.

"You know, you're a part of history and you're not going to be here forever," he tells them. "Why don't you sit down and do it, and that will be here forever."



COURTESY OF MGYSGT JANE CROSS, USMC (RET)

MGySgt Jane Cross, USMC (Ret)
War on Terrorism
Collection #117485

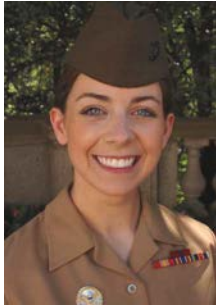
If anyone understands the value of collecting and preserving memories, it's retired Master Gunnery Sergeant Jane Cross, who served for 22 years as a music librarian and archivist with "The President's Own" United States Marine Band, and, since her retirement last year, has worked as an archivist in the Library of Congress Music Division.

In December 2019, Cross attended a social event with other archivists, where she met two VHP staff members who encouraged her to contribute her story. She sat down in early 2020 with VHP director Karen Lloyd for an oral history interview, which she describes as an "unexpectedly emotional" experience. The opportunity also caused her to reflect on what she calls her family's greatest regret: not preserving her grandfather's oral history from his service in World War II.

She often wishes she had recorded the stories he did share with her—and that she had asked him to tell more. By recording her own story of service, she's determined to not let the past repeat itself.

"Talking about it was difficult but also helpful," said Cross.

MGySgt Jane Cross, center, served as the orchestra librarian for a luncheon hosted by the First Lady in Washington, D.C., May 2019. Pictured here with SSgt Charles Paul, left, and SSgt Tilden Olsen, right, Cross shared the story of her 22 years with "The President's Own" United States Marine Band during a VHP oral history interview earlier this year.



COURTESY OF ASHLEIGH BRYANT BYRNES

Ashleigh Bryant Byrnes Operation Enduring Freedom Collection #81887

As a Marine Corps combat correspondent, Ashleigh Bryant Byrnes was familiar asking the questions. So when she decided to share her story with the Veterans History Project in 2012, it felt a bit strange to her that the roles were reversed.

But the experience was personally rewarding for Byrnes, who enlisted in the Marine Corps in 2004 and served in Afghanistan during 2009 as the News Bureau Chief for Armed Forces Network Kandahar, working as an embedded reporter with various units. On one of her trips to the front lines, she earned a Combat Action Ribbon during Operation Eastern Resolve II.

"I didn't have an easy deployment—not that any deployment is easy—but there were elements of my deployment that were very difficult and sat with me for a very long time," said Byrnes, who left active duty as a sergeant in 2011 and now works as the Deputy National Communications Director for Disabled American Veterans (DAV). "It was therapeutic, in a way, to get that off my chest. And really, that was the first time I had talked with anyone really openly about it. There were things I said in that interview that I'm sure I didn't even tell my own mother, partly because I know that she would not take that easily. But in a way, it was almost easier to open up and express that to someone who wasn't an immediate family member. It was nice to be able to say those things out loud finally."

Through her work with DAV, which partners with the Veterans History Project frequently during national conventions and other events, Byrnes has seen firsthand the myriad benefits of creating a permanent record of one's service. She's particularly driven to encourage her fellow female veterans to make their



COURTESY OF ASHLEIGH BRYANT BYRNES

Marine veteran Ashleigh Bryant Byrnes shared her stories from Afghanistan with VHP in 2012. Byrnes, who now works for Disabled American Veterans as deputy national communications director, is thankful that her oral history will be preserved for her young sons.

voices heard, emphasizing that the number of women who have participated in VHP is particularly low.

"We have this unique shared experience as women in the military, and so often I think it feels like we're isolated in our experiences," said Byrnes. "I think women 30, 40, 50 years ago never would have imagined that women in the military would be doing what they are doing today, but it all stems from them. It's just important to me to look back and see whose shoulders we were standing on."

For Byrnes, who is now a mother, it's equally important to her that her children and future generations of her family have access to her own story, told in her own words.

"You never know what's going to happen tomorrow," said Byrnes. "So to know that that's captured, that's recorded, if I don't ever have a chance to share that with my sons, they can go and open that archive and there's a little time capsule in there that they can learn about their mom and what their mom did in service."

"It was enjoyable in the sense that someone cared enough to ask, listen to me share my unique experiences, and record them."

During her years with the Marine Band, Cross collected and curated items related to the band's former members—photographs, correspondence, music, uniforms and instruments.

"But it was through the fascinating stories about their experiences that those items took on meaning and helped us better understand our unit's history," she reflected. "Someday I hope my story about my time in the Marine Band will similarly contribute to a broader understanding of how it served the White House, the Marine Corps and the American people, and what the experience was like."



COURTESY OF MGYSgt JANE CROSS, USMC (RET)

After retiring from the Marine Corps in 2019, MGySgt Jane Cross took a position at the Library of Congress, where she recently processed the Leonard B. Smith papers, a collection of sheet music, pictured here.

What Now?

Are you a veteran or Gold Star family member who is interested in contributing your own oral history interview or collection to the Veterans History Project? Would you like to become a volunteer and conduct interviews within your own community? Are you interested in exploring the digitized collections from the VHP?

Visit www.loc.gov/vets, where you can find answers to these questions, access information and resources, download the VHP Field Kit and explore the collections of veterans who have contributed to the project.



COURTESY OF HISTORY FLIGHT

Scientific recovery expert Johan Rodriguez, left, and archaeologist Archie Tiauzon, both with History Flight, examine an excavation on Red Beach 2 during recovery operations on Betio Island, Tarawa Atoll in 2020.

Until They All Come Home

History Flight is Dedicated to Locating, Excavating Remains of Missing Marines

By Nancy S. Lichtman

In 2014, Wendell Perkins and five other veterans of the Battle of Tarawa arrived on Betio for the first time since they had fought the Japanese there in 1943. This time, however, they weren't being shot at by a firmly entrenched enemy intent on their defeat. The Marines were there with Mark Noah, founder and president of History Flight, to see firsthand the work Noah's team was doing to locate and recover the remains of their fellow Marines who died during the battle and were still buried on the tiny island in the Pacific.

Over the years, Perkins had often thought of revisiting the place where he



PFC Wendell Perkins, left, and PFC Harold Hayden

first experienced the chaos of combat, but this trip was more than just a walk down memory lane for him. Perkins wanted to see the History Flight excavation site because for him, it was personal. The bones being unearthed there belonged to the men who had fought fiercely alongside Perkins. They were his fellow Marines—they were his friends.

Wendell Perkins was 19 when he landed on the north side of Betio Island, Tarawa Atoll, on the evening of Nov. 21, 1943. It was D+1, the second day of a bloody battle on a tiny coral atoll in the South Pacific. Perkins was a machine gunner with Company A, 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division and this

COURTESY OF HISTORY FLIGHT

Almost half of the KIAs buried in the aftermath of the battle, however, were not recovered after the war. It has taken more than 75 years, but through the work and dedication of History Flight, a nonprofit organization, those men are finally being brought home to their families for proper burial.



Cemetery 13 (left) is one of the many cemeteries created after the battle ended. As the war in the Pacific raged on, some of the cemeteries on Betio were relocated to accommodate the construction of base infrastructure. Unfortunately, the wartime relocation of the cemeteries later resulted in confusion about where the men were buried. The unknown cross (right) is one of many marking the graves of servicemen who died during the battle on the island and whose identities were lost.

was his first taste of war. When darkness fell, he dug in next to a log and slept intermittently, waiting for the fight that was sure to come the next morning. When dawn broke, Perkins realized that the log he had been using for cover was actually the body of a dead Japanese soldier.

The fighting on Betio was fierce, but Perkins survived. Many of the men in his squad, including his two good friends, Private First Class Harold W. Hayden and PFC Mervin D. “Monk” Galland, were not so lucky. Perkins, now 95, can’t forget the moment he saw his friend, Harold, die. The two Marines were setting up a machine gun when an enemy round hit Hayden in the head, ending his life. “We were stopping and setting up our defenses, and Harold Hayden was bringing a box of ammunition up to me; he got alongside of me and set the box down and just about that time he got hit,” said Perkins.

The Battle of Tarawa was a victory for the United States, but a costly one; more than 1,000 Marines and Sailors were killed and more than 2,100 were wounded.

The Marines and Sailors who were killed during the battle, including Perkins’ friends Harold Hayden and Monk Galland, were buried in makeshift cemeteries across the island. In 1946, the 604th Quartermaster Graves Registration Company of

the American Graves Registration Service disinterred all the U.S. casualties they could locate into one centralized location on Betio, the Lone Palm Cemetery, for later repatriation. Some of the men were able to be identified and were sent to their families; others were buried as “unknowns” at the National Memorial of the Pacific in Honolulu, Hawaii. Almost half of the

KIAs buried in the aftermath of the battle, however, were not recovered after the war. It has taken more than 75 years, but through the work and dedication of History Flight, a nonprofit organization, those men are finally being brought home to their families for proper burial.

History Flight is the creation of Mark Noah, a full-time pilot for UPS who be-



Jordan Windish, left, and James Murphy, archaeologists with History Flight, excavate a site on Betio, July 15, 2019.

In the immediate aftermath of the battle, fallen Marines were buried in makeshift cemeteries all over the small island of Betio.



USMC

came compelled to locate the remains of missing servicemen through his passion for flying restored historical aircraft. Noah, who was named an Honorary Marine in 2015, initially formed History Flight in 2003 as an organization that would restore World War II-era aircraft and take them on flying tours, selling rides on the warbirds to fund the cost of their restoration and historic preservation. As he researched the vintage aircraft, Noah learned of the thousands of men whose remains were still missing in overseas graves, so he shifted the focus of his organization to locating and recovering U.S. military personnel previously deemed unrecoverable.

Combining historical and archival information with technologies such as ground penetrating radar surveys, magnetometry and forensic archaeology, History Flight currently has a 93 percent success rate in locating the remains they have searched for. To date, the History Flight team has recovered 332 full sets of U.S. remains from Europe and the Pacific.

"The project is very edifying," said Noah. "Other than being a good citizen and a good family man, it's the best thing that I've ever done in my life."



COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Sgt Fae V. Moore, assigned to E/2/8, 2ndMarDiv, was killed on the first day of the Battle of Tarawa, Nov. 20, 1943. He was recovered by History Flight in 2015.

During a 2015 excavation on Betio, Noah's team located the remains of First Lieutenant Alexander Bonnyman Jr., who was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions during the Battle of Tarawa. Bonnyman's grandson, Clay Bonnyman Evans, was on site when his grandfather's grave was excavated, and in his book, "Bones of My Grandfather," he describes how important it was to his family to have his grandfather buried in the family plot in Knoxville, Tenn., instead of in an unmarked grave in the South Pacific.

"As I watched an archaeologist expose my grandfather's remains to sunlight for the first time in 71 years, it was the culmination of my family's long, broken-hearted search to bring him home," said Evans. "And burying him next to his family members brought our family together and gave immense solace to his two living daughters, now 86 and 79," he added.

In 2018, retired Marine Sergeant Major Justin LeHew joined the History Flight team as the chief operating officer. Not long after he joined the organization, a positive identification was made of the recovered remains of Technical Sergeant Harry A. "Bud" Carlson. "To anybody

Combining historical and archival information with technologies such as ground penetrating radar surveys, magnetometry and forensic archaeology, History Flight currently has a 93 percent success rate in locating the remains they have searched for.



USMC

To pay respects to their fallen brothers in arms, Marines fire a rifle volley during a memorial ceremony on Betio in January 1944.

else,” said LeHew, “that’s one of [many] Marines ... who gave his life in wave one on Tarawa.” But for LeHew, a veteran of combat in Iraq, it was impossible to ignore the parallels between himself and TSgt Carlson, a Marine who was killed in battle nearly 50 years before LeHew stood on the yellow footprints at Parris Island. TSgt Carlson had served as the platoon sergeant of 3rd Platoon, “Alpha” Company, 2nd Amphibian Tractor Battalion. Sixty years later, when LeHew was in combat in 2003, he was the platoon sergeant for 3rd Plt, Alpha Co, 2nd Amphibian Bn, Task Force Tarawa. “[TSgt Carlson] personally did my job 75 years before. In the same unit, right down to the same platoon ... there is a higher power that guides the hand of all of this,” said LeHew.

LeHew, who received the Navy Cross for his actions on March 23-24, 2003, during the Battle of Nasiriyah, Iraq, leads the day to day operations and management of archaeologists, explosive ordnance disposal technicians, medical personnel, team leaders, specialty scientists and volunteers whose mission is to locate and recover the missing remains of U.S. servicemembers, not just on Betio and in the Pacific, but worldwide. Like Noah, LeHew is driven by a sense of responsibility to



KATHY REESEY

MajGen James Lukeman, left, presents Mark Noah, the founder and head of History Flight, with the title of Honorary Marine during a ceremony at the National Museum of the Marine Corps on July 24, 2015. Noah said he was humbled by the honor.

the families of the young men whose remains are still missing. That sense of purpose is a constant among all of the History Flight team members—civilians and military veterans alike.

“There’s no other more honorable

mission than this mission right here,” said retired Marine Staff Sergeant Robert “Bobby” Perez II, an explosive ordnance disposal technician and History Flight team leader. “It is the greatest generation of American history right there,” said Perez, who added that it’s a privilege for him to “come out to one of our most famous [battlefields] and search for my brothers ... they paved the way for me.”

“What it really comes down to,” said James Murphy, a scientific recovery expert with History Flight, is “having the right to understand and know the fate of your loved one ... there’s never really any closure to it, but just knowing that they’re home ... you can never underestimate the impact of that and so it’s a real honor to be part of it.”

“It’s a really different kind of archaeology,” said Jack Rossen, another scientific recovery expert who has been excavating the site on Betio. Rossen, who has a master’s degree and doctorate in anthropology, came to History Flight with more than 40 years of experience in archaeology. He spent more than 20 years in academia and also did field work all over the world. But Rossen said this mission is unlike any of his previous field assignments. “I’ve done archaeology—there’s a curiosity to it,



BILL DASHER

Members of the DPAA conclude a repatriation ceremony on July 25, 2017, for 17 servicemembers located and recovered by History Flight on Betio.

there's a joyous curiosity to a lot of archaeology and this is not like that at all," Rossen said. "This is very sad and emotional and urgent archaeology."

Rossen grew up in a family that felt the full impact of World War II. His father was an Army medic in the European theater during the war, seeing action in the Battle of the Bulge, and he had a cousin who was wounded on Iwo Jima. Rossen also has relatives who survived the Nazi concentration camps as well as many who did not.

"I believe in the mission, I am happy that my skills can be put to good use," said Rossen who delayed his retirement in order to work with History Flight.

History Flight works very closely with the government's Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) to ensure that the evidence unearthed is collected and maintained according to the highest standards. DPAA forensic scientists and anthropologists are the ones who analyze the remains in their laboratories in order to make positive identifications of those remains. "We are in constant contact, and if we have any questions or any kind of thing that emerges or arises, we are in

constant contact with them," said Murphy. "We make numerous trips, have meetings both online and in person at their offices ... or whenever that opportunity arises, and whenever they visit the island, we take those opportunities then to be sure that everything we are doing is parallel to what they are doing. And they've been very happy with the progress ... it's a very, very good relationship," he said.

Murphy and Rossen made one particularly impactful trip with their DPAA colleagues, traveling aboard a military transport aircraft to Hawaii with remains that they had just recovered. Both men were struck by how moving it was to witness the official transfer of remains to DPAA personnel. "Repatriation ceremonies are extremely powerful," said Murphy, adding that he was impressed by the care and dedication of the active-duty servicemembers who perform those honors.

"I thought that was one of the greatest honors I have ever received in my life to ride that plane then to witness the [repatriation] ceremony back at the airport as the Marines were being brought out in their flag-draped caskets," Rossen said. "It

was so emotional, and I was very moved and I'm not really an emotional guy in general," he added.

"As a scientific archaeologist, we're sort of taught we're not supposed to be emotional, we are supposed to be scientific and that's almost impossible to do all the time," said Rossen.

The other History Flight archaeologists express similar sentiments. Some days "it hits you pretty good," said Jordan Windish, an osteoarchaeologist. Windish recalled a dig on Betio about a year ago during which a hand that she recovered was holding a cross from a rosary. "The cross was still inside [his] palm," she said. "That kind of stuff that you see, personal effects like class rings or wedding rings ... or even a pair of glasses or dog tags, it's that kind of stuff that's real personal that hits you pretty hard," Windish added.

Windish studied osteoarchaeology and paleopathology in England. She did field work there where her area of emphasis was leprosy in medieval times and the bones she was excavating and examining were from people far removed from what we know in the modern era. For Windish, her work with History Flight hits a little closer

Some days “it hits you pretty good,” said Jordan Windish, an osteoarchaeologist. Windish recalled a dig on Betio about a year ago during which a hand that she recovered was holding a cross from a rosary. “The cross was still inside [his] palm,” she said.

to home—she had two grandparents who served in the Pacific during WW II. Her grandfather was in the Army and her step-grandfather was a Marine in the Pacific.

Her expertise in skeletal remains means that when a site is being excavated, Windish can tell quite a bit about the remains even before they are collected and sent to the DPAA laboratory. One of the things that is often immediately apparent is how young each Marine was when he died. “Looking at them osteologically, a lot of the guys ... their bones hadn’t even started to fuse,” Windish said. Another thing visible to her trained eyes is the evidence of the wound that caused the Marine’s death. “When you see the trauma ... how they died, that kind of gets me,” she said. “It doesn’t matter who it is, it was a person [and] you can see how they got killed.”

Windish said her mother has taken a keen interest in her work on Tarawa. “She thinks it’s absolutely amazing and I’ve taken her to two of the funerals that I went to,” said Windish, adding that meeting families who were burying the remains of their loved ones killed in battle more than 70 years ago showed her mother a more complete picture of the History Flight mission. “You can only go through and you can explain only so far what we see at



NANCY S. LICHTMAN

Retired Marine SgtMaj Justin LeHew, center, has been the History Flight chief operations officer since 2018. His passion for the mission is so contagious that his wife, Cynthia, right, a retired FMF corpsman, and their daughter, Aisley, an information technology professional, both left high-paying jobs in the private sector to be a part of the team.

work and what we go through every day.”

LeHew has made it a priority to have the History Flight team members represent the organization at as many of the funerals as possible because he believes that the archaeologists and the families all benefit from the experience. The families sometimes form a strong connection with History Flight team members because they represent a link to a loved one who has been missing for more than 75 years after sacrificing his life for our country. “Because you helped bring their grandfather home, and now they associate that with you,” said LeHew, who attends as many funerals as he can. He travels with a supply of steel pennies minted in 1943; it’s the calling card he leaves behind when he visits the grave of a Tarawa Marine.

“It all really comes home when I have a chance to go to a funeral of one of the guys we recovered and meet his family members,” said Jessica Gadis, another archaeologist with History Flight. She hadn’t expected family and community involvement and the gratitude shown to her by the extended families of the Marines who have been recovered caught Gadis off guard. “Coming to that funeral and seeing that this guy was [from] a family of eight and everyone remembered him



For archaeologists Jessica Gadis (inset) and Jack Rossen (right), these excavations are unlike other field work they have done during their careers. “Putting a face to a name is a huge part of our process ... we have a whole wall of ... photos to keep these guys in mind,” said Gadis. (Inset photo by Sgt Melanye Martinez, USMC)



SGT JACQUELINE CLIFFORD, USMC



COURTESY OF HISTORY FLIGHT

Although the COVID-19 pandemic travel restrictions have caused excavations to come to a temporary standstill, local teams have been able to continue their work (above) to restore sites to their original condition after the completion of excavations. Local teams are integral to the success of History Flight's mission on Betio, and during active excavations, they play a role in recovery efforts (below) sifting soil on site, under the supervision of scientific recovery experts.



COURTESY OF HISTORY FLIGHT

... the impact that one life had and how glad they are to see him home, it kind of becomes something that brings that family together across the entire country.”

Her efforts with History Flight are quite different from her previous work in medieval archaeology. “To find any way of having an impact and doing something

good for living individuals and not just [writing] a line in a report that no one is going to read,” Gadis said, makes all the difference for her.

Much to the frustration of the entire History Flight team, the organization's recovery operations were temporarily shut down in March due to the coronavirus

pandemic. “I got the last plane out,” said Rossen. “I almost got stuck there,” he added.

“I was very sad because I felt I have left work unfinished. I was very unhappy about leaving. I tried my best to leave everything in good shape. We made sure that we had blue tarps down and before we ... filled everything in, we left good markers so we can go back and find the exact spots again so everything was done carefully. But I've never, believe it or not, in 45 years, I've never begun an excavation and then filled it in without completing it. I've never done that,” Rossen said.

Perez, who lives on Betio year-round, has continued to lead the locals who are employed by History Flight in projects that have improved the island. “Every day we try to do something positive with the community,” Perez said, adding that not unlike that of the Marine Corps, the History Flight mentality is to leave places where they are working better than they found them.

Rossen and his colleagues will resume their work as soon as travel restrictions are lifted. In the meantime, research and planning continues for future recovery operations in other locations. According to Noah and LeHew, they are in the planning phase for completing recovery operations in the Philippines where it is estimated that 10,000 U.S. servicemembers were never recovered after dying in Japanese prisoner of war camps there.

The logistics behind organizing recovery efforts are complicated, time-consuming and expensive. History Flight operations are paid for by private donations and from contracts with DPAA. “The mission is so huge,” said Noah. “There's 79,000 missing from World War II; there's 8,000 missing from Korea; there's 1,600 missing from Vietnam and 214 missing from the Cold War ... the amount of funding that's available ... is not anywhere close to what's necessary and so I always tell people if you like the mission, and you want to support the mission, to donate because the project has been chronically underfunded ever since the beginning to today,” Noah said.

At the office for History Flight, located in Fredericksburg, Va., there's a wall covered with the photographs of the Marines whose remains were left behind on Tarawa after the war. The men from Wendell Perkins' machine-gun squad are

“The amount of funding that's available ... is not anywhere close to what's necessary and so I always tell people if you like the mission, and you want to support the mission, to donate because the project has been chronically underfunded ever since the beginning to today,” — Mark Noah, History Flight Founder



The History Flight Tarawa field team gathers for a group photo after a repatriation ceremony in July 2019. The camaraderie among the group has been solidified as they search for missing men who gave their lives in battle. (Photo courtesy of History Flight)

included on the wall. And SgtMaj LeHew can tell you something about every one of these Marines as if they were the men he served with during his own 30 years in the Marine Corps. He and Perkins have developed a rapport; they even have similar enlistment stories. LeHew's mother didn't want him to become a Marine. Her brother was a Marine who served in the Pacific during WW II and she always said he came home a changed man. She didn't want that to happen to her son. As for Perkins, his father adamantly refused to give his permission for his son to join the Marine Corps when the war began. He had fought and been wounded at Belleau Wood and knew all too well what it meant to be a Marine in combat. In spite of the generation that separates LeHew and Perkins, when they talk to each other, they are just two Marines, reminiscing. "Instantly the age and everything goes out the window, and it's like you both went to boot camp together," said LeHew.

Perkins attended one of the funerals for a recovered Marine, who fought with him in 1943, but said that with the restrictions on large gatherings created by the coronavirus pandemic as well as the health risks for him, it's unlikely he will be able to see his friends Harold Hayden and Monk Galland laid to rest. Their



COURTESY OF HISTORY FLIGHT

Wendell Perkins was one of six veterans of the Battle of Tarawa who visited New Zealand and Betio in 2014 to see the work History Flight was doing to recover the remains of their fellow Marines who died during the battle. He is pictured here at the restored rail station at Camp Paekakariki, New Zealand.

remains were identified earlier this year, and funeral plans are pending.

For Mark Noah and his team at History Flight, their success in bringing solace to hundreds of families who have wondered about their loved ones for decades doesn't

mean they are satisfied. In fact, quite the opposite—those successes seem to fuel their drive. "You know there's so many missing persons cases to be completed so I can't imagine being able to get that completed in my lifetime," said Noah. "But ... if we continue full-time work on Tarawa, in five years we think that we can get the Tarawa project completed," he added.

Perkins still thinks about the men he went to war with, particularly the ones who didn't come home. When DPAA announces positive identification of Tarawa Marines who were previously unaccounted for, History Flight publishes each announcement on Facebook. The first person to pay his respects in the comment section is almost always Wendell Perkins, with his simple, but heartfelt message, "Welcome Home, Marine. Semper Fidelis."

For more information about History Flight, or to make a donation, visit: www.historyflight.com.

Author's note: Special thanks to Geoffrey Roecker of missingmarines.com as well as Ben Kristy and Owen Conner at the National Museum of the Marine Corps for assistance with research and photographs.

As Slink Fire Threatens California Training Center, Marines Respond

As wildfires raged across the state of California this summer, the Marines were on hand to assist. Marine Corps Crash Fire Rescue personnel with Marine Wing Support Squadron 373, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, I Marine Expeditionary Force arrived on scene Sept. 4 to support firefighting efforts for the Slink Fire in the area near Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center Bridgeport, Calif. They joined the interagency firefighting force that had been battling the fire since it started Aug. 29.

“The interagency requested support from the DOD for Crash Fire Rescue because of the increased number of aircraft supporting the fire moving toward the base,” said Colonel Daniel Wittnam, the commanding officer of MCMWTC.

The interagency force included firefighters from multiple state fire departments, the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management with whom Marines from MCMWTC integrated to battle the growing 16,000-acre fire that threatened training areas on the base that are important for Marine Corps service-level training.

“As a firefighter and as a Marine it feels pretty awesome to be able to be the first ones selected to come up here and provide this support on such short notice,” said Gunnery Sergeant John Anderson, the staff noncommissioned officer in charge of the Crash Fire Rescue detachment.

Anderson said that assisting all the agencies involved, working with aircrews from around the country, and helping the efforts to get the Slink Fire contained and extinguished was a satisfying mission.

The Crash Fire Rescue detachment integrated with the Aviation Operations Element of the interagency team responding to the fire and operated on an improvised airfield, utilizing two P-19R fire trucks operated by eight Marines.

“We’re supporting their landing zone ... operations in and out,” said Anderson during the detachment’s operations. “That ... involves having a crew on standby in case there’s any type of incident, fuel

PFC Osvaldo D. Vasquez, left, and other Crash Fire Rescue personnel with MWSS-373, 3rd MAW, conduct an equipment check at an interagency improvised airfield near Coleville, Calif., Sept. 6, in support of firefighting operations.



BENJAMIN PALADINO

Above: The Slink Fire burns near base housing at MCMWTC Bridgeport, Calif., Aug. 30. Marines integrated with multiple firefighting agencies from several states to help mitigate damage to the training areas aboard the installation.



CWO BOBBIE CURTIS, USMC

spill, hard landing, medical incident that happens within this LZ that we can respond to immediately.”

The training areas threatened by the Slink Fire are used for multiple mountaineering and cold weather warfare-focused courses for Marines, Sailors and other servicemembers from the U.S. and partner nations.

The primary exercise conducted at the training center is Mountain Exercise, a modernized, force-on-force event that utilizes the vast Mojave Desert training grounds at Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif.

CWO Bobbie Curtis, USMC

Professional Development Trip Marks 102 Years of Female Marines

It’s no secret that women make up a small percentage of the total force of the Marine Corps—roughly 8 percent.

World War I was the impetus for the first 305 women to enlist in the Marines. Today, 16,000 serve on active duty working in all combat-related occupational specialties. For the current generation, it is important to understand the history of those who came before them, in order to keep moving the legacy forward.

A group of 16 female Marines with Ammunition Company, 2nd Supply Battalion, 2nd Marine Logistics Group, traveled to the National Capital Region for a two-day professional development trip in August in honor of the 102nd anniversary of the enlistment of Opha May Johnson, the first female Marine.

Corporal Kaylynn Kalama and Cpl Rosalinda Hernandez were the driving force behind making the trip happen.

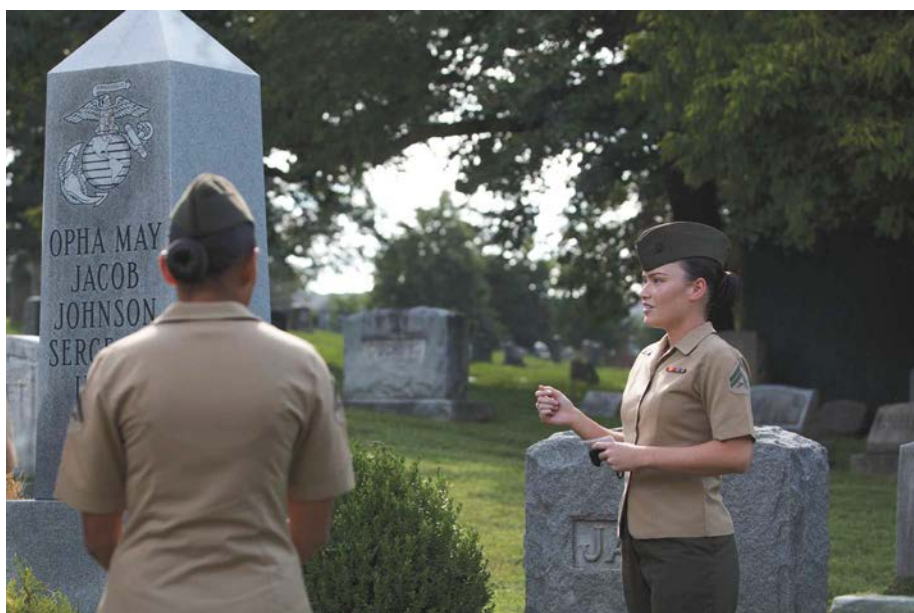
“This trip was essential for us because we needed to see that there are Marines, especially women, in high leadership positions who are looking out for us,” said Kalama.

The Marines had the opportunity to visit the Pentagon, Marine Barracks Washington, Opha May Johnson’s gravesite in St. Paul’s Rock Creek Cemetery, and the National Museum of the Marine Corps.

At the Pentagon, they heard from a panel consisting of Marines ranging from staff noncommissioned officers to general officers, all of whom shared experiences through open dialogue.

Among those on the panel were two prominent Marines who continue to pave the way for the upcoming generations: Lieutenant General Loretta Reynolds and Brigadier General Lorna Mahlock.

LtGen Reynolds is the Deputy Commandant for Information, Headquarters Marine Corps, and commander of U.S. Marine Corps Forces Strategic Command.



LCPL FATIMA VILLATORO, USMC

Above: Cpl Kaylynn Kalama with Ammunition Co, 2nd Supply Bn, 2nd MLG, right, gives a presentation at the burial site of Opha May Johnson, the first woman to enlist in the Marine Corps, as part of a professional development event in Washington, D.C., on Aug. 13.

Below: Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Troy E. Black talks with female Marines during a professional development event at the Pentagon, Arlington, Va., Aug. 13.



LCPL FATIMA VILLATORO, USMC

BGen Mahlock serves as the director of Information Command Control, Communications and Computers and the Department of the Navy Deputy Chief Information Officer of the Marine Corps.

“Overall this trip was important to me and my junior Marines because it’s important to see [women] being represented in places that we don’t get to see often, in this case, the Pentagon,” said Hernandez. “There is a lot of room for women to grow in the Marine Corps, but to see that there are women who are already in these positions is amazing.”

The panel shared with the visiting Marines their successes, failures and lessons

learned. This resonated with the Marines and prompted them to in turn share their struggles with the members of the panel. One struggle in particular was having a voice.

“This is their force,” said Major Sharon Sisbarro, a communication strategy and operations officer with the Communication Directorate, HQMC. “Part of what our efforts are as we try to incorporate diversity and inclusion is to make sure that every Marine knows that we are here to listen to them and that their contribution is seen as the strength that is strengthening our force.”

In the Marine Corps, initiative is one

of the traits that should be embodied by every leader. Taking the initiative to make a change and speak up about things that matter is what begins to make a difference.

“There are always going to be people who want to help you succeed and who went through the same struggles that you did,” said Hernandez. “You just have to make noise and make it known that you need the help to make a positive change.”

Kalama believes it’s up to her and other young female Marines to continue the legacy of those who paved the way.

“I don’t think I’ll ever get to experience anything like this in my Marine Corps career again, but I’m so grateful that I did,” said Kalama. “It was almost like seeing the past and present communicate about how far we’ve come and what we still have yet to accomplish.”

LCpl Fatima Villatoro, USMC

Setting the Example:

Marines Clean Up Kin Blue Beach

Reveille was at 5:30 a.m. on July 25. Platoon internal training with Combined Anti-Armor Team (CAAT) 1 had concluded the night prior. The Marines were all tired and ready to go home, but CAAT 1 had one more task to complete.

After spending three full days and nights patrolling and practicing basic infantry skills in the heat at Kin Blue Training Area, Okinawa, Japan, CAAT 1 spent the morning clearing the beach of

trash and debris that had washed up. Marines and Sailors that use the training area are expected to clean up after themselves after the completion of training, but CAAT 1 decided to take it one step further and clean the entire beach as well. The Marines were happy to volunteer and show their appreciation to the community.

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19, all personnel assigned to the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit were required to maintain a strict “bubble.” Interactions between MEU and non-MEU personnel were strictly prohibited following the appearance of case clusters throughout Okinawa. While unable to interact with anyone from the local community, the Marines of CAAT 1 tried to demonstrate gratefulness and respect for the island whenever possible through simple actions.

Although Kin Blue is a training area, each year in March the beach is opened up to the public for an event called “Hama Uri.” At the traditional Okinawan event, women go to the ocean to purify themselves by dipping their feet and hands in the water and to pray for their health. Camp Hansen and Kin Town have been opening Kin Blue to local residents during Hama Uri for more than 20 years.

“With all the negativity going on in the world, even one positive action can help in a major way,” said Sergeant Collin Rogers, a squad leader with CAAT 1. “As leaders,

we can’t just think about ourselves.” Noticing the beach was covered in trash that had washed up from the ocean, CAAT platoon leadership decided to leave the beach better than they found it in order to demonstrate respect for the environment they are allowed to operate in.

Gunnery Sergeant Steven Habon, CAAT 1 platoon sergeant, wants his up-and-coming leaders to know that this is the expectation for how Marine leaders are to act.

“Hopefully we become the example for the battalion,” said Habon. “Our goal is to inspire the units that come after us to demonstrate service through action in order to strengthen the bond between the Marine Corps and the people of Okinawa.”

“It really was a great way to end training,” said Sergeant Michael Asbell, a squad leader. “Given the current circumstances, I don’t think there’s a better way to show respect to the community.” The Marines of the 31st MEU hope that by similar actions, they can continue to express gratitude for the opportunity to be in Okinawa.

The 31st MEU, the Marine Corps’ only continuously forward-deployed MEU, provides a flexible force ready to perform a wide range of military operations as the premier crisis response force in the Indo-Pacific region. The 31st MEU has implemented strict health protection measures and will continue to conduct mission-essential training in support of regional security and stability.

LCpl Kolby Leger, USMC

Corporals Course Adapts To Meet Pandemic Guidelines

Marines with Corporals Course 4-20, Headquarters and Support Battalion, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., continued to train and learn about time-honored traditions despite the coronavirus pandemic. The Corporals Course is a professional military education course that continues young noncommissioned officers education in leading Marines.

During the three-week training course, Marines get a chance to learn more about the foundations of Marine Corps leadership, combat conditioning, joint operations, financial planning and more.

According to Sergeant Paul Sebastian, the head instructor for Corporals Course 4-20, Marines never stop training, and it’s vital that noncommissioned officers continue to learn about leadership fundamentals, core values and time-honored traditions.

“We have taken extra time and precautions while setting up the classes and training events to combat COVID, but



LCPL KOLBY LEGER, USMC

Marines with CAAT 1, BLT 2/4, 31st MEU clean the beach at Kin Blue, Okinawa, Japan, July 25. At the conclusion of their training, the unit picked up trash in an effort to leave the environment better than they found it.



LCPL ANDREW CORTEZ, USMC

Cpl Ivan Leon-Munoz, the class commander with Corporals Course 4-20, shoots an azimuth with a lensatic compass during land navigation training at MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., Aug. 17.

the instructors to learn and teach more training than in previous courses, but it allowed the instructors more time to mentor their Marines.”

Corporal Ivan Leon-Munoz, the class commander with Corporals Course 4-20, said that the training was more supervised—referring to enforcing social distancing and cleaning—than previous seminars and courses he’s attended, but that it didn’t lose its effectiveness.

“I think the Marine Corps is doing right by the Marines by continuing to train,” said Leon-Munoz. “This training helps build on the foundation of leadership and training we have already learned and built during our time in the Marine Corps. This training is something we will keep building on and start passing on to our Marines as leaders during the remainder of our time in the Marine Corps.”

LCpl Andrew Cortez, USMC



these are the future leaders of our Marine Corps and they should be given the same chances and training opportunities as the NCOs before them to ensure theirs and the Corps’ success.”

Throughout the course, the Marines followed social distancing guidelines and wore masks if they couldn’t maintain 6 feet between each other. As part of the

course, Marines went through physical training events like fireman carries, buddy carries and team exercises.

“One of the toughest things and ways we had to change this course was all the classes are being taught by the Marine instructors instead of bringing in subject matter experts in those different areas,” said Sebastian. “It was a challenge for

Crazy Caption Contest

Winner



AMY FORSYTHE

“Uh-Oh! No way am I wearing that ribbon!”

Submitted by:
John T. Komar
The Villages, Fla.

This Month’s Photo



CPL DALTON S. SWANBECK, USMC

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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.

FOOTBALL PHENOMS

Corps Has Fielded Gridiron Greats



LCPL SHALTIEL DOMINGUEZ, USMC

The MCB Camp Pendleton Spartans defeated the 11th Marine Cannon Cockers 26-7 during the first game of the Commanding General's Cup Camp Pendleton Tackle Football League in 2014.

By Keith Oliver

Already a combat-seasoned, decorated recon Marine sergeant at age 23, Clark Blake became a member of the Northeast Louisiana State College football team in 1966 less than one week after boarding a “freedom bird” from Vietnam.

He suited up for practice the day he arrived on campus in bayou country.

“True story: My Marines and I had just come back from a week’s patrolling and I came across an ALMAR in the head, of all places,” Blake said. “Seems Headquarters Marine Corps was granting early separation for any enlisted jarhead

who was within six months of his EAS, provided he had acceptance at a college or university,” recalled Blake.

“But the deadline was fast approaching and so was the first day of school,” he added.

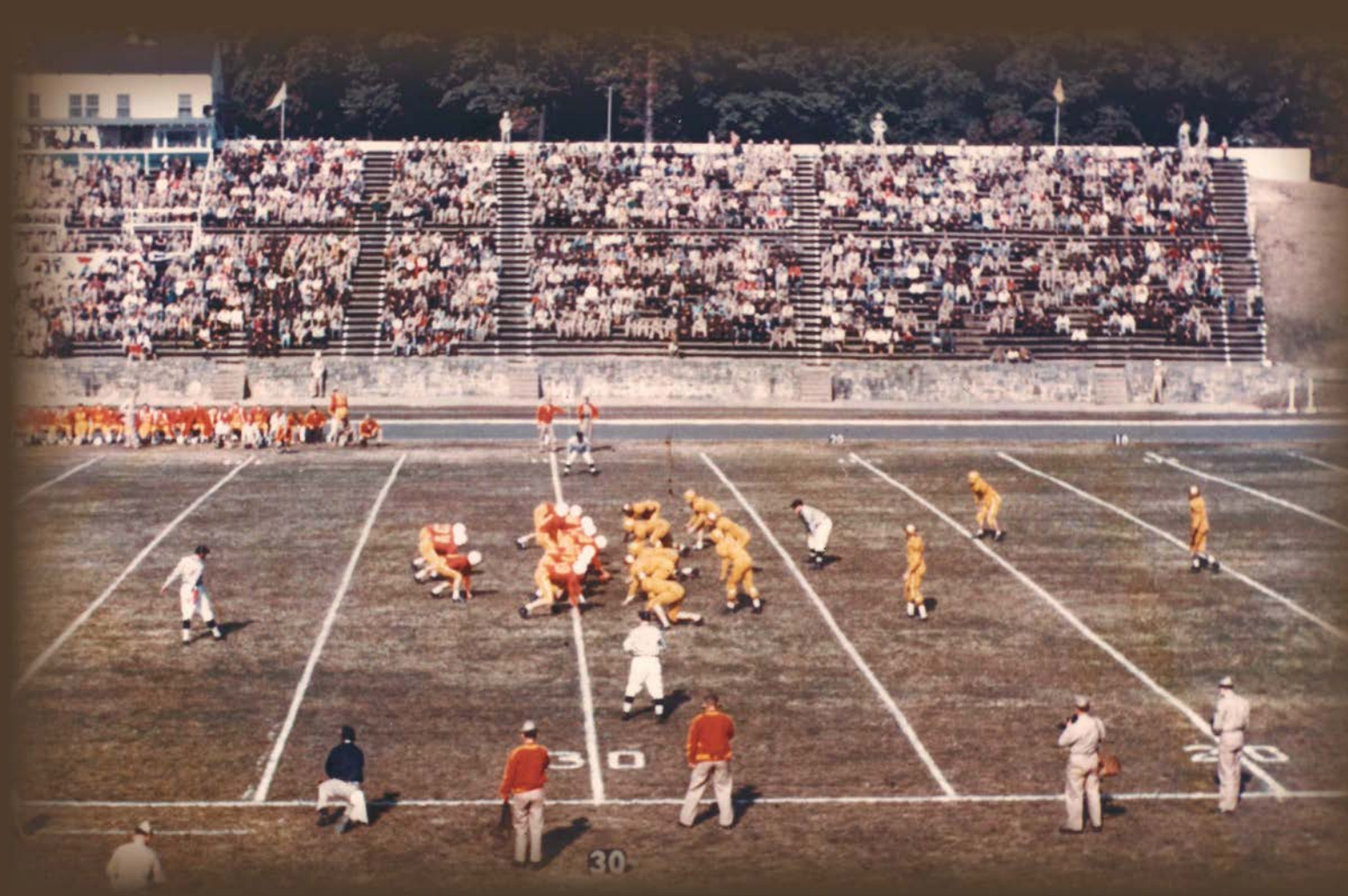
Fortunately, the coaches were more than ready to welcome their Marine. They already had film on the running back/linebacker/placekicker from his days at Fort Lauderdale High School. And they had been keeping up with Blake’s tackle football prowess at Camp Lejeune before he shipped off to Vietnam.

“Marine Corps football was a very big deal in the 1960s,” Blake explained. “We lined up against teams from other bases,

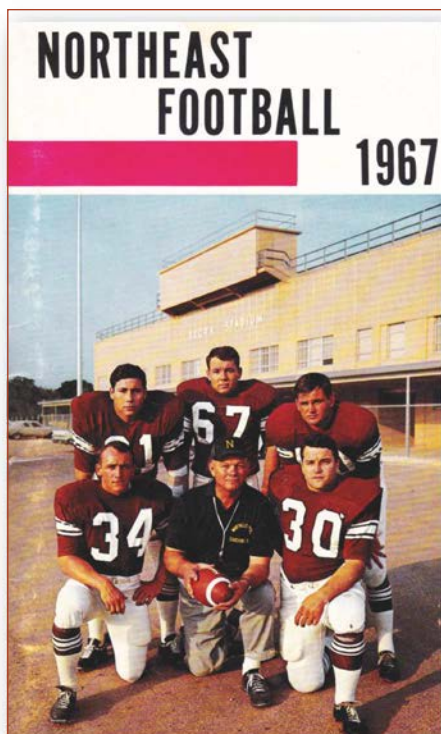
including Parris Island, Fort Benning and Fort Bragg. Shoot, the Quantico Marines even played a college schedule!”

He graduated from college with honors and returned to his native Florida to coach the Eustis Panthers to state championships in both football and soccer while garnering political science “Teacher of the Year” accolades from a half-dozen different entities over a 30-year tenure.

Some of today’s Marine veterans, including battle-tested Iraq and Afghanistan hands, have echoed the post-Corps football adventures of forebears like Blake, former Beirut hostage Steve Kirtley, and Mike Anderson, who never played high school football but eventually



During the heyday of the Marine football program, games were played at Butler Stadium, which was built when BGen Smedley Butler was the commander of Marine Corps Barracks Quantico. (USMC photo)



COURTESY OF KEITH OLIVER



COURTESY OF CINDY DIAN

Clark Blake and some of his teammates (left) from the Northeast Louisiana State College football team in the late 1960s. Blake (right) was a decorated recon Marine sergeant when he became a member of the Northeast Louisiana State College football team in 1966. He later had a successful career motivating students and athletes as a high school teacher and coach.

became a Denver Bronco and was the NFL Offensive Rookie of the Year. Among the more contemporary, dreams-realized crop of leathernecks are Appalachian State's Brian Jones and Wayne Parrish; Baylor linebacker Kyle Boyd; Palomar College wide receiver Kyran Griffin; Luke Boyd and Seth Newsome of LSU; and Middle Tennessee State's Steven Rhodes.

Then there are those who played ball *before* their Marine Corps service, including Saturday afternoon heroes and warrior-leaders of some renown:

LtGen Ronald L. Bailey-Star wide receiver at Tennessee's Austin Peay University who serves there now as vice-president of external affairs. Bailey led the 2nd Marine Regiment in the initial days of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003. He later was in charge of Marine Corps recruiting and commanded 1st Marine Division.

LtGen Emil R. "Buck" Bedard-Most Valuable Player on North Dakota's Mayville State University football team in 1964, he also garnered all-conference honors and induction into the Comets' Hall of Fame. Bedard served as the Commanding General, II Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) and commanded combat troops in Vietnam and Somalia.

LtGen Martin R. "Marty" Berndt-A running back at West Chester State in Pennsylvania who commanded the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit, Berndt received national acclaim for the rescue



Sgt John R. Chalk, a *Leatherneck* staff artist, created the cover for the September 1953 issue of the magazine.

of Air Force pilot Captain Scott O'Grady during the Bosnian War in 1990. He later commanded both II MEF and Marine Forces Atlantic.

LtGen Ernest C. "Big Ernie" Cheatham-A Loyola Marymount University gridder who saw heavy action in Korea and Vietnam, Cheatham played defensive tackle for the Pittsburgh Steelers and Baltimore Colts between wars. He was awarded the Navy Cross for his valor

in leading 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines at Hue City in 1968.

Col Joseph R. Clearfield-Playing football at Columbia and Union College, Clearfield also coached sprint football at the U.S. Naval Academy. His infantry portfolio includes two Bronze Stars with combat "V," honor grad from airborne school, and an award as the Outstanding Platoon Commander, 2ndMarDiv. He later served in Fallujah, Afghanistan, Liberia and Haiti.

Col Rich Crain-An acclaimed Duke linebacker with two decorated tours in Vietnam, Crain served as Sports Director of the Marine Corps, where he earned a reputation for fierce advocacy of USMC athletic programs.

LtGen John F. Goodman-Arizona State's quarterback for two years in the late 1960s, Goodman was drafted into the Army upon graduation where he fought with the 75th Ranger Regiment in Vietnam, earning a Purple Heart and Bronze Star with combat "V." He later served as a Marine fighter pilot after a brief stint with the New Orleans Saints.

Col Mark King-A center for the University of Florida who transferred to Troy University in 1973 where he served as team captain, King was named All-American and drafted by the Kansas City Chiefs. He commanded an anti-aircraft battery in Operation Desert Storm and was later the chief of staff for 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing. He also was later a championship high school coach and inducted into Troy University's Hall of Fame.

MajGen Paul E. Lefebvre-After playing football at Springfield College, he coached at Penn State for Joe Paterno. He was later awarded the Leftwich Trophy as the top infantry captain in the Marine Corps, and his deployments included Haiti, Panama, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq. Lefebvre retired as Commanding General, Marine Forces Special Operations Command.

Maj Ralph Sinke-The running back for the Ottawa Rough Riders of the Canadian Football League, the mustang major received five Purple Hearts during his Vietnam service. He later coached at Naval Academy Prep School in Newport, R.I., and went on to become a novelist and poet.

Col Ralph Tice-After kicking for the Citadel under Coach Bobby Ross, Tice went on to command a squadron in Operation Desert Storm and Marine Aircraft Group 29 at New River, N.C. The CH-53 pilot later returned to his alma mater as a Professor of Military Science and Commanding Officer of the Naval ROTC unit.

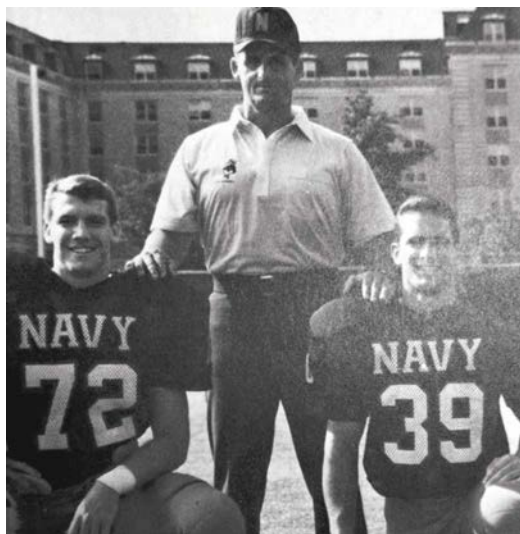


LtGen Emil "Buck" Bedard, USMC (Ret), delivers the keynote address at the dedication ceremony of the Military Honor Garden at Mayville State University, in Mayville, N.D., Oct. 17, 2015. Bedard was a standout lineman at the university before embarking on a distinguished military career.

America's football coaching ranks have also been enriched by a Devil Dog cadre beginning with college legends like Georgia's Vince Dooley and Iowa's Hayden Fry and professional head coaches Les Steckel (Minnesota Vikings) and J.D. Roberts, Bum Phillips and Jim Mora, all of whom coached a variety of teams but who each coached the New Orleans Saints at one point in their careers.

Retired Marine LtCol Lonnie Messick, now an assistant with the Hardrockers of the North Dakota School of Mines and Technology (Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference), found a special niche: preparing young men for next-level college football from the prep school ranks. A member of the Kent State staff for many years, the former Oklahoma Sooners linebacker and Vietnam-seasoned artillery officer is best known in coaching circles for his stunning successes at Marine Military Academy in Harlingen, Texas, and Hargrave Military Academy in Chatham, Va. At Hargrave, 95 percent of his charges played collegiately, including more than 60 players at the Division I-A level.

A coach from another generation was



COURTESY OF KEITH OLIVER

the first officer killed on Iwo Jima. 1stLt Jack Chevigny, USMCR had guided the NFL's Chicago Cardinals in 1932. Before that, he had the head job at the University of Texas where he led the Longhorns to victory over his own alma mater, Notre Dame (where he literally helped "win one for the Gipper" as depicted in the iconic film about coach Knute Rockne).

Chevigny had received a direct commission into the Marine Reserve in 1943 at age 36 and was coaching the Camp

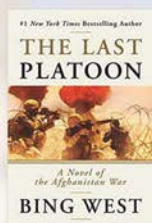
Coach Lonnie Messick has guided countless young football players over the years at the collegiate and prep school level.

Lejeune football team when his request for an overseas combat assignment was approved. He was killed on Red Beach on Feb. 19, 1945, (D-day) shortly after disembarking from the attack transport USS *Rutland* (APA-192) while serving as a liaison officer with the 27th Marine Regiment.

World War II was surely the high-water mark for football and the Marine Corps as it was for the other services. One unique distinction for the Marine Corps: Back-to-back Heisman Trophy winners, Georgia's Frank Sinkwich in 1942 and Notre Dame's Angelo Bertelli in 1943, were announced while each was undergoing recruit training at Parris Island.

Institutionally, the Marines' mother lode for all things football was and is the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Md., the nation's most productive source for regular commissions into the Marine Corps as well as the Navy. Perhaps Navy's biggest sensation since Roger Staubach was last season's quarterback, Malcolm Perry, a Marine second lieutenant who

HAPPY 245TH BIRTHDAY, MARINES, FROM YOUR FAVORITE AUTHORS



THE LAST PLATOON
BING WEST



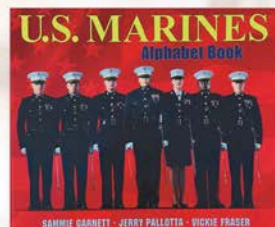
DEVIL'S DEN
LTCOL DAVID BROWN, USMC (RET)



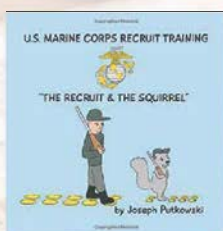
AN AMERICAN STORY
FOSTER G. ULRICH, JR.



VALOR IN ACTION
JANE WATERHOUSE



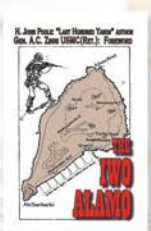
U.S. MARINES ALPHABET BOOK
SAMMIE GARNETT, JERRY PALLOTTA,
VICKIE FRASER



THE RECRUIT AND THE SQUIRREL
JOSEPH PUTKOWSKI



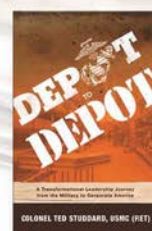
SUPER SQUAD
H. JOHN POOLE



THE IWO ALAMO
H. JOHN POOLE



BLACK ANGEL
JACK DAYTON



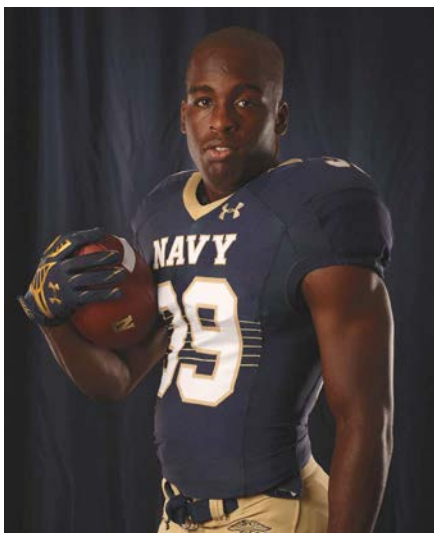
DEPOT TO DEPOT
COL TED STUDDARD, USMC (RET)

For our digital readers, please click on the book cover on where to buy. Supporting the Marine Corps in every clime and place!



Above: Malcolm Perry, a standout player for the United States Naval Academy, led his team to 11 wins during his senior season scoring 21 touchdowns as a receiver. He was later drafted by the NFL's Miami Dolphins.

Below: Marine captain and Naval Academy grad Shakir Robinson played defensive back for the Midshipmen.



made the roster of the NFL's Miami Dolphins after being chosen as a wide receiver in the 7th round of the NFL draft in the spring. Perry, whose parents are retired Army NCOs, led his team to 11 wins his senior season. He scored 21 touchdowns, rushed for 2,107 yards and had a passing efficiency rating of 181.58—school records all. He also led the nation with 26 “explosive rushes” (runs of 20 yards or more) and was the first quarterback in the history of the Football Bowl subdivision to post 2,000 running yards in a single season.

Consistent with the latest Secretary of Defense guidance, Perry is a member of the Marine Corps Individual Ready Reserve, authorized to defer his active-duty commitment until his professional football career is concluded.

As the Academy's Senior Marine Corps Representative as well as the dean of humanities and social sciences, Texas A&M graduate Colonel Jeff Smitherman is in charge of the overall leatherneck effort which includes personally serving as the officer representative of USNA's varsity football team. The artillery officer and former CO of the 6th District of

Marine Corps Recruiting Command is “especially pleased to see a consistently large number of Marine Corps accessions among our football players and other varsity athletes and throughout the Brigade of Midshipman, overall.

“The credit goes to the Marine staff and faculty,” Smitherman said. “They are outstanding role models, through and through.”

Marine captain and Naval Academy graduate Shakir Robinson, a logistics officer assigned as the Maintenance Management Officer for the 1stMarDiv at Camp Pendleton, was a Navy defensive back who unabashedly leans on his football experience every day.

“It's all about the team,” he said. “We are blessed to be able to support and encourage magnificent young Marines. To watch them get after it by helping each other out, by embracing the importance of each individual's contribution to the overall mission, is a joy to behold.”

Author's bio: Retired Marine Col Keith Oliver served in the Corps from 1972-2004. He had his first Leatherneck byline in 1974 when he was a sergeant.



UPCOMING TOURS

FEB 16–MAR 1, 2021
Friends & Families Vietnam

FEB 20–MAR 4, 2021
Tet Offensive & Battle of Hue
City—I-Corps

MAR 22–29, 2021
Iwo Jima Return to The
Black Sands

APR 17–30, 2021
VHPA Saigon, Delta & III
Corps
APR 13–18 Pre-Tour Dalat

APR 17–30, 2021
Friends & Families Vietnam

NEW MAY 1–7, 2021
Civil War Adventure “North
to Gettysburg” Bull Run-
Gettysburg-Antietam

MAY 22–31, 2021
WWI Devil Dogs in France
Belleau Wood-Reims

MAY 27–JUN 9, 2021
D-Day: 77th Anniversary of
“The Longest Day-PLUS”
Normandy-Battle Bulge-
Paris

JUN 1–9, 2021
D-Day: “The Longest Day”
Normandy-Paris

JUN 12–25, 2021
Cathedrals of Northern
France—Normandy

JUL 9–25, 2021
Napoleon & Waterloo

AUG 1–9, 2021
Guadalcanal Op Watchtower

AUG 15–29, 2021
Germany—“Rise & Fall of the
Third Reich”

AUG 29–SEP 7, 2021
Footsteps of Easy Company
D-Day Normandy & The
Bulge

AUG 25–SEP 6, 2021
Vietnam Return to I-Corps

SEP 8–22, 2021
Ireland—USMC “Irish
Marines”
WWII Dublin, Belfast & Derry

SEP 9–14, 2021
Midway Island Return
Pearl Harbor & Waikiki

SEP 13–25, 2021
WWII Concentration Camps
& the Holocaust

SEP 29–OCT 10, 2021
Italy WWII: Salerno to Venice

SEP 29–OCT 10, 2021
England WWII: Portsmouth-
London-Duxford-
Stonehenge

OCT 10–22, 2021
China “Imperial Jewels”
Beijing-Xian-Shanghai

NOV 8–20, 2021
Taste of Asia Saigon:
Vientiane-Phnom Penh-
Bangkok-Singapore

NOV 27–DEC 8, 2021
Vietnam Delta to DMZ
Post: Dec 9–14 Laos &
Cambodia

DEC 4–11, 2021
80th Anniversary of Wake
Island: Guam & Pearl Harbor

MAR 22–29, 2022
Iwo Jima Return to The
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Leatherneck Laffs



"The helicopter's two hours late. Let's try Uber."



"I started a *what* last night?"



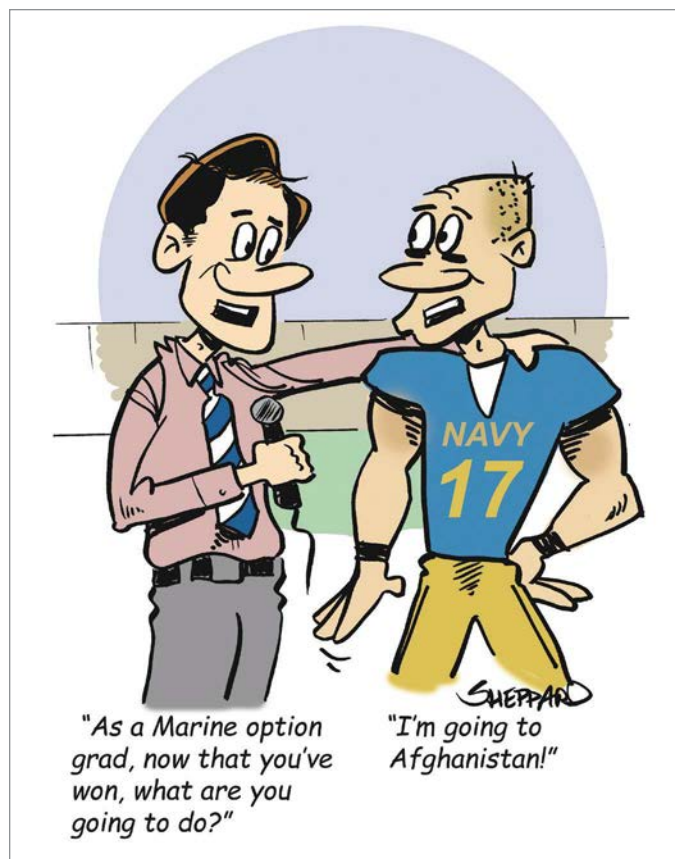
"There's no Republicans, Democrats, liberals or conservatives here. You're all maggots!"



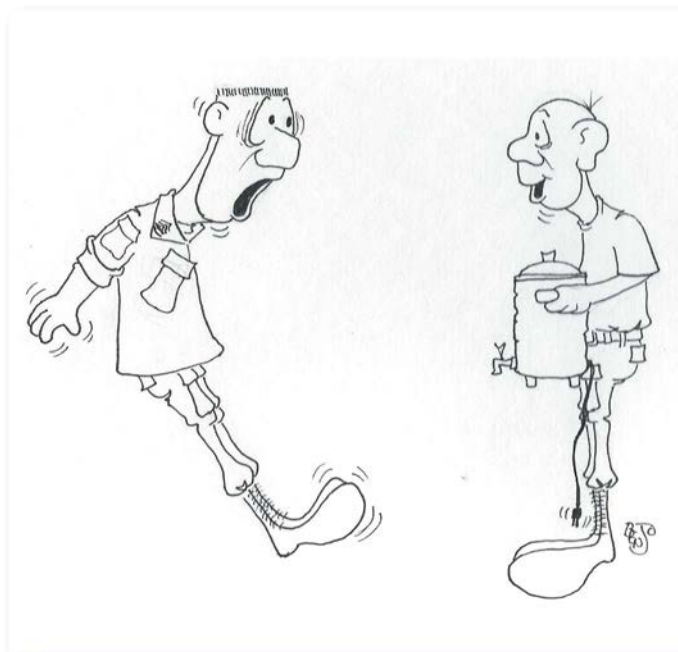
"At least the Marines are open to both political sides."



"Perkins, your transfer to the air wing came through."



"I said, send up the breacher."



"I cleaned your coffee pot for you, gunny."

Free a Marine to Fight: The Silent Legacy of Sergeant Lena Riggi



Sgt Lena Mae Basilone, USMC (WR), prepares to christen the destroyer USS *Basilone* (DD-824) at the Consolidated Steel Corporation shipyard in Orange, Texas, Dec. 21, 1945. The ship was named in honor of her late husband, GySgt John J. Basilone, who received the Medal of Honor for his actions on Guadalcanal. He was killed during the Battle of Iwo Jima in February 1945.

By GySgt Alison V. Bardeguez,
USMC

Editor's note: The following article received an honorable mention in the 2020 Leatherneck Writing Contest. Major Richard A. "Rick" Stewart, USMC (Ret) sponsored the contest, which is open to enlisted Marines, through the Marine Corps Association and Foundation. Upcoming issues of Leatherneck will feature other honorable mention entrants.

Time abruptly stood still as she watched the Western Union telegram solemnly held out toward her shaking hands. With trembling fingers, she opened the note and focused on the words that would change the rest of her life: "Deeply regret to inform you that your husband, Gunnery Sergeant John Basilone, USMC, was killed in action

the 19th of February, 1945, at Iwo Jima, Volcano Islands, in the performance of his duty and service to his country. When information is received regarding burial, you will be notified. Please accept my heartfelt sympathy. Signed, General Alexander Vandegrift." Sergeant Lena Riggi-Basilone's seven-month marriage to the man she loved had abruptly ended. Her "Johnny" was gone. With it, her legacy would slip quietly into the shadows, but, in due time, would be rediscovered and told through friends and family who knew and loved her.

Lena Mae Riggi was born on an unusually cold day in Portland, Ore., on March 7, 1913, to Italian immigrant parents. Lena, the fifth child of James and Virginia Riggi, had four older brothers, Peter, Samuel, Paul and James, and one younger, Frank who was born in 1914. Her parents had immigrated to the United

States and moved to the city of Portland, but soon found themselves on an onion farm just north of Salem, Ore.

Lena and her brothers learned the value of hard work from their industrious parents, but according to her great-nephew in an interview he gave later, the family always made time for fun. Lena was both stunning in beauty and fiery in spirit and was very fond of her family. Her brother, Frank Riggi, was an amateur boxer and she loved watching him display his skill at fairs. In the early 1900s, it was common for community fairs to set up boxing rings where nearly anyone could try their hand. Lena, the energetic firebrand that she was, loved to instigate these matches for her brother.

She eventually left her family's farm and moved back to Portland to attend business school. Her mother Virginia died in 1936, and only two years later her father, James, died. The Riggi children were on their own.

When the Marine Corps created the Women's Reserve, Lena Riggi was quick to sign up. Later on, her husband would proudly proclaim, "She joined the Corps because she wanted to be with the top outfit in the war effort." Lena's fighting spirit would become what John Basilone loved and admired in his wife.

Women in the newly founded Reserve were able to fill more than 200 different types of jobs from stenographer to auto mechanic, and Lena Riggi was assigned as a field cook on Camp Pendleton in 1943. She attained the rank of sergeant with her fierce attitude and belief that she could do anything that the men could do. She was not a woman who gossiped and did not care to be bothered by whispers and nonsense. So when Sergeant Giovanni "John" Basilone came back to Camp Pendleton after traveling the country selling war bonds, his fame and the fans that came along with it did not thrill her.

The first time John had laid eyes on her, she was working in the mess tent while he was making his way down the food line. "She was dark—Italian or Spanish kind of dark," John Basilone had detailed. "Black



COURTESY OF ST. MARY STAR OF THE SEA CATHOLIC CHURCH

GySgt John Basilone and Sgt Lena Riggi were married on July 10, 1944, in Oceanside, Calif. The small ceremony, officiated by Father Paul Bradley, was attended by the couple's closest Marine Corps friends.

hair, dark eyes, and she walked around like she owned the place. Damn, I had to get to know that one." They shared a glance, but her stoic and unmoved eyes intrigued him significantly for it was then that he knew she was tough. While the other women giggled, gossiped and flirted with him, Lena was unimpressed. Once the women would exhaust all their prattle, she would retort, "So what?" John knew immediately that this was the girl for him.

The two met again in February of 1944, and John Basilone mustered the courage to ask Lena for her number. She gave it to him, and they scheduled a first date to a movie on Camp Pendleton. The sun shone brightly when they met, and it was a beautiful afternoon when she approached

him. She never made an overly dramatic attempt to impress him, and she walked without sway as if she was on her way to somewhere of importance, with her black hair curled and her big beautiful smile that John said could be seen from a mile away. He admired her work ethic from the farm and the upbringing they had in common as Italian Catholics. The thing he loved most about her was that she did not ask him about his Medal of Honor or his war stories. As the bright day transformed

into the soft warm colors of dusk, the two began to feel a deeper connection than either one of them had expected.

Lena and John continued to court that spring. John was promoted to gunnery sergeant on March 1, declining an offer to be commissioned as a second lieutenant. As the spring came, John's field training increased, as did his attachment to Lena. John fell in love and dreamed of a forever life with the beautiful woman who captured his heart. Lena's visits with John started to become scarce as his training became exceedingly exhausting, but they always had time to express that they were on each other's mind. John proposed to Lena, and she accepted. Their wedding date was set for July 10, 1944.

The ceremony was held at St. Mary's Catholic Church, nestled in downtown Oceanside and only a few blocks from the sea, and was officiated by Father Paul Bradley. It was a beautiful and modest wedding, with attendees including John's commanding officer, executive officer, Lena's sergeant, and other Marines with whom they served. Sgt Frank Budemy escorted Lena down the aisle to John and give her away. Lena herself was humorously 30 minutes late due to a miscommunication with the Oceanside taxicab company. With little money to spare, they were able to feed their guests and host a small reception in Carlsbad and spend the night at the hotel where the reception took place. The next day, the

Later on, her husband would proudly proclaim, "She joined the Corps because she wanted to be with the top outfit in the war effort." Lena's fighting spirit would become what John Basilone loved and admired in his wife.



John Basilone



COURTESY OF ST. MARY, STAR OF THE SEA CATHOLIC CHURCH

GySgt John Basilone and Sgt Lena Basilone on their wedding day in Oceanside, Calif., before GySgt Basilone returned to the fighting in the Pacific.

two ventured off to Portland by train for an impromptu honeymoon where they visited with Lena's brother James, his wife and their 8-year-old son Robert. Robert Riggi, wild with aspirations and admiration, spoke to Lena and John about joining the service. John, with humility and pride, looked at the young boy and smiled. "By all means you should join the service. But it had damn well be to the Marines," he said. John would not live long enough to discover that in 1955, the young Robert Riggi would enlist in the Marine Corps and serve five years.

Lena and John attended many of his events together. Just being in his presence brought her joy. John informed Lena soon after the wedding that his Division was shipping out to the Pacific, and he was going with them. They began to discuss their life after the war—how they would spend their time and what they would

name their children. "She held up pretty well while we talked. She didn't cry and pretended she was okay, but she was no poker player. But I was. I told her, 'I'm coming back,' and she believed me."

On Aug. 12, 1944, Lena's beloved husband John boarded USS *Baxter* (APA-94) and headed toward his untimely demise. On Feb. 19, 1945, on the blood-stained black sands of Iwo Jima, John Basilone gave the ultimate sacrifice for his country and the Corps, which he loved with every fiber of his being. Survivors of Iwo Jima, men who knew and served beside John, would remember how fast the word of his death traveled up the mountain. "Basilone got it," they recalled in a short documentary by Diane Hawkins, a niece of John.

It was not until March 7, Lena's 32nd birthday, that she received the telegram of her husband's death. Lena traveled to his hometown of Raritan, N.J., where she

met his parents for the first time. It was a somber meeting, and Lena presented his parents with both his Medal of Honor and the \$10,000 life insurance money she had received.

Lena did not attend either of her husband's burials; the first in Raritan in April 1948 and his reburial at Arlington later the same year. Lena seemed to disappear from view and both the Riggi family and the Basilone family feel that her refusal to move to Raritan to be cared for by John's parents may have fueled some tension between Lena and his parents. The last public appearance Lena made was on Dec. 21, 1945, when she christened the destroyer named after her late husband.

Settling back into civilian life in California, Lena bought a house in Lakewood, and found a job with an electrical generating company. She never remarried,



Above: St. Mary, Star of the Sea Catholic Church in Oceanside, Calif., the church where GySgt John Basilone and Sgt Lena Basilone were married.

Right: Basilone demonstrated a modicum of modesty when he wrote to his mother, Mrs. Salvatore Basilone: "Dear Mom, I am very happy, for the other day I received the Congressional Medal ..."

Her long-time friend Barbara Garner spoke highly of Lena saying, "When Lena saw a need, she made sure to fill that need." Lena spent many days caring for those around her, and her relentless ability to make a positive impact in the lives of many would follow her in passing.

but her family and friends hold firm to the conviction that Lena led an extraordinarily fulfilled life after the Marine Corps and that she felt as though she had already had the best in that "great love only happens once." Lena was an active volunteer in her community, assisting

patients at the Veterans' hospital in Long Beach, the American Veterans Auxiliary, and the Women Marines Association. She was known for hosting large gatherings with many friends, members of her congregation and neighbors. Her long-time friend Barbara Garner spoke highly of Lena saying, "When Lena saw a need, she made sure to fill that need." Lena spent many days caring for those around her, and her relentless ability to make a positive impact in the lives of many would follow her in passing.

On June 11, 1999, Lena Riggi-Basilone died after having heart bypass surgery. "The saddest days of my life," Barbara recalled, "were seeing Lena's normally fighting spirit wane after her surgery." While Lena was in the hospital, the Department of Veterans Affairs had presented her with the offer to be buried in Arlington next to her husband, but she refused, not wanting to cause trouble for anyone.

Lena never removed her wedding band from her loving "Johnny" and was buried with it still on her finger in Riverside,



Calif. "She was as fun, compassionate, and loving as she was tough." Her humility and resilience, love and legacy will continue to pass on through many generations of the Riggi family.

Author's bio: GySgt Alison Bardeguez is from Astoria, Queens, N.Y., and now serves as the avionics division chief for VMM-774. She has served as an avionics technician for the CH-46E and MV-22B and runs a women's veterans organization called Sisters in Arms.

Leatherneck Laffs



"It's just boiler plate stuff. You don't need to read it.
Just sign at the bottom and you're good to go."

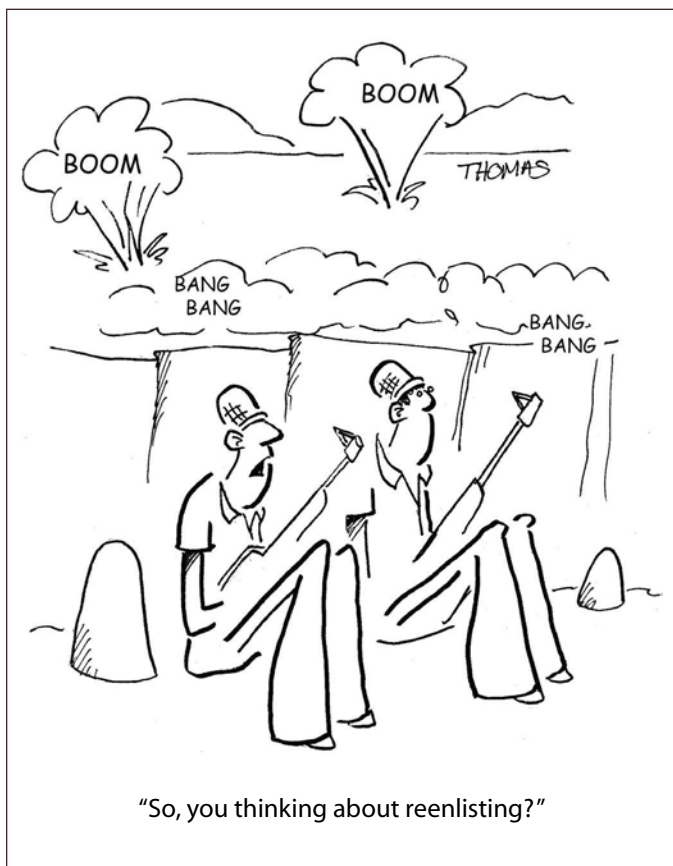


"I can't wait to see my recruiter again."



"At this rate, by the time you reach the end,
your enlistment will be up!"





Passing the Word

Compiled by Sara W. Bock



The next-generation uniformed services identification card for military dependents, retirees, and other cardholders includes enhanced safety features and will look similar to this sample version, which resembles the CAC used by servicemembers and DOD civilians.

New ID Cards Being Issued for Military Family Members, Retirees

The Defense Department began issuing next-generation uniformed services identification cards on July 31, marking the first time since 1993 that changes to the card have been made.

Michael Sorrento, director of the Defense Manpower Data Center, provided details during a Pentagon briefing about the new ID cards, which affect military dependents, retirees and other eligible cardholders.

According to Sorrento, the new card transitions from the current laminated paper card to one made from much more durable plastic material, similar to what's used for the common access card (CAC) used by servicemembers and DOD civilians. The new cards also feature enhanced security measures that will "deter counterfeiting and fraud."

"It's essentially the CAC card without the chip," said Sorrento.

Although the new ID cards are available

now, as of late August only about 20 Real-Time Automated Personnel Identification Card System (RAPIDS) sites were offering the new cards as new equipment is required to produce them. All RAPIDS sites worldwide likely will have the equipment by the end of 2020. However, to reduce foot traffic—particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic—Sorrento said that unless a card is about to expire, individuals should plan to wait until summer 2021 to get a new one. The complete transition to the new ID card is targeted for January 2026. In the meantime, the old version of the card will be accepted.

DOD is looking at future capabilities that can be provided with the new ID cards, said Sorrento. For example, users of the card may eventually be able to go online and order a card through a proper vetting process and have it directly distributed to them by mail, rather than sitting in a RAPIDS office and waiting for a card to be made.

David Vergun, DOD

Be Prepared: Payroll Tax Deferral Subject to Repayment In First Quarter of 2021

A Presidential Memorandum to temporarily defer Social Security tax withholdings was issued Aug. 8, following guidance from the Internal Revenue Service released on Aug. 28. This tax deferral is designed to provide relief during the COVID-19 pandemic.

What this means is that the Social Security tax, listed on the Leave and Earnings Statement (LES) of military personnel and civilian Department of Defense employees, will not be paid to the government for the remainder of 2020. This applies to military personnel with a monthly rate of basic pay less than \$8,666.66 and civilian employees with wages, subject to OASDI, that are less than \$4,000 in any given pay period.

All servicemembers and civilian employees that are subject to this tax deferral must be aware and understand that *they will have to repay it* between January and April 2021. To recoup the deferred tax, the amount of Social Security tax withheld during those months will most likely be double what is normally paid. For example, if a Marine's August LES stated a deduction of \$250 in Social Security tax, then there will be an increase of \$250 each month from October through December. Then, beginning in January, there would be a decrease of that same amount, as well as the \$250 that normally would be deducted—resulting in a decrease of \$500 in pay each month.

The deferral and repayment will be

Due to a payroll tax deferral, the paychecks of military personnel and civilian DOD employees will be higher through December, but the deferred amount will have to be repaid during the first quarter of 2021.

SOCIAL SECURITY PAYROLL TAX DEFERRAL

For most military members and civilian employees

September - December, 2020

automatic and individuals cannot opt out. It is highly recommended that all those who are subject to this tax deferment routinely check their LES and plan to see lower paychecks from January through April. For more information on the tax deferral, visit <https://www.dfas.mil/taxes/Social-Security-Deferral/>.

DFAS/Maj Joshua MacDonald, USMC

Operation Homefront Solicits Nominations for 2021 Military Child of the Year

The nomination period for Operation Homefront's 2021 Military Child of the Year Awards program is open through Dec. 7. The award is the nation's premier celebration of the achievements of military children.

The annual awards program recognizes eight outstanding young people, ages 13 to 18, who are legal dependents of servicemembers or military retirees. Seven recipients who demonstrate resiliency, leadership and achievement during their parents' military service will be chosen, one from each branch of the Armed Forces—the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, National Guard and Space Force. The eighth award is the Military Child of the Year Award for Innovation, presented by global technology and consulting firm Booz Allen Hamilton. This award goes to a military child who has designed a bold and creative solution to address a local, regional or global challenge.

All eight recipients will be invited to attend an awards gala on April 8, 2021, in Arlington, Va., where they will each receive a \$10,000 prize and a laptop computer. If COVID-19 conditions permit, Operation Homefront will provide airfare and lodging for the award recipient and one adult guardian and guest for a two-day visit to the Washington, D.C., area. The recipient of the innovation award will also meet with a team of Booz Allen Hamilton employees for project support.

"As we start our annual Military Child of the Year award nomination process, all on our end eagerly look forward to hearing more amazing stories of how our nominees are able to excel in school, in extracurricular activities and as leaders and volunteers in their communities, all while facing the challenges inherent in growing up in a military family," said Brigadier General John I. Pray Jr., USAF (Ret), President and CEO of Operation Homefront. "This year is particularly unique as many families are facing a variety of unexpected issues, but we fully expect to continue to see examples of nominees exhibiting the resiliency and creativity for which our military children are well



COURTESY OF OPERATION HOMEFRONT

Niklas Cooper, the 2020 Operation Homefront Military Child of the Year for the Marine Corps, is a student at Lejeune High School at Camp Lejeune, N.C., and has contributed hundreds of volunteer hours mentoring, tutoring, and participating in community projects. Operation Homefront is soliciting nominations for next year's award recipients through Dec. 7.

known. I want to take this opportunity to encourage anyone who knows an extraordinary military child to nominate him or her for our very special recognition program.

Whether in schools or honor societies, civic associations and clubs, sports or volunteerism, you never have to look far to find an exemplary military child who thrives in the face of challenges. Ideal candidates for the award demonstrate resilience and strength of character and embody leadership within their families and communities.

Founded in 2002, Operation Homefront is a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to build strong, stable and secure military families so that they can thrive—not simply struggle to get by—in the communities they have worked so hard to protect.

To nominate a child for the award, visit <http://www.militarychildoftheyear.org>, and click the "Submit" tab.

Operation Homefront



DPAA Accounts for Tarawa Marines

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced the positive identification of two Marines who were killed in the Battle of Tarawa.

Private First Class Frank L. Athon Jr., 29, of Cincinnati, was assigned to Company A, 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division when he landed on the island of Betio in the Tarawa Atoll of the Gilbert Islands. He died on Nov. 22, 1943, the third day of the battle.

PFC Thomas F. Johnson, 18, of San Jose, Calif., was assigned to Co B, 1st Bn, 6th Marines, 2ndMarDiv when he landed on Betio. He died on Nov. 23, 1943, the fourth day of the battle.

PFC Athon and PFC Johnson were reported to have been buried in Row D of the East Division Cemetery, later renamed Cemetery 33. In 1946, the 604th Quartermaster Graves Registration Company centralized all the American remains at the Lone Palm Cemetery for later repatriation. Almost half of the known casualties, however, were never found, and in 1949, PFC Athon and PFC Johnson were declared “non-recoverable.”

In 2009, History Flight, a nonprofit organization, located a site on Betio where numerous casualties had been buried after the battle. The remains were recovered by History Flight and transferred to the DPAA laboratory at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii.

To identify Athon's remains, DPAA scientists used dental and anthropological analysis as well as circumstantial and material evidence. To identify Johnson's remains, DPAA scientists used mitochondrial DNA analysis in addition to dental and anthropological analysis, circumstantial and material evidence.

To read more about History Flight's mission to locate and recover the remains of U.S. military personnel, see the article “Until They All Come Home: History Flight is Dedicated to Locating, Excavating Remains of Missing Marines,” on page 36.

Compiled from DPAA News Releases

Philip J. Burr

Philip J. Burr was the recipient of the Navy Cross for his bravery and leadership under fire during the Korean War. While his platoon was repelling an enemy attack, he refused evacuation for his wounds and instead continued to lead his Marines in battle. He died in March in Medfield, Mass., at the age of 90.

On Oct. 6, 1952, Second Lieutenant Burr was the platoon commander for Company C, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, 1st Marine Division (Reinforced) at Outpost Seattle along the Jamestown Line in Korea. When the enemy launched a well-coordinated artillery and infantry attack, Burr made his way through trenches encouraging his men, carrying ammunition, and organizing the defense. He also supervised the evacuation of wounded Marines.

According to the award citation, “Although painfully wounded, he steadfastly refused to accept medical attention and continued to direct his men in the defense of the position. Hurling to the ground and wounded a second time by the explosion

of an enemy shell while engaged in carrying ammunition to his men, he continued to supervise the supply of ammunition until he was again seriously wounded. Immobilized by his many wounds and evacuated to the medical aid bunker, he skillfully controlled the defense while receiving his treatment from a corpsman and maintained complete charge of his unit until relieved by another officer.”

After the war, he returned to teach school in his hometown of Medfield, where he had been a star athlete and student during his high school years. He spent many years as an educator and football coach at two different high schools in the area and also was involved with local youth hockey and baseball leagues.

Burr was a member of the American Legion and AMVETS and he volunteered his time to ensure that veterans received proper recognition.

“He was a good friend and a proud Marine,” said Frank Iafolia, a Marine veteran who also lives in Medfield. Beginning in the late 1980s, Burr was always a guest of honor at Iafolia's Marine Corps

Birthday celebrations and he participated in community service projects.

“When I began collecting Toys for Tots in 2001, Phil would always be there to donate, encourage and just be Phil—not only with a Semper Paratus but also ‘God Bless,’” said Iafolia. “Each Memorial Day when I place flags and markers on veterans’ graves in Medfield, Phil would always take the time to compliment how good they look. Again with a ‘God Bless.’”

Nancy S. Lichtman

Eric M. Hammel

Military historian and prolific author Eric Hammel, who wrote about the Marine Corps with such authenticity that many believed he was a veteran Marine, died Aug. 25 at the age of 74.

Hammel developed his passion for military history at a young age. When he was 12, he was confined to bed for a week with a childhood illness, and to pass the time, he read the book “Day of Infamy,” by Walter Lord. A few years later, when he was 15, he began writing the piece that eventually became “Guadalcanal: Starvation Island.”

After earning a degree in journalism from Temple University, he and his wife spent time living on a kibbutz in Israel. After their return to the United States, they settled in the San Francisco Bay area, where Hammel opened a small advertising agency. In his spare time, he continued his pursuit of bringing the stories of Marines at war to life with books like “76 Hours: The Invasion of Tarawa,” “Chosin,” and “The Root: The Marines in Beirut.”

Following the success of “Chosin,” he turned his full attention to writing and publishing, establishing Pacifica Press, which later became Pacifica Military History. Hammel wrote 40 books and at least 70 magazine articles. He had a longtime professional relationship with *Leatherneck*, and his work was regularly featured in the magazine. He also served a brief stint as a contributing editor.

“The first book I read after I made the decision to become a Marine was Eric Hammel's ‘The Root: The Marines in Beirut,’ and I've been privileged to work with him throughout my tenure as editor of *Leatherneck*,” said Colonel Mary H. Reinwald, USMC (Ret). “For someone who never wore our uniform, Eric Hammel has done as much as anyone to tell the story of Marines.”

Nancy S. Lichtman

MSG Leo Fitzpatrick, 80, of Newington, Conn. He served in the Marine Corps from 1960-1966 as a combat correspondent and was assigned to Armed Forces Radio and TV in Vietnam and Okinawa. He later served in the Army Reserve and owned and operated a photography business. He was a member of the VFW and the MCL Hardware City Det.

Mario Hernandez, 64, of Los Lunas, N.M. He enlisted after high school and later had a career as an auto mechanic.

Cpl David J. Lang, 79, of Grand Rapids, Mich. He enlisted after his high school graduation in 1958 and served three years. He was a past commandant of the MCL Fred Cochran Det. and was a member of the MCA&F.

Stuart B. "Stu" Milam, 81, of Santa Fe, N.M. He enlisted after his high school graduation. He later had a career with the Department of Energy in the nuclear weapons program.

Michael Perez, 42, of Albuquerque, N.M. During his 22 years in the Marine Corps he was assigned to Light Armored Reconnaissance units and served on several MEUs. He also served in Kosovo. He was an infantryman with 1/5 when he deployed to Iraq, where he was wounded. He served as a recruiter in Kansas City,

Mo., and in Albuquerque. He worked as an actor and had small parts in the movie and TV productions including "Lone Survivor" and "Better Call Saul."

Edward Postel, 89, of Costa Mesa, Calif. His nine years in the Marine Corps included service in Korea. He later had a career in law enforcement with the Orange County Marshal's Department.

Jack J. Rasmussen, of Manti, Utah. He was a Marine who served in the South Pacific during WW II and saw action on Bougainville, Guadalcanal and Guam. He was wounded during the fighting on Iwo Jima.

Capt John P. Stone Sr., 98, of Jacksonville, Fla. He was a graduate of Georgetown University who commanded a company of infantry Marines during WW II. He was the recipient of the Silver Star for his actions on June 1, 1945, during the Battle of Okinawa. While in command of I/3/29, 6thMarDiv, he led his company against a heavily defended hill. Through heavy hostile fire, he led the attack from the front and reduced all enemy resistance, thereby enabling a general advance to be made, according to the award citation.

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

After the war, he had a successful career

in business and was active in a variety of community service programs. In 1970, he was named Big Brother of the Year for Duval County, Fla.

Sgt Gregory J. Taylor, 74, of Salem, Mass. He was a Marine who served during the Vietnam War. He later completed college, earning a degree in business.

Cpl Michael J. Valdez, 36, of Albuquerque, N.M. He enlisted in 2004 and completed three deployments to Iraq.

William C. "Bill" VanHandel, 85, of Green Bay, Wis. He was a Marine who served from 1953-1955. He later had a career in manufacturing.

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



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Polar Bear Insignia Patch

The U.S. Army's 31st Infantry regiment are known as the Polar Bears and wear the Polar Bear insignia on coat sleeves. The unit fought in Northern Russia and Siberia between 1918-1920 in places such as Vladivostok and Novo Litovskaya. The unit came home after losing 176 KIA slain by Cossacks and Bolsheviks. Another 122 died from sickness and disease. The unit has two battle streamers: North Russia and Siberia.

1stSgt Robert Hughes, USMC (Ret)
Santa Ana, Calif.

Salute

My poem, "Salute," ran in the April 1984 issue of *Leatherneck*. That was 36 years ago. The editor called me and said he loved the poem and asked if I had any more. I didn't. He encouraged me to write some more so I did and ended up writing for *Leatherneck* for the next five years.

Life evolved and I went from writing poems and short stories to 17 self-published books, two children's books and three cookbooks. Poems stayed in the background.

"Salute"

*For history records the victories won;
What can I do
that hasn't been done?*

*What can I write or try to promote?
When I hear the bugler play
that last note?*

*I know through the years
you've fought to stay free,
And never once said,
"Oh, God, don't send me!"*

*What can I say?
I can say, "Thank God!"
For having these men
to protect our sod.*

*What can I do?
I can hold my head high,
For the cream of the crop
is serving with pride.*

*What can I write?
Just these words to be seen,
My salute to the few ...
the proud ... the Marines!*

I was in the Navy from 1955 to 1959 and married Gunnery Sergeant Wyatt W. Miles Jr., a career Marine who served from 1959 to 1979. He served two tours in Vietnam, was wounded four times and received the Bronze Star. He was an excellent recruiter for four years from 1970 to 1974 in Gulfport, Miss. Our son, Russell Scott, was in the Reserves.

I'm a young 83-year-old proud veteran of the U.S. Navy and an associate of Semper Fi!

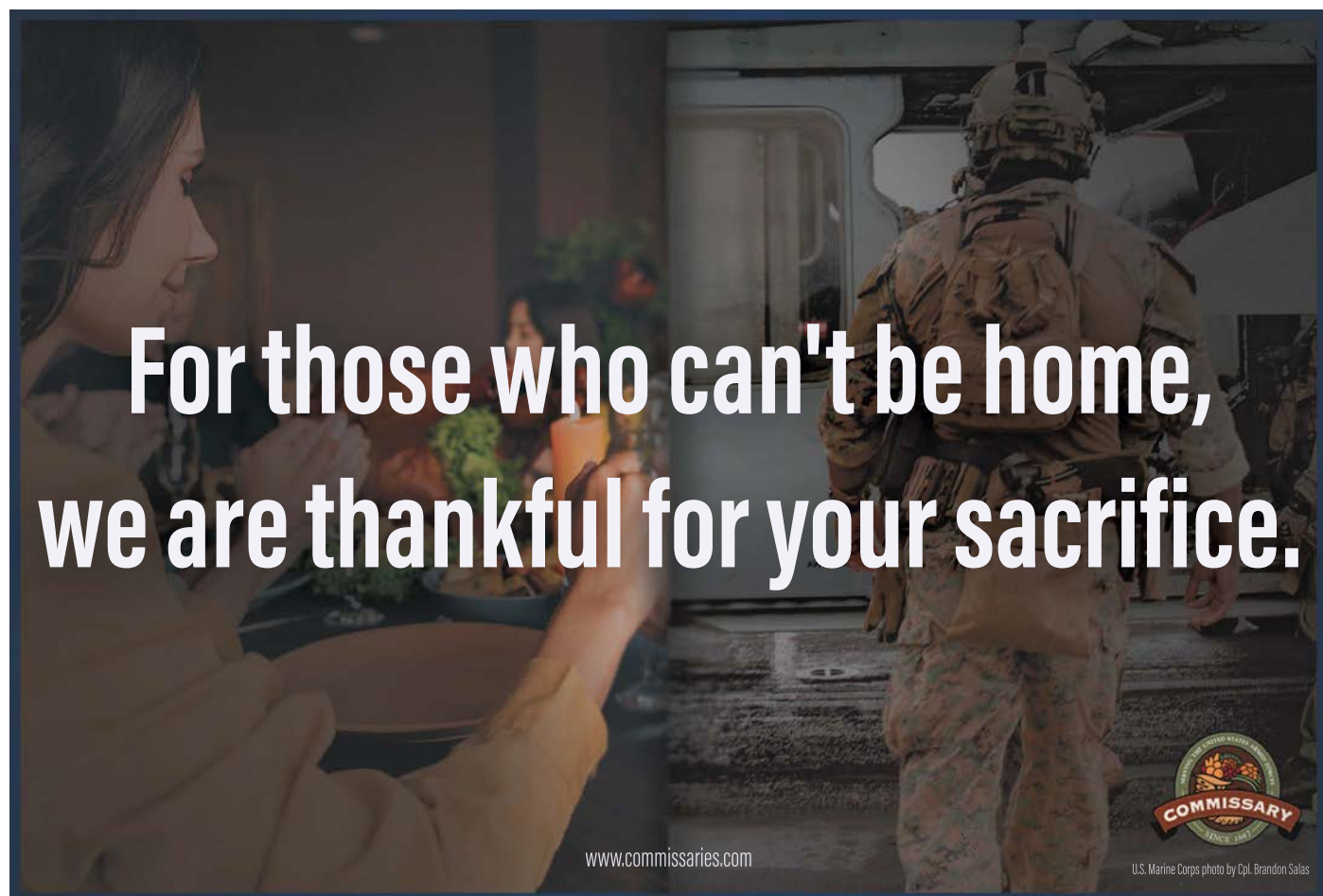
The poem was written to honor all Marines but especially the 241 Marines whose lives were lost with the Beirut, Lebanon, terrorist truck bombing.

Theresa "Terry" Miles
Gulfport, Miss.

My Brush with Wake Island

I read with great interest, "The Wake Story" in the August edition of *Leatherneck*. I have had two brushes with that island over the years both of which have humbled me and put me in awe of the men who defended that miniscule but vital piece of real estate.

My first brush with Wake Island was in May 1972. I was a young buck sergeant headed for WestPac. I boarded a Flying Tigers DC-8 jet at Norton AFB in California. We flew to Honolulu without incident.



Active Duty and Retired Uniformed Service Members

The Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program Can Offer Peace of Mind to You and Your Family

The prospect of needing long term care may be far from your mind today, but circumstances can change. A long term care event can happen at any age, and the potential financial and emotional strain that comes with it can have an impact on you and your loved ones. Unfortunately, traditional health insurance plans—including TRICARE For Life—do not pay for the chronic, ongoing assistance with daily living that is most often associated with long term care.

In fact, even the long term care benefits offered through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) are tied to specific triggers, including service-connected disability, available funding, and even your ability to contribute to the cost of care. Long term care can be expensive, and service members often rely on the VA to cover the associated costs. Depending on your eligibility status in the VA program, the level of coverage available to you may not be enough. For this reason, you may want to research standalone long term care insurance like a plan offered through the Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program (FLTCIP).

The FLTCIP—created specifically for the federal family—offers active duty and retired members of the uniformed services the opportunity to help take control of their future long term care needs with long term care insurance. Designed to be both comprehensive and flexible, the FLTCIP provides insurance coverage for qualified long term care services, including the type of care you may receive and where you receive it.

Coverage under the FLTCIP

FLTCIP 3.0, the current plan available to new applicants, offers comprehensive coverage, including a stay-at-home benefit and home care provided by friends and family*, with added premium stability.

One thing that makes FLTCIP 3.0 unique is the premium stabilization feature. This built-in, innovative feature is designed to reduce the potential need for large future premium increases—a concern many consumers wanted the long term care insurance industry to address. Under certain conditions, this amount may be used to offset an enrollee's future premium payments or provide a refund of premium death benefit.

The FLTCIP is designed to reimburse for qualified long term care services and can lessen or eliminate an individual's reliance on a loved one to provide hands-on care. FLTCIP 3.0 benefits also include:

- international coverage up to 100% of the maximum lifetime benefit
- choice of a 3% automatic compound inflation option or future purchase option
- choice of a two-year, three-year, or five-year benefit period

Build a FLTCIP plan

There's no one-size-fits-all when it comes to long term care insurance, and it's no secret that planning for your future care can be overwhelming. Our new Guided Planner was designed to simplify the process of building a FLTCIP plan that's right for you, and it will guide you through these key considerations:

- **Cost of care:** Compare the national average cost of long term care with other locations in the United States. You can choose where you live, or plan to retire.
- **Care options:** Learn more about different care options, such as home care, assisted living facilities, and nursing homes, as well as the associated costs.
- **Inflation protection:** Understand the impact of inflation on the cost of care over time and see examples of how our inflation protection options can help.

Visit [LTCFEDS.com/militaryfamily](https://www.LTCFEDS.com/militaryfamily)
to learn more about the benefits of applying for the FLTCIP.

For personalized assistance, call 1-800-LTC-FEDS (1-800-582-3337) TTY 1-800-843-3557 to speak with a program consultant. They are available to answer any questions you may have and can walk you step-by-step through the plan design and application process.

Note: Certain medical conditions, or combinations of conditions, will prevent some people from being approved for coverage. You need to apply to find out if you qualify for coverage under the FLTCIP.

The Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program is sponsored by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, insured by John Hancock Life & Health Insurance Company, under a group long term care insurance policy, and administered by Long Term Care Partners, LLC.

*Informal care provided by friends and family members is covered, as long as the caregiver isn't your spouse or domestic partner and doesn't live in your home at the time you become eligible for benefits. Benefits for covered care provided by family members is limited to 500 days.





*Then
&
Now*

Leatherneck is looking for your wedding photos—**one from your wedding day** in your Marine Corps uniform with you and your spouse and **one present-day photo** (does not need to be in uniform). If you have been married **30 years or longer** and would like to share it with our readers in a future issue, send them in.

Be sure to include your name, spouse's name, how long you have been married, and rank at the time of marriage.

Submit photos no later than **November 30**.

Send your photos to Patricia Everett at: *Leatherneck Magazine*, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134 or email them to p.everett@mca-marines.org. Please do not send originals as we are unable to ensure their safe return.
—*Leatherneck Editor*

After a few hours on the deck, it was time to board and continue the journey. About two hours later, the plane experienced traumatic engine failure. Honolulu was too far back to return so the captain elected to make it to Wake Island. It was early morning. The sun was just rising when the island came into site. This plane of Marines was looking out the windows like school children. We were all wondering how in the heck this giant jet was going to land on that tiny island.

The pilot did get us down safely. We were there for about 30 hours as parts were brought in and repairs made. We couldn't go anywhere because even after all those years, we were warned about unexploded ordnance. The plane was ready, and we left for WestPac. Nothing dramatic, but it did instill the sense of how vital that island was.

My second brush was many years later. In 1991, I was a captain stationed at HQMC. I drove to a hotel in Alexandria, Va., to pick up Major Brown who was in town for a meeting. From the hotel, the major and I went down to a restaurant for coffee and breakfast. The restaurant was pretty full. In one corner were a couple dozen crusty old guys. We were both in uniform, and as soon as they saw us, they invited us to their tables. Turns out these

were the remaining survivors of VMA-211 Wake Island Avengers attending their reunion. Maj Brown and I were in awe of these men who fought at Wake Island and then endured the torturous years of captivity under the Japanese. These men were true American Marine Corps heroes, every one of them. Eventually Maj Brown and I left for the meeting but we both considered the meeting with the men of VMA-211 to be a monumental moment in our lives.

These two incidents really cemented the idea of what it is all about. These Marines fought against odds they could not possibly overcome for a tiny but vital piece of dirt in the middle of the Pacific Ocean.

Maj Bob Fields, USMC (Ret)
Bradenton, Fla.

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



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Reader Assistance

Edited by Sara W. Bock

Reunions

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

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

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

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

• **Marine Air Traffic Control Assn.**, Sept. 19-26, 2021, San Antonio, Texas. Contact Steve Harris, (509) 499-8137,

sandkh2@gmail.com.

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

• **STA Plt, 2/8 (1989-1993)** is planning a reunion. Contact Mike Moriarty, mmoriarty81@comcast.net.

• **1/27 (1968)**, July 2021, Las Vegas, Nev. Contact Felix Salmeron, (469) 583-0191, mar463@aol.com.

• **2/9**, Nov. 7-12, Arlington, Va. Contact Danny Schuster, (978) 302-4126, ditson35@verizon.net, twoninencoic@aol.com, www.2ndbattalion9thmarines.org.

• **"Stormy's" 3/3**, 2020 reunion postponed until 2021, date TBD, Branson, Mo. Contact Burrell Landes, (303) 734-1458, bhanon@comcast.net, www.stormys33.com.

• **H/2/7 (RVN, 1965-1970)**, June 24-27, 2021, Jacksonville, Fla. Contact Steve Cone, (843) 424-8279, scone1948@yahoo.com.

• **Philippine Embassy Marines (1976-1977)**, Nov. 10, 2021, North Carolina. Contact Tim Craig, phildream2017@gmail.com.

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

• **TBS, Co D, 4-73**, is planning a 50th-anniversary reunion in 2023, Quantico, Va. Contact Col Bill Anderson, USMCR (Ret), (540) 850-4213, binche57@yahoo.com, or Col Bob Donaghue, USMCR (Ret), (614) 840-0267, ip350haven@comcast.net.

• **Plt 1187, San Diego, 1969**, is planning a reunion. Contact T.E. Miller, (618) 520-9646, or Mark Elder, (314) 322-8516.

• **Plt 2057, San Diego, 1971**, is planning a reunion. Contact K.L. Christeson, (816) 830-1498.

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

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We want to thank you for your commitment to our Marines.



Mail Call

• Michael Hagle, michaelhagle@me.com, to hear from any former troop leader, officer or instructor from Co A, SOI-West, Camp Pendleton, 1989-1990.

• John C. Feeney, (540) 373-8347, forfeeney2@yahoo.com, to hear from anyone who can provide information to confirm the awarding of the Silver Star to **SgtMaj Archie Lee ROBINSON** for his actions as a sergeant with F/2/5, February 1953, during a raid on the **Bunker Hill Complex**.

• Frank Walker, (512) 626-2277, sailpancho@aol.com, to hear from or about **Paul MCLAUGHLIN**, an artillery officer who served in **Vietnam, 1965**.

• George Slaughter, 2850 Erlands Point Rd. #43, Bremerton, WA 98312, (360) 813-3104, to hear from anyone who served with **MTM, 3rd FSR, 1966-1967**.

• Michael Spencer, mtspencery@yahoo.com, to hear from or about **Carl JORDAN**.

Wanted

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

• James Norman, jnorman10385@gmail.com, wants a **platoon photo** and

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recruit graduation book for **Plt 384, Parris Island, 1973**.

• Rob Ostrander, ostranderj77@gmail.com, wants a **recruit graduation book** for **Plt 1029, Parris Island, 1995**.

• David Coon, usmesoonercoon@

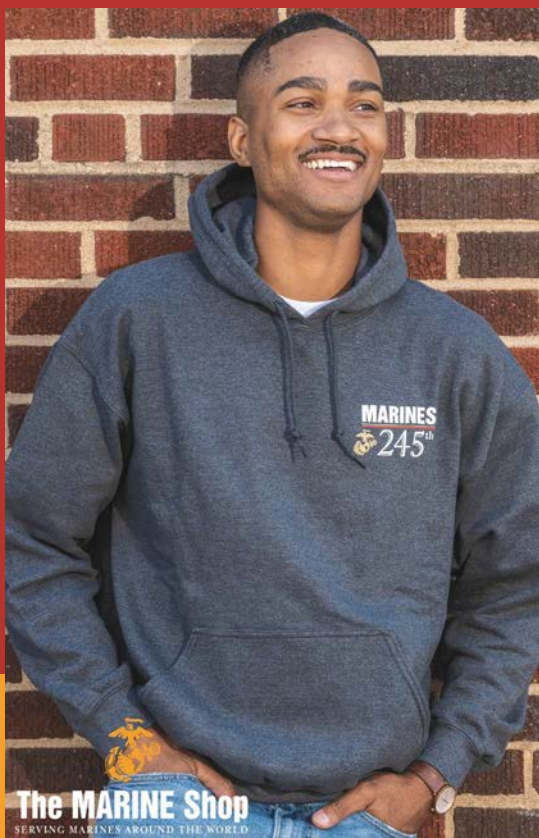
icloud.com, wants a **recruit graduation book** for **Plt 3031, San Diego, 1991**.

• Theodore Winters, tsqtslick@aol.com, wants a **recruit graduation book** for **Plt 189, Parris Island, 1963**.

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



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COURTESY OF NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MARINE CORPS

BATTLEFIELD RELIC—This World War II M-1942 enamel canteen, above right, was recovered from the Cemetery 33 area on the island of Betio by History Flight, a nonprofit organization dedicated to search and recovery operations for missing and unaccounted for American servicemembers.

Discovered during excavations in 2013, the canteen was still sealed and retains the original fresh water carried in it by a Marine who fought in the November 1943 Battle of Tarawa. It has been photographed next to a more well-preserved canteen of the same type for comparison purposes. In the photo on the right, the canteen is in its cover, and in the photo above, the cover has been removed.

The canteen is a fascinating time capsule from the Marines who took part in the battle. It is still immediately identifiable by its unique glossy-black enamel coating. This style of canteen was manufactured only in 1942. The enameling process was created by the Vollrath Company in reaction to shortages in raw materials, such as steel, early in the war. The enamel proved particularly useful in humid Pacific environments and would have been seen as a significant leap forward from the World War I-era, M-1910 canteens still used by many Marines during the Battle of Tarawa.

The canteen, along with numerous other artifacts that were located on Betio, were donated to the National Museum of the Marine Corps by History Flight in early 2020 and are currently being assessed for conservation.



COURTESY OF NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MARINE CORPS

For more information about History Flight, see “Until They All Come Home: History Flight is Dedicated to Locating, Excavating the Remains of Missing Marines” on page 36.


Author’s bio: Owen Linlithgow Conner is the uniforms and heraldry curator at the National Museum of the Marine Corps.





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