

APRIL 2022

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LEATHERNECK

MAGAZINE OF THE MARINES

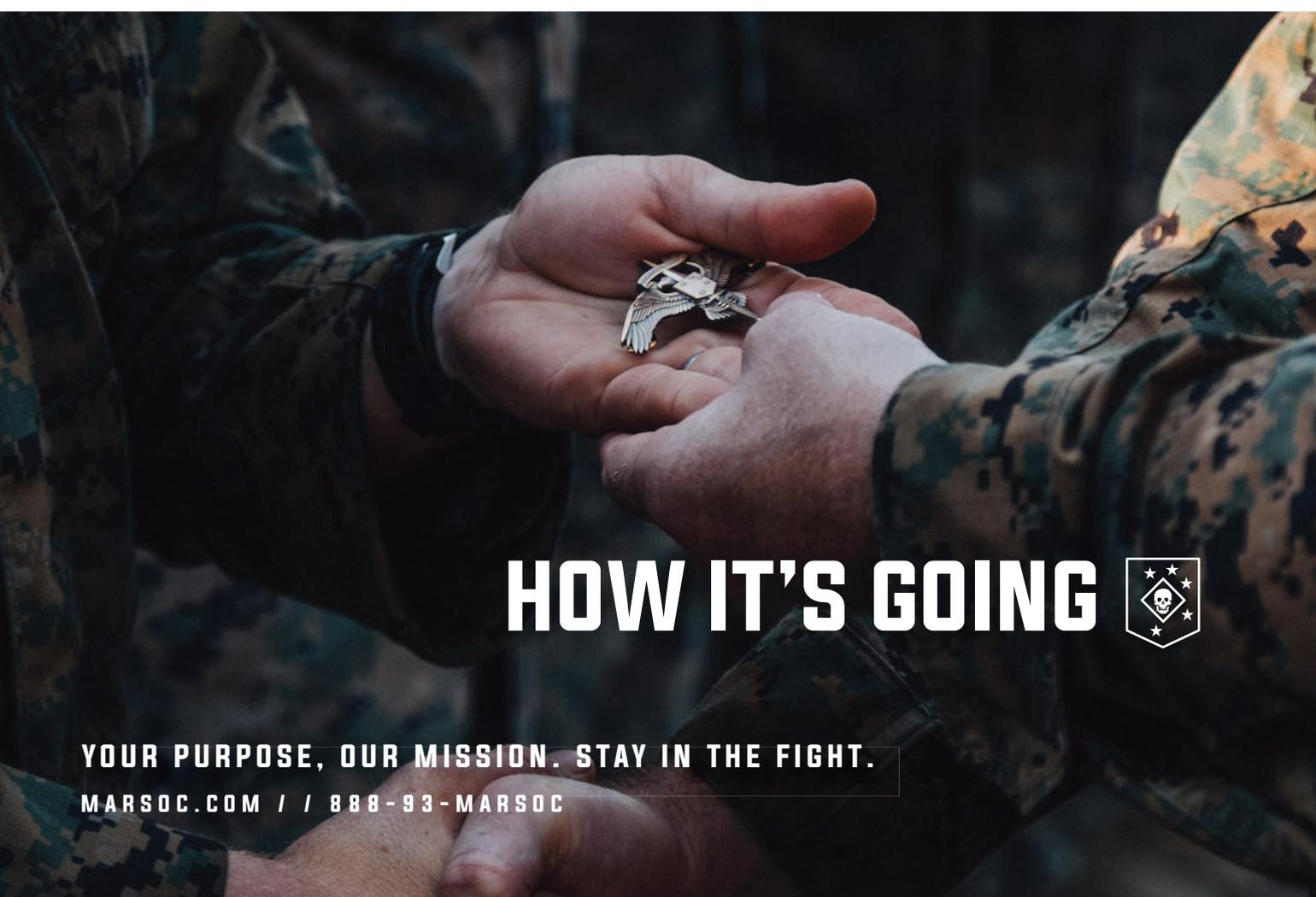
This Is My Rifle: The M1 Garand

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HOW IT STARTED



HOW IT'S GOING



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From the Editor's Desk

In January, I visited Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island with the Marine Corps Association President and Chief Executive Officer, Lieutenant General Charles G. “Chuck” Chiarotti, USMC (Ret) to see how the MCA can enhance our support to the staff and the recruits as they embark on their journey to become Marines. LtGen Chiarotti had the privilege of serving as the Reviewing Officer for that week’s graduation parade.

We also participated in MCRD PI’s Family Day activities. From the motivation run to the liberty formation to the tours of the depot, Marine families were everywhere, families who, unlike so many of their fellow Americans, now had the ultimate “skin in the game.” Pride, motivation and joy emanated from them in waves. And while we two retired Marines were swept up in similar emotions—recruit graduations are one of the best ways to remind you of what it means to be a Marine—I couldn’t help but think of the sacrifices, absences, and fear ahead for the mothers and fathers and other family members proudly watching their new Marines.

There’s nothing like having a child serving to fully understand what “skin in the game” really means. The families I saw at Parris Island that day now have a personal stake as Russia invades Ukraine, understanding that events happening on the other side of the world may have a significant impact on not just our country, but their sons and daughters. The next time troops are sent into harm’s way, these are among the American families who have the most to lose.

Over the last few decades, we have often lamented how so few of our national leaders have served or have sons or daughters who have served in the military. When decisions are made at the highest levels of our government to deploy our soldiers, Sailors, airmen and Marines to hotspots around the world, we can only hope that someone in the room has “skin in the game” and knows the true consequences of their actions.

But to paraphrase President Ronald W. Reagan’s famous quote, Marines don’t have that problem. Throughout our history, many of our senior leaders have had “skin in the game,” and that tradition continues today. One of the Commandant’s four sons is currently serving as an infantry officer; another was an enlisted Marine who served in Afghanistan during some of the worst fighting there. The Assistant Commandant also has a son on active duty serving in the operating forces. Many of the Corps’ generals have had a son serve in Iraq or Afghanistan in recent



years or have children filling our officer and enlisted ranks today. In May of last year, one general proudly commissioned a son at Quantico than headed to Parris Island to see his daughter become a Marine. All are as proud of their Marines as the moms and dads of the new Marines LtGen Chiarotti and I met at Parris Island.

LtGen Chiarotti also has two children on active duty including a daughter who proudly continues the tradition of bearing the title of United States Marine. And while none of my children followed in their parents’ footsteps as Marine officers, two of them had the good judgment to choose some of our country’s best for their spouses. My son-in-law is an Army captain who has already deployed to both Iraq and Afghanistan, and my soon-to-be daughter-in-law is a Marine logistics officer.

I think that most veteran and retired Marines would agree with me that there is little as stressful and fear-inducing as knowing that your child may be called to fight for our great Nation. As nerve-wracking as it is, however, as my future daughter-in-law and I stood together as “The Marines’ Hymn” was played at the most recent Army-Navy game, I was reminded that having “skin in the game” is also so very worth it.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary H. Reinwald". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and legible.

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



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COVER: The M1 Garand has garnered enduring popularity among military riflemen and civilian firearms enthusiasts since it was introduced during World War II. Marines, like the one here who is preparing to return fire on a sniper in Seoul, Korea, Sept. 27, 1950, used the rifle in every clime and place for two decades. Cover design by Jason Monroe. USMC Korean War photo. M1 Garand photo by Nancy S. Lichtman. 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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Letter of the Month

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

Several years ago, while vacationing in Hilton Head, S.C., I took a side trip to Parris Island where I had graduated from in August 1968. Not remembering too much about the arrival of the bus at the main gate more than 50 years ago, I got lost looking for the 3rd Battalion area. When I asked for directions, I was directed to some barracks buildings that didn't look remotely familiar. A drill instructor (DI) was walking along, and I asked him if this were truly the 3rd Bn. Judging my age, he said, "Probably not the one you're looking for. You want the old 3rd Bn which is set to be torn down" and directed me there.

When I got there, the memories came back as though I'd never left but now it was like a ghost town with rows of empty barracks, mess hall, battalion offices, etc. The doors were hanging open with leaves, papers and Spanish moss blowing around, and I entered the very building and squad bay in which I spent those exhausting eight weeks. Standing in front of the window where my rack had been, I remembered how my head would hit the pillow and I

would be asleep in seconds. I recalled the thousands of bends and thrusts done on that floor and the difficulty of using the head at the same time as 79 other recruits.

For the first time in my life, I entered the "DI house," now empty, and thought about how glad I was to have never been summoned there as a boot. I walked around the parade deck, now silent. No screaming DIs, no thump of boots on the pavement, no singsong cadence calls and no thousands of recruits doing PT and close order drill. It was one of the eeriest experiences of my life.

But in retrospect, those eight weeks weren't as horrible as I had remembered.

I made PFC out of boot camp, and my platoon, 371, won everything in our series: drill competition, marksmanship, etc., largely due to the efforts of the senior DI, SSgt C.E. Thomas, who should have been on a recruiting poster. He was a perfect picture of what a Marine should look like, and some of the lessons he imparted are still with me today.

I will never regret the two months I spent at Parris Island.

Sgt Daniel Hodge
Union, N.J.

Winners Never Quit

What a story! LCpl Devyn W. Watkins' story on overcoming adversity to become a Marine [February Sound Off] reminded me of my first day of gym class as a freshman. On the bulkhead was a huge sign under our Panther mascot with the words, "Winners Never Quit, Quitters Never Win!" It inspires me to this day. My other inspirational sign was at the U.S. Naval Training Center in San Diego, Calif. It read: "Take All You Want But Eat All You Take."

I entered the military at age 18 and retired when I was 38 or so. If the recruiter told me to stay in for 20 years, it never registered. I met military retirees who were on their second job career during my last job from which I retired in 2005. I have always remembered my military training and all the great folks I met and worked with. Our country and its people are worth defending and only good honorable military and patriots can carry out the mission.

I hope LCpl Watkins makes a career out of the Corps.

John Sanchez
USN, 1961-1966
Harford, Calif.

"No Draftees" Letter Triggered Memory

MGySgt George H. Smith's, USMC (Ret), Sound Off letter, "There Were No Draftees in 1942" in the February issue, triggered a memory of my dad, the late Joseph N. Doyle, the former deputy chief, Fire Department New York. It was World War II, late 1944, and all my uncles were serving. My dad was exempted because he was a New York City firefighter, deemed a critical occupation. However, they kept classifying him 4F. He went to the draft board and pleaded to be classified as 1A since the 4F classification could hurt his post-war chances of promotion through the civil service ranks. They did so, and he immediately went to the Navy recruiter and enlisted. After passing all the tests, he and about 50 other Navy recruits were lined up when a Marine sergeant came in and said, "Okay, men, 10 of you are now in the Marine Corps."

Dad, at almost 6 feet 3 inches tall, and easily the tallest and fittest man in the bunch, thought he was now a Marine. But since he was 31 years old, they took a bunch of younger men. Dad went to boot camp at Great Lakes and his civilian life caught up. Upon graduation he was transferred to the firefighting school and made an instructor. Basically, all he accomplished was to cut his salary by 75 percent, move 800 miles west of the Bronx and leave my mom with an 18-month-old baby—me.

Sgt Joe Doyle
USMC, 1964-1970
Scottsburg, Va.

In reference to MGySgt George H. Smith's, USMC (Ret) Sound Off letter, I agree that at the beginning of World War II, there were not draftees; however, in 1945 my father was drafted into the Marine Corps. The Marine Corps prided itself on *not* drafting to the best of their ability. They did accept volunteer personnel who were being drafted. My dad told me when he was standing in a long line for induction there was an Army individual standing at the head of the line. As you walked up to him, he would tell you where you were going to serve except occasionally he'd stop and ask, "Where do you want to go?" This concerned my dad as the man in front of him was asked and my dad prayed that the individual would ask him. He was asked and replied, "Marine Corps!" He was flabbergasted

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Quantico, VA 22134 or email to:
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POSTMASTER

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Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134.



Leatherneck (ISSN 0023-981X) is published monthly by the Marine Corps Association, Bldg. #715, MCB, Quantico, VA 22134. Copyright 2022 by MCA.

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that he had been asked but was a very happy man as with all his heart, he wanted to fight as a Marine.

My father emigrated from Norway in 1923. He was a U.S. Marine and his service number started with 9. My understanding is all voluntary draftees were given a service number beginning with 9. I've been wrong in the past, maybe wrong now.

1st Sgt Bruce L. Hansen, USMC (Ret)
Elyria, Ohio

Becoming a United States Marine

I am a 79-year-old Marine who served in the Corps from 1962 to 1966. I have written this poem, and many retired and active-duty Marines I know have encouraged me to pass it along.

My older brother, Gunny Jim, is a Marine, and one I will always admire, The Marines had found a new man in him, a spark became a fire.

He told me of places where he had been, and things that he had seen, So I signed up that winter when I was just 18.

Enlisted in December '62, with a couple of good buddies of mine, Then off to California and a much warmer clime.

MCRD San Diego, to boot camp we were sent,

Not knowing then, or caring, what being a Marine really meant.

Never been so far away from Nebraska and my hometown,

First ride in an airplane, I was worried it might go down.

Landed in San Diego in the middle of a cold, wet night,

Flew in over the ocean, man, what an awesome sight.

Before long they bused us through the guardhouse gate,

There was no going back now, no, it was way too late.

The DI's voice rang loud and clear, "GET OFF MY %#@* BUS,"

And in a flash, I realized, civilian life was over for us,

We all stood at stiff attention on footprints painted yellow, The DIs began to scream at us and their tone sure wasn't mellow.

They cursed at us, berated us, got right up in our faces,

One poor boot did 10 push-ups for having untied shoelaces.

MCRD San Diego, all Marines know where it's at,

I noticed that every DI wore the official Smokey Bear hat.

Receiving barracks, barber shop, what happened to your hair, Double time wherever you go, sound off like you got a pair.

Here they take a young man, undisciplined and green, And mold him into a warrior, a deadly fighting machine.

Up before dawn every day, you're learning to pull together, It makes no difference, day and night, or how bad the weather.

Getting stronger every day, you run till your legs feel numb,

Soon we developed these vital skills, improvise, adapt, and overcome.

Manual of arms, hand-to-hand combat, learning our new trade,

Soon you come to realize, this is how a Marine is made.

They issue you a rifle, tell you it's your best friend,

You learn to use it at the range, countless hours of snapping in.

After several weeks of surviving the toughest training on earth,

Your bodies become hard and lean, you've lost that flabby girth.

Your determination keeps you strong, and then one day you're through, You're now a U.S. Marine, one of the brave, the proud, the few.

Razor sharp creases, polished brass, weapon clean and ready,

Soon headed for your first post, you're strong, you're smart and steady.

You're squared away standing tall, sharp from head to toe,

For the rest of your life, you'll be a Marine no matter where you go.

Marines have protected our country since 1775,

You'll keep our tradition proudly and keep freedom alive.

On land, at sea, and in the air, we've always been the best,

Marines continue to stand tall and straight ready to face any test.

You're ready now to fight and win on any foreign shore,

Proud to be a member of the United States Marine Corps.

Sgt Larry M. DeBuse
USMC, 1962-1966
Bella Vista, Ark.

MSgt Ben Spotts recently purchased these old emblems and asked if anyone knew the dates of them. Leon Basile responded with some interesting information.



Differences of the Emblem

This is in response to MSgt Ben Spotts' letter, "Marine Corps Emblem," in the February issue of *Leatherneck*. The book, "The Eagle, Globe, and Anchor 1868-1968" by Col John A. Driscoll, USMCR, on page 46 shows the enlisted field cap and hat ornament, 1914-1922, World War I era, and between the globe and the stock of the anchor, there is an opening between the cable and the shank. None of MSgt Spotts' emblems are like that.

On page 49 it shows the enlisted service coat collar ornaments, 1920-1930, with no cable at all, but there was a round opening at the top of the anchor which a cable would have gone through if there was a cable. On page 65 it shows the enlisted bronze collar ornament, 1930-1937, with no cable at all, no opening at the top of the anchor, and most notably the wings of the eagle drop down like the two at the bottom of MSgt Spotts' photo. The ornaments from 1937 had the position of the eagle's wings similar to those prior to 1930 not dropping down. The three ornaments on the second row of MSgt Spotts' photo look like the enlisted bronze collar ornaments, 1937-1949, WW II era, on page 77 of Col Driscoll's book.

Leon Basile
Woburn, Mass.

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Pharmacists in the Corps

Over the past 55 years I have often wondered if I may have been the only fully licensed pharmacist to serve in the Marine Corps during the Vietnam War. I ask because of the enlisting procedure I encountered. In late 1965 I awoke one morning having decided to do something I had dreamed of for many years—join the United States Marine Corps. I was draft exempt due to a shortage of pharmacists in Illinois. I had graduated from Drake University in June 1963 with a bachelor's degree in pharmacy. I became fully licensed in August 1963 after passing the state boards.

The Marine Corps recruiting office, at the time, was in the Peoria, Ill., post office. I entered the recruiter's office with the intent to join the Corps on a two-year enlistment.

The recruiter began by informing me that two-year enlistment quotas were full. I then agreed to discuss a three-year enlistment. The recruiting staff noncommissioned officer, a gunnery sergeant, then began questioning me on my education by asking if I was a high school graduate, if I had attended college, did I graduate, to which I answered yes to all. He then asked my degree.

When I answered pharmacy, he im-

mediately informed me that he could not accept me as the recruiting of doctors, dentists, pharmacists, nurses, and veterinarians was prohibited by Marine Corps regulations and I needed to see the Army, Navy, or Air Force recruiters. I informed him that was not what I wanted to do; I wanted to enlist in the Corps. He stated that there was nothing he could do and that I needed to think things over.

I departed his office and stood in the hallway pondering the situation. After about 10 minutes, I re-entered the recruiting office. The gunny looked at me as if he had never seen me before and asked if I was interested in enlisting. I, of course, answered positively. He then began asking me the same questions about my education background. However, when he asked my degree, I answered that I had been a chemistry/biology major. He then continued the recruiting process and convinced me to attempt to complete the Officer Candidates School (OCS) program.

I entered OCS in March 1966 and successfully completed the course in late May. After OCS I attended The Basic School, class 5-66, and the Army's Armored Officer Course at Ft. Knox, Ky., which I finished in February 1967. I had two tours in Vietnam as an 1802, tank officer, with 1st Tank Bn.

I returned to civilian life in June 1969. My DD-214 indicates my related civilian occupation as truck dispatcher. The officers and men with whom I served, to me, are the finest men I have known. I have never once regretted my decision to be a Marine.

Capt David J. Thompson
Granville, Fla.

Surprise Discovery in Old Magazine

Recently, while waiting for my car to be serviced I happened to find an October 2015 *Leatherneck* in a magazine pile. Not being a current subscriber or reader of *Leatherneck*, but being a Marine, I thought it would be interesting and entertaining to read.

As I browsed through the magazine, I found an article entitled, "Deadliest Weapon in the World: Parris Island Rifle Range Has Long History of Making 'Every Marine a Rifleman.'" That really caught my interest because I qualified with the M1 rifle on the Parris Island rifle range during recruit training in the autumn of 1957.

On the second page there are two photos. The bottom photograph has the notation, "Recruits in 1957 used many of the same firing positions—standing, kneeling, prone—that were used well into

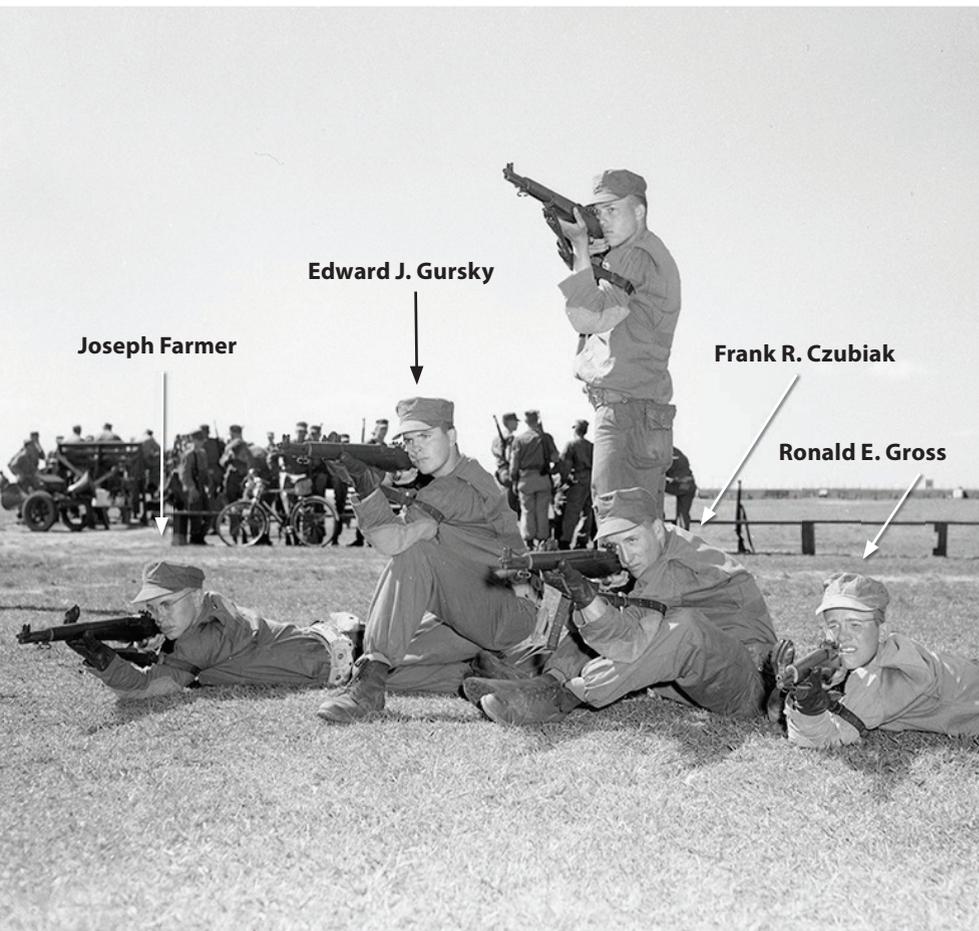
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Recruits from the Parris Island rifle range during recruit training in the autumn of 1957. From the left: Joseph Farmer, Edward J. Gursky, unknown, Frank R. Czubiak and Ronald E. Gross.

the 21st century on rifle ranges throughout the Corps.” The photograph presents five Marines with M1 rifles in various firing positions with the 200-yard firing line and target line in the background.

When I examined the photograph, I was surprised to find I was one of the Marines in the picture. I am posing in the kneeling position. I was also able to identify three other Marine recruits. The four of us were in Plt 241 and were all at the rifle range the last two weeks in September and the first week of November in 1957. I’m sure the other recruit in the photo was from Plt 241 but more than 64 years later I cannot positively identify him.

Frank R. “Ray” Czubiak, Ronald E. “Ron” Gross, and I were six-month Marine reservists. Upon completion of boot camp and infantry training we returned to our reserve unit, 7th AW Btry, Marine Corps Reserve Training Center, Connellsville, Pa. Over the years I have lost touch with Ray and Ron.

Plt 241 was in Co B, 1st Recruit Bn. Its

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form date was Aug. 6, 1957. Graduation date was Nov. 4, 1957. We lived on the lower floor of a two-story wood barracks which faced the parade field. On the edge of the parade field to our left was the outdoor movie theater. It had wooden benches for seating. On movie night we could hear the movie's dialogue while our drill instructor had us sing his (our) song. We had to sing it very loud so that he could hear us.

Edward J. Gursky
Brownsville, Pa.

• *We've published many issues of Leatherneck over the years so the odds of you finding one in which you were pictured have to be pretty small. What an incredible piece of luck. Thank you for filling in the missing information on the photo. Since the photo was of you with your M1 on the range, I think you'll enjoy the article "This Is My Rifle: How the M1 Garand Became Legendary Among Riflemen" on page 36. And I'm hoping that you've been able to rectify the only part of your letter that I didn't like—you said that you aren't a subscriber or reader of Leatherneck. If you haven't already, go to Become a Member – MCA (mca-marines.org) or call 866-622-1775 and we'll get you signed up!—Editor*

A Historical Day for the Troops

My tour of duty in Vietnam in 1968 was almost completed when a friend of mine, Sgt Bill Saunders, asked if I wanted to see the Bob Hope USO Show at the Hill 327 PX complex. Bill and I had met at Camp Pendleton in December 1967 while assigned to a staging battalion.

Bill commandeered a jeep from somewhere and drove us about 6 or 7 miles to the show. Upon arrival we saw thousands of U.S. troops and some civilians. Prior to leaving I mentioned to Bill that all the senior ranks had left with tickets in hand. True or not, I had never heard of needing tickets to a Bob Hope USO show.

The crowds were sitting on the side of a hill facing a stage at the back of one of the PX buildings. Triple rows of razor-sharp concertina wire encircled the crowd—now I understood why a ticket was needed.

Bill and I had our own tickets—jungle boots. We stomped down the wire and walked inside. We were in the nosebleed seats, but it was OK. I really couldn't believe Bob Hope was in Vietnam. He was such an icon. I never get excited about celebrities, but Bob Hope risked his life not only that day in a combat zone, but many other times. Ann-Margret was also there. The show was fantastic. Afterward, Bill and I went our separate ways until

rotation time out of Vietnam.

In October 1990, Steve Martin came to Saudi Arabia with Bob Hope to entertain the troops. The government of Saudi Arabia wouldn't let them entertain. Mr. Martin was only allowed to meet and greet. When I saw him, he looked like he was going to pass out from the heat. His face was red and he was sweating profusely. The Marines were already acclimated to the weather wearing short sleeved t-shirts under outdoor GP tents. I walked over to Mr. Martin and asked for his autograph. He complied and I turned around for him to sign the back of my green military t-shirt. He wasn't Bob Hope, but he was a wild and funny guy. Thanks for the memories.

GySgt Larry D. Williams, USMC (Ret)
Yuma, Ariz.

"Gunsmoke" Took Me Back to Korean War Memories

Recently I saw an old re-run of "Gunsmoke" that took me back to Korea, where I served first as a battalion surgeon with 3/5 and later as CO of Easy Medical Company. On the "Gunsmoke" episode, the character named Doc Adams was explaining advances in medicine during the Civil War to a young medical student, **[continued on page 68]**



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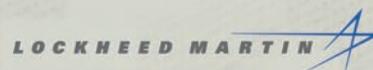
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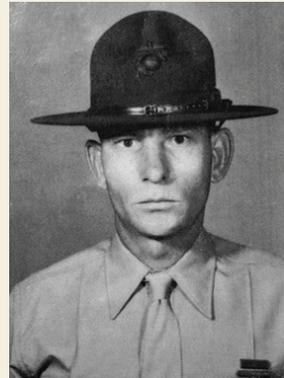


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TINA LASSETER PEARCE



USMC

MSgt Richard W. Lasseter



USMC

Maj Charles L. Dismore

Fredericksburg, Va.

Recruit, Drill Instructor Meet Again 54 Years Later

When the Marine Corps Engineer Association gathered in Fredericksburg, Va., Sept. 23-25, 2021, among its events was a meaningful reunion that was 54 years in the making. Maj Charles L. Dismore, USMC (Ret), former president of MCEA and organizer for the reunion, pictured on the right, reunited with his former drill instructor from Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego in 1967, then-Sergeant Richard W. Lasseter, pictured above, second from right, for the first time since Dismore graduated boot camp.

Lasseter, a retired master sergeant, saw the MCEA reunion notice in *Leatherneck* and called Dismore, the listed point of contact, and asked when he went to boot camp and if he remembered his drill instructor's name. After Dismore responded, "1967" and "Sgt

Lasseter," the two instantly bonded, forming a new friendship.

Lasseter fondly recalled that he had designated Dismore as the platoon secretary as he was the only recruit with college experience. Dismore was quick to thank his former DI for the structure, guidance and discipline that served him well throughout boot camp and his career. He credited Lasseter not only for his success in the Marine Corps but also for his lifelong successes.

Sadly, their newfound friendship was short-lived as Lasseter passed away on Veterans Day, Nov. 11, 2021, after a short battle with cancer. The day before he passed, the two spoke over the phone and wished each other a "Happy Birthday, Marine!"

Submitted by Tina Lasseter Pearce



COURTESY OF TJ MORGAN

Las Vegas

Generations of Marines Connect At Annual Birthday Ball

National Junior Vice Commandant of the Marine Corps League, TJ Morgan, had the honor of attending the Marine Corps League Greater Nevada Detachment 186 Birthday Ball at the Orleans Casino and Hotel in Las Vegas, Nev., Nov. 13, 2021, and enjoyed the opportunity to meet and hear from guest speaker John "Joey" Jones, a Marine veteran and double amputee who served in Afghanistan.

"He was a wonderful speaker and had such a positive outlook on life," Morgan said.

From the left, Morgan; Department of Nevada Marine Corps League Commandant Dan O'Connell; retired Lieutenant General Emil "Buck" Bedard (seated); Greater Nevada Detachment 186 Commandant Wesley Edmunson; and Jones enjoyed each other's company as they wished each other a happy 246th birthday.

Submitted by TJ Morgan

Triangle, Va.

Vietnam Veterans Awarded Long-Overdue Bronze Stars

On Nov. 30, 2021, an award ceremony was held at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle, Va., to correct an error that had been made 50 years earlier. In March of 1969, Lance Corporal Karl Tober and Private First Class Robert McNally were recommended for Bronze Stars with combat "V" for heroic action while serving with Company D, 1st Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment. Due to administrative mistakes, the awards were never processed.

The long-overdue ceremony, in which both Tober and McNally were awarded Bronze Stars, was the culmination of a two-year effort by Colonel Chris Rodatz, USMCR (Ret); Headquarters Marine Corps Awards Branch; and U.S. Senator Marco Rubio's office.

Feb. 18, 1969, was a rough day for the 1st Platoon of Co D, 1/9. The 9th Marines were engaged in Operation Dewey Canyon on the fringes of the Ashau Valley of Vietnam and the Laotian border. Then-Second Lieutenant Chris Rodatz was ordered to send out an ambush squad under the control of the platoon sergeant. The squad ran into a sizable North Vietnamese Army (NVA) force and within minutes, the platoon sergeant and four or five other Marines were dead or wounded. Rodatz and the remainder of the platoon rushed forward to consolidate the first squad's position and a major battle ensued. As the platoon and company consolidated their position, it was brought to Rodatz's attention that the radio man for the ambush squad had been wounded and fallen behind the rest of the unit. The Marine also had a radio which had all the battalion frequencies on it. Rodatz instructed Tober and McNally to go back and get the wounded Marine and bring him and his radio back to the platoon lines. A major firefight erupted as Tober and McNally fought their way to the wounded Marine and dragged him back to the company lines. After Operation Dewey Canyon was over and the battalion extracted from the Ashau Valley, both Tober and McNally were put in for the Bronze Star.

Fifty years later, in 2019, Rodatz received a phone call from Tober, who inquired about the Bronze Star. According to Rodatz, it was a heart-wrenching phone call because it reopened memories that had been suppressed for decades.

"I retired in 1998 after 30 years of active and reserve service and really had no idea how to go about this. I knew though, that it is extremely difficult to get an award approved after such a long



LCPL D'ANGELO YANEZ, USMC

lapse in the time frame, if for no other reason than that most of the participants are dead," said Rodatz.

Rodatz made several phone calls and ended up in contact with the HQMC Awards Branch.

"Without the help and guidance of the folks at Awards Branch this would not have happened," Rodatz said. "They guided me through the paperwork. First off, witnesses are required. Myself, as originator, was one, but I needed one more and finally with the help of the 1/9 Association I located my platoon radioman. Again, another tearful reunion. Current regulations require that a submission of a combat award be submitted by a member of Congress. I had a friend who worked for Senator Marco Rubio, and they reviewed the package and said that yes, they would take it on. The rest is history."

Due to delays related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the package took nearly two years to be approved. McNally passed away in 2011, but at the November ceremony, his widow, Bernadette McNally, accepted the award on his behalf, and Tober was present to finally be recognized for his actions decades earlier. Members of Sen. Rubio's staff, representatives from the Awards Branch and 40 members of the 1/9 Association were in attendance as well.

"This is something I felt I had to do," said Rodatz. "It would have been real easy to simply say, 'It can't be done because of the time span and the work involved.' However, these were my Marines, we were in combat together ... Marines take care of their own."

Submitted by Col Chris Rodatz, USMCR (Ret)



COURTESY OF COL CHRIS RODATZ, USMCR (RET)

"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.bock@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

PHILIPPINE SEA

Dual MEU/ARG Team Demonstrates Ability to Aggregate, Seize Terrain

Noble Fusion, a joint and combined naval expeditionary exercise made up of multiple elements of the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force and the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF), kicked off Feb. 3 in the Philippine Sea in the vicinity of the Luzon Strait and the Miyako Strait, near the islands and archi-

pelagos known as the “first island chain.” For the first time since 2018, two Marine Expeditionary Unit/Amphibious Ready Groups (MEU/ARG) operated together in the Indo-Pacific as part of the exercise, this time alongside a Carrier Strike Group (CSG).

“Integrating the elements of the dual MEU/ARG team with the power of the Carrier Strike Group, joint elements and our Japanese counterparts in a distributed

operation demonstrates our ability to command and control lethal forces in contested areas, create strategic advantage and integrated deterrence,” said Colonel Michael Brennan, the operations officer for 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade, which was known during the exercise as Combined Task Force 79. “Our sea-denial operations with naval expeditionary integration and littoral allies prepares us to counter potential adversarial aggressive actions in the first island chain.”

The exercise demonstrates that joint and allied naval expeditionary forces can rapidly aggregate as a combat force to conduct lethal sea denial operations, seize key maritime terrain, guarantee freedom of movement and create advantages for the U.S. and its partner and allied forces. Together, CTF-76 and CTF-79 commanded and controlled the integrated naval expeditionary forces of the 11th and 31st Marine Expeditionary Units and Amphibious Squadrons 1 and 11 embarked aboard USS *Essex* (LHD-2) and USS *America* (LHA-6), respectively.

“This exercise is a great opportunity to showcase the hard work and expertise of the Sailors, Marines, airmen and [JMSDF] as they integrated with each other across the littoral areas of the first island chain,” said Commander Jeremy Carlson, USN, the operations officer for CTF-76. “While this is a training exercise, and we regularly rehearse combined operations, this event took it to a new level of cooperation and clearly showcases our ability to quickly aggregate and seize key terrain at the time and place of our choosing.”

On the first day of the exercise, the 11th MEU/USN *Essex* ARG and CSG-3 conducted an amphibious maneuver highlighting the ability to seize key terrain with various types of aircraft flying over the Philippine Sea. AV-8B Harriers and MV-22B Ospreys assigned to the 11th MEU flew from *Essex* and rehearsed integrated air operations with a Navy E-2D Advanced Hawkeye flying from USS *Abraham Lincoln* (CVN-72) all within the Luzon Strait. Simultaneously, 11th MEU Marines and Sailors aboard *Essex* conducted operational checks on the Stalker unmanned aerial system and loaded Polaris MRZR light tactical all-terrain vehicles and other equipment into MV-22B Ospreys.

The following day, the 31st MEU/USN *America* ARG conducted two live fire air-to-ground strikes along with one simulated strike at a training range in the first



SGT JENNESSA DAVEY, USMC

Above: Marines assigned to Marine Attack Squadron (VMA) 214, 11th MEU, prepare to load ordnance while aboard USS *Essex* (LHD-2) in the Philippine Sea in support of Exercise Noble Fusion, Feb. 3.



SGT ISRAEL CHINGIO, USMC

While supporting Exercise Noble Fusion, a Marine assigned to Marine Medium Tilt-rotor Squadron (VMM) 165 (Reinforced), 11th MEU, sets up a mobile satellite communication system during a refuel of the P-8A Poseidon attached to U.S. Navy Patrol Squadron 26 at MCAS Futenma, Okinawa, Japan, Feb. 5.



Above: A Sailor assigned to *USS Essex* (LHD-2) in the Philippine Sea signals an MV-22B Osprey attached to VMM-165 (Rein), 11th MEU, to land after conducting routine operations in support of Exercise Noble Fusion, Feb. 3. (Photo by Sgt Israel Chincio, USMC)

Right: A Marine pilot with VMM-165 (Rein), 11th MEU, operates an MV-22B Osprey while conducting routine operations in the Luzon Strait during Exercise Noble Fusion, Feb. 3.

island chain with F-35B Lightning II aircraft. Additionally, F-35Bs of Marine Aircraft Group (MAG) 12, based at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan, as well as F-15C Eagles with the U.S. Air Force's 18th Wing based at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, Japan, teamed up with a P-8 Poseidon from Task Force 72 to conduct a maritime strike.

The strike at sea was coordinated with and supported by *USS Dewey* (DDG-105) and JMSF's *JS Kongo* (DDG-173) in order to provide command and control as well as maneuvering elements on the surface for realistic training. In order to support the aircraft at distance and increase time on station, the USAF 18th Wing supported with KC-135 Stratotanker aircraft, and MAG-12 provided KC-130J Super Hercules



SGT ISRAEL CHINCIO, USMC

aircraft for air-to-air refueling. In the evening, F/A-18E Super Hornets and an E-2D Advanced Hawkeye flew from *Lincoln* to conduct simulated strikes against live surface targets in the first island chain.

"The most powerful tool in the U.S. military is a Navy-USMC cohesive, joint team," said Col Brennan. "We have no doubt that we will execute like this tomorrow should we need to defend ourselves

or be asked to help defend allies or partners in the region."

The Navy-Marine Corps team regularly conducts integrated naval expeditionary training throughout the region in order to maintain readiness, reinforce its commitment to allies and partners as well as continue to bolster shared security, stability and peace in the Indo-Pacific.

GySgt Dengrier Baez, USMC

Marine EOD technicians and FBI agents work together to search an IED detonation site as part of a Large Vehicle Bomb Post-Blast Analysis course at Range 800 on MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., Jan. 26. (Photo by LCpl Andrew Cortez, USMC)



CAMP PENDLETON, CALIF. EOD Marines Hone Investigative Skills Alongside FBI

Explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) technicians at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., are responsible for ensuring servicemembers can safely train on the installation's many ranges, but they also respond to bomb threats or calls about suspicious packages on base and military unexploded explosive ordnance calls in the areas surrounding the base.

In an effort to help keep MCB Camp Pendleton and the local community safe, EOD Marines frequently partner with local law enforcement agencies for training. In January, Camp Pendleton-based EOD Marines teamed up with the FBI for the first time to conduct a Large Vehicle Bomb Post-Blast Analysis course, a weeklong training that consisted of several days of classwork followed by actual controlled detonations for the students to analyze.

"For this evolution we are trying to simulate a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) that detonated at the gates of Camp Pendleton," said Staff Sergeant Andrew Duggan, an EOD team leader with Headquarters and Support Battalion, MCB Camp Pendleton. "If this were a real event, these people would be the exact people responding to that event with us."



LCPL ANDREW CORTEZ, USMC

SSgt Nathanael Douglas, an EOD technician, takes a sample swab of explosive residue while training alongside FBI agents at MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., Jan. 26. The course focused on collecting attack-related material such as device components, casualty information and explosive residue following a vehicle-borne IED attack.

The exercise involved detonating a 250-pound explosive in an armored vehicle and a 50-pound explosive in a pickup truck. The FBI typically relies on military bases to conduct this type of training because of their diverse training areas and capabilities.

"One of the main reasons we use military ranges is because they have the ranges to support the class," said Rick Sanchez, an FBI special agent bomb technician. "The normal demolition ranges the government has are way too small and are limited to one-pound detonations."

The course focused on collecting attack-related material such as device components, casualty information and explosive residue following a VBIED attack. The course started with an in-class presentation about what the Marines and agents should look for when collecting evidence. The attendees also studied historic attacks involving VBIEDs. The following day, the EOD Marines detonated vehicles at Camp Pendleton's Range 800, then traveled to the blast site to collect "evidence" and present an analysis of what had occurred.

"What they are looking for is the actual device used to detonate the explosive so we can send it back to forensics to get analyzed," said Sanchez. "They also look for vehicle parts such as [vehicle

identification] numbers so they can track down the vehicle to get a lead on the investigation to solve the crime.”

While it was the first time the course had been held on Camp Pendleton, those involved hope it won't be the last.

“This is the [farthest] south we have ever been in California, and we look forward to continuing doing operations with Camp Pendleton,” said Sanchez. “Once the doors are open to Camp Pendleton, we would like to keep them open and maintain a good working relationship.”

LCpl Andrew Cortez, USMC

OKINAWA, JAPAN

Fight Now: Marines Contend in Rifle Squad Competition

Units attached to the 4th Marine Regiment as part of the Unit Deployment Program participated in a weeklong 3rd Marine Division rifle squad competition at the Jungle Warfare Training Center on Camp Gonsalves, Okinawa, Japan, in January, testing their jungle survival skills, basic infantry tactics and excellence in weapons handling.

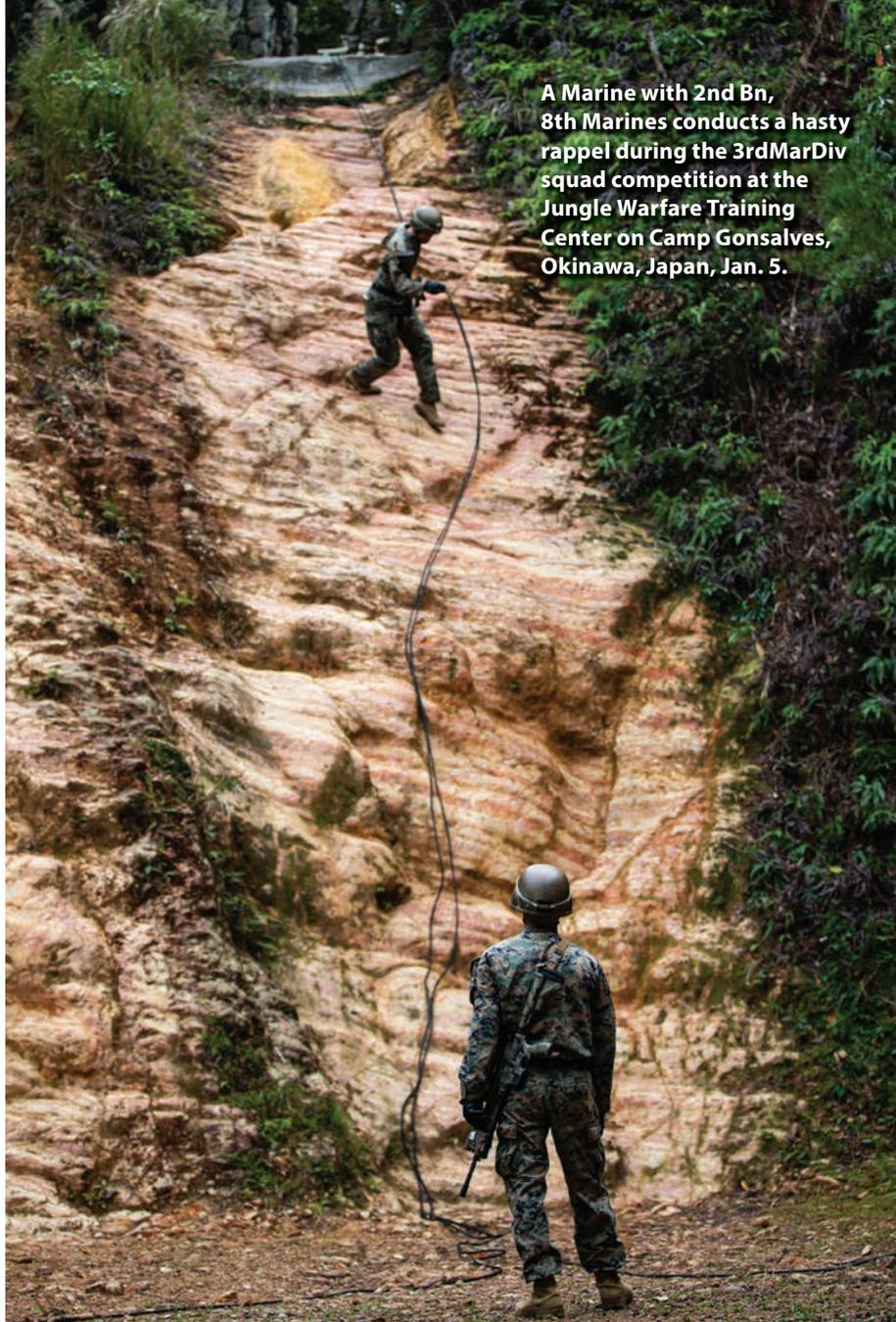
The Marines persevered due to strong leadership and motivation from their peers and demonstrated the ability to live up to the 3rdMarDiv's mantra: “Fight Now.”

“I think this competition has tested our physical limits a lot,” said Corporal Madison Brillon, a team leader with 2nd Platoon, “Kilo” Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment. “Just being in the jungle [and] going up and down those hills and being on the slippery mud all day while doing patrols and land navigation. It's definitely pushed our limits.”

The competition began with a 5-kilometer race at the training center. Throughout the week, squads set out into the jungle carrying out route reconnaissance, plotting navigation points, scaling cliffs and conducting hasty rappels. Not only did the squads have to overcome the physical challenges of survival in the jungle environment, but they also had to accomplish their primary mission of offensive and defensive maneuvers.

While in the jungle, each squad had to conduct an assault on a well-defended village and later in the week had to defend their position against a determined assault.

“The purpose of the squad competition, in my opinion, is to build camaraderie amongst each squad,” said Brillon. “On top of that, it's just one final rep before we go to combat because we never know when that call is going to come. Doing something like this kind of shows you how efficient you are at your skills or where your weaknesses are and allows you to get ready for when that call does come, and we need to go to combat.”



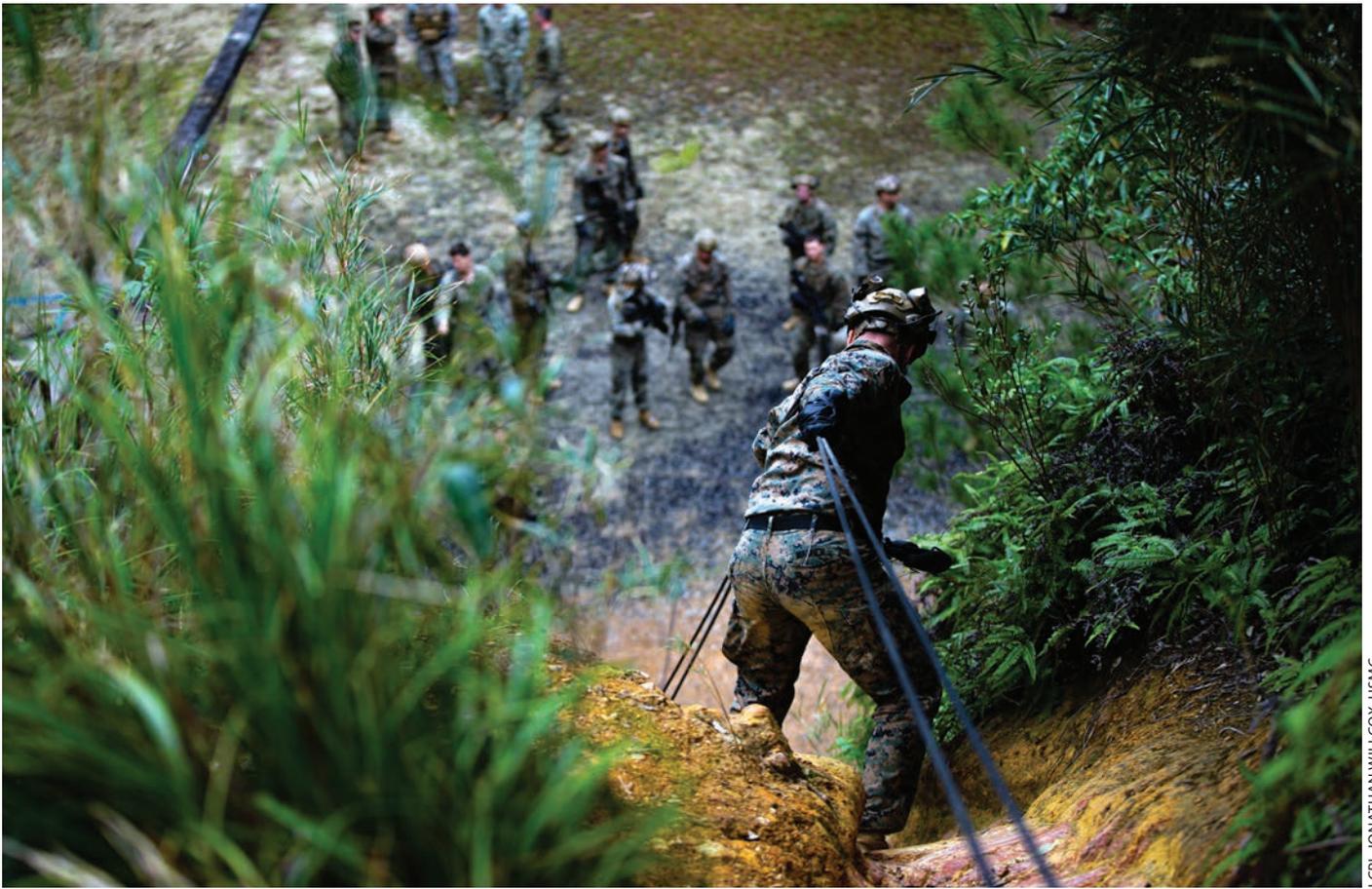
A Marine with 2nd Bn, 8th Marines conducts a hasty rappel during the 3rdMarDiv squad competition at the Jungle Warfare Training Center on Camp Gonsalves, Okinawa, Japan, Jan. 5.

LCPL JONATHAN WILLCOX, USMC

Below: Sgt Tyler Ornelas, a squad leader with 3rd LAR Bn, runs the endurance course during the 3rdMarDiv squad competition in Okinawa, Japan, Jan. 7.



LCPL JONATHAN WILLCOX, USMC



LCPL JONATHAN WILLCOX, USMC

Above: Cpl Bradley Wagner, a rifleman with 1st Bn, 3rd Marines, rappels during the 3rdMarDiv squad competition at the Jungle Warfare Training Center, Camp Gonsalves, Okinawa, Japan, Jan. 5. The weeklong competition tests jungle survival skills, basic infantry tactics and excellence in weapons handling.

Below: Cpl Jason Stigall, a rifleman with 2nd Bn, 8th Marines, prepares to rappel while completing the endurance course at the Jungle Warfare Training Center, Camp Gonsalves, Okinawa, Japan, Jan. 7.



LCPL JONATHAN WILLCOX, USMC

On the fourth day of the competition, squads competed in the endurance course. The participants had to crawl underwater as well as conduct buddy drags through the mud in the cold and rainy jungle. As a team and as individuals the Marines also had to navigate razor wire, maneuver over cargo nets and help each other over the walls.

“Mentally it tested us as a squad which made us work together as a team,” said Sergeant Jose Acevedo, an infantry squad leader with 1st Platoon, “Lima” Company, 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment. “Guys were suffering, but the leadership, which were my three team leaders, pushed my guys to the limits, and at the end of it, we completed each individual task that we were assigned.”

Later, at Camp Hansen, Marine Corps Base Camp Smedley D. Butler, the leathernecks completed another 5-kilometer race, conducted a 1,400-meter swim and concluded with marksmanship on the known-distance range, which is the annual qualification course of fire.

“Coming to the squad competition was a really good experience,” said Madison. “It’s a really good way to bring a team together—to bring an infantry squad together. Shared hardship and challenges are always a good way to test people and to make them better.”

Sgt David Staten, USMC

Marines with VMX-1 load a joint air-to-ground missile onto an AH-1Z Viper during an operational test at MCAS Yuma, Ariz., Dec. 6, 2021. VMX-1 fired and evaluated the JAGM to determine its suitability and effectiveness to support EABO to include conducting strike and close air support missions.

YUMA, ARIZ.

VMX-1 Tests JAGM on Land Targets

Marines from Marine Operational Test and Evaluation Squadron (VMX) 1 conducted an operational test and evaluation of the joint air-to-ground missile (JAGM) from an AH-1Z Viper at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Ariz., Dec. 6, 2021.

VMX-1 continues to test and analyze the capabilities of the JAGM on land targets after evaluating the effectiveness of the missile on maritime targets at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., in November 2021.

Personnel from Air Test and Evaluation Squadron Two One (HX-21), Naval Air Systems Command Direct and Time Sensitive Strike program office (PMA-242), Marine Corps H-1 Light/Attack Helicopters program office (PMA-276), Army Program Executive Office Missiles and Space, as well as industry partners were on location to observe and analyze the data from the test event. This event can lead to significant improvements in lethality of attack helicopters by arming them with newer munitions equipped with two-sensor technologies and optimizes missile performance on land targets.

“I am proud of all the work and professionalism demonstrated by the joint team striving to hit major milestones of



CPL MATTHEW ROMONOSKE-BEAN, USMC

the JAGM initial operational test and evaluation,” said Colonel Byron Sullivan, the commanding officer of VMX-1. “The analysts, coordinators and controllers meticulously pore over all the data captured so this weapon system can bring the necessary firepower to the warfighter.”

The team observed the test of eight separate shots against armored and light armored vehicles in a variety of operational scenarios. Ultimately, the data collected is analyzed to determine overall system effectiveness and refine the tactics, techniques and procedures of employing this weapon in expeditionary advanced base operations (EABO), such as strike operations and close air support.

“Watching the joint team perform the JAGM test is like observing a highly skilled professional football team with seasoned offensive coordinators calling the right plays for an offense that flawlessly executes play after play,” said Major Thomas Hutson, the assault support department head at VMX-1 and member of the JAGM test team.

This test is part of a larger effort to upgrade the AH-1Z and UH-1Y aircraft in alignment with the Commandant’s vision of force modernization to maintain a competitive edge against potential adversaries.

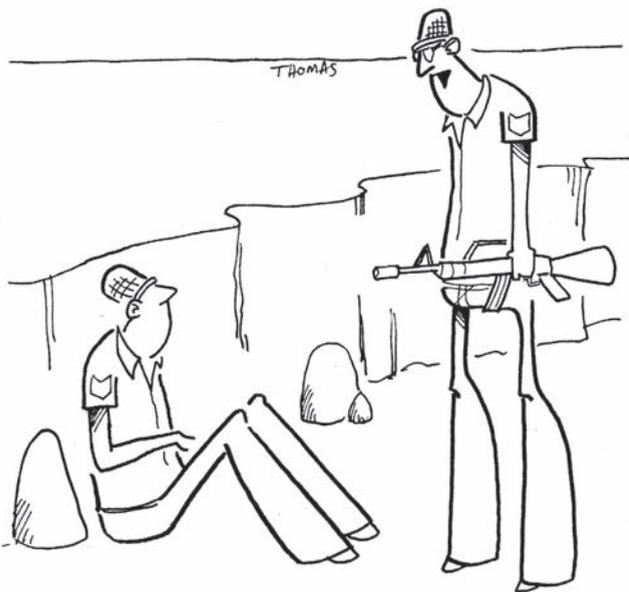
Maj Jorge Hernandez, USMC



CPL MATTHEW ROMONOSKE-BEAN, USMC

A Marine with VMX-1 arms joint air-to-ground missile during an operational test at MCAS Yuma, Ariz., Dec. 6, 2021.

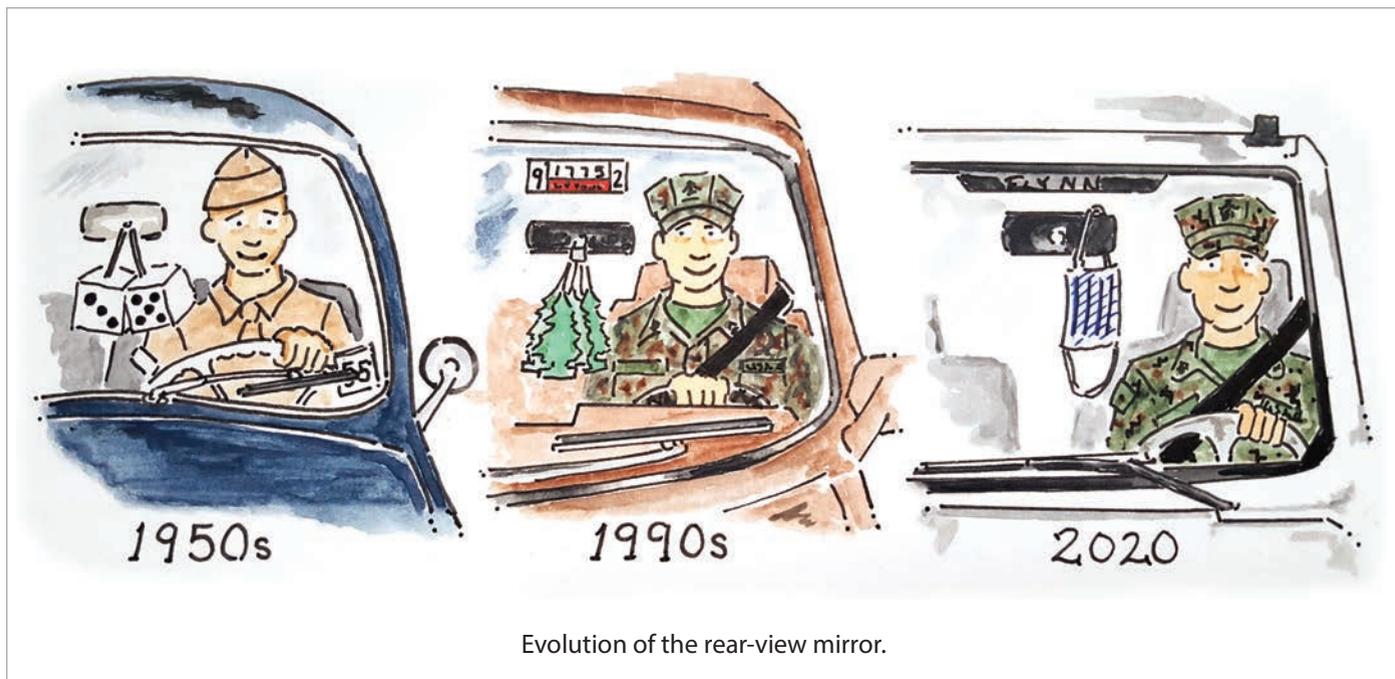
Leatherneck Laffs



"Instead of calling it retreating, the enemy is calling it social distancing."



"Do I have to take my leave?
There's no place to go anymore."





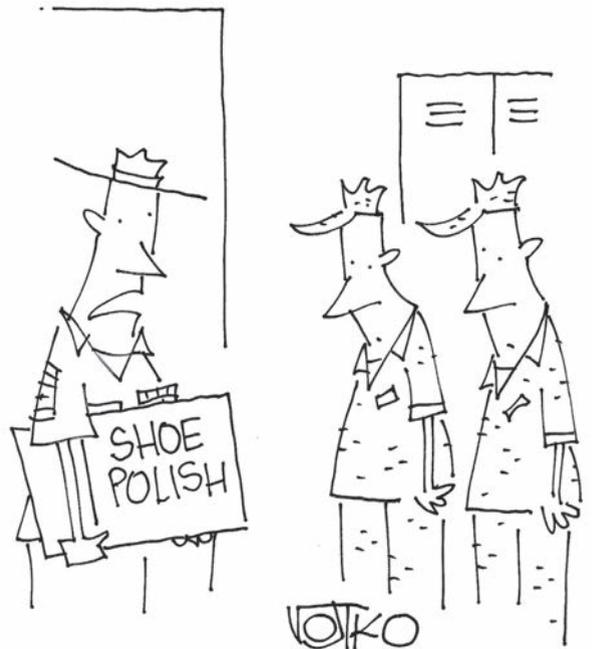
"Advance to within 6 feet to be recognized."



"I'm practicing saluting without touching my face."



Social Distance Boot Camp



"Because of the virus, there will be no 'spit' and polish."

Ripley at the Bridge

By Vicki Vanden Bout

Editor's note: On the 50th anniversary of then-Captain John Ripley's destruction of the highway bridge at Dong Ha, Leatherneck is republishing an account of that fateful day from Ripley's own perspective. We talked to Vicki Vanden Bout, who wrote this article in 1986, and she told us about her meeting with Col Ripley, whom she described as "bigger than life" while at the same time, "extremely down to Earth." She said he "was so excited that somebody was interested in his story" and considered himself nothing more than a Marine who did his job.



COURTESY OF U.S. NAVAL INSTITUTE

Capt John Ripley reviews a map in Vietnam during his assignment as commanding officer of "Lima" Co, 3rd Bn, 3rd Marines in 1967.

The U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md., added two memorials to Memorial Hall in the mid-1980s. Both were to honor Academy graduates who performed honorably and upheld the great traditions of the class of 1962.

One of those honored at the ceremony, Colonel John W. Ripley, was featured in a military diorama, "Ripley at the Bridge" in the Memorial Hall foyer in Bancroft Hall. The action depicted in the diorama by Royal Navy Commander Robert Mouat was an almost heart-stopping rendition of the triumph of man over adversity. The high drama portrayed is the stuff of epic movies, and yet was only a small part of the Easter Offensive, 1972.

Col Ripley, who later served as the senior Marine representative at the U.S. Naval Academy, enlisted in the Corps in June of 1957. "I always wanted to be a Marine. There was never any other consideration," said Ripley. Fresh out of Radford High School, Radford, Va., Ripley was determined to act on his not-so-secret desire to be a Marine.

In recruit training, he found out about a program that put active-duty Sailors and Marines into the Naval Academy Prep School prior to acceptance into the Academy. Ripley was selected for the program straight out of boot camp. "I pursued this program. That wasn't too easy because, of course, anytime you identified yourself as being interested in an officer program, well, the DIs went

nuts!" Ripley remembers what the DIs would tell him. "They would yell, 'You haven't even gotten through boot camp yet!' It sure got me a lot of unwanted attention.

"I didn't apply myself very strongly in high school, I was more interested in athletics. But after leaving, I could see there was more potential for the future for someone with a formal education. So, I concentrated on getting my degree," Ripley said.

The Naval Academy offered young Ripley a chance to get his education and remain a Marine. But boot camp left a mark as well. "The impression is so indelible. It's burned in my memory, that sureness of having achieved something. The effect of that has given me strength over the years." Ripley remembers, "Having one of the drill instructors say 'Good job, recruit' meant more to me than any personal decoration.

"There was never anything less than total respect for those Marines, if not fear," said Ripley of his drill instructors.

When Ripley had finally completed his time at the Naval Academy and set off for The Basic School (TBS), Quantico, Va., he was allowed six months of leave. "I threw it away and reported right in. I was ready to be with Marines."

Infantry was always his interest, and he feels fortunate in having done what he enjoys.

After completing TBS, Ripley was assigned to sea duty for a year. "I was on an aircraft carrier. It was very valuable experience," he said.

A variety of other assignments followed including with 2nd Marine Division, Camp Lejeune, N.C. and Company L, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines near the Demilitarized Zone, Vietnam as well in Khe Sanh, and Con Thien. "I got to spend some time in all the garden spots!" Ripley said, laughing.

A stint with the British Royal Marines came next during 1969-1971. "That was a tremendously exciting job," he remembered. Ripley was one of the last U.S. Marines to go through the Royal Marines training with their recruits. One of the things Ripley was impressed



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—Col John Ripley, USMC (Ret)

**Capt John Ripley, Vietnam 1972
(Artwork courtesy of John Ripley)**



This aerial photo, which looks north over the two bridges on the Cua Viet River at Dong Ha, was taken in 1969 when Naval Mobile Construction Bn 62 was building the bridge at Dong Ha. It was completed in 1970 and destroyed in 1972 along with the accompanying old railroad trestle. (USN photo)

by in the Royal Marines was the unit stability. “It had a very solidifying effect. They leave a man in a unit, instead of moving him around.

“When I got to Vietnam the second time, I had had the best training possible. It was a great advantage to have all that behind me,” he recalled.

As an advisor, Ripley found himself in the same area where he had served five years before. “I was the advisor to one of the best doggone units. The 3rd Battalion, Vietnamese Marines were incredibly good,” he said. Ripley was to find out just how good those Marines were sooner than he would have thought likely.

As Col John Ripley began to describe the events leading up to the start of the Easter Offensive, it became evident that his second tour in Vietnam is clearly etched in his memory. As his story unfolded, time seemed to fall away and the thousands of miles between Dong Ha and Annapolis disappeared.

During Ripley’s first tour in Vietnam, he had been a company commander. “I had fought in virtually the same areas that we were in. On a number of occasions, I was the only man in the battalion who had been to the places we were going. We went out to Khe Sanh, for example, and walked along Cau Rock Ridge out to (Hills) 1015 and 950. I was the only American, the only man who had been there before. During my first tour I had been out there 12 months,” Ripley pointed out.

Things were slow and quiet at the end of March 1972, but already signs of the approaching chaos and combat were appearing. The North Vietnamese Army was testing the defenses of the outer fire bases. “I had returned from R&R several weeks before this and gone up north that last time, thinking ‘Well, this is the end of it. I’ll just sit around and wait for my time to go home.’ That was it. There wasn’t any reason in the world to expect

that to change. Things were slow. We were mainly doing scouting patrols. I remember going out and swimming in the river.”

The 27th of March was when things came unglued. “It became apparent that it [the NVA probe] was on a much larger scale than what we anticipated. They [the NVA] started putting pressure on the outer fire bases. It didn’t seem the enemy had anything serious in mind. Those fire bases [Fire Base Sarge and Nui Ba Ho] had been overrun once before when I was there. I figured it was the same thing.

“Major Walt Boomer was on Sarge and Capt Ray Smith was up on Nui Ba Ho. That’s where the first approach was made. Well, the enemy didn’t back off and a very serious element was introduced. Artillery fire started.” Ripley then believed something more than just a probe was coming.

The Vietnamese Marines were moving up north to face down the threat and

to stop the NVA movement south. They didn't yet understand there was a reason to be terribly concerned. "I still didn't believe it was super serious. I thought, 'Well, we'll just have to stay here for the next few days or a week and then we'll be back to sitting on bunker tops again.'" The NVA had set a pattern of engaging the South Vietnamese and then backing off again.

But this time the NVA didn't disengage. Ripley's battalion moved up to Dong Ha as the 7th Bn and another unit had moved up to Mai Loc. "We were considered the Division reserve, the unit least likely to get involved." The situation looked pretty bad at both FB Sarge and Mai Loc. "That night I spent at Dong Ha under artillery fire, all night long. This was a poignant reminder of the past as I spent the night in the old 3rd Marine Division morgue. It was the same place where I had identified the remains of my Marines five years earlier." The shells landed constantly all through the night.

It was clear to Ripley by that time that this activity wasn't just an average change of tempo in the action. The enemy was clearly serious about whatever they were up to. "What a change it turned out to be," said Ripley.

The next day was Easter Sunday. Nobody really knew what day it was; the only way they could tell was if it was time to take a malaria pill. (Malaria pills were taken each Sunday.) Days ran together. At daylight the artillery slowed, and Ripley went out to do a crater analysis.

"There's a way you can look at a shell crater and determine, pretty accurately, which direction it came from. Size of the crater, details like that. I had just seen this thing blow up in front of me, so I ran over there to make an analysis. I was surprised, actually, to find that it pointed, not to where I believed the artillery to be but generally in the DMZ area, where we didn't think the threat was coming from. And then when I came back from that, that's when I got a call from Col Turley's folks." Lieutenant Colonel Gerald H. Turley, USMC, was the newly arrived assistant senior advisor to the Vietnamese Marine Corps. During an indoctrination visit to the northern provinces of South Vietnam, a series of bizarre incidents occurred which, in essence, made him coordinator of the defenses of Northern Region One. "Things had indeed gotten

very serious, and he said there was a large number of tanks coming south along this road here (Route 1)." Ripley traced the road on the map with his finger.

"We didn't have the wherewithal to stop that many tanks. We had little hand-held weapons. And we certainly didn't have anything on the scale that



Col John Ripley

Arriving at the bridge, Ripley and Smock went through what Ripley describes as "the very deliberate and detailed effort to blow it up."

was needed to deal with the threat. Originally 20 tanks had been reported." Ripley chuckled softly at the memory.

The number of tanks turned out to be around 200. Several days later an aerial observer, quite high up, flew over Route 1 and said, "You got bumper to bumper tanks from the Ben Hai River all the way to Dong Ha. They can't even turn around they've got so many of them."

The headquarters staff, as well as the advisors, had believed the war was winding down. Instead, they were faced with an enormous threat. "Let me assure you, we were not dealing with logical progression here. It wasn't, 'What do we do next, what do we do here, how do we deal with this?'" It was heightened, rapid-fire decision making.

"I was the only advisor represented there. Normally you had two advisors,

but my assistant had already gone," Ripley remembered. The decision had been made to cut back to one advisor per battalion and Ripley was there alone. That morning when they saw the tank threat across the river, he was doing everything he could to determine how to stop the armor attack. Across the river, from near a railroad bridge, something attracted his attention. Ripley looked across.

"My gosh! That's not our flag! It was a North Vietnamese flag. We knew they already had one end of the bridge. So, then we made an effort to get back to the main highway bridge. That was when they started an artillery barrage that was just indescribable. I've never seen anything like it in my life. Hundreds and hundreds of rounds of artillery trying to reduce resistance at Dong Ha. The enemy didn't want any trouble crossing the river.

"We couldn't get through Dong Ha, so we went through a route I knew south of the old Marine combat base there. I had used it a number of times in my previous tour. The Vietnamese had no idea it was there. Again, I was lucky that I had known where I was. Otherwise, I never would have gotten back to Route 1. From there the question was, 'How do I get up to the bridge?'"

There was a tank battalion near the bridge. The Vietnamese were reluctant to let Ripley have a tank to get to the bridge, but there really wasn't any other way. "It took a bit of persuading, but I finally convinced them. I got help from the tank battalion's advisor." The U.S. Army advisor who joined Ripley on his bridge adventure was Maj James E. Smock, who was attached to the Vietnamese tank battalion.

Arriving at the bridge, Ripley and Smock went through what Ripley describes as "the very deliberate and detailed effort to blow it up."

Ripley and Smock found five ARVN engineers beneath the bridge when they arrived. The engineers had placed 500 pounds of TNT and plastic explosives, anticipating the order for the bridge's destruction. The placement of the crates of explosives would not have destroyed the bridge. The blast would only have dropped a span and the tanks would still be able to cross.

Ripley and Smock started to rearrange the crates of explosives, while the ARVN engineers simply disappeared. Ripley had to clear a high chain link fence topped with razor wire and steel tape.

Then Smock began to push the boxes of TNT over to Ripley who would hand-walk out to place the boxes where they would do the most damage.

"I would hand-walk out, then swing up to get my heels into the I-beam." Smock would hand up the crate of explosives to Ripley. "Then I'd swing down on one T-beam and then leap over and grab another T-beam." The entire time Smock and Ripley were working on the tremendous task in front of them, the North Vietnamese were on the other shore watching.

"That was one of the most inexplicable parts of the whole affair. I could see them there, ganged up, and eventually the tanks began moving in on the north bank. The whole thing was almost surrealistic. I kept thinking, 'Why aren't they trying to get across the bridge? Why aren't they directing some of their attention to me? What are they doing over there?' And yet the NVA never seemed to do that with any seriousness." Ripley is convinced that, had the forces

been switched around, an American would have said, "I'll knock that guy off just because it would be so easy. The North Vietnamese seemed to think 'that poor little old bird over there is so obviously susceptible, leave him alone.'"

Ripley estimates it must have taken him and Smock about 2 ½ hours to complete the job they had set out to do. The COVANS (a nickname the Vietnamese had for the advisors) must have felt relieved that the job was nearly complete. The last task was to detonate the explosives.

Ripley, not finding any electric detonating caps, finally discovered several time fuses. He had to think back to remember how to estimate the length of the fuse to allow enough time to get him and Smock out of range of the blast.

Ripley could not measure the fuse properly, and he couldn't find any crimpers. "I had to take the blasting cap and open the one end. Then I had to take it and stick it backwards in my

mouth with the opening out and put it way back in and bite the end of this thing. It was gagging me, it was so far back in my mouth."

By this time the North Vietnamese were furious. Ripley had really stirred up a hornet's nest. The NVA were shooting up everything they could. "I was lying there on the ground with Smock going through this ridiculous little exchange. I was exhausted."

Ripley looked up, "There right in front of me was the doggone box of electric caps. I couldn't believe it. And I thought, 'Man, if I leave here and the time fuses don't work, I'll never get lucky enough to get back under there.'"

Ripley climbed the fence again. He worked quickly to prime the boxes of explosives. The entire time the time fuses were still burning. He trailed the wire leads from the caps to some communications wire.

At that time, Smock looked at the old railroad bridge and realized that any armor or engineer unit could re-

An Advisor's Uniform

This coat was worn by Col John Ripley when he was a Republic of Vietnam Marine Division advisor. It is currently in the collection of the National Museum of the Marine Corps. According to the Museum's uniforms and heraldry curator, Owen Conner, The South Vietnamese Marines were easily recognizable for their "Tiger Stripe" camouflage. Wearing the same uniform as the men in the Division, American advisors had their U.S. rank and insignia embroidered on the coats. Then-Capt Ripley also wore his equivalent Vietnamese rank sewn to his right pocket. These uniform coats were worn tucked into the trousers, similar to the way U.S. Marines wore their sateen utility uniforms.

This is the type of uniform Ripley was wearing during his actions at the Dong Ha Bridge. (Photos courtesy of the National Museum of the Marine Corps)



“I scraped the terminals, touched the wire to it and ... nothing. Scraped it again, still nothing. Just as I was standing there thinking, ‘What am I going to do now?’ I was thrown to the ground. The time fuses had worked!”

**—Col John Ripley,
USMC (Ret)**

pair and use that bridge. He put the crates of explosives in place under the undamaged portion of the railroad bridge. Then Ripley ran another wire to blow both bridges at the same time.

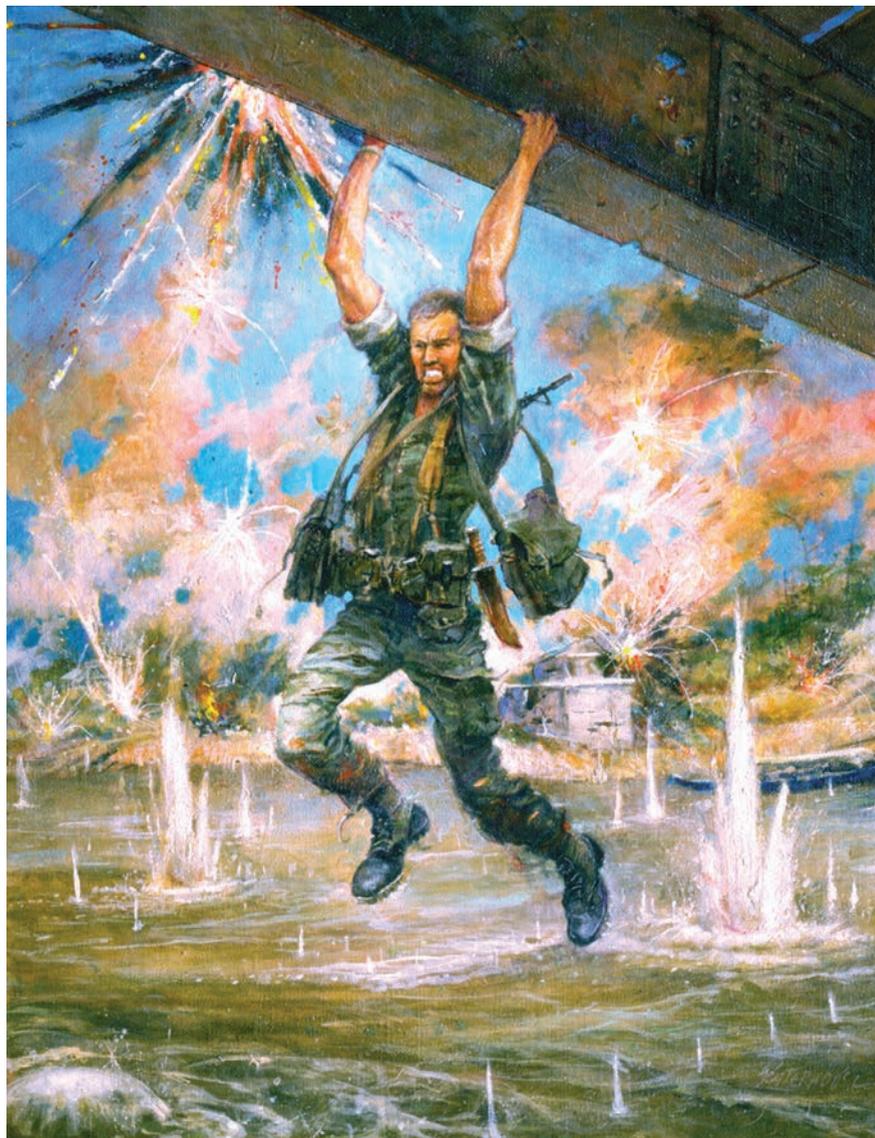
The two made a mad dash back to the relative safety of the South Vietnamese lines, with the Vietnamese Marines cheering them on. They were safe. Once there Ripley found a jeep that had been blown over and proceeded to use the battery in an attempt to detonate the explosives.

“I scraped the terminals, touched the wire to it and ... nothing. Scraped it again, still nothing. Just as I was standing there thinking, ‘What am I going to do now?’ I was thrown to the ground. The time fuses had worked!” Ripley still sounds surprised. “I guess that’s why they always say to double prime!”

Part of the bridge was composed of 12-inch timbers, and when the explosion went off, the timbers were ignited. They continued to burn for the following five days. A terse message reported the results of Ripley and Smock’s efforts to LtCol Gerald H. Turley, acting chief advisor, 3rd ARVN Division, “The Dong Ha Bridge has been destroyed.”

“LtCol Turley took matters in his own hands. He had accepted an enormous responsibility and assumed the authority,” said Ripley. “Col Turley took care of the advisors; he’s the reason we all got out.”

The North Vietnamese offensive was stopped by the combined efforts of a handful of advisors and the Vietnamese. As long as his men were still out there, Turley wouldn’t give in to pressure to pull back. Ripley said he believes that every Marine should be ready to accept that kind of overwhelming responsibility.



This dramatic painting by Col Charles Waterhouse, USMCR (Ret) depicts Ripley’s courageous efforts at the bridge at Dong Ha.

“I don’t think it ever entered his mind not to do what he had to do. Despite the fact that someone might say, ‘Do you realize what you’re doing?’ What did they want him to do? Turn the radios off and leave? That’s just not the Marine Corps way. Ever!”

The Vietnamese Marines eventually regrouped and recaptured Quang Tri. In the process they suffered extremely heavy casualties.

The folks back in the States at that time just didn’t want to hear about the Easter Offensive. “People didn’t want to know about it. The war was sour news and old news. It was a non-event. The biggest attack of the war and it was turned around by an incredibly few people determined to do something,” said Ripley. “The Vietnamese Marines were extraordinary.

“My formula, my view is to be de-

cisive,” said Ripley, “no matter what. When something needs to be done, do it.” If you truly believe something is right, seize the opportunity within the confines of your authority.

“You also need to be aggressive. Not just in the traditional aspect of our trade, as in taking the fight to the enemy, which I think is the only sensible way to fight. Sitting on well-prepared defenses doesn’t do it. But I think an individual’s nature is just as important. Don’t sit down and wait for an opportunity or for perfect conditions. Achieve your goals. Launch on them. Or you’ll wait forever.”

Author’s bio: Vicki Vanden Bout is a former Leatherneck writer who joined the staff in 1985 as a photojournalist. She later became associate editor and contributing editor in July 1986. 🐼

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

Hugh Purvis:

Patriot Led a Life of Military Service, Culminating in Medal of Honor



By Mike Miller

Students of Marine Corps history may know about the bravery of Hugh Purvis, who received a Medal of Honor for his actions in the 1871 Korea expedition. But what is not well-known about Purvis is that he was a veteran of the Civil War. Purvis became a Marine in 1869, the first of many years of a long and distinguished career wearing the eagle, globe and anchor. Before that, however, he was a soldier who fought in the Battle of Gettysburg.

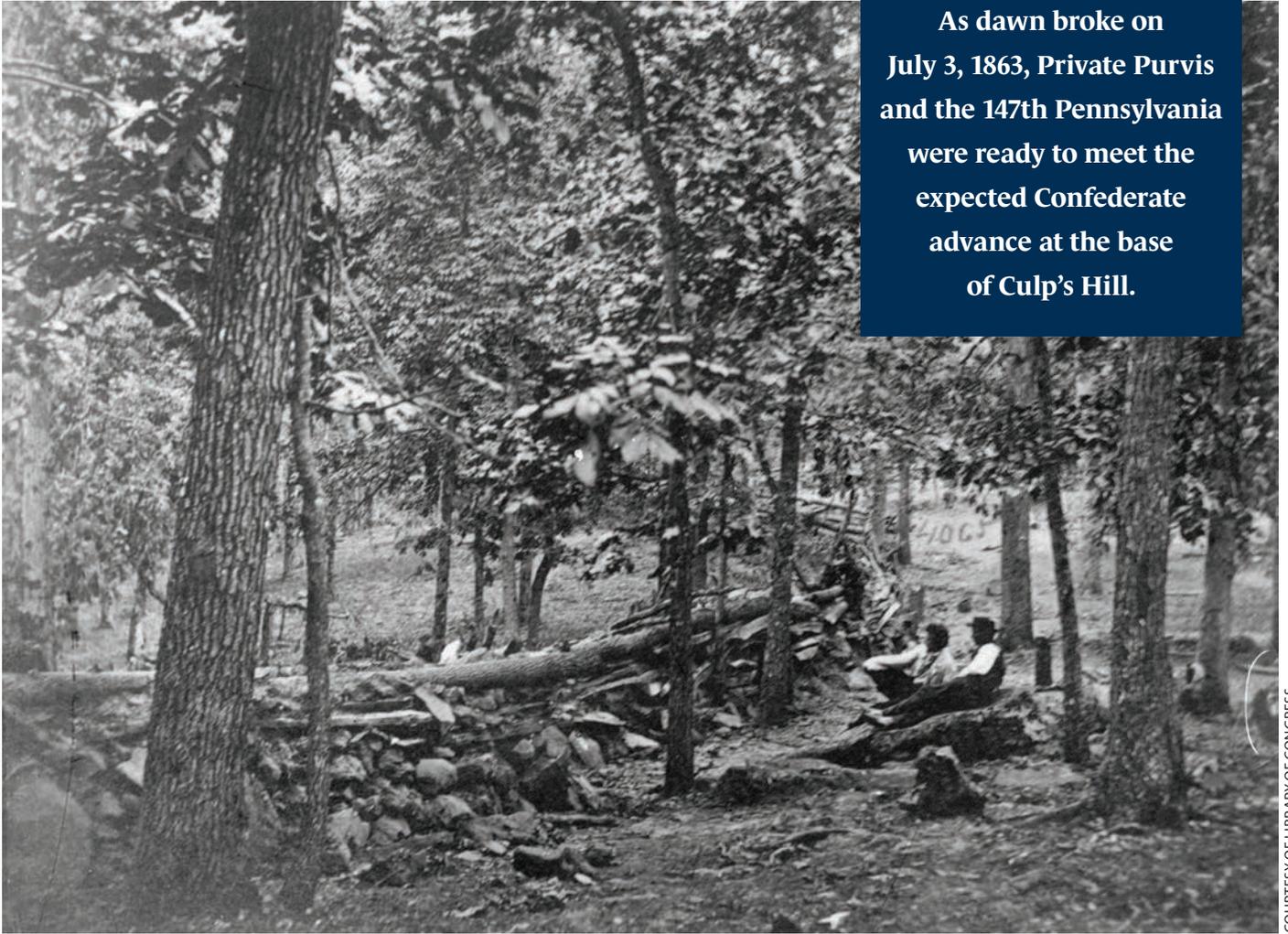
With the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, Hugh Purvis was struck with patriotic fervor and joined the 23rd Pennsylvania Infantry, a three-month regiment, serving in Maryland in order to secure Washington, D.C., from Confederate incursions. At the end of his enlistment, Purvis decided that military life suited him well and joined the 28th Pennsylvania Infantry for three years. After a quiet winter on the Potomac River near Harper's Ferry, Purvis faced sustained battle for the first time at Antietam on Sept. 17, 1862. More combat awaited at Chancellorsville in 1863, which began the road to Gettysburg. The 28th Pennsylvania was fragmented, with Purvis now belonging to the newly formed 147th Pennsylvania.

On July 1, 1863, Private Hugh Purvis and the other 297 officers and men of the 147th Pennsylvania Infantry marched hurriedly toward Gettysburg, drawn by the sounds of cannons and the knowledge that they must face General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia on their native soil. As dawn broke on July 3, 1863, Private Purvis and the 147th Pennsylvania were ready to meet the expected Confederate advance at the base of Culp's Hill. Across a cleared field and stone wall, the 1st Maryland Infantry (Confederate), the

Pvt Hugh Purvis received the Medal of Honor in 1872, for his heroic actions during the Korean Expedition in 1871.

COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES

As dawn broke on July 3, 1863, Private Purvis and the 147th Pennsylvania were ready to meet the expected Confederate advance at the base of Culp's Hill.



COURTESY OF LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The woods where the 147th Pennsylvania Infantry lay at the time of the charge of the rebels on Culp's Hill, Gettysburg, Pa.

3rd North Carolina and two Virginia regiments made ready to charge directly into the Union regiment's line. Lieutenant Colonel Ario Pardee moved his men down a slight slope to the low ground to a better firing position where they would not be on the skyline. Hugh Purvis and the 147th Pennsylvania readied for battle.

At 8 a.m., the Confederates charged down the slope with the "rebel yell," led by the Maryland regimental mascot Gracie, a black Labrador retriever. Pardee allowed the Confederates to approach to 100 yards and then opened fire. The volley tore through the enemy ranks, breaking the charge into fragments that continued to attack until they could go no further. Within minutes, the surviving Confederates drew back up the hill to safety, leaving the field littered with the bodies of the dead and wounded southerners.

The sight before the 147th Pennsylvania was horrendous. One wounded Maryland soldier pulled up to load his rifle, which caused many nervous Federals to sight in on the injured man. Major John Craig ordered the men to hold fire as it was

obvious that the warrior could do little damage. The intent of the wounded man soon became clear. All watched carefully as he slowly loaded his weapon, pulled the hammer back and then placed the muzzle of the rifle under his chin. As the Federals watched in horror, the soldier placed his ramrod on the trigger and fired the weapon, ending his suffering. No one who witnessed the incident could ever forget the Maryland soldier. The field at Gettysburg would forever be known as Pardee Field, after the commander of the 147th Pennsylvania.

Purvis next saw action in the Western theater in the 1863 battle of Lookout Mountain and the 1864 Atlanta Campaign at Dug Gap, Resaca, New Hope Church and Kennesaw Mountain. On Sept. 26, 1864, he returned home at the end of his enlistment. Civilian life seemed not to suit Purvis, and he joined the Veterans Volunteer Corps in 1865, serving in the defense of Washington, D.C., until

the end of the war. Purvis remained in this service until July 20, 1866, when he again rejected civilian life for the duty of a soldier, enlisting for three years initially with the 26th Infantry Regiment. As the Army reduced in size, Purvis' regiment was consolidated with other units.

Purvis made a fateful decision on Oct. 27, 1869, leaving the Army for an enlistment in the Marine Corps with his first station fittingly the Marine Barracks at the Philadelphia Navy Yard. He left the City of Brotherly Love for Boston the following month, followed by a quick assignment to the Marine detachment on USS *Alaska* on Dec. 29, a new wooden hulled screw sloop of war. Purvis had little time to learn the ways of the Marine Corps before going

to sea. On April 8, 1870, Purvis found himself on his way to join the Asiatic Squadron commanded by Rear Admiral John Rodgers.

Private Purvis arrived on station just



Ario Pardee

FILE PHOTO

COREA.

PORTS AND BATTERIES
Engaged by the
Land And Water Forces
Of The
U.S. ASIATIC FLEET
JUNE 1871.

U.S. forces
before charging
the forts

Fort McKee

Monocacy
struck rock

Elbow Fort

Fort Palos

batteries and
companies

infantry line of march

Forts Monocacy

Marine
Encampment
June 10th

Marine
redoubt

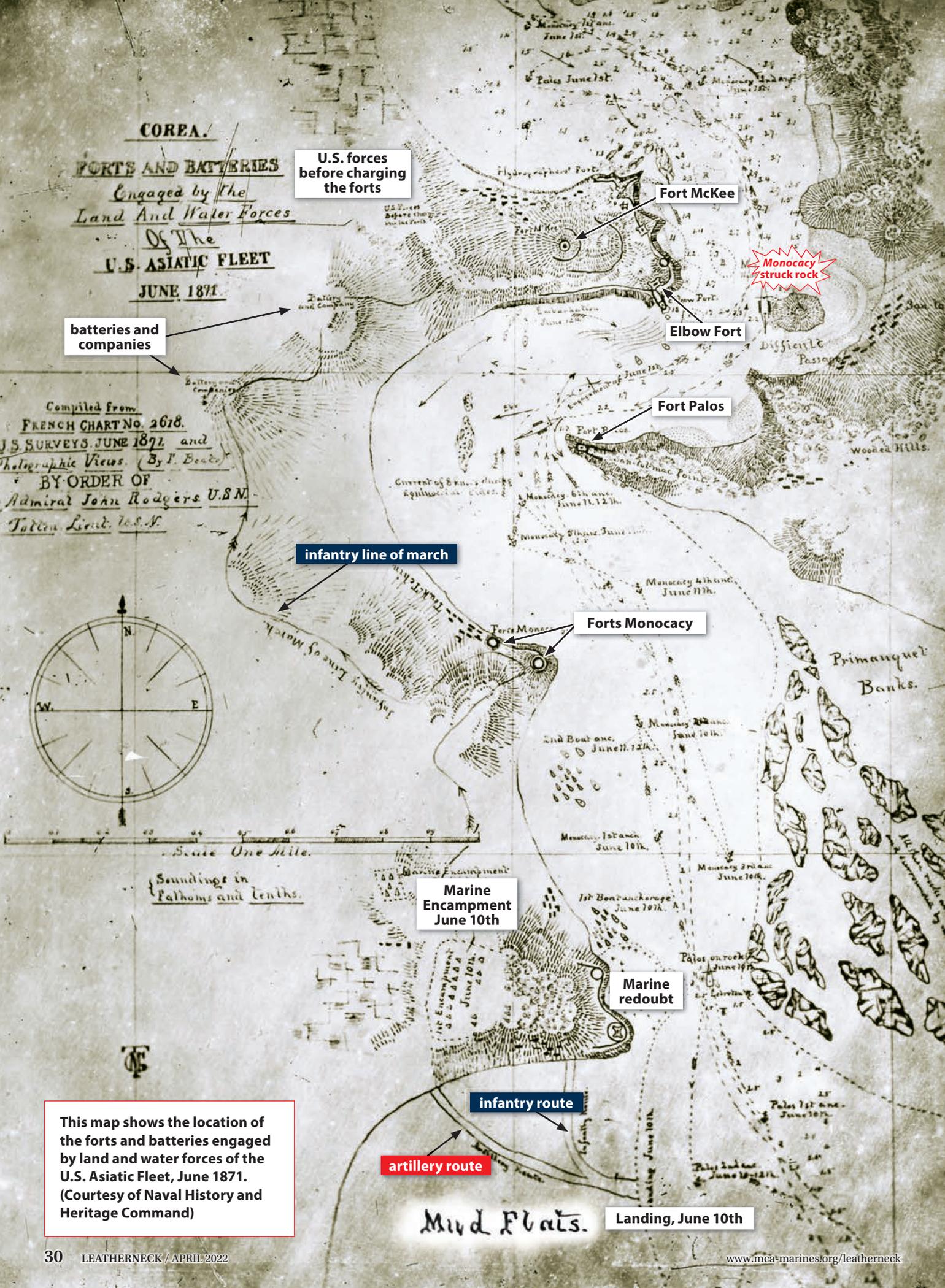
infantry route

artillery route

Landing, June 10th

Mud Flats.

This map shows the location of the forts and batteries engaged by land and water forces of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet, June 1871. (Courtesy of Naval History and Heritage Command)



As tensions between the United States and Korea escalated over the 1866 disappearance of an American flagged ship, S.S. *General Sherman*, and the American Sailors who were supposedly shipwrecked on Korean territory. There existed no formal diplomatic relations between the two countries, so when the ship vanished, no method existed to investigate the incident. American warships visited Korea over the next two years, but no information was gained.

Rear Admiral John Rodgers was tasked to visit Korea and assist American diplomats in establishing some form of diplomatic relations. He assembled his squadron in Nagasaki, Japan, and sailed for Korea on May 16, 1871, aboard the screw frigate USS *Colorado*, accompanied by USS *Alaska* with Pvt Purvis aboard, the screw sloop of war USS *Benicia*, side wheel gunboat USS *Monocacy* and the gunboat USS *Palos*. The expedition reached Korean waters three days later but was immobilized by thick fog that prevented any further movement. When the weather cleared, RADM Rodgers anchored his squadron near Eugenie Island on May 23. Rodgers sent out the gunboat USS *Palos* with steam launches to survey the area.

At noon on June 1, USS *Monocacy* began the sounding mission with Commander Homer C. Blake on USS *Palos* steaming up the river behind three steam launches and a steam cutter performing the actual soundings. As the Americans neared the Korean forts at a bend of the river, the Sailors “observed the flags, an indication of the forts being occupied by soldiers.” As the Americans came closer, they saw

the cannons in the fort were fully manned, and “the face of the hill occupied by lines of men, perhaps a thousand in number.”

The sound of a rifle shot echoed across the river, signaling the guns to open a blistering fire upon the American craft. Blake’s Sailors replied with a fusillade of cannon fire which quickly caused the gun crews to abandon their cannons. The American ships passed the fort at

There would be no more dueling with the cannon from the river. This time, RADM Rodgers planned an amphibious landing that would capture each fort as necessary. He pulled together a landing force of Sailors and Marines.

full speed and anchored, still firing at any sign of Korean resistance; however, USS *Monocacy* struck a rock and was leaking water at a rapid rate. The small boats reported little ammunition remaining from the fight. The Americans withdrew to rejoin the rest of the squadron, firing on the forts as they passed with no response from the Koreans. The Americans lost only two Sailors wounded during the engagement.

RADM Rodgers regarded the fire from the Korean forts as an insult to the

American flag and informed the Korean government he would give them 10 days to make an apology before taking further action against the forts. Ambassador Low concurred with RADM Rodgers’ arrangements. The 10 days allowed him time to plan for battle and to take advantage of the neap tide, which would provide optimum conditions for a landing. There would be no more dueling with the cannon from the river. This time, RADM Rodgers planned an amphibious landing that would capture each fort as necessary. He pulled together a landing force of Sailors and Marines from *Colorado*, *Alaska*, and *Benicia*, totaling 759 men, including 105 Marines, commanded by Captain McLain Tilton. As each day passed, there remained no response from the Korean government.

On June 10, at 10 a.m., Rodgers ordered his landing force into motion with the mission to punish the forts which fired on the American vessels. USS *Monocacy* bombarded the first offending fort, identified as the “Marine Fort,” while the *Palos* towed 22 small boats loaded with Sailors and Marines, including Pvt Purvis and the landing party from *Alaska*. The Koreans returned fire but were driven from their guns by *Monocacy*’s cannon. *Benicia* made for a landing in an inlet below the fort, flanking the Korean defenders, who scattered as the boats neared shore, leaving their stronghold vacant.

Each boat grounded on the beach, allowing the ready Marines and Sailors to jump ashore to an unopposed landing, at least in theory. No one performed a reconnaissance of the ground itself, which proved to be the major opponent of the

USS *Monocacy* towing landing boats in the Han River during the Korean expedition in May-June 1871.



COURTESY NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND

day. The inlet possessed a seemingly bottomless mudflat, which grasped the Marines by their legs and refused to let go. “The men, stepping from the boats, sunk to their knees, and so tenacious was the clay,” Rodgers reported, “that in many cases they lost gaiters and shoes, and even trouser legs.” Even worse were the gun crews of the nine howitzers, which quickly disappeared in the mud up the axles of their gun carriages. Dry land was a distant quarter mile to half a mile, depending on the landing site.

The lack of Korean resistance, even with obsolete weapons, allowed the Americans to avoid a disaster as the hill above the fort completely dominated the mud flat. Time was also necessary to plow through the mud and cross cavernous tidal channels in the sludge to reach dry land. Purvis and the Marines took a direct route to the fort, pulling themselves from out of the mud into the abandoned fort; however, the landing guns took a deeper route out of the swamp, avoiding the steep banks of the hill at the fort. Each cannon was pulled out by 75 to 80 Sailors and Marines manning drag lines with raw force to overcome the morass and requiring more than two hours of labor.

Once out of the mud, the sodden Marines and Sailors immediately began the destruction of the abandoned fort, tossing

the smaller cannons into the river while spiking the larger cannons to prevent any further use. Other working parties pulled down the walls of the fort while powder, uniforms, rations and anything else burnable were put to the torch, sending blank clouds of smoke into the air. The destruction went on into the later afternoon when

When the walls were pulled down, the American column began the march the final 2 miles to the heart of the Korean defense. If there would be a battle, it would be in the final fort complex ahead.

the Americans went into camp on the heights above the smoldering fort. The Marines took position in advance of the main encampment, armed with one of the boat howitzers, placing a strong picket line to detect any counterattack by Korean forces from the additional forts upriver. A force of Korean soldiers harassed Pvt

Purvis and the Marines at midnight with desultory rifle fire but was soon driven away by several howitzer shells.

Daylight of June 11 allowed complete destruction of Fort Marine, and a request was sent to Admiral Rodgers for further instructions. Rodgers signaled back, “Go ahead and take the forts.” Commander Lewis A. Kimberly ordered the landing party into motion, marching toward the principal Korean forts 3 miles upriver. Pvt Purvis and the rest of the Marines led the advance, approaching a second fort on a high ridge overlooking the river. Once again, the Korean forces evacuated their fort, allowing the Americans to destroy the large number of cannons remaining behind. When the walls were pulled down, the American column began to march the final 2 miles to the heart of the Korean defense. If there would be a battle, it would be in the final fort complex ahead, the headquarters of the Korean commanding general.

The final 2 miles to the Korea citadel proved exhausting, and Admiral Rodgers described it as “a succession of steep hills, with deep ravines between, over which foot soldiers passed with great fatigue.” Entire companies deployed on the drag ropes of the artillery, hauling every cannon up each vertical ravine and then lowering the gun down into the next gully in a

Elbow Fort, one of the defenses of the Han River, as photographed from Fort McKee shortly after its capture on June 11, 1871.



COURTESY NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND

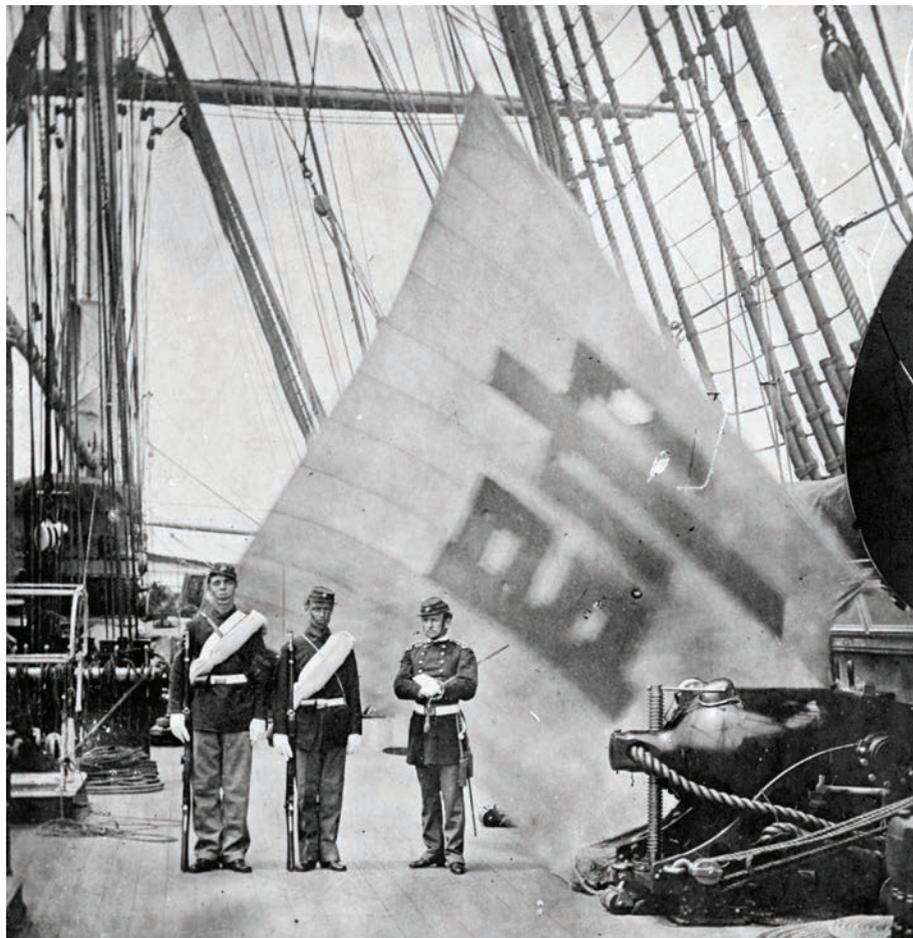


COURTESY OF NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MARINE CORPS

An oil painting by John Clymer, USMC, depicting the landing of Marine infantry and field artillery on Kang-Wa Island in the Han River in Korea, June 10, 1871. USS *Monocacy* provides gunfire support in the background.



Above: Inside Fort McKee after its capture on June 11, 1871. (Photo courtesy of Naval History and Heritage Command)



COURTESY OF NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND

never-ending struggle, yard after yard. As the American column moved wearily forward, columns of Korean infantry appeared on their left flank, threatening the advance. Commander Blake ordered three companies of Sailors and five of the howitzers to keep the Korean advance at bay until the main column reached their target.

At 11 a.m., Blake's men reached the base of the peninsula holding the main Korean position well sited once again on a commanding hill overlooking the river. The approach from the land side proved most formidable with the only way to attack the position constricted by the peninsula into a narrow kill zone, commanded by the fort. The Sailors and Marines wasted little time getting into position, eager to complete their relentless attack. Purvis and the rest of the Marines moved in defilade to within 150 yards of the fort and then paused to recover their strength for the decisive attack.

The final charge would have to be made

Cpl Charles Brown, left, Pvt Hugh Purvis, center, and Capt McLane Tilton aboard USS Colorado off Korea in June 1871. In the background is the Korean military flag captured in the attack on Fort McKee on June 11.

up yet another steep hill and then face the walls of the fort itself without scaling ladders. “Our men kept up a fire from their resting place upon the fort whenever an enemy exposed himself,” Rodgers noted, “and this they did constantly with the most reckless courage, discharging their pieces as fast as they could load.” The Koreans desperately defended their position, returning the fire with a vengeance. A bullet struck Marine Private Denis Hanrahan of the *Benicia*, killing him in the exchange of fire.

At last, the order to charge was given. Purvis sprinted ahead down a slope into an 80-foot ravine and then up the final yards to the walls of the enemy fort. The Korean defenders fired quickly on the charge until the Americans reached the wall, and then instead of pausing to reload, threw stones and boulders down the attackers. Luckily for the Americans, several gaps were blown into the wall before them, allowing them to enter the wall without a fatal climb.

Navy Lieutenant McKee was the first American in the fort and immediately engaged in hand-to-hand combat with the Koreans, falling with two mortal wounds, a spear in the side and musket ball in the groin. The Koreans fought hard against the Marines and Sailors. “The fighting inside the fort was desperate,” Rodgers related, “they apparently expected no quarter, and probably would have given none.” Private McNamara, of *Benicia*, took on a Korean soldier on the parapet, wrenching the matchlock weapon from the grip of his opponent and then killing him in a hand-to-hand fight. Navy Landsman Seth Allen of *Colorado* was killed while climbing the parapet as the Korean soldiers struggled with the Marines and Sailors. “Our men fought, some with cutlasses, others with their muskets and carbines, using them as clubs,” Commander Silas Casey of *Colorado* related, “the Koreans with spears, swords, stones and even threw dust to blind us.”

Rodgers related the Koreans “fought to the death, and only when the last man fell did the conflict cease.” The American flag flew from the parapet of the fort at 11:15 a.m. The Korean soldiers fought bravely but could not survive the American modern firepower in the close confines of the fort. At least 108 bodies of the Korean garrison were counted inside the citadel, and another estimated 20 prisoners were captured, many of whom were wounded. The garrison bravely gave their lives to defend their fort. Two Marines—Private Hanrahan and Private Michael Owens of *Colorado*—were killed in the fight.

Private Purvis was among the first to enter the fort and charged with Captain



COURTESY OF NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND

Officers and men of the landing party gather for a group photo at Point Duconde during the Korean Expedition of 1871. The fort at Point Duconde was captured with no opposition on June 10, 1871.

Tilton and Corporal Charles Brown on the large yellow 12-foot square flag of the Korean general. “The Alaska Marine [Purvis] was then a second or two before me and my corporal [Brown], but while he was unknitting the halliards, my Corporal and I tore the flag down.” Tilton noted in his report that Purvis rightly deserved

for long. On May 18, 1874, he found a new home and a new start by reenlisting in the Marine Corps at the Marine Barracks Annapolis, Md. Interestingly, Purvis rejoined his comrade of the Korean forts, Capt McLane Tilton, who was in command of the station.

Here, Purvis found his niche, remaining at the barracks for the next 10 years until 1884, when he was discharged from the Marine Corps as a corporal. He continued to serve as armorer and mechanic at the Naval Academy for many years. Purvis also met Mary Alice Jackson of Annapolis, and they were married by 1880. The two had three children. After a long and certainly interesting life, Purvis died on Feb. 12, 1922, in Annapolis and is buried in Saint Anne’s Cemetery beside Alice, who lived long enough to have the honor of sponsoring the USS *Hugh Purvis* (DD-709), commissioned in 1945.

Private Purvis was among the first to enter the fort and charged with Captain Tilton and Corporal Charles Brown on the large yellow 12-foot square flag of the Korean general.

credit for the capture. Both Purvis and Brown were recommended for Medals of Honor, but Cpl Brown deserted before he was awarded his medal. Pvt Purvis received his medal in 1872. He left the Marine Corps with the memories of his round the world cruise fresh in his mind. Yet, Purvis would not remain a civilian

Author’s bio: Mike Miller has written five books and many articles about Marine Corps and Civil War history. A longtime Leatherneck contributor, he retired in 2016 after a 34-year career in the Marine Corps archival, museum and history programs. His latest book is “The 4th Marine Brigade at Belleau Wood and Soissons: History and Battlefield Guide.”

“This is My Rifle”

How the M1 Garand Became a Legend Among Riflemen

By Sam Lichtman

Perhaps more than any other military rifle, John Garand’s iconic M1 holds a special place in the hearts of military riflemen and civilian enthusiasts alike. From the jungles of the South Pacific to the infamous “Frozen Chosin,” Marines carried this revolutionary arm for nearly two decades, using it to deadly effect in some of the Corps’ most famous battles.



SGT ROBERT KINAPP, USMC

Marines with 2nd Plt, “Bravo” Co, Marine Barracks Washington, D.C., march in formation during a full honors funeral for three formerly unaccounted for Vietnam veterans at Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Va., Sept. 27, 2018. M1 rifles are still widely used for ceremonial purposes by militaries which formerly fielded it in battle.

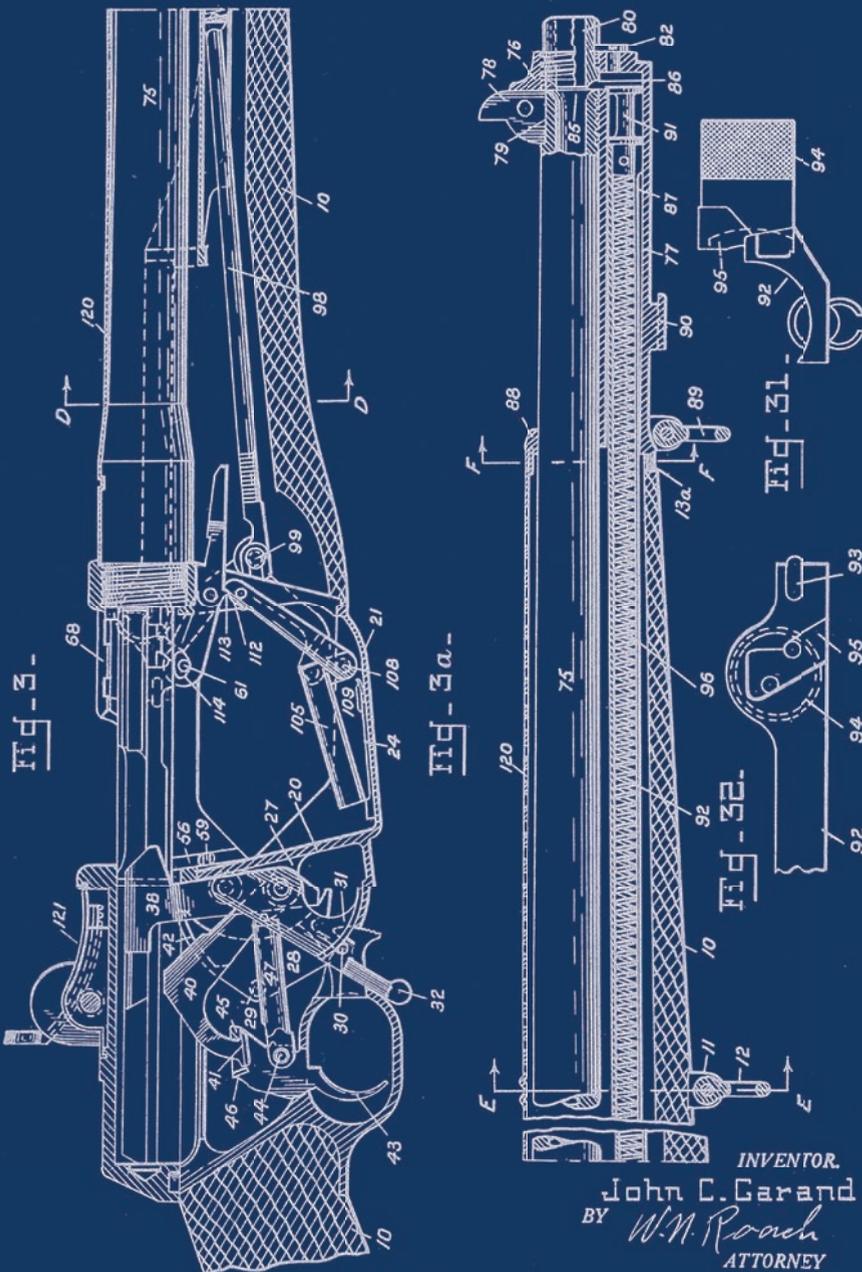
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Dec. 27, 1932.

J. C. GARAND
SEMI-AUTOMATIC RIFLE
Filed April 21, 1930

1,892,141

9 Sheets—Sheet 2



John C. Garand was a relative unknown in the firearms world. Hailing from Canada, he was a mechanical engineer by training and trade. Much of his career had been spent designing industrial machinery for factories, a skillset which would later come to serve him well.

The year was 1932, and then-Major (later Major General) Julian S. Hatcher at the U.S. Army Ordnance Office had a problem. The Army had already decided that it wanted to replace the venerable bolt-action M1903 Springfield with a self-loading rifle to provide its riflemen with rapid-fire capability. Although there were no shortage of talented designers looking to sign a contract, Hatcher had no way to tell who was serious about building a suitable rifle and who was just a hobbyist looking for an easy cash grant. Furthermore, the workable designs that already existed had significant problems—after all, self-loading infantry rifles had been produced in small numbers since before the First World War, but no design had been good enough for a major military to adopt it as standard. A round of trials in 1924 had failed to find a rifle that was entirely suitable, but those trials set the stage for what was soon to come.

Self-loading, or semi-automatic, rifles had been modestly popular among hunters and sport shooters for decades. The ability to fire multiple shots in rapid succession without having to manually cycle the action was highly valuable in the field, but the designs weren't nearly adequate for military use. Engineers had tried to scale up civilian designs like the Remington Model 8 and Winchester Model 1907 rifles, but they encountered serious problems: the rifles were usually some combination of heavy, inaccurate, fragile, unreliable, or expensive to produce. It quickly became clear that the standard .30 M1906 cartridge was much too powerful and the military's requirements too stringent for an existing design to simply be adapted for soldiers and Marines to use in combat.

Enter two men named John—John Pedersen and John Garand. Pedersen was a seasoned, experienced firearm designer who had developed several commercially successful firearms while working for Remington. During WW I, Pedersen designed a conversion device which allowed the M1903 Springfield to be quickly adapted into a semi-automatic pistol-caliber carbine; it was adopted by the U.S. military and saw limited use by war's end. John Moses Browning once called John

Pedersen “the greatest gun designer in the world;” high praise from anyone, let alone Browning. Throughout the 1920s, Pedersen had been working on prototype designs for a reliable, accurate self-loading infantry rifle. When the Army started looking for one, he saw this as the perfect opportunity to have his design adopted.

Compared to heavyweights like Pedersen, John C. Garand was a relative unknown in the firearms world. Hailing from Canada, he was a mechanical engineer by training and trade. Much of his career had been spent designing industrial machinery for factories, a skillset which would later come to serve him well. Garand's experimentation in arms design began in the early 1920s, culminating in his submission of a self-loading rifle to the unsuccessful 1924 Army trials. Changes to the way military ammunition was manufactured rendered the basic



John C. Garand, at work in his model shop in the 1940s, was a mechanical engineer whose place in history was secured with the design of the M1 rifle. (Photo by Alfred T. Palmer, Courtesy of Library of Congress)



Sgt Rinaldo Martini fires shots of opportunity during the Battle of Iwo Jima, March 12, 1945, with an M1 Garand while sitting on a stack of captured enemy ammunition crates. Martini, a machine gun section leader assigned to C/1/27, earned the Silver Star for his actions earlier during the battle.

This Garand prototype, designated T3E2, competed in U.S. Army trials beginning in 1932. It features a primitive “gas trap” system which taps expanding gases from the muzzle rather than the simpler and more efficient gas port arrangement found in most production M1 rifles.



COURTESY OF NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MARINE CORPS

MacArthur ordered that the .276 be abandoned immediately and all rifle development focus on the standard .30-'06.

John Pedersen had designed his rifles around the .276 cartridge, but Garand had an ace up his sleeve.



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Above: The back of the T3E2's receiver prominently features caliber information and other details. This rifle, manufactured in January of 1931, bears serial number 20.



LCPL ALLEN SANDERS, USMC

Left: Firing from a modified Port Arms position, Marines with “Alpha” Co firing party execute a three-round volley using blank-adapted M1s during a funeral for repatriated Marine PFC Harold H. Hayden at Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Va., Oct. 27, 2021.

operating mechanism unworkable, but by the early 1930s, John Garand had again produced a design worthy of proper military trials.

In 1932, the Army ran another trials program to select and adopt a self-loading infantry rifle to replace the Springfield. This time, the playing field was dominated by only two serious contenders: John Pedersen with his T1E3 rifle and John Garand with his new and improved T3E2, both in caliber .276. Pedersen's

design used a toggle-delayed blowback mechanism with the breech locked by a sort of knee joint during firing. Garand's design used a more conventional rotating bolt driven by a gas piston, which tapped expanding powder gases from the muzzle to operate the action. In the trials, John Garand's rifle was found to be more robust and reliable than Pedersen's and had one crucial advantage—it didn't need lubricated ammunition. By virtue of its delayed-blowback operating mechanism,

John Pedersen's rifle would seize up and stop functioning unless the cartridges were lubricated, but its internal lubrication system increased complexity and allowed dust and grit to accumulate in the receiver, eventually causing malfunctions without careful cleaning.

The Army also had been testing the prototype rifles not in the standard chambering of .30-'06, but in an experimental .276. Military analysts had already determined that the new cartridge had

Marines carrying the M1 Garand on the bayonet course charge over a log obstacle while training at Montford Point, April 1945.



COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES

a number of advantages suiting it well for use in a self-loading infantry rifle. Somewhat smaller and less powerful, the cartridge placed less strain on a rifle's operating components and produced significantly less felt recoil, allowing soldiers and Marines to fire more rapidly and accurately. Furthermore, the lighter weight and lower production cost of each round allowed men to carry more ammunition into the field and stay in the fight longer.

During the late stages of testing, General Douglas MacArthur personally intervened to throw a proverbial wrench in the whole program. Wary of the additional complications a new infantry cartridge would pose for the U.S. military's logistical network, MacArthur ordered that the .276 be abandoned immediately and all rifle development focus on the standard .30-'06. John Pedersen had designed his rifles around the .276 cartridge, but Garand had an ace up his sleeve—he had been working with the .30-'06 for longer. One of his crucial advantages was that he could readily redesign his T3E2 in .30-caliber, whereas Pedersen could not as easily scale his own designs up to fire the more powerful round.

Although Pedersen was known across the developed world for his design expertise, Garand's rifle proved more effective



USMC

Marines armed with the M1 Garand waded ashore on Tinian from landing barges during World War II.

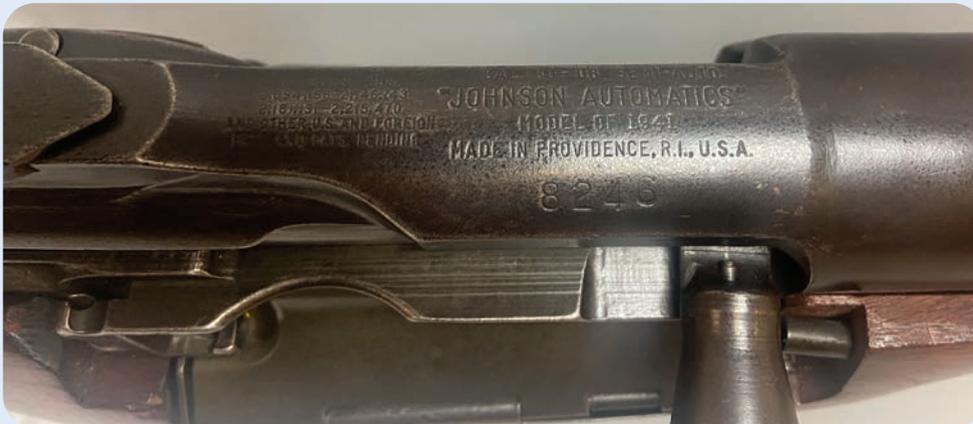


Right: The Pedersen T1 performed well during trials but the rifle was more difficult to mass produce than John Garand's design. Additionally, the Pedersen design required lacquered ammunition and was less easily adapted to the standard .30-'06 chambering.



COURTESY OF NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MARINE CORPS

Below: The Johnson M1941 was used by Marine paratroopers during WW II. .



COURTESY OF NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MARINE CORPS

Right: In this view of the Johnson M1941, National Museum of the Marine Corps curator Jon Bernstein points out where the additional rounds would be fed into the rifle's unusual rotary magazine. Melvin Johnson used such a magazine in part because he hoped it would deter others from stealing his design.

Rifles That Didn't Make The Cut

During the 1920s and 1930s, small arms designers the world over developed prototype semi-automatic military rifles. Here are just a few of the many that the U.S. military tested but ultimately discarded in favor of the Garand.

Pedersen T1E3: John D. Pedersen's self-loading rifle was the most promising of those that didn't make the cut. His toggle-delayed blowback mechanism used a knee joint to hold the breech closed until pressure inside the chamber dropped to a safe level. While visually similar to the Luger pistol's toggle-locked short recoil system, Pedersen's simpler design is conducive to better reliability and accuracy. Its feed system is similar to that of the Garand, consisting of an internal box magazine loaded with 10-round en-bloc clips; unlike on the Garand, these could only be inserted in one direction. The Pedersen rifles performed well in testing but their greater difficulty to manufacture, requirement for waxed ammunition, and non-standard .276 chambering doomed them in the long run.

Colt/Auto-Ordnance Model 1923: Designed by John T. Thompson of submachine gun fame, the so-called "Autorifle" was found to be entirely unsatisfactory in preliminary trials. Thompson's rifle began testing at a disadvantage as it required internal lubricant pads to grease each round with whale oil in order to extract reliably. Its unusually large receiver made the rifle bulkier than its competitors, measuring a whopping 50 inches long and weighing in at nearly 11 pounds. Most damning of all was the faulty action—Thompson's screw-delayed blowback system allowed the bolt to open prematurely, allowing dangerous high-pressure gas to escape. After ejecting cases so violently in an early test that they embedded themselves in wooden boards several feet away, the prototype was deemed too risky to investigate further.

Johnson M1941: As a Marine Corps Reserve officer, Melvin M. Johnson developed his rifle with a close eye on accuracy, portability, and ease of manufacture. His rifle and its light machine gun stablemate used a short-recoil mechanism similar to that used in most pistols but with a multi-lug rotating bolt design which would later find its way into the M16 and M27, among others. Marine paratroopers liked the Johnson as its quickly removable barrel made it easy to carry while jumping out of an airplane. In the end, however, Marine Corps testing showed that the Garand rifles already in production for the Army were equally capable in most respects.

The Dutch military adopted Johnson's rifle as the M1941; their colonial forces received some 30,000 and used them on a limited basis in the Pacific theater. Also of note is the Johnson rifle's rotary magazine, which could be continually fed by five-round stripper clips while firing.

Winchester G30M: Completed too late for Army trials, Winchester's rifle was tested by the Marine Corps and found to be inferior to its competitors. Continued development led to the G30R, which again failed to unseat the M1, and the Winchester Automatic Rifle, marketed as a lightweight replacement for the famous BAR (Browning Automatic Rifle). Winchester later adapted its unusual tappet-style gas piston system, designed by David Marshall Williams, for use in the enormously successful M1 Carbine.

Sam Lichtman



COURTESY OF NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MARINE CORPS



COURTESY OF NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MARINE CORPS

Above: In this close-up view of the Pedersen T1E3's receiver, the toggle mechanism is easily visible on the top. This "knee joint" bends upward to open the action, eject a spent casing, and load the next round.



COURTESY OF NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MARINE CORPS



LCPL GABINO PEREZ, USMC

LCpl Makenze Kunzlemen, with 2nd Bn, 5th Marines, 1stMarDiv fires the M1 Garand during a competition as part of San Francisco Fleet Week, Oct. 4, 2017.

Firing an M1 Garand Today



COURTESY OF NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MARINE CORPS

Of the more than 5.5 million M1 Garand rifles produced from 1936-1945 and 1952-1957, many are still functional and continue to circulate on the civilian market. If you own one of these rifles, ensure you care for it in accordance with its specific needs, which may be different from those of a modern rifle.

For the sake of safety, please fire only military surplus ammunition or ammunition specifically marketed for use in the M1. Modern .30-'06 ammunition is loaded to higher pressures and can damage the operating rod rendering your rifle unusable. If you would like to fire commercial ammunition safely, you can change out the gas block for an aftermarket adjustable model and tune it for the specific load you will be firing.

Finally, some M1s were re-chambered in 7.62×51mm NATO. Before using any firearm, check the caliber markings on the barrel or receiver and ensure you have the proper ammunition.

Sam Lichtman

and easier to manufacture. It was officially adopted as “U.S. Rifle, Caliber .30, M1” by the Army on Jan. 9, 1936.

The Marine Corps has traditionally been a little more conservative than the Army with adopting new rifles. Marine Corps brass in the late 1930s saw the rapid-fire capability of the Army’s new rifle as nothing more than a great way to waste ammunition and impede precision marksmanship. Despite their initial skepticism, the Corps ran a trials program of its own in 1940 to determine whether a semi-automatic rifle could be better than the venerable Springfield. They tested

Pedersen’s and Garand’s designs along with a recoil-operated rifle designed by Marine reserve officer Melvin M. Johnson.

The Corps eventually decided to send some Johnson and Garand rifles to the Pacific theater to see how viable they were in combat. Both rifles, especially the Garand, quickly proved their worth against the Japanese in battles like Guadalcanal. The Japanese had long used the banzai charge as a way to dislodge enemy forces, and this tactic worked very well against Chinese conscripts armed with slow-firing Mausers. But against highly trained U.S. Marines with semi-automatic

M1 rifles, a bayonet charge never stood a chance. Far from wasting ammunition, the sheer volume of fire provided by the new rifle allowed Marines to suppress enemy defenders and make rapid follow-up shots at moving targets.

Hearing positive feedback from Marines who had used the M1 in combat, the Marine Corps formally adopted the rifle to completely replace the M1903 and began mass issuing the new rifle to Marines in the field in early 1942.

Recall that John Garand was a production engineer with a great deal of experience designing factory equipment. This background allowed him to design the rifle for ease of production as well as the machines that would perform each operation. This proved to be a key factor in giving the United States an edge during World War II. They could manufacture and field in the mass quantities needed, something that tripped up the likes of the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany with their own self-loading rifle programs.

With America’s industrial might at their backs, riflemen of the United States Marine Corps used the M1’s fire superiority to fight their way all the way across the Pacific. Marines carrying M1s raised the American flag over numerous islands, and when war broke out on the Korean peninsula in 1950, soldiers and Marines picked their M1 rifles back up and went to go fight.

Warfare in the bitter Korean winter is very different from fighting on the hot, humid islands of the South Pacific, but John Garand had designed his rifle to function in extreme cold as well as heat. During the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir in 1950, Marines found that their M1s still functioned perfectly fine, except for one thing—lubrication. All firearms require proper lubrication in order to function reliably, and the M1 is no exception, but the natural oil in service at the time had an unfortunate tendency to thicken and gum up in the extreme cold temperatures. Undeterred, Marines simply stripped all the lubricant out of their M1s and ran them bone-dry—and the rifles kept on working.

Even after serving in two wars, the M1 kept soldiering on. Years of work on modifying and improving the rifle’s base design culminated in the adoption of the M14 in 1957. Despite the external differences, every M14 and variant thereof can trace its lineage directly back to the M1. Despite its official replacement, the M1 itself endured in frontline service. It dutifully guarded the inner German border and other hotspots around the world until 1961 when the last examples were finally phased out and sent back to Springfield for refurbishment and storage.

During the 1950s and beyond, militaries



USMC

Cpl Richard J. Griffin, left, and PFC James H. Appleton, train in the art of precision marksmanship in the early 1950s. Appleton is armed with an M1903A4, while Griffin carries the short-lived M1C mounted with a four-power riflescope. The Army and Marine Corps both developed scoped variants of the M1 for use by snipers; these quickly fell out of favor due to accuracy problems.

During the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir in 1950, Marines found that their M1s still functioned perfectly fine, except for one thing—lubrication. Undeterred, Marines simply stripped all the lubricant out of their M1s and ran them bone-dry—and the rifles kept on working.

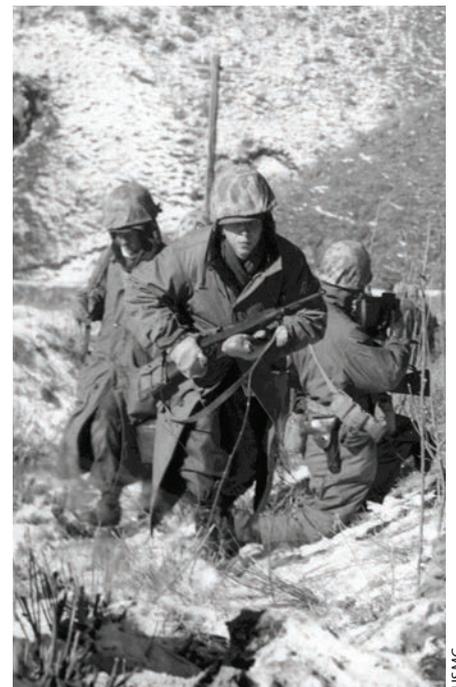
on six of the seven continents fielded M1 rifles received from the United States as military aid. Even after they were taken out of American service, M1 rifles gained a new life among civilian marksmen—many of them soldiers and Marines who had carried them in combat. Through the Office of the Director of Civilian Marksmanship (DCM), managed by the War Department, members of shooting clubs across the country could purchase refurbished military surplus rifles that were no longer needed by the U.S. military. To this very day, the DCM—now known as the Civilian Marksmanship Program—sells original 1940s and 1950s production M1 rifles for match shooting.

Few historic military arms have garnered such enduring popularity as the M1. This rifle, revolutionary for its time, is still held in high regard; its influence

on tactical doctrine, marksmanship, and later firearm designs is felt in the modern day. Marines at Tarawa, Saipan, Iwo Jima, Inchon, Outpost Vegas and hundreds of other battlefields didn't know how famous the rifle would become, of course. All they cared about was whether it worked, and as the record reflects, it did indeed.

Editor's note: Special thanks to Jonathan Bernstein at the National Museum of the Marine Corps and Geoffrey Roecker of MissingMarines.com for technical research and assistance with photos.

Author's bio: Sam Lichtman is a college student and licensed pilot. He works part-time as a manager at a gun store and occasionally contributes content to Leatherneck. He also has a weekly segment on Gun Owners Radio. 🦅



USMC

Marines with RCT-7 move up a ridge in Korea, Dec. 6, 1950. The M1 Garand saw wide use during the Korean War as the standard-issue infantry rifle of the U.S. Army and Marine Corps as well as a few allied militaries.



CPL CAMERON HERMANET, USMC

Cpl Jamaury M. Jimenez, a machine gunner with Advanced Machine Gun Course 1-22, fires polymer-cased rounds from a .50-caliber machine gun at MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., Nov. 3, 2021. During the course of fire, Marines tested the innovative ammunition, which could potentially reduce the weight of a 100-round linked belt of .50-cal. ammunition by 7 pounds.

Corps Explores Use of Lightweight Ammunition

The Marine Corps is on a mission: get lighter, more mobile, and more lethal.

Marine Corps Systems Command (MCSC) plays a critical role in accomplishing this goal. The command's program manager for ammunition has been in the process of researching myriad ways to lighten the warfighter's load while maintaining or increasing lethality. One potential solution is polymer-cased ammunition.

In 2020, MCSC awarded a contract to test and evaluate new lightweight .50-caliber polymer ammunition that could decrease the amount of weight Marines carry on the battlefield. The ammunition, to be used in multiple .50-cal. weapon systems, is significantly lighter and easier to haul than the traditional brass-cased ammunition.

"This polymer ammunition is an upgrade over the current brass case rounds as it reduces the overall weight of the cartridges and links," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Chad Chason, the project officer for .50-cal polymer ammunition at MCSC.

"That reduction in weight makes a huge difference for Marines."

On the battlefield, the weight a Marine carries matters. The more weight on their shoulders, the less mobile and mission flexible they can be. MCSC has worked tirelessly to field capabilities that are lighter without compromising lethality. Polymer is a lightweight, proprietary plastic that weighs less and offers more durability when compared with brass and other metals commonly used in weapon systems. MCSC is working toward replacing brass-cased ammunition with a polymer-cased alternative and traditional metal links with nylon links used to secure ammunition in belts.

"This polymer ammunition also reduces fuel costs not only for [aircraft] but also for logistics and supply," said Cason. "You can fit more ammunition for the pallet, increasing the overall pallet space used on a truck or ship. You can carry more on vehicles into combat or training as well."

Testing has indicated that polymer rounds are as lethal and as effective as the current brass casing cartridge, said Cason.

Upon firing, the polymer ammunition maintains a more consistent velocity when compared with its brass counterpart.

"We are replacing a heavier round with a lighter round that has the same capability, the same lethality," said Cason. "And when you factor in the weight advantages, using polymer ammunition versus brass is a night-and-day difference."

Another key advantage of polymer over brass ammunition lies in its structural characteristics. For example, a machine gun typically heats up when Marines rapidly fire brass ammunition. The high temperature can soften the material and affect the bullet's acceleration.

Polymer cartridges absorb heat expelled from the casing, preventing the machine gun from overheating. This allows Marines to fire for longer periods. They can also pick up the cartridge case immediately after firing and it will not burn their hand, Cason said.

"Polymer dissipates the heat faster and acts as an insulator at the same time, which is one of my favorite aspects of this ammo," said Cason. "That is not the case



CPL CAMERON HERMANET, USMC

Above: The Marine Corps is exploring the feasibility of using polymer-cased ammunition, pictured here, to lighten the warfighter's load.

Below: Marines with Advanced Machine Gun Course 1-22 prepare ammunition for a course of fire to evaluate polymer-cased rounds at MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., on Nov. 3, 2021.



CPL CAMERON HERMANET, USMC

with the brass ammunition.”

In November 2021, Marines with 1st Marine Division tested and assessed polymer ammunition during a limited user evaluation. Corporal Jarom Hoffmann, a machine gunner with 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, emphasized the various advantages of using lighter-weight ammunition.

“This ammo can help us do our job in a way that the rounds are lighter, so we can carry more rounds per Marines,” said Hoffmann. “That is huge for me as a machine gunner.”

Hoffmann also said the ammunition seems to shoot more smoothly than the brass casings—an aspect of the ammunition that Lance Corporal Peyton Robinson, a machine gunner with 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, also seemed to appreciate.

“In some cases, the ammo cycles through a lot smoother, which allows us to fire more rounds faster,” said Robinson. “Firing more rounds means we have more time on the gun to surprise whatever enemy we’re dealing with.”

Other branches of the U.S. Armed Forces

are also evaluating additional types of polymer ammunition, including the Army, which is validating a 7.62 mm polymer round. The Army’s efforts on validating the lightweight ammunition are important to the Marine Corps because the Army is the single manager for conventional ammunition (SMCA), established to avoid duplication of efforts in the management of conventional ammunition.

“If the Army is successful with polymer 7.62 mm, fields it and fully integrates it, then it is probable that the Marine Corps will follow suit, especially if polymer cartridges completely replace brass cartridges in certain calibers,” said Cason.

By acquiring lighter, more innovative capabilities, MCSC helps modernize the Marine Corps in preparation for the future fight. Lieutenant Colonel Brian Wisneski, MCSC’s deputy program manager for ammunition, said such innovation supports Force Design 2030 and the Commandant’s vision.

“Polymer ammunition will enhance the force’s capability by being more agile in logistical movements and reducing lift requirements in support of stand-in forces deployed in a distributed environment,” said Wisneski. “The ultimate goal would be to adapt this technology across the ammunition portfolio and multiple platforms to save weight while achieving the same desired effects against multiple targets.”

Cason said MCSC will continue to hold larger user assessments to test and evaluate the ammunition, soliciting Marine feedback to determine its feasibility in supporting the warfighter. After completion of those exercises, the command will assess data and identify a definitive fielding timeline.

Matt Gonzales

The End of an Era: 2nd Bn, 3rd Marines Deactivates

On Jan. 21, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment cased its colors during a deactivation ceremony aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii.

The battalion was first activated May 1, 1942, at New River, N.C., as 3rd Training Battalion, assigned to Division Special Troops, 1st Marine Division. A year later, 2/3 was the first battalion to storm the beaches of Bougainville. During World War II, the Marines of 2/3 also saw action at the Northern Solomons, Guam and Iwo Jima. In Vietnam, the battalion fought on the streets and in the jungles, operating in Da Nang, Quan Tri and Khe Sanh. The battalion also participated in Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm. During the Global War on Terror, 2/3 completed three combat deployments to Afghanistan

Marines with 2/3, 3rdMarDiv, participate in the battalion's deactivation ceremony at MCB Hawaii, Jan. 21. (Photo by Sgt Melanye Martinez, USMC)



Left: LtCol Brandon H. Turner, commanding officer of 2/3, left, and SgtMaj Adan Moreno, 2/3 sergeant major, center, case the battalion colors during the deactivation of 2/3 at MCB Hawaii, Jan. 21. The battalion was deactivated in accordance with Force Design 2030 as the regiment modernizes to become the Corps' inaugural Marine Littoral Regiment.

forces, will contribute to sea control and sea denial within actively contested maritime spaces.

The 3rd MLR will train and evolve to be ready to fight as part of 3rdMarDiv, III Marine Expeditionary Force. This redesignation reflects the Corps' continued effort to ensure the Marines remain capable of fighting and winning on the battlefields of the future.

1stLt Isaac Liston, USMC

From a Civil War to Homelessness, Marine Reflects on Journey That Led Him to the Corps

As a young boy, Benjamin Crayton would fall asleep to the sound of helicopters and gunfire, often filled with fear that the militia would come into his house and kill him and his family. Born in Monrovia, Liberia, during the First Liberian Civil War, Crayton and his family later moved to Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, due to the escalation of violence in his country. The

in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and two combat deployments to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"Although our battalion colors will no longer fly tomorrow, our spirit—the nature and character of the Island Warrior—spreads throughout our Corps," said Lieutenant Colonel Brandon H. Turner, the commanding officer of 2/3. "Our Marine Corps moves forward, and we, ever faithful to the cause, move forward as well. Fortune favors the brave. We are and always will be the Island Warriors."

At the ceremony, Colonel Timothy S. Brady Jr., the commanding officer of 3rd Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, addressed the audience.

"While today is a somber day in history as the Island Warriors deactivate, today symbolizes a critical shift for the Marine Corps—a necessary shift to once again answer the call. A shift that enables the Marine Corps to reorganize and establish new formations like the Marine Littoral Regiment: a unit ready to fight and win against any rising threat in the Pacific."

The battalion was deactivated in accordance with Force Design 2030 as 3rd Marine Regiment becomes 3rd Marine Littoral Regiment (MLR), the Corps' first such unit. The transformation of the MLR calls for the deactivation of certain units and capabilities in order to modernize the force. The MLR, integrated with naval

SGT MELANYE MARTINEZ, USMC

war, however, followed his family, and soon the militia was yet again patrolling up and down his street.

Now a private first class in the U.S. Marine Corps, Crayton, a motor vehicle operator with Headquarters and Support Battalion, reflected on the difficulties he endured as a child and the unconventional path that led him to the Marine Corps.

“Almost every night, I would hear shooting for hours because my house was not far from a popular hotel where the president stayed,” said Crayton. “I would hear the militia marching at night outside my door. It was common to hear gunshots as helicopters flew over my house, firing at the hotel. It was very overwhelming. That is when I learned that no one was safe, so my family immigrated to Europe.”

In 2013, Crayton arrived in France, where he lived with his uncle and aunt and continued attending school. A few years later, his mother contacted his family members requesting that they be reunited in the U.S. He was concerned about seeing his mother after so much time had passed, but after some persuasion from his family, he agreed. At the end of 2014, he made the trip to Philadelphia where he and his mother were reunited.

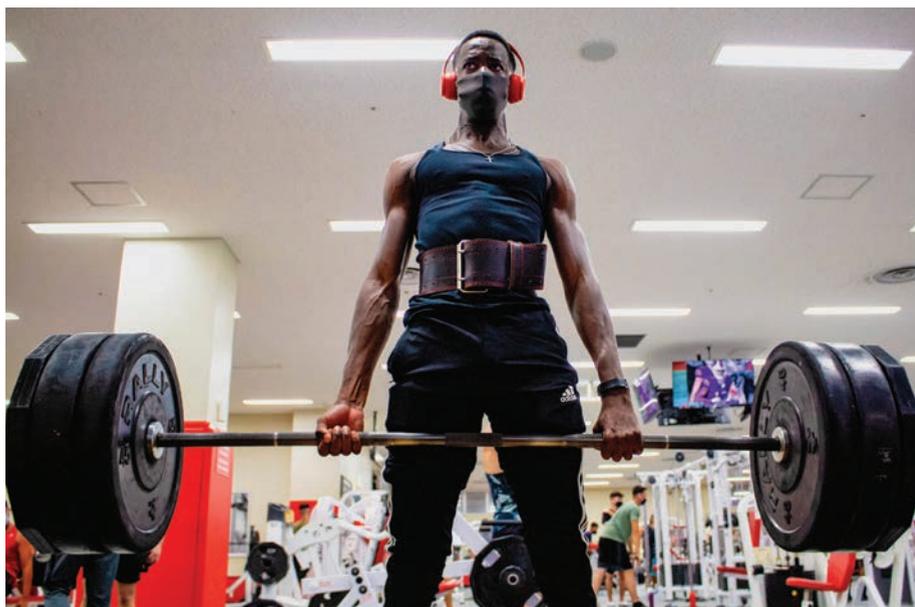
Crayton got a job as a cart pusher at a local store where his mother worked as a cashier, but the store closed a few months later.

“I worked hard when I was at the store, but when the store closed, I felt like it was a message from God telling me to do something bigger and better,” said Crayton. “We decided that my next step in life would be to try to go back to school. I had my green card and Free Application for Federal Student Aid, but sadly I couldn’t get any scholarships or afford college.”

Due to his circumstances, Crayton became homeless. He would wake up early in the morning and go to a gym. After a brief workout he would shower, find his friends and something to eat. One day, one of his father’s friends contacted him and said he wanted to help him get out of his current position. Crayton ended up in Lawrenceville, Ga., where he was able to secure a job with a moving company.

During one of his moving jobs, Crayton met a Marine Corps recruiter who talked with him and asked if he was interested in joining the Marine Corps. In February 2021, he arrived at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C.

“I feel that when you fail and things feel too hard, it’s easy to quit,” said Crayton. “It is important to me that people expand their minds and their bodies. In the Marine Corps, there’s no such thing as quitting. It was hard, but I had to push



PFC JONATHAN BEAUCHAMP, USMC

PFC Benjamin Crayton, a motor vehicle operator with H&S Bn, MCIPAC, conducts a barbell deadlift on Camp Foster, Okinawa, Japan, Jan. 10. Crayton, who was born in Liberia during the First Liberian Civil War, immigrated to Europe as a refugee and eventually came to the U.S., where he enlisted in the Marine Corps last year.

through the challenges. When I felt like I couldn’t get through an obstacle, I had my Marines to my left and right to help push me forward.”

“PFC Crayton has been a hardworking Marine ever since he came to the unit and is always willing to help out his peers,” said Gunnery Sergeant Lawrence Minott, a utility chief with Headquarters and Support Battalion, Marine Corps Installations Pacific. “He is an amiable Marine. He has an upbeat demeanor, respectful, courteous and liked amongst his peers.”



LCPL JONATHAN BEAUCHAMP, USMC

Crayton measures the tire pressure of a High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle M1123 during an inspection on Camp Foster, Okinawa, Japan, Jan. 10.

To maintain his high work ethic, Crayton pushes mental and physical barriers by going to the gym.

“The gym is important to me because my whole life I was skinny,” he said. “Being physically fit is something I feel is important as a Marine, but this has been important to me long before the Marine Corps. When I am at the gym, I feel like everything is falling in order, and that feeling brings me peace from everything that has happened in my past. I give myself a goal every year to achieve a higher Physical Fitness Test and Combat Fitness Test and going to the gym helps me achieve those goals helping me to be combat-ready.”

“[Crayton] has proven time and time again that he possesses the ability to adapt to changing requirements to support the mission and gains knowledge through every challenge he faces,” said Minott. “He constantly uses what he’s learned in the past to better serve the challenges he and his peers will face in the future.”

Crayton explained that everyone has good days and bad days and everything happens for a reason.

“I prayed and I put faith in myself,” he said. “I realized that I am the only person who can control my life. I look at the Marine Corps and the second chance I was given and feel blessed. This chance has allowed me to share my story, and I hope that my story will help others who are going through or have gone through the same situations or worse.”

MCIPAC



HISTORY DETECTIVE

Volunteer Researcher Works to Unearth the Stories of Missing World War II Marines



Author, historian and MissingMarines.com founder Geoff Roecker, center, is presented with the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation's 2019 General Roy S. Geiger Award for his profile of 2ndLt Elwood Ray Bailey, a Marine fighter pilot shot down over Guadalcanal in August 1942. Bailey's name was among the missing and unaccounted-for Marines listed on Roecker's site until his remains were recovered and identified in 2017.

COURTESY OF MARINE CORPS HERITAGE FOUNDATION

By Sara W. Bock

It all began with a series of letters that made their way home to New York from the far-off islands of the Pacific, and one family's stories of the young Marine officer who penned them, never to return home himself.

Two generations later, Geoffrey Roecker grew up hearing about his grandmother's cousin, First Lieutenant Philip Emerson Wood Jr., who was killed in action on Saipan in 1944 while serving as a weapons platoon leader with Company A, 1st Battalion, 24th Marines. In the early 2000s, Roecker, then an undergraduate student at Vassar College, got his hands on a few of Wood's letters home, which had been

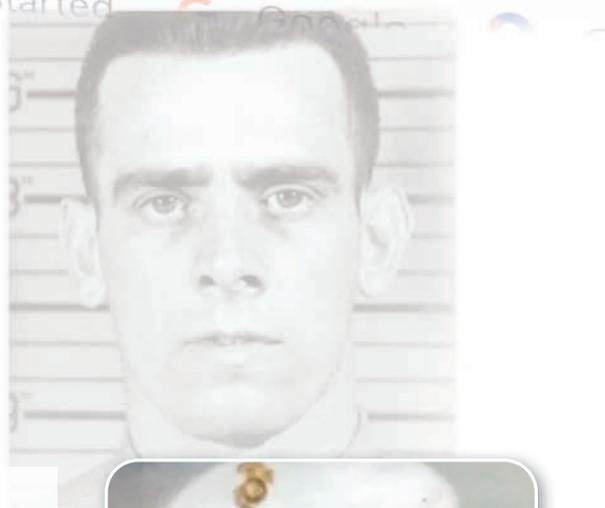
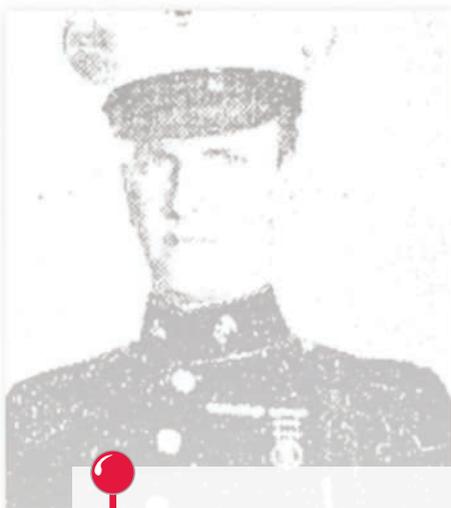
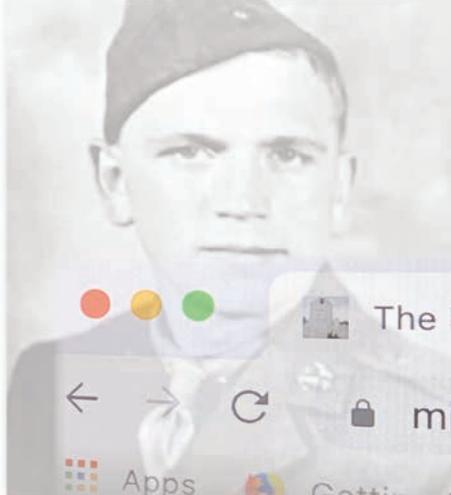
saved by a sister, Gretchen, to whom many of them were addressed. (*Editor's note: One of Wood's letters was featured in Roecker's article "Lay Bare a Few More Nerves: Under Fire at Roi-Namur" in the February 2021 issue of Leatherneck.*)

Roecker was captivated by the detailed accounts of combat that Wood had recorded in his letters and developed a keen interest in the Marines of 1/24. He began to track down veterans of the battalion, hoping that their firsthand accounts would help him piece together his cousin's service, the details of his death, and the stories of the brave men he served alongside during World War II.

As he delved into the unit's history, one name kept popping up both in Wood's

letters and in Roecker's conversations with the surviving Marines of 1/24: Sergeant Arthur Ervin. Wood's early letters implied that Ervin had not made the greatest first impression on him, "but you could sort of see the two of them growing closer and closer as time went by," Roecker said. Eventually, Ervin became Wood's second-in-command of the company's mortar platoon. On July 5, 1944, while on a patrol to bring back civilians who had been stuck between the lines during the Battle of Saipan, they were ambushed.

"Phil Wood was mortally wounded, and Ervin went running out after him to get him and was shot in the head and killed, so the two of them died side by side," said Roecker. "Obviously he [Ervin] had



“Where is Sgt Ervin? Where is he buried? What could have happened that all the rest of them could be recovered but he was not?” Roecker recalls asking himself. “So that was sort of my first ‘toe dip’ into this realm of research.”

been out there trying to rescue him, so I wanted to learn as much about this guy as I could.”

A preliminary search revealed that Ervin’s name was on the official “missing” list maintained by the now-defunct Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO), which was merged with other agencies in 2016 to form the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA). This didn’t make sense to Roecker, who had collected numerous accounts that Wood and Ervin died together and were buried side-by-side in the 4th Marine Division cemetery along with the other Marines who were killed on the patrol. He knew that in 1949, Wood had been disinterred and buried in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu, known as the Punchbowl, and had assumed that the same could be said for Ervin, a Pearl Harbor survivor and Marine Raider who had been awarded both a Bronze Star and the Navy Cross.

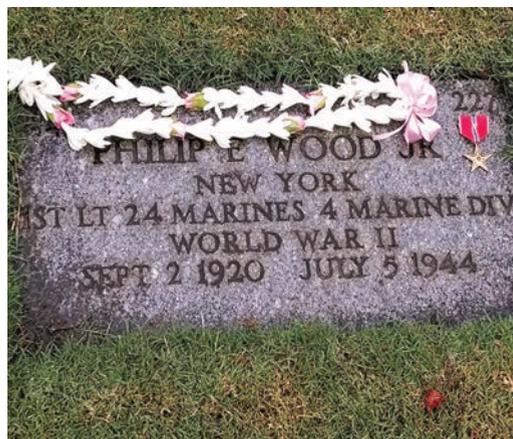
“Where is Sgt Ervin? Where is he

buried? What could have happened that all the rest of them could be recovered but he was not?” Roecker recalls asking himself. “So that was sort of my first ‘toe dip’ into this realm of research.”

Roecker spoke with various Marines who had served in Co A, but none had any clear memories of that fateful patrol. He did, however, find Ervin’s military records;



USMC



COURTESY OF GEOFF ROECKER

Roecker’s quest to provide detailed research on every missing Marine from WW II began with his interest in the death of his grandmother’s cousin, 1stLt Philip E. Wood Jr., who was killed on Saipan in 1944 and is buried at the Punchbowl in Honolulu, pictured in the left photo. Roecker has spent more than a decade trying to understand why Sgt Arthur Ervin, pictured in the above photo and who was killed during the same incident, is still unaccounted for.

relevant photographs from the National Archives and several written accounts containing key details. He even tracked down some distant cousins, nieces and nephews of Ervin's and encouraged them to provide DNA samples that might enable a positive identification by DPAA officials. Eventually, in 2011, Roecker connected with Ted Darcy of WFI Research Group, who helped him decipher documents he had collected, including Ervin's medical records and Individual Deceased Personnel File (IDPF), and showed him how to compare key details against a file for a set of unidentified recovered remains that had been disinterred from the division cemetery and classified as "X-64."

"He showed me how to put all those together, and we got a burial chart of the 4thMarDiv cemetery, and wouldn't you know it, X-64 has a strong physical resemblance to Sgt Ervin. His dental's a pretty close match, and who's he buried right next to, but 1stLt Philip Wood," Roecker said.

To Roecker's knowledge, X-64, once buried in Manila, the Philippines, continues to sit in a DPAA lab awaiting identification. For now, the case has yet to be closed, but in the meantime, the mystery of Sgt Arthur Ervin's whereabouts became the impetus for what Roecker considers his "off the clock" job. In 2011, Roecker, who spends his days working as a creative director and copywriter for a Manhattan-based advertising agency, launched MissingMarines.com, an independent research project devoted to assisting with missing in action (MIA) recovery efforts by gathering official

records and firsthand accounts to compile individual biographies and case files. Over the last decade, Roecker has devoted an incalculable number of hours to providing volunteer research assistance in support of the efforts of recovery agencies like DPAA and nonprofit organizations like History Flight, which sends teams to locations across the globe to locate, exhume and repatriate MIA servicemembers, many of whom had previously been deemed "non-recoverable." In that span of time, the prolific researcher also earned a master's degree in military history and authored a book, "Leaving Mac Behind: The Lost Marines of Guadalcanal," which was published in 2019.

"When I went on and looked up the official list of the missing and saw all of

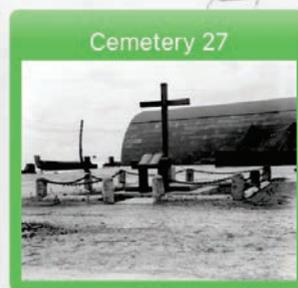
these names, I thought, 'Man, there's got to be a story behind every single one of them,'" Roecker said. "The idea behind Missing Marines originally was to try and tell as many of those stories as possible."

Roecker's site provides a searchable database of the nearly 3,000 missing and unaccounted-for Marines and attached Navy medical personnel from WW II. To date, Roecker, who singlehandedly runs the operation and provides his research free of charge, has compiled detailed profiles of more than 1,000 of these missing Marines which can be accessed through his exhaustive "Missing Marines List."

When listening to Roecker speak about his endeavors with Missing Marines, it's easy to discern that this is not merely a

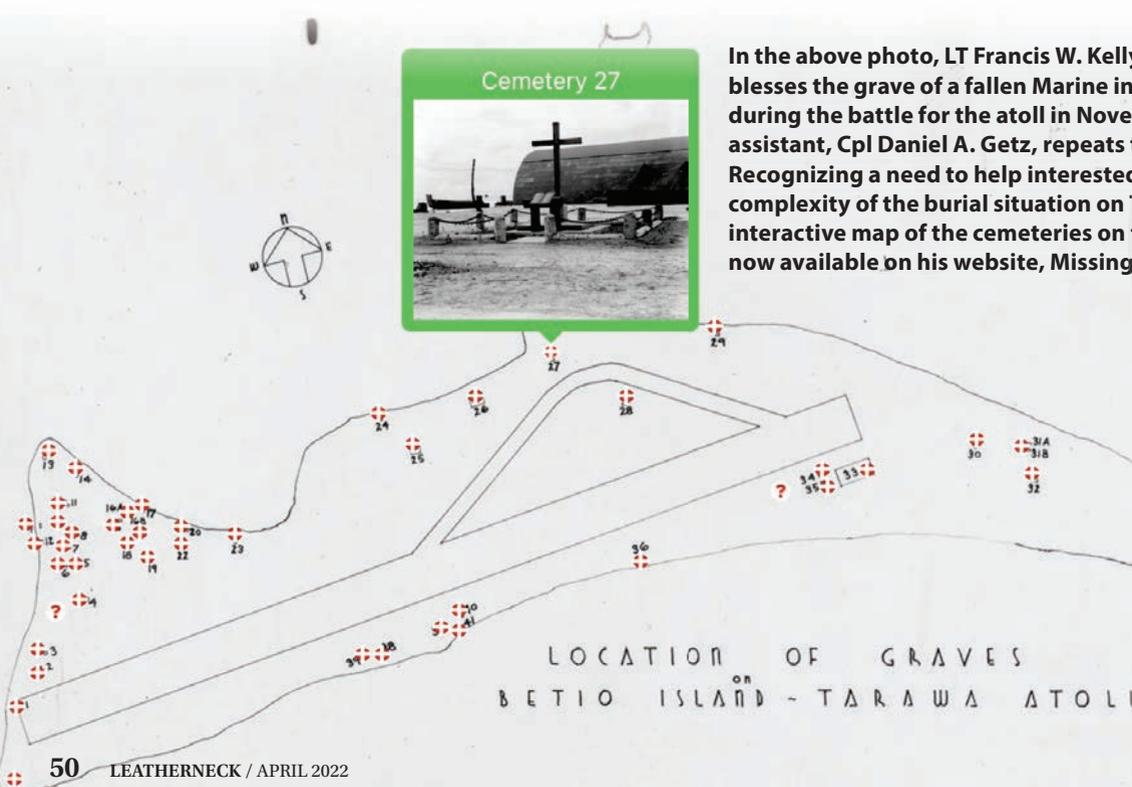


USMC



Cemetery 27

In the above photo, LT Francis W. Kelly, Chaplain Corps, USNR, blesses the grave of a fallen Marine in a cemetery on Tarawa during the battle for the atoll in November 1943, while his assistant, Cpl Daniel A. Getz, repeats the Prayers for the Dead. Recognizing a need to help interested researchers understand the complexity of the burial situation on Tarawa, Roecker created an interactive map of the cemeteries on the island of Betio, which is now available on his website, MissingMarines.com.



COURTESY OF GEOFF ROECKER



“When I went on and looked up the official list of the missing and saw all of these names, I thought, ‘Man, there’s got to be a story behind every single one of them.’”—Geoffrey Roecker

hobby, but a passion, and that while he’s never worn the uniform, he has an acute understanding of the cost of war and the need for closure felt by those whose loved one or brother-in-arms remains unaccounted for.

In 2016, Roecker attended a burial cemetery on Long Island, N.Y., for Private First Class John F. “Jack” Prince, who was killed on the island of Betio in the Tarawa Atoll of the Gilbert Islands in 1943 and whose remains were recovered by History Flight. The experience had a profound impact on him and served as a tangible reminder of why the often tedious and emotionally taxing work of MIA research is worth the investment of time and energy.

“What really impressed me was that nobody present at the funeral had known him in real life. They were all born long after he was killed, but they’d grown up hearing stories about him and they passed those stories on to their children,” Roecker recalled. “It brought them all together. People came from all over to come to this, it was like a big family reunion, and like there had always been an empty chair at previous events, and Jack Prince was in his chair finally after being killed that long ago. It was really moving.”

While attending that burial ceremony, Roecker met History Flight researcher Katie Rasdorf, who provided key research that aided in the recovery of Prince’s remains. She’s become a mentor of sorts for Roecker, a close ally and friend in what he describes as a small community of MIA researchers and has acted as a guiding force in the evolution of his website, he said.

Through his work with Missing Marines, Roecker has relished the opportunity to connect not only with fellow researchers like Rasdorf, but also with direct descendants and family members of the missing. In these interactions, he strives to empower them to reach out to recovery agencies and contact their representatives in Congress, as well as facilitate connections with whichever entity will, when circumstantial and material evidence supports, decide to disinter an unidentified set of remains.

“It’s not so much that you’re doing this for the deceased individual—you’re doing it for the people who remember them. It felt like putting a missing piece back into this family or healing a scar that maybe

they hadn’t even known was there and was hurting them, but once it was healed, they could feel the difference,” said Roecker.

Sometimes Roecker contacts family members directly when he’s working on a “cold case” of a missing Marine and finds contact information for their lineal descendants or extended relatives. In many cases, individuals stumble upon his website while conducting their own investigations and reach out to him on their own accord.

He finds it particularly fulfilling when he receives messages of gratitude from website visitors; for example, “I found my ancestor’s picture here, and I learned something I didn’t know about them before. Thanks for keeping their story alive,” he recalls one individual saying.

“That’s kind of all I need, you know?” Roecker said. “I put the information out there and people come and find it,” he added, saying that it’s interesting to see the spikes in website traffic and messages he receives around the anniversaries of battles like Iwo Jima in February.

But MissingMarines.com is not solely geared towards the novice researcher or curious family member. The detailed individual biographies, interactive maps and user-friendly Missing Marines List available on Roecker’s site have become a go-to resource for officials from well-known MIA recovery organizations like History Flight, who rely heavily on the work of vetted volunteer researchers like Roecker to help further their mission.

“[Roecker] is honest, truthful and truly cares about telling peoples’ stories, for the right reasons ... His website at Missing Marines is fascinating and a person could get lost in there for years. I refer to it constantly as a source of great and valid information,” said Sergeant Major Justin LeHew, USMC (Ret), the chief operating officer for History Flight. “The level of research Geoff goes to is unmatched.”

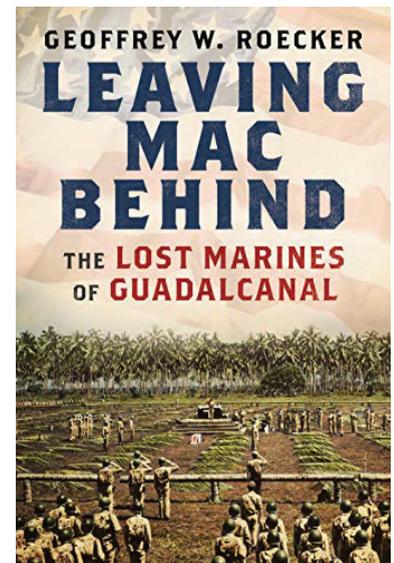
The opportunity to support recovery operations, even on a small scale, is an endeavor Roecker finds extremely fulfilling.

“We do this in the hopes that it will make their jobs easier, that it will lead to the return of more of these cases in a more timely fashion,” he said of his and other volunteer researchers’ work for various organizations and agencies.

A perfect example of this is the newest feature on the Missing Marines site: an



Roecker, pictured in his home office in the above photo, not only has earned a master’s degree in military history since launching MissingMarines.com in 2011, but also wrote the book, “Leaving Mac Behind,” pictured below, which was published in 2019. (Photo courtesy of Geoffrey Roecker)



interactive map of the cemeteries on the island of Betio, in the Tarawa Atoll of the Gilbert Islands. The Tarawa cemeteries, Roecker says, offer a unique case study in MIA recovery due to their high percentage of non-recovered casualties, many of whom fell during the Battle of Tarawa, part of the 1943 invasion of the Gilbert Islands known as Operation Galvanic.

Along with the interactive map, Roecker provides a detailed explanation of how so many came to be missing on Betio; why they were never recovered; and why surviving families received conflicting information about their loved ones’ locations



Entitled “The Cost of Guadalcanal,” this interactive map from MissingMarines.com shows the home of record for each KIA in the 1942 campaign. A similar map, “The Cost of Tarawa,” also can be viewed on the site.

in memorial cemeteries that were established across the island. Recognizing a need to break down a complicated topic, Roecker’s Tarawa Cemetery Tour does just that, giving visitors an overview of the conditions that were faced by troops trying to bury people and the evolution of the different burial grounds and infrastructure on the island. The topic has become particularly relevant in recent years, as the remains of dozens of Marines have been recovered on Betio by the History Flight team and subsequently identified.

“It’s intended as a resource that I hope will be equally as useful for people who are kind of new to researching the battle or have had very minimal military history background, like family members who are looking for information, but also for somebody, if you’re working for History Flight and you need to be able to direct somebody to a single resource, ‘OK, here’s some very specific information about what’s going on with this individual case and whether or not there’s a chance that they may be recovered or not,’” Roecker said.

A visit to Roecker’s website is a bit like

a visit to a museum from the comfort of one’s own home. The Missing Marines site also features two additional interactive maps, entitled “The Cost of Guadalcanal” and “The Cost of Tarawa.” Each is based on a map of the continental U.S., on which Roecker has taken the list of Marine

Roecker is passionate about empowering interested individuals to try their hand at conducting their own research ... He hopes that his Missing Marines website will serve as a jumping-off point for them.

fatalities in their respective campaigns and created “pins” that mark the homes of record for each of the fallen, color coded to denote their status as missing, buried at sea, identified or recovered.

Above each map is an impactful statement: “There’s a massive difference between seeing a number and seeing what that number *really* looks like.” It’s Roecker’s hope that the data visualization the map provides causes viewers to take a pause.

“The neat thing about having the map be interactive is you can hover over it and see where they’re from, and it just kind of brings it home, the gravity of it is so much more—it’s much easier to grasp,” Roecker said. “You can read a number, but your tendency is to just take on a more academic view of it ... It’s so easy to look at a list or look at a number and not feel anything. The point of all of these exercises and these sites and storytelling is you want to remind people what it feels like. You can use the old trope about ‘those who forget their history are doomed to repeat it.’ If you view death and loss in just purely academic, historical terms then the impact is lost and the real meaning of the sacrifice is lost, I think.”

For Roecker, who is a gifted writer and storyteller, that’s a big part of what MissingMarines.com is all about: putting faces to the names of the missing and telling the stories of the lives they lived and the families they left behind. He achieves this in the more than 1,000 detailed profiles he’s written thus far, which contain photographs and as much biographical information as he can collect through his extensive research. One such profile, written about Second Lieutenant Elwood Ray Bailey, a Marine fighter pilot shot down over Guadalcanal in August 1942 and accounted for in 2017, earned Roecker the 2019 General Roy S. Geiger Award presented by the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation.

Roecker is passionate about empowering interested individuals to try their hand at conducting their own research about missing Marine family members or other unaccounted-for servicemembers they might have a connection to. He hopes that his Missing Marines website will serve as a jumping-off point for them.

“Find out everything you can about what their unit was doing, where they were based, the exact circumstances of loss, where they were engaged at the time, and sort of see how much you can pinpoint from there based on what you know about your individual,” said Roecker. “Once you have that, you’ve got the bones of your story put together.”

There are numerous resources Roecker uses daily that he recommends for gathering information. These include paid subscription-based site Ancestry.com and its sister sites, Newspapers.com and Fold3.com, the latter of which is a database of historical military records. He also relies heavily on the National Archives, which accepts Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests for declassified military

COURTESY OF GEOFF ROECKER

Marines with Marine Forces Pacific participate in a repatriation ceremony to honorably transfer the newly recovered remains of several missing Marines on Betio, Tarawa Atoll, Republic of Kiribati, Nov. 20, 2018.

records of those who left service more than 62 years ago. These records can include Official Military Personnel Files (OMPF) and Individual Deceased Personnel Files (IDPF) and can be requested via the National Archives website, www.archives.gov.

“It’s interesting to kind of see how many of these cases potentially can be solved just by taking a closer look at these records,” Roecker said. “People just starting this up are surprised by how much information is there and is available. You just need to know where to look, and it just takes a little bit of practice to figure out what you’re looking for.”

Due to a backlog of requests at the National Archives, which has worsened due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Roecker advises that requests may take months to be filled. On that note, he has two pieces of advice. First, requests may be expedited if an immediate next-of-kin family member like a spouse or child is the individual requesting the records. If it’s within a researcher’s budget, he recommends two independent research groups that are based in St. Louis, Mo.,



SGT TIMOTHY TURNER, USMC

where the National Personnel Records Center is located: Golden Arrow Research and Redbird Research. For a fee, they will go into the archives, pull a file and make color copies of it.

After records and supporting details have been collected, Roecker recommends reaching out to the Marine Corps History Division, located on Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., which has casualty cards on file and can send copies of them upon request.

If someone successfully gathers pertinent information about an unaccounted-for ancestor, Roecker encourages them to contact an organization like History Flight to express interest in learning about the likelihood of that individual being recovered.

Since Roecker launched his site in December 2011, 166 missing WW II Marines have been accounted for by DPAA. But there’s still one name that weighs heavily on his mind that hasn’t yet made that list—his “white whale,” he calls him figuratively. Until Sgt Arthur Ervin is laid to rest, Roecker won’t stop searching for clues about the 23-year-old from Oklahoma who ran into harm’s way, refusing to leave his lieutenant behind. Perhaps Ervin is, indeed, “X-64,” or maybe he’s yet to be disinterred. But in the meantime, Roecker, who runs a separate website that tells

the detailed history of 1/24 at www.1-24thmarines.com, has had the opportunity to foster meaningful connections with those who also have a vested interest in seeing Ervin and other missing Marines from the battalion brought home.

“In the 10 years I’ve been working on this I’ve met a lot of veterans and a lot of family members who met me sort of in the tail end of their lives and got really interested and really involved,” Roecker said.

One in particular was George Smith, also of Co A and a friend of Ervin’s, who developed a close bond with Roecker, serving as a grandfather figure of sorts. The pair first met in 2007 when Roecker was researching the stories of 1/24, and Smith was shocked to learn that Ervin had never been recovered. He got involved in helping Roecker try to crack the case and wrote letters, made phone calls and even connected with some of Ervin’s extended family.

“His one big dream was to go to the funeral when we brought Sgt Ervin home,” said Roecker of Smith, who Roecker believes was the last living veteran who knew Ervin. The aging Marine had duplicate sets of Ervin’s dog tags made for the two of them to wear until he could be brought home to rest.

Sadly, Smith didn’t live to see the day, but Roecker is determined to stay true to the last words he spoke to his dear friend, who died last year:

“His memory started to go, and the last time I went to see him I gave him one of the tags that I had been wearing all that time, and told him not to worry, we were going to get him back.” 🇺🇸



USMC

The story of missing Marine pilot 2ndLt Elwood Bailey captivated Roecker, who had the chance to get to know some surviving members of his extended family in recent years. His profile of Bailey, which earned him a prestigious award (left) from the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation, was largely based on photos and information the family provided him. (Medal image courtesy of Marine Corps Heritage Foundation)



SEA STORY OF THE MONTH

“Smoke ‘em If You Got ‘em”

I quit school when I was in the 11th grade in 1973. I was 17 years old and had to get my father and mother to sign for me so I could enlist in the Marine Corps. I joined in May, but thanks to the Delayed Entry Program, I didn’t go to boot camp until August, so I took the summer off and had fun.

Aug. 15 came, and off to Parris Island I went. One very hot day about two or three weeks into boot camp, the platoon was running PT in full boots and utes. I had finished the run, and while standing in formation getting ready to go into the barracks, I passed out from the heat. When I was taken to sickbay, my temperature had spiked to 107 degrees and was rushed to Beaufort Medical Center. I woke up a day or two later in the intensive care unit. When it was determined that my condition was stable, I was moved to a regular ward with other patients recovering from their injuries.

Every patient on the ward was recovering from some form of injury that they had received in Vietnam except me. Across the aisle and to the right of the foot of my bed was a Marine lance corporal who was required to be on oxygen most of the day. As I lay in my bed, he called over to me, “Hey you, come over here.” As any good recruit would do, I sprang to his bedside. He asked me if I was a Marine, and I told him, “No” and explained that I was a recruit and what had happened to me. He said, “Good, I need a cigarette. Go get me a cigarette.”

I stood there for a moment stunned, looking at his oxygen mask, and then as quickly as I could ran out into the hallway and got a cigarette from a Sailor. I went back to the ward and handed it to the lance corporal. I went back to my bed and a few hours later the lance corporal got out of his bed and motioned for me to come with him. We walked down to the end of the ward where there was an area that the patients could sit and relax. He then lit the cigarette and we started talking.

Out of nowhere, came a nurse screaming at the top of her lungs. Drill instructors had nothing on this woman. She pulled the cigarette from the lance corporal’s mouth and demanded to

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know where he had gotten it. She then turned to me and screamed, “Did you get it for him?” I sat there frozen with my mouth open and eyes as big as silver dollars. My first thought was I’m going to the brig forever for trying to kill a Marine. The lance

corporal then yelled that he had gotten the cigarette on his own which brought the nurse’s attention back to him, at which time I made my way back to my ward. As I was crawling into my bed, I could hear the lance corporal and nurse still arguing. It was one of the best examples of profanity, by both, that I had ever heard.

The next day I was told I would be returning to recruit training. Hearing that I was going back to Parris Island, the lance corporal called me over to his bedside. He explained that Marines always take care of one another, and they never rat each other out. As far as the nurse was concerned, he said she was a Sailor and not to pay any attention to her. He then asked me if I would get him some more cigarettes before I left the hospital. So, like any good Marine, I spent the rest of the day and the next morning begging cigarettes off whomever I could. I have often wondered what became of that Marine and have never forgotten the lessons learned in those days in the hospital.

GySgt Henry J. Tomasko Jr.
USMC (Ret)
1973 to 1998
Andreas, Pa.

We Picked the Wrong Shower Facility

After five years in Korea, MAG-33 was returning to the United States. We headed to Pusan from Pohang by train. We arrived at an Army base at 1 a.m. and proceeded to stand guard duty on the docks. I had a squad assigned to me along with about 10 Koreans to unload boxcars while waiting for our ships to arrive. We had a place to sleep, but no other

facilities and no available head or showers. We got our drinking water by filling our canteens in an open top water tower.

On about the third day, I was returning with my squad from a very hot day of unloading and stacking materials. After entering the main gate and heading for our hut, we passed a couple of soldiers. As they passed, one yelled, “Who is in charge here?” I held up my hand and said that I was.

As he approached, I noticed he was an officer and a major at that. He then asked if Marines did not salute officers, and I replied, “Yes, we do.” He asked why we had not. I replied that we thought they were enlisted. He then verbally tore into me and said our appearance was a disgrace. I admit that we were a bit scruffy, but with no facilities, we were unable to have shaved or showered and had been wearing our uniforms for about five days. After I was thoroughly chewed out, we were dismissed.

The more I thought about it, the madder I got. I told my guys to get their gear and we would find a place to clean up. Within a few minutes we found a head and showers. All of us were enjoying our showers when we heard the door open, and a voice yelled, “Who in [the] hell is in charge here?” I held up my hand, and yep, it was the same major. He started to chew me out once again, but this time I told him where our CO was and then gave him my name, rank and serial number and told him he could report us to the CO. I heard absolutely nothing during our remaining time there.

Later I saw our sergeant major and asked him if the major had reported our

encounter. He replied that he had, and the sergeant major told the major that he would take care of it. The sergeant major then jabbed his finger into my chest and said, "Sergeant Colbert, if you so much as stub your toe, I will have your butt." Needless to say, I kept a very low profile for the 20 days it took us to reach Long Beach.

Sgt Daniel Colbert
Madison, Iowa

Dinner Was More Than Chili and Beer

While stationed at Camp Lejeune as comm chief with 2nd Amtrac Bn, I was hanging out with my unit. PFC Chuckles said his wife was out of town and invited 10 of us to his house for a weekend party. He made chili for dinner, and we drank beer.

After dinner I told them if I could find a cockroach, I would eat it. PFC Chuckles said his wife kept a clean house and I would never find one but go ahead and check. They all bet me \$20 that I wouldn't eat one. About 30 seconds later, I opened the cabinet under the kitchen sink and came out with a cockroach in my hand. I showed it to the other Marines and then ate it. I was a happy Marine with money in my pocket after they each shelled out \$20.

Sgt Mike "Roach" Metko
USMC, 1972-1977
Amberg, Wis.

Hungry Officer Candidate

A good friend of mine, Jon Manis, attended Officer Candidates School (OCS) in the early 1980s. One day Candidate Manis was eating his noon meal in the chow hall in the middle of a large mass of officer candidates. Since the training schedule was always tight, the staff allowed very little time to eat. No talking. Eyes front. Eat. Suddenly, at a nearby table a fellow candidate who was shoveling in food as fast as he could, began choking. Having been a Navy

corpsman, Jon knew exactly what to do. He jumped up, ran over to the table, and performed a perfect Heimlich maneuver. The candidate didn't say thank you or even acknowledge Jon's efforts. He just sat back down and went right back to shoveling it in. He could have said thanks or something.

Jon should have been commended for his quick action, calmness under pressure, and outstanding judgement that resulted in saving the life of another candidate. Instead, the candidate who choked was scolded for wasting food. Jon got a "chit" or "red rocket," a formal reprimand

He jumped up, ran over to the table, and performed a perfect Heimlich maneuver. The candidate didn't say thank you or even acknowledge Jon's efforts. He just sat back down and went right back to shoveling it in. He could have said thanks or something.

that goes into your official candidate record. What was most unusual about the incident was that when Jon reported to the platoon sergeant's office later that day, he was told that his chit was for improper justice.

The platoon sergeant, in an overly dramatic fashion, told Candidate Manis, "That other candidate was weak. You should have let him die. Dismissed!" Knowing that Candidate Manis was prior enlisted in the Navy, the platoon sergeant felt obligated to give him

an extra-large ration of grief. Regardless, there is a gentleman out there somewhere who remembers the day when another candidate saved his life. Proper justice be damned.

Col Bill Morgan
USMCR (Ret)
Destrehan, La.

A Revealing Inspection

I had returned from Vietnam and was stationed at Camp Lejeune, N.C., serving with the 10th Marines in June 1968. Early one morning I was asked to take a Marine to the airport. When I got back to the barracks, I decided to take a shower. The next thing I heard was someone yelling, "Attention!" There was a surprise inspection.

While I was in the shower the brass came in to inspect the showers. There I was, dressed the way God intended us to be while showering. I stood there at attention until they left and then finished my shower. Upon leaving, the company gunny told me to come see him later that morning, which I did. He was fuming from finding me in the shower during inspection but when I told him what happened, he understood as the gunny was the one who asked me to take the Marine to the airport.

We had a good laugh and life in the Corps went on without incident. There were so many unplanned things that happened while serving in the Corps.

Cpl Daniel C. Biser
USMC, 1966-1968
Lutz, Fla.

The DI and the Fire Watch

I got my well-deserved thumping about two weeks before graduation at MCRD Parris Island, with Platoon 283, 2nd Battalion, in 1957, while assigned fire watch in the wooden barracks. Our senior drill instructor (DI) had the duty that night and told the first watch stander that he wanted to be woken

up at 4 a.m. which was 30 minutes earlier than usual and to pass the word from one fire watch to another.

I was pulling the watch right before the guy who was to wake up our DI. I relieved my brother, and he passed the order on to me. At the end of my shift, I hit the rack. The next thing I knew the squad bay lights went on and the DI was standing in the center of the room in his t-shirt and skivvies with a tickle of blood on his cheek and fire in his eyes and screamed, "FIRE WATCHES TO MY HUT NOW, YOU MAGGOTS!"

He proceeded to ask each petrified recruit, "Did you pass the word?" and each replied, "Sir, yes, Sir." It's now my turn and he asked the same question of me. My feeble reply was, "Sir, I think so."

Before the words left my mouth, he latched onto me and bounced me off the bulkhead and flipped me over his rack. I landed between the rack and bulkhead and scrambled to my feet to assume the position of attention. He then bull rushed me back into the squad bay and shouted, "[If] this maggot failed to pass the word in combat, someone can get killed." He turned my screw up into a teachable moment that none of us especially, me, would ever forget.

LCpl Bob Lake
USMC, 1957-1960
Reisterstown, Md.

Do you have any interesting stories 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 membership for the "Sea Story of the Month." 🦒

THE NEW MARINE CORPS

By
Sgt Harry Polete
USMC



One hundred and seventy-one years ago the New England colonies sired a new son. It was a lusty lad, born in the midst of strife and nurtured on the milk of freedom. His Revolutionary fathers, with premonitions that he would foster a corps of amphibious warriors, christened him Marine.

The protection of American lives and property both on land and sea—in peace and war—was his highest commission.

It was a turbulent childhood for the youngster. The struggling colonies were having a rugged time, battling for freedom. Military supplies and equipment were scarce. So scarce, in fact, that colonial leaders viewed with paramount importance several reports

At the peak of demobilization, ships arrived almost daily bringing thousands of Marines back to the United States. Many of the men hadn't been home in three years.



LEATHERNECK FILE PHOTO

To say that the Marine Corps learned a lesson about demobilization from experiences after World War I would be a mere statement of facts. ... This well-learned lesson was reflected during the past year when three fourths of the Corps was discharged without any detriment to overseas commitments for occupational duties.



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Above: At the end of the war in the Pacific, the Marine Corps, no longer needing a large force for an invasion of Japan, began a rapid program of demobilization. Scenes like this one at Miramar were familiar ones as Marines returned for discharge or reassignment.

Right: It's Mister, not Sergeant, Henry W. Rohland. Like 400,000 Marines, he is now Joe Q. Civilian.

reaching their attention. These were to the effect that the British had concentrated large quantities of military stores in the Bahama Islands.

These all-important supplies would do much to augment an almost depleted American arsenal. A hasty and daring plan to capture these supplies from the British was soon formulated.

History records the subsequent action as one of the most successful naval operations—of this particular type—to be carried out during the Revolutionary War. The landing force of Marines and Sailors met with crowning success at every turn. Defenders on the island were able to destroy only a few kegs of powder before the Americans captured all remaining supplies. It was one of the first engagements for the newly formed Marines.

Years have passed since that first operation—171 hard years. Six major wars and hundreds of campaigns have become history. The interim contained few idle years.

Year 171 has more or less been under the shadow of the recently ended war. In many ways the important events of the past year have been overcast by more spectacular events of the four preceding years. They seem lusterless in comparison.

Yet, who can deny that it was not a year of importance?

This importance did not stem from any actions against the enemies of the United States. At least not in the form of physical conflict. No Tarawas, Iwo Jimas, or Okinawas added their streamers to battle standards of the Corps. There was only



LEATHERNECK FILE PHOTO

the inevitable aftermath of war. This was a period given over to demobilization, readjustments and occupational duties in the Pacific.

The past year differed from postwar years of other conflicts only in the magnitude of the problems and, of course, in the more efficient way each one was handled.

To say that the Marine Corps learned a lesson about demobilization from experiences after World War I would be a mere state-

ment of facts. That they profited from these experiences is now a foregone conclusion. This well-learned lesson was reflected during the past year when three fourths of the Corps was discharged without any detriment to overseas commitments for occupational duties.

Apparently, at the end of WW I, the old idea that we had just fought a war to end all wars was taken too literally. Returning warriors were discharged as fast as their papers could be signed without regard for the efficiency of the Corps. This idea is amply demonstrated by an old story that used to make the rounds among Marines.

The gist of the story concerns an unidentified Marine officer who remained at his desk all night signing discharges in order that all men eligible for discharge could leave the next morning. So many men were discharged in this fashion that it is supposed to have been a common sight, for a little while at least, to see ser-

geants major acting as sergeants of the guard, gunnery sergeants as corporals of the guard, with the remainder of the detachment walking post as privates of the guard. It was necessary to practically rebuild the Marine Corps, afterward.

After this war, it was different. When Japan surrendered there were approximately 485,000 Marines in the Corps. By Jan. 4, 1946, some 190,853 of these had been discharged. This was more than two and a half times as many Marines as were in the entire Corps when the Armistice was signed in 1918. And the discharges had only started—but in an orderly fashion.

Month by month the demobilization program continued. It was rapid, yet always with an eye toward preventing a repetition of the condition in which the Corps found itself after WW I. By May 17, the overall strength of the Corps had dwindled to a mere 185,000. Of this total, approximately 82,000 were Reserve and 30,000 were Selective Service. The remainder were regulars.

A few weeks later, on June 14, a further breakdown showed that there were 144,712 enlisted men, 10,723 male officers, 2,294 enlisted women and 121 female officers still on duty. The total that had been discharged to this date, according to Headquarters, Marine Corps, was 371,767. In breaking down this discharge figure it was revealed that since Aug. 17, 1945, 328,600 enlisted men, 15,225 enlisted women, 27,287 male officers and 655 female officers had been separated from the Corps.

According to figures released for the week of Aug. 17-23, 1946, one year after demobilization had begun, 428,936 men and women had been discharged from the Corps during that period. This left the Corps with an estimated strength of 121,820; a total which included 13,298 reservists and inductees still overseas. This group of Marines were returned to the United States and discharged as quickly as possible.

At this time some 500 women reservists remained in the Corps. All were eligible for discharge but were retained in the service upon their own request to aid in the demobilization program and other administrative duties of the Corps. Some 17,415 had already been discharged.

While some 400,000 Marines were sewing on ruptured ducks and looking around for civilian clothes, the Marine Corps was also busy along other lines—the recruiting program.

On Dec. 1, 1945, the Corps had discontinued the practice of accepting Selective Service inductees. A short time later an intensive program to build up the number of regular Marines was initiated. The reserves and selective service men already in the Corps received first attention in the recruiting



The largest recruiting program in history supplied more than 50,000 new men in eight months.

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It was just after the turn of the new year that the recruiting program was given a new impetus. The fact that Congress was looking with favor on a bill to authorize a permanent strength of 100,000 men for the Corps furnished a big incentive. Throughout the United States, Marine recruiting personnel were soon engaged in one of the largest drives in history.



Not all of the Chinese seem to have the feeling of gratitude depicted in this banner, and duty in North China could be rough at times.

without a mention of the four Marine Divisions that were victims of the demobilization, not counting numerous smaller units that attained fame during the Pacific War.

The first to feel the effects of this demobilization program was the 4th Division. By Nov. 28, 1945, it had been completely disbanded at Maui, Hawaii. A majority of the high-point men, eligible for discharge, had already been sent Stateside. Those not eligible for discharge had been transferred to other occupational or garrisoning units. Their colors, bearing the battle streamers of Kwajalein, Saipan, Tinian and Iwo Jima, were cased for the last time.

One month later, on Dec. 28, the breakup of the 3rd Division was begun. The 3rd, which had assisted in the capture of Bougainville, Guam and Iwo Jima, began demobilizing on Guam and ended the process at Camp Pendleton. Thus, the Marine Corps had hardly entered into its 171st year, when two Divisions of its striking force had ceased to exist—except in the memories

of those men who had served under their colors.

program. There were many advantages linked with service in the regular Marine Corps; all of these were pointed out. Thousands of men, aware of these benefits, shipped over as regulars. It was just after the turn of the new year that the recruiting program was given a new impetus. The fact that Congress was looking with favor on a bill to authorize a permanent strength of 100,000 men for the Corps furnished a big incentive. Throughout the United States, Marine recruiting personnel were soon engaged in one of the largest drives in history. The bill to increase the size of the Corps was passed in June by Congress and signed soon thereafter by the President. Prior to this, the permanent authorized strength allowed the Marines had been 45,400.

The results of this drive were soon evident. In January, 4,721 men enlisted or reenlisted for regular service. In February the drive began to gain momentum and 5,222 men joined the regulars. The number continued to increase during March when 5,728 signed on the dotted line. In April and May there were slight drops to approximately 4,500 each month. However, during June the recruiters again did a booming business when they signed 8,616 for the month.

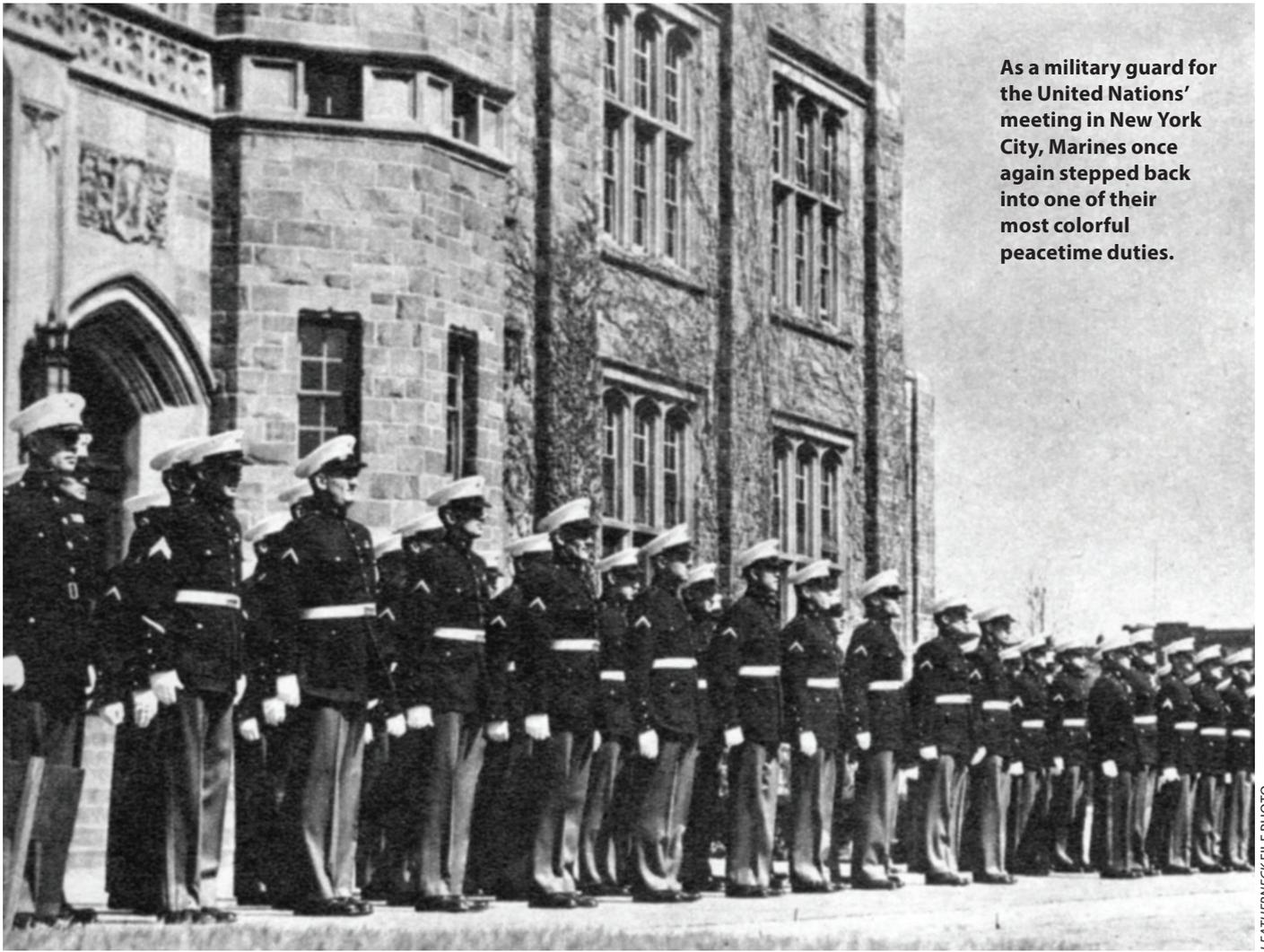
July and August contributed 16,158 more signing for service with the Regular Marine Corps. This brought the total enlistments and reenlistments from Jan. 24, through Aug. 24 to 49,860. Factually the number of regulars was approaching the authorized strength for the whole Corps.

For all practical purposes, demobilization will have been completed by the time Marines' celebrate their 171st birthday. But the story cannot be completed

The 5th Division, of Iwo fame, was the next to go. Many of its personnel had been transferred to other units while the Division was stationed in Japan. The last elements of the 5th wound up their affairs and disbanded at Camp Pendleton on Feb. 5, 1946. The 6th Division was sent to North China from Okinawa. After several months of duty in China it ceased to function as a division on April 1, 1946. The men who remained were formed into the



In the past year more time was devoted to training which had often been omitted during the war for the want of time.



As a military guard for the United Nations' meeting in New York City, Marines once again stepped back into one of their most colorful peacetime duties.

LEATHERNECK FILE PHOTO



The collection and destruction of weapons by the thousands was one of the many tasks that faced Marines during their tour of occupation duty in Kyushu, Japan.

LEATHERNECK FILE PHOTO

Headquarters announced that the 2nd Division was being withdrawn from Japan where they had been a part of the occupying forces. Elements of this Division had been stationed at Sasebo, Yokosuka, Omura and Nagasaki since shortly after the final surrender of Japan, when they relieved the 5th Division. For the first time since 1942, the 2nd was coming home.

3rd Marine Brigade and this later to the 4th Marine Regiment, reinforced. This regiment remained on duty in North China.

When the 5th Amphibious Corps was disbanded at Camp Pendleton on Feb. 15 and the 3rd Corps in China on June 10, the Marine Corps had shrunk to its last two Divisions—the 1st and 2nd. The 1st was on duty in China, the 2nd in Japan.

Shortly after this, Headquarters announced that the 2nd Division was being withdrawn from Japan where they had been a part of the occupying forces. Elements of this Division had been stationed at Sasebo, Yokosuka, Omura and Nagasaki since shortly after the final surrender of Japan, when they relieved the 5th Division. For the first time since 1942, the 2nd was coming home.

The forward elements arrived in the United States early in July. Their assignment to Camp Lejeune came as a surprise to many. Regiments that had long been West Coast units comprised the “ready outfit” of Marines for the East Coast. The last elements of the Division were landed Stateside a month later.

One regiment, the Sixth, of the 2nd Division, was detached and landed at Camp Pendleton, Calif. Later the Commandant announced that this regiment would be expanded into a brigade and later to divisional strength, but that the latter would not happen for another year.

Prior to the 2nd’s return, the 1st Special Marine Brigade was the only organized unit of the Fleet Marine Force in the United States. It had been activated at Quantico during Jan. 1946, under its first commanding officer, Brigadier General Oliver P. Smith. A month later, however, the command passed to BGen David N. Nimmer.

Three months after its organization the brigade was engaged in the first large-scale maneuvers since the close of World War II. For 34 days they engaged in amphibious maneuvers with the 8th Fleet in the Caribbean and in brigade problems on the island of Puerto Rico. A majority of the men participating in these various maneuvers were new and every effort was made to employ a great deal of the knowledge gained by experienced officers and men during the war.

In the meantime, 3,000 miles across the United States and off the shores of San Francisco, Marines were landing on another island. This landing, however, had little in common with those being executed at Puerto Rico. At Alcatraz a number of prisoners had overpowered the guards, secured two weapons and made a vain attempt to escape from the “Rock.” When this failed, they barricaded themselves in a cell block, threatening the lives of a number of prison guards, captured during the early moments of the riot. Before the 45-hour battle was over, the desperate convicts had carried out their threats against two of the guards. Several others were wounded. The three ringleaders in a hopeless dash

for liberty also paid with their lives. No Marines were wounded.

Back across the continent again, this time to the Bronx in New York City, four officers and 75 enlisted Marines were engaged in one of the colorful assignments of the year. They had been selected to form a military guard for the United Nations Security Council meeting being held at Hunter College. This guard was commanded by Major Jonas M. Platt.

The early meetings of the Council were quarrel-wracked ones. The bombastic attitude of the diplomats highlighted the United Nations conclave. They argued incessantly in an attempt to find a common ground on which to perpetuate the peace so recently bought with years of bitter fighting. Throughout these meetings



Three Marines, attached to the early occupation forces in Japan, pause outside this gate in Sasebo to eat their noon meal.

the Marines maintained their vigilance, efficient and unperturbed.

Not so unperturbed, however, were some of the visitors who came to witness the Security Council’s meetings. The belligerent attitude of many delegates and the stories of world unrest in the newspapers disturbed many of the visitors. Perhaps it was this feeling of apprehension that caused one lady to view with alarm the bayonets hanging from the belts of Marines as they walked their posts.

She approached one of the sentries and demanded to know if trouble was being anticipated. When assured that none was, she demanded to know why the “Soldiers” were carrying “those large knives” on their belts. “I suppose,” the sentry later explained as he recounted the incident, “that she would have expected an invasion if we had been carrying M1s.”

The Marines provided a definite atmosphere of color for the historic meeting of the United Nations. Once again, they were attired in a uniform that is as famous as the globe and anchor. The new and much discussed dress blues had finally made their



LEATHERNECK FILE PHOTO

The Marines in their new dress blues were a colorful part of the United Nations meeting in New York.

been made. There is, however, at least one article of clothing that has reverted from its wartime styling to a peacetime mode. Marines need no longer suffer the ignominy of camouflaged underclothing. White skivvies are back in the Corps and costing the government 14 cents less than the foliage-green ones.

Another peacetime practice was also resumed during the past year. The smoke had barely cleared from the battlefields than Marines were busy on the rifle ranges throughout the Corps.

Early in the year Marines began to sharpen their shooting eyes for the Divisional matches held at Hawaii, San Diego, Parris Island and Quantico. High shooters of these matches then turned their sights on the Marine Corps matches held at Quantico in June. Some of the most experienced shots in the Marine Corps were on the firing line for these matches.

There were a number of coveted awards, but the one which everyone hoped to take home was the Lauchheimer trophy. This was awarded to Gunnery Sergeant Theodore F. Wade of Camp Pendleton for the highest aggregate score in the rifle and pistol matches. He fired a total score of 557 out of a possible 600 with the rifle and

scored 531 out of a possible 600 on the pistol. This brought his aggregate score on both to 1,088—the highest in the matches.

Maj Walter R. Walsh of Quantico walked off with high individual pistol honors when he scored 553 out of a possible 600.

This was the first Marine Corps match since 1940, and the first in which the M1 rifle was used. It was noticeable that the scores were somewhat lower than in previous matches when the '03 was used. Experts gave a number of reasons for this, the first being the large sight. They say that this sight was adopted primarily for rapid fire and not for long range accurate shooting as was the leaf sight on the '03. The course had also been changed and the emphasis placed on rapid fire. Naturally, this is not as accurate as the slow well-aimed fire over the old course.

Parris Island won the Elliott Trophy in team competition from all stations east of the Mississippi River. The San Diego Cup went to the Service Command, FMF, for highest team score of stations west of the Mississippi. Individual winners were awarded gold, silver or bronze medals.

There were many other events of interest taking place throughout the Marine Corps during the past year. Included was the inevitable occupation that follows in the wake of every war. The Marines drew their share of this duty in Asia and on the smaller islands of the Pacific.

appearance in the Corps and in public. And, while none of the radical changes predicted for years had been made, the first group of Marines to wear them was by no means disappointed.

The most radical change was the adding of four pockets to the blouse and pockets to the trousers. The new blues became an item of issue in September and were passed out to Marines in the States as rapidly as the Depot Quartermaster could procure them.

One of the outstanding changes in the Marine uniform was that made in the greens during the past year. Previously, the last major change made in this uniform occurred in 1928 when the roll collar was substituted for the old high collar. At one time the green blouse was equipped with a collar similar to that on the blue blouse.

The familiar green blouse has now been replaced by a combat jacket, similar to the Aussie battle jacket. Hip pockets and a higher waist have been added to the trousers and complete the new winter service uniform. And, while many Marines did not favor the change, experiments had proven the old-style uniform unsuitable to modern combat. This was the primary reason for the change since the greens are, in the first place, combat uniforms and utilized for garrison purposes secondly.

Not much of the clothing being issued to Marines at the present time is in its prewar shape or style. Many changes have

The familiar green blouse has now been replaced by a combat jacket, similar to the Aussie battle jacket. Hip pockets and a higher waist have been added to the trousers and complete the new winter service uniform. And, while many Marines did not favor the change, experiments had proven the old-style uniform unsuitable to modern combat.

Asiatic police and guard duty is by no means new to the Marine Corps. It was new, however, to many of the younger Marines who have been destined to serve in the occupation forces. Along with their Army brothers in occupied Germany, these Marines faced many problems unthought of in boot camp or the training area. Many Marines, mainly those of the 2nd Division, had the responsibility of carrying out policies, setting standards and supervising a section of conquered Japan. It was a big job to carry out in atom-bombed Nagasaki.

The Marines who first landed in that devastated city lived under all types of hardships. Yet, despite this, rehabilitation of the Japanese people was started almost immediately. Before they were relieved and sent home, the Marines had started the citizens back toward a normal living. This was just one of the many examples of the 2nd Division's work in Japan. Their job was naturally overshadowed by the Supreme Commander of the Occupation Forces and the Army which drew the more spectacular duties surrounding the Japanese capital, Tokyo.

In North China, the circumstances were reversed. Here the publicity went almost entirely to the Marines stationed there. It was in this area that civil war flared between the Nationalist and Communist troops of China. The few thousand Marines of the 1st Division and 4th Regiment (the 6th Division having been deactivated) were kept busy guarding the Peiping-Mukden railroad. This was the lifeline that could enable the Chinese government troops to save Manchuria for China.

In addition to driving off the bands of Communists that continually attempted to wreck the right of way or blow up the 32 bridges, the Marines did another job equally important to China's recovery. They kept open a vital coal mine which was saving North China and Shanghai from a fuel and power shortage.

When the Marines came to North China in October 1945, the beleaguered Tangsham mines were producing only 400 tons of coal a day. The output had soon jumped to 11,000 tons a day, which was sufficient for the needs of Shanghai, Peiping, Tientsin, Tsingtao and a few of the other cities. When the Marines came to China in the fall of 1945, it took four days to make the trip between Chinwangtao and Tientsin over the railroads. Soon after Marine guards had been posted along the railway system the scheduled time for the trip was eight hours.

One newspaper columnist has even gone as far as to say that "it is very possible China is being saved by the efficient manner in which a few thousand American boys are doing an irksome, thankless job."

The same irksome and thankless tasks are being performed, too, on many of the now insignificant islands in the Pacific. Now these islands and many others surrendered by the Japanese after VJ-Day have reverted to their former unimportance. Once again, they are merely pinpoints on the map to everyone, that is, excepting military strategists and the men who fought for them.

There have been hundreds of changes during the year, but the same old spirit is there. As the Marines celebrate their 171st birthday they are still finding out that the best post in the Marine Corps is the one they just left. The worst is the one they are going to. There are still men in China who want to come home and men in the United States who want to go to China.

The platoons coming through boot camp feel sure that they have the toughest DIs and are the most overworked and best-drilled platoons ever to hit Parris Island or San Diego.

Basically, it's the same old Marine Corps. But in its 172nd year it will really be a new Marine Corps, in the sense that it will be the largest and most efficient Corps in history. 🇺🇸

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LCPL JACK CHEN, USMC

LCpl Angel Alvarado, a combat graphics specialist with Marine Corps Forces Command, Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic, donates blood for the Armed Services Blood Program at Camp Elmore, Norfolk, Va. Blood supply is critically low nationwide, and eligible individuals are strongly encouraged to take the time to donate and help save lives.

Armed Services Blood Program Urges Donors to Step Up

The Armed Services Blood Program (ASBP) says donations are down and is encouraging volunteers to step up and donate blood to replenish the supply, the Military Health System announced in January.

“Blood supply is critically low across the nation, not only for the ASBP, but for civilian organizations as well,” said Colonel Audra Taylor, USA, the ASBP’s division chief. The ASBP provides life-saving blood products to servicemembers, their families, retirees and veterans worldwide.

“Historically, donations decrease in the holiday and winter months due to schedule changes, people taking leave, families going on vacation, weather conditions or illnesses impeding people from donating,” Taylor said. “This year, it’s all of those things in addition to COVID-19 restrictions and overall health and safety concerns for potential donors and ASBP blood donor center team members.”

Army Lieutenant General Ronald Place, the Defense Health Agency’s director, echoed the sentiments about the importance of blood donors and a steady supply of blood products.

“Adequate blood supplies are a critical part of a ready medical force. Our medical providers must have everything they need to complete their mission, including blood.

A donation can be done in as little as one hour and yield lifesaving blood products for surgical procedures, traumatic injuries, chronic illness and cancer treatment,” LTG Place said.

Administered to treat various conditions, blood products are essential for warfighters in combat operations and for emergency use wherever they are, Taylor added.

“It’s also necessary to conduct surgeries at military hospitals and clinics,” Taylor said. “It could be critical to the survival of a newborn baby. It could give treatment to those with blood-borne illnesses, with certain cancers, for burn victims.”

The ASBP ensures global military

medical centers, hospitals and clinics have immediate and easy access to safe and viable blood and blood products. This includes whole blood, red blood cells, platelets, plasma and transfusable components derived from them.

ASBP blood donor centers are located throughout the United States and at locations around the world.

“We have over 20 donor centers, and many of them conduct mobile blood drives around their areas and sometimes in places further away on a regular basis,” Taylor explained. “As the Defense Department’s blood program, we are limited to collect at federally owned or leased properties only. But we’re thankful for the many bases, academies, centers and more that help us make missions and sponsor regular blood drives.”

Ready to donate? If you are able and eligible, find a blood drive or blood donor center near you at www.militarydonor.com.

Claudia Sanchez-Bustamante

New Course for Military-Connected Students Aims to Prevent Human Trafficking

Identifying a need to train military-connected students, the Defense Department’s Combating Trafficking in Persons (CTIP) program management office has developed a new program for high school students that alerts them to the dangers and signs of human trafficking. The office released the Department of Defense CTIP Student Guide to Preventing Human Trafficking in December 2021.

Military-connected students face challenges that could contribute to their



SEAN GORDON



CPL MARK MORALES, USMC

NEWEST RECRUIT— The Corps’ newest four-legged recruit, Chesty XVI, has reported for duty at the “Oldest Post of the Corps,” officials at Marine Barracks Washington, D.C., announced Feb. 3. The young English bulldog recently began training to replace LCpl Chesty XV, who will retire this summer. In the meantime, Chesty XV will mentor his new protégé and show him the ropes of being the Marine Corps’ unofficial mascot.

vulnerability to human trafficking, such as separations from a parent or caregiver due to deployments, high mobility rates and social challenges attributed to frequent school changes.

In 2020, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children’s Cyber Tipline received 21.7 million reports of suspected child sexual exploitation. Nearly all were related to images and videos of children being sexually abused that are circulated on the internet. Research shows that minors increasingly are being targeted by human traffickers and are being exploited at alarming rates, especially online.

To educate military-connected high school students in the 10th through 12th grades about the dangers of human trafficking and online exploitation, the CTIP program management office collaborated with Joint Knowledge Online to create the Defense Department’s CTIP Student Guide to Preventing Human Trafficking course. The program management office also worked with the National Center for

Missing and Exploited Children to provide 24/7 access to help, which is featured on every page of the student guide.

The purpose of this training is to strengthen the ability of students to recognize the signs of human trafficking and encourage them to seek help from a trusted adult if they or their friends suspect human trafficking or are being trafficked. The CTIP program management office developed the course using the latest evidence-based information on how to best reach and inform teens. The course emphasizes the strengths and resilience that military-connected teens already have that can help prevent human trafficking.

The student guide has 18 interactive “action cards” that cover the nature and scope of human trafficking, signs and indicators, how to recognize potential trafficking situations, how to seek help and how and where to report suspected trafficking incidents.

Additionally, this unique course consists of many innovative features to en-

gage students, such as near-peer stories, a non-linear format that allows students to skip around and find the information most useful or interesting to them, and interactive games and activities.

In addition to the student guide, the CTIP program management office also developed a companion parent resource guide, which explains why it’s important to educate students about human trafficking and walks parents through each action card in the course.

While the course is designed for military-connected students, it is publicly available on the CTIP program management office website at <https://ctip.defense.gov/CTIP-Student-Guide/>. Non-military connected students also will benefit from taking the course. To access the student guide via the website, answer a demographic question and you will be directed to either the student guide or the parent resource guide.

Two Marines Die After Tactical Vehicle Mishap

Lance Corporal Jonathan E. Gierke, 19, from Lawrenceville, Ga., and Private First Class Zachary W. Riffle, 18, from Kingwood, W.Va., died Jan. 19 following a tactical vehicle rollover near Jacksonville, N.C.

LCpl Gierke was a landing support specialist with Combat Logistics Battalion 24, Combat Logistics Regiment 2, 2nd Marine Logistics Group. He entered active duty in March 2021.

PFC Riffle was a landing support specialist with Combat Logistics Bn 24, CLR 2, 2nd MLG. He entered active duty in March 2021.

“My sincerest heartfelt condolences are extended to family, friends and colleagues of the Marines who lost their lives or were injured in Wednesday’s vehicle mishap,” said Brigadier General Forrest C. Poole II, the commanding general of 2nd MLG.

Several other Marines were injured in the mishap.

1stLt Kevin Stapleton, USMC

Sgt James Smith

Sergeant James “Horse Collar” Smith, a Marine Raider who received two Silver Stars for his actions during the Solomon Islands campaign died Jan. 3, in Fairfax, Va. He was 101.

Smith, a native of Cleveland, Ohio, enlisted in 1939 and completed boot camp at Parris Island, S.C. He was trained as a radio operator and completed a tour as a seagoing Marine before volunteering for duty in the newly formed 1st Raider Battalion.

He earned his nickname “Horse Collar,” later shortened to “Horse,” during his time as a communications Marine. Because he used to butt heads with his sergeant, he usually ended up pulling the cart which contained his section’s communications gear as a punishment.

As one of “Edson’s Raiders,” Smith sailed for the South Pacific in 1942. On Tulagi, Aug. 7, 1942, his patrol came under heavy enemy small-arms fire. According to his first Silver Star citation, Smith worked his way around the enemy flank and charged the Japanese forces in order to neutralize the threat and enable his patrol to destroy the enemy in that area.

The next month, on Sept. 13-14, 1942, during the fighting on Guadalcanal, Smith and four of his fellow Raiders maneuvered to the front lines and engaged the enemy in

close combat. Smith was wounded during that engagement, which was known as the Battle of Edson’s Ridge, but he continued the fight, and for the second time was the recipient of the Silver Star.

“Some of the toughest men I knew had experienced the pressures of war, but we could not fall apart—we couldn’t afford it,” Smith said during a 2017 presentation to Marines in the Marine Security Guard program at Marine Corps Base Quantico. “We bit our tongues, kept our heads down low and kept pushing forward,” added Smith, who later had a career as a foreign service officer.

“For Horse, heroism and patriotism didn’t cease later in his career ... Service was a character that was always on, it was part of his inner core, and he served heroically in the best traditions of the Corps,” said Smith’s son, Chris Smith.

Throughout his life, Horse was in contact with other World War II Raiders and attended the group’s final reunion in 2018. “Certainly, the only way we got to hear about many of Dad’s exploits was through his [fellow Marines], since they avoided aggrandizing their own heroic actions,” said Chris Smith.

“The stories were exciting and poignant. While many they made amusing at each other’s expense, it was also clear how much they loved, respected, and missed the Marines that were lost in combat,” he added.

Nancy S. Lichtman

Mariano Aguirre, 76, of Albuquerque, N.M. He was assigned to HMM-365 and participated in more than 300 missions during the Vietnam War. His awards include the Purple Heart. After his retirement from the Marine Corps, he pursued a career in general aviation in New Mexico. He earned a master’s degree from Embry Riddle Aeronautical University and later taught aviation courses. He was a member of the USMC Combat Helicopter and Tiltrotor Association.

Sgt Glen P. Allen, 91, of Xenia, Ohio. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1949, serving as a mail clerk in Japan and Korea. He later worked at the Xenia post office for more than 50 years.

Anthony Almeida, 73, of Pawtucket, R.I. He was a sniper with 1st Recon Bn during the Vietnam War.

Mary Bevan, 97, of Melbourne, Fla. She served during WW II. She was a member of the MCL and the Women

Marines Association.

Jack W. Broering, 75, of Hamilton, Ohio. His awards include the Purple Heart.

Paul Deaton, 83, of Middletown, Ohio. He served four years in the Marine Corps and later had a career in the steel industry.

SSgt Leslie Dienstberger, 92, of Delphos, Ohio. He was a veteran of the Korean War and saw action at the Chosin Reservoir. He was an avid musician and played the sousaphone for numerous musical organizations. He was a member of the MCL and the Chosin Few.

Gregory “Doc” Emery, 95, of Boynton Beach, Fla. He was a corpsman during WW II. He was 19 years old when he landed on Iwo Jima with the 5thMarDiv.

MGySgt William H. Finnegan, 98, of Independence, Mo. He enlisted when he was 17 and served in the Pacific. He fought on Guadalcanal, Cape Gloucester and Peleliu. He was recalled to active duty during the Korean War and saw action at the Chosin Reservoir. He later had a career in journalism as a reporter for the *Kansas City Star* and the editor of various military publications.

Roland “Mac” Gendron, 89, of New Bedford, Mass. He enlisted when he was 17 and fought in the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir. After the war, he had a career as a firefighter. He was a member of the Chosin Few and the VFW.

Cpl Charles H. Higgs, 91, of Pompano Beach, Fla. He was a veteran of the Korean War, who saw action at the Chosin Reservoir. His awards include the Purple Heart. He was a member of the Chosin Few and the MCL.

CWO-5 Guy L. Hunter, 77, of Topsail, N.C. He had a 32-year Marine Corps career. In January 1991 during Operation Desert Storm, he was completing a mission in an OV-10 Bronco as an observation officer when the aircraft was downed by a surface-to-air missile. He and the pilot were taken prisoner by the Iraqis. He was released two months later. His awards include the Prisoner of War medal, Purple Heart, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal and Navy Commendation Medal.

George W. Jacques III, 97, of Haynersville, N.Y. He was a Navy Seabee in the Pacific during WW II. His unit was attached to the 4thMarDiv.

Beverly M. (Tyler) Kern, 96, of San Diego, Calif. She served during WW II and did clerical work.

Robert Martin Sr., 70, in Abilene,

Texas. He was a Marine who served during the Vietnam War era. He later worked in the construction industry.

Allen R. Mitchell, 82, of Suamico, Wis. He enlisted after graduating from high school and served for several years. He later worked nearly four decades for Proctor & Gamble.

Wallace L. Podell, 93, of Wrightstown, N.J. He served from 1945-1968.

1stLt Leslie L. Pugh Jr., 101, of Santee, S.C. He was selected for the V-12 program at Duke University. He served in the Pacific during WW II and saw action on Peleliu.

Capt John H. "Hib" Robertson, 93, of Lancaster, Pa. He was a veteran of the Korean War, who fought during the Battle of Bunker Hill and in defense of Hill 181.

SgtMaj John Weliver, 91, of Fort Myers, Fla. During his 25-year Marine Corps career, he fought in the Korean War, seeing action at the Chosin Reservoir. He later served a tour in Vietnam, where he was wounded. He was a member of the Chosin Few and the MCL. His awards include the Purple Heart.

Ronald B. Wells, 78, of Middletown, Ohio. He was a Marine who served in Vietnam. His awards include the Purple Heart. He later worked in the paper industry.

Cpl Thomas A. Whitfield, 95, of Bedford, Pa. He served with the 4thMarDiv during WW II and saw action on Roi-Namur, Saipan, Tinian and Iwo Jima.

Cpl J. Blair Whitney, 79, of St. Paul, Minn. He served from 1963-1969 and was assigned to VMR-234.

Col Charles D. "Dal" Wood, 91, of Green Bay, Wis. He was commissioned after earning a degree in forestry from the University of Idaho. His 25 years of service included a tour in Vietnam. After his retirement, he had a second career as a financial planner.

Noah F. Woolum, 78, of Hamilton, Ohio. His service from 1963-1967 included a tour in Vietnam. His awards include the Purple Heart.

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.

Leatherneck introduces LEGACIES —

a quarterly special section commemorating Marines and other servicemembers.

LEGACIES provides a venue in which individuals can celebrate and recognize the lives of their loved ones by sharing their Marine Corps stories with other Marines, friends and loved ones for a small fee.

Leatherneck will continue to run obituaries at no charge, but for those who want to further memorialize their loved one or themselves, LEGACIES is here to share those memories. Debuting in our May 2022 issue, this paid feature will run quarterly only in *Leatherneck*.

For more information on LEGACIES rates, please email us at advertising@mca-marines.org



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France - Normandy

JUL 30-AUG 4
"Bloody Tarawa"

JUL 31-AUG 8
Guadalcanal 80th Anniv

AUG 12-26
Germany - Rise & Fall
of the Third Reich

AUG 25-SEPT 6
Vietnam Battlefields - I-Corps

AUG 26-SEPT 6
D-Day, Normandy &
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AUG 29-SEPT 4
MHT Civil War Gettysburg,
Bull Run & Antietam

SEPT 10-24
Ireland - 50 Shades of Green
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USMC VETERAN OWNED & OPERATED SINCE 1987

SOUND OFF
[continued from page 10]

and then explained how he handled the carnage without going nuts: "When death's all around you, saving a single life can be the most important thing in the world." I doubt that there's a single doctor active on the battlefield in any war who didn't feel that, whether or not he verbalized it. And that doesn't apply just to doctors, but to everyone involved in a firefight who has anything to do with tending the wounded.

Birney Dibble
Eau Claire, Wis.

Thank You *Leatherneck*

I would like to take the time to thank the *Leatherneck* editor along with her entire staff for providing me the honor and privilege to have some of my submitted letters viewed and published. *Leatherneck* is sort of my mentor in amateur writing. My greatest pleasure and enjoyment are to continue submitting my letters so that my Marine brothers and sisters may enjoy their reading.

Cpl John Messia Jr.
USMCR, 1952-1954
Brockton, Mass.

A Field Day That Lasted Many Months

In January 1954, I reported for duty with 1st ANGLICO at Camp Catlin, Oahu, Hawaii. The chow hall served up the best chow anyone could ever want. Our enlisted club was the best and we were lucky to have Mark Russell stationed with us. He entertained us nightly with his non-stop piano playing. As for liberty, you could walk out the main gate, catch a bus and be on Hotel Street in Honolulu in 10 minutes or get a transfer and be on the beach at Waikiki or lounge under a banyan tree at the Moana Hotel in 15 minutes. What a great place. Life was good back then in the Corps.

Then suddenly, it all came to an end. Camp Catlin was closed, and we were moved up the hill to the abandoned World War II Aiea Naval Hospital. The vegetation had taken over the grounds, the building was in disrepair and barely habitable. It was difficult to get to Honolulu or Waikiki Beach for liberty. We started from scratch scrubbing the floor, painting bulkheads, and pulling weeds. It seemed like non-stop cleaning and repairing. By the time I left in December 1955, the place started to look like a Marine base should but still a lot of work needed to be done.

Years later, I read an article in *Leather-*

neck titled, "Camp H.M. Smith, Hawaii," [September 1989] where the base was referred to as "a showplace for Marines." Yes, it was and the same base that was the abandoned WW II Naval Hospital that we cleaned up. Now at the age of 86, I often wonder how many are left that remember being involved with this project that would become the showplace of the Pacific, Camp H.M. Smith.

Sgt Franklin N. Masselle, USMC (Ret)
Berlin, Conn.

Just Another Day at Parris Island

After reading the article, "I Won't Do That Again" in "Sea Stories" in the December 2021 issue of *Leatherneck*, I thought of some of the happenings in 3rd Bn at Parris Island in 1964.

During training for grenade throwing, we were instructed to pull the pin, then release the spoon as we threw the grenade out of the concrete bunker downrange. Sounds simple if you are careful enough. We had a recruit in our platoon who pulled the pin and dropped the grenade, releasing the spoon as he dropped it and then he froze. The instructor was quick to kick the live grenade down into a tunnel in the bunker. We heard it explode underground. The recruit did a lot of extra running.

Some of us had heard that if you keep

**The Marine Corps Gazette
would like to thank Dominion
Energy for its support of our
LtCol Earl "Pete" Ellis Annual
Essay Contest.**



Contest Winners Are:

First Place: CAPT Andrew L. Litteral, CEC, USN - "Don't Change the Player, Change the Game"

Second Place: Capt Walker D. Mills & Dr. Nicholas Judson - "Energy Resilience"

Honorable Mention: Maj Phillip R. Roberson, Jr. (Ret) - "The Unnecessary Command"

Honorable Mention: Col Maria McMillen - "Preparing for War"



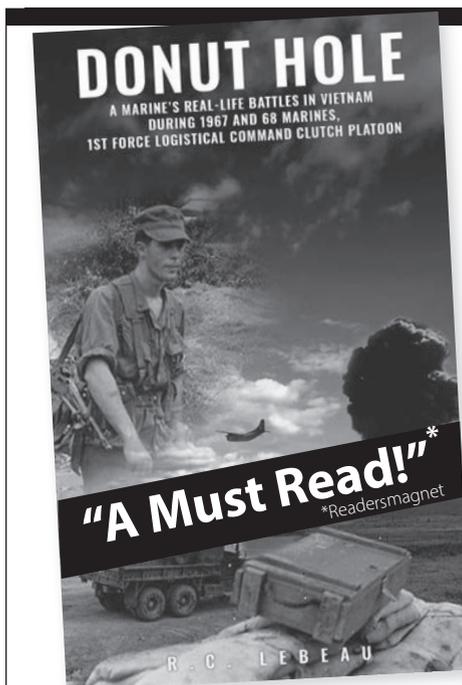
Dominion Energy and the Marine Corps Gazette salute the winners and thank them and all the entrants in the essay contest!

the pin of the first grenade you threw and hooked the pin with your dog tags, you would survive combat. This seemed important as the Vietnam War was raging.

We had another instance with the same recruit when he announced that someone had taken a \$20 bill out of his footlocker. In this case everyone had to empty all their footlockers and empty all the pockets of all clothing. After everyone had torn everything apart and no \$20 bill was located, the recruit said, "Here it is." He had hidden it in his dress shoe. Just another day in life at Parris Island.

PFC Palmer Sweet
North Garden, Va.

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 📧



DONUT HOLE

A biography by
R.C. LeBeau

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San Antonio, TX

Toys For Tots

Preserve Traditions

Young Marines

Funeral Honors

Color Guard

MCLMembershipCommittee@mcleague.org

Reader Assistance

Edited by Sara W. Bock

Reunions

• **5thMarDiv Assn.**, May 11-15, San Diego. Contact Kathy Tinsley, (619) 770-0257, finally@cox.net.

• **USMC Vietnam Tankers Assn.**, Sept. 17-20, Dubois, Wyo. Contact John Wear, (719) 495-5998, johnwear2@verizon.net.

• **Marine Corps Engineer Assn.**, Sept. 26-29, Las Vegas. Contact LtCol George Carlson, USMC (Ret), (931) 307-9094, treasurer@marcorengasn.org, www.marcorengasn.org.

• **East Coast Drill Instructors Assn.**, April 7-10, Parris Island, S.C. Contact SgtMaj K.D. Miller, (828) 499-0224, usmcpidi@charter.net, www.parrislanddi.org.

• **National Montford Point Marine Assn.**, July 12-16, Shreveport, La. Contact Ronald Johnson, (504) 202-8552, vice_president@montfordpointmarines.org.

• **USMC Weather Service**, June 19-24, Overland Park, Kan. Contact Kathy Donham, (252) 342-8459, kathy.donham@hotmail.com, or Dave Englert, engertd@psci.net.

• **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).

• **2nd Force Recon Co**, May 12-14, Bishopville, S.C. Contact Phil Smith, (540) 498-0733, jarhed73@yahoo.com.

• **G/2/7 (RVN)**, Sept. 14-18, San Antonio. Contact Lamont Taylor, (518) 249-7009, cinemscreend@yahoo.com.

• **I/3/7 (all eras)**, April 27-30, Myrtle Beach, S.C. Contact Dennis Deibert, 6007 Catherine St., Harrisburg, PA 17112, (717) 652-1695, dennisdeibert8901@comcast.net.

• **M/3/7 (RVN)**, May 11-14, Annapolis, Md. Contact George Martin, (443) 822-3597, m37bulldog@aol.com.

• **I/2/7**, Sept. 28-Oct. 1, San Antonio. Contact Felix Salmeron, (469) 583-0191, mar463@aol.com.

• **Marine Expeditionary Brigade-Afghanistan, Task Force Leatherneck (2009-2010)**, May 13-15, Quantico, Va. Contact reunion committee, taskforceleatherneck@gmail.com.

• **Marine Security Forces, NWS Earle**, Oct. 7-10, Colts Neck, N.J. Contact Dusty Wright, (618) 553-2205, slickstuff@nwcable.net.

• **MCSFO Puerto Rico, Marine Guard Unit Puerto Rico, Marine Barracks Puerto Rico (all eras)**, May 8-12, Rio Mar, Puerto Rico. Contact Matt Schavel, (949) 212-7851, seaswirl170@gmail.com, or Grady Johnston, (404) 432-8223, 2009gj@gmail.com.

• **TBS, Co H and Co I, 5-62**, May 17-20, Quantico, Va. Contact Joe Morrone, (410) 961-7400, or Harvey Ross, (269) 782-3601, usmc.tbs.562@aol.com.

• **TBS 3-64**, April 5-7, Quantico, Va. Contact Hugh Doss, hudoss@aol.com.

• **TBS 4-67, 5-67** "Rally at the Alamo," April 19-22, San Antonio. Contact Ken Pouch, (860) 881-6819, kpouch5@gmail.com.

• **TBS, Co C, 3-72**, April 20-23, Quantico, Va. Contact Col Joe Mueller, USMCR (Ret), (818) 815-8331, jnm21213@yahoo.com.

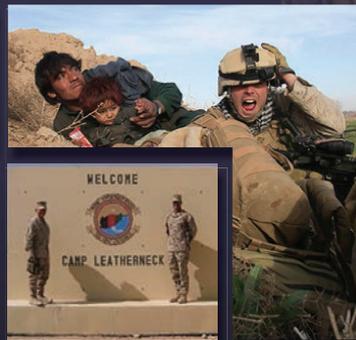
• **TBS, Co D, 4-73**, is planning a 50th-anniversary reunion in 2023, Quantico,



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Va. Contact Col Bill Anderson, USMCR (Ret), (540) 850-4213, binche57@yahoo.com, or Col Bob Donaghue, USMCR (Ret), (617) 840-0267, ip350haven@comcast.net.

Mail Call

• Jeff Brown, (407) 739-1227, jeffsbrown76@yahoo.com, to hear from **anyone who knew or served with** his brother, **LCpl Steven BROWN**, who served from **1966-1967 and was killed in Vietnam on July 4, 1967.**

• SMSgt David L. Hine, USAF (Ret), 132 E. McKenzie Rd., Greenfield, IN, 46140, (317) 468-3664, mrdavidlhine@att.net, to hear from anyone who has **photos of Marines Steve A. BANNER, Harry E. MATTHEW and Saul ZAYAS**, who were **killed in action in Vietnam.** He is a board member for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, which is working to find a photo of every servicemember named on "The Wall" at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

• Jim Curtis, umibushi@yahoo.com, to hear from or about a Marine with the last name **SCRIBNER** who served with him in **M/3/1, RVN**, and was shot in the leg while operating west of **Hill 55.**

Wanted

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

• Tony Russell, 1026 E. Crimm Rd., San Tan Valley, AZ, 85143, (760) 291-7484, shotime555@gmail.com, wants a **platoon photo** for his platoon, **San Diego, 1996.** He does not recall his platoon number.

• Brom Tremonti, 3338 Harrison St., Apt. 68, Kingman, AZ 86409, (192) 862-8907, gearjammer688@yahoo.com, wants a **recruit graduation book** for **Plt 326, San Diego, 1963.**

• Arthur Lopez, 3434 Tiffani Place, Highland, CA 92346, (909) 677-6005, genoandglo@yahoo.com, wants a **recruit graduation book** for **Plt 1046, San Diego, 1971.**

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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Gen Alexander A. Vandegrift
LtGen Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller

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2022 GIVING DAY



The Marine Corps Association Foundation's Second Annual Giving Day will be held on **Tuesday, April 19, 2022.**

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Saved Round

By Jennifer Castro



Evacuees board a helicopter to fly out of Saigon, Vietnam, April 29-30, 1975.



OPERATION FREQUENT WIND—Col George P. Slade was the commander of Battalion Landing Team (BLT) 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines, 3rd Marine Division April 29-30, 1975, during Operation Frequent Wind, the non-combat emergency evacuation of U.S. citizens, third country nationals and “at-risk” Vietnamese from South Vietnam prior to the takeover of the city by the North Vietnamese Army during the fall of Saigon.

The Defense Attaché Office compound was the main point of departure for the evacuation efforts that also included the U.S. Embassy in Saigon. This wooden painted U.S. seal, (inset) now in the collection of the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle, Va., was removed from the embassy during the evacuation efforts and presented to Col Slade by the officers and men of BLT 2/4 in appreciation for his leadership and dedication throughout the operation. In accordance with Department of State regulations, the Great Seal is displayed above the doors at all U.S. embassies and consulates throughout the world.

Editor's note: Photographs are either personal photographs from the collection of Col George P. Slade, USMC or were official photographs taken by GySgt R.R. Thurman, USMC.

Author's bio: Jennifer Castro is the cultural and material history curator for the National Museum of the Marine Corps.



Left: Col George Slade speaks to the Marines of Battalion Landing Team 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines before the evacuation.

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