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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.)

It had been 25 years since I had graduated from Marine Corps recruit training at Parris Island, S.C. My wife, now a college professor of nursing, was in Hilton Head, S.C., to present a research paper. I tagged along for the ride, the food, and the beach. She, on the other hand, was in meetings all day.

As I looked at a map and a schedule of things to do, I realized that Parris Island was less than an hour from our hotel room. I had not been back to Parris Island since I had graduated and decided I would take a trip over. There was much to see. Our experience as recruits, or "boots" as we were sometimes called, limited our perspective a great deal. We only saw what was designed for us to see. Besides, in the 13 weeks of boot camp, we trained every day from 5 a.m. to 9 p.m. when it was lights out. We did get to sleep in on Sundays; all the way to 6:00 a.m. There was virtually no freedom of movement, and we were told what to do, when to do it, and how to do it nearly every minute of the day.

After checking in and receiving per-

mission to be on the base, I visited my old barracks area that housed the 2nd Recruit Training Battalion, the confidence course, the water survival area, the close combat training area, the rifle range, the physical training area and all those places that were frozen in my mind. There were recruits there much younger than me. Even then, it was hard to believe that I was ever that young.

I visited the museum on Parris Island and learned, as a young sergeant proudly informed me, that my era was in a museum now. Looking at the displays of the Vietnam-era it felt as though I was looking into the past and, in a sense, I guess I was. The uniforms, the weapons, it had all changed, upgraded, and improved.

However, my most memorable moment of that visit lasted only a very brief time. As I was walking down the sidewalk heading to another area, I saw ahead of me a group of elderly men headed my way. What hair they had was all white, some were bent, some shuffled as they walked, one was in a wheelchair, and a few sported canes or walkers. I thought to myself that they must be from a local nursing home and were out for a field trip. They all had on bright yellow baseball caps—the easier to keep track of them I thought.

As they drew near, I saw that there was red stitching on the ball caps. As they came within reading range, the caps all said, "Guadalcanal Reunion." I froze in place. The Battle of Guadalcanal was the first major land offensive of the Allies against the Japanese Empire of World War II. The brutal fighting on the island lasted six months and two days. When it was finally over, the Japanese had lost a total of 24,000 men killed in the Battle of Guadalcanal, while the Americans sustained 1,600 killed, and 4,200 wounded.

We were taught about these men in boot camp. These old men were among those who created the legend of the Marine Corps. They were among the Corps' fiercest warriors. Documentaries and Hollywood movies had been made about the Marines of Guadalcanal. Now, they were old, and I stood in awe before them.

I wanted to say something to them. To tell them that they were still revered and talked about in hushed tones. But words failed me. I stood in silence and got off the sidewalk, giving it up to those who had seen and done more for their country than I ever would.

As they passed, just for a moment, I stood in their shadows.

It's possible all the men I saw that day are dead now. Of the 16,000,000 Americans who served in World War II, only 240,329 were alive in 2021, and some of those have passed already. Those who remain are likely in their 90s or older. My father joined the Navy at age 17 in 1944. He would have been 95 this June.

Most of those who served during the Korean War are in their 80s and 90s now. Most of the Vietnam veterans are in their 70s and 80s. Nearly all of those who are alive are grandfathers and great-grandfathers now. Some, especially from the Korea-era, like my father-in-law, John F. Douglas Jr., are great-great grandfathers. All of these are old men but they were warriors once. And, truth be told, in their hearts, they are warriors still. If called upon and able to do so, nearly every one of them would pick up a rifle if their nation needed them to defend her. Even the ones in wheelchairs.

I wish I had said something to those I encountered that day. Most of that generation would have replied that they were just doing their job, or the real heroes are the men who didn't come back home. They are usually modest, these old men. They say they are nothing special. They say that they were just doing what anybody would do. But they would be wrong. Not everybody did what they did. Not everyone responded to the call. Not everyone became a legend.

As these old men in scarlet and gold baseball caps shuffled past me that day, I stood in the grass in silent respect. There's one other thing I wish I had done. Since I had no words, I wish that, as they passed, I had saluted them. And, though it has been long delayed, I do so now.

David Epps
USMC, 1970-1973
Sharpsburg, Ga.

There Were No Draftees in 1942

I liked MSgt Marsden E. Champaign's letter, "Marines in the Pacific Volunteer" in the October issue of Sound Off. I enlisted on Nov. 19, 1942, and went to Parris Island. There certainly weren't any draftees around in those days, the main reason being there were plenty of volunteers. We were called reserves but there were no draftees. The expression we heard was that we were in for the duration. My serial number began with a five. Later,


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perhaps when there were draftees, some numbers began with an eight. I'm not sure but I believe that was more toward the middle of the war. Our dog tags all read USMCR.

In his letter in the August issue that MSgt Champaign refers to, Mr. Bill Aiello said he was taught that 70 percent of Marines in World War II were draftees. I don't know if that's a good figure or not, so I would need more information to accept it, considering all the volunteer Marines that I knew. A related feature might involve regular Marines who were already in the Corps. Say someone enlisted for four years on July 1, 1940, he would be USMC. In 1944 his enlistment would be up. I don't recall of anyone being reenlisted for a specific number of years then, but I guess it could have happened. I believe they were just extended for the duration like the rest of us. Two things for sure, all this was a long time ago, and MSgt Champaign and I have been Marines

for 79 years as of November 2021—he on Nov. 10 and myself on Nov. 19.

MGySgt George H. Smith, USMC (Ret)
Orange Park, Fla.

Marine Corps Emblem

Reading the November issue of *Leatherneck* magazine, I found the article, "The Eagle, Globe and Anchor: Representing the Marine Corps," very interesting. I recently purchased several emblems online. I know the top one (see the photo below) is recent and the middle three are World War II-era emblems, and, as far as I know, the bottom ones with both longitude and latitude lines are from World War I but not completely sure. Anyone know the dates of them?

MSgt Ben Spotts, USMC (Ret)
Fort Morgan, Colo.

In the article regarding the eagle, globe and anchor in the November issue you asked which design was our favorite. I



MSgt Ben Spotts recently purchased these old emblems and is asking if anyone knows the dates of them.

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came up with a tie—the emblem featured on the bottom of page 55 and the emblem featured at the top of page 56. I noticed several slight differences. My personal favorite is the drawing shown in the upper righthand corner of page 55. The drawing shows the emblem that was used in 1925. This style emblem has been permanently displayed on my right forearm since 1951.

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

Adversity Was an Opportunity For Perseverance

My name is Lance Corporal Devyn W. Watkins, and I am currently stationed at MCB Quantico, Va. I am a supply admin clerk for TECOM's G-4 supply section. Four years ago on Nov. 6, 2017, I stepped onto the yellow footprints at MCRD Parris Island, S.C., and began my journey to earn the title United States Marine. Due to many medical issues, including pneumonia that was a few days away from killing me, I spent four and a half months on Parris Island. I was dropped in recruit training a total of seven times. The mental and physical damage that I went through caused me to ultimately give up, and I was sent home on March 23, 2018. I took some time to adjust back to civilian life and tried to join the Navy. After four



COURTESY OF LCPL DEVYN W. WATKINS, USMC

LCpl Devyn Watkins' perseverance and determination finally earned him the eagle, globe and anchor.

months with the recruiter, I received a phone call from a Marine recruiter who asked me if I would like to attempt recruit training again since I was as close as 15 days away from the Crucible. I declined his offer at first, but not long after, when I turned 20, I found myself in the recruiting office filling out paperwork once again. Five months went by, and I was close to

going back to Military Entrance Process Station (MEPS) to get medically cleared. I had a knee injury while running that delayed my process and took four months to properly heal. Finally, after getting medically cleared, it took seven months for my waiver to get approved. A few weeks later COVID-19 shut down Marine Corps recruit training. After the depot opened back up, I shipped out to boot camp on May 25, 2020. I was in Platoon 3056, "Kilo" Co, 3rd Battalion. I went through recruit training with no issues and finished with my original platoon. To make my comeback even more special, my original "kill hat" from four years ago was the recruit training regiment drill master of the depot, and although he didn't recognize me at the time, he saw me receive my eagle, globe and anchor. He spoke with me a week later during a graduation practice and told me how proud he was of me.

I spent two and a half years as a boot camp failure, but my will to never give up and truly prove I had it in me to complete my journey just goes to show what the mindset of a Marine is all about. I genuinely believe adversity is an opportunity to show perseverance.


LCpl Devyn W. Watkins, USMC
Quantico, Va.

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JEANNINE MILLS

Maj Tom Brinegar, USMC (Ret), helps his dad, Col Richard L. Brinegar, USMC (Ret) prepare for a home celebration of the Marine Corps Birthday on Nov. 11, 2021.

In the Highest Tradition of the United States Marine Corps

Maj Tom Brinegar, USMC (Ret), prepared his father's uniform for a home celebration of the Marine Corps' 246th Birthday. His father, Col Richard L. Brinegar, USMC (Ret), who had a 30-year career, has late-onset Alzheimer's, and while his son helped him get his uniform together, it is evident from the photo taken covertly by Col Brinegar's daughter, Jeannine Mills, that he clearly was mentally aware of the event taking place and perhaps even recalling a glimpse into his own past if only momentarily.

Maj Brinegar noted that his father stood as tall as he'd ever seen him at past celebrations and promotions, looking confident and proud as always. Col Brinegar attended the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md., and graduated in 1958. He now resides in Rhode Island. *Semper Fidelis, Marine.*

Submitted by Steve Fasching
Carlsbad, Calif.

Two Great *Leatherneck* Articles

I always read *Leatherneck* from stern to stern and our true-life stories are outstanding. The story, "Pushing the Boundaries: Marine Astronauts Nicole [continued on page 68]"



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FEBRUARY 2022 / LEATHERNECK 7

In Every Clime and Place

Compiled by Sara W. Bock

LAMAR, COLO.

Ahead of Norwegian Exercise, Cold Weather, Altitude Training Helps Marines Acclimate

During the month of November 2021, late autumn winds rushed down from the Rocky Mountains, passed steep plateaus and sifted through deep canyons before settling on the great plains of Colorado. These untamed plains, inhabited only by wildlife adapting to the soon-to-come winter, would shortly be the training grounds for aircraft and personnel looking to make the very same adaptations—the Marines of Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron (HMLA) 269.

“This Colorado detachment is setting us up for success when we go to [Exercise] Cold Response and operate in Norway,” said Captain Reilly Costello, an AH-1Z Viper pilot with HMLA-269. “It won’t be as cold here as it is likely to be in Norway, but it will at least give us some experience so when we get to Norway, we’re not surprised by what we see there.”

Cold Response is an upcoming Norwegian Joint Headquarters-sponsored

exercise with the goal to train in a realistic, cold-weather environment. It will provide U.S. forces, as well as servicemembers from 18 other nations, with the opportunity to strengthen interoperability with allies and partners, achieve an increased level of combat readiness and adjust for operations in austere conditions. In preparation for Cold Response, participating units prioritized training in locations like Colorado to ensure ample preparation for the Norwegian climate.

In addition to adapting to cold weather conditions, the Marines of HMLA-269 also needed to adjust to a drastic change in elevation—a difference of nearly 4,000 feet from what they are accustomed to in North Carolina. For the aircraft, the altitude changes meant adjustments in support capabilities, weight capacities, fuel usage and more.

“The altitude is something we are not used to operating in, flying around sea level at home,” said Costello. “This was definitely good training for cold-weather operations at [high] altitude and learning about the considerations you have to take

into account when you’re planning a flight or planning a mission.”

Eastern North Carolina is mostly flat, but Colorado provided an entirely new dimension of terrain feature. From mountains to canyons, the environment provided unique training opportunities for the pilots and aircrew of HMLA-269.

“We need to see different environments and different terrain in order to better prepare ourselves for the wide breadth of situations we might be put into when we go on a deployment,” said Costello. “This was a little bit different in terms of the operating areas we work in because it wasn’t just necessarily mountains, it was canyons and plateaus that we were flying around.”

While in Colorado, HMLA-269 established three separate areas of operation to train in the concept of expeditionary advanced base operations (EABO). Transitioning from these three areas reflected a modernized version of the Pacific island-hopping campaigns of World War II.

“EABO means you are operating away from your home base, maybe two or three



LCPL ELIAS PIMENTEL, USMC

An AH-1Z Viper and two UH-1Y Venom helicopters assigned to HMLA-269 fly over Lamar, Colo, Nov. 12, 2021. The squadron’s Marines trained in a cold weather, high altitude environment in preparation for an upcoming training exercise in Norway.

operating areas away from where you would have your main supply point,” said Costello. “The intent of EABO is to spend long periods away from what you would call home in order to advance your capabilities or project the ability to influence something farther away from where you normally would.”

The largest component of HMLA-269’s EABO training mission was establishing and operating a forward arming and refueling point (FARP). With the support of Marines from Marine Wing Support Squadrons 271, 272 and 273, HMLA-269 Marines were able to rapidly refuel and arm their aircraft in a distant field environment.

“[The FARP] is a spot where some logistical elements are set up to provide ordnance and fuel,” said Costello. “It extends our range and enables us to turn around sorties much faster and be closer to the front, vice having to transit back and be limited by our combat radius.”

However, practicing and implementing the concepts of EABO with the use of a FARP did not come without obstacles.

“There was some friction,” said Costello. “But I think that’s to be expected based on the fact that even the EABO manual is still not necessarily doctrine yet; it’s tentative.”

With obstacles come learning opportunities, and the Marines of HMLA-269 are optimistic about future EABO implementation.

“Learning has occurred for sure,” said Costello. “Even though there were some friction points, I think you still gain experience and learn lessons from that to come back better the next time we do something along these lines.”

The combined efforts of every Marine in HMLA-269 and supporting units ensured that their deployment for training to Colorado greatly aided in preparing them for 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing’s upcoming deployment to Norway. With the lessons they learned, HMLA-269 continues to maintain the level of readiness the nation expects of them in support of worldwide operations.

L/Cpl Elias Pimentel, USMC

RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL U.S. Marine, Naval Officers Take Part In Brazilian-Led Exercise Dragão

Marines and Sailors with U.S. Marine Corps Forces, South, and U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet conducted multiple engagements with the Brazilian Navy and Marines in support of the Brazilian Joint Exercise Dragão in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Oct. 29-Nov. 5, 2021.

Dragão is a biannual joint Brazilian exercise focused on maritime security



SGT CAMILA MELENDEZ, USMC

Brazilian sailors conduct operations in a ship-to-shore connector alongside the Brazilian naval vessel NAM *Atlântico* in support of the Brazilian Joint Exercise Dragão, Nov. 2, 2021. U.S. Marines were on board the vessel during the exercise, where they conducted integrated planning with their Brazilian counterparts.

and sea control. It involves planning and missions across the range of military operations focused on expeditionary employment from ship to shore.

“Dragão is a key event to integrate our naval forces and expand our ability to synchronize operations and intelligence in the maritime domain,” said Commander Thiago Lopes de Silva, Brazilian liaison officer to U.S. Marine Corps Forces, South. “Having U.S. Marines integrated into this exercise goes to show how deep our partnership is and how we both teach each other new approaches to be successful in today’s operating environment.”

This exchange focused on expeditionary operations and provided a venue to expand key professional relationships and subject matter expert exchanges. This supports concepts for maritime interoperability and seeks to build a coalition of allies and part-

ners with similar standard operating procedures who can effectively come together to address maritime security during a crisis or contingency in the South Atlantic.

The event began with a series of key leader engagements at the Brazilian Marine Amphibious Division base in Rio de Janeiro. The U.S. briefed topics to include the current U.S. Marine Corps Force Design plans and the concept of expeditionary advanced base operations (EABO). Force Design is the Commandant’s strategic direction and vision of the Marine Corps as a naval expeditionary force that is trained, organized and equipped to deter malign behavior, fight inside a near-peer adversary’s weapons engagement zone, and facilitate maritime freedom of movement and sea control in support of fleet operations and the joint force.

The Brazilian Navy and Marine Corps

briefed topics such as the modernization of their expeditionary forces, future maritime ISR (intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance) employment, and Brazil's "Blue Amazon" concept, which is designed to ensure security and stability in the South Atlantic.

Following the period ashore, exchange planners embarked on the Brazilian Navy's flagship vessel, Navio-Aeródromo Multipropósito (NAM) *Atlântico*, which is similar to the U.S. *America*-class amphibious assault ships, where they conducted integrated exercise planning alongside their Brazilian Navy and Marine counterparts. In addition to conducting information preparation of the battlespace, integrated amphibious planning, ISR and simulated precision strikes from a maritime platform, they continued to develop key professional relationships.

"This maritime interoperability has significant implications for threat actors in the regions," said Lieutenant Colonel Michael Aubry, the lead U.S. Marine participant for the engagement. "Not only do these threat actors have to worry about an incredibly capable and proficient Brazilian force, they also have to address what allies and partners are aboard and what capabilities are integrated into the multinational team.

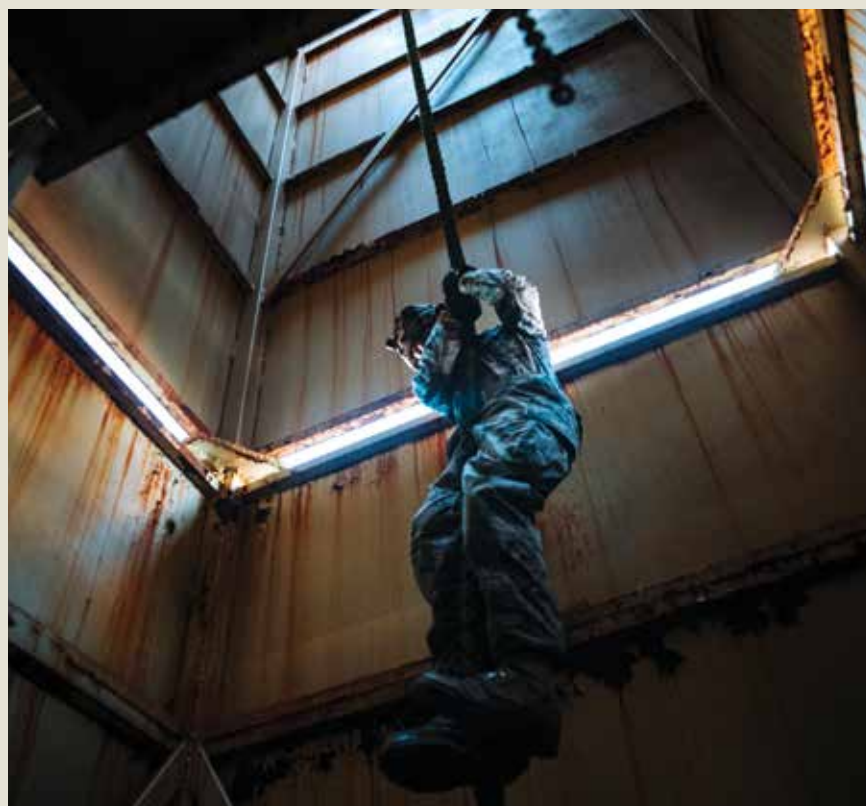
Exchanges between U.S. and Brazilian forces aboard ship are not uncommon. This exchange expanded on relationships and concepts built a year ago when U.S. Marines participated in a Brazilian Navy maritime planning engagement aboard a Brazilian ship to exchange best practices, increase interoperability and develop enduring touchpoints to grow the professional knowledge of both forces. Most recently, Brazilian allies embarked on USS *Hershel "Woody" Williams* (ESB-4) off the coast of Africa in August 2021. In 2019, Brazilians integrated into maritime operations aboard USS *Wasp* (LHD-1) to develop multinational standard operating procedures for humanitarian assistance and disaster response efforts.

"Although COVID-19 has limited the exchanges over the last two years, there is a clear desire and plan to increase these exchange opportunities," said Major Ricardo Moreira, USMC, who participated in the exchange. "The value of embarking forces on each other's ships cannot be overstated and the impact on overall maritime security and strategic competition is significant."

As Brazil spearheads maritime security in the South Atlantic, exercises such as Dragão serve a fundamental role in building the sea control and maritime security capabilities of the professional naval force.

Maj Thomas Perna, USMC

BUTLERVILLE, IND.



LCPL JACQUELINE ARRE, USMC

LCpl Breydon Santos, a combat engineer with Mobility Assault Co, 2nd Combat Engineer Bn, 2ndMarDiv, participates in FRIES training during Exercise Bold Quest at Muscatatuck Urban Training Center, Ind., Nov. 4, 2021.



LCPL JACQUELINE ARRE, USMC



LCPL JACQUELINE ARRE, USMC

Above: Cpl Julie-Anne Cail, Corps of Royal Canadian Engineers, and LCpl Alex Roley, USMC, run through tactical concealment preparations during the final training event of Exercise Bold Quest, Nov. 16, 2021.

Left: Marines with Mobility Assault Co, 2nd Combat Engineer Bn, 2ndMarDiv, and Canadian soldiers with 2 Combat Engineer Regiment, 2 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group, 4th Canadian Division patrol through an urban area during the final training event of Exercise Bold Quest, Nov. 16, 2021.



LCPL JACQUELINE ARRE, USMC

Bold Quest: U.S., Canadian Troops Train for Future Missions

Marines from various units across 2nd Marine Division, U.S. soldiers, and members of the Corps of Royal Canadian Engineers took part in Exercise Bold Quest 21.2 at Muscatatuck Urban Training Center near Butlerville, Ind., during November 2021. The exercise, a joint and multinational operational assessment and demonstration, was designed to improve technical and procedural tactical-level sensor-to-shooter interoperability. Participating servicemembers utilized innovative equipment, conducted reconnaissance patrols, urban operations training and practiced employing the Fast Rope Insertion Extraction System (FRIES).

Cpl Alex Jackson, a combat engineer with Mobility Assault Co, 2nd Combat Engineer Bn, 2ndMarDiv, throws an M-18 smoke grenade during Exercise Bold Quest at Muscatatuck Urban Training Center, Ind., Nov. 16, 2021.

JAPAN

Marines, Sailors Rehearse Maritime Strikes in Pacific

U.S. forces with 1st Marine Aircraft Wing and the U.S. Navy's 7th Fleet conducted a joint rehearsal of tactics and simulated strikes off the coast of Okinawa, Japan, Nov. 19, 2021. Between the two services, the participating aircraft platforms included the F/A-18 (C, E, and F variants), E-2D and KC-130J.

The joint planning for the rehearsal took place over a six-day time period with planners coordinating their efforts from three separate locations in the Indo-Pacific: Okinawa, mainland Japan and aboard USS *Carl Vinson* (CVN-70).

"This training offered a vital opportunity to practice lethal maritime actions with elements of the Navy and Marine Corps operating against a peer adversary," said Lieutenant Colonel Jeremy Siegel, current operations officer for 1st MAW and lead planner for the exercise. "This was extremely valuable because it allowed us to further refine our tactics, techniques and procedures for carrying out joint maritime strikes, and it also provided us the opportunity to practice command and control of a diverse organizational structure. Through events like these, we are able to establish a repeatable framework that can be applied to similar actions in the future."

U.S. forces in the Indo-Pacific routinely



PO2 JONTEIL JOHNSON, USN

Sailors load ordnance onto an EA-18A Growler assigned to the Navy's Electronic Attack Squadron 136 on the flight deck of USS *Carl Vinson* (CVN-70) in the Philippine Sea, Nov. 19, 2021. U.S. forces with 1st MAW and the U.S. Navy's 7th Fleet conducted a large-scale joint rehearsal of tactics and simulated strikes on naval targets off the coast of Okinawa, Japan.

train and rehearse maritime mission sets in order to maintain readiness to carry out a wide range of operational tasks in a region characterized by vast oceans, seas and waterways.

"The U.S. Navy is committed to consistent forward presence in the Indo-Pacific region," said Rear Admiral Dan Martin, USN, Commander, Carrier Strike Group One. "As part of the larger U.S. Joint Force and alongside our allies and partners, our

strategy is simple—develop and maintain warfighting capabilities, readiness and sustainment necessary to guarantee freedom in the maritime domain. We train and rehearse so that, if necessary, we can act in the global community's interest in upholding the rules-based international order that has ensured the sovereignty and prosperity of all nations."

Capt Marco Valenzuela, USMC



SGT BOOKER THOMAS, USMC

Aircrew Marines with Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 112 conduct pre-flight checks on F/A-18C Hornet aircraft at MCAS Iwakuni, Japan, Nov. 18, 2021. The squadron was one of numerous 1st MAW units that participated in a joint rehearsal off the coast of Okinawa, Japan.

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Story and photos by Sgt Paul L. Thompson, USMC

The history of the Corps overflows with accounts of hard-fought battles in which Marines struggled for every foot of ground they took. Perhaps the taking of Hue City was not the biggest campaign ever fought but the victory has earned its place along with other valiant engagements recorded in the Corps' history books.

To single out any one battalion, company, or man would be unfair. Each man, fire team and platoon fought the same, room-to-room, house-to-house, street-to-street war. In some cases, it was a duel between individuals. A fast trigger finger often meant the difference between who lived or died. Sometimes

there were only seconds to fire when the enemy moved past a window or turned down an alley. And then you hoped that the next time you passed a window or ran down an alley, the enemy would not be waiting for you.

The city of Hue is not built like the typical Asian town. It is the old imperial capital of Vietnam, a mixture of Vietnamese and French, and for the most part it was built like a French city. It is actually two cities, separated by the Perfume River, so-called because of the sweet smell emanating from the river during the summer months. South of the river was the city's French colony. The north side of the city holds the Imperial Citadel, where the rulers of Vietnam held court around the turn of the century.



Below: A group of Marines wait for the word to go into action during the battle for Hue in Vietnam in early 1968.



The battle on the south side of the river can best be described as a company-size scrap. It was between the men of “Hotel” Company, 2nd Bn, 5th Marines, and the NVA troops holding the Vietnamese Hue Provincial Headquarters on Lei Loy Street, along the riverfront.

The 2/5 Marines began by working their way out of the Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) compound and into the Hue University area, little more than 100 yards away. A couple of days later 1st Bn, 5th Marines, and 1st Bn, 1st Marines, came into the city, along with elements of other units. These units formed the Marines’ main fighting force in the city.

The battle on the south side of the river can best be described as a company-size scrap. It was between the men of “Hotel” Company, 2nd Bn, 5th Marines, and the NVA troops holding the Vietnamese Hue Provincial Headquarters on Lei Loy Street, along the riverfront. After fighting house-to-house along the street, Co H Marines pulled up next to the headquarters building to evaluate their present situation and plan further action.

The enemy fought like a highly trained professional with his defense laid out in depth. Any Marine who helped to take the city will tell you the NVA is a very tough enemy. As the Marines awaited the word to move forward, one young private first class, Louis Denny, was informed he would remain in the rear. He would not take part in the attack on the headquarters. He had already been wounded twice that day.

Before the communists seized Hue, the city had barely felt the sting of the war. Now, most of the old homes, large stately structures, are scarred and bullet riddled. Some are little more than rubble. The Hue University, a modern college, was gutted by the fighting there. The Palace itself felt little of the damage, but the walls of the Citadel, which make up a good part of the city, resemble ancient ruins.

The enemy, mostly North Vietnamese Army (NVA) troops, came into the city on Jan. 31, 1968, during what was supposed to be a Lunar New Year truce. They captured major portions of the city, and by the next day were almost in complete control. That same day the men of the 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines, entered the city and joined the battle.

“The first time I got hit,” said the young Marine, “was with grenade frags, I think.” He wore a large field dressing on his neck to cover the wound. Even after PFC Denny was hit, he remained with his platoon; he didn’t want to leave. Denny added, “Later in the day, I was on the line again when an NVA sniper put a bullet in my helmet.” Pulling off his helmet, he showed the bullet hole and a large, ugly-looking red streak across the top of his forehead where the bullet had creased his

building and began fighting room to room. As the building was being secured, the Hotel Company gunny, Gunnery Sergeant Frank Thomas, and a number of Marines from the company began pulling the North Vietnamese flag off the flagpole outside the building. Seconds later the “Stars and Stripes” were raised. GySgt Thomas said, “I had been carrying that flag for a couple of days, just waiting to run it up in front of this building.”

Marines of Hotel Co, 2/5 raise the American flag over the Hue Provincial Headquarters after pulling down the NVA flag during a firefight.



While the gunny was still securing the rope, rounds began zipping in close to the flagpole and the Marines around it. The gunny yelled, “Take cover!” His words were unnecessary. The Marines around him were already looking for a place a little less in the open.

One Marine, looking for some cover, yelled to the others, “Look out, there are snipers dug in along the wall!” Only a few feet from the flagpole a cement wall formed the courtyard in front of the building. Along it, on the inside, were dug a number of sniper holes. Within seconds the Marines were walking toward the holes, firing their M16s as they went.

Minutes later six NVA, dead or dying, lay in the courtyard, their weapons stacked near their

**GySgt Frank Thomas said,
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run it up in front of this building.”
While the gunny was still securing
the rope, rounds began zipping in
close to the flagpole ...**

bodies. A voice screamed, “There’s another one over here! Help me!” Two Marines started toward the hole, again firing their M16s from the hip. As they fired, two hands came out of the hole. One of the enemy had chosen to surrender, rather than meet the same fate as the others. He was pulled by his outstretched hands from his fighting hole and taken near the flagpole to be searched. As two Marines searched him, more enemy fire was directed at the courtyard. They tied up their prisoner and dragged him to a safe place, then took cover.

The building, for the most part, was then secured and the rest of the company began to move in. The

Marines coming in were warned not to step in front of any of the windows. It soon became clear that the NVA had used the buildings as one of their main strongpoints and also as a headquarters. When they were forced to retreat, they left behind not only vast amounts of food and ammunition, but also their personal gear.

As the NVA packs, weapons, and field gear were collected, First Lieutenant Bill Moore, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines S-2, (Intelligence Officer) began going through the captured equipment. Lt Moore stated that, “When any enemy begins to leave his weapons and personal gear behind, he is on the run, and nothing can stop him.” He added, “This is one of

skull. With a smile, he added, “The NVA are damn good shots. I had heard someplace that they were not good marksmen. Well, I’m here to tell you different!”

As the Marines waited to take the building, an Ontos drove up and began pouring rounds into the building from its six 106 mm recoilless rifles. After the third round the NVA fired back with a small rocket, much like the ammo from the Corps’ 3.5 rocket launcher. The Ontos was put out of action; its crew was pulled to safety. Two of the crewmen had to be evacuated because of wounds.

Then, through a hole in a nearby wall, the Marines started their push. Against heavy fire they made their way into the



Above: A mechanical mule was used during the fighting to haul ammo and chow and to evacuate wounded Marines from danger areas.



Marines and Vietnamese soldiers pick their way back through the rubble of Hue after securing the Imperial City in a bitter house-to-house battle.



Cpl Richard R. Pfendler of Lima Co, 3/5, sits in the city's rubble while waiting for another push to start.

“These young Marines fighting in the city are better equipped and better trained than the NVA. Oh, the NVA is a good trooper, make no mistake, he’s damn good, but he still doesn’t hold a candle to any Marine.” MGySgt Jenaro Leucero

second time as the operations chief of a regiment. Ask him why he spends so much time in Vietnam, he will smile and say, “This is it, it’s where a Marine belongs. It’s what I have been trained to do all my life. I am just paying back the investment the Marine Corps has made in me.”

When asked about the fighting in the city, Lucero said, “The Marine Corps is kicking the NVA where it hurts the most. It’s only a matter of days now before he is done for.” Then he added, “These young Marines fighting in the city are better equipped and better trained than the NVA. Oh, the NVA is a good trooper, make no mistake, he’s damn good, but he still doesn’t hold a candle to any Marine. Besides that, he’s up against the two best regiments in the Corps, the 1st and the 5th.” MGySgt Lucero might be a little prejudiced. Every man likes to think his unit is the best. And there is a soft spot in Lucero’s heart for the 5th, with which he served in the Korean War as an automatic rifleman.

A little while later, dressed in his helmet and flak jacket and with an M16 under his arm, Lucero started to leave. “I just thought I’d kind of check with some of my troopers and see how they are doing,” he told us. When his job can spare him, Top Lucero spends as much time as he can in the companies and platoons with the junior enlisted men.

In another section of Hue, a jeep came around a corner with its tires screaming. It slid to a stop. The driver looked huge; he was badly in need of a shave, a shower and some sleep, but not necessarily in that order. Sitting on a tire with an M16 rifle laid over the jeep’s canvas top, was another Marine, smaller than the first. Their job was hauling wounded from the fighting back to the battalion aid station. The Marines

the biggest hauls we have made to date. I think we have him just about where we want him now.”

The captured gear was loaded on a truck and sent back to battalion headquarters. The building was secured, and the fight moved up the street, again room by painful room, house by house.

In another part of the city, another battle was going on at the same time. A battle of radio watches, map changes and hours upon hours without sleep. At 1st Bn, 1st Marines regimental headquarters, located in the mess hall of the MACV Compound, a rather large master gunnery sergeant, with a very sinister looking mustache, spends his time keeping the headquarters running smoothly. His name is Master Gunnery Sergeant Jenaro Lucero. He has only been in Vietnam a few months—this time. This is his third tour in Vietnam and his

were Sergeant Roland Garnsey, smaller of the two, and PFC Ken Schatra, the driver. Both were with Fox Co, 2nd Bn, 5th Marines. Their job of hauling wounded and bringing supplies up to the company was a dangerous task. Sgt Garnsey said, “As the platoons move forward, there are always a few snipers left behind. That’s one of the reasons we don’t pay much attention to the speed limits around here. We get to where we’re going and back as quickly as we can.”

PFC Schatra added, “When I first started driving this jeep, I didn’t know the city at all, but I learned in a big hurry.” He explained that a wrong turn could end in disaster. Schatra doesn’t like fighting in a city. “I’d much rather be in the rice paddies or the bush any day of the week,” he stated.

As the two jeep-driving Marines took a break, their company commander, Captain Michael Downs, came over

Leatherneck Writer and Photographer Reflects on His Experiences During the Battle of Hue City

Sergeant Paul L. Thompson was a *Leatherneck* combat correspondent when he covered the Battle of Hue City for the magazine. We recently spoke with him about that assignment and asked him for his thoughts about it now that more than 50 years have passed.

Book after book has now been published on Vietnam, the history of the country, the war and the many mistakes made. The one mistake that stands out for me is the fact that General Westmoreland and others believed Hue City was not a problem and could be dealt with quickly. It was believed by higher authority that no more than 2,000 communist soldiers were in the city. The Marines learned they were facing five times that number of enemy troops. Higher authority refused to believe the Marines with their boots on the ground. The Marines who were sent to Hue were experienced and very capable in the jungle. Marine commanders were reading textbooks on “Combat in Built Up Areas” as they were on their way to Hue City. The first Marines who arrived there were in for a shock. The difference between combat in the jungle and combat in a city is so very different. However, Marines learned quickly, sometimes by the mistakes they made.

I had a choice when the Tet Offensive began. I could have gone to Khe Sanh or Hue. I picked Hue because the Marine Corps had not fought in a city since Marines captured Seoul during the Korean War. On the fourth or

fifth day of battle I asked a medevac pilot if I could ride into Hue City with his helicopter. At first, he said no! I explained why I wanted to go to Hue City. He said if I wanted to go, I had to understand that it was a one-way trip. I could not change my mind. The helicopter was going in to pick up wounded. He could not bring me back out and leave a wounded Marine. I agreed. He grinned and said I was crazy. I made the trip in, the helicopter did a combat drop into the landing area, I burst out of the door as wounded Marines were being loaded. Within seconds that helicopter was on its way out. The rest of the month I was in Hue.”

Another note about Hue ... in a book I just read about Hue, the Imperial Throne Room was mentioned. It said that every North Vietnamese trooper who entered the Throne Room sat on that throne, and many had their photos taken. So, when I did, near the end of the battle, I was not the first to sit there and have my photo taken. The National Archives has that photo. For a long time, they offered a nice, framed copy of the photo, or a mouse pad, or coffee cups with that photo on it. I bought copies of the coffee mugs for my children. The photo is also used in the Marine Corps’ official history of Hue City. The photo caption with that publication says the Marine in the photo was a member of the 5th Marines. I was not a member of that great organization ... just *Leatherneck* magazine.



Leatherneck combat correspondent Sgt Paul L. Thompson sits on a throne in the palace in the old city of Hue in 1968.

and sat in the jeep, trying to keep out of the ever-present rain. He took off his helmet and rubbed the dark red line made by the band in the helmet.

“My company is doing one hell of a job,” he commented. Not all of the men in his company had come into the city with combat experience. Some had just joined the company and this was their first battle. “I don’t think I’ll ever get over the way these men act under fire. This is their first time and they go about it like hard, seasoned troops. An officer could ask no more from his men than I have received.”

But the captain’s few moments of rest ended when one of his two radio operators handed him the handset to a PRC-25 radio. The captain listened for a few seconds then handed the set back. He replaced his helmet on his head and told the other radio operator, the one in contact with his platoons, “Platoon commanders up!” There was another room-to-room, house-to-house street to be taken by the men of Fox Company 2/5.

Across the Perfume River, Marines of 1/5 were fighting for the moats and walls of the Imperial City. And, if it were possible, the fighting on the north side of the river was more

of the Citadel wall, which surrounded the inner city and the moated and walled palace.

The men of 1/5 fought elements of the 802nd, 804th and the K-4B NVA main force battalions, all well-trained and well-led troops. Staff Sergeant James Monroe was given the job of securing a vantage point, a tower, on the wall itself.

Monroe said, “We started about 3:30 in the morning and were told that we had two buildings to secure before we would be able to reach the tower.” He went on to say that they met no opposition at all in either of the two buildings or in the tower itself. “I guess we sort of caught the NVA napping, which was a great help.” He added that as soon as first light came so did NVA sniper fire along with a couple of rockets. “We did a little shooting of our own,” said Monroe. “We got 15 of them by body count from up in the tower.” After that one vantage point was taken, the NVA’s position along

the wall began to crumble little by little.

The Marine Corps was not the only unit fighting on the north side of the river. The South Vietnamese Army was also doing its share. One unit, a reconnaissance company of the

South Vietnamese Army’s First Division, was attached to 1/5. With them was an advisor, Warrant Officer Terry J. Egan of the Australian Army. Egan said of the two units, “Between my ‘mates’ and the Marines, the bloody NVA have their hands full. We’ve been teaching old Charlie a thing or two.” The 1/5 Marines’ battalion command post was guarded, in part, by the ARVN Recon Company. And when they were not busy guarding the command post, WO Egan and his “mates” were busy scouting the streets in which both units were working. They also had the job of clearing tunnels the NVA had dug in the area, a job which is just about as dirty as any you can find.

In the next few days, the fighting was mostly one-sided. The NVA could no longer hold the Citadel. As the Marines made their final push, they came to within a hundred yards of the palace wall. And then, with the help of a tank commanded by Sgt Roy H. Jones of “Alpha” Co, 1st Tanks, a hole was punched in the palace wall. The Marine unit along the wall was “Lima” Co, 3/5, attached for the operation to 1/5. As they watched the wall from their positions, the ARVN forces were allowed to pass through. The honor of taking the

palace was given to them. They were led in by the famous Hoc Bao, or Black Panther Company. The 2nd Bn, 3rd ARVN Regiment, followed. The Hoc Bao streamed up to the hole in the wall and, as the first man passed through, a cheer went up from both Marines and the Vietnamese. The battle, except for a few scattered enemy, was over. It had lasted, for all practical purposes, for 25 days. Enemy losses had numbered in the thousands.

The battle for Hue is now a part of Marine Corps history. And for the men who fought there, no other words are more fitting than the traditional, “Well Done!” 🇺🇸

The battalion commander of 1/5 is Maj R.H. Thompson. His hours were long, and he carried great responsibility that goes with the command. Maj Thompson is called “The Old Man” by his troops and they use the term with respect.



Maj R.H. Thompson commanded 1/5 when the battalion drove elements of the North Vietnamese 802nd, 804th and K-4B NVA main forces from the Imperial City of Hue.

difficult than that on the south. The homes on the river’s south side are closer together. So are the streets, providing more places for the enemy to hide.

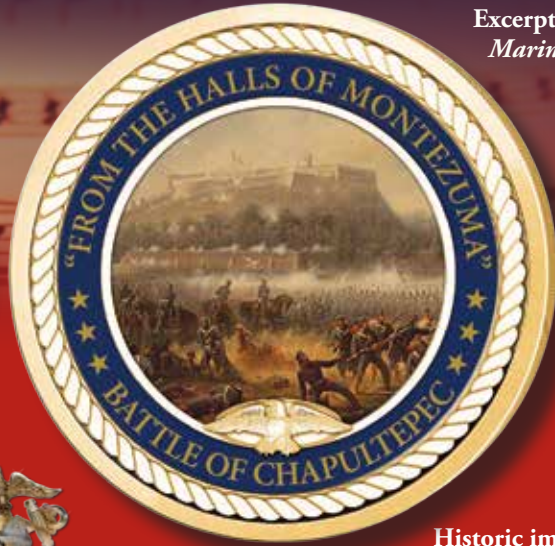
The battalion commander of 1/5 is Maj R.H. Thompson. His hours were long, and he carried great responsibility that goes with the command. Major Thompson is called “The Old Man” by his troops and they use the term with respect. On the other side of the river, the men of 1/5 were fighting for every foot of ground they took, and Maj Thompson was the man who decided when and where the men in his battalion would strike next. The 1/5 Marines already had taken part

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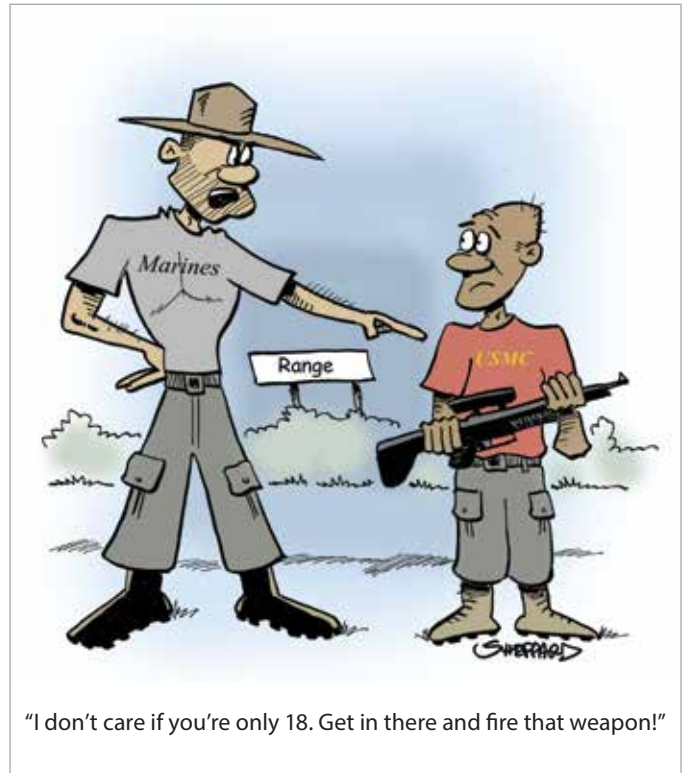
State _____ Zip _____

911005-E50202

Leatherneck Laffs



"Are you sure there is no way I can do this online at home, sir?"



"I don't care if you're only 18. Get in there and fire that weapon!"



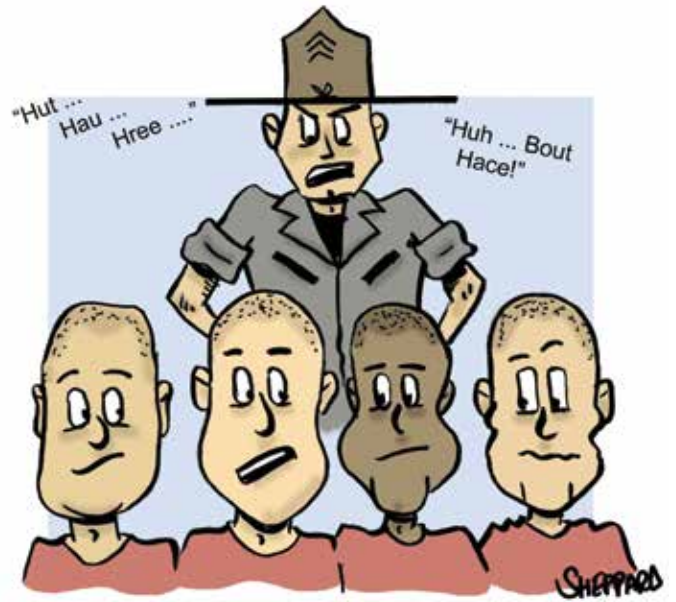
"I got a letter from Mom. She said, 'Bless your heart.'"



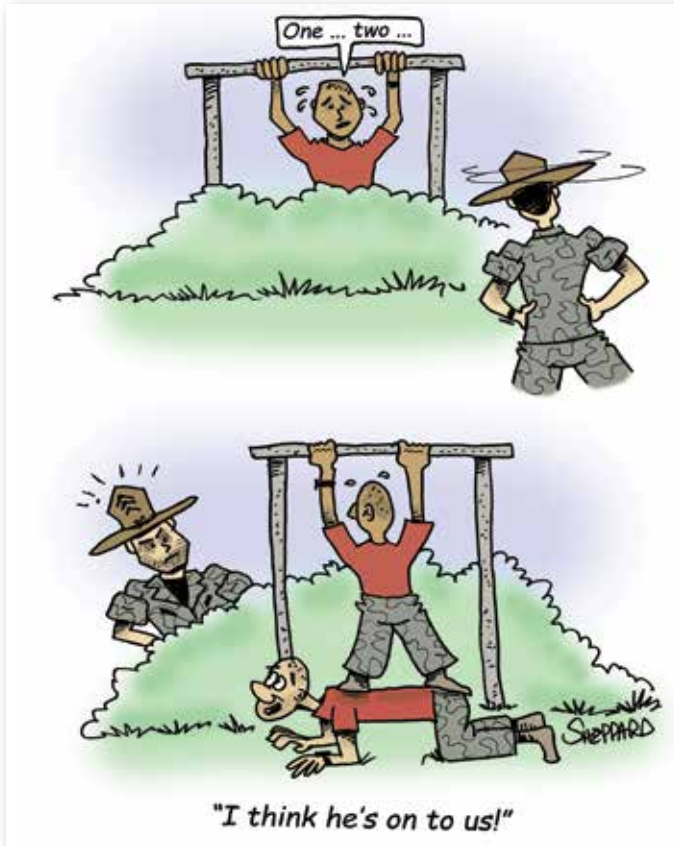
"Gee, recruits, it seems you may have made a mistake on that last movement. Let us see if we can do better next time so I don't get upset."



The time you met your new life coaches.



"What language is that?"



"I think he's on to us!"



"I don't want to become a cliché."



Above: Uelses clears the bar in his successful attempt at the indoor pole vault record at the Millrose Games. The actual jump was 16 feet, 1/4 inch. (Photo courtesy of Marine Corps History Division)

Right: After setting the indoor record at the Millrose Games, Uelses competed in the Boston Athletic Association indoor track meet the following night. He vaulted 16 feet, 3/4 inch and broke his own record from the night before.



COURTESY OF MARINE CORPS HISTORY DIVISION

Setting the Bar

Marine Pole Vaulter Soared to New Heights With Record-Breaking Vault

By Kater Miller

Feb. 2, 1962, in front of a sellout crowd of 15,000 people in Madison Square Garden, Marine Corporal John Uelses prepares for a pole vault attempt. The bar is set at 16 feet, 1/4 inch. If successful, his jump will be the first time anyone has ever cleared 16 feet. Uelses just missed his first attempt at this height. Another Marine competitor at the games, Lieutenant Aubrey Dooley, thinks that this attempt will make history. Uelses starts running toward the bar. He plants his fiberglass pole in the box at the end of

the runway. His pole bends deeply, and it goes, inverted into the sky. Uelses rides the whipsaw action of the flexible pole to push him up, and he uses his arms to push over the bar. He sails over feet first, then throws his hands up to avoid touching and rotates backward. He lands on his feet, then rolls onto his back in the sawdust pit.

At that moment, John Uelses officially became the first athlete to successfully clear the 16-foot barrier—a barrier similar to the sub-four-minute mile. The crowd roared with approval. In the excitement that followed, a crowd of well-wishers and reporters rushed forward and knocked

down the bar before it could be officially measured again after the jump—a standing rule of the sanctioning body, the Amateur Athletic Union. Luckily for Uelses, the president of the Amateur Athletic Union allowed the pre-jump measurement to count. The following night at the Boston Athletic Association indoor track meet, Uelses beat his own record, clearing the bar at 16 feet, 3/4 inch, and this time, the officials took the second measurement.

Born Hans Joachim Feigenbaum in pre-war Germany, he immigrated to the United States after the death of his

Right: LCpl Uelses receiving a Letter of Commendation from LtGen Edward Snedeker, Commanding General, Marine Corps Schools, Quantico. LtGen Snedeker invited the press onto the base to interview Uelses regularly.

Below: Uelses holds his fiberglass pole in a publicity photograph. His use of the fiberglass pole to break the indoor world record created some controversy, but virtually every vaulter adopted fiberglass by the end of the decade.



COURTESY OF MARINE CORPS HISTORY DIVISION

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Right: LTJG Uelses was a radar intercept officer in F-4 Phantoms and F-14 Tomcats after graduating from La Salle and being commissioned in the Navy.

father to live with his aunt and uncle in Miami, Fla. He took their last name and became John Hans Uelses. In high school, he was a gifted athlete but did not pick up pole vaulting until his senior year. He showed enough athletic talent to receive scholarship offers to several schools and enrolled in the University of Alabama. Uelses showed promise in several track and field disciplines, including sprinting, hurdles and the javelin. In 1958, he had the best javelin throw in the Southeastern Conference, throwing 205 feet, 5 1/2 inches. Uelses' prowess in track and field earned national press coverage for his athleticism. As a 20-year-old sophomore, his goal was to break the 16-foot pole vault barrier.

Uelses decided to quit the University of Alabama after his sophomore year. He believed that the football program received too much attention, leaving track and field to languish. During the Cold War, the Marine Corps was always looking for talented athletes to fill its ranks



COURTESY OF MARINE CORPS HISTORY DIVISION

and promised him that he could continue his track and field career by representing the Marine Corps. In the summer of 1958, he went to boot camp at Parris Island and spent the next four years in uniform representing the Marines domestically and the United States internationally.

The fiberglass pole that Cpl Uelses used when he broke the 16-foot barrier caused some controversy. Pole vaulters had used

steel or aluminum poles to break all but one record to that point. He was not the first pole vaulter to use a fiberglass pole. Thousands of them had been manufactured and sold in the United States throughout the 1950s. In fact, when Olympian and U.S. Marine Bob Mathias won his second gold medal in the decathlon in Helsinki in the 1952 Olympics, he had used a fiberglass pole; however, many vaulters feared



Marine pole vaulter Dave Tork broke the world record less than a month after Uelses set it at the Mt. San Antonio Relays. (*Leatherneck* file photo)



COURTESY OF MARINE CORPS HISTORY DIVISION

Uelses completes a jump in an undated photograph. At the time, pole vaulters had to land on their feet in sawdust pits.

fiberglass because it bent so much further than aluminum or steel poles during the jump. At the time, fiberglass poles would shatter catastrophically, and many athletes considered them to be a dangerous novelty. Additionally, the technique for using fiberglass varied greatly from the use of the more rigid steel and aluminum poles. The athletes using the new material invented new techniques.

In 1961, when George Davies of Oklahoma State University used a fiberglass pole to break the pole vault world record, interest in the new material exploded. American vaulters had been toying with fiberglass through the 1950s, but in the fall of 1961, even Europeans started to train with fiberglass in large numbers. There was some pushback from the international community, where the Russians complained that it was too expensive for the working-class to use and that Russia was developing athletes, not technologies. Davies learned his new technique from another OSU student, Aubrey Dooley. Davies's record caused Cpl Uelses to redouble his efforts to learn to control the fiberglass pole. He would learn through trial and error and from

advice from a new Marine who arrived at Quantico in June 1961—Lt Aubrey Dooley.

Though Uelses was a tremendous athlete, he was not even the best pole vaulter in the Marine Corps through 1961. There were four standouts who were internationally ranked. Lt Bob Gutowsky, vaulting for Occidental College, broke the outdoor pole vault record in the spring of 1957, only weeks before reporting to Platoon Leaders Class that summer. He recorded the highest all-time vault using a steel pole. Gutowski won silver at the 1956 Melbourne Olympics but was tragically killed by a drunk driver at Camp Pendleton in 1960. Lt Mel Schwarz, a graduate of the University of Maryland, also competed for the Marine Corps. He trained for three hours a day and was another Olympic hopeful in 1960. In 1960, he was one of only 15 people who could clear 15 feet on the pole vault. Lt Dave Tork, a West Virginia graduate, competed for the Marine Corps as well. Additionally, there was the Oklahoma State University graduate, Lt Aubrey Dooley, who was a leading expert in the use of fiberglass poles. Though Uelses had completed some college classes, he was the only one of the superlative Marine Corps vaulters who was not commissioned. Every one of the



COURTESY OF MARINE CORPS HISTORY DIVISION

Uelses on the runway at Butler Stadium in Quantico using a metal pole. He had to travel to the University of Maryland to practice during the winter months because unlike Quantico, they had an indoor facility.

Marines thought that they could be the one to jump 16 feet.

If every story needs controversy, it also needs an antagonist. Enter Don Bragg. After graduating from Villanova, Bragg joined the U.S. Army so that he could continue pole vaulting as an amateur, an important distinction for Olympic eligi-

bility. Bragg was larger than life, fed off attention, and nicknamed himself Tarzan. In 1960, Don Bragg held both the indoor and outdoor pole vault records and won a gold medal in the 1960 Olympic Games in Rome. In 1959 and 1960, Track & Field News ranked Don Bragg as the top pole vaulter in the world. As the fiberglass

**LEAVE THE GHOSTS
OF THE PAST BEHIND.**

**HELP IS JUST
A CLICK AWAY.**



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WHERE THINGS START TO GET BETTER.

Cpl Uelses prepares his fiberglass pole for travel outside of Larson Gymnasium at Quantico, Va. He would attach the pole to the outside of his car when he traveled to track meets on the East Coast.



COURTESY OF MARINE CORPS HISTORY DIVISION

Tex Maule, argued that fiberglass was not substantively different from bamboo poles, the athletes still had to train with the new implement, and the use of metal poles was an attempt to improve over bamboo and wood anyway. Maule concluded that fiberglass was a non-issue and that Uelses could have made the 16-foot jump with a bamboo pole if he had trained to do so.

In the next issue of *Sports Illustrated*, the letters to the editor section focused exclusively on the fiberglass poles. Most of the writers wrote that the fiberglass pole should be viewed favorably because the pole vaulter would still have to perfect the technique of the jump. In other words, it was not going to be a magic bullet. Much hesitancy centered around older pole vaulters who did not want to learn a new technique so late in their career. After all, the switch from hardwood poles, to bamboo, to steel, and to aluminum poles gave jumpers an advantage, so why not fiberglass too? Either adapt or become irrelevant.

Cpl Uelses's 16-foot 3/4 inch jump did not count for a world record because he made it indoors. He had to wait until the

poles became more prevalent, his ranking slipped all the way to 9th, falling behind Davis and Uelses. Though Bragg experimented with fiberglass poles, he believed that only steel or aluminum poles should count. He was tall and muscular and believed that vaulting should be left to the muscular athletes using their strength to push themselves over the bar. Using fiberglass was nothing short of catapulting, he reasoned, and changed the nature of the sport. He argued that fiberglass favored coordination, not strength. Like many pole vaulters of the day, he wanted to be the one to break the 16-foot barrier, and he was very close to doing it, but the fiberglass pole-using vaulters crushed his aspirations. He called it a gimmick, then later retired when he realized that the AAU was not going to outlaw the new pole.

In 1961, there were 21 Americans who

cleared the 15-foot mark. Twelve of them used fiberglass poles, including Cpl Uelses and Lt Tork. When Uelses broke the 16-foot barrier, Bragg was apoplectic with anger. He did everything from claiming that he taught his friend, Cpl Uelses, the techniques that allowed for the 16-foot jump, to accusing Uelses of cheating. He told every sports reporter who would listen how unhappy he was with the changing sport, and since drama sells, they were all too happy to put his words in print for years.

Bragg was not the only critic of fiberglass poles. The cover of the Feb. 26, 1962, issue of *Sports Illustrated* featured Uelses's portrait. The main point of the feature article, "He Could Do it on Bamboo," was to talk about the controversy of the new poles. The article's author,



COURTESY OF MARINE CORPS HISTORY DIVISION

John Uelses's undated press photo. His fame resulted in significant attention from the media including the Associated Press and United Press International in the winter and spring of 1962.

outdoor track season started to clear 16 feet for a world record. He entered the Santa Barbara Easter Relays and broke the outdoor record at 16 feet, 1/2 inch in front of a throng of cheering spectators. Lt Tork participated in the relays, coming just short of Uelses's mark. On March 31, 1962, Cpl Uelses held both the indoor and

the outdoor pole vault record—and held the records for just short of one month.

He became something of a celebrity. Reporters thronged to Quantico to talk to the young corporal who tried to preserve some sort of privacy. When the base arranged for reporters to talk to him, he complained that they would even try to follow him into the showers after practice. For a brief period in the spring of 1962, Uelses planned to attend Southern Illinois University to finish his degree. Local newspapers printed several articles about his visit there. Thousands of students went to the track to watch him practice. Track and field was in the zenith of its popularity.

In April 1962, less than a month after the Easter Relays, Lt Tork, representing the Camp Pendleton Marines, took to the runway at the Mount San Antonio College Relays and squeaked above Uelses's mark, clearing 16 feet, 2 inches. His record lasted a little longer; it was broken in June. Tork broke the indoor record in Toronto the following year, but his record only lasted 24 hours before it too was broken. Unlike Uelses, he did not hold both indoor and outdoor records at the same time. Once pole vaulters started figuring out the use of fiberglass poles, more and more athletes joined Uelses and Tork in the 16-footer club. Because they were in the front ranks

of the fiberglass users, they both thought they could reach 17 feet. American John Pennel crossed that mark in August 1963, but neither Marine was able to ever reach that height.

After completing his Marine Corps service, Cpl Uelses enrolled at La Salle University with two years of college athletics eligibility left. He won the 1964 Outdoor Individual Championship for pole vault with a 16-foot jump. At La Salle, he talked about how he had to train and go to class, but in the Marine Corps, he could just train and travel to competitions. Lt Tork took a job as a graduate assistant at Southern Illinois University, then with his alma mater, West Virginia University, and continued to chase the 17-foot jump in competition.

The Marine Corps took track and field seriously in the 1950s and 1960s, even hosting the Marine Corps Schools Relays at Quantico every year and inviting up to 1800 athletes and 90 organizations to compete. Track and field was very popular worldwide, and the Marines closing in on the 16-foot barrier garnered national coverage in print.

The recruitment of pole vaulters like Bob Gutowski, John Uelses, Dave Tork, Aubrey Dooley, and Mel Schwarz shows a legacy of sports in the Marine Corps

that should be remembered. Dave Tork attributed the camaraderie of the Marine Corps pole vaulters to their tremendous success. He said that competitors would often compare techniques and give one another advice.

These athletes joined the Marines at a perfect moment when the sport's popularity, improving technologies, and support from the Marine Corps allowed these Marines to flourish in the sport. For a brief period, Marines were the top pole vaulters in the world.

After Uelses finished college, he was commissioned as an ensign in the Navy and continued to soar to great heights, only now it was in an airplane.

After completing training as a naval flight officer, he was a radar intercept officer in the F-4 Phantom and the F-14 Tomcat and completed several combat tours in Vietnam.

Author's bio: Kater Miller is the outreach curator at the National Museum of the Marine Corps and has been working at the museum for 11 years. He is developing an interpretive plan for the Marine Corps Sports Gallery as part of the Final Phase expansion underway at the museum. He served in the Marine Corps from 2001-2005 as an aviation ordnanceman. 🇺🇸



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The RED DEVILS



USMC

Weary VMTB-232 aircrews walk away from their Grumman TBS-1 Avengers upon arrival at Kadena Airfield, Okinawa, during April 1945.

By Sgt Norman Kuhne, USMC

The Army was fighting its way south on Okinawa. Love Hill stood in the way of the 383rd Regiment. For several days the troops tried to storm the ridge but Japanese firmly entrenched on the top and on the south side of the hill beat back the attack.

Suddenly the troops saw a flight of bombers coming up from the south headed toward their lines. It was a strike of Marine and Navy TBMs out to dislodge the Japanese from the slope.

Ground support strikes normally are not flown toward friendly lines—there is too much danger of friendly fire. But this time a strike headed northward was the only way to get at the Japanese. Actually, the Army wasn't worried about damage from our airplanes because the strike was led by pilots of the famous Marine Red Devil squadron.

Leader of the strike, Captain James E. Nauss, of Albany, Minn., gunned his turkey in over the target area and wagged his wings. That was a dry run for target location. Ground radioed that he was right on the beam.

The second time that Nauss came over the target it was no dry run. The troops saw his plane plummet down and disappear below the crest of the ridge. They waited for him to reappear. Just when they were sure he had failed to pull out of his dive, the blue turkey zoomed up over the crest, followed a second later by a tremendous explosion.

Then the infantrymen saw the other TBMs come in toward them, dive down on the ridge and pull out as they dropped their bombs. They watched Lieutenant Fred Folino, of Cleveland, Ohio.

They watched Lt Edmund Gilligan, of New Orleans, La. They watched Lt James Godbold, of McComb, Miss. They watched more than a dozen planes unload their bombs and rockets. Then, when the strike was over, they pushed up the hill and through the debris to clear the Japanese from their positions.

That was just one of many such strikes the Red Devils flew in the last major Marine campaign of World War II, one of many campaigns for the pilots of VMTB-232. As VJ day came, the torpedo bombers were flying anti-sub patrol (ASP), looking for any Japanese undersea prowler that might be trying to strike a last lick against our shipping.

This gave VMTB-232 the distinction of being in action against the enemy both on Pearl Harbor day and VJ Day. It was at Ewa when the Japanese pulled their sneak attack and, like all Marine units there, it took a beating. In those days it was still known under its old designation as a dive bomber squadron, VMSB-232.

Firsts are routine to the Red Devils. Its ground echelon was the first aviation unit to hit the beach on Okinawa, landing on L+2. For the first 30 days of the operation, the ground force of 232 serviced its own squadron and three others, working around the clock under continual Japanese aerial bombardment and shell fire.

When the flight echelon came in from Ulithi a few weeks after L-day, the pilots started on the kind of a campaign that the flyers described as a bomber pilot's dream.

Originally the squadron was slated for the routine job of anti-sub patrol (ASP) of the surrounding waters. In fact, its commanding officer, Major Allan L. Feldmeier, of Little Falls, N.Y., had been designated to head all ASP activities in the Ryukyus. But within a few days it was assigned the primary

job of supporting the ground forces. This latter assignment gave the Red Devils chores never before equaled for variety.

Day and night the squadron flew bombing and rocket strikes in support of Marines and Army infantry. It supplied the ground forces via parachute drops. It sprayed the island with DDT to wipe out disease-carrying insects. It dropped propaganda leaflets over the enemy lines. It delivered hot coffee and doughnuts to Marines on the front lines by parachute.

One day VMTB-232 was called on to perform an unusual assignment. It flew over the enemy lines with a note to the Japanese commanding general on Okinawa, calling on him to surrender. Then its observers waited until they saw the Japanese retrieve the message.

The following day the Red Devils loaded up with 25 civilian correspondents and flew out to see if the Japanese had posted the pre-arranged signals to indicate capitulation. Instead of the markers, the fliers were greeted by "ack-ack."

Although designated a torpedo bomber squadron, 232 did about everything on Okinawa except use torpedoes. One job much appreciated by the infantry was its nightly bombing and heckling missions against Japanese artillery positions. For a while night firing artillery had been raising hell with our ground forces. VMTB-232 was called on to do something about it.

Every night the torpedo bombers would fly patrol over the Japanese lines. When a Japanese artillery piece would open up, the flash in the dark was all that the pilots had in the way of target designation. They would bore in with bombs and rockets. Pretty soon the enemy got the word that night artillery fire was not too healthy, and they began to knock it off. All in all, the night heckling missions by the squadron are credited with silencing more than half the night artillery fire by the Japanese.

Besides knocking out enemy artillery, the Red Devils helped our own big guns dish it out against the Japanese. On May 5, Lt Godbold was flying observation in the vicinity of Yonabaru. Ground control contacted the flyer and asked for help in locating some Japanese gun positions believed to be concealed in caves near Tombstone Ridge.

Godbold flew in over the target area. After several flights, his observations led him to believe the Japanese piece was in a certain cave. He relayed the word to warships which were standing offshore to shell the position.

After each salvo, Godbold gave corrections to the ships and to 3rd Corps artillery which had joined in the show. Within a short time, the target had been blasted out of existence, the pilot helping out by unloading his bombs and rockets on the cave entrances.

When the big rains came on Okinawa, the 1st and 6th Divisions were fighting on the Naha-Shuri line and driving south. Roads were hip-deep in mud and many supplies had to be dropped from planes. The Red Devils did the bulk of the para-pack drops.

Typical of the aerial supply work was a flight over the 6th Division lines in the vicinity of Itoman led by Capt Floyd G. Phillips, of Aurora, Ill. A unit of the 6th was pinned down in a small sector so that the flyers had a target area of only 150 feet square in which to drop their bundles.

On their first mission the Red Devils put 13 out of 16 bundles in the target. On their second mission they got 23 out of 24 bundles into the target area. A wide variety of supplies were dropped including food, ammunition, water, radios, telephone wire, medical supplies and other combat gear.

All in all, the Red Devils got 96 percent of their supply chutes into the target areas so they could be recovered. During its drive

to the southern end of the island, the 1st Division got the bulk of its supplies for several days via 232. For its aerial supply work during the period May 20 to June 9, the squadron received a letter of commendation.

In its long career the Red Devil squadron has earned many commendations and decorations.

The squadron was first commissioned as Bombing Squadron 4 (VB-4M) in July 1933 and replaced the disbanded Fighting Squadron 10 (VF-10M). It was known as VB-4M in naval aviation circles until redesignated as Marine Bomber Squadron 2 (VMB-2) in July 1937. VMB-2 was a lower echelon of Aircraft 2 (later designated 2 MAG and MAG 21) and moved with all its personnel with that unit from Naval Air Station San Diego, to Ewa, where it stayed until August 1942.

The squadron's roster of commanding officers is studded with names well known in Marine aviation circles. There were Capt F.D. Weir, Maj Hayne D. Boyden, Capt P.E. Conradt, Maj Ira L. Kimes, Lieutenant Colonel Richard C. Mangrum, Lt Henry W. Hise, Maj Rolland F. Smith, Maj Menard Doswell, and currently Maj Feldmeier. (Rank shown is as of time each was squadron CO.)

It was under LtCol Mangrum on the 'Canal that the Red Devils wrote the first important chapter of their history in WW II. They arrived on Guadalcanal in August 1942 to fly ABP and reconnaissance. On the 28th of that month they got their first big

bag when they spotted four Japanese cruisers near St. Isabella Island. They got three of them.

On Sept. 2 the Japanese made one of their many attempts to reinforce their troops on Guadalcanal. The Red Devils spotted the landing attempt near Henderson Field, moved in and broke it up. On the 26th they smashed another Japanese landing attempt.

Meanwhile the campaign against Japanese shipping was continuing. On Sept. 15 they damaged a Japanese destroyer and got another the following day. On the 17th they spotted a Japanese task force off New Georgia and bagged a cruiser and two destroyers. They got hits on three more Japanese cans on the 19th and 20th, and four on the 24th.

October again found 232 concentrating on the sea lanes and Japanese shipping therein.

The first of the month they scored on four more cans, damaged three on the 3rd, hit a cruiser and two destroyers on Oct. 4.

They carried out a successful night attack against three Japanese cans on the 6th. Their last strike of this tour was on the 9th when they damaged four more destroyers. The following day they left for the States.

Arriving in November the squadron went to El Toro where it stayed until July 1943 when it again headed for the Pacific. Now it was known as VMTB-232, having been redesignated in June.

On Sept. 23 they flew the first strike of their second overseas assignment. Between then and the end of the month they got in seven missions against gun positions, camp areas, dumps, barges and other installations on Bougainville, Kolombongara and Choiseul.

During October the squadron operated from Henderson Field and flew 17 strikes on barges, supply dumps, ack-ack positions, airstrips and personnel bombing and strafing on Choiseul, Kolombongara, Bougainville and Ballale Island, Kara airstrip, Kahili airstrip, Ballale airstrip and Kieta.

Nov. 1 found the Red Devils in their now familiar role of ground support covering the landing of the 3rd Division in the Empress Augusta Bay area.



LtCol Richard C. Mangrum

USMC

Air support for the ground forces on Bougainville was a tough assignment because the heavy jungle obscured the targets and made briefing difficult. But the squadron did all right. It got lucky hits on two enemy blockhouses, using 2,000-pound bombs.

Later, the squadron got a commendation for its strike in support of the infantry on Hill 1111. Marines were able to move in and take the height within a half hour after the turkeys had finished their work.

After the rest in Sydney the squadron returned to the South Pacific and the end of the year found it operating from Munda, on New Georgia.

During January 1944, the Devils got in 11 strike missions against Japanese concentrations on Bougainville, Poperang Island, the lighthouse at Cape St. George, New Ireland and Tobera airfield, New Britain and shipping in Simpson Harbor and Keravia Bay.

On Jan. 14, a strike over Simpson Harbor led by Lt James L. White bagged five Japanese ships and three planes. Three days later another strike on the same port netted 15 hits on Japanese shipping with nine ships sunk and two enemy planes shot down.

Then came a rest in New Zealand.

By March 2, the Devils were back flying combat missions, this time from Piva airstrip on Bougainville. That month they got in 48 combat missions consisting of 927 flights. They bagged 10 ships and three barges.

During April, the squadron pounded enemy positions on New Britain and Bougainville and in May moved to Nissan in the Green Islands. The 15th of that month it moved to Emirau in the St. Mathias group. From there it flew 23 missions against Rabaul and other positions on New Britain and New Ireland.

The Devils had the distinction of flying the first bomber strike against Rabaul. The airfield was a formidable Japanese bastion in those days and the turkeys could expect interception from around 150 bogeys on every strike.

From June to October the squadron was back at Espiritu Santo in the New Hebrides, reorganizing and training replacements and checking out in the newer TBM-1Cs which were replacing the TBF-1Cs.

October found the Devils at Falalop Island, Ulithi, with the assignment of flying ASP to protect the fleet anchorage, recon flights and strikes against Yap. Eight strikes against that Japanese stronghold were flown in December.

VMTB-232 wound up 1944 with a credit ledger of 36 Japanese ships sunk, 23 Japanese ships damaged, one enemy midget submarine sunk and five Japanese planes shot down. Most of this score had been compiled when the South Pacific was no milk run and when the Japanese air force still had to be reckoned with.

Nor was Okinawa a milk run when the Red Devils moved in there in April 1945. This can be gathered from the fact that the 2nd Marine Air Wing alone bagged more than 500 bogeys in the Ryukyus.

The ground echelon found its work cut out for it on Okinawa as did the flight echelon. With bomb strikes alternating with para-pack drops, the ordnance department worked plenty of extra hours. Because the packs are of different size and shape from bombs, every chute drop meant a thorough going over of the bomb bays to see that everything checked out OK.

Once a flight of 28 Navy airplanes came in to fly an urgently needed strike in the Naha area. Ordnance of 232 got the job of loading them with bombs, rockets, and machine gun ammunition. They had the job out in an hour and a quarter.

Changing ground conditions complicated the job of aviation ordnance. Frequently the squadron would be notified to prepare for a strike loaded with 500-pound bombs. Then a changed tactical

situation would make it necessary for the load to be switched to 1,000-pounders or something else. In spite of changed loads and the fact that 232 frequently flew three or four strikes daily on short notice, ordnance had every flight ready to go on schedule.

Because there were no bomb disposal specialists on hand in the early confusion of the campaign, 232 ordnance frequently had the ticklish job of removing fused bombs which had failed to release from bomb bays. But the NCOs in charge of ordnance, Master Technical Sergeants Alfred Turner, of Natick, Mass.; A.D. Traxler, of Laird, Colo.; and C.R. Teegarden, of Boulder, Colo., are proudest of the fact that in spite of their work under pressure, they maintained a perfect safety record.

Pilots of 232 flew combat missions on an average of five days out of every seven. On nearly every flight the pilots were briefed in the air via radio from ground control. The tactical situation on the infantry front often was so fluid that briefings before takeoff would be outdated by the time the pilots got over the target.

Because the targets assigned to the Red Devils were frequently very small, the infantry would cooperate by firing white phosphorus shells to mark the area to be bombed. In an attempt to cross up our pilots, the Japanese would fire white phosphorous into our lines when they saw the turkeys overhead. VMTB-232 made no mistakes in its targets in spite of the Japanese attempts at deception.

The Devils made some of the closest ground support strikes flown on Okinawa. One strike was made against Japanese gun positions on Naha airfield while our patrols were on the strip. The Japanese were knocked out and the infantry moved in and took over.

While they were dishing it out to the Japanese, the Devils were taking some themselves. During the campaign 128 planes were damaged by enemy action, an average of five times for each TBM in the squadron. Seven planes had to be surveyed because of damage from enemy action, and two engine changes and 15 wing changes had to be made for the same reason.

All of this added up to plenty of work for Gunner Estes N. Ratliffe's engineering department but the ground crewmen were



Three Marine pilots with VMTB-232 stand before the unit's sign at an advance base in the South Pacific sometime in 1943 or 1944.

USMC

able to keep 20 out of 24 planes available for service at all times during the Okinawa operation.

Because supplies were lacking in the early phase of the campaign, Master Technical Sergeant W.V. White, noncommissioned officer in charge of the metalsmith and machine shop, had to make all his exhaust and generator studs out of Japanese bolts picked up at Kadena, the airfield from which the squadron operated.

When it was discovered that the TBM had a structural weakness in the tail wheel installation which was giving the pilots trouble in landing, MTechSgt Joseph Orosz, of Brackenridge, Pa., devised a method for strengthening the defective part.

An earlier discovery of the ground crewmen came in handy on Okinawa. At Ulithi the squadron had ordered some carbon tetrachloride. Their requisition was filled with another chemical by mistake. Knowing something about the properties of the chemical and not wanting to see it go to waste, Gunner Ratliffe and TechSgt Jesse G. Arganbright experimented with it as a means of repairing cracks and holes in plexiglass. Their new method of repair enabled planes to fly within three hours. Under the old method of repairing plexiglass, 24 hours were required.

When the squadron was at Ulithi, only MTechSgts L.C. Ross, of St. Helens, Ore., engineering chief, and Warren Wells, of Syracuse, N.Y., assistant engineering chief and two other enlisted men had had any experience with the TBM. Yet the squadron got through the Okinawa operation with no accidents due to engineering failure.

However, the squadron did lose some pilots and gunners in the Ryukyus. They were Lt James W. Fox, of San Bernardino, Calif.; Cpl James M. Forbes, of Mattapan, Miss.; and Private First Class Vincent DePaul Kelly, Duryea, Pa., killed in action, and Lt Lyman Berg, of Aberdeen, S.D.; Lt Owen R. Baird, of

South Minneapolis, Minn.; PFC Richard J. Pushman, of Detroit, Mich.; Staff Sergeant Frederick K. Johnson, of Auburn, Calif., and Sgt Clyde B. Hight Jr., of Owensboro, Ky., missing in action.

And there were some close calls, too. Lt Donald E. Whitfield, of Visalia, Calif., along with his two gunners, Cpl Harold J. Derr, of Kempton, Pa., and PFC Carl E. Hanlin, of Highland Park, Mich., were forced down in the East China Sea during a storm. After three days on a raft, during which time they were twice attacked by Japanese planes, they were rescued.

Of the various jobs that they were called upon to do, the Devils best liked work in support of the infantry. These strikes were in close to the deck, and when they saw the infantrymen move in after a strike, they knew they had gotten results. But more important—like most Marine airmen the Devils felt a kinship with the infantrymen. The way they see it, aviation in the Corps is not something apart. It's all part of a unified force that can strike by land, by sea and in the air for a common objective.

The squadron takes the greatest pride in the support strike flown by Lt Robert R. Piper, of West Alexandria, Ohio. Marines were fighting on the Shuri line and from upstairs Piper could see they were having a plenty rugged time of it. On his next trip, Piper came prepared. He had carefully packed three quarts of whisky in separate packages. When he got over the Marine lines, he let them drop one at a time. Piper figured that if anyone on the island rated a drink, it was the men who were slugging it out on the Shuri front.

All three bottles of the precious fluid, precious on Okinawa at least, were retrieved by the line outfits.

Piper admits it was a pretty good support mission. The only trouble, he says, was that when the troops saw what the packs contained, he had damn near started a private little All-Marine war right there on the front. 🇺🇸

Are You Ready?



Angela Maness
Sr Vice Commandant
Sooner Detachment #559
Oklahoma City, OK



Laura Brown
Adjutant / Paymaster
Alamo Detachment #315
San Antonio, TX

Toys For Tots Preserve Traditions Young Marines
Funeral Honors Color Guard

Tribe@MCLeague.org

SEA STORY OF THE MONTH

Big Chief

While deployed on a WestPac with the 15th MEU in 1995, we had an opportunity to conduct liberty in the Philippines. I was the company executive officer, and on our last night in port, I was monitoring the return of our Marines to the ship. Stumbling down the pier were lieutenants from my company carrying a large carved Indian chief statue that had to weigh more than 100 pounds. After struggling up the gang plank, the senior officer rendered a salute to the ship's ensign and requested permission for "Big Chief" to come aboard which was granted. I then followed these officers as they expertly maneuvered the totem into their stateroom.

A few days later while at sea, the ship ran into some bad weather, and in the middle of the night I heard a loud thump. Investigating the noise led me to the lieutenants' stateroom where I found them staring at the totem on the deck; one lieutenant was visibly shaken. I asked what happened and was informed that they had put the totem in a top bunk and failed to secure it, and when the ship rolled with one of the big swells, Big Chief rolled too, coming out of his bunk almost killing the lieutenant in the bunk below. I was glad to see both were OK and that I would not have to conduct a command investigation and explain this Marine's unfortunate demise to his wife.

Recently I spoke with one of these Marines and he informed me that Big Chief is still alive and well and currently holds a place

of honor in one of their backyards.

Steven P. Manber
Oceanside, Calif.

Ship's Platoon

Lance Corporal Amos was a supply warehouseman, so he did a lot of heavy lifting. As one of only three lance corporals in the S-4 section, he pulled duty with "Ship's Platoon" every third month. With more than a thousand Marines embarked on USS *Guadalcanal*, the Ship's Platoon provided much of our onboard logistical support. These poor, indentured servants reported to the Navy for one month at a time and they worked in the laundry, prepared meals on the mess decks, policed the flight deck, and loaded/unloaded supplies.

In late 1993, the 22nd MEU was transiting from East Africa having just assisted with the U.S. forces withdrawal after the Black Hawk Down incident in Somalia. It was November and still hot as we made our way through the Red Sea back toward the Mediterranean Sea. One Monday morning at the S-4 meeting, it seemed a little unusual that LCpl Amos had his camouflage blouse on with his sleeves rolled down. It was the first of the month and he had just finished his Ship's Platoon rotation.

Though we were all happy to have him back, he was out of uniform and the Gunny told him so. "Amos, you're out of uniform. Roll your sleeves up." Amos replied, "It's okay, Gunny. I'm fine," as if to say that the heat wasn't bothering him. The Gunny replied, "Amos, that wasn't a request. Square away your uniform." Amos took off his blouse and began to roll up his sleeves. From his shoulders to

his wrists, his arms were covered with bruises. Not just any bruises, but nasty black, blue, and purple bruises. When asked by the S-4 what had happened to him, Amos responded, "I was on Ship's Platoon, Sir." The S-4 replied, "Did they beat you on Ship's Platoon?"

Not quite. Since we went through a lot of supplies in Somalia, we had required a

Amos took off his blouse and began to roll up his sleeves. From his shoulders to his wrists, his arms were covered with bruises. Not just any bruises, but nasty black, blue, and purple bruises.

major replenishment while underway. The 200-man working party from the Ships Platoon had broken down pallets and "hand humped" supplies to various places throughout the ship. The Marines and Sailors formed a human chain to pass cases of canned green beans, corn, carrots, sacks of potatoes, bags of rice, and other bulk foodstuffs from the flight deck down five or six levels. As the human chain was stretched, some items were "tossed" as opposed to "handed" between duty personnel. Apparently, Amos was in the middle of a ladder as the chain continued to stretch until he was all the way at the bottom with supplies coming at him from an entire flight of stairs up. "I got this!" Amos yelled

up the hatch. "Keep 'em coming!" With every case of soda, sack of potatoes, and bag of rice, a new bruise appeared. With more pride than common sense, Amos sacrificed his arms for the quick unloading and storage of supplies. God bless LCpl Amos and all Marines who do the heavy lifting.

Col Bill Morgan, USMC (Ret)
Destrehan, La.

My First Night in Vietnam

I arrived in Vietnam one Sunday afternoon in March 1968, just as the first phase of the Tet Offensive was winding down. The general in charge of I Corps that included the Da Nang Air Base where I was stationed with 3rd Marine Air Wing decided the troops needed rest and had issued orders that Sunday would be a day of worship and rest, provided it did not interfere with the normal duties. As a result, headquarters personnel were resting by going to the base exchange or sleeping or going to the beach. The sergeant of the guard issued me a .45-caliber pistol with holster and two loaded magazines. He informed me where my living quarters were located and told me I was to report to headquarters the next morning to finish my check-in.

The hut I was assigned to was like all the rest—16x16 feet in size. Three other staff noncommissioned officers were assigned to the hut which equated to each of us having a corner. My bunk was easy to find; it was the empty one with a dresser, insect net covering the bunk, chair, small desk, and a trash basket. I unpacked my gear, cleaned my pistol, and got my space looking as I wished. By this time

the mess hall was open so I went to check out the food I would be eating for the next 12 months. After enjoying a good meal, I went back to the hut where I met my hut mates who invited me to join them at the staff club. It had been a long day and I was more interested in taking a shower and getting some much-needed rest. About an hour later I was ready to try out the sheets and catch some sleep. I said my prayers and was asleep when my head touched the pillow. I was sleeping very lightly when I heard a loud bang on the roof of the hut. I came to full alert and instantly sat on the edge of my bunk searching for my gun while doing my best to keep a cool head. I was sure we were under attack. There was another bang, and I began to move faster. I finally found my gun and magazines and started for the door. I had one problem: the insect net. It seemed to be everywhere. I was so tangled up in it as I headed for the door that I landed in a heap on the floor in the middle of the room. I was able to get untangled

I heard a loud bang on the roof of the hut. I came to full alert and instantly sat on the edge of my bunk searching for my gun while doing my best to keep a cool head.

after what seemed like many valuable minutes.

I ran out the door and jumped to a combat stance ready to defend the base from all the bad guys that I was sure were just outside the hut. Then I saw my attacker. It was a monkey scurrying over the base fence who had been throwing rocks at the hut. I stuck my pistol in my

waistband and tried to relax. After I was sure the danger had passed, I went back into the hut and found that the chair, desk, and waste basket had been thrown toward the center of the hut and the netting destroyed. I never again had an insect net in the corner of my hut for as long as I was in Vietnam. I also never told my hut mates how I protected the base that night when it was attacked in their absence, but they did ask about the insect net. I didn't give them a straight answer about that either.

Submitted by Serina Vick
San Francisco, Calif.

Editor's note: Serina Vick recently discovered this story in her late husband's study. He served in the Corps for 21 years and retired in 1981. He passed away five years ago. Mrs. Vick has been subscribing to Leatherneck since his passing.

\$20 Hot Potato

The fall of 1954 found me in Korea as a 19-year-old PFC fire team leader in "Suicide Charlie" Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines. My mother, wanting to do something nice for her only son, mailed me a "hot potato" in the form of a U.S. \$20 "greenback" bill. Unfortunately, neither she nor I realized that the possession of this currency in Korea was strictly taboo as our pay and other transactions were handled only by U.S. military scrip. The fear was that U.S. currency worth full-face value on the black market could be used for all kinds of nefarious purposes, whereas military scrip was practically worthless.

A storm was brewing and was about to break as it became known that I had a \$20 bill. "You better get rid of that thing before you get yourself in trouble," said one guy in my tent and others agreed. I did try to spend it at our seldom open PX.

They would not touch it. Charlie Co's headquarters people wouldn't touch it either and sent me away with a stern warning about what would happen if I was caught with my \$20 bill. I could have destroyed the note, or mailed it back to my mother, but \$20 in those days was a lot of money and I wanted it. Finally, I decided to consult wise 38-year-old Sergeant Barnes, a World War II veteran who was serving as first platoon leader until headquarters could find a second lieutenant to replace him. He said 7th Regimental Headquarters should be able to help but he had no way of getting me there as motor transport was scarce in Korea. 7th Regiment was about 20 miles round trip by a one-lane dirt road but only about 6 miles round trip by footpath. The path ran along the ridge behind our camp. Barnes said, "Take a friend, your rifle, four eight-round clips and climb up the streambed trail to the summit of Hill 495. At the top you'll find a ridge line path. Follow that until it angles downhill to 7th Regiment HHQ [higher headquarters]. You can't miss it." I took my buddy, Private First Class Tabalangan and the \$20 bill with me. After a long steep climb to the summit of Hill 495 we followed the ridge line path until we stood looking over tent tops of 7th Regiment headquarters.

We found a crude structure designated as the headquarters office and went inside. A curtain backed by a curtain divided the workspace. Suddenly, the curtain flew back, and an overweight master sergeant stepped to the rear of the counter. I explained my plight. "Yes siree, m'son, you came to the right place. One thing I hate to see is a young Marine get his self into a heap o'trouble. Now m'boy let me see that bill," and I handed over my \$20.

The sergeant scrutinized it for signs of being counterfeit. "Yesiree, m'son, you're lucky you found me. You could be in big trouble." I thought to myself he's laying it on pretty heavy. I wondered what his game was. While he was muttering how lucky I was, he whipped out his wallet and stuffed my \$20 in it. Next, he unlocked the cash

A storm was brewing and was about to break as it became known that I had a \$20 bill. "You better get rid of that thing before you get yourself in trouble," said one guy in my tent and others agreed.

drawer under the counter, pulled out \$20 in military scrip and plopped it down in front of me. He locked the cash drawer and vanished behind the curtain still muttering how he hated to see a young Marine get "his self" in trouble. Tabalangan and I slung our rifles and walked back to Charlie Co speculating on how long it would take for that \$20 to reach the black market and what it would buy.

Cpl Ward Wright
Knoxville, 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." 🐼

A Universal Language

As Afghan Evacuees Arrive at Quantico, Marines Get Creative to Bridge Cultural Divide



CPL SCOTT JENKINS, USMC

By Sara W. Bock

During a fall festival at Upshur Village, MCB Quantico, Va., Oct. 31, 2021, Capt Joshua James passes out candy to Afghan children temporarily being housed there.

In 2009, Marine Corps combat artist Kris Battles traveled to Helmand Province, Afghanistan, where he produced numerous works depicting the bond between Marines and local Afghans who assisted them as interpreters and translators or in other vital roles. So, after he made the short drive from the Combat Art Studio at the National Museum of the Marine Corps to the newly formed Upshur Village, located on the western end of Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., Sept. 8, 2021, he felt a tinge of familiarity as he sat on his three-legged stool, sketchbook in hand, and documented a historic moment in Marine Corps history.

Once an extension of Officer Candidates School and today a commonly used training area for Marine reservists, Camp Upshur had been transformed practically overnight into a temporary home for thousands of America's Afghan allies and their family members, and Battles needed only to travel to his own backyard to record it.

While the experience was in many ways reminiscent of his deployment more than a decade ago, Battles could sense optimism and hope in the air: a stark contrast, he says, to the troubled environment of a war zone. Just weeks earlier, these Afghan men, women and children, fearing retribution for their association

with U.S. troops, fled for their lives as the Taliban seized control of their country—and they were the lucky ones. Now, they await a new beginning in a nation with a lengthy history of welcoming newcomers to its shores.

“To sketch them in a more safe and secure environment, to see them already starting to flourish, was a very positive thing,” said Battles, who, now a civilian, has served as the Marine Corps Artist in Residence since 2019.

Working intently putting his pencil to paper, Battles created rough sketches of Afghan guests eating meals in the chow hall, waiting in line for medical attention and even merely watching him with curiosity.

A single scene in particular stood out to him during his two-hour visit to the makeshift village—one of eight designated “safe havens” at military installations across the country and the only Marine Corps base on the list—where Afghan evacuees were awaiting processing and

eventual resettlement into American communities. A Marine was kneeling to the ground, teaching a group of smiling Afghan children to play the timeless childhood game, “Rock, Paper, Scissors.” While observing the simple activity that requires neither material supplies nor a common language, Battles was struck by the significance of the moment: that interactions like these gave the children a first glimpse of their newfound life in America.

“This young Marine, being a young man himself, not much out of high school, he’s not too far away from ‘Rock, Paper, Scissors’ himself, so he’s sharing his experience which also welcomes them, makes them feel more at home automatically,” said Battles, gesturing toward the aptly named “Rock, Paper, Scissors” oil-on-canvas painting he created based on the sketch. “Games are a great way to build rapport,” he added.

Battles points out some of the nuances in the painting; namely, that the differences in the clothing worn by the two boys gives context clues as to the setting, despite the fact that the monochromatic background does not. One boy is dressed in traditional Afghan clothing and the other is wearing shorts, a T-shirt, and a pair of Crocs that are far too big for his tiny feet.



In the Combat Art Studio at the National Museum of the Marine Corps, Kris Battles, the Marine Corps Artist in Residence, prepares to put the final touches on "Rock, Paper, Scissors," an oil-on-canvas painting he created based on his sketches at Upshur Village, and the cover image for *Leatherneck's* February issue.

JASON MONROE



ELIZE MCKELVEY



With his sketchbook in hand, Battles observes Afghan guests interacting with each other at Upshur Village during his Sept. 8, 2021, visit to the safe haven community, one of eight military installations where Afghan evacuees are temporarily being housed as they await processing and resettlement.



LCPL SCOTT JENKINS, USMC

Marines with CLB-2, 2nd MLG, escort the first group of Afghan guests into the living spaces at Upshur Village, MCB Quantico, Va., Aug. 29, 2021. In the five days leading up to the guests' arrival, Marines worked around the clock to prepare living quarters and outdoor spaces around Camp Upshur for the Afghan families.

“People were immediately responding to the call for help and donations,” Battles said in a nod to members of the local community. “It’s in our nature [as Americans] it seems, to help out and to give out of the bounty that we have, so they immediately responded, and of course, the kids are already wearing the T-shirts.”

Indeed, within hours after the news broke on Aug. 26 that MCB Quantico had been selected as a temporary housing site for Afghan evacuees, the base began receiving offers of support from individuals in the surrounding military and civilian communities, local interfaith groups and non-governmental

organizations. Posts across social media platforms called for items like pillows, bedsheets, diapers and school supplies to support the arriving guests who had traveled thousands of miles with little more than the clothes on their backs.

“We were just really overwhelmed with the incredible outpouring from the community and the sheer quantity of donations that we were receiving at the outset,” said Major Tara Patton, the deputy operations officer for Task Force Quantico, which was formed in support of Operation Allies Welcome, a whole-of-government effort spearheaded by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Schools and units across MCB Quantico pitched in to help collect supplies during the early days, and as the months have passed, items needed by the guests have continued to pour in. Patton describes the setup of donated goods at Upshur Village as being much like a Walmart store, where Afghan guests can come on their designated days to get the items they need.

According to Danielle Decker, the external affairs officer for Operation Allies Welcome Quantico, the cross-collaborative endeavor to help

MSgt John Rudd, left, and SSgt Jacob Lipham, assigned to 8th ESB, 2nd MLG, interact with Afghan guests at Upshur Village, MCB Quantico, Va., Sept. 23, 2021. For Marines who served in Afghanistan, the opportunity to welcome America’s allies to safety is particularly fulfilling.



TIA DUFOUR

Right: LCpl Konate Allan, a field artillery cannoneer with 1st Battalion, 10th Marine Regiment, leads Afghan children in push-ups for recreation at Upshur Village, MCB Quantico, Va., Sept. 27, 2021.



LCPL SCOTT JENKINS, USMC



LCPL SCOTT JENKINS, USMC

Afghan evacuees start a new life in America involves the work of multiple agencies and bureaus within DHS, including Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA); Customs and Border Protection; and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), as well as the Department of Health and Human Services, the State Department and the Department of Energy. The effort also relies heavily, said Decker, on the Department of Defense to provide security and staffing at each base. In addition to Quantico, two other locations in Virginia were chosen, Fort Lee and Fort Pickett, and across America, Fort McCoy, Wis.; Fort Bliss, Texas; Joint Base McGuire-Dix, N.J.; Holloman Air Force Base, N.M., and Camp Atterbury, Ind., also made the list.

During a Nov. 9 State Department town hall meeting for Afghan resettlement stakeholders, former Delaware Governor Jack Markell, coordinator for Operation Allies Welcome, said that cultural advisors were assigned to each of the bases to ensure that the efforts of the military members were supplemented with culturally appropriate food and places of worship.

At Quantico, which Decker says was chosen based on its capacity to provide a secure location that could house and meet the needs of guests while providing essential security and support, representatives from each of the participating agencies are present at an on-site Interagency Coordination Cell (ICC). For Maj Patton, who works in the ICC, it's a unique

Maj Carla McGirr, a civil affairs officer with Task Force Quantico, interacts with an Afghan girl at MCB Quantico, Va., Oct. 8, 2021.



LCPL SCOTT JENKINS, USMC

Navy LT Marissa Singh, a dentist with 2nd MLG, provides dental care to an Afghan guest at MCB Quantico, Va., Sept. 25, 2021.

opportunity unlike anything she’s experienced in her Marine Corps career thus far.

The mission to support Operation Allies Welcome also is an out-of-the-ordinary one for Marines from units across 2nd Marine Logistics Group, part of the Camp Lejeune, N.C.-based II Marine Expeditionary Force, who mobilized at a moment’s notice, diverting from a planned humanitarian relief effort in Haiti to a much closer-to-home locale.

According to Patton, on Aug. 24, the first Marines from 2nd MLG were sent to Quantico. “That was actually on about an hour’s notice,” she adds. At the onset, the Marines lived in two-man tents on site as they readied the squad bays at Camp Upshur, formerly used by OCS, to serve as temporary living shelters for the Afghan guests. As the evacuees began to arrive just five days later on the 29th, the Marines facilitated

the check-in process and helped them get settled in.

“Initially we were working pretty hard with the base to use the existing infrastructure at Camp Upshur to support billeting Afghan guests,” Patton said. When it was realized that additional accommodations were needed to support an influx of arrivals, the task force summoned 8th Engineer Support Battalion from Camp Lejeune to establish “Pioneer City,” a second temporary housing area. “In 36 hours, working 24-hour ops, they built the site from nothing, on a landing zone, and turned it into a space for about 1,000 Afghan guests. It’s really been interesting to see it evolve over time,” she added.

As of Oct. 21, said Lieutenant Colonel Jacob Hummitzsch, the executive officer of Combat Logistics Regiment 2, 2nd MLG, roughly 900 U.S. servicemembers, primarily Marines and Navy corpsmen, were supporting the mission in various roles like running the donation center, performing site maintenance and repairs, providing medical care as well as visiting with the guests, playing with the children, and helping their temporary accommodations feel a little bit more like home.

“Everyone is really proud to be part of this historic effort,” said Hummitzsch. “The ability to quickly respond like we did, the opportunity to provide the necessary support to the success of Operation Allies Welcome, and to be able to walk around and see all the smiling faces from all the adults, the families, the kids.”

Recognizing the trauma that many of the Afghan guests went through in order to arrive at Upshur Village, Hummitzsch said, makes their smiles even more meaningful to him. “And the Marines and Sailors are doing phenomenal things helping them out every day,” he added.

In October, Decker said that approximately 3,800 Afghan guests were currently living aboard MCB Quantico, adding that some families had at that point been fully processed and were starting their new lives in various locations across the U.S.

“The guests undergo a series of vetting processes throughout their stay with us, and they also undergo intake immigration and biometrics processing and medical screening, and then they’ll ultimately reach their final state of assurance and then ultimately depart camps to their final destination,” Decker said.

During the State Department’s Nov. 9 stakeholders meeting, Nancy Izzo Jackson, who heads the department’s Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration, explained the intake and resettlement process for those evacuees seeking special immigrant visa (SIV) status or qualify for designation as refugees fleeing persecution, stating that the interagency partners were working around the clock to resettle everyone into their permanent home communities as quickly and respon-

Looking for ways to help support Operation Allies Welcome?

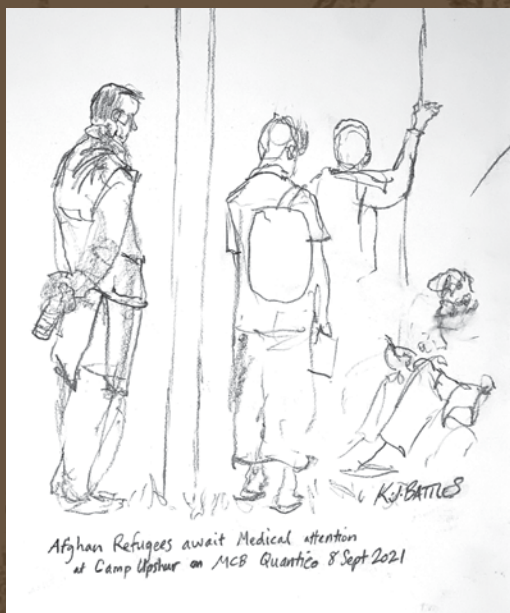
The State Department has partnered with Welcome.US, a nonprofit, nonpartisan initiative created “to galvanize additional private sector support and resources for arriving Afghans and channel the immense goodwill of the American people,” explained Uzra Zeya, State’s undersecretary for civilian security, democracy and human rights, during the department’s Nov. 9 town hall meeting.

Interested individuals, veterans organizations, businesses, religious groups and Afghan American diaspora groups can visit the organization’s website, Welcome.US, and from there can donate airline miles to provide transportation from safe havens to resettlement communities; volunteer to provide temporary housing, or sign up for new community sponsorship opportunities.

Operation Allies Welcome goes far beyond the mobilization of military bases and the servicemembers assigned there and extends to the mobilization of an entire nation to welcome our Afghan allies and honor our nation’s obligation to them—an obligation that those Marines who served in Afghanistan understand well.

Nazanin Ash, CEO of Welcome.US, hopes that the effort will help repair division in the U.S.: “Our ultimate ambition is to unite all Americans in this common cause of welcome,” she said.





Afghan Refugees await Medical attention at Camp Upshur on MCB Quantico 8 Sept 2021



LCPL SCOTT JENKINS, USMC

LCpl Amir Shinwari, a linguist, sits in prayer with Afghan guests during religious services on MCB Quantico, Va., Oct. 8, 2021.



LCPL BRIAN BOLIN JR., USMC

LCpl Tyler Zaki, a motor transportation operator with Combat Logistics Battalion 8, 2nd MLG, engages in some outdoor playtime with Afghan children on MCB Quantico, Va., Sept. 18, 2021.

sibly as possible. According to Jackson, after initial administrative processing and health screening on one of the eight military bases designated as temporary safe havens, Afghan guests were being connected with one of nine resettlement agency partners to receive their initial placement and assistance.

“This process takes into account family size and composition, any special medical needs, existing connections to U.S.-based family or friends. It also takes into account the locally available housing, schooling and community resources,” Jackson said, adding, “We want to make sure every Afghan is set up for success in their new home communities.”

As the U.S. continues to deal with a critical housing shortage, making it difficult in many areas to find suitable accommodations, the State Department has had to get creative and for the first time in its history, has partnered with private sector actors like vacation rental company Airbnb.

“We have never had to resettle so many people so quickly and we have never done it while also facing a global pandemic, a national housing shortage and significant staffing shortfalls. So, we have had to innovate to meet the challenge,” Jackson said. “We are relying on support from local U.S. communities and private sector partners to help us succeed in these efforts, and we have already seen an astonishing outpouring of support, both material and emotional, from individual community organizations, individuals themselves





KRIS BATTLES

Marine Corps combat artist Elize McKelvey, right, encourages Afghan children to draw pictures and doodles in her sketchbook during a Sept. 8, 2021, visit to Upshur Village. She saved the drawings, pictured below, as a memento of her experience there.



ELIZE MCKELVEY

and private companies. It is a true testament to the boundless American capacity for generosity towards those most in need. From New Jersey to Wisconsin to New Mexico, our Armed Forces colleagues and local communities around our military bases have opened their arms and their hearts to our Afghan guests.”

For Maj Patton, who served in Afghanistan, her role with Task Force Quantico has afforded her a unique opportunity to see her time there come full circle. During the early months of her assignment at Upshur Village, there was an interaction she won't soon forget. A 4-year-old girl, who evidently had been observing the Marines' interactions with each other at Upshur Village, stopped and saluted her as she walked by.

“I just kind of stopped in my tracks and realized that that little girl could be back here in Quantico 20 years from now as a Marine Corps second lieutenant going through [The Basic School]. While that may or may not be in the cards for her, the fact that she's here and going through this process means that if she wants to, she has that opportunity. There are those little moments that really resonate with you personally and make it a worthwhile endeavor,” Patton said.

As Kris Battles and fellow combat artist Elize McKelvey, a veteran Marine who also is part of the Marine Corps Combat

Art Program, observed and sketched at Upshur Village, children played and ran free. At one point, a large group of them gathered around McKelvey's sketchbook with pens and pencils and began creating doodles of their own. In that moment, Battles could sense that the children felt at home there, and the artists relished the opportunity to connect with them through a shared interest.

“Part of our job as combat artists is to record for posterity in traditional media these stories for 100 years from now, for 200 years from now. This was a great opportunity, very historic, and it happened right on our doorstep,” said Battles. “An added benefit of what we do is bridge building. Combat art builds bridges in America between the military and [civilian] cultures, and we also build bridges to other cultures because art is a universal language.”

MARINE SHOP VALENTINE'S DAY GIFTS THAT WON'T MISS



Necklace Heart with EGA & Red Crystals

FOR HER

FOR HIM



Marine Wife Sterling Silver Heart Necklace



USMC White Bear with Gift Box



Red Pinstriped Polo



Black USMC Cuff Link & Tie Tack Set in Gift Box



Once A Marine Yellow Footprint 30 oz. Tumbler



Gold Bow & EGA Charm Lapel Pin



Rose Gold EGA Watch



Crossed US & USMC Flags Tie Tack

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SGT COREY MATTHEWS, USMC

Marine's Friendship Integral to Safe Passage For Afghan Family

By 1stLt Jacob Sugg, USMC

Maj Michael Kuiper, left, walks with Matiullah Matie, an Afghan guest at Fort Pickett, Va., and Matie's young son Zabihullah, Oct. 24, 2021. Kuiper and Matie worked together 12 years earlier in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, and were reunited after Kuiper assisted Matie's family in their evacuation to America.

After 12 years and more than 7,000 miles of travel, Matiullah Matie, an Afghan guest at Fort Pickett, Va., an installation of the Virginia Army National Guard, was reunited with Major Michael Kuiper, the executive officer of 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, who he worked with in Afghanistan in 2009.

The two, who reunited at Fort Pickett on Oct. 24, 2021, first met shortly after Kuiper arrived in Helmand Province during Operation Khanjari, a large offensive which targeted Taliban strongholds in southern Afghanistan.

"When I first arrived, there was heavy fighting. We didn't see many women or children in the streets," said Kuiper. The majority of the local population, he said, didn't speak to or work with the Marines due to fear of retaliation by the Taliban.

Nawa, Afghanistan, was primarily a farming town without schools and medical clinics, and only two businesses. Kuiper explained how Matie was one of the first members of the local community to work with

the Marines. He even agreed to build a government center in two months' time.

"Not only did he finish the job in half the time, but he returned over half the funds," said Kuiper, who further explained how this inspired others within the community to seek employment with coalition forces. "Following Matie's example, others began to work with us. Within three months there were nine schools open, more than 60 stores and three medical clinics."

As Matie reflects on this experience, he notes that he and Kuiper are like "family."

"Michael Kuiper was a very kind person, and he did a lot for the people of Afghanistan. After he helped open the bazaar and the schools, we became brothers."

Although Kuiper left Afghanistan, he remained in contact with Matie over the next decade, and their relationship was a critical factor in helping Matie's family leave Afghanistan after the Taliban took control of the government in August 2021.

One night in Kabul, Matie answered a knock at the door.

"Where is Matiullah's residence?" asked the men at the door.



SSGT VICTOR MANCILLA, USMC

U.S. Marines and soldiers assist with security at an evacuation control checkpoint at Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul, Afghanistan, Aug. 19, 2021. When Kuiper learned that Matie and his family were trying to get through security, he suggested they make signs with key words related to Marine Corps history so they'd be noticed by the Marines guarding the perimeter.

“Down the street,” Matie responded, as he closed the door, grabbed his AK-47, and waited for their return, which never occurred. At that moment, he knew it was time for his family to leave Afghanistan.

Matie encountered numerous challenges on his journey out of the country. He recounted one instance where he was stuck at a chaotic Taliban checkpoint where they used gas and rubber bullets against the crowd. In another instance, he and his family spent 23 hours trying to get to the airport before running out of water and having to return home.

A battalion in Kuiper’s regiment was assigned to help guard Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul. The area was crowded with thousands of civilians, so Matie needed a message to help the Marines identify his family.

“I knew Matiullah and his family needed to stand out amongst the crowd,” said Kuiper. “I recommended they hold signs with ‘Teufelhunden,’ our battalion’s motto; Chesty Puller, the most decorated Marine in history; and the date of the Marine Corps birthday.”

The signs with wording significant to Marine Corps history helped Matie’s family stand out in the crowd of individuals outside the airport and were a factor in their subsequent escort into the perimeter. Kuiper recalls the immense feeling of relief when he was able to hear Matie’s voice from within the perimeter.

“Once they were inside, the sergeant escorting Matiullah was able to place him on the phone with me. I asked him if he was safe and he responded, ‘Of course I am safe, I am with the Marines.’”

Weeks after that phone call, Kuiper and Matie

were reunited at Fort Pickett, where the family is being housed temporarily, and Kuiper was able to meet Matie’s wife and six children for the first time.

“Seeing Matiullah and his family here was a moment of joy, knowing that they are safe and that they are going to have a better life,” said Kuiper.

Matie is optimistic about his resettlement. He said he looks forward to starting a business in the United States and living in a country where his children are free to pursue an education.

“This is my children’s time to go to school. They can now go to a university and choose a career,” said Matie, holding the hand of his young son who was dressed in a children’s version of the Marine Corps dress blue uniform. “This is all due to the help from my brother, Michael. He is the one who saved my family.” 🇺🇸

Below: Wearing a tiny set of Marine Corps dress blues, Zabihullah Matie salutes Kuiper at Fort Pickett, Va., Oct. 24, 2021. The Matie family was temporarily being housed at Fort Pickett, Va., while awaiting processing and resettlement as they begin their new life in the U.S.



SGT COREY MATHEWS, USMC

New Robot System Gives Marines “Eyes in the Water”

In September 2021, Marine Corps Systems Command (MCSC) began fielding an amphibious unmanned robot system to support littoral operations globally.

The Explosive Ordnance Disposal Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) is a next-generation, box-shaped robot that enables Marines to navigate safely and efficiently in shallow waters to identify and neutralize explosive hazards and other threats.

“This robot gives Marines eyes in the water,” said Master Sergeant Patrick Hilty, an Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) project officer at MCSC. “It is a capability the Marine Corps has never before had.”

The ROV employs sound navigation and ranging sensors, a high-definition video capability and cameras that provide real-time feedback for EOD divers. It includes an articulator arm that helps Marines maneuver through underwater foliage or neutralize explosive threats.

“It is a system that saves Marine divers

from having to swim hundreds of meters, an activity that can tire them out,” said Hilty.

Marines can use the robot for various amphibious missions. For example, they can leverage the ROV to search harbors and operators can use it for activities in very shallow waters, conducting littoral lost object searches, damage assessments and mine countermeasure missions.

Hilty applauded the ROV’s tether feature, which keeps EOD technicians at a safe distance from explosive hazards. Before the capability, Marine divers could only disrupt or dispose of underwater explosive threats by swimming in close proximity, exposing the Marines to hostile elements.

“The ROV gives us a remote means to search underwater while also helping us stay at our best when having to prosecute explosive devices,” said Hilty.

Master Sergeant Matthew Jackson, the staff noncommissioned officer in charge of the Littoral Explosive Ordnance Neutralization section, 1st EOD Company,

1st Marine Logistics Group, said the ROV is highly stable in an underwater environment. He noted that the machine requires minimal equipment and reduces the Marine Corps’ overall footprint during operations.

“This intuitive system has the ability to complete critical underwater tasks much deeper than manned missions can,” said Jackson. “The ROV will serve as an important capability to support our tasks.”

Jackson also praised the system for its ease of use. He said it requires minimal training when compared with other unmanned underwater systems. This ultimately saves the Marine Corps time and money.

“Instead of sending a Marine to a course for seven or eight weeks, it takes about four days to learn basic operations for successful employment,” said Jackson.

The ROV also supports naval integration. In 2019, the Navy acquired this commercial off-the-shelf capability. The service conducted a series of tests to determine its viability for EOD mis-



Marine EOD technician Sgt Tyler Joles with 7th Engineer Support Bn, 1st MLG, controls an ROV with a human machine interface during a demonstration in San Diego, Calif., Oct. 6, 2021. The ROV asset aids the Marine Corps in naval force integration by giving Marines the capability to work alongside Navy EOD units.

SSgt Seth Barnes, an EOD technician with 7th ESB, 1st MLG, releases an ROV into the water in San Diego, Calif., Oct. 6, 2021.



LCPL KRISTY ORDONEZ MALDONADO, USMC

sions. These tests included reliability and maintenance evaluations to test its effectiveness and ease of employment during simulated activities.

“Testing conducted by the Navy allowed us to field this capability to Marines more quickly,” said Hilty. “Additionally, the Marine Corps and Navy both having this system increases interoperability among the services.”

The robot is the first increment in the Littoral Explosive Ordnance Neutralization (LEON) Family of Systems. This series of robotic capabilities will allow Marines to search a wider area in the littorals, including the very shallow water, surf and beach zones.

LEON Systems, to be fielded gradually by MCSC over the next several years, will also help the Marine Corps complement Navy EOD teams in joint operations as it strives to evolve naval force integration in the future.

“Having this capability aids in naval force integration by giving us the same equipment that the Navy is using,” said Staff Sergeant Seth Barnes, an EOD technician with 1st EOD Co, 1st MLG. “It allows us to bolt on with Navy EOD as we move forward.”

Achieving Force Design 2030 remains an ongoing, concerted effort for the Marine Corps, as repeatedly stated by the Commandant, General David H. Berger. This goal requires the acquisition of next-generation unmanned systems like the ROV to support Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations (EABO).

“We’re bringing the EABO concept to the modern day,” said Ronald Diefenbach, a program analyst on the Explosive Hazard Team at MCSC. “Adhering to this concept, we can use the ROV to support Marines when operating from the littorals and while conducting island-hopping tasks.”

Hilty said the Marine Corps has never before leveraged waters for missions. In the past, Marines would begin operations from land, typically a beach. This new concept requires a paradigm shift in terms

of how the Marine Corps operates.

Fielding capabilities that conform to the vision to support an evolving naval fight will ultimately support the present and future Marine.

“We’ve always done this piece via the Navy,” said Hilty. “Now that the Marine Corps is doing it, we are learning valuable skillsets, becoming much better-rounded and proving to be a bigger asset to the [Marine air-ground task force].”

Matt Gonzales



LCPL KRISTY ORDONEZ MALDONADO, USMC

In September 2021, the Marine Corps began fielding the EOD ROV, a next-generation robot that will enable Marines to navigate safely and efficiently in shallow waters to identify and neutralize explosive hazards and other threats.



LCPL JONATHAN BEAUCHAMP, USMC

BGen William Bowers, CG, MCIPAC, presents the Jim Kallstrom Award for Bravery to LCpl Noelle Gallegos, with PMO on Camp Foster, Okinawa, Japan, Nov. 3, 2021. Gallegos was nominated for the award after she helped prevent a distressed Marine from harming himself and others.

PMO Marine Awarded for Bravery, Lifesaving Efforts

Marines with Provost Marshal's Office, Headquarters and Support Battalion, Marine Corps Installations Pacific, gathered for a formation on Camp Foster, Okinawa, Japan, Nov. 3, 2021, to present Lance Corporal Noelle Gallegos with the Jim Kallstrom Award for bravery. Two awards, one for leadership and one for bravery, are named for Marine Corps captain and Vietnam veteran Jim Kallstrom, who went on to a 28-year career with the FBI and is the co-founder and chairman of the Marine Corps Law Enforcement Foundation. The awards are presented annually to Marine Corps military police who have displayed outstanding professional competence, exemplary leadership skills, significant contributions and heroic or lifesaving actions.

"I support Gallegos receiving the Jim Kallstrom Award for bravery," said Staff Sergeant Amanda Helps, the staff noncommissioned officer in charge with PMO, H&S Bn, MCIPAC. "I believe Gallegos fully understands all aspects of her job and can lead, but also set the example for new Marines and by doing so, influence the old Marines."

Brigadier General William Bowers, the commanding general of MCIPAC, presented Gallegos with the award, which cites how she risked her safety and displayed bravery and the ability to make sound, tactical decisions in a life-threatening moment. Gallegos received the award

for helping prevent a distressed Marine from harming himself and potentially others.

All patrolmen are responsible for reducing mishaps, increasing mission readiness, and preventing and preserving warfighter missions.

"I think what happened is an example of why we need to continue to look out for our brothers and sisters and know when we need help," said Gallegos. "I pray that the Marine in distress will make a full recovery so they can continue their journey and make a difference with their second chance in life."

MCIPAC

New York-Based Reservists Celebrate Second Consecutive Win In Corps' Annual Cyber Games

For the second year in a row, Marine reservists bringing their civilian and military cyber skills to the keyboard triumphed handsomely against other teams in the annual Marine Corps Cyber Games. The Marines of 6th Communication Battalion, headquartered out of Brooklyn, N.Y., and attached to Force Headquarters Group, Marine Forces Reserve, beat teams from across the Corps in the third iteration of the games, hosted by the Deputy Commandant for Information and executed virtually and globally from Nov. 1-5, 2021. During these service-level cyber games, both active duty and reserve Marines used critical thinking and decision-making skills to compete in

a game of "capture the flag," focused on offensive cyber operations.

"This capture the flag-style exercise is a 48-hour event," said First Sergeant Jason Foust, assigned to "Alpha" Company, Defense Cyber Operations-Internal Defensive Measures (DCO-IDM). "There is a range environment where there are pre-configured machines and hints to capture the flags that are on the machines. They range from low-level flags that are fairly simple to answer to things that are extremely complex and very advanced, that consist of a lot of branch logic to get to the answer."

The Marine Corps uses the Cyber Games as a test of talent to gauge where Marines stand based on training they have received both in the Marine Corps and in the civilian workforce.

"What we're doing in the cyber capture the flag exercise is similar to what you would do at a hacker conference," said Foust. "What you typically bring back from these events are new skills, new connections, new ideas and lessons learned from others that have either tried to innovate and didn't make it or that did and were successful."

Staff Sergeant Sean Sarich previously transitioned from being an infantry Marine to a cyber warrior. As a reservist and a defense contractor in the cyber realm, he had the interest and skills the Marine Corps was looking for to help "beef up" its offensive and defensive capabilities.

"The call went out to the reserves as a whole to find folks who were already in industry to basically staff up the reserve companies that [the Marine Corps] was building up last year," said Sarich, who is assigned to 6th Comm Bn. "I'm here today because that's what I do in my civilian job. I'm a cyber security manager in the DIB [defense industrial base]."

Jokingly, he described the team as a "ragtag" group of reservists but added that he believes that's where their strength comes from.

"A lot of us come from all over the United States and we only see each other a certain amount of time, but because we have a technical seat at the table with a very diverse ecosystem, we can really bring a lot of that expertise to bear together," Sarich said.

The Marine Corps Reserve has unique opportunities to recruit new talent and actively bring back Marines recently separated from service who want to continue serving in this field. Sometimes those Marines don't have formal military training but come with abilities that make them a formidable force in support of the U.S. military's cyber operations.

Marines with DCO-IDM, 6th Comm Bn, compete to virtually “capture flags,” earning points that helped them secure their second consecutive win in the Marine Corps Cyber Games at Fort Meade, Md., Nov. 5, 2021. Eight teams from cyber units across the Corps participated in this year’s games hosted by the Deputy Commandant for Information.

“A lot of the reservists that we have in the [DCO-IDM] companies for 6th Communication Battalion and even in the Individual Mobilization Augmentee Detachment at Marine Corps Forces Cyberspace Command are not qualified Marines in the 1700 cyberspace operations occupation field,” said Master Sergeant Mike McAllister, cyberspace operations chief, 6th Communication Bn. “These Marines are from other military occupational specialties, and they just happen to work in civilian jobs that align with the needs of the company, so they are brought in.”

The Cyber Games encourage Marines to learn new tactics and techniques for implementation.

“We have the desire to be competitive and prove that even though we are reserve Marines, we still have a huge talent pool stemming from our work in the private sector,” said Foust. “This allows the reserve component to augment the active-



LCPL HAILEY MUSIC, USMC

duty forces as we have skill sets that are hard to teach without years of hands-on experience and are definitely hard to come by.”

Reserve participation in the annual Marine Corps Cyber Games is just one example of how Marine Forces Reserve is continually training and preparing to fight battles in an ever-changing environment on land, air and sea and now in cyberspace.

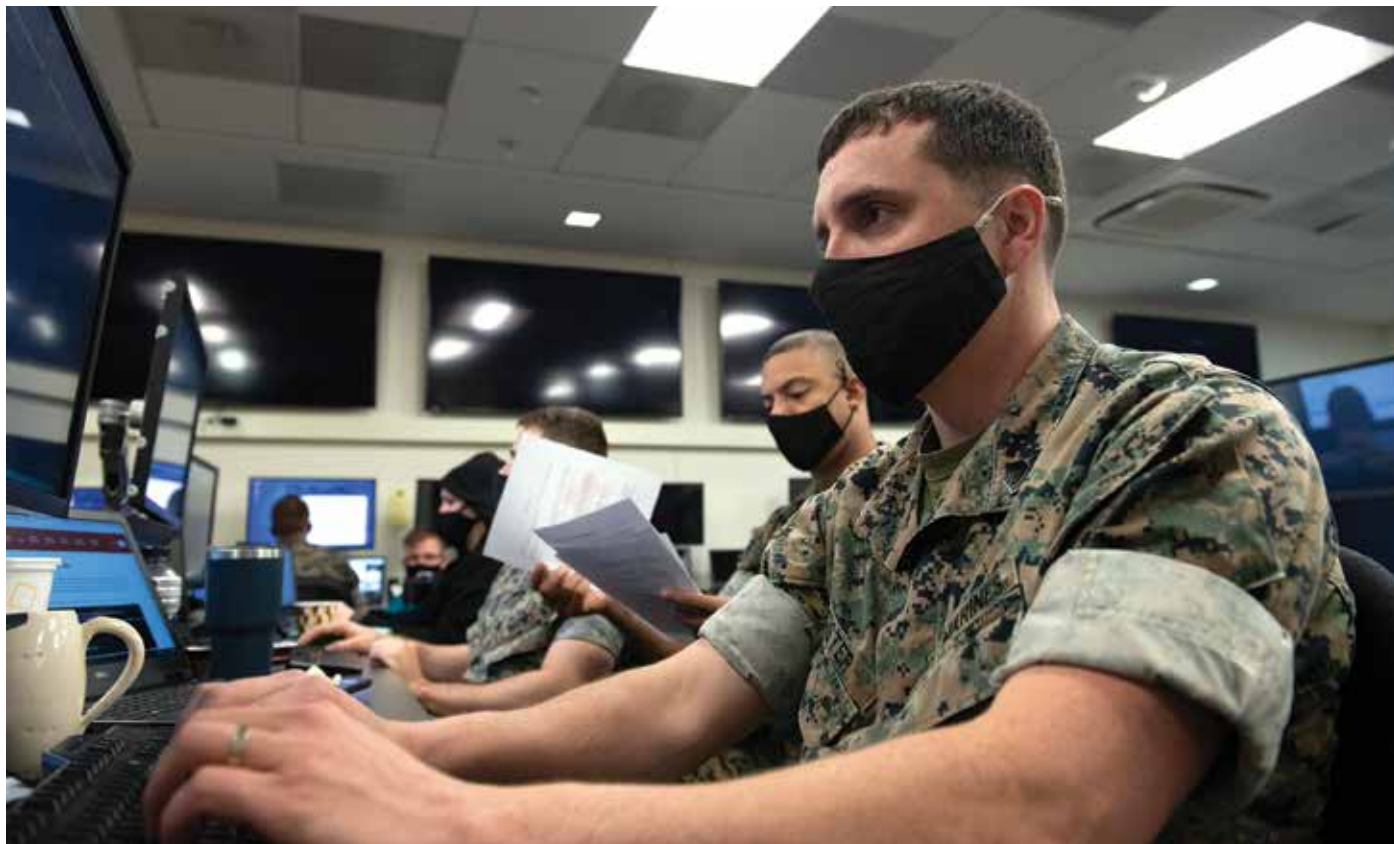
“We don’t go into a competition expect-

ing a victory, but we look at Cyber Games or any other competition as a learning experience: how can we leave this better than we came in?” said Foust. “At Defensive Cyberspace Operations, we support each other and that lets the right ideas flourish. Some of our best talents within DCO are junior Marines, and no matter the rank, we look at the best idea and the best idea wins 100 percent of the time.”

LCpl Ashley Corbo, USMC



GySgt Nathaneal Register of Marine Corps Cyberspace Warfare Group, Cyber Protection Team 651, participates in the Marine Corps Cyber Games at Fort Meade, Md., Nov. 5, 2021.



LCPL HAILEY MUSIC, USMC

Desert Shield/Desert Storm Stories from the Marines on the Ground

Jan. 15, 1991, Was Payday at the Front, But Nobody Remembers It

Just hours before Operation Desert Storm began, Sergeant Kevin Kessinger, a tank commander with the 1st Marine Division's armor-heavy Task Force Ripper, said the only thing different about Jan. 15, 1991, was that it was payday.

But over the predawn crackle of radio updates, it seemed that Kessinger and his crew would have to leave their checks in the bank.

Kessinger and his fellow Marines have been in Saudi Arabia for seven months. They said they have had plenty of time to contemplate war, and that they have come to terms with it.

"You know when you join the Marine Corps that people go to combat," said Lance Corporal Kevin Moroney, Kessinger's tank driver. "It's on our minds, but we don't dwell on it."

This sentiment, which prevailed among Marines throughout Operation Desert Shield, did not change with the passing of the United Nations deadline. There was little change whatsoever. The recent change in weather from scorching heat to rain and cold was, in fact, welcomed by the Marines of Task Force Ripper.

"It's been wet and miserable, but at least it's different," said Moroney of Lucas, Ohio. "Anything different is welcome."

The last word from Kessinger and Moroney just before they embarked on the biggest change in their lives was that they were going into it with confidence and caution.

"The only thing I'm worrying about is doing something stupid and getting one of my Marines killed," said Kessinger, who has been training for war for more than nine years. He added that he believes the United States has the best-trained military force in the world and that all he has to do is live up to its standards. "The people who are doing the planning for this operation are simply the best," he said.

Colonel Carlton Fulford, commanding officer of Task Force Ripper, expressed similar concerns for his men, and also expressed confidence in the Marines' ability to defeat Iraqi forces. He said

that this is in part due to the quality and quantity of training they have had since arriving in August.

"Since the beginning of August, we have literally been on one solid training cycle," Fulford said. "We haven't gone out on liberty, and we haven't gone out to the liberty ship, wherever that is. We're desert-hard, and we know each other real well.

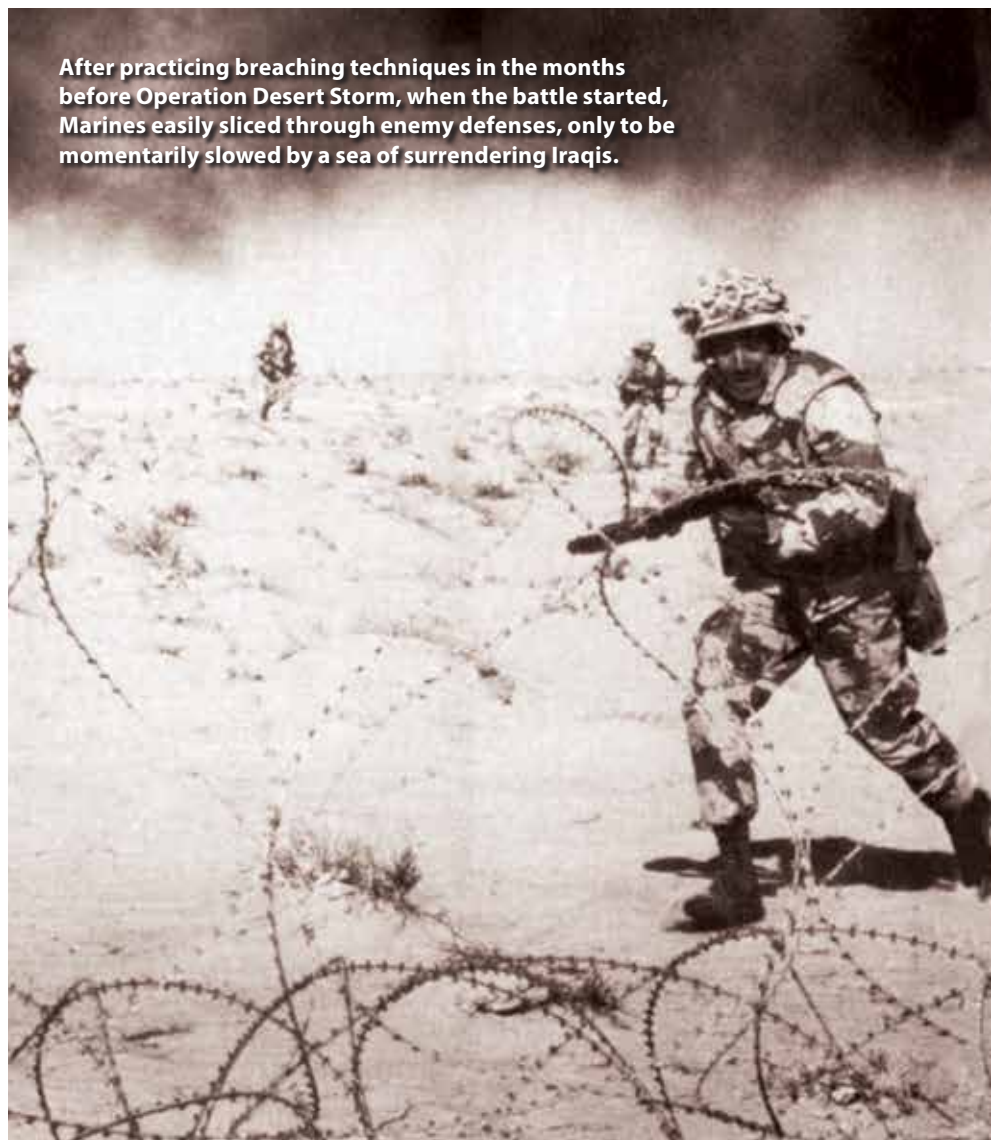
"I would prefer not to go to war because

of the cost in human lives," Fulford added, "but should we go, I think this organization is as ready and prepared as it could possibly be at this time."

As Fulford, Kessinger and all the other Marine leaders here prepared for the imminent responsibilities of perhaps one of the world's most grave crises, the waiting was indeed over.

"Things haven't changed much out here," Kessinger said. "Like I said, it's payday and I haven't been paid yet. I don't even remember yesterday."

Sgt Brad Mitzelfelt, USMC



After practicing breaching techniques in the months before Operation Desert Storm, when the battle started, Marines easily sliced through enemy defenses, only to be momentarily slowed by a sea of surrendering Iraqis.

Fire Mission: LCpl Gabriel Juarez Yanked the Lanyard And Sent the First Arty Rounds Onto the Iraqis

The first artillery offensive by U.S. ground troops took place here Jan. 21, 1991. The 1st Marine Division artillery unit opened fire from Saudi Arabia across the border on Iraqi positions at 3:14 a.m. and concluded its mission at 3:40.

The actual firing time lasted six minutes. The battery pumped out 71 rounds of improved conventional ammunition shells from M198 155 mm howitzers, covering roughly 1,000 square meters, according to Captain Phillip Thompson, a battalion fire direction officer. The unit was about 3 miles from the border and fired about 8 to 10 miles into Kuwait.

During a routine training exercise, Lance Corporal Gabriel Juarez probably wouldn't have moved at lightning speed

after waking up at 3 a.m. to assist in firing artillery rounds into an impact range.

But this wasn't Camp Pendleton, Okinawa, Hawaii, or any other training base. This was Saudi Arabia in the midst of a war, and Juarez and the rest of his gun crew had just received a "real-world" fire mission.

They received the order nine hours after setting-in their positions near the Iraqi border. The temperatures had been cold all night, and since his battery's mission involved some waiting, Gun Six's crew was at 50 percent guard—one half remaining awake and on alert, and the other half asleep and/or trying to stay warm.

"We received a call for fire from an infantry regiment and were told that an enemy artillery battery was actually firing down into Khafji [from across the border]," Thompson said.

"We were told to bring only what we needed for the raid, so we didn't have much cold-weather gear with us," Juarez said. "But it [worrying about the cold]

kept our minds off of thinking about incoming rounds we might have taken from the Iraqis or anything else that could have gone wrong.

"It was a rude awakening," he said, "but it didn't take long to wake up. After I heard that we had a fire mission, the butterflies kicked in. We all just jumped up, everybody went to their respective places, and we started throwing rounds downrange."

Juarez is the number one man, meaning that he is the last man to contribute to the gun's operation by priming the powder charge and pulling the lanyard which fires the projectiles. "At first, pulling the lanyard wasn't too big of a deal because my adrenaline was pumping and I just wanted to shoot the rounds downrange and get out of there, knowing that we might be taking some incoming fire, too," Juarez said. "In a way, it was almost like a regular training mission, but at the end, we all started to ponder that we were the first ones to fire on them (the Iraqi forces).

"When you shoot the type of rounds we fired and as much as we did, the trails of the gun dig in pretty much so it took longer than usual to get them out and hooked up to the truck, but we did well, considering we were pretty tired."

Thompson said that the battalion had less than 12 hours notice that it was going to execute the mission. Despite the short notice, the "cannon cockers" were on the road at 3:30 p.m. on the 20th and were in place at 6 p.m. They waited for a fire mission throughout the night.

About two hours before they unleashed their howitzers, the battery received enemy fire, but it had no effect, landing about 2,000 meters southeast of its position.

According to First Lieutenant Christopher Mayette, a battery executive



CPL KEVIN DOLL, USMC

**"After I heard that we had a fire mission, the butterflies kicked in. We all just jumped up, everybody went to their respective places, and we started throwing rounds downrange."
—LCpl Gabriel Juarez**

officer, the possible targets the battery was to engage included multiple rocket launchers, a command-and-control site, and a surface-to-air missile site. “The rocket-launcher battery is one that fired upon us, but was later taken out by air,” he said. “We ended up firing on a different battery that was firing on Marine positions near the border.”

Gunnery Sergeant Juan DeWilliams said that Marines rehearse for combat but cannot rehearse actual combat. “The boys impressed me,” said the 14-year veteran. “We did what we had to do, then got the hell out of there.”

“I was nervous of the unexpected,” said Sergeant Norman Arias. “I’m an artillery meteorologist. My job is to get weather-condition information to the fire direction center, so the guns don’t have to use ‘Kentucky windage’ to aim their rounds. It felt good knowing I helped the guns get all those rounds downrange and on target.”

LCpl Robert Redwine said, “The 3rd Marines were the first to take incoming from Iraqi troops, and now we were able to give some of it back.” Redwine was one of the Marines who supplied the security for the mission. “I was happy to be out there and to make a little history,” said the Marine from Portland, Ore.

Cpl Steve Nelson, USMC and Sgt John Dodd, USMC

While Cannoneers Sent Rounds Downrange, Infantrymen Took Incoming and Waited for Word to Attack

“Incoming, incoming! Hit your fighting holes!” could be heard throughout the area as the leathernecks from an infantry battalion of the 1st Marine Division rushed for cover.

For more than a week, these Marines were taking artillery rounds from Iraqi positions inside the Kuwaiti border.

“We don’t mind taking incoming as long as we don’t take any hits,” said Captain Kent Bradford, an operations officer. Bradford said the Iraqis had been dropping two to three rounds a night for five nights running but hadn’t hit them yet.

“Marines here haven’t displayed any amount of stress or strain,” added the captain. “The apprehension is there, but we don’t talk about shells landing on our position.”

Being shelled was the worst feeling in the world for Private First Class Scott Zmiewsky. “You don’t know where the rounds are coming from, and all you can do is run for cover,” said Zmiewsky.

“At first you’re scared,” added Lance Corporal Chad Graff. “You find yourself stopping what you are doing and looking around. Then all of a sudden, it clicks in your head what to do.”

The incoming wasn’t like the Iraqis were pounding the hell out of them, noted First Lieutenant David Johannsen, a platoon commander. “It’s just a couple of rounds a night,” said the Algonquin, Ill., native.

“Yeah, just enough to tick you off,” said LCpl John Couch. “They wake us up in the middle of night. We have to head to our fighting holes, then back to the rack after the attack is over.”

Sgt John Dodd, USMC

For These Guys, Desert Storm Means Getting Sandblasted by Helicopters

Hunkered down in a hole in the desert floor, four Marines sat and idly talked as the frigid wind of the Saudi winter passed overhead. Storm clouds covered the sky, intermittently spitting rain at them.

A low grumbling caused the Marines to perk up and look out over flatland toward the horizon.

“Bird comin’,” one of the Marines stated matter-of-factly.

Grabbing goggles and helmets, two Marines wearing reflective vests clambered out of the protective pit and scurried onto the landing zone (LZ).

Like giant bumblebees, two approaching CH-53E helicopters gently maneuvered toward the LZ. Their “pollen,” six pallets of meals, ready to eat (MRE), dangled in nets underneath. The helicopter support team used a variety of hand-and-arm signals to guide the incoming ‘53s safely down onto the LZ.

Unhooking their load, the helicopters pulled up and soared out of the area.

Marines of the helicopter support team (HST), part of Beach and Terminal Operations Company, 2nd Landing Support Battalion (LSB), are the eyes and ears of helo pilots who approach and land in an LZ under their control.

During the first weeks of Operation Desert Storm, these HST Marines were working to help furnish a supply depot near the Kuwaiti border. The incoming “birds” were supplying the depot with MREs, medical supplies and maintenance parts.

“Our main mission is to talk the helos into the zone,” said HST leader Corporal



CPL SUWAT TITHAPATHACHAI, USMC

Cpl Donald Vaught, left, and Cpl Marc Carbonetto, both “Stinger” missilemen, practice honing in on targets from USS *Guam* in the Persian Gulf. They were part of an 18,000-Marine amphibious force that tied down several Iraqi divisions, forcing them to keep close to the Kuwaiti coast while trying to guess where the Marines would land.

“He cut his load and was pulling up when one of his engines blew. The bird began wobbling around and came down within about 30 feet of me.”

—PFC Timothy L. McClintic

J. Shane Bost. “We also help the Landing Support Equipment Marines move the cargo off the LZ, and we package and hook up any outgoing cargo.”

The Lexington, N.C., native said that his company had been in country and manning the landing zone about a month. He added that the helicopter support teams quickly learned how treacherous the desert can be during their operations.

“We have a lot more trouble seeing the birds when they get close to the ground,” the Camp Lejeune Marine said. “We get sandblasted pretty good from the rotor wash.”

Bost and his crew are usually part of an HST; however, they can perform a number of duties required of a beaching operation.

“If we were at the beach, the entire BTO company would be staging vehicles and gear. If there were any helo support ops to do, we would probably be doing that also.” He added the red patches LSB Marines wear on their utility trousers and covers are to let people on the beach know who they are as they run the operation.

Other duties an HST is tasked with are helping to move litters of wounded personnel on and off helos during a medevac and the management of personnel hitching rides on the aircraft.

Although infrequent, mishaps can occur as the HST performs its duties.

“I was bringing in a bird with an external load the other day,” began Private First Class Timothy L. McClintic, a member of Bost’s HST. “He cut his load and was pulling up when one of his engines blew. The bird began wobbling around and came down within about 30 feet of me. The pilot moved to the side of his cargo and came down pretty hard,” said the landing support specialist from Seymour, Ind.

Luckily, no one was hurt in the incident and the HST reviews events such as this.

“We often have safety briefs with the pilots. They tell us if they have trouble over the LZ, they’ll try to head to an 11 o’clock position and so we move to 5 o’clock,” commented Bost.



CPL KEVIN DOLL, USMC



CPL KEVIN DOLL, USMC

Above: Getting sandblasted from helicopter prop wash is part of the price Landing Support Battalion Marines paid to keep their fellow leathernecks supplied.

Left: LCpl Danny J. House talks to an incoming helo via radio.

The HST Marines are usually on the LZ shortly after daybreak. They often work into the night as long as the birds are coming in. A spotlight on the bird and their reflective vests help pilots to pinpoint them in the dark.

“We are a mobile unit, like all Marine

units,” Bost said, as he brushed desert grit from one of his crew’s automatic weapons. “We don’t know how long we’ll be here at this supply depot. But anywhere we’re needed by the helos, that’s where we’ll go.”

Cpl Kevin Doll, USMC

Tanks a Lot! The Corps Put Abrams Tank on Front Line In Time for Shoot-Out



SGT ROBERT C. JENKS, USMC

Above: LCpl Adam Kennedy peers up through the gunner's hatch of his M-1A1 tank before aiming it north and driving into Kuwait.

Below: M1A1 Abrams tanks arrived in Saudi Arabia in time to roll into Kuwait and battle the Soviet-made T-55 and T-62 tanks.

Marines of 2nd Tank Battalion, 2nd Marine Division unloaded M-1A1 tanks from military prepositioning ships Jan. 10. The Abrams tanks will gradually replace the aging M-60s and are the first of the sophisticated tanks to join the Corps. They couldn't have arrived in Saudi Arabia at a better time.

The tanks are out-of-the-factory new. When they rolled out of their assembly plants, they rolled onto ships and were joined with forces already in place.

When the ships docked, 2nd Tank Bn Marines boarded them to ready the tanks for offload. Private First Class Chester Bryans climbed aboard the first tank. After a quick light and instrument check, he drove the 67.5-ton tank onto the ramp spanning the gap from ship to shore.

Bryans taxied the tank to a rally point to ready it for its first test. There, a factory employee replaced Bryans for the trial run.

Once in position, a road guide gave his signal, and the tank lunged forward, picking up speed. The tank's engine revved up as its driver drove down the

darkened road, at approximately 40 mph.

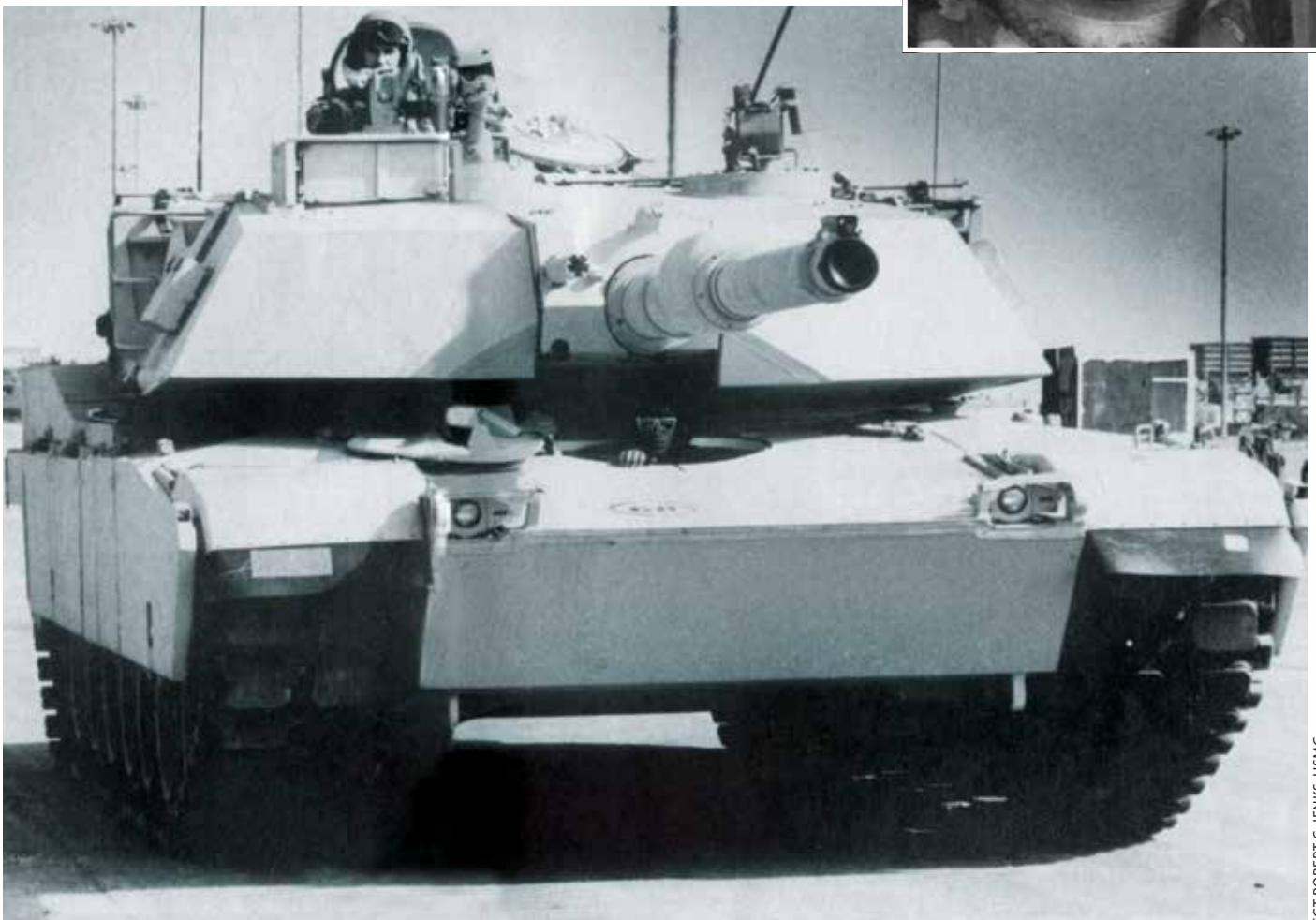
At the end of the half-mile strip, the driver parked the tank in a staging area, where tankers started the depreservation process by taking off equipment boxes and removing tape from the M256 120 mm main guns.

For several days, the Marines equipped

LCpl John C. Maloney maneuvers his M1A1 Abrams. Tanks helped spearhead drives by the 1st and 2nd Marine Divisions that reached Kuwait City in less than three days.



SGT ROBERT C. JENKS, USMC



SGT ROBERT C. JENKS, USMC

the tanks with machine guns, removed the packing grease, and readied what they call “Silent Death” for combat.

In November, the 2nd Tank Bn leather-necks had learned to operate the new tank.

“We spent two weeks learning about the M-1A1,” Lance Corporal Allan Bouchard of Lexington, N.C., said. “We mostly focused on our own stations because of the (Persian Gulf) crisis.”

According to Bouchard, the Marines like the M-1A1 much better than the M-60. “It’s a lot faster, has a lower profile, a larger gun and has much better armor,” he said. “It’s just a far better tank.”

The Marines are also very confident of the tank’s capabilities. “We can outrun, outgun and take a hit better than any other tank made,” Corporal James J. Reinhardt of Cherokee, Iowa, said. “Besides, the M-1A1 even has an NBC (nuclear, biological and chemical) defense system on board so we don’t have to worry about getting gassed.”

With the new tanks in Saudi Arabia, 2nd Tanks now has a piece of equipment with the technology of tomorrow, for combat today.

Cpl Philip Haring, USMC

2nd Marine Division Took First Iraqi Prisoners: “Very Prudent Individuals”

The first Iraqi prisoners taken by the 2nd Marine Division surrendered on the afternoon of Feb. 5, 1991.

The six Iraqi soldiers, two officers and four enlisted men, drove to the berm in a vehicle displaying a white flag. They dismounted, walked to Marine units that had them under observation and asked to surrender. “Each had the pamphlets explaining surrender procedures,” said Lieutenant Colonel Jan Huly, the assistant operations officer of the division.

“They were part of a combat engineer unit,” Huly said. “They told us that they were disenchanted with the war effort. They indicated that food, medicine and other basic needs were in short supply. They were very prudent individuals.”

The prisoners ate meals, ready to eat (MREs) and a hot meal, underwent a medical checkup and had the opportunity to clean up. “They were in pretty good condition when they showed up,” said Huly, “but they were grateful for the food. They especially enjoyed the MRE candy.”

LtCol Huly stated that after questioning, the prisoners were turned over for their detainment in accordance with the Geneva Convention.

“They indicated that their particular unit was suffering greatly from desertions, apparently the results of allied bombing. They also indicated that many more of their soldiers would defect, but they lack the opportunity. There seems to be a shortage of almost everything there, so it seems that our bombing campaign is having positive effects for us,” Huly said.

Sgt Earnie Grafton, USMC

Getting Attention The Hard Way

They weren’t looking for trouble; they just wanted to be seen. Elements of the 1st Marine Division were sending out mobile patrols to let everybody up north know that the United States had its eye on the area near the border.

“The patrols are mainly for surveillance and to establish a U.S. presence in the area,” said Captain Kevin Scott, a rifle company commander. “If there are unfriendlies in the area, they see us, and, therefore, know that we’re still interested in the ground we’re patrolling. It keeps them guessing.”

Each company of the task force which was running the patrols usually headed out with troops, vehicles and weaponry consisting of small arms, antiarmor, and large-caliber weapons. They also had the ability to call for fire and always had a Saudi liaison officer or translator with them.

“If we keep doing these patrols, somebody’s bound to see us and call it in on their radio,” said Sergeant Don Milojevich, a Weapons Company Marine. “As long as they know we’re here, it’s good.”

With weapons always at the ready, the patrols usually headed out at midmorning and returned to their respective base camps just before nightfall.

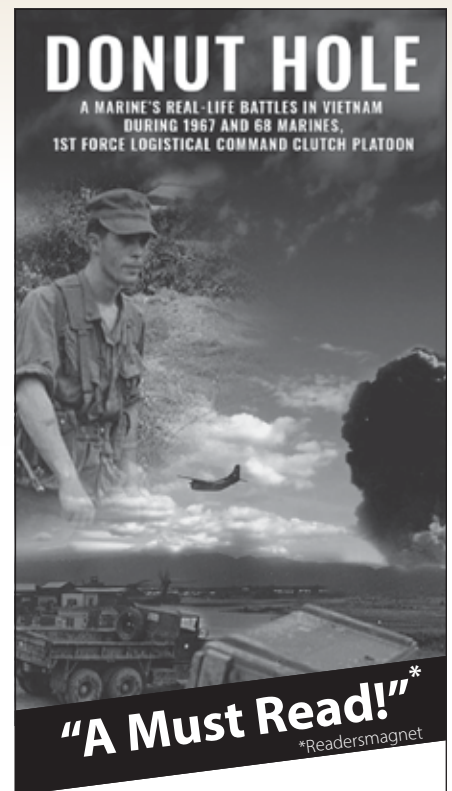
Rolling across the barren desert, the patrols often met up with Saudi military personnel and stopped to converse for a while to further make their presence known.

Sheep and camel herders and other Bedouins were also passed by, often waving or holding up the “peace” or “victory” sign.

Whether it was dry, dusty terrain or mud-filled sabkhas, the patrols pressed on through the desert, stopping from time to time in order to compute a grid to give them their exact location and keep them on the right course.

“They [the Iraqis] may still have a forward observer in the Khafji area,” Scott said. “We want to be seen.”

Cpl Steve Nelson, USMC



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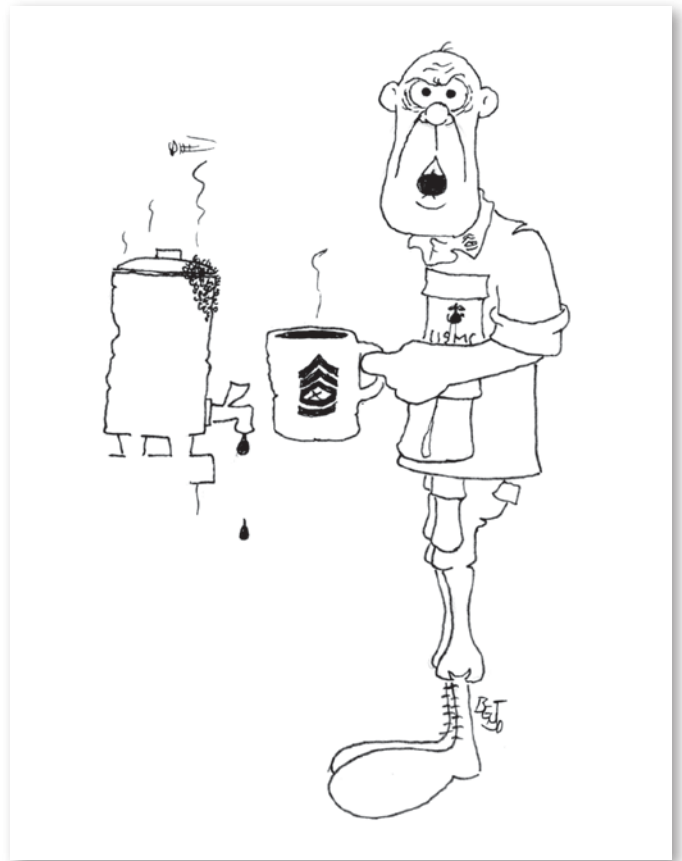
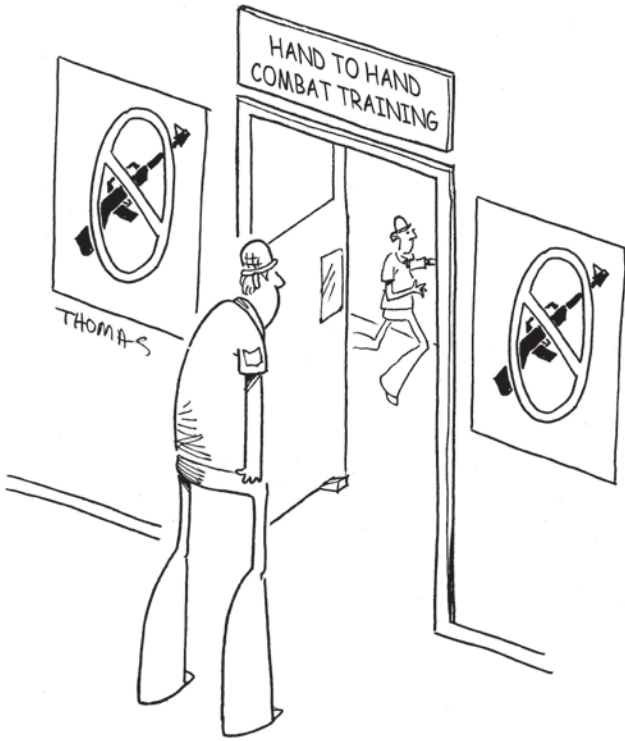
"Three years in the Corps and I'm still not fit enough to open these medicine bottles."



"I'm not going to the mess hall. I'm using GrubHub."



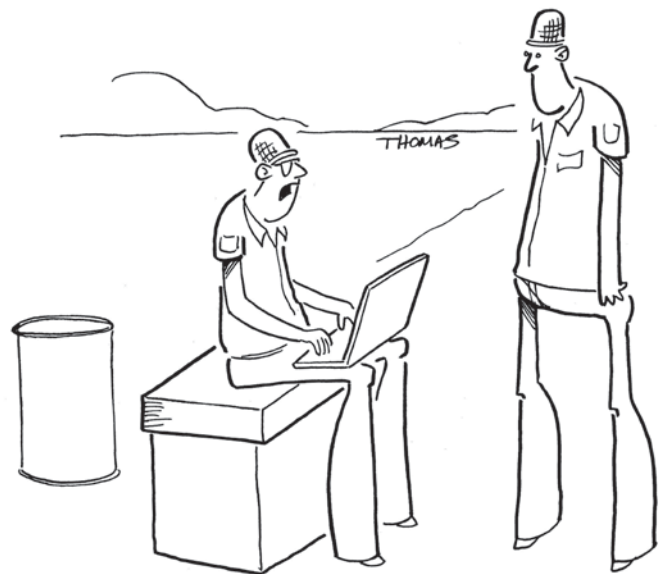
"Carry him, Johnson! Carry, him!"



"No, coffee first, then tell me about the barracks' weekend."



"They're coming back from the grenade range."



"It used to be, keep the barracks spotless, now it's wipe your hard drive."

Marines Learn *from* Battles of the Past

By Capt Chris Cordova, USMC and Capt Cody Farrell, USMC

On Aug. 26, 2021, Marine Combat Training Battalion East (MCT Bn) Marines traveled from Camp Lejeune, N.C. to Fredericksburg, Va., to visit Civil War battlefields where they studied tactics and decision-making.

With support from the Marine Corps Association Foundation, MCT Bn designed the event as part of its non-commissioned officer (NCO) and staff noncommissioned (SNCO) development program. Over the past 16 months, MCT Bn and all of SOI-E has transformed

how it develops Marines to achieve the guidance by the Commandant of the Marine Corps to modernize training and education. Many of the Marines on the trip have been on the cutting edge of adaptation, transitioning from an instructor-centric, platform instruction focused system to a student-centered, outcomes and problems-based teaching environment that focuses on decision-making and critical thinking in addition to training entry-level skills. The battlefield visit helped further NCO and SNCO



MCT Bn instructors study tactics and discuss battlefield decision-making during their visit to Chatham Manor, an estate that was used by the Union Army during the Battle of Fredericksburg, Va.



understanding of student-centered learning while also enhancing their understanding of decision-making, critical thinking, and leadership in historic and contemporary warfighting.

Prior to departing, the participants reviewed material found on the professional development section of the Marine Corps Association website and from “The U.S. Army War College Guide to the Battles of Chancellorsville and Fredericksburg.” All participants were encouraged to prepare to plan as a member of both the Union and Confederate staffs. Most of the Marines embraced the opportunity, conducting additional research into the strategic and operational circumstances surrounding the battle. Once on scene, the Marines

COURTESY OF LTCOL STEVE DETRINIS, USMC



COURTESY OF LTCOL STEVE DETRINIS, USMC

walked the ground in and around the Fredericksburg battlefield. The context of the battle, both sides' leaders, and detailed information covering weapons and equipment capabilities and limitations placed the participants in the shoes of the decision-makers for the battle. Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park rangers assisted in setting the scene and developing a comprehensive plan to maximize the group's time on the battlefield. With their assistance, the battalion incorporated concepts akin to a tactical exercise without troops (TEWT) and a Socratic dialogue designed to encourage the Marines to assume the personalities and the roles of the Civil War tactical leaders to expand their understanding of

the decisions shaped by the fog of war.

On the second day of the visit, MCT Bn began the staff ride at Chatham Manor, an estate that was used by the Union Army during the battle, with a brief, contextual overview provided by a park ranger and an operational overview as the beginning of the battle unfolded. When they broke into small groups, the NCOs reviewed the decisions made by the Union Army Commanding General, Major General Ambrose E. Burnside. The NCO teams developed and briefed the missions and tactical tasks they would have given their armies at the beginning of the battle and before the attempted river crossing at Fredericksburg as if they had been in command. While preparing their orders,

The view from Chatham, known in December 1862 as the "Lacy House," gave the MCT Bn instructors an outstanding perspective of portions of the battlefield in Fredericksburg, Va.

they walked around Chatham Manor, which is located along the banks of the Rappahannock River opposite the city of Fredericksburg, to understand the battle space from the vantage of Civil War artillerymen and the senior tactical leaders who had operated from that position during the battle.

After plans were completed, the team gathered at a vantage point that provided views of Fredericksburg and the Rappahannock River crossing sites to receive their updates and explain their



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decisions. The groups discussed their plans and decisions, and everyone moved across the river to the next stop to discuss the battle from the Army of Northern Virginia's vantage point.

MCT Bn relocated to the visitor center of the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park. From the visitor center, the NCOs walked along Marye's Heights—during the battle, this position was held by General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia—and briefed the beginning stages of the battle as Lee and his subordinates understood it. This session also began with a park ranger providing context to help the participants understand the Confederate situation. The Marines focused on exploring Lee's army's assumptions as the men observed the Union Army forming across the Rappahannock River.

Following a brief orientation, the teams created mission statements and tactical tasks for dissemination to their army. Additionally, they were asked to consider Lee's operational approach and how it aligned with the Confederacy's tactical and operational objectives. Since



COURTESY OF LTCOL STEVE DETRINIS, USMC

Instructors from MCT Bn are photographed at the southern end of Marye's Heights, which is now the Fredericksburg National Cemetery, established in July 1865.

the groups had already discussed the Union Army's tactical and operational end states and outcomes, they had to remain disciplined to focus on what the Confederate Army may have thought the Union Army's objective was instead of considering what they know about the Union's plan. Each of the teams created a plan for how they would prevent the Union Army from achieving its objectives, and while some groups decided to conduct a delaying action, others decided to conduct a defense in

depth from within and beyond Fredericksburg's urban terrain. Others decided to cede space for time and to defend along the commanding linear feature that defines Marye's Heights.

All of these plans could have succeeded for a variety of reasons. However, the most important lesson that MCT Bn learned during the staff ride was not a tactical decision or a determination of which team developed the best plan—an outcome that did not happen! The most important lessons were how to

Participants from the MCT Bn staff ride gather in front of the monument featuring MG Andrew Humphreys, whose men advanced farther on Confederate-held Marye's Heights than any other Union troops did during the Battle of Fredericksburg.



COURTESY OF LTCOL STEVE DETRINIS, USMC

use history to help develop the critical thinking of contemporary military leaders.

MCT Bn codified the learning by closing the staff ride with a detailed discussion covering the outcomes we desired from the exercise. First, the NCOs and SNCOs articulated their understanding of the belligerents' operational plans and their relationship to their strategic objectives. A highlight of this conversation was the tie-in to MCDP-1, Warfighting. Specifically, the groups argued the differences between limited and unlimited warfare as both pertained to the Battle of Fredericksburg and the historic operational approach that best matched the strategic end state.

Another major theme the Marines highlighted was decision-making in the fog of war. During the conduct of the staff ride, the Marines had to make decisions with limited knowledge of their friendly situation and limited in-

telligence of the adversary. The lack of clear understanding of the adversary's intentions greatly affected the participants' plans, which applied realism. This resulted in participants developing courses of action that did not effectively use the advantages of terrain and available troops to stifle the adversary's attempts at achieving their strategic goals.

Finally, the Marines discussed the application of the skills they used during the staff ride in relation to their primary role as teachers and coaches of entry-level students. By participating in a TEWT and using Socratic dialogue techniques, the participants experienced student-centered, outcomes-based learning through the eyes of the students. Additionally, the participants experienced instruction that applied effective ways to ask leading questions without giving answers. Participants applied foundational warfighting concepts such

as bias for action and decentralized command to a historic battle. These are all concepts that they can easily replicate in the Eastern North Carolina swamps with their students. The staff ride provided an excellent opportunity for MCT Bn NCOs and SNCOs to practice decision-making while fine-tuning their own critical thinking. By the conclusion of the staff ride and thanks to the generosity of the Marine Corps Association Foundation, the MCT Bn NCOs and SNCOs bettered themselves and in the process discovered how to better train and develop more lethal riflemen for the Fleet Marine Force.

Authors' bios: Capt Chris Cordova, an infantry officer, and Capt Cody Farrell, an artillery officer, are currently assigned as company commanders with Marine Combat Training Bn, School of Infantry-East. 🇺🇸

Fredericksburg, Va.



COL JOEL L. COOLEY, USMC (RET)

Association Recognizes Achievements of Marine Engineers

After a cancellation in 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Marine Corps Engineer Association's annual awards banquet was held in Fredericksburg, Va., Sept. 24, 2021. Each year, deserving Marine Corps engineers are nominated by their commanders to compete for the title of "outstanding engineer" in their grade.

Headquarters Marine Corps makes the final selections, and the association recognizes the individuals and units at its annual awards banquet. The highlight of the evening was recognizing the 18 active-duty Marines selected as the Corps' outstanding engineers and

explosive ordnance disposal technicians for 2021. The outstanding engineer units of the year were also recognized with 2nd Combat Engineer Battalion, 7th Engineer Support Battalion and Engineer Company, Marine Wing Support Squadron 372 receiving top honors.

The guest of honor, Colonel Gary A. McCullar, the commanding officer of Marine Corps Engineer School, presented plaques to the award recipients.

Submitted by Col Joel L. Cooley, USMC (Ret)

Detroit

WW II Marine, 100, Receives First Set of Dress Blues

As a young Marine during World War II, Ed Gazel saw combat on Tarawa, Saipan, Tinian and Okinawa but he was discharged as a sergeant without ever receiving his dress blues. Now 100, Gazel, who lives in Detroit, Mich., finally donned the iconic uniform to celebrate the 246th birthday of the Corps, Nov. 10, 2021, thanks to the quality service and expert tailoring provided by The Marine Shop in Quantico, Va., and the generosity of the Chief Rick Stone and Family Charitable Organization, which funded the purchase.

Stone, a retired police chief who later worked as a historian for the now-deactivated Joint Prisoner of War/Missing in Action Accounting Command, founded his charitable organization in 2006. Its primary mission is to conduct research and investigations on behalf of the families of missing in action servicemembers. It was through his foundation's work that Stone was connected with Gazel, who



COURTESY OF RICK AND CINDY STONE

helped him solve the case of an MIA Marine, Claire Eulin Goldtrap, who was lost on Tarawa the same day Gazel landed there in 1943.

Upon learning that Gazel never had a set of dress blues, Stone and his wife, Cindy, connected with Marine veteran Chuck Bernard of the Marine Corps League Detachment 152 in Dearborn, Mich., to which Gazel belongs. Armed with Gazel's measurements and list of medals he was awarded during the war—among them, a

Bronze Star with combat "V" for valor—Bernard connected with The Marine Shop general manager Janice Gwazdauskas, who helped facilitate the order and tailoring of the uniform pieces.

On Nov. 5, 2021, just days ahead of the Marine Corps birthday, the Stones presented Gazel with the dress blues, which he then wore to a tailgate party honoring veterans at the University of Michigan.

Submitted by Col Tim Mundy, USMC (Ret)



COURTESY OF JIM CURTIS

Tacoma, Wash.

Ocean Warriors

A small group of veterans who reside in the Tacoma, Wash., area gathered at the Harbor Lights Restaurant on Tacoma's waterfront to celebrate the 246th birthday of the Corps. Referred to by event organizer Jim Curtis as the "Ocean Warriors Birthday Party," this most recent gathering on Nov. 10, 2021, marked the third iteration of the event.

Pictured from the left are retired Coast Guard pilot Mike Flood; SgtMaj Kevin Fontenot, currently serving with the Combat Logistics Command on Joint Base Lewis-McChord; World War II Marine Raider Chuck Meacham; retired Marine Lieutenant Colonel Ed Doyne; and Curtis, who, along with Doyne, served with 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment in Vietnam.

Submitted by Jim Curtis

Barstow, Calif.

New Logo Pays Tribute to USMC, Route 66 Connection

A new 13-foot statue of the eagle, globe and anchor—with a noteworthy modification—was dedicated at Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, Calif., Nov. 9, 2021, to commemorate the military significance of historic U.S. Route 66 during World War II. According to the base's environmental director, Jason Thompson, as America entered the war, the West Coast became a desirable location for training bases, and the completion of Route 66 allowed for the transportation of troops, equipment and supplies to various bases nationwide.

As the only military installation to have Route 66 go straight through it, MCLB Barstow's Cultural Resources Program staff created a new logo that integrated the symbols of the Corps and the iconic route, which was then approved by Headquarters Marine Corps. In addition to the statue, the new logo is now stenciled on the road and appears in the Historic Route 66 signs that span the 1.71-mile stretch of the route that runs through the base.

Submitted by Jason Thompson



COURTESY OF JASON THOMPSON



COURTESY OF JASON THOMPSON



COURTESY OF JASON THOMPSON



COURTESY OF JASON THOMPSON

"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 Wake of Pandemic, Funded Morale Leave Approved For Okinawa-Based Troops

Since COVID-19 protocols were first implemented in 2020, servicemembers stationed in Okinawa, Japan (MARFORJ), have faced significant barriers to conducting regular, unrestricted annual leave outside of Japan—particularly to and from the United States.

In recognition of this hardship, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Japan released an Okinawa-Based Funded Environmental and Morale Leave (FEML) Bulletin, Dec. 10, 2021, which provides government funding for eligible servicemembers, dependents and Defense Department civilians to travel from Okinawa to Seattle, Wash. Participants may travel to locations other than Seattle, but total transportation costs cannot exceed the costs that would have been incurred had the participants traveled from Okinawa to Seattle.

“The purpose of FEML is to provide all eligible MARFORJ Marines, Sailors and DOD civilians and their families the opportunity to execute leave off the island of Okinawa, spend time with family and friends there, and maintain operational and personal morale after almost two years of pandemic in the face of unique conditions in the Western Pacific,” said Lieutenant General James W. Bierman Jr., the commanding general of III Marine Expeditionary Force.

FEML travel time is not chargeable as leave, and no more than two FEML trips are authorized for any overseas tour, including extensions to that tour.

“FEML is an entitlement, and all those

eligible will be encouraged to take advantage of it,” said Bierman. “Each member of MARFORJ eligible for FEML will be briefed by an officer or staff noncommissioned officer regarding the opportunities and procedures outlined in this policy.”

Dependents are eligible for FEML when residing with the servicemember or

civilian employee serving an accompanied tour if the servicemember’s dependent is command-sponsored or the civilian employee’s dependent is authorized. Additionally, FEML travel may not be taken within six months of the beginning or end of the servicemember’s tour of duty. This funded travel will be directly approved by the servicemember’s chain of command.

“Throughout the period FEML is executed, readiness to ‘Fight Now’ must be maintained as a first priority; through deliberate planning, operational requirements and FEML can be balanced,” said LtGen Bierman.

The FEML is categorized as an exception to policy and will no longer be valid once the Japanese government removes COVID pandemic travel restrictions affecting DOD personnel on Okinawa.

LCpl Natalie Greenwood, USMC

Walmart, Sam’s Club Maintain Commitment to Hiring Veterans And Military Spouses

In a continued effort to employ veterans, retail giant Walmart has partnered with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce’s Hiring

Supporting our Veterans

- Attracting talent for the future of Walmart.
- Supporting and connecting Walmart and Sam's Club associates.
- Advancing all veterans and military spouses' economic opportunity and well-being.

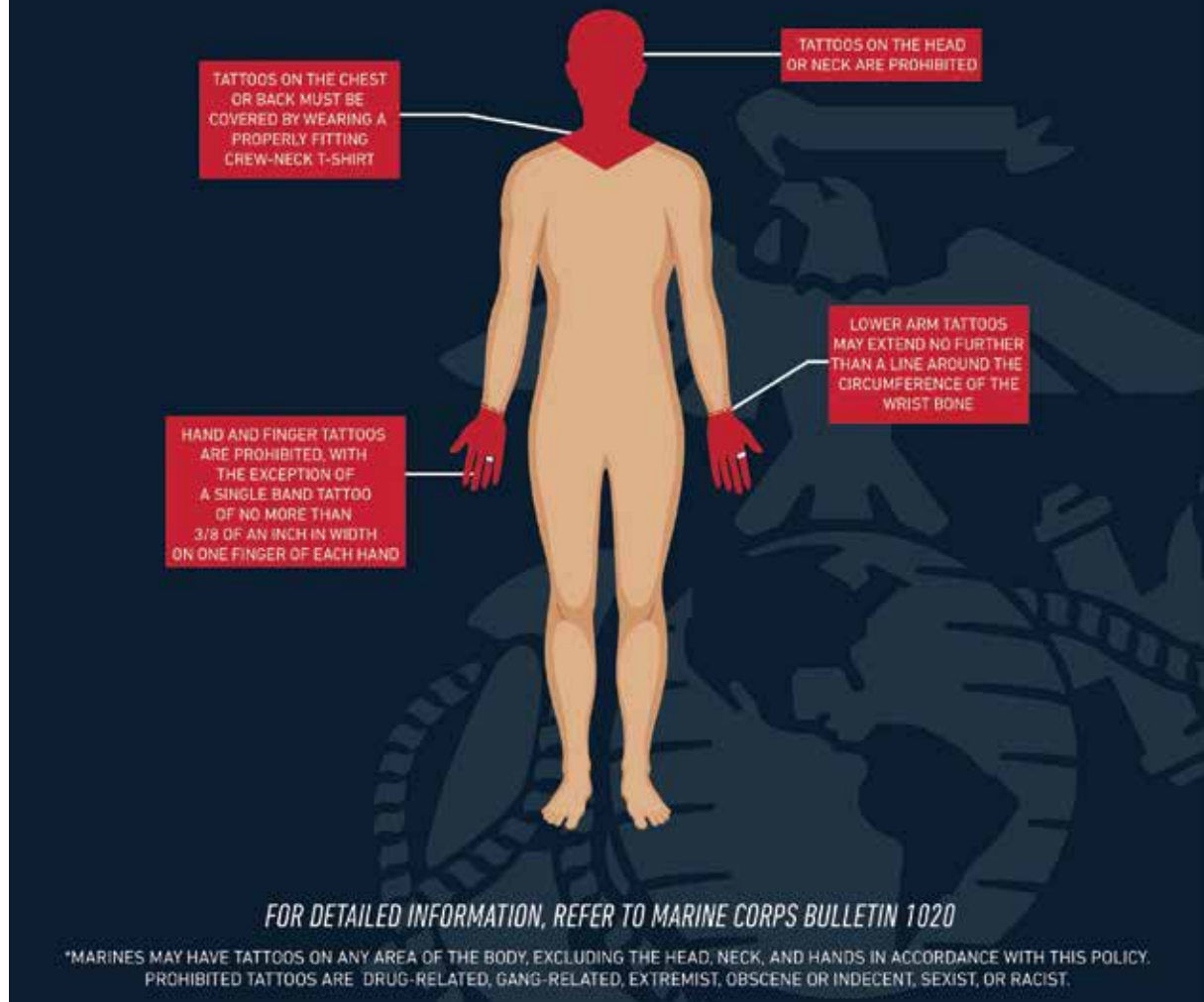
Since launching this past summer, nearly **300,000** veterans' and military spouses have engaged with the "Find-a-Future" site.

Since 2013, we've hired more than **400,000** veterans and military spouses.

Approximately **90%** of those who have participated in the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Hiring our Heroes pilot received a job offer.

HIRING OUR HEROES
U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FOUNDATION

UPDATED TATTOO POLICY



NEW INK—The Marine Corps has implemented a new, less restrictive tattoo policy which replaces the previous guidance that was issued in 2016. Marines now may have tattoos on any area of the body, excluding the head, neck and hands, as long as they are in accordance with the specific guidelines detailed in Marine Corps Bulletin 1020, dated Oct. 29, 2021. Tattoos that are drug-related, gang-related, extremist, obscene or indecent, sexist or racist remain strictly prohibited.

Our Heroes initiative and its corporate fellowship program. Fellows get professional learning experiences with campus office and frontline roles in Walmart U.S., Sam's Club, Supply Chain and Global Tech. The 6-to-12-week fellowship provides support with a learning project, access to mentors, and opportunities to discover career journeys at Walmart. Approximately 90 percent of those who have participated in the pilot program received a job offer.

Walmart's Veterans Welcome Home Commitment goal of hiring 250,000 veterans by 2020 was met years in advance and since 2013, the corporation has hired more than 400,000 veterans and military

spouses at Walmart and Sam's Club.

Founded by U.S. Army Intelligence Corps veteran Sam Walton, Walmart believes that it's important to keep veterans engaged even after hiring them. Through SERVES, a veteran and military spouse associate resource group (ARG), the company ensures these associates stay connected by sharing helpful resources and holding regular network and education events. The ARG was originally a group for campus office associates but is now expanding to associates working in Walmart's stores, clubs, distribution centers and fulfillment centers.

In the summer of 2021, Walmart introduced "Find-a-Future," located at <https://walmartfindafuture.com>,

a free site to help veterans and military spouses achieve their goals. The site provides a coach and tools to help veterans and military spouses understand their skills and experience and connect them to the right partners. Since its launch, nearly 300,000 individuals have engaged with the "Find-a-Future" site.

For more information on the Hiring our Heroes corporate fellowship program, which pairs veterans and military spouses with employers like Walmart, visit <https://www.hiringourheroes.org/career-services/fellowships/>.

Brynt Parmeter



DPAA Identifies Battle of Tarawa Casualty

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced in November 2021 that Corporal Andrew Pellerito, 22, of Grand Rapids, Michigan, killed during World War II, was recently accounted for.

In November 1943, Pellerito was a member of Company K, 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force, which landed against stiff Japanese resistance on the small island of Betio in the Tarawa Atoll of the Gilbert Islands, in an attempt to secure the island. Over several days of intense fighting at Tarawa, approximately 1,000 Marines and Sailors were killed and more than 2,000 were wounded. Pellerito was killed on the first day of the battle, Nov. 20. His remains were reportedly buried in Cemetery 33.

In 1946, the 604th Quartermaster Graves Registration Company centralized all American remains found on Tarawa at Lone Palm Cemetery for later repatriation. Almost half of the known casualties were never found. The remains that were recovered were sent to Hawaii for analysis. Those that could not be identified or associated with one of the missing were buried as unknowns at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, also known as the Punchbowl, in Honolulu, including one set designated Tarawa Unknown X-118. None of the recovered remains could be associated with Pellerito, and, in October 1949, a Board of Review declared him “non-recoverable.”

In 2009, History Flight, Inc., a nonprofit organization, discovered a burial site on Betio believed to be Cemetery 33, which has been the site of numerous excavations ever since. In 2014, possible human remains and identification media were found and were turned over to the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, a DPAA predecessor.

At the end of 2016, DPAA disinterred Tarawa Unknown X-118 from the Punchbowl as part of an effort to identify the Tarawa Unknowns buried there. Scientific analysis determined that elements of the History Flight turnover were associated with X-118.

To identify Pellerito’s remains, scientists from DPAA used dental and anthropological analysis, as well as circumstantial and material evidence. Additionally, scientists from the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System used mitochondrial DNA, Y chromosome DNA, and autosomal DNA analysis.

DPAA

Camp Pendleton Marine Killed While Assisting Stranded Motorist

Lance Corporal Alberto Lucio, 20, a military policeman with Security and Emergency Services Battalion, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, was killed Dec. 5 on Interstate 5 in Oceanside, Calif., while attempting to aid distressed motorists on the highway’s shoulder after their vehicle was involved in a collision.

Lucio, a native of Smithville, Tenn., along with the disabled vehicle, were struck by a box truck. He was pronounced dead on the scene.

“Security and Emergency Services Battalion sends our deepest condolences and prayers to LCpl Lucio’s family,” said Colonel John W. Black, commanding officer, Security and Emergency Services Battalion, MCB Camp Pendleton. “LCpl Lucio performed a noble and selfless act by stopping on Interstate 5 to provide

critical aid to a person in need. LCpl Lucio gave his life in the service of others. His actions epitomized servant leadership and personified the very best in our emergency services personnel. Please honor LCpl Lucio’s memory through your actions, words and deeds.”

His personal awards include the National Defense Service Medal and the Global War on Terrorism Medal.

USMC

Robert L. Bangert Sr., 88, of Silver Cliff, Wis. He joined the Marine Corps in 1950 and served in the Korean War. He was a member of the American Legion.

John “Jack” Brody, 89, of Wilmington, N.C. He served on active duty from 1952-1954 and was a member of the Marine Corps Reserve until 1960. He was a member of the MCL Cape Fear Det. #1030.

Richard L. Buechler Sr., 93, of Green Bay, Wis. He was a Marine Corps pilot who flew the F4U Corsair during the Korean War.

Cornelius E. Chisolm III, 83, of Panama City Beach, Fla. He served in the Marine Corps before earning a degree in aerospace engineering. He later earned an MBA and had a career in business.

Col John C. Church Sr., 81, of Clinton Township, Mich. He began his career as an enlisted Marine and later was commissioned. He was a naval flight officer who completed 550 combat missions during the Vietnam War as a radar intercept officer for the F-4 Phantom II.

He commanded a fighter squadron and later was the commanding officer of MWSG-47. His awards include the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Purple Heart, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Air Medal with Strike Flights 39 and the Navy Achievement Medal with combat “V” (and gold star in lieu of second award).

William “Bill” Clark, 95, of St. Louis, Mo. He was a Marine who served in the Pacific during WW II and was a Navy Seabee during the Korean War.

Eugene C. “Skip” George Jr., 77, of Albuquerque, N.M. He enlisted in 1966 and served at Camp Pendleton.

Nicholas R. Harring, 88, of La Crosse, Wis. He was a Marine who served during the Korean War.

CWO-5 Roxanne M. Haskill, 67, of Elizabethton, Tenn. She was a musician who conducted the Marine Band. She served during Operation Desert Storm.

Dennis P. Henry, 67, of Geneseo, Ill. He enlisted after his 1973 graduation from high school and served in Vietnam.

Sgt Gary L. Hill, 74, of Northport, Ala. In 2013 he was awarded the Silver Star for actions that occurred more than four decades earlier on Hill 881 South during the Battle of Khe Sanh in 1967. According to the award citation, after then-LCpl Hill’s platoon leader was killed, he led his fire team as they maneuvered to protect the platoon’s dangerously exposed right flank. “He repeatedly but stealthily exposed himself to enemy fire to engage the enemy at close quarters. Once he crawled to within 3 feet of an enemy bunker and singlehandedly killed its occupants. He then attacked an enemy trench line and killed three NVA soldiers.” When his fire team was targeted by an enemy sniper, he ordered the Marines to

lay down suppressive fire while he located the sniper in order to eliminate him. Hill then evacuated wounded Marines from the battlefield to the base of the hill.

A family friend heard the story, and contacted MajGen John Admire, USMC (Ret), who worked to ensure that Hill was recognized for his actions.

"I only did what I had to do to stay alive, and that's keep moving," said Hill in 2013. "The Marine Corps raises everybody to be a leader if they need to be. If you're the last man standing, you're the leader anyhow," he added.

Sgt Nick Infante, 81, of Colchester, Conn. He was a Marine who served from 1958-1962. He was assigned to 3rdMarDiv.

Floyd M. Kenley, 91, of Pontoon Beach, Ill. He saw action in the Korean War. His awards include two Purple Hearts. He later had a career in sales with Toro.

Laurence Larson, 85, of Moline, Ill. He served in the Marine Corps from 1954-1957. He later earned a divinity degree and was ordained in the Episcopal Church.

Richard Neher, 86, of Wilmington, N.C. He served at MCAS New River in the late 1950s. He was a member of the MCL.

Michael J. Niebrugge, 71, of Effginham, Ill. He served in Vietnam. He was a member of the VFW and the MCL, serving as his detachment's commandant.

MSgt Joseph Pagan, 84, of Irvine, Calif. He immigrated to the U.S. from Italy in 1951 and enlisted in the Marine Corps after completing high school. He was a member of the national championship Marine Corps volleyball team in 1969.

George B. Parrish, 96, of Alexander, N.Y. He enlisted when he was 17 and served in the Pacific during WW II.

Herbert E. Pintsch, 81, in Milton, Wis. He served in the Marine Corps from 1958-1962. He later had a career in law enforcement.

MSgt George E. Rampenthal Jr., 84, of Bowling Green, Ky. He had a 23-year career that included a tour in Vietnam. Other assignments were with 1stMarDiv at Camp Pendleton; Marine Barracks, Naval Base Bermuda; and MCAS Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii. His awards include the Navy Achievement Medal and the Navy Commendation Medal.

Ron Rostoni, 78, of Fort Gratiot, Mich. He served in the Marine Corps and later had a 38-year career with Detroit Power and Industrial. He was also a volunteer firefighter and rescue volunteer.


Col Richard Stockton, 93, of Albuquerque, N.M. He was commissioned after earning his degree and saw combat in the Korean War and the Vietnam War. He retired in 1978.

CWO-2 Jose Luis Torres-Reyes, 75, of Falling Waters, W.Va. He had a 28-year career in the Marine Corps and earned a master's degree in computer science from the University of Maryland. He was active with the International Defensive Pistol Association and the MCL.

Joseph W. "Joe" Trembl, 73, of Green Bay, Wis. He was a Marine who served in Vietnam from 1967-1969.

David A. "Dave" VanGheem, 78, of Lakewood, Wis. He enlisted in the Marine Corps after his 1961 graduation from high school and served as an aircraft mechanic.

Capt Michael J. Walker, 80, of Sister Bay, Wis. He served in the Marine Corps from 1965-1969. He completed a tour in Vietnam, where he was a platoon commander with the 1st Bn, 9th Marines.

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



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SOUND OFF
[continued from page 7]

Mann and Jasmin Moghbeli Are at the Forefront of Space Exploration,” in the October 2021 issue was especially good. Hats off to LtCol Nicole Mann and Maj Jasmin Moghbeli.

The story, “The True Meaning of Semper Fidelis: A Surgeon’s Journey to Heal Wounded Marines” by CDR Bill Krissoff in the November 2021 issue, was truly a story of providence. Out of a family loss, a medical miracle dad took the bull by the horns and joined the Navy. CDR Krissoff gave his medical training to all in need in the highest tradition of our military services. It is great to read about the coordination of medical services between our military branches and our allies in combat. I have never heard or read a greater story of a senior citizen who joined our military and, along with great military service people, got to help and mend our warriors in combat. Lt Nate Krissoff did not pass in vain. To our medical services and support staff, you are the greatest!

HN John Sanchez
USN, 1961 to 1966
Hanford, Calif.



Cpl Ditinno and his wife, De, sent this “you-put-it-together” gingerbread house to Marine Special Operations Company “Bravo,” in Afghanistan thinking they would get a kick out of it.

Unusual Christmas Packages That Were Sent From Home

I spent some time in a Combined Action Platoon in Thua Thien Providence in Vietnam in 1969 and 1970. We loved getting packages from home. The more

idiotic, the better. One year we received a do-it-yourself pizza mix. We had a great laugh when we received it. We were going to trade it having no idea how we were going to cook it, but I said, “Wait a minute,” and took an empty ammo can,



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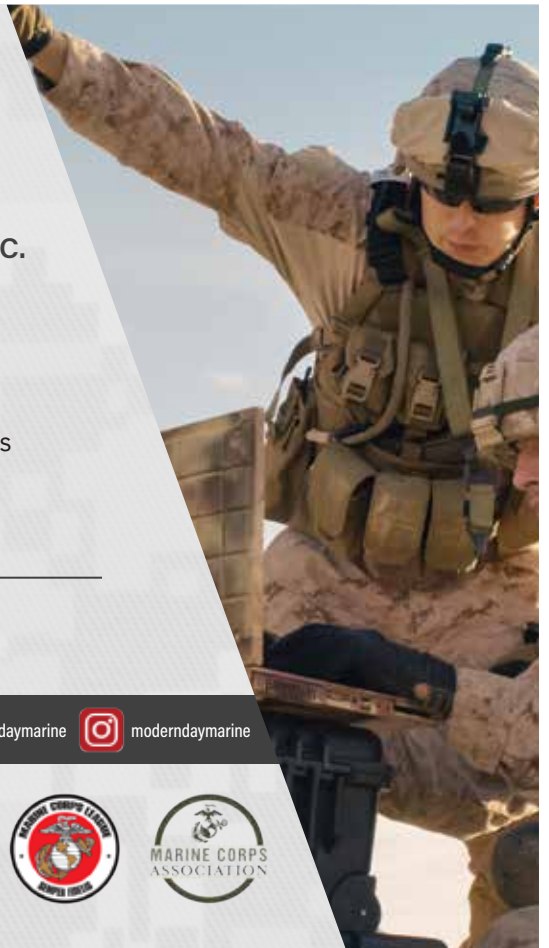
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laid it on its side, lit heat tabs on top and bottom, and cooked our pizza. It didn't look good, but it tasted great.

My wife and I have sent boxes to Afghanistan. We sent a "you-put-it-together" gingerbread house one Christmas thinking the Marines would get a kick out of it. We never expected a return note or picture from Marine Special Operations Company "Bravo." Got to love those Marines!

I've been reading *Leatherneck* for many years. It's a great magazine for Marines.

Cpl Alex Ditinno
Largo, Fla.

Marine Holds Army Pilot in High Regard

This is for my good friend and brother Harry Locklear, an Army chopper pilot, who served in Vietnam for two tours, who has been my friend for more than 40 years.

I was in a chopper in Vietnam that came into a hot landing zone (LZ) in which I was to let the ground command know that supplies were on the way and to secure and mark a good drop zone as soon as possible. We were on the ground maybe five or 10 minutes and had room to take three wounded Marines to the Da Nang hospital. Coming into the LZ we were hit with what I would call popcorn hitting our

bird as we flew over the firing line. As we climbed out of the fire zone, we could feel the "Gs" of a rapid ascent. At 1,000 to 2,000 feet, our bird suddenly lost all power and the co-pilot yelled back to start preparing for a hard landing. Somehow our pilot found a river and we splashed down in about 5 feet of water. Thank God for the river. Upon landing, in my panic, I was ready to bail out of the bird, but the gunner grabbed me and yelled that the blades are were still turning and to stay put. When the blades hit the water, they splintered and splashed water everywhere.

We set up a defensive perimeter and 30 minutes later a couple more choppers came in to pick us up along with the three wounded. At that point we declined the rescue because we could not leave the chopper before it was field stripped and blown up. Another bird came back later and picked us up.

All Marines hold all chopper pilots of any service with a great deal of respect and honor. Most of us ground pounders, while in choppers, felt safer on the ground than in the air, as you pilots were feeling safer in the air. Thank you for your service, Harry.

Cpl R.C. LeBeau
Stockton, Calif.

Marines Uphold Tradition

I was rereading my November 2021 *Leatherneck* and the feature, "Celebrating Marine Corps History, Mission and Tradition: Marines All Over the Globe to Honor the 246th Marine Corps Birthday," and had a great laugh at the picture on page 13 of the Marines of "Charlie" Co, 1/7, my unit from the same time, cutting their celebration cake. Those three Marines were upholding the spirit and dedication of the Marine Corps by having cake with their, most likely, warm beer. Semper Fidelis to the spirit of the Corps!

Sgt Richard B. Ellenberger
Normandy Park, Wash.

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

Reunions

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

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

• **Marine Corps Aviation Association Don Davis Squadron (Aviation Logistics Marines)**, March 10-13, Myrtle Beach, S.C. Contact Kevin McCutcheon, kevinmccutcheon76@gmail.com, or Gale Rodgers, rogers770ki@yahoo.com.

• **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.

• **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.

• **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 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, 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.

• **VMFA-451**, March 8-12, Beaufort, S.C. Contact Sgt Mark Lyons, reunionvmfa451@yahoo.com.

Mail Call

• Thomas Killion, tkillion1964@comcast.net, to hear from anyone who can help him identify his **two platoon numbers** from **MCRD San Diego, August-October 1964**.

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• Philip Glen, pglen1213@gmail.com, wants a **recruit graduation book** for **Plt 1068, San Diego, 1975**.

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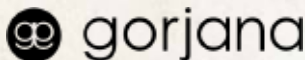
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DRAWING FROM THE PAST—The painting “Ring Around the Rosie” by Col Charles Waterhouse depicts a Marine playing the popular playground game with some Vietnamese refugee children at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., in 1975. When Saigon fell at the end of April of that year, those who were evacuated from the city during Operation Frequent Wind were brought to Camp Pendleton, where temporary housing had been set up for them.

Col Waterhouse, who was the Marine Corps Artist in Residence at the time, traveled to California to document life in the refugee camp. He made sketches and took photographs while he was on site and completed the paintings later when he had returned to his studio.

“My civilian clothes and lack of escort allowed me some freedom and acceptance. Nonetheless, heads or backs were turned when attempts to sketch or photograph were noticed,” writes Waterhouse in the book “Marines and Others: The Paintings of Col Charles Waterhouse, USMCR (Ret).”

Recently, Kris Battles, the Corps’ current Artist in Residence, visited Camp Upshur at MCB Quantico to

see today’s Marines interact with refugees from Afghanistan and to tell the story through his artwork.

“In homage to Waterhouse, I chose warm-toned canvas panels on which to do my color work about the Afghan refugees—especially the oil sketch, ‘Rock, Paper, Scissors,’ which is a similar scene to Waterhouse’s ‘Ring Around the Rosie.’ Both images show how Marines related so warmly to the refugees,” Battles said, adding that he studied the work Waterhouse created after his Camp Pendleton visit prior to his own visit to Camp Upshur.

“I wanted to pay visual tribute to Col Waterhouse and also to honor the Marines, both past and present, who have not only protected democracy abroad, but also welcomed those who have fled to our shores for freedom and refuge.”

Battles’ “Rock, Paper, Scissors” is featured on the cover of *Leatherneck* this month. For more about the Afghan refugees at Camp Upshur, read “A Universal Language: As Afghan Evacuees Arrive at Quantico, Marines Get Creative to Bridge Cultural Divide,” by Sara W. Bock on page 36. 🐞

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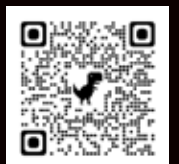
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