

JANUARY 2023

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MAGAZINE OF THE MARINES



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COVER: GySgt Dustin Hamilton, a safety specialist with Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, shows a motivational tattoo on his arm. To read more about Marines and their tattoos, see "The Illustrated Marine" on page 36. Photo by Carlos Guerra. Copies of the cover may be obtained by sending \$3 (for mailing costs) to *Leatherneck Magazine*, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134-0775.

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.)

Regarding the Dinner Menu From Thanksgiving in 1958

I saw the menu included in the November 2022 issue of *Leatherneck* and thought that all Marines and other readers would enjoy knowing that Marines have had incredibly good holiday dinners for at least 100 years. My father-in-law Melvin L. Sewall was stationed at Marine Barracks, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, from 1923 to 1925. He saved his Christmas dinner

menus which I have kept closely guarded. This is also part of our Marine Corps history and should be shared with all. It is interesting to observe the menu format and food contents to see that they have not changed a whole lot in 100 years.

Richard A. Emery
USMC, 1954-1960
Novato, Calif.

Folds of Honor

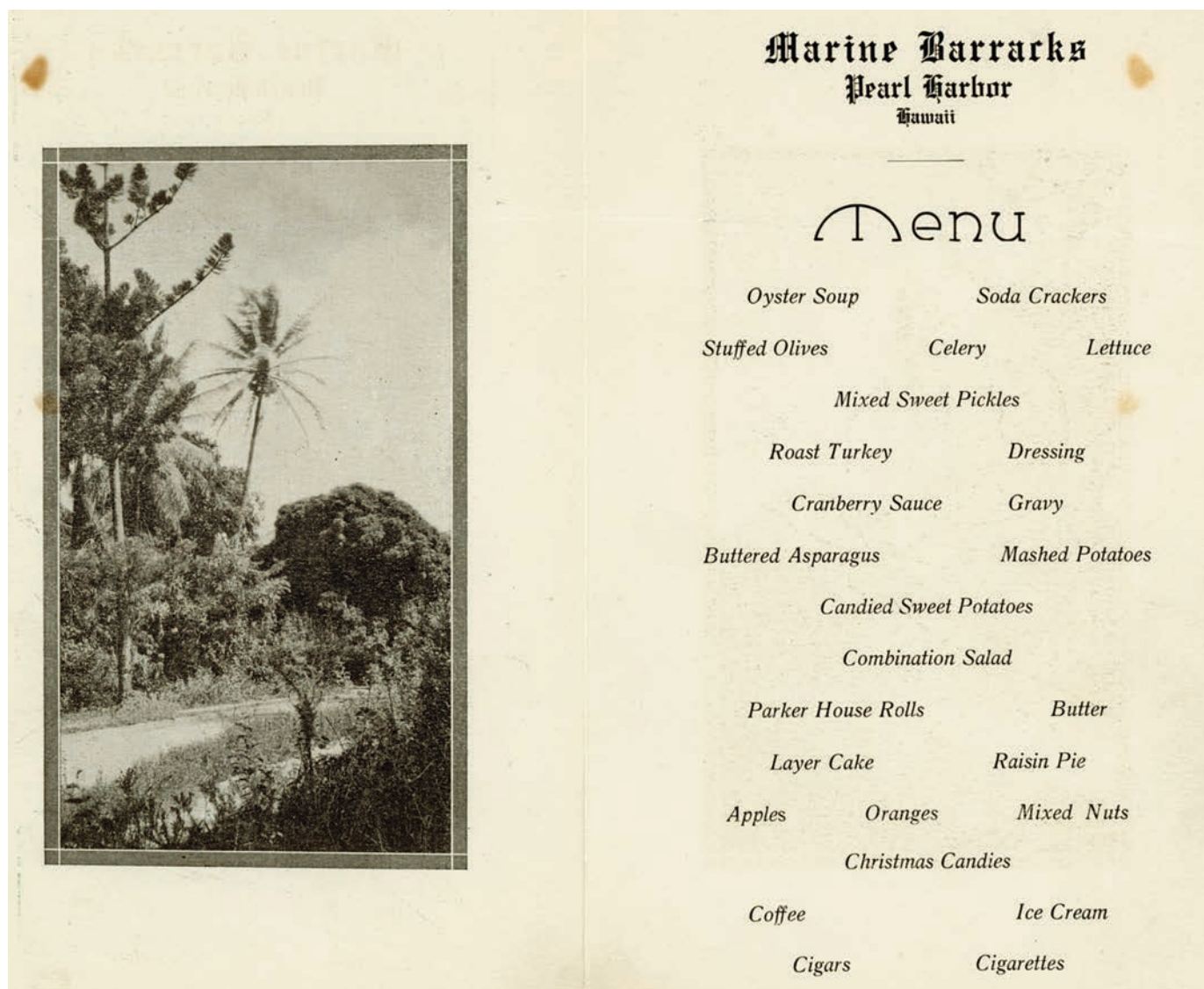
I was working at a boat yard as a night watchman where I had been for the past 13 years. I'd often stumble around these triangle steel things called gussets. One night my boredom led me to give one a close look. It appeared to be that it would look good as a folded flag, so I took it in

the tool room to grind, sand and paint it blue. So far so good, but what about the stars? I was in Hobby Lobby one day and saw these glow-in-the-dark stars. They were the right size, so I painted them white and glued them onto the steel.

I'd planned on putting the first flag on my dad's grave, then I decided to use it for photos including some graves of friends that were veterans. The second one I made was for the ones we lost in our Marine Corps League detachment. The 782 union was always helpful on our toy drives. So, they welded U-bolts on the second flag to place on a stand.

The person I'm creating the third flag for is Navy LT Richard Tito Lannom, a B/N on an A-6 Intruder. On March 1,

Richard Emery's father-in-law, Melvin L. Sewall, saved this menu from Christmas dinner when he was stationed at Pearl Harbor from 1923 to 1925.



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COURTESY OF MIKE KING

These triangle-shaped flags, named "Folds of Honor," were created from metal gusset plates normally used as structural support for buildings and bridges.

1968, LT Lannom flew off USS *Enterprise* (CVN-65) never to be seen again. His A-6 was shot down in north Vietnam. He was MIA until 2017 and his remains were found identified in 2019. LT Lannom was from Union City, Tenn. After finding out he was on the *Enterprise*, I saw where the Navy was building a new *Enterprise* (CVN-80) and cutting up the steel from the old *Enterprise*. I've been writing letters to try and make a flag for him or in honor to him, but I'm not sure if I'll ever get it.

Recently my brother-in-law, Joe Corey, got on board making flags with me. He's trying them with concrete. I've also got Makenzi Hankins of Zebra Graphics helping me make the folded flags like yard signs that I'm going to place on graves of veterans that I know.

Mike King
Kevil, Ky.

No Better Friend

I enjoyed "No Better Friend" in the June 2022 issue of *Leatherneck*! I deeply admire your article about the importance of animals. In Vietnam, these loving creatures were used as food for the local people.

Did you know that snakes are used as food? While attending the Staunton Military Academy in Staunton, Va., my dad ordered a single rattlesnake. He received two snakes instead of one. The cadets in dad's room tried to climb the metal storage containers to get out of the way. Dad did catch both safely and placed the critters in the same cage temporarily.

My wife and I now have Pierre our

parakeet as a companion. Pierre can talk up a storm in English. There are some words that Pierre shouldn't know. Such is life!

Bruce Downs
Palmer, Alaska

Reader: Monument at Parris Island Needs to be Squared Away

I served in the Marine Corps from January 1969 to October of 1974. I went through boot in MCRD San Diego. ITR and BTS at Camp Pendleton. I went to Vietnamese language school in Monterey and spent 17 months in Vietnam with 3rd and 1st Marine Divisions.

I also served for three years at Parris Island as a PMI on the rifle range. I loved my duty at PI and at that time all aspects of that island were pristine! When I recently saw a picture of our beloved Iwo Jima monument from the parade deck on Parris Island, I could not believe what I was looking at!

It looks like it hasn't been cared for at all. It is a disaster and an embarrassment to all Marines!

Robert Mattson
USMC, 1969-1974
Hoffman Estates, Ill.

Thoughts On the Future of The Marine Corps

The November 2022 issue of *Leatherneck* was a great read.

In the future, the U.S. Marine Corps and Navy could be in an area of the world we know so well. Southeast Asia is positioned for sea blockades for food and

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munitions. The Indian Ocean area could be another area of blockade enforcement by the USMC and USN. Two billion people cannot function without food and fresh water. The loss of electrical power by huge dams cannot be ignored. The Three Gorges Dam would become temporarily out of service.

Napoleon said it best, "An army travels on its stomach." China is land locked and it has no Navy to speak of. Taiwan and mainland China could be a possible solution. A democracy next to Japan would be nice. We could have Army, Air Force and Navy forces in friendly nations again.

John Sanchez
USN, 1961-1966
Hanford, Calif.

USMC Route 11 in Vietnam

Reading about the 11th Engineers busting heavies while refurbishing the road to Khe Sanh in the November 2022 issue reminded me of an unfortunate incident when one of the accompanying Marine gun tanks from "Bravo" Co, 3rd Tank Battalion that were providing security made a wrong turn and ended up in the river that runs alongside Route 9 where the engineers were working. The thrown tank track was behind the hapless tank as

it sits "cooling off" in the river. It took a major amount of effort, but the tank got back up on the road and all ended well.

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

Thank You from a Former 11th Engineer

I wish to thank the editor of *Leatherneck* for posting the diligent efforts of the 11th Engineers while up along the DMZ region. Keeping those routes 9 and 1 open and clear of mines being planted each night was a challenge for the sweep teams. Building out those bunkers that came in handy when the enemy took the time to zero in our location also was a challenge while under fire at times.

One more point is that the decision to eliminate Marine Corps tank support remains an issue of failing our Marines of today.

There comes a time when you need heavy tanks support.

Sgt Gene T. Spanos
USMC, 1966-1971
Park Ridge, Ill.

Operation "Adopt a Recruit"

Years ago, I was a car detailer at a car dealership in Paducah, Ky. One of the

salesmen, who also served in the Marine Corps, would come back to my shop and we would talk about our time in the Corps.

On one occasion, we were talking about boot camp and how mail call was the best part of the day. I know of a few guys in my platoon that never got any mail including one of my friends. I can't even imagine how bad that would be.

Having support from family and friends is important. So, we came up with an idea of getting school kids to write recruits. Then we thought, why not get them to adopt a recruit to write to while they're in boot camp and have the class learn about what the recruits are going through, on a much smaller scale, and maybe get a visit from a DI or something. So, before we checked with any schools, I wrote to SgtMaj McMichael, then the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps.

The day I wrote this letter was on 9/11 so that idea was canned. About a year or so later, I ran across David Bounds from Worman, Okla. A high school history teacher at Norman High School, David never got a chance to be a Marine because he was injured in a car accident which prevented him from serving.

David has a heart of a Marine. I told him of my idea and he liked it and ran

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with it. He involved his class, which used MCRD San Diego for the project and it was a success. As a matter of fact, one of the girls in his class ended up getting married to the recruit she was writing to.

I've lost track of Mr. Bounds over the years. I've called Norman High School to find out he is no longer there. Anyway, I'm hoping to start working at the middle school where my granddaughter goes to and try his again.

Mike King
Kevil, Ky.

37th Commandant Visits VMI

I wanted you folks at *Leatherneck* magazine to see that there was an announcement in the Lexington newspaper about the upcoming appearance of former Marine Corps Commandant General Robert Neller at Virginia Military Institute. VMI, "the West Point of the South," has molded its share of Marine Corps officers. Of course, it is an old Army school. They did not establish a Naval ROTC unit there until 1974. Many VMI cadets enrolled in the Marine Corps PLC Program at Quantico.

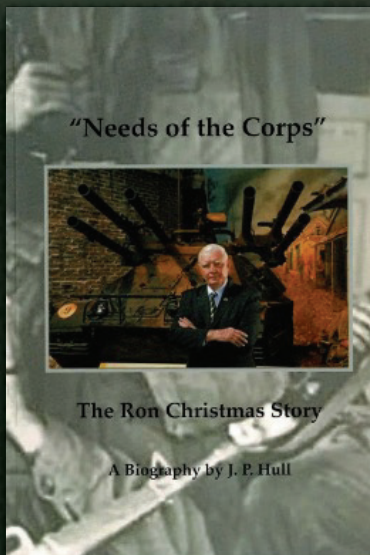
When I was a senior at T.C. Williams High School 45 years ago in my hometown of Alexandria, Va., VMI was my first
[continued on page 70]

Needs of the Corps... The Ron Christmas Story

A Biography

An extraordinary story of leadership guided by physical and moral courage. Returning from Vietnam seriously wounded, Capt Christmas struggles to recover and remain in the Corps. What follows is a remarkable three decades of active service, culminating at the rank of Lieutenant General. Continuing to serve the nation and Corps in a variety of capacities, Ron Christmas plays a significant role in making the National Museum of the Marine Corps a reality. An inspiring lifelong account of the selfless service of an exceptional man.

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Brothers in Arms

Siblings in the 4th Brigade of Marines During World War I

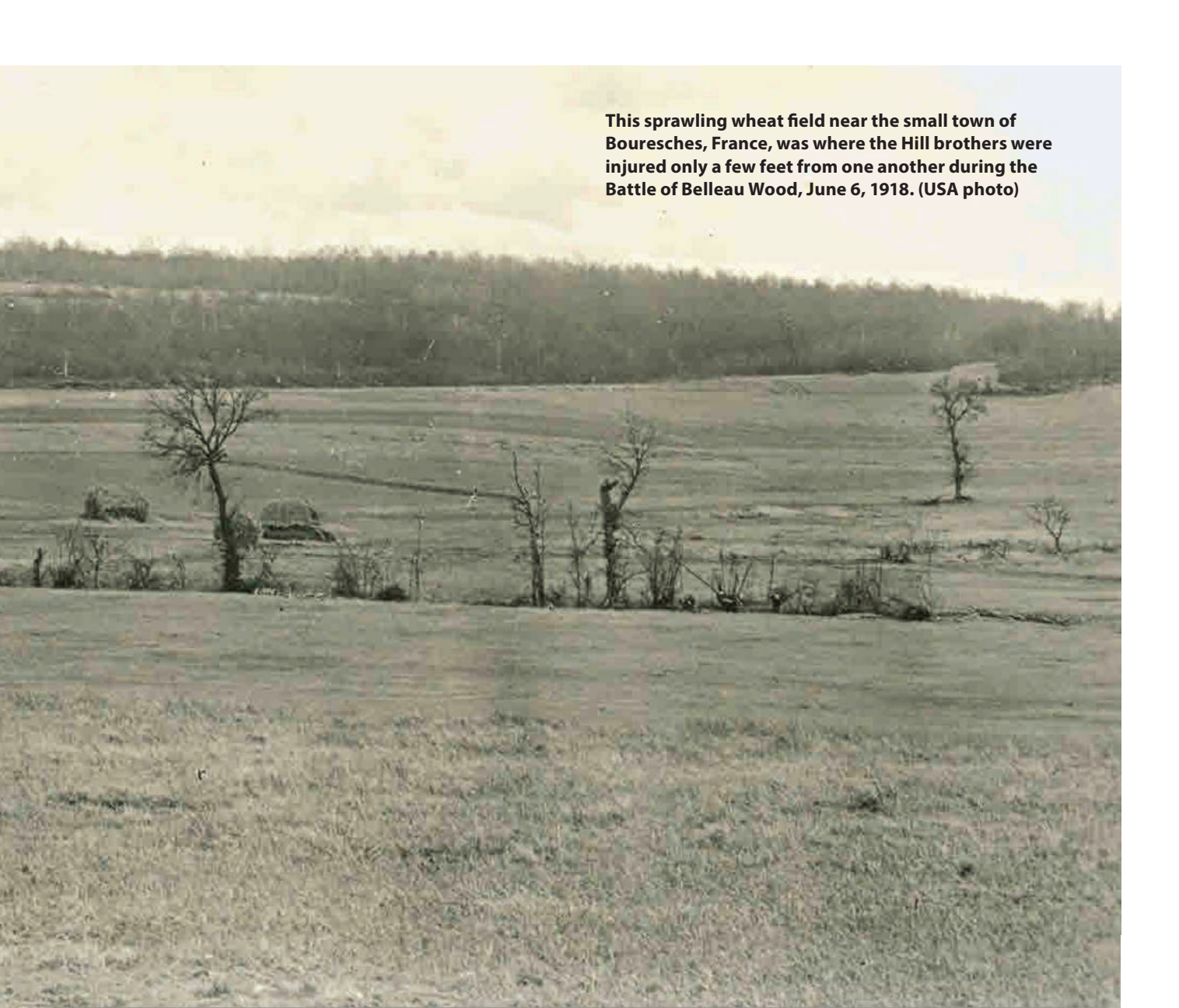


COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES



COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Michigan born brothers Sidney B. Hill (left) and Glen G. Hill (right) enlisted together in 1917. They were initially assigned to the 79th Company, 6th Regiment.



This sprawling wheat field near the small town of Bouresches, France, was where the Hill brothers were injured only a few feet from one another during the Battle of Belleau Wood, June 6, 1918. (USA photo)

By James P. Gregory Jr.

In World War I, young men filled with patriotic zeal stepped forward and enlisted in the United States Marine Corps, helping create one of the most formidable fighting forces the world has ever seen. Among those volunteers were many siblings, some enlisting together in one branch of the military. No rules existed then to stop these men from serving side by side in the same units

Basic training brought various recruits together and made them brothers in arms and serving alongside their actual brothers made them fight harder for the other but increased the emotional toll on their families back home.

Three sets of brothers had especially interesting service during the “war to end all wars.” The Hill brothers served in the 79th Company, 6th Regiment; the Urbaniak brothers served together in the 6th Machine Gun Battalion; and the Cox family had one brother in the Marines and another in the Army.

The Hill Brothers

On May 9, 1917, Glen G. Hill, 22, and Sidney B. Hill, 17, enlisted in the Marine Corps. Although born in Michigan, the brothers grew up in Washington. Unwavering in their sense of duty to their country, they left their lives as a schoolteacher and student, respectively, traveled to Seattle, Wash., to enlist. Sidney, who was underweight, received a waiver granted by the Major General Commandant which allowed him to join. The brothers were shipped to Mare Island, Calif., to begin their training to become Marines.

The Hill brothers would do everything together as Marines. On July 14, 1917, the brothers traveled to Quantico, Va., where they joined the 79th Company, 6th Regiment. Two months later, both Hills were promoted to corporal on Sept. 12. After almost eight months of training, the brothers boarded USS *Henderson* (AP-1) for France, where they disembarked on Feb. 8, 1918.

Once in France, the brothers would get their first taste of war while in the trenches of Verdun in the Toulon

sector in the spring of 1918. Here, the Marines experienced combat for the first time and acclimated to the hardships of war. During this period, Sidney wrote home about life in the trenches. In one letter, he mentioned that when he would be alert listening for sounds of the Germans, rats would appear and fight and Sidney was often not sure if he should “throw a bomb, or fire my rifle, or just lay low.” He also commented that he “would hate to kill a poor innocent rat, but I would love to get a [German].”

After their time in the trenches, the Hill brothers faced their first major battle.

In late May, the Marines of the 4th Brigade were rushed to halt the German offensive marching toward Paris. By June 2, the Marines had dug in and held off the German advance. The American Marines began their first major assault on the morning of June 6 during the Battle of Belleau Wood. The 79th Company set out across the wheat fields toward the town of Bouresches taking heavy casualties. During this advance, Corporal Glen Hill was struck by a machine-gun round that ripped through his kneecap. He lost consciousness several times while lying in the field. At almost the same time, Corporal Sidney Hill suffered a similar wound to his left knee. Both brothers lay in the field,

unaware of each other's wounds. Remarkably, both brothers were rescued by the same group of men from the 2nd Engineers. Private John S. Hubert, Company C, 2nd Engineers recalled, “During the day I was with a special detail, fairly close to one of the Marine attacking forces. As we approached a wooded area close to Bouresches, we observed a Marine crawling on the ground in our direction ... We went around one section of the wood we came upon a second Marine crawling out of the trees, the [brother] of the first one assisted ... Instead of complaining about pain, they laughingly kidded each other about being so careless.”

The brothers were evacuated and, after recovering, were sent back to the United States where they were assigned to the Marine Barracks, Navy Yard, Puget Sound, Wash. On March 25, 1919, Cpl Glen Hill was discharged, followed shortly by Cpl Sidney Hill on April 5, 1919.

The Urbaniak Brothers

On May 16, 1917, Peter P. Urbaniak, 26, and Joseph T. Urbaniak, 24, enlisted in the Marine Corps. Born in Detroit, Mich., to Polish immigrants, both men eagerly wanted to serve their family's new country. After their training at Paris Island, S.C., (the spelling was changed to “Parris Island” in 1919) the brothers were transferred to Quantico, Va., and assigned to the 81st Company, 6th Machine Gun Battalion. On Dec. 8, 1917, the Urbaniak brothers boarded USS *DeKalb* (SP-3010), bound for France.

In its first trial by fire in the trenches around Verdun, the 6th Machine Gun Battalion assisted in fending off several German raids during the spring of 1918. It would be at Belleau Wood in June where the Urbaniak brothers experienced their first heavy combat. Here, the two bravely fought into the woods supporting the advance of their fellow Marines. Unfortunately, on June 17, Private Joseph Urbaniak had to be evacuated due to rheumatism, a disease that attacked his joints severely enough to require almost five months in the hospital. This left Private Peter Urbaniak to continue fighting the war without his brother by his side.

At Soissons, on July 19, Peter survived the attack on Tigny that resulted in heavy Marine casualties. In the Marbache Sector, the Marines rested, but still held off German raids. At St. Mihiel, the 81st Company attacked with the 2d Battalion, 6th Marines, and on Sept. 15, engaged in heavy fighting in the Bois dela Montagne inflicting numerous casualties on the German infantry.

The fighting at Blanc Mont Ridge thoroughly tested the Marines. On Oct. 4, Pvt Peter Urbaniak advanced with the 5th Regiment into what would be known as “The Box” where the Marines were surrounded and also hammered by German aviators. The 81st Company leathernecks attempted to lay down suppressing fire on the German positions, but also had to turn their guns skyward



COURTESY OF LAWRENCE URBANIAK

Joseph T. Urbaniak, left, and Peter P. Urbaniak, right, were assigned to the 81st Company, 6th Machine Gun Battalion which helped fend off several German raids in the trenches around Verdun in the spring of 1918.



Peter P. Urbaniak, bottom right, and his brother Joseph T. Urbaniak, top middle, with other members of the 6th Machine Gun Battalion train with the Lewis machine gun.

to fend off harassing German aircraft. That day, Oct. 4, would result in the Marine Corps' highest number of casualties in a single day in the war. For his gallantry in action during the Battle of Blanc Mont Ridge, Peter was awarded a Silver Star Citation (this WW I Silver Star citation became a separate Silver Star Medal when approved by the Department of the Army in 1932).

During the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, Peter and the 81st Company supported various units until the Armistice on Nov. 11, 1918. When the fighting ended, Peter remained with the 2nd Division occupying the Rhineland until the peace treaty was signed.

After recovering from his illness, Pvt Joseph Urbaniak was shipped back to the United States on Nov. 10, 1918, and discharged on May 21, 1919. Pvt Peter Urbaniak followed his brother back to the States and was discharged Aug. 13, 1919.

The Cox Brothers

Unfortunately, not all brothers returned to their families after the war. This was the case for Walter J. and Wallace J. Cox. Born in Donaldsonville, La., both traveled when they reached adulthood, with Walter moving to Ohio and Wallace to Idaho. After the United States declared war, Wallace enlisted in the

Army on June 3, 1917, at age 26, and Walter joined the Marine Corps on July 19, 1917, at age 28. While they did not serve in the Marine Corps together, they served in the same offensives and made the ultimate sacrifice within nine days of each other.

Upon joining the Army, Private Wallace J. Cox was assigned to Battery A, 10th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Division. He traveled overseas on April 23, 1918, and was promoted to corporal in France. The 3rd Division was placed in the line east of Chateau Thierry on June 6. The Division's front lines were extended over the next month until the Division held a 10-kilometer front along the Marne River. On July 14, the Germans began a preparatory bombardment during which Cpl Wallace Cox was severely wounded and had to be evacuated. He died of his wounds on July 28, 1918.

After joining the Marine Corps, Pvt Walter J. Cox trained at Quantico, Va., until he was sent to Europe in April 1918 as part of the 140th Company, Third Replacement Battalion. In France, Walter joined the 83rd Company, 6th Regiment. He missed much of the time in the trenches around Verdun, but he soon was thrown into the hell of Belleau Wood. Throughout the month of June, Walter would endure the heavy fighting in the woods. After a month of constant engagement, the Marines and Army successfully drove the Germans from the wood.



COURTESY OF DARRELL OURSO



COURTESY OF DARRELL OURSO

Wallace Cox, (top left), served in the Army and his brother, Walter Cox, (bottom left), a Marine, gave their lives in service to their country. They lie in graves marked as unknown soldiers. A memorial was made for the brothers (above) to honor their sacrifice.




COURTESY OF DARRELL OURSO

After a short rest, the Marines were sent to participate in the Aisne-Marne offensive. On July 19, 1918, Pvt Walter Cox and the 83rd Company advanced toward the German line east of Vierzy. The Marines followed French tanks across wide open wheat fields that provided no cover. The slow pace of the French tanks caused the Marines to creep across the field making them easy targets for the German artillery and German machine guns. The 6th Regiment was ordered to dig in and wait for reinforcement after gaining only 1 kilometer.

Walter found himself in a shell hole with Privates James Scarbrough and James Corey. The three Marines inflicted heavy casualties on the Germans, firing more than 600 rounds of ammunition. Before nightfall, a German sniper killed Pvt Corey and then Walter, exactly one year after he joined the Marine Corps. Pvt Scarbrough buried both Marines in the shell hole before falling back. Their bodies were later recovered but due to a lack of identification, both were listed as missing in action. They lie in graves marked as unknown soldiers.

The Cox brothers gave their lives in service to their country in the same offensive, only miles from each other. Like many brothers who joined the military during World War I, their service in the Marine Corps and in the Army serves as a representation of the significant contributions made by many siblings throughout the war.

Author's note: Thanks is owed to those who helped make this article possible: Steven Girard, Lawrence Urbaniak, Darrell Ourso and Kevin Seldon.

Author's bio: James P. Gregory Jr. is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Oklahoma. He also is an award-winning author of Marine Corps history. 

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Meade River



GYSGT HERB RICHARDSON, USMC

Otters were used extensively for re-supply in Vietnam's rain-swollen marshland rice paddies. Drivers claimed these tracked vehicles could navigate through anything.

Story and photos by GySgt Herb Richardson, USMC

“Dodge City” was a bad area—worse than its namesake in Kansas ever dreamed of being. American airplanes drew a lot of ground fire from that section of South Vietnam, just a few miles south of Da Nang. Friendly forces could depend on fierce firefighting any time they entered that communist domain.

Like its frontier namesake, it had to be cleaned out. Units of the 1st Marine Division, working with Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) units and elements of the Korean Marines, had to do the cleaning. The guns of the 26th Marines were to be brought in also. They called the job Operation Meade River.

This was supposed to be a 10-day operation, aimed toward rooting out the Viet Cong (VC) Infrastructure. Intelligence figured that Vietnamese who had given up communism and changed to the side of the South Vietnamese government could put the finger on as many as 100 members of the “shadow government.” This could, in effect, be a bullet in

the heart of VC activity in the “Dodge City” area.

It started as a massive cordoning operation with the northern edge of the cordon about 10 miles south of Da Nang. Some Marines moved into position in trucks. Roughly 3,500 others were heli-lifted. The troop lift was reported by military sources to be the largest Marine combat helicopter effort in history.

Helicopters from the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing and the nearby Special Landing Force had the job of moving the troops in 7600 hopppers in two hours, using 47 landing sites. The move had to be fast to use the element of surprise to advantage.

It was a challenge especially to the Marines of HMH-463 at Marble Mountain. They were to employ their CH-53 Sea Stallions in the troop movement. Although the bird was designed to be used for this type of job, it hadn't been used on a large scale prior to this time.

Lieutenant Colonel Roger Peard, the squadron's commanding officer, told his pilots during the early morning pre-flight briefing, “This is going to be a hairy operation

The operation was taking place in an area of low, swampy land and rice paddies and during the wet season. The men who were in mud and water only up to their knees almost considered themselves fortunate.

with a lot of planes in the air, so stay alert. The grunts don't think we can do it. I think we can."

They did.

Although the helicopters drew ground fire in some areas, and the weather closed in to cut down visibility in other sections, the air effort came off as nearly perfect as anyone could have hoped for.

The cordon was set with seven Marine battalions and three ARVN battalions strung out on a 20-mile perimeter. The Marines occupied positions that would remain fixed for several days.

A few of the Marines appreciated the situation. Some of the 5th Marines' positions were along a road cutting through a village. There were several conveniently located buildings in which Marines could take refuge from the sun and rain. Most of the Marines weren't that lucky. The operation was taking place in an area of low, swampy land and rice paddies during the wet season. The men who were in mud and water only up to their knees almost considered themselves fortunate.

After the cordon was established, the next job was to get the Vietnamese living in the area moved into a refugee camp that was being set up. There were well over 2,500 people to be moved out and provided for. The job took three days. They were screened, fed, given medical attention, when necessary, issued new identification cards, and taken to their temporary camp.

A three-day amnesty period had been established. The purpose was to move the civilians and give psychological operations people time to try to convince the Viet Cong (VC) in the area that they should surrender because it would be useless to try to fight.

Meanwhile, the VC were trying to get out. There were probes along the cordon. Units of the 1st and 7th Marines, blocking along a river to the north, were tried by the trapped enemy. Communists failed and died.

Most of the probes were small-unit attempts. On the southern border of the cordon, three VC tried to get through 3/5. One enemy, wounded in the attempt, was identified as an assassin who was responsible for the deaths of more than 50 inhabitants of a village over a period of time.

He was identified by citizens of the village he had helped terrorize. They wanted to kill him on the spot, but he was



GYSGT HERB RICHARDSON, USMC

GySgt C.G. Rush Jr. can be seen kneeling to check his troops' positions. His unit, C/1/1, was set up as a blocking force along the river.



GYSGT HERB RICHARDSON, USMC

LtCol Roger Peard, CO, HMM-463, briefed his pilots just before the initial troop lift.

Right: Marines were stationed along a 20-mile perimeter to cut off enemy troops.

Below: The area of operation was in predominantly wet, muddy lowlands. Marines in water only up to their knees felt lucky.



GYSGT HERB RICHARDSON, USMC



GYSGT HERB RICHARDSON, USMC

Morrison told the less seriously wounded Marine to stay put and carried the other Marine to safety. He started back for the remaining man, keeping the enemy pinned down with his machine gun.

Then the gun jammed.

taken to the rear for medical treatment and questioning.

Golf Company, 2/7 came under attack from mortar and rockets as the VC tried to open a gap. That attempt failed too.

Finally, the time came to start closing the trap on the encircled enemy forces. Units began making coordinated sweeps to tighten the noose. It was a slow, tedious process.

Allied troops moved with determination combing the area thoroughly, searching the terrain inch by inch to root out caves and tunnels. Any resistance was answered with artillery and air strikes. There was no hurry. The cordon was tight, and Charlie wasn't going anywhere.

Relatively small skirmishes broke out. In one, three members of a fire team from 26th Marines were wounded. A machine gunner, PFC John Morrison, was called upon for help. He moved in under his fire power and had the uninjured member of the four-man team carry a man out. Morrison told the less seriously wounded Marine to stay put and carried the other Marine to safety. He started back for the remaining man, keeping the enemy pinned down with his machine gun.

Then the gun jammed.

Morrison reported two facts about that experience. The first was that the enemy was slow in getting up after the gun jammed, giving Morrison time to get the injured Marine part of the way back to a safer area before he drew fire.

He also indicated that he made a determined attempt at a new ground speed record. "I felt real secure until my machine gun jammed," he explained. "Then I was so scared that I think I probably set a new record for the 100-yard dash."



GYSGT HERB RICHARDSON, USMC

Above: Marines dug in with trenches during the opening phase of Operation Meade River.



GYSGT HERB RICHARDSON, USMC

Above: Wet, muddy feet quickly became routine during the operation.

Left: Shortly after the cordon was set, the arduous task of evacuating all civilians from the area began.



GYSGT HERB RICHARDSON, USMC



GYSGT HERB RICHARDSON, USMC

MajGen Carl Youngdale, the commander of 1stMarDiv, briefs his key personnel about the operation.

As the operation progressed, Marine aviators continued to pound the terrain with ordnance, and artillerymen fired mission after mission in support of the troops.

Colonel R.G. Lauffer, commanding officer of the 1st Marines, had operational control of Meade River. He explained the heavy use of artillery and air power this way: "We're using everything we can get in there. The object is to use as much fire power as we can get in to avoid losing Marines."

As the operation went into its 16th day, the enemy who hadn't been killed or captured were compressed into two pockets of resistance. They were dug in, well-armed, and reportedly had orders to fight to the death.

"Spooky" worked out every night, weather permitting. These airplanes, modified C-47s, carried three rapid-firing mini-guns and had the capability of pumping 18,000 rounds a minute into a target area. Spooky was also used to furnish flare light. The Air Force owned and flew this plane, but Marine infantrymen welcomed it as one of their own when it joined a fight.

Spooky's light was the cause of mild consternation in one area. There was a rooster who took his "greet the newborn dawn" role too seriously. Every time a flare popped, the rooster, thinking it was dawn, would start crowing. There was speculation that the chicken, who came to be known as "demented," was sleeping during the day and taking good care of his throat. He crowed for eight straight nights, and still was at full voice at the end of the ordeal. Marines within hearing distance found themselves staying awake nights listening for him to crow again.

As the Marines moved, enemy losses continued to rise. Many died in their bunkers, the result of air and artillery strikes. Elements of the 7th Marines were held up at one time by enemy resistance. The area was hammered with American ordnance, and Marines kept the enemy hemmed into the impact zone. Before the area was swept, it was estimated that there were as many as 100 communists lying dead in their bunkers.

Allied forces continued to move slowly. They were armed with T-bars, which were used to probe for caves and underground caches. This was country that had been used for years by the Viet Cong as a staging and transit area for troops headed north.



GYSGT HERB RICHARDSON

Positions were static during the initial phase of the operation. Marines were positioned in various spots along the 20-mile perimeter, hidden among the wetlands.



GYSCT HERB RICHARDSON, USMC

American and Vietnamese troops worked together to clear an area that had been an enemy stronghold for years.

The operation was costly to the Viet Cong. Its primary purpose, to ferret out VC Infrastructure members, was met. A total of 71 VCI had been identified at the refugee camp. Allied forces killed 1,025 VC and North Vietnamese troops, and no one will ever know how many were buried in caves, bunkers and tunnels.

Enemy troops captured in the action totaled 129. Units sweeping the terrain after the operation continued to find bodies and weapons.

The most lasting effect of the operation may be the elimination of safe areas for infiltrating enemy troops headed toward Da Nang and the elimination of VCI to establish more.

Major General Carl Youngdale, commanding general of 1st Marine Division, said, "By eliminating the VCI, we have disrupted the means they have of introducing a significant number of troops into some important areas without our knowing it."

"Dodge City" may or may not in fact be cleaned out. Only time will tell. But one thing is certain. The Viet Cong had been hurt, and their activities curtailed for a while. 🇺🇸

It was well worth the time if the operation would curtail the use of the terrain by the enemy.

As the operation went into its 16th day, the enemy who hadn't been killed or captured were compressed into two pockets of resistance. They were dug in, well-armed, and reportedly had orders to fight to the death. Naval guns, air, and artillery took a tremendous toll in enemy dead, and infantrymen dug out those who still resisted.

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PHILIPPINE SEA



LCPL YVONNE IWAE, USMC

Above: Marines with BLT 2/5, 31st MEU, ride in combat rubber raiding crafts during a launch and recovery exercise in the Philippine Sea, Aug. 6, 2022. The Marines conducted this exercise to refine launching and recovering from USS *New Orleans* (LPD-18).

Right: Marines with “Echo” Co, 2/1, 1stMarDiv, establish a defensive position during Mountain Training Exercise (MTX) 1-23 at Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center Bridgeport, Calif., Sept. 30, 2022. During MTX, the Marines learned various skills to become more proficient in combat and survival in an austere mountain environment.

BRIDGEPORT, CALIF.



CPL SKYLER HARRIS, USMC

Below: Marines with BLT 2/5, 31st MEU, fire an M777 towed 155 mm howitzer during a combined-arms, live-fire exercise with the Philippine Marine Corps as part of KAMANDAG 6 at Colonel Ernesto Rabina Air Base, Philippines, Oct. 13, 2022. KAMANDAG is an annual exercise between the armed forces of the Philippines and U.S. military designed to strengthen interoperability and cooperation.



PHILIPPINES

SGT DANNY GONZALEZ, USMC



UNITED ARAB EMIRITES

Left: LCpl Remy Lucero, a machine gunner with "India" Company, 3/5, 1stMarDiv, conducts an immediate-action drill with an M240B medium machine gun during exercise Intrepid Maven 22.4 in the United Arab Emirates, Sept. 22, 2022. Intrepid Maven is a bilateral exercise between U.S. and UAE armed forces to train and strengthen relationships with allied nations in the CENTCOM area of operations.

SGT DYLAN CHAGNON, USMC

Below: Marines with Combat Logistics Battalion 6, CLR-2, 2nd MLG, kneel during a Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) range in preparation for Exercise Freezing Winds 22 in Syndalen, Finland, Oct. 11, 2022. Task Force Red Cloud, headquartered by elements of CLB-6, deployed to Finland in support of Freezing Winds 2022 to foster strong relationships between U.S. Marine Corps and Finnish Defense Force.

FINLAND



LCPL MESHAK HYLTON, USMC

SOUTH CHINA SEA



SGT DANNY GONZALEZ, USMC

Left: A Marine with the 31st MEU jumps from the catwalk during a swim call aboard USS *New Orleans* (LPD-18) in the South China Sea, Sept. 25, 2022. The 31st MEU operated aboard ships of the *Tripoli* Amphibious Ready Group in the 7th fleet area of operations as a ready response force to defend peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific Region.

OKINAWA



LCPL JUSTIN MARTY, USMC

Above: Marines from III MEF tack to a UH-1Y Venom helicopter assigned to HMLA-469 during a Helicopter Rope Suspension Techniques (HRST) Master Course at Landing Zone Sterling, Okinawa, Japan, Sept. 14, 2022. HRST training teaches Marines proper knots and rappelling techniques, and builds confidence for maneuvering from air to ground.

JAPAN



CPL SCOTT AUBUCHON, USMC

Above: LCpl Collin Nicholson, a mortarman with 3/3, 3rdMarDiv, fires an M252 81 mm mortar system during Exercise Resolute Dragon 22 on Shikaribetsu Maneuver Area, Hokkaido, Japan, Oct. 6, 2022. Resolute Dragon 22 is an annual exercise designed to strengthen the defensive capabilities of the U.S.-Japan alliance.

BRAZIL



CPL JONATHAN GONZALEZ, USMC

Marines with HMLA-773, 4th MAW, conduct flight operations near the Christ the Redeemer statue at Corcovado Mountain, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, during Exercise UNITAS LXIII, Sept. 12, 2022. UNITAS takes place annually with this year marking the 63rd iteration of the world's longest-running annual multinational maritime exercise.

Below: Marine Corps F-35B Lightning II aircraft assigned to MAG-12, Royal Australian Air Force F-35A Lightning II aircraft assigned to Number 75 Squadron, and an E-7A Wedgetail aircraft assigned to Number 2 Squadron, stage together during Exercise Pitch Black 2022 at RAAF Base Tindal, Australia, Aug. 19, 2022. Pitch Black is the RAAF's largest exercise, hosting up to 2,500 personnel and 100 aircraft from 17 participating nations.

AUSTRALIA



CPL EVAN JONES, USMC



Right: LCpl Dalton Hamby, a parachute rigger assigned to 2nd Landing Support Battalion, 2nd MLG, exits a KC-130J Hercules during static line airborne operations during Weapons and Tactics Instructor (WTI) Course 1-23 over Yuma, Ariz., Sept. 30, 2022. WTI is a seven-week advanced training event that assists in developing and employing aviation weapons and tactics.



YUMA, ARIZ.

CPL JACKSON DUKES, USMC



Above: A light armored vehicle A2-25 with "Bravo" Company, Ground Combat Element, 22nd MEU, fires at targets during a live-fire exercise aboard USS *Kearsarge* (LHD-3) in the Atlantic Ocean, Jun. 28, 2022. The *Kearsarge* Amphibious Ready Group deployed in the U.S. Naval Forces Europe area of operations in support of U.S. Sixth Fleet to defend U.S., allied and partner interests.

SGT ARMANDO ELIZALDE, USMC

NORTH CAROLINA



CPL KARL HENDRIX ALITEN, USMC

Left: LCpl Aidan Antrim, a machine gunner with 2/2, 2ndMarDiv, assembles an M240B machine gun in the disassembly and assembly event during the Warlord Games on Camp Lejeune, N.C., Sept. 1, 2022. The Warlord Games is a quarterly event where Marines from 2/2 compete in various competitions to strengthen the unit's esprit de corps. 🇺🇸

San Antonio, Texas



FELIX SALMERON

1st Bn, 27th Marines Reunite in Texas

A group of veterans from 1/27 gathered in San Antonio over the last weekend of September 2022. They visited the Alamo and other local venues in the city before heading to Fredericksburg, Texas, for a visit to the National Museum of the Pacific War. The 33rd Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen Michael Hagee, greeted the veterans at their memorial service, where the group honored the 111 Marines the battalion lost in 1968.

Submitted by Felix Salmeron

Dubois, Wyo.



COURTESY OF JOHN WEAR

USMC VTA Holds "Mini" Reunion

The USMC Vietnam Tankers Association (VTA) gathered in September 2022 at the National Museum of Military Vehicles. The museum, which opened in August 2020, is located in Dubois, Wyo.

More than 60 VTA members and their families traveled to the museum for the day-long tour. As a bonus and the highlight of the reunion, Dan Starks, the CEO and owner of the museum, conducted the tour and even brought out several of his working tanks for the veterans to drive.

Submitted by John Wear



JOHN WEAR

Chosin Reservoir Veterans Reunite for 72nd Anniversary

The Chosin Few, an organization of Korean War veterans, came together for their annual reunion in September 2022. The National Museum of the Marine Corps hosted 51 veterans of the Chosin Reservoir, along with their friends and families, on Sept. 9, 2022. The group toured the museum, visited the Chosin Reservoir monument in Semper Fidelis Memorial Park, and viewed a private screening of the new movie, "Devotion," depicting actions around the reservoir in 1950. The veterans included a South Korean Army veteran and a British Royal Marine, (below left) both of whom fought alongside the Marines in November and December 1950. Kyle Watts, *Leatherneck's* senior staff writer, had the opportunity to spend the day at the museum with the Chosin Few. Among the veterans he met was retired GySgt Ray Houlette. Houlette served as a forward observer with 1st Bn, 5th Marines. As a 17-year-old, he fought through the Pusan Perimeter, the Inchon landing, and the battle for Seoul. He turned 18 right before advancing north toward Chosin, where he traveled as far north as any Marine unit to Yudam-ni. He can be seen in one of the photographs at the museum leading into the Toktong Pass immersion exhibit (below right). Following their day at the museum, the Chosin Few traveled to Washington, D.C., to visit the Korean War Memorial and completed their weekend by having dinner with Gen David Berger, the Commandant of the Marine Corps.

Submitted by Kyle Watts



MARY INGMAN



KYLE WATTS



KYLE WATTS

"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: *Leatherneck* Magazine, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134, or email them to leatherneck@mca-marines.org. Submission does not guarantee publication, and we cannot guarantee the return of photos. 📷



MGySgt Adam Walker, left, and 1stSgt Enrique Hernandez, his mentor and role model. When Walker checked into 3/7 in 2002, he watched and learned from Hernandez. (Photos courtesy of Adam Walker)

Don't Imitate, but Emulate

Peer Leadership's Lasting Impression

By Adam Walker

Editor's note: The following article received an honorable mention in the 2022 Leatherneck Writing Contest. Major Richard A. "Rick" Stewart, USMC (Ret) sponsored the contest, through the Marine Corps Association Foundation.

Iserved as a Marine infantryman for twenty-five years. During that time, I walked with legends and served with heroes. Some are recorded in our shared history, such as Medal of Honor recipient Corporal Jason Dunham. Others are less well-known, but no less great. The most influential leader in my professional life was a peer with whom I served as a young staff noncommissioned officer. His name was Staff Sergeant Enrique "Henry" Hernandez. I served with both of these fine men in "Kilo" Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines.

My first assignment had been on the East Coast with 2nd Battalion, 6th Marines where I served for five years and went on three deployments. I was a fire team leader on the winning squad of the 1996 Annual Rifle Squad Competition (Super Squad) and had been fortunate to



Walker was a staff sergeant when he deployed to Kuwait in 2003.

have outstanding leadership. My first two battalion commanders were Lieutenant Colonel John Allen and Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Dunford. Both would go on to become four-star generals who had a tremendous impact on Corps and country.

I later checked into 3/7 in the summer of 2002 after a tour on recruiting duty in Asheville, N.C. Recruiting duty was challenging, but I finished well as a meritorious staff sergeant. As a new father I examined the demands of balancing career and family and considered leaving active duty. Like many who watched the towers fall on Sept. 11, 2001, I knew that a fight was coming, and I should be there. I requested orders to an infantry battalion in the 2nd Marine Division at Camp Lejeune. The enlisted assignments monitor told me, "You can go to 1/7, 2/7, or 3/7." I responded "Uh ... aren't they all in Twentynine Palms?" He said, "That's right ... and that's where you're going." I considered countering with mention of "a duty station preference following a Special Duty Assignment," but thought that the coming fight would be in a desert. Why not train in the desert? I then requested orders to 3/7.

I pulled into the high desert that sum-



SSgt Walker rests next to his gear after a mission in Baghdad, Iraq, 2003. (Photo courtesy of Adam Walker)

mer while the battalion was away in Victorville, Calif., for a month-long training package. By the time they returned to Twentynine Palms, I had completed the check-in process but was trying to figure out how to put together my gear. While I was on recruiting duty, the Marine Corps had transitioned from the ALICE packs (All-purpose Lightweight Individual Carrying Equipment) to MOLLE gear (Modular Lightweight Load-carrying Equipment), issuing an instructional video on a VHS cassette with it. SSgt Hernandez grinned and said “I got you, bro.” He taught me how to put my gear together which began the first of many lessons I would learn from him. I knew early on that I wanted to be a platoon sergeant like Hernandez.

Hernandez had two tours in security forces and was a close quarters combat instructor. He’d been to more than a dozen schools and had assignments in 2/7 and 3/7 with several deployments, including Somalia. We may have held the same rank and billet, but Hernandez had more experience than I did.

The experience I gained in 2/6 provided a firm foundation upon which to grow. I had a high level of confidence in my experience and abilities, however, I recognized there was much to learn. In addition to new “deuce gear,” an entire family of radios emerged in the Fleet Marine Force while I had been away. Hernandez possessed the knowledge and experience I needed to “re-green” myself back in the grunts.

At that time a rifle company would typically have six SNCOs. The first sergeant, the company gunny, and four platoon sergeants. When I checked into

the unit, Kilo Company had only two: the first sergeant and SSgt Hernandez. Hernandez was simultaneously filling roles as company gunny, platoon commander, and platoon sergeant while mentoring the young NCOs who were filling in as the other platoon sergeants. A week later he and the first sergeant went on leave saying, “You got it, ‘Walkie.’”

On Monday morning the battalion sergeant major yelled at me, “SSgt, why did Lance Corporal Smith get a seatbelt ticket?!” I had no idea who LCpl Smith was but replied, “Because he wasn’t wearing a seatbelt, SgtMaj.” I was kicked

**SSgt Hernandez grinned and said “I got you, bro.”
He taught me how to put my gear together
which began the first of many lessons I would learn
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In leadership you cannot imitate, but you can emulate. Imitation is trying to be someone else. It is an act you cannot keep up when you are tired, stressed, or when the chips are down. It takes time to develop as a leader, but you have to be yourself.

out of his office with a string of profanity and instructions to “fix Kilo.” A few days later I landed in his crosshairs for my poor execution of sword manual at a retirement ceremony. I became acutely aware that being a good platoon sergeant required much more than just being a competent grunt. Being a good platoon sergeant had to start with being a good SNCO.

When Hernandez returned from leave, I watched him closely, asked a lot of questions, and most of all, I did what he did. In leadership you cannot imitate, but you can emulate. Imitation is trying to be someone else. It is an act you cannot keep up when you are tired, stressed, or when the chips are down. It takes time to develop as a leader, but you have to be yourself. You emulate the qualities possessed by effective leaders. Hernandez had those qualities. He was physically

fit, assertive, knowledgeable and incredibly professional. He could interpret situations and senior leaders and anticipate changes and then take action accordingly. He did all of this with humility. Hernandez was also the kind of guy who could immediately transition from “smoking and joking” to stone cold serious. He was balanced.

Hernandez never gave me bad advice. A few times he gave me advice that I disregarded to my own detriment. Once it was in a minor issue. I was in the barracks early ensuring reveille and morning clean-up were going on. I held formation and swung by the company office to give the first sergeant an update for the morning report. My platoon was about to right face for a “boots and utes” run up “Cardiac” and “Sand Hill” in the backyard of Twentynine Palms. I had a small pinhole in my T-shirt at chest level. As



COURTESY OF ADAM WALKER



COURTESY OF ADAM WALKER

Above: Conducting uniform maintenance while waiting for follow-on orders, SSgt Hernandez set the example for his Marines during Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003.

Left: SSgt Walker, left, and SSgt Hernandez, right, during a company deployment in Kuwait, 2003.



COURTESY OF ADAM WALKER

I passed Hernandez, he said, “Don’t let First Sergeant see that.” I balked and said, “We’re headed out to PT, it’s no big deal.” I reported to the first sergeant. He listened as I rattled off my update. In his characteristic fashion his eyes scanned methodically from my haircut to my boots. He then said curtly, “Good to go, Staff Sergeant. I see you again with a hole in your shirt, and I’m gonna rip it off your body”. “Aye, First Sergeant.” I walked out to my platoon and Hernandez shook his head laughing. “I told you, bro.” I never did that again.

The next time I disregarded his advice, it was a much more serious matter. I tried to take care of a situation at my level, and I lied to the first sergeant. I count it my greatest professional failure.

Hindsight provides clarity to a situation which seemed murky at the time. The event occurred during combat operations in Iraq during the time referred to as the “March Up” in 2003. We had been going for weeks on little sleep, crammed into the back of AAVs. When the ramp dropped, we rushed out ready to engage the enemy. We never really knew where we were, but we knew Baghdad was north. Day blended into night then into another day. On one of those days, a lance corporal in my platoon lost a set of night vision goggles. The loss of serialized gear is *really* bad and could be an indicator of incompetent leadership. It was human error under arduous conditions, but the fact remains we lost them, and they could be used by the enemy. I told the company

From the left, SSgt Walker, SSgt John Ferguson and SSgt Hernandez pictured just before the “March Up,” after going weeks with little sleep while crammed into the back of AAVs.

gunny but there was no time to search for them. We had orders to continue to push north.

A couple of weeks later as we were pulling out of Baghdad, Kilo Co was assigned a position in the desert to re-set. We got some rest and conducted accountability checks of our gear while waiting for follow-on orders to conduct security and stability operations. During my platoon site count, we discovered that one of the Marines lost a set of binoculars. “Binocs” were armory-issued gear,



Hernandez and Walker at the premier release of "The Gift," a documentary about Medal of Honor recipient Cpl Jason Dunham and the Kilo Co, 3/7 Marines at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in 2022.

COURTESY OF ADAM WALKER

but they weren't serialized. I did not want to report that another piece of gear had been lost. I considered my options. I could just report it, knowing that some would begin to view this as a trend, and my reputation as a leader would be diminished. I also thought of various times where I had been taught that "SNCOs solve problems." Another option was to temporarily hide the issue and remedy it myself. This would require me to initially lie and say we had all of our gear, then purchase a replacement commercially before the gear would be turned in after we returned home. It was feasible and tempting. I asked the other platoon sergeants for advice. Hernandez said, "Come clean, tell First Sergeant."

I didn't.

After telling the first sergeant my platoon's gear was all accounted for, I went back to my fighting hole. I sat there for over an hour feeling guilty. I walked back to the first sergeant. I told him I needed to speak to him, that I had lied. He looked at me and said, "I know." I stood there in shame as he explained. One of the Marines in the platoon told the NCO who served as the armory custodian that we were missing the bins. The NCO passed on to the first sergeant who kept it to himself. He waited to see how I would handle the situation. He didn't raise his voice but spoke sternly, full of disappointment. He then said this would remain between us, he would not tell the CO, but that trust had been broken and it would be a long road to restore it. I turned

to go, but after a few steps faced him again. I said "First Sergeant, I do not take this lightly. This will never happen again. I failed, but I am committed to becoming the kind of SNCO that I should be." He returned my gaze and said, "I hope so."

I walked back to my position feeling dejected. An NCO from the platoon came running up smiling with something in his hand. He said "We found it! We found the bins!" My swirling emotions burst forth in a spew of anger and profanity. He left confused, wondering why I didn't celebrate the good news. I gave the first sergeant the update. He simply said "Roger" and I walked away.

I orchestrated my own dilemma with my poor judgement. Upon learning that we actually did not lose the bins, I had the brief thought that I should have "stuck to my guns." It would have resulted in no loss of face, but I knew inside that I would have pushed the envelope even further next time. I grew a lot from that experience. I stopped by Hernandez's fighting hole. Unsurprisingly, he was cleaning his weapon. I told him all that had just transpired. He looked at me with empathy and without sounding the least bit condescending simply said, "I told you, man."

Henry Hernandez taught me so many things. His example stays with me today. I learned the lasting power of peer leadership. Peers do not have authority over you, but they have tremendous influence on you. They know your vulnerabilities, they know your potential, and they know the real you. They possess the ability to challenge you and hold you accountable in a way no others can.

I've shared these lessons with many SNCOs during my remaining years in uniform by speaking in leadership panels, mess nights, graduations and birthday balls. They are shared here now because I have learned that leaders are rarely born, but always built. I am grateful one of those builders was my friend, 1stSgt Enrique Hernandez Jr.

Henry Hernandez taught me so many things. His example stays with me today. I learned the lasting power of peer leadership. Peers do not have authority over you, but they have tremendous influence on you.

Author's bio: Adam Walker served as a Marine infantryman for 25 years, retiring as a master gunnery sergeant with three tours in Iraq and a Purple Heart. You can read more of his work on his blog, takeitontheleftfoot.com.

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- Maximum 2,000 words
- Must include contact information: grade, name, unit, SNCOIC/OIC, email and phone number.
- Submit electronically to leatherneck@mca-marines.org in Microsoft Word Format

SUBMISSIONS ACCEPTED: 1 Jan - 31 March 2023



Sponsored By Major Rick Stewart. USMC (Ret)

Leatherneck Laffs



"SSgt, my orders read 'UK.'
Do you know how close to
London I'll be?"

"Ehhh ... that's Ukraine."



"Whoa ... wait a minute! What have we have here?
Gee, I almost tripped over this sucker!"



♪ We gotta get out of this place ...
If it's the last thing we ever do ...



"Oh my gosh, I think I left my Marines at attention."



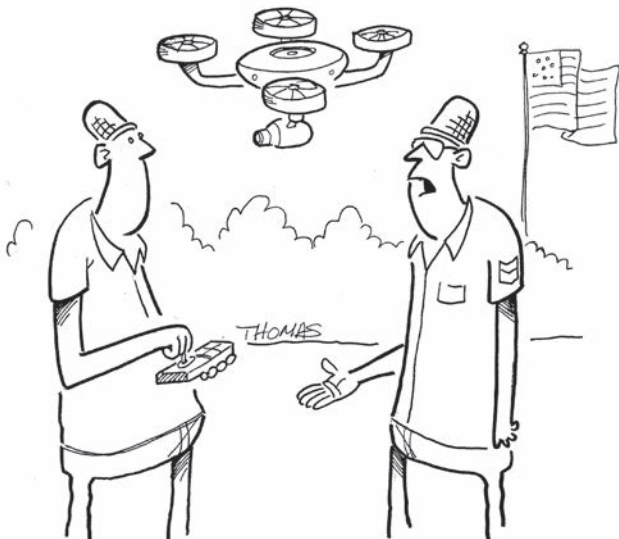
"That's enough about us.
Let's talk about the Marine Corps."



"Sir, the enemy is fortifying their position.
They put up two new firewalls."



"He's been carrying .50-cal. cans all day."



"You're too young to remember the days
when we used to use binoculars
to see what the enemy was doing."



"You've passed the easier first inspection.
Now it gets harder with my mom."



COURTESY OF ADAM KRICK

THE ILLUSTRATED M ★ A ★ R ★ I ★ N ★ E

By Kyle Watts

A dichotomy of perception resounds today, as true as it has for decades. One group has always viewed tattooed Marines as a stigma, a mark of the undisciplined or unprofessional. The opposing sect, perhaps inspired by the first, revered the Marine who was covered in ink. Many USMC veterans can look back at their time in the Corps and instantly remember their drill instructor or gunny or some other grizzled old warrior covered in tattoos, smoking a cigarette, and spitting dip into an empty

beer bottle. In school circles, these Marines punctuated their wisdom with every profanity known to man, all the while teaching us something we would never forget about being a Marine. They were terrifying, inspiring, and made us strive to be the best we could possibly be.

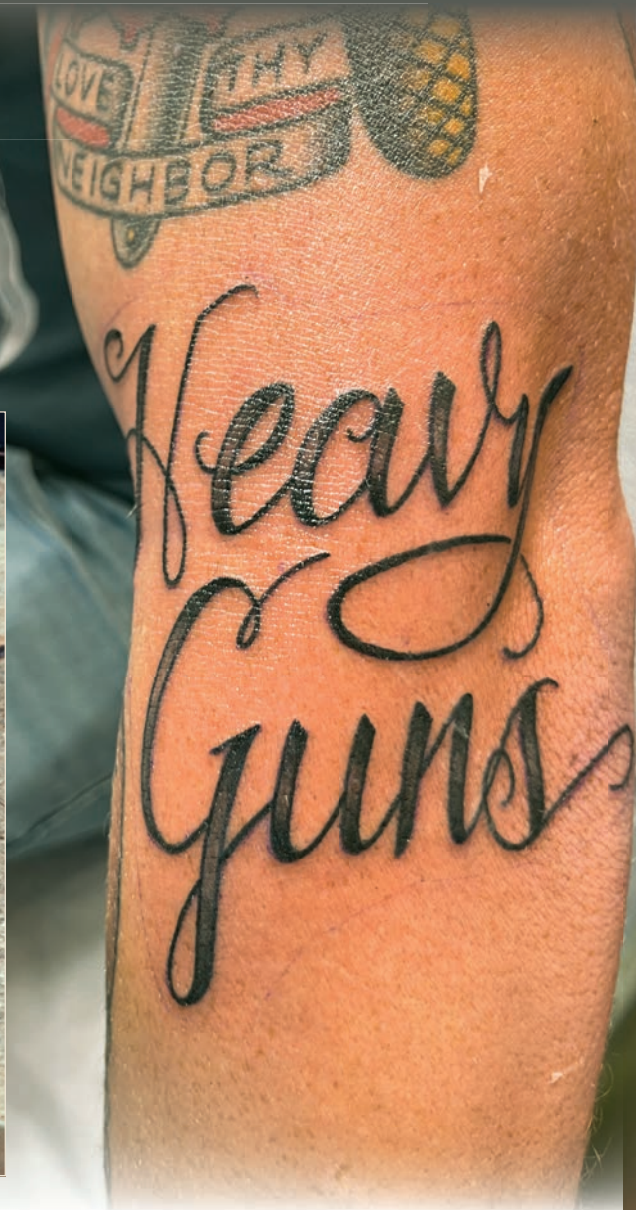
Conflicting opinions on tattoos impacted many Marine careers over the last few decades. In spite of this, Marines and their tattoos continue telling stories. Policies or perception have deterred few who wanted a tattoo. Quite the contrary, Marines seem even more proud of their ink.

Adam Krick is one of these proudly tattooed Marines. He

Top: Adam Krick's pair of M240 machine guns were a unique statement piece in 2007, demonstrating his pride in his MOS.

Right: Robert Ham, a former machine gunner with 1st Bn, 3rd Marines, recently added this new ink to his collection, celebrating his time as an 0331 from 2014-2018. (Photo courtesy of Robert Ham)

Below: HM1 Jerry Ostrem with Marines in Vietnam during Operation Oklahoma Hills in 1969. Of his multiple tattoos, the large, fully rigged sailing ship riding the waves across his chest stands out. (USMC photo)



returned home from his first deployment to Iraq in February 2005. He and the other veterans of 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines enjoyed the bonds they formed in combat. Krick knew the experience would stick with him forever, and he wanted to memorialize it. He walked into a tattoo parlor outside the gates of Camp Lejeune and considered his options. A lot of guys went with the eagle, globe and anchor. Krick liked that idea, but instead selected a less traditional “tat.”

In Iraq, Krick had humped around a medium machine gun. He loved it, and he loved the camaraderie he shared with his fellow 0331s. As he sat down in the tattoo parlor, Krick presented a photograph of an M240G straight from the machine gunner’s training manual. He told the artist to draw the gun on his forearm as large as possible. The end result, stretching from wrist to elbow, left Krick looking unique among his peers.

“After that, I figured I couldn’t just do one because machine guns are always deployed in pairs,” Krick recalled. “I went back and got another 240 on the other arm to match.”

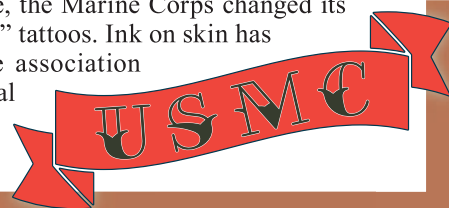
On leave at his home in Pennsylvania, Krick followed up his pair of tattoos with a traditional eagle, globe and anchor on his bicep. He returned to Camp Lejeune full of pride.

“Back then, obnoxious moto tats about your MOS weren’t really a thing yet, so I got ridiculed pretty hard by my senior enlisted.”

Krick joined his company in formation one day when the company gunnery sergeant called him to the front. The gunny made Krick raise his arms above his head, putting his 240s on display. After berating Krick in front of his peers, the gunny forced him to demonstrate “talking guns” with his inked weapons. He struggled to contain his laughter as he alternated arms boxing the air, making machine gun sounds with each punch.

The experience served only to make Krick prouder of his tattoos, and he continued adding ink to his collection. At the same time, the Marine Corps revised its policy on tattoos. In 2007, while back in Iraq on his second deployment, Krick learned that tattoos on the forearm were no longer allowed. In order to avoid disciplinary action, his 240s needed to be photographed, added to his Service Record Book, and “grandfathered” into the new policy. While still in country, a senior Marine photographed Krick’s tattoos on a company camera.

Multiple times before Krick’s experience in 2007, and numerous times since, the Marine Corps changed its stance on “acceptable” tattoos. Ink on skin has always carried some association with an unprofessional appearance.





"It appears that the newer generation [of Marines] has taken to eccentric appearances of the popular culture," stated one Marine officer amid a major tattoo policy change. "The new policy sends a message to all Marines that this type of behavior does not fit into the conservative image the Marine Corps wants to project."

Although this quote might easily be confused with sentiments from present day, the officer made these comments more than 25 years ago in May 1996. It is also curious that the policy implemented back then proved more lenient than today's policy, prohibiting tattoos on the neck and head only.

Regulations have come full circle over the last two decades. In 2007, the Corps instituted additional restrictions, outlawing sleeve tattoos. Marines like Adam Krick were grandfathered into this new policy, but still faced potential roadblocks to their career development. These restrictions were spelled out in 2010 through an official policy "amplification." Any enlisted Marine with sleeve tattoos, even those grandfathered, became ineligible for officer and warrant officer commissioning programs. Additionally, these Marines, regardless of service record or fitness reports, were barred from billets such as recruiting, drill instructor, and Marine security guard.

The changes met backlash. Some could

not reconcile the Corps' desire to preserve a traditional appearance with the impact these decisions had on many within the ranks. One 2007 opinion piece in *Marine Corps Gazette* presented the opposition argument crystal clear.

"The amount of ink a Marine sports isn't indicative of maturity level; behavior is... To me, there is no uniformity in a nontattooed, poorly behaved Marine dragging his peers to his bottom-feeding level. I'd prefer the illustrated man

who is motivated, dedicated, and educated to lead America's finest fighting force."

A more forceful opinion article appeared in the *Marine Corps Gazette* in 2015.

"The current tattoo policy is a blanket doctrine that is often misused to prevent the professional advancement of a warrior... How is this strengthening the fabric of our Corps? Often, these exemplary Marines become so disgruntled that they choose instead to exit active service and leave the occupational field, depriving the Corps of leadership and experience, all because the Marine is not afforded the chance to progress based on a few tattoos."

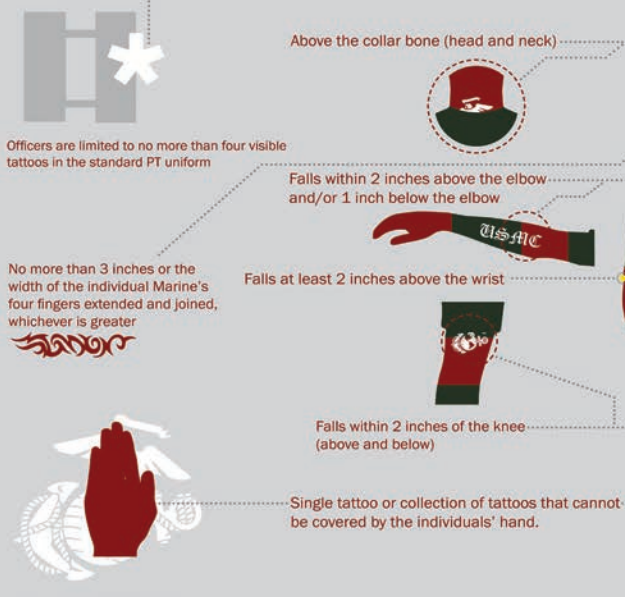
The Corps' leadership began changing regulations in 2016 with Marine Corps Bulletin 1020. More tattoos were approved for more body parts but determining if your ink fit the criteria proved arduous. The 32-page document covered every inch of skin, detailing the new directive in



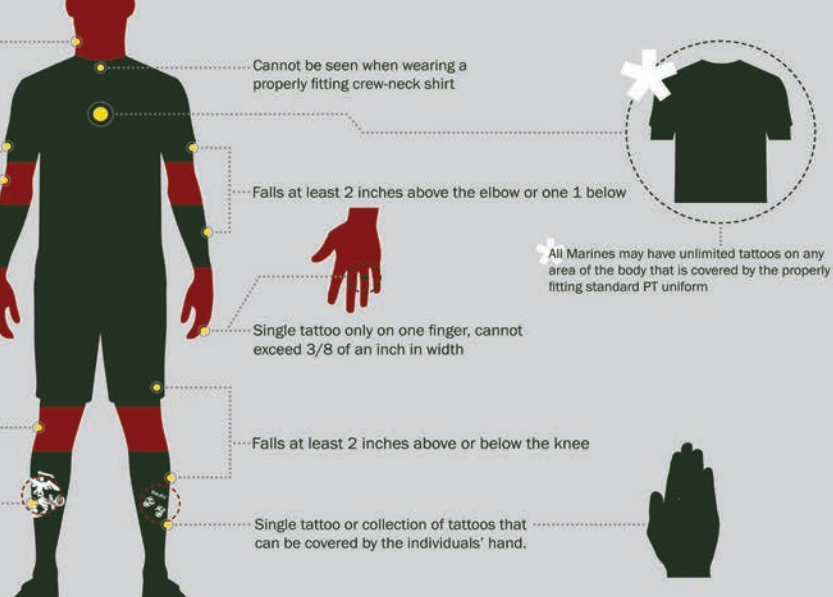
Former 0331 Robert Ham wears numerous tattoos in memory of his time in the Corps. This pineapple grenade serves as an ode to his tour in Hawaii.

UPDATED TATTOO REGS

UNAUTHORIZED AREAS



AUTHORIZED AREAS



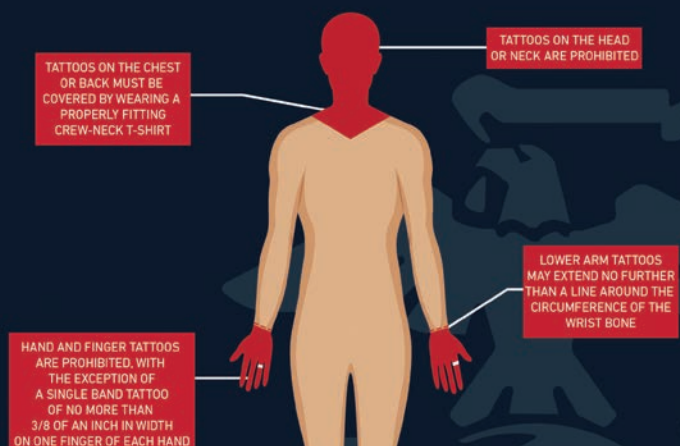
Published in 2016, this official graphic (above) depicts approved tattoo sizes and locations. Confusing? The updated 2021 graphic (below) simplified the message. (USMC Illustrations)

excess. Photographs, body diagrams, and measuring instructions specific to each body part filled the pages. The bulletin even contained official USMC printable tattoo measuring tools. Marines were supposed to print the device themselves, cut it out, and utilize it over their knees and elbows. No detail remained unspecified, lest any computer illiterate Marines venture into the agonizing task. A full page outlined formatting and printing instructions, complete with diagrams, screenshots, and color photographs demonstrating how to cut along the dotted lines. Perhaps a Marine deciphering his career prospects through a free printable held against his body would have found it more humorous if the photos at least featured crayons.

Robert Ham enlisted under these policies, but routinely entered unfazed into tattoo parlors stateside, in Hawaii, and in Korea. He served as a machine gunner with 1st Battalion, 3rd Marines from 2014 to 2018. He walked away with multiple tattoos commemorating parts of his time on active duty.

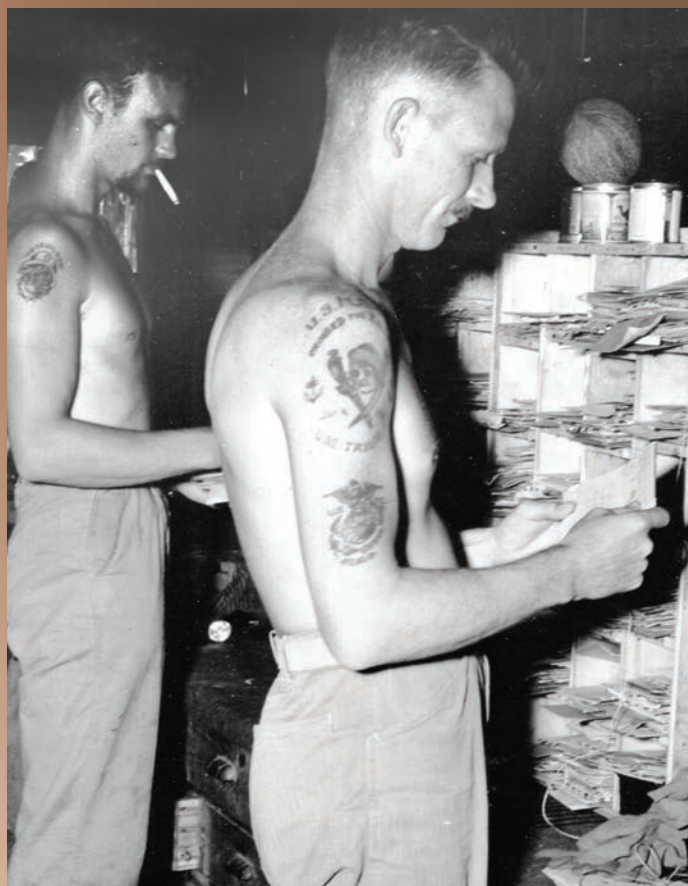
“My whole platoon got a pineapple grenade as an ode to the Hawaii Marine Corps,” Ham recalled. “Setting your own headspace and timing was becoming a lost

UPDATED TATTOO POLICY



FOR DETAILED INFORMATION, REFER TO MARINE CORPS BULLETIN 1020

*MARINES MAY HAVE TATTOOS ON ANY AREA OF THE BODY, EXCLUDING THE HEAD, NECK, AND HANDS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS POLICY. PROHIBITED TATTOOS ARE: DRUG-RELATED, GANG-RELATED, EXTREMIST, OBSCENE OR INDECENT, SEXIST, OR RACIST.



Left: Two tattooed Marines sort mail in the South Pacific, circa 1942. The Marine in the foreground sports multiple tats, including the eagle, globe and anchor. The other Marine wears a bulldog head.

art, so all the machine gunners got a headspace and timing gauge. A bunch of us got a pirate flag at infantry school. Fresh out of boot camp, I got my typical moto tat, ‘Semper Fidelis’ on my ribs.”

Ham collected more tattoos, each one drawing up a memory and story from his time in the infantry. He started a sleeve on his left forearm while on active duty, but due to the tattoo policy at the time, waited until he left the Marines in 2018 to finish it. Now a professional firefighter in Virginia, Ham continues inking his body with tributes to his new squad, his wife and his children.

“I think a lot of people love the idea of the Marine Corps and what it stands for, but once you’re in, it can be a little frustrating. A lot of guys talk negatively about their time in the Marine Corps, but still come away with tattoos. That’s because of the bonds you make, sitting on field ops for days on end with all the wild and crazy conversations, just being with your boys.”

Current tattoo guidance evolved in October 2021. An official review determined the old regulations, “were believed to have an adverse effect on retention and recruiting efforts.” The new message came refreshingly clear and simple; “Marines may have tattoos on any area of the body, excluding the head, neck, and hands in accordance with this Bulletin.”

Exceptions and potential career implications still exist. The content of a Marine’s tattoos will be scrutinized more thoroughly. Even so, in general, if a Marine today wants ink, he or she can get it.

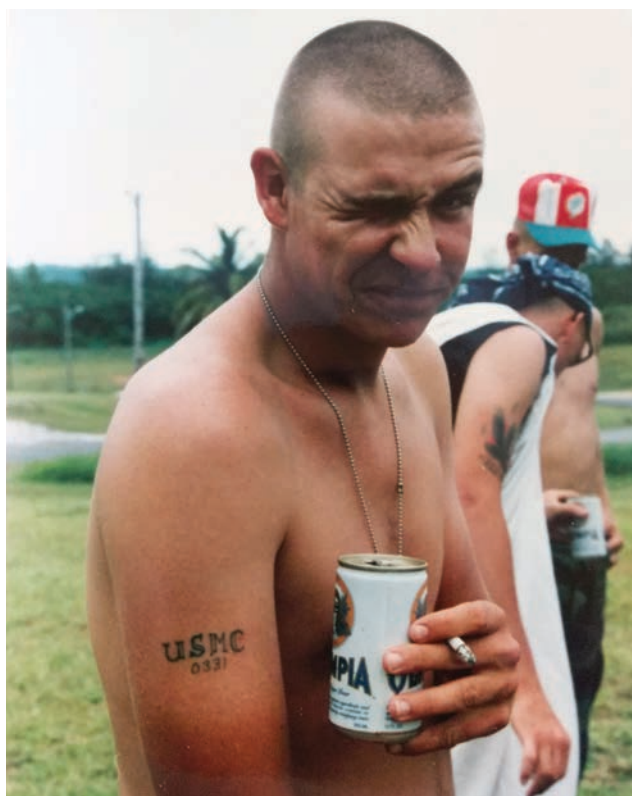
Every policy change across time spawned from the same motive; the Corps has a responsibility to maintain a disciplined and professional appearance. In his updated bulletin of last year, however, the Commandant expressed a judicious observation.

“This Bulletin ensures that the Marine Corps maintains its ties to the society it represents.”

What is the definition of a disciplined and professional appearance? It appears the Marine Corps has remained firmly committed to this philosophy. The society it serves must have changed. A traditional appearance might no longer be equated to a professional appearance. A person’s level of discipline might no longer be measured, in part, by the amount of ink on their skin.

Regardless of shifts in policy or society, Marines continue getting tattoos. They desire to display their individual experiences; the things for which they are most proud or most impacted. Vinyl stickers splashed across a vehicle or bedazzling a Yeti water bottle can only go so far. What can be more powerful than inking your own canvas of skin?

Though tattoos may be greater in number and variety, their significance to Marines remains unchanged. Captain Robert Asprey, a World War I veteran of Belleau Wood, affectionately remembered his drill instructors as, “the tall, straight, mustached professionals who dressed their



This Marine was tattooed by fellow machine gunner and amateur tattoo artist Eric Althen in the barracks on Guam in 1985.

pride in gaudy blue uniforms, decorated their bodies with salty tattoos, fed their thirst with chewing tobacco, frequently dipped snuff, assuaged fatigue with whiskey, cursed with the metric vigor of Kipling ... and knew everything there was to know about the Springfield .03 rifle.”

Some of the most famous Marines to wear the uniform proudly bore their ink.

“I selected an enormous Marine Corps emblem to be tattooed across my chest,” stated Smedley Butler, two-time Medal of Honor recipient and legendary Marine general. “It required several sittings, and hurt like the devil, but the finished product was worth the pain. I blazed triumphantly forth, a Marine from throat to waist. The emblem is still with me. Nothing on earth but skinning will remove it.”

Another Medal of Honor recipient, John Basilone, inspired generations of Marines with his tattoos. He sported a cowgirl pinup on one bicep. The other arm bore a popular military tattoo, a dagger plunged through a heart and wrapped with a banner proclaiming the ubiquitous, “Death Before Dishonor.”

Thousands and thousands of Marines across time inked their bodies with a standard, “moto tat.” An eagle, globe and anchor, or bulldog head were common. These timeless drawings remain popular today. Many Marines, however, prefer a more unique tattoo.

David Meza, a former Marine Corps Security Forces Guard and 0311, received his moto tat while home on leave in 2017.

“My uncle, who is a Marine as well, took me out to a bar and asked, ‘So what’s going to be your Marine Corps tattoo? You know, the one everybody gets after graduating boot camp.’ I told him I didn’t want something typical, so I found this image scrolling through social media and he was like, ‘Let’s go get it right now.’”

The finished product, “Protek the Crayonz,” received a laugh from everyone at the unit.

Another Marine veteran, David Tyma, took a more satirical approach to his moto tat. Tyma served as an Amphibious Assault Vehicle crewman and repairer at Camp Pendleton.

“We always joked about how we keep the Marine Corps amphibious, and I basically spent four years just sitting on



Eric Althen’s homemade tattoo machine. The motor extracted from a cassette player is mounted to the top of a toothbrush. When powered up, it rapidly feeds a length of guitar string through the hollow tube of an old Bic pen ink reservoir.

COURTESY OF ERIC ALTHEN



Above: After spending years on the beach at Camp Pendleton, former AAV crewman David Tyma altered a standard Marine "moto" tat into his seagull, beach ball, and umbrella.

the beach at Del Mar. I don't remember if I came up with the idea for the tattoo or one of the other guys did, but we talked about it enough that I finally decided to do it."

Tyma altered the traditional eagle, globe and anchor into a seagull, beach ball, and umbrella. Now off active duty and serving as a professional firefighter in Nebraska, Tyma routinely runs into other veterans who recognize his tattoo.

"I get a lot of crap over it, especially from older Marines. They think it's trash or an abomination, but to me, it's a joke and it sums up my Marine Corps experience perfectly."

Perhaps Garrett McMahon, a 0311 from 2015 to 2021, wears the most motivated of moto tats. In fact, his evolved into an entire sleeve dedicated to USMC warriors throughout history. The WW I-era painting of a Marine bayonetting a German soldier covers an entire side of his forearm. The silhouetted Marine photographed while sprinting under fire on Okinawa honors Marines of WW II. McMahon paid homage to Korean War veterans by adding the 1st Marine Division's patch from that era. Another famous Vietnam-era photo of Carlos Hathcock peering through the scope of his sniper rifle covers the outside of his arm. A modern battlefield cross honors veterans of the Persian Gulf, Iraq and Afghanistan. As a final personal touch,

Below: Former 0311 David Meza took a less traditional approach with his "moto" tat, received in 2017.



COURTESY OF DAVID MEZA

McMahon included his grandfather's dog tags on his wrist. His grandfather fought in two wars as a Marine, surviving landmark battles such as Guadalcanal and Bougainville in WW II, and the landing at Inchon in Korea.

As sacred as their moto tats, many Marines proudly wear ink they received unintentionally. Alcohol, a lost bet, or some combination of both, typically serve as the catalyst. No matter what these tattoos turn out to be, they forever represent a piece of the brotherhood the individual shared during his time in the Corps.

"One night, after a bottle of Jack Daniels and playing Mortal Kombat in the barracks, I made a bet with one of my fellow boots that I could beat him in a game," remembered one hard charger. "The loser would get the winner's name tattooed on their butt, with another tattoo of the winner's choosing. I lost, obviously."

After months of putting it off, and incessant taunting from his buddy, the Devil Dog finally went through with the bet one week before shipping out to Twentynine Palms for Integrated Training Exercise (ITX). Beneath his trousers, the Marine sported a cute, baby unicorn on his left cheek, with his buddy's name in a semi-circle over the creature's rainbow mane.

"The first night we were in Camp Wilson, I stayed up past midnight thinking the showers would be clear and nobody would see my fresh ink. After five minutes in the shower by myself, none other than my CO walked into the same shower as me. I could hear him laughing shortly after he came in. That made my first ITX very interesting."

A sizeable portion of Marines allowed themselves to be inked by a buddy who was an aspiring artist. These "barracks tattoos" may not look as professional but are just as prevalent. Eric Althen perfected his craft tattooing other Marines while in the barracks on Guam in 1985. Althen entered the Corps as an 0331 the year before. He



COURTESY OF GARRETT MCMAHON

Tattoo sleeve worn by former 0311 Garrett McMahon honoring Marine warriors from World War I through present day.

arrived on Guam to his assignment providing security on the naval base.

“At the time, I had been doing a ton of drawing. I think that’s how I was recruited into being the tattoo guy,” remembered Althen. “A couple of my buddies got a bunch of tattoos and we talked about them all the time. One of the guys with us was this hard kid who grew up on the streets of Los Angeles. One day, he told me I should make a prison

tattoo machine. I’d never heard of anything like that, so he drew it out for me.”

The leathernecks gathered raw materials for the homemade device and got to work. They cut the bristles off an old toothbrush and bent the top over, then extracted the motor from a cassette player and mounted it to the toothbrush. They stripped down a Bic pen and blew the ink out of the reservoir inside, leaving a thin, hollow plastic tube. Althen



Eric Althen used his homemade “prison tattoo machine” to ink a fellow Marine in 1985. The machine performed better than expected and the pair of underwear he used to wipe up ink and blood also performed admirably.

COURTESY OF ERIC ALTHEN

found a Marine in the barracks with a guitar and convinced him to donate a length of guitar string. He filed the string to a point and fed it through the ink tube, then attached it to the motor. When powered up, the motor fed the string rapidly back and forth. He picked up a voltage controller at the PX to adjust the motor speed, and a bottle of Indian ink from out in town. Before long, Althen was in business.

He outlined his art on a willing Marine’s skin with a ballpoint pen. They requested all kinds of tattoos. Althen employed his machine to ink everything from “USMC” in block letters across a Marine’s knuckles, to a massive snake wrapping around and all the way up someone’s arm. Once outlined, he dipped the guitar string in the Indian ink and went to work.

“The tattoo process involves a lot of ink and blood. You’re constantly wiping it off so you can see where you’re going. Today, a normal person would have a microfiber cloth or something like that. I remember I couldn’t even find an old t-shirt to use, but I had a pair of underwear I was willing to sacrifice. They were freshly laundered, at least.”

Althen’s list of customers multiplied after his guinea-

tats permeate the ranks for every job from rifleman to combat camera. Often, the most meaningful tattoos honor the memory of a fellow Marine lost in combat. The Corps’ most recent casualties at the Abbey Gate of Hamid Karzai International Airport are memorialized in ink.

Von Straight served with Weapons Platoon, “Bravo” Company, 1st Battalion, 8th Marines in Kabul during Operation Allies Refuge. The suicide bomb at Abbey Gate detonated behind him on Aug. 26, 2021. Later that night, he and several others learned their friend, Sgt Nicole Gee, was one of the 13 American servicemembers killed in the attack. When they left Afghanistan, Straight and his friends designed a tattoo to remember her. The outline of Afghanistan lies in the middle with “OAR” written in Arabic inside, and “21” outside. A ring of 13 stars surrounds the country and text, representing each American killed at Abbey Gate. The largest, outlined star at the top of the circle represents Gee.

Whatever their motivating experience may be, Marines who memorialized a piece of their Corps on their skin found great meaning in the process. In the end, it boiled down to pride in being part of something great, and more importantly, remembering the brothers and sisters with whom they shared that time of life.

Marines from every era have more fully realized what the Corps meant to them after they got out. The culture of being a Marine, the struggle to earn the title, and the camaraderie shared is difficult to explain to outsiders. For many Marines, their tattoos will continue telling these stories. For many more to come, their stories remain to be inked. 🇺🇸

Von Straight and several other active-duty Marines designed this tattoo honoring their friend, Sgt Nichole Gee, and the other Americans killed at Hamid Karzai International Airport in August 2021. “OAR” is written in Arabic inside the Afghanistan outline. Thirteen stars represent each U.S. service-member killed with the outlined star at the top representing Gee.

COURTESY OF VON STRAIGHT





Camp Lejeune PMO Marines Recognized for Saving a Life

“My priority was just making sure that he made it through the night and survived,” said Sergeant Michelle Lescano, military police officer, Headquarters and Support Battalion, Marine Corps Installations East (MCIEAST), Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune.

Two Marines from the Provost Marshal Office on MCB Camp Lejeune received the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal on Aug. 26, 2022, for saving the life of another Marine.

On May 19, 2022, around 5 a.m., Lescano and Lance Corporal Colton Richardson, along with other military police and civilian law enforcement officers from MCB Camp Lejeune, were dispatched to attend to a Marine who sustained a life-threatening injury at Onslow Beach. Lescano and Richardson arrived shortly after the initial responding police officer and quickly made their way to the end of the pier where the victim was located. Richardson and another officer determined that the space on the pier was insufficient to conduct life-saving measures and decided to move the victim off the pier, toward land. Richardson carried the victim to a safer location, 500 feet away, where responding law enforcement officers and Lescano were able to assess the victim. Lescano immediately directed another officer to apply direct pressure to the victim’s wound while waiting for MCB Camp Lejeune Fire and Emergency Services to arrive on scene. Lescano and

Richardson’s quick actions enabled the victim to survive his injury and eventually return to his unit.

When asked how Lescano felt about the situation the next day, she responded, “The one thing I was worried about was making sure he was OK.”

“[In our job,] we sometimes have a lack of closure, when they [victims] go in an ambulance, and no one comes back to update us [the reporting officers],” said Richardson. “It is on us to continue to stay up to date with the hospitals and with that individual. We take it upon ourselves to check in on them.”

Richardson said he hopes to return to the military police schoolhouse to teach Marines how to become technically and tactically proficient within their military occupational specialty.

Cpl Makayla Elizalde, USMC

Long Island Native Continues Legacy of New York Women In Marine Corps History

At 17 years old, with her parents’ permission, Lily Banhegyesi made a commitment to serve when she raised her right hand and joined the United States Marine Corps.

Staff Sergeant Banhegyesi is a first-generation American whose parents emigrated from Hungary and settled in Syosset, a small hamlet in Long Island, N.Y. At only 6 years old, like other Americans at the time, she witnessed the attack on the World Trade Center towers, on Sept. 11, 2001, changing the course of her life forever. At that point, she knew

Sgt Michelle Lescano, left, and LCpl Colton Richardson, military police officers with Headquarters and Support Battalion, MCIEAST, MCB Camp Lejeune, received the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal on Aug. 26, 2022, for saving the life of another Marine on May 19, 2022.

she wanted to serve her country, adding to the legacy of female Marines.

By the time Banhegyesi was born, women had been serving in the Marine Corps for 77 years. Like Banhegyesi, many of the first women to break the “glass ceiling,” came from New York.

The legacy of New York women continues today with Marines like Banhegyesi. After successfully completing recruit training, she served with a primary military occupational specialty of 2651, Special Intelligence System Administrator/Communicator. The inspiration her drill instructors instilled in her remained long after her entry-level training.

“My drill instructors, they inspired me so much,” said Banhegyesi. “Seeing what they did, yeah, that was my goal.”

Banhegyesi earned the rank of sergeant shortly before reenlisting and took the opportunity to volunteer for drill instructor duty in connection with her commitment to serve another four years.

Like many other drill instructors, she faced trials along the way. She was an experienced drill instructor in her company, primarily responsible for training recruits in close order drill movements and instilling precision and discipline in preparation for evaluation in ceremonial formation. Banhegyesi’s platoon failed the initial drill evaluation, which she said was mentally and socially difficult, especially in a small professional environment where there is constant scrutiny.

Banhegyesi persevered through this difficult point in her career, advancing to become a senior drill instructor. She was on her second training cycle as a senior drill instructor when she received an unexpected call.

“I got a call randomly from my first sergeant and sergeant major,” she said. “They asked me if I wanted to be the drill master, which obviously came as a shock because I failed drill.”

This was unheard of, and she was skeptical at first, wondering how someone in her position, who had failed at the task, could be selected to hold one of the most prestigious positions for a drill instructor.



CPL TIA CARR, USMC

SSgt Lily Banhegyesi, a drill master with MCRD Parris Island, S.C., corrects a future Marine during a poolee function at Recruiting Station New York in Garden City, N.Y.

Banhegyesi turned to the one person she knew would help her make this decision, her mom.

“I told her about the opportunity, and she cut me off mid-sentence,” Banhegyesi said.

“She said, ‘Take the job because these leaders see something in you that you don’t even see in yourself. Who cares if you’ve had failures in the past!’ And she said something so powerful that it will stick with me forever: ‘Be a lion and don’t worry about what the sheep say,’ ” Banhegyesi said.

Banhegyesi took the position with pride, studying the manuals every second she could, perfecting where she once had faults, and assisting others who struggled as she once did. She felt as though she had a better understanding because of the struggles she had faced early on.

She was the face of her battalion for all things pertaining to drill and ceremonies, ensuring traditions and standards were upheld. For the remainder of her time as a drill instructor, she knew she held the power to influence the way future generations of Marines conduct ceremonial drill.

After successfully completing her tour of duty at Parris Island, she returned to her primary MOS and now proudly utilizes the lessons and leadership traits



CPL TIA CARR, USMC

SSgt Lily Banhegyesi corrects a poolee in Garden City, N.Y. Banhegyesi, a native of Syosset, Long Island, N.Y., attended the poolee function to assist recruiters in preparing future Marines for Marine Corps recruit training.



LCPL RUBEN PADILLA, USMC

Sgt Richard G. Moler, an expeditionary firefighting and rescue specialist with Marine Wing Support Squadron 271, Marine Air Control Group 28, 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing, recently shot a perfect 400 score during his first pistol qualification.

learned during those years at her current unit in California.

“Never let your failures hold you back and prevent you from being great,” Banhegyesi said, reminiscing on the struggles and progress she’s made so far in her career.

From only 300 women serving in clerical positions in 1918 to thousands of enlisted women today, women have made bounding progress, achieving myriad milestones to include advancing in roles such as Female Engagement Teams, serving in the infantry, and being assigned to Marine Forces Special Operations Command.

Throughout the decades, New York Marines like Banhegyesi have played key roles in building a legacy of necessary change, strengthening the Marine Corps, and equipping it to face and overcome all manner of challenges in defense of the nation.

Sgt Heather Atherton, USMC

Marine Firefighter Shoots a Perfect Score On the Pistol Range

Perfection is always the goal for Marines, but rarely achieved. This, however, was not the case for Sergeant Richard G. Moler, a native of Clarksville, Tenn.

He shot a perfect score of 400 on the USMC pistol range during his first pistol qualification on Sept. 9, 2022. Moler is an expeditionary firefighting and rescue specialist with Marine Wing Support Squadron 271. While attending the Weapons and Tactics Instructor course, he was provided the opportunity to qualify on the pistol range. Although this would mark Moler’s first time shooting the pistol, he adapted and exceeded everyone’s expectations.

Moler grew up shooting rifles, but it wasn’t until he joined the military that he became familiar with shooting a pistol. His mentor, and now best friend, Mike LeClaire, invited him out to the range, which inspired him to develop his skills.

“Me shooting good that day, a lot of it is because of my mentor,” said Moler. “He was the NCO I desperately needed in one of my darkest times. He noticed that and got me out of my room one day. We went shooting and he let me fire his pistol ... most of what I did on the range was because of his teachings.”

The Marine Corps encourages every Marine to be mentored by someone in or outside their chain of command. A mentor acts as a role-model, teacher, guide and coach. Moler’s mentor taught him the importance of sticking to the

fundamentals. He constantly reminded himself to slow down, draw the pistol slowly and line up the shot, he explained.

“In the pre-qual, I only missed seven shots. I was rushing shots because I was getting nervous. I had to teach myself to remember the fundamentals,” said Moler.

Moler said that if you want to shoot a perfect score, the trick is to take your time. You have seven seconds to shoot one bullet; use every single one of those seconds to line up the shot perfectly and do a slow steady trigger squeeze. Don’t squeeze the trigger with the tip of your finger. Do it with the middle knuckle because it helps the gun not sway from left to right.

“Let the recoil do its thing. Don’t try to fight it because that’s when you tense up and miss,” said Moler.

Moler believes in the importance of not only having a mentor but also a good friend. He expressed that the good friendship and teachings he received from his mentor were vital to his performance that day. He said every Marine should find someone who they trust and look forward to seeing every day or else life may get boring and repetitive.

LCpl Ruben Padilla, USMC





CPL LEVI VOSS, USMC

Capt Kyle Westman, MV-22B Osprey pilot with Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 161 at Marine Corps Air Station in Miramar, Calif., received the Air Medal on Nov. 1, 2022, for his actions in the successful completion of a casualty evacuation.

Osprey Pilot Awarded Air Medal

By Cpl Levi Voss, USMC



It is rarely quiet in Hangar 7 on the flightline at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar. Usually, the hum of tools reverberates throughout the hangar as maintenance Marines perform routine work on the numerous MV-22B Ospreys housed there. All of that was temporarily put on hold on the afternoon of Nov. 1, 2022, as the Marines of Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 161, Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, gathered in formation. Among the Marines were three individuals standing distinctly in civilian attire: one woman and two toddlers. They all gathered to watch their leader, fellow pilot, father and husband be recognized for outstanding commitment to duty and unwavering leadership.

Captain Kyle Westman received the Air Medal for outstanding

dedication to duty and, specifically, the success of a difficult casualty evacuation (casevac) that led to saving an individual's life.

On Nov. 13, 2021, Capt Westman's casevac alert aircrew learned there was someone suffering from a heart attack aboard a merchant vessel 500 miles off the Kenyan coast. Westman's flight launched a recovery effort from Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, to fly more than 1,000 nautical miles to the vessel. He masterfully positioned his aircraft between numerous vertical obstacles on the ship to facilitate Air Force medical personnel rappelling aboard the ship to care for the patient before making the return flight.

This action was the first of its kind for an MV-22B, both for the distance covered and the insertion of Air Force medical personnel via rappel to a non-standard civilian merchant vessel. The rescue

Right: LtCol Ryan A. Stevens, the commanding officer of VMM-161, left, shakes hands with Capt Kyle Westman as he is presented with the Navy and Marine Association (N&MA) Leadership Award at the same ceremony.

demonstrated the MV-22B's capabilities to hastily cover vast distances and execute these maneuvers with precision and safely return, which stresses the importance of why only an MV-22B could have accomplished this mission.

"[Westman] has singlehandedly changed the culture and expectations of company grade officers in the ready room. I can't think of a more deserving Marine than Capt Westman for this award," said Major Christopher Huff, the executive officer of VMM-161. He adds, "His ability to balance billet duties, flight instructor duties, and deployment coordination is not only instrumental to the squadron's success to deploy on short notice, but also serves as a reminder to all the company grade officers on what they are capable of accomplishing, and what a young officer is capable of producing."

In August 2021, Westman helped coordinate a deployment with only 53 days' notice. Arriving to Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, in September 2021 as the officer in charge for the VMM-161 advanced echelon for the East Africa Aviation Combat Element (EA-ACE), Westman was tasked with activating the first EA-ACE for the Marine Corps. Westman worked tirelessly to successfully coordinate across two continents and combatant commands to transfer six MV-22Bs and numerous aircraft ground support equipment, oversee the assignment of quarters, development of workspaces, and



CPL LEVIVOSS, USMC

acquisition of hangar spaces, as well as establish squadron command relationships with higher command elements.

Westman is a prime example of how 3rd MAW remains trained, ready, relevant and responsive to emergent requirements across the globe. 🇺🇸

MARINE CORPS HERITAGE FOUNDATION AWARDS

APRIL 29, 2023

call for NOMINATIONS

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SUBMISSION DEADLINE JANUARY 15TH, 2023

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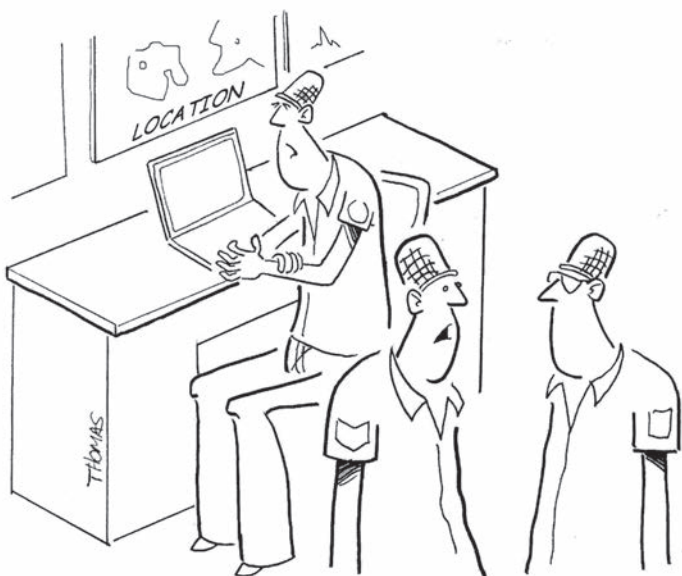


are you a
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are you an
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Leatherneck Laffs



"Tell the General that we have to delay the air strike due to hand cramps."



Gravity!



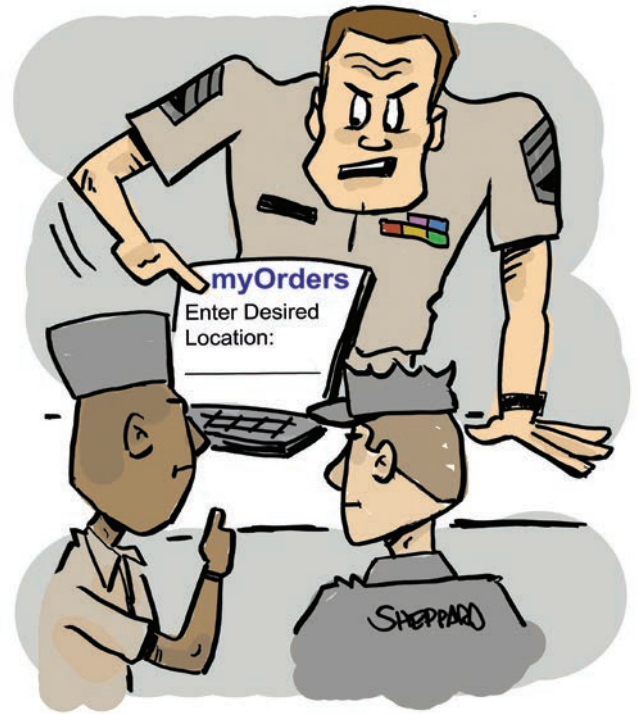
"Ever since his bed passed inspection, he's been sleeping on the deck."



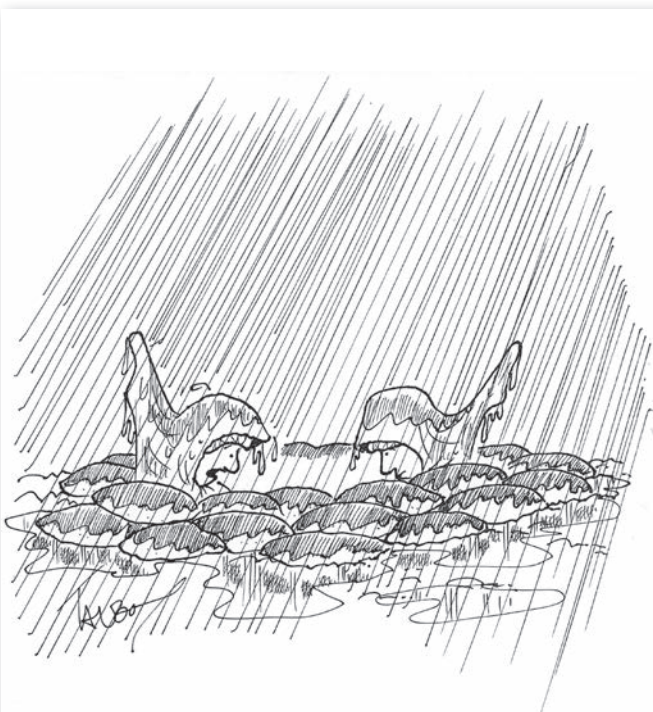
"It won't fire. It wants your Apple ID."



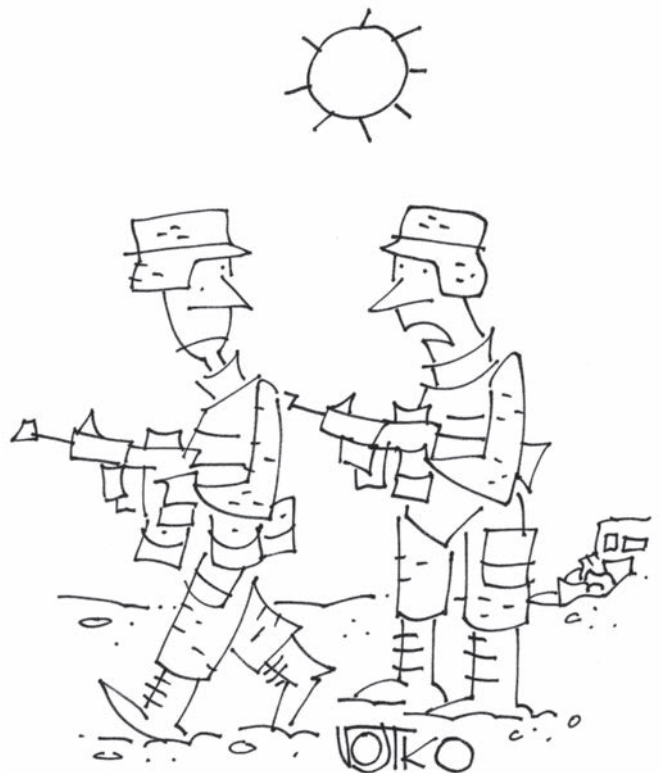
"The mouse is mightier than the sword."



"You enter where you want to go and it calculates the base closest to 180 degrees opposite from your choice."



"Well, looks like our basement is flooded."



"How ironic! I was lousy at golf, and yet, here I am stuck again in a sand trap."

9-MILE PLUNGE

By MSgt Clay Barrow, USMC

LtCol William H. Rankin's 40-minute nightmare fall is a record no one is likely to challenge

A lot more than altitude separates the hot pilot from the ground-pounding infantryman. A rifleman, thumbing through a flyer's manual and reading, "When you are in the middle of a quadrant, one of the extremes will be correct, and it is best to switch to loop and use aural null procedures," must realize that here is a language barrier that is way over his head in more ways than one.

Realistically, there is little in common between the infantry and aviators, except during wartime "working hours," or peacetime air-ground exercises.

Yet both the flying fraternity and their ground-bound opposite numbers must surely agree on one point: Lieutenant Colonel William Henry Rankin's sudden departure from his aircraft—9 miles up—is a record that nobody wants to try to break.

The infantryman realizes the enormity of the feat only when he considers that it would take him about three and a half hours non-stop to march the distance LtCol Rankin fell.

A fellow flyer, who has known him a long time, says, "Nobody's ever going to kid him again about that weightlifting kick he's been on for years. Only a man in superb physical condition could have survived what he did. The slide-rule people used to speculate that, in ejection at that height, a man's stomach might burst like a ripe melon or his blood might literally boil. Everybody's glad Bill made liars out of them."

Propped up with pillows in his private room in the naval hospital at Beaufort, LtCol Rankin was obviously

feeling discomfort 10 days after his fall. There was no more room on the dresser top for another get-well card. His bedside stand, too, was almost invisible under layers of cards, telegrams, letters, business proposals and newspaper clippings.

"I read one newspaper clipping," he

said, "that said, 'Rankin blacked out once during the fall,' and they had me at the wrong altitude too. Well, Rankin didn't black out! Let's see if I can tell you the way it happened."

He closed his eyes and, for an instant, he was back at 47,000 feet in a doomed aircraft. He brought himself quickly



back to earth as he snapped, “I know it’s asking a lot of you, but let’s hold down the adjectives and adverbs when you write it. OK?”

OK, Sir.

“About 1800 EST on 26 July 1959.” he began, “while returning from a high-altitude cross-country training hop from Boston to Beaufort, S.C., I had an indication that I was having engine trouble. We [wingman Herbert Nolan and he] were south of Norfolk above an overcast, the top of which was about 44,000 feet. I recall seeing 47,000 feet go by on my altimeter when a grating, rasping sound began and the fire warning light came on. I had a flame-out and a rapid rundown, followed by engine seizure.”

His emergency power package did not work, and he was without instruments, radio or flight control. He knew that to ride into the thunderstorm could have resulted in either slowing down and spinning or nosing over and going supersonic. “Although I realized I was at an extreme altitude,” he said matter-of-factly, “I had no choice but to eject.”

His F8U had been in a slight climb when the controls froze and, slightly nose-up, he was in an ideal attitude for ejection. He pulled the ejection curtain and fired himself from the aircraft.

“My first impressions were of the rapid expansion of my body due to the explosive decompression and a feeling of extreme cold. Inside the aircraft the temperature had been about 75 degrees above zero. An instant later I was pinwheeling through an atmosphere of 65 degrees below!”

“The cold feeling quickly changed,” he recalls, “to a burning, tingling sensation. I was uncomfortable from the expansion of my body and cold to the point that I was afraid I would lose consciousness. I had the terrible feeling that explosive decompression had me and I would not survive.”

As he hurtled and spun through space, his arms and legs were spread-eagled, despite his violent efforts to bring them into his body. After a few seconds he opened his eyes and, through the slits, saw he was entering the top of the overcast. The clouds were white and fleecy.

“It took all my strength to bring my arms into my body,” he says. “I was amazed to find I still had my helmet and oxygen mask on.”

His oxygen mask was standing out from his face, probably due to the slip stream, and he was not sure that his emergency oxygen system was doing any good.

He continued to free-fall but had

to fight a driving desire to open his parachute. “I knew,” he said, “that to do it would mean death from the cold or lack of oxygen.”

Despite the compelling desire to open the chute, he, at last, made himself place his life in the hands of the automatic parachute, set to open at 10,000 feet.

The free fall continued for what seemed to be an eternity. As he fell into denser atmosphere, he became a little more comfortable due to the pressure being reduced although his body was still numb with cold.

“About this time, I knew I was falling into denser and darker clouds and I began

But the ground—and safety—was a long way off for the Marine.

The feeling of well-being gave way swiftly as he realized he was out of oxygen as the mask collapsed against his face. He disconnected it.

“The violence in the thunderstorm became very severe,” he recalls. “I was stretched, jarred and buffeted about by updrafts and downdrafts. At times I had the horrible feeling that I was going in a complete loop around the ‘chute.’”

Of the thunderstorm, he said, “... the violence in there is impossible to describe. There is nothing to compare with it. I recall hail, water—almost as if



GYSGT E.J. JARRARD, USMC

Lt Marlene Mazar, a Navy nurse, helps LtCol Rankin sort through some of his letters from well-wishers.

to feel the turbulence of the thunderstorm. I started to be concerned about my ‘chute opening and, while I was thinking about it, I felt a violent jerk and sudden stoppage when the parachute blossomed.”

LtCol Rankin knew well the indescribably wonderful sensation of a parachute’s opening—he’d had to bail out over enemy lines in Korea. He looked up instinctively to check his parachute but was in such a dark cloud that he could not see it. He reached up and checked the risers and was convinced that he had a “good ‘chute.’”

“I had the feeling that I had it made,” he remembers with a grin. “What more could a fella want? I was in a good ‘chute and I was on my way down.”

I were in a swimming pool—lightning and thunder.”

LtCol Rankin said he believes that updrafts carried him up into the hail layer of the storm several times. He became airsick. “The lightning was so blinding,” he remembers, “that it seemed like countless atom bombs were exploding. The thunder was so severe, you couldn’t hear it. But you could certainly feel the vibrations.”

About the time that he was at last convinced that neither he nor his gear could take much more and that he would surely lose consciousness, he suddenly sensed the air getting smoother. He realized that he was at last, incredibly, below the worst of the storm—the lower two-thirds.

"I was still in clouds," he said, "the rain was extremely heavy, but I felt I was getting near the ground. I began looking down in preparation for the landing. Below me, the clouds were thinner. I could make out green foliage and distinguish trees."

Minutes later, he was being blown above the ground by a strong surface wind and moving both horizontally and vertically into the trees. He estimates that he broke out of the overcast between 300 and 500 feet up.

As he fell through the trees, his parachute suddenly caught, and he was swung like a pendulum and crashed into the trees.

"I was cold and numb," he said. "I could barely move. I was amazed to find I still had my watch and that it was still ticking. The time was 1840. I'd been 40 minutes coming down!" LtCol Rankin's wingman later verified that he had, indeed, ejected at 1800.

He had, he learned later, landed about 25 miles from where he'd bailed out.

LtCol Rankin painfully unstrapped himself from his parachute. He took off all his flying gear except his helmet and his knife. He wobbled about three steps into a wall of vegetation.

"I guess," he said, "that, in that moment,

I got a little panicky. But I quickly told myself to settle down, figure out a plan and get myself out of there."

It was dark, the rain was still pouring down. As he stumbled about, he noticed sawed tree stumps, some newly cut, others with old scars. He knew he'd find a logging road around. He set himself a "square search," pacing off the area. About the third leg of the search, he encountered the road. Following the deepest ruts, he walked a few hundred yards until, through a clearing, he saw a cornfield and, beyond, what appeared to be cars passing on a road.

"I knew then I really had it made," he said.

But as he clambered up the highway, he was in for the most frustrating experience of all. He still gets angry as he recalls, "Nobody would stop! I must have waved at a dozen cars, but they whizzed right on by. I know what I must have looked like. I was covered with blood from a nosebleed that had started when I ejected. I must have been a sorry lookin' mess."

He knew he was hurt and needed medical attention. There was only one way to get it, he told himself. If one more car passed him, he would lie down in the middle of the road, and they'd stop or run over him!

Just as he was about to put his desperate measure to the test, a car which had gone by, stopped and backed up. LtCol Rankin blurted out his story to Mr. Judson Dunning, whose son had recognized the lieutenant colonel's gold crash helmet and asked his dad what a pilot would be doing out there.

"I gave the boy the helmet," LtCol Rankin said.

He was taken to a small hospital in Ahoskie, N.C., where he was given emergency treatment, a large sedative and a warm bed. "From there on," he said, "things become a little vague."

"That's all there was to it," he said.

To LtCol William H. Rankin, the commanding officer of Fighter Squadron 122 and a veteran of almost 20 years of enlisted and commissioned service, that may have been all there was to it. To him it may have been simply an accident during a routine training flight and, although it had almost cost him his life, it was something that could have happened to any pilot.

But to the civilian population and to his fellow Marines, LtCol Rankin's feat was not only above and beyond the call of duty—it was above and beyond the imagination. 🇺🇸

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A composite image featuring a Marine in dress uniform, a white dress glove, and various Marine Corps medals and insignia. The Marine is wearing a black tunic with gold buttons and a white shirt with a red tie. A white dress glove is shown above the Marine's head. A circular gold medal is visible in the top left corner. The background is a dark wood paneling.

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SEA STORY OF THE MONTH

A Triumph of Leadership

While at Camp Lejeune waiting for orders to Vietnam in the summer of 1968, our company gunny put me in charge of a working party tasked with washing the windows of an old World War II wooden building used as officers' quarters. There must have been 100 windows on that thing. I had three privates, one step ladder, and a bucket of soapy water. There was, however, a long hose with plenty of water pressure. Being a boot corporal and not knowing any better, I directed the privates to first take off all the screens and hose them down.

The screens hadn't been off the building since 1945. They were wood framed. They were dry. As soon as the water hit them, they started to swell. They got bigger. Much bigger. I told the Marines not to worry about the screens, just leave them in the sun to dry. Then it was time to wash the windows and we flogged them with the hose. Bugs, dirt, bird droppings, and cobwebs flew everywhere. The window frames were also wood. They were dry. Some of the windows were open. Some were closed. They started to swell just like the screens had.

It took us all day to hose down all four sides of the building. Finally, around 4 p.m., brass started arriving, and a lieutenant told us to knock it off. We packed up our bucket, coiled the hose, and skedaddled, leaving the wood-framed screens leaning against the building, still wet and swollen.

The following day, I got

my orders to Vietnam and was gone. A few months later, I ran into one of the privates from my working party at Camp Lejeune. He told me the company gunny was looking to kill all of us the day I left. With our hose-down we had soaked the beds, wall lockers and furniture in several of the officers' rooms. The enthusiastic cleaning had also left the windows of the old barracks swollen and inoperable. The wood screens were so severely warped they would not fit back in the windows.

The four of us had made an entire BOQ uninhabitable. The private said he saw them pitching tents outside the building so the officers had somewhere to sleep.

The four of us had made an entire BOQ uninhabitable. The private said he saw them pitching tents outside the building so the officers had somewhere to sleep. Gunny got reamed big time, and the other three Marines caught holy hell. Me? I skated.

Leading this working party was one of the crowning achievements of my entire Marine Corps career.

Sgt Jim Hackett
USMC, 1967-1970
Carmel, Ind.

UA on Okie

It was June 11, 1969. I was headed home to be discharged. I flew out of Da Nang sitting in the cargo bay of a C-130. There was no other place to sit. We

landed on Okinawa after a flight that lasted forever and were taken to Camp Hansen. The C-130 is a great aircraft, but it was slow as hell.

We were promised liberty during the four days that we were there, but it didn't happen. Each night they said it would be the next night. On the fourth night, we were again denied liberty. Being a bit unhappy I decided to try to sneak off base.

I had never been UA before. I walked up near the gate which had a bunch of tollgate-style booths. A Marine came up to me and asked if I was trying to get off base. He said he could take me off base for a price. Next thing I knew, he had me in a cab. As we approached the tollgate style booth I was beginning to panic. The gate guard talked to the guy with me, took some of my money and waved us on. Outside the gate the cab stopped, and I was turned loose.

Later, I had to figure out how to get back onto the base. I did not see anyone who could help me, so I began to walk along the road beside the base. I came to an area of housing separated only by a low fence. It was officer country, and I knew I was not allowed in that area. I stepped over the fence and was back on base. I thought it was better to be caught in officer country than off base without a pass.

I started walking, but then I saw a lieutenant coming so I turned to a doorway and pretended to ring the doorbell. I stepped down, saluted, and asked the officer watching me if he knew where I could find Lieutenant Harrison. He shook his head no. I saluted

and left. I got out of officer country and made my way back to the barracks. I may not have been a very good barracks Marine but as a mud Marine, I was very resourceful.

LCpl Joseph P. "Snuffy"
Jackson
Loudonville, N.Y.

Operation Blue Star

During 1959 and 1960 I was serving on Camp Koza in Okinawa with Company A, 3rd Pioneer Battalion. As engineers, we were always attached to infantry units. In early 1960 our platoon was sent to Camp Schwab, the new camp that was toward the northern training area where the 5th Marine Regiment was billeted. We were under control of the "Fighting 5th," for Operation Blue Star that was conducted on the island of Formosa.

The day we arrived, we boarded ship and set sail. After a few days of bouncing around the waves and being seasick, we prepared to make an amphibious landing down the ropes and into the boats. There were many countries involved, and it was quite a large operation. We climbed down the ropes into the landing craft, then circled the boats until all were online.

We hit the beach in "John Wayne" fashion then charged forward at port arms across the sandy beach. About 50 to 75 yards ashore we maneuvered over a small crest of a hill. On the other side of the hill, we encountered rice paddies. We were all hauling butt across the rice paddy dikes when I found myself up in the air doing a double back flip! I landed in some very wet, slimy, nasty smelling substance with 75 percent

of my body submerged.

As I was running, I had hit some sort of hard root in the dike with my foot and went ass over teakettle. After climbing out of the paddy I joined my platoon. The platoon straggled in two columns, and I was ordered by the platoon sergeant to follow the unit 50 to 70 feet behind as I smelled very ripe.

The next day my platoon leader called for me, and the lieutenant told me the regimental commander and many high-ranking brass were observing the landing via field glasses. They mentioned that my tripping and flying through the air was the most realistic scene of a Marine being shot. I'm sure they might still be laughing thinking of that day.

CWO-3 Jack Wing,
USMC (Ret)
Apopka, Fla

The LTC Didn't Appreciate Our Skills

During Armed Forces Week in 1968, a shopping mall in Santa Barbara, Calif., allowed our I&I staff of Co H, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Marines in Port Hueneme,

Calif., to set up an exhibit in their parking lot. Seabees from Port Hueneme also participated. Being a rifle company, we erected a GP tent filled with tools of the trade, i.e., M60s, M14s 60 mm mortars, .45-caliber pistols and even a 106 recoilless rifle mounted on a M274Mule along with other displays of a rifle company's equipment, arms and ammo. The Seabees displayed many of their humongous earth-moving machines and other equipment.

Halfway through the week, an Army geek drove into the lot with a Nike missile on a huge semi rig. By this time, I was getting a little bored overseeing such important operations and noticed an opportunity to make life a little more exciting for the Marines and our Seabee comrades. Seventy-five meters from our display area was a coffee shop with a really pretty waitress who was thoroughly unimpressed by the likes of us. Even the Seabees gave up trying to impress her but our new-found Army friend had the courage, fortitude and

stupidity to continue the assault and he spent all his time in the coffee shop.

I seized the moment and contacted the mall managers I had sucked-up to earlier for logistical help. One of the managers provided me a back room

Have you ever seen a Marine Nike missile?

No? Neither had the unfortunate soldier's CO.

in their office complex and whatever tools and supplies I needed. Have you ever seen a Marine Nike missile? No? Neither had the unfortunate soldier's CO. When the CO, a lieutenant colonel, pulled up in his Army sedan the next day and took a quick glance at his precious missile you would have thought he was going to have a stroke. He asked someone where his "Army of One" was. He was told where to find him, took off in a huff and shortly returned with a very embarrassed soldier in tow.

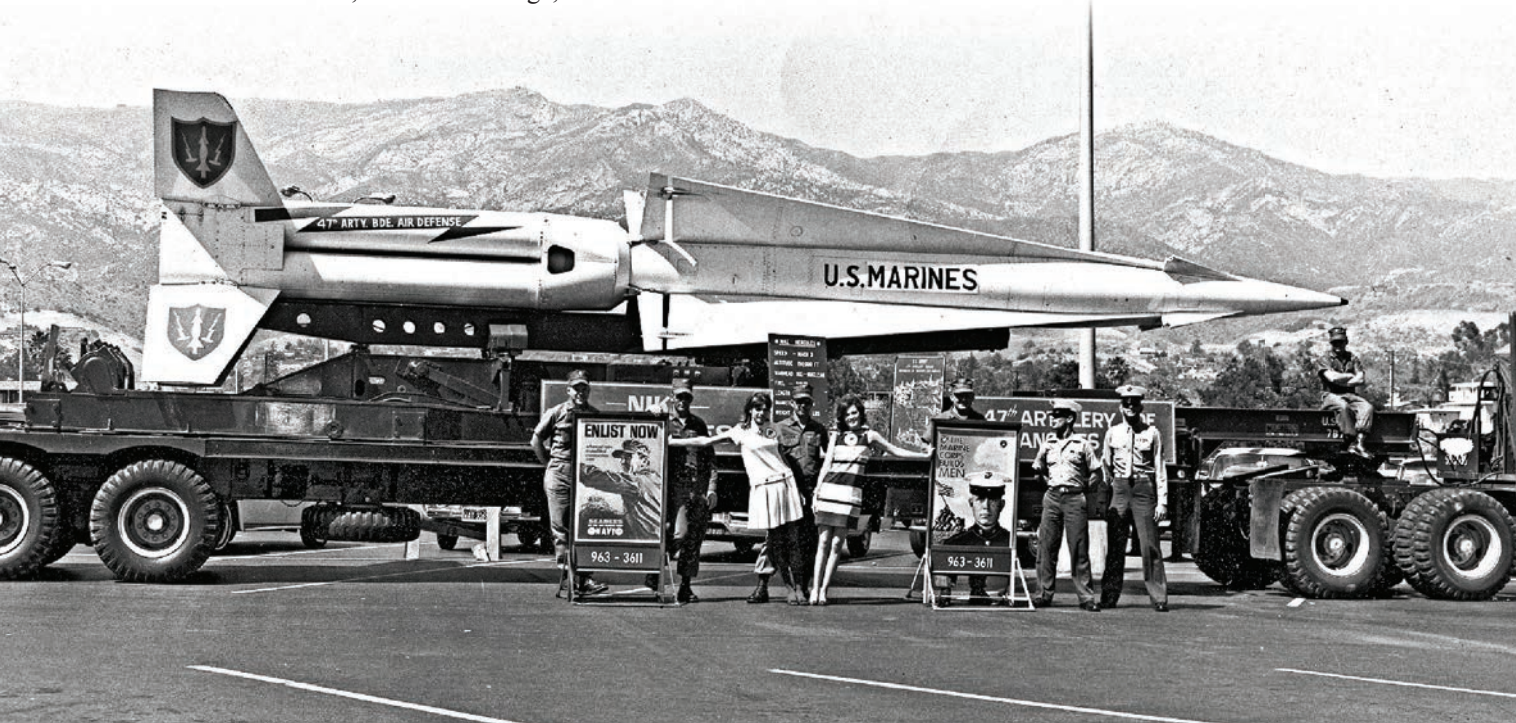
It was a complete surprise to the soldier because the "U.S. Marine" logo was on the side of the missile facing away from the coffee shop. He never had a clue.

After he and the lieutenant colonel "cleaned up" their missile and prepared to exit the mall parking lot, the Marines and Seabees got into formation and saluted them as they departed. The colonel never returned our salute.

As lame as it may be, this is just one of the highlights of my career.

1stLt Bernie Eveler,
USMC (Ret)
1953 to 1973
Hiram, Ga.

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: Sea Stories, *Leatherneck Magazine*, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134, or send an email to: leatherneck@mca-marines.org. We offer \$25 or a one-year MCA membership for the "Sea Story of the Month." 🦖



During Armed Forces week in Santa Barbara, Calif., an Army Nike missile was mysteriously converted to a Marine Corps Nike missile. (Photo by 1stLt Bernie Eveler, USMC (Ret))

Turning Advocacy into Action

Nonprofit Organization Focuses on Homeless Veterans



COURTESY OF STEPHEN PECK

Stephen Peck, CEO of U.S.VETS, at the opening of Veterans One-Stop Service Centers at Patriotic Hall in Los Angeles, Calif., 2014.



COURTESY OF STEPHEN PECK

Employees from Home Depot helped Peck and his wife landscape the grounds of U.S.VETS' Washington, D.C., site.

By Joel Searls

Stephen J. Peck is the president and CEO of the United States Veterans Initiative (U.S.VETS), which is the nation's largest nonprofit devoted to providing housing and other essential services to at-risk veterans. He is descended from a Hollywood legend; his father is the late Gregory Peck, but Stephen chose a different path for his career. Peck served in the Marine Corps and was an artillery officer in Vietnam.

U.S.VETS opened its first facility in Los Angeles, Calif., in 1993 and has grown to 11 sites in five states including the District of Columbia. The nonprofit serves more than 5,000 veterans a day and helps 8,000 veterans find housing and more than 1,500 veterans gain full-time employment annually.

Peck lives by a lesson learned in the Corps: "If you don't go where the trouble is, you can't solve the problem." He shares his Marine story, continued service, and current activities in his interview with *Leatherneck*.

What are the greatest life lessons you took from your service in the Corps?

I was drafted after my sophomore year and got my 2S deferment then joined the PLC [Platoon Leaders Course]. I did not want to be a private in the Army. I wanted to be surrounded by trained killers, and the Marines were the way to go.

I've been around several military events recently and am so impressed with young Marines these days. They are professional. They are disciplined. They are respectful ... The fact that we all have been through TBS (The Basic School) from the Commandant on down, we've all had that same training and it's important to bring us all together. All of us carry that [bonding moment] who have been Marines. We all have experienced that and use it. I use it regularly and try to build that esprit de corps in the agency that I run. I use those leadership principles. You put your ego out of the way so that they can do the best job that they can. That comes right from the Marine Corps.

I run a big organization and we have

500 employees. That's not something I can possibly, even remotely, attempt to do by myself. I must have key people underneath me and I must make sure they're supported. The term "I've got your back" is totally overused these days, but in Vietnam, it was a real thing. It was serious. I knew that they [the Marines] did, and they knew that I did. That's essential in combat. The people that work for you must know that you've got them. I'm going to send you out there and you're going to do this. Whether you succeed or fail, I've got you. And if you fail, we're going to try again and we're going to try again.

It's all about accomplishing the mission, no matter who does it. We're all doing this together. It's really critical. We try to teach that to all our site directors and managers. Some people get into a leadership position and it's all about me; I have to do this and make every single decision and every decision has to come through me. They don't understand that you really have a whole team of people under you, and the more knowledgeable and more professional and more committed they are, the better



COURTESY OF STEPHEN PECK

Above: Stephen Peck in June 1969, near Da Nang, Vietnam.



COURTESY OF STEPHEN PECK

Above: The documentary, "Heart of a Warrior," was directed by Peck in Peshawar, Pakistan, in 1989 and featured a group of Mujahideen.



COURTESY OF STEPHEN PECK

you are [going to] look at the end of the day, but it's not about you. It's about accomplishing the mission and getting homeless veterans off the street. I'm happy to give credit away, it doesn't matter. Our results are what matters.

What's important is how many men and women we get off the streets and how many we get into housing and how many we get jobs. That's what we're all about, not about any one of us. I'm getting on in years and probably have a couple of years left of doing this. This has to continue on. I'm the only leader that has been here since the beginning of this organization, 29 years ago this month we brought five veterans into a facility in Inglewood. Now we've got 600 formerly homeless veterans in there. We house another 2,400 more in 11 metropolitan areas across the country. If I disappear it's [got to] go right.

Fortunately, I've got a Marine as my second [in command], so I'm good to go. He's been with us for 19 years. Our CFO is a Marine. We're rotten with Marines here. We learned in the Marine Corps that you have to accomplish the task whatever that is. Over, around, under, or through. You've got to accomplish the task. If you don't accomplish it the first time, you have to keep going. Use your imagination. Use other people. Whatever you've got to move forward. We learned that in the Marine Corps and in combat you don't have a choice. You have to protect your team. That is life and death. It is life and death for some of the homeless veterans we encounter. We have to stick with it. Whatever our particular task is, we've got to get it done. If you get a "no," try to bring in someone else. Maybe you're not the right person to get that task done. Let's pass it off to this person or maybe somebody else knows someone who can get it done. It's all about getting the job done. It's about getting veterans off the streets.

Can you share with us about your experience in the Corps?

I was assigned to the artillery so after TBS I went down to Fort Sill and became an artillery officer. I was assigned as a Forward Observer with "India" Company, 3/7. I was about 15 miles west of Da Nang at Hill 10. Those memories don't leave you. I was going on patrols for the first

Left: Peck, third from the right, attended the grand opening of the U.S. VETS Riverside, Calif., site in March 2018. The site now houses more than 150 veterans and families.

Below Left: Stephen Peck was commissioned in June 1968 on the same day he graduated from Northwestern University.



COURTESY OF STEPHEN PECK

Below Right: Actor Gregory Peck, Stephen's father, right, was in attendance at his son's college graduation in 1968.



COURTESY OF STEPHEN PECK

three or four months—mostly platoon sized patrols immediately west of Hill 10. We were the last emplacement out there. Hill 10 wasn't very big. It was what they called "Indian Country"; you don't go outside the wire because you don't know what's out there. We went out in units, and we'd be out for two weeks. We'd come back in for four days and then go back out for two weeks in the mountains where the NVA was operating. Our task was to be a presence to prevent them from rolling down that valley going east into Da Nang. We were part of Operation Oklahoma Hills going out as a company and there were other companies going up into the hills there. We were there

to intercede the activities of the NVA (North Vietnamese Army) and Viet Cong up there.

Even at the bases we regularly received mortar fire and rocket fire. I was rocketed on my birthday, Aug. 16, 1969. I was at Hill 55 at that point which was the 7th Marines headquarters. It was a big base; it's a pretty safe place and our company commander was talking with battalion about where we were going to go next. We were chilling out for four days and I was in the officers' club, which is essentially a big hooch. There was music in there and there was a bar in there, so it was semi-normal.

Rockets started falling outside and

a whole bunch of us ran out the door into slit trenches. We ran about 50 feet and piled into a trench, one on top of the other. We were piled three or four high. Rounds were dropping as we were running. Miraculously, no one got killed.

I feel lucky all the time, any number of times it could have gone differently. One tour of Vietnam was enough for me but it's extraordinary how exhilarating combat is, you're wired. You're buzzed. The last few months in country I was at Division headquarters in S-2. A lot of times they put officers in the rear for the last few months. I had like an eight-hour job. I was in the S-2 office for an eight-hour shift and then kind of hung



COURTESY OF STEPHEN PECK

Peck, second row, second from left, with his platoon from The Basic School in front of O'Bannon Hall at MCB Quantico, Va.



COURTESY OF STEPHEN PECK

Peck, right, and his company commander, Capt Miles, center, in Vietnam where Peck served with Co I, 3/7.

around. I remember thinking one night, combat was a lot more exciting than this. I had to tell myself not to volunteer to go back out there. You got out of that situation once, don't take another chance. It's terrifying, but it's thrilling. Boy, do you have a mission—to stay alive and accomplish the task. A lot of guys come back from combat, and they miss that. Their life seems kind of empty.

I remember feeling kind of rootless when I came back. You're just not in a life and death situation at home unless you are a cop or something. You miss that adrenaline. It's a real problem with some guys. Some guys volunteer to go back and I know a couple guys that did. A couple guys didn't make it back after that second tour. It's a real emotional dilemma that you face when you come back.

Can you share some of the statistics of success with your organization?

We came along about the time when the homeless veteran movement was really gaining steam. There was a group of guys who started the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans. That was really the beginning of the homeless veteran service movement. Now there are some 300 organizations across the country bringing homeless veterans into housing and off the streets. When we started in 1993 there were about 240,000 homeless veterans in the United States. Today there are a little less than 40,000 so we really are accomplishing the mission here. Now

we're dealing with more challenging groups. We got all the low-hanging fruit. The guys who we bring in, get them a job and push them back out into the community. We got those guys. But there are a lot of veterans that are suffering from some sort of mental illness, substance abuse issues, real emotional problems, tragedy in their life, PTSD, TBI, you name it. They just can't set one foot in front of the other because they are so preoccupied with their combat experience. That's a more challenging group.

We have about 1,000 rehabilitation beds with intensive case management. Let's find out what got them homeless in the first place. Let's get them back to work if they are able to work. Let's get them into permanent housing so they are not on the street anymore. We are also emphasizing two other parts of it which are homeless prevention and mental health services before they become homeless. So, we are expanding those programs and on the other end, building more permanent supportive housing.

We've got about 2,400 permanent housing beds at the moment and are building another 450 or so as we speak. There's a lot more funding available and we're one of those agencies that are doing everything we can to solve that drastic shortage of affordable housing with the support services that will keep these men and women stable. We run all types of therapeutic groups at our sites whether it's AA [Alcoholics Anonymous], PTSD groups, fatherhood groups, financial

literacy, the whole nine yards. We want them to be independent when they leave us. That is the whole goal. Create an independent guy who can be a contributor to the community.

What inspired you to join and lead U.S.VETS?

I was a documentary filmmaker and had a particular interest in homelessness. I had done a couple of films about homelessness in the Tenderloin in San Francisco. In the late 1980s, someone told me that one-third of homeless men were veterans. I did a short film on my own down on Venice Beach in Los Angeles. Someone pointed out to me that there was a group of veterans living on the beach down there, so I went down there with a film crew and filmed them. Six Vietnam vets, totally disillusioned, angry. These were some of the guys who came back and were not welcomed home. They were made to be ashamed of their service and it really embittered them. They were just saying to society, "To hell with you, I'm out here on the beach, just leave me alone."

I did a short film and started using that for advocacy. My idea was to do a one-hour film on homeless veterans. But one thing led to another, and I became an advocate with the West LA VA [Veterans Affairs]. I didn't want to leave that advocacy behind because I was so into it. The VA ultimately offered me a job in their outreach department and as

a liaison to the community. I started as an outreach worker in 1993. Going out under the bridges and into the shelters bringing homeless veterans in off the street. I learned from the ground up what homeless veterans needed, what their desires were, what their challenges were, and that education was invaluable. I spent a few years really learning what we needed to be doing so we could create programs to help them.

I was with the VA until 1996 then I jumped over to U.S.VETS. I wanted to be able to do more ... they had just started. I was an outreach worker assigned to this brand-new nonprofit in Los Angeles and brought the first five guys in. Then we had 25, then 100. Now that's the site that has 600 vets. We learned by making all the mistakes. We learned what it was that veterans needed. Not only the housing but the services, the support services, the clinical counseling and employment services. They need those three things [housing, support and employment] together. They didn't just lose their home. Something happened, maybe losing a job, losing their family, losing their income to the point they can't pay rent and then they're out on the street. We have to address all those issues.

"Heart of a Warrior" is the documentary that led me to change careers. We filmed in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Russia, Vietnam and the U.S. It showed in festivals all over the U.S., VA Medical Centers, Walter Reed Army Hospital to a group of 60 psychiatrists as the Gulf War was heating up, and Harvard School of Government. Bob Sampson and I attended many of these screenings together to participate in panels. Here's the short description:

"Bob Sampson is a former U.S. Army paratrooper who fought in Vietnam until his left leg was shot off. Nikolai Chuvanov is a former paratrooper in the Soviet army who served in Afghanistan until his right leg was shattered by a bullet. "Heart of a Warrior" movingly portrays the personal aftermath of war for these two men. Both still suffer from the emotional damage, unresolved moral questions and enduring pain of wartime. Through compassion, camaraderie and even humor, these former warriors form a powerful, healing bond and offer a message of hope."

We're now at a point where we are about to reduce the number of rehabilitation beds we need in Washington, D.C., because we've knocked the homeless population down. The street population of veterans in D.C. last I heard a week

Right: Peck, left, with Marines of Golf Btry at Hill 10 in Vietnam in 1969.



COURTESY OF STEPHEN PECK

Above: President Joe Biden and his wife, Dr. Jill Biden, helped Peck celebrate the opening of the U.S.VETS Las Vegas site.



COURTESY OF STEPHEN PECK

Above: The executive director and staff of U.S.VETS joined Peck, center, at the groundbreaking ceremony at the Washington, D.C., location in May 2013.



RJ POPPAS

ago is 27. Nationwide we've got about 1,000 of the grant and per diem beds from the VA. We're paid per veteran that you serve on a monthly basis. You're expected to provide housing, meals and all of those services that are going to make them whole again. Those are really important beds to us. We've got 85 of those beds in Washington, D.C. But now we don't need 85 anymore. We're going to reduce it to whatever the need is ... then transform the other space into permanent supportive housing.

We hope this process happens all across the country. We knock the numbers down so low that we have to redesign our programs to fit this new reality, creating more permanent housing on the one hand and creating homeless prevention programs on the other so we prevent veterans from becoming homeless. It is strategic and has an immense financial impact.

You've got to face these problems head-on. In the Marine Corps, you learn to face enemy fire, you don't turn your back on it. Homelessness is one of those issues that people are kind of afraid of, it's such a big societal issue. Most people don't know what to do about it. Do you give them money or give them a bus ticket? We have to look at it right in the face. We happen to be one of those agencies that have the capacity to do that and feel a real responsibility for that.

What new programs and initiatives are you working on for veterans?

A lot of focus has been on veteran suicide and it's not getting any better. It's happening among veterans and in the military. Twenty veterans and military a day are taking their own lives. We have to address that in some way, a more significant way than we have been. We started our homelessness prevention program in Los Angeles and all that mental health programming that we do is ultimately about suicide.

We've started a Women's Veteran on Point program that's a portal that reaches out to women that are not seeking services. Only a third of women veterans are seeking services at the VA. They view it as a male bastion. This is particularly true when a woman veteran walks into the waiting room at the VA and she has experienced military sexual trauma and there are 20 guys in there, she's not comfortable in there. She's going to walk right back out. So, we initiated this portal where there is a chat room, there is a self-assessment tool and then a phone number to call. You can come in and get



COURTESY OF STEPHEN PECK

CBS recently interviewed Peck at the site of the new U.S.VETS West Los Angeles Veteran's Affairs project, which will be open at the end of this year.

counseling either in person or through telehealth.

What COVID has done is really expanded our ability to provide telehealth and we want to spread that throughout our programs across the nation so that we are serving not only the veterans within our walls but also into the wider community.

The highest number of homeless veterans in the country is in Los Angeles. In Los Angeles, the West LA VA over the last decade has been receiving lots of criticism because it hasn't been housing homeless veterans. Many of the buildings for housing veterans there have been abandoned for decades.

The VA put out a request for proposals a few years ago and U.S.VETS along with two other partners were chosen as the principal developers to develop up to 1600 units of permanent supportive housing on that north campus. We're well into it at this point. The first building will open this fall in November or December. That will be for 60 senior veterans, who are one of the fastest growing homeless populations in the US. We have another 400 units coming online by 2024 and are continuing to raise money to build up to 1,600 units. We will also build support service space for homeless prevention programs.

We will not only house 1,600 veterans, which is nearly half the number of the homeless vets on the streets of Los Angeles, but if we can prevent more vets from becoming homeless, we might be able to significantly solve the problem here in Los Angeles. It is a monster project that will take eight to 10 years to accomplish. The VA has stepped up

during the pandemic and placed about 120 tiny shelters on the grounds to get veterans on to the campus and out of tents and now they are challenged to provide the level of service those veterans need. The VA has also stepped up and is helping us redo the infrastructure. All the water, power and telecom. They have put up a bunch of money to build the backbone of the water and sewer to the different buildings. We're out there raising money to build the buildings and to provide the support services. We're going to create a real close-knit community with resident councils and town halls so the veterans will have a lot to do and to say about what goes on there so that we are providing the best support for them.

What are you most proud of from your service?

I never imagined that when I got out of the Marine Corps that I would be doing what I'm doing. There was no thought in my mind that I would have anything to do with the military again. The Vietnam experience was enough for me. I was done. But those thoughts and emotions don't leave you. Ultimately it led me back to what I'm doing where I have an outlet for all of that. That's the legacy that the Marines have left me with. They got me into a career that has been extremely rewarding.

Author's bio: Joel Searls is a creative and business professional in the entertainment industry. He writes for We are the Mighty. He serves in the Marine Corps Reserve and enjoys time with his family and friends. 🐼

Disabled Vets, Military Retirees See Record COLA Increase

Disabled veterans and military retirees will see an 8.7 percent increase in their Social Security benefits and VA disability payments for 2023.

On average, Social Security benefits will increase by more than \$140 per month starting in January according to the Social Security Administration. This is the largest annual adjustment to the federal Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) since 1981, due to inflation.

Veterans will see increases in compensation rates for certain Department of Veterans Affairs benefits, including disability benefits and dependency and indemnity benefits.

The increase went into effect on Dec. 1, 2022. "This increase in compensation and benefits, the largest in more than four

decades, will provide critical financial help to our veterans and their families during these challenging times," Rep. Elaine Luria, D-Va., said in a statement. "We have an obligation as a nation to take care of our veterans."

The American Legion

2023 Commandant's Retention Program Works to Retain Talented First-Term Marines

While every servicemember has raised their right hand and taken oaths during their time in service to the nation, only a small percent of first-term Marines will raise their hand to reenlist and vow to serve for a minimum of two additional years. For fiscal year 2023, the Commandant's Retention Program (CRP) has made it easier for selected first-term Marines to reenlist.

On May 26, 2022, the guidance for the execution of Fiscal Year 2023 Commandant's Retention Program was officially signed, and, MARADMIN 305/22 of June 17 provided the approved selections to the CRP. The CRP focused on retaining the most talented first-term Marines who stand out among their peers and represent the highest level of performance within their primary military occupational specialty.

"I think what makes this retention program so special is that it not only motivates the Marines who were selected but also motivates the next generation of Marines planning on re-enlisting," said Sergeant Hannah Peleras, a career planner with Headquarters and Support (H&S) Battalion, Marine Corps Installations Pacific (MCIPAC). "They get to see the benefits and conveniences of reenlisting



Cpl Clarisa Garcia, an administrative specialist with Headquarters and Support Battalion, Marine Corps Installations Pacific, holds her certificate of reenlistment after a ceremony on Camp Foster, Okinawa, Japan, July 19, 2022. Garcia was one of the 25 Marines from H&S Bn, MCIPAC, selected for the Fiscal Year 2023 Commandant's Retention Program.



LCPL JONATHAN BEAUCHAMP, USMC

through the CRP, which will lead to higher performance and motivation from those hoping to be selected in the future.”

Peleras said the Marines eligible for the CRP had to be on their first enlistment and close to a reenlistment date. She explained that most Marines selected were categorized under a Tier 1 status based on factors including job performance, physical fitness, marksmanship, leadership, and individual character.

Through the CRP, 2,468 first-term Marines were selected. Of those selected, more than 1,200 submitted their retention paperwork. These reenlistments aid the Marine Corps in reaching its retention goal.

Historically, Marines must go through a 20-step process to reenlist, but CRP requires far fewer hurdles to jump through. In addition, the incentives offered to those Marines reenlisting included specific special duty assignment choices to a permanent change of station and specific units, known as an enhanced duty station incentive.

“Along with the incentives, the biggest difference is the hassle-free process,” said Peleras. “If a Marine were selected and wanted to reenlist, they would simply have to provide their Basic Training Record and Individual Medical Record to get the process started.”

The Marines who chose to reenlist through the CRP could experience the incentives and streamlined approval process as soon as they submitted for reenlistment.

“I was unaware of my selection or what the CRP was until one of my senior officers congratulated me on my selection,” said Sgt Ryan Petty, a military police officer with Provost Marshal’s Office, H&S Bn, MCIPAC. “I was already in the process of reenlisting when I was selected for the CRP. It made the routing list for my reenlistment package much faster, and it was approved in under a week.”

Petty, like many other Marines, had his own specific reason and intention behind his reenlistment.

“I reenlisted to continue improving myself as a leader,” said Petty. “Forget awards or chasing results. I aim to be the kind of leader who helps Marines enjoy their service.”

Cpl Alex Fairchild, USMC

Body Composition Study Leads to Change

Training and Education Command, in collaboration with the United States Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine (USARIEM), recently concluded a year-long study to evaluate



LCPL GEORGE NUDO, USMC

A Marine participates in a body composition assessment on Aug. 22, 2022, at The Basic School on Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va. Beginning Jan. 1, 2023, Marine Corps units will utilize more accurate and unbiased methods of body composition assessment prior to enrolling Marines in the body composition program.

current body composition standards and ensure service standards optimize health, performance, and fitness.

General David Berger, Commandant of the Marine Corps, received the study’s findings and made the following decisions: Marines who score a 285 or higher on their fitness tests will continue to be exempt from body composition standards; prior to assigning Marines to the Body Composition Program, commanders will assess body composition using more advanced body composition methods effective Jan. 1, 2023; and a one

percent increase in total allowable body fat for female Marines became effective Jan. 1, 2023.

“This study marks a milestone in understanding the health and performance of our Marines,” said Gen Berger. “Our primary focus in the Marine Corps is the individual Marine and this study is a pivot point. We will continue to learn and explore additional modifications to our body composition program.”

This study was one of the most technologically advanced studies on the topic since the 1980s, drawing participation



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from a diverse group of 2,173 Marines, including 1,435 men and 738 women, 196 of whom were postpartum. The study was conducted at three locations: Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va.; MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C.; and MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif.

"Ultimately, this is about warfighting. We need to find the most practical, accurate, and unbiased method of measuring body composition to maintain a healthy, ready force," said Berger. "In order to make changes, we have to understand the impacts and availability of our proposed alternative methods. This will take some time to get it right, but we owe it to our Marines to move quickly. We continue to make changes across the force that aim to better take care of our most important asset—our Marines."

Every participant was first assessed using methods that measure the size and proportions of the human body via height, weight, and the current service wide tape test.

Then, participants received three assessments that measure tissue density. The first assessment was a Dual Energy X-Ray Absorptiometry (DEXA) scan, which is the most accurate means to estimate body fat, lean body mass, and bone density. The second assessment was

a 3D body scan using a two-compartment model approach to assess fat and lean mass. The third method was through bioelectrical impedance analysis (BIA), which uses an imperceptible electrical current to estimate lean mass and fat mass.

Finally, the performance assessment, called the Counter Movement Jump, was conducted on a force plate designed to measure the forces and movement applied when conducting an upward jump.

Going forward, the Marine Corps will still conduct height and weight measurements with the accompanying tape test. The research concluded that the tape test correctly identifies 91.6 percent of male Marines and 92 percent of female Marines as over the allowable body fat. Under this new process, the Marines who are erroneously identified as exceeding body fat standards by the tape test would be correctly identified within standards by completing the Dual Energy X-Ray Absorptiometry scan. Therefore, under this policy, Marines who are identified as over their allowable body fat percentage when taped will receive a DEXA or BIA scan to ensure body fat percentage accuracy prior to enrollment in the body composition program.

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Reunions

• **Marine Corps Disbursing Assn.**, May 21-25, 2023, Louisville, Ky. Contact MGySgt Kevin Gascon, USMC (Ret), (760) 458-2655, usmcdisbursers@hotmail.com, www.usmcdisbursers.com.

• **11th Marine Regiment, OIF (20th anniversary)**, Mar. 31-Apr. 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).

• **Co A, 3rd Engineer Bn/BLT 1/9 (RVN, 1970-1971)**, is planning a reunion. Contact Gene Spanos, (847) 532-2963, genethemarine@gmail.com.

• **TBS, Co D, 4-73**, June 15-18, 2023, Arlington, 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.

• **Plt 2064, San Diego, 1965**, is planning a reunion. Contact Gary A. Gruenwald, (434) 609-3433, usmcgman74@aol.com.

• **Hotel Co, 2/7 (RVN 1965-1970)**, June 8-11, 2023, Oklahoma City, Okla. Contact Jerry Norris, (940) 631-7233, postalm16@hotmail.com.

• **TBS Class 3-67/41st OCC**, Oct. 26-29, 2023, Arlington, Va. Contact Paul Disario, (559) 273-9549, pdisario@comcast.net.

• **East Coast Drill Instructor's Association**, April 27-30, 2023, Parris Island, S.C., Contact Kenneth Miller, (828) 499-0224, usmcpidi@charter.net, for more info visit www.parrislanddi.org.

Mail Call

• Anne Koskinen, (310) 371-1889, koskinen@earthlink.net, is seeking information about the H&S Battery, 14th Marines, 4thMarDiv, and their involvement in the battle of Iwo Jima to learn more about her father's service.

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

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In Memoriam

Compiled by Nancy S. Lichtman

George Booth, 96, in Brooklyn, N.Y. He enlisted in 1944 and served as a rifleman with 4thMarDiv in Hawaii. He was assigned to *Leatherneck* magazine in 1946 and was an illustrator and cartoonist with the magazine for two years. He returned to *Leatherneck* for a second tour from 1950-1952. After leaving the Marine Corps, he began a long career as a cartoonist for *The New Yorker* magazine, working well into his 90s. He also illustrated children's books, including the Dr. Seuss book, "Wacky Wednesday." See Saved Round on page 72 for more about Booth and his artwork.

Sgt Patrick M. Butler, 68, of Albuquerque, N.M. He enlisted in 1973 and served four years. Assignments included service as an MSG Marine in Nassau, Bahamas. He later earned his bachelor's degree and had a career with Wells Fargo bank. He was an avid scuba diver and was a private pilot.

SSgt Russell E. Cleveland, 98, of Glenden Beach, Ore. He was an aviation Marine and served in the Pacific during WW II.

Jean Pierre Cole, 90, of Asheville, N.C. He enlisted when he was 17 and served in the Korean War. After the war, he served in the Marine Corps Reserve while attending college. He later returned to active duty, retiring in 1978. He served one tour in Vietnam from 1968-1969. He was a graduate of Command and Staff College, and his awards include the Navy Commendation Medal with combat "V."

He was later a deputy and detective with the Henderson County Sheriff's Department, retiring in 2010.

Patrick M. Connolly, 83, of Long Beach, Calif. He began his military career as a recon Marine, later transferring to the Army. He had a 33-year career in law enforcement in the Los Angeles, Calif., area.

Noah J. Dietzman, 72, of Wautoma, Wis. He served a tour in Vietnam at Da Nang with the 1st MAW. He was also stationed at MCAS El Toro, Calif.

Sgt Darin Dyer, 38, of Las Vegas, Nev. He enlisted in 2005 and served at MCAS Miramar. He deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. He later worked for the DOD as a civilian for 10 years.

Owen M. "Bud" Field Jr., 97, of Shelbyville, Ind. He was a corpsman in the Navy during WW II and served in the Pacific. He saw action on Iwo Jima.

AIR. Geisweidt, 76, of Orange County,

Calif. He served in the Marine Corps during the 1950s. He had a decades-long career in management and engineering.

William E. Graham, 69, of Riverside, Calif. He enlisted in the Marine Corps after graduating from high school. He was the owner of Graham's Carpets for decades.

Robert Guest, 68, of Fredericksburg, Va. He began his 20-year Marine Corps career as an aircraft communications technician. When he was a gunnery sergeant, he spent eight years as a presidential support specialist.

Laurence J. Herberger, 93, of Salem, Ore. He joined the Marine Corps and served the Korean War. He later had a three-decade long career working in state government in Oregon.

MSgt David R. Howard Sr., 70, of St. Joseph, Mo. He started his 25-year Marine Corps career as a radio operator and later transitioned to air traffic control communications. His duty stations included New River, N.C.; Quantico, Va.; Tustin, Calif.; El Toro, Calif.; and Okinawa, Japan. In December 1992, he was deployed to Somalia for Operation Restore Hope. His awards include the Navy Achievement Medal and the Navy Commendation.

Adolph N. Joswiak, 102, of Warren, Mich. He was born in Texas and moved to Michigan when he was 16 to join the Civilian Conservation Corps after the family fell on hard times. He enlisted in the Corps after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. He was a machine gunner in the South Pacific and saw action on Guam, New Caledonia and Okinawa.

Capt Cyril C. y" Kammeier, 89, in Martinsburg, W.Va. He was a mustang who served for 23 years and completed a tour in Vietnam. After his 1974 retirement, he was the executive director of *Leatherneck* before the magazine merged with the MCA. He later was the editor of Purple Heart Magazine. His awards include a Bronze Star with combat "V," two awards of the Navy Commendation Medal with combat "V" and the Purple Heart.

James R. "Jim" Kepler, 79, of Greeley, Colo. He enlisted in 1962 and served with the MarDet aboard USS *Albany* (CG-10). He later was active with the Union Colony Marines Det. 1093, MCL.

Raymond "Ray" Kress, 91, of Wilmington, N.C. He served with the 5th Marines during the Korean War and

was a machine gunner who was wounded during the fighting on Hill 81. He later earned a bachelor's degree and had a 40-year career with Exxon. He was a member of the MCL.

Sgt June M. Linsmeyer, 92, in Seymour, Wis. She enlisted in 1953 and served at Camp Pendleton, Calif., and Camp Smith, Hawaii, where she worked in the motor pool. She later had a career as an airline ticket agent.

Marc Lintner, 77, of Middletown, Ohio. He was a Marine who served in the Vietnam War.

Cecil "Mac" McCormick, 90, of Fullerton, Calif. He served in the Marine Corps after his high school graduation. After his 1955 discharge, he earned a bachelor's degree and then began a long and successful career in banking.

Donald G. "Mac" McWilliams, 9, of Fair Oaks Ranch, Texas. He enlisted in 1943 and was assigned to 1stMarDiv. He served in the Pacific and saw action in New Britain, Pelelieu and Okinawa. After the war he went to college and earned a degree in petroleum engineering and had a career in the oil business.

Robert E. Mehrmann Sr., 91, of Fullerton, Calif. He served in the Korean War. After the war, he was recruited by the New York Yankees and was a pitcher in the minor leagues and once pitched batting practice to Mickey Mantle.

Cpl James Minor, 92, of Green Bay, Wis. He enlisted when he was 17 and served for two years. He later had a 36-year career in operations at Proctor and Gamble.

Marquis E. "Mark" Otradovec, 86, of Green Bay. He earned a degree in education and worked as a teacher before joining the Marine Corps. He later had a career in the building industry.

LCpl Fred L. Owens Sr., 74, of Murrells Inlet, S.C. He enlisted in the Corps in 1968 and served a tour in Vietnam. He later worked in the nuclear power industry.

William D. "Billy" Owens, 75, of Liberty Township, Ohio. He enlisted after his 1964 graduation from high school and served in Vietnam.

Sgt Samuel Pacheco Sr., 87, of Ottawa, Kan. He enlisted in 1952 and completed boot camp at MCRD San Diego. He was assigned to 1stMarDiv and served in the Korean War. In his later years, he was an avid runner and participated in various 5k and 10k races as well as half marathons.

Merle A. Parker, 98, of Columbia, S.C. During WW II he served with 1stMarDiv in the Pacific.

Leo E. Pilon, 98, of Albuquerque, N.M. He enlisted and served during WW II.

Stanley W. Ploszaj, 97, of Westbrook, Conn. He enlisted and went to MCRD Parris Island for boot camp. During WW II he was an aerial gunner and completed 100 missions in the Pacific, mostly between Guadalcanal and the Philippines.

PFC William A. Pressley, 96, of Canton, Ga. He was a veteran of WW II. During the Battle of Iwo Jima, he was assigned to MP Co, Hq Bn, 5thMarDiv.

GySgt John C. Robinson, 90, of Monroe, Ohio. He served in the Korean War and saw action at the Chosin Reservoir. He was a member of the Chosin Few.

Lenore D. (Mitchell) Rogala, 98, of Crystal Lake, Ill. She enlisted and served during WW II. After the war, she had a career with Walgreens as an executive secretary.

Sgt Ernest K. St. Johns, 95, of Kalamazoo, Mich. He served in the Pacific during WW II and saw action on Iwo Jima and Okinawa. He was recalled to active duty during the Korean War. He

was later ordained as an Episcopal priest.

Ernest Sanchez, 83, of Santa Fe, N.M. He served in the Marine Corps and was later a member of the American Legion.

Cpl John T. "Johnny" Sawyer, 72, of Dillon, S.C. He was assigned to "Lima," 3/9 in Vietnam in 1968-1969. He was wounded by an enemy grenade during Operation Dewey Canyon in the A Shau Valley. He later had a career in law enforcement, retiring as a captain with the Dillon County, S.C., sheriff's department. He was a member of the VFW. His awards include the Purple Heart.

Cpl Michael Sheehan, 75, of Tarbert, County Kerry, Ireland. He enlisted in the Marine Corps after emigrating from Ireland. He served two tours in Vietnam and was wounded twice.

Capt Robert B. Starke Jr., 84, of Boulder, Colo. He was commissioned in 1963 and served with 3rd Recon Bn in Vietnam. After leaving the Marine Corps, he had a career in business. He later served on the board of directors for the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation and was one of the founders of the National Museum of the Marine Corps.

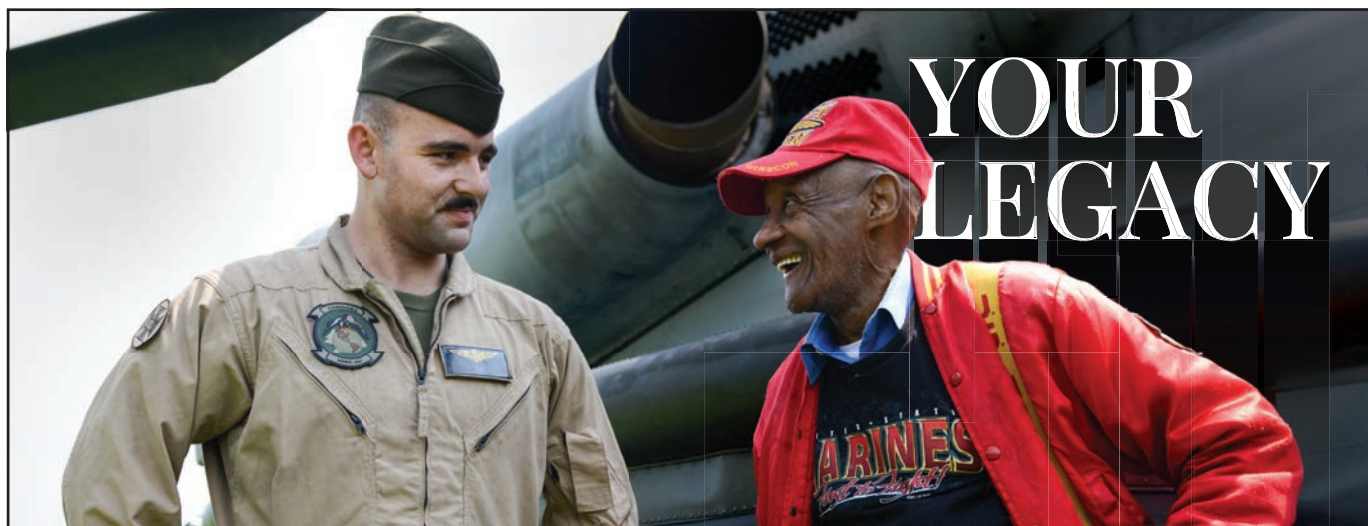
Robert L. "Bob" Villarreal, 76, of Albuquerque, N.M. He was a Marine who served a tour in Vietnam.

Kevin M. Vraa, 65, in Seymour, Wis. He enlisted after his high school graduation and served four years. He later had a 27-year career as a truck driver for Fort Howard Paper company.

Capt Daniel M. Walsh III, 81, of Springfield, Mass. He was commissioned after graduating from Providence College. He served a tour in Vietnam and was wounded. After the war he worked in the finance and insurance industry. He later got involved in local government and was elected to the city council. For the last 15 years he was the city's veterans' services director. His awards include the Bronze Star with combat "V" and the Purple Heart.

SSgt John F. Weber, 74, of Salem Ore. He enlisted in 1969 and served until 1972. He later had a career in law enforcement.

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. 🇺🇸



There are many ways in which you can give to further the mission of the **Marine Corps Association Foundation** and make a difference to the professional development of Today's Marines.

A gift of stocks or bonds is one way to provide a charitable donation while also receiving a tax benefit at the end of the year. If you have owned securities for more than a year and their value has increased, you can avoid capital gains taxes and receive a charitable deduction equal to the fair market value of the gift if you donate them to the Marine Corps Association Foundation and our programs for Marines.

To donate any marketable securities, please contact Michelle Collins at m.collins@mca-marines.org for additional information or visit mca-marines.org/legacy-gift-planning/options-for-giving



野球大会プログラム

PROGRAM OF BALL GAME

アントネアリー進駐軍司令官ヨリ佐賀市民ヘコノ大会ヲ贈ル

COLONEL ANTONELLI-COMMANDING OFFICER PRESENTS

2ND. BN. 27MARINES (進駐軍チーム)

VERSUS (對)

SAGA CITY ALL STARS (全佐賀チーム)

AT (場所) : ANTONELLI-FIELD, KYUSHU, JAPAN (アントネアリー球場)

DATE (日時) : NOV. 4. 1:30 pm (十一月四日午後一時三十分)

BALL PLAYER (選手名)

AMERICAN (アメリカ)			JAPANESE (日本)		
CENTER FIELD	中	EAGLETON W.H (イーグルトン)	3RD BASE	三	OKAMOTO 岡 本
2ND BASE	二	MEKETTI P.I (メケティ)	SHORT STOP	遊	IMAMURA 今 村
CATCHER	捕	HARTSELL C (ハートスル)	CATCHER	捕	GOTO 後 藤
LEFT FIELD	左	WAITE M (ウコイト)	LEFT FIELD	左	IDA 井 田
SHORT STOP	遊	HUMINISKI P.J (フミンスキ)	PITCHER	投	INADOMI 稲 宮
3RD BASE	三	RIDER E.C (ライダー)	1ST BASE	一	TOGAWA 戸 川
1ST BASE	一	CLEMENTS C.A (クレメンツ)	RIGHT FIELD	右	YAMADA 山 田
RIGHT FIELD	右	HILES B (ハールス)	CENTER FIELD	中	KAWASOE 川 添
PITCHER	投	REHOR D (レイホー)	2LD BASE	二	MOCHINAGA 持 永
PITCHER	投	HOWELL G.W (ハウル)	PITCHER	投	MASUNAGA 増 永
		VON FRECKEN V.J (ヴォンフレクン)			FURUKAWA 古 川
CATCHER	捕	CAPUTA R (カプユーター)	IN FIELDERS	内	NANRI 南 里
IN FIELDERS	内 野	BROWSSARD (ブラウサード)		NAGAO 永 尾	
		DUST W.E (ダスト)		YAMAGUCHI 山 口	
OUT FIELDERS	外 野	ADMAS S (アドマズ)	OUT FIELDERS	外	MORI 森
		OLIVER W.G (オリヴィグアー)		FUKUSHIMA 福 島	
		BUCKNER H.A (バクナー)		SHUETSUGU 末 次	
		PETERSON C.E (ピーターソン)		KITAJIMA 北 島	
MANAGER					
LT. PAUL A RENNE (レーン中尉) (ATHLETIC OFFICER)			S. EGUCHI (日本側監督 江 口)		

Walter P. O'Malley shares his copy of the program roster from the baseball game played between a team of U.S. Marines and a Japanese team from Saga City, Japan, Nov. 4, 1945.

SOUND OFF
[continued from page 7]

college choice. They put me on the waiting list, so I went to George Mason University in Fairfax, Va. In the summer of 1980, I went down to Quantico for the PLC Junior Course at Camp Upshur.

Thank you for lending me archived material on the history of the PLC Program. They certainly did thing differently back in the 1930s and 1940s!

Greg Paspatis
Alexandria, Va.

**"Diamond Diplomacy"
Brings Back Memories**

I recently read the story "Diamond Diplomacy" by Kater Miller in the December 2011 issue of *Leatherneck*. I was at the Nov. 4, 1945 game and have enclosed a copy of the program and roster of both teams. Meketti at second base, Waite in left field and Dust, an infielder, were all in Company E with me, and I was acquainted with all three. Doug Rehor, the pitcher, was the battalion armorer, and lived only 9 miles away from my hometown in Leominster, Mass. Other high schools competed with them in school sports. I visited with Doug in 1988, his 50th graduation year.

Walter P. O'Malley
Clinton, Mass.

Thanks for the Memories

Editor's note: Longtime Leatherneck production assistant, Patty Everett, retired in October after more than 40 years of service to Leatherneck and the Marine Corps Association. A reader sent in the letter below, and it perfectly sums up what Patty meant to all of us here.

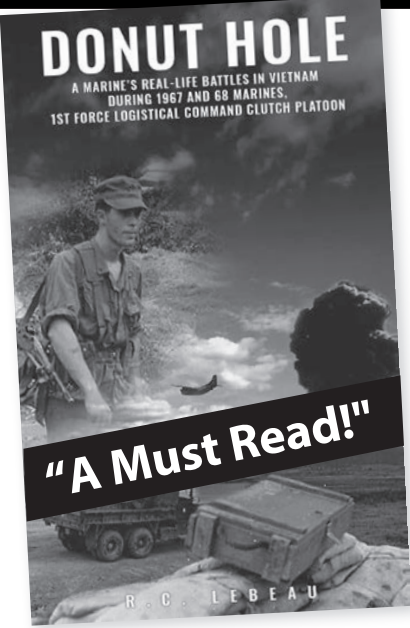
Patty,

I just read the December *Leatherneck* and saw that you are retiring. I submitted several articles to you about my "laughable" times during my combat tour (the water buffalo was one) in Vietnam 1968-69 when I was assigned to E/2/7. You added so much joy to my heart by allowing me to talk. Thank you so very much. I wish you all the very best in everything you plan to do.

For myself and all the Marines you gave a voice to (as Bob Hope often said to the troops in combat) thanks for the memories. I believe I can speak for thousands of Marines that you published our memories and are appreciated so very much. We will miss you.

Semper Fi,

GySgt Larry D. Williams
USMC (Ret)



DONUT HOLE

A biography by
R.C. LeBeau

A Marine's Vietnam War Story

★★★★★

Amazon reviews:

I've read numerous personal stories, in various services and locations, from Vietnam. This, by far, has been the best which I've read to date. An excellent read, with exceptional detail and honesty.
Kindle reader

I was in that battle. This book was awesome. Brought back a lot of personal memories. Couldn't help but get emotional when you read the names of the KIAs.
Don Hammett

Includes:
Task Force Miracle
Battle 1-day casualties were second only to the infamous
"Hamburger Hill"

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"68"

In 2011, after finding out I served during Tet Offensive of 1968, my grandson Tyler Pagliarulo (who was 10 years of age at the time) wrote the following poem for me for Veterans Day:

Lonely fear light up the sky
Can't help but wonder why you're
so far away.
There you had to take a stand in
someone else's land.
Life can be so strange
But I won't turn my back again.
Your honor I'll defend
So hurry home 'til then
'Til then.

I served with 1/7 for 13 months and extended for six months for the CAP units, then extended for another six months to stay with CAP.

Charles Pagliarulo Jr.
Yakima, Wash.



WAYS TO SOUND OFF



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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

Saved Round

By Nancy S. Lichtman

A LEGACY OF LAUGHTER— George Booth (below) was one of the many talented illustrators in the *Leatherneck* art department in the late 1940s and early 1950s. He left the Marine Corps in 1952 to pursue a career as an illustrator and cartoonist, eventually landing at the prestigious magazine, *The New Yorker*. Booth entertained the magazine's readers for more than 50 years with his zany brand of humor; his work was as well-loved by cerebral intellectuals as it was by the small-town everyman he had known while growing up in Missouri.

Booth never forgot his Marine Corps roots. On this June 1953 *Leatherneck* cover (right), created not long after he left the Corps, Booth poked a little fun at recruits arriving at boot camp. From 2007-2009 he contributed monthly to the *Leatherneck* Laffs department with his popular "Nadine and Ed" cartoons.

Booth died recently at the age of 96, so it seemed appropriate to pay a special tribute to a man who spent a lifetime making others chuckle.

To learn more about this legendary cartoonist, see *Obits*, on page 68, or read "George Booth: Everything but the Kitchen Sink," from the July 2007 issue, in the *Leatherneck* archives. 🐾



Left: Booth seemed to have an affinity for including dogs in his cartoons, such as this one from November 2008 in his monthly "Nadine and Ed" series in *Leatherneck*.



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A chef with dark hair tied in a bun, wearing a white chef's coat and a black apron, is focused on stirring a small metal bowl with a spoon. The background is a professional kitchen with various cooking equipment and ingredients.

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