

LEATHERNECK

MAGAZINE OF THE MARINES



**“If You Can
Dream It,
Be It!”**

—Capt Riley Tejcek,
USMC

**Gold Standard—
Logistics Officer
Aiming for Olympics**

**Lejeune’s Legacy
Set the Course
for Today’s Corps**

**Steel Knight:
I MEF Hones Skills
With Joint Exercise**



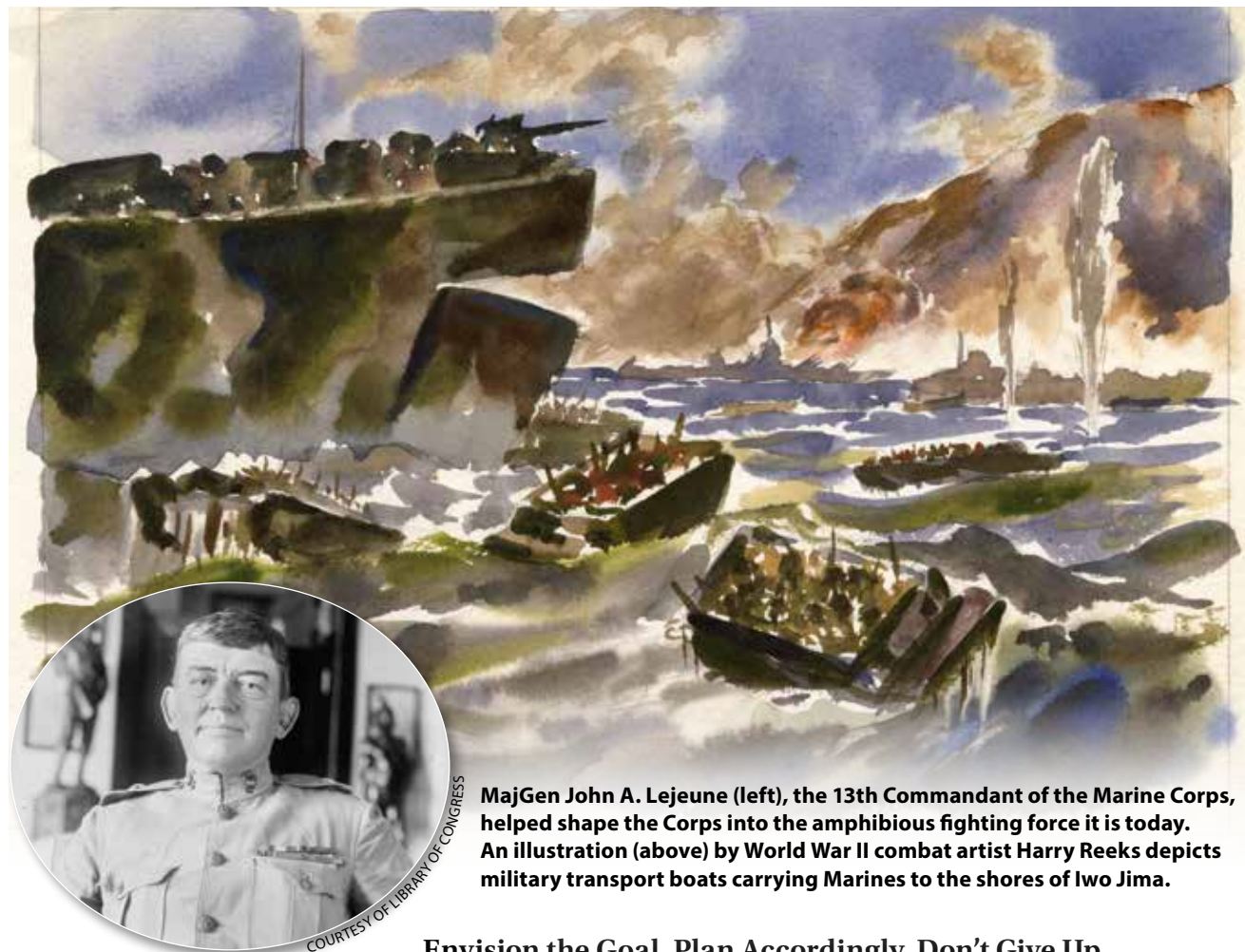
MARSOC.COM



THE *UNCONQUERABLE SPIRIT* OF MARINE RAIDERS.

SPIRITUS INVICTUS

From the Publisher & Editor-in-Chief



MajGen John A. Lejeune (left), the 13th Commandant of the Marine Corps, helped shape the Corps into the amphibious fighting force it is today. An illustration (above) by World War II combat artist Harry Reeks depicts military transport boats carrying Marines to the shores of Iwo Jima.

COURTESY OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Envision the Goal, Plan Accordingly, Don't Give Up

As this month's cover highlights, we feature a story on a Marine athlete training to qualify to represent the United States in the Olympic Games. "Proving Her Mettle: Olympic Hopeful Goes Full Speed as Marine, Bobsledder," by *Leatherneck* deputy editor, Kipp Hanley, details how Capt Riley Tejcek, a logistician currently on the staff of Expeditionary Warfare School, is hoping to be the first female Marine to compete in the Winter Olympics for "Team USA." Capt Tejcek will continue to train for the upcoming 2026 Games to be held in Milan, Italy, and I know all Marines and patriotic Americans will join me in cheering for her. You can listen to an interview with Tejcek on the Marine Corps Association's podcast, "Scuttlebutt."

Other standout articles this month cover an array of topics related to the legacy of Marine amphibious operations in World War II. "A Leader Ahead of His Time: Lejeune Set the Stage for the Corps' Amphibious Excellence" by Maj Skip Crawley USMCR (Ret) looks at how MajGen John A. Lejeune's initiatives as the 13th Commandant contributed to the capabilities Marines

needed to win in the Pacific in World War II. To complement the focus on amphibious capabilities, we pulled from the *Leatherneck* archives to re-publish "Brothers in Arms" by Maj Allan C. Bevilacqua, USMC (Ret). Originally published in April 2007, this story describes the heroism of some of the early "amtrac" Marines at Cape Gloucester in the Solomons.

Finally, we have two additional articles focusing on the "touchstone battle" of Iwo Jima, February to March 1945. On page 48, we present an excerpt from Andrew Biggio's book "The Rifle 2: Back to the Battlefield," based on interviews with Iwo-veteran and Marine artilleryman, John Trezza. On page 56, frequent contributor to both *Marine Corps Gazette* and *Leatherneck*, Steven D. McCloud, gives us "Angel of Mercy: Evacuating Wounded Marines from Iwo Jima," the story of Navy flight nurse ENS Jane Kendeigh.

Enjoy a great month of reading. Semper Fi.

Colonel Christopher Woodbridge,
USMC (Ret)

LEATHERNECK
MAGAZINE OF THE MARINES

MARINE CORPS
Gazette



Contents

LEATHERNECK—MAGAZINE OF THE MARINES

MARCH 2024
VOL. 107, No. 3

Features

18 A Leader Ahead of His Time: Lejeune Set the Stage for the Corps' Amphibious Excellence

By Maj Skip Crawley, USMCR (Ret)

MajGen John A. Lejeune's contributions to making the Corps a lethal amphibious fighting force should not be overlooked. Read how his actions as Commandant set Marines up for successful invasions in the Pacific theater during World War II.

28 Brothers in Arms

By Maj Allan C. Bevilacqua, USMC (Ret)

This article from the *Leatherneck* archives, originally published in April 2007, tells the tale of Marine brothers whose extraordinary bravery resulted in two Navy Crosses while fighting at Cape Gloucester during World War II. Read about their heroics performed aboard the newly unveiled amtracs.

36 Proving Her Mettle: Olympic Hopeful Goes Full Speed As Marine, Bobsledder

By Kipp Hanley

Once a collegiate softball player, Capt Riley Tejcek is now competing on the international stage in bobsledding. Read about her journey as an Olympic hopeful, and how she is using her new-found exposure to represent the Marine Corps.

48 A Furious Fight: An Artillery Marine's Account of the Assault on Iwo Jima

By Andrew Biggio

In this excerpt from the book "The Rifle 2: Back to the Battlefield," Andrew Biggio, author and Marine, interviews John Trezza, who serves up a harrowing tale of his experience—and injury—during the Battle of Iwo Jima.

56 Angel of Mercy: Evacuating Wounded Marines from Iwo Jima

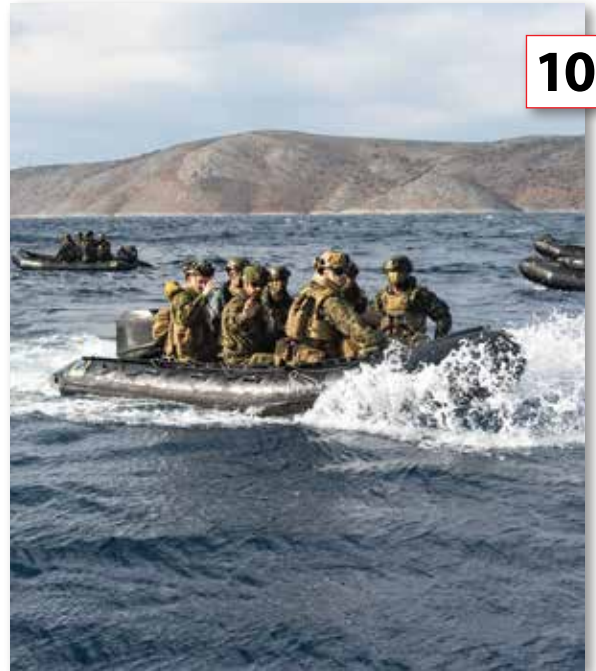
By Steven D. McCloud

Marine casualties were piling up on Iwo Jima, but help was on the way in the form of a Navy flight nurse, an "angel" named ENS Jane Kendeigh.

66 Lunga Park Open at Last: MCB Quantico Site Cleared of Munitions

By Jonathan Hunley

Before it became a recreational area, MCB Quantico's Lunga Park was used by Marines for training during the World War II years as an impact zone for mortars, artillery and grenades. It is now open again after an extensive cleanup of the site.



10

Departments

- 4 Sound Off
- 10 In Every Clime and Place
- 35 Leatherneck Laffs
- 42 We—the Marines
- 46 Corps Connections
- 61 In Memoriam
- 62 Passing the Word
- 65 Reader Assistance
- 70 Sea Stories
- 72 Saved Round

COVER: Capt Riley Tejcek, pictured here at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle, Va., is aiming to be the first female Marine to qualify for the Winter Olympics. Read about her life as a Marine and world-class bobsledder, on page 36. Photo by LCpl Kayla LeClaire, USMC. Copies of the cover may be obtained by sending \$3 (for mailing costs) to *Leatherneck Magazine*, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134-0775.

LEATHERNECK AND MCA MEMBERSHIP PRICES: 1 year \$42; 2 years \$79; 3 years \$119
Toll-free (866) 622-1775 • Email mca@mca-marines.org

USMC CHALLENGE COINS

REPRESENT WITH BASE CHALLENGE COINS AND MORE

SHOW YOUR PRIDE



MCB Quantico
Coin
\$11.95



Camp Lejeune
Coin
\$11.95



Highway to
Hell Coin
\$11.95



Camp Pendleton
Coin
\$11.95



Camp Geiger
School of
Infantry Coin
\$13.95



2nd Recruit
Training
Battalion San
Diego Coin
\$11.95



Shop today at Marineshop.net
or call us at (703) 640-7195



Follow us on
social media!



@themarineshoponline



@TheMarineShop1



The MARINE Shop
SERVING MARINES AROUND THE WORLD

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.)

I just finished reading the article in the January 2024 issue "A Day in the Life of a MARSOC Critical Skills Operator" about the Marine Raiders and I noticed a caption on the photo on page 40 stating that they work with the U.S. Air Force Special Operation units. I immediately contacted my grandson who is a part of the Air Force Special Operations unit and asked him his opinion of our Marine Raiders. The following was his response:

"I worked with them mostly in training and saw them when I was deployed a few times. They were all super squared away and good at what they do. They are a good bunch of dudes getting the mission done."

Nice to know our Marine Raiders are making such a positive impression on

other members of the Special Operations community!

SSgt Michael Pierce
USMC, 1967-1971, USMCR, 1972-1980
Prescott Valley, Ariz.

Thanks for passing this on. The entire Special Operations Community are true quiet professionals with very high standards. They are hard to impress, so your grandson's opinion is high praise. Semper Fi.—Publisher

What Is a Veteran?

This Marine veteran had celebrated the Marine Corps' 248th Birthday on Nov. 10, 2023, along with celebrating Veterans Day breakfast at one of the senior centers in Massachusetts. I was confronted by a student who asked me to explain what a veteran was. The following is what I said to the student:

A veteran comes from all walks of life, from various family members who have dedicated their lives to the military services. When they heard the call for valiant

service to their country, they are proud members from all the military services, who have displayed their honor, integrity, courage, and fearlessness, and most of all, commitment to accomplishing their missions when called upon to do so.

Some have made the ultimate sacrifice for their country and are called our fallen heroes. They come from different backgrounds but they have a code and bond that says that we are a band of brothers and sisters, for he or she that stands with me in battle and sheds their blood with me, shall be my brother and sister for all eternity.

John Messia
Brockton, Mass.

Well said, sir. I hope the student understood and remembers your words. Semper Fi.—Publisher

There Were Drill Instructors At Camp Lejeune?

The In Memoriam notice for Cpl Gerald Peterson on page 66 of the January 2024

Car Buying, Fully Loaded

- Get a decision in seconds on great-rate auto loans¹
- Shop, compare and get up-front pricing through our Car Buying Service, powered by TrueCar[®]
- Learn more about your vehicle's history with CARFAX^{®2}
- See if you could save on auto insurance from Liberty Mutual[®], made available through TruStage^{™3}
- Explore **FREE** trial subscriptions to SiriusXM's Platinum Plan

Terms and conditions apply.

Learn more at navyfederal.org/carbuying.⁴

NAVY
FEDERAL
Credit Union

Our Members Are the Mission

Navy Federal Credit Union is federally insured by NCUA. ¹Credit and collateral subject to approval. ²CARFAX is a registered trademark of CARFAX, Inc. ³Liberty Mutual Insurance is made available to Navy Federal Credit Union members through TruStage[™]. Auto and Home Insurance Products are issued by Liberty Mutual Insurance Company or its subsidiaries or affiliates, 175 Berkeley Street, Boston, MA 02116 USA. © 2023 Liberty Mutual Insurance. In Texas, coverage provided and underwritten by Liberty County Mutual Insurance Company, 7900 Windrose Avenue, Plano, TX 75024. All statements made are subject to provisions, exclusions, conditions, and limitations of the applicable insurance policy. Coverages and features not available in all states. Discounts are not available in all states and discounts vary by state. Certain discounts apply to specific coverages only. To the extent permitted by law, applicants are individually underwritten; not all applicants may qualify. A consumer report from a consumer reporting agency and/or motor vehicle report will be obtained on all drivers listed on your policy where state laws and regulations allow. Please consult your policy for specific coverages and limitations. The insurance offered is not a deposit, and is not federally insured, sold, or guaranteed by Navy Federal Credit Union. Navy Federal Credit Union is in no way responsible for any products or services provided by or through TruStage, Liberty Mutual, or their affiliates, subsidiaries, and insurance company partners. Navy Federal Credit Union enables this insurance program to be offered and is entitled to compensation from TruStage Insurance Agency, LLC. © TruStage AUT-4210544.2 ⁴Navy Federal Credit Union is in no way responsible for any product, service, purchase, or lease provided by or through CARFAX, TruStage, Liberty Mutual, SiriusXM, or the Navy Federal Car Buying Service operated by TrueCar. © 2023 Navy Federal NFCU 14083 (9-23)





THE COMPLETE 20TH CENTURY U.S. SILVER DOLLAR COLLECTION

- ★ Genuine U.S. Mint Dollars issued in the 20th century
- ★ Includes 90% silver coins
- ★ Features coins over 100 years old, plus many out of circulation for decades
- ★ Sealed in crystal-clear, tamper-proof holders

Collection includes and is limited to every year silver dollar issued for general circulation from 1900 to 1999

COLLECT A SHINING CENTURY OF GENUINE U.S. DOLLARS

Today, historic coins are capturing the attention of savvy collectors as never before. Yet few are more esteemed than U.S. Silver Dollars, coveted for their beauty, history, rarity, and enduring intrinsic value. Now, The Bradford Exchange Mint presents the ultimate collection: *The Complete 20th Century U.S. Silver Half Dollar Collection*.

This presentation of genuine, almost-vanished U.S. Mint coins includes *each and every* U.S. silver dollar issued for general circulation in the 20th century from 1900 to 1999. It gathers the entire set of highly-coveted Morgan silver dollars minted from 1900-1921, and the complete Peace silver dollar set, from 1922-1935. Plus, you'll receive the full set of Eisenhower dollars, issued from 1971-1978, and all four coins in the Susan B. Anthony dollar series.

*Real Coins, Real Value ...
100% Guaranteed.*

These are coins you'll treasure for years to come, a legacy to share with children and grandchildren. Acquire each edition now, at the \$49.99* issue price, payable in two installments of \$24.99. There's no risk when you respond now thanks to our 365-day guarantee, and you may cancel at any time.

After acceptance, you'll receive your first coin shipment. Your FREE Deluxe Display Case will be shipped with the second coin. Future coins in *The Complete 20th Century U.S. Silver Dollar Collection* will be sent about once a month at the same low price. SUPPLIES ARE LIMITED, so don't wait. Take advantage of this limited time offer while you can.

The Bradford Exchange Mint is not affiliated with the U.S. Government or U.S. Mint.



ACT TODAY AT BRADFORDEXCHANGE.COM/SILVERDOLLARS



©2024 BGE 17-00040-045-BD24

SEND NO MONEY NOW

PLEASE RESPOND PROMPTLY

The Bradford Exchange Mint

9307 Milwaukee Avenue · Niles, IL 60714-9995

YES. Please send me *The Complete 20th Century U.S. Silver Dollar Collection* for my preview as described in this announcement. I need send no money now. Limit: one per household.

*Plus a total of \$6.99 shipping and service per coin. Please allow 4-8 weeks for delivery of your first coin. All sales are subject to product availability and acceptance. This could be your only opportunity to preview the first issue in *The Complete 20th Century U.S. Silver Dollar Collection* as well as future issues to come. Issues will arrive about once a month. Your FREE custom Display Box will ship with your second coin. You may cancel at any time.

Mrs. Mr. Ms.

Name (Please Print Clearly)

Address

City

State

Zip

Email (optional)

911046-E50201

Leatherneck

MAGAZINE OF THE MARINES

President/CEO,

Marine Corps Association

LtGen Charles G. Chiarotti, USMC (Ret)

Publisher & Editor-in-Chief

Col Christopher Woodbridge, USMC (Ret)

Executive Editor: Nancy S. Lichtman

Deputy Editor: Kipp Hanley

Copy Editor: Lauren Jeter

Staff Writer: Kyle Watts

Editorial Assistant

Briesa Koch

Art Director: Jason Monroe

EDITORIAL OFFICES

Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134

Phone: (703) 640-0115

Email: leatherneck@mca-marines.org

Web page: www.mca-marines.org/leatherneck

MCA SUPPORT CENTER:

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION & CUSTOMER SERVICE

Hours of Operation: 8:00-4:30 EST

Phone: toll-free (866) 622-1775

Email: mca@mca-marines.org

ADVERTISING QUERIES ONLY:

Contact: Valerie Preletz 703-640-0107 or

LeeAnn Mitchell 703-640-0169

advertising@mca-marines.org

LEATHERNECK AND MCA MEMBERSHIP PRICES

1 year \$42; 2 years \$79; 3 years \$119

Leatherneck also is available in digital format at www.mca-marines.org/leatherneck.

All overseas and foreign addresses add \$16 postage for each year's membership except APO and FPO military addresses. Periodicals postage paid at Quantico, Va., USPS #308-080, and additional mailing offices.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please send your new address six weeks before the date of issue with which it is to take effect, if possible. Include old address with new, enclosing your address label if convenient.

Send to: *Leatherneck* Magazine, Box 1775,

Quantico, VA 22134 or email to:

mca@mca-marines.org.

POSTMASTER

Send address changes to: *Leatherneck* Magazine, Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134.



Leatherneck (ISSN 0023-981X) is published monthly by the Marine Corps Association, Bldg. #715, MCB, Quantico, VA 22134. Copyright 2024 by MCA.

All rights reserved. Stories, features, pictures and other material from *Leatherneck* may be reproduced if they are not restricted by law or military regulations, provided proper credit is given and specific prior permission has been granted for each item to be reproduced.

Opinions of authors whose articles appear in *Leatherneck* do not necessarily express the attitude of the Navy Department or Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps. "Marines" and the Eagle, Globe and Anchor are trademarks of the U.S. Marine Corps, used with permission. When mailed, manuscripts, art or photographs should be accompanied by self-addressed envelopes and return postage. Query first on all submissions. The publisher assumes no responsibility for return of unsolicited manuscripts, drawings or photographs.

Publication of advertisements does not constitute endorsement by MCA except for such products or services clearly offered under MCA's name. The publisher reserves the right to accept or reject any advertising order at his absolute discretion.

issue of *Leatherneck* caught my attention. Having read *Leatherneck* for 40 years (and having spent five years at the MCA), the reference to Cpl Peterson being a drill instructor at Camp Lejeune after two tours in Vietnam stood out. The only time I know of recruit training at Camp Lejeune was for the Montford Point Marines during and after World War II. That location is now Camp Johnson, dedicated to SgtMaj Gilbert "Hashmark" Johnson and his incredible service to the Corps and country.

If there really was recruit training going on during the waning days of Vietnam (and the draft) at Camp Lejeune, it has not been well reported in the last 40 years. If this is the case, this would be a great article for a future issue of the magazine.

Adam D. Hawkins
Stafford, Va.

Good catch! That was our error. The sentence should have read: "He later served as an instructor at Camp Lejeune." Besides being loyal, the best thing about Leatherneck readers is that you keep us on our toes. Thanks for pointing it out so we can correct the record and thanks for the important historical information about Camp Johnson.—Executive Editor

VFW Post 4582 Celebrates Red Friday

Pictured here is the staff at the Starbucks, Minn., VFW on Red Friday. It is a wonderful tradition at this club and other veterans' clubs to wear red on Friday night to remember everyone who is deployed or has been deployed. There are very few Marines that are members at this club, so you can imagine the "harass-

ment" we get from the Army and Navy vets. All in good fun of course! So, to level the playing field for the "few and proud," I supplied red Marine shirts for the staff members and their managers to wear during the event.

Cpl Bil Pederson
USMC, 1963-1966
Mauston, Wis.

Sounds like a great event, and thanks for taking care of the Marines.—Publisher

Why We Need the Team at the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society

I read the story on Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society helping troops and dependents on Guam in the January 2024 issue of *Leatherneck* and I thought how they can tap into U.S. government aid to get money for human aid in disaster situations. I just read in the media that the U.S. government awarded 90 billion dollars in grants for various organizations, and I started wondering if NMCRS should hire professional grant writers to assist in getting grants for a worthy cause. The money would serve military servicemembers and civilians and would be a win-win situation for humanity. I am a thrift store enthusiast and living near Naval Air Station Lemoore provides me with tons of gear and clothing at a very low price. All my friends like to recycle gear and household items. Here in California, most cities and churches have food giveaway programs that serve the people as well. It is great to see such help given out to folks who need it!

Additionally, the article "The Vintage Veteran Barber of L.A." about Esgar Reynega and his barbershop reminded



Pictured from left to right: Employees Illene, Niki, reader Bil Pederson, and bar manager Mary wearing red shirts at their VFW post to celebrate Red Friday.



MODERN DAY MARINE®

WALTER E. WASHINGTON CONVENTION
CENTER, WASHINGTON D.C.

APRIL 30- MAY 2

350+ Exhibiting Companies, OBJ 1
Wargaming Convention, Briefings
from Senior Leaders and DoD
Personnel, Events for Spouses, the
Latest Warfighting Innovations,
and More



Scan the
QR Code
for More
Information



Modern Day Marine is not open to the public. All registrants must provide proof of identity with a Government issued photographic ID and must demonstrate that they have an "identifiable relationship" with the Marine Corps.

The Department of Defense, the Department of the Navy, or U.S. Marine Corps does not endorse any company, sponsor or their products or services



me of my days at the U.S. Naval Hospital Corps School in Balboa Park, San Diego, Calif. I used to cut hair for my classmates too. High and tight was our goal there. Beautiful shop, beautiful story!

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

Thanks, Doc! We couldn't agree more.
—Publisher

In 1962, I was attached as an attack pilot to VA-212 based at Naval Air Station Lemoore, Calif. It was two weeks from deployment aboard USS *Hancock* (CVA-19). I planned for my wife and three small children to spend time with my mother in Oklahoma City, Okla. My mother suggested this plan and flew out to California two weeks before the squadron deployment and put this plan into motion. My wife Sue and I had been living in Hanford, Calif., just a few minutes away from NAS Lemoore.

But the plan backfired when my mother and my wife got into an argument after a long day on the highway as to where they would spend the night.

My mother called her sister who lived in Roswell, N.M., to come pick her up. Sue was able to contact me through an

antiquated phone system. I contacted my commanding officer to request a couple of days off help with this problem and he said, "No! I need you here!"

An order was an order and Sue would just have to do her best to handle the situation by herself. I knew she could do it. She was a strong woman. I was lucky to have her!

Although Sue was just barely over 5-feet tall, she was tough and she "took the bull by the horns" and found a decent place to spend the night in the middle of nowhere in New Mexico.

Sue passed away from Alzheimer's disease at the age of 87.

I wish that I had been able to use the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society in those days.

When I heard about the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society, I have been giving as much as I could to help Navy men and women and Marine Corps personnel too. What a great organization. I will continue to give as much as I can each year.

CDR Dewitt T. Ferrell Jr., USNR (Ret)
Athens, Tenn.

We're all sorry for your loss. Sue sounds like the quintessential Navy wife. I know your contributions to NMCRS are helping many of today Sailors and

Marines and their families. Thank you.—
Publisher

A Connection to a Famous Marine

"The Boys in the Boat" by Daniel James Brown was made into a movie and was released into the public on Dec. 25, 2023. It is a story about grit and rowing. In it, the University of Washington has to beat the Navy team of Midshipmen from Annapolis, Md., to qualify for the 1936 Olympics which were held in Berlin, Germany. While all the Navy rowers were Midshipmen at the Naval Academy, their coxswain was a Marine lieutenant who had graduated earlier, named Victor Krulak, nicknamed "The Brute." Fast forward to 1964 and Victor Krulak was a lieutenant general in the Marine Corps, and I was assigned as his driver in Okinawa, Japan, when he took an inspection tour of the Far East.

Bill Ober
Huntington, N.Y.

Very interesting added detail in a truly inspiring story. It makes complete sense that "Brute" Krulak would be a coxswain—you want the lightest crew member (less than 125 lbs if possible) and the sharpest tactical mind sitting in that seat!—Publisher

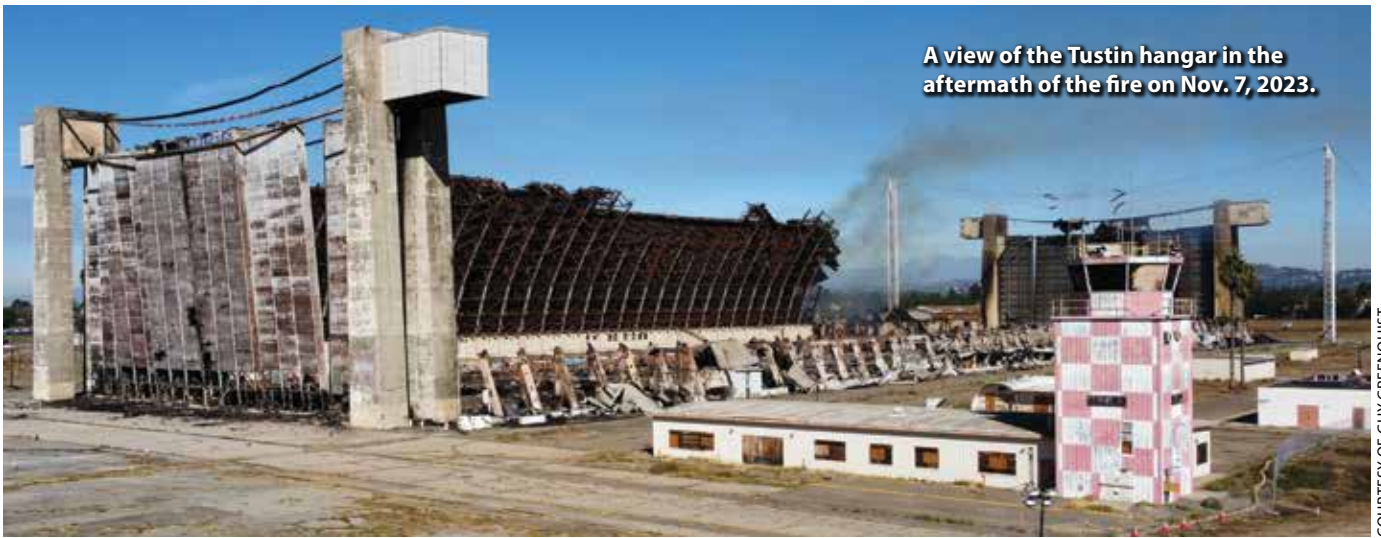
ENLISTED COLLEGE
DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAM
— TOTAL FORCE —

SERGEANTS SCHOOL SEMINAR PROGRAM
READY RELEVANT CAPABLE

CAREER SCHOOL SEMINAR PROGRAM

ADVANCED SCHOOL SEMINAR PROGRAM

1-888-435-8762
WWW.USMCU.EDU/CDET/ENLISTED



A view of the Tustin hangar in the aftermath of the fire on Nov. 7, 2023.

COURTESY OF GUY GREENQUIST

Updated Photos of the Tustin Hangar

Thank you for publishing my Tustin hangar letter in the February 2024 issue of Sound Off! I initially sent a file that I thought contained two pictures. You might have only received one. That one that was labeled in the aftermath of the fire was a photo of the complete hangar taken about a year and a half ago. I have sent two pictures of the hangar during the fire.

Guy Greenquist
Florence, Wis.

Thank you for correcting the mix-up and sending us a new photo. As a student of naval aviation history, it's tough to look at the burned out remains of that beautiful old hangar. Readers: I'd love to see any of your old photos from MCAS Tustin. Feel free to email them to us at leatherneck@mca-marines.org, for possible future publication in the magazine.—Executive Editor

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.
—Executive Editor 🦖

**MARINES HELPED YOU
BECOME A MARINE.
WE CAN HELP WITH RE-ENTRY
TO CIVILIAN LIFE, TOO.**



FOCUSMARINES.ORG

WHERE THINGS START TO GET BETTER.



Capt Enel Laborn, a production control officer with MALS-36, 1st MAW, transitions through a shooting drill during the Marine Corps Marksmanship Competition Far East on Camp Hansen, Okinawa, Japan, Dec. 12, 2023.

Okinawa, Japan Leathernecks Participate in Marine Corps Marksmanship Competition Far East 2023

Marines from across Okinawa participated in the Marine Corps Marksmanship Competition Far East, hosted on Camp Hansen, Dec. 8-15, 2023. MCMC-FE is one of five regional marksmanship competitions held by the Marine Corps Shooting Team (MCST). Shooters who score in the top 10% are invited to compete in the Marine Corps Championship Match held annually in Quantico, Va.

The purpose of the match is to increase the proficiency of shooters and recognize those who are uniquely skilled in marksmanship. A four-day period of instruction precedes the three-day competition. Members of the Marine Corps Shooting Team introduce shooters to drills meant to better prepare them for the competition.

“The intent with the Marine Corps Marksmanship Competitions is that we

go to every major region and offer the Marines stationed there the chance to receive instruction from the shooting team, and to test the skills they gain from that instruction in a match that is analogous to the civilian shooting competitions that we participate in,” said Sergeant Shane Ryan, a member of the MCST.

Made up of Marines who have distinguished themselves in competition, the MCST uses its members’ expertise to enhance the skillset of competing Marines. The MCST is a part of Weapons Training Battalion, headquartered at Marine Corps Base Quantico. Its mission is to serve as the Marine Corps’ proponent for all facets of small arms combat marksmanship and to be the focal point for marksmanship doctrine, training, competition, equipment and weapons. They regularly compete with marksmanship teams, both civilian and military, from all over the globe.

Shooters race against the clock and test their adaptability as they navigate challenging shooting positions, aiming to perform better than the rest. The added stress of competing against their peers can be a challenge, but this is by design.

“We expose the shooters to a type of shooting that they usually aren’t used to on Marine Corps ranges. Many of the events are a little unorthodox in order to expose them to new scenarios and make them critically think while shooting,” said Captain John Bodzioch, the MCST action team officer in charge.

Coaches instruct the competitors on how to best shoot from a variety of positions and barricades. To many, firing accurately from these barricades can become exceeding difficult as fatigue and stress affect the shooters.

“A big challenge for myself was firing from the tractor tires,” said First Lieutenant Mathew Candy, an adjutant officer with 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines.



CPL VINCENT PHAM, USMC

Above: A Marine fires an M4 service rifle during the Marine Corps Marksmanship Competition Far East on Camp Hansen, Okinawa, Japan, Dec. 12, 2023. MCMC-Far East is an annual two-week event held to improve Marines' marksmanship, combat readiness and weapon proficiency.



CPL VINCENT PHAM, USMC

Maj Jerrid Procter, an operations officer with Task Force 76/3, 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade, fires an M18 pistol during the MCMC-Far East on Dec. 11, 2023.

“You have to be able to make hits in uncomfortable positions but once I started connecting with steel down range, it was a great feeling.”

The competition is composed of two days of individual focused events and one day of team events. These include long range stages that test shooters' ability to stabilize their rifles on uneven surfaces while judging distance to make hits. Other

stages incorporate close-range shooting with rifle and pistol where the shooter's speed and accuracy is put to the test.

As shooting tactics and techniques evolve, the MCST uses its experience in international shooting competitions to create a better course year after year.

“Historically, there was more of a focus on bull's-eye shooting in competition, so incorporating action shooting disciplines

with modern, dynamic speed and accuracy is something we have been improving on every year of the Marine Corps Marksmanship Competitions,” said Ryan.

The awards ceremony on Dec. 15 recognized the best performing individual shooters and teams of the competition. Categories included individual recognition of the pistol and rifle shooters as well as the teams who performed the best in each category.

Placing first overall in the pistol category was Corporal Tanner Wright from 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marines, who had advice for new aspiring competitors: “Even if you think you aren't good enough to compete, you can still go out there and learn a lot from the match.”

2ndLt John Sagan, USMC

Greece 26th MEU(SOC) Conducts Amphibious Operations with Hellenic Marines

Marines and Sailors with the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) participated in a Greek Bi-Lateral Exercise with the 32nd Hellenic Marine Brigade while embarked on USS *Mesa Verde* (LPD-19) in the Mediterranean Sea from Dec. 1-3, 2023.

The U.S.-Greece (Hellenic) amphibious interoperability training event was designed to exercise amphibious command and control within a constructive scenario, reflective of real-world crisis response operations.

“The Greek Bi-Lat is a fantastic opportunity for the Marines of the 26th MEU(SOC) to train alongside and learn from our long-standing partner,” said Lieutenant Colonel Scott Helminski, Commanding Officer, Battalion Landing Team 1/6 and the 26th MEU(SOC) Bravo Command Element Officer in Charge aboard USS *Mesa Verde*. “Integrating with the 32nd Hellenic Marine Brigade will not only strengthen the existing relationship and interoperability between the U.S. Marines and Hellenic Armed Forces, but will also showcase the operational flexibility and utility of forward-deployed Marines aboard amphibious ships within the U.S. European Command area of responsibility.”

Since arriving in theater in July 2023, *Mesa Verde* and 26th MEU(SOC) have participated in a wide array of exercises, operations, and activities, to include port visits with partners and allies throughout the U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa (NAVEUR-NAVAF) area of operations. From the snow-capped mountains in Norway, to the Baltics, Ireland and Spain, the 26th MEU(SOC) trained alongside



CPL MICHELE CLARKE, USMC

Marines from the 26th MEU(SOC) execute a small-scale amphibious assault alongside Greek Marines with the 32nd Hellenic Marine Brigade during a bilateral exercise near Skyros, Greece, on Dec. 2, 2023.



SSGT JESUS SEPULVEDA TORRES, USMC

various multinational partners, demonstrating U.S. commitment to the NATO Alliance and our global partners.

The 26th MEU(SOC) serves as a premier crisis response force for the United States, capable of conducting amphibious operations, crisis response and limited contingency operations. The force is postured to enable the introduction of follow-on-forces and designated special operations, in support of theater requirements of the Geographic Combatant Commander. Coupled with the USS *Bataan* Amphibious Readiness Group, the 26th MEU(SOC) serves as the premier stand-in force with a full complement of all-domain capabilities to operate persistently within the littorals or weapons engagement zones of any adversary.

Capt Angelica White, USMC

Camp Pendleton, Calif.

I MEF Concludes

Exercise Steel Knight 23.2

Marines and Sailors with I Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF), Sailors with U.S. 3rd Fleet, and Airmen with the 920th Rescue Wing participated in Exercise Steel Knight 23.2 from Nov. 27-Dec. 17, 2023. U.S. Armed Forces, alongside allied and partnered service members from Peru, Mexico and the Philippines observed the exercise from various locations.



LCPL SAMANTHA DEVINE, USMC

A CH-53E Super Stallion with HMH-361, MAG-16, 3rd MAW, conducts flight maneuvers during Exercise Steel Knight 23.2 over Palm Springs, Calif., on Nov. 30, 2023.

Steel Knight originated as a tank battalion exercise in 1991 and has since grown in participation, becoming an annual exercise for 1st Marine Division. Today, I MEF, with the participation of 1stMarDiv, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW), 1st Marine Logistics Group (MLG), Expeditionary Strike Group 3,

the I MEF Information Group and the 920th Rescue Wing, leads the annual three-phase, scenario-driven, live-fire exercise.

Steel Knight 23.2 maintained I MEF's proficiency as a Joint Task Force, while certifying 5th Marine Regiment to command the next Marine Rotational Force-



CPL MIGEL A. REYNOSA, USMC

Marines with Charlie Company, 1st LAR Battalion, 1stMarDiv, operate an LAV-25 Light Armored Vehicle during a simulated airfield seizure for a mission rehearsal exercise during Exercise Steel Knight 23.2 at Camp Pendleton, Calif., on Dec. 2, 2023.

A Marine with Fox Company, 2nd Bn, 5th Marines, 1stMarDiv, provides aid to a simulated civilian casualty during a mass casualty training scenario for a simulated embassy reinforcement during Exercise Steel Knight 23.2 at Camp Pendleton, Calif., on Nov. 29, 2023.

Darwin, Marine Air-Ground Task Force. The exercise also certifies 3rd Fleet to command the Amphibious Task Force, preparing both commands for the future fight. SK 23.2 simulated multiple scenarios, enabling Marines from I MEF to test their proficiency in command and control, combined-arms, amphibious and air assault operations, and expeditionary advanced base operations with an adaptive opposing force.

“The scenario for Steel Knight is constructed to give I MEF an opportunity to execute expeditionary advanced base operations as part of a maritime campaign.” said Major General Benjamin T. Watson, Commanding General of 1stMarDiv. “We create a fake map and limit ourselves in terms of geography to simulate that discrete areas of Southern California are actually islands.”

The training environment for Steel



CPL LEARIK BARTON, USMC

Knight simulates an island chain in the Pacific, utilizing U.S. Army Fort Hunter Liggett, Inyokern Airfield, Point Mugu State Park, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, San Clemente Island, and Yuma, Ariz., as geographic areas of operation. Simulated island-hopping techniques, partnered with 3rd MAW executing through the hub, spoke, and node concept, provides depth and versatility

to the battlespace. The ability to establish and utilize forward arming and refueling points in dynamic and contested environments is critical, as it ensures pilots can advance and sustain the fight anywhere in the world.

Marines with Fox Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines, made a lasting impression during the exercise with a short-fuse embassy reinforcement order. Ma-



CPL MIGEL A. REYNOSA, USMC

Marines with Echo Company, 2nd Bn, 5th Marines, 1stMarDiv, approach an MV-22B Osprey assigned to VMM-164, MAG-39, 3rd MAW, for a simulated airfield seizure during Exercise Steel Knight 23.2 at MCAS Yuma, Ariz., on Dec 2, 2023.

rines began at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Ariz., boarded an MV-22B Osprey tiltrotor aircraft, and flew to Camp Pendleton where they simulated reinforcing an embassy requesting assistance. Within the hour, the embassy received notional enemy contact and Fox Company engaged. Actors and actresses role-played as simulated casualties, sounds of simulated ammunition rang through the streets, and smoke filled the air as Marines tested their warfighting and response capabilities.

“The embassy reinforcement for Steel Knight [23.2] is the culmination of a large amount of coordination throughout I Marine Expeditionary Force,” said Fox Co commander, Captain Austin Dickey. “It gave me a lot of confidence to see our corpsmen, our Sailors, brothers and sisters helping us out, training and ready to respond to a situation like that. Friction is going to come up, the plan is going to change. I saw the Marines and Sailors handle that unanticipated event well.”

While Fox Co conducted embassy reinforcement training, Navy corpsmen with 1st Medical Battalion, 1st MLG, and airmen with the 920th Rescue Wing worked together to navigate the complexities of a simulated mass casualty

event at Inyokern Airfield in Inyokern, Calif. Together, the teams rehearsed concepts for treating and stabilizing casualties during extended transportation movements to facilitate a higher echelon of care.

“What a great opportunity to work side-by-side with our Air Force brothers and sisters during Steel Knight,” said MajGen Michael J. Borgschulte, Commanding General of 3rd MAW. “As the Air Force expands its expeditionary capabilities, there is natural synergy between our two services in the way we envision fighting in the Indo-Pacific.”

Pararescuemen with the 920th Rescue Wing conducted pararescue operations while working alongside Marines during their adjacent exercise, Distant Fury Stallion 23, which is used to validate the 920th Rescue Wing’s interoperability within the joint team while reaffirming lethality, precision, and ability to fight and win in future operation environments. Working as a tri-service team, airmen, Marines and Sailors demonstrated their integration capabilities through joint combat search and rescue training. The pararescuemen jumped to retrieve simulated stranded Marine Corps pilots, and upon retrieval, the HH-60Gs took the

pilots to the USS *Cincinnati* (LCS-20) for temporary follow-on care and medical assessments.

“One thing that has made this exercise unique for the Air Force, specifically the 920th Rescue Wing, is seeing the expeditionary nature of how the U.S. Marine Corps operates,” said U.S. Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Michael Conrad, Operations Officer with the 920th Rescue Wing.

“This Exercise really has evolved into what I MEF needs it to be today,” said MajGen Bradford Gering, Commanding General of I MEF. “... it gives us an opportunity to integrate with the Navy and work on Navy-Marine Corps warfighting. I think the power of the MAGTF is everything that we’re able to bring to bear; we’re able to use the air wing for aviation capabilities to bring speed, agility and depth into the battle space. We’re able to use expeditionary logistics, put them in places in a time of need when we need them, and then of course we’re able to maneuver throughout the battlespace with our ground combat arms capabilities using a combination of both surface and aviation to force project them.”

SSgt Hailey Clay, USMC



SGT KEDRICK SCHUMACHER, USMC

SSgt Jin Chang, USAF, a loadmaster with 39th Rescue Squadron, 920th Rescue Wing, guides Marines with 5th Marine Regiment, 1stMarDiv, in an Ultra Light Tactical Vehicle into an Air Force HC-130J Combat King II aircraft during a mission rehearsal exercise as part of Exercise Steel Knight 23.2 at Laguna Army Airfield, Yuma, Ariz., on Dec. 4, 2023.



CPL HENRY RODRIGUEZ, USMC

A critical skills operator with MARSOC briefs Marines from BLT 1/8 prior to a joint raid during an integration training event at Camp Lejeune, N.C., on Nov. 21, 2023.

**Camp Lejeune, N.C.
MARSOC Conducts Small Unit
Tactics Training with BLT 1/8**

Throughout 2023, Marine Raiders from Marine Forces Special Operations Command trained with Marines from Battalion Landing Team (BLT) 1/8, 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), to build the most capable forces possible.

The training enhanced the operational readiness of both Marine Special Operations Companies in their core capabilities, as well as the level of performance seen by the Battalion Landing Team. Lieutenant Colonel William Kerrigan, BLT 1/8 Commanding Officer, placed an emphasis on raising the level of training for his Marines by working with MARSOC and other special operations forces, such as Naval Special Warfare, as often as possible.

“Ever since LtCol Kerrigan took command at BLT 1/8, we’ve really ramped up the integration with MARSOC,” said Sergeant Frederick Owens, a squad leader with the BLT. “My platoon, alone, has worked with them multiple times in the last year.”

In that time, Marines from BLT 1/8 trained with Marine Special Operations Teams and Companies from each of MARSOC’s three Marine Raider Battalions. The training events included a variety of live-fire events: marksmanship on both flat and indoor ranges, emphasizing small unit tactics in a kinetic environ-

ment; mortar fire training to compare standard operating procedures between BLT 1/8 mortar platoon and MARSOC’s mortarmen; and squad and company level ground, air, and amphibious raids with MARSOC tactical support.

Additional integration between the two parties took place on exercises, such as BLT 1/8’s Marine Corps combat readiness evaluation and MARSOC’s Exercise Raven, a special operations forces level certifying exercise that all MSOCs attend before deploying. At every phase of training, preparation from both units ensured the mutual benefit had in relation to their relevant mission demands and requirements.

“It really is a win-win,” said a Team Chief on a Marine Special Operations Team with MARSOC. “We get to work on our ability to do foreign internal defense and the infantry Marines work through their small unit tactics and advance their skills before deploying.”

Foreign internal defense, one of MARSOC’s core capabilities, sees MSOCs deploy to other nations and train their militaries, preparing them to conduct more complex operations.

“The more repetitions we can get on training other forces to operate at a high level, the better our processes and efficiency will be when we go down range,” added the Team Chief.

The latest of these integration training events included a live scenario that

simulated a raid on an objective building where adversary combatants were housing dangerous munitions. The integration saw critical skills operators and special operations officers conduct full mission profiles alongside infantry squads.

Marine Raiders maneuvered side by side in all aspects of the training, from planning and briefing together, to being a seamless part of their assault and support elements. While developing skills to work more closely with partner forces outside of their team, the Raiders were also able to highlight positive habits to increase combat effectiveness.

“It’s all about composure while you are operating,” said Lance Corporal Liam Wood, a team leader with 1/8. “A lot of younger or more inexperienced guys have a tendency to get overwhelmed or rush, and working side by side with the CSOs, it reinforces the right way, which is to remain calm and composed. Being able to move side by side with them really reinforces what we are taught and helps us step our training up to another level.”

Beyond just the physical tactics that benefit from the integration, the Critical Skills Operators (CSOs) helped the infantry small-unit leaders improve their tactical evaluation.

“The CSOs are able to go into a situation and create an effective plan at a rapid pace and that has started to rub off on us as well,” said Sergeant Owens. “My thought process and how quickly I can work through problems has definitely improved from before my experiences with MARSOC.”

“It’s vital that special operations forces and conventional forces train, integrate, and complement one another,” said Kerrigan. “The current and future operating environments require a fast and adaptable battalion landing team that can respond to ever changing threats. From September 2022 to November 2023, Battalion Landing Team 1/8 built relationships early and often with our MARSOC teammates. Together, we learned that we have the same drive and professionalism to accomplish any mission assigned. As we look to the future, this training makes BLT 1/8 and the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit more lethal, employable, and sustainable to meet geographical combatant commanders’ operational needs.”

Cpl Henry Rodriguez II, USMC



A TRIBUTE TO OUR HEROES IN THE MARINES



SALUTE TO THE USMC

MEN'S CANVAS JACKET

Available in 5 Men's Sizes M-XXXL

IN HONOR OF THOSE WHO SERVE

Now you can wear your respect for the Marine Corps with the **"Salute to the USMC" Men's Canvas Jacket**. Relaxed yet rugged, this comfortable jacket is crafted of 100% cotton khaki canvas with a soft quilted lining and fully embroidered details. On the back are an embroidered Eagle Globe and Anchor emblem, plus the motto "SEMPER FIDELIS" and "USMC EST. 1775"; on the front is the embroidered word "MARINES" with the USMC emblem on the pocket flap. A full-color embroidered American flag is proudly displayed on the left sleeve. Thoughtful details include 2 chest pockets with snap closures, 2 slip hip pockets, ribbed hem, a hood lined with soft black fleece,

and a full front zipper. This jacket is available in 5 men's sizes from M-XXXL, so you're sure to find a fit that's perfect for you. Imported.

AN OUTSTANDING VALUE NOT AVAILABLE IN STORES

Each officially licensed **"Salute to the USMC" Men's Canvas Jacket** is available in 5 men's sizes (M to XXXL) for just \$139.95*, payable in 4 interest-free installments of \$34.99, and backed by our 30-day full-money-back guarantee. (Sizes XXL-XXXL, add \$10.) To reserve a jacket in your name, send no money now. Just fill out and return your Priority Reservation today!

Order Today at bradfordexchange.com/40598



Officially Licensed Product of the United States Marine Corps.

Connect with Us! [f](#) [p](#) [i](#) [i](#) [x](#) [v](#)

©2024 The Bradford Exchange 01-40598-001-BIB

Where Passion Becomes Art

PRIORITY RESERVATION SEND NO MONEY NOW

The Bradford Exchange

9345 Milwaukee Ave., Niles, IL 60714-1393

YES. Please reserve the **"Salute to the USMC" Men's Canvas Jacket** for me as described in this announcement in the size indicated below. **Please Respond Promptly**

- Medium (38-40)** 01-40598-011
- Large (42-44)** 01-40598-012
- XL (46-48)** 01-40598-013
- XXL (50-52)** 01-40598-014
- XXXL (54-56)** 01-40598-015

Signature _____

Mrs. Mr. Ms. _____
Name (Please Print Clearly)

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

*Plus a total of \$16.99 shipping and service each (see bradfordexchange.com). Please allow 2-4 weeks after initial payment for shipment. Sales subject to product availability and order acceptance.

E50201

Below: This image of MajGen John A. Lejeune, 13th Commandant of the Marine Corps, was photographed in November 1920.

Right: A colorized version of an aerial view of the amphibious assault on Tinian, circa 1944. (USMC photo)



COURTESY OF LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

A Leader Ahead of His Time

Lejeune Set the Stage for the Corps' Amphibious Excellence

By Maj Skip Crawley, USMCR (Ret)

Ask any Marine who among the pantheon of notable and illustrious Marines between World War I and World War II were most responsible for the Corps becoming the premier amphibious assault force in the world during the Second World War and many names would be mentioned: The iconoclastic Major Earl “Pete” Ellis, whose ideas and assumptions, according to authors Jetek A. Isley and Philip Crowl, “became the keystone of Marine Corps strategic plans for a Pacific War;” Major General Commandant John H. Russell (1934-1936), who author Merrill Bartlett said “guided the development of amphibious doctrine, preparing the Marine Corps for its major contribution in World War II;” and Lieutenant General Victor H. Krulak, who played key roles

in the development of the Landing Vehicle, Tracked (LVT) and the ubiquitous Higgins Boat as a young officer.

But John A. Lejeune, Major General Commandant from July 1920 to March 1929, may not be on many Marines’ short list of those Marines most responsible for transforming the Marine Corps into an amphibious assault force that had the capability of taking islands such as Tarawa and Iwo Jima in World War II. It is not that Marines are unfamiliar with Lejeune. Indeed, Lejeune, referred to as the “Greatest of All Leathernecks,” is well-known not only for his 1921 Birthday Message that is read annually but also for several other key accomplishments. He founded the Marine Corps Association in 1913, the Marine Corps League in 1923 and “created the Marine Corps Institute.” And, of course, Camp Lejeune is named after him. But most Marines may not be aware of Lejeune’s crucial role in setting the Marine Corps



Lejeune's reforms and efforts during his nine-year tenure as Commandant laid the groundwork for the establishment of the Fleet Marine Force in 1933 and the publication of the "Tentative Manual for Landing Operations" in 1934; both of which undergirded the development of the capability to conduct opposed amphibious landings.

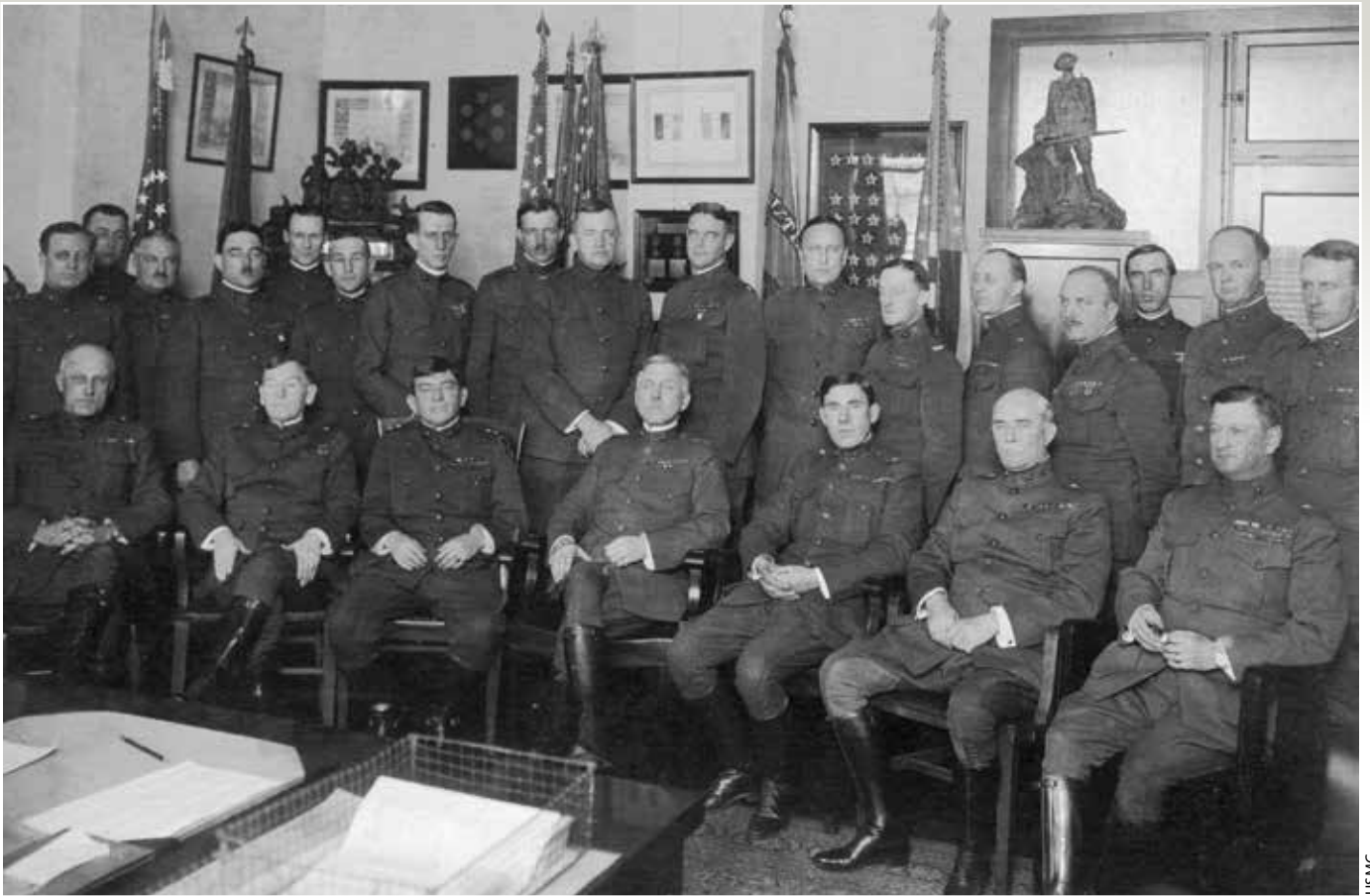
on the path to becoming the world's premier amphibious assault force it would become, and the nation needed, in World War II.

In the first two decades of the 20th Century, the Marine Corps' primary mission was to provide the Navy with an Advanced Base Force (ABF) to seize undefended or lightly defended islands in the Pacific as part of War Plan Orange (WPO). WPO was the Navy's strategy for advancing across the Central Pacific to relieve the Philippines, fight and (presumably) win a modern-day Jutland against the Imperial Japanese Navy in the western Pacific; followed by blockading the Japanese Home Islands, leading to a complete United States victory. However, the Marine Corps Lejeune took over in 1920, while having the ABF in its force structure, was focused on the "Banana Wars," not on supporting WPO. Lejeune would change that, ensuring the Marine Corps could survive as a separate service because it

had a unique mission within the overall military establishment. Lejeune's reforms and efforts during his nine-year tenure as Commandant laid the groundwork for the establishment of the Fleet Marine Force in 1933 and the publication of the "Tentative Manual for Landing Operations" in 1934; both of which undergirded the development of the capability to conduct opposed amphibious landings.

Background

Following the American victory in the Spanish-American War in 1898, the U.S. Navy needed bases between the newly acquired Philippine Islands and Hawaii to provide sheltered anchorages for their warships to use to replenish their coal supply if and when they were required to conduct a westward advance to relieve the archipelago from a Japanese blockade.



USMC

MajGen George Barnett, the 12th Commandant of the Marine Corps, and MajGen John Lejeune, the 13th CMC, along with staff members, taken in 1920.

“The U.S. Marines and Amphibious War: Its Theory, And Its Practice In The Pacific” by Jeter A. Isely and Dr. Philip A. Crowl, originally published in 1951 and republished by Pickle Partners Publishing in 2016, has this to say:

“Shortly after the conclusion of the Spanish-American War the attention of high naval planners was turned toward the problem of building a permanent force capable of seizing and holding advanced bases to be employed by the fleet in the prosecution of naval war in distant waters. Up to that time the duties of the Marine Corps had been limited largely to supplying marine detachments to vessels of the fleet and furnishing guards for navy yards, except during wartime when units of the Corps had actually participated in minor landings. The relatively easy victory over Spain did not conceal the fact that the fleet was incapable of sustained operations even in waters as close as those of Cuba, and the projection of American power far into the Pacific as a result of Commodore George Dewey’s victory at Manila Bay made the problem of acquiring bases even more acute ... shortly after the war the General Board of the Navy, impressed by recent events ... determined to set up a permanent advance-base force within the naval establishment. It was axiomatic that warships powered by steam were tied to their bases by the distance of their steaming radii and, since it was impracticable to maintain permanent bases in all parts of the world where the fleet might conceivably engage in action, it would be inevitably necessary in wartime to seize temporary bases against opposition if necessary. Defense of such bases once seized was an inseparable problem. The Marine Corps, an organization consisting of ground troops but with naval experience and under naval authority, was the obvious solution to the difficulty. Immediately tentative steps were taken to prepare the Corps for this new line of activity.”

Though preliminary steps were taken in 1901, the Marine Corps did not officially establish the Advanced Base Force until 1913. “Although the germs [sic] of later amphibious training may be found in this early advance base activity, it is clear that the great weight of the emphasis was not on offensive landing operations,” Isely and Crowl also wrote. “In fact, there is little resemblance between this early concept of the main function of the Marine Corps and its subsequent role as a military organization specially trained for amphibious assaults against enemy shores. Although in theory the advance-base force was supposed to be prepared to seize as well as defend bases, in practice all of the training concentrated on the defense.”

Even then, World War I and the “Banana Wars” conspired to keep the Advanced Base Force from being front and center in Marine Corps thinking. World War I was a seminal moment in the history of the Marine Corps because the Corps went from primarily “supplying Marine detachments to vessels of the fleet and furnishing guards for navy yards” as Isely and Crowl state, to gaining the ability to fight on the most modern and intense battlefield imaginable. The Marine Corps’ ability to field a brigade that could go toe-to-toe with the Germany Army (and its attendant “First to Fight” publicity) shifted the Marine Corps, both substantively and in the public’s mind, to moving beyond only providing ships’ detachments and being colonial infantry, to being an elite conventional fighting force; an image that would be cemented in World War II. But the Banana Wars, which started before World War I, persisted during World War I and continued post-war, was the Marine Corps’ conscious primary focus when Lejeune became Commandant. What Lejeune foresaw and most didn’t, was that the colonial infantry role was not a viable mission for the Marine Corps long-term because opposition was growing against American



USMC

Marines like Lewis “Chesty” B. Puller, (above) were sent to Central America during the Banana Wars. The Marines there primarily functioned as an infantry force and conducted river patrols (right) and air patrols (bottom) while deployed there. Lejeune wanted to shift the Corps’ focus to strengthening its amphibious assault capabilities for future conflicts.



USMC



USMC

What Lejeune foresaw and most didn’t, was that the colonial infantry role was not a viable mission for the Marine Corps long-term because opposition was growing against American intervention; which ultimately led to President Roosevelt’s “Good Neighbor Policy.”

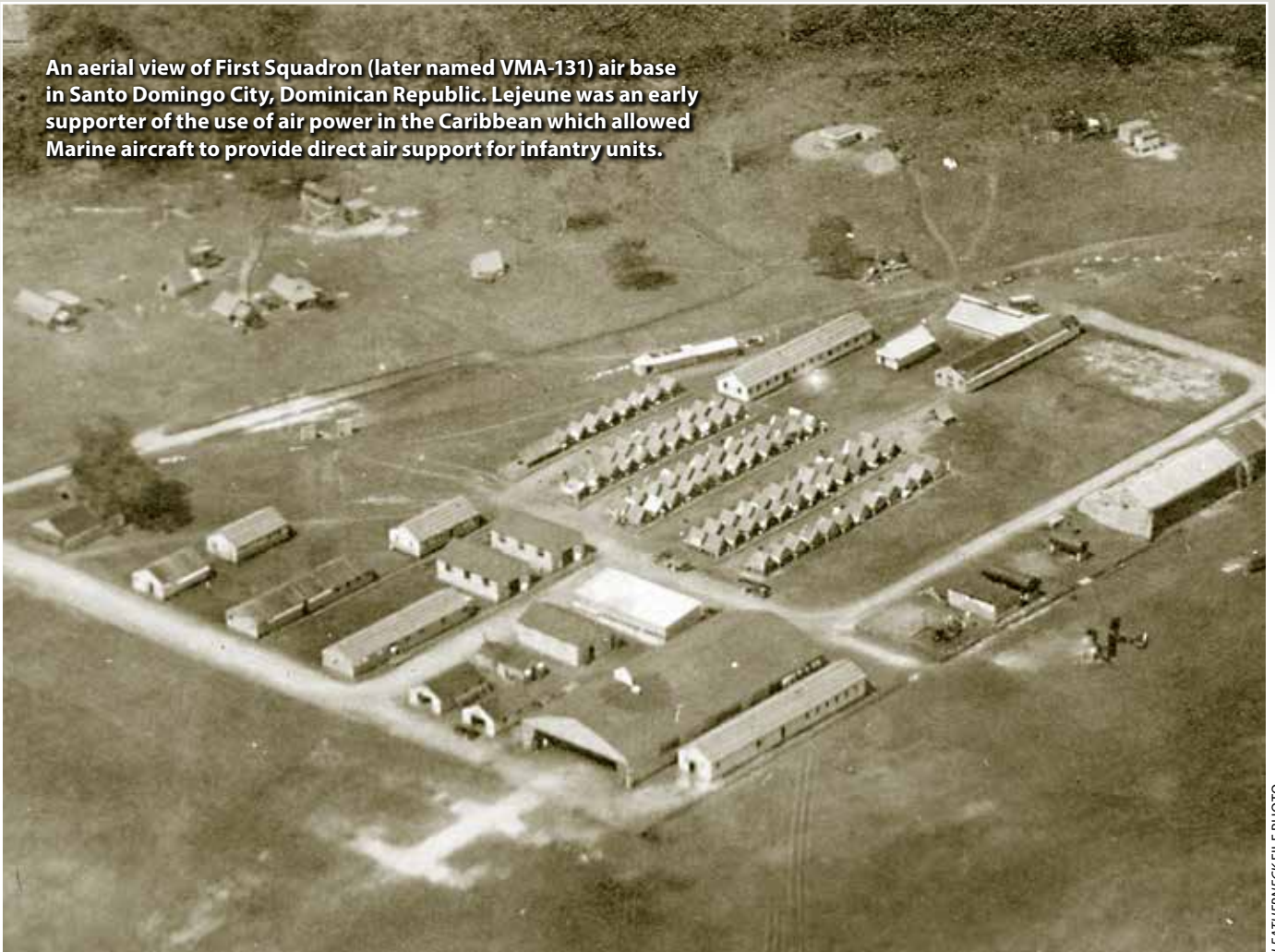
intervention; which ultimately led to President Roosevelt’s “Good Neighbor Policy” in 1933, “a policy of nonintervention in local affairs, applying specifically to Latin America.” He would be successful in his endeavor to wean the Marine Corps from the primacy of the colonial infantry role and put the Marine Corps on a trajectory to be an amphibious assault force, but only after overcoming deep-seated opposition within the Corps.

The Marine Corps’ Future: Colonial Infantry or Advanced Base Force?

Joseph Simon, author of “The Greatest Leatherneck of All Leathernecks: John Archer Lejeune and the Making of the Modern Marine Corps,” writes “... by early 1920, the ABF—developed over the last 20 years—was in limbo, unable to support the Navy’s challenge in the western Pacific. In effect, the Marine Corps had returned to its old mission of providing troops for expeditionary and occupation duty in Haiti and Santo Domingo, acting as colonial infantry. Visionary Marines who supported the Navy’s new mission in War Plan Orange did not want to return to the past but did not have the power to establish amphibious assault as the [Corps’] new wartime mission.”

Marines had been fulfilling the colonial infantry role for the first two decades of the 20th century; indeed, “they had accumulated enough experience to write and publish “The Small

An aerial view of First Squadron (later named VMA-131) air base in Santo Domingo City, Dominican Republic. Lejeune was an early supporter of the use of air power in the Caribbean which allowed Marine aircraft to provide direct air support for infantry units.



LEATHERNECK FILE PHOTO

Wars Manual” in 1921. (Author’s note: Originally called “The Strategy and Tactics of Small Wars” when published in 1921; renamed “Small War Operations” in 1935; then renamed the “Small Wars Manual” in the 1940 revision, the title by which it is known today.)

Many Marines enjoyed being deployed to Central and South America. They lived like kings while serving in exotic lands—or what Americans perceived to be exotic lands; the reality never seemed to live up to the fantasy. Fighting natives in the jungle promoted a swashbuckling image of Marines and was an inducement to young men who sought adventure. The Banana Wars provided great leadership opportunities for junior officers who would patrol for days with their only contact with higher headquarters being a radio carried on a pack animal that had to be assembled at the end of each day’s patrol. Marine officers had real-world opportunities to employ small unit tactics against the local insurgents; gaining experience that only comes with actual combat. According to one of his biographers, the legendary Lewis B. “Chesty” Puller looked back on his experience serving in Haiti in late 1919 and the early 1920s, as a watershed moment in his career:

“It was not until years later that Puller realized the full richness of his Haitian

experience, and the value of its lessons in soldiering and hand-to-hand combat—he had fought 40 actions,” writes Burke Davis in “Marine! The Life of Chesty Puller.”

“He had not only been bloodied; the guerrilla combat had been almost continuous, most of it introduced by ambush on the trail. Puller had stood up well under this strain, and had come to trust his own physical prowess and ability to lead men under fire. He had discovered that native troops could become superb soldiers. He had developed his instinctive talent for using terrain in battle, and learned the lessons of jungle fighting ... Despite his youth, he was one of the most seasoned combat officers in the Corps.”

The greatest and most senior champion for continuing to emphasize the colonial infantry role in the Marine Corps was an Old Corps legend—Brigadier General Smedley “Old Gimlet Eye” Butler. Butler owed his career advancement as much to his father, the highly influential Senator Thomas Butler, Chairman of the House Naval Affairs Committee, as much as to his service as a Marine fighting in the Banana Wars at Guantanamo Bay, the Philippines (three times), China, the Panamanian Isthmus, Nicaragua, Veracruz, Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

“[A] highly decorated Marine officer



LEATHERNECK FILE PHOTO

BGen Smedley “Old Gimlet Eye” Butler advocated for continuing the colonial infantry role in the Marine Corps.

Lejeune also “defined the relationship between officers and their men as ‘that of teacher and scholar’” and “promoted the Corps as an institution that uplifted young men’s lives mentally, physically, and morally.”



Marine Corps sergeants circa 1921. Continuous reforms allowed for Marines to learn trades and strengthen the relationships between officers and enlisted Marines. (USMC photo)

with little formal education beyond high school, [Butler] had won two Medals of Honor and believed in the egalitarian warrior ideal. Butler supported the [Corps’] old mission, was ambivalent about the amphibious mission, and believed that the Marine Corps performed better when separated from the Navy,” according to “The Greatest of All Leathernecks.”

The difference in Lejeune’s outlook and Butler’s is the result of their different experiences as senior officers. Like practically every other Marine, Lejeune fought in the Banana Wars, but he commanded a brigade and then a division in conventional, high-intensity combat on the Western Front. Butler’s career was in essence, from the beginning to the end, fighting in the Banana Wars except for deploying to France with the 13th Marines and then commanding the personnel depot at Brest at the very end of World War I. Butler’s focus was on the Marine Corps’ celebrated past that was going away and Lejeune’s focus was on positioning the Marine Corps for the future. If that was not enough, Butler who “believed that the Marine Corps performed better when separated from the Navy,” would have had trouble working in harness with the Navy to seize and defend advance bases where coordination between the two services was crucial. (Author’s note: Butler would later write “*War is a Racket*,” a book that repudiated his service in the Banana Wars.)

Fortunately, Butler was sidelined in the middle of Lejeune’s tenure as Commandant when Butler temporarily left active-duty service to be the director of the department of Public Safety for Philadelphia. While Butler wasn’t the only Marine who opposed Lejeune’s desire to move away from the colonial infantry role, he was the most senior and vocal. With him out of the way, Lejeune’s reforms could move forward unimpeded.

Lejeune’s Reforms

There are numerous things Lejeune did to improve conditions in the Marine Corps and, as Simon says, “to make the Marine Corps the most efficient military organization in the world.” Lejeune provided enlisted Marines with opportunities to learn a trade through vocational programs; reorganized recruiting service to ensure the Marine Corps was enlisting only the highest quality recruits, and worked diligently to economize and cut costs, earning Lejeune goodwill with Congress. Lejeune also “defined the relationship between officers and their men as ‘that of teacher and scholar’” and “promoted the Corps as an institution that uplifted young men’s lives mentally, physically, and morally.”

Several of Lejeune’s reforms directly led to the Marine Corps developing into the amphibious assault force it became after his tenure. While Lejeune did not remake the Marine Corps into the amphibious assault force that would become its hallmark, he laid the groundwork for that to be the case.

Advanced Base Force Becomes Marine Expeditionary Force

Perhaps the most important of Lejeune’s reforms was to rename the Advanced Base Force (ABF) the Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF). (Author’s note: In this context, “Marine Expeditionary Force” is a term meaning the available Marine forces on either the East and West Coasts available for deployment [one MEF on each coast]; not what Marines today know as an MEF.) As Simon writes in “The Greatest of All Leathernecks,” “ABF operations [were] of a defensive nature” and authors Jetek Isely and Philip Crowl state in “The U.S. Marines and Amphibious War” that

“The advance-base force was in actuality little more than an embryo coastal artillery unit.” According to author Joseph Alexander in his book “Storm Landings: Epic Amphibious Battles in the Central Pacific,” the name change speaks to the offensive and more comprehensive mission of providing the fleet with “specially trained and equipped amphibious forces able to fight their way ashore.” “As of 1925 [a MEF] consisted of infantry, artillery, auxiliary troops such as engineers, signal, gas, tank and aviation units, all of them equipped and trained for service with the fleet.”

According to historian Alexander, Lejeune lobbied hard for the Navy to integrate the new MEF into the fleet.

“Lejeune understood that the future of the Marine Corps lay with the Navy and worked diligently to bring the Navy and Marine Corps closer together ... Lejeune recommended to the Navy that the MEF become an integral part of the fleet, convinced the special board of policy of the Navy’s General Board that the MEF was essential to the fleet for conducting ship-to-shore operations, updated the pamphlet *Joint Action of the Army and Navy* (1927) to officially establish the [Corps’] role as the first to seize advanced bases in amphibious operations. . . .

“Again in 1926, Lejeune recommended that the MEF become a part of the fleet. He wrote to the CNO that ‘in order to clarify terminology, it is recommended that the Marine Expeditionary Force or Advanced Base Force,’ which would serve with the fleet ... be designated, ‘Marine Corps Force, U.S. Fleet.’ ” Unfortunately, at this time the Navy was not prepared to recognize the MEF as part of the fleet.

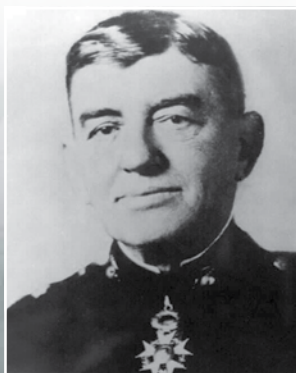
“While Lejeune had only limited success in converting the Navy to his viewpoint, he succeeded in inspiring younger progressive leaders in the Marine Corps and Navy as to the importance of the new mission, a challenge that motivated these men to adopt and refine the mission of amphibious assault in the 1930s and 1940s.”

The MEF was the precursor to the Fleet Marine Force (FMF) and the transitional step between the defensive-oriented ABF and the offensive-oriented FMF capable of amphibious assaults against the most strongly fortified positions in World War II.

Marine Corps Schools

If the MEF provided the intermediate force structure step between the ABF and the FMF, Marine Corps Schools (MCS), established by Lejeune in 1921, would be the institution most responsible for providing the intellectual underpinning for the Marine Corps’ ability to assume the amphibious assault role as its own. According to Alexander, “one of Lejeune’s greatest and most enduring contributions to the Corps was the establishment of the MCS. As Commandant, Lejeune saw a great need for more in-depth military training for officers in order to modernize the Corps ... Based on his own experience, Lejeune knew that the average Marine officer received minimal formal military training.

However, in the beginning, MCS did not focus on amphibious warfare. According to Alexander, Lejeune’s “original intent in developing the MCS in the early 1920s was to utilize his experiences in the world war to teach new officers and recruits



USMC

MajGen John A. Lejeune

“Lejeune understood that the future of the Marine Corps lay with the Navy and worked diligently to bring the Navy and Marine Corps closer together ... Lejeune recommended to the Navy that the MEF become an integral part of the fleet ...”



An amphibious tractor heads for the beach on Tinian, July 1944. Lejeune’s focus on amphibious assault helped set the Corps on the path to becoming a premier amphibious force. (USMC photo)



USMC

A group of Marine officers confer, circa 1919. Marine Corps Schools developed by MajGen Lejeune in the 1920s taught new officers how to fight modern wars with a combined arms approach.

war.” But after Marine officers learned the basics of combined arms on land, the MCS would transition to focusing on the amphibious assault.

“Lessons learned from the study of Gallipoli became part of the Marine Corps—Navy maneuvers of 1924 and 1925. In the early 1930s, Brigadier General James C. Breckinridge, head of the MCS, significantly increased the study of the failed Dardanelles operations. The Gallipoli amphibious disaster became a key part in the study of landing operations and helped develop the landmark “Tentative Landing Manual” of 1934.”

Usually, the establishment of the MEF in 1933 and the publication of “Tentative Landing Operations Manual” in 1934, are considered separate events. But there was a relationship between them that is often overlooked. Colonel Robert D. Heintz Jr., USMC (Ret) says it best in his essay “The U.S. Marine Corps: Author of Modern Amphibious Warfare” in “amphibious thinkers produced the Fleet Marine Force; this unique unit in turn gave body and substance to the doctrinal theories of its creators; and the interaction of the two combined in substantial measure to make possible the victorious beachheads of World War Two.”

infantry tactics and how to fight a modern war using a combined-arms approach. This approach stressed greater firepower by combining infantry, artillery, tanks, and aircraft in the attack against a powerful enemy. Although this focus remained until the mid-1920s, it later became clear that Lejeune wanted to use the combined-arms approach for amphibious operations.”

As stated in “The Greatest of All Leathernecks” by Simon, the original focus of MCS was to teach “how to fight a modern

Other Reforms

There were three other reforms Lejeune did that still serve the Marine Corps today. According to Simon, based upon Lejeune’s experience in command of the Army’s 2nd Division in France, he adopted the French Army’s G-1/G-2/G-3/G-4 staff system



To learn more, contribute or volunteer, visit www.thetun.org



The Tun Tavern Legacy Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose mission is to rebuild and re-establish The Tun. The foundation needs to raise **\$19 million** to complete the project. When completed, it will serve as a functioning tavern reminiscent of the colonial Philadelphia mariners’ tavern that it was, serving period-influenced refreshments, food, and entertainment and offering an educational experience through exhibits, historical documents, and special events. The new location will be approximately 250 yards from the original site, in the heart of Philadelphia’s “Old City” district.

Many organizations whose history began at The Tun, such as the United States Marines (1775), Pennsylvania, Freemasons (1731), St. Andrew’s Society (1747), Society of St. George (1729), The Friendly, Sons of St. Patrick (1771), United States Navy (1775) are involved in reestablishing The Tun in Philadelphia to support veteran causes, Shriner’s Hospitals, educational scholarships, and qualified charities. **The Tun™ is scheduled to open in November 2025**, coinciding with the Navy and Marine Corps 250th Homecoming Celebration in Philadelphia. A groundbreaking ceremony is planned for November 2024.



USMC

Above: Marines come ashore after landing on Tinian in 1944.

MajGen Lejeune and BGen Dion Williams visit with Civil War veterans (below) at a 1924 reenactment of the Battle of Antietam, Sharpsburg, Md. The Marine Corps' Civil War battle reenactments (bottom) conducted in the 1920s supported colonial infantry training methods, which differed from Lejeune's vision of an amphibious assault force.



COURTESY OF LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



USMC

Perhaps Lejeune's greatest strength was his ability to anticipate future conflicts and prepare the corps to successfully deal with them—specifically, a likely war in the Pacific.

for “independent field commands of brigade size or larger” streamlining and making staff functions more efficient.

Second, Simon writes that “Lejeune pioneered the modern use of air power in the Caribbean occupations . . . For the first time, Marine aircraft provided direct air support to small infantry units on the ground fighting rebels in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua.” Lastly, the Butler-directed reenactments of Civil War battles in the early 1920s, would on the face of it, be nothing more than “a reproduction in pageantry form of the Civil War battle at that place, as little would be gained by either officers or men as regards lessons of a military nature.” While true to a greater or lesser extent, especially early on, Lejeune saw these reenactments as valuable training opportunities. They got the Marines into the field under wartime conditions and tested equipment “under service conditions.”

Conclusion

During his nine-year tenure as Major General Commandant, Lejeune did not transform the Marine Corps from a colonial infantry force into an amphibious assault force. Lejeune set

the Corps on the trajectory to becoming the world's premier amphibious force by moving the Marine Corps' focus away from the colonial infantry role; changing the name of the ABF to MEF and expanding its focus; and establishing MCS, which would in a few short years after Lejeune's tenure, write the “Tentative Landing Operations Manual.”

As Simon writes in “The Greatest Leatherneck of All”: “Lejeune's greatest legacy to the Marine Corps of the 1930s—and even to the Corps of today—was his capability as a strategic leader in providing direction, purpose, and identity. Lejeune could envision the near future and . . . [could] convince the Navy Department and the Joint Army and Navy Board that his vision for the Marine Corps was realistic. Lejeune established for the Marines “their own separate and very distinct culture and identity.” Perhaps Lejeune's greatest strength was his ability to anticipate future conflicts and prepare

the corps to successfully deal with them—specifically, a likely war in the Pacific. Lejeune made the visionary decisions that changed the culture of the Marine Corps and laid the foundation for the development of amphibious warfare that established the standards realized during World War II and after.”

Major General Commandant John Archer Lejeune was indeed, “The Greatest of all Leathernecks.”

Author's bio: Maj Skip Crawley, USMCR (Ret), was an infantry officer in 1st Battalion, 7th Marines during Desert Shield/Desert Storm. He has had numerous book reviews published in Marine Corps Gazette. This is his first article for Leatherneck.

LEATHERNECK

MAGAZINE OF THE MARINES

WRITING CONTEST OPEN TO ALL MARINES

PRIZES:

1st Place: \$1,000 + an engraved plaque

2nd Place: \$750 + an engraved plaque

3rd Place: \$500 + an engraved plaque

TOPIC:

Leadership – The history of the Corps is filled with legendary examples of outstanding leaders and today's Marines maintain that tradition of excellence. Drawing from our storied history, or from your own experience:

Describe the single most important thing you have learned about leading Marines, or Describe an outstanding Marine Corps leader and what makes him or her successful

DETAILS:

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

SUBMISSIONS ACCEPTED: 1 Jan - 31 March 2024



Sponsored By Colonel Charles Michaels, USMC (Ret)

Brothers In Arms



USMC

The Roebling Alligator tracked landing vehicles were used to move supplies ashore and through jungles during the Cape Gloucester campaign.

By Maj Allan C. Bevilacqua, USMC (Ret)

Editor's note: We elected to republish this 2007 story about amtracs in the Pacific as a companion to "A Leader Ahead of His Time: Lejeune Set the Stage for the Corps' Amphibious Excellence," on page 18 of this month's magazine. It was Lejeune's vision which set the stage for the Corps' role in the island hopping campaign during World War II.

Conventional wisdom holds that there is nothing heroic about war. War, it is said, is a mean, brutish business that reduces men to life at the animal level, concerned with nothing but the reality of killing or being killed. Poets and politicians may see it differently, but on the battlefield that is the only reality that counts. You live or you die; there is nothing else.

Strangely, though, every war is a war

of heroes. For the most part, heroes are just ordinary men, men like any of us, men caught up in that most extraordinary of circumstances that is war. In the midst of crushing, nerve-stretching stress and deadly combat, these ordinary men routinely perform incredible acts of heroism. Those acts are seen by the men who perform them as only what is necessary at the time.

On a Wednesday in mid-September

1942, three such ordinary men entered the Marine Corps Recruiting Station in Buffalo, N.Y., intent on becoming Marines. The brothers, Alfred, Paul and Leslie Hansen, were like thousands of other young men who were volunteering to serve their country in the most monumental war the world had ever seen. But why had they settled on the Marine Corps when the other armed services were equally eager for recruits?

The eldest, Alfred or "Al," believed America was going to need them. Why wait to be drafted? If they were going to have to fight, why not fight with the best? Why not join the Marines?

Younger brothers Paul and Leslie thought it over and nodded in assent. Twins, they were able to communicate

Marines landing on the beaches of the Pacific islands had to navigate through seemingly endless jungles and bottomless mud. The Alligators helped ease their movement through difficult terrain.



USMC

Leslie Hansen



USMC

Paul Hansen



USMC

without words; a look, a shrug, a nod would do the job.

It had always been that way with them. Even for twins they were uncommonly close, thinking alike, doing everything together. They played sports together, worked together at after-school and summer jobs, pulled down near-identical grades in school. The two brothers were inseparable. But there was nothing about them to suggest that on a scarcely known Pacific island, Paul and Leslie Hansen would write a page in the Marine Corps' annals of courage that has never been equaled.

First there was Parris Island that along with San Diego was bulging at the seams with a flood of recruits who would eventually swell the ranks of the Marine Corps to a half-million men. In the compressed and accelerated boot camp of the day, there was precious little time to speculate on what the future might hold. There was only the unrelenting dawn-to-dusk training regimen that ate up every minute of the day. Almost as quickly as boot camp began, it was over, and the Hansen brothers were off to their next stage of training.

That was in the unlikely place of

Dunedin on Florida's Gulf Coast. Why Dunedin? That was where Donald Roebling and the Food Machinery Company were.

Donald Roebling was the grandson of Washington Roebling, builder of the Brooklyn Bridge and heir to the immense fortune of the Roebling Wire Rope Company. Its braided steel cable products held

up most of the suspension bridges in America. It would have been easy to think of him as a spoiled, lazy, ne'er-do-well rich boy. But he wasn't. It was just that nothing much interested Donald Roebling, nothing, that is, except anything mechanical.

The hugely overweight man was an inveterate tinkerer, fascinated by anything that had moving parts. With all the time in the world and a good chunk of the world's money, he had built a lavishly equipped machine shop on his large estate. There he could indulge himself to his heart's content in his fascination for taking things apart, finding out what made them work and putting them back together again. And in 1928, Donald Roebling had an idea that in time would save the lives of countless Marines.

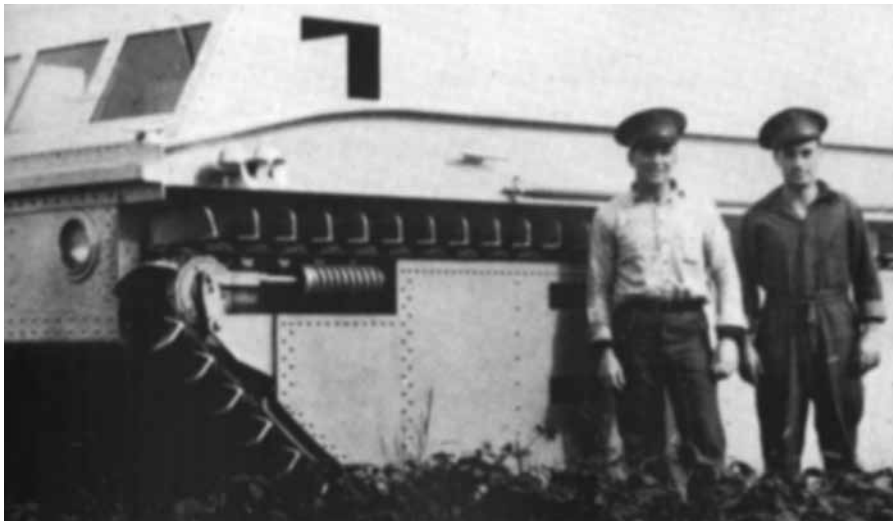
In the late summer of 1928, a huge hurricane went ashore on Florida's East Coast, picked up Lake Okeechobee and flung it in a mountainous wall of water across the Everglades. More than 2,000 people died, many of them before they knew what had happened. In the hurricane's aftermath, Roebling had become intrigued by the stories of failed rescue attempts. They had cost even more lives



COURTESY OF MARINE CORPS GAZETTE

Donald Roebling

Sgt Clarence H. Raper, right, and Cpl Walter L. Gibson, left, in front of Roebing's first Alligator. They assisted Capt Victor H. Krulak during tests of the LVTs at Quantico.



COURTESY OF MARINE CORPS GAZETTE



COURTESY OF NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND

An LVT-1 churns toward the shore at Cape Torokina, Bougainville, on the first day of landings, Nov. 1, 1943. The Hansen brothers, assigned to Co B, 1st Amphibian Tractor Bn, were at Cape Gloucester in the spring of the same year.

because there was no vehicle that could make its way through the tangle of the Everglades.

Donald Roebing had an active and inquisitive mind. What about something that could float like a boat, yet still make its way through mangrove roots and vegetation and over marshy hummocks that were too soft to walk on while at the same time too firm to swim in?

Roebing came up with something of a cross between a boat and a Caterpillar tractor he called an "alligator" for its ability to operate in the water or on land.

Still thinking of his invention as a rescue vehicle, Roebing soon found that actually making the things in any commercial volume was too big a job for his own machine shop.

That was where the Food Machinery Company (FMC) came into the picture. Makers of machinery for agricultural processing, irrigation and commercial food canning, FMC had a large plant nearby. Roebing made inquiries. Would FMC be interested in a contract to manufacture the hulls for his contraption while he himself fabricated the suspensions? Why

not? Donald Roebing started making Alligators.

By 1941, the Marine Corps had tested Roebing's odd-looking vehicle, found it ideal for amphibious operations and let a contract for hundreds of Alligators. Christened a Landing Vehicle, Tracked, LVT for short, Roebing's Alligator was designated as LVT-1 in the Marine Corps' inventory. Placed in newly formed amphibian tractor battalions, the Alligator soon lost its original name and came to be called at first an "amph-trac," then simply an "amtrac." It was the grandfather





A line of M4 Sherman medium tanks on a beachhead prepare to move forward into the "Green Inferno," the swamps and dense jungles near Cape Gloucester on Japanese-held New Britain.

USMC

of a long line of tracked amphibians that still are doing duty with the Marine Corps. The three Hansen brothers met the Alligator in its birthplace of Dunedin.

The training routine at Dunedin was only slightly less frantic than at Parris Island, S.C. True, there was liberty for what few attractions Dunedin offered, but for the most part there was the continuous daily round of lecture, demonstration and application. The Hansen brothers learned the amtrac frontward, backward, upside down and inside out.

A brief leave at home in the spring

of 1943 was followed by a rail journey to the West Coast, then aboard a troop transport en route to the South Pacific and the war zone. The slow-moving convoy would make one stop at the island of New Caledonia, and there the three brothers would be parted. Alfred Hansen was among the new personnel assigned to the 3rd Marine Division and eventually to the division's 3rd Amphibian Tractor Battalion. The twins, Paul and Leslie, sailed to Australia, never knowing it was the last time they would see their older brother.

Short weeks after he landed on New Caledonia, Alfred Hansen was sent with an amtrac platoon to take part in the assault on the island of Rendova in the northern Solomons. Largely conducted by the Army's 43rd Infantry Division, supported by the 4th Marine Raider Bn and the 9th Defense Bn, the landing at Rendova was a steppingstone for a shore-to-shore attack against the Japanese on nearby New Georgia. On July 2, a heavy Japanese air raid that launched from Rabaul struck the American buildup on Rendova. Among the 62 Marines,



Marines guide a jeep through shallow water after unloading it from a landing craft. Cape Gloucester proved difficult to navigate due to heavy rainfall and the lack of roads and trails.

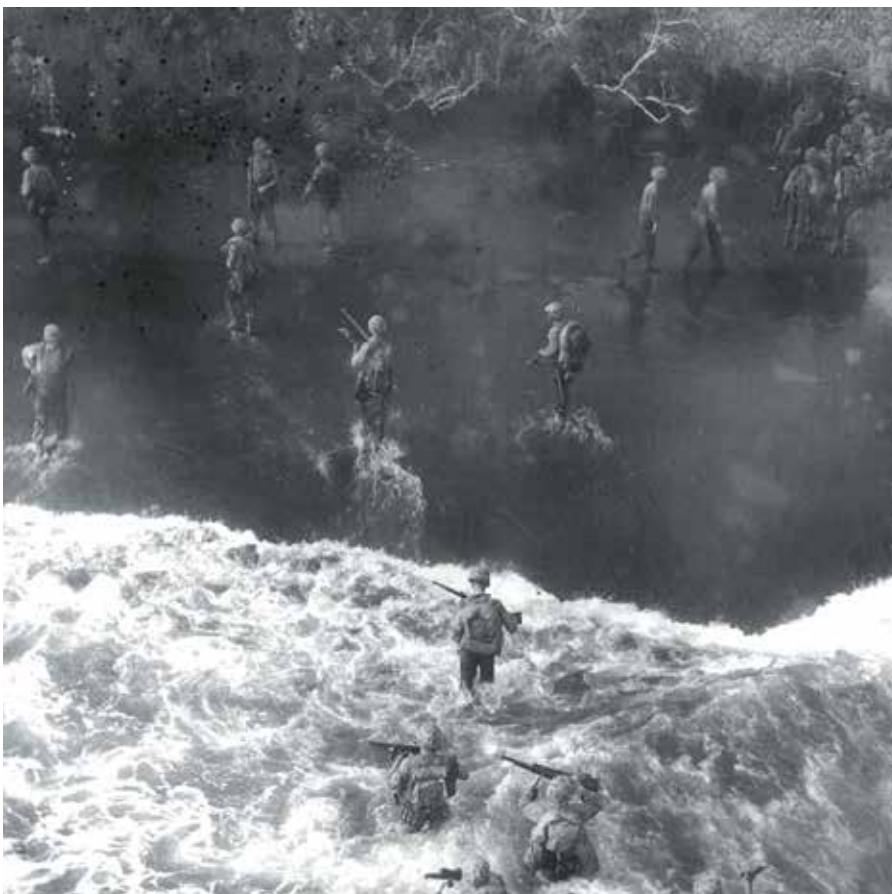
soldiers and Seabees killed that day was Corporal Alfred Hansen.

It would be weeks before a letter from home would inform Paul and Leslie Hansen of their brother Alfred's death on Rendova. By that time they would have joined the 1stMarDiv and been assigned to Company B, 1st Amphibian Tractor Bn. There would be scant time for mourning. Four months of intense fighting on Guadalcanal had reduced the proud 1stMarDiv to a ghost, shredded by 2,138 combat casualties and an incredible 5,601 Marines laid low by malaria. Replacements were melded into units as fast as they arrived, for there was a new operation on the horizon.

General Douglas MacArthur was about to begin his drive up the east coast of New Guinea. First, though, was the matter of the Japanese airfield at Cape Gloucester on the western tip of New Britain at the rear of MacArthur's position. Japanese bombers and torpedo planes launched from Cape Gloucester could seriously interfere with the New Guinea operation. The airfield had to be seized. The call went out for a division that was experienced both in fighting against the Japanese and in jungle conditions. In the entire South Pacific, there was one such division: the 1stMarDiv.

At Cape Gloucester the division would need every bit of its experience. In the entire Pacific War, it is unlikely there was a more inhospitable place to fight a battle. Cape Gloucester was a high impenetrable rain forest with a scanty road network and few trails, a place where the soaring temperature and suffocating humidity raced each other to see which could be first to reach the 100 mark. From late December (D-day was scheduled for Dec. 26, 1943) the northwest monsoon comes to New Britain, and for three months pummels the entire island with more rainfall than nearly anywhere on Earth.

In his excellent wartime history of the 1stMarDiv "The Old Breed," George McMillan wrote, "Put a fighting man down in a spot where the plant and animal life and the climate are as much or more of a menace to his existence than



As they arrived at Cape Gloucester on Dec. 26, 1943, Marines waded through 3 feet of water to get to the shore. The narrow beaches quickly blended into the island's jungle landscape.

the armed human opposite him, and the fighting man will feel he is the victim of an injustice.” That was Cape Gloucester.

Beyond that, as Paul and Leslie Hansen and their fellow Marines would find out, there was next to no beach at Cape Gloucester; where the water ended the jungle began. As one 1st Division Marine saw it, “If a tall man were to stretch out flat on his back with his head beneath the trees, his feet would be in the water.”

Immediately behind the landing “beach,” a narrow shelf of dry land supported the coastal track that led to the airfield. Beyond that strip of dry land lay an area identified on tactical maps as “Damp Flat.” It was in fact a tropical swamp forest that as one disgusted Marine put it was “damp right up to your neck.” Standing water and muck were hip-deep. Trees and underbrush of all kinds grew so densely as to reduce visibility to less than 10 yards.

That was the situation ashore at 8:30 a.m. on D-day when Colonel William J. Whaling’s 1st Marine Regiment landed at Yellow Beach on Cape Gloucester’s north shore, passed through the beach-head established earlier by Col Julian N. Frisbie’s 7th Marines and turned right to move against the airfield. Advancing along the coastal track—it was little more

than a wide footpath hemmed in by a dense growth of mature trees—the regiment’s lead elements ran immediately into stiff Japanese resistance.

Company K, 3rd Bn, 1st Marines, leading the assault on a very narrow front, found itself heavily engaged in a matter of minutes. The company commander, Captain Joseph A. Terzi, and the executive officer, Capt Phillip A. Wilheit, were killed in the first exchange of fire. Lieutenant Hoyt C. Duncan took command, as the Japanese, blazing away from a skillfully sited complex of log bunkers, fighting holes and trenches, poured a murderous barrage of fire along pre-selected fire lanes. Marines in the ranks of Co K found themselves with little to fire back at beyond a wall of vegetation. The advance ground to a halt.

Even as leathernecks dove for cover wherever they could find it, help from an unusual source was on the way. Paul Hansen, responding to a call for ammunition resupply from 1st Marines, had his amtrac smashing its way forward through the thick jungle growth, his brother Leslie and crew chief Sergeant Robert Osborn manning the bow machine guns.

With jungle growth pressing tightly in on both sides, Paul Hansen rammed his way relentlessly forward, more like a

bulldozer operator than an amtrac driver. Japanese fire seemed to be coming from every direction but straight up. A blizzard of bullets clanged off the amtrac’s hull, while a shower of tree limbs, cut down by the ferocity of the Japanese fire, fell into the troop and cargo compartment. Shot through the head, Osborn fell lifeless, leaving only Leslie Hansen to return fire.

It was then, at the worst possible moment, that the amtrac stopped dead in its tracks, wedged firmly between two trees at the edge of the trail. Instantly, Japanese defenders swarmed from their fighting positions in an attempt to physically overwhelm Paul and Leslie Hansen by sheer weight of numbers.

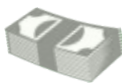
Paul Hansen refused to lose his head. Working fast, but under control, he attempted to rock the amtrac free from the grasp of the trees. When two Japanese soldiers clambered up onto the stalled vehicle’s front slope plate, he calmly drew his .45-caliber service pistol and shot each man. Then he returned to the task of breaking the amtrac free.

Up above, Leslie Hansen was no less busy. Painfully wounded in the hand, completely exposed and with total disregard for his own safety, he employed each of the bow machine guns and his own pistol to lay a withering fire on the



WAYS YOU CAN GIVE TO SUPPORT TODAY'S MARINES

Donate to the Marine Corps Association Today!
mca-marines.org/foundation



Make a **one time donation** to help the professional development of Marines.



Recurring Gifts - no matter the amount, monthly donations can make a lasting impact on our programs for Marines throughout the year.



Matching Gifts - Many employers will match or double their employees’ charitable contributions to organizations like the Marine Corps Association Foundation. Contact your human resources department to see if your company participates in an employee matching gift program.



Stocks/Securities - Donating stock or appreciated securities often results in a larger donation to a charitable organization as the gift is tax-deductible and there are no capital gains taxes to pay. *Consult your tax professional for tax advice on your gift.*



COURTESY OF NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND

Armed with M1 Garand rifles, M1 carbines and Thompson submachine guns, Marines wade ashore behind a bulldozer manned with a 105 mm gun.

Japanese attackers. When he wasn't occupied in that fashion, he took time out to fling Japanese hand grenades back from where they had come.

Leslie Hansen was joined in this improbable game of pitch-and-catch by a Marine whose name remains unknown to this day. Despite being already wounded, this unidentified Marine, who must have come from the ranks of K/3/1, scrambled up into the amtrac to join Leslie Hansen in hurling back grenades, which were now falling thick and fast. But more and more Japanese were joining in the attack, like ants pouring from a kicked anthill.

It was hand-to-hand fighting. The unknown Marine fell wounded again, leaving Leslie Hansen to face the Japanese onslaught alone. With pistol, Ka-Bar and bare fists, the younger of the Hansen twins shot, slashed and bartered at the Japanese who were now climbing over the sides of the amtrac. Locked in combat

with a pair of assailants, Leslie Hansen tumbled from the amtrac, falling to the ground where he died under a flurry of rifle butts and bayonets, still battling with his last breath.

As his brother died, Paul Hansen, with one final effort, wrenched the amtrac free from the embrace of the trees that had immobilized it. With a fighting spirit worthy of his brother, Paul Hansen sent his heavy amphibian lunging forward, crushing one Japanese bunker under its tracks and silencing the machine gun that had been firing from it. Setting his sights on another bunker, he pounded it into the ground, plowing forward to demolish yet a third. By the time it was over, Paul Hansen had accounted for, or been instrumental in, the deaths of 68 Japanese and the elimination of Japanese resistance, opening the way to the airfield.

For their actions at Cape Gloucester

on D-day, Dec. 26, 1943, Paul and Leslie Hansen each would be awarded the Navy's second highest award for military valor, the Navy Cross. Each of their citations would testify to their "indomitable fighting spirit and selfless devotion to duty." It would be the only time in the history of the award that it would be presented to twin brothers fighting side by side in the same combat action.

For Paul Hansen, the war was over. By order of the Commanding General, 1st Marine Division, Major General William H. Rupertus, Paul Hansen was ordered Stateside with the notation in his service record that he never again be sent into a combat zone. The loss of two sons, Rupertus felt, was enough of a sacrifice to ask of any mother. Paul Hansen spent the remainder of the war at Camp Lejeune, N.C., helping to prepare other Marines for combat. 🇺🇸

Leatherneck Laffs



"I wonder if these guys take any kind of anger management classes?"



"A pessimist blames the rifle. An optimist expects they will improve, but realists will adjust their sights."



PASSWORDS: BAMCIS 123 DEVIL DOG 1
SEMPERFI!2 FIELD DAY! USMC 10 NOV
CHESTY!1234 TAKE CHARGE MOONBEAM 1
OOHRAH 8999 0331 MA C 19 SGTMAJ
WEST PAC DESERTS GREEN 2019
3/5 1990 3/70 BLACK 2023

Proving Her Mettle:

Olympic Hopeful Goes Full Speed As Marine, Bobsledder

By Kipp Hanley

By the time Captain Riley Tejcek was 7 years old, her father, John, knew he was raising a tough kid.

Tejcek sported a Power Rangers watch at the time, and like many children her age, was learning how to ride a bicycle. After her first fall onto the pavement, Riley said something that left her dad incredulous.

“She looks at me and says, ‘Dad, would the Power Rangers quit?’ I’m not quitting,” John recalled. “She gets back up on her bike and says, ‘let’s go.’ I am laughing inside, and I’m like, ‘oh my God, what kind of reaction was that?’ ”

Two decades later, the 2021 Female Marine Athlete of the Year and U.S. national team bobsledder is using that determination to try and accomplish what no other active-duty female Marine has done: qualify for the U.S. Winter Olympics team. Capt Tejcek wants to show the next generation of leathernecks that it’s possible to use your athleticism, desire and skill for something bigger while still serving your country.

“Being the first in anything is cool, but I want to normalize that,” Tejcek said of her dream of qualifying for the 2026 Winter Games. “Every Marine is a tactical athlete. Every Marine is an athlete, period, in the way we train.”

While she is training for the Games, Tejcek hopes to use her charisma and success on the sled and turn it into a future billet with the Marine Corps Recruiting Command. Along the way, she hopes to inspire more females to become Marines—and eventually officers. Since donning the red, white and blue of Team USA, Tejcek has documented her life as an Olympic hopeful and as a Marine on social media. That includes producing a variety of short videos on Instagram, where she has garnered nearly 50,000 followers.

“I don’t know of a better example for



VIESTURS LACIS/IBSF

Capt Riley Tejcek, foreground, teamed with Jasmine Jones to place sixth in the 2021 International Bobsleigh & Skeleton Federation North American Cup at Park City, Utah in November 2021.

young females to emulate than Riley,” wrote Colonel Jason Graul, the deputy director of the Expeditionary Warfare School and Tejcek’s commanding officer at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va. “We are proud to have her in our ranks and serve beside her. She is serving her country, and we are excited to see her [possibly] represent our country in the Olympics.”

Toughness Taking Root

Growing up in suburban Indianapolis, Ind., Tejcek was not always the most talented kid on her athletic teams but worked extremely hard to achieve success in every sport she played, said John, who played minor league baseball. And Tejcek’s parents did their best to engender her competitive streak, whether it was

epic games of Uno with the family or weekly spelling tests.

Tejcek eventually earned a softball scholarship to George Washington University, helping the Colonials to their first-ever Atlantic-10 Conference title in 2019. At the same time she was scooping up ground balls, she was training to become a Marine through the Marine Corps Platoon Leaders Course program. It took meeting a Marine recruiter during her freshman year to consider a career in the Corps.

“I loved everything he had to say,” said Tejcek, whose grandfathers served in the Corps and Army, respectively. “I was like a kid in a candy shop, my eyes were wide open. [He said], you can be a leader. And not only that, you can be a female leader ... You can be part of the



COURTESY OF CAPT RILEY TEJCEK, USMC

“Being the first in anything is cool, but I want to normalize that,” Tejcek said of her dream of qualifying for the 2026 Winter Games. “Every Marine is a tactical athlete. Every Marine is an athlete, period, in the way we train.”



VIESTURS LACIS/IBSF

Above: Riley Tejcek qualified for the IBSF World Cup this month thanks to an impressive 2023-2024 season.

Left: Riley Tejcek was commissioned in 2019 and currently serves as a logistics officer at Expeditionary Warfare School at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va.



COURTESY OF CAPT RILEY TEJCEK, USMC

Above: Marines are “tactical athletes” according to Capt Tejcek, who changes up her training during the fall and winter months to meet the rigorous physical demands of competitive bobsledding.



COURTESY OF JOHN TEJCEK

Riley Tejcek participates in an OCS run in the summer of 2018 at Marine Corps Base Quantico after her junior year at George Washington University. Tejcek completed the Platoon Leaders Course while attending GW.

fewer, the prouder. You can do that and make a difference for people.”

And John saw his daughter’s toughness continue to blossom while she was in college. While the two were participating in a 13-mile overnight Go-Ruck event in Washington, D.C., John broke his ankle when he accidentally stepped in a hole in the sand near the Potomac River. Tejcek was leading her group and started crying when she saw her dad’s condition, knowing he couldn’t finish.

Her cadre of Marines saw her reaction and began questioning whether she had what it took to be in charge, said John. But she wiped the tears away and led her team to the finish line early that morning. Seeing her finish at the Pentagon was a relationship-changing moment for John and his daughter and a glimpse into what Tejcek would become as a Marine.

“She’s worn out to s--t but she’s still going,” John said. “... If that wasn’t the best analogy, [that] you don’t need your dad to push you or motivate you. You’re on your own. In fact, you’re motivating me now.”

After graduating from college, Tejcek was commissioned in 2019 and was assigned to Camp Pendleton as a logistics officer with Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 39, Marine Aircraft Group 39, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing. Like many of her peers, she was hoping to get deployed. However, her billet kept her out of any overseas action. And due to COVID-19 restrictions, she couldn’t satisfy her competitive urge by playing on the Marine Corps softball team.

“I said, ‘what am I waking up for? What am I training for?’” said Tejcek after learning she would not be deployed. “The PFT and CFT twice a year wasn’t enough for me, especially as a competitor.”

Meeting Olympic bobsledding medalist Elana Meyers Taylor, who also played softball at George Washington, quickly quelled Tejcek’s restlessness. Soon after-

wards, Tejcek made a tape of her athletic resume for the U.S. National Team selection committee. That led to a tryout in Colorado in the fall of 2020 as the pilot of a two-woman bobsled.

John volunteered to be her brakeman for her tryout since she didn’t have a partner yet. On her second trip down the course, they flipped the sled, leaving John bruised and a little wobbly. Instead of calling it quits, Tejcek found a new brakeman from the track crew assembled there and was able to complete her third and final run in flawless fashion, said John.

Living Her Dream

Once she made the U.S. team, Tejcek knew she needed to get stronger if she wanted to be successful on the international stage. When she first began training three years ago, Tejcek weighed just 150 pounds, significantly lighter than most of her counterparts. In order to muscle the nearly 300-pound sled, she bulks up 20 pounds each winter and then cuts weight in the spring to fulfill her PFT and CFT requirements as a Marine.

Tejcek also has to juggle her year-round commitments at Quantico in order to find time to train. That includes traveling up to Lake Placid, N.Y., for training and competition and flying across North America and Europe to compete in the International Bobsleigh & Skeleton Federation series.

Since the Marine Corps does not spon-

Pictured here with her father, who spent time playing minor league baseball, Riley Tejcek helped George Washington win an Atlantic-10 conference championship her senior season.



COURTESY OF JOHN TEJCEK

“I said, ‘what am I waking up for? What am I training for?’” said Tejcek after learning she would not be deployed. “The PFT and CFT twice a year wasn’t enough for me, especially as a competitor.”



COURTESY OF JOHN TEJCEK

Above: Riley Tejcek, pictured with her parents, was commissioned in 2019 after graduating from George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

Left: Riley Tejcek tried out for the U.S. National Bobsled team in 2020 with her father John, left, serving as her brakeman. (Photo courtesy of John Tejcek)



COURTESY OF CAPT RILEY TEJCEK, USMC

The Book on Bobsledding

Heavy lifting: Two-person bobsleds weigh a minimum of 284 pounds and need a manual push from both the brakeman and driver at the start of a race.

Need for speed: Some bobsleds can go faster than 90 miles an hour.

Steep descent: The grade at the Mt. Van Hoevenberg Olympic Bobsled Run at Lake Placid is nearly 10 percent. That is a 1-foot drop for every 10 feet traveled.

Going the distance: Courses can be up to a mile long.

Just missed: The difference between a gold medal and fourth place is often less than a second.



COURTESY OF JOHN TEJCEK

Last fall, Riley Tejcek was promoted to captain at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle, Va., (above) and is now doing her assigned duties at Expeditionary Warfare School, Marine Corps Base Quantico. She spends much of her free time promoting the Corps at base events (right) and across the nation.



LCPL JEFFERY STEVENS, USMC

sor prospective Olympic athletes, Tejcek is always looking for ways to pay for her training. In 2022, she was fortunate enough to come into some unexpected funding after landing a spot on the game-show “Lingo.” In typical Tejcek fashion, she and her mother, Ann-Marie, decided to take on the challenge, practicing for hours online from their respective homes. Their hard work paid off as they took home more than \$90,000 in prize money, which covered her training and travel costs for 2023. Last fall, she acquired a new sponsor AMETEK, an American-based international designer and manufacturer of electronic instruments and electromechanical devices.

“No organization in the United States is more revered for excellence than the United States Marine Corps and no competition has a more longstanding legacy than the Olympics,” said Jason Marshall, AMETEK Director of Business Development for its Fluid Analysis Companies. “As an organization who has demanded results for its investors for over 94 years, AMETEK couldn’t conceive of a more flesh-and-blood example of excellence than Riley Tejcek.”

Thanks to a successful 2023-2024 campaign, Tejcek has qualified for the two-woman bobsled competition in this month’s World Cup at the Mt. Van Hoevenberg Olympic Bobsled Run in Lake Placid. Last November, Tejcek finished third in the North American Cup event at Lake Placid with teammate Emily Renna and placed fourth at Park

City, Utah, a month later with teammate Macy Tarlton.

Tejcek has also found time in 2023 to stump for the Marine Corps. Last May, she participated in the WeCoach convention in Denver thanks to the Marine Corps Recruiting Command. MCRC formed a partnership with WeCoach in hopes that coaches from around the country can influence their athletes to join the Corps when their playing days are over. The partnership also encourages more inclusion in the military, including promoting more females into leadership positions.

“Our demographic, we aren’t hitting that mark,” Tejcek said. “We have women I’ve met in the Marine Corps that are some of the most solid people I have ever met. But I know that there are more. I know that we are not getting some of that talent. Personally, I don’t think these people know [about the Corps].”

In addition to her engagement with WeCoach, Tejcek spent some of her free time in Park City last December visiting with Marine poolees as well as at a Christian school where she and her teammate spoke about bobsledding

“We have women I’ve met in the Marine Corps that are some of the most solid people I have ever met. But I know that there are more. I know that we are not getting some of that talent. Personally, I don’t think these people know [about the Corps].”

and her Christian faith. A few weeks later, she served as the Grand Marshal of the Military Bowl, held annually in Annapolis, Md.

With more than two years until the Games, Tejcek recognizes a lot can happen that can get her off track. She has already fought through a foot fracture from overuse that left her unable to train

for three weeks last fall. She also knows her competitors will always have more time to devote to the sport because of her commitment to the Corps. But these are just obstacles, not excuses to quit, said Riley, who is writing a book entitled “If You Can Dream It, Be It.”

“The book is about a little girl with the task of figuring out what she wants to be when she grows up,” Tejcek said. “She interviews key people in her life, to include her grandfather who was a Marine, and is pressured from outside society to pick one career. In the end, she realizes you can do and be whatever you want, so she decides to be a Marine, professional athlete, pageant winner and author.”

“[Tejcek] has accomplished more in the past couple years than most will do in a lifetime,” said Col Graul. “She has done this on top of her normal assigned duties.”

Author’s bio: Kipp Hanley is the deputy editor for Leatherneck. The award-winning journalist has covered a variety of topics in his career including the military, government, education, business and sports. 🇺🇸

FieldLab 58M

EXPEDITIONARY FLUID ANALYSIS SYSTEM

Key Features

- Rugged design with battery power for on-site field use
- No solvents or chemicals required
- Complete oil analysis lab with 4 technologies integrated into a small case
 - X-Ray Fluorescence (XRF) spectrometer for elemental analysis
 - Filter Particle Quantifier (FPQ) pore blockage particle counter
 - Infrared (IR) spectrometer
 - Kinematic viscometer (40°C)
- Built-in intelligence, easy to read report with clear Observations, Diagnostics, and Recommended Actions.

Contact us now at www.Spectrosci.com





LCPL JUAN DIAZ, USMC

Above: Marines with Detachment Delta Company, 4th Law Enforcement Battalion, MARFORRES, prepare to load a KC-130J Super Hercules assigned to VMGR-152 at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, Dec. 4, 2023. Marines traveled to Alaska's Northwest Arctic Borough via snowmobile and aircraft to deliver toys to children in remote villages as a part of the Toys for Tots program.

Alaska Marines Deliver Toys To Northwest Arctic Borough

Marines with Detachment Delta, 4th Law Enforcement Battalion, Marine Forces Reserve, sorted and delivered thousands of toys throughout Alaska's Northwest Arctic Borough from Dec. 4-Dec. 20, 2023. Larger than the state of Indiana, Alaska's Northwest Arctic Borough boasts a population of 7,800 residents residing within 11 different communities, many of whom are Alaskan Natives. Infrastructure is extremely limited to the villages and towns of the borough, making airplanes the only means of travel available year-round.

Despite significant logistical challenges, the Alaska Marines, based out of Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in Anchorage, traveled hundreds of miles



LCPL JUAN DIAZ, USMC

SSgt Riley Stahl, left, administrative chief, and LCpl Jackson Gruber, right, administration specialist, both assigned to Detachment Delta Company, 4th Law Enforcement Battalion, MARFORRES, helped deliver toys to students at June Nelson Elementary School in Kotzebue, Alaska, on Dec. 6, 2023.

on snowmobiles to deliver toys to eagerly awaiting children. In total, more than 30,000 toys were collected, sorted and shipped throughout the state. More than 14,000 of those toys were distributed to remote areas of the state, such as the Northwest Arctic Borough.

As in previous years, the Marines'

challenging mission would not be possible without local guides. Locals like Robert Kirk of Noatak and Brad Rich of Kiana helped the Marines traverse dangerous terrain to ensure toys were delivered safely. The Toys for Tots mission also served as a training evolution for the Marines in operating in extreme cold

Col Damon K. Burrows, left, Commanding Officer of Headquarters Battalion, 2ndMarDiv, speaks about LCpl Elisabeth Tooke, center, and LCpl Hogan Tooke during an award ceremony at Camp Lejeune, N.C., on Dec. 18, 2023.

conditions. Leading up to their mission, they emphasized cold weather training to enhance their skills as subject matter experts in the region.

1stLt Gregory Dreibelbis, USMC

2ndMarDiv Marines Rescue Trapped Civilians from Vehicle

On the night of Nov. 17, 2023, while returning from a Marine Corps Birthday ball, two Marines helped free a trapped mother and son from a flipped car on the side of the road. Lance Corporal Hogan Tooke, a rifleman with 2nd Battalion, 8th Marines, 2nd Marine Division, and Lance Corporal Elisabeth Tooke, a satellite communications operator with Headquarters Battalion, 2ndMarDiv, left the ball in Wilmington, N.C., expecting to return to Camp Lejeune to spend time with friends. While driving back, the married couple noticed a flipped car. They pulled over and immediately jumped into action.

“When we stopped, we had no idea who it was, we didn’t know if it was a Marine or a civilian. I would hate to have that question of what could have happened if we didn’t stop. There was so much chaos, but we knew what we had to do,” explained Hogan.

Elisabeth dialed 9-1-1, while Hogan assessed the scene. He could hear screams of terror from inside the vehicle, its occupants begging for help. Noticing the smoke surrounding the vehicle, Hogan knew he had to act fast. He scanned the car and realized the sunroof was the safest option to get the mother and son out quickly. Hogan kicked in the sunroof and used a piece of broken glass to cut out the attached screen. After extracting the mother and son from the vehicle, Elisabeth and Hogan began to assess them for possible injuries. The mother was extremely distraught, screaming and panicking. Elisabeth helped keep her calm while they waited for authorities to arrive on scene.

“I think what made me stop was the fact that before the Marine Corps I was an EMT, so I knew I could help. It made me worried not seeing any EMS there already. We needed to make sure everyone was okay.”

For their actions, the Tookes were each awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal.

“You’re a Marine 24/7, and this inci-



LCPL EMMA GRAY, USMC

dent proved it to me. It was messed up how many cars just passed by without stopping while we helped. No one expects their night to go that way, but we were ready,” said Hogan.

LCpl Emma Gray, USMC

Increasing Survivability with Expeditionary Medical Systems

Marine Corps Systems Command’s Expeditionary Medical Systems team is at the forefront of a pivotal shift, working tirelessly to increase the warfighter’s battlefield survivability.

“The Expeditionary Medical Team handles Class VIIIA medical supplies and equipment,” Navy Captain Janine Espinal, EMS team lead and senior medical logistician, recently explained. “We support Role 1 and Role 2 capabilities, which encompass a range of medical services such as battlefield surgery, trauma care, resuscitation, and a full spectrum of other medical capabilities available in the field. Our team is focusing on prolonged casualty care, which involves keeping patients stable for potentially days in contested areas while awaiting medical evacuation. Our efforts include enhancing our medical capabilities to be more scalable and agile, particularly in staging patients and providing necessary health support amid Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations, or EABO.”

Key to this effort are the Damage Con-

trol Resuscitation, or DCR, and Damage Control Surgery (DCS) capabilities. These lifesaving systems are the latest additions to the family of field medical equipment, tailored for Marines and Sailors engaged in EABO—a strategic doctrine that involves establishing temporary, agile forward bases that support naval operations, missile defense, and other critical functions.

Within this context, DCR/DCS capabilities are notable for their compact, modular design, which not only makes them lighter and more agile, but also enables smaller medical teams to provide essential care close to the front lines in contested areas. As a crucial component of Role 2 casualty care, these sets enable effective medical support with fewer personnel.

As noted by Mark Urrutic, EMS senior project officer and subject matter expert, “We’ve developed a modular medical kit for small, agile teams, crucial for distributed maritime operations. It enables a 10-person team to simultaneously treat surgical and non-surgical patients. Designed for rapid deployment and management, this kit supports teams in isolated environments, equipping them to sustain patients longer in contested areas where evacuation is challenging.”

The team’s focus on adaptability and rapid response is not just theoretical, but rigorously tested and refined through

MCSC's Portable Patient Transport Life Support System is an advanced medical device capable of generating its own oxygen, providing ventilation for both pediatric and adult patients, offering comprehensive physiological monitoring, and featuring integrated suction capabilities. This all-in-one solution ensures continuous critical care during patient transport in contested areas.

comprehensive experimentation, war-gaming and exercises. These activities enable the team to employ a data-driven approach, integrating insights and feedback from Marines directly engaged in field operations, thereby ensuring the capability evolves in alignment with empirical evidence and real-world demands.

In partnership with the Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory, or MCWL, the team is participating in crucial exercises, including Valiant Shield in Hawaii, Global Medic at Fort McCoy, Wis. and Resolute Dragon in Okinawa, Japan. These exercises are essential in testing and evaluating the capabilities of our DCR/DCS sets, thereby enhancing the readiness and effectiveness of medical systems in various operational environments.

The EMS team, in collaboration with Marine Corps Combat Development and Integration, is diligently working on introducing three new capabilities, with



JOHANNES SCHMIDT

the aim of securing funding and potential fielding in fiscal year 2026.

The first capability, known as “patient staging and holding,” is purpose-built for rapid deployment in expeditionary environments. Its primary function is to provide a staging area for casualties awaiting movement either back to CONUS or to nearby Role 3 facilities.

The second capability, “role one enhanced,” is specifically designed to bolster the support for corpsmen stationed in forward field positions. These highly trained corpsmen are responsible for delivering critical trauma care in situations where advanced medical providers are not available.

Finally, the third capability, “role two enhanced,” is geared toward the consolidation of casualties from various forward battalion aid stations and DCR/DCS teams. This strategic consolidation facilitates follow-on surgical care and further streamlines the entire medical support process.

Together, these efforts are part of a broader strategy to enhance the Marines’ ability to operate in smaller, more independent units, aligning with the overarching objectives of Force Design.

Johannes Schmidt,
Marine Corps Systems Command



CPL MARY KOHLMANN, USMC

U.S. Navy Sailors deployed with CLB-6, CLR-2, 2nd MLG, render medical care to simulated casualties in a Finnish landing craft during a casualty evacuation exercise in Hästö Busö, Finland, on Nov. 18, 2023. The exercise underscored the readiness of CLB-6 to conduct tactical evacuation operations in the extreme cold weather environment and provide scalable, agile, and responsive Damage Control Resuscitation and Role I medical support in challenging scenarios.

A Rare Presentation of the Eagle, Globe and Anchor

On Dec. 9, 2023, Private First Class Morgan Mathews was awarded her eagle, globe and anchor from her husband and recruiter, Staff Sergeant Charles Mathews. The emblem ceremony is one of the most important events in any Marine's life, and rarely is there an opportunity for a spouse to present a new Marine with the eagle, globe and anchor.

"It was an emotional moment, there were no words ... everything that could have been said was said in the hug," said PFC Mathews.

"It was a lot more emotional than I thought it was going to be," said SSgt Mathews. "I'm not the type to tear up," SSgt Mathews said, adding that he was happy to be the one to present his wife with the emblem.

PFC Mathews had hoped that because her husband was an active-duty Marine, as well as a recruiter, he would be able to present her with the eagle, globe and anchor. However, she could not see him when she marched onto the parade deck for the ceremony. The couple have a 2-year-old daughter and PFC Mathews assumed her husband was unable to attend because he was taking care of their child.

Unbeknownst to Morgan, Charles was planning to surprise her and hid behind the stands. As the ceremony began, the company first sergeant gave a short speech, and the drill instructors began presenting the new Marines with their emblems. Charles came out of his hiding place and walked with them to Morgan.

The couple had a very tearful reunion when Charles stepped in front of Morgan to present her EGA.

"Congratulations Marine, I'm proud of you," GySgt Mathews said to his wife.

Maintaining a relationship during recruit training can be an extremely difficult task, and like all other recruits, the Mathews' only way to communicate was through letters.

"It was great, I loved hearing from my wife because that's the only communication you get while at recruit training," said Charles.

For Morgan, getting letters from her husband was one of the most challenging parts of recruit training. Charles would, from time to time, send her photos of their daughter; a stark reminder for Morgan of the time she is sacrificing to better herself and join the Marines.

"Seeing her getting taller, hearing that she's saying new words, and doing new things was hard," said Morgan.

When viewing these photos and reading these letters, Morgan had to remind



LCPL WILLIAM HORSELY, USMC

In a ceremony at MCRD Parris Island, PFC Morgan Mathews received her eagle, globe and anchor from her husband, SSgt Charles Mathews on Dec. 9, 2023.



LCPL WILLIAM HORSELY, USMC

herself that she is here to better her life not just for herself, but for her family. She took inspiration to enlist from her husband.

"He's always been that Marine who took initiative," said Morgan. "If there is ever anyone struggling with something at work, there is no doubt he'll help them with it."

Morgan said none of her previous jobs provided her with the fulfillment she was looking for.

"It felt like I didn't have any forward momentum, with the nine-to-five life you don't really feel fulfilled," said Morgan.

Constantly being around the Marines that Charles worked with, Morgan felt she fit in better with them rather than the other spouses. When Charles began recruiting duty, Morgan decided to talk

to him about enlisting in the military. He was very supportive and was willing to help her. However, she found out shortly thereafter that she was pregnant, so the two decided to wait until their daughter was a little older. When their daughter was six months old, they revisited the idea and began the lengthy process of enlisting.

For Morgan, the ultimate reason she wanted to join was the impact that her husband had on her. Constantly being around the Marines really left a mark and really showed her what the Marines stood for.

"That's where I'm meant to be," she said. "I feel like I can make a change in my life there."

LCpl William Horsley, USMC



Ocean Pines, Md.



ED PINTO



ED PINTO

First State Detachment Honors Oldest and Youngest Marines at Birthday Ball

Around the world every year on Nov. 10, active-duty Marines and members of Marine Corps veteran associations gather to celebrate the birthday of the founding of the Marine Corps. Along with that tradition is another: serving the first slices of the birthday cake to the oldest and youngest Marines in attendance.

The tradition of celebrating the Marine Corps Birthday and serving the first slices of cake to the oldest and youngest Marines in attendance was upheld by the First State Detachment of the

Marine Corps League in November 2023 when it held its celebration at the Ocean Pines Yacht Club. The first two slices were presented to 97-year-old local Marine veteran Morris Semiatin, a World War II Purple Heart recipient, and to 18-year-old Private First Class Jason Harney. Harney is temporarily assigned to the USMC recruiting station in Salisbury while waiting for a slot to open in a Marine Corps school.

Submitted by: Ed Pinto

Quantico, Va.

Third-Generation Marine Continues Family Legacy

On Nov. 18, 2023, Colonel Timothy S. Mundy, USMC (Ret) had the privilege to swear in his son, Second Lieutenant David J. Mundy. David chose to earn the title "Marine" for his own reasons, but in doing so added to a remarkable family legacy. David's mother and father pinned a pair of second lieutenant bars on David's shoulders that were worn by his grandfather, the 30th Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Carl E. Mundy Jr. when he was a lieutenant in 1957. Those same bars were also used to commission David's father and his uncle, Lieutenant General Carl E. Mundy III, USMC (Ret).

Additionally, the newly commissioned 2ndLt Mundy was presented with his grandfather's officer sword.

Submitted by: Col Tim Mundy, USMC (Ret)



COL TIM MUNDY, USMC (RET)

Flowery Branch, Ga.

Youth Earns the Title of Honorary Marine

Since childhood, Jack Lowe always envisioned a future serving in the military. His great grandfather was a pilot in the Marine Corps. His grandfather served in the Navy during the Vietnam War. Both of his parents served in the Marine Corps. So, naturally, Jack planned to join the USMC upon graduating high school. However, in March 2022, as a junior in high school, Jack received devastating news—he was diagnosed with Ewing Sarcoma, a rare form of bone cancer.

In the weeks following his diagnosis, Jack received 36 proton radiation treatments while concurrently completing six months of in-patient chemotherapy. Within six months of his diagnosis, Jack was deemed cancer free. Regrettably, in August 2023, doctors discovered the cancer had returned and spread to his upper body. They immediately started Jack on six weeks of experimental chemotherapy. However, the cancer aggressively grew and spread to other places in his body. Further testing revealed the cancer to be chemotherapy resistant and his oncology team has declared him terminal with only a short window of life. Jack asked his family to stop treatment because he was tired of being “poked and prodded.”

Following his terminal diagnosis, many of Jack’s friends and family begin reaching out to see if they could make his dream of becoming a U.S. Marine a reality. The Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Eric Smith, received the request and approved Jack for the title of Honorary Marine.

On Nov. 1, 2023, Jack was designated an Honorary Marine at his home in Flowery Branch, Ga., by Brigadier General Walker Field, Commanding General of Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island and the Eastern Recruiting Region.



SGT WARREN SMITH, USMC

With Marines and family in attendance, Field removed his eagle, globe and anchor from his uniform and handed it to Jack’s father Daniel, a retired Marine. Daniel awarded the emblem to his son. During the ceremony, Field praised Jack for his resiliency.

“Our greatest weapon is the fighting spirit found in each and every Marine,” he said. “Throughout this very challenging time, Jack has displayed a tenacious fight underpinned by steady resolve and a wry, witty sense of humor. Henceforth, we as Marines embrace him as one of our own.”

Submitted by: CWO Bobby Yarbrough, USMC

Editor’s note: Just as we were going to press with this issue, we learned the sad news that Jack Lowe died. Leatherneck and the Marine Corps Association send our condolences to his family.



SGT WARREN SMITH, USMC

BGen Walker M. Field, Commanding General of MCRD Parris Island and Eastern Recruiting Region, presented Jack Lowe, center, with the eagle, globe and anchor and the title of “Honorary Marine” at the Lowe family residence on Nov. 1, 2023. Jack Lowe’s father, Daniel Lowe, left, is a Marine Corps veteran.



SGT WARREN SMITH, USMC

Jack Lowe hugs his mother, Alyssa Herb, also a Marine Corps veteran. Jack Lowe, who was diagnosed with terminal bone cancer, has a long family history of military service. Before his diagnosis, he had dreams of serving his country.

“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. 📷



A Furious Fight:

An Artillery Marine's Account of the Assault on Iwo Jima

By Andrew Biggio

Editor's note: The following story is an excerpt from the book "The Rifle 2: Back to the Battlefield" by Andrew Biggio. When Biggio returned from deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, he had questions about the cost of war, so he decided to ask those who knew the answer—World War II veterans. Marines like John Trezza, whose story we published here, told Biggio about the complexities of life after combat. The book can be purchased at <https://amzn.to/47IUNs2>. You can listen to a few in-depth conversations I had with Biggio on the Marine Corps Association podcast, "Scuttlebutt," www.mca-marines.org/scuttlebutt.

The sounds of explosions and distant gunfire were fierce. There was no such thing as a break during D-day on Iwo Jima, and since there was no rear echelon, the battle raged everywhere. The

call for fire missions was constant, but the men of "Fox" Battery, 2nd Battalion, 13th Marines, had no choice; they had to pause. "Our guns were red-hot. If we put another shell in through the cannon, we

risked killing our whole gun crew," John Trezza told me.

John Trezza stared at his 75mm howitzer. It was glowing red. You could have cooked hamburgers for the whole company on it. If another shell was placed into the artillery piece it could detonate. The Marines from his battery had just run a hundred shells through it in a short period of time. The Japanese had emplacements everywhere on Iwo. There was no end in sight to the calls for fire missions. They were facing an entrenched enemy estimated to be over 20,000 strong.

Casualty collection points and rendezvous areas developed behind the artillery



Left: Wrecked vehicles and fallen Marines lay scattered on the Iwo Jima shore. (USMC photo)

Below: Marines take shelter on the first terrace above the beach at Iwo Jima shortly after landing. (USMC photo)



“When it got to me I couldn’t look at it,” said John, as he sat on a couch 77 years later. He was still emotional about the Italian-American war hero from New Jersey who had been killed in action. The two had much in common. They were both Italians, both Jersey boys, both Marines, and most of all, both proud Americans. John Basilone was admired by the whole Marine Corps after his actions on Guadalcanal, actions which had earned him the Medal of Honor.

“Before we left Hawaii, I got the chance to meet him. We all looked up to him. He didn’t have to go back into combat. He had a ticket to stay home forever and sell war bonds. He wanted to be with the Marines and he died doing so,” John added. It was amazing to see the profound impact Gunnery Sergeant Basilone still had on his Marines nearly eight decades later. These Marines were not 18 years old anymore. Here was 96-year-old man still upset as he remembered the loss of a Marine Corps icon. This was deep admiration. No propaganda could accomplish this. Gunny Basilone was truly a legend.

Back on Iwo Jima, an 18-year-old John Trezza couldn’t look at his fallen hero’s empty pack. It would be admitting that Basilone was really gone, and that the Japanese could kill anyone. Yet John’s turmoil over seeing Basilone’s gear was

soon interrupted. It was time to start shelling again. The infantry depended on it.

John’s fatigues were powdery white, his uniform crusted by the salt from the ocean in which he had been submerged only hours before. His landing on the beach had been anything but pleasant. For all the Marines of the 5th Division, it had been hectic.

The entire 5th Marine Division was created for the purpose of taking Iwo Jima. It was the first time the Marine Corps developed such a unit with one island as its objective. John trained on Camp Tarawa in Hawaii for six months, then loaded onto the troop transport ship. It was there he met Medal of Honor recipient John Basilone. They and the other Marines aboard spent 38 days on the ship, heading generally west. After landing, the two would never meet again, yet John would never forget him. Iwo Jima affected the lives of all Marines who took part for generations to come.

After a long month of zigzagging through the Pacific, the 5thMarDiv anchored near the island of Saipan. The Marines took to the decks of the transport ships. “We would watch the B-29s take off to do their bombing runs. It seemed like there was one taking off every minute,” John said. This activity gave the Marines something to occupy their time,

units on Feb. 19, 1945, throughout the day. Wave after wave of Marines landed, and those who were supposed to be in reserve found themselves hitting the island midday on D-day instead of in the following days, as they’d initially supposed would occur.

Packs and supplies of those killed on the island began to pile up behind Fox Battery. Then one pack arrived that seemed to hush the sounds of distant gunfire as the Marines passed it around. Written in black ink on a piece of gear attached to the pack was the name “BASILONE.” The Marines of Fox Battery studied it in disbelief.

and the young men crowded the decks to view the mighty Army Air Corps fly away to strike Japan.

What they didn't yet know was that those same B-29s were most likely being used in an attempt to prevent the onslaught that lay ahead for the 5thMarDiv. But aerial carpet bombing of the volcanic island of Iwo Jima proved to be unsuccessful. Saying the Japanese were a "well-entrenched enemy" was an understatement. Their tunnels, caves, pillboxes, and artillery emplacements remained for the most part unscathed despite American bombing raids. Anything that could be moved was wheeled or pushed into a tunnel or cave. The only advantage the bombings gained for the invading Marines was to provide defilades for cover. Other than that, Iwo Jima was like every other island, a smoky flaming mess with thousands of Japanese soldiers at the ready.

After a few days the ships left Saipan, destined for their final stop: Iwo Jima. "It was Feb. 19, a Monday morning,

I'll never forget it," John said, shaking his head.

Before the sun rose, Marines were pushing their way through chow lines in the ship's mess hall. It was noisy and hectic, and adrenaline was high. The first waves of Marines made their way to the bottoms of their ships. The ship carrying John's unit was an LCT (landing craft tank). Stored inside the ship's hull were amphibious tracs and DUKW (pronounced "duck") boats that could be launched from the bow once the ramp opened. Overhead, fighter planes soared, providing covering fire for the first waves of Marines heading for the beach. The landing crafts and amphibious vehicles of this first wave chopped forward in the ocean until they reached the black sand.

"The first wave was unopposed. The Japanese wanted them to make their way inland to a certain point before opening up on them," John explained.

"Which wave were you?" I asked.

"Third wave," he replied. "All hell broke loose on the second wave."

It was John's turn to load onto the DUKW boat. "There were four of us. A Coast Guard guy was driving it," he recalled.

The DUKW is a boat with wheels extending underneath it. It does not travel fast on water, as John and the other Marines quickly found out.

John recalled the frightening ordeal. "We were drenched with water within minutes of leaving the ramp of the big ship. Mortar shells were landing on each side of us."

Landing crafts were also taking direct hits not far from John's DUKW. The ocean seemed to be crowded with burning, scuttled landing crafts. The immense enemy fire, now concentrated on the beach and ocean, was causing a traffic jam for incoming waves of troops. The Coast Guard skipper in charge of John's DUKW boat couldn't find a place to land on his designated area of the beach.

The beach was littered with vehicles and Marines. The pileup was proving to be deadly and prevented reinforcements

**A Marine's view while approaching Iwo Jima, February 1945.
Eighteen-year-old John Trezza fought on Iwo Jima with the
5th Marine Division.**





USMC

A discarded LVT sits abandoned on the shoreline. Marines disembarked and headed into battle once the boats hit the beach during the Battle of Iwo Jima in 1945.



USMC

An explosion of mortar fire shoots dirt and debris into the air. Trezza was among the third wave of Marines to push inland. (USMC photo)



Above: Marines haul an ammunition cart onto the beach during the Battle of Iwo Jima in 1945.

from coming ashore. The DUKW boats' skippers were all having trouble finding openings, and when they did they risked running over Marines already present and bogged down by enemy fire.

The Coast Guard skipper of John's DUKW boat had to work fast. He powered the boat to the far left of the designated area. "He led us right into a cove," John said.

The DUKW boat full of scared Marines made its way into the natural opening. As it pulled into the cove the Marines began to jump off the sides.

"I jumped off the back and nearly drowned." Unbeknownst to John, the water here was significantly over his head. In a sheer panic, he unslung his rifle from his body. His M1 Garand sank to the bottom of the ocean. Stripping himself of his gear, John rose to the surface, gasping for air. The DUKW boat was still within arm's reach.

"I grabbed hold of it and climbed back on," he recalled. The incident still left John feeling short of breath 77 years later.

John boarded the boat again. "I had



Troops and supplies pour onto the beach during the first day of the Battle of Iwo Jima in 1945. The large crowds of Marines made it difficult for incoming units to land. (USMC photo)

no helmet, no weapon, no nothing!” The DUKW boat spun about, trying to find a spot where John and the others could place their feet. The skipper was able to locate solid earth for John to step out on. John waited for the thumbs-up, then was off.

“I ran as fast as I could to the beach. When I looked up I saw a 300-foot cliff. ‘Should I go up there?’ I thought. ‘What’s on the other side?’ I figured I would go back to where I was supposed to land first, Red Beach One.”

John began to follow the beach farther down before making his advance inland. “I was running around bareback, with no equipment whatsoever!” John was practically shouting as he related this to me in his living room. The extreme circumstances of his landing had lost none of their shock value over the years.

Nervous and unarmed, John scurried along the black sand. “I got to Red Beach 1 and there was still no possible way to get in. I don’t know how all those guys got into that little pass,” John said. Red Beach 1 was blockaded with vehicles, bodies, and equipment. There was no way around it. “That’s when I decided to go to Red Beach 3.”

John ran further along the sand toward Red Beach 3. At this beach a weaponless John observed a set of makeshift stairs that ran along the cliffs. “They must have been built by the Japanese. There were a couple hundred stairs and they ran all the way up.” This pathway seemed the only way to link up with his unit. He began to crawl up the side of the stairs.

“All the way to the top there were dead Marines along the stairs. They were slumped over and all appeared to be shot through the head and face. They each had just a small trickle of blood running from between their eyes.”

The bodies of Marines who had attempted to ascend the stairs were scattered over the hillside. They were the victims of earlier waves, and John gazed at each one as he climbed around them, the lifeless bodies serving as markers the higher he climbed.

“Every one of those guys I saw dead” John had to pause. The memory of the fallen Marines still haunted him. “Every one of those guys, my heart went out to them.” Nearly 80 years later, the tears still came.

What happened when you got to the top of the stairs?” I asked.

“Then I found my outfit!” John said, a smile on his face. Reuniting with his field artillery battalion was obviously a much happier memory. “Right then and there I found my guys.”

Fox Battery was set up not far from



USMC

Amphibious tractors burn at the foot of Mount Suribachi on Iwo Jima. In the foreground sits a Marine 75 mm howitzer.



USMC

Artillery fire provided the infantry with protection against Japanese banzai charges.

the summit of the cliff John had climbed. Their guns had been dragged into position in the earlier two waves.

“The first man I saw was a forward observer from my battery, a lieutenant. I didn’t want him to know I didn’t have a rifle, so at this point I’m still trying to look for a weapon. I didn’t look long before we had our first fire mission.”

John’s attempt to arm himself would have to wait. The 75 mm howitzers were ready to fire.

“I lost count how many shells we fired. The forward observer was giving us coordinates all day, and at night we shot illumination rounds. By day two we were running out of ammunition.”

John’s battery was doing a historic job



USMC

Above: Marine casualties are carried away from the frontlines on Iwo Jima.

Right: Nearly 80 years later, John Trezza recalls his experience during the Battle of Iwo Jima. He's holding an M1 Garand that belongs to author Andrew Biggio and has been signed by nearly 400 World War II veterans. Biggio continues to collect the signatures of combat veterans and tell their stories in "The Rifle II." (Photo courtesy of Andrew Biggio)



of keeping a steel wall in front of the grunts of the 5th Marine Division.

At night, however, things got weird. An unknown voice called out to them. "Fox Battery, where are you? Fox Battery, where are you?" The voice seemed to come from far in the distance. "We found that so strange. We were taught never to call out to one another in the night. So we hid low behind our guns and ignored it."

John believes it was Japanese soldiers testing to see if they could infiltrate. Some Marines and forward observers had gone missing. There was no way to tell if they had been tortured or killed for information by the Japanese.

"The next day, day three, we totally ran out of ammunition for our howitzers," John said. The Marines of Fox Battery

made multiple runs to and from the beach trying to track down any ammo they might find for their guns.

The less they fired, the less protection the infantry had. As an artillery man, you were the king of battle and often the hand of God. It was artillery that could knock down rows of banzai charges.

Ammunition finally reached the beachhead, and men ushered rounds to Fox

Battery's position. The new high-explosive shells had arrived just in time. Enemy counterbattery fire was incoming.

"Luckily we had a time-fire radar. We could adjust quickly and knock them out."

By day seven, Fox Battery's position was known to the enemy. The Japanese zeroed in. Enemy counterbattery poured in faster than John and his gun crew could adjust. Finally their ability to return fire

Are You Ready?



Mike & Kay Ross

Albert E. Shockley Detachment #960
Kokomo, Indiana



Tribe@MCLeague.org
www.mclnational.org

Toys For Tots • Color Guard • Young Marines
Funeral Honors • Preserve Traditions

ceased altogether when an enemy shell exploded to their left. The Japanese artillery blew John and the other Marines off their howitzer like rag dolls.

Stunned and temporarily deaf in both ears, John lay facedown in the dirt. Other Marines were scattered around. They slowly attempted to get up and get back to the gun. John found he could not bounce back like the others. As they sat him up, he looked down below his belt line. There was smoke coming from his groin. He had a large hole in his pants. He was hit.

"I placed my hand in my pants. I was hit right by my family jewels," he said quietly.

John was bleeding heavily. As the men shouted for a corpsman, the roar of other artillery pieces firing drowned their screams for help. John tried to staunch the blood loss from his groin, but soon passed out.

"When I gained consciousness, I was in a tent hospital. I looked down at my groin. I could see they did a good job fixing me up, and I passed back out."

It was a relief for a 19-year-old boy to know he still had his penis and testicles. Still under a considerable amount of morphine, John was transported to a hospital ship offshore for more rehabilitation. While John was out of the

fight, the battle for Iwo Jima raged on.

"Dealing with my injuries was some delicate stuff. You could put three or four fingers into my wound," John explained. He would spend the next five months recovering in hospitals both in Guam and Hawaii.

John was ultimately satisfied with the healing process. He could have lost his manhood on Iwo Jima. Thanks to surgeons, he was able to have a normal life and create a family.

"I came home and later joined the sheriff's department on May 1, 1950. I retired in 1978." John retired as the deputy warden of the Essex County Jail in New Jersey. In the prison system he would run into other Marines who had chosen to go down a different road after the Battle of Iwo Jima. "It makes you think if the war contributed to the behavior of some Marines after their return home from combat."

John had a point. Like many others, he and I both had chosen law enforcement after the Marines. By doing so we were at times confronted with the fact that some Marines chose crime.

As I placed the rifle into its case, I

believed my time with John had come to an end. "Where do you think you're going?" he asked.

"Well, I got a long drive back to Boston."

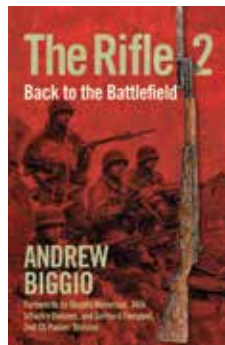
"You aren't going anywhere until you have some of my meatballs!"

John hobbled over to the kitchen and turned on the burners on the stove to warm up a pot. A few minutes later, he was off-loading giant meatballs on a plate for me.

I knew I had a long drive from New Jersey to Boston ahead of me, but I sat down with the Italian-American Marine. I bit into one of the meatballs he had made, and he told me I couldn't leave until I was finished with my meal.

I can honestly say they were the best damn meatballs I ever had.

Author's bio: Andrew Biggio is a Marine veteran who served in Iraq and Afghanistan. He is currently serving as a Massachusetts police officer and is the president of the nonprofit Boston's Wounded Vet Run. "The Rifle 2" is his second book. 🦁





Angel of Mercy

Evacuating Wounded Marines from Iwo Jima

By Steven D. McCloud

Ensign Jane Kendeigh draped the yellow “Mae West” life vest over her head, clipped the straps around her, placed her ball cap back where she wanted it, then took a seat along the bulkhead of the Douglas R4D Skytrain ... the Navy version of the C-47. Despite the butterflies in her stomach, she was ready to meet the day for which she had trained for months.

For only the second time, she was dressed in a shiny, nylon flight suit, brand new brown leather boots with not a single crease, ball cap, and a snappy new khaki flight jacket, all of which she’d been issued the day she flew out from Honolulu. In a few hours, the 22-year-old Navy flight nurse would be on Iwo Jima.

In the cockpit, Lieutenant John N. Burns, USN, and his copilot were going through their preflight checks, and flight engineer William Amundsen was checking his charts. LT Burns had named his new airplane, “Back Bay Special,” a nod to his Boston, Mass., roots. Next to Kendeigh sat the corpsman for the flight, Chief Pharmacist Mate Silas V. Sturtevant.

The two were squadron mates, members of the new Evacuation Squadron (VE) 2 formed three months earlier, on Dec. 12, 1944. Twenty-four-year-old Sturtevant had enlisted in 1939, and had operated with Marine units, including the Iceland expedition in 1941. In late 1943, he moved to Rescue Squadron (VH) 2, then joined VE-2 the day it was formed.

Kendeigh, one of the squadron’s initial 12 flight nurses, had completed nursing training at St. Luke’s Hospital in Cleveland,

ENS Jane L. Kendeigh (left) comforts Sgt William J. "Bill" Wyckoff of Co F, 2nd Bn, 23rd Marines. A map illustration (right) by author Steven D. McCloud shows the 4thMarDiv hospital where injured Marines went before being evacuated from Iwo Jima. (Photo courtesy of the Museum of the Pacific War, DeWitt Collection)



Iwo Jima

6 March 1945

Steven D. McCloud, 2024

Ohio, in June 1943, before entering the eight weeks of specialized flight nurse training. Though the squadron and its planes moved to Guam in mid-January, she had picked up her flight gear and made the 20-hour flight across the international date line on Feb. 20-21.

At Guam, the squadron's 12 R4Ds had been grounded at Agana airfield since Feb. 19, the day the Marines landed on Iwo Jima. They were standing by for word that an airfield on the island was available for them to begin aerial evacuations. They had waited two weeks for that word. Everyone had read the reports coming from Iwo Jima and knew casualties were exceptionally heavy. The regional commander reported 6,876 hospital beds on Saipan and Guam were ready for patients from Iwo, and troop ships and two hospital ships had been filling them with casualties.

The squadron's advance team had finally been cleared to fly up on March 3 to begin establishing an evacuation center. But the airfield was still taking enemy fire and two more days passed before ENS Kendeigh and "Doc" Sturtevant got the word to be ready to fly on March 6. Theirs was to be the squadron's second departure that morning, at 2:30 a.m. The first was

scheduled to depart at 2 a.m., with chief flight nurse Lieutenant Junior Grade Emily Purvis aboard.

Then onto the airplane climbed a U.S. Navy lieutenant with a photographer's case. Introducing himself as Gill DeWitt, he explained that he was a member of Captain Edward Steichen's team of photographers, and was to have been LTJG Purvis' airplane, to document the journey of the first flight nurse to land in a combat zone. He explained that he had arrived 10 minutes early for the flight, only to find that Purvis' plane had already departed. To make the best of it, he would ride along with Kendeigh and Sturtevant and document that flight instead.

After fitting himself with a Mae West, DeWitt got his camera and flash out and snapped a photo of the two-person medical team sitting together, then got ready for takeoff.

Sunrise was an hour away on Iwo Jima as Sergeant Bill Wyckoff and his fellow Marines of "Fox" Company, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Marines (BLT 2/23), lumbered 2,200 yards back up to the front in the darkness. Combat efficiency of the Marine landing force was estimated at 45%, and they had been given a day to rest and reorganize. Now they were going back on the attack. BLT 2/23 was to relieve 3/24 as the left flank

for the 4th Marine Division and was to make the division's main effort for the day. In position by 6 a.m., they broke out K-rations and watched daylight slowly reveal the desolate gray moonscape around them.

Nearly two hours later, at 7:50 a.m., a distant thunder of artillery rolled across the airfield behind them, followed by a rumble of impact far to their left. For 31 minutes, every battalion of artillery on the island pounded the zone ahead of the 5thMarDiv. Then there was quiet. Twenty-four minutes later, the thunder returned. This time, however, the impact was dead ahead of Wyckoff and the others, and it was unlike anything they had seen or felt before.

"On March 6, we decided a coordinated attack by the whole Corps might break through," wrote Lieutenant General Holland M. Smith in "Coral and Brass," a book he co-authored with Percy Finch. "To prepare for the attack we employed artillery on a scale exceeding any previous effort. We laid down a devastating



NCOs of Co F, 2nd Bn, 3rd Marines, 4thMarDiv, at Camp Maui before shipping off to Iwo Jima. Sgt Bill Wyckoff is in the front row, second from the right.

barrage, using all Corps and divisional artillery and heavy guns from supporting warships."

"That was the durndest barrage that I ever saw," explained Fox Co's Gunnery Sergeant Harold J. Douglas, "That was as bad as a Japanese barrage except it wasn't landing amongst us. Those big guns just shook the island when they fired that preliminary fire. It was devastating. It was just terrifying listening to that stuff."

After 21 minutes, the crushing explosions ahead of the Marines had ceased. Bill Wyckoff and the other Marines glared at the rocks ahead and wondered how anyone could be left alive. Then they were horrified by a sudden loud shriek from behind them. Rocket trucks that had slipped in behind them unleashed their own barrage, then hurriedly left the scene. Seconds later, Japanese mortars rained down on the area just left vacant. It was the final element of preparatory fire.

ENS Kendeigh peered with fascination through the airplane's small window at the inferno below and the haunting appearance of the island itself. After a short stop at Saipan, their plane arrived at Iwo Jima just as the bombardment began. LT Burns had been told he would have to circle the island until it ended. Now some 90 minutes later, he received instructions to land.

Kendeigh again peered out the window as they passed by Mount Suribachi.

It was time for the Marines to jump off in the attack. Wyckoff stood up and said, "Let's go." Immediately an apparent grenade blast knocked him down.

"I saw the blast and heard a ... yell," Wyckoff later recalled. "I was unconscious for I don't know how long, but when I regained consciousness, I was suffocating and couldn't breathe. I said, 'My God, help me,' and 'Mom, help me.' It seemed like an eternity before my right lung started working and I could breathe. One couldn't imagine the pain—it was unbelievable. All I could taste was blood and gunpowder. Then I felt someone dragging me back to the lines."

Corporal Leroy Surface pulled Wyckoff to the corpsman, PhM Owen H. Bahnken, who bandaged his eyes, then pulled a skivvy shirt from a nearby pack and stuffed it in the hole in his chest. Stretcher bearers got Wyckoff back to the battalion aid station where Dr. Glen Rice and his team did hasty work to stabilize him. "They pulled some of the shrapnel out of my eyes, then they bandaged me, and brought me back in a jeep."

Fox Co's Sergeant Tom Gavaghan later recalled his dismay when he saw a Marine being carried through the command post, mouthing to one of the carriers, "Who?" and being told it was Wyckoff.

Wyckoff was evacuated to the division hospital, further bandaged, assessed, and promptly driven across the airfield to the air evacuation center. After being screened once more to be sure he could survive the flight, he was carried out to an aircraft named "Back Bay Special," flown by LT John N. Burns.

Kendeigh and DeWitt had been directed straight to the evacuation tent. "Once in the tent, we asked about the first plane carrying LT Purvis and learned they had become lost and were due in very soon," said DeWitt. "Strangely enough, ours was the first plane—and Jane Kendeigh the first nurse—to land on Iwo Jima."

"The field hospital was right there on the airfield," Kendeigh later recalled, "and we had a doctor who gave me the details and how badly they were hurt, and what to try to do for them. And we loaded and we got off just as soon as we could."

While the flight team received medical reports on their evacuees, the stretcher patients were being carried out to the plane, joining ambulatory patients, including young men tagged with combat fatigue. The squadron's ground team also off-loaded the 28 stretchers and stack of some 48 wool blankets brought to Iwo to replace those being flown off with casualties. Each casualty required two or three blankets so supplies on the island quickly ran short. A case of whole blood had also been flown up as resupply for the whole blood bank and its two 150-square foot reefers located near the aerial evacuation tent. By the time the operation ended, the squadron flew in 960 pints of whole blood from Guam.

Several photographers were on the scene when ENS Kendeigh returned to the aircraft to tend to her patients, including 3rdMarDiv photographer T.G. Burgess.

Bill Wyckoff lay half-conscious on the stretcher. "I was blind for about six months, I guess. I had a collapsed left lung, a broken shoulder, and a couple of broken bones in the back of the neck. The nerve was completely severed in the shoulder, for the left arm."

Wyckoff was puzzled to hear a young woman's voice, but even

COURTESY OF STEVEN D. MCCLOUD

Right: After aiding in the effort to evacuate the wounded from Iwo Jima, Navy nurse ENS Jane Kendeigh traveled with her patients to the fleet hospital in Marianas.

Below: ENS Kendeigh answers questions about her work as a nurse on Iwo Jima at a press conference in Honolulu circa 1945. (Photo courtesy of National Archives)



COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES

more astonished to feel the comforting touch of her hand. Photographer DeWitt was where he needed to be to capture the moment... of the young flight nurse comforting a Marine she did not know on the most nightmarish place anyone had imagined.

“I just couldn’t get over the fact of how badly they were injured,” Kendeigh recalled. “And I kept thinking this could be my brother. I had a brother about the same age. And I just wished someone would take care him like I was trying to take care of the wounded Marines. The extent of their injuries were just ... I couldn’t get over it.”

DeWitt snapped a photo of ENS Kendeigh leaning in low over Wyckoff to comfort him. Three days later, the ACME Telephoto service on Guam transmitted DeWitt’s photograph of Kendeigh and Wyckoff back to the United States as a Navy radio photo. It was reproduced not merely in her hometown, but across the country ... it was even published in the September 1945 issue of *National Geographic*.

The squadron wanted its planes to be off the ground in about a half-hour, but both Kendeigh and DeWitt remembered this evolution taking about an hour. There was no need to taxi. LT Burns merely opened up the throttle and rumbled downwind in a cloud of dust and climbed out slowly for the five-hour flight to Guam. Behind him, corpsmen were loading the next plane with casualties.

In fact, by the time Burns was in the air, there were likely



Sgt Bill Wyckoff is visible in the background as he’s carried on a stretcher past a group of Marines.

COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES

seven other squadron planes and crews on the ground, waiting their turn. The number of flights made each day was determined by request from the island the previous day. Records indicate that the squadron scheduled them to arrive 30 minutes apart, to avoid overwhelming the evacuation team on Iwo, or the receiving team of screeners, ambulances and hospitals back on Guam. If Kendeigh’s flight was scheduled as the second arrival, the additional 90-minute delay and an hour on the ground would have stacked up the following five flights behind her and Purvis.

Planners anticipated evacuating about 350 casualties per week. But in reality, the squadron averaged about half that number each day, due to the high casualty rate and the shortage of available shipping. On March 6, they evacuated 171 Marines

March 1945

Date	Type of Machine	Number of Machines	Duration of Flight	Character of Flight	Time
6	R4D-6	17268	1.2	M	LT Burns 2
6	"	"	5.5	M	" +2
6	"	"	5.0	M	" +2
19	R4D-5	17247	5.1	M	LT Gandy, Stanula 2
19	"	"	4.7	M	" +2
12	"	39170	8.8	M	
15	"	"	8.1	M	
16	"	39167	8.8	M	
18	"	"	9.0	M	

PASSENGERS	REMARKS
5 + 5	Prone to Saipan
" + 5	Saipan to Iwo Jima
" + 21	Iwo Jima to Agaña
" + 4	Agaña to Iwo
" + 23	Iwo to Agaña
" + 25	Guam to Kwajalein
" + 25	Kwajalein to Guam
" + 28	Guam to Kwajalein
" + 28	Kwajalein to Guam

VE SQUADRON 2

TIME BRT. FORWARD 34.5
 TIME THIS MONTH 56.3
 TOTAL TIME 90.8
 CERTIFIED CORRECT

APPROVED: *O.A. Keenan*

ENS Jane Kendeigh's flight log shows all the evacuation flights she completed during the war. In March of 1945, she made nine trips between Saipan, Iwo Jima, Guam and Kwajalein.

straight back to her hut to get some sleep. Her flight log shows that six days would pass before she flew again, and not to Iwo Jima. She made two nine-hour flights to Kwajalein on March 12 and March 16, escorting patients on their journey back to Pearl Harbor. And after a nine-hour return flight on the 18th, she returned to Iwo Jima only once more, on March 19.

On March 21, VRE-1 was commissioned and on March 26—the last day of the Iwo Jima operation—it absorbed crews and planes of VE-1 and VE-2, then VE-3 on March 27. Both VE-1 and VE-3 were on the West Coast training in R5Ds.

ENS Jane Kendeigh was the first flight nurse to land on Okinawa and,

and Sailors. That number would reach 225 two days later, and 248 on March 11. Ultimately, the squadron would make 125 flights to Iwo Jima and evacuate 2,393 casualties. And though two planes were hit during take-off, no one was wounded.

Five hours later, Lieutenant Burns taxied Back Bay Special to the air evacuation center at Agaña's airfield, where ambulances were lined up, as were several photographers. While ground crews carefully off-loaded patients, ENS Kendeigh turned over her patients and their records to the flight surgeon.

Wyckoff was transferred to the new Fleet Hospital No. 111, there on Guam. After a short stay, he would be flown back to the States, ultimately to the naval hospital in St. Albans, N.Y., where he would spend two and a half years recovering. Wyckoff was finally released and discharged after the war was over.

As for Kendeigh, her 15-hour day was over. She headed

ultimately, made six evacuation runs there through June of 1945. She crossed the Pacific between Honolulu and Guam eight times and made two other runs between Guam and Kwajalein.

By the time of her last logged flight in February of 1946, Kendeigh had become something of a wartime celebrity. But now with the war over, she returned home. She married Bob Cheverton, one of the pilots with whom she'd flown, and started a family, having never met any of the young men she had cared for on those flights ... until 41 years later.

In February 1986, Kendeigh accepted the invitation to attend an Iwo Jima reunion in San Diego. Unbeknownst to her, so did Wyckoff. On stage at a reunion event, a Navy nurse and some Marines from Camp Pendleton reenacted the famous scene under the spotlight.

Then the house lights went up, and the master of ceremonies announced to everyone that their Angel of Mercy was there with them that night. He called Jane forward to the cheers of all the Marines in the room.

"Then they turned all the house lights on," recalled Wyckoff in 1995, "and the MC said, 'Jane, have you ever met any of your Marines?' She said, 'No I haven't.'"

Then Eddie Davis, who had been Fox Co's superb runner during the war, hustled out on stage with a message. After pretending to read the message, the host then introduced Wyckoff. Forty-one years after DeWitt snapped that famous photograph on Iwo Jima, the two were reunited there on stage.

"All you could hear were sighs all over the place," said Wyckoff. "It was very emotional. She was quite a gal."

Author's bio: Steven D. McCloud, is a leadership consultant and tour director, founder of Trident Leadership.com and author of "Black Dragon: The Experience of a Marine Rifle Company in the Central Pacific." He also conducts PMEs and battlefield staff rides for corporate and government agencies.

He plans to lead a group back to the Pacific in June 2024 for the 80th anniversary commemoration of the Saipan-Tinian operations.



In 1986, Wyckoff and Kendeigh reunited at an Iwo Jima reunion in San Diego, Calif.

COURTESY OF JANE KENDEIGH-CHEVERTON

COURTESY OF JANE KENDEIGH-CHEVERTON

In Memoriam

Compiled by Briesa Koch

Maj George V. Best, 83, of Pittsburgh, Pa. He was a Marine who completed a tour in Vietnam and served on active duty for 19 years before retiring. His awards include the Bronze Star with combat "V."

James A. Butts, 86, of Vidor, Texas. He served in the Marine Corps as an infantryman. He loved the outdoors and after his service, he took up fishing.

LtCol James C. Henderson, 84, in Phoenix, Ariz. He earned a bachelor's degree in education and was commissioned a second lieutenant. He was a Marine aviator and served two overseas tours in Vietnam as a helicopter pilot. He was later assigned to HMX-1 where he flew Marine One from 1969 to 1973. He retired from active duty in 1981.

After his retirement, he worked at Sumter High School in Bushnell, Fla., for 21 years and coached girls' softball. He also volunteered as the chief helicopter pilot for the Sumter County Sheriff's Department from 1998 to 2008.

James M. "Jim" Martin Jr., 97, of Rapid City, S.D. He joined the Marine Corps after graduating from high school and served in the Pacific theater as a machine-gunner with Co B, 1st Bn, 27th Marines, 5thMarDiv. After his discharge in 1946, he graduated from

Black Hill State University and received a bachelor's degree in education and a master's degree in chemistry from the University of South Dakota and had a career as a teacher and coach. His awards include the Purple Heart.

Cornelius J. "Connie" McHugh, 101, of Lehigh, Pa. He grew up during the Great Depression and after high school he served in the Civilian Conservation Corps in New Mexico. He enlisted in the Marine Corps after the attack on Pearl Harbor and served in the Pacific theater. Following the end of World War II, he worked as a crane operator at Bethlehem Steel for 34 years. He was an active member of the Marine Corps League and the Toys for Tots program. He was also a member of the VFW and Disabled American Vets.

SgtMaj David A. Miller, 65, in San Antonio, Texas. He was a Marine who served for 26 years and completed two tours in Iraq. He later worked as a facilities technician and physical plant supervisor at St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas, for 19 years and later as the director of facilities at the Marine Military Academy in Harlingen, Texas, for 23 years.

Richard Mitchell, 96, of Elk, Calif.

He enlisted in the Marine Corps after graduating from high school and served in the Pacific as a machine gunner with 1stMarDiv. After the war, he was stationed in China with the 1stMarDiv to assist with the repatriation of Japanese forces. He later transitioned from active duty to the Marine Corps Reserve. He was called back to active duty during the Korean War. After his return to civilian life, he had a career as an insurance agent. His awards include the Purple Heart.

Sgt Harvey B. Sanders, 94, of Santa Fe, Calif. He joined the Marine Corps in 1947 and served in the Korean War. He was the recipient of the Silver Star for his actions while serving as a squad leader of Co C, 1st Bn, 7th Marines, 1stMarDiv, May 28, 1953. According to the award citation, although wounded by the initial burst of enemy fire, "Sgt Sanders refused medical aid and continued to advance through intense grenade, small-arms, and automatic-weapons fire. Skillfully maintaining complete control of his men, he effectively directed their fire and personally destroyed an enemy machine-gun emplacement, killing the crew and the riflemen who were protecting the position." He would later serve overseas again during the Vietnam War and retired after 20 years of service. During his civilian life, he worked for the U.S. Postal Service. His other awards include the Purple Heart.

PFC Ralph C. Simoneau, 98, of Germantown, Wis. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1943 and served with Co D, 2nd Bn, 27th Marines, 5thMarDiv in the Pacific and saw action on Iwo Jima.

Sgt John "Jack" Vulgaris Jr., 90, of Lancaster, Pa. He was a Marine Security Guard who was assigned to the embassies in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, from 1954 to 1955; and in Bonn, Germany, from 1955 to 1956. After his discharge, he worked as a credit manager and a district sales manager for J.I. Case Company.



SSGTCHASEBRAN, USMC

LtCol James C. Henderson, USMC (Ret) was interred at the Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Va., during a snowy day in January. Musicians from the United States Marine Band, as well as ceremonial units from Marine Barracks Washington, supported the funeral.

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. 🇺🇸



LCPL ROBERT CARRASCO, USMC



MC2 ALEXANDER A. VENTURA II, USN

Following the grounding of all Ospreys in December 2023, Marines and other servicemembers continue to maintain the aircraft and remain proficient as they await authorization to resume flight.

Pentagon Coordinates Operational Stand-Down Of Ospreys

In December 2023, the Defense Department office that oversees the military's tiltrotor aircraft program coordinated with the Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps as they conducted an operational standdown of all CV-22 Osprey variants. Deputy Pentagon Press Secretary Sabrina Singh said the decision by the services to ground their platforms was taken out of an abundance of caution as the Air Force continued its investigation following the Nov. 29, 2023, Osprey mishap off the shore of Yakushima Island, Japan that killed eight airmen. She added that the decision by each of the services to conduct the operational standdown



REVISITING THE BASICS OF FINANCES

No matter your stage of life, from those just starting out to those nearing retirement, everyone's financial future is more stable when the foundation is strong. It's what holds up the rest of your financial dreams like saving for a home, paying for college education or even retiring one day. So take some time to see how you are doing in each of these four financial foundations.

BUDGETING

Budget doesn't have to be a financial "dirty" word. Think of it more as a way to create a plan to spend your money on things that matter to you. You can even get started in three easy steps: paycheck, prioritize and plan

Follow this QR code or click the title to reach USAA's How to budget page that's full of resources designed to help you budget better with those three simple steps.



PAYING DOWN DEBT

You're not alone. Debt management is a top concern for many people. Gain control by following these three steps: assess, avoid and attack.

Follow this QR code or click the title to reach USAA's How to pay off debt page that serves as your go-to guide on debt management and learn more about the three steps to pay down debt.



BUILDING AND MANAGING CREDIT

Is a poor credit score keeping you from achieving your goals? Think good credit is out of reach? Think again. Getting and keeping good credit may be easier than you think.

Follow this QR code or click the title to reach USAA's How to build credit page where you will discover the three C's of building and keeping good credit.



SAVING

We all have goals we want to achieve, and mastering the art of saving is key to achieve them. Believe it or not, saving money can be accomplished in three easy steps.

Follow this QR code or click each title to reach USAA's How to save page where you can learn about the three easy steps to help you reach your savings goals.



reflects the priority Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III has placed on operational safety. “The secretary fully supports the services and their [decision], out of an abundance of caution, to stand these aircraft down,” she said.

Singh added that while there “will always be an inherent risk in military aviation,” DOD consistently strives to mitigate that risk.

“We will continue to maintain a high level of operational standardization for all of our pilots and all of our crew,” she said.

Each service will determine guidelines for resuming flight operations in coordination with the DOD’s V-22 joint program office after conducting operational safety investigations within their fleets.

The Air Force Special Operations Command led the investigation into the November mishap. Singh echoed Austin’s condolences for the family and loved ones of the servicemembers who were lost in the crash. She added that the department is grateful to the Japanese government for their assistance in the search and recovery efforts.

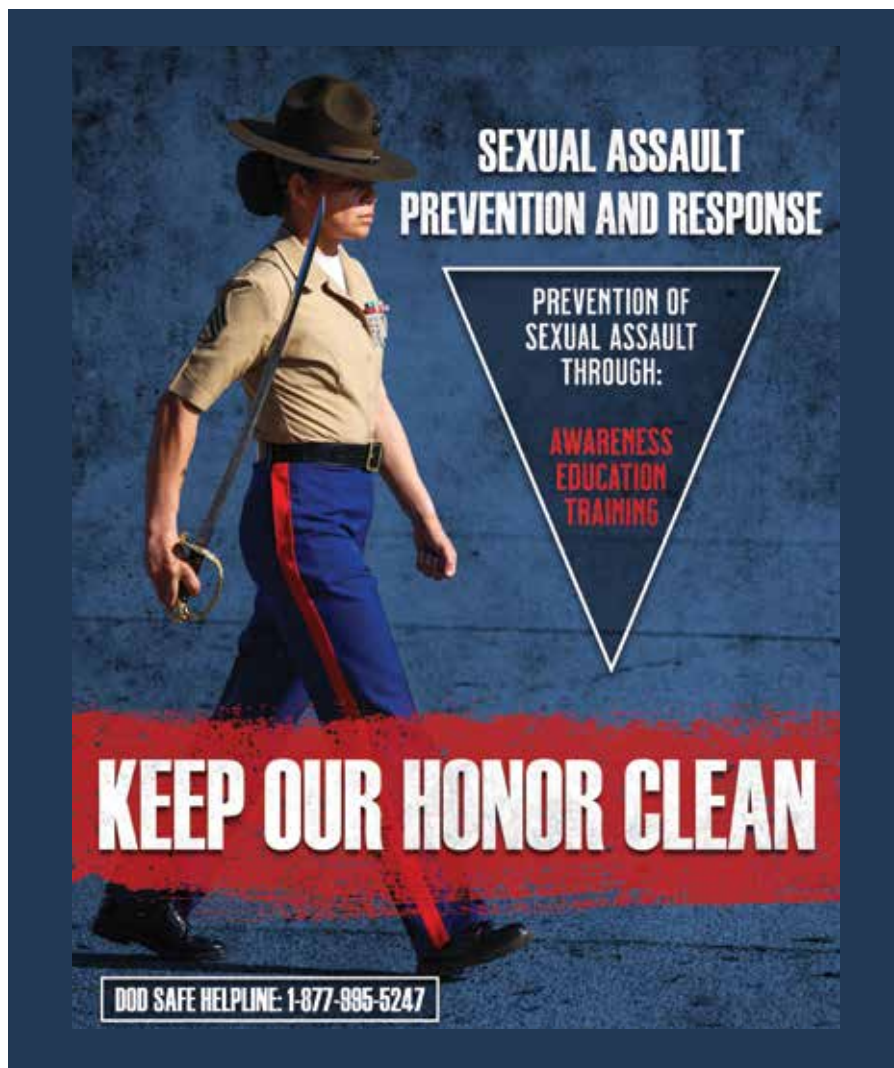
Joseph Clark, DOD News

DOD Releases 2024 Basic Allowance For Housing Rates

The Department of Defense released the 2024 Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) rates in December 2023. BAH rates increased an average of 5.4 percent when the new rates took effect on Jan. 1, 2024. An estimated \$27.9 billion will be paid to approximately 1 million service members. While average BAH rates increased, different rental markets experienced different market trends, and the 2024 BAH rates reflected those geographic market condition differences.

The department collects rental housing cost data annually for approximately 300 military housing areas in the United States, including Alaska and Hawaii. The Basic Allowance for Housing rate-setting process relies on a wide variety of data sources to obtain high-quality, accurate, current-year housing cost data.

An integral part of the Basic Allowance for Housing program is the provision of individual rate protection to all members. No matter what happens to measured housing costs—including the out-of-pocket expense adjustment—an individual member who maintains uninterrupted Basic Allowance for Housing eligibility in a given location will not see his/her Basic Allowance for Housing rate decrease. This ensures that members who have made long-term commitments in the form of a lease or contract are not penalized if the area’s housing costs decrease.



For more information on the Basic Allowance for Housing, including the 2024 Basic Allowance for Housing rates and 2024 Basic Allowance for Housing rate component breakdown, visit <https://www.travel.dod.mil/Allowances/Basic-Allowance-for-Housing/>.

DOD News

Sexual Assault Court Cases Moved to Special Trial Council

Beginning Dec. 28, 2023, the decision to prosecute sexual assault and several other serious crimes has moved from an accused servicemember’s chain of command to the new Offices of Special Trial Council (OSTC), which have general or flag officer leaders who report directly to the secretaries of the military departments.

This military justice reform is an important step in restoring faith that the system is fair, just, and equitable, said senior DOD and military officials, who emphasized that the offices will be staffed by specially trained, independent military attorneys uniquely qualified to address complex cases. The OSTCs will handle

cases professionally, applying the best practices and procedures of civilian prosecution offices. The covered offenses that fall under the authority of the new OSTCs include: murder, manslaughter, kidnapping, domestic violence, stalking, child pornography and most sexual assault and sexual misconduct. Sexual harassment will become a covered offense on Jan. 1, 2025, for crimes committed after that date where a formal complaint is made and substantiated.

In the case of sexual assault, the reform applies to unrestricted reports. A servicemember making an unrestricted report has decided to participate in a criminal investigation and support actions taken to hold the alleged offender appropriately accountable. To understand these changes, individualized, confidential help is available from victims’ legal counsel in the Navy and Marine Corps. Sexual assault response coordinators can assist in contacting the attorneys and other assistance services.

DOD News



Reunions

• **FMFEUR/MARFOREUR (London)** is planning a reunion. Contact Kurt Stinemetz, (334) 590-8016, kstinemetz@charter.net.

• **East Coast Drill Instructors Association**, April 11-14, MCRD Parris Island, S.C. Contact SgtMaj Kenneth D. Miller, USMC (Ret), (828) 499-0224, usmcpidi@charter.net.

• **Embassy Guard Association**, May 16-19, San Antonio, Texas. Contact Bob Lighty, (717) 433-1105, bob.lighty@embassymarine.org.

• **Marine Corps Weather Service**, June 16-21, Billings, Mont. Contact Kathy Donham, (252) 342-8459, kathy.donham@hotmail.com, or Dave Englert, (812) 630-2099, englertd@psci.net.

• **Mike Co 3/7 (1965-1970)**, July 31-Aug. 4, Minneapolis, Minn. Contact David Ray, (612) 860-8932, davidrayray49@gmail.com.

• **1st Bn, 5th Marines, 1985-1992**, Sept. 5-8, Macomb, Ill. Contact Scott Hainline, (309) 351-2050, ptimfi@yahoo.com.

• **USMC A-4 Skyhawkers**, Nov. 11-13, Pensacola Beach, Fla. All drivers, main-

tainers, and aficionados welcome. Contact Mark Williams, (702) 778-5010, rogerwilco14@gmail.com.

Mail Call

• Cpl Mike Cutini, (716) 868-2531, kmcmmc@roadrunner.com, is looking to hear from **anyone who served May 1968 to February 1969 with 3rd Plt, Delta Company, 1st Bn, 26th Marines. The commander was Lt Connyholm, the platoon sergeant was SSgt Henderson.**

• SSgt Harry "Bill" Orsburn, mborsburn@hotmail.com, is looking to hear from **Marines who served with the 1st Provisional Infantry Battalion from January to February 1968.**

• *Leatherneck*, leatherneck@mca-marines.org, is looking to hear from **Marines who served at Marine Barracks Washington from 1961 to 1964 and Marines who served security detail at Camp David or had any special assignments related to President Kennedy or the Cuban Missile Crisis.**

Wanted

• Sgt Jim Livingston, (208) 263-2215, jmsrlvgstn@aol.com, is looking for

photographs and stories of MAG 11, VMF-451, and others during the Formosan (Taiwan) Straits Crisis from September 1958 to January 1959 in Ping Tung and Hsin Chu, Taiwan.

• SSgt Harry "Bill" Orsburn, mborsburn@hotmail.com, is looking for **information, documentation or published accounts of actions taken by the 1st Provisional Infantry Battalion during the Tet Offensive south of the Da Nang airbase.**

• Mark Pacey, markp@mstn.govt.nz, is looking for **photographs, interviews, letters, and any other information on Americans stationed in New Zealand during WW II.**

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. 📧

Transform your garden into a stunning masterpiece!



Shop today at Marineshop.net
or call us at (703) 640-7195



Follow us on social media!
Facebook: @themarineshoponline
Instagram: @themarineshoponline
Twitter: @TheMarineShop1

USMC Garden Stake
\$15.95



"The Few The Proud" Garden Flag
\$14.95



Marines Wind Chime
\$29.95



Garden Stone with USMC Emblem & Flags
\$39.95



Full Color USMC Emblem Stepping Stone
\$20.95



Lunga Park Open at Last

MCB Quantico Site Cleared of Munitions

By Jonathan Hunley

After partially exposed mortar fins were discovered in Lunga Park at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., in February 2012, the recreational area was scheduled to be closed for a few months.

Cleaning up the land has taken a lot longer—more than 11 years so far—due to the complicated nature of the project, which was spearheaded by the Navy. In May 2022, one of three parcels being

investigated at Lunga was opened to Marines and Department of Defense employees.

“I am very proud to be a part of the re-opening of Lunga Park here at MCB Quantico,” Nancy L. Moorman, MCCS’ deputy director, said in an email. “It’s wonderful to see Marines and service-members, their families and the local community enjoying this beautiful venue to relax and reset, whether just picnicking or fishing or just enjoying the picturesque view.”

Park History

In recent decades, Lunga Park and its adjoining reservoir were used for pastimes such as fishing, camping or group get-togethers. But its history dates to World War II when Quantico expanded to the west side of Interstate 95 in Virginia. According to Quantico’s Communication Strategy and Operations (CommStrat) officials, more space was needed for maneuvers and training during the war, and that area became the home of Camp Barrett, where newly



An aerial view of Lunga Park, a Marine Corps Community Services Outdoor Recreation site on the west side of MCB Quantico. The park was closed in 2012 due to the discovery of unexploded ordnance and was reopened May 26, 2023.

Crews scanned hundreds of acres inch by inch using equipment such as magnetometers ... The most common munitions recovered were 2.36-inch rockets, rifle grenades, 75mm projectiles and 60mm mortars.

commissioned officers attended The Basic School.

Parts of that land near Camp Barrett were used as impact zones when Marines conducted live-fire training with mortars, artillery and rifle grenades and a reservoir was built as a water source for Camp Barrett. New ranges were eventually set up, and live-fire training moved from the reservoir area before the creation of Lunga Park in the mid-1960s. The park was used for recreation until the mortar discovery in 2012. A decade before the

closure of the park, the Department of Defense created the Military Munitions Program, which mandated that all bases and installations make an inventory of former range areas or sites where munitions were used. So, when munitions were found at Lunga, an advisory council with members from various government agencies was formed, according to a CommStrat spokesperson.

The Navy took the lead on the cleanup, partnering with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Virginia

Department of Environmental Quality and following a process established by the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) of 1980.

Crews scanned hundreds of acres inch by inch, using equipment such as magnetometers, which are hand-held, super sensitive detectors that locate iron and steel. They also used equipment that estimated the properties of buried metal objects, specifically detailing size, that sometimes were more than 3 feet underground. The most common munitions recovered were 2.36-inch rockets, rifle grenades, 75mm projectiles and 60mm mortars.

As munitions were found, they were excavated and identified. Every item was put through a certification, demilitarization, and verification process, and designated as either safe-to-move or not safe-to-move. If deemed safe-to-move, they

Below: Marines practice mortar firing techniques during a training exercise as part of the Platoon Leaders Course on MCB Quantico, July 23, 1953.



LCPL JEFFERY STEVENS, USMC



SGT J.L. FAKLER, USMC



Above: A bird's-eye view of Lunga Reservoir, circa 1958. (USMC photo)

Right: Under the watchful eye of an instructor, a Marine at the MCB Quantico grenade range in the 1950s prepares to fire an M1 Garand with a 22 mm adapter and an MK 2 fragmentation grenade. The Lunga Reservoir was partially drained to expose hidden munitions after unexploded ordnance was discovered there in 2012.



USMC



GYSGT DUSTIN D. MARCH, USMC

**Most ERP sites do not have the intended recreational use that Lunga does ...
That has made the Lunga cleanup much more comprehensive, and much more time-
consuming and expensive. The ERP has spent about \$25 million on the work.**

were taken offsite for metal recycling/smelting, or were stored, consolidated and destroyed. If determined not safe-to-move, they were destroyed in place.

The reservoir also was partially drained to expose any potential munitions that could have been there.

“It used to be all terrestrial and land,” said Victoria Waranoski, environmental engineer and remedial project manager for Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Washington’s (NAVFAC) Environmental Restoration Program (ERP).

Most ERP sites do not have the intended recreational use that Lunga does, Waranoski said. Others may be in remote parts of installations and may not include water. That has made the Lunga cleanup much more comprehensive, and much more time-consuming and expensive. The ERP has spent about \$25 million on the work.

Waranoski also underscored that the cleanup—which is still ongoing at two other Lunga sites—is a public operation.

“The CERCLA process inherently requires public engagement and public participation in certain phases of investigation and cleanup,” she said.

The re-opened area features 14 picnic spots, horseshoe pits, a beach volleyball court, a corn hole game site, boat and kayak ramps, 14 campsites, four fully

furnished rustic tiny cabins, a general store, and outdoor gear and boat rentals.

Those authorized to use the park include active-duty service members and their families, members of the National Guard and reserves and their families, current and retired Department of Defense civilian employees, service academy and Merchant Marine cadets, retired service members and their families, honorably discharged veterans with a 100 percent service-connected disability, Medal of Honor recipients, and surviving family members of uniformed service members or retirees until they age out of eligibility or their dependent status associated with the deceased member or retiree changes.

Naming the Park

Lunga Park is not just notable for the munitions that were found in areas there that used to a shooting range.

“The name ‘Lunga’ was almost certainly a reference to Point Lunga, which was an important terrain feature on Guadalcanal,” Craig A. Swanson, acting director of the Marine Corps University’s History Division, said in an email. “It makes sense that Lunga is named after Guadalcanal because several of the streets at Camp Barrett are named for Pacific War battles.”

The Battle of Guadalcanal was the first U.S. offensive operation of the Pacific

War. Eight months after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, it was the first time American troops sought to take back territory from the expanding Japanese Empire, Swanson said.

On Aug. 7, 1942, Marines of the 1st Marine Division came ashore just east of Lunga Point on Guadalcanal. Their objective was to capture and defend a Japanese airfield under construction on Lunga.

Before the war, “few Americans had ever heard of this distant and obscure island in the Solomons,” Swanson said.

The Battle of Guadalcanal would, however, go on for six desperate months with fierce fighting and great losses on both sides, he said.

“After the battle, Guadalcanal and its terrain were well-known to Americans back home,” Swanson said. “To the Marines who captured and defended it, Guadalcanal held a special place as the first of many island battles and victories in the Pacific.”

Author’s bio: Jonathan Hunley is an award-winning freelance journalist who has worked as a reporter and editor for several newspapers in Virginia. He resides in Woodbridge, Va., with his dog Larry. 🐕

SEA STORY OF THE MONTH

A Boot Camp Travel Log

Sixty-one years ago, I was part of a group of young men preparing to board a bus leaving Atlanta later that evening, and we were so excited. We were evidently going to some “island resort” [MCRD Parris Island] in South Carolina. We got there around two or three in the morning and the nicest man got on the bus with us. He was so happy to see us and so pleasant. Told us he really enjoyed playing games and asked if we’d like to have a little fun. Of course, we said yes, and he then explained that the first game would be to see if we could all be off his bus by the time, he walked to the back of it. He made sure he talked loud enough so everybody could hear him, too. Somebody asked how the ones in the back could get off with him blocking the aisle. He mentioned something about how he was a busy man and he had other things to think about and we had just used 30 seconds of the 60 seconds this game should take. He was nice enough, once again, to make sure everyone could hear him, too. Those in the back wanted to be as nice to him as he was to them, so they chose to just go ahead and crawl over the seats and their bags and things—hardly slowed them down at all.

His friends were waiting for us outside and they were just as nice. Why, they even helped us with things we’d been doing wrong for 18 years that we were just not aware of. We thought it was so nice of them to even show us how to stand, what

to do with our hands and mouths, and especially our eyes. I thought it was very nice of them to be sure we could hear everything they said, too. Why, they would even get only about 6 inches from our faces to be sure we could hear everything. It amazed us how many things we had been doing wrong forever until, thankfully, they could help us out.

Evidently, they were all raised on farms, so they were even able to tell us about different animals.

It was a most interesting start for a group of young men who were beginning to wonder just what in the devil they were doing on an island, before daylight, with a bunch of extremely loud and aggressive men in strange looking hats.

Female sheep were a real problem for them because one of the first things we learned was that not even one of them liked any ewe at all. Not sure what those ewes ever did to them, but they had no use for them at all; wouldn’t even let us say their name. Another interesting thing was that, unlike most people, they didn’t like anybody to look at them unless they were right in front of you. Must have been something from their childhood.

It was a most interesting start for a group of young men who were beginning

to wonder just what in the devil they were doing on an island, before daylight, with a bunch of extremely loud and aggressive men in strange looking hats. Not one, not even one of the 50 to 60 of us in that group, did a single thing right that whole night and little did we know that would be one of our easiest nights for the next three months. If you’ve never been on that bus getting to that island you will have no idea on earth what I’ve been writing about. If you are among the luckiest of people that walked off that island three months later wearing that thing called the eagle, globe, and anchor ... I salute you my brothers and sisters.

To let some of you know how long Parris Island, drill instructors, and female sheep remain in your mind; well, I recently turned 79 and this is not even a very small percentage of my memories ... nor will it be of yours.

Sgt Bobby Jarett
USMC, 1962-1967
New Berry, Fla.

The Bathroom Boogeyman

One night, back in the mid-1970s, I was walking back to MCAS Iwakuni after a night of fun in Hiroshima. I was walking because the cab drivers were not fond of transporting drunken Marines back to base from the train station. As I was walking along past a cemetery, I heard a strange sound. At first, it scared the hell out of me, but then I heard someone say, “Help me!”

I looked around and found another Marine, drunker than I, wedged into the benjo [bathroom]

ditch. His arm was under his body, and he didn’t have the strength or coordination to lift himself by the other arm. I took him by his free arm and lifted him out. When he was free from the benjo ditch, we both continued our walk back to the base, firmly convinced that benjo monsters lived in the cemetery.

GySgt Ray Harris
USMC, 1967-1980
Las Vegas, Nev.

He Was Out of His Element

In 1986, I was a bonehead first lieutenant in Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 212. Stationed at Marine Corps Air Station Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, the “Lancers” flew the F-4S Phantom II, the McDonnell Douglas “flying cement truck.” My call sign was “Ping,” and I was a “brand spankin’ new” Radar Intercept Officer (RIO) with one overseas deployment under my belt. In early November of 1986, VMFA-212 deployed to the mainland to participate in a combined arms exercise at Twentynine Palms. The expeditionary airfield located there was the Lancers’ base of operations for performing close air support (CAS).

In CAS, an important item for aircraft control is called the initial point. Upon the Phantom’s arrival at the IP, the forward air controller gives the crew a nine-line brief to attack the target. Then, the IP is the starting point for the run to the target.

The exercise was flowing smoothly, and the Lancers were a week into the training. Having just landed from a CAS hop, my pilot and I were walking from the flight line back into maintenance control.

There, I bumped into a fellow RIO on his way out to his jet. However, he seemed a bit harried.

“Ping,” he began, “I just realized that I left my map in the ready room tent.”

“Oh no.”

“Can I borrow yours?”

“Sure,” I replied, and began rifling through my helmet bag. “Here you go.”

“Thanks, man. You’re a lifesaver.”

He accepted my map and continued to his F-4.

Ninety minutes later in the ready room tent, I was relaxing after debriefing my flight.

Suddenly, the RIO who had borrowed my map stormed into the tent. He halted just inside the entrance flap and scanned the room’s occupants. Upon spying me, he trooped straight to my chair and asked “Ping, what was your major in college—chemistry?”

I furrowed my brow, replying, “Huh? What? No, it was—”

“—well,” he interrupted, “my major certainly wasn’t chemistry!”

I sat up.

“We just spent an hour in the range complex totally lost,” he continued. “We couldn’t find a single IP!”

“Well how is that my fault?” I countered. “You had my map, right?”

Then Bing! A little light went off above my head. “Ohhhhhhhh ... I see.”

Before the exercise had started, The air tasking order had assigned the names of the IPs to be metallic elements: zinc, copper, iron, mercury, silver and gold.

And I had a great idea. To label the IPs on my map, I used the two-letter identifiers from the periodic table of elements. From my high school chemistry, I just happened to remember those identifiers: zinc—zn; copper—cu; iron—fe; mercury—hg; silver—ag; and gold—au. It was the perfect

labelling plan—short, concise, obvious—or so I had thought.

Anyway, the disgruntled RIO threw my map into my face and turned around to go debrief.

“Well then,” I began anew, dripping with sarcasm, as he departed, “I guess you’re not familiar

Suddenly, the RIO who had borrowed my map stormed into the tent. He halted just inside the entrance flap and scanned the room’s occupants. Upon spying me, he trooped straight to my chair and asked “Ping, what was your major in college—chemistry?”

with the periodic table of elements.”

“No, I’m not,” he said from over his shoulder.

I relaxed back down into my chair and chuckled. Imagine the helmet fire that he experienced upon opening my map and seeing the IPs labelled with their two-letter identifiers. Maybe next time, the air tasking order should use the letters from the Greek alphabet.

LtCol John M. Scanlan
USMC (Ret)
Hilton Head Island, S.C.

Marines Always Find A Way

My father Technical Sergeant Clarence “CW” Fields, on Iwo Jima, was the senior wire chief for the 5th Amphibious Corps. His responsibilities were to plan and oversee the installation of field wire

communications from the 105 and 155 artillery guns back to battalion, regiment, division, and 5th Amphibious Headquarters. As such, he had a small bunker in a secured area for his field radios and other comm gear.

When he disembarked the troop ship to go ashore, he said all Marines were searched for contraband to include cameras and alcohol.

One night, early during the battle, a chaplain stopped by his bunker and asked if he could spend the night in my dad’s bunker. Of course, he invited the chaplain to do so.

Upon entering the bunker, the chaplain pulled a bottle of booze out of his pack and said, “This one is for you.” He then pulled another bottle out of his pack and said, “This one is for me.” He then pulled another bottle from his pack and said, “This one is for us.” Chaplains were allowed to carry alcohol for supposed religious purposes.

The next morning, waking with a hangover, my dad awoke to find the chaplain was gone. However, he found “his” bottle and the half empty “us” bottle.

When questioned by his commanding officer how he got the booze ashore, he kept his mouth shut.

Kenneth Fields
Columbia, Mo.

Modified Recruit Training

In the late 1950s recruit training was modified because of the drowning incident behind the barracks in the swamp. I remember it well, and it was on my mind when I entered boot camp at Parris Island in April 1958. We were told that the “hands-on” type of training was eased up and the drill instructors were to follow the established rules, etc. The drill instructors

all had tricks and inside the barracks these tricks took place. A couple that I remember were quite successful. The drill instructors inspected the hands of all recruits during the personnel inspections and if the hands showed signs of fingernail biting, the recruit was ordered to don his leather gloves. He was ordered to wear gloves 24 hours a day for approximately two weeks. They would eat, sleep, (Fire watchers and squad leaders had eyes on), wash skivvies on the wash racks, eat in mess hall, drill, PT and all events! Imagine what the white skivvies were like? It worked, and it broke the recruits’ habit of biting nails. Another game that was played was equipment inspection failures. We had all our issued equipment displayed on poncho liners on the drill field. One failure, all fail rules. Pick up the poncho loaded with equipment, over shoulder carry back to squad bay, position gear on deck, stand at attention. After a severe chewing out, the DI would give us a right face, turn off the lights and order us to “forward march-double time!”

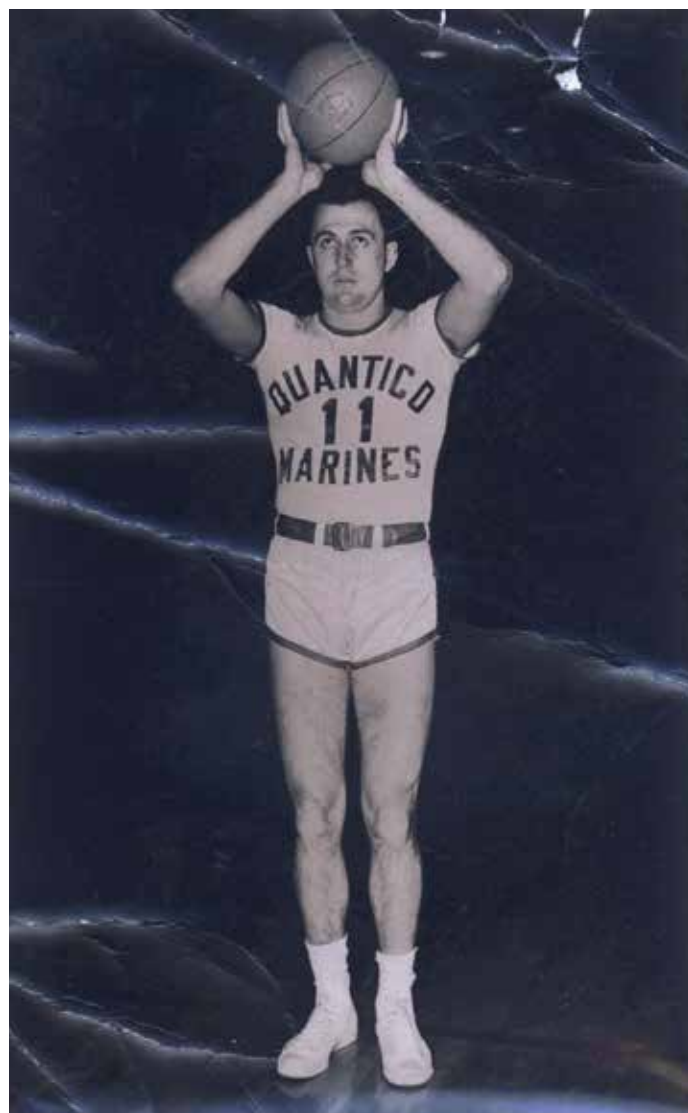
Recruits were tripping over their feet, crashing into racks, etc. A few were knocked out!

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

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: Briesa Koch, *Leatherneck Magazine*, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134, or email them to leatherneck@mca-marines.org. We offer \$25 or a one-year MCA membership for the “Sea Story of the Month.” 🍷



WIKIMEDIA/THE SPORTING NEWS ARCHIVES



USMC

A SHOOTING STAR—Seventy years ago, Paul Arizin left the Marine Corps to resume a Hall of Fame career in the National Basketball Association for the Philadelphia Warriors.

But not before his Marine Corps Base Quantico team took on the professional team in a 1953 exhibition and beat them, 85-76. Drafted during the Korean War in 1952, the Villanova University star showed off his hoops' prowess for the Quantico basketball team when he wasn't pulling duty as a bookkeeper on base. Arizin was named to *Leatherneck* magazine's 1952-1953 Outstanding Player List, scoring a combined 61 points in two wins over MCB San Diego.

Former NBA Publicity Director Haskell Cohen said Arizin wasn't given any special treatment on the courts at Quantico despite coming from the professional ranks. In fact, it was quite the contrary, according to a 1955 article written by Cohen in *Sport Review* magazine.

"Opponents figured they'd be noticed if they stopped Arizin short of his 25 or 30 point a game average, so they usually roughed Paul up more than usual," penned Cohen. "One time, he came back to Philadelphia to play in a preliminary game for the Warriors, and he looked as if he belonged in a hospital ward. He had a black eye, his left elbow was bandaged, his right knee was taped, and his body was aching all over."

Arizin was more than just a talented offensive player; he was an innovator on the court. He stood 6-foot-4, and his leaping ability was legendary as was his mastery of the jump shot, which only a few players employed during that time. Arizin

went on to score 22.8 points per game during his 10-year NBA career, helping the Warriors win an NBA title over the Fort Wayne Pistons in 1956. He also tallied more than 100 points in a single game—albeit against a junior college while playing for Villanova.

Those skills left *Leatherneck* reader, Corporal Joe A. Dickinson, highly entertained during his time as a Marine.

"I wanted the hardwood sports lovers of the Corps to know that watching the extraordinary basketball skills of Paul made the cold winter nights a little warmer during my tour at Camp Lejeune, N.C.," wrote Dickinson in a 2007 letter to *Leatherneck* after Arizin passed away the previous December. "He stood out like a beacon during tough games with various Korean War-era Army teams always stacked with quality college players."



Thank you for all of
your support in 2023.



OVER
\$1,200,000
SPENT ON
MARINES IN 2023



>6,400 MARINE LEADERS
CONDUCTED
BATTLEFIELD
STUDIES
AROUND
THE GLOBE



> 2,300 BOOKS
FROM THE COMMANDANT'S
PROFESSIONAL READING
LIST WERE PROVIDED TO
ENSURE MARINES HAVE
ACCESS TO THEIR REQUIRED
READING MATERIALS

~4,200 AWARDS
RECOGNIZING
THE OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS
MARINES WERE PRESENTED, WITH
94% GOING TO ENLISTED MARINES



47 MARINES
RECEIVED
AWARDS FOR
THEIR SCHOLARLY
WRITTEN WORK



MORE THAN **47,000** MARINES
IMPACTED BY MCA PROGRAMS!

THANK YOU

FROM THE **MARINE CORPS ASSOCIATION FOUNDATION**



NOT HOW YOU WOULD'VE DONE IT

YOU BUNDLE THINGS RIGHT

Like when you bundle your home and auto insurance with USAA and save up to 10%.¹

Visit usaa.com/bundleright to learn more.



¹Savings are off total premium. Not available in all states or in all situations. To qualify for a discount on the property policy, a USAA Auto Insurance policy must be active within 60 days of issuing the property policy. Discount subject to change. Restrictions apply.

Membership eligibility and product restrictions apply and are subject to change.

Property and casualty insurance underwritten by United Services Automobile Association (USAA), USAA Casualty Insurance Company, USAA General Indemnity Company, Garrison Property and Casualty Insurance Company, NOBLR Reciprocal Exchange, based in San Antonio, Texas; USAA Limited (UK) and USAA S.A. (Europe) and is available only to persons eligible for property and casualty group membership. Each company has sole financial responsibility for its own products. Coverages subject to the terms and conditions of the policy.

© 2023 USAA. 6014197.1123

