

DECEMBER 2023

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# LEATHERNECK

MAGAZINE OF THE MARINES

Recon Marines  
Training to Fight  
In Every Clime

“Six Days in Fallujah”  
Does Video Game  
Replicate Reality?

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Guarding Guam:  
Forgotten Tale  
Of Marine Heroics





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# From the Publisher & Editor-in-Chief



SGT JOHN R. ROHRER, USMC

First, and most importantly, the staff of *Leatherneck* and the entire Marine Corps Association wish all our members and readers a happy holiday season, Merry Christmas and all the best in the coming year. As the photo on this page shows, Marines will always find ways to celebrate even in the most hostile, austere conditions. Let us all remember the many Marines, Sailors and all members of our Joint Force who are right now deployed and in harm's way. Whether in the Middle East, Northern and Eastern Europe, or on watch and at sea across the globe, these brothers and sisters-in-arms will find blessings throughout this holiday season. We wish them all Godspeed, victory and a safe return home.

Our cover highlights one of the standout articles in this month's edition. On page 36, *Leatherneck* staff writer Kyle Watts presents a close-up look at the training of today's warriors of Marine Reconnaissance in "Attitude and Spirit: Marine Reconnaissance Veterans Combine Efforts to Inspire Next Generation." This article is a great example of how the Corps relies on the expertise and experience of those veterans who've "been there and done that" to help new Recon Marines apply combat lessons learned.

Other noteworthy articles include "The Case for Moral Vision" by LT Ian Clark, USN and LT Amy Ruhf-Brien, USN. Here, two chaplains discuss what can be lifelong effects of the split-second, life-or-death decisions required in war. On page 31, you'll find one of *Leatherneck's* first reviews of a computer-based wargame, "Six Days in Fallujah: Long-Delayed Video Game Delivers Realistic Depiction of Iraq Battle." In this article, William Treuting—an associate editor for *Marine Corps Gazette*, avid gamer, and son of a Marine infantry officer—comments on the accuracy and player experience of this new first-person shooter game based on the 2004 battle during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Again, happy holidays and best wishes in 2024. Semper Fidelis.

Colonel Christopher Woodbridge,  
USMC (Ret)



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**COVER:** Marines from "Charlie" Company, 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion, 2nd Marine Division set up security during a dive mission in Key West, Fla., on Jan. 24, 2018. Exercises like stealth insertion and sub-surface swimming objectives are part of Marines' combat readiness evaluation before deployment. On page 36, read about the training and the education Recon Marines are receiving from a veteran of the Vietnam War. Photo by LCpl Brennon A. Taylor, 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.

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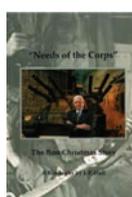
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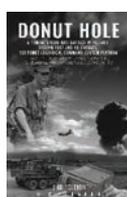
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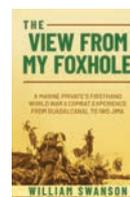
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## Letter of the Month

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

More than 75 years after Associated Press photographer Joe Rosenthal took the iconic photograph of the second flag raising on Mount Suribachi on Feb. 23, 1945, during the battle for Iwo Jima, an effort is underway to have a ship named for him in honor of the inspirational impact the photo had on the Marines fighting there, and on the last war bond drive of World War II.

Rosenthal's photograph was a motivating symbol for the war and was helpful in raising \$26.3 billion on the war bond drive, which was instrumental in helping the United States to continue to victory against the Japanese. Now, it has become as much a symbol of the Marine Corps as the eagle, globe and anchor.

Secretary of the Navy James Forrester,

who was on Iwo Jima that morning, was reported to have said when he saw the flag flying, "The raising of that flag on Suribachi means a Marine Corps for the next 500 years."

That adds another dimension of importance to Rosenthal's photo.

Rosenthal was already a successful photographer and had covered several campaigns in the South Pacific with the Marines. But the flag-raising photograph won him a Pulitzer Prize, cemented his reputation and career, and became the one for which he's best known. It also lifted the spirits of the American people.

"I took the picture," Rosenthal always said. "The Marines took Iwo Jima."

The Joe Rosenthal Chapter of the USMC Combat Correspondents Association (a group of retired military and civilian photographers, videographers, and journalists) has petitioned Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro to name a ship *USS Joe Rosenthal* to honor him for his historic image that became a national symbol of American spirit and determina-

tion. It is fitting and long overdue to honor Rosenthal in this way, and efforts are gaining real traction.

Rosenthal wasn't a Marine or a Sailor, but the AP combat photographer was right there with the Marines and other American combat troops—unarmed—at Hollandia, New Guinea, Guam, Peleliu, Angaur and Iwo Jima in the Pacific theater. The only weapon he carried on those island campaigns was his bulky Speed Graphic camera that proved to be invaluable to victory and to history.

It's time for the *USS Joe Rosenthal*.

Ray Elliott  
Urbana, Ill.

*Agreed! This would be an appropriate recognition of Mr. Rosenthal's timeless contribution to the Corps and the nation.*  
—Publisher

## Thank You, Leatherneck

*Leatherneck, I hope you like your flag. I know it's not the traditional blue background with white stars. I was trying to*

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*Leatherneck* (ISSN 0023-981X) is published monthly by the Marine Corps Association, Bldg. #715, MCB, Quantico, VA 22134. Copyright 2023 by MCA.

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BRIESA KOCH

**Long-time reader Mike King recently sent a reimagined design of "Folds of Honor" to the *Leatherneck* staff. The original design can be seen in the January 2023 issue of *Sound Off*.**

think outside of the box. It's also my way of saying thank you! For several years now you have printed the stories I've sent you. There is nothing that makes my day more than coming home to see an issue of *Leatherneck* in the mailbox along with my story in it that I sent you. My old teachers would be so shocked!

One of my stories you printed in the January issue in *Sound Off* is about one of my flags the "Folds of Honor." It was made of steel. I only made two of them. The ones I'm having made now are more practical, they're made by Zebra Graphics where I live in Paducah, Ky. The only thing it cost me was a dozen donuts from Reds Donuts, which are very good! I'm placing those flags on the graves of veterans in this area, mainly at a cemetery where my dad and some of my friend's dads are buried.

L/Cpl Mike King  
USMC, 1977-1981  
Paducah, Ky.

*Thanks for all you do to honor and remember our veterans. We appreciate you. Semper Fi!—Publisher*

**Questions About the M16A2 Service Rifle and Earlier Versions**

The M16A1 and M16A2 service rifles were used during the time that I served in the United States Marine Corps. The issues I remember in its use were the bolt rings, termed "gas rings," and the safety/fire selection switch.

I felt that after years of using the selection switch, if it were to be switched to the left side of the lower receiver instead of it being located on the right side, it would be more advantageous for the rifleman to use ... I guess the rifle was made this way so the finger had to leave the trigger to change the selector, preventing negligent firings/discharges of ammunition.

Regarding the bolt rings/gas rings: I have fired the M16A1/A2 rifles many times. It seemed to have a dramatic loss of power after firing for a brief period of about 10 to 30 rounds, which was caused by the gas rings lining up ... With the

three rings properly assembled on the bolt, I assumed that it shouldn't make a difference, but it did. Were these issues that I noticed on all manufacturing levels? Is this a problem for all branches of the military? And have these issues ever been corrected?

Bill Hickey  
Jacksonville, N.C.

*These issues were remedied with later model M16A4 and M4 carbine and the newest M27 Infantry Assault Rifle. To read about the history of the M16, see "This is My Rifle: From the Hill Fights in Vietnam to Today, the History of the M16" in the October 2021 issue.—Publisher*

**Chesty's Thoughts on the Vietnam War**

I was going through my files and came across a clipping from the *Evening Star* published September 1966, concerning Chesty Puller and his view on the Vietnam War, which said:

"LtGen Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller, USMC, scoffs at the idea of taking 20 years to win the war in Vietnam. The way to win the war, says the Corps most decorated hero, is to 'go forward in column, march to the sound of the guns, destroy the enemy, and come home. The Vietnam War is no different than any other war.' "

I took the *Washington Star* clip off microfilm at the library in September 1966 when I was in the first grade at Grace Episcopal School in Alexandria, Va.

Additionally, is there anyone who can tell me what the current state of the PLC Program at Quantico is?

Greg Paspatis  
Alexandria, Va.

*Thanks for the very interesting quote from LtGen Puller. I wonder what our Vietnam veteran readers make of it. As for the Platoon Leaders Class program, it is alive and well and one of the main sources for Officer Candidates School at Quantico, producing about 60% of the Corps' commissioned officers.—Publisher*

**Kudos to the Marine Corps History Division**

Kudos to Lieutenant Colonel Timothy Heck with the Field History Branch, Marine Corps History Division, for the great work they do recording the memories of Marines and Navy Corpsmen that served during WW II and Korea. Their primary duty is to record source material that will be in the Marine Corps Archive, the National Archives or in the custody of the National Museum of the Marine Corps in perpetuity. As time

passes, memories fade and the opportunity to record the service of these veterans may be lost forever.

As an active member and executive board member of American Legion Synepuxent Post 166, in Ocean City Md., this Marine had the privilege to work with LtCol Heck identifying and supporting the interviews for two Marine Purple Heart recipients, Morris Semiatan, who was wounded on Iwo Jima, and Stewart Smith, who was wounded in Korea at the Chosin Reservoir. Both Marines are now in their 90s and in declining health but have vivid memories of their combat experiences. It was fascinating to listen to the recording of the history of these two Marine heroes.

Tim not only interviews and records, but he also follows up to make sure these heroes' records are updated by verifying that the medals and ribbons that they are entitled to are updated in their records. Tim goes above and beyond doing in-depth research of unit records and follows up by requesting letters of appreciation from current unit leaders in recognition of their combat service. Post interview, Tim stays in touch with the veteran's family members to advise on benefits and social services that can support the quality of life for these aging Marines.

The mission to record the individual history of combat Marines and corpsmen is a testament to tenets of Semper Fidelis. As we identify and qualify other brothers and sisters that served and sacrificed, we the leathernecks of Post 166 stand ready and look forward to supporting future history branch interviews.

Cpl Bob Broderick  
USMC, 1967-1968  
Ocean City, Md.

*We all appreciate the tremendous efforts to preserve the Corps' history and the individual stories of our combat veterans. Leatherneck and the MCA continue to do our part working closely with History Division and the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation.—Publisher*

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](mailto:leatherneck@mca-marines.org). Due to the heavy volume, we cannot answer every letter received. Do not send original photographs, as we cannot guarantee their return. All letters must be signed, and emails must contain complete names and postal mailing addresses. Anonymous letters will not be published.  
—Editor 

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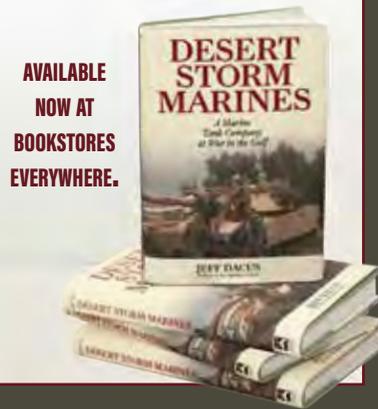
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# In Every Clime and Place

Compiled by Kyle Watts

## Philippines

### Australian, Filipino, U.S. Forces Demonstrate Readiness for Crisis and Contingency Response

Marines and Sailors of Marine Rotational Force-Darwin (MRF-D) joined members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and Australian Defence Force (ADF) for Exercise Alon, part of Indo-Pacific Endeavour 2023. Alon, a Filipino word which translates to waves in English, refers to the amphibious nature of the exercise which included ship-to-shore movements conducted by the combined force.

“Exercise Alon has been two years in the making—what started off as just a concept is now coming to fruition,” said the commander of the Amphibious Task Force, Royal Australian Navy Captain Phillipa Hay. “It’s a great pleasure to be operating with the Filipinos and particularly to be able to exercise and bring together an integrated force in Filipino waters.”

The combined force sailed from Darwin, Australia, to the Philippines on HMAS *Canberra* (LO-2), while integrating tactics, techniques and procedures

in preparation for a series of amphibious assaults. MRF-D complemented the capabilities of the ADF and AFP by embarking four MV-22B Ospreys and a contingent of ground combat forces on the ship in support of the ship-to-shore movements of personnel and equipment.

“It’s quite significant, having the MV-22s on board, as it is the second time they have been on board, the first time being as part of RIMPAC last year,” said the commanding officer of HMAS *Canberra*, Captain Brendan O’Hara. It shows the real interoperability between the U.S. and the Australian Navy, but also demonstrates the flexibility of our amphibious capabilities in order to support other nation’s aircraft, and as we are seeing in Exercise Alon, other nation’s personnel as well.”

What began as a series of deck landing qualifications more than two years ago has now evolved into the full embarkation of four aircraft and necessary maintenance personnel.

“We came to Exercise Alon with a more robust footprint, applying lessons learned on what it takes to sustain a detachment of Ospreys aboard HMAS

*Canberra* and ensuring all necessary logistics requirements were met,” said Lieutenant Colonel Joe Whitefield, the CO of Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 363 (Reinforced), MRF-D. “Having our aircraft on board increases flexibility in ship-to-objective maneuvers and adds to the capability of the combined force.”

With the exercise beginning in Darwin only a week prior to embarkation on HMAS *Canberra*, the combined force worked quickly to integrate tactics, enabling seamless coordination throughout the exercise. The Marines (U.S. and Filipino) and soldiers conducted urban combat, communications, medical training events and daily wet and dry embarkation rehearsals to increase speed and efficiency. Colonel Douglas Pashley, commander of the landing force, spoke to the significance and complexity of integrating the combined force to accomplish the objective,

“The job of an amphibious force can range from base-level engagement and partnering with friends and allies to humanitarian assistance, to disaster relief in response to a natural disaster, to something more serious, such as a security



Marines with MRF-D, Australian Army Soldiers, and Philippine Marines embark on American MV-22B Ospreys aboard the Royal Australian Navy vessel HMAS *Canberra* during Exercise Alon at Palawan, Philippines, on Aug. 22.

MAJ MATTHEW WOLF, USMC

**Marines with Marine Rotational Force-Darwin, Australian Army Soldiers, and Philippine Marines conduct an amphibious assault during Exercise Alon on Aug. 22.**



MAJ MATTHEW WOLF, USMC

and stability operation or evacuation, up to high-end warfighting.”

The contingent of ground-combat Marines and soldiers used inflatable walls to practice close-quarters combat on the ship’s heavy vehicle deck, moving through a series of obstacles with airsoft weapons that added realism to the simulated urban combat. After training was completed, the landing force set its focus on the initial assault on Palawan. Waves of the combined force assembled in the ship’s light vehicle deck and conducted final gear inspections before making their way to the flight deck for the over-the-horizon aerial assault in MV-22B Ospreys.

Once ashore, the combined force established security around an airfield and set conditions for a subsequent movement through the town of Rizal to a fortified position occupied by a contingent of Marines from the Philippine Marine Corps who were simulating the enemy force. After seizing the fortified position, the combined force participated in a “Boodle Fight” hosted by the Philippine Marine Corps contingent; an AFP tradition in which warfighters gather around a banquet table to feast in celebration of recent victories.

Reconstituting on HMAS *Canberra*, the force began preparations for the second assault while sailing north to the



MAJ MATTHEW WOLF, USMC

**Exercise Alon, part of Indo-Pacific Endeavour 2023, is a bilateral amphibious training activity between the Australian Defence Force and the Armed Forces of the Philippines, supported by Marine Rotational Force-Darwin.**

Zambales area. The second assault saw an increase in size and scope, with the addition of three landing craft delivering forces and equipment ashore, including an Australian M1A1 Abrams main battle tank. In addition to delivering forces ashore from HMAS *Canberra* via MV-22B Osprey and landing craft, the Philippine Navy delivered their Marines using the *Tarlac*-class landing platform dock

BRP *Davao Del Sur* and two assault amphibious vehicles. The assault was supported by a free-fall landing, led by the Philippine Marine Corps, and two Royal Australian Air Force F-35A Lightning II aircraft that provided close air support.

As a subset to the exercise, MRF-D sent a headquarters element to the Philippine province of Cebu to establish com-



CPL JADE K. VENEGAS, USMC

**Above: LtCol Benjamin Schmidt, CO of VMFA-225, and Capt Alex Johnson, an F-35B Lightning II pilot with VMFA-211, MAG-13, 3rd MAW, prepare for takeoff during Fifth-Generation Friday at MCAS Yuma, Ariz., on Sept. 8. (Photo by Cpl Jade K. Venegas, USMC)**

**Top: F-35B Lightning IIs with MAG-13, 3rd MAW, fly in formation during Fifth-Generation Friday at MCAS Yuma, Ariz., on Sept. 8.**

munications and conduct scenario-based training evolutions that challenged the staff in applying command and control for a combined force operating across vast distances.

“The mobility of the MRF-D team is vital to providing our allies and partners with the support necessary to respond to crisis and contingency in the region as a combined force,” said the MRF-D Operations Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Philip Flambert. “Our participation in exercises such as Alon builds repetition in our ability to exercise mobility. We are continuing to learn new ways to integrate with our friends in the region and are gaining efficiencies in doing so.”

Maj Matthew Wolf, USMC

**Yuma, Ariz.  
MAG-13 Executes  
Fifth-Generation Friday**

Marine Aircraft Group 13, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, conducted its monthly iteration of the Fifth-Generation Friday training series on Sept. 8. Fifth-Generation Friday is a standardized training exercise unique to MAG-13, which provides F-35B Lightning II pilots real-world exposure to fighting and training against potential peer adversarial platforms.

MAGs haven’t historically run large-scale fifth-generation versus fifth-generation aircraft exercises. Exercises of this nature are typically executed at specialty schools like Weapons and Tactics Instructor Course (WTI) or TOPGUN, or

during Air Force-hosted training like Red Flag; a two-week advanced aerial combat training exercise. All four MAG-13 F-35B Lightning squadrons: Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 122, VMFA-211, VMFA-214, and VMFA-225, participate in the monthly event.

The first iteration of Fifth-Generation Friday was in February 2023. Pilots tested traditional Marine Corps aviation tactics and began fighting as a group, rather than a squadron element. Routine squadron training doctrinally applies divisions of four F-35s, while group-level training increases this to 20 or more aircraft. MAG-13 pilots who spearheaded the development of Fifth-Generation Friday drew on experience from the Ma-

rine Corps' WTI, Marine Operational Test and Evaluation Squadron One (VMX-1), and inspiration from the Air Force's Weapons Instructor Course and the Navy's TOPGUN exercises. They also aimed to tailor the training objectives according to the resources available to MAG-13 squadrons.

"The structure has been deliberately built to minimize the tax on the squadrons, meaning the administrative phases, mission planning, etc. are standardized and repeatable," said Lieutenant Colonel Tyler B. "Chicken" Sanders, MAG-13 Operations Officer. "The key word is repeatable; to build proficiency in the mission set, aircrew, and tactical controllers, there must be repetition."

This event construct has built a standardized, repeatable training exercise that creates minimal burden on the squadron, while providing training outcomes equivalent to large-scale, joint evolutions. MAG-13 executes Fifth-Generation Friday events once or twice per month, each consisting of approximately 25 aircraft and two fight periods. The fight periods begin when the jets take off, split into blue air and red air elements, and execute their missions. The blue air element is the "friendly" fighter aircraft executing Marine Corps aviation tactics.

Meanwhile, the red air element represents a peer adversary.

"We have to be very good, and we have to be very proficient in what we do," said Major John "Yardsale" Rose, VMFA-214 Executive Officer. "Our prioritization of training in our day-to-day lives needs to support that."

The foundation of such dynamic training can be compared to the seven-on-seven football training program that is used across colleges and universities; this training program focuses on perfecting the basics: passing, catching and fitness. MAG-13 pilots train with this same mindset during Fifth-Generation Friday. Group-level leaders provide the mission and intent to their subordinate squadrons and enable training that focuses on the fundamentals of problem-solving, tactics and performance under stress to outmaneuver an adversary.

Fifth-Generation Friday is a force multiplier for Marine Corps tactical aviation that enhances the effectiveness of F-35 support to the Marine Air-Ground Task Force and the joint force. As the Marine Corps fosters its combat aviation capabilities, it reinforces its function as a force in readiness against a capable peer or near-peer adversary in any clime and place.

2ndLt Madison Walls, USMC

## Southwestern United States 15th MEU Completes Predeployment Exercise Across Southwestern United States

The 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit conducted its first exercise as a Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) across the Southwestern United States, Aug. 17-28. Known as Realistic Urban Training, RUT is a land-based predeployment exercise that brings together the elements of the 15th MEU to integrate the unique individual and unit skills and develop the MEU's proficiency to operate as a MAGTF and respond rapidly to crises.

The 15th MEU is composed of a Ground Combat Element, Battalion Landing Team, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines; a Logistics Combat Element, Combat Logistics Battalion 15; and an Aviation Combat Element, Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 165 (Reinforced).

Also supporting the 15th MEU during RUT was Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 225, Marine Aircraft Group 13, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, which brought a squadron of F-35B Lightning II aircraft to conduct missions such as electronic attack and expeditionary strike. VMFA-225 has since been attached to the 15th MEU.

RUT was conducted over 11 days in



SGT SYDNEY SMITH, USMC

Marines assigned to Company B, BLT 1/5, 15th MEU, move through a town while conducting a long-range raid during a Realistic Urban Training exercise at Fort Hunter Liggett, Calif., on Aug. 24.



seven locations across Arizona, California and Nevada. The various and concurrent missions that were planned and executed during the exercise included amphibious raids, expeditionary strikes, tactical recoveries of aircraft and personnel, and a military assisted departure from a simulated U.S. consulate.

“RUT is the first ‘print-time training’ event where we bring the full MAGTF together to plan and execute as a team,” said Colonel Sean Dynan, the commanding officer of the 15th MEU. “Traveling to Yuma provided us the training facilities to conduct expeditionary operations and proved to be a summertime leadership

laboratory as we thrived during 115-degree heat and a hurricane. The lessons learned here set a solid foundation for our future training and deployment.”

In addition to the scenario-driven exercise run by Expeditionary Operations Training Group, I Marine Expeditionary Force, the elements of the 15th MEU conducted unit-level sustainment training at Yuma Proving Grounds, Ariz. The sustainment training allowed the units to refine core skills, from individual fast rope and weapons employment, up to live-fire maneuvering at the squad level, all while operating in an unfamiliar environment.

Adding real-world complexity to the exercise were extreme heat as well as the threats of flash flooding and destructive winds caused by Tropical Storm Hilary. In response to the tropical storm, the 15th MEU planned and executed a destructive weather mitigation plan. This required detailed planning and synchronized actions of the MAGTF as an additional problem set to the scenario training. The 15th MEU moved personnel, aircraft, and equipment from expeditionary sites to hardened structures to protect them. Since Marine Corps Air Station Yuma and Yuma Proving Grounds are both located in open desert areas, the winds

Marines assigned to Company B, BLT 1/5, 15th MEU, maneuver through a field to board MV-22B Ospreys attached to VMM-165 (Rein), 15th MEU, during a Realistic Urban Training exercise at Fort Hunter Liggett, Calif., Aug. 24.



SGT SYDNEY SMITH, USMC

of Hilary gusted up to 65 mph at times, whipping sand and shaking buildings. Once given the “all clear,” the entire 15th MEU quickly redeployed units to resume normal operations, without a loss of training or capability.

“No plan survives first contact, and that held true for our original exercise timeline,” said Major Peter Shelton, 15th MEU air operations officer and the action officer for the destructive weather mitigation plan. “What the MEU was able to do in about 48 hours—plan, move people and aircraft, wait, and then resume—is remarkable. Though not a training objective, it showed what immense tasks the

MEU can undertake, and was a great repetition for us by simulating what could happen in the real world.”

The added friction spurred the need for the approximately 2,500 Marines and Sailors to integrate, collaborate and overcome obstacles they could face throughout the upcoming deployment. While RUT is the final land-based exercise for the 15th MEU, it is the first of four MEU-level predeployment training exercises that will be completed over the coming months.

1stLt Robert Nanna, USMC

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**Above: Marines with VMFAT-101, MAG-11, 3rd MAW, conduct a mass formation launch known as “flying the barn” to honor the squadron’s legacy on the day of its deactivation at MCAS Miramar, Calif., on Sept. 29. (Photo by LCpl Samantha Devine, USMC)**

**Right: LtCol Ryan J. Franzen, left, CO of VMFAT-101, MAG-11, 3rd MAW, and SgtMaj Jonas Johnson, center, the VMFAT-101 sergeant major, case their squadron’s colors during VMFAT-101’s deactivation ceremony at MCAS Miramar, Calif., on Sept. 29.**



LCPL SAMANTHA DEVINE, USMC



**Miramar, Calif.**  
**Marine Corps Deactivates**  
**Historic F/A-18 Training Squadron**

On Sept. 29, the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW) deactivated Marine Fighter Attack Training Squadron (VMFAT) 101, a historic F/A-18 Hornet training squadron. Since 1969, instructor pilots of the VMFAT-101 “Sharpshooters” have qualified combat aviators and sent them to operational squadrons worldwide.

The squadron commemorated the event by “flying the barn,” launching 18 aircraft in a single flight. More than 300 Marines, Sailors, veterans, family members and community supporters then gathered for a sundown ceremony to commemorate the squadron’s history and contributions to Marine Corps readiness.

“Pilots come to VMFAT-101, cut their teeth, and are transformed into aviation warriors,” said Colonel William J. Mitchell, the commanding officer of Marine Aircraft Group 11, 3rd MAW.

Since October 2019, VMFAT-101 has trained Navy and Marine Corps aviators as the only remaining F/A-18 Hornet Fleet

**For more than 50 years, instructor pilots of the VMFAT-101 “Sharpshooters” have qualified combat aviators and sent them to operational squadrons worldwide. (Photo by LCpl Samantha Devine, USMC)**

Replacement Squadron in the Department of the Navy.

“Thousands of aircrew have passed through the halls of VMFAT-101; fighter pilots, fighter radar intercept officers, fighter weapon systems officers, and it’s bigger than that,” said Brigadier General Robert B. Brodie, the assistant wing commander of 3rd MAW. “This squadron has trained more maintenance Marines than any other in the Marine Corps. It’s a holistic approach to ensure we are ready to fight and win.”

The training mission of VMFAT-101 will transfer to Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 323, a 3rd MAW operational squadron at MCAS Miramar. As outlined in the 2022 Marine Corps

Aviation Plan, the Hornet will continue to operate and provide combat capability until its complete transition to the F-35 Lighting II in 2030.

Brodie is an F/A-18 pilot and served as the commanding officer of VMFAT-101 from 2011 to 2013. He and Lieutenant Colonel Ryan J. Franzen, the final commanding officer of the squadron, were joined by 10 former VMFAT-101 commanding officers and two spouses representing their late husbands.

“We’re standing on the shoulders of giants,” said Franzen. “You helped shape the ‘Sharpshooter’ legacy.”

3rd MAW  


# The Case for Moral Vision

By LT Ian Clark, USN and LT Amy Ruhf-Brien, USN

In preparation for this article, we input the following query into a search engine: *How many decisions does a typical person make each day?*

The results ran the gamut. Some suggested a number as high as 35,000 decision points daily, while others offered a much more moderate 75-125. Whatever the truth, the reality is that we, as people, make a lot of decisions each day. Some of those decisions are mundane: *What will I eat for lunch? What television show will I watch? Will I respond to that pesky text message now or later?* Others, by contrast, are far more significant—some are even life changing. We might find ourselves asking: *Which medical treatment option should I pursue? Should I ask my partner to marry me? Should I make a career change?*

Those latter questions undoubtedly require greater discernment because their impact on ourselves and others is more significant. These decisions require us to seek out more information, talk to peers and mentors, avoid impulsiveness, and think through the consequences.

Within the context of the Marine Corps, those significant questions occur frequently, often carrying with them substantial impacts. For example, a decision made in combat may lead to death or injuries or could have sensitive political, strategic, operational, or tactical consequences. A decision made outside the



CPL MAVERICK MEJACABRERA, USMC

**Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear Defense Specialist Sgt David Hernandez, who serves with the Identification and Detection Marine Chemical Biological Incident Response Force, recites the oath of enlistment during his reenlistment ceremony aboard Naval Support Facility Indian Head, Oct. 13, 2017.**

context of combat may impact readiness, training, security, or the well-being of individuals and their families.

Enter ethics.

Ethics, at its most basic level, addresses how to make decisions well. It provides us with frameworks for how to uncover what is good and bad, right and wrong. Ethics helps us organize our values so that we can more clearly differentiate between the options that life offers us.

The prevailing ethical model that has long guided western militaries, including

the Marine Corps, is the “Just War Tradition.” This tradition, which was largely organized by early and medieval Christian thinkers such as Saint Augustine and Saint Thomas Aquinas, provides guidance for moral decision making in relation to war. This doctrine addresses both the just and unjust rationales for resorting to war (“jus ad bellum”) and the moral considerations directing the conduct of warfighters in battle (“jus in bello”).

Of course, many things regarding warfare have changed since the medieval period. Yet, the Just War Tradition has proven enormously resilient. Its underlying principles have changed little, and even today it serves as a primary basis for the laws of armed conflict as well as much of the Marine Corps’ warfighting doctrine. Marine Corps publication MCDP 1, “Warfighting,” speaks extensively of the moral character of war, suggesting that “any doctrine . . . that neglects these factors ignores the greater part of the nature of war.”

Likewise, MCDP 1-1, “Strategy,” devotes considerable time to “what moral criteria guide strategic decisions” and includes a section dedicated to Just War. The book also makes a central point on decision making, suggesting that “strategists must be able to reconcile what is necessary with what is just. The ‘just war’ theory provides a set of criteria that can help to reconcile these practical and moral considerations.” The document makes clear that this mode of thinking should be “understood by Marines at all levels of command both in the operating forces and the supporting establishment.”

In short, the Just War Tradition is a tool that enables Marines to make better decisions in the context of war. It is a doctrine worthy of study and is central to

**A Bougainville Disaster Response Joint-Agency worker hands supplies to Maj Joshua Culver, an operations officer for VMM-265 (Rein), 31st MEU, during a humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operation on Bougainville Island, Papua New Guinea, Aug. 12. The operation was in response to the eruption of Mount Bagana.**



CPL ABIGAIL GODINEZ, USMC



CPL JONAH LOVY, USMC

**RADM Brent W. Scott, the 19th Chaplain of the Marine Corps, speaks to Marines stationed at MCAS Beaufort, Feb. 3, 2016. The Mission of the CHMC is to oversee religious ministry in the Marine Corps. Principles such as the Just War Tradition, taught by Marine Corps chaplains, act as a guide to making necessary moral decisions during war.**

how the Marine Corps understands, plans and executes its warfighting mission.

But there is an issue that is often overlooked. The Just War Tradition cannot be understood merely as an isolated doctrine that arose spontaneously. Instead, it comprises a part of a more expansive moral vision for the world. Said another way, the Just War Tradition and its doctrinal components are not simply tools which Marines can employ on a case-by-case basis. They are guiding principles which enable us to ensure that there is continuity between isolated decisions and the pursuit of a broader understanding of what the future should look like.

To understand this concept a little more clearly, let's imagine a football game. That football game has rules that shape game play. Those rules ensure that the players' on-field behavior demonstrates restraint and that fair play perseveres, while also allowing outside observers—the fans—to make sense of what happens on the field. But rules are not ultimately why the athletes play the game or put themselves at risk. They do that because they possess a guiding vision for playing the game: They have a vision of themselves hoisting a national championship trophy and bringing glory to the city or school they represent.

Similarly, in war, Just War doctrine could be considered the moral rules of the game. But it is the greater sense of moral vision that guides and motivates the action: A clear moral vision generates motivation, commitment, morale, and selflessness. It is what makes the rules worthy of following.



LCPL SARAH GRAWCOCK, USMC

**The Just War Tradition and its doctrinal components are not simply tools which Marines can employ on a case-by-case basis. They are guiding principles which enable us to ensure that there is continuity between isolated decisions and the pursuit of a broader understanding of what the future should look like.**

### **What Is Moral Vision?**

When we speak of a moral vision, we are inviting Marines to consider what a more just and whole world looks like. In other words, we encourage Marines to think about what the world could be, not necessarily what it is. This vision, in turn, motivates them to action and helps to connect them to a bigger picture. It infuses decisions with meaning and purpose.

Let's consider another example. Imagine that you wanted to lose 15 pounds. You'd need to make several challenging decisions about what you eat and how you use your time. None of those decisions would be easy or particularly enjoyable. However, if you possess a

mental image of a fitter, healthier you, the sacrifices quickly become worth the effort. Your decision about what you eat has a greater sense of meaning: You're now making that decision with a clearly defined purpose in mind. You are not merely constraining yourself; you are enabling something better to be realized.

A moral vision is an ethical equivalent. In the Armed Forces, it is the thing that gives the Just War Tradition its clearly defined purpose and serves to inject it with meaning. It is a reminder that ethics is not merely a set of restrictive rules but instead something that contributes toward a better world.

For many people, this moral vision is cultivated through religious traditions.



CPL CARL M. RUPPERT, USMC

**Marines with 13th MEU and Sailors participate in a chapel service held aboard USS Makin Island (LHD-8), Jan. 22.**

Religions possess a moral vision that adherents use to guide their life and work. For people of faith, this moral vision typically relates to a yet-unrealized picture of harmony, respect, and peace. For example, the book of Isaiah, which Jewish and Christian adherents generally consider to be a prophetic text, speaks of a future where “the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat” (Isaiah 11:6). In other words, this moral vision for the future is one where both the strong and the weak can live in a manner that is free from fear and oppression. Visions like this guide everyday decisions to care for, rather than exploit, vulnerable and marginalized people. They encourage actions that reduce hostility and produce peace.

Not all moral visions are inherently religious. For example, the preamble of the Constitution of the United States imagines a “more perfect Union,” characterized by justice, tranquility, safety, human well-being and liberty. Absent the preamble, the Constitution becomes simply a guiding body of laws. But with the document’s moral vision, the Constitution becomes a roadmap for a better future reality. In 1996, General Charles C. Krulak, the 31st Commandant of the Marine Corps, wrote that “All Marines are expected to epitomize that which is good about our Nation and to personify the ideals upon which it was founded” and that there was “no room in the Marine Corps for ... situational morality.” In other words, the decisions that Marines make must be guided by a clear and abiding sense of right and wrong, which is shaped by a moral vision for the future.

### Marines As Moral Agents

Much of how we in the West think about the morality and ethics of war can be traced to a book called the “Summa Theologiae,” written by Saint Thomas Aquinas in the 13th century.

Within the “Summa Theologiae,” Aquinas addresses not only the direct question of warfare, which serves as the primary foundation for our *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* principles, but also the concept of military prudence (“*prudencia militaris*”). Defining prudence as “right reason about things to be done,” Aquinas proposes that military personnel are especially called to reason



MSGT REBECCA HEITE, USMC

**Silent Drill Platoon member LCpl Matthew O. Haynesworth II, performs at Silas High School in Seattle, Wash., on March 10. Marines can maintain spiritual fitness in a variety of ways, including through religion, meditation, community service and speaking to trusted professionals like chaplains.**

**Morality—and the choices which comprise it—is a non-negotiable element of what it means to bear the title “United States Marine.”**

rightly—that their decisions must be shaped and guided by some greater sense of what is good because their decisions are especially impactful.

Perhaps most importantly for our purposes, Aquinas writes that prudence must correspond with a “comprehensive end of human life.” By this, Aquinas means that military personnel must have a moral vision if their work is to be understood and the requirements which regulate it are to be adhered to. Prudence necessitates doing things toward a recognized “good end.” As Gen Krulak noted, there is no place in the Marine Corps for situational morality. Ours is a profession which demands a clear moral vision.

The Marine Corps makes it clear that all Marines are expected to participate in this effort. The Corps’ primary recruiting website, *marines.com*, indicates that “the demand of every Marine” is a willingness to “fight for a common moral cause on today’s battlefields and in future warfare,” and this language is echoed in the core values of honor, courage, and commitment. This serves as an important reminder that morality—and the choices which comprise it—is a non-negotiable element of what it means to bear the title United States Marine.

Marines who know and do what is right, even when no one is watching, are grounded Marines who understand their purpose as agents for moral good. Knowing and doing what is right is seldom easy, so drawing upon principles that can help build a foundation of integrity is essential. These principles may come from internal influences, such as abilities, achievements, beliefs, and experiences, or external influences, such as culture, religion, philosophy, and cause/purpose. These influences help to shape the moral vision, which enables Marines to live out their call as moral agents for good in the world and equips them to build a strong and resilient force.

### Spiritual Fitness

To instill core values, and the common sense of moral vision that underwrites them, into Marines, Gen David Berger, 38th Commandant of the Marine Corps,

noted that spiritual fitness is critical to the force. Taking a holistic approach to fitness, which includes more than physical fitness, the Marine Corps seeks to ensure that Marines are ready on all levels. Fundamentally, this enables the Corps to realize the vision set forth in “Warfighting” of not only a lethal force but a moral one.

Just as someone can strengthen their physical body through exercise, the unique proposition of spiritual fitness is that Marines are also capable of strengthening their intangible self. Just as one might go to the weight room in order to build body strength, spiritual fitness encourages Marines to regularly partake in activities that strengthen their moral compass, sense of inner strength, and connectedness to a larger purpose. For some, this includes participation in a religious organization. For others, it may mean adopting personal disciplines such as reading, meditation, community service, speaking to trusted professionals (such as a chaplain), or making intentional time for family.

Spiritual fitness helps to enhance personal and unit resiliency and well-being. Yet it is not merely a mechanism for augmenting a Marine’s ability to cope with life’s hardships. Instead, it helps

Marines actively maintain a connection to a guiding sense of something greater than themselves, which can and should shape their decisions.

Interpreted in this light, spiritual fitness can be understood as a doctrine and methodology that supports the Marine Corps’ efforts to fight with honor and conform to long-established principles of justice in warfighting.

### Going Forward

Decisions punctuate our daily lives, and it would not be wrong to suggest that much of who we are—and who we will be—is shaped by the decisions that we make, especially in times of crisis.

Decisions represent a moment of freedom—we possess the opportunity to select a path forward, and to shape our destiny. But decisions also have consequences, especially in the context of the Armed Forces. For Marines, those consequences can be immense.

Ethical frameworks like the Just War Tradition enable us to make better moral decisions in war. But for these frameworks to work and have meaning beyond simple compliance, we must be aware that they are there to protect and enable: namely, a moral vision for the future.

The Marine Corps, to its great credit, is a diverse community that consists of people with varying ideological, faith, and cultural positions. Nonetheless, there is widespread agreement that this moral vision can and should reflect greater peace, stability, and human flourishing than exists today. And indeed, those guiding hopes serve to better contextualize the Just War doctrine.

Fostering, maintaining, and actively engaging that vision is just as important today as it was in the time of Aquinas and other major ethicists. Perhaps, given the realities and potential consequences of modern warfare, it is even more important now.

*Authors’ bios: LT Ian Clark, CHC, USN serves as the battalion chaplain to 4th Recruit Training Battalion aboard MCRD Parris Island. He is a Ph.D. candidate in theological ethics at the University of Aberdeen, where his research explores issues in contemporary military ethics.*

*LT Amy Ruhf-Brien, CHC, USN serves as the battalion chaplain to 1st Recruit Training Battalion aboard MCRD San Diego.* 🇺🇸



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# A Battle Long Forgotten

## Marines Fought Valiantly to Protect Guam During 1941 Japanese Invasion



By Maj Richard A. “Rick” Stewart,  
USMC (Ret)

**A**s the Marine Corps has shifted its focus toward forward deployed expeditionary forces at strategic points in the Pacific, particularly Guam, it is worth looking at what occurred there in the first few days after Pearl Harbor was bombed in 1941.

Because Guam fell quickly, histories of the period have largely treated the event as little more than a footnote. As a result, very few people are aware of the brief but furious and courageous defense by fewer than 100 Marines, Sailors and Guamanian Insular Guardsmen in the early morning hours of Dec. 10, 1941, at the Plaza de Espana in the capital of Agana. All lacked combat experience and some Guardsmen

were without weapons. The Guardsmen had never fired their three machine guns. Outnumbered more than four to one, outgunned and facing almost suicidal odds, the steadfast defenders displayed extraordinary courage in standing their ground. None deserted their post, and all performed their duty.

The Marine NCOs and junior enlisted defending the Plaza displayed exceptional heroism despite believing they had no chance of survival, even if captured. As hundreds of Japanese troops descended on the Plaza, Sergeant George Shane, leader of the Marine Insular Patrol defenders was quoted in “Captured: The Forgotten Men of Guam” as saying, “On a scale of one to 10, our pucker factor was a 15 at that instant.” While the Japanese would claim their occupation of Guam

was “bloodless,” official historian Samuel Eliot Morrison noted, “Both the Americans and Chamorros put up a brave resistance and twice drove the attacking force back with rifle and machine-gun fire, losing 17 of their men but killing and wounding a much greater number of Japanese.”

Guam, an American territory since 1898, is the southernmost island in the Marianas chain and is a mountainous island with jungle 20 miles long and a width of 12 miles or less. The population in 1941 was some 23,000, consisting mainly of native Chamorros and a few hundred Americans, mostly Navy and Marine personnel, civilian construction workers and a few employees of Pan Am who operated a seaplane Clipper service and small hotel for passengers transiting the



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**By the terms of the 1922 Washington Naval Conference, the United States was not permitted to fortify Guam, so there were no coastal gun emplacements in 1941. As a result, the defensive capabilities were wholly inadequate to defend the island.**

George J. McMillin, who was responsible for civil and military administration but not tactical command of Navy and Marine forces. CAPT McMillin realized that the island could not be successfully defended against a determined Japanese invasion. To avoid unnecessary loss of lives, he planned to surrender the island quickly with minimal resistance should the Japanese land. As the island's chief executive, he had direct authority over the Marine Insular Patrol whose force of 28 Marines supported by Navy corpsmen performed police duties at Agana and around the island. The Insular Patrol of 30 enlisted U.S. Marines armed only with pistols was commanded by McMillin's military aide, Captain Charles S. Todd, USMC. Its day-to-day operations were directed by the assistant chief of the Insular Patrol, Sgt Shane. Marines and corpsmen were assigned to posts around the island with native members of the Patrol. The remaining Marines were at the Guard barracks in Agana. There they would play a key role, along with the Navy administered Guam Insular Force Guard and other Marines and Sailors in the fight against the Japanese in the Plaza de Espana.

The U.S. Naval force consisted of 20 Naval officers, six warrant officers and 220 enlisted Sailors. The force operated from a small Piti Naval Yard in Apra Harbor, the old minesweeper USS *Penguin* (AM-33) with four officers and 75 enlisted men; two old yard patrol craft, each with a five-man crew; and a small disabled oiler, USS *Robert L. Barnes* (AG-27), used for training mainly Chamorro messmen for duty with the U.S. fleet. In addition, there were naval staff at the governor's office and a wireless naval communications facility, Radio Agana, with 22 Sailors not far from the Plaza in Agana. There was also a smaller naval wireless station 2 miles from Agana called Radio Libugan, a facility staffed with eight enlisted Sailors and used for finding the Japanese fleet. There was a naval hospital in Agana with a staff who provided medical care to military personnel and local populace.

The Navy-administered Guam Insular Force of 222 native Guardsmen, including bandsmen and hospital medical orderlies, were housed in Agana. They were organized and led by their training officer,

Chief Boatswain Mate Robert B. Lane, and under the overall command of Commander Donald T. Giles, the governor's civil aide and second in command. This small force protected the Piti Naval Base and Government House while patrolling around the island. They wore Navy uniforms and had Navy ranks. Their armament included three .30-caliber machine guns, four Thompson submachine guns, six Browning automatic pistols, 50 .30-cal. pistols, a dozen .22-cal. rifles, and 85 Springfield '03 rifles marked "For Training Only. Do Not Fire." As there were not enough weapons, some Guardsmen were not armed. The force had been expanded only a few months earlier, lacked training in the use of their weapons and had never fired their machine guns.

The island's Marine Barracks detachment of six officers and 118 enlisted Marines (less 31 assigned to the Marine Insular Patrol) were quartered in a two-story barracks at Sumay on the Orote Peninsula, located on a bluff overlooking Apra Harbor. Commanded by Lieutenant Colonel William Kirk MacNulty, USMC, they were armed with M1903 Springfield rifles and 10 Lewis machine guns. Though the Marine detachment was the principal ground defense force, they had no mortars, artillery or anti-aircraft guns.

Prior to Pearl Harbor, there was no effort to dig entrenchments, roadblocks or beach defenses. The only entrenchments were the rifle range butts on the Orote Peninsula overlooking Apra Harbor. With war looming, all military and civilian dependents were evacuated in October. The Marine Sumay detachment's pre-war activities, aside from occasional rifle range practice, were performing weekly parades and close order marching and providing music and transport for the Naval staff. Duties usually ended at noon. No tactical training or maneuvers were conducted. After duty hours, many Marines hung out at Ben's Bar in nearby Sumay town where beer was 10 cents. The bar was operated by a Japanese man whom everyone called Ben Cook (who turned out to be a Japanese Naval officer working as a spy). As one detachment Marine commented in Roger Mansell's book "Captured: The Forgotten Men of Guam," pre-war Guam was "truly a paradise."

As tensions with Japan rose with war

**An aerial view of the U.S. Naval Station in Sumay Bay, Guam, prior to the start of World War II, taken in the 1930s. There were no American air defenses on the island when Japan invaded Guam in 1941.**

Pacific. The capital and largest city is Agana on Guam's north coast, located about 5 miles north of Apra harbor. In 1941, there was no airfield or American air forces on the island. By the terms of the 1922 Washington Naval Conference, the United States was not permitted to fortify Guam, so there were no coastal gun emplacements in 1941. As a result, the defensive capabilities were wholly inadequate to defend the island.

This fact was painfully obvious to the Governor of Guam, Navy Captain

**McMillin conferred with his officers and informed them that he had obtained permission from Admiral Hart to give up the island without resistance when the Japanese landed. MacNulty disagreed and insisted that his Marines would not surrender without a fight.**

warnings came from Washington, Japanese observation planes from Saipan flew over Guam daily. LtCol MacNulty met with the Pan Am Station Manager, Charles Gregg, during the last week of November and informed him that a Japanese attack was imminent and, if it happened, his Marine force would be in command of all government personnel with plans to evacuate American civilians. The Marines began improving defenses at their rifle range. They were issued ammunition and kept their weapons and ammo under their beds. The command was making plans to cache a week's worth of food at select remote locations to enable personnel to hold out for rescue by the Navy.

When the invasion did occur, there was no time for MacNulty to coordinate defensive actions. While the Americans still hoped that ongoing negotiations with Japan in Washington would forestall war, on Dec. 6, Governor McMillin ordered the destruction of all classified documents on the island to prevent them from falling into Japanese hands.

While this was happening, the Japanese were making final preparations for the invasion of Guam. The principle invasion unit was the South Seas Detachment under Major General Tomitaro Horii. It included the 144th Infantry Regiment and

other units from the 55th Division, with a total of 4,886 men who were aboard ships in the Bonin Islands. They would be accompanied by a supporting force, the 370-man strong 5th Company (also called the 5th Special Force) of the 2nd Maizuru Special Naval Landing Force, commanded from Saipan by Naval Captain Hiromi Hayashi.

The two forces would be transported to Guam on nine transports escorted by the Japanese Fourth Fleet's heavy cruiser *Aoba*, destroyers *Yuzuki*, *Kihuzuki*, *Uzuki* and *Oboro*, four gunboats, five subchasers, a minesweeper squadron and other auxiliaries, with air support from the 18th Naval Air Corps at Saipan. This oversized landing force was being employed because the Japanese believed (strangely because of their careful surveillance of the island) that there were 300 Marines and 1,500 armed native defenders on Guam. Major General Horii assumed that the main resistance would be by the Marine detachment on the Orote Peninsula.

For Guam, the war commenced at 5:27 a.m. on Monday, Dec. 8, 1941, (Dec. 7 at Pearl Harbor across the International Dateline) when the Navy Communications Office at Agana received a teletype message from Admiral Thomas C. Hart, commander of the Asiatic Fleet tersely

stating "Japan Started Hostilities. Govern yourself accordingly." Guam was also notified of the Pearl Harbor attack. The radio operator immediately notified McMillin and MacNulty. There was an immediate attempt by radio to alert the minesweeper USS *Penguin*, which was on patrol around the island, but the ship's radio was not being monitored at that time. McMillin notified Commander Donald T. Giles, who was responsible for the Insular Guard, and his military aide, Capt Todd, that Pearl Harbor was being attacked. Various posts were notified by phone until Japanese saboteurs or bombs cut the phone lines about 7:30 a.m., which caused the use of runners. Todd was directed to have his Insular Guard Force arrest all Japanese who were quickly rounded up and put in the Agana jail. The governor also ordered the residents of Agana, Agat and other towns to evacuate and most fled into the jungle and mountains.

USS *Penguin* tied up at its buoy about 8 a.m. where a launch arrived with a message informing the captain, Lieutenant J.W. Haviland, of the Pearl Harbor attack. At 8:27 a.m., 18 Japanese seaplane bombers and fighters attacked various points including the Libugan radio station, without effect, and Agana, Sumay and USS *Penguin*. Three Japanese fighters made two passes at *Penguin*, whose crew tried to fight back with their anti-aircraft gun. One Japanese plane was hit but not observed to go down. The gun crew commander, Ensign White, was killed by strafing. Three bombs exploded close to the ship, inflicting leaks in the hull. Three crewmen, including Haviland, were injured. Haviland ordered the ship to be

**A Pan American Sikorsky-S-42 Clipper landing in Sumay, Guam, prior to World War II. The Marine detachment stationed in Sumay regarded pre-war Guam as a paradise.**



COURTESY OF NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



USN

**Sailors aboard USS *Penguin* (AM-33) set up a defensive position in Apra Harbor to push back approaching Japanese forces.**

scuttled and the seacocks were opened while the crew boarded a life raft or swam to shore. The Pan Am hotel was also attacked and destroyed, with loss of civilian life.

For Marines at Sumay, the day began with the usual early reveille followed by breakfast. Many Marines were still in the barracks when the Japanese bombed the barracks at 7:27 a.m., even though MacNulty had been alerted before 6 a.m. Some Marines ran out in skivvies and began firing their rifles at the low flying planes. Three Marines were seriously wounded while running across the golf course to seek protection in nearby thickets. A bomb exploding 10 feet from the barracks' radio shack mortally wounded Corporal Harry E. Anderson, who died at the hospital a few days later.

That afternoon, the Japanese also bombed several coastal villages, some of which would be landing points for the Japanese. Until about 5 p.m., more bombs were dropped around Agana but only one building was destroyed. Their bombing of Agana was opposed by anti-aircraft fire from a machine gun that lacked a tripod and was manually mounted on a ledge atop the old Spanish fort above Agana.

Manned by Marine Private First Class Knute Hanson, he was certain that he downed at least one Japanese aircraft.

That evening McMillin conferred with his officers and informed them that he had obtained permission from Admiral Hart to give up the island without resistance when the Japanese landed. MacNulty disagreed and insisted that his Marines would not surrender without a fight. It was agreed that only a token resistance would be offered, and that the Marine detachment would defend the Orote Peninsula and the approaches to Sumay and Apra Harbor. The Guam Insular Guard and Insular Patrol along with Sailors from *Penguin* and from the Government House would be concentrated at the Plaza in Agana where they would set up defenses. Preparations would be made to destroy equipment to prevent it from falling into Japanese hands. The Guam Insular Guard was recalled to the Plaza at Agana and Todd was instructed to recall the remote Insular Patrol Marines and native Guardsmen, but he disregarded the instructions. He and Sgt Shane drove to the outposts but only instructed the native Patrol members to assemble at Agana. According to author

Tony Palomo's "An Island in Agony," Shane disagreed with the decision, feeling that the Marines at those posts would have a better chance at the Plaza. However, events proved Todd was correct.

**D**uring the night, CAPT McMillin received a report that the Guam Insular Patrol had apprehended three men who had landed in a dugout canoe during the night near Ritidian Point at the northern end of the island. They were brought to the government house for questioning by McMillin and his staff. Local Chamorros identified the men as Chamorros who were native to Saipan but had relatives on Guam. The men stated that they were sent to be interpreters for the Japanese landing force which would land the next morning at Duncas Beach, about a mile up the shore from Agana. When asked by McMillin why they were offering this information, they said that on Saipan the Chamorros were treated like slaves by the Japanese. They apparently believed what they said even though the invasion did not actually start until the day after. Both McMillin and MacNulty were skeptical and thought the infiltrators were trying to draw the Marines away from the Orote Peninsula.



**A view of the Government House (above) across from the Plaza de Espana in Guam. In the days before the war, a Navy ceremony is held (opposite page) near the Governor's Palace on Guam. (Photos courtesy of National Park Service)**

No effort was made to set up defenses at Duncas beach.

Bombing resumed at 8:30 a.m. the following day against the same targets, along with the Government House in Agana and some scattered air attacks at villages around the island. The Marine barracks was damaged along with the Pan Am Air installation and the Standard Oil tanks, which had already been hit and set afire the previous day. Marines from the barracks were deployed in the rifle range butts. Machine-gun and rifle fire was directed against the Japanese planes from Orote and Agana, but no hits were observed.

**T**hat evening, the Japanese invasion fleet departed the island of Rota for Guam. Because General Horii assumed there could be almost 2,000 armed defenders, possibly with heavy weapons, his plan divided the landing force into three components. The Hayashi Naval 5th Special Unit with an Army reinforced battalion called the Tsukamoto Force would land at Tumon Bay about 4 miles northeast of Agana, then move quickly down the coast road to capture Agana. The Hayashi Force would then move to secure the installations at Apra Harbor. The main force with two thirds of the reinforced 144th Regiment, called the Kusunose Force, would land at a beach on the southwest coast near Merizo and advance north to overcome any

resistance at Orote and meet up with the northern force. A smaller detachment from the main force would land in the east at Talofoto Bay and move inland to protect the heights above Apra.

About 1 a.m. on Dec. 10, on the orders of McMillin, the small force of defenders began setting up their defenses in the Plaza. Sgt Shane and the 11 Marines of the Insular Patrol prepared defensive positions with sandbags, ditches and overturned benches in front of the Government House on the southwest side of the Plaza. Lane led the three platoons of Insular Guards, about 80 men with a few *Penguin* Sailors, who were deployed with little cover around the Plaza. A machine gun was assigned to each platoon. One, under Guardsman Pete Cruz, was positioned without cover at the critical northeastern corner near the cathedral to cover the narrow street to the north. He was assisted by Guardsman Vincente Chargualaf to whom Cruz handed his pistol to provide cover when he changed ammunition belts. They were unexpectedly joined by an 8-year-old boy, Ramon Camacho, who emerged from the cathedral intending to take photos. Cruz tried to warn the boy away but he stayed and assisted Cruz in changing the ammo belt while Chargualaf covered them with a pistol. Across the Plaza at the northwestern corner in front of Dorn Hall, Guardsman San Nicholas with two men set up their gun to cover

the Agana jail and elementary school on the north side. The third machine gun under Guardsman Joe Perez and crew was set up to cover the southeastern corner and area south of the cathedral. The Guardsman and Sailors with rifles were deployed around the Plaza using the cover of hedges where possible.

The Japanese landing plans went slightly astray but did not affect the ultimate outcome. The transports began readying their landing barges for debarkation at 1 a.m. on Dec. 10. In the south, the main Kusunose Force landed at Merizo but split into two parts because there were no direct roads. This significantly delayed their move toward Sumay and the Orote Peninsula. The northern Tsukamoto Force found its way through the coral reefs and landed at Tumon Bay at 2:25 a.m. as planned. These troops almost immediately encountered and fired up a jitney carrying a Chamorro family, killing most of them. They also captured two Sailors from *Penguin*.

The Hayashi Special Naval Landing Force, which debarked from a different transport, could not find the reef opening, so it moved southward around the steep cliffs at Oca Point where they found a channel into Agana Bay. Firing flares to guide the landing craft, they landed about 3:30 a.m. on Duncas Beach less than 2 miles from the Plaza in Agana. As the boats approached shore, the splashing



was overheard by Insular Guardsman Juan Perez on beach patrol. He fired at the first boat then ran to Agana to warn Governor McMillin. The landing force encountered six Sailors from the USS *Penguin*. After a short exchange of fire, the Americans surrendered and were then wired together and killed by bayonets. Farther north at Tumon Bay, the Army Tsukamoto Force was delayed by waiting for the Hayashi Force, unaware they had landed 2 miles farther down. This delay prevented them from reinforcing the Hayashi force.

Around 4 a.m., McMillin received a report of flares at Dungcas Beach. Assuming a Japanese landing was underway, he issued orders to all stations to carry out their assigned missions. A *Penguin* Sailor patrolling the San Antonio District between the Plaza and the beach reported a large landing force to Lane at the Plaza. Japanese troops entering that district began sweeping the streets with gunfire.

That shooting was heard at the Plaza, and some fires were seen. The Marines, Sailors and Insular Guard were in their defense positions around the Plaza, which

was ringed with buildings, including a Catholic church, Guard barracks, public works, police station and Government House. This limited the Japanese approach to mainly a narrow street from the north and streets from the northwest and south. There was little protection, mainly hedges in some spots. Their three machine guns were set up to cover two intersections by the church, the road from Agana Heights and an intersection by the police station. There were fewer than 100 defenders. Marine defenders in the Plaza included Sgt Shane and PFCs Harris Chuck, Robert Hinkle, Frank Nichols, William Bomar, Hal Burt and John Kaufman from the Sumay barracks. Kaufman had joined earlier from the hospital and apparently fought alongside the Guards and *Penguin* sailors. Insular Patrol PFC's Richard Ballinger and Garth Dunn guarded the rear entrance to the Government House.

As the defenders nervously awaited the Japanese who were infiltrating the streets toward the Plaza, Shane ordered PFC Chuck to take a few Marines to the garage and armory and destroy every-

Burt, he commandeered a van and drove to the garage where the three disabled the vehicles with hammers and then broke the lock to the armory and set it afire with gasoline.

Hayashi's men moved rapidly approaching the Plaza on a narrow street from the north alongside the hospital and a cathedral and also from the northwest. Some of his force were moving to circle around the Plaza to approach from the northwest and cut off retreat to the south. About 5:15 a.m., the Japanese crammed in the narrow street by the cathedral and marched almost shoulder to shoulder with their bayoneted rifles facing forward into the plaza. Guardsman Juan Perez opened fire with his Browning Automatic Rifle on a soldier crossing the Plaza, causing others to run for cover. Guardsman Pedro Cruz, manning the machine gun at the northeastern corner near the cathedral, saw Japanese begin sneaking into the plaza from the north and opened fire. As the Japanese entered the Plaza in force, the defenders opened fire on the advancing Japanese front ranks, killing and wounding many. The Marines defending Government House joined the firing. The intense fusillade caused the Japanese to fall back, reform and then advance again. The defenders continued heavy fire, causing the attackers to withdraw a second time. Reforming again, the Japanese advanced from the north and northwest,

**The Marines defending Government House joined the firing. The intense fusillade caused the Japanese to fall back, reform and then advance again. The defenders continued heavy fire, causing the attackers to withdraw a second time.**

swarming into the Plaza with fastened bayonets and leveling heavy fire at the defenders. They also rolled in a pack howitzer.

The firing remained intense as the defenders fell back. At the northeast corner of the Plaza covering the cathedral approach, Pedro Cruz continued firing his Lewis gun, with the boy helping change belts, until Japanese return fire killed both Roman Camacho and Vicente Chargualaf. Cruz withdrew and was soon captured. At the northwestern corner, the Lewis gun operated by Guardsman San Nicholas and his two-man crew fired on the Japanese. After some exchange of fire, they dropped the gun and fled under Dorn Hall to escape but were met by a large group of Japanese soldiers between Dorn Hall and the Guard barracks where Nicholas escaped up a cliff behind the Government House but his loader, Angel Flores, was shot and killed.

Todd issued orders to the surviving defenders to withdraw to the protection of the thick-walled Insular Guard barracks on the western side. The Insular Patrol Marines and some defenders ran to that shelter including Radioman Second Class

## As a tense quiet prevailed over the Plaza, a Japanese near the cathedral, using a bullhorn, called out in broken English, “You are surrounded. You must surrender. Send your Captain!”

Robert Epperson, who fired his pistol at the attackers until his ammunition was expended. *Penguin* sailor Electricians Mate First Class Ralph Gwinnup was shot in the ankles and dragged by his comrades to the barracks. Other Japanese began to flank from the south side of the Plaza.

With the Japanese overrunning the Plaza and the surviving defenders in retreat, Governor McMillin, who had by then received telephone reports of other Japanese landings, realized that resistance was futile. Deciding to surrender, he telephoned MacNulty to not resist. About 5:45 a.m., to prevent an imminent slaughter, Giles crawled out in front of Government House and ran to a nearby Chevrolet and sounded three horn blasts. He believed they would understand and cease firing, which they did as did the Japanese. However, there was immediately some brief gunfire behind Government House.

There is some dispute as to the reason but most likely was because Chief Petty Officer Malvern Smoot and a civilian, John Klugel, came from behind Government House in effort to escape.

Smoot fired his pistol and hit several Japanese before he and Klugel were killed in a hail of gunfire. Two sailors from Government House, Joseph Blaha and Lyle Eads, exited and tried to join the defenders but were wounded and initially presumed dead by the Japanese. To be sure, they bayoneted Blaha and started to bayonet Eads, but he rose and raised his hands. Both were taken to the hospital and survived. PFCs Bomar and Burt, who had ridden with PFC Chuck to sabotage the armory and motor pool, jumped out of his van on the return trip to try to escape. They were soon captured by a Japanese patrol and executed, by some accounts by beheading. In words of McMillin in his later formal report, “The Insular Force



CPL HAILEY D. CLAY, USMC

Today, Guam is a strategic Pacific outpost for U.S. military forces, containing a Marine Corps Base and joint Navy-Air Force Base.

Guard stood their ground, and opened up a fire with machine guns and rifles hot enough to halt the invading force for a short time. The situation was simply hopeless, resistance had been carried to the limit.”

**A**s a tense quiet prevailed over the Plaza, a Japanese near the cathedral, using a bullhorn, called out in broken English, “You are surrounded. You must surrender. Send your Captain!” At the direction of the governor, Giles and Lane stepped out and crossed the Plaza unharmed to parlay. They were marched through the San Antonio district to make contact with the Commander of the Naval landing force, Hayashi, and returned about a half hour later with the Japanese commander. The remaining defenders in the Plaza put down their weapons and began to rise and raise their arms, the pre-dawn darkness masking their fears of harm and execution. Before the Japanese commander arrived, a squad of Japanese soldiers entered the governor’s quarters and took McMillin captive. He was made to remove his jacket and trousers then marched to the Plaza where the Japanese were assembling their prisoners in three ranks, covered by machine guns. Prisoners were prodded by bayonets and savagely beaten into line.

Those who had taken refuge in the barracks were ordered by a Japanese officer to come out and surrender. The prisoners were ordered to remove their clothing. PFC John Kaufman was not removing his underwear fast enough; the enemy slashed open his abdomen and he fell over and died.

Hayashi, McMillin and Commander Giles entered the Government House escorted by a Japanese guard with rifles and fixed bayonets. Because none of the Japanese with Hayashi spoke English, a local Japanese civilian, Mr. Shinahara, was brought to act as the interpreter. McMillin indicated that he was prepared to sign a declaration of surrender if the Japanese agreed to respect the civil rights of the people of Guam and that the surrendered military would be accorded the rights under international law. Hayashi agreed and surrender terms were drafted and signed by McMillin about 7 a.m. on Dec. 10. The Japanese laid out an American flag in the Plaza and shined flashlights on it to signal the surrender to their planes overhead.

By now, dawn was breaking and the surrendered defenders in the Plaza could see bodies of Japanese and some defenders strewn around the Plaza. The Marines had lost three killed, all after being

captured or surrendered. Fortunately, none of Shane’s Marines defending Government House were killed in the actual fighting. The Navy had lost two and the Insular Guard had lost three plus the civilian volunteer, Roman Camacho. Despite the surrender agreement, the fate of the prisoners remained uncertain. More than once, they were stood up as if facing a machine-gun firing squad then told to sit down. Chief Petty Officer Robert O’Brien from *Penguin*, who could speak Japanese, overheard Hayashi say that he wanted to execute the prisoners because they had killed more than 200 of his men but was overruled by his Fleet commander. A formal count of Japanese losses was not reported but the island’s mortician, Pharmacists Mate First Class John Ploke recorded in his diary that he later counted more than 200 dead Japanese. Other sources reported that only one Japanese sailor was killed and six wounded which seems unlikely given the fusillade that met the Japanese advance into the Plaza. At the same time, more than 200 Japanese dead appears high as it would have been half the 400 men from the Landing Force and there were still swarms of Japanese in and around the Plaza after the surrender.

After a time, the prisoners’ clothes

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◀ Pictured: A fragment of the Berlin Wall resides in Chapman University’s Liberty Plaza, reminding students that the fight to stay free is central to the American spirit and to the human spirit.

**Lieutenant Governor of Guam, Joshua Franquez Tenorio, gives welcoming remarks at the Hasso Inalâhan memorial in Inalâhan, Guam, July 13, 2022, in remembrance of the 1941 invasion of the island. After the invasion, thousands of Guamanians were forced into prison camps until they were liberated by U.S. forces in 1944.**

were returned. The American officers were taken and held in the Navy hospital. The other Plaza prisoners, along with those in Agana who had surrendered were rounded up and sent to the cathedral. The wounded were taken to the hospital for treatment.

At the Sumay barracks that morning, the Marines were advised by the executive officer, Major Donald Spicer, to take cover in the surrounding jungle and not congregate at the rifle range butts west of the barracks. This is according to a Pan Am manager, James Thomas, who was in direct contact with MacNulty. MacNulty realized that surrender was imminent and that with daylight, Japanese aircraft would be swarming overhead with the Orote Peninsula a prime target. Congregating the Marines would attract the attention of strafing aircraft and result in unnecessary loss of life. Many Marines scattered into the nearby jungle for cover while some remained at the barracks. A roadblock ordered by MacNulty was never fully implemented.

**H**aving secured the Plaza and ended resistance, Hayashi formed a detachment of his men and march directly over a paved road to secure the Piti Navy Yard. He then began marching to Sumay. Shortly after leaving Piti, his force encountered a few Marines of the Insular Patrol who were unaware of the surrender and opened fire. The Japanese quickly surrounded and disarmed the Marines without any injuries to either side. Hayashi's detachment then marched quickly to the neck of the Orote Peninsula where they were supposed to join and support an attack by General Horii's main force.

At the barracks, MacNulty had been informed by McMillin of the surrender agreement directed not to resist. The Marines were called back from the surrounding area and assembled. A Marine bugler sounded retreat and the American flag was lowered amidst many tears. Hayashi proceeded to the barracks where



LCPL GARRETT GILLESPIE, USMC

he accepted the surrender of the Marines from MacNulty. The Marines were initially stripped naked and made to sit on the adjoining golf course and then later taken to the cathedral where Japanese soldiers from Tumon Bay had taken over guard duty. The Marines around the island were alerted and came in or were captured by Japanese patrols unharmed. Over the next few days, the Sailors and Marines who tried to hide in the jungles and mountains turned themselves in or were captured by roaming patrols. Six Sailors from the Agana radio station remained at large hoping for rescue by a Navy task force and hidden for a time by loyal Chamorros.

The battle for Guam, though brief, was over. The Marines had four killed and 12 wounded from the bombing and Plaza battle. The Navy had lost nine and 25 wounded while the Guam Insular Force lost four including the civilian volunteer and five wounded. On Jan. 10, 1942, the prisoners were loaded aboard ships bound to Japan where they were imprisoned. Back on Guam, the Japanese were determined to find the missing Americans issuing warnings that if they did not turn themselves in, they would be executed when captured. Five were eventually caught and executed. One Sailor, Radioman First Class George Tweed, was hidden and moved around by loyal Chamorros, evading constant Japanese patrols. In June 1944, he was rescued by the destroyer USS *McCall* (DD-400) just

prior to the Marine landings on Guam. The Hayashi detachment stayed on Guam and was wiped out by Marines during its recapture.

Today, the people of Guam are U.S. citizens who require and deserve American protection. World War II showed that the Chamorro people are loyal, brave and would courageously support defense of their island. There also may be lessons we derive from the 1941 fall of Guam. Guam is an important strategic U.S. possession in the western Pacific with a large Air Force base and major naval base. Air superiority is crucial as Guam still lacks any substantial ground force defense capability and would require rapid reinforcement if threatened or attacked. Guam is key to our western Pacific defense strategy and a likely defense mission for Marine Forces Pacific to ensure 1941 is not repeated.

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**The Marines were called back from the surrounding area and assembled. A Marine bugler sounded retreat and the American flag was lowered amidst many tears.**

# “Six Days in Fallujah”

## Long-Delayed Video Game Delivers Realistic Depiction of Iraq Battle

By William Treuting

War has forever been entwined with popular culture. Artists have attempted to replicate, with great attention to detail, iconic scenes of countless battles. Homer’s “Iliad” was spread throughout antiquity as poets recited the mythological history of the Trojan War. Many of today’s Marines were first exposed to the history of the Corps through literary accounts such as “Helmet for My Pillow: From Parris Island to the Pacific,” by Robert Leckie or Eugene Sledge’s “With the Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa.” With the creation of film, and movies such as “Saving Private Ryan,” storytelling evolved, redefining how war was presented to the public. Perhaps it was in-

evitable, then, that video games—as a form of entertainment—would take up the mantle of trying to depict war within popular culture.

As long as storytellers, writers, artists, filmmakers, and game designers tried to replicate war, controversy closely followed. Painters have been accused of glorifying war. Poet Walt Whitman claimed, “The real war will never get in the books.” Director Steven Spielberg’s “Saving Private Ryan” was labeled by a writer from the *New York Observer* as a “pornography of violence and cruelty.” A World War II-themed videogame directed by Spielberg, titled “Medal of Honor,” became so mired in controversy that it was almost pulled from release before now being recognized as one of the greatest first-person shooters on the

PlayStation platform. Ultimately, the question as to whether war should be depicted in popular culture is moot—as storytellers and creators will always adapt their depictions of war with evolving media. Rather, we should be asking how to best depict war in popular culture. Enter “Six Days in Fallujah.”

### The Fight

On Nov. 7, 2004, the city of Fallujah, Iraq, ignited into a conflagration as Marines and soldiers of U.S.-led coalition forces launched Operation Phantom Fury to rid the city of militant Islamic extremists in what would be later called the Second Battle of Fallujah. The insurgents had turned the city into a fortress complete with tunnels, trenches, spider holes and improvised explosive devices of all



A cinematic cutscene from “Six Days in Fallujah” depicts a small squad of Marines moving through the city.



**“Six Days in Fallujah,” a first-person shooter (FPS) game, simulates the chaos of urban warfare. (Photo courtesy of Victura)**

varieties. Further complicating the coalition assault were the thousands of civilians who were unable to evacuate the city and remained hidden on every block. In the ensuing one month, two weeks, and two days, the Marines and members of the coalition fought in the bloodiest instance of urban combat in the 21st century—only to be surpassed almost two decades later with the ongoing war in Ukraine. The cost was terrible. Close to 100 Americans died and more than 500 were wounded. In addition, there were over 60 coalition casualties, the insurgents were largely annihilated, and at least 800 civilians were killed. Controversy closely followed the battle,

as various media outlets reported on the use of white phosphorus and depleted uranium munitions, the extensive civilian casualties, the destruction wrought upon the city, and both real and supposed atrocities committed by both coalition and insurgent forces. Despite this, the Second Battle of Fallujah has become enshrined within the pantheon of Marine Corps battles—further demonstrating the combat prowess of the Corps against all enemies.

Among the wounded Marines was Sergeant Eddie Garcia, who was seriously injured by an insurgent-fired mortar. His fellow Marines managed to stop the bleeding and bring him to safety at a

nearby field hospital before he was transferred to Baghdad, then Germany, and eventually to the United States. Upon returning home, Garcia reached out to Peter Tamte—a video game developer with Atomic Games.

The two had met before the battle. Garcia had been sent by the Marine Corps to be their subject matter expert for various training simulations that Atomic Games was developing. Throughout developing these Marine Corps training simulations, the two got to know each other quite well, with Garcia providing keen insight into how Marines fought and operated. However, when Garcia approached Tamte after his return home,



COURTESY OF VICTURA

**Sgt Eddie Garcia (left) fought in the Battle of Fallujah and wanted to develop a game based on his experience in combat. During game development, former infantry officer Capt Read Omohundro (right) describes the Marines’ encounter with the enemy during the battle.**



COURTESY OF VICTURA

it was not to develop another training simulation—he wanted to develop a video game based on the battle he had just fought.

The idea of a game quickly went from concept to reality. As the veterans of the Second Battle of Fallujah began returning to the United States when their deployments ended, Tamte and Atomic Games began conducting interviews with dozens of Marines who were willing to share their experiences. The interviews were expanded to include Iraqis who survived the battle. Recurring motifs from these interviews were the uncertainty and intimacy of close-quarters combat, the fear of what lurked behind the next door, the utter necessity of teamwork, the difficulty of fighting a radical enemy that could easily blend into a terrified civilian populace, and the combat fatigue induced by constant fighting and witnessing death regularly. It soon became apparent that the game needed to be grounded in realism and authenticity—both in gameplay and storytelling.

The game's development was formally announced in 2009 and was planned for a 2010 release. However, problems began to arise. The controversy of the Battle of Fallujah and the public distaste for American intervention in the Middle East reared

their heads. Some argued that the game's subject was too recent to tastefully be depicted in a video game; others argued that the game would negatively depict Muslims by their worst stereotypes and devolve into a racist kill simulator; and some accused the developers of creating a propaganda piece that glorified a conflict that many viewed to be unjust. The controversy spawned by this criticism pushed the game's publisher, Konami, to suspend its role in the project in April 2009. Within two years, Atomic Games went into bankruptcy—putting the future of "Six Days in Fallujah" into question.

Despite this series of obstacles, Tamte held onto hope. He eventually formed a new gaming company, Victura, to carry the mantle of producing "Six Days in Fallujah," with developers from games such as "Halo" and "Destiny" jumping on board to help finish the project. Within two years, in late June, an early access version of the game became available for purchase via Steam. Since its release, "Six Days in Fallujah" has undergone a few updates, and the completed version will be available in 2024. Currently, the game is limited to online cooperative mode with teams of up to four people. However, a single-player campaign is in development. Based on the available

content, we can begin to disseminate how "Six Days in Fallujah" authentically depicts war as a means of popular culture and to what degree it maintains authenticity.

### Gameplay

Upon starting the game, the player is presented with a short film (with a History Channel-esque vibe) describing the situation with period footage, photography and interviews. Loading screens include images of veterans and Iraqi survivors accompanied by their quotes describing the battle. From this onset, the player realizes they are part of a real story with real people—not a generic war story where the characters are made up. In doing so, the game is trying to place players into the shoes of someone who took part in this battle—putting extra emotional weight behind the experience they are about to have.

After assembling a team in the co-op mode lobby, players are then thrust into a generated situation to accomplish a randomized mission, such as locating and destroying an enemy supply cache, securing an enemy stronghold, or repelling waves of attacks supported by vehicle-borne IEDs (VBIED). To replicate the fear of not knowing what lurks

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COURTESY OF VICTORA

**Above and Below: Players are provided with a unique experience each playthrough. Gameplay includes environmental immersion, differing map designs and relentless enemies.**



COURTESY OF VICTORA

behind every door, “Six Days in Fallujah” employs a map-design randomizer feature that creates new maps every playthrough: buildings will not appear in the same place, entrances will be along different walls, enemies will not hide behind the same doors, etc. This randomizer is perhaps the strongest feature of gameplay, as it forces the players to handle each

situation uniquely, rather than memorizing a cookie-cutter scenario as in most other first-person shooters.

The learning curve for playing “Six Days in Fallujah” is steep and the gameplay is unforgiving—reminiscent of the famed game “Oregon Trail”: you can easily die at any time, for any reason, in any possible way. Snipers fire with deadly

accuracy should you expose yourself for too long; mortars can wipe out an entire team with a single round; the enemy will fix your team with machinegun fire while a VBIED rolls up your flank and detonates behind you; insurgents will fire at you between cracks of war-torn buildings; your team can easily be caught in the fatal funnel of every

doorway; the list is endless. This is not your typical run-and-gun game. The weapons feel weighted, and the recoil must be accounted for when pulling the trigger. Wounds must be bandaged; injured teammates must be assisted to get back into the fight; and ammunition can only be replenished at your AAV. Additionally, to quote Murphy's law of combat operations: "Friendly fire isn't," which was a hard-learned lesson while clearing buildings. Many first-person shooter gamers may not be used to the slower pacing of the game; however, many gamers—some of whom served in combat—have applauded the game's pacing as being more realistic.

You learn quickly that teamwork is the only way to accomplish missions—and even that does not guarantee success. If you try to move too fast, your team can get caught in an ambush; move too slow, the enemy can gain the initiative and outmaneuver your position; stay too close together, a single grenade can wipe your team; and spread too far out, you risk being defeated in detail. From my own experiences, of the 30 games played by myself and with two teammates, we were defeated within two minutes on 18 attempts, lasted longer than five minutes on 11, and accomplished the objective once. However, with proper coordination,

patience and a basic understanding of the principles of fire-and-maneuver tactics, players can fight and win in the labyrinth of Fallujah.

Ultimately, "Six Days in Fallujah" is an experience akin to a horror-survival game that strives to ground its gameplay in a higher level of depth and realism. To an extent, the game is a teaching tool as much as it is a means of entertainment. Yes, not every feature is perfect as some reviewers have pointed out, but with the game still being in development, time allows for the edges to be smoothed out for greater historical accuracy. However, in an era where Nicki Minaj is a playable character in "Call of Duty" and where "Battlefield V" bastardized World War II with historically inaccurate character customizations, "Six Days of Fallujah" is a breath of fresh air for those who want a historical experience when gaming. And to those who question as to whether this game is coming out "too soon," I respond with this:

After over 20 years of fighting two wars, many Americans cannot name a single battle or recall any cities in Iraq or Afghanistan besides maybe Baghdad. To them, places such as Fallujah, Marjah, Mosul, Basra, or Kandahar mean nothing. They cannot recall any place where their tax dollars sent our country's finest to

fight and die in wars that were fought for reasons that are increasingly unclear to the general public. What "Six Days in Fallujah" has done is keep the Iraq War in the public consciousness, to remind us that these wars involved real people who had to live with the consequences of being in monumental historical situations. It portrays war as a human experience and attempts to do so as accurately as possible. If "Six Days in Fallujah" can encourage a young gamer to reflect upon the struggles of the Iraq War, watch an educational film on the subject, or read histories or biographies from survivors, then the game has served its purpose.

For now, gamers must be content with the available cooperative mode. Only with the release of a single-player campaign can we truly understand the full extent to which "Six Days in Fallujah" can be used to tell the story of one of the Marine Corps' most hard-fought battles in Iraq.

*Author's note: I would like to thank, Danny Roldan and Ricc Donate-Perez, for playtesting "Six Days in Fallujah" with me to help write this article.*

*Author's bio: William Treuting is an editor and content creator for the Marine Corps Gazette. He is a cohost of the MCA's "Scuttlebutt" podcast and director of MCA Films.*

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# Attitude and Spirit

## Marine Reconnaissance Veterans Combine Efforts to Inspire the Next Generation



By Kyle Watts

**A**board Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., one training company is tasked with producing a coveted and demanding Marine specialty—elite among the elite.

Reconnaissance Training Company (RTC), nestled within the School of Infantry-West, holds sole responsibility for transforming Marines into 0321 Reconnaissance Marines. Prospective candidates endure a rigorous training pipeline. They must volunteer for a shot at the advanced qualification, and RTC representatives extend the opportunity

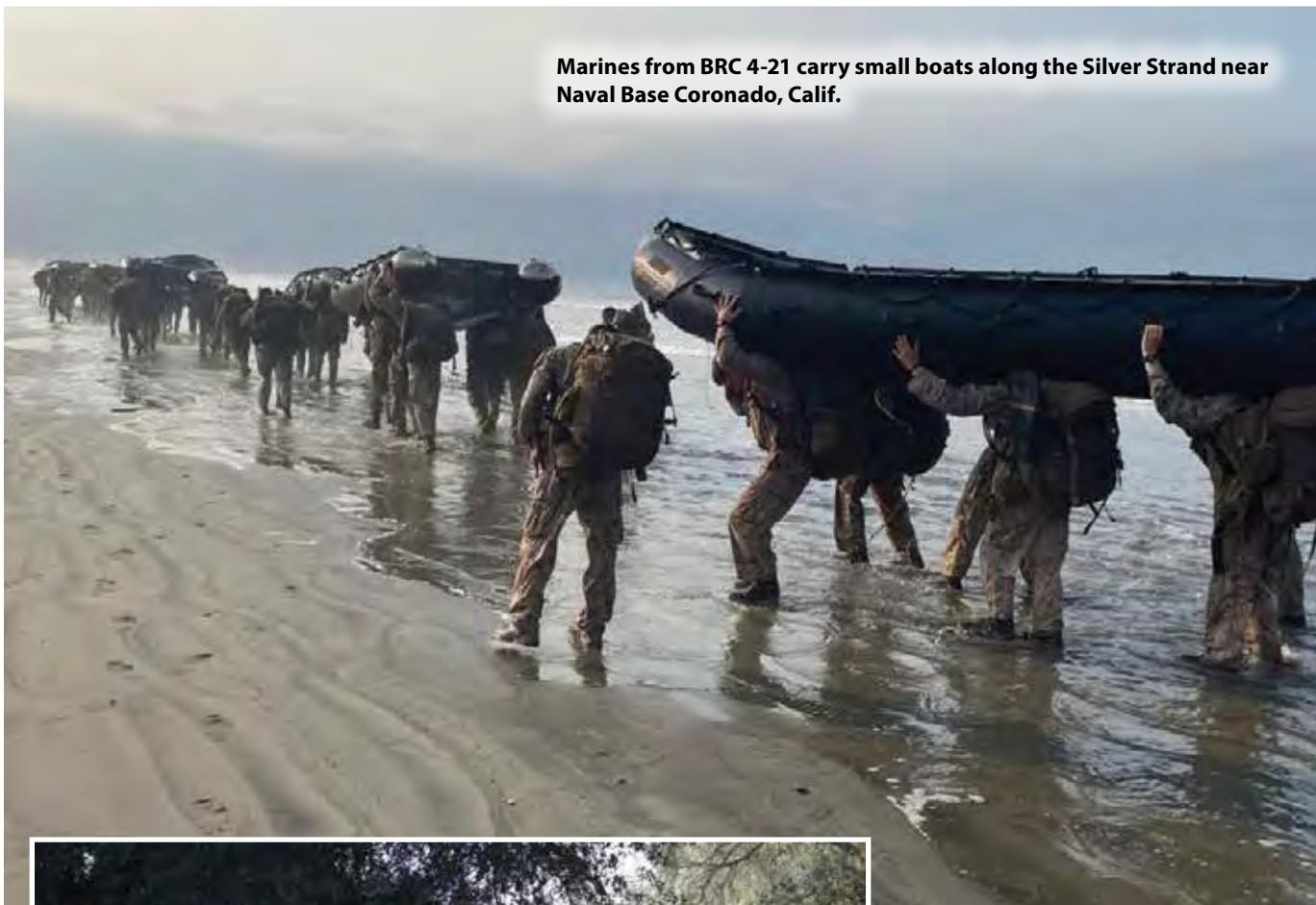
to Marines of nearly every Military Occupational Specialty (MOS).

Following completion of basic combat training, volunteers enter an additional 18 weeks of training and assessment. The Recon Training Assessment Program is a grueling five weeks, pushing Marines to the limit and screening out any who will not make the cut. The Basic Reconnaissance Course (BRC) follows. In 13 weeks, the same amount of time spent in Boot Camp, RTC staff completes the transformation.

From the moment they step on the yellow footprints at Parris Island or San Diego, to graduation day at BRC,

Recon Marines endure nearly 40 weeks of continuous training to earn their MOS. BRC graduates have only just begun their journey, however, and remain unqualified to enter the Fleet Marine Forces. An additional six months of training must be completed. All 0321s earn their jump wings at Basic Airborne Course and Multi-Mission Parachute Course, their dive qualification at Marine Combatant Diver Course, and pass through two weeks of hell at Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape (SERE) School. Only then is a newly minted Recon Marine fully qualified for assignment to a fleet Reconnaissance Battalion.

**Marines from BRC 4-21 carry small boats along the Silver Strand near Naval Base Coronado, Calif.**



COURTESY OF RECONNAISSANCE TRAINING COMPANY



COURTESY OF RECONNAISSANCE TRAINING COMPANY

**Above: Marines complete their final movement to extraction during the patrol phase of BRC 4-21. The movement includes 8 miles of arduous terrain with weapons and gear shared among the class.**

**Opposite Page: BRC 4-23 begins a training evolution called, “the longest day” at MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif. (Photo courtesy of Reconnaissance Training Company)**

The advanced training and stringent requirements exist as a result of the community’s experience in combat and their mission as the Marine Corps special operations-capable force. The activation of Marine Forces Special Operations Command (MARSOC) came about largely through the reassignment of Force Recon or Recon Battalion Marines to the MARSOC pilot program known as “Det One” in 2003. Again, several years later, 1st and 2nd Force Recon Companies saw wholesale deactivation and redesignation to create the genesis of the Marine Special Operations Battalions. Today, Marine Raiders exist as an elite force of warriors operating under the purview of U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). They are, in effect, Special Operations forces who happen to be Marines. Recon Battalions exist within the USMC chain of command, operating at the will of forward deployed commanders.

Recon Marines have always been, and remain today, the special operations-capable force of the Marine Corps. The community traces its lineage back to the Amphibious Reconnaissance Battalion of World War II. The Vietnam War, brought about the most significant evolution in Recon doctrine and cemented their role

Marines with All-Domain Reconnaissance Detachment, 13th MEU, move across the deck of training vessel USNS *Atlas* as part of a maritime interdiction operation training exercise on Aug. 31, 2022.



SGT BRENDAN CUSTER, USMC

Marines undergoing the Reconnaissance Training Assessment Program receive their final instruction prior to a night land navigation exercise.



COURTESY OF RECONNAISSANCE TRAINING COMPANY

in the Corps' mission. It's been 50 years since Recon procedures and tactics were written, but the lessons learned remain critical today. Despite the advent of new technologies, weapons and entirely new battle spaces, the key attributes that define a Recon Marine or corpsman remain unchanged and are amplified as the Recon community looks toward the future.

The Corps began a dramatic reshaping and reorganization several years ago under Force Design 2030 (FD2030). The advance technologies and new adversaries shaping tomorrow's war initiated changes felt across the fleet, affecting each Marine, down to the individual rifleman. While many MOSs now look significantly different, or even simply no longer exist, the Reconnaissance community discovered in its future a return to its roots established in the jungles of Southeast Asia. Retired Force Recon Marine Jose "Pep" Tablada III, currently serves in a crucial role to the advancement of FD2030. Tablada spent 13 years as a Force Recon Marine, deploying in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and being named the Force Recon Team Leader of the Year twice before his medical retirement in 2005. Since then, Tablada has held a series of civilian roles within Marine Forces Pacific (MARFORPAC), presently working as the deputy assistant chief of staff for Operations of all Marine Corps forces in the Indo-Pacific region. He was part of a team hand-picked by General David H. Berger, the 38th Commandant of the Marine Corps, tasked with devising the strategies for future warfare and working with I and III Marine Expeditionary Forces to implement force modernization and forward posturing in the Pacific.

"Recon Marines primarily focus on deep reconnaissance, battle space shaping, and direct action precision raids," Tablada explained. "In the traditional sense, much of the deep recon and battle space shaping missions remain the same as in Vietnam. What is very different is the fight we are in today is much, much more advanced. You'll hear detachments getting deployed today being called, 'All-Domain Reconnaissance,' and the reason why that's different is because Marines and Sailors today have the technology and training to bring cyber, signals intelligence, and space capabilities to the fight. It's amazing what today's Reconnaissance Marines can do."

Detachments from Recon Battalions deploy with each Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), as well as in support of numerous other specified tasks around the world. While the naming of these detachments varies depending on the



**Marines with Force Reconnaissance Platoon, 31st MEU, perform a visit, board, search and seizure (VBSS) exercise aboard dock landing ship USS *Germantown* (LSD-42), on March 7, 2021. (Photo by LCpl Joseph E. DeMarcus, USMC)**

parent command of the MEU, the function is identical. A host of "enablers" deploy alongside them, such as cyber or signals intel-trained Marines, allowing this special-purpose force to conduct a wide variety of missions. The detachments train for maritime-specific direct action raids, such as gas and oil platform seizure and "Visit, Board, Search, and Seizure" (VBSS) to support interdiction operations of a naval vessel. Technologies such as satellites and drones assist them in locating the enemy, understanding what they are doing, and directing other friendly forces within the battle space. The ideas surrounding deep reconnaissance in a future war present a different set of challenges.

"The next war in the Pacific will look different from anything we experienced in the Global War on Terror," Tablada

said. "Small units will be dispersed across a large area. They will have to be independent in austere environments, on their own for long periods of time, and possessing their own means of mobility. There will be limited or no resupply, and no Forward Operating Base to return to in many instances. Imagine a Recon detachment having its own long-range maneuver platform, like a modernized PT boat from WW II. They go out in the waterways and the littorals of the Western Pacific searching for maritime targets. They're going to use their all-domain capabilities to find those targets, fix those targets, create targeting data, then hand it off to the bomber or the submarine or the cyber strike to destroy it. This doctrine is new in terms of the expansiveness of what will be expected from a Recon detachment. They will have to operate

truly independently of the commander's intent. Not only will they have to complete the mission, but they will have to figure out how to sustain themselves for longer periods. They will have to be smart, resilient, and professionally aggressive with a mature sense of tactical judgement."

As new doctrines progressed, Colonel Robert J. Coates, USMC (Ret), recognized a potential area for improvement in the Recon training pipeline. During more than 32 years on active duty, Coates served as the officer in charge of the Amphibious Reconnaissance School, commanding officer of 1st Force Reconnaissance Company, and later as CO of the MARSOC pilot program, "Det One." In 2016, Coates was inducted into the USSOCOM Commando Hall of Honor. He is one of only nine Marine inductees since it was established in 2010. Other inductees include well-known Marines: Evans Carlson, James Capers and John Ripley.

Now in retirement, Coates continues serving the Marine Corps as a mentor to deploying MEUs and Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Forces, including their respective Recon Battalion detachments. He understood the role of deep reconnaissance was not going away, and the only place in history to find the experience was Vietnam. Throughout the Global War on Terror, the mission set dealt to Recon focused heavily on direct action raids against insurgent leadership. They simply did not operate within the battle space in the same way Marines did during Vietnam, nor will they be expected to in the future.

Coates remembered his own Recon instructors as a young Marine growing up, veterans of the early 1960s and 70s, immensely proud of their service. They exacted standards of perfection in appearance, discipline and physical fitness. Even years later when he was a colonel in charge of 1st Force Recon, Vietnam veterans continually impressed him by visiting the company offices and attending company functions in order to remain connected to the community and support active-duty Marines. Being a Marine remained the most defining and profound experience of their lives, and despite the decades passed, they continued to unselfishly give back to the Corps. As Coates considered the details of creating a professional military education (PME) on Vietnam-era reconnaissance, and who to lead it, he requested help from a personal friend and mentor: legendary Recon Marine, Sergeant Robert Buda.

Buda's name is no stranger to *Leatherneck* readers. Stories of his combat exploits are told in "First to Fight:

First Force Reconnaissance in Hue City" (February 2018), and "The Flying Ladder: Emergency Extractions and the Lifesaver from the Sky" (April 2018). During 13 months in country with 1st Force Recon Company, Buda took part in 46 long-range recon patrols along the Laotian border, six combat dive missions, and earned two Bronze Stars with combat "V." He extended his tour to remain in country, but received his third Purple Heart in January 1969 and was sent home.

As a team leader on deep reconnaissance patrols among large North Vietnamese Army (NVA) formations and staging areas, Buda faced decisions and situations that seem insurmountable. His experience and point of view offered the perfect vehicle to communicate the lessons learned from Vietnam, serving as a living link between the past, present and future of Marine Reconnaissance. Buda developed a class to present to the students of BRC. He based the content on a series of his patrols that best illustrated the role of Recon, the discipline and attitude so vital to success and the types of challenges Marines could one day face in combat. To get the class financially backed and implemented, the RTC cadre turned to Jose Tablada. In addition to his senior role with MARFORPAC, Tablada serves as the president of the Marine Recon Foundation (MRF), a nonprofit organization doing impressive work within the community.

MRF is fully staffed by volunteers—primarily of retired staff noncommissioned and commissioned officers. Even though they exist on behalf of a relatively small contingent of active duty or veterans, the organization has accumulated astounding support. MRF maintains over 325,000 followers between Facebook and Instagram. They operationally support,



**Below: Sgt Robert Buda, center, stands with Col Robert J. Coates, USMC (Ret), center left, after receiving a paddle from the Reconnaissance Training Company in honor of his service at the BRC 3-23 graduation ceremony in July. Buda's two sons, right, and the sheriff from Buda's home county in Illinois, far left, also attended the graduation.**



COURTESY OF ROBERT BUDA



Marines take part in the Recon Challenge at MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., sponsored by the Marine Recon Foundation. The 14th annual event took place in April. Teams of two complete a combat equipment surface swim off the Pacific coast (below), then continue over land across Camp Pendleton (left) for more than 26 miles while carrying a combat load over 50 pounds. Each team bears the name of a fallen Recon Marine, honoring their memory. (Photo courtesy of Marine Recon Foundation)



COURTESY OF MARINE RECON FOUNDATION



COURTESY OF MARINE RECON FOUNDATION

Members of the Marine Recon Foundation gather around legendary Reconnaissance Marine, Maj James Capers Jr., USMC (Ret), seated center.

**Sgt Robert Buda, left, and Cpl Sam Carver, right, prepare for a long-range recon patrol at An Hoa, Vietnam, in November 1968.**

coordinate, and when necessary, finance a seemingly endless list of programs that provide tangible and immediate help to Reconnaissance Marines, Special Amphibious Reconnaissance Corpsmen, and their families.

The foundation offers reoccurring programs, including retreats for wounded veterans and Gold Star families, and the annual “Recon Challenge” in California. They also provide emergency support to Marines in crisis; for example, helping rebuild the life and home of a Marine and his family after fire destroyed their house or covering the funeral expenses for a Marine lost to suicide and establishing college investment accounts for his children left behind.

The foundation’s final line of effort is dedicated to promoting and preserving the legacy of the Recon community. They accomplish this task through written narratives, audio and video recordings of veterans to capture their experiences, and sponsoring mentorship events where veterans are brought in to speak with active-duty Marines.

Major James Capers, Lieutenant Colonel George “Digger” O’Dell, and Col



COURTESY OF ROBERT BUDA

Robert Coates are a few of the Marines who participate in mentorship events. Master Sergeant Earl Plumlee, USA, also attends. Before receiving the Medal of Honor as an Army Special Forces soldier, Plumlee served as a Reconnaissance Marine, earning Recon Team Leader of the Year in 2008. He credited his gunfighting skills to his time with Force Recon.

“A lot of Americans don’t know Marine Recon history,” Tablada said. “A lot of Marines don’t know Marine Recon

history, and frankly, some of the young Marines and Sailors in Recon don’t know the rich lineage and storied history of their community. We are brought up to be silent professionals. We don’t have a lot of books, there’s no calendars, we aren’t talking on the news. A lot of people just don’t really understand what Marine Reconnaissance is, so through our mentorship program, we send these legends of our history, these senior mentors, down to the active-duty Marines in the fleet or at the schoolhouse to talk to them about their experiences and lessons learned in combat.”

Through the mentorship program, MRF coordinated with RTC staff and arranged for Bob Buda to travel to Camp Pendleton and present his pilot class. The first PME took place in July for a BRC class nearing graduation. Buda walked the students through the evolution of recon tactics in Vietnam, explaining some of the tragic events that led to the successful implementation of standard procedures, such as operating in larger teams, and the immediate action of extreme violence and huge amounts of fire power on enemy contact to stun the enemy and give the team a chance to escape. He covered several specific long-range Recon missions in which he took part, including the missions covered by *Leatherneck* in previous stories. These case studies presented the students with real situations that can be faced in combat, and the types of challenges they could encounter.

“When you’re out on a long-range Recon mission, the terrain and environment will often be harder to deal with than the enemy,” Buda stated. “It’s just extreme hardship, and you have to learn to develop the right attitude in your head.”



COURTESY OF ROBERT BUDA

**Sgt Robert Buda, standing far right, with his team “Moose Peak” in November 1968.**



COURTESY OF MARINE RECON FOUNDATION

**Left: Recon legend LtCol George "Digger" O'Dell, USMC (Ret), spoke as the guest of honor at the graduation of BRC 1-23 in January.**

**Below: Recon Marines on patrol in Vietnam return enemy fire with their M60 machine gun.**



COURTESY OF MARINE RECON FOUNDATION

Marines from 2nd Reconnaissance Bn, BLT 1/9, 24th MEU, conduct a Helo-casting mission out of the back of a CH-53, and a closed-circuit dive during sustainment training in Djibouti.



GYSGT JAMES FRANK, USMC

HM3 Taylor Hale, left, a special amphibious reconnaissance corpsman, and Sgt Trevor Lynch (right), a Recon Marine assigned to 3rd Reconnaissance Bn, 3rdMarDiv, participate in a Marine Corps Combat Diving Supervisors Course on Camp Schwab, Okinawa, Japan, May 20, 2020.

The class was so well-received that RTC staff invited Buda back the following month to present to the students of the Recon Team Leader's Course. This more senior group of warriors also included USSOCOM Special Operations Forces personnel from other branches of service. Buda tailored his presentation to highlight the vital role the team leader plays in the success or defeat, life or death, of their team.

Combat decision making occupied a central theme in the team leader's course presentation. To open the discussion, Buda presented the group with a case study on one of his patrols where a Marine was killed by enemy fire after the team encountered a NVA antiaircraft gun that was turned on them. The Marines successfully eliminated the gun with nothing but their organic small arms, the only Force Recon team known to have



CPL SAVANNAH MESIMER, USMC

accomplished such a feat. Despite the victory, Buda faced numerous decisions that day that as the team leader, only he could have made. His choices held direct and immediate sway over the lives of his teammates. To this day, he wrestles with the choices he made, debating if they were correct and if he should have done something differently. These circumstances and thought processes were candidly presented to the students to

demonstrate the kinds of situations they will face in the field.

"The most important concept we try to push into the students in BRC, and more importantly the team leaders, is to implant and enhance the concept of the recon brotherhood and the proper team spirit, which is vital to conduct real long-range Reconnaissance missions in the most hostile and challenging environments in the world," said Buda.



COURTESY OF ROBERT BUDA

**Sgt Robert Buda stands alongside the Marines of BRC 3-23 following his first presentation of a class covering the evolution of Marine Recon in Vietnam and the lessons learned for the future.**

“Attitude and team spirit; those words are easy to say, but the team leader must develop those in order to succeed.”

To close his presentation, Buda highlighted the importance of training your replacement and discussed the warrior who raised him in the field. Buda served as a junior Force Recon Marine under Lawrence H. Livingston. Livingston eventually retired as a giant of the Corps; a Major General, two-war veteran, and recipient of five Purple Hearts, four Bronze Stars, a Silver Star, and a Navy Cross. In Vietnam, Livingston was a staff sergeant who taught Buda how to run point on patrols, and eventually, how to lead a recon team in the jungle. When the Corps plucked Livingston from combat to return home for officer training, he selected Buda to replace him as team leader. Livingston passed away in 2018 at the age of 77. Buda dedicated his presentation in Livingston’s memory.

With the experience of these two classes, Buda continues working to improve the lesson content for future iterations. Tablada and the MRF are com-

mitted to sustaining this type of activity as part of their historic preservation line of effort and the Recon Mentor Program. At a minimum, Buda hopes to continue presenting the class as a standard PME included in the biannual team leader’s course.

Marines of every MOS take pride in our history and bear the responsibility of honoring the service of those who went before. The Recon community today exemplifies an enduring truth; no matter what may change in weaponry or technology, Marines today fight as part of the same spirit and enduring legacy, and Marines of eras past are their backbone, offering experience and wisdom from combat that no one else can provide. There are many warriors from Vietnam, like Bob Buda, who volunteer their experience today for the good of the Corps. The Recon Marines preparing for tomorrow’s war will reap immense benefit from hearing his firsthand account of what they will face in combat.

“At the end of the day, it isn’t going to matter how many new accoutrements you

have that make you pretty, what rank you are, or how many accolades you may have achieved,” Buda reflected. “At the end of the day, when you’re out of water, out of ammo, you’re starving, surrounded by bad guys, can’t get extracted, soaked by rain, covered in bugs, mud, and shrapnel wounds, the *only* thing that will sustain you in that environment is if you have deeply cultivated the proper attitude in your team, where they look to each other in those absolutely destitute conditions and someone cracks a contagious smile. You can’t talk. Everything has to be done through hand signals and mental telepathy, but everyone is smiling at each other thinking, ‘I’m ready, and we are still in this fight. Love you brother.’”

*Author’s bio: Kyle Watts is the staff writer for Leatherneck. He served on active duty in the Marine Corps as a communications officer from 2009-2013. He is the 2019 winner of the Colonel Robert Debs Heinl Jr. Award for Marine Corps history. He lives in Richmond, Va., with his wife and three children.* 🇺🇸



CPL TANNER PITTARD, USMC

**GySgt Shannell M. Styczynski, an instructor at the Logistics Operations School, was honored as the Formal School Instructor of the Year at the Marine Corps Association's inaugural Training and Education Awards Dinner on Aug. 10, in Arlington, Va. The award was sponsored by the MCA and Dominion Energy.**

## **Camp Johnson Marine Receives Instructor Award**

Camp Johnson, N.C.-based Gunnery Sergeant Shannell M. Styczynski was recently recognized as the Marine Corps' top Formal School Instructor for her achievements in the 2023 academic year. For nearly three years, Styczynski has served as an instructor at the Marine Corps' Logistics Operations School, where she teaches entry-level, intermediate, and advanced courses on logistics and motor transport operations to enlisted Marines and logistics officers. During her time as an instructor, she has enhanced the quality of the academic experience for more than 4,600 Marines.

During her career, Styczynski has served in various capacities, including Okinawa, Japan, with Combat Logistics Battalion 4 (CLB-4), Afghanistan with CLB-3 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, and recruiting duty in Appleton, Wis. Following her tour on recruiting duty, Styczynski transferred to Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif.,

where she served with 1st Battalion, 5th Marines as motor transportation chief. She was the first female Marine to serve in that unit.

Wherever she served, Styczynski excelled, earning multiple awards, citations, certificates, and possessing a government license that certifies her to drive a variety of tactical and logistical vehicles, fuel tankers, heavy equipment and a dump truck. However, despite all her achievements and noteworthy experiences, she has had a very important mission in mind: becoming a motor transportation instructor. Throughout the years, Styczynski had identified many deficits within her MOS and wanted to correct them through teaching.

"I wanted to help the [motor transportation] MOS," said Styczynski. "I wanted to make a difference ... If you come to the formal learning school, you get to correct those shortfalls and teach people what they don't know here so in the fleet they can become more successful."

Styczynski said her fellow instructors

often share their best practices and ideas with her. While she uses a variety of methods to engage her students and adapts the lesson plans based on the types of students she encounters, Styczynski said the most powerful tool that an instructor can possess is passion.

"I care," said Styczynski. "If you walk into a classroom and if you think it is the worst class and that it does not [need to be taught], you still need to walk into that class and make it seem like it is the most important class."

Despite her accolades and being recognized at a Marine Corps Association awards ceremony by the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, Styczynski says her biggest win as an instructor is when students who have graduated from one of the classes she's taught is calling or emailing her about a question they have or if they need a solution to a problem.

"I don't give [former students] the answer, and I don't allow them to use me as the 'easy button' but that lets me know that they're comfortable enough to reach back out, and they're looking for what right looks like."

CWO-2 Bryan Nygaard, USMC

## **Marine Wins DOD's Spirit of Hope Award**

Captain Jergen "Cam" Campbell never imagined his name would be mentioned in the same sentence as late comedian Bob Hope. But Campbell, who enjoys doing standup and is doing an Armed Services Arts Partnership comedy boot camp on weekends, was recognized as the Marine Corps recipient of the Department of Defense Spirit of Hope Award for 2023 on Sept. 14, at the Pentagon.

Created in honor of Hope, a devoted United Service Organizations performer, the award is given to individuals and organizations that epitomize the selfless service and dedicated commitment to service members.

"It's humbling to be held in the same regard," said Campbell, 38, who is currently assigned to Headquarters Marine Corps as a uniformed advisor to the Suicide Prevention Capability.

Before arriving at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., in July, Campbell served as the manpower officer and Suicide Prevention Program officer for Marine Aircraft Group (MAG) 12 at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan. He was nominated for the work he did there to



CPL SANTICIA AMBRIEZ-STIPPEY, USMC

**Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, Ashish S. Vazirani, presents The Spirit of Hope Award to Capt Jergen D. Campbell at the Pentagon’s Hall of Heroes in Arlington, Va., on Sept. 14.**

boost morale and integrate prevention efforts, but he is quick to say it was a team effort.

Colonel Derek Bannon was the commanding officer of MAG-12 when Campbell was in Iwakuni.

“He became interested in taking care of the individual Marines,” Bannon said. “Regardless of rank, regardless of position, it was very easy to go talk to Capt Campbell. He would easily share what he’s been through.”

But, according to the colonel, Campbell never spent time complaining about his own past difficulties. “It was always about the individual he was talking to.”

While in Japan, Campbell helped launch a Team Iwakuni Resiliency Huddle to build relationships among Marines and civilians assigned to Marine Corps Community Services by meeting during lunch every two weeks. He hoped to connect members of the Operational and Stress Control and Readiness Team (OSCAR) with other prevention stakeholders, including counselors, chaplains and Navy medical personnel. They talked about what was working, what needed improve-

ment, and how they could work to prevent a range of harmful behaviors. One initiative was to offer positive outlets for Marines to decompress and spend time with one another.

Campbell and his prevention partners organized open mic nights at local restaurants and at the base chapel to give Marines, Sailors, families, and civilians a chance to express themselves through comedy, poetry and music. They also held Iwakuni castle runs every week where servicemembers and civilians—including some of the Resilience Huddle participants—ran or hiked up 1,700 feet to “earn the sunrise together,” Campbell said. While building total fitness, the castle runs also gave Marines a reason to make good choices the night before the run; for example, declining a night out at the bar because they had to be up at 4 a.m.

Campbell’s dedication to suicide prevention and strengthening cohesion stems from his personal experience. He joined the Marine Corps in 2002, getting permission from his parents to join at 17 and serve his country in the wake of 9/11.

“I decided I would rather die for some-

thing rather than continuing to live for nothing, which is what I was doing,” Campbell said.

The native of the Hampton Roads area of Virginia had some scrapes with the law as a teen and had dropped out of school after the eighth grade. He earned a GED diploma at 16 thanks to the Virginia National Guard Commonwealth Challenge Youth Academy, a quasi-military environment that helps at-risk youth. Campbell plans to volunteer as a mentor with them while he is back in Virginia.

Campbell started his career as a field radio operator, eventually deploying to Iraq in September 2004. The first of his three children was born two months later; his wife was a Marine field radio operator at the time. After serving as a drill instructor, becoming a staff sergeant, and taking some college classes, Campbell applied for the Marine Enlisted Commissioning Program. He was promoted to gunnery sergeant while in school, earned his bachelor’s degree from Old Dominion University, and then graduated from The Basic School.

His first duty station as an officer was at the Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake in California, and he experienced difficult moments. He was a geographical bachelor the first year and felt isolated as one of only a few Marines on the base.

“I was too officer for the enlisted; I was too enlisted for the officers,” Campbell said. “Then I was in the middle of the desert by myself.”

He remained highly distressed “for too long without seeking help,” he said. He had more than one night where he had had too much to drink and felt so low that he contemplated suicide.

He finally sought the help he needed, and the professionals helped him make sense of what he was experiencing. He was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress, which surprised him because he didn’t think his tour in Iraq justified that. But the therapist told him: “I’m not diagnosing you for your time in; I’m diagnosing you for your childhood.”

When General Robert Neller, the 37th Commandant of the Marine Corps, wrote “We are all ‘broken’ in our own way—and we all need help at times,” in a letter to Marines in 2019, it resonated with Campbell. He quit drinking and he started looking for positive ways to spend his time. He started PT nights for the Marines and families at China Lake, building the same types of connections forged in the initiatives he would later spearhead at Iwakuni.

“We had to take care of each other in a different way there,” Campbell said.

The Communication Strategy section at Iwakuni tapped Campbell to appear on Armed Forces Network broadcasts to promote healthy outlets and suicide prevention, impacting more than 3,000 personnel aboard the installation.

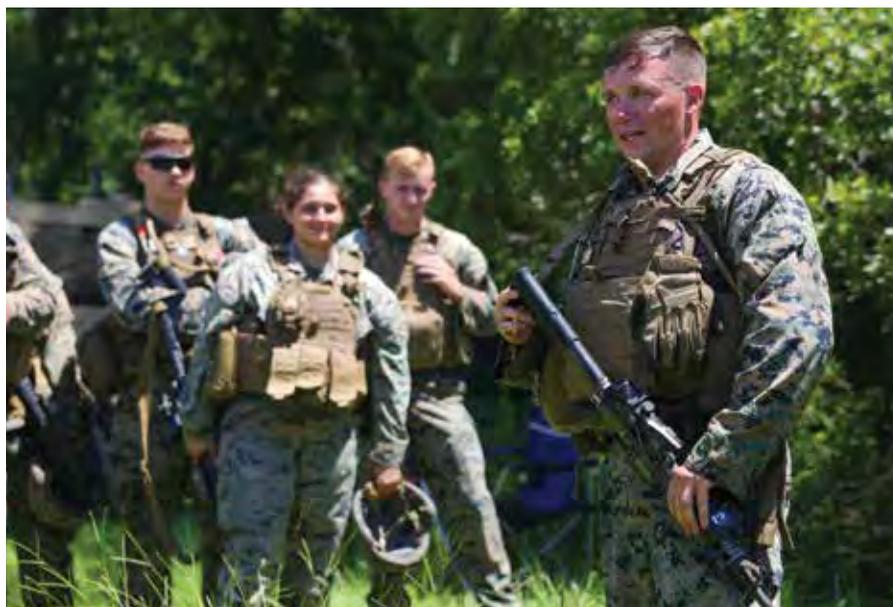
Campbell hopes to continue making a difference in his new role at HQMC. He wants to promote the potential of OSCAR Teams in the fight to prevent suicide, because he believes “Marines have to take care of Marines.”

Betty Snider, Marine and Family Programs

### Gen Smith Promotes 2ndMarDiv Motor T Marine

On July 24, General Eric M. Smith, then serving as the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, expedited the promotion of Sergeant Peyton Nott, the motor transportation chief with “Romeo” Battery, 1st Battalion, 10th Marines, 2nd Marine Division, after the presentation of the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal.

The initial purpose of the interaction was for Nott to receive the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal in



LCPL RYAN RAMSAMMY, USMC

**Sgt Peyton Nott (above), a motor vehicle operator with 1st Battalion, 10th Marines, 2ndMarDiv, speaks to his Marines during a Marine Corps Combat Readiness Evaluation at Camp Lejeune, N.C., on July 24. Nott’s inspiring speech led Gen Eric M. Smith (below), then serving as the 36th Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, to spontaneously promote Nott from corporal to sergeant.**



LCPL RYAN RAMSAMMY, USMC

recognition of his ability to take on the responsibilities and duties of a higher position in an effective manner during his time with Romeo Battery.

“It felt great to not only receive my second Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, but that the [36th Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps] took the time to come down here to award me,” said Nott. “It wasn’t just me; it was every single one of these Marines out here that helped me achieve that award and promotion, I just oversaw it all.”

After being awarded, Nott delivered a motivational speech about his father’s impact on him growing up, the importance of capitalizing on each opportunity, and ensuring we always leave something

behind for those who come after us. The weight of the speech was felt by everyone in attendance, including Gen Smith, who afterward decided to promote Cpl Nott on the spot.

“Cpl Nott’s promotion by the Assistant Commandant was as inspirational as anything I’ve ever seen,” said Col Robert J. Hallett, Assistant Division Commander of 2ndMarDiv. “Truly, what I observed was the execution of talent management by the most senior officer in the Marine Corps. When you see quality, want to retain it and keep the very best in our ranks, you immediately act on it as he did.”

LCpl Deja Thomas, USMC



# Happy Holidays

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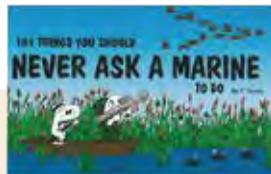
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RICHARD CARMER

## Colorado Springs, Colo.

### USMC VTA Host 2023 Reunion

The USMC Vietnam Tankers Association hosted its 2023 reunion in Colorado Springs, Colo., in September. The five-day gathering was packed with events such as a tour of the National Museum of World War II Aviation and a ride up the cog railway to the summit of Pikes Peak. Outside of visiting tourist attractions, attendees made the best use of their time reconnecting in “the slop chute.”

The reunion was attended by 162 people, 97 of whom were VTA members. The VTA’s motto is, “Ensuring our legacy through reunion, renewal, and remembrance.” Members accomplished their goal of remembrance at the reunion by adding nearly 20 video recordings to their collection of oral histories published on the VTA website. A Young Marines group of 15 youths between the ages of 10 and 18 visited the reunion on several occasions to speak with the attendees and act as the color guard at the closing dinner ceremony.

Learn more about the USMC VTA in next month’s issue of



CLAYTON PRICE

*Leatherneck*, where a feature article will showcase the work they are doing to preserve tanker history.

Kyle Watts, *Leatherneck*

**Nokesville, Va.**

### **USMCHC Shows Off Marine Corps' Past and Present At Annual Tank Farm Open House**

The U.S. Marine Corps Historical Company's flamethrowing exhibition was once again a hot ticket at the annual Tank Farm Open House, held on Aug. 26-27 in Nokesville, Va.

Hundreds of military enthusiasts gathered during a late summer weekend to watch volunteers with USMCHC—many of whom are active-duty Marines—in action as they demonstrated a combined arms operation to assume control of a bunker. As part of the demo, Marines showed off a World War II-Korean War-era flamethrower. The Marines were also armed with vintage WW II weapons including M1 service rifles, M1 carbines and Browning Automatic Rifles.

In all, the Tank Farm Open House boasted 50 military vehicles, including a large number of tanks and a CH-47 Chinook helicopter. Attendees also got to view a variety of arms, accessories, and clothing from different eras, as well as modern Marine weapons like the new M27 Infantry Automatic Rifle, the M320 grenade launcher, and the M18 pistol.

"As always, the narrated Marine demonstrations were some of the high points for the visitors along with the wide array of operational armored vehicles from around the world," said USMCHC director, Gunnery Sergeant Thomas E. Williams, USMC (Ret).

For more than 25 years, the USMCHC has participated in the Tank Farm Open House, an event created by avid gun collector



COURTESY OF U.S. MARINE CORPS HISTORICAL COMPANY

and past National Rifle Association president Allan Cors. It also serves as a showcase for the yet-to-be completed Americans in Wartime Experience museum in Dale City, Va. Dennis Brant, CEO of Americans in Wartime Experience, told *Insidenova.com* that they hope to have their first building completed within two years. In addition to the wide variety of military vehicles, the museum will feature a theater, leadership center, a mountain bike trail and a team-building facility with obstacle courses and a zipline.

Kipp Hanley, *Leatherneck*



COURTESY OF U.S. MARINE CORPS HISTORICAL COMPANY

**"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](mailto:leatherneck@mca-marines.org). Submission does not guarantee publication, and we cannot guarantee the return of photos.** 📷

# Marines and Medicine:

## How Two Leathernecks Became Doctors, Fast Friends after World War II

By Valerie Leman

**S**econd Lieutenant Craig B. Leman and Major David D. Kliever served in the Pacific theater during World War II and later became physicians and colleagues. They were exemplary Marine officers and brilliant doctors who forever adhered to the principles of loyalty, integrity, and collegiality that served them well in the Corps. Their path to the military and medical careers were very different, yet they shared common values and interests throughout their long lives.

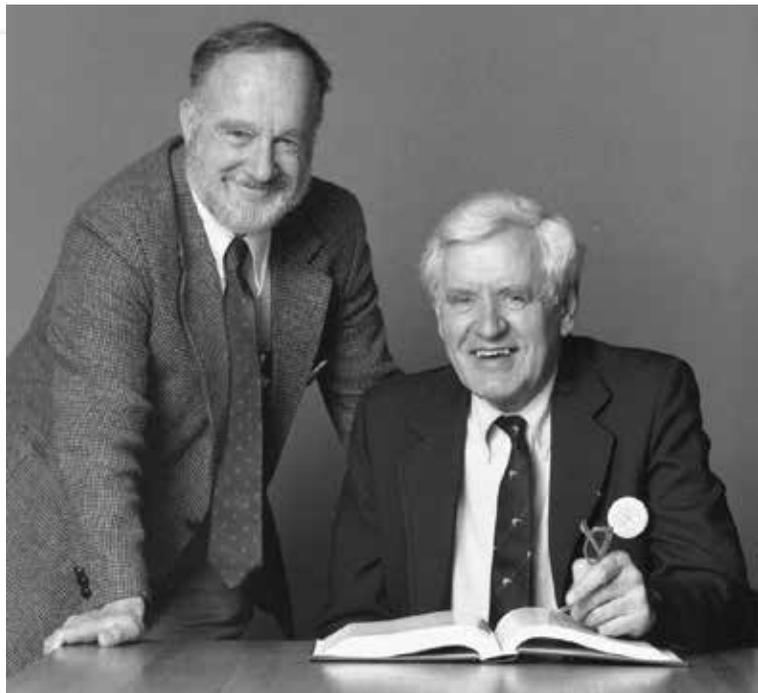
They met after the war, as students at Harvard Medical School, recognizing each other as veterans by the Silver Star insignia each customarily wore. Kliever, an aviator assigned to Marine Fighting Squadron (VMF) 211, had been a prisoner of war in Japan from 1941 to 1945. Each POW was allowed to send out a few letters on a strict schedule, and Kliever used one of his to write to Harvard Medical School, requesting admission. Its admissions officers provisionally accepted him, adding that he should come see them when he was released. He was admitted and, eventually, he joined Leman and others in a group practice in Corvallis, Ore.

Leman considered Kliever to be his closest friend in civilian life. After Kliever's death, Leman wrote this message to the families of each:

"I met Dave Kliever 60 years ago at Harvard Medical School, and we were friends [until] he died two years ago. Every Christmas, I think of his Christmas in 1941 on Wake Island where he had just been captured by Japanese soldiers who had overrun his position defending the beach, and his Christmas of 1942, 43, and 44 which he spent in prison in Japan. Although he lost about 50 pounds and acquired tuberculosis, he survived, finished his pre-med course at OSC, and entered medical school a year after his release.

"We practiced together at the Corvallis Clinic, and he was physician to my family. About 30 years ago I gave him a box of Japanese mandarin oranges as a Christmas gift. He told me that they had special meaning for him. Late in the war, with Japan blockaded and near starvation, the POWs, who were at the very end of the food chain, were in dire straits. The International Red Cross sent him a box of mandarin oranges. The other POWs asked Dave to divide them up equally, so that each prisoner had a few segments. He saved the orange peels, shredded them, divided up the fragments, and each prisoner used them to sprinkle on his food, a few shreds at a time, till they were gone.

"Every Christmas I visualize this scene in the cold snowy mountains of Honshu in the barbed wire stockade. And I give thanks."



**Craig B. Leman, left, and David D. Kliever, right, often spoke about their war experiences and other related issues, including the humane treatment of POWs.**

### From POW to Physician

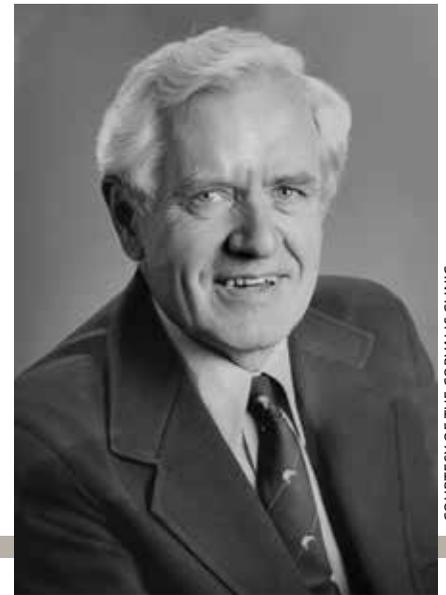
David Kliever grew up in the Mennonite faith in Montana, where his parents were missionaries on a reservation. Both he and his brother Paul wanted to become doctors, but during the Depression, there was no money to pay for further education. When Kliever graduated from college in Wheaton, Ill., he and his brother flipped a coin to see who would get a job to earn money to put the other through medical school, upon which, the other would return the favor. His brother won the toss, so Kliever decided to train as a pilot, joining the military in 1939. While Paul became a physician, Dave became a fighter pilot flying Grumman F3F and F4F Wildcat aircraft. He completed training in December 1940 and was assigned as a second lieutenant to VMF-211 at Pearl Harbor. Aerial and combat training were underway, but he wasn't aware of the imminent feeling that war was coming.

On Nov. 28, 1941, his 65-man squadron received secret orders to go on fleet maneuvers to Wake Island, where there was a limited garrison consisting of Marines and civilian construction workers. By then, the pilots had orders to shoot down any enemy planes encountered. Four days after the squadron arrived on Wake, the Japanese attacked the island. Kliever estimated that about half of his unit was lost, as well as seven or eight of their 12 aircraft. Despite the casualties, the Marines repulsed the first attack, and for the next week, the remaining pilots flew



COURTESY OF PETE KIEWER

David D. Kliever (below) enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1939 and was assigned to VMF-211, stationed at Pearl Harbor and Wake Island. He was captured on Wake and spent several years as a POW in Japan (left). In this photo, he is at the far right in the back row.



COURTESY OF THE CORVALIS CLINIC

patrols. On Dec. 15, 1941, Kliever was on a solitary patrol when he dive-bombed and sank a Japanese submarine. This action earned him a Silver Star.

Soon, the Japanese began a second attack on Wake, and the Marines got word that no relief was coming. Kliever later explained in his Library of Congress oral history interview that training required them to fight to the last man, and that he as a pilot had to become an infantry Marine, for which he had received no training. On Dec. 23, he and three enlisted men took up a post at the end of the runway close to the beach, with the mission of blowing up the airfield if the Japanese planes landed. Brutal hand-to-hand combat ensued. The moment is memorialized in a display at the National Marine Corps Museum in Triangle, Va.

One of Kliever's enlisted men said to him, "Never surrender, Lieutenant. Marines don't surrender." Soon they saw a group carrying a white flag walking down the beach, but they thought it could be a hoax and shot at them. However, as the group got closer, Kliever heard his commanding officer, Major James Devereaux, shouting orders to surrender, and they turned over their weapons and were captured. They learned that the Japanese high commander offshore overruled the desire of the invading forces to execute the prisoners, probably because he thought it would be better propaganda for the Japanese to take prisoners.

Shortly after being taken prisoner, Kliever became ill with typhoid but recovered.

After a few days, all the ambulatory prisoners were transported in the hold of a passenger boat to Yokohama, threatened with

death if they talked or moved without permission. When they arrived on Jan. 12, 1942, most of the enlisted passengers were sent to prison camps in China. But Kliever and 11 fellow officers were kept in the Tokyo Bay area, where they endured brutal interrogation by Japanese pilots. They were told that if they didn't reveal all that they knew, they would be killed, since no one, including the Red Cross, even knew they were prisoners.

Although Kliever was mistakenly identified as the communications officer, he had no information to give and gave none. He was stunned when his commanding officer, Captain Putnam, had the bravado to point him out as the pilot who had sunk the Japanese submarine. The Japanese pilots asked him a lot of questions about that. Later, the POWs were marched around on display in Tokyo streets and taken to schools to sing for schoolchildren ("Home on the Range" was a particular request).

Kliever and the others were taken to another camp on a southern island of Japan, where they met other POWs brought in from Guam, including British and Dutch military personnel, mostly officers. Kliever worked in the dispensary with one of the other POWs, a Navy doctor, who told him that he ought to pursue his goal of becoming a doctor and

should apply to Harvard Medical School. They had a few books and conducted a few classes, although the authorities discouraged this. Red Cross packages came periodically, and Kliever traded his portions of cigarettes or rice for a Bible, a calculus book, and a copy of "Gray's Anatomy." After about two years, he convinced one of the more humane camp officials to allow the prisoners to raise rabbits to supplement the prisoners' meager

**Soon they saw a group carrying a white flag walking down the beach, but they thought it could be a hoax and shot at them. However, as the group got closer, Kliever heard his commanding officer, Major James Devereaux, shouting orders to surrender.**



COURTESY OF THE CORVALLIS CLINIC

**After being invited to join the group practice in Corvallis, Ore., in 1961, David D. Kliever, left, worked as a physician until retiring in 1984.**

rice diet. He later credited the POWs' military discipline, including maintaining a chain of command, for staying alive and unified. On principle, he refused to sign a pledge that he would not try to escape—until he and the few other holdouts agreed that they would die of starvation with the reduced rations they received as punishment.

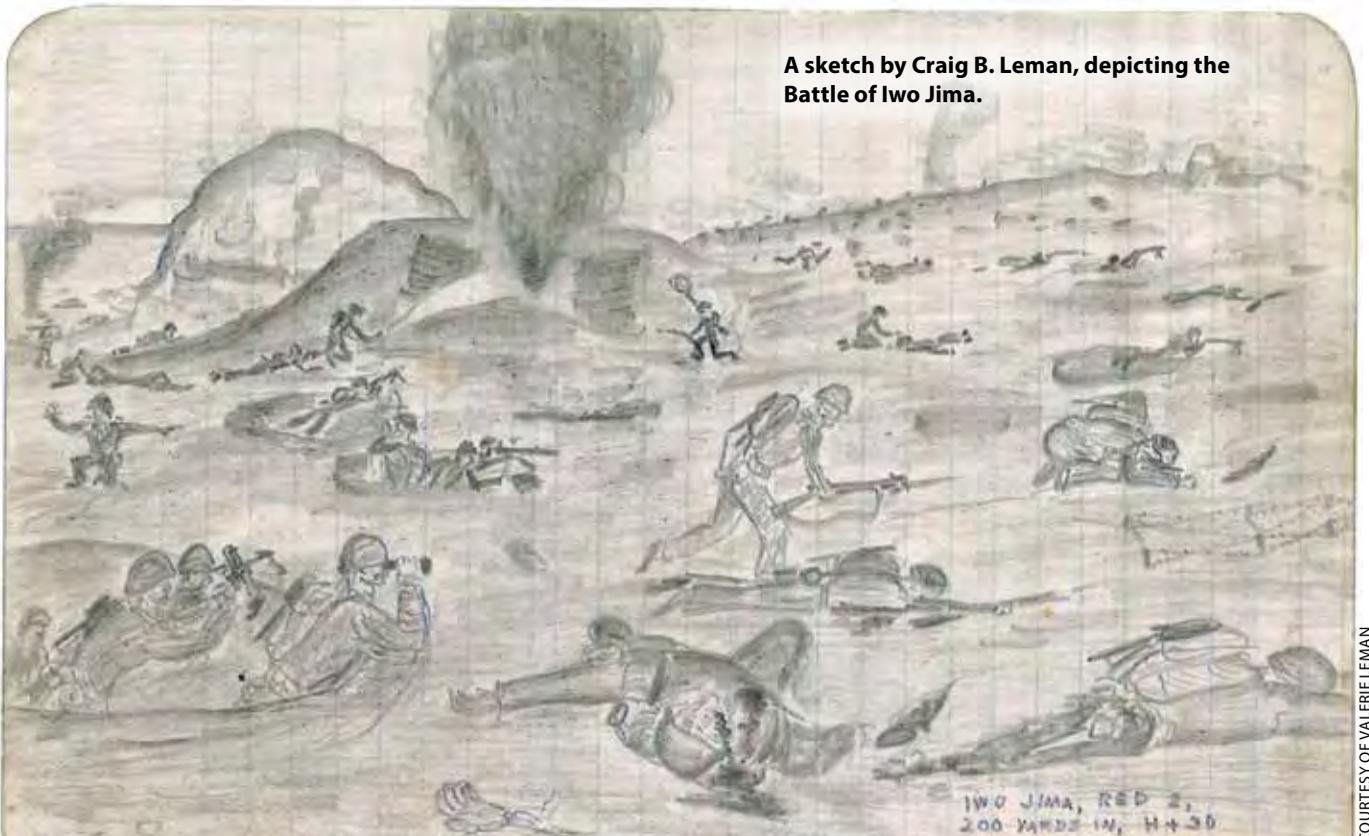
Toward the end of the war, the prisoners got bits of news of the Allied progress in the Philippines and elsewhere from the

enlisted POWs who were serving as stevedores at the docks. They saw U.S. bombers flying overhead and anticipated that they might be killed in bombing raids or from starvation, since food was becoming scarce. They were then taken to a different camp and told that something terrible had happened. When they learned that the emperor had surrendered after the bombs were dropped, they used toothpaste to write "POW" on the roofs of their camp buildings and received food dropped from Allied airplanes.

Soon a 7th Cavalry unit took them by train to the coast for debriefing. After being deloused and having showered, Kliever started out for the next station while still naked. Along the way he met General Douglas MacArthur, who asked, "Young man, what can we do for you?" He said that he wanted an American newspaper and cigar to enjoy on an American toilet. He got them. The Marine Corps conveyed in a telegram to his parents in Oregon that he was alive and safe, "praise be to God." They had been told for years only that he was missing in action.

During his six months of hospitalization for recovery, Kliever finished his pre-med course at then-Oregon State College and entered Harvard Medical School a year after his release. Other than having to take a year off for treatment for tuberculosis, which he acquired in the POW camp, he successfully completed his studies and served as an internal medicine doctor in Hawaii. In 1961, Leman contacted him and invited him to join the group practice in Corvallis. There, he specialized in hematology and oncology until his retirement in 1984. The doctor who succeeded him quipped, "It is not easy replacing the greatest doctor who ever lived."

**A sketch by Craig B. Leman, depicting the Battle of Iwo Jima.**



COURTESY OF VALERIE LEMAN

## Common Interests

Throughout their careers, both Leman and Kliever were strong supporters of community public health and humanitarian causes, speaking out in newspaper articles on current affairs that involved issues of war, including the humane treatment of POWs. They worked closely on founding a local hospice nonprofit organization, as well as anti-tobacco work and improving patient care. Each had sons who became doctors, and Kliever's daughter became a nurse. Kliever and his wife Jean were early proponents of the local Habitat for Humanity. She joked that she would help Dave on all his public health and other campaigns, and her reward "was to be taken to a Mennonite conference."

In a 1985 clinic newsletter, Kliever profiled his friend and fellow Marine veteran Leman, who was president of the local hospital's medical staff at the time, writing, "Intensity is an apt description of everything that Craig does, whether it is swimming, running, playing the piano or the practice of medicine. You will not see him on the roadway with other joggers, for he loves to run over the countryside over fences, across swamps and through poison oak patches."

Leman and Kliever each made a point of returning to the sites of their wartime experiences as a means of demonstrating that healing and reconciliation were possible and would be beneficial for all. Kliever never abandoned the pacifist principles he had learned growing up as a Mennonite, but he was also proud of being a Marine. He struggled with the knowledge that he had caused the death of enemy soldiers. His experience as a POW taught him important lessons about hope, determination, and living every day fully. When he was 72 years old, he attended a conference in Hiroshima held by the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War. He also visited the sites of two of the prison camps where he had been held, finding that one had been turned into a high school and one into a ski resort, and met a few of the people who had worked at the camps. They rejoiced together that both of the camps had been turned to peaceful purposes, "swords into plowshares."

Leman returned to Iwo Jima for Japanese-American Reunions of Honor in 1985 and 1995, recalling in a 1985 *Oregonian* newspaper article: "I lost many of my best friends at Iwo. My resentment toward the Japanese was consuming. However, the occupation of Japan six months later gave me the opportunity to meet Japanese civilians and to learn that they were human beings like us. If anyone had told me then that I would ever return to Iwo Jima for a joint memorial service with the Japanese survivors to honor the dead of both sides, I would have thought that person insane. How was I to know, in 1945, that the day would come when the Japanese and



CHRIS LAWSON

**With Mount Suribachi looming in the distance, American and Japanese veterans of the Iwo Jima campaign paid tribute to fallen comrades.**

Germans would be our friends, and that our allies—the Russians—would not? As a surgeon, I have treated patients of many nationalities and have worked with surgeons from many countries ... I know our common humanity; I hope we can learn from our past."

**Leman and Kliever each made a point of returning to the sites of their wartime experiences as a means of demonstrating that healing and reconciliation were possible and would be beneficial for all.**

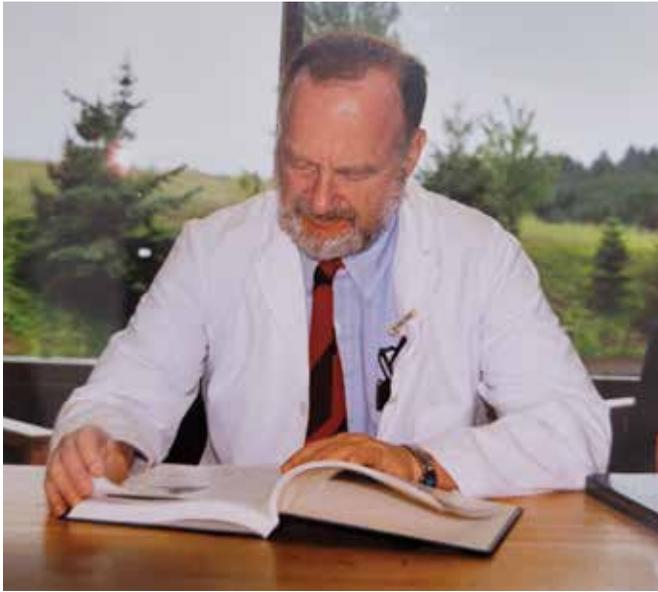
Consistent with his principles, his family has returned to the Obon Society the Japanese battle flag that he kept for many years.

In his 2011 memoir, Leman included his observations of post-traumatic stress disorder. "PTSD is a term that had not been invented in 1946, and I coped with my continued anger at the Japanese and my distress at the destruction of so many friends as best I could," he wrote. "The person who did most to cure me of my antipathy toward the Japanese was a fellow physician whom I met in medical school, Kliever ... Fifteen years after the war we stayed up all night talking about our experiences; his humane, forgiving attitude, after enduring far more suffering

at their hands than I had, helped me to overcome the anguish and bitterness that had afflicted me. These are just a few of the comrades whose memory I honor."

*Author's bio: Valerie Leman is the daughter of Dr. Craig B. Leman, who was a longtime member of the 5th Marine Division. A retired judicial attorney in San Diego, Calif., she is on the board of the Fifth Marine Division Association and is a history buff who often writes articles about her father's military service.*





COURTESY OF THE CORVALLIS CLINIC

**While attending medical school, Craig B. Lemans visited recovering veterans and attributes his interest in medicine to his experience in the Marine Corps and on Iwo Jima.**

After recuperating in Guam, Lemans rejoined the 5th Marine Division at Camp Tarawa on the Big Island of Hawaii, to prepare for the invasion of Japan. After the surrender, he served in Palau and then was discharged in March 1946. Lemans immediately fulfilled a pact he had made with three of his classmates at SOCS, in late 1944—that if any of them were killed, the survivor would visit the bereaved families to tell them about their son’s last year. Trains and planes in Los Angeles were booked at the time, so he hitchhiked to Arizona to spend an emotional night with the family of one such classmate, and then to Louisiana to see the family of another.

Lemans returned to the University of Chicago in 1946 to finish his history degree and then earned admission to Harvard Medical School. While still in school and medical training, Lemans visited fellow recovering veterans in hospitals, beginning a pattern of striving hard to keep up his ties with the men with whom he served.

“I had thought about becoming a doctor before the war, but had



COURTESY OF VALERIE LEMAN

**Craig B. Lemans trained with the 5thMarDiv at Camp Tarawa, Hawaii, to prepare for an invasion of Japan.**

never really made the decision, as I felt it was improper for me to go to medical school while World War II was going on, and I felt that if I survived, I would be too old. I was very pleasantly surprised when the War ended when it did, and I could go to pre-med at the University of Chicago, and to medical school at Harvard,” Lemans wrote in a 1985 letter to a young colleague.

“I think the reason I chose surgery was because of my experience on Iwo Jima, and in particular the sight of apparently dying men coming back from the front gray and in shock, and being transfused and then going back to the operating room and coming back several hours later very much alive and pink and obviously going to live. Surgery attracted me then, and I have never been sorry,” he continued.

After Lemans retired from his surgical practice, he had more time to engage in correspondence and visits with fellow veteran Marines, near and far. He wanted to make sure that the relatives of the fallen knew their stories, and he corresponded with many who wrote him to ask about service in the Marines.



COURTESY OF VALERIE LEMAN

**This is the helmet that was worn by Craig B. Lemans when he was shot in the back of the neck by a sniper while on Iwo Jima. He survived and was treated at the division hospital.**



COURTESY OF VALERIE LEMAN

**Author Valerie Lemans holding a Japanese flag. Valerie is the daughter of Craig B. Lemans and is a board member of the 5th Marine Division Association, the same division that her father served in.**

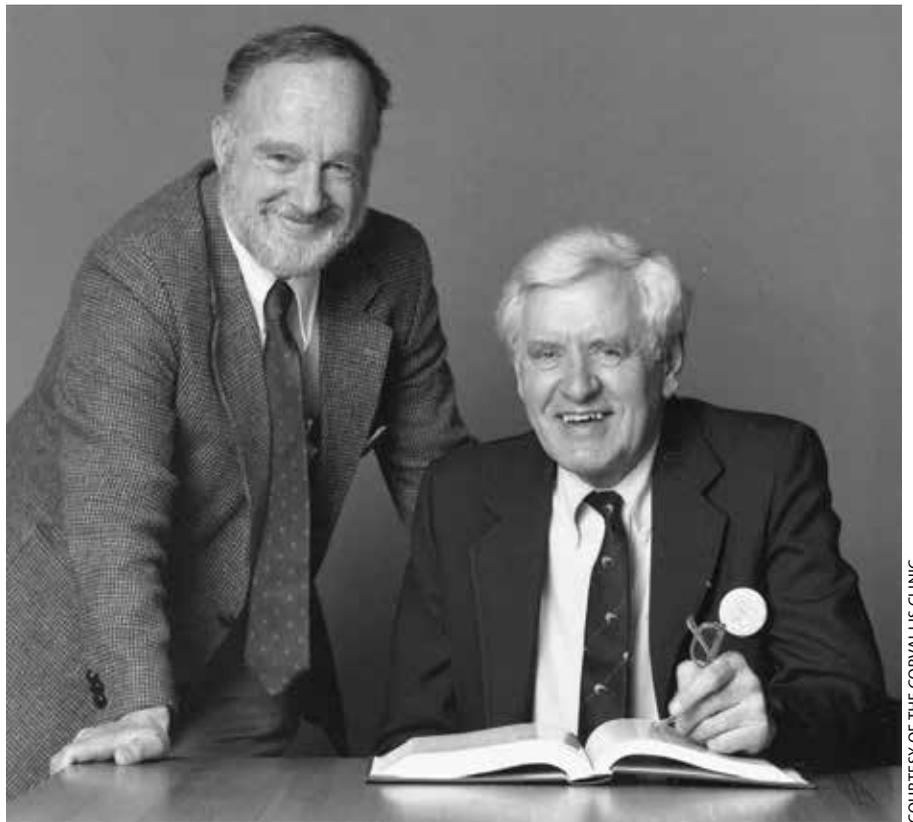
## Common Interests

Throughout their careers, both Leman and Kliever were strong supporters of community public health and humanitarian causes, speaking out in newspaper articles on current affairs that involved issues of war, including the humane treatment of POWs. They worked closely on founding a local hospice nonprofit organization, as well as anti-tobacco work and improving patient care. Each had sons who became doctors, and Kliever's daughter became a nurse. Kliever and his wife Jean were early proponents of the local Habitat for Humanity. She joked that she would help Dave on all his public health and other campaigns, and her reward "was to be taken to a Mennonite conference."

In a 1985 clinic newsletter, Kliever profiled his friend and fellow Marine veteran Leman, who was president of the local hospital's medical staff at the time, writing, "Intensity is an apt description of everything that Craig does, whether it is swimming, running, playing the piano or the practice of medicine. You will not see him on the roadway with other joggers, for he loves to run over the countryside over fences, across swamps and through poison oak patches."

Leman and Kliever each made a point of returning to the sites of their wartime experiences as a means of demonstrating that healing and reconciliation were possible and would be beneficial for all. Kliever never abandoned the pacifist principles he had learned growing up as a Mennonite, but he was also proud of being a Marine. He struggled with the knowledge that he had caused the death of enemy soldiers. His experience as a POW taught him important lessons about hope, determination, and living every day fully. When he was 72 years old, he attended a conference in Hiroshima held by the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War. He also visited the sites of two of the prison camps where he had been held, finding that one had been turned into a high school and one into a ski resort, and met a few of the people who had worked at the camps. They rejoiced together that both of the camps had been turned to peaceful purposes, "swords into plowshares."

Leman returned to Iwo Jima for Japanese-American Reunions of Honor in 1985 and 1995, recalling in a 1985 *Oregonian* newspaper article: "I lost many of my best friends at Iwo. My resentment toward the Japanese was consuming. However, the occupation of Japan six months later gave me the opportunity to meet Japanese civilians and to learn that they were human beings like us. If anyone had told me then that I would ever return to Iwo Jima for a joint memorial service with the Japanese survivors to honor the dead of both sides, I would have thought that person insane. How was I to know, in 1945, that the day would come when the Japanese and



**Craig B. Leman, left, and David D. Kliever, right, often spoke about their war experiences and other related issues, including the humane treatment of POWs.**

Germans would be our friends, and that our allies—the Russians—would not? As a surgeon, I have treated patients of many nationalities and have worked with surgeons from many countries ... I know our common humanity; I hope we can learn from our past."

**Leman and Kliever each made a point of returning to the sites of their wartime experiences as a means of demonstrating that healing and reconciliation were possible and would be beneficial for all.**

Consistent with his principles, his family has returned to the Obon Society the Japanese battle flag that he kept for many years.

In his 2011 memoir, Leman included his observations of post-traumatic stress disorder. "PTSD is a term that had not been invented in 1946, and I coped with my continued anger at the Japanese and my distress at the destruction of so many friends as best I could," he wrote. "The person who did most to cure me of my antipathy toward the Japanese was a fellow physician whom I met in medical school, Kliever ... Fifteen years after the war we stayed up all night talking about our experiences; his humane, forgiving attitude, after enduring far more suffering

at their hands than I had, helped me to overcome the anguish and bitterness that had afflicted me. These are just a few of the comrades whose memory I honor."

*Author's bio: Valerie Leman is the daughter of Dr. Craig B. Leman, who was a longtime member of the 5th Marine Division. A retired judicial attorney in San Diego, Calif., she is on the board of the Fifth Marine Division Association and is a history buff who often writes articles about her father's military service.*

COURTESY OF THE CORVALLIS CLINIC

# Leatherneck Laffs



"Let's go! Santa needs a resupply!"



"Sir, I was told by the sergeant, who was told by the lieutenant, who was told by the captain, who was then told by the major, to increase military efficiency."



"Sure, there's only one hole. That's where all my shots went through."



"He was a Marine drill instructor, so he just yelled at us for an hour."



"We're Marines! Marines don't have rain delays!"



"I'm in my own arms race. I have to get everyone vaccinated by tomorrow."

Deployment Jeopardy				
Japan	Europe	SW Asia	South Korea	SE Asia
6 mos	6 mos	6 mos	6 mos	6 mos
12 mos	12 mos	12 mos	12 mos	12 mos
18 mos	18 mos	18 mos	18 mos	18 mos
24 mos	24 mos	24 mos	24 mos	24 mos
TAD	TAD	TAD	TAD	TAD



"I'll take SW Asia for 12 please."

Nathaniel Whisenant, a Marine aviator with VMF-251, flies an F4U-1D Corsair in the skies over the Philippines, in April 1945. (Photo courtesy of Jack Cook)



# KEEPING THE PEACE

By Steven K. Dixon

*Editor's note: This is an excerpt from the new book "Keeping the Peace: Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 251 During the Cold War 1946-1991" by Steven K. Dixon. While the book's focus is more on VMFA-251's role in Marine aviation during the Cold War, Leatherneck selected this section about the squadron's early years during World War II to mark the 80th anniversary of the F4U Corsair in combat. The book, published by Casemate Publishers, is available for purchase on their website: <https://www.casematepublishers.com/9781636241937/keeping-the-peace/> or at Amazon: <https://amzn.to/3EXomUY>.*

## The Birth of a Squadron

On Dec. 1, 1941, VMO-251 was activated at Naval Air Station (NAS) San Diego, Calif. The squadron was designated to perform a photo-reconnaissance role. However, the squadron did not fly any such mission during the war.

By the time the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, the squadron still had no aircraft. Debate between the Navy and Marine Corps went on for months as they tried to pin down which aircraft to use. Several types were considered: floatplanes, the SBD Dauntless dive bomber, and the PBY Catalina flying boat to name a few. Finally, in the spring of 1942, the Navy

and Marine Corps agreed on the aircraft: the Grumman F4F-3 Wildcat. VMO-251 began receiving its first Wildcats soon after the decision was made. By mid-April 1942, the squadron had in its possession at least 12 used Wildcats from the Navy. The aircraft were in poor shape and needed maintenance. Most importantly, however, the Wildcat was a fighter and not designed to be a photo-reconnaissance aircraft. Modifications to the aircraft had to be made.

At a modification facility at North Island, half the Wildcats had cameras installed and the much-needed maintenance on the aircraft was performed.

An aerial reconnaissance camera was added by removing one of the fuel tanks in the fuselage, located behind the pilot. He controlled the camera with a series of switches in the cockpit. The aircraft were redesignated F4F-3P. Fortuitously, the fighter's machine guns were not removed during the modifications.

While the first batch of aircraft were undergoing modification, VMO-251 became involved in the 1942 Hollywood movie production of "Wake Island." Apparently, the film's star, Brian Donlevy, and the squadron's current commanding officer, Major (later lieutenant colonel) John Hart, knew each other from their Naval Academy days in the 1920s. Whatever tricks Donlevy and Hart used seemed to have worked. The squadron was given permission by the Marine Corps, but the USMC wanted complete control of publicity when it came to the squadron. Paramount Pictures accepted the request. Pilots from the squadron spent at least two weeks flying their

Wildcats from an improvised airstrip near Salton Sea in California and another near Salt Lake City, Utah. After filming was completed, the rest of the aircraft were modified and repaired.

The picture was released near the end of the year, but squadron personnel were not able to catch the premiere. By then, VMO-251 was involved in the invasion and the months-long campaign to capture Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands.

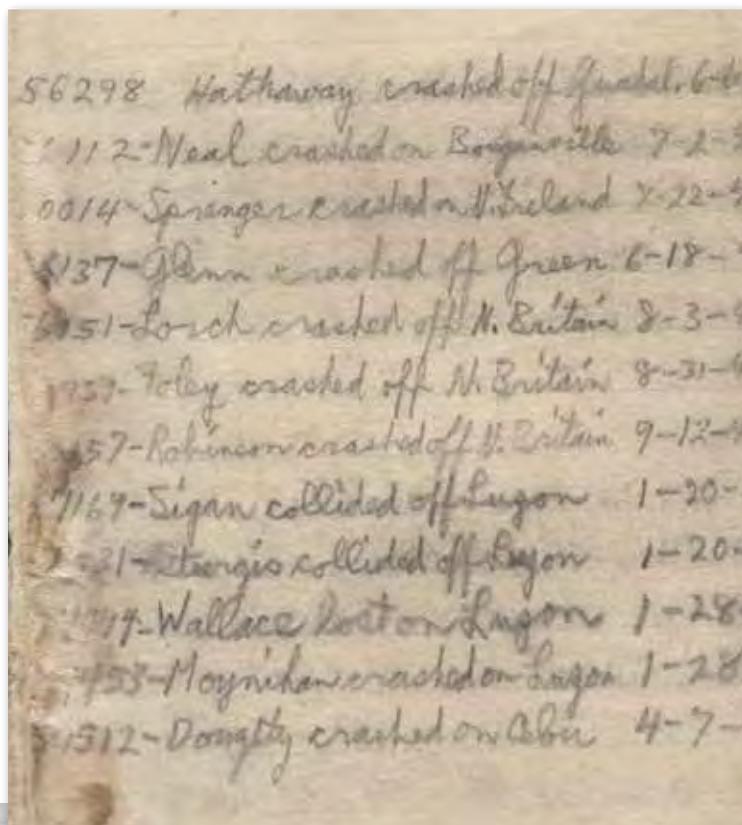
The Solomon Islands saw increased activity by Japanese forces in 1942. Of concern to the Allies was the airfield under construction near Lunga Point on the north coast of Guadalcanal. If the airfield was completed by the Japanese, it would put their air forces within range to strangle Australia by cutting off its supply route to the United States. It could also attack Australia itself. To counteract this threat, plans were quickly drawn up and the invasion of Guadalcanal—dubbed Operation Watchtower—was established. U.S. forces set D-day for Aug. 7, 1942.

In late April, the squadron was assigned in direct support of the 1st Marine Division. The division was packing up for a move from the United States to New Zealand, and on to Guadalcanal. VMO-251 received its orders on May 18 and began the arduous task of packing. The squadron departed for New Zealand on June 17 on board USS *Heywood* (AP-12), a troop transport.

USS *Heywood* made its first stop at Samoa. There, the squadron received a change in assignment; it was now headed for New Caledonia. The ship anchored at Noumea—the capital of New Caledonia—on July 10, 1942. The squadron disembarked and was sent to Tontouta Airfield to await further instructions.

While at the airfield the Wildcats were reassembled, and pilots began to test fly them. As work progressed, the squadron finally found out what it would be doing. Its primary responsibility would be the air defense of the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu), an island chain several hundred miles northeast of New Caledonia. It would do so while stationed on Espiritu Santo. The squadron also had to install two radar stations: one on the north end of Espiritu Santo, and the other at the Turtle Bay Airfield near the southeast coast of the island. In addition, the Marines were to lend all possible assistance to the 11th Bombardment Group (BG) since that unit had yet to receive its ground echelon. Men from the squadron's photo section flew photo missions on 11th BG B-17 Flying Fortresses out of Tontouta and then Espiritu Santo. Other squadrons

**Right: A page from John Irwin's logbook noting the losses of VMO/VMF 251 Corsairs during World War II. Irwin served as the squadron's maintenance officer and was one of the few who was with the squadron from its activation in December 1941 until June 1945.**



COURTESY OF THE IRWIN FAMILY



COURTESY OF THE MADDEN FAMILY

**John Irwin, right, sits in a jeep with other VMO/VMF-251 squadron members while stationed in the South Pacific.**

**Two future Marine Corps  
aces, Second Lieutenants  
Mike Yunck and Henry  
McCartney, scored their first  
kills with the squadron.**

staging through the airfield on their way to Guadalcanal were also to be assisted as required. With these assigned duties, the squadron could not perform the role for which it was created: photo reconnaissance. In short, it functioned as a fighter unit rather than a photo-recon squadron.

**Guadalcanal**

On Aug. 7, 1942, U.S. forces launched Operation Watchtower. With naval forces providing a pre-invasion bombardment, and air cover, Marines stormed ashore with little to no resistance from the Japanese. Caught by surprise, what Japanese forces were in the area fled into the jungle. The Marines quickly captured the airfield and consolidated their positions. The airfield was not complete and needed extensive work—quickly—to be of use.

The Japanese recovered from the initial attacks and counterattacked by sea and air later in the day and into the next. During the night of Aug. 8, Japanese naval forces engaged U.S. naval forces near Savo Island. The Japanese soundly defeated the Americans. Several ships were sunk, including *Vincennes* and *Astoria*. Scheussler and Kirby were lost when *Vincennes* went down, becoming the first squadron casualties of the war. Spurlock, Campbell, and Whitten survived the sinking of *Astoria* and later made it back to the squadron. Vice Admiral Frank Jack Fletcher, the task force commander, withdrew his carriers from the area, not wanting to risk his valuable ships to Japanese attack. Without air support, supply ships halted the flow of supplies to shore and withdrew from the area. The Marines on Guadalcanal were left without air support and limited supplies.

Getting the captured airfield operational—now known as Henderson Field—became a priority.

Marines from the invasion force were already hard at work on the field to extend its 2,000-foot runway. The Navy's Construction Utility Battalion 1 engineers jumped in with their gear to take over construction. The field was finished three days later, but Japanese bombers made sure its use was delayed.

The determined Japanese scored sev-



eral hits on the runway. When the bombers left, the engineers immediately went back to work to fill in the bomb craters. The work ended on Aug. 21 and the first Marine air units, VMF-223 and VMSB-232, arrived from the escort carrier USS *Long Island* (AVG-1).

After two weeks without air cover, the Marines finally had aircraft on the island to help alleviate the pressure they were under.

From September 1942 to January 1943, the squadron supported the Cactus Air Force in many ways. The Cactus Air Force was a mixed bag of Army, Navy

and Marine aircraft designated to defend the air over Guadalcanal. VMO-251 trained personnel from non-fighting squadrons as fighter pilots. These pilots eventually ended up cycling through Guadalcanal. The squadron also sent several of its aircraft and pilots to Guadalcanal on a rotation basis. In January 1943, the unit was transferred to Guadalcanal and remained there until May. By late February, pilots were posted to other squadrons or sent back to the United States. What officers and men remained, aided the Cactus Air Force until the squadron was transferred home.



**VMO-251 Corsairs lined up in early 1945. The squadron's pilots flew fighter sweeps and bombing missions while supporting operations in the Pacific.**

COURTESY OF THE IRWIN FAMILY

Disease, constant combat, and poor living conditions took a toll on VMO-251. Squadron documents for the period are incomplete but an approximate number of casualties can be determined. From August 1942 to May 1943, the squadron suffered 20 casualties: eight killed in action; seven wounded in action; two injured (non-battle); and three accidental deaths.

Squadron pilots contributed to the demise of the Japanese empire by downing 32 enemy aircraft of all types. Second Lieutenant Herbert A. Peters was the squadron's top scoring pilot with four

confirmed kills and two other probable shoot downs. Two future Marine Corps aces, Second Lieutenants Mike Yunck and Henry McCartney, scored their first kills with the squadron. Several went on to command their own squadrons during the war, including Spurlock and First Lieutenant Charles P. Weiland.

What remained of VMO-251 boarded the attack transport USS *George Clymer* (APA-27) on May 12 and sailed for Espiritu Santo. The ship arrived two days later and after a 48-hour layover, USS *Kitty Hawk* (AKV-1), set sail to take the squadron back to the United States.

### **Converting to the Corsair**

The ship arrived at San Francisco in early June. Squadron personnel were granted a 30-day leave pass. When they returned to their unit, VMO-251 began a massive reorganization. Many of the squadron's combat veterans were transferred out to provide needed experience to new squadrons being activated. After all the transfers, all that remained were four officers and about 30 enlisted men. The Marines who remained shared their experiences in combat to the new officers and enlisted personnel who joined the squadron at its new duty station outside

of Mojave, Calif.: Marine Base Defense Air Group 44, Marine Corps Air Station Mojave.

Training began in earnest as the squadron geared up for its return to the Pacific theater. The pilots were pushed hard: from September 1943 to January 1944, the squadron lost 12 aircraft, 27 damaged, and four pilots killed. They trained in Wildcats until October 1943 when new aircraft were finally delivered.

The squadron received the F4U-1 Corsair. It was designed as a fighter, not for the photo-reconnaissance role. As the pilots gained experience in the powerful Corsair, they became comfortable with its quirks. When the squadron returned to the Pacific, it would be flying bombing missions nearly every day. Interestingly, the squadron kept its “observation” squadron designation (VMO) despite the fact it was flying a new fighter aircraft.

From August through September, maintenance men were sent to several schools to learn the workings of the Corsair’s systems: When not in school, men performed maintenance on the aircraft or pulled duty in firefighting details.

Training concluded in February 1944 and the squadron began preparations for another tour in the Pacific. Aircraft were returned to aviation authorities at the base and the unit was brought up to combat strength with an influx of personnel. The Marines of VMO-251 boarded the seaplane tender USS *Tangier* (AV-8) at NAS North Island, San Diego, on Feb. 20, 1944, and departed for Espiritu Santo the next day.

## A Second Tour of Combat

After nearly a three-week cruise, the squadron arrived at Espiritu Santo on March 9, 1944. The next day they left the ship and set up at Luganville Bomber Field where they would operate while on the island. Unfortunately, they had no aircraft to fly.

After waiting a month, the squadron received 20 F4U-1 Corsairs on April 6.

## The last mission the squadron flew was on May 1. It sent 12 Corsairs to Leyte in support of advancing Filipino ground forces in the vicinity of Sulpa.

The next day, the pilots took to the air on familiarization and training flights which included division tactics, gunnery training, oxygen system testing, blind flying (reference to cockpit instruments only), radar training and problem solving, and bombing practice. The training period lasted several weeks.

The squadron received orders to send its pilots, the flight surgeon, intelligence officer and intelligence clerk to Green Island on June 6. There, under MAG-14 control, they would be flying combat familiarization flights over the Rabaul area. Transport aircraft took the men to their new home. VMO-251’s ground echelon and its aircraft remained at Espiritu Santo, more than 1,100 miles to the southeast. Operations began on June 18 when they

received 13 F4U-1s and three FG-1s from MAG-14. The pilots flew several fighter sweeps and bombing missions while at Green Island. These types of missions would be flown by the squadron until it departed for the Philippines at the end of December 1944.

In early July, the squadron received orders to move about 150 miles south to Piva Airstrip, located near Torokina on Bougainville. Except for 20 pilots, led by squadron commander Major William C. Humberd, the flight echelon was transported by South Pacific Combat Air Transport Command aircraft on June 27. Humberd and his 20 Corsairs flew to Bougainville on June 28. VMF-223, undergoing a refit, sent its ground echelon to Piva to provide maintenance for VMO-251 until the squadron’s own maintenance personnel arrived from Espiritu Santo. Almost a month later, an indication of the vast distances encountered throughout the Pacific theater, the squadron’s ground echelon arrived at Piva and took over maintenance duties from VMF-223.

From June 28 and until Dec. 8, the squadron flew several missions a day. Anywhere from four to 18 aircraft flew on a mission. Areas targeted were Bougainville, Buka Island, New Britain, and the Duke of York Islands. An example of a large mission was the multi-squadron attack on Vunakanau Airfield, near Rabaul on the island of New Britain, on Aug. 18. Squadrons from Torokina, Piva and Emirau—seven in total—armed their aircraft with a 1,000-pound bomb each. The Japanese put up a stiff resistance at Vunakanau: five planes were lost and several damaged. VMO-251 was one of the squadrons that lost an aircraft, but its pilot was rescued. Patrols were flown by two to four aircraft and attacked targets of opportunity: convoys, coastal vessels, suspected camps, and Japanese troops left behind as their units retreated towards Japan. The squadron lost 16 Corsairs while at Bougainville, with four pilots killed in action, four wounded, and three killed in accidents.

## The End of the War

In early December, the squadron halted all attacks and began its preparations to move to Guiuan Airfield on the southern tip of the island of Samar in the Philippines. The squadron took off for its new assignment on Dec. 30.

Led by PBJ Mitchell bombers to help with navigation, and flying via Emirau, Hollandia, Owi and Peleliu, the journey covered nearly 2,000 miles before touching down Jan. 2, 1945.

The field was not in the best shape. It



COURTESY OF THE CUNNINGHAM FAMILY

**VMO-251 aviator Russell Cunningham flies out to strike a target somewhere over the South Pacific.**

**This is what remained of 2ndLt Hugh “Yogi” Irwin’s Corsair after a 500-pound bomb exploded underneath his aircraft during a landing at Guiuan Airfield on Samar, Philippine Islands, April 8, 1945.**



COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

was crowded with other aircraft and construction gear. The ground echelon of the squadron put together a makeshift line area so the pilots could park their Corsairs. There were no taxiways, no hard buildings—just tents, no stockpile of supplies, and daily torrential rains tore into the runway, creating huge potholes that were a danger to aircraft taking off and landing. The lousy weather kept Navy engineers busy resurfacing the field on an almost daily basis. Accidents were numerous and the conditions made maintaining the Corsairs difficult.

VMO-251 was MAG-14’s first squadron to arrive in theater; the day after arriving, the unit began combat operations from Guiuan. Different types of missions were flown: combat air patrols, convoy cover, and close air support for Army units and Filipino guerilla operations. The squadron flew this mix of missions until May 1945.

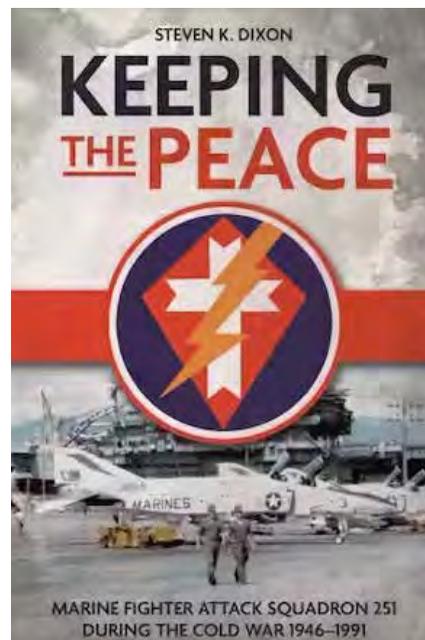
The Marine aviators suffered their worst month for losses in January. Four pilots were killed in action within eight days. Two were lost on the 20th. The aircraft were on a strafing run south of Manila when they collided head-on. Eight days later, the squadron lost two more pilots due to possible anti-aircraft fire while flying missions near Taytay and Neilson Auxiliary Airfield.

The squadron was finally redesignated as VMF-251 on Jan. 31. Two months later, a new patch was adopted. The new patch featured a caped red devil riding a gull-winged general-purpose bomb with “Lucifer’s Messengers VMF-251” written in the background.

The last mission the squadron flew was on May 1. It sent 12 Corsairs to Leyte in support of advancing Filipino ground

forces in the vicinity of Sulpa. The Corsairs hit the target located near the front lines and well within view of the Filipino forces, earning a “well-done” message from the commander on the ground. The aircraft turned for home and arrived back at Guiuan unscathed. By June 1, 1945, only three officers remained with VMF-251. The pilots had been transferred to other squadrons or sent home; the same applied to the members of the ground echelon. After nearly four years of service, the squadron was deactivated. The acting squadron commander—First Lieutenant Glen F. Keithley—signed the papers, officially ending the unit’s participation in the war.

The squadron received several awards for its service during World War II. These were the American Defense Service Streamer, the Presidential Unit Citation, the American Campaign Streamer, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Streamer with one Silver Star and one Bronze Star, the World War II Victory Streamer, the Philippine Liberation Streamer, and the Philippine Presidential Unit Citation.



*Author’s bio: Steven K. Dixon is a Marine veteran who was assigned to VMFA-251 from 1976 to 1979. In addition to writing, he also designs conflict simulation games.*

## NMMC Opens 40th Anniversary Exhibits of Beirut Bombing and Operation Urgent Fury in Grenada

“They Came in Peace,” a new temporary exhibit at the National Museum of the Marine Corps, opened in September and will be on display through February 2025. This exhibit tells the stories of the Marines who conducted peacekeeping operations in Beirut, Lebanon, from 1982 to 1984, and the 22nd Marine Amphibious Unit (MAU) that landed on Grenada in 1983 as part of Operation Urgent Fury.

The exhibit honors the 241 soldiers, Sailors, and Marines from the 24th MAU who lost their lives in the Oct. 23, 1983, bombing of the Marine barracks at Beirut International Airport as part of the museum’s commemoration of the 40th anniversary of this tragic event. A memorial wall with the names of the fallen servicemembers and a multimedia presentation incorporating contemporary footage of the bombing and interviews with surviv-

ing Marine veterans and next of kin of the fallen shows the cost borne by the Marines of the 24th MAU and the impact the bombing has had to this day.

In 1982, Marines began a peacekeeping mission as part of a multinational force in war-torn Lebanon. The Marines and Sailors on peacekeeping duty suffered 11 killed and 64 wounded during intermittent fighting before Oct. 23, 1983. On that date, a suicide bomber in a truck loaded with 2,000 pounds of explosives sped past a guard post at Battalion Landing Team (BLT) 1/8’s headquarters building, through a fence, into the building’s lobby, and detonated his bomb. The massive explosion and subsequent building collapse claimed the lives of three soldiers, 18 sailors, and 220 Marines. This was the greatest single-day loss of Marines since the Feb. 19, 1945, landing during the Battle of Iwo Jima in World War II.

Six days before the attack, the 22nd

MAU sailed from North Carolina for the Mediterranean to participate in an exercise in Spain before relieving the 24th MAU in Lebanon. However, the amphibious squadron carrying the 22nd MAU changed course toward the Caribbean at midnight on Oct. 20, 1983, to participate in Operation Urgent Fury on the small island nation of Grenada. The goal of the operation was to evacuate hundreds of American citizens and restore order following the outbreak of politically motivated violence. The Marines from 22nd MAU launched their invasion of Grenada on Oct. 25, 1983, and remained on the island until they withdrew to relieve the 24th MAU in Lebanon on Nov. 2, 1983. They began peace-keeping operations in Beirut on Nov. 19, 1984.

“They Came in Peace” highlights the Marine Corps’ flexibility as America’s naval expeditionary force in readiness, and the bravery, determination and sacrifice of Marines in Lebanon and Grenada.

National Museum of the Marine Corps



NANCY S. LICHTMAN

## DOD Announces New Actions To Prevent Suicide in the Military

On Sept. 28, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin released a memo directing urgent actions to address suicide in the military community, building upon two years of significant work toward suicide prevention across the Department of Defense (DOD).

Following Austin’s establishment of the Suicide Prevention and Response Independent Review Committee (SPRIRC) in 2022, the SPRIRC conducted internal reviews of 11 military installations, consisting of 457 focus groups and interviews with 2,106 Servicemembers and 670 civilian staff. Guided by this review and existing research, the SPRIRC made 127 near-and long-term recommendations to address this critical problem within the ranks.

The memo outlines the DOD’s campaign to reduce the number of suicides throughout the Armed Forces across five lines of effort: foster a supportive environment, improve the delivery of mental health care, address stigma and other barriers to care, revise suicide prevention training, and promote a culture of lethal means safety. The lines of effort are supported by numerous enabling tasks that will transform the DOD’s efforts on suicide prevention. These lines of effort are in line with the Secretary’s



Taking Care of Our People initiative and emphasize the DOD's commitment to the well-being of the total force.

The DOD remains committed to reducing the number of deaths by suicide throughout the Armed Forces and is pursuing an aggressive timeline for planning and implementation of Austin's five lines of effort, prioritizing the most impactful actions to set a solid foundation for long-term progress. The Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness will oversee implementation efforts across the DOD and will ensure implementation is conducted expediently and methodically. DOD aims to have full implementation of each line of effort by the end of fiscal year 2030.

DOD

### Protect Your G.I. Bill Benefits From Scams

Some educational institutions and programs unfortunately use misleading practices and overpromise their degrees' value and earning power. Without knowing the warning signs to protect yourself, this could lead to a depletion of your education benefits.

The Department of Veterans Affairs wants to ensure veterans are informed when using their G.I. Bill benefits and to help them make the best education decisions. The VA encourages veterans and their beneficiaries to know these education fraud warning signs and the best practices to avoid falling victim to a scam.

Several types of scams are targeting your education benefits. Job scams

through job boards or advertisements targeting specific demographics may be misleading or fake and require you to give personal information or money to get a job. You can find free, official information about federal jobs at [USAJOBS.gov](http://USAJOBS.gov), [FedsHiresVets.gov](http://FedsHiresVets.gov), and [CareerOneStop.org](http://CareerOneStop.org). Your state's Department of Labor may have job listings, contacts for local job offices and resources for counseling and referrals.

Student loan or scholarship scams arise when educational institutions may promise immediate student loan forgiveness or debt cancellation to entice vet-



erans to enroll in classes. For most borrowers, loan forgiveness is only available through programs requiring many years of qualifying payments or other qualifying criteria. Also, educational institutions may "guarantee" veterans a scholarship in exchange for a redemption/processing fee. Veterans may be promised a scholarship and financial aid under the guise of high-pressure sales pitches where they feel pressured to pay a fee immediately

or risk losing the so-called "opportunity." Veterans may also be promised incentives such as free laptops, gift cards or other "freebies" for enrolling in courses.

To protect your education benefits, choose G.I. Bill approved schools. Use the Weams Institution Search Tool to find G.I. Bill approved schools, and the G.I. Bill Comparison Tool to compare the benefits you'll receive at different schools. You can also find schools that take part in the Yellow Ribbon Program, which can help you pay for school costs not covered by the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill.

Also, the National Resource Directory Database provides validated resources that support recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration for servicemembers, veterans, family members and caregivers. Scammers may try to appear legitimate by using official sounding names, logos, websites or showcasing a false affiliation with the VA.

The VA recognizes the importance of professional growth and training for a meaningful career after your service to your country. If you suspect you are a victim of fraud, please contact the VA Office of Inspector General at VAOIG Hotline. You may also file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission by visiting [reportfraud.ftc.gov](http://reportfraud.ftc.gov). If you miss a VA benefits payment, identify a discrepancy in payments, or find suspicious activity with your direct deposit account, contact the VA immediately at 1-800-827-1000.

Krystle Good, VBA Office of Financial Management



**Sgt George Acinger Jr.**, 74, of Spring Hill, Kan. He enlisted in the Marine Corps after graduating from high school at the age of 17. He served as a machine-gunner with Co E, 2nd Bn, 7th Marines, during the Vietnam War. After leaving active duty, he began a career with the Overland Park and South Johnson County Fire Department, retiring in 2011.

**SgtMaj Junior Bennett**, 94, in Weirton, W.Va. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1947 and served tours overseas during the Korean War and the Vietnam War. He retired from the Corps in 1977 after a 30-year career. His awards include three Purple Hearts. He also was an avid golfer and won numerous club championships.

**Carl N. Bridenhagen**, 84, of Sturgeon Bay, Wis. He was a Marine who served from 1957 to 1960. After his enlistment, he had a career as a firefighter for 32 years.

**Cpl Earl R. Buchanan**, 96, of Concordville, Pa. He was a Marine who served during World War II and later during the Cold War as an orderly at Headquarters Marine Corps in Washington D.C., under General Alexander A. Vandegrift, the 18th Commandant of the Marine Corps.

**Darold Cayemberg**, 82, in Powers, Mich. He was a Marine who served in 1951. He later started a diesel truck company with his brother.

**Cpl Melvin F. Cruthers**, 99, in Burton, Ohio. He enlisted in the Marine Corps after graduating from high school and was assigned to the 5th Marines, 1stMarDiv, in the Pacific theater during World War II. His awards include a Purple Heart. He was a member of the VFW and the American Legion.

**Cosmas D. Eaglin Sr.**, 108, of Fayetteville, N.C. He enlisted in the Marine Corps at the age of 27 and served for two years in the Pacific theater during World War II. He was one of the first 300 Black Marines to train at Montford Point, N.C., following President Franklin D. Roosevelt's executive order in June 1941, which allowed for Black men to serve in all branches of the military. He left the Marine Corps after World War II ended, but later served in the Army as a paratrooper.

**CWO-4 Neil W. Goddard**, 88, of Fayetteville, N.C. He was a Marine gunner who served for 32 years. During his enlistments, he completed a tour in Vietnam and participated in the development of rifles during the Vietnam War. He also

served as the OIC of the Rifle Team Equipment shop at MCB Quantico. After retiring from the Marine Corps in 1982, he worked as an evidence custodian for the police department in Raleigh, N.C. He was also a private pilot and volunteered with the Experimental Aircraft Association's Young Eagles program.

**David L. Guzman**, 72, in Colorado Springs, Colo. He was a Marine who served during the Vietnam War. He later had a career as a police officer with the Albuquerque Police Department, and as a school resource officer with Albuquerque Public Schools.

**Ronald Hedman**, 89, of Green Bay, Wis. He was a Marine who enlisted after graduating high school and served from 1953 to 1956. He later had a career as a letter carrier with the United States Postal Service until retiring in 1989.

**Luther L. Hunt**, 98, of Port Allen, Va. He enlisted in the Navy at the age of 17 and served as a corpsman with the 5thMarDiv during World War II in the Pacific theater. He was the recipient of the Silver Star for his actions during the Battle of Iwo Jima.

**Michael Johnson**, 66, of Hobart, Wis. He was a Marine who served from 1975 to 1980. He later worked in the paper industry.

**Lawrence Kirby**, 99, of Manchester-By-The-Sea, Mass. He enlisted in the Marine Corps at the age of 18 and served as a scout sniper platoon leader with 2nd Bn, 9th Marines, 3rdMarDiv, in the Pacific theater during World War II. He sustained shrapnel wounds during the Guam invasion, and later wrote about his experiences in his book titled "Stories from the Pacific: The Island War, 1942-1945." His awards include the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star.

**Darrell A. Kolb**, 91, of Fox Lake, Wis. He was a Marine who served from 1950 to 1952. He later had a 37-year career in the Wisconsin Department of Corrections.

**Lyle G. LaPlante**, 87, of Saint James City, Fla. He served in the Marine Corps and the Air Force before starting his own business in 1963.

**Richard L. Mathias**, 89, of Newcomerstown, Ohio. He was a Marine who served from 1951 to 1954 and fought in the Korean War. He later had a career as a furniture and carpet salesman in Dover, Ohio.

**Sgt Frank McGill**, 91, of Frederick,

Md. He enlisted in the Marine Corps during the Korean War. He graduated from boot camp at MCRD Parris Island and served there as a drill instructor. He was a member of the Drill Instructors Association, the American Legion, the Korean War Veterans, and Sons of the American Revolution. He later studied music and was an opera singer before moving into a career in the insurance industry. He was a member of the American Legion and the MCA.

**Thomas G. Moles**, 81, of Sarasota, Fla. After graduating from Wagner College, in Staten Island, N.Y., he enlisted in the Marine Corps and served with Co D, 3rd Recon Bn in Khe Sanh, Vietnam. After leaving active duty, he had a career as a fixed income manager at an investment company and was an active member of the 3rd Recon Assn, and the MCA.

**MajGen Dennis J. Murphy**, 91, in Wyckoff, N.J. He was commissioned as a second lieutenant after graduation from Georgetown University with a bachelor's degree in history and government. He served as an infantry platoon leader and participated in vertical assault development and atomic bomb testing. He later attended Army Ranger School and served as a series commander in recruit training upon graduation. After completing Amphibious Warfare School, he served with Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic until he was assigned as the executive officer of 2nd Bn, 9th Marines during the Vietnam War. After his graduation from National War College, he commanded 2/9 on Okinawa and later Battalion Landing Team 2/9 in Australia.

In later assignments, he served at Headquarters, Marine Corps on the staff of the Secretary of the Navy; Assistant Division Commander, 2ndMarDiv, at Camp Lejeune; Chief of Plans for Korean and U.S. Combined Forces Command in Seoul, South Korea; Deputy Commander, Fleet Marine Forces, Pacific, in Hawaii; and later as the Director of Manpower Management at Headquarters, Marine Corps. He later commanded the 2ndMarDiv at Camp Lejeune before retiring in 1987.

His awards include the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit with combat "V" and gold star, and the Purple Heart.

**Marvin L. Nordling**, 84, of De Pere, Wis. He served in the Marine Corps in 1957 after graduating from high school.

**Sgt Lowell E. Phillips**, 100, of Savannah, Tenn. He was a Marine who served during WW II with the 1stMarDiv and saw action on Guadalcanal. He later served as chairman of the Hardin County School Board.

**PFC Robert “Bob” Rottner**, 81, of Bloomingdale, N.Y. He was a Marine who served from 1960 to 1964. After graduating from boot camp at MCRD Parris Island, he served with Co C, 1st Bn and was deployed to Guantanamo Bay during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

**SSgt Orlando A. Saavedra**, 42, of Elephant Butte, N.M. He was a Marine who served in Iraq during the Battle of Fallujah and Afghanistan. He was a member of the VFW and was the All-American District 4 Commander of the American Legion.

**Cpl Jimmy Stewart Strong**, 74, of Greeley, Colo. He enlisted in the Marine Corps at the age of 17 and served a tour in Vietnam. After his service, he worked as a mail carrier for the United States Postal Service. His awards include and the Bronze Star with combat “V” and three Purple Hearts

**Col James E. Toth**, 86, in Lexington, S.C. After graduating from the University of Illinois where he participated in the Navy ROTC program, he served 30 years

in the Marine Corps with the 2ndMarDiv, 3rdMarDiv, and the 5thMarDiv. He spent most of his service with the 1st and 2nd Air-Naval Gunfire Liaison Companies, a fire support liaison unit of the 28th Marine Regiment; aboard USS *Newport News* (CA-148); and with 2nd Fleet Headquarters. He also served with the Marine Forces of NATO and the Republic of Korea. After retiring from active duty in 1988, he was a chairman of the Department of Military Strategy and Logistics at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces (now the Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy). He also took part in several national strategy reviews and joint doctrine development assignments during the Gulf War.

**Maj Haines D. Waite**, 97, of Tustin, Calif. He enlisted in the Marine Corps during WW II and was assigned to the 4th Amphibian Tractor Bn where he saw action during the fighting on Guam and Okinawa. He was honorably discharged in November 1945, but reenlisted in September 1946. During his service he worked in air reconnaissance and aircraft maintenance, and was stationed in Santa Ana, Calif.; MCAS Cherry Point, N.C.; Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii; and in Memphis, Tenn. His overseas tours included Korea,

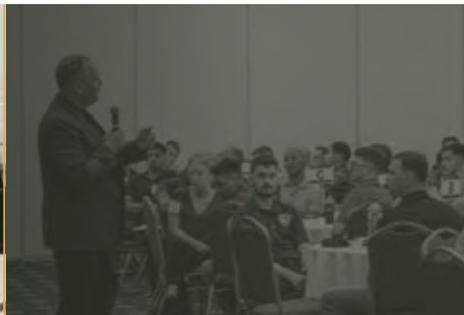
Japan, and Vietnam. After retiring, he worked in the service department for McLean’s Cadillac in Santa Ana, Calif.

**Sgt Thomas J. Williams**, 75, in Erie Pa. He was a Marine who served with Headquarters Co, 2nd Bn, 26th Marines during the Vietnam War and was stationed at Khe Sahn and Dong Ha. He also served on the security staff for Admiral J.W. Shaffer in Newport, R.I.

After leaving active duty, he obtained a bachelor’s degree in cardio-respiratory science from the State University of New York Stony Brook and a master’s degree in organizational leadership from Mercyhurst University in Erie, Pa. He later had a career as a registered respiratory therapist and retired as the Operations Director of the Hamot Heart Institute in Erie, Pa.

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](mailto:leatherneck@mca-marines.org).

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## Reunions

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

• **Embassy Guard Association**, May 16-19, 2024, San Antonio, Texas. Contact Bob Lighty, (717) 433-1105, [bob.lighty@embassymarine.org](mailto:bob.lighty@embassymarine.org).

• **Marine Corps Weather Service**, June 16-21, 2024, Billings, Mont. Contact Kathy Donham, (252) 342-8459, [kathy.donham@hotmail.com](mailto:kathy.donham@hotmail.com), or Dave Englert, (812) 630-2099, [englertd@psci.net](mailto:englertd@psci.net).

• **USMC A-4 Skyhawkers**, Nov. 11-13, 2024. Pensacola Beach, Fla. All drivers, maintainers, and aficionados welcome. Contact Mark Williams, (702) 778-5010, [rogerwilcol4@gmail.com](mailto:rogerwilcol4@gmail.com).

## Wanted

• Michael L. Lippelgoos, [dogwood125@gmail.com](mailto:dogwood125@gmail.com), is looking for a **Plt 2003 graduation book from MCRD San Diego, 1969**.

• Mark Pacey, [markp@mstn.govt.nz](mailto:markp@mstn.govt.nz), is looking for **photographs, interviews,**

**letters, and any other information on Americans stationed in New Zealand during WW II.**

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

## Sales, Trades and Giveaways

• Kurt Stinemetz, (334) 590-8016, [kstinemetz@charter.net](mailto:kstinemetz@charter.net), has the 2nd edition, 1954 copy of "Tarawa" by **Robert Sherrod, with signatures by Julian Smith and David Shoup.** Available to anyone with a reasonable offer.



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**Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation**

1. Publication Title <b>Leatherneck</b>		2. Publication Number 2 3 9 - 8 1		3. Filing Date 09/08/2023	
4. Issue Frequency Monthly		5. Number of Issues Published Annually 12		6. Annual Subscription Price \$42.00	
7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer) (Street, city, county, state, and ZIP+4®) Marine Corps Association 715 Broadway Street Quantico VA 22134				Contact Person J.Chirchila Telephone (include area code) (703) 640-0138	
8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not printer) Marine Corps Association 715 Broadway Street Quantico VA 22134					
9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank) Publisher (Name and complete mailing address) Christopher Woodbridge 715 Broadway Street Quantico VA 22134 Editor (Name and complete mailing address) Christopher Woodbridge 715 Broadway Street Quantico VA 22134 Managing Editor (Name and complete mailing address) Christopher Woodbridge 715 Broadway Street Quantico VA 22134					
10. Owner (Do not leave blank. If the publication is owned by a corporation, give the name and address of the corporation immediately followed by the names and addresses of all stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, give the names and addresses of the individual owners. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, give its name and address as well as those of each individual owner. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, give its name and address.) Full Name Marine Corps Association Complete Mailing Address 715 Broadway Street Quantico VA 22134					
11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities. If none, check box <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None Full Name Complete Mailing Address					
12. Tax Status (For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at nonprofit rates) (Check one) The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months <input type="checkbox"/> Has Changed During Preceding 12 Months (Publisher must submit explanation of change with this statement)					

PS Form 3526, July 2014 (Page 1 of 4 (see instructions page 4)) PSN: 7530-01-000-9931 PRIVACY NOTICE: See our privacy policy on www.usps.com.

13. Publication Title <b>Leatherneck</b>		14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below 09/01/2023	
15. Extent and Nature of Circulation		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)		30511	33225
b. Paid Circulation (By Mail and Outside the Mail)	(1) Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3841 (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)	60	56
	(2) Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3841 (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)	30606	33866
	(3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mails Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS®	2928	2658
	(4) Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail®)	57	65
c. Total Paid Distribution (Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3), and (4))		33851	36645
d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (By Mail and Outside the Mail)	(1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies Included on PS Form 3841	0	0
	(2) Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies Included on PS Form 3841	118	158
	(3) Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail)	88	80
	(4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means)	1335	1106
e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 15d (1), (2), (3) and (4))		1541	1304
f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15e)		35392	37949
g. Copies Not Distributed (See Instructions to Publishers #4 (page 9))		56	50
h. Total (Sum of 15f and g)		35448	37999
i. Percent Paid (15c divided by 15f times 100)		95.65%	96.56%

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16. Electronic Copy Circulation	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Paid Electronic Copies	22385	24337
b. Total Paid Print Copies (Line 15c) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)	56236	60982
c. Total Print Distribution (Line 15f) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)	57777	62286
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17. Publication of Statement of Ownership  
 If the publication is a general publication, publication of this statement is required. Will be printed in the 12/1/2023 issue of this publication.  Publication not required.

18. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner  
 Christopher Woodbridge Publisher/Editor  Date  
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# Saved Round

By Kipp Hanley



Wilbur Kocher had been at Pearl Harbor for only six days when he served patrol duty at Hickam Field after the Japanese attacked on Dec. 7, 1941.

USA

**PROTECTING PEARL HARBOR**—It was Sunday, Dec. 7, 1941, and Wilbur Kocher was sleeping later than usual. The 22-year-old Marine artilleryman from the 4th Defense Battalion had liberty the day before, and he was still snoozing in his tent when Japanese airplanes began buzzing overhead.

“At first he thought it was a drill, but other [Marines] came there and said we were under attack,” said his daughter Claudia Kocher in a recent interview. “Dad looked up and saw the Japanese emblem flying over.”

As the attack unfolded, some of the 4,500 Marines stationed at Pearl Harbor were posted on the Marine Barracks parade deck, firing on passing enemy aircraft. Others were assigned to the Navy Yard fire department to help with fire suppression on and around ships and buildings at the Navy Yard and the naval hospital.

Although he had only been on base for six days and was less than a month removed from Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, Kocher was now tasked with guarding Hickam while some of his fellow Marines were sent to the beach a few miles away to collect the dead piling up at Pearl Harbor.

When the surprise attack was over, 112 Marines were dead



Wilbur Kocher and his sister, Nellie, during his time in the Marine Corps.

COURTESY OF CLAUDIA KOCHER

or missing in action, including 67 on USS *Arizona* (BB-39).

Kocher was in the Pacific theater throughout World War II and served on the Japanese mainland when the war ended. After he got out of the Corps in 1945, he spent seven years working at a dairy farm in California before coming back to his home state of Illinois where he got married and raised four daughters.

After Kocher died in June at the age of 103, his daughter and her husband Shawn Rooney shared their memories of him with *Leatherneck*. According to Rooney, who served as a submarine electrician in the Navy during the 1980s, his father-in-law showed no signs of slowing down as he got older. While at Anaconda Wire & Cable Company, he could best co-workers 30 years his junior in physical challenges.

“He was an incredible athlete, even when he was in his 50s,” Rooney said of Kocher, who was also a talented baseball player before joining the Corps. “He would challenge men at the local factory to any strength test and then outperform them. Push-ups, sit-ups, arm wrestling. He was a true jarhead.” 🍪

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