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April 2018

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16 First FSSG in Somalia

By MSgt Tom Bartlett, USMC (Ret) In this story from the *Leatherneck* archives, Marines and Sailors of 1st FSSG deployed to Somalia in December 1992 to assist in conducting humanitarian operations in support of Operation Restore Hope.

22 The Flying Ladder: Emergency Extractions and the Lifesaver from the Sky *By Kyle Watts*

Repeated attempts to rescue a team of eight Marines surrounded by the NVA on Jan. 12, 1969, proved futile until a skilled pilot, a sergeant and a flying ladder came to their rescue.

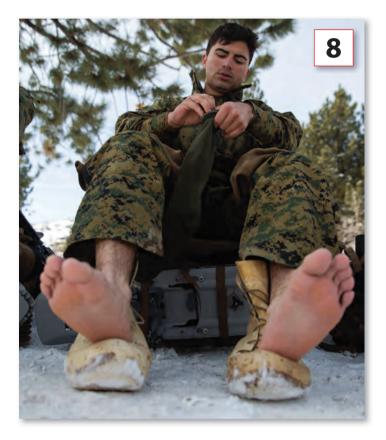
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Signature Wound of Modern-Day Combat (Part II) By Sara W. Bock From research studies to educational initiatives and innovative approaches to treatment, the DOD is pushing limits and striving to provide the highest quality care for Marines and other servicemembers and veterans with traumatic brain injury.

54 Greetings, Comrade! Cold War Aviators Engage in Unconventional Diplomacy *By LtCol John Scanlan, USMC (Ret)* During the mid-1980s, Marine aviators from VMFA-212 encountered "Badgers" and "Bears" over the Sea of Japan and escorted them back to Soviet airspace.

COVER: Marines of 2nd Recon Bn conduct special purpose insertion and extraction training aboard MCB Camp Lejeune in March 2013. To read about recon insertions and extractions during the Vietnam War, see "The Flying Ladder: Emergency Extractions and the Lifesaver from the Sky," on page 22. Photo by Cpl Ryan Joyner, USMC. Copies of the cover may be obtained by sending \$2 (for mailing costs) to *Leatherneck* Magazine, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134-0775.



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Sound Off

Letter of the Month

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

There have not been many times in my life that I have had the opportunity to spend time with a really great person. I would like to share some of my thoughts about one such person.

We all saw the opening ceremony at the recent Super Bowl. There were 15 Medal of Honor recipients honored right before the coin toss. They selected Chief Warrant Officer 4 Hershel "Woody" Williams, USMC (Ret), to flip the coin to start the game. The few seconds that Woody was in the spotlight, he was smiling, upbeat, excited about being there and was very much enjoying himself. He was very proud of his country and his Corps. He has been doing uplifting things for many years now.

I was invited to attend the presentation of the Gold Star Families Monument on Jan. 27, at Patriots Point located in Mount Pleasant, S.C., and Woody was the key speaker for this dedication. It was the 31st such monument dedication that Woody's foundation has been able to achieve. It was a very moving ceremony and Woody added so much to the event.

One of Woody's quotes which exemplify his personality is as follows:

"I hope we can maybe raise the bar a little bit of how important it is that we respect our country, that we respect our flag, that we remember and respect and pay tribute and honor to those who never got to come home."

One of the messages that Woody offered in his talk was concerning young people. He travels this great country talking to young people. During his talk, he noted his concern that the young people of our country do not understand freedom and how it must be preserved. Herein lies a challenge for all of us to be sure we answer these concerns whenever we have the opportunity to speak with young people.

Back in 2012, I learned that Woody was going to be in my area talking to young people at local high schools. I decided to host a social at my home for Woody and invite local Marine Corps League members, true patriots and local officials that would like to meet Woody. He accepted my invitation. We spent several hours together just getting to know each other. My father was a World



Medal of Honor recipient Hershel "Woody" Williams, left, stands with Capt Jim Vinyard, USMC (Ret), in front of an invasion map from Iwo Jima that is displayed in Vinyard's home. Williams is the last surviving MOH recipient from the battle of Iwo Jima.

War II Marine in the 4th Marine Division. He landed on Iwo Jima like Woody did. I have a room in my home displaying many mementoes from my father's time. One such item is a "Secret-Advance Copy" invasion map of Iwo Jima. When Woody saw that, he stood there, kind of mesmerized explaining where he was [during the battle]. He was back there for a moment.

Another highlight of the visit was when he met a WW II corpsman. They started talking and they drifted off into a world of their own. Bottom line: Woody thrilled everyone who attended and it was then I realized that I was in the presence of a really great person. Woody epitomizes the definition of an "Ambassador of Good Will."

> Capt Jim Vinyard, USMC (Ret) York, S.C.

1st Force Recon in Hue

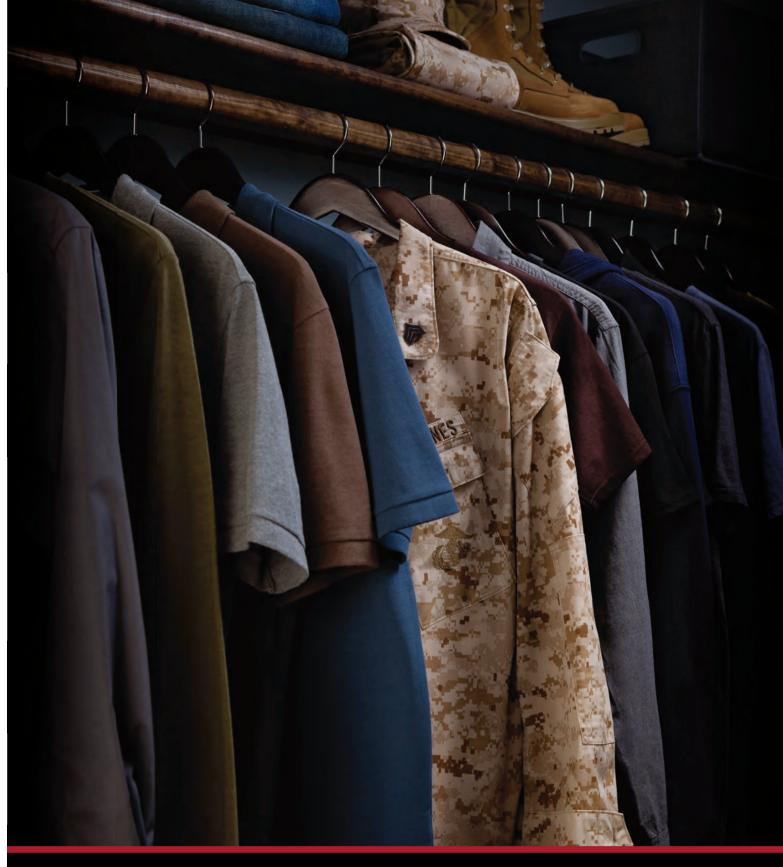
I have just seen the February *Leather*neck article, "First to Fight: 1st Force Reconnaissance in Operation Hue City." The lead picture of the article shows a Force Recon team at Camp Reasoner, Vietnam in 1967, just before an attempted insertion into enemy territory on the Thuong Duc plateau. You may be interested to know that the Marine second from the right in the picture is then-Staff Sergeant Lawrence H. Livingston, USMC.

On that particular insertion, the team immediately came under heavy enemy fire upon exiting the CH-46 and had to be emergency extracted. It was a vicious firefight but the team was able to withdraw without casualties through the leadership of SSgt Livingston, a 50-cal. and some idiot with an M-16 on the chopper.

Livingston went on to be commissioned via the Meritorious Noncommissioned Officer's Program, received the Navy Cross as the Senior Advisor to the First Vietnamese Marine Corps Infantry Battalion Marines, attained the rank of major general and served as CG of Second Marine Division. Quite a career, although almost cut short that fateful day a half a century ago.

> Fred Vogel 1st Force, 1967-1968 Herndon, Va.

• Readers will recognize Vogel's name from the article "First to Fight: 1st Force Reconnaissance in Operation Hue City," and in this month's issue, you can read



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more about Vogel and 1st Force Recon Marines in the articles "The Flying Ladder: Emergency Extractions and the Lifesaver from the Sky," and "The Flying Ladder Reunion."-Editor

I just read the Leatherneck article "First to Fight: 1st Force Reconnaissance in Operation Hue City," in the February issue. I was pleasantly surprised to read about Corporal Dave Thompson. Dave and I attended Ontos Repairman School together and then were both assigned to Ordnance Maintenance Company, 1st FSR. We were both from Wisconsin and spent a lot of time together. When Force Recon was expanding, they were looking for volunteers. Dave, along with a couple of others from our platoon, was selected and started training. I believe that this was the 5th Force Recon Co.

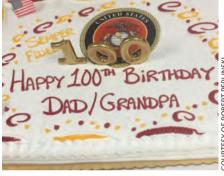
I did connect with Dave once in Phu Bai, Vietnam, in 1968, but lost contact after that. Over the last 50 years, I have often wondered what became of Dave. I would like to reconnect with Dave if possible.

> William Rantanen Watertown, Wis.

• Through the dedicated efforts of our outstanding production coordinator, Patty *Everett, and the author of "First to Fight:* 1st Force Reconnaissance in Operation Hue City," Kyle Watts, we were able to connect William Rantanen with Dave Thompson.—Editor

Bataan Marine Turns 100

My father, Master Sergeant Matthews Vincent Peplinski, USMC (Ret), turned 100 years old on Feb. 11. He was a survivor of the Bataan Death March, a Japanese POW, as well as being one of the Frozen



MSgt Matthews Vincent Peplinski celebrated his 100th birthday on Feb. 11.

Chosin. I'm not sure how many other surviving Marines are left that have been through all that but he is alive and well at 100 years old! He is not into being in the spotlight but I think he would get a kick out of seeing his milestone birthday celebration in Leatherneck.

> Robert Peplinski Warren, Mich.

A Memorable Marine Corps

Following my 18th birthday in 1945, I was drafted into the Marine Corps from El Paso, Texas. Nine of us in the group were sent by train to Parris Island, S.C., for boot camp. That began a new chapter in my life.

I was in Platoon 402 with about 105 other young men for nine weeks. Our time was cut from 13 weeks to nine so that we would be ready to land on Japan. My drill instructors were Sergeant Muhaw and Corporal Binkley.

We were then sent to Camp Lejeune, N.C., for advanced training in landing on beaches, hand-to-hand combat and other tactical training. When the atomic bomb was dropped, there were about 40,000 of us sleeping in shelter halves or eating

ALWAYS FAITHFUL



Almighty Father, whose command is over all and whose love never fails, make me aware of Thy presence and obedient to Thy will. Keep me true to my best self, guarding me against dishonesty in purpose and deed and helping me to live so that I can face my fellow Marines, my loved ones and Thee without shame or fear. Protect my family. Give me the will to do the work of a Marine and to accept my share of responsibilities with vigor and enthusiasm. Grant me the courage to be proficient in my daily performance. Keep me loyal and faithful to my superiors and to the duties my Country and the Marine Corps have entrusted to me. Help me to wear my uniform with dignity, and let it daily remind me of the traditions which I must uphold. If I am inclined to doubt, steady my faith; If I am tempted, make me strong to resist; If I should miss the mark, give me courage to try again. Guide me with the light of truth, and grant me the wisdom by which I may understand the answer to my prayer. Amen.

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in mess hall tents. After a few days our platoon was given new orders.

One morning while at Quantico, Va., those of us who had not gone on liberty were rushed to get into full uniform, grab our rifles and march to the administration building; we ended up serving as an Honor Guard for President Truman. In June 1946 our rifle detachment also served as an Honor Guard for Admiral Charles W. Nimitz, ADM Ernest J. King and ADM William F. Halsey—all five star admirals.

ADM William J. Crowe came to Odessa, Texas, when he was the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to give a speech. Following the speech I was fortunate to meet with him. I shared my experience of doing Honor Guard for the three admirals. At 90 years old and looking over my blessed life, I must give thanks for the many foundational principles and discipline I learned from my Marine Corps experiences.

> W.T. Riley, USMC Odessa, Texas

Pink Flashlight from Vietnam

I am writing this email as a follow-up to my letter published in the December 2017 issue of *Leatherneck*. I would like to add information about the pink anglehead flashlight I was issued in Vietnam.



This pink flashlight was issued to Cpl Steckler while he was in Vietnam.

The MX-212/u is a flashlight for use in an explosive atmospheres (won't give off sparks). It is the odd color so it can be identified at a glance and differentiates it from the Fulton Angle Head Military Flashlight MX-991/U Olive Drab. As to why I was issued this particular flashlight I can only speculate that it was what was on hand when I requested one. Does anyone know where I can get one?

> Cpl Carl J. Steckler USMC, 1966-1972 Dryden, N.Y.

Thoughts on Post WW II Drawdown

I was a private first class in 1949. In the late 1940s, the Marine Corps was threatened with being disbanded as a result of political victory by President Harry S. Truman, Secretary of Defense Louis A. Johnson, the leadership of the Army and the new Air Force.

The recruiting slogan at the time was, "Only 100,000 may serve," but the reality was that the total strength of the Corps, including ships detachments, embassies and brigs, was only a little over 60,000 total. At Parris Island, S.C., it sometimes took a month to accumulate enough recruits in the H&S Co barracks to fill out one platoon and begin recruit training.

Then came the Korean War. The remnant of the Corps was scraped up, saved the Korean War and we were back to stay. LtCol Tom C. McKenney, USMC (Ret)

Ocean Springs, Miss.

My Grandfather: A Belleau Wood Marine

My grandfather was born June 6, 1900, and volunteered for the Marines on April 19, 1917, when he was 16 years old. Our country had just gone to war, and he, along with millions of other young Americans, wanted to do their part to preserve our freedoms. He was a good size young man, and volunteers were needed, and through, let's just say a "clerical" error, his birthday was put down as June 6, 1898, making him 18 years old. Well, on paper anyway.



Little did he know that he would serve in the most decorated unit in Marine Corps history—the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, and also fight in the most important battle in World War I, the Battle of Belleau Wood. My grandfather would also go on to fight in the Second Battle of the Marne in 1918 and was WIA [wounded in action] on Oct. 4, 1918, during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive.

I must admit I didn't know too much about my grandfather and regret that I was not there when he passed. I was stationed at Kunsan Air Base, South Korea, but as soon as I got back home my top priority was to pay my respects.

I say I didn't know much about him and his military service, but about five years ago I felt the need to find out more. The more I learned, the more I started to share his story, especially to Marines around Gallup, N.M., where I live and with the veterans and guests who stay at my hotel, the Comfort Suites in Gallup.

One day there was a Marine who really opened my eyes about my grandfather, and believe me, filled my heart and soul with such a deep pride in his service to our country. This young man had served with 1/5 in Iraq in 2005. He was very interested in my grandfather's story, and how from day one of Marine Corps training they are taught about the Marines of Belleau Wood.

He asked me, "You know what the Germans called them, don't vou?" I replied, "Teufelhunde" and he laughed and said, "Hell yeah, you know and it was those Devil Dogs of Belleau Wood that helped the Marines earn the reputation they rightfully have to this day." He then stated that I was the first direct descendant of those Marines that he had ever met and asked to shake my hand. I was deeply touched by this young man's excitement in hearing my grandfather's story. He then said how he wished he could go back in time and sit with my grandfather, have a beer and just listen to him talk, to which I simply replied, "Me too."

The young Marine went on to say, "Your grandfather was a badass!" This made me chuckle a bit because I had never thought about him in that way, but now here I am listening to this man who was probably in his mid to late 20s, telling me that my grandfather was a badass. Wow! What a revelation to know that my grandfather and the Marines of Belleau Wood still have that much of an influence and carry that much respect to the modern-day Marines. My grandfather was a very proud Marine and I am so honored to say [continued on page 66]

YOU EARNED IT

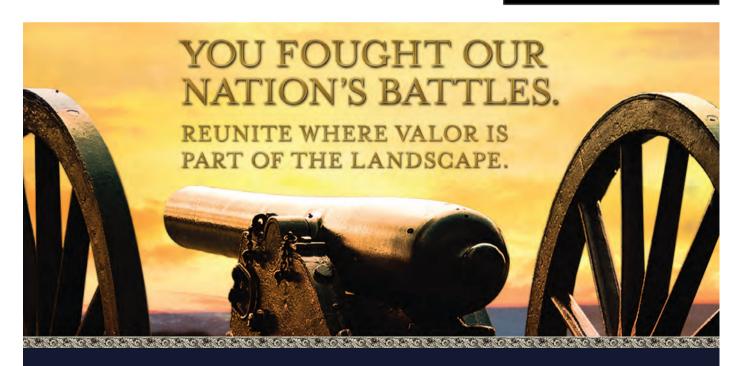


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Compiled by Sara W. Bock

HAWAII Water Confidence is Vital To BRC Success

Reconnaisance Marines with the Marine Corps Base Hawaii Detachment, 4th Reconnaissance Company hosted amphibious training events as part of a monthlong preparation course for prospective recon Marines, Jan 22-23. The course aims to prepare reservist students for the stresses of the Basic Reconnaissance Course (BRC) by offering a broad, realistic curriculum, challenging them mentally and physically.

"It's basically a stepping stone for students to prepare for BRC," said Corporal Nikita Klochko, a course instructor and recon Marine. "We've been through basic reconnaissance skills and all the other physical and mental components they'll need to succeed."

The extensive time the students spend in the water will drastically increase their preparedness for the difficulties of BRC training, Klochko said.

"Water confidence is huge," Klochko said. "Most guys will freak out, hyperventilate and quit. Pool activities and fins are a big part of what we do here."

Private First Class Michael Garziano, an infantryman with the unit, said during the course that he had already seen improvements in his performance in the water.

"Before it started, I was completing my 500-meter swim in almost 17 minutes," Garziano said. "We've been working on that event almost every day here, and I've

LCPL LUKE KUENNIEN, USINC

PFC Michael Garziano, an infantryman with 4th Force Recon Co, prepares for the BRC by treading water while holding a rubber rifle at MCB Hawaii, Jan. 22. cut that time all the way down to under 13 minutes."

It is especially important that the detachment's students are fully equipped to succeed and come back from BRC as recon Marines, as the unit is already understaffed, said Sergeant Trevor Smith, a course instructor.

"Our main goal is to continue bringing reconnaissance Marines to the Hawaii detachment," Smith said. "Right now, we have five reservists here on island, and that isn't even enough for a team."

By assembling a full team, the unit would be able to take advantage of the unique amphibious training environments Hawaii has to offer.

"We have a brand new dive locker here, literally a stone's throw away from the detachment," Smith said. "Helocasting opportunities are more readily available with the bay and the air station right next door. Having a full team would give us the capability to fully utilize those training opportunities."

The BRC is a means to achieve this goal by instilling the superior discipline, force fitness and warfighting knowledge that the reconnaissance community is known for. LCpl Luke Kuennen, USMC

A BRC preparation course instructor with 4th Force Recon Co monitors a student during a 25-meter underwater swim, Jan. 22.



CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C. Logistics Marines Improve Proficiency with Sling Load Ops

Marines with Landing Support Company, 2nd Transportation Support Battalion, 2nd Marine Logistics Group conducted sling load operations at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., to improve their proficiency with loading equipment onto aircraft for transportation, Jan. 25.

The training consisted of Marines attaching a 400-gallon M149 water tank trailer to an MV-22B Osprey using a sling and hook.

"The importance of conducting sling load operations is that it gives us an opportunity to work with air crews and make sure the Marines are well-trained to attach equipment," said Captain Mark Krueger, the company commander for LS Company. "Each different type of equipment or supplies has to be attached in a certain manner and when you encounter new pieces of equipment it requires new configurations of the slings."

To attach the equipment to the aircraft, the Marines used five-man crews consisting of a static man, who uses a static wand to ground the aircraft so that electricity coming from the aircraft doesn't shock them; a hook man, who uses a hook to attach the sling to the aircraft; two leg men to move any obstacles away from the equipment; and a safety man, who makes sure the crew are doing their jobs safely and in an efficient manner.

"There are some places where you can't simply drive a truck into an area of operations," said Lance Corporal Isaac Spragling, a team leader with the company. "Sometimes it has to be air dropped."

The training was in preparation for a capabilities exercise designed to test the Marines' ability to conduct sling load operations and perform an airdrop.

"The Marines did a great job," said Krueger. "They have come a long way in what they have learned and what they have been taught."

Sgt Chris Garcia, USMC

BRIDGEPORT, CALIF. Marines Battle the Elements In Preparation for Arctic Edge

Approximately 90 Marines with Combat Logistics Regiment 25, 2nd Marine Logistics Group battled blistering winds and bone-chilling cold as they traversed the snow-covered Sierra Nevada Mountains at Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center, Bridgeport, Calif., Jan. 23-29.

The purpose of the training was to prepare the unit for joint-force training Exercise Arctic Edge 18 in northern Alaska. It gave them the opportunity to



Cpl Daniel Aldana, a distribution specialist with CLR-25, 2nd MLG, takes advantage of a tactical pause during a hike to change his socks at MCMWTC Bridgeport, Calif., Jan. 26. Approximately 90 Marines participated in the weeklong cold weather training event. (Photo by Sgt Brianna Gaudi, USMC)

learn survival skills, traverse mountainous terrain and perform cold weather weapons maintenance, all vital to making the exercise a success.

A cold environment paired with mountainous terrain affects the way Marines conduct tasks, techniques and procedures. During cold weather training at MCMWTC Bridgeport, CLR-25 Marines look for "casualties" during a simulated avalanche scenario. The training prepared the Marines for joint-force training Exercise Arctic Edge in northern Alaska.

The training provided them with the ability to adapt to operations in an environment that is both physically and mentally demanding.

"So much of being up here is mental," said Corporal Kyle Sherwood, an electronics maintenance Marine with CLR-25. "As long as you are well-prepared, your body should be fine, but you need to stay mentally tough."

Marines who participated in the cold weather exercise spent three days at lower base camp receiving classes in preparation for their trek up the mountain pass. They then put what they learned to the test by summiting the mountain and then living atop it.

Aside from learning basic survivability, such as boiling snow to decontaminate and replenish water reserves, Marines were taught how to properly keep warm, maneuver with snowshoes and skis, construct tents to live in and maintain weapon systems.

"Training like this is great," said First Sergeant Sergio Berrios of CLR-25. "Marines could get PowerPoint classes on how to survive, but nothing compares to being out here experiencing firsthand what it's like in a real-world environment."

An instructor at the training center explained that this specific training area can have subzero temperatures, winds up to 100 miles per hour and snowfall in excess of 5 feet.

"It is extremely important to stay motivated because if you don't this weather will get the best of you," said Barrios. "The Marines have done a great job of motivating each other to push through this training and keeping in mind that they are all in this together."

Completing their preparatory training package properly prepared the Marines of CLR-25 for Arctic Edge, where they will be required to further hone weapons and combat operations capabilities in northern Alaska's extreme environment.

Sgt Brianna Gaudi, USMC

CAMP PENDLETON, CALIF. Foreign Weapons Training Prepares Marines for Deployment

Marines with Task Force Al-Taqaddum 18.1 Rotation 6 participated in a foreign weapons demonstration at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., Jan. 16-17. The demonstration provided them with



A Marine with Task Force Al-Taqaddum 18.1 assembles an AK-47 as part of a foreign weapons demonstration at MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., Jan. 16. (Photo by Pvt Robert Bliss, USMC)



Prior to deploying to Iraq, Marines with Task Force Al-Taqaddum 18.1 practice marksmanship with AK-47 assault rifles at MCB Camp Pendleton, Jan. 16. The training helped them become familiar with weapons they may encounter while working with the Iraqi armed forces.

an opportunity to become familiar with the AK-47, a weapon they may encounter during their upcoming deployment in Iraq.

The Marines of Task Force Al-Taqaddum need to have a working knowledge of not only their own weapons, but also those of partner nations: the most prominent being the AK-47.

"This weapon system is very different from what Marines are used to," said First Lieutenant Joseph Riley, instructor officer in charge, I Marine Expeditionary Force advisor training branch (ATB). "It has a different kick to it and it uses a different round. It's overall a less accurate weapon than the M16."

The AK-47 makes up for its reduced accuracy by being a fully automatic weapon capable of firing 600 rounds per minute, explained Riley.

"The AK-47 has its drawbacks, but it also has its benefits," said Riley. "This type of training is very good for the task force."

While deployed in Iraq, the Marines of Task Force Al-Taqaddum will be advising members of the Iraqi Armed Forces, who primarily use the AK-47. The Marines will need to be able to effectively employ this weapon system in order to help complete the mission of training and advising. According to Riley, knowing and understanding the Iraqi weapon systems helps the Marines train with them more efficiently.

Effectively employing a weapon system at the tactical level is a necessity for Marines, but it does not stop there. The Marines of Task Force-Al Taqaddum took a course on the various functions and differences of the AK-47 before putting a single round downrange.

One of the largest differences between the M16 and the AK-47 is the size of the round, said Sergeant Dalton Bauer, a tactics instructor with I MEF ATB. The M16 uses a 5.56 x 45 mm NATO round, while the AK-47 uses a 7.62 x 39 mm round. It uses a gas-operated, long-stroke piston as opposed to the M16, which uses direct gas. The AK-47 is also slightly heavier, weighing 9.5 pounds, compared to the 7.18-pound M16.

The physical differences between the two weapons systems are well-pronounced,

but familiarity with the weapon can help offset this. One way the Marines did this was by firing the AK-47 from 50 meters beyond its max effective range. It is always important to be hands-on with new weapon systems, said Riley.

"Marines need to know how to fire them, they need to know how to conduct remedial action and they have to know how to employ these weapons safely," Riley added.

This training will help Marines and members of the Iraqi military come together to increase overall proficiency and tactical knowledge during Task Force Al-Taqaddum's upcoming deployment.

Pvt Robert Bliss, USMC

BEAUFORT, S.C. Controlled Burn Training Maintains Unit Readiness

The Marines of Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting (ARFF) conducted controlled burn training at Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, S.C., Jan. 19.

This particular "small aircraft fuel fire" simulation required the Marines to put out a jet fire, giving them the skills and experience they may need to employ in a real-life scenario someday.

"We try to do training fires like this at least once a month," said Corporal Trevor Hendry, a crewman with ARFF. "Now that we have the opportunity to do these exercises more often makes it a lot easier to maintain unit readiness as a whole."

The training took place in a pit specifically designed for training fires. Inside the pit is a mock aircraft surrounded by nozzles that douse it and surrounding



ARFF Marines extinguish a small aircraft fuel fire during a monthly controlled burn training exercise at MCAS Beaufort, S.C., Jan. 19. (Photo by LCpl Ashley Phillips, USMC)



Safety is paramount for ARFF Marines during training exercises like this one, which involved fighting a jet fuel fire at MCAS Beaufort, S.C., Jan. 19.

areas in jet fuel. When the Marines are ready, the fuel is then ignited with a flare.

"It definitely forces people to become more comfortable with their hand line skills," said Lance Corporal Danny Clarke, a hand lineman with ARFF. "It gives you more of an insight on how the fire moves and the little things you need to watch out for while on the job."

To put out the fire, two pairs of Marines advance toward the aircraft—one pair taking its place on each side. The lead Marine holds the hose and controls the flow of the water. The second Marine stabilizes the first and keeps an eye out for safety hazards. During the training there is also a pit safety officer for each pair of Marines. "Safety is the most important aspect when it comes to these training events," said Hendry. "There is no teacher as good as experience. That's why this training is so important—it keeps Marines cycling through and having these repetitions under their belt."

The Marines also considered environmental safety at the pit. Since there is excess water that runs off of the pit, they surrounded the back of the pit with a berm of fuel-absorbing material. Another safety precaution was an extra tanker of water and a rapid intervention team on standby.

"The most important part of this training is the trust that it builds in this unit," said Clarke. "I have to be able to trust that my fellow Marine has my back. The better prepared we are, and [confident] in our abilities when we are on the job, are the keys when it comes to saving a life." LCpl Terry Haynes, USMC

OKINAWA, JAPAN

Exercise Requires Cross-Training, Improves Proficiency for Communications Marines

More than 100 Marines with Detachment Alpha, Marine Wing Communications Squadron 18, Marine Air Control Group 18, Marine Aircraft Group 36, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing participated in Exercise Warrior Challenge throughout Okinawa, Japan, Jan. 18-31.

The exercise allows participants to rehearse the establishment of a tactical air command center (TACC)-level communications architecture in order to increase Marines' technical skills, build unit cohesion and rehearse the communications support prior to the execution of Key Resolve 18, an annual command post exercise conducted with the Republic of Korea Armed Forces.

"All this training leads to the proficiency of the Marines," said First Lieutenant Donovan Bates, the officer in charge of Warrior Challenge. "It gives them the basic level of knowledge needed to go out and support our exercises for any expeditionary operations or training events we have throughout the fiscal year."

The TACC is the operational wing command post from which the aviation combat element commander and his staff plan, supervise, coordinate and execute Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) air operations. It integrates the six functions of Marine aviation with the MAGTF command element. The TACC provides functional interface for employment of MAGTF aviation in joint and coalition operations.

Throughout the exercise, network administrators, data systems administrators, Air Contingency MAGTF (ACM) and field radio operators cross-trained to facilitate the ever-evolving progressive transformation of their 06XX military occupational specialty school.

"MWCS-18 is taking the first steps to provide training to Marines that have not been exposed to the new requirements," said Bates. "This is essential to the transformation of the command and control abilities that allow the Marine Corps to best deliver and defend the command and control network."

Force modernization requires the Marine Corps to adapt to a changing information environment by standardizing the information management processes. This permits commanders in the air, on land and at sea to make faster decisions to





Cpl Parker J. Berg, a digital wideband transmission equipment operator with MWCS-18, adjusts an antenna during Exercise Warrior Challenge on Okinawa, Jan. 24.

overcome the enemy and preserve the lives of servicemembers. This transformation also allows command and control to increase mobilization and deployment abilities, ensuring the U.S. maintains a decisive advantage over her enemies.

"Because of the [communication] squadron's high operational tempo, we need to get these guys trained up," said Gunnery Sergeant Timothy Bos, the staff noncommissioned officer in charge of Exercise Warrior Challenge. "We need to get their [billet descriptions] established and just give them the ground work to go out and do their newly assigned jobs quickly."

During the exercise, the ACM played a major role in the overall technical proficiency that the detachment will be reAbove: GySgt Timothy Bos teaches a networking class during Exercise Warrior Challenge 18 at Camp Foster, Okinawa, Japan, Jan. 23. During the exercise, Marines with MWCS-18 improved their technical skills, built unit cohesion and rehearsed communications support prior to participating in Exercise Key Resolve this spring.

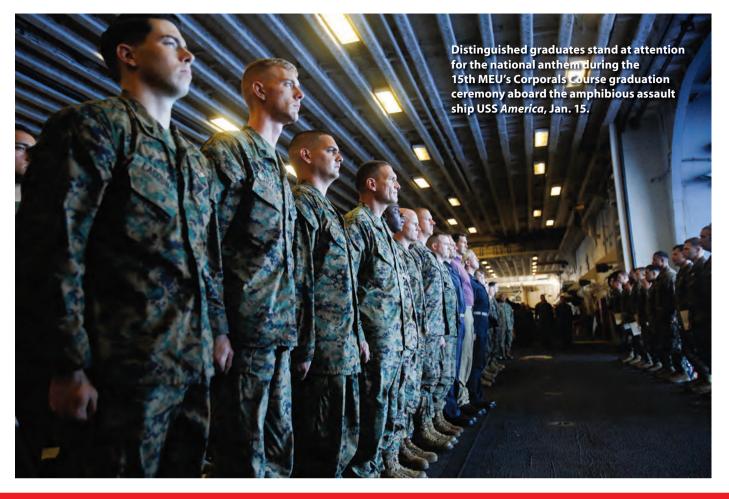
quired to provide during Exercise Key Resolve this spring.

"Within a matter of hours, the ACM or radio data team, which is kind of the generals' personal communications team, can deploy rapidly and establish communications in a very short time," said 1stLt Jordan Duncan, the ACM officer in charge for Detachment Alpha, MWCS-18. "This increases command and control in high intense situations."

Although throughout the communications community they work side-by-side to get the job done, the mission can't be completed without each 06XX Marine doing their part.

"We are starting from the bottom, learning the small things so we can build ourselves up," said Private First Class Katherine Reynosa, a network administrator with Detachment Alpha, MWCS-18. "I feel more confident in what I am doing and more experienced."

Cpl Jessica Etheridge, USMC



Corporals Course

15th MEU Conducts Professional Training at Sea

By Cpl Timothy Valero, USMC Photos by Cpl Jacob Pruitt, USMC

am the backbone of the United States Marine Corps. I am the Marine noncommissioned officer," recited more than 100 Marines during their Corporals Course graduation ceremony aboard amphibious assault ship USS America (LHA-6).

Corporals Course is a Professional Military Education course designed to provide mentorship and expand the professional and personal knowledge of the Corps' NCOs. This two-week course recently brought together corporals and a select few lance corporals from across the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit's Aviation Combat Element, Ground Combat Element and Command Element to reinvigorate their core values and teach them the fundamentals of being smallunit leaders.

"The purpose of Corporals Course is to give the Marines tools to be effective



MGySgt Torain Kelly, operations chief with the 15th MEU, was the guest speaker for the Corporals Course graduation ceremony and provided leadership advice to the future leaders of the Marine Corps.

noncommissioned officers and leaders," said Sergeant Jose Lopez, a network specialist with the 15th MEU and a Corporals Course instructor. "These corporals will soon have Marines under their charge, if they do not already, and the knowledge they learn during the course will prepare them with the skills, knowledge and courage they will need."

The academic knowledge was not simply read from a slide on a screen or a page in a book. The instructors brought the lessons to life, sharing their personal experiences and lessons learned from their time in the Marine Corps so that the students could relate the information to their own situations.

"I really appreciated the opportunity to stand up in front of the students and teach them the lessons I have learned throughout my time as a noncommissioned officer," said Lopez. "I never really had anyone sit down with me and give me the advice we get to give to these Marines. If I can improve the [military] careers of just a





MGySgt Torain Kelly congratulates Cpl Jonathan Lacount, the class honor graduate, during the Corporals Course graduation ceremony.

few of these students than I believe I will have made a difference in the Corps. I will know every hour spent instructing these Marines has been worth it."

The Marines attending the course received several instructional periods on subjects such as basic infantry tactics, communication, operations, land navigation, career progression, promotion system and military drill. The goal of the classes was to give the Marines the knowledge needed to improve them professionally and personally while giving them the tools needed to return to their Marines and share their knowledge.

The NCOs also were taught how to

Above: The 15th MEU Corporals Course 18-2 graduates and their instructors pose for a group photo after the graduation ceremony aboard amphibious assault ship USS *America*, Jan. 15.

confidently and proficiently handle the NCO sword and guidon for formation and ceremonies.

"Whether you were newly promoted to corporal or have been a corporal for years, this course will teach you something either about yourself, your job or the Marine Corps," said Corporal Jonathan Ramkissoon, a cyber-network operator with the 15th MEU.

"It taught me the value of personal responsibility and how big of a difference it can make for people to be able to rely on me, or have a junior Marine look up to me as positive mentor for them to emulate," said Cpl Ramkissoon.

The skills and knowledge the Marines in the course received will be taken back to every shop, office, unit, squad and workspace improving core leadership positions while providing junior Marines with NCOs who embody the Marine Corps values of honor, courage and commitment.

Throughout their deployment, the 15th MEU held multiple courses on each ship of the *America* Amphibious Ready Group, leaving each Marine with the responsibility of small unit leadership and teaching them that although today they may instruct and supervise in peace, tomorrow they may lead in war.

First FSSG in Somalia

Story and Photos by MSgt Tom Bartlett, USMC (Ret)

Editor's Note: The Marines and Sailors of 1st Force Service Support Group deployed to Somalia from December 1992 through February 1993 in support of Operation Restore Hope.

ost Marines serving in Somalia "shower" under nozzles of wheeled water tanks known as "buffaloes." There is little or no privacy for these Marines when answering nature's call.

They dry shave or use cold water. They sleep on ponchos on the ground, and they eat meals, ready to eat (MREs) most of the time. Sometimes, if they're lucky, they'll swap a meal with the French or Italians, just for a change of menu. Such is the accepted fate of the Marine infantryman affectionately called "grunt."

Then there are the Marines of the 1st Force Service Support Group (FSSG) who live at the Port of Mogadishu, Somalia's capital. Those Marines sleep on cots covered with mosquito netting. They are housed in an old warehouse with walls and a roof to protect them from the heat of day or chill of night.

Also, it does rain on occasion in Somalia. Marines of the 1st FSSG have enclosed reads (toilets) and showers. Two hot meals

heads (toilets) and showers. Two hot meals are prepared daily and served in an enclosed mess hall. Coffee and cold drinks are available almost around the clock.

Religious services are conducted regularly. News events and professional sport scores are neatly typed and posted on a huge bulletin board daily. There is even a small post exchange which sells cigarettes, candies, personal items and batteries for radios, flashlights and cameras.

Generators provide electricity within the warehouse, enabling Marines to read books, write letters home or to use small computers.

Wash racks are available, enabling 1st FSSG Marines to wash clothes whenever time permits.

And there's the rub. "Whenever time permits. ..."

There really isn't much free time. Sure, they admit that they have it made compared to their counterparts serving in the bush with the 7th Regimental Combat Team.

The field Marine is probably envious of those living "in luxury" at Mogadishu, but what they fail to realize is that what little the grunt in the field might have was probably unloaded, transported and



Food-relief ships from a number of nations unloaded medicine and grain at the Port of Mogadishu, Somalia. Marines provided security for the emergency supplies and escorted Ethiopian drivers as they delivered the goods to relief agencies. On adjacent piers, Marines of the 1st FSSG unloaded their own maritime prepositioning ships.

distributed to him (or his unit) through the facilities and manpower of the 1st FSSG.

"The *Bonnyman* was offloaded in nine hours," First Lieutenant David Steele stated. "It carried 395 vehicles and 216 containers."

The vessel is an MPS, or maritime prepositioning ship. A squadron comprises four such merchant ships providing the equipment and 30 days of supplies for a Marine expeditionary brigade. The ships offload at piers or from offshore with special equipment they are fitted with. Many of the supplies are containerized or packed in a huge box similar to the hauler segment of an 18-wheeled tractor trailer. They can be stacked aboard ship, three or four high, if necessary.

In all, 13 ships will provide for the Marines; five of the ships are in various stages of construction. One squadron operates in eastern and northern Atlantic waters. The second operates in the Indian Ocean and the third squadron operates out of Guam.

The ships are civilian owned and crewed, leased to the U.S. government.

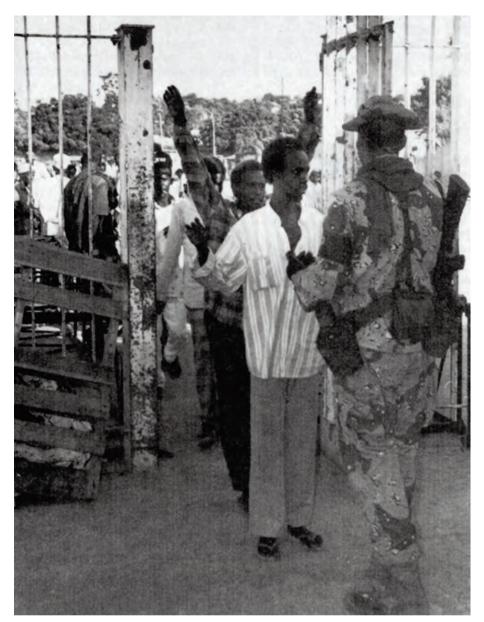
"We had [USNS] *1stLt Jack Lummus* [744 vehicles and 246 containers] and [USNS] *Private First Class James Anderson* [529 vehicles and 271 containers] unload earlier," 1stLt Steele explained. "We figure that we have 1,700 vehicles and 700 containers ashore, so far, and two more ships will arrive shortly.

"When we refer to vehicles, we're including some big stuff. Take the *Lummus*, for example. We offloaded seven M1A1 tanks, 27 assault amphibian vehicles, nine LVS-mm, howitzers and 157 'light' vehicles [under five tons, such as pickups, humvees and ambulances]. There were also 103 'heavy' motor transport vehicles, such as tractor trailers, retrievers or wreckers.

"Plus there were 36 engineer vehicles, such as dump trucks, forklifts, bulldozers and material-handling equipment, water buffaloes, generators and [eight] floodlight sets."

The floodlights enabled the Marines to offload ships throughout the dark Somali nights.

Steele was a sergeant assigned to the ground support equipment section of Marine Attack Squadron 311 (A-4 Skyhawks) at El Toro, Calif., when selected for a commission through the Meritorious Enlisted Commissioning Program. He received his commission in 1990. "I really expected to go to Saudi to participate in Operation Desert Storm, but I was undergoing training at The Basic School at Quantico, Va." Assigned as public affairs officer for the 1st FSSG and Brigadier General M.T. Hopgood, Steele surmised, "I guess I got picked for the job because I had written



LCpl Brian Scamman, a military policeman from the 1st FSSG, searched Somali dock workers selected to unload food-relief ships. Sniper fire was not uncommon near the entrance to the port.

safety stories and taken supply photos after graduating from the Defense Information School at Fort Benjamin Harrison in Indianapolis, Ind."

"We had an operational exercise in Kuwait last August called Native Fury 92. It went well, and we were getting ready for Native Fury '93 when that exercise was scrubbed and our orders changed to here, Somalia, to begin Operation Restore Hope."

The three MPS ships providing support for Marines in Somalia were all named after Marines: 1stLt Jack Lummus was with 2/27 at Iwo Jima; PFC James Anderson Jr. served in Vietnam with F/2/3; and 1stLt Alexander Bonnyman Jr. served with 2d Shore Party, 8th Marines at Tarawa in World War II.

All were killed in action. All were awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously.

Support to Allies

"A ship comes in and is unloaded," Steele explained. "Some supplies remain here for use, but we also assist other United Nations forces serving here.

"We gave the Saudis 30 cases of MREs, 2,100 gallons of potable water and 20 gallons of fuel. I think that's funny as hell. One of the richest oil-producing countries in the world is scrounging 20 gallons from us. We also provided them with some cots.

"Now for Belgium's troops, we gave five cases of MREs, 1,800 gallons of water, cots and 100 gallons of fuel.

"France received 1,200 gallons of water and 260 gallons of fuel. Italy signed for 30 cases of MREs, 1,560 gallons of water, 75 gallons of fuel and cots. Kuwait wanted only one case of MREs and 20 gallons of water. "How come so little food for the Kuwaitis? I think they just wanted to sample our meals. France didn't want any of our chow. Their field rations are really pretty good."

Potable or drinking water is not a problem for U.N. forces in Somalia. *Lummus*, for example, generates 28,000 gallons of water daily, desalinizing salt water to fresh.

"We have more than a million gallons of fuel stored at various tank farms [in huge bladders]," Steele continued.

Marines of 1st FSSG also support the Navy medical section which has a full X-ray capability and full dental laboratory.

"It is really a fantastic situation," Steele continued. "The combination of the maritime prepositioning ships and Marine expeditionary forces works fantastically well. An incredible team.

"The 1,800 Marines of the 15th MEU are part of USS *Tripoli*"s amphibious ready group. They were in place and off the coast of Somalia by the time the United Nations voted to use military force to get food to starving Somalis.

"The vote was approved and boom! Marines landed. A few days later, the first elements of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force [commanded by Lieutenant General Robert B. Johnston], and three MPS ships from the Military Sealift Command arrived in support."

LtGen Johnston commanded 4,533 Marines, but as joint task force commander, he also led 6,967 American soldiers, Sailors and airmen.

When the first infantry Marines landed, they carried with them enough supplies to last one week in the field. Their mission was "... to secure major air and seaports, key installations and food distribution points to provide open and free passage of relief supplies, to provide security for convoys and relief organization operations, and to assist U.N./nongovernment organizations in providing humanitarian relief under U.N. auspices."

The 1st FSSG is home-based mainside at Camp Pendleton, but its elements are spread out all over the base.

Headquarters and Service Battalion provides disbursing, post exchange, postal and military support for the MEF, and communications for the group.

Sergeant Major Larry Lentzner is the senior enlisted Marine of 1st FSSG. He has been a Marine for 28 years.

"Marines here in Somalia have free mailing privileges. They receive \$150 a month imminent danger pay, and they also receive foreign duty pay which ranges from \$8 to \$22.50 a month, depending on rank. But servicemembers sacrifice their subsistence allowance [from \$132.42 to \$216.90 a month, depending on rank].

"You could do us a favor regarding mail, if you will," the sergeant major continued. "You could advise your readers not to send a bunch of mail addressed to, 'Any Marine in Somalia.' We're getting flooded with mail like that, and it slows down mail from family members and loved ones.

"If people want to get pen pals, let them look in the back pages of *Leatherneck*, and if they want to address a letter to 'Any Marine,' advise them to just write one or two letters, not 20 or 30.

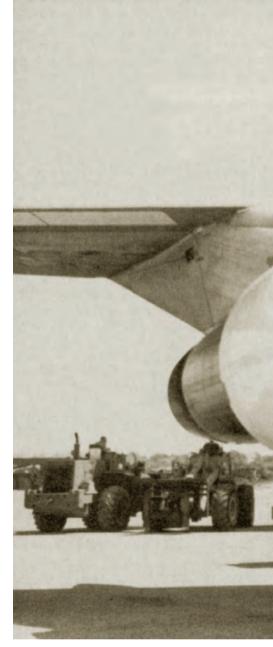
"We have enough problems with mail here, because units are continually on the move; Baidoa, Bardera, Mogadishu. ... We have Marines in the field and aboard ship, and our postal clerks are doing one helluva good job, but they are simply overwhelmed."

Military police at Mogadishu have their hands full as hundreds of Somalis gather daily outside the gate, hoping to be hired to work on the base or offloading foreign ships carrying food and medical supplies to the various relief agencies based in Somalia.

Various fixed posts are located near the main entrance of the port, and MPs direct pedestrian and motor vehicle traffic entering or exiting the port.



A light-armored vehicle "topped off" at Bela Dogle, the halfway point between Mogadishu and Baidoa. The 1st FSSG controlled more than a million gallons of fuel, stored at various locations in Somalia.



Lance Corporal Gina Tomasello waved a French convoy through the gate. "With all the various U.N. units here, I'm sometimes confused as to who to salute," she said. "Some soldiers wear stars on their shoulders, but you know they're not generals. You know the adage, when in doubt, salute? That's what I do. I salute the lead vehicle's front-seat passenger after I halt the convoy, and then I check the paperwork. Seems to be working out all right."

Corporal Timothy Lozott explained the pedestrian gate. "We 'pat' search anyone coming aboard. The Somali civilian laborers now walk in with their hands up. We pat their armpits down and feel for weapons strapped to their waists or inside their legs.

"You'd be amazed at what we find, including sawed-off AK-47s, and a lot

More than 75 FSSG Marines supervised the unloading of military and civilian-contracted aircraft ferrying in personnel and military equipment to Operation Restore Hope in Somalia.

of knives. I found a straight-edged razor yesterday."

"I took a 9 mm pistol from one of them this morning," LCpl Brian Scamman offered. "Some of these Somalis are bodyguards for civilian news gatherers. So they come walking up to the gate with an AK-47, and right away, that kind of unnerves me.

"And you take the weapon and clear it, then lock it up inside while he goes and finds his news people to escort for the day. When he leaves, you hand him back his weapon and say, 'Have a good day."

Sniper rounds occasionally impact at the Port of Mogadishu, and a reaction force responds. "But so far, nobody has been hit," LCpl Harold Zickefoose said.

Members of the 1st Maintenance Bn are responsible for tactical communications, electronics and engineer equipment. Motor transport and ordnance equipment sections are also under their command.

The 1st Supply Bn and Supply Activity Management Unit provide all classes of issue items except for bulk fuel.

The Cooks

"We're the people all the Marines like to see setting up," Gunnery Sergeant Jeff Vandervort boasted. He is mess chief, along with Navy Chief Thomas Apatan.

"I was the food services operations chief at Camp Pendleton when I was told to stand by to mount out. I was supposed to be heading for Kuwait with about 20 Navy and Marine cooks. And here I am, joined by 22 messmen [some are American soldiers] serving in Somalia.

"We started from scratch. Marines were 'feasting' on MREs until we got set up. Then we served one hot meal a day for 1,661 troops. We had the only hot chow in an American mess hall in Somalia.

"Then we started serving a hot breakfast, making it two meals a day. Funny, you know, how fast the word spread. We were serving more meals than people assigned. We know some of the grunts were here, maybe visiting friends or whatever, and they came through the line. Word gets around fast over here."

Chief Apatan has been in the Navy for 25 years. He was the supply officer at San Clemente Auxiliary Landing Field, Calif., when he was ordered to join 1st FSSG for the mount out.

"The gunny and I split the duties," Apatan said. "One of us gets here at 4:30 a.m., and makes the coffee. And while that is brewing, we tour the area, checking for cleanliness or problems."

Sergeant James "Smitty" Wilson was a

cook at Camp Pendleton's "14 Area" when assigned to Somalia. He is chief cook for the Mogadishu camp.

"The cooks are day on, day off, starting around 0400 [4 a.m.]. We'll finish around 0730 and grab some 'Zs' if we can, and return over here to prepare the evening meal around 1400. We can live with that kind of schedule. The difficult part is hauling potable water from buffaloes over here for boiling chow, and keeping the area clean."

The Battalions of the FSSG

The 7th Engineer Support Bn provides water supply, mobile electric power, storage and distribution of bulk fuel, and EOD (explosive ordnance disposal).

The 7th Motor Transport Bn provides support to the FSSG as well as to major elements of I MEF.

The 1st Landing Support Bn (LSB) consists of shore parties, helicopter support teams, air delivery and airfield control groups. The battalion has three landing support companies, a beach and terminal operations company, landing support equipment company and a service support company.

IstSgt Jeff Study was as close to the MPS ship as he could be without getting his feet wet. The detachment of the 1st LSB had its tents set up at the edge of the pier. You couldn't miss them; one flew the American flag and the other the Marine Corps flag. "We have 10 officers and 267 enlisted Marines working around the clock," he said. "Lieutenant Colonel Pete James is in charge. Our job is to unload aircraft and control the arrival of cargo and passengers.

"1st LSB controls this port, militarily, and our Marines are responsible for the offloading of MPS ships. We're talking some long and hard hours. We have 78 Marines at the airport, supervising the unloading of aircraft. We've been busy...."

The 1st Medical Bn gives emergency treatment, provides temporary hospitalization and specialized surgery, and evacuates battle injuries. The battalion also coordinates preventive measures for control of disease.

Chief Petty Officer David Knapp, U.S. Navy, is assigned to Marine Forces, Somalia, with the Preventive Medicine Section. He has been a Sailor for 15 years. "We're responsible for purity of the water, and also for pest control and sanitation," he explained, squinting at a test tube of foggy fluid as he tested the water purified by Marines. "So far, we've had no malaria problem in the Mogadishu area.

"In addition to providing desalinized water here at the port, the Marines are also responsible for the water at the airport. I'm checking to see if this batch will be medically approved before it is distributed for use."

Hospitalman Second Class John McCord said that between 16,000 and 20,000 gallons of water per day were used by members of the joint task force.

Hospitalman First Class Debra Dunning was checking out some backpack pesticide sprayers. "They work off compressed air," she said. "We really don't have a problem here now, but before the MEF landed, I understand there were bats and rats all over the place. It's pretty cleaned up, now."

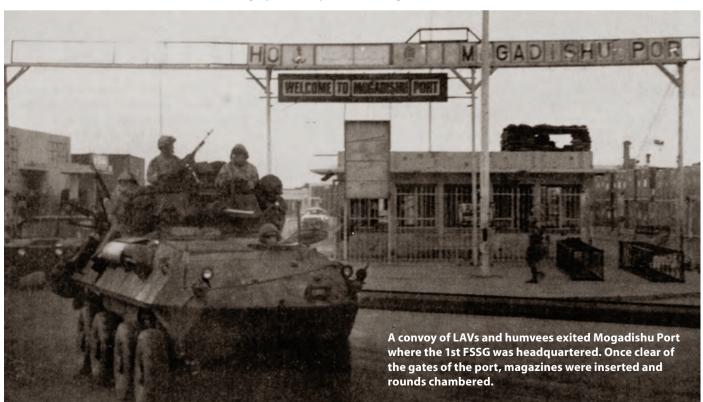
Americans serving in Somalia were required to obtain a number of shots due to the various diseases flourishing there, including recent outbreaks of chicken pox and measles. Immunizations were to ward off hepatitis (two strains), diphtheria, polio, influenza, typhoid, meningococcus, malaria, dengue fever, and yellow fever. Also a tuberculin skin test was required.

The 1st Dental Bn treats members of the MEF and stands ready to provide specialized care for casualties.

MEU Service Support Groups 11, 13 and 15 provide the same type of combat service support on a smaller scale to their respective commands as is provided by 1st FSSG to I MEF.

How effective is the relationship between Marines, Sailors and prepositioning ships?

"In 1991, Marines and Sailors evacuated nearly 20,000 citizens and diplomats, assisted more than two million refugees and deployed 90,000 Marines to combat. We must maintain the capability to influence world events and manage instability, the capabilities that have long been the stock in trade of your Corps of Marines. We have a long tradition of answering '911' calls. We intend to continue it," said General C.E. Mundy Jr., Commandant of the Marine Corps, in his remarks before Congress in March 1992.



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Sgt Bob Buda in Hue City, February 1968. He played a key role in a mission that saved the lives of eight recon Marines.

The Flying Ladder

Emergency Extractions and the Lifesaver from the Sky

By Kyle Watts

S econd Lieutenant John Slater froze in place and stopped breathing. More than 20 voices closed within 40 meters of his position. His force reconnaissance team had inserted 24 hours earlier into Base Area 112, west of An Hoa Combat Base, Vietnam. North Vietnamese Army (NVA) soldiers combed the jungle, hunting the Marines from the moment they arrived. Now, with the enemy so close, the lieutenant's request for air support was denied. The seven-man recon team would have to evade the NVA long enough to find an extraction site.

COURTESY OF DAVE THOMPSON

They escaped the enemy and survived

These recon Marines are demonstrating the flying ladder, which in January 1969, proved to be the only means of escape for a team of recon Marines near An Hoa. another night. The next morning, Dec. 15, 1968, enemy soldiers again surrounded their position. Sporadic rifle fire came from multiple sides as the NVA attempted to locate and flush them out. Slater evaded the enemy once more and called for immediate emergency extraction.

CH-46 pilot Captain Laurence "Larry" Adams landed his transport helicopter at An Hoa for refueling as 2ndLt Slater's call came into the First Force Reconnaissance Combat Operation Center (COC). Adams diverted from his original mission to go get Slater and his men. The team's escape had led them farther up the side of the mountain under 60-foot jungle canopy and landing a helicopter was out of the question. They would have to be hoisted up into the hovering chopper using a jungle penetrator. The device looked similar to a three-pronged fishhook with its seats folded down, and it was designed for one man. In perilous circumstances, however, two men wrapped themselves around the hoist and each other to reduce the number of trips required to rescue an entire team.

Capt Adams dropped his helicopter over the area where the Marines held their ground. As the jungle penetrator lowered through the trees, enemy rounds shot skyward toward the bird. Sixty seconds passed before the hoist finally hit the jungle floor. Two Marines hooked on with snap links and began the journey up. The weight of two gear-laden passengers severely slowed the hoist, more than doubling the time of the trip. The Marines clung tightly as they watched tracer rounds smack the belly and sides of the helicopter that was supposed to be their haven. As they reached the helicopter, the crew pulled them inside; more than five minutes had passed.

The hoist began a second trip. Adams struggled to keep the chopper steady under fire. Marine UH-1N Huey gunships let loose at the enemy below. One friendly rocket exploded so close to Adams' helicopter that shrapnel cut holes through the side along with the enemy fire. He could hear voices over the radio. "Two more on, but there's still three on the ground!"

"Don't worry," he shouted into his microphone, "We're not going anywhere; we'll get you out!"

Nearly 15 minutes passed before the second group of Marines safely boarded the chopper and the jungle penetrator returned to the ground for a third trip. The CH-46 continued taking hits but miraculously stayed aloft. Two more Marines crowded onto the hoist. Lt Slater remained on the ground with the enemy closing in and the helicopter under con-



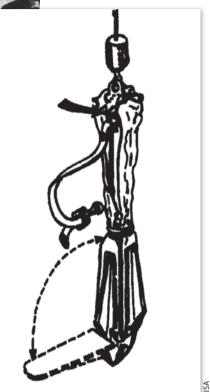
tinuous fire. Believing another five minutes alone on the ground meant certain death for his entire team if the aircraft went down, Slater grabbed the jungle penetrator as it lifted. He slid both arms under the legs of one of his Marines and held firm to the folded down seat. The Marine reached down and grabbed Slater's belt. From his position under the hoist, it was impossible for Slater to hook up.

Adams lifted off as soon as the last of the team was on the hoist. Slater and the others scraped through the trees as they rose above the canopy. The crew chief tried to reel in the hoist, but discovered the weight of three Marines plus their gear was too much. He could not pull them up. Adams decided to land the helicopter to bring in the remaining Marines. He found a large sandbar 6 miles north and headed straight for it. The flight lasted only a few minutes, but tragically, that was longer than Slater's strength could hold. As the helicopter approached the sandbar, Slater lost his grip on the jungle penetrator and plummeted 100 feet to his death. They landed, recovered his body and returned to An Hoa.

Back at the COC, First Lieutenant Andrew Finlayson reflected on the disaster. As the operations officer, he manned the other end of the radio with Slater the whole time. Almost two years earlier on his first Vietnam tour, Finlayson patrolled the same area his Marines now covered. He knew if they remained here for much longer, they needed a better way to get teams out.

Less than one week earlier, 1st Force Recon had moved to An Hoa. Slater's team was one of the unit's first patrols sent into Left: U.S. airmen use a jungle penetrator. Notice two of the small seats are still folded upright, while the airman sits on the remaining seat in the down position.

Inset: The jungle penetrator looked similar to a three-pronged fishhook with its seats folded down.



the surrounding jungle, known as Base Area 112. The Marines faced innumerable difficulties here, gathering intelligence in support of Operation Taylor Common. Jungle-covered mountains dominated the area and few viable landing zones (LZ) existed. This was NVA country, flush with supply routes, fighting positions and professionally trained soldiers to man them. The NVA developed tactics specifically targeting recon patrols. They manned every feasible LZ to prevent inserts and extracts and patrolled on line to push teams out of hiding. Every aspect of the Marines' new area was stacked against them.

A recon team's intelligence value remained highest as long as they were undetected. "Once a team made contact with the enemy, they really couldn't carry out their mission," said Finlayson, now a retired colonel and author of two books on his tours in Vietnam. "Then it became a case of simple survival. They're either running to avoid the enemy or fighting A CH-46E transport helicopter, the main aircraft for recon inserts and extracts, parked at An Hoa. A UH-1 Huey gunship is in the background. (Photo courtesy of Dave Thompson)

for their lives." In these circumstances, a team's best course of action was to break contact, evade the enemy, and call for extraction. Until Operation Taylor Common, jungle penetrators were used to great success despite their weaknesses. Many recon Marines rode the hoist and owed their lives to it. Base Area 112 and the enemy who inhabited it, however, were not as forgiving. The amount of time it took to extract a full team was too long.

Major Roger Simmons, commanding officer (CO) of 1st Force Recon, tasked Lt Finlayson with finding an alternative. To help, he sent Finlayson to the Army's elite Studies and Observations Group (SOG). Their experience inserting and extracting teams deep behind enemy lines inspired numerous devices for the task. Finlayson borrowed two concepts: the Stabilized Body (STABO) harness which seemed simple enough to adapt and produce and a giant swinging ladder.

The ladder, made of aluminum rungs and wire, was designed to roll up on the floor of a helicopter and kick off the tail when needed, unraveling to the ground. The Marines combined multiple sections of the original device, making it 8 feet wide and 80 feet long. An entire team could snap onto the ladder at once, and with no way to reel it in, no additional time was spent hovering. Marines extracted with this ladder knew they were in for a wild ride.



Capt Laurence "Larry" Adams, USMC

The device did not come without problems. The most serious risk came from the Marine CH-46 helicopters using the ladder. When pilots tested the device, they found it extremely difficult to lift off with a full recon team hanging below. The monumental task of steadying the chopper required perfect coordination between the pilot and crew. Air wing commanders did not approve the ladder for use in combat. Despite the risks, 1st Force Recon unanimously accepted the ladder as a great improvement over the jungle penetrator and began training with the device right away. In honor of their CO, the Marines rebranded the ladder as the Simmons Rig.

Ist Force Recon patrolled through the New Year into January 1969. With hovering inserts and extracts on the rise, Maj Simmons decided more training was necessary to keep his Marines' skills fresh. He gave the job of Insert/Extract Noncommissioned Officer (NCO) to one of his most experienced patrol leaders, Sergeant Robert "Bob" Buda. In his new role, Buda mastered the rigging and utilization of all insert/extract methods and provided the company with training. Few in the country were better suited for the role.

Buda arrived in Vietnam in November 1967. After 13 months, 45 patrols, six combat dives and two Purple Hearts, the 20-year-old platoon sergeant was an invaluable resource. It seemed like anything you could imagine behind enemy lines was something he had already experienced and survived, earning two Bronze Stars with combat "V" in the process. Buda extended to remain in country as the end of his tour approached. "My mindset was such that the only family I had was the guys at 1st Force Recon," remembered Buda. "My family just became the guys at the unit and I had no intention of going home. I was going to stay there forever, I thought."

His new position seemed perfect. It allowed him to remain with 1st Force Recon while minimizing the risk of a third Purple Heart—an automatic ticket out of Vietnam. Buda shrugged off numerous wounds in the past to avoid the "award" and was determined not to let another send him home.

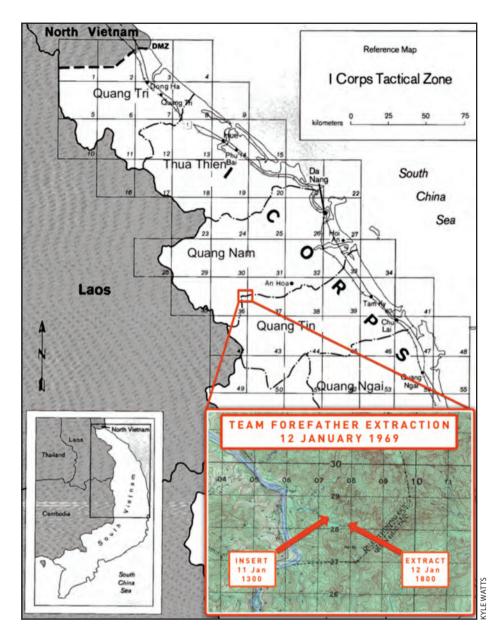
Also nearing the end of his tour was 21-year-old Sergeant David Thompson. Thompson arrived in January 1968 and progressed to his role as a team leader after six months. Twenty-eight patrols and four combat dives lay under his belt by the time he reached An Hoa. He knew the pros and cons of a jungle penetrator from firsthand experience. On one occasion. Thompson was left behind. His nine-man patrol ran into trouble and called for emergency extraction. After three trips with the hoist, six Marines were in the chopper. On the fourth trip, Thompson put just one Marine on the hoist. In recon, the patrol leader was always the last on the ground. It was also true that the patrol leader's most powerful weapon was a radio. Keeping himself and his radio operator on the ground, Thompson sent the Marine up by himself and waited for a fifth trip. The helicopter crew assumed that was the last of the patrol and took off. Thompson yelled into his radio at the pilot, who turned the helicopter around. The last two snapped onto the hoist and floated away through enemy fire.

Thompson trained on the Simmons Rig and took part in a demonstration of the device. "I called it the flying ladder," remembered Thompson. "In truth, it was the lifesaver from the sky." Given that it was not approved for use in combat, Thompson did not plan on the ladder getting him and his team out of a tight spot.

On Jan. 4, Thompson received a patrol warning order. His team, called Forefather, would insert 20 miles west of An Hoa to search for a suspected enemy supply station. Given the limited amount of time left on his tour, Thompson knew this would be his last patrol.

He had a feeling unlike anything he experienced before in Vietnam—a premonition of ill will. He had heard stories recently of other Marines with the feeling. Someone would say before going out that this mission would be "the one" and sure enough, they were killed or grievously wounded. Maybe Thompson's premonition happened because this was his last patrol. Maybe it was the reputation of Base Area 112. Whatever the cause, the feeling left Thompson uneasy.

Forefather took off from An Hoa shortly after noon on Jan. 11. The helicopter flew



them within a mile of their objective. Hovering 60 feet above a stream, the Marines rapelled to the ground. They rapidly moved into an ambush position along a nearby trail and waited. The noise of insertion always drew attention and they needed to determine how much.

ess than 20 minutes passed before the Marines saw three NVA soldiers moving north along the trail toward the suspected supply station. Two more followed shortly after. Another 20 minutes passed, and a group of six soldiers came down the trail. The Marines held their fire as they waited for the enemy to pass. One of the soldiers slowed and stopped several meters beyond the Marines' position. He looked frozen on the trail, obviously eyeing something. The deafening silence of the jungle rang in Thompson's ears as he put his M16's front sight post on the soldier's back and slid his index finger across the trigger. Suddenly the soldier turned, lifted his AK-47 and sprayed bullets into the brush. Less than one hour into the patrol, Forefather had already made contact.

Thompson squeezed the trigger and dropped the NVA soldier. The rest of the Marines opened up, killing two more. The remaining three fled down the trail. Thompson grabbed his radio handset. "Night Scholar, this is Forefather Six. We are in contact. Do you copy?" No response came from the COC. He tried again. No comms. They needed to contact An Hoa and to do that they needed higher ground. The team melted into the forest away from the trail. They moved 200 meters farther up the hill behind them. From their new position, Thompson established degraded comms with Lt Finlayson.

It was now after 3 p.m. and the sun dipped near the top of the mountains. The Marines had not seen or heard anything since their initial firefight on the trail. Thompson decided to remain in the current position for the night and

the Marines spread out in a defensive perimeter. As darkness fell, those not on watch tried to doze off, but no one slept. "Forefather Six, Forefather Six, what's your status?" The watch officer at the COC checked in to make sure the team had not been wiped out. Thompson clicked once on his handset's talk button. This silently signaled back that all was okay. No one talked. No one moved. Everyone prayed for daylight.

Night finally turned to daylight, and the Marines prepared to move out. As they ate breakfast, checked their weapons, and reapplied paint to camouflage their faces, Thompson was again stopped by a feeling. Normal procedure would be to move out at dawn, but this morning, something was off. The jungle felt too quiet. Sometime during the night, the team had again lost comms with the COC. "That was the first time ever, with any team, I didn't move out right away," remembered Thompson. "Something wasn't right, we just knew it, so we stayed there."

The team returned to their perimeter. Thompson hoped they would soon see a Cessna Bird Dog overhead. These tiny, single-engine aircraft were used by forward air controllers, but could function as a radio relay and help him re-establish comms with the COC. Forefather waited in their position for several hours. Finally, around 11 a.m., a Bird Dog came into view. Thompson reached the airplane on his radio, which relayed his position. Finlayson told Thompson to resume his mission and move out.

The team picked up and moved toward their original objective. After an hour trekking through thick undergrowth, they emerged into a clearing under the jungle canopy. The point man halted the patrol and crouched down. Walking at an angle to their front, at least 20 NVA soldiers moved in unison, spaced apart on line. They traveled fast and light with AK-47s, but carried no packs or even canteens, conducting an anti-recon sweep to flush out Forefather. Both sides realized the others' presence at nearly the same instant. NVA soldiers nearest the Marines opened up and the Marines returned fire, killing one. They poured fire at the enemy long enough to make the NVA scatter, then the Marines ran. Going toe-to-toe in the jungle with a force more than twice their size was not a good idea. Thompson and the others broke contact and headed up the hill to higher ground.

The team reached the crest of a knoll around 200 meters from where they made contact. They looked out in frustration as they came to an abrupt halt. A massive bomb crater—big enough to hold a house—cut off their escape. Thompson knew entering the crater with the enemy close behind would make them like fish in a bowl for the NVA. They were stuck, with the enemy closing in from three directions, and the crater blocking the fourth.

Thompson arranged his defense with the team and raised the COC on his radio. "Night Scholar, this is Forefather Six. We are in contact, request emergency extraction." Upon learning the situation, Lt Finlayson forwarded the request for extraction up the chain of command. He immediately called for support from UH-1N Huey gunships and fixed-wing jets.

Thompson and his men heard the enemy all around. The sounds crept closer and closer until suddenly, an enemy soldier popped his head out from the brush 5 feet away. The closest Marine blasted him in the face and continued firing. The ensuing firefight resulted in three more enemy killed before they retreated. The Marines loaded fresh magazines and waited for the next contact. They had been in their position for more than an hour already. The sound of aircraft overhead finally sang in Thompson's ears. He made contact with the Bird Dog, who relayed the team's position and coordinated the operation. Jets screamed in, pummeling



Sgt Dave Thompson is pictured with recon team "Stone Pit," in Da Nang, Vietnam, 1968. Thompson is kneeling in the middle right of the front row.

the jungle floor with their bombs. UH-1N Huey gunships followed with rockets and machine guns.

Despite the air support, Forefather continued fighting off the enemy on their own on the ground. Magazine after magazine fed through their M16s. Thompson, focusing on the radio, handed out his own ammunition as other Marines ran dry. Four more hours passed, and the sun began to set. Thompson knew if they did not get out, this night would not go as well as the last.

Approval for extract finally arrived. Finlayson's voice came over the radio. "Forefather Six, this is Night Scholar Three, emergency extract is in route. Need you to move north toward alternate LZ, over." Thompson looked north behind him at the bomb crater. "Negative Night Scholar, moving north not possible," he replied. He tried to make their perilous situation clear, but it didn't seem to sink in. "Roger Forefather Six, then need you to head west and cut back ASAP," came the reply. Thompson's frustration boiled over. "Night Scholar, I can't go north. I can't go south. I can't go east. I can't go west. I can't move without losing the team! Either try to get someone in here to get us out, or send body bags in the morning!"

Back at An Hoa, Sgt Buda was conducting a rapelling class. He stood atop the rappel tower when he saw a Marine sprinting toward them. "Sgt Buda!" the Marine yelled up, "Maj Simmons needs to see you, now. There's a problem and they need your help!" Buda rapelled down and ran to the COC. Maj Simmons brought him up to speed on Forefather's situation. He told Buda a CH-46 was going to get them, and he wanted Buda to ride along. His knowledge of the terrain could help the pilot get over the team faster, and his experience with the jungle penetrator would hopefully speed up that process as well. The helicopter stopped at An Hoa, picked up Buda, and headed toward Forefather.

Enemy soldiers had massed around the team as the afternoon hours passed. They moved farther up the hill above the Marines and waited for the helicopters they knew would come. They reached an elevation that a rescue chopper could reach and hover over the Marines. From this position, the NVA could shoot directly, or even down, at any aircraft going after the team.

Buda guided the pilot over the area where Forefather held its ground. At 2,000 feet, the CH-46 circled as Huey gunships swooped down and unloaded their aweinspiring display of firepower. Buda looked on, knowing precisely how the gunships meant life or death for the team. Thompson heard bullets smacking trees and leaves



The swinging ladder was made of aluminum rungs and wire and was designed to roll up on the floor of a helicopter and kick off the tail when needed, unraveling to the ground. (Photo courtesy of Dave Thompson)

like a heavy rain. The gunships closed in, and the sound turned to dull thuds as the rounds impacted the ground. Marines saw miniature explosions in the dirt, one after another in rapid succession, moving straight for them. The helicopters ceased firing with seconds to spare, stopping the stream of bullets less than 20 meters in front of Forefather's position. A UH-1N Huey pulled up and roared over Thompson's head. The next chopper repeated the gun run, and completed another after that. Nearly an hour passed before the CH-46 dropped in to attempt the hoist.

he helicopter came under fire before it even established a hover. The pilot held steady as Buda dropped

the jungle penetrator through the floor. Lying on his stomach, watching the hoist descend, Buda felt a warm rain begin pouring through his hair and down his neck. He looked up to see hydraulic fluid spraying from a destroyed line. He watched streams of daylight appear through new bullet holes in the wall and debris flew off as the rounds impacted the far side. In the cockpit, he witnessed every light on the control panel light up like a Christmas tree. "It's coming apart," he thought to himself. Over the intercom, the pilot ordered the crew chief to blow the line and drop the hoist. They had to get out of the zone. Thompson watched the chopper struggle to remain airborne. He saw the jungle penetrator fall away to the ground as the helicopter groaned and lifted higher. He knew they would have to hold on for a while longer.

The helicopter limped through the sky, miraculously making it 20 minutes back to An Hoa, where the pilot made a hard landing. As the chopper hit the ground, one of the rear rotor blades flew off. Buda jumped off, drenched in sweat and hydraulic fluid, but otherwise unscathed. He wondered what would happen now.

Lt Finlayson discussed the situation with Maj Simmons. They were running out of options for Forefather. Another try with the jungle penetrator would only produce the same results, or worse. "Sir, the ladder. We've got to give it a shot," said Finlayson. Simmons agreed. It was their only other viable option. Finlayson sought out Buda as he watched others counting holes in the downed chopper. "Buda, get the Simmons Rig together. We're trying it this time," he said. Buda departed to prepare the rig, and Finlayson radioed for another chopper.

Capt Adams had just returned to his home airfield at Da Nang. It was around 4:30 p.m. He had logged more than eight hours flying time by that point, running resupply missions all day. He entered the squadron headquarters when the call came down from An Hoa for another recon extraction. Despite his exhaustion from the day, Adams volunteered to go. The 25-year-old pilot participated in many recon inserts or extracts. For his role extracting Lt Slater and his team the previous December, Adams was awarded the Silver Star. His fellow pilots nicknamed him "Blades" in honor of the exceptional number of rotor blades he damaged tucking his chopper into tight LZs between trees. Adams possessed experience and knowledge of the jungle penetrator, but had never seen or even heard of the ladder.

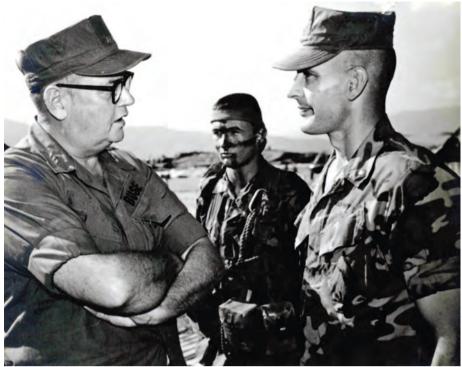
Sgt Buda moved the Simmons Rig into

the LZ at An Hoa as Adams landed and started refueling. "What's this?" Adams asked. "It's a ladder, sir," replied Buda. "We've been trying to get these guys out all day, but nothing's working." He explained how the ladder worked, and that he would come along to help. Adams told him to put it on the chopper and they would give it a try. Buda set up the rig and positioned the ladder on the tail. Adams lifted off with his crew and Buda around 5:30 p.m. The sun sank low behind the dark clouds of an approaching storm.

Adams approached the area and he circled at 1,500 feet. Gunships again strafed the jungle surrounding Forefather and the remaining jets dropped the last of their ordnance. As the other aircraft pulled out, Adams dropped his bird 80 feet above the team. The enemy on the hillside opened up on the hovering helicopter. Buda unhooked the ladder and kicked it over the tail. Adams' crew chief, Corporal James Tyler, dropped prone on the tail ramp looking down over the unraveling ladder. Through his headset, he expertly directed Adams until the bottom of the ladder touched the ground close to the Marines. He told the pilot to stop, but the chopper kept moving. Tyler yelled louder into his headset, but the ladder continued in the wrong direction. He turned and realized a bullet had severed his communication line. Tyler stood and ran through the helicopter to the cockpit. He shouted commands directly into Adams' ear over the din of the engines and gunfire. Tyler returned to the tail ramp through a hail of bullets to watch the ladder. Once corrected, he gave a thumbs-up to the copilot, who communicated to Adams to hold the chopper steady.

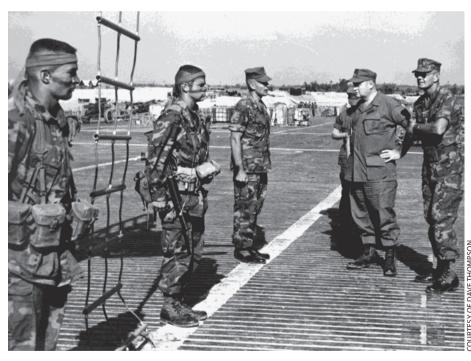
For the first time in six hours, the recon team left its defensive position and sprinted toward the ladder. Thompson grabbed ahold with his left hand and used his right to assist the others. Two Marines climbed 12 feet up the ladder making room for the rest to follow. Thompson noticed one of his Marines behind the rest of the patrol, slowly making his way toward the ladder. "Hey, what the hell are you doing? Let's go!" Thompson shouted. "I can't find my snap link!" the Marine replied. This vital piece of equipment attached the Marines to any extraction device, ensuring they would not fall. Thompson yelled at the Marine to find it and hurry up as he helped two more Marines scale the ladder. The fifth Marine began his ascent. Thompson looked back again and saw the lagging Marine now going through his pack in search of the snap link. "Get up here now!" he yelled again, "We have to go, LET'S MOVE!!"

Overhead, Adams fought the helicopter



Above: LtGen Henry Buse Jr., Commanding General, FMFPac, Maj Roger Simmons, 1st Force Recon CO, and Sgt Thompson discuss the ladder demonstration at An Hoa in early January 1969.

Below: Maj Simmons explains the device to LtGen Buse as Sgt Thompson, left, and Cpl Sam Carver stand ready to demonstrate.



to keep it steady. The added weight of the Marines underneath proved challenging, and enemy rounds chipped away all over the helicopter. Gunfire mixed with the whine of the helicopter in a deafening roar. In the background through his headset, he heard his crew shouting. They were only overhead for a few minutes, but it quickly turned into a very bad situation. From the tail ramp, Tyler signaled to the copilot that five Marines were on the ladder. "Five on board, we've got five on," Adams heard someone say. "Roger, five on. Let's go," he replied. No one told him how many Marines were on the ground.

Thompson felt the ladder pulling upwards out of his hand. His knuckles went white, willing the helicopter to stay. He looked at his radioman and the other Marine still on the ground. He knew he could not leave them. Thompson let go and hustled the others away as the ladder ascended. Running down the hill, he grabbed the radio and yelled to anyone listening. "We're still down here! Three still on the ground!" His primary concern was that a gunship or jet might drop something on top of them, thinking the whole team was off the ground. The Bird Dog overhead responded he knew the Marines remained.

The remaining three ran until the heavy thud of their footsteps became louder than the fading helicopters and formed a tight triangle in the thickest brush they could find. In the sudden silence, Thompson realized his rapid breathing was the loudest thing in the jungle. The enemy obviously believed the entire patrol had been extracted. The Marines remained frozen and waited, hoping someone would find them before the NVA did.

A dams gained altitude with the five recon Marines hanging beneath the helicopter. As they rose to safety, the Bird Dog pilot's voice came through relaying the news that three Marines were still on the ground. A sinking feeling grew in the pit of Adams' stomach as he thought through the situation. He looked down at his controls. The stick felt good in his hands, and the helicopter readily responded to his commands despite the damage. He knew as long as the chopper could function, he could not leave the Marines behind. He made up his mind they would go back.

They located a forward artillery base on a secure hilltop less than 6 miles from the extraction site. Rather than making the 20-minute flight back to An Hoa, Adams elected to drop the recon Marines there. He arrived over the hilltop and lowered the helicopter carefully. Tyler directed from the tail and, without landing, gently let the five Marines down. Once they unhooked, Tyler gave the thumbs up and Adams turned back with the ladder fully extended beneath the bird.

The sun was gone and rain clouds further obscured any remaining light. Adams knew this was his last chance to get the Marines out before it was completely dark. The jets had expended all their ordnance and were gone. The gunships had also ran their guns and rockets dry. Adams would have to make the final rescue attempt on his own.

He dropped the chopper below 1,500 feet as he approached the zone. Tracer rounds arched skyward through the twilight as he descended. Before he could get into position over the Marines, the helicopter was already taking more hits from intense enemy fire. Adams yanked the chopper back into the air out of small



A recon team demonstrates mounting the ladder beneath a hovering helicopter.

arms range. He circled around and tried coming in from a different direction, yielding the same result. Adams knew that dropping down on top of the zone made him too much of a target and left him exposed for too long. He needed a different approach—a small stream ran up the valley at the base of the mountain.

Adams circled back for a third approach, this time continuing farther down the valley. He dropped the helicopter low and gunned the engines. The ladder whipped in the wind, standing out behind the chopper as it accelerated towards the Marines. When he neared the zone, Adams popped up 100 feet above the ground and the ladder dropped back vertical. As the enemy fire resumed, he swung the tail end around into the fire. The rear armor plating and smaller target profile facing the enemy gave the helicopter its best hope. Thompson watched the chopper thunder overhead. The helicopter stopped in exactly the same spot it had been 20 minutes earlier. The ladder touched the ground and began moving in the Marines' direction. As they moved back up the hill, Thompson noticed a tall bombed-out tree stump directly in the path of the ladder. His heart sank as images flashed in his vision of the ladder getting stuck and the struggling chopper coming down. The ladder eased against the stump, then up and over the top. As it dropped mercifully down the other side, Thompson and the others came sprinting.

Enemy fire raked the helicopter as Adams fought to keep it steady. Buda manned a door gun, blasting away at the enemy below. As he returned fire, he felt a punch in his left thigh. He looked down and saw a growing circle of blood staining



A Marine CH-46 helicopter piloted by Maj Bruce L. Shapiro, HMM-263, lifts a 1stMarDiv reconnaissance team to a secure zone southwest of An Hoa Combat Base.

his utilities. Adrenalin coursing through him shielded him from pain as he kept firing. Tyler positioned himself back on the tail ramp to direct Adams over the remaining Marines. He stood motioning to the copilot when a bullet entered his right leg below the buttocks. The round dropped him back to the deck, but he continued his commands to perfectly position the helicopter.

The Marines finally reached the bottom of the ladder. Enemy surrounded the area, but all fire focused on the chopper overhead. The radioman started climbing. Thompson looked back at the last Marine. "I never found my snap link!" the Marine shouted. "Then you'd better hold on!!" Thompson replied. The Marine stuck his arms and legs through the ladder, clinging with all four appendages. Thompson snapped on underneath of him. The last member of Forefather was finally off the ground.

Adams heard through the chaos that everyone made it onto the ladder. For a final time, he lifted above the jungle. Below the chopper, Thompson closed his eyes as rain began pelting his face. A final feeling overpowered his senses. They made it.

Adams lowered the ladder to the ground back at An Hoa. Thompson unhooked and immediately searched for the rest of his team. Lt Finlayson grabbed him and told him about the forward artillery base where Adams dropped the other five members of Forefather. The three Marines were whisked away for debriefing. By the time Adams landed, Thompson and the others were gone. He would never meet the eight Marines they rescued that day.

As others slapped his back, shook his

hands, and offered him steaks, Adams surveyed his damaged helicopter. More than 100 holes were later counted. "I think it just wasn't my time," Adams reflected recently. "I think it was just time to rescue those guys, and maybe it wasn't their time either." A Huey picked up Adams and his crew and returned them back to Da Nang.

After two helicopters and three rescue attempts, Sgt Buda finally made it back to An Hoa, where he awaited medical treatment. He lay outside looking on as others gawked at the beaten and destroyed helicopters that had been his rides over the zone. "What happened to you?" the doctor asked when Buda's turn came. "Well Doc, I tripped over an ammo can. I might need a stitch," Buda replied. The doctor removed the pant leg and began probing around in the wound. A few seconds later, the forceps emerged holding a bloody AK-47 bullet. "An ammo can, huh, Sarge?" said the doctor, dropping the round into a pan. "I've heard that before. You see this tag? This guarantees you're going to the hospital for follow up. There's no way we're going to ignore this." The following day, Buda was evacuated to a hospital in Japan. There he received his third Purple Heart. Once recovered, he flew to Okinawa, then to Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii. He would not return to Vietnam.

This first use of the Simmons Rig in combat proved a turning point for recon emergency extractions. The success demonstrated the ladder's capability as combatworthy tool. It also stood out as a stunning example of the heroics required for missions of this type. Sgt Buda and Cpl Tyler each received a Purple Heart for the wounds they sustained in the helicopter. Tyler also received a Silver Star for his actions directing Adams over the team. Sgt Thompson was also awarded the Silver Star for leading the team on the ground and for his decision to remain behind. For his heroic flying, warrior spirit, and refusal to leave any Marines on the ground, Capt Adams was awarded the Navy Cross.

First Force Recon utilized the Simmons Rig more frequently as 1969 progressed, replacing the jungle penetrator on numerous occasions. It was a great tool, but its flaws haunted the unit. Not long after the successful extraction of Forefather, another patrol met disaster. Being extracted from the banks of a stream, six recon Marines snapped onto the ladder. The pilot took off, but with the weight of the team under the chopper, he struggled to gain altitude. The helicopter dragged the ladder and Marines into the stream. After more than a minute under the water, dragging across the rocky bottom, two of the Marines were knocked off and drowned.

Insertion and extraction techniques

continued progressing, and the STABO harness eclipsed the Simmons Rig as the preferred method. This was further improved into the Special Patrol Insertion and Extraction (SPIE) rig, which is still used today.

arry Adams, Bob Buda, and Dave Thompson all left Vietnam and the Marine Corps shortly after the mission. Adams returned to the states as a flight instructor in North Carolina. He was surprised and disappointed by the nation's indifference and politically motivated attacks on servicemembers. He discovered that while he was gone, two college friends attempted to take out a life insurance policy on him, figuring they could cash in when he didn't return. Adams flew more than 1,000 missions in 600 flight hours in Vietnam, earning 50 Air Medals and two Distinguished Flying Crosses in addition to his Silver Star and Navy Cross. He married his sweetheart and settled in Washington, where he worked in the radio industry and became a successful entrepreneur.

After his recovery at Kaneohe Bay, Buda was presented with orders to be an instructor at Amphibious Reconnaissance Course in Coronado, Calif. Rather than accepting this dream job for any recon Marine, he opted to get out. Back now from Vietnam, Buda witnessed a side of the Marine Corps that disturbed him deeply. Race riots broke out on Marine bases across the nation, with one of the worst happening in Kaneohe Bay. "It was absolutely terrible," remembered Buda. "It was a terrible time to be in the Marine Corps. I thought we were going to hell in a handbasket, and I didn't want to be part of it." Buda left the Marine Corps and joined the Honolulu Police Department and began life outside the military. He moved to the mainland where he continued as a police officer and detective in California for the rest of his career. He is now retired and living in Illinois.

Thompson returned home to orders as a drill instructor (DI) in San Diego. With only six months left on his contract, the Corps decided not to train him as a DI. Since they couldn't send him back to Vietnam, they let him out early. Three and a half years after enlisting, Thompson returned to his home state of Wisconsin as a civilian. Two months after leaving the Marines, he found out he had been awarded the Silver Star in addition to a Navy Commendation with combat "V." He donned his dress uniform for one final time as the governor of Wisconsin pinned the medal on his chest, followed by an Independence Day parade where he was honored as one of the main features. Thompson worked in manufacturing for many years, and finished off his career with the United States Department of Agriculture. He is now retired and living in his hometown.

Often, veterans like Adams, Buda, and Thompson discuss their experiences of 49 years ago with reverence and reluctance. The selfless examples of courage, humility, and dedication that many veterans have set throughout their lives serve as a continuation of their service to their communities and our country.

"At the end of the day, you're called, and you go," reflected Adams. "You don't think about the political implications. You just go and do your job. There's no great glory to that, there's just a job that needs to be done. You find out what you need to do, and go ahead and do it. And by the grace of God, you'll come out of it OK."

Author's note: To Dave Thompson, Bob Buda, and Larry Adams, thank you for reliving your incredible stories with me and allowing me to tell them. I hope these words can justly honor your service to each other and our beloved Corps. To all the Marines of 1st Force Recon and HMM-165 involved that day, and so many others, Semper Fidelis.

Author's bio: Kyle Watts is a former Marine captain and communications officer. He currently resides in Richmond, Va., with his wife and two children.



Following the presentation of his Silver Star, Sgt Dave Thompson was honored by his home state during an Independence Day parade through Madison, Wis.

The Flying Ladder: A Reunion

By Kyle Watts



Dave Thompson



Bob Buda



Larry Adams

began writing "The Flying Ladder: Emergency Extractions and the Lifesaver from the Sky," toward the end of last year. By then, I already had the privilege of speaking with Marine force reconnaissance veterans Dave Thompson and Bob Buda. They told me stories about the ladder device used for emergency extraction of force recon teams in Vietnam and their involvement the first time it was used in combat to pull Marines from the jungle. I was shocked by the details.

Both veterans repeatedly mentioned the helicopter pilot in the mission. Captain Laurence R. "Larry" Adams III flew the CH-46 that narrowly escaped with Thompson and his team dangling below. For his daring role bringing everyone back alive, Adams received the Navy Cross.

Buda met Adams briefly before they took off to retrieve Thompson and his men on Jan. 12, 1969, but Thompson never met him. Only later, after Adams received his award, did Thompson learn the name of the pilot who saved his life that day. As I spoke with them nearly 49 years later, it was clear to me that the impact that day had made on their lives had not faded. I set out to find the pilot, hoping he was still alive, and hoping he would be willing to speak with me.

After several days of digging, I was confident I had located the correct Larry Adams. I contacted him, explaining who I was and what I was doing, and asked if he would be willing to speak with me. "I appreciate your investigative talent and heart," Adams replied. "Of all the soldiers that served in Vietnam, there were hundreds of thousands of brave accomplishments achieved in that war. My story is but a blip on the screen. I was only a driver. My crew [were] my eyes, ears and heart. Seek them out and you will have a more deserving and forthright story about bravery, and what made these guys volunteer for such a mission."

He also presented me with a question. "What end do you hope to accomplish by publishing these articles?" This caught me off guard as much as my initial communication had surprised him.

"That is an excellent question," I replied, "One I believe I am still answering for myself." After much consideration, I told Adams my personal goal was to speak with each and every one of the hundreds of thousands of veterans who returned home from Vietnam with their stories and tell those stories the way the veterans would tell them. My only agenda would be to create something as inspiring to the reader as the story has been to me as I honored those brave accomplishments.

Adams graciously agreed to speak with me, and we arranged a call. His stories were as shocking and compelling as those told by the other Marines with whom I had spoken, though from a completely different perspective. It fascinated me how the same story could be so unique depending on the participant's point of view. I informed Adams that I was in contact with one of the Marines he snatched from the jungle with the ladder, as well as another who rode with him in the chopper, and he expressed his interest in speaking with them.

The following day, I called Bob Buda and Dave Thompson to let them know I had found Adams and asked if they were interested in speaking with him. "More than interested," said Thompson, "I would be thrilled." Everyone first connected through email. Spread from coast to coast in three different time zones, it was not an immediate option for the veterans to meet personally. Thompson emailed Adams that he wished to extend, "a long overdue thank you (only 48 years, 11 months, and six days late) for yourself and the crew of HMM-165 on that day." I offered to arrange a conference call at a later date, and all agreed.

Everyone dialed in on the morning of Jan. 7, 2018. The fact that this occurred less than one week before the 49th anniversary of the mission did not go unnoticed. "Forty nine years this Friday since we were last together," said Adams. "Where did those years go?" replied Thompson.

The veterans introduced themselves to connect voices with names. "It's a little difficult to address some of the stuff we went through because it's awfully hard to believe we survived it," said Buda. "I'd like to start by thanking Larry for the job he did that day. I went into the zone on different birds with different pilots, but Larry was the guy that pulled it off. I saw a lot of inserts and extracts, and a lot of them went to hell. But the one that day, I'm utterly amazed we all walked away from. At least to the degree that we did."

He couldn't pass up the opportunity to rib his fellow patrol leader. "Freaking Thompson! You'll notice the guy that got us all into that mess came away unscathed! But I'll tell you what, he was a fantastic team leader, and that day was fantastic for all of us, but we all owe our thanks to Larry. Without your professional skill and dedication to getting the job done that day, the bad guys would have eaten the team alive that night."

I posed a question to the group. "For this story in particular, how does it fit into your overall experience in Vietnam?"

Thompson described several of his memories, and how this story tops his list. "It's almost like you relive it in living color, and you don't really forget much. It's something you can't erase. It's a memory thing that's read only with no delete. I told Bob after 35 years I hadn't really talked with anyone about this since I got out. He warned me once you start talking about this again, it all comes back and to be prepared. He was right."

"I think by the grace of God, things were set up the way they were and the mission was completed," Adams said. He recounted memories of flying into Hue, running resupply missions and performing emergency extractions. He addressed the politics of the war that he encountered upon his arrival back home. "What I remember is that I really didn't care about the politics. I just wanted to go do the job, and do it to the best of my ability. A lot of people ask me about the politics, fighting communism and everything. The people asking those questions have absolutely no grasp of what went on over there, and how close you all and myself came to dying on that mission. The privilege of being with you guys today, and Kyle's perseverance in tracking everybody down, is taking place for a reason."

Buda provided his perspective on the mission. "It's one of those things I think about [almost] every day. I still remember specific things that I can't get out of my mind ... The voices over the intercom calling out all the things going on as the helicopter was almost destroyed. Mainly, I remember looking up at the caution panel in front of you guys in the cockpit and thinking everything that could get lit up was lit up! I was there a long time, ran a lot of patrols. There are a lot of things that stand out and they don't fade that much unfortunately, but that's reality."

Buda and Thompson filled in Adams on the first rescue attempt with the jungle penetrator before he arrived. They explained how Buda ended up with the ladder aboard Adams' chopper trying to convince him to let them use it. They all reflected on how cumbersome the ladder appeared and how incredible it is that it all worked.

"I'll tell you what, the crew chief that day did a fantastic job of directing you to move the ladder around in the zone," said Buda to Adams. "It was a very tactically difficult thing to do, and that was the first time we ever did it in combat. You couldn't see that thing. Only he and I could, and he knew exactly what commands to give you. That's the reason we pulled it off ... your skill and his ability."

Adams asked Thompson if North Vietnamese

Everyone dialed in on the morning of Jan. 7, 2018. The fact that this occurred less than one week before the 49th anniversary of the mission did not go unnoticed.

Army (NVA) soldiers or Viet Cong guerillas surrounded them on the ground that day. The recon Marines again filled Adams in on the NVA saturating the entire area and all of the other difficulties they faced on the ground during Operation Taylor Common.

"The terrain was incredibly mountainous and difficult," said Buda. "That's one of the reasons I was assigned to go with you that day. I'd been out there a couple times with my team, and they wanted me to make sure we made it to the right location. It wasn't too tough to find, though, because of all the air support overhead from the moment Dave got into trouble."

"Yeah, they never did bill me for those 10 flights of jets that dropped their ordnance that day!" mused Thompson. "Don't worry, Dave," Buda replied, "we can fix that! I'll generate an invoice and include my time on there too!"

Adams' wife, Kris, joined us on the call as well. "I wanted to tell you, Kyle, your timing on this Pilots of HMM-165, "The White Knights," stand next to one of their aircraft in Vietnam. Capt Larry Adams, far right, flew the CH-46 that narrowly escaped with Sgt Dave **Thompson and his** team dangling below. For his heroism and bravery in rescuing his fellow Marines, Adams received the Navy Cross. (Courtesy of Larry Adams)





Capt Larry Adams was presented with the Navy Cross at Marine Corps Air Station El Toro, Calif., on Sept. 12, 1970. was really amazing. Larry doesn't really talk about his experience over there, but in the last year or two he has mentioned an interest in knowing what happened to some of the people he served with. When he first declined to talk with you, I said, 'Are you kidding me? You need to have this conversation.' I think it is really great that you all could meet and speak, so thank you so much. This is a blessing."

"That's very true," Adams added. "This is just fantastic, and it kind of closes the book for me. But then again, maybe it opens the book to greater things, who knows. I don't talk about this very often, as my wife said, because sometimes there's no need to, but when you talk about it with someone who was involved, it really brings it back, and that can be a good thing."

Before we closed the call, Buda requested the opportunity to address Adams' wife. "Kris, I just want to tell you. Make no uncertain thoughts about this subject. Your husband, quiet as he may be about it, was a lion and a warrior that day. His tactical skill and efforts *saved our lives*. I have absolutely no doubt in my mind. He *saved our lives*, and there's no way to pay that back. We've owed him the lives we have. Our kids wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for his efforts, I can promise you

"I don't talk about this very often because sometimes there's no need to, but when you talk about it with someone who was involved it really brings it back, and that can be a good thing."—Larry Adams that. So when you think about who you're married to, you'll never hear it from him, but you're hearing it from us, am I right, Dave?"

"You're damn right," Thompson agreed. "There are eight of us that owe him our lives, and like Larry said, everything happened for a reason. That was the reason he was there."

The aftermath of my research and conversations for this story has left me in personal reflection. The veterans I have gotten to know unanimously approach their service with uncommon humility. They often discuss their time in Vietnam as their "job." I consider my own "jobs," and my "service." I try to understand leaving my youth in a country far away. I struggle comprehending the thought of a 13-month tour, so dense with memory that it could shake me to tears a lifetime later as it unpacks in my mind. I also fail to grasp the courage required to endure and survive the things they experienced, and the greater courage to relive them for me now.

Today, the nation's attitude toward veterans is significantly different from the America to which Vietnam veterans returned. The realization that someone has spent time in the Armed Forces often garners a "thank you for your service." For me, the privilege of speaking with men like Larry Adams, Bob Buda, and Dave Thompson has continually left me speechless. To them I offer simply, "Thank you."

Author's bio: Kyle Watts is a veteran Marine captain and communications officer. He currently resides in Richmond, Va., with his wife and two children.

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"Something's Not Right"

Marine Corps, DOD Confront Signature Wound Of Modern-Day Combat

While attached to a safety harness, a servicemember with TBI walks on a treadmill through a virtual reality scenario at the NICoE in Bethesda, Md., March 20, 2017. Motion capture cameras track the patient's movements via reflective markers that are applied to the patient and provide data on physical deficits.



Part II By Sara W. Bock

This is the second installment in a twopart series, the first of which appeared in the March issue of Leatherneck in recognition of Brain Injury Awareness Month. The series was made possible through the assistance of the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center (DVBIC), Naval Medical Center Camp Lejeune, N.C., the Intrepid Spirit Center at Camp Lejeune and Wounded Warrior Battalion– East.

Return to Forces

"When you've seen one TBI, you've seen one TBI," is a saying commonly heard among the doctors and staff at Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center (DVBIC). It's a simplified way of explaining that despite numerous advances in the field of TBI research and care, there will never be a solitary "cure." The complexity of the human brain is such that individualized treatment is key to recovery and successful reintegration. What works for one servicemember with TBI may not work for another, but the end goal is the same: to put them in control of their symptoms rather than allowing their symptoms to control them.

Leading experts in the field of military TBI, like Navy Captain Thomas Johnson, a neurologist and the director of the Intrepid Spirit Center (ISC) at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., believe that retraining the brain can restore servicemembers to the highest possible level of function, whether they suffer from the effects of mild TBI, commonly known as concussion, or a more serious TBI, which can be classified as either moderate, severe or penetrating. For between 85 and 95 percent of the individuals who are part of the brain recovery program at the stateof-the-art facility, treatment ultimately leads to their return to the force.

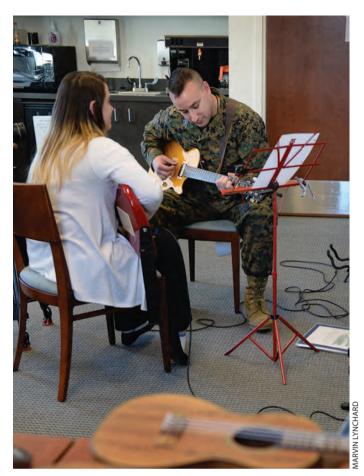
It's an impressive statistic, and evidence that the DOD is on the right track in its approach to caring for those Marines and other servicemembers who are quietly fighting their own battle against the effects of invisible wounds.

"Instead of trying to cover up the symptoms, we try and take advantage of this phenomena of neuroplasticity to sort of re-train the brain—whether that's retraining their balance capabilities or retraining them so that their sleep hygiene improves, or other non-narcotic tools to give them mastery over their symptoms like headache, pain, sleep disturbance," said Johnson, referring to the brain's ability to change, modify its connections and, in a sense, "re-wire" itself.

In an effort to expand the reach of the model of care first implemented at the National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE) in Bethesda, Md., and the Center for the Intrepid in San Antonio, the Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund, founded by the

HN David Vargas, left, a behavioral health technician at Naval Hospital Jacksonville, Fla., conducts a block design test on a Marine to assess functioning of the parietal and frontal lobes Feb. 1, 2017. The "pathways of care" model within the DOD, spearheaded by DVBIC, helps ensure that there's standardization of care for all servicemembers reporting TBI symptoms. (Photo by Jacob Sippel)







With the help of Adrienne Stamper, an art therapy intern at the

NICoE, SSgt Mannino paints as part of his therapy and recovery

SSgt Anthony Mannino plays guitar with guidance from music therapy intern Kalli Jermyn at the NICoE in Bethesda, Md., March 1, 2016.

philanthropic Fisher family, offered to build nine satellites—Intrepid Spirit Centers—across the nation. Among its locations are Camp Lejeune, which opened in 2013, and Camp Pendleton, Calif., which is still under construction and expected to open its doors this year.

These facilities are part of what Johnson describes as a network or "web" of providers and institutions such as DVBIC, VA Polytrauma Centers and military treatment facilities. It's less hierarchical than most areas within the DOD, Johnson said, which allows for more rapid sharing of ideas and innovations among the different entities dealing with military TBI.

The holistic, integrated, interdisciplinary model used at the Intrepid Spirit Centers represents the shift in mentality over the last decade regarding brain injuries, whether they were sustained in combat or in garrison. The stigma surrounding TBI has been greatly reduced, seeking help is no longer widely perceived as a sign of weakness, and the treatment options available are based on cutting-edge research and a focus on the whole person.

"Holistic means you're looking at someone from 360 degrees—so mental, physical, emotional, spiritual," explained Johnson. "Integrative means you have different disciplines working together, and then interdisciplinary means that the different health professionals—the providers who see them—work with the servicemember in a way to develop a treatment plan in partnership with each other."

process, March 1, 2016.

Each servicemember who comes into the ISC receives a standard evaluation, which includes lab work and a meeting with a team of specialists: a physician, physical therapist, occupational therapist, speech and language therapist, and behavioral health provider. With all of these individuals in the same room together, the servicemember is given the opportunity to tell their story.

"What this is, is an effort so that the servicemember doesn't have to tell their potentially traumatic experience over and over again," said Johnson, adding that the three questions the group of providers will ask the Marine are: "What happened to you? What's bothering you? What can we do to help you?"

Following the standard evaluation, the servicemember's perspective and the medical team's assessment are combined and an individualized treatment plan is developed. And while the program is generally referred to as a 16-week process, Johnson said, as long as the servicemember is benefiting, they will continue to receive care. In keeping with the "warrior-athlete" paradigm with an expectation of recovery, said Johnson, most Marines remain a part of their parent unit the entire time and receive treatments as needed.

These treatments range from traditional therapies like physical, speech and occupational to less traditional, such as acupuncture, yoga and art. The servicemembers Johnson has worked with have been overwhelmingly receptive to the nontraditional "complementary" therapies, and he's observed that most have a real hesitancy about taking pills, particularly narcotics, and want to find ways to truly get to the root of their symptoms rather than simply mask them.

It's a matter of trying different therapies and figuring out what combination works best for the individual. Captain Andrew Yeary's headaches are best controlled by Botox injections; for Major Joshua Ellsworth, acupuncture is effective. Both Marines believe that the DOD and the Marine Corps have offered them access to the best and the brightest clinicians in the field.

"They went out and got some rock star long-ball hitters when it comes to understanding what's going on and trying to help the Marines and the family," said Yeary, who reinforced his belief that even with the availability of the best specialists, the Marine has to fully "buy in" to the treatment in order for it to be successful.

The referral process to Intrepid Spirit has what Johnson characterizes as a "wide aperture." Most receive referrals from their medical officer, but specialists in mental health or sports medicine can also refer them. Servicemembers may also self-refer.

"We'd rather see too many people and have some of them not have a brain injury rather than miss some of the people," Johnson.

The center is designed to meet the needs of servicemembers who have sustained a brain injury and require more support than the traditional clinic setting can provide. According to Johnson, patients with evidence of a brain injury and certain symptoms are selected based on their willingness, commitment, time and command support to participate in the program.

"You think of your brain kind of like a computer if you have too many windows open," said Johnson. "If you have insomnia, chronic back pain, headache, concerns about performance at the workplace and stress at home, it's just too much. But in our program if we're able to get control of pain and sleep ... all of a sudden that allows them to focus on other issues, like trying to express things that have been stressful or experiences that were traumatic for them," he added.

Early Detection and Treatment

One of the benefits to a close alignment among NICoE, the network of ISC sites and DVBIC is the standardization of data collection and development of "best practices" in TBI care. It's central to what



GySgt Clint Pearman, USMC (Ret), a DVBIC regional education coordinator, gives a presentation on the Military Acute Concussion Evaluation (MACE) to corpsmen aboard USNS *Mercy* (T-AH-19) in May 2017.

DVBIC's acting director Kathy Helmick says is an ongoing effort to establish TBI "pathways of care" within the Defense Health Agency. This involves matching patient requirements with the capabilities of the military health system and delivering the latest research and education findings to military healthcare providers, ensuring continuity and standardization of care throughout the entire DOD and, when applicable, in the transition to care through the VA.

For approximately 85 percent of servicemembers who sustain a concussion, a period of rest followed by a progressive



return to activity—the current clinical recommendation—enables their recovery within seven days with no need for ongoing care, said Dr. Katharine Stout, a physical therapist and board certified neurological specialist who is the chief of the clinical affairs section at DVBIC.

"The sooner somebody is treated ... their symptoms will more typically resolve early and not be lingering or lifelong challenges," said Stout. "The longer somebody waits to report, the more challenging it becomes to treat."

In some cases, subsequent concussions after the initial injury can compound the symptoms, and it can be virtually impossible to distinguish which incident caused which symptom. Another challenge in treatment is an overlap of symptoms with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or anxiety.

"We'll have people come in and say that they can't remember—that they're forgetting stuff. Well, if you're tired, you're not going to remember. So is it a cognitive deficit or a sleep deficit?" said Stout. "There's this interplay between all the symptoms, so it's trying to figure out what ... are the primary symptoms and which are the secondary impact of those symptoms."

Reinforcing the important message that TBIs can occur during training events and in garrison, this illustration from DVBIC depicts a servicemember sustaining a TBI during a land navigation exercise. This complexity of symptoms is one of the reasons that the interdisciplinary model, with specialists from multiple areas as part of the team, has been so successful.

Stout and the rest of DVBIC's clinical affairs staff focus their efforts on developing clinical recommendations on how to manage best practices for TBI care in the military; providing recovery support networks for servicemembers transitioning out of TBI programs; measuring longterm outcomes of servicemembers with TBI; and surveying the impact of TBI and the needs of the clinics across the DOD.

The presence of DVBIC staff at its 22 network sites aids in the efficacy of developing recommendations for clinicians within the military health system in regard to how to deal with patients who have or are suspected of having TBI. Ultimately, the goal is to promote state-of-the-science care for all servicemembers and veterans whether they're treated at clinics, emergency departments, outpatient or inpatient facilities, Intrepid Spirit Centers or other TBI programs.

In developing clinical recommendations for military health providers, DVBIC has collaborated with clinicians and research experts from the civilian sector, particularly from Johns Hopkins Medicine, the Cleveland Clinic and the University of

Right: A technician at the NICoE in Bethesda, Md., demonstrates how a patient with a TBI can use the driving assessment and rehabilitation treatment to help regain the ability to drive.

Below: A computer screen displays a neurocognitive eye tracker used in assessing potential TBIs at Naval Medical Center San Diego, Sept. 15, 2017.





Pittsburgh, as well as from the sports community—namely the NFL and NCAA.

DVBIC's primary focus group, according to Helmick, is providers, with the goal of educating clinicians to recognize the signs and symptoms of TBI and treat them in a timely and appropriate manner. Beyond that, it is imperative that unit leaders and primary care managers emphasize to servicemembers and their families how important it is to seek medical attention following any impact to the head that's accompanied by an alteration of consciousness-not only in combat, but also in garrison. Whether it's a sports injury, vehicle crash, or proximity to an IED blast, it's vital to be seen by a provider as soon as possible to minimize long-term effects.



"We know that if we can treat your symptoms and we can progressively return you back to your pre-injury activity level, you have the best outcomes," said Helmick, adding that the vast majority of early-detected TBI patients are "scooting back out into the fight."

The challenge, said Helmick, is that in the case of concussion, these early detections currently are not based on objective data. There is not yet an MRI or CT scan that can see a concussion; nor is there a known biomarker in the blood that conclusively indicates one. While the last decade has seen great improvements in recognizing signs and symptoms of mild TBI among servicemembers, diagnosis remains entirely event-based with symptoms. Helmick and her staff won't rest until there's an objective way to determine whether someone has a concussion.

"Right now the clinical scenario is you tell me your story, I ask what your symptoms are, and I try to treat your symptoms," said Helmick. While it frustrates her that there's a lack of assessment data and no way to truly confirm a diagnosis of concussion, she's also hopeful that technological advancements that currently are being worked on diligently will be ready to push out to the field in the next year to two years.

"We're working these things very feverishly," Helmick said, adding, "We're not where we need to be."

Filling the Gaps

"What do we still not know?" It's a question that Stout says drives DVBIC's progress in the fight against TBI.

In her work with clinicians to develop



Dr. Katharine Stout, chief of the clinical affairs section at DVBIC, discusses the development of TBI clinical recommendations at DVBIC headquarters in Silver Spring, Md., Jan. 3.



The DVBIC research section chief, Dr. Saafan Malik, shares his system for tracking current TBI studies across DVBIC's 22 network sites.

best practices for TBI care, she hears their questions and concerns, which she then feeds to the DVBIC research team so that they can better design research studies to find the answers to those questions.

Currently overseeing DVBIC's open research studies—which totaled 71 as of Jan. 3—is Dr. Saafan Malik, neurosurgeon and DVBIC research section chief.

The studies are all put through a rigorous approval process prior to receiving funding and must focus on filling the current gaps in TBI research.

Most notably are three different longitudinal 15-year studies looking at the long-term effects of TBI on Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom veterans, including the effects on their caregivers.

Researchers also are studying the impact of servicemembers' exposure to repetitive low-level blasts in training environments. "How much is too much? When do you start to have cognitive changes?" said Helmick. "You haven't been injured yet, you haven't lost consciousness, you haven't had any alteration of your consciousness but you keep firing off weapons and it's causing blast problems."

Both Camp Pendleton and Camp Lejeune are key DVBIC sites in studies designed to measure the effects on the brain of repetitive firing of shouldermounted munitions. Marines will come off the range and go through blood draws, ear testing, balance testing and more to compile data that, if conclusive, may eventually effect policy change within the DOD regarding striation of training.

"Marines like to know, 'OK, when I'm going out there every day and I'm getting kind of 'blown up' or I'm practicing in breacher scenarios, how do I know that this isn't going to do long-term damage to me?" "said Helmick.

While exposure to and firing of highvelocity weapons may not lead to TBI, said Malik, the cumulative exposure may give some servicemembers symptoms that are closely affiliated with the symptoms of concussion. It's something they don't yet know enough about and a gap they hope to fill in the coming years.

Another area of interest is chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), caused by subconcussive blows—repetitive trauma to the brain. Postmortem diagnosis of CTE among several well-known football players in recent years has raised awareness of the degenerative brain disease and has researchers looking for answers on how to avoid or prevent such injuries.

"Necessity is the mother of invention, and if you need something, you go for it and find a solution for it," said Malik.

Malik oversees DVBIC's entire research portfolio, and his staff at DVBIC headquarters in Silver Spring, Md., tracks and monitors all 71 studies—several of which are congressionally mandated—across the 22 network sites. Other pockets of TBI research are conducted throughout the DOD through Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences and the U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command (MRMC).

The sustained efforts of DVBIC formerly known as the Defense and Veterans Head Injury Program—have led to the production of more than 400 publications that Malik says have a high impact on the body of TBI research to date. The military's research on TBI began with the Vietnam Head Injury Study, which tracked for more than 40 years a cohort of Vietnam veterans who sustained penetrating TBIs in combat. Today, the majority of the research is focused on concussion—"the one that we didn't know anything about," said Helmick.

"We are really stepping up and pushing ourselves to get anything we can get our hands on and push our limits to have things available for our servicemembers," said Malik.

A handheld diagnostic device—the Infrascanner—was tested by Marines and subsequently fielded throughout the Corps in 2015. It uses near-infrared light to check for intracranial hematomas—clots or accumulations of blood between the brain and the skull—allowing corpsmen to assess brain injuries on the battlefield. Another new device, BrainScope, records the electrical activity of the brain and can detect abnormalities consistent with TBI.

There's also currently a study testing three different eye-tracking devices to determine which one should be used by the DOD for TBI diagnostics. It involves a partnership with Walter Reed National Military Medical Center and is funded through NRMC—making it what Malik calls a "group effort" within the DOD.

"Our research is requirements-driven, gaps-oriented, for the servicemember,"



Mark Urrutic, project officer for Family of Field Medical Equipment Team, Marine Corps Systems Command, uses an Infrascanner to locate a simulated hematoma on a mannequin's skull while MCSC Executive Director William Williford observes during the Navy League's Sea Air Space Exhibition in National Harbor, Md., April 3, 2017.

said Malik, pointing out the difference between research conducted by DVBIC and studies by civilian healthcare chains, which are profit-driven. "For us, the profit is to serve the servicemembers," he added.

A Head for the Future

Dr. Scott Livingston spent two years at Camp Lejeune as the manager of the Warrior Adaptive Reconditioning program at Wounded Warrior Battalion–East before becoming the chief of DVBIC's education section.

"In the period of time that I was there, from 2013 to 2015, the percentage of Marines and Sailors with musculoskeletal type injuries, amputations or blast-type injuries went way down and we were seeing much more invisible wounds— TBI, post-traumatic stress, chronic pain," he said.

The experience provided invaluable insight into his current role, which involves overseeing DVBIC's educational initiatives geared towards three primary audiences—servicemembers; medical professionals and clinicians; and caregivers. The most recognizable of these initiatives is the "A Head for the Future" campaign, which promotes awareness about TBI and provides resources to aid the military community in prevention, recognition and recovery.

From materials about safe helmet use, preventing falls and wearing seatbelts to video testimonials from "TBI champions"—active-duty servicemembers and veterans sharing their stories of recovery and hope—"A Head for the Future" aims to dispel myths about TBI and get the facts straight.

Regional education coordinators at DVBIC's 22 network sites disseminate fact sheets and materials and conduct a variety of classes and training opportunities. For servicemembers and their families, they educate about helmet safety and how to recognize the symptoms of concussion. For clinicians, they distribute clinical recommendations on topics like management of sleep disturbances or progressive return to activity after TBI and provide accompanying face-to-face training.

Recently DVBIC's education section has developed an interactive decisionmaking and assessment tool that clinicians can access online or download to their iPhone or Android devices.

"[It] guides them through a focused headache history, exam, everything they should include when they evaluate a patient," said Livingston. "It's just a nice interactive tool to help them guide their assessment, guide their evaluation and make the best decisions on how to treat



Dr. Scott Livingston, DVBIC education section chief, discusses the latest initiatives for spreading awareness about TBI, Silver Spring, Md., Jan. 3.

those patients in a format that's more userfriendly."

For family members who are caregivers for servicemembers with TBI, DVBIC, in conjunction with DOD and VA, produced a congressionally mandated caregiver education curriculum in 2010.

"Caregivers like having access to current, relevant information, but they most want training on how to be a caregiver. What does it mean to be a caregiver and how do I navigate through the caregiving process over the long term?" said Livingston. The caregiver curriculum is currently under revision, and a new effort to broaden its reach has come in the form of a Podcast called "The TBI Family."

"The Podcast was kind of a better way to get that information across in smaller, easier to consume bits," said Livingston. "A lot of what we've learned from our caregivers ... is that they want that information in an one-on-one dialogue. They want to hear it from other caregivers, they don't want to just read it ... so we took the physical product and really expanded it."

The overarching goal of all of these educational initiatives is to continue to reduce the stigma of TBI in the military and ensure that those servicemembers who sustain them are given the treatment they need in order to return to duty.

The resources are there—and it's up to service members and veterans to take advantage of them.

"People should seek medical care for evaluation and treatment if they think they have had a head injury. They should also never give up hope, no matter how severe the injury may be," said CAPT Johnson, who quoted Hippocrates: "There is no head injury so trivial that it should be despised, or so serious that it should be despaired of."

Author's note: If you're a servicemember or veteran who knows or believes you have sustained a TBI—even if the injury occurred years ago—DVBIC's TBI Recovery Support Program is available to you. Visit www.dvbic.dcoe.mil/servicemembers-veterans for more information.

Signs and symptoms after a brain injury may include:

- Headache or a sensation of pressure in the head
- Loss of or alteration of consciousness
- Blurred eyesight or other vision problems, such as dilated or uneven pupils
- Confusion

- Dizziness, feeling off-balance or the sensation of spinning
- Ringing in the ears
- Nausea or vomiting
- Slurred speech
- Delayed response to questions
- Memory loss
- Fatigue

Some signs and symptoms may not appear for hours or days, such as:

- Trouble concentrating
- Continued or persistent memory loss
- Irritability and other personality changes
- Sensitivity to light and noise
- Sleep problems
- · Mood swings, stress, anxiety or depression
- Disorders of taste and smell

* The majority of TBIs treated by military physicians are diagnosed in noncombat settings.

DVBIC

Sea Stories

SEA STORY OF THE MONTH

A Draftee's Revenge

The "Inspection Trombones" experience of my fellow Marine musician Steve Shaw in the "Sound Off" column of January's *Leatherneck* brought to mind one of many hilarious experiences any Marine musician could relate to.

While I was in the 3rd MAW band at Marine Corps Air Station El Toro. Calif., in the early 1950s, the general's wife noticed that there were no orange trees on the base, although it was surrounded by orange groves. This was unacceptable. So the band found ourselves standing in formation in front of the general's quarters one afternoon for a tree planting ceremony playing, "I Think I Shall Never See Anything As Lovely As A Tree."

Here's a bit of background. 1. The band consisted of a sizable number of draftees who were not overjoyed being in the Marines in the first place. The fact that this auspicious occasion was on a Sunday, which messed up a full weekend off for the band, didn't help matters. 2. The day was quite hot, melting our shoe polish from a mirror finish to dull goo, appropriate with the dark stains of sweat showing from the armpits of our khaki uniforms. 3. Every local and state politician gave an elongated speech about how orange trees added to the ambiance of the base, with a good dose of political rhetoric thrown in. The last speech was by the general's wife whose final words were of praise and thanks to the band.

As she finished, one of our more disenchanted draftees drifted from the position of attention to a nonchalant stance between the ranks, and with a wave of his arm loudly proclaimed, "That's okay, lady, it ain't like we got anything better to do today!" The world stopped spinning. The birds stopped singing. Dead silence—you could have heard a pin drop on the grass.

There was but one thought going through the mind of every guy in the band: "We're dead." The anticipation of what might happen next was overwhelming. Finally the general, who fortunately loved his band, saved the day, and us, by saying, "I'd like to thank you also, men. It's been a long day." He was so right. The band rode the bus back to our quarters silently as we knew our day wasn't over.

When the bus stopped at our quarters, our crusty band officer, Gunner Victor Shul, stood up and gave our errant bandsman "the look." With clenched teeth and veins showing through his red neck and face, the gunner growled, "I'll see you in the band office, loudmouth ... NOW!" As the two of them entered our Quonset hut band office, the rest of us milled around outside, eager to see/hear what was about to happen.

Needless to say, we heard a decidedly one-sided, loudly punctuated and "colorful" conversation, with a weak, but frequent, "Yes, Sir" and "No, Sir" reply.

The world started spinning again, birds sang, and the sun came up the next morning, but the Great Tree Planting Ceremony of 1953 will always be a legend.

And the draftees? Well, they and a whole lot of reservists did themselves, and the Corps, proud in the frozen hills of Korea, and their fine musicianship greatly enhanced the bands.

The general was none other than Christian F. Shilt, a Medal of Honor recipient who rescued a number of Marines with his airplane in Nicaragua in the 1920s.

Ship me over, sergeant major. I'm ready to do another 27 years.

Capt Jesse Sunderland USMC (Ret) Meridian, Miss.

No Birds Allowed

It was August 1993, and I was upset. Lying in my rack at the position of attention listening to the drill instructor (DI) go on and on about how Recruit Downey was the most terrible recruit on the base, I just couldn't hold back. With one motion, I propelled my already difficult third week of recruit training into one of epic proportions ... I released the birds from their cages.

Now, I'm not talking about real birds. I'm talking about the evil little birds that live in all of our hearts, and more importantly, within our hands.

Yes, I flipped off a DI. "Oh, is that right, Downey?" came the bonechilling question from my heavy hat from 10 racks down.

My blood ran cold. There was no way this guy could have seen me from all the way down there, with nine racks in his way, lights out, and my hands so stiffly plastered next to my legs. Now, before you say, he's full of it, he's alive to tell the tale, I will say this. I paid. Oh, how I paid.

From the head, came the cry of the second vulture, "What's that, Sergeant Meadows?"

He responded, "Downey just thinks he can flip me off!" He had seen it! "Just

Compiled by Patricia Everett

wait, Downey. No, don't worry about it now. Get your sleep, little chick, you're going to need it!"

The next morning, we awoke, and I was already sweating. However, Sgt Meadows acted like nothing had happened. "I got away with it," I thought. Yeah, right.

After chow we changed into PT gear, went to PT, came back and changed into the appropriate uniform for the rest of the training schedule. We even had lunch. Then into the lull of the training schedule we fell.

Like a headsman calling his next victim came the cry, "Recruit Downeeeeeeey!"

My heart sank. "Recruit Downey reporting as ordered, Sir!" I said.

I spent the next hour on the quarterdeck. Every trick in the book came my way. I was toast. Then the senior walked into the squad bay. "Stop!" came the order from Sgt Meadows. "Stop, Aye Aye, Sir!" I said.

There he stood, the one man who could save me, our daddy, our senior DI. Alas, he took one look at me with my fists clenched perfectly along the seams of my trousers, but with one difference. Yes, Sgt Meadows forced me to do side-straddle-hops, sit-ups, leg lifts, high knees, and yes, push-ups with my middle fingers extended.

"Carry on!" Two words and my heart sank. The torture renewed. A week later I was sent to Medical Rehabilitation Platoon due to an injury. I spent a month there, and almost two months with another training platoon before I laid my eyes on Sgt Meadows again.

When I did, my blood ran cold. We were at chow, and he was sitting at the DI table talking with my new heavy hat and gesturing toward me. Sneers were on both their mouths. I was called over and asked if his story was true. I said yes and I was allowed to finish my lunch.

After I finished, however, I was allowed to show my new DI all of the tricks Sgt Meadows had shown me months before.

> Sean Downey USMC, 1993-1997 McAllen, Texas

It's Better to Be Lucky Than Good

It happened in the early morning hours of Jan. 29, 1991.

To set the stage: In anticipation of Operation Desert Storm, the VMFA(AW)-121 Green Knights were flying brand new, two-seat, F/A-18D Hornets, the first six of which departed Marine Corps Air Station El Toro, Calif., for Shaikh Isa Airfield on the island of Bahrain on Jan. 7.

The Green Knights then flew its second six jets to the Naval Air Station in Rota, Spain. From there, they would proceed to Shaikh Isa and link up with the first six jets and their squadron mates.

The lead jet was flown by Major "Atlas" Kennedy with Captain "Shroom" Scott in the back seat. As for me, "Ping," I was in the back seat of the fifth jet, piloted by Capt "Meat" Scanio.

We had taken off from MCAS Beaufort, S.C., around 0100 in a serious fog and flew up the eastern seaboard. The first aerial refueling from an Air Force KC-10 had gone off without a hitch.

We made the turn to the east out over the cold, dark Atlantic Ocean near Norfolk, Va., and were preparing to do the second of 10 more aerial refueling sessions.

I watched our second jet, with First Lieutenant "Jason" Richie in front and Maj "Bake" McBride in back, sidle into position Suddenly, Jason accidentally ripped the basket from the hose and their jet ingested fuel down the left intake.

Over the radio, Bake announced the words that no aviator wants to hear, "We've got a left engine fire!"

Cool as cucumbers, Jason and Bake performed the required immediate action procedures while the Green Knights diverted north to the Naval Air Station at Brunswick, Maine. All six F/A-18Ds landed safely.

In a feat that was nothing short of spectacular, maintenance Marines aboard the KC-10 replaced that left engine overnight and the next day the Green Knights flew the second six jets to Rota, Spain. From there, they successfully continued into Shaikh Isa.

A few days later, I was discussing the event with Capt "Frog" Pedersen.

"Frog, we were lucky that Brunswick was open," I summarized.

"Ping, in this business," Frog advised, "it's better to be lucky than good." LtCol John M. "Ping" Scanlan USMC (Ret) Hilton Head Island, S.C.

A Kept Promise

During the late 1950s Captain O.K. Steele and I were in Company B, 3rd Recon Battalion, Marine Corps Base Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii. Anyone who ever had the honor of serving with him could plainly see this 6'4" Marine Corps poster boy surely would make general someday.

I told the young captain this one day, and he thought for a few seconds, looked me straight in the eyes, and said, "Sgt McCourt, if I do make general, I'll definitely call and invite you to my wetting down party."

A couple of years later I

received orders for a special assignment and departed the unit. That was the last time I spoke with Capt Steele.

I retired in 1972 and in 1984 I began working for a government contractor in Hawthorne, Nev.

One morning I arrived at my office when my secretary said Mr. Steele from Washington, D.C., was on the phone. Since we had a Mr. Steele at our corporate office, I figured it was him.

I answered, "Mr. McCourt here, how may I help you?" There was a bit of silence, then the voice on the other end said, "Ed, how have you been since the last time we served together?" I asked, "Who is this?" He replied, "Col Steele. I'm the CO of Marine Corps Barracks at 8th and I." I finally realized who I was talking with, and he reminded me of his promise to invite me to his wetting down party.

I was very fortunate to have served with SNCOs and officers who set that same kind of example. I hope my Marines had as much respect for me as I had for MajGen O.K. Steele.

Capt Ed "Machete Eddie" McCourt, USMC (Ret) Florence, Ariz.

Old Glory in Distress

In 1952 I was assigned to the Security Department, Headquarters Squadron, Marine Corps Air Station Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii. There was a sergeant in the interior guard section, I'll call him Sergeant Le Banque, who delighted in sounding squad bay reveille by flipping all lights on, spinning a GI can lid on the smooth and polished concrete deck, shaking the double-deck racks and bellowing, "Heave out and trice up." Nothing is more irritating than the reverberations of a GI can lid as the gyroscopic effect diminishes and it makes the last few slow death spinsparticularly irksome to those who stood the midnight to 0400 watch.

The sergeant of the guard along with two Marines conducted morning colors. The guard shack connected to the station-wide PA system and the corporal of the guard played "Attention, To the Color" and "Carry On" from 78 RPM records on a turntable. All calls were sounded throughout the station from reveille through "Taps."

One morning as I played the sequence of bugle calls at 0800, I heard the officer of the day mutter an expletive. I looked out the window and saw Sgt Le Banque and the Marines three-abreast marching from the flag pole. I looked up and there was Old Glory fully extended in the brisk tradewinds upside down. I immediately retrieved another flag from the flag locker and accompanied by a supernumerary and a roving patrolman began marching toward the flag pole to replace Sgt Le Banque's flag. Le Banque saw us approaching with the other flag, broke his pace, stopped and slowly turned and stared at the colors he had smartly hoisted to the flagpole moments before.

Le Banque never again sounded GI can lid reveille. Donald F. Perkins Raleigh, N.C.

Do you have an interesting story from your time in the Corps that will give our readers a good chuckle? Maybe it's a boot camp tale or a good old sea story that will have us in stitches? We would love to hear your stories and see any accompanying photographs. Write them down (500 words or less) and send them to: Patricia Everett, Leatherneck Magazine, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134, or email them to p.everett@ mca-marines.org. We offer \$25 or a one-year MCA&F membership for the "Sea Story of the Month." Spread the word! 🐲

We-the Marines

Dog Handlers, K-9s Establish Bonds, Keep the Peace

Aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii, the K-9 unit assigned to the Provost Marshal's Office (PMO) keeps a close "nose to the ground" to help preserve the peace, while also projecting their presence as a deterrent from hostile intent.

"Whether deployed overseas, searching for roadside bombs or aboard military installations locating narcotics and explosives, dog handlers and their partners are the first lines of defense," said Corporal Stevie Ezzell, a military police dog handler with K-9. He patrols the streets of MCB Hawaii with his partner, Pedro, and said being a handler is a rewarding experience and provides another layer of defense for the base.

Ezzell said training furthers their precision in searching and reacting to crimes.

"We are constantly training to improve ourselves and progress the capabilities of the dogs," Ezzell said.

He stated that having K-9 support helps PMO deter crime and heightens detection of contraband.

"We are a support element for the police force, such as being called to a domestic violence situation or to assist in searching a vehicle," Ezzell said. "People are not afraid of people, but once they see any animal, the situation de-escalates. Criminals are more scared of facing our dogs because of how proficient they are in detecting illegal substances and for locating suspects on the run."

Officer Kristopher Evers, a working dog handler with MCB Hawaii PMO, has been working with police dogs for many years and said the bond between officer and dog instills trust in the team.

"Since 2001, I have been handling police dogs, including when I was prior service where I've deployed to Afghanistan as a military dog handler and worked at a sheriff's office," Evers said. "It's more than a job—it's a lifestyle. Coming into work Monday through Friday, you have a living being to take care of and you end up bonding with them and they become your best friend."

He said when not on patrol, he is training his dog, reinforcing everything it has learned and more.

"Training is constant, it's a forever deal," Evers said. "We have minimums to maintain, but in order to build the dog up there has to be trust. The number one learning curve is to have confidence in your partner and work as a team. Many days I enjoy the company of my dog over people, which shows how strong of a bond you make with your best friend."

Cpl Jesus Sepulveda Torres, USMC



Pedro, a PMO military working dog, waits to begin a scouting exercise with his handler during an exercise at Fort Hase Beach, MCB Hawaii, Jan. 23. The K-9 unit works to improve mission readiness with realistic training exercises including tracking, escorting, searching and detaining.

Clearing a Path: Corps Tests Modified Full Width Mine Plow

The Marine Corps' Assault Breacher Vehicle (ABV) made history in December 2017 when it conducted its first amphibious landing with a Modified Full Width Mine Plow prototype during a long-range breaching exercise in the western U.S. and California coast.

Marine Corps Systems Command (MCSC) had the opportunity to test the Modified Full Width Mine Plow prototype for the first time during Exercise Steel Knight, a 1st Marine Division exercise designed to enhance command and control and interoperability within the division, its adjacent units and naval support forces.

In the future, this new piece of equipment will make it easier for Marines to land and deploy an ABV from a Navy Landing Craft Utility (LCU) boat to the shore to complete their mission.

"Our legacy Full Width Mine Plow on the ABV could not fit into an LCU because it was too wide," said Timothy Barrons, ABV project officer for Engineer Systems, MCSC. "The prototype we are testing fills a current capability gap and gives commanders the flexibility to use multiple surface connectors to get ABVs in the fight."

The modified plow prototype is not only easier to transport, but safer to use, Barrons said. Once the LCU drops the bow ramp onto land, Marines can drive the ABV off the boat, open the plow and breach the area to ensure they eliminate any unsafe obstacles.

"The Assault Breacher Vehicle is the premier breaching tool in the Marine Corps, and there is no other tool like it," said Alvin "Tommy" West, ABV platform engineer. "It can carry two Linear Demolition Charges [commonly referred to as line charges] on the back with over a thousand pounds of C4 explosives in each

... A rocket is attached to each line charge to propel the charge, which is critical when clearing a path through minefields."

After the line charge detonates, landmines in its path are destroyed or rendered ineffective. Marines use the mine plow to sift through the minefield and push any remaining land mines off to the side, leaving a safe path for the assault force.

"This plow prototype makes the ABV transportable and gives the commander options to accomplish his tasks on the battlefield," said Barrons. "The capability makes the force more lethal because it



Marines with 1st Combat Engineer Bn, 1stMarDiv, conduct the first amphibious landing in an ABV with the Modified Full Width Mine Plow prototype during Exercise Steel Knight at MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., in December 2017.

helps keep other combat vehicles intact and saves the lives of Marines."

The ABV Program Team plans to take the information and feedback gathered from Marines during Exercise Steel Knight to refine the design and improve the overall performance of the modified plow. The team wants to ensure the modified plow will meet all the requirements of the legacy mine plow in performance and survivability. After the redesign is completed, the articles will be tested at the U.S. Army Aberdeen Test Center in Maryland.

"Because the plow is foldable and deals directly with explosives, it is going to take some hits, so we need to ensure it is more reliable than the legacy mine plow which was not hinged or foldable," said West. "There is no other piece of gear in the Marine Corps that does what the ABV with the Full Width Mine Plow does. Our goal is to make the new plow even more reliable and easier to maintain."

The ABV program is part of Engineer Systems, which falls under the Logistics Combat Element Systems program of Marine Corps Systems Command. Kaitlin Kelly, MCSC

I MEF Marines Strengthen Ties With San Diego Community

Honor, courage and commitment are the values that define every Marine. They are bound by these values both on and off the battlefield and when Marines are not deployed, they can sometimes be found in their neighborhoods demonstrating these distinguishing values through community outreach events.

In 2017, I Marine Expeditionary Force Marines and Sailors supported more than 140 community events in the San Diego area and beyond by providing color guards, educational static and mobile displays, military working dog demonstrations, vocalists and guest speakers. Some of the events were as large as the San Diego County Credit Unit Holiday Bowl and Parade and the 58th annual City of Torrance Armed Forces Day Parade.

"It's always an exciting experience to see little kids' faces light up when they see military vehicles roll down the street," said First Lieutenant Eric Davis, a platoon commander with Company B, 1st Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, after participating in the Holiday Bowl parade.

These community events provide Marines with an opportunity to interact with community members on a one-on-one basis.

"It's about connection," said Sergeant Major Frank Pulley, USMC (Ret), West Coast Area Representative for the Marine Corps Association & Foundation. "The more Marines that connect with the community, it provides a positive representation of the command and display of Marine Corps' core values."

Marines hold themselves to a higher standard, which can be seen in the uniform they wear. The attention to detail in the precise placement of ribbons and badges,



PFC Jacob Arbiscogautieri, a High Mobility **Artillery Rocket** System operator with I MEF, helps a child down from the cab of a HIMARS vehicle prior to the San Diego **County Credit Union** Holiday Bowl Parade, Dec. 28, 2017. | MEF **Marines and Sailors** supported more than 140 community events in the Greater San Diego area throughout 2017.



I MEF Marines drive light armored vehicles past cheering crowds during the San Diego County Credit Union Holiday Bowl Parade in San Diego, Dec. 28, 2017.

the crisp creases and the shine of the shoes is a reflection of that standard.

"When the Marines come out to our events, the youth are enamored by the uniform and excited at the chance to meet a Marine in person," said Dr. DeVera H. Heard, board member of Volunteer Center of Orange County. "The adults are just as excited, especially the elderly and veterans, because it gives them something outside of their normal day."

Kevin Faulconer, mayor of San Diego, said that Marines are not just serving the community—they are an integral part of it. They are neighbors, family and friends.

"I can't say enough about the men and women of the United States Marine Corps," said Faulconer. "They are a part of who we are in San Diego and the fabric of our community. To see all our Marines out here showing their pride in our country and our city, being active members in the community, is what makes this a very special place and a special country."

LCpl Cutler Brice, USMC

Marine Answers "A Nation's Call" In New Recruiting Ad

Released in February, "A Nation's Call" is the latest commercial released under Marine Corps Recruiting Command's "Battles Won" advertising campaign. It showcases the full power of the United States Marine Corps conducting an assault mission, and aired during Super Bowl LII, marking the first time in 30 years that the Marine Corps advertised during the game.

The commercial opens with Marines loading onto helicopters before they take off from aircraft carriers in the ocean as



Cpl Karissa Tanguay-Jones, an MV-22B Osprey crew chief, recently appeared in the Marine Corps' newest recruiting commercial, "A Nation's Call," which aired during Super Bowl LII.

stirring music plays in the background. The helicopters, along with amphibious assault vehicles and other aircraft, move from ship to shore, carrying Marines toward a fight in an urban area. For a brief moment, the viewer is taken inside of an MV-22B Osprey and sees Marines ready for battle. The camera moves toward the rear of the aircraft where a Marine is seen making ready a heavy machine gun. That battle-ready Marine is 21-year old Corporal Karissa Tanguay-Jones, a native of Colorado Springs, Colo.

Tanguay-Jones, or "Tangy" as her fellow Marines call her, serves as an Osprey crew chief. She is responsible for maintenance, loading of cargo and personnel, acting as a flight observer and the role she plays in the commercial: machine gunner. She spends most of her days several thousand feet in the air and comes home every day covered in grease. She said it's the best feeling in the world because she knows she's accomplished something.

"I love being a crew chief," said Tanguay-Jones. "Of course I have my days where I don't like it as much, but that's true with any job. Flying is an adrenaline rush ... looking down on the world is an amazing sight."

She enlisted in the Marine Corps after spending a semester at community college and realizing she had neither the drive nor the funds to finish college.

"After talking to the Marine recruiters

I knew where I belonged," Tanguay-Jones said. "The confidence, pride and discipline the Marines would help give me is exactly what I needed in my life."

Less than two months later, she entered Marine Corps recruit training and graduated in 2015. She completed Marine Combat Training and then spent more than a year in various schools, including air crewman school, mechanic school and flight training before qualifying as a crew chief. The most grueling training she was required to complete was the Navy's Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE) course, which involved learning how to survive under adverse conditions and evading capture from hostile forces.

"Each school presented a new and very different challenge than the last. Flight school was my favorite, especially when we started flying. I will never forget my first flight. I had a blast," said Tanguay-Jones.

When she was done with training, graduating at the top of her class, Tanguay-Jones checked into her first unit, Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 164, based at Marine Corps Air Station Camp Pendleton, Calif. Since serving with the unit, where she is the only female crew chief, she's gotten a lot of flight time and practiced transport of Marines into a combat zone, just like she did on the commercial.

"It's pretty exciting to know I'm going to be on TV," said Tanguay-Jones. "I went from being lost out of high school to finding something to be proud of. For me, it's a way I can show that even if you're lost right now, someday you can still find your passion. You just have to take a chance and not be afraid."

She is scheduled to deploy this spring with her squadron as part of Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force– Crisis Response-Central Command.

SSgt Bryan Nygaard, USMC

MEF Support Battalion Is First of its Kind

The first-ever Marine Expeditionary Force Support Battalion in the Corps was activated during a ceremony at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., Feb. 9.

The new battalion, part of the II Marine Expeditionary Force Information Group,

is designed to provide and coordinate combat service support as well as security and administrative services to the MEF Command Element or Marine Expeditionary Brigade Command Element and MEF Information Group (MIG) in order to sustain command and control of Marine Air-Ground Task Force operations.

"By taking the administrative and support responsibilities off the MEF Information Group, it enables the MIG to utilize the information assets and capabilities and focus its efforts on information operations," said Lieutenant Colonel Joshua Whamond, the MSB commander.

Leading the way in the restructure schedule, the MSB intends to meet the evolving demand to equip commanders with necessary resources by providing the MEF with administrative and logistical support.

The battalion is the first of its kind in the Marine Corps, said Colonel David S. Owen, the commanding officer of II MIG.

"This is a historic day for II MEF and the Marine Corps," Owen said.

Čpl Victoria Ross, USMC

Crazy Caption Contest



"Hey! What happened to the SOS?"

Submitted by Sgt Peter P. Joulios San Francisco, Calif.

Dream up your own Crazy Caption. *Leatherneck* will pay \$25 or give a one-year MCA membership for the craziest one received. It's easy. Think up a caption for the photo at the right and either mail or email it to us. Send your submission to *Leatherneck* Magazine, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134, or email it, referencing the number at the bottom right, to leatherneck@mca-marines.org. The winning entry will be published in two months.

This Month's Photo



(Caption)_____

Name Address_____ City/State_____ ZIP

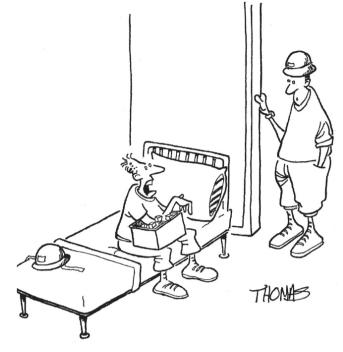
4-18

Leatherneck Laffs



"Gunny yelled at me again today. One more time and I'm gonna unfriend him on Facebook."





"Go ahead, recruit. Take your time."

"Why does my arm hurt? There are 500 people on this base and you all out rank me."



"Remember, one if by land, two if by sea."



"Nice job on the camo!"

The "Badger," a Tu-16 twin-engine airplane, was used by the Soviet Union as a high-speed jet bomber. VMFA-212's mission in Japan in 1986 was to intercept and escort them back to Soviet airspace.

Greetings, Comrade! Cold War Aviators Engage in Unconventional Diplomacy

By LtCol John Scanlan, USMC (Ret) Photos courtesy of the author

ears ago, I was a bonehead first lieutenant in Marine Fixed Wing Fighter Attack (VMFA) Squadron 212. Flying the McDonnell Douglas F-4S Phantom II, VMFA-212 would event ually go down in history as the

last Marine Corps squadron to employ the aircraft known as the "flying cement truck." I joined VMFA-212 as a newly trained Radar Intercept Officer (RIO) in October of 1985-only two days before the squadron deployed to Iwakuni, Japan.

When I showed up, they didn't quite know what to do with such a late arrival. I was given a seat on one of the Air Force KC-10 Extenders that would be dragging 12 F-4s across the Pacific Ocean as aerial refuelers. I had a copy of the F-4S technical manual-which is about 2 inches thick-with me. I was told to read it during the flight to Japan.

The squadron arrived at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni on Oct. 11, 1985.

During the mid-1980s, the Cold War was still very much at full throttle. Thus, as Marine Corps aviators, we knew that on any given day, we could possibly tangle with the Soviet war machine.

Immediately upon the squadron's arrival, the operations officer began hyping the flights that we would conduct over the Sea of Japan—the small body of

water between Japan and South Korea-in early spring of 1986. VMFA-212 would be tasked with supporting the aircraft carrier USS Midway (CVB-41).

Support to Midway would be provided by intercepting Russian "Badgers" and "Bears" and then escorting them back to Soviet

airspace. Badger was the NATO code name for the gigantic Tupolev 16 (Tu-16), a twin-engine jet bomber. Bear was the NATO code name for the Tu-95, a monstrous four-engine, turboprop-powered, strategic bomber and missile platform.

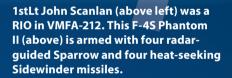
Operations over the Sea of Japan began on Monday, March 7, 1986. For three straight nights, VMFA-212, utilizing Air Force KC-10 aerial refueling assets, flew

missions in complete darkness, trusting the F-4's antiquated radar to complete com each intercept. The standard operating procedure was to first establish a collision course with the radar contact at 1,000 feet below its altitude. At a range of 10 miles, the collision course was broken and a displacement turn was commenced in order to create the necessary turning room between the two flight paths. When that distance was achieved, a counter turn was conducted to arrive at the bogey's 5 or 7 o'clock position. Subsequently, one Phantom would creep into a tighter escort position.

This was the era before night vision goggles, so in the pitch-black gloom, we couldn't see anything while in the escort position, even when nestled right next to a Badger or Bear. Thus, we just had to take our Navy controller's word for it that it actually was a Tu-16 or Tu-95 that we had intercepted.

Of course, then came the daunting task of identifying the aircraft by its type, squadron and side number. One RIO's solution was to carry a big, batterypowered, raccoon-hunter's spotlight with





Left: The Badger's tail gunner compartment is located at the rear of the aircraft.

This was the era before night vision goggles, so in the pitch-black gloom, we couldn't see a thing while in the escort position, even when nestled right next to a Badger or Bear.



Right: The AIM-7F Sparrow on this F-4 Phantom had a larger warhead than its predecessors and improved reliability and range.

Below: 1stLt Scanlon and his squadron mate, Capt Robert "Raoul" Morrill, pose in front of their F-4S Phantom II in Japan in 1986.



www.mca-marines.org/leatherneck



An F-4S Phantom II escorts a TU-95 Bear back to Soviet airspace.

him in the back seat. Upon arriving into the escort position, the crusty old major would flip on the light to identify the aircraft and read the aircraft's squadron and side number.

But hallelujah! On Thursday, March 20, I was scheduled for an 8:30 a.m. brief and 10:30 a.m. takeoff. Our section of two F-4s momentarily sat on Iwakuni's runway until we received takeoff clearance and both pilots selected afterburner. Seconds later, two F-4s were airborne, proving once again that if a brick has big enough engines, it'll fly.

We checked in with our Navy controller, who swiftly gave us vectors to intercept an inbound Badger. Our months of training paid off and minutes later, two Marine Corps F-4s rolled into position at the Badger's 7 o'clock. Of course, we took advantage of the opportunity to snap pictures for our "I love me walls" back home.

When it was my F-4's turn to get photographed, my pilot—call sign "Raoul" adeptly sidled our Phantom into an even tighter position at the Badger's 7 o'clock. As our wingman snapped pictures from 500 yards to the left, I glanced up at the Badger's tail gunner, who was merely 25 feet above me and slightly to the right. The first thing that I noticed was his old-fashioned leather helmet, much like Snoopy wore in his engagements with the Red Baron. The tail gunner placed his goggles upon his forehead, I flipped up my visor and we made eye contact.

Moving stiffly in a cumbersome leather jacket, he unfastened the clip on the left side of his oxygen mask, allowing it to

The tail gunner placed his goggles upon his forehead, I flipped up my visor and we made eye contact.

hang down. He certainly looked Russian. He had a rough, weathered face and I could see a big, bushy mustache and one giant eyebrow. I could even make out a gap between his two front teeth when he grinned.

I watched him twist left and reach down with his hand to retrieve something from his left console. Then he twisted back to his right and held up that object for Raoul and me to see. It was a magazine, with the centerfold dropped down in full view. He flashed a smile, pointing at the centerfold and giving us a big thumbs-up. After our "photo session," we escorted the Badger without further incident until our Navy controller pulled us off and vectored us back to our original station. From there, we intercepted three more Badgers that day.

But my mind kept wandering back to the first Badger's tail gunner. He had succeeded in humanizing that big, bad Soviet bear. I guess it just goes to show you that he was a man, just like I was. I bet that he missed home too. He probably didn't like the cold weather. He'd never be rich and he'd never be famous. He bravely flew daily missions against a potential adversary without question.

Though we flew many more missions, I was grateful that VMFA-212's operations in the Sea of Japan never escalated to the point where we had to shoot down one of those Badgers.

Author's bio: LtCol John Scanlan, USMC (Ret) is a 1983 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy. He was a Marine Corps Naval Flight Officer who flew in the F-4S Phantom II and the F/A-18D Hornet. He currently resides on Hilton Head Island, S.C., and is pursuing a career as a writer.

Books Reviewed

THE FINAL MISSION OF EXTORTION 17: SPECIAL OPS, HELICOPTER SUPPORT, SEAL TEAM SIX, AND THE DEADLIEST DAY OF THE U.S. WAR IN AFGHANISTAN. By Ed Darack. Published by Smithsonian Books. 256 pages. \$22.46 MCA Members. \$24.95 Regular Price.

If you love conspiracy theories, Ed Darack's new book is not for you.

In his well-detailed telling of the fatal August 2011 crash of a CH-47D Chinook in Afghanistan's Tangi Valley, Darack, a journalist and author, avoids rekindling any radical theories about government cover-ups or enemy retribution for the killing of Osama bin Laden. Instead, he remains faithful to journalistic ethics and lays out the facts as he uncovered them.

Darack's book, "The Final Mission of Extortion 17," is about an Army helicopter shot down by an enemy combatant, resulting in a crash that killed all 38 passengers and crew, including 17 U.S. Navy SEALs. The crash took place only a few months after the bin Laden raid in Pakistan. Since most of the passengers were members of an elite SEAL team that conducted the May 2011 raid, theories of possible retaliation arose.

Darack avoids any mention of these theories until the second to last chapter, saying that such stories

"suggested the absurd."

"None held any credibility, serving only to wound the families, friends, and colleagues of those lost," Darack writes.

But even the most ardent believer in Darack's reportage will have difficulty stomaching the conclusion he reaches about the reason Extortion 17 (the aircraft's call sign) was shot down. The enemy fighter respon-

sible for the downing had fired a rocketpropelled grenade that struck the aft proprotor blades. Darack writes that a report prepared by Army officer Jeffrey Colt, then a brigadier general, "correctly identified the sole cause of the downing: a lucky shot."

The simplicity of that conclusion juxtaposed with the gravity of the loss leaves the reader with an emptiness that makes a conspiracy theory more appealing. What might stop the reader from Googling those sensational theories is the solid argument Darack makes for the "lucky shot"—an argument built upon a strong understanding of the RPG's capabilities and the Taliban's history with the weapon. Also, the detail in which he recounts the downing—almost second by second—leaves the reader with little doubt about the journalist's research.

Darack describes RPGs as unguided ballistic weapons that can be manipulated by air temperature, wind and other factors. The fatal shot was fired at a moving object that would have appeared to the enemy fighter as the size of a tennis ball in the nighttime sky.

"That shot really required a virtually unimaginable level of chance to connect," Darack writes.

But it wasn't the first time the enemy had acquired such luck.

In June 2005, another Chinook helicopter was shot down with an RPG in Afghanistan, killing all onboard, including Navy SEALs. Those killed were members of a quick reaction force, sent in to help four Navy SEALs fighting off a large contingent of enemy fighters. Three of those SEALs fighting on the ground would never make it home. The story of the Chinook crash and the deaths of the SEALs were later recounted in the book, "Lone Survivor." Director Peter

Berg subsequently made a movie by the same title about the incident.

Another incident, Darack writes, took place in July 2010. Two pilots flying a Marine Corps AH-1W Super Cobra attack helicopter were killed after an RPG struck the aircraft's tail boom.

These incidents were rare, but they did happen, Darack explains.

"Over the course of the war in Afghanistan, pilots filed

hundreds of reports of RPG shots fired at American and coalition helicopters, but only a few actually connected with aircraft," Darack writes.

While the media often puts an emphasis on the Navy SEALs in its retelling of Extortion 17, Darack's book focuses on the aviators and the culture of Army aviation. The pilots and crew of the aircraft are "those at the heart of the story," Darack writes.

Through family and friends, he tells the stories of those at the controls and in the back of the aircraft. These human stories

will strike the reader's emotional chord and provide balance to passages dedicated to aviation history and a helicopter's capabilities.

Even those who know the story of Extortion 17 are likely to discover new nuggets of information—pieces of the tale that were either gleaned over by media outlets or never touched upon.

For example, Darack spends a considerable amount of time rehashing another Chinook crash (an aircraft with the same company that also used the call sign Extortion 17) that took place in June 2011. Investigators found the reason for that crash to be inconclusive, however, all signs pointed to it being shot down. All the men onboard survived.

Darack also uses the last chapter of the book to tell the story of the operation that killed the enemy fighter responsible for the fatal August 2011 crash. Almost immediately after Extortion 17 was shot down, the military and CIA began a mission to find those responsible and retaliate. The writer explains a secretive technique– described to Darack by an anonymous source as a "real-life mythology"—that the Joint Special Operations Command, or JSOC, uses against anyone involved in deadly attacks against U.S. forces. The individual "becomes marked for death, or 'cursed,'" Darack writes.

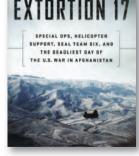
The reader might be surprised to learn that Extortion 17 has a real-life Hollywood ending, with the man responsible for downing the Chinook being killed by an Apache helicopter as the fighter prepared to fire another rocket propelled grenade.

"The Final Mission of Extortion 17" doesn't make a political statement. The Obama administration is never mentioned in its pages, other than to point out the absurdity of conspiracy theories. The book, Darack explains in the preface, was written to explain what happened, how it happened and who was involved. Darack successfully accomplishes each objective.

"The full story of Extortion 17 stretches far beyond the few minutes of that earlymorning mission, long before the pilots and crew launched their fateful flight and long after their tragic downing," Darack writes. "The true Extortion 17 story is a nexus of diverse yet interrelated narratives about individuals and events bound by both the mission and the tragedy."

LCpl Kyle Daly, USMC

Author's bio: LCpl Daly is a Southern



ED UARACK

THE FINAL MISSION OF

California native who joined the Marine Corps after working as an editor and reporter for various publications, including the Pacific Daily News in Guam. He lives in Jacksonville, N.C.

THE LAST TO FALL: THE 1922 MARCH, BATTLES, & DEATHS OF U.S. MARINES AT GETTYSBURG. By Richard D.L. Fulton & James Rada Jr. Published by AIM Publishing Group. 178 pages. Available on Amazon.

Between 1921 and 1937, Marines conducted seven major re-enactments/training exercises on the grounds of former Civil War battlefields. During the summer of 1922, the hallowed battlefield at Gettysburg, Pa., came alive again with the haunting sounds of battle and strong men in combat. However, unlike the 1863 threeday struggle inflicting an estimated 51,000 casualties on both sides, only two Marine participants would lose their lives during the battle's re-enactment in 1922.

Editor's note: In 2014, Leatherneck published articles about several of these re-enactments. MCA&F members can view them online at mca-marines.org/ leatherneck.

For all the enthusiastic media coverage Marines received during World War I, the Corps found itself in jeopardy of being reduced in size, or worse, being totally disbanded after the "war to end all wars" had concluded. The Commandant, Major General John A. Lejeune, was resolute in the belief that the Marines would need to fight an aggressive post-war

media campaign in order to proudly survive and continue to serve the nation. The crafty general surmised that the simple idea of coupling the Marine's annual summer maneuvers with modern Civil War re-enactments would be just the thing to create large pro-Marine media attention. He judged that the re-enactment would help keep the Marines "front and center" in the news, and importantly, in the hearts and minds of sympathetic Americans.

In 1922, Smedley D. Butler was in command of the Marine Barracks Quantico, Va. His 5,000 Marines packed up their kitbags and marched 80 miles from Quantico to the battlefield at Gettysburg. The Marines passed through Washington, D.C., on their way to the re-enactment. President Warren G. Harding reviewed the troops as they marched through the White House grounds. And as the Marines continued through Maryland and into Pennsylvania, aging veterans of the Civil War offered their personal salutes to the passing throngs of marching leathernecks.

The book's title, "The Last to Fall," was selected to honor the last two men that would die on this hallowed battlefield. Captain George W. Hamilton and Gunnery Sergeant George Russell Martin were killed when their de Havilland DH-4B dive bomber crashed while attempting to land on the battlefield. The two Marine warriors added their blood to the fields where thousands bled only 59 years before.

A canvas structure was erected for use of the President and his first lady during the re-enactment. Dignitaries in attendance included Marine generals John A. Lejeune and Wendell C. Neville, General John "Black Jack" Pershing, Theodore Roosevelt Jr., congressmen and local governors. Additionally, the battle re-enactment was attended by two significant guests, Helen Dortch Longstreet, the widow of the Confederate general, and George Pickett's grandson, George F. Pickett III.

Marines spent time learning about the battle as they were trained to re-enact the famous assault, known to history as Pickett's Charge. Marines acting as

> Robert E. Lee's Confederate army crafted their uniforms to pass for the butternut color worn by the Rebels.

> With Marine officers portraying the parts of Civil War officers, the three-day re-enactment commenced. Rain and heat took its toll as the battle was joined. Marines, both north and south, fought over the battlefield as realistically as possible. As

with the 1863 battle, smoke permeated the site. The ghosts of the old soldiers seemed to rise up and charge forward. It was reported tens of thousands of spectators viewed the extravaganza.

The Marines had achieved their intended goal: America was watching, and when the time came, refused to allow their congressmen to tamper with their beloved Marine Corps.

"The Last to Fall," is a superb book. Besides effectively covering the battle reenactment spectacle, it includes 155 period photos of the post war Marine Corps in training. Many of these priceless photos provide the reader with a marvelous view into the training and management of a fight-force in readiness. It was forceful displays of fighting power that helped make the case that America needed its ever-feisty, battle tested, Corps of Marines. Two short decades later, our country reaped the benefits of its Corps of leathernecks, well-trained and ready to rumble.

Bob Loring

Author's bio: Readers will recognize Marine veteran "Red Bob" Loring as a frequent Leatherneck reviewer, who has had more than 100 book reviews published in the magazine.

THE MARINE CORPS WAY OF WAR: THE EVOLUTION OF THE U.S. MARINE CORPS FROM ATTRITION TO MANEUVER WARFARE IN THE POST-VIETNAM ERA. By Anthony Piscitelli. Published by Savas Beatie. 264 pages. \$24.75 MCA Members. \$27.50 Regular Price.

"The Marine Corps Way of War" provides a concise explanation of the doctrinal shift from attrition to maneuver warfare within the United States Marine Corps. Anthony J. Piscitelli argues that the principal factor of the shift was the influence of Sun Tzu and his associated philosophy of warfare in Marine Corps leaders during the latter half of the 20th century. The author explains that those leaders, influenced by the philosophical underpinnings of Sun Tzu, became the prime movers of the introduction of maneuver warfare into Marine Corps doctrine.

The author carefully, but expertly, introduces the line drawn between Sun Tzu and the Marine Corps; strategic influence





is a delicate subject in the history field and the author is able to capture the connection lucidly. Piscitelli works from several examples of Marine Corps conflicts to show the difference between the attrition and maneuver warfare ideologies. The author uses Operation Urgent Fury as a principal pivotal event and efficiently

uses the recent conflicts of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom to depict the importance of the doctrinal shift.

Piscitelli's work is wellresearched. He covered several military strategists providing a comprehensible introduction to various philosophies regarding the strategy of warfare while building a clear framework for his argument. The author

interviewed the prime movers of the "Marine Corps Way of War" as well as several other Marine Corps and Department of Defense leaders contributing heavily to oral history and building a wellrounded discussion regarding the shift in doctrine. The interviews provide a narrative that a student of strategy or military history should not overlook. Piscitelli's use of objective evidence and statistics he provides percentages of casualties from both the Marine Corps and their enemies during several conflicts—to support the benefit of the shift from attrition to maneuver warfare is a useful element for even those who have little exposure to strategic literature.

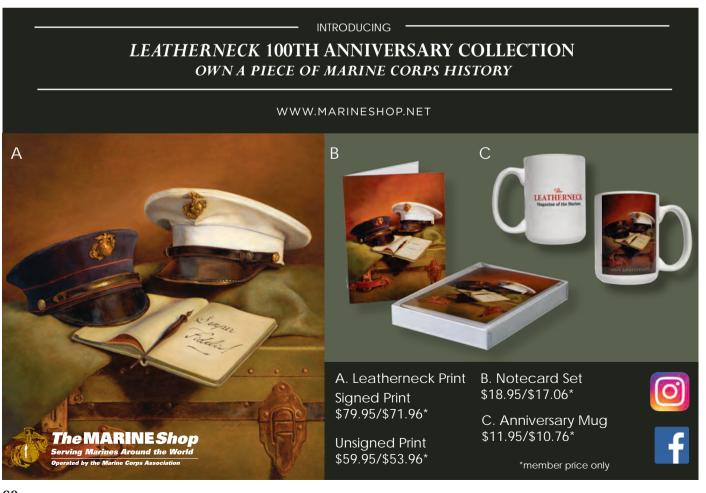
> Piscitelli's secondary argument is regarding the importance of a military education in today's warfighters. The author includes narratives from Marine Corps leaders who attribute the doctrinal shift, which has greatly reduced battlefield causalities, to a broad military education at every level. A history of the formation and continuation of the Commandant's Professional Reading List—a selection of

books that Marine Corps leaders feel that will benefit warfighters, strategists, and administrators alike—is also provided. Piscitelli then reinforces the importance of education with his own contribution by listing and providing a summarization of several small wars and conflicts in which the Marine Corps participated. This inclusion of smaller conflicts offers readers exposure to conflicts which are often overlooked given the large-scale wars in the Marine Corps' past.

Although Piscitelli's work is extremely informative and reads like a novel with the information of an academic textbook, it holds the possibility of overwhelming readers without prior exposure to Marine Corps jargon. The author frequently uses military-specific terminology and abbreviations that may be unfamiliar to readers without exposure to the acronyms used in modern military operations. To combat this unfamiliarity, however, the author had the foresight to include a table of abbreviations and acronyms for reference.

"The Marine Corps Way of War" is an engaging read that covers the most vivid aspects of Marine Corps history and provides context to various aspects of strategy as well as a clear understanding of past and current Marine Corps doctrine including the journey in-between. This book is highly recommended for those who consider themselves students of strategy or military history as well as anyone associated with the Marine Corps family.

Steven Reilly



THE MARINE CORPS WAY OF WAR

ANTHONY L PISCITE



The Marine Corps Association & Foundation would like to extend our sincere appreciation to the following companies for sponsoring awards presented at Marine Corps Recruit Depots Parris Island and San Diego throughout the year.



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Thank you to these companies and to all of our supporters for helping us recognize Marines during 2017.



To find out how your company can support our award programs, please call 703-640-0169 or email I.mitchell@mca-marines.org

Passing the Word

DOD, VA Release Online Tool For Discharge Upgrade Process

A joint initiative between the departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs has yielded a web-based tool that will provide customized guidance to veterans who desire to upgrade or change the conditions of their military discharge.

"We are thrilled to have partnered with the Department of Veterans Affairs in developing this wonderful and easily accessible tool," said Robert Wilkie, undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness. "We support our veterans, whether they served recently or long ago, and we are excited to introduce a tool that will individualize the guidance for those who desire an upgrade or change in their military discharge."

Over the years, some veterans have criticized the review process as daunting or difficult to understand, said Pentagon officials, noting that supplemental guidance over the past few years, while helpful to many, has the side effect of creating multiple guidance documents that can be confusing. Furthermore, officials said, some veterans suffer from mental health or other conditions that make tasks like these more difficult for them than for others.

The new online tool simplifies and customizes the guidance. By answering a few short questions, veterans will know which board they need to go to, what form to fill out, any special guidance applicable to their case, where to send their application, and some helpful tips for appealing their discharge. This easier, more streamlined process encourages veterans who believe their discharge was unjust, erroneous or warrants an upgrade to use the tool and then apply for review.

This initiative is one of many in recent years aimed at improving the review process and guidance available to veterans who believe they may have been unfairly discharged or received an unfair discharge characterization. The Defense Department issued special guidance in 2011 for veterans discharged under "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" or its predecessor policies.

The DOD also issued guidance related to post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury in 2014. Most recently, in February 2016, they redoubled their efforts to ensure veterans received the benefit of the latest guidance, and statutes of limitations were liberally waived in such cases. Subsequently, in December 2016, the department launched an internal review of its policies and procedures. That review disclosed some gaps and confusion in the previous guidance. In August 2017, DOD issued significant guidance clarifying how review boards will consider cases involving mental health conditions, PTSD, TBI, sexual assault or sexual harassment.

The new online tool can be found at https://www.vets.gov/discharge-upgradeinstructions. For veterans of the Navy and Marine Corps, service-specific upgrade information is available through two different boards. For information about the Navy Board for Correction of Naval Records, call (703) 607-6111, email BCNR_ Application @ navy.mil, or visit http:// www.secnav.navy.mil/mra/bcnr/Pages/ home.aspx. For information about the Navy Discharge Review Board, call (202) 685-6600, email NDRB @ navy.mil, or visit http://www.secnav.navy.mil/mra/ CORB/Pages/NDRB/default.aspx.

DOD

SMP Coordinator: Volunteerism, Recreation Opportunities are Key

Jennifer Merlo, the Single Marine Program (SMP) coordinator at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C., received a Certificate of Commendation presented by Major General Matthew G. Glavy, Commanding General, 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing, Jan. 30. Merlo, who has been in the position since 2011, also manages the MCAS Cherry Point Road House restaurant and air station recreation center. Since 2013, Cherry Point's SMP has received the highest rating in the Marine Corps.

The program provides single Marines and Sailors with volunteer opportunities, fun activities, vacations and recreational sports.

"It's been such a blessing," said Merlo. "We talk about giving back to the Marines and developing that leadership, but really it's given so much to me and helped develop who I am."

Merlo's program received a noteworthy grade during the 2017 Marine Corps Installations-East Commanding General's inspection, along with having the highest number of participating volunteers— 1,712—and most volunteer hours, an impressive 4,796, recorded. The program was awarded \$1,400 because of Merlo's efforts.

Marines and Sailors volunteer at the



MajGen Matthew G. Glavy, Commanding General, 2nd MAW, congratulates Jennifer Merlo, the Single Marine Program coordinator for MCAS Cherry Point, N.C., after presenting her with a certificate of commendation, Jan. 30. Under Merlo's leadership, the air station's Single Marine Program received the highest ranking in the Corps.



Elisabeth Reiss, who leads Colonial Williamsburg's military outreach initiative, stands with Liberty Lounge volunteers and WW II veteran David Cook, who was the lounge's 100,00th visitor on Feb. 3. The historic site recently has expanded its on-site amenities for military guests, which include complimentary beverages in the Liberty Lounge and a military information desk at the visitor center.

local animal shelter, Veterans Organic Garden, Special Olympics, local schools and Habitat for Humanity, said Merlo. They also built a house from the ground up for a wounded Marine Corps veteran and his family.

Her program conducts trips across the U.S. to provide more recreation and volunteer opportunities. Merlo trains all SMP representatives at Cherry Point and conducts monthly meetings with the SMP representatives, sergeants major and family readiness officers of each unit. She helps discuss and address quality of life issues on base, including in the barracks, and reports them to the MCAS Cherry Point sergeant major and Marine Corps Community Services leadership.

"I'm so appreciative of the opportunity, especially with the SMP," said Merlo. "I love what I do. I'm very blessed to be excited to come to work every day and get to work with the Marines and Sailors."

"She helps the Marines learn more about themselves and not just their job in the Marine Corps, but their passions," said Sergeant Major Paul McElearney, MCAS Cherry Point sergeant major. "Maybe there are things they don't even realize they are interested in and then they find out by participating in this program."

"Our mission is giving Marines and Sailors back to society as better citizens," added McElearney. "That is a huge part of what the SMP does."

LCpl Ethan Pumphret, USMC

Williamsburg Expands Amenities For Military Guests

On Feb. 3, the Liberty Lounge in Colonial Williamsburg, Va., welcomed its 100,000th visitor, World War II veteran David Cook. The lounge, which first opened its doors in May 2016, is a complimentary space for ticketed military guests to relax and recharge in the Historic Area while visiting Williamsburg.

Part of a broad military outreach initiative led by Elisabeth Reiss, wife of Colonial Williamsburg President and CEO Mitchell B. Reiss, the Liberty Lounge is staffed full-time by 63 volunteers from the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation who have more than 435 collective years of service in the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps.

The donor-funded lounge, located in the Margaret Hunter Workshop offers amenities like hot and cold beverages, wireless internet, and a children's area and showcases vintage military memorabilia from the foundation's collections.

"It was a dream of mine to create a special place for our military guests and their families to recharge while visiting Colonial Williamsburg," said Elisabeth Reiss. "We could never have anticipated the overwhelming support the lounge has received from guests and the community, and we are grateful to our volunteers, donors and corporate sponsors for making it all possible."

The Liberty Lounge also assists volunteers and staff with communicating the year-round military discounts and offerings available to Colonial Williamsburg guests, including complimentary and discount admission through the Honoring Service to America program, sponsored by the Home Depot Foundation, and discounts on Colonial Williamsburg hotels, food and beverage, military retreats, golf and spa services.

In the wake of the Liberty Lounge's milestone visitor, Colonial Williamsburg expanded its on-site amenities for military guests over President's Day weekend with the opening of a new military information desk at the Colonial Williamsburg Regional Visitor Center. Staffed full-time by foundation volunteers, the visibility of the desk helps drive awareness of Colonial Williamsburg's military offerings. For more information visit www.colonial williamsburg.com/military or call (855) 296-6627.

The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

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In Memoriam

SgtMaj Robert E. Cleary

Sergeant Major Robert E. Cleary, who was awarded the Silver Star for actions during the Vietnam War, and was the 10th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, died in Norfolk, Va., at age 86.

Born in Tewksbury, Mass., in 1931, he enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1951. After completing boot camp, he was initially assigned the MOS of engineer, specializing in demolitions, but later became an infantryman. "Right after Korea, I made a lateral move to the infantry from the engineer field. I knew I wanted to make the infantry my career," he told *Leatherneck* in a 1983 interview.

His 36 years of service included four combat deployments: one during the Korean War, and three in the Vietnam War, including one tour with Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 165, where he was awarded three Air Medals.

On June 25, 1966, while serving as a platoon commander with 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines during Operation Jay, his platoon engaged with the Viet Cong near the village of Ap My Phu. During the assault launched by his Marines, then-Gunnery Sergeant Cleary moved among his men shouting instructions and encouragement. He moved through hostile fire to direct one of his squads in destroying enemy emplacements. Although he was wounded, he refused to be evacuated. He received the Silver Star for his actions.

"I'm proud to have the Silver Star ... but I don't dwell on things like awards. What you are doing now is much more important than what you were doing 'way back when,' "he told *Leatherneck* shortly after his June 28, 1983, appointment as the 10th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps.

"Any qualified sergeant major has the ability to fill this job. I'm just lucky it was me. But this job is a challenge. In fact, the Marine Corps is a challenge—each duty station a Marine is assigned to has a new set of challenges. I consider my new responsibility to be the highest challenge of my career," he also said during the interview.

SgtMaj Cleary's other assignments included two tours as a drill instructor at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, Calif., and a tour as the Sergeant Major of Marine Security Guard Battalion. He also served as the 3rd Marine Division Sergeant Major.

"I've served with many good units throughout the Corps, but I think any Marine would be proud to serve as the sergeant major of the 3rd Marine Division," he said.

In addition to the Silver Star and Air Medals, his awards include two Purple Hearts and a Navy Commendation Medal with combat "V."

He retired from the Marine Corps in 1987.

GySgt Robert J. Allmon, 79, of LaVista, Neb. He was a Marine who served for 20 years.

Edward B. Bass, 95, of Watertown, N.Y. He joined the Marine Corps after the attack on Pearl Harbor and saw action on New Guinea, Peleliu and Okinawa.

Cpl Clyde F. Baulch, 97, of Ada, Okla. He was with the 6thMarDiv in the South Pacific during WW II.

MSgt William A. Behana, 92, of El Cajon, Calif. During his 27 years in the Marine Corps, he fought in three wars.

Stanley M. Bolas, 95, of West Seneca, N.Y. He was an Eagle Scout and a Golden Gloves Boxer who enlisted in the Marine Corps. He served in Iceland until he was deployed to the Pacific at the outbreak of WW II. He saw action in the fighting on Eniwetok.

After the war he completed college and joined the Buffalo Police Department, eventually advancing to captain of the narcotics unit.

Kenneth C. Bowron, 63, of Sarasota, Fla. He was a mortarman during the Vietnam War.

Cpl Ronald K. "Ron" Burford, 71, of Columbus, Ohio. He was a Marine Corps veteran who served in 3rdMarDiv during the Vietnam War. His awards include a Purple Heart.

Frederick W. Caramanica of Quincy, Mass. He was a Marine Corps veteran of the Korean War. He fought at the Chosin Reservoir and was a member of the Chosin Few.

MSgt Michael J. Carew, 67, of Norfolk, Va. He served 25 years in the Marine Corps.

Willie B. Carter, 94, in Del Rio, Texas. He was a Marine who served in the South Pacific during WW II.

1stLt Max Dean, 95, of Flint, Mich. He was a Marine Corps pilot who served in the Pacific during WW II. His awards include two Distinguished Flying Cross medals and five Air Medals. He later had a career as an attorney.

Cpl Michael J. Frino, 92, of South

Plainfield, N.J. He was a Marine who served during WW II.

Sgt Marlin F. "Whitey" Groft, 94, of Lancaster, Pa. He worked on construction projects around Washington, D.C., as part of the Civilian Conservation Corps. He enlisted in the Marine Corps after the attack on Pearl Harbor. He was with the 1st Raider Bn during the fighting on Tulagi and at the Bloody Ridge on Guadalcanal.

Hans R. Heinz, 78, of Brandy Station, Va. He was commissioned in 1962 and served for 22 years. He was a rifle company commander in Vietnam and was wounded in action. He later became a JROTC instructor and a coach.

Keith Jackson, 89, of Los Angeles, Calif. He was a sportscaster who was wellknown for his college football broadcasts. He served four years in the Marine Corps before attending Washington State University.

1stSgt Jerry T. Johnson, 95, of Hernando, Fla. He was an aviation Marine who served for 20 years. During WW II he was in the Pacific. Later assignments included tours in China, Japan, Korea and Guantanamo Bay. His last assignment was with VMR-353 at MCAS Cherry Point, N.C.

Geraldine M. "Geri" Kimbro, 81, of Port Huron Township, Mich. She joined the Marine Corps in 1955.

Frank Klepper, 94, of North Merrick, N.Y. During WW II he was assigned to the MarDet aboard USS *Cabot* (CVL-28). On Nov. 25, 1944, he fired upon numerous aircraft during a kamikaze attack on the ship while she was was off Luzon in the Philippines. His awards include the Purple Heart.

Donald M. "Doc" Kollross, 83, of Luxemburg, Wis. He joined the Marine Corps in 1950 and served in the Korean War. He was wounded in action.

Jay L.A. Lembeck, 97, in San Luis Obispo, Calif. His 20-year career in the Marine Corps began during WW II, where he fought on Iwo Jima. After his 1963 retirement, he had a career in business.

GySgt Walter F. Lofink, 91, of Hinsdale, Mass. He enlisted in the Marine Corps at the age of 17 in 1944 and served for 24 years. He was a combat veteran of WW II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. While assigned to Co F, 2nd Bn, 7th Marines in Vietnam, he was awarded the Silver Star for his actions on March 16, 1967. After his retirement from the Marine Corps he was employed by the California Employment Development Department where he worked to find jobs and training programs for veterans.

Laurence B. St. Martin, 94, of Gladstone, Mich. He was a Marine who served during WW II. He established and was active in his community's Toys for Tots campaign.

John J. McPhelim, 89, of Audubon, Pa. He was with the 1stMarDiv in the Pacific theater during WW II.

Sgt Angus Mestayer, 95, in Lafayette, La. He is a veteran of WW II who saw action on Guadalcanal and Bougainville.

James V. Mullen, 85, of Hyde Park, N.Y. He was a Marine who saw action during the Korean War in the Battle of Chosin Reservoir.

MSgt Catherine G. Murray, 100, of Fort Lauderdale, Fla. She was the first enlisted female Marine to retire from active duty. She enlisted in 1943 and for the first few years of her career was a motor transport Marine at Parris Island. Other duty stations include Ewa Air Station, Oahu, Hawaii; Camp Pendleton, Calif.; MCB Quantico, Va.; Washington, D.C.; and London, England.

Capt Philip T. O'Hara, 89, of Virginia Beach, Va. He was a naval aviator who was commissioned after graduating from Georgetown University at age 18. He flew F4U Corsairs during the Korean War. He later became a pilot for Pan Am and then had a career in the insurance industry.

Cpl William R. Ojala, 92, of Aurora, Minn. He enlisted in 1942 and fought with the 2ndMarDiv in the Battle of Tarawa. He later served with the 6th Defense Bn on Midway Island.

Milton G. Parins, 93, of Green Bay, Wis. He was a Marine who served from 1942-1946. He saw action in the South Pacific, including on Okinawa. He was recalled to active duty during the Korean War.

David L. Patterson, 68, of Luxemburg, Wis. He was a Marine who served in the Vietnam War.

Cpl Julian "Flip" Rodriguez, 72, of Victoria, Texas. During the Vietnam War he was with the 5th Marines, 1stMarDiv. His awards include the Purple Heart.

Sgt Spencer A. Rollins, 21, in Oceanside, Calif. He was a Marine who served in Afghanistan.

David Rose, 72, in Marion, Ind. He was a Marine who fought in the Vietnam War. His awards include the Purple Heart. For many years, he was a nurse's aide at a VA medical center.

Jack A. Ruffer, 76, of Palm Desert, Calif. He received the Silver Star for his actions while serving as the XO of Co C, 1st Bn, 1st Marines, 1stMarDiv during Operation Medina in 1967. According to his award citation, he "completely disregarded his own safety as he exposed himself to hostile fire while standing to direct his rear elements into position to block the North Vietnamese advance on his left flank. Simultaneously, he organized his platoon and courageously led them in an aggressive counterattack that drove the hostile force from the perimeter. Upon seeing one of his men wounded and lying outside his lines, Captain Ruffer, ignoring the danger to his own life, ran under heavy enemy fire to the fallen Marine and carried him 30 meters to ... safety."

You can read more about Ruffer's actions in Operation Medina in the article "Let's Go ... Charlie!" in the March issue of *Leatherneck*.

His other awards include the Bronze Star with combat "V," a Purple Heart and Meritorious Service Medal.

Cpl John A. Schrapper, 76, of Clarksville, Ga. He graduated from boot camp at Parris Island in 1960 and served at various duty stations, including MCAS Beaufort, S.C.

Gene Sherrill, 83, of Lincolnton, N.C. He was a member of the Capt Jeb F. Seagle, Det. 1265, MCL color guard.

SgtMaj Frank A. Thomas Jr., 85, of Palm Harbor, Fla. He was a combat

veteran of the Korean War and the Vietnam War. He distinguished himself in combat while serving as the company gunnery sergeant of Co H, 2nd Bn, 5th Marines during the Battle of Hue City. His awards include the Bronze Star with combat "V" and Navy Commendation Medal with combat "V."

1stSgt John J. Tolarchyk Jr., 77, of Hurricane, W.Va. During his 26 years in the Marine Corps he worked in public affairs and information technology. Following his retirement, he attended Marshall University and worked for several newspapers.

Edward F. Zebrowski, 96, in Holyoke, Mass. He was a Marine who served in WW II. He fought on Tarawa, Saipan and Peleliu.

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



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SOUND OFF [continued from page 7]

that about him. He went off to fight in a war at the age of 16, because in his own words, "When your country calls, you answer that call because it's the right thing to do."

So, as this year marks the 100th anniversary of the greatest battle in Marine Corps history, I am extremely honored that my hero and grandfather, Private Paul Emerson Riege, was there, fighting with his fellow Devil Dogs defending and preserving the freedoms that we enjoy today.

There is no greater honor then to have worn the uniform of our country, and I am so proud that my grandfather was and will always be remembered as a badass leatherneck Devil Dog.

> Kenneth P. Riege USAF, 1985-1993 Gallup, N.M.

Love at First Sight

Lance Corporal Garrett Bunting returned to Camp Pendleton, Calif., on Feb. 3, after his deployment on USS *America* with the 15th MEU. His daughter, Kennedi Grace, was born on Dec. 28, 2017. The photo captures the moment he first held



LCpl Garrett Bunting returned from deployment and met his daughter for the first time.

her and saw her in person. The sign was attached to the front of her carriage so he would see it as he approached her.

This is what love at first sight looks like. Tammy L. Bunting Clewiston, Fla.

Memories Revisited

As another of your longtime readers, I eagerly look forward to the arrival of *Leatherneck* each month. Your January issue contained three articles of considerable interest to me, two of which jogged my memory back to 1952 when I joined the Marine Corps.

The addition of the Afghanistan and Iraq engravings to the Marine Corps War Memorial were long overdue. During February or March 1952, I recall standing in line in boot camp waiting to get paid. At the pay table our DIs queried each of us as to whether we would like to make a voluntary contribution to help build the "Iwo Jima Statue," as it was called in those days. It was to be built in Washington, D.C. Privates (E-1), as I was, in those days earned about \$75 per month, but as our DIs strongly encouraged contributions, most, if not all chipped in. It is now a fitting and long-standing tribute to all Marines.

Following that article and immediately adjacent to it was "Korea 1952: The Hook." Captain Frederick C. McLaughlin, the commanding officer of A/1/7 received both the Silver Star and Bronze Star at an awards ceremony on March 13, 1953, at Camp Pendleton for his leadership at The Hook. Capt McLaughlin was my CO.

JUN 26- JULY 6 Russia WWII Eastern Front 75th Anniversary of Kursk Moscow & Stalingrad

2018-2019 battlefield

JUN 30- JUL 12 50th Anniversary of Operations Scotland II & Robin - I-Corps

JUL 7- 16 Spain Military & Cultural Exploration Madrid Post Tour Barcelona

JUL 7- 16 WWII Italy - 75th Anniv of Operation Husky Invasion of Sicily

AUG 2- 11 Guadalcanal & Tarawa

AUG 2- 12 Imperial China Beijing - Xian - Shanghai

AUG 19 - 31 50th Anniversary I-Corps Operations Mameluke Thrust & Maui Peak SEP 12- 26 Ireland All of the Emerald Isle WWII U.S. "Irish Marines"

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SEP 24- OCT 4 WWII Concentration Camps Poland, Czech Republic & Germany for Ocktoberfest

SEP 30- OCT 8 Korean Experience

OCT 5- 13 Israel Military & Cultural History

NOV 2- 13 WWI 100th Anniversary Paris

NOV 17-23 75th Anniversary of the Tarawa Landing

NOV 24- DEC 1 Burma 75th Anniversary Chindits

DEC 1- 12 Vietnam "Delta to the DMZ"

DEC 2-8 Pearl Harbor; Ford Island & Arizona Memorial

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JUN 1- 9 74th Anniversary of D-Day: Normandy to Paris And, last but not least was, "A Battle Was Our Goal": The 6th Marines Journey to France," during World War I and their struggle to get into battle. Coincidentally, I had just finished reading "First to Fight" by Lieutenant General Victor H. Krulak, USMC. Now, I know why the book has long been on the Commandant's Professional Reading List. It is an outstanding study and recap of the never ending battles for its continued existence that the Marine Corps has had with both civilian and military politicians since Tun Tavern. I heartily recommend it.

Many thanks to all of your staff for the hard work and dedication in producing this excellent magazine.

> Sgt Robert C. Stebbins USMC, 1952-1955 Encinitas, Calif.

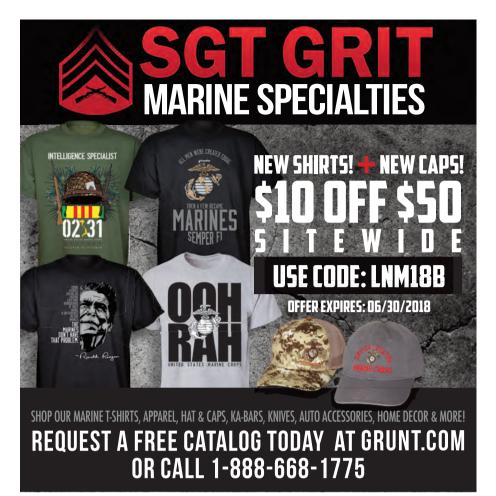
Sgt Stebbins—Thank you for your kind words. We're glad you enjoyed so many of the January articles—Editor

Bible Travels Through Three Wars

I have a story about three Marines from the same family and one New Testament. My father Richard Soper fought in the battles of Iwo Jima and Okinawa in World War II, and was in the invasion of Inchon and the retreat from the Chosin Reservoir in the Korean War.

My grandmother gave my father a New Testament when he went to boot camp at Parris Island, S.C., in the summer of 1944. My father was with the 5th Marines in the third wave landing on the island of Iwo Jima. While my father and his fellow Marines were working their way forward, my father was knocked down by a Japanese round. He said that he did not take notice until they had a short time to regroup and check out their gear and themselves. That was when he noticed that he had a rip in his left breast pocket, right where he kept his Bible. He noticed that he had a ricochet on his Bible, right in the middle. This is where my grandmother had told him to keep it if he went into battle. He carried it throughout WW II and the Korean War.

I am a Beirut veteran, who went into Beirut, Lebanon, three different times. I was with Headquarters 32nd Marine Amphibious Unit (MAU), the first Marine unit into the Port of Beirut, when we withdrew the Palestinian Liberation Organization and American citizens. We went back into Beirut after the massacre, where we opened up the airport for air traffic, and secured the airport surrounding. When I came back to the States in late 1982, after being relieved by 24th MAU, I took some time off around Christmas. My father gave me his New Testament that he carried in WW II and



Korea, and told me to carry it in my left breast pocket when I went back to Lebanon. I asked my father why he wanted me to carry the Bible in my pocket. He stated that he would let me know when I came home.

22nd MAU relieved the 24th MAU in mid-to-late winter of 1983, and we left Lebanon in May 1983. I got out of the Marine Corps on June 27, 1983. My father picked me up at Camp Lejeune, and we drove back to Elmira, N.Y. On the way home we stopped at the Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington, Va. When we were at the memorial he told me the story about the New Testament, and why he wanted me to carry it in Beirut.

Speed forward to 2011 through 2014. My oldest son, Benjamin, served with 1st Battalion, 12th Marines in Hawaii. When his unit was about to rotate over to Afghanistan, I sent him the New Testament that my father and I had carried. I told him the story of how my grandmother had given grandpa the Bible, and told him to carry it in his left breast pocket when he went to war. I told him how my father had given it to me, and had told me to carry it in my left breast pocket. My son carried it into Afghanistan. Maybe one day another generation will need that Bible in war. I hope not. The months that Benjamin was in Afghanistan were very hard on me. I had lots of dental work done from grinding my teeth.

My father shipped over to guarding the gates of Heaven on Aug. 1, 2002. Benjamin is out of the Marines, attending college, working full time, and serving in the Marine Corps Reserve. To be honest, my family and I would not be here today, if it was not for that New Testament my grandmother gave to my father.

> Cpl John Soper USMC, 1979-1983

A 40&8 Memory

A few years before I served in the Marine Corps from 1960-1968, I was just like a number of other kids participating in parades and having fun. One thing that caught my interest was the 40&8 unit in a parade. [Editor's note: "A Battlefield Was Our Goal: The 6th Marines Journey to France," from our January issue refers to the 40&8 boxcars in which the Marines were transported.] I had asked my dad what it was about.

I didn't realize the importance of the 40&8 until I had done my military service and was at a truck stop in London, Ohio, for lunch. As I was holding the door open while leaving the restaurant, four or five men from Indianapolis, Ind., were coming



in. It turned out they were all veterans. One was a retired sergeant major and the other men were getting after him about a Marine holding the door for them.

All of us enjoyed a few minutes of sharing our travels. You can't put a price tag on this. The sergeant major went into the restaurant, came back out and called out to me before I got too far across the parking lot and said he had something

WAYS TO SOUND OFF



he wanted to give me. He handed me a beautiful lapel pen that had symbols of POW-MIA, 40&8, an eagle and the words "You Are Not Forgotten."

I thanked him and walked back to my car with tears in my eyes. When I got home, I looked up the 40&8 on the internet and found some very interesting reading. I didn't realize that the town of Whitesboro, N.Y., has one of the cars that were sent from France. I grew up in Rome, N.Y., about 12 miles from there. I have looked on a model train site for the boxcar but no luck so far.

> SSgt Roy Meiss USMC, 1960-1968 Bexley, Ohio

Easter on Russell Islands

Almost every year around springtime I get memories of the spring of 1943. I was in Marine Air Group 21, a sergeant in the Quartermaster section of Service Squadron. The group had moved up from Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands to the Russell Islands. We had to find our tents and bedding then set them up for living quarters. As we were sorting things, a man in "tans" came through the brush and gave us a big hello. He identified himself as a Catholic chaplain for the air group.

It was a few days before Easter and

he asked if we would like to celebrate Mass. We said we would but to give us a few minutes to find some things to make an altar. It seemed like a miracle that a few empty ammo boxes and a sheet of plywood about 3 feet square showed up from nowhere.

As we were setting up, word got out that we were to celebrate Mass. We started with about eight or 10 men from our group and in a very few minutes there were more than 20 men on the scene. We felt that Easter would not feel so lonesome after all.

> William Tuthill South Plainfield, N.J.

Have a question or feel like sounding off? Address your letter to: Sound Off, *Leatherneck* Magazine, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134, or send an email to: leatherneck@mca-marines.org. Due to the heavy volume, we cannot answer every letter received. Do not send original photographs, as we cannot guarantee their return. All letters must be signed, and emails must contain complete names and postal mailing addresses. Anonymous letters will not be published.—Editor

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Reader Assistance

Reunions

• Marine Embassy Guard Assn., May 3-7, Arlington, Va. Contact Max Wix, (682) 716-3972, contact@embassymarine.org, www.embassymarine.org/2018-mega-reunion/.

• Marine Corps Engineer Assn., Sept. 26-29, San Diego. Contact Maj Charlie Dismore, USMC (Ret), (512) 394-9333, www.marcorengasn.org.

• 2nd Force Recon Co Assn., May 16-19, Sneads Ferry, N.C. Contact Phil Smith, 1830 Walhalla Hwy, Pickens, SC 29671, jarhed73@yahoo.com.

•7th Engineer Bn Vietnam Veterans Assn., Sept. 20-23, New Orleans. Contact Norm Johnson, 6100 Cochrane Rd., Marlette, MI 48453, (989) 635-6653, nwgj@outlook.com.

• Chosin Few, U.S. Army Chapter (Navy/Marine Corps Corsair Pilots, Ground Crews, MAG-12 and MAG-33 welcome), May 22-26, Springfield, Mo. Contact Ron Strickland, (417) 755-3217, grayhorse234@gmail.com.

• 11th Marines, OIF-I (15-Year Reunion), April 6-7, Camp Pendleton, Calif. Contact Casey Harsh, (703) 432-8060, casey.harsh@usmc.mil. Facebook group: Cannon Cockers OIF-I 15 Year Reunion.

• 1/3 (all eras), Sept. 11-16, Colorado Springs, Colo. Contact Don Bumgarner, (562) 897-2437, dbumc13usmc@verizon .net.

• 1/27 (1stMarDiv FMF, RVN, 50th Anniversary Reunion—all other 27th Marines battalions welcome), July 18-22, Alexandria, Va. Contact Felix Salmeron, (469) 583-0191, mar463@ aol.com.

• 2/3 (RVN), Sept. 26-29, Colorado Springs, Colo. Contact Art Ferguson, (623) 780-1819, clydesdadfergy@aol.com.

• 2/4 (all eras, 50th Anniversary of victory at Dai Do—Gold Star family members welcome), April 30-May 3, Quantico, Va. Contact Becky or Frank Valdez, (714) 306-2329, fxala@hotmail.com.

• "Stormy's" 3/3 (1960-1962), Oct. 15-19, Las Vegas. Contact Burrell Landes, 2610 West Long Circle, Littleton, CO 80120, (303) 734-1458, bhanon@comcast .net.

• B/1/5 and C/1/5 (RVN, 1966-1967) are planning a reunion. Contact SSgt Jim Proulx, USMC (Ret), (904) 343-4850, bertojotol@gmail.com.

• F/2/7 and H/2/1 (1965-1966), July 15-20, Colorado Springs, Colo. Contact

Ron Gryn, (352) 638-2872, boatmanron@gmail.com.

• **K/3/7** (all eras), Aug. 12-16, Savannah, Ga. Contact Bill Gerke, (631) 433-8575, msggerke@aol.com.

• Support Co, 3d Engineer Bn (RVN, 1967-1968), Sept. 11-13, Ocean City, Md. Contact A.J. Folk, 215 Sweetwater Lane, Newmanstown, PA 17073, (610) 589-1362, ajfpa@comcast.net.

• **RVN-Era Aerial Observers**, May 29-June 1, San Diego. Contact Tim Moriarty, (408) 529-4117, tmoriarty@fastmail.com, or Bill Mundt, (732) 763-7323, wtmundt@msn.com.

• 1st Provisional Marine Brigade ("The Fire Brigade," Korea, 1950) is planning a 65th anniversary reunion. Contact Col Warren Wiedhahn, USMC (Ret), Military Historical Tours, 13198 Centerpointe Way, #202, Woodbridge, VA 22193, (703) 590-1295, jwiedhahn@ aol.com, www.miltours.com.

• Subic Bay Marines Survivors, Aug. 22-26, Nashville, Tenn. Contact A.J. Allen, (208) 941-3345, aj@mikebrowngroup .com.

• Marine Corps Security Forces, Naval Weapons Station Earle, Sept. 28-30, Colts Neck, N.J. Contact Dusty Wright, (618) 553-2205, slickstuff@ nwcable.net.

• Marine Barracks NSA Fort Meade, Md., April 12-15, Parris Island, S.C. Contact Bob Pepin, (508) 831-5575, rpepin @ wpi.edu.

• Marine Barracks NWS Yorktown, Aug. 10-12, Yorktown, Va. Contact David Greene, marinebarracksyorktown@ gmail.com.

• 105th OCC, 1st Plt, Co C, December 1977 (staff NCOs, officers and commissioning female Marines), Oct. 18-21, Quantico, Va. Contact Debbie Thurman, (434) 929-6320, debbie.thurman 54@gmail.com.

• **TBS Class 3-67/41st OCC**, Nov. 15-18, New Orleans. Contact Fred Lash, (703) 644-5132, fredanddonnalash@verizon .net.

• TBS, Co H, 8-68 (50th Anniversary and Memorial Plaque Dedication), June 6-10, Quantico, Va. Contact Capt Terrence D. Arndt, (314) 308-5020, tdarndt@gmail .com.

• **TBS, Co K, 9-68**, is planning a reunion. Contact Jim Stiger, (206) 999-1029, jimstiger@earthlink.net.

• TBS, Co F, 6-79, is planning a reunion. Contact LtCol Tom Conners, USMC (Ret), (919) 303-2697, (919) 418-5757, tconners3@yahoo.com.

• Warrant Officer Screening Course, 1st Plt, Co D, January 1974, is planning a reunion. Contact Capt Joseph C. Chiles, USMC (Ret), (619) 729-9562, joseph .chiles@gmail.com.

• "Kilo" Co (Plts 277, 278, 279 and 280), Parris Island, 1961, is planning a reunion. Contact MSgt Martin D. Smith, USMC (Ret), 10 Lee Ct., Stafford, VA 22554, (540) 720-3653, martann843@ gmail.com.

• Plt 98, Parris Island, 1948, is planning a reunion. Contact SSgt Jim Proulx, USMC (Ret), (904) 343-4850, bertojotol @ gmail.com.

• Plt 171, Parris Island, 1966, is planning a reunion. Contact J.P. Kuchar, 33 Sheridan Ave., Metuchen, NJ 08840, (732) 549-6468, jpkuchar@mac.com.

• Plt 244, Parris Island, 1967, is planning a reunion. Contact former Sgt J.D. Croom III, (704) 965-8521, jcroom47@ aol.com.

• Plt 245, San Diego, 1965, is planning a reunion. Contact David S. Alvarez, (209) 735-2601, srt8006@yahoo.com.

• Plt 266, Parris Island, 1962, is planning a reunion. Contact Donald A. Welch, 129 Hawthorne Pl., Ithaca, NY 14850, (607) 256-0554, don814u@hotmail.com.

• Plt 340, Parris Island, 1963, is planning a reunion. Contact Garrett W. Silvia, (508) 992-7392, gwsil@comcast.net.

• Plt 431, Parris Island, 1945, is planning a reunion. Contact 1stSgt George P. Cavros, USMC (Ret), (262) 782-7813, gcavros88@gmail.com.

• Plt 1018, San Diego, 1968 (50th anniversary), is planning a reunion in Salem, Ore. Contact Dan Stombaugh, (541) 606-0398, dwstombaugh @msn.com.

• Plt 1040, San Diego, 1968, is planning a reunion. Contact Stephen Norpel, 206 N. 7th St., Bellevue, IA 52031, (563) 451-8417, snorpel@yahoo.com.

• Plt 1059, San Diego, 1967, is planning a reunion. Contact Dave Jamieson, (805) 896-7404, daveyo_jamieson@msn.com.

• Plt 1096, San Diego, 1968, Oct. 4-8, San Diego. Contact Dan Hefner, (312) 504-4658, drh818@msn.com.

• Plt 2023, San Diego, 1983, is planning a reunion. Contact Jeffrey R. Johnson, 3751 Merced Dr., Unit 4D, Riverside, CA 92503, jrj430@yahoo.com.

• Plt 2030, Parris Island, 1965-1966, is planning a reunion. Contact John E.

Lyford, (518) 654-6073, reniejohn@road runner.com.

• Plt 2077, San Diego, 1966, is planning a reunion. Contact SgtMai Raymond Edwards, USMC (Ret), 100 Stephens St., Boyce, LA 71409, sgtmajedretired@ gmail.com.

• Plt 2086, San Diego, 1966, is planning a reunion. Contact Bill Kennedy, (707) 527-8319, wm.kennedy98@yahoo.com.

• Plt 3041, San Diego, 1968, July 2018. Contact Dan Kirkman, (206) 383-9018, teager2@yahoo.com.

• Plt 3042, San Diego, 1968, is planning a reunion. Contact Gary Berry, (614) 679-1499, tagpresident@verizon.net.

• Plt 4035, "Papa" Co, Parris Island, 2000, is planning a reunion. Contact Tammy (Manyik) Epperson, (571) 451-7263, tammy.epperson@gmail.com.

• Marine A-4 Skyhawkers, Nov. 1-4, Pensacola, Fla. Contact Mark Williams, 400 Howell Way #102, Edmonds, WA 98020, (425) 771-2030, rogerwilco14@ gmail.com, http://a4skyhawk.info/article/ notices.

• MACS-9, Aug. 8-11, Colorado Springs, Colo. Contact Tom Boyle, (319) 631-1912, tboyle621@aol.com.

• VMFA-212 "Lancers" (1975-1981 and beyond), May 3-5, 2019, San Antonio. Contact J.D. Loucks, vmfa212reunion@ aol.com.

Ships and Others

 USS Hornet (CV-8/CV/CVA/CVS-12), Sept. 19-23, Mobile, Ala. Contact Sandy Burket, P.O. Box 108, Roaring Spring, PA 16673, (814) 224-5063, hornet cva@aol.com, www.usshornetassn.com.

• USS Iwo Jima (LPH-2/LHD-7), Oct. 10-13, Jacksonville, Fla. Contact Robert G. McAnally, 152 Frissell St., Hampton, VA 23663, (757) 723-0317, yujack46709@ gmail.com.

• USS John R. Craig (DD-885), Sept. 5-9, Bloomington, Minn. Contact Jerry Chwalek, 9307 Louisiana St., Livonia, MI 48150, (734) 525-1469, jermail@ ameritech.net.

Mail Call

• Steve Pavlu, (732) 441-4480, sphret@ optonline.net, to hear from or about Jimmy AVELLA from North Bergen, N.J., who served during the **Battle of Hue Citv**.

• Kevin Parham #10047538, 2605 State St., Salem, OR 97301, to hear from Cpl Mike GALLEGOS who was stationed at Marine Barracks Subic Bay, 1982-1984.

• Tom Rhodes, (619) 823-7723, dustee @cox.net, to hear from or about SSgt H.W. JOHNSON, who was the platoon commander for Plt 3105, San Diego, 1971.

• Don Jordan, P.O. Box 27268, Hwy 21,

MAGAZINE OF THE MARINES WRITING CONTES

Open to all enlisted Marines

PRIZES:

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Must include contact information: grade, name, unit, SNOIC/OIC, e-mail and phone number

Submit electronically to LEATHERNECK@MCA-MARINES.ORG in Microsoft Word format

DEADLINE: 15 April

Angie, LA 70426, to hear from members of Plt 3010, San Diego, 1981, and Marines who served in 1/9 between 1981 and 1985.

Wanted

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

• Albert Sanchez, albert.m.sanchez@ hud.gov, wants Leatherneck magazines from June to December 1964.

• Don Jordan, P.O. Box 27268, Hwy 21, Angie, LA 70426, wants a recruit graduation book for Plt 3010, San Diego, 1981 and WestPac cruise books from 1981-1982 and 1983-1984.

• Kevin Parham #10047538, 2605 State St., Salem, OR 97301, wants a recruit graduation book for Plt 3052, San Diego, 1982, and a barracks book or photos from Co A, Marine Barracks Subic Bay, 1982-1984.

• William Woodworth, (412) 673-3202, woodywoodworth@comcast.net, wants a recruit graduation book for Plt 1058, Parris Island, 1966.

• Terence Mahoney, (510) 712-2644, tjm37tjm@hotmail.com, wants a recruit graduation book and platoon photo for Plt 1042, San Diego, 1975.

• Tim Hetland, 208 Prospect Ave., Middletown, RI 02842, (401) 846-7322, cplhet200@gmail.com, wants recruit graduation books for Plt 56, Parris Island, 1957 and Plt 23, Parris Island, 1957.

MAJOR RICK STEWART, USMC (RET)

Sales, Trades and Giveaways

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• Joe D'Arcangelo, (727) 365-8927, darc163@gmail.com, has a platoon photo of Plt 259, Parris Island, 1960 that he will give to any former member of the platoon.

• John Wintersteen, 436 Sycamore Circle, Danville, CA 94526, steenmarine@ vahoo.com, has a recruit graduation book for Plt 1065 through 1068, San Diego, 1984, that he will give to any member of one of those platoons.

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

Saved Round



A MARINE REMEMBERED—An honor guard salutes as Corporal Robert V. McMaugh's flag-draped transfer case is loaded onto a C-130 Hercules in Beirut, Lebanon for the flight home to the United States.

Cpl McMaugh, an MSG Marine, was standing guard at Post 1 at the U.S. Embassy in Beirut on April 18, 1983, when terrorists detonated an explosives-laden vehicle in front of the building. Cpl McMaugh was one of 17 Americans killed in the blast. Eight other Marines sustained minor injuries.

Cpl McMaugh, a native of Northern Virginia, was 21 years old at the time of his death. According to newspaper reports, hundreds of people gathered at a service in Manassas, Va., to mourn his death, and the procession of cars en route to the burial site at Arlington National Cemetery was a mile long.

Established in 1986, the Robert V. McMaugh Memorial American Legion Post 10, located in Manassas, is named in his honor. A display case inside the post pays tribute to the fallen Marine.

