

JUNE 2018

MAGAZINE OF THE MARINES

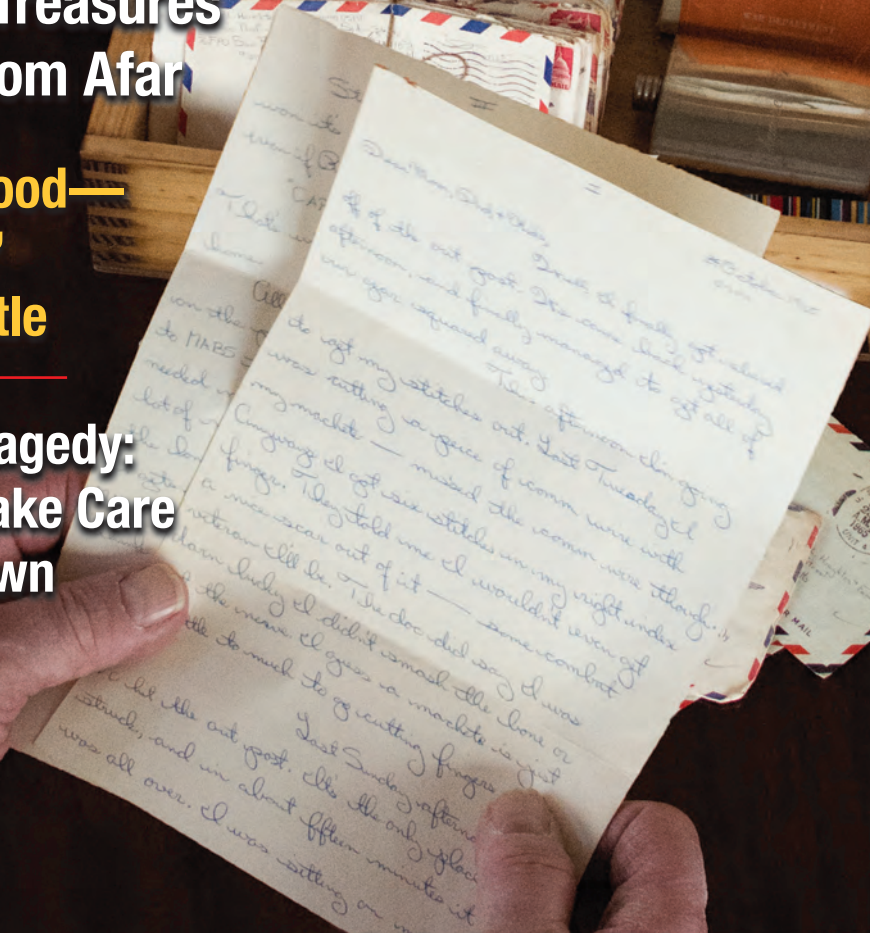
# Leatherneck

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## Letters Home: Priceless Treasures Written From Afar

## Belleau Wood— The Corps' Iconic Battle

## Sudden Tragedy: Marines Take Care Of Their Own



A Publication of the Marine Corps Association & Foundation





Commemorating the 100th Anniversary of *Leatherneck*—Magazine of the Marines

### *"Semper Fidelis"*

By  
Nicole Hamilton

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*By LtCol Jessica van Dop Dejesus, USMCR* From our first moments in the Corps, honor, courage and commitment are etched into Marines but the Corps continues to face challenges with those who do not adhere to these core values.

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**COVER:** In years past, letters were the most relied on form of communication families had with their Marines. The letters written by Marines at boot camp, aboard ships, and even while serving in a war zone become priceless treasures to their parents, friends and spouses back home. We asked our readers to send in their letters, some of which were written 70 years ago. Read "Priceless Treasures: Letters Home" on page 24. Cover design created by Patricia Everett. Photo by Abigail Wilson. Copies of the cover may be obtained by sending \$2 (for mailing costs) to *Leatherneck Magazine*, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134-0775.



## Letter of the Month

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

My brother, Kyle Brayer, was a veteran U.S. Marine who served two tours overseas and was a captain of the Tempe Fire Department in Arizona. On Feb. 4, a tragedy ended his life. I was speechless and completely moved by the honor bestowed on my brother at his service.

Kyle had a ceremony that was a combination of Marines and firefighters. The Marine veterans surrounded the entire city block around the church, holding the largest American flags I'd ever seen. The Patriot Riders were there, among others. The 21-gun salute was presented by special authorization. There were two honor guards and a Marine Corps Honor Guard folded the American flag.

Kyle's fire department ladder truck (number 276) was present with the boom raised and the American flag flying at the top. The Firefighters Honor Guard presented a second American flag to me, and my brother's captain's helmet was presented to my father. There were more than 1,000 people attending his service.

A celebration of life was held after the service, where Marines presented a wooden plaque that was custom-made and flown in from California. I've never seen a more honorable and moving ceremony. For this, the family is forever grateful to the U.S. Marine Corps and Tempe fire department. We will never forget the honor bestowed on behalf of my brother.

Below is what I wrote shortly after his service.

*The twenty-one gun salute  
Sent shockwaves through the air;  
Followed by deeply respectful silence  
To honor Sergeant Kyle Brayer.*

*The American Flag swayed proudly  
Beneath the Arizona sky;  
Over a thousand loved ones  
and strangers  
Lined up to say goodbye.*

*The methodical beating of the drums  
The honor guard standing proud;  
Stilled our wounded hearts  
And drew silence on the crowd.*



COURTESY OF BROOKE BRAYER

**Sergeant Kyle Brayer, USMC**

*The solemn folding of the flags  
As tears fell without control;  
Were presented by U.S. Marines  
As restitution for the soul.*

*Kyle's spirit lives amongst us  
The protector of us all;  
As we continue to live out his legacy  
For true heroes never fall.*

Kyle has been nominated for the Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame.

Brooke A. Brayer  
Davie, Fla.

## No Next of Kin

The subject line of the email from the Sarasota National Cemetery says "Service Support, Unclaimed, NO—NOK." Almost once a week the call for volunteers to represent a fallen veteran, a brother or sister that put on the cloth of our nation, took the oath and served honorably, who is being buried alone. As veterans, we will never let that happen.

Volunteers from the Knights of Columbus, Patriot Guard Riders, Florida Highway Patrol, and Sarasota County Veterans Commission and New York Fire Department retirees, the Tidewell Hospice chaplain and patriotic citizens make sure this veteran is not forgotten.

At the committal shelter the Patriot Guard form a Flag Line, "Taps" is sounded and active-duty personnel present Folds of the Flag. The chaplain reads the name,

branch of service and dates of service. This is all we know about this veteran but it is all we have to know. Burial with honors has been rendered to a deserving veteran.

Ted Smith  
USMC, 1960-1964  
Sarasota, Fla.

## Recon Extractions

I have been a loyal reader of *Leatherneck* magazine since I first enlisted 48 years ago. In all of those years, I have read it cover to cover, and enjoyed the articles and stories. In the April issue though, you really knocked it out of the park. The story "The Flying Ladder: Emergency Extractions and the Lifesaver from the Sky" and follow-up reunion story were probably the most well-written and truly great stories I have ever read in *Leatherneck*. Thanks for a great story.

Maj Bob Fields, USMC (Ret)  
Bradenton, Fla.

I just finished reading "The Flying Ladder: Emergency Extractions and the Lifesaver from the Sky" by Kyle Watts in the April issue of *Leatherneck*. I think I held my breath most of the time. An incredible true story of true heroes, it is a testament of courage, ingenuity, dedication and more.

Then I turned the page and read about the reunion of three of those who made that mission a success. Awesome!

Like Kyle Watts, I believe it is important to hear the stories of the veterans who returned from Vietnam. Recently, I interviewed three in the Atlanta area and plan to send their recordings to the Library of Congress Veterans History Project. I'm a volunteer whose experience began when I wrote to soldiers in 1970.

Thanks to everyone who made the story and its publication possible.

Elaine Westfall  
Lawrenceville, Ga.

In reference to the April *Leatherneck* the story on "The Flying Ladder: Emergency Extractions and the Lifesaver from the Sky," I was the team leader of the eight-man Force Recon team "Forefather." I need to clarify a couple points.

The most important is page 25, where it stated, "Thompson squeezed the trigger and dropped the NVA soldier. The rest of the Marines opened up killing two more." All the enemy killed on that patrol, NVA



six KIA (confirmed), including the three in the above statement, and one NVA KIA (probable) have to be credited to my team members, not me personally. So it would be better stated, "Some of the team opened up killing three NVA Soldiers." Not all the team members were in position to fire. My team of Fleming, Greene, Marr, Griggs, Thurman, Private Grant and "Doc" Welch consisting of five PFCs, one private and my HM3 (E-4) corpsman get the credit on this patrol. As this was my last long-range patrol as a team leader, they were assigned a new patrol leader and sorry to say, I have not been in contact with any of these team members since leaving Vietnam.

The other minor correction is on page 31 in the parade photo caption. The parade was in my hometown of Richland Center, Wis., not in Madison, where I was presented the Silver Star by the governor about a month earlier.

Sgt David B. Thompson, USMC  
1966-1969  
Richland Center, Wis.

### Better Helmet Protection Needed

I read with interest the article, "Something's Not Right: Marine Corps, DOD Confront Signature Wound of Modern-Day Combat," in the March and April issues. I came to the conclusion that the

modern combat helmet has to be changed to better protect the eyes and the ear canal leading into the brain from explosives and impact waves. From recent photos of Marines in the combat zones, it is apparent the boonie cover and short length helmets are not protecting these areas.

The Kevlar helmet should be redesigned with longer sides around the skull and ear protection around the ears. The front of the helmet should have a wraparound clear ballistic shield, similar to a hockey helmet. The helmet should look similar to a baseball protective helmet with no ear holes or bill. The eye shield should withstand tremendous explosive force, pressures and ballistic metals.

The practice of driving local highways and Middle East war zone roads should be avoided. Drive off-road and use old tire tracks as an indication of previous convoys and new tire activity of possible IED activity.

I saw an Army documentary on the cable military channel where they traveled the same roads day after day and cleared IEDs day after day. Reminds me of Vietnam where the North Vietnamese could set their clocks when the airplanes would arrive.

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our troops better. A Kevlar woven ear cover and chin strap would further protect the ear canal.

I served as corpsman at the old naval hospital next to Lake O'Neill in 1962. I served with honor and I love our military!

HN John Sanchez

USN, 1961-1966

Hanford, Calif.

## Machine Gun Recovery

In the summer of 1953 Marine Air Group (MAG) 32 was returning from Roosevelt Roads Naval Station, Puerto Rico, to Opka-Locka, Fla. The first flight landed at "Gitmo" in Cuba to refuel. Two planes went on non-stop to Opka-Locka. One plane crashed at a small field in Homestead, Fla. The pilot ejected and the plane was destroyed.

The second plane splashed in the Biscayne Bay in 12 to 15 feet of water with six .50-caliber machine guns. The first recovery team put a hole in the tail section letting the air out and the plane sank out of sight. I was a member of the second recovery team along with three buck sergeants and a tech sergeant. We were sent to recover the guns. We met the Coast Guard at MacArthur Park at the foot of Rickenbacker Causeway. The ship was a buoy tender with a crew of four, speed of 7 knots and a 35 to 40 foot boom.

Our diving equipment was the fuzzy blue swimsuit and a length of nylon line rope. After we found the plane we took turns diving off the ship and got a line under the tail of the plane. We stood the plane on its nose, popped the gun bay doors open while standing on them, took a deep breath, ducked underwater and put a line through the breach of the gun. We were able to haul away all six guns.

It wasn't a bad day cruising on Biscayne Bay looking for a ship and a dip in the ocean recovering guns. Our reward, a cup of hot Navy coffee.

My question, is the plane still there?

Sgt Mike Loughney

USMC, 1950-1954

Chicago, Ill.

## R. Lee Ermey

Greetings from England. I was somewhat sad today when I saw in the international press the passing of R. Lee Ermey, retired U.S. Marine and actor.

I'd like to extend to you my condolences to his family and the Corps on the death of R. Lee Ermey, known for his role as Gunnery Sergeant Hartman and also who was a true full-time Marine Corps veteran.

As a Royal Marine Commando veteran in England, I admired his Vietnam War film appearances. Those of us in our re-

spective Corps realized that this could only be a man who had been a real drill [instructor].

How true the Marine Corps saying, "Improvise, adapt, and overcome." It is very similar to our Royal Marine Commando code of, "Be the first to understand; the first to adapt and respond; and the first to overcome!"

Both of our Corps have much in common, and that camaraderie will never change or be forgotten.

I salute him and your Corps with the salutation of "Semper Fi" and our salutation "Per Mare Per Terram."

Martin F. Kelly

Lymington, Hampshire

• *In memory of R. Lee Ermey who passed away on April 15, 2018, we have reprinted "The Man Under the Hat—GySgt R. Lee Ermey," from our August 2002 issue which can be found on page 52. His obituary is listed in our In Memoriam department on page 62.—Editor*

## Eligibility Dates: Service Dates Versus Defense Service Medal

I've never truly been given an explanation as to why these dates are not the same for award of the National Defense Service Medal (NDSM) and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recognized war-time dates. NDSM for the Korean War is June 27, 1950 to July 27, 1954, yet the VA Korean Wartime dates are June 27, 1950 to Jan. 31, 1955. For Vietnam War eligibility for the NDSM is Jan. 1, 1961 to Aug. 14, 1974, yet the VA eligibility dates for Vietnam Wartime Service is Aug. 5, 1964 (Feb. 28, 1961, for veterans who served "in country" before Aug. 5, 1964) through May 7, 1975.

Am I correct that you could serve active duty during the Korean War after July 27, 1954, and not rate the NDSM but would qualify as a Korean War-era veteran for the VA until Jan. 31, 1955? Same goes for Vietnam, no NDSM after Aug. 14, 1974, but by VA dates you're a Vietnam wartime-era veteran until May 7, 1975.

Seems to me that the dates for awards of the NDSM should coincide with VA Wartime Service dates. I have also observed World War II veterans wearing the NDSM. I can find no reference to World War II-era rating the NDSM. Just seems it was made difficult when it didn't have to be.

Cpl Joe Green, USMC (Ret)

Beloit, Wis.

• *The National Defense Service Medal was awarded for honorable active service for any period between June 27, 1950 and July 27, 1954; between Jan. 1, 1961 and*



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*Aug. 14, 1974; between Aug. 2, 1990 and Nov. 30, 1995 and between Sept. 11, 2001 and a closing date to be determined. If someone is wearing the NDSM as a result of their service in World War II, they are in error. As to why the VA and the DOD aren't in sync on the dates, this is a much more common occurrence than you would think. The two distinct departments differ on a variety of things including names, verbiage and policies.—Editor*

### Yuma Disbursing Reunion

From 1967 to 1969, I served as a disbursing clerk (MOS 3421) at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Ariz. In March 1968, on a typical sunny weekend in Yuma at the Holiday Inn, I and several of my fellow disbursing clerks posed poolside for a photo. I had not seen this photo or even remembered it being taken for nearly 50 years. Then, not long ago, the Marine

who took the photo sent it to me. I got in touch with all the guys in the photo and we agreed to have a 50-year reunion at MCAS Yuma. That reunion, which was attended by four of the five guys, along with another fellow Yuma disbursing clerk, not pictured, was on March 21, 2018, almost 50 years to the day the original was taken.

We had a great time reminiscing and enjoyed visiting our old stomping grounds, both on station at MCAS and in the city of Yuma. We were pleased to find that our beloved MCAS Yuma is in good hands under the leadership of Commanding Officer Colonel David Suggs, the Air Station Adjutant, Captain Herman Haynes and the many Marines under their command with whom we came in contact during our visit. Our thanks to them all.

Chuck Robertson  
Owosso, Mich.

### Honored Meeting

When I graduated from boot camp in 1944, President Franklin Roosevelt was on the West Coast running for his fourth term. While there, he chose to come to the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego, and review the troops of Platoon 402, my platoon, at graduation.

I had the good fortune of being one of the top three of 600 Marines on the rifle range at Camp Mathews. As the youngest and smallest Marine at age 17, I was at the very top of success as expert rifleman. I view my high score (being a Kentuckian) due to Kentucky windage. I was assigned to school as a tail gunman in dive bombers.

At graduation, because of my high score, I was called out to display my pack which was on the other side of the lane where the President's limousine

came down in front of the platoons being reviewed. The President passed between the row of Marines standing at attention and me with my pack laid out standing right next to the President's limousine when he came down to review the troops. I acknowledged him with either a salute or a shake of my head. Seeing President Franklin Roosevelt was one of the historic happenings in my life.

This ranks slightly above dancing with Betty Davis at the Hollywood Canteen in Los Angeles.

E. Bruce Heilman  
Richmond, Va.

### Chosin Reservoir Retreat, Not So

I liked Corporal John Soper's letter, "Bible Travels Through Three Wars," in the April issue, about the Bible helping his family's Marines through three wars, but I have to let him know something. There was no retreat from the Chosin Reservoir in the Korean War. Not one of us thought so at the time; especially not our commanding general, Major General Oliver P. Smith.

The 1stMarDiv and its supporting elements fought its way to the sea. We absolutely did not retreat. I'm sure that has been taught to all recruits since those days in November and December 1950. I'm surprised to hear it said by a veteran Marine.

GySgt John Boring, USMC (Ret)  
Phoenix, Ariz.

### Oohrah or Oorah?

I beg to differ with a letter I read by 1stSgt Harry O. Blake Jr., in your March issue about "Oorah" not having a meaning. Everything we say has some kind of a meaning. I first heard it at Parris Island,

[continued on page 70]



COURTESY OF CHUCK ROBERTSON

**March 1968:** Left to right, Cpl Rick Meade, Sgt Roger Fickbohm, Sgt Chester Taylor, Cpl Chuck Robertson and Cpl Dave Meador.



COURTESY OF CHUCK ROBERTSON

**March, 2018:** Left to Right, Chuck Robertson, Roger Fickbohm, Chester Taylor and Dave Meador.



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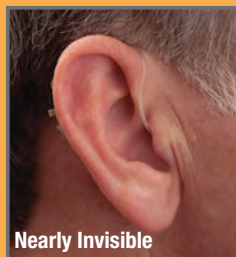
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# In Every Clime and Place

Compiled by Sara W. Bock

## YUMA, ARIZ.

### Accurate and Lethal: Marines Build APWKS II Rockets During WTI

Marines assigned to Marine Aviation Weapons and Tactics Squadron (MAWTS) One built 2.75-inch rockets configured with Advanced Precision Kill Weapon System (APWKS) II during ordnance building training, part of the seven-week Weapons and Tactics Instructor (WTI) course at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Ariz., March 28.

“APKWS II [converts] an unguided Hydra 70 rocket into a highly accurate Precision Guided Munition,” said Staff Sergeant David Braga, an ammunition stock recording system munitions chief with MAWTS-1. “The smaller warhead greatly reduces collateral damage while providing sufficient lethality to destroy point targets.”

The rockets have three main sections: a Hydra 70 rocket motor, an M282 High Explosive Incendiary Multipurpose Penetrator Warhead and the guidance unit. The guidance unit allows the rocket to change its course of fire or hit moving targets.

“The APKWS II adds a mid-body Semi-Active Laser WGU-59/B guidance unit to the current 2.75-inch rocket,” said SSgt Kendall Ripp, an aviation ordnance systems technician with MAWTS-1.

The guidance section and warhead size provides commanders with the ability to strike targets in close proximity to friendly forces while lowering the amount of collateral damage, according to Braga.

“The 2.75-inch rocket with APKWS II guidance section and M282 Multipurpose Penetrator warhead is replacing the standard 5.0-inch high explosive warhead,” said Ripp. “This allows pilots to carry more of a payload per aircraft as well as creates a more accurate weapon.”

Giving pilots the capability to carry more weapons with improved accuracy allows for better training and more effective air support of troops on the ground.

“APKWS II provides the operational forces with the familiarity and employment training that is needed to understand and overcome any issues or differences they may encounter between other weapon systems,” said Braga. “This allows the APKWS II weapon system to be assembled and employed efficiently in a wartime environment.”

WTI is hosted biannually by MAWTS-1, which provides standardized advanced tactical training and certification of unit instructor qualifications and assists in developing and employing aviation weapons and tactics.

LCpl Ashley McLaughlin, USMC

## CHAMROUSSE, FRANCE

### Mountain Marines Bring Their Best to Winter Challenge

For the first time, U.S. Marines competed in the two-day Mountain Troops Winter Challenge, a competition hosted by the French Army, March 14-15. After competing the week prior in Germany, the Mountain Leaders Section, Mountain Warfare Training Center Bridgeport, Calif., traveled to the French Alps to test their skills against teams from France, Germany, Italy, Lebanon, Georgia and the United Kingdom.

Located at the renowned Chamrousse ski resort, high above the city of Grenoble, the event provided some challenging Olympic-tier courses and incredibly difficult scenarios.

The first day consisted of a welcoming introduction by the French leadership and familiarization with the French FAMAS service rifle. Later in the evening, they competed in the main touring ski event up to the summit at Chamrousse. The steep incline on certain portions of the course and incredibly high winds resulted in significant challenges for the competitors. While the first competitors reached the top around 8:30 p.m., the Marines summited around 9:15 p.m. in front of the Lebanese and Georgian teams and several French teams.



LCPL ASHLEY MCLAUGHLIN, USMC



LCPL ASHLEY MCLAUGHLIN, USMC

**Above left: Marines assigned to MAWTS-1 use a torque wrench to assemble a 2.75-inch rocket with APKWS II, a hydra 70 rocket motor and M282 Multipurpose Penetrator warhead during ordnance building and preparation in support of WTI 2-18 at MCAS Yuma, Ariz., March 28.**

**Above right: MAWTS-1 Marines load a rocket onto an AH-1Z Viper during an APWKS loading and flight takeoff exercise during WTI 2-18, March 29.**





LCPL PRESTON MORRIS, USMC

**During the main touring event at the Mountain Troops Winter Challenge 2018, U.S. Marines from the Mountain Leaders Section, MWTC, Bridgeport, Calif., reach the summit at Chamrousse, France, March 14. It was the first time that a team from the USMC participated in the competition of mountain infantry skills and tactics.**

After all of the teams had summited, they were given torches to carry down the mountain in ceremonial fashion. At the bottom of the mountain a small celebration with a light show and hot food was held to commemorate the completion of the first day.

The second day of the competition consisted of another touring ski event up the mountain with a casualty evacuation with a snow litter on the way back down. The shooting portion was cancelled due to hazardous weather conditions at the summit. The competition concluded with a final awards ceremony, in which the Marines placed fourth among the six nations that participated.

“It has been a pleasure to have the U.S. Marines compete here this year,” said an organizer from the French Army. “We hope that you enjoyed yourself and enjoyed the challenge, and we hope to see you again next year.”

LCpl Preston Morris, USMC

## CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C.

### Urban Breaching: “We Have to Be Able to Adapt”

Accompanied by the sounds of boots stomping over mud and dirt, orders were yelled and received. A fiery explosion thundered as a squad of Marines charged their objective.

Marine combat engineers with 2nd Combat Engineer Battalion and infantry assaultmen with 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine

Regiment, 2nd Marine Division blasted through barriers during an urban breaching training event at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., March 20.

“Engineers and assaultmen share a lot of similar tasks and skills,” said Sergeant William Collins, 2nd CEB chief instructor at Engineer Training Areas 9 and 10.



**Marines with 2nd CEB and 3/6 detonate a breaching charge during an urban breaching range at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., March 20. The training was designed to further improve proficiency and unit cohesion. (Photo by LCpl Leynard Kyle Plazo, USMC)**

“This training gave the assaultmen and the combat engineers time to work together and get to know each other,” Collins said.

As soon as the sun rose, Marines began conducting tactical maneuvers and familiarizing the battalion’s newest combat engineers with urban-style demolitions.

“A lot of the Marines arrived here within the past few months, and they picked up information fast and had a lot of speed and intensity, which is what it takes to do this sort of thing,” Collins said.

The Marines consolidated into three squads before constructing various explosive charges, with each charge having its respective purpose and explosive power for the range.

“For most of the Marines, this is their first time handling live demolitions,” said Corporal Cabel Thomas, a squad leader with the battalion. “The biggest thing for them is getting hands-on experience and having a better understanding of how to do urban breaching.”

As the day carried on, Marines performed back-to-back breaches on multiple targets using various explosive charges and tactical maneuvers.

“One of the most important parts of this training is getting the chance to stand there, feel the blast and the pressure and being able to push through to the objective,” Collins said. “We make our training as realistic as possible and allow the Marines to move freely while using their own tactics and formations.”

The Marines of 2nd CEB conduct urban



breaching training regularly to sustain their proficiency and improve unit cohesion.

“We fight all over the world and we have to be able to adapt—not only with the movement of the infantrymen but also within an urban environment,” Thomas said. “You never know what’s going to happen or what kind of situation you’ll be in.”

II MEF PAO

## **NORTHERN TERRITORY, AUSTRALIA**

### **In Cyclone’s Aftermath, Marines Lend a Hand**

U.S. Marines with Marine Rotational Force-Darwin and members of the Australian Defence Force provided assistance after Tropical Cyclone Marcus swept through Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia, March 19.

The servicemembers worked together to clear tree branches and debris from roadways and sidewalks that were obstructed by the wreckage the cyclone caused to Larrekeyah Defence Precinct and Robertson Barracks.

They also ventured off the Larrekeyah Defence Precinct to help residents of surrounding communities clear roads and footpaths so that children and residents

could walk to school and work without potentially harmful debris obstructing their way.

“It’s a great opportunity for us to give back to the community, especially in a time like right now,” said Lieutenant Colonel Travis Gordon, the commanding officer of the 5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment. “The people around Darwin and Palmerston are our neighbors and our friends.”

“The community has been a very gracious host the entire time we’ve been here,” said Major George Forbes, USMC, the commanding officer of the Ground Equipment Staging Program detachment, a logistical unit under MRF-D’s forward coordination element. “What little bit we can do is a tangible demonstration of the [United States’] commitment to the U.S. and Australian alliance so we love to give back to the local community [when we are able to].”

According to the Australian Government Bureau of Meteorology, Tropical Cyclone Marcus passed through Darwin as a Category 2 system and moved westward away from the northwestern coast of Australia.

LCpl Mason Roy, USMC

## **MARINE CORPS TRAINING AREA BELLOWS, HAWAII**

### **Jungle Environment Presents Challenge for CAAT Mounted Patrols**

U.S. Marines with 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment conducted combined anti-armor team (CAAT) mounted patrols during Exercise Bougainville I at Marine Corps Training Area Bellows, Hawaii, March 15.

The Marines dealt with simulated improvised explosive devices and ambushes throughout the patrols and were put through a scenario in which a simulated IED went off, taking out a humvee and causing a simulated casualty.

“We definitely kept [the IED] a secret from them—they didn’t expect it,” said First Lieutenant Shane Wescott, a platoon commander with 1/3. “When we got that first initial hit, they jumped out of the vehicles, posted up security and did the best they could in order to react to that situation.”

The training event was a continuation of Exercise Bougainville I, which began in early March. The exercise is an opportunity for Marines to conduct small unit-level training to prepare for Exercise Bougainville II and future deployments.



LCPL MASON ROY, USMC

**After Tropical Cyclone Marcus swept through coastal parts of the Northern Territory, Australia, Marines with MRF-D and Australian Defence Force servicemembers work together to load a tree trunk into a truck at Darwin, March 20.**



“After an IED blast, there’s usually an ambush so we take action based on what happens,” said Lance Corporal Spencer Burkman, an antitank missileman with Weapons Company, 1/3. “The biggest thing to do is to provide security and make sure there’s no ambush. If there is, we can take out the threat, get the vehicle out of the area and return home safely with everybody.”

During the weeklong training event, the Marines occupied a simulated forward operating base. The jungle and urban terrain of Marine Corps Training Area Bellows presented a challenge for CAAT patrols, which are designed for anti-armor in a large open environment.

“It’s all going to be situationally dependent,” said Wescott. “We have to change up a lot of things to adjust to a more jungle environment. Dismounting more Marines, changing the way we return fire, changing the way that we react to close and far ambushes—essentially adjusting everything that we have learned and adjust them to that more confined jungle environment that we’re dealing with.”

LCpl Eric Tso, USMC



**LCpl Robert Lindsay talks into a radio on a CAAT mounted patrol during Exercise Bougainville I at Marine Corps Training Area Bellows, Hawaii, March 15.**

LCPL ERIC TSO, USMC

## DUGWAY PROVING GROUND, UTAH

### Reserve Marines, USAF Special Ops Conduct HIMARS Raid

An Air Force MC-130 barreled through the dry March air en route to Dugway Proving Ground, Utah, on March 30. Aboard, Marines verified target coordinates for an M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) chained down beside them.

An Air Force loadmaster from 9th Special Operations Squadron signaled “10 minutes ’til wheels down” as reserve Marines from “Kilo” Battery, 2nd Battalion, 14th Marine Regiment begin to don their flaks and Kevlars.

The exercise had begun the day before at Fort Campbell, Ky., where Marines and airmen practiced loading a Marine Corps HIMARS aboard the MC-130. In order to get the vehicle aboard the aircraft, Marines had to remove multiple components, including the antenna, machine gun and infrared camera. They also had to lower the suspension and partially deflate the tires.

“The Air Force was very accommodating in making sure we were ready for the

## FORT GREELY, ALASKA



LCPL CODY J. OHIRA, USMC

**NORTHERN LIGHTS**—Marines take a break from Exercise Arctic Edge to view the Northern Lights at Fort Greely, Alaska, March 10. The biennial, large-scale, joint-training exercise prepares and tests the U.S. military’s ability to operate tactically in the extreme cold-weather conditions of arctic environments.





LCPL NILES LEE, USMCR

**Marines with Kilo Btry, 2/14 reassemble a HIMARS which was transported on an Air Force MC-130 to Dugway Proving Ground, Utah, March 30.**

following day's mission," said Sergeant Jeffery Hale, a launcher chief with Kilo Btry. "I asked the loadmaster if we could have another shot at loading the HIMARS and he said, 'Do whatever you Marines need to do to make sure you're comfortable for tomorrow.'"

After a four-hour flight, the Marines and airmen landed at Dugway Proving Ground, where they offloaded and reassembled the HIMARS. Then they loaded a missile pod and drove to a firing

point 1,300 meters away from the plane. There, they fired two missiles at one target, readjusted, and fired two more at another before returning to the plane and flying back to Fort Campbell.

The exercise was conducted to demonstrate the Marine Corps' ability to deploy their HIMARS capabilities and rapidly insert into a combat area via aircraft. This gives commanders the ability to fire missiles on enemy targets that would be too dangerous to reach directly

by aircraft and too far for cannon artillery. HIMARS is a versatile platform that can be fired in all weather conditions and locations. It is also equipped with GPS-guided missiles, giving it the ability to accurately hit targets more than 40 miles away.

"It was a great experience for me and my Marines," Hale said. "We have practiced this tactic before and in segments, but never all together or this quickly."

With advances in warfare and ever-evolving threats against the United States and its allies, Marines must adapt and practice new techniques and tactics.

"These Marines are doing a really high-end, high technology and very high skilled mission," said Gunnery Sergeant Paul Hendee, the artillery operations chief with Kilo Btry. "It was a great training opportunity to do this mission and also getting to work with an Air Force special operations aircraft and crew."

The Marines of Kilo Btry are looking forward to future missions, employing new tactics and staying ready to fight.

LCpl Niles Lee, USMCR



**Sgt Jeffery Hale, a launcher chief with Kilo Btry, 2/14, hooks missile pods to a hoist on an M142 HIMARS at Dugway Proving Ground, Utah, March 30.**



LCPL NILES LEE, USMCR



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## Iwo Jima



COURTESY OF THE YOUNG MARINES

### Young Marines Attend "Reunion of Honor"

Col William P. Davis, USMCR (Ret), National Executive Director and CEO of the Young Marines, left, and members of the Young Marines traveled to Guam and Iwo Jima for the annual "Reunion of Honor," which took place March 24. Pictured here atop Mount Suribachi, the

group also had the opportunity to walk on the black sands of the landing beaches and visit the scene of the iconic flag raising on Iwo Jima.

"Every Young Marine who makes this annual trip treasures the experience," said Davis. "They learned history from those who made history. Truly it was a once-in-a-lifetime event."

Each year, American and Japanese veterans come together for remembrances of their fallen brothers and to recall the fierce battles that took place on the islands of Iwo Jima and Guam during World War II. During the Reunion of Honor on Iwo Jima, the Young Marines gathered with veterans, family members and dignitaries for a memorial service in honor of those who gave their lives during the savage campaign for the island.

The Young Marines is a national nonprofit youth education and service program for boys and girls age 8 through the completion of high school. The organization promotes the mental, moral and physical development of its members and focuses on teaching leadership, teamwork and self-discipline and promoting a healthy, drug-free lifestyle.

Submitted by Andy Richardson

## Las Cruces, N.M.

### Female Marine Veterans Gather at Women Veterans Monument Dedication

The United Military Women of the Southwest dedicated a new Women Veterans Monument in Veterans Memorial Park, Las Cruces, N.M., March 10. The monument is a tribute to military women of the United States Armed Forces, featuring six life-size bronze statues representing Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard and Army National Guard women in World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Cold War and present.

Among those in attendance were a group of female Marine veterans who reside in New Mexico and Arizona. From the left, Leticia Cano; Helena Anthony; P.K. Horton, Area 8 Director for the Women Marines Association; Joni Seymour, President of the New Mexico 1 Chapter of the Women Marines Association in Albuquerque; and Cecil Montoya all enjoyed the company of their fellow Marines following the dedication ceremony.

The monument was a passion project of the United Military Women of the Southwest, whose members procured funding from the State of New Mexico to supplement privately raised funds and partnered with the City of Las Cruces to complete the groundwork. They worked tirelessly with architects, artists and contractors on a project that took years to complete and is now a dream come true.

Submitted by Ceci Vasconcellos



COURTESY OF CECI VASCONCELLOS





COURTESY OF JOE HOLYFIELD

## San Diego

### Marine Veteran Entrepreneurs Stay True to Their Roots

In 2008, Marine veterans Joe Holyfield and Pete Dvorak founded Alone and Unafraid, a T-shirt company with military-related designs.

"Despite early success, the brand started to fade as it took a backseat to life events and civilian employment," said Holyfield. "In the years that followed, personal struggles and experiences gave a whole new undiscovered meaning to the brand."

The duo re-launched their business endeavor in 2016 as Alone and Unafraid American Clothing Company, with products that appeal to a broader audience. But for Holyfield and Dvorak, it's important that the company stay connected to the Marine Corps and to their fellow veterans. For them, this means donating 5 percent of sales to the Semper Fi Fund; sponsoring organizations that support veterans like San Diego-based Triple B Adventures; donating thousands of garments to the Xtreme Justice League of San Diego for distribution to homeless veterans; and supporting active-duty military units through a custom unit shirt program.

Pictured here at a summer 2017 event in San Diego, Holyfield and Dvorak, center, stand with individuals from the Challenged Athletes Foundation and U.S. Congressman Duncan Hunter. Alone and Unafraid helped raise funds for the Challenged Athletes Foundation's "Operation Rebound" which empowers wounded veterans by providing opportunities to use fitness and sports as a means of reintegration and empowerment.

This aligns with the brand message of Alone and Unafraid, which is personal strength and empowerment. According to Holyfield, the name is derived from MARSOC-style missions in Afghanistan. "It is just the acknowledgement to ourselves that at the end of the day it is within us and our own will to push, fight and conquer our struggles."

Submitted by Joe Holyfield

## St. George, Utah



COURTESY OF WILLIAM G. FORTUNE

### MCL Det 1270 Presents \$4,000 in Scholarship Awards

Members of Utah Dixie Detachment 1270, Marine Corps League, presented three Marines and two JROTC cadets with scholarship awards during the Ric Backman Scholarship dinner at the SunRiver Ballroom in St. George, Utah, Feb. 10.

Backman, a member of the detachment who passed away in 2014, had lost both of his legs in Vietnam but played golf every day, rain or shine. The proceeds from the sale of the special golf cart he used were the starting point for the scholarship fund designed to recognize Marines or Fleet Marine Force corpsmen attending Southern Utah University and Dixie State University. A special award is made for senior JROTC cadets at Pine View and Dixie High Schools in St. George.

Colonel Dave Waters, USMC (Ret), the detachment commandant, presented the awards to the recipients, including Cadet Chayne Wotley, pictured in the top photo, and Sergeant James Dotterer, a student at Southern Utah University, pictured in the bottom photo.

To support the program, the detachment sponsors a silent auction during the dinner, featuring items that are of particular interest to Marines.

Submitted by William G. Fortune

**"Corps Connections" highlights the places and events through which active-duty and veteran Marines connect with one another, honor the traditions of the Corps and recognize the achievements of their fellow leathernecks. We welcome submissions of photos from events like the ones featured here. Send them to: Sara W. Bock, *Leatherneck Magazine*, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134, or email them to [s.bock@mca-marines.org](mailto:s.bock@mca-marines.org). Submission does not guarantee publication, and we cannot guarantee the return of photos.** 📷





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This map depicts the course of the battle of Belleau Wood in June 1918. The hand-drawn color lines show the advancing American front in the vicinity of Bois de Belleau.

# Immortalized in History

## The Marines Who Fought at Belleau Wood

By J. Michael Miller

**"G**ive victory to our Armies as they fight for freedom," President Woodrow Wilson wrote in a proclamation designating May 30, 1918, as Decoration Day. He set aside the day to be celebrated by Americans in prayer and contemplation, asking for a higher power to provide wisdom "to our people to make sacrifice to the utmost

in support of what is just and true." General John J. Pershing, commanding the American Expeditionary Forces in France, issued his own General Orders 76 in support of the President's proclamation, stating, "It is singularly appropriate that we who are now engaged in a war for our right to be free should not fail to observe this day." Most importantly for the men of the 4th Marine Brigade, Pershing also ordered: "All duty except that which is

necessary will be suspended on that date."

The Marine brigade took great pleasure in the break. After breakfast, the 6th Marine Brigade marched to regimental headquarters at Serans Cerau, without the usual packs and sidearms. "I enjoyed that hike," remembered Private Havelock D. Nelson. "The cooling night air had not yet been dispelled from the rising sun and our shoulders and arms were free from the weight of the usual pack ... " Marines



from the 95th Company squared off with 6th Marines in a spirited baseball game, which ended with a score of 12 to 7 in favor of the 95th Co.

Navy Chaplains John J. Brady and Albert N. Park held services for the 5th Marine Brigade at regimental headquarters at Boury-en-Vexin. Normal regimental services were held daily in the schoolhouse, which was always crowded. This special Sunday service was held in the larger officers mess in Mery. Both services were heavily attended, and the sight of the Marines receiving Holy Communion caused Chaplain Albert C. Larned to remark years later, "God bless forever those splendid men." The bands from both the 5th and 6th Marines were ordered to play "Departed Days," and other appropriate music.

"When far from those most dear awhile we part, in stranger lands to find a home ... and softly in each sorrowing heart, they pour sweet memories of departed days."

Decoration Day proceeded according to Pershing's orders until the ominous arrival of a French staff officer put an end to the casual nature of the day. The Army's entire Second Division, including the 4th Marine Brigade, received orders for departure for the front at 5 a.m. the following morning. On May 27, a German offensive broke open the French line on the Aisne River and now threatened to sever the Paris-Rheims road, perhaps even threatening the French capital itself. After a night of frenzied packing with little sleep, French camions (trucks) arrived during the early morning hours to carry the Marines to battle.

Captain Lester S. Wass, commanding the 18th Company, allowed his men to sleep as long as they slumbered in their uniforms with packs ready. Reveille came at 4 a.m. and the company field kitchens cooked every ration in the company. After



**Marines digging in after arriving at Belleau Wood, June 1-5, 1918. (Photo by Marius Eugene Vasse)**

the men had eaten, they packed what remained as travel rations "in case we actually moved," retorted the doubtful company mess officer. At 8 a.m., their French trucks arrived, and the battalion came into line at the sound of a bugle. Twenty Marines then climbed into each truck as the platoon commanders blew their whistles. Each Marine carried a 60-pound pack along with his rifle. The French trucks were Spartan in nature, with rough plank seats and a canvas cover. When the last man was aboard, the Vietnamese drivers placed the vehicles in gear and the column began to move.

The Marine columns soon encountered a river of refugees streaming away from the German attack. "We saw hundreds of old men, old women, and little children, carrying in their hands loaves of bread,

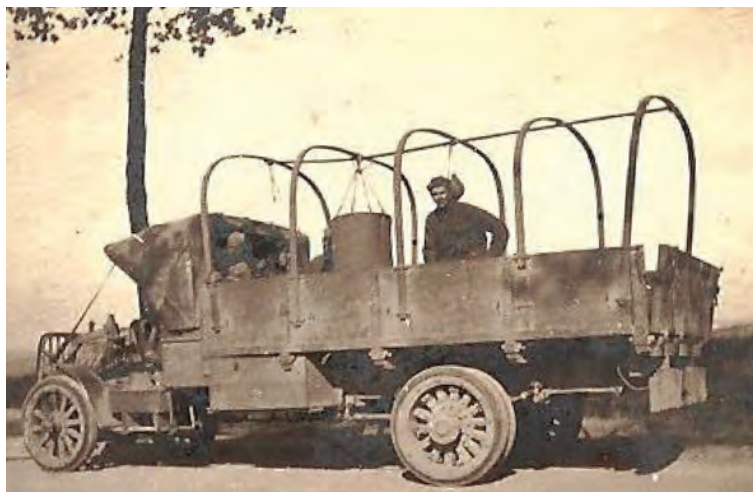
chickens, rabbits, and pieces of bed clothing ... " Corporal Daniel E. Morgan of the 77th Machine Gun Company wrote. "With tears in their eyes they cried out to us as we passed, 'Long Live America.' " The long procession of civilian refugees caused Second Lieutenant John A. West of the 79th Co to write, "War suddenly became real to us; it was not just an adventure, it was serious. This sight, more than bullets, proved that." Private Levi E. Hemrick of the 80th Co recalled, "Our hearts and souls were captured by these people. This emotional experience was like a baptism of fire."

After spending the night in the open field, listening to the rumble of nearby artillery, the brigade concentrated in the small village of Montreuil aux Lions on June 1, directly on the Paris Road. Colonel



USMC

**Refugees on the road to Belleau Wood.**



MARIUS EUGENE VASSE

**Distributing water to the line companies, June 2-4, 1918.**



**Right: Marines occupy Lucy le Bocage, June 1-4, 1918.**

Albertus W. Catlin, commanding the 6th Marines, established headquarters in his automobile in the town square, joined by Army Brigadier General James G. Harbord, commanding the 4th Brigade. As Harbord and Catlin were conferring, a fast-moving car pulled up and a French staff officer jumped out to speak with Col Catlin. He asked the colonel to move his Marines forward to hold the Germans for a few hours until the French could withdraw. Once the new French line was formed, the Frenchman explained the Marines could pull back as well. Catlin dismissed the officer by saying, "We will let the damn Bosches do the retreating! The Marines have never been trained to retreat."

Catlin moved his regiment forward east on the Paris Road, led by Major Thomas Holcomb's 2nd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment. Holcomb, who would eventually become the 17th Commandant of the Marine Corps, was met by Col Catlin, leading 10 empty 2ndMarDiv trucks. The colonel quickly picked up as many Marines as he could pack into the vehicles and then proceeded 3 miles down the road. As the trucks passed out of the town, cans of tomatoes and round loaves of French bread were tossed to the Marines. The amount of supply to each Marine was dependent on the speed of the driver of the individual truck. "If you went by fast," remembered 2ndLt West, "you were out of luck."



Holcomb halted just short of Le Thiolet on the Paris Road and deployed his battalion to the north of the road, tying in with the Army 9th Infantry south of the road. The 1st Battalion, 6th Marines came forward in short order, extending the line to Lucy le Bocage and Hill 142, with the 3rd Bn, 6th Marines moving to the left at La Voie de Chatel. The 6th Machine Gun Bn held positions supporting the left of the brigade, just behind the French positions.

The first order of business for the Marines was to dig fighting holes and then to find food and water. Several boxes of hardtack and canned beef known informally as "Corned Willy" were issued

to each squad, but more adventuresome Marines went on their own to find food in the nearby towns. Most came back with empty pockets, except the last Marine, Private Walter A. "Red" Roberts, who appeared with an iron pot, "literally grinning from ear to ear. "The pot was filled with the "most luscious looking, golden brown, French fried potatoes any of us had ever seen." When asked where he found such a miraculous feast, Roberts simply replied he liberated the pot from the French artillery mess when the gunners scattered during counter battery fire.

The presence of the French units ahead of the Americans allowed the 4th Marine Brigade to adjust to the nature of open field combat, not the trench warfare which they previously encountered south of Verdun. The 5th Marines moved into the line on June 2 with the 1st Bn filling a gap in the line on the left and the Army's 23rd Infantry, with Major Frederic C. Wise's 2nd Bn, taking the front from Hill 142 to Les Mere Ferme. Each regiment held the line with two battalions up and one in reserve. The Marines soon learned of the accuracy of the German artillery, but still were behind the French frontline infantry. On June 4, the French units fell back through the American lines, making the front line now Marine Corps territory. However, the Germans paused in their assault, making June 5 a quiet day along the line. In all, Marine casualties for the five days were 74 killed or died of wounds, most by artillery.

The failure of the Germans to continue the attack on June 5 puzzled the French commanders, who ordered a limited attack at daybreak by the 4th Marine Brigade on Hill 142, intended to test the German intentions for further combat. Major Julius



**Germans retreating during the battle. More than 700 Marines were killed during the iconic battle with almost 3,000 more wounded.**



## Legends of Belleau Wood

**The Bulldog Fountain**—Tradition indicates that drinking from the Bulldog Fountain in the town of Belleau will give long life and more to any Marine who samples the fountain.

Truth: No Marine entered Belleau during the June 1918 battle. The Marine advance halted on the northern edge of Belleau Wood. The town was actually taken by the Army 26th Division in July. However, this tradition speaks to the bond of modern Marines and the Marines of 1918. Drinking from the Bulldog Foundation is a tradition that will continue through the ages to commemorate the sacrifice of the Marines at Belleau Wood.

**Teufelhunden**—Tradition indicates the term “Devil Dog” originated during the battle for Belleau. However, newspaper correspondents were using the words as early as March 1918 to describe American Marines. This term exploded in the news coverage of Belleau Wood and was embraced by World War I Marines who described themselves as Devil Dogs both during and after the war. The Marine Corps identity as Teufelhunden has been passed down through generations of Marines and will continue to be a proud icon of Marine Corps history.



LCPL KELVIN CLARK, USMC

**The 4th Marine Brigade Halted the German Advance on Paris**—Tradition indicates the Marines halted the German advance on Paris, resulting in the Battle of Belleau Wood in

June 1918. In fact, the Marine Brigade was one of many American, British and primarily French units engaged on a large salient from Soissons to Reims. However, the attack by the 4th Marine Brigade on June 6 and resulting struggle for Belleau Wood answered many questions about the American ability and will to fight, and news of the Marine success captivated the populations of Allied nations at a critical moment in a year that offered little good news to the Allied nations, exhausted after almost four years of war with little to show for their sacrifice. The battle of Belleau Wood changed the morale of the Allies, renewing their will to fight. This moment of history proved critical to the defeat of Germany. The bravery of the 4th Marine Brigade at Belleau reflected a change in the fortunes of war.

Allied victory occurred only a little over four months after Belleau Wood became Bois de la Brigade de Marine.

J. Michael Miller

S. Turrill's 1st Bn, 5th Marines broke through three lines of German defenders in the early morning mist, capturing Hill 142 and repulsing heavy German counter-attacks during the morning.

The success of the Marines of 1/5 caused the French to issue orders for a larger attack that same day, with the intent of passing through Belleau Wood to take the commanding hills beyond. Three Marine battalions were assigned the task of capturing the wood: Major Benjamin S. Berry's 3rd Bn, 5th Marines on the left; Major Berton W. Sibley's 3/6 Marines on the right; while Holcomb's 2/6 Marines covered the right flank, attacking the town of Bouresches. After the wood was captured, Turrill's 1st Bn, 5th Marines would join from Hill 142, and the four battalions would capture the hills on the far side of Belleau Wood.

The issue facing the 4th Brigade was time. The orders for the attack were issued at 2:05 p.m. for a 5 p.m. attack, leaving little or no time to coordinate the assault. Consequently, many of the infantry did not get their orders until minutes before they were supposed to go forward, or even after 5 p.m.

The resulting attack proved very costly for the Marines, failing to replicate the success at Hill 142. Berry's battalion was decimated by the German machine guns

as it crossed a wheat field, while the men of Sibley's battalion encountered fierce resistance inside the wood. Two companies of Holcomb's battalion captured the town of Bouresches, which was only lightly held by the German defenders. Most of Belleau Wood remained in German hands, foregoing any attempt on reaching the hills to the west, the primary target of the attack.

One of the Marines killed in the assault was 20-year-old Private Albert Silverston, 20th Co, a native of Cincinnati, Ohio, who died in the charge across the wheat field. Silverston enlisted in the Marine Corps with his best friend, Eli Wittstein, in April 1917. Both went to France together but in different regiments. Wounded in the mass mustard gas attack on the 74th Company in the Verdun Sector, Wittstein suffered eight days in the hospital before dying on April 21, almost exactly a year after his enlistment. The west end of the city of Cincinnati now grieved for both Marines. After receiving the telegram from Commandant George Barnett, Harry Silverston spoke of his child, “I grieve for my son, but I am proud of him.” In 1909, Silverstone had received a medal from the *Cincinnati Post* newspaper for an essay on President Abraham Lincoln. A nephew found the medal and asked his father what it was. “Uncle Albert was a

soldier,” replied his father, “fighting for the same thing Lincoln fought for.” The bodies of both Wittstein and Silverston were returned to the United States in 1921 and buried together in their hometown cemetery.

Private John H. Frarick, 80th Co, was wounded on June 10 in the southern portion of Belleau Wood. Like many of the Marines who were wounded, Frarick wanted only to return to the fight. “Mother, I think I got away pretty lucky,” he wrote home, “for I received a small wound. My wound isn't much, and I think I will be going back to the front soon. I would like to get back on the firing line with the boys again.” Continued attacks over the next five days secured the southern end of Belleau Wood with resulting casualties. The attack of Major Wise's 2/6 Marines on June 11 proved particularly bloody as the Marines attacked over the same wheat field of the June 6 assault.

Private Charles A. Naegelen Jr. with 51st Co was also killed in the assault, only a short distance from where his father had been born. Charles A. Naegelen Sr. came to the United States when he was 3 years old, becoming head of his own machinery company. When he received word of his son's death, Charles went into mourning and collapsed, dying of grief only days later. His son now rests in the





MARIUS EUGENE VASSE

**Marines from 152nd Infantry Regiment with a French soldier in early June 1918.**

Aisne-Marne Cemetery, along with his fallen comrades.

Pvt Clarence F. Mundstock of the 76th Co attacked in the tangled forest from the south in support of the attack. "Just returned from a suffering hitch in hell, and must thank the Lord for being lucky enough to come back alive," he wrote to his mother, "They were situated on a large rocky hill, thickly covered with woods ... we suffered our first casualties after we reached our objective, when they shelled us at close range. That was the only way they got any of our boys. They did not get a single one of us in the hand-to-hand fight when we attacked them."

Continued fighting occurred over the same woods until June 14, when Lieutenant Colonel Logan Feland assumed command of the remaining Marine forces in Belleau; the remnants of the 1/5 and 2/5 Marines and 1/6 and 2/6 Marines. Feland readjusted the lines, enabling the Marines to hold their ground and occupy positions to apply pressure on the Germans. A deadly stalemate settled into the wood, punctuated by a ration of heavy shelling, snipers, and gas. The Army 7th Infantry Regiment arrived on the night of June 15 to relieve the exhausted Marines, who pulled out for a well-deserved rest period.

The Marine brigade returned to Belleau Wood on June 22, replacing the now battered Army 7th Infantry, and immediately planned to finish the capture of the wood. Private Walter S. Austin of the 15th Co, 6th Machine Gun Bn had just returned to his unit from the hospital after

being gassed on June 3, when he was again wounded on June 24, this time by enemy shrapnel. Austin returned to the hospital once again, with the dubious distinction of being twice wounded during the battle.

At 5 p.m., on June 25, the Marines of 2/5 began the task of clearing the Germans from the northern end of the woods with 3/5 joining the attack. 2ndLt Fred Thomas led his platoon of the 16th Co into the northern end of Belleau Wood, covering the left flank of the advance. A convergence of four machine guns and trench mortars halted the platoon, causing Thomas to move forward into the German fire alone to find a way to silence the guns. He found the exposed flank of the machine guns

and went back to deploy his platoon to turn the enemy position. Within a few moments, all four guns and 21 Germans were captured, one machine gun by Thomas himself. The lieutenant then moved his men still forward into a German barrage to take his final objective that he held for five hours against three counterattacks. When Marine reinforcements arrived that

evening, Thomas reported a 40 percent loss in his platoon. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his bravery, the first of two such decorations Thomas would receive during World War I.

Early in the morning of June 26, Major Maurice E. Shearer reported, "Woods now United States Marine Corps entirely." The attack garnered 10 heavy and eight light machine guns and 309 prisoners were taken. No further attacks were taken during the rest of June, and the relief of the



MARIUS EUGENE VASSE

**Pvt Walter S. Austin**

entire 4th Brigade was begun on July 5, by the Army 26th Yankee Division. The New Englanders were suitably impressed by the battle-worn Marines as well as the battlefield itself. The smell of death hovered over the wood, with broken bodies and limbs still unburied, strewn throughout the underbrush and even hanging in the trees where artillery rounds flung the remains of their victims.

During the approximate 26 days of combat, total losses amounted to 756 Marines killed, 2,978 wounded, 1,371 gassed and 94 missing, totaling 5,199 casualties or about 200 casualties per day. Two replacement battalions entered combat during the battle to offset the losses, but with an estimated initial strength of 7,800 Marines, the 4th Marine Brigade suffered heavily during the battle. One Marine was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions on Hill 142 on June 6, four officers received the Distinguished Service Medal, and 48 officers and 96 enlisted men were awarded the Army Distinguished Service Cross as a result of their bravery during the battle.

The impact of the battle on the Allied cause was immediate. On June 30, the French 6th Army commander officially changed the name of Belleau Wood to the Bois de la Brigade de Marine. The 4th Marine Brigade was cited in French orders as well, stating the Marine brigade completed "on a very difficult terrain an advance varying from 1,200 to 2,000 meters, on a front of 4 kilometers, capturing a larger amount of material, taking more than 500 prisoners, inflicting on the enemy considerable losses." This citation conferred on the 5th and 6th Marines and the 6th Machine Gun Bn the award of the fourragere, in the colors of the Croix de Guerre.

The Marines of Belleau Wood understood the importance of their sacrifice. General Order Number 12, published on June 30, 1918, stated, "It is believed that the history of the U.S. Marine Corps will write the Bois de Belleau, Bouresches, and Hill 142 on the tablets which already carry Tripoli, Mexico, China, and other names immortalized in our traditions." These words proved prophetic and will live on for current and future generations of United States Marines to add to their legacy.

*Author's bio: J. Michael Miller retired from the Marine Corps History Division in 2016 after more than 30 years of service, and is now writing a multi-volume history of the Marine Corps in World War I. The first volume of the series will be published in the summer of 2018, covering the battles of Belleau Wood and Soissons.* 🇺🇸



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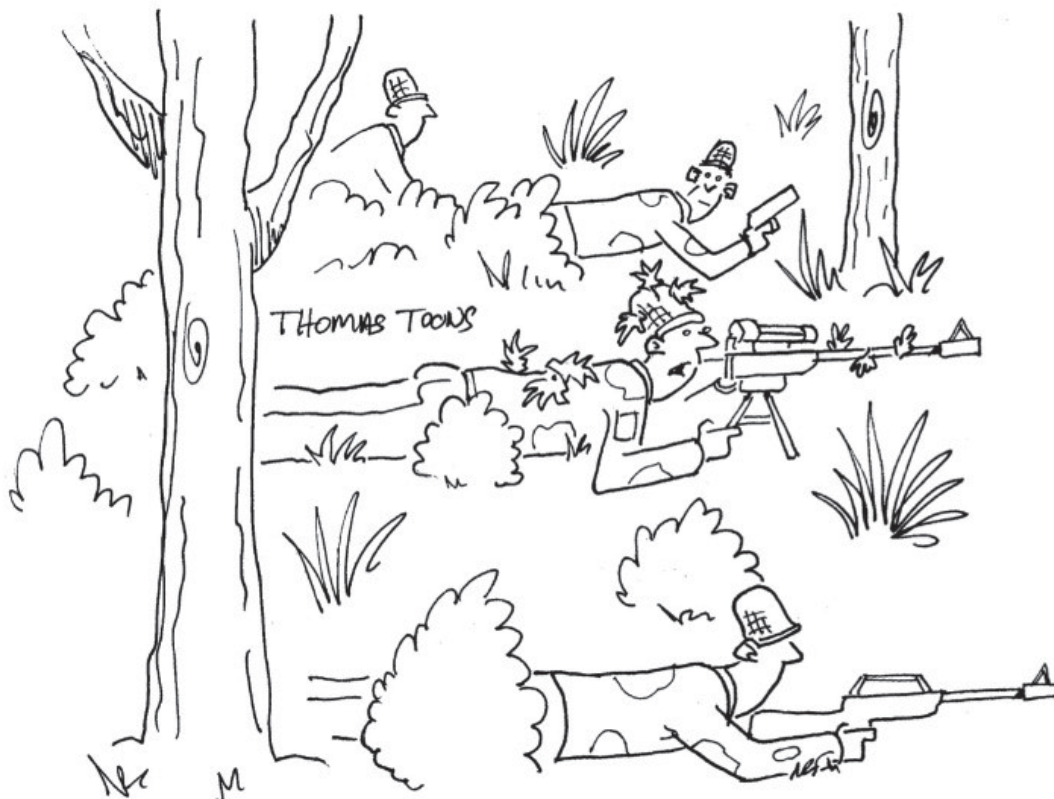
# Leatherneck Laffs



"You get your third stripe and you go all hippie on us?"



"Actually, Sir, I joined by accident. I was texting when I bumped into a Marine recruiter."



"Men, make sure your cell phones are off."

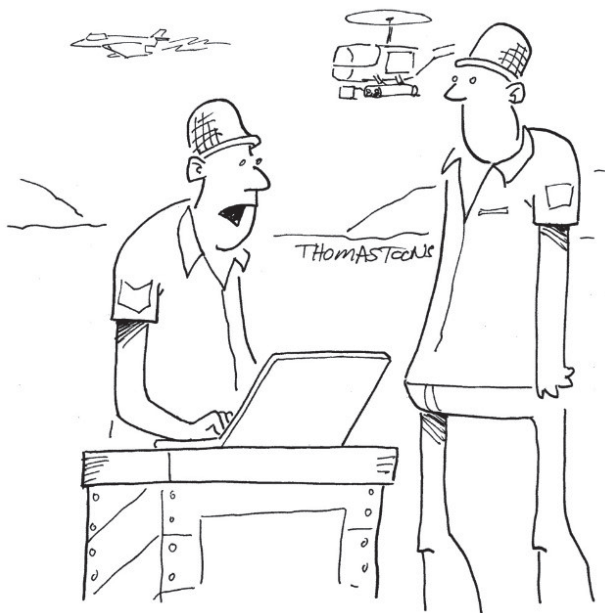




"It's a vacuum-packed picnic, recruit."



"Today you will have earned 30 frequent marching miles."



"We've been slowed by tanks and enemy fire, but never by low bandwidth."



"He must have gone to a very liberal college."



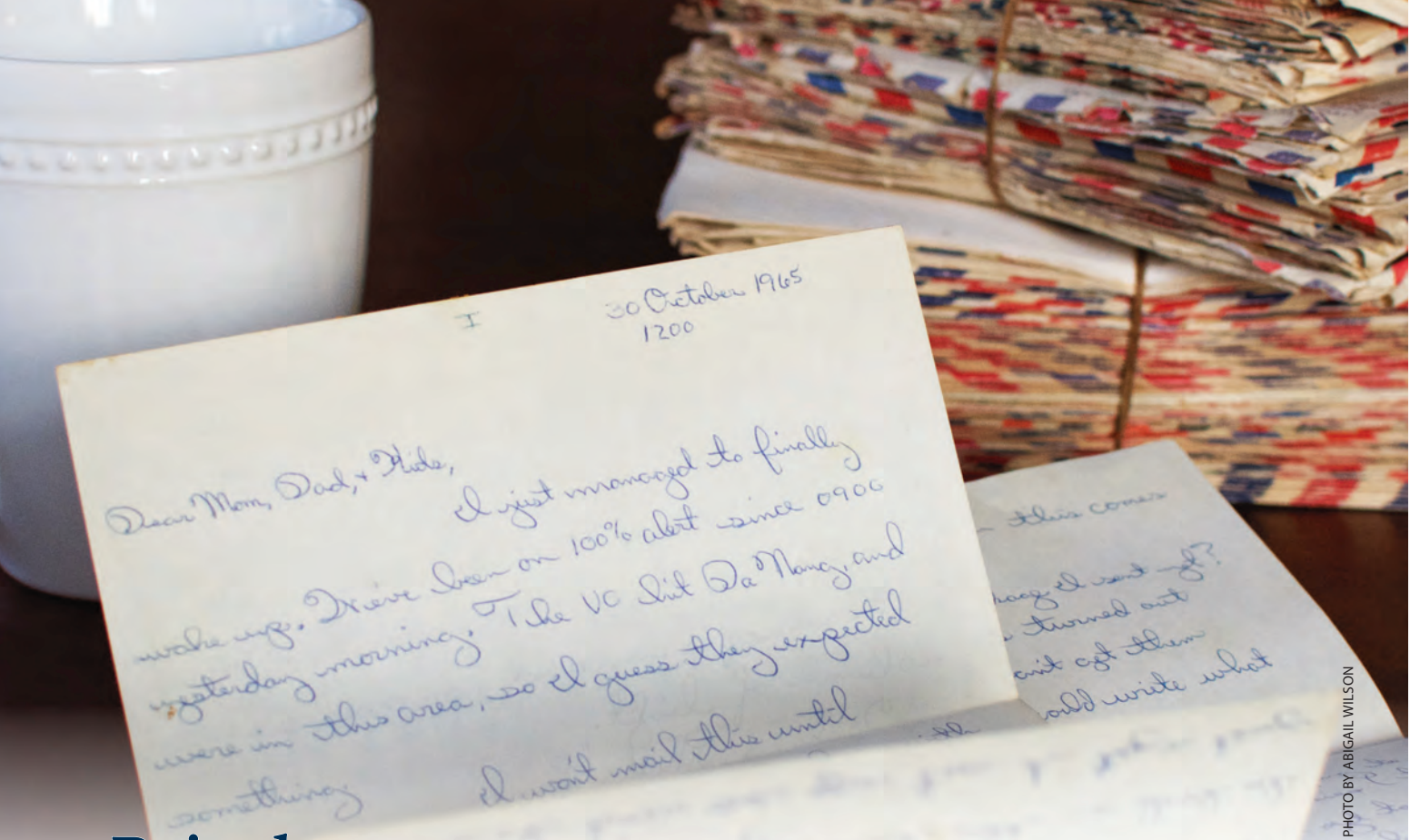


PHOTO BY ABIGAIL WILSON

# Priceless Treasures: LETTERS HOME

Compiled by Patricia A. Everett

*When Leatherneck asked our readers for letters written by their special Marine, the response was overwhelming. Below are some of those letters which reveal the sorrows, joy, humor and homesickness Marines far from home shared with their loved ones.*

## **Aug. 2, 1967, Vietnam Aboard USS *Duluth***

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Alsup,

In some little way I hope my letter will take some of your hurt away. When mom told me about Terry, tears came to my eyes and the chills were in every part of my body. I don't know what to say at a time when everything seems so dark. I've prayed so many times that God will end this war, but there has to be a reason why we are here. We all know what it means to be so far away from our loved ones.

Mrs. Alsup, maybe someday God will tell us why everything has to be the way it is. It seems like yesterday when me and Terry were together. I know you and Mr. Alsup worried so very much about him and you asked God why he had to come to a place like this, a place that you read about in every newspaper that you pick up. Please, I want to tell you something about what has taken your son's life away. Every one of us over here know why we are here and we know that our life may be taken away in the next rice paddies that we cross or the next village that we go through, but as we cross the rice paddies, we see old men and women in knee deep mud trying to raise enough rice for their children back at the village. Then as we approach the

village, children crowd around us asking for food. They do not know what it means to have a hot meal or even a cold glass of milk or water to drink. They have no schools to go to. Most of them don't even know why we are going through their home searching for the VC [Viet Cong] but someday when they have food on the table and a bed to sleep in and live their life and have their children live a life like ours back home, then they will remember why we went through their fields and villages.

As you already know Mrs. Alsup, I have the most wonderful wife in all the world waiting on me back home and I know what Peggy and my mom and dad are going through. I am not the only one who has left so much behind. Some of us will never see home or our loved ones again; our life is completely changed over here. We live in fear, we live a life that we never dreamed of living while we were in school or at home but every one of us knows what we are giving our life for, so that our children will never live this life the way these people do. If my children had to go through what these do, then I would never want any.

Well, Mrs. Alsup, I guess I've said enough. Terry, your son, has given his life for his country but he gave his life for much more than his country. Maybe someday God will tell you why he had to go.

Well, I'll close now. May God bless you, and I pray that God will lift the heavy burden from your heart. I will say a special prayer for Terry.

Sam

*Sgt Samuel P. Leonard submitted this letter which he wrote to the mother of his high school friend after learning his friend had been killed by a rocket attack on his convoy in Vietnam.*



## Dec. 26, 1965, Vietnam

Dear Mom, Dad & Kids,

I imagine that about now you are sitting down for a supper of Christmas dinner leftovers. There's about 18 hours difference in time. Christmas here wasn't too much unlike any other day. Christmas Eve was cool and breezy with a little rain. Yesterday was quite nice though. We had a volleyball game against the Second Squad. We beat them two out of three. Later on we are going to whip the First Squad.

I'm glad that the slides of the patrol came out good and you got them okay. I'm almost finished with another roll so will be sending it along soon. The Marine passing out goodies is Corporal Walker; also there's one of "Doc" treating a baby with an ear infection.

I haven't heard from Sheila yet, but if she got her things, I imagine she'll write.

How did everyone make out on Christmas? Dad wrote what he was getting Mom and it sounded very nice.

I mailed you a package of odds and ends to store for me. It seems I've got just too much junk and when you have to carry it all, it's not worth it. Would you put some oil or something on the gloves? They got a little moldy from the dampness.

Five more days and I'll be 19. I don't know where the year went. It seemed to come and go awful fast.

I finished reading "Banners at Shenandoah" and have started "King Rat" that Teri sent.

I think that I'll cut a few Z's before the game. Happy New Year! And take care.

With love,  
Lester

*MGySgt Richard L. Houghton wrote letters home faithfully. The letters displayed on this month's cover were saved by his mother.*

## March 14, 1968, Khe Sanh Valley, Vietnam

My Dearest Darling "Mrs. Perkins,"

I love and miss you so very, very much. I hope my darling that you are taking very good care of yourself and our little Tiger. Sweetheart, as always, I hope with all my heart that you both are enjoying the very best of health and enjoyment together. I can't tell you my darling how very very much I enjoy the pictures of you and one Sherri Berry. I find myself looking at them and admiring my good-looking blonde.

I'd give anything to be able to put my arms oh so very tightly around you. Barb, this trying to write letters by flashlight is something else. Still no mail which makes 10 days now since any mail or ammo/chow resupply. Maybe today.

The VC have really been moving the last few days. We had another Marine from 2nd Platoon killed this morning. He is still on the LZ (landing zone) on our hill. We can't get a chopper in to get the body out. Oh, here comes a chopper to try again—done. No. They just shot the chopper down. We went and got another chopper in and we got everyone out.

It's been another long long day, my darling, and here we are once again into this night and heavy fog. My dearest, even with

## CHRISTMAS DAY MENU

Saturday 25 December 1965

Shrimp Cocktail

Julienne Soup / Saltines (Didn't have it)

Roast Turkey

Giblet Gravy

Virginia Style Baked Ham (Didn't have it)

Pineapple Sauce (Didn't have it)

Corn Bread Dressing (Didn't have it)

Chilled Cranberry Sauce

Snowflake Potatoes

Glazed Sweet Potatoes

Buttered Fresh Frozen Broccoli (Didn't have it)

Buttered Whole Kernel Corn

Spring Garden Salad W /

Russian Dressing

Christmas Relish Tray

Christmas Fruit Cake / Assorted

Ice Cream (Didn't have it)

Mincemeat Pie / Pumpkin Pie W / Topping

Bread / Butter

Hot Coffee / Iced Beverage

Assorted Hard Candy

Salted Mixed Nuts

2 Cigars

Enclosed in one of Richard Houghton's letters home was a "Season's Greetings" pamphlet designed for the Marines of 1st MAW in Vietnam in 1965. Listed inside were the Christmas dinner menu and messages from the commanding general and chaplain.

as bad as things are and as often as we are hit, my most inner thoughts are of you, honey, and this is coming from my heart. I just can't wait [until] we are together in Hawaii and married. Boy, hon, we will have a super great time.

What has our little Tiger been up to lately? Have you ever been able to find her bike, honey? How is Tiger doing in school? Have you been helping her with her studies in the evenings? When I get home, we will both help her and our son together.

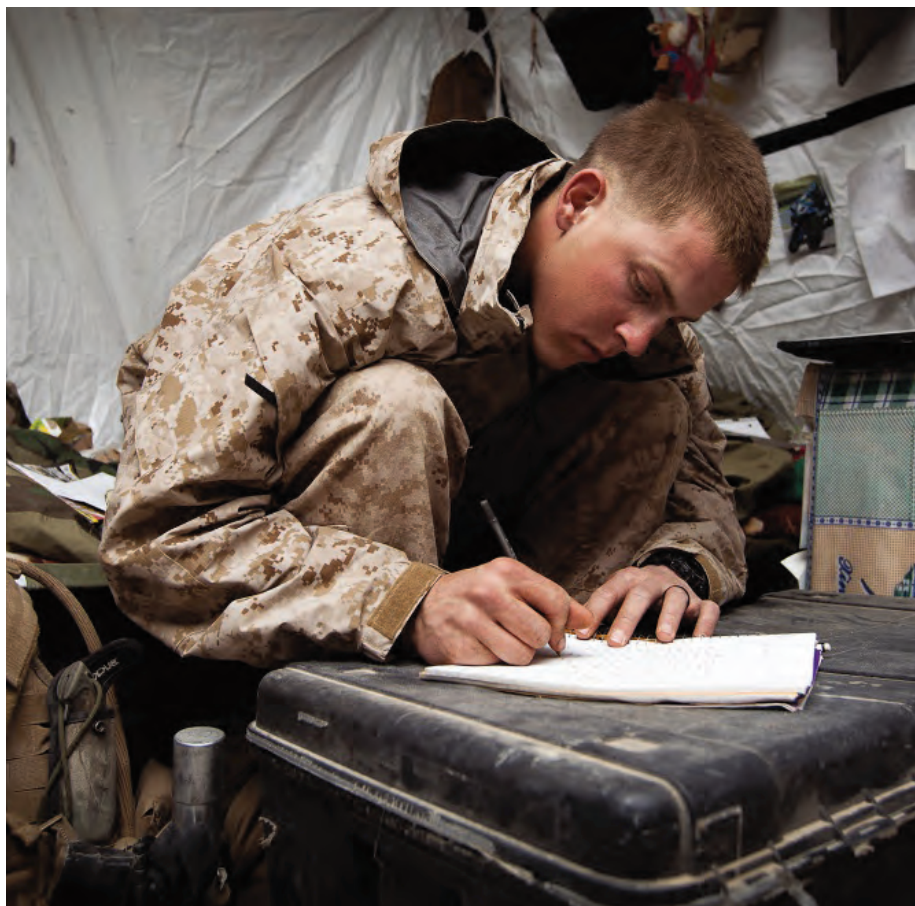
Well, my darling, I am going to have to close once again. I've got to go around the trenches and see how the troops on watch are doing. Will try and get another letter off to you, my darling, again tomorrow. Give our little Tiger a kiss from me, honey and please give my best to everyone.

With All My Love Always,  
Chuck

P.S. Sherri Berry, please give good ole mom a good kiss from me. How's our fish doing, Tiger?

*GySgt G.H. Perkins sent this letter to his fiancée, Barbara, two weeks before he was shot by a sniper on March 28, 1968. He died from his wounds on May 17. They had planned to meet in Hawaii to be married while GySgt Perkins was on R&R. GySgt Perkins was a widower and Mrs. Eddowes, who sent in the letter, had a young daughter, Sherri, whom Gunny Perkins called Tiger.*





SGT REECE LODDER, USMC

From his sleeping area in Afghanistan, Cpl Devin Deweerdt, a mortarman with Co K, 3rd Bn, 3rd Marine Regiment, writes a letter to his wife, Feb. 26, 2012.

### Sept. 30, 1970 MCRD San Diego

Dear Billy Bango,

Needless to say it's not what I expected. It's run, run, run the entire time. Our platoon gets extra push-ups on our knuckles whenever we goof up. Tony got took in a closet and beat up the other day. Gary got cuffed around today. They don't hit us little guys. They choke us! They 'bout killed a kid from another platoon the other day choking him. Our platoon is a dud; it won't stick together on anything.

I ran the obstacle course today for the first time. It wasn't bad at all.

We probably won't be home till Christmas or later so have some cold beer on tap.

How's school and your El Camino going? Let me know how the old town's getting along at night. If anybody is thinking of



ABIGAIL WILSON

joining the Marines, tell 'em to forget it!

We've got real nice barracks and mess hall and the food's great. Tony's on a diet.

Well, see ya in two months  
Your Buddy,  
"Davie"

P.S. If you use two stamps your letters get here faster. Wish I were home. Say "Hi" to Steve U. and Kent for me.

*Sgt David Drury wrote this letter to his best friend after his second week of boot camp. The letter was given back to Sgt Drury when his friend's daughter found a packet of letters that he had written to her dad from 1970 to 1972.*

### 1967, Vietnam

Dear Wife,

I love you a lot more than the Corps and you know how much I love the Corps, so as you can see you've sure gotta lot of love coming to you. Why darling, I enjoy looking into your blue eyes even more than shining my jump boots. And kissing you means more to me than even my wearing dress blues to the Birthday. For you're as wonderful as Chesty Puller is brave. Your happiness outshines my shoes and you're as full of spirit as a real good bayonet fight. Just a hurt look from you touches and affects me more than a summary court martial.

Darling, you're even more beautiful than a fresh blue job on a M1928-A3

Thompson submachine gun. To touch your softness is more of a thrill than cutting a throat with a 6½ inch blade Randall fighting knife. And to taste your lips is as good, if not better, than ham and limas on a cold night. You're more fun than a combat patrol and a bunker assault added together.

I wish I could walk in cadence with our inboard palms touching on post right now. See the moon gleaming off the tanks, hear the bugle at "Taps" and enjoy the crisp sound of a young trooper reporting his post. Great shades of Lou Diamond, I've let myself get even more sentimental than when I fired my first 1903A1 Springfield rifle.

I can see the time on deck is now 1630 hours. That means chow call. If I've surprised you by letting my feelings run as wild as a second lieutenant with a compass, good. For everyone needs a few surprises from egg to hatch. However, for the rest of this report I shall try and remain as cool as a two hashmark private first class standing rifle inspection.

For it isn't my fault that at times I find you as simple to figure out as a 1919A4 machine gun and yet at other times as complicated as a DD-298 questionnaire security form. It's your fault because at times you can change your mind faster than a green side out, brown side out inspection.

Now, having held myself up to as much ridicule as a 0141 clerk gunny attempting to teach close order drill, I'll shove off.

Sincerely Yours in the Glory of My Corps,  
Mad Mac

*Francis McGowin Jr. wrote this letter to his wife while serving in Ripley's Raiders, "Lima" Co, 3/3. They have been married for the past 59 years and attended a Ripley's Raiders reunion last September. Their son, GySgt Steven F. McGowin, USMC (Ret), submitted the letter which was found when GySgt McGowin and his mother were going through some old boxes.*



ends a Christian at his best." Anon.

#### THE SCRIPTURE LESSON

St. Matthew 20:1-16

#### THE PASTORAL PRAYER

The Chaplain

#### THE CHORAL RESPONSE

Recruit Choir

#### THE OFFERING

Anthem

Recruit Choir

\* THE DOXOLOGY No. 418, Page 399 to be sung by all

\* THE HYMN OF PREPARATION No. 170 Anon.  
"Fairrest Lord Jesus"

THE SERMON "The Price is Not Right" Chaplain Dodson

\* THE HYMN OF DEDICATION No. 273 A. S. Hawks  
"I Need Thee Every Hour"

\* THE BENEDICTION The Chaplain

\* THE NAVY HYMN No. 399 (one verse only) Dykes

\* THE POSTLUDE "O Lamm Gottes, Unschuldig" Bach

=o=o=o=o=o=o=o=o=o=o=o=o=

\* Congregation standing

\*\* Recruits are requested to remove bulletins from the hymnals and hand hymnals to the ushers on the way out.

#### NOTICES

1000 -- Every Sunday. General Communion Services in Theatre. Personnel remaining for Communion are requested to take seats in the front center section during the Postlude. The Communion services will begin immediately after the completion of the Postlude.

1030 -- Today. Lutheran Communion in Classroom #1, Theatre.

1045 -- Religious Instruction Classes. All recruits who have signed up for instruction will meet in front of Hut #391 at 1030 for assignment to classrooms.

Preaching next Sunday -- Chaplain Burks

USE BACK OF BULLETIN TO WRITE A LETTER HOME TODAY

Sentence Sermon: "The world at its worst"

#### DIVINE SERVICES

McDOUGAL HALL

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS RECRUIT DEPOT  
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

14 February 1960

MAJGEN, V. H. KRULAK, USMC Commanding General  
COL. G. R. NEWTON, USMC Commanding Officer, RTR  
LT. L. W. DODSON, JR., CHC, USN 1st Bn Chaplain, Preaching  
JOHN T. ROSS Choir Director  
MARILYN ALLEN Organist  
PFC. G. E. MUNDEN Assistant Choir Director

#### THE ORDER OF WORSHIP

THE PRELUDE "Lord Jesus, I Know Very Well" Burtchude

THE CHORAL INTROIT Recruit Choir

THE CALL TO WORSHIP AND INVOCATION The Chaplain

\* THE HYMN OF PRAISE No. 289 Gould  
"Onward Christian Soldiers"

THE CALL TO CONFESSION The Chaplain  
THE PRAYER FOR SALVATION No. 1, Page 135 to be prayed by all

THE PRAYER FOR PARDON The Chaplain  
THE LORD'S PRAYER to be prayed by all

\* THE RESPONSIVE READING No. 477, Page 430 Thanksgiving  
\* THE DECLARATION OF FAITH No. 77, Page 129 In Unison

\* THE GLORIA PATRI No. 420 Page 399

Ralph McClure wrote a letter to his mother on the back of the church bulletin while waiting for Sunday service to begin.

Feb. 14, 1960  
MCRD San Diego

Dear Mother,

I am sitting in church waiting for it to start with 800 other young men. Sunday is really a good day out here. We don't have to work and run so much, and we get a little free time.

The base out here is really nice and pretty with all the palm trees and green grass, and of course, everything is clean.

By now we are all getting used to the new way of life out here, and it's really not so bad. Starting tomorrow we will probably start going to classes. The fourth week is mess hall duty then we go to the rifle range for three weeks. When we get to the rifle range, we can make phone calls and have visitors on Sunday.

Well, I better close and listen to the Pastor.

Much Love,  
Ralph

*Ralph McClure wrote this letter to his mother as he was waiting for church services to start while he was in boot camp. Ralph wrote the letter on the back of the church bulletin. After his mother recently passed away, he found it in her personal effects.*

Jan. 18, 1945  
Eastern France

Dear Son,

Judging from everything I have heard about you, it is obvious that you are a most precocious young man; however, I seriously doubt if you have learned to read by this time. For that reason it may be a bit unusual for me to be writing you tonight, but it's

your first birthday, and we can't afford to let that pass totally unobserved. Perhaps the main reason I'm writing you, though, is to give me the very selfish pleasure of writing the two words, "Dear Son" just so I could see how they look on paper and how it would feel for me to write them.

First of all, let me tell you that I'm not going to bore you with a lot of sob-sister stuff about how much I want to see you, how often I've said, "Dear Son" softly to myself, and how often I have thought of you. Those things just go without saying, and you and I can dispense with any tear-jerking phrase.

Yes, there are many, many things I could write about tonight, but that can all wait till I see you. The important thing is that it's your first birthday. I know you have everything you want and need right now; you are surrounded by the love and affection of your mother and two sets of mighty fine grandparents. You are with those who love you and want you and that is important.

It's not the normal thing for a red-blooded, wide-awake boy like you to have to do without having his father fussing about him. Perhaps in your own way you are even missing me a little bit and wondering why I'm not with you where I should be. Well, Bob, that's just another one of the tragedies of this war; but when you consider these other one year old boys that I have already written you about, you will agree with me that ours is only a minor tragedy by comparison.

There's nothing in this world that I wouldn't give to be with you and your mother tonight; I felt that same way when your first Christmas passed by us, and I've felt just like that every day and every night since your mother went down into the valley of



the shadow of death to bring you home to us a year ago today. But you can see, and you must understand, that you and I are only giving up a little of our time together for the same reason that many fathers and many sons have given up their lives. They didn't complain, so we won't. Rather we must be thankful that the sacrifice that we have been called on to make has been so very small.

I have your most recent picture here in front of me—you are a fine-looking boy, and I'm proud of you. You have a good name, and you were born on the right side of the tracks. You are starting the race even with the rest and there is no handicap; the finish line is up to you. Over here we are all hoping that the track will be in better shape for you; I guess that's why we are all here.

Happy first birthday to you, Son. May God bless you and guide you and the others your age as you all proceed from here on to the future.

Sincerely,  
Your Dad

*Bob Loring, a Leatherneck book reviewer, and veteran Marine, submitted the letter which also was printed in Susan Besze Wallace's "Love & War 250 Years of Wartime Love Letters." Loring's father, who was serving in the Army, wrote it to him on his first birthday.*

## Nov. 10, 2016 MCRD Parris Island, S.C.

Hey Bro!

First off, "Happy B-Day" to all Marines. Also, it was my rifle range qualification. Table 1 at least. I have Table 2 in two weeks. I'm proud to let you know that your bro shot expert for Table 1!

Table 1 qualifications: Marksman: 190-209, Sharpshooter: 210-219, and Expert: 220-250. Your bro shot a 224! Expert, bro! Now I need to do good on Table 2 to graduate with an expert badge. But I couldn't do it myself. Before every shot I prayed. God was with me through every yard line. I couldn't do it alone. I would repeat Philippians 4:13 over in my head to calm me down.

I miss you, bro, can't wait to see everyone. I pray for you guys every day.

Hope that was interesting for you, bro. Tell mom & dad I miss & love them.

Love you bro, see you soon.

Ron

*Ronald Ramos wrote this letter to his brother, Julio Abdiel Ramos, and signed it with a heart and arrow instead of his name. Their mother, Dianelys Ramos, submitted the letter.*

## April 16, 1945, Hawaii

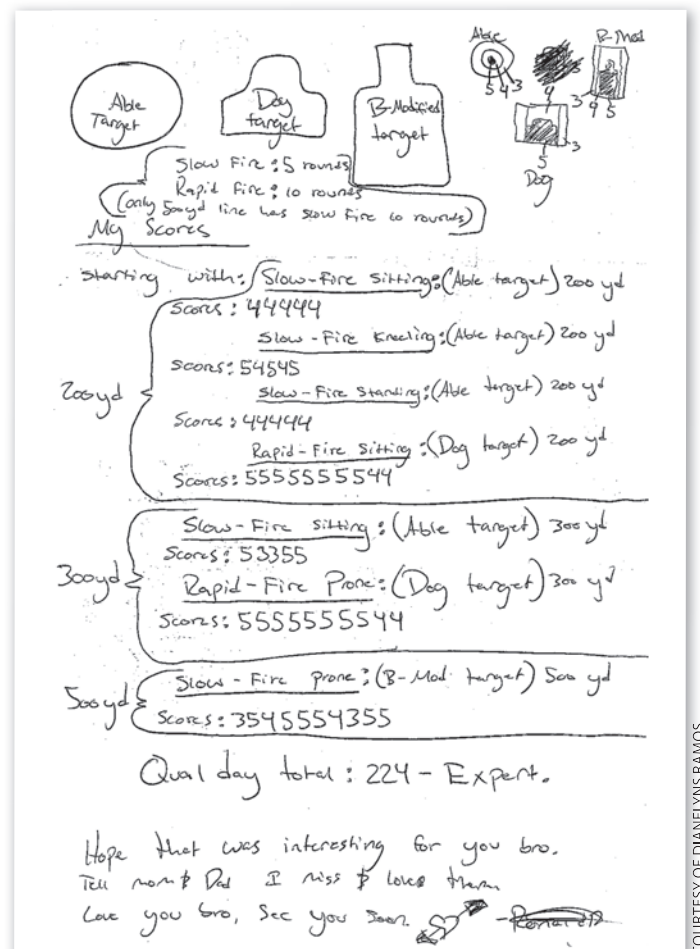
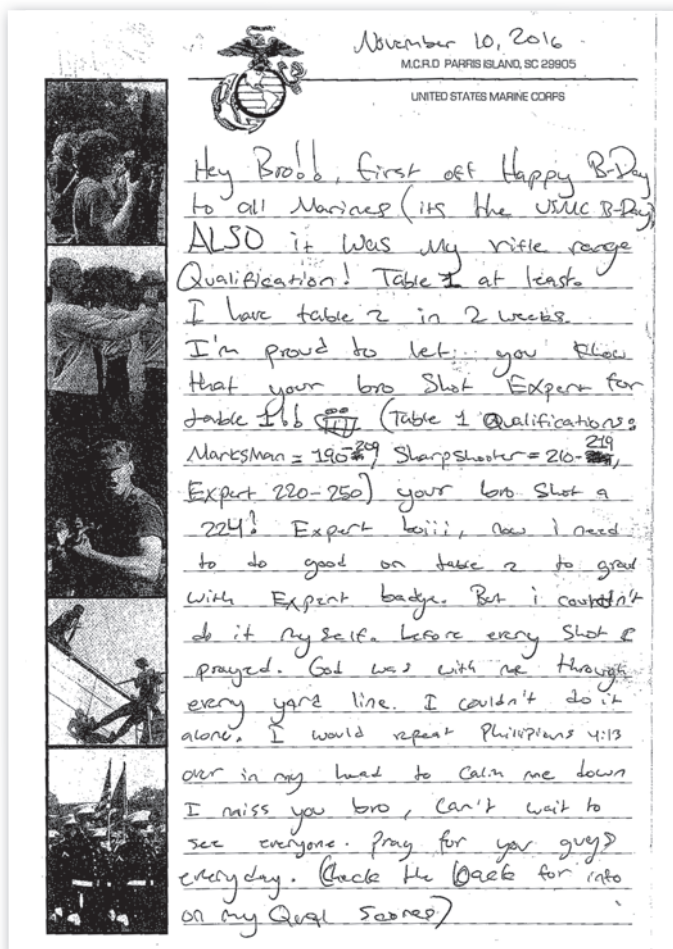
Dear Mother and Dad,

Well, I finally got around to writing although I haven't written for some time. I hope you can read this without too much trouble. By the way this is being written with a Japanese pencil that I'll try to send off to you along with a few (darn few) souvenirs.

You are probably anxious to know a little more about Iwo. I don't believe I can say very much. We are not settled here yet so I haven't found out what I can say.

Our engineer outfit was with 28th Marines, 5th Marine Division—NOT 4th as the newsreels have it who took Mount Suribachi. After that was secured, we moved to the north part of the island and continued on.

As far as personal experiences which we can tell of, I didn't



Included in Ronald Ramos' letter to his brother were his hand-drawn qualification scores.





LCPL VANESSA AUSTIN, USMC

**Recruits often use their limited free time to write letters to family and friends. Note: A copy of *Leatherneck* magazine is on the footlocker of the recruit on the left.**

have but one close call and that came while down on Suribachi. The Japanese used a new mortar and when we came across it, we were instructed to tow it away.

I hooked a cable on it and the other bulldozer operator started off. There happened to be a shell inside and it shot out as he started towing it. As it shot out of the back, the pressure of the propelling charge sent the big mortar tube a 'flying, and it hit me in the knee and swept me clean off my feet. That was one clean sweep! I got a bruise out of the deal but was lucky at that. I got up and went on with the work. All I had done was dozer work building roads and covered caves. There sure were a bunch of caves. That place looked like a cake of Swiss cheese.

Today is the first mail I got since leaving Iwo. I'm back on our old base again. Haven't got settled enough to start answering all my mail. Your two V-mails were the only from home—rest was on Grossinger's paper and mostly from the sisters.

Bob writes and wants to know why the Marines aren't fighting and sitting on their cans. Boy is somebody going to get the scoop!

I'll have to write Jerry Donnelly and let him know my whereabouts. Thrope just ran into his brother here; he's an aerial gunner. Is Steve Poley still in the same place? Send me Howard Bonnell's address. I'm kind of interested in writing him. Bert's boy got nicked in the last Japanese attack. You probably read about it. It wasn't serious. I had seen him the day before. That was around the 25th. It was sad about Dickenson being killed. Send me the article out of the Middletown paper and save all the clippings about that.

Well, Mom and Dad, I guess this is all. I'm okay. Will write soon.

Love,  
Henry

*This letter was written by PFC Henry "Hank" L. Gerow to his parents. His wife, Louise, and daughter, Nancy Gerow Morgan, sent in the letter. PFC Gerow received a Purple Heart for his knee injury that he played down so his family wouldn't worry.*

### **July 8, 1962, U.S. Naval Academy Annapolis, Md.**

Dear Gunny,

I don't reckon you'll remember me very well so I'll try to refresh your memory. You knew me as Private Dines of platoon

185 (1960), right guide and honorman. Twice I visited you at your home with some of the other guys from the platoon. Remember? Well, anyhow I'll get on with the letter.

Gunny, this is primarily a letter of appreciation of what you did for me. You instilled in me the basis of the military and the spirit of the Corps and for this I shall be externally grateful. Had you not, I might not be where I am now, at the U.S. Naval Academy.

We (the 5th Marines) went to Okinawa in April of 1961, and in August of '61 I was transferred to the Naval Prep School at Bainbridge, Md., where I studied for the entrance exams to the Naval Academy. I passed them and the 26th of last month I was sent to the Academy.

My ambition now is to become a Marine officer and be as good a leader of men as my old senior drill instructor. That's you, Gunny.

Thanks a lot for what you did for me, Mr. Thomason. I'll never forget it.

Tell your wife and children hello for me and if you have a chance, drop me a line. I'd like to hear from you.

Sincerely,  
Don Dines

*When he was a midshipman, Don Dines wrote this letter to W.D. Thomason. The letter was found 55 years later by Thomason's daughter, Annica Wickersham who sent it in.*

### **Dec. 30, 1943 Camp Lejeune, N.C.**

Dear Folks,

I hope you don't mind my writing to all of you at once. I'm a little pressed for time right now.

Well, my second day here is almost at an end. I got here at 11:30 yesterday morning. We've been on the go practically ever since except from 10 last night until 5:45 this morning; they let us sleep then.

There's about 88 of us to a squad room (where we live) but only about half of us are here now. The rest are coming from the West Coast and will be here Friday or Saturday. They got to stay home for Christmas. It takes them six days to get here from there on the train—wow!

Quiet hour just ended (7:30 to 9). During that time no one can





SGT BOB BOWEN, USMC

**A Marine takes advantage of a “take five” command while on a combat patrol in Vietnam in 1966 to jot a few lines in a letter he’s composing to his girlfriend.**

smoke, talk or leave the squad room. We can’t smoke or wear lipstick before breakfast either.

I think my marching is getting a little better. I actually marched from the barracks to chow this noon without getting out of step, a distance of about three blocks. We also had a little instruction from a DI. That’s a drill instructor from Parris Island. Those guys really know their stuff too. And you should hear the way they call out their orders. You’d probably bust out laughing. They’re practically the only men we see for six weeks.

We don’t get our uniforms for another two weeks but we get our hats in a couple of days and we have to wear them every time we go outside.

Well, it’s getting close to 10. That’s lights out so I’d better close for now.

P.S. Please write. My address is on the envelope.

Love, Muriel

*Pvt Muriel Underwood sent in this letter which she wrote to her parents and aunt more than 70 years ago; her cousin found the letter in her aunt’s papers after her death.*

#### Nov. 4, 1944, Somewhere at Sea

Hello Macushla,

I’m up again writing early in the morning. Where I get the energy this

**George Baird would often sketch on the envelopes of the letters he wrote home to his wife, Rita.**

early in the day is beyond me unless it’s because it’s so much cooler at this time of day.

The envelope is another one of my feeble attempts at art so you’ll have to forgive any unseemly bulges or lack of proper proportions. I’ve pictured you in tropical surroundings simply because I wish you were with me. By the way, I’m not making any great attempt to have the girl in the sketch look exactly like you. I’ll try to make her attractive enough to do you partial justice, but she never seems to come out the same girl any two tries in succession so don’t let the rapid changes disturb you. I hope I’m not overdoing this drawing business. I’ve tried to branch out a lot more than I’m capable of doing since I first followed Mison’s ideas on the sign posts. So far I still don’t know whether you like them or not.

If things go according to Hoyle and this letter takes only as much time to reach you as I think it will, you should have it by Thanksgiving Day. More important, is our wedding anniversary so Happy Anniversary, Mrs. Baird.

I’m sorry I can’t send you anything more substantial than faithfulness. If and when I can, I’ll send you something nice. It’s too bad that we haven’t been able to be together for the last few months of our first year but there are still months and years to come. We’ve always been pretty good at making up for lost time.

Gosh knows that I have a heck of a lot more to look forward to this time than I did on the last trip home. I’m awfully lucky to have you to go back to.

I have to eat now, darling.

I love you,  
George

*This letter was written by William Baird’s father to his mother, Rita. After her passing in 2014, William published his father’s letters in the book, “Dear Rita” that is reviewed in Leatherneck’s July 2017 issue.*



COURTESY OF WILLIAM BAIRD



# Reinforcing the Gap in Military Justice

## The New “Short-Martial”

By National Capital Region Trial Counsel

As trial counsel, we often find that cases detailed to us for prosecution begin with a Marine refusing non-judicial punishment (NJP). That may be about to change.

Effective Jan. 1, 2019, courtesy of the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act, commanders will have another form of court-martial at their disposal. This new tribunal, an adaptation of the existing special court-martial, will not be authorized to impose a bad conduct discharge (BCD) or more than six months' confinement. It will also not require or permit court-martial members (that is, a jury) and cannot be refused by the accused. These changes reflect an effort to create a court-martial that can efficiently try petty offenses. Because of the limitations on punishment and its potential for reduced logistical and procedural demands, we have termed this option a “short-martial.” We expect short-martials to prove invaluable to commanders concerned that NJP refusals unduly delay or prevent the administration of good order and discipline in their units. In fact, the mere availability of the short-martial, which cannot be refused, may persuade Marines to more readily accept NJP—especially if the modified forum is effectively utilized in the months following the 2019 rollout.

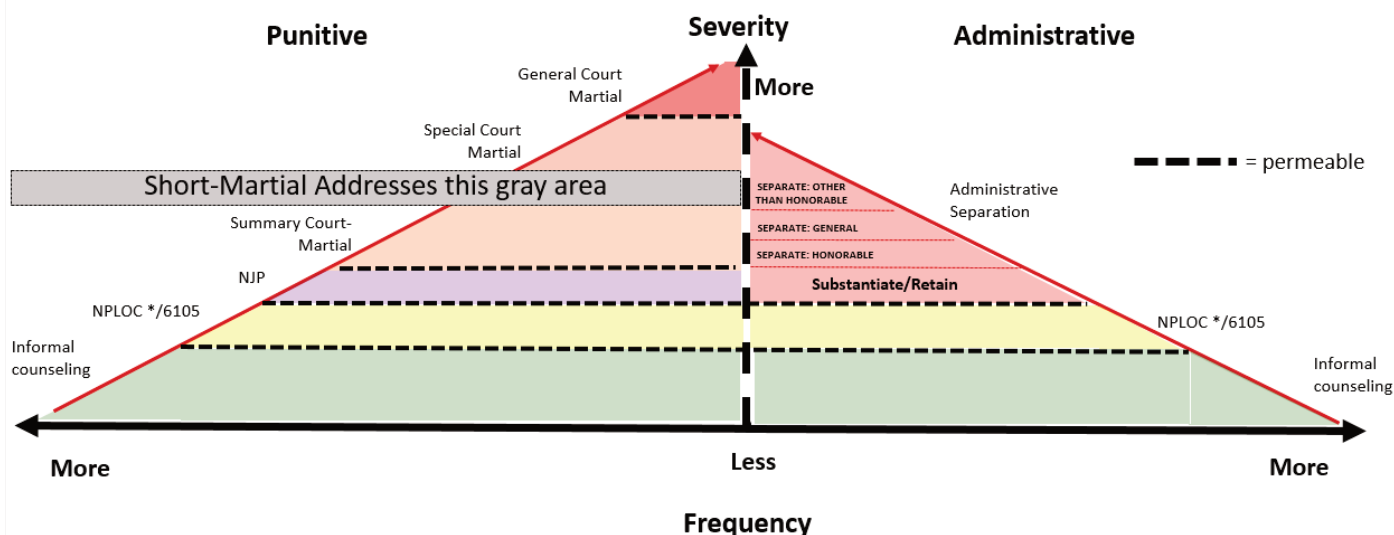
### The Problem: NJP Refusal

NJP is typically offered when the misconduct in question requires more (and more public) punishment than is afforded by a 6105 (formal counselling) but is not so serious as to merit the time, effort, cost, uncertainty, punitive exposure and federal criminal conviction that come with a special court-martial. We say that NJP is “offered” because, like a summary court-martial, it may only be imposed with the consent of the Marine. There are a variety of reasons a Marine might refuse NJP even if he did commit misconduct. One reason for refusal is that, realistically, a command has only two options when a Marine refuses NJP. They can refer the case to court-martial—which the commander evidently thought more severe than the misconduct warranted when he made the initial decision—or the commander can pursue administrative routes like counseling, which may be less severe than warranted but would at least be fast, easy, and assured. With the command facing those options, Marines who have committed misconduct sometimes try to exploit that opportunity in hopes of escaping with only counseling.

Indeed, faced with these choices, and given the logistical burdens and risks of both over- and under-punishment, expedient commanders will often default to counseling when a Marine refuses NJP. First, the manpower drain of courts-martial

**All told, hundreds of man-hours can be saved in the course of a single case. That's a good thing for defendants, judges, attorneys and the operational tempo at the referring command.**

## Commander's Options for Misconduct







USMC

**The new short-martial provides commanders with another option between non-judicial punishment and special courts-martial and its “judge alone” component should provide greater consistency and predictability for similar offenses.**

is significant—depending on the type of court-martial, up to a dozen members of the command must be appointed to potentially serve as jury members, some of them likely for several days. Second, NJP refusals also typically involve minor transgressions for which court-martial members historically have been lenient, either by offering little punishment, or, skeptical that the misconduct merits a criminal conviction and not knowing that the Marine refused NJP, by declining to convict. Finally, sending the case to special court-martial exposes the Marine to greater punishment than the average NJP-level transgression warrants—including the possibility of a BCD, which is well outside the appropriate level of punishment originally offered via NJP.

Ironically, even in cases where a Marine refuses NJP, and the commander, justifiably unwilling to let the infraction pass, elects the more severe forum of special court-martial, investigation, negotiation and the interests of justice often lead to an agreement in which the accused accepts NJP. That is, we arrive at the same end state, only by a longer route. In this system, there is little downside to the Marine in refusing NJP; instead, the downside is often borne by the command via a negative impact to good order and discipline in the unit and through the manpower and logistics burdens it is forced to bear

throughout a lengthy special court-martial process. Until now, there has not been a better system for dealing with misconduct that would otherwise be handled at either NJP or special court-martial.

### **The Solution: Short-Martial**

Commanders will soon have access to a tool designed to remedy the gap between NJP and special court-martial. Starting in 2019, Article 16(c)(2) of the Uniform Code of Military Justice will permit referral to a short-martial.

This new option squarely addresses three drawbacks for the commander in the NJP/court-martial calculus. First, in a short-martial, a defendant has no right to a members’ panel. Consequently, the commander will not need to designate jury members, and the military judge who presides over the case will not need to clear the way for them. This is a more substantial difference than it may seem at first blush. Since a defendant need not ordinarily decide whether to request a jury until the final weeks of a court-martial, current special courts-martial must consider a jury’s potential perspective at every step. For instance, dozens of hours can be spent working out whether some piece of evidence might unfairly confuse, mislead, or outrage a jury, which ultimately may never be appointed, or suggesting and perfecting instructions to shape that same jury’s understanding of the evidence it will receive. In addition, as trial nears, there will be no need to pull senior staff noncommissioned officers (SNCOs) from

their usual duties when a staff sergeant elects trial by a partially enlisted jury, all of whom must be senior to the accused. As trial begins, there will be no need for voir dire, in which the government and the defense debate which of the members named on the convening order shall serve throughout the trial. Nor will it be possible to bust quorum—that is, to reject so many members that the trial needs to be postponed while more potential jury members are found. As trial proceeds, there will be no need for lengthy breaks in which the parties argue over what the jury should be permitted to hear, and less reason to confine trials to working hours or to avoid holidays since the judge and both parties to the case can push through for one long day. All told, hundreds of man-hours can be saved in the course of a single case. That’s a good thing for defendants, judges, attorneys and the operational tempo at the referring command.

The second drawback that the short-martial addresses is the uncertainty around both conviction and sentencing because of the absence of jury members. While every military judge has a different style, they are always qualified, certified judge advocates with extensive courtroom experience and a nuanced sense for the actual severity of any given set of charges. We predict that, in the long run, “judge alone” sentencing will provide greater



**Justice for minor offenses  
will be more appropriately  
obtainable at short-martial  
than at a regular  
special court-martial.**

consistency and predictability for similar offenses.

Third, because neither BCDs nor more than six months of confinement may be imposed at short-martial, and because of the relative predictability of military judges' decision making, the danger of *over-punishing* the Marine is substantially reduced. Justice for minor offenses will be more appropriately obtainable at short-martial than at a regular special court-martial. Additionally, since a BCD is not authorized at short-martial, there are no restrictions imposed on the characterization of service that can be awarded at a subsequent administrative separation board.

These are only the differences that will emerge in cases actually referred to short-martial. The most significant effects may be felt in cases that never make it to that point. Knowing that the option of short-martial will reduce the manpower and logistics burden a commander must balance when deciding to refer any given case to court-martial, Marines offered NJP for petty offenses will have much less reason to hesitate before accepting. From October 2015 through September 2016, across the Navy and Marine Corps, NJP was imposed nearly 9,000 times, while the Navy tried 135 special courts-martial, and the Marine Corps tried 208.

**Comparison of Special Court-Martial, Short-Martial and NJP**

	Special Court-Martial	Short-Martial	NJP	
			E-6+	E-5 and below
Bad Conduct Discharge	Yes	No	No	
Confinement	1 year or less	6 months or less	No	
Reduction	To E-1		No	By one grade
Forfeitures	2/3 base pay for 12 months		1/2 base pay for 2 months	
Fines	Yes		No	
Hard labor without confinement	3 months or less		No	
Restriction	Yes		60 days or less	
Extra duties	No		45 days or less	
Restriction w/ extra duties	No		45 days or less	
Admonition/Reprimand	Yes		Yes	
Right to a jury	Yes	No	No	
Right to an attorney	Yes	Regulations Pending	No	
Est. time, start to finish	6 months	TBD	1 week (unless refused)	

Those numbers—and the balance they reflect—may change appreciably with the advent of the short-martial, especially if the tool is used wisely in the first months after it becomes available.

While the focus of this article has been on the interplay between NJP refusals and the short-martial, it is important to note that nothing would prevent a commander from starting at a short-martial if deemed appropriate based on all relevant factors—it is a new tool in military justice. Many of the details of the short-martial's implementation remain undetermined; however, it is clear that short-martials will fill a gap in the practice of military justice. As 2019 approaches, commanders will be well-advised to keep this new option in mind. 🦁



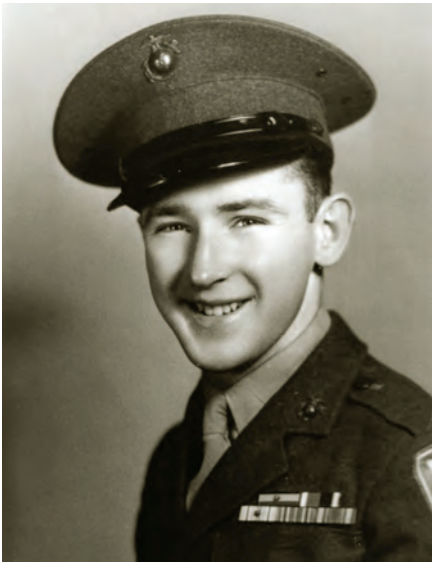
SGT SANTIAGO G. COLON JR., USMC

**Marine judge advocates from multiple units joined judge advocates from other branches of the Armed Forces during the 18th Annual NLLSA conference at the University of Texas at Austin School of Law, Sept. 17-20, 2014.**



# CHOSIN TWINS:

## The Service and Sacrifice Of the Thosath Family



COURTESY OF PAT NASH

Robert "Bob" Thosath



COURTESY OF PAT NASH

William "Bill" Thosath

By Kyle Watts

**T**win siblings enjoy an intrinsic connection. Countless studies have been conducted on their similarities, brain patterns, development, even twin telepathy—yet their bond appears more spiritual than scientific. One could argue identical twins could not be more inseparable or alike. Two such brothers from the Greatest Generation found a way to forge an even stronger bond, becoming brothers in arms in the United States Marine Corps.

William and Robert Thosath were born on Dec. 7, 1925. Their father, Perry, was a first-generation American whose parents immigrated to Spokane, Wash., from Norway. He married his sweetheart, Alice, and settled into family life. By 1925, a toddler named James already roamed their small house. Alice became pregnant again and went into labor, delivering twins in their home. The birth was attended by her Norwegian mother-in-law. William was born first. Recognizing Alice was not through with the delivery, Perry's surprised mother scolded him. "My goodness Perry, you always overdo everything!" Twenty minutes later, Robert followed. Thus, "Bill" and "Bob" entered the family.

The twins' childhood proved typical of

the day, as the family endured ongoing financial struggle through the Great Depression. Even so, it was a happy life, and the boys were inseparable. There was no William or Robert—it was always Bill and Bob. They worked on cars at their father's auto shop and performed other odd jobs to help bring in money. When not working, they went hunting, fishing and camping in the woods around Spokane. They perfected "twin tricks" on their friends, teachers or family, with one twin posing as the other. The only thing harder than separating them was telling them apart.

Though identical in appearance, the twins maintained their differences. Bill took after his father, serious and soft-spoken. Bob, on the other hand, was more whimsical and loved poetry and music. On one occasion at the height of the Depression, the twins had been working long hours, scraping together barely enough for their family to get by. That evening, Bob returned home and revealed a handful of coins to his mother. He announced with a smile that he earned the extra change that day and was taking her dancing. For that night at least, any worry over the lack of milk in the house or the absence of an indoor bathroom took a back seat.

Bill and Bob entered Lewis and Clark



**Standing 5 feet 7 inches tall and weighing less than 120 pounds apiece, the recruiter discovered the twins did not meet the minimum weight requirements for the Corps.**



In December 1943, following their oath of enlistment, Bob, left, and Bill, right, participated in a program at a local theater commemorating Pearl Harbor day and featuring the debut of the film, "Guadalcanal Diary."



COURTESY OF PAT NASH

High School in the early 1940s. On Dec. 7, 1941, as they celebrated their 16th birthday, 3,000 miles away the Japanese Navy attacked Pearl Harbor, sparking an unstoppable chain of events that would alter the lives of millions of Americans, including the Thosath twins.

As the fighting heated up, the brothers' patriotic fervor burned inside. They drudged through high school, watching the men of Spokane depart for war. Their older brother James enlisted in the Army and was sent to the Pacific in 1943. Two

of their uncles joined and went overseas as well. The twins yearned to fight for their country and prepared to drop out of school to enlist.

On their 18th birthday, Bill and Bob dragged their parents to the Marine recruiter's office. Standing 5 feet 7 inches tall and weighing less than 120 pounds apiece, the recruiter discovered the twins did not meet the minimum weight requirements for the Corps. He sat the boys down, passed them a bunch of bananas, and told them to start eating. Several

minutes and several bananas later, the twins' full bellies tipped the scales in their favor. Their parents signed the enlistment papers and shortly the twins were off for recruit training in San Diego.

Alice and Perry Thosath returned home, without their sons, to inescapable silence. Their younger daughter Dolores (called "Dilly") remained home with them, but all the boys were gone. Alice saw the increasingly common "service flags" hanging in windows throughout town representing sons at war. She hung one of





USMC

**Bill, seated front row, third from left, and Bob, seated front row, second from right, with their platoon from recruit training in 1943.**

her own in their window, with three stars paying mute tribute to her own sacrifice.

By the end of 1944, the twins were assigned to the infantry serving with the 1st Battalion, 26th Marines. They set sail to join the thousands of Marines already engaged in the Pacific. Even with their late entry into the war, the Thosath boys would not be spared from the carnage. Their first experience together in combat took place at the landmark battle of Iwo Jima.

Bill and Bob hit the beach on D-day following the initial assault waves. U.S. naval bombardment cleared the entire area of any natural cover, leaving only the bomb craters as protection from Japanese fire. Advancing inland, they encountered numerous enemy pillboxes and land mines, but the battalion sustained significant casualties from the unceasing artillery and mortars raining down on top of them.

The twins had joined the Marines, the infantry, and the battle just as they had anything in life—together. Now fighting the Japanese side by side, they questioned this instinct. As the unit battled inland, Bill and Bob split up between two companies within the battalion. The violence surrounding them made survival uncertain. They hoped some

distance between them might decrease the likelihood of getting hit at the same time.

They continued for days, arching across the north side of the island. To root out the entrenched Japanese, exposed infantry drew fire to pinpoint their location, then

**The violence surrounding them made survival uncertain. They hoped some distance between them might decrease the likelihood of getting hit at the same time.**

tanks and mortars blew them to pieces. The twins' battalion played a critical role in the final phase of the battle, destroying the last enemy hold out at Kitano Point. They witnessed vicious, point-blank fighting, as the last remnants of the Japanese fought to the death.

Once Iwo Jima was secured, Bill and Bob took part in a massive "mopping up" operation, visiting numerous islands, hunting for any remaining Japanese.

Nothing encountered during this period compared to their experience on Iwo. Bob wrote home to his parents:

"Dear Folks,

How are you? Bill and I are fine. I know you are really worried by now ... The reason I haven't said much about Iwo is we didn't want to worry you. We had extra good mail service then and kept you pretty well bluffed. There isn't anything to worry about now. I don't like to talk much about Iwo because it was a living hell."

The twins took part in patrols searching for, "[Japanese], land mines, crashed American planes, or anything in particular," Bob wrote. In the Palau Islands, Bill and Bob patrolled the island of Koror. On one occasion, they climbed down to the entrance of a cave and crept cautiously as they noticed the barrel of a Japanese machine gun sticking out. As the gun came fully into view, they saw the bare bones of two skeletal hands still clutching the grips. They entered the cave and found a Japanese skeleton sitting behind the gun, ready to fire. They pondered this morbid spectacle, making mental note of the ammunition—still in perfect lethal condition—and the fanatic soldier, who continued his fight even from the afterlife.



The living enemy they found were corralled in a stockade, then transferred back to Japan.

As they moved from island to island, Bob wrote a series of poems in addition to his letters home.

*"The Army can have its khaki,  
the Navy can have its whites;  
but I will take the outfit  
that knows how to fight.  
We have fought for our country  
in every foreign land,  
for our liberty and freedom,  
and we made a gallant stand.  
Though odds were against us,  
both big and small,  
we never let you down  
where any duty called.  
Battles we have won,  
none have we lost.  
No matter what the danger,  
no matter what the cost.  
Everyone knows our motto,  
everyone knows our will.*

*For the [Japanese] who know it best:  
kill, kill, kill!  
We have won the battle,  
the worst ever seen.  
We well earned the title,  
United States Marines.*

*In God we trust wherever he may be.  
Over the land, in the air, and on the sea."*

The twins eventually sailed to Japan, along with their captives, and remained there on occupation duty. With the war in its final stages, they longed to return home to Spokane. It had been 18 months since they last saw their family.

"Wish us luck, and it won't be too long before we will see each other," Bob wrote his parents. "Pop, you can start looking for a new car now ... Mom can start digging out her recipes and get ready to cook. Dilly better get ready to be teased again. All my love, Bob."

To emphasize the point, he added a postscript:

"P.S. You're the best family a fellow wants and all hell can't keep me from coming back."

Bob squeezed a final line to his parents at the bottom of the page under the postscript:



COURTESY OF PAT NASH

**At age 24, the twins were sworn in for a second time, prior to their departure for the Korean War.**

"Please excuse the language, but I meant it."

After nearly two years, the Thosath twins returned home as corporals in July 1946. They settled into their post-war civilian lives nicely. Both took jobs and married. Bob's wife, Jean, soon became pregnant with a daughter, Jackie. In early 1950, the twins also gained another sister. Their mother Alice gave birth to her fifth child, a daughter named Patricia. As the family expanded and the brothers looked to the future, they remained proud of their service in the war and even prouder to call themselves Marines.

In July 1950, almost exactly four years after the twins returned home, another chain of events began that would dictate the brothers' destiny for the second time. Half a world away, the armies of North Korea invaded South Korea, invoking the swift military response of the United Nations.

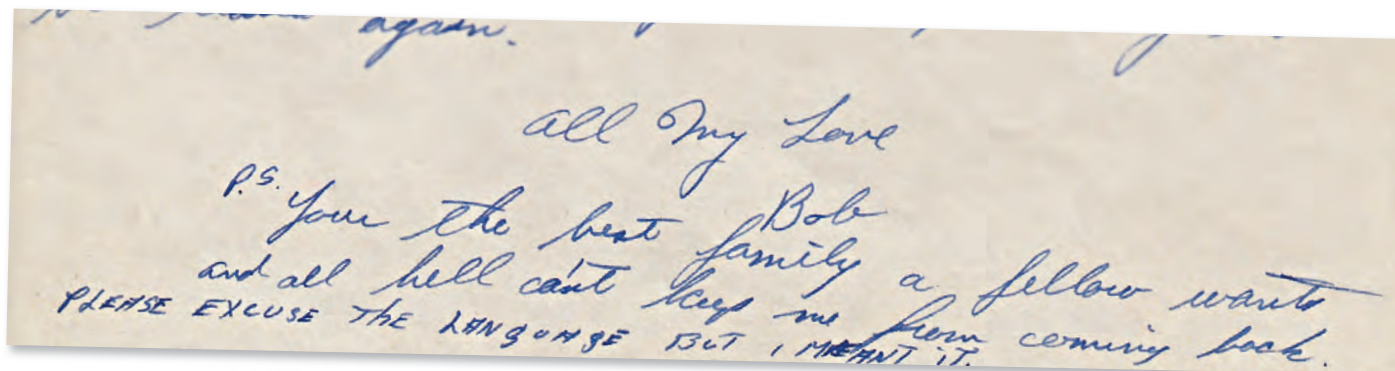
The country prepared for war, and the boys again could not contain their patriotism. "They were hell-bent on joining the Marines," said their youngest sister, Pat, in a recent interview. "They go through the World War II experience and

come home, and they aren't done yet." Ultimately, they reasoned if they had survived the World War, Korea would feel like a vacation. Bill and Bob took the oath of enlistment for the second time, and were returned to active duty.

Bob reassured his distraught mother and wife. He tried to convince them that Korea would be nothing compared to what they had already been through. The boys would be home before they knew it. For Bob's wife, Jean, the news proved most untimely. She was pregnant again, and Bob would not be there for the baby's birth.

The twins returned to the infantry with the 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines, and sailed for Korea in September. Learning from their combat experience on Iwo Jima, they again decided to split up. Bill served with "George" Company as an infantry platoon sergeant. Bob led a section of mortars in Item Co.

The Marines of 3/7 arrived at Inchon toward the end of September 1950. The twins' first Korean combat experience came quickly while recapturing Seoul. Following this short drive inland, 3/7 and the entire 1st Marine Division began





planning their next expedition. They would sail to the opposite side of the Korean peninsula and push north toward the border with China.

“Hi there everybody, how are you today?” Bob wrote in a letter to his parents as they waited to re-embark. “I have some news for you, something that will make you and dad proud of us. My [lieutenant] and I heard through the grapevine that Bill too, because of the way we acted and handled our men under fire, we are both sergeants. So address our letters respectively Sgt R.L. Thosath. Good news, don’t you think? Both of us are in different outfits and made it at the same time. Funny in a way.”

The scuttlebutt going around had the Marines doing all sorts of things, and Bob’s take on the upcoming mission was no exception. “We are sailing in the morning for combat again. Now keep this a secret until you read it in the papers. We are landing 14 miles from Russia, then making a 114-mile dash to the North Korean capital which is our objective. From there they better send us to a rest camp. We sure need it. We are all underweight. We just have the clothes on our backs. Shoes are about worn out. Oh well, enough of our trouble ...”

While his geography and mileage were inaccurate, there was no question about it. The Marines knew something big was

coming—something important—and they were going to be at the center. As he commented on the physical condition of his men, he could not possibly have imagined the horror that waited for them in the hills surrounding their next objective.

“Now, don’t worry. Tell grandma hello. Also Jim and Lucy and the kids ... Maybe we might, but no promises, be heading

**Bill’s George Co and  
Bob’s Item Co were assigned  
to the same objective—  
Hill 1542. They prepared to  
launch their attack  
on the morning of Dec. 1,  
six days before the twins’  
25th birthday.**

home after this mission. I miss you all and love you all ... Your devoted son always with my love, Bob.”

The Marines packed their gear, boarded the ship, and set sail. Commanders finalized their plans for the mission. They would push the North Korean Army to the Yalu River border with China and capture a large man-made lake known as the Chosin Reservoir.

The twins, along with 25,000 other Marines, began their drive north from the coast. They marched up the single, unpaved road that served as the only way into or out of the reservoir. They understood they were marching into the mountains, in winter, into one of the coldest known parts of North Korea. Neither this knowledge, nor any amount of cold-weather gear, could adequately prepare them for the harsh conditions they faced. Temperatures plummeted below zero, freezing water, food, weapons and Marines. Stiff winds whipped exposed skin and cut through all layers of clothing. Periodic snowfall added to the misery.

Another enemy lurking around the reservoir proved far less understood or anticipated than the cold. Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) observed the 1stMarDiv moving toward their border. They were already fighting alongside the North Koreans, but this invasion precipitated the mass movement of Chinese troops south of the Yalu River against the Americans. As the Marines battled through any resistance along the road north, more than 100,000 Chinese soldiers marched south by night, hiding during the day. Their singular objective was the complete annihilation of the 1stMarDiv.

The Thosaths’ 7th Marines led the march to Chosin. On Nov. 6, the regiment



**Marines make camp near the Chosin Reservoir, Korea, likely trying to thaw food and water to fuel their bodies.**



ought off a significant Chinese attempt to halt the column. The Marines sustained numerous casualties but ultimately beat them back. On Nov. 15, Marines reached the southern end of the reservoir at the town of Hagaru-ri.

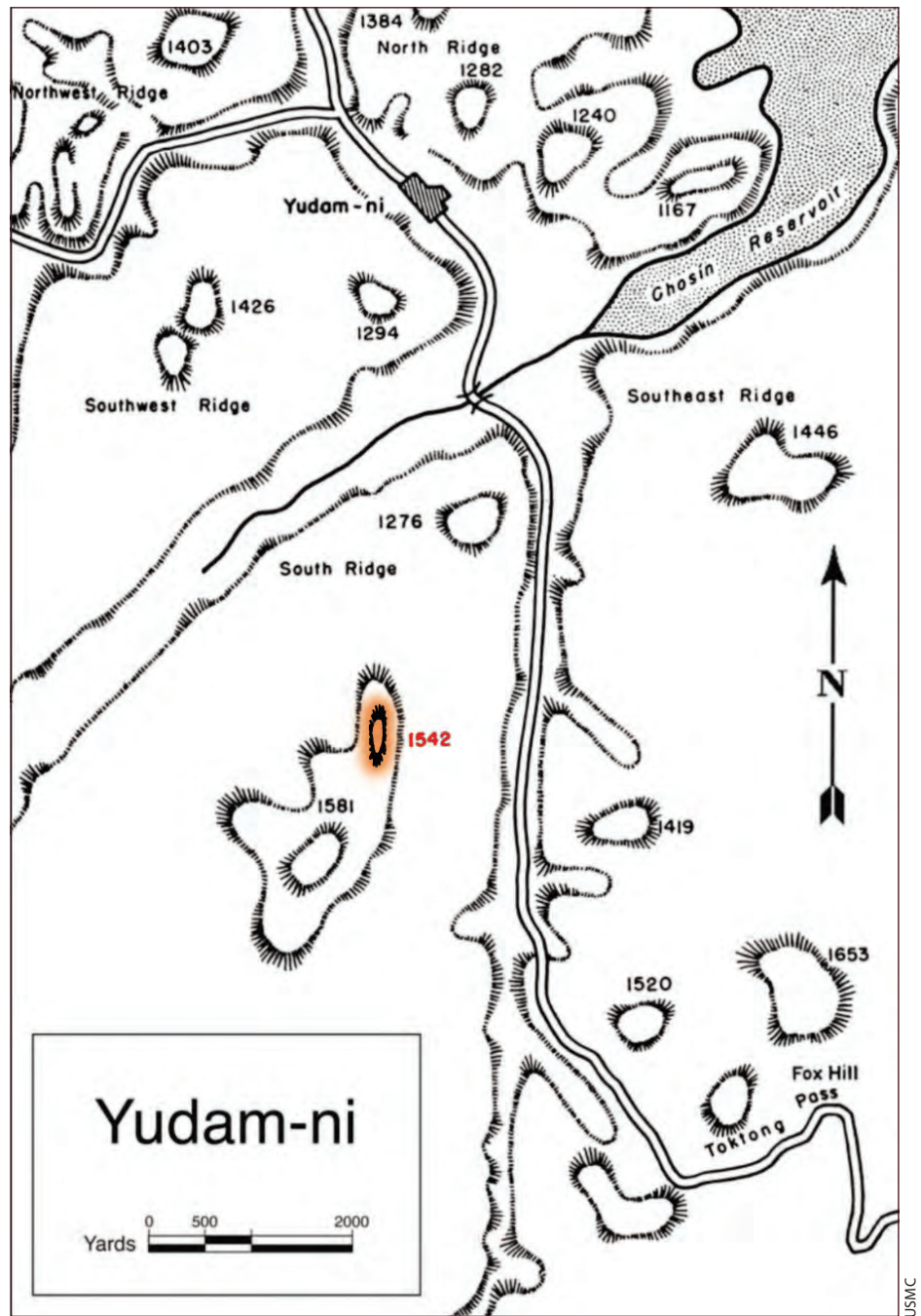
As they prepared for the next phase of the battle, Bob penned another note to his parents explaining his Chosin experience. "I am still with the living and feeling fair," he wrote. "As you probably know, we are still in combat. Haven't frozen up yet . . . We haven't hit too much organized resistance the last couple days. The main trouble now is the cold weather. It has been 14 degrees below zero here a couple times with the damdest cold wind blowing. A lot of men have been turning in with frozen hands, feet and noses . . . We got boots with three pair of socks. They help a lot. We have fur-lined parkas and two pairs of gloves. Our chow is always frozen solid so we have one hell of a time thawing it out."

"We finally got the reservoir which was our objective," he continued. "Our 1st Division got 4,000 replacements, so you can get an idea how many casualties we have had. I haven't heard from Bill for two weeks, so I don't know how he is. I wish I knew. I know his outfit was hit pretty hard."

Bob closed the letter on a familiar note. "Give my love to everyone there. I love you very much Mom and Dad. I hope to see you soon. Well, I better close as I have a mission to fire. Goodbye for now. Your ever-loving son, Bob." The tone of the letter must indicate that Bob, like his commanders, did not anticipate that the hardships they had encountered were nothing compared to what was to come. It must also suggest that despite his thankfulness for being alive, he would not consider that this letter might be his last.

A few days later, the twins set out with the regiment again and occupied the town of Yudam-ni. They were further north and more isolated than any other unit of the Division. On the night of Nov. 27, the CCF finally revealed the full weight of their force. Tens of thousands of Chinese troops fell on the entire Division attacking points along the road, surrounding the Marines at Yudam-ni, and cutting them off from any reinforcements. The Marine aggressors quickly became the defenders as they fought to maintain a perimeter around the town. The isolated Marines beat back assault after assault from the enemy hoard. Air and artillery support provided the Marines' only tactical advantage and played a key role in preventing a collapse in the line. Finally, three days later, commanders realized Yudam-ni could not be held and ordered the Marines to fight

[www.mca-marines.org/leatherneck](http://www.mca-marines.org/leatherneck)



their way 17 miles back to Hagaru-ri.

For the defenders of Yudam-ni, their withdrawal would be like bursting through a closed door. The 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines would burst through any enemy on the road south. The twins' 3/7 would be the door. Their mission was to swing out into the hills and hold off the enemy as their comrades withdrew. Once Yudam-ni had been evacuated, 3/7 would move back to the road with the rest of the column as the last of the rear guard.

Bill's George Co and Bob's Item Co were assigned to the same objective—Hill 1542. They prepared to launch their attack on the morning of Dec. 1, six days before the twins' 25th birthday. An enemy force more than twice their size occupied the high ground. As vulnerable as the

attack would be, it had to be done. The withdrawing column on the road proved infinitely more vulnerable to the Chinese occupying the heights on both sides of the road.

The twins began their march up the slopes. The movement was arduous as they tried to gain a foothold on the hill. For six hours, the Marines fought inch by inch. The terrain advantage and superior numbers afforded the Chinese prevented the Marine attack from gaining momentum.

Initially, Bill's George Co was held in reserve as Bob's Item Co led the attack. By the afternoon, George Co entered the fray, along with headquarters troops, artillerymen and any other Marine available to swell the numbers on the hill. Night fell with the Marines locked on the





USMC

**Chinese soldiers, frozen where they fell, in the hills surrounding Yudam-ni.**

eastern slopes of Hill 1542, looking up toward the endless number of enemy on the crest. Between Bob's and Bill's two companies, and the hodgepodge of others present, fewer than 200 Marines defended the position. Officers reorganized the men into a hastily formed defense. Bill took a position with the remainder of his platoon and prepared for the inevitable CCF attack. He looked to his left, where the remnants of Item Co held the flank of the Marine position. He couldn't make out Bob in the dark, but somewhere down the line, less than 100 yards away, Bob set up his mortars and made sure his rifle was not frozen.

Chinese soldiers crept through the darkness down the hill toward the Marine line. Sporadic shots rang out as Marines saw movement in the shadows. Around 4:30 a.m., the sound of whistles pierced the air, and the Chinese onslaught came in full. Having located the end of the Marine line, the Chinese focused their attack on Item Co. Even as Bill fired his rifle and fought to hold his own, he looked in horror toward his brother's position.

Squad- and platoon-sized elements of Chinese attacked points of the Marine line

in sequence looking for a weakness. The Marines inflicted severe casualties on their attackers but struggled to maintain their position. Parts of the line were overrun and gave way. The Marines consolidated farther down the hill. The line formed once more, and again it faltered, giving more ground. By daybreak, the Marines

**Curiously, the most bitter loss he suffered is the one ignored in his letter. Nowhere does Bill begin to address his brother or his loss.**

had dealt enough damage to ward off the Chinese assault. Marines from all over Hill 1542 staggered back to consolidated positions near the road.

Bill searched for his brother. Having witnessed the carnage on Bob's portion of the line, Bill felt encouraged to see any remnants of Item Co. But as he looked, a realization came that Bill did not want to acknowledge, a painful reality that he

already knew to be true. Bob was dead.

Bill searched for his brother. They had always been together and if anyone could find him, Bill could.

None of the survivors knew anything about Bob's location or what happened to him. Bill grabbed a fellow Marine and ran back up the hill. The Chinese still occupied the slopes, licking their wounds from the night's battle. As the last Marines in Yudam-ni filed south down the road, Bill sneaked across the hill looking. He reached the area where the attack had begun the night before but could find no sign of his brother. Hiding from sight of the Chinese, Bill searched until the last possible moment. It was time for the rear guard to fall in. Bill departed Hill 1542 and marched south with the rest of the regiment. Always introverted with his feelings, Bill wrestled within himself as he marched, struggling to understand what had happened to his brother, how it happened, and what it meant. Bob would later be tallied as one of 33 Marines to go missing in action that night from the Division. This classification mattered little to Bill. He already knew Bob was gone forever.



**Many Marines, including Bill Thosath, were forced to burn their mail rather than leaving the documents for the Chinese to find after the Marine withdrawal.**



USMC

For 10 more days, the Marines made their way south back toward the coast and safety. The going was maddeningly slow, with the column starting and stopping over and over. The battle-weary Marines literally slept where they fell. Under constant harassment from the enemy and unable to pause for a night of rest, Marines snatched minutes of sleep sitting, standing and walking. Their objectives of capturing the reservoir, driving the Koreans to the Yalu River and anything else they may have desired all fell by the wayside. Only one purpose now drove them forward—survival.

As the days passed, more and more Chinese prisoners of war were taken. It was discovered the enemy suffered

equally, if not more, from the conditions and combat as the Marines. The Chinese force intent on destroying the Americans had suffered near destruction themselves in the effort. In this tragedy unfolding around the Chosin Reservoir, there would be no victors—only those who made it and those who did not.

The column finally reached the port city of Hungnam. Bill, along with the rest of 3/7 in the rear guard, were some of the last Marines to enter the safe harbor. Of the 25,000 Americans who began the march toward the reservoir weeks earlier, nearly 13,000 became casualties. Of those, 7,300 fell victim to the cold with frostbite, hypothermia or other non-battle related injuries. 200 Marines were missing in action.

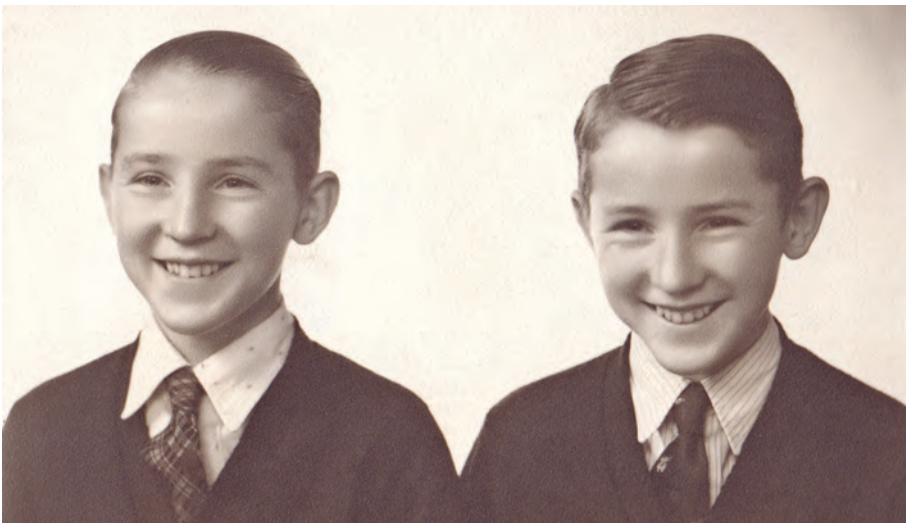
They boarded ships and began the journey back around the Korean peninsula. Now out of danger, Bill took up the responsibility of writing his parents on Dec. 12.

“Hi you two, I know you are waiting for this letter, so I’m writing this one short,” he began. “I’m still alive and my health is still pretty good. We made it out of the traps, how I don’t know. It was more or less a living hell . . . I have lost everything I had as our position was overrun by the [Chinese]. So now I am right back where I started but damn glad to be alive. Only God could have brought me or anyone else back, and I sure have been praying and thanking God for all that he has done for me. The outfit took quite a beating, and this idea of fighting both ways isn’t my idea of fun in case anyone asks.”

“They lost a lot of mail and packages which we were supposed to have gotten but rather than give them to the [Chinese] we burned them as the order of the day was just to take the beans and bullets, as we would be lucky to get out. So you see, I lost everything . . .”

Curiously, the most bitter loss he suffered is the one ignored in his letter. Nowhere does Bill begin to address his brother or his loss. Bill’s reasoning for this is lost to history. Never one to address his feelings, it is possible the raw emotion was just too difficult to face. Still processing the events of the past days for himself, perhaps he simply could not find the words to express anything other than his own thankfulness for being alive.

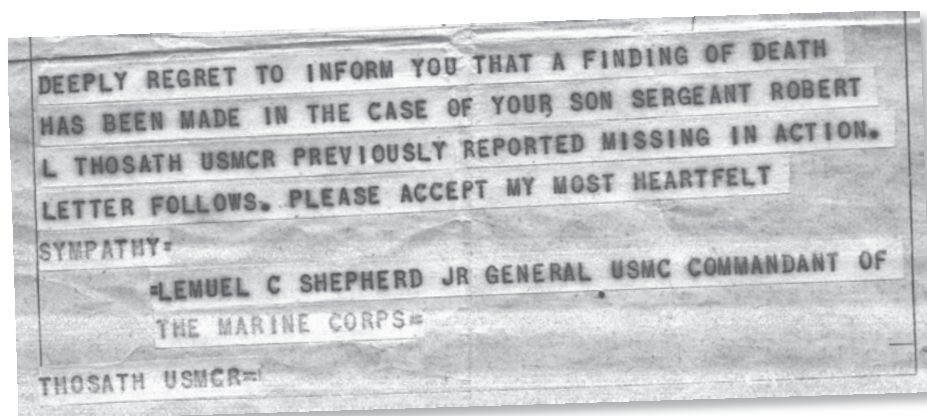
How should one respond to such



COURTESY OF PAT NASH

**Bill, left, and Bob, right, around 10 years of age.**





tragedy? In this intensely personal process, there can be no right or wrong answer. To suffer loss, violent and sudden, is a unique pain for which there is no road map of grief. For the families of those missing in action, the void of closure or assurance their loved one is even truly gone adds greater perplexity and weight to the burden.

The twins' mother, Alice, refused to believe her Bob was lost. Within a matter of months, Alice had given birth to her fifth child, watched her boys return to war, and now was informed via telegram that one of them had vanished. It was more than she could bear. "She had quite a time mentally dealing with Bob's death," remembered Alice's daughter Pat. "For about the first three years of my life I was actually taken care of by my brother James' wife and my sister because my mother just was not able." Alice began writing letters pleading for information. The War Department, the Red Cross, the Marine Corps, members of Congress and even the president, all received letters looking for information. She clung to the thought that Bob had survived.

Perry Thosath refused to speak of his lost son. In all the years following, until his death in 1979, Pat never heard her father speak of Bob, even during times where his alcoholism got the better of him.

Bob's wife Jean was convinced that he had been taken prisoner. She wouldn't accept that he had been killed. When Bill arrived back in the United States and was treated in a San Francisco hospital for his frostbite, Jean drove all the way to see him, convinced of the possibility that the twins' identities had been mixed up and it was really Bob. She pored over photos of prisoners of war, looking for her husband's face. In April 1951 she gave birth to a son, naming him Robert, after his father. Jean became extremely ill following Bob's loss, and her doctors recommended a warmer climate. She packed 3-year-old Jackie, baby Robert and all her belongings into their car and drove to Fresno, Calif. She

maintained little or no contact with the rest of the Thosath family. Even though she refused to discuss what happened with him, would later destroy all his letters, and eventually remarry, Jean always considered Bob the love of her life.

As others debated Bob's fate and searched for information, ironically, one of the few people who could provide the details they sought had returned home to their front door. Bill arrived back in Washington in early 1951. After exiting the Marine Corps, he worked with his older brother, James, as a contractor and took a job as a pressman for the Spokane local newspaper. Much like his father, Bill would not discuss what had happened. It remained a place too painful to go. As his mother wrote her letters and hoped for a miracle, Bill would say, "You're wasting your time. I was there. He could not have survived that." This was as far

**When she returned home from the meeting, she called Bill to let him know she had attended and what was said.**

**"Jackie," Bill replied, "He's never coming back."**

as the conversation could go, and Bill was unwavering.

He threw himself into his work, occupying his time and his mind. Each Thanksgiving and Christmas, Alice planned family gatherings around Bill, tucking in meal times between his multiple jobs. Again like his father, Bill struggled with alcoholism, seeking a release from the burden he bore. Bill and his wife eventually adopted a daughter and tried to continue on along with the rest of the family.

Three years after Bob's loss, in December 1953, the Thosaths received another telegram in the mail. "Deeply regret to inform you that a finding of death has been

## MISSING MARINE LISTED AS DEAD

Sgt. Robert Lee Thosath, Spokane marine missing in action in Korea, has been reclassified as "dead" by the department of defense.

His parents, Mr. and Mrs. Perry H. Thosath, E907 Thirty-ninth, and his widow, Mrs. Jean Thosath of Fresno, Calif., were informed of the change of status today.

Robert Lee Thosath is one of twins who were called to active duty from Spokane marine reserve unit company D shortly after the outbreak of the Korean war. He and his identical twin, William E. Thosath, N1313 Dick road, were in the Chosin reservoir December 2, 1950, near-by when Chinese troops overran the mortar position occupied by Sgt. Robert Thosath.

The entire mortar platoon commanded by Sgt. Robert Thosath was declared missing after the reservoir retreat. A survey of men who had fought in the area by William Thosath failed to produce any information on his missing brother.

The mother said she has written many letters in a vain effort to find her son. She said the telegram is only a formality and she still feels her son may be a prisoner in Russia.

In Fresno Mrs. Thosath is raising the marine's two children. Jackie Lee is 5 and Robert, whom the father never saw, soon will be 3.

William's and Robert's birthdays are December 7 and the twins originally enlisted in the marines December 7, 1943.



Sgt. Robert Thosath

made in the case of your son Sergeant Robert L. Thosath USMCR previously reported missing in action." The military declared Bob dead due to lack of any evidence demonstrating otherwise. The official change in Bob's classification had been made on Dec. 7, the twins' 28th birthday. Until she died in 1987, Alice Thosath held out hope for her son. No funeral or memorial service for Bob has ever been held.

When Bob's daughter Jackie turned 21, she decided it was time to meet the Thosath family again. She flew to Spokane for an anniversary celebration for her grandparents. "At first Bill didn't come, he didn't think he could see me," remembered Jackie. "But he came during the middle of the party and he burst into





COURTESY OF PAT NASH

**Left to right: Perry, Bill, Alice, and Bob Thosath pose for the last photograph taken of them together before the twins departed for Korea in 1950.**

tears. He burst into tears, then he took me on a tour of Spokane, and every place that he and my father loved to go. He showed me where my mom had lived and told me how Bob had met my mom. From then on, he and I stayed in touch.”

In 2001, Jackie attended a Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) Family Update in Los Angeles. These monthly meetings have been conducted since 1995 and are designed as a personal interaction between the families of MIA servicemembers and the U.S. government personnel whose mission it is to find them. The military personnel present wore dress uniforms and treated the families with the utmost respect. They gave presentations on the efforts going on across the globe and provided updates on servicemembers recently identified. Sitting across from Jackie and her son were the family of an American airman whose plane had been shot down during World War II. Her conversation with the other families, the amount of respect demonstrated toward them, and the realization of the worldwide effort going on to bring home the missing, all comforted Jackie. Seeing that there were others out there knowing, remembering, and searching provided her with some closure. When she returned home from the meeting, she called Bill to let him know she had attended and what was said. “Jackie,” Bill replied, “he’s never coming back.”

More than 7,700 U.S. servicemembers

remain unaccounted for from the Korean War. Nearly 1,000 of those were lost during the Chosin Reservoir campaign. Today, the DPAA continues its operations to recover, identify and return the lost. More than 50 years passed before Americans were allowed to return to the Chosin Reservoir to search for remains. Since then, operations in North Korea have been alternately suspended and resumed as the hostilities between the U.S. and that nation ebb. As recently as March 2018, another American soldier, gone missing the same night as Bob Thosath on the opposite side of the reservoir, has been identified.

As Bill grew older, looking back on



COURTESY OF PAT NASH

**Bill Thosath in 2002**

his life, his greatest source of pride remained his service as a United States Marine. “When he was very elderly, I would call him and when he answered, I would start singing the Marine Corps Hymn,” remembered his sister. “He’d just start laughing and tell his wife, ‘Oh it’s Patty again!’ I knew he loved to talk about the Corps, even though he didn’t go into his feelings, and that kind of became our thing. He knew he could talk to me, whereas some other people in the family felt that was a bad subject and didn’t want to go there.”

“I don’t know what the Marine Corps does to people,” Pat reflected. “They just get this thing where it’s a lifetime pride, and Bill was just so proud to have been part of it. And it speaks really well of the Marines for Bill to have gone through this experience, coupled with losing his brother, and when he’s 75 years old, he’s still so proud to be a Marine.”

Following his 80th birthday, Bill set out on his life’s final mission; reuniting with his brother. “I’ve had it in my mind that wherever he goes, I’m going to be there too,” Bill told a reporter for the local newspaper. With help from the local government, Bill worked it out with the Naval Mortuary Affairs Burial at Sea Program to have his remains brought back to Korea. They would return his ashes as close as they could get to Chosin. Bill died two years later, just shy of his 83rd birthday.

In June 2011, Pat opened a copy of the morning papers. A large, bold headline captured her gaze. “Decades later, servicemen’s remains returning to Spokane.” She read on to learn a U.S. Army soldier, gone missing in Korea, had finally been recovered and identified. His elated family was already planning the long overdue memorial service that could provide them some measure of peace. Pat closed the paper. Hope for her family seemed a forlorn reality, and there seemed no escape from reminders of the pain.

For the Thosath family, and all those families with loved ones still missing in action, peace remains incomplete and fleeting. “It’s not just our family,” said Pat “There are many stories, and because of what we’ve gone through, we understand it. Most people in this country, we love our soldiers.” She paused, struggling to subdue the emotion always accompanying memories of her brother. “So in a way, this is just another story about a soldier. But he was ours.”

*Author’s bio: Kyle Watts is a former Marine Captain and Communications officer. He currently resides in Richmond, Va., with his wife and three children.*



# We—the Marines

Compiled by Sara W. Bock

## Honoring Hero of Vietnam War, USS *Ralph Johnson* Commissioned

The Navy's newest *Arleigh Burke*-class guided-missile destroyer, USS *Ralph Johnson* (DDG-114), was commissioned in a ceremony in Charleston, S.C., March 24. The ship is named in honor of Private First Class Ralph Johnson, USMC, who posthumously was awarded the Medal of Honor for his "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity" during the Vietnam War.

In the early hours of March 5, 1968, in an observation post overlooking the Quan Duc Valley, Johnson used his body to shield fellow Marines of 1st Reconnaissance Battalion from a grenade. Members of Johnson's family attended the ceremony held at Columbus Street Pier. Also present were several surviving team members of "Texas Pete," Johnson's recon team.

General Robert B. Neller, Commandant of the Marine Corps, gave the principal

address. In his remarks, he thanked the family and friends of Ralph Johnson for raising such a remarkable man willing to sacrifice himself for his fellow Marines. He implored the ship's crew to bring Johnson's fighting spirit to the enemy as the ship enters the fleet.

Ralph Johnson's sister, Helen Richards, said that her brother always put others before himself and told the crew that they are now part of the Johnson family.

The ship's sponsor, Georgeann McRaven, spouse of Admiral Bill McRaven, USN (Ret), ordered the officers and crew to "Man the ship and bring her to life!" PFC Alex Colvin, Johnson's best friend in Vietnam and fellow member of the "Texas Pete" recon team, presented the ceremonial long glass to the officer of the deck as the first watch was set.

The ship's commanding officer, Commander Jason Patterson, USN, said his

crew embodies the heroic and selfless legacy of its namesake.

"This ship is built to bring the fight to the enemy," said Patterson. "Just like PFC Johnson took care of his fellow "Texas Pete" Marines, this crew takes care of each other and the ship named after him."

Built by Ingalls Shipbuilding, USS *Ralph Johnson* is a multi-mission surface combatant capable of conducting anti-air warfare, anti-submarine warfare and anti-surface warfare. As a multi-mission platform, it is capable of sustained combat operations supporting forward presence, maritime security, sea control and deterrence.

Compiled from reports by U.S. Navy Public Affairs and DOD News

*Editor's note: The Citadel Foundation recently has established a PFC Ralph H. Johnson MOH Scholarship designated*

**Approximately 6,000 people from across the country gathered to watch the commissioning of USS *Ralph Johnson* (DDG-114), named in honor of Medal of Honor recipient PFC Ralph Johnson, USMC, in Charleston, S.C., March 24. (Photo by A1C Helena B. Owens, USAF. Inset photo USMC)**







LCPL NAOMI MARCOM, USMC

**From the left, PFC Heather Williams, Sgt Hope Timberlake, Sgt Saturnina Rodriguez and PFC Jasmin Villagomez, the first all-female color guard from MCLB Albany, Ga., present the colors during NCAA Division I Women's Final Four semi-final basketball games in Columbus, Ohio, March 30.**

*for minority students from South Carolina who have demonstrated financial need and a desire to pursue a Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)-based degree. To donate to the scholarship fund, visit <https://foundation.citadel.edu/ralphjohnsonscholarship>.*

### **All-Female Marine Color Guard Opens for Women's Final Four**

The four Marines shined the brims of their covers, polished their shoes, donned their white belts and gold buckles and aligned their ribbons. They prepared to present their rifles and flags during the national anthem for a crowd of nearly 20,000.

Rifle bearers Private First Class Jasmin Villagomez and PFC Heather Williams and color bearers Sergeant Saturnina Rodriguez and Sgt Hope Timberlake presented the American flag and Marine Corps colors during "The Star Spangled Banner" as the first all-female color guard of Marine Corps Logistics Base Albany, Ga., during the NCAA Division I Women's Final Four semi-final basketball games at the Nationwide Arena in Columbus, Ohio, March 30.

The games were held in conjunction with the 2018 Women's Basketball Coaches Association (WBCA) Convention, which the Marines partnered with and attended to engage with female athletes and coaches and inform them of career opportunities within the Marine Corps.

"The partnership with the Marine Corps is incredibly beneficial to the WBCA," said Danielle Donehew, the

executive director of the WBCA. "The Marine Corps' presence at our national convention reinforces its commitment to women, its commitment to women leaders and its commitment to the sport of women's basketball. The ideals for which [the Marine Corps] stands are common ideals and values that we also share."

Two weeks before the convention, Timberlake, the color sergeant for the

women's color guard, was informed about the event. Wanting every movement to be perfect, the Marines spent more than 20 hours rehearsing their drill movements.

This year marks the centennial of women in the Marine Corps, and each member of the color guard acknowledged the significance of their participation during a monumental time.

"Having an all-female color guard shows a lot of progression in the Marine Corps," said Timberlake, the color sergeant for the women's color guard. "It's an honor to be able to represent."

LCPL Naomi Marcom, USMC

### **Alumni Day Brings Active-Duty, Veteran Marines Together**

The 7th Marine Regiment hosted an "Alumni Day" for Marine veteran members of the Desert Cities Mitchell Paige Medal of Honor Chapter, 1st Marine Division Association, at Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif., March 28.

Alumni Day, which was attended by veterans of the Vietnam War, Korean War and Operation Desert Storm, consisted of a tank display, lunch at Dunham Hall and a live-fire rifle shoot at the Marksmanship Training Unit.

"Today was wonderfully educational," said David Dangwillow, a board member with the association's chapter. "It's fulfilling to be around young Marines. The Marine Corps is better than it's ever been before because the Marines are of



LCPL RACHEL K. PORTER, USMC

**Veterans of 1stMarDiv listen to an active-duty Marine describe a tank's capabilities during an Alumni Day hosted by 7th Marines at MCAGCC Twentynine Palms, Calif., March 28.**





LCPL RACHEL K. PORTER, USMC

**David Dangwillow, left, a board member with the Desert Cities Mitchell Paige Medal of Honor Chapter of the 1stMarDiv Association, speaks to leathernecks of 7th Marines about his time in Vietnam during Alumni Day at MCAGCC Twenty-nine Palms, Calif., March 28.**

seeing a veteran smile when we showed him a fully automatic grenade launcher,” said Corporal Thomas Elijah Diner, a squad leader with 7th Marines. “Today taught me a lot about the experience that Marines had in Vietnam. It shows what holds the Marine Corps tradition and history together.”

LCpl Rachel K. Porter, USMC

### **Parris Island “Boots” To Trial Lightweight Boots**

In an effort to continually improve the clothing and equipment Marines are issued, Marine Corps Systems Command (MCSC) will conduct an assessment during a three-month period this summer to see if lighter boots can improve recruit performance. Plans are to compare two more lightweight boots to the Marine Corps Combat Boot during a recruit training cycle at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C.

One of the boots, the Danner Reckoning Hot Weather Boot, was authorized for optional wear by MCSC in 2017.

higher quality than ever in training and in character.”

Throughout the visit, the veterans enjoyed talking about the evolution of the equipment they used to what Marines use today.

“We did not have the same equipment in our day,” said Vince Mast, the president of the Desert Cities Mitchell Paige Medal of Honor Chapter of the 1stMarDiv Associa-

tion. “The tanks we saw today are twice as large and the weaponry is twice as efficient.”

During the live-fire event, the veterans experienced the new and improved weaponry, flak jackets and Kevlar helmets. The active-duty Marines enjoyed showing the veterans the new equipment—and seeing their reactions to it.

“One of my favorite parts of today was



CPL DAMON MCLEAN, USMC

**COLOR SERGEANT—Sgt Kenneth Newton, 37th Color Sergeant of the Marine Corps, right, passes the National Ensign to Sgt Francis Frazier, the 38th Color Sergeant of the Marine Corps, left, during a relief and appointment ceremony at Marine Barracks Washington, D.C., April 6. The act symbolized the passing of duties and responsibilities as the senior sergeant of the Marine Corps at Marine Barracks Washington, D.C., April 6. The Color Sergeant of the Marine Corps is entrusted with carrying the National Ensign in ceremonies throughout the National Capital Region and across the nation and leading the official Color Guard Platoon at “8th and I.” Present to witness the ceremony were the 4th Color Sergeant of the Marine Corps, Bob Brothers, and the 5th Color Sergeant of the Marine Corps, Michael Kane.**



“The feedback we’ve received from Marines on the Reckoning boots is positive,” said Todd Towles, project officer for the clothing and equipment team, MCSC. “The boots are lightweight, durable and there’s virtually no break-in period.”

Now, program officials plan to compare the Reckoning and another relative newcomer—the Rocky Tropical boot. The Rocky Tropical performed well in jungle environments during a 2017 user evaluation by the Marines of 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment in Hawaii.

The program office will issue 700 Danner Reckoning boots and 700 Rocky Tropical boots, which will be split evenly between male and female companies.

The purpose of the assessment is to determine whether there is a decrease in lower extremity injuries among recruits with the lightweight boots compared to the Marine Corps Combat Boot, which has been in the Corps’ inventory since 2001 and is a seabag-issue item.

Kaitlin Kelly, MCSC



LCPL JOSEPH JACOB, USMC

**Marine recruits with “Bravo” Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, march during a 6-mile conditioning hike at MCRD Parris Island, S.C. In an effort to continually improve the clothing and equipment Marines are issued, MCSC is conducting an assessment to see if lighter boots can improve recruit performance.**

## Crazy Caption Contest

### Winner



CPL JACOB PRUITT, USMC

“Relax. I got it.  
It was only a baby spider.”

Submitted by  
Ron Ryan  
Fort Wayne, Ind.

### This Month’s Photo



LCPL ABREY LIGGINS, USMC

(Caption) \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

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](mailto:leatherneck@mca-marines.org). The winning entry will be published in two months.



# Constraints: That Which We Must Do



CAPT JUSTIN JACOBS, USMC

By Capt Brian Worley, USMC

Phone calls at 0430 are rarely good. I hop out of bed hoping my wife is still asleep—I dislike when my burden become hers. The person on the other end tells me that one of my Marines is in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). I call my gunny; he's aware. I am showered and in my truck, heading to the hospital within 15 minutes. I wear civvies because I'm not sure what this day will bring. The 45-minute drive to the hospital doesn't do much to calm my nerves. I get conflicting word about what the battalion wants me to do. I turn off my phone. I know what I need to do: take care of my Marine. I get to the hospital and park. I ask a person in scrubs where I can find the ICU. My gunny and I link up to take the elevator. He is calmly focused.

I don't like hospitals. I dated a nurse and it didn't end well. We get buzzed in to the ICU. I find the nurse and ask for the room. It's to my left and I see him. My Marine. He's in a coma, on a ventilator, cut open from emergency surgery and plastered with gauze, sensors and bandages. A traffic accident did this. A drunk driver. I don't know what to say. "Shit, Sir," is all my gunny can get out. It captures the moment. I corner the charge nurse and she tells me it isn't good. I see a small crowd outside the room. I introduce myself and ask who the doctor is. It isn't good. They aren't sure he is going to survive. I call my boss and decide to stay put. This is where I need to be. I send my gunny back and tell him to send my sergeant down with a duty vehicle. The parents

are flying in this afternoon. They've been made aware of the situation. The sister is returning from overseas and the brother is studying in Asia. Both are booking flights. I put a plan together in my mind. We will take care of them. It is not a question. Later on, my regimental sergeant major will describe it eloquently, "We only care for Marine families one way." Truth, Sergeant Major.

Picking up the parents from the airport is the worst thing I've ever had to do. I arrange with security for them to be taken off the flight first. The police officer is a Marine. She helps immediately. Semper Fidelis. I speak to the California Highway Patrol and they agree to escort us to the hospital. Minutes may be the difference in seeing



their son alive. I wait at the gate with my sergeant and the chaplain. We're in civvies and "Chaps" is in his service uniform. I wish he wasn't. I see security escorting the parents. They see us—the mom is crying. I shake their hands. She asks me if her son is still alive. "Yes ma'am, but we need to go." She breaks down. All eyes in the airport are on us. This is a military town. People know what a chaplain in uniform and a crying mother means. I have to get them out of here, no one deserves an audience for their grief. We get moving. We're in the van and California Highway Patrol is leading the way. My sergeant is worried about exceeding the speed limit in the government vehicle. "I don't care, tell them I ordered you to do it," I say. We get to the hospital in record time.

We have a plan to get their baggage later. I explain everything I know to the parents during the ride. We take the elevator up. Before we are buzzed in, I stop the group. "Ma'am, Sir, this isn't a good sight. Please know that we'll do everything we can to help." It isn't enough. We enter the ICU, the mother sees her firstborn in a hospital bed. The father holds her as she shakes with grief. I'm in the doorway and the nurse asks me when the siblings are arriving. I ask her to shoot me straight. "We don't know how long he will last," she says. The sister arrives in five hours. The brother is moving flights to get here sooner, but will arrive in the early morning. My sergeant and I repeat the process at the airport. It is heart-rending each time. We would rather be anywhere else than looking in their eyes as they are escorted off the plane. The sister cries softly during the trip to the hospital. The brother tries to hold it in, his masculine pride faltering only when he sees his brother. I hate that part. I ask if the family needs anything. The nurses bring blankets and pillows for them. I sit in the corner of the room on a chair, unsure of what to do. The uncertainty is unnerving. Leaving feels wrong, like abandoning my post.

This is the second night we'll spend at the hospital. Last night we slept in the waiting room, taking turns on watch. The nurses tell us he could go at any moment, so I leave instructions for the watch to wake the group if

anything happens. There are six of us the first night, sprawled on cushions and couches. I get some blankets when my watch ends and cover my Marines. They keep the hospital cold to kill bacteria. In the morning, I ask for a razor. My reflection looks tired and I cut myself twice. I decide to invade a conference room closer to the ICU. The



COURTESY OF KRIS KURSINKIS

**Cpl Nick Kursinskis, 25, was hit by a drunk driver on June 28, 2017. He died on July 1, 2017, surrounded by his family.**

*This is the  
second night  
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the hospital.  
Last night we slept  
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at any moment.*

Marines have landed. The charge nurse is no-nonsense. I promise we will stay out of their way. I am grateful for her kindness. The second night, five of us sleep under a conference room table, rotating watch. When my watch ends, I pause to look at my Marines. I am thankful they decided to stay. I didn't tell them to. They did what felt right and what needed to be done. I am humbled by their willingness to endure. Where do we find these people?

The day starts as the doctor consults with the family. Tests have come back with the worst possible news. Life support can keep him alive, but his brain is badly damaged. For a person who lived life aggressively, scuba diving, hiking, shooting, and climbing, there is no quality of life on a ventilator. The doctor stays to answer questions. The family says their final goodbyes and makes the decision to let him go. It is sunny outside. Traffic zips by on the interstate, unaffected. We gather in the hospital room—the family, my Marines, myself. No one speaks. It's time. Technicians work busily removing tubes and sensors and machines. Modern medicine. He looks peaceful, and I'm glad. Privately, I ask the nurse how long it will take. "Not long." I notice my guys crying. I wish they didn't have to see this, but it would be wrong to leave. I look at the father. He and I have talked a lot in the last few days. I see the pain in his eyes. Fathers shouldn't bury their sons.

It is mid-morning when he passes. The nurse announces it. It isn't like the movies. There is no flat tone to announce it. We cry. I grab his hand a final time. I hug the family. I wipe my eyes and step outside to make the call. I look at the nurse and try to articulate that I need to know the time of death and cause of death. I call my commanding officer, "Sir, he's gone. He's gone," is what I can get out. I call the adjutant and give him the information he needs for Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps to start their process. I've already arranged rooms for the family and transportation. I focus on the mission to clear my head: take care of the family. I get us moving and we gather our belongings and return to Camp Pendleton. It is a quiet car ride. We get the family situated and go home to shower and sleep.





COURTESY OF KRIS KURSINKS

**The Kursinskis family in happier times. From left to right: Nick; mom, Kris; dad, Ron; sister, Alex; and brother, Jake.**

I am in “Alphas” at the funeral home. I am escorting the remains. My wife drops me off. She can tell I’m nervous. To prepare, I watched “Taking Chance” because there is no publication for this. I’m early and the funeral director allows me to sit in his office while he prepares the hearse. I hear the Patriot Guard assembling outside. It’s time to go. I check the tag on the coffin. It’s him. It hurts. We pull onto the street and I speak to the Patriot Guard. A retired gunny salutes me and introduces himself. He apologizes for bringing only 25 riders—they used to get many more during the war years, he tells me. Makes sense. There is no nobility in dying in a traffic accident. They clear a path down to the airport. We salute the fallen as the airline crew carefully handle the coffin. I see the eyes of many veterans as they look me up and down, unsure. Credibility is an uphill battle as a lieutenant.



**Nicholas I. Kursinskis**

COURTESY OF KRIS KURSINKS

I meet the mother and daughter in the terminal. They chose to fly with us. The flight is a redeye so we won’t sleep much tonight. I do crosswords with the sister to keep us occupied. I am worried about the family, I hope I have done enough for them. At the airport in Atlanta, there is an office buried deep below the passenger terminals. I hope you are never there. The man who works in it loves his country. He serves by caring for the remains of fallen servicemembers, taking charge of all those who fly through the airport. He’s arranged an honor guard of airport workers composed of veterans who volunteer their time to honor our fallen. He shows us pictures of folks who he has helped bring home and shares the stories of those servicemembers. He has a float he enters in his local parade each year covered in their stories. The pride is evident. It is 0530 on Saturday and he has come in early

with his son to handle our transit. Whoever thinks America stopped being great hasn’t met these people. It’s time to load my Marine on our final flight. I take my place next to the honor guard. I see an Army sergeant in his dress uniform escorting remains on a different flight. We salute and shake hands. I see on his face the same weariness that I feel. We exchange pleasantries but there is nothing to say. We make eye contact for a long moment and I say, “Take care, brother.” We salute. We are boarded and in the air.

When we land in Columbus, the aircrew announces that we are transporting a fallen servicemember. I am conspicuous in my “Alphas,” and now I am conspicuous for my mission. I don’t like being the center of attention. They announce for everyone to remain seated. I move to let the mother and sister out first, the flight attendant explains they mean for me to get off first. “It was her son, ma’am, and her brother. They will go first.” Outside, the town is waiting to greet the family. The reserve unit is present, I link up with the Casualty

Assistance Calls Officer (CACO). They look sharp—drill sharp. I get in the hearse. The local police are escorting us and the ride is brief. As we get into town I see a line of lights. Every intersection is blocked by saluting police and firemen. People are out of their cars clapping. It is overwhelming to see the town welcoming home one of its own. I am proud that this is how they receive us. I am proud that the family will ride through the visible support of their neighbors. At the funeral home, I ensure no one sees the remains until I complete my inspection. He looks like a Marine. He looks like my brother. I miss him. I tell the director and CACO that I am satisfied.

I find a local pub. I don't want to sit in my hotel room alone. So I sit at the bar alone and stare at whatever is on the television. Over dinner I replay events. I second-guess my choices. I think about my family. The bartender is curious about me. I'm from a small town, so I know it is easy to spot outsiders. She asks me why I look sad. "Because I'm sad, today." She asks what will help. "Time," I reply. They let me sit in peace. I appreciate it. The beer is good. It helps my mind wander, and after a few hours I get a taxi. I gather myself and ask for the bill. "It's been taken care of." I ask what she's talking about. "We know why you're here. Thank you for what you did." I don't know what to say. I start tearing up because I'm exhausted and buzzed and overwhelmed by the gesture. "We know why you're here." I've said "thank you" a million times, but I have never meant it in the way I say it now. "Thank you. Thank you for letting me sit here all night. I didn't know what else to do." She knew the whole time. I hold it together until I get back to my room. It is the first time in my career I've felt appreciated because it is the first time I feel I have done something worth appreciating. It is staggeringly cathartic.

While I'm gone, one of my good friends calls my wife to talk. He lost Marines in war and at home. He tells her the best thing she can do is get me to talk about it. I don't like it, but he's right. When I get back he corners me and tells me the same. I still don't like it, but I love him and he's right. I tell the same to my Marines. On leave, I see my father and talk through this. We are stoic people, but I know he understands. He lost friends when the barracks was

bombed in Beirut. He tells me to take care of my people, and he listens. He speaks as a Marine and as a father. At work, I am pestered by helpful listeners. We only care for Marine families one way, and I appreciate it. My guys get memorial bracelets made. I make sure the family gets them too. Before I left, I wrote awards for my Marines, which they received in my absence. They don't want them, but they deserve them. I don't deserve the Marines I have, but I want them.

Leadership is the obligation to advance the mission, whatever comes. Chaotic events do not wait for complete solutions and careful assessment, they demand flexible and timely action.

patiently answering questions. It is a doctor taking time to explain the situation. It is a police officer remaining faithful long after end of active service. It is a highway patrolman going outside the norm. It is an Army sergeant who shares the burden. It is my sergeant staying by my side for days because he knows I need him. It is Marines sleeping in a conference room and keeping the watch. It is a man who works at Atlanta airport and loves his country. It is veterans who still serve in times of need. It is an airline captain saluting the fallen. It is a small town caring for one of their own. It is a bartender picking up a tab. It is a senior Marine caring for a junior Marine, the last generation preparing


*The bartender is curious about me.  
I'm from a small town, so I know it is  
easy to spot outsiders. She asks me why  
I look sad. "Because I'm sad, today."  
She asks what will help. "Time," I reply.  
They let me sit in peace.*

Planning creates maneuver space, anticipating tomorrow's needs with today's information, a critical resource for leaders who think in the future while existing in the present. The leader's center of gravity is an inexhaustible supply of critical thinking built upon a foundation of experience, knowledge and deliberate invention. Leadership is leading when required, following when others are more suited to the task and maintaining clarity of the larger context. Leaders recognize that events are nonlinear and require a thought framework that is similarly nuanced. These skills are abstract but essential, acquired only through intent and purposeful exposure. There is no single source of knowledge or experience. There is no one organization that owns effective leadership. There is no shortcut.

If you ask me how to be a good leader, I can't give you a quick answer. It is a nurse caring for a wounded Marine,

the next. I am eternally thankful for the leadership of all those I depended upon. It is a privilege to lead Marines. It was a privilege to escort my brother. My commanding officer thanked my Marines and me for the leadership we showed. We did what needed to be done. If you ask me to make you a leader, I can't tell you how. But if you find yourself in Grove City, Ohio, there's a barkeep who can show you.

*Editor's note: Nicholas I. Kursinskis, 25, of 9th Communications Battalion, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., was struck by a drunk driver while riding his motorcycle on June 28, 2017. He died from his injuries on July 1, 2017.*

*Author's bio: Capt Worley is a graduate of Central Michigan University. He is currently serving as the 9th Communication Battalion S-4.* 





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# The Man Under the Hat— GySgt R. Lee Ermey

By Joe Chenelly

**Above: Ermey, portraying Senior Drill Instructor GySgt Hartman in the Vietnam film "Full Metal Jacket," wrote most of his character's memorable lines.**

*Editor's Note: The following article is reprinted in memory of R. Lee Ermey who passed away on April 15, 2018. His obituary can be found in the In Memoriam department on page 62.*

**A** blistering wit, migraine-inducing bark and scowl that could weaken the knees of any recruit make R. Lee Ermey one of the most recognized drill instructors in the Marine Corps' colorful history, but he was all smiles May 17, 2002, when presented with an "honorary promotion" to gunnery sergeant.

The new chevrons were pinned on Ermey, a medically retired Marine staff sergeant and Vietnam veteran, at a ceremony aboard Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, recognizing there is more to the man than the drill instructor he was

or the characters he's portrayed in numerous movies and television shows.

He stood on the yellow footprints on the same depot in 1961 as a Marine recruit. Little did the troubled youth from the state of Washington know what was to come when he enlisted on his birthday "under a bit of duress."

"The judge said if I didn't join the Marine Corps, he was going to put me where the sun never shined," Ermey said with a chuckle. "I figure I'd be spending life in the Walla Walla Penitentiary [Washington State Penitentiary] if it wasn't for the Marine Corps. I basically owe everything to the Marine Corps."

The judicial ultimatum firmly set Ermey on the march across the parade deck to success. He described the drill field, both as a recruit and later when he returned as a drill instructor, as the birthplace of his career.

"When I went through boot camp it just flat woke

me up,” Ermeý said. “It gave me a little discipline and squared my young a-- away.

“When I came back to the drill field it was the start of something big. As an instructor, I became comfortable working with people,” he continued. “That is basically what I do now, work in front of people. I think being an instructor has got to be the greatest school you can go to for becoming an actor. If you’re not comfortable in front of people, you sure won’t be comfortable in front of a camera.”

After boot camp, Ermeý served for two years as an infantryman with the Marine detachment aboard USS *Coral Sea* (CVA-43) and then transferred to Company B, 1st Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment. From there, he received orders to the drill field.

While training recruits, he learned how to seize people’s interest and keep it.

“I think it takes a good sense of humor and a sharp wit to maintain a recruit’s undivided attention,” Ermeý explained. “If you’re entertaining, they’ll listen and they’ll even repeat the drill instructor verbatim a couple of days later. If they admire you, you’ll catch them mimicking you.”

Keeping the knowledge he picked up as a drill instructor under his helmet, Ermeý headed for Vietnam. He was placed in an instructor’s billet with Marine Wing Support Group 17 in Da Nang.

Halfway through his second tour with MWSG-17 in Vietnam, his world literally caved in. “Trying to get the hell out of dodge,” Ermeý was crushed by a collapsing bunker, severely injuring his shoulder.

“They made [the bunkers] out of these telephone pole-sized, railroad ties-looking affairs. The whole thing came down. It was my right shoulder—my shooting shoulder.”

Medical retirement was forced on the staff sergeant, spoiling his personal goals of spending 30 years on active duty and becoming Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps.

“I hated it,” Ermeý said. “I really didn’t care to be discharged. I didn’t care to be retired. I would have preferred to stay in the military, but that just wasn’t happening. I found myself standing outside the gate of Marine Corps Recruit Depot [San Diego] thinking, ‘What in the hell am I going to do now?’ ”

He retired wearing the Presidential Unit Citation for his service with MWSG-17, a Meritorious Unit Commendation, Good Conduct Medal with two stars, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, National Defense Medal, Vietnam Service Medal with one star, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal with



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silver date bar, a Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with palm and, later, the Drill Instructor Ribbon.

News of Vietnam War movies being filmed in the Philippines caught his attention. Utilizing the Department of Defense’s Space-Available Program, Ermeý caught a military hop to the islands and made an impact quickly.

Making a point to meet the only American casting director there, Ermeý became the “Marlboro Man” of the Philippines, where he starred in television commercials for sports equipment, watches and other similar products.

His break in American cinema came when film director Francis Ford Coppola arrived to shoot a Vietnam War movie in the Philippine jungles. Ermeý impressed the famed producer/director enough to be hired as a technical adviser and given a small part as a helicopter pilot in the surrealistic film “Apocalypse Now.”

**Ermeý offered some on-set advice during the filming of “Fire Base Gloria,” set in Vietnam. He starred in and acted as a military adviser for the film.**

**“I would have preferred to stay in the military, but that just wasn’t happening.**

**I found myself standing outside the gate of Marine Corps Recruit Depot [San Diego] thinking,**

**‘What in the hell am I going to do now?’ ”**





CPL JOHN B. STOLLER, USMC

**SgtMaj Bruce A. Mackamul, left, and Major General Jan C. Huly pinned gunnery sergeant chevrons on Ermey's collar in an honorary promotion ceremony at MCRD, San Diego, May 17, 2002.**

Immediately after that picture was completed, Ermey went to work on another Vietnam War movie: "The Boys in Company C." He snagged a feature role and was named the film's lead technical adviser. His part in that flick was old hat. He played a drill instructor.

His performance as both an adviser and actor in the two popular movies gained him attention. Several years later he was again asked to don a drill hat for another role, this time in a movie by another legendary filmmaker, Stanley Kubrick.

When Ermey headed to Europe to film the movie "Full Metal Jacket," a starring role for the Marine veteran may have been what Ermey had in mind, but the thought had not yet occurred to Kubrick. "I was hired as technical adviser, but I thought it would get my foot in the door," Ermey said. "I certainly didn't go to England just to do technical advising. It was to capture the role of Gunnery Sergeant Hartman. I felt there was no one who could do it as well as I."

Locked in a room with the former drill instructor, Kubrick realized the asset he had in Ermey.

"I wrote almost everything Gunnery Sergeant Hartman had to say. Kubrick and I locked ourselves up in the office. We would discuss a scene, and then I'd stand up and go off like a drill instructor would. I would go until I'd run out of gas completely. He

would punch a little button on his tape recorder and get it all on tape. We would discuss it some more, and I would stand up and do it again. Sometimes we would do a scene three or four times. Then we'd send the tape down to the production secretary. She would transcribe everything on the tape and send it back up to us. Then we would incorporate just the catchiest, most colorful, off-the-wall lines into the existing scene."

Shortly after filming began, injury once again felled Ermey. With a dream role in his grasp, an automobile accident left him with six broken ribs, a fractured collarbone and a dislocated hip. With Ermey's opportunity hanging in the balance, Kubrick elected to delay production until Ermey healed enough to return. More than four months later Ermey resumed, finishing the picture. The movie contains some scenes in which he never uses his arms because of the injuries.

Ermey's portrayal of GySgt Hartman earned him a Golden Globe nomination for Best Supporting Actor and a place in Marine Corps lore. Memorable quotes, such as "You're so ugly you could be a modern art masterpiece!" are still uttered by active-duty Marines more than 30 years after the movie debuted on the big screen.

"I am very happy with how the show turned out in the end. I would be hard-pressed to improve it,"



## "Any time the Marine Corps calls, I go. As far as I'm concerned, I'm still in the Marine Corps."

Ermey said proudly. "I know the Marine Corps has certainly taken notice of that show. Most everyone I've talked to in the recruiting industry claims it is a hell of a recruiting film."

He has gone on to appear in more than 70 productions. His roles in feature films include "Dead Man Walking" with Susan Sarandon and Sean Penn, "Seven" with Brad Pitt and Morgan Freeman, and "Switchback," starring opposite Dennis Quaid and Danny Glover. He also has appeared in "Leaving Las Vegas," "Murder in the First," and "The Frighteners," as well as his critically acclaimed role opposite Jared Leto in "Prefontaine."

The movie star also views other people's movies from time to time. Like so many Marines who've served, Ermey watches military flicks with a critical, trained eye. He is distracted by non-regulation haircuts and improper handling of weapons.

"These young actors, when they fire the rifle, they don't recoil," he noted. "It looks very phony when there is no recoil, especially with the M14 and M1 [rifles]."

A large percentage of his time now is dedicated to Marines and the Corps. He frequently attends recruit graduation ceremonies, visits Marine units and volunteers his time with the Marine Corps Reserve's Toys for Tots program. Last year he attended four different Marine Corps Birthday balls and has not missed his Corps' birthday in 41 years.

"Any time the Marine Corps calls, I go," he said. "As far as I'm concerned, I'm still in the Marine Corps. When I'm not working I will just saddle up and go watch a graduation down at the depot in San Diego to see how the privates are doing. We made a lot of changes in recruit training over the years. Of course, us old, grouchy drill instructors disagree with most everything, but at the end of the day when I watch those young privates march off the end of the grinder, well, they're just as squared away, just as motivated and just as tough as we ever were, so I guess it still works."

Ermey made himself available when Marines began deploying from Marine Corps bases and stations in California to Central Asia to join the war on terrorism. Unit commanders began requesting his motivational presence.

"I love socializing with Marines. It keeps me in the right state of mind and motivated."

Ermey dedicates more than just his time to the Corps. He is a charter member of the Marine Corps Drill Instructor Association and donates 10 percent of all proceeds from his official website, [www.rleermey.com](http://www.rleermey.com), to the association.

Many items, including a 12-inch "Gunny" Ermey action figure, T-shirts and autographed photos, are offered on the

site. About 55,000 people click on the site per day, according to Ermey. "I try to answer as much of the email as I can. When I'm not working I spend four or five hours a day writing back."

Ermey continues to be visible in the entertainment world. He is slated to host a new TV show this fall on the History Channel, titled "Mail Call." He said he will try to use the Marine Corps as much as possible in the program, which will answer questions about the technology used by the armed forces throughout history.

He is also co-starring in a remake of the 1971 hit film "Willard." He recently finished shooting the movie in Vancouver, Canada. It is due out next year.

The original movie is about a boy named Willard who befriends rats and can turn them on people, Ermey said. The remake is rewritten with a different storyline, but it is the same basic situation. "[Willard] has thousands of [rats]. I am his boss, and he does not like me.

"They let me go crazy. I rewrote everything that I did. I think it is the best character I've done since 'Full Metal Jacket.' I think it is going to be a hell of a show."

Ermey continues day to day, working hard to support the organization he credits for his success and freedom.

"I'd like to think I'm a role model," he said. "I do take that very seriously. The Corps was there for me when I needed it the most, and I'll always be there for it."

*Author's bio: Joe Chenelly, a Marine veteran of combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, was a staff writer for Leatherneck from 2002-2004. He is now the national executive director of AMVETS, one of the nation's largest veterans service organizations.* 🇺🇸

**Even Ermey found it difficult to be a "hard case" when he met the MCRD, San Diego mascot to offer a few tips on discipline.**



LCPL SHAWN M. TOUSSAINT



# Protecting Our Core Values

## Marine Corps Leadership Steps Up Efforts To Combat Disrespect

By LtCol Jessica van Dop DeJesus, USMCR

**F**rom the moment recruits step on the yellow footprints of recruit training or officer candidates arrive at Marine Corps Base Quantico, the Marine Corps' core values of honor, courage, and commitment are etched into a future Marine's heart and mind. Marines, both enlisted and officers, continue to adhere to these core values throughout their military careers and into their civilian endeavors. More than core values, they are the pillars of our Marine culture. And when our culture comes under attack, the Marine Corps and its leadership take swift action.

In March of 2017, a nonprofit organization identified "Marines United," a private Facebook group that, within a small subgroup, housed inappropriate pictures of and derogatory comments about female servicemembers, including active-duty female Marines. There was a range of reactions throughout the Marine Corps community from disbelief to disgust to indifference. While reactions varied, there was a clear consensus that this misconduct shed a light on a problem within the Corps—there was disrespect exhibited by some toward their fellow Marines. It was this disrespect that the Corps' senior leadership immediately began to address.

As the Corps began taking a hard look at the reasons why Marines were drifting away from their core values, we were reminded that we must always set the example, modeling behaviors that embody our culture. These actions must be delib-

erate and continuous regardless of outside influences, resistance or complacency; all insidious cancers that, if unchecked, will expand and harm the Corps.

### Misconduct on Social Media

In the wake of "Marines United" postings, the Marine Corps quickly took action, with the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Robert B. Neller, testifying before Congress shortly after learning about the misconduct. When questioned about the scandal during his testimony, the Commandant said, "We all have to commit to getting rid of this perversion of our culture; we will take action to remove this stain on our Marine Corps." General Neller's reference to culture started an important conversation, leaving many men and women wondering: Can we keep our strong culture of warfighters while simultaneously treating others with respect? The answer is yes.

Social media misconduct is the latest example of how quickly some confuse and turn their back on what it means to have honor, courage, and commitment. Hazing is another recent example of how the Corps identified and actively addressed behaviors which were acceptable in past years. As Marines have come to recognize and protect individual dignity, behaviors such as pinning on blood stripes as a way to "welcome" them to a new unit have now ceased. When faced with a hazing crisis 20 years ago, Gen Charles C. Krulak, 31st Commandant of the Marine Corps,



reiterated that for Marines, the only initiation needed is recruit training. Gen Neller has taken that a step further by identifying, investigating and punishing those who seek to harm their fellow Marines with humiliating photos, comments, and disrespect.

### Understanding the Real Problem

As the Corps investigated the "Marines United" subgroup and social media misconduct at large, there was a misconception

**Can we keep our strong culture of warfighters while simultaneously treating others with respect? The answer is yes.**





CPL MARIONNE T. MANGRUM, USMC

that the issue was exclusively the posting of nude photos of female Marines. The cases, however, were more complex and comprised myriad incidents of blatant disrespect for women.

A Marine lieutenant colonel shared her story about how a group photo of her with some fellow Marines made it to the “Marines United” Facebook group. It was a photo of seven female field grade officers, all in uniform. Unbeknownst to the Marines, their photo was pulled from one of the Marine’s social media accounts and posted on the “Marines United” page. The ensuing comments, many of which were crude and disrespectful, also described sexually assaulting these women.

Unfortunately, that is just one example of the social media misconduct witnessed. Ultimately, this misconduct takes us back to the importance of our core values. If we, as Marines, live by the code of honor, how can we denigrate our leaders and fellow Marines? If courage means doing the right thing, why are there so many Marines disrespecting their fellow Marines?

### Disciplinary Action

Whether it is hazing or social media misconduct, leadership holds perpetrators accountable. Following the “Marines United” incident, the Marine Corps, with help from the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS), identified 123 persons of interest, 101 of whom were Marines.

**Marines assigned to a Female Engagement Team (FET), speak with an Afghan man during a patrol in Marjah, Helmand Province, Afghanistan, Dec. 30, 2010.**

As of March 2018, there have been 82 dispositions completed: six Special Courts-Martial; one Summary Court-Martial; 15 nonjudicial punishment; six administrative separation; and 27 adverse administrative actions. No formal adverse action was taken on the rest.

In addition to making it clear to Marines that those who choose to disrespect others will face swift legal action, we need to take a look at how disrespecting our fellow Marines impacts our ability to work as a team. For example, one Marine who was



**Marines have never backed down from a fight and we will continue to engage those who fail to promote our culture of dignity and respect.**



CPL ANESHEA S. YEE

**Drill instructors with 4th RTB, Recruit Training Regiment, MCRD Parris Island, S.C., stand at parade rest as they wait to give a demonstration of what recruits encounter during the first week of recruit training on March 1, 2013.**

a victim of social media misconduct was living in fear after someone began stalking her after he saw her picture on a group's page. In addition to addressing potential disciplinary actions, the impact that misconduct has on individual Marines and mission readiness must also be addressed.

Social misconduct is a symptom of a more significant threat and more troubling ailment. We see how our core values are not considered when taking such despicable actions. Honor was violated when Marines chose to disrespect their fellow brothers and sisters. Courage was in question when Marines knew of these groups and decided not to do anything. Although many Marines did not comment or share photos on social media inappro-

priately, they knew of their existence but did not report this behavior. The lack of professional discipline reflects a problem with our commitment to one another and to the Corps.

#### **Other Initiatives**

So, what did the Marine Corps learn from this misconduct? The Marine Corps brought a diverse group of Marines and civilians together in the form of a task force to address not only "Marines United" but other underlying issues in our Corps. The recommendations strengthen the Marines Corps by pursuing a culture that affords every Marine the opportunity to serve to their full potential.

Examples of initiatives are:

%Transition Readiness Seminar: A leadership message is being developed to underscore the importance of the "Once a Marine, Always a Marine" ideal as Marines transition to veteran status.

%The Exit, Milestone and Longitudinal Survey: This survey is underway and will help the Marine Corps identify job satisfaction during and at the end of a Marine's career.

%Doctrine revisions: Existing USMC doctrine is being revised to ensure it is written in a gender neutral way.

%Education: Training and Education Command is developing ways to mitigate unconscious bias into existing leadership training.

One recommendation of the Task Force

was the creation of what is now called the Personnel Studies and Oversight (PSO) Office. Established in July 2017, the PSO will help to ensure the long-term success of the Marine Corps by examining aspects of our culture and assessing areas that may require strengthening. According to Melissa Cohen, the PSO Director, “Our first priority is to listen to what Marines have to say. They understand the problems and they want to be part of the solution. From meeting with senior enlisted leaders and commanders to having one-on-one conversations with our more junior Marines, we are creating buy-in and talking about the impact on combat readiness when we fail to value the members on our team.” To that end, the PSO has partnered with the Center for Advanced Operational Culture and Learning to conduct focus groups and interviews with Marines to discuss culture, gender bias and leadership. Those insights will provide valuable information to Marine Corps leaders to help determine the way ahead.

#### Fourth Phase

Another important step in addressing possible issues in recent months has been the introduction of a Fourth Phase to recruit training. The new phase is designed to provide a more meaningful opportunity for drill instructor mentorship as recruits mature into their new identities as Marines. The Crucible remains the culminating event of Recruit Training but will occur a week earlier in training to accommodate Fourth Phase. The new phase will introduce new Marines to the Marine leader development framework of the “Six Fs”—Fidelity, Fighter, Fitness, Family, Finances and Future. The end result is to produce Marines who are more resilient, mature, disciplined, and better prepared for follow-on entry-level training and to thrive in the challenges of the operating forces.

Lieutenant Colonel Misty Posey, the current commander of 4th Recruit Battalion at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, is optimistic about Fourth Phase and has already witnessed positive results. “Our mission is to make a basically trained Marine, not a basically trained recruit. The end result is a Marine who is transformed by our shared legacy and thoroughly indoctrinated with our core values and love of Corps and country. The new fourth phase better completes the transformation process by providing more time for leaders to teach, coach, mentor, and evaluate the new Marines.”

All elements of the Marine Corps community, active-duty, reserve, civilian, and veteran Marines know that the majority of Marines, are doing the right thing but



LCPL JOSEPH M. PETERSON, USMC

**LCpl Sienna G. De Santes, a member of the FET supporting 3rd Bn, 5th Marines, engages with an Afghan woman in Sangin, Afghanistan, Jan. 4, 2011.**

also know that a small but visible few can tarnish the reputation of our Corps and put in jeopardy our ability to attract talented young men and women to join our ranks. Mission readiness is always a priority and reckless actions affect cohesion among Marines and decrease attention and resources from needed training and preparation to fight the nation’s battles. We need to be firm in showing that we are an organization that treats all our members with dignity and respect. Our success on the battlefield is dependent upon our ability to work as a team.

When our core values of honor, courage, and commitment are put into question due to the dishonorable actions, we need to look beyond simply punishing the perpetrators and work to create an environment where there is no place for those who disrespect, degrade, and harass Marines. The Marine Corps continues to face

challenges with those who do not adhere to our core values. Marines have never backed down from a fight and we will continue to engage those who fail to promote our culture of dignity and respect. We will continue to promote teamwork and enhancing an organization where all Marines are valued based on their individual excellence and commitment to warfighting.

*Author’s bio: LtCol Jessica van Dop DeJesus, USMCR currently is a Strategic Communications Officer at the PSO at Quantico, Va. She enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1997 and was commissioned in 2001. When not on active duty, she is a digital content creator specializing in food and travel articles. Her work has been published in outlets such as Southern Living, Travel Channel, and Capitol File.*





# Passing the Word

Compiled by Sara W. Bock

## MCSC Engineers Spark Students' Interest in STEM

Engineers from several program offices within Marine Corps Systems Command were on the lookout for the next generation of engineers and scientists during the USA Science and Engineering Festival at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C., April 6-8.

The three-day event aims to stimulate interest in science, technology, engineer-

ing and math (STEM) among more than 350,000 students and attendees by featuring more than 3,000 exhibits from government agencies, academia, industry and STEM organizations. MCSC has participated for the past three years, highlighting how the Marine Corps uses STEM to develop equipment and weapon systems for Marines.

"It is never too early to plant the seed when it comes to science and math," said

Karrin Felton, MCSC engineering competency manager. "Many kids think [STEM] is boring or hard, but it's a lot of fun. From [designing] the material in a helmet to 3-D printing replacement parts to [information technology], there are so many opportunities for them to use their talents, interests and creativity to make our world better."

This year, MCSC's exhibit included a 3-D printer, a FITLIGHT speed and agility trainer demonstration and an opportunity to try on Marine helmets and other protective gear. Such hands-on displays enabled the engineers to engage with attendees and educate them about the Marine Corps and MCSC's mission of equipping Marines.

"Marines are the lifeblood of what we do," Felton said. "We want people to know they can serve our country as Marines, but they can also be behind the technology that supports them."

Day one of the event included a career fair, where MCSC employees met with high school and college students and other attendees interested in STEM careers.

"We have to continue to build that cadre of experts in order to remain competitive in today's peer/near-peer environment," said Jeannette Evans-Morgis, chief engineer of the Marine Corps and deputy to the MCSC commander for systems engineering and acquisition logistics. "STEM is everywhere, so it's really important that we have a large population getting into STEM [career fields]."

MCSC currently employs more than 400 people who work in STEM fields, as well as college students who enter the MCSC workforce through various developmental programs.

"Studying STEM can make such a difference," Evans-Morgis said. "We hope to not only show how we are making a difference in the Marine Corps from a STEM perspective, but also to influence students to get into STEM and maybe be future employees or civilian Marines."

Monique Randolph

## Vietnam War Commemoration Establishes Certificate of Honor

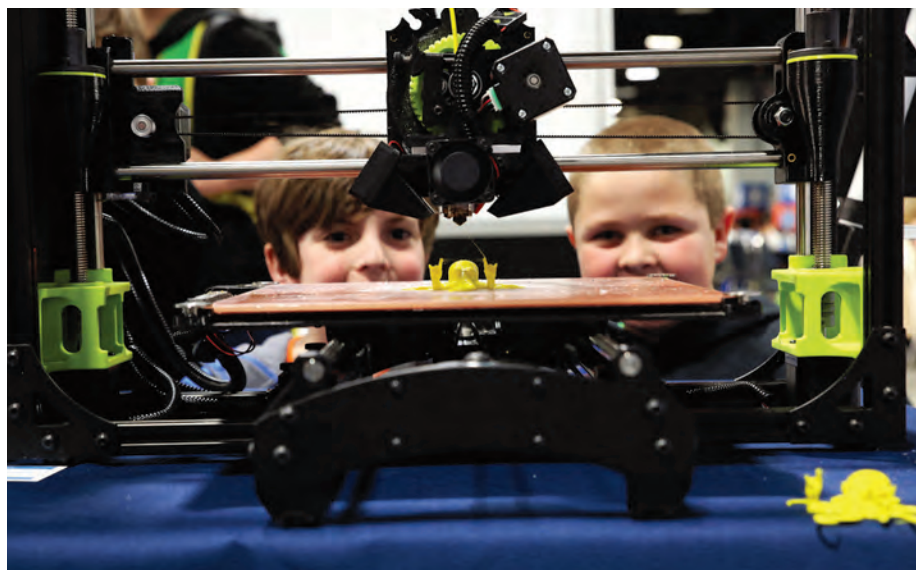
Since the launch of the Vietnam War Commemoration in 2012, Americans have publicly and individually thanked and honored more than 1.8 million Vietnam veterans and their families across the nation. The goal of the commemoration is to thank and honor the nearly 7 million



MONIQUE RANDOLPH

Above: Jeannette Evans-Morgis, chief engineer of the Marine Corps, center, and Mark Jackson of MCSC demonstrate the FITLIGHT trainer for students at the USA Science and Engineering Festival in Washington, D.C., April 6.

Below: Students watch a 3-D printer demonstration at MCSC's exhibit, which showcased how the Marine Corps uses STEM fields to develop equipment and weapon systems for Marines.



MONIQUE RANDOLPH



LCPL BETZABETH Y. GALVAN, USMC

**HOPE FOR HEROES—Arnold Fisher, center, the honorary chairman of the Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund, cuts the ribbon to officially open the new Intrepid Spirit Center at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., April 4. One of nine centers nationwide, its location adjacent to Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton will provide Marines and Sailors with state-of-the-art, interdisciplinary treatment for traumatic brain injury and psychological health conditions.**

living American veterans who were among more than 9 million who served on active duty during the Vietnam War years, regardless of location.

In collaboration with Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, the military services' casualty offices and its commemorative partner organizations, the Vietnam War Commemoration is now also offering special recognition for four unique categories of Vietnam veterans and their families through the Certificate of Honor program.

The categories are:

- Unaccounted For: Immediate family members (parents, spouse, siblings and children) of American military personnel listed as missing and unaccounted for by the Department of Defense
- Former, Living American Military POW from the Vietnam War as listed by the Department of Defense
- In Memory Of: Immediate family members (parents, spouse, siblings and

children) of a veteran who is listed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., and who is not listed as missing or unaccounted for by the Department of Defense

• Deceased Vietnam Veteran Surviving Spouse: Surviving spouse, at time of death, of a veteran who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces at any time between Nov. 1, 1955 and May 15, 1975, regardless of location of service.

Recipients receive a Certificate of Honor signed by the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and an accompanying lapel pin specific to their category.

Recipients of the Deceased Vietnam Veteran Surviving Spouse certificate receive a certificate signed by the Director of the Vietnam War Commemoration, Major General James T. Jackson, USA (Ret), as well as a "Surviving Spouse" lapel pin.

If you are eligible for and interested in receiving an "Unaccounted For" Cer-

tificate of Honor please contact your Service Casualty Office based on the branch of service of the missing and unaccounted for veteran. The Marine Corps Casualty Office can be reached at (800) 847-1597.

For inquiries regarding the "Former, Living American Military POW" or "In Memory Of" certificate contact the Vietnam War Commemoration at (877) 387-9951 or visit [www.vietnamwar50th.com](http://www.vietnamwar50th.com) to find a partner organization to contact near you.

There are no costs associated with becoming a commemorative partner, and participating organizations include businesses, corporations, veterans and military organizations, associations, educational institutions, community groups, towns, cities, states and others. For more information, visit [www.vietnamwar50th.com](http://www.vietnamwar50th.com).

U.S. Vietnam War Commemoration





## DPAA Identifies Remains of WW II Marines

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) recently announced that the remains of several U.S. Marines, unaccounted for since World War II, have been identified.

U.S. servicemembers who died in the Battle of Tarawa were buried in a number of battlefield cemeteries on Tarawa. Recovery operations were conducted in 1946 and 1947 and the remains that could not be identified were interred in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu, Hawaii. Recently DPAA began the process of disinterring those remains for identification.

The Marines whose remains were disinterred and identified are:

**PFC Arnold J. Harrison**, 19, of Detroit, Mich. He was assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division.

**Pvt John M. Tillman**, 21, of Reno, Nev. He was assigned to Co F, 2nd Bn, 2nd Marines, 2ndMarDiv.

In June 2015, History Flight, Inc., a nongovernmental organization, notified DPAA that they discovered a burial site in Betio Island. Remains were recovered and turned over to DPAA for identification.

The Marines whose remains recently were recovered and identified are:

**PFC Lyle E. Charpillouz**, 19, of Silverton, Ore. He was assigned to Co F, 2nd Bn, 8th Marines, 2ndMarDiv.

**Pvt Edwin W. Jordan**, 19, of Pittsburgh. He was assigned to F/2/8, 2ndMarDiv.  
DPAA

## Four Marines Dead in Super Stallion Crash

Four Marines from Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron (HMH) 465, Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, were killed as a result of a CH-53 Super Stallion helicopter crash near El Centro, Calif., on April 3, 2018.

The Marines who died are:

**Capt Samuel A. Schultz**, 28, of Huntington Valley, Pa., was a pilot assigned to HMH-465.

**1stLt Samuel D. Phillips**, 27, of Pinehurst, N.C., was a pilot assigned to HMH-465.

**GySgt Derik R. Holley**, 33, of Dayton, Ohio, was a crew chief assigned to HMH-465. His awards include the Navy Marine Corps Commendation Medal, Navy Marine Corps Achievement Medal (4th award) and the Air Medal-Strike/Flight (9th award).

**LCpl Taylor Conrad**, 24, of Baton Rouge, La., was a crew chief assigned to HMH-465.

"The loss of our Marines weighs heavy on our hearts," said Major General Mark Wise, Commanding General, 3rd MAW. "Our priority is to provide support for our families and HMH-465 during this critical time."

The aircraft departed the Strategic Expeditionary Landing Field at Marine

Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif., to conduct squadron training consisting of aircraft landings in unimproved zones.

The mishap occurred approximately 15 miles west of El Centro.

The cause of the crash is under investigation.

3rd MAW Communication Strategy and Operations

**Sgt Kyle Brayer**, 34, of Scottsdale, Ariz. He deployed to Iraq with MALS-16 and also assisted with the delivery of humanitarian aid to the Philippines. He was a volunteer with the Marine For Life program.

After leaving the Marine Corps, he was a firefighter paramedic with the Tempe Fire Medical Rescue Department. He attained the rank of captain.

**Robert E. Dolan**, 93, of Cheyenne, Wyo. He was a Marine who served during WW II as one of Carlson's Raiders. After the war he became a railway conductor. His awards include the Purple Heart.

**Col David L. Elam**, 87, of Auburn, Ala. He was a Marine aviator who flew combat missions in the Korean War and the Vietnam War. His awards include three Distinguished Flying Crosses, 71 Air Medals and the Purple Heart.

**GySgt R. Lee Ermey**, 74, in Palmdale, Calif. During his 11 years in the Marine

Corps, he served one tour in Vietnam with MWSG-17 and was a DI at MCRD San Diego. He later achieved fame as a technical advisor and actor, appearing in more than 60 feature films. His breakout performance was as a DI in "Full Metal Jacket." He was the host of a TV program called "Mail Call" which ran for eight seasons on the History Channel.

He made numerous personal appearances in support of law enforcement and military personnel, and was a longtime spokesperson for the Young Marines.

"GySgt Ermey was a true friend of the Young Marines and supported us in every way possible," said Col William P. Davis, USMCR (Ret), national executive director and CEO of the Young Marines. "He was more than a spokesman; he cared about our youth. He always made time for the Young Marines and enjoyed being with them. He would always encourage them to be proud of themselves, stay healthy, get good grades and be good representatives of our program. I can't say enough about his service to our country, our veterans and the Young Marines program," Davis also said.

He was a friend to *Leatherneck* magazine, and recently commented to the magazine staff, "If you want to know what's going on in the Marine Corps, you read the *Leatherneck* magazine."

To learn more about the career of "The Gunny," see "The Man Under the Hat—R. Lee Ermey" on page 52.

**Sgt Richard L. Greer**, 100, in Abingdon, Va. He was a Marine who served in the Pacific during WW II. His awards include the Purple Heart.

**June E. Heim**, 95, of Silver Spring, Md. She was born in Australia and came to the United States after marrying Marine Gordon F. Heim, whom she met when the 1stMarDiv was recuperating in Australia after the Guadalcanal campaign. She was one of the founding members of the 1st Marine Division Association and was a good friend to *Leatherneck* magazine.

**Wallace R. "Walt" Heller**, 94, of Kalkaska, Mich. He enlisted in the Marine Corps after his 1942 graduation from high school. He was one of Edson's Raiders and saw action in the Pacific.

**Robert J. Hoffman**, 88, of Neenah, Wis. He was a Marine who served in the Korean War. After the war, he had a 31-year career as a fire fighter.

**LtCol Poindexter M. Johnson**, 81, of Sarasota, Fla. He was a veteran of the

Vietnam War. His awards include the Bronze Star with combat "V" and the Purple Heart. Following his retirement from the Marine Corps, he worked as a defense contractor in the Washington, D.C., area.

**Ed Kennedy**, 87, in Pompano Beach, Fla. He was a Marine who served with ANGLICO in the Korean War. He later served as a county commissioner in Broward County, Fla.

**Frank J. Knapp**, 69, of London, Ky. He was a Marine who served from 1967-1969.

**MSgt Elmer G. Millette Jr.**, 87, of Poynette, Wis. He served in the Korean War and also had two tours in Vietnam. His awards include two Purple Hearts.

**Harry L. Mills**, 94, of Huntington, W.Va. He was a Marine who fought in the Pacific during WW II. He later worked for 36 years for the VA. He was a member of the MCL.

**Capt Jack T. Paxton**, 88, of Wildwood, Fla. He had a 22-year career in Marine Corps public affairs. He served tours as a combat correspondent with the 1stMarDiv in Korea from 1951-1952 and with the III MAF in Vietnam in 1965. He was commissioned a second lieutenant while serving as a senior public affairs representative at Chu Lai in May 1966 with the 4th Marines. He also served as

public affairs officer of the 6th Marine Corps Recruitment District.

After retirement, he worked in private industry and later for the United Way. He was the executive director of the U.S. Marine Corps Combat Correspondents Association and earlier this year he edited "First to Go," a history of Marine journalists and authors at war. He was a good friend to *Leatherneck*, writing several articles for the magazine.

**Philip B. Pendleton**, 86, of Mansfield, Ohio. During the Korean War he was a radio-telephone operator.

**Col Tullis J. Woodham Jr.**, 89, of Myrtle Beach, S.C. His 36-year Marine Corps career began when he enlisted in 1946. He was a rifle instructor at MCRD Parris Island before leaving active duty to attend the University of Florida. He was commissioned in 1951 and was a platoon commander with Co B, 1st Engineer Bn, 1stMarDiv in Korea.

During the Vietnam War, he was awarded the Silver Star for actions while serving as the CO, 3rd Bn, 27th Marines, 1stMarDiv in 1968. According to the award citation, after an advance party was engaged with the enemy during Operation Allen Brook, he "unhesitatingly led the remainder of his battalion in a heliborne attack to assist the besieged unit. Un-

daunted by a heavy volume of automatic weapons and mortar fire, he repeatedly advanced to dangerously exposed positions as he aggressively deployed his companies and engaged the hostile force. Displaying outstanding professional knowledge and superior tactical ability, he ably planned and directed supporting arms fire and air strikes ..."

His other awards include the Legion of Merit with combat "V" and gold star in lieu of second award, and the Bronze Star with combat "V."

His daughter and one of his sons are veteran Marines. His other son is a retired Air Force officer.

**Timothy P. Young**, 78, of Green Bay, Wis. He was a Marine Corps veteran.

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



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## 2018-2019 BATTLEFIELD TOURS

<p><b>AUG 19 - 31</b> 50th Anniversary I-Corps Operations Mameluke Thrust &amp; Maui Peak</p> <p><b>SEP 12- 26</b> Ireland All of the Emerald Isle WWII U.S. "Irish Marines"</p> <p><b>JUL 7- 16</b> Spain Military &amp; Cultural Exploration Madrid Post Tour Barcelona</p> <p><b>JUL 7- 16</b> WWII Italy - 75th Anniversary of Operation Husky Invasion of Sicily</p> <p><b>AUG 2- 11</b> Guadalcanal &amp; Tarawa</p> <p><b>AUG 2- 12</b> Imperial China Beijing - Xian - Shanghai</p>	<p><b>DEC 1- 12</b> Vietnam "Delta to the DMZ"</p> <p><b>DEC 2-8</b> Pearl Harbor; Ford Island &amp; Arizona Memorial</p> <p><b>DEC 7- 15</b> Israel Military &amp; Cultural History</p> <p><b>FEB 9- 21 2019</b> Tet Offensive   Battle of Hue City - 1968</p> <p><b>FEB 23- MAR 7 2019</b> 50th Anniversary of Operation Dewey Canyon</p> <p><b>MARCH 19- 25 2019</b> Iwo Jima 73rd Reunion of Honor - Guam &amp; Charter Flight to Iwo Jima</p> <p><b>APR 27- MAY 10</b> 50th Anniversary of Op Apache Snow-Hamburger Hill I-II-III-IV Corps</p>
<p><b>SEP 24- OCT 4</b> WWII Concentration Camps Poland, Czech Republic &amp; Germany for Ocktoberfest</p> <p><b>SEP 30- OCT 8</b> Korean Experience</p> <p><b>OCT 5- 13</b> Israel Military &amp; Cultural History</p> <p><b>NOV 2- 13</b> WWI 100th Anniversary Paris</p> <p><b>NOV 17- 23</b> 75th Anniversary of the Tarawa Landing</p> <p><b>NOV 24- DEC 1</b> Burma 75th Anniversary Chindits</p>	

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## Special Events

• **USMC Combat Correspondents Assn. Professional Development and Training Symposium**, Aug. 20-23, New Bern, N.C. Contact Kate Stark, 385 SW 254th St., Newberry, FL 32669, (352) 448-9167, [hq@usmccca.org](mailto:hq@usmccca.org).

• **MCA&F Acquisition Awards Dinner**, Aug. 23, Springfield, Va. Sarah Cohen, (703) 640-0174, [s.cohen@mca-marines.org](mailto:s.cohen@mca-marines.org).

• **MCA&F Intelligence Awards Dinner**, Sept. 20, Arlington, Va. Sarah Cohen, (703) 640-0174, [s.cohen@mca-marines.org](mailto:s.cohen@mca-marines.org).

## Reunions

• **Marine Corps Mustang Assn.**, Aug. 8-12, San Antonio. Contact LtCol Richard J. Sullivan, USMC (Ret), (508) 954-2262, [sul824@verizon.net](mailto:sul824@verizon.net), [www.marinecorpsmustang.org](http://www.marinecorpsmustang.org).

• **West Coast Drill Instructor Assn. (SgtMaj Leland D. "Crow" Crawford Chapter)**, Sept. 13-16, San Diego. Contact Gregg Stoner, (619) 884-9047, [greggstoner22@aol.com](mailto:greggstoner22@aol.com), or CWO-3 Chip Dykes, (760) 908-2322, [www.westcoastdi.org](http://www.westcoastdi.org).

• **Marine Corps Engineer Assn.**, Sept. 26-29, San Diego. Contact Maj Charlie Dismore, USMC (Ret), (512) 394-9333, [www.marcorengasns.org](http://www.marcorengasns.org).

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

• **Seagoing Marines Assn.**, Sept. 11-15, Colorado Springs, Colo. Contact Bob Sollom, (540) 840-9310, [sol136@msn.com](mailto:sol136@msn.com).

• **The Chosin Few**, Sept. 5-9, Norfolk, Va. Contact Armed Forces Reunions, Inc., (757) 625-6401, 322 Madison Mews, Norfolk, VA 23517, [www.afr-reg.com/chosin2018](http://www.afr-reg.com/chosin2018).

• **Men of Chosin**, June 17-19, Reno, Nev. Contact Stanley Galewick, 5091 Dapple Grey Dr., Redding, CA 96002, (530) 221-1496.

• **1/3 (all eras)**, Sept. 11-16, Colorado Springs, Colo. Contact Don Bumgarner, (562) 897-2437, [dbumcl3usmc@verizon.net](mailto:dbumcl3usmc@verizon.net).

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

• **2/3 (RVN)**, Sept. 26-29, Colorado

Spring, Colo. Contact Art Ferguson, (623) 780-1819, [clydesdadfergy@aol.com](mailto:clydesdadfergy@aol.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](mailto:bhanon@comcast.net).

• **Battery Adjust, 3/11 (all eras)**, Sept. 19-23, Orlando, Fla. Contact Doug Miller, (402) 540-9431, [dwmiller48@gmail.com](mailto:dwmiller48@gmail.com).

• **B/1/5 and C/1/5 (RVN, 1966-1967)** are planning a reunion. Contact SSgt Jim Proulx, USMC (Ret), (904) 343-4850, [bertojoto1@gmail.com](mailto:bertojoto1@gmail.com).

• **E/2/3 (RVN)**, Sept. 9-12, San Antonio. Contact Bill Smith, (925) 997-8041, [da190@aol.com](mailto:da190@aol.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](mailto:boatmanron@gmail.com).

• **G/2/5 (all eras)**, Oct. 24-28, Santa Fe, N.M. Contact Larry Ortiz, (505) 629-6393, [lso.vngrunt@yahoo.com](mailto:lso.vngrunt@yahoo.com).

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

• **3rd 155s, M/4/12, 3rdMarDiv**, Sept. 9-13, Nashville, Tenn. Contact Alex Jablonowski, (248) 505-2183, [3rd155s.m4.12@gmail.com](mailto:3rd155s.m4.12@gmail.com).

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

• **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](mailto:jwiedhahn@aol.com), [www.miltours.com](http://www.miltours.com).

• **Youngstown, Ohio Marine Reunion, MCL Det #494**, Aug. 18, Youngstown, Ohio. Contact Chester Kaschak, (330) 533-6084.

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

• **U.S. Naval Disciplinary Command Portsmouth, N.H.**, Sept. 9-13, North Conway, N.H. Contact Don Ferry, (972) 334-0609, [don.ferry@sbcglobal.net](mailto:don.ferry@sbcglobal.net).

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

• **Marine Barracks NWS Yorktown**, Aug. 10-12, Yorktown, Va. Contact David Greene, [marinebarracksyorktown@gmail.com](mailto: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.thurman54@gmail.com](mailto:debbie.thurman54@gmail.com).

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

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

• **TBS, Co F, 6-79**, is planning a reunion. Contact LtCol Tom Connors, USMC (Ret), (919) 303-2697, (919) 418-5757, [tconnors3@yahoo.com](mailto:tconnors3@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](mailto: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](mailto:martann843@gmail.com).

• **Plt 98, Parris Island, 1948**, is planning a reunion. Contact SSgt Jim Proulx, USMC (Ret), (904) 343-4850, [bertojoto1@gmail.com](mailto:bertojoto1@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](mailto: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](mailto:jcroom47@aol.com).

• **Plt 245, San Diego, 1965**, is planning a reunion. Contact David S. Alvarez, (209) 735-2601, [srt8o06@yahoo.com](mailto:srt8o06@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](mailto:don814u@hotmail.com).

• **Plt 329, Parris Island, 1967**, is planning a reunion. Contact Thomas Payne, 2220 Flat Branch Rd., Ellijay, GA, 30540, (706) 635-4540, [corap@ellijay.com](mailto:corap@ellijay.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 1034, San Diego, 1968 (50th Anniversary)**, Sept. 8, Phoenix. Contact Oscar F. Borboa, (602) 809-0623, oscarbaz@cox.net.

• **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 1098, Parris Island, 1970**, is planning a reunion. Contact Michael Shea, (786) 280-8202, mikek2709@comcast.net.

• **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, 1965-66**, is planning a reunion. Contact John E. Lyford, (518) 654-6073, reniejohn@roadrunner.com.

• **Plt 2077, San Diego, 1966**, is planning a reunion. Contact SgtMaj 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 3108, San Diego, 1966**, is planning a reunion. Contact MSgt Bob Rees, USMC (Ret), (619) 940-9218, bobrees86@gmail.com.

• **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>.

• **Marine Air Base Squadrons-49**, Sept. 8, Earlville, Md. Contact Col Chuck

McGarigle, USMC (Ret), (609) 291-9617, (609) 284-2935, mabsreunion@comcast.net.

• **MACS-9**, Aug. 8-11, Colorado Springs, Colo. Contact Tom Boyle, (319) 631-1912, tboyle621@aol.com.

• **VMA(AW)-533 (all eras)**, Sept. 6-8, New Orleans. Contact Jerry Callaway, 6545 Union St., Arvada, CO 80004, (303) 946-7893, j2callaway@q.com.

• **VMFA-323 "Death Rattlers" (75th anniversary reunion)**, Aug. 2-5, San Diego. Contact T.C. Crouson, vmfa323reunion2018@gmail.com.

## Ships and Others

• **USS Antietam (CV-36)**, Sept. 19-22, Albuquerque, N.M. Contact L. Ray Young, (316) 680-0252, lyonelyoung@outlook.com.

• **USS Canberra (CA-70/CAG-2)**, Oct. 10-14, St. Louis. Contact Ken Minick, P.O. Box 130, Belpre, OH 45714, (740)

423-8976, usscanberra@gmail.com.

• **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, hornetcva@aol.com, [www.usshornetassn.com](http://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

• Bill McMullen, 1650 Hance Ln., Garnet Valley, PA 19060, (610) 213-3308, mcmullenbd@comcast.net, to hear from anyone who can help identify the unit the Marines who signed the **Japanese flag**,



Bill McMullen would like to hear from anyone who can identify which unit the Marines who signed this Japanese flag belonged to.



pictured on previous page, were from. The names include **Joseph P. WINSLOW Jr.**, **William E. EATON**, **Dewey L. GRAVETT**, **Clifford J. CRANE**, **Lyman J. KINGLEG**, **Edwin MILLER**, **Willis B. PETERSON**, **Jack E. DAVIS**, **Louis R. BEAN**, **Jack BAILEY** and **John W. "Doc" MIKA**.

• SgtMaj Daniel G. Murphy, USA (Ret), danielptx@att.net, to hear from Marines who served with **LCpl Timothy M. MURPHY** in **Okinawa, Japan**, during the **1970s**.

• Milton D. McCarthy, 2605 State St., Salem, OR 97310, to hear from or about **Cpl Donald F. SMITH** from Cape Elizabeth, Maine, who served with **C/1/3, 1966-1967**.

• Nicole Bass, ncopley0986@gmail.com, to hear from Marine veteran **Michael J. MCCARTHY**, who lived in Hartford, Conn.

• Karen Cozzi Campbell, 4655 McLaren Dr., Oswego, IL 60543, (630) 244-8816, to hear from or about **Matthew "AI" COZZI** or **any of the other Marines pictured (or who were present but not pictured)** in the below photo, which was taken at **Camp Kiser, New Caledonia, 1943**.

• Betty Shannon, (724) 222-2091, kstrawn3@verizon.net, to hear from **LtCol David ALTOFF**.

• George Clark, (518) 727-6028, to hear from **Cpl Phil VITTI**, who served with **Co A, 2nd Antitank Bn, 1961-1962**.

• Robert Denlinger, hawk32@denstarfarm.us, to hear from Marines who were at **Tam Boi, RVN**, during **Operation Dewey Canyon** with **1/9** on **March 18, 1969**, particularly an RTO who called in a "Mayday" to which a Cobra Gunship responded.

## Wanted

*Readers should be cautious about sending money without confirming authenticity and availability of products offered:*

• George A. Williams, 15 Ladyhawk Ct., Sacramento, CA 95835, (916) 600-1602, georgewilliams876@yahoo.com, wants a **platoon photo** for **Plt 3024, Parris Island, 1968**.

• Clarence Milster, crmilster7@msn.com, wants a copy of a **book about the Korean War** with a photo of **LtCol Ray Murray** and staff kneeling and pointing on the cover.

• Ryan Lukens, tufelhunden03@gmail.com, wants a **recruit graduation book** and **platoon photo** for **Plt 3049, Parris Island, 2003**.

com, wants a **recruit graduation book** and **platoon photo** for **Plt 3049, Parris Island, 2003**.

• MSgt William Dugan, (603) 424-9517, duganb\_p@comcast.net, wants a **recruit graduation book** for **Plt 27, Parris Island, 1956**.

• Edward Jones, 211 Sandalwood Ln., Rhinebeck, NY 12572, wants a **recruit graduation book** for **Plt 644, Parris Island, 1945**. He would also like to hear from any members of the platoon.

• Michael J. Kielbowicz, (561) 900-5053, wants a **recruit graduation book** and **platoon photo** for **Plt 280, Parris Island, 1960**.

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. 📧



COURTESY OF KAREN COZZI CAMPBELL

Karen Cozzi Campbell would like to hear from **Matthew "AI" Cozzi** or **any of the other Marines pictured in this photo, taken at Camp Kiser, New Caledonia, 1943**.

# Books Reviewed

**DISPATCHES FROM THE PACIFIC: THE WORLD WAR II REPORTING OF ROBERT L. SHERROD.** By Ray E. Boomhower. Published by Indiana University Press. 260 pages. \$21.60 MCA Members. \$24 Regular Price.

Robert L. Sherrod was arguably one of our finest war correspondents during World War II. His love and reporting on the Marine's "leapfrogging" Central Pacific campaign was truly remarkable. He covered the desperate struggle for the Tarawa Atoll and the fights for the well-defended islands of Saipan, Iwo Jima and Okinawa from the rifleman's point of view. His first book, "Tarawa: The Story of a Battle," a book-length look at what war means to a peace-loving people, swiftly became an award-winning best seller. Published in 1944, it was a hit both with the public and some especially uncompromising wartime critics.

After graduating from the University of Georgia in 1929, Robert Sherrod, a Southeastern Georgia boy, began his life's work as a journalist. In the dark days of the Great Depression, Sherrod managed to land his dream job with *Time* and *Life* publisher Henry Luce. The new magazine's simple goal was to keep the American people well-informed of the news of the day. However, the hot-button politics of the day soon faded with the thunderous onset of America's entry into WW II.

Determined to see the fighting firsthand, Sherrod's initial combat assignment was to accompany and report upon the American recapture of Attu and Kiska in the Alaskan Islands. Most of the fighting in the bitter cold weather was done by the 17th and 32nd Infantry Army Divisions on Attu. Covering the campaign, the correspondent wrote, "Not all soldiers are heroes—far from it; the army that wins, other things being equal, is the army which has enough men to rise above duty, thus inspiring others to do their duty."

Robert Sherrod's first close call with death came when the men in his tent all were killed in a desperate banzai charge; that night he had been away on assignment. During the campaign Robert met an important figure in his life and career. He became a lifelong friend of

Marine General Holland "Howlin' Mad" Smith, the father of modern amphibious warfare. Gen Smith served as an advisor to the Army's amphibious operations during the Alaskan campaign.

Sherrod's next assignment was with the 2nd Marine Division as it prepared to land on the tiny isle of Betio in the Tarawa Atoll located in the Gilbert Islands. In this campaign Sherrod met and learned to appreciate the professionalism of another important Marine, Colonel David M. Shoup. The future Medal of Honor recipient commanded the 2nd Marine Regiment's landing force. Sherrod wrote of the landings at Tarawa, "An action that would live in history, as long as mankind holds courage in esteem." And in his wartime experience, the action on the island, "stood as the supreme triumph of courage over adversity. But for the Marines' determination that they should not fail, Tarawa would have been lost." From then on, and for the rest of the war, Robert Sherrod reported on battles fought by his newly found leatherneck friends and companions.

By 1944, Robert Sherrod again joined Gen "Howlin' Mad" Smith for the invasion of Saipan. The battle cost 15,000 American casualties and produced one of the Pacific war's major journalistic controversies. When Gen Smith relieved an Army general commanding the 27th Division, a major inter-service hullabaloo was unleashed. Some of Sherrod's reporting did support Gen Smith's case for the Army general's dismissal.

Of the battle, Sherrod doubted if any other troops in the world, other than U.S. Marines, could have taken such high casualties. The violence of the campaign was, he noted, "beyond comprehension."

Ray E. Boomhower, a senior editor at the *Indiana Historical Society*, has produced several important books about the lives of some notable Americans including Gus Grissom, Civil War General Lew Wallace, and the memorable war correspondent, Ernie Pyle. His new work, "Dispatches

from the Pacific," will only add to his growing reputation as an authoritative biographer.

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.*

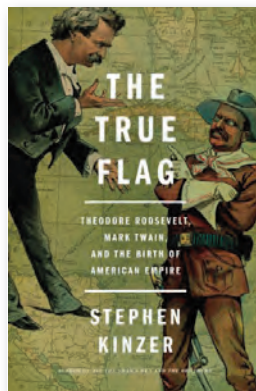
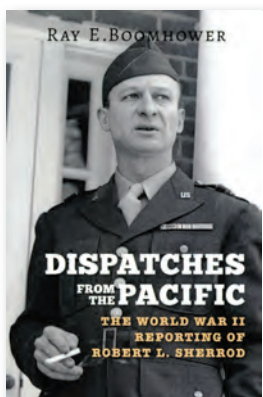
**THE TRUE FLAG: Theodore Roosevelt, Mark Twain, and the Birth of American Empire.** By Stephen Kinzer. Published by Henry Holt and Company. 320 pages. \$16.20 Members Price. \$17.99 Regular Price.

Today, as we hotly debate America's role in the world, author Stephen Kinzer's new book, "The True Flag," allows us to recall the roots of this ongoing historical dispute. Should America retreat into a nationalist position, or should we continue to lead the way in world affairs? Herein lies, perhaps, the greatest question ever presented to those of us who call ourselves Americans. By the end of the 19th century, America had expanded its borders to include a large portion of North America. The argument that arose at this time revolved around the burning notion: should our country expand its territory to include realms outside the continental United States?

The imperialist movement argued that the United States should seize the opportunity for economic and strategic expansion. Annexing Hawaii in the Pacific seemed the likely move. Such a move would open the door to the China market as well as setting up our strategic claims in the Pacific. Other imperialists looked south in hopes of pursuing territories in the Caribbean and South America. The other vocal faction, the anti-imperialists, believed the United States was threatened

from within, not by other global powers.

The stage was set for the great debate. The proponents of the expansionist view were skillfully led by Teddy Roosevelt and Senator Henry Lodge. As Republicans, they naturally supported the agenda of the McKinley administration. The other side, the Anti-Imperialist League, was directed by Mark Twain and a former





Civil War general, Carl Schurz. Others involved were Senator William Jennings Bryan and the most prominent African American leader of the day, Booker T. Washington.

Americans of that period became transfixed with the emerging revolution in Cuba. The Spanish had governed the country since the days of Columbus, but now many Cubans actively sought their freedom from Spain. Into this mix, publisher William Randolph Hearst and his powerful newspaper enterprise entered into the argument. They aggressively attempted to whip up support for the liberation of Cuba. President McKinley and his assistant Secretary of the Navy, Teddy Roosevelt, dispatched the armored cruiser, USS *Maine* to Cuba as a “gunboat calling card.” USS *Maine* was mysteriously sunk in Havana Harbor, and the stage was set for the commencement of the Spanish-American War.

Teddy Roosevelt formed the Rough Riders, a cavalry regiment in support of the U.S. invasion of the tiny Caribbean island. In the Far East, Admiral Dewey defeated the Spanish naval forces in the Philippines and Captain Henry Glass raised the American flag on the Pacific island of Guam. The “Star-Spangled Banner” was struck up. “When they fin-

ished,” the author notes, “Glass declared Guam to be American. That made him the first officer ever to seize an overseas territory for the United States.”

In what might be termed the intoxication of conquest, the United States and the expansionists seemed to have triumphed; in quick order the U.S. had added Cuba, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, the Philippine Islands and Guam to its list of annexed territories. As it turned out, becoming the governing administrators of new territories became more problematic than simply winning the war with old-world Spain.

Governing the Philippines became a challenge. The Philippine leader, Emilio Aguinaldo, and his army at first partnered with the U.S. and together they evicted the islands’ colonial rulers. Aguinaldo had believed that America would then declare the islands free for Philippine self-determination. In the ensuing years, America fought a savage war with members of the Philippine liberation movement. It was the racist’s belief that it was the white man’s burden to govern and enlighten the world’s colored peoples, a commonly held belief of that historic period. However, the challenges of governing soon became a distasteful problem for the expansionist coalition to champion or justify.

Kinzer’s new book has rekindled the origins of the current debate between the nationalists and the globalists. Should America continue to be the police force for the world, or should we retreat to the initial mandate set forth by none other than President Washington in his farewell address to the nation when he warned that we might live in peace only if we avoid the traps of foreign entanglements.

This fine book reacquaints us with the sparkling and fluent oration of the gilded age. Two of America’s finest orators went toe-to-toe in America’s time of global innocence. Roosevelt, the pre-eminent imperialist, faced off with Twain at a formal New York dinner. These two world-renowned giants truly respected each other but in this case, the lines of their disagreement were clearly drawn. Twain, having recently returned from his worldwide tour, promptly pointed out the problems England faced administering its colonies. “England sinned when she got herself into a war in South Africa ... just as we sinned in getting into a similar war in the Philippines.” Twain concluded his remarks with this stunning note: “England and America—yes, we are kin. And now that we are also kin in sin, there is nothing more to be desired. The harmony is complete, the blend is perfect.”

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# Archives

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READ ABOUT THE MARINES WHO TOOK THE “BLOODY ACRE”

Alternately, in a private conversation, Roosevelt avowed that he'd like to skin Twain alive.

"The True Flag" is both well written and well-conceived and is a credit to his stated intentions. Thanks, Sir, for helping remind us of the origins of our currently heated debate.

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.*

**DESTINED FOR WAR: CAN AMERICA AND CHINA ESCAPE THUCYDIDES'S TRAP? By Graham Allison. Published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 384 pages. \$25.20 MCA Members. \$28 Regular Price.**

The recently released National Security Strategy and National Defense Strategy both focus the Marine Corps toward the long-term strategic competition with a rising China. In "Destined for War" Graham Allison provides insights into the underpinnings of this great power rivalry. Allison, the director of Harvard's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, has a litany of work familiar to practitioners including the seminal "Es-sence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis." A quick, well-organized, and provocative read, "Destined for War" is worth consideration to orient leaders of Marines given this strategic inflection point.

The book begins with a useful primer about the rise of China. Segueing next to the essence of the Thucydides Trap, Graham paints a compelling historical case for how a rising power and the status quo power have a high propensity to clash. Historical case studies illuminate this briefly, and also are rendered as an appendix, which serve as an excellent reference to help with context. The discussion of the U.S.-Japanese rivalry that preceded World War II is particularly relevant given frequent contemporary references and the shared geographic overtones. Practitioners would be well-served to examine Allison's suggestions for how conflict could begin between Washington and Beijing. Likewise, the discussion regarding how such a clash is not predestined, but prevention requires both sides' awareness and action to avoid this historical norm. Historical analogies, while not preordained to repeat, certainly have the potential to echo.

Commensurate with the scope of the issue, the book serves as a start point vice a comprehensive encapsulation. The

treatment of China's rise begs for deeper discussion of issues facing the Middle Kingdom. China's meteoric economic success is accompanied by significant structural issues economically, socially, and militarily. Since Allison doesn't specifically label, the reader is left to ponder whether the U.S. and the PRC represent a modern Athens and Sparta, respectively. Alternatively, are they the converse, or some hybrid rivalry trending toward likely conflict? Aside from governance systems that often ascribe Sparta as China and Athens as the U.S., there are other differences emerge to consider. For example, given that both modern nations are invested in sea power neither fits neatly into the land-centric underpinnings Sparta held at the beginning of the rivalry.

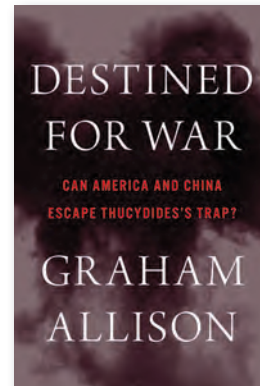
Significant utility is borne in the dissection of possible catalysts for conflict. Allison uses several vignettes in the chapter discussing "from here to war" to provide context regarding possible conflict initiation. Those new to the Pacific will find utility in using the basic case studies to shape and challenge

how the military instrument of national power could be used to deter conflict while simultaneously exacerbating the conditions driving toward a clash. The book's treatment of potential third-parties' catalysts, in particular U.S. allies such as

the Philippines and Japan, highlights the necessity to carefully manage alliance structures that can act both a force multiplier while also adding variables to the equation.

On the whole, practitioners would be well-served to bring challenges Graham explores into future operational design.

LtCol Ray Gerber  
USMC



*Author's bio: LtCol Ray Gerber is an intelligence officer currently serving as the Chief of the Executive Support Division at Intelligence Department, HQMC providing intelligence support to USMC senior leadership. LtCol Gerber commanded Region 2 of the Marine Corps Embassy Security Group and served in intelligence billets at the MEU command element and within the Ground Combat Element as well as in the interagency.*

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**SOUND OFF**  
[continued from page 6]

S.C., boot camp in 1956. My question is when and where did it originate? Sgt Grit has T-shirts with it spelled as “Oohrah” and “Oorah.” Which is correct? Most Marines that I have asked said that “Oorah” is preferred over the other.

GySgt Lewis R. Souder III, USMC (Ret)  
1956-1976  
Sebastian, Fla.

• *This question comes up periodically. Although the other services have since come up with their own versions, “Oorah” is the uniquely Marine way of replying positively to almost anything. According to the Leatherneck archives, in 1953 members of 1st Amphibious Reconnaissance Company were aboard the submarine USS Perch (ASSP-313). Perch was a WW II diesel retrofitted to carry underwater demolition teams and recon Marines. Whenever the boat was to dive, someone would announce over the PA system, “Dive, dive!” and sound a klaxon horn that sounded like “Arrugha!” While 1st Amphib Recon Marines were on conditioning runs on land, they started singing chants. Someone imitated the horn sound “Arrugha,” and it became a Recon mantra.*



A life-size bronze statue of “Sgt Vince Carter” from the television show “Gomer Pyle: USMC” was unveiled on May 3, 2017, in Clarksville, Tenn.

COURTESY OF MIKE KING

Former Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps John Massaro took “Arrugha” from recon with him to Drill Instructor School and passed it to the DI students, who in turn passed it to their recruits. “Arrugha” eventually evolved into “Oorah.”—Editor

### Sgt Vince Carter

You may find this of interest. During my recent trip to Clarksville, Tenn., I ran across a statue of “Sgt Vince Carter,” known best from the TV series “Gomer Pyle: USMC.” Frank Sutton, who played Sgt Carter, is from Clarksville.

Mike King  
Paducah, Ky.

### Gunny Molded My Career

I would like to locate a gunnery sergeant I served under at Marine Barracks Brooklyn during the years 1967-1968. I believe this Marine had more to do with the success in my 30 years in law enforcement than any single person I can think of.

I arrived at Marine Barracks Brooklyn and was told to report to Gunny George in the brig. I would be working under him in the Third Naval District Brig as a brig supervisor. Gunny George was the most “squared away” Marine I had ever seen. When I reported in, the first thing Gunny George said was, “Marine, get a haircut.” I

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informed the Gunny that I had just gotten a haircut. He replied, "Not good enough. Get another one." I could tell by looking at the gunny's hair that unless I had blood coming from my scalp it was not going to be good enough. Regardless, I went to the base barber and got another haircut and reported back. Again, not good enough and this time he sent me to his barber, and as I expected, this time it would be more than acceptable.

I really thought my time at Marine Barracks was going to be rough and that the gunny and I would never get along, but I was very wrong and what I learned from Gunny George lasted me throughout my entire 30 years in law enforcement. During the years where I supervised other investigators, I always tried to treat the investigators under me as Gunny George treated me and tried to train the investigators in the method in which I was trained during my time in the Corps. My only regret was when Gunny George came to me and said he was going back to Vietnam where I knew he had been wounded on his last tour; he told me to come and go with him. Having only a few months left I felt that there was not enough time to accomplish this; I regrettably could not go.

Looking back, I wish I had gone and made the Marine Corps my career. Young



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men today should seriously look at the Marine Corps for their future as the Corps has more to offer young people than anything outside.

Roy Tex  
Livingston, Mont.

• *For any of our readers looking to connect with Marines from their past, our "Reader Assistance" section is available; we're happy to publish notices with no charge in order to assist Marines. Send an email to [s.bock@mca-marines.org](mailto:s.bock@mca-marines.org) or a letter to Reader Assistance Editor, Leatherneck Magazine, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134 with the pertinent*

*details and we'll run requests on a space-available basis.—Editor*

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



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# Saved Round

By Nancy S. Lichtman



USMC

**LETTER FROM HOME**—From private to general, mail call can lift the spirits of any Marine. In this picture, taken at Enogai Point in 1943, then-Colonel Harry B. Liversedge is reading the first letter he received from his family back home since leaving for the Pacific. Col Liversedge commanded the 1st Marine Raider Regiment and the XIV Corps Northern Landing Group during the push to expel the enemy from New Georgia in the Solomon Islands. His mixed Army and Marine command was used as infantry

rather than in the special operations role for which the Raiders had been trained and equipped.

Liversedge was awarded the first of two Navy Crosses for his actions leading the Raiders in the tough jungle fighting on New Georgia.

For more stories about how important mail call is for Marines and for the families who wait for them to return home, read “Priceless Treasures: Letters Home” on page 24. 🐞