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October 2018





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COVER: A Marine with 3rd Bn, 7th Marine Regiment, 1stMarDiv attached to Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force-Crisis Response-Central Command (SPMAGTF-CR-CC), prepares to board a MV-22 Osprey in Iraq at Fire Base Um Jorais (FB UJ), July 6. SPMAGTF-CR-CC Marines provided security at FB UJ during Operation Talon Spear. Photo by Cpl Carlos Lopez, USMC. Copies of the cover may be obtained by sending \$2 (for mailing costs) to *Leatherneck* Magazine, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134-0775.

# **Sound Off**



The bust of Cpl Tom Green sits in a special place at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #5146 in Athens, Tenn., honoring him for his faithful service.

#### 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.)

Corporal Tom Green was born July 4, 1947. Tom and I became good friends and made a tradition of observing each other's birthdays. On one occasion Tom gave me a subscription to *Leatherneck* magazine, which I still eagerly await at my doorstep. His birthday was always special. We'd all gather at Tom's farm where he and Major Jim Haney, USMC (Desert Storm veteran) would set up for a barbecue cookout for all his friends and family to enjoy. It was always a joyous occasion.

Tom was appointed the McMinn County Veterans Affairs officer in 1991, a post that he held for more than 20 years. He helped veterans obtain and receive their benefits, especially veterans and their families who had existing disabilities. He would drive them to VA hospitals that were hours away, wait for them to receive medical help, and then drive them home.

Tom died on Oct. 28, 2017, and the funeral was Nov. 3. It was a cold and rainy night but close to 500 veterans drove to Tom's hometown of Madisonville, Tenn.,

to pay their respects. My daughter and I stood in the receiving line for more than an hour to pay our respects to his family. It was very sad and touching.

It was decided that we should honor him for his extraordinary service as a caring Veterans Affairs officer who went the extra mile to help his fellow veterans. We decided to have a bronze bust made and mount it in a special place in our Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #5146 so we would always remember Tom's faithful service to us and as a war hero.

He did two combat tours in Vietnam. He was part of the Marine detachment that was completely surrounded at Khe Sanh for 77 days by the Viet Cong. We will always be grateful to Cpl Green and all the Marines who faced the enemy during those days and stood their ground. They are all very special heroes. All I can say is "Semper Fi" to them all.

CDR Jack Ferrell, USNR (Ret) Knoxville, Tenn.

#### **One Proud Pappy**

Our local Marine Corps League Detachment #759 in Lynchburg, Va., started a tradition of a monthly leatherneck dinner. Marines and Navy corpsmen with invited guests attend the dinners held at various restaurants around the area. Our rules have always been no business discussed, no head table, no speeches, no one in charge and no dinner fees. It is a great evening with some old jarheads enjoying great camaraderie, good food, good fun, clean jokes, war stories and sometimes B.S. We always end the evening by standing and singing "The Marines' Hymn" which gets applause from other patrons. For me, it is always a nice evening with old and new friends. We began with about a half dozen and now frequently have 22 to 30 attending.

Our April meeting was held in my old home town of Bedford and it turned out to be a wonderful surprise for me. My son insisted that we go even though I was not feeling well. Upon arrival I was shocked and pleased to see some family members attending from Texas that I had not seen in some time. Seven Marines with a total of 39 years of service attended; I am very proud of our service to our Corps over the years from 1955 to the present.

Among those attending were my sons Roger with six years of service and Mark, four years of service. My grandson Georgie with five years of service and my godson, Chris, a retired gunny with 16 years, were also there. Missing was my grandson Edwin who is currently a master sergeant with 18 years of service. Had he been able to be with us it would have made a total of 57 years to our Corps.

I want to give a special "oorah" to my family as we did set a new record of 32 family members in attendance that evening. And, as is my custom, I was able to award "oorah" rhinestone pins worn by the wives and ladies to my grand-daughter Carmen and Chris' wife Sharon.

It was a fantastic surprise and minifamily reunion. It certainly was a memorable evening for this old Marine and one proud "Pappy" of some of my favorite Marines.

Dale Wilson Sr. USMC, 1955-1963 Lynchburg, Va.

#### History of the Swagger Stick

There are a variety of stories concerning the history of the swagger stick. Some even trace it as far back as Roman centurions who carried a vine staff as an emblem of office. Although not entirely unknown to Marine Corps officers during the late 1800s, swagger sticks (or riding crops) gained prominence with them during World War I due to their encounter with British officers who carried them. A 1922 change in uniform regulations authorized them for enlisted personnel as well. Their appearance in the Marine Corps, however, was sporadic until they were encouraged by a 1952 regulation.

Encouraged but not required, by the mid-1950s swagger sticks were ubiquitous within the Corps.

I carried one in 1957 while assigned as assistant S-4 of the 4th Marines which was part of the 1st Marine Brigade stationed at Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii. Since they were widely carried but not required, policy concerning swagger sticks was more or less left up to the discretion of the local commander. Colonel John H. Masters, CO of the 4th Marines, did not require them in the regimental area, but Brigadier General Avery Kier encouraged them in the Brigade headquarters area.

The regimental S-4 officer was located a couple of doors down from the CO. Occasionally, Col Masters would appear in our doorway and ask to borrow my swagger stick. This was the signal that he was on his way to a meeting at Brigade headquarters.

In the spring of 1959, I was on temporary duty at NAS North Island in California as part of a planning staff associated with an upcoming brigade exercise at Camp Pendleton. One evening before going to dinner at the officers' club, I left my cover and swagger stick on a coat rack at the entrance. Later that evening I discovered that while my cover was still there, my swagger stick was missing. I did not immediately replace it, and, as it turned out, replacement was not necessary. Early in 1960, the newly installed Commandant of the Marine Corps, General David M. Shoup, referring to the swagger stick, stated, "It shall remain an optional item of interference. If you feel the need of it, carry it." Not surprisingly few Marines felt the need, and the era of the swagger stick was effectively over.

Col Richard H. Stableford, USMC (Ret) Dumfries, Va.

#### **History Questions**

I have a World War I recruiting poster with a World War I Marine putting a notch on his rifle stock, with the saying, "Another Notch Chateau-Thierry." This is a rather iconic poster. However, "The U.S. Marine Corps Story," revised edition, by J. Robert Moskin, says no Marine ever claimed he fought in Chateau-Thierry.



Maybe one of the WW I historians has an explanation.

Rich Basile 1957-1960 Belvidere, N.J.

I was a Marine infantry officer from 2nd Marine Division back in the mid-1970s. There has always been a curiosity I have had about an article from that time frame in your magazine. It was about the lost regiment (not battalion or company) that seemingly disappeared off a Pacific island when at war with the Japanese. Now that we are all buddy, buddy with [the Japanese], has anyone thought to ask where did they put that lost regiment, equipment, and all that was connected to them?

The second question is about who was issued what weapon in a World War II infantry platoon. In the 1970s every rifleman had an M16. But there were also carbines, M1 rifles, BARs and Tommy Guns, etc. What determined who got what? Did they give the smallest guy the BAR? Did the platoon commander and platoon sergeant get their choice to augment their .45 pistol?

James Rish Wewahitchka, Fla.

#### Camp Fuji, Japan

The July issue of *Leatherneck* has a photo on page 10 of Camp Fuji, Japan. I served there from 1954 to 1955 in the same Headquarters Battery, 3rd Battalion, 12th Marines until we were suddenly shipped out to form the 4th Marines (Reinforced), a regimental combat team.

When I was at Camp Fuji, we were quartered in tents, in which we built a



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Atsugi, Japan's East Camp, also called the Korean Village, in the winter of 1953-1954.



Sgt Edward MacIntyre, left, and Cpl Richard Kinnel get their shoes shined at the village of Mogil Dong, Pohang, South Korea, in the summer of 1954.

room of drywall to keep out the cold. We had two small stoves for warmth—it snowed in winter and the wind blew really hard. We only had 105 mm and 155 mm howitzers.

The photo gave me a sense of nostalgia (I am 83 years old), and I wonder if the Marines stationed there today still live in tents.

Cpl D.P. Van Blaricom Bellevue, Wash.

#### Memories at Atsugi, Japan

As a follow-up to a sea story "Stick 'Em Up" in the May issue of *Leatherneck*, Sergeant MacIntyre described how a fellow guard negligently fired his shotgun while on guard duty and the results.

MacIntyre's story brought back many memories of 64 years ago at Atsugi, Japan's East Camp. I knew him as a fellow aviation ordnanceman from 1953 to 1955. I was assigned to Marine Fighter Squadron 224, Marine Air Group 11, 1st Marine Air Wing.

I thought you might like to see a picture from one of my scrapbooks showing the so-called Korean Village and the fence they were guarding during the shooting and a photo of Sgt MacIntyre taken at K-3, Pohang, Korea, during the 1st MAW gunnery meet in the summer of 1954, one year after the truce ending the war.

MSgt Richard Kinnel, USMC (Ret) 1952-1973

Huntington Beach, Calif.

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#### Marine Corps Basic Badge

I received my July issue of *Leatherneck* today and to my surprise on page 6, the letter "Marine Corps Basic Badge" was displayed. I have not read or heard about it since I was honorably discharged in November 1955.

I coached recruits from MCRD San Diego, Calif., at Weapons Training Battalion Camp Mathews, San Clemente, Calif. I don't recall when I received my badge but I have it proudly displayed among all my other Marine mementos. My time at Camp Mathews was one of my best stations as a Marine.

I have heard there is a small monument at the California Community College in honor of Marine personnel who were stationed at Camp Mathews. Scuttlebutt perhaps?

The letter made my day. Marines are the best, in my unbiased opinion, and always will be.

> Sgt Joe J. Champagne, USMC Gold Bar, Wash.

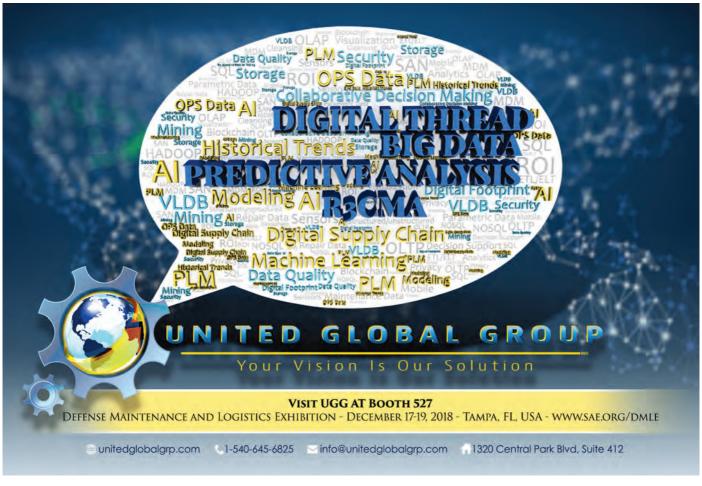
#### The Future of Cherry Point

Preferring my *Leatherneck* magazine in magazine form (not digital) I just couldn't wait to read your very informative article about Cherry Point [August issue], so I ventured online. You see, I was stationed

there from 1965 to 1968. Your history of Cherry Point added so much to the general history that I thought I knew.

My time at Cherry Point was just as Vietnam was beginning to really ramp up. I witnessed a lot of activity as aircraft of all types, Marine Corps C-130s, Air Force C-141s, even 707 airliners from scheduled airlines and charter airlines, arrived and departed from Cherry Point. They stopped to refuel or pick up Marine Corps units or all manner of cargo, destined for Vietnam, sometimes throughout the night. In addition to all of that we had a full complement of active squadrons, A-4s, A-6s, EA-6s, F-4s and C-130s, that continually conducted training missions in and around the many outlying installations, i.e., Bogue Field, Oak Grove and

Your descriptions of the surrounding area brought back many memories of off-time jaunts to the likes of Beaufort, New Bern, Moorhead City, the Outer Banks and, of course, Havelock. A recent return to Cherry Point saw a far different air station than the one in the 1960s. I guess the recent visit caught the beginning stages of the transition you described in your article. There were a few F/A-18s, a few TAV-8s, and the C-130 Squadron (VMGR-252) and even a few British or



French Jaguars. It was a mere shadow of its former self.

It was quite distressing to see empty flight lines in front of hangars. The control tower was relocated and made taller, which represented a notable change. A fellow crew chief and I had been invited by the CO of VR-1 to attend the decommissioning of the search and rescue operations and our beloved Pedro, the rescue chopper's call sign. We were part of the flight crew on Pedro back in the 1960s and had a bird's-eye view of the swamps and rivers and streams you described, and yes, there were alligators in those creeks and some of those alligators were pretty big.

One special memory was being the duty crew chief when the much decorated and history-making Major General Marion E. Carl, then CO of 2nd Marine Air Wing, stopped by to get some stick time on Pedro. His rank aside, he cut an imposing figure of over 6 feet with a temperament and a monosyllable vocabulary that left most everyone shaking in their boots.

Budget cuts and perhaps the evolving new missions for Cherry Point would seem to have been the catalyst for the searchand-rescue function to cease. When we were there three years ago or so, we did see many changes in and around Havelock and how New Bern had become quite upscale with many fine dining options throughout the downtown area which we heartily enjoyed.

The future of Cherry Point certainly sounds exciting and oh to once again be part of that transition and growth. It is heartening to know that Cherry Point will continue to play a crucial role in the Marine Corps' evolving new missions. Thankfully, time has a way of altering an enlisted man's perspective of life at Cherry Point from back in the 1960s. MCAS Cherry Point was a part of this "Old Corps" Marine's life and it now would seem that it will still be around long after I report for guard duty in heaven's streets. Thank you for a very enjoyable and informative article.

Cpl Ed Barewich USMC, 1964-1968 North Reading, Mass.

#### **Happy Birthday Sergeant**

In November 1964 my close friend, Sergeant Sheppard, and I were having a conversation about birthdays. I told him that the 28th of next month was my birthday. He asked, "Are you going to invite me to your party?" I said, "I am not having a party."

I had never had a birthday party. I grew up in a small west Texas town where the

[continued on page 67]



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# **In Every Clime and Place**

# BRIDGEPORT, CALIF. "Dark Horse" Takes on Mountainous Terrain

As "The Marines' Hymn" boasts, Marines must be prepared to operate in any clime and place. Each environment poses its own unique set of challenges, but training in those environments helps prepare Marines to overcome those challenges. The Marines of 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, known as "Dark Horse," took on a unique set of challenges in their latest field operation in the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range.

In order to be ready to deploy with the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit, Marines and Sailors with 3/5 conducted Mountain Exercise 4-18 at the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center, Bridgeport, Calif., from July 17 to Aug. 9, during which they also conducted their Marine Corps Combat Readiness Exercise.

According to Captain Dilan Swift, the assistant operations officer for 3/5, the

exercise was an opportunity for the battalion and its supporting units to conduct operations in a mountainous, high-altitude environment. It allowed the Marines and Sailors to conduct training operations they wouldn't have the opportunity to do anywhere else on the West Coast.

"While out here, we've done river crossings to help build our endurance as well as help us understand and appreciate that climates and situations aren't always comfortable," said Staff Sergeant Juan Fuentes, an infantry unit leader who acted as the assistant operations chief during the field exercise. "We also practice rappelling and climbing up the cliffs of these beautiful mountains here during cliff assault operations."

Training in an area like Bridgeport is strenuous and difficult.

"Due to the different terrain, dense vegetation and low oxygen levels, it is very challenging for us and allows us to push ourselves in ways we haven't before," Compiled by Sara W. Bock

said Fuentes. "Marines had to overcome their exhaustion while moving in this terrain, enduring the cold, overcoming their fears—whether it be of heights or anything else—to complete or help to complete their mission."

"Improvise, adapt and overcome" is one of the Marine Corps' unofficial mottos, and the Marines of 3/5 had to do just that.

"We had to adapt and adopt new ways of doing things to overcome certain challenges that we have never had to deal with and are not used to," said Fuentes. The battalion was evaluated to certify that its Marines are prepared to deploy with the 11th MEU and conduct their core mission-essential tasks (METs).

"We have four METs that the battalion has to train on," said Lieutenant Colonel Geoffry Hollopeter, the commanding officer of 3/5. "The two specific core METs that we are supposed to train up to the battalion level and perform during the MCCRE is offense and defense. What



CPL ADAM DUBLINSKE, I

Marines with Co I, 3/5 stage their gear after conducting a cliff assault operation during MTX 4-18 at MCMWTC Bridgeport, Calif., July 30, prior to joining the 11th MEU as its ground combat element.





Above left: HN Roy Wells, USN, a corpsman with Co I, 3/5, holds position during training at MCMWTC Bridgeport, Calif., July 30. MWMTC's mountainous, high-altitude environment provides unique training opportunities for Marines.

Above right: Capt Lucas Helms, left, an intelligence officer with 3/5, and LCpl Robert Fagaragan, a machine gunner with 3/5, discuss troop movements during MTX 4-18 at MCMWTC Bridgeport, Calif., July 30.

we're trying to get out of this exercise is to be evaluated on our offense and defense as a battalion by our higher regiment to certify that we can deploy and perform those core METs on deployment."

Following Mountain Exercise 4-18, 3/5 attached to the 11th MEU in preparation for their deployment, which will take place next year. As a sea-based Marine Air-Ground Task Force, the 11th MEU acts as a forward-deployed expeditionary crisis response force, embarking troops, vehicles, aircraft and equipment aboard war ships. The unit had a challenging month at Bridgeport, but they emerged even better than they were before.

"This is my third MTX and I've seen it from many different perspectives: as a platoon commander, executive officer and now as an assistant operations officer. Those experiences have given me some perspective and context to see that this battalion has done very well overall," said Swift. "The Marines have a lot to work on, we all do, but the staff did well, the companies did well and the Marines really challenged themselves and accomplished a lot."

Cpl Adam Dublinske, USMC

#### DIIBOUTI

#### Marines, Sailors, Air Force PJs Form "Dream Team"

U.S. Marines, Sailors and Air Force Pararescuemen (PJs) combined forces to train together at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, in late July. The training included simulated Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel (TRAP), a mass casualty scenario, high altitude-low opening (HALO) jump operations, medical training and fast-rope helicopter egress training. The goal was to integrate the forces and identify ways to better accomplish their shared mission of quickly responding to contingency scenarios, which ultimately could save lives.

"Marines and PJs working together are a deadly combination," said Major Mark O'Driscoll, the commander of the ground combat element with Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force–Crisis Response-Africa. "Marines can secure and defend the landing zone while PJs save lives and recover assets. It's the best of both worlds."

PJs bring highly specialized capabilities, such as technical rescue tools, to recover personnel from damaged vehicles or aircraft, recover sensitive items and



A Marine KC-130J crewmaster greets Air Force PJs assigned to the 82nd Expeditionary Rescue Squadron as they prepare for a HALO training jump at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, July 21. (Photo by TSqt Larry E. Reid Jr., USAF)



JUST KEEP SWIMMING—Marines with Maritime Raid Force, 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit, swim underwater during bilateral dive training with members of the Royal Jordanian Navy in Aqaba, Jordan, July 8. The unit is deployed aboard USS Iwo Jima (LHD-7) in the 5th Fleet area of operations to ensure maritime stability and security in the central region, connecting the Mediterranean and the Pacific through the western Indian Ocean and three strategic choke points.

provide medical care as certified paramedics. Bycomparing tactics, techniques and procedures, the Marines identified ways to become a more effective response force while improving their ability to integrate with other services.

"It helped bringing the perspective of an outsider that is a true professional at this mission set into the fold. We've walked away from this training with im-provements to planning and execution of this mission," said Second Lieutenant Luke Carraway, an infantry platoon commander with the SPMAGTF-CR-AF ground combat

The Air Force PJs also had the opportunity to practice integrating with other units and become more flexible in an increasingly joint environment.

"Integrating the joint force into a cohesive fighting force during exercises like this one is worth every ounce of sweat," said an Air Force officer with 82nd Expeditionary Rescue Squadron. "The Marines we worked with were some of the

hardest-working people I've across."

The SPMAGTF-CR-AF currently stands ready as a rapid response force for crisis response missions throughout the U.S. Africa Command area of responsibility in support of U.S. and NATO operations.

1stLt James Mercure, USMC and 1stLt Marco Valenzuela, USMC

#### CAMP DOUGLAS, WIS. 3rd MAW Mechanics Support **Exercise Northern Lightning**

Marines from units across 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing provided assets and personnel during Northern Lightning 18-2, a joint training exercise at Volk Field Counterland Training Center, Camp Douglas, Wis., Aug. 13-24.

Even though the primary mission of Northern Lightning is aviation training, there are hundreds of Marines behind the scenes ensuring pilots launch, execute their mission and land safely.

"In the air wing community we put in

a lot of man hours to make sure these jets can get up and accomplish their mission with no complications," said Corporal Kirk McLaughlin, an AV-8B Harrier power line mechanic for Marine Attack Squadron (VMA) 311, based at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Ariz. "Our num-ber one priority is ensuring that our pilots are safe, even if that means we are working on the weekends."

Multiple sections work together within a squadron to keep aircraft in top operating condition.

"It's not just one system or one shop that makes this jet work," said Cpl Guender, an avionics Alexandra technician for VMA-311. "Power lines, 'avi,' airframes, c-shop, ordnance or maintenance control ... we are all very important in making this jet fly safely for our pilots and the civilians who might be under the airspace we are working out of."

Ensuring missions are accomplished in a safe, effective manner is a top priority for the Marine Corps. Without mechanics



VMA-311 Marines perform post-flight maintenance checks on an AV-8B Harrier II during Exercise Northern Lightning at Volk Field Counterland Training Center, Camp Douglas, Wis., Aug. 13. The exercise strengthened interoperability among the Marine Corps, Navy and Air Force. (Photo by Sgt David Bickel, USMC)

who do their jobs well, aircraft would be unsafe and ineffective for the Marine Air-Ground Task Force.

"We all have a very integral part in ensuring our missions run smoothly, whether we are training in scenarios like Northern Lightning or actually employing our assets overseas."

Exercise Northern Lightning allowed the Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps to strengthen interoperability and gain a greater understanding of aviation capabilities within a joint fighting force.

Sgt David Bickel, USMC

#### OKINAWA, JAPAN Robots Are Essential Element Of Modern-Day EOD Training

Marines with 2nd Platoon, Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company, 9th Engineer Support Battalion, 3rd Marine Logistics Group engaged in charge employment training July 31-Aug. 2 at Camp Hansen, Marine Corps Base Camp Smedley D. Butler, Okinawa, Japan.

The training taught EOD technicians to confidently and safely neutralize an improvised explosive device using robotic platforms.

During the simulated scenarios, the technicians used the Mark II Talon EOD robot and the iRobot 310 Small Unmanned Ground Vehicle. Due to the rough, muddy



LCpl Hannah Crook, an aviation ordnance Marine with VMA-311, conducts maintenance checks on an AV-8B Harrier II at Camp Douglas, Wis., Aug. 13. Essential to the success of exercises like Northern Lightning are the Marines who work behind the scenes to ensure aircraft safety.



SSgt David Cain and Sgt Maximilian Musick of EOD Co, 9th ESB, 3rd MLG lift the tracks of the Mark II Talon EOD robot during charge employment training at Camp Hansen, Okinawa, Japan, Aug. 2. The training taught EOD technicians to neutralize IED threats with unmanned robotic platforms by safely finding and removing any hazards.

terrain in which they were operating, they mainly utilized the Mark II Talon.

The technicians sent the robot out from their vehicle, controlling it with a remote operator control unit. It was then used to travel into the danger area, without the technicians having to physically walk through the area. After the robot traversed through the danger area, the technicians were able to follow its tracks while sweeping for IEDs with a metal detector. They then retrieved the robot and returned it to its starting location.

The Marines combined everything they learned in recent training evolutions, said Sergeant Andrew Duggan, an EOD technician and training noncommissioned officer with EOD Co, 9th ESB. Duggan said the training ensures the Marines' cohesion is sound and the teams understand each other during the simulated IED scenarios.

PFC Terry Wong, USMC

#### MIRAMAR, CALIF.

#### Communications Field Training Tests Skills Under Pressure

Reserve Marines with Marine Wing Communications Squadron (MWCS) 48 conducted a field training exercise involving organic, terrestrial and satellite communications capabilities at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., June 14-18.

This annual training field exercise exists to challenge the Marines, keep



LCPL ISABELLA UKI

Reserve Marines with MWCS-48 attempt to establish radio contact with their base of operations during a field training exercise at MCAS Miramar, Calif., June 18. The exercise required them to use organic, terrestrial and satellite communications capabilities to maintain contact with an aviation combat element.

their minds sharp and make performing difficult tasks second nature.

"The purpose of this exercise is to bring the members of the unit together so the geo-dispersed units can build rapport with each other while increasing technical proficiency in all the various military occupational specialties," said Captain Corey Winters, company commander with MWCS-48.

In addition to MCAS Miramar, the exercise also took place at two locations on Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton. The Marines set up central connecting points, or nodes, to connect the three locations via satellite, enabling each group of Marines to have constant, single-channel contact with the Marines in the exercise's aviation combat element at Camp Pendleton.

During the exercise, noncommissioned officers with MWCS-48 gave communication classes to their junior Marines and practiced setting up communication equip-



ment while incorporating physical exercise to simulate stress and exhaustion. The communications setup drills combined with physical activity taught necessary skills and tested the Marines on their ability to concentrate when exhausted.

"This radio training environment stresses the Marines mentally and physically to challenge our minds and put us in that combat mindset," said Staff Sergeant Blake Dudek, transmissions chief with MWCS-48. "When you go to combat, you're going to be constantly physically and mentally exhausted, and we have to be able to set up communications in those circumstances."

Cpl Victor Mincy, USMC



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Gen Holland M. "Howlin' Mad" Smith

# The Legacy of HOLLAND M. SMITH

By Cpl Kyle Daly

Editor's note: The following article is the first-place winner of the 2018 Leatherneck Writing Contest. Major Richard A. "Rick" Stewart, USMC (Ret) sponsored the contest, which is open to enlisted Marines, through the Marine Corps Association & Foundation. Upcoming issues of Leatherneck will feature the secondand third-place winners and honorable mention entrants.

Holland Smith couldn't sleep.

Aboard a naval vessel somewhere in the central Pacific, the 61-year-old Marine again found it difficult to rest. For the second night in a row, the weight of a great task disturbed his slumber.

It was Nov. 20, 1943.

More than 400 miles south of the vessel, Smith's men—his Marines—occupied a sliver of beach on the island of Betio in the Tarawa Atoll. Throughout that day, they had suffered heavy casualties in what would become one of the bloodiest battles of the Pacific campaign. More than 800 Marines would be killed in action. Others would die of wounds or go missing.

"Casualties were so high that a man could hardly walk on the narrow beach without stepping on a body," a historian later wrote.

Smith wouldn't know the true nature of the devastation until four days later. The Nov. 20 assault—part of Operation Galvanic—involved simultaneous attacks on Japanese positions in the Gilbert Islands. Smith was aboard USS *Pennsylvania* (BB-38), where Rear Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner—the officer in charge of Galvanic's amphibious landings—had insisted he remain. *Pennsylvania* was near the island of Makin, the site of another amphibious assault being conducted by

Army troops. Turner wouldn't let Smith leave until Makin was secure.

Smith, understandably, grew impatient. Throughout the day, Smith was receiving brief messages from Tarawa. The senior Marine, who was in charge of the operation's landing forces, had received a request to use the last reserve troops for Tarawa. It was not a good sign.

"I had had no sleep the night before, and after committing our last reserve to the battle of Tarawa, sleep again was out of the question," he'd later write in his memoir.

It was now evening, and Smith, an



old man with gray hair and a potbelly, was alone in his cabin. During the war, the general, wearing his steel-rimmed glasses, would read his Bible each night. The Alabaman had received the Bible from his mother long ago, when he first joined the Corps.

"It was a great spiritual relaxation: an answer to the day's problems," he wrote.

It's unclear whether Smith received any answer to the major problems he faced on the evening of Nov. 20. What is clear is that Tarawa—an operation he would later call a "mistake"—was an apex in the

old man's long career. After years spent developing the Marine Corps' amphibious doctrine, Tarawa was the first time his ideas were put into practice. That practice was carried out by the V Amphibious Corps, made up of the 3rd, 4th and 5th Marine Divisions. August 2018 marked the 75th anniversary of V Amphibious Corps' formation.

In the midst of the bloody battles fought in November 1943, another conflict began to brew. This was a confrontation between Holland Smith and Army commander, Major General Ralph Smith, the man in charge of the Makin assault. The Army's slow approach of taking Makin—which held Smith back from being with his Marines on Tarawa—was criticized by the old Marine. A year later, Holland Smith would relieve Ralph Smith of his duties during the Battle of Saipan in the Marianas. This confrontation would, unfortunately, leave an unpleasant mark on the general's military career. Historians recognize Smith for his contribution to the U.S. military's success in the Pacific, but the Marine was never able to escape the controversy surrounding the firing of

MG Smith. Holland Smith is called the father of modern U.S. amphibious warfare, but he is perhaps more known as the poster child of inter-service rivalry during the Pacific War.

During the war, much friction existed between the services—the Army, Navy and Marine Corps.

U.S. Army GEN Douglas MacArthur even wrote in a letter, "Of all the faulty decisions of the war, perhaps the most unexplainable one was the failure to unify the command in the Pacific, [which] ... resulted in divided effort; the waste, diffusion, and duplication of force; and the consequent extension of the war with added casualties and cost."

The controversy surrounding Holland Smith's firing of Ralph Smith was only exacerbated by both the U.S. media and Holland Smith's 1949 memoir, "Coral and Brass." In his memoir, Smith criticized other services for their views of Marines.

Historian Sharon Tosi Lacey, author of the book "Pacific Blitzkrieg: World War II in the Central Pacific," told *Leatherneck* magazine in an email interview that Holland Smith's book "took aim at everyone who ever crossed him or his beloved Marines.

"His version of events was so twisted that, after reviewing a draft of the book, Marine Commandant Clifton Cates, Secretary of Defense James Forrestal, and Secretary of the Navy John Sullivan urged him not to publish it," Lacey said.

Lacey, chief historian for the U.S. Census Bureau, added that she thinks Smith's book even impacted the role Marines played in high command positions of future wars.

Another historian, Anne Cipriano Venzon, wrote that Smith "effectively eliminated himself from the ranks of the legendary leaders of World War II" with the way he treated other people. She explains this in her 2003 book "From Whaleboats to Amphibious Warfare: Lt. Gen. Howling Mad Smith and the U.S. Marine Corps."

"A man may earn a reputation for excellence, even brilliance in battle, but his relationships with people add the polish to that reputation that pushes him onto the level of greatness," Venzon wrote.

For those who wish to scrape the surface of history, it's easy to view Smith through the lens of his nickname: "Howlin' Mad." It's a nickname that perfectly fits a man who would fire a fellow general during battle. The name turns Smith into a caricature—a battle-hardened Marine who speaks his mind without any regard for the consequences of his statements.

In some respects, this was Holland "Howlin' Mad" Smith. He could be the



MG Ralph Smith, USA

caricature that was presented in the press. But like an iceberg, the public only saw what rose up out of the water. According to some historians, much more was hidden beneath the surface.

Harold Goldberg, a history professor at the University of the South in Tennessee and the author of "D-Day in the Pacific: The Battle of Saipan," said generals and admirals are multifaceted people, and Holland Smith was no different.

"He's a difficult person to characterize briefly because he's a complex [individual]," Goldberg said in an interview with *Leatherneck* magazine.

Goldberg said Smith certainly deserves credit for his contribution to the military's success in the Pacific, especially as a key innovator of modern amphibious warfare. Smith, who Goldberg described as an "old school Marine" clearly loved his Marines, he said.

But the friction he created with other services didn't help his reputation, Goldberg said. Readers of Smith's memoir "come away with an individual who is not appreciative ... of what the other services are contributing."

"That's not how you create a legacy," he said.

#### Joining the Corps

Smith was born on April 22, 1882, in Hatchechubbee, Ala., and grew up in an upper middle-class household. His family's financially secure life was provided through Smith's father, John V. Smith. The elder Smith was a successful lawyer who became deeply involved in politics.

Smith's father would later push his son to follow in his footsteps as a lawyer, but the younger Smith, even at an early age, showed signs of pursuing another calling. These signs included buying books about his heroes—Andrew Jackson and Napoleon—and keeping them hidden from his parents, two people who still felt the sting of America's Civil War.

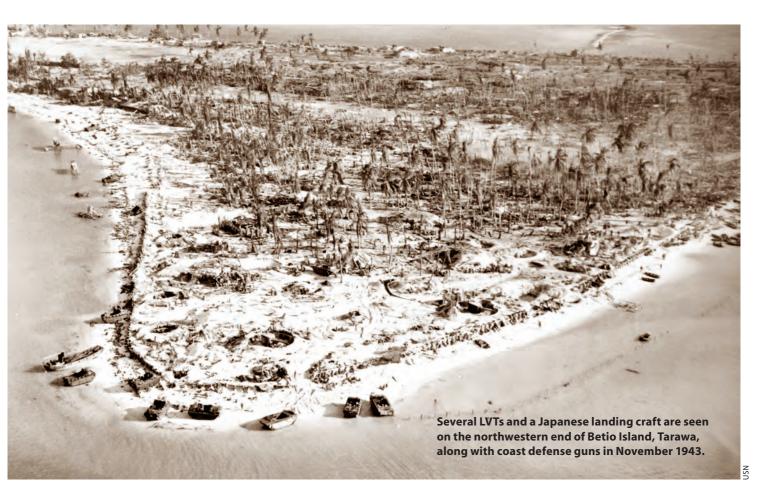
Smith attended the Alabama Polytechnic Institute, which later became Auburn University. Pushed by his father, he then secured a degree from the University of Alabama Law School in Tuscaloosa and worked at his father's law firm following graduation.

It was a career he was forced into, not one he chose willingly.

"Acquaintances always introduced me as John Smith's son and this made me



LtGen Holland M. Smith tours the area near the Saipan airport in August 1944.



realize that as long as I practiced law, I would be only John Smith's son," he wrote in his memoir. "Like most young men, I had independent ambitions and they were far removed from the musty labyrinths of law."

After losing what appeared to be an open-and-shut assault case, Smith vowed never to enter the courtroom again. His eyes instead focused on a military career.

Smith had already joined the Army National Guard following college and achieved the rank of first sergeant. Now, he hoped to enter the regular Army.

The young man—only in his early 20s—took a trip to Washington, D.C., to meet with Colonel Ariosto A. Wiley, an Alabama congressman with a military background. His mission was to secure a commission; however, after Smith and the congressman visited the War Department, they both learned there were no current openings for Army officers.

Wiley suggested another option: How about the Marines?

"I know it sounds odd today but I answered, 'What are the Marines?' "Smith wrote in his memoir. "Honestly, I didn't know."

Wiley gave the young man a rundown of the Marine Corps—both its history and purpose—and convinced Smith that he belonged in the Corps.

Smith wrote that the proudest day of

his life was in February 1903 when he successfully passed his examinations to become a Marine Corps officer. This set in motion a life that would take the young man on adventures across the world.

Smith wrote he was given the nickname "Howlin' Mad" while serving in the Philippines, his first duty station. The name was coined after an exhausting march through the jungle with the men under him in full gear. With almost 100 men on the march, Smith set out to break the record of the Marine captain who'd previously commanded his company. Venzon, the author of "From Whaleboats to Amphibious Warfare," wrote that the men marched the 28 miles in 6 hours and 10 minutes, breaking the captain's record by nearly two hours.

Referring to the nickname that was bestowed upon him, Smith wrote matter-of-factly: "I suppose I did use tempestuous language to keep the men moving because I was determined to break the record."

#### The Father of Modern Amphibious Warfare

In the coming years, Smith's career would take him to Nicaragua; Washington, D.C.; California; the Philippines; and China. He started a family when he married Ada Wilkinson of Phoenixville, Pa., a girl he met at a dinner party in Annapolis soon after he joined the Corps. But his

great love, it could be argued, was the Corps.

He led Marines in combat in 1916 when the war minister of the Dominican Republic attempted to seize power.

Within a year, Smith would see another warzone—this time, in France. At the Battle of Belleau Wood during the first world war, Smith served as a liaison officer, charged with keeping communication lines open. He was awarded the Croix de Guerre for his service.

In 1920, he was one of two Marines who received orders to attend the Naval War College in Newport, R.I., an institution that Smith described as a "laboratory of germinating ideas" on war. It was here that Smith presented ideas he had been contemplating for some time.

"The point at issue, which I introduced into all discussions, was the employment of Marines in an amphibious form of warfare," Smith wrote.

His concepts were outside the norm and went against naval doctrine of that time period, according to Smith.

In his memoir, Smith explained his ideas as such: Marines would be used during an amphibious assault with support from both warships and airpower.

One argument against his ideas, Smith wrote, was that warships could not put up an effective fight against powerful coastal artillery.

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"The original Navy reaction was that such a proposal was impracticable," he wrote. "Warships would be required to carry two types of ammunition: high explosive for land bombardment and armor-piercing for action with an enemy fleet. Such a double load would tax magazine capacity."

Another argument was against Marines themselves—a branch that those in the Navy called a "secondary force," according to Smith.

Smith argued not only for the use of Marines during an amphibious assault—because they were better trained at land warfare than Sailors—but also that Marines, not naval officers, should command operations once on shore.

"The principle of Marine participation on equal terms had never been recognized before," Smith wrote. "Most naval officers were incapable of envisioning a large Marine force operation without naval guidance."

This idea of allowing Marines to run the show following a beach assault had never been proposed, according to Smith.

Passages such as these in his memoir are prime examples of the general's contentious relationship with other services.

In 1932, years after attending the war college, Smith realized one piece of equipment was essential for Marines to properly secure a beachhead. During an inter-service exercise in Hawaii, Marines attempted to assault a beach riding in regular boats. According to Smith, the

boats were ineffective at crossing reefs, getting through the surf and landing a large number of men at one time.

The solution was provided by a boat manufacturer from New Orleans, Andrew Higgins.

Higgins designed and manufactured crafts that could navigate the shallow waters of the Mississippi River and shorelines of the Gulf Coast. (Editor's note: For more on the Higgins boat, see "Gallipoli? Where's That?" Parts I and II in the October and November 2016 issues.) They could also run up onto a shoreline and back off easily. After the military saw potential in amphibious assaults, a ramp was added to the boat and the rest was history.

Smith said the boat "did more to help win the war in the Pacific than any other single piece of equipment."

With it, Smith's full vision of a Marineled amphibious assault could be realized.

#### **Battle of Saipan**

In a letter he wrote to his family back home in Nebraska, Army Tech Sergeant Harold Moss described the horror he witnessed on the beaches of Saipan in the summer of 1944. Moss, whose letters were published online years later by his daughter, wrote that he wasn't part of the first wave of troops that hit the beach. But when he did go ashore, the sight was disturbing.

"The scenes of battle were everywhere, the effect of the naval shells, the [Japanese]

SOURTES OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES

LtGen Holland M. Smith, left, and ADM Raymond A. Spruance discuss the tactical situation during a lunch meeting at division headquarters on Saipan, Mariana Islands in July 1944.

own mortar fire on our troops and many bodies lying around, in all positions and all stages of decomposition," Moss wrote. "Sights that you hope you will never see again. Along the beach, in and out of the water, were wrecked tanks, alligator debris and a thousand things necessary to the campaign. The smell was terrible and the dust from tanks and vehicles was so thick you could hardly breathe."

So began the weeks-long effort to secure the island of Saipan in the Marianas. Saipan was one of three islands designated for capture as part of Operation Forager—the two other being Guam and Tinian. Smith was to be in charge of all troops—both Marines and Army—during the ground phase of the battle.

It had been seven months since Tarawa. The Gilbert Islands were about 2,000 miles southeast of their position. This joint force of Marines, soldiers and Sailors were fighting in new waters.

It was during this battle that another historic fight—often dubbed "Smith versus Smith"—took place.

Goldberg, the author of "D-Day in the Pacific: The Battle of Saipan," told Leatherneck magazine that he believes there are several facets to the confrontation that ultimately led to Howlin' Mad dismissing Ralph Smith from his command. One way Goldberg would characterize the conflict is a contrast between someone who attempted to control the situation by sticking to his battle script and timetable versus someone who wanted to study the situation by walking the terrain with his troops and then revise the plan where necessary.

"Holland Smith envisioned a three-day battle. When the battle did not play out the way he had imagined, he lost his temper," Goldberg said. The battle ended up lasting three weeks.

"He looked for someone to blame ... he wasn't going to blame his own plan so he placed the blame on the Army general. The real problem was that the Japanese refused to surrender according to Holland Smith's schedule."

Goldberg added, "Let's remember that no battle in the Pacific was easy or went according to plan. Perhaps Holland Smith should have read [19th-century military theorists Carl Von] Clausewitz: 'Everything in war is very simple. But the simplest thing is difficult.'"

In the weeks leading up to the battle, soldiers and Marines trained in Hawaii. Though, as noted in Goldberg's book, the two services did not train together.

"During the ensuing battle it became clear that Marines and soldiers, employing different battle tactics, had not carefully coordinated their views of how the battle



might proceed," Goldberg wrote in his book. "It was evident that the Marines and the Army approached the coming events from different perspectives, and this discrepancy led to an eventual clash between the service commanders during the battle."

The invasion of the 12-mile-long island began on June 15, 1944. By the second day, with casualties already high and Marine reserves already deployed, Holland Smith called on the Army's 27th Division, commanded by Major General Ralph Smith, to close a gap between two Marine divisions as part of an attack on an airfield.

After securing the airfield, the Divisions pushed to the northeast to capture Mount Tapotchau, a 1,555-foot peak on the center of the island. The attack began June 22. Venzon wrote that problems began when units within the 27th "failed to move out on time," with some departing "between

LtGen Holland M. Smith, left, aboard USS *Rocky Mount* (AGC-3) at H-hour on D-day off Saipan, June 15, 1944.

55 minutes and two hours late." They were further slowed down by rough terrain, which was made up of wooded hills and caves that the Japanese took full advantage of, according to Venzon.

Goldberg wrote that the slow progress of the Army division created a U-shape in the lines.

In his memoir, Smith wrote that he was reluctant to use the 27th after its past performances, including the fight at Makin in the Gilbert Islands.

When the 27th continued to make slow gains, Holland Smith decided to relieve the Army commander, replacing him with Major General Sanderford Jarman.

As Holland Smith describes in his memoir, when Admiral Raymond Spruance, overall commander of the operation, asked the Marine what should be done about the sagging lines, Howlin' Mad replied, "Ralph Smith has shown that he lacks aggressive spirit, and his division is slowing down our advance. He should be relieved."

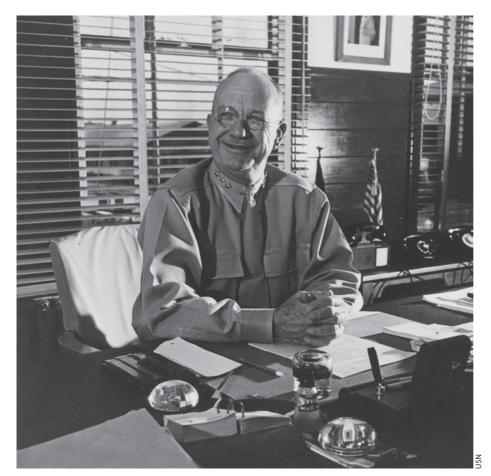
Holland Smith also claimed that the 27th's "failure to perform endangered American lives," according to Venzon.

Goldberg, in his book, offered two

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Marines from the first wave hug the beach on Saipan and prepare to move inland on D-day, June 15, 1944. Note the burning LVT in the background.



LtGen Smith is photographed in a genial mood at his desk on April 30, 1945.

opposing views from different historians on the firing of Ralph Smith. One historian, Goldberg wrote, judged the men of the 27th harshly, saying "there was some justification for Holland Smith's lack of confidence in the leadership of the regiment" as "the attack of the infantry companies was frequently uncoordinated; units repeatedly withdrew from advanced positions to their previous nights' bivouacs; they repeatedly yielded ground they had gained." Another person, the official historian of the 27th Division who was among the troops on Saipan, defended the division by pointing to the rough terrain and the number of enemy, saying, "these figures clearly refute the charge made against the battalion by one news magazine that it had failed dismally against a 'handful' of Japanese."

An all-Army board of inquiry that investigated the matter would agree that the Marine general had the authority to relieve Ralph Smith, but that Holland Smith was not fully informed about conditions on the ground and that the firing "was not justified by the facts."

Lacey, author of "Pacific Blitzkrieg" told *Leatherneck* in an email that she thinks Howlin' Mad's dislike of Ralph Smith and the 27th "colored his decision and made him view everything related to the 27th with a negative lens."

Holland Smith had held this view of the 27th since Operation Galvanic in the Gilbert Islands.

"I think he was just looking for an opportunity to fire Ralph Smith, and Ralph Smith gave him one," she said. "I'm not sure it was a firing offense, given the situation on the ground, but as the ground forces commander, that was Holland Smith's prerogative and decision to make."

Lacey also added that, in her opinion, had Ralph Smith stood up to Holland, the Marine "would have backed down and maybe even given him some (grudging) respect."

"Holland was a bit of a bully when it came to his Marines and I don't think he respected Ralph in part for not being the same about his soldiers," Lacey said. "In Holland's defense though, Ralph probably should have replaced his commanders before leaving Hawaii."

According to Venzon, MajGen Jarman, the Army commander who replaced Ralph Smith, found problems with the unit itself. Jarman ended up relieving one of its commanders, Colonel Russell G. Ayers.

Whatever the truth may be about the Army's performance, Holland Smith had Ralph Smith removed from the battlefield.

Venzon wrote that Smith knew his decision would "have grave and far-reaching consequences," but he did it because "he believed it was the right thing to do."

News of the firing made it into the media with Holland Smith being quoted in a September *Time* magazine article explaining that "circumstances forced [him]" to relieve MG Ralph Smith.

According to Ralph Smith's obituary in *The Washington Post* in 1998, each side of the issue was supported by a large media empire, with the Hearst newspapers backing the Army and criticizing the Marine Corps' high-casualty tactics and *Time* backing the Navy and Marines.

Lacey said that after the Army board of inquiry released its findings, relations were so strained between the services that those in high command "basically ordered a 'cease fire' to their respective services."

"However, the battle raged on for a few months via the press (the Hearst publications favored the Army; journalist Robert Sherrod who wrote for *Time* and *Life* favored the Marines), but eventually the furor died down as events in Europe and the Pacific became more important," Lacey said.

Ralph Smith, she said, never spoke publicly of the issue.

After Operation Forager, Holland Smith became commander of the new Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, effectively ending his command of V Amphibious Corps. He would go on to command expeditionary troops at Iwo Jima, the last battlefield he would ever see.

Smith retired from the military in May 1946 at age 64 and lived in southern California for 20 years until his death in 1967.

Lacey said in an email that since the Pacific theater of WW II was essentially the birthplace of joint modern operations, how the services handle issues like the Smith-versus-Smith episode "was critical to building trust."

"I think that had Holland Smith not published "Coral and Brass" right before war broke out in Korea, we would have seen Marines serving at higher levels of command much earlier that Iraq and Afghanistan," she said. "It serves as a reminder of the importance of understanding your sister services' cultures, that personalities are important in matters of command, and that the press has inordinate power in shaping and promoting a preferred narrative."

Author's bio: Cpl Daly is a Southern California native who joined the Marine Corps after working as an editor and reporter for various publications, including the Pacific Daily News in Guam. He is currently stationed in Okinawa, Japan.

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# **Leatherneck Laffs**



"Go get candy! We're not giving out MREs."



"I see ... I see four clicks up and three clicks left should put you dead center."



"Try to look unimportant. The enemy may be low on ammo."



"What? I'm calling us an Uber."



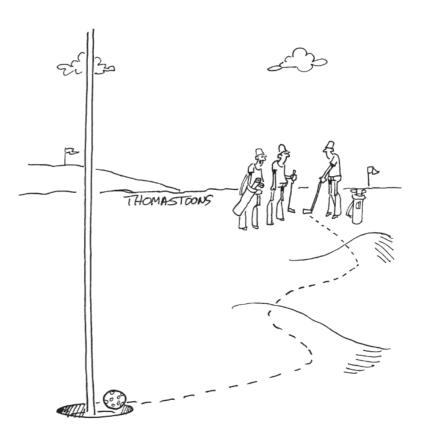
"Is there a 'Don't mess with me, I'm a Marine emoji?'"



"Inspection today?"



"How much farther do we have to run?" "As far as binoculars can see."



"Sir, he's our unit's best sniper."



"The Capture of Blanc Mont Ridge," painted by artist Capt George Harding, depicts Marines of 2nd Division at Essen and Elbe Hook, a part of the Hindenburg Line of impregnable trenches, during October 1918.

# The 2nd Division Pays a Heavy Price In the Battle of Blanc Mont Ridge

By J. Michael Miller

ajor General John A. Lejeune fully expected his 2nd Division would receive a well-deserved rest following the end of the battle of St. Mihiel. The soldiers and Marines pulled back from their advance positions near Thiaucourt on Sept. 16, 1918, allowing time to pay a courtesy visit to the 1st Corps Headquarters of Lieutenant General Hunter Liggett. MajGen Lejeune found the entire headquarters deserted with Liggett about to depart as well. The corps commander confided to Lejeune news of a massive Allied offensive designed to break the German defenses after four years of trench warfare.

The full power of General John J. Pershing's American Expeditionary Force would be unleashed on the Germans on a front running from the Meuse River to the western edges of the Argonne Forest. The American 1st Army attack would begin on Sept. 26 with 15 American divisions of the 29 American divisions available in France, supported by 189 light tanks including 142 American crews, 821 aircraft with 605 American pilots and 3,980 artillery pieces. The American attack included a formidable 600,000 men.

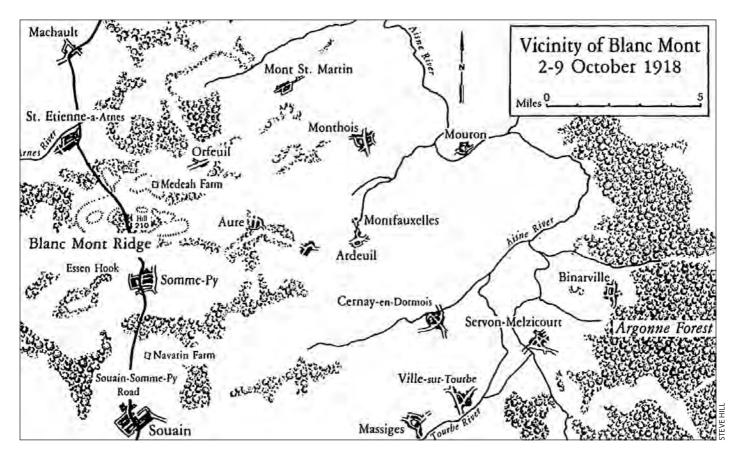
At the same time, the French 4th Army commanded by General Henri Gouraud would attack on the left flank of the Americans, expanding the assault to the west. French, British and Belgian attacks extended the offensive further up the line to the English

Channel, giving the Germans few options with their dwindling reserves facing both Allied armies.

With 15 American divisions committed in the Argonne, seven more holding the line at St. Mihiel, two assigned to the British forces, and three holding quiet sectors of the front, GEN Pershing had only two divisions remaining uncommitted to the fight, one of which was Lejeune's 2nd Division with the 4th Marine Brigade. Liggett assured Lejeune "the 2nd Division would be sorely missed on 'D-day' in the big attack." Lejeune's emotions about being left out of the most important American attack of the war were not recorded but his initial disappointment was replaced with a confidence the 2nd Division would join the battle at some point.

Unknown to Lejeune, Henri-Philippe Petain, the commander in chief of the French armies, requested on Sept. 16 that three American divisions be placed under General Gouraud's 4th Army, to be used to exploit the expected initial breakthrough. Pershing responded by assigning the 2nd Division along with the 36th Division, an Oklahoma-Texas National Guard Division. Three days before the grand assault, Lejeune received orders sending his division into the French sector.

Lejeune arrived early, establishing a new home in a castle "that was strong historically, but weak so far as comforts were concerned." He met with Gouraud immediately and was



impressed by the warrior appearance of his new commander. "Tall, erect, with a heavy dark brown beard," Lejeune noted, "he would be a distinguished man in any company, especially as his distinguished appearance was enhanced by an empty sleeve and very prominent limp." Gouraud lost an arm at Gallipoli in 1915, almost had a leg amputated in the same campaign and served extensively in North Africa before the war.

The two generals quickly reached a confident relationship with one another. Gouraud assured Lejeune he was a Marine as well, wearing the khaki brown uniform of the French Colonial forces.

The two talked of the great offensive and that the 2nd Division was yet to be attached to the French 4th Army, subject to release from reserve by General Petain. At the same time, Lejeune and his staff nervously awaited the arrival of the 2nd Division. While the massed armies on both sides of the lines prepared for battle, Lejeune was ill at ease by his role on the sidelines. "We had uncomfortable feelings during a troop movement by rail," Lejeune recalled. "For four days we could [do] nothing but wait."

On Sept. 26, Lejeune and his staff were awakened by the roar of the American and French artillery hurling shells into the night into the German trenches and road network. The break of dawn offered little solace to Lejeune, who visited French 4th Army Headquarters twice during the day to learn of the progress of the attack. Although

encouraged by the advance, Lejeune also learned on the following day of a plan to divide his Division and allow each brigade to be attached to a French Division, which was half the size of an American Division.

He immediately arranged a meeting with Gouraud to discourage any idea of splitting up his command. Gouraud ushered Lejeune into his private office and began the meeting by giving an update on the offensive, utilizing a large relief map. He offered news that the attack was going well, but was held upon the left flank by a series of commanding hills known as "Les Monts" near the village of Somme Py. These hills commanded the low ground about them and were determined too strong to take by direct assault. The German main line of resistance ran along these hills, centered on a high ridge known as "Le Massif du Blanc Mont" and extended to the east to another prominence at Medeah Fermre.

"If I could take this position by assault," Gouraud said as he

placed his hand on the map, "advance beyond to the vicinity of St. Etienne-a-Arnes, and hold the ground against the counterattacks which would be hurled against my troops, the enemy would be forced to evacuate," ending the four-year siege of Rheims and forcing the Germans to fall back at least 20 miles to the Aisne River. "My divisions, however, are worn out from the long stain of continuous fighting," he continued, "and from the effects of the heavy casualties they have suffered, and it is doubtful if they are equal to accomplishing this difficult task."

Lejeune was taken aback by Gouraud's words, far different than he expected. "General, if you do not divide the 2nd Division, but put it into line as a unit on a narrow front," he replied, "I am confident that it will be able to take Blanc Mont Ridge, advance beyond it, and hold its position there." These

were audacious words from Lejeune, making his promise only on the evaluation of a relief map, having never seen the ground. Gouraud immediately accepted Lejeune's claim at face value and pledged to speak with Petain for permission to send the 2nd Division to Blanc Mont.

Lejeune was summoned back to 4th Army Headquarters the



Gen Henri Gouraud French 4th Army Commander

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This steel and concrete machine-gun nest is typical of the many mutually supporting emplacements the Germans built in depth from Blanc Mont Ridge in St. Etienne.

following day, where Gouraud jubilantly informed him Petain approved his request. Within hours, orders arrived putting the 2nd Division in motion to the jump off area of Suippes. On Sept. 30, Lejeune opened his headquarters in the town at 10 a.m. It was a "dilapidated, desolate place" evacuated by its inhabitants in 1914, but was now filled with 25,000 Marines and soldiers of the 2nd Division, ready to make good on Lejeune's promise to take Blanc Mont and Medeah Ferme.

The 4th Marine Brigade began arriving in Chalons-Sur-Marne along with the rest of the Division from Sept. 26, 1918—the day the Allied offensive began. The Marines were unaware of the plans at 4th Army Headquarters but were more concerned with the sound of cannon fire ahead and all of the other indications that combat was certain in the near future. "Old Man Fear was with us again," recalled Sergeant Don V. Paradis of the 6th Marines. Trucks transported the Marines to Suippes, but the rest of the progress was made by hard marching under a hot sun, with every step taking the men closer to the sound of gunfire.

The landscape proved even less encouraging for the Marines after the devastation of four years of war. "The territory we moved to that afternoon was one of total desolation," Paradis remembered, "nothing [but] ruins of farmhouses, towns, with hardly a tree left standing ... the whole countryside was as far as we could see was covered with old trenches and churned up shell holes, not a very encouraging sight for men entering the lines." One of the lasting memories of the march was the kindness of French engineers who placed wooden boards around the larger shell holes and mine craters, allowing the Marines an easier path to the front.

The assembly of the 2nd Division was complete during the night of Sept. 30, with orders to move into the front-line trenches the following night. With all units now in place, the 2nd Division extended 2 miles in length, facing German defenses composed of four main trench lines about 500 yards deep. Detailed maps defined the enemy positions and daybreak would allow the Marines and soldiers to evaluate what lay ahead of them.

As the first rays of light appeared on Oct. 2, the 4th Marine Brigade could now see the daunting task waiting ahead. The simple view of Blanc Mont ridge proved ominous to the Marines in the low ground, who studied the terrain ahead with a veteran judgment of the impending challenges. The ridge stood 200 feet over the surrounding ground, dominating the rolling fields and steep slopes leading down to Somme Py. The ground was open, with the remains of scrub pine and covering vegetation, long destroyed by artillery fire. Intriguing was the white soil composed of a chalky limestone, which when disturbed by shells



Staff of 6th Marine Regiment in WW I. Col Harry Lee, CO, 6th Marines, is in the center of the front row and LtCol Thomas Holcomb is to his left. Directly behind Col Lee is Capt William B. Moore, one of the heroes of Belleau Wood. Capt David Bellamy, the adjutant of 3d Bn, 6th Marines, is on the far right of the front row.

holes and trenches, gave off a white dust and powder unlike anything the Marines had seen.

A small stream lay in the low ground ahead, marking the extent of the French advance. The initial German trench line was dug in along the north bank of the creek, intended as an outpost line with many communication trenches reaching up to the main line of resistance atop Blanc Mont Ridge. Several strong points dotted the slope, including the notorious Essen Hook and Bois de la Vipere, which threatened the flanks of any attack up the ridge. Concrete bunkers dotted the key terrain overlooking the sloping terrain running down to the Py Brook.

Blanc Mont offered challenges more difficult than any yet encountered by the Marine Brigade. They had encountered battles of open terrain at Belleau Wood and Soissons and deep trench systems at St. Mihiel, but commanding terrain like the ridge before them gave much evidence indicating reasons why the veteran French soldiers believed the ground had been too strong for a frontal assault. If Gen Lejeune had any second thoughts about the wisdom of his promise to Gouraud about taking the hill, they are not recorded. Lejeune still remained confident his men would meet the challenge ahead. He knew the battle would be extremely difficult and decided to "appeal to the espirit de corps," making certain each Marine and soldier understood "the workings of the great machine, that he himself was an important part of it.'

he 2nd Division order of the day for Oct. 1, 1918, read, "The greatest battles in the world's history are now being fought ... Owing to its worldwide reputation for skill and valor, the 2nd Division was selected by the commander in chief of the Allied armies as his special reserve, and has been held in readiness to strike a swift and powerful blow at a vital point in the enemy's line. The hour to move forward has now come, and I am confident that our Division will pierce the enemy's line, and once more gloriously defeat the enemy. Signed, John A. Lejeune."

Brigadier General Wendell C. Neville's 4th Marine Brigade took the front line facing the hill, with the Army 3rd Brigade on the right facing the Medeah Farm. Colonel Logan Feland's 5th Marine Regiment took the right of the Brigade line, and Colonel Harry Lee's 6th Marine Regiment took the left. Attack orders for Oct. 3 at 5:50 a.m. were issued late on the evening of Oct. 2 by the French 21st Corps. The late arrival of the orders delayed Lejeune's own Division order until 11 p.m., which reached the Marine Brigade by motorcycle courier at 4 a.m., and finally reached Major Earnest C. Williams, just as the attack was to begin. Fortunately, the veteran Marines and soldiers were briefed on the attack plan the evening before and already intimately knew their roles in the assault.

At the appointed moment, the 2nd Field Artillery Brigade reinforced by French artillery opened with a five-minute intense barrage instead of the usual long preparatory shelling, which was intended to surprise and disorient the Germans, giving them little notice of the attack. Thirty light and 18 heavy artillery batteries pounded Mont Blanc Ridge and then shifted into a rolling barrage, advancing about 100 yards every four minutes. French guns placed smoke over selected points on the ridge to cover the attack and placed a sustained barrage on enemy strong points. Four batteries of howitzers placed a continued fire on the crest of the ridge while long-range guns isolated the German position by shelling the rear areas behind Blanc Mont.

At exactly the same moment, the 6th Marines advanced in a line three battalions deep. The 2nd Battalion, led by Major Williams, took the lead with a detachment of French tanks, followed by the 1st Bn, led by Major Frederick Barker, and then Major George K. Shuler's 3rd Bn. The 5th Marines followed behind, led by Major Messersmith's 2nd Bn, then 3rd Bn led by Captain Larsen, with Major Hamilton's 1st Bn following behind. Each battalion was assigned a company



MajGen John A. Lejeune commanded the 2nd Division at Blanc Mont Ridge, October 1918.

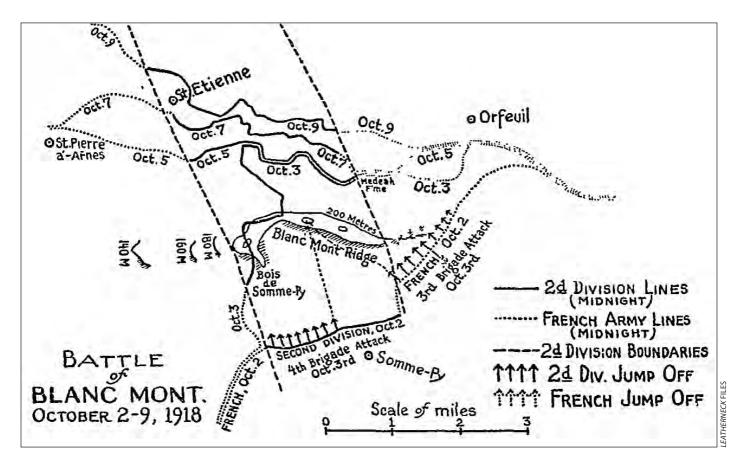
from the 6th Machine Gun Bn and the two Regiment's Machine Gun Companies.

The entire 6,000-man brigade was positioned as a battering ram designed to absorb casualties endured during the attack up the ridge, continuing momentum to the very crest of Blanc Mont. The 3rd Army Brigade deployed in the exact same formation, again supported by a wedge of French tanks. Each follow-on battalion encountered threats to either flank during the attack, while at the same time maintaining the strength to overcome each successive trench of the four line of German defense.

Even more brilliant was Lejeune's coordinating plan of attack for both brigades. Instead of the traditional attack formation of fighting side by side, each brigade fought separately, attacking Blanc Mont Ridge from opposing angles. The 4th Brigade attacked the ridge frontally, while the 3rd Brigade struck the Germans from the right oblique. Such a formation allowed a triangular gap between the assault columns, but prevented the Germans from focusing their fire in one direction. The Germans had to split their defensive effort to meet each assault, dividing and weakening their planned interlocking line of defense. The danger of friendly fire proved a concern as the two brigades converged on the hill.

Major General Lejeune and Army Colonel James C. Rhea, Second Division chief of staff, took a position on the high ground at Navarin Farm and anxiously scanned Mont Blanc Ridge with binoculars for signs of the advance, but could see little as the smoke and haze of the morning covered the ridge almost completely. "Suddenly, both of us gave shouts of Joy," Lejeune later wrote in his memoirs, "We saw the signal lights being fired from the top of the ridge. They began on the right of the objective, and one by one, we saw them until finally those on the extreme left became visible.'

The French commanders were overcome with admiration for



the Marines and soldiers of the 2nd Division. Lejeune received messages from Marshall Ferdinand Foch, Commander of the Allied Armies, Petain and Gouraud. French General Stanislaus Naulin, commanding the 21st Corps, urged Lejeune to press forward over the ridge deeper into the German rear areas, but the 2nd Division commander urged caution. The French divisions on each flank were nowhere near the 2nd Division advance. Until the French could advance, the Americans of the ridge were caught in a salient surrounded by Germans on three sides.

ware of their danger to counterattack, the 4th Marine Brigade consolidated their gains on Blanc Mont Ridge and secured both flanks. The 17th (A) Company, 5th Marines, captured the troublesome Essen Hook position on the front side of the ridge and turned the area over to the French soldiers on that flank. The company had to retake the Hook a second time when the French withdrew after a German counterattack. As night fell over the ridge, Lejeune felt his hold on the ridge secure despite the expected German counterattacks. The 4th Marine Brigade and 3rd Army BDE took over 2,000 German prisoners while driving a wedge into the main German line of defense over 3 miles deep, without any support on either flank. However, German reinforcements were seen arriving on the western and eastern portions of Blanc Mont Ridge during the night, along with a continuous day and night fire by German artillery on the captured trenches occupied by the Americans.

On Oct. 4, Lejeune ordered the 5th Marines to pass through the 6th Marines' lines and attack the town of St. Etienne, at the bottom of the back slope on Blanc Mont Ridge. He received reports that the Germans were already evacuating the series of hills as well as falling back from their hold on the city of Rheims, threatened during the last four years. Although the Germans were expected to fight dearly to prevent any further expansion from Blanc Mont Ridge until their withdrawal was secure, Lejeune took the opportunity to search out a way to exploit the enemy weakness.

The fury of the German defense descended on the 5th Marines

as soon as they moved past the crest of the ridge. Colonel Feland took the regiment across the ridge in a column of battalions, just as the previous day. The Germans were ready for the attack, moving some of their best units to the area, and were able to focus fire from three sides onto the Marines with no cover except for the partial concealment of the wheat. The 5th Marines advanced alone into the descending wheat fields. All of the advantages of the previous day were no longer supporting the attack, and the 5th Marines paid a heavy price for every yard of ground gained by their advance. Unknown to the Americans, the Germans had turned the town and cemetery into a "fortress" with prepared machine-gun emplacements and tunnels connecting the town with the stones of the cemetery and a creek bed which allowed the movement of troops without detection.

The Marines' attack came to a halt about 500 yards from St. Etienne where the fire was so severe that no further advance could be made. The veteran German infantry quickly discovered the Marines were deep in the open with exposed flanks and counterattacked immediately. Maj Hamilton noticed the Germans moving into the wheat fields and unleashed his 1st Bn into a counterattack of his own, plowing into the enemy and, after heavy losses, broke his flank. Feland reported back to Lejeune that his regiment was practically surrounded in the field on the back slope of Mont Blanc and needed support to move further. At the same time, Lejeune learned of repeated counterattacks on Colonel Lee's 6th Marines at the crest of the ridge and a troublesome nest of German machine guns on the ridge that would have to be attacked to secure the ridge.

General Gouraud arrived at 2nd Division headquarters at the moment of crisis and ordered his French divisions to remain under Lejeune's control as long as necessary to secure the American position. At the same time, he informed the Americans that the Germans were in full withdrawal to their reserve positions on the Suippe River. The Germans would fight desperately to hold the 2nd Division until that withdrawal was completed.

In this moment of crisis, Lejeune recognized the ability of

his men to fight off every counterattack, endure every German bombardment and fight on despite heavy losses. "Its morale was unshaken," he remembered later, "and its flaming spirit burned brightest when the danger was at its greatest and the fighting the hardest." The confidence of the Marines and soldiers was never in doubt. They had taken the crest of Blanc Mont, and would not release their grip.

At 6 a.m. on Oct. 5, Major Shuler's 3/6 attacked the stubborn German machine-gun position atop Mont Blanc Ridge, ending the last German resistance on the high ground. The Marines attacked again in the woods southeast of St. Etienne, linking up with the French 11th Corps and pushing the Germans farther away from the ridge. Local engagements continued on Oct. 6, as battle continued with the ever-present machine gun fortress of St. Etienne. The Marines learned to wait for darkness to reveal the gun flashes of the Germans and then reply with equal force. The number of dead found later in the underground emplacements testified to the accuracy of the Marine machine gunners.

accuracy of the Marine machine gunners.

With the front now stable and French units advancing on each flank, the battle of Blanc Mont now began to come to an end for the 2nd Division. The American 36th Division arrived on the evening of Oct. 6 to take over the line with inexperienced but high-quality soldiers from the Oklahoma-Texas National Guard. The 2nd Division units remained with the new units the following day, to help with the turnover of the new division, which had yet to experience heavy combat. As Lejeune met with General Naulin about the turnover, he was horrified to learn the French general planned an attack the following day to be led by the 36th Division.

Lejeune protested that the new division was composed of excellent soldiers but lacked the expertise to conduct such an attack against some of the best German units on the line. Naulin disagreed with Lejeune and expressed his expectation that the

Texas-Oklahoma soldiers would replicate the achievements of the 2nd Division. When Lejeune protested further, the French general departed with the words, "Tomorrow will be another great day for the 21st Corps!" When the orders came out for the attack, Lejeune's only role was providing flank security for the attack. Major Barker's 1/6 would support the left of the 36th Division's attack, with a battalion of the 9th Infantry taking the right flank.

The 36th Division attack was initially successful, but the inevitable German counterattacks crushed the advance and rolled the soldiers back to their starting point. Lejeune's worst fears were realized at a heavy cost to the Americans of the 36th Division. Some of the Marine units engaged the German counterattacks, particularly Major Shuler's 3/6 Marines who commented, "We shot the tar out of the Boche."

Lejeune's 2nd Division was officially withdrawn from the battle on the evening of Oct. 9, with command passed to the 36th Division at 10 a.m. on Oct. 10, 1918. The entire 2nd Division lost 209 officers and 4,764 enlisted men were killed, wounded or missing. The 4th Marine Brigade alone suffered 2,369 casualties, the second highest total of any Marine battle of World War I, after Belleau Wood. After the battle, Lejeune issued an order to the men of the Division, which ended with his true sentiment about this battle:

"To be able to say when the war is finished I belong to the 2nd Division; I fought with it at the battle of Blanc Mont Ridge, will be the highest honor that can come to any man."

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 covers the battles of Belleau Wood and Soissons.

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# **Sea Stories**

#### SEA STORY OF THE MONTH

#### A Bed and Breakfast Behind Bars

After enjoying New Year's leave in January 1968, I was due back to Camp Lejeune on Jan. 5, my second wedding anniversary. Leaving late on Jan. 4, I arrived at the West Virginia Turnpike to find it was closed due to a snowstorm. Long before the convenience of a GPS, I dug out a torn and tattered map of the East Coast.

My discharge date was Jan. 31, and I really did not want to risk being UA. I can't recall the route I took but do remember skirting Washington, D.C., on into southern Virginia and North Carolina. This obviously was going to take more time than I had.

When I stopped at the red lights in the small towns along the route, I put my '65 Mustang in neutral, and rested my eyes, as they were getting heavier with each mile. This worked well—for a while. At one town I was awakened by a metallic (flashlight) click, click on the driver's window. I knew the police officer at the window thought I was drunk.

Explaining my problem of reaching base before morning formation did not impress him. "I'll just come down the road later and scoop you up with a shovel. Follow me," he said. The officer was placing me under protective custody.

Entering his small empty three-cell jail I was given a blanket as he closed the cell door. That made me a bit nervous and I asked if that was necessary. He said, "Naw, just a habit," as he locked the door. "You go ahead and rest. See you in the morning."

When I awoke, there was bright sunlight outside but I had no idea what time it was. The police officer called to the matron (his wife), "He's up, bring his breakfast."

He then said, "I talked to the OD at Lejeune telling him why I had you and wasn't letting you go. He granted a 24-hour extension."

That was the first and last time I was incarcerated. It probably saved my life.

> Jon Johnson Sidney, Ohio

#### We Don't Do Luggage

The Marine Corps
Reserve Officers
Association holds an annual convention and in mid-1974 it was held in Washington, D.C., in an elegant hotel.
Two Marine gunners and myself from our battalion attended.

Late one afternoon, we were standing together in our dress blues and dress whites, all with medals and ribbons on, facing away from our hotel entrance waiting for the valet to bring our car when we heard a loud female voice. Since we were talking among ourselves, we didn't turn around. The ear-splitting and obnoxious voice belonged to a seemingly impaired woman who reiterated her request for all to hear. "Will one of you get my bags from the car and bring them into the lobby?"

We did an about-face in unison and the first gunner replied, "We don't do luggage." The second gunner replied, "We work for the president of the United States." I, the last in line, said, "We quell insurrections and fight wars."

The lady looked quizzically at us and

appeared not to understand. She shrugged and entered the hotel through the revolving door, which took three turns before she exited. She may have had a few too many before coming there.

So much for being recognized in uniform in Washington, D.C.

CWO-4 David L. Horne USMC (Ret) West Palm Beach, Fla.

#### Happy Birthday to Me

When I was in boot camp at MCRD San Diego in 1953, we hiked to Camp Matthews for rifle qualification and spent three weeks there, two snapping in and one week firing. Our three weeks on the range were during Christmas and my birthday, Dec. 20. One evening, I was called to the DI tent to collect my mail. Little did I know what was to happen.

I was told I had
two minutes to eat
the two-layer cake.
I offered it to the DIs
to take home
for Christmas—
that didn't work
so I sat down and
started eating.

I went through the ritual knocking and asking to enter. When I was given permission, I saw a box held by my senior DI; it was from my grandmother. I knew it was a birthday cake. I also knew, as did all recruits, that no pogey bait or any outside chow was allowed.

I was told I had two minutes to eat the two-layer cake. I offered it to the DIs to take home for Christmas—that didn't work so I sat down and started eating. I began to choke and gag and my DI said, "Stop." I thought, "Great!" Not so. He told me another recruit had gotten popcorn balls and that they went well with cake so I had to eat both.

I was dismissed, so I ran straight to the head and stuck my finger down my throat and got rid of everything.

The next day we fired for record, and I was the top expert in our platoon. I was awarded a clock radio from our company commander. No more birthday cake for me until I graduated.

Sgt Peter Wojciechowski USMC, 1953-1956 Ham Lake, Minn.

## **Chance Meeting In Hong Kong**

In the fall of 1967, the heavy cruiser USS Saint Paul (CA-73) was in Hong Kong, and the Sailors and Marine Detachment were allowed liberty. A highlight of our visit was a chance meeting with John Russell who had been a Marine lieutenant on Guadalcanal with the 6th Marines during World War II. Mr. Russell was better known to us as the star of the "Lawman" TV series which was shown from 1958 to 1962 in the United States.

Mr. Russell was in Hong Kong to promote the forthcoming debut of the "Lawman" series in Australia and New Zealand sponsored by Qantas Airlines, which had reserved a penthouse banquet room at the Hong Kong Hilton for publicity events.

Mr. Russell graciously invited the Marine

Detachment to be his guests at the Hilton festivities which included complimentary food and beverages served by Qantas flight attendants. He saw to it that we all enjoyed a great time.

When it was time for us to leave. Mr. Russell downplayed our thanks and said, "I was only doing what one Marine always does for another. Besides, Qantas was picking up the tab. Semper Fi."

> Capt Joseph Reber USMC (Ret) Surprise, Ariz.

#### Beer vs. Rank

In August 1966 "Golf" Battery, 2nd Battalion, 11th Marines moved off the sand in Chu Lai, and settled in the hills. A club for beer was deemed necessary, so we acquired wood decking and screening from the Seabees. All hands kicked in some money and the mess tent became a bamboo mess club screened in by disassembling 106 ammo boxes, straightening the nails and framing the walls. After evening chow, it became our club with soda and an allotment of two cans of beer for 15 cents each for

those not on watch or gun duty. As a non-drinker I was made club manager.

Beer runs to Chu Lai became a regular event in which I did not participate, but when the 6x6 truck returned, my job was to get it unloaded and store it in the beer tent.

One September day, I had my small working party humping in the heat when I noticed a newbie in a white

I had my small working party humping in the heat when I noticed a newbie in a white T-shirt just watching us.

T-shirt just watching us. I found this annoying and was sure he'd want a cold beer later. Using my best salty 3rd class petty officer vocabulary, along with some Marine terms, I said, "Get over here and help us unload the beer or you won't get any later!" He hopped to it

and pitched right in with no argument. In no time the beer was stowed and the working party dismissed.

Slipping back into the shade of my sick bay tent, I was surprised to have the gunny storm in telling me I was wanted in the headquarters tent. It turned out that the newbie was a new lieutenant. I made my apologies noting that neither of us was wearing rank. Nothing more was said.

> Guy J. Preuss San Diego, Calif.

#### **SWAK**

Early in 1954 I was in boot camp at MCRD, San Diego, with eight of my friends from Norwood, Ohio. We had actually completed several weeks of training and I thought I had pretty much gotten used to the routines.

However, one evening, one of our drill instructors, Private First Class McAdams, was holding mail call in the front end of one of our barracks. He had decided to do mail call differently so he was sitting on a top bunk distributing the mail. He would call the recipient's name and then with some sort of a comment pass the mail down to the lucky receiver.

Prior to calling the next name we all noticed that he was really inspecting the envelope closely. Wouldn't you know that's when he called "Allen Hott." McAdams then ordered me to have a seat on top of the bunk. He asked if I had a girlfriend back home. I told him yes, sort of.

He then asked, "Hott, what does SWAK mean?"

Well, I knew but I wasn't sure I wanted to tell him.

I did answer that I thought it meant sealed with a kiss.

After he and the entire platoon finished laughing, he told me that since I couldn't respond exactly in that fashion he thought it would be appropriate if I opened the envelope with my teeth saying, "... so maybe you will get the feel of her lips on the envelope."

Knowing I had no choice, I began tearing at the envelope with my teeth until I could get to the letter. He then told me to get down off the bunk and get rid of the envelope in the trash can. As I did so, he and Platoon 207 all roared in laughter.

This was one of my highlights of life in boot camp with PFC McAdams and Sergeant Eckstein.

> Allen Hott Canton, Ga.

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



"Golf" Battery, 2nd Battalion, 11th Marines built a bamboo mess club with wood decking and screening in Chu Lai, 1966. The Army had the benefit of using it when the Marines moved to Hill 55 outside of Da Nang. Note the ammo box foundation.

#### In Commemoration Of the 35th Anniversary



# First Blood in Beirut

By Eric Hammel

he factional hostilities that had been simmering for two months in and around Beirut finally erupted on Aug. 28, 1983—a Sunday.

The flashpoint was reached only after Israel Defense Force (IDF) units precipitously turned a number of its checkpoints in East Beirut and the northern Shouf over to Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) units.

Without the heel of the IDF firmly planted upon their necks, local warlords moved their militia forces into the power vacuum created by the limited IDF withdrawal. Their target was the LAF,

for any defeat suffered by that weak force would serve to undermine the Christian-led Lebanese government and, it was assumed, enhance the positions of the disparate Muslim groups seeking to gain increased power within and without the state structure.

Early on Sunday, Aug. 28, 1983, First Lieutenant Mark Singleton, the Charlie Battery, 1st Battalion, 10th Marine Regiment, forward observer attached to "Alpha" Company, 1st Bn, 8th Marines, led a small contingent of Marines and French Foreign Legionnaires into the foothills east of Beirut International Airport (BIA) to conduct a cross-training exercise. Everyone was given the chance

to fire everyone else's weapons amid exchanges of compliments and the goodnatured spinning of elitist tall tales. Several of the Marines were surprised to discover that the Legionnaires were not Frenchmen but foreigners!

As the Marines and Legionnaires were returning to Co A to participate in the scheduled weekly cookout and basketball game, 1stLt Singleton and others noted that the city was, well, "a little too quiet." The traffic flow was unusually light for a Sunday, which was a Muslim workday even if it was the Christian sabbath, and there did not seem to be the usual numbers of pedestrians on the streets.



Left: A forward observation point in Beirut, Lebanon, 1982. Co A's combination command/observation post was situated on a tiny, isolated knoll overlooking the three main platoon positions and numerous other posts and checkpoints throughout the company's sector.

Below: A view of war-ravaged Beirut, Lebanon. After a routine patrol in the midst of unfettered chaos, Cpl Moore and his patrol returned back to their company position reporting their observations of a potential fight.



### "They're Shooting at Us!"

First Lieutenants Greg Balzer and Chuck Schnorf of the Battalion Landing Team (BLT) staff were jogging on the perimeter road near Co A when Balzer heard several rounds crack overhead.

"Chuck. I think someone is shooting at us."

"Nah! Keep running."

Balzer heard several more rounds crack overhead as the two continued through the Co A sector and turned up a dirt road detour past a construction site.

"Chuck, I know they're shooting at us." "No, no! Keep running. No problem."

The two kept going and finally reached Rock Base, the helo control area just north of the Marine Amphibious Unit (MAU) and BLT headquarters buildings. It came as no great shock to Balzer that all the air-wingers were hiding behind every bit of available cover.

Two rounds pinged off the pavement

and the two lieutenants dropped in unison to the roadway.

"Jesus Christ," Schnorf bellowed, "they're shooting at us!"

"No doubt, Chuck," Balzer replied. "They are definitely doing that."

### **Increasing Unrest**

While most of Co A spent the early afternoon embroiled in intramural sports and a cookout with the Legionnaires, Corporal Terry Moore was on the streets of the Shiite Muslim town of Hay-es-Salaam, or "Hooterville," trying to conduct a routine patrol in the midst of unfettered chaos. Amid shouted guttural warnings of "There's going to be a fight," hundreds of people were running back and forth along the narrow streets, including numerous young men armed with rifles, submachine guns, and rocketpropelled grenades (RPGs). The farther the Marine patrol walked, the greater the

The farther the Marine patrol walked, the greater the unrest it encountered. At length, Cpl Moore opted to change the patrol's projected route and head for home.

unrest it encountered. At length, Cpl Moore opted to change the patrol's projected route and head for home.

No sooner had Moore's vulnerable patrol cleared the built-up area to walk across an open field fronting the Co A position than nine mortar rounds passed overhead, undoubtedly on their way to LAF positions near the BIA.

The reinforced squad reflexively de-



A view, from a fortified position, of the hills surrounding Beirut.

ployed in the field, setting up its M-60 machine gun and pausing tensely to see what might befall it. There was no additional fire, so Cpl Moore hurriedly led his Marines back into the company position and reported his observations to the company command post (CP).

Lance Corporal Frank Orians, a Co A M-60 gunner, was supposed to have had the day off but had been ordered to replace one of the company's star basketball players on guard duty. He arrived at his post at exactly 4 p.m., just as the first mortar salvo was passing over Cpl Moore's patrol.

The sergeant of the guard ordered all hands into their bunkers to await developments. When nothing happened for several minutes, he allowed his Ma-rines to stand down. LCpl Orians was greeted on the outside by a fresh salvo, which, though it was not close, was none-theless unsettling.

### **Condition I**

The indirect overhead fire was unnerv-ing enough, but Co A and the Legionnaires were really put on edge by the whispered whee, whee, whee of small-arms fire from the east as it transited the company sector only 10 or 15 feet overhead.

There was a rush to don helmets and flak jackets—and finish off the last of the beer. Then the Legionnaires headed home. Captain Paul Roy, the dark, athletic Mainestater who commanded Co A, ordered his troops into their bunkers, at full alert. Marines throughout the BIA complex were

ordered into Condition I, the attack-imminent combat status.

The Co A combination command/ob-ser va tion post was situated on a tiny, isolated knoll overlooking the three main platoon positions and numerous posts and checkpoints throughout the company's sector. The post, which had been inherited from all the companies of the three pre-vious BLTs that had been deployed around

The disciplined troops
took it for hours,
but a noticeably rising
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to request permission
to return fire.

the airport and Hooterville since late September 1982, was more ceremonial than real, for it offered no overhead pro-tection and was, in fact, shielded only by a knee-high sandbag blast wall.

Most of the troops initially were willing to buy the official line that they happened to be situated between the bolder militia factions and the intended target, the LAF. But while mortar and rocket fire continued to pass high overhead long into the night, small-arms fire passed overhead at between 8 and 10 feet. Many bullets fired from adjacent Hooterville dinged into squad tents throughout the company sector.

Co A's 2nd Platoon was closest to Hooterville and most of the small-arms fire directed from the Shiite Muslim town against Co A struck the dirt berm around and the tent tops within the platoon sector. The disciplined troops took it for hours, but a noticeably rising volume of unanswered fire led the platoon leader, 1stLt Brent Smith, to request permission to return fire. The message was sent up the command chain, and permission to engage in limited form came back at about 6 p.m. — designated shooters could return fire if they had clear targets, if those targets were actually initiating or returning fire and if the return fire did not spill over onto civilian targets.

The 2nd Plt shooters were closely supervised. Since they felt it was imperative to demonstrate their will and ability to dominate the battlefield, the NCOs in charge of the return fire directed several shooters against each confirmed target. It was, however, extremely hard to spot the Shiite fighters; survival of the fittest since the start of the Lebanese civil war eight years earlier had taught snipers to fire through open windows two or even three buildings back from the line of structures facing Co A. It was thus extremely difficult for the Marine shooters to confirm even the sighting of clear targets, and the very close supervision by 1stLt Smith and his NCOs prevented a wholesale venting of frustrations.

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No one in 2nd Plt had ever fired at live targets, nor had anyone ever been one. One of the truly surprising bonuses for the troops was the general rush of power, danger and fear that they found easy to swallow.

The militiamen's marksmanship, if it was intended to kill or maim

Marines, was egregious.

The fire tapered off after midnight and stopped altogether by 2 a.m. Condition I was lifted and three Marines out of every four were released to get some sleep in their bunkers.

The gunfire began again at about 4 a.m., rousting 1st Platoon and the company command group. It was light fire, perhaps typical of the general mayhem Co A had endured for weeks. No one did much about it. It woke Hospitalman Victor Oglesby, the 1st Plt corpsman, who lay listlessly on his cot for a few minutes before reaching for his helmet.

#### Incoming

The overhead fire heated up at about 7 a.m., when elements of the LAF's 1st Air Assault Battalion performed a helicopter landing operation on the main BIA runway directly behind the Co A CP. The commander of one of the LAF companies

joined Capt Roy to learn what he could about known militia positions across the way in Hooterville. While the helo assault and briefing were still underway, gunners in the Shouf and around Khalde fired medium artillery, 82 mm mortars, 106 mm recoilless rifles, and 122 mm Katyusha rockets against Air Assault troopers and the nearby LAF encampments. The fire really got heavy as the Air Assault platoons moved through Co A's lines and on toward Hooterville to reinforce LAF units already embroiled in battles with Shiite Amal militia units. Several rounds landed around the airport hangars and a near miss cleared the control tower of air traffic controllers. The Air Assault companies continued eastward toward the jointly manned checkpoint at Combat Post 76 and then swung northward through Hooterville.

Captain Bob Funk's Charlie Btry, 1/10, had been fairly innocent bystanders in the widening circle of violence engulfing the adjacent Co A position. Located on a hill several hundred meters to the west of Co A, Charlie Btry Marines had seen and heard small-arms fire and had even counted 106 mm recoilless rifle rounds as they whizzed by on their way to the nearby LAF training camp. A few small-arms rounds nicked tents and

An aerial view of Co A's 1st Plt encampment. 2ndLt George Losey and SSgt Alexander Ortega were killed in the center of the three tents. (Photo courtesy of Eric Hammel)

5-ton trucks within the battery's hilltop compound, but the damage was negligible and no one was hit.

At 7:30 a.m., the Charlie Btry executive officer ordered the guns manned and prepared to fire. The level of small-arms fire steadily increased.

### **Sniper Targets**

The fire through the Co A sector suddenly intensified at about 8 a.m. All hands not already underground headed to the bunkers and trenches, where they stayed for about an hour. Then corporals and sergeants drifted into the open to carry out their duties. Soon, most of the troops simply left their bunkers to make head calls, get food or do the things they wanted to do.

Capt Roy and First Lieutenant Andy May, the temporary company executive officer, drew the particular attention of one militia sniper as they went about their business at the isolated company



A Marine camp set up on the beach as seen from the sea, 1982. (USMC photo)

CP. Beginning at about 8 a.m., one or the other drew fire every time he popped his head over the sandbag blast wall. The two tested their paranoia a few times and came away convinced the fire was meant especially for them. There was not a great deal of danger because the sniper was on lower ground and had a tendency to fire high. There was no telling, however, if he might improve. The two victims shared some weighty advice, "Keep your head down," then invective, "I can't believe this bastard," and finally relief every time the terrible marksman missed.

### Lt Losev

Shooting at gunmen who were not actually firing their weapons was forbidden; all the Marines could do was watch as groups of three or four Muslim fighters walked with their personal weapons slung into buildings or bunkers fronting on Co A's positions. Everyone knew that these men would fire on the company until they ran out of ammunition or grew bored. And everyone knew the militiamen would then sling their weapons and walk in plain view—unmolested by Marine gunfire—to a café (Café Daniel) or what was assumed to be their armory. It was not unusual for militiamen in the open to point their

fingers at the Marines and shout, "Bang, bang" amid general group laughter. All the Marines could do in response was "flip them the bird," which simply didn't do the job.

As the intensity of the gunfire picked up at about 9 a.m. in the face of 2nd Plt's

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continued response, Second Lieutenant George Losey, the 1st Plt leader, ordered all hands to take cover. Then he and his platoon sergeant, Staff Sergeant Alexander Ortega, split up to check the trenches and bunkers, agreeing to meet back at their own hooch, the middle of three sandbagged tents covering most of the platoon compound.

Second Lieutenant Losey had been the last of the Co A officers to come aboard before the deployment. He was different from the other lieutenants in several respects. He was, at 28, a few years older. He had also accepted a commission in the Marine Corps following an enlisted hitch as an Army Ranger. He was a quiet, self-reliant man of deep religious convictions. The junior lieutenant, Losey had first commanded Weapons Platoon, then had been moved with SSgt Ortega to 1st Plt, whose commander, Andy May, was filling in for the detached company executive officer. Of all the Co A officers, George Losey was the best liked among the enlisted Marines. Though Losey was scrupulous in avoiding any but the routine fraternization that arises out of living with enlisted Marines in the field, his prior enlisted service seemed to afford him a special aptitude for dealing with their problems and concerns. He was a good leader whose soft-spoken orders were the law because the troops wanted them to be.

Capt Bob Funk left the Charlie Btry fire direction center at about 8:30 a.m. to man a forward post from which he had a clear view of Hooterville, which was just

down the hill on which the howitzers were emplaced. Funk watched, incredulous, as a militiaman stood up on top of a building in full view of the Marines manning the bunker and repeatedly fired RPGs into the street below.

Certain that the wild, undisciplined fire from Hooterville eventually would be aimed at the battery, Captain Funk phoned the BLT to request permission to return fire if any was aimed directly at him. He was awaiting a reply—it would be a long wait—when he and the three other men in his bunker were rattled by a mortar round that detonated 100 meters to the front, near Co A's 2nd Plt.

Sergeant Robert Galt of Co A's 2nd Plt was engrossed in directing return rifle fire at presumed Shiite Amal gunmen in nearby Hooterville when, at about 9:15 a.m., the first mortar round of the day impacted between his position and Charlie Btry. Galt, like everyone around him, pulled his head into his shoulders and muttered a term of relief once the shock had dissipated. A second round landed in the 400-meter-wide field that separated Brent Smith's 2nd Plt from Losey's 1st Plt. So did the third round farther to the east and closer to 1st Plt. It dawned on Galt that the 82 mm rounds were being walked straight toward the neighboring platoon, but there was no time for anyone to get on the horn and voice a warning. Warrant Officer Charlie Rowe, the MAU assistant public affairs officer, was on the roof of the BLT, escorting Associated Press photographer Don Mell on a routine shoot. Their vantage point was the best available to the Marines manning the BIA; it offered virtually unrestricted vistas of the entire MAU compound and most of the surrounding Muslim hamlets. Only a few frames had been shot when the first mortar round impacted just north of the main runways—in the field between Charlie Btry and Co A. While the wire service photographer coolly followed the action through his viewfinder, Gunner Rowe held his breath and watched the mortar rounds walk eastward across the field. Rowe had been an infantryman for nine years before being selected for warrant officer and, though unblooded, his years of training nagged a warning into the deepest recesses of his mind: Co A was well and truly in deep trouble.

### "Corpsman Up!"

Moments before the first mortar round impacted near Charlie Btry, Corporal Bruce Dudley of 1st Plt had ordered his squad from its tent and deployed the troops behind the waist-high sandbag wall that ringed the three platoon tents. After setting in his men, Dudley looked back in



Marines on the beach in Beirut, Lebanon, Sept. 29, 1983. Beachmaster Unit Two provided tactical support of amphibious operations and facilitated landing and movement over beach troops, equipment, supplies and evacuation of casualties.

time to see Losey and Ortega enter their hooch. This struck Dudley as extremely odd because Losey had been explicit in his instructions that everyone get down behind the best cover available.

Dudley was just getting comfortable on the ground between the blast wall and the command hooch when the third mortar round blew off in the open just the other side of the sandbags. That was only registering when the fourth round impacted right on top of the center tent.

Mortar rounds are equipped with extremely sensitive point detonators. The round that hit the 1st Plt command tent exploded the instant its nose touched the taut canvas.

Lance Corporal Joe Thorpe, a fire-team leader, was killing time playing chess with his squad leader when a huge "Boom!" erupted almost on top of him. HN Victor Oglesby's ears were ringing when he reflexively left his bunker and headed for a better-built structure nearby. He had not

vet settled in when he heard Marines outside yelling, "Doc!" and "Corpsman up!"

Cpl Dudley emerged from a momentary blackout and felt a sharp stinging in his head and right arm. As his ears cleared from the blast, he heard other Marines complaining about their injuries. There was great confusion among the squad's line. Dudley quickly calmed down, carried out a body-function check on himself, found he was still intact, and reached to his belt for his first-aid packet. His first priority was patching the nicks in his head, which, though superficial, bled heavily. Another squad leader knelt down for a look and told Dudley that he had not been badly hurt, which was a relief. As soon as he had his head patched, Dudley decided to forgo treatment of his arm wound, which was fairly serious, in order to run around to the front of the stricken tent.

When Doc Oglesby left his bunker, he found five bleeding Marines arrayed in the open. A quick pass through the group

revealed that none of the wounds was life-threatening. All of the injured were being helped by other Marines, who were patching wounds and muttering words of encouragement through their own profound fears. Oglesby was called into the command tent.

There were shouts outside LCpl Thorpe's bunker, so he ran into the open, where he saw a small crowd standing by the command hooch. Thorpe stuck his head in and saw George Losey and Alexander Ortega sitting up in their chairs. There was an awful smell of blood. Thorpe ran back to his fire team and ordered his troops to lock and load and, above all, stay under cover in the trench. That done, he returned to the command tent to help if he could.

SSgt Ortega had died instantly. He was sitting upright in a canvas chair, bleeding profusely from head and neck wounds. Doc Oglesby took just one quick look at the platoon sergeant, then turned his full attention to the platoon leader.

George Losey was still alive. He had also sustained numerous head wounds, a 3-inch gash on his leg that was fully 2 inches deep, and a bloody nose. He was unconscious.

Cpl Dudley joined Doc Oglesby in lowering the officer gently to the ground for treatment. Losey was an extremely large man, a prodigious bodybuilder, so getting him safely to the ground was a monumental feat. Oglesby was checking the grievously injured man when someone suggested that aid be administered in a less-vulnerable setting. Oglesby, Dudley, and LCpl Thorpe took it upon themselves to carry Losey from the tent to a nearby dirt berm, another prodigious feat, particularly in light of Dudley's untreated, bleeding arm wound.

Capt Paul Roy could just make out the mortar rounds hitting his 1st Plt area; there was a pillar of dark gray smoke to mark each detonation. He knew Co A had been hit by the indirect fire, but he could not quite bring himself to believe it. He asked his executive officer, 1stLt Andy May, to place a call and find out if there were casualties. Before May could respond, however, Roy saw through his binoculars that several people were being carried or helped across the open platoon area to a secure bunker.

Sergeant Donald Williams, the 1st Plt guide, came upon the Tac Net. Capt Roy

and the others heard only the executive officer's end of the conversation: "Roger, I copy. SSgt Ortega dead, Lieutenant Losey seriously wounded."

Roy stared in disbelief, then called out his company corpsman, radioman, shotgun, and driver and headed for his jeep.

The crowded company commander's Jeep bounced out of the command post and hit the dirt road at top speed. Mortar rounds were still impacting near 1st Plt. As soon as the jeep left, 1stLt May took it upon himself to call the BLT and request that several amtracs be sent to evacuate the wounded under fire.

Within minutes, Capt Roy strode into the 1st Plt CP tent, where he found SSgt Ortega's body. After only a moment's hesitation, Roy headed for the platoon's aid bunker. The scene inside the bunker was utter chaos. First-aid kits, offered by shocked Marines who wanted to do something to help, kept arriving through the low entryway. The wounded were brought in, and fellow Marines treated their injuries while Doc Oglesby turned his full attention to stabilizing George Losey. Capt Roy's arrival imposed a sense of order that had thus far eluded

USS Iwo Jima anchored off the coast of Lebanon where wounded Marines were medevacked after the bombing. (USN photo)



the grieved gaggle of Marines that was 1st Plt. The company corpsman joined Doc Oglesby in patching the wounded.

Warrant Officer Charlie Rowe was staring in disbelief at the impact area from atop the BLT, trying to convince himself that Co A had weathered the storm when a column of three hogs rolled past the building and headed north up the perimeter road. There was no official word around the BLT yet, but Rowe knew beyond a doubt that there were injured out there. He hoped there were no dead.

George Losey was placed aboard the first amtrac and Cpl Dudley and the other injured 1st Plt Marines went out aboard the second vehicle. By then, SSgt Ortega had been placed upon a stretcher and covered tightly with a blanket. He went in the third amtrac, escorted by several of his uninjured troops, who insisted upon providing an impromptu honor guard.

First Lieutenant Greg Balzer was sitting in the BLT just outside the combat operations center (COC) when he heard Capt Roy's cool, professional voice over the small Tac-Net loudspeaker: "One KIA, one WIA serious, and five WIA not critical."

An immediate hush descended over the general hubbub of activity within the confined, crowded workspace. The flow of work missed barely a beat, but there was a palpable feeling, often discussed among members of the battalion staff, that there would be hell to pay if an American serviceman died in Lebanon. It seemed that now was the time to pay.

Scores of Marines turned out to meet the amtracs. Gunner Rowe had his heart in his mouth as he watched their progress. The first hog arrived and stretcher-bearers carried George Losey into the lobby of the BLT. Then the next hog disgorged the bandaged ambulatory wounded. Not great, but okay. Then, as Associated Press photographer Don Mell leaned over the parapet of the roof and snapped pictures as fast as he could, Gunner Rowe watched the blanket-covered stretcher bearing Alexander Ortega being carried into the lobby. He fought back tears and rage and, perhaps, allowed a stifled moan to escape. The dozen or so other Marines on the BLT roof were tense and quiet.

### **Evacuating the Wounded**

Lieutenant Lawrence Wood, Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron (HMM) 162's Navy surgeon, did not want to be on the beach. He had joined the Navy simply because it offered him a medical residency in his specialty, ophthalmology. He had no idea why he had been selected to work with the Marines. Though Wood was normally based with the helo squadron



**Capt Paul Roy, USMC** 

aboard USS Iwo Jima (LPH-2), he had assented to do a two-week tour at the battalion aid station while the BLT 1/8 surgeon toured Greece with his wife. It had taken Wood some time to get used to life on the beach. The thing he liked least was using the open-air piss tubes and insubstantial heads, but he had done his best to fit in.

On Sunday afternoon, the 6-foot-5 doctor had joined in an impromptu game

**Gunner Rowe watched the** blanket-covered stretcher bearing Alexander Ortega being carried into the lobby. He fought back tears and rage and, perhaps, allowed a stifled moan to escape.

of basketball at the weekly cookout. He had finally allowed himself to relax; to get into the group high. Distant gunfire seemed like no big deal at first, but the noise grew in volume and there was definitely more of it. If this made Lawrence Wood extremely nervous, the Condition I alarm nearly unhinged him. "I knew absolutely nothing about war." Being on the float with air-wingers for three months had done little to enlighten him.

Wood sweated through Sunday night

and most of Monday and was just getting his nerves under control when the first mortar rounds set him off again as he sprinted with his corpsman from their third-deck rooms to the basement aid station.

The name of the game in combat medicine is triage. The job of the doctor and his senior corpsmen in a mass-casualty situation is to stabilize and attempt to save the men with the best chances while passing the grievously injured to moredistant aid stations or setting them aside.

George Losey arrived at the BLT well beyond any help that the aid station's limited facilities could offer. All the BLT headquarters staffers who were free were standing on a balcony overlooking the atrium lobby of the BLT building to watch George Losey being prepared for transport. He was in such poor condition and the need for him to be flown offshore to *Iwo Jima* was so apparent that he was treated right on the deck of the lobby.

Wood assigned a team of corpsmen to keep the brutally battered platoon leader alive and stable and ordered him to be medevacked to Iwo Jima as soon as a bird could be brought in. As the onlookers gazed mutely at the scene below, George Losey was stripped of his clothing, checked for hidden wounds, and given a shot in the thigh to help fortify him against shock. While a pair of corpsmen forced Losey's jaws open with a screw device, Dr. Wood unwound the head bandage that Doc Oglesby had applied at the 1st Plt bunker. Losey immediately stopped breathing, but a good punch in the chest administered by the surgeon got him going again. The corpsmen started an IV and carried him outside to the waiting helo.

If there had been any question among the onlookers as to what a Marine's mission or possible fate might be, it was eloquently answered during George Losey's brief stay at the BLT.

Alexander Ortega, who needed no help, was flown out with his barely breathing platoon leader.

The five other wounded Marines were checked, given supplementary treatment, and likewise flown to Iwo Jima.

Soon, the word circulated through Co A, and then the rest of BLT 1/8: George Losey had succumbed to his injuries.

There was no going back; BLT 1/8 was "good to go" from that moment on.

Author's bio: Eric Hammel is a military historian who has written dozens of books on Marine Corps history, including "Chosin: Heroic Ordeal of the Korean War," "Guadalcanal: Starvation Island" and "Islands of Hell: The U.S. Marines in the Western Pacific."



The explosion of the Marine Corps building in Beirut, Lebanon on Oct. 23, 1983, created a large cloud of smoke that was visible for miles. (USMC photo)

# **Beirut Bombing 1983**

### MAU Marines Race to Help the BLT

By Dick Camp

### The Bomb

At 6:22 a.m. on Oct. 23, 1983, Iranian national Ismail Ascari drove a yellow 19ton Mercedes-Benz stake-bed truck, crammed with thousands of pounds of explosives. He turned onto the access road leading toward the four-story Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment (BLT 1/8) headquarters and barracks building in Beirut, Lebanon. He drove into and around the parking lot in excess of 35 miles per hour, crashed through a 5-foot high barrier of barbed and concertina wire passing between

guard posts six and seven. He entered an open gate, maneuvered around one sewer pipe barrier and between two others, flattened the sergeant of the guard's sand-bagged booth at the building's entrance, penetrated the lobby of the building and detonated the explosives.

The BLT 1/8 Headquarters was located in a bombed-out, fire-damaged, four-story building constructed of steel and reinforced concrete at the Beirut International Airport. At one time, large plate glass windows encompassed the second, third and fourth stories. All of the windows on the upper three floors had been replaced with an assortment of plywood, sandbag cloth,

screen and plastic sheeting. The ground floor was an open area that had been enclosed with substantial sand bagging and barbed wire. At the center of the building, an open courtyard extended to the road with a ventilated covering to protect against rain while providing for cooling and illumination of the building's interior. There were two inoperable elevator shafts with severe fire damage. Access to upper stories was gained via two concrete stairwells located on the east and west ends of the courtyard. At the time of the attack, approximately 350 men occupied the building.

Lance Corporal Eddie DiFranco was

manning post number six. "Soon as I saw [the truck]," he recalled, "I knew what was going to happen." The sentries had been warned to be on alert for suspicious vehicles that might be terrorist vehicle bombs. As the truck roared by, LCpl DiFranco said, "He looked right at me ... smiled, that's it." By the time he managed to slap a magazine into his M16 and chamber a round, the truck had sped through an open vehicle gate, and was headed straight for the main entrance of the building on the south side.

Sergeant Stephen E. Russell heard the truck's revving engine as it headed straight for him. "What is that truck doing inside the perimeter?" he thought. Immediately recognizing it as a threat, he ran from his guard shack across the lobby toward the rear entrance, yelling, "Hit the deck! Hit the deck!" Glancing over his shoulder as he ran, he watched as the truck smashed through his guard shack into the open atrium lobby and erupted in a "bright orange-yellow flash at the grill of the truck." The explosion blew him into the air and out of the building.

The blast was so powerful that it lifted the entire building upward, shearing the base off of its four main steel-reinforced support columns—each 15 feet in circumference—and caving the upper 50 feet of the structure into about 10 feet of rubble. A massive shock wave and flaming gas hurtled in all directions. More than 300 dead and wounded Marines were sandwiched between the collapsed floors and ceilings. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Forensic Laboratory would later describe the bomb as the largest conventional blast ever seen by explosives experts. It was the worst single-day death toll for the Marine Corps since the Battle of Iwo Jima during World

Severely injured, Russell regained consciousness and found himself in the road outside the BLT headquarters with debris from the explosion all around him. Among the luckiest was LCpl Adam Webb, one of four guards posted on the roof. "I heard a sentry down in the parking lot holler for someone to stop the truck and then it all blew up," Webb said. "I never left the roof until it hit the ground and then I wound up sitting upright in a jeep."

The aftermath of the attack left a scene of severe injury, death and destruction. The dust and debris remained suspended in the air for many minutes after the explosion, creating the effect of a dense fog. A distinct odor, described as both sweet and acrid, lingered in the air. The carnage and confusion made it difficult to establish control immediately—the explosion had eliminated the entire BLT



The four-story barracks was photographed a day earlier when a USO band performed for Marines and Sailors of the BLT.

1/8 headquarters command structure. Almost simultaneously with the attack on the U.S. Marine compound, a similar truck bomb exploded at the French Multi-National Force headquarters, killing 58 paratroopers and wounding scores of others.

### Help is on the Way

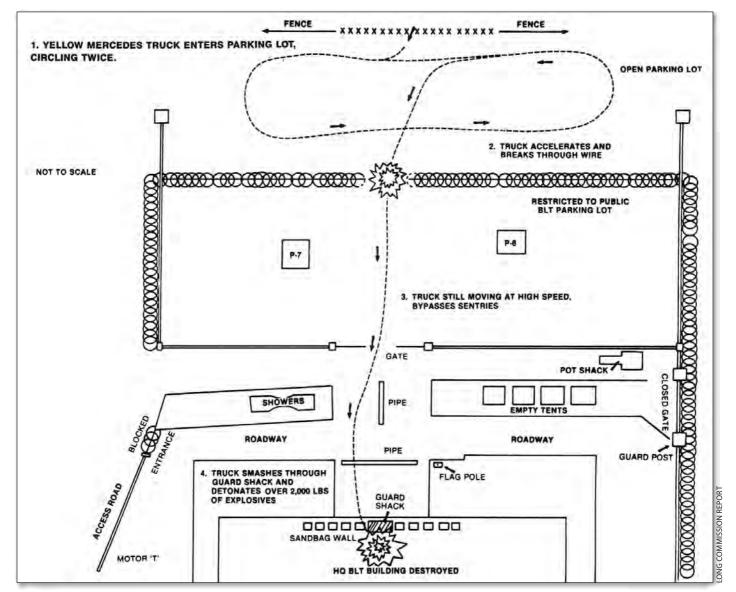
Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 162 (Reinforced), the Marine Amphibious Unit's (MAU) air combat element was onboard USS *Iwo Jima* (LPH-2) located about 10 to 15 miles offshore. First Lieutenant Anthony Pais was on medevac standby. "It was pretty early, not quite pre-dawn, but still pretty early for a Sunday morning routine," he said, "when I heard an APU [auxiliary power unit]

fire up and the steel helicopter tie downs being dragged along the deck." He started getting out of bed—medevac standby could sleep on the ship—when the Squadron Duty Officer (SDO) burst into his room shouting, "Get up! Get up! The BLT's been hit!"

Not realizing what had happened, Lt Pais replied, "So what's new?" Taking hostile fire was a routine occurrence for the Multinational Peacekeeping Force. The SDO responded, "No, this time they've really been hit!" Pais threw on his flightsuit and rushed to the ready room. "I remember walking down the passageway after signing for the airplane and seeing about 15 men who [volunteered] to go in with me." They rushed to the flight deck where the "crew chief had already

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spread the rotors. The bird was ready to go in pre-flight."

Sgt John Snyder, a squadron aircrewman, volunteered to help with the rescue operations. "It was announced that there had been an attack on the Marine barracks. None of us had any idea of the extent of the damage, the lives that had been lost, or the fact that the growing cloud of dark smoke on the shore line was what was left of where we had, only weeks before, eaten chow every day. As the extent of the disaster ashore was realized, the squadron called for a working party to go ashore. I jumped at the opportunity to get off the USS *Iwo Jima*, and volunteered. A handful of us, maybe 10 or so, flew by CH-46 helicopter back out to the airport to an area known as LS [Landing Site] Brown. I didn't really have any idea at that point the amount of damage that had been done. I didn't really know what to expect. All I knew was some Marines had been hurt and 'Top' was looking for some volunteers."

Pais and his copilot, Captain Michael J. Hagemeyer, flew the CH-46F medevac

aircraft, together with a second CH-46, east into the early morning haze at about 6:45 a.m. As the two aircraft flew closer to shore, "All I saw was a pillar of smoke," Pais recalled. Then, he could make out what had been the BLT 1/8 headquarters. "It was just a smoking hole!" He tried to reach someone on the radio. "There was nobody to talk to ... nobody on the radio."

Pais landed his bird on the north end of the north-south runway. "We had set up an LZ that was in defilade and was pretty much secure from small arms fire," Pais said. He shut the aircraft down and started walking toward the MAU headquarters. "It was just silent," he recalled. "There was activity but there was just shocked, stunned silence." Pais saw that the MAU headquarters was relatively undamaged the blast had cracked the reinforced concrete foundation and caused relatively minor injuries—and continued walking. A jeep picked him up and drove him toward "The Pile," as the destroyed BLT 1/8 headquarters came to be known.

"I remember a line of blasted fir trees

that were filled with debris," Pais vividly recalled. He noted that before the blast, "the four-story building was open—you could look through the trees and see cots, mosquito nets and hanging clothes ... see how the Marines lived ...."

### The Pile

"On Sunday and subsequent days, I remember being on The Pile," Pais recalled. "There was a big sloping mound of non-reinforced concrete in a big pile. They asked for volunteers to go in and dig through the rubble ... we were in a lifesaving phase to pull Marines out. We found lots of [dead] Marines and body parts." The rescuers were prepared for possible sniper fire. "I remember we had our flak jackets and helmets and we were trying to stay out of the line of possible fire," he explained.

Sgt Snyder recalled, "Our working party worked out of, and around, the small, empty Lebanese hangar. Trucks would bring the bodies of the dead from the blast site, down the road and to the



A view of the destruction following the bombing of the BLT headquarters building.

hangar. My job was to unload and stack the bodies as they were brought down the road from the blast site. We would then, with great care, stack the bodies—some in body bags, some not—into aluminum shipping containers which we would eventually load on aircraft for their final flight home."

Lance Corporal Emanuel Simmons was sleeping on the second deck of the BLT 1/8 headquarters. "I woke up and found myself buried. I was a bit confused and was trying to figure out what happened," he explained. "The ceiling had collapsed and my thought was that we got shelled. I heard a lot of yelling and moaning. I just lay there and tried to humor myself. I had no feeling in my left arm and believed it to have been severed. On my left hand, I had been wearing a ring with a cobra snake on it. I felt the ring and grabbed hold of my arm thinking I was going to keep it and give it to a doctor to reattach to my body."

Simmons heard heavy machinery and he yelled for help. Somebody shouted back, "Hey, are you OK, bud? We're coming to get you." He could feel dirt roll down his neck and cool air hit his body. "I started feeling I was going to get out of this," he said. Simmons was pulled from the rubble with a broken left scapula, collapsed lung, burst eardrums, second- and third-degree burns, severe lacerations to the face, embedded shards of metal to his body, temporary blindness and paralysis—but he was alive.

### **Prepare for Mass Casualties**

Navy dentist Dr. Gilbert U. "Gil" Bigelow, a former Air Force commando, took one look at the destroyed building and ran to the Marine Expeditionary Unit Service Support Group (MSSG) headquarters to help prepare an aid station with his colleague Dr. James J. Ware.

According to "The Root, The Marines in Beirut, August 1982-February 1984," by Eric Hammel, "Ware asked, 'What happened, Gil?' Bigelow gasped, 'Jim, the BLT has been hit. The aid station is gone. There's a lot of wounded people. Prepare for mass casualties.'

While Ware set up an aid station in the

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Memorial services for the victims of the Oct. 23, 1983, bombing in Beirut were held at Camp Lejeune, N.C. Among those attending were, left to right, National Security Adviser Robert MacFarlane; Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger; Treasury Secretary Donald Regan; Secretary of State (and veteran Marine) George Shultz; Mrs. Paul X. Kelley; 28th Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen Paul X. Kelley; Mrs. Nancy Reagan; and President Ronald Reagan.

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MSSG headquarters building, Bigelow "grabbed his emergency medical kit, counted off four corpsmen, and charged back in the direction of the BLT to set up an on-site triage station."

The explosion killed the BLT 1/8 medical officer and killed or wounded 19 hospital corpsmen.

Pais joined dozens of BLT 1/8 Marines, Navy corpsmen, Lebanese civilians and Red Cross and Italian soldiers at the pile. "I did a lot of stretcher bearing," Pais explained. "Most of the men on stretchers were unconscious and they had to be stabilized with IVs to keep them alive. At first, it was hard to separate the dead from the injured. Their swollen limbs and faces just made them unrecognizable. We triaged until we finally had enough injured to take to the USS Iwo Jima. They unloaded the casualties on the flight deck and used the elevator to lower them to the hanger deck where a field hospital had been set up.'

Hammel in "The Root," described, "... a blood-covered surgeon dressed in combat boots, white T-shirt, and khaki trousers working over the waist-level elevator, simultaneously caring for three victims. The doctor had one hand in one victim's abdominal cavity, was talking to another patient over his shoulder, and

palpating the abdomen of a third victim."

Sgt Snyder recalled, "Wave after wave of our squadron's helicopters flew ashore, each time returning with bodies which quickly stacked up on the hanger deck below decks. Many of us were tasked with carrying the dead and wounded, and helping out as best we could holding a hand here and there and trying to calm those who could not be calmed. I remember watching one Marine—a victim who had a small sliver penetrate his temple—with swollen purple eyelids that for some reason gave me the impression of a frog. As I held his hand, he slipped into unconsciousness. I later learned that he had died. It was a very sad, busy, and chaotic time."

A total of 62 wounded in action were treated aboard the USS *Iwo Jima* (LPH-2).

Within 15 minutes of the explosion, aeromedical evacuation was requested. "When the casualties were stabilized enough, they were flown from the *Iwo Jima* to the Beirut International Airport," Pais explained. The first injured were evacuated by a Royal Air Force (RAF) C-130 to their facility at Akrotiri, Cyprus, followed by a U.S. Air Force C-9 to the Wiesbaden Air Force Hospital, Germany, a U.S. Navy C-9 to Naples, Italy, and a C-141 to the Landstuhl Army Hospital.

The RAF hospital proved to be especially useful because it was only an hour flight, while the flight to Germany took four hours.

### **They Came in Peace**

On Oct. 23, 1986, a memorial was dedicated to the 241 American peacekeepers—220 Marines, 18 Sailors and three soldiers. The simple memorial, located just outside the gate of Camp Johnson, N.C., consists primarily of two large walls, separated by the statue of a Marine in combat uniform with his rifle at the ready. The left wall features inscriptions of the names of the Americans killed in Beirut and the names of three Marine pilots from Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune who were killed in Grenada. The right wall is inscribed with the words, "They Came in Peace."

Editor's note: The Beirut Veterans of America are dedicated to keeping alive the memories of those who were killed in the U.S. peacekeeping mission in Lebanon. Visit www.beirutveterans.org for more information.

Author's bio: Dick Camp, a retired Marine colonel, is a frequent contributor to Leatherneck.



A Beirut Memorial was erected to honor the memory of the 271 Marines who were killed in the bombing. The memorial is located at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C.



By Cpl Dallas Johnson, USMC

s the sun slowly settled over the multi-colored hills and mountains, Marines quietly dug sandpits in preparation for an expected attack. After hours of digging, the sun was gone and the moon hung high in the sky and an enemy convoy came into sight several miles away. The Marines readied their rifles, machine guns and rocket launchers. Now was the time to put to use everything they had learned in training.

A whistling sound passed overhead and an explosion lit up the night sky. The impact rumble was felt a mere two seconds later. The command was given. "Fire!" The Marines immediately let loose a deafening barrage of rounds on the enemy. A momentary pause several minutes later gave a false impression that the attack was over, but then a Marine stood up, shouting, "Firing!" and the boom from a rocket launcher shook the ground. Again, the Marines fired their weapons without hesitation on the enemy—only, there was no enemy. This was the defense of a notional force that threatened to take over their domain.

The Marines were participating in the final defense of a three-day exercise called the "Air Assault Course" as part of Integrated Training Exercise (ITX) 4-18 at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif.

Since Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, Marine Forces Reserve (MARFORRES) has supported combatant commanders with forces focused on crisis response and prevention, theater security cooperation and combat operations around the world. One way MARFORRES has developed this combat readiness among the Reserve component is through the annual training event Integrated Training Exercise.

ITX is the capstone exercise of a fiveyear MARFORRES Force Generation Model. Years one through three generally are dedicated to conducting training during drill weekends and annual training exercises in preparation for year four. During year four, the Marines partake in ITX, which certifies participating units to become the "ready-bench"—first to augment and reinforce active component forces. During year five, ready-bench units conduct follow-on training such as Mountain Exercise in Bridgeport, Calif., where they further develop small-unit leadership and build familiarity and confidence operating in austere environments.

"This is the best way to prepare for combat. Not just to improve readiness, but to prepare the Marines for what they could potentially face."

— Col Steven White CO, 23rd Marine Regiment

For ITX 4-18, Marines with 1st Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment; 1st Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment; Marine Aircraft Group 41, Combat Logistics Battalion 25 and a host of supporting elements from across the Reserve component, came together from June 2-July 4, aboard Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms as Marine Air Ground

Reserve Marines with Co A, 1st Bn, 23rd Marine Regiment, 4thMarDiv, position themselves in a foxhole prior to engaging a notional enemy during an air assault course at ITX 4-18 aboard MCAGCC Twentynine Palms, Calif., June 17. (Photo by Cpl Dallas Johnson, USMC)

Task Force 23—so named because 23rd Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division, fulfilled the command element role.

This four-week, live fire and maneuver exercise employed battalion and squadron-sized units in tactics, techniques and procedures, designed to prepare the units to seamlessly integrate with active duty Marines into a Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF). More than just a training exercise, ITX 4-18 served as the culminating event for certifying the 5,500 attending members' capabilities for ready bench employment during the 2019 fiscal year.

"As everyone knows, we only have 48 drills a year," said Colonel Steven White, commanding officer of 23rd Marine Regiment. "This is the best way to prepare for combat. Not just to improve readiness, but to prepare the Marines for what they could potentially face. This is an exceptional opportunity to mimic the mental and physical challenges of being on a

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Marines with "Mike" Btry, 3rd Bn, 14th Marine Regiment, 4thMarDiv, emplace an M777 Lightweight 155 mm howitzer for a direct fire shoot during ITX 4-18 aboard Twentynine Palms, Calif., June 13.

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Marines with 4th
Combat Engineer
Bn, 4thMarDiv,
prepare to conduct
live-fire training
drills on Range
410A, a platoon
reinforced
attack range,
during ITX 4-18
aboard MCAGCC
Twentynine Palms,
Calif., June 14.



desert floor, under stress, and that's for a lieutenant colonel down to a private. You can never fully imitate combat. But with ITX, our focus is on improving our combat readiness."

### Forager II

To meet the requirement for two ready battalions, 23rd Marines created Forager II, a force generation plan inspired by the 1944 Pacific War offensive "Operation Forager." During Operation Forager, U.S. forces mounted against Japan in Palau and the Mariana Islands. The offensive was intended to neutralize Japanese bases in the central Pacific, support the Allied drive to retake the Philippines and provide bases for a strategic bombing campaign against Japan. Allied forces continued their ultimately successful campaign against Japan by landing in the Philippines the following October, and then landing on a number of surrounding islands in early 1945. With Forager II, 23rd Marines designed the exercise to prepare and employ every aspect necessary for Marines to conduct offensive and defensive operations as a MAGTF, including tactical abilities, logistical and administrative support, medical and dental readiness and command and control.

### **Ground Combat Element**

The Marines with 1st Bn, 23rd Marines trained specifically for ITX 4-18 over the course of nine months. This included squad-level infantry tactics, company



Marines with 4th Light Armored Reconnaissance Bn run through a casualty evacuation exercise during ITX 4-18 aboard Twentynine Palms, Calif., June 12. (Photo by Cpl Alexis Rocha, USMC)

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A Marine tank crew with Co E, 4th Tank Bn, 4thMarDiv, reposition their M1A1 Abrams Main Battle Tank with a mine plough before conducting a Tank Mechanized Assault Course during ITX 4-18 aboard MCAGCC Twentynine Palms, Calif., June 15.

live-fire attacks and several fire support coordination exercises. Battle staff training at those same exercises also allowed company commanders and staff to gain experience in command and control—emphasizing problem framing, information management and assessment and the integration of tanks and aviation assets.

In early April, 1st Bn, 25th Marines conducted a four-day mission rehearsal exercise at Fort A.P. Hill in Bowling Green, Va. They were joined by detachments from Combat Logistics Battalion 25 and 4th Assault Amphibian Battalion, and were supported by Marine Corps MV-22 and CH-53 assets. They were tested on command and control, company-level supported live-fire attacks, fires integration and combat service support operations.

Months of training brought both infantry battalions to ITX 4-18 fully prepared to face the challenges of ranges 400 and 410A and their final exercises—the AAC and the Mechanized Assault Course.

On ranges 400 and 410A, infantry companies conducted attacks on fortified enemy positions, scout snipers took point

to adjust fires and engineers prepared and executed breaches throughout the range, utilizing 60 mm mortars, medium machine guns, rockets and engineer support. Upon range completion, the Marines were debriefed by trainers from Tactical

"This training is important so we can confirm and validate our current TTPs, our current doctrinal ways of conducting operations."

—CWO-4 Eric Brown Regimental gunner, 23rd Marine Regiment

Training Exercise Control Group, often referred to as coyotes, on what went as planned and what they could have done to improve the outcome of the attack.

For their final exercise, each unit participated in either the three-day AAC or the two-day MAC. During the AAC, units

provided supporting machine-gun fires from atop hills while other units assaulted an objective. On the final day of the exercise, the Marines conducted a night-fire operation where multiple supporting units called in fires on designated targets.

On the first day of the MAC, units cleared enemy positions with hasty breaching operations and performed a casualty air evacuation drill. During day two, units conducted a defensive counterattack on a notional enemy. Again, at the conclusion of each exercise, Marines were debriefed on performance and areas of improvement.

"This training is important so we can confirm and validate our current TTPs, our current doctrinal ways of conducting operations," said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Eric Brown, the regimental gunner for 23rd Marine Regiment. "This training helps us identify where we lack proficiencies so we can hone in to correct them. That way we can retrain to do them better and to get an overall confirmation to assess where we're at, or if we're at a point where we can sustain the force into a ready battalion."

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### **Aviation Combat Element**

While ground combat elements use a five-year readiness model, aviation units have to maintain a continual state of readiness to meet Marine Corps and Federal Aviation Administration requirements. Aviation elements, both active and Reserve, continuously emphasize readiness through effective aircraft maintenance programs, focusing on training practices and increased training capacity. This was no different for MAG-41 squadrons during ITX 4-18.

Prior to ITX 4-18, MAG-41 squadrons supported, and regularly augmented, a number of Reserve and active-duty operations.

MAG-41 brought a range of capabilities to the MAGTF and turned to other services to help fill shortfalls. The California Air National Guard's 163rd Attack Wing partnered with MAG-41 to provide unmanned aerial system support via their MQ-9 Reaper. This training benefited both airmen and Marines. Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron (VMU) 4 was unable to participate in ITX 4-18, as it was receiving the new RQ-21A Blackjack system—a system that puts it on par with

"We're identifying gaps
and shortfalls and coming up
with creative ways to fill them
by making sure support
to the Ground Combat Element
is robust as possible."
—LtCol Kevin J. Szepe,
Operations Officer, MAG-41

active component UAV squadrons, in turn enhancing readiness for future iterations of ITX.

"We're identifying gaps and shortfalls and coming up with creative ways to fill them by making sure support to the GCE [Ground Combat Element] is robust as possible," said Lieutenant Colonel Kevin J. Szepe, operations officer for MAG-41. "We're not just using MAG-41 assets either. We're reaching out to other MAGs, as well as Army and National Guard units for support services."

The Aviation Combat Element (ACE) conducted a range of operations in ad-

dition to assault and close air support. On June 21, air elements were evaluated during a deliberate enemy attack on the base Strategic Expeditionary Landing Facility and follow-on Base Recovery After Attack. Marine Wing Support Squadron (MWSS) 473 was the primary squadron certified in everything from airfield security operations planning to immediate action drills of specific threats.

The exercise culminated with notional indirect fire, which damaged a portion of the airfield and surrounding facilities and infrastructure. Following the attack, engineers with MWSS-473 conducted battle damage assessment and repair. The sim—ulated attack had real-world associations and closely mirrored the Camp Bastion raid—a Taliban raid in Afghanistan's Helmand Province on Sept. 14, 2012.

An objective of Integrated Training Exercise is to provide challenging, realistic training that produces combat-ready forces capable of operating as an integrated MAGTF. For the Marines of MAG-41, operating during the heightened demands of ITX 4-18 proved their resilience in sustaining operations under punishing conditions.

### **Logistics Combat Element**

The Logistics Combat Element (LCE) of ITX was evaluated on multiple capabilities, to include command and control, motorized operations and support capbilities. Training for CLB-25 began when they conducted a Mission Rehearsal Exercise (MRX) with 1st Bn, 25th Marines, at Fort A.P. Hill, and another MRX with 3rd Battalion, 14th Marine Regiment, at Fort Dix in New Jersey. During these exercises, CLB-25 gained experience in building a command and control center that serviced the battalion headquarters, as well as two other service companies. During this time, they furthered their knowledge of command post operations and standard operating procedures that better enabled support to infantry units.

During ITX 4-18, LCE-specific training events culminated in a live-fire recovery mission, which requires units to conduct a complex recovery in restrictive terrain while engaging enemy targets from unknown distances. Once again working with their East Coast neighbors, CLB-25 Marines called in indirect fire support from 3rd Bn. 14th Marines.

"ITX has allowed me to learn a lot more about my MOS," said Corporal Alex Ruppert, an ammunition technician with Supply Company, Combat Logistics Battalion 451, Combat Logistics Regiment 45. "Being here and learning so many new things has been a really beneficial experience for me, as I know it has for my fellow Reserve Marines."

### **Coming Together**

ITX is an essential component of the MARFORRES five-year training and readiness cycle and the principal exercise for certifying units for employment across



LCpl Benjamin Strube, a scout observer with Btry M, 3rd Bn, 14th Marine Regiment, 4thMarDiv, calibrates a vector during an air assault course for Co A, 1st Bn, 23rd Marine Regiment, 4thMarDiv, during ITX 4-18 aboard MCAGCC Twentynine Palms, Calif., June 17. (Photo by Cpl Dallas Johnson, USMC)

a full range of military operations. Those MARFORRES units who attended the monthlong exercise demonstrated an increased proficiency in MAGTF interoperability and increased total readiness.

Many of the Marines who participated will gain further experience individually augmenting an active-duty unit or through the Unit Deployment Program (UDP) in which infantry battalions stationed in the United States deploy to Okinawa, Japan, for six months. Either way, with ITX 4-18 complete, Marines will return to their hometowns or civilian careers having proven their readiness to augment, support and reinforce the active component forces.

"It's important we realize what the focus is," said White. "And that is the Marine and Sailor on the deck. We're here to improve their skills and that takes a variety of things. One of those is we have to go out there and execute this safely and use what we learned as a platform for future iterations of ITX. Now is the time where the tip has to be very pointed and ready to go for those operating."

Author's bio: Cpl Dallas Johnson, USMC is a combat correspondent with

MARFORRES in New Orleans, La. F Marines with Wpns Co, 1st Bn, 25th Marines, 4thMarDiv, embark an MV-22B Osprey, during ITX 4-18 aboard MCAGCC Twentynine Palms, Calif., June 23. 49



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### We—the Marines

### From Mississippi to N.C., Rucking Raiders Honor the Fallen

A crowd of veterans and members of the Jacksonville, N.C., community lined the shoulders of U.S. Route 17 to cheer on the "Rucking Raiders" on the final approach of their 900-mile Marine Raider Memorial March from Mississippi to the Marine Corps Special Operations Command (MARSOC) compound at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., July 26.

The Rucking Raiders are family, friends and fellow servicemembers of the seven Marine Raiders, nine crew members and one Navy corpsman who died in the July 2017 KC-130T Super Hercules crash in Mississippi. The aircraft, from Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron (VMGR) 452, crashed en route from North Carolina to California.

"There isn't a single soul in this audience, or in this formation, who wouldn't trade any of the goodness over the last year, any of the wisdom that we've gained, any of the soul-enriching moments along the way, made on this journey of grief; there isn't a soul here who wouldn't push that all to the side to have our Marines and Sailor back with us," said Colonel Michael A. Brooks Jr., Commanding Officer, Marine Raider Regiment, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command (MARSOC).

Rucking Raiders founder Nate Harris presented the Marine Raider Regiment with a handcrafted paddle that the teams took turns hiking with during the march, and then led the group in a final set of push-ups.

"It's a story that needs to be told, on who these men were as people and not just as numbers," said Harris. "I think every time that an individual who's served in the military dies, there's a quick blurb about how they died, then there is a picture of them in their uniform and that's pretty much all that the public get to see."

The hike began at the site of the crash

site in Itta Bena, Miss., on July 14, and continued without stopping until the hikers reached Stump Sound Park in Sneads Ferry, N.C., for a pause. There were 10 teams of two to three people per team, which included spouses, family and friends of the fallen. Carrying a Marine Raider flag, the paddle, packs filled with soil from the crash site and American flags that were draped over the fallen by first responders, each team rucked 8 miles to a changeover point where the next team took the paddle and flags until they reached Camp Lejeune, symbolically bringing the Marines and corpsman "home."

"It's horrible what happened to the guys who went down in that plane, but my biggest thing is the family who [are] still here," said a Marine gunnery sergeant who wished to remain anonymous. "To me, it means more to show that their son or loved one is not going to be forgotten—at least not that easily."

Cpl Breanna Weisenberger, USMC



Family and friends of servicemembers who died in the July 2017 KC-130T Super Hercules crash in Mississippi hike on the shoulder of U.S. Route 17 in Jacksonville, N.C., on the final stretch of their 900-mile memorial trek from the crash site to the MARSOC headquarters at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., July 24.

CPL B

### **Pendleton Balances Training** With Maintaining Environment

With more than 125,000 acres of land, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., has a very diverse environment within its borders. When it comes to training, maintaining and protecting the environment is extremely important, especially during wildfire season when the environment is most susceptible to fires that could cause significant damage.

According to Deborah Bieber, head of the Land Management section of the **Environmental Security Department for** MCB Camp Pendleton, studies show that there are certain instances in which controlled burns and traditional wildfires can make a positive impact on the environment by clearing areas to safely conduct training, clearing invasive plants and protecting endangered plant species.

"We do a lot of preventative measures ... one of them being controlled burns," said Bieber. "We look for areas where the Marines need to train, but the way they're training may have a risk to cause a fire, so we'll go in and do a controlled burn to remove all the fuels so that the Marines can conduct their training."

While units aboard Camp Pendleton conduct training, they aren't the only ones who benefit from the controlled burning of overgrown grasslands.

The controlled-burn method is an effective way to safely clear out grasslands, freeing up some natural habitats, eliminating fuels from certain training areas to reduce the risk of a wildfire due to training, and ultimately preventing large-scale wildfires.

"As of late, our native grasslands have been overtaken by thatch, an invasive grass that overgrows and chokes up all of the grasslands, which are almost home to three endangered species," Bieber said. "We'll then conduct a burn to get rid of all the thatch so that the animals aren't forced to relocate."

Once a controlled burn or wildfire is fully extinguished, the Land Management section conducts a post-wildfire habitat restoration. Once a fire has cleared, it will usually uncover large erosion scars, and once they complete a full survey of a burn area, Land Management will repair the erosion and then begin to re-seed the burn area with vegetation.

"We plant certain grasses and plants to protect the ground from being overtaken by invasive grasses," said Gwen Kenney, an ecologist with the Land Management section. "It also helps to make up for what was lost in the fire as well."

Uncontrolled wildfires, however, are a different situation. Last year, Camp Pendleton suffered a total loss of approximately



Firefighters with the Camp Pendleton Fire Department, CAL Fire and the Orange County Fire Department excavate firebreaks along a highway to keep fires from leaving the installation during joint operations at MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., April 30. Controlled burns and other preventive measures are taken in order to protect the environment surrounding the base and ensure safe training.

15,500 acres due to uncontrolled wildfires. Understanding both sides of the "fire line," however, can not only improve the way the base combats wildfires, but also determine opportunities to benefit the environment.

"I feel that what we do as a whole is important because we want the Marines to have a training event as realistic as possible," Bieber said. "While doing that, we also want to ensure that we protect all of the endangered species that call Camp Pendleton home."

Cpl Dylan Chagnon, USMC

### **Documentary Subject Maj Capers Visits Lejeune-Based Marines**

Marine Corps Community Services Lejeune-New River hosted an all-hands professional military education class at the base theater on Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., July 31. Marines were allowed to see the documentary "Major Capers: The Legend of Team Broadminded" and meet retired Marine Major James "Jim" Capers Jr.

"There were two important themes in the film, and that's the theme of perseverance and faith," said Ashley Cusato, director, writer and executive producer for the documentary. "Throughout all of the different challenges in his life, even when he was up against insurmountable obstacles and challenges, he and Team Broadminded just continued to persevere."

The documentary tells the story of Capers, an African-American Marine who joined the Corps at a time when the country was still showing signs of segregation.

Capers was one of the Marine Corps' first African-American reconnaissance Marines and the first black Marine officer nominated for the Medal of Honor. He



Maj Jim Capers Jr., USMC (Ret), speaks to Marines during an interview at an all-hands PME class at the MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., base theater, July 31.

earned two Bronze Stars, a Silver Star and three Purple Hearts for his actions in Vietnam. In 1967, he represented the Marines in a national recruiting campaign.

During the Vietnam War, Capers took part in Operation Deckhouse, an amphibious assault to clear the DMZ of Viet Cong forces, where he rescued 16 Marines, a B-57 aircraft recovery missions and the battle of Phu Loc on a search-and-destroy patrol in an effort to locate a North Vietnamese Army regimental base. During his last firefight in Phu Loc, Capers was gravely injured.

Capers and his 10-man team were looking for Viet Cong when enemy forces ambushed them. Capers sustained broken limbs and the blast of a claymore before he ordered his team to evacuate as he returned fire on the enemy.

"I've seen most of the world, in places that it's dark, it's dangerous and even today I bear the burden. I have 22 holes that I bled from and I still have nightmares on occasion, but am I afraid? Hell no, not afraid. We all do our duty, and if we get together there's no finer fighting force in the world," said Capers.

To watch a trailer and learn more about the documentary featuring Capers, visit www.capersthedoc.com.

Cpl Breanna Weisenberger, USMC

### Single Marines Take in the Sights At Zion National Park

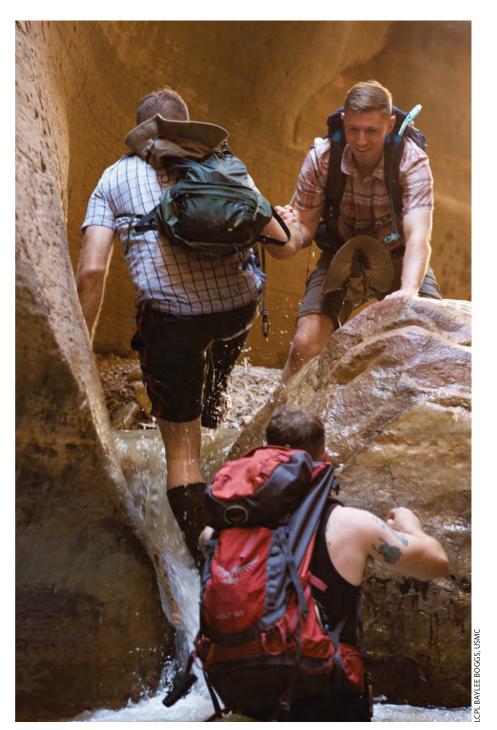
Some say Zion National Park in Springdale, Utah, is where the sound of silence exists, and when surrounded by its colossal mountains, you realize how small you are in comparison. For a group of Marines traveling to the park with the Single Marine Program (SMP) at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., size and silence certainly welcomed them as they reached the peak.

The SMP's main goal is to enhance the quality of life for single Marines by offering a variety of different extracurricular activities to keep them physically, mentally and socially active while living in the barracks.

"For 40 [dollars], we received transportation, tents, beds, food, water and Gatorade," said Sergeant Jennifer Mendez, an intelligence specialist with 1st Law Enforcement Battalion, I Marine Expeditionary Force Information Group. "It was also nice that we could choose how to spend our time. We were not restricted to a schedule of events at specific times of the day."

During their trip to Zion, Marines had the chance to hike, relax around a bonfire and mingle with other Marines.

"Everyone who chose to take this opportunity had at least two things in com-



Sgt Brehm Rhett, a ground radio repairman with 1st Intel Bn, I MEF Information Group, helps his fellow Marines traverse terrain during a Single Marine Program trip to Zion National Park, Utah, Aug. 4.

mon—being interested in the outdoors and being in the military," said Mendez. "Whether or not you were a lance corporal, a sergeant, in the Navy or the Marine Corps, it didn't matter."

Single, active-duty servicemembers and those not geographically located with their spouses can participate in SMP events. While attending trips, servicemembers are able to get outside, challenge their physical fitness in unique ways and bond with other servicemembers who are interested in similar activities. The program offers a wide variety of volunteer oppor-

tunities, tickets to various sporting events and weekend getaways.

"SMP is looking to get Marines out of the barracks, out from in front of the TV and give them opportunities that they wouldn't normally have," said Jessica Swinson, a manager for two of the SMP recreational centers. "The goal for hiking at Zion National Park was to give Marines the opportunity to hang out with individuals that had common interests and to build friendships."

LCpl Kerstin Roberts, USMC





**RECORD SETTER—Marine** Cpl Kira R. Lavine set two swimming records in the 50-meter and 100-meter freestyle during the 2018 **Department of Defense** Warrior Games, held at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado, June 1-10. After completing an intensive outpatient program at **Marine Corps Base Camp** Pendleton, Calif., Lavine enrolled in the Warrior **Athlete Rehabilitation** Program and went on to the **Marine Corps Trials before** competing at the Warrior Games. The Paralympic-style competition for wounded and injured servicemembers from all of the U.S. Armed Forces also included teams from the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada.

### **Crazy Caption Contest**

### Winner



"I'll have two burgers and two milkshakes!"

Submitted by: John Sanchez, Hansford, Calif.

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

### This Month's Photo



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

Name

Address\_\_\_\_\_ City/State\_\_\_\_ZIP\_\_\_

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OCTOBER 2018 / LEATHERNECK 53 www.mca-marines.org/leatherneck

# **Corps Connections**



### **Rifle Detail Supports Memorial Day Ceremony**

Members of the Marine Corps League Verde Valley Detachment #1176 provided a Memorial Day rifle detail at the Verde Valley Military Service Park in Cottonwood, Ariz., May 28. The park, which was first envisioned by a member of the detachment three years ago, is in its third phase of completion and has been strongly supported by the detachment and well-received by the local community. Phase one consisted of a 70-foot flagpole flying an American flag, surrounded by five flagpoles flying a flag for each branch of the Armed Forces. Phase two saw the addition of a four-sided black granite monument featuring the names of members of the community who have honorably served in the military. The third phase will add a reflection area with an Arizona flag and a POW/MIA flag, as well as a battlefield cross; finally, it will be com-

pleted with a tribute to "Rosie the Riveter" and a black granite monument featuring the names of female servicemembers who supported defense industries during World War II.

On Memorial Day and Veterans Day each year, all of the flags in the park are replaced during a special ceremony. This was the first year that the Verde Valley Detachment provided a ceremonial guard and rifle detail for the event. Pictured from the left, Rod Consalvo, Rick Duffield, Marvin Redeye, Ray Ojeda, Mike Noble, Keith Vogler and Steve McCoy represented the detachment during the ceremony.

"This is our partial payment of a huge debt that is owed to our veterans, both living and dead," said Keith Vogler, the senior vice commandant of the detachment.

Submitted by Keith Vogler



### Shenandoah Valley "Lunch Bunch" Unites Local Marines

On the second Wednesday of every month for the past 23 years, a group of Marine veterans in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia have gathered for "Lunch Bunch" at a restaurant in the small town of New Market. A tradition started by three area veterans of the Korean War who served together at Marine Barracks, Naval Base Subic Bay, Philippines, from 1950-1951, has grown over time to include more than 40 Marines from all eras.

"There are enlisted and officers in this group and there is no rank pulling, just good old Marine camaraderie and lots of sea stories," said Captain Leonard R. "Shifty" Shifflette, one of the original "Lunch Bunch" members. Each year, the group honors the birthday of the Corps by inviting family and friends to join, and has formed a lasting bond with the restaurant staff.

Submitted by Capt Leonard R. "Shifty" Shifflette, USMC (Ret)

### Cape Canaveral, Fla.

### Unclaimed Veterans Reach Final Resting Place

Members of the Brevard County Detachment of the Department of Florida, Marine Corps League, participated in the Missing in America Project's burial of 21 unclaimed urns of veterans' remains at the Cape Canaveral National Cemetery in Florida, June 23. Among the remains were those of two Marines—First Lieutenant Jan Robin Bloser, 1934-2006, and Lance Corporal Arthur Matthew Pappalardo, 1956-2006. The Missing in America Project exists to locate, identify and inter the unclaimed cremated remains of American veterans or their spouses or dependent children through the joint efforts of private, state and federal organizations. They strive to provide honor, respect and dignity to those who have served their country by securing a final resting place for "forgotten heroes." Submitted by Vinnie Howard



### Crossville, Tenn.

### **Recruiter Goes the Extra Mile for Aspiring Marine**

While traveling with his family from Westminster, Md., to Crossville, Tenn., to celebrate Independence Day with his grandparents, 6-year-old Michael Stronsky took along his dress blues. Michael has been fascinated with the Marines for quite some time, even selecting the dress blues uniform as his Halloween costume one year. Most kids would go for the super hero costumes but Michael insisted on Marine dress blues.

While in Tennessee, his mom, Ann Marie, took him to the Marine Corps Recruiting Station in Crossville, Tenn., so he could meet the Marines. He dressed in his uniform and off they went. Unfortunately, when they got there the office was closed. Seeing that Sergeant Jonathan Fleming had left his card in a holder on the door she called the number listed inquiring when they would be available and explaining it was the last day they could visit. Sgt Fleming graciously offered to come by the Recruiting Station to personally meet Michael that very day. He talked to Michael about his experiences in the Marine Corps and showed him places on a map where he had traveled. Thank you, Sgt Fleming, for taking the time to come in on your day off to make a future Marine's day.

Submitted by Patricia Everett

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"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. Submission does not guarantee publication, and we cannot guarantee the return of photos.

www.mca-marines.org/leatherneck OCTOBER 2018 / LEATHERNECK

# Spiritual Fitness Contributes To Total Wellness

By LCDR Justin Top, USN

It is important that we continue to nourish our psychological, social and spiritual growthotherwise our life ... can tip out of balance.

everal years ago, a popular meme circulated the Internet, especially among body builders and gym rats. It was a picture of a big, muscle-bound guy lifting weights. At first glance, he seemed pretty impressive; however, upon closer inspection, his skinny "chicken legs" were visible. The caption read, "Friends don't let friends skip leg day." Here was a man who was dedicated to improving his physique and who clearly invested a lot of time in the gym to shape his body, but apparently neglected his legs. It seems ridiculous, but this type of thing happens all the time. People develop "favorite" muscle groups to direct focus. They spend a lot of time and energy to perfect that part of their body, but ignore other important muscle groups. The result is a body that is awkwardly out of balance.

This principle of imbalance has application beyond bodybuilding and can be applied to total wellness. Wellness is about more than just physical fitness. In addition to physical health, it

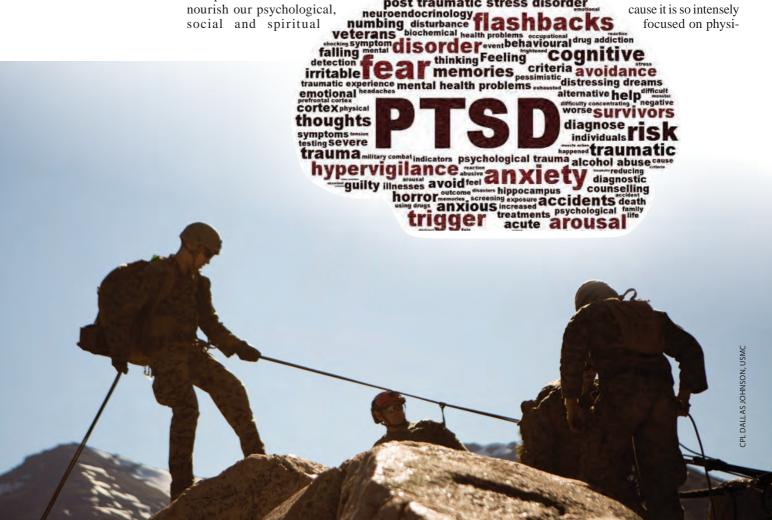
is important that we continue to nourish our psychological, social and spiritual

growth—otherwise our life, like the body builder mentioned previously, can tip out of balance. Happiness and success in life are most likely achieved when all four elements are in balance.

The reverse is also true. Take clinical depression, for example. While it is considered a psychological disorder, depression exists in all four areas of health—causing poor sleep habits, lack of desire for healthy physical activity, isolation and loss of meaning and hope. Effective treatment for depression includes strengthening all four wellness areas and incorporates exercise, improved nutrition and possibly medication (physical), counseling to help recognize and change irrational and unhelpful thought patterns (mental), identifying faith, values and meaning to motivate and strengthen (spiritual) and reconnecting with others to develop meaningful relationships (social).

Maintaining balance in all four areas of health is especially important to those in the military. By nature, training for warfighting ent assault Stress post traumatic stress disorder

can cause imbalance because it is so intensely focused on physi-



cal and mental hardening. If, however, the emotional, social and spiritual fitness of the individual do not keep pace, it can cause problems, including relationship and family problems and poor moral decisions. Reintegration issues after deployments are often the result of this imbalance.

### **Warrior Ethos**

To combat this tendency for warriors to experience moral hardening and imbalance, many historical warrior cultures created a strong warrior code to encourage constant attention to all areas of fitness. The Samurai in Japan are known for their commitment to a warrior code known as Bushido, which emphasized eight virtues: righteousness, heroic courage, compassion, respect, integrity, honor, duty, and self-control. Notice that few of these

virtues relate to physical strength or mental toughness, but rather provide balance to a combat mindset by emphasizing spiritual and social values that enhance mental and emotional functioning. Chivalry among medieval knights served a similar purpose, providing a spiritual and sociological framework within which warriors could operate.

For the modern warrior, the need to maintain balance is perhaps even greater than ever because modern technology now tends to decrease separation between a warrior's "combat life" and regular life. A Marine may be engaging with the enemy in a fight for life in the morning, and then trying to emotionally engage with family members that same afternoon. Managing two different worlds that are at odds with each other can be extremely challenging. Marines need to develop the mental skills, spiritual strength and social and relational understanding that will enable success.

### **Spiritual Fitness**

Marine Corps leaders understand the need for a strong spiritual foundation and have highlighted the importance of making it part of warrior preparation. In ALMAR 033/16, Commandant of the Marine Corps General Robert B. Neller explained, "Research indicates that spiritual fitness plays a key role in resiliency, in our ability to grow, develop, recover, heal, and adapt. Regardless of individual philosophy or beliefs, spiritual well-being makes us better warriors and people of character capable of making good choices on and off duty ... By attending to spiritual fitness with the same rigor given to physical, social and mental fitness, Marines and Sailors can become and remain the honorable warriors and model citizens our Nation expects."

It is important to identify the difference between spirituality and religion. Many confuse religion and spirituality as being the same thing. They are actually two different concepts that may overlap for many people. Religion is an organized set of beliefs and practices adhered to by a group of people. It is practiced externally with the intent to foster spirituality. Spirituality is an internal experience. It is characterized by one's personal experience of



meaning, connection, and transcendence. It may include a personal relationship with a higher power or a purpose that gives meaning to life. Research shows that religion can be an effective way to foster the benefits of spirituality because it provides teachings, scripture, rituals and practices that can enhance personal meaning, direction, connection and fulfillment.

Simply being part of a religion does not make a person "spiritual." It is also possible to be a spiritual person without being religious or even believing in God as defined by religion. For many people who are not religious, spirituality is about living in harmony with nature or with society. Others use a powerful principle as their guiding source of inspiration, such as love, patriotism, truth or the human spirit. Many seek to understand and develop their own "higher self." Whether one chooses to use religion or chooses to follow a different path, the key to developing spirituality is to make regular, sincere efforts to find deeper connection and meaning in life. The Marine Corps

As part of the Religious Affairs staff integration week during Eager Lion 2018, U.S. military chaplains and members of the Jordanian armed forces conducted mass casualty training at the Joint Training Center in Amman, Jordan, April 12.



LtCol Daniel Micklis, CO, BLT, 1st Bn, 1st Marines, 31st MEU, receives communion during a Protestant church service aboard USS *Wasp* (LHD-1) off the coast of Okinawa, Japan, April 15.

LCPL AMY PHAI



is not interested in telling Marines which religion to practice, but it is interested in training Marines to be fit and resilient warriors who are ready in every way for war. Spirituality has been linked by many different studies to numerous physical, psychological and social health factors. In addition, the benefits of spirituality are especially helpful in making warriors more resilient in the face of combat. More and more, research seems to support the sentiments of General George C. Marshallwho also served as Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense—when he said, "It is in the national interest that personnel serving in the Armed Forces be protected in the realization and development of moral, spiritual, and religious values consistent with the religious beliefs of the individuals concerned. To this end, it is the duty of commanding officers in every echelon to develop to the highest degree the conditions and influences calculated to promote health, morals, and spiritual values of the personnel under their command."

Though spirituality may look a little bit different for each individual, there are several key elements that seem to be important active ingredients for spirituality across all faith backgrounds and to those of no religious affiliation. Each Marine, whether religious or not, would benefit from becoming familiar with these core elements of spiritual fitness, and from exploring how they can be applied to improve personal resilience. Further, Marine Corps leaders should understand these concepts and find ways to integrate them into training plans.

### **Personal Faith**

Marines learn about personal faith from the moment they step off the bus in boot camp. It is drilled into them to trust their leaders, trust each other, and eventually to trust their own training and abilities. For example, when Marines first learn to rappel, trusting in the rope can be difficult and disorienting. However, with training and practice, Marines quickly discover that faith in the equipment provides a solid connection that increases safety and stability and instills hope and confidence in accomplishing any task.

Like rappelling, personal faith requires trust in something greater than self. The majority of Americans place faith in a higher power or God and in a religious community and report that religious faith is a source of significant support. However, religion is not the only type of faith that can be beneficial. Other objects of faith may include self, in the form of skills, abilities or personal worth, friends, family, unit, the Marine Corps or the nation. That faith relationship can provide connection that improves personal and moral stability and increases confidence and hope for the future.

**Marines and Sailors** of USS Wasp **Amphibious Ready** Group sing during a **Protestant church** service aboard USS Wasp off the coast of Okinawa, Japan, April 15. **Marines and Sailors** are able to participate in services of various religions and denominations while deployed and in garrison.



CPL AMY PHAN, USMC

### **Foundational Values**

Imagine being completely lost in a wilderness area. How would you determine which way you would go? An effective strategy would be to try to get a view of the land to enable a mental map of the terrain. That way, direction decisions would not be purely based on the limited view each moment. By seeking a bird's eye view, it would be possible to identify important terrain features to follow, such as rivers and valleys, as well as terrain to avoid, such as dangerous cliffs, impassable vegetation or disorienting forests. It would be important to view the surroundings, decide where to go, and then make a plan to get there while properly utilizing the terrain. Marines understand the importance of these land navigation skills and are trained to use maps and plan detailed routes through difficult terrain in order to arrive at objectives efficiently.

The same navigational principles apply to life. Many people wander through life without any particular destination. They make daily choices based on what lies ahead at that moment. The result in life is often much like it would be if they were lost in the wilderness—they end up going in circles, running into dead ends or taking much longer to get anywhere than they need to. In order to avoid this, identifying life's meaning and values is important. Meaning addresses questions such as, "What is the purpose of life?" and "How do I live a good life, even in the face of hardship?" Meaning provides a bird's eye view of life—a "life map" that identifies terrain (values) and objectives (goals). Having personal meaning and values mapped out provides motivation to pursue goals and strength to endure hardship.

Determining a detailed life map is especially important for Marines in combat, as the conditions of war can distort perceptions of right and wrong and can challenge a person's worldview. It is important that Marines regularly reaffirm commitment to and personal understanding of Marine Corps values of honor, courage and commitment, as well as other personal foundational values.

### **Moral Living**

Just as a map is of little value if it is not used, personal meaning and values are of little use if they are only given lip service. Saying that something is crucial or that it is important to live life a certain way is good because it helps to identify objectives and guide a path to follow, but it can be easy to stray from an intended path without regularly comparing progress to the map and generating reminders of core values.

For many people, this is where spirituality breaks down. Most people want to be "good" people and have at least a vague idea of what that kind of life should look like. Despite this, prisons are full of people who started with good intentions. They didn't say, "I want to be a criminal when I grow up." They probably created some sort of life map at some point. The problem is that many people never follow through on good intentions. In essence, they glanced at their map, said, "I got this," and then



threw away the map and started walking. They never noticed as they gradually drifted more and more off course until they were so far off they could no longer remember what their map looked like. All Marines can recite the Marine Corps values. Those Marines who have made poor decisions that have brought dishonor on themselves and the Corps knew those values in their mind—they just weren't written in their hearts.

Moral living is where the rubber meets the road for spirituality. It is where faith and values are transformed into action and lifestyle. Using the map analogy from above, it is the compass that guides each step we take. Marines learn how to use a map and a compass together by identifying the heading on the map, shooting an azimuth in the same direction with the compass, then advancing in line with that azimuth, paying careful attention to direction and pace. It is a very deliberate, exact process. Likewise, Marines need a moral compass. They need to develop the habit of aligning life choices with foundational values and meanings. When this type of spiritual attention guides every footstep in life, it is more likely that the individual will end up at the destination envisioned.

Spiritual fitness is an important element of warrior total fitness because it provides the underlying framework of meaning and motivation that helps Marines push themselves, overcome challenges, endure hardship and suffering for a greater cause and be able to adapt to life's changing battlefields.

For more information, check out USMC Spiritual Fitness on Facebook and Instagram, or send us an email at USMCSpiritfit@USMC.mil.

Author's bio: LCDR Top, a Navy chaplain, works in the office of the Chaplain of the Marine Corps to crease resources to promote spiritual fitness in the Marine Corps. He is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in counseling psychology and specialized in the relationship between spirituality and mental health.

**RADM Brent W. Scott** gives closing remarks during the Chaplain's **Professional Development Workshop at Camp** Foster, Okinawa, Japan May 8, 2017.

Many people wander through life without any particular destination. They make daily choices based on what lies ahead at that moment. The result in life is often much like it would be if they were lost in the wilderness.

## **Passing the Word**

### Veterans History Project Collects Stories of War

During a conference sponsored by the Veterans History Project, 26 combat veterans from various wars gathered on July 31 at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island Museum in South Carolina to give firsthand accounts of their service during past conflicts.

The conference allowed the veterans to have their unedited stories recorded and stored for future generations.

"Our goal is to collect, preserve and make accessible the firsthand accounts of U.S. war veterans so that people can better understand the realities of war," said Andrew Hubert, a member of the Veterans History Project who oversaw the conference. "It's an unedited, uncensored view of military service, both the good and the bad."

Throughout the day, volunteers sat down with the veterans, some of whom were over the age of 90, and conducted interviews. Various sections of the museum were set up to facilitate the interviews and were temporarily closed to the public.

The majority of those interviewed were veterans of World War II—a group that is

rapidly dwindling in size. According to the National World War II Museum, only 558,000 of the 16 million Americans who served during WW II were still alive in 2017. Many of the veterans who attended the conference reside in the Beaufort and Bluffton areas of South Carolina, but some came from Savannah, Ga., and Columbia, S.C.

Edward Cilli, 96, was one of the WW II veterans interviewed. He enlisted in 1942 and served as a combat radioman in several bloody conflicts in the South Pacific. Cilli said the loss of so many of his fellow veterans makes it that much more important to ensure that their story is told.

"My son talked me into this but I'm glad I got in here," said Cilli shortly after recording his interview. "It's under a million [World War II veterans] now left. We're slowly disappearing so it's good to get this written down so other people can read about it and get the information."

Huber said that holding the event at the museum and having active-duty Marines and student veterans from the Technical College of the Lowcountry in Beaufort, S.C., on hand to help with the interviews helped make it a successful endeavor.

"We could not do this without TCL

and the museum," Huber said. "When we have a backdrop like this, where everyone understands their sacrifice, it makes all the difference. Especially when we have veterans interviewing veterans—that makes all the difference because they can open up to them."

Henry Dreier, a Marine Corps veteran and president of the college's student veterans chapter, helped organize the event after meeting Hubert at a student veterans conference in Texas. Dreier said the event exceeded his expectations and a second is in the works.

"We thought it was going to be pulling teeth getting guys to show up and share their stories," he said. "What ended up happening was we were full before we ever advertised. It shows veterans want to tell their stories. They want this knowledge to get out there."

An undertaking of the Library of Congress established in 2000, the Veterans History Project collects firsthand accounts of U.S. veterans from all wars and conflicts in an effort to make their personal accounts accessible to future generations. For more information, visit https://www.loc.gov/vets/about.html.

SSgt Tyler Hlavac, USMC

John White, a 93-year-old veteran of World War II, tells interviewers his story of serving in the Marine Corps in the South Pacific. White was one of more than 20 veterans interviewed by members of the **Veterans History Project at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island Museum** in South Carolina, **July 31.** 

### New Bonuses Aim to Retain Marines

The Marine Corps is spending \$136 million in reenlistment bonuses and other incentives to help retain Marines for multiple military occupational specialties during fiscal year 2019.

Marines in certain MOS fields may be eligible for an early reenlistment kicker, which is a \$10,000 lump sum paid to a Marine in addition to his or her MOS's individual bonus if they submitted their package prior to Sept. 30, 2018. There are also bonuses for Marines making a lateral move into a high-demand MOS like infantry, special operations or special duty assignments.

"The biggest difference between last year's bonus program and this year's is that if your MOS actually rates a bonus, then you are entitled to a kicker as well," said Sergeant Payne Davis, career planner, Headquarters and Service Battalion, Marine Corps Installations—West.

Though several occupational specialties are offering bonuses, the amounts do vary. Air traffic controllers are being offered \$20,000; infantry squad leaders \$30,000; and counter-intelligence/human intelligence specialists \$40,000. In addition, anyone considering a lateral move while reenlisting into an MOS with a bonus will be awarded that MOS's bonus once they complete the entry-level training.

Davis also said that Marines who have served fewer than eight years may qualify for the maximum amount of money their MOS is offering due to the fact that they are the least likely to reenlist.

For Marines reenlisting into a special duty assignment such as drill instructor, recruiter or detachment commander for Marine security guard duty, once they complete the applicable school they can receive that SDA's bonus in addition to their primary MOS bonus if it has one.

It is important to keep in mind that those Marines who are eligible to receive a bonus must fulfill certain terms and conditions or otherwise will be obligated to repay the bonus.

"Every situation has its own specific terms and conditions when receiving a bonus," said Davis. "Across the board, as long as you fulfill your contract without getting in trouble or administratively separated, you're good to go."

Another example of a high-demand MOS that will benefit from the new bonuses and incentives is explosive ordnance disposal (EOD).

"I provided security for EOD responses during my first deployment to Iraq; I never considered lateral moving prior to that deployment," said Master Sergeant Matthew Small, operations chief, 1st



VADM Raquel C. Bono, USN, Director of the Defense Health Agency, and Stacy Cummings, program executive officer for Defense Health Management Systems, answer questions about the progress of the MHS GENESIS electronic health record transition during the 2018 Defense Health Information Technology Symposium in Orlando, Fla., July 24.

Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company, 1st Marine Logistics Group. "I saw an opportunity to deploy more often and have a greater impact on the Marines deployed as an EOD technician. I did not lateral move for the money, but it was a nice unexpected perk. It's the community and the work that has kept me around so long."

Retaining experienced and qualified Marines remains one of Headquarters Marine Corps' highest priorities. Retention is extremely vital to not only shaping the future, but also for sustaining the Marine Corps' enlisted force.

"We want to keep the best Marines where they belong," said Davis. "This program is a great way to ensure the Marine Corps keeps the best qualified Marines to uphold the standards set by us."

For more information about bonuses and eligibility, visit your career planner or consult MARADMIN 370/18.

Cpl Dylan Chagnon, USMC

### New Health Record System Gains "Forward Momentum"

The Military Health System is looking at how to best incorporate feedback as it advances with the deployment of its new electronic health record system, MHS GENESIS.

"We need to continue with our forward momentum," said Vice Admiral Raquel C. Bono, USN, Director of the Defense Health Agency, during the 2018 Defense Health Information Technology Symposium in Orlando, Fla., July 24-26.

VADM Bono acknowledged there have been areas where adjustments were needed and stressed the importance of

having a secure system that is improved by user feedback.

"We are a large government organization undertaking a critical strategic project," Bono explained. "It's important that we embrace our heritage as a learning organization."

MHS GENESIS has been deployed at four sites in the state of Washington: Naval Hospital Bremerton, the Air Force's 92nd Medical Group at Fairchild Air Force Base, Naval Health Clinic Oak Harbor and Madigan Army Medical Center.

During the symposium, Stacy Cummings, program executive officer for Defense Healthcare Management Systems, announced four new sites where MHS GENESIS will be deployed. Three of the sites are in California—Naval Air Station Lemoore, Travis Air Force Base and Army Medical Health Clinic Presidio of Monterey. Another is in Idaho, at Mountain Home AFB.

Eventually, MHS GENESIS will provide a single electronic health record for each of the 9.4 million beneficiaries of the Military Health System and will be used by about 200,000 providers at 1,200 sites.

"Feedback from our frontline users is most important, but input from [initial operational test and evaluation], Congress, consultants, the media and our patients are both to be expected and welcomed," Bono said. "We're getting a lot of input and feedback right now; we need to process it calmly and in a measured way and keep moving forward with confidence and conviction in the path we've selected."

Lisa Ferdinando, DOD



### In Memoriam

### Guadalcanal Marine's Remains Identified

The remains of Marine Private First Class Francis E. Drake Jr., 20, of Framingham, Mass., recently were identified and returned to his family for burial. In October 1942, Drake was a member of Company C, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, 1st Marine Division, participating in the main offensive action in the Battle of Guadalcanal when he was killed and interred in a grave on the island.

From 1947 through 1949, the American Graves Registration Service searched for isolated burials on Guadalcanal, but were not able to locate Drake's remains.

In 2011, Yorick Tokuru, a resident of Guadalcanal, located possible remains near his home. A team of Royal Solomon Islands Police Force investigators excavated the site. Recovered remains were turned over to Joint POW/MIA Recovery Command (now Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency).

To identify Drake's remains, DPAA scientists used dental and anthropological analysis, as well as historical and material evidence.

**DPAA** 

### **DPAA Identifies Marines Killed on Tarawa**

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) recently announced that the remains of two Marines, unaccounted for since World War II, have been identified. The remains were recovered from Betio Island in the Tarawa Atoll of the Gilbert Islands. The Marines whose remains were identified are:

**Private First Class John W. MacDonald**, 19, of Somerverville, Mass. In November 1943, he was assigned to Company F, 2nd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division. He died on the first day of the Battle of Tarawa, Nov. 20, 1943.

**Private Emil F. Ragucci**, 19, of Philadelphia, Pa. In November 1943, he was assigned to Co E, 2nd Bn, 2nd Marines, 2ndMarDiv. He died on the first day of the Battle of Tarawa, Nov. 20, 1943.

DPAA

LtCol Arthur J. Arceneaux Jr., 94, of Baton Rouge, La. He was as an original member of VMF(N)-542 in the Pacific in WW II. He was called back to active duty during the Korean War and flew photo reconnaissance missions during the Vietnam War. He was a member of the American Legion, VFW, MCL and Disabled American Veterans. His awards include the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with two Gold Stars.

**Cpl Howard B. Atwater**, 67, of Boomer, W.Va. He was a Marine Corps veteran.

John Beasley, 86, of Anchorage, Alaska. He was a veteran of the Korean War and fought in the Battle of Chosin Reservoir. He was the president of the "Chosin Few" organization and worked on legislation to establish Mt. Chosin Few in Chugach National Forest as a monument to his fallen brothers and fellow survivors of the battle.

**James Begay**, 92, of Oneida, Wis. During his 20 years in the Marine Corps, he served in WW II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War.

Marcel Bisson, 93, in Brooklyn,

Minn. He was a veteran of WW II and was wounded on Iwo Jima. His awards include the Purple Heart.

**Henry J. Bukowski** of Brentwood, N.Y. He served in the 3rdMarDiv and saw action in the South Pacific on Iwo Jima. After the war, he was a police officer.

**GySgt Ralph R. "Pat" Caruthers**, 88, of Hamilton, Ohio. He served during the Korean War. After serving, he worked in the paper industry. He was a noted philanthropist, donating millions to the community.

**Richard "Dick" Deschaine**, 87, of Green Bay, Wis. He was a Marine Corps veteran of the Korean War. After the war, he was a punter for the Green Bay Packers and the Cleveland Browns. He later worked in the auto industry.

**Thomas Dolan**, 69, of Gillette, N.J. He enlisted in 1967 and fought in Vietnam. After the war, he became a police officer. His awards include the Bronze Star with combat "V."

**Richard Arnold Downs**, 80, of Enfield, Conn. He served with VMA-211, the "Wake Island Avengers." He was a member of the MCL and the MCA&F.

**Frank C. Fameree**, 78, of Casco, Wis. He was a veteran of the Marine Corps and volunteered at the VA clinic.

WO Charles A. Fields Jr., 78, of Enfield, Conn. He served as a drill instructor at Parris Island during the Vietnam War. After serving a tour of duty in Vietnam, he was selected for warrant officer and worked in the office of the inspector general until his retirement.

**Sgt Burnis T. Gardner**, 91, of Brandon, Miss. During WW II, he was assigned to "Lima" Co, 3rd Bn, 4th Marines, 6thMarDiv during the Battle of Okinawa. He later served in the Korean War. After the war, he completed college and graduate school and worked as a teacher for more than 30 years.

**Sgt Ronald J. Gathers**, 70, of Parma, Ohio. He enlisted in 1967 and served two tours in Vietnam.

**Sgt Walter H. Gibson Jr.**, 72, of Rocky Hill, Conn. He served two tours in Vietnam. His awards include the Purple Heart.

**James H. Gregory**, 95, of Southington, Ct. During WW II, he served in the Pacific. His awards include the Bronze Star

**Col Russel M. Harwood**, 87, of Brownsville, Texas. He was a Marine who served from 1953-1955 during the Korean War and then for 30 years in the Marine Corps Reserve. His awards include the Legion of Merit and two Meritorious Service Medals.

**Guy H. Hoard**, 73, of Davenport, Iowa. He served in Vietnam from 1966-1967. He earned his degree in accounting and had a career with the IRS.

**Charles F. "Chuck" Horn**, 69, of Hobart, Wis. He was a veteran of the Marine Corps.

**Valentine L. Jaroch**, 91, of Detroit, Mich. He enlisted in the Marine Corps at 17 and served in WW II and the Korean War.

**Derek A. Karel**, 50, of Selah, Wash. He served in the Marine Corps for four years, participating in Operation Desert Storm.

**Cpl Ronald F. Koperniak**, 71, of Chicago, Ill. He served from 1969-1971 and worked with the Brigade Disbursing Section, 5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade at Camp Pendleton. He was an IRS auditor for more than 32 years.

**Virginia B. Kosik**, 94, of Harrison Township, Mich. She served in the Marine Corps during WW II.

**Peter B. Lee**, 84, of Buena Vista, Colo. He was an A-4 pilot during the Vietnam

War. He later had a career as an airline pilot flying the DC-3, 737, MD-80 and 747.

**MSgt Herman Medina Sr.,** 78, of Safford, Ariz. He served for 20 years in the Marine Corps.

**Maj James H. Montague**, 90, of Homestead Hills, N.C. He enlisted in 1945 and later was selected for officer training.

**Leonard J. Reed**, 79, of Allouez, Mich. He served in the Marine Corps from 1958-1962.

**Harold L. Robertson**, 97, of O'Brien, Ore. During WW II he served in in the Pacific as a radioman and sharpshooter.

**Nelson Sandoval**, 77, of Whitehorse, N.M. He enlisted in 1966 and served a tour in Vietnam with 2nd Bn, 26th Marines, 3rdMarDiv.

**Ted Sawyer Jr.,** 60, of Asheville, N.C. He served in the Marine Corps for six years and later served in the Army's 5th Special Forces Group. He was a volunteer with Boy Scouts of America.

**SSgt James M. Seidel**, 35, of Altoona, Pa. His 13 years in the Marine Corps included two deployments to Afghanistan, and one to Djibouti, Africa.

Gale Wallace Siders, 88, of San Diego, Calif. He served in WW II and saw action on Guadalcanal where he was wounded. He later had a career in law enforcement.

Lloyd T. Smith Jr., 86, of Charlottes-

ville, Va. He joined the Marine Corps and served with 7th Marines during the Korean War.

**Capt Lloyd M. Steele**, 85, of Bayard, Neb. He served in the Marine Corps for 21 years, serving tours in the Korean War and the Vietnam War.

**1stLt Charles N. Tate**, 81, of Evans, Ga. His 23 years in the Marine Corps included an assignment with MAG-16 at Marble Mountain during the Vietnam War.

**Col David Townshend**, 85, of Beaufort, S.C. He had a 30-year career in the Marine Corps.

MSgt Robert L. Turk, 81, of Texarkana, Ark. He served in the Marine Corps for 21 years. His awards include the Air Medal with three Strikes, Navy Commendation Medal and Navy Achievement Medal.

**Bernard J. "Ben" Vanden Bergh**, 82, of Bellevue, Wis. He was a veteran of the Marine Corps.

**Thomas Vey Voda**, 94, of Douglastown, N.Y. He was a WW II veteran of the VMF-122 where he was an F4U Corsair crew chief. After the war, he became a detective with the NYPD.

**Nadine M. Ward**, 61, of Temple, Texas. She was a veteran of the Marine Corps.

LtCol James J. Yantorn, 79, of Jacksonville, N.C. He enlisted in 1957

and in 1969 he was given a direct commission. His 30-year career in the Marine Corps included assignments in Okinawa and a tour in Vietnam. His awards include a Navy Commendation Medal with combat "V."

**Dorothy M. York**, 98, of Kelso, Wash. She was a heavy equipment operator in the Marine Corps during WW II.

C. Richard Zenger, 94, of Portland, Ore. He enlisted in the Marine Corps after Pearl Harbor and served in the Pacific theater as a radioman with the 1st Armored Amphibian Bn. He was called back to active duty during the Korean War and fought at the Chosin Reservoir.

**Della Fae "Peg" Ziebell**, 95, of Arapahoe, Neb. She enlisted in 1944 and served for two years.

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



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### **Books Reviewed**

TWO FLAGS OVER IWO JIMA: Solving the Mystery of the U.S. Marine Corps' Proudest Moment. By Eric Hammel. Published by Casemate. 22 pages. \$26.96 MCA Members. \$29.95 Regular Price.

"Two Flags Over Iwo Jima" must be considered the most singular and profoundly heart-driven historical disentanglement story in the annals of the Pacific War. With simplicity and directness, the issues of the troubling reporting that plagued the saga of raising not one but two American flags on Mount Suri-

bachi in late February 1945, are presented. Then, in painstaking detail, the book delineates how it wasn't until 2016, when the Huly Panel completed its investigations, that the disputes were definitively resolved.

Three reasons make "Two Flags Over Iwo Jima" startlingly different from any other book about the conflict with Japan. First, with its astonishing detail, clarity, and precision of facts and

participants, it is an extremely important, well-documented contribution to U.S. war history. Second, it is a hitherto untold testament of exceptional gallantry by Marine riflemen climbing, clawing, and fighting their way up the 600 foot slope to the top, although many of their stories will never be completed because the infantrymen who could add to or confirm them died. And finally, because it is the tale of a boy's fascination and his quest over half a century to know what happened to each of his heroes. The boy was Eric Hammel, and he was destined to become one of America's foremost military historians, writing more than 50 military titles and 70 magazine articles so far.

In 1955, Hammel, as a student in Mrs. Lesche's fourth-grade class at Logan Elementary School in Philadelphia, Pa., sat in the last desk in the second row. From that vantage point, he looked out the classroom door to the opposite hallway wall where a color print of Joe Rosenthal's photo of the flag raising on Iwo Jima was perfectly framed. Every day for a year, he gazed upon the stunning symmetry of five Marines in a rough pyramid lifting a pipe with the American flag towering over their heads.

Hope of securing Suribachi found

fruition on Feb. 23, 1945, as the Stars and Stripes was observed fluttering in the wind by both Sailors aboard their ships and Marines still battling far below on the ash and sand of the volcano island. For 75 days, B-24, B-25 and B-29 Superfortress bombers from Saipan, in addition to battleship and other heavy naval guns, "softened up" the 5-mile long, 2½-mile wide "sulfur paradise," especially Suribachi on the southern tip being saturated the most. In the final three days before the first landings on Feb. 19, 450 ships of the U.S. Navy's 5th

Fleet unleashed more than 40,000 shells on Iwo Jima in the heaviest bombardment of all World War II.

Between 9 and 10 am on that fateful Monday morning, more than 8,000 Marines landed on East Beach, half of them killed or wounded by noon. Despite enduring the greatest baptism of fire in the history of world warfare, the Japanese held on tenaciously. Most had to be burned, bombed, and shot

out of their holes. Many were simply buried alive in their caves.

After three days of ascending footby-foot under mortar, artillery, rocket, machine-gun, and grenade fire, Lieutenant Colonel Chandler W. Johnson's 2nd Battalion, 28th Regiment, made it to the mountaintop, the first of two "Old Glory" flags planted and flapping in the Okinawa ocean winds.

Three hours after raising the original flag, it was replaced by a larger one brought ashore from a tank-landing craft. When that second flag was raised, Associated Press photographer Joe Rosenthal happened to be nearby, and almost as an afterthought, took photographs of its raising.

In short, "Two Flags Over Iwo Jima: Solving the Mystery of the U.S. Marine Corps' Proudest Moment," focuses on the all-but-forgotten first flag raising, almost hour by hour; the fascinating men and minutiae involved in the second; and the definitive conclusions of the Huly Panel investigating the various contradictory claims, accusations, and "mysteries" regarding the two flag-raisings. All of it is told with Hammel's thoroughness and narrative perceptiveness. Led by Lieutenant General Jan Huly, the nine senior active-duty and retired Marine

and civilian experts, within nine days of intensive review, reached their findings for the final report to the public. Hammel writes, "It immediately sent shock waves through the entire tradition-driven Marine Corps extended-community world-wide."

Singled out for special recognition was Huly board member, retired Colonel Mary Reinwald, editor of Leatherneck magazine, who concluded in her superlative August 2016 article, "Examining the Evidence": "Ironically, the significance of Rosenthal's photo and the Marine Corps War Memorial that it inspired is not who raised the flag, but rather who and what they represented. While the desire to correct the historical record is both understandable and necessary, that moment on top of Mount Suribachi more than 70 years ago will still hold a special place in the hearts of Marines and in the history of the Corps regardless of who raised the flag."

Of all the well-documented contributions to the history of WW II in the Pacific, none has a more heartfelt narrative, combining deep understanding and sensitive perception than "Two Flags Over Iwo Jima." And, because it cannot be read without emotion, eliciting a quiet tear or two, it is, and most certainly will continue to be, among this reviewer's favorite five of the Pacific War.

So remarkable is a new book clarifying the acclaim and controversy of unquestionably the proudest moment in Marine Corps history that as a reviewer I am truly, nay, deeply, appreciative of the honor of critiquing it for *Leatherneck*.

Don DeNevi

Author's bio: Don DeNevi, who reviews World War II titles exclusively for Leatherneck magazine, and who has authored more than 35 nonfiction books of his own, has recently witnessed the arrival of his second historic novel, "Shep in the Victorio War: Based on True Events from the Texas Frontier."

### TO THE SOUND OF THE GUNS: 1st Battalion, 27th Marines from Hawaii to Vietnam 1966-68. By Grady T. Birdsong. Published by BirdQuill LLC. 434 pages. Available on Amazon.

"To the Sound of the Guns" is highly recommended for not only the Marines who served in 1st Battalion, 27th Marines, but also Marines everywhere interested in our Corps' grand and illustrious battle history. This carefully researched book documents the battalion's combat history in Vietnam.

The title of the book is taken from the battalion's motto "To the Sound of the Guns." The motto, etched on the battalion's patch, reflects its outstanding

combat record achieved during World War II's Iwo Jima campaign.

The book is full of interesting anecdotes and remembrances of the battalion's veterans. Although continuously undermanned, the battalion served as a maneuver force in the ever-expanding war following the Tet Offensive. After rigorous organization and training in Hawaii, the Marines of 1/27

were ordered to Vietnam in February 1968. The battalion was then attached to the 1st Marine Division.

Initially sent south of the huge military base at Da Nang, 1/27 was tasked with keeping "Liberty Road" safe and secure for travel and later participated in Operation Allen Brook. The operation lasted three and one-half months, resulting in more than 1,000 enemy combatants killed. The battalion also fought in a series of battles for the control of Go Noi Island, located south of Da Nang.

The author reported on his early experience with war wondering just what kind of madness a war might bring. The war, he concluded, would brutalize the Marines far beyond normal.

The battalion sustained extremely heavy casualties during its relatively short deployment in the Republic of Vietnam. One hundred twelve Marines and Navy corpsmen were killed. Additionally, 557 battalion members were wounded during the battalion's 1968 combat tour.

This excellent military history volume is well-conceived and well-executed. The book contains many previously unpublished photos of the 1/27 Marines from their combat tour. Studded with well-conceived and reliable maps, the book also is a treasure trove of Vietnam War statics. The work includes an exceptionally helpful glossary of military terms, acronyms and an Honor Roll of the battalion's war fighting casualties.

Marines of the Vietnam-era will enjoy the chapter, "Tools of the Trade," where the author guides the reader through a review of the battle equipment used by Marines during the action-packed days of the 1960s. The reader gets a look at the battalion's wheeled vehicles including the Mighty Mite jeep. This chapter also includes photos of the lifesaving support

helicopters used during the Vietnam War. Additionally, photos of the weapons are also included and "old salts" will undoubtedly relish seeing photos of the antiquated 782 filled gear that they utilized during the war.

HM2 Bob Taugner recalled treating a

severely wounded Marine: "He had been shot and the bullet had entered on the side of his face. It looked like the round had taken off the bottom lower jaw and half of his tongue ... and most of his teeth in that area of his jaw." Not trained for anything like this, the doc instantly packed the horrific wound. He then sat the Marine upright to stop him from choking and/or preventing

him from swallowing his tongue. He continued: "He was a tough one ... He never grabbed me or cried out. I will never forget him."

To The Sound Of The Guns

Grady T. Birdsong

Grady Birdsong, the author, was raised in Kansas and joined the Marines in 1966. He served two combat tours in northern I-Corps between 1968 and 1969. He has served as a veterans' advocate and is now retired and living with his wife near Denver, Colo.

Well-researched, wellorganized, and interesting

to read, "To the Sound of the Guns," may well become one of the definitive narratives of the Marine involvement in the Vietnam War.

**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.

FIRE IN THE STREETS: The Battle for Hue, Tet 1968. By Eric Hammel. Published by Pacifica Military History. 420 pages. \$17.06 MCA Members. \$18.95 Regular Price.

This book is another example of why Eric Hammel is the premier chronicler of Marine Corps combat history. Hammel has produced a number of outstanding narratives on Marine Corps history including, "Chosin," "Khe Sanh Siege in the Clouds" "Marines on Iwo Jima," "The Root" and many more. This volume on the 1968 battle of Hue was first published in 1991. It is being appropriately re-released to commemorate the battle's 50th

anniversary. Hammel has produced a straightforward account of the battle that is educational and compelling.

Hammel approaches his topic using a day-by-day account of Marine, Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN), and U.S. Army operations. It is primarily a Marine story, however, with the focus on the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 5th Marines. Hammel uses official records and numerous oral history interviews on which to build his narrative.

Of course, the official records can be as dry as dust, but Hammel's talent as a writer weaves these into a fast-paced and engaging account of the action while maintaining a historical accuracy that is often missing from battle stories. This task is greatly abetted by his skillful use of oral history excerpts from interviews of Marines and soldiers who fought at Hue. The accounts of personal experiences

draws readers in and they come to understand the tremendous challenges that Marines faced at Hue.

Foremost, beyond the ferocity by which the enemy fought, was the suddenness by which Marines were thrown into the cauldron of urban combat. Their combat experience was in the bush and rice paddies of the South Vietnamese countryside. They had very little training in fighting in urban terrain. Hue was as urban as it could

get with a labyrinth of winding narrow streets and close built structures. They learned as they fought, improvising to pry out a tenacious foe, street by street and building to building. The frequency by which noncommissioned officers took on leadership roles as officers became casualties is surprising.

Hammel sets the scene in the first three chapters and develops the tactical situation. The reader understands the substantial strategic and symbolic significance that victory in Hue represented for the communists. The communists sent 5,000 of their best troops to achieve a quick victory and trigger a gathering of the masses to show the world the popularity of their cause and the widespread opposition to the puppet government in Saigon. Such was not the case. The masses did not rise up in support of the communist cause and the communist troops were dealt a resounding defeat by Marines, soldiers, and ARVN.

Hammel describes the communist battalions' movement into Hue, the surprise factor they enjoyed, their consolidation of some key terrain and their failure to seize





other key terrain. The first commitment of Marines was from 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, who upon hearing they were going to Hue, regarded this as a reprieve from battle. Hard combat ensued, however, as they approached Hue and it persisted as they moved into the city. The 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines' fight was outside the Citadel, the city-scape between the Perfume River and the Citadel, while the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines (reinforced with a 3/5 company) fought in conjunction with ARVN units to clear the Citadel. The Army's First Cavalry Division soldiers had the mission of isolating Hue.

The book leaves no doubt that it was

an infantry fight, although Hammel does include how supporting arms were employed including artillery, tanks and the creative use of the M-40 106 mm recoilless rifle that proved surprisingly effective. Air support was cut short by the horrible weather, low clouds and mist. This is not to diminish the air support that, as Hammel describes, was heroically provided by Marine pilots who flew strikes despite the weather, and helicopter pilots who flew support and medical evacuation missions. Infantry units bore the burden of the fight and suffered the casualties. Marine, Army and ARVN units suffered about 4.400 casualties, which included more than 600

killed (KIA). Of these, the Marines suffered 142 KIA and about 1,100 wounded. Communist casualties included up to 5,000 casualties, of which more than 1,000 were KIA

This is a solid, no-frills, account of a landmark Marine battle. The reader will come away with a clear understanding of the role Marine units played in the victory. Many lessons can be derived from the reading: the ever-present need for clear intelligence, adequate training in urban combat, the essential need for leadership training amongst NCOs—and all Marines for that matter—and the willingness to improvise when the standard tactics and weapons prove ineffective. This book is highly recommended reading for military professionals.

Maj Fred Allison, USMCR (Ret)

Author's Bio: Maj Fred Allison, USMCR (Ret) is a former Marine F-4 radar intercept officer. He earned his doctorate in history from Texas Tech University and currently is a historian at the Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, Va.





### **SOUND OFF** [continued from page 7]

school and the town were completely segregated and we never celebrated birthdays. End of conversation, I thought.

On Dec. 28, Sgt Sheppard kept insisting we go to lunch. Finally I agreed. Upon entering the mess hall it struck me as unusual. The tables were covered with white tablecloths and on one side of the room was a table with a huge cake that read, "Happy Birthday Sgt Manuel Espudo USMC." The 20 to 30 sergeants in attendance began to sing happy birthday and were joined by 100 or so corporals and below. They followed by singing "The Marines' Hymn," which brought me to tears. My throat felt like I was swallowing a brick and I couldn't blow out the candles. Sgt Sheppard and another sergeant began cutting the cake and served it.

When Sheppard and I returned to the office, Mr. Ours asked with a smirk on his face, "How was your lunch, Sgt Espudo?" I said, "Oh, it was nice. Sgt Sheppard brought me a cupcake all the way from Lake Elsinore." Sheppard shouted, "Espudo! I'm going to tell my wife you called your cake a cupcake! The bus driver helped me tilt it through the door." Sheppard went on to say most of the passengers on the bus were Marines and when he explained why he was carrying such a big cake, they all volunteered to help get it safely to Marine Corps Supply Center, Yermo, Calif.

For my 80th birthday my kids had a party at the Beaumont Auditorium. In attendance were most of my fellow members of Semper Fi #1 Marine Honor Detail of The National Cemetery of Riverside, Calif.

As my 90th birthday nears, I have a commitment from my three grandsons, Chase, Marc and George, to go with me to the Running of the Bulls in Pamplona, Spain. They will be there just in case I fall. Most of my family thinks I need serious therapy.

> GySgt Manuel R. Espudo Banning, Calif.

#### Belleau Wood Remembered

The article "WW I: 100 Years Ago: Immortalized in History: The Marines Who Fought at Belleau Wood," in the June issue brought back memories. During the summer of 1952, I was a trainee at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. By the end of the summer, I had to leave for two weeks of reserve duty at Camp Lejeune, N.C.

I had written an article for one of the department's publications, the Agricultural Situation, which at the time had the largest circulation of any monthly govern-



Gen Alfred M. Gray officiated at MGySgt Howard Snowden's retirement ceremony aboard MCB Twentynine Palms, Calif., in 1988.

ment publication. I was told to submit the article to the editor.

When I met with him, the first thing he said was that he had a large backlog of articles and that he might not be able to publish the article for months. I told him that was no problem but I had to leave for Camp Lejeune and would appreciate it if he would send me a copy of the publication once it was published. He asked, "Are you a Marine?" I said, "Yes, Sir." He said, "Sit down," then lifted one of his hands which was missing a thumb and forefinger. He said, "I lost them at Belleau Wood." A shell had come in and killed his best friend and he lost the fingers.

We had a nice chat and off I went. My article appeared in the next issue of the publication.

> Nicholas Kominus USMCR, 1950-1962 Loris, S.C.

### Salute to Gen Gray

I just want to say how much I enjoyed and appreciated the piece on General Al Gray in the July issue. I had the pleasure of serving with Gen Gray over the years. He promoted me to master sergeant in 1977 when he was the commanding general of the 4th Marine Amphibious Brigade.

Gen Gray's leadership was always an inspiration to all. Gen Gray, then Commandant of the Marine Corps, officiated at my retirement ceremony aboard Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center in Twentynine Palms in July 1988. Gen Gray is a really fine man and a true Marine.

> MGySgt Howard C. Snowden USMC (Ret) Twentynine Palms, Calif.

### His Real Name is Marine

I originally was given this poem/song sometime in the late 1980s by a friend who



said he was given it by his brother who is a Marine (always present tense). The original was only four stanzas long and not titled. I do not have the original copy, but had memorized it many years ago. It was originally sung with the melody from a very old song, "Ghost Riders in the Sky."

While attending a reunion of the Mid-Atlantic Chapter of the 2nd Marine Division Association, I sang it. Before I sang it, I explained its origin and said that I do not have a very good voice but it was received with a good response. It was so well-liked that I was asked to send it to the editor of the chapter's newsletter, William "Bill" Banning. We became very good friends and through his mentoring, I became president of the chapter and later national president of the 2nd Marine Division Association.

While I was writing it out to send to Bill, I got, shall we say, inspired, and titled, revised and added to it. It has been revised a number of different times but this is the current version. It is now seven stanzas long. Numbers one and two are modified from the original. Numbers three and six are original. Numbers four, five and seven are my doing.

There is Army Khaki, Air Force and Navy Blue.

But there's still another fighting man I'll introduce you to.

His uniform is perfect, the best you've ever seen.

The Germans called him Devil Dog, His real name is Marine.

He comes from Parris Island, The land that God forgot.

He comes from San Diego where the sun is scorching hot.

He comes from Quantico where they make officers of Marines.

They're the finest warriors the world has ever seen.

His rifle is his best friend, it never leaves his side.

He shoots it with the meanest eye that no one can deny.

And on the battlefield you can hear his war-like cry

"Come on leathernecks, we'll kill them till we die."

He comes from every walk of life, race and color too.

To form fighting units, warriors true and true.

But when he puts on the uniform of a United States Marine.

The only race and color is that of Marine Corps green.

The scarlet and gold are Marine Corps Colors too.

The scarlet for the blood he shed for me and for you.

The eagle, globe and anchor will always reign supreme.

The Germans called him Devil Dog, His real name is Marine.

### **WAYS TO SOUND OFF**



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Now listen, my ladies, I've a tale for you.

Get yourself a good Marine, there's not much he can't do.

And when he gets to heaven Saint Peter he will tell,

"Another Marine reporting, Sir, I've served my time in hell."

For he's the very best the world has ever seen.

The Germans called him Devil Dog, His real name is Marine.

GySgt Michael A. Piserchia, USMC (Ret) Bayville, N.J.

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



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### **Reader Assistance**

#### Reunions

- **5thMarDiv Assn.**, Oct. 16-21, Champaign, Ill. Contact Ray Elliott, 2609 N. High Cross Rd., Urbana, IL 61802, (217) 840-2121, rayelliott23@att.net.
- Marine Corps Air Transport Assn. (VMR/VMGR), Oct. 18-21, New Orleans, La. Contact Rich Driscoll, (817) 657-7768, president @ mcata.com.
- 2/9 (all eras), Nov. 8-12, Arlington, Va. Contact Danny Schuster, (978) 302-4126, ditson35@verizon.net, www.2ndbattalion9thmarines.org.
- •"Stormy's" 3/3 (1960-1962), Oct. 15-19, Las Vegas, Nev. Contact Burrell Landes, 2610 West Long Circle, Littleton, CO 80120, (303) 734-1458, bhanon@comcast.net.
- B/1/5 and C/1/5 (RVN, 1966-1967) are planning a reunion. Contact SSgt Jim Proulx, USMC (Ret), (904) 343-4850, bertojotol@gmail.com.
- E/2/5 (1965-1972), Oct. 18-21, Pensacola, Fla. Contact Doc Doughty, 1455 Roebling Tr., Pensacola, FL 32506, (850) 723-9453, dhdoughty@cox.net.
  - G/2/5 (all eras), Oct. 24-28, Santa

- Fe, N.M. Contact Larry Ortiz, (505) 629-6393, lso.vngrunt@yahoo.com.
- H/2/7 (RVN, 1965-1970), June 20-24, 2019, San Diego, Calif. Contact Dan Steiner, (618) 567-4077, dsteiner49@yahoo.com.
- 2nd Topographic Co, Nov. 4-8, Pigeon Forge, Tenn. Contact Jim Martin, (781) 572-7924, topotrooper@aol.com.
- 1st Provisional Marine Brigade ("The Fire Brigade," Korea, 1950) is planning a 65th anniversary reunion. Contact Col Warren Wiedhahn, USMC (Ret), Military Historical Tours, 13198 Centerpointe Way, #202, Woodbridge, VA 22193, (703) 590-1295, jwiedhahn@aol.com, www.miltours.com.
- Marine Barracks Sasebo, Japan, Nov. 6-9, Las Vegas, Nev. Contact Herman Cospy, 1co\_spy@sbcglobal.net, Bob McCarthy, coach430@aol.com, or Ruben Chavira, bngrm@aol.com.
- Yemassee Train Depot Marines, Oct. 19-20, Yemassee, S.C. Contact Roy Hughes, P.O. Box 625, Yemassee, SC 29945, (843) 589-3385.
  - USMC SATS/EAF/Morest (MOS

- **7011, 7002**), Oct. 16-20, Pensacola, Fla. Contact Dick Althouse, (760) 741-7629, califyayhoo @ sbcglobal.net.
- 38th/39th OCC, TBS 3-66/4-66, Oct. 7-11, 2019, Newport, R.I. Contact Jack Sheehan, (401) 255-0387, jacksheehan jtown @ me.com, www.usmc-thebasic school-1966.com.
- 105th OCC, 1st Plt, Co C, December 1977 (staff NCOs, officers and commissioning female Marines), Oct. 18-21, Quantico, Va. Contact Debbie Thurman, (434) 929-6320, debbie.thurman 54@gmail.com.
- TBS Class 3-67/41st OCC, Nov. 15-18, New Orleans, La. Contact Fred Lash, (703) 644-5132, fredanddonnalash@verizon.net.
- TBS, Co K, 9-68, is planning a reunion. Contact Jim Stiger, (206) 999-1029, jimstiger@earthlink.net.
- TBS, Co E, 5-69, is planning a 50th anniversary reunion in May or June 2019. Contact Joe Howard, 21 Snow Meadow Ln., Stafford, VA 22554, (540) 720-0259, ilheach1@cs.com.
- TBS, Co H, 8-69 (50th Anniversary), June 6-9, 2019, Arlington, Va. Contact Dennis Mroczkowski, m4ski@comcast .net, or Thomas Molon, ncmolons@sudden link.net, www.facebook.com/basicschool hotelcompany69.
- TBS, Co F, 6-79, is planning a reunion. Contact LtCol Tom Conners, USMC (Ret), (919) 303-2697, (919) 418-5757, tconners3@yahoo.com.
- Warrant Officer Screening Course, 1st Plt, Co D, January 1974, is planning a reunion. Contact Capt Joseph C. Chiles, USMC (Ret), (619) 729-9562, joseph .chiles@gmail.com.
- "Kilo" Co (Plts 277, 278, 279 and 280), Parris Island, 1961, is planning a reunion. Contact MSgt Martin D. Smith, USMC (Ret), 10 Lee Ct., Stafford, VA 22554, (540) 720-3653, martann843@gmail.com.
- Plt 98, Parris Island, 1948, is planning a reunion. Contact SSgt Jim Proulx, USMC (Ret), (904) 343-4850, 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.
- Plt 244, Parris Island, 1967, is planning a reunion. Contact former Sgt J.D. Croom III, (704) 965-8521, jcroom47@ aol.com.
- Plt 245, San Diego, 1965, is planning a reunion. Contact David S. Alvarez, (209)





735-2601, 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.
- 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.
- Plt 431, Parris Island, 1945, is planning a reunion. Contact 1stSgt George P. Cavros, USMC (Ret), (262) 782-7813, gcavros88@gmail.com.
- Plt 1018, San Diego, 1968 (50th Anniversary), is planning a reunion in Salem, Ore. Contact Dan Stombaugh, (541) 606-0398, dwstombaugh@msn.com.
- Plt 1040, San Diego, 1968, is planning a reunion. Contact Stephen Norpel, 206 N. 7th St., Bellevue, IA 52031, (563) 451-8417, snorpel@yahoo.com.
- Plt 1059, San Diego, 1967, is planning a reunion. Contact Dave Jamieson, (805) 896-7404, daveyo\_jamieson@msn.com.
- Plt 1096, San Diego, 1968, Oct. 4-8, San Diego, Calif. Contact Dan Hefner, (312) 504-4658, drh818@msn.com.
- Plt 1098, Parris Island, 1970, is planning a reunion. Contact Michael Shea, (786) 280-8202, mikek 2709 @ 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, 1965-1966, is planning a reunion. Contact John E. Lyford, (518) 654-6073, reniejohn@road runner.com.
- Plt 2077, San Diego, 1966, is planning a reunion. Contact 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 3042, San Diego, 1968, is planning a reunion. Contact Gary Berry, (614) 679-1499, gnberry21@gmail.com.
- 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.
- Distinguished Flying Cross Society, Sept. 15-19, 2019, Dayton, Ohio. Contact Warren Eastman, (760) 985-2810, weastman@dfcsociety.org.
- Marine A-4 Skyhawkers, Nov. 1-4, Pensacola, Fla. Contact Mark Williams, 400 Howell Way #102, Edmonds, WA 98020, (425) 771-2030, rogerwilcol4@



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gmail.com, http://a4skyhawk.info/article/notices.

• HMM-162 (Beirut), Oct. 20-21, Jacksonville, N.C. Contact Jack Cress, (831) 229-6773, ace162beirut83@razzolink.com.

### **Ships and Others**

- USS Canberra (CA-70/CAG-2), Oct. 10-14, St. Louis, Mo. Contact Ken Minick, P.O. Box 130, Belpre, OH 45714, (740) 423-8976, usscanberra@gmail.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 Saratoga (CV-3, CVA/CV-60), Oct. 10-13, San Antonio, Texas. Contact Chip Hayes, (845) 729-8775, uss\_saratoga @yahoo.com.

### Mail Call

- MGySgt James D. Clanton, USMC (Ret), 4912 Apache Ave., Jacksonville, FL 32210, (904) 381-8812, to hear from **David L. CROOKS**, who was assigned to **VMA-331**, **MCAS Beaufort**, **S.C.**, in the **early 1960s**.
- John Elzer, easyelz2010@gmail.com, to hear from members of his boot camp platoon, **Parris Island**, that graduated between **Aug. 22 and Sept. 7, 1967**, and can provide him with the **platoon number**.
- Gary Berry, (614) 679-1499, gnberry21 @ gmail.com, to hear from **Washington**, **D.C.**, **area Marine veterans** interested in joining a new detachment of Marines meeting on the 2nd Thursday of each month at the American Legion, Post 8 in Washington, D.C.
- Bill Pilgrim, marinecorps1955@ yahoo.com, to hear from members of **Plt 114**, **Parris Island**, **1973**.
- Jeff Brown, (407) 739-1227, jeffsbrown 76@yahoo.com, to hear from Marines who served with his brother, **LCpl Steven A. BROWN**, who died on **July 4**, **1967**, in **Vietnam** while serving with **Co F**, 2/3.
- Raymond Beumer, (214) 604-0777, raybeumer@yahoo.com, to hear from or

about **Charles J. TULANEY**, who was the **communications officer** for **MWCS-18**, **Kaneohe Bay**, **HI**, 1990-1991.

- Albert Taylor, #1094891, 2665 Prison Rd. #1, Lovelady, TX 75851, to hear from members of **Plt 138, Parris Island, 1969**.
- Wayne Karlin, POB 239, St. Mary's City, MD 20686, waynek@csmd.edu, to hear from or about **Tom CAMPEAU**, a **combat correspondent** with **1st MAW**, **I Corps, Vietnam**, **1966-1967**, with whom he hitchhiked from Phu Bai to Hue City.

### Wanted

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

- SSgt Leland Hutchison, hutchlt@ yahoo.com, wants a recruit graduation book and video for Plt 1070, San Diego, 2008.
- Gregory M. Davis, 735 Canterbury Dr., Ruther Glen, VA 22546, (804) 448-9741, wants a **platoon photo** and **recruit graduation book** for **Plt 81, Parris Island, 1956**. He also would like to hear from members of the platoon.
- SSgt Clarence O'Neal, USMC (Ret), 11140 Mesquite Dr., Dade City, FL 33525, wants a **1956 "Guidebook for Marines."** He also would like to hear from members of **Plt 14, Parris Island, 1956**.
- John Tully, (518) 263-6009, wants a recruit graduation book for Plt 118, Parris Island, 1958.

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.

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than good old-fashioned football" as "leathernecks ran all over the Bears ... and scored in each of the last three periods." Between the Marines' stalwart defense and O'Neill's impressive running of the pigskin, the Marine victory was never in doubt.

The victory marked the fourth time in six years that the Marines had taken home the President's Cup after having lost it to the Navy in the previous year. For more on the history of Marines on the gridiron, see "Marine Football!" Part I in the December 2014 issue and Part II in the January 2015 issue of Leatherneck.

GRIDIRON GLORY—Admiral Charles F. Hughes, Chief of Naval Operations, presents the President's Cup trophy to the captain of the Marine Corps football team, Lieutenant David F. O'Neill. Major General W.C. Neville, 14th Commandant of the Marine Corps, and Rear Admiral Frederick Billard, Coast Guard Commandant, are shown in the background. Fullback O'Neill and his team defeated the U.S. Coast Guard team 19-0 at Griffith Stadium in Washington, D.C., on Nov. 2, 1929, in front of more than 7,000 spectators.

According to the December 1929 issue of *Leatherneck*, the Marine Corps team "resorted to little more

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