

FEBRUARY 2013

MAGAZINE OF THE MARINES

# Leatherneck

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**Marines Still Nation's Best  
Quick Reaction Corps**

**Steel Knight 2013:  
8,000 Marines  
Storm the Desert**

**"Rough Riders" Rumble  
To Beleaguered Khe Sanh**

**EOD School: Learning  
The Most Dangerous Job**

A Publication of the  
Marine Corps Association & Foundation



# Welcome to *Leatherneck Magazine's*

## Digital Edition

February 2013

We hope you are enjoying our digital edition with its added content, and we encourage you to visit us for frequently updated Marine Corps content on our website ([www.leatherneckmagazine.com](http://www.leatherneckmagazine.com)) and in our social media postings.

This year, 2013, the Marine Corps Association marks its centennial of service to Marines and Marine families. Throughout the year we will be republishing articles of enduring value from our archives. Bear in mind that all *Leatherneck* issues back through 1921 are online and searchable. If you want to find an old article, go to [www.leatherneckmagazine.com](http://www.leatherneckmagazine.com) to access the archives.

We thank you for your continuing support.

Semper Fidelis

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Walt Ford".

Col Walt Ford, USMC (Ret)  
Editor



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**MARINE RESERVE**



# Contents

LEATHERNECK—MAGAZINE OF THE MARINES

## FEATURES

**10 In Every Clime and Place** *Edited by R. R. Keene*  
Marine operating forces train around the world while also continuing the war on terrorism in Afghanistan.

**16 Steel Knight 2013: The Largest First Marine Division Exercise In Nine Years**

*By Andrew Lubin*

First Marine Division stretches its command and control during division-level combined arms, live-fire Exercise Steel Knight 13.



**22 From the Archives, September 1947: The Whine of Snipers' Bullets Comprised the Only Opposition**

*By Bill Miller*

In celebration of the Marine Corps Association's centennial of service, this article about the Battle of Iwo Jima and the first flag raised atop Mount Suribachi is republished.

**34 Vietnam: The Road to Khe Sanh: U.S. Marine Tanks Fight to Keep Route 9 Open** *By James P. Coan*

Marine engineers turned a cart path into Route 9, creating a ground supply route from the east to the western edge of Vietnam, but could it be held?

**40 Warrior Day** *By Roxanne Baker*

The Basic School's Warrior Day serves to introduce the families of new Marine officers to some of the training and equipment of their Marine.

**42 EOD in the IED Age**

*By CWO-4 Randy Gaddo, USMC (Ret)*

Education and training continue to be the key to success in explosive ordnance disposal and the Corps is committed to providing the best of both these to EOD Marines.

## DEPARTMENTS



**2** Sound Off

**20** Leatherneck Laffs

**28** We—the Marines

**31** Crazy Caption

**47** In the Highest Tradition

**50** In Memoriam

**52** Leatherneck Line

**54** Books Reviewed

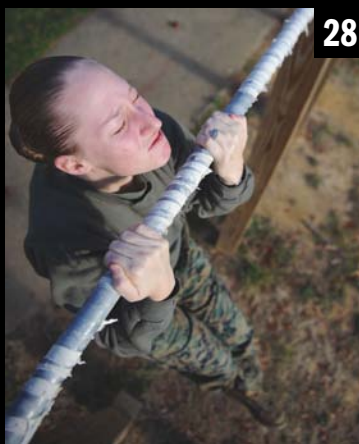
**64** Gyrene Gyngles

**COVER:** Marines and sailors with 26th MEU participate in a predeployment mass casualty exercise at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., Dec. 14, 2012. To read more about the Marines as a ready force deployed around the world, see page 10. Photo by Cpl Michael Lockett. Copies of the cover may be obtained by sending \$2 (for mailing costs) to *Leatherneck Magazine*, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134-0775.

**Leatherneck—On the Web** Delivering more scoop on the Internet. Look for this indication that additional content found online in our digital edition is available to subscribers and MCA&F members.



34



28



16



# Sound Off

Edited by R. R. Keene

Have a question or feel like sounding off? Address your letter to: Sound Off Editor, *Leatherneck Magazine*, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134, or send an e-mail to: r.keene@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 e-mails must contain complete names and postal mailing addresses. Anonymous letters will not be published.—Sound Off Ed.



COURTESY OF JACK LABRECQUE

**At MCRD Parris Island, S.C., PFC Tim Goetz (right) gives his first salute as a Marine to his father, Col Robert Goetz.**

## Letter of the Month

(*Leatherneck* will pay \$25 for the Sound Off Letter of the Month.)

One of our valued Life Members of Marine Corps League Housatonic Detachment 1129 is Colonel Robert Goetz, USMCR. When I received some pictures of his recent visit to [Marine Corps Recruit Depot] Parris Island, S.C., I felt I should share them with other Marines.

Col Goetz went to Parris Island for a recruit graduation where more than two decades ago he was a graduate.

His recent visit was to attend the graduation of his son Tim. What a thrill it must have been to be the first officer whom his son saluted as a United States Marine. Bob also must be proud that he now can call his son a brother Marine. *Semper fidelis* to Bob and Tim Goetz.

Jack LaBrecque  
Stratford, Conn.

## In Beaufort County, There's More Than Recruit Graduations

I just had to comment on the November 2012 Letter of the Month by Lieutenant Colonel Robert M. Mullins, USMCR (Ret), who wrote of his return to Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C. I also decided to go back to Parris Island. This year marked 49 years since I reported for boot camp. I saw that the Lt. Dan Band was playing in nearby Beaufort, S.C., so

I went the day before and was at the same graduation as LtCol Mullins.

It was just like he said it was. My fiancée wants to go back next year for my 50th. Beaufort also was all that LtCol Mullins said, and more. The day before the Lt. Dan Band performed, a last-minute, all-veteran band concert was arranged. I should have been better prepared for the last group when they asked all Vietnam veterans to come forward. I was thanked for my service. Everybody shook our hands or hugged us and again thanked us for our service.

To say I was moved is an understatement. I also should mention that Hunting Island campground out on the beach is beautiful, inexpensive and a short drive away. We will be returning next year.

Sgt Pete Sayles  
H&S/1/5, RVN, 1966-67  
Sebastian, Fla.

## Old Salt Prefers JAR to the BAR

I enjoyed the article "Dr. Chocolate and the Marine Paratroopers" in the October 2012 issue. Author Colonel Dave E. Severance could be the patriarch of all Marine paratroopers, living or dead.

How well I remember the D-bar ration chocolate bar (some called it the "dung" bar). Also, [I recall] the "K" Cracker Jack



COURTESY OF MSGT FRITZ GEMEINHARDT

**A much younger Fritz Gemeinhardt with his favorite JAR.**

Box ration and, of course, the good old C-rations. I loved the pork and beans, and if I had my Ka-Bar or a "John Wayne" C-ration opener, I had it made.

In the story, Col Severance is pictured holding our Johnson light machine gun. The JAR was superior to the Browning Automatic Rifle. It had much interchangeability with the Johnson rifle. Both of these .30-06 weapons used plenty of five-round clips. They were perfect for paratrooper use. I personally carried and used both the Johnson pieces. I found them perhaps ahead of their time, but that was how politics went.

MSGT W. F. "Fritz" Gemeinhardt, USMC (Ret)  
Central Point, Ore.

## Head Knocking From "Grandpa"

I was discharged in 1967 after a four-year enlistment. I came home to New York City and got a job in the lower Manhattan financial district where crowded trains and tempers got out of control daily.

One day, an old gent was being bumped by some punk, who told the old guy, "I'm going to beat you up, Grandpa!"

I said to myself, "This will not happen if I have something to say about it."

The two got out at Wall Street Station and faced each other with a crowd watching. The kid was against a pole, and the next thing I saw was the old guy using the punk as a punching bag, as every time he hit the kid, the kid would bounce off the pole into the old guy's fists.

I noticed an eagle, globe and anchor tattoo on the old gent's arm. I told him: "I had your back, sir. *Semper Fi*, Marine." He replied, "I can take care of myself, son, but thanks anyway."

I never saw either of them again, and now I am the old gent and would do it again in a heartbeat if the situation arose.

Cpl Bruce Bender  
USMC, 1963-67  
Oakland Gardens, N.Y.

## A "Semper Fi" Communion From Bishop O'Connor

I wish to thank Corporal John McLaughlin for his December 2012 "Sound Off" letter revealing Cardinal John O'Connor's



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Editorial Offices: 115 • Business Office: 121

## Circulation/Member Services

Phone: toll-free (866) 622-1775

E-mail: mca@mca-marines.org

## LEATHERNECK AND MCA&F MEMBERSHIP PRICES

1 year \$35; 2 years \$64; 3 years \$89

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

**CHANGE OF ADDRESS:** Please send your new address six weeks before the date of issue with which it is to take effect, if possible. Include old address with new, enclosing your address label if convenient. Mail to: *Leatherneck Magazine*, Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134.

## POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:

*Leatherneck Magazine*, Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134.



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**Association & Foundation**  
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*Leatherneck* (ISSN 0023-981X) is published monthly by the Marine Corps Association & Foundation, Bldg. #715, MCB, Quantico, VA 22134. Copyright 2013 by MCA&F.

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history as a Navy chaplain. I grew up in the Bronx and worked and resided in and around New York City until retiring to Virginia in 2008.

Back in 1984, my mother had recently passed away and been buried in Gate of Heaven Cemetery, Hawthorne, N.Y. Shortly after Bishop O'Connor was appointed Archbishop of the New York Archdiocese in 1984, he celebrated a dedication Mass at the cemetery, which my father and I attended. My father, a retired FDNY deputy chief, was a prominent figure in Catholic circles, so we were invited to sit in a reserved section.

As luck would have it, we went up to receive Holy Communion and were in the line being served by Bishop O'Connor. I was dressed in a suit and tie, with a Marine emblem on my lapel.

In the Catholic communion rite, the priest extends the wafer to the communicant, and says, "The Body of Christ," to which the communicant responds, "Amen." When it was my turn, Bishop O'Connor said his part and I replied. He then winked and said, "Semper Fi."

I have wondered for years about that, and now my curiosity has been satisfied.

Sgt Joe Doyle  
USMC, 1964-70  
Clarksville, Va.

## Even the Corps Has Catch 22s

I read the letter from John McLaughlin who wonders why he joined the Marine Corps after graduating from high school. I joined the Corps after graduating from high school. It was not my intention, as I never thought the Marine Corps would accept me. I knew I wanted to join the military as I only took a general high school course and figured I could get some training in the service.

I heard that the easiest branch was the Air Force, so I decided to sign up. At the time, there was a six-month waiting list, so I decided to join the Navy. They, too, had a six-month waiting list. As I started to leave the post office where the recruiting offices were located, the Marine recruiter stopped me and asked if I wanted to join the Marine Corps. I thought he was joking as I weighed only 118 pounds and wore glasses. He said there was a "buddy platoon" that was forming and talked me into signing the papers. A person had to sign up for only three years. To this day I do not know why, but I signed up for four years.

The people who signed up for the "buddy platoon" were sworn in on the city hall green, treated to a meal at one of the local restaurants and had a band to send us off at the railroad station. I am surprised that I made it through boot camp at Parris

Island, S.C., and I did get my private first class chevron upon graduation.

I was then transferred to Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., and applied for embassy duty. I was notified that I was qualified, but my request was denied because I was needed in a billet commensurate with my military occupational specialty of 0231 (intelligence specialist).

In 1954, I received orders transferring me to the First Marine Division, Korea. When I got there, I heard the Army had an intelligence school at Camp Drake, Japan. I applied for the school, but was turned down because, again, I was needed in my current billet.

In 1955, I was transferred back to the States with the 1stMarDiv and stationed at MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif. I knew Camp Pendleton had an intelligence school and I applied for it. This time I was told that they wanted to send "newbies" to the school, and I had been in the Corps for more than two years.

In 1956, I transferred to the First Marine Aircraft Wing in Korea. I thought that maybe now I could go the Army school at Camp Drake. I was quite disappointed to find the school no longer existed. I was dismayed, as by now I was a sergeant and soon would be eligible to take the test for staff sergeant. I figured that without any schooling in my field, I would not be able to pass the technical test. I was shocked to find that I passed the test and was promoted to staff sergeant in 1957.

When I joined the Corps, the recruiter told us that if we shipped over at the end of our first tour, we could request and be assigned to the duty station of our choice. I was willing to ship over and wanted to be assigned to Japan. I was told that a choice of duty station applied only to persons with the rank of sergeant and below. I decided to get out.

Although I am now a senior citizen of 78, I am still proud to be a Marine veteran. When people ask if I am a former Marine, I let them know that there is no such thing as a former Marine.

Frank Perry  
Tucson, Ariz.

## "It Only Takes One to Make You Proud to be a Marine"

In September of 1957, Platoon 357 graduated at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego. I was the senior drill instructor.

In September 2012, one of the men who graduated from that platoon paid me a visit where I now live, which is Oregon. Dale Hartly lives in Missouri and was traveling from Seattle, Wash., and drove down to meet with me. We have been in touch before because Dale located me through *Leatherneck* magazine.

It made an old drill instructor proud to know that I made an impression on one of the many who came through MCRD, and that he wanted to see me again. Dale Hartly is a great example of "Once a Marine, always a Marine." I just had to write this letter because it only takes one person to make you proud to be a Marine.

1stSgt Joseph R. Curley, USMC (Ret)  
Hillsboro, Ore.

## A French Stamp Depicts Marines Landing at Wallis Island

I have recently been informed by Christophe Laurent, the curator of the Wallis Island South Pacific Museum, that a commemorative 70th anniversary stamp has been issued and is now in use in the South Pacific. The French stamp, "Wallis and Futuna 55F," depicts a colorful drawing of U.S. Marines and naval forces landing on Uvea French Wallis Island, May 27, 1942, against possible Vichy French troops.

The stamp picture was extracted from my book "Love and War Beneath the Southern Cross." *Leatherneck* magazine



COURTESY OF EDWARD ANDRUSKO

Edward Andrusko drew his depiction of Marines landing on Wallis Island in 1942, and now the French have used it on a South Pacific stamp.

both the May and July 1992 issues about the Wallis Islands landings.

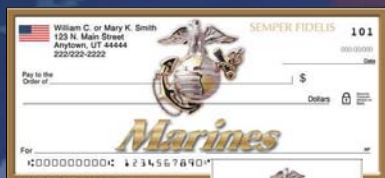
Edward Andrusko  
1/3/7, USMC, WW II  
Boulder, Colo.

## Walter Walsh, Brooke Nihart And the 1stMarDiv Shooting Team

Among the papers of my late husband, Colonel Franklin B. "Brooke" Nihart, USMC (Ret), I found this photo of the First Marine Division Rifle and Pistol

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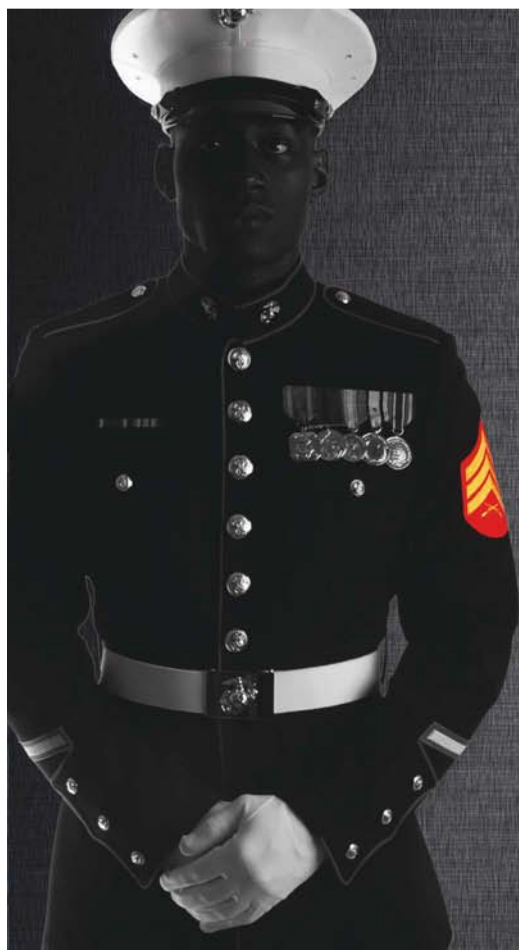
  

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Team of 1946 made up in North China.

I will quote from Col Nihart in writing to a shooting friend much later: "Walter Walsh and I served together in the First Marine Division on Okinawa and North China. When the Competitive Arms

Program resumed in 1946, Walter [then 1stMarDiv provost marshal] and I [the executive officer of 1st Battalion, First Marine Regiment] brought the 1stMarDiv team to Pualoa Point Range on Oahu for the Pacific Division Matches. Lieutenant

Colonel Henry P. "Jim" Crowe was the match executive officer."

Maybe there are some Marines who will recognize themselves in the photograph?

Mrs. Mary Helen Nihart  
Lake Ridge, Va.



The 1946 1stMarDiv Rifle and Pistol Team: Maj Brooke Nihart is seventh from the left in the second row, and next to him is Maj Walter Walsh. Mrs. Nihart wrote: "This photo appears to be taken at Camp Matthews, Calif., as the moustaches on Majors Nihart and Walsh disappeared as soon as their wives appeared."



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• Mrs. Nihart has impeccable timing. We ran a story on Walter Walsh in last month's issue, and this is a timely and interesting footnote.—Sound Off Ed.

## They Call a Number of Statues "Iron Mike"

I saw a Hewlett-Packard ad in the November issue showing an "Iron Mike" statue at the National Museum of the Marine Corps. Isn't "Iron Mike" at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C.?

Don Moore  
Harker Heights, Texas

• Yes, you did see an HP ad with an Iron Mike statue at the National Museum of the Marine Corps. There's a slight problem here and it has, as usual, to do with what we, over the years, adopt as part of our Corps' lore and what the facts really are. Emily Martin, in March 2012, wrote a feature article for the magazine, "Crusading for Right: The Story," in which she explained the statue at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., called by many "Iron Mike," is actually named "Crusading for Right." The Marine in this statue is holding a 1903 Springfield rifle and is wearing a pack. She further wrote: "The real 'Iron Mike' stands proudly at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C. ..."

Not so fast. The Parris Island statue of

a Marine with a Maxim machine gun over his right shoulder and M1911 .45-caliber pistol in his raised hand is officially titled "Monument to U.S. Marines" and is dedicated to Parris Island graduates killed in World War I.

So, which is the real "Iron Mike"? Actually, there are a number of them. "Iron Mike" is an American moniker to describe men who are considered tough, brave and inspiring. Some of those guys who study word origins claim it originally was a nautical term for a gyrocompass used to keep a ship in an unwavering course.

Anyway, over the years many statues have acquired the Iron Mike nom de guerre. In France, "The Marine Memorial" at the Aisne-Marne American Cemetery and Memorial at Belleau Wood, sculpted by Felix De Weldon, who also did the Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington, Va., is called "Iron Mike."

"The Airborne Trooper" at Fort Bragg, N.C., and its replica at La Fiere in Normandy, France, are called "Iron Mike." The University of Minnesota's Twin Cities campus has a statue known as the "Student Soldier Memorial" dedicated to alumni who served in the Spanish-American War that's called "Iron Mike," but it is really titled "The Hiker." There are more, but you get the gist.

## ORIGINAL ISSUE



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The “Iron Mike” located in front of the National Museum of the Marine Corps, the one you saw in the ad, was duplicated from the one on MCB Quantico that Ms. Martin wrote about in *Leatherneck*. It is an exact replica of the original “Crusading for Right,” including the sculptor’s name, Peyre,” inscribed on the statue’s right boot, and the foundry where the statue was cast, “VAL d’OSNE FONDEUR PARIS,” inscribed on the left boot.

Raised gold letters “IRON MIKE” on one side of the five-sided concrete base have been added. Plaques to the 5th Marine Regiment, the 6th Marine Regiment, and the 6th Machine Gun Battalion are mounted on three sides. The plaque on the final side reads: “COMMISSIONED AND DONATED BY PATRICK F. TAYLOR, CPL. USMCR NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA.” Perhaps the raised gold Iron Mike letters should have with quotation marks?—Sound Off Ed.

## Next Time You’re Thinking About Getting a Tattoo ...

When I was in the Marine Corps from 1955 to 1959, I considered getting a tattoo, but decided not to as I might regret it later. I purchased this “SEMPER FI” sterling silver bracelet, which I can remove daily if I desire. I know a lot of former military

personnel who have regretted getting their tattoos.

I personally have nothing against anyone desiring, or getting a tattoo, but they might want to reconsider as I did.

Kenny Adams  
Warrenton, Va.



Kenny Adams suggests a bracelet such as the one he wears is a viable alternative to getting tattooed.

• Not bad advice, Kenny, not bad at all.—Sound Off Ed.

## Hagaru-ri and Task Force Drysdale Remembered

When I looked at the cover of the December 2012 *Leatherneck*, my eyes focused on “Hagaru-ri, 1950: It Had to be Held.” Immediately, my thoughts raced back to Nov. 29, 1950. I was heading for Hagaru that day. I just didn’t make it all the way.

When I turned to the story, [“Hagaru-

ri—The Vital Link” by Maj Allan C. Bevilacqua, USMC (Ret)], I called my wife: “Hey, my picture is in *Leatherneck*.” She was most disappointed when I pointed to a column of men moving up a hill with “George” Company, 3d Battalion, First Marine Regiment. She asked me how I knew I was one of those “specks” on a snowy background.

We had a very large group of “Savannah, Ga.” boys trudging up that hill; for example, the rifleman in my fire team, Private First Class Harrell Roberts, hailed from Savannah and he let everyone know it.

We took no fire until we got to the top of the hill and then all hell broke loose. My platoon sergeant, Staff Sergeant Gerald Tillman, took a fatal wound to his head. He was one hell of a Marine. He had earned a Silver Star in September near Yongdung-po and was an inspiration to all in his platoon.

At one point, my squad leader had us heading for the next ridgeline, but automatic fire was so intense that we were forced to abandon the assault. It was decided that the enemy was so entrenched that any assault would be very costly. But almost of greater importance, it would take precious time, a commodity that we could not spare.

On that day, G/3/1 was part of Task Force Drysdale, named for the commander of the 41 Independent Commando, Royal Marines. His task was to get G/3/1, the Royal Marines, a U.S. Army rifle company from the 31st Regiment and headquarters personnel of the First Marine Division to Hagaru. He didn’t have the time to drive the Chinese off every mountain; he ordered the task force to board the trucks and punch our way to Hagaru at all costs.

We pulled off Telegraph Hill and boarded trucks. About half-a-mile out of Koto-ri, we came under heavy automatic weapons fire. My truck unloaded. I crouched behind the wheel of the truck and within a few seconds a mortar round sent me, eventually, to a hospital in Japan.

I am proud that I was a Marine. I am proud that I helped save the Republic of South Korea, and I am very proud to have been under the command of an officer of the Royal Marines.

James “Jim” Byrne  
San Jose, Calif.

## He Really Knows the “Old Corps”

As a faithful reader of *Leatherneck*, I am amused sometimes by the claims of being in the “Old Corps” by Marines of the 1960s, ’70s, and ’80s. I believe that the standard answer to who was in the Old Corps is the guy who enlisted the day be-

[continued on page 56]

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# In Every Clime and Place

Edited by  
R. R. Keene



## ■ HELMAND PROVINCE Return to Marjah: Working With Much Improved Afghan Forces

Leathernecks with 3d Battalion, Ninth Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 7 recently returned to southern Afghanistan, two years after their last deployment to the Marjah area.

The opportunity to return allowed some Marines to see firsthand the difference two years of Marine teaching and mentoring can make.

“We were in the Marjah District on the edge of Trek Nawa from December 2010 to June 2011,” said Lance Corporal Limuel Richards, a team leader with the battalion.

Richards and his squad leader, Sergeant Ben Edwards, were among those who were returning. The two Marines have a better perspective of the progress made by Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF).

“I honestly thought when we came back it was going to be like before,” said Edwards. “Everyone told me the war had changed, but I see it now with my own eyes.”

**Sgt Ben Edwards, L/3/9, RCT-7, says goodbye to Afghan National Army SSgt Samandar Khan, squad leader, Headquarters Tolai, 1st Kandak, 4th Brigade, 215th Corps, after a partnered patrol, Nov. 27, 2012. The two squad leaders took turns leading the patrol, Edwards getting them to their objectives and Khan taking charge on the return route.**

On their last deployment, the Marines worked relatively independently of their Afghan counterparts. They operated and patrolled through the district, occasionally with Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers attached to their squad. This is a stark contrast with how missions are run now.

“The biggest difference is the ANA are running their own operations,” said LCpl Richards. “They understand tactics and

how to patrol a lot better than [during] our last deployment.”

Recently, Sgt Edwards’ squad made a patrol with an ANA squad.

“I led the patrol down to a local police station,” said Edwards. “We checked on a school that recently opened, and [we] had chai tea with the [local Afghan police] officer and Afghan squad leader. Afterward, I talked to the ANA squad leader,



CPL TIMOTHY LENZO



SSgt Nathan C. Stocking, the platoon sergeant for Scout Sniper Plt, BLT 3/5, 15th MEU, instructs members of the Kuwait Armed Forces during bilateral training in basic marksmanship techniques at a firing range near Camp Buehring, Kuwait, during Exercise Eager Mace 13, Nov. 12, 2012.

CPL TIMOTHY CHILDRERS

and he took charge and led the patrol back.”

The last time Richards was there, they used simple hand signals to show the Afghan soldiers how to patrol, where to post security, and other squad and fire team tactics. The development of the Afghan forces is much further along than those days.

“On today’s patrol, they knew what to do,” said Richards. “I was really impressed with their improvement.”

When the squads arrived at the police station, ANA Staff Sergeant Samandar Khan, a squad leader with Headquarters Tolai, 1st Kandak, 4th Brigade, 215th Corps, set his soldiers in security positions outside.

“While we had the meeting, [Staff Sergeant Khan] mentioned going out and checking on his soldiers, which stood out to me,” said Edwards. “Checking on his men and posting security really showed how he acted like a leader, doing the things leaders should.”

Edwards and Richards drank tea with Khan and Afghan local police (ALP) Third Lieutenant Shah Mohammad. The Marines, ALP and ANA representatives sat on a patch of grass inside the police station while the sounds of children playing could be heard at a nearby school—yet another sign of significant security progress made in southern Helmand province. The Ma-

rines made sure the ALP were being supported by their higher command and asked about the recently opened school.

After the meeting, it was Khan who approached Edwards about leading the patrol back, another indication of how much the Afghan forces have improved.

“I didn’t realize it would be like this,” said Edwards. “We are starting to see the ANSF take charge and take control of their own country.”

The development of the Afghan police and ANA allows fewer Marines to support a larger area.

“I enjoy being in the same area because I get to see the progress firsthand,” said Richards. “The Afghans are doing great. What we helped them with last deployment they’ve continued working on.”

Since there are many Marines in the battalion on their first deployment, Edwards and Richards are sharing their previous experiences to help the younger Marines understand the changes that have been made.

The compound-to-compound clearing operations are a thing of the past for the Marines who now support their Afghan counterparts. It is a welcome sight in the community and a sign of progress in the area as ANSF take control of their country.

Cpl Timothy Lenzo  
Combat Correspondent, RCT-7

## ■ THE PERSIAN GULF

### U.S. Marines, Kuwait Armed Forces Snipers Train Alongside One Another

Marines shielded their eyes the best they could as a sandstorm moved across the firing range. Wind speeds reached more than 30 mph, which made a dead center shot at more than 500 yards seem impossible.

What may have seemed unfeasible was made achievable by the scout snipers of Battalion Landing Team 3d Bn, Fifth Marine Regiment, 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit. They flawlessly brought down targets at a firing range near Camp Buehring, Kuwait, during Exercise Eager Mace 13 on Nov. 10, 2012.

The U.S. Navy and Marine Corps were participating in an annual bilateral training exercise with Kuwait’s armed forces, Nov. 10-21. The purpose was to expand levels of cooperation, enhance mutual maritime capabilities, as well as promote long-term regional stability and interoperability between U.S. Armed Forces and regional partners.

During the training event, the Scout Sniper Platoon, Weapons Co, BLT 3/5 went to one of many firing ranges around Camp Buehring and trained alongside a Kuwait armed forces unit. The team helped teach marksmanship skills to junior members of the Kuwaiti military.



**Leathernecks with B/1/11, BLT 3/5 fire the M777A2 lightweight howitzer as part of Eager Mace 13, aboard FOB Sword, Kuwait, Nov. 14, 2012. The purpose of the exercise is to expand levels of cooperation, as well as promote long-term regional stability and interoperability between U.S. forces and regional partners. (Photo by Cpl Bobby J. Gonzalez)**



“We assisted with teaching basic marksmanship skills,” said Staff Sergeant Nathan Stocking, the platoon sergeant for Scout Sniper Plt, Wpns Co, BLT 3/5. “It’s good that we can train them, so that they have the capability to protect themselves.”

The real work was done within the platoon, as the Marines took advantage of the unique training opportunities.

“At the range, we practiced quite a lot of advanced marksmanship techniques in simulated combat surroundings,” said Stocking. “Camp Pendleton doesn’t facilitate this kind of training. Because of the range’s size and facilities, we were allowed to practice more advanced drills that we wouldn’t be able to simulate at most [military] bases back home. As Marines, we know these techniques by the book, but we can truly prove the concept at this range.”

The range also provided a unique training environment, compared to the platoon’s home base in California. The high winds, dust clouds and terrain features, unique to the region, gave the snipers new challenges to build on and improve their skills.

“I always enjoy an opportunity to train somewhere different,” said Corporal Dakota Mortensen. “We had an opportunity to zero our weapons to meet this type



CPL TIMOTHY CHILDERS

**Marines with Combined Antiarmor Team 2, 15th MEU assault an objective at a live-fire range near Camp Buehring, Kuwait, during Exercise Eager Mace 13. Training in a desert environment provided unique opportunities for the MEU.**

of environment. We can use the data we gathered to prepare us for any possible contingencies in the future. This is also our first opportunity we’ve had on deployment to fire our weapons and knock the rust off.”

In order to hone its skills, the 14-man team conducted a number of maneuvers including unknown distance, limited exposure and movement to contact drills.

“I enjoyed being with the platoon and having all day to concentrate on shooting,” added Stocking. “We took the opportunity

to find and correct deficiencies. Every day, we increased the distance, decreased the target size and changed weapon systems. By throwing different variables at the snipers, we made it harder, but it made them better.”

The 15th MEU is deployed as part of the *Peleliu* Amphibious Ready Group as a theater reserve and crisis response force throughout U.S. Central Command and the U.S. 5th Fleet area of responsibility.

Cpl Timothy Childers  
Combat Correspondent, 15th MEU

## ■ NEW ORLEANS

### Marines Prepare to Deploy and Train African Partner Nations

More than 130 Marines from 32 different Reserve training centers across the nation gathered at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., in October 2012 to get to know each other and prepare to face the unique challenges presented by operating independently in Africa.

"It's very unlike anything the Marines have gone through for either Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi Freedom preparation," said Lieutenant Colonel Daniel P. Whisnant, the commanding officer of Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force Africa 13.2. "The skill set and broad range of expectations of the Marines is very diverse."

The first training event the Marines encountered together took place at the Tier 1 Group Training Facility in Crawfordville, Ark., Oct. 4-25, 2012. Marines learned essential methods for training foreign militaries on marksmanship and how to set up and conduct firing ranges to prepare them for their mission of advising, coaching and mentoring partner nation forces as part of a security cooperation team.

"The training we're doing with the Marines here is 'train the trainer,'" said Raj Chowdhuri, an instructor with Tier 1 Group. "It's a formal course on how to be an instructor, how to make ranges happen, and duties and responsibilities of all the personnel on the range."

According to Whisnant, this type of training is important to the Special Purpose MAGTF because its ability to train a partner-nation force, as an individually operating security cooperation team will be key.

"We're going to be the only Marines there, and we'll be in charge of training the local nationals," said Sergeant Michael Wong. "We won't have support from instructors, so we need intensive 'Train the Trainer' classes so that we're able to run ranges."

During the tactical combat casualty care portion of the training, Marines learned how to rapidly apply medical care in stressful situations, such as receiving enemy fire.

"We teach TCCC [Tactical Combat Casualty Care] in the Navy. It was a great refresher for myself," said Chief Hospital Corpsman Mark Chesney with the Special Purpose MAGTF. Chesney added that the participants did an excellent job running through scenarios using Marines and sailors as simulated wounded. "The Marines came in, did their job, got their patients out of [the line of] fire, dressed the wounds, simulated needle decompression and con-

tinued on. I was very impressed [with] how the Marines conducted themselves."

Throughout their movements in Africa, the Marines will primarily rely on civilian vehicles for transportation within individual nations, so as part of their predeployment training, they learned advanced driving techniques.

"We got our vehicle stuck [on the off-road course] on purpose, and they taught us different ways to get it unstuck by using ropes, chains and winches," said Chesney. "This can prove to be very effective incountry if we get stuck in hostile areas."

Concurrent with this training, the commander's staff from 2d Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment out of Garden City, N.Y., was activated to do training of its own.

"A battalion staff was activated from 2/25," said LtCol Whisnant, also the commanding officer of 2/25. "This is critical for these types of deployments. It gives a foundational piece to the Special Purpose MAGTF and allows us to quickly ramp up and join those Marines from the 32 home training centers."

Whisnant sent his staff noncommissioned officers and special staff officers to a two-week crisis management operations planner's course at Camp Lejeune where they took a close look at the Marine Corps planning process through a crisis management lens. Aside from time spent in the classroom, the battalion element conducted practical application that allowed them to develop their own standard operating procedures and planning processes.

Special Purpose MAGTF Africa 13.2 also trained with the 22d Marine Expeditionary Unit which provided them with significant logistical support.

Marines of Special Purpose MAGTF Africa 13.2 were projected to deploy to Africa in January where they can be in as many as a half-dozen to a dozen countries at once. They are expected to return home after seven months of deployment.

Cpl Jessica Ito

Combat Correspondent, MARFORRES New Orleans

## ■ OVER THE HORN OF AFRICA

### Coalition Aerial Refueling Enhances Interoperability, Partnerships, Mission Capabilities

U.S. Marines from Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron (VMGR) 352, assigned to the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit, conducted a refueling training mission with French forces while flying at 15,000 feet over Djibouti, Nov. 22, 2012.

Coalition aerial refueling training helps develop French and U.S. forces' interoperability across a variety of critical mission areas and demonstrates the American and French militaries' continued commitment to the standards and values of the NATO Alliance.

"When we work cooperatively and capitalize on each other's strengths, we become a much stronger force," said Major Angela R. Hooper, VMGR-352 detachment officer in charge and aircraft commander. "We've got a joint mission and we train like we fight, and we fight side by side [with the French]."

The VMGR-352 detachment, consisting



During a refueling training mission, a Marine KC-130J, Super Hercules, assigned to VMGR-352, refuels a French-forces Dassault Mirage 2000-5, Nov. 22, 2012. Coalition aerial refueling training helps develop French and U.S. forces' interoperability across a variety of critical missions. (Photo by TSgt Joseph McKee, USAF)



of 41 Marines and two KC-130J Super Hercules aircraft, deployed from Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif. While refueling training missions are done regularly, this marks the first time this squadron has worked with the French forces to refuel their fighter aircraft, the Dassault Mirage 2000-5.

According to French Air Force Captain Christophe Dubois, a French Fighter Squadron Dassault Mirage 2000-5 pilot, there currently is no permanent tanker available on the French side, so this has been a huge asset and they appreciate the cooperation from the United States.

"It's always a pleasure to work with American counterparts," Dubois said. "Those flights allow us to maintain our skills [such as] air-to-air refueling capability and slow mover protection."

According to Maj Hooper, "They have an amazing amount of resident knowledge, and we can learn as much from them as they can from us. We hope to expand our training element with them in the future."

Hooper said she hopes to expand the

training in terms of low-level flying, aerial deliveries, austere landings and escorts. For that to happen, coordination between U.S. military and coalition forces is vital, and Hooper said she's glad to have the support of Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa.

"Working with our coalition partners is a big part of the CJTF-HOA mission," said U.S. Air Force Colonel David Harris, CJTF-HOA aviation component commander. "Training with each other not only demonstrates our willingness to work together, but shows our dedication to learning from each other to accomplish our mission."

SSgt Veronica McMahon  
Combat Correspondent, 15th MEU

## ■ THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA

### 24th MEU Remains Ready While Awaiting Orders Home

Leathernecks of the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit have continued their daily mission of staying prepared and busy aboard the amphibious assault ships of

**Marines with A/1/2, 24th MEU, conduct fast-rope training from a CH-53E Super Stallion onto the flight deck of USS *New York* (LPD-21), Nov. 30, 2012. The 24th MEU deployed with the *Iwo Jima* Amphibious Ready Group, serving as an expeditionary crisis response force capable of a variety of missions and returned home in December 2012.**



the *Iwo Jima* Amphibious Ready Group as they continued an extended deployment that originally was planned to end in November 2012.

The Marines have taken the deployment extension in stride and continued to make good use of their time. Aboard USS *Iwo Jima* (LHD-17), USS *New York* (LPD-21) and USS *Gunston Hall* (LSD-44), flight operations, weapons handling training and live-fire ranges, various classes, maintaining equipment, and the everyday chores of cooking and cleaning are ongoing actions for the Marines as they remain ready as an expeditionary crisis response force, ready for a variety of missions.

Capt Robert Shuford  
Officer in Charge  
Communication Strategy Team, 24th MEU

## ■ NORTHERN MARIANAS

### Exercise Forager Fury Begins With Historic Landing on Tinian

Exercise Forager Fury 2012 officially began Nov. 28, 2012, as a Boeing 747-400 aircraft made history by being the first 747 to land at Tinian Island's World War

CPL MICHAEL PETERSHEIM



A Boeing 747-400 unloads at Tinian International Airport, Northern Mariana Islands, Nov. 28, 2012, during Exercise Forager Fury 2012. The aircraft was the first 747 to land on Tinian and brought equipment vital for MAG-12's execution of Forager Fury. The historic landing marked the beginning of the exercise, which continued through Dec. 19, 2012.

LCPL JOSEPH KARWICK

II airfield, West Field, delivering 160,000 pounds of equipment vital for execution of the exercise.

Forager Fury is a Marine Aircraft Group 12 training exercise that integrates Marine air-ground task force functions with an emphasis on tactical aviation and aviation ground support to further develop expeditionary airfield capabilities.

"We needed to get all our equipment down here: fuel bladders, arresting gear, tents and everything we need to run the airfield for our MAG-12 fixed-wing aircraft while also supporting Navy helicopters," said Major Matthew Halbert, the airfield operations company commander and Tinian officer in charge for Marine Wing Support Squadron 171, MAG-12, First Marine Aircraft Wing, III Marine Expeditionary Force. "The airlift proved to be a great asset, and the landing proves a 747 can come into Tinian. It showed everybody what you can do with this airfield."

Any questions about the durability and size of the runway were answered as the 747 rolled down the taxiway under a set-

ting sun and full moon.

"The runway was pretty much the same length as Iwakuni's [Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan]," said Peter Pecenicic, the captain of the contracted aircraft who has 21 years of experience flying 747s.

The goal of Forager Fury, conducted through Dec. 19, was to allow MAG-12 to demonstrate its ability to generate significant combat power in an expeditionary environment while building relationships with the local community. During Forager Fury, Marines conducted arrested landings, provided fuel storage and distribution for MAG-12 aircraft at Tinian's West Field and cleared, and stripped and repaired the landing surface on runways at Tinian's North Field.

"MAG-12 is always anxious to train on Tinian because the people of Tinian are very welcoming, appreciative and accommodating," said Maj Jonathan Kehr, the logistics officer.

Planning for Forager Fury began in the summer, and an advance party of Marines arrived Nov. 27 to prepare for the aircraft

group's equipment arriving on the 747.

"We started planning for (the exercise) in August, and even before that, we were looking at what we were going to do when we got here," said Halbert. "The event tonight has been smooth because of our logistical support, planning and all of the coordination of MAG-12's aircraft."

The people of Tinian expressed a warm welcome to the Marines and thanked them for returning after training on Tinian earlier this year.

"For a long time, our people have wanted Marines on the island," said Ramon Dela Cruz, the mayor of Tinian. "We know that the Marines would bring about a great economic opportunity to the people of Tinian. We welcome them, and I hope in the future more will come. ... We will always welcome them, and we hope they continue to return."

LCpl J. Cage Karwick

PAO, Marine Corps Installations Pacific, Okinawa, Japan





# Steel Knight 2013:

## The Largest First Marine Division Exercise In Nine Years

By Andrew Lubin

**S**ome 8,000 Marines and sailors of the First Marine Division (Reinforced) participated in division-level combined arms, live-fire Exercise Steel Knight 2013, Nov. 29-Dec. 13, 2012. Held simultaneously in the training areas at the Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC) Twentynine Palms and Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., the division's largest annual exercise focused on traditional Marine combined-arms doctrine, with live-fire armor, artillery, infantry and air operations.

"This was the first time since 2003 that the exercise was conducted as a division-level combined arms live-fire exercise," said the 1stMarDiv's commanding general, Major General Ronald L. Bailey. "In past years, the COIN [counterinsurgency] requirements of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom overshadowed the Marine Corps traditional combined-arms emphasis, but Steel Knight showcased our return to core competencies."

"Our goal was to stress the command and control abilities of 1stMarDiv's combat operations center and fire support coordination center," said Major Thomas Kisch, Plans Officer, 1stMarDiv. "We brought together infantry, artillery, armor [tanks, amphibious assault vehicles (AAVs), light armored vehicles] and reconnaissance."

Kisch also noted that the air-ground team flavor so important to Marine operations was added by the Third Marine Aircraft Wing based at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., which provided close air support, the Direct Air Support Center, assault support and a low altitude air defense element. Logistical support came from the First Marine Logistics Group's Combat Logistics Regiment 1.

The 8,000 Marines were split approximately evenly between Camp Pendleton and Twentynine Palms, with the division headquarters at Camp Pendleton. The ground combat element included First and

Fifth Marine regiments, 11th Marines, 1st Tank Battalion, 3d Assault Amphibian Bn and 1st Reconnaissance Bn. The guiding scenario was a Pacific-focused assault that included a notional beach landing that segued two days later into notional fighting and an enemy counterattack at Twentynine Palms.

With four maneuver battalions working simultaneously at Twentynine Palms, Steel Knight took 75 percent of the available training areas. A realistic wartime tempo was set on the morning of the first day, Kisch explained, when a U.S. Air Force communications satellite failed, which quickly spiked above the expected stress levels of the exercise.

Such a large-scale exercise provided training opportunities within training opportunities. Since the annual combined Marine-Singapore Armed Forces training in Exercise Valiant Mark was ongoing at Camp Pendleton, and at Twentynine Palms, the Tactical Training Exercise Control Group (TTECG) was working on transitioning from the Enhanced Mojave Viper



A Co C, 1st Tank Bn leatherneck relays commands to the driver of his M1A1 main battle tank on Range 210, Marine Air-Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, Calif., during First Marine Division Exercise Steel Knight 2013 in early December 2012.





LCPL D. J. WU

predeployment training package to the new, updated Integrated Training Exercise (ITX) scenario for preparing Marine units to deploy, both these efforts were folded into Exercise Steel Knight.

### Multiple Regiments and Multiple Battalions Equal Many Stories

Lieutenant Colonel Howard F. Hall  
Commanding Officer  
3d Assault Amphibian Bn

"We have 2012 Marines operating 1960s vehicles, but these old machines remain the backbone of the Marine air-ground task force," said LtCol Hall. Hall's AAVs were playing a significant mobility and firepower role in Steel Knight. Although among the oldest pieces of equipment in the Marine Corps arsenal, the amphibious assault vehicles provide the ground combat commander with a variety

of options ranging from delivering 18 combat-ready Marines onto a contested beach to delivering 10,000 pounds of humanitarian or disaster-relief supplies into earthquake- or typhoon-stricken villages.

"Our role in Steel Knight was one of support and training," Hall explained. He added that amtracs give the Marines the ability to attack from the sea and continue inland and carry Marines into the fight just as demonstrated at Twentynine Palms in Steel Knight.

Maj Robert Bell  
Current Operations Officer, TTECG  
MCAGCC Twentynine Palms, and the ITX

"We're a cog in Steel Knight's bigger wheel. During the exercise, we worked with the battalions as they filled in their white space [available time] training," said Maj Bell. "When they weren't in their

**Marines with Co E, 2/4 prepare to attack on Range 210 at MCAGCC, Twentynine Palms, Calif., during Exercise Steel Knight 2013.**

formal exercise, we supported them with additional training.

"As we adjust from Enhanced Mojave Viper to ITX [Integrated Training Exercise], the emphasis will switch from platoon-level stability operations to company-level and larger combined arms. It's a reordering and redesigning of priorities where the training has two weeks of live fire, and then followed by a week of stability ops. While COIN and stability operations are still an important part of our core competencies, the emphasis now has returned to combined arms, thus, our participation in Steel Knight.

"The Marine we turn out from here is a jack-of-all-trades. While the emphasis





LCPL D. J. WU

Marines with Co B, 1/4, below, provide covering fire for the lead element, above, of a platoon-sized attack at the Combat Center's Range 410, Nov. 30, 2012, during Exercise Steel Knight 2013.



LCPL D. J. WU

is now 'Guns up,' our stability operations training has shifted from COIN to the HA-DR [humanitarian assistance-disaster relief] basics of food and water distribution, medical assistance, NEO [non-combatant evacuation operations], population control using entry control points and vehicle control points, plus counter-IED [improvised explosive device] training. We can also tweak the training to the specifics required by each MEU or unit

going on the Unit Deployment Program.

"Steel Knight was our opportunity to work with the participating infantry battalions and practice prior to January's ITX, and we assisted by having our Coyotes [TTECG staff nickname] telling the Marines readying the live-fire exercises where the notional enemy was assembled."

#### The 3rd Bn, Singapore Guards And Valiant Mark

Exercise Valiant Mark is an annual training effort between U.S. Marines and the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) designed to improve military-to-military operations and mutual combat capabilities.

This year the 3rd Bn, Singapore Guards joined 2d Bn, 5th Marines and 3d AA Bn in live-fire training as well as the types of amphibious, urban and helicopter-borne operations likely to be encountered in the littorals—the area from the open ocean to the shore that must be controlled to support operations ashore and the area inland from the shore that can be supported and defended directly from the sea.

Commanded by LtCol Fredie Tan, the 3rd Bn, Singapore Guards specialize in rapid deployment and are considered one of the elite units of the SAF. Trained as heliborne troops, the Guards have specialized warfighting skills that give them added combat versatility.

Much like the U.S. Marines, the 3rd Bn is trained to fight in urban areas, built-up areas and against fortified objections. The unit also trains in amphibious warfare and is capable of seizing airfields, beachheads, depots and enemy strongholds. Additionally, the unit prepares to handle nonwar-related operations such as humanitarian assistance and peace support operations.

Valiant Mark alternates locations every year, explained LtCol Tan. This year the Guardsmen traveled to Camp Pendleton, while next year the Marines will go to Singapore to train with their Pacific allies.

"We have never been to a range like this one before," said Sergeant King Chi, section leader in the 3rd Bn. "We are becoming accustomed to the terrain and weather and are very excited about being here and working alongside the Marines."

Chi added, "Marines are very experienced in combat. I think we can learn a lot from them. It is a great opportunity to be able to train with them."

Describing training with the Singaporean forces, LtCol Jason Perry, the commander of 2/5, said: "We trained side by side and exchange[d] tactics with the Guardsmen."

In addition to the squad- and platoon-size assaults on enemy objectives, the Guardsmen learned the functions of the Marine heavy machine-gun weapon systems and employed them on a live-fire range. The joint training allowed both units to refresh their basic infantry skills and small-unit tactics, said Captain Jordan Jones, the Company F, 2d Bn, 5th Marines commander.

"The training benefits the Guardsmen because they get to take advantage of Camp Pendleton's huge training grounds," said Jones. "And it's beneficial to us because we are able to learn from each other's culture, tactics, techniques and procedures."

During the training, some Marines noticed certain similarities between their tactics and those of their Singaporean

#### Leatherneck—On the Web

See more photos at [www.mca-marines.org/leatherneck/SK2013](http://www.mca-marines.org/leatherneck/SK2013)



**PFC Kyle Kirby, a 2/5 machine-gunner, explains the capabilities of an M249 Squad Automatic Weapon to Lt Surath Pereira, a platoon commander with 3rd Bn, Singapore Guards, during a static weapons display after the opening ceremony of Exercise Valiant Mark 2012 at MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., Nov. 29, 2012.**

counterparts. “It surprised me how similar their tactics were to ours,” said Sgt Tim Davis, a “Fox” Co squad leader. “They moved to engage the enemy together, and their section leader controlled his section just as our experienced squad leaders control their squads.”

While the need for COIN’s “Clear-Hold-Build-Transition” training has lessened as Marine forces in Afghanistan continue to be drawn down, the need for training for multinational operations is growing, especially in the increasingly important Pacific Rim, and Steel Knight provided an excellent combined training platform. The training instilled confidence in the men of the two battalions and clearly demonstrated that the 3rd Bn, Singapore Guards is an important partner to the Marines.

### Wrapping It Up

Steel Knight 2013 was all about divisional command and control while under the stress of combat. With so many of the maneuver battalions and Marines having served in Iraq and Afghanistan,



the challenge was for division and regiment headquarters to coordinate and focus 8,000 Marines, integrate allied forces and build an effective air-ground team, as they accomplished required Mission Essential Tasks.

While this was the division staff’s first large-scale exercise, it clearly demonstrated that the division is up to the task. While, as always, a great many lessons were learned and relearned, Steel Knight 2013 was a success.

*Editor’s note: Andrew Lubin is a frequent Leatherneck contributor and has embedded with Marine units in Iraq and Afghanistan numerous times and accompanied units inside the United States on operational efforts such as responding to Hurricane Sandy’s aftermath in New York City and also during training exercises such as this one.*



**Marines with “Lima” Battery, 3d Bn, 11th Marines fire M777A2 155 mm lightweight howitzers Dec. 11, 2012, at the Combat Center during Exercise Steel Knight 2013. (Photo by LCpl Jason Morrison)**





# Leatherneck Laffs



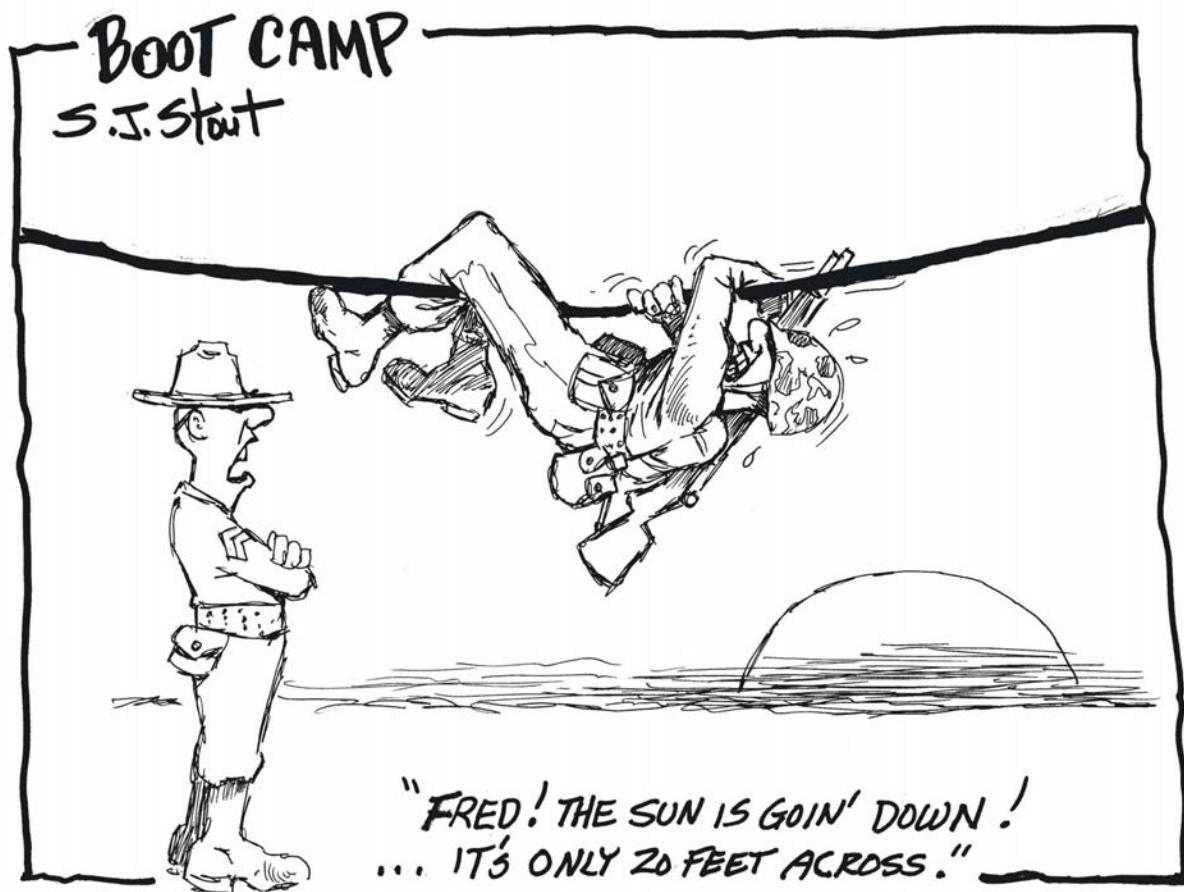
"Here ya' go, Gertrude, your favorite. Beenie Weenie can."



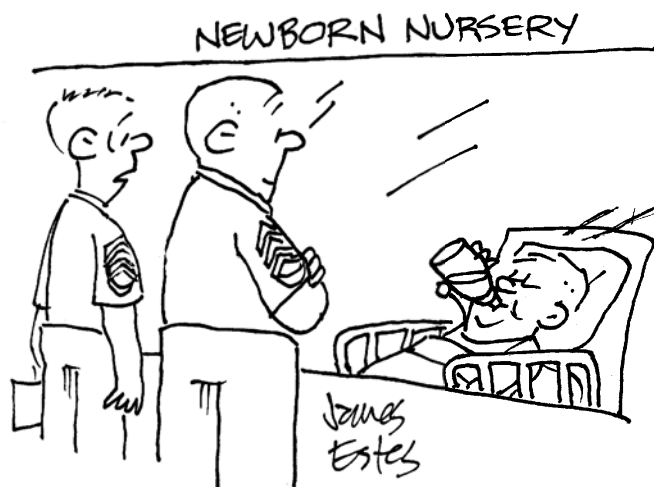
"I don't like the looks of this one.  
I say we let the engineers handle it."



"Critics!"



"One more for the Commandant?  
Sir, doesn't he do his own pull-ups?"



"14 pounds, 6 ounces. Have you picked a name yet,  
or are you just going to let him name himself?"



# The Whine of Snipers' Bullets Comprised the Only Opposition



Story by Bill Miller  
Photos by SSgt Lou Lowery

**T**his is the story of the 3d Platoon of “Easy” Company, 2d Battalion, Twenty-eighth Marines, and how it raised the colors on Suribachiyama, the grim, strange volcano fortress that frowned in deadly menace over Iwo Jima’s ashy battleground. The 3d Plt didn’t do it all alone, and those very few of its members who survive would be the last to say it did.

When the assault regiments of the Fourth and Fifth [Marine] divisions hit the beaches

of Iwo, all but the 28th swung right to take the major part of the island. The 28th turned left to attack the mountain and still its guns. This story starts as dusk fell on the night of D-day plus one [20 Feb. 1945]. The whole Marine line facing Suribachi was still out in the open and the Japanese on the high slopes were looking down their throats.

It made the Marines jittery to know that their every move was being watched from above. They couldn’t see quite well enough for accurate rifle fire, but machine-guns exchanged harassing bursts as the enemy prepared positions in the belt

of shrubbery ahead and higher up the sides of the old volcano. A destroyer pulled close in to shore and did a beautiful job of bombarding the crater’s snarling lip.

First Lieutenant John K. [“Tex”] Wells of Lake View, Texas, the platoon leader, ordered his men to clean their weapons, three at a time. Then he and little Jim “Chicken” Robeson, a 16-year-old Chewelah, Wash., lad, and Ed Christian, a deeply tanned Californian, went out to string wire 50 yards ahead of the Marine lines. The enemy positions were 50 yards beyond that. William “Jawbone” McNulty from Stillwater, Minn., and Clarence



**Left: The initial waves of 5thMarDiv leathernecks land under heavy fire on Red and Green beaches at the foot of Mount Suribachi on 19 Feb. 1945.**

**Below: LtCol Chandler Johnson, the commanding officer of 2d Bn, 28th Marines, gives last-minute instructions to his Marines and calls for an end to all gunfire on Mount Suribachi so the patrol can get going on 23 Feb. 1945.**



**SSgt Louis R. Lowery, the *Leatherneck* photographer accompanying the patrol to the top of Mount Suribachi, asks the Marines to show the flag they are carrying up the slopes. No one knew if they would make the top without resistance.**

Hipps, Brownwood, Texas, set up trip flares. Donald Ruhl, a rawboned, reckless Montana rancher, and Corporal Everett Lavell, Bellingham, Wash., were over on the right flank in a deserted Japanese coastal gun pit of concrete and concrete-filled oil drums.

That gun pit had been a great menace for two days, and the company on the right had had seven men killed trying to take it. The enemy had it covered with mortars from the volcano.

Ruhl and Old Man Lavelle had scouted it out that day. They had found a cave leading out from the back of the pit to

ward the mountain. Tex sent back for demolitions to blow the cave, but before they arrived, Ruhl managed to crawl the full length of the dark tunnel by himself and came back to report there were no Japanese in it.

He and Lavelle had orders that night to

shoot anyone who tried to jump in with them. Somebody tried it—somebody who turned out the next morning to be a very dead Japanese.

All the men were tense. They weren't hungry, but they started asking for food and water. Tex and the platoon sergeant,



As the 40-man patrol headed up Mount Suribachi pauses, the stretcher bearers in the left foreground make small targets of themselves. Note the type stretchers.



Leathernecks of "Easy" Co, 2/28, from the left, 1stLt Harold G. Schrier, PltSgt Ernest Thomas, Sgt Henry Hansen and Cpl Charles W. Lindberg, tie the flag to a piece of pipe found on top of Mount Suribachi.

Ernest Thomas, passed out what they had, and it helped to get through the hours. Actually, everyone ate little and drank little for the first three days of the battle.

Then the Japanese, with their bent for breaking monotony, threw down a mortar barrage. It seemed to come spewing right out of the volcano's mouth. Tex thought it was getting his men. Actually, it did nothing more than bury them deeper in volcanic ash.

That silly "knock-knock, who's there" game made the rounds about that time. The lieutenant and his men played it to assure each other they weren't afraid.

"Come in or stay to hell out," they yelled at mortar shells splattering around their foxholes. After the shelling, a little machine-gunner in Item Company climbed out of his hole and shook off the dust.

"How do you suppose your dancin' girl is doing about now?"

"I don't rightly know," Wells said, "but, by God, she better be thinking of me."

Darkness fell and the men stretched out on their ponchos. Nobody slept. They just lay there at the ready, watching the greenish glare of flares creasing the wrinkled face of Suribachi.

The Japanese were out bright and early on D-day plus two, swarming like bees around their caves and trenches at the foot of the mountain. The Marines could see them moving along the trenches, a whole squad or gun crew at a time, each



man stooped over, running like hell and holding on to the belt of the man in front of him.

Before jumping off, Tex asked for support. The tanks which were back refueling couldn't make it, but air promised a strike on call. Not many Japanese earned the Purple Heart in that strike. It hit high up the side of the mountain. The enemy, by then, had moved farther down.

From where it was lined up for the assault, the platoon had to cross a wide open spot and get through its own wire. Tex ordered the right flank up on the abandoned gun emplacement to cover the attack. Eddie Romero, an ex-paratrooper from Chicago, was downed by rifle fire, and Robert Blevins of Galesburg, Ill., took a mortar hit. Clifford Langley, a slow, imperturbable Missourian who seemed especially cut out for the job of corpsman, hurried out to give a hand. A second mortar shell exploded in the midst of them. Romero was killed, but Blevins and Langley survived.

The platoon rushed the Japanese line before the enemy had a chance to get set. Ruhl and his buddy, Sergeant Henry Hansen of Somerville, Mass., whom everybody called the "Count" (he was a suave lad with a good education) took rifles and grenades and ran up to the top of a pillbox. A grenade fell between them. Ruhl, who sincerely believed that the whole world was stark raving mad, covered it with his body. Hansen picked him up, looking at Tex who was crouching close to the pillbox. Tex shook his head and Hansen laid him down again.

The Japanese were now throwing everything they had at the Marines—big spigot mortars, knee mortars, grenades, Nambu and rifle fire. It all seemed to come at once. Cpl Harold Keller of Brooklyn, Iowa, moved in beside the pillboxes with Platoon Sergeant Thomas and the demolitions men, Jawbone and Hipps. The same little gunner from Company I appeared on the scene, bringing his gun with him.

Mortars were closing in on the reserve squad. Tex sent Sgt Howard Snyder and his men on in to take a pillbox about 20 yards inside the enemy lines, in open sand. Snyder was a former Raider, from Huntington Park, Calif., a cool little man who learned to kill the Japanese in the jungles. He moved up, threw grenades into the pillbox and sent Louie Adrian, the Indian from Wellpinit, Wash., to fire his Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR) at the enemy from a Nambu nest on top.

Adrian, a quiet, handsome lad, stood straight up and fired pointblank into the enemy. They were running in all directions, trying to dodge his fire. Snyder, on his fifth operation now, was kneeling be-



**Shortly after the flag is raised atop Mount Suribachi, around 1020 on 23 Feb., PFC James R. Michels, foreground, checks out Japanese activity.**

side Adrian on the pillbox, smoking a cigarette and throwing grenades. He and Keller tossed so many grenades that morning they got blisters on their fingers.

The Indian was shot through the heart as he fired. He was dead before he hit the ground, his BAR still chugging. Leo Rozek, the big private first class from Muskegon, Mich., jumped up in his place and kept shooting directly into the Japanese with his BAR. Then the little machine-gunner from Co I moved in on top of the same pillbox.

The lieutenant, lying beside the pillbox now, giving a casualty report to Captain Dave Severance, Easy Company's CO, sent three men back to get more grenades. Two of them, Edward Krisik of Milwaukee

and Wayne Hathaway of Eldorado, Kan., were killed. Things were going badly. An amtrac trying to get in to the platoon had taken a direct hit. The CP [command post] absorbed the full blast of a mortar shell which wounded Tex, Dick White, Robert Lane and Bill Wayne.

After hanging around until the morphine was making him groggy, Tex finally was persuaded by a corpsman to get out of the area. He went reluctantly, his buttocks filled with mortar fragments.

That afternoon Sgt Thomas led the platoon in a drive with the rest of Easy Company to the base of Suribachi. They were the first there and set fire to a huge coastal defense gun, the kind which the enemy defenders held back as a surprise all dur-





Marines move toward a Japanese position on top of Mount Suribachi after the flag is raised.

ing the early landing preparations until D-day minus-two.

At the base of the mountain, 3d Platoon sliced off to the left around Suribachi's shoulder, neutralizing enemy positions as it went. Nightfall caught it 500 yards on around the base of the mountain. There, bypassed enemy strongpoints cut them off and prevented the evacuation of casualties. Later, they regained contact with other units of the 2d Battalion and wiped out the last remaining pockets of enemy resistance.

In the meantime, a patrol had reached the southern tip of the island, on the other side of Suribachi, and there, working through the soaking rain of D-day plus three, had made contact with the Marines who had come around the other side. The latter had pushed through a Japanese bivouac area on the west coast. Hundreds of enemy were bottled up in caves which honeycombed the slopes.

Early on the morning of D-day plus

four, [Sgt] Sherman Watson led a four-man patrol from Fox Co up the precipitous side of the mountain. With him were George Mercer, Ted White and Louie Charlo, an Indian. They went almost to the top and got back to report that the enemy was still holed up. American guns had scoured the slopes with creeping barrages.

The stage was set for the ascent and subsequent flag raising on the top of the mountain, an event which so heartened the Marines on Iwo, the Navy offshore and the people at home. Lieutenant Harold Schrier, executive officer of Easy Co, was ordered to bring the 3d Plt back around to the north side of Suribachi. There, Lieutenant Colonel Chandler Johnson, CO of the 2d Bn, gave them the flag. It was the ship's flag of USS *Missoula* (APA-211), an attack transport that had carried the 2d to its staging area at Saipan. The battalion adjutant had carried it onto Iwo in his map case.

Forty men gathered around the CP to hear LtCol Johnson give them instructions.

If they reached the top and secured it, he said, they were to call down to him and raise the flag. If they didn't make it? This wasn't discussed. No one knew how many enemy had dug into the mountain and were waiting, still alive.

The patrol shoved off in column of files through the debris of the fighting and past gun pits that were grim with the mangled remains of the enemy dead. In places, the ascent became so difficult that the entire patrol had to go down on hands and knees to continue the climb. They picked their own way, avoiding a winding trail leading up the mountain-side. It was mined. At a steep defile, flankers were sent out to protect the main body against ambush.

But save for the occasional whine of a sniper's bullet, there was no resistance on the way up. The platoon climbed slowly and cautiously, taking frequent breathers, and reached a spot near the rim of the crater. Then it spread out in a semicircle around the ugly edge of the extinct lava





The raising of the first American flag on top of Mount Suribachi did not signal the end of the Battle of Iwo Jima. It went on for several more weeks.

pit, every man on his stomach. On a signal from Lt Schrier they charged over the rim and circled the ridge. In that fraction of a minute Suribachi fell to the Marines.

One of the men found a piece of pipe on which he fastened the flag. Sgt Lou Lowery of *Leatherneck*, who took the pictures on these pages, begged for a little time to put new film in his camera. He had been shooting pictures steadily all the way up. The flag raisers griped at the delay, but they waited. Lowery got his flag-raising picture.

This action photograph of Lowery's, taken in the heat of battle with the haste that whistling shots from the enemy makes necessary, caught the flag just as it reached the upright position. Among those it shows are Schrier, Thomas, Hansen, Lindberg and Michels. Little Robeson, over covering a cave, refused to be included.

"Hollywood Marines," he snorted, and waited intently for a chance to catch any Japanese who might try to register his objections to the flag raising.

Chicken didn't have long to wait. The ceremony enraged some of the diehard enemy garrison into pitching grenades at the flag party. Their commanding officer

went farther. He charged, brandishing a Samurai sword. "Snowjob" Garrett shot him down.

Shortly after he had gotten his pictures, Lowery nearly met disaster. A Japanese pitched a grenade at him and he was forced to jump down the side of the mountain. He had plunged and rolled down 50 feet before he could catch himself on a bush.

That night, the platoon watched a great show from its vantage point. The next morning, Lt Wells went ashore against the advice of a Navy doctor and rejoined what remained of his platoon. Lindberg and Robert Good met him at the base of the mountain and carried him to the top. Far to the north, they could see the flash and dust of battle and few realized what it held for them.

When the 3d Platoon had laid down its weapons at the end of the bitter Iwo campaign, not one of all the men who had gone ashore on D-day was with it. Keller and Michels were the only ones who had not been hit, but they had been transferred to another platoon. The rest were replacements.

*Editor's note: To commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Marine Corps Association's founding by then-LtCol John A. Lejeune and a group of officers at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, on 25 April 1913, we will be reprinting significant articles from the Leatherneck archives in each 2013 issue.*

Many of our readers will know that Leatherneck staff photographer, then-SSgt Lou Lowery, accompanied the "Easy" Co, 2d Bn, 28th Marines patrol that raised the first flag over Mount Suribachi during the Battle of Iwo Jima. They certainly did not know if they would reach the top, but Lou Lowery would be along to capture what happened with his two Rolleiflex cameras. We selected this article for re-publishing because of its enduring historical content.

If you want to read more from our archives, they are digitized and searchable online via our website: [www.mca-marines.org/leatherneck](http://www.mca-marines.org/leatherneck).





# We—the Marines

Edited by Clare A. Guerrero

## MARSOC Stands Up New Battalions

■ U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command (MARSOC) recently stood up two new battalions as part of a reorganization effort designed to accommodate its influx of combat support and combat service support personnel at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C.

The Marine Special Operations Logistics Battalion (MSOLB) and the Marine Special Operations Combat Support Battalion (MSOCSB) will take on board the nearly 800 Marines scheduled to join MARSOC's support component by 2016. The new Marines will provide support in intelligence, engineering, explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) and other capacities to Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command's special operations teams, which often operate in forbidding and remote locations with little access to conventional support assets.

Now, the need for critical support assets from conventional forces will decrease as the new logistics battalion will fulfill roles in engineering, embarking and logistics, with Marines trained specifically to support MARSOC's special operations missions.

"The support we're going to be able to deliver to our deployed [Special Operations task forces] and companies is going to increase their survivability and their ability to conduct operations globally," said Colonel Jeffrey Fultz, commanding officer of the Marine Special Operations Support Group, to which the new battalions belong.

Fultz also said that the Marine Special Operations Logistics Bn is one of the Marine Corps' most unique logistics battalions, due to its Individual Training Program (ITP).

"For the first time in combat service support in the Marine Corps, the Marines [in MSOLB] will have an ITP," said Lieutenant Colonel Stephanie L. Walker, CO of the new logistics battalion. "If you've ever been in any other unit with combat service support, you're either deployed or you're home doing your predeployment training. But you never get time to individually train. That's what MSOLB offers these Marines: some time to hone their skills prior to going out in support of MARSOC."



The organizational color of the new Marine Special Operations Combat Support Battalion, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command is displayed during its activation ceremony at MARSOC headquarters, MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., Nov. 15, 2012. (Photo by Cpl Kyle McNally)

Each support Marine at U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command is required to complete a comprehensive checklist of individual training requirements, including the Special Operations Training Course (STC) and Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE) training. Added to a combination of unit training requirements and a short dwell time between deployments, MSOLB's new ITP is a welcome change, said Walker.

The activation of the Marine Special Operations Combat Support Bn also brings new advances to the command, particularly in the intelligence realm. A revision of MARSOC's former intelligence battalion, adding a communications company and a headquarters company, MSOCSB is capable of bringing every intelligence asset to the battlefield, providing another platform that helps MARSOC operate independently.

"Combat support battalion's Marines are not only able to find and fix, they're also able to finish," said Fultz. "With the addition of Headquarters Company, which

includes multipurpose canines and joint terminal attack controllers, and Communications Company, they're adding a whole new piece to their kit bag, and their ability to support MARSOC worldwide."

Fultz said that MARSOC prides itself on the ability to task organize a fully enabled and integrated Special Operations Forces (SOF) capability, largely through the fusion of operations and intelligence. The MSOCSB, with its additional assets, will significantly enhance this capability.

Growth is steady, but slow. The Corps' gradual downsizing is shrinking the pool that MARSOC can draw from. However, according to Fultz, that won't be a problem. MARSOC will continue to do more with less, as all Marines do. "We're going to continue to ask a lot of you," said Fultz, addressing a formation of Marine Special Operations Support Group Marines. "We're going to continue to push you. But I know you'll continue to accomplish the mission."

Cpl Kyle McNally  
Combat Correspondent, MARSOC

## Marine Corps Requires Pull-Ups For Female Leathernecks

■ According to an All Marine Corps Activities (ALMAR) message that was released Nov. 27, 2012, pull-ups will replace the flexed arm hang for female Marines during the physical fitness test (PFT) after Jan. 1, 2013, to be fully effective Jan. 1, 2014.

The first phase, from January 2013 to January 2014, will serve as a transition period, allowing female Marines to choose to either complete the pull-up or opt to do the flexed arm hang.

"It's something we have been looking at for a number of years," said Lieutenant General Richard P. Mills, Deputy Commandant, Combat Development and Integration. "We've done the studies. It's popped up a number of times, and when it was discussed this time, we decided it was the right time to do it. We decided to execute because there is no reason why we shouldn't do this."

Phase 2 will commence Jan. 1, 2014. Pull-ups will replace the flexed arm hang, which will remain a part of the initial strength test required before attending recruit training or Officer Candidates School. Passing a PFT with pull-ups will be a requirement for graduation from both recruit training and OCS after Jan. 1, 2014.

Lieutenant General Mills said the change in the PFT is part of the efforts to standardize requirements across the Marine Corps.

"Women are fully capable of accomplishing it," said LtGen Mills. "It's more recognition of the changing role of women, the changing capabilities and the changing demands that we place on them."

Males and females will do pull-ups for the PFT. However, the scoring will differ between the male and female Marines. "The events are gender neutral," said LtGen Mills. "The scoring is gender norm because there are physical differences between males and females."

The scoring table is experimental and will be adjusted if need be before Phase 2. Scores from practice PFT will be reviewed, and feedback will be gathered to determine whether to adjust the table or keep it the way it is.

"We wanted to arrive at a number that was fair but challenging," said LtGen Mills. "So we took the studies under consideration, and senior leadership, both officers and enlisted, decided that eight was where we wanted to start and then we will raise or lower that after we see how our female Marines do in the year."

The change to the PFT, replacing the flexed arm hang with pull-ups, isn't a surprise to most female Marines.

"Initially, we all thought it was going



LCpl TABITHA BARTLEY

**Sgt Stephany Rector, an administrative specialist with Headquarters Company, Headquarters and Service Battalion, MCB Quantico, Va., takes a break from work to practice pull-ups outside of her office.**

to be sooner than it has," said First Sergeant Matina D. Spaulding, the company first sergeant for Headquarters Company, Headquarters and Service Battalion. "I started hitting the pull-up bars and started preparing a long time ago."

In the coming year, LtGen Mills would like to see female Marines do their best to rise to the challenge.

"If you look at the female PFT through history, you can see all the changes," said LtGen Mills. "We have adjusted it, as the role of the Marine Corps has changed and people have recognized their capabilities and what we can challenge them with."

To help Marines prepare for pull-ups, a website has been set up to help them go from zero pull-ups to their max at fitness.usmc.mil/fpft.

"In my 18 years of experience," said Spaulding, "females have seen more change in the Marine Corps than the males have, and it's stuff that we just have to adapt and overcome, and continue to march forward and rise above."

LtGen Mills, who said he has had difficulty with pull-ups his whole career, understands the challenge the Marines are facing.

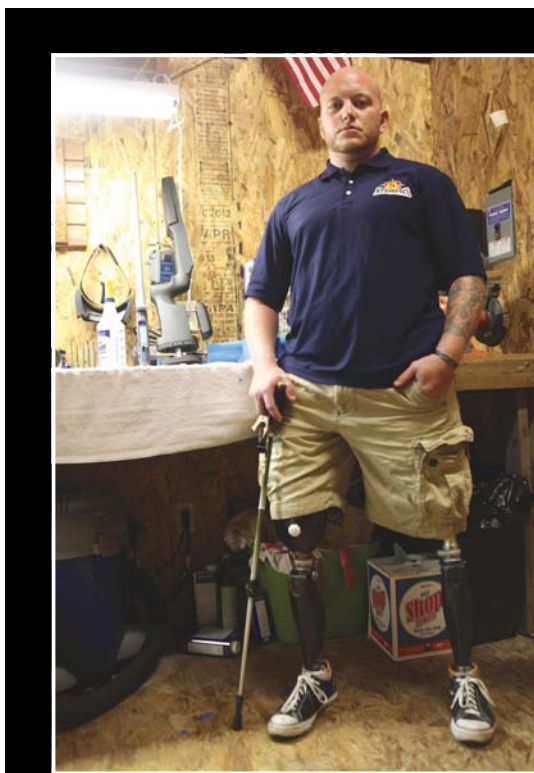
"I have never maxed out on pull-ups," said LtGen Mills. "It's a challenge, but it's a challenge that we are confident our female Marines will grab onto and [will] do extraordinarily well."

LCpl Tabitha Bartley  
PAO, MCB Quantico, Va.

## Marine Takes Top Pistol Shot In International Competition

■ Sergeant Peyton Hebert, Marine Corps Shooting Team, Pistol Team, never fathomed that he would be representing the Corps on an international level. In fact, as a young Marine, he never saw himself serving more than four years.

Hebert, now on his second enlistment,



CPL PAUL PETERSON

**EOD MARINES CHARGE THE BUSINESS WORLD, MAINTAIN HUMOR—Medically retired SSgt Brad M. Lang, who served as a technician with 2d Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company, Second Marine Logistics Group, stands in his workshop in Jacksonville, N.C., on Oct. 26, 2012. Lang lost both legs when an improvised explosive device detonated in Afghanistan in 2011. Lang joined forces with SSgt Johnny W. Morris, a fellow EOD technician who also lost a leg in Afghanistan. The two men launched their business, Stumpies Custom Guns Inc., a fully functional gun store that sells, repairs and specializes in custom guns.**



has surprised the competitive marksmanship world with his deadly accuracy and lightning-like reflexes that led him to be the top pistol shooter at the Royal Marines Skill at Arms Meet at Altcar Range in Hightown, England.

"It was my older brother who inspired me to join the Marine Corps," said Hebert, a native of Beaumont, Texas. "He joined before me, and that ... motivated me to enlist."

Hebert, who was originally an artillery mechanic, joined the Marine Corps Shooting Team in 2009 after demonstrating his potential at a division match in Okinawa, Japan.

"I did what my coaches told me to do. I ended up doing OK at the match and got selected to join the team," said Hebert.

His fellow competitors at the Royal Marines Skill at Arms Meet didn't know what to think of Hebert because of his calm and collected attitude.

"I remember eyeing the U.S. Marines, as everyone does, because of the reputation as good shooters," said Marine 3 Jonathan Stein, a competitor with the Dutch Royal Marines 11th Airborne Infantry. "While everyone else was joking or laughing, he was mostly quiet. You can tell he was thinking of the match."

"Before a match I go over it in my head as much as I can and visualize the win," said Hebert.

Hebert has come a long way from being just an average pistol shooter, and his dedication to refining his skills has paid off.

"He has lightning reflexes," said First Lieutenant Antoine De Zeehw, a Dutch Royal Marines 11th Airborne infantry officer. "It's almost as he's done with the match before I can even get a shot off. You can't tell by looking at him, but he is the



CPL EMMANUEL RAMOS

**Sgt Peyton Hebert with the Marine Corps Shooting Team's Pistol Team competed in the Royal Marines Skill at Arms Meet at Altcar Range in Hightown, England, on Sept. 27, 2012. The team competed using the SA80 A2, Royal Marines service rifle.**

man to beat in a pistol match."

Hebert recalled the moment he knew he was a good marksman. It all started when his gunnery sergeant pulled his team aside for a breakfast and told them they were great shooters who could compete against the best.

"I wrote that down and put it in my pistol-carrying case," Hebert said. "Now before a match I read that, and it always gets me going."

Hebert has consistently outshot competitors on national and international levels. Those who have been fortunate enough to compete against him have taken what they can from Hebert and applied it to their own style.

"I've asked him loads of questions,"

said James English, a competitor with the British Royal Marines. "He is always willing to help anyone out. He just loves to shoot, and any bloke like that is hoofing [awesome] in my book."

Hebert has only a few months left with the Marine Corps Shooting Team and said that his time with the team will not be soon forgotten. He plans to continue with his marksmanship when he returns to his military occupational specialty as an artillery mechanic, but says his family takes precedence.

"Although I love the feeling competition brings out in a person," Hebert said, "it's an expensive sport, but I'll keep at it as long as I can."

Cpl Emmanuel Ramos  
PAO, MCB Quantico, Va.

## WW II Survivor Leads Marines Through Battle of Okinawa Tour

■ Although it has been more than 65 years since one of the largest air, land and sea battles ended, more than 40 military personnel from Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, Okinawa, Japan, relived the Battle of Okinawa, Nov. 13, 2012, through the eyes of Setsuko Inafuku, a survivor of the battle and tour guide for 18th Force Support Squadron at Kadena Air Base, Japan.

The tour included a visit to the Okinawa Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum, the former Japanese Navy Underground Headquarters, Hacksaw Ridge and Sugar Loaf Hill.

Inafuku, who was an infant when U.S. military personnel rescued her family from a cave during the battle, explained her family's experiences to the tour guests. Inafuku has been giving tours since 1986 and advocates sharing the truth about what happened during the war.



MARY WILSON

**CALIFORNIA BOXING HALL OF FAME INDUCTS MARINE VETERAN—** On Oct. 20, 2012, at the Sportsman's Lodge in Studio City, Calif., the CBHOF inducted Maj H. J. "Fritz" Werner, USMC (Ret). Werner enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1948 and retired in 1985. His Corps career highlights include the Chosin Reservoir campaign; a combat tour in Vietnam as a platoon commander with 1st Battalion, Ninth Marine Regiment; chief instructor at Drill Instructor School, Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C.; director of Drill Instructor School at MCRD San Diego; Commanding Officer, Support Bn, Recruit Training Regiment, Parris Island; and CO of Headquarters Bn, Fourth Marine Division. As a drill instructor, he began his boxing career by organizing and officiating recruit smokers and local boxing events. After obtaining certifications, he officiated International Boxing Federation, World Boxing Association, World Boxing Commission and World Boxing Organization championship title events worldwide.



PFC KASEY PEACOCK

“My son would come up to me as a young boy and ask me about the war because he wasn’t learning about it in school,” said Inafuku. “When he passed away, I wanted to [honor] his memory by spreading knowledge about the Battle of Okinawa.”

The battle, which began April 1, 1945,

consisted of 82 days of brutal fighting that killed or wounded more than 100,000 Japanese soldiers, 65,000 allied personnel and tens of thousands of civilians.

Throughout the tour, the leathernecks reflected on the lives lost by both nations and appreciated learning new things about the war.

**Setsuko Inafuku tells Marines about U.S. Army LTG Simon B. Buckner Jr., who was killed in action during the Battle of Okinawa. Inafuku led guests through a battle sites’ tour at the Okinawa Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum in Naha, Okinawa, Nov. 13, 2012.**

“I learned more in one day on this tour than I have learned in the past two years,” said Sergeant Joshua M. Petellar, a data network specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, MCAS Futenma. “Having Inafuku as our tour guide really allowed the servicemembers to connect with what she was saying because her family was there during the battle.”

Inafuku, who has spent countless hours speaking with veterans about the battle, leaves an impression on nearly every tour guest.

“I have spent so many years around veterans from both sides that I learn as much from them as they do from me,” said Inafuku. “I feel as though it is my duty to inform people on the battle, and that’s what I’m going to continue to do.”

PFC Kasey Peacock

PAO, Marine Corps Installations Pacific



## Crazy Caption Contest

### Winner



LCPL SARAH ANDERSON

**“I don’t care if you are a Marine. Sit!”**

**Submitted by  
Tina Freeland  
Lincolnton, N.C.**

### This Month’s Photo



LCPL BENJAMIN HARRIS

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

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



## Leaving the military?

# Get your finances and career civilian-ready

## A step-by-step guide

By JUNE LANTZ WALBERT



The civilian world shouldn't feel like foreign territory. After all, you haven't lived your entire life in the military. But preparing for life — and a career — after the military can make you feel like you're speaking a different language.

Preparing for post-military life begins while you're still in the military. Here are some tips to help you get started.

### STEP ONE:

Build a strategy

From deciding where you'll live to the type of work you want to do, your last year in the military should be the year you prepare for civilian life. If you've settled on a community you want to call home, get familiar with details like cost of living, housing and the proximity of military support (health care, shopping, etc.). From there you can develop your financial transition.

You can find budgeting worksheets online to help you make a budget based on your projected civilian expenses and income.

Without military housing or a housing allowance, you'll need to account for rent and rental deposits or a down payment and a mortgage on a home. Don't forget to include renters or homeowners insurance, property taxes, maintenance and upkeep.

Your budget will also need to factor in other essentials. With no commissary, you may need to adjust what you allocate for groceries. The same

goes for your clothes — and you may need to invest in a professional wardrobe for a civilian job.

*Looking for a military-friendly city to call home? Check out USAA's "Best Places for Veterans" ([usaa.com/bestplaces](https://usaa.com/bestplaces)).*

### STEP TWO:

Expect the unexpected

You've seen it happen: Hail and Farewell on Friday, new civilian job on Monday. But there are plenty of times when the transition isn't

that smooth. Do you have a fund to cover an employment gap? Financial planning experts recommend saving at least nine months of living expenses. Not there? Now's the time to adopt a leaner budget and a more aggressive savings plan.

### Life decisions

Your plans for the unexpected will also need to be updated in another important area: life insurance. Losing Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) could represent a big risk for you and your family. Determine if you have a coverage gap by using the life insurance calculator at [usaa.com](http://usaa.com) (type "life insurance calculator" in the search box). If a gap exists, consider a term policy that will stay in force no matter what your employment situation is. If your health situation means that traditional life insurance isn't a cost-effective option, Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI) is available without medical questions or exams for up to 120 days after separation.

If you're retiring from the military, the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) can

provide a monthly income for your family if something should happen to you. SBP is often a cost-effective option. If you're eligible, you must sign up during your out-processing.

### STEP THREE:

#### Negotiate pay and benefits

Military pay and allowances offer few surprises. Civilian compensation is a bit trickier. Your post-military salary should be in line with your skills and the local market — but also consider benefits.

Before you accept a job offer, look beyond base salary at things like paid time off, medical and disability coverage, life insurance and retirement benefits. How does the medical insurance compare to TRICARE options? What about dental and vision? If your civilian employer has a retirement savings plan, it's wise to participate, especially if your employer matches your contributions.

If you contributed to the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) on active duty,

you can keep those funds where they are, or roll them into your new employer's plan or into a traditional IRA. If you made tax-free combat pay contributions to your TSP, you may want to consider rolling those into a Roth IRA or using them to bulk up your cash cushion.

### Cash in? Think twice.

Most financial planning experts agree that cashing in a retirement account, particularly one funded with pre-tax earnings, is a costly decision. If you're under age 59½, you'll not only owe income tax, but you may owe an additional 10 percent penalty.

June Lantz Walbert is a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ practitioner with USAA. She retired recently as a lieutenant colonel in the United States Army Reserve. At USAA, Walbert focuses her efforts on helping families get financially fit.



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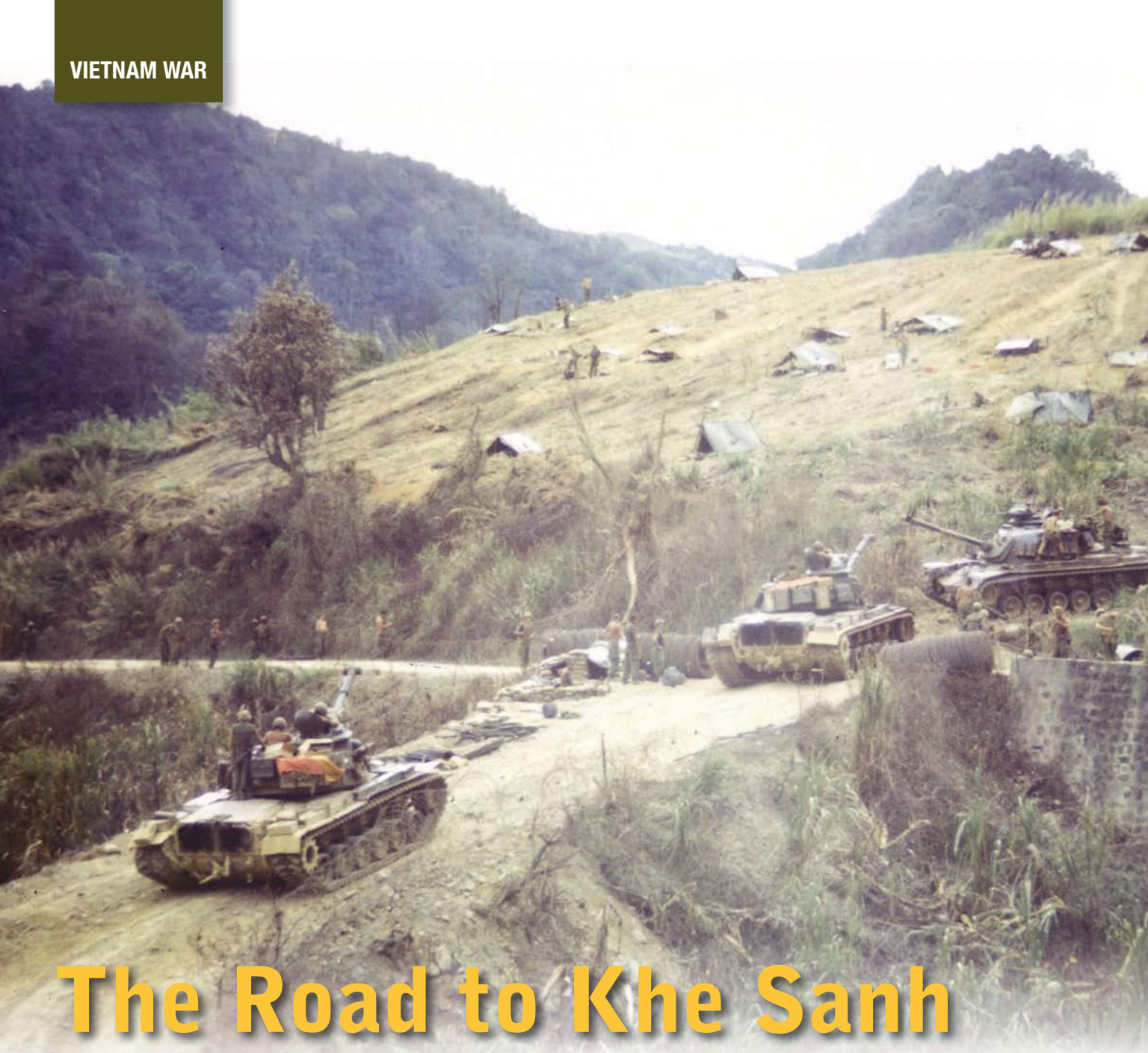
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# The Road to Khe Sanh

## U.S. Marine Tanks Fight to Keep Route 9 Open

By James P. Coan

*In early March 1967, U.S. Marines from the 11th Engineer Battalion undertook the arduous task of converting an ancient cart path that meandered from Ca Lu to Khe Sanh in the Republic of South Vietnam into a viable roadway for “Rough Rider” resupply convoys. That road to Khe Sanh officially was designated Route 9. Recognizing the vulnerability of that extended supply route, the North Vietnamese Army commenced ambushing convoys traveling Route 9 to Khe Sanh. By the end of August, no more convoys ventured beyond Ca Lu. Khe Sanh would have to be resupplied by air.*

**O**n 20 Jan. 1968, Fourth Marine Regiment moved its headquarters to Camp Carroll in South Vietnam’s Northern I Corps and assumed responsibility for the security of all Marine bases along Route 9 from Cam Lo to Ca Lu. As a welcome, North Vietnamese Army (NVA) gunners shelled Camp Carroll that night. That turned out to be the opening round of a concerted NVA effort to cut Route 9 and isolate Camp Carroll.

A routine artillery resupply “Rough Rider” convoy from Dong Ha was ambushed by a large NVA force on 24 Jan. when the trucks were about to turn on to the Camp Carroll access road from Route 9. A reaction force of two Marine

tanks (one a flame tank) and two Army M42 Dusters loaded aboard a platoon of Marines from Company H, 2d Battalion, Ninth Marine Regiment (H/2/9) and headed out to the rescue.

Corporal Harry Christensen was the tank commander of the lead tank. Captain Daniel Kent, the commanding officer of “Bravo” Co, 3d Tank Bn, rode standing outside Christensen’s cupola with his pistol drawn. He also was the reaction-force commander.

The relief force halted 100 yards from the ambush site and opened fire at NVA positions alongside the road. A bullet ricocheted off the tank, striking Christensen above his right eye. He placed a dress-



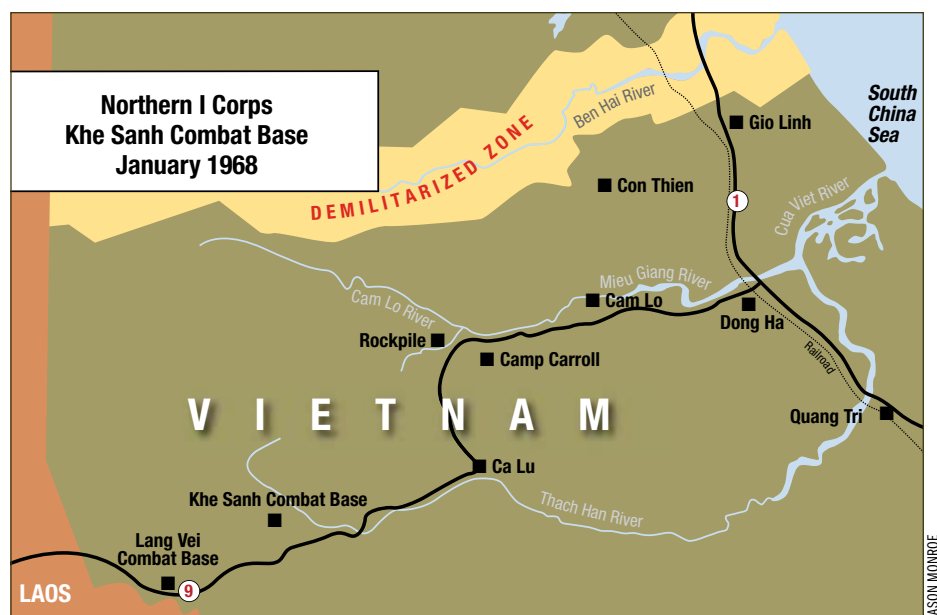


These M48A3 gun tanks of 3d Tank Bn's Provisional Mechanized Company pass a small Marine encampment as they patrol Route 9 between Ca Lu and Khe Sanh, 1968.

ing over the wound and stayed in the fight.

Christensen's tank and a Duster then charged in closer to the ambush site. Just after Capt Kent shouted, "We're taking fire from both sides of the road," two bullets struck the captain in the back. Cpl Christensen grabbed Kent, struggling to drag him atop the turret and put him inside the tank, when two rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) hit, further wounding both Marines.

A recoilless-rifle round exploded on



the turret, wounding Christensen again and blowing Capt Kent off the tank. That blast set off a fire inside the turret. The badly wounded tank commander ordered his crew to bail out. Another RPG then hit his tank, knocking him to the ground where he rolled into a ditch. As he raised his head, he could see Capt Kent's lifeless body in the road.

When a second relief force from Dong Ha reached the chaotic scene, accompanied by two UH-1E helicopter gunships overhead, the NVA broke contact and hastily retreated, taking its dead and wounded with it.

Back at III Marine Amphibious Force headquarters, concern was mounting over the NVA's ability to strike almost at will along Route 9 and potentially deny access to Camp Carroll, the Rockpile and other Marine bases in the Northern I Corps area. Lieutenant Colonel Lee R. Bendell's 3d Bn, 4th Marines choppered in from the Trace area of Leatherneck Square to beef up security. The battalion's mission was to secure Route 9 from the Khe Gia Bridge east to Cam Lo, a distance of 9 kilometers.

Mike Co, 3d Bn was situated on a little hill just north of Route 9 near the 24 Jan. ambush site. In the predawn hours of 27 Jan., the NVA attacked Mike's Hill. India and Lima companies joined the fray. In a fierce daylong fight for Mike's Hill, the NVA troops were driven off, and Route 9 was open once more to

traffic. That attack cost the NVA 130 killed in action. Suffering the loss of 21 dead and 62 wounded, Marines of 3/4 paid a heavy price to secure the vital main supply route (MSR); however, intelligence sources warned that large numbers of NVA troops were continuing to move into the area.

Tet, the Vietnamese Lunar New Year holiday, occurred the end of January in 1968. A Tet truce had been announced by the Viet Cong to last from 28 Jan. until 3 Feb., but that was an epic ruse. By 31 Jan., almost all major cities, provincial capitals and military installations throughout South Vietnam were being attacked by the NVA and Viet Cong.

Situated astride Route 9 was the Cam Lo District Headquarters compound. Alerted to expect trouble soon, U.S. Army advisory staff at the district headquarters requested Marine reinforcements. On 1 Feb., 1st Platoon (two squads) from D/1/4 was ordered to move inside the Cam Lo compound and dig in. A squad of Marines from E/2/9 had shown up unexpectedly that evening, and it took up positions alongside the D/1/4 Marines.

At 0215 on the morning of 2 Feb., the compound was hit by hundreds of rounds of recoilless-rifle, rocket and 82 mm mortar fire. One recoilless-rifle round smashed into the main command bunker, killing the district advisor and temporarily knocking out communications. The deputy dis-



Cpl Harry Christensen



Capt Daniel Kent



trict advisor, U.S. Army CPT Raymond McMaken, found the only radio still functioning and began coordinating artillery fire missions from Fire Support Base (FSB) C-3 and the Dong Ha Combat Base. A steady rain of artillery fire from multiple batteries blasted suspected enemy assembly areas, weapons positions and withdrawal routes.

At 0430, a Marine armor/infantry relief force from FSB C-3 charged cross-country toward the Cam Lo compound. The surviving NVA troops broke off their attack and hastily retreated north across the Cam Lo River, then west into the hills, leaving behind 156 of their dead for the Marines to bury.

The outnumbered defenders of Cam Lo had triumphed against seemingly impossible odds. Fewer than 50 Marines, plus a handful of Army advisors, had held off and defeated at least two NVA battalions and a sapper company. Army CPT McMaken said later, "The Marines just stacked them up on the wires. They were magnificent."

Many of the soldiers and Marines officially were recognized for their valor at Cam Lo that night. Marine Cpl Larry L. Maxam was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously. Lance Corporal Lawrence M. Eades and Cpl Timothy W. Russell

each were decorated with the Navy Cross.

Since mid-January 1968, the Marines at Khe Sanh Combat Base had been preparing for an enemy attack they knew was imminent. Were the Americans risking another Dien Bien Phu? General William C. Westmoreland, Commander Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV), believed it was worth the risk because Khe Sanh would be a key asset in his planned invasion of Laos to cut the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Also, relinquishing the base at that time would be a major enemy propaganda victory. Thus, all the players were in place for a major battle to commence.



Cpl Larry L. Maxam

On 20 Jan., the siege of Khe Sanh commenced with the NVA attacking several hill positions. A deluge of rockets, mortars and artillery continued to shell the besieged Marines and Army of the Republic of South Vietnam (ARVN) soldiers occupying the base. Khe Sanh Village fell to the NVA a few days later. The Special Forces Camp at Lang Vei was next, overwhelmed by a numerically superior NVA force supported by 10 PT-76 tanks. Throughout February and March, the siege of Khe Sanh continued. A major operation was necessary finally to break the siege.

Operation Pegasus (a U.S. Army, ARVN,

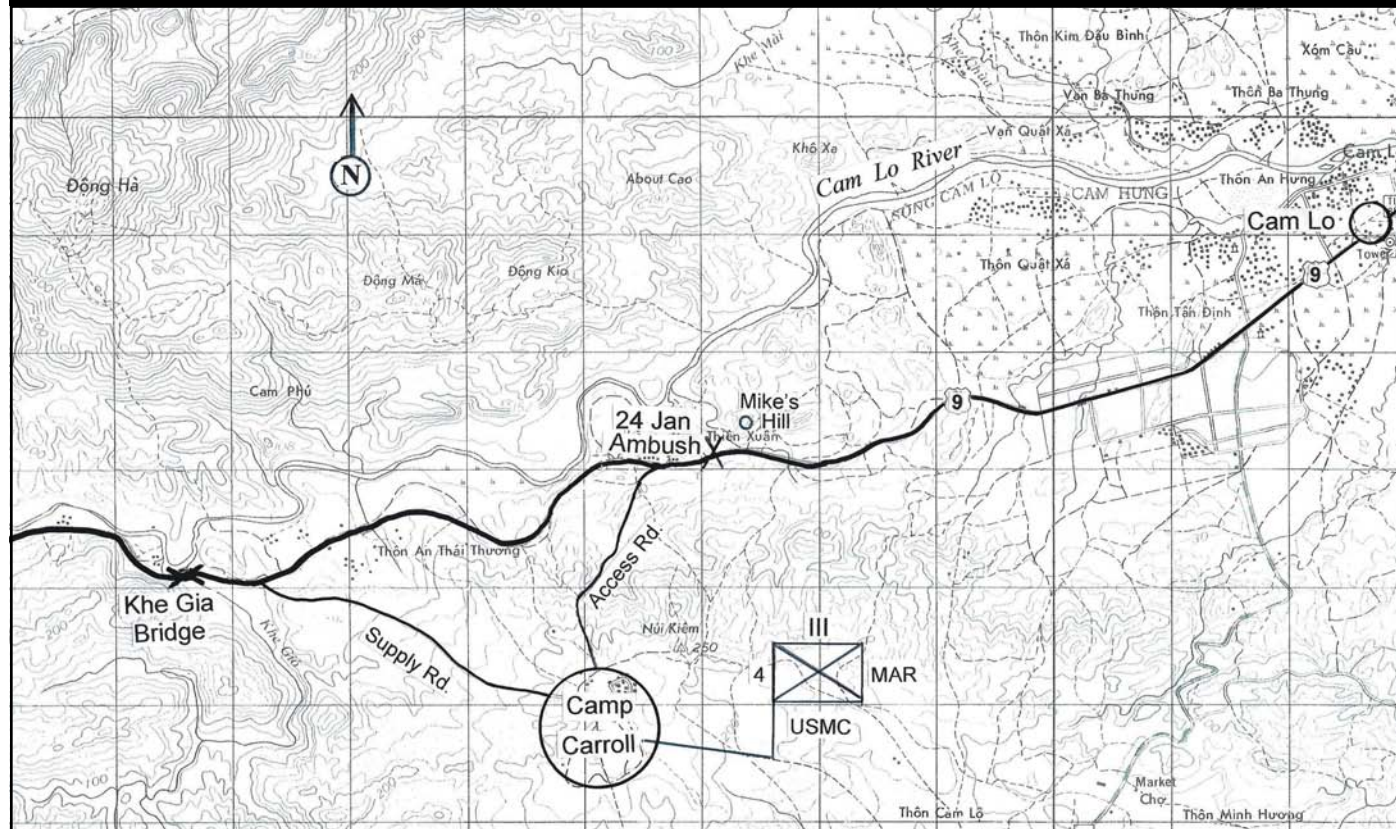
and Marine Corps operation) commenced 1 April 1968, with the objective of lifting the siege of Khe Sanh and opening Route 9. Marine Corps engineers, supported by armor and infantry, performed admirably, removing mines and repairing bridges, culverts and bypasses. By 11 April, Route 9 was open the entire 10 miles from Ca Lu to Khe Sanh for the first time since September 1967.

Hardly a week after the end of Pegasus, the NVA ambushed another ammunition resupply convoy at bridge #28, halfway between Ca Lu and Khe Sanh. To thwart any future NVA plans to cut Route 9, Task Force Hotel was created, consisting of several Ontos and one tank platoon each from Bravo and Charlie companies, 3d Tank Bn. They commenced patrolling Route 9 to prevent enemy buildups along the MSR.

That tactic appeared to be working well until 14 May, when the NVA sprang another ambush between Ca Lu and Khe Sanh. Again, the Marines responded, and after a fight that lasted into the next day, the NVA retreated, leaving behind 74 dead. Marines from 2/3 lost 7 KIA and 36 wounded. The 14 May battle signaled the onset of increased enemy activity in the area.

On the morning of 19 May, Ho Chi Minh's birthday, a minesweep team and a platoon from F/2/1 departed the gates at

## Clearing of Route 9—24 Jan-2 Feb 1968





COURTESY OF FRED KELLOGG

**Cpl Fred Kellogg sits on top of his M48A3 tank at Khe Sanh, 1968.**

Khe Sanh, headed south along the former coffee plantation road. Two tanks from 1st Plt, Bravo Co went along as added security. Meanwhile, a convoy had formed up inside the compound, awaiting word from the minesweep team that the access road was clear.

About 300 meters from the road's intersection with Route 9, the NVA triggered a massive ambush. Camouflaged NVA troops opened fire from 25 meters. RPGs, grenades and mortars rained down on the



COURTESY OF DICK CAREY

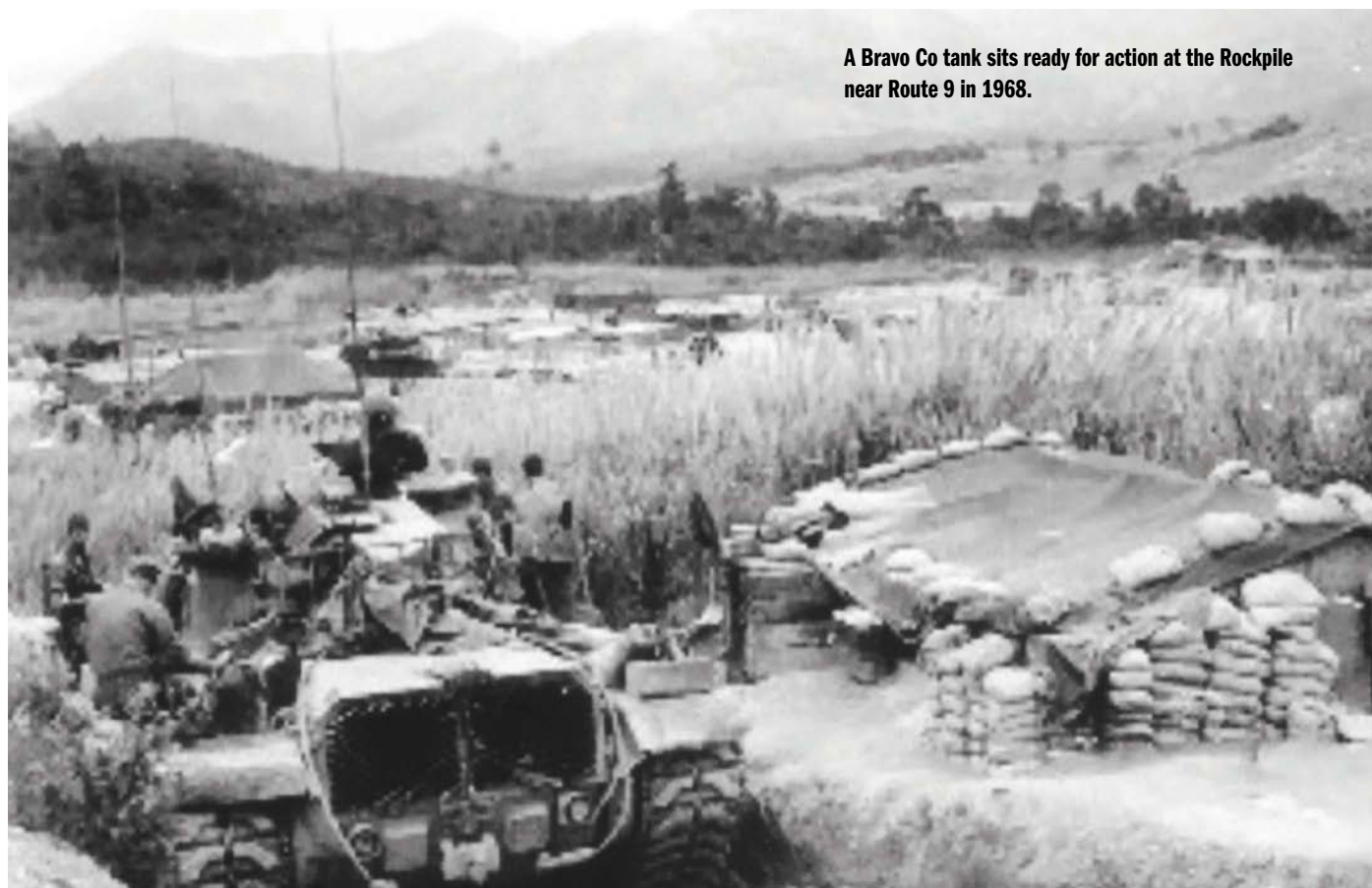
**Capt Daniel Kent, commanding Co B, 3d Tank Bn, later killed in action, conducts a company staff briefing at Camp Carroll in 1968.**

Marines diving for cover.

Cpl Fred Kellogg commanded one tank, Cpl Buzz Conklin the other. As Kellogg's tank opened fire with its .30-caliber coaxial machine gun, an RPG struck the main gun shield, rocking the tank. Kellogg's gunner yelled over the intercom that he could see the RPG team reloading. A high-explosive round was already in the main gun chamber. A second later, the RPG team vaporized as a tank round exploded at its feet.

The Marines were pinned down by NVA troops firing from numerous bomb craters. Kellogg maneuvered his tank so that he could lean out of his tank commander's cupola to fire his M3A1 "grease gun" and throw hand grenades into the craters until his cache of 19 grenades was exhausted.

Seeing that Conklin's tank was disabled by numerous RPG hits, Kellogg maneuvered his tank over to provide protection. Then, another RPG struck the turret of Kellogg's tank, just behind the range-



**A Bravo Co tank sits ready for action at the Rockpile near Route 9 in 1968.**

COURTESY OF DICK CAREY



**A Marine convoy rolls along Route 9 between Ca Lu and Khe Sanh, 1968.**



**These M48A3 gun tanks were staged at Dong Ha Combat Base, at the eastern end of Route 9.**

finder blister. Kellogg was standing directly in the path of the plasma jet that exploded through the armor, badly wounding him and his other two crewmen in the turret and setting the tank on fire. He was given last rites aboard a hospital ship offshore, but Kellogg would survive, barely.

The tank platoon leader, First Lieutenant Harris Himes, and a second Bravo Co tank were back at the combat base awaiting word to depart with the convoy for Ca Lu when the ambush was triggered. His two tanks, along with the remainder of Co F, raced to the aid of the beleaguered mine-sweep team. Even with G/2/1 assisting in the Marine assault, the NVA launched a determined counterattack. The COs of both infantry companies were killed and their command groups decimated in the fierce firefight.







SGT E. H. LEBLANC



GYSGT DONNIE SHEARER



GYSGT DONNIE SHEARER

**The M50, Ontos, with its six 106 mm recoilless rifles was frequently added to convoy security and reaction forces to keep Route 9 open. In this photo, an Ontos is passing through Gio Linh, near the Demilitarized Zone.**

Despite being wounded by an RPG, 1stLt Himes stayed in the fight, directing the fire of his two tanks as the infantry around them were engaged in hand-to-hand combat with the close-quarters enemy. Himes' tank began smoking after taking 13 RPG hits. Some rounds penetrated the engine compartment, rendering the steering mechanism inoperable. All electrical power was gone.

Himes shouted to his crew, "We have two choices: stay in here and risk being burned alive, or abandon the tank and risk getting shot!"

The crew stayed put and donned gas masks. They manually fired their 90 mm main gun and .30-cal. machine gun, while furiously hand-cranking the powerless turret. First Lt Himes' loader, Cpl Rene Cerda, bleeding profusely from numerous RPG shrapnel wounds, continued to load and fire his tank's guns. He later would be awarded the Silver Star for his heroism. Towed back to the combat base after the battle, Himes' tank was so damaged that it was stripped and buried in place.

Fixed-wing napalm strikes, some only 50 meters from the Marine positions, finally broke the enemy's will to stand and fight. Eight Marines were killed and 34 wounded that day. The Marines reported killing 113 of the enemy and capturing

three, one of whom stated that the enemy mission was to stop all movement along Route 9 to Khe Sanh.

Operation Charlie, the dismantling of Khe Sanh Combat Base, began on 19 June. On 5 July, the base officially closed. The following day, 1st Marines' rolling stock departed for Ca Lu. As the last trucks rumbled over Route 9, engineers removed and recovered the tactical bridging equipment they had installed during Operation Pegasus in April.

The command decision to evacuate Khe Sanh so soon after the massive commitment of men and material to hold the base is difficult to understand. One likely explanation is that, with GEN Westmoreland being relieved by GEN Creighton Abrams, MACV no longer adhered to the belief that Khe Sanh was strategically important. That decision is debated to this day.

*Editor's note: James P. Coan also wrote "Con Thien: The Hill of Angels," University of Alabama Press, 2004. His other most recent Leatherneck article on Vietnam is "Tet Attack at Cam Lo," January 2010. Coan served in Vietnam as a platoon leader with the 3d Tank Bn, 3dMarDiv.*







**Above:** Landon Zehner, 6, gains hands-on experience inside a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) armored vehicle while his parents, 2dLt Jonathan and Kelle Zehner, watch.



**Right:** Fintan Vargas, 2dLt Nick Barberini and his father, Tom Barberini, front to back, take a look inside a CH-46 helicopter, just like the one 2dLt Barberini flew in during training at The Basic School.



**Cpl Brandon Hughes teaches 12-year-old Rebecca Tepen and Steve and Amy Cannavo how to use the M41 Saber Improved Target Acquisition System (ITAS), the latest TOW missile Command Launch Unit for ground forces.**





Graduating Delta Co TBS student 2dLt David Vu instructs his parents, Hong and Tammy Vu, on how to use an AT-4 light antiarmor weapon at the weapons display during Warrior Day.

# Warrior Day

Story and photos by Roxanne Baker

**T**welve-year-old Rebecca Tepen squinted through the scope of an M41 Saber Weapons System and aimed in to fire a missile. The weapon wasn't loaded, but it was still the hands-on experience Rebecca had always sought.

"I've always liked weaponry and artillery and I've seen it in movies, but this is my first time seeing it out in the open," she said.

Rebecca is one of hundreds of family members who attended The Basic School's "Delta" Company Warrior Day on Dec. 12, 2012. The afternoon provided an opportunity for the families of graduating Marine second lieutenants to meet the company instructors and tour the home of The Basic School, Camp Barrett on Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., prior to the graduation ceremony later in the day.

"It's a big deal for us as the instructors to meet the family," said Captain Ademola Fabayo. "[Warrior Day] con-

nects what we do with the rest of the civilian population. They get a glimpse of the sacrifices and hardships that the troops go through, and it's important for the country to get that."

Visitors explored a static display of some of the weapons and vehicles the graduating lieutenants used during their six months of training. Second Lieutenant Nick Barberini's father, Tom, attended in support of his son. The elder Barberini said all the weapons were interesting to see, but touring the CH-46 helicopter proved the most impressive.

"It's great; it's really a lot of fun to see all the equipment, the guns and the night binoculars," Tom Barberini said. "Now I know what my son has been doing for the past 26 weeks."

Adults were bused to a live-firing range to measure their own shooting skills. Supervised by instructors, they fired rounds from the M16 service rifle, the M249 light machine gun and the M203 grenade launcher.

Although Warrior Day was an im-

pressive show, it also was a celebration of the lieutenants' six months of rigorous training.

For Tammy Vu, it was a gratifying day because of all her son, 2dLt David Vu, has accomplished.

"I'm so proud of him for what he's doing for his country, so happy for him," Vu said.

*Editor's note: Roxanne Baker is the writer and media coordinator for the Marine Corps Association and Foundation. A Marine wife, she attended Warrior Day to see some of what her second lieutenant husband, who graduated with Delta Co, experienced. She is a multimedia journalist with hundreds of published works. While she's moving on to Naval Air Station Pensacola, Fla., to be with her husband during his flight training, she will continue to provide articles. We wish the Baker family the very best as they begin a Marine Corps career together.*





Two Marine EOD technicians conduct a post-blast investigation to determine size, type and country of origin of the ordnance item used in an attack.



COURTESY OF CAPT ROBERT SCHMIDT, MARDET EGLIN AFB

# EOD in the IED Age

## New Advanced Training Center in Twentynine Palms Prepares Marines for 21st-Century Threats

Story and photos by  
CWO-4 Randy Gaddo, USMC (Ret)

**T**his is the most relevant improvement for the Marine Corps EOD community's training and education continuum that has taken place over the past decade," declared Lieutenant Colonel Marc Tarter, Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) action officer and occupational field sponsor at Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps.

The senior EOD Marine was referring to activation of the new EOD Advanced Training Center at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif.

Explosive ordnance disposal Marines who find, identify and disarm many different types of live explosive devices en-



COURTESY OF CAPT ROBERT SCHMIDT, MARDET EGLIN AFB

**After remotely rendering safe an IED and separating the main charge from the firing system, a Marine EOD technician starts the process of removing key components.**

gage in one of the more dangerous jobs in existence.

Like any other job, though, dangerous or not, education and training are the keys to success—which in the EOD world equates to keeping themselves, their fellow Marines and others uninjured and alive after each mission.

"Though we are the smallest EOD of all four U.S. military services, we regretfully have the highest casualty rate in combat," said Captain Robert Schmidt, Commanding Officer, Marine Corps Detachment, Naval School Explosive Ordnance Disposal, Eglin Air Force Base, Fla. The school is where personnel from all four services, as well as international students and other government agency staff, receive basic-level EOD training.

Since July 2004 when the first Marine



EOD tech, Gunnery Sergeant Michael J. Clark, was killed in action in Iraq, the occupational field has lost 45 EOD technicians during combat operations.

The casualty rate undoubtedly correlates to the high-risk areas Marines have occupied in Iraq and Afghanistan over the past decade. These many sacrifices on the battlefield prompted a 2010 Headquarters Marine Corps-level review of EOD training and education.

“This led to the advanced training center, which directly benefits the Fleet Marine Force by maintaining [the] high technical proficiency we need in the field,” said Schmidt.

The new center at Twentynine Palms offers, for the first time, advanced EOD training and education for officers and enlisted. “Courses cover technical and tactical skills associated with EOD operations to support the Marine air-ground task force, homeland defense, the supporting establishment and special operations,” Schmidt explained.

Advanced classes for senior enlisted started in March 2012; the first EOD warrant officer course will be for those graduating from The Basic School fiscal year 2013 class at Quantico. All Marines in the EOD field are noncommissioned officers or staff noncommissioned officers or officers who came up through the warrant officer and limited duty officer ranks.

“This is one of those occupational fields where technical expertise from the enlisted level, coupled with leadership, is essential to be an officer in the field,” said Schmidt.

The basic EOD course is 99 percent sergeants and a few corporals who meet requirements for promotion to sergeant. Corporals will receive noncompetitive promotion to sergeant once they successfully complete the course and have one year of time in grade.

Staff sergeants and gunnery sergeants in the field can apply for warrant officer and, if selected, and after they attain CWO-3, can compete for limited duty officer at the rank of captain and eventually can progress to lieutenant colonel.

The Advanced Training Center is filling a badly needed training gap for those senior enlisted and officers.

“Establishing the training center is a major milestone for the EOD community,” confirmed Capt Ed Quiroz, the officer in charge of the EOD Advanced Training Center. “Prior to the center, no formal training beyond the entry level existed within the Marine Corps.”

Capt Quiroz went on to explain that in the past, EOD Marines broadened their knowledge and developed their technical skills through on-the-job training, men-



**Above: An Air Force EOD instructor critiques a Marine student on the proper identification of a U.S. rocket as three U.S. Army students look on. (Photo by ENS Elizabeth R. Allen, USN)**

**Below: Students at Naval School EOD spend a great deal of time at the computer learning to control robotic platforms for EOD.**



torship and personal experiences. “Duty station assignments greatly shaped a Marine’s skill sets too,” he added.

The Advanced Training Center concept came about in 2010 after the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps returned from a visit to Afghanistan and recommended integrating EOD teams earlier in the predeployment program training rather than in-country to build relationships with the Marines they would be supporting.

“The training center now enables EOD personnel to focus on technical skills in

a formal training environment while capitalizing on integration into Marine air-ground task force training cycles,” Quiroz explained. “As threats emerge and new technologies are developed, the center’s curriculum will evolve to meet the requirements.”

Historically, necessity was the mother of creation for the EOD occupational specialty, which CBS news once surmised might be “The Most Dangerous Job in the World?” The British formed Bomb Disposal Units early during World War II to counter German development of long-





COURTESY OF CAPT ROBERT SCHMIDT, MARDETEGLIN AFB

After identifying the specifics of length, width, number of fins, bolts, bands and the color of an abandoned Russian bomb, a Marine EOD technician inputs these elements of his reconnaissance into a pre-programmed publication loaded on his computer to provide positive identification so that defusing may continue.

application,” Colton explained.

Of the 143 training days, 85 are spent in several outdoor, practical application areas working under realistic environmental conditions—sand, dust, rain, wind and freezing-cold temps. Reality is important when learning to handle high explosives.

Students in all military branches go through classes together, including eight hours of contact instruction per training day, plus two hours of study hall. Marines going to the school generally are drawn to EOD from other military occupations.

“We are only allowed to study during school hours,” explained Marine Sergeant George Bland, a student from Memphis, Tenn. “They tell us specifically not to dwell on the lessons of each day, just to go back to our quarters, relax and rest up for the next day,” said the former motor transport operations Marine.

Fellow Marine Sgt Christopher Awes from Red Wing, Minn., also was in motor transport operations. “But I was looking for a new challenge,” he said, “and EOD definitely is one of the more challenging fields in the Marine Corps.”

Waukesha, Wis., native Sgt Charles Meyer was a mechanic before earning a spot in EOD. “This school is a challenge,” he confirmed. “It’s a lot of new information every day, and there’s always more to learn. The thing I like about it is that we learn, then immediately apply what we

delay and anti-disturbance (i.e., booby-trapped) fuzes in their bombs.

U.S. Navy Rear Admiral Draper L. Kauffman, known as the “Father of U.S. Bomb Disposal,” learned from the British and, in 1942, established the first U.S. EOD school. After WW II, all U.S. military branches trained centrally at Naval Ordnance Station Indian Head, Md. In 1971, DOD consolidated all training under the Secretary of the Navy, still at Indian Head. By 2000, the school had moved all operations to its current location at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida’s panhandle.

The Marine Detachment at Eglin has three officers, 16 enlisted (12 of them staff

NCO instructors) and two Navy corpsmen. On average, there are about 92 Marine students going through classes in one of nine unique training divisions, which include demolition; core; tools and methods; ground ordnance; air ordnance; beginning and advanced improvised explosive devices; nuclear, biological and chemical; and weapons of mass destruction.

“Once they go through the demolition division, core and tools and methods they have the basic building blocks, then go through a full scenario, A-Z,” said CWO-4 Kelly Colton, the Marine EOD detachment executive officer at Eglin.

“These students attend more than seven months of intense academic and practical



CWO-4 RANDY GADDO, USMC (RET)



CWO-4 RANDY GADDO, USMC (RET)

Sgt Jake Locquiao, left and above, trains in the Aircraft Explosives Hazard area of Naval School EOD under the watchful eye of SSgt Miguel Disla, an aircraft explosive hazard instructor.



# A Perpetual Symbol of Sacrifice

## Memorial Honors EOD Techs Killed in Action Since World War II

It is a modest memorial, small by some standards; yet, it records the huge and ultimate sacrifice made by some of the bravest men and women in the United States Armed Forces.

The Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Memorial at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida displays names of all U.S. military men and women who earned the title EOD technician and have died on active duty as a result of an EOD mission since World War II.

"The four services stand together in one place at one memorial, forever honoring their heroes in the common mission they all were a part of," said the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General James F. Amos, in 2011. "This one wall represents a single team fighting together. No individual whose name is inscribed stood alone nor did they fall alone."

Gen Amos was guest speaker at the 42nd annual memorial service honoring EOD technicians past and present—a day when names of EOD technicians killed in action over the past year are added to the wall.

"You move toward danger while others flee, you create access on the battlefield, you clear compounds, you permit movement down dusty roads and, ultimately, you make an area safe for the people who live there," the Commandant was quoted as saying in a 2011 news release by the 96th Air Base Wing Public Affairs Office.

More than 3,000 people attend the annual dedication, which will be held this year on May 3-4 and include a memorial ball, a concurrent Global EOD conference (April 30-May 2) and other related events. (For more information, see [www.eodmemorial.org](http://www.eodmemorial.org).)

As of last year's memorial service, there were 289 names on the wall. Indicative of the increased EOD efforts since 2001, 112 EOD tech names have been added to the wall. From 1942 to 2001, 177 EOD techs had been killed in action. The EOD



From the left: Sgts Christopher Awes, Charles Meyer and George Bland, students at Naval School EOD, visit the EOD Memorial at Eglin AFB, Fla., which lists the names of all EOD technicians killed in combat operations since WW II.

Memorial was conceived in February 1969 when a committee was formed consisting of senior officers from all four services. The intent was to design and construct a memorial at the Naval School Explosive Ordnance Disposal, then at Naval Ordnance Station, Indian Head, Md.

The memorial was constructed there. Then in 1999, when the EOD School was consolidated at Eglin, it was moved to its current location across from the main EOD School building.

The memorial consists of inscribed names on four bronze tablets—one for each branch of service under the Department of Defense. Front and center of the wall is a dedication plaque with the basic EOD badge, known as "The Crab." Behind the memorial the American flag stands tall.

—CWO-4 Randy Gaddo, USMC (Ret)

learn, which makes it easier to understand and retain."

The need for more learning beyond the basics was the catalyst that formed the advanced EOD school. The high casualty rates caused by IEDs [improvised explosive devices] in Iraq and Afghanistan prompted action.

"The proliferation of commercially available technology has elevated the IED to the weapon system of choice for irregular warfare adversaries to offset overwhelming U.S. conventional superiority," Tarter stated, but emphasized that IEDs are only a small part of the total EOD mission.

"EOD includes capabilities to support all warfighting functions and range of military operations," he said. "Although

IEDs have brought the EOD community to the eye of the public and have allowed a direct focus on the IED mission, it is important to remember the broader EOD roles as well."

Robotic devices have been developed to reduce risk and increase safety for EOD technicians and the Marines they support in the field, but there are times when robots just can't replace a Marine on the ground.

"Depending on the mission at hand, such as route clearance, we often use robots," said Schmidt. "But when clearing IEDs off structures such as the underside of bridges or on patrol, robots are not a viable solution, and it takes hands-on efforts to render safe the IEDs. We rely on

experience, thinking outside the box and lessons learned to reduce the danger."

The advanced center curriculum captures that experience and the lessons learned to provide up-to-the-minute training. The nine-member staff (one officer, eight enlisted) provides formal, centralized training beyond the basic level for the first time in Marine Corps EOD history for team leaders, section leaders, platoon sergeants and newly assigned warrant officers.

The four-week EOD supervisors' course is for staff sergeants and gunnery sergeants. It addresses unique EOD tools plus supervisory, operational and administrative tasks to support the variety of missions in which they can expect to lead other Marines.





CWO-4 RANDY GADDO, USMC (RET)

**SSgt Mike Andella, a ground ordnance division instructor, works with a group of students at one of the nine training areas at the Naval School EOD at Eglin AFB, Fla.**

21st-century battlefield, IEDs and other looming threats.

The advanced training course gives Marines the edge they need to survive on today's battlefield.

"It will allow commanders and Marines in the field to integrate EOD technicians who have a refreshed, well-rounded bag of advanced skills and tools to support the operating forces," stated Schmidt. "The EOD Advanced Training Center's higher level of training will benefit the Marine Corps in general by ensuring all of EOD's capabilities remain sharp and focused."

Training and education can sometimes take a back seat to pressing operational needs of the hour, but due to the ever-changing battlefield environment, it is critical for EOD leaders to receive this advanced training as soon as possible.

"We ask that commanders afford their EOD Marines the opportunity to attend the courses provided at the Advanced Training Center," said Capt Quiroz. "It will greatly benefit these Marines and provide the Corps with more technically proficient EOD Marines capable of succeeding in any environment."

*Editor's note: The author, CWO-4 Randy Gaddo, USMC (Ret), was a combat correspondent as an enlisted Marine and later a public affairs officer. He retired from active duty in 1996 and now is a contributing editor for Leatherneck.*



Gunnery sergeants and master sergeants attend the two-week managers' course, which delves into the higher levels of leadership skills and tools those senior Marines need, including specific publications, orders and directives guiding the field.

The warrant officer course familiarizes students with the EOD structure from small unit to larger components and introduces them to operations, logistics, doctrine and administration of the EOD field.

The exploitation course is for all enlisted and officers and standardizes tactics, techniques and procedures for exploiting and disarming a wide range of U.S. and foreign ordnance.

The new curriculum is a game-changer for Marines in the EOD field.

"As the EOD community receives new personnel through the accession pipeline, they will now be able to set career goals and milestones for advanced training requirements," LtCol Tarter affirmed. "The Marine Corps will have a much better trained EOD force with the ability to rapidly change applicable curriculum to meet evolving threats that must be handled by Marines in this occupational field."

While the process to fulfill the EOD mission can be complicated and ultra dangerous, the essence of the mission is deceptively simple: locate and disarm live ordnance, bombs, explosives and, in the

## THE CRAB EOD Breast Insignia: Only Badge Used By All Four Services

The Explosive Ordnance Disposal breast insignia, or badge, known as "The Crab" by insiders, is the only military occupational specialty insignia awarded to men and women in all four DOD services.

The Crab is so-called due to its design, which consists of a wreath, a bomb, lightning bolts and a shield. Each symbol of the insignia, first created in the 1950s, has distinct meaning.

The wreath is symbolic of achievements and laurels earned by EOD members while minimizing accident potentials; the bomb represents the historic purpose for creation of the EOD field; lightning bolts portray the destructive power of the bomb and the courage and professionalism of EOD technicians; and the

shield represents the EOD mission—to protect personnel and property.



There are three insignia levels: basic, senior and master EOD technician.

The basic insignia is issued after successful completion of the preliminary school and after 18 to 24 months of on-the-job field training. It consists of the four basic elements.

The senior insignia is issued after three to five years as an explosive ordnance specialist and is designated by a star in the center of the bomb; the master designation is earned after seven to 15 years of service in a senior leadership position and is distinguished by an additional star atop the shield.

—CWO-4 Randy Gaddo, USMC (Ret)

# In the Highest Tradition

Edited by R. R. Keene and Tina Pearce

## It Was a Two-Day Fight: Four Special Ops Marines Earned a Navy Cross and Silver Stars



It turned into one hell of a two-day fight for the Marines, their corpsman and military working dog, Posha.



The Marine Special Operations team with Company B, 1st Marine Corps Special Operations Battalion, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command (MARSOC), working with Afghan special operations forces, broke an enemy ambush and rescued the wounded in a long and deadly firefight back on July 10 and 11, 2010, in Helmand province, Afghanistan.

More than two years later, on Dec. 3, 2012, Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus pinned medals on four members of the team. The Navy Cross was awarded to Sergeant William Soutra Jr. of Worcester, Mass., the dog handler of the German shepherd, Posha, who died last year of cancer. The Secretary then pinned Silver Stars on Major James T. Rose of Abilene, Texas, who was the team leader; Staff Sergeant Frankie J. Shinost of Sturgis, S.D., who called in air support as the Joint Terminal Attack Controller; and Navy Hospital Corpsman First Class Patrick B. Quill of Coronado, Calif.

The MARSOC commander, Major General Mark A. Clark, also was on hand and

spoke of the individual roles played by those honored as well as their dedication to each other and to mission accomplishment.

It was Posha the dog who led the way after the Marines and Afghan commandos were inserted by helicopter to search 11 compounds for a Taliban presence in the volatile Nahr-e-Saraj district of Helmand province. Posha immediately alerted to two pressure-plate bombs, confirming the suspected presence of improvised explosive devices.

Sgt Soutra and Posha continued looking. That's when the first snap of small-arms fire and explosions from rocket-propelled grenades sent everyone scurrying for cover. Caught in the open by heavy fire



From the left: HM1 Patrick B. Quill, SSgt Frankie J. Shinost, Maj James T. Rose and Sgt William B. Soutra of 1st MSOB, MARSOC stand at attention after being awarded the naval service's second- and third-highest awards for valor in combat by Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus at MCB Camp Pendleton, Dec. 3, 2012. They exhibited extraordinary heroism during a combat mission in Helmand province, Afghanistan, more than two years ago.



from multiple directions, the Marines led the Afghan commandos in a counterattack. Suppressive fire and close air support directed by the Marine team carried the day.

They faced a similar situation on the second day. Only this time, one Marine, Staff Sergeant Christopher Antonik of Crystal Lake, Ill., was killed along with an Afghan commando. Others were wounded, dazed and disoriented, but once again, the Marine Special Operations team took aggressive action to overcome the enemy.

According to his Navy Cross citation, Sgt Soutra repeatedly ran through heavy enemy gunfire to direct the Afghans in a counterattack all the while “relentlessly” firing his rifle. Sgt Soutra applied tourniquets to one commando and then dragged him out to the line of fire. He then helped call in air support and medical evacuation.

Maj Rose had been busy also. His citation reads in part: “As fire increased, he directed his element to break contact while he remained in place, returning fire and shielding their movement with his own body.” He killed two insurgents and wounded another. He then coordinated the medevac.

SSgt Shinost coordinated air support. He

was cited as not only calling in gun runs and resupply of ammunition, but fearlessly exposing himself to “withering” gunfire. He guided an Air Force A-10 Thunderbolt II on a strafing run at enemy positions less than 500 feet away, “destroying all enemy positions to his front.” He then ran through sweeping fire to mark the landing zone for helicopters.

In two days, the Marines and Afghan commandos killed 28 insurgents while evacuating 10 of their wounded.

R. R. Keene

Compiled from news reports

### **Pinned in Canal, Marine Kept Calm And Took the Fight to the Enemy**

It is not every day a National Guard sergeant is awarded a Silver Star for actions performed as a Marine. But that’s what happened in Pittsburgh on Dec. 10, 2012.

Sgt David M. Gerardi, with the Army National Guard’s 19th Special Forces Group, received the naval services’ third-highest combat medal for his actions while deployed in 2011 as a Marine with 3d Reconnaissance Battalion, Second Marine Division (Forward), II Marine Expeditionary Force.

Gerardi humbly accepted his Silver Star

before family, friends and Marines from 3d Recon Bn.

He credits his fellow recon Marines for his heroic actions.

“I know the award talks about me a lot, but those guys did more to bring me home than I could ever do for them,” Gerardi said. “I have been honored to serve with the best Marines and soldiers.”

It was June 6, 2011, in Helmand province, Afghanistan. Then-Corporal Gerardi and his fellow leathernecks were providing security near Balozai village when they were pinned down in a canal by enemy fire from a little more than 100 yards away.

Gerardi identified a firing position at a mud wall across an open field forward of the team that would give him a clear line of sight to the primary enemy position. He crossed the field to get to the wall less than 45 yards from the enemy. He was greeted with a volley of rocket-propelled and 30 mm grenades as well as machine-gun fire that prevented him from returning fire.

Despite the intense fire, he maneuvered to a more vulnerable position along another wall that afforded a better angle for him to fire on the enemy. With rounds striking within inches of his body, Gerardi provided suppressive fire, which allowed his Marines to extract a wounded Afghan soldier.

“The training kicked in,” Gerardi said. “Going to that position just made sense. That way, I wasn’t conflicting with the other guys’ line of fire.”

Gerardi continued to coordinate with other Marines to provide suppressive fire despite the chaos caused by enemy fire impacting around his position.

According to his citation, throughout the five-hour engagement, Gerardi showed “stalwart determination and vigilance” while he provided precision fire, thereby allowing his team to extract after nightfall.

“Because of his dedication and superior knowledge, he was able to accurately engage,” said Cpl Josh Davenport, a fellow recon Marine.

“He wasn’t just shooting blindly,” Davenport said. “He was saying, ‘I’m going to do this job better than anyone else,’ and he did. For that reason, he got the Silver Star. He was braver and more dedicated.”

When Gerardi completed his enlistment, he transferred to the Army National Guard to pursue a new challenge—to become a Green Beret. Although Gerardi has left the Corps, his impact on the Marines who served with him will last a lifetime.

“He’s an example to all of us,” Davenport said. “One of the biggest things we take from him is his heart. He puts everything into it. He brings guys together.”

Cpl Jacob D. Osborne

DivPA, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps



CPL JACOB D. OSBORNE

**Sgt David M. Gerardi is presented his Silver Star by MajGen Melvin Spiese, CG, 1st Marine Expeditionary Brigade Dec. 10, 2012, in Pittsburgh for action in Afghanistan.**

## Personal Combat Awards

The awards records in the Marine Corps' Award Processing System (APS) and Improved Awards Processing System were used to populate this list, which reflects personal combat awards from the start of the global war on terrorism presented to Marines and sailors serving with U.S. Marine Corps forces only. This list may not reflect certain personal combat awards processed outside of either system and/or approved by another branch of service. Any questions on the content should be submitted in writing to the Personal Awards Section at Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, Manpower Management Division, MMMA-2, 2008 Elliott Rd., Quantico, VA 22134.

The following awards were announced in November 2012:



### Bronze Star With Combat "V"

**HMCS Barry Breuninger**,  
1st Marine Special Operations  
Battalion (MSOB), U.S. Marine  
Forces Special Operations

Command (MARSOC)

**GySgt Jonathan W. Gifford**, 2d MSOB,  
MARSOC

**Capt Andrew M. Jarosz**, 2d MSOB,  
MARSOC

**Capt Paul M. Marcy**, 1st MSOB,  
MARSOC

**Sgt Michael C. McClurg**, 1st MSOB,  
MARSOC

**SSgt Todd G. Morgan**, 2d MSOB,  
MARSOC



### Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal With Combat "V"

**Capt Andrew H. Armstrong**,  
1st Reconnaissance Bn,

First Marine Division

**Sgt Anthony M. Battles**, 1st Recon Bn,  
1stMarDiv

**GySgt Travis C. Bouten**, Combat  
Logistics Regiment 15, First Marine  
Logistics Group

**GySgt Jason R. Butler**, Sixth Marine  
Regiment, 2dMarDiv

**Sgt Steven M. Cheek Jr.**, 1/8, 2dMarDiv

**1stLt Ryan J. Chrobak**, 1st Combat  
Engineer Bn, 1stMarDiv

**SSgt Robert J. Conlon**, 1st MLG  
(Forward)

**SSgt Gregory T. Copes**, 2d MSOB,  
MARSOC

**1stLt John S. Dingess**, 2/5, 1stMarDiv

**Sgt Leocarlo L. Enad**, 1/7, 1stMarDiv

**Capt Paul D. Fischer**, 2/10, 2dMarDiv

**GySgt Jacob L. Franks**, 1st Recon Bn,  
1stMarDiv

**Sgt Benjamin J. Gracia**, 1st MSOB,  
MARSOC

**SSgt Eric R. Harmon**, 1st MSOB,  
MARSOC

**Sgt Jordan R. Hintz**, 1/7, 1stMarDiv

**Cpl Jeffrey J. Hoffman**, 1/7, 1stMarDiv

**Capt Patrick M. Hughes**, 1st Recon  
Bn, 1stMarDiv

**1stLt Nicholas K. Isbrandtsen**, 1/7,  
1stMarDiv

**1stLt Neal T. Jones**, 2/5, 1stMarDiv

**LCpl Joshua J. Langston-White**, 1/1,  
1stMarDiv

**Sgt Aaron M. Ligon**, 1st Recon Bn,  
1stMarDiv

**SSgt Sergio Medrano**, 1st MSOB,  
MARSOC

**Sgt Albert H. Mendiola**, 2/5, 1stMarDiv

**HM1 John K. Morey**, 1st MSOB,  
MARSOC

**Sgt Mario Ormeno**, 1st Recon Bn,  
1stMarDiv

**Sgt Daniel D. Poldoski**, 1st CEB,  
1stMarDiv

**HM1 Patrick B. Quill**, 1st MSOB,  
MARSOC

**Sgt Jeffery J. Reber**, 1/1, 1stMarDiv

**GySgt Eliesel Rivera**, 6th Marines,  
2dMarDiv

**SSgt Samuel O. Shin**, 1st Recon Bn,  
1stMarDiv

**SSgt Jordan H. Small**, CLR-15, 1st MLG

**Capt Patrick V. Turevon**,  
1stMarDiv (Fwd)



### Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal With Combat "V"

**Sgt Gabriel J. Anderson**,  
CLR-15, 1st MLG

**Sgt Travis E. Barnes**, 2/5, 1stMarDiv

**HM3 Ryan M. Barry**, 1/1, 1stMarDiv

**Sgt Joshua S. Benjamin**, 1/7, 1stMarDiv

**Cpl Kevin D. Bennett**, 1stMarDiv (Fwd)

**Sgt Anthony E. Berg Jr.**, 1st Recon Bn,  
1stMarDiv

**Cpl Matthew M. Bowser**, 1st CEB,  
1stMarDiv

**Sgt Miguel Bustos**, 2/5, 1stMarDiv

**LCpl Jonathan R. Butt**, 1/7, 1stMarDiv

**Sgt Daniel P. Cheatham Jr.**, 1/1,  
1stMarDiv

**Cpl Jeffrey A. Conus**, 1/8, 2dMarDiv

**1stLt Garrett S. Cross**, 2/5, 1stMarDiv

**HM3 Derrick A. Deboard**, 1/7, 1stMarDiv

**1stLt Daniel J. Dempsey**, 3d CEB,  
1stMarDiv

**Cpl Luke A. Diamond**, 1/7, 1stMarDiv

**SSgt Milton Donatus**, 2/5, 1stMarDiv

**HN Michael D. Donohue**, 1/7, 1stMarDiv

**Sgt Jacob D. Edmondson**, 1st Recon  
Bn, 1stMarDiv

**SSgt Angel R. Esquivel**, 1stMarDiv (Fwd)

**Cpl Austin J. Feller**, 1/7, 1stMarDiv

**LCpl Jason I. Ferreira**, 1/8, 2dMarDiv  
**Cpl Mitchell Florea**, Marine Aviation  
Logistics Squadron 16 (Fwd), Marine  
Aircraft Group 16, Third Marine Aircraft  
Wing (Fwd)

**Cpl Thomas H. Fowlkes**, 2/5, 1stMarDiv

**Sgt Judd D. Fritz**, 1stMarDiv (Fwd)

**Sgt Anthony C. Garbo**, 1/7, 1stMarDiv

**Sgt Joaquin M. Garcia II**, 1st CEB,  
1stMarDiv

**Cpl Derek L. Goodridge**, 3/5,  
1stMarDiv

**HN Cody A. Harlow**, 1/7, 1stMarDiv

**Sgt Gregory J. Harris**, 1st Recon Bn,  
1stMarDiv

**Sgt Gary R. Hohn II**, 1st MSOB,  
MARSOC

**Sgt Ian S. Hunt**, 1stMarDiv (Fwd)

**Sgt Jonathan R. Ingersoll**, 1st Recon  
Bn, 1stMarDiv

**HM2 Rodney Isaacs**, 1st MSOB,  
MARSOC

**Sgt Alexander R. Jones**, 1st MSOB,  
MARSOC

**Sgt Matthew A. Kaufman**, 1/7,  
1stMarDiv

**Capt Colin J. Kiernan**, 1st Recon Bn,  
1stMarDiv

**Sgt Michael D. Kimmerling**, 1/8,  
2dMarDiv

**PFC Cody W. Klaver**, 1/1, 1stMarDiv

**LCpl Timothy J. LaFountain**, 2/5,  
1stMarDiv

**1stLt Jeffrey J. Lenar Jr.**, 1/8,  
2dMarDiv

**Cpl Brian M. Ligon**, 1stMarDiv (Fwd)

**Sgt Michael W. Lockhart Jr.**, 1/1,  
1stMarDiv

**Sgt Xavi Mata**, 1st MSOB, MARSOC

**1stLt Deven K. Ravel**, 1/7, 1stMarDiv

**Sgt Anthony R. Redhouse**, 1st CEB,  
1stMarDiv

**Sgt Shaun M. Reuter**, CLR-15, 1st MLG

**Cpl Travis J. Smith**, 1st CEB, 1stMarDiv

**HM2 Clay W. Sullivan**, 1/8, 2dMarDiv

**LCpl Jarrod L. Tatom**, 2/5, 1stMarDiv

**Cpl Brandon J. Thennisch**, 1stMarDiv  
(Fwd)

**HN Joshua G. Weber**, 2/5, 1stMarDiv

**1stLt Brian T. Wlcek**, 1/7, 1stMarDiv





# In Memoriam

Edited by R. R. Keene

"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, units served in, dates of service and, if possible, a local or national obituary. Allow at least four months for the notice to appear.

## Operation Enduring Freedom: Marine Casualties, Nov. 1-30, 2012

**The following were listed as having died while supporting combat operations:**

**Lance Corporal Dale W. Means**, 23, of Jordan, Minn., with Combat Logistics Battalion 2, Combat Logistics Regiment 2, Second Marine Logistics Group, II Marine

Expeditionary Force, Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., Nov. 18, in Helmand province, Afghanistan.

**Corporal Christopher M. Monahan Jr.**, 25, of Island Heights, N.J., with CLB-2, CLR-2, 2d MLG, II MEF, MCB Camp Lejeune, Nov. 26, in Helmand province.

### "DEP" Miller

Major General Donald E. P. "DEP" Miller, highly decorated Marine aviator, wounded veteran of the Vietnam War, director of the Marine Corps Division of Information, and commanding officer and commanding general of a Marine squadron, Marine aircraft group and aircraft wing, died Nov. 14, 2012, in San Antonio. He was 77.

Born in Morrill, Kan., he was commissioned and designated a naval aviator in 1958. In 1962, he deployed to Naval Air Station Atsugi, Japan, with Marine Fighter Squadron 451. In 1963, he was assigned to Marine Aircraft Group 36 and transitioned to helicopters, flying the CH-57C Mojave and, later that year, deployed with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 462 to Chu Lai, Republic of Vietnam and to Sub Unit One, MAG-16, Marine Corps Air Station Marble Mountain, Republic of Vietnam.

In September 1966, he reported to Headquarters, U. S. Marine Corps, Washington, D.C., and served as the Assistant Maintenance Accounting Officer in Aviation Plans and Programs, Deputy Chief of Staff for Aviation. He returned to Vietnam in December 1968 and served as the Aircraft Maintenance Officer of Marine Observation Squadron 2, MAG-16.

In 1974, he was assigned as the Helicopter/OV-10 Bronco projects officer, Naval Weapons Center, China Lake, Calif. While there, he earned his master's degree in public administration and, in 1977, attended the Industrial College of the Armed Forces.

Upon reporting to the First Marine Aircraft Wing in 1978, he served as the executive officer of MAG-36. He then became the commanding officer of Marine Light Helicopter Squadron 367. Returning to HQMC in 1979, he was assigned to the Plans and Policies Department. Prior to departing headquarters, Col Miller was the Branch Head of the Western Regional Branch, Plans, Policies, and Operations Department. On April 30, 1982, he assumed command of MAG-39.

In 1983, he was chief of staff of the 3d MAW at MCAS El Toro, Calif. Promoted to brigadier general in 1984, he was assigned duty as the Commander, Marine Corps Air Bases, Western Area/Commanding General, MCAS El Toro. Back at HQMC again, he was the director of public affairs. As a major general in 1987, he became CG, 3d MAW/Deputy Commander, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Fleet Marine Forces, Pacific, MCAS El Toro.

On Aug. 28, 1989, MajGen Miller returned to HQMC for the fifth time to serve as the Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff, Plans, Policies, and Operations Department, and the Director, Plans Division within that department at HQMC. He retired May 1, 1991.

MajGen Miller's personal decorations include the Silver Star, the Legion of Merit with combat "V," two Distinguished Flying Crosses, the Purple Heart, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Air Medal with three stars and numeral 46 and the Combat Action Ribbon.

### Jack Brooks

Colonel Jack Brooks, former Texas congressman who enlisted in the Corps, fought in World War II served in North China, and considered a self-important, but crusading supporter of civil rights and eliminating government waste for more than 42 years, died Dec. 4, 2012, in Beaumont, Texas. He was 89.

He enlisted as a private and fought at Guadalcanal, Guam and Okinawa. He was discharged as a first lieutenant and eventually became a colonel in the Marine Corps Reserve, serving until 1972.

He is in one of the most famous news photographs of the 20th century, that of Lyndon B. Johnson being sworn in as President on Air Force One after President John F. Kennedy was assassinated on Nov. 22, 1963. Brooks, who had been in the presidential motorcade, was standing behind Jacqueline Kennedy in the photo.

According to *The New York Times*, some wondered why Brooks did not rise to top leadership, "but nobody questioned his ability to look after his district. In the crime bill that helped spell his defeat, Mr. Brooks tried to include \$10 million for construction of a criminal justice center at Lamar University.

"'If it's pork,' he said in an interview, 'it'll be tasty.'"

### Joe Lewis

Joseph H. Lewis, a Vietnam veteran who went on to become an actor and U.S. champion in karate and kickboxing,

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died Aug. 31, 2012, of a brain tumor at Coatesville Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Pa. He was 68.

He grew up on a farm in Wilmington, N.C., and enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1962. He served at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., and in Okinawa, Japan, where he discovered his passion for karate and earned his first black belt in three months. In 1965, he was deployed to Vietnam as a member of the Ninth Marine Amphibious Brigade and taught hand-to-hand combat to a reconnaissance unit.

After his discharge, he began competing professionally.

He was a 10th-degree black belt and U.S. karate champion from 1966 to 1969. In 1971, he retired as the undefeated U.S. heavyweight kickboxing champion. He was featured in both *Ring*, a boxing magazine, and *Sports Illustrated*.

In 1975, Mr. Lewis was inducted into the *Black Belt* magazine Hall of Fame.

According to Sally A. Downey, a *Philadelphia Inquirer* staff writer, he studied with martial artist Bruce Lee and assisted Lee with fight choreography for his movies.

Downey wrote that Lewis "starred in several action-adventure movies: 'Jaguar Lives,' 'Force Five,' 'Death Cage,' and 'Mr. X.' He was featured in other films

and appeared in television series and as a guest on talk shows."

In later years, he gave seminars across the country on his Joe Lewis Fighting Systems and became known as the Muhammad Ali of the sport.

His students said he was "incredible to watch." One, David Shaw, told Downey: "His fists were like cinder blocks—literally flattened out from all of the punching—and his speed just amazing. He was notorious for his side kick and told us he perfected it early in his career by throwing hundreds every day."

**Jimmy C. "Dick" Alphin**, 72, in Plano, Texas. He started in the jewelry business at the age of 10. He served in the Corps, which enabled him to attend Southern Methodist University on the GI Bill. He eventually became one of the most skilled diamond setters in the region and opened his own jewelry manufacturing business in the 1960s. He was an avid hunter, and friends and family said that he hadn't purchased meat from a store since the early 1980s.

**Donald C. Cameron**, 25, of Longview, Texas. He was a 2008 high school graduate who enlisted in the Corps and served four years, including two tours in Iraq. He was attending the University of Texas

in Austin, and on the magna cum laude dean's list, when he was killed in a motorcycle accident.

**Maj Elvin R. "Ralph" Coon Jr.**, 87, in Oxford, N.C. He served from 1943 to 1963 and was a veteran of the Korean War. He previously earned a law degree from George Washington University and worked as a legal officer in the Judge Advocate General section at the Pentagon and at MCB Quantico, Va. After retiring from the Corps, he practiced law in Virginia from 1963 to 2007.

**Capt Ray K. McNamara**, 82, of Dallas. He was a tank commander during the Korean War. He earned his master's degree in psychology at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. He then earned his doctorate in philosophy at the University of Oklahoma and began his career as a child psychologist at the Dallas Child's Guidance Clinic. He opened a private practice where he practiced for 44 years.

Considered a gifted psychologist, he was well known in the medical community. He helped countless young children, adults and seniors with his medical expertise, dedication and caring nature. He was an adjunct faculty member of the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School.





# Leatherneck Line

Edited by Clare A. Guerrero

## Marine Combat Photographer Wins Art in Embassies “Best in Show”

“It’s about being an ambassador for the United States,” said Sergeant Alvin Williams Jr., Photo Chief, Motion Media Section, Combat Camera, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps. He was reacting to his selection as one of 12 photojournalists, and the only Marine, with an image awarded “Best in Show,” for the U.S. Department of State’s Art in Embassies (AIE) new photography exhibition, “Serving Abroad ... Through Their Eyes.” Williams was honored at an awards ceremony at the Pentagon, Nov. 30, 2012.

“[Marines] have gotten a lot of negative publicity this year and in past years. I just wanted to put something out there [that shows] that Marines are out there helping,” said Williams.

The photograph reflecting then-Lance Corporal Williams’ award-winning efforts is the face of a Marine sergeant who served with Battalion Landing Team 2d Bn, Fifth Marine Regiment, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit. The MEU was participating in annual bilateral exercises when a massive mudslide occurred in the Province of Southern Leyte, Republic of the Philippines, Feb. 17, 2006.

In response to the devastating event, the BLT 2/5 leathernecks spread out over the disaster site to search for survivors and provide first aid. Williams noted the exhaustion of the Marines as they worked feverishly to unload their gear from Navy amphibious ships and helicopters, and then carry it all to the top of a hill, before beginning the arduous and emotionally and physically exhausting task of digging for survivors.

“We were getting ready to get a briefing and then it started raining. I had my camera out ... and started shooting.”

It was at that point, with the rain pelting down, that Williams captured a physically and emotionally spent Sgt Chandler Arriano.

“For me, the photo [of Arriano] portrays perseverance,” said Williams. “That was the moment when you gather yourself and you just mentally prepare; you hunker

down because you know there is work to be done. We had just [gotten] there and were already tired and wet from the high humidity, and [Arriano] had a lot of PFCs, corporals and lance corporals who needed his leadership.”

When AIE announced the new exhibition commemorating its 50th anniversary in 2012, Civil Service, Foreign Service



**Sgt Chandler Arriano with BLT 2/5, 31st MEU, takes a break during a rainstorm as he and his team of Marines dig in search of survivors after a devastating mudslide covered the province of Southern Leyte, Republic of the Philippines, Feb. 17, 2006.**

and military personnel were invited to submit photographs that told their stories of serving abroad.

Williams submitted two photographs from his 2006 tour with the 31st MEU. Of the 3,200 images that were submitted, both of Williams’ images were named among the 161 finalists.

The photo of Arriano titled “Long Day” was selected as one of 12 designated “Best in Show.” These 12 photographs were selected by a pool of distinguished Americans and reviewed by former Secretaries

of State Madeleine Albright and Colin Powell; three former Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs: General Richard Myers, Gen Peter Pace and Admiral Mike Mullen; and David Gregory of NBC’s “Meet the Press.”

According to an AIE press release, the “Best in Show” winners “depict themes of friendship, places, faces, loss or triumph, providing a window on the complexity, diversity and courageous work performed by America’s heroes throughout the world.”

“Marines—we’re known for being the first in the fight, but we weren’t there to fight anybody, [we were] there to provide some aid,” said Williams. “Through my images [I wanted to show that] we’re not just warfighters ... we have wives and children [as well] ... and we found survivors and assisted children and brought in resources [such as] food and water, and after the search and rescue mission, we humped into villages and set up the survivors with food and [necessities]. We take care of the people who aid us ... and humanitarian exercises are one of the best ways, I believe, to make new friendships. It is an honor to be among the 12 [to receive the award] and to represent the Marine Corps.”

The winning images were displayed on the 7th Street video marquee at the Verizon Center in Washington, D.C., Nov. 28-30, 2012. The exhibition also was displayed during a private reception at the Smithsonian Institution’s American Art Museum in Washington and at the Pentagon and will be added to the permanent art collection at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Clare A. Guerrero  
*Leatherneck*

## Boy Scout Eagle Project Helps Correct History at GITMO

Temperatures were almost as high as the motivation level of U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, residents who recently began assisting local Boy Scout Forrest Welsh with the construction of a new monument commemorating the actions of Marine Medal of Honor winners Sergeant John Henry Quick and Private



SFC CLASS JEROME GRANT

**Forrest Welsh, a Boy Scout with Troop 435, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, listens as Navy CAPT J. R. Nettleton, the U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay commander, congratulates him on the completion of his Eagle Scout project. Welsh led the construction of a new monument commemorating the Battle of Cuzco Well and the heroic actions of Marine Medal of Honor winners Sgt John Henry Quick and Pvt John Fitzgerald.**

John Fitzgerald during the June 14, 1898, Battle for Cuzco Well.

The monument construction was the Eagle Scout project for Welsh, son of Navy Captain Thomas Welsh, the Staff Judge Advocate, Joint Task Force Guantanamo.

The idea for the new monument was born when the younger Welsh, looking for an Eagle Scout project, learned that an existing monument to mark the historic battle had not only been constructed on the wrong ridgeline but also had the wrong date.

“The proper placement of the monument is very important,” explained Welsh. “Two Marines demonstrated exceptional courage and answered the call of duty. It is only right that we honor Sergeant Quick and Private Fitzgerald by building a monument on the correct hill—one on which they were willing to die if necessary in order to save the lives of their fellow Marines.”

The new obelisk monument, made from rebar-reinforced poured concrete, stands 8 feet tall from base to tip and is a fitting tribute to Marines whose actions arguably helped prevent the disbanding of the Marine Corps.

Just as the taking of Cuzco Well was no easy task, neither was the construction of the monument. More than 25 volunteers, including Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, Marines and personnel from all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces, have participated in the completion of the project.

“On the side of that huge hill, there are no paths,” explained Marine Sergeant Rose Coleman, Joint Task Force Guantanamo medical linguist noncommissioned officer

in charge. “Everyone had to carry all the cement by hand in 5-gallon buckets, because the cement truck couldn’t climb the road, and the Bobcat with a bucket could only make it up the road to the entry point where we started the climb.”

Welsh handled all the coordination for the project as part of his Eagle project, including soliciting the donation of materials necessary from local contractors, Burns and Roe and Lakeshore TolTest Corp.

“This project had a twofold impact,” explained Marine Sergeant Major Scott

Smith, Joint Task Force Guantanamo senior enlisted leader. “First, it was an opportunity to help out a family member of the JTF team in accomplishing his mission of getting his Eagle Scout. Second, as a Marine, being able to experience the hallowed ground of our beloved Marine Corps history ... it would be like a soldier being able to help erect a monument at Normandy.”

SFC Jerome Grant, USA  
PAO, Joint Task Force Guantanamo Bay, Cuba



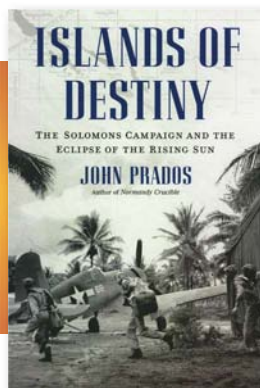
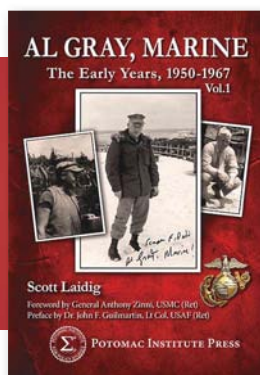
CAREY SNIPES

**NMCRS ALBANY REOPENS—** Col Don Davis, Commanding Officer, Marine Corps Logistics Base Albany, Ga., along with Heather Challet and Nikki Onuska, both volunteer caseworkers for the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society, Albany, cut a large, red ribbon to symbolize the reopening of the NMCRS Emergency Services Office and Family Services Building on Nov. 28, 2012. A nonprofit, charitable organization, NMCRS ([www.nmcrs.org](http://www.nmcrs.org)) provides financial assistance and education to active-duty and retired members of the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps, their eligible family members and survivors, when in need.



# Books Reviewed

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**AL GRAY, MARINE—The Early Years, 1950-1967, Volume One.** By Scott Laidig. Published by Potomac Institute Press. 389 pages. Stock #0985248300. \$44.96 MCA Members. \$49.95 Regular Price.

Reading “Al Gray, Marine—The Early Years, 1950-1967, stirs the heart and mind, leading one to imagine additional volumes with such subtitles as “Nobility While Soldiering” and “Inspiring Creative Leadership.”

In his lucid and masterful biography, author Scott Laidig, a decorated Marine combat veteran in Vietnam, clearly reinforces what every knowledgeable Marine already knows: General Alfred M. Gray Jr. is the greatest post-Vietnam Commandant the Corps has known, a general who has earned the right to march at the fore. Like others in American military history such as Eisenhower, Bradley, Patton, Lejeune, Vandegrift, Puller and Wilson, to name just a few, Gen Gray subordinated his own amazing contributions and achievements to the risk of battle, victory and his relationships with the officers and the men who served under him.

Combining an astonishing number of interviews with a formidable amount of facts collected from private sources, command chronologies, and public as well as military archives, to say nothing of the endless vignettes from close friends, superiors and subordinates, mentors and Gen Gray's family members, Laidig writes about the years between June 1950 (Korea) and December 1967 (“Charlie” Ridge, Da

Nang). The book portrays the fledgling growth and development of a creative military mind that one day would envision a new and advanced Marine Corps—one that would put the Corps back in the limelight after the near disastrous post-Vietnam era.

Said Gen Anthony C. Zinni, USMC (Ret), former Commander, U.S. Central Command, of Gen Gray: “His greatest contribution would be a strategy for how our service would best meet our mission to win our country's battles. General Gray saw a much more expansive role for us—a role that would not encroach on the roles of other services but complement them because of flexibility, readiness, adaptability, deployment, interoperability, and the expeditionary nature of our organization.”

In short, author Laidig sets the stage in this initial 400-page text for the leader who, years later, will become the 29th Marine Corps Commandant: combat service in Korea; Communications Officer School, Quantico, Va.; Staff, Washington, D.C.; among the first boots on the ground in Vietnam and returning to serve multiple tours in critical positions to include serving in 12th Marines, conducting operations from Tiger Tooth Mountain, commanding the Gio Linh Outpost and learning of the coming North Vietnamese Army's 1968 Tet offensive.

From such valuable combat and administrative experiences would slowly evolve a belief that the Corps should be a reservoir of combat capability that can shape,

organize and meet aggression in the most effective and efficient manner possible. For the maturing general-to-be, rigid Corps structures and dogmatic organizational designs would no longer be acceptable. Gen Gray would insist upon flexible and imaginative organization and inspired leadership. There would be brand new operational concepts.

“Al Gray, Marine—The Early Years, 1950-1967, Volume One” is a wise and winning introduction to a good man and soon-to-be great leader. The author's admiration for his subject is both apparent and deserving, as is the respect that readers will have for Scott Laidig. By providing us with Gen Gray's early higher echelon experiences, insights and understandings, coupled with the overall picture of the Vietnam War and America's role in it, the book is all the more captivating.

Importantly, proceeds from the book will be donated to the Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund.

And, Scott, when can we expect Volume Two? And, possibly, Volume Three, the general's private letters, military correspondence and unpublished writings?

Don DeNevi

*Editor's note: Don DeNevi, an author himself, is a frequent reviewer for Leatherneck magazine.*

**ISLANDS OF DESTINY: The Solomons Campaign and the Eclipse of the Rising Sun.** By John Prados. Published by New American Library. 388 pages. Stock #0451238044. \$24.26 MCA Members. \$26.95 Regular Price.

Just over 70 years ago, America launched the first major ground offensive of World War II in the Pacific when the First Marine Division landed on Guadalcanal. The 7 Aug. 1942 landing was initially unopposed. Many books have been written about Guadalcanal with most dealing primarily with the division's battle with Japanese ground forces. John Prados, however, weaves a much broader tapestry. He takes the reader on a journey throughout the

wide-ranging Solomon Islands, describing in great detail the naval and air battles between the United States and the highly skilled and unyielding Japanese.

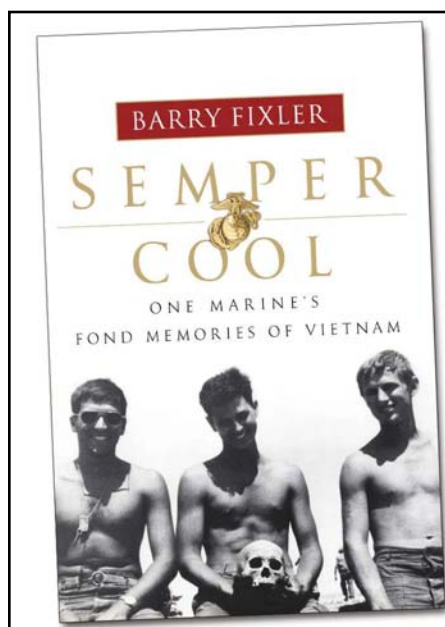
The author is a talented and proven military historian. His crisp, descriptive writing reflects extensive research. For this book, he obviously had access to vast American and Japanese archives, ship's logbooks and the results of interrogations of Japanese prisoners. Readers will realize that controlling the Solomon Islands and the surrounding sea and airspace was crucial to the defense of New Zealand and Australia.

The 1stMarDiv, then stationed at Quantico, Va., was chosen for this crucial mission. Major General Alexander A. "Arch" Vandegrift, the commanding general, had Marines pulled from posts and stations nationwide to fill out the ranks. Taking advantage of the initial absence of resistance, the division pushed forward, reaching a partially constructed airfield to discover earth-moving machinery, petroleum supplies and even a railway used to transport supplies to and from the airstrip. Marine engineers, later supplemented by Navy Seabees, had the vital airstrip, known as Henderson Field, named for Marine aviator Major Lofton R. Henderson, who was killed by attacking Japanese at Midway Island, ready for use in two weeks. On 20 Aug. 1942, the airfield became home to the Marines' "Cactus Air Force."

The Navy admiral commanding the landing force had informed the Marines that his ships would remain off Guadalcanal no longer than three days. He did pull his ships away, but not before the Japanese had sent a few to the bottom of Iron Bottom Sound. The leathernecks faced a multitude of challenges. MajGen Vandegrift's Marines had ammunition for one week, plus a two-week supply of food. Guadalcanal maps were not accurate, but key terrain features soon became apparent: Bloody Ridge, the Tenaru River and The Slot (New Georgia Sound) to name but a few. Guadalcanal was filled with swamps, thick jungle, snakes, crocodiles and swarms of mosquitos.

Over the next few weeks, the division suffered more nonbattle casualties than casualties inflicted by the enemy. Hundreds of Marines had malaria, dengue fever and jungle rot. The Marines inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy, but Japanese ships established an effective system—the Tokyo Express—landing hundreds of Japanese reinforcements each night.

The most critical factors during the battles for Guadalcanal were, first and foremost, the bravery and tenacity of the Marine division. The "Cactus Air Force"



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—Marc Leepson, *The VVA Veteran*

was a strong number two, as they attacked Japanese troops, ships and surrounding islands, preventing the enemy from pushing the Marines off Guadalcanal. The third was intelligence. The author stressed the importance of Naval Intelligence.

Human intelligence started with the brave Australian coastwatchers. They had been stationed on Guadalcanal and other islands for many months with powerful radios which enabled them to relay vital and timely data, especially Japanese ship and troop movements. The Navy's combat intelligence unit at Pearl Harbor was augmented by skilled code breakers who became very proficient at intercepting Japanese transmissions, especially operational orders.

The Battle for Guadalcanal was no "walk in the sun," but as the ebb and flow of the battle continued, the Marines were victorious. The "Cactus Air Force" received additional aircraft, and the First Marine Division, bone-weary and malaria ridden after four months, received reinforcements from the Second Marine Division. The U.S. Army's 23rd Infantry Division, known as the "Americal Division," went ashore as did the 25th Infantry Division a bit later. MajGen Vandegrift turned his command over to U.S. Army MG Alexander Patch and the 1stMarDiv, depleted but victorious, headed for Australia.

As the Battle for the Solomon Islands wound down, Emperor Hirohito expressed his strong displeasure at losing Guadalcanal. The author points out that while the Navy's Battle of the Coral Sea in May and the Battle of Midway in June were key in stopping the Japanese advance, the Battle of Guadalcanal was really the pivotal point in the Pacific. For the Japanese, the dream of shoving the 1stMarDiv off

Guadalcanal, and subsequently controlling the Solomons, slowly turned into a costly nightmare.

LtCol James B. Wilkinson, USMC (Ret)

*Editor's note: LtCol Wilkinson enlisted in 1948 and was commissioned in 1951 at the age of 20. He has served as a rifle company commander in both the 1st and 3d Marine divisions. As an advisor to the Korean Marine Corps, he accompanied the Korean Blue Dragon Brigade to Vietnam in 1965. LtCol Wilkinson commanded 1st Bn, 26th Marines, 3dMarDiv for nine months, including during the battle for Khe Sanh in 1968. He completed his tour in Vietnam as the executive officer of 4th Marines. Upon retirement, he worked for Merrill Lynch for 26 years, primarily as a branch office manager.*



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## SOUND OFF

[continued from page 8]

fore you. However, there are a few 90-year-old Marines who really know the Old Corps. They all enlisted before World War II. I became a Marine in 1940.

I enlisted in Allentown, Pa., and was sent to the Philadelphia Navy Yard for a physical. After a short delay, I boarded a train for Parris Island, S.C., with a short stop in Washington, D.C., to board more recruits. On arrival at Yemassee, S.C., we boarded trucks for P.I. and were sent to the second floor of a brick barracks in front of the "Iron Mike" statue. We waited several days until we had enough "boots" to form a platoon.

While we waited, we were given another physical, had our heads shaved and were issued our buckets, each with personal hygiene items and a scrub brush. We were informed it would be deducted from our pay of \$21 a month. The post exchange was not available to us, but was across the street and consisted of an old wooden building with a small store on the left, soda fountain on the right and rocking chairs on the front porch.

When they issued us basic uniforms, they had a very scientific way to determine

our shoe sizes. You stood on two footprints, picked up some heavy weights and stood with both hands at your sides. How far your feet spread determined your shoe size.

With enough recruits on hand, we marched with our buckets to our camp area. Boot camp consisted of a small area in the right corner of the parade ground. The total area was three double rows of two-man tents; each row was a platoon. There were two-story barracks and a small wood-framed mess deck.

After weeks of basic training, we marched from the recruit area to the rifle range where there was only one new brick barracks with a mess hall. All of the recruits were in tents. We started by shooting the .22-caliber rifle at close range paper targets and learned proper positions for prone, kneeling and standing fire. We fired the .45-cal. pistol for qualification, threw dummy hand grenades, pulled butts on the range and shot for qualification.

We went back to recruit tents for final graduation and parade day. The parade ground was solid sand and sand fleas. The viewing stand was one section of old wooden bleachers. After passing in review, we went back to gather personal items and walk up the street to join the 4th Defense Battalion. Once again we

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were back [main side] in tents as the 4th Defense Battalion was split and preparing to move to the West Coast. Those left behind formed the 5th Defense Battalion that went to Iceland and the South Pacific.

Jim Flowers  
USMC, 1940-45  
Southport, N.C.

• It was during his time at boot camp that Private Flowers and the base were hit by a hurricane. Personal loss was heavy. While no one was killed, clothes, blankets, rifles and all other equipment were destroyed. Those who had kept money in their footlockers lost everything. The base dug itself out according to Flowers in an interview with a reporter at the time: "Tradesmen among the ranks were canvassed to help make repairs, so I volunteered as a carpenter. They put me in charge of a force of inexperienced fellows to shingle roofs and demolish buildings."

Thank you, sir, for your service in the "Old Corps" and in World War II.—Sound Off Ed.

## Reader Assistance

"Reader Assistance" entries ("Mail Call," "Wanted," "Sales, Trades and Giveaways" and "Reunions") are free and printed on a space-available basis.



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#### Mail Call:

• Former Sgt George R. Searce, 1794 W. State Hwy. 76, Anderson, MO 64831, (417) 845-6675, to hear from **cooks from H&S Co, 2d Bn, 5th Marines, 1stMarDiv** or anyone else he served with in Korea, 1951-52, and from anyone in **H&S Co, 2d Bn, 9th Marines, 3dMarDiv, MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., 1952-53**, or from anyone who knew him at the **Sangley Point Naval Base, Philippines**, especially **Bill B. CHAPMAN**, or at the **Brooklyn Naval Base, Brooklyn, N.Y., 1955-56**, especially **Wayne YOUNG**.

• Marine veteran Mike Rauner, (260) 547-4226, [mike4grand@yahoo.com](mailto:mike4grand@yahoo.com), to hear from **seagoing Marines** to inform them of the Seagoing Marine Association, [www.seagoingmarines.com](http://www.seagoingmarines.com).

• CWO-4 Michael Kozlowski, USMC (Ret), 3136 Harbour Dr., Palmyra, NJ 08065, [kozlowski2007@comcast.net](mailto:kozlowski2007@comcast.net), to hear from members of **Plt 168, Parris Island, 1962**.

• Former PFC Scott Parrot, 860 St. James Ln., Vero Beach, FL 32967, (772) 794-3260, to hear from the **MCRD Parris Island graduates, 1942; Wake Island Avengers; and members of H&S Co, 25th Marines, 4thMarDiv**, who were sworn in on the State House steps in Boston, shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Dec. 7, 1941.

• Capt William O. "Bill" Meyer Jr., USMC (Ret), 34 Road 3665, Aztec, NM 87410, [doubleb@sisna.com](mailto:doubleb@sisna.com), to hear from members of **Plt 32, Parris Island, 1952. MSgt A. A. HICKMAN, Sgt R. W. MORROW and Cpl R. E. BREWER** were the drill instructors.

• Marine veteran Ronald Bupp, 4814 Clair-Mar Dr., Dover, PA 17315, (717) 292-6389, [rbupp@juno.com](mailto:rbupp@juno.com), to hear from sailors and Marines who served in **USS Okinawa (LPH-3)** during the **spring offensive**, from **April-July 1972**, on **Yankee Station, RVN**.

#### Wanted:

• Marine veteran Brian Madson, (480) 259-0084, [brianj.madson1@gmail.com](mailto:brianj.madson1@gmail.com), wants a **recruit graduation book and photo for Plt 3054, San Diego, 1982. SSgt RICHMOND** was the senior drill instructor, and **SSgt McBRIDE and Sgt GILL** were the drill instructors.

• Marine veteran William "Bill" Woodworth, (412) 673-3202, [woodywoodworth](mailto:woodywoodworth)

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@comcast.net, wants a **recruit graduation book for Plt 1058, Parris Island, 1966.**

• Marine veteran Daniel Mele, 77 Amsterdam Rd., Smithtown, NY 11787, (631) 265-1947, wants a **recruit graduation book for Plt 326, Parris Island, 1951.** SSgt COLSTON, SSgt LEWIS and Sgt KENDRICK were the drill instructors.

• Former Cpl Carl R. Withey, 121 North St., Elbridge, NY 13060, (315) 689-3653, (315) 657-0972, crwithe@twcnny.rr.com, wants a **recruit graduation book for Plt 193, Parris Island, 1966.**

• SSgt Thaddeus McCollum, USMC (Ret), 575 Cameo Dr., Ormond Beach, FL 32174, (386) 673-3260, mccollumj@cfl.rr.com, wants a **recruit graduation book for Plt 464, Parris Island, 1944.**

#### Sales, Trades and Giveaways:

• Former Sgt George A. Schmitt, (850) 478-0880, big747@att.net, has a **7th edition copy of "The Marine's Handbook"** and a **1944 copy of "Tarawa: The Toughest Battle in Marine Corps History"** by SSgt Dick Hannah for sale. Both books are in good condition.

#### Reunions:

• 3dMarDiv Assn., Aug. 14-18, Alexandria, Va. Contact GySgt Don H. Gee,

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USMC (Ret), P.O. Box 254, Chalfont, PA 18914, (215) 822-9094, gygee@aol.com, www.caltrap.com.

• **8th & I Reunion Assn.**, May 16-19, Arlington, Va. Contact Maj John Marley, USMC (Ret), (703) 473-9818, jml1967a15@verizon.net, www.8thandi.com.

• **11th Marines OIF Reunion**, April 5-7, MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif. Contact "Bigfoot" Brown, cannoncookers@yahoo.com, or visit www.facebook.com/#!/11thMarineRegiment.

• **11th Engineer Bn (RVN, 1966-69) and Vietnam Veterans of America**, Aug. 13-17, Jacksonville, Fla. Contact Gene Spanos, (847) 770-9049, genethemarine@gmail.com.

• **2/4 (All eras)**, June 26-29, Philadelphia. Contact Bill Weise, (703) 866-7657, or Jay Brown, (856) 728-3196, 24reunion2013chairman@gmail.com.

• **H/2/7 (RVN)**, June 20-23, San Antonio. Contact Rudy Ramon, (210) 861-9950, h272013@att.net.

• **I/3/7**, April 24-27, Myrtle Beach, S.C. Contact Dennis Deibert, 6007 Catherine St., Harrisburg, PA 17112, (717) 652-1695.

• **K/3/7 (RVN)**, Sept. 18-23, Jacksonville, Fla. Contact William Rolke, (262) 780-0993, k37usmc@att.net, or Don Tackett, (678) 725-0329, tdontack@netscape.net.

• **U.S. Navy Site One Holy Loch, Scotland Assn.**, Aug. 27-Sept. 4, Dunoon, Glasgow and Edinburgh, Scotland. Contact Roland Kitridge, (508) 877-2960, rk01701@yahoo.com, www.holyloch.org.

• **MSG Paris** is planning a reunion. Contact Roland C. Beisenstein, 53 Castle Rock Dr., Mill Valley, CA 94941, (415) 388-4941.

• **4th USMC/METOC/Weather Service**, June 2-6, Las Vegas. Contact Lee Halverson, (925) 837-7493, lhazmateer@aol.com, or Don Innis, (321) 724-6600, dinnis@cfl.rr.com.

• **Plt 296, Parris Island, 1965**, is planning a reunion for 2014. Contact Sgt Maj James Butler, USMC (Ret), (910) 340-7074, jbutler29@ec.rr.com.

• **Plts 316-319, Parris Island, 1964**, April 17, 2014, Parris Island, S.C. Contact Alexander J. Nevglowski Sr., (910) 325-9148, (910) 548-5227, gunr88@hotmail.com.

• **Plt 1089, Parris Island, 1986**, is planning a reunion. Contact Mark Smith, P.O. Box 828, Columbus, MS 39703, (662) 549-7712, msmith@cpi-group.com.

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

• **Plt 2085, Parris Island, 1966**, is

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For more information contact: GySgt. Don H. Gee, USMC (Ret); Third Marine Division Association, P. O. Box 254, Chalfont, PA 18914-0254; 215-822-9094; gygee@aol.com; [www.caltrap.com](http://www.caltrap.com).



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• **Plts 4020/4021, Parris Island, 2000**, July 12-14, Parris Island, S.C. Contact Elizabeth Rossi, (914) 315-1728, elizabethannrossi@gmail.com.

• **VMAT-102 A-4M Skyhawks (and related squadrons from MCAS Yuma,**

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2316, rpolanowski@stny.rr.com.

• **USS Houston (CA-30/CL-81)** Assn., Aug. 20-24, Chicago. Contact Donna Rogers, 3949 Little John Dr., York, PA 17408, (717) 792-9113, dlr7110@yahoo.com.

• **USS Portsmouth (CL-102)**, April 25-29, Herndon, Va. Contact Walt Hohner, 448 Hillside Ave., Piscataway, NJ 08854, (732) 463-1745, wphohner@aol.com.

• **USS Renville (APA-227)**, April 3-7, Portland, Ore. Contact Lynda Rumble, 187 Lakeshore Dr., Mooresville, NC 28117, (704) 906-7622, lyndahd01@aol.com, ussrenvilleapa227.com.

• **USS Tarawa (CV-40/LHA-1)**, April 25-28, Pensacola, Fla. Contact Ken Underdown, 31 Islet Rd., Levittown, PA 19057, (215) 547-0245, or Walter Tothoro, 106 N. Tranquil Trl., Crawfordsville, IN 47933, (765) 362-6937, walsue@acclplus.net.

• **USS Ticonderoga (CV/CVA/CVA-14/CG-47)**, May 16-20, Colorado Springs, Colo. Contact George Passantino, (720) 929-1844, georgepsr@aol.com.

• **East Coast Seabees**, Feb. 22-24, Hampton, Va. Contact Bruce MacDougall, (804) 921-4753, seabeemacd40@verizon.net.



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# Gyrene Gyngles

Edited by Clare A. Guerrero

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## SEAL Diplomacy

There is a triumphal arch where the bad guys wait,  
And is known throughout Baghdad as Assassin's Gate.  
It straddles the zones called the "Green" and the "Red";  
People who pass through it sometimes end up dead.

There is natural high ground on three sides,  
Honeycombed with alcoves where the enemy snipers hide.  
Rounds zip by you, they buzz like angry bees,  
Before you hear a bang, or can drop and take a knee.

There is a twisting chute of t-walls, an M1 tank,  
Personal security details, moving persons of rank,  
Long lines of Iraqis, searched on their way to jobs,  
Convoys of humvees, reporting in from FOBs.

The snipers set up after midnight, when it's inky dark.  
As the morning light rises, they pick out their marks.  
It is usually Iraqi, as the soldiers are behind the walls.  
From a day labor line is the one who takes the fall.

The large-caliber rounds make just an awful mess—  
Eyeballs roll out, big holes in gaping chests.  
Try as you like, you just can't fix them up;  
Their dying was fast, but, man, did it suck.

Then one day we decided that we had quite enough.  
It was time to call the varsity, time to get tough.  
The SEAL teams arrived, sort of like a sudden wind,  
Can't see where they are and don't know where they've been.

The teams are rather small, two or three at most;  
The shooter and his spotters might as well be ghosts.  
They don't shoot yet, maintain invisibility,  
They watch and they wait, a patient strategy.

Three days pass, the bad guys' harvest moon,  
People are still getting killed, but change is coming soon.  
Methodically and motionless, in desert boonie suit,  
The SEALs find their vantages, green light, it's time to shoot.

An MP, who is a longtime, good friend of mine,  
Was at the gate next morning, reports the weather fine.  
There were five shots in succession, .50-caliber size.  
So sorry, bad-guy snipers, it's time for you to die.

My MP buddy told me that he once saw a swan;  
It was in flight by a bus, bang, and it was gone.  
Yet on frozen wing, it described a graceful, final arc—  
That's what the snipers' limbs did,  
when the "fifty" found its mark.

Assassin's Gate, for weeks now, has been mostly sniper free,  
Thanks to what our soldiers call, SEAL Diplomacy.  
A politician quoted, "See, it's because we don't  
provoke them."  
You silly, sheltered ass, they stopped because we  
smoked them.

Paul Shannon

## Marine Air

We say you're "swinging with the wing,"  
You're skating, every man,  
For only grunts are real Marines—  
And then it hits the fan!

When we have wounded on the ground,  
Come choppers through the fire,  
To pull our bleeding brothers out,  
When things are worse than dire.

While all around, your close support,  
Breaks up their next attack,  
You come in fast and low and hot,  
To knock the bastards back.

Then we are grateful on the ground;  
The wing came through again.  
We thank our brothers in the air,  
Our flying riflemen!

Former SSgt Robert A. Hall



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# WHAT IF YOU'RE FAR FROM HOME AND NEED TRAVEL ASSISTANCE?



Photo by: Pfc Sean Dennison

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## World War II: the Pacific Theater, including the Original Iwo Jima Monument

Auction February 22  
New York

Preview  
February 16-22

Tom Lamb +1 212 644 9001  
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books.us@bonhams.com

Felix de Weldon's original Iwo Jima  
monument, formerly on display  
outside the Navy Department  
Building on Constitution  
Avenue, Washington, DC  
Estimate on request

Bonhams WWII auction consists of property detailing  
events from Pearl Harbor to the end of the war,  
featuring the original Iwo Jima 1945 monument.  
Other highlights include:

- flags and silverware from the USS Arizona
- a selection of over 20 battleship and submarine  
models
- an assemblage of over 60 lots devoted to submarine  
warfare in the Pacific
- captured swords, helmets and flags from Iwo Jima
- the mimeographed copy of Lewis' log of the Enola  
Gay flight made within seven days of his return
- the ticker tape announcing the end of the war.

