

FEBRUARY 2014

MAGAZINE OF THE MARINES

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## **Digital Edition** February 2014

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Thank you for your continuing support.

Semper Fidelis,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Walt Ford". The signature is written in a cursive style and has a long, thin horizontal line extending to the right.

Col Walt Ford, USMC (Ret)  
Editor



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**COVER:** PFC Cristina Fuentes Montenegro, Co D, Infantry Training Bn, SOI-East, is one of three female Marines who are the first women to graduate from Marine infantry training. Photo by CWO-2 Paul S. Mancuso. Copies of the cover may be obtained by sending \$2 (for mailing costs) to *Leatherneck Magazine*, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134-0775.

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# Sound Off

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 Anonymous letters will not be published.—Sound Off Ed.

## Letter of the Month

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

I want to thank the United States Marine Corps and many Marines for my grandson's funeral, which was above and beyond any I have attended in the past.

On Aug. 1, 2013, Corporal Kyle A. Boline, 23, of Robbinsdale, Minn., a Marine and my grandson, was killed in a car accident. Kyle was on terminal leave and was due to be discharged a couple of days later.

After boot camp in 2008, Kyle went to Camp Pendleton, Calif., and then to two schools before reporting to Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Ariz., in 2009 with his wife, Rachel. He was assigned to Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 13.

Kyle deployed to Afghanistan in 2012. While stationed at Camp Bastion, Kyle survived a Taliban attack where his commanding officer and a sergeant were killed and nine Harrier aircraft were damaged or destroyed.

The day after Kyle's death, his widow notified his outfit at Yuma. The next day, Kyle's mother and widow were visited by Gunnery Sergeant James Palmer, 4th Law Enforcement Battalion. "Gunny" Palmer said the Corps would take over all the details for a funeral.

A day or two later, GySgt Palmer went with the family to the mortuary to make funeral arrangements.

The Marine Corps arranged for Kyle's three best friends to fly from Yuma for the funeral: Corporals Frankie Collins and L. A. Watson and Sergeant J. M. Defer. The Corps also made a new set of dress blues for Kyle.

On Aug. 8, Kyle's funeral was held. After the service, everyone assembled outside the church. The flag was removed from the coffin, and flags were presented to members of Kyle's family. A Marine rifle squad fired the Corps' traditional salute, and "Taps" was played.

On Aug. 12, another ceremony was held at Fort Snelling National Cemetery in Minneapolis. Another rifle salute was followed by "Taps" and "The Marines' Hymn." GySgt Palmer attended and directed every ceremony.

On Aug. 15, a memorial service was held at MCAS Yuma. The Marine Corps flew Kyle's wife, mother, father, brother and sister to the memorial service. A number of my Marine Corps buddies attended the funeral, including retired Master Gunnery Sergeant Stanley Olivera and Major Harold Roth. All said they had never attended a Marine Corps funeral that could match Kyle's for its reverence and beauty.

Sincerest thanks to our U.S. Marine Corps and to GySgt Palmer.

SSgt Floyd E. Boline  
USMC, 1948-52

U.S. Magistrate Judge (Ret)  
Golden Valley, Minn.

## Those Fouled Anchors!

I was asked by a young Marine at the 238th Birthday Ball why a fouled anchor is part of the Marine Corps emblem. I did not have an answer for him. Do you or someone on your staff know the answer to his question? I would be grateful if you might be able to point me in the right direction, as I don't have a sergeant major anymore!

Col Steven Miller  
ARNG/USMC (Ret)  
Manitou Springs, Colo.

• *Tradition. The Royal Marines include the fouled anchor in their "badge" or emblem; we adopted it. The fouled anchor was part of the Lord High Admiral of the British Fleet badge and first worn by Royal Marines in 1747. The current U.S. Marine emblem, with the eagle, globe and anchor (never referred to as the "EGA"), dates from 1868. It was contributed to the Corps by Brigadier General Jacob Zeilin, seventh Commandant. Until 1840, Marines wore various devices mainly based upon the spread eagle or fouled anchor.*

*Why did the Royal Marines include a fouled anchor in their emblem?*

*"The Oxford Companion to Ships and the Sea," edited by I. C. B. Dear and Peter Kemp, 1976, has the following explanation for the use of the fouled anchor on the Royal Marines badge: The use of the foul, or fouled anchor, an abomination to seamen when it occurs in practice, as the seal of the highest office of maritime administration is purely on the grounds of its decorative effect, the rope cable around the shank of the anchor giving a pleasing finish to the stark design of an anchor on its own."*—Sound Off Ed.

## Guarding President and Mrs. JFK

I was in the Marine Corps from 1960 to 1966. In June of 1962, I had just graduated from the Marine Security Guard School in Arlington, Va. Out of a class of about 60 of us, 50 or so had already left for their embassy posts. There were 10 of us who were still waiting for visas or some other type of paperwork before we could leave. In June of 1962, President John F. Kennedy and Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy were on their way to Mexico, and the 10 of us Marines were sent down to augment the Marine Security Guard Detachment at the American Embassy.

We all wore civilian clothes and carried our concealed weapons under our jackets. Some of us (including me) guarded President Kennedy, and others guarded Mrs. Kennedy during their stay. When I got back to Arlington, my orders were in, and I went off to guard the American Embassy in Seoul, Korea, for 2½ years.

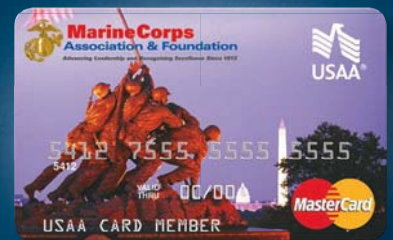
Several months later, I received a letter from the American Ambassador to Mexico, the Honorable Thomas C. Mann, enclosing a telegram from President Kennedy, saying: "I want to thank personally, on behalf of Mrs. Kennedy and myself, those members of your staff who helped to make this visit so fruitful."

I have these two letters framed and hanging on the wall in my den. This was the highlight of my Marine Corps career. Here I was, just 20 years old, with a top secret security clearance, guarding the



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President of the United States. Quite an honor for a high school graduate from Newark, N.J.

On Nov. 22, 1963, just a year or so later, I was asleep in bed in Seoul and, as usual, had fallen asleep listening to the Armed Forces Radio station. We all knew the radio disc jockey very well, and he would often dedicate certain songs to "the Marines down at the American Embassy."

I woke up and he was playing very somber music. A few minutes later, around 4 a.m. Seoul time, he said, "It has been confirmed that Kennedy is dead." I thought that he was talking about President Kennedy's father. A few minutes later he said, "It is now confirmed that President Kennedy has been shot and killed in Dallas." I was shocked. A few minutes later the phone rang, and it was our senior noncommissioned, Thomas Larkin McHugh, on the phone telling us to get all of the Marines down to the Embassy right away. All of the armed forces around the world went on alert.

For the next few days, we had set up an autograph book at the Embassy, and thousands of Korean people, including the Republic of South Korea President, Park Chung-hee, came to the American Embassy to sign the book. President Park then left for the United States to attend President Kennedy's funeral. It was very sad all around the world during that unfortunate time. I am very happy that I had gotten to meet President and Mrs. Kennedy for the short time I had.

Sgt Jule Spohn  
USMC, 1960-66  
Newark, N.J.

## Silent About Why Marines Went to Beirut

I found the article "Remembering Their Heritage" (October 2013) to be both informative and oddly silent about the reasons Marines (and others) went to Beirut in the first place. Indeed, the constant reiteration of the dual themes of militant Islam and Iran-as-beast made it read like something the Israeli embassy would have put out.

The reason Marines landed had nothing to do with Islamic militants or Iran. Israel had launched an exceedingly brutal invasion of Lebanon, and when it rejected then-President Ronald W. Reagan's appeal to withdraw, he sent the Marines to Beirut to keep Israeli forces out of the city. There followed several tense confrontations between Marines and Israeli troops, including one famous incident of a Marine lieutenant jumping on an Israeli tank and ordering the commander at gunpoint to withdraw. He did—doubtless assisted in that decision by U.S. carrier aircraft overhead.

A year later, after intense Israeli pres-

sure on the administration through Capitol Hill (sound familiar?), we and the Europeans had come to be seen by the locals as part of the problem and not part of the solution—essentially Israeli puppets. Hence the attacks. They were correct, and that is still the reason so many in the Muslim world hate our country. Being Israel's Hessians just isn't fun, you know?

Dr. Alan Sabrosky  
New Castle, Pa.

• *Dr. Alan Sabrosky, Ph.D., University of Michigan, is a 10-year USMC veteran. He served in Vietnam and is a graduate of the U.S. Army War College.*

*Retired Chief Warrant Officer 4 Randy Gaddo, who wrote the story, responds: "The article was not intended to be a commentary on political reasons the United States sent troops into Beirut; it was about 1st Battalion, Eighth Marine Regiment as the 'Beirut Battalion' and how they have used lessons learned there to carry out their current mission. Any background provided was intended to give the reader basic information about events leading to the bombing.*

*"Regardless as to why U.S. forces were sent there, it is irrefutable that Iranian-backed Hezbollah, led by extreme elements of the Islamic world, orchestrated the atrocious truck-bombing attack on men sleeping in their barracks. Israelis didn't carry out the attack, Islamists did."*—*Sound Off Ed.*

## 1846 Troubles With Mexico Largely Overlooked in History?

I enjoyed the two-part article on Lieutenant Archibald H. Gillespie, USMC in the November and December 2013 issues. Coincidentally, I am currently reading "A Wicked War" by Amy S. Greenberg.

A description of the book reads: "Often forgotten and overlooked, the U.S.-Mexican War featured false starts, atrocities, and daring back-channel negotiations as it divided the nation, paved the way for the Civil War a generation later, and launched the career of Abraham Lincoln. Amy S. Greenberg's skilled storytelling and rigorous scholarship bring this American war for empire to life with memorable characters, plotlines, and legacies.

"This definitive history of the 1846 conflict paints an intimate portrait of the major players and their world. It is a story of Indian fights, Manifest Destiny, secret military maneuvers, gunshot wounds, and political spin. Along the way it captures a young Lincoln mismatching his clothes, the lasting influence of the Founding Fathers, the birth of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and America's first national antiwar movement. A key chapter



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in the creation of the United States, it is the story of a burgeoning nation and an unforgettable conflict that has shaped American history.”

For those interested in expanding their knowledge of the origins of the Mexican War, I heartily recommend this book.

The articles by Colonel Dick Camp, USMC (Ret) added even more to my understanding of this war’s origin and the expansion of the United States.

Thanks for the excellent work your staff accomplishes in producing *Leatherneck* each month.

Sgt Tom Dunne  
USMC, 1967-71  
Hedgesville, W.Va.

### Blood Stripes for Everybody?

As we all know, the red stripe down the dress blue uniform stands for the blood shed at the Battle of Chapultepec. Can you please explain why it can only be worn by corporals and above? It seems to me that in Vietnam and Afghanistan there were more lower-grade enlisted men killed or wounded than higher-ranking men and officers. Can you please explain the reasoning?

LCpl Michael B. Mossman  
RVN, 1966-67  
Edwardsville, Ill.

• *We addressed the “blood stripe” in “Sound Off” in the November 2013 issue. However, I particularly liked the answer our publisher/executive editor, retired Colonel Walt Ford, gave to your e-mail and have reprinted it here: “Officers and noncommissioned officers have worn the scarlet stripes on their dress trousers since 1850. It is important to note that it is historically unsubstantiated that the scarlet stripe was as a result of the blood shed at the Battle of Chapultepec in the Mexican War.*

*“However, legend and tradition has it that the right to wear the stripe was conferred on this segment of the Corps—officers and noncommissioned officers—because of their leadership and sacrifice during the Mexican War—again, the scarlet stripe was added to the uniform right after the Mexican War, so you can see how the adding of the scarlet stripe to officer and noncommissioned officer dress trousers could be attributed to that war. But, in historical fact, the scarlet stripe is not tied to the Battle of Chapultepec.*

*“Certainly, leaders are always targeted first in battle, and I know that in our Corps’ battles, privates first class and lance corporals have very frequently assumed leadership roles, and those ranks do incur the most casualties—not just in Vietnam*

*and Afghanistan, but in all wars.*

*“Accepting that the scarlet stripe is not historically tied to the Mexican War, then the question is, Why do the Corps’ NCOs and above wear it on their dress trousers? The scarlet stripe, commonly referred to as ‘the blood stripe,’ serves as a mark of achievement, position in the overall force, and distinction. For the enlisted, it demonstrates they have entered the officer ranks, albeit as noncommissioned officers.”—Sound Off Ed.*

### The San Patricio Battalion, Irish in Mexico

I just got my December 2013 issue and was interested in Dr. Hudnall J. Lewis’ letter on the mass hanging at Chapultepec.

Here is some more background on this. Many of those hanged were members of an all-Irish unit in the Mexican army known as the *San Patricio Battalion*. As the doctor points out, they were all deserters, but were actually traitors as they fought against the American Army they were recently a part of. The story goes deeper though. These Irish immigrants, recently debarked from the “coffin” ships, were fleeing the famine in Ireland that caused the death of a million or more. Upon arrival in the United States without skills and education, their prospects were dim.

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The Army, being involved in a war, seemed like a good place for a meal and assimilation. Unfortunately, the United States was in the midst of a severe anti-Catholic, anti-immigration and anti-Irish period. These immigrant soldiers suffered horrific discrimination, prejudice and persecution in an army that was mainly white Anglo-Saxon Protestant.

Many Irish voiced their doubts of why they were fighting alongside people who hated them because of their religion and against people who shared their religion. Many deserted. Leaders among them convinced Mexican authorities to form an all-Irish artillery/infantry unit named after their patron, Saint Patrick. They flew green flags with harps and holy scenes and, knowing their fate upon capture, became known as a fierce fighting unit.

Today the Mexican government honors these men with a band playing Irish music and with military honors and a ceremony on the anniversary of the battle outside the old fortifications of Chapultepec.

Former Marine Cpl Daniel F. Hennessy  
Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret)  
Queens Village, N.Y.

• *I grew up hearing this story. Thirty were hanged on Sept. 13 in Mixcoac, within sight of the fortress of Chapultepec,*

*where the Americans and Mexicans were battling for control of the castle. Around 9:30 a.m., 1847, as the American flag was raised over the fortress, the prisoners were hanged. The flag being raised was meant to be the last thing they ever saw.*

*One of the men hanged that day, Francis O'Connor, had both his legs amputated the day before due to his battle wounds. When the surgeon told Colonel William Harney, the officer in charge, Harney said, "Bring the damned son of a bitch out! My order was to hang 30 and by God I'll do it!"*

*Oxcarts were pulled out from under the Irish and they hanged. One Mexican onlooker remarked: "Hands tied, feet tied, their voices were still free."*

*I was taught that Chapultepec Castle served as Mexico's military academy, and the cadets fought side by side with soldiers. Six of the youths died. One, Juan Escutia, clutching the Mexican flag to keep it from American hands, jumped to his death from the parapets. For their valor, the cadets have been honored in annual celebrations as Los Niños Héroes.*

*Ordered to retreat by their commandant, the cadets joined the fight. Four teenaged cadets (Francisco Marquez, the youngest, was 13) and their lieutenant squadron leader, Juan de la Bar-*

[continued on page 64]

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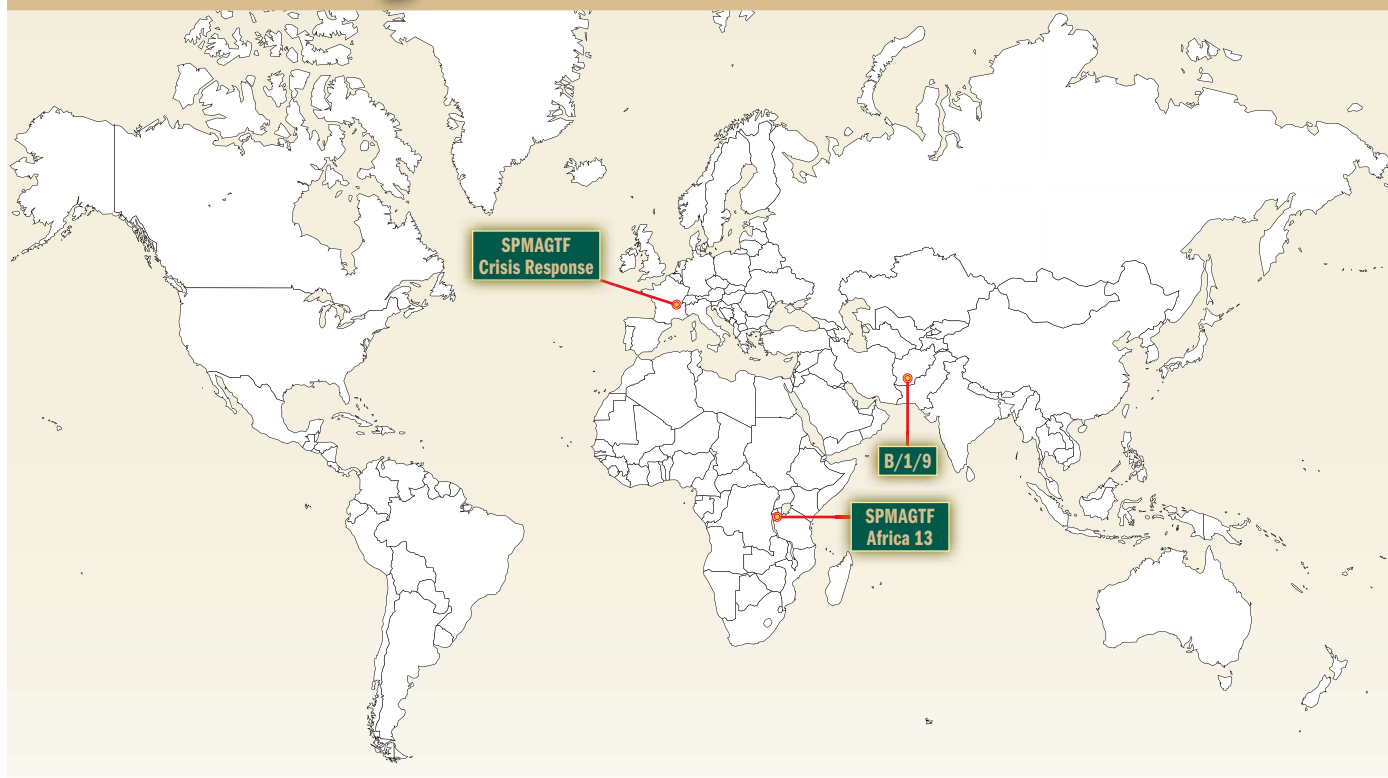
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## ■ NAD ALI DISTRICT HELMAND PROVINCE, AFGHANISTAN B/1/9 Marines Engage Enemy In Hours-Long Firefight

A threatening calm settled around 2d Platoon as the whirl of helicopter blades faded into the night. It was 5:15 a.m. on Dec. 4, 2013, with daylight nearing fast.

We clicked on our night vision goggles and stumbled our way through the darkness. Deliberate steps felt out the ground before us as the long file of Marines with “Bravo” Company, 1st Battalion, Ninth Marine Regiment pushed north to the nearby bazaar.

Most of the homes around the Bari Gul Bazaar were still quiet, the residents asleep in their beds. We knew that would change quickly. The noise of the helicopters that dropped us in the open field was anything but subtle. If there were fighters in the area, they would soon find us.

Through the dim, green sparkle of my goggles, I spotted what seemed to be the silhouette of Second Lieutenant James Salka leading his team forward. He was one of the first Marines I met before the mission.

I committed his stern face and piercing green eyes to memory in case I needed to find him during the mission. It did me little good in the darkness. In any event, the shadowy figure seemed to be in charge,

so I tottered forward to snap off a few camera shots.

It was 2dLt Salka. A communications antenna rose off the back of the Marine next to him and cut into the deep-blue glow of the morning sky. Salka gripped a radio handset and studied his map under a dim light. The photos didn’t turn out in the dark, so I fell in line with some Marines watching the perimeter.

I killed the power to my night vision and flipped the device atop my helmet. Most of the Marines in the security positions around Salka had already done the same. The lieutenant gave his platoon a few moments to set up supporting positions with snipers and machine-gunners who could cover us as we moved through the open field.

Daylight broke the horizon. We pushed.

Intelligence reports stated insurgents were using the bazaar as a front to move lethal aid in Nad Ali District, so we were conducting the interdiction operation alongside Afghan National Army commandos to try and disrupt the insurgents’ activity.

The area around the bazaar was a patchwork of dirt homes and barren, muddy fields. Cover was scarce. I could see a handful of shallow irrigation trenches, barely deep enough to cover a small child lying on his stomach. I wondered how

much manure littered the fields ... I could smell it.

It looked like a miserable place in which to get shot.

At daybreak, Bravo Co started to patrol from the landing zone to the bazaar. I fell in line with Sergeant Steven Pendleton’s assault squad as they shuffled into the damp field. Our boots slid across the mud with each step. A layer of heavy sludge began to weigh down my feet. That sick, sweet smell of manure lingered.

Lance Corporal Nathan Chandler, a machine-gunner, and three or four Marines under Salka moved in behind us. The chirp of crickets and crows from roosters that had echoed across the desert only minutes earlier went silent as we moved across the field.

The sound of machine guns ripped the silence. Several insurgents began firing to our left, so the Marines at the front of the patrol crouched low and ran to a nearby house. LCpl Nathan Gulbranson was running in front of me with an M32 grenade launcher sticking out of his pack. He decided the house was too far away, so he juked, sagged to his knees, and let his body fall prone into the dirt. I slid into one of the shallow irrigation ditches.

I could no longer see Salka or the other Marines. Chandler was still behind me; cheek nestled against his machine gun,



CPL PAUL PETERSON

**Above: LCpl Nathan Gulbranson, a 1/9 rifleman, crouches inside a building while searching for insurgents near the Bari Gul Bazaar, Dec. 4, 2013.**

**Below: As members of his squad dash across the open to an adjacent compound, LCpl Indy Johnson, 1/9, lays down suppressing fire against Taliban positions with his infantry automatic rifle.**



CPL PAUL PETERSON

shouting out for a smoke grenade. Rounds zipped and cracked over our heads.

Chandler and Gulbranson shouted back and forth: Run or stay put?

Their packs were heavy, gear cumbersome, and it was nearly 100 yards to the compound. There would be no moving without support.

A smoke grenade landed in the field

and spit a green cloud between us and the shooters. Bravo Co's snipers and machine-gunners fired back at the insurgents. Fire over the field slackened. We ran.

An hour earlier, we were smoking our last cigarettes in the dark just off the flight line. It was a pleasant enough December morning for Afghanistan. Now my lungs burned as my legs pumped against the soft

soil. My bootlace snapped and released tension around my right foot. I barely noticed.

Chandler and Gulbranson hunched under the weight of their packs. Gulbranson wrangled his grenade launcher and rifle with both hands in an awkward lurching motion. Chandler cradled his machine gun against his hip, left arm swinging his weight forward. His combat pack sagged with spare ammunition. It looked backbreaking.

Our ungraceful race ended against a dirt wall 20 yards from Pendleton's squad. They were still tracking down enemy shooters and preparing for an assault on another compound when we finally linked back up.

We walked through a small gate which rattled each time a Marine passed inside. I heard voices coming from the courtyard of the compound. Our interpreter was speaking with the homeowner to see what he knew about the insurgents.

The firefight had caused me to lose all sense of time. It felt like noon, but was only 6:30 or 7 in the morning. In any case, the sun was still rising. I hoped the glare from the east was hitting the insurgents, who were still firing.

By this time, helicopters in the air reported insurgents were massing around our position. The area was almost empty of women and children, who had either fled or hunkered down inside their homes.

Sgt Pendleton gathered his squad to



CPL PAUL PETERSON

**Above: LCpl Brian Schaeffer uses his rifle sight to scan for threats during a firefight with insurgents. Nearly 100 Marines and coalition forces engaged the Taliban in the firefight.**

**Below: Cpl Eric Stump, center, a 1/9 squad leader, reviews a map with his Marines prior to conducting interdiction operations near the Bari Gul Bazaar, Nad Ali District, Helmand province.**



CPL PAUL PETERSON

move to the next building. They loaded high-explosive rounds and fired their grenade launchers at a shooter before sprinting from the compound.

Pendleton and his Marines dashed into the open, which sparked a brief burst of machine-gun fire that quickly dwindled. I bounded with the second team at a full sprint.

Pendleton set his Marines to clear another compound. For the next 30 minutes, Marines sifted the area for any signs of insurgency. Marksmen took posts at doorways and along walls to watch for insurgents, and explosive ordnance technicians searched for explosives.

To the south, Salka continued to patrol behind us in an effort to reinforce our

squad. From the doorway, I watched as the lieutenant and his men bounded across the open field. Machine-gun fire chattered as the Marines ran toward us with gear strapped to their shoulders. Enemy fire continued as they sprang forward in 10-meter dashes and dropped to the ground, using their body armor to absorb their impact with the soil.

I saw LCpl Indy Johnson bounding forward when a round struck his helmet. He dropped to the ground, momentarily dazed but unharmed. He collected himself and resumed his movement toward cover.

Nearly an hour into the firefight, a call came across the radio that a Marine had been hit. I knelt inside a small, walled-off garden when a surge of gunfire rang out

in the distance. I didn't know it at the time, but Bravo Co was providing suppressive fire as a team of Marines ran into the open to grab the wounded Marine. They dragged him back to cover and immediately began first aid.

Salka relayed the information on the wounded Marine over the radio—gunshot wound to the abdomen. Salka requested a medical evacuation, and a helicopter was inbound within minutes.

Each squad of Marines held its position and prepared to support the evacuation. The fields around the bazaar fell silent as the medevac helicopter moved in.

As the helicopter made its approach, the insurgents concentrated their fire in an attempt to shoot it down. Streams of bullets from AK47s and machine guns erupted from compounds around the area.

LCpl Brian Schaeffer was posted at the south end of the building held by Sgt Pendleton's squad. The fire seemed to come from around the corner while Pendleton slid in alongside Schaeffer in an attempt to pinpoint the location. Shoulder to shoulder, the two Marines peered out.

The helicopter banked hard to avoid the incoming rounds and flew around the landing zone for a second pass while Pendleton and another Marine fired their grenade launchers to provide suppressive fire.

On the second pass, the pilots decided to land.

By the time the helicopter landed, Pendleton already had rallied his team to continue the attack.

He squeezed himself into a doorway to check if the path was clear for his men. Another Marine climbed atop an empty oil drum and peered over the wall. Nothing moved.

The squad shuffled out of the building, ran along the outside wall and stacked at the northernmost corner of the compound. With the casualty evacuated, we pushed north before enemy fighters could regroup.

One by one, the Marines stepped into the clearing and headed to a nearby compound, where they eventually linked up with the rest of the platoon. We still had nearly two miles to patrol before we reached our extraction point.

For the next three hours, we pushed farther into the bazaar, and enemy fire became less organized. We stopped at the final compound before pushing our way out of town.

Bravo Co paused long enough for the Marines to suck down some water and burn a cigarette. Riflemen collapsed against dirt walls for a few minutes of rest.

As we left the bazaar, insurgents once again attempted to pin us down in an open field. Helicopters flying overhead

provided covering fire for the Marines, killing one insurgent fighter, as the Marines took shelter in a building.

By the end of it, I was pretty exhausted. We had been running, crawling, walking and running again in full gear for more than 12 hours. We had patrolled nearly four miles of the district and zigzagged in and around the bazaar for who knows how many more. We spent almost four hours under constant fire. The energy I received from the bag of gummy bears I ate for lunch was gone.

Evening loomed as Bravo Co streamed out of the village and converged on the extraction point.

Dusk settled over us as we finally slipped back onto our helicopters under the cover of darkness. I was thankful for the thrum of the CH-53. The beast of a helicopter jettied superheated air over my shoulders as I boarded and searched for a seat in the dark. I trusted its raw power and the three .50-caliber machine guns bristling along the fuselage.

Salka climbed on the helicopter with the last group. He was clearly proud of his men. I spoke with him afterward. Even in the chaos of the fight, he said they made his job easy. He led, and they all knew what had to happen when things got rough.

Before the patrol, he told me to just do my thing and follow the Marine in front of me. I broke one camera lens, damaged another. My boots reeked like a zoo. But

I didn't have to fire a single round.

Correspondent's note: It's the details that get lost or shuffled about. I sat down to speak with some of the Marines after the mission, including LCpl Indy Johnson, who took the round to his helmet, in an effort to stay as true to memory as I could.

Everyone made it out that day, and 2dLt James Salka firmly believes the swift action of his men saved the wounded Marine's life. The battalion confirmed its suspicions of insurgency in the area by finding evidence of weapons caches. Even more telling was the organized resistance they stirred up around the bazaar. As for the wounded Marine, he is expected to recover.

Cpl Paul Peterson  
Combat Correspondent  
Regional Command Southwest, Afghanistan

*Editor's note: This is a firsthand account of a Marine's first firefight in Afghanistan.*

## ■ ALMERIA, SPAIN

### Crisis Response Marines Conduct Bilateral Live-Fire Training in Spain

Leathernecks and sailors with Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force Crisis Response conducted fire and maneuver, live-fire bilateral training with Spanish Brigada De La Legion Rey Alfonso XIII at Base Alvarez de Sotomayor, Almeria, Spain, Dec. 2-5, 2013.

The exercise allowed the Marines an

opportunity to refresh their skills on long-range precision weapons and machine guns while continuing to build rapport with a foreign partner by exchanging tactics, techniques and procedures (TTP).

"The Marines gained more respect for the foreign military and their capabilities," said Captain Thomas J. Byrne, a platoon commander with the ground combat element, SPMAGTF Crisis Response.

The four-day exercise began with 25 Marines inserting via MV-22B Ospreys, then linking up with 25 Spanish soldiers at Base Alvarez.

The bilateral exercise included machine-gun and sniper firing at known and unknown distances and live-fire maneuver. The Marines also conducted unilateral close-quarters training in an urban terrain facility.

Each drill allowed the Marines and Spanish soldiers to build trust. The final drills consisted of the two forces combining to engage targets while safely and effectively moving and firing live rounds.

"The last four drills were the best. I was able to see the Marines and the Spanish military all online, working together and moving together to assault an objective," said Byrne.

"It was definitely valuable sustainment training. ... We really enjoyed it and want to train together again," said Byrne.

SSgt Robert L. Fisher III  
Combat Correspondent, MarForEur and Africa

**A Marine sniper with SPMAGTF Crisis Response spots for a Spanish sniper during bilateral live-fire training in Almeria, Spain.**



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SGT HUGH MURPHY

**Marines with SPMAGTF Africa 13 and Burundi National Defense Force soldiers palletize supplies in Bujumbura, Burundi, Dec. 10, 2013, that will be used to support Burundian forces during the African Union mission in the Central African Republic.**

**■ BUJUMBURA, BURUNDI**  
**Marines Provide Logistical Support To Central African Republic**

The soldiers of the Burundi National Defense Force and the leathernecks with Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force Africa 13 worked together Dec. 10, 2013, as the African partners prepared to embark to the Central African Republic as part of the African Union (AU) mission.

On Dec. 9, the U.S. government authorized U.S. aircraft to assist the Burundi National Defense Force with its deployment to Bangui, Central African Republic (CAR), according to a Department of State press release. The Marines have been in Burundi since October, taking part in military-to-military training engagements.

“Security Cooperation Team 2 moved to assist their partnered Burundian forces hours after learning about [the operation],” said Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Marble, Special Purpose MAGTF Africa 13 commanding officer.

Dawn Liberi, U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Burundi, met with 1st Vice President Bernard Busokoza and Chief of Defense and War Veterans Major General Prime Niyongabo on Dec. 8 to

facilitate close collaboration between U.S. and Burundian militaries to respond immediately to the crises in CAR. Ambassador Liberi emphasized the need for immediate deployment to help end the widespread violence and chaos.

The event highlights Burundi’s contribution to regional peacekeeping, as Burundi has now deployed in an expeditionary role to two of Africa’s most urgent humanitarian crises: Somalia and CAR.

Burundi’s ability to deploy highly trained soldiers is the result of the seven-year military partnership between the United States and Burundi and reflects the long-term training assistance provided by the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance program, a State Department program. Marines and Burundian soldiers have been partnered since 2012, working together through theater security cooperation engagements that bolster both forces.

“The flexibility of the Special Purpose MAGTF and the engagement our team provided have prepared [the BDNF soldiers] well for their mission in the Central African Republic,” said LtCol Marble.

The BDNF and Marines worked together

to palletize equipment, stage supplies and assist in the final preparations, as the soldiers embarked for their CAR mission Dec. 10-11.

“The team spent about five hours out there helping to build pallets of beans, rice and other sustainment items as well as staging vehicles,” said Major Matthew Berthinet, Security Cooperation Team 2 officer in charge. “Regular training is suspended for tomorrow so we can return to the airport and finalize some of the pallets as well as issue new [personal protective equipment] to the soldiers as they walk on the [aircraft].”

The Marines will continue to logistically assist the 850-man Burundian force as part of the U.S. Africa Command-directed support to the French and AU mission that is providing humanitarian assistance and establishing an environment that supports a political transition to a democratically elected government.

1stLt Peter Koerner and Maj Campbell Kane  
 Combat Correspondents, MarForEur and Africa



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# Joe Rosenthal

## And the Iwo Jima Marines He Made Famous



Joe Rosenthal stands atop Mt. Suribachi, Feb. 23, 1945, overlooking the landing beaches just minutes after taking the iconic photograph of the flag raising that would earn him a Pulitzer Prize and a place in history.

By Jack Withington and Tom Graves

A bronze plaque honoring Joe Rosenthal, the Associated Press photographer of “Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima,” was dedicated at Semper Fidelis Memorial Park on the grounds of the Marine Corps Heritage Center in Triangle, Va., on Oct. 9, 2013.

The Joe Rosenthal San Francisco Chapter of the USMC Combat Correspondents Association donated the plaque to Semper Fidelis Memorial Park. Rosenthal was a longtime member of the chapter, attending meetings and sharing stories with fellow photographers and reporters until his death in 2006.

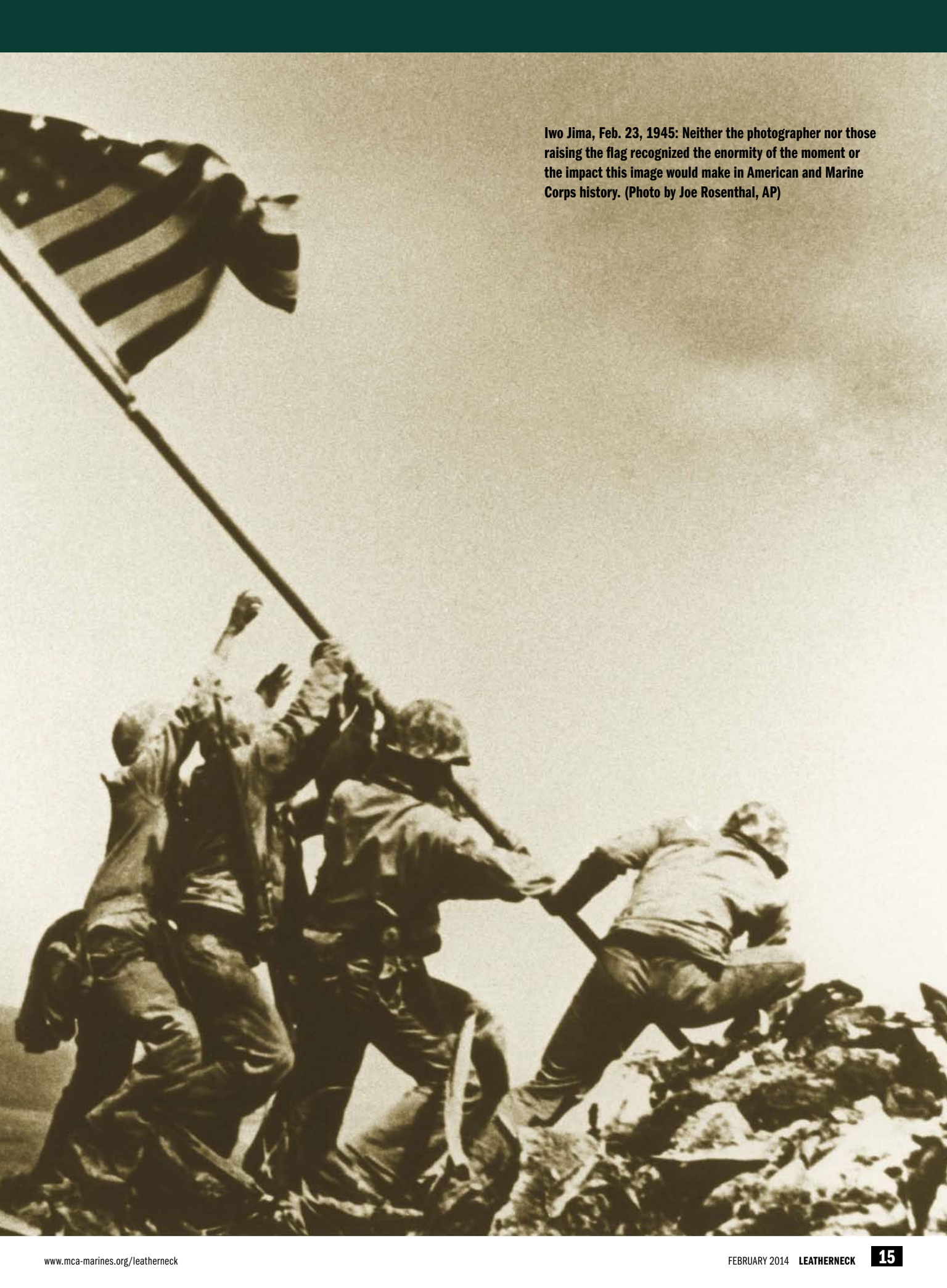
Marine veteran Dale Cook, the president of the Joe Rosenthal Chapter, was the master of ceremonies at the event, which was held on the 102nd anniversary of Rosenthal’s birth. Cook earned a Purple Heart on Iwo Jima as a private and rifleman in “Fox” Co, 2d Battalion, 23d Marine

Regiment, Fourth Marine Division and became a career journalist after the war.

Commander William D. Stallard, a Navy chaplain and former enlisted Marine, offered the invocation and benediction.

The keynote speaker, Lieutenant General Jan C. Huly, USMC (Ret), served in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm; as the commanding officer of 22d Marine Expeditionary Unit and participated in Operations Provide Promise and Deny Flight in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Continue Hope/UNOSOM II in Somalia; as Commanding General, Marine Corps Recruit Depot/Western Recruiting Region; and as Deputy Commandant for Plans, Policies and Operations at Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps.

Other speakers included William Hauptfleisch, Deputy Director, Combat Camera, Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., and national president of the USMC Combat Correspondents Association; Colonel Warren Wiedhahn, executive vice presi-



Iwo Jima, Feb. 23, 1945: Neither the photographer nor those raising the flag recognized the enormity of the moment or the impact this image would make in American and Marine Corps history. (Photo by Joe Rosenthal, AP)

dent of the Iwo Jima Association of America; and Hal Buell, a recognized authority on the flag raising and author of the book, "Uncommon Valor, Common Virtue: Iwo Jima and the Photograph That Captured America."

Cook remembered seeing the American flag flying on Mount Suribachi after facing four days of the fiercest combat of World War II on the island of Iwo Jima. "We were happy to see that flag because it meant the enemy had lost its observation post up there," said Cook, who later was wounded and evacuated from the island. The five-week battle became the costliest in Marine Corps history in terms of total casualties.

### Early Years

Joseph J. Rosenthal was born Oct. 9, 1911, in Washington, D.C. After graduating from high school, he joined his older brother in San Francisco, hoping the Depression-era job prospects would be better there. He found work at a newspaper and advanced to photographer, working for many of the city's papers until he joined the Associated Press in 1941. When WW II broke out, he took leave from AP to photograph the action while aboard ship with the Merchant Marines in the

Atlantic. He also photographed the London Blitz and the war in North Africa.

Determined to be where the action was, Rosenthal returned to San Francisco to rejoin AP and requested assignment to the Pacific. Although he had been rejected for active service by the U.S. Armed Forces because of poor eyesight, in battle, he faced the same dangers as the Marines he photographed. Rosenthal had volunteered to be there.

### Iwo Jima

A remote volcanic outpost with little more to offer than a few sulfur mines on its barely 10 square miles, Iwo Jima's proximity to Japan's home islands provided its strategic importance. Island-based Japanese aircraft could harass American B-29 bombers on their missions to the Japanese mainland and broadcast warnings of coming bombing raids. In American hands, the island's airfields would be lifesavers for damaged bombers or those too low on fuel to reach their home fields on Saipan and Tinian. Two stricken B-29s landed on Iwo Jima while the fighting still raged around them.

Japanese army LTG Tadamichi Kuribayashi undertook the construction of the island's defenses and commanded its

22,000-man force. The defenders worked for months, digging miles of tunnels and massive underground facilities (including living quarters and a hospital) and establishing machine-gun, mortar and artillery emplacements and observation posts. Men and guns rose from the ground to fire before descending again. Some veterans of the battle will say, "The enemy was not on Iwo Jima; they were *under* it."

Rising taller than a 50-story building, the island's extinct volcano, Mt. Suribachi, was an unparalleled observation point. From it, enemy artillery spotters could call fire on American Marines anywhere on the island. The capture of Suribachi was vital to American success.

Landing three Marine divisions, American planners expected victory in five days, but it took five weeks and cost 6,821 lives to capture the island. More than 19,000 Americans were wounded. Nearly all the Japanese defenders were killed. The costly victory proved worthwhile for Americans. During the remainder of the war, more than 2,000 B-29 Superfortresses landed on Iwo Jima, saving more than 20,000 airmen. Iwo Jima ranks as one of the Corps' greatest battles, along with Belleau Wood, the Chosin Reservoir, Khe Sanh and, more recently, Fallujah.



Members of the Joe Rosenthal Chapter, USMC Combat Correspondents Association and the keynote speaker at the Oct. 9, 2013, Rosenthal dedication, from the left: Jack Withington; LtGen Jan C. Huly, USMC (Ret); Leonard Cohen; Dale Cook; and Tom Graves.

## The Iconic Flag-Raising Photo

The flag raising that Rosenthal immortalized on Feb. 23, 1945, was the battle's second. The first flag went up on Suribachi earlier that same day, and that first flag raising was photographed by Staff Sergeant Lou Lowery, a *Leatherneck* magazine photographer. Lowery descended Suribachi as Rosenthal hiked up. Although Rosenthal knew the flag was already up, he decided to proceed to the top.

There, he and 5thMarDiv photographer Private First Class Bob Campbell and 5thMarDiv motion-picture cameraman Sergeant William Genaust moved quickly to capture the second flag going up. Rosenthal had only one shot at capturing the action. He raised his bulky camera and tripped the shutter instinctively. His famous photo is nearly duplicated on a frame of Sgt Genaust's movie film. (Genaust was killed later in the battle.)

Rosenthal's 4" x 5" negatives were flown to Guam to be developed, the famous image sent on to the Associated Press and distributed to newspapers nationwide. "Here's one for all time!" an AP photo editor exclaimed. Rosenthal did not see the photograph for several days. Even then, he could not have anticipated its success or his coming fame.

Although he made powerful photographs during the war and throughout his career, his skill and fate found each other on Iwo Jima on Feb. 23, 1945, when 33-year-old Rosenthal made the most published photo of all time, one that became a symbol of both the Marine Corps and of America's determined power. The most important 1/400 second of his life, "Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima," earned him a Pulitzer Prize and raised the spirits of a nation weary of war.

Although two earlier bond drives had not met their goals, the powerful photo and public appearances by the surviving flag raisers combined to earn \$26.3 billion in a 1945 War Bond drive.

The Iwo Jima photograph has been reproduced innumerable times on everything from tie clips, statuettes and coffee mugs, a 3-cent U.S. stamp and, most grandly, in 1954, the massive bronze Marine Corps War Memorial (often referred to as the "Iwo Jima Memorial"), designed by Felix de Weldon, on Arlington Ridge, Va., just outside Arlington National Cemetery. Even the silhouette of the 120,000-square-foot National Museum of the Marine Corps ([www.usmcmuseum.org](http://www.usmcmuseum.org)), which receives 500,000 visitors a year, is starkly symbolic of Rosenthal's photo.

Besides the famous flag-raising photograph, Rosenthal made dozens more on



LCPL SAMUEL ELLIS

**One of the speakers at the Rosenthal plaque dedication, Hal Buell (above) was the director of photography for AP for many years and wrote the book "Uncommon Valor, Common Virtue: Iwo Jima and the Photograph That Captured America." Below is the Len Cohen-designed plaque honoring Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer Joe Rosenthal.**



COURTESY OF GROPEN INC.

Iwo Jima. He was proud of one he shot at noon on D-day called "The Quick and the Dead" of a Marine charging past the lifeless bodies of other Marines on the sand.

## "I Took the Picture; The Marines Took Iwo Jima"

After the war, Joe Rosenthal had a long career as a news photographer, mostly with the *San Francisco Chronicle*, which he joined in January 1946. He became the "dean" of the city's newspaper photographers, expecting and receiving a spot in the first row at any news event. In addition to the Pulitzer Prize he won in 1945, he earned numerous awards and honors throughout his career, including a Department of the Navy Distinguished Public Service Award; USMC Combat Correspondents Association Life Membership and Distinguished Service Award; and

awards from *U.S. Camera* magazine, the Press Photographers of New York, San Francisco Press Club and the National Press Photographers Association.

At the *San Francisco Chronicle*, he worked alongside Bob Campbell, a fellow flag-raising photographer, and Tedd Thomey, a 24-year-old second lieutenant (operations/liaison officer) wounded at Iwo. After 35 years at the *Chronicle*, Joe retired on March 1, 1981, and died on Aug. 20, 2006, at age 94.

An honorary Marine, he made no secret of his admiration for the men he met and photographed during the war. Often, when praised about the flag-raising photo, Rosenthal would say, "I took the picture; the Marines took Iwo Jima."

In 1973, the San Francisco Chapter of the USMC Combat Correspondents Association officially changed its name to the "Joe Rosenthal San Francisco Chapter." The chapter's members are Marine and Navy veterans of WW II, Korea and Vietnam. Iwo Jima veterans attend each meeting.

The chapter dedicated two years to the goal of immortalizing its namesake member, aiming to keep Rosenthal's memory alive and recognize the ongoing significance of his flag-raising photo to the Marine Corps. The distinctive bronze plaque was designed by chapter member, Marine veteran and artist Leonard Cohen. Cohen served from 1959 to 1965, and his last assignment was as a crew chief on an LVTH6, a landing vehicle, tracked, howitzer. He took up art later in life after a career in education.

*Editor's note: Jack Withington, who led the effort to change the San Francisco chapter's name, served in the Marine Corps from 1959 to 1962 with the 1stMarDiv and 3dMarDiv (MOS 0311) and with the 3d MAW at MCAS El Toro, Calif., as a 4312 staff writer for the base newspaper, The Flight Jacket. He served with the ISO/PIO during the Cuban Missile Crisis while aboard USS Washburn (AKA-108). He is the author of "Historical Buildings of Sonoma County" and a contributor to the Sonoma County Historical Society's quarterly magazine.*

*Tom Graves serves as the historian of the Joe Rosenthal Chapter, USMC Combat Correspondents Association. He has interviewed and photographed nearly 300 veterans of WW II and the Korean War. His book, "Twice Heroes: America's Nisei Veterans," was published earlier this year and is available at [www.TwiceHeroes.com](http://www.TwiceHeroes.com).*



# Flying Lessons: For Auld Lang Syne



Retired Marine LtCol Art Sifuentes finishes a preflight check of a fully restored UH-34 Seahorse at Hanscom AFB, Mass., in 2012, before he lifts off to take the helicopter around the airfield. He flew the same helicopter in combat in Vietnam in 1966.

By Lane Wallace

An airplane is an inanimate piece of machinery. This is an empirical fact. It has no inherent spirit or soul, and what we often term “personality” in a plane is really just its own unique assemblage of mechanical quirks and imperfections. I know this, deep in my rational mind.

Having said that, however, I also know that many pilots, especially those who have spent many hours flying solo, have an attachment to their airplanes that surpasses any rational human-machine interaction. Myself included. I’ve owned four cars in the course of my adult life (I inherited my father’s belief that the only way to get value out of a car was to drive it until it rusted out from under you or the cost of repairing it was more than it was worth). But I’ve never talked to a car as if it could hear me, asked it what was wrong with it, thanked it for a good trip, or patted its hood before leaving it in the garage.

What makes my relationship with my airplane so different? My best guess is that it has to do with the difference in the risks and challenges, as well as the overall experience involved with the two. While I appreciate reliability in a car, I don’t feel as if my life is potentially dependent on whether or not my engine keeps running on the way to the store. And while

some people view their cars as status symbols or extensions of their personalities, I view my car as more of a utilitarian vehicle. Some comfort and style are nice, but I don’t expect my cars to open up new worlds or adventures or wonderful new experiences for me.

My airplane is a different story. When I put the throttle forward, I am always aware that I am venturing into a world where there are no tow trucks to help me if something goes wrong. My airplane and I will have to find our own way home, and if she lets me down, I may very well be in a fight for my life. At the same time, my forays into that riskier world have touched and transformed me in ways no journey on the ground ever has.

Like a personal magic carpet, my airplane has allowed me to skim along the heights of Montana mountain ridges and the clear, turquoise waters of the Florida Keys, close enough to tingle every nerve in my body. I’ve seen colors, landscapes, and starscapes that would have been impossible to see from the ground. I’ve also met people in remote places I probably wouldn’t have reached if I hadn’t “dropped in” there from the sky. And in many cases, the only witness to those experiences was my airplane.

All of this means that I view my airplane not just as a tool or possession, but almost as an inanimate kind of partner

and friend. Because I depend so heavily on my airplane’s mechanical health and performance, and because I have had so many powerful experiences with it, I have an attachment to it that isn’t entirely rational.

My only comfort, whenever I feel a tad embarrassed about this fact, is that I know I am not alone. The experience of flight, and the experiences that flight tends to bring into our lives, are often dramatic or transformative. Consequently, many pilots hold a special place in their hearts for the machine/friend that made those moments possible or brought them back safely from them—no matter how many years have passed.

Witness, for example, the story of Marine Lieutenant Colonel Art Sifuentes, USMC (Ret). I met Art at a dinner celebrating the centennial of Marine Corps Aviation in Marblehead, Mass. (where the first Marine Corps pilot soloed). As part of the celebration, the Marine Corps flew four helicopters into town and landed them on the ball fields by a local elementary school. One of the helicopters was a vintage Sikorsky UH-34 Seahorse, YN-19, which had been restored by a group of volunteers headed by Al Weiss, a former Marine Corps crew chief who, like Art, had served in Vietnam.

Art, who is now the executive director of the Marine Corps Aviation Association, had run into Al and the UH-34 a couple of years ago at a Marine Corps Air Station New River, N.C., event in Jacksonville, N.C. When Al found out that Art had flown UH-34s in Vietnam, he offered to give him a ride in the UH-34. Unfortunately, timing didn’t work out then. But when Al got ready to bring the Seahorse to Marblehead, he called Art and said, “Hey, we owe you a ride, and Marblehead would be a great time to do that.”

Art knew that the UH-34 Al and his group had restored was a Vietnam veteran, so out of curiosity, he went back and checked his logbooks. There were more than 500 UH-34s flown by the Marine Corps in Vietnam. And yet, the one Al and his group had restored was not only the same *type* as the one Art had flown ... although it had different squadron markings, it was the very same aircraft, serial number 150570, that he had flown on his initial night carrier qualifications, and subsequent missions, when he joined Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron (HMM) 163, the “Ridge Runners,” in Vietnam in 1966.

During Marine Corps Aviation Centennial celebrations in Marblehead, Mass., where the first Marine Corps pilot soloed, the restored Seahorse sports the number YN-19 as she did when assigned to HMM-361.



COURTESY OF LTCOL ART SIFUENTES, USMC (RET)

Below left: Then-1stLt Art Sifuentes, right, and a fellow pilot are beside the same restored helicopter when she was assigned to the “Ridge Runners” of HMM-163 in Vietnam’s I Corps in 1966.

Below right: LtCol Art Sifuentes takes a bow after safely bringing YN-19 back to the Hanscom strip, 44 years after he had last flown a UH-34 and 46 years since he had flown this same helicopter.



COURTESY OF LTCOL ART SIFUENTES, USMC (RET)



ROXANNE KAUFMAN

“When I saw that, I thought, ‘Holy cow! That’s like one in a thousand chance!’ ” Art told me. “And when I got to Hanscom [Air Force Base, where they were staging the helicopters before flying them into Marblehead], I could not crawl up and get inside [the helicopter] fast enough. They were going to help me in, because I’m not as young as I used to be, but I was already up inside, strapped in and ready to go before they could move.”

Art laughed at the memory. “That was a real ‘wow’ moment, when I climbed up in there and strapped in again,” he said with a grin. Forty-four years had passed since he’d last flown a UH-34. But when the pilot offered Art the chance to start up and

fly the Seahorse once again, he not only jumped at the chance ... he discovered that all that knowledge was still there in his memory banks.

“[The UH-34] was complicated to start,” Art recounted, launching into the details of the start sequence from memory. “... You have to have the pistol grip of the collective at a certain detent ... then at a very certain point, you press the mixture up while holding the primer and starter down. Then you take your thumb off the primer and push the mixture up. ...”

It’s astounding, really, what sticks with us throughout the years, ready to pour out again if we stumble across the right prompts or touchstones to access it.

“Truth to tell, Art flew that bird better than I do,” the “official” UH-34 pilot told me at the dinner.

And how did LtCol Sifuentes feel about his reunion flight?

“You know,” he said, “another H-34 would have been great, but to fly the *same aircraft* that you flew in harm’s way, in Vietnam, on the other side of the world ... to smell that 115/145 av gas coming out of that old radial piston engine, when you haven’t flown that kind of engine since 1968, it all comes back. It’s déjà vu all over again. You *can* go back sometimes. I *did* go back. But in a good way.” He paused for a moment, still affected by the memory.

“It was like being back with an old

## Restored Vietnam War Combat Helicopter Donated to the Marine Corps Museum



DAVID H. HUGEL

**YN-19 arrives at the National Museum of the Marine Corps, Triangle, Va., Nov. 8, 2013, for eventual display inside the museum.**

Plans call for it to be displayed in the National Museum of the Marine Corps' glass-enclosed atrium known as "Leatherneck Gallery," where it will replace the HRS-1, a Korean-era helicopter that is scheduled to undergo much-needed restoration work. Although the museum has assumed ownership of its newest aviation treasure, the helicopter is not scheduled to be placed on display until 2017 as the first phase of the planned museum expansion efforts.

Commenting on the gift of the helicopter, museum Director Lin Ezell said: "The National Museum of the Marine Corps is very enthusiastic about the prospect of receiving YN-19. This helicopter will be a significant addition to the museum's permanent collection. With its rich combat history and strong emotional ties to both the Marines who flew it and those it carried, the aircraft will be a meaningful addition to our interpretative program. Designers and curators are studying a number of options for how to dynamically display the helicopter in the museum's central gallery."

—David H. Hugel

On Nov. 8, 2013, the Marine Helicopter Squadron 361 Veterans Association formally turned over the UH-34D Seahorse helicopter they had restored and flown at numerous military-related events for the past eight years to the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle, Va. (See the August 2013 issue of *Leatherneck* for the story of the helicopter's history, its restoration and appearances it has made.)

According to the museum's aviation curator, Ben Kristy, the Sikorsky helicopter is in excellent condition and will need little preservation work.

friend," he continued. "A dear old friend. Because that particular bird always brought me home. We took our share of hits and danger and combat, but it took that punishment and kept plugging. It's hard to describe, but it's like, 'You brought me through so much.' You have a real attachment to it, even though it's an inanimate object. You have such an attachment to that part of your life. So to fly it again was ..." He paused again, searching for the right words. "Awesome. Terrific. Really, really special."

My guess is that most military pilots who flew in harm's way would feel the same way, if they were to reconnect again with the particular aircraft that brought them home safely. But the attachment can be there even without the life-threatening drama.

A number of years ago, I got a tour of the Smithsonian's Silver Hill, Md., restoration facility. It was shortly before the Udvar-Hazy annex opened at Dulles Air-

port in Virginia, and as I rounded a corner of airplanes waiting to be shipped to the new facility, I came face to fuselage with the exact 1929 Arrow Sport biplane that had inspired me to become a pilot, back in 1985. The paint scheme and the N-number were the same. It wasn't just *an* Arrow Sport, it was *my* Arrow Sport. And in an instant, that summer evening flight and all the magic and emotion it had contained and inspired rushed over me again like a wave.

"That's my airplane!" I exclaimed to the person giving me the tour. He frowned, confused.

"I think we got that plane from a collector ...," he started to answer.

"No, no. I didn't own it," I said. "But I flew it. That airplane is why I'm a pilot." I don't know if he understood. But I stood there for several long minutes, just gazing at the Arrow Sport, filled with giddy joy, nostalgic tenderness, wistfulness, gratitude, and an almost irresistible urge to give

the old girl a hug, as if she would or could remember me. Never mind that she couldn't. I remembered *her*. She had changed my life. And that was enough.

Sadly, since civilian pilots rely not on serial numbers but on N-numbers to identify the airplanes we've flown, the new registration process the Federal Aviation Administration is currently going through will make it a lot harder to track down old, lost friends, even if we only want to know what happened to them. Are there really so many airplanes in existence that we can't come up with enough new registration numbers without wiping out our past? History and efficiency never track in the same direction, of course, but I still think it's a bit sad.

It's the same sadness in fact, that inspired Robert Burns to write his now-famous tribute to friends from adventures and days gone by:

*We two have run about the braes ...  
from morning sun 'til dine  
But the seas between us have roared  
[and swelled] since auld lang syne.  
So here's a hand, my trusted friend,  
and give me a hand of thine  
We'll take a cup of kindness yet, for  
auld lang syne.*

I know Burns wasn't talking about airplanes. But that doesn't mean the lyrics don't apply. After all, friends are those with whom we have shared meaningful life experiences and moments. And a reunion with a friend—even an inanimate friend—is a powerful and wonderful thing ... just ask Art Sifuentes.

*Editor's note: This article previously was published in EAA Sport Aviation magazine, Vol. 62, No. 2, February ©2013, Lane E. Wallace.*

*We very rarely republish articles from other periodicals, but this one was particularly interesting because of the connections to Vietnam, the Marine Corps aviation centennial and the delivery of the restored UH-34, YN-19, to the National Museum of the Marine Corps.*

*To read more about the restoration of YN-19, see "Vietnam Veterans Restore Seahorse to Honor Squadron Mates," by David Hugel, in the September 2013 Leatherneck.*

*Lane Wallace is an aviation-focused author. More of Lane's writing can be found at [www.LaneWallace.com](http://www.LaneWallace.com) or [www.theatlantic.com/lane-wallace](http://www.theatlantic.com/lane-wallace).*

*David H. Hugel, a combat photographer when on active duty in the 1960s, is a Vietnam veteran and a frequent Leatherneck contributor.*



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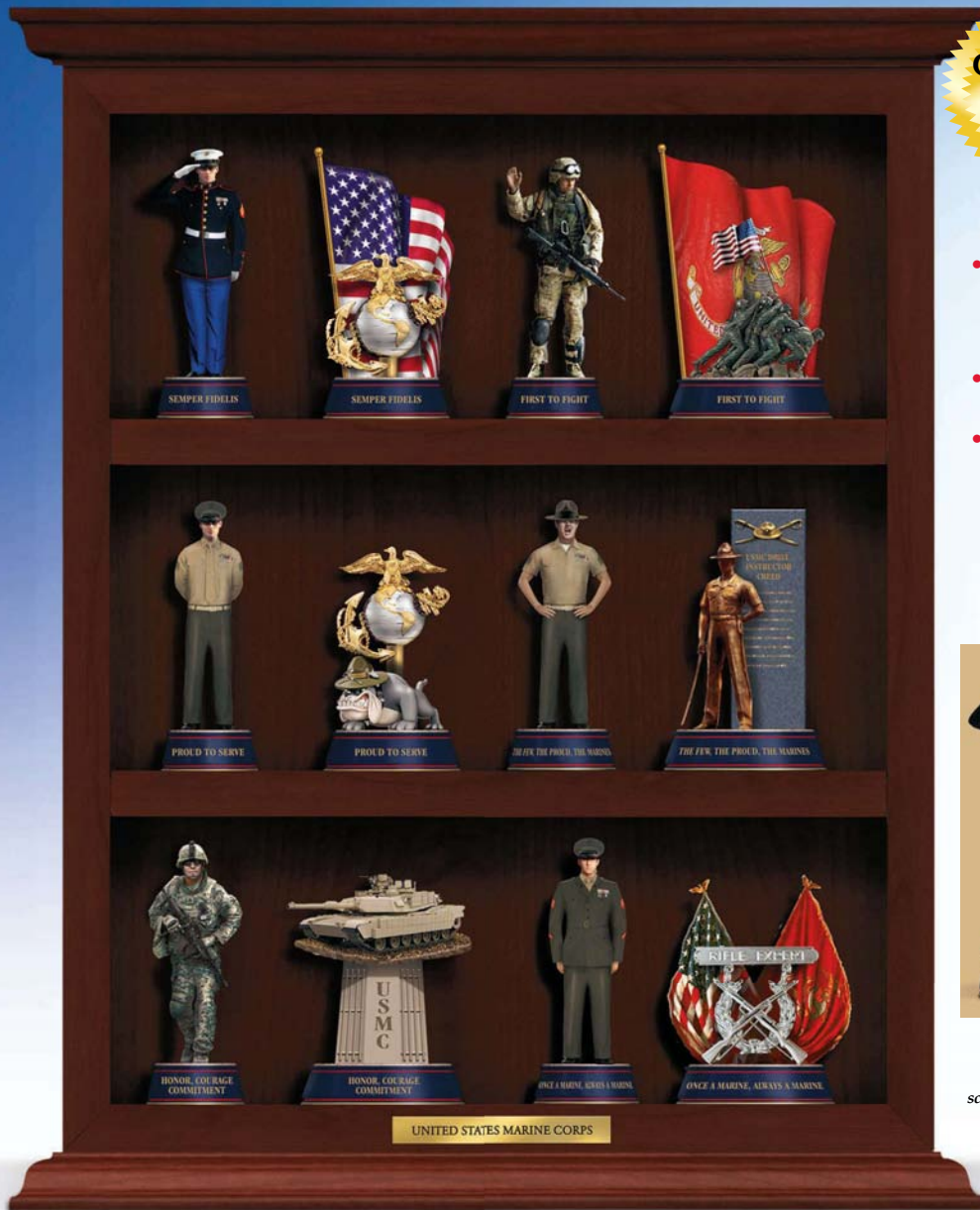
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# Leatherneck Laffs

— BOOT CAMP  
by S.J. Stout



“OK—We’re out of sight.  
Who’s got the candy bars?”



“It’s called ‘hand-to-hand’ combat.”



“Yes! I called my mother ... and now she’s here!”



“Now, watch John Wayne. He moves to the right and then he looks back.  
Never look back!”



“You have to go back. You forgot the ammo.”



COURTESY OF THE C-7A CARIBOU ASSOCIATION

One of the versatile U.S. Air Force C-7A Caribous, like the ones Marines parachuted from, goes “feet dry” in the Republic of South Vietnam during the war.

## Marines Parachute Into Happy Valley

By Reuben Darby

0430, 5 Sept. 1967, Quang Nam Province, South Vietnam: Twelve miles southwest of Da Nang, a pilot from the U.S. Air Force’s 459th Troop Carrier Squadron throttled back his C-7A “Caribou” over the Tam Kho River Valley, known to Marines as “Happy Valley.” Smearing green camouflage face paint and bathed in sweat, a nine-man team from 1st Force Reconnaissance Company struggled under T-10 parachutes, radios, packs and weapons. Team Clubcar had been ordered to attempt the second combat parachute mission of a Marine unit in Corps history.

Leading the mission was highly experienced jumper and patrol leader Gunnery Sergeant Walter N. Webb. Tenured in Marine reconnaissance units and a graduate of Army Ranger School and Marine survival courses, Webb was a study in relaxed leadership because he led by example.

“Pushing the stick” was Webb’s assistant patrol leader, Staff Sergeant Thomas J. Vallario, who had cut his teeth in one of 1st Force Recon’s early Pathfinder teams and who recently had earned a Silver Star by disarming a string of Viet Cong (VC) underwater explosives.

The Marines between Webb and Vallario had been hand-picked, some from other teams, based on experience and reliability. All had volunteered. Now they rechecked each other’s gear, yanked on their static lines, focused on the blackness outside the tailgate and wondered what waited on the valley floor.

Happy Valley runs east and west with the eastern flank bottlenecked between Ba Na Mountain to the north and Charlie Ridge to the south. To the west the valley joined a serpentine infiltration route for North Vietnamese reinforcements squeezing through the Annamite Mountains from Laos. After burying their parachutes, Webb’s team was to move northeast into

the Tam Niong River spur valley, searching out evidence of enemy infiltration and hidden rocket launchers.

Although parachutes rarely were considered in Vietnam due to terrain, weather and injury issues, the mission had been green-lighted because the CH-46 Sea Knights, which normally flew recon missions, had been grounded due to structural difficulties. Only aging UH-34 Seahorses and a handful of UH-1 Hueys and CH-53 Sea Stallions remained to cover recon missions spread all over central I Corps, as well as to support ongoing infantry operations as 5th Marines continued to lock horns with the 2d North Vietnamese Army Division in the Que Son Valley.

The undeniable stealth benefit of successful parachute entry provided further impetus. The G-2, intelligence section, of the First Marine Division had fingered the eastern mouth of Happy Valley as the launch site for enemy rocket attacks against Da Nang’s air and logistical assets.

If a team could be slipped in at night quietly enough to catch a VC rocket squad unaware, the team might be able to subject the squad to the talents of Marine pilots or artillery crews.

Having previously overflown Clubcar's intended drop zone (DZ), Webb recognized certain landmarks, even at night. But as the C-7A approached the release point, he didn't like what he saw. To minimize exposure under canopy, the drop altitude had been pegged at 700 feet. But as Webb later would note, "We were approximately 1,500 to 2,000 feet above the terrain."

It got worse. Compounding the glitch in altitude, Webb watched currents of ground fog roll in pushed by sudden westerly winds straight out of the Annamite Mountain chain. He was incredulous. "I had just gotten a report from a team already in the valley that winds were negligible. ... Then I look out and seen ground fog moving in the western part of the valley."

There was no time left for a second pass. The jump had to be under cover of darkness, or it had to be aborted. Corporal Charles "Chuck" Owens, fresh out of jump school on Okinawa, recalled, " 'Gunny' was on his knees, on the tail ramp. ... He hollered that it was too dark."

Then Webb screamed, "Go!" and disappeared into the night. Behind him, the choreographed "airborne shuffle" was lost on the fly as his combat-loaded Marines scrambled down the tail ramp and jackknifed into the practiced static-line body position. Deployment bags broke loose in a series of tugs, counterpointed a heart-



COURTESY OF CPL JOE BRIEL

**Then-SSgt Walter N. Webb serves as jumpmaster during jump training from a KC-130 at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., in 1962.**

beat later by the welcome shock of dark fabric overhead.

Snatched upright by his deployed T-10, Webb checked the rest of his team. All eight men were out with chutes open. While most were attempting to slip toward him, one man was crabbing away fast to the north. Owens, Clubcar's M79 grenadier, affirmed, "I was fourth in the stick, and our corpsman, HM2 Laporte, was right behind me. Once I was out and open, he was moving towards Ba Na [Mountain]."

But there was little time to ponder Michael Laporte's sense of direction or

his motivations. Due to excess altitude and sudden winds, Clubcar was being blown 4,000 meters east of its DZ and into the heavily forested southern slopes of Ba Na. Webb remembered, "The winds were 25 to 30 knots aloft. ... I knew then we were in trouble. ... Having made a previous overflight, I knew we were headed for tall canopy. ... I looked at my watch. It was ... 0435."

Trees, some splintered by bombs or artillery, came up fast. A branch tore at Webb's scrotum. Another shoved an M16 magazine into his kidney. He could hear his men crashing through the jungled



COURTESY OF STAN LAWSON

**Above left: From left, Capt Patrick Ryan, GySgt Walter Webb, 1stSgt Billy L. "Wild Bill" Lyday and Sgt Stan Lawson get ready for a jump while on Inspector-Instructor duty with 3d Force Reconnaissance Co, USMCR, in Mobile, Ala., 1966.**

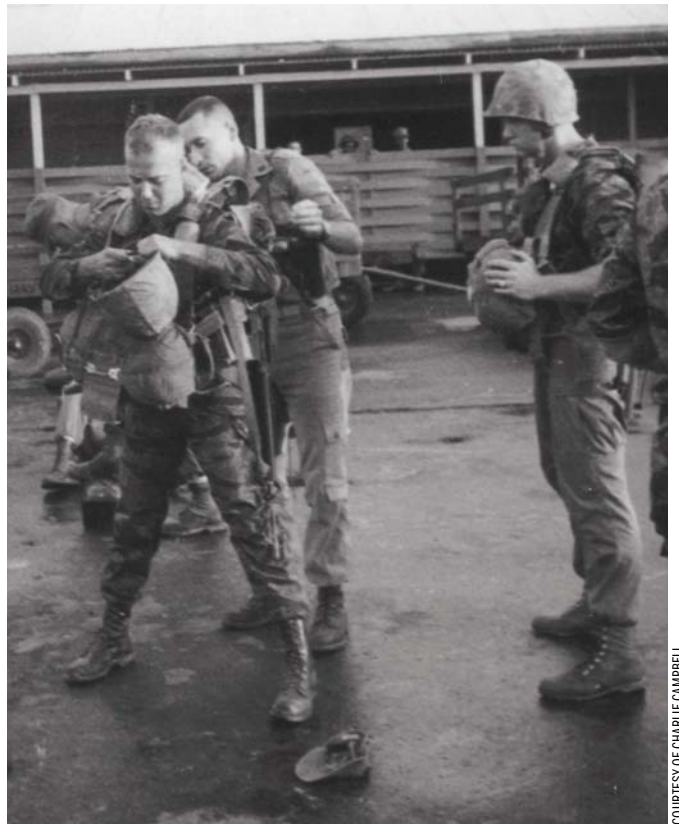


COURTESY OF REUBEN DARBY

**Above right: PFC Reuben Darby, Co C, 3d Recon Battalion, hams it up before launching on a six- to seven-day patrol in February 1966. The bayonet on the M14 was removed before boarding a CH-34 for insertion.**



COURTESY OF CHARLIE CAMPBELL



COURTESY OF CHARLIE CAMPBELL

**Above left: Jumpmaster SSgt Charlie Campbell checks out a recon Marine prior to a training jump in South Vietnam, 1967.**

**Above right: From left, Cpl Jimmy Lynn, SSgt Charlie Campbell and Cpl Chuck Owens prepare for a training jump in South Vietnam, 1967.**

forest. The four-day route recon had just been trumped by concussions, torn ligaments and hung-up canopies.

Unable to see the ground, Webb dropped his helmet, counted and calculated he was 60 feet high. With Clubcar's only RT-10A handheld survival radio, he repeatedly tried to raise any station on the higher frequency. Getting no response, he switched to homing mode and decided to wait until first light to climb down.

Webb's primary radioman, Sergeant James W. Hager, described landing to Webb's north. "I remember coming down in the trees and waking up a half hour later. I assembled my PRC-25 [radio] and contacted [a radio relay]. I informed him [I was] alone and didn't know where I was and [that] I was still hanging in my harness. . . . He advised me to cut myself down."

At 0530, Webb heard jets overhead and was able to raise an A-6 Intruder aircraft with Marine All Weather Attack Squadron 242: "I advised that we were all hanging in trees and off target and that I would attempt to assemble the team and continue on mission."

Suffering intense kidney pain, he at-

tached his reserve parachute to a neighboring tree, climbed down the spilled canopy and dropped to the ground. He headed north where he had heard someone land. Hager also had reached the ground and heard him coming. "Ssst . . . That you, Gunny?"

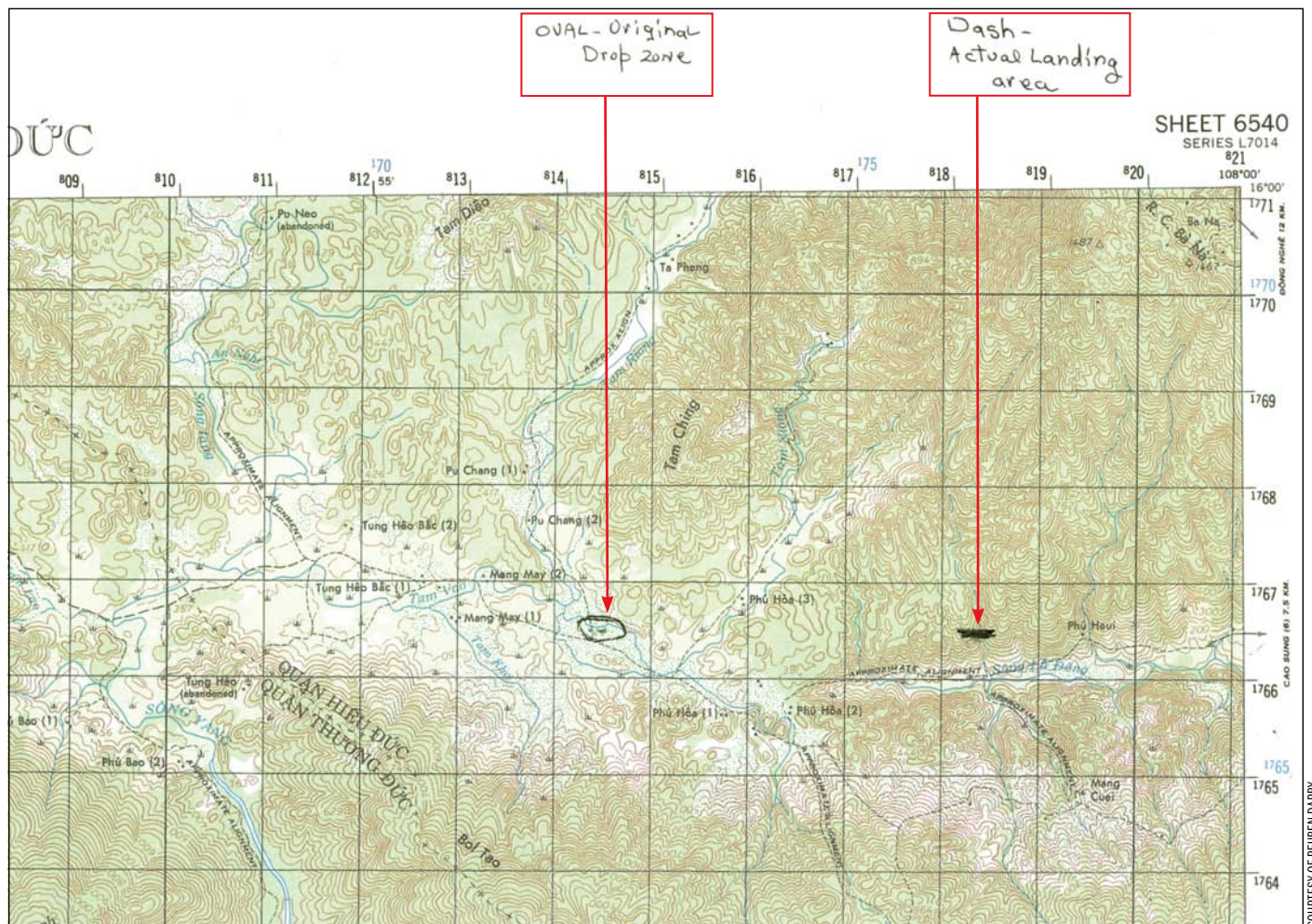
Webb answered and then froze. Between him and Hager he spotted some Viet Cong, trying to pinpoint the voices.

The only way out was away from Hager, so Webb slipped into some undergrowth and cut west. With a game of cat and mouse in the offing, he shucked most of his food and water to lighten his load.

To the west, Vallario regained his senses to the sounds of voices and splashing directly beneath him. Once the voices moved on, he slipped a magazine into his M3A1 "grease gun" and activated his

**Cpl John Slowick, right, and an unidentified Marine are on a long-range recon patrol in central I Corps, South Vietnam, after Slowick had left Clubcar and joined Killer Kane in 1967. (Photo courtesy of Donald "Doc" Conner)**





reserve, hoping to climb down the canopy. Unfortunately, the canopy slipped through the branches, and he fell to the ground, spraining both ankles and again losing consciousness.

Owens found himself in similar straits. In trying to free himself from his own snared canopy, he flipped upside down in his harness and lost most of his M79 rounds and pistol magazines. After cutting himself loose, he headed east. Then he stopped cold. Just ahead was a man with Asian features. Forty-six years later, Charles Owens said, laughing, "It was Sergeant Woo. He was injured, but I was glad to see him. I only had my M79, my .45 and two mags."

While Owens and Donald Woo worked on their next move, Vallario forced himself to his feet, determined to track down his team. By moving east, he soon located the secondary radio man, Sgt Harold McNemar, and 24-year-old Cpl Ronald "Pappy" Garcia, who had landed within feet of each other. Shattered tree limbs had sliced open McNemar's head, and Garcia could barely walk. Vallario recalled, "I patched up Sergeant McNemar with what I had. ... I couldn't do nothing for Garcia. ... Soon as I got the radio, I contacted [Hager]. ... We couldn't move very far,

one man in severe pain, one kept passing out."

As the three struggled to find a clearing for a possible medevac, they were joined by Lance Corporal John Slowick, who had narrowly escaped being gutted by a spear-like branch which had ripped open his pack, leaving him only his M16 and cartridge belt. Slowick remembered, "After moving about 150 meters, I started using my clicker and picked up an answer. ... Found Staff Sergeant Vallario, Sergeant McNemar, Corporal Garcia. We moved ... two hours, but injured had a hard time walking."

To the east, Hager still was searching for Webb when he was joined by Owens, helping Woo walk down a streambed. Hager recounted, "I called [radio relay] and informed him we now had three people. He replied that 'Blackcoat-Six' [an aerial observer] would try to link us up with Staff Sergeant Vallario, who had three other people besides himself."

With the midday sky alive with fixed-wing and UH-1 gunships and at least one aerial observer (AO), Vallario was able to find an area clear enough for the orbiting aircraft to fix his position and for him to coordinate the evacuation of McNemar and Garcia. He recalled, "At approximately

1230, a 'Jolly Green' [Air Force helicopter] came in and hoisted out two badly injured men."

At around 1330, a gunship spotted Hager, Woo and Owens and communicated that they were only a couple hundred meters east of Vallario and Slowick. At Hager's suggestion, Vallario ignited a pencil flare, which allowed the trio to follow the hissing sound into his position. Only Webb and Laporte still were unaccounted for.

Webb had spent most of the day snaking through undergrowth to evade the VC who had cut him off from Hager. Although he was urinating blood and barely could walk, he was able to raise the AO on his RT-10. He recalled, "Blackcoat-Six overflew several times until I found an area clear enough to pop a yellow smoke."

By 1830, the AO had a lock on both Webb's and Vallario's coordinates and was able to vector in a CH-53 with a jungle penetrator to winch out Webb through the trees. The pilot then was able to slide a few hundred meters east and repeat the same maneuver with Sgt Woo.

With nightfall approaching, Vallario, Hager, Owens and Slowick were ordered to "harbor" for the night and at daybreak continue the search for Laporte where one of the gunships had spotted "someone"

Sgt Larry Livingston, holding a captured Viet Cong spear, and Cpl Chuck Owens are on patrol in Vietnam's central I Corps, 1967. Livingston rose to the grade of major general and went on to command the Second Marine Division.



COURTESY OF REUBEN DARBY



COURTESY OF STAN LAWSON

The Clubcar team leader, GySgt Walter Webb, is shown in the center of this 1966 photo while he was on Inspector-Instructor duty with 3d Force Recon Co in Mobile, Ala., prior to his deployment to Vietnam.

in the jungle. The night was spent motionless, back to back, each man covering a 90-degree sector. Vallario related, "All through the night we heard movement. I figured ... it might be a monkey or something like that."

The next morning, around 1030, as Vallario's men were working through thick brush, they again heard movement and were certain it was Laporte. But when Vallario squeezed his cricket, hidden enemy soldiers opened up with small arms

and grenades. Vallario offered a thumbnail sketch. "[N]ext thing I knew, a grenade went off. ... One of the VC had on a 'go-to-hell hat.'"

The patrol pulled back and turned the problem over to a pair of gunships. With the threat nullified, the four Marines approached the reported sighting only to discover that "Laporte" was the carcass of a wrecked drone.

Vallario described the next attempt to locate the corpsman. "[T]hen they got



a [psyops] warfare plane out there with speakers on it, and they cruised the area [broadcasting for Laporte to signal his position]. We listened for a gunshot and tried to spot a smoke. ... We stayed out there to ... 1645 and then called in four -34 copters to come pick us up."

Clubcar's recovery might have been one more setback but for the skill and initiative of the Marines flying the mission. The actual package was two UH-34s from Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron (HMM) 263 escorted by two "Deadlock" gunships from Marine Observation Squadron (VMO) 2. Halfway en route, the -34 pilots learned that the team probably would need to be lifted out through tall canopy along the south side of Ba Na Mountain. Realizing their piston-driven craft could not hover at that altitude, they immediately diverted to the Marble

A CH-46A sits ready to go on LZ Finch at the 1st Reconnaissance Bn command post, Camp Reasoner, Da Nang, 1967.



COURTESY OF DONALD "DOC" CONNER

Mountain helicopter facility where the ‘birds’ were stripped of doors, windows, navigation gear, armor plate and all but one radio. Extra ammo and even the door gunner and his M60 were left on the pad.

Vallario described the extraction: “The -34s came in, and the choppers did an outstanding job. They were about three to four feet away from the canopy ... tail rotors close to the trees. I got the man with the bad back [Slowick] out first ... then Corporal Owens, then myself ... then Sergeant Hager.” (Hager, as the remaining RTO—radio, telephone operator—volunteered to be the last one out.)

After returning to Camp Reasoner, Webb’s team was evaluated for injuries and reassigned accordingly. Webb picked up a stand-in slot in the S-3 operations shop of 1st Force Recon. Vallario resumed his position as diving noncommissioned

officer. Garcia, whose father was fighting the Navy’s brown-water war in the Mekong, was evacuated to Clark Air Base and then joined 5th Force Recon at Camp Pendleton, Calif. Hager and Slowick rejoined Lieutenant Andrew Finlayson’s legendary “Killer Kane” team.

To extend hard-won experience Woo, Owens and, later, McNemar also were assigned to other teams, soon to be caught up in revolving-door insertions, extractions and firefights. Charles Owens remembered, “I’d no more than gotten off the -34, when another team leader came up and told me he had too many new guys, and he needed people with experience. ... What could I do? ... I cleaned my weapon, gathered some ammo and food and got ready to go back out.”

Missions to find Laporte began immediately. Starting with Navy Cross Ma-

rine SSgt Roy Fryman’s team being shot out of its primary landing zone, several teams scoured the jungle-choked southern slopes of Ba Na for the corpsman. Except for finding Webb’s parachute and helmet, they all returned empty-handed. Although there were rumors and so-called sightings in the months and years that followed, HM2 Michael Louis Laporte never was found.

*Editor’s note: Reuben Darby served three years in 2d Force Recon and graduated from airborne, Ranger and scuba courses. In his two tours in Vietnam, he had approximately 35 long-range patrols with 1st Force Recon. His awards include the Bronze Star with combat “V,” the Purple Heart and the Combat Action Ribbon.*





**Above: It may have been cold and wet, but “Charlie” Co knew only one thing: “Today, Nov. 26, 2013, I am a Marine!”**

**Right: Candidate James C. Fazica, facing the camera, won the Marine Corps Association & Foundation Honor Graduate Award for Co C, and also took home the Phil Yeckel Award for the highest overall average and the Colonel Robert I. Kriendler Award for the highest leadership average.**



# Marine Officer Candidates School

Story by Col Walt Ford, USMC (Ret) · Photos by Nancy Lee White Hoffman

On a cold, rainy day in late November 2013, the officer candidates of Company C, Marine Corps Officer Candidates School (OCS), Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., marched across the OCS parade deck with great pride in accomplishment. It was graduation day. And, what a day it was for these men and women, their families, the OCS staff, the Marine Corps and our country.

With the required reduction in force in coming years, the Corps will need fewer officers, and that will translate to more difficult challenges for those who want to become officers, the officer selection officers and Marine Corps planners.

It's important to ensure the Corps is ready to expand when needed, and that means keeping the various officer sourcing programs viable. Commissioning allocations have to be balanced across the OCS programs—Officer Candidates Course, the Platoon Leaders Class and the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps—as well as the United States Naval Academy.

Watching the pride and spirit of “Charlie” Co on parade, it's hard to believe the quality can get any better, and it's clear the future of the Corps remains bright.



After OCS graduation, those candidates being commissioned are sworn in at the National Museum of the Marine Corps, Triangle, Va. Newly commissioned 2dLt Benjamin “Ben” Mackey, center, whose grandfather was a World War II Marine, is joined by his cousin, retired LtCol William M. “Bill” Hoffman, far left, a Gulf War veteran; his mother, Barbara Mackey; his college roommate, Sgt Mike A. Czynnik; and his father, former Sgt B. T. “Mack” Mackey, a veteran of the Korean and Vietnam wars.



Above left: Second Lt Ben Mackey takes his first salute from Sgt Mike Czynnik, longtime friend and roommate at The Citadel, The Military College of South Carolina in Charleston.

Above right: Second Lt Mackey, Sgt Czynnik and 2dLt Geoff Wright show off their class of 2013 Citadel rings after Mackey and Wright were commissioned.

# We—the Marines

Edited by Clare A. Guerrero



**PFC Cristina Fuentes Montenegro, left, and PFC Julia Carroll, right, two of the first three female Marine graduates from the School of Infantry-East's Infantry Training Battalion, stand with Shirley M. John from the North Carolina Tarheel Chapter of the Women Marines Association, following the graduation ceremony of "Delta" Company, ITB, SOI-E, at Camp Geiger, N.C., Nov. 21, 2013. Delta Co was the first ITB unit to train female Marines.**

## Women Marines Graduate From SOI-East, Make History

■ Three Marines made history by becoming the first females to graduate from the School of Infantry-East, which is based at Camp Geiger, N.C., Nov. 21, 2013.

The graduating class of Company D, Infantry Training Battalion (ITB), School of Infantry-East included Privates First Class Julia Carroll, Cristina Fuentes Montenegro and Katie Gorz, demonstrating that women are capable of completing the same infantry training as their male counterparts.

Despite the recent Department of Defense policy changes regarding women serving in combat roles, those three Marines will attend various primary military occupational specialty schools and not serve in an infantry unit.

"I wish I was going to an infantry unit with my fellow Marines," said Carroll, a native of Idaho Falls, Idaho. "We're trained to take care of each other, and I wish I could help take care of them."

The integration of female Marines into SOI-East was a single phase of a research study to evaluate the plausibility of females

serving in combat. The policy allows each service until Jan. 1, 2016, to evaluate combat-related job fields and determine which should be open to both male and female military personnel and which should remain for males only.

Although those female Marines will not serve in an infantry unit, they are grateful for the opportunity to attend the training.

"I volunteered to attend ITB because it was going to make me a better-prepared Marine," said Fuentes Montenegro, a native of Coral Springs, Fla. "I feel lucky to be given the opportunity, because there's a lot of Marines who want to receive the training."

The 59-day course is designed to effectively prepare Marines for combat situations. During the course of the training, they learn various skills including weapons systems, land navigation, scouting, patrolling and more.

"It was always training, day in and day out," said Carroll. "But it's very valuable, even if women are not in ground-combat roles. They can still get deployed, and they can still see combat."

The female Marines were held to the

same established school standards as their male counterparts, proving both their physical and mental toughness.

"The Marines have built a common respect and a bond we've expected them to build during the shared hardship. This first evolution proves there are a number of highly qualified female Marines who are capable of meeting the existing standard for the training currently," said Colonel Jeffrey T. Conner, commanding officer of SOI-East.

Although this is only the first step toward the integration of women into combat arms roles, the graduation validates that female Marines are capable of enduring one of the most physically and mentally demanding schools in the Marine Corps.

LCpl Justin A. Rodriguez  
PAO, MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C.

## Southern University Football Team Transformed by Esprit de Corps

■ When the commanding general of Marine Forces Reserve, Lieutenant General Richard P. Mills, shook hands with Southern University coach Dawson Odum at the Bayou Classic press conference on the floor of the Superdome in New Orleans, Nov. 22, 2013, it wasn't the first time the Marines had contact with the Jaguars.

Earlier in the year, the Marines from the 6th Marine Corps District put the team through some grueling training, which helped prepare the team for the upcoming season, said Odum.

"We train so much physically—the same as the military—but usually, when it's time for us to do a job, it requires our mental fortitude," Odum said. "We needed to be put into adverse situations so we could overcome things once we're put in 'combat.'"

During the early part of 2013, the Marines approached the Jaguars head coach with the idea of putting the team through training similar to the training that the Marine Corps commonly uses to help build teamwork and camaraderie within its combat units. Odum agreed.

Early in the preseason, the Marines had the "Jags" crawling through the mud, hefting around logs and carrying fellow



LOPL BENJAMIN PRYER

**LEVEE FOR THE OSPREY**—Leathernecks with Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 265 present one of the Corps' aviation hallmarks, the MV-22 Osprey, during a press event held on the airstrip of the Japan Air Self-Defense Force's Nyutabaru Air Base. The Osprey and aircrew attended an air show hosted by the JASDF in Miyazaki, Miyazaki Prefecture, Dec. 1, 2013, marking the aircraft's first public debut on mainland Japan.

teammates on stretchers. The Marines, both figuratively and literally, gave the team a taste of what it's like to be a Marine, even going so far as feeding the players military field rations known as MREs, or meals, ready to eat.

"We wanted to give them an introduction to how the Marine Corps inspires and trains its leaders," said Captain Adesina

O. Aladetohun, who headed the Marines training with the Jaguars. "We wanted to push the players, both physically and mentally, and allow them to test their own limits. We also wanted to force them to rely on one another to get through the exercises."

Coach Odum said training with the Marines helped provide a foundation for

the team's success on the field last year and that he frequently called upon their shared experiences with the Marines to help rally them to victory throughout the season. With Southern University sitting on a 7-4 record, its first winning season in three years, the experience the Jaguars had with the Marines appears to have been not only foundational but transformational.

"We take our MREs out there with us in the fourth quarter, and we hold them up," Odum said. "And we say this is where it started. This is what brought us together."

Although the term "transformation" may be used infrequently in college football, Aladetohun said transformation in his line of work is a topic of daily discussion. He also said he sees the process at work with each man or woman he sends off to become a Marine.

"Changing young men and women's lives for the better is something we do every day," commented Aladetohun. "I'm glad the Jags feel we had a hand in helping them become successful on the field. We wanted to show the relevancy of the Ma-

**Players from the Southern University football team carry a teammate on a stretcher during a training exercise conducted by the Marines to help the team prepare for the 2013 football season.**



COURTESY OF JOHN OUBRE, SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY MEDIA RELATIONS



RONALD MARTINEZ

**COLORS AT QATAR**—Marine veteran Ronald Martinez, an Information Management Specialist at the U.S. Embassy Doha, Qatar, took this photograph of the Marine color guard detail during the Marine Corps Birthday ceremony at the U.S. Embassy Doha on Nov. 7, 2013. “Bravo Zulu”—Well done to the Marines of Qatar and the U.S. Embassy team in Qatar.

## Leathernecks Visit Guam, Mentor Troubled Teenagers

■ Marines and sailors participating in Exercise Forager Fury II spent one of their days off in a building surrounded by barbed wire, inspiring juveniles in a detention center at the Department of Youth Affairs in Mangilao, Guam, Dec. 7, 2013.

Forager Fury II, a two-week-long exercise that took place on Guam and Tinian, allowed Marine Aircraft Group 12 to improve aviation combat readiness through simulated operations in a deployed, expeditionary environment.

“The Department of Youth Affairs is a place where juveniles are sent when they commit crimes and are given a second chance,” said Navy Lieutenant Travis E. Coffey, deputy chaplain for MAG-12, First Marine Aircraft Wing, III Marine Expeditionary Force. “This is their chance to turn their lives around,” he said about the Marines’ and sailors’ interactions with the teenagers, sharing stories and advice during their visit.

“We have a lot of Marines and sailors that are able to relate to the people that are there,” said Coffey. “They shared with the children the bad decisions they have made and how they overcame the difficulties in their life to get to where they are today.”

As the day went on, the teenagers became increasingly more comfortable and were eager to ask questions about the military, and some even showed an interest in joining as a way to change their lives.

“I think each one of these kids has a bright future,” said Lance Corporal Thomas Taylor, an F/A-18C air frames mechanic with Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 232, MAG-11, currently assigned to MAG-12, 1st MAW, III MEF, under the unit deployment program. “They just have to be willing to work for it.”

The demeanor of the teenagers had drastically changed as the day ended and the military personnel began to leave.

“I think it made a difference that we showed that we cared,” said Coffey. “I explained to them that the people here did this on their day off of work because they wanted to be here, and once they saw that, I think they were uplifted.”

“As I was leaving, multiple residents came over to say thanks, and that proved to me that the time we invested was meaningful.”

Approximately 1,000 Marines arrived on Guam and Tinian to participate in Forager Fury II, which began in late November 2013. The exercise focused on tactical aviation and ground support and built on previous exercises that had taken place in the Northern Mariana Islands.

rine Corps in their lives and give them some Marine skills, which directly translate into life skills.”

While Aladetohun said he is happy he and his fellow Marines could help the team prepare for a winning season, as the Marine who is responsible for recruiting future Marine officers in the New Orleans and Baton Rouge area, he is hoping their efforts will lead to the Marine Corps winning a victory of its own.

Aladetohun said that his “win” would be seeing a Jaguar transition from a uniform of blue and gold to camouflage green.

The Marines’ efforts at Southern University are part of a larger effort by the Corps to bolster diversity throughout its

ranks. The Marine Corps has put an active outreach program in place that includes many of the historically African-American colleges and universities like Southern, hoping to attract a future Marine force that has the cultural expertise, language skill sets and the varied philosophies needed to meet the Marine Corps’ future operational commitments across the globe.

“I’m glad we were able to play some part in helping their players develop as athletes and young men,” Capt Aladetohun said. “Hopefully, some of these players may consider joining another winning team. The Marines.”

GySgt Ryan Scranton  
PAO, 6th MCD

PFC Alissa Schuning  
PAO, MCAS Iwakuni, Japan

## Marines Rescue Downed Aviators During Operation Damayan

■ Leathernecks with Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 152 assisted in the rescue of two pilots in a civilian helicopter crash Nov. 24, 2013, over Manila Bay, Republic of the Philippines.

A KC-130J Super Hercules assigned to the squadron was returning to Villamor Air Base from Tacloban City after delivering relief supplies in support of Operation Damayan, the U.S. military response to Super Typhoon Haiyan.

Major Jason Kauffman, a pilot with the squadron, heard a mayday call come through his radio approximately 18 nautical miles northwest of North Harbor.

“We were inbound to approach into Manila ... we heard a mayday call from a helicopter that just crashed into Manila Bay,” said Kauffman. “We set up in orbit, we got eyes on the survivors—there were two of them in the water.”

The crew immediately prepared to deploy a life raft.

“The four crew members in the back got the raft ready to go and cleared all the loose equipment away from the door,” said Sergeant Chris Weins, a crewmember with the squadron.

“On the aircraft commander’s call, we threw the raft out, and it deployed as it was supposed to about 300 feet away from the [survivors].”

The Marines’ quick response ensured the pilots did not remain in open water long.

“A local fisherman responded 20 to 30 minutes later,” said Kauffman.

“They came up alongside the raft we kicked out and loaded the two helicopter pilots into the fishing boat.”

Representatives with the U.S. Agency for International Development, who were helping with relief efforts, were passengers in the KC-130J.

“[Operation Damayan] has been a textbook example; it’s a model of what we can do when we all work together,” said Jeremy Konyndyk, a USAID representative and passenger aboard the Super Hercules. “It’s always nice to learn from what’s gone right.”

Also aboard the aircraft were congressmen Trent Franks, Chris Smith, and Al Green, who traveled to the Philippines to observe the U.S. military relief and recovery efforts.

“In an absolutely amazing example of military precision, [the crew] dropped a

life raft to where the people could swim to it,” said Rep. Franks of Arizona. “It seems like [Kauffman’s] call sign ‘Rescue’ was emphasized again. I believe that the military [personnel] of the U.S. are the most noble figures in human society.”

The cause of the helicopter crash is under investigation.

1stLt Luke Kuper  
Combat Correspondent  
Marine Corps Installations Pacific

## Quick Shots Around the Corps

### Monument to Engineers To be Erected at NMMC

■ The Marine Corps Engineer Association will pay tribute to all Marine Corps engineers and related occupational specialties, by dedicating a monument in the Semper Fidelis Memorial Park at the National Museum of the Marine Corps, Triangle, Va., May 14. All are welcome to join the celebration at the NMMC.

To find out more about the monument and how you might support it, contact Ken Frantz at (936) 273-4830 or [execdir@marcorengasn.org](mailto:execdir@marcorengasn.org), or visit the MCEA website: [www.marcorengasn.org](http://www.marcorengasn.org).



## Crazy Caption Contest

### Winner



“Boy! You guys really know how to get comfy.”

Submitted by  
Thomas J. Elbert  
Grafton, Ohio

### This Month's Photo



COURTESY OF DAMA A. BEVELER

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Dream up your own Crazy Caption. *Leatherneck* will pay \$25 or give a one-year MCA membership for the craziest one received. It's easy. Think up a caption for the photo at the right and either mail or 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](mailto:leatherneck@mca-marines.org). The winning entry will be published in two months.



SGT MALLORY S. VANDERSCHANS

The 35th Commandant, Gen James F. Amos, charges First Marine Division NCOs at Marine Corps Air Station Camp Pendleton, Calif., Nov. 21, 2013, to commit to the “reawakening” of the soul of the Corps.

# Update on the Corps

## Interview With General James F. Amos 35th Commandant of the Marine Corps

By Arthur P. Brill Jr.

The 35th Commandant of the Marine Corps, General James F. Amos, recently sat down with *Leatherneck* to address some tough questions and update our readers on the current status of the Corps and his focus of effort in the coming months.

**Leatherneck:** I recall Marine leaders in the past complaining about spending 90 percent of their time on 10 percent of their Marines, which included their troublemakers. What is the situation today?

**Gen Amos:** Today’s Marines are magnificent young men and women. About 98 percent of them are doing the right thing. I’d say about 2 percent are soiling our name by doing the hazing, the sexual assaults and other unseemly behavior.

**Leatherneck:** You joined the Marine Corps in 1970. What was the discipline like back then compared to today?

**Gen Amos:** The post-Vietnam Marine Corps I saw in my first squadron in the early 1970s was full of drugs and roving gangs of racial groups on base. There was a significant lack of standards and little accountability. When General Lou Wilson [Gen Louis H. Wilson Jr.] became the 26th Commandant in 1975, he said, “Enough is enough!” and he tightened things up. We’ve come a long way since then. Today is not the 1970s.

**Leatherneck:** If that’s the case, why the need to reawaken the soul of the Corps [see the January 2014 *Leatherneck*, pg. 10]?

**Gen Amos:** After long periods of com-

bat, there is a tendency to set aside standards, discipline and accountability. In addition to the behavioral issues we talked about, we’re seeing some early fraying of the Corps’ character due to a lack of discipline, personal standards and appearance. We want to head that off. Our generals and senior sergeants major told me and Sergeant Major Barrett [SgtMaj Micheal P. Barrett, 17th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps] that we need to get back to the basics. So, that’s what we’re doing.

**Leatherneck:** How long will that take?

**Gen Amos:** Today’s Marines will get it. This millennial generation is performing far above expectations. They want to lead and be led by good leaders who are accountable. In today’s uncertain world,

it's vital that our leaders are engaged and concerned 24/7.

**Leatherneck:** The military has been on the skyline for societal problems that plague America such as sexual assault and suicide. The Corps is dealing with these issues, but has the negative attention damaged Marine recruiting?

**Gen Amos:** Recruiting is over the top. If you want to be a Marine today, you will wait in the delayed entry pool for six to eight months. Your recruiter will train you, get you in shape and teach you the Marine Corps way. This gives you a higher chance of succeeding at boot camp. There's not an ounce of anxiety right now with regards to recruiting and retention. As we drive the force down, the competition for retention is fierce. We're keeping a higher quality young man or woman.

**Leatherneck:** Long ago, we were told that staff noncommissioned officers [staff NCOs] were the "backbone" of the Marine Corps. Today, it's the corporal and sergeant noncommissioned officers [NCOs]. Is it because of the type of combat Marines have seen these past 11 years?

**Gen Amos:** I think so. Years ago, small leadership was a captain with a company. Today, it's almost at the squad level. NCOs are making many of the hard decisions that could have international implications. Corporals and sergeants play a huge role in "distributed operations" where our units are spread out. Of 183,000 enlisted Marines, 144,500 are NCOs and below. That's 82 percent. In getting back to the basics, we're asking our young NCOs to help lead the way.

**Leatherneck:** You recently relieved two Marine general officers, whom you knew well, for their decision-making in Afghanistan. How difficult was that?

**Gen Amos:** I had many introspective moments. Of the Corps' 85 general officers, they are probably two of my closest friends. They are great leaders, revered by their Marines, and both were courageous in battle. It boiled down to accountability. In combat, the leader makes decisions based on the situation, which includes evaluating risk. In a dangerous area, risk is always there. It became a function of the risk that was assumed for the force protection of Bastion [Camp Bastion, an air base in Helmand province, Afghanistan]. It was a risk they probably should not have assumed. As it turned out, it cost us the lives of two great Marines, several wounded, six destroyed airplanes and a win for the Taliban.

**Leatherneck:** Are there lessons learned here for Marine leaders?

**Gen Amos:** Since I informed these two Marines face to face, both have stayed professional, kept their dignity and publicly accepted full accountability for their decisions. All Marines can learn from that. We do not have a zero-defect environment. We expect our leaders to make informed decisions. If your Marines have concerns about something important, never hesitate to revisit past decisions. Not every mistake in judgment will have consequences. In this case, we paid a healthy price and both of those officers will retire, but they are two of the very best we ever had.

**Leatherneck:** What kind of a world will future Marine leaders face?

**Gen Amos:** The world is even more dangerous today than when I took over three years ago. Today's hodgepodge of disaffected youth will worsen. Places you think are nations can't control their borders. Their youth bulge is astronomic and often combined with unemployment, drought and famine. These young people arrive seeking advantage and a family. They easily can link up with the wrong extremist organizations. So we'll be dealing with that.

**Leatherneck:** You once told me that future Marines would be involved in irregular warfare. Do you still feel that way?

**Gen Amos:** It's more so today than when we talked about it a few years ago. We're not forgetting the lessons of the



USMC PHOTO BY CHRISTINE CEBALO

**Sgt Miguel Iles, an Asia-Pacific cryptologic linguist with 3d Radio Battalion, reads a traditional Chinese legend in his office on Marine Corps Base Hawaii. A DLI graduate, he was named the Department of Defense Language Professional of the Year in 2012.**

past 11 years. We'll continue to teach counterinsurgency operations and the value of culture and human terrain. We doubled the numbers of foreign and regional area officers. We've got staff NCOs out in Monterey at postgraduate school and the Defense Language Institute. We've never had that before.

**Leatherneck:** If Marines fight a more conventional battle, will they get the fire support they need?

**Gen Amos:** We're getting back to combined-arms training. We haven't done that since Marines headed to Baghdad in 2003. Our integrated training exercise at Twentynine Palms [Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center in California] is a battalion-size combined-arms effort on the ground with a modern-day aviation package, logistics combat elements and



**U.S. Marines with HMM-364 and HMMT-164, MAG-39, 3d MAW and Co C, 1st Bn, 5th Marines, 1stMarDiv conduct an airfield seizure during Exercise Steel Knight 2014 at Camp Wilson, Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif., Dec. 11, 2013. (Photo by Sgt Keonaona C. Paulo)**



LCPL DIAMOND N. PEDEN

**Marines with Retrograde and Redeployment in support of Reset and Reconstitution Operations Group, CLB-4, CLR-3, 3d MLG, III MEF unload their gear at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, Japan, on returning from Afghanistan, Dec. 9, 2013. The Marines deployed for seven months to receive equipment from redeploying units, repair it as needed and send it back to the U.S. for redistribution throughout the Marine Corps.**

coordinating fires. We're also including the best lessons learned from [Exercise] Mojave Viper and [Exercise] Enhanced Mojave Viper to make it more realistic instead of the old CAXs [Combined Armed Exercises] of the 1980s and 1990s.

**Leatherneck:** If the Marine Corps acquires the additional training space at Twentynine Palms, what will you do with it?

**Gen Amos:** Congress will inform us soon about getting the 144,000 acres called the Johnson Valley, the western boundary of our Twentynine Palms training area. That will allow us to put three battalions of a MEB [Marine expeditionary brigade] on the ground and it's exciting. This will be a live-fire and maneuver "cat's meow."

**Leatherneck:** So, Marines will be prepared to fight in both irregular and conventional conflicts?

**Gen Amos:** Yes, we'll do both. We'll be masters of irregular warfare and distributed operations with decentralized command and control. We'll also do the large-scale battalion and MEB-sized fire and maneuver operations. We might have to do that again in certain places. Korea is one example. If something bad happened there, we'll need that expertise.

**Leatherneck:** During this fully sequestered budget, the other services have pulled back, saying they don't have ready forces. Planes aren't flying and ships aren't sailing. Yet, the Marine Corps is going in the opposite direction?

**Gen Amos:** Marines are in a high state of readiness, and we're the only service doing that. That's our character. When the President says we need options and someone says, "Send in the Marines," I can't request 35 days to organize, equip and train them. I can't say we need time

to combine two battalions or squadrons to make one. We advertise that we respond to today's crisis with today's force today. What we did in the Philippines last November is a classic example.

**Leatherneck:** The Corps is losing about 10½ percent of its budget under sequestration. How is that affecting Marine readiness?

**Gen Amos:** When we saw sequestration would happen, we started planning early with a small team. I told them to build a highly ready force with a C2 readiness average across all of our deployable units, not just the deploying and the next to deploy. Our deployed units are C1, the highest readiness state that includes training, personnel, equipment and everything else. Readiness is paid for in O&M [operations and maintenance] dollars—that's fuel, ammunition, parts, training ranges, schools, and the money to train and to deploy.

Secondly, the units would be about 97 percent manned. Right after 9/11, they were about 88 percent manned. Their equipment was in the high 80s—if they rated 10 pieces of gear, they probably had eight, maybe seven. The overall actual readiness was in the high 60s to low 70s. You can't fight a force like that. So, we put the manning, equipment and money back in the units. This force will be 97 percent manned with 100 percent of its equipment and the O&M money it needs to train and to stay in that high state of readiness. And you know, Art, Marines like that.

**Leatherneck:** How are you paying for this readiness?

**Gen Amos:** We had to move money from the bases and stations, the maintenance of facilities and other accounts. We're spending about 68 percent of our minimum requirement to maintain our barracks and bases. We cancelled 27 programs and pulled money from others. We're moving all these monies into readiness under the authorities that we have. We can do that for two years.

## Fenced Units

Units that will not be impacted by force reductions:

- Marine Forces Cyber Command (MARFORCYBER)—Fort Meade, Md.
- Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command (MARSOC)—Camp Lejeune, N.C.
- Chemical Biological Incident Response Force (CBIRF)—Indian Head, Md.
- Marine Barracks Washington—Washington, D.C.
- Marine Corps Helicopter Squadron One (HMX-1)—Quantico, Va.
- Marine Corps Tactics and Operations Group (MCTOG)—Twentynine Palms, Calif.
- Marine Corps Logistics Operations Group (MCLOG)—Twentynine Palms, Calif.
- Marine Aviation Weapons and Tactics Squadron One (MAWTS-1)—Yuma, Ariz.
- Wounded Warrior Regiment—Quantico, Va.

—Arthur P. Brill Jr.



PHOTO BY SGT ADAM D. WAINWRIGHT, USMC

**Marines assigned to 31st MEU board an MV-22 Osprey assigned to VMM-265 (Rein) on the flight deck of the amphibious assault ship USS Bonhomme Richard (LHD-6) in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of responsibility during September 2013.**

**Leatherneck:** When this article is published in February, what will be the Corps' authorized strength for the immediate future?

**Gen Amos:** I think it will be 175,000. That's doable. Under sequestration, we'll lose a Marine division's worth of combat power. We have to cut some units to avoid having a hollow force. At 175,000, we can be the high state of readiness force we just talked about and still do the things that America needs.

**Leatherneck:** Will the MEUs [the afloat Marine expeditionary units] be preserved under the 175,000?

**Gen Amos:** You bet. All seven MEUs will be completely stood up. They are among our "fenced" units.

**Leatherneck:** What's the latest about opening up the Corps' closed jobs and units to women?

**Gen Amos:** It's going as planned. We're talking about the law here. Congress has told the Secretary of Defense to open up these closed MOSs [military occupational specialties] and units to women and report back by January 2015. We're trying to establish one standard for both male and females in tanks, artillery, infantry and

reconnaissance. For example, every artillery Marine must do certain things, including picking up and loading a 96-pound 155 mm shell.

Of the 150 female Marine officers who joined since April 2012, eight tried unsuccessfully to make it through the Infantry Officers Course [IOC] at Quantico,



SGT TYLER L. MAIN

**PFC Julia Carroll eats a small meal after a six-hour patrol during patrol week at Infantry Training Battalion, School of Infantry-East, Camp Geiger, N.C., Oct. 31, 2013. Carroll is one of the first three females to ever graduate from ITB.**

Va. We're encouraged that four more women officers have volunteered for the next IOC that starts in early 2014.

On the enlisted side, 119 female Marines graduated recruit training last September, and 49 were physically qualified to attend the School of Infantry at Camp Lejeune, N.C. They reached the same standards as the males, including being first-class PFTers and doing pull-ups. Of those, 15 checked into the School of Infantry. Over the next 60 days, some were injured and others dropped-out-on-request. Four women made it through the final hurdle, a long march carrying a heavy pack, but one broke her foot. Three female Marines graduated.

**Leatherneck:** I noticed that 26 male Marines did not make that final hike.

**Gen Amos:** That's an important point. When those female officers didn't make it through the IOC, a slug of males didn't either. It maintains credibility with what we're doing. If a service thinks an MOS or unit should remain closed, it must prove it to the Secretary of Defense and probably to Congress. That's why graduation is important. I'm excited about it, and I'm proud of the three women graduates. It's also part of my data gathering. Otherwise, all we have is hyperbole, instincts and intuition. You can't go to war with that.



LCPL CALEB McDONALD

**Marines with the SPMAGTF Crisis Response ground combat element transition from the standing to kneeling positions during a live-fire exercise aboard Moron Air Base, June 24, 2013. The mission of the task-organized deployment force is to respond to potential crises in the Africa region.**

amphibious ready groups. Now, they are in other places in the world. So, we built this 750-person Crisis Response Force and gave it to the U.S. combatant commander responsible for the entire African continent.

**Leatherneck:** What does the force consist of?

**Gen Amos:** After Benghazi, we practically wrote it on the back of a cocktail napkin at an executive off-site conference last March. This is new stuff. The unit is basically a beefed-up rifle company with added weapons for more firepower. We gave it a slice of logistics to sustain itself and six V-22s that can zip along at 250 to 280 mph. It also has two C-130Js for inflight refueling and to haul the heavy stuff. We can go a long distance over Africa without stopping. We have our own fuel, gas stations, and we haul our own stuff. That's pretty powerful.

**Leatherneck:** After 9/11, the Corps established a short-lived Anti-Terrorism Battalion. How useful will this crisis response force be?

We've got to do this right. So, we'll report back to the Secretary of Defense with an educated recommendation in about a year.

**Leatherneck:** If the jobs and units currently closed to women are opened, do you expect large numbers of female Marines to volunteer?

**Gen Amos:** No. We don't have big numbers. Only 7 percent of the Marine Corps are females. We have slightly more than 14,000 women, and about 2,800 join yearly, both officer and enlisted. I talk to Marines often, and most of our women tell me that they didn't join the Corps to be in the infantry. They wanted an institution with high standards. They joined to be U.S. Marines.

**Leatherneck:** How many same-sex couples does the Corps have, and is the "basket leave" they receive to get married causing any rumblings?

**Gen Amos:** We have about 144 same-sex couples on active duty, and less than 25 are a Marine with a Marine. Most are a Marine and a civilian or a Marine with another servicemember. Same-sex marriages are not allowed in all the states, so the Secretary of Defense authorized them "basket leave" to get married in another state. He's trying to take care of these people. It's not causing any concern to my knowledge, and I haven't heard a peep about it.

**The Commandant, Gen James F. Amos, left, responds to a question from a Marine during a June 2013 meeting with SPMAGTF Crisis Response leathernecks at Moron Air Base, Spain. (Photo by LCpl Caleb McDonald)**

**Leatherneck:** Can you talk about the Crisis Response Unit the Corps established after the deadly attack against the U.S. diplomatic post at Benghazi, Libya?

**Gen Amos:** It's one of the big success stories as we adapt to this new security environment. After Benghazi, we asked, "Could we have done something?" Clearly, no forces were available, to speak of, to do anything. I served two years as a young brigadier general in the Mediterranean during the Kosovo-Serbian wars. That's when the Mediterranean was ripe with U.S. 6th Fleet ships, carriers and



**Gen Amos:** We're at the American Embassy in Tripoli right now. We reinforced it with about 87 Marines. The headquarters and the bulk of the force is in Moron, Spain, an old air base about 30 to 40 minutes outside of Seville. Several V-22s, and at least a platoon of Marines, are forward deployed at [Naval Air Station] Sigonella, Italy, an ideal jumping-off spot. When they get a mission, they have one hour to plan it, get their gear aboard and be airborne. We rotate that force weekly. When Egypt looked really bad, they were ready to help with noncombatant evacuation. The same thing in Syria and Tunisia.

That crisis force gives the nation options. A ship is often too far away. As an old fighter pilot, I can tell you that flying aircraft overhead will not do much good. You've got to put some boots on the ground. This outfit is catching people's attention. We're building a similar force, probably on a smaller scale, for the U.S. Southern Command. Also, the Central Command wants one.

**Leatherneck:** How many more Marine embassy security guards will the State Department receive?

**Gen Amos:** After Benghazi, Congress directed us to increase the number of embassy security guards by 1,000. We currently have more than 1,300 Marines in 135 countries. We're growing the program, and by the end of 2013, we opened up nine new MSG [Marine Security Guard] detachments at embassies that the State Department was worried about. We'll continue to do that. Thus far, we haven't received a dime to pay for the increase, but we're working on that.

**Leatherneck:** You've also formed a precrisis unit to augment the security at diplomatic posts. How does that work?

**Gen Amos:** We've taken a slice of that 1,000 MSG increase, about 300 Marines, and formed the Marine Security Augmentation Unit [MSAU]. Along with MSG expertise, we also train them up with FAST [Fleet Antiterrorism Support Team] skills. We house, train and watch over them. If an ambassador is concerned about something, we'll fly 15 to 100 Marines in to augment the security. It's all tailor-made, depending on the threat. The MSAU can also be an interim security force at posts until its permanent MSG detachment arrives.

Since last August, MSAU has conducted 11 operational deployments. Prior to the September 11 anniversary, MSAU teams deployed to eight U.S. embassies in Africa



USAF PHOTO BY SAMUEL KING JR.

**A Marine F-35B Joint Strike Fighter lifts off during the first vertical and/or short takeoff and landing mission at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., Oct. 25, 2013. The milestone training mission was flown by Maj Brendan M. Walsh, with VMFAT-501.**

and the Middle East to augment security. A team deployed to Nairobi, Kenya, to harden a U.S. facility following the West Gate Mall attack. In November, the MSAU was in Panama to support a visit by Vice President [Joe] Biden.

**Leatherneck:** You testified recently that Marines could go straight from boot camp to combat without giving them precombat training. Would you really do that?

**Gen Amos:** The answer is no. But, if our strength and capabilities drop, we can fight just one major contingency someplace. If that big one comes, Marines will go to war and won't come home until it's over. We will not have the depth to rotate people back and forth. Similar to Korea in the early 1950s, Marines could go from boot camp to the battlefield. Believe me, we would do everything possible not to do that.

**Leatherneck:** What do you want to accomplish in your final year as Commandant?

**Gen Amos:** I'll give up command of the Marine Corps this October. I'm feeling pressure to get a few things done or at least headed on an irreversible vector. I want to reset the Corps in various areas. Marines come out of Afghanistan in December, basically lock, stock and barrel. We've got 70 percent of the equipment out now, well ahead of anyone else. It will take another two years to get it through the depots. For

example, we want to rework the vehicles back to zero miles.

We need to get combined-arms training going and the skill sets ready to do all our missions around the world. We talked about resetting the Corps' soul and getting our force structure settled. Lastly, my two top priorities are the F-35B and the amphibious combat vehicle [ACV] that replaces our 40-plus-year-old amphibious tractor. Before October, I want a positive vector on the ACV. It's a stretch to say that the F-35B is on autopilot, but it's doing very well.

**Leatherneck:** This has been an informative session, General. Hopefully, we'll meet again before October and talk about these things.

**Gen Amos:** I'd be happy to. We'll do a measure of effectiveness, and you can give me a report card. We have a lot going on, but we have good people and they are all working pretty hard.

*Editor's note: Retired Marine LtCol Arthur P. Brill Jr. has written more than 70 feature articles about Marines, including the last five Commandants, for Leatherneck and defense publications. He commanded a rifle company in Vietnam and later was the Corps' press spokesman. He also was the media spokesman in key positions for the Carter and Reagan administrations.*



Capt Gregory Scott, left, a class advisor for Class 6-12, Logistics Officers Course, Logistics Operations School, MCCSSS, instructs 1stLt Julius Oreiro, an LOC student, on bringing in a CH-53E Super Stallion for a helilift at Landing Zone Eagle, Camp Lejeune, N.C.



SGT MARKE E. MORROW JR.

# Marine Corps Combat Service Support Schools: Solidifying the Transformation

## Taking Entry-Level Marines From JV to Varsity

By CWO-4 Randy Gaddo, USMC (Ret)

**“W**hen entry-level Marines arrive here it’s like they made it to the JV squad and the varsity is the operating forces,” asserted the commanding officer of Marine Corps Combat Service Support Schools (MCCSSS) at Camp Johnson, N.C.

“Our instructors get them ready for the varsity so they can assimilate into the operating forces rapidly,” said Colonel Paul F. Bertholf, summarizing the role of the diverse group of leathernecks under his command.

The 250 instructors at Camp Johnson prepare nearly 20 percent of all enlisted Marines fresh out of boot camp and Marine Combat Training (MCT)—about 7,000 per year—for service in logistics, ground supply, personnel administration and financial management. There are also

advanced MOS (military occupational specialty) courses for noncommissioned officers (NCOs), staff NCOs and officers in those fields as well as an MOS-producing course in water survival.

“They are mentors, leaders, coaches, sometimes marriage counselors. They wear many hats,” observed the command’s Sergeant Major Rodney A. Robinson. “One of the first things instructors do with each of their new students is to go through the Marine Corps mentoring worksheet to learn everything they can about that student. They can identify potential issues with a student before it becomes a problem here.”

About 200 additional Marines and civil-service staff support those instructors as the team helps fledgling Marines not only prepare for their eventual military job, but also fine-tune their basic Marine skills.

“This duty puts you outside the norm

and definitely lets you shine in your MOS,” declared Gunnery Sergeant Brandon S. Foote, a Financial Management School instructor.

Entry-level students can be there between two weeks and three months, depending on the school and even longer if they are waiting for a new class to convene. That’s a long time for very junior Marines who now have paychecks and more discretionary time.

“We would be remiss in our duties if we just talked to students about the MOS,” noted Foote. “I like to set aside about an hour a day to talk about what they will be facing the next four years ... how to purchase a car, about credit reports, how to wear their uniform, not to get married early on ... just the variety of pitfalls junior Marines can find themselves in.”

Other instructors agree: The training is not just about passing on job-related

information; it involves the whole-Marine concept.

“You’ve got to put in the time from sunup to sundown to get what you’re looking for out of students, from the basics of making racks to standing duty,” confirmed Ground Supply School instructor Staff Sergeant Ramon I. Karney. “Even after you go home for the day, you’re still going to get phone calls. You still have to lead; it never stops,” he said, after more than 18 months of instructing. “We’re preparing these Marines for the next level of responsibility.”

“We are solidifying the transformation from boot camp through MCT,” explained Col Bertholf, who noted that each instructor has about 45 students per class. “The instructors here essentially get a new platoon every couple of months or so. They provide leadership from ‘Reveille’ to ‘Lights Out.’ Unlike the fleet, where you get a return on your investment, here we invest time and attention, and it pays forward to the fleet.”

In a way, instructors are investing in their own future because they are training Marines with whom, odds are, they will one day serve.

“What drives me in this duty are the Marines,” revealed SSgt Jere L. Cribb II about his finance students. “To know that one day I’m going to step into a shop and see the product that we’ve given to the Marine Corps, and now they’re going to be under our charge, that is a great feeling of accomplishment.”

With the end product in mind, Cribb said he goes back to the basics.

“The first thing I do when they come here is start from the boots and work my way up,” he said, literally meaning how to care for combat boots, but figuratively meaning a whole lot more. “Being an instructor forces me to go back to the basics,” he explained. “I have to make sure students know where to find answers, so I have to go back to the Marine Corps orders and directives and make sure I know what I’m telling them is absolutely correct.”

SSgt Vivian J. Boone said that many times her new administrative students enter the school with a mindset that they’re going to be an administrator, “but they don’t focus on the fact that they’re going to first have to uphold the Marine Corps concept,” she said. “We also teach them to be model citizens, how to act, how to dress, how to present themselves to the civilian population because they are representing the Marine Corps at all times.”

Quality instructors may experience ultimate job satisfaction from a casual conversation with one of their peers in the operating forces.



**GySgt Zachary Reilly, an instructor in the Motor Transport and Maintenance Instructional Company, Logistics Operations School, MCCSSS, explains to students the disassembly of a valve body on a transmission during a practical-application exercise. (Photo by Sgt Mark E. Morrow Jr.)**

“When I hear Marines in my field in the fleet comment to me about how well-prepared or well-behaved they judge Marines that I’ve instructed, that’s when I know I’ve done a good job, and that is a very rewarding feeling,” said SSgt Sandra A. Fisher about instructing ground-supply students. “I teach my students that the term ‘I don’t know’ is never acceptable.

They have to know where to find all the answers, and they have to show me that they know before they will leave here.”

“What gives you goose bumps is when you teach an entry-level Marine who later comes back for an advanced course, and he or she seeks you out and tells you that everything you taught them was accurate,” divulged GySgt Torrence P. Henry, a



**Maintaining fitness while a student is important, so SSgt Jason Silva, an instructor in the Personnel Administration School, demonstrates proper techniques for running the Marine Corps obstacle course at MCCSSS.**



**GySgt Rosa M. Locke, right, an instructor in the Financial Management School, inspects the work of Pvt Devin M. Patlan, Class 5-12, FMS, during a practical application exercise.**



CPL HOLLY A. WILLIAMS

**GySgt Joseph M. Marshall, left, an instructor in the Marine Corps Water Survival School, teaches rescue techniques to Marines during their practical application exercise.**

logistics instructor. “The Marine Corps institution is one that is all about passing on knowledge, customs and traditions, and this is just a part of it.”

The occupational fields represented at MCCSSS vary in size from logistics and supply operations, which is very large, to financial management and disbursing.

“When students come into logistics operations at the entry level, nearly 100 percent have no idea what that means,” SSgt David F. Cain, a logistics instructor, said.

“Every student learns differently, so you have to find something that each can relate to. Some catch on quickly; some might take halfway through the course before the lightbulb comes on, when they finally understand what their role is going to be in the Marine Corps air-ground task force and what the MOS is all about and how important it is in the Corps. It’s sometimes frustrating getting the bulb to come on. Sometimes it’s hard to find the switch, but eventually you find a way, and that makes you feel good.”

The Water Survival School is different in that it leads to a secondary rather than primary MOS. Students graduating as a water survival instructor will return to the operating forces to teach fellow Marines water survival.

“Water is the ultimate equalizer,” noted GySgt Joseph M. Marshall, water survival instructor. “You can be the best land Marine in the world and do 300 PFTs [physical fitness tests], but water will wear you out.”

Marshall explained that most of their students are more senior Marines. Some,

like Marshall himself, had been on drill-instructor duty and had enjoyed the challenge of teaching water survival there. He emphasized that the training is rigorous.

“It you choose this ticket, it’s a full ride,” he said. “It’s 59 miles in the pool in three weeks and a continuous growing process after you graduate to maintain the WSI [water survival instructor] certification.”

One of his fellow water survival instructors, GySgt Ken L. Reynolds, agreed and added, “This instructor billet is challenging and will be looked at as something that is above and beyond, something that the Marine Corps deems important.”

Being selected as an MCCSSS instructor involves several steps and can start as a request from an individual Marine or as a choice by the occupational field monitor at Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps.

“I didn’t initially choose this duty; the monitor assigned me,” said GySgt Juan R. Ortegon, an instructor in the Personnel Administration School, who extended one year from his original three-year tour. “I found that I enjoy teaching and passing along the knowledge I have acquired. When a student finally gets it, it motivates me. I look at it as shaping my MOS because all entry-level administration Marines, enlisted and officers, come through here.”

Ortegon recently was named Instructor of the Year in highly charged competition across the four large schools at MCCSSS.

All potential instructors are screened by the chief instructor at each MOS school, and then they attend the basic instructor course at the Train the Trainer School. The weeklong training familiarizes them with military-instruction techniques, how to teach from the “platform,” followed by evaluation from master instructors to ensure they know what they’re doing and can handle the class. Finally, they go through a “murder board” of their peers and the chief instructor to certify them as “good to go.” Instructors receive performance reviews throughout their tour.

Teaching basic-level students is distinctly different from instructing advanced-level staff NCOs and officers, so those instructors receive advanced training and screening before they are cleared for that.

“The instructors who teach the senior staff NCOs and officers are the best of the best because it is imperative they have



**Students in the Financial Management School receive instruction from Sgt Carter R. Hilton. (Photo by Cpl Bryce J. Burton)**

their act together,” stressed Col Bertholf. In some cases they are teaching their peers who have returned for advanced training.

“Everything we do starts at the basics and works back up, no matter what level we’re teaching,” noted SSgt Cribb. “Unlike entry-level students, where we bring them up to the basics, we have to pull advanced students back to the basics. They may know Steps A, B and D, but forgot Step C, so we give them that step. We remind them where to find the answers.”

“If you see things that need improvement in your MOS, then come back to the schoolhouse and put your stamp on the Marines who are coming out there,” said SgtMaj Robinson. “It’s the challenge of being that expert in your MOS; when you are teaching it, you should be the resident expert, teaching the latest and the greatest. You’re polishing yourself as an instructor, plus you’re getting the PT [physical training] and the opportunity to lead and mentor Marines on a daily basis.”

All those advantages can equate to instructors standing out in their field.

“When you come here, you are going to be amidst a significant number of staff NCOs in your MOS, and you compete with them,” noted the commanding officer. “If you do well, you are going to have an outstanding fitness report that will make it easy for a briefer on a promotion board to say, ‘Hey, we need to promote this Marine.’”

That promising statement appears to be validated.

SSgt Boone was selected for the warrant officer program after becoming an instructor. In fact, she noted that all three Personnel Administration School instructors who submitted warrant officer packages were selected. “I had submitted for warrant officer once before I got here, but was not selected,” Boone remarked. “Teaching the MOS here enables me to be a benefit to the warrant officer field, and I believe it had a lot to do with my selection.”

GySgt Marshall, who was previously a drill instructor, was selected for gunnery sergeant from the “below zone,” meaning he was promoted over peers. He believes the instructor duty contributed to his selection, that it was part of what he called his career “road map.”

“Promotion is based on performance, and if you’ve had a special-duty assignment, if you’ve had combat duty, then a duty like this can provide that diverse background promotion boards are looking for,” he surmised.

Physical fitness is a big deal at MCCSSS.

The school occupies part of the 1,600 acres that make up Camp Johnson, roughly 12 miles north of Camp Lejeune near

**Command runs, led by the commander and sergeant major, promote physical fitness and a productive learning environment, as well as unit cohesion, pride, self-esteem, teamwork and camaraderie.**



SGT MARK E. MORROW JR.

Jacksonville, N.C. The training ground is steeped in Marine Corps history since the Corps acquired it in 1941 to establish Marine Barracks New River. It is home to Montford Point, renamed in 1974 after SgtMaj Gilbert “Hashmark” Johnson, a legendary Marine. Nearly 20,000 African-American recruits, including Johnson, were trained there until 1949 when the U.S. military was fully integrated. Many of the original buildings are preserved as historic landmarks.

“We PT every day,” said Col Bertholf. “At 1530 this place looks like an Olympic training camp. Each student does an inventory PFT, then PT while they’re here, and we do a graduation PFT to see if they’ve improved ... and that will reflect in their pros and cons,” he added, talking about proficiency-and-conduct markings they receive when they leave school.

“As an instructor, this is not a place where you come to drop your pack,” the colonel vigorously emphasized. “You’re going to work your a-- off. I am looking for Marines who are hungry, who want a challenge and who want to know you are competing and cutting yourself out from your peer group.”

There is great potential at MCCSSS to influence the future of the Corps.

“We encourage Marines in the operating forces who have recent combat experience to come here and make the future of their MOS based on their experience,” Col Bertholf explained.

*Editor’s note: For more information, contact Ground Supply School Operations Chief, (910) 450-1006; Personnel Administration School Senior Instructor, (910) 450-1066; Logistics Operations School Academics Chief/Chief Instructor, (910) 450-1164; Marine Corps Combat Water Survival School Operations Chief, (910) 450-0909; or Financial Management School Comptroller Instructional Officer in Charge, (910) 450-0512.*

*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.*



**Leatherneck—On the Web**

See more photos and a video on MCCSSS at [www.mca-marines.org/leatherneck/MCCSSS](http://www.mca-marines.org/leatherneck/MCCSSS)

# In the Highest Tradition

Edited by R. R. Keene and Tina Pearce



**SgtMaj Ronald L. Green, I Marine Expeditionary Force sergeant major, congratulates Maj Robb McDonald after the major was awarded a Silver Star for his role in repelling an enemy attack inside Camp Bastion, Afghanistan, Sept. 14, 2012. McDonald risked his life to lead Marines away from a building that could have become a death trap. He later shot and killed an attacker and directed two helicopter attacks that killed several other insurgents.**

## Silver Star for Special Ops Marine: He Led Battle During Airfield Attack



Major Robb McDonald, a former enlisted Marine and currently the air officer with 1st Marine Special Operations Battalion, Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command, was awarded the Silver Star at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., Dec. 9, 2013, for taking immediate action and command when his squadron came under ground attack from 15 insurgents at a coalition airfield in southwestern Afghanistan.

Lieutenant General John A. Toolan, Commanding General, I Marine Expeditionary Force, pinned the medal on McDonald, who in 2012, was the executive officer of Marine Attack Squadron 211, Third Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward).

“Murphy’s Law is alive and well wherever you go,” LtGen Toolan said. “That’s the great thing about being a United States Marine ... you adjust and overcome.”

The enemy killed McDonald’s commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Christopher Raible, and Sergeant Bradley W. Atwell. Six aircraft also were destroyed Sept. 14, 2012, during a night attack on Camp Bastion, and McDonald took control of the Marines.

“There was a lot more going on than what was read in [my award] citation,” McDonald said. “It was a collaborative effort of everybody that was out there, and I’m being awarded for that effort.”

While under attack, McDonald borrowed a rifle, engaged the enemy and coordinated two helicopter strikes that ended the attack.

“For those of you that aren’t aware of the fact that every Marine is a basic rifleman, those guys proved it in spades on that particular day,” LtGen Toolan said.

After mentioning the men he fought alongside during the attack, McDonald addressed his wife and the battle she dealt with simultaneously.

While McDonald was fighting opposing forces, his infant son was undergoing a major surgery. Jennifer McDonald received news of the attack and had to pray for both her son and her husband.

“After 16 hours, and after everyone in the squadron called, I called and let her know I was alive,” McDonald said.

Although two Marines were killed during the attack, many were saved due to the efforts of McDonald and the Marines he commanded.

Cpl Scott Reel  
Combat Correspondent, I MEF

## A Combat Tour in the Jungle Resulted in a Bronze Star 43 Years Later



It had been 43 years since rifleman Lance Corporal Michael Carey left Vietnam. Like most Marines, he was just glad to get out alive.

During his yearlong combat tour, he was written up for an award by his company commander, the CO of Company E, 2d Battalion, Seventh Marine Regiment. When the company left Vietnam, he was transferred to “Hotel” Co, 2d Bn, 5th Marines and remained in Vietnam. The initial recommendation for the Bronze Star was not acted on.

“I found the original letter four years ago [while] going through my military records,” said Carey, now 63 and living in Frisco, Texas.

He contacted Marines he had served with in Vietnam and asked if they would be willing to write support letters on his behalf. They did. Then he located his former company commander, Captain Charles Mulherin, who wrote the original letter, along with First Lieutenant Steve Petto, his platoon leader. They wrote supporting letters of recommendation for the Bronze Star medal with combat “V.”

Carey then submitted a request with notarized documents through the office of his local congressman, Rep. Sam Johnson. Carey was formally awarded the Bronze Star with combat “V” by Rep. Johnson on Nov. 9, 2013, in McKinney, Texas.

The award citation recognized Carey’s service in connection with combat opera-

tions against communist forces from February to October 1970 while serving with 7th Marines.

On March 26, 1970, in the Que Son Valley 35 miles southwest of Da Nang, LCpl Carey was the point man of a patrol when he tripped an "enemy firing device." His quick response allowed the squad to take cover and saved the nearest Marines from deadly shrapnel. The force of the blast staggered Carey and caused bleeding from both ears. He refused medical evacuation "as we were short on men," he said.

LCpl Jim Ladden, the Marine directly behind Carey, took shrapnel in his right arm and leg while diving for cover. He needed to be evacuated. In a letter he stated, "If Mick hadn't alerted us so quickly, I would have walked into the brunt of the blast, surely causing my death. He saved my life that day." Ladden and Carey have remained close since.

Carey also was recognized for his continued disregard of his own safety during seven continuous days on Operation Imperial Lake in I Corps as he helped to maneuver his squad to find and engage a fierce "dug-in" North Vietnamese Army battalion. In close-quarter fighting, the Marines inflicted heavy casualties on the NVA and broke their will, causing them to retreat. The seven-day intense battle ended with three Marines killed and 32



Former LCpl Michael Carey, right, displays his Bronze Star with combat "V" presented 43 years after his heroic action in Vietnam. The presentation was made by Texas Congressman Sam Johnson, center, and the mayor of McKinney, Texas, Brian Loughmiller, left, Nov. 9, 2013.

seriously wounded needing emergency evacuation. The enemy suffered 54 dead, and six prisoners of war were taken.

"During this battle, we watched helicopters being shot down and crashing, napalm canisters being dropped so close to us that we could feel the intense heat and hear the enemy's death screams," Carey said.

"I served with some brave men, and we were very aggressive, causing fear in the enemy. All of the men in our squad, platoon and company, all deserve this same award."

While operating in the mountainous jungles for most of his tour, Carey was

wounded and awarded three Purple Hearts. He contracted malaria three times, typhoid fever, and dealt with bouts of dysentery, hookworm, ringworm, jungle rot and immersion foot. "We would sometimes go days without food and water and being forced to eat whatever we could find."

Carey is now 100 percent disabled. "It's been extremely difficult on all of us that served in heavy combat and witnessing so much death and destruction. ... I know I'm lucky to be alive, so I look at life completely different than most."

Story courtesy of Michael Carey

## 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 2013:



### Bronze Star With Combat "V"

**SSgt Aren C. Brandfass**, 1st Marine Special Operations Battalion (MSOB), U.S. Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command (MARSOC)  
**Capt Ian G. Dunlap**, 2d MSOB, MARSOC  
**Maj Bradley M. Ledbetter**, 1st MSOB, MARSOC  
**Capt Jesse D. Pletts**, 1st MSOB, MARSOC



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

**Capt Cody P. Buras**, II Marine Expeditionary Force Headquarters Group, II Marine Expeditionary Force  
**Sgt Ryan J. Eskandary**, MHG, II MEF  
**SSgt Matthew A. Harrison**, 2d MSOB, MARSOC  
**Sgt Wesley Valencia**, 2d MSOB, MARSOC  
**SSgt Joseph Wade**, 1st MSOB, MARSOC  
**SSgt Kyle D. Witkowski**, 1st MSOB, MARSOC



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

**Cpl Dillon J. Cornn**, MHG, II MEF  
**Sgt Mario J. Gonzales II**, 3d Bn, Fourth Marine Regiment, First Marine Division  
**Capt Joshua A. Gregory**, MHG, II MEF  
**LCpl Luke T. Nyenhuis**, MHG, II MEF  
**Sgt Brandon W. Wilson**, 2d MSOB, MARSOC  
**SSgt Ronnie Wilson Jr.**, 2d MSOB, MARSOC  
**Sgt William J. Zastawny**, 1st MSOB, MARSOC



# A “Celebration” of 2/1

## Battalion Dedicates Monument To Its Vietnam War Marines and Sailors

Story and photos by Nancy Lee White Hoffman

The long line of Vietnam veterans, along with their family and friends, made its way through the fall foliage along the concrete-and-brick pathway to one of the farthest sites in Semper Fidelis Memorial Park, adjacent to the National Museum of the Marine Corps, Triangle, Va., Nov. 8, 2013.

Led by two Marine bagpipers and a color guard from the U.S. Naval Academy, the group was on hand for the dedication of a monument to the approximately 6,000 Marines and sailors who served in the 2d Battalion, First Marine Regiment, from September 1965 to May 1971, during the Vietnam War.

Lieutenant General Jack Klimp, USMC (Ret), guest speaker, said that the day was “a celebration of young men who left their homes and traveled thousands of miles to fight in a country many had never even heard of before—to fight for what they believed in and to, ultimately, fight for their buddies. ... They asked for virtually nothing from America. It was they who protected us, our families, our beloved people, and it was they who put it all out there to shield America. They could have done so many other things with their lives, lives so filled with potential. But, they chose to move to the sounds of the guns. ... They were, and are, American heroes.”



Below left: Maj Phillip “Phil” Leslie, USMC (Ret), vice president of the Vietnam Veterans of 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, and chairman of the monument committee, addresses the crowd gathered for the ceremony, which museum officials said had the largest attendance to date for a monument dedication. Leslie served in “Golf” Co, 1968-69. Behind him is Paul Mangan, the organization’s president, who served in “Foxtrot” Co, 1965-66.

Below right: Seated, from left, are Renee Lugo, the daughter of Medal of Honor Marine LCpl Emilio De La Garza Jr.; Mrs. Diane Norris; Col Donald J. Norris, USMC (Ret); Col W.V.H. “Bill” White, USMC (Ret); Mrs. Arlene Duncan; and Col Billy R. Duncan, USMC (Ret). Norris, White and Duncan were commanding officers of 2/1.



Left: Three of the battalion’s 14 COs during the war (only five are still living) attended the ceremony and unveiled the monument. From left: Col Donald Norris, USMC (Ret), Republic of Vietnam, Sept. 13, 1970-March 7, 1971; Col Billy Duncan, USMC (Ret), RVN, Jan. 9, 1968-Aug. 9, 1968, partially obstructed; and Col Bill White, USMC (Ret), RVN, Aug. 9, 1969-May 15, 1970.



Above: Veterans of 2/1, along with their family and friends, make their way to the site for the dedication and blessing of their monument.

Left: MGySgt John Rode, USMC (Ret); LtCol Sean Smith; and Maj Lansdale “Dale” Williams, USMC (Ret) lead the procession to the monument site. Williams, one of the monument committee members, was a corporal, 0311, in 1st Platoon, F/2/1 during 1969-70.



Enjoying the fruits of their labor, monument committee members pose with the Vietnam Veterans of 2d Battalion, 1st Marines monument. From left: LtGen Jack Klimp, USMC (Ret); Col Bill White, USMC (Ret); Maj Phil Leslie, USMC (Ret), chairman; LtCol Clyde Woods, USMC (Ret); Cpl Bruce Oliver, USMC (Ret); and Dale Williams, USMC (Ret).

LtGen Klimp, who was a platoon commander, company executive officer and company commander of Co G, 2/1 during the war, said: “When I remember the very young men, many of whom are here today, and the days we spent together then, I am continually amazed, for these were mostly recent civilians, barely out of high school, called up from the cities and the farms to do their year in hell and then return.

“I am constantly reminded of the steadiness with which these Marines and sailors shouldered their incredible responsibilities and of how accepting most of them were

in the face of continuous peril.”

They went on Operations Dagger Thrust, Harvest Moon, New York, Troy, Oregon, Jay, Hastings, Cannon, Coffee, Independence, Lafayette, Stone, Medina, Granite, Pegasus, Scotland II, Napoleon Saline, Meade River, Pipestone Canyon, Durham Peak, Dubois Square and Scotch Orchard in areas called Hue-Phu Bai, Dodge City, Da Nang, Quang Tri, Hai Lang Forest, Con Thien, Khe Sanh, Cau Ha, Go Noi Island and Marble Mountain.

They were “battle-wise and battle-hardened 20-year-olds teaching inexper-

enced 19-year-olds the intricate lessons of the unforgiving battlefield,” said LtGen Klimp, also remembering, “The flawless skill of the young squad and fire team leaders as we moved through possibly hostile villages and weed-choked trails in the black of night—their willingness to risk their lives to save other Marines in peril. . . .

... “These men are my heroes. They did not just carry on the legacy of the Corps—the legacy of Marines; they added to it and passed it along to the current generation of United States Marines. They are peerless examples of the courage of mind, body and spirit resident in Marines since 1775.”

And, as LtGen Klimp told the group, “The war exacted a heavy price on the battalion. Many gave much. Many gave everything. Nearly 500 were killed in action or were classified as missing in action.”

Three were awarded the Medal of Honor, all posthumously, and another three were awarded the Navy Cross.

Time will not erase what the battalion accomplished and sacrificed in that far-away land more than 40 years ago, and this monument will help serve as a reminder.

Thank you, 2/1, for a job well done. A belated welcome back to “the world.”

## 2d Battalion, 1st Marines Medal of Honor Awardees



**PFC Gary W. Martini**  
“Fox” Co, 1967



**PFC Dewayne T. Williams**  
“Hotel” Co, 1968



**LCpl Emilio A. De La Garza Jr.**  
“Echo” Co, 1970



LCPJ SHALITEL DOMINGUEZ

**Sgt John E. Kotner II, a motor transport operator with CLR-1, 1st MLG, and his family attend a capstone ceremony at MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., honoring Marines at the end of their military careers and assisting with their successful transition into the civilian world.**

By LtCol Ted Timmerman, USMC (Ret),  
LtCol Robert Hepler, USMCR  
and Maj Erik Orient, USMC (Ret)

**T**hrough the past 12 years of conflict, you planned countless operations, conducted miles of road marches, led hours of tribal engagement sessions, and participated in multiple cultural training discussions. In so doing, you prevailed against a cunning enemy. In the next 12 months, either you or your Marines face a much easier operation, although one that still requires a significant level of planning for success.

Without a doubt you would answer “yes” to the following questions. Would you require a squad leader to brief a plan before leaving the forward operating base (FOB) on a dismounted patrol? Does a convoy commander consider uniforms and equipment, rehearsals, weapon test fires and comm checks prior to a resupply operation? Is an assessment of the human terrain and a discussion of possible second- and third-order effects part of any civil-military operations campaign? Do Marines incorporate rules of engagement and cultural norms into their thoughts, interactions and speech when in a new area of operations?

The answers came to your mind without a second thought because you intuitively

# TRANSITION PLANNING

## Education Is Your “Weapon” As the Corps Downsizes

understand the importance of planning, conducting rehearsals, thinking ahead, focusing on the objective and combining intelligence with operations. Do not forget what you learned in combat; those same lessons are needed when transitioning from the active-duty ranks.

You are well aware of fiscally constrained force-shaping options that may require the Corps to reduce to 174,000 Marines. A variety of programs and incentives might cause you to consider whether the time and conditions are right to transition from the active ranks to another component, civilian employment or educational pursuits. Maybe you will not transition in the next year, but one of your Marines will. For many, that transition may begin by pursuing additional educational objectives or enhanced skills training. Set the conditions for success by asking and answering three questions: What is the desired end state? What is the plan? Who can help?

You and your Marines have all the tools, training and experience needed to build an effective transition plan. Treat transition like any other operation and you will win. Step off without a plan to reach the objective, and you know the rest.

When your journey involves a stop at higher or advanced education, a dizzying array of considerations includes online learning, hybrid delivery methods, graduate and/or undergraduate certificates, vocational training, financial aid, accreditation and “military-friendly” designations. Done correctly, Marines emerge after several months or years with exactly the skills, connections and competencies needed to succeed. Unfortunately, many squander precious educational benefits and unrecoverable time on a path that goes nowhere.

When thinking about a future after the

Corps, consider education or skills training your weapon and a desired job your target. As you already know from your training, one must be suited for the other. Use your benefits wisely by becoming self-aware and thinking about your future. What capabilities should your education provide? What type of civilian profession interests you? What is the employment situation like in that career field? Answering these types of questions is vital in deciding where you go and what you study.

There are innumerable factors involved in obtaining the best and most relevant education possible. One at the very top of the list must be accreditation. Accreditation is essentially the reviewing process that establishes a program as legitimate. Aim for a school that is regionally accredited and generally steer away from those that dodge this label in favor of ones like “nationally accredited,” “accredited



SGT RICHARD BLUMENSTEIN

**Ryan M. Martin, a 25-year-old Marine veteran at the University of Massachusetts Amherst campus in August 2013, said, “My school is 100 percent paid for.” He is using his Post 9/11 GI Bill to earn a bachelor’s in resource economics.**

worldwide,” or “fully accredited.” Be wary of for-profit institutions and deals that seem too good to be true. If you ever find yourself thinking, “I never knew it was so easy to get a college degree,” stop and think again. You may unknowingly direct your time, energy and benefits at a

“diploma mill” that provides a throwaway degree.

Another potential distraction is the military-friendly designation that many institutions hold. Dig deeply into what this label means at the institution you choose. Does the assessment of a school’s veteran services mean that it offers dedicated academic counselors and discounted tuition for veterans or that there is convenient parking and something that approximates a veterans lounge? Many high-quality institutions truly value veterans and are rated as military friendly. Just know that the label might not be related to incentives and programs that are valuable to you or your future.

In the end, it matters little what you think about a program or what that school thinks about it. The people whose opinions matter most are those who can influence hiring decisions. Find successful people in your desired profession and ask them what they think about your educational or skills-training plan before committing to something that is not respected within the industry. Remember, you need the right weapon to engage the target.

Online learning has made tremendous educational and popularity gains in the past 10 years, with some claiming it is equal in quality to on-campus programs. There is absolutely no doubt that some online programs afford a degree of flexibility unmatched in the classroom, and that may be exactly what you need. Be sure to consider, however, the quality of the online program you pursue. Accreditation standards still apply, and you should be aware of how online degrees are perceived in your chosen career field.

If you decide online learning is right for you, think about the struggles and suc-

**Cpl Zachary D. Edwards, an infantryman with 3d Battalion, Sixth Marine Regiment, found out that job fairs are a key part of the transitioning process when he visited the National Job Fair and Education Expo (below and opposite page) at Goettge Memorial Field House, Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., Sept. 25, 2013.**



CPL CHARLES CLARK

cesses you had with MarineNet and non-resident PME (professional military education) courses. Then, consider conducting a leader’s recon and rehearsal by trying out individual courses through accredited universities or at free sites like [www.coursera.org](http://www.coursera.org). As a last pre-combat check before stepping into online learning, go to any Internet search engine and type in the name of your school with the additional terms “scam,” “diploma mill” and “accreditation.” You may be surprised by what you learn.

Finally, there are many important secondary considerations when choosing a school. They include proximity to family and medical facilities, geographical preference, institutional size, student-to-teacher ratio and employment-placement statistics. While all of these factors are

legitimate, simply keep in mind that you are aiming for employment, and picking the right weapon to hit that target is the most important consideration.

Getting yourself to and through college or vocational training is not the most complex operation you have undertaken, but there are quite a few boxes to check if you want to make the transition process seamless and successful. It is reasonable to start planning for this next step two years prior to the first day of classes.

The first 12 months of your timeline should be dedicated to researching major institutions, determining employment opportunities in a given field, saving money, ensuring you are set up to receive GI Bill benefits and deciding what metrics you will use to measure success. Do not skip that critical last step. If your vision for



CPL URIEL AVEVANDANO



PFC CHRISTOPHER JOHNS

**Above left: The Honorable Arne Duncan, Secretary of Education, discusses the benefits of education aboard Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Ariz., in September 2013.**

**Above right: Sgt Lance Joames receives assistance from Amanda Etter, an education specialist at the MCAS Miramar, Calif., education center. Base and station education centers serve a transition-preparation function.**



CPL CHARLES CLARK

the future involves significant financial benchmarks, you may be on a different path than someone who is most concerned with family time and quality of life.

No later than the 12-month mark, have your applications in the mail to several institutions. Start early because good programs fill up fast, and you will want to reserve your spot before all the boat spaces are gone. In preparation, recognize that you may need to do all of the following: obtain official transcripts, gather letters of recommendation, take or retake standardized placement tests (sometimes not required at the undergraduate level for adult learners or veterans with an honorable discharge) and apply for federal and state financial aid.

The financial riddle can be challenging to understand. First, visit your campus financial-aid office and file a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Be sure to apply for state financial aid. You will learn what grants, subsidized loans and unsubsidized loans you can use for education costs. In the best case, the Post 9/11 GI Bill and any federal and state aid will cover all your tuition and fees while also providing a book and housing stipend.

Often, however, private school tuition or nonresident public-school tuition costs exceed what those resources fund, so you will want to determine if your school participates in the Yellow Ribbon Program. That is an agreement between a school and the Department of Veterans Affairs to make up part or all of the difference between Post 9/11 GI Bill coverage and actual tuition costs.

Even with all of these opportunities, there will be numerous unforeseen expenses, and you are best served to arrive at school with a substantial monetary cushion so you can avoid unnecessary loans. Managed correctly, you should have sufficient funds to graduate debt free.

When you receive the good news that you have been accepted to a college or university, there is still significant work to be done. You will need to arrange for housing, have your military record evaluated by the school for civilian educational credit, register for classes, establish contact with the VA or your campus veterans outreach office, purchase class materials and complete campus orientation and placement activities. This is no small feat when you are still on active duty, deploying, trying to arrange a TMO (transportation management office) move and conducting administrative- and medical-separation activities.

Do not underestimate the time or effort involved in gathering materials and getting ready for your transition.

Once you arrive on campus, settle in and then start charting your academic path until graduation. This involves knowing how many credits you can receive for your military training and experience. It is often a two-step process, beginning with the creation of a transcript listing all ACE (American Council on Education)-evaluated military credits that have comparable courses offered by your school. Step two answers the real question: Which of those credits will satisfy degree requirements?

Frequently, very few military credits

satisfy degree requirements due to the difference between applied knowledge (what you learned in the service) and theoretical knowledge (what the university is teaching). Reconcile yourself to this fact, get over it and move on.

As a Marine, you possess many skills useful as a student: self-discipline, time management, the ability to handle stress and chaos and the ability to think on your feet and figure things out. Tap these to achieve academic success. Combine them with foresight, planning and the Post 9/11 GI Bill, and you can have a superb educational experience and a fast track to the rest of your life. Unfortunately, there are many ways to shoot on the wrong target or put one into the berm. Unlike the range, you do not get assigned to an alibi relay. Those rounds are downrange, and you can make up for them only with significant reinvestments of precious time and money.

The old adage from “Alice in Wonderland,” “If you don’t know where you are going, any road will get you there,” does not apply with transition. “If you do not know where you are going, *you will not go anywhere*” is much more appropriate. Marine hallmarks such as force, relentlessness and strength of will are important during the transition from the active component, but finesse, planning and circumspection will carry the day.

The Corps has armed you and your Marines with all you need to win on the battlefield and beyond. Once you identify where you are going, how you will get there and who can help you along the way, you will succeed in this important process.

*Editor’s note: LtCol Ted Timmerman, USMC (Ret) is associate director of the Office of Veterans Programs, The Pennsylvania State University. He has assisted hundreds of student veterans pursue primarily undergraduate degrees.*

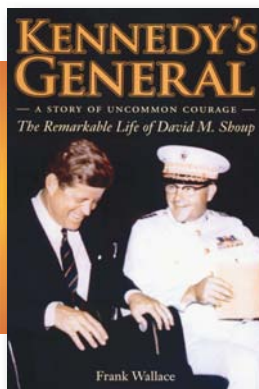
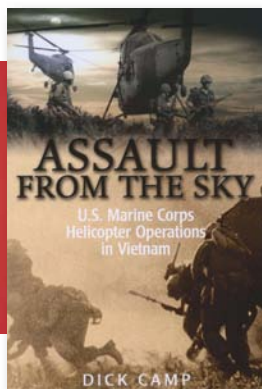
*LtCol Robert Hepler, USMCR spent seven years on active duty before transitioning to the Reserve. He is now a senior vice president at Bank of America where he has been a leader of various veteran transition initiatives within the veteran advocacy group. He previously served as the Western North Carolina Marine For Life Hometown Link.*

*Maj Erik Orient, USMC (Ret) is the Penn State Smeal College of Business director of MBA Student Services. He recently went through the job search process and now advises veteran and civilian students on graduate education and career placement opportunities.*



# Books Reviewed

Unless otherwise noted, these books may be ordered from *The MARINE Shop*. Subscribers may use members' prices. Include \$5.99 for shipping. Virginia residents add 6 percent sales tax; North Carolina residents add 6.75 percent. Prices may change. Make check or money order payable to: MCA, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134, call toll-free: (888) 237-7683, or shop online at [www.marineshop.net](http://www.marineshop.net).



**ASSAULT FROM THE SKY: U.S. Marine Corps Helicopter Operations in Vietnam.** By Dick Camp. Published by Casemate. 264 pages. Stock #1612001289. \$29.66 MCA Members. \$32.95 Regular Price.

There are two reasons why "Assault From the Sky: U.S. Marine Corps Helicopter Operations in Vietnam" is so distinctive that it deserves an appellation all its own: first, combining qualities of superlative research and scholarship for the first book to document the sacrifice and heroism of helicopter crews in Vietnam between 1962 and 1975; and, second, the author, Dick Camp, himself.

First, the subject.

During the more than a decade of American involvement in South Vietnam, some 400 Marine Corps helicopters were lost in combat and operational accidents, resulting in the deaths of more than 800 crewmen and passengers. It's inexplicable that only a handful of articles have focused upon what is commonly referred to as "America's first helicopter war."

The author admits that his narrative, compressed into three main sections, serves only as an introduction for a much-needed future analysis of successful and failed helicopter missions. Nonetheless, from unpublished sources, such as the Marine Corps University Archives and the Marine Corps History Division, U.S. government publications, unit records and diaries, as well as personal interviews, evolves a cogent, yet stunning, strategic

history that the reader will find difficult to put down.

Of immense value in setting the tone for what's to follow, the reader should first review Appendix A, "Marine Corps Helicopter Development, 1948-1969."

Part One, "The Buildup, 1962-1966," carries us through six chapters of early actions accompanied by detailed maps and charts, as well as hitherto unpublished personal photographs from the participants themselves. Part Two focuses on the increasingly heavy fighting that occurred between 1967 and 1969, with Part Three, "The Bitter End, 1975," describing what occurred on Saigon rooftops and at the Defense Attaché Compound. Vivid eyewitness accounts of the fighting that took place at the U.S. Embassy during the final days and hours conclude the account of Operation Frequent Wind, the largest evacuation in helicopter history—1,373 Americans and 5,595 Vietnamese.

As for author Dick Camp, let this be said: The past 100 years, say, from 1914 until now, have probably produced more than a quarter of a million military pundits writing about every conceivable subject of warfare in every imaginable type of media print. Based upon Camp's output to date, his smooth narrative skill in both fiction and nonfiction, and his promise for better writing to come, he has to be among the top 25. He would be embarrassed by, and actually null, any ranking alongside or comparison to the likes of Samuel Eliot

Morison and others. No special glory, title, honor or distinguishing designation for him.

For a glimpse of Camp's achievements, see R. R. Keene's eminently praiseworthy review of Camp's second venture into fiction, "The Killing Ground: A Novel of Marines in the Vietnam War" (*Leatherneck*, September 2013, page 59).

For a greater insight into the mind and character of the man, one has to look no further than Camp's first book, "Lima-6: A Marine Company Commander in the Vietnam War," that is, Lima Co, 3d Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment (June 1967-January 1968). Read between the lines and you get this: men who adored him because Dick wouldn't have a man in his company that he did not think was as good as himself. Hence, full equality that bred respect and love for a father as well as a captain. Not one of his boys would have hesitated stepping between him and death.

The only deference Dick Camp might yield or submit to is this: "Son of the United States Marine Corps."

Don DeNevi

*Editor's note: Don DeNevi is a frequent book reviewer for Leatherneck magazine.*

**KENNEDY'S GENERAL: A Story of Uncommon Courage—The Remarkable Life of David M. Shoup.** By Frank Wallace. Published by Minuteman Press. 183 pages. Softcover. Stock #0988200740. \$17.96 MCA Members. \$19.95 Regular Price.

Frank Wallace asked his father, a World War II Marine veteran of Tarawa, about the war. "I was especially fascinated to learn (at the age of nine or ten) that the Marine in dress blues, featured in pictures with President [John F.] Kennedy as the [commander], had [also] served [in] Tarawa," writes the younger Wallace in "Kennedy's General." "I resolved to try to meet him and, though it took several years, as a young Marine lieutenant, I did. I was astonished to find General Shoup the most modest of men."

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Based upon personal interviews with General David M. Shoup and his family, and resources including film history, Wallace has penned a slice of life of our Marine Corps' General Shoup.

Historians writing of the assault on Tarawa suggest the landing wasn't necessary since it served no military purpose. Gen Shoup's belief was that Tarawa was indeed crucial for strategic purposes. Void of battle plan discussions and schematic sketches of enemy emplacements, the section about Tarawa in "Kennedy's General" is compressed into readable proportions and not intended to be a comprehensive or analytical study.

Wallace does not elaborate on the backgrounds of the two men. President Kennedy was educated in a series of private schools including Harvard. For Gen Shoup, education started in a one-room school and ended at DePauw University. Little has been written on the relationship of President Kennedy and Gen Shoup, and yet it appears to have been close, a point implied by the cover photo of "Kennedy's General." Wallace says of their relationship, "They got along famously." There is little to support they were buddies or pals.

What was it that drew these two men

**[continued on page 62]**

## Leatherneck Book Browser

Charles Young, a World War II corpsman and member of the Sixth Marine Division, adds insight into the "greatest generation" with his latest book **"Letters From the Attic: Save the Last Dance for Me."**

The book is just what the name implies. Finding letters from the 1940s while rummaging through his attic, Young begins a walk through his past and then a search for long-lost friends. The book is those letters from the attic in chronological (mostly) order and may serve as a great primary resource for anyone interested in this pivotal period of American history. It is not a military history book, but instead an inside look into the culture, vernacular and feelings of the time.

One cannot help but be amazed at the innocence of America, and although these were trying times, the book reminds the reader that Americans were united and proud of their country. Friends' letters, both young people Stateside and in the military, provide interesting glimpses into wartime life. One is reminded that each generation of young people has its own lingo.

While the book is a great source of social and cultural history, it also covers Young's training, the war and occupation of Japan. It does not offer a great deal of combat detail. As Young explains, "We were under a tight news blackout. I was in Guadalcanal for eight months and couldn't even mention the name of the island."

The book is available on Amazon.com for \$34.91, hardcover; \$25.69, softcover; and may be downloaded to Kindle for \$3.99. "Letters From the Attic" is published by iUniverse. ISBN-10: 1475976011, ISBN-13: 978-1475976014.

Laura Homan Lacey

*Editor's note: Laura Lacey is the author of "Stay Off the Skyline: The Sixth Marine Division on Okinawa" and "Ortiz: To Live a Man's Life."*

# Leatherneck Line

Edited by Clare A. Guerrero



CPL MELISSA ESCHENBRENNER

Janelle D'Ambrogi, far right, wife of Sgt Chad V. D'Ambrogi, with HMM-364, stands with her church group during a trip to the Grand Canyon. D'Ambrogi has embraced her Corps' family by coordinating "meal teams," providing home-cooked meals to Marine families in need.

## Marine Wife Leads "Meal Team" For Military Families in Need

When life throws a curveball, a well-cooked meal can be enough to get someone back on track. That's why volunteers like Marine wife Janelle D'Ambrogi step in to provide home-cooked meals to fellow military families.

After becoming part of the Marine Corps family a little more than a year ago, D'Ambrogi set her ambitions toward helping Marines and families transition through major life changes.

Janelle D'Ambrogi is the wife of Sgt Chad V. D'Ambrogi, a crew chief and maintainer for CH-46s with Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 364. She said that Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., is her second duty station since she married her Marine husband a year and a half ago. "Our squadron [HMM-364] hired a new family readiness officer [FRO] and had a family day to introduce her. New to the area, I had no friends or commitments and decided that it was important to get involved and use my time wisely, and that this is where I should do it."

D'Ambrogi signed up to begin volunteering through the squadron's FRO and helped plan several events. They prepared meals to welcome families to the squadron and helped guide them to resources.

The program, affectionately dubbed "meal teams," brings together Marine spouses from the squadron sections, enabling them to work together to recruit volunteers and cook meals, explained D'Ambrogi. The prepared meals go to new parents, Marines and family members undergoing surgeries or to Marines and families in need.

"The 'meal team' is important, especially for new mothers who may be struggling with the duties involved in caring for their family addition, as well as the families that may be affected by a life-changing surgery," she said. "To complete these duties, I must be an active and attentive part of the families' lives in the flight line [section] and the entire squadron."

She also works to bring families together with bingo nights, Christmas parties and spa nights throughout the squadron, but her efforts do not stop there.

D'Ambrogi teaches children's church classes at the Marine Memorial Chapel aboard Camp Pendleton and volunteers with the Christian Women's Fellowship Bible studies.

"I am so glad I have chosen to get involved," she said. "It has only been a few months, but I already feel so much more connected here with the other spouses than I did when I was in North Carolina. So many wives draw into themselves and stay at home when in a new situation that military life often brings. This initiative has already and will continue to encourage spouses to become involved, and when you get involved, you know that you are not alone."

Cpl Melissa Eschenbrenner  
PAO, MCAS Miramar, Calif.

## Families Receive Huggies for Christmas

West Coast Marines and sailors were the fortunate recipients of donated diapers from Huggies at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., on Nov. 21, 2013.

The 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit was in charge of facilitating the delivery of diapers to military personnel and their families throughout the base.

Huggies donated the diapers as a gesture of appreciation for the military. This is the second time that MCB Camp Pendleton has received a donation from Huggies, thanks to the generous support of For Families of Active Military.



LCPL DEMETRIUS MORGAN

LCpl Alexander Williams, a supply administrative specialist with the 11th MEU, helps other MEU personnel distribute some of the 150,000 Huggies diapers donated to Marine families Nov. 21, 2013.

“For the second time we are blessed to have Huggies work with us in giving this donation,” said Kyp Hughes, the 11th MEU family readiness officer. “The effort from our volunteers, including Bridget Blehm, who is the founder and director of For Families of Active Military, and our Marines who helped unload all those diapers, is very appreciated.”

Early on the morning of the delivery, Hughes, along with other Marines with the MEU, waited for the donation. Once the truck arrived, the Marines immediately unloaded the palletized diapers. According to Hughes, the 150,000 diapers received are 50,000 more than the last time.

“People sometimes take things like diapers for granted,” said Corporal Patrick Schindlebeck, a warehouse clerk with the 11th MEU. “Anyone with children knows that diapers get expensive, so gestures like this help take the money we were going to contribute to diapers and contribute it to something else—especially with Christmas coming up.”

The MEU was among the nine different units on Camp Pendleton to receive diapers from Huggies. The MEU used its supply warehouse as an outpost from which different units and families could take diapers.

This donation is only one of the many gestures that military personnel receive as thanks for their service. Hughes said that a number of commercial companies are honored to be able to assist families and show support to all the military for the many sacrifices of our active-duty military and their families.

LCpl Demetrius Morgan  
Combat Correspondent, 11th MEU

### Wounded Marines Rehab With Golf

The first injured Marines from Wounded Warrior Battalion West to participate in Operation Game On were professionally fitted for new TaylorMade golf equipment at The Kingdom in Carlsbad, Calif., Nov. 26, 2013.

Operation Game On teaches injured troops how to golf as a means of rehabilitation after suffering combat-related injuries.

Tony Perez created Operation Game On in January 2008 as a rehabilitation program for injured troops at Naval Medical Center San Diego. In 2013, the program expanded to include injured Marines from WWBN-W.

“The program starts with the basics of the golf swing,” Perez said. “We go through chipping, pitching and using the irons.

Staff Sergeant Jacob Nelson, an injured Marine assigned to WWBN-W participating in Operation Game On, said the bond while playing golf helped his recovery.



Injured Marines with WWBN-W tee off during Operation Game On at TaylorMade, The Kingdom, a driving range in Carlsbad, Calif., Nov. 26, 2013. (Photo by LCpl Joshua Murray)

“Struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder myself, just being able to get out with people and enjoying things I used to enjoy instead of sitting in my room helps a lot,” Nelson said.

“I love watching the guys progress,” Nelson added. “Watching guys that haven’t touched a club at all, and here eight weeks later they are improving so much.”

The eight weeks of Operation Game On has brought the Marines to TaylorMade’s golf facility, The Kingdom.

“They’ve earned the right to be here at TaylorMade, The Kingdom,” Perez said. “They’ll get professionally fitted for their

brand-new sets of clubs, golf balls, and anything they need to get on the first tee at no charge to them.”

Perez sees the success with his program every day the injured troops step up to the tee.

“Guys suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder have come to me and said, ‘You have brought me out of my shell,’” Perez said. “Success to me is listening to their laughter.”

LCpl Joshua Murray  
Combat Correspondent, 1 MEF



AIR FIVE—A Marine greets a child during the annual Japan Air Self-Defense Force Nyutabaru Air Base Air Show in Okinawa, Japan, Dec. 1, 2013. The air show marked the first public display of an Osprey in mainland Japan.

CPL BENJAMIN PRYER

# 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, Oct. 1-31, 2013

There are no casualties to report for this month.

### Ray Price

Country Music Hall of Fame's Ray Price, a Marine veteran and one of country music's most popular and durable performers and bandleaders, with more than 100 hits, died Dec. 16, 2013, at his ranch near Mount Pleasant, Texas. One of the last personal connections to another country music great, Hank Williams, Price was 87.

Price was born in Perryville, Texas, and served in the Marine Corps from 1944 to 1946. He began singing in 1948, joining the "Big D Jamboree" in Dallas in 1949. Following a traditional path for country music singers, he moved to Nashville, Tenn., and roomed with Hank Williams for a short time. Price took over running Williams' band, the "Drifting Cowboys," when Williams died.

Some of Price's more well-known songs include "Release Me," "Make the World Go Away," "Danny Boy," and a 1966 honky-tonk gem "Touch My Heart." And his "Crazy Arms," in 1956, was his first No. 1 hit on the country charts. Price's version of "For the Good Times" became a crossover hit on the pop charts as did "I Won't Mention It Again."

He was elected to the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1996.

### Wilfred Billey

Corporal Wilfred E. Billey, a Navajo Code Talker, whose words are inscribed on congressional medals given to his group, died Dec. 12, 2013, in Farmington, N.M. He was 90.

He was one of hundreds of Navajo Code Talkers during World War II who used his native language as a means of communication that the Japanese couldn't decipher.

Billey served with the Second Marine Division and was involved with several island-hopping campaigns.

After the war ended, Billey used the GI Bill to attend college. "I served my country by fighting the war, and then my country served me by sending me to college," said Billey in an August 2003 *Leatherneck* article.

Billey earned a degree in secondary education and worked as a counselor in a high school, eventually becoming a principal.

In his later years, Billey worked with the Navajo Code Talkers Association, sharing with groups and organizations across the country the rich history of the Navajo people and how they helped the Allied Forces win WW II.

### Nolan Beat

Brigadier General Nolan J. Beat, USMC (Ret), who was a forward air controller on Saipan and Tinian and fought on Okinawa during World War II, died Nov. 23, 2013, in Santa Ana, Calif. He was 95.

He enlisted in October 1942 and, following recruit training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., attended Officer Candidates School, Quantico, Va., where he was commissioned in 1943.

He was assigned to Marine aviation and attended engineering maintenance school prior to being assigned as the aircraft maintenance officer of Marine Air Base Defense Group 44, Marine Corps Air Station Mojave, Calif.

In the spring of 1944, he was assigned as an air support officer in Second Marine Division and served with 2d Battalion, Second Marine Regiment at Saipan and Tinian and then with 6th Marines in the Battle of Okinawa. During the Korean

War, he was in charge of a Marine historical unit tasked with recording the Marine aircraft wing at war.

After the Korean War, he served in Marine infantry billets until he returned to Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, in 1956, as an instructor in amphibious warfare and tactics.

By 1960, he was assigned to the Marine Corps Supply Center, Albany, Ga., as staff secretary of the Center and director of Services Division. A lieutenant colonel in 1962, he was with the Defense Supply Agency, Richmond, Va. Following graduation from the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, Washington, D.C., LtCol Beat served as the Division Supply Officer and AC/S, G-4, for the 4thMarDiv Headquarters Nucleus, Camp Pendleton, Calif.

BGen Beat retired from active duty in 1976.

**Col James O. Appleyard**, 96, of Hightstown, N.J. He served with the 2dMarDiv in the Pacific in WW II, was a veteran of the Korean War, and his Marine career ran from 1940 until his retirement in 1966.

He went on to a second career in management at Lockheed Missiles & Space in Sunnyvale, Calif.

**Otho R. Barton**, 74, in Wilsonville, Ore. He served in the Corps from 1957 to 1959. His Marine aircraft wing unit assisted the Nationalist Chinese in the Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1958 in their struggle with Communist China for Quemoy Island.

After active duty, he worked primarily as a long-distance independent truck driver. He loved flying airplanes, driving automobiles and riding motorcycles.

**Col James T. Breckinridge**, 89, at Arbor Acres, Winston-Salem, N.C. The son of a career Marine officer, he was born on May 17, 1924, in Washington, D.C., where his father commanded the Marine Barracks.

As a youth, Breckinridge lived on Marine installations at Quantico, Va.; Parris

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Island, S.C.; and Palo Alto, Calif. In the 1930s, he lived in China when his father commanded the Marine Detachment in Peking. Breckinridge was a graduate of Saint James School in Hagerstown, Md., and was commissioned in August 1945. He joined the 1stMarDiv in North China as the intelligence officer for the 7th Marines, and then as a first lieutenant, Breckinridge commanded the Marine security guard for the American Embassy in Paris.

During the Korean War, Breckinridge saw action as an infantry platoon commander with 5th Marines. The retired Marine served two tours in Vietnam as an advisor to the Vietnamese Marine Corps. Other career highlights included the command of 2/2, 2dMarDiv, MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., and command of the Marine Barracks, Naval Station Great Lakes, Ill.

**Cpl Marvin R. "Ray" Edelman**, 88, of Longview, Texas. He served during WW II from 1943 to 1946.

He and his brother Howard established Edelman's Furniture Inc., the oldest furniture store in Longview. He volunteered with the Longview Cancer Center, Little League, Boy Scouts and Meals on Wheels.

**Frederick P. Frankville**, 84, of Milan, Ill. He was a veteran of the Korean War

who served with D/2/7, 1stMarDiv from December 1950 to September 1951. He was awarded the Silver Star and Purple Heart for wounds in June 1951.

Frankville wrote the book "Running With the Dogs: War in Korea With D/2/7 USMC," which was reviewed in the November 2013 issue of *Leatherneck*.

He was employed with the Rock Island Line Railroad and the Sioux Line Railroad for 44 years. He enjoyed collecting and restoring antique cars and tractors.

**Dean P. Guerin**, 91, of Dallas. He was a WW II veteran of the South Pacific who was awarded the Bronze Star and Purple Heart.

He was one of the founders of the investment banking firm Eppler, Guerin and Turner in 1951 and served as chairman and CEO until he retired in 1988. He also was chairman of General Aluminum Corporation until 2000.

Guerin served on more than 40 corporate boards during the last 50 years, including seven listed on the New York Stock Exchange. He was a Trustee of the Marine Military Academy in Harlingen and was a member of the Naval War College Foundation.

**MSgt James R. Harris**, 60, in Lynchburg, Va. He was a veteran of the Vietnam War and a veteran of the Persian Gulf

War. He retired in 1991 after 20 years of active duty and worked for the U.S. Postal Service for 18 years.

**PFC Wayne H. "Dick" Higgs**, 88, in Clovis, N.M. He was a machine-gun crewman with Co A, 1st Bn, 28th Marines, 5thMarDiv on Iwo Jima in 1945. He was wounded by a mortar shell on March 22 and awarded the Purple Heart. Marines from his regiment raised the flag on Mount Suribachi on Feb. 23.

Higgs was discharged in 1945 and worked with the New Mexico highway department as an equipment operator and assistant highway foreman for 36 years, retiring in 1987. He volunteered with the New Mexico Mounted Patrol, Troop 24, auxiliary to the New Mexico State Police from 1974 to 2004, and retired as a second lieutenant. He also did volunteer work at Sivells Baptist Camp in Cloudcroft and the New Mexico Baptist Convention.

He was a member of the Iwo Jima Survivors Association and Marine Corps Association. He was inducted by the Cannon Airman Leadership School class of 2007-B into the ALS Hall of Heroes.

**Jack N. Hook**, 88, of Longview, Texas. He enlisted in 1943 and served for four years.

During his journalism career, he worked for the *Amarillo Globe-News*, the *Capitol*

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*Hill Beacon* in Oklahoma City, and the *Tulsa World Tribune* as a proofreader, cub reporter and teletype operator. He enrolled in the University of Oklahoma and went on to a career as a petroleum engineer.

**LtCol Paul R. Koenen**, in Oak Park, Ill. He graduated from the University of Kentucky and went into the Corps. He retired from the Marine Corps Reserve after serving more than 25 years.

A gifted artist, Koenen was a much respected contributor to the advertising industry in Chicago, where he served as an advertising artist, art director and director of marketing communications for more than 30 years. He became an accomplished artist working primarily in watercolors and exhibiting his art at shows and galleries throughout the Midwest. He

helped found an art gallery in Asheville, N.C.

**MGySgt Arthur A. Larsen**, 75, in The Villages, Fla. He enlisted in the Corps in 1955 at Chicago and retired in 1987 at MCAS El Toro, Calif. He served three tours in Vietnam and was a member of 10 Marine squadrons, most notably VMFA-531 and VMFP-3. He retired as maintenance chief of MAG-11 at El Toro and served on the board of directors of the Marine Corps Aviation Association.

**Col James R. "Judge" McElroy Jr.**, 76, of Birmingham, Ala. He joined the Naval Reserve at age 17 and transferred to the Marine Corps Reserve and was commissioned in 1960. As an infantry officer, he was a rifle platoon leader with the 1stMarDiv, MCB Camp Pendleton,

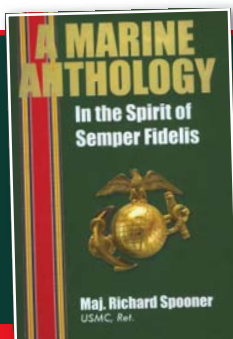
Calif., and with the 3dMarDiv in the Western Pacific.

As a captain in Vietnam from 1966 to 1967, he commanded a rifle company and was executive officer of a combined action group. As a major, he was senior advisor to a South Vietnamese Marine infantry battalion from 1970 to 1971. As a lieutenant colonel, he was executive officer of a U.S. Marine regiment and commanding officer of a battalion landing team in the Mediterranean Sea and Indian Ocean.

Promoted to colonel in 1981, he served again with the 3dMarDiv in the Western Pacific, 1982-83. His awards include two Silver Stars, two Legions of Merit, two Bronze Stars with combat "V," two Purple Hearts, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Joint Service Commendation Medal, the Navy Commendation Medal with combat "V" and the Navy Achievement Medal.

**Maj Donald C. McLane Jr.**, 84, in Greenville, N.C. His service included duty in Japan, Okinawa, Korea, Morocco, Vietnam and more than 10 years at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C.

Upon his retirement in 1971, he moved to Greenville and completed his college education at East Carolina University, receiving both a BA and MA in education.



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He was employed by the Greenville City Schools and subsequently by Pitt County Schools until his retirement in 1993. He organized and chaired Man to Man, a prostate cancer support group and, for many years, was a member of the Pamlico Sound Barbershop Chorus.

**John H. Moore Sr.**, 84, in Coppell, Texas. He was a veteran of WW II and the Korean War and later retired from the commercial air conditioning business.

**Sgt Terrence J. "Terry" Quinn**, 80, in Nashville, Tenn. He served from 1951 to 1954, which included service in Korea from 1952 to 1953. He also served with H&S Co, 6th Marines, 2dMarDiv, MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C.

He went on to become city manager in Wheeling, W.Va., in the 1950s. He was business consultant to Pure Carbon Corporation in Coudersport, Pa., until his death.

**Manuel L. "Manny" Roman**, 78, of Auberry, Calif. He was a Korean War veteran who served with the 3dMarDiv.

He later worked as a computer program analyst and business consultant. He also coached youth football and baseball for a number of years.

**Col John F. "Jack" Shine**, 90, of Glenview, Ill. He enlisted in the Corps shortly after the onset of WW II and was

selected for flight training and served as a naval aviator. In the Pacific he flew the North American PBJ Mitchell bomber and participated in the liberation of the Philippines.

After the war, he remained in the Reserve and flew various types of training and fighter aircraft with Marine squadrons at NAS Glenview. Recalled to active duty during the Korean War, he trained as a night fighter pilot in the Grumman F7F Tigercat.

Col Shine served more than 30 years, retiring from the Marine Reserve.

In civilian life, he was a vice president with Allstate Insurance Company. He was a life member of the Marine Corps Association and active in many military and civilian organizations, including the MCL.

**Sgt James F. Thomas**, 95, of Boothwyn, Pa. He was a WW II Marine Raider who served with Co D, 1st Raider Bn on Guadalcanal, and Co K, 3d Raider Bn on Bougainville. He served 30 months in the Pacific and was awarded the Purple Heart.

He went on to retire after 27 years from the Chester (Pa.) Police Department as captain of the detective division.

He also was the chief investigator for the Delaware County Public Defenders Office, retiring in 1983, and formerly

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worked as assistant director of the Delaware County Department of Veterans Affairs. He was a founding member of the Delaware County Detachment MCL and past commandant.

**Louis H. Weller**, 88, of Davison, Mich. He served in the South Pacific and then China. In Peiping, he served with VMF-115, MAG-12, 1st MAW. He was a member of the China Marine Association.

He retired as captain of the Flint (Mich.) Fire Department and was one of the original members of the Flint Banjo Club.



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## BOOKS REVIEWED

[continued from page 55]

together? Gen Shoup was awarded the Medal of Honor, and both men earned the Purple Heart.

The question remains: What was so unique about their relationship that the President singled out Gen Shoup's opinion along with what the Joint Chiefs of Staff offered? Both men were historically significant and connected by respect and trust during a time of extreme need.

For those who recall the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Bay of Pigs, Ribbon Creek, and Tarawa, memories long forgotten may be rekindled. The book is not filled with obscure information but instead serves as a primer on both Marine Corps history and American military politics.

Wallace writes about a series of events that began after World War II and would change the course of Marine Corps history. Much has been forgotten about the attempt to disband the Marine Corps under the guise of military unification. Wallace points out some of the key happenings including Truman's insult:

"For your information the Marine Corps is the Navy's police force and as long as I am President that is what it will remain.

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They have a propaganda machine that is almost equal to that of Stalin's."

We learn that much to the irritation of the U.S. Army, including the Army Chief of Staff Dwight Eisenhower, the achievements of Marines during the war did not go unnoticed by a nation desperate to pay homage to the few, the proud, the Marines. Among those defending the Marine Corps very publicly against the effort of military unification were Gen Alexander A. Vandegrift, 18th Marine Corps Commandant, and Colonel Merrill Twining.

Army leadership, Truman and Strom Thurman were clear losers in the debate, and from it all there emerged a victor. Three Commandants later, President Eisenhower passed over Twining for Commandant, and the job of the 22nd Commandant of the Marine Corps went to David M. Shoup, and the Marine Corps became an everlasting entity.

During the rancor around the issue of "putting the Marine Corps out of business," Wallace traces what the film "Sands of Iwo Jima" did for the Marine Corps as the ultimate recruiting tool. Initially John Wayne refused the role of Sergeant John M. Stryker, but upon learning of the attempts to abolish the Corps, he took on the role wholeheartedly. Gen Shoup was technical adviser and portrayed himself

during the battle scenes of Tarawa and took liberty to correct dialogue and scene structure.

Under Commandant Shoup, changes came quickly. Gone were swagger sticks, but Smokey the Bear hats for drill instructors were in. Gen Shoup also did away with honorary post gun salutes, and President Kennedy would become the first chief executive to visit the Commandant's residence. Mindful of preventing another officer from advancement and violating a longstanding tradition, Gen Shoup turned down the President's plea for another four-year term as Commandant. Wallace's description of this exchange is verbatim.

The author's brief section "Final Thoughts" pays tribute to a man who had the moral courage to oppose the war in Vietnam; a man of imperfections who once was prepared to go to war during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Ed Vasgerdsian

*Editor's note: Ed Vasgerdsian, a retired law-enforcement officer and former Marine security guard who served in the Corps from 1953 to 1959, is a freelance writer, a director of the Marine Embassy Guard Association and a contributing editor to Leatherneck.*





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## SOUND OFF

[continued from page 7]

*vera (the oldest, 20), lost their lives. It is one of those stories that those of us of Mexican-Irish heritage learn at a young age.—Sound Off Ed.*

### Anybody Heard Bob Crosby's Version Of "The Marines' Hymn"?

I looked over the list of possible contacts with *Leatherneck* magazine, and I thought the "master gunny" probably has all of the answers, or knows where to go. About a year ago, I was listening to the 1940s music station on SiriusXM satellite radio and heard a song by Bob Crosby and his Bobcats, which was a Dixieland version of "The Marines' Hymn."

During World War II, Marine Lieutenant Bob Crosby spent 18 months in the Corps touring with his band in the Pacific. Bob was Bing Crosby's brother. I have been searching for a CD of the rendition of that song and have been unsuccessful. I thought it might be on the Master Guns' Marine music playlist, but it wasn't there either. If you can help in any way, it would be greatly appreciated.

Dave Snyder  
Portland, Ore.

*• It would be greatly appreciated by Leatherneck if we had a copy for the "Master Guns' Playlist" on our website. Now that we know it could be out there, we are doing what we always do in such a situation: "Readers?" Hopefully, someone has a copy and can get it to us. It will go directly to our popular playlist.—Sound Off Ed.*

### Splitting Hairs at the National Memorial Day Parade

As a Khe Sanh veteran, I was given the opportunity to participate in the National Memorial Day Parade in Washington, D.C., for eight years. I rode my warhorse Manny and led the Civil War part of the parade. Being on horseback in the staging area at 7th Street, I was able to visit with many of the Medal of Honor recipients.

On one occasion, I asked a gunnery sergeant wearing very old dress blues how he "won" his medal. Make no mistake about it, I was corrected on the spot! I remember very well being dressed down that he didn't "win" anything. He said "to win something means you're out there trying to do so, and on that day I wasn't trying to win anything" or something along those lines.

I realize we're splitting hairs with this, but I think the "Sound Off" editor needs



**Tom Tompkins on Manny at the National Memorial Day Parade, Washington, D.C. (Photo Courtesy of Tom Tompkins)**

to cool his heels with how he responds to some of the letters. Everyone is entitled to an opinion, whether right or wrong, but the "Sound Off" editor doesn't have to be a smart a-- when he replies, which happens way too often!

Simply because a Marine Corps "historian" used the word "win" in describing the Medal of Honor, well, they should talk to the "gunny" who set me straight. And besides, if you think official Marine Corps historians are 100 percent correct, just read the "official" Marine Corps version of the siege of Khe Sanh!

Tom Tompkins  
Powhatan, Va.

• *Thank you for your candid assessment. If you read old World War II, Korean War and Vietnam articles, you will see "win" always associated with honors, awards and medals. Now-deceased Medal of Honor Marine Colonel Mitch Paige told our editors on several occasions that sometime in the late 1990s the Congressional Medal of Honor Society members—military men from all branches of the service who earned the MOH—agreed to not use "win" when referring to the medal. Col Paige and a number of others did not support that at the time.*

*I am under the impression that Vietnam Medal of Honor Marine Col Harvey Barnum does support the abandonment of the word "win" associated with medals, as does MOH Marine Col Wes Fox. We revere, and are friends with, both these leathernecks, but will continue with our policy.—Sound Off Ed.*

### Smedley Butler and Napoleon On the Subject of Medals

After reading "Sound Off" letters in the last few issues concerning different opinions from readers about medals and who should rate them, I opened my December issue to find another letter on that subject.

I just finished reading (rereading) Major General Smedley D. Butler's booklet "War Is a Racket." The ongoing subject of medals brought my attention right back to Chapter 3 in which MajGen Butler wrote:

"Up to and including the Spanish-American War, we had a prize system, and soldiers and sailors fought for money. ... Then it was found that we could reduce the cost of wars by taking all the prize money and keeping it, but conscripting [drafting] the soldier anyway. Then soldiers couldn't bargain for their labor.

"Napoleon once said, 'All men are enamored of decorations ... they positively hunger for them.'

"So by developing the Napoleonic system—the medal business—the govern-



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ment learned it could get soldiers for less money, because the boys liked to be decorated. Until the Civil War there were no medals."

1stSgt Frank Furtado, USMC (Ret)  
Port Orchard, Wash.

#### One More Time: How Does the Corps Number Recruit Platoons?

I just have a question about the numbering of platoons in boot camp. I'm curious how the numbers are used and if they are repeated over the years. I was in Platoon 341, Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, and have seen that number

used only once since then, and it was with a platoon at MCRD Parris Island, S.C.

Back to the question, could you clarify what sort of a system is used for this, if any? Thank you for any information you may provide.

Ron Gray  
USMC, 1960-66  
Clarkston, Wash.

• *We get asked this often, and if you go to the FAQs on our website, [www.leatherneckmagazine.com](http://www.leatherneckmagazine.com), you will find the following: Over the years, there seems to have been several systems used to designate recruit platoons at San Diego and Parris Island. However, the way it has been for the last 50 years or so is that the first numeral on the guidon signifies the recruit battalion, and the rest is pretty simple. The platoons are numbered numerically as they are formed after the start of the calendar year. (For example, 3d Recruit Training Battalion's first platoon would be 3000. In the early 1960s, it would have been 300.)*

*When the year ends, they start over again. The depots have more or less always followed a similar system of numbering. Recruit Training Regiment has custody and responsibility for the guidons and maintains that it would go*

*broke making and dry-cleaning individual flags for every new platoon.—Sound Off Ed.*

#### More Than One "Commie Pinko Slogan" In the Marine Corps

I'm sure that Marine Matthew Gardner ["Sound Off," December 2013] who took such exception to the use of "Leaning forward!" because it is a "Commie Pinko Slogan," will be absolutely horrified to learn that one of the most-revered Marine battle cries, "Gung ho!," was adopted by the equally revered Colonel Evans Carlson for the 2d Marine Raider Battalion after he got it from his New Zealander friend Rewi Alley, as Mr. Alley was an avowed member of the Chinese Communist Party.

Mr. Alley set up the Chinese Industrial Cooperative Association after the Japanese invasion in 1937, and it was the association's motto. Carlson liked it and adopted it for the Raiders, as he also assimilated the idea of open discussions and criticism, things generally frowned upon in our beloved Corps.

Mike Betts  
Senior Vice Commandant  
Department of Maryland  
Marine Corps League  
Finksburg, Md.

#### Reunions

• **Iwo Jima Commemorative Committee**, Feb. 20-22, MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif. Contact Daniel Zepeda Jr., (951) 201-6251, [zepeda012@msn.com](mailto:zepeda012@msn.com).

• **3dMarDiv Assn.**, Aug. 12-17, Reno, Nev. Contact GySgt Don H. Gee, USMC (Ret), P.O. Box 254, Chalfont, PA 18914, (215) 822-9094, [gygee@aol.com](mailto:gygee@aol.com), [www.caltrap.com](http://www.caltrap.com).

• **USMC Combat Correspondents Assn.**, Sept. 8-11, Oceanside, Calif. Contact Jack T. Paxton, 110 Fox Ct., Wildwood, FL 34785, (352) 748-4698, [usmccca@cfl.rr.com](mailto:usmccca@cfl.rr.com), [www.usmccca.org](http://www.usmccca.org).

• **Marine Corps Aviation Assn. ("Gray Ghost" Squadron 531)**, April 24-27, Quantico, Va. Contact Ralph Delisantie, (585) 426-4091.

• **Marine Corps Aviation Reconnaissance Assn.**, May 1-5, Tucson, Ariz. Contact Paul Melcher, (803) 359-9338, [melch12@msn.com](mailto:melch12@msn.com).

• **Marine Corps Musicians Assn.**, May 5-9, Honolulu. Contact Matt Stevenson, (920) 676-1260, [mmusmceod@gmail.com](mailto:mmusmceod@gmail.com).

• **USMC Hawk Assn.**, May 19-22, New Bern, N.C. Contact Stan Buliszyn, 1 Cherry Drive Ln., Ocala, FL 34472, [www.usmchawkassociation.com](http://www.usmchawkassociation.com).

• **Rose Garden Marines (Nam Phong, Thailand, 1972-73)**, May 23-26, Kansas City, Kan. Contact John Tabarrini, (951)



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880-3634, [jpwoody51@gmail.com](mailto:jpwoody51@gmail.com).

• **26th Marines Scout Snipers (1968-69)** is planning a reunion for 2014 in Omaha, Neb. Contact Cleveland Mason, (209) 358-1646, [clevm@sbcglobal.net](mailto:clevm@sbcglobal.net), or Tom Phillips, (402) 672-1271, [tomandwoo@swvawcreek.net](mailto:tomandwoo@swvawcreek.net).

• **3d, 4th and other Defense Bns**, May 21-23, San Diego. Contact Charles Buckley, 35925 Ashton Pl., Fremont, CA 94356, (510) 794-7280, [ceb39reunion@gmail.com](mailto:ceb39reunion@gmail.com), or Sharon Heideman, 140 Grist Mill Rd., Umland, TX 78640, (512) 738-2075, [sharon\\_heideman@yahoo.com](mailto:sharon_heideman@yahoo.com).

• **A/1/12 (3dMarDiv, RVN)**, Sept. 17-21, San Diego. Contact Bob Schoenleber, (425) 822-7474, [bobschoenleber@comcast.net](mailto:bobschoenleber@comcast.net).

• **I/3/7**, April 30-May 3, Myrtle Beach, S.C. Contact Dennis Deibert, 6007 Catherine St., Harrisburg, PA 17112, (717) 652-1695.

• **K/3/7 (and attached units, RVN)**, Sept. 9-15, San Diego. Contact William Rolke, (262) 780-0993, [k37usmc@att.net](mailto:k37usmc@att.net), or Jerry Walker, (951) 203-2280, [jwalkercdr@verizon.net](mailto:jwalkercdr@verizon.net).

• **American Embassy Saigon (pre-1975, RVN)**, April 27-30, Galveston, Texas. Contact MSgt Gus Tomuschat, USMC (Ret), (804) 693-3007, [saigongunny@yahoo.com](mailto:saigongunny@yahoo.com), [www.saigonmac.org](http://www.saigonmac.org).

• **Recruiters School Class 3-69 (1968)** is planning a reunion. Contact MGySgt Bob Daniels, USMC (Ret), (904) 579-4346, [bertojotol@gmail.com](mailto:bertojotol@gmail.com).

• **TBS Co C, 3-69**, May 1-4, Quantico, Va. Contact Jim Bowen, (423) 413-2859, [jimbowen@gocarta.org](mailto:jimbowen@gocarta.org).

• **Plt 291, Parris Island, 1964**, is planning a reunion. Contact Sgt Ernest Bennett, (304) 269-3294, [sfceb@yahoo.com](mailto:sfceb@yahoo.com).

• **Plt 296, Parris Island, 1965**, Nov. 7-10, Parris Island, S.C. Contact SgtMaj Jim Butler, USMC (Ret), (910) 340-7074, [jbutler29@ec.rr.com](mailto:jbutler29@ec.rr.com).

• **Plts 316-319, Parris Island, 1964**, are planning a reunion for April 24-26. Contact Alex Nevglowski, (910) 325-9148, (910) 548-5227, [gunr88@hotmail.com](mailto:gunr88@hotmail.com).

• **Plt 331, Parris Island, 1959**, is planning a reunion. Contact MGySgt Bob Daniels, USMC (Ret), (904) 579-4346, [bertojotol@gmail.com](mailto:bertojotol@gmail.com), or Bob Wood, (205) 903-7220, [bwood@bellsouth.net](mailto:bwood@bellsouth.net).

• **Plt 358, San Diego, 1959**, Aug. 7-10, San Diego. Contact MSgt John Newport, USMC (Ret), (770) 926-4752, [mrnmrs41@aol.com](mailto:mrnmrs41@aol.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](mailto:jrj430@yahoo.com).

• **East Coast All-Seabees**, Feb. 21-23,

Hampton, Va. Contact Bruce MacDougall, (804) 921-4753, [seabeemacd40@verizon.net](mailto:seabeemacd40@verizon.net), [www.vietnam-era-seabees.org](http://www.vietnam-era-seabees.org).

• **NMCB-62 and PWD Edzell Seabees**, Feb. 21-23, Hampton, Va. Contact Frank Thompson, [seabee@bardstowncable.net](mailto:seabee@bardstowncable.net), [www.nmcb62alumni.org](http://www.nmcb62alumni.org).

• **HMR(L)-261**, April 30-May 4, Quantico, Va. Contact Bill Wells, 14 Flicker Dr., Greenville, SC 29609, [wewii@bellsouth.net](mailto:wewii@bellsouth.net).

## **Ships and Others**

• **USS Houston (CL-81)**, Oct. 20-25, Norfolk, Va. Contact Donna Rogers, 3949 Little John Dr., York, PA 17408, (717) 792-9113, [dlr7110@yahoo.com](mailto:dlr7110@yahoo.com).

• **USS Tarawa (CV-40, LHA-1)**, April 24-27, Branson, Mo. 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@accelplus.net](mailto:walsue@accelplus.net).

• **USS Tulare (AKA-112)**, Feb. 27-March 1, San Antonio. Contact Sam or Sharon Schrock, 74651 T. Road, Elm Creek, NE 68836, (308) 236-0227, (308) 991-1112, [samsldodge@frontier.com](mailto:samsldodge@frontier.com).



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# Reader Assistance

Edited by Clare A. Guerrero

Entries for "Reader Assistance," including "Mail Call," are free and printed on a space-available basis. *Leatherneck* reserves the right to edit or reject any submission. Allow two to three months for publication. Send your e-mail to leatherneck@mca-marines.org, or write to Reader Assistance Editor, *Leatherneck* Magazine, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134.

## Mail Call

• Former Sgt Phil Arneson, 1 Stanford Dr., Rancho Mirage, CA 92270, (760) 770-9023, phila47036@aol.com, to hear from or about **Lt Earl F. MILLER**, with whom he served at **NAS Whidbey Island, Wash., 1955-56.**

• Former Sgt Charles M. Teal, 9822 Riva Ridge Ct., Alexandria, KY 41001, (859) 448-0873, charlesmteal@yahoo.com, to hear from **MSgt Harvey HALL**, who served in the **base telephone section, Bldg. 1, MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., 1958-62.**

• 1stSgt Robert Hughes, USMC (Ret), 1001 Catalina Ave., Santa Ana, CA 92706, (714) 285-1772, rhughes1933@aol.com, to hear from members of **Plt 343, Parris Island, 1953 (below).**

• Marine veteran Doug Walker, 617 N. Rodeo Dr., Beverly Hills, CA 90210, (818) 915-0818, or Andrea Braver, andrea@taperfamilyoffice.com, to hear from or about **SSgt HUNSINGER**, who was the **senior drill instructor of Plt 157, San Diego, 1960.**

• Fran Wall Weaver, 551 Lakeshore Dr., Hartsville, SC 29550, techsgtfrankwall@gmail.com, to hear from anyone who knew or served with her family member, **TSgt Frank WALL**, who served with **Co B, 1st Bn, 1st Marines, 1stMarDiv, on Guadalcanal, Cape Gloucester and Peleliu and with the 3dMarDiv at Camp Fuji, Japan.** Prior to his death in 1957, he was a **pitcher on Marine Corps baseball teams at MCRD Parris Island, S.C.; MCB Quantico, Va.; and MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C.**

• MSgt Allan Katz, USMC (Ret), P.O. Box 2008, Edgewood, NM 87015, (505) 281-0160, mainmast@q.com, to hear from or about **SSgt J. A. HAND, SSgt H. L. DYKES, Sgt M. R. ORTE and Sgt H. R. SCHUSTER**, who were **DIs for Plt 35, MCRD Parris Island, 1957.**

• GySgt Harold L. Groves, USMC (Ret), 22 Millsap Dr., Jackson, TN 38305, (731) 427-8419, to hear from anyone who served with **2d Bn, 2d Infantry Training Regt, MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., September-November 1951**, or sailed aboard **USNS General William Weigel (AP-119)**, as the **16th replacement draft to Korea, Dec. 15, 1951.**

• Former Sgt Richard J. Allie, 37 Black-



PLATOON 343  
 SECOND RECRUIT BATTALION M.C.R.D., PARRIS ISLAND, S.C.  
 CPL. H. M. HOFFORD SGT. L. TROSCLAIR PFC. F. T. DAVIS  
 DEC. 2nd 1953 PHOTO BY, Maag  
 POST HONOR PLATOON

COURTESY OF 1STSgt ROBERT HUGHES, USMC (RET)

Retired 1stSgt Robert Hughes would like to hear from members of Plt 343, Parris Island, 1953.

stone St., Bellingham, MA 02019, (508) 966-0936, to hear from members of **Plt 300, MCRD Parris Island, 1960**, and those who were at **1st Marine Corps District, Garden City, N.Y., 1964-66**.

**Wanted**

*Readers are cautioned to be wary of sending money without confirming authenticity and availability of products offered.*

• Marine veteran Edward Maginn, (610) 328-1726, edward.d.maginn@hq.dhs.gov, wants a **recruit graduation book for Plt 128, Parris Island, 1967**.

• Marine veteran William T. Price, 1066 Nicholas Cir., Marshall, MO 65340, (660) 886-0507, bp65340@sbcglobal.net, wants a **recruit graduation book for Plt 1066, San Diego, 1969**.

• Marine veteran George A. Herendeen, george\_herendeen@hotmail.com, wants a **recruit graduation book for Plt 3052, San Diego, 1984**.

• SSgt Paul Burr, USMC (Ret), 248 Mashpee Neck Rd., Mashpee, MA 02649, pl.burr@comcast.net, wants a **1950s-'60s-era white MP helmet liner, MP armband and white duty belt**.



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# Gyrene Gyngles

Edited by Clare A. Guerrero

Please submit copies of original poems with first publishing rights and author's permission to print granted to *Leatherneck*. Poems may be edited or shortened, as necessary. Due to volume received, submissions will not be acknowledged or returned.

## In a Heartbeat

Marching, marching on the grinder,  
New boots pounding on the deck,  
Knowing tomorrow won't be kinder,  
Just another aching trek.

We begin to feel the surging beat,  
Sharp commands obeyed,  
Plenty of tired and sore feet,  
An endless passing parade.

The DI watching and about to pounce:  
"Move that rifle, not your head!  
Don't bounce! Don't bounce!  
Pretend you got a pair and take out the lead!"

We learn to march till the day is done,  
A platoon of synchronous parts.  
One screwup away from a "little" run,  
The cadence, the breathing, our hearts ...

From a group so pathetic,  
"Out of many, one."  
With DIs unapologetic,  
E pluribus unum!

From a "yellow footprints" wise guy,  
It's a story often told;  
Change happens daily at PI,  
The Marine identity takes hold.

I recall the words of that "old" gunny,  
When I feel times are getting rough,  
Words that used to seem funny,  
"Sometimes guts is enough!"

Then, one day we get the spirit,  
Something we cannot hide!  
We know it! We feel it!  
It's now a matter of pride!

Marching is our reminder,  
That commands cannot wait!  
It begins on that hard grinder,  
A young heart that will not hesitate!  
Marine veteran Michael Spataro

## Black and White ... This Color of War

This is not what we asked for ...  
This color of war.  
It was taught in our history, only as facts.  
Glorified and vilified  
In books by the stacks.

These black-and-white pages:  
The glory of men.  
Our sons in uniform  
Don the colors,  
For God, country  
And then.

The harbor at Pearl,  
Beirut and the *Cole*,  
9/11 testing our soul.  
These history-page heroes  
Gave their all  
In black-and-white pages ...  
The color of war.

Walk alone with these heroes,  
Through corridors of pain and despair,  
But do it with care  
And you will hear their names  
Being whispered,  
Between these black-and-white pages ...  
The color of war.

"These history-page heroes are yours, America."  
Former Cpl B. J. Forst


## Belleau Wood

There,  
Do you hear it? ...  
Off in the distance  
A solitary trumpet  
Blows a mother's  
Good-night kiss.

Off in the distance,  
And just above  
The morning  
Mist.

Marine veteran John Roberts





**Mine was earned  
over Iraq in a CH-53.  
By my dad.**

Adelaide C.,  
future USAA member

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