

MAY 2013

MAGAZINE OF THE MARINES

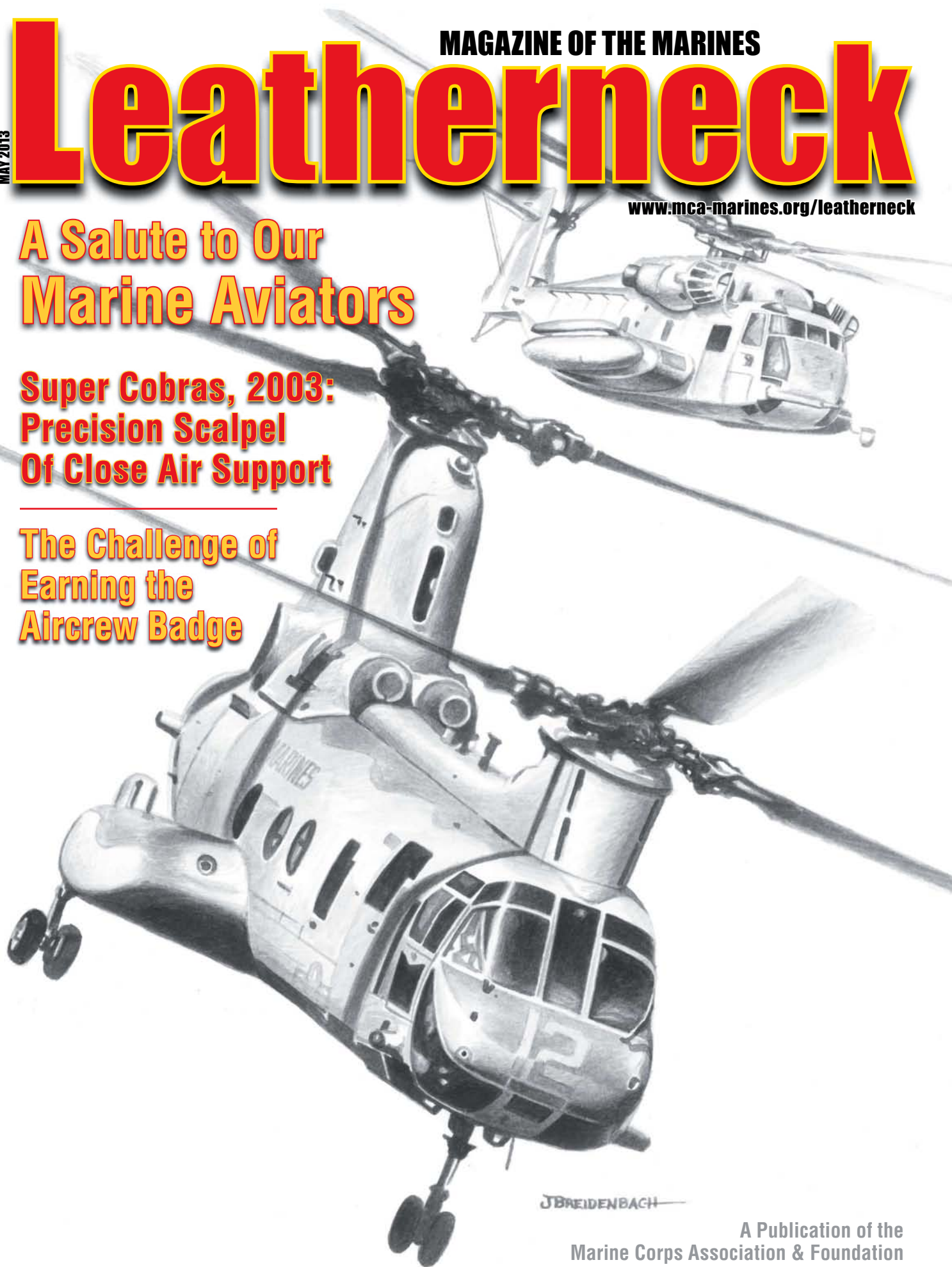
Leatherneck

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A Salute to Our Marine Aviators

**Super Cobras, 2003:
Precision Scalpel
Of Close Air Support**

**The Challenge of
Earning the
Aircrew Badge**



A Publication of the
Marine Corps Association & Foundation



Welcome to *Leatherneck Magazine's* **Digital Edition** May 2013

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

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

We thank you for your continuing support.

Semper Fidelis,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Walt Ford".

Col Walt Ford, USMC (Ret)
Editor



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Contents

LEATHERNECK—MAGAZINE OF THE MARINES

FEATURES

10 The Marine Corps Association & Foundation: Advancing Leadership and Recognizing Excellence

By Roxanne Baker

In its centennial year, the MCA, with its relatively new Foundation, recognizes and promotes exceptional performance across the Corps.

12 In Every Clime and Place Edited by R. R. Keene

Marine operating forces train around the world while also continuing the war on terrorism in Afghanistan.

17 A Memorial Day Tribute—Roger Taylor Park: Iwo Jima Marine Remembered in Hometown By Jeff Denecke

Round Lake Beach, Ill., has ensured that this Marine, who died at age 18 on Iwo Jima in World War II, is remembered.

18 “I Wasn’t Going to Let the Bad Guys Win”—Wounded Marine Warrior Gets Back Up and Rides By Cpl Daniel Wulz

Losing both legs to an improvised explosive device didn’t keep SgtMaj Raymond Mackey off his Harley; instead, it motivated him to get on and ride.

20 Sky High: Earning Marine Aircrew Wings

By Roxanne Baker

Marines put dreams and goals to the test as they begin the arduous pursuit of aircrew wings.



22 From the Archives, November 2007: Noncommissioned Officers Will Win This War: The Battlefield May Change—But Our Values Are Timeless By Gen James T. Conway,

34th Commandant of the Marine Corps

In celebration of the Marine Corps Association’s centennial of service, this article of enduring value describing today’s decentralized battlefield and the critical role of small-unit leaders in the success of the Corps is reprinted.

28 Operation Iraqi Freedom—Cobra Attack: Iraq, 2003

By Col Michael D. Visconage, USMCR (Ret)

As ground forces crossed into Iraq on the evening of March 20, 2003, Marine air was in constant support, with Cobras playing a key fire support role.

36 Okinawa, May 1945: Sugar Loaf Hill

By Maj Allan C. Bevilacqua, USMC (Ret)

After six days of assaulting and taking Sugar Loaf Hill only to be kicked back off in fierce hand-to-hand fighting, the Hill was secured.

48 Green on Green: Pensacola Marines Run St. Patrick’s Day Race for Wounded Brothers and Sisters By Roxanne Baker

Led by the commander, over 2,000 Marine Aviation Training Support Group 21 leathernecks ran the St. Patrick’s Day race in formation, chanting all the way, to raise money for the Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund and the Wounded Warrior Project.

56 Corps Album Edited by Nancy S. Lichtman

Leatherneck honors Marine aviation in the Korean War with a variety of old photos taken from our 1950-53 archives.

COVER: “Combat Assault Support” is an exclusive watercolor illustration honoring rotary-wing Marine aviation in the initial stages of Operation Iraqi Freedom. It was produced for *Leatherneck* by aviation artist Jason Breidenbach. Copies of the cover may be obtained by sending \$2 (for mailing costs) to *Leatherneck* Magazine, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134-0775.

DEPARTMENTS



2 Sound Off

26 Leatherneck Laffs

44 We—the Marines

47 Crazy Caption

50 Books Reviewed

53 In the Highest Tradition

58 Leatherneck Line

60 In Memoriam

72 Gyrene Gyngles

Leatherneck—On the Web

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



56



12



28

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 free one-year courtesy subscription to non-MCA&F members who are selected for the Sound Off Letter of the Month. Leatherneck will continue to pay \$25 for the Sound Off Letter of the Month submitted by members.*)

“He says a Marine is what I want to be. She wants to go too. My heart floods with emotion as I take a deep breath—a Marine, I whisper with an exhale, and yet I ask myself, Why? Why that path and not another? Something more convenient, less costly and for some other mother!

“People say, ‘A Marine? Are you sure? He’s so handsome, she’s so sweet ... surely not them, but some other child who’s undisciplined, unruly and thoroughly wild. Especially not these—we know this young man and young woman—it hits too close to home.’

“Yes, another path could have been chosen, the possibilities endless, their future before them that would cost them so little. The one I would have chosen. I would have been happy to shoulder the expense to keep them closer to home, assured I would see them at the holidays and receive phone calls each week.

“But they wouldn’t be happy—they’d be discontent—always wondering what could have been.

“Yet, there is something invisible that runs deep in their soul[s] which cannot be ignored. The challenge to do something significant, the love of their country, the need to fight for their beliefs, a drive to be something special and unique, willingness to lay down their lives for a country—and for what? [For] those who are selfish, greedy, disabled, poor, homeless, rich, or too busy to care, who live their own lives in comfort and ease—whose biggest concern is earning a buck or getting their hair done—who really don’t care—they don’t give it a thought that there is someone there—to protect them, defend them, to fight to the end for the freedoms they have, to do as they please. [For others] to go where they want, earn what they can, worship how they



COURTESY OF STANLEY R. POND

Marine brother LCpl James S. Pond hugs his sister, Pvt Marla R. Pond, at her Parris Island boot camp graduation.

will, and live unthreatened in the land.

“Their hearts remind me of someone I know, who laid down his life so very long ago. For the same kind of people whose hearts were as wicked, he gave up his life and loved them so deeply.

“It’s hard to understand why this path and no other, but to be a Marine is their choice—sister and brother.”

My wife, Mary, wrote the [above] letter the day our daughter left for boot camp, Nov. 12, 2012, at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C. On graduation day, Feb. 8, 2013, this picture was taken, and my wife finally had a picture for the letter. The two Marines, Lance Corporal James S. Pond and Private Marla R. Pond, are the oldest of nine children. James is stationed at Camp Hansen in Okinawa, Japan.

We are proud to call our son and daughter, U.S. Marines!

Stanley R. Pond
Odessa, Texas

Andersonville National Historic Site Probably Run by a Bunch of Yankees

I just read something interesting on the Andersonville National Historic Site on Facebook. (Andersonville was the Confederate prison in Georgia during the Civil War.)

They have a short article about a U.S. Marine who died there, but the photo of his grave marker shows “USN” for his branch of service. Several people have posted comments about it, and the Andersonville site replied by saying the Marine Corps is “part of the Navy.”

I commented that I thought they should correct his marker with one to show he was a Marine, if they are positive that is correct, but frankly, I rather doubt they will.

Ken Haney
Jackson, Tenn.

• “*Part of the Navy?*” That’s like saying *Andersonville was just a hoosegow. The U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Navy are both branches of the service in the Department of the Navy. We, Marines, of course, are the icing on the department’s cake.*—Sound Off Ed.

Why Would Anyone Wear Utilities When He Could Be One of SgtMaj Umlauf’s Marines?

When recruit Platoon 351 received our future military occupational specialties in August 1964, I think about 50 percent of us received an “03” [infantry] MOS.

However, only about half of the 03s, (or so we were told) went to “grunt” units while the rest of us went to various Marine Barracks for duty. Our senior drill instructor told us that General Wallace M. Greene, 23rd Commandant of the Marine Corps, believed Marines did not look as sharp as he thought Marines should look and, therefore, wanted future grunts to spend about a year at a spit and polish assignment before going to an infantry division.

I spent my first year of service at Naval Ammunition Depot Earle, N.J. There we had Sergeant Major William “Willie” Umlauf. It is my guess that the sergeant major may have held the same rank when Brigadier General Archibald Henderson, Fifth CMC, was a second lieutenant.

The dress standard of SgtMaj Umlauf was a bit to the north of an “8th and I” Marine, and woe be the Marine who did not adhere to it. At that time, nobody at the

Barracks would step foot off the base in utilities. And, why would we want to? The 80-plus Marines at Earle looked poster-perfect in our dress uniforms. It was quite a beneficial experience learning to “look” like a Marine; that was apparent during the years after that I spent in the grunts.

Bill Bernstrom
Bangkok, Thailand

Whiskey, Romeo, Oscar, November, Golf!

Regarding the use of the phonetic alphabet, I wish it were used correctly. I’m a Marine who served from 1959 to 1963. I was a communications Marine, so I had to know and use said phonetic alphabet. I’m not trying to single anybody out, but in my September 2012 *Leatherneck*, a writer used “How” and “Item” instead of “Hotel” and “India.”

I referenced my guidebooks from 1967 and 1990 to confirm that the alphabet has not been changed. I mentioned only one incident, but there have been many over the years. Maybe *Leatherneck* could include a copy of a correct alphabet at the end of my “Sound Off” letter, so all who are interested can have a nice correct alphabet.

Former LCpl Conrad J. Wohltmann
Cocoa, Fla.

• If you had checked “The Military Phonetic Alphabet” on “Leatherneck FAQs” at www.mca-marines.org/leatherneck/military-phonetic-alphabet, you would know that there have been three phonetic alphabets: the pre-World War II, the World War II/Korean War and the [pre-] Vietnam Era to Present. And, without looking, I will bet you a challenge coin to a beer, that the reference to “How” and “Item” in the September 2012 issue was done in the context of a World War II or Korean War story, which was when those phonetic words were used for the letters “H” and “I.”—*Sound Off* Ed.

Don Dickson’s “Since ‘17” Brought Back Memories

I read the “From the Archives” article “Since ‘17” by Donald L. Dickson in the March issue. It actually brought tears to my eyes as I recalled my own 20 years of service.

I remember Korea being still fresh in our memories in 1954 as I was getting ready for boot camp at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., with the help of my best friend’s father, a Marine staff sergeant. “Rocks ‘n’ Shoals” were gone, and we were learning about the Uniform Code of Military Justice, our 11 General Orders and the Code of Conduct.

In 1955, I was at Marine Corps Base

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Camp Lejeune, N.C., where corporals with two years of service were considered “old salts” by us “boots.”

Peacetime brought long waits between promotions, a reenlistment, a new duty station at Marine Barracks Brooklyn, and promotion to “buck” sergeant. I was on my way to the Ninth Marine Regiment in Okinawa when we heard of President John F. Kennedy’s assassination. With 1964 came promotion to staff sergeant, my first under the new rank structure. New equipment was being introduced. The M1 rifle was gone and the M14 was on its way out, being replaced by the M16. War was brewing in Southeast Asia at a place called Vietnam, which most of us had never heard of, but the burial details began to pile up.

For me, it was back to Camp Lejeune in 1969 to get ready for the uncertain future.

I made “gunny” and was packing my bags. I was going to war. No one can prepare you for this experience. For the next year, I tasted combat and watched good friends die. I finally got my own Purple Heart and went home two weeks early. After a year in the hospital, I finished my career at MB Treasure Island, San Francisco.

I left the Corps I so passionately loved to the younger, more eager Marines. New battles were in our future, but not for me. Thank you, Mr. Dickson, for a most memorable trip.

GySgt Gran D. Henry, USMC (Ret)
Penn Valley, Calif.

Yut?

I served in Korea in 1952 to 1953, and I communicate on Facebook with young reservists as a sort of mentor. One term I see them use is the expression, “Yut.”

Leatherneck

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I have no idea what it means or what its significance is. Please enlighten me.

Ike Oshana
Long Beach, Calif.

• *"Yut?" It also was a new one on me, so I went to the Urban Dictionary and found several definitions that relate to the military and the Marine Corps. One should be careful in using this word. Some definitions, not printed here, are just plain vulgar.*

"YUT: Yelling useless things.

"Marine Corps term derived in order to make fun of officers and the stupid things they say. Also used when agreeing to something when you have no idea what was said.

"Officer: 'Blah blah blabitty blah eh, oorah'

"Enlisted Marine: 'Uhh, YUT!'

"YUT: Young Undisciplined Thing

"YUT: 1. A motivational word used in the U.S. military, similar to the word oorah—often used when one is either too lazy or not motivated enough to say 'oorah,' or other popular word of motivation.

"2. Used when in a large group of military members. When they shout a motivational term on cue, some may shout 'YUT!' instead, and often in a sharp, awkward voice, just to stand out."—Sound Off Ed.

He Enlisted on a Whim

I joined the Corps on a whim. I was bummed I couldn't get a job at Ford Mustang in Detroit where Dad, Gramps and my uncles worked.

I wasn't the military type, but dared myself for some reason. The recruiter wanted to know if I could swim. I told him I could swim like a fish and I wanted to see the world. He told me I was gonna be an amtracker. I thought, "Great! I love trains!" Anyway, I ended up reenlisting and had the best seven years of my life. One complaint: I never saw one %@&!#& train.

Joe "Ski" Milewski
Jacksonville, N.C.

He "Could Be Wrong," But He's Not

I could be wrong, and God knows I have been a time or two during my more than 40 years of service, but it looks to me like the F-18 on page 11 of the March issue of Leatherneck is really from Marine Fighter Attack (All Weather) Squadron 224, not 225, and unless the pilot is about to snap the cable on the mobile arresting gear unit, he should be decelerating.

I spent about one third of my service time with the wing, and my late father, Master Sergeant Ralph "Fuzz" Fairman,

USMC (Ret), was the senior enlisted Marine in the mobile arresting gear military occupational specialty during the late 1950s and early-to-mid 1960s.

I saw a lot of mobile arresting gear and Short Airfield for Tactical Support (SATS) operations at Marine Corps Air Station El Toro, Calif.; Bogue Field, N.C.; and other sites, never realizing that someday I would be a staff noncommissioned officer in charge at several squadrons making those traps and launches.

CWO-4 Ray R. Fairman, USMC (Ret)
Athens, Ga.

• *Yup. You're right. The correspondent got it wrong in the caption, but we should have looked closer at the picture too.—Sound Off Ed.*

Yellow Footprints at MCRD San Diego May Go Back to 1958

There still seems to be some question of when the yellow footprints began to appear in boot camp. I don't know if they appeared before my time, but I stood on those footprints in January 1958 at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego. I distinctly remember that day, 55 years ago, because the largest man I had ever seen, Sergeant Sisco, made it crystal clear that smiling was absolutely forbidden! Nineteen months later, I ran into him, and we were both sergeants. I had mixed emotions about that.

Sgt Ed Belfy
USMC, 1958-61
Paw Paw, Mich.

This DI Remembers Yellow Footprints Being Painted at San Diego in 1955

In June 1955, we as students of Class 47 of Drill Instructor School, MCRD San Diego used chalk to trace our steps on Saturdays on the "Grinder." This was in front of Building 1.

This created a problem for the commanding general. The officer in charge of DI School explained to the CG that this was necessary to teach recruits.

Later, painted footprints were used to teach the recruits.

SgtMaj George P. Geronimo, USMC (Ret)
Bryan, Texas

Wait, Yellow Footprints in San Diego May Go Back to 1951

I'm writing in response to the March "Sound Off" letter, "Yellow Footprints at San Diego, Little 'Empirical Evidence.'" My Webster's dictionary informs me that "empirical" relates to "experience or observation not supported by theory." The following is offered respectfully as my experience and observation. My group of Marine Corps inductees was sworn into

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the Corps at Minneapolis and put on a westerly train.

We were met at the recruit depot by this gunnery sergeant who immediately told us that we were no longer civilians or Marines, but some lowlife in between. I mention this so that perhaps you can understand that what happened when we arrived is etched indelibly in my mind even though this occurred in November 1951. We left the train in San Diego and boarded a semi-tractor-trailer rig. At the Marine Corps recruit depot, the gunnery sergeant shouted to us that we were to depart from the bus quietly, put our feet on the yellow footprints and wait for further instructions.

I'm certain that the thought going through all of the recruits was, "What have I done to myself?"

I have been reading about the yellow footprints for some time, but the letter from Sgt John Stevenson in the March "Sound Off" spurred me to write. The letter mentions that Camp Matthews was at Camp Pendleton. It was not. We did our rifle training at Camp Matthews, and I thought it was nearer to San Diego.

In 1983, or so, I attended a conference in San Diego and had an opportunity to visit MCRD. The people there were gracious hosts and said I could go any place on the base I desired. I had attended a field radio course after boot camp and was familiar with the base.

During my visit, I asked where Camp Matthews was. A gunnery sergeant said he was going off duty and I could follow him out to where the camp was. It was on a hill, but I didn't recognize it because it was covered with houses. However, one late night on the hill, years before, we recruits went hand over hand on a rope up the hill and ran back down; just to go back up again. It seems to me that there was a sign there mentioning the site of the camp; however, I am not certain of that. As recruits, we rode a bus from MCRD to the camp, and it didn't seem to take a long time.

My son started receiving *Leatherneck* while he was in and had it sent to my house. He went in at MCRD San Diego in 1979.

I am 81 years old and still remember those yellow footprints and the bucket we got our basic stuff in, such as toothbrush, toothpaste, laundry brush, ties for hanging our cloths up to dry, etc.

I don't know if this "empirical evidence" is of any value, but you have it for what it is worth. My platoon number was 452. We didn't have graduation books, but we each received a picture of the platoon on graduation day.

Robert L. "Bob" Bennett
Stoughton, Wis.



The President's San Diego visit as pictured in Frank Mendez's recruit graduation book.

• *You are correct. Camp Matthews was not at Camp Pendleton. For many years, it was known as Marine Rifle Range, La Jolla, located not far from MCRD. It was named Camp Matthews in 1942 in honor of Brigadier General Calvin B. Matthews, a "Distinguished" shooter, and it closed in 1964 because of the civilian encroachment on the firing range.—Sound Off Ed.*

He Remembers President Kennedy On the Footprints

I wanted to send you a couple of pages from my 1963 Platoon 137 recruit graduation book. These might once and for all shed some definitive light as to the location of the yellow footprints I stood on when I arrived at San Diego on June 3, 1963. Also, I've enclosed a copy of the

back page that was included in my book. I retyped the captions because the scan was very vague.

I believe this will give all who were there the exact date of President Kennedy's visit. I had been there three days when this event took place. It will be 50 years ago on June 6, 2013.

Sgt Franklin Mendez
USMC, 1963-67
Austin, Texas

"President's Own" Out of Uniform? Not a Chance

In the March issue is a picture of "The President's Own" marching in the inauguration parade wearing camouflage utility coats.

What a disgrace! What was wrong with

winter service “A”? Even dress blues would have been more appropriate. Shame on those responsible.

Cpl John Gaydos
USMC, 1959-65
Springdale, Pa.

• *If you read the caption closely, you'll know the photo was taken during a rehearsal for the inaugural. They were in the proper uniform.—Sound Off Ed.*

A Jeep Ride Into the “Twilight Zone”

More than 61 years ago, I experienced something I did not give much thought to and very rarely mentioned until recently. I would also like to know if anyone can recall it.

On June 3, 1951, while serving with 3d Platoon, “Fox” Company, 2d Battalion, First Marine Regiment, First Marine Division, under Captain Goodwin C. Groff, Platoon Leader Second Lieutenant Harry Randal III and Platoon Sergeant Eugene Smith, I was injured by grenade fragments.

After the battle, a fellow Marine named Newberry, who was shot through the right shoulder, but still ambulatory, and I were told to go to the rear and have our injuries cared for. Down the ridge to an area at the base of the hill, we talked to a corpsman, and he was able to get a helicopter for Newberry and another Marine who was more seriously injured.

I had to sit there until a 6-by truck pulled up and told to climb aboard. At that time, they loaded a sick North Korean on the truck with me. I insisted that he be put on the other side, as I was in no mood to be diplomatic to a member of an organization who was intent on killing me two hours before.

There were no roads, only paths that needed to be navigated slowly with caution. Somewhere down the road, it started to rain, and we had come to a crossroad of sorts. I was told that I would have to wait there until another vehicle came by. They took out a stretcher and told me to lie there and wait, covering me with a poncho.

I was fully aware of what being covered with the poncho meant, but I had shrugged it off. I was very pleased to be where I was and not in a foxhole in the rain, probably being mortared about now. I lay there listening to the raindrops and thinking of my wife getting a telegram for such a small injury.

A short while later a jeep pulled up, so I lifted the edge of the poncho and saw two people sitting in the front seats. Behind them, extending out a bit over the rear of the jeep was a rack made out of pipe or tubing that was holding three stretchers with room for a fourth. The occupants



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from the front of the jeep jumped out and grabbed my stretcher, hoisted me up and strapped me in, almost in one quick movement. They jumped back into their seats and took off.

I could not help but think that if I were seriously wounded, that rough ride would have killed me. I looked out to my left at the figure across from me. His feet were bare, yellow and blistered. I just thought that the poor guy had jaundice. He was not complaining, so I just covered up with my poncho again.

Suddenly, we came to an abrupt halt. Without any hesitation, the two occupants from the front seats jumped out, unstrapped us, and in not a very gentle manner plopped us on the ground. Then, without hesitation, they jumped back into their seats and sped off. I just assumed that they were in a hurry to get back to pick up the wounded.

Although it was a dreary day, I did not see it that way. As I lay there, I could hear talking, as in the sound that you hear when a group of people are working, and I could hear music. I once again lifted the corner of the poncho. Looking toward my left, I saw the bare, yellowed, blistered feet of the chap next to me. Then raising my head some, I could see a row of stretchers with bodies covered with ponchos. As I had never been in a field hospital, I guessed



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that was where I was; the division was in the attack, and there were probably more casualties than they had planned for.

Not giving any thought as to why the others in the group of stretchers were not expressing their feelings, I was very pleased to be where I thought I was and not in the foxhole in the rain.

I am unable to recall how long I lay there as I listened to the rain hitting the poncho, thinking of the telegram they would be sending and wishing that I could prevent it from being sent. I was not the least bit suspicious of why the guy next to me never uttered a word or even moved his feet.

I heard a voice, so I had raised the edge of the poncho again, looking to my left where I saw whom I guessed was a chaplain coming from the far end of the row toward me. He would stop at each of the stretchers, lifting the poncho, mumbling some words and making the sign. This did not seem unusual for a hospital area to offer their services.

When the chaplain was two stretchers away from me, I said, just as he was kneeling, "Hello, Chaplain." It was like he was administered an electric shock as he fell backward, although he caught himself. He was in the act of getting back to his feet, looking at me with eyes the

size of saucers and a very disbelieving look. He started shouting, "Oh, my God! Oh, my God! Oh, I am sorry! I'm sorry! I'm sorry!" Without a pause, he turned toward the row of tents, shouting, "Get this man inside. Get this man inside. Oh, I am sorry!" I was stunned, wondering what the hell all the fuss was.

I don't remember being able to get a word in there, but out of nowhere came an ambulance. I was whisked into the vehicle and taken a short distance down the road to a field hospital. On the way out to the Navy Mobile Field Hospital, referred to as "Easy" Med, we passed a tent with a sign over the entrance that read, to the best of my memory, "First Marine Division Graves Registration." At Easy Med, I spent about 30 days, eventually requesting to return to my unit, which was on the Kansas Line, wherever that was.

I don't remember this incident being mentioned by anyone while I was on active duty. My main reason for writing is, if anyone else remembers (as this type of thing surely did not happen often), I would

like to know the chaplain's name and if he is still alive.

Lyle Conaway
Virginia, Minn.

His Fiancée Was Published in *Leatherneck*, but Not as a Pinup

I've been reading *Leatherneck* since 1959 when my older brother joined the Marine Corps. *Leatherneck* used to print pretty girlfriends of Marines, wives and others. So, when I became engaged to Norma Miles in 1963, I sent a copy of her high school senior picture to my brother. Little did I know he would submit it to *Leatherneck* magazine and it would be selected and published! What a surprise, and something that I certainly didn't want to tell my future father-in-law—"that his daughter's photo had been published, almost like a 'pinup' for a worldwide Marine magazine." So, I never did, ever.

We are now reaching our 50th wedding anniversary.

During my 28-year Air Force career, I attempted twice to obtain an interservice transfer to the Marines and actually got assignments each time:



Norma (Miles) Potter, circa 1963. She certainly was pretty enough to be in *Leatherneck*.

Should you join the Camp Lejeune Historic Drinking Water notification database?

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Best estimates from recently released water modeling indicate that some of the base's water was affected by chemicals beginning in 1953. Registered individuals will be notified of results from independent scientific studies as they are finalized.

Information regarding these results and recently passed legislation can be found by visiting the Camp Lejeune Historic Drinking Water website, www.marines.mil/clwater. Results of health studies are expected beginning in late spring 2013.

Sign up for the Camp Lejeune Historic Drinking Water notification database or update your registration information.

Already registered? Visit the Camp Lejeune Historic Drinking Water website today for more information and updates.

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Marine Corps Air Station El Toro, Calif., flying F-4 Phantoms, and Naval Air Station Glenview, Ill., flying A-4s with the USMCR. However, both times, the Air Force would not let me transfer because I was a “regular” officer and they “owned me.” So, I always tell my Marine friends that “I am a Marine on the inside; Air Force blue on the outside.”

Col Joseph V. Potter, USAF (Ret)
Colorado Springs

• *I think you are talking about a column called “Cheri’s Scrapbook,” edited by Cpl Cherilee Noyes, which appeared periodically in the late 1960s. We didn’t publish the photo in our pinup series. Anyway, congratulations on reaching your 50th. I am sure that reading Leatherneck contributed to your success as a couple. I know it has in our house.—Sound Off Ed.*

The Difference Between a Hat And a Cover

Captain Jesse Sunderland’s March “Corps Changing (Slightly) Its Policy on Wearing Utility Uniforms” reminded me that, while serving as an instructor in Infantry Training Regiment at Camp Geiger, N.C., in the late 1960s, if we didn’t have weekend duty, we had an inspection in tropical worsted wool or service green uniforms every Friday afternoon before being dismissed for liberty call.

Sergeant Mike Skorich’s letter [“Covers: The Difference Between Regs and Tradition”] brought to mind an incident involving my mom. It was the early 1970s, and I had reentered the civilian world after six years of service. We were at a beach club that my family belonged to. Don, one of the members who was both a former Marine security guard and a drill instructor, and I were trading sea stories. My mom was present, and she wanted to know the difference between a hat and a cover.

Don looked at her, and said, “It’s quite simple, ma’am. Soldiers and civilians wear hats, Marines and garbage pails wear covers.”

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

READER ASSISTANCE

“Reader Assistance” entries (“Mail Call,” “Wanted,” “Sales, Trades and Give-aways” and “Reunions”) are free and printed on a space-available basis. Leatherneck reserves the right to edit or reject any submission. Allow two to three months for publication. Send your email to leatherneck@mca-marines.org, or write: Reader Assistance Editor, Leatherneck Magazine, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134.

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Mail Call

• Former LCpl Michael R. Merrill, 2 Ragged Hill Rd., Milford, MA 01757, (508) 478-3637, (508) 596-7126, to hear from anyone who served with **Co B, 1st Bn, 3d Marines, 3dMarDiv, Okinawa, 1963-64.**

• Former Cpl Richard Farrell, 806 Boquilla Trl., Georgetown, TX 78633, (512) 863-7483, (512) 818-1133, to hear from Marine veterans **Marty POLLOCK** from Cleveland and **Homer WATERSON** from Western, Pa., who served in the **machine-gun platoon, Schools Demonstration Troops, MCB Quantico, Va., 1955-1957.**

• Marine veteran Thomas Tucker, 423 Shadeswood Dr., Hoover, AL 35226, (205) 822-8836, oldmarine57@att.net, to hear from **TSgt J. M. BRADSHAW** and **Sgt D. L. PALMER**, drill instructors with **Plt 106, Parris Island, 1957.**

• Former PFC Albert Taylor, #1094891, 2665 Prison Rd. #1, Lovelady, TX 75851, to hear from any Marines who can provide historical information regarding **VMCJ-1, a photo reconnaissance squadron, or its predecessor.**

• Marine veteran Melvin Sherrod, (415) 236-0510, ncmel2009@gmail.com, to hear from members of **Plts 3048-3051,**

[continued on page 67]

ORIGINAL ISSUE



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CPL RODRIGUEZ/ABOLUTNY

PFC S. M. Rodriguez, center, holds the MCA&F-sponsored “Chesty” Puller Recruit Company Honor Graduate Award after the graduation ceremony of “India” Company, 3d Recruit Training Battalion, Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., on March 8, 2013. PFC Rodriguez is flanked by family and friends and, on the far left, BGen Lori Reynolds, Commanding General, Marine Corps Recruit Depot/Eastern Recruiting Region, and, on the far right, SgtMaj Gary W. Buck, the depot sergeant major.

By Roxanne Baker

Providing unit libraries, professional military education and awards for excellence are some of the ways the Marine Corps Association & Foundation supports Marines in the fleet. And we have a lot of fun doing it. We get to read the letters from those who are deployed and who now have books, present trophies to the top-performing Marines—enlisted and officer—and support hands-on teaching for battlefield lessons.

But we couldn't do any of that without the generous donors who span the globe from small-town U.S.A. to faraway countries. No two donors are alike. The retired veteran, the Corps-friendly corporate sponsor and the mother of a young private

first class are but a few of those supporters so important to our mission.

All these donors make the wheels of your nonprofit turn each day. But we shouldn't be the only ones having fun. We want to put you in the driver's seat and recognize your efforts even more this year.

Last month, we published the names of donors from the Special 100th Anniversary Donation Campaign in both *Leatherneck* and the *Marine Corps Gazette*. In March, a retired Marine presented an award at The Basic School that was made possible by a top-giving donor. And at the end of summer, we'll start our annual initiative for givers to sign a personal message in the bookplates placed inside unit library books they provided for Marines.

Send us your feedback and let us know

what you want to see done for the Corps. We'll consider all ideas and will do our best to set them into action. The photos featured in this article reflect how your donations have directly impacted Marines in the past few months. As the association continues through its 100th anniversary, we thank all donors for the endless support for Marines.

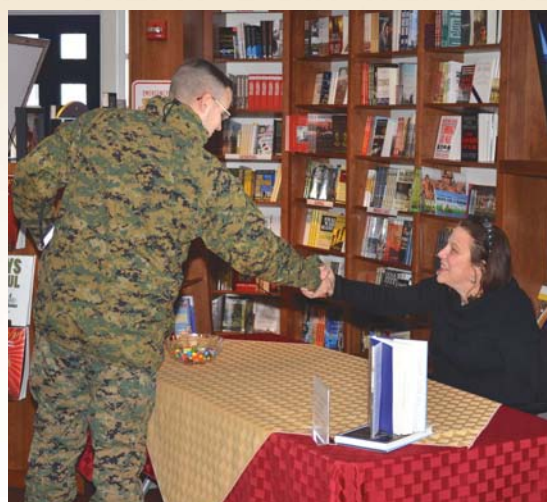
Editor's note: Roxanne Baker is the writer and media coordinator for MCA&F. A Marine wife, she is an experienced multimedia journalist with hundreds of published works. We look forward to more from her as she moves around the Corps, getting to know the Marine Corps family.





1STLT JOSHUA LARSON

Leatherneck selected an unprecedented three images by 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit Marines for its covers during the MEU's recent seven-month deployment. On March 6, MCA&F's East Coast area representative, retired SgtMaj Adam Terry, far left, and the commanding officer of the MEU, Col Frank L. Donovan, far right, presented two *Leatherneck* cover plaques to SSgt Robert Fisher III, public affairs chief, second from left, 24th MEU, in recognition of his photographs published as covers on the June 2012 and January 2013 *Leatherneck* magazines and one plaque to Cpl Michael Petersheim, combat camera, 24th MEU, for his photo published as the December 2012 cover.



RON LUNN

Laura Homan Lacey was at MCA&F's *The MARINE Shop* in Quantico, Va., Jan. 24, to sign copies of her biography of the legendary Col Pierre "Pete" Ortiz titled, "Ortiz-To Live a Man's Life."



LCPL JUSTIN A. FISHER

LCpl Andrew Peal was recognized with the MCA&F-sponsored "Chesty" Puller Recruit Company Honor Graduate Award at the March 8 recruit graduation of "Kilo" Co, 3d RTB, MCRD San Diego. The lance corporal is pictured with his senior drill instructor, SSgt Joseph C. Dodson, left, and his recruiter, Sgt Nathaniel D. Holmes.



RON LUNN

Second Lt Thomas Patterson, center, "Delta" Co, The Basic School, was awarded the 1stLt Baldomero Lopez Honor Graduate Award during graduation ceremonies held at Little Hall, MCB Quantico, on Jan. 30 by the *Marine Corps Gazette* editor, Col John Keenan, USMC (Ret), right, and the CO of TBS, Col Todd S. Desgrosseilliers.

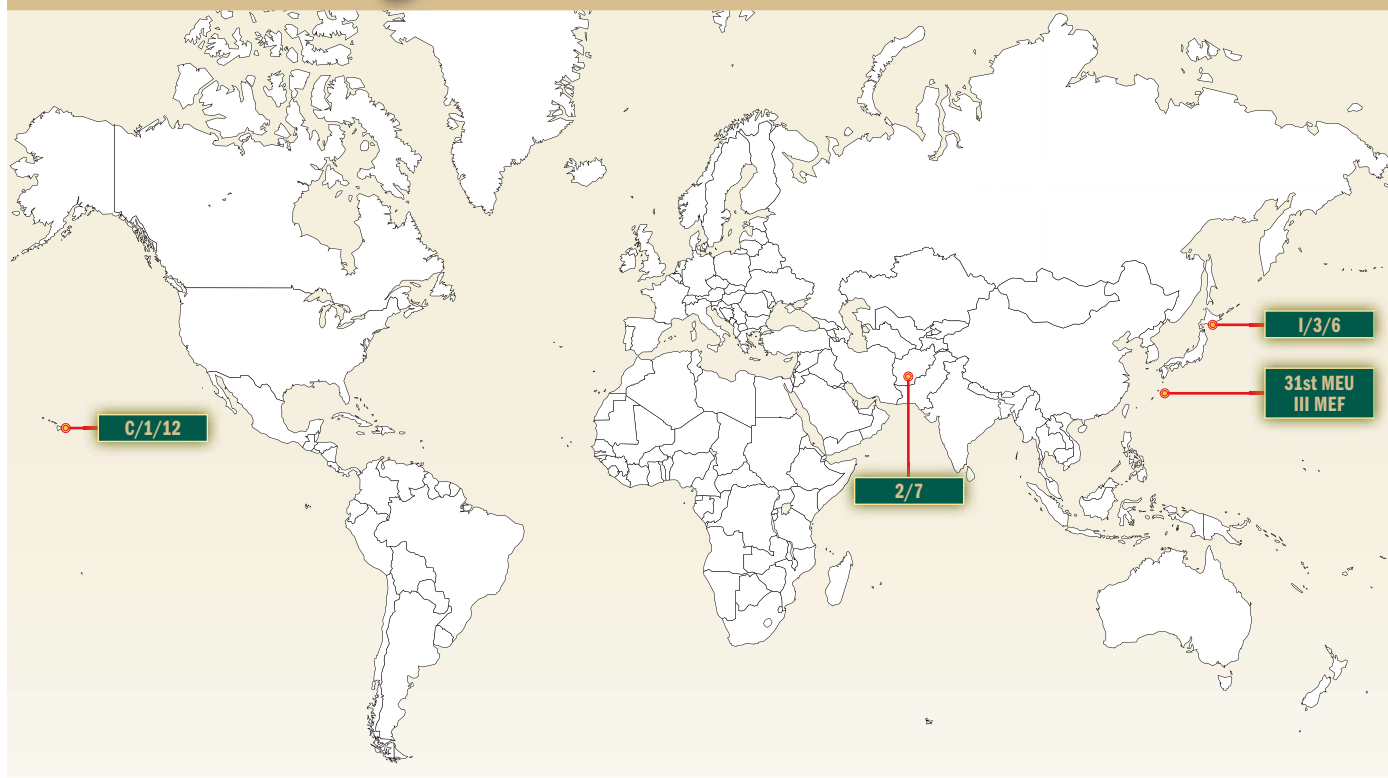


RON LUNN

The MCA&F recognized MGySgt Robert D. Chaldekias for the 2012 Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Writing Award, Feb. 13, at the MCA&F West Coast Dinner in Carlsbad, Calif. From left: BGen John J. Broadmeadow, CG, First Marine Logistics Group; MGySgt Chaldekias; SgtMaj Richard D. Thresher, SgtMaj, 1st MLG; MajGen Edward Usher, USMC (Ret), MCA&F president and CEO; and SgtMaj Frank Pulley, USMC (Ret), MCA&F West Coast representative.

In Every Clime and Place

Edited by
R. R. Keene



■ THE RYUKYU ISLANDS

There's Lots More Than Putting Boots on the Ground:

31st MEU Spearheads Foreign Aid

A typhoon whips through an island leaving hundreds without food, water and electricity. Terrorist factions have killed government officials and have taken over several significant locations. What is the best way to assist the distressed citizens, and how can the assistance be delivered?

In the Pacific and its littoral regions, it is by sending in the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit. That was proven during the MEU's March 11 Certification Exercise at Camp Hansen in Okinawa, Japan.

Embarked with the USS *Bonhomme Richard* Amphibious Ready Group, the 31st MEU was tasked with rendering humanitarian aid to a notional island nation recently struck by a natural disaster and facing a rising threat from radical nationals.

The MEU's first step in addressing the crisis was the establishment of a forward command element (FCE).

"The FCE is a portion of the MEU

Leathernecks of the 31st MEU, acting as the quick reaction force of the MEU's forward command element during the MEU's semiannual Certification Exercise, protect the gate of the notional U.S. Embassy and quell "hostile protesters." The unit's full range of capabilities was evaluated by the Special Operations Training Group, III MEF.

command located on-site to lay the groundwork for the humanitarian assistance," said Lieutenant Colonel Troy Roesti, the 31st MEU executive officer. "We operate out of the nation's U.S. Embassy to effectively coordinate and plan our assistance, and everything that goes along with it."

The forward command element inserts into the U.S. Embassy to coordinate with the Department of State and determine the requirements for assistance. These requirements are formed from communi-

cation between the embassy and the host nation's government. The FCE then relays that information to the 31st MEU command on ship, which determines a response plan. This serves as the basic communication structure between a country in need and the Marines providing help.

The FCE acts as the eyes and ears for the command located on ship and can articulate the MEU's capabilities to the Department of State. It is made up of a



SGT JONATHAN G. WRIGHT

security team and approximately 15 members from the command, all representing specific functions ranging from engineering and logistics to medical and public relations.

Members of the FCE form a Humanitarian Assistance Survey Team and move by helicopter to visit the various locations requesting aid. This allows the team to see what damage has occurred and what aid is requested. Working alongside the Department of State and nongovernmental organizations, the team can begin to form joint decisions on how to provide relief. An aid delivery operation requires constant coordination and exhaustive levels of planning to be successful.

“You have to find out what supplies are needed, where they’re coming from, how they will be delivered to the people, what routes will be taken,” said First Lieutenant Tuan Pham, an engineer representative for Combat Logistics Battalion 31 during the exercise. “There are so many simultaneous actions taking place to meet one objective, and that all is before the first shipment goes out.”

In the scenario, a village of 200 citizens located five kilometers from the embassy is without food and water while a nearby village also may require assistance. At the same time, hostile locals with an anti-government agenda stage daily protests outside the embassy, attempting to disrupt relief operations. These protestors demonstrate the need for the FCE’s security element.

“They are not necessarily enemies, but are civilians who may have the wrong perspective about our intentions,” said Sergeant Alfredo Corona, a howitzer section chief with Battery F, Battalion Landing Team 1st Bn, Fifth Marine Regiment, 31st MEU and acting security squad leader for the exercise. “We’re here to maintain order around the embassy and prevent any obstruction of aid we’re providing, using proper escalation of force.”

Following the determination of where the humanitarian aid is to be delivered, the 31st MEU and the *Bonhomme Richard* ARG flotilla work concurrently to transport the necessary equipment ashore. Even then, coordination does not cease until the mission is completed.

“It’s a lot of planning and on-the-ground adjustments, but that’s what the 31st MEU does,” said LtCol Roesti. “Our FCE plays a vital role in coordinating efforts between the embassy and the 31st MEU, ensuring humanitarian assistance is provided precisely where and when it is needed.”

The 31st MEU’s certification exercise is a semiannual exercise where the unit’s full range of capabilities is evaluated by the Special Operations Training Group,



JGSDF officers and Combat Assault Bn leathernecks disembark an MV-22B Osprey, March 1, in the Central Training Area near Camp Hansen, Okinawa, Japan, after flying in the aircraft and learning its capabilities. (Photo by LCpl Ian M. McMahon)

III Marine Expeditionary Force with the purpose of maintaining the MEU’s proficiency.

The 31st MEU is the only continuously forward-deployed MEU and is the Marine Corps’ force in readiness in the Asia-Pacific region.

Sgt Jonathan G. Wright
Combat Correspondent, 31st MEU

■ THE RYUKYU ISLANDS JGSDF, Marines Strengthen And Learn Together

Marines with Combat Assault Battalion (CAB) engaged in bilateral training alongside Japan Ground Self-Defense Force officers March 1 in the Central Training Area near Camp Hansen as part of the Japan Observer Exchange Program (JOEP).

The JGSDF officers and Marines inserted into the Central Training Area via MV-22B Osprey aircraft and proceeded to conduct a six-mile conditioning hike. It was the first opportunity for the participating JGSDF officers to fly in the Ospreys, which are part of Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 265, Marine Aircraft Group 36, First Marine Aircraft Wing, III Marine Expeditionary Force.

The learning experience offered through JOEP events is unparalleled, according to JGSDF First Lieutenant Shomei Ugaki, an intelligence platoon leader. “The U.S. Marine Corps is one of the most experienced military services in the world. They have learned a lot from combat operations and quickly applied lessons learned to their training. It is a very good experience for us to learn alongside the Marines.”

The exchange of information and experience was mutual during the hike and flight.

“It was a good experience. I learned a lot about Japan and how their forces operate,” said Second Lieutenant Jason J. Romero, a platoon commander with CAB, Third Marine Division, III MEF.

Due to mutual professionalism, the JGSDF officers and Marines overcame the language barrier to train together, according to Ugaki. “Even though both forces speak different languages, we still conduct bilateral training very successfully. It is very important for us and our allies that we have a chance to share our experiences.”

Both U.S. Marines and JGSDF officers look forward to further interactions, as it is an essential part of both services’ roles in the Asia-Pacific region, according to Corporal Alexander F. Orlosky, a combat engineer. “It lets us see both sides of the spectrum.”

PFC Mike Granahan
Combat Correspondent, Marine Corps Installations,
Pacific

■ BOLDAK, AFGHANISTAN Gimlet-Eyed Unmanned Aerial Vehicles See It All for Marines

Leathernecks of 2d Battalion, Seventh Marine Regiment had been taking sporadic enemy fire for most of the morning March 2 while conducting their daily patrol through Boldak, a small town interlaced with green fields and large mud compounds about eight kilometers southeast of Camp Leatherneck in Afghanistan.

Due to their position and the unforgiving



SGT BOBBY J. YARBROUGH

Above: LCpl Nathan Bush launches the Puma while taking part in a surveillance mission at Patrol Base Boldak, March 4.

Below: LCpl Bush uses the hand controller of the Puma to guide the unmanned aerial vehicle March 2. Bush and other Marines who operate the remotely controlled UAV are members of Wpns/2/7.



SGT BOBBY J. YARBROUGH

terrain of the city, the Marines couldn't locate the shooter.

The Marines radioed their combat operations center at Patrol Base Boldak, a small base just two kilometers away, and asked for aerial surveillance to help locate the place from where the shots were coming.

Within minutes, Marines with Weapons Company, 2/7 had launched an RQ-LOA Puma AE, a small, unarmed aerial vehicle, to search for potential suspects.

As the Puma positioned over the patrol's location, a man on a motorcycle was

spotted speeding north away from its position. An object was across the man's lap.

The aerial vehicle followed the man as he drove through the city and across fields, weaving in and out of narrow dirt roads and washed-out *wadies*. The man pulled up to a large compound and parked his motorcycle underneath trees that shaded the right side of the road. Multiple men flooded out from inside of the compound to meet the motorcyclist.

The Marines at PB Boldak watched on a TV screen as the motorcyclist and the

men gathered under the trees. For the next few minutes, people moved back and forth from under the tree line to the inside of the compound. After about 10 minutes, the motorcyclist and a female passenger left the compound, but without the object.

Although the Marines couldn't positively identify the object as a weapon, through the use of the aerial surveillance, they were able to identify a possible insurgent compound they would now monitor.

Unconventional warfare has defined Afghanistan for the last 12 years. With an enemy who hides amongst the population and uses improvised explosive devices (IEDs), the U.S. military has reinvented and transformed its strategies for defeating insurgency.

Weapons Co, 2/7, one of the few Marine Corps units in Helmand province still operating independently of the Afghan National Army, remains focused on counterinsurgency operations. Aerial surveillance systems are ideal for them as an infantry unit because they allow them to conduct intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance flights over their battlespace.

Since 2012, the Marine Corps has fielded the Puma surveillance system to units in Afghanistan. And for the last five months, the Puma systems have become a fundamental part of battlefield planning for 2/7.

"Aerial surveillance has become indispensable to our unit," said Captain John Dalby, company commander of Wpns/2/7. "The Puma system has become a lifeline for our unit, allowing us to observe, detect and monitor a transparent enemy while operating in a counterinsurgency environment."

The Puma is a hand-launched unarmed aerial vehicle (UAV) with a range greater than 15 kilometers. It weighs 13 pounds, has a two-hour time of flight and can be operated from a static position or a mobile platform. The Puma's small size and its ease of use are positives for infantry units because it allows them to operate the systems organically.

"The Puma system is very important, especially for the infantry," said Lance Corporal Scott Chase, the Puma flight chief. "When it comes to fighting insurgency, we are attempting to fight an enemy who isn't directly attacking us. With the Puma system, we can independently observe our battlespace day or night, which allows us to find the enemy before he has the chance to find us."

Currently, the unit has four Puma systems and four flight operators. The operators, who all are infantrymen, fly the system for approximately eight hours each day and have logged more than 1,000 flight hours during their deployment.

According to LCpl Josh Miller, a Puma

flight operator, the system has helped them to locate 12 IED emplacements and numerous enemy firing positions, as well as track multiple insurgents across the battlefield.

The use of unarmed aerial vehicles has become commonplace on the battlefield and is poised to define the future of combat. However, Capt Dalby believes the real future of aerial surveillance in the Marine Corps lies within its use in amphibious operations.

Dalby was a former small boat commander, and he believes the Puma systems have unlimited potential in support of ship-to-shore movements.

“Moving into the future, the use of aerial surveillance will become more important,” said Dalby. “As we return to our amphibious roots, we will adapt the technology into a valuable tool for MEU commanders to use in their decision-making process for beach landings.”

Sgt Bobby J. Yarbrough
Combat Correspondent, II MEF (Fwd)

■ HUALALAI VOLCANIC MOUNTAIN Proficiency Makes Howitzers “Kings of Battle”

Artillerymen from Battery C, 1st Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment fired live ammunition with the M777 155 mm howitzer during Operation Spartan Fury at



LCpl Zachery Knoebel, a cannoneer with “Charlie” Btry, 1/12, aligns the sights of an M777 155 mm howitzer, using a collimator, or infinity reference point, during Operation Spartan Fury at Pohakuloa Training Area, Hawaii, Feb. 22.

Pohakuloa Training Area, Hawaii, Feb. 22.

Marines from the battalion attached to “Charlie” Btry before the training exercise started to become familiar with the battery’s operational tempo.

“The tempo was very realistic and al-

lowed everyone to get acquainted with the weapon and each other,” said Lance Corporal David Bonin. “Sometimes conditions and circumstances are rough, but it builds camaraderie because we get through it together.”

In cold, rainy and windy weather high in between Mauna Loa, Mauna Kea and Hualalai volcanic mountains, Charlie Btry unpacked.

Each section had two trucks that hauled supplies from one firing zone to the other. Upon reaching the designated firing zone, the section chief aligned the howitzers in the correct position, and section members dug the guns into place, preventing the weapon from moving during firing.

At least two rounds had to be readily accessible immediately after each howitzer was in place in case Marines received a fire mission, but there was more work to complete. In each section a camouflage net covered both 7-ton trucks and the rear of the howitzer, where the crew loaded the rounds of ammunition.

Each section maintained its weapon during downtime, but they also lifted camaraderie with stories about childhood, friends and family.

“No matter the condition or state of morale, everyone is always trying to laugh and stay motivated through times that aren’t always fun,” said LCpl Luis



Using shovels and pickaxes, Charlie Btry, 1/12 cannoncocks prepare to emplace the trails of an M777 155 mm howitzer during Operation Spartan Fury. Digging in the spades on the trails helps ensure howitzer accuracy.

Ramirez, a motor transport driver. “Although we like to keep the mood light, when it’s time to get down to business, the mood quickly transitions to do our part to get rounds downrange.”

The chiefs commanded their sections to start the loading process by calling out, “Fire mission!” Once the command was given, Marines began working to make the mission a success.

The sections waited until the fire direction center operations chief gave the command, “Stand by!” When the command was given, the section chief raised his hand in anticipation of hearing, “Fire!” from the operations chief. Once it came over the radio, the section chief lowered his arm while simultaneously yelling, “Fire!” His gunner rolled on the lanyard attached to the howitzer, causing an earth-shaking boom, hurtling a 155 mm round downrange.

Once the battery was ready to move to a new location, each section packed everything into the truck, leaving the firing location without a trace.

The Marines of Charlie Btry repeated the steps of unloading, firing and loading gear more than five times a day.

“This training allows everyone in the section an opportunity to practice jobs all over the gun,” said LCpl Robert Solberg. “Operation Spartan Fury forces everyone in the battalion to push to be better at the job specialty.”

LCpl Nathan Knapke
PAO, MCB Hawaii

■ HOKKAIDO MANEUVER AREA JGSDF, Marines Brave Elements During Exercise Forest Light

Japan Ground Self-Defense Force soldiers and Marines conducted a comprehensive bilateral field training exercise (FTX), Exercise Forest Light 13-3, March 2-3, in the Hokkaido-Dai Maneuver Area, Hokkaido Prefecture, Japan.

As if operating in a simulated hostile territory with a language barrier between friendly forces wasn’t challenging enough, the combination of subzero temperatures, howling winds and snowfall measuring in feet added a level of misery that made mission accomplishment nearly impossible.

These military personnel were well-trained and dedicated to success above all else, overcoming the elements in impressive fashion.

In the combined combat operations center, Marines and JGSDF soldiers worked together to coordinate fire support, track friendly and enemy movement, and analyze the enemy situation and terrain.

The FTX required both forces to use and apply the communication and cooperative skills, according to Second



Above: Second Lt Matthew G. Goggin, a platoon commander with I/3/6, points out a potential enemy position to JGSDF soldiers March 2 while conducting comprehensive bilateral field training during Exercise Forest Light 13-3 in the Hokkaido-Dai Maneuver Area in Hokkaido Prefecture, Japan.

Below: Marines patrol through strong winds and heavy snow during the training exercise. The FTX began with the Marines and JGSDF patrolling separately on foot and with mechanized vehicles to reach an area where they set up a defensive position.



Lieutenant Matthew G. Goggin, a platoon commander with Company I (Reinforced), 3d Battalion, Sixth Marine Regiment, currently assigned to 4th Marines, Third Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force, under the unit deployment program.

“This final training evolution proved

that we can communicate and operate together effectively in highly stressful situations,” said Goggin. “There was a lot to learn from each other. We had ideas on how to improve their fire packages, and they taught us about maneuvering in snowy terrain.”

The FTX began with the Marines and the Japanese soldiers patrolling separately on foot and with vehicles to reach an area where they set up defensive positions. The two militaries combined forces the next morning, then cleared and secured the objective.

“I enjoyed watching the capabilities of our combined forces,” said Colonel Naoki Yamane, the commanding officer of 11th Infantry Regiment, 7th Armored Division, Northern Army, JGSDF. “You can see the proficiency and skills the Marines have in the way they move. As our forces have never been deployed to combat, we have much we can learn from the Marines and their experiences.”

More than the other training events during Forest Light 13-3, communication was most important during the final FTX, according to Lance Corporal Masami D. Rouse, a machine-gunner and interpreter. “We worked very well together to break the language barrier and clear and secure the objective. The most fulfilling part for me was when the Marines and JGSDF members took the objective together rather than separately. You could see both forces using everything they had learned throughout the exercise in order to accomplish the final mission.”

PFC Kasey Peacock
PAO, Marine Corps Installations Pacific



Roger Taylor Park

Iwo Jima Marine Remembered in Hometown

By Jeff Denecke

Roger Wallace Taylor joined the United States Marine Corps on 2 June 1944 at the age of 18. He died in the Battle of Iwo Jima on 2 March 1945, eight days before his 19th birthday. He was the only man from Round Lake Beach, Ill., to die in World War II.

Taylor died while serving on a machine-gun crew. He was reported to have died instantly from his wound.

He had been assigned to the replacement draft for the Fourth Marine Division. On 24 Feb. 1945, Taylor was assigned to "Easy" Company, 2d Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment. The following morning, the 4thMarDiv began its assault on an area called the "Meat Grinder."

Letters and records do not specify exactly when or where the young Marine made his ultimate sacrifice and became another fatality of the battle to take and hold Hill 382. Only the date, 2 March 1945, is known for certain.

By the next day, the Marines had silenced most of the enemy positions in the area where Taylor was killed. It wasn't

until then that they were able to move the wounded to aid stations and take their dead to the cemetery at the base of Mount Suribachi.

Prior to joining the Corps, Taylor lived with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Taylor, and his younger sister, Rosemary. Their home was just a short distance from what is now Roger Taylor Memorial Park. The Taylor family had moved from Chicago to Round Lake Beach a few years earlier.



Robert W. Taylor

COURTESY OF THE TAYLOR FAMILY

Taylor was a gifted musician and played multiple instruments. He believed that helicopters were going to be a common form of transportation in the future and aspired to be an aeronautical engineer. Taylor attended Grant High School, graduating third in his class. He wrote many letters to his family and friends during his short time in the Marines, and through those letters he left a small trail of his final journey.

On a cold November 1945 day, the fallen Marine was mourned and honored by his family, friends, co-workers and the community, and a park was dedicated in his memory. Taylor's legacy is one of valor, and one that should not be minimized by the passage of time. He fought in a terrible

and cruel battle because he believed it had to be done. On this and every Memorial Day, Americans have a special time to remember.

As part of that 1945 dedication of the park, a memorial marker and a commemorative tablet were placed near the tip of the park with these words inscribed:

ROGER TAYLOR PARK

***Gratefully Dedicated To The Memory
Of The Man Whose Name It Bears.***

Today, 68 years later, like the island of Iwo Jima itself, Taylor's service and sacrifice have faded from public memory.

The Battle of Iwo Jima, however, has remained legendary in Marine Corps history. Those who died for our country on that small island are not dead until they are forgotten.

Please join Round Lake Beach in remembering Roger Wallace Taylor this July in a rededication of the park that was named in his honor.

Editor's note: Jeff Denecke and his sister Mary Behrens were raised across the street from the Roger Taylor Park. For information or questions, contact him at denjeff5@gmail.com.



MARY BEHRENS



COURTESY OF THE TAYLOR FAMILY

Today, Roger Taylor Park remains a place for families to enjoy getting together. The citizens of Round Lake Beach continue to perpetuate the memory of a hometown Marine killed on Iwo Jima, just as his mother, Mrs. Lillian Taylor, envisioned when she stood beside the memorial stone in 1945.

“I Wasn’t Going to Let the Bad Guys Win”—

Wounded Marine Warrior Gets Back Up and Rides

By Cpl Daniel Wulz

All motorcycles share similar controls regardless of style or brand. Most of them have manually operated clutches controlled by using the left handle’s lever to engage or disengage the clutch, and the left foot-pedal to shift gears up and down. On the right side, both the handle’s lever and the foot-pedal are used for braking the front and rear wheels, respectively. This is common knowledge for the experienced rider.

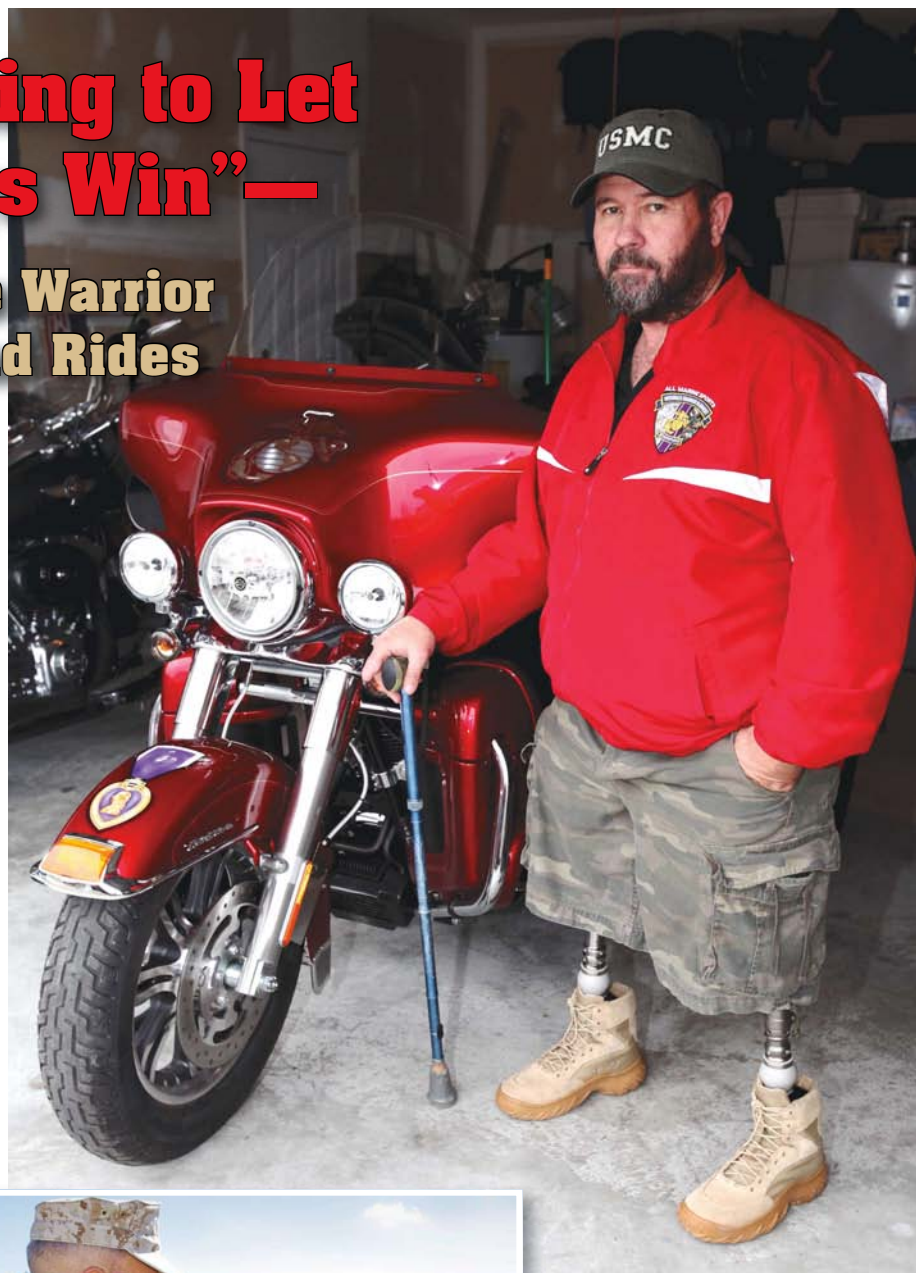
For retired Sergeant Major Raymond H. Mackey, former battalion sergeant major of 3d Battalion, 10th Marine Regiment, all of his braking and shifting is done completely by his hands. He has custom hand controls designed for racing motorcycles installed on his brand-new Harley-Davidson Tri-Glide, often called a trike or three-wheeled motorcycle. The specialized controls are a necessity for Mackey.

While on patrol in the volatile district of Nawa, Afghanistan, one of Mackey’s Marines slipped and fell into a ditch. Mackey leaned down to pull him up and unknowingly stepped on an improvised explosive device, triggering an explosion that resulted in him losing his legs.

A battalion sergeant major does not normally accompany his Marines on a patrol, but Mackey is a different kind of leader.

“I wholeheartedly believe that you can’t advise the battalion commander if you don’t know what the troops on the ground are thinking,” said the Sierra Vista, Ariz., native, who had been a motorcycle rider for more than 35 years at the time of his accident.

“When this happened, I wanted to get back to as normal as I would ever get back to,” said Mackey. “I wasn’t going to let the bad guys win by not getting on a motorcycle, and I was determined to find a way to ride again. I looked into everything that there was that could assist



CPL DANIEL WULZ



SGT MALLORY S. WANDERSCHANS

Above: SgtMaj Raymond H. Mackey, USMC (Ret), a double amputee with Wounded Warrior Bn East, stands next to his dream, a Harley-Davidson Tri-Glide, which allows him to resume his 35-year motorcycle-riding hobby.

Left: Gen James F. Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps, awards SgtMaj Mackey a Legion of Merit during SgtMaj Mackey’s retirement ceremony Nov. 1, 2012, at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C.

me in getting on a bike again.”

Ultimately, Mackey decided to purchase a three-wheeled trike and not a standard two-wheeled motorcycle.

With some help from the New River Harley-Davidson motorcycle dealership in Jacksonville, N.C., Mackey picked out

a motorcycle and found ways to have custom hand controls installed. Specialists and engineers from Adaptive Cycling, a Florida-based motorcycle company, had some ideas about how they could install hand controls and sent them to New River Harley-Davidson.

Below left: On the third anniversary of his survival—Dec. 23, 2012—retired SgtMaj Mackey mounts his brand-new Harley-Davidson Tri-Glide for the first time.



CPL DANIEL WULZ



CPL DANIEL WULZ

Jeff Myers, a salesman at New River Harley-Davidson and a retired Marine, played an essential role, helping Mackey purchase the bike as well as coordinating the bike's assembly.

"We're absolutely thrilled to be doing this," said Myers. "This is an opportunity to show all wounded warriors they can still ride American 'Iron.' A lot of guys who rode before may have given up their desire to ride, but now they can try again. That is at least our hope."

On Dec. 23, 2012, which marked the third anniversary of his brush with death, Mackey received his brand-new Harley-Davidson motorcycle, customized precisely for his use—without his legs.

As he started the motorcycle up for the first time, surrounded by friends and family, Mackey leaned in to listen to the engine and shouted above the noise to the audience, "Is it on?"

After the bike's maiden voyage, Mackey said that because of the rehabilitation he did at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., he was pretty accustomed to working with the hand controls. Riding the bike for the first time was not difficult since Mackey already had been riding for a number of years.

"We got along from the first moment we met, and she didn't buck me off," said Mackey.

Early on in his recovery, Mackey was plagued by the thoughts that he would never ride again, but he was determined to get back on the bike.

"I was always kind of stubborn," he explained. "People told me, 'You can't

Above right: Jon Arnn, left, a mechanic, and Jeff Myers, a salesman, for New River Harley-Davidson in Jacksonville, N.C., discuss the Kliktronic gear actuator of SgtMaj Mackey's custom Tri-Glide on Dec. 11, 2012, ensuring all is ready prior to delivery.

Right: The custom-made Harley-Davidson trike allows SgtMaj Mackey to ride without the use of his legs.



CPL DANIEL WULZ

be a Marine. You're too stubborn to be a Marine.' I thought, 'Yes, I can. I'm going to be a Marine.' So 30 years later, I have to retire, and now being a double amputee I have people telling me, 'You can't do that. You're a double amputee.' I'm still

"Being a double amputee I have people telling me, 'You can't do that. You're a double amputee.' I'm still thinking, 'Yes, I can.'"

thinking, 'Yes, I can.' So, I hope in some way that I set an example, not just for other wounded warriors and amputees but for Marines. You can do the impossible."

Mackey, who had his retirement ceremony in November 2012, currently is

spending time with his wife, two sons, two daughters and, of course, his new motorcycle.

"At first all people initially see is the bike. Then they pull up closer and see I'm missing my legs and think, 'Oh, that's awesome!'"

Editor's note: Cpl Wulz is an award-winning combat correspondent from Rogers, Ark., who completed recruit training in January 2010. He deployed with II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward) during Operation Enduring Freedom from March 2011 to March 2012. He produced written and video stories throughout Nimroz and Helmand provinces and embedded with the British Royal Marines during his deployment. He currently is assigned to II MEF, Camp Lejeune, N.C.



SKY HIGH

Earning Marine Aircrew Wings

Story and photos by Roxanne Baker

When training gets tough at aircrew candidate school, Lance Corporal Sawyer Guerin powers through the mental barrier. He keeps his eyes upward and focused on his main motivation—to get up in the sky.

“Flying is something you dream about when you’re a little kid like everyone does,” Guerin said. “You look up in the sky and you get mesmerized by anything that’s

flying. It’s something you dream about your whole life.”

Guerin is putting his dream to the test as he begins his training to be a crew chief for a Marine Corps aircraft. He’s entrenched in the four-week Naval Aircrew Candidate School (NACCS) at Naval Air Station Pensacola, Fla.

Crew chiefs are responsible for the back half of the aircraft, said Gunnery Sergeant Brian Freeman, staff noncommissioned officer in charge of the school. Depending

on the role of the aircraft, they watch over troops, conduct preflight checks, address mechanical issues in the air, operate onboard weapons and are the eyes where the pilot can’t see.

“I think it’s pretty cool to shoot from an aircraft,” said aircrew candidate Private First Class Camron Tucker. “I can’t wait to experience that.”

The Navy operates the school, and each course usually has about 10 sailors and 10 Marines, Freeman said.

Candidates must pass a flight physical and a Marine physical fitness test during their first week. Naval instructors then put the candidates through a series of water-survival skills, including mile swims, treading water and holding their breath. The candidates advance from training in their bathing suits, to flight suits and then full gear.

Water survival instructor Aviation Structural Mechanic First Class (Aviation Warfare) Juan Marrero said the full gear weighs about 7 pounds and consists of a flight suit, boots, gloves, a vest and a helmet.

“It’s more mental than anything,” said Marrero of wearing full gear in the water. “They put that helmet on, and it gets to some people’s mind, just being enclosed.”

Candidates must run, perform calisthenics, withstand the low-pressure chamber and learn CPR.

In an effort to keep pushing himself forward when the conditioning seems impossible, Guerin said he imagines the whirring sound of a Huey helicopter.

“Every time on a long run and I’m out of breath, I [imagine I can] hear a helicopter in the background,” he said.

The candidates also train for emergency situations in case an aircraft crashes. They learn how to clear water surface of debris and how to swim through water that’s engulfed in flames from burning oil. A helo dunker is a machine that simulates a helicopter’s crash landing into water. It rotates upside down in the water, and the candidates must swim out safely even with blacked-out goggles.

“Hopefully they’ll never have to use these skills,” Marrero said. “But we’re trying to get them comfortable and confident in the water; that way if anything does happen, they’ll be able to stay calm and survive out there in the ocean.”

During the last week of training, candidates are issued their flight suits and gear



Above: Marine aircrew candidates PFC Kevin Paul, far left, and PFC Juan Joanuribe, right, with his head down, shout out their push-up counts during morning PT with U.S. Navy aircrew candidates as part of the four-week intensive course to become aircraft crew chiefs.

Below: Sgt Derreck Alcalá, far left, leads morning PT for Marine Corps aircrew candidates at NAS Pensacola. Cranking out pull-ups are PFC Blake Toth, center, and LCpl Frank Reina, right.





Above: Water survival instructors look on as aircrew candidates are tested on their ability to tread water. Crew chiefs must be prepared to stay afloat for hours, waiting for rescue teams if their aircraft crashes into the water.

Right: Marine aircrew candidates, from left, are Sgt Chase Cossairt, PFC Lucas Rott, PFC Patrais Sterzelecki, PFC Camron Tucker, LCpl Sawyer Guerin, PFC Logan Orr and Sgt Aaron Rayburn.

on “Tom Cruise Tuesday,” learn about aviation history at the National Naval Aviation Museum and have a graduation ceremony. They are then assigned their aircraft, GySgt Freeman said.

The grueling four weeks are tiring, said aircrew candidate Sergeant Aaron Rayburn, but the graduates are in good company of other high achievers.

“The people who don’t want to be here get weeded out, and honestly, that’s OK with me because, like my instructors said, they don’t want to fly with someone who doesn’t want to be there,” Rayburn said. “I have a lot of respect for them [instructors].”

After candidates graduate from the aircrew candidate school, they must complete the two-week Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE) School located at NAS North Island, Calif., or Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine. The Marines then are sent to schools to learn their specific aircraft.



Once the candidates log enough flight hours, they are awarded their gold wings etched with “AC.” The process from initial aircrew school to having wings pinned takes about one year, Freeman said.

Obtaining those gold wings is something Tucker has looked forward to since he was a child. While growing up, he lived near Fort Benning in Columbus, Ga., and would sometimes see aircraft soar by. Every last Sunday of the month, he flew in a small, private plane as part of a local youth program. The feeling stuck.

“I always wanted to fly,” Tucker said. “You get to see the ground from a different perspective. I love it. I really do think it’s the best job in the Marine Corps.”

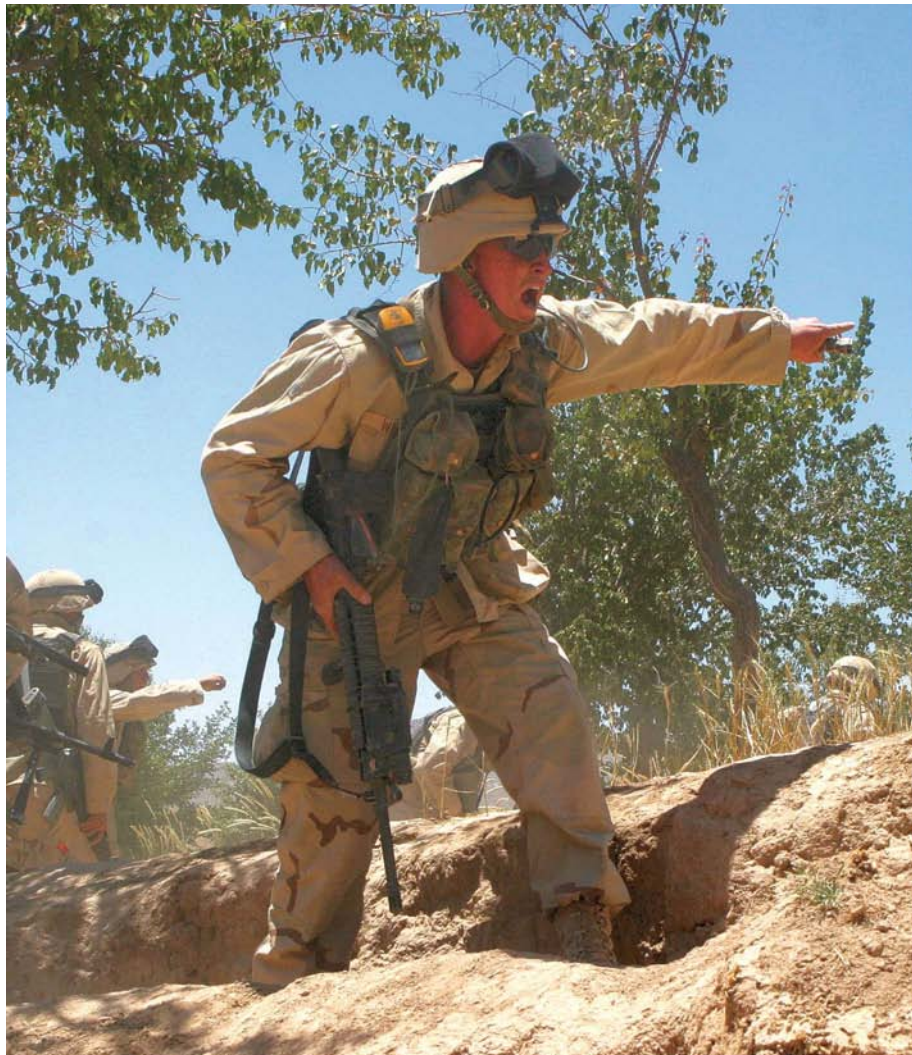
Editor’s note: Roxanne Baker is the writer and media coordinator for MCA&F. A Marine wife, she is an experienced multimedia journalist with hundreds of published works.



Noncommissioned Officers Will Win This War

The Battlefield May Change—But Our Values Are Timeless

By Gen James T. Conway, 34th Commandant of the Marine Corps



In June 2004, Sgt Ryan R. West, a squad leader with Battalion Landing Team 1st Bn, Sixth Marine Regiment, 22d Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), shouts at his Marines to take cover as sniper rounds impact around them during a fight with anticoalition militia in central Afghanistan.

Our Corps faces challenges today that are unlike any in our past. Never before have battlefields been more decentralized, our enemy more ruthless, and never have we had more potential for our small-unit leaders to determine our success as a Corps.

In Iraq and Afghanistan, the first battles of this Long War, we truly live in the era of the “Strategic Corporal”—where tactical action by a noncommissioned officer may have strategic consequences. To all our NCOs in the fight, make no mistake, your actions do have impact! You not only af-

fect those serving on your left and right flank today, but also your fellow Marines who will follow you in future rotations.

Our NCO corps is the envy of professional militaries around the world; others can see the tremendous value of our small-unit leadership in current operations. Whether fighting a complex insurgency, conducting major disaster relief, or rescuing noncombatants, the collective efforts of well-led Marine units have brought peace and stability to many regions during the opening battles of this Long War. That success will continue to rest on the shoulders

of young men and women who wear corporal and sergeant chevrons—in the battles of today and the battles that will follow.

The challenges of combat demand strong leadership at all levels, but in particular where “the rubber meets the road.” This is where the Corps has its greatest strength—the steadfast leadership of our NCOs. These small-unit leaders reinforce our core values of honor, courage and commitment—through example and action, and this value system is crucial to winning the Long War. While the battlefields may change, our values will not.

Leadership

The challenge to prepare our Marines for the complexities of a counterinsurgency battlefield, at its essence, is a leadership issue. Marine leaders must do what they have always done to coach, train and inspire their Marines. Each level of leadership, if we are to function as a well-oiled machine, has a role in mission accomplishment.

Officers, particularly commanders, are responsible for leading their Marines with firmness, fairness and dignity and creating a command climate that “powers down” responsibility to the lowest level. They must set a bold example for their Marines, particularly in combat. Officers must challenge their Marines to demonstrate moral and physical courage, and, in the end, hold all accountable for their actions.

Staff noncommissioned officers provide the experience and mentorship that our Corps needs to maintain its high standards. Their toughness and determination form the bedrock of our combat formations. The genuine concern for Marines under their charge is frequently a reflection of leadership they received when they were young NCOs and pays huge dividends whether in training or in combat.

The NCOs have the toughest tasks of all. They are our 24/7 leadership. In garrison, they are tasked with the maintenance of good order and discipline. In combat, they make hard decisions at the point where strategy meets reality, linking commanders’ intents to the actions of their Marines—often in a split second.

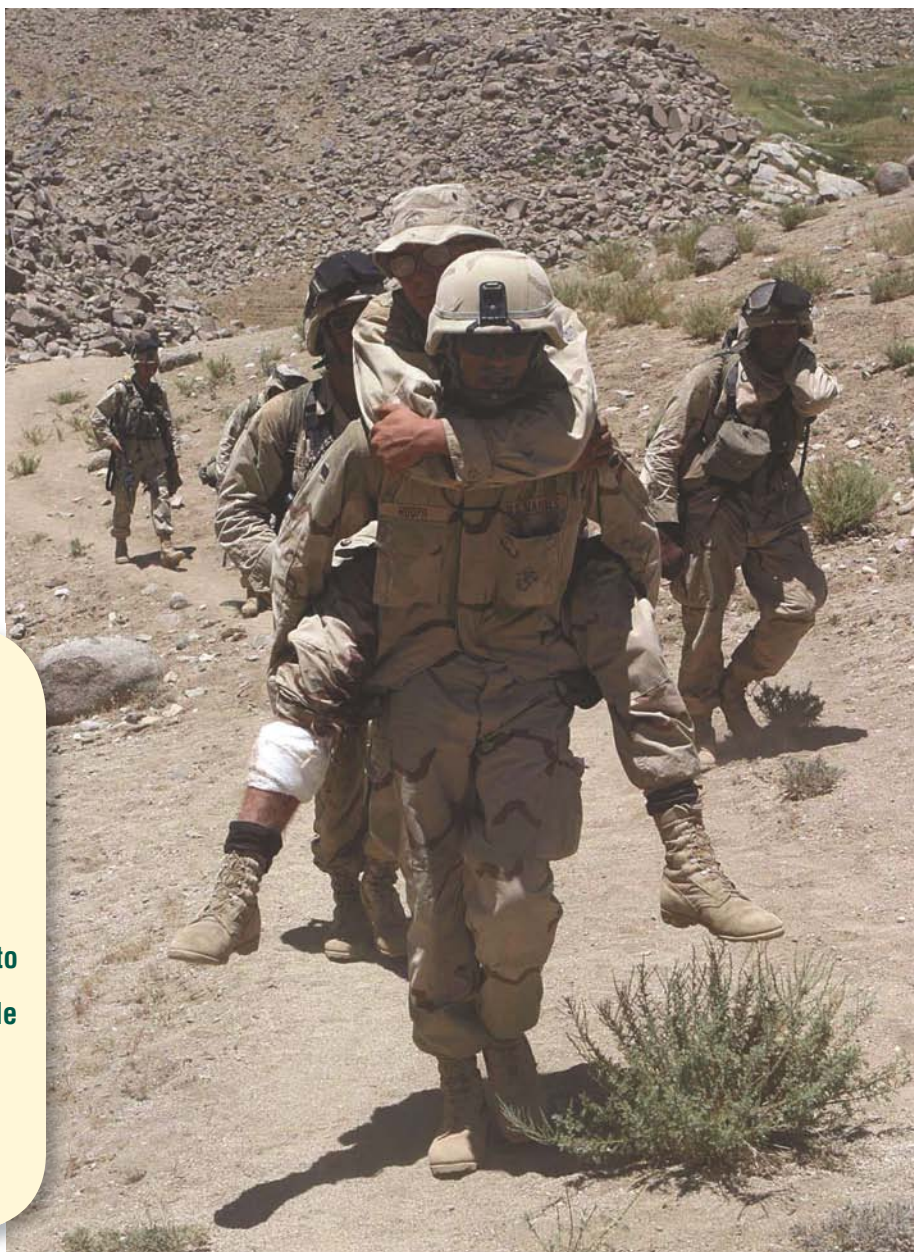
Noncommissioned Officers

Marine noncommissioned officers are the critical link in battlefield leadership, they close the final 200 yards with the enemy—they make decisions where it counts. When I speak with our young second lieutenants at The Basic School at Quantico, Va., I advise them to listen to and learn from those combat-experienced NCOs in the units they will eventually join.

A brand-new platoon commander, by virtue of his rank and position, is indeed the recognized leadership and authority figure for that platoon. However, the battle-hardened corporals and sergeants are often the “informal leaders” within the unit. Frequently, they have one or two deployments to Iraq or Afghanistan under their belts. Many have scars from combat

“The time always comes in battle when the decisions of statesmen and of generals can no longer affect the issue and when it is not within the power of our national wealth to change the balance decisively. Victory is never achieved prior to that point; it can be won only after the battle has been delivered into the hands of men who move in imminent danger of death.”

—S. L. A. Marshall



GYSGT KEITH A. MILLS



SGT HEIDI AGOSTINI

Above: In June 2004, unable to bring in a medevac helicopter in the rugged mountains of Afghanistan, 1stSgt Ernest K. Hoopii, company first sergeant, Co C, BLT 1/6, sets the pace, carrying a wounded LCpl James Gould. (See *Leatherneck* archives, June 2006 for the story.)

Left: Gen James T. Conway, 34th Commandant of the Marine Corps, waits to address Marines at Camp Leatherneck, Afghanistan, Aug. 18, 2010. He and the 16th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, SgtMaj Carlton W. Kent, were visiting Marines in country.

injuries; they have seen close friends killed or severely wounded, and they know the fears and harsh realities of war. In many cases, these NCOs have made life-or-death decisions, or decisions that have had strategic consequences. Marines will invariably look first to these leaders when their unit is in contact.

Sgt Jeff Seabaugh, a squad leader with Co E, BLT 2/1, 15th MEU (SOC), calls his Marines forward on March 23, 2003, during Operation Iraqi Freedom.



LCPL BRIAN L. WICKLIFFE

“We have good corporals and sergeants and some good lieutenants and captains, and those are far more important than good generals.”

—General of the Army William T. Sherman

I am convinced that corporals and sergeants are the best instructors when it comes to rules of engagement and battlefield ethics. These combat-tested warriors have unique insights for young Marines going to the fight for the first time—they have “been there and done that.” Of course, with that responsibility comes the need for thorough understanding of the rules of engagement and an ability to teach them “by the numbers.” Examples and anecdotes are helpful for instructional purposes, but as a Corps, we must have unity of purpose and a common understanding of the overarching principles of something as important as the rules of engagement.

We all acknowledge that our NCOs have tremendous authority and responsibility

Then-LtGen James T. Conway, Commanding General, I Marine Expeditionary Force, discusses the next phase of operations with MajGen James N. Mattis, CG, First Marine Division, in central Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom, March 30, 2003.

in combat zones—our young leaders are literally responsible for the lives and well-being of our Marines. Yet, sometimes, when back in garrison, we strip them of that authority and responsibility, and fail to take full advantage of our NCO leadership. Good order and discipline, training, barracks life, and safety are just some examples of where I believe our corporals and sergeants can do even more than we presently ask.

The challenge for our officer and SNCO leadership is to find and maintain that “sweet spot”—where we maximize the

skill sets of our NCOs while staying personally and professionally involved in the development and preparation of our Marines for war. I encourage all to keep working at it—we’re not there yet.

Challenges of the Counterinsurgency Environment

The Corps has a long history of successful operations in counterinsurgencies—the Banana Wars and our experience in Vietnam are the most notable—and our Corps rightfully takes pride in the innovation and aptitude we brought to these de-



SGT JOSEPH R. CHENEVY

manding and complex battlefields.

Our enemy on the contemporary battlefield is a cunning and remarkably adaptable foe whose courage at times borders on fanaticism. There is little else about him, however, that commands our respect. He employs vicious murder and intimidation campaigns against civilian communities—and then hides in their midst when we approach. He uses women and children indiscriminately to support his aims—then howls to the media if they are wounded or killed by our fires. He distorts an entire religion to match his own extremist ideologies. This enemy follows no rules of engagement, wears no uniform and is answerable to no form of higher authority. He murders his prisoners.

Confronted with this despicable conduct on the battlefield, we are appalled by these acts. The worst thing we could do, however, would be to respond to his savagery with our own acts of brutality, because in a counterinsurgency, our enemy is fighting to win the support of the people—he wants to portray us as the bad guys. When we act with the discipline of a professional warrior, we advance our cause and defeat the enemy. Discipline is the hallmark of the professional warrior.

Ethical Mindset and Action

Our success today in Al Anbar province comes as a result of many battalions and squadrons demonstrating, to a watchful population, our discipline and ethical conduct in a most difficult combat environment.

For us to succeed in this Long War, an ethical mindset is an absolute requirement. Success in a counterinsurgency comes from an ethical mindset in action—knowing right from wrong and having a firm moral compass that guides your actions as a Marine.

This mindset cannot—will not—be developed at the moment of action in combat; it must be ingrained beforehand by mature leaders, realistic training, and the steady resolve of a principled warrior. Marines must possess an “ethical muscle memory” to make instinctive decisions when rounds are impacting nearby, it’s 120 degrees, and your buddy is bleeding. An ethical mindset frames the problem—then it takes the moral and physical courage of a Marine to do the right thing!

Conclusion

The Marine Corps holds a special place in the heart of American society—and deservedly so. Our reputation is born of epic battles like Belleau Wood, Guadalcanal and Hue City. Each of these battles occurred in vastly different terrain against

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skilled and resourceful enemies. Yet, one thing was constant: our young leaders—corporals and sergeants—took the fight to the enemy. In these battles, and others, Marines fought with professionalism and discipline.

I am certain our reliance on our non-commissioned officers will lead to success—they are our strategic center. I challenge NCOs throughout the Corps to carry forward this noble tradition—established by Marines of years past and still alive in the men and women who proudly fight today. Your Corps depends on it!

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

Gen Conway penned this article while serving as the 34th Commandant of the Marine Corps.

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



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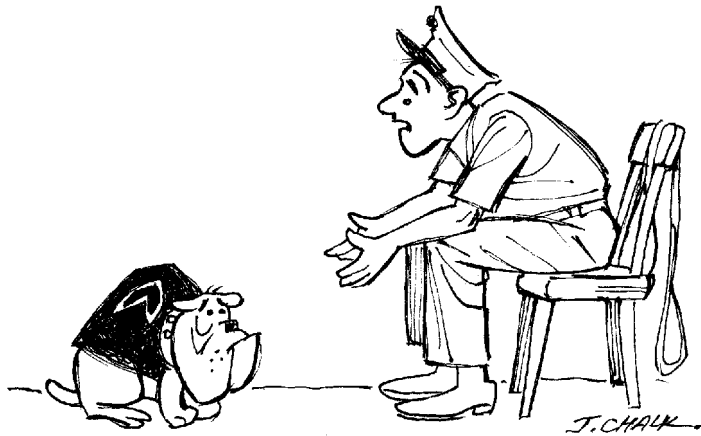
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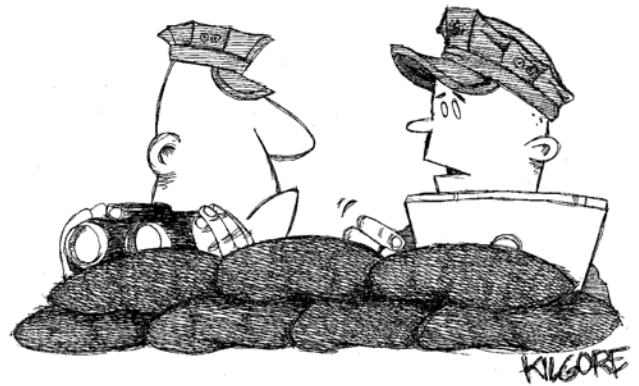


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"But it's regulations. Since I made lieutenant, I can't hang out with you enlisted guys."

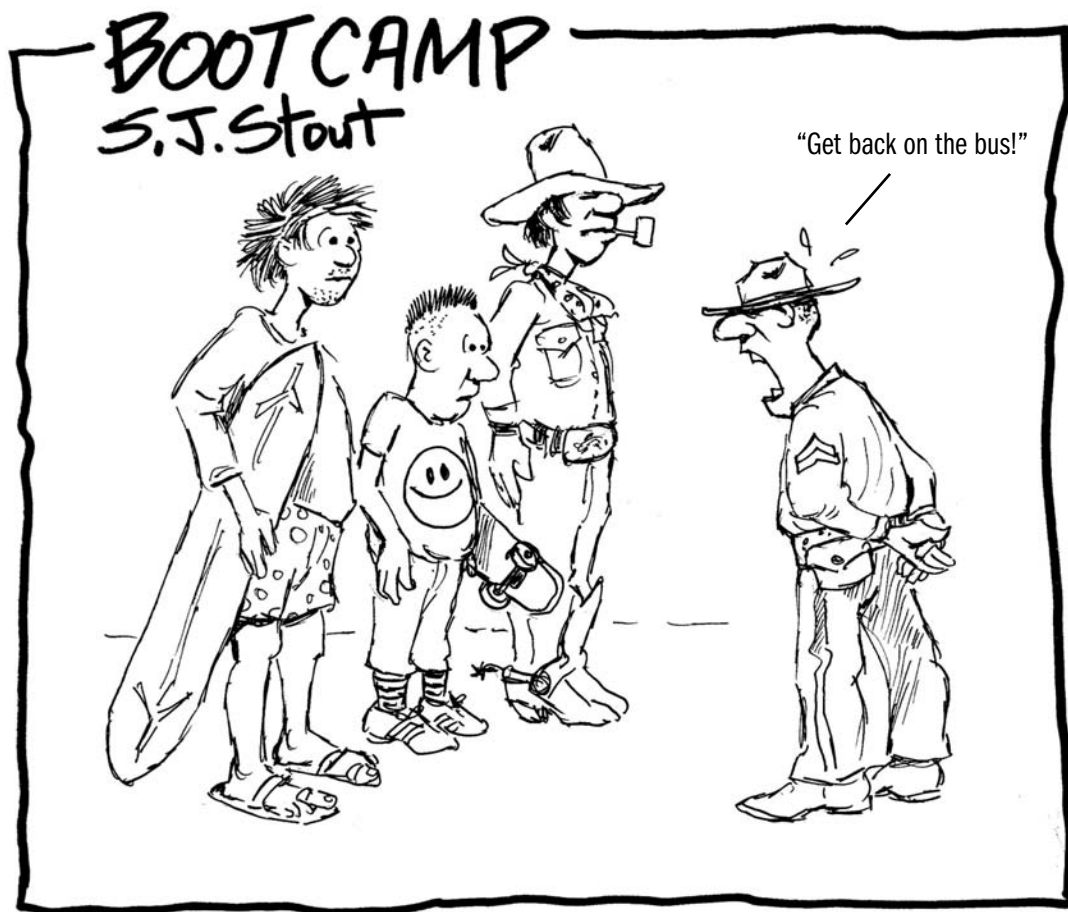


"Hey, 'Gunny,' wanna 'friend' me on Facebook?"



"Welcome aboard ... name's Roger, but my call sign is 'Tomahawk.' If you need anything, I'll be your wingman here in the office."

Retired Marine Pilots—You Can't Miss 'Em

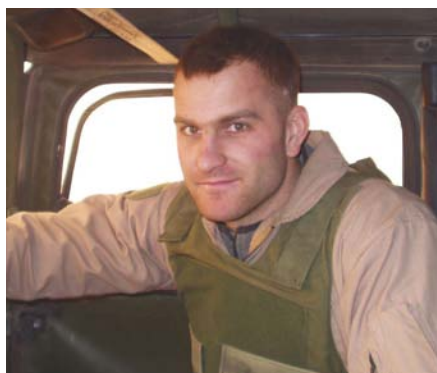


"House-to-house fighting?
I thought you were talking about the real-estate market."



"And there's nothing in the manual of arms
about 'left shoulder foot locker.'"

Cobra Attack: Iraq, 2003



1stLt Jonathan E. Bidstrup

Story and photos by
Col Michael D. Visconage, USMCR (Ret)

For First Lieutenant Jonathan E. Bidstrup, an AH-1W Super Cobra helicopter pilot assigned to the Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron (HMLA) 269 “Gun Runners,” the weather

was the first challenge. The Iraqi counter-attack in An Nasiriyah on 23 March 2003 had unfolded just before an unprecedented sandstorm enveloped southern Iraq.

Interviewed between flights during the battle, it wasn’t the weather that captured Bidstrup’s attention. “Over the last few days we’ve been shot at by what appear to be taxicabs, people from apartment complexes, people from little farms and palm-tree groves along the rivers and canal,” he said.

In 2003, the initial attack into Iraq was a dramatically different fight than the occupation and counterinsurgency that would follow. Iraqi army resistance to the ground invasion had been light and limited at first. The battle for An Nasiriyah was unexpected, and fierce urban fighting would be a hallmark of the days ahead. From a Marine aviation perspective, it also changed the air support tactics. Because of the threat of man-portable air-defense

systems (MANPADs), the original war plan restricted fixed-wing aircraft from descending below 10,000 feet, leaving Marine AH-1 Cobras “up close and personal” to fly low-altitude support of the ground attack—directly in the line of enemy fire.

From East and West

As the war plans solidified early in 2003, the Third Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW), under the command of Major General James F. Amos, deployed as part of the I Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF). Third MAW contained seven Marine aircraft groups (MAGs) in all, two of which included Marine light attack helicopter squadrons. The squadrons were manned by more than 350 Marines and sailors and were equipped with the AH-1W Super Cobra, a two-seat tandem attack helicopter, and the UH-1N Huey utility helicopter. Both aircraft traced their roots to Vietnam,

In early April 2003, leathernecks of 3d Assault Amphibian Bn move in to guard a downed Cobra on Highway 6.



but were a far cry from their 1960s-era predecessors in terms of weaponry and avionics.

From Camp Pendleton, Calif., MAG-39 arrived with the HMLA-169 “Vipers,” commanded by Lieutenant Colonel James R. Braden, and the HMLA-267 “Stingers,” commanded by LtCol Stephen K. Heywood. Augmenting 3d MAW was MAG-29 from New River, N.C., with the “Gun Runners” of HMLA-269, commanded by LtCol Jeffrey M. Hewlett. One additional squadron of MAG-39, the HMLA-369 “Gunfighters,” arrived in mid-April of 2003.

The MAG-39 elements primarily were staged out of Ali Al Salem Air Base, approximately 55 kilometers northwest of Kuwait City. Most of MAG-29 would remain ready to launch from the decks of the U.S. Navy amphibious assault ships until just days before the assault. All would spend the next several weeks fine-tuning the attack plan and rehearsing with the regimental combat teams (RCTs) and the forward air controllers (FACs) who would call on their support during the advance into Iraq.

Across the Line of Departure

Despite weeks of training, the initial actions going into Iraq were more reactive than rehearsed. A last-minute strategic “target-of-opportunity” strike against Saddam Hussein’s presumed hiding place failed to kill the dictator and alerted the Iraqis to the onset of a broader attack. The enemy responded by launching surface-to-surface missiles and putting their mechanized divisions on the move. The ground attack (G-Day) scheduled for dawn on 21 March was moved up, and forces crossed the border into Iraq after dark on the evening of 20 March—Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) had begun.

“We started getting indications of Iraqi Republican Guard armor down along the border, so the word was, ‘Go, go, go; now, now, now,’ ” according to Colonel (now Lieutenant General) Robert E. Milstead Jr., the commanding officer of MAG-29 during the operation. “If you’re prepared, you’ll make your modifications, you’ll call the audible, and it’ll work—and it did work.”

Shifting with the revised timeline, AH-1s attacked key Iraqi border outposts to limit the enemy’s ability to observe ground forces or to direct artillery fire. In the confusion of the altered plan, one AH-1 would fire on a friendly M1 tank that had ventured farther forward than the battle plans outlined. Fortunately, no significant damage was inflicted on the tank or its crew.

“On G-Day the routing was almost non-

existent,” said Captain Robert B. Finneran, an HMLA-267 pilot, speaking in late March 2003 about the procedures for directing aircraft to forward units. “We were basically pushing ourselves up to the FLOT [forward line of troops] and just scrolling through the TAD [Tactical Air Direction radio] net and finding someone who needed work.”

Enthusiastic to engage the enemy and able to keep flying for hours at a time, the desire of some pilots to stay forward longer than their air-tasking-order (ATO) window allowed also caused some initial accountability challenges. After the confusion of the early start and what appeared to be a 24- to 48-hour procedural “shakedown,” an effective battle rhythm emerged. The ATO became clearer, and the Direct Air Support Center (DASC) and air control elements fell into a routine.

The Fight Moves North

The battle plan for the ground attack was unprecedented, calling for the movement inland more than 350 miles to seize Baghdad. To support the plan, the MAW had devised a chain of 15 forward arming and refueling points (FARPs) and forward operating bases (FOBs), code-named for baseball stadiums like Yankee, Three Rivers and Qualcomm. Those would be established by Marine wing support squadrons (MWSSs) as they moved forward with ground combat forces, setting up fuel and ammunition points for aircraft supporting the attack.

“This allowed the AH-1s to keep rolling forward with the advance,” said Lieutenant General Terry G. Robling, the 3d MAW assistant wing commander during the 2003 deployment. “They would just go out and refuel and keep going, following the division as they made their way up.”

Normally operating in sections of two aircraft and divisions of four, the Cobras also would team with UH-1N Huey helicopters in their squadrons as the mission profile warranted. Crews typically were scheduled for day or night sorties, keeping the same crews on either day or night missions for at least a week at a time.

One night mission early in the campaign put Major Charles B. Cox’s division of HMLA-169 AH-1s in support of British Royal Marine Commandos moving north toward Basra. Flying on night vision goggles, Cox’s Cobras first zeroed in on a palm grove and a suspected Iraqi command-and-control compound at a farmhouse. “As we pulled off the farmhouse, we discovered a tank platoon arrayed in column formation pointed east down Highway 6,” Cox said. “We knew something was up, so we came back around.”

When they completed their turn, Cox



LtCol Stephen K. Heywood
CO, HMLA-267



Col Robert E. Milstead Jr.
CO, MAG-29



Capt Robert B. Finneran
HMLA-267 pilot



BGen Terry G. Robling
AWC, 3d MAW

This Cobra, downed on Highway 6 during the attack north, is recovered for repairs.



Above left: The Marine recovery detail unloads ordnance prior to loading the Cobra onto a lowboy trailer for transport to a 3d MAW maintenance and repair facility.

Above right: Iraqi 7.62 mm rounds in the right spot caused systems to stop and forced the Cobras down.

observed six T-55 tanks and two MT-LBs (tracked personnel carriers) and began firing. "Basically we went 'Winchester,' " Cox said, using the aviation terminology for expending all available ammunition. "We had three confirmed K kills [complete destruction] on tanks and a K kill on an MT-LB."

After completing their run on the enemy tanks, the Cobras assumed the role of airborne FACs as fixed-wing attack jets

arrived overhead. Coordinating the strike, Cox and his team sent one F/A-18 carrying MK-20 "Rockeye" cluster bombs into the palm grove to finish the job his AH-1s had started on the command-and-control site.

"I felt pretty good about that mission because we had British Commando units to the south," Cox said. "That would have been a significant roadblock for that Commando unit coming up Highway 6 to Basra."

An Nasiriyah

On 23 March, I MEF encountered the first significant organized resistance. Up to that point, Marines had followed a measured approach when attacking enemy forces, holding back some of their firepower while they determined if the Iraqis would surrender. The hope was that some elements of the Iraqi army could be preserved for a post-Saddam Hussein Iraqi defense force. For the HMLA squadrons,

early rules of engagement (ROE) called for bypassing Iraqi units assuming a surrender posture.

“The word ‘Saddam Fedayeen’ was in nobody’s lexicon,” Milstead said, referring to the irregular (and often foreign) fighters loyal to Saddam Hussein who first appeared in An Nasiriyah. “No one gave any credibility to these guys as a fighting force or [to] their ability to affect our operations.”

Just nine months out of flight school, 1stLt Bidstrup was one of the Cobra pilots beating back the Iraqi unconventional forces in the city. His section already had engaged the enemy in the open southern desert, destroying eight enemy tanks and armored vehicles. Interviewed in a humvee just after climbing out of the cockpit at an FOB, Bidstrup observed that during his first missions in the city, “white cars with orange fenders were circling” and were taking men into the city to fight rather than fleeing.

In Iraq, civilian taxicabs are white cars with orange fenders. After receiving fire from those taxicabs, FACs ultimately cleared the Cobras to attack civilian vehicles obviously being used by enemy fighters. HMLA pilots began flying repetitive missions in support of the Marines on the ground in Task Force Tarawa, rearming and refueling for as many as five successive sorties.

“In the urban environment, the TOW [missile] works better,” Bidstrup said about the weapons that were proving most effective. “You can guide it right in to a window. ... With the TOW or the 20 mm you can get pretty precise, and that’s what you want to do.”

Bidstrup also reflected on his first few days of combat experience, which frequently meant more than 10 hours at a time in the cockpit. “Obviously there have been people and things that we’ve shot at—that I’ve shot at—and killed. They’re shooting at us; they’re shooting at Marines on the ground. ... We’re here to do a job, and I think we’re doing a fine job so far.”

To make matters worse, the weather deteriorated while fighting continued in An Nasiriyah, a massive sandstorm curtailing most flight operations. Some helicopters continued to maintain visual contact with the RCTs they supported only by following in a low hover 15 to 20 feet above the ground convoys.

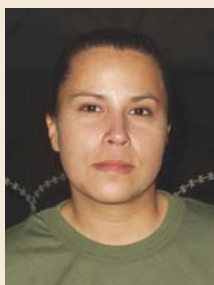
According to Capt Finneran in a 26 March 2003 field interview, “The worst day was yesterday when the sandstorm came in. Visibility came down to a half-mile with the sandstorms; we launched one sortie and came back an hour later, and that was it.”

As the sandstorm subsided, Cobras resumed their support role, but the urban

FOBs, FARPs and Cobras

The firefight began after dark on 28 March 2003. Marine Wing Support Squadron (MWSS) 371, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel James T. Cravens, already had passed through An Nasiriyah and was due to open the next forward arming and refueling point (FARP) at Qalat Sikar. Establishing that FARP was critical for the aircraft supporting Regimental Combat Team (RCT) 1 as it advanced on the Iraqi Baghdad Division of the Republican Guard at Al Kut.

The convoy linked up with light armored vehicles (LAVs) and a Force Service Support Group element to consolidate defenses and merge into a convoy of approximately 200 vehicles. Soon, AH-1 Cobra attack helicopters began running close air support (CAS) against enemy positions as the convoy paused outside the town of Ash Shatrah.



LT COL MICHAEL D. VISCONAGE, USMC

GySgt Melba L. Garza

Gunnery Sergeant Melba L. Garza, operations chief, MWSS-371, was in the convoy. She saw the enemy fire begin toward the front of the convoy’s column as it approached the town. The intensity increased as the column began taking fire from machine guns, mortars and rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs).

“We’re seeing the front of the convoy taking fire,” Garza said. “We start rolling through Ash Shatrah, and you can see tracer rounds, and you can hear RPGs. ... The LAVs are engaging; you see the CAS.” Ultimately, even Garza’s soft-sided humvee with four Marines on board returned fire with the three 9 mm pistols and one

M16 rifle available to them.

At one point, the Cobras ran low on fuel. Forming a break in the convoy, MWSS-371 cleared a path for the aircraft and moved a fuel truck into position on the road to provide immediate refueling for the four AH-1s. That hasty action allowed the Cobras to resume their attack on the nearby enemy positions in just minutes. “It was very dangerous, but very necessary,” Garza said.

The convoy was able to continue on to Qalat Sikar later that night, suffering several wounded and one missing in action during the night ambush. MWSS-371 made the airfield C-130 capable in the first 24 hours, and the transport aircraft began taking in much needed food, water and supplies.

Commenting in a 13 May 2003 interview in the Northern Arabian Gulf, Colonel Robert E. Milstead Jr., a Cobra pilot and the commanding officer of Marine Aircraft Group 29 during Operation Iraqi Freedom, recounted another of the many ad hoc refueling operations during the attack.

“As we were fighting north up towards Tikrit ... some of my boys looked down and saw one of the FARP teams they recognized,” Milstead said. “They called him on the radio ... in a matter of five minutes ... they blocked off Highway 1 on the north side. A humvee went down and blocked off Highway 1 on the south. After the cars had cleared on both directions, they pulled up the fuel truck, ran out the lines and began fueling airplanes right smack in the middle of Highway 1. It was awesome.

“What a success story the FARPs were,” Milstead concluded. “The way they did it was innovative, and it’s a way we haven’t done it before.”

—Col Michael D. Visconage, USMCR (Ret)

close-air-support (CAS) mission, typified by the fight in An Nasiriyah, would change the way the AH-1s fought from that point forward. “It’s been a completely different fight,” Finneran said. “We basically fell in on Task Force Tarawa as they started moving through An Nasiriyah, doing escort for them.”

Moving north from An Nasiriyah, the speed of the assault was impressive, and the HMLA squadrons frequently found themselves at the center of every key engagement. But the quick advance also created challenges that the HMLA squad-

rons would be called on to solve.

“We knew we were going to move fast; the center of gravity was Baghdad,” Milstead said. “That means if you’re moving fast and you’re not clearing in zone, you’re leaving your rear exposed.”

From the cockpit, pilots like Finneran, with five years experience flying the AH-1, also saw the challenge. “As we pushed north, [in] each little town or village we come to, we’re starting to see a lot of resistance. We’ve been hanging out with the convoys as they’ve moved along. Usually as we screen about one click ahead of the

convoys, we'll find something that will kind of stir up a bee's nest."

"After An Nasiriyah the gloves came off," Milstead said. "We went after the Iraqis with a vengeance, and everything was within the ROE, but we were out there to kill Iraqis."

Forced Down on Highway 6

By early April, I MEF was pressing close to Baghdad, then less than 70 miles away. Maj Jason G. Adkinson, the squadron operations officer for HMLA-267 with more than 1,700 hours of flight time in the Cobra, was well aware of the Iraqis' ability to fight back when they chose. On G-Day he had flown an AH-1 in support of Fifth Marine Regiment, 7th Marines and British forces as they crossed the border, sustaining damage from 7.62 mm machine-gun rounds near Zubayr while engaging enemy artillery pieces.

On the morning of 4 April, Adkinson lifted off from Ali Al Salem and was sent forward to join a section of Cobras from HMLA-169 already supporting the attack. "They were pushing up Highway 6 towards Baghdad," Adkinson said in an

interview at FOB Three Rivers near An Numiniyah, Iraq, on 5 April 2003. "They were engaged."

"The section from -169 said that the tanks had been taking some small-arms fire," Adkinson continued. The 2d Tank



Maj Jason G. Adkinson

Bn FAC reported that they had enemy troops in trenches and that the Iraqis also were burning oil in ditches, presumably in an effort to obscure their positions.

"We could see the black smoke from them," Adkinson said. "They asked us to take a look at it and go up there ... so we

could run in there with our rockets and guns."

Before Adkinson could close in on the enemy, he found himself under fire. "I've been shot before a couple of times out here, and I knew immediately that we were hit," Adkinson said. "I actually knew I was hit pretty bad because the aircraft started shuddering. I felt multiple impacts—usually you only feel two or three.

"I broke the flight left, so my wingman also got shot pretty good," Adkinson added. "I told the FAC I was hit and that I was probably hit pretty bad. ... That's when my wingman said that he was hit."

Adkinson's wingman reported damage to his hydraulic system and warning lights on both battery systems. The best option was getting back to Three Rivers FOB, but most importantly they wanted to be near friendly ground-force convoys in case they had to set down.

"We got about five miles east on Highway 6, and I asked my wingman 'Slats' how his airplane was," Adkinson said. "He said, 'It's still flying.' About 30 seconds after that he goes, 'I just lost my secondary system.' You've got to land

An Nasiriyah and the Cobra Durability Connection

In another AH-1 engagement in An Nasiriyah, Major Carroll N. Harris III, a Marine Corps field historian assigned to Third Marine Aircraft Wing during the invasion, reported: "[An] HMLA-269 Cobra, piloted by Captain Tom Budrejko and Captain Mark Vincent, was struck in its number-one engine by what was likely a 7.62 mm round from an AK47. The round entered through the lower section of the engine-compartment door, pierced the heat shield surrounding the combustion section of the engine and impacted the outside of the combustion section itself.

"The direct hit on the engine had the result of producing a three-inch-long crack in the combustion section, about two inches forward of where the power turbine blades are located—the hottest and most high-pressure part of the engine. Luckily, the round did not fully rupture the casing, preventing the escape of superheated air into the engine compartment.

"Unfortunately, after striking the 'can,' the round fragmented and shot forward directly into the fuel manifold line which delivers high-pressure fuel to the combustion chamber, severing the line and resulting in a potentially catastrophic fuel leak.

"Both pilots, unaware of the severity of the damage, continued the fight over the city for almost another hour, before returning to the forward operating base (FOB) to reload and

refuel. Upon arriving at the FOB, the ground crew noticed fuel streaming from the engine compartment and signaled to the pilots to shut down the engine. After conducting an emergency shutdown, the damage was evaluated, and the aircraft had to be taken out of the fight.



Capt Mark Vincent studies a battle map prior to launching in his Cobra. He ended up out of the fight for a short time due to battle damage to his attack helicopter.

"Fortunately, the engine had continued to provide good power to the crew throughout the flight despite the ruptured fuel line, enabling them to return safely behind friendly lines. Amazingly, the father of the pilot in command had been previously employed at a company called Hamilton Standard (now Hamilton Sundstrand), a company responsible for the design and implementation of the fuel control system (program JFC-78) used in the GE-T-700-401 engine.

"The fact that the fuel control system managed to keep metering fuel in such a manner that the engine continued to produce adequate power, and that it did not cause a fire, was the key factor in the safe

recovery of the aircrew and the aircraft. The excellent design and craftsmanship of that fuel control system, spearheaded by Donald Budrejko more than two decades before, ultimately ended up saving the life of his own son and enabled the crew to bring back a badly damaged aircraft."

—Col Michael D. Visconage, USMCR (Ret)

then; otherwise, the gear boxes will seize, your rotor won't turn, and bad things will happen."

Three Rivers was then a no-go. Instead, they shot for a dirt field just to the north side of Highway 6 at grid 38R MB 850 519. "Ironically, it was right across from an Iraqi military compound that they [the Marines] had shot up earlier that was now vacated," Adkinson said.

Landing just 10 meters off Highway 6, Adkinson and his wingman checked their damaged aircraft. "He probably took 10 rounds of various sizes," Adkinson said, "including one through the canopy." Adkinson also noticed that there were "multiple bullet holes in the driveshaft cover, the tail-rotor driveshaft on the tail boom."

Adkinson's initial concern was the number of Iraqi civilians in the area. The Cobra pilots flagged down three humvees from 2d Bn, 5th Marines to help provide security. Later, a platoon of Marine amphibious assault vehicles (AAVs) arrived with the specific mission of securing the two helicopters until they could be recovered by ground crews. By 1800 that evening, a CH-46 helicopter landed to pick up Adkinson and the three other aviators from his section.

"We never saw them," Adkinson said of the enemy fighters who had forced them down. "I guess the Iraqis won yesterday—we didn't shoot, and they shot us."

To Baghdad and Beyond

Proving far more survivable than even their crews anticipated, the Cobras took the brunt of enemy ground fire. The 3d MAW command chronology reported that HMLA squadrons received enemy fire on an ongoing basis and that 22 AH-1 aircraft were damaged by enemy fire, some sustaining hits again on additional missions.

In HMLA-169, 12 of 18 AH-1s took some type of battle damage, and the squadron commander believed enemy helicopter ambush tactics were becoming more refined as the gunships moved closer to Baghdad. The challenge was particularly acute during daytime missions; Cobras could not fly at a higher altitude without being subjected to the MANPAD risk, and by flying low they were exposed to small-arms and traditional anti-aircraft artillery (AAA) fire.

"We don't traditionally go forward of the FLOT; doctrinally we don't do that," Milstead said. "Cobras from our sister MAG were shot up pretty good. ... Most of the rounds the Cobras took were from behind. They'd let the Cobras fly over, and then they'd riddle them up."

Despite the AH-1's overall reliability



Taking away the Iraqi anti-aircraft artillery early in the push north allowed Marine air to focus on the direct support of the ground combat element.

under fire, Cobras suffered losses in the campaign, including two AH-1 pilots from HMLA-267 killed on 5 April near Al Aziziyah. With enemy forces more dug in and subjecting the Cobras to AAA fire from ZSU-23 anti-aircraft fire, MAW leaders became concerned about their vulnerability in the urban environment. In early April a decision was made by 3d MAW to restrict the use of HMLAs in Baghdad.

According to Milstead, "The MAW CG [commanding general] decided we wouldn't go into Baghdad or go downtown." Milstead believed the decision received some degree of pushback from the ground commander. "General Amos backed us up—we'll do you no good if we go in and get shot up."

The End of the Beginning

Restricting the role of the Cobras and Hueys allowed 3d MAW to preserve those assets for the anticipated demand for CAS if the fighting continued. Ultimately, air actions in Baghdad were minimal, but the squadrons continued their support north of the city as Samara and Tikrit were taken.

Together, MAG-29 and MAG-39 squadrons flew more than 4,400 AH-1 hours during the March and April campaign. MAG-39 alone fired 5,987 2.75-inch rockets, 64,106 20 mm rounds, 1,150 TOW missiles and 947 Hellfire missiles. It destroyed hundreds of enemy targets,

from tanks and artillery to bunkers and observation posts.

Col Jeffrey A. "Jaws" White, 3d MAW battle captain, summarized why Cobras were so popular with ground commanders. "If you can put a FARP ... within 30 to 40 miles behind friendly lines, those Cobras can now make a five-minute flight back, get gas, rearm, reload and be back in the fight within 30 minutes. And this has really proven to be a lifesaver for the grunts."

"The Cobras and the Hueys, with their weapons, probably saved the day there," LtGen Robling said, reflecting on the turning point in An Nasiriyah. "It would have been a lot worse than it was ... if those guys hadn't stayed in the fight and just cycled through overhead as long as they could, went back refueled, rearmed and got right back into the fray."

Editor's note: Then-LtCol Mike Visconage deployed to Iraq during the initial months of Operation Iraqi Freedom as a field historian with the Marine Corps History Division and later served as the officer in charge of the Field History Detachment. He returned to Iraq in 2007-08 as the command historian for the Multi-National Corps-Iraq (MNC-I). He retired from the Marine Corps Reserve in June 2012 and works in private industry in San Antonio.



Leatherneck—On the Web

See more photos of the Third Marine Aircraft Wing and AH-1 Cobras in Operation Iraqi Freedom at www.mca-marines.org/leatherneck/CobrasinOIF



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How to navigate the critical path toward financial readiness.

Planning for your future is a personal process. It depends on where you are now and where you hope to be when you retire. But no matter who you are, getting your financial house in order makes it easier to keep it that way while increasing your chances of retiring in comfort. Planning for retirement doesn't sound easy, but it can be if you take these few steps today. And doing so can help you worry less about tomorrow.

Here's how to start. Go through the flowchart on the facing page. It will ask you yes/no questions about your current situation that lead to steps you can take and tools that will help you. If you're currently serving, be sure to read the section to the right. We're sure you won't regret taking the time.

Steps to take if you're currently serving.

Add these important to-do items to your list now. Then walk through the flowchart on the facing page for additional steps.

1. Contribute to your TSP. The Thrift Savings Plan offered by the military is an automatic way to save for retirement — and the sooner you start, the better off you'll generally be later. Learn more about this benefit at tsp.gov/planningtools.

2. Review your life insurance. The right coverage helps ensure that if anything happens to you, your survivors won't face hardship. Servicemembers Group Life Insurance provides up to \$400,000 of life insurance protection while you serve, but you must sign up if you want the option to convert to Veterans Group Life Insurance when you separate from the military. Depending on your family's circumstances, you may want to purchase an additional life policy. For advice, visit usaa.com/militarylife.

Your financial planning flowchart

Start here.

Do you have a clear picture of your money situation?	NO	Inventory your finances. Make a thorough list of your income and expenses. Also list the debt you have from credit cards, personal loans and your mortgage. Treat your inventory as an active document and keep it up to date.
Do you budget?	NO	Make a budget. Build a spending framework that includes debt repayment and savings, necessities like food and clothing, and allowances for entertainment and recreation.
Do you have enough cash for an emergency?	NO	Set up an emergency fund. Save money until you've set aside enough to cover three to six months of expenses. Set up this fund before paying down debt or saving for retirement.
Do you have a retirement plan?	NO	Open a retirement account. If you're currently serving, use the Thrift Savings Plan. If your civilian employer offers a 401(k), take full advantage of it. Otherwise, open an IRA.
Do you have adequate life insurance?	NO	Protect your family. As you get older, the cost of life insurance goes up, and the type of policy that's best may change. Get advice on the best coverage for you from advisors who understand the military.
Are you saving what you can?	NO	Save a little extra. Adjust your budget to increase savings. Consider investing in a diversified portfolio and taking prudent risks in line with your risk tolerance.
Are you debt-free?	NO	Attack debt. Start with your highest-interest debt and pay it off as aggressively as you can until it's gone. Then go after the debt with the next-highest rate, and so on.
You have a bright financial outlook!		With your finances in order, you'll be prepared for surprises and poised to manage changes in the economy. You'll be able to make smart choices and enjoy spending without guilt. For more information, tips and resources, view the free USAA Retirement Guide at: usaa.com/mcaretirement.

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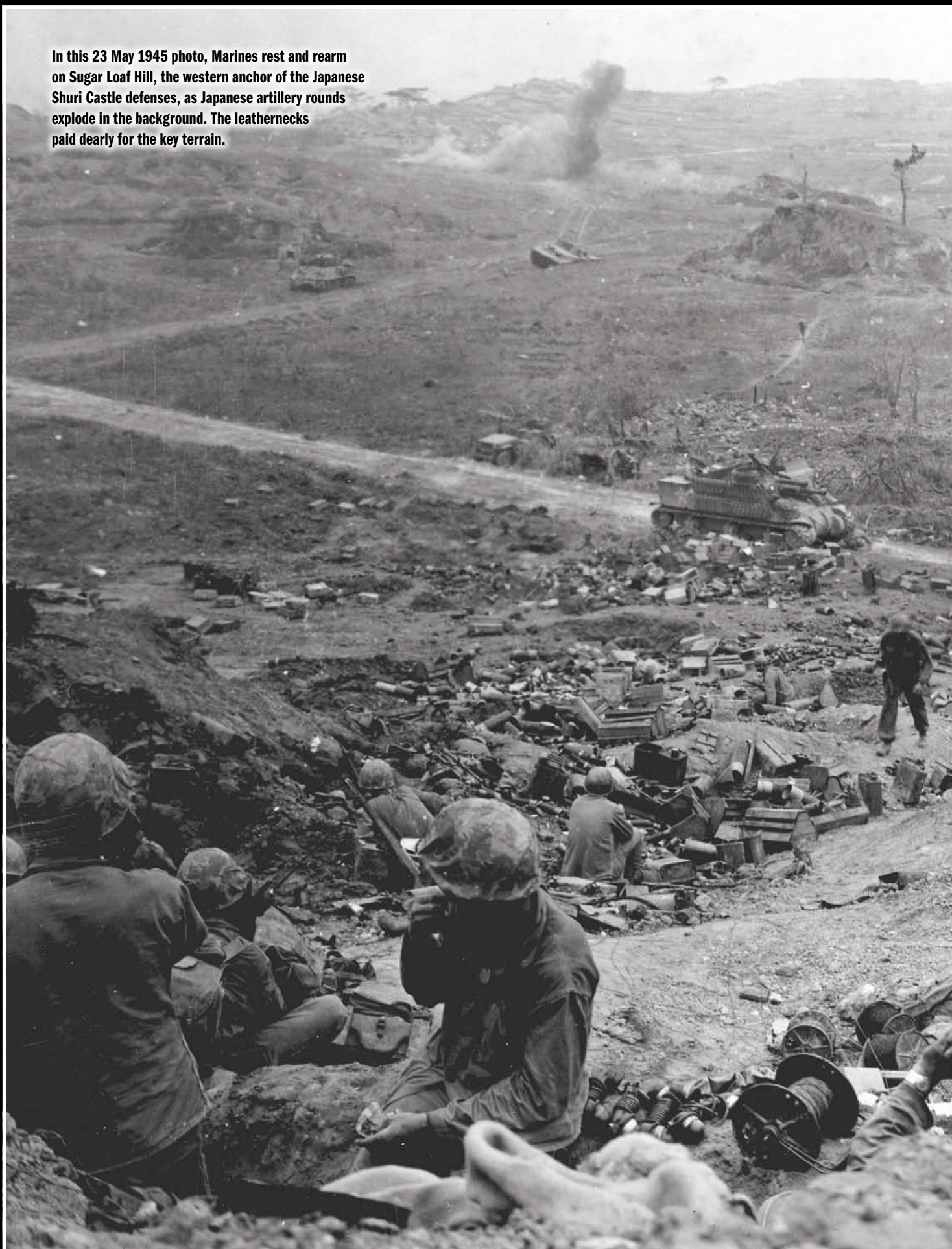
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In this 23 May 1945 photo, Marines rest and rearm on Sugar Loaf Hill, the western anchor of the Japanese Shuri Castle defenses, as Japanese artillery rounds explode in the background. The leathernecks paid dearly for the key terrain.





Okinawa, May 1945

SUGAR LOAF HILL

By Maj Allan C. Bevilacqua, USMC (Ret)



These Sixth Marine Division leathernecks smoke out Japanese soldiers dug in behind Okinawa's jagged coral boulders.

"America has never quite produced a generation like those Marines who went up Sugar Loaf Hill. I pray to God that we still might see the likes of such giants again. And so perhaps we shall."

—Victor Davis Hanson
senior fellow, The Hoover Institution

If you go to Okinawa, Japan, looking for Sugar Loaf Hill, you may not find what you expect to see. The hill Marines called Sugar Loaf has been swallowed up by the spreading sprawl of greater urban Naha. There is nothing that immediately meets the eye to tell that this inconsequential bump in the ground marks the spot where two entire regiments of

the Sixth Marine Division were shot to tatters in one blood-soaked week of fighting in May 1945.

Close by the Omoromachi Station on the Okinawa Monorail (What Marine who fought for Sugar Loaf could have imagined such a thing as a monorail?), much of the hill has been carved away to make room for a major shopping center. Where once men battled savagely, there are theaters and upscale shops carrying such names as Louis Vuitton, Fendi, Bulgari and Fabergé. At Sugar Loaf's crest, a large white water tower stands on the spot that Marines reached and were forced to yield so many times before finally claiming possession. Not far from the water tower,

a simple bronze tablet written in English and Japanese testifies that this is indeed Sugar Loaf Hill.

It was different in May 1945. Then, Sugar Loaf served as the western anchor of the Shuri defenses planned by Lieutenant General Mitsuru Ushijima, the commander of the 120,000-strong Imperial Japanese 32d Army that defended Okinawa. Known as a humane man who always cared for the welfare of his soldiers and possessed unflinching bravery under fire, Ushijima was an experienced commander, an excellent tactician with an exceptional ability to utilize terrain.

LTG Ushijima also was a realist who knew that the troops he had were all he was going to have, while his opponent could and would receive reinforcements and replacements from the sea. He had no expectation of stopping an amphibious assault at the beach and did not plan to do so. Nor did he expect that in the long run he could successfully hold Okinawa. What he knew he could do and upon which he planned his defense of the island was a skillfully sited series of positions designed to bleed the attacking forces white. His opponent would, in all probability, take the island, but at a staggering cost that would stun far-off Washington, D.C.

At first glance Sugar Loaf was an unlikely anchor for one flank of an entire defensive line. On a tactical map, the hill's elevation showed as 235 feet, but that was Sugar Loaf's elevation above sea level. Its relationship to the surrounding terrain was another matter. Measuring only 300 yards in length, the east-west-oriented hill rose to a height of little more than 50

Sugar Loaf was actually one great reinforced bunker, impervious even to direct hits and studded with almost undetectable firing ports.

feet, barely enough to show on a map as a hill at all.

Had Sugar Loaf stood alone, it would not have been a major obstacle. That, however, was not the case. Sugar Loaf was supported by two other low hills, Half Moon to the southeast and the Horseshoe to the south; all three hills commanded the open terrain all about them. Today, almost 70 years later, the Sixth Marine Division's Special Action Report best describes the tactical problems presented by Sugar Loaf and its neighbors.

"Any attempt to capture Sugar Loaf by

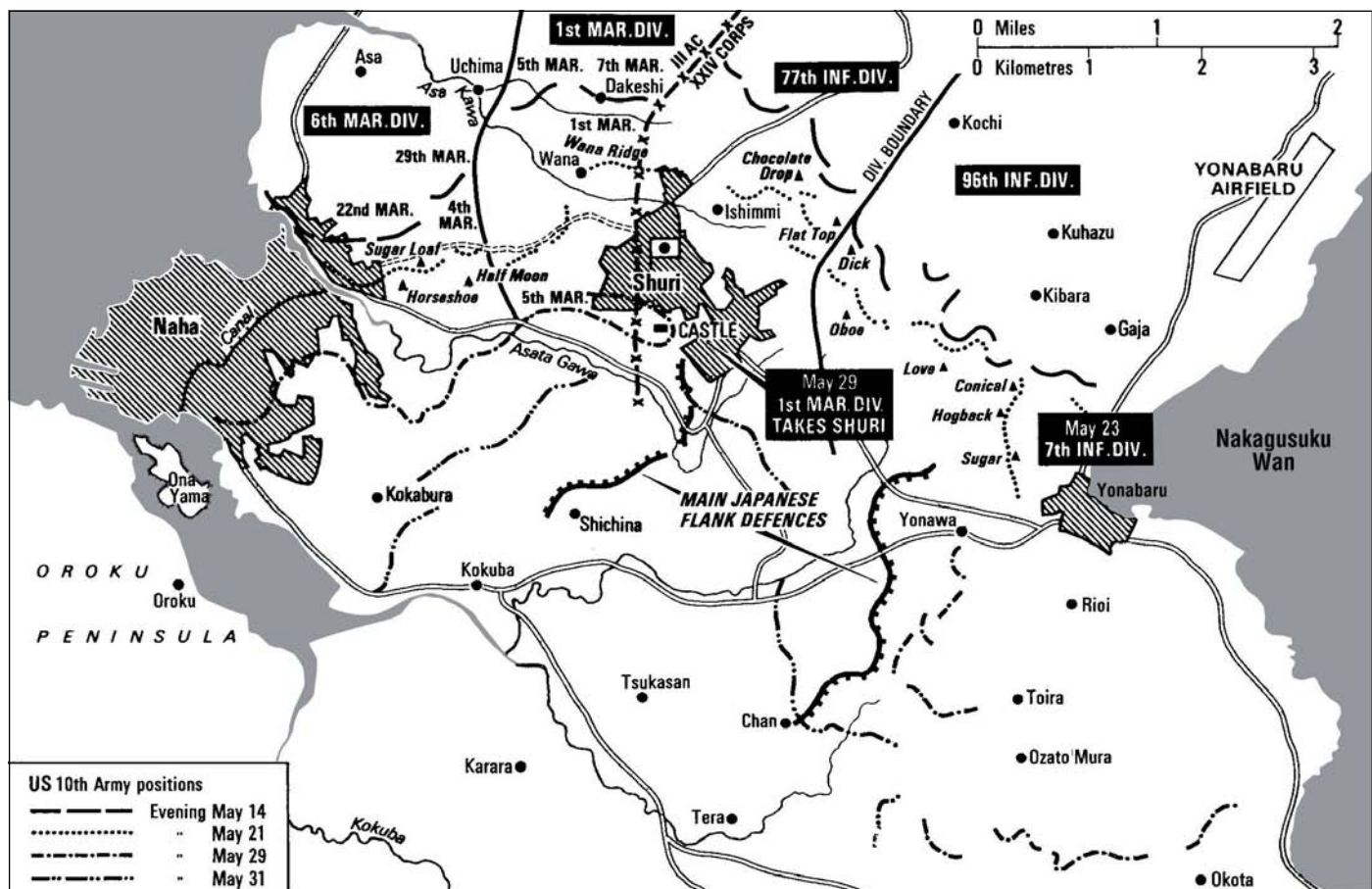
flanking action from east or west is immediately exposed to flat trajectory fire from both of the supporting terrain features. Likewise, an attempt to reduce either the Horseshoe or the Half Moon would be exposed to destructive, well-aimed fire from Sugar Loaf itself. In addition, the three localities are connected by a network of tunnels and galleries, facilitating covered movement of reserves.

"As a final factor in the strength of the position, it will be seen that all sides of Sugar Loaf Hill are precipitous, and there are no evident avenues of approach into the hill mass. For strategic location and tactical strength, it is hard to conceive of a more powerful position than the Sugar Loaf terrain afforded. Added to the foregoing was the bitter fact that troops assaulting this position presented a clear target to enemy machine guns, mortars and artillery emplaced on the Shuri heights to their left and left rear."

Even worse, the Japanese defenders of Colonel Seiko Mita's 15th Independent Mixed Regiment were not *on* Sugar Loaf, they were *in* it, occupying an interconnected system of passageways and underground firing positions that left not an inch of dead space in front. Sugar Loaf was actually one great reinforced bunker, impervious even to direct hits and studded

Marines prepare for yet another attack on Sugar Loaf Hill. (USMC photo)





with almost undetectable firing ports. Outside, the ground in every direction had been surveyed and registered for supporting mortar and artillery fires. Sugar Loaf was indeed the western anchor of LTG Ushijima's Shuri Line, and the flat terrain around it was carefully selected to be a killing zone.

A killing zone was what Captain Owen T. Stebbins' Company G, 2d Battalion, 22d Marine Regiment walked into on the afternoon of Saturday, 12 May. Accompanied by 11 M4 tanks, the initial advance across the open ground in front of Sugar Loaf seemed almost too easy.

It was easy, but only because the Japanese were waiting until the greatest number of advancing Marines was within range. When they were, the Japanese opened fire with every available weapon, engulfing the ranks of "George" Co in a firestorm. Small-arms and machine-gun fire from Sugar Loaf, mortars firing from Half Moon and the Horseshoe, long-range machine guns, heavy mortars and artillery to the left at Shuri, all of them accurate, ripped into the Marine ranks.

LTG Ushijima had chosen his killing ground well. Casualties in the ranks of

Co G were immediate and crippling, with two of Capt Stebbins' platoons decimated and reduced to little more than squad strength. Gathering up the remnants of what had been a full-strength company only minutes before, Capt Stebbins, accompanied by his remaining platoon leader, First Lieutenant Dale W. Bair, threw them in a lung-straining, heart-pounding dash for the base of Sugar Loaf. Before the charge had covered the last 100 yards,

another 28 Marines were down, killed or wounded, and Capt Stebbins was out of action, shot through both legs.

First Lt Bair assumed command, only to have his left arm ripped by machine-gun fire. With his wounded arm hanging useless, Bair picked up a Browning M1919A4 light-machine gun, tripod and all, with his sole functioning hand and led a bare handful of Marines through a blizzard of machine-gun and mortar fire, accom-



Amtracs, mounted with 75 mm howitzers and .50-caliber machine guns, helped press the attack on Sugar Loaf. They also resupplied the leathernecks and evacuated the wounded.



CPL ALBERT J. GROSSI

The 60 mm mortar section of George Co, 2/22 takes a short rest after a hard fight near Naha, 29 May 1945.

panied by a shower of grenades to the top of Sugar Loaf.

The 6-foot-2-inch, 225-pound Bair stood there upright with the machine gun cradled over his left arm, returning fire for fire. Hit twice more by machine-gun fire while standing totally exposed, the big lieutenant refused to fall. "It was impossible to be afraid when you saw him standing there," remembered one Marine later. Squad leader Sergeant Edmund M. DeMar thought Bair looked like a character straight out of a Hollywood movie. DeMar then went down with blood spurting from a jagged wound in his right thigh.

For his inspiring leadership and total disregard for his own safety, Dale Bair, who already had the Silver Star for bravery on Eniwetok, would be awarded the Navy Cross. With leadership like that of Bair setting the standard, three additional attempts were made at Sugar Loaf that day. Sadly, each one was the same story. Thirty men might reach the summit only to be raked by deadly direct fire from Half Moon and the Horseshoe and cut down by murderously accurate mortar and artillery fire. Perhaps 10, all who were left, would crawl painfully back down, dragging their wounded with them, while friendly artillery fire did its best to shield their withdrawal.

Of the 230 members of Co G who went into the attack that day, only 70 were present for duty when the sun went down.

The next day, Sunday, brought more of the same. Despite furious Japanese resistance, elements of Lieutenant Colonel Horatio C. Woodhouse's 2/22, many of

them freshly arrived replacements, fought their way to the top of Sugar Loaf several times. Each time, deadly enfilade fire from Shuri cut them down in windrows, reducing the able bodied to mere handfuls, far too few to hold against the counterattacks that came boiling up from the Japanese reverse slope defenses.

Despite continual close air support, the efforts of the 6thMarDiv's entire artillery assets and the fires of one battleship, four cruisers and three destroyers, the hill could be taken, but it could not be held. By the time an attack reached the summit, there were not enough able-bodied Marines left to stay there.



USMC

A leatherneck of 29th Marine Regiment prepares to advance over open terrain under deadly Japanese Nambu machine-gun fire.

To make a bad situation worse, a steady drenching rain began to fall on Monday, 14 May. Almost immediately, the flat open ground in front of Sugar Loaf became a foot-sucking bog. It seemed like the attacks against Sugar Loaf were carried out in slow motion with men wrenching one foot at a time from the clinging mud underfoot, all the while being lashed mercilessly by Japanese fire.

Late in the afternoon, Major Henry A. Courtney, the executive officer of 2/22, was successful in leading a handful of men through the clinging muck and the unrelenting Japanese fire to a foothold halfway up the north slope of Sugar Loaf. Furious defensive fires halted Maj Courtney's group there, forcing them to seek what scant cover there was until darkness brought some respite.

As Maj Courtney saw it, that respite was only temporary. The position he and his men held was untenable. A Japanese counterattack that came down over the summit would roll over them like an avalanche. To stay where they were was impossible. The sole remaining place to go was up. Henry Courtney made a decision. "I'm going to the top of Sugar Loaf. Who wants to come along?" Not one man remained behind as Henry Courtney left the shell hole in which he had been hunkered and made for the crest of Sugar Loaf.

Henry Courtney earned the Medal of Honor there atop Sugar Loaf, scrambling from position to position to organize a defense that could hold that blood-soaked ground. Determined and courageous in the midst of a horrific concentration of Japanese fire that Browning Automatic Rifleman Lester Brandt described as "the worst hell I experienced in combat," Maj Courtney died in a near direct hit by a mortar round.

Nearly two-thirds of Courtney's small group were killed or wounded in less than a half hour as the Japanese blanketed Sugar Loaf with grenades and mortar fire and raked it with machine guns. One who was not killed or wounded or, miraculously, even scratched was Corporal John "Jack" Castignola, who raised the technique of grenade throwing to an art form. Working like a machine, Castignola would pull the pin from a grenade and send it rolling down the hill at the Japanese below, while at the same time reaching for another grenade.

Slowly, painfully, Jack Castignola was forced to join the other remaining members of the Courtney group stumbling back down the fire-blackened hill, taking their wounded with them. One of those wounded was South Dakota farm-boy Lester Brandt, his spleen and one kidney shredded when a Japanese machine-gun round struck one

of the magazines in his cartridge belt and exploded its contents. Lester Brandt would live to remember Sugar Loaf.

Nineteen-year-old Cpl James L. “Jim” Day, a machine-gun squad leader, would live as well. For three days, Jim Day and his small squad sheltered in a shell hole on the front face of Sugar Loaf, fighting off every Japanese attempt to overrun them. Reduced by casualties until only Jim Day and Private First Class Dale Bertoli, who was shaking with the ravages of dengue fever, were left, there they stayed, refusing to yield so much as an inch. When they were finally relieved, the bodies of 142 Japanese were counted around their makeshift position.

Fifty-three years later, Major General James L. Day, USMC (Ret) would be awarded the Medal of Honor from the President of the United States for his “conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty.” Jim Day is believed to be the only Marine to have been both wounded and decorated for bravery in three wars: World War II, Korea and Vietnam.

The unrelenting rain continued to fall, turning the ground all about Sugar Loaf, already a mire, into liquid mud, a festering swamp littered with the wreckage of attack after attack after attack. Knocked-out tanks and amphibian tractors (amtracs) slowly rusted and sank deeper and deeper into the ooze; discarded helmets, weapons

and equipment littered the nightmare terrain. And something else was there also, something hardly ever seen—the decomposing bodies and fragments of bodies of scores of dead Marines.

Marines pride themselves on never leaving fallen comrades on the battlefield, but to attempt to retrieve the dead who dotted the glue-like landscape about Sugar Loaf would have been a death sentence for

Sharp-eyed Japanese forward observers at Shuri missed nothing. Any movement, even the showing of a head, brought an instant rain of deadly accurate fire.

would-be rescuers. Sharp-eyed Japanese forward observers at Shuri missed nothing. Any movement, even the showing of a head, brought an instant rain of deadly accurate fire. Fire like that killed Maj Thomas L. Myers, the commanding officer of 1/22, when his command post was spotted and immediately taken under fire. LtCol Jean W. Moreau, who commanded 1/29, was wounded seriously in the same fashion.

After three days of near constant combat, 22d Marines suffered 60 percent casualties. The 29th Marines would have to shoulder the main load. One of the first of the regiment to make it to the top of Sugar

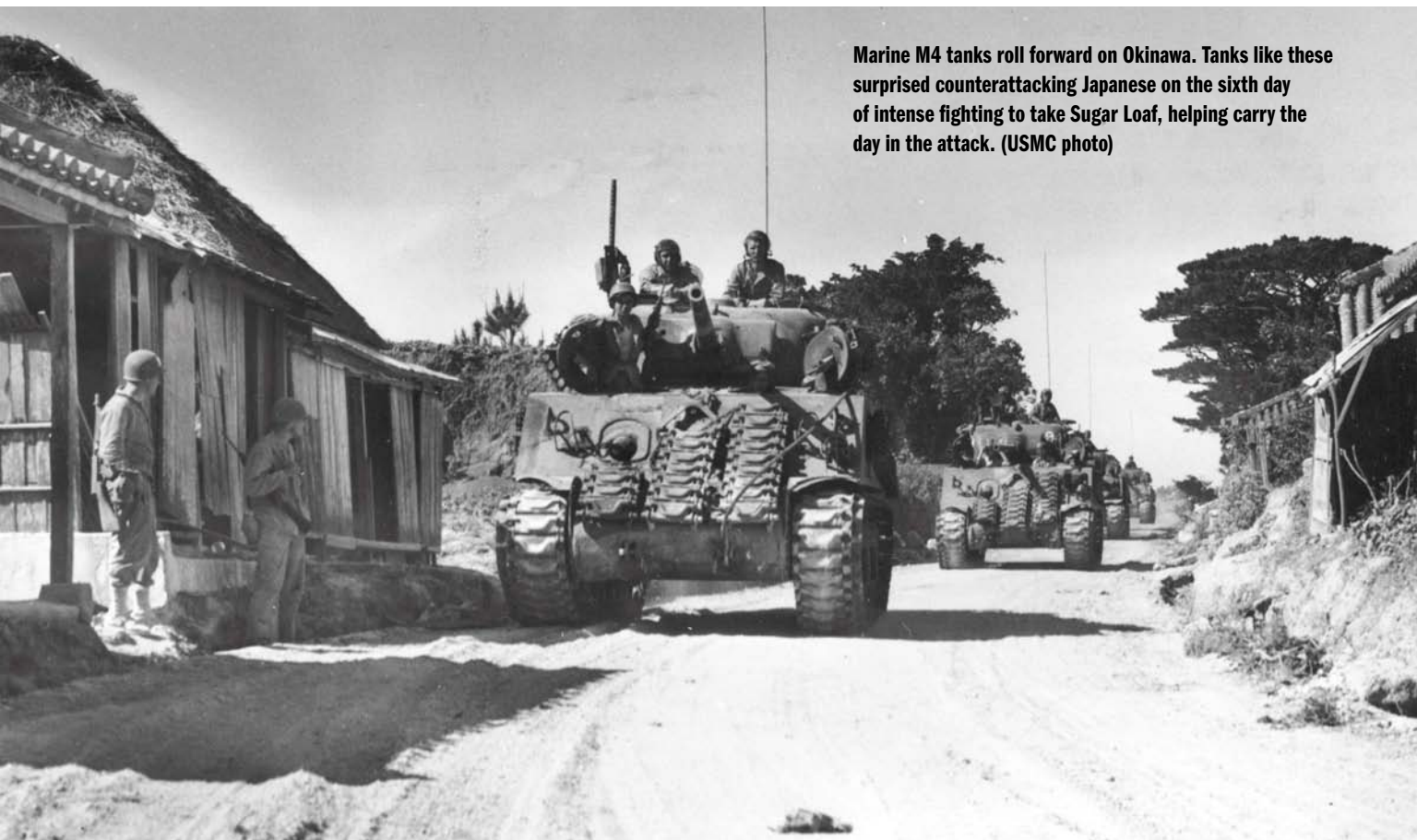
Loaf was 1stLt George Murphy, a platoon leader in Capt Howard L. Mabie’s Co D, who led his depleted platoon to the crest in a bayonet charge. They were engaged immediately in a grenade battle that in minutes exhausted the entire supply of 350 grenades they had taken with them.

Whittled down by mounting casualties, those of the platoon still on their feet gave ground one foot at a time, with 1stLt Murphy covering the withdrawal. Firing with one hand and helping a wounded Marine toward safety with the other, Murphy absorbed the full force of a mortar round that landed squarely in front of him. “Irish George” Murphy, college football All-American and captain of the 1942 Notre Dame “Fighting Irish” football team, died instantly.

The attacks went on, and so, too, did the casualties.

For every three Marines to reach the summit of Sugar Loaf, two didn’t return. One of those was Cpl Victor “Vic” Hanson, a fire-team leader in Co F, 2d Bn, 29th Marines. Treasured by superiors as a man who could be depended upon, admired by squad mates for never, under any circumstances, wavering in the face of danger, Vic Hanson, a huge bear of a man, caught a burst from a Japanese *Nambu* in his right thigh. The stream of bullets ripped the sub-femoral artery. He bled to death before a corpsman could reach him. Howling unintelligibly, his closest friend, Peter Madigan, went berserk, charged wildly

Marine M4 tanks roll forward on Okinawa. Tanks like these surprised counterattacking Japanese on the sixth day of intense fighting to take Sugar Loaf, helping carry the day in the attack. (USMC photo)





Leathernecks with 2/22 raise the American flag on the southernmost end of Okinawa in honor of their battalion commander, LtCol Horatio C. Woodhouse, who was killed on 30 May 1945.

his mother, was raised by his uncle who treated him as his own son; the cousin with whom he grew up was more like a brother. Did Vic Hanson, somewhere in that place Marines hope to go, know that the cousin he knew as a brother and who flew B-29s during the war, would name his own son for him and that Victor Davis Hanson would become a renowned historian, author and political analyst? Maybe he did.

Owen Stebbins made it his duty to see that the Marines with whom he fought received proper recognition for what they did on that terrible hill. It was primarily through his efforts that the lost recommendation for Jim Day's Medal of Honor finally was located and the award made. Owen Stebbins died in 1996.

MajGen James L. "Jim" Day, USMC (Ret), Medal of Honor winner, died in 1998. He rests today in San Diego's Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery overlooking the blue waters of the Pacific.

In 1956, Master Sergeant Edmund M. DeMar was stationed at Marine Barracks, 8th and I streets S.E., Washington, D.C., where he occupied one of the Marine Corps' most visible billets, drum major of the United States Marine Band. He was many miles and a few years from Sugar Loaf Hill.

LTG Mitsuru Ushijima, true to the code of the samurai, ended his own life by ritual suicide, *seppuku*, rather than surrender.

He denied his operations officer, Col Hiromichi Yahara, permission to do the same, telling him in a written directive: "If you die, there will be no one left to tell that we did our duty and fought honorably here. You must bear the temporary shame of surrender, but endure it. This is an order from your army commander."

Hiromichi Yahara's book "Okinawa Kessen" ("Battle for Okinawa") is the sole account of the Okinawa campaign as it was experienced by the Japanese who defended the island. Hiromichi Yahara died in 1981.

Sugar Loaf Hill today is a bustling center of commerce, but we never should forget it wasn't always that way.

Editor's note: Maj Bevilacqua, a Leatherneck contributing editor, is a former enlisted Marine who served in the Korean and Vietnam wars. Later in his career, he was an instructor at Amphibious Warfare School and Command and Staff College, Quantico, Va.



toward the Japanese and died in a fusillade of rifle fire.

Second Lieutenant Charles E. "Charlie" Behan, another member of F/2/29, wounded in the mouth and spitting blood and bits of teeth, refused medical treatment and made that same attack. Hit again, still refusing treatment and unable to talk, he continued to lead, using hand signals. A burst from a machine gun caught him full in the chest. PFC Bill Hulek saw "the bullets come right out of his back, and you could see his jacket raised—plink, plink, plink." The citation for Charlie Behan's posthumous Navy Cross would attest to "his courageous and unfaltering devotion to duty."

All of the blood that was shed on Sugar Loaf wasn't Marine blood. Day after day of constant combat was taking its toll on the Japanese as well. Slowly, steadily, that defense was weakening. On Friday, 18 May it broke. A three-pronged simultaneous attack against Sugar Loaf, Half Moon and the Horseshoe by the 29th Marines caught the Japanese completely off guard. The last 200 members of the 15th Independent Mixed Regiment died fighting.

Coupled with the successful Army attacks on Conical Hill to the east, the Shuri Line was breached. There would be two more months of fighting on Okinawa, but from that point on, the Japanese situation was hopeless. Bringing that about had cost the 6thMarDiv 2,662 in dead and wounded and nearly 2,000 more nonbattle casualties, men completely worn out and used up.

Sixty-Eight Years On

Medal of Honor Marine Maj Henry A. Courtney was buried in the Sixth Marine Division Cemetery on Okinawa. Following the war, when the American dead were repatriated, his remains were disinterred for reburial in the Courtney family plot in Calvary Cemetery, Duluth, Minn. But Henry Courtney never really left Okinawa, where today Camp Courtney houses the headquarters of the 3dMarDiv and III Marine Expeditionary Force.

All of the blood that was shed on Sugar Loaf wasn't Marine blood. Day after day of constant combat was taking its toll on the Japanese as well.

Jack Castignola, who went up Sugar Loaf with Henry Courtney, came back down under his own power. In 1946, he returned to college to complete his education. He became one of the most successful high-school football coaches in Michigan history, winning 231 games and a succession of conference and state championships during his career. "Coach Jack," a beloved coach, teacher, counselor and father figure, died of cancer in 1986. At the entrance to the Trenton, Mich., high-school football stadium, a granite monument memorializes his life dedicated to guiding and inspiring the lives of young people.

Vic Hanson, orphaned by the death of

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We—the Marines

Edited by Clare A. Guerrero



LCPL CANTLIN MALUDA

Active-duty and veteran Marines from around the nation traveled to MCRD Parris Island, S.C., to attend the celebration of the 70th anniversary of females in the Marine Corps. The celebration was held at the 4th RTB on March 1. MCRD Parris Island began training female Marine recruits in 1949, and today 4th RTB is the home of all female enlisted recruits training to become Marines.

Women Marines Celebrate Milestone In Their History

■ Female Marines from across the country gathered to attend the 70th Anniversary Celebration of Women in the Corps at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., on March 1. The event, hosted by the staff of 4th Recruit Training Battalion, was held as a time for remembrance, connection and festivity among women throughout the Corps.

The approximately 50 women Marines were given the opportunity to reminisce, remember and even relive their time at Parris Island during a tour led by female drill instructors. The outing included a walk through 4th RTB, where the rooms and hallways were filled with memorabilia highlighting the legacy of women in the Corps. The tour culminated with a demonstration of recruit pickup known as “Black Friday.”

First Sergeant Matina Spaulding, a former drill instructor, said the celebration proved to be a memorable and rewarding experience.

“For me it’s all about the young Marines

who will carry on our legacy,” said 1stSgt Spaulding, company first sergeant for Combat Development Co, Headquarters and Service Bn, Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va. “They are hungry to learn more about our history, and it’s an awesome feeling seeing how they light up when they learn something new. It gives them an opportunity to learn things about our history that they may not be aware of.”

She also said the event was particularly special because it offered young female Marines a unique way to experience their rich heritage as they were able to engage with women of generations past.

The night’s celebration began with music, which was followed by dinner and a ceremony with presentations commemorating women Marines.

Betty Moseley Brown, president of the Women Marines Association, made the audience chuckle as she gave an account of her experience when she entered recruit training in 1978.

“Back then, I didn’t know what I was getting into. In fact, I wanted to be sharp when I went [to the] Marines,” said Moseley

Brown. “So I had a red wraparound dress, I had red high-heel shoes and, yes, I had my nails done. I didn’t know I would be in those clothes for close to 72 hours; I haven’t worn a wraparound dress since.”

Moseley Brown said she has seen the strides women have made in the Corps. During her early times as an enlisted Marine, it was rare to see more than a few women serving next to her, and it was highly unusual to encounter a female officer or staff noncommissioned officer.

“When I saw my first woman Marine sergeant major I thought I had died and gone to heaven. When I see the beauty here, I know I have died and gone to heaven. How things have changed and yet they stay the same. Our hairstyles may have changed, but our commitment, courage and patriotism are just the same.”

PAO, MCRD Parris Island, S.C.

Cherry Point Search-and-Rescue Team Rappels Into Forest, Saves Lives

■ It was Presidents Day, Feb. 18, and Hospital Corpsman Third Class John H. Nelson had the day off from work. When

he left his house in New Bern, N.C., HM3 Nelson, with Marine Transport Squadron (VMR) 1, had no idea how his day would unfold.

“When I got the call that we were needed to assist a search-and-rescue mission, I was about to take my dog for a walk,” he said.

Late in the afternoon, local authorities reached out to the search-and-rescue squadron to help rescue three missing children who wandered too far while playing in the Croatan National Forest.

After getting the call, six crewmembers from VMR-1 rushed to the squadron’s hangar to board one of their HH-46E Sea Knights, affectionately referred to as “Pedro.”

For most of the crewmembers, this was the first time they carried out a real-world search-and-rescue mission. This also was the first mission carried out under the squadron’s new commanding officer, who took charge of the “Roadrunners” just three days before the incident.

“It made me extremely happy to be able to return the kids to their parents and make their mother happy,” said Lieutenant Colonel Brian D. Bernth. “As a parent with three kids around the same age, I can only imagine what those parents were feeling. I’m glad these highly trained Marines were able to bring the children to safety.”

After authorities discovered the children’s whereabouts, the crew was directed to a secluded deer stand the children were using for cover.

“When we arrived on the scene, the children were waving their arms to flag us down,” said Nelson.

The crew realized, after arriving, that they did not have enough space to land the aircraft to retrieve the children. They knew the only way to get on the ground was to send crewmembers down to help the children board the helicopter.



LCPL PEDRO CARDENAS

STAFF SERGEANT SCRUTINY—SSgt Jason R. Lansdon, Company I, 3d Recruit Training Battalion, inspects a recruit during the company’s senior drill instructor inspection aboard Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, March 1. Senior drill instructor inspection is the first inspection that recruits undergo during recruit training.

“This is the perfect scenario for us,” said pilot Major Bryan E. Donovan, who was flying Pedro at the time. “We train hard for instances like this where there was lots of scrub brush and nowhere to land.”

Nelson and rescue swimmer Corporal Chad V. D’Ambrogi rappelled from the aircraft to the ground. They were able to fit all three children in a search-and-rescue basket and hoist them up to the cabin of the aircraft.

“At first, I was in disbelief that this was actually happening,” said Nelson. “Our reactions were sheer muscle memory. Even though we mainly perform hospital transfers, situations like this are what we train the most for.”

“Once we had the children inside, we

turned the heat all the way up and wrapped them in blankets,” said Donovan.

The children were transported to a field just a few miles from where they were rescued. The Newport (N.C.) Fire Department’s fire and rescue team, and other local emergency response teams and authorities, was on the scene waiting when they arrived.

Nelson said the children thanked the VMR-1 Marines and him, as the lone sailor, for their efforts.

“A lot of time, effort and training is put forth by all the Marines and sailors in VMR-1,” said Bernth. “Hard work goes into keeping our aircraft and Marines ready to respond to incidents. It amazes me how good they are at doing their jobs.”

Cpl Andrea Cleopatra Dickerson
PAO, MCAS Cherry Point, N.C.



CPL ANDREA CLEOPATRA DICKERSON

MARSOC: 7 Years From Inception

■ U.S. Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command celebrated its seventh birthday on Feb. 22 at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C. The date marks the Corps’ growing commitment to special operations in the global war on terrorism.

“[MARSOC] is no longer new,” said Major General Mark A. Clark, the MARSOC commander.

MARSOC Marines and sailors marked the occasion with a morning “warrior

Rescue swimmer Cpl Chad V. D’Ambrogi and HM3 John H. Nelson, both with VMR-1, were among members of the six-man crew who rescued three missing children from North Carolina’s Croatan National Forest, Feb. 18.



CPL KYLE McNALLY

MajGen Mark A. Clark, the commander of U.S. Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command, congratulates the winning team leader of the MARSOC warrior challenge at an awards ceremony at MARSOC headquarters, MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., Feb. 22. MARSOC Marines and sailors celebrated the command's seventh birthday by competing against each other in the warrior challenge.

challenge" in which the unit's subordinate commands competed during a stamina course, a fitness and marksmanship challenge and a soccer tournament.

"It was a good way to meet people throughout the command," said a lance corporal with MARSOC's Logistics Battalion. "It's important with the workload that we have to be able to come out here and relax, reflect and get to know each other."

"Because of the passion and persever-

ance of our Marines and sailors, [MARSOC] is considered to be one of the most capable and professional special operations forces today," MajGen Clark said at the awards ceremony.

The general noted that in the past year, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command Marines and sailors have received 135 valor medals, 112 Combat Action Ribbons and 25 Purple Heart medals.

MARSOC joined U.S. Special Opera-

tions Command in 2006 and has since integrated seamlessly, said MajGen Clark.

MARSOC currently is commanding and supporting a special operations task force of Marines, Green Berets and SEALs in Afghanistan. Its battlespace is larger than that of any other special operations task force, covering an area of more than 100,000 miles.

Cpl Kyle McNally
Combat Correspondent, 1st MSOB

World War II Veterans Turn Out For Marine Military Academy Parade

■ Sixteen World War II veterans turned out for the Marine Military Academy (MMA) Iwo Jima Parade in Harlingen, Texas, on Feb. 19. This year marked the 68th anniversary of the Battle of Iwo Jima.

Open to the public, the annual event is a tribute to the courage and sacrifice made by "The Greatest Generation" to preserve freedom around the world. As in previous years, the parade was well attended by the public, particularly veterans from all wars and branches of the U.S. Armed Forces.

The veterans of WW II sat in reserved seating directly in front of the historic "Iwo Jima Monument," located on the MMA campus. During the parade, they all stood for the Pledge of Allegiance and joined Colonel R. Glenn Hill, MMA superintendent, for the ceremonial Pass in Review.

In addition to honoring America's veterans, the parade recognizes the historical significance of the Battle of Iwo Jima during WW II. On Feb. 19, 1945, members



CMSGT LEO SALINAS

TAKING IN THE TANK— Marines with Company A, 1st Tank Battalion watch a crew of their fellow tankers shoot on Range 500 at Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif., Feb. 15. The Marines were in the midst of their annual tank qualification, which ended Feb. 19.

of the Third, Fourth and Fifth Marine divisions stormed the tiny Pacific island expecting little resistance. Unknown to Allied forces, the Japanese had spent months fortifying the island through underground tunnels. A month-long struggle ensued in which more than 6,000 Marines and 20,000 Japanese soldiers perished.

On the fifth day of the battle, U.S. Marines raised two flags on top of Mount Suribachi. During the second flag raising, photographer Joe Rosenthal took the iconic photograph of five Marines and one Navy corpsman that inspired Dr. Felix de Weldon to sculpt the U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial, the magnificent bronze statue located in Arlington, Va. De Weldon officially gave his original model to MMA in 1981. Since April 16, 1982, MMA has been home to the historic treasure known as the Iwo Jima Monument.

MMA can thank one particular South Texas native for the Iwo Jima Monument. Corporal Harlon Block of Weslaco, Texas, was one of the Marines to erect the second American flag on Feb. 23, 1945. He is depicted at the base of the flagstaff. Although he did not return from the war, Block will forever be remembered by Americans in Rosenthal's photo and de Weldon's statue.

World War II veterans salute the flag during the Pledge of Allegiance at the Marine Military Academy Iwo Jima Parade in Harlingen, Texas, on Feb. 19. The parade marked the 68th anniversary of the Battle of Iwo Jima and was a tribute to "The Greatest Generation."



GRACIELA SALAZAR

Block's gravesite resides directly behind the Iwo Jima Monument.

One of the guests attending the 2013 Iwo Jima Parade was 88-year-old Glen Cleckler, a WW II veteran and Block's best friend. He and Block attended Weslaco High School and together enlisted in the Marine Corps in December 1942. In fact, they enlisted in the Marine Corps because they needed an excused absence for skipping a day of school.

Cleckler returned from WW II and brought back Block's Marine Corps ring, which now is housed in the Iwo Jima Museum on the MMA campus. Cleckler be-

came an educator in Harlingen and shares the history he lived with those who ask.

Marine Military Academy is a private, college-preparatory military school for young men in grades 8-12 with an optional postgraduate year. Since 1965, MMA is the only private school in the world based on the traditions and values of the U.S. Marine Corps. To learn more about MMA, visit MMA-TX.org.

Andi Atkinson
Marine Military Academy



Crazy Caption Contest

Winner



LCPL LANESEA ARTHUR

"All those in favor of a movie instead of PT raise your right hand."

**Submitted by
Jay Pulis
Massapequa Park, N.Y.**

This Month's Photo



LCPL B. A. STEVENS

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. The winning entry will be published in two months.

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In this 36th running of McGuire's St. Patrick's Day 5K in Pensacola, Fla., thousands of local civilians turned out, and leathernecks with Marine Aviation Training Support Group 21 volunteered to run in such numbers that the sea of Marine green, all striding in formation to the sounds of motivating chants, lifted the race to even greater success—all to the benefit of the Corps' wounded warriors.



Green on Green

Pensacola Marines Run St. Patrick's Day Race For Wounded Brothers and Sisters

Story and photos by Roxanne Baker

It was no ordinary PT when more than 2,200 Marines called cadence as they ran in formation for three miles.

It was an opportunity for the leathernecks to help give back to their wounded brothers and sisters by representing the Corps in the McGuire's 5K run in Pensacola, Fla.

A sea of green flooded the streets as the Marines joined 15,000 revelers in the 36th annual St. Patrick's Day-themed race on March 9.

McGuire's, a well-known Irish pub that has been a longtime institution in the Pensacola community, hosted the run. In addition to other charities, the restaurant

owners donated \$15,000 to the Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund and \$5,000 to the Wounded Warrior Project.

"It's an honor to help the disabled and injured back from the battlefield," said restaurant manager Perry Hunter.

Hunter said the Marines from Naval Air Station Pensacola volunteer for fundraisers, park restoration and other community events throughout the year. Escambia County School District also contributed to the citywide race effort and provided 51 school buses to transport the Marines from the base to the downtown race.

"[The Marines] are great citizens of Pensacola, so we want to give back to them," Hunter said. "I think it's important

for the civilian population to step in and help."

The \$15,000 donation "means so much" to injured and wounded military personnel and their families, said Laura Castellvi, senior manager of Community Outreach and Events at Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund. This is the fourth year McGuire's has donated to the cause, she said, and has since raised \$65,000 for the nonprofit.

"We feel indebted to our servicemen and women who provide us the ability to live in this wonderful country and who are injured on our behalf," Castellvi said. "It's the least we can do to help them live the quality of life they deserve."

The \$15,000 will be spread across multiple programs and initiatives, she



said, and 94 cents of every donated dollar directly impacts a servicemember. The organization has distributed \$72 million in assistance since its establishment nine years ago. Castellvi said the program funds case-by-case needs for the injured such as service dogs, exercise equipment, grants, therapeutic beds and immediate financial assistance.

"We are so appreciative when communities like Pensacola and McGuire's help us with our mission because we can't do it alone," Castellvi said. "It just shows what people can do when we work together."

Editor's note: Roxanne Baker is the writer and media coordinator for MCA&F. A Marine wife, she is an experienced multimedia journalist with hundreds of published works.



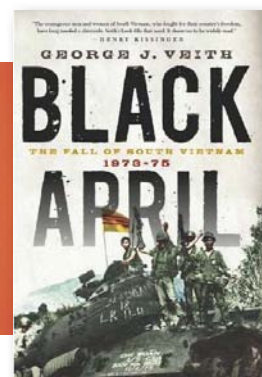
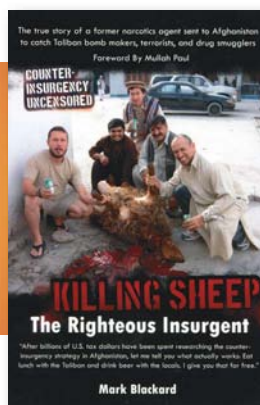
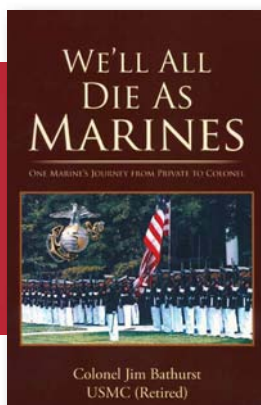
Above: Col Robert C. Sherrill, Commanding Officer, MATSG-21, with LCpl Kapenga Kankienza, running to his left as a road guard, leads the Marine formation with the guidon of Aviation Maintenance Squadron 2 proudly flying just behind.

Below: The MATSG-21 color guard, trained by GySgt John Regan, includes from left: Cpl Joshua I. Drummond, Sgt Hesler Cardona, Cpl Steven M. Brown and Cpl Troy L. Woodie.



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 5 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.



WE'LL ALL DIE AS MARINES: One Marine's Journey From Private to Colonel. By Col Jim Bathurst, USMC (Ret). Published by iUniverse Inc. 543 pages. Stock #1475956932. \$38.66 MCA Members. \$42.95 Regular Price.

We've got a whale of a book to recommend to all you gung-ho leathernecks. Colonel Jim Bathurst's huge memoir is truly a treat to read and consider. In fact, I enjoyed reading every page of this fully packed professional, yet very personal narrative. Bathurst rose from a high school dropout and Marine boot to the exalted rank of gunnery sergeant before gaining his commission as an officer of Marines. His story will speak strongly to each and every Marine.

Marine General Peter Pace, the 16th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, noted in a dust-jacket comment, "Reading Jim's book is like coming home!" And Gen Pace, I fully agree!

Initially, this wide-eyed boot set his cover on becoming a first-class Marine "gunny," the early role models he admired most. Joining in 1958, he quickly adapted to the ways and ethos of his beloved Corps.

To young Bathurst, the Corps was not only a career, but a way of life. Starting off as a communicator, he continually sought assignment to the infantry field. His first overseas duty assignment was at Marine Barracks Yokosuka, Japan, where he spent his tour in a picture-perfect guard section. This formative experience would serve him well throughout his career. By 1960, the young corporal donned our Corps' dis-

tinctive campaign hat and took to the field at Parris Island as a Marine drill instructor.

In early 1966, he arrived in Vietnam. Now an 0311 "grunt," he joined Company E, 2d Battalion, First Marine Regiment north of Da Nang. Active patrolling, avoiding booby traps and ducking Viet Cong snipers were the names of the deadly game in "Indian Country." For most of his combat tour, Sgt Bathurst, or "Sergeant B," as the troops called him, in effect, served as their platoon leader. His stalwart actions in I Corps earned him a Silver Star, a Bronze Star with combat "V," and the award he did not wish to win, the Purple Heart. There, his actions and instincts fully demonstrated he was a capable leader of Marines in combat.

Upon returning to "the world," he was tapped to join the leathernecks at Marine Barracks Washington, D.C., the "oldest post of the Corps," steeped in the Corps' time-honored history and tradition. It was there that Jim was promoted to his long-sought grade of gunnery sergeant. But soon, his previously hard-won field combat commission came through. The newly promoted Mustang was awarded his gold bar and commenced a new and exciting part of his storied career.

Wise beyond his years, he excelled in each of his new and challenging assignments. Over the years as he gained promotions, he became known as an expert problem solver.

As a major, he turned around the sagging reputation of the Marine Barracks

located at Naval Air Station Lemoore, Calif. The turnaround was so successful that the base was written up in a "Post of the Corps" article in the August 1981 *Leatherneck* magazine. By the end of his three-year tour, the IG inspection of the base, now considered unnecessary, was canceled. Maj Bathurst proudly wrote: "They were actually going to skip us, something I had never heard of happening throughout my career."

Before being promoted to lieutenant colonel, Bathurst was assigned to square away the drooping morale and production in Recruiting Station Chicago in the 9th Marine Corps District. Using long-tested leadership experience, RS Chicago was transformed into a star recruiting area and rated as the top RS in the district for 19 straight months.

Rewarded with top-level school at the Naval War College, LtCol Bathurst received his master's degree in national defense and strategic studies. Then he achieved the dream of any hard-charging Marine officer—battalion command. LtCol Bathurst took command of 2d Bn, 6th Marines. The battalion was special with a reputation rooted in World War II, when it was known as "Huxley's Harlots," and highlighted in the Leon Uris novel, "Battle Cry," and the movie, "Battle Cry."

Promoted to colonel, Jim Bathurst was sent to Landing Force Training Command Atlantic in Norfolk, Va. There, he developed a riverine fast-attack assault boat capability for the Corps. As you might

expect, this caused nervousness within the local East Coast SEAL command, and Bathurst pulls no punches in his descriptive dialog about the assignment.

Upon retirement in 1993, Col Jim Bathurst settled in Montana. During the winter months, he treks to warmer climes where he has ample opportunity to reflect on his time as a Marine.

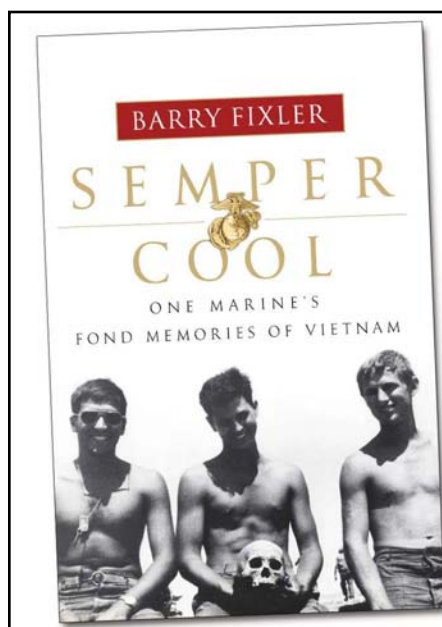
In summarizing his life and career, Jim Bathurst says it best: “[T]he Corps was not a job, a career, or even a profession; it was—and still is—a way of life.”

This grand tome is a sparkling tribute to the life and times of an “Always Faithful” Marine’s Marine. It’s jam-packed with significant lessons for leaders. The book keeps the leatherneck booklover focused on our Corps’ values, history and traditions.

When finished, I simply hated putting this electrically charged book down. Indeed, it was the best military memoir I’ve ever read. Thank you, sir. For a brief moment in time, I felt young again.

Robert B. Loring

Editor’s note: “Red Bob” Loring, a Marine veteran and frequent Leatherneck reviewer, is a prolific reader of Marine-related books. He is a deeply committed Toys for Tots volunteer.



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—Marc Leepson, *The VVA Veteran*

KILLING SHEEP: The Righteous Insurgent. By Mark Blackard. Published by Morris Publishing. 314 pages. Stock #1936956004. Softcover. \$15.26 MCA Members. \$16.95 Regular Price.

When I received this book to review, I did not anticipate enjoying it. My initial thought was one of “another author who knows all of the answers better than everyone else.”

After reading Mark Blackard’s book, I came away with a very different impression. Certainly he is very critical of the United States and its policies/procedures/attitudes within Afghanistan, and the book is not a balanced evaluation of how things are accomplished (for example, Blackard is not opposed to making very sweeping generalizations critical of the U.S. com-

Leatherneck Book Browser

“Next-Generation Homeland Security: Network Federalism and the Course to National Preparedness.”

Positing that the 20th-century system of federal-centric governance no longer provides for American security, John Fass Morton makes the case for a next-generation homeland security transformation. He provides an inside view of the political dynamics behind the creation of the Department of Homeland Security and the development of the National Preparedness System and focuses on the emerging belief that the nation must advance beyond the interagency model dominated by Washington, D.C., and the federal agencies’ security relationships with state and local governments and the private sector.

Introducing a 21st-century governance paradigm called Network Federalism, Morton charts the course to next-generation homeland security via statutorily empowered and decentralized intergovernmental staffs in the 10 federal regions.

The author, who comes from a long line of Navy veterans, has more than 25 years of analytical experience in national and homeland security, recently serving as the homeland security lead for the Project on National Security Reform.

“Next-Generation Homeland Security,” which includes a foreword by Gov. Tom Ridge, is a must-read for Marines transitioning from the Corps into homeland security fields or law enforcement.

The 416-page paperback (available in eBook), published by U.S. Naval Institute Press, www.usni.org, retails for

\$36.95. Copies may be obtained for less through Amazon.com, barnesandnoble.com, Google ebookstore and iBooks. (ISBN: 978-1-61251-088-0)

“Marine—Featuring: The Battle Of Hickory, May 1967.” If you are into inspirational books that feature the Corps, you may want to consider this one by Dr. Philip E. Ayers, a former sergeant and squad leader with Company G, 2d Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment in Vietnam in 1967.

Ayers tells of going from high-school dropout to Marine, to Vietnam and combat and of eventually becoming a Baptist pastor. He includes a very good account and summary of the fighting during Operation Hickory, up in “Leatherneck Square” in Northern I Corps in 1967. Ayers is inspirational when he talks about the Marines in combat—their bravery, esprit de corps and their devotion to one another—and his battle with post-traumatic stress disorder.

This book provides nonmilitary and families of Marines returning from combat several lessons and a better understanding of what their military man or woman has experienced.

There are 238 pages of thoughtful and important lessons that the author presents in an easy reading fashion while keeping it entertaining. There also are some very good photographs from Vietnam. Published by Xulon Press, 2301 Lucien Way, Suite 415, Maitland, FL 32751, (866) 381-2665, it is available in paperback for \$15.99 through Xulon Press, Amazon, and Barnes & Noble. (ISBN: 978-1-62419-556-3)

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mand structure without trying to understand why some of these things are in place), but he does make some very interesting observations from his perspective working directly with the Afghans.

The author, arrived in Afghanistan in 2009 for a one-year stint, after a 12-year career as a narcotics police officer and two tours embedded with U.S. Marines in Fal-lujah, Iraq. He was employed as a contractor working as an advisor/operator as part of the JIEDDO (Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization). His role in Afghanistan was to act as an advisor to Afghan law enforcement (working in conjunction with, but not for, the U.S. military) to combat the improvised explosive device threat in the region of Jalalabad.

Blackard's book recounts his experiences over the course of that year. He outlines his team's successes and failures, the effect of overlaying a U.S. military bureaucracy over operations in the Afghan region, his relationship and respect for his Afghan teammates and his trust and regard for their competency, working issues the "Afghan way" versus the Western way. He also recounts, to a great extent, his frustration with the conduct of the Afghan war by senior U.S. military and government agencies. Specifically, he sees them as out of touch with the re-

alities of the Afghan people and intolerant of those who are not "Western."

The book is written from a tactical perspective; that is to say that there is no attempt to evaluate the conflict beyond the confines of his experiences. Blackard's writing style is very informal in keeping with his approach to life and operations. He defines things very much in black-and-white. In other words, there is very little room in his evaluations for actions not in keeping with his perception of how things should be conducted.

For example, he is very harsh in his criticism of the death of Afghan civilians resulting from U.S. operations. He views these all as murder and perceives the United States as having little to no regard for these actions. In effect, as far as Blackard is concerned, the U.S. military leadership does not care about these losses (referring to them simply as collateral damage).

While Blackard's observations and arguments are simplistic, he does touch upon a number of valid issues that will continue to affect the conduct and effectiveness of asymmetric (and symmetric) conflicts in the future.

Overall, Blackard's book is an interesting and engaging read. As stated, he is somewhat simplistic in his views. There is no question that Blackard has no tolerance

or time for those he views as bureaucratic "company men," and he thrives in the "wild-west" atmosphere of Afghanistan, where he is constrained minimally by regulation and oversight. In my opinion, his book, despite making some very valid points, loses some credibility with his constant criticism of the U.S. military and government, thereby undermining some of the strengths of his own arguments.

Maj Chris Buckham

Editor's note: Maj Chris Buckham is a logistics officer in the Royal Canadian Air Force. He has experience working with all elements, including SOF. A graduate of the Royal Military College of Canada, he holds a bachelor's degree in political science and a master's degree in international relations. He presently is assigned as a logistics officer with the multinational branch of EUCOM (J4) in Stuttgart, Germany.

BLACK APRIL: The Fall of South Vietnam, 1973-75.
By George J. Veith. Published by Encounter Books.
624 pages. Stock #1594035725. \$26.95 MCA Members. \$29.95 Regular Price.

"Shouldering their weapons, lining up four abreast in a column stretching almost half a mile long, the two thousand

[continued on page 64]

In the Highest Tradition

Edited by R. R. Keene and Tina Pearce

“Always Faithful” Sergeant Posthumously Awarded Bronze Star



Sergeant William C. Stacey, a squad leader with 2d Battalion, Fourth Marine Regiment, lived and died by the Corps' motto, *Semper Fidelis*. He used the phrase in a letter written to his family just before he was killed in action in Helmand province, Afghanistan, Jan. 31, 2012. He said he was willing to give his life for the good of the people of Afghanistan and for his Marines.

On Feb. 15, 2013, Sgt Stacey was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star with combat “V” at Headquarters, Fifth Marine Regiment, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., for his many acts of perseverance and courage during his deployment to Afghanistan beginning in late 2011.

The award citation specifically addresses an incident that occurred Nov. 26, 2011, while Stacey and his squad were engaged by heavy machine-gun fire in an insurgent-infested region of Helmand province. In order to assault an enemy position, Stacey personally moved 200 meters over exposed ground, all the while under enemy fire, into tactically advantageous terrain so his squad could achieve fire superiority.

Stacey was described by many of his peers as a perfect Marine. Always putting his squad before himself, he led them through many combat engagements in Afghanistan. Marines in Sgt Stacey's squad said his selfless acts were the reason why his unit was lethally effective and able to return home safely when their work in Helmand was complete.

First Lieutenant Maxwell Bernstein, the executive officer of Weapons Company, 2/4, and Stacey's platoon commander during his final deployment, said Stacey was a warrior in the truest sense of the word, and when it came to the safety of his Marines, “he could be deadly serious.”

“He turned Marines into brothers and our platoon into family,” Bernstein added.

Stacey's citation states that even though drastically outnumbered, he held his ground, his squad beating back numerous



LCPL JAMES GULLIVER

A photo of Sgt William Stacey taken in Afghanistan serves as part of the Feb. 15, 2013, posthumous salute to his bravery and sacrifice held on the Camp San Mateo parade field at MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif. Sgt Stacey was awarded the Bronze Star with combat “V” for actions Jan. 31, 2012, in Helmand province, Afghanistan.

flanking attempts and continuing the fight for several hours.

As their ammunition began to dwindle, Stacey directed his squad out of the kill zone and back to the patrol base, unquestionably saving the lives of his Marines.

“We were taking a lot of fire. Bullets were landing pretty close to me. I kind of froze and a lot of us did at that point,” said Corporal Jeff Otterson, a fire team leader with Stacey's squad. “But he [Sergeant Stacey] kept calm, got up, looked at me and said, ‘Let's go.’ That calm voice and that demeanor got us through that day.”

Stacey had a love for not just his fellow Marines, but also the people of Afghanistan.

In his final letter to his family, Stacey wrote, “If my life buys the safety of one child who will one day change the world, then I know that it was all worth it.”

“A lot of the time you don't agree with what the locals do, but he was there for them just as much as us,” said Lance Corporal Dustin Branges, Stacey's radio operator. “It did not matter if you were American or Afghan, he liked to take care of people.”

Stacey continued to put his squad and the people of Afghanistan before himself throughout his deployment. On Jan. 31, 2012, Stacey's squad was conducting a foot patrol when he went ahead to check for improvised explosive devices. During his search, he triggered an IED and was killed.

“He was somebody you just tried to emulate, and you wanted to be like him,” Branges said. “His prowess and skill at his job is what gave him his confidence, and you wanted to just be like that. All of us did.”

Sgt Stacey closed his final letter with a remark that his fellow Marines understand very well: “*Semper Fidelis* means always faithful. Always faithful to God, country and Corps. Always faithful to the principles and beliefs that guided me into service.”

LCpl James Gulliver
Combat Correspondent, 1stMarDiv

He Set the Example and Led the Way



Captain John E. Nobles III, Force Reconnaissance platoon commander, 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit, was awarded the Bronze Star with combat “V” during a ceremony aboard USS *Kearsarge* (LHD-3) while at sea Feb. 16, 2013.

The award was presented in recognition of actions while commanding 1st Platoon, Company A, 2d Reconnaissance Battalion, Second Marine Division (Forward), II Marine Expeditionary Force (Fwd), from Jan. 8 to June 7, 2011. The citation reads: “Captain Nobles demonstrated exceptional proficiency, courage, and aggressive leadership in the face of a relentless and determined enemy force within the Upper Sangin River Valley.”

Performing selfless acts of valor in the face of immediate peril, Nobles displayed honor, courage and commitment in an unparalleled manner, faithfully staying true to the core values of the Marine Corps.

“Captain Nobles responded, led and saved lives,” said Colonel Matthew G. St. Clair, Commanding Officer, 26th MEU. “It’s a humbling experience for me to be able to present this award to Captain Nobles, and it’s a humbling experience for me to stand here, beside him, wearing the same uniform he wears—the same uniform that each and every one of you wear.”

The citation further states: “Captain Nobles served as a stalwart example of combat leadership and routinely moved to key locations despite the ferocity of enemy attacks encountered by him and his men. During numerous direct engagements with enemy forces, Captain Nobles exposed himself to accurate and sustained fires to emplace, coordinate, and direct the fires of his men, as well as supporting arms, onto the enemy.”

Nobles said the key to his platoon’s success was always having the upper hand by refusing to be intimidated by enemy forces. He also contributed their success to the ability of free movement. They were not restricted to certain patrol routes or areas of operation, so the enemy could not predict their movement and back lay improvised explosive devices.

Once Nobles and his men were deployed, the tide of engagements in the area turned. His leadership skills and the proper emplacement of his Marines saved lives.

“We’re very fortunate we had such a good platoon,” said Nobles. “Our team leaders were absolutely phenomenal. Our

company commander was also phenomenal. Everybody was always very aggressive and on the same page, which helped out a lot.”

Cpl Kyle N. Runnels
Combat Correspondent, 26th MEU

He Saved His Sergeant and Earned The Navy and Marine Corps Medal



Lance Corporal Benjamin Nalls, a fire team leader with Company D, 1st Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, First Marine Division at Camp Las Flores, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal, March 8, for his life-saving actions as an infantryman in Helmand province, Afghanistan.

On Feb. 23, 2012, Nalls and his squad were patrolling and resupplying Marines setting up a cordon around an improvised explosive device.

Nalls was the point man for the patrol, and it was his job to lead the Marines across several canals to reach their objective. Several of the bridges that spanned the canals were partially submerged in the swift currents of the waterway.

As the squad moved across a bridge early in the patrol, one of the Marines fell into the canal, but Nalls and his squad leader, Sergeant Erick Gutierrez, were able to pull him from the water, saving his life.

They reached their objective without further incident and resupplied the Marines in the cordon with ammunition, food and water.

On the way back, Nalls searched for an alternate crossing. He did not want to risk another member of his squad falling into the freezing water. He picked a safer crossing and was the first Marine to try to cross back over the frigid river with more

than 60 pounds of gear. While Nalls was crossing, the bridge shifted and he fell into the water, where the strong current swept him underneath the bridge and down the canal.

The canal swept him along for more than 50 meters, until his fellow Marines were able to pull him onto the riverbank.

As Gutierrez was crossing, he lost his footing and immediately was swept under by the current as well.

“I tried to drop my gear so I could stay above water, but I couldn’t even unbuckle my chinstrap before my muscles froze up and went completely numb from the cold,” said Gutierrez.

Nalls heard the commotion and immediately jumped back into the cold water to save his squad leader.

Gutierrez said: “I traveled down the river for a few meters; I felt Nalls grab me by my plate carrier, and he told me, ‘Don’t worry, Sergeant, I got you and I’m not letting go.’”

Nalls was able to pull him to the riverbank where they were treated by the squad’s corpsman. They both were evacuated by helicopter and treated for hypothermia.

“Any one of my Marines would have done it for me. If the situation had been reversed, my squad leader would have jumped in after me,” said Nalls. “It’s just something we would do for each other.”

Nalls humbly passed off the credit for the award to his fellow Marines, saying they molded him into the man he is today.

“What he did says a lot about his character. Diving into that canal for me, that’s not something you can teach someone, you’re born with it,” said Gutierrez. “He definitely was born with it.”

LCpl James Gulliver
Combat Correspondent, 1stMarDiv



CPL CHRISTOPHER Q. STONE



LCPL JAMES GULLIVER

Above left: For his bravery and combat leadership in the Upper Sangin River Valley in 2011, Capt John E. Nobles III is awarded the Bronze Star with combat “V” by Col Matthew G. St. Clair, CO, 26th MEU, while at sea in USS Kearsage (LHD-3), Feb. 16, 2013.

Above right: LCpl Benjamin Nalls is presented the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for lifesaving by MajGen Ronald L. Bailey, Commanding General, 1stMarDiv, at Camp Pendleton on March 8, 2013. LCpl Nalls saved a sergeant from drowning in February 2012 by jumping into fast-moving, frigid water in a 9-foot-deep, 15-foot-wide canal in Helmand province, Afghanistan, and pulling the Marine to safety.

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 February:



Silver Star

Sgt Daniel W. Ridgeway,
7th Engineer Support
Battalion, First Marine
Logistics Group



Bronze Star With Combat "V"

LCpl Jason N. Barfield, 3d
Bn, Seventh Marine Regiment,
First Marine Division
LtCol Michael A. Brooks Jr.,
Marine Special Operations Regiment
(MSOR), U.S. Marine Corps Forces
Special Operations Command
(MARSOC)



Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal With Combat "V"

Capt Jason P. Bowers,
I Marine Expeditionary Force
Headquarters Group (Forward)
Capt Adam J. Brochetti,
2d Reconnaissance Bn, 2dMarDiv
Sgt Octavio Meza Jr., 1/7, 1stMarDiv
Capt Christopher F. Polidora,
I MHG (Fwd)
Sgt Michael J. Sims, 2d Air/Naval
Gunfire Liaison Company, MHG,
II MEF
Sgt Richard T. Stroud Jr.,
7th Marines, 1stMarDiv
1stLt Andrew J. Yearly, 7th Marines,
1stMarDiv



Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal With Combat "V"

Sgt Anthony F. Amayaramos,
Combat Logistics Regiment 15,
1st MLG
Sgt Nicholas S. Barcelona, Marine
Cryptologic Support Bn
Sgt Sammy J. Cooper, 7th Marines,
1stMarDiv
SSgt Justin C. Fite, 1/7, 1stMarDiv
Cpl Jarrod J. Keller, I MHG (Fwd)
Cpl Kenneth R. Mull, 1/8, 2dMarDiv
Sgt Steven P. Satham, 7th Marines,
1stMarDiv
Sgt Christopher L. Shoemaker,
Combat Logistics Bn 2, CLR-2,
2d MLG



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CORPS ALBUM

Edited by Nancy S. Lichtman · Photos by MSgt Fred G. Braitsch Jr.



An F4U Corsair from Marine Attack Squadron 312, the “Checkerboard” squadron, launches from USS *Bataan* (CVL-29), off the coast of Korea, 1952. “Deck chiefs were like traffic cops. Carrier-based planes had to be spotted for round-the-clock flights,” according to a November 1952 *Leatherneck* article by combat correspondent MSgt Fred G. Braitsch Jr.



Mechanics work on a Marine Fighter Squadron 311 Grumman F9F Panther jet in Korea, 1951. Panther pilots attacked land targets and tangled with MiG-15s in air-to-air combat. Baseball slugger Capt Ted Williams was recalled to active duty in 1952 and flew Panthers in VMF-311—many missions alongside flight leader Maj John H. Glenn, future astronaut and U.S. senator.



The pilots of Marine Observation Squadron 6, flying unarmed light OY-2 and L-19 observation planes, conducted some of the most dangerous missions in the war. They were the “eyes in the sky,” as MSgt Braitsch wrote in the October 1951 issue of *Leatherneck*.

KOREAN WAR PHOTOS FROM THE *LEATHERNECK* ARCHIVES



According to the November 1952 *Leatherneck*, the motto of the First Marine Aircraft Wing's "Korean Airways" was "Anything, Anytime, Anywhere." Marine Corps aviators and their crews flew Douglas R4D Skytrains to deliver invaluable combat gear and medical supplies.



Above: Marine Transport Helicopter Squadron (HMR) 161 arrived in Korea in September 1951 equipped with the Sikorsky HRS-1. Besides the pilot and copilot, there was room for eight passengers—fewer in full combat gear. Cargo could be carried either internally, or sling-loaded externally. In this December 1952 *Leatherneck* photo, Marines are inserted by an HRS-1.

Left: The pilots of HMR-161 flew hundreds of Sikorsky HRS-1 medevac missions, transporting wounded to hospital ships, as in this 1952 photo. The pilots also delivered life-saving medical supplies to corpsmen and doctors in field hospitals.

Editor's note: Have a favorite Marine Corps photograph? Send it, along with a date, unit or any other available identification, to: Corps Album Editor, Leatherneck Magazine, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134. Send electronic copies to: leatherneck@mca-marines.org. Photos must not be copyrighted or have run in any other publication. Selection will be at the discretion of the "Corps Album" editor.

Leatherneck Line

Edited by Clare A. Guerrero



CPL WILLIAM J. JACKSON

LCpl Liam McElroy, an unmanned aerial vehicle technician with VMU-3, colors a picture with a kindergarten student at Joshua Tree Elementary School during National Read Across America Day, March 1.

Marines From Combat Center Open Books, Read to Kids

Leathernecks with Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron (VMU) 3 took a day to read and interact with the children of Joshua Tree Elementary School in Joshua Tree, Calif., during National Read Across America Day, March 1.

The National Education Association's Read Across America Day is a reading program that calls for children across America to celebrate reading on March 2, the birthday of Dr. Seuss, a renowned author of children's books. Dr. Seuss published 46 children's books in his career. His most celebrated books include "Green Eggs and Ham," "The Cat in the Hat," and "How the Grinch Stole Christmas!"

"It's good to support the community. They support us, and we just want to support them back," said Sergeant John Harrison, imagery analyst, VMU-3.

The Marines also spent time answering questions, coloring pictures with students and telling stories to the students. The day gave students a break from a normal school day and time to celebrate Dr. Seuss' impact on children's literature.

"The last class we went to was quite lively," Harrison said. "We had a lot of

questions about what we do. One student even gave us pencils as a souvenir. It's a great time."

Being able to interact with the students in a classroom environment was a refreshing change for the Marines, who most often join students at recess and physical education through the Adopt-a-School Program.

"They [Marines] love the interaction," said Daniele Hunter, the principal of Joshua Tree Elementary. "Today was extra special because they got to be inside the classrooms. They've been looking forward to this for a few weeks."

The kids are always looking for positive role models, she added. "We really enjoy having [Marines] here. It's another way to increase the positive culture for our students."

Cpl William J. Jackson
PAO, MCAGCC Twentynine Palms, Calif.

Wounded Warriors With Spinal Injuries May Benefit From Scuba Diving

Marines with Wounded Warrior Battalion-West, Detachment Hawaii submerged in Marine fashion during a day of scuba diving on the island of Oahu, March 17. Families and friends showed up in support

of the event, as certified divers from Island Divers and Adaptive Heroes guided the Marines through scuba-diving classes for a day of fun under the sea and as a means of physical and mental rehabilitation.

"This is my first group of Marines that I've had the opportunity to come out and work with," said Thomas Boyles, president of Adaptive Heroes, a nonprofit organization that uses scuba diving as a therapy tool. "This really all started when we used diving as the first step in the rehabilitation process for soldiers and civilians with spinal injuries. We saw a positive impact in doing this, and the results were amazing. Because of this, I wanted to work with other services and share this tool."

According to Boyles, being in the water does two things for those who suffer from, or are recovering from, serious injuries. The first is zero gravity, only found in space and water, which gives divers confidence in abilities they might not have on land and, subsequently, empowers them to take their minds off their injuries while weightless in water.

"It really helps you actively enjoy your day and allows you to do strenuous activities that you have no confidence doing on land," said Sergeant Steve A. Haberkorn, a wounded warrior with WWB-W, Det Hawaii.

Researchers at Johns Hopkins University began a study in 2011 about the effects of scuba diving on patients with spinal injuries. By taking a small group of veterans with spinal injuries and putting them through a four-day scuba-certification course, researchers noted "dramatic" results in several areas, including "significant improvement in muscle movement, increased sensitivity to light touch and pinprick on the legs, and large reduction in post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms."

"Johns Hopkins is still doing many tests to answer all the 'whys' and 'hows,' but I believe in this, and many others do as well," said Boyles. "We're trying to get as many wounded warriors certified in scuba diving as we can with no charge. All they have to do is show interest in the hobby, and Adaptive Heroes will pay for 100 percent of the fees."

LCpl Jacob D. Barber
PAO, MCB Hawaii

Okinawa Marines Help Restore Guam's Museum Trucks

Motor transport Marines with Combat Logistics Detachment (CLD) 39 helped bring relic military vehicles back to life Feb. 27 at the Pacific War Museum in Hagatna, Guam.

Upon being informed of the need for vehicle restoration, the Marines jumped at the opportunity to volunteer and provide maintenance at the museum. The leathernecks used their expertise to restore the Corps' equipment from World War II and the Korean and Vietnam wars, said Staff Sergeant Michael J. Madieros, the motor transport maintenance chief for CLD-39, 9th Engineer Support Battalion, Third Marine Logistics Group, III Marine Expeditionary Force.

Roy W. Moore, a volunteer at the museum who knew the Marines were on Guam for Exercise Guahan Shield, contacted the leathernecks to see if they could assist him with restoring the vehicles. Moore was a good friend of the museum's founder, the late John Gerber, who was born and raised on Guam and served in the Marine Corps during the Vietnam War. Gerber built the museum to educate and remind Guam residents about their history. (See "One Determined Marine," *Leatherneck*, August 2010.)

The museum has a rich history due to the dedication and care of its founder, said the museum's current owner, Mela G. Gerber, John Gerber's widow.

"It's part of our history, and John wanted the people of Guam and visitors to be able to study what went on during



LCPL PETER SANDERS

While on Guam for Exercise Guahan Shield, SSgt Michael J. Madieros, motor transport maintenance chief with CLD-39, helps Roy W. Moore, a volunteer at the Pacific War Museum, with repairs on exhibit trucks Feb. 27 at the museum in Hagatna, Guam.

World War II here," she said.

During WW II, the Marines fought on Guam, taking the island back from Japanese control. After the war, the United States gave the island territory status and helped its people regain their Chamorro identity, one that is rich in culture and tradition.

"As the years go by, we tend to forget the meaning of liberation, so [John] wanted everybody to have a way to remember," said Gerber.

The museum provides visitors the opportunity to learn about significant events in Guam's history, said Jeremy P. Hare, a visitor from the Hagatna area.

"This museum serves as a reminder of the importance of liberation," Hare said. "There are many stories about survival, including our own."

Leathernecks also benefit from the museum. Marines can see what past leather-

necks put themselves through to ensure Guam's liberation, according to Madieros.

"There's so much history here that every Marine should come and see what the past Marines did, and how they fought and died for freedom," he said.

The restoration work also provided the Marines an opportunity to diversify their knowledge of vehicle repair and maintenance, added the staff sergeant.

"It is a great training opportunity," Madieros said. "It's something they don't do every day, and it's something they will remember for the rest of their lives."

According to Gerber, it is important to remember the struggles of our forefathers while fighting for freedom.

"Let us never forget," said Gerber.

LCpl Peter Sanders

PAO, Marine Corps Installations Pacific



LCPL NICHOLAS S. RANUM

OKINAWA'S OSPREYS— LCpl Devon B. Springer, a flight equipment technician with Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 265, Marine Aircraft Group 36, First Marine Aircraft Wing, III Marine Expeditionary Force, walks with Okinawa community members during a family day hosted by VMM-265, March 3, at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, Okinawa, Japan. The family day was held to familiarize more than 300 parents and children from the community with the MV-22B Osprey and to provide them an opportunity to ask questions about the aircraft and its capabilities.

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, Feb. 1-28, 2013

The following was listed as having died while supporting combat operations:

Staff Sergeant Jonathan D. Davis, 34, of Kayenta, Ariz., with Headquarters Battalion, Regimental Combat Team 7, First Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., Feb. 22, Helmand province, Afghanistan.

George Van Sant

Colonel George M. Van Sant, decorated veteran of North China and the Korean War, civilian academician and educator, distinguished professor emeritus of philosophy and four-term city council member in Fredericksburg, Va., died Jan. 20 of a stroke. He was 85.

He enlisted in 1945 and served with the First Marine Division in North China. By 1950, he was commissioned in time to serve as a platoon commander with Company F, 2d Battalion, First Marine Regiment and went into combat in 1952 on patrols and in night battles against Chinese Communist Forces in Korea. In late August, he was at the heart of a struggle for a Korean ridge line the Marines called "Bunker Hill."

In 1953, he began graduate studies in philosophy at the University of Virginia where he was elected to the Raven Society and Omicron Delta Kappa. He served as president of the graduate student body and as a member of the university's Honor Council.

Dr. Van Sant was appointed assistant professor of philosophy at Mary Washington College of the University of Virginia in 1958. He served as chairman of the department, marshall of the faculty and chairman of the inaugural committee for two presidents of the college. He was elected to honorary membership in Mortar Board and Phi Beta Kappa. He spent a year as a visiting scholar at Cambridge University, U.K., in 1971.

From 1953 until 1977, Col Van Sant trained officer candidates in a number of

different Marine Corps programs and was a faculty member at several Marine Corps educational institutions. He retired from the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve in 1977. His personal decorations include the Bronze Star with combat "V," the Purple Heart and a Meritorious Service Medal.

In 1990, he retired as a distinguished professor emeritus of philosophy at the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, Va.

He was active in the local community of Fredericksburg as an original member of the Fredericksburg Chapter of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts and a board member and president and drive chairman of the Rappahannock United Way. He served many terms on the board of the Central Rappahannock Regional Library, leading up to chairmanship. He was elected to the Fredericksburg City Council and was a member of the Fredericksburg-Spotsylvania Annexation team.

Col Van Sant was instrumental in getting the Fredericksburg Area Museum and Cultural Center established and was actively involved in the Old Town restoration effort. He also discovered a flaw in the commonwealth of Virginia "composite index," resulting in cities being unfairly funded for education, and he chaired the Municipal League's transportation committee in 1986-87.

BGen Dorsey J. Bartlett, 86, of Richmond, Va. Born in Clarksburg, W.Va., he first went to Washington, D.C., in 1938, as the lone representative of his native state to the national school safety patrol convention. Cited as "America's Typical

Schoolboy Patrolman," BGen Bartlett was offered a 30-day House Page appointment, and thus began his unusual career in public service.

BGen Bartlett graduated from the Capitol Page School in 1944 and promptly enlisted in the Corps. As a private first class, he was serving at Headquarters, Department of the Pacific, San Francisco, when WW II ended. Upon returning to the Capitol, he was selected to be Chief of the Pages.

Resuming his service in the Marine Corps Reserve, he was selected as a meritorious noncommissioned officer to be commissioned. He received his commission in 1950, and in 1951 he was transferred to the Second Marine Division, Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C.

Upon his release from active duty, BGen Bartlett again returned to the Congress and in 1953 won the coveted post of House Reading Clerk. He has served a similar role as the Chief Reading Clerk for several Republican National Conventions.

His Reserve assignment was with Navy-Marine Corps Composite Company 5-48, Washington, D.C. He later commanded Public Affairs Unit 4-1, Washington, D.C. He was promoted to brigadier general in 1975.

BGen Bartlett retired from the USMCR in 1978 and was awarded the Legion of Merit. Active in support of the U.S. Jaycees government affairs leadership program, BGen Bartlett was the recipient of their Distinguished Service Award, and The Freedoms Foundation of Valley Forge presented BGen Bartlett the George Washington Honor Medal in 1969 for a patriotic essay concerning commerce with an enemy.

LtCol James W. Bierman, 72, of Toano, Va. He was the son of the late BGen Charles O. Bierman, USMC. He earned the Bronze Star with combat "V" during the Vietnam War.

He was an engineer with Northrup-Grumman.

Sgt Billy Bob Cobb. He was a Korean War veteran.



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LtCol Joe W. Contreras, USAF (Ret), 79, of Phoenix. He enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserve in 1953 and served with the 9th Engineer Co, Phoenix, as a combat engineer. Upon graduation from college, he entered the Air Force and began flight training. He subsequently was assigned to the Auditor General Headquarters, USAF.

After active duty, he served for another 20 years in the active Air Force Reserve as a mobilization augmentee attached to the Judge Advocate General office. His awards include the Air Force Commendation Medal.

Following a successful law practice in Phoenix, he was appointed as a judge to the Arizona Court of Appeals, Division I, in 1978 and later served as a presiding judge and as Chief Judge.

Cpl Theodore "Ted" Cook, 79, at Clifton Forge, Va. He served with the 2d Amphibian Tractor Bn, 2dMarDiv during the Korean War-era.

He later retired after more than 20 years of service with the sheriff's department in Port Saint Lucie, Fla.

Maj Horace E. Curtis, 92, in Dallas. He was a WW II veteran of the Pacific. After the war, he worked for the *Christian Science Monitor*, and as an advertising executive, managing accounts for several agencies in New York and Dallas. He was the creator of the "Look, Ma, no cavities" ad campaign for Crest toothpaste.

Cpl Edward "Mort" Denell, 89, in Michigan. He was a WW II veteran of Iwo Jima.

1stSgt Irving "Spike" Gordon, 87, of Swampscott, Mass. He was a WW II veteran who saw action in the Solomon Islands, the Philippines and Okinawa.

He entered his family's clothing business and later owned or managed several prominent local businesses, including Hoffman's in Lynn, Allied Lumber in Salem and Harvey's Door and Window in Beverly.

His community activities included the Lynn Chapter of the NAACP and the Jewish Rehabilitation Center of the North Shore. He and his wife worked with newly arrived Russian immigrants.

Cpl Clay W. Hunt, 28, in Houston. He enlisted in 2005 and served in Iraq in 2007 with 2/7. While on patrol in Al Anbar province, near Fallujah, he was wounded in a sniper attack, earning a Purple Heart. He later graduated from the Marine Corps Scout Sniper School in 2008. He and his scout sniper team deployed to an area near Sangin, Afghanistan, in 2008. He was discharged in 2009.

In 2010, he and fellow Marine Jake Wood and others founded Team Rubicon, an early response team for natural disaster relief. Hunt and Team Rubicon entered Port-au-Prince, Haiti, one week after that country's devastating earthquake, immediately established field medical facilities and secured transportation to those facilities for thousands of injured Haitians during a month-long stay there.

He later went to Chile in 2010 with Team Rubicon to aid earthquake victims

and then returned to Haiti in 2010 on a follow-up mission. He participated in four Ride2Recovery challenges to raise money for struggling wounded veterans. Additionally, he helped lobby Congress on behalf of Iraq-Afghanistan Veterans of America for better and timelier delivery of benefits to veterans.

SgtMaj Alvin J. Jackson Jr., 68, in Palm Springs, Calif. He enlisted in 1965 and retired in 1993. His service included two tours in Vietnam.

He worked in Petaluma, Calif., for 34 years as a meeting planner for Firemen's Fund Insurance Company.

BGen John J. Krasovich, 84, of San Diego. Upon graduation from college, he enlisted and completed recruit training at Parris Island, S.C. He later completed the Officer Candidates Course and was commissioned in 1951.

In 1952, he joined the 1stMarDiv in Korea, where he served as a platoon leader until he was released from active duty in March 1953. He served as a platoon leader, executive officer and commanding officer with Selected Marine Corps Reserve (SMCR) units in Springfield, Mass., Topeka, Kan., and San Diego.

In 1972, he commanded 4th Tank Bn, Force Troops, FMF, NAS Miramar, Calif., and, later, commanded Volunteer Training Unit 12-14 in San Diego. He was Group Commander, 16th Staff Group (Ground), MCRTC, NAS Miramar and Commanding Officer, Mobilization Training Unit, CA-6 in San Diego. While in the latter assign-

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ment, he was selected in February 1980 for promotion to brigadier general.

He was tapped to be the Assistant Division Commander, 4thMarDiv, New Orleans in 1980. In February 1981, he assumed additional duties as CG, 2d MAB. In 1983, BGen Krasovich's designated mobilization assignment was CG, MCAGCC/CG, 7th MAB Twentynine Palms, Calif., and CG, MCLB Barstow, Calif. He retired in 1984.

BGen Krasovich is a past president of the H. M. Smith Chapter of the Marine Corps Reserve Officers Association and past president of the Pacific Southwest Amateur Athletic Association.

In his civilian career, he was employed by the City of San Diego Park and Recreation Department. During his 36 years with the department, he was involved in numerous park projects, including Balboa and Mission Bay parks and the famous Torrey Pines golf courses.

Walter Leake, 81, of New Bern, N.C. He was awarded two Purple Hearts for wounds received during the fighting in Korea. He is remembered for helping Marines at MCAS Cherry Point, N.C., get through some tough times.

Melton K. Livingston, 87, of Pine Hill, S.C. He was a WW II vet who served in USS *Sarasota* (APA-204) and USS *Ranger* (CV-4) as a gunner.

He eventually retired from Greenwood Mills Liner Plant and Orangeburg County Neeses Convenience Site. He also worked at the Greenwood Packing Company and Pine Hill Barbeque.

Sgt John "Jack" McGonigle, 88, of Wildwood, N.J. During WW II, he served on Guadalcanal, Bougainville and Iwo Jima with the 3dMarDiv.

MGySgt Everett C. Nolen, 79, of Douglasville, Ga. He served 34 years, much of that in the public affairs field. As a combat correspondent in Vietnam from 1966 to 1967, he was assigned to the 1st MAW as a press chief and correspondent/photographer at MCAS Ky Ha and Chu Lai. He earned his combat aircrew insignia and numerous Air Medals.

He was a member of the United States Marine Corps Combat Correspondents Association and a great friend to this editor.

David J. Saliba of Winchester, Mass. He was a plankowner, serving with the MarDet in USS *Intrepid* (CV-11) when she was commissioned in 1943.

Gloria M. "Shortie" (Van Deventer) Simmons, 89, of Arlington, Va. She was the wife of Col Robert L. Simmons, USMC (Ret) for 68 years. She grew up in Mexico, Mo., where, as a sixth grader, she met her future husband. Throughout

his 32 years in the Marine Corps, she traveled with him to North Carolina, Virginia, Hawaii, Japan, California and Kansas. She was the founding member of the Marine Corps Gift Shop in Quantico, Va., and was active with the Marine Corps aviation wives group.

PFC John N. "Jack" Skinner, 87, of Redding, Calif. He enlisted in the Corps in WW II and served as a telephone communications specialist with 2d Plt, Wpns Co, 2d Bn, 28th Marines and with 5thMarDiv at Iwo Jima in 1945. After the war, he served as part of the occupation forces in Japan.

After returning Stateside, he married Suzanne E. Cole, moved to Shasta County, Calif., and ran a ranch near Montgomery Creek. He was a logging cat-skinner in the summers and a carpenter in winters for 15 years.

He served as a member of the Montgomery Creek School Board, and when they sold the ranch, the family moved to the Redding area, where he became a building contractor for 30 years. The homes he built or remodeled were known for special finishing touches such as hand-carved front doors, fireplace mantles, beams and cabinet doors. One of his memorable jobs was to carve scenes of Scotland on large open beams already in place.

Pvt James R. Smith, 82, in San Antonio. He was a Korean War veteran who fought at the Chosin Reservoir.

LtCol Edward S. Stallknecht, 100, of Dumfries, Va. He enlisted in 1933, went on to become a Distinguished Marksman in 1936, was commissioned 1948 and rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel before retiring in 1964.

After retirement, LtCol Stallknecht and his wife, Ruth, founded Stallknecht Realty in Prince William County. During his career in real estate, he received the Realtor Code of Ethics Award, was the president of the Prince William Board of Realtors, was inducted into the Prince William Board of Realtors Hall of Fame, served as director of the National Association of Realtors and served as director of the Real Estate Aviation Chapter of the Realtor Land Institute.

LtCol Stallknecht became a director of Marine Corps Base Federal Credit Union and its successor through merger, Marine Federal Credit Union, from 1968 until his death (emeritus status from 1997), serving as president from 1980 to 1985. He was a resident of Dumfries for 63 years. He was a member in good standing at the "Privates' Mess" at the Globe & Laurel restaurant, Stafford, Va., and will be missed.

GySgt Billy K. Stewart, 77, in Albany, Ga. He was a Vietnam veteran who enlisted in 1954 and retired in 1974. He served in Vietnam in 1967 and was at the siege of Khe Sanh in 1968. His awards include the Navy Commendation Medal with combat "V."

He was a heavy equipment operator/instructor and, after retirement, worked as an equipment specialist at the Marine Corps Supply Activity, Philadelphia and Albany. He also served as a Contracting Officer's Technical Representative with the Maritime Prepositioning Ships program on Guam, in the Philippines, on Diego Garcia, and in Albany, Ga., and Jacksonville, Fla.

In 1962, he received the Leatherneck of the Month award when he broke a range record for rifles with a 244 out of a possible 250. He shot for a number of years on the Rifle and Pistol Team.

He served as the commander of VFW Post 2785 in Albany, Ga., where he achieved the honor of being the first All-American Post commander in Albany. He was a member of Marine Corps League #1260 in Albany; the Third Marine Division Association; the Marine Corps Engineers Association; the Khe Sanh Veterans and the Marine Corps Association.

Sgt Daniel J. Sweeney Jr., 79, in Philadelphia. He enlisted in 1953 and served in the Corps for three years: with Wpns Co, 2d Bn, 7th Marines in Korea; as a

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drill instructor for Platoon Leaders Class platoons at Quantico, Va.; and as a guard at the Quantico brig.

He later moved to Wilmington, Del., working for Sealtest as a milkman and rising to a supervisory role for the company in Chester, Pa., and Philadelphia. In the late 1960s, he joined the Mackle Brothers and the Deltona Corporation in their effort to develop Marco Island, Fla., relocating there in 1973. He eventually established his own real estate company, Sweeney Realty, on Marco Island.

In 1984, he returned to his native Philadelphia to begin a career with the city's Bureau of Surveys and Design, fulfilling numerous surveying roles and responsibilities over his tenure. He was known for an unparalleled work ethic. His tenure included an 11-year period of never having taken a sick day.

Evan C. "Photo Joe" Turner, 87, in Dallas. He enlisted in 1942 and was a veteran of WW II, Korea and Vietnam. He retired from the Corps in 1969 and worked for the U.S. Postal Service.

Theodore Q. Washabaugh, 84, in Cleveland. Proud of his service as an infantryman stationed at Marine Barracks Yorktown, Va., 1946-48, he frequently regaled friends and family with tales of his time on active duty—including one of breaking boring mobile patrols by jumping the old Yorktown Revolutionary War trenches in a jeep. He inspired his son, Bradley, to become a career Marine.

After active duty, he became a newspaperman and freelance photographer who photographed four Presidents and numerous Hollywood stars.



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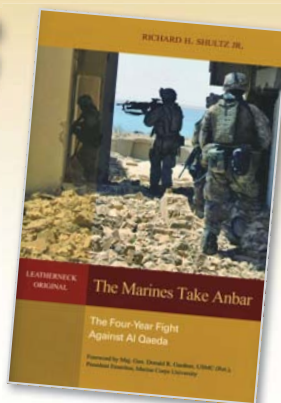
Although first chartered in 1972, the genesis of the organization dates back to World War I with the First Marine Aviation Force Veterans. As a result, sharing the legacy and heritage of Marine aviation and bringing aviation Marines, both active duty and retired together is at the core of our mission.

MCAA promotes and recognizes professional excellence in Marine aviation, supports the fraternal bond of its membership, preserves Marine aviation heritage, and safeguards the future of Marine aviation through awards programs, events and publications.

MCAA currently has 73 corporate members. A large part of our membership comes from the aerospace industry. Through our corporate membership and generous donations, we support numerous awards, scholarship programs, The Wounded Warrior Program, and Semper Fi Fund. MCAA also supports aviation memorials and aircraft museum restorations.

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BOOKS REVIEWED

[continued from page 52]

men of ARVN's [Army of the Republic of Vietnam's] most elite unit began marching along the highway toward Saigon. As promised, Colonel Human was in the first row. ... Soon a Communist officer and troops met Human on the highway. Human told the officer his men were prepared to turn over their weapons, but they would not undress. If ordered to do so, they would refuse, and a firefight would break out. The Communist officer relented, and the soldiers of the 81st [Airborne Rangers] stacked their arms and dispersed. It was the final unit in Saigon to lay down its weapons."

It was 30 April 1975, and the President of South Vietnam, Duong Van Minh, or "Big Minh," had just hours before broadcast the surrender order. Thus, the end of the Republic of Vietnam.

George Veith provides the reader with a most thoroughly researched book on the "final days" of South Vietnam. He presents his vast amount of collected documents, personal interviews and other material from a rather objective position, dispelling the generally held opinion that North Vietnam soldiers cakewalked their way to Saigon in early 1975.

Using every available source—printed materials, memoirs, diaries, articles, personal interviews of both North and South Vietnamese government and military officials, quotes from Politburo meeting minutes—in a superbly crafted narrative, the author provides valuable insights and analysis on what, how and why events in the unraveling and ultimate collapse of South Vietnam happened the way they did.

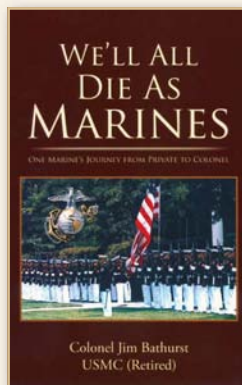
Simply enough, the book is about the fall of South Vietnam at the hands of North Vietnam, but it is much, much more. The book's 18 chapters, replete with maps detailing the South and North Vietnamese forces' orders of battle, an extensive bibliography, index and glossary, begin with the signing of the Paris Peace Accords in 1973, which the North Vietnamese broke within weeks. The book's end coincides with the final collapse of South Vietnam on 30 April 1975. That said, Veith tells us much more.

To many of us who served in the Vietnam War and asked, "What happened, we were winning when I left," "Black April" provides a full and complete account of the years after the last Marines left RVN. After the withdrawal of major U.S. ground forces, the average American citizen, and the military at every level, had by and large moved on, putting that ugly chapter in American history behind us. But the several thousands of South Vietnamese soldiers we left behind—essentially abandoned by America—continued on in a series of bloody, brutal battles, winning many but losing more and suffering catastrophic losses of both military and civilian personnel.

Unlike many previous American "historians" who blamed the South Vietnamese for the loss of the Vietnam war, "Black April" makes the case that the drastic cut in American military aid to, and support of, South Vietnam in 1974 to 1975, combined with a number of critical strategic and tactical mistakes made by the South Vietnamese civilian and military leadership, was to blame for the outcome of "Black April" 1975.

South Vietnam desperately needed military aid from the United States for its defense. But the war-weary American Congress voted to reduce the aid to essentially zero. While South Vietnam prepared for the renewed war with diminished resources of men and materiel, North Vietnam poured supplies down the Ho Chi Minh Trail and sent fresh troops to the South. "[O]ne hundred thousand fresh troops advanced southward in 1973, and another eighty thousand were headed to the battlefields during the first half of 1974."

For seventeen-year-old high school dropout Jim Bathurst, the Marine Corps' reputation for making men out of boys was something he desperately needed when he enlisted in March of 1958, and his life changed forever.



We'll All Die As Marines is a story about a young, free-spirited kid from Dundalk, Maryland, and how the Corps captured his body, mind, and spirit. Slowly, but persistently, he was transformed into someone whose first love would forever be the United States Marine Corps.

In this memoir, Bathurst reveals that for him—a former DI who was awarded the Silver Star, Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V," Purple Heart, and a combat commission to second lieutenant—the Corps was not a job, a career, or even a profession; it was—and still is—a way of life.

This book is a must-read for every Marine—past, present, and future.

Visit the author at www.wellalldieasmarines.com or email him at SgtB@royell.org



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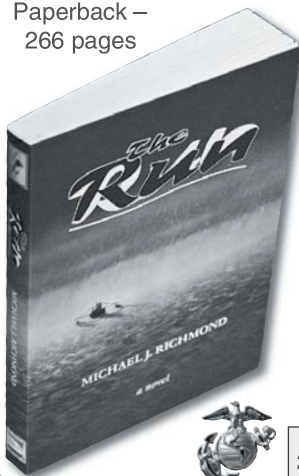



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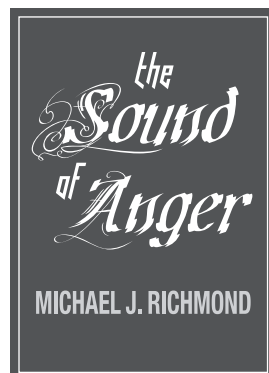
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The Ho Chi Minh "Trail" had been expanded to a logistics system of a two- to four-lane paved highway. It included four pipelines connecting Haiphong Harbor in North Vietnam, with a series of pump stations and repair facilities, all the way down to the doors of Saigon just across South Vietnam's borders with Laos and Cambodia.

"Black April" is a marvelous, in-depth and accurate account of great historical importance. With Veith's access to volumes of documentation from all sides of the heroic efforts of the men of the outmanned, outgunned and outmaneuvered South Vietnamese armed forces, who stood up for a last fight against the aggressive and better led North Vietnamese, despite the lack of ammunition, supplies, equipment and replacements, we see patriots and heroes who fought till the end—the very sad and tragic end.

LtCol Ray Stewart, USMC (Ret)

Editor's note: LtCol Stewart is the president of the Marine Corps Vietnam Tankers Historical Foundation and a frequent contributor to Leatherneck. He is working on an e-book, "Marine Corps Tanks and Ontos in the Vietnam War," to be released this fall.



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SOUND OFF

[continued from page 9]

Parris Island, 1985, or anyone with **Co B, MCCES/MCAGCC Twentynine Palms, Calif., 1985**, or anyone in **Hq Co, 2d Marines, 2dMarDiv**, namely **Comm Plt, Tow Plt or Wire Plt, 2/2, 2/3, 2/4, 1/2, MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., 1985-87**.

Wanted

• Marine veteran Bob Hines, 1560 Arrowhead Trl., Gaylord, MI 49735, (989) 705-1530, ramthis@charter.net, wants a **recruit graduation book for Plt 1008, San Diego, 1967**.

• Marine veteran Mike Dalio, 1722 Hollywood Dr., Pueblo, CO 81005, (719) 561-9088, mdalio@q.com, wants a **recruit graduation book and photo for Plt 203, San Diego, 1957**.

• Robert Murgallis, (410) 569-2468, murl941@msn.com, wants a **sixth edition "Guidebook for Marines."**

• Marine veteran Melvin Sherrod, (415) 236-0510, ncmel2009@gmail.com, wants a **recruit graduation book and platoon photos for Plts 3048-3051, Parris Island, 1985**.

• MSgt James Bingham, USMC (Ret), 122 Hallie Cove, San Antonio, TX 78227,

(210) 875-4983, wants the following **copies of Leatherneck magazine**: January, February, April and May 1977; July 1978; June, July and September 1979; December 1995 and July 1996.

Reunions

• **3dMarDiv Assn.**, Aug. 14-18, Alexandria, Va. Contact GySgt Don H. Gee, USMC (Ret), P.O. Box 254, Chalfont, PA 18914, (215) 822-9094, gygee@aol.com, www.caltrap.com.

• **6thMarDiv Assn.**, Aug. 15-18, Quantico, Va. Contact Sharon Woodhouse, (503) 642-2429, sjwoodhouse@gmail.com.

• **First Marine Aircraft Wing Assn. (RVN)**, Aug. 23-25, New Orleans. Contact Al Frater, (201) 906-1197, teanal@optonline.net.

• **8th & I Reunion Assn.**, May 16-19, Arlington, Va. Contact Maj John Marley, USMC (Ret), (703) 473-9818, jm1967a15@verizon.net, www.8thandi.com.

• **Moroccan Reunion Assn.**, Sept. 10-15, Daytona Beach, Fla. Contact Robert Sieborg, 2717 N. 120th Ave., Omaha, NE 68164, (402) 496-1498.

• **USMC Vietnam Tankers Assn.**, Oct. 31-Nov. 4, San Antonio. Contact John Wear, (215) 794-9052, johnwear@yahoo.com.

• **2d Recon Battalion Assn.**, June 20-23, Warwick, R.I. Contact Bob Moody, P.O. Box 1679, Westminster, MD 21158, sgt recon73@gmail.com, www.2dreconbn.com.

• **3d Amtrac Bn**, May 21-25, Swansboro, N.C. Contact Carol Mortenson, (910) 325-9000, Fred Davidson, (443) 927-4420, or Philip Anninos, (386) 447-0171.

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

• **11th Engineer Bn (RVN, 1965-70)**, June 11-15, Pensacola, Fla. Contact Charles Luhan Jr., 8451 S. Kilbourn Ave., Chicago, IL 60652, (773) 585-9629, 3rdMarDivCL@sbcglobal.net.

• **"Stormy" Sexton's BLT 3/3 (1961-62)**, Oct. 21-25, Wilmington, N.C. Contact H. A. Phillips, (910) 540-2226, hphillips@ec.rr.com.

• **2/1 (RVN)**, Nov. 7-13, Washington, D.C., with 2/1 monument dedication at the National Museum of the Marine Corps, Triangle, Va., Nov. 8. Contact Paul Mangan, (515) 360-2600, namgrunt@aol.com, www.firstmarines.org.

• **2/4 (all eras)**, June 26-29, Philadelphia. Contact Bill Weise, (703) 866-7657, or Jay Brown, (856) 728-3196,

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• **A/1/7**, Oct. 13-18, Kerrville, Texas. Contact Roland or Iva Mae O'Con, 1018 High Point Dr., Kerrville, TX 78028, (830) 367-2801, rgocon@hctc.net.

• **G/2/7 (RVN, 1965-70)**, Aug. 14-18, Kansas City, Mo. Contact Ron Myers, (916) 723-7324, rlmyers5@comcast.net, <http://golf2-7vva.com>.

• **G/3/1 (Korea)**, Sept. 16-19, Dana Point, Calif. Contact "Bing" Bingham, 1453 Patricia Dr., Gardnerville, NV 89460, (775) 265-3596, bingbingham@msn.com.

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

• **H/2/26 (RVN)**, Oct. 14-19, San Diego. Contact Bill Hancock, 2748 Moeller Dr., Hamilton, OH 45014, (513) 738-5446, hancockw@roadrunner.com.

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

• **L/3/5 (RVN, 1966-71)**, June 11-16, Arlington, Texas. Contact Dan Nordmann, (314) 291-1725, dmnordmann@att.net.

• **M/3/7 (RVN)**, Sept. 4-7, Natick, Mass. Contact Jim Hastings, (508) 966-0364, snopymike@aol.com.

• **Anacostia Naval Station Marines**, Sept. 8-13, Branson, Mo. Contact Ron Bursch, (612) 499-0776, ronbur38@gmail.com.

• **Subic Bay Marine Barracks**, Oct. 28-Nov. 1, Pigeon Forge, Tenn. Contact Col Rufus Bowers, USMC (Ret), 1021 Stagecoach Ln., Friendsville, TN 37737, (865) 804-1898, (865) 995-1950, polly21@peoplepc.com.

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

• **MarDet, USS Juneau (CL-119)**, Aug. 23-30, Alaska cruise. Contact William S. Gerichten, 141 Pinelawn Dr., Kernersville, NC 27284, (336) 993-5415.

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

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

• **MASS-2/MTACS-2 (All years)**, Sept. 23-26, Las Vegas. Contact George Macartie, (858) 566-5303, mass-2sbcglobal.net.

• **USMC Postal 0160/0161**, Oct. 6-11, Pigeon Forge, Tenn. Contact MSgt Harold Wilson, USMC (Ret), 835 N. Wood St., Logan, OH 43138, (740) 385-6204, handk.lucerne06@gmail.com.

• **Udorn Veterans**, July 12-15, Weatherford, Texas. Contact Jerry C. Long, 118 Mariah Dr., Weatherford, TX 76087, (817) 594-4623, jclhydsr71bafb@gmail.com.

• **38th OCS/SBC 3-66**, Oct. 16-20, San Diego. Contact Terry Cox, (310) 732-6908, tcx95@cox.net.

• **21st SBC (1953)**, Oct. 9-13, Honolulu. Contact LtCol Tom Kalus, USMC (Ret), 98-1927 Wilou St., Aiea, HI 96701, (808) 486-5004.

• **SBCs (Korean War-era, 1950-54)**, Nov. 1-4, San Antonio. Contact Bob Lukeman, (405) 842-3601, jrlukeman@aol.com, or John Featherstone, (310) 833-2190, johnf9375@aol.com.

• **TBS 4-69/52d Special OCC**, Sept. 12-15, San Diego. Contact LtCol W. Todd Frommelt, USMC (Ret), 3402 Celinda Dr., Carlsbad, CA 92008, toddfrommelt@roadrunner.com.

• **TBS Class 8-68**, June 6-9, Quantico, Va. Contact Terrence Arndt, (314) 434-6908, (314) 306-5002, tdarndt2@mac.com.

• **Plt 170, Parris Island, 1963**, is plan-

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ning a reunion for Oct. 10-14, Parris Island, S.C. Contact former Sgt Pete Sayles, (772) 360-7347, petesayles@yahoo.com.

• **Plt 280, Parris Island, 1963**, Oct. 4-6, Parris Island, S.C. Contact 1stSgt Malcolm Stewart, USMC (Ret), (904) 282-8319, malcolmstewart@comcast.net.

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

• **Plt 331, Parris Island, 1959**, is planning a reunion. Contact MGySgt Bob Daniels, USMC (Ret), (904) 579-4346, bertojotol@gmail.com, or Bob Wood,

(205) 903-7220, bwood@bellsouth.net.

• **Plt 1040, San Diego, 1968**, July 26-27, Oklahoma City. Contact Stephen Norpel, (563) 451-8417, snorpel@yahoo.com.

• **Plt 1066, San Diego, 1969**, May 30-June 2, Branson, Mo. Contact Bob Deal, (443) 608-0008, robert.c.deal@gmail.com.

• **Plt 1089, Parris Island, 1986**, is planning a reunion. Contact Mark Smith, P.O. Box 828, Columbus, MS 39703, (662) 549-7712, msmith@cpi-group.com.

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

• **Plt 2044, San Diego, 1973**, is planning a reunion for July 19, San Diego. Contact Douglas Bower, (408) 876-8966, douglasbower@yahoo.com.

• **Plt 2085, Parris Island, 1966**, is planning a reunion. Contact Bill Simmons, jst1putt@aol.com, mkb Boyle@myfairpoint.net.

• **Plts 4020/4021, Parris Island, 2000**, July 12-14, Parris Island, S.C. Contact Elizabeth Rossi, (914) 315-1728, elizabethannrossi@gmail.com.

• **MACCS**, Sept. 18-22, San Diego. Contact Tom Mulkerin, (703) 644-1724, tom.mulkerin@mulkerin.com.

• **MCAS-6**, Oct. 11-13, Havelock, N.C.

Contact Gene Herrera, (757) 484-0091, geneathome@outlook.com.

• **HMM-363 (RVN)**, May 16-18, Pensacola Beach, Fla. Contact Mike Tripp, (401) 434-7200, mtripp@mwt-cpa.cox.atwork.com.

• **VMA(AW)-533 (Chu Lai/Iwakuni, 1969-70)**, May 31-June 1, Las Vegas. Contact John Murphy, (609) 313-8434, jmurphy425@gmail.com, or Jerry Callaway, (303) 467-9896, j2callaway@q.com.

Ships and Others

• **USS Bremerton (CA-130/SSN-698)**, Sept. 8-12, St. Louis. Contact James Jensen, (406) 837-4474, jmbluff@centurytel.net, or R. F. Polanowski, (585) 365-2316, rpolanowski@stny.rr.com.

• **USS Canberra (CA-70/CAG-2)**, Oct. 2-6, Reno, Nev. Contact Ken Minick, P.O. Box 130, Belpre, OH 45714, (740) 423-8976, usscanberra@gmail.com.

• **USS Hornet (CV-8, CV/CVA/ CVS-12)**, Sept. 24-29, Providence, R.I. Contact Carl and Sandy Burket, P.O. Box 108, Roaring Spring, PA 16673, (814) 224-5063, hornetcva@aol.com, www.usshornetassn.com.

• **USS Houston (CA-30/CL-81) Assn.**, Aug. 20-24, Chicago. Contact Donna Rogers, 3949 Little John Dr., York, PA 17408, (717) 792-9113, dlr7110@yahoo.com.

• **USS Iwo Jima (LPH-2/LHD-7)**, Oct. 2-6, San Diego. Contact Robert G. McAnally, 152 Frissell St., Hampton, VA 23663, (757) 723-0317, yujack@megalink.net, ussiwjojimashipmates.cfns.net.

• **USS Philippine Sea (CV/CVA/ CVS-47)**, Oct. 24-29, Jacksonville, Fla. Contact USS *Philippine Sea* Assn., P.O. Box 496412, Port Charlotte, FL 33949-6412, (941) 743-5460, philsea@embarqmail.com.

• **USS Randolph (CV/CVA/ CVS-15)** and **USS Terror (CM-5)**, Sept. 22-29, Indian Rocks Beach, Fla. Contact Sal Rizza, 1720 Sandy Ct., Merritt Island, FL 32952, (321) 454-2344.

• **USS Ranger (CVA/CV-61)** (all members), Sept. 18-22, St. Louis. Contact George Meoli, (203) 453-4279, uss.ranger@yahoo.com.

• **USS Ticonderoga (CV/CVA/ CVA-14/ CG-47)**, May 16-20, Colorado Springs, Colo. Contact George Passantino, (720) 929-1844, georgepsr@aol.com.

• **USS Yorktown (CV/CVA/ CVS-10)**, 1943-70, Oct. 3-5, Mt. Pleasant, S.C. Contact Nina Creasman, P.O. Box 1021, Mt. Pleasant, SC 29465, (834) 849-1928, ncreasman@yorktown.net.



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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.

Self-Inflicted

Reflect without judgment an issue outstanding,
A condition replete with misunderstanding.

Destructive behavior may seem enigmatic
With invisible wounds of stress traumatic.

One night he is drinking and smoking cigars,
The next draped in cloth, bespeckled with stars.

A hero and warrior too soon laid to rest
With confusion and sadness long suppressed.

Now ponder America, this problem unique,
Safe back from war—dead the next week.

Capt David Dixon

Who Is "Iron Mike"?

There's one down at P.I.,
And one at Quantico,
These statues standing guard
Over the truth we know.

There's one at Belleau Wood,
And others here and yon,
These statues standing for
The comrades who have gone.

But is the real "Iron Mike"
A statue cast in bronze?
We ask it over beers,
Debating pros and cons.

I think the real Iron Mike
Is in each brother's heart,
Marines who went and did,
Marines who played their part.

I think the real Iron Mike
Is in each sister's soul,
Marines who went and did,
Marines who met their goal.

Iron Mike's the young Marine,
Who saddles up once more,
To go out on patrol
In some forsaken war.

Iron Mike's the old Marine
Who goes to work each day,
To keep the family fed,
To hold the wolf at bay.

Iron Mike's the dead Marine
Who handed down our name,
Who kept it shining bright,
And we must do the same.

It's values that we hold,
A Corps that must not die—
If Mike's not in your heart,
He's not down at P.I.

Former SSgt Robert A. Hall

Memorial Day

It used to be, when I was young,
There were parades and flags flying,
In the bright summer's sun.
People of all ages turned out to see
Those young men in uniform,
Who helped to keep us free.
The occasion was called Memorial Day,
A time to celebrate, a time to pray.
What used to be a solemn tradition
Has now been forgotten, a truly sad omission.
Where are the patriots, those who care,
About our nation in need of prayer?
We should never forget their sacrifice;
On far-off battlefields they paid the price.
It seems to me that one day each year,
We could pay our respects,
Wave flags and just cheer—
Cheer all those who are with us today,
And honor those in whose memories
We'll shed some tears and pray.
For these men now rest in hallowed ground,
Surrounded by comrades, so quiet and sound.
Yet faintly I hear the soft sound of "Taps,"
Echoing the voices from men from the past.
If you listen to your heart and feel the soft breeze,
As the leaves gently rustle through the trees,
Listen, listen! And no doubt you'll hear,
Voices deep within you say,
"Let us put the memory back in Memorial Day!"
Now here we gather to honor those
Whose memories will never perish,
We can do no less than to say ... "Thank you,
Your deeds we shall forever cherish."

Marine veteran Boyce Clark





PHOTO BY SGT AUSTIN HAZARD

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