

AUGUST 2019

MAGAZINE OF THE MARINES

Leatherneck

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GENERAL DAVID H. BERGER

**The 38th Commandant
Of the Marine Corps**

A Publication of the Marine Corps Association & Foundation

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MARINE
RAIDERS



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COVER: General David H. Berger, 38th Commandant of the Marine Corps, salutes for the "honors" sequence during a passage of command ceremony at Marine Barracks Washington, D.C., July 11. Photo by Sgt Robert Knapp, USMC. Copies of the cover may be obtained by sending \$2 (for mailing costs) to *Leatherneck* Magazine, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134-0775.



PFC ALLEN SANDERS, USMC

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Letter of the Month

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

With respect to Lance Corporal Hugh B. Pratt's letter in the May issue, you could not be more wrong. You questioned yourself as being a Marine and answered, "Yes barely." My ass! You ARE and always will be a Marine. I am a combat Marine. I was a machine gunner with H/3/1 that was mentioned in "The Last Battle," March 2016 *Leatherneck* magazine. I was wounded and received the Purple Heart in Korea.

My brother Albert, 6 ½ years younger than I, followed me into the Corps years later when there were no battles to be fought. He spent the majority of his four years at Twentynine Palms. He *was* and *is* a Marine.

I have heard, but can't confirm, that in any battle only 10 percent are at the front pulling triggers and 90 percent are

support. Correct me if I am wrong. Every Marine can't be a combat Marine.

Here's my point. I firmly believe that we join the Marine Corps because we have, some more, some less, a warrior mentality. We take the oath, go through boot camp, are assigned a military occupational specialty, report for duty and go where the Corps wants or needs us. It's not our call.

We all bleed Marine green, serve our country and by God, no one, NO ONE, is "barely" a Marine. Be proud, LCpl Pratt. You earned the title.

Sgt C.C. Westlake, USMC (Ret)
Bozeman, Mont.

Rifle Detail

Master Sergeant Chris Hornback, USMCR (Ret), rightfully complained about the runaround he got when he attempted to arrange a rifle detail for his grandfather who was a World War II combat Marine in the March *Leatherneck*. I think I can top this one.

Robert Moinester was a major in the United States Army Air Force during WW II, and his wife contacted me for a proper

military funeral. Their son, LTJG Robert W. Moinester, was killed in action during the Tet Offensive in 1968 and received the Purple Heart as well as a Silver Star in addition to having a ship named after him, USS *Moinester* (FFT-1097).

I gave her the phone number for the Army and she was told that they couldn't do it because he had served in the Air Force. I gave her the Air Force phone number and they couldn't do it because he was an Army veteran.

When all else fails, send in the Marines! We proudly provided the detail for this deserving veteran.

Bill Ober
Huntington, N.Y.

Recon Doc

I always glance through the table of contents when the latest issue of *Leatherneck* arrives. An article in the April issue caught my attention. As I read through "Recon Doc" by Kyle Watts, so many things rang true. My late husband had a 20-year career as a Navy corpsman which included three tours in Vietnam

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with the 1st and 3rd Marine Divisions from 1967 to 1969.

Since he passed last summer, I have been reading just about everything I could get my hands on written about or by corpsmen. It's helped me deal with my grief. We were not married during most of his service time and I never really knew much about what he did, other than what he chose to share. But in going through his papers I assembled a chronology of his 20 years, including short stories he wrote about his time in Vietnam, his two return trips in 1997 and 2000, his winter in Antarctica in 1974, and a few others. I began that project for his three grown children to help them better understand who their dad was, but it grew to be so much more.

I have always been proud of his accomplishments and am prouder now of him after completing this project.

My thanks and appreciation to the author, Kyle Watts. I feel a lot closer to the corpsman I miss so much, HM1 James B. "Doc" Beyersdorf, USN (Ret).

My heartfelt thanks to all the corpsmen, past, present, and future. A special breed, by far.

Martha L. Beyersdorf
Pittsfield, Vt.

LZ Margo

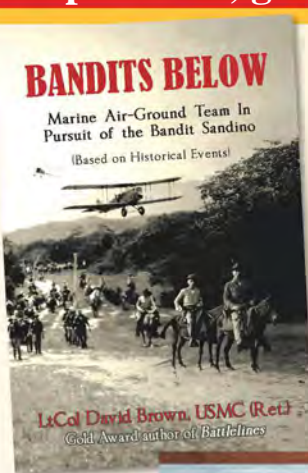
Kyle Watts' article, "LZ Margo, Lest We Forget," is an absolutely brilliant treatment of a very difficult story and a magnificently written account of the survivor's reunion as reported in the May 2019 issue of *Leatherneck*. His talent as a writer and storyteller is top-notch. His ability to translate oral history into such a gripping story is the best I've seen in many years as a *Leatherneck* reader and subscriber, and as a former Marine combat correspondent. He took us, the readers, to that miserable hill and let us experience the horrors the survivors were attempting to relate. He told their story. He was absolutely their writer. Well done, Sir.

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

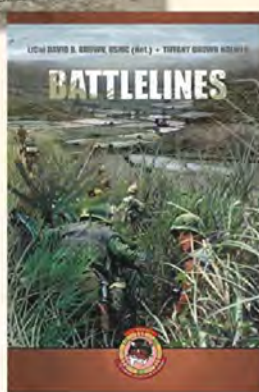
I turned to the article, "LZ Margo: Lest We Forget," when I saw BLT 2/26 listed in the table of contents as my fellow Marine, Corporal Jessie James Cunningham, was a member of this unit. We were from the same hometown and went to high school together. He was killed June 24, 1968.

Steve Haisley of this article had just got in country, but made friends quickly with Cpl Cunningham. I learned all of this through corresponding with Steve Haisley who makes a post every year on the day Jimmy Cunningham was killed and then again on Christmas. That's how Steve and

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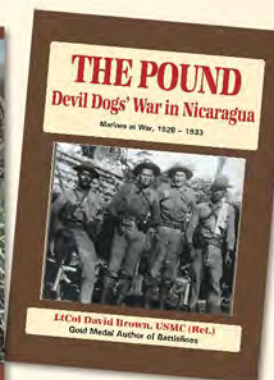


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about a rifle
company's
adventures
in Vietnam.



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—Dr. Charles P. Neimeyer
Former Director, Marine Corps History Division



Just released
and available
on Amazon,
"The Pound" is
the adventures
of Capt Lewis B.
"Chesty" Puller
and other
Marines
in Nicaragua
battling the
"Bandits Below."

I met—by reading each other's post to Jimmy Cunningham on the Virtual Wall. I only know Steve through correspondence, and when I saw him pictured in the article, I had to share how the Marine Corps family, while humongous, can be small.

The virtual wall made this article so close to home. I was with MAG-36 in Phu Bai, Vietnam, when this happened. I have the highest regard for these Marines and glad to know Steve Haisley.

Cpl David Fletcher
Sherwood, Ark.

Interservice Transfer Questioned

In the April issue of *Leatherneck* I read with keen interest CWO-4 David L. Horne's, USMC (Ret), letter stating an Army Spec-4 was being granted an interservice transfer to the Marine Corps but was required to go through Marine Corps recruit training. This is a normal turn of events for someone from another service after discharge joining the Corps. I'm not going to question the warrant officer's letter on interservice transfers, as he may be speaking from truth.

I'm a little discombobulated as to the interservice transfers as my understanding always has been there are none.

This action took place in 1973. In 1959 I was with "India" Co 3/5 when a "newbie"

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joined my platoon. He came in all hot and heavy stating he was an interservice transfer from the Air Force. Every chance we had we let him know he wasn't telling the truth. Only two details stopped us from finding out if he was telling the truth: We couldn't check his SRB and no one asked him if he went to boot camp. So after all this, are interservice transfers allowed?

1stSgt Bruce L. Hansen, USMC (Ret)
Menifee, Calif.

• *Officially, an interservice transfer occurs when commissioned officers transfer from one service to another with no break in service and are often used to fill critical shortages in certain specialties. They are often used by pilots when there is a backlog at flight training. It is not an interservice transfer to be discharged and then enlist in another service although the term is often used that way.—Editor*

Right or Left Shoulder Arms?

I spent 20 years in the Marine Corps both active and reserve. I am a Desert Shield/Desert Storm veteran. During my entire career, including boot camp at Parris Island, I was instructed that the rifle bearers in the color guard were always at right and left shoulder arms.

Recently in movies, advertisements, commercials and ceremonies I've noticed the rifle bearers at right shoulder arms. I know the Army and other branches of the service are always at right shoulder arms but we are not the Army, we are Marines.

In recent ceremonies with other branches the Marines are at right shoulder arms. Is this a matter of courtesy or uniformity? Please advise what the proper procedure is and why the inconsistencies. "8th and I" in Washington, D.C., still practices right and left shoulder arms which looks much better.

GySgt Casper F. Fidacaro Jr., USMC
Lakewood Ranch, Fla.

• *According to the Marine Corps Drill and Ceremonies Manual, paragraph 7005, "Synchronizing the Manual of Arms for the Color Guards Armed with Rifles, ... the left rifleman is at left shoulder arms and the right rifleman is at right shoulder arms."—Editor*

Lost Post of the Corps

In 1959 to 1961 I was stationed at Naval Training Command, San Diego, Calif. As a private first class and lance corporal, I stood guard tower duty and corporal of the guard. The base now is Camp Elliot or it was named Naval Retraining Command, Camp Elliot.

My question is where is the history of Naval Retraining Command, Camp Elliot?

Another lost post as I recall is Marine Barracks NAS Lemoore, Calif. After returning from my first tour in Vietnam in 1965, I was stationed there as a sergeant and staff sergeant. I was the training noncommissioned officer and commander of the guard. I tell fellow Marines of these posts and they have never heard of them.

Can you please give me the history of these posts?

GySgt Ollie Oglesby Jr., USMC (Ret)
1956 to 1977
Claremore, Okla.

• *Gunny, Camp Elliot was originally called Camp Holcomb after LtGen Thomas Holcomb, later the 17th Commandant of the Marine Corps, when the land was acquired in 1934 to address future training requirements in the area. Renamed Camp Elliot in 1940, the base was the home of the Fleet Marine Force Training Center, West Coast. Toward the end of the war, Camp Elliot was passed to the Navy which used it as the Naval Training Center Elliot Annex in the early 1950s until it was decommissioned less than 10 years later. It was later used as a test facility, and portions were obtained by local governments for their own use. Private developers also bought portions of the land.*

Naval Air Station Lemoore, on the other hand, is still around after being established in 1961. Now a master jet base, it's home to the Navy's F/A-18 Hornets, F/A-18 Super Hornets, and F-35 Lightning IIs.—Editor

What's Going On?

I joined my beloved Marine Corps in 1974. I graduated from recruit training at MCRD San Diego in September 1974 and left the Marine Corps in 1990.

A very good friend of mine visited Parris Island a couple weeks ago to attend a friend's daughter graduation from recruit training. He called me during Family Day the Thursday prior to graduation day and asked, "Did I ever hug and cry with my drill instructors?" I was shocked he would ask me that. He said the drill instructors and recruits, who weren't Marines yet, were hugging each other and crying. I have never heard anything like what my friend told me.

As I remember public displays of affection are prohibited in public especially in uniform. Even holding hands is prohibited. On my graduation day I was lucky to get a handshake from my drill instructors.

My friend is a retired Army veteran and his stepson, who was with him, is active-duty Army Air Cavalry. He was in

[continued on page 66]

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SGT ROBERT KNAPP, USMC

Gen Robert B. Neller, 37th Commandant of the Marine Corps, right, passes the Marine Corps Battle Color to Gen David H. Berger, Commandant of the Marine Corps, during the passage of command ceremony at Marine Barracks Washington, D.C., July 11. In the background is SgtMaj Ronald L. Green, the 18th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps. (Note: SgtMaj Green is also featured in the photo on the Contents page.)

Passage of Command

General David H. Berger Assumes Duties As 38th Commandant of the Marine Corps

By Col Mary H. Reinwald
USMC (Ret)

During a passage of command ceremony on July 11, General David H. Berger assumed the duties of Commandant of the Marine Corps from Gen Robert B. Neller. “We are passing the torch from one exceptional Marine to another,” Mark T. Esper, the acting Secretary of Defense, told the guests assembled on the parade deck at Marine Barracks Washington, D.C., for the ceremony.

The event also marked Gen Neller’s retirement from more than four decades in the Marine Corps. “Gen Neller has commanded at every level and always took care of his Marines,” said Mr. Esper, who also noted that the general, known for his passion for accomplishing the mission and candor in providing military advice, had spearheaded recent efforts to modernize the Corps. “Your legacy will endure in a more capable U.S. Marine Corps ... and a safer nation,” he said.

Gen Neller reminisced about his time

in the Corps, sheepishly remarking that one of his biggest regrets was burning down Camp Hansen’s Range 2 in 1977 as a second lieutenant. On a more serious note, he reflected on his tour as 37th Commandant, saying, “We’re a little more ready, we’re a little better trained, we have a little bit better equipment but that’s come from a lot of hard work from the Marines.”

Looking to the future, he cautioned about the need to be prepared while also extolling today’s Marines. “I’m proud to be part of an organization that is held in



PFC ALLEN SANDERS, USMC



SGT ROBERT KNAPP, USMC

Above: Gen Robert B. Neller, 37th Commandant of the Marine Corps, addresses attendees at the passage of command ceremony on July 11. The ceremony also marked Gen Neller's retirement from the Marine Corps after 44 years of faithful service.

Above: The Marine Corps Color Guard marches on the parade deck at Marine Barracks Washington, D.C., during the passage of command ceremony July 11.

high esteem because they [the nation] believe we do what we say and say what we do, and we hold ourselves accountable if somebody says something is going to happen. We're men and women of virtue and character," said Gen Neller.

Gen Berger also addressed the attendees, graciously thanking the Marines who have mentored and guided him throughout his career as well as the Marines with whom he serves today. "I consider it a privilege just to wear the uniform, just to stand in their ranks," Gen Berger said. "Calling yourself a Marine—it's an honor," he added.

Gen Berger firmly remarked that there is much work to be done. "I know we need to modernize the Marine Corps, I know we need to train better. I know we need to recruit the very best people and we need to keep them in our ranks," he said.

The 38th Commandant finished his speech on a motivational note. "I believe in my soul that Marines are different. We are not like everyone else and the Marine Corps is not like any other organization. This is the force that will always adapt and overcome. No matter what the circumstances are—we will fight and win in any clime and place. That's what we do and that's who we are." 🇺🇸



SGT ROBERT KNAPP, USMC

Gen David H. Berger, Commandant of the Marine Corps, left, and Gen Robert B. Neller, second from right, salute during the passage of command on July 11. Guests included Secretary of Defense Mark T. Esper, third from right, and Mrs. D'Arcy Neller, far right.



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In Every Clime and Place

Compiled by Sara W. Bock

HARSTAD, NORWAY Recon Marines Train With Norwegian Coastal Rangers

During the month of May, U.S. Marines with 1st Platoon, Company A, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division and 1st Platoon, Force Reconnaissance Company, 2nd Marine Division worked with the Norwegian Coastal Ranger Commandos (KJK) during Exercise Platinum Ren at Fort Trondennes, Harstad, Norway. Platinum Ren is a theater security cooperation training evolution held to rehearse mission-essential tasks in harsh operating environments while strengthening coalition partnerships.

"You always hear these terms 'brotherhood' or 'esprit de corps' get tossed around and in some units it is artificial, there isn't much depth to it. What I think is different about the reconnaissance community is we are such a small unit and you spend so much time with your team, your platoon and your company, you get to know people on a different level," said Sergeant Joseph Ortiz, a team leader with 1st Plt, Co A, 1st Recon Bn, 1stMarDiv. "The way the Norwegian Coastal Ranger Commandos are with each other, just on a personal level and the way they conduct business,

I honestly felt like I came to another reconnaissance battalion when I came here."

Upon their arrival in Harstad, the Marines and KJK were divided into small combined teams. The servicemembers remained integrated throughout countless evolutions including familiarizing themselves with their partner nations' weapon systems during combat marksmanship drills, conducting CB-90 on-and-off drills and executing a hypothermia lab.

The teams integrated effortlessly despite their different backgrounds. In fact, as they got to know each other, they found they shared more similarities than differences. Sergeant Ortiz is a Lakeside, Calif., native who spent his rambunctious childhood afternoons under the Southern California sun.

"I was the loose cannon of the family, always getting myself into trouble and being outside," Ortiz said.

A Norwegian Coastal Ranger who goes by "Tail" grew up on a small island in the southwest region of Norway.

"I was mostly outside getting into a heap load of trouble," said Tail.

Tail first joined the Norwegian service first as a conscript, fulfilling his country's mandatory military service requirement.

"When I showed up for my conscript year, I hated it," said Tail with a laugh. "I was in a signal battalion and I spent my days setting up antennas and wires, and I hate that stuff, I really do."

After Tail completed his conscription, he was put in charge of other conscripts for a patrol. That changed everything.

In 2010 and 2011, all of Norway's troops were deployed to Afghanistan. Despite his hard feelings toward his conscription, Tail wanted to help.

"I really didn't think I would continue to be a soldier after that initial year, but I got in contact with one guy from the Professional Army," said Tail. "There were 2,000 applicants for 50 positions."

Tail was selected and spent two years in the Norwegian Army, commonly called the Professional Army. During the end of his second year the Norwegian Army held an educational brief on the KJK personnel in Afghanistan.

Tail, who hadn't even heard of the KJK, decided to apply for the elite force in 2013. After a full year of selection and another year of training, he was one of seven who remained out of the 450 who originally were accepted.

Across the ocean, Ortiz enlisted in the Marine Corps in 2012.

"I wanted to fight for my country, to be the first to fight," said Ortiz, who was attracted by a pamphlet about reconnaissance. "I was a 17-year-old kid who didn't understand most of it but I saw things like 'deep behind enemy lines,' 'direct action' and pictures of these guys parachuting and scuba diving ... I figured I was kind of an adrenaline junkie and that checked that box. The way I perceived it, reconnaissance would get me as close to the fight as the Marine Corps could, and so I was like, 'Yeah, sign me up.'"

Seven years later, Ortiz and Tail would find themselves training alongside one another in Norway.

Throughout the years, it has been shown that partnerships are built upon shared values, experiences and vision. Throughout Exercise Platinum Ren, a brotherhood between the two was forged.

As the preparation phase ended, the planning for the final mission became more critical. The teams poured over maps and mission plans, deciding team tactics and team values. As Tail expressed the importance of the team's flexibility, Ortiz agreed. Both expressed the importance



SGT TAYLER SCHWAMB, USMC

Recon Marines and Norwegian Coastal Rangers insert for the final mission of Exercise Platinum Ren in Norway, May 20. The theater security cooperation training evolution was jokingly referred to as a "camping trip" by participants as they practiced mission-essential tasks in a harsh operating environment.

Aboard a CB90 military assault craft, Marines with 1st Recon Bn, 1stMarDiv and Force Recon Co, 2ndMarDiv, along with Norwegian Coastal Rangers, head to insert the teams for the final mission of Exercise Platinum Ren in Norway, May 20. (Photo by Sgt Tayler Schwamb, USMC)



of taking pride in one's work, trusting in the team and the key role each individual plays during a mission.

"The individual needs to be an asset, not a liability," said Ortiz.

"We know there's not a lot of 'pretty' sides to this life, like sharing a sleeping bag with another man for 10 days, or looking at a target that isn't moving that much," said Tail. "All of the training we have leads us to be the unit that is going to be able to do that job. You do need to have a certain sense of humor when hardships like that strike. The way you deal with that brings you together."

"We have to put ourselves aside and realize that we're doing this because it's helping people, saving lives and keeping bad people from doing bad things," said Ortiz. "No matter how miserable you might be in the moment, keep putting things in perspective. It's what we volunteered for. It's why we are here."

In preparation for future demanding operations, the teams conducted an evening patrol, submitting themselves to the unforgiving conditions of the harsh Arctic climate and mountainous terrain during Exercise Platinum Ren. If nothing else, the "camping trip," as they referred to it, strengthened the brotherhood the KJK and Marines built.

Starting in January 2017, the Marine Corps began a rotational presence in



SGT TAYLER SCHWAMB, USMC

Marines and Norwegian Coastal Rangers debark a CB90 in Norway, May 20, as part of the final mission of Exercise Platinum Ren. The assault craft can execute extremely sharp turns at high speeds and decelerate from top speed to a full stop in 2.5 boat lengths, allowing the boats to operate in close proximity to one another.

Norway in order to enhance Marine Corps readiness, conduct cold-weather training and operations and improve the overall interoperability with U.S. allies and partners. Exercises like Platinum Ren continue the tradition of deploying Marines to Norway to train with their NATO ally.

“These are very austere conditions, and I think it will be very valuable to the Marine Corps as a whole so we can continue to perfect standard operating procedures across the board,” said Ortiz. “I think it is extremely valuable getting outside of our main bases and having to think outside the box. It is no longer ‘what do I need to do to complete the mission’ but ‘what do I need to do to survive?’ ”

“What we have found is that it doesn’t matter how many people you can get here—if they cannot deal with the weather, they will die,” said Tail. “To experience the cold, you cannot just read that in a book. You have to feel it. Everything takes twice as long when you are that cold. Tying your shoes, putting on clothes, everything is double the amount of time. What you really want is to reduce the amount of time you are adding on.”

As their final mission arose, the Marines and KJK prepared mentally and physically to ensure that they were the most ready and lethal combined force.

When asked how they expected their final mission to go, they replied simultaneously: “Perfect.”

Sgt Tayler Schwamb, USMC



LCPL DAMION HATCH, USMC

SSgt Daniel Bosksnick with EOD Co, 8th ESB, 2nd MLG searches for IEDs during a field exercise at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., May 21. EOD Co evaluated Marines and Sailors during a realistic training scenario on the full spectrum of EOD operations.

CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C. EOD Marines Prepare For Real-Life IED Scenarios

Marines with Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Company, 8th Engineer Support Battalion, 2nd Marine Logistics Group completed a weeklong evaluation of EOD operations during a field exercise at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., May 17-22.

The Marines performed a variety of tasks including chemical and biological response operations, disposal and exploitation of explosive ordnance, and post-blast analysis.

“The purpose of this exercise was to test the skills of everyone from the command and control element down to the EOD technicians in the field,” said Sergeant Taylor Tingey, an EOD technician with



Marines and Norwegian Coastal Rangers conduct a hypothermia lab in Harstad, Norway, May 8, during Exercise Platinum Ren. The ability to complete tasks in extremely cold conditions is essential to readiness for both participating forces. (Photo by Sgt Tayler Schwamb, USMC)

EOD Company, 8th ESB, 2nd MLG. “It’s important the technicians work on realistic training aids to improve.”

The Marines of EOD Co partnered with 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division during the exercise in a simulated combat environment.

“Incorporating an infantry platoon and an engineer platoon provides the unique opportunity to build valuable integration skills between communities that operate together in a combat environment, but rarely train together in garrison,” said Gunnery Sergeant Steven Smith, training chief with EOD Co, 8th ESB, 2nd MLG.

The Marines patrolled a military operations in urban terrain (MOUT) town while they simulated combat operations. When they detected potential improvised explosive devices (IEDs), they called on EOD technicians embedded with the patrol to investigate the situation.

The exercise culminated with a night raid where the Marines were tasked with capturing a high-value target while avoiding IEDs in a low-light environment.

“Working with EOD is beneficial because we learn how to work together in a deployed environment,” said Lance Corporal Donte Vezio, a rifleman with 1/6. “We get the chance to train in an environment where IEDs are placed.”

The technicians excavated IEDs, disposed of weapons caches and performed night operations in front of personnel safety officers, who took notes on their progress and briefed EOD Marines on safety and efficiency.

LCpl Damion Hatch, USMC

NIINISALO, FINLAND **Four Nations Conduct** **Force-on-Force Training** **During Exercise Arrow**

U.S. Marines and soldiers, Finnish soldiers, and servicemembers from other partner nations teamed up during Exercise Arrow 19 near Niinisalo, Finland, May 6-17.

Arrow 19 is an annual Finnish multinational live-fire exercise of platoon- to battalion-sized mechanized infantry, artillery and mortar field training skills.

“It is important to create and foster international relationships between partner warfighters,” said First Lieutenant Robert Locker, communications officer with 2nd Transportation Support Battalion, Combat Logistics Regiment 2, 2nd Marine Logistics Group, II Marine Expeditionary Force.

The exercise brought mechanized forces from four nations together at Pohjankangas, Niinisalo, Finland. Marines from 2nd Marine Logistics Group and 2nd Marine Division stationed at Marine Corps

Cpl Christopher Schnofer, a squad leader with 2nd LAR Bn, 2ndMarDiv, holds 25 mm ammunition before a live-fire range during Exercise Arrow 19 near Niinisalo, Finland, May 12. The annual multinational exercise develops mechanized infantry, artillery and mortar field skills in a live-fire scenario along with partners from the Finnish Defense Forces.



LCPL SCOTT JENKINS, USMC

LCpl Shanton Williams, a fire team leader with 2nd LAR Bn, 2ndMarDiv, shouts an order during a force-on-force battle during Exercise Arrow 19 at Pohjankangas Training Area near Niinisalo, Finland, May 10.



LCPL SCOTT JENKINS, USMC



LCPL SCOTT JENKINS, USMC

Above: U.S. Marine Corps M1A1 Abrams tanks with 2nd Tank Bn, 2ndMarDiv, fire during Exercise Arrow 19 in Finland, May 13. In support of the exercise, the Marines brought a variety of wheeled and tracked vehicles, which allowed for more complex training maneuvers.

Left: Prior to a live-fire range, Marines with 2nd Tank Bn, 2ndMarDiv, receive ammunition for Exercise Arrow 19 at Niinisalo Garrison, Finland, May 12.

redeploy assets through a known logistically complicated area of operation,” said Locker.

This year, the exercise included a greater variety of Marine Corps wheeled and tracked vehicles than previous years, allowing more fast-paced and complex maneuvers in coordination with allied and partner military forces.

“The force-on-force training allowed us, as a maneuver-centric force, to work alongside our partners and allies to improve and develop new techniques, tactics and procedures in terrain that require a very deliberate approach in planning and execution for each attack,” said 1stLt Dillon Layman, a platoon commander with 2nd Tank Battalion, 2ndMarDiv.

Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., and U.S. soldiers from 4th Squadron, 2nd Cavalry Regiment, U.S. Army Europe, participated in the exercise along with the Royal Lancers, a British Army armored intelligence unit, and an Estonian contingency of armored intelligence.

2nd TSB supported the exercise by

rapidly deploying personnel and organizing the use of vehicles and other equipment from the Marine Corps Prepositioning Program-Norway storage facilities.

“Participating in such exercises allows II MEF to evaluate our ability to offload personnel and equipment, generate combat power across the Atlantic and then



LCPL SCOTT JENKINS, USMC

During the weeklong training, the participants used the multiple integrated laser engagement system (MILES) and live-fire ranges. MILES utilizes a laser sensor system with blank ammunition to simulate combat scenarios. The system is worn by ground troops and placed on combat vehicles. Units were divided into two teams and carried out simulated attacks on each other throughout the first week.

"It was good to get out of our comfort zone and train in an unfamiliar environment," said Lance Corporal Tyler Thompson, a Light Armored Vehicle crewman with 2nd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 2ndMarDiv.

"The Finns were the most accommodating host nation I have worked with," said Locker. "I look forward to working alongside the Finnish Army. They are an industrious force and know how to get effects on target, regardless of obstacles in their path."

U.S. Marines first participated in the exercise in 2018 when 4th Tank Battalion, 4th Marine Division, Marine Forces Reserve brought M1A1 Abrams tanks to Finland to train.

LCpl Scott Jenkins, USMC

TOWNSEND BOMBING RANGE, GEORGIA

"Warlords" Execute Strafing As They Train for the Fleet

Marine Fighter Attack Training Squadron (VMFAT) 501 conducted 25 mm GAU-22/A Gatling gun live-fire training at Townsend Bombing Range, Ga., May 22. It was the first time the squadron, known as the "Warlords," conducted training with this mountable gun.

"This week is an exciting new chapter at the squadron," said Lieutenant Colonel Adam Levine, the commanding officer of VMFAT-501. "This is the first time the squadron will be employing the GAU-22/A Gatling gun at Townsend Bombing Range. The end state behind the gun employment at the training squadron is to build familiarity with our students to learn how to employ this weapon system along with the other weapons that the F-35B carries."

The exercise also allowed the ordnance and maintenance Marines the opportunity to mount the gun onto the aircraft and load live rounds into it. This "first" for the squadron benefits both the pilots and ordnance Marines as they will be interacting with the gun at deployable F-35B squadrons.

"This is very important for both pilots and Marines to get exposure to," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jason T. Connolly, the ordnance officer in charge with VMFAT-501. "This is something that if they go to any other F-35B squadron in the Marine Corps, they will be doing on a regular basis. It's a necessary introduction."

The pilots flew nearly 82 miles southwest from Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, S.C., to the bombing range, which is owned and operated by the air station so the pilots can complete their



LCPL MICHAEL DELOACH, USMC

An F-35B Lightning II with VMFAT-501 participates in a live-fire training exercise at Townsend Bombing Range, Ga., May 21. The training strengthened the pilots' capabilities and familiarized them with the weapon system.

training, which includes strafing and dropping inert ordnance. The pilots flew in pairs—one engaged the target while the other flew overhead. They took two overhead passes before firing the gun.

"To be clear, the gun is already used in combat in our operational squadrons, but we finally get to train with it at 501," Levine said. "As a part of our mission to train initial qualification pilots and transition pilots, this air-to-surface training is critical. This will equip them to go out and become a more effective member of their follow-on squadrons."

Cpl Ashley Phillips, USMC



LCPL MICHAEL DELOACH, USMC

Rounds fired from a 25 mm GAU-22/A Gatling Gun, mounted to an F-35B Lightning II aircraft, impact the strafing target during a training exercise at Townsend Bombing Range, Ga., May 21.



Gen Louis H. Wilson, 26th Commandant of the Marine Corps



Gen Robert H. Barrow, 27th Commandant of the Marine Corps

SAVIORS OF THE CORPS:

Generals Louis H. Wilson Jr. and Robert H. Barrow

By 2ndLt Rykar Lewis, USMC

As the turbulent Vietnam War came to a close, the Marine Corps found itself at what was possibly the lowest point in its history. Despite achieving numerous battlefield successes throughout the war, the Corps emerged from the conflict as a wounded organization. Plagued with discipline problems, illegal drug usage, educational deficiencies and questions about the necessity of its existence, the Marine Corps was in desperate need of restoration. Two men stepped up to meet the challenge.

Generals Louis H. Wilson and Robert Barrow worked every day in their terms as Commandant to bring the Marine Corps back to its former glory, while also looking ahead to prepare for the future. The emphasis by Generals Wilson and Barrow on honing and strengthening the role and capabilities of the Marine Corps,

raising the quality standards for individual Marines and recovering the respect of the American people make these two men the saviors of the Corps.

General Louis H. Wilson Jr.

General Louis H. Wilson was just the man needed to start the process of bringing the Marine Corps out of the post-Vietnam War slump. A recipient of the Medal of Honor as a company commander during the battle for Guam in 1944, Wilson was the last Commandant to have fought in the Pacific during World War II.

Even losing a lung to cancer did not slow him down. He was promoted to the rank of general on July 1, 1975, and served as the 26th Commandant of the Marine Corps until 1979. These years were punctuated by efforts to revitalize a psychologically and morally devastated Marine Corps. Wilson proved to be more than capable of instituting reforms and

re-establishing the glory of the Corps.

One of Gen Wilson's primary missions was to solidify the role of the Marine Corps in the tumultuous Cold War world. His emphasis was on developing mobility within the service and transforming it into a modern, capable expeditionary force. These ideas swirled around Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps even amid a post-war slump in defense funding. Wilson knew many in Washington, D.C., were eyeing the Corps warily, questioning whether the service's independence was necessary given its emphasis on amphibious operations. During the Cold War, amphibious assaults were seen as outdated by many military and political leaders. Gen Wilson pointed to the amphibious operations in the Korean War—conducted after similar debates as to the relevance of the Marine Corps—as proof of the timelessness of amphibious operations. The Commandant had no intention of stripping the Corps

of its traditional amphibious capabilities; however, he realized some adjustments to the service's role were in order.

The general set to work from the moment he stepped on deck. During his passage of command ceremony, Wilson said, "I call upon all Marines to get in step, and to do it smartly." With amphibious operations at the heart of the Corps' mission, Wilson also honed the Marines' ability to fight alongside NATO in Europe.

Yet he resisted calls to prepare solely for European warfare. Combined Arms Exercises and desert warfare were given adequate attention at the newly created Air-Ground Combat Center at Twentynine Palms, Calif. Wilson also sought to obtain advanced weaponry that would provide the Marines with increased firepower and, most importantly, versatility. This was demonstrated by his rejection of the F-14 Tomcat in favor of the highly versatile AV-8B Harrier and F/A-18 Hornet. In short, Gen Wilson envisioned the Marine Corps as a "global force in readiness" that could project power via the sea and fight in any clime and place. The accomplishment of his vision would ensure the health and independence of the Corps.

Meeting the bolstered Marine Corps mission required top-rate Marines, and by and large Gen Wilson was not pleased with the Marines of 1975. Allan R. Millett, in his book "Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps," explains, "By 1975, the Marine Corps had the worst rates of imprisonment, unauthorized absence, and courts-martial in the Armed Forces. Drug and alcohol abuse rates were second only to the Navy's." Wilson knew he had to address the manpower problems to re-install the image of the Marine Corps and recover America's respect. The Great Personnel Campaign was Wilson's answer.

The campaign started at recruiting stations across the nation and the Marine Corps Recruit Depots. The general explained to Congress that there was no place in the Marines for recruits in the lowest mental group (Category IV), even if the Corps failed to meet its manpower allotment by 10,000 men. "We didn't promise you a rose garden" and "The Marines are looking for a few good men" became the captions on recruiting posters across the nation. They represented more than a propaganda tool. Rather, the posters reflected a new mindset.

The Commandant also addressed Marines who were currently serving. During his first day as the leader of the Marine Corps, he commanded, "Obesity must vanish." He proceeded to enact stringent weight and appearance standards to ensure the discipline and fighting capability of the



Above: President Harry Truman presents the Medal of Honor to Capt Louis Wilson at a ceremony held on the White House lawn in 1945.



Gen Louis H. Wilson Jr., 26th Commandant of the Marine Corps, is piped aboard USS *Iwo Jima* (LPH-2) as he arrives for a visit at Marseille, France, July 9, 1978.



The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the
MEDAL OF HONOR to CAPTAIN LOUIS H. WILSON, JR.
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

for service as set forth in the following citation:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as Commanding Officer of Company F, Second Battalion, Ninth Marines, Third Marine Division, in action against enemy Japanese forces at Fonte Hill, Guam, Marianas Islands, 25 and 26 July, 1944. Ordered to take that portion of the hill within his zone of action, Captain Wilson initiated his attack in midafternoon, pushed up the rugged, open terrain against terrific machine-gun and rifle fire for 300 yards and successfully captured the objective. Promptly assuming command of other disorganized units and motorized equipment in addition to his own company and one reinforcing platoon, he organized his night defenses in the face of continuous hostile fire and, although wounded three times during this five-hour period, completed his disposition of men and guns before retiring to the company command post for medical attention. Shortly thereafter, when the enemy launched the first of a series of savage counterattacks lasting all night, he voluntarily rejoined his besieged units and repeatedly exposed himself to the merciless hail of shrapnel and bullets, dashing fifty yards into the open on one occasion to rescue a wounded Marine lying helpless beyond the front lines. Fighting fiercely in hand-to-hand encounters, he led his men in furiously waged battle for approximately ten hours, tenaciously holding his line and repelling the fanatically renewed counterthrusts until he succeeded in crushing the last efforts of the hard-pressed Japanese early the following morning. Then, organizing a seventeen-man patrol, he immediately advanced upon a strategic slope essential to the security of his position and, boldly defying intense mortar, machine-gun and rifle fire which struck down thirteen of his men, drove relentlessly forward with the remnants of his patrol to seize the vital ground. By his indomitable leadership, daring combat tactics and dauntless valor in the face of overwhelming odds, Captain Wilson succeeded in capturing and holding the strategic high ground in his regimental sector, thereby contributing essentially to the success of his regimental mission and to the annihilation of 350 Japanese troops. His inspiring conduct throughout the critical periods of this decisive action enhanced and sustained the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.



USMC

individual Marine. Commanders received authority to take administrative action to rid the service of “problem Marines” who were not abiding by the Commandant’s guidelines. Gen Wilson refined the Corps on every level. Not only was the role of the Corps in general modified, but the standards for Marines and recruits were drastically increased as well.

One of the greatest achievements during Gen Wilson’s tour of duty was the acceptance of the Commandant of the Marine Corps as a permanent member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Wilson won

this battle in 1978, marking a fitting end to the Marines’ fight for survival and independence. Becoming a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was in no small part due to Wilson’s notable political prowess and connections in Congress. The Commandant of the Marine Corps was now firmly established as a military advisor to the president and secretary of defense.

When he retired on June 30, 1979, Wilson returned to his Mississippi home knowing he saved the Corps. As the ALMAR that announced his death on

June 21, 2005, stated, “During his Commandancy, he laid a firm foundation of the high standards and demanding training that ensured that the Marine Corps remained a modern, mobile, general purpose, combined arms force with amphibious expertise prepared for low and high intensity combat against a wide-spectrum of potential foes around the globe.” Indeed, today’s Marine Corps is in Gen Louis H. Wilson’s debt.

Gen Robert H. Barrow

The work was not yet over, however. Thankfully, Gen Wilson had a worthy successor in Gen Robert Barrow. Taking the helm as 27th Commandant of the Marine Corps on June 29, 1979, Barrow told Marines “to keep in step,” following Wilson’s orders.

As a former Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island commanding general, Barrow realized the future of the Marine Corps lay in recruiting the proper young men and training them effectively at the recruit depots. Barrow had seen firsthand that possessing a high school diploma directly correlated to greater success for recruits at boot camp. The general held that perhaps the most essential peacetime activity of the Corps was recruiting the best young individuals in the nation. Ultimately, the Commandant aspired to have every Marine be a high school graduate. This was a tough task, but Barrow was determined. Ultimately, the Great Personnel Campaign came to a successful conclusion during his term as Commandant. Marines who entered the Corps were better educated and better equipped to serve the nation successfully.

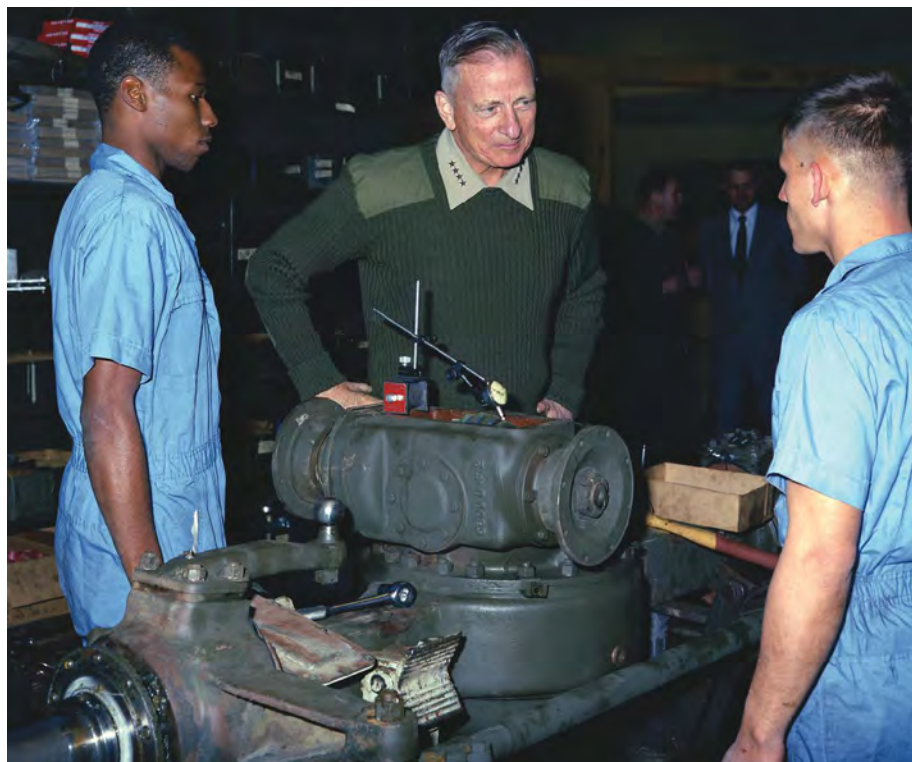
The lack of Marines’ education was not the only problem Gen Barrow faced. Illegal drug use was rampant in the post-Vietnam War Marine Corps and was tearing apart the organization. One survey exposed that 47 percent of sergeants and below had used drugs in the past 30 days, including 5 percent of staff noncommissioned officers and company grade officers, and even 2 percent of field grade officers. In “NAVMC 2750: Marines’ War on Drugs,” Barrow explicitly stated, “The distribution, possession or use of illegal drugs is not tolerated in the United States Marine Corps.” Barrow admitted “naïveté” at the top levels of the Corps regarding drug abuse in the past, but the Commandant was keenly aware of just how threatening the problem was.

Gen Barrow believed leaders at all levels were the key to successfully combating drug use. He called upon them for help. Barrow authorized commanders to conduct random urinalyses to identify offenders and gave leaders the power to



Gen Robert H. Barrow, left, talks with MajGen Robert E. Haebel, the commanding general of 3rdMarDiv, during a ceremony at the Camp Hansen officers' club in 1983. This was Gen Barrow's last visit to Okinawa as Commandant of the Marine Corps.

COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES



Gen Robert H. Barrow talks to two technicians in the repair division during his visit to MCLB Albany, Ga., in March 1982.

COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES

punish offending Marines. An entire chapter of NAVMC 2750 was devoted to the legal and administrative ramifications of illegal drug use. The general's four elements for combating the issue were leadership, identification, enforcement of standards and education. Moving through the general's program produced a more effective Marine Corps with significantly reduced levels of drug use. Many of Barrow's ideas and policies are still in place in today's Corps with great success.

Gen Barrow further made his mark on the Marine Corps by strengthening its ties with the Navy. He made it a priority to develop a good relationship with the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Thomas Hayward. Together, they reinstated the inseparable ties between the Navy and the Marine Corps. Barrow hoped to increase Navy support for Marines in the areas of medical assistance, naval gunfire and antimine warfare. In a press conference at the Pentagon, the Commandant reminded the nation of the critical Navy and Marine mission: control of sea lanes while sustaining the ability to project power from the sea. The mission of the Navy-Marine Corps team was vital to the defense of America and its allies across the world.

While re-establishing relations with the Navy, Gen Barrow told Congress of the need for amphibious shipping and ship modification within the fleet to support the Marines. Barrow had in mind the idea of Maritime Prepositioning Ships (MPS) loaded with wartime supplies and equipment that could be staged at strategically important geographic locations, ready to support inbound Marines in the event of a crisis. Under Barrow's plan, a 16,500-man Marine air-ground task force could link up with MPS at a friendly port near the battle zone. This would give greater mobility and speed to Marine operations across the globe. The secretary of defense approved this idea. The program was tested years later during Operation Desert Shield. During that time, the 7th Marine Expeditionary Brigade was the first significant American combat unit with armor to arrive in the Persian Gulf in force, directly attributable to MPS. The success of the Marine deployment to the Persian Gulf can be traced to Gen Barrow's MPS program.

The end of Gen Barrow's time as Commandant brought to a close a dual-Commandant effort to rescue the Corps. Barrow relinquished command of the Marine Corps on June 30, 1983, with the confidence that the Corps was well on the road to recovery. Gen Barrow and his predecessor set up future Commandants for success through their necessary, wide-sweeping reforms combined with demands to return to traditional thoughts and values.

The President of the United States
takes pleasure in presenting the Navy Cross to
CAPTAIN ROBERT H. BARROW
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

for service as set forth in the following citation:



For extraordinary heroism as Commanding Officer of Company A, First Battalion, First Marines, First Marine Division (Reinforced), in action against enemy aggressor forces in the vicinity of Koto-ri, Korea, on 9 and 10 December 1950. Ordered to seize and occupy the high ground on Hill 1081 dominating the pass below and held by a heavily-fortified, deeply-entrenched enemy of approximately battalion strength controlling all approaches to his company's objective, Captain Barrow boldly led his company up the ice covered, windswept, razorbacked ridge in a blinding snowstorm and, employing artillery, mortars and close air support, launched a well-coordinated attack. With his forward assault platoon suddenly brought under withering automatic weapons, small-arms and mortar fire from commanding ground as they moved along the narrow snow-covered ridge toward a bare mountain top studded with hostile bunkers and foxholes, he fearlessly advanced to the front under blistering shellfire, directing and deploying his men and shouting words of encouragement as they followed him to close with the enemy in furious hand-to-hand combat. Reorganizing his depleted units following the bitter conflict, he spearheaded a daring and skillful enveloping maneuver, striking the enemy by surprise on the right flank and destroying many emplacements as he continued the final drive up the steep slope in the face of heavy automatic-weapons and grenade fire to secure the objective with a total loss to the enemy of more than 300 dead and wounded. By his gallant and forceful leadership, great personal valor and fortitude maintained in the face of overwhelming odds, Captain Barrow aided immeasurably in insuring the safe passage of the First Marine Division through this hazardous pass, and his inspiring devotion to duty throughout reflects the highest credit upon himself and the United States Naval Service.

In the span of eight years, Generals Wilson and Barrow completed their goal of saving the Marine Corps from the post-Vietnam War slump. They inherited an organization in desperate trouble, polished it, and returned it to its former glory. Virtually every level of the Corps transformed, from recruiting efforts all the way to the role of the Commandant. The roles and capabilities of the Marine Corps were re-examined and bolstered to meet the demands of the Cold War. Additionally, Generals Wilson and Barrow could say the Marine as a fighting man was of the highest order. These efforts and results garnered the respect of the American people and their government. The Marine Corps was solidified as an independent, first-rate fighting force. Though neither Commandant led the Corps in a time of war, each fought crucial battles within the organization and on the home front. Their victories in these battles gave them the distinct honor of being the saviors of the Corps.

Author's bio: 2ndLt Rykar Lewis is a third-generation Marine and is serving as an Air Traffic Control Officer aboard Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan. He is passionate about professional reading, studying military history, and sharing the greatest stories of the Marine Corps.



Gen Robert H. Barrow, 27th Commandant of the Marine Corps,
prepares to depart *USS Nashville* (LPD-13) during the deployment of
Marines participating in a multinational peacekeeping operation.

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Out From Under the Rug

By SSgt Kenneth R. Rick, USMC

Editor's note: The following article is the third-place winner of the 2019 Leatherneck Writing Contest. Major Richard A. "Rick" Stewart, USMC (Ret) sponsored the contest, which is open to enlisted Marines, through the Marine Corps Association & Foundation. Upcoming issues of Leatherneck will feature honorable mention entrants.

I was the first squad leader, 1st Platoon, "Dog" Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment and my platoon was headed across the Helmand River, west, to a little town called Qal-eh-ye Gaz. We were tasked to conduct reconnaissance for the SEALs. We would soon find out why it was said that the village had never been taken. Of course, we got that intelligence months after the ensuing battle.

Just before six in the morning on an already hot June day, we were in our landing zone. This was my fourth combat deployment and second time to Afghanistan so I liked to think I could recognize the signs that told us it was about to happen—we were about to get in a fight. As the telltale signs of eerie silence and barely a couple of birds chirping gave us the gut feeling, we pushed out our leader's recon patrol. The Marines of 1st Plt had

planned to stay in the area for about a week and we needed to find a house from which to operate. That meant taking a house from a family. While en route to the one chosen via map reconnaissance, all hell broke loose. This was the most well-coordinated attack from an invisible enemy I had experienced to date.

As the leader's recon element was ambushed by small arms and a medium machine gun, the rest of us in the landing zone started taking 82-millimeter mortar and small arms fire. We had no idea where it was coming from. There were buildings to our west and tree lines to our east. The sun was barely up and we were now scrambling to get out of the landing zone. Those mortars were accurate.

I specifically remember calling both Gabe and Jeremy, who were my team leaders, to get the men pushed west to

cover and get accountability. Silence on the radio. No response. My heart was racing and my mind was going crazy. Where are my Marines? I had only pushed 50 meters west so we couldn't be lost; had they been injured—or worse? As I attempted to get around one house, our leader's recon element ended up taking a new patrol base. I remember looking south to make sure no friendlies passed me while at the same time I watched a mortar hit 3 feet from me. We were in very soft tilled farm fields common in the Sangin Valley. It was so soft that the mortar just stuck in the dirt, fins exposed. I didn't have time to think about it being a dud or not so I just called on the radio to anyone listening in the chaos that I was the farthest south element and I was pushing to our patrol base. Those guys were good: From complete defilade and cover they were able to force us into a position that we would end up staying in for the next six days.

We were hearing bad news over the radio—the call for a medical evacuation bird to take away a wounded Marine shot in the throat. It was with our sister platoon farthest south. The other squad leaders and I talked about what would be our plan of attack. There was no hiding in the patrol base. We had to hunt these guys to take the pressure off of us. Our unit finally had accountability and only a couple of our Afghan soldiers had taken shrapnel from the mortars. Those guys were tough. They wanted to stay and fight even with their squad leader getting a piece to the face. The radio was now telling us the Marine shot in the throat was an angel—he was gone. Our blood was boiling and we were itching for payback. It was only three hours into the mission.

Our priorities of work were going flawlessly. Security was set, communication with higher was solid and we had full accountability. The leadership of the platoon was discussing who would push out first, explaining the route and trying to figure out when we were getting our big guns. Alpha Co, 1st Tanks was coming in direct support of us.

It was 10 a.m. and it had been silent for too long. We knew it was coming, and if the mortars were accurate again, then we were in real big trouble. As we were still



COURTESY OF SSGT KENNETH R. RICK, USMC

Marines of 1st Squad, 1st Plt, "Dog" Co, 1/7. Top row, left to right, Cpl Gabe Hernandez, Sgt Ken Rick, the squad's interpreter and LCpl Jeremy Horton. Bottom row, left to right, LCpl Javier Fuentes-Mattson, LCpl Abraham Jung, LCpl Jeffery Boldt, and LCpl Albert Alba. Jung, Horton, and Ken Rick were wounded in operation JAWS D-5.

The landing zone team was exposed to everything with no cover at all. Just five minutes after departing our patrol base, it seemed every enemy gun in the province opened up.



COURTESY OF SSGT KENNETH R. RICK, USMC

Sgt Ken Rick was the squad leader for the first squad of Dog Co's 1st platoon.

discussing the rotation of patrol and security squad, there was a loud explosion inside the patrol base. We looked over toward the explosion and we saw Andrew swinging at something as another something bounced off his Kevlar. Six grenades were being tossed into our patrol base from an adjacent compound and Andrew was trying to play handball with them. I pushed one Marine out of the way and toward cover. It was Marc, our acting radio operator, who took a piece of shrapnel and was yelling that he was hit. I pushed him to cover as well and as I turned back toward the explosions, my squad automatic weapon (SAW) gunner, Jeffrey, was still too close. I grabbed him and swung him to put myself between him and the final blast. I realized a minute later after directing him to help with Marc's wounds that I had taken a piece in the butt cheek. I for sure wasn't getting out of there for something so small. Instead, Nick, the second squad leader, and I hopped on the roof and began lobbing grenades and suppressing the compound the grenades came from—who knows to what effect.

Caleb, one of our platoon corporals, along with Jeffrey, was treating Marc. It turned out that Marc took the piece of

shrapnel through the back and it collapsed one of his lungs. He needed to get out of there. Marc was on a stretcher, Caleb was pulling a piece of shrapnel out of his own arm that he decided not to say anything about, and my two team leaders were getting ready to secure the landing zone to evacuate Marc. Steven, my engineer, was a young private first class with a wife and kid at home. This guy had found everything we threw at him in training during our work up and I was not worried about him at all. My team leaders said they had it, so I stayed on the roof ready to suppress the enemy.

The landing zone team was exposed to everything with no cover at all. Just five minutes after departing our patrol base, it seemed every enemy gun in the province opened up. Small arms, medium machine guns and what we guessed to be RPGs erupted. My first team leader, Jeremy, ran inside the patrol base and said, "Steven is dead." Without hesitation, both Nick and I jumped off the roof. Nick grabbed a stretcher with Jeremy and I grabbed the SAW from Jeffrey. All we knew was a man was down and the rest of my squad was pinned.

The three of us ran outside of the patrol base, rounds still impacting mere feet



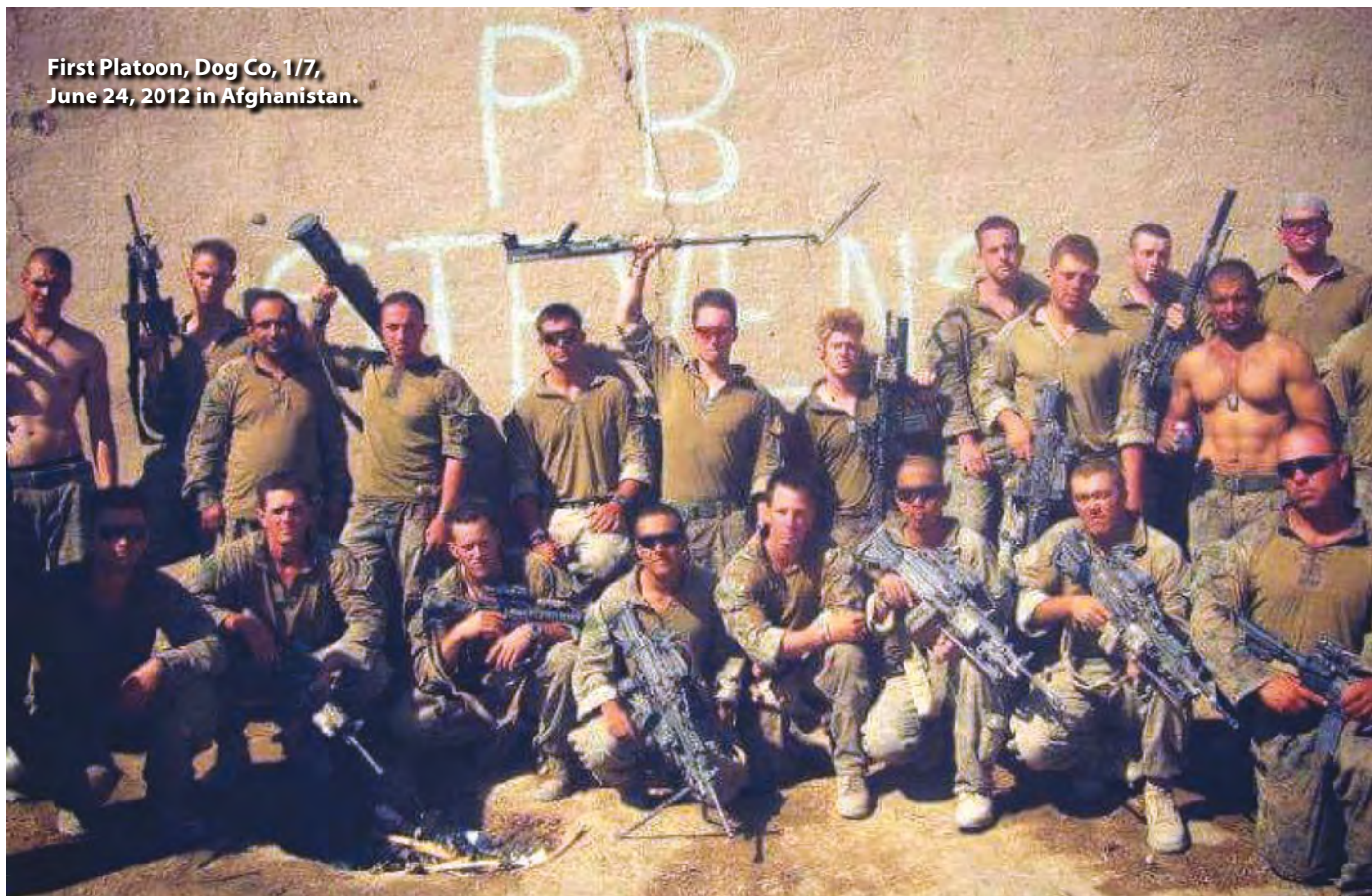
COURTESY OF SSGT KENNETH R. RICK, USMC

PFC Steven P. Stevens, pictured here less than a month before he was killed on June 22, 2012. He was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star and promoted to lance corporal.

from everyone. I took over suppression and command of the landing zone team while Jeremy and Nick loaded up Steven on the stretcher. Adrenaline will make your body do crazy things. We ran out 200 meters to where Steven had fallen, which meant Jeremy was at 400 meters. As rounds zipped around us, I remember telling everyone to go inside. I suppressed what I could as fast as I could and was down to only magazines while firing the SAW. Not one single jam happened while firing through a couple of magazines surprisingly. Good job, Jeffrey, on proper lubrication, I thought.

We now had another angel, Steven, and a deteriorating casualty, Marc. I learned that Jeremy couldn't reach us with his comm because as usual, it was down. Steven had taken a burst of machine PKM fire and shrapnel from an RPG all at the same time. He was killed instantly. I also learned that Abraham, the cover man and closest one to Steven, was knocked unconscious from the same RPG that hit Steven. Abraham was visibly in shock and still dizzy from his concussion, so I forced him to drink water and sit out the remainder of the patrols. It was a tough sight to see Steven wrapped in a poncho

First Platoon, Dog Co, 1/7,
June 24, 2012 in Afghanistan.



COURTESY OF SSGT KENNETH R. RICK, USMC

on a stretcher with Marc right next to him. This time, we had a full squad on security along with our suppression and smoke screen. The bird landed and took off without incident, thank goodness.

We began conducting our first movements, contact patrols, and would quickly be involved in a “troops in contact” (TIC). There was an enemy marksman with several small arms pinning us with abnormally accurate fire. Jeremy ran between trees to get the enemy to fire. After drawing fire enough to get a talk on, I could fire a smoke grenade, which allowed the pilots to drop the enemy building. Niall, my new sweeper, said, “That’s the sound of enduring freedom.”

Along our route to an enemy position, we expected to find an improvised explosive device (IED) and Niall found one. It had the typical signs—disturbed earth, on a walking path, out of sight of us and accompanied by a line of rocks. We marked and bypassed this one and set in security. We were only about 25 meters from the firing position facing my posts. I made the decision to hold everyone outside and away from me. I had a feeling that this house was booby-trapped.

Taking the sickle—a telescoping pole with hook we use to scrape across the ground to dig up wires and pressure plates common with the IEDs in our area—I kept my squad holding security and watching my back. I cleared the doorway of IEDs and saw three RPG fins left behind from the enemy firing position. I began clearing the rooms with my rifle, giving instructions to my Marines that if something happened, to come in slow and with the sickle again and to not rush in. The house was clear—no enemy and no IEDs. We were only 100 meters away from the patrol base. As I got back in with the squad, we started getting inaccurate small arms fire. It was just bait. After maybe a minute, the firing started coming toward us and as we sought cover, Niall would initiate the same IED. In the heat of the moment, you don’t think about these things. We were approaching from a different angle, the sun was going down and the enemy was firing.

Niall was blown into the irrigation canal paralleling the path we traversed that was filled with dirty septic water. I gave the instructions for everyone to stop moving. The area was covered with dirt

from the blast and we could no longer look for indicators—I had to decide my own path. I came up to Niall in the septic water and began going to work. Jeremy was the cover man for Niall. Closest to the blast, he was knocked into the water as well. He was visibly dazed from the concussion and was not responsive to my commands though in the kneeling position. Jeremy came to and helped with treatment. The injuries were devastating.

Just two days into the mission and my 1st Plt had sustained two angels, five casualties and four Afghan casualties. 2nd Plt sustained a casualty, our outside unit fighting with us farther south gained two angels, headquarters sustained at least two casualties, and tanks also sustained a casualty.

Everyone had enough. We decided that with the enemy trying to overrun our position, suppressing all supporting units and restricting our freedom of movement, there was no time to have different squads. We took the best of our platoon and formed the kill squad.

Author’s bio: SSgt Rick is an infantry unit leader and has served for more than 13 years. He is currently stationed at Camp Pendleton. He is a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Inherent Resolve.

He was visibly dazed from the concussion and was not responsive to my commands though in the kneeling position.

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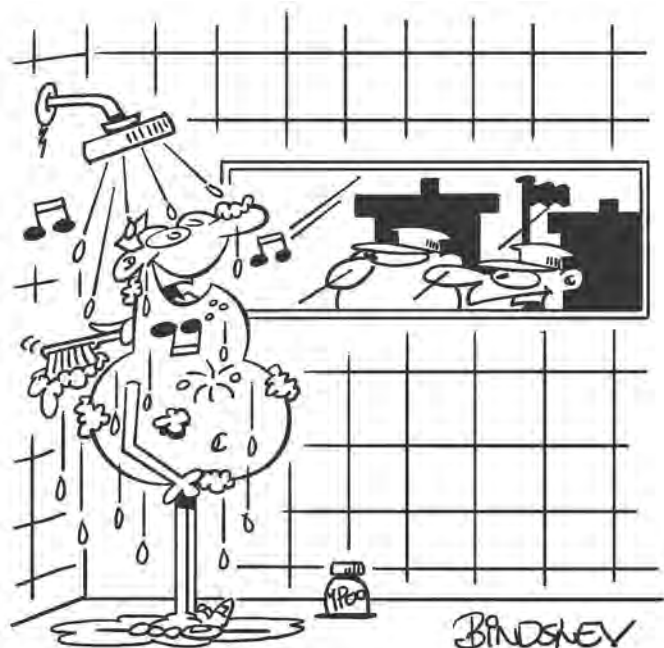
Leatherneck Laffs



"There are no selfies in the Marines, only teamies."



"Sorry, sir. I must have been blinded by your National Defense Service ribbon."



"The captain is very ambitious about his rank. He only sings in the shower in the key of B major."



"Think we'll be out of here in time for the next issue of *Leatherneck* magazine?"



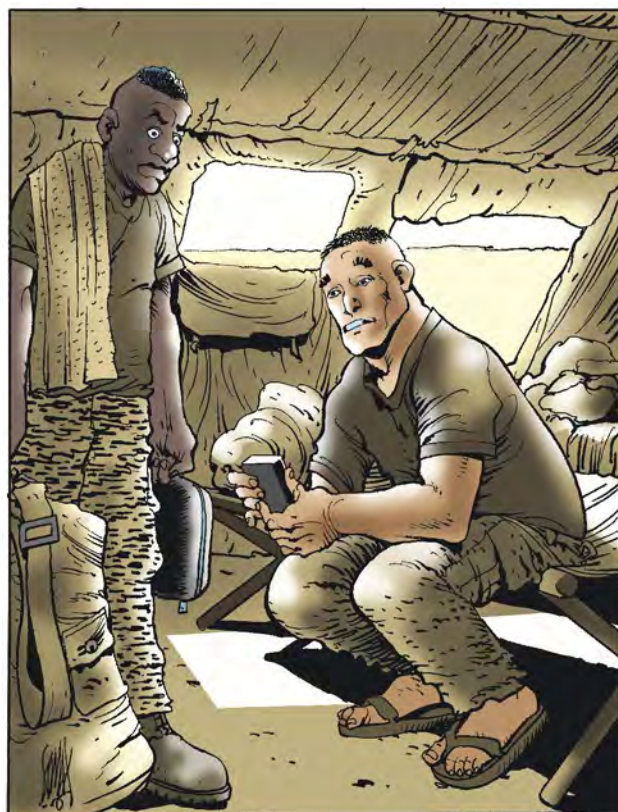
"Dear, can't you forget about work for just one weekend?"



"I'm starting a fundraising page to get the obstacle course redone with soft artificial turf."



"I don't care if you're only 18.
Get in there and fire that weapon!"



"It says here, 'Homegrown terrorists
blew up an MRE factory.' Kinda makes you
wonder which side they are on, huh?"

A Founding Reservist, CAPTAIN ALLEN M. SUMNER, USMCR: The First Officer to Join the Marine Corps Reserve

By GySgt Brian A. Knowles, USMCR

Editor's note: The following article received an honorable mention in the 2019 Leatherneck Writing Contest. Major Richard A. "Rick" Stewart, USMC (Ret) sponsored the contest, which is open to enlisted Marines, through the Marine Corps Association & Foundation. Upcoming issues of Leatherneck will feature other honorable mention entries.

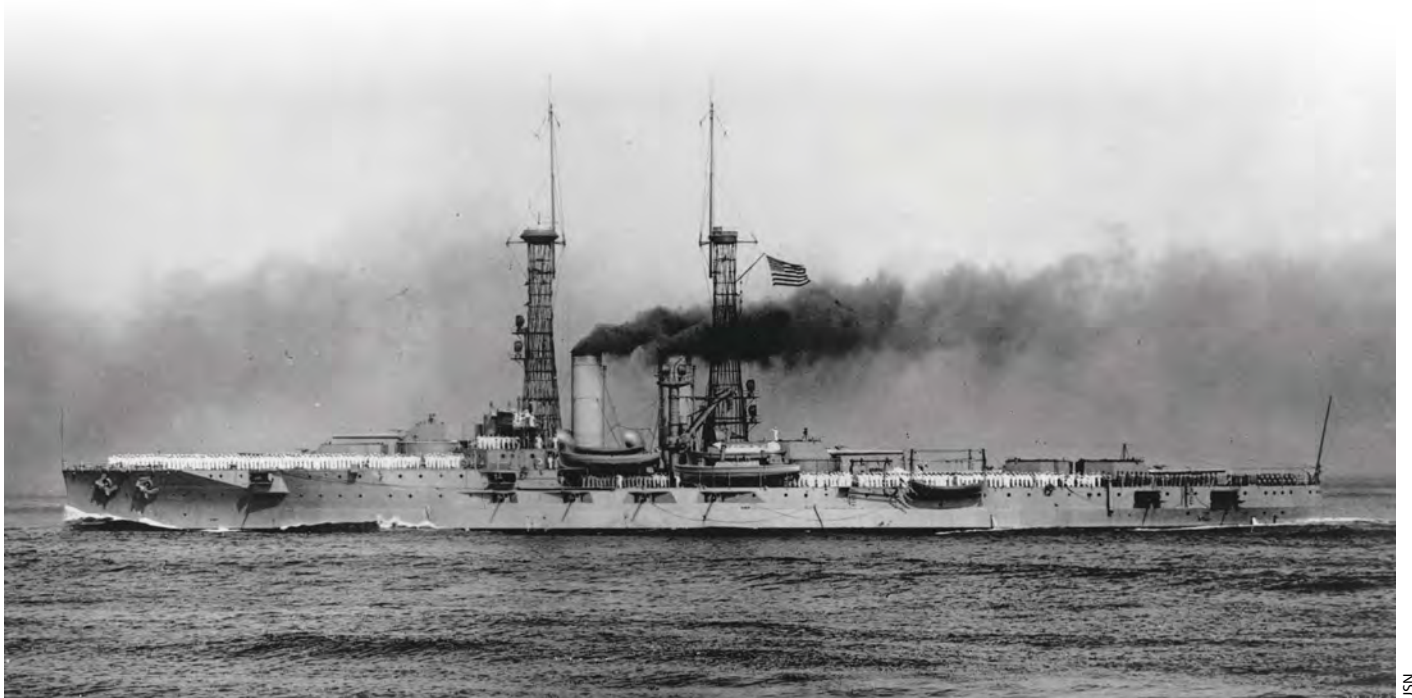
Allen Melancthon Sumner was born in Boston, Mass., on Oct. 1, 1882. He later resided in Washington, D.C., for a time and then lived with family near the town of Dogue in King George County, Va. Having completed three years of college at Harvard University, Allen M. Sumner was appointed a second lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps on March 21, 1907.



Capt Allen M. Sumner

Sumner served at various posts and stations in the United States, to include the Marine barracks in Boston, Mass.; New York City; and Norfolk, Va. His service at sea was with the Marine detachments aboard USS *South Carolina* (BB-26) and USS *Utah* (BB-31). He also saw service in Cuba with the 1st Provisional Marine Regiment from January 1908 to January 1909; the Panama Expeditionary Brigade from December 1909 to April 1910; and again in Cuba with Company F, 2nd Marine Regiment, Provisional Marine Brigade from March 1911 to June 1911.

With the death of his sister in 1912 and his mother's health failing, Sumner resigned his commission Jan. 1, 1914; however, records show that he was promoted to first lieutenant on Dec. 14, 1914. To care for his mother and to manage his family's property and finances, he returned to the family's farm near Fredericksburg, Va.



Above: USS *Utah* (BB-31) seen here in 1914 was one of the two ships on which Capt Allen Sumner served as part of the detachment of Marines.



COURTESY OF LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

A scene from Belleau Wood in the aftermath of the epic battle fought there. As a member of 81st Co, Capt Sumner received the French Croix de Guerre for his heroic actions during the battle.

While tending to family business during the year, Sumner must have heard the news of war breaking out in Europe. Although the U.S. remained neutral, the widening global war revitalized Sumner's devotion to duty and he realized that experienced men would be needed for the fight ahead. Sumner foresaw the Marine Corps being the first to fight when the U.S. finally joined the war.

Beginning in early 1915, Sumner petitioned the Commandant of the Marine Corps, Major General George Barnett, for reinstatement of his commission in the event the United States joined the Great War. Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels and Commandant Barnett would need every trained officer and enlisted man available to expand the Marine Corps to fight the new form of warfare in Europe. In 1915 and 1916, they pushed for the expansion and funding of a larger Navy and Marine Corps. The Naval Act of 1916, also known as the "Big Navy Act," vastly

enlarged the naval service. President Wilson signed the act in the summer of 1916. A provision of the act allowed for the creation of a reserve component to the Marine Corps. The Navy Reserve had been authorized in 1915.

**Only 33 enlisted men
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war a month later.**

The U.S. Marine Corps Reserve was authorized by the Navy Department on Aug. 29, 1916; however, three months would pass before the first enlisted Marine would join and six months would pass

before the first officer was recruited into its ranks. Having wanted to rejoin the Corps for more than three years, Allen M. Sumner finally was accepted back and was re-commissioned March 22, 1917, as a first lieutenant in the new Marine Corps Reserve.

Observed without any historical distinction at the time, this occasion made Sumner the first officer to join the Marine Corps Reserve. Also of note for the Marine Corps Reserve and 1stLt Sumner, the very same date of his reserve commission, he was promoted to provisional captain. Captain Sumner subsequently was mobilized to active service just two days later on March 24, and posted to the 1st Marine Regiment, Advanced Base Force, in Philadelphia, Pa. Only 33 enlisted men would be on muster rolls in the reserve and only one other officer would be commissioned in the reserve before the declaration of war a month later.

Since 1914, provocations by Germany



COURTESY OF LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

American servicemembers and some of their German captives after the Battle of Belleau Wood in 1918. Capt Sumner and his Marines remained in the area after the battle to prepare for the next offensive.

had pushed the U.S. into closer relations with the Allies. The sinking of *Lusitania* (1915) and *Housatonic* (1917) and the insult of the Zimmermann Telegram enraged the American public against Germany, and war with Germany was declared April 2, 1917, by President Woodrow Wilson. Congress approved the declaration on April 6, 1917.

With war declared, all officers and enlisted men of the Marine Corps Reserve served in an active capacity. Reserve officer commissions were used to greatly expand the pool of officers needed to command the many thousands of Marines sent to France and to fill billets in locations the Marine Corps was still tasked with protecting throughout the world. Reserve

On average, one out of every 10 Marines sent to France was on an officer or enlisted reserve commission or enlistment.

enlisted personnel, including the first female Marines, would serve proudly throughout the First World War. On average, one out of every 10 Marines sent to France was on an officer or enlisted reserve commission or enlistment.

After a few months with the 1st Marines, Capt Sumner was detached to the Marine Barracks, Quantico, Va., for duty with the

5th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Brigade, 2nd U.S. Division slated for overseas service in France. Secretary Daniels and Commandant Barnett made sure that the Marines would be among the first U.S. troops to arrive in France. Capt Sumner and the 5th Marines sailed from Philadelphia, Pa., on Aug. 5, 1917 aboard USS *Henderson* (DD-785) and arrived in France Aug. 20, disembarking on Aug. 22, 1917.

While organizing and training with the 5th Marines, Sumner was detached for duty in the office of Chief of Staff, American Expeditionary Force from September to December 1917. Two months after his return to the 5th Marines, Sumner was assigned on Feb. 9, 1918, to the 81st

USS Sumner (DD-333) was commissioned in 1920 in recognition of the Marine who received two awards of the Croix de Guerre for his actions during the Battle of Belleau Wood and the Aisne-Marine Offensive. Sumner was killed in action on July 19, 1918.



Company, 6th Machine Gun Battalion, 5th Marines. Capt Sumner spent the spring and early summer of 1918 preparing for combat.

The German offensives of 1918 had caused the Western Allies considerable casualties and manpower shortages. After years of war and millions of casualties, the British and French were in desperate need of troops. Pressing on their attacks, a breakthrough of German forces toward Paris necessitated the Americans to place themselves in the line of advance. As only a few American divisions were ready for combat, the 2nd Division, which included the Marine Brigade and the 81st Co, were pulled from a reserve position and sent to stop the German advance.

Capt Sumner and the 81st Co then participated in the Aisne Defensive, Chateau-Thierry Sector, from May 31 through July 1, 1918. On June 1, 1918, their section of the frontline placed them near the towns of Chateau-Thierry and Bouresches in a thick-forested hunting preserve the Germans had just occupied. Capt Sumner would advance with his Marines into the fields and woods to engage the enemy.

This battle, known today as the Battle of Belleau Wood, fought from June 1 through June 26, 1918, is heralded by Marines as one of their finest accomplishments.

The Marines fought fiercely. Several days into the battle, after the death of his company commander, Capt Sumner assumed command of the 81st Co on June 10.

For his actions at Belleau Wood, Capt Sumner was awarded the French military's Croix de Guerre, with Gilt Star, for heroism. The Gilt Star indicates he was mentioned in dispatches at the Corps level. The award citation read in part: "Displayed untiring energy in commanding his company through all the phases of the battle from June 1-11, 1918. Displayed indomitable courage and great coolness under artillery, machine gun, and rifle fire."

Capt Sumner and his company stayed near the front to reorganize and re-equip for action in the next phase of the cam-

paign, the Aisne-Marine Offensive, including the Battle of Soissons, fought from July 18-22, 1918. This battle ended with a decisive victory for the Allied forces.

Tragically, Capt Sumner was killed in action July 19, 1918, during an advance on the town of Tigny. Records are not available to describe the injuries he suffered; however, artillery would have been the most likely cause of wounds and deaths since the Allied forces were greatly exposed as they advanced upon German defenses.

Capt Sumner's second award of the Croix de Guerre was earned in the Soissons Sector on July 18 and 19, 1918. For his bravery in this battle, he was also cited by the com-

mander in chief of American Expeditionary Forces, General John J. Pershing, for gallantry in action and brilliant leadership on July 19, 1918. Capt Sumner was cited twice in general orders of the 2nd Division, A.E.F., this citation reading: "On



Croix de Guerre medal

July 19, 1918, during the advance from Vierzy to Tigny, he accompanied one of his platoons, keeping all of the men of the platoon under cover while he alone watched for signals for the advance. In doing so he saved the lives of many of his men, but was himself killed.”

For the outstanding leadership he provided to his men, Capt Sumner was being considered for promotion to major in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, however, his death on the battlefield prevented him from achieving this honor.

The war continued on for nearly four more months. The Allies pushed the Germans back and reduced their ability to resist. Due to the overwhelming combat power displayed on the battlefield by the Americans, the tide of war had turned in favor of the Allies in the summer of 1918. The A.E.F. would conduct several more campaigns and major battles before the armistice, engaging in offensives until the very end. The fighting would stop at 11 a.m. on Nov. 11, 1918.

Two years after Capt Sumner’s death, in special recognition of his bravery and honor, the U.S. Navy commissioned a

destroyer in his name. USS *Sumner* (DD-333) served during the 1920s, a period of peace and calm for the U.S. Navy. USS *Sumner* was decommissioned in 1930.

He was further honored with the U.S. Navy’s USS *Allen M. Sumner* (DD-692) when it was launched Dec. 15, 1943. The ship served with distinction in anti-

Capt Sumner was being considered for promotion to major in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, however, his death on the battlefield prevented him from achieving this honor.

submarine patrols in the Atlantic and throughout the western Pacific in surface actions, shore bombardment and in anti-air protection duties. *Sumner* even supported the atomic weapons testing in Operation Crossroads. Later she served in support of the Korean War, the Cuban Blockade,

the Vietnam War, the Suez Crisis and many other duty assignments around the world. In total, she earned five battle stars throughout her career over three wars. Fittingly, *Sumner* finished her career as a Naval Reserve training ship. Capt Sumner’s namesake ship was decommissioned Oct. 16, 1974.

Capt Allen M. Sumner, USMCR, is buried at the Aisne-Marne American Cemetery and Memorial at Belleau, France, in Plot A, Row 13, Grave 25. As one of the founding reservists, Capt Allen M. Sumner holds a distinct place of honor in the history of the Marine Corps Reserve and the U.S. military. Known by few Marines today, and even fewer Americans, he still deserves our respect and admiration more than a century later.

Author’s bio: GySgt Brian Knowles served with Communications Platoon, HQ Co, 3rd Bn, 24th Marines from 2001-2010. He then served in the Marine Corps History Division’s Field Historian Branch. He currently is serving as a historian for public affairs, U.S. Africa Command.



The second U.S. Navy ship named after Capt Sumner, USS *Allen M. Sumner* (DD-692), was commissioned in 1943 and remained a part of the Navy’s fleet until her decommissioning in 1973.

THE BATTLES OF THE PAST GUIDE US IN THE PRESENT



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SEA STORY OF THE MONTH

Kid, Mind Your Own Business

While stationed at Red Beach, north of Da Nang, Vietnam, with III MAF headquarters in 1971, I had just come off a long night. Sergeant Rich Ostuni had spotted me before I could get to the mess hall and asked me to ride shotgun while he drove a small trailer full of burn bags to the disposal site to be incinerated. No one was allowed outside the perimeter without an escort and Ostuni needed help so grudgingly, I consented.

We drove inland from the beach to the burn area where a flame-scorched metal box about the size of a Goodwill clothing bin was set into the sand. Ostuni pulled up in front of the box, unlatched the small square door and began throwing in the paper bags. After every three to four bags a hefty splash of gasoline followed. This seemed excessive, and I said, "Rich, I think you're a little heavy on the gas. That's probably enough." He just gave me a look that said, "Mind your own business, kid" and kept tossing in bags and gasoline. Although we were both sergeants, I was 19 years old and Ostuni was 34.

The bin was soon packed full and the acrid smell of gasoline was heavy in the air. I began to edge away from this looming disaster as Ostuni pulled a pocket of matches from his pocket. He grinned in anticipation, struck a match, and at that instant, predictably, a tremendous ball of flame shot out of the open door of the box with a tornadic whoosh and engulfed a very surprised Sgt Ostuni, whose outstretched arm and trembling hand, suddenly

hairless and scorched, still held the burned match. He looked like Wile E. Coyote after yet another ill-fated attempt to kill the roadrunner.

I kept this thought to myself as I drove him to sick bay. It was difficult to keep from laughing but I doubted that Ostuni, frozen in pain, saw the humor in the situation. He had taken on the hue of a boiled lobster and held his arms in mid-air to avoid touching anything and triggering more agony. Neither of us said anything

**He grinned in
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open door.**

and I drove as fast as I could over the rutted, potholed track that passed for a road.

Two corpsmen looked him over when we arrived and began applying thick salve that resembled axle grease to the well-done parts of his body. One of them asked me what had happened. I just said, "Oh, he got burned." I figured it was up to Ostuni to tell the tale if he so chose. I don't know if he ever did but I think it's a story worth telling and hearing.

Bill Federman
Southampton, Mass.

John Wayne Saved My Backside

While on Okinawa in 1972 we were allowed to take local karate classes and the Marine Corps would pay the costs. We were expected

to attend classes at the main dojo in Futenma on Friday nights where our instructor was an Okinawan who had learned to speak English by listening to the radio after World War II.

The second week of classes I went to the dojo and managed to kick my opponent in the crotch twice due to poor control and poor technique. I was informed on Monday by my sensei that I needed to go back to the dojo that Friday night, no questions asked. It was made apparent that the person I had sparred with the Friday prior was the head sensei's grandson. When I showed up at the dojo, I was matched up with what appeared to be a white belt like myself, but his white belt was very worn and tattered. Within seconds of the start of the match, I realized I had been set up with someone that was very experienced.

As we faced off, John Wayne crossed my mind as I thought what would John do if he were in my shoes? I smiled at the thought which was a big mistake. My Okinawan opponent was incensed by that simple smile and the fight was on. My dad taught me how to box and the Marines gave me the spirit and confidence to handle the situation. It seemed like the match lasted only seconds, but it took my hand weeks to recover.

I lost the match by one point and my sensei was ecstatic. Apparently the Okinawan I fought was a second-degree brown belt and had been sparring for two years at that level. It was intended that I be punished for my transgressions against the head sensei's grandson during that sparring match.

When I went for my black

belt test I was surprised to find they had matched me with my Marine sparring partner. They didn't want any more of their students hurt.

I enjoy reading *Leatherneck* magazine. The magazine gives Marines a chance to vent, to connect and to share. Thank you.

Sgt Howard E. Johnson
USMC, 1969-1973
Elk River, Minn.

The Phone Call That Never Was

One of my best friends, Hubert E. "Sonny" Campbell, joined the Marine Corps about six months before I did in 1955. At the time, Sonny had a girlfriend named Sandra Box, and while he was in boot camp, she had a party but did not invite me and some of my friends. One of these friends was Benny Donnigan. He and I were out together with my cousin, Jane, on the night of this party. Benny could mimic anyone's voice so I suggested he call Sandra and pretend he was Sonny.

We went into a phone booth and Jane pretended to be the operator and announced she had a long-distance call from Sonny. Benny talked with Sandra for several minutes. After the party Sandra sat down and wrote him a letter saying how nice it was to hear his voice. Here is where things got interesting. Sonny was in the brig and all brig mail was censored.

Sonny was called in by the commanding officer of the brig. He told him if he would tell him who let him out to make the call there would be no farther charges against him. After several rounds of interrogation and a three-day stint on bread and water, the officer produced the letter and asked him to explain it.

Sonny had no explanation as to how Sandra would write such a letter since he did not call her. Finally, the officer gave up and no further charges were filed.

Sonny did not learn how this all came about until he came home on leave, and I filled him in. I miss my old buddy. Sonny died June 14, 2018.

Sgt J.C. Settlemoir
USMC, 1955-1959
Lizton, Ind.

Where's Our Tank?

The Iranian Hostage rescue mission, Operation Eagle Claw, had failed in 1980 and that fall the 31st Marine Amphibious Unit (MAU), located at Subic Bay, Philippines, was at a fever pitch to relieve our sister unit at Camel Station. I was a young grunt dragged into the adjutant/legal job and was standing in the well deck of USS *Tarawa* (LHA-1) while our very last gear was being back-loaded.

An M60 tank was transitioning from a large landing craft utility (LCU) on a stern-gate-to-stern-gate marriage. I had to turn away as the tank engine noise reverberated, reaching a deafening crescendo. Suddenly, all went quiet. A dozen shouts and screams broke the silence. As I turned my head back, the tank was gone with the LCU still tied up to the stern gate. Houdini had made our tank disappear, but even more alarming, where was the tank crew? One, two, three, and finally four heads popped out of the murky water as the entire Marine crew was then ignominiously fished out. The thick lines between the craft had bizarrely stretched so the tank toppled forward, and it neatly slipped between the ship and LCU. A tiny ripple was the last clue.

I ran up to tell Lieutenant Colonel Ray Findlay, our battalion CO, that we had "lost" a tank and he replied,

"Holy smoke, we have to tell the MAU CO." We trotted to Colonel Ed Looney's stateroom and with a growing entourage of brass, entered the inner sanctums of the ship's CO, finally reaching the amphibious squadron commodore, and repeated my tale of astonishment along the way. As a quasi-witness, I dodged the MAU XO when he tried to tag me as the investigating officer.

We couldn't sail to the Gulf without a full complement of gear. It took two days to fly a tank from Okinawa to Naval Air Station Cubi Point on a C-5A, train it down to the naval base, and then crane it onto *Tarawa's* stern gate.

**I ran up to tell
Lieutenant Colonel
Ray Findlay, our
battalion CO,
that we had
"lost" a tank.**

Everyone, save a few red-faced Sailors, enjoyed the extra two days of liberty before a long time at sea.

On our last night we had drinks at the club while being entertained by a glorious sunset and the sight of a massive Navy floating crane freeing our forlorn tank from 65 feet of water and stubborn mud. The grand finale occurred with the tank suspended upside down above the water. Both tank hatches emptied all kinds of electronics and personal gear before the searchlight broke off and made the final splash.

The official investigation wisely concluded the ship's lines were no match for a severely overloaded tank. Unfortunately, the tank contained every piece of gear that the MAU had

lost in the past year. We all admired that staff genius who cleaned up so much paperwork in a single stroke.

Bob Shaw
McLean, Va.

His Nerves Got the Best of Him

In the mid-1950s Marine Transport Squadron 152 was stationed at Naval Air Station Barber's Point, Hawaii. All staff noncommissioned officers, upon joining the squadron, were required to appear before the commanding officer for an interview the morning after their arrival. At 0800 one day the sergeant major entered the colonel's office with the new member of the squadron, Gunnery Sergeant Defendorf, who was known to stutter a little when he became nervous. The gunny marched into the office, came to attention 3 feet in front of the colonel's desk, and while standing at attention said, "GySgt Defendorf dorf dorf reporting as ordered, Sir."

The commanding officer asked, "Damn, sergeant. How many dorfs do you have in your name?" The gunny replied, "One damn dorf dorf dorf, Sir."

Manuel Statini
Scottsdale, Ariz.

Marines Don't Have Guns

In August 1960 I was in Parris Island, S.C., as a member of platoon 374. One day a skinny kid from Mississippi in our platoon called his rifle a gun. That night just before lights out, as we were standing at attention in our skivvies in front of our racks, the drill instructor called out, "Private, get your piece and your pillow and get your bony ass up here NOW!"

"Aye, aye, Sir," said the private.

This private was so skinny that his knees looked like bell clappers in his skivvies and he had a high

reedy voice with a southern drawl. While we were all at attention, the drill instructor had the private place his M1 on the pillow and get on his knees in front of each of us, raise up the pillow and say, in that Mississippi accent, "Sir, out of two hundred and fifty thousand men in the Marine Corps, I am the only shitbird with a gun" 80-plus times.

It was very difficult to maintain a straight face for those of us at attention, but a good lesson was learned. It's either a rifle or a piece, never a gun.

Norm Spilleth
Minneapolis, Minn.

Sleeping Beauty

In 1959 I was assigned to sergeant of the guard at Camp Hansen, Okinawa. Checking guards, I spotted one sitting in a jeep, hand on the muzzle of his M1, butt resting on the ground and sound asleep. I carefully removed his hand from the rifle, removed the trigger housing group before assembling the stock and barrel and placing his hand back on his unloaded M1.

As I woke him he jumped out of the jeep denying he was sleeping and slung his weapon up on his shoulder then said, "Ed, please don't tell." I responded, "OK, you owe me a beer." Fortunately, it was peacetime.

I loved the Corps and still do 61 years later.

Sgt Ed Belfy, USMC
Paw Paw, Mich.

Do you have an interesting story from your time in the Corps that will give our readers a good chuckle? We would love to hear them. Write them down (500 words or less) and send them to: Patricia Everett, *Leatherneck* Magazine, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134, or email them to p.everett@mca-marines.org. We offer \$25 or a one-year MCA&F membership for the "Sea Story of the Month." 🐻

Outlook is Everything

Marine Transplant Recipient Focuses
On Small Victories Rather Than Setbacks



After nearly two years on the transplant list, retired Marine Sgt John Peck raises one of his new arms following his surgery at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, Mass., in 2016.

JESSICA PECK

By Sara W. Bock

John Peck opened the cover of his new memoir, “Rebuilding Sergeant Peck: How I Put Body and Soul Together After Afghanistan,” and carefully signed his name on the first page. He then worked his way through a stack of the books and signed one after the other, taking the time to pen a personal note to each recipient.

The book’s release date finally had arrived, and sitting in his wheelchair in front of his computer at his home in Bethesda, Md., May 7, he logged on to his Facebook account and started a live video feed, sharing the excitement of the occasion with the more than 17,000 people who follow his “John Peck’s Journey” page.

Signing books may sound like an unremarkable task, but for him, it’s the opposite of mundane—it’s extraordinary. The hands he uses to hold the pen and steady the book are not the hands he was born with, nor are they part of prosthetic limbs. John’s arms once belonged to another young man—an organ donor—and became part of his body in the fall of 2016 when he became the second U.S. military servicemember in history to undergo a bilateral arm transplant.

I began corresponding with John last August about sharing his story with *Leatherneck*. At the time, he was two years post-transplant. His book—which he co-wrote with author Dava Guerin and Pulitzer Prize-nominee and journalist Terry Bivens—was nearing the final stages of publication, and he was beginning to scale back the number of hours he was spending in various therapies at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Bethesda, Md., which previously had amounted to the equivalent of a full-time job.

We scheduled a visit in Bethesda during the first week of November, where I would observe his occupational therapy session at the hospital and visit the nearby apartment where John lives with his wife, Jessica, to see the outcome of two years of rehabilitation and therapy as he goes about the activities of his daily life. I booked a flight from my home in Yuma, Ariz., where I work remotely for *Leatherneck*, to Washington, D.C., and waited eagerly to meet the optimistic, witty Marine who left Afghanistan without his limbs but refused to leave his spirit there too.

But just as I began to pack my bag to head east, I got some unfortunate news: John was headed to Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston, Mass., the same

hospital in which he had undergone the arm transplant. What first had appeared as a small rash on one of his arms had escalated, and his body was displaying symptoms of rejection—every organ recipient’s worst nightmare. Despite the anti-rejection medications he had been taking, his immune system was recognizing his arms as foreign objects and had begun attacking them. It wasn’t the first time it had happened, and there is no guarantee it will be the last.

After talking on the phone with the public affairs specialist who was my contact at Walter Reed Bethesda, I promptly called the airline to cancel my flight.

John’s condition improved with treatment, though the rejection symptoms didn’t clear up completely, and he returned home to Bethesda. We agreed to postpone our meeting until spring.

It was early in the morning on April 2 when I arrived at Walter Reed Bethesda to meet John. After parking, I quickly checked my email on my phone and found one new message from him. He was not headed to his occupational therapy session as planned, but to the emergency room with a high fever and severe abdominal pain. He would soon find out that his appendix had ruptured and the resultant bacteria caused an abscess to form. The doctors, however, would have to delay



COURTESY OF SGT. JOHN PECK, USMC (RET)

After returning from Afghanistan a quadruple amputee, Peck donned his dress blues to attend the Army-Navy football game in 2013.

the removal of the abscess due to his low white blood cell count, a side effect of his transplant-related medications. He had just recovered from a severe bacterial infection in his mouth, which also could be traced back to the medications, and now was facing yet another life-threatening scenario.

While I was unable to meet him in person that day, I spent the morning with the occupational and physical therapists at Walter Reed Bethesda. They’ve spent



COURTESY OF SGT. JOHN PECK, USMC (RET)

Peck signs copies of his new book, “Rebuilding Sergeant Peck: How I Put Body and Soul Together After Afghanistan,” at his home in Bethesda, Md., May 7. The book, which he co-wrote with Dava Guerin and Terry Bivens, details his life journey from a difficult childhood all the way to becoming the second U.S. servicemember ever to receive an arm transplant.



COURTESY OF SGT JOHN PECK, USMC (RET)

Peck and other members of 3/1 stopped to take this photo in Iraq in 2007. During that deployment, he was injured by an IED and suffered a TBI, which wiped out much of his memory. Three years later, he would step on a second IED in Afghanistan, which left him a quadruple amputee.

so much time with John that they've become an unlikely "family" of sorts, and each describes him as motivated and goal-oriented, particularly when it comes to his passion for cooking. Laughing as they describe the "pickle Oreo ice cream sandwiches" he concocted during one of his therapy sessions, they say that working toward various kitchen tasks like

chopping and stirring has pushed him to make remarkable progress.

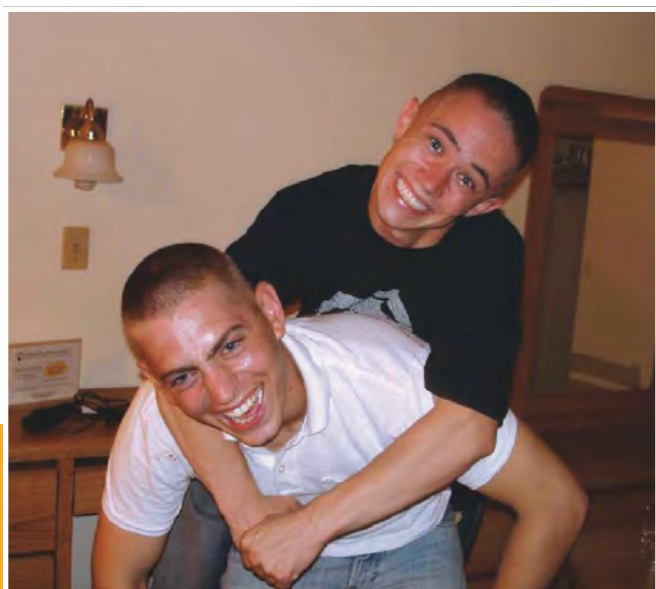
Now, three years have passed since the transplant, and although he's made great strides in terms of function, mobility and strength, John continues to face setbacks and challenges—as evidenced by our two canceled meetings—and he likely always will.

"I'm hard to kill!" he jokingly said to me, flashing a big smile as we video chatted on our computers via Skype on April 23. He finally was home from the hospital, and while still not 100 percent, he was feeling well enough to proceed with the interview despite the fact that he had to cancel several stops on his long-anticipated book tour as he continued to recover.

A quadruple amputee, Peck, then a corporal, lost all four of his limbs after stepping on an improvised explosive device (IED) during a routine patrol in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, in 2010, while serving as an infantry squad leader with 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment. It wasn't his first IED-related injury in combat. An IED blast in Al Anbar Province, Iraq, in 2007, left him with a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) that caused significant memory loss and speech-related issues, yet didn't deter him from reenlisting in the Marine Corps two years later in 2009.

"I loved the camaraderie, the brotherhood, and I loved my job," he said of life as a grunt.

As he recalls the events of May 24, 2010—the day his life changed forever—he doesn't spare me any of the more gruesome details. He immediately lost



COURTESY OF SGT JOHN PECK, USMC (RET)

Peck, bottom, and fellow Marine Nathan Tapp goof around in Guam in 2007 before deploying to Iraq with 3/1. The two have kept in touch over the years, and Tapp recently visited Peck in Bethesda.

his left leg below the knee, his right leg above the knee and his right arm above the elbow. His left arm, which later would be amputated, experienced “degloving,” separating his skin from the underlying tissue.

“This is my dark, sick, twisted sense of humor, but when I stepped on the IED I felt something hit me in my head and I swear to this day it was my foot kicking me in the head,” Peck recalled, saying that he thought to himself, “Way to go, John, you found another IED, you’re really good at this.”

Dust and soot filled his eyes, preventing him from fully taking in the severity of his injuries, but the situation was dire. The corpsmen applied tourniquets, and, since his limbs had been ripped from his body, had no choice but to insert an IV through the marrow of an exposed bone in his left leg.

As he screamed and pleaded with the Marines and corpsmen who surrounded him not to let him die, he felt the rotor wash of the casualty evacuation helicopter overhead.

“The last thing I remember was being put on the helicopter and seeing a dark figure above me, and I tried to look back and tell the guys I’d be back in a few days, and the next thing I know I’m probably getting a high dose of morphine,” said Peck. He was transported to Bagram Air Base in eastern Afghanistan, and then to Germany. During the flights, medical personnel worked hard to keep him alive



COURTESY OF SGT JOHN PECK, USMC (RET)

Prior to his arm transplant surgery, Peck spoke to students at a school in Washington, D.C., about his experiences in the Marine Corps. After hearing him share his story, the students donated the proceeds of their bake sale and car wash to his arm transplant fund.

as he “coded” numerous times and nearly was pronounced dead.

Medically sedated, he didn’t wake up for roughly three months. Upon his arrival at National Naval Medical Center, which in 2011 would merge with Walter Reed Army Medical Center and take on its current name, his doctors decided his only remaining limb—the left arm—had been so badly damaged that it would have to be amputated.

“Losing all four of my limbs wasn’t the biggest thing I was facing, believe it or not,” Peck tells me. He had contracted a flesh-eating fungus that nearly claimed his life, eating away at what little remained of his limbs and forcing doctors to remove

even more of his left leg all the way to his hip socket. The situation was so dire that they began to discuss end-of-life decisions with his family members.

But again, Peck defied the odds, pulled through and began to recover. Only one of his limbs—his left arm—could successfully be fitted for a prosthetic device, which greatly limited his ability to regain skills related to self-care and independence.

As optimistic and cheerful as he comes across today, he doesn’t shy away from speaking candidly about what he calls the “dark spot” he once found himself in.

“At that point in my life, my life sucked,” said Peck, describing his particularly



COURTESY OF SGT JOHN PECK, USMC (RET)

Peck and Ken Jones, founder of Warfighter Engaged, a company that builds adaptive video game controllers for amputees, at Walter Reed Bethesda, in 2012.



COURTESY OF SGT JOHN PECK, USMC (RET)

After his arm transplant, Peck, left, and his friend, Tony McDermott, took in the scenery on an Alaskan cruise in 2017.



Kyla Dunlavy, Peck's first physical therapist at Walter Reed Bethesda, adjusts his arm splints in 2017. After spending six months in Boston post-surgery, Peck returned to Bethesda early in 2017 to continue his rehabilitation and therapy.

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COURTESY OF WRNMMC

chair next to him in memory of his donor, in keeping with the military tradition of honoring the fallen. After seeing the gesture, the donor's father contacted him and told him about his son, a young, musically-inclined man about Peck's age who died from a rare brain disease.

"He saved four people's lives, but he improved countless others, including mine," Peck said of his donor.

More than four months after the transplant, on Dec. 28, 2016, Peck wiggled his fingers for the first time. It was his first "small victory," and one of the many he chronicled through videos and photos he shared on his Facebook page, inviting the world to follow along with an incredible journey that's been anything but easy, but that he says has been worth it all.

He talks about his first push-ups and pull-ups using his new arms; making a sandwich for the first time; the Valentine's Day dinner he cooked for Jessica last year; a solo trip to the grocery store below his apartment to buy frozen waffles; throwing the first pitch at a baseball game in June 2018 and learning to drive an adaptive van. He laughs as he says he now owes Jessica two years as her "designated driver." It's evident as he talks about these moments that these are the things that truly rebuilt



COURTESY OF SGT JOHN PECK, USMC (RET)

Peck and his wife, Jessica, celebrate his second time sitting in a chair after his transplant surgery at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston on Aug. 25, 2016.



COURTESY OF SGT JOHN PECK, USMC (RET)

Peck, an avid cook and aspiring professional chef, had the opportunity to meet *Food Network* stars Bobby Flay, right, and Katie Lee, left, at the New York Food and Wine Festival in 2018. During his visit, he also met Giada De Laurentis and the judges from the reality cooking game show "Chopped."



COURTESY OF WRNMMC

After receiving two new arms, Peck spent a great deal of time in the therapy kitchen at Walter Reed Bethesda, working hard to independently enjoy his favorite pastime. His therapists say that they used his passion for cooking to help motivate him to make progress in mobility and function.

ently motivate him to hit milestone goals like using a knife. With a variety of adaptive tools, such as a splint with a knife attachment, and then a “rocker knife” that allows the user to cut using a rocking motion rather than the typical sawing motion, he worked his way up to having the strength and dexterity to use a real knife.

As only the second arm transplant patient ever to receive therapy at Walter Reed Bethesda, Peck has provided somewhat of a learning experience for the staff, who are uniquely positioned for collaboration among different specialties through the facility’s integrated, holistic approach to wounded warrior care. In the Military Advanced Training Center (MATC), located on the first floor of the America Building at Walter Reed Bethesda, physical therapists, occupational therapists, prosthetists and providers from various other specialties are all found in the same area, and regularly work together to provide each patient with the best possible care for their individual case.

“It’s different with arm transplants

him and helped him feel whole again.

If the skilled surgeons who attached his new arms gave him wings, it was his team of providers at Walter Reed Bethesda who taught him how to fly.

Often using Peck’s lifelong love for cooking as a motivator, his physical and occupational therapists have helped him set and achieve goals for himself. Raised by a single mother, 12-year-old John was left largely to fend for himself, and he often improvised and experimented with

different ingredients after growing tired of eating the same things over and over. He’s enjoyed being in the kitchen ever since, and dreams of perhaps becoming a professional chef one day.

“The fun part of my job is being able to take the person’s interests and really tailor it to their goals and their needs,” said Annemarie Orr, an occupational therapist who worked with John after his surgery until the fall of 2018, adding that she watched his desire to cook independ-



NANCY S. LIGHTMAN

Brook Walker, an occupational therapy assistant at Walter Reed Bethesda, demonstrates hand exercises during an interview with *Leatherneck*, April 2.



COURTESY OF WRNMMC

Peck works to improve his grip strength using a rubber therapy tool held by occupational therapist Mark Marsico at Walter Reed Bethesda.

obviously, so you don't really know what to expect—it's not textbook, and that was where it was a little bit tricky, but it's also a fun part of the creative piece because every day was kind of new and different," said Orr. "John is far surpassing expectations in a lot of ways, and that is 100 percent a tribute to who he is as an individual and a Marine."

Ongoing communication between John's teams at Walter Reed Bethesda and Brigham and Women's has been a vitally important element throughout the entire process. Steve Springer, John's case coordinator in Bethesda, serves as a liaison between the two and has advocated for him throughout the process.

Alyssa Olsen, a physical therapist assistant at Walter Reed Bethesda, emphasized the amount of arm strength John gained since he began his therapy there in January 2017.

"He's incredible," she said. "He would give me a hard time for some of the 'creative' tasks that I gave him, but he did them. He did anything I asked him to do. I had my days where I'd try and break John—push him to the limit and see what I could get out of him—and it was fun."

His physical therapy focused on motor control, utilizing different muscle groups, improving stability, and included various exercises and activities like swimming in a therapy pool to improve core control, doing bicep and tricep curls and eventually even push-ups and pull-ups.

"I have learned so much on so many different levels just from working with him," said Olsen. "He's honestly one of my favorite patients I've ever had."

For a while, therapy took up his entire day, five days a week. Today, Peck leaves his apartment on therapy days, just two days a week, and takes himself on a 15-minute wheelchair ride to Walter Reed to see his occupational therapists, Brook Walker and Mark Marsico. He stopped doing physical therapy last summer, and now focuses his energy on strengthening and fine-tuning the motions of his hands using various therapy tools like putty, rubber bands and clips as he continues to improve his ability to perform daily tasks. They work with him to set goals based on what he wants to accomplish in his everyday life. According to Walker, the progress has been slow but sure.

"He's a very goal-oriented person, and we've always fostered his goals and tried to simulate those activities in our environment here," said Walker. "So, lots of cooking tasks. He would come up with a recipe that he wanted to make that particular day, and we would go through the whole process."

There's a door adjacent to the main occupational therapy area that leads to



JESSICA PECK

Wearing his "Chef Peck" jacket, Peck gets ready to prepare a Valentine's Day dinner for his wife, Jessica, at Walter Reed Bethesda in February 2018.

a kitchen, where John and his therapists have spent countless hours working on his cooking skills.

"You can definitely see when he achieves something, he wants to show it off," said Marsico. "He wants to share what he cooks with people. He wants to be independent."

In the years since he's been injured, Peck has not only longed for independence but also has looked for ways to help others. Each year during the holidays, he's found single moms in the local community and purchased gifts for their children. In 2017, he and Jessica filled two shopping carts with toys and delivered them to a family shelter on Christmas Eve.

"My outlook has changed dramatically. I'm more caring, more empathetic—definitely look out for people who are struggling and try to help them," he said. "You've got to have a positive outlook."

It's his hope that "Rebuilding Sergeant Peck" will serve as another way in which he can reach out to people who need help. It's a refreshingly open and honest narrative that details his journey from a difficult childhood to the Marine Corps and from rock bottom to hope for the future.

In the epilogue to his book, John shares the Valentine's Day menu he prepared for Jessica in 2018, which had been provided for him by his friend and mentor, *Food Network* Chef Robert Irvine.

At the bottom of the menu, Peck fittingly sums himself up in a "recipe" for the main dish: "One half-pound of determination; one cup of resilience; two ounces of fearlessness; three ounces of Marine spirit; and two full cups of heart."



NANCY S. LICHTMAN

Alyssa Olsen, a PT assistant who worked extensively with Peck after his transplant surgery, stands beside the therapy pool at Walter Reed Bethesda, April 2. She says swimming is an incredible therapy tool for amputees and was an important factor in Peck's recovery.

We—the Marines

Compiled by Sara W. Bock

99th Birthday Celebration Unites Generations of Marines

His weathered hands, aged by war and time, brushed across the fuselage of an aircraft. Like a gust of wind, old memories washed over him. Stepping out from the hangar, the 99-year-old Marine took a firm grasp of his grandson's hand as a Marine from Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 164, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, escorted them onto the flight line at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif.

Nearly a century of experience, including more than 20 years of military service, weighed visibly on his frame. Here was a man who had danced with death above the oceans of the world and lived to tell the tale.

In honor of his 99th birthday on May 31, retired Major Richard Cropley, who flew dive bombers during World War II, wanted nothing more than to see an

MV22-B Osprey up close and spend time with the Marines who faithfully carry on his legacy. The Marines granted his wish.

"I can't believe the Marine Corps would do something like this for me," said Cropley while fighting back tears. "You get out or retire, and it just feels like the world forgot about you. I can't express how much this means to me."

Cropley began flying in 1942 and flew multiple combat missions over the Pacific.

"The planes I flew could fit inside here," said Cropley, motioning toward one of the Osprey's engines, its size a far cry from the small, single-engine aircraft he trained on and fought in during the war.

He peered across the flight line at hundreds of aircraft, aviation equipment and sensors, and there was a rare and peaceful silence. He was home. The Marines watching Cropley smiled as they helped fulfill his birthday wish.

"Aircraft change, aviation changes," said Captain Ross Studwell, the flight equipment and ordnance officer in charge at VMM-164. "But Marines never change. Cropley is a fine example of the commitment the Marine Corps is famous for."

An endearing welcome was extended to Cropley, who was invited as an honored guest to a change of command ceremony and given a guided tour of the squadron's hangar, allowing him an up-close look at modern-day Marine Corps aircraft.

What he didn't expect was the surprise that the Marines had planned for him. The "Knightriders" presented Cropley with a cake in celebration of his 99th birthday and his more than 20 years of service.

"This is a true honor for VMM-164, but it's just keeping with the fundamentals of Marine Corps tradition," said Lieutenant Colonel Joseph DiMambro, the commanding officer of the squadron. "We always remember our brothers and sisters and take pride in caring for our own. Keeping the standards of brotherhood set by Marines like Maj Cropley means a lot to us and to the Marine Corps."

The Marines of VMM-164 were honored to celebrate Cropley's birthday with him, and many gathered to look at his flight logbooks and WW II keepsakes from places like Guadalcanal and Bougainville.

Cropley's voice broke as he held back tears. His words echoed in the small room as he thanked the Marines and expressed his pride in sharing the title of United States Marine. His parting words were brief, but carried the weight of his decades of tradition: "Semper Fidelis."

Cpl Jacob Pruitt, USMC

"The President's Own" Makes History With First Japanese Tour

For the first time in the history of "The President's Own" United States Marine Band, the centuries-old musical group traveled to Japan, delivering a once in a lifetime performance at the Yamaguchi Prefectural Cultural Hall Sinfonia for Japanese locals and residents of Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, May 19.

The lights dimmed for the packed show as the red-clad Marine musicians orchestrated melodies that dazzled an audience of nearly 1,200 concertgoers. The last time the band performed internationally was in Switzerland in 2001, making this trip historic and unique.

Tomoe Fukuda, the wife of Iwakuni City mayor Yoshihiko Fukuda, said the concert



SGT CHARLES PLOUFFE, USMC

A Marine with VMM-164 gives Maj Richard Cropley, USMC (Ret) an up-close view of the MV-22B Osprey at MCAS Camp Pendleton, Calif., May 31. Cropley, a WW II veteran, celebrated his 99th birthday by visiting the air station and spending time with the squadron's Marines.



CPL ANDREW JONES, USMC

During “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band’s first-ever tour in Japan, GySgt Sara Sheffield, a mezzo-soprano vocalist, performs at the Yamaguchi Prefectural Culture Hall Sinfonia in Iwakuni City, May 19.

was dynamic and heartwarming. She also said that she thought the performers and the audience became one as they were connected through the music.

“The fact that the Marine band has come to Japan for the first time in our 220-year history means that the audiences which we have encountered are seeing the Marine Band for the very first time,” said Colonel Jason Fettig, the 28th director of “The President’s Own.” “We have definitely felt, as we have performed for these audiences in these four cities which we have visited, that these concerts are truly special.”

The band traveled throughout Japan for eight days starting in Yokohama, where they performed with a Japanese military musical group, The Japan Ground Self-Defense Force Central Band.

“It was a really wonderful way to connect with our Japanese colleagues,” said Master Gunnery Sergeant Chris Clark, the Marine Band’s trombone section leader. “We had previously performed with them in Washington, D.C., on one of their visits, so it was great to come here and get to see them in their home country and perform with them.”

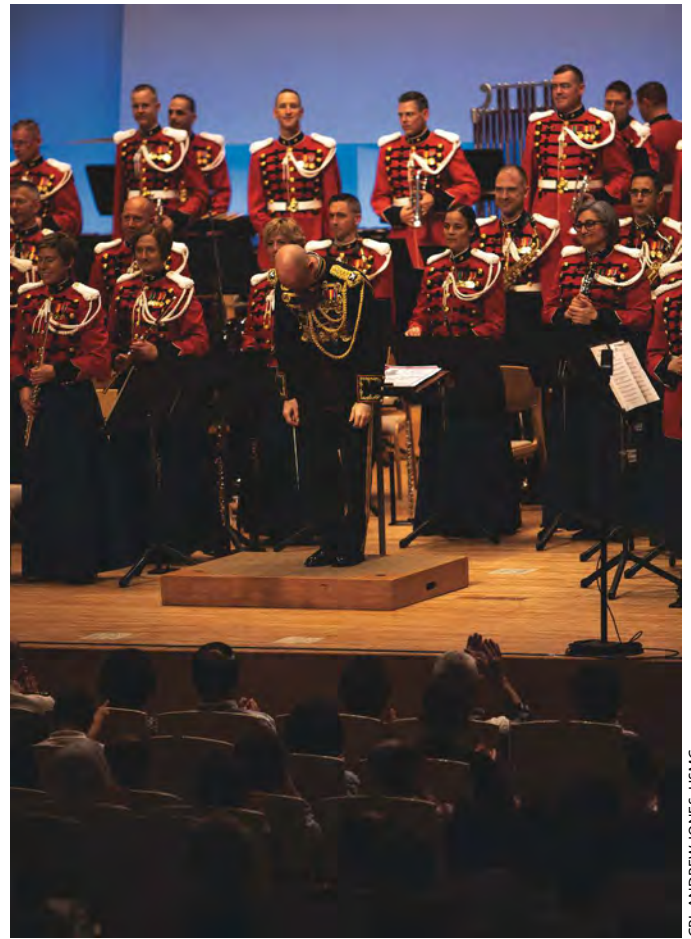
The band moved to Kanazawa and then

on to Hamamatsu where they played for the Japan Band Clinic, a well-known group of directors and teachers in Japan. On the final stop of the tour, every seat was taken for the concert in Iwakuni City.

Hideki Wakabayashi, the director of Sinfonia Iwakuni, said the songs entered the ears and went straight to the hearts of the people listening, and he got the impression that the Marine Band loved Japan.

“The great alliance that the United States and Japan share is important to our collective success,” said Colonel Richard Fuerst, the commanding officer of MCAS Iwakuni. “We work very hard here in Iwakuni to support the alliance and to maintain the readiness of the U.S. Marines, the U.S. Navy and the JMSDF stationed here, while at the same time being the best neighbors we can be. Events like this help us maintain the already great relationship that we enjoy through mutual respect and shared interests, and they are also a lot of fun.”

While stateside, the main duties of the band include playing for the President of the United States, and the Commandant of the Marine Corps, and well as regular



CPL ANDREW JONES, USMC

Col Jason Fettig, the director of “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band, takes a bow during the band’s concert in Iwakuni City, Japan, May 19. In the audience were nearly 1,200 Japanese citizens and residents of MCAS Iwakuni.

ceremonial performances in the Washington, D.C. area. The band is known for playing time-honored military classics such as “Semper Fidelis,” “Stars and Stripes Forever,” and other musical pieces, many of which are the works of John Philip Sousa, the famous American composer who also served as the 17th director of the Marine Band.

Cpl Andrew Jones, USMC

Female Marine Graduates From Urban Leaders Course

Lance Corporal Autumn Taniguchi, an infantry Marine with Company F, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, became the first female Marine to successfully graduate from Urban Leaders Course at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., May 3.

“This course is not easy. I didn’t expect it to be easy, but it also helps to show me that I can do more than I thought I could,” said Taniguchi, adding that the classes were pertinent and the instructors were very knowledgeable in the way they brought information across to the students.

During the three-week course, students are taught to make decisions, respond to



LCpl Autumn Taniguchi, a rifleman with Co F, 2/4, 1stMarDiv, simulates a patrol during the Urban Leaders Course at MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., April 24. She became the first female Marine to graduate from the three-week course.

LCPL ANA MADRIGAL, USMC

challenges and lead the fight in an urban environment by going through realistic scenarios and live-fire ranges.

“The course’s purpose is 49 percent teaching the Marines urban warfighting and what they can face and how they should act,” said Staff Sergeant Ken Rick, chief instructor of the course. “The other 51 percent we teach them focuses on how to be creative thinkers. You’re not going

to be given every single tool on how to accomplish the mission, [but] because you’re a Marine, you’re going to get it done regardless.”

As America’s “911” force in readiness, the Marine Corps ensures that mission accomplishment, battlefield effectiveness and lethality remain paramount. The standard for the infantry Marine remains unchanged, and every Marine who under-

goes the training is expected to execute the mission regardless of gender.

Taniguchi wasn’t aware that infantry was open for females when she was going through the enlistment process, but once she found out, she knew it was something that she wanted to do.

“It wasn’t anything special,” said Taniguchi. “I wasn’t looking to pave the way for other females or anything like that. I just wanted to be in the infantry.”

PFC Frank Cordoba, USMC

Commander’s Cup Strengthens Bond Between Marines, Local Students

Marines joined with students from Parkwood Elementary School, Jacksonville, N.C., for a Commander’s Cup competition on Onslow Beach at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., May 24.

Marines with 2nd Transportation Battalion, Combat Logistics Regiment 2, 2nd Marine Logistics Group, organized the event. The unit “adopted” the school in January and the Marines visit with the students every Tuesday.

“Seeing the [Marines and Sailors] give back and invest in the community



CPL PAUL A. OCHOA, USMC

FREEDOM RUN—During Fleet Week New York, Marines and Sailors participate in a “Freedom Run” to the National September 11 Memorial and Museum, May 23. Fleet Week New York was an opportunity for New Yorkers to meet their Marine Corps, Navy and Coast Guard servicemembers and experience America’s sea services firsthand.

is wonderful,” said Lieutenant Colonel Jonathan Baker, the battalion commanding officer. “These children are our future and it’s our job to foster their creativity.”

The Commander’s Cup served as a way to extend that partnership and helped show the students how Marines overcome challenges through teamwork.

“As Marines, we all want to be better, faster and stronger,” said Lance Corporal Carlos Salazar, a motor transport operator with the unit. “It fills me with a sense of pride that we’re able to inspire these students.”

Events included a push-up competition, Marine Corps Martial Arts Program (MCMAP) tournament, a log run, tug-of-war and more.

Although the Marines were the primary competitors, the students motivated them by cheering and joining in on some of the challenges.

“I have siblings, so I’ve always been invested in helping them grow into good people,” said Salazar. “I see the students as my own family and it makes me want to try harder every day for them.”

Cpl Ashley Lawson, USMC



CPL ASHLEY LAWSON, USMC

Parkwood Elementary School students run with Marines with 2nd Transportation Bn, CLR-2, 2nd MLG, during a log run competition at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., May 24. The Marines of the unit “adopted” the elementary school and volunteer their time with students weekly.

Crazy Caption Contest

Winner



SGT AARON HENSON, USMC

“Keep talkin’ lieutenant, we’ll find you.”

Submitted by:
MSgt Don Bowersox
Bainbridge, Ga.

This Month’s Photo



PFC KARIS MATTINGLY, USMC

(Caption) _____

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____ ZIP _____

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

Corps Connections

Compiled by Sara W. Bock

Triangle, Va.



to develop professionally, exchange ideas and preserve the traditions of the Corps. The Foundation's initiatives include the Commanders' Forum program, the Marine writing program, unit library program, and Marine excellence awards.

Pictured from the left are guest of honor and 33rd Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, retired General John M. Paxton Jr.; Cpl Sarah E. Thee; Cpl Shenoah White; and Lieutenant General Mark Faulkner, USMC (Ret), President and CEO of the Marine Corps Association & Foundation. Both corporals shared testimonials during the ceremony about the impact that professional military education (PME) trips sponsored by MCAF have had on their Marine Corps experience.

"Reading about history is one thing," Cpl White, who attended a PME trip to Belleau Wood, said to the audience. "But being able to be there and see what they saw and witness what they witnessed is a whole different thing, and it brought the history to life."

Another highlight of the evening was the recognition of donors whose exceptional generosity and support to the Foundation has been especially significant. Mr. Burton M. "Skip" Sack and Lieutenant Colonel Ronald R. Eckert, USMC (Ret) were each presented with the sculpture "First to Fight" in appreciation of their contributions to the professional development of Today's Marines. Dr. Susan M. Johnston was also recognized for her 10 years of support to the Foundation.

MCA&F

MCAF Celebrates 10 Years of Supporting Marines

Marines, donors, staff and honored guests gathered at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle, Va., June 8, for a reception and ceremony in celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Marine Corps Association Foundation. As the nonprofit arm of the Marine Corps Association, the Foundation was founded in 2009 to help develop leaders by providing forums for Marines

ANDREW NOH

Glastonbury, Conn.



MCL Det Unites Veterans During Suicide Awareness Hike

On May 11, the Marine Corps League Peter P. Monaco Jr. Detachment 40 mustered several hundred veterans in Glastonbury, Conn., to hike 22 kilometers (13 miles) through the town for their annual "Hike to Remember" to raise awareness of veteran suicides. The group stepped off at 0515 wearing their "boots and utes" from their respective services and followed their lead vehicle, a 5-ton truck. Three bagpipers from the Middletown Pipes and Drums welcomed them to their breakfast stop, hosted by "The Gallery" restaurant.

The mission of MCL Det 40 is to unite veterans to enjoy the

camaraderie they shared while serving and work to combat suicide within the veteran community. The annual hike is designed to support the fight to end veteran suicide and support veterans and their families as they transition back to civilian life.

"It's great to see all the hard work of the detachment come together and help fulfill our mission," said Mike Monaco, the detachment commandant. "To be able to rub elbows with veterans from all eras and branches of service was truly an experience that all vets need to feel."

Submitted by SgtMaj Jamie B. DePaola, USMC (Ret)

COURTESY OF SGTMAJ JAMIE B. DEPAOLA, USMC (RET)



RAGAN BOLICK

Washington, D.C.

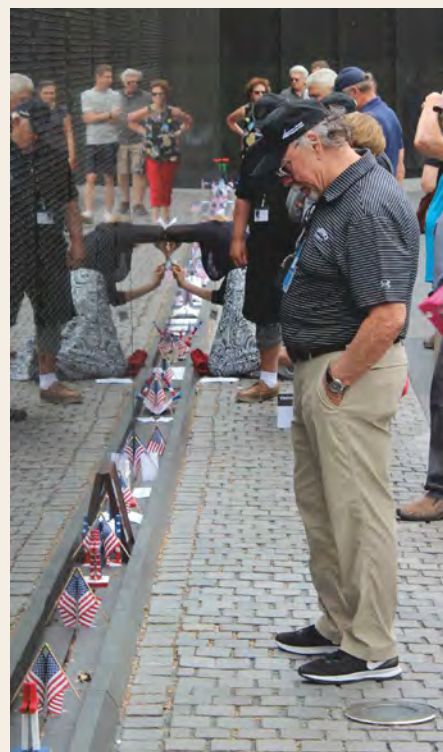
After 50 Years, TBS Classmates Reflect, Reconnect

A 50th-anniversary reunion for members of The Basic School (TBS) "Echo" Company 5-69 and Charlie Company 3-69 provided an opportunity to reflect on the past and to reconnect with the Marine Corps through a variety of events at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., and in Washington, D.C., May 7-11. During the companies' first-ever joint reunion, attendees stayed extremely busy, visiting Gruntworks Squad Integration Facility, where they had a chance to see current gear used by active-duty Marines, and touring TBS, Officer Candidates School, Camp Upshur, Marine Corps University and the National Museum of the Marine Corps. During a banquet at The Clubs at Quantico, they welcomed General Alfred M. Gray, USMC (Ret), 29th Commandant of the Marine Corps, as the guest of honor and keynote speaker.

After two days in Quantico, the group moved north to Washington, D.C., where they toured the Pentagon, and visited the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the Marine Corps War Memorial and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, where they located the names of 12 TBS classmates who were killed during the Vietnam War. For many of the classmates—who all



RAGAN BOLICK



RAGAN BOLICK

served in Vietnam—it was their first visit to "The Wall" and an emotional and sobering part of the reunion. They ended the reunion by attending an Evening Parade at Marine Barracks Washington, D.C.

Submitted by Joe Howard

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

Marines and the *Miracle Mets*

By Chris Randazzo

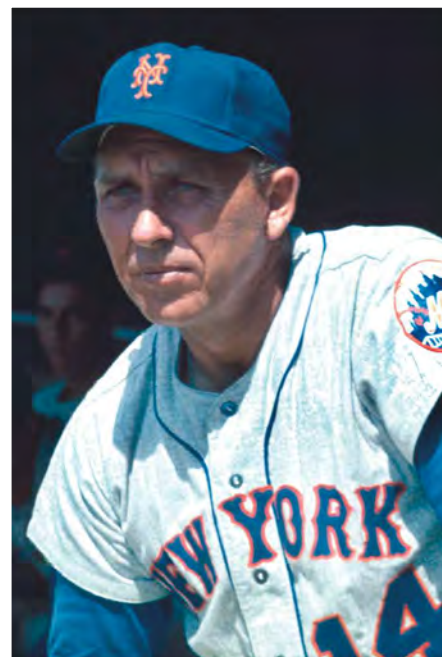
Fifty years ago, the New York Mets stunned the baseball world and earned immortality by winning the 1969 World Series. Among these “Miracle Mets” were Marines who played key roles in leading the Mets to their improbable victory.

Below: Gil Hodges, top row, sixth from right, completed Recruit Training at MCRD San Diego on Dec. 22, 1943.

The most important of these Mets with Marine Corps ties and the only one with combat service was the manager, Gil Hodges. Hodges enlisted in the Marine Corps in September 1943 at the age of 19.

Writing to his parents from St. Joseph’s College in Collegeville, Ind., shortly before he enlisted,

Hodges told of a dorm friend who had joined the Marines and was now en route to San Diego, Calif., “where it is 90 degrees in the shade.” Undeterred by the weather, Hodges wrote, “I would sure like to get in the Marines. I had my blood test and have been classified 1A so it won’t be so very long



Gil Hodges



COURTESY OF MARJORIE HODGES MAYSENT

before I am stepping into the service.” In the same letter, he inquired about the whereabouts of his baseball glove.

Hodges completed recruit training in late 1943. By early March of 1944, Hodges deployed to the South Pacific as part of the 44th Replacement Draft, where he was assigned to the operations and intelligence section of the 16th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Battalion. Hodges landed with the assault element in the Hagushi Beach area on April 1, 1945—D-day for Operation Iceberg, the battle for Okinawa.

The last large battle of World War II, Okinawa was among the bloodiest for all participants. More than 7,000 Americans died taking Okinawa, while 100,000 Japanese died defending the island. The Marine Corps suffered more than 19,500 casualties from its ground, air and ships’ detachment personnel. The kamikaze or “Divine Wind” was a particularly lethal weapon used by the Imperial Japanese at this late stage of the war. During the battle, the Japanese launched more than 2,000 suicide air attacks. According to its official war diaries, Hodges’ unit was heavily engaged against the kamikaze. The battalion fought off 108 kamikaze attacks, including 15 in one day, May 4, 1945. Hodges and his unit remained on Okinawa until that October.

Hodges was discharged in February 1946, having attained the rank of sergeant. Like many combat veterans, Hodges never spoke about his experiences during World War II although his widow, Joan,

fondly remembers him leading their family in singing “The Marines’ Hymn” while driving on family vacations. Also, like many returning veterans, Hodges went back to the job he held prior to the war—his was playing professional baseball for the Brooklyn Dodgers. With the Dodgers, Hodges excelled, becoming the best defensive first baseman of his era. From 1949 to 1959, Hodges played in eight All-Star games and six World Series, winning two. From 1949 to 1955, the 6-foot-2-inch, 200-pound Hodges averaged 30 home runs and 101 runs batted in. When he retired as a player in 1963, Hodges’ 370 home runs placed him second all-time among right-handed hitters.

Gil Hodges took over as manager of the Mets prior to the 1968 season. In 1967, the Mets had lost 101 out of 162 games. In their preceding six seasons since joining the National League in 1962, the Mets had either finished last or next to last. The Mets would finish their first season under Hodges in ninth place, next to last, losing 89 games.

A no-nonsense professional, Hodges imbued in his players a sense of pride. Al Weis, who served in the Navy where he played on a base team, noted how ramrod straight Hodges stood when the national anthem was played before games.

“Gil told me that being in the service really made him a better manager. The service taught him that no one person was better than the other and that’s how he treated his team.”

—Joe Pignatano

Gil Hodges, second row, fifth from left, Tom Seaver, third row, fifth from left and Tug McGraw, second row, first on left, pose for a New York Mets Team photo in 1969.



COURTESY OF NEW YORK METROPOLITAN BASEBALL CLUB, INC.



COURTESY OF ANTHONY CALVACCA/NEW YORK POST/(C) NYP HOLDING, INC.

Mets pitcher, Tug McGraw, looking every bit a Marine at Shea Stadium after signing a contract which called for a raise to \$10,000. McGraw, a six-month Marine Reservist, was in New York on a pass from Camp Lejeune, Jan. 19, 1966.

The former Brooklyn and Los Angeles Dodger whose nickname was “The Quiet Man” also let his players know who was in charge. “He had that strong Marine background. He didn’t take anything from anybody,” said Ed Kranepool, a first baseman on the 1969 Mets. Instead, “He put you in a position to win. Everyone came of age under the leadership of Gil Hodges. He was a great leader. He was the right manager in the right place at the right time.”

“Gil told me that being in the service really made him a better manager,” recalled Joe Pignatano, the bullpen coach for the 1969 Mets and a teammate of Hodges on the Dodgers. “The service taught him that no one person was better than the other and that’s how he treated his team. Gil treated the stars like the 25th player on the team,” Pignatano added. “Gil defined everybody’s role,” Dr. Ron Taylor recalled in 2009. After his playing days ended, Taylor returned to his native Toronto and became a medical doctor, but in 1968 he was a relief pitcher, watching Hodges evaluate his team. “I could see it coming,” Taylor said, recalling how Hodges bluntly told players he was going to be platooning, “and people had to accept it.” A defining example of what Hodges expected from his players occurred during the second game of a doubleheader against the Houston Astros on July 30, 1969.

After observing left fielder Cleon Jones slowly retrieve a ball, allowing the eighth Astro run to score in the top of the third inning, Hodges came

out of the dugout and slowly walked to the outfield to speak with Jones. Hodges then turned around and headed back, trailed by Jones following about 10 paces behind. As Jones told reporters after the game, “It looked like what you thought it was.”

There has been some question as to whether Hodges intentionally went against the Marine Corps norm to “publicly praise, and privately punish.” In a *New York Post* article titled “1969 Mets Hero Cleon Jones Clears up 50-Year-Old Gil Hodges Mystery” by Kevin Kernan published on Feb. 23, 2019, “He [Hodges] was stern in a lot of ways, but he would never embarrass anyone,” Jones said. “He had a plan and a purpose, and the plan and the purpose was, if I can go out and talk to Jones and when I’m hitting .350, maybe all these other guys will get the message,” Jones said. “And sure enough, it worked.” Added outfielder Art Shamsky, “We got the message.” From that day on, the Mets won 45 games against 18 losses, advancing to the playoffs for the first time.

“[Hodges] had a very strong personality,” said Tom Seaver, the “ace” of the 1969 Mets pitching staff with 25 victories. “He had one way to run this business—as a professional. Pretty much from day one, he didn’t try to make it too complicated. It was you, the player, understanding that there was a way you go about your business.” But Seaver also has something to say about the 1969 team being referred to as the “Miracle Mets.”

“That is a misnomer,” says Seaver. “We knew we were good. We knew we were darn good because we had very good pitching and we had a great leader in Gil Hodges. Maybe we surprised everybody else, but we didn’t surprise ourselves.”

“We sat in the bullpen, Tug McGraw and I, Don Cardwell, Cal Koonce, and we said to each other how good this team could be,” added Taylor.

What his players knew coming into the 1969 season, and the rest of baseball was soon to learn was their manager possessed one of the shrewdest minds in the game. Hodges used a platoon system at certain positions, playing the left-hitting fielder against the right-handed pitcher and vice-versa. Another important innovation was Hodges’ implementation of a five-man pitching rotation. Now standard throughout all of baseball, in 1969 it was the Mets pitching coach Rube Walker, with Hodges’ approval, who advocated this system to protect against overuse of his young pitchers, four of whom were between the ages of 21 to 25. In fact, these four—Nolan Ryan, Jerry Koosman, Tug McGraw and Tom Seaver—went on to pitch for a combined 85 seasons in the major leagues.

Also a Marine, George Thomas “Tom” Seaver, was so important to the Mets that he was known by fans as “Tom Terrific” or “The Franchise.” In 1962 Seaver enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserve. Years later, in 2013, when asked by longtime friend Pat Jordan what was the turning point of his life, Seaver replied, “When I joined the Marines when I was 17.” Seaver had followed his idol, older brother Charles, into the Marines, where he “learned discipline, discipline, discipline. Somebody says, ‘Do it,’ you

do it, and eventually you come out the other end, and you're proud."

In the June 26, 1967, issue of *Sports Illustrated*, Seaver's father, Charles, spoke of his son's transformation in boot camp. A right-handed pitcher and hitter, Seaver shot left-handed. During marksmanship training, his primary marksmanship instructor "insisted" he must switch over. "Out [the marksmanship instructor] came with an eye patch," said Charles Seaver, "put it over his left eye and in two weeks he was an expert marksman with his right hand." Years later, Seaver relayed his pride in achieving rifle expert and of being a Marine. "The Marine Corps is one of the most important cornerstones of my life. It made me go 'Oh, there's more to life than what is in a baseball,' but it also gave me the discipline to go on to play major league baseball for 20 years. The principles that I learned in boot camp were the principles that I took to the mound," he said. "Focus, dedication. I wouldn't have made it without the Marine Corps."

Beginning in 1967 when he was selected National League Rookie of the Year, Seaver became the dominant right-handed pitcher of his generation, ultimately winning 311 games over those 20 years. Seaver was a three-time winner of the Cy Young award, the prize given to the best pitcher in the National and American Leagues in Major League Baseball. His first came in 1969 when Seaver compiled a won-lost record of 25-7, an earned run average (ERA) of 2.12 runs per game with 208 strikeouts. Seaver won two games in the 1969 postseason, including a complete game victory in Game 4 of the World Series.



George Thomas "Tom" Seaver

Another Marine on that 1969 Mets team was a pitcher known by his nickname "Tug." Frank Edwin McGraw Jr. enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1965, reporting to Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island in September, months after his first game in the Major Leagues on April 18, 1965. In January 1966, McGraw spoke to the *New York Daily News* about the Marine Corps. "I'm gung-ho on this outfit. There's something about the Marines that makes you that way. They break you down at first, and they build you up all over again, in a new image." Said McGraw, "You see a target in the distance and you know you can't hit it, but they teach you to believe you can." When asked if he could now throw the

"The Marine Corps is one of the most important cornerstones of my life. It made me go 'Oh, there's more to life than what is in a baseball,' but it also gave me the discipline to go on to play major league baseball for 20 years."

—Tom Seaver



After retiring as a player in 1987, Tom Seaver became a color commentator on Major League Baseball television broadcasts for NBC and as an analyst for both the Yankees and the Mets. Seaver is shown here in the broadcast booth on Aug. 14, 1992. (Photo by Chris Randazzo)



CHRIS RANDAZZO

Tom Seaver at his National Baseball Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony Aug. 2, 1992. Seaver went into the Hall of Fame with 98.84 percent of the vote, the highest percentage in history until Ken Griffey Jr. received 99.32 percent in 2016.

ball more accurately over home plate, "I'll tell you one thing, they teach you how to concentrate, and that should help my control."

During the 1969 season, McGraw, had a won-loss record of 9-3, along with 12 saves. His ERA that year was an impressive 2.24 over 100 innings. McGraw was a starting pitcher when he joined the Mets in 1965; however, by 1969, McGraw had transitioned to the bullpen to become a reliever. It was in this reliever role that Tug McGraw gained baseball prominence and success, a change brought about by Manager Gil Hodges.

The 1969 New York Mets will gather this year at Citi Field, home of the Mets, to celebrate their amazing victory 50 years ago. Sadly, these three Marines, Gil Hodges, Tom Seaver, and Tug McGraw, will not be present. Two have died—Hodges in 1972, two days shy of his 48th birthday, and McGraw in 2004, at the age of 59 from brain cancer. Seaver was recently diag-

The 1969 New York Mets will gather this year at Citi Field, home of the Mets, to celebrate their amazing victory 50 years ago. Sadly, these three Marines, Gil Hodges, Tom Seaver, and Tug McGraw, will not be present.

nosed with dementia and announced his retirement from public life.

On the outfield wall of Citi Field are the jersey numbers of two of these Marines—Hodges and Seaver. The Mets retired Hodges' Number 14 in 1973 and Seaver's Number 41 in 1988. All three Marines have been inducted in the New York Mets Hall of Fame—Hodges in 1982, Seaver in 1988 and McGraw in 1993. On Aug. 2, 1992, Seaver achieved the pinnacle of recognition for a major leaguer and was inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame, appearing on an overwhelming 98.84 percent of the ballots.

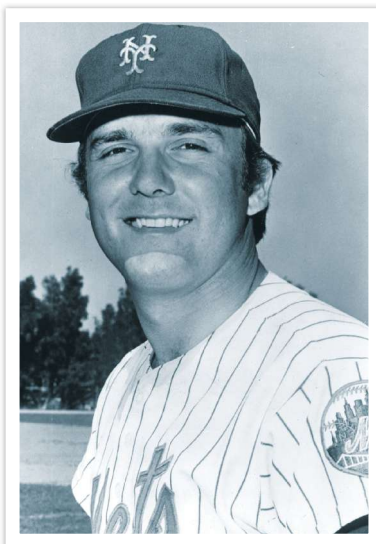
In addition to the Baseball Hall of Fame, Seaver was inducted into the Marine Corps Sports Hall of Fame on Aug. 1, 2003. While Hodges' election to the Baseball Hall of Fame has proved elusive, on Aug. 17, 2007, the Marine Corps honored Gil Hodges by inducting him into the Marine Corps Sports Hall of Fame.

Included in the final phase of National Museum of the Marine Corps, the Sports Gallery and Hall of Fame has a planned completion date of 2022. It will contain the current roster of inductees, including 48 Marines who went on to stellar athletic careers. Prominently featured in the Sports Gallery will

be a jersey worn by the Marine who led his Mets to the top of the baseball world: the Number 14 of Gil Hodges.

Editor's note: Official team photos courtesy of the New York Metropolitan Baseball Club Inc.

Author's bio: A lifelong Mets Fan, Chris Randazzo retired as a gunnery sergeant from the Marine Corps Reserve where he first served as a mortarman, deploying during Operation Desert Storm, in a Civil Affairs unit in Fallujah, and a public affairs unit in New York City. He now teaches yoga to military personnel.



Frank "Tug" McGraw Jr.



OPERATION PRAYING MANTIS— Take Down of Iranian Oil Platforms

By Dick Camp

Shortly before 4:39 p.m. on April 14, 1988, the frigate USS *Samuel B. Roberts* (FFG-58) was steaming south through the Persian Gulf when lookouts spotted three floating mines off the bow. While *Samuel B. Roberts* was attempting to back down, a fourth mine exploded on her port side, blowing a 21-foot hole near the engine room, nearly tearing the ship in half. Ten Sailors were injured, but the ship was saved and eventually repaired and returned to service.

It was determined that the minefield had recently been laid by Iran. Lieutenant Colonel Larry Outlaw, commanding officer of HMLA-167, the “Warriors,” spotted the minefield. “As I hovered over the top of the mines in my Cobra [helicopter gunship] with my gun camera on, these were brand new mines. They didn’t even have rust on them. It was clear that these mines had only been in the water for days or hours before *Roberts* hit them.”

President Ronald Reagan ordered a military response in retaliation. “Let’s do it,” he declared just before signing the

authorization order. Contingency Marine Air-Ground Task Force (CM) 2-88 was assigned to deliver the message to the Iranians.

CM 2-88

Officially activated in mid-November under the command of Colonel William M. Rakow, CM 2-88 consisted of three units in addition to the command element, totaling approximately 400 Marines and Sailors:

- Ground Combat Element—Company B, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment under Captain Thomas Hastings

Above: The main building of the Iranian oil platform Sassan burns after being hit by a BMG-71 TOW missile fired from an AH-1 Cobra helicopter during Operation Praying Mantis on April 18, 1988. (Photo by Cpl John Hyn, USMC)



Iranian oil platforms became the target of U.S. retaliation after the guided missile frigate USS *Samuel B. Roberts* struck an Iranian mine in the Persian Gulf.

- Aviation Combat Element—Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron (HMLA) 167 (four AH-1T Cobras, two UH-1N Hueys, two CH-46E Sea Knights) commanded by LtCol Larry D. Outlaw
- Combat Service Support Element—CSSD-20 under Captain Kenneth D. Wickwire

CM 2-28 was task organized based upon the assigned mission. The goal was to be a contingency force supporting the Commander, Joint Task Force Middle

**“This is U.S. Navy warship.
You have five minutes
to evacuate your platform.
I intend to destroy it at 0800.
Any act other than evacuation
will result in immediate
destruction.”**

East (CJTTFME). Rakow explained that for the next month and a half, CM 2-28 concentrated on “focusing on our capability to conduct an amphibious raid on short notice, as we perceived it [because] this type of operation would present the most difficulty.” In December, the Task Force conducted “blue water” workups, and in early January, key leaders made a trip to the Gulf of Mexico to become familiar with oil rigs that were similar to those used by the Iranians.

On Jan. 25, CM 2-28 embarked aboard USS *Trenton* (LPD-14) at Norfolk for the 26-day voyage through the Straits of Hormuz choke point to the Persian Gulf. According to Rakow, the Task Force used this time to continue training on a broad range of employment options in order to “enter the Gulf in a fully combat ready status.” He said, “We developed a ‘playbook’ for each of those capabilities that would enable us to respond within four to six hours from notification ... we entered the Gulf with a ‘working’ book of 21 different ‘plays.’ ”

On Feb. 20, the Task Force conducted a “turnover” in the Gulf of Oman and assumed the following missions:

- Armed escort/reconnaissance in support of U.S. flagged ships/convoys
- Surveillance, reconnaissance, and intelligence collection
- Security for mobile sea bases
- Standby reaction and reinforcement force
- Logistic support
- Mobile training teams
- Contingency operations

GOSP Sassan

On April 15, the day after *Samuel B. Roberts* was severely damaged, Rakow received notice to begin planning for Operation Praying Mantis, retaliatory strikes against Iranian Gas Oil Separation Platforms (GOSP) in the Persian Gulf. CM 2-28’s specific mission was to board and neutralize the Sassan GOSP, which the

Iranians used as a command and control facility, observation platform and launch point for fast patrol boat (FPB) attacks against Gulf merchant shipping.

Rakow described Sassan as a “large, seven-platform complex. The various platforms, connected by erector set-like catwalks, house wellheads, gas-oil separators, maintenance areas, pumps, generators and building areas. Platform legs hold the work areas approximately 30-50 feet from the water’s surface. Each platform had two or more decks, and one had a helicopter pad. We knew the GOSP was manned by 20-30 Iranian Marines armed with at least three ZU 23-2 anti-aircraft guns and other crew served and individual weapons. We suspected the presence of surface-to-air missiles (SA-7/Stingers).”

Operation Praying Mantis

At first light on April 18, Surface Action Group (SAG) Bravo—consisting of USS *Merrill* (DDG-976) and USS *Lynde McCormick* (DDG-8)—took station 4,000 yards east of the Sassan GOSP, which was close enough to see individuals through the ship’s on-board telescopes. USS *Trenton*, with CM 2-28 embarked, remained 7 miles southeast. “Morale was very high and everyone was ready to take action,” LtCol Outlaw declared. “We were prepared to do whatever we were allowed to do. We practice this all the time so it was nothing new, it was just our battle drill.”

At 6:15 a.m., USS *Trenton* launched four heavily armed AH-1Ts, two UH-1Ns

(one configured as a command and control aircraft), and two CH-46Es containing the assault force—consisting of the Force Reconnaissance Platoon and the 1st Platoon, Company B—altogether 42 Marines and Sailors organized into two teams.

At 7:55 a.m., the Navy began broadcasting a message in English, Farsi and Arabic: “Sassan gas and oil separation platform. This is U.S. Navy warship. You have five minutes to evacuate your platform. I intend to destroy it at 0800. Any act other than evacuation will result in immediate destruction.” Outlaw remembered being somewhat concerned about the timing of the assault. He would have preferred an earlier attack. “We tried to figure the sun angle. At [the scheduled attack time], 8:00 a.m., the sun is pretty high and that gives them a better chance to see you than if it was dark and earlier.”

Outlaw, in one of the Hueys, was in a good position to observe the platform. “There was a lot of flailing around and people running all over [Sassan]. The next thing we knew, they were getting into a boat underneath the oil platform.” An estimated 29 Iranians, thought to be civilians, boarded the tugs and headed for shore.

Col David B. Crist noted, “A Marine radio team monitoring Sassan’s communication with Bandar Abbas learned that several Iranian Marines—between three



Above: A CH-46 transport helicopter from HML/A-167 flies over an Iranian oil platform after dropping off Marines during Operation Praying Mantis, April, 18, 1988. (Photo by Cpl John Hyp, USMC)

Below: Marines inspect a ZU-23 23 mm automatic antiaircraft gun on the Iranian oil platform Sassan. Marines attacked and destroyed the platform as part of Operation Praying Mantis which was launched after the guided missile frigate, USS Samuel B. Roberts, struck a mine on April 14, 1988. (Photo by Cpl John Hyp, USMC)



and six—remained on board to interdict the Americans in a last, desperate suicidal mission.” Some estimates placed the number of military on board at 20.

The Iranians began firing at USS *Merrill* with a ZU-23, but the rounds fell short, and the gun was quickly destroyed. “Captain Vernon Scoggin [2nd Air-Naval Gunfire Liaison Company] ordered proximity fuses which blow up in the air and rain down shrapnel,” Outlaw reported. The naval gunfire was enough to send “a large crowd of converted martyrs to the northern end of the platform,” USS *Merrill*’s skipper said. “At this point, we checked fire and permitted a tug to return and pick up many of the remaining defenders.

As the boat departed, the assault began anew with a coordinated naval gunfire and helicopter gunship attack. “We shot naval gunfire above the platforms and I sent the Cobras in underneath,” Outlaw said. “The Cobras, at long range, started firing TOWs at the AAA [antiaircraft artillery] guns on the platform. Major Kevin P. Janowsky and First Lieutenant Robert H. Powers fired a TOW missile and took out that site and a big chunk of something fell into the water,” said Outlaw. “Whoever stayed in that AAA position went to the bottom

of the ocean with his weapon.” One of the TOW missiles hit a three-story wood frame building and set it on fire. “Soon flames engulfed the entire structure, burning furiously, sending black smoke into the air.”

At this point, the two CH-46s com-

“The rooms were black to begin with and when you threw a flash-bang in there, the concussion just knocked everything down so you went into a black room with a black cloud.”

menced their run in to the platform, covered by 20 mm suppressive fire from the Cobras. As they reached the landing points, the transports came to a quick hover and dropped fast-ropes off the rear ramps.

Lance Corporal Craig Cardiepy was one of the first out of the CH-46. “I was the third guy out of the bird. The first two guys were on the ground flopping

so I thought they were shot,” he said. “I didn’t know that they hadn’t been killed until later in the day.”

The platform fire reached the Iranian ammunition. “It was extremely loud,” LCpl Gardiepy said. “I thought we were in a firefight, but I didn’t know where the fire was coming from.” He soon realized that it was the ammunition cooking off in the fire.

“Once aboard the GOSP, the assault teams began a systematic search using the standard close-quarters battle tactics,” Rakow said. At one point, Capt Hastings, the assault commander, halted the search of the platform because of the danger from secondary explosions and the intense fire. He alerted Col Rakow for a possible emergency extraction; however, things quieted down, and the search continued.

LCpl Frank Galli was on one of the search teams. “That platform had been hit somehow before [by Iraq] and it was a twisted wreck,” he explained. “The gun systems had food still sitting there because we came in so fast. It was a twisted mess of pipe and steel and it was dark with a lot of nooks and crannies. We had to go all over and clear every corner to make sure somebody was not wedged in behind a pipe. The rooms were black to begin with

Marines raided the oil platform to gather intelligence data and military equipment used by Iranians. The platform was destroyed later in retaliation for the Iranian mining of the Persian Gulf, April 14, 1988. (USN photo)



and when you threw a flash-bang in there, the concussion just knocked everything down so you went into a black room with a black cloud."

The men had to clear each room. "When you leapfrog like that, you lose people. You would move down six rooms and you would be by yourself, trying to clear things and you couldn't see, it was 100 degrees in there, and you had all this gear on. It was trashed and there was a thick layer of junk," Galli said.

During the search, the assault element captured a ZU-23, one RPG-7, and one 12.7 machine gun. Additionally, two ZU-2as were destroyed in place. Shortly after 10 a.m., the platform was declared secure. One energetic Marine then took the opportunity to climb the radio tower and fasten the Stars and Stripes and the Marine Corps flag at the highest elevation to the accompaniment of cheers and oorahs.

Intelligence teams scoured the platform, but unfortunately, the fire had destroyed the office space and partially burned the billeting areas where the most valuable intelligence material was located. Outlaw explained, "We still got a great deal of intel from the housing area that was not burned."

While the search was going on, an

explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) team was hard at work placing 1,300 pounds of explosives throughout the complex. According to Outlaw, "We didn't want to destroy the entire platform, just to make it unusable for oil pumping ... We had studied oil platforms before we went to the Gulf, finding out ways we could make them unusable but not an environmental hazard. Our EOD specialists knew just where to put [the charges] so we could do that." By 1:03 p.m., the Marine force had been evacuated, and seven minutes later, an EOD team member touched off the demolition charges. The resulting explosion could be seen for miles.

Just before sunset, the Task Force commander decided to re-position two Cobras aboard USS *Wainwright* (CG-28) because they were concerned that the Iranians might stage a small-boats attack during the night.

Rakow and Outlaw both vigorously protested—it was the end of a long day and the pilots were exhausted. They had been flying for 12 hours and most had not slept the night before. They were overruled and two Cobras were dispatched. The first one landed and shut down, but before the second could touch down, the ship's radar picked up an unidentified object off the port bow.

The second Cobra, piloted by Captains Stephen C. Leslie and Kenneth W. Hill, was asked to investigate. As they closed on the contact, they reported being locked up and then dropped from *Wainwright's* radar. An immediate and extensive search of the area revealed no evidence of the helicopter or any survivors.

In May, the Cobra's wreckage was located, and the pilots' remains were recovered. There was no sign of hostile fire, and it was assumed that the pilot dove too low to the water after receiving the radar lock-on warning. It was, however, determined that the crash was the direct result of enemy action. As a result of their heroic action earlier in the day, both pilots were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and Purple Heart.

The Marine assault of Sassan GOSP had been perfectly executed. It was hailed as a textbook example of Navy-Marine Corps teamwork.

Author's bio: Dick Camp, a retired Marine colonel, is the former director of operations for the National Museum of the Marine Corps, former deputy director and director (acting) of the Marine Corps History Division and a prolific author. He is a frequent contributor to Leatherneck.



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Passing the Word

Compiled by Sara W. Bock

Marine Corps Spouses Can Be Reimbursed For Professional Relicensing

The Marine Corps has announced its new relicensing fee reimbursement program for spouses, authorized by the 2018 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The NDAA allows military branches to reimburse servicemembers for occupational relicensing and recertification expenses incurred by their spouses due to a permanent change of station (PCS) to a new state.

Headquarters Marine Corps may reimburse Marines up to \$500 toward qualifying relicensing or recertification costs for their spouses due to relocation for PCSs that occurred on or after Dec. 12, 2017.

“Within the Marine Corps community, spouses have a vital role in supporting their Marines and the Corps’ overall readiness and resiliency,” said Lieutenant General Michael A. Rocco, Deputy Commandant for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. “Providing this assistance to spouses who face the challenge of interrupting their professional careers and updating their credentials with a move to a new duty station is another example of family readiness.”

When moving to a new state, spouses accompanying their Marine may need to update a license or certification according to the new state’s requirements. This provision will help alleviate the financial load of recertification or licensing, and Marines and their spouses can take advantage of

this program with each qualifying move. Qualifying costs for the program must be imposed by the Marine’s new duty station state for a spouse to secure a license or certification to continue working in the same profession from their previous duty station and be incurred or paid by the member or spouse to secure the license of certification from the state of the new duty station after the date PCS orders are issued.

Spouses who wish to take advantage of this provision may begin the process by bringing the following documentation to their local on-base Personnel Administration Office: a copy of PCS orders, a copy of previous certification or license, a copy of new recertification/relicensing document, and a receipt showing recertification/relicensing fees.



LCPL URSULA SMITH, USMC

ON THE SPEEDWAY—LCpl Jared Huffman, left, and LCpl Brandon Bishop, mortarmen with 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, write inspiring messages on the motor speedway before the NASCAR Coca-Cola 600 in Charlotte, N.C., May 26. The speedway hosts the event on Memorial Day weekend each year to honor the fallen men and women of the Armed Forces. Names of fallen servicemembers—including many Marines—were painted on the cars, and Gen Robert B. Neller, 37th Commandant of the Marine Corps, gave opening remarks prior to the race.

To learn more about the recertification reimbursement, read MARADMIN 304/19. For guidance on state laws regarding professional licensing, visit www.veterans.gov/milspouses.

The Marine Corps' addition of the re-licensing reimbursement initiative complements the existing suite of programs designed to help spouses continue their career development. Other resources available to spouses can be explored through the Family Member Employment Assistance Program at the Marine Corps Community Services office on each base or station.

MCCS

“Atomic Veterans” Can Apply For DOD’s Honor Certificate

Veterans who were exposed to radiation in the military between 1945 and 1992 are eligible to apply for the newly created Atomic Veterans Service Certificate (AVS C) signed by acting Defense Secretary Patrick M. Shanahan, the Department of Defense announced June 6.

Application for the certificate is open to retired and former servicemembers, or next of kin in cases of deceased veterans, Defense Department officials said.

DOD tasked the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) to manage the certificate program because it already keeps a database of radiation-exposed veterans.

According to DTRA’s website, during World War II, thousands of servicemembers were involved in the secret program to build an atomic bomb—the same project that DTRA traces its roots back to—known as the Manhattan Project. Thousands more were part of the U.S. occupation of Japan immediately following the dropping of two atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and Japan’s unconditional surrender. After the war ended, through decades of the Cold War, many more were involved in atmospheric and underground testing of nuclear weapons.

Authorized in the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019, the AVSC is intended to recognize all veterans who were or could have been exposed to radiation during their service to the nation.

Potentially affected veterans include the original atomic veterans from atmospheric testing conducted from 1945 to 1962 in addition to those who participated in underground testing conducted from 1951 to 1992.

Issued so DOD can honor radiation-exposed veterans, the certificate does not carry any other value or entitle the bearer to benefits, said Doug Johnson, DOD’s assistant director for military decorations and awards policy.



Servicemembers participate in a Troops to Teachers seminar at the education center on MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., May 16. The seminar provided information to Marines and Sailors interested in becoming teachers at the end of their military service. (Photo by LCpl Miranda C. DeKorte, USMC)

DTRA maintains there are about 550,000 veterans that could qualify for the certificate in accordance with defining statutes, noted Lieutenant Lee A. Alleman, USN, military program manager for the Nuclear Test Personnel Review and Deputy, Nuclear Survivability Division.

“We also estimate that approximately 80,000 of the original cohort—World War II veterans—remain alive out of 493,000 [exposed veterans],” said Alleman.

To be considered for the certificate, applications must be filed at the following website: <https://www.dtra.mil/DTRA-Mission/Nuclear-Test-Personnel-Review/Atomic-Veterans-Service-Certificate/>.

DTRA will keep a historical record of veterans whose military service met the certificate eligibility criteria and were awarded the AVSC.

Terri Moon Cronk

Troops to Teachers Offers Transition Guidance for Marines

Troops to Teachers (TTT), a veteran-only program, hosted a seminar at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., May 16, to provide information on how servicemembers can become a teachers at the end of their military careers.

“[Every servicemember has] gained some type of skill set, whether serving four years or 20 years,” said Doug Taggart, a TTT program coordinator. “We want to be able to provide, assist and prepare those that have interest in becoming a teacher.”

One tool that TTT provides to servicemembers in the Camp Lejeune area is a two-day “shadowing experience,” which provides an opportunity for servicemembers to shadow a teacher in a local school in the subject area and grade level of students that interests them.

“The goal is to let you see what a modern classroom is like,” Taggart said. “You do this for two days and there are typically two outcomes. Either you are motivated and want to take the next steps in order to become a teacher, or you realize that maybe teaching is not for you.”

TTT offers a financial assistance program that will offer up to \$10,000 to assist servicemembers with their career transition.

For more information about the program, as well as state-specific guidelines, visit www.proudtoserveagain.com.

LCpl Miranda DeKorte, USMC



DPAA Identifies Marine Killed at Tarawa

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency recently announced that a Marine who was killed during the Battle of Tarawa was recently accounted for.

PFC William E. Brandenburg, 19, of New Miami, Ohio, was a member of Company A, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division in November 1943. He died during the third day of the battle on Nov. 22, 1943. He was accounted for on Sept. 25, 2018.

DPAA

Marine Dies After Vehicle Rollover

1stLt Hugh C. McDowell, 24, of Chevy Chase, Md., a platoon commander with 1st Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division died following a vehicle rollover during a training event on May 9, 2019.

McDowell was a 2017 graduate of The Citadel.

Six other Marines were injured in the incident which is currently under investigation.

Compiled from media reports

Emory B. Ashurst, 98, of Ellenwood, Ga. He enlisted in 1940 and served at Camp Lejeune, N.C. and Indian Head, Md., before shipping out to the South Pacific. He saw action with the 2nd Marine Division in numerous battles, including Tarawa, Saipan and Tinian. He later served in the Army. After retirement, he worked for the Department of Defense.

Richard M. "Critch" Bean, 96, of North Nephthi, Utah. During WW II he was an aircraft mechanic aboard USS *Gilbert Islands* (CVE-107) in the South Pacific.

SSgt Jack Dunkin Berry, 73, of Casper, Wyo. He enlisted in 1965 and served two tours in Vietnam. His awards include the Navy Commendation Medal with combat "V."

Capt Roger N. Brooks, 81, of Richmond, N.H. After graduating from college, Roger was commissioned as a second lieutenant. He was a platoon commander in Co C, 1st Bn, 8th Marines. During the Cuban Missile Crisis, he was deployed to Guantanamo Bay, and later served as an aerial observer. He was honorably discharged in 1965.

Richard D. Buntman, 88, of Green Bay, Wis. He enlisted after his 1948 graduation from high school and served until 1952.

Charles "Chuck" Burkett, 80, of Largo, Fla. He served in the Marine Corps

from 1955-1959 and later had a successful career in business.

GySgt Paul D. Bush, 33, of Kansas City, Kan. He enlisted in 2003 and graduated from recruit training at MCRD San Diego, Calif. He was a radar technician who deployed to Iwakuni and aboard USS *John C. Stennis* (CVN-74). He also had assignments as a recruiter and as an instructor at the Basic Recruiter Course. His awards include the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal and the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal with gold star in lieu of second award.

Louis A. Cabral, 92, of Sandusky, Ohio. He served in the Marine Corps during WW II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. He retired after 26 years of service.

Albert J. Carter, 95, of Kelseyville, Calif. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1939 and served in the South Pacific during WW II. He was assigned to the 1st Raider Bn, landing on Tulagi and Guadalcanal. After the war, he had a 20-year career with the California Highway Patrol.

Dale Cook, 92, of Brentwood, Calif. Dale was 18 when he saw action on Iwo Jima, where he was wounded. He graduated from Washington State University and went on to a 40-year career as a newspaperman. Later, he was an Army Reserve public information officer. He was a member of the VFW and was president of the Joe Rosenthal chapter of the U.S. Marine Corps Combat Correspondents Association.

MSgt Oma D. Day Jr., 88, of Grant, Fla. He was underage when he enlisted and he saw action in the Korean War.

He received the Silver Star for his actions on Jan. 14, 1953, while he was serving as platoon sergeant, 2nd Plt, Co C, 1st Bn, 7th Marines, 1stMarDiv. According to the award citation, he "went

to the aid of some exhausted and wounded Marines who were under enemy fire. He drew the enemy fire to himself and fearlessly attacked and killed the enemy. Although painfully wounded a second time, exposing himself to enemy fire and the danger of exploding ammunition [he] ... entered the burning bunker and evacuated the wounded, shouting words of encouragement to his men." His other awards include the Bronze Star with combat "V" and two Purple Hearts.

James P. DeVleeschower, 72, of Green Bay, Wis. Following his graduation from high school, he enlisted and served a tour in Vietnam.

LtGen Leo J. Dulacki, 99, in Sun City West, Ariz. He was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps following his 1941 graduation from college, beginning a career that spanned three decades and three wars.

During WW II he saw action in the South Pacific. He was assigned to USS *Hornet* (CV-8) during the Doolittle raid and the Battle of Midway. When the ship was sunk off Guadalcanal in 1942, he was assigned to USS *Belleau Wood* (CV-24) until she was damaged off the Philippines in 1944.

He again saw combat during the Korean War, when he commanded a battalion in 1stMarDiv.

In 1965 he served his first tour in Vietnam when he was the intelligence officer of the III Amphibious Force and the chief of staff of 3rdMarDiv. In 1969, he served another tour in Vietnam with the III Amphibious Force.

Subsequent assignments included commanding 5thMarDiv and 4thMarDiv. His last assignment before his 1974 retirement was as Director of Manpower at HQMC.

MGySgt Joe E. Flores, 69, of Fenton, Mich. He served for 20 years, retiring in 1987.

Col Robert J. Gadwill, 80, of Eau Claire, Wis. He was commissioned a second lieutenant, serving in Hawaii, Vietnam and Okinawa. He was a graduate of the Industrial College of the Armed Forces at National Defense University and served as officer in charge of recruiting in New York City and as the Deputy Director of Recruiting for 10 Western states.

William A. "Bill" Gilbert, 95, of Missoula, Mont. He served for three years in the Pacific with the 8th Defense Bn. He later served during the Korean War.

Henry D. Grasley, 82, of Oshkosh, Wis. He served in the Marine Corps Band from 1956-1959.

Cpl George T. Gray, 94, of Burlington City, N.J. Enlisting in 1941, he was one of the Montford Point Marines. He saw action on Saipan during WW II.

James H. Grove, 96, of Dixon, Ill. James served from 1942 to 1945 as a tail gunner on an SBD dive bomber. He was a member of MAG-24, and saw action in the Pacific.

Alton M. "Pup" Harwood, 94, of Butte, Mont. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1942. His company took part in landings on Tulagi, after which he was attached to the 1stMarDiv to support the ongoing Guadalcanal Campaign. He fought on Tarawa where he was wounded twice.

Gene Hasseler, 88, of Green Bay, Wis. He enlisted after graduating from high school. Following his military service, he worked as a town assessor for more than 20 years.

Thomas I. Henderson, 95, of Urbana, Ill. He joined the Marine Corps after graduating from high school, serving until 1945. During WW II he was a crew chief and tail gunner assigned to "The Wild Hares" of VMSB-142. He saw action in the Pacific.

LCpl Justin A. Hinds, 28, in Jacksonville, N.C. He was serving as an administrative specialist with Headquarters & Support Battalion, MCB Camp Lejeune. He previously deployed to Afghanistan as a combat engineer.

Rodney A. Hinz, 83, of Green Bay, Wis. He enlisted in 1954 and later attended the University of Wisconsin where he earned a business degree.

Marjorie E. Hoffman, 94, of Idaho Falls, Idaho. She served in the Marine Corps during WW II. She was a member of the MCL.

Francis L. Huntley, 77, of Las Vegas, Nev. He enlisted in 1961 and was assigned to NAS Cubi Point during the Cuban Missile Crisis. In 1964 he deployed to Vietnam. He later served a second tour in Vietnam with 1st MAW.

Sgt Bradford L. Hutchenrider, 74, of Leesburg, Fla. He served in the Marine Corps from 1963 to 1967, and spent a tour in Vietnam. He was a member of the MCL.

SSgt Jack M. Sands, 87, of Waldorf, Md. He was a Marine who served from 1952-1962. He later had a career with the U.S. Park Police. He was an avid motorcyclist who wrote "The Motorcycle Marines: An Illustrated History."

MGySgt Stanley R. Sheloski, 91, of

Lyndwood, Pa. He served nine years on active duty, and 18 years in the Marine Corps Reserve. During the Korean War he served with the 1st MAW. Other assignments included recruiting duty in Chicago.

Amber L. Smith, 39, of Hamilton, Ohio. She enlisted in the Marine Corps after her 1998 high school graduation.

Victor A.R. Stevens, 86, of Chelsea, Mich. He served in the Marine Corps during the Korean War. His duty stations included MCB Quantico. He later had a career as an accountant for Ford Motor Company. He was a member of the MCA&F.

Sgt David A. Wedding, 74, of Denver, Colo. He was a Marine who served from 1962-1966.

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



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AUG 28- SEP 9

50th Anniversary of the
VN War - 1969 I-Corps

SEP 7- 15

Evolution of the Western
Front- WWI 1914-1918

SEP 10- 22

50th Anniversary of the VN
War- 1969 I-Corps

SEP 12- 19

75th Anniversary of the
Liberation of Peleliu

SEP 17- OCT 1

Ireland WWII U.S. Marines
Dublin-Belfast-Derry

OCT 3- 13

China "Three Jewels"
Beijing - Xian - Shanghai

NOV 2- 13

WWI Armistice Day France &
Explore U.S. Battlefields

NOV 28- DEC 9

50TH Anniversary of the
VN War - Delta to the DMZ
Post Tour: Cambodia & Laos

DEC 3- 9

Hawaii 78th Anniversary of
Pearl Harbor & WWII Sites

JAN 4- 11

Panama - 30th Anniversary
of Operation Just Cause

FEB 8- 20

50th Anniversary of VN War
Tet Offensive & Hue City

MARCH 24-28

75th Iwo Jima Anniversary

APR 25- MAY 8

50th Anniversary of VN War
I-II-III-IV Corps Delta to DMZ

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Books Reviewed

WAR IN THE FAR EAST: STORM CLOUDS OVER THE PACIFIC 1931-1941. By Peter Harmsen. Published by Casemate. 288 pages. \$29.65 MCA Members. \$32.95 Regular Price.

Shockingly, in 1921, so oblivious were the American military and government to the possibility of a war with Japan over supremacy of the Pacific that only one officer in the entire U.S. Navy could read or speak Japanese. And, this, only 20 years before “a date which will live in infamy,” the catastrophic Dec. 7, 1941.

That ruthless seekers after world domination were already in secret discussions at Imperial Army Headquarters in Tokyo was inconsequential to most in our Armed Forces. Inconceivable, other than to half a dozen Navy analysts, was war with Japan, sooner or later, was inevitable.

Now, in the first volume of a dramatic and historically significant trilogy entitled, “War in the Far East: Storm Clouds Over the Pacific, 1931-1941,” author Peter Harmsen, a highly regarded “new breed” World War II historian who is willing to focus years of research attention on highly complex, rarely scrutinized themes and theses, presents us with hitherto ignored pre-Pearl Harbor causes. Daring to delve at length into the general history of global conflicts amid the tense background of international and Far Eastern rivalries and dominance, all of which the American military and government were blind to, is only one of the book’s rewards.

Also gratifying, “Storm Clouds Over the Pacific” tackles via a smooth, easy-to-digest narrative the generations of animosities that drove the immensely destructive war in the Pacific, costing the lives of millions of people, soldiers and civilians alike.

Using his renowned ability to weave together complicated, thorny events into revealing facets of the war previously neglected or unexplored, i.e., the subarctic conditions on the Aleutians; the mass starvations in China, India and Indochina, that cost the lives of millions; the range of perspective reflecting what war was like from the Oval Office to the burning, bullet-riddled sands of Iwo Jima, etc. is yet another reward.

“Storm Clouds Over the Pacific,” vol-

ume one, commences with the author’s acclaimed, “Shanghai 1937” and “Nanjing 1937,” narratives especially intriguing as Harmsen demonstrates how Japan and China’s enmity grew in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. That animus led to increased tensions in the 1930s, which exploded into those horrific conflicts of



1937. This in turn, according to the author, led to the Battle of Taierzhuang in 1938, one of China’s rare victories. Their continuing war of attrition ultimately led to the Japanese decision to finally launch the attack on the United States, beginning at Pearl Harbor.

WW II buffs, readers, and writers, as well as historians, will welcome Harmsen’s introduction of two new war networks, the Second World

War Research Group at King’s College in London and the international gatherings of the Institute of Modern History at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

Don DeNevi

Author’s bio: Don DeNevi has authored more than 45 books. “Pacific Nocturne—Pavuvu Island, 1944—The Mystery of a Multiple-Murdering Marine Murdering His Own” is his first World War II novel. The sequel is “The Guard House Murders—Camp Elliott, San Diego, 1944—Solving the Mystery of Disappearing Marine Recruits,” available on Kindle and softcover.

VIETNAM: AN INNER VIEW. A DVD by Marc C. Waszkiewicz and Lea Jones. The DVD may be purchased through: <https://vietnaminnerview.com/>.

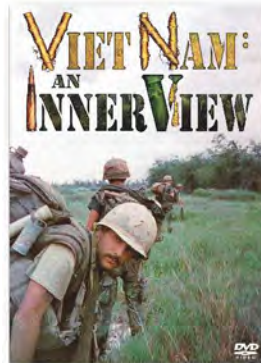
Anyone who reads *Leatherneck* magazine is undoubtedly familiar with the Vietnam War from a historical perspective, and perhaps even a personal one. The detailed historical accounts available to us today give us an unparalleled view of what happened from the vantage point of the armchair general. We can study in exacting detail every contributing factor to the success or failure of a certain unit at a certain

place on a certain date half a century ago, with a level of background knowledge that would have put the entire military intelligence community at the time to shame. That said, the modern historian’s detached view of historical events such as the war in Vietnam can often blind one to the intangible elements of armed conflict—heroism, bravery, fear, loss. An objective account can fail to convey how it really felt to *be there*.

“Vietnam: An Inner View” differs from so many other film and TV documentaries in that it was created by its own subjects. Marc C. Waszkiewicz and Lea Jones artfully craft an engaging story through a series of vignettes about military life in Vietnam, told directly by the Marines who were there. The story begins with Waszkiewicz winning a color camera in a poker game; we witness nearly the entirety of his three combat tours in Vietnam through this lens.

From quiet nights on watch at an artillery battery to intense firefights in dense jungle, the viewer is taken on an all-inclusive journey through the war as experienced by one man and his trusty camera. Throughout the documentary, we get a chance to experience the excitement of a fresh supply shipment, the nervous anticipation of an ambush, the loud confusion of a battle, the boredom of filling sandbags, and the relief of making it back to the United States after many long months in the heat of combat, all within the span of a little more than an hour. From one’s vantage point in a safe, comfortable living room, the viewer is transported to the heat and humidity of Vietnam. Within the 74-minute runtime of the film, we experience the kind of visceral, edge-of-the-seat tension one might expect from a blockbuster action movie, only these stories are real.

The testimonies of Marines in Waszkiewicz’ unit, as well as the more than “4,000 photographs [and] hours of 8 mm movie footage” that went into the making of this film, place the viewer right in the middle of the action. We are offered a rare opportunity to experience the Vietnam War from within, and the emotional impact of this experience is more powerful than can be conveyed by any slick, dramatized cinematic produc-



tion. "Vietnam: An Inner View" is a must-see for anyone with an interest in the Vietnam War in particular or modern military history in general.

Sam Lichtman

Author's bio: Sam Lichtman is a college student living in Stafford, Va. He has written Saved Round for Leatherneck in the past, but this is his first review for the magazine.

THE FIGHTERS: AMERICAN COMBAT IN AFGHANISTAN. By C.J. Chivers. Published by Simon & Schuster. 400 Pages. \$25.20 MCA Members. \$28 Regular Price.

The new book, "The Fighters," highlights the accounts of men who served in America's longest wars in Afghanistan and in Iraq. More than 2.7 million Americans have served since the bloody terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, including many who have served tours in both of these two war-torn countries. More than 7,000 of America's very best have been killed in combat, and tens of thousands have been wounded, or otherwise suffer from the devastating long-term effects of post-traumatic stress disorder.

Author C.J. Chivers skillfully depicts America's warriors with regard for both their honored service and their humanity. Chivers served as an infantry officer in the Marine Corps and now is a correspondent with the *New York Times Magazine*. In 2009, he was a part of the gifted writing team that was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for International Reporting and "The Fighters," recently won him a Pulitzer for feature writing.

Writing about our America's grunts Chivers notes: "They do not make policy. They are stuck in it, which is to say that they are the inheritors of the problem caused by the ambition, poor judgments, and mistakes of others, starting with their politicians and generals." As the cost of these wars continue to grow, in blood and pain, our warriors continue to gallantly serve, even with no satisfactory ending in sight.

"The Fighters," is a masterpiece of combat reporting, and the book provides a gripping portrait of our American fighting men and woman in the "Great Sandbox" wars. "The Fighters" channels the experiences of those who do the fighting with an unapologetic belief and trust in our brave warriors who continue to carry the burden of America's wars. Additionally, each chapter opens with a brief summary of America's two wars of the 21st century.

The reader follows the seemingly never-ending war through the experiences of six

American combatants: a fighter pilot, a Navy corpsman, a grunt, a Marine infantry officer, a scout helicopter pilot, and a Special Forces sergeant.

One chapter, "In the Navy He'll Be Safe," was especially powerful as it told the story of Navy Corpsman Dusty Kirby. Gail Kirby, Dusty's mother, concluded incorrectly that because her son had joined the Navy, he'd be relatively safe. After Navy boot camp Kirby attended Field Medical Service School. At this school, designed for potential corpsmen, Marines take custody of these Sailors and prepare them for the unique life style of living and working beside leathernecks. Here, the Sailors transition "from Navy blue, to mean-Marine-green!"

In late 2006 "Doc" Kirby, arrived at Camp Fallujah in Iraq and joined Weapons Company, 2nd Battalion, 8th Marines. By then, the war had taken a new and deadly twist. In Fallujah, the militants killed and mutilated American contractors and Americans reacted strongly to the disturbing news about the mistreatment of Iraq detainees at Abu Ghraib prison. With growing skills in the shadowy art of guerrilla warfare, coupled with a new proficiency in the use of improvised bomb, the insurgents skillfully adapted to the America's "rules of (battle) engagement." At home, Americans were becoming frustrated by the sense that these wars would not be over soon. And by this time the Pentagon ordered many American troops to move off the super-bases and onto many small strategically located outposts throughout Iraq.

"Doc" Kirby swore an oath: No Marine would die on his watch. The "Doc" was well-trained and fully prepared. He had stocked up on tourniquets and bleeder kits. On one occasion, a shot rang out; Lance Corporal Smith had been hit in the head. When "Doc" Kirby reached the Marine, Smith was still breathing and had a strong pulse. He gave the blood-drenched Marine two life-saving breaths with the standard mouth-to-mouth procedure. "Doc" Kirby cradled Smith's head in his blood-soaked hands. Kirby had done it; he *had* saved a life. Yes, he had saved a life, but somehow, he did not feel exalted; he wanted to vomit. He thought: "Smith had survived, but for what?"

One very bad day, while "Doc" was standing extra guard duty for a minor infraction of the rules, he was hit hard in the face. "A bright light flashed in his eyes. He felt a jolt to his head. ... A single

drop of blood landed on his palm. A flood followed. In a hot gush, Kirby's hands were covered. ... A chunk of bone fell into his palm." By the alarmed reactions of his Marine brothers, he concluded that it was very bad, and he must look ghastly. Kirby would, first, be stabilized before being flown to Germany. Then he was back to the United States to receive additional advanced treatment. Kirby endured more than two dozen surgeries. His jaw was carefully rebuilt by many bone grafts. In constant pain, he was, understandably self-conscious about his appearance. Kirby became depressed; he gained weight and, once, attempted suicide.

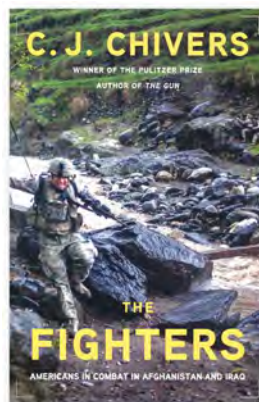
Seven years later, he and his mother Gail met former President, George W. Bush. Kirby encountered the man who had sent him to war. Gail confronted the President about the meaning of the war and expressed its detrimental effects that the war had on all the mothers back home.

Wow, he thought, his mother was going after the past commander in chief. Nobody talks to the President like that. Bush sympathetically responded, "I am sorry," he said, "I am responsible, I know. I sent him there." Her family's experience, Gail felt, was validated.

Of the book, Pulitzer Prize winner, David Finkel, may have stated it best: "As one of America's greatest war correspondents, C.J. Chivers knows that the closest thing to truth in war comes from the people at the far end of policy, those who have done the fighting, are fighting now. This book is that truth, brilliantly told. Courageous in its reporting and shining in its humanity. 'The Fighters' is a defining document of what was truly is."

Bob Loring

Author's bio: Readers will recognize Marine veteran "Red Bob" Loring as a frequent Leatherneck reviewer, who has had more than 100 book reviews published in the magazine.



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Marines of "Mike" Co, 3rd Bn, 9th Marine Regiment, inset, wrote this poem while sitting in a tent in Vietnam in December 1965. It has been safely tucked away in Sgt Bailey's Bible for more than 50 years.

COURTESY OF GARLAND "BUTCH" BAILEY

SOUND OFF [continued from page 4]

full dress uniform with cowboy hat, spurs and all. I was embarrassed that they had to witness such behavior. What kind of example did we set for the recruits? Are they going to expect hugs every time they do something good or bad? I ask, what is going on?

SSgt Robert D. Minton
Boulevard, Calif.

USS *Galveston*

Thank you for printing my letter, "Olongapo," in the May issue [Sound Off]. My ship, USS *Galveston* (CLG-3) stood for Cruiser Light Guided Missile #3. Just a correction so old salts, Marine and Navy, can find this great ship's history.

John Sanchez
Hanford, Calif.

Details About Vietnam-Era Poem

In regard to the poem, "Who is He?" in the June Sound Off, the author is listed as anonymous. Here is the poem's history. The title of poem is, "To the College Guys and Those Sitting at Home, How Do You Feel?" The men of "Mike" Company, 3rd Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment are the authors of this poem.

While sitting in a tent with other Marines from 3/9 at the end of December 1965, the conversation came up of the college crowd back home complaining about the Vietnam War. We Marines decided to write a letter and send it back home to a news station or two. We wanted to let the college guys know a thing or two about what Marines were doing over there.

After some brainstorming, the letter turned into a poem, but we never contacted the news stations because we were completely consumed by the war. This poem was written by a group effort and the words belong to each and every one who took part. My assistant gunner Joseph "Joe" Herbert Walton, who was from Chicago, was also a co-author.

My copy of the poem was put in a small Bible with a zipper. On Aug. 20, 1966, in the 12th month of our 13-month tour, while on a combat patrol south of Da Nang in the An Hoa area, we made contact with the enemy. A large firefight followed and Joe was shot in the head by the Viet Cong. I still live that day over and over. My buddy Joe is with me every day.

The poem was published in the book, "Young Blood: A History of the 1st Battalion, 27th Marines, 1968," by Dr. Gary E. Jarvis. Why is this poem connected to Delta 1/27? Because I

trained and took my machine gunners back to Vietnam with that unit in 1968.

Sgt Garland "Butch" Bailey
Camden-Wyoming, Del.

Rank Changes

I read with interest the responses to my letter [March issue] telling of their experience with the Jan. 1, 1959, rank change. As I said, from Jan. 1, 1959, until I left active duty on Sept. 24, 1959, I never heard of anyone being referred to as acting. Yet a writer enclosed a copy from his recruit graduation book where all of his DIs had acting under their pictures.

I think all of us, plus the thousands of Marines we haven't heard from, would agree to the fact that it was a mess.

The Navy and the Air Force simply added the new E-8 and E-9 pay grades on the top of their existing pay grades without disturbing their original E-1 through E-7s, no fuss or complications.

I spent the summer of 1957 attending the U.S. Army Engineer School at Fort Belvoir, Va. One other Marine and I were the only Marines in the class, the rest were Army. Even back then, long before the rank change, I could never figure out their rank system. They had noncommissioned officers (NCOs) and they had specialists. NCOs could command and specialists,

even though they were the same grade, could not. I wouldn't even attempt to see what they did with their E-8 and E-9s. Both of us Marines were privates first class, and I guess all the Army students were out of boot camp because they were all privates. That meant that we Marines had to stand charge of quarters (CQ), same as our duty NCO, which in the Corps, we didn't get until we were actually NCOs. I guess the Army felt that a Marine private first class was more qualified to stand CQ. I can conclude everyone is right about the rank change. Maybe this will finally put it to rest.

Regarding the "battle" jackets, I wore one of those short jackets for almost three years and I never heard them called anything other than a "battle" jacket.

One other thing I'd like to mention was the absence of the book reviews in the May issue. I truly hope that this is not going to be a permanent occurrence as I always enjoy reading the reviews and also have purchased some of the books.

Art Smalley
USMC, 1955-1959
Virginia Beach, Va.

Yet another story about the acting ranks. I was promoted to corporal, E-4, in January 1960 from acting corporal E-3, two stripes. Corporal E-4 collar emblems were not available, and we were told they would not be available until all the three-stripe sergeant collar chevrons were gone.

I was able to wear the three-stripe buck sergeant chevrons, eat in the sergeant's mess hall and was called sergeant. I was discharged in June 1960 still wearing three-stripe sergeant collar chevrons and corporal chevrons on my uniform.

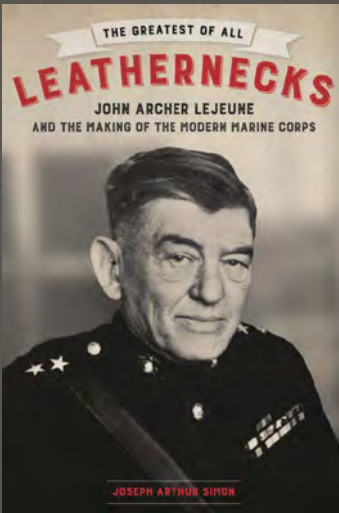
Cpl Rich Basile
USMC, 1957-1960
Belvidere, N.J.

Ike Jacket or Battle Jacket

This is in regard to recent letters regarding the Army "Ike" jacket and the Marine "battle" jacket. The "Ike" jacket was skin tight, whereas the "battle" jacket had excess material at the waist with a tight waistband automatically blousing the jacket when worn. This was also the era in which the Army wore their ties tucked in under their shirts about the third button down while our field scarfs, as we referred to our ties, were worn full-length with a tie clasp.

I don't know about the regulations but we wore our "p---cutters" (garrison caps) two fingers above the nose keeping your head braced back to see. Steel taps were also quickly added to our dress slippers, both toes and heels, so that walking or

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marching Marines were a bit noisy. They could hear us coming.

I certainly enjoy the Sound Off column.
Bill Fenkner
Surprise, Ariz.

I just finished reading the May 2019 issue. I have to comment on two subjects; the jacket adopted to replace the coat (we called it a blouse) and the marksmanship badges.

I was issued a jacket in my boot camp clothing issue in September 1948 and was told the jacket was the new uniform item to replace the coat which had been declared obsolete. We were issued the coat only because the existing stocks on hand were so large that they had to use them up. We all know how that worked out. I never ever heard it referred to as a Vandegrift jacket, often an "Ike" jacket, but usually just jacket. We were also issued cotton khaki jackets for summer wear. We hated them and never wore them except for our boot camp photo at MCRD San Diego.

While on sea duty aboard USS *Toledo* (CA-133), I sold both of mine to the ship's

chief master at arms for \$5 each once we received word that they were no longer required. The Navy chiefs loved them. We loved the green winter service jackets. We only wore the coat when we wanted to look a little bit more formal on liberty. Back in the day we could wear civvies if stationed ashore, but rarely did. They were too expensive and our pay wasn't that great. We saved it for beer.

In response to the shooting badges, please refer to, "U.S. Marine Corps Marksmanship Badges from 1912 to the Present," by Michael D. Visconage, Marine Corps Museum Monograph, published in 1982. At one time the Army and the Marine Corps did wear the same badges until 1921. The monograph explains it all in great detail. I was quite saddened when the Marine Corps changed the wording from expert rifleman to rifle expert. Adapting the crossed M1 rifles in place of the '03s was okay, it made sense. I was building a "ladder" of expert requalification bars. I already had two when they changed to the present type bar. I received a fourth award bar for my rifle

expert badge and was working on a 4th award for my expert pistol badges when I retired. I had three awards on that one.

The old basic badge was great too. We could build ladders on that one also. We had to buy them in Army/Navy stores downtown. I never did see an issue one of those.

1stSgt William H. Janzen, USMC (Ret)
Lake Forrest, Calif.

Lost Dog Tags?

This is in reply to Rusty Sachs' letter, "Dog Tags, Legit or a Scam" (June issue) asking if the lost dog tags that he purchased in Vietnam were legit or a scam. I don't know if your readers are aware that fake dog tags have been a multi-million dollar business in Vietnam for decades. When the U.S. abandoned Vietnam in 1975, the U.S. Army left behind hundreds of millions of dollars of equipment. Some of that equipment was all of the machines and materials to produce military dog tags. Along with the equipment, the Americans also left behind tons of paper military records with names, serial numbers and other personal data.

Some unscrupulous, yet enterprising, Vietnamese people then started producing and selling fake copies. They got so good at it that they even use old steel and put chemicals on it to make it look like it is 50 years old. They sell those fake dog tags everywhere. The unsuspecting tourists buy them because their hearts are pure. These same well-meaning folks come back home and then spend weeks, months and years looking for the veteran who "lost" his dog tags. The vast majority of the veterans who are "found" say, "I did not know that I lost them." And you know what? They didn't, but the Vietnamese pocket the money and laugh all of the way to the bank.

Do a Google search of "Fake Dog Tags Vietnam."

Sgt John Wear
USMC, 1966-1969
Elbert, Colo.

30 Days on the Line

The story, "30 Days on the Line," from the December 1944 archives was an important capsule of Marine Corps history. It is a stunning example of the hardship that those Marines endured and the fortitude they displayed. A footnote: Captain Joseph Jeremiah McCarthy, CO, G/2/24, 4th Marine Division, earned a Silver Star and Purple Heart on Saipan. Just seven months later, still in



**Capt Joseph J.
McCarthy**

command of Co G, Capt McCarthy earned another Purple Heart on Iwo Jima where he received the Medal of Honor.

Jack McKeon
USMCR, 1959-1965
The Woodlands, Texas

The Crew of USS *Pueblo*

On Jan. 23, 1968, USS *Pueblo* (AGER-2), captained by Commander Lloyd Bucher, USN, was hijacked by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) (North Korea) along with 82 other members of its crew. One crewmember was killed, and the rest, including two Marines, kept in captivity and tortured for 11 months.

Upon their arrival back in the U.S., the crew of *Pueblo* was sequestered at Balboa Naval Hospital in San Diego, Calif., where they were evaluated for medical and psychological needs. They also underwent in-depth debriefing. The noncommissioned officers (NCO) club on Balboa was converted to a mess and relaxation facility and meeting place for reunification with family. Excellent food was available for the crew and family 24/7. The military police (MP) security detail, which was of platoon size, also benefited from this great food as our operations center was in a back room of the NCO club. This gave us unlimited access to the crew and we met many brave heroes.

Upon returning from my tour in Vietnam, March 1968, where I served with "Mike" Co, 3/5, I was assigned to the 5th Military Police Battalion (field) at Camp Pendleton. I believe the new designation for the 5th MPs is now the 1st Law Enforcement Battalion (LEB). There we augmented the base MPs by vehicle patrol, gate guards and traffic control along with our normal field operations.

The day I returned from leave in December 1968, I was told to report to the Balboa Naval Hospital's NCO club to take over *Pueblo's* crew security as noncommissioned officer in charge (NCOIC). At that time I was a sergeant. There was no staff NCOIC and the officer in charge was not on site nor would he be after my arrival. Our duties were to protect the crew mainly from the press, guard CDR Bucher's hospital room with two armed Marine guards and furnish two armed Marine guards for the round wall Quonset hut where the debriefing and intelligence material was kept. This was all on a 24/7 basis. Orders for the guards on the Quonset hut were to "shoot first and ask questions

later" should any unauthorized persons even approach the building. Fortunately, they didn't have to draw their weapons.

Toward the end of their stay at Balboa, which was approximately two weeks, an awards ceremony was held for the crew, which I attended and viewed. During CDR Bucher's address to the audience, he said, "If I had only two medals to award this day, they would both go to my Marines." Oorah!

Sgt Ken Fields
USMC, 1966-1969
Columbia, Mo.



COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Setting the Record Straight

A photograph in We—The Marines on page 45 of the July 2019 issue of *Leatherneck*, which accompanied a news item entitled, "Following Renovation, OCS Rededicates Branch Hall," was not a portrait of Capt Frederick C. Branch as it was labeled. The photo is a picture of PFC Howard P. Perry, the first enlisted African-American Marine. Capt Branch is shown in the above photo, taken in 1945, as his wife, Camilla, pins on his second lieutenant bars.

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

USMC

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Reader Assistance

Edited by Sara W. Bock

Reunions

• **3rdMarDiv Assn. (all eras)**, Sept. 17-22, Branson, Mo. Contact Roger Bacon, (215) 822-9094, rogerbacon45@yahoo.com.

• **Iwo Jima Assn. of America**, Feb. 25-29, 2020, Arlington, Va. Contact Art Sifuentes, (703) 590-1292, rsifuentes@iwojimaassociation.org, www.iwojimaassociation.org.

• **USMC Law Enforcement Assn.**, Oct. 10-13, Gatlinburg, Tenn. Contact CWO-4 Don Bolen, USMC (Ret), 1066 Mount Laurel Rd., Clover, VA 24534, usmcleanet@gmail.com.

• **USMC Combat Correspondents Assn.**, Aug. 20-23, Atlanta, Ga. Contact Kate Stark, (352) 448-9167, kate@usmccca.org.

• **USMC Vietnam Tankers Assn.**, Oct. 31-Nov. 4, Seattle, Wash. Contact John Wear, (719) 495-5998, johnwear2@verizon.net.

• **Marine Corps Engineer Assn.**, Sept. 12-14, San Antonio, Texas. Contact Maj Charlie Dismore, USMC (Ret), (512) 394-9333, www.marcorengasn.org.

• **USMC Food Service Assn.**, Oct. 3, Woodbridge, Va. Contact Maj Rick Bedford, USMC (Ret), (804) 386-6991, rdbedford1@gmail.com, www.usmcfssa.org.

• **Marine Corps Mustang Assn.**, Sept. 17, Branson, Mo. Contact CWO-4 Jim Casey, USMC (Ret), businessmngn@marinecorpsmustang.org, www.marinecorpsmustang.org.

• **Seagoing Marines Assn.**, Oct. 1-6, Louisville, Ky. Contact Bob Sollom, (540) 840-9310, sol136@msn.com.

• **The Chosin Few**, Dec. 4-8, San Diego, Calif. Contact Chosin Few Headquarters, 3 Black Skimmer Ct., Beaufort, SC 29907, (843) 379-1011, thechosinfewinc@aol.com, www.chosinfew.org.

• **Montford Point Marine Association, Inc.** (open to all veterans and supporters from all branches of the Armed Forces), Aug. 28-31, Charlotte, N.C. Contact MGySgt Ron Johnson, USMC (Ret), (504) 202-8552.

• **26th Marines Assn. (all eras)**, Aug. 23-25, New Orleans, La. Contact Sonny Hollub, (512) 825-4730, sonnyusmc@gmail.com.

• **Marine Corps Air Transport Assn. (VMGR/VMR)**, Oct. 3-6, San Diego, Calif. Contact Rich Driscoll, (817) 657-7768, president@mcata.com, www.mcata.com.

• **Marine Corps Recruiting Service**

(all who served in a recruiting command, officer or enlisted), Sept. 11-15, Bluffton, S.C. Contact Larry Risvold, (803) 760-4575, larryrisvold@att.net, http://marinecorpsrecruitingservice reunion.com.

• **USMC Postal 0160/0161**, Sept. 29-Oct. 4, Norfolk, Va. Contact MSgt Robert I. Brown, USMC (Ret), (910) 358-7752, cbrown11@ec.rr.com.

• **MCAGCC Twentynine Palms, Calif., (all units, 1978-1982)**, Feb. 7-9, 2020, Twentynine Palms, Calif. Contact Maj Stew Rayfield, USMC (Ret), ironmajor@gmail.com.

• **Marine Barracks Fort Meade (NSA)**, Sept. 19-22, Valley Forge, Pa. Contact Bob Pepin, (508) 831-5575, rpepin@wpi.edu.

• **Marine Detachment/Barracks Bermuda (all eras)**, Sept. 15-19, Harrisburg, Pa. Contact Dennis McDonald, (763) 473-3458, (612) 247-3299.

• **3rd Engineer Bn**, Oct. 1-3, Rehoboth Beach, Del. Contact A.J. Folk, (610) 589-1362, ajfpa@comcast.net.

• **1/1 (RVN, 1965-1971)**, Oct. 23-26, San Diego, Calif. Contact Bill Kendle, (651) 248-3914, bkendle@comcast.net.

• **1/3 (all eras)**, Sept. 17-22, Branson, Mo. Contact Don Bumgarner, (562) 897-2437, dbumcl3usmc@verizon.net.

• **1/5 (1986-1992)**, Sept. 5-8, Macomb, Ill. Contact Scott Hainline, (309) 351-2050, ptimfi@yahoo.com, Facebook: 1/5 USMC 1986-1992.

• **1/5 (Afghanistan)**, Oct. 9-12, Camp Pendleton, Calif. Contact Jim Hogan, (310) 728-9166, socks4heroes@gmail.com, http://scmcsg.org/1-5-afghanistan-reunion.

• **1/7 (1984-1988)**, October 2019, Las Vegas, Nev. Contact Maj Bill Pedrick, USMC (Ret), bill.pedrick@gmail.com, or SgtMaj Dave Jones, USMC (Ret), drjonessgtmaj@gmail.com.

• **2/9 (all eras)**, Nov. 8-12, Arlington, Va. Contact Danny Schuster, (978) 667-4762, twoninencoic@aol.com, www.2ndbattalion9thmarines.org.

• **“Stormy’s” 3/3**, Oct. 20, San Antonio, Texas. Contact Burrell Landes, (303) 734-1458, bhanon@comcast.net.

• **3/4 (all eras)**, Aug. 21-25, Virginia Beach/Norfolk, Va. Contact Travis Fryzowicz, (732) 251-5518, travisjfry@gmail.com.

• **3/26 (RVN)**, Nov. 10-17, Eastern Caribbean Cruise from Fort Lauderdale, Fla. Contact James Sigman, (850) 528-3854, www.funseas.com/26marine.

• **A/1/11 (RVN, August 1965-August 1966)**, Oct. 15-18, San Diego, Calif.

Contact Jim Wybenga, jwybenga15@gmail.com.

• **H/2/5 (RVN)**, Nov. 7-10, San Antonio, Texas. Contact Robert Hardrick, (513) 410-0935, www.hotel25vv.org.

• **K/3/7 (all eras)**, Sept. 12-16, Nashville, Tenn. Contact Bill Gerke, (631) 433-8575, msggerke@aol.com.

• **M/3/7 (RVN)**, Oct. 9, Branson, Mo. Contact Keith and Judy Kohlmann, (920) 203-5764, jckohlmann@yahoo.com.

• **3rd 155s, M/4/12, 3rdMarDiv**, Sept. 8-12, Myrtle Beach, S.C. Contact SgtMaj Gordon Niska, USMC (Ret), (770) 856-1542, sniska@windstream.net.

• **Marine Expeditionary Brigade-Afghanistan, Task Force Leatherneck (2009-2010)**, May 1-3, 2020, Quantico, Va. Contact reunion committee, taskforceleatherneck@gmail.com.

• **Marine Corps Security Forces, Naval Weapons Station Earle**, Sept. 20-23, Colts Neck, N.J. Contact Dusty Wright, (618) 553-2205, slickstuff@nwcable.net.

• **38th/39th OCC, TBS 3-66/4-66**, Oct. 7-11, Newport, R.I. Contact Jack Sheehan, (401) 255-0387, jacksheehanjtown@me.com, www.usmc-thebasicschool-1966.com.

• **TBS 4-67**, Oct. 9-12, San Diego, Calif. Contact Ken Pouch, (860) 881-6819, kpouch5@gmail.com.

• **TBS 3-68**, Sept. 19-22, Quantico, Va. Contact Norm Hapke, 9949 Halo Circle, La Mesa, CA 91941, (619) 249-2281, nhapke@cox.net.

• **TBS, Co C, 3-72**, is planning a 50th-anniversary reunion. Contact Col Joe Mueller, USMCR (Ret), (818) 815-8331, jnm21213@yahoo.com.

• **Plt 238, San Diego, 1965**, Oct. 15-18, San Diego, Calif. Contact Bonnie Arnold Gallegos, (608) 582-2386, hookemceg@hotmail.com.

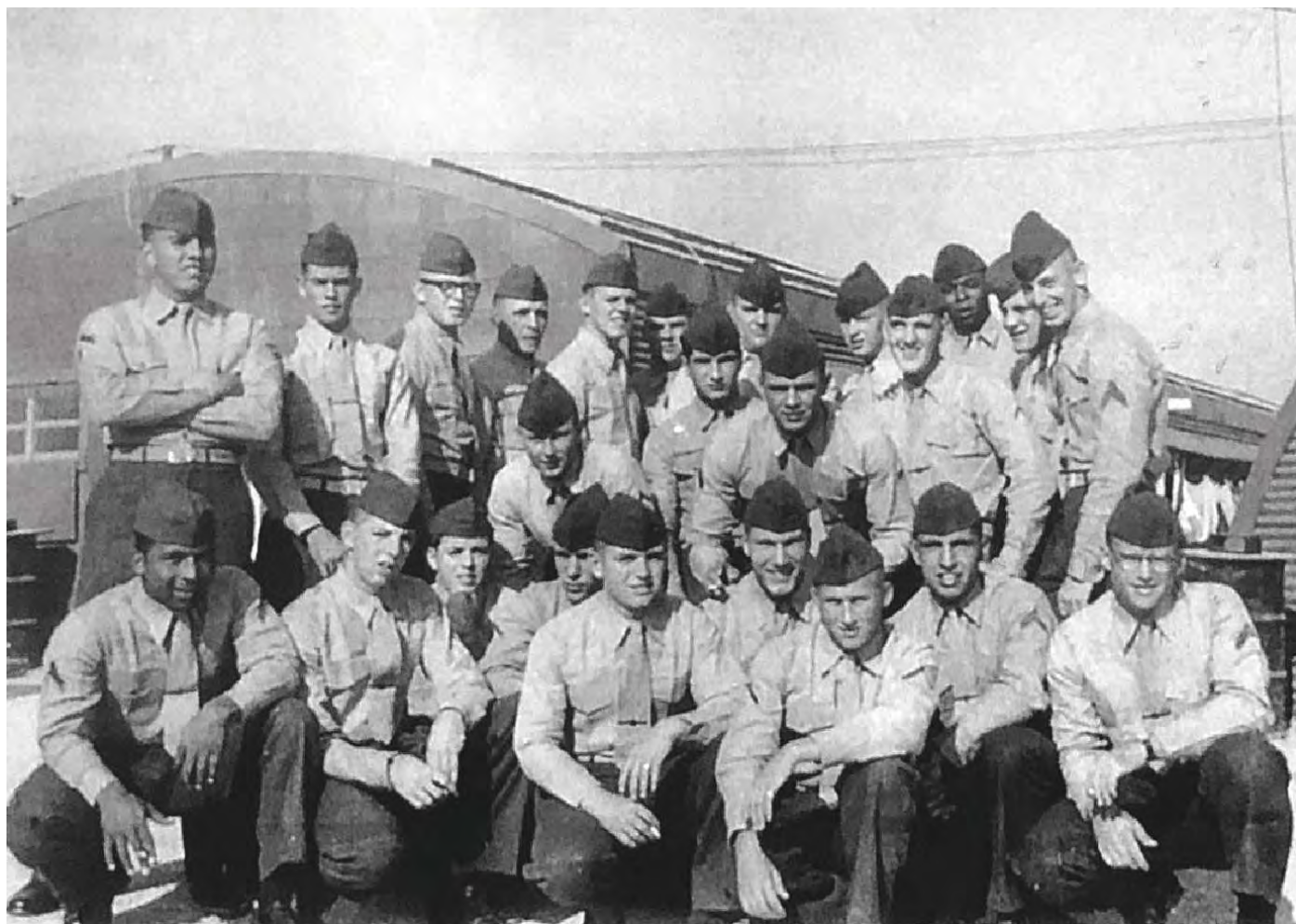
• **Plt 331, Parris Island, 1959**, September 2019, Beaufort, S.C. Contact R.W. Wood, (205) 903-7220, bwood9@bellsouth.net.

• **Plt 1187, San Diego, 1969**, is planning a reunion. Contact T.E. Miller, (618) 520-9646, or Mark Elder, (314) 322-8516.

• **Plt 3028, San Diego, 1966**, is planning a reunion. Contact MSgt Bob Rees, USMC (Ret), (619) 940-9218, bobrees86@gmail.com.

• **Distinguished Flying Cross Society**, Sept. 15-19, Dayton, Ohio. Contact Warren Eastman, (760) 985-2810, weastman@dfcsociety.org.

• **VMO/VMA/VMF/VMFA-251 (all**



COURTESY OF LARRY ILES

Larry Iles, who served with H&S Co, 1/1, 3rdMarDiv, would like to hear from any Marines in this photo taken at Camp Hague, Okinawa, Japan, in 1958.

eras), Nov. 7-10, Charleston, S.C. Contact Steven Dixon, (404) 944-1268, frenchy@vmfa251.org.

Ships and Others

- **USS Canberra (CA-70/CAG-2)**, Oct. 9-13, Deerfield, Ill. Contact Ken Minick, 2115 Pride Ave., Belpre, OH 45714, (740) 423-8976, usscanberra@gmail.com.

- **USS Iwo Jima (LPH-2/LHD-7)**, Oct. 2-5, Norfolk, Va. Contact Robert G. McAnally, 152 Frissell St., Hampton, VA 23663, (757) 723-0317, yujack46709@gmail.com.

- **USS Wasp (CVS-18) Marine Detachment (1960-1970)**, Sept. 22-25, Niagara Falls, N.Y. Contact Joseph Looker, jsphlooker@aol.com.

Mail Call

- Larry Iles, 7906 Rosina St., Long Beach, CA 90808, to hear from the Marines pictured in the above photo, who were members of **Comm Section, H&S Co, 1/1, 3rdMarDiv, Camp Hague, Okinawa, 1958.**

- Mike Jaeger, 379 Moriches Rd., St. James, NY 11780, (631) 862-6289, mikejaeger7@aol.com, to hear from

anyone he served with from **August 1966 to June 1969**, particularly members of **1st Plt, Co B, 5th Engineer Bn.**

- Gerald Mullinix, ni4f@earthlink.net, to hear from members of **Fox Co, TBS 6-69.**

Wanted

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

- John Stavesky, (252) 503-3133, johnstavesky@outlook.com, wants a **recruit graduation book for Plt 181, Parris Island, 1968.**

- Sierra Reyes, s.phudson97@gmail.com, wants a **platoon photo and recruit graduation book from Plt 3141, San Diego, 1977-1978.**

Sales, Trades and Giveaways

- Rich Lee, (352) 650-0364, rdlez377@gmail.com, has a like-new **enlisted Marine dress blue uniform** for sale, jacket size **44 regular**, trousers waist **34**, inseam **31**, for sale for \$175. Uniform includes blouse with all gold buttons, blood stripe on trousers and dress white web belt with Staff NCO buckle.

- Howard Sweitzer, (954) 972-0555, 1417 NW 62 Way, Margate, FL 33063, has the following items for sale: a USMC **"Ike" battle jacket, Korea, 1953**; a large WW II poster entitled **"Island Invasion"**; a first printing edition of **"Guadalcanal Diary," 1943**; T-shirts from **"Desert Storm 1991"** and **"Marine Corps Marathon, Quantico, 1982,"** and a 1983 NASA hoodie, "First American in Space."

- Bob Jackson, sgte5j@cox.net, has recruit graduation books for **Plt 1109, San Diego, 1979-1980**, and **Plt 4012 and 4013, Parris Island, 2015**, to give away.

Entries for "Reader Assistance," which include "Reunions," "Mail Call," "Wanted" and "Sales, Trades and Giveaways," are free and printed on a space-available basis. *Leatherneck* reserves the right to edit or reject any submission. Allow two to three months for publication. Send your email to s.bock@mca-marines.org, or write to Reader Assistance Editor, *Leatherneck* Magazine, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134. 📧



COURTESY OF TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

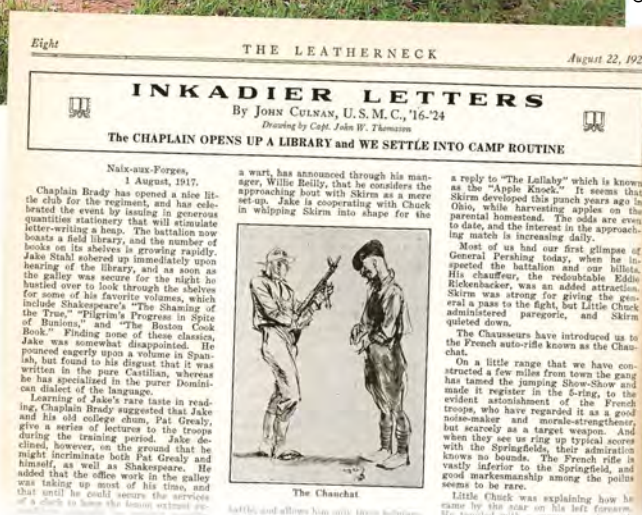
HONORING “THE KIPLING OF THE CORPS”—During a dedication ceremony in Oakwood Cemetery, Huntsville, Texas, May 18, the Texas Historical Commission recognized Marine Colonel John W. Thomason Jr. as a significant part of Texas history by placing an Official Texas Historical Marker at his gravesite.

First Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment, based in Houston, Texas, provided a color guard for the ceremony. Pictured from the left are: Lance Corporal Antonio D. Willis, Sergeant Trace E. Anderson, Sgt Javier F. King and LCpl Eric Rangel.

A veteran of World War I, Captain John W. Thomason Jr. was awarded the Navy Cross, the Silver Star and a Purple Heart for actions during the fighting at Soissons. He came from a well-to-do family in Huntsville, Texas, and joined the Marine Corps on the day the United States declared war. When the war ended, rather than returning to his prosperous family and the life they had mapped out for him, Thomason decided to make a career as a U.S. Marine.

Not only was Thomason a combat-tested Marine, he was a gifted writer and illustrator. *Leatherneck* began publishing his work beginning in mid-1925—his drawings added life to the magazine’s column Inkadier Letters.

Thomason published several books of stories and illus-




LEATHERNECK ARCHIVES

trations, beginning with “Fix Bayonets!” in 1927. Numerous other books followed, earning him the nickname “the Kipling of the Corps.”

When he died in 1944, he was still faithfully serving his beloved Marine Corps.

Editor’s note: Thank you to Leatherneck reader, Kent Knudson, who attended the ceremony and let us know about the event. 🍌



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