

JANUARY 2021

MAGAZINE OF THE MARINES

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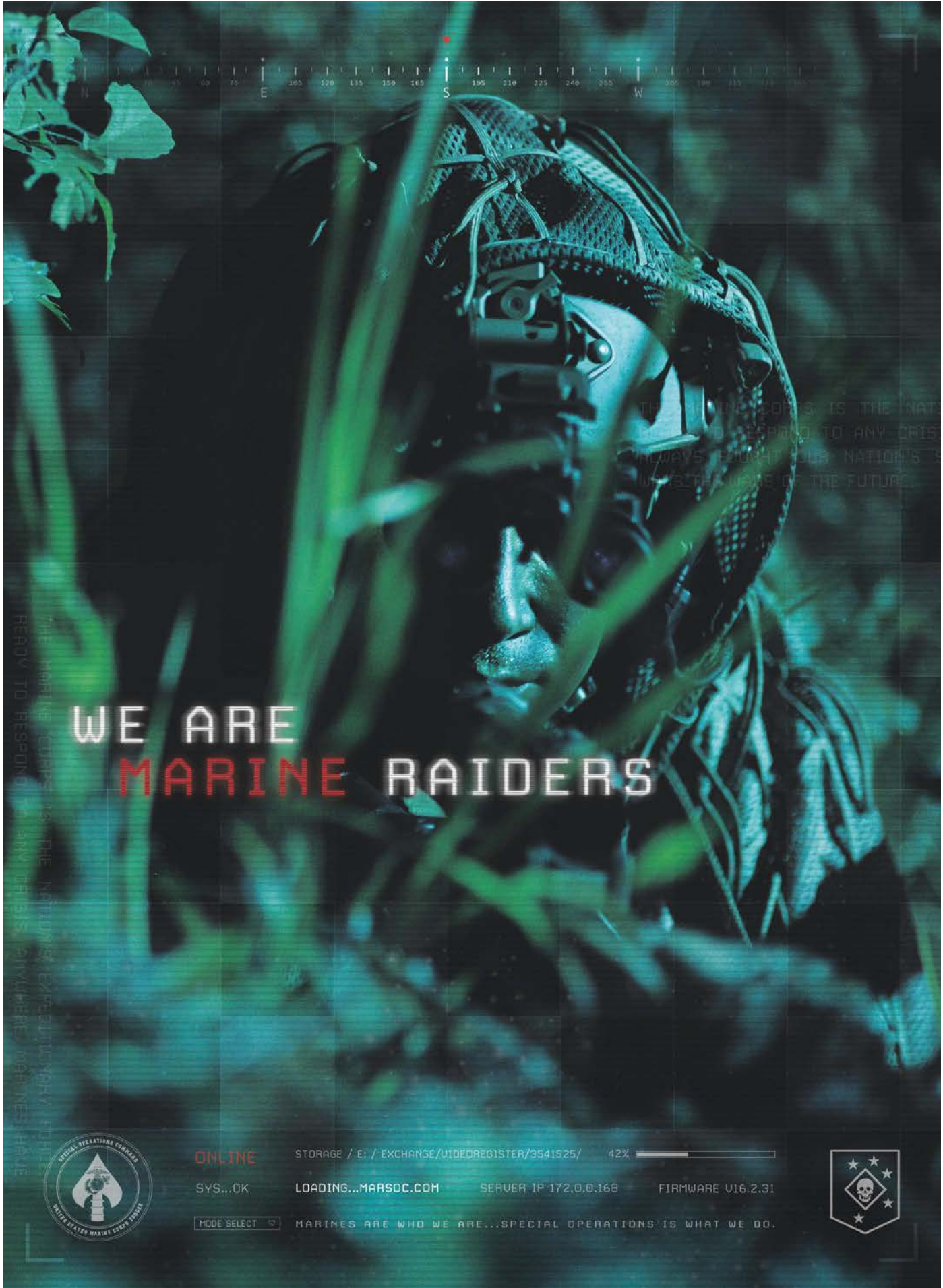
“QRF, Mount Up!”

**Grunt Life in Helmand
Was Far From Ordinary**

**SgtMaj Troy E. Black:
These are the Corps'
Non-Negotiables**

**Crow's Nest 1971:
Marines of 2/1
Had Bird's-Eye View
Of Enemy Rockets**





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JANUARY 2021
VOL. 104, No. 1

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COVER: U.S. Marines with 1st Bn, 9th Marines provide security inside a compound during a clearing mission in a village in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, Nov. 6, 2013. The unit conducted the mission to clear areas that were known enemy strongholds. Photo by Sgt Eric Wilterdink, USMC. Read more about 1/9 in Afghanistan on page 36. Copies of the cover may be obtained by sending \$2 (for mailing costs) to *Leatherneck* Magazine, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134-0775.

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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.)

I was the company commander of an engineer company at Camp Pendleton when a new second lieutenant came to me and said there had been a terrible mistake. He had graduated from Princeton with a degree in English, and when he joined the Marine Corps, he wrote "Eng" on his papers and was told, "Great! We need engineers!" He asked me what he should do. I told him he had a fine platoon sergeant and to listen to him! He went on to be a fine engineer officer and took every assignment I gave him with vigor.

He later was able to change his MOS from engineer to infantry and he went on to have a very honorable career. As a captain in Vietnam, he was awarded the Silver Star and was severely wounded and not expected to live. A Navy chaplain, Victor Krulak Jr., knew Hank and ensured that he was triaged appropriately, basically saving his life. Hank told me about waking up in the hospital in the Philippines where he was sure he was in heaven as there was an angel looking down on him. When he came to his senses, he found out the angel was Ann Margaret.

Lieutenant General Hank C. Stackpole was deep selected more than once. Years later, I was a major and the operations officer for the base facilities department when Hank came by to see me. He was a lieutenant colonel and outranked me. Then, after serving in many important leadership positions, including as commanding general of the 3rd Marine Division, he retired from his last billet as Commanding General, Fleet Marine Forces Pacific. Hank would often call me and announce, "A Murphy-trained Marine got promoted!"

A couple of years ago I was concerned about his health and flew to Hawaii. We spent a very delightful week exploring his island and really enjoyed our time together. Over these many years we stayed in constant contact. I shall miss him forever and say a daily prayer for his soul and for his lovely wife, Vivien.

Maj James L. Murphy, USMC (Ret)
Los Osos, Calif.

What Ever Happened to Ron Suci

Does anyone remember our poet Ron Suci? I admired his poems and prose. I heard he became a professor at the Citadel. Was any of his material ever printed in a book? He was a sergeant in Vietnam and in my opinion expressed the war so vividly it brings tears to one's eyes.

James A. Jones
Gladewater, Texas

• *We contacted Ron Suci and he said: "A recent call from Leatherneck, prompted by a reader's curiosity, invoked a whisper of memory on my part. I looked back over an association with our magazine which was initiated in 1986. It was a full and compelling adventure, a decade and a half, consisting of publications and assignments that even carried me back to Vietnam with a Medal of Honor recipient Colonel Harvey C. "Barney" Barnum. Now, at 78 years old ... that whisper of memory rekindles more than 20 years in law enforcement and an additional 20 as a college professor. Retirement in Florida includes museum work, guest lectures and a lot of memories."*—Editor

"The Wake Story"

"The Wake Story" in the August 2020 issue was a most interesting article but somebody missed an important side note. The author, Sergeant Ernie Harwell, USMC, went on to become a famous baseball sportscaster. For years, he was known as the "Voice of the Tigers" for the Detroit Tigers.

Anyone who knew him will tell you he was loved and highly respected. Ernie passed away on May 4, 2010, to join his wife, Lulubelle. RIP, Marine.

Sgt Daniel J. Skrobowski
USMCR, 1954-1962
Sterling Heights, Mich.

Jack Lummus, Football Phenom

The November 2020 issue of *Leatherneck* contained a story by retired Colonel Keith Oliver titled, "Football Phenoms: Corps Has Fielded Gridiron Greats." He begins by naming Marines who played football after fulfilling their military obligation, then introduces us to 11 Marines who "... played ball before their Marine Corps service, including Saturday afternoon heroes and warrior-leaders of some renown." Col Oliver overlooked a warrior-leader of great renown—a World War II Medal of Honor recipient.

Jack Lummus, born Andrew Jackson Lummus Jr., was an honorable mention All-American end for Baylor University and played as a two-way end for the New York Giants in the 1941 football season.

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, he shipped into the Marine Corps. On March 8, 1945, 29-year-old First Lieutenant Jack Lummus was leading 3rd Platoon, "Easy" Company, 2nd Battalion, 27th Marines, 5th Marine Division toward the Iwo Jima coast east of Kitano Point. After being knocked off his feet by a grenade, Lt Lummus got back into the fight and eliminated an enemy gun emplacement. Continuing to the next fortified position, he was the target of another Japanese grenade which severely injured his shoulder. Undaunted, Jack Lummus dispatched the occupants of the next hostile emplacement and then another one after that before stepping on a land mine.

Despite the horrific trauma to his legs and massive internal injuries, 1stLt Lummus remained conscious and urged his men to keep moving forward, and advance they did, gaining an incredible 300 more yards.

Brought to the rear for medical treatment, Jack Lummus received 18 pints of blood in a futile effort to save his life. Sensing the end was near, he looked up at one of the doctors attending him and said, "Doc, it looks like the New York Giants have lost a damn good end."

Gary Wilk
USMC, 1976-1980
Pittsfield, Mass.

I am a long-time reader of *Leatherneck*. Early in my career, I served as a hospital corpsman in the 1st and 3rd Marine Divisions. As a football fan, I was especially interested in Colonel Keith Oliver's outstanding article, "Football Phenoms" in your November 2020 issue.

There is one Marine who was not mentioned in the article, but unquestionably warrants inclusion on the roster of Marine Corps' greatest football stars. That is First Lieutenant Jack Lummus, who served with E, 2/27, 5thMarDiv on Iwo Jima. Prior to World War II, he played for Texas Military College and Baylor, receiving awards for his high caliber of play. In the NFL, Jack played for the 1941 New York Giants as an end. In 2015, the Giants inducted him into the team's Ring of Honor.

Jack Lummus made his most important

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accomplishments as a United States Marine. Serving as a platoon leader in "Easy" Company on March 8, 1945, he led his Marines forward against multiple enemy pillboxes, destroying several himself. He was wounded in this action, and a short time later lost his legs in a landmine explosion. He died of his wounds the same day. For his heroism in combat, Jack received the Medal of Honor posthumously.

To me, Jack Lummus is an example of that which is best in our nation. He gallantly gave his life and deserves our eternal respect and admiration.

1stSgt Mark W. Flowers, USA (Ret)
Veneta, Ore.

Supporting Arms, A Thing of the Past

Astounding! That is the first word that comes to mind. "Say it isn't so" is my response to Sergeant John Wear's Sound Off letter in the September issue entitled, "USMC Supporting Arms a Thing of the Past." I have been a Marine for more than 75 years and a tanker in the Korean War. I fired the first shot of the war from Company B, 1st Platoon, First Tank Battalion, 1st Marine Division, on Sept. 16, 1950, on the outskirts of Inchon. From Inchon to Seoul and Wonsan to the Chosin Reservoir, we were in an offensive mode and it became clear to me that armies gain momentum from armor, artillery and air power and only then does the queen of battle (infantry) fill in the vacuum and occupy and advance.

When large-scale offensive forces were employed, the tanks led the attacks, and the infantry rode on our backs or walked behind. Since Marines are trained for offense with little thought given to defense, it is imperative that when fortunes change, the very supporting arms that got them there are readily available.

Can you imagine having to call the Army for assistance to send tank or artillery on a moment's notice? The Marine Corps developed the concept of close air support and perfected amphibious assault to a science and by their very creed, "Semper Fidelis," are true to each other. So, to strip them from this cohesiveness is insane. I don't know who is advising the Commandant on this, but I suspect that it is the same destructive forces that were sponsored by Truman and Johnson.

Cpl John D. Mixon
USMC, 1945-1951
Bakersfield, Calif.

I served in Vietnam from March 1968 to October 1969 with Mortar Battery, 3rd Bn, 11th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, FMF (Reinforced). We were very good at what we did. I find the idea

of taking artillery and close air support away from grunts is wrong. It says that they can call on the Army for fire missions and the Air Force for close air support. What if they can't or won't provide said support?

When the Marines were at Khe Sanh, they had their own artillery support already there with them. Marine and Navy provided all the close air support they needed. I understand that when the 101st Airborne Division offered to help by opening the highway, the Marines said "No, thank you, we have this." The North Vietnamese Army had enough and left the area after a few months. It seems to me that the French Foreign Legion surrendered at Dien Bien Phu.

Is this a step in the direction of doing away with the Marine Corps? I hope not.

Charles P. Landt III
San Antonio, Texas

Graduation Spectators

This is in response to Sergeant Lloyd Stimson's Sound Off letter titled, "Basic Training Graduation Spectators" in the October 2020 issue. I graduated from Platoon 360, the regimental honor platoon, MCRD San Diego in November 1965. The graduation was held on the parade field, aka "large grinder," located in the center of the facility adjacent the base theater. There were no bleachers there at that time, but spectators were indeed allowed to attend the graduation. Our family members and friends were directed to the steps of the base theater where they stood and watched the graduation ceremony. Once we were dismissed, the spectators joined us on the parade field for photos and congratulatory greetings.

They have since installed bleachers for the spectators in the southeast corner. When we graduated, there were administration buildings on the east side and recruit Quonset huts on the west side. It was a great time for all as we didn't have visitor day due to intense training in preparation for Vietnam. We graduated in long-sleeve tropical shirts, ties, barracks covers and shooting medals. There was no National Defense Ribbon worn at that time.

A great day that I will never forget.

Sgt John H. Allen
USMC, 1965-1974
Fountain Valley, Calif.

Confederate Battle Flag

After reading the letters concerning the removal of the Confederate Flag, the responses and rereading the Commandant's letter, I had mixed feelings and my response refers to only military bases.

Is it right to remove symbols of our

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nation's history be they the symbol of a good or bad period? No, it's not. Marines are an integral part of that history.

Is it right to keep historical symbols even if they reflect an era of slavery, the end of which led to years of segregation and discrimination? No, it's not. However,

if the symbols are to be removed, then all politically oriented items and apparel from on base display or wear should be banned in the interest of impartiality.

I grew up in the Bronx and learned about discrimination from my immigrant Irish-born dad who spent 35 years in the fire department of New York from 1939 to 1974. His service was mostly in the disadvantaged minority areas of the Bronx and Harlem and he retired as a deputy chief.

He lived by the FDNY credo, "Don't ask who is in the building. Ask is anyone in the building? And if you don't get a very definite, 'no,' you go in." He brought me up with that, and when I enlisted in our Corps in 1964, that's what I experienced among my brother Marines during Vietnam. Marines help Marines. Just look at how many Medal of Honor citations state that very fact.

I've been retired for a dozen years now and live in Virginia. I have experienced a vast difference in race relations than the segregation and discrimination I witnessed during the late 1960s stationed in North Carolina.

Sgt Joe Doyle
USMC, 1964-1970
Scottsburg, Va.

I didn't think the Commandant sounded like a "whiney little girl" in his letter explaining the banning of the Confederate Flag in Marine Corps facilities but more like a politician tiptoeing through a minefield. It's not his fault. I think he was forced to do it and had no choice in the matter. It's a sad commentary on our society when the Commandant of the most elite fighting force in America has to take time out of his schedule to respond to issues like this.

I'm assuming that all other divisive symbols have been banned also—flags from all other countries Mexico, Great Britain, etc., and all political organizations such as Black Lives Matter, etc.

I'm guessing that next we will see a movement by the pet owners across this country to make the Marines abandon the title of devil dogs as it demeans all dogs, suggesting they are all devils. Sound silly, get ready for it.

What is even more worrisome to me is that some of the politicians in Washington will decide to defund the Marine Corps because it is much too violent. If that happens, Marines, like some of our Hollywood actors have promised, "It's time to move to Australia," but unlike them, will really do it.

Jerry D. Ennis
Fresno, Calif.

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**Sgt Grant Timmerman
And USS *Timmerman***

What a nice and heroic story in the "Saved Round" [October 2020] section on Sergeant Grant Timmerman. The "tin can" destroyers were work horses in neutralizing the Japanese forces in the Pacific. The Navy-Marine forces and other forces worked together to defeat Japan and the Axis forces worldwide. It was an excellent war story of our men and women in combat and of the ship. My brother served on USS *Harry E. Hubbard*, (DD-748), and to this day, I have wondered who Hubbard was and how they named the ship.

John Sanchez
USN, 1961-1966
Hanford, Calif.

• According to our research, *Harry E. Hubbard* commanded USS *Meredith* in the early 1940s. The destroyer ship was escorting another ship with much needed fuel and ordnance for the forces on Guadalcanal when it was sunk by Japanese planes. Only eight officers and 73 enlisted men from the 273-man crew survived. Despite burns and other wounds from the attack, CDR Hubbard made it off the ship just before it sank. He succumbed to his wounds before being rescued.—Editor

National Cemetery of the Pacific

The inscription at the National Cemetery of the Pacific mentioned in the October 2020 Sound Off letter, "Ernie Pyle at the Punchbowl," from Bill Haase as the place of burial of Ernie Pyle, has an interesting history. In 1864, the governor of Massachusetts wrote President Abraham Lincoln that a Mrs. Bixby had lost five sons in the Civil War. Lincoln has been credited with the letter that contains this line, "I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom."

There is some controversy surrounding the letter as only two of her sons died in battle; one deserted; one was a prisoner of war, and one was honorably discharged. The original letter has never been found, and there is an argument that it was written by John Hay, one of Lincoln's secretaries.

The story was re-created in the movie, "Saving Private Ryan." When General George C. Marshall became aware that Ryan's three brothers had died in combat, he invoked the War Department's sole survivor policy. Marshall read the Lincoln letter and orders that Ryan be found and to
[continued on page 66]

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Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Explains Corps' Non-Negotiables

The United States Marine Corps has a long and illustrious history of success on the battlefield. We are unique in the way we train and fight. Our culture is one of competing and winning with a time-tested tradition of evolving to adapt to the current and future warfighting environment.

The Marine Corps is always evolving, but the foundation of who we are never changes. We have constantly reinforced the basics throughout our history. We know that in every battle and skirmish, the ingenuity, leadership, and ability of Marines wins the day. New weapons, new equipment, and new tactics have always been a part of how we fight new enemies in new environments, but the adaptability and strength of the individual Marine remains at our core. This is a valuable point when considering how we prepare the next generation of Marines for the next battle. To remain a certain force for an uncertain world our tolerance for change must increase, but we must never accept mediocrity or the lowering of our standards. We are all standing beside one another on the front lines of the future, to be “The most ready, when the Nation is least ready.”

Our Commandant has laid out in his planning guidance his vision for the future of the Marine Corps. In it, he outlines our priorities as a Naval Expeditionary Force, the need to adapt to constantly evolving and complex warfighting domains, the perils of failing to outpace a peer threat, and the increasing reliance on the critical thinking abilities of the individual Marine.

As the Marine Corps evolves to meet

this mission there are some aspects that must never change. I call these simply Non-Negotiables.

The following eight “Non Negotiables” are fundamental to our identity and success as Marines regardless of the battles being fought or the generation of Marines fighting them. Within them,



TROY E. BLACK

19th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps

there can be much debate, but in general they are time proven and lay at the heart of being a Marine.

1. Core Values. This is our foundation. They exist in order to make us better citizens, better leaders, and better warfighters. Our Core Values give us something to aspire to as men and women of honor. When we enter into uncertainty it is Honor, Courage, and Commitment

that carry us through to victory. It is on these insoluble elements that all other Non-Negotiables are built.

2. Discipline and Good Order. Discipline and good order are the hallmarks of a Marine. At its core, discipline is about self-control and a willingness to do the right things in the right ways for the right reasons for organizational success. Discipline is also the instant and willing obedience to lawful orders, respect for authority, and respect for each other. Living a disciplined life is what all Marines must strive to do. We cannot simply choose what orders to follow and which to disobey. Discipline is behind the unrelenting drive for perfection described in the NCO and SNCO Creeds. This discipline applies to seniors and subordinates. It applies to everything from uniform regulations to rules of engagement. From the moment we arrive on the yellow footprints or at OCS, we strive to develop in each and every Marine the commitment to live up to our Core Values. This takes discipline, and the result is good order.

3. Professional Military Education (PME) and Professional and Personal Development. There is a difference between the three. Professional Military Education (PME) develops understanding of the functions of our Marine Corps. Warfighting, ethics, and critical thinking skills are all honed within PME, regardless of an individual’s Military Occupational Specialty or their unit’s mission. Professional development is where we learn our craft and refers to those core elements associated with our service



SGT VICTORIA ROSS, USMC

Gen David H. Berger, Commandant of the Marine Corps, left, was the featured speaker at the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Symposium conducted virtually on Oct. 7, 2020. SMMC, SgtMaj Troy E. Black, right, hosted the seminar in which senior enlisted advisors from throughout the Marine Corps discussed emerging issues and challenges facing the Marine Corps today.

that apply to all Marines. Strenuous and demanding professional development schools, courses, and evaluations are the bedrock of our winning culture. Personal development refers to the education opportunities that exist through tuition assistance and other means. Each Marine should strive to accomplish excellence in all these areas. Off-duty education and other vocational programs that help to develop cognitive skills and problem solving capabilities are vital to developing enlisted Marines to operate in a competitive environment. There is no doubt the combination of PME focused on warfighting and Marine Corps common skills combined with the individual pursuit of higher education and advanced vocational certification makes the Marine Corps a more lethal and capable fighting force.

4. Physicality and Expeditionary Mindset. Those who have been in combat know it is a physically and mentally demanding environment. We know physical fitness has bearing on a leader's

Our Commandant has laid out in his planning guidance his vision for the future of the Marine Corps ... As the Marine Corps evolves to meet this mission there are some aspects that must never change. I call these simply Non-Negotiables.

ability to sustain their presence of mind during periods of extreme stress. To ensure we are able to keep a clear head during combat, we must demand the highest standard of fitness from ourselves and our subordinates. This focus on fitness leads to a competitiveness that fuels the winning nature of Marines. Fitness includes more than just the physical aspects. Physical, mental, and spiritual fitness all combine to form total fitness. These elements of fitness allow Marines to persevere in any climate and place. Developing perseverance is key to success on the battlefield and in truly mastering the ability to operate in expeditionary environments. The past has shown us we can expect to operate from locations where the most meager of infrastructure exists. We must prepare every day to be fit of mind, body, and soul.

5. Training for the Purpose of Warfighting. As Marines we fight and we win. To be "the most ready when the nation is least ready" is the purpose of

Having respect for our Nation, the civilians we serve, and to each other is essential to our existence and as a Corps. Being a Marine means setting the standard and we must never diminish the importance of who we are, what we stand for.

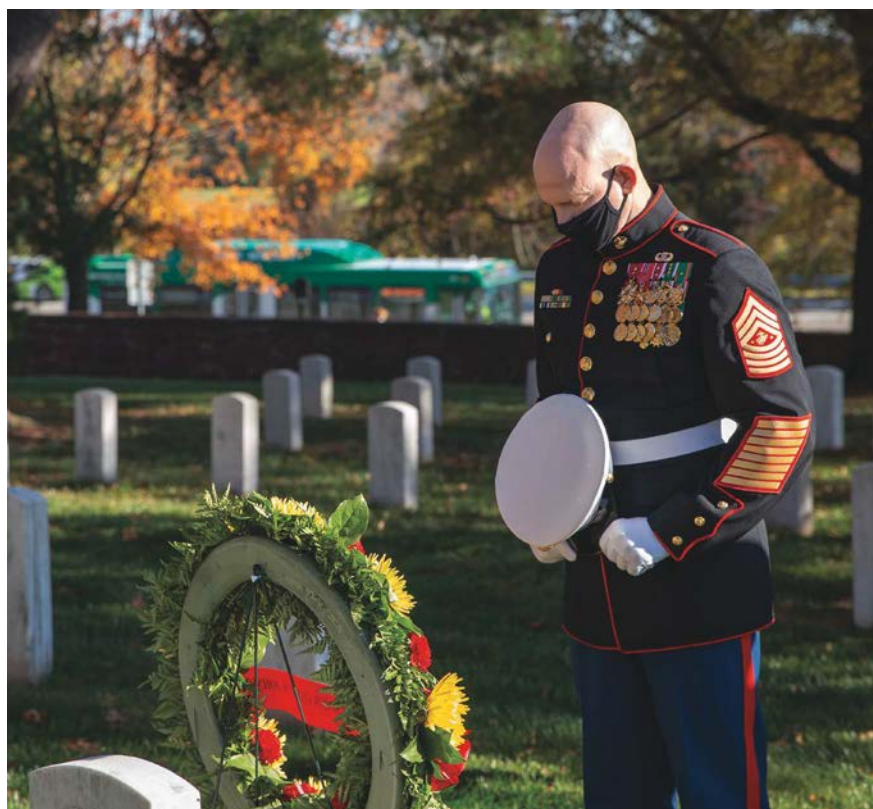
everything we do. In order to achieve this, we must be prepared to conduct combat operations at any time in any place. Our core belief that “Every Marine is a rifleman” is central to our identity and key to our ability to accomplish this mission. Utilizing available time and resources on training that is realistic and demanding while remaining focused on warfighting must remain a priority. In short we train hard to affect real outcomes in combat. We train as we fight, and we fight to win.

6. History, Tradition and Protocol. Starting with initial training, every Marine is indoctrinated in the Corps’ rich history. By constantly reinforcing and reminding Marines of that legacy, we sustain the transformation from civilian to recruit and from recruit to Marine. As Marines we do not earn the Eagle, Globe, and Anchor, but the right to wear it. With the right to be called Marine comes the responsibility to live up to the history set down by those who came before us. These traditions include seemingly minor things like the celebration of our birthday, the use of naval terminology, our manner of dress, our pride in physical conditioning, pride in our uniforms, pride in grooming and personal appearance, standing when a senior officer enters the room, saluting, administrative accuracy, and simply



SGT VICTORIA ROSS, USMC

Speaking to new lieutenants at The Basic School Nov. 2, 2020, SgtMaj Troy E. Black discusses the relationship between officers and staff noncommissioned officers and the need for strong command teams at all levels in the Marine Corps.



SGT VICTORIA ROSS, USMC

SgtMaj Troy E. Black pays tribute to SgtMaj Gilbert “Hashmark” Johnson at Arlington National Cemetery following the Marine Corps Birthday Wreath Laying Ceremony, Arlington, Va., Nov. 10, 2020.



SgtMaj Troy E. Black addresses Marines assigned to Marine Corps Combat Service Support Schools, during a visit at Camp Johnson, N.C., Feb. 5, 2020. Prior to COVID restrictions being implemented, the SMMC had a busy schedule traveling meeting Marines stationed worldwide. (Photo by Cpl Stephanie E. Soto, USMC)

being respectful. Having respect for our Nation, the civilians we serve, and each other is essential to our existence and as a Corps. Being a Marine means setting the standard and we must never diminish the importance of who we are, what we stand for, and the rigorous military bearing that makes the Marine Corps the world's finest fighting force.

7. Leadership and Leadership Development. Developing, sustaining and expanding the leadership skills of subordinates is the responsibility of each and every leader. There is no greater responsibility or better use of our experience. Consistent mentorship, coaching, teaching, and training is critical to developing the next generation of leaders. Our leadership principles and traits are time tested. The best leaders are those who are bold, take initiative,

display fearlessness, have the ability to inspire others, and are worthy of emulation. Inspiration and emulation are two key elements that appear in both the NCO and SNCO creeds. The duty of every Marine, from one generation to the next, is to mentor subordinates. By passing on our knowledge, skills, and experience we are ensuring that hard won lessons learned in combat are being passed to the next generation of battlefield leadership.

8. Drill and Ceremony. Drill is more than just a show piece. Success in nearly every element of combat can still find a correlation with proficiency in drill. Seemingly routine tasks such as pre-combat inspections, pre-combat checks, first aid, and CBRN responses are learned behaviors that cannot be taught at the time of incident. The precision

and attention to detail that drill and ceremony demands directly contribute to success on the battlefield.

General Carl E. Mundy, Jr. said it best when he published "Leading Marines" in 1995. "Our actions as Marines every day must embody the legacy of those who went before us. Their memorial to us—their teaching, compassion, courage, sacrifices, optimism, humor, humility, commitment, perseverance, love, guts, and glory—is the pattern for our daily lives."

Semper Fidelis,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Troy E. Black".

Troy E. Black
19th Sergeant Major of the
Marine Corps



In Every Clime and Place

Compiled by Sara W. Bock

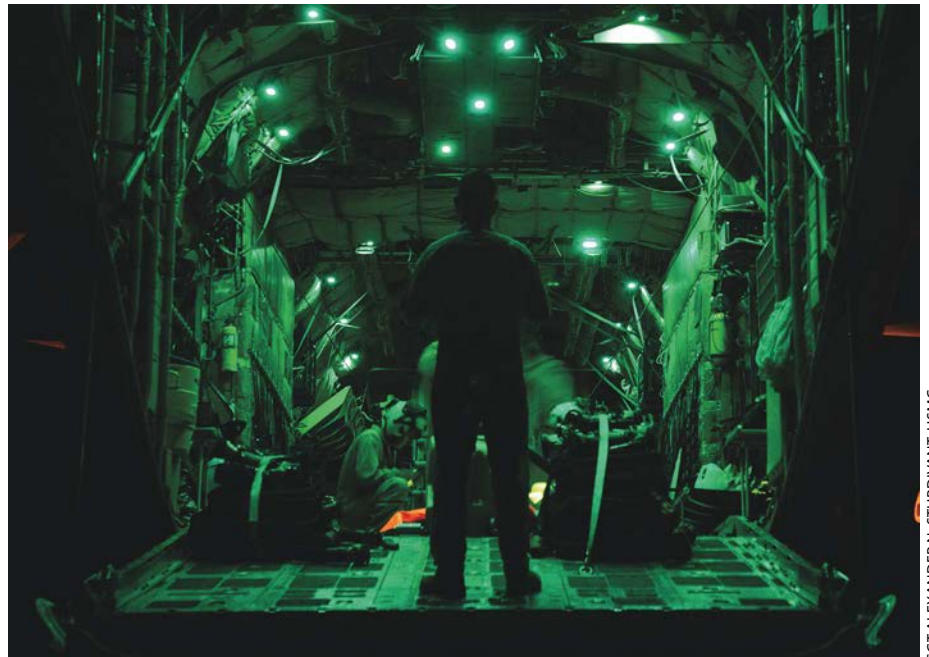
YUMA, ARIZ.

Instructors Complete WTI Course, Contributing to Fleet Readiness

Upon the completion of Weapons and Tactics Instructor (WTI) course 1-21 at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Ariz., Nov. 3, 2020, more than 100 newly qualified instructors returned to their respective squadrons across the Marine Corps.

Culminating with a fully integrated, combined arms exercise encompassing all functions of Marine aviation, WTI prepares graduates to support the Marine air-ground task force with mission planning, briefing and debriefing, threat systems and unit weapons system employment.

“The WTI course is critical to the readiness of not only 3rd MAW, but the whole Marine Corps aviation enterprise. My pilots, crews and maintainers get tremendous opportunities to execute against some very varsity-level problem sets. Make no mistake about it, our lethality across aviation combat functions—from command and control to aviation ground support logistics, and everything in between—is sharpened during WTI. The weapons we carry forward are forged at MAWTS-1 [Marine Aviation Weapons and Tactics Squadron],” said



SGT ALEXANDER N. STURDIVANT, USMC

Above: GySgt Manuel Yanez, a KC-130J Super Hercules loadmaster instructor assigned to MAWTS-1, supervises Marines during an air-delivered ground refueling mission as part of WTI 1-21 at Stoval Airfield, Dateland, Ariz., Oct. 16, 2020.

Below: AH-1Z Vipers supporting WTI 1-21 fly to a forward arming and refueling point near MCAS Yuma, Ariz., Oct. 16, 2020. The seven-week training event, held biannually, provides standardized advanced tactical training and certification of unit instructor qualifications to support Marine aviation training and readiness. (Photo by Sgt Alexander N. Sturdivant, USMC)



Major General Christopher Mahoney, the commanding general of 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing. “All of these capabilities are essential to maintaining 3rd MAW readiness and will ultimately help prepare Marines to effectively move forward and confront challenges across the globe.”

During WTI 1-21, all three of the Corps’ aircraft wings provided aircraft including the F-35C Lightning II, AH-1Z Viper, UH-1Y Venom and CH-53E Super Stallion to support the course, which requires all of the functions of Marine aviation. In conjunction with the course, the Marines of 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment arrived from Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., to conduct predeployment training while supporting WTI.

WTI is a seven-week period of instruction hosted by MAWTS-1 that incorporates Marine Corps planning and implementation of advanced air and ground tactics through a series of escalating evolutions in order to produce certified weapons and tactics instructors. The mission of MAWTS-1 is to provide standardized advanced tactical training and certification of unit instructor qualifications that support Marine aviation training and readiness and to provide assistance in the development and employment of aviation weapons and tactics.

Sgt Dominic Romero, USMC

PHILIPPINE SEA Fight and Deliver: 31st MEU, *America* ARG Build Integrated Blue-Green Team

Over the course of a recent deployment, the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit and *America* Amphibious Ready Group enhanced interoperability within the Navy-Marine Corps team, challenging old patterns and finding new ways to integrate capabilities.

MEUs regularly embark, train and deploy on Navy vessels in order to be prepared to respond to crisis anywhere in the world. Although Marine Corps units regularly deploy with the Navy, there are challenges associated with bringing together personnel from multiple units across two military branches. The 31st MEU and *America* ARG are constantly striving to improve Navy-Marine Corps integration because this teamwork is critical to mission success.

To bridge the gap, integration between the “blue” and “green” teams began at the lowest level with cross-training Marines and Sailors in professional military education. Over the course of the recent deployment, eight Sailors completed the Corporal’s Course alongside their Marine Corps counterparts aboard USS

America (LHA-6). Concurrently, five Marines from Combat Logistics Battalion (CLB) 31 worked through the process of earning the Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist (ESWS) qualification aboard USS *Germantown* (LSD-42), enhancing their understanding of how the surface Navy functions.

Corporal Samuel Romoquezada, a landing support specialist with CLB-31, completed the ESWS qualification as well as the Corporal’s Course with Sailors aboard LSD-42. “I respect the Navy’s jobs more as a result of the training; each Sailor plays a part on the ship every day, 24/7,” Cpl Romoquezada said. When asked about “blue side” participation in Corporal’s Course, he said, “it was great to see how they integrated with us and learned our traditions, such as sword and guidon manual.”

Beyond educating junior service-members, an equally critical step to building a well-integrated team was bringing the right members into the conversation during day-to-day operations before entering the mission planning process.

One group that worked particularly closely together was the intelligence section. After working with Navy counterparts over the course of the deployment, Captain Jesse Schmidt, the 31st MEU collections officer, said, “The ability of the USS *America*’s intelligence team to bring strategic-level reporting to us was invaluable. They are a tremendous resource for us as Marines because they provide context to a lot of the situations and events we otherwise wouldn’t fully appreciate. I’m proud to serve alongside them because I know they make me and



Two Sailors assigned to USS *America* assist a Marine with Amphibious Reconnaissance Plt, 31st MEU, as he climbs down a ladder to board a rigid-hull inflatable boat and conduct a Reconnaissance and Surveillance training mission in preparation for a boat raid in the Philippine Sea, Sept. 9, 2020. (Photo by LCpl Brienna Tuck, USMC)

the intel team better every day we work with them.”

By ensuring that Navy and Marine Corps representatives from all levels of leadership were involved in decision-making, the ARG-MEU team was able to identify creative solutions to potential shortfalls as well as source assets that could better achieve mission success.



CAPT Richard Labron, commodore of Amphibious Squadron 11, left, watches as Maj Brock Lennon, the 31st MEU fires officer, right, demonstrates the capabilities of an android tactical assault kit during a simulated VBSS aboard USS *New Orleans* in the Philippine Sea, Aug. 26, 2020.



SGT DANNY GONZALEZ, USMC

Recon Marines with the Maritime Raid Force and Marines with BLT 2/4, 31st MEU, ride with Sailors in a U.S. Navy rigid-hull inflatable boat assigned to dock landing ship USS *Germantown* during a reconnaissance and surveillance mission in the East China Sea, Sept. 15, 2020.

This combined approach to planning paid off early in the deployment during visit, board, search and seizure rehearsals when the MEU opted to insert an assault force from Navy MH-60S helicopters with Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 24 instead of relying solely on Marine Corps air assets.

“Throughout the underway period, HSC-25 went above and beyond with their involvement in the MEU’s training missions. Having personally known many of the HSC-25 pilots from flight school, it was nice to catch up and learn a bit more about each other’s platforms,” said Captain Peter LaMoe, an MV-22B Osprey pilot with Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 262 (Reinforced). “Integrating with the ship’s Air Department and MH-60S detachment is something that is unique to the MEU and serves as a great opportunity to build creative thinking into mission planning,” added LaMoe.

Navy and Marine Corps planners also identified the possibility of inserting reconnaissance and surveillance teams via the ARG’s rigid-hull, inflatable boats (RHIB) instead of relying solely on the combat rubber raiding craft. RHIBs provided the Amphibious Reconnaissance Platoon with a faster and steadier option for inserting the teams at a lower footprint, allowing them to conduct missions with less risk even in a higher sea state.

“Blue-green integration is absolutely essential for the future of our joint force,” said Captain Rich LeBron, USN, commander of Amphibious Squadron 11. “We’re talking about our future battle

force bringing a higher concentration of effective firepower to our adversaries’ doorsteps, while keeping the team fit to ‘fight and deliver.’ Anything we can do to improve our mutual capability, capacity and lethality now will enable us to stay ahead of our adversaries, move forward as we build and galvanize partnerships, deter conflict, and if necessary, defeat our foes in the Indo-Pacific region.”

Blue-green integration extended beyond mission planning and execution. By bringing Navy and Marine counterparts together to plan early in the deployment, the ARG-MEU team was able to identify better solutions to problems than they would have been able to as two separate units. While the Navy’s capabilities augmented and improved Marine Corps mission execution, the “green side” CLB 31 was able to expedite maintenance for the “blue side” by utilizing 3D-printing technology.

While the MEU embarks with the ARG, the Marines take on the role of the landing force while the Navy serves the amphibious task force. Each are responsible for different portions of mission planning but must be “in sync” with one another to achieve mission success. The land force must rely on the amphibious task force to ensure that they can arrive in the right place, at the right time, with the right assets, to execute any tasking. The amphibious task force supports from the sea while relying on the landing force to project power ashore and to seize key maritime terrain in support of fleet maneuver.

“When it comes to naval integration, the Commandant of the Marine Corps has determined that the time for deliberation is over: now is the time for action,” said Colonel Michael Nakonieczny, the commanding officer of the 31st MEU. “I have been nothing short of impressed by the commitment and dedication displayed by the Sailors of the *America* ARG and their leadership. As the landing force, the MEU is reliant on our relationship with the ARG, and they have continually proven their critical worth to us as well as their willingness to sacrifice for the sake of the mission. The blue-green team is one in, all in,” he added.

Integration within the Navy-Marine Corps team is both an art and a science—one that the 31st MEU and *America* ARG are committed to mastering. In order to remain ready and lethal while operating in a more distributed domain, both commands recognize that fully integrating the blue-green team is more than just a good idea: it’s a necessity.

The 31st MEU, the Marine Corps’ only continuously forward-deployed MEU, provides a flexible and lethal force ready to perform a wide range of military operations as the premier crisis response force in the Indo-Pacific region.

31st MEU

BRIDGEPORT, CALIF. Marines With 2/2 Battle Cold, Mountainous Terrain During MTX

Marines with 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division arrived on a cold night for the five-week Mountain Training Exercise (MTX) 1-21 at Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center Bridgeport, Calif., Oct. 2-Nov. 13, 2020.

During the exercise, Marines trained to effectively work in extreme weather and terrain conditions while conducting survival training.

“This is great training out here for us,” said Lance Corporal Jordan Lyeick, an assistant patrol leader and rifleman with “Fox” Company, 2/2. “We don’t get to learn these things at Camp Lejeune.”

Marines with “Easy,” “Fox” and “Golf” Companies conducted a 14-day mobility operation as part of MTX, and for many, it was their first time participating in cold weather training.

“If we went into combat, most of the areas we would go, this would be the terrain,” said Lyeick. “It’s good to be able to feel the weight of a pack, going up and down mountains.” He added that the training was very different than what they normally had but was needed.

Marines with Headquarters Company, 2/2, who work in administration, intelligence, operations and logistics, took part



LCPL SARAH HEDIGER, USMC

Leathernecks with Headquarters Co, 2/2 step off on a 3-mile conditioning hike to help acclimate them to the higher altitude during MTX 1-21 at MCMWTC Bridgeport, Calif., Oct. 19, 2020.

in MTX as well. They practiced setting up and taking down a command operations center in the field, driving tactical vehicles in a mountainous environment, and operating communication and computer systems in cold weather.

Private Benjamin Converse, a small arms repair technician with Headquarters Co, said that the training was about making

sure the company is able to support its subordinate units in a mountainous or cold weather environment.

The overall goal of training like MTX is for all Marines, from administrative specialists to infantry, to know how to operate and work together efficiently in every clime and place.

LCpl Sarah Hediger, USMC

OKINAWA, JAPAN

Fast, Fluid, Together: Japanese, U.S. Marines Exercise Amphibious Capabilities During Keen Sword

During the early hours of Nov. 1, 2020, the silence was broken by the sound of an amphibious assault featuring Japanese Self-Defense Force CH-47JA Chinooks touching down and delivering streams of Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade (ARDB) troops while U.S. Marines hit the beach via small boats briskly navigating over the horizon from USS *Ashland* (LSD-48) to Gaja-Jima. As they disappeared in fast-moving columns into the foliage of the small, uninhabited island off the coast of Japan, their counterparts to the south were already preparing missile launchers and coordinating fire support against enemy targets on land and sea.

These scenes and more dotted the islands and waters off the coast of Japan for two weeks as U.S. Marines and the JSDF conducted Exercise Keen Sword 21, a bilateral exercise with a series of wide-

LCpl Colton Hunter, a rifleman with "Easy" Co, 2/2, crosses a river during MTX 1-21 at MCMWTC Bridgeport, Calif., Oct. 9, 2020. Marines learned how to build a rope bridge to get troops and equipment across rivers in an efficient manner.



LCPL SARAH HEDIGER, USMC

ranging missions focused on strengthening the interoperability of forces forged through a 60-year alliance.

Japanese ARDB members took point alongside Marines with 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment arriving from the air and sea in a bilateral amphibious assault on Gaja-Jima, as troops from both forces landed simultaneously on the remote island demonstrating the ability to eliminate an occupying enemy.

“Working with the Japanese forces, I could tell they are masters of their trade. Setting up bilateral security upon insertion and relaying information across units came with ease,” said Corporal Juan Pena, a team leader with 1/3.

This mission showcased a combined ability to seize territory threatened by an adversary, defend key maritime areas and establish expeditionary advanced bases for follow-on operations through swift, integrated and lethal action.

“Our interaction with the ARDB was seamless as if we previously trained with that specific unit,” said Sergeant Ashton Wilson, a squad leader with 1/3. “I would not hesitate to serve with them in combat or other operations.”

More than 200 miles to the south, a complex but effective integrated joint targeting and fire support coordination effort maintained a blistering pace as elements of the U.S. Army’s 17th Field Artillery Brigade joined 12th Marine Regiment and 3rd Marine Division in mobile command-and-control nodes on Camp Hansen and Camp Courtney in Okinawa. Employing deliberate and dynamic targeting against land, sea and

air targets, these Marines and soldiers further enabled the bilateral amphibious force to maneuver through the littorals while supporting naval operations at sea.

One such precision long-range fires capability was on display as High Mobility Artillery Rockets System (HIMARS) launchers from both the Marine Corps and Army landed on beaches via ocean-going transports in support of an amphibious raid elsewhere in the exercise area. HIMARS launchers can be moved throughout a distributed maritime environment via air, sea or land. This freedom of movement, coupled with the long-range strike capability of HIMARS, means that the U.S.-Japan team can rapidly move precision-fire weapons into position and strike distant targets smoothly.

Meanwhile, Marines from the 5th Air-Naval Gunfire Liaison Company (ANGLICO) integrated into the ARDB and embarked on a Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force ship to enhance combined command and control capabilities to further enable bilateral amphibious operations.

“Our Marines assisted in mission coordination between the JSDF Amphibious Task Force and USS *Ashland* with 1st Bn, 3rd Marines embarked,” said Major Bradley Ebach, air officer with 5th ANGLICO. “During the execution of the bilateral amphibious exercise, we employed a Joint Terminal Attack Controller to assist with close air support and provided liaisons to the ARDB Fire Support Coordination Center during the assault.”

While U.S. and Japanese naval and expeditionary forces continued operations

at sea and established advanced bases, Marines with 1st Bn, 2nd Marines and 1st Bn, 3rd Marines conducted a grueling force-on-force exercise stretching across the challenging terrain of the jungles in northern Okinawa. As the Marines battled through the heat and humidity and thick vegetation in the hilly jungles, members of 1st Bn, 2nd Marines and the JSDF’s 15th Brigade exercised command and control through combined operations centers located on Camp Foster and Marine Corps Air Station Futenma.

“This force-on-force evolution in a jungle environment provided a realistic training opportunity focused on defeating a peer adversary in any clime and place,” said Maj Dennis Grazioski, who brings combat experience from Afghanistan to his current assignment as operations officer for 1st Bn, 2nd Marines. “Integrating these operations with joint and bilateral command and control nodes at other locations on Okinawa increases our interoperability with allies and bolsters our ability to fight together.”

Keen Sword 21, the latest in a series of regularly held exercises between Japan and the United States, represents continuing advancements for the longtime allies in combined operations across an increasingly distributed and complex environment. Through this exercise, the shape of future operations in the region is on display—fast, fluid and together with allies and partners.

3rdMarDiv



During Exercise Keen Sword 21, CWO-2 John Earney, USMC, assistant operations officer with 1/2, left, and Japanese Capt Kazunari Kadokura, executive officer with the JGSDF’s 15th Brigade, right, exercised command and control through combined operations centers located on Camp Foster and MCAS Futenma, Okinawa, Japan, Nov. 2, 2020.

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Reunion in Frisco

By Cpl Leonard Riblett, USMC

For Technical Sergeant Raymond Eccles, a China Marine, the war with Japan began on Nov. 24, 1941, and it did not end until March 20, 1946. Pearl Harbor and the signing of the peace aboard USS *Missouri* (BB-63) to him are but incidental, though important, dates.

On Nov. 24, 1941, Eccles, then a staff sergeant in the Marine garrison at Peking, knew war was near and sent his beautiful bride of two days back to the safety of the International Settlement in Shanghai. He did not know that they both were to be prisoners of the Japanese, nor did he know that it would be four years, four months and four days before they were to meet again.

Theirs is a romance that might have been written by the late Colonel John W. Thomason Jr., master teller of tales about Marines in China.

Raymond Eccles enlisted in the Corps on March 5, 1934. He was 18 years old and two weeks out of high school. He wanted adventure. He found it in a hurry. Three weeks after he entered boot camp in San Diego he was shipped to China where replacements were needed in the famed and colorful Legation Guard at Peking.

Private Eccles looked upon North China and liked what he saw. For there are the Western Hills and beyond the Western Hills is the Great Wall of China. In Peking he found the Imperial City with its red plastered walls and the purple walls of the Forbidden City. Peking, the city of Kublai Khan, had the same fascination for this 18-year-old Marine that it had had for a Venetian lad more than six centuries before. Here it was that Marco Polo had found the Great Khan.

Pvt Eccles served with the Legation Guard for 11 months. Then he was laid

low by typhus fever and pneumonia and learned that to live in China one must live wisely. He was lucky to survive this siege. When he did recover, he was transferred on a doctor's order to the 4th Marines in Shanghai.

It was there that he found Margaret Silver. Eccles often played basketball at the Navy YMCA in Shanghai. So did the Erin Villa girls club. It was there that Eccles first saw Margaret, who was

She also likes Coca Cola, which was a break for Pvt Eccles since that is how he met her.

While Eccles knew that he was in love, he knew that it would require quite a campaign to win the vivacious Margaret. He would have to wait a long time before they could be married. Shanghai duty was good duty, so he didn't mind waiting. Besides, there wasn't much he could do about it.

There was—and is—much to do in Shanghai, which is one of the world's truly cosmopolitan cities. The rate of exchange made even a private relatively well off. The food was good. The liquor was better. A good fight could be had for the asking and sometimes without having to ask. One of the best of these was staffed via the Shanghai radio which played recordings and dedicated them upon request. When England's King Edward VIII abdicated his throne on Dec. 11, 1936, to marry Wallis Simpson, the Marines asked the Shanghai radio to play "My Kingdom for a Kiss," dedicating it to the British Seaforth Highlanders, then stationed in Shanghai. That started a wonderful brawl.

So Eccles was having a fine time and making good progress in his campaign to win Margaret when his

30-month tour of duty ended.

He was returned stateside in February of 1937 and it was good to be home again—in a way. But after a few weeks, Eccles applied for China duty, for an obvious reason whose name was Margaret. It took him six months to get back with the 4th Marines and three months later he was engaged to Margaret.

In those days China Marines were discouraged from marrying unless they were in the staff pay grade or higher. Margaret, then 19, was still in school,



then 16. Hers was the delicate beauty of fine porcelain. She was tiny and lovely. It was love at first sight for Pvt Eccles.

Margaret Silver is the daughter of a British customs patrol official and his Cantonese wife. Like most daughters of cultured families in China, she has, by Western standards, a remarkable education. She speaks English and French, Canton and Mandarin, and she can get along fairly well in Russian, Portuguese and Japanese. There is warmth and personality in her soft British accent.

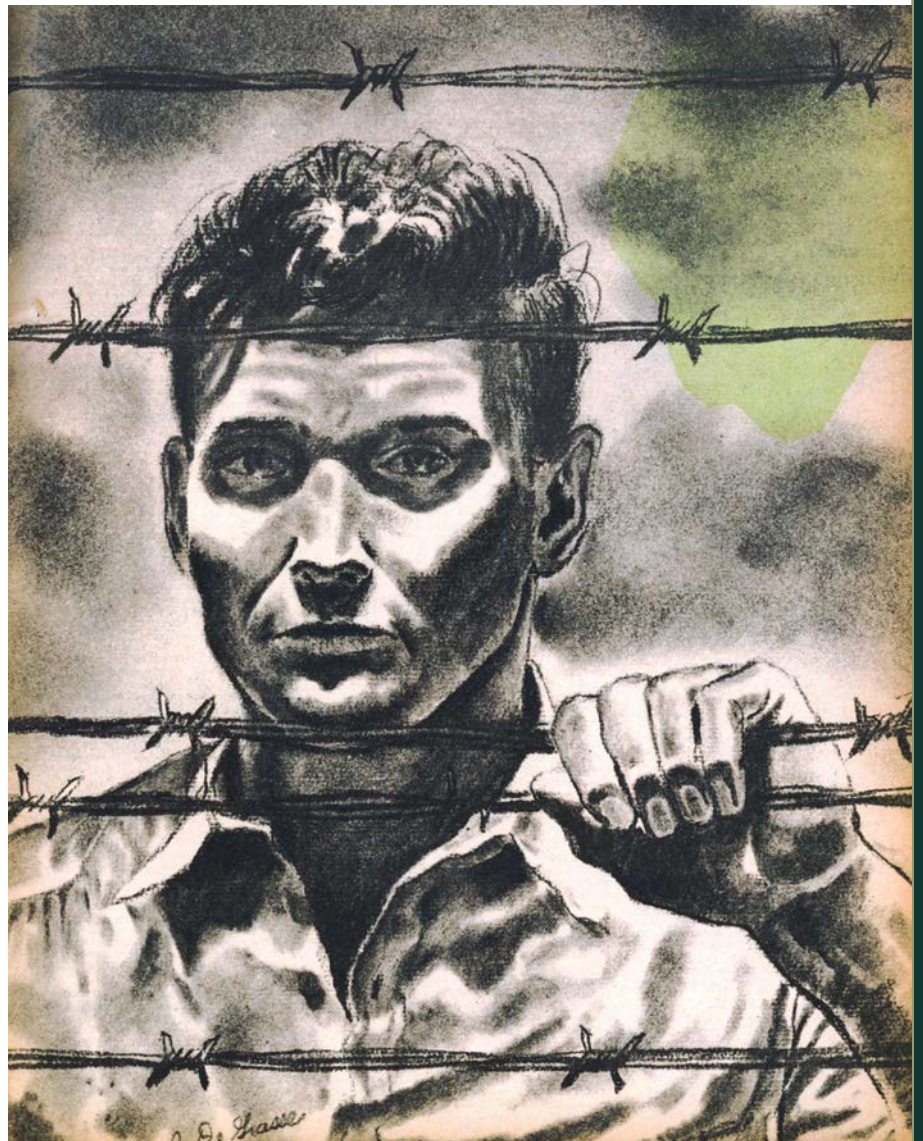
so Eccles concentrated on those extra stripes. He was still trying when his first cruise ended. He extended for two years.

But in 1940 he again headed stateside and on March 6 was discharged, planning to return to China as a civilian so that he and Margaret could be married. Margaret did not wish to leave China so Eccles planned to enter business and make Shanghai his home.

At that time a Chinese business owner would sign over his business to an American to gain the protection of the United States flag. Eccles did not figure on the State Department, which was refusing passports to China because it was a war zone. He discovered this while working for passage money at the Lockheed Aircraft Plant in Burbank. There was only one way for Eccles to get back, so in September 1940, he reenlisted, and the following January was on his way. He tried to make Shanghai but was sent, instead, to Peking. Three weeks later Margaret moved to Peking to live with relatives.

Eccles had made buck sergeant by then, and in November earned his first stripe down. Although they knew war was certain—every Marine in China knew this and had known it for months—he and Margaret were married on Nov. 22. Two days later he sent her to Shanghai over her indignant protests.

The days that followed were hectic for the Marines in Peking. Most of their weapons and ammunition had been sent to the Philippines. Officers were in the radio and decoding room day and night. It was only a question of hours before the war the China Marines knew was inevitable and for which the Marine Corps had been preparing would break



out. On Dec. 8, the warning came by radio. All hands knew what Pearl Harbor meant to the small garrison. So everyone ordered double portions of waffles and sausage for breakfast, figuring this might be their last good meal for a long time. Then they waited.

At 1300, Col W.W. Ashurst officially surrendered. There was nothing else he could do. They had but one case of ammunition since the garrison had been preparing to move. Eccles says they would have fought with empty beer bottles had Col Ashurst given the order. They were confident the war would last but a few months and they jeered the pessimist who hinted it would be six months before Japan was crushed. They had seen the Japanese soldier and compared him to the China Marine. They underestimated the Japanese and they did not know how badly the United

States had been crippled at Pearl Harbor. Nor did they know that in the overall Allied strategy the war in Europe was to have top priority.

The Marines were kept in Peking for three weeks. Their captors, soldiers of the regular Japanese garrison, treated them decently. Even their personal effects were untouched. Then, with the rest of the North China Marines, they were sent to Tientsin. For the month they were there, they were treated with respect, even being granted liberty to attend shows. But this was not to last, for on Feb. 1, 1942, the prisoners were transferred to Shanghai.

On the trip south, their new guards were arrogant, and the Marines began to realize what it really meant to be prisoners of war. Their spirits remained high, especially at Soochow. There, while waiting for the train, the

In those days China Marines were discouraged from marrying unless they were in the staff pay grade or higher. Margaret, then 19, was still in school, so Eccles concentrated on those extra stripes.

Marines marched through the city. It was something of a show for the Japanese, but it had its moments. As they passed a Chinese music shop the proprietor played a record of "The Marines' Hymn." The Chinese knew that stirring march and knew it well. The Japanese guards didn't recognize it. But when the prisoners heard the familiar march, they stepped out with heads high for as snappy a parade as ever was seen in China.

In the Woosung prison camp at Shanghai were 1,500 men. Among them were Major James Devereux and his



Marines from Wake Island. There, too, were the Wake civilians. There were Britons and Koreans, crewmen from the British gunboat *Petrel* and crews from merchant ships. It was a strange collection of men.

Sergeant Eccles was in this camp for more than two years. But he was never ill as were so many of the others because he had lived in China and knew how to survive in China. Some of the prisoners ate raw vegetables or drank

water that had not been boiled. Some would not protect themselves from mosquitoes.

A few of the prisoners just gave up hope and quit. But not Eccles. Margaret was in Shanghai, 5 miles away, and before she too was interned in 1943, she sent him soap and calcium tablets. Her letters, which were limited to one a month, constantly admonished him to be careful of his health and to keep as clean as possible.

"Always remember you are an American," she warned. "Never let yourself go."

By her courage she added to her husband's strength. This courage never failed, even after she was interned.

The prisoners at Woosung were fed as little as possible and forced to do as much heavy work as possible. They built a mountain that was to have been a Japanese shrine. It was 13 meters high and required a year and a half to build. In addition to the large mountain there were nine smaller ones. Instead of becoming a Japanese shrine the whole thing became a rifle range.

The courage of American prisoners of war is well-known. The sabotage they performed is legendary. It was true at Shanghai as elsewhere. The incline railway was wrecked; tools were broken. Progress was slowed as much as possible.

There was one Japanese that Eccles and scores of others vowed to kill if ever they had the chance. He was the senior civilian interpreter, Isamu Ishihara, whom they dubbed the "Beast of the East." He was fond of beating the prisoners with his riding crop. The "water cure" was another of his favorite tortures. He invented needlessly cruel punishments, but mental torture was what he preferred. Mail was delivered every six weeks and if a man received too many letters, the "Beast of the East" would keep them. One prisoner was severely beaten because his wife showed too much affection in her letters. Ishihara forced the unfortunate husband to ask his wife not to write so endearingly and to tell her that Ishihara did not like to read such letters. Even the Japanese

hated this man. They said he was mad. Once a week "Front Day" was held. On this day Ishihara exhorted the prisoners to "make yourselves suffer because your buddies in the front lines are suffering." This treatment was not designed to raise the morale of the prisoners, many of whom had never had a chance to fight the Japanese.

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(Editor's note: In Shanghai on March 7, 1946, bespectacled Isamu Ishihara, the former Honolulu schoolteacher called the "Beast of the East," was convicted of torturing American prisoners of war while serving as an interpreter at the Woosung and Kiangwan prison camps. He was sentenced to life imprisonment at hard labor.)

Because Eccles had had lengthy China duty, knew the ways of the Chinese and could speak their language, he was able to help buy additional food for the underfed camp. Articles of clothing were bartered for eggs and other necessities. American money was exchanged on the black market. Some of the men were caught and tortured in an effort to make them reveal the ringleaders. Only one man ever talked, and he was not a Marine. Eccles was never caught. But despite the extra food and medicines obtained on this black market, it was not enough. Many of the men sickened and died.

Eccles says the men at Shanghai were among the luckiest prisoners of war because the Japanese permitted deliveries of two Red Cross trucks a month. Occasionally, Red Cross packages from home were brought. Their own doctors were allowed to treat the prisoners.

There were the usual mass punishments. Slappings were frequent, though these were more humiliating than painful. The men in Woosung had better treatment than prisoners in other camps for the most part. One reason for this was that their captors were men of a peacetime garrison. A second reason was Maj Luther A. Brown, who wrote, "The Marine's Handbook." Maj Brown, who always was fighting to improve the lot of his men, was at the Japanese throat whenever a man was beaten.

The major could—and would—quote international law at the slightest violation of rules for treatment of prisoners of war. The Marines respected him as an officer and swore by him as a man. They would have followed him

A few of the prisoners just gave up hope and quit. But not Eccles. Margaret was in Shanghai, 5 miles away, and before she too was interned in 1943, she sent him soap and calcium tablets. Her letters, which were limited to one a month, constantly admonished him to be careful of his health and to keep as clean as possible.



into hell. The Marines refused to bow to their captors and they seldom saluted. They were well-treated by one Japanese doctor called Shindo and according to Sgt Eccles, "Any man in the camp would buy him a beer." He was one Japanese that would look away, or drop his head, to show he did not expect a prisoner to salute him. But there were others who were vicious sadists. Among these was one called, "Shuffle Foot," and another, who loved the music of Beethoven, had "Dirty Neck" for a nickname.

Although it was useless to try, there were attempts to escape. A charged fence around the camp killed several men. One prisoner, a civilian, was shot dead by a Japanese sentry. The Japanese took his body outside the fence, photographed it and thus "proved" he had been trying to escape. The sentry was then transferred to another camp.

In June of 1944, when the war had gone into reverse for Japan, the prisoners were transferred to the Shanghai race-track to bury huge stores of oil and gasoline that had been confiscated from Allied oil companies. They stayed there for nearly a year. From the grapevine to be found in any prison they learned something of the progress of the war. They had heard of the Superfortress, but it was not until Armistice Day, 1944, that they saw them.

That was a wonderful day for the prisoners in Shanghai. The B-29s came in high and when those proud giants loosed their bombs there was not a prisoner who was not cheering. The Japanese anti-aircraft fire failed to reach the "Superforts." But the bombers reached the Japanese. Any diversion was welcome at Kiangwan, and one of these was "Photo Joe," a P-38 recon plane that came over daily. The prisoners soon were watching for Photo Joe and could spot him long before the Japanese could. It was not long before the Japanese were watching the prisoners and when they saw that they had seen the P-38, they would sound the air raid alarm.

The men in Kiangwan first saw the North American Mustangs on Easter Sunday, 1945, and those speedy fighters broke up their ball game. They cheered as if insane when the American planes shot up everything in sight. They would have cheered more had they known that at the same moment American forces were invading Okinawa. The prisoners now knew more of the truth about the

war situation for new prisoners in the camp were fliers shot down over China. These newsmen suffered the most, for the Japanese, in their impotent hatred of American air strength, really worked them over.

In May of 1945, the invasion-jittery Japanese moved the prisoners to Korea. It was a terrible journey. Fifty men were jammed in one boxcar, the doors of which were left open. Barbed wire was strung the width of the car on each side of the open doorways.

The men had to sleep in shifts. It was bitterly cold. The food was vile—when there was any food. Thus, they made the long journey north. From Korea they were shipped across the straits to Hokkaido. American fighter planes were attacking all trains and all shipping for there was nothing to indicate they were transporting prisoners. And if there had been, there would have been no assurance that it was not a subterfuge. Once across the straits they were again jammed into trains, this time 135 men to one boxcar. In Tokyo they were stoned by the fear-crazed Japanese populace.

The sight of smashed and still-burning towns was a beautiful sight to these men who had been captives for three years and more. They knew, then, that the war could not last much longer. That knowledge gave them strength. They needed that strength. Their treatment was brutal. They had no medical attention. They were little more than skeletons. Their food was seaweed and rice. They were forced to work in the mines, and so bad were the conditions, so bad the food, that few could have lived through another winter.

July 4, 1945, was a special day. For dinner, the prisoners had fried grasshoppers and rice.

Tuberculosis and beriberi were prevalent, the inevitable result of inadequate diet and fatigue. Work in the mines was little more than slow execution. The men were heartened by bits of news and disheartened by propaganda. Nothing was definite and this in itself was mental torture.

Then they sensed a change.

With no explanation, the night shift in the mines was canceled. This news swept the camp in an instant. Did it mean peace? All of the Japanese guards, supervisors, officers and engineers, stayed close to the radio, and girls were seen to walk away in tears. Men in the brig were released. It had to be peace!

But still there was no announcement from the Japanese.

On Aug. 15 they noticed that air raid curtains had not been lowered in the Korean mining village across the valley. The next day the B-29s were over the camp, dropping food and leaflets that told them the war was over. The prisoners became ill because their weakened stomachs could not hold the rich American foods. That night the Japanese issued one bottle of beer or wine to every five men.

"We wouldn't drink their damned beer," says Sgt Eccles.

The prisoners did their own cooking and gardening, and Margaret was assigned to the galley, where she worked from 0400 to 1800. It was grueling, heartbreaking work. She suffered from malaria and dysentery—and hunger.

The prisoners took over the Japanese guardhouse and the radio and anxiously awaited orders. They were told to stay in the camp to expedite rescue.

While waiting they foraged for fresh food, even trading every article of clothing available for chickens raised by the Koreans. Not one fowl was left in the valley because the Koreans, whom the prisoners pitied as Japanese slaves, needed clothing desperately. They raided Japanese stores, and every man had 43 packages of chewing gum. But they couldn't chew the gum because the sweetness was torture to their rotted teeth.

Waiting for the rescue parties was nerve-racking in the extreme. They expected to be treated "like eightballs," because we had done no fighting." Instead they were treated like kings. They were taken to Yokohama and given new clothing. There were laundry and barber services. Food, good American food, could be had at any time. It was treatment the liberated men needed, because they were bitter and cynical after years of imprisonment. It restored their faith.

Eccles and his buddies were taken to Guam aboard LSTs, and from there were flown to Honolulu, then San Francisco. After treatment in Oak Knoll Hospital, Margaret Eccles' staff sergeant was given a 90-day furlough and flown to Los Angeles. He spent those 90 days trying to get his wife to the United States.

Margaret had been interned in 1942 because she was a British subject. She and her sister, Anita, were given but a week's notice that they would have to move to an internment camp at Yangchow, near Nanking. They moved in on March 13, 1943, with one trunk filled with food and another with clothing. They were allowed only two pieces of luggage and their bedding.

There were 600 prisoners at Yangchow. Most of them were Britons, and more than half were women. There were nearly 100 children in the camp. The prisoners did their own cooking and gardening, and Margaret was assigned to the galley where she worked from 0400 to 1800. It was grueling, heartbreaking work. She suffered from malaria and dysentery—and hunger.

The worst period was from December 1944 to May 1945 when they had only turnips and rice to eat. And they had this three times a day. There was no fuel and the temperature often was below zero. That none of the children died was a miracle. Only the arrival of Red Cross packages saved the lives of many.

The inmates at Yangchow had no official news of progress of the war. But they knew what was happening. Chinese amahs risked their lives to smuggle newspapers into the camp under their clothing. One day they read that the war was over. They wouldn't believe it.

Because of transportation difficulties no Allied representatives could reach Yangchow until three weeks after the end of hostilities. It was not until Oct. 4 that Margaret was released. She returned to her family in Shanghai, at House 27, Lane 77, Nanyang Road, and in the next

four months gained 16 pounds. From the United States her husband was sending money and packages and disheartening news of the chances for her joining him there. Margaret was not one to give up. While she waited, she helped American officials locate the wives of servicemen stranded in Shanghai.

In Los Angeles, meanwhile, Sgt Eccles was waging his one-man war against red tape and losing. He was told that Margaret would not be able to enter the country for two years. He wrote senators and representatives, sent a 500-word telegram to the White House, and even telephoned President Truman.

The red-tape troubles were ended with the ruling that wives of American servicemen overseas need not wait to gain entrance to the United States under the quota system.

March 7, 1946, was a great day for Sgt Eccles, who by now was wearing a ruptured duck and wondering whether or not to ship over for a fourth cruise. Two things make that a memorable day. First came a cable from Margaret that she was sailing on the transport *General H.H. Scott* for Seattle. Second was the news that the hated Isamu Ishihara had been convicted. It was too good to be true.

Eccles was waiting when *General Scott* pulled into Pier 39 on March 20. He was almost lost in a mob of customs and immigration officers and the usual assortment of troops from Fort Lewis, including an Army band. Aboard the transport were several thousand soldiers, an assortment of Chinese officials, nearly 100 civilians, and Margaret. All one could see on the decks were soldiers, with their usual comments about Marines.

As Eccles eagerly searched for his wife the soldiers whistled for a "bell-hop," meaning the sergeant with the three hash marks and double row of campaign ribbons. Eccles did not lose his patience. But he almost started a riot when he asked, casually, "You guys just getting home? Hell, the Marines

finished the war seven months ago. Where have you been?"

But he could not see Margaret on the jammed decks.

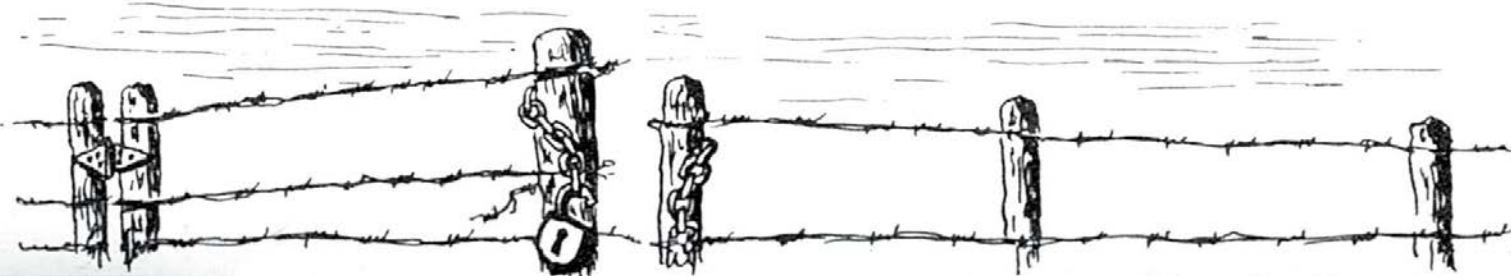
The ship's officers came ashore, followed by the first of the soldiers, who were returning from occupation duty in China. Eccles had only the cablegram from Margaret and began to fear that she had missed the boat. Other women were on the deck, including several Chinese. But not Margaret. Eccles checked immigration officers on the pier, but they had no list of passengers arriving. He asked if he could go aboard and was told he would have to wait until the troops had debarked. Later he was told all civilians were being held incommunicado until they cleared immigration inspection.

It took three hours for the troops to be debarked and loaded into big truck convoys for the trip to nearby Fort Lewis. About 1600, when the sun was low over the Sound, Margaret came on deck. Once he had seen her, Eccles moved quickly. He cornered the Army officer in charge of the debarkation and the officer listened to his story. With a smile he steered Eccles to the gangplank and on behind the immigration authorities and escorted him aboard. Three cruises in the Corps and Eccles instinctively (believe it or not) stopped to salute the ensign. Then Margaret was in his arms for the first time in four years, four months and four days.

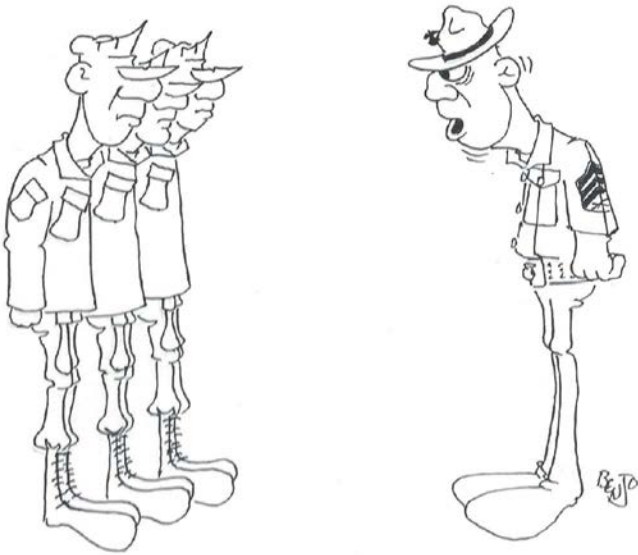
Five minutes later she was called below where the ship's officers were filling out papers required by Immigration. Eccles returned to the pier to wait. But Sgt Eccles, who had waited for this day since 1941, did not mind the waiting. Nine and one-half hours after the transport berthed, Margaret came ashore, her papers all in order. She was through customs in a matter of minutes.

Then, arm in arm. TechSgt Raymond Eccles and his wife of four years, his bride of two days, walked happily to his car.

The war was over. 🐻



Leatherneck Laffs



"Who knows how to drive a stick?"

"I do, Sir!"

"Good. Go grab that stick broom and drive it around the squad bay."



"I double-dog dare you."



"I find the best way to prepare for retirement from the Marines is to stay alive."



"Treat your firearm like a credit card. Only use it when it's absolutely necessary."



"My ringtone is gunfire. It keeps the men on their toes."



Welcome to the Pentagon.



"Well, Bill, these days I start my day off with a little blue pill."

"Heh heh." "Tee hee."

"It's an Aleve!"

Mustangs of the Corps

By Capt George B. Meegan, USMC (Ret)

Throughout history, the United States Marine Corps has recognized its enlisted Marines for their knowledge and leadership. This recognition has, on occasion, resulted in promotions to join the officer ranks. These prior enlisted officers have their own nickname: “Mustangs.”

The word “mustang” is defined as a small, wild horse of the southwest plains thought to have descended from horses brought by the Spanish colonists in the 16th century. These horses displayed stamina and fortitude and were able to endure the rigors of life in a barren environment. The definition could easily describe the Mustang officer who has undergone the rigors of both boot camp and officer training.

The Corps has not always had Mustang officers. The founding of the Marine Corps began with the Continental Marines resolution approved by Congress in 1775. It approved the establishment of two battalions with Captain Samuel Nicholas serving as the first Commandant. The resolution did not bestow him with the final authority to appoint officers. Various state naval boards selected individuals from their area with no standardized vetting process. Thus, the quality varied and led to problems of authority.

It was not until 1798 that the Congress stipulated the Commandant had full authority to select and train new officers. It was at this time the first Mustang officer, Robert Dewar Wainwright, enlisted in 1800. He was commissioned as a lieutenant in 1812. During his career, he would be promoted to lieutenant colonel and serve under Archibald Henderson as assistant commandant.

The year 1861 saw a significant change in the selection of officers when Congress established criteria for officer procurement. The criteria required applicants to be between the ages of 20 to 25 and pass a detailed examination. The examination was drawn up and administered by the Secretary of the Navy. This requirement remained in effect until 1881 when Congress stipulated that the Marine Corps must begin obtaining officers from the Naval Academy. The first graduates to be commissioned as lieutenants were from the class of 1883.

Officer procurement in this manner continued up to 1898. The initiation of the Spanish-American War required the Corps to establish an expeditionary force. Congress then authorized 40 lieutenants to be appointed, including three billets for noncommissioned officers. These were among the first Mustangs in the Corps. Another element was added to the procurement process by Congress, which required applicants to pass an extensive examination. General Barney Vogel, first commanding officer of the 2nd Marine Division in 1940, told of his exam which required him to name all of the streams and rivers that flowed into the Mississippi River on down to



Henry L. Hulbert

New Orleans.

In 1898, Congress approved the rank of warrant officer, but no one was appointed until World War I. The first Marine gunner appointed was Henry L. Hulbert, an infantryman, who received the Medal of Honor for his actions in the 2nd Samoa War as a private in 1899. At the same time, another noncommissioned

LEATHERNECK FILE PHOTO



Gen Alfred M. Gray

SGT J. S. SANDERS, USMC



Gen Christian Schilt

USMC



MajGen James Day

USMC

officer was appointed to Chief Clerk (Quartermaster). Marine Gunner Hulbert would go on to be temporarily commissioned as a second lieutenant, a first lieutenant, and, just before his death in 1918, a captain.

Marine Gunner Hulbert's life had an interesting twist. Prior to his enlistment in the Marine Corps, he was in the British Civil Service serving in Malaya. Unfortunately, he became involved in a romantic situation which caused him to resign from the service. He then enlisted in the Marine Corps as a private at age 31 and proved to be an exceptional Marine. He rose steadily through the ranks to sergeant major, then was promoted to Marine gunner and then lieutenant. Senior officers were so impressed with him that they said if he were promoted over them, they would gladly serve under his command.

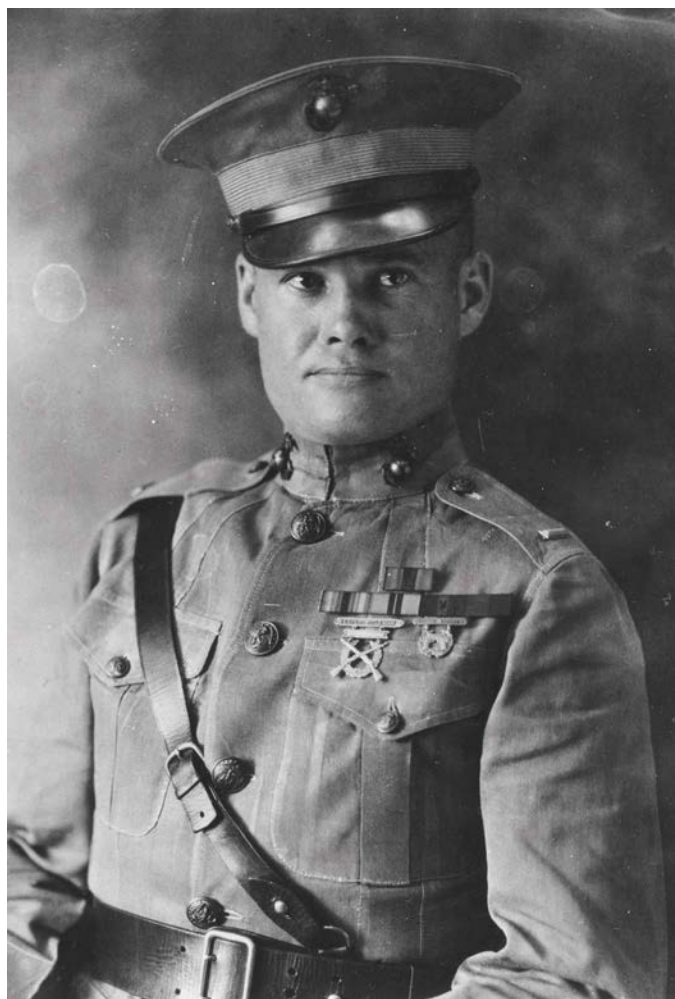
World War I saw the procurement process expand extensively, which gave the experienced noncommissioned officers and civilian applicants opportunities for temporary commissions as lieutenants. The Commandant, however, did not forget the enlisted Marines, as 18 experienced noncommissioned officers were selected for detailed exams. Twelve of the 18 were able to achieve a temporary commission. It was at this time that the Marine Reserve was established, but it was slow in developing.

Civilian procurement continued with the stipulation that the candidates must undergo boot camp as Marine reservists. If they passed the officers' exam, they would be commissioned. If they did not, they were given the option of service as enlisted Marines or could be discharged.

For the remainder of the war, lieutenants were selected from the best of enlisted Marines. Quotas were given to all posts and stations. The first class produced 300 lieutenants in 1918. Some classes were conducted in France, which also produced a few of the needed officers. The preferred way of meeting the procurement quota could not be achieved, so recruitment was extended to military colleges such as the Virginia Military Institute, the Citadel and Norwich University.

Notable Mustangs from the post-World War era include Christian Schilt, who was promoted to lieutenant in 1919. He became the fifth Marine aviator and was awarded the Medal of Honor in 1927 for his actions in Nicaragua. He went on to retire as a general.

Another notable Mustang was Lewis "Chesty" Puller. He was initially commissioned as a lieutenant in the Marine Corps



LEATHERNECK FILE PHOTO

Lewis "Chesty" Puller

Reserve in 1919 but resigned his commission. He then enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1920 and was assigned to Haiti as a sergeant. There, he was commissioned a lieutenant in the Garde de Haiti. He again applied twice for a lieutenant's commission in the Marine Corps; however, he was not awarded a commission until 1923. He retired in 1955 as a lieutenant general, and during his career, he was awarded five Navy Crosses.

The enlisted ranks still were considered a prime source for



USMC

Gen Robert Barrow

Notable Marine Mustangs

- General Robert Barrow (27th CMC)
- General Al Gray (29th CMC, Silver Star)
- General Christian Schilt (Medal of Honor)
- Lieutenant General Lewis "Chesty" Puller (Navy Cross)
- Major General James Day (Medal of Honor)
- Brigadier General Hermann Hanneken (Medal of Honor, Navy Cross)
- Colonel Mitchell Paige (Medal of Honor)
- Colonel Archie Van Winkle (Medal of Honor)
- Colonel Wesley Fox (Medal of Honor)
- Gunner Henry L. Hulbert (Medal of Honor)

lieutenants, but the preferred way was to acquire officers from the Naval Academy. This source was utilized rather than recruiting from civilian colleges. The end of the '20s saw only nine enlisted Marines be commissioned as lieutenants.

In the 1930s during the Depression, few opportunities were available for future Mustangs, as only four were promoted. The Reserve, however, provided openings for former noncommissioned officers who had at least 18 months service previously, attended at least two summer camps and were recommended by their commanding officers.

The year 1940 initially saw preparation for World War II procurement, but there were few openings for enlisted Marines. Officer Candidates School was soon expanded for civilian candidates. Later in 1940, a select group of 15 experienced noncommissioned officers took a detailed examination for promotion to lieutenant with 13 passing. The V-12 program was established in 1943 and it enabled enlistees to attend college at the Marine Corps' expense. The program was mildly successful but was closed in 1945. During this time, the noncommissioned ranks continued to produce, as 1,225 lieutenants and 90 warrant officers were appointed.

Following World War II, the Corps did not abandon the enlisted Marines as they retained the Meritorious NCO program. Just prior to the Korean War, veterans of World War II who had attended college were able to serve as lieutenants. Another program initiated in 1949 was the Officer Candidate Screening Course. A candidate either had to have a GCT of 120 or college credits to qualify. Enlisted Marines had to have the same qualifications.

During the 1950s, in order to speed the expansion of the Marine Corps for the Korean War, the Corps selected 500 master

sergeants and warrant officers for temporary commissions. Their commission service was to be only 17 months which relieved the Corps from having to send them to a Special Basic Course. The same period saw 2,025 reservists recommended for commissions with only 1,077 pinning on second lieutenant bars.

During Vietnam, a similar program that had been used in the 1950s was implemented for staff NCOs and warrant officers, which offered temporary promotions to lieutenant. Commissions would be for five years unless they were selected for a Reserve commission. During their commissioned service, they were still promoted along with their peers in their rank.

Today, Mustang officers come from a variety of sources and continue to serve in a variety of Military Occupational Specialties. Programs such as the Enlisted Commissioning Program and the Meritorious Commissioning Program provide young, enlisted Marines with opportunities to commission as second lieutenants. Other Mustangs serve as privates and lance corporals and obtain their college degrees after being discharged. Many of these Mustangs return to the Corps through traditional officer programs including the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps and Officer Candidate Course. The Naval Academy is another avenue by which enlisted Marines join the officer ranks. Regardless of source of commission, Mustangs continue to

provide the Corps with seasoned and experienced lieutenants and serve as proof for young Marines that talent, dedication, and leadership will be recognized and promoted.

Author's bio: George B. Meegan is a Mustang Marine who retired as a captain in 1978 after more than 20 years of service as an enlisted Marine and as an officer.



Col Wesley Fox

LEATHERNECK FILE PHOTO



BGen Hermann Hanneken

USN



Col Mitchell Paige

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Col Archie Van Winkle

USMC

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Aiken, S.C.

League Members Promote Local Reserve Marine, Police Sergeant

Members of the Marine Corps League James L. Hammons Detachment #939 participated in an Aug. 29, 2020, ceremony in Aiken, S.C., to promote Matt Comer, an Aiken Department of Public Safety police sergeant to the rank of master sergeant in the Marine Corps Reserve. From the left, Major Joe Featherston, USMC (Ret), who officiated at the ceremony; MSgt Comer; and Colonel Claude Davis, USMC (Ret), Junior Vice Commandant of the detachment, stood together following the promotion.

Submitted by Maj Joe Featherston, USMC (Ret)

Fredericksburg, Texas

Iwo Jima Vet Crosses Finish Line as Oldest-Ever MCM Finisher

On Oct. 25, 2020, in Fredericksburg, Texas, T. Fred Harvey, a 96-year-old World War II Marine and Silver Star recipient who fought at Iwo Jima, became the oldest person ever to complete the annual Marine Corps Marathon, which this year was held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Harvey participated in a customized Adaptivestart Axiom Racer push chair developed by Ainsley's Angels, a nonprofit organization founded by a Marine veteran, and was guided by marathoners Glenn Paige, M.D., a U.S. Naval Academy Blue & Gold Officer and ambassador for the Navy SEAL Foundation; Marine Master Gunnery Sergeant Mike Lawrence; and Chris Haley, a member of "Team Gratitude," founded by Paige, to raise funds for the Navy SEAL Foundation.

With a time of five hours, 20 minutes and eight seconds, Harvey and his team completed the 26.2-miles in four laps around the National Museum of the Pacific War. General Michael Hagee, USMC (Ret), 33rd Commandant of the Marine Corps and President and CEO of the National Museum of the Pacific War, officially started and ended the race. For the final stretch, Harvey traded his racing chariot for his walker and crossed the finish line on his own power with a crowd cheering him on.

Prior to the race, Harvey said, "I haven't competed in a marathon before, but I've never been afraid of a challenge. And I'm lucky to have good friends who are expert runners. Without their help and



CARLOS SANCHEZ

my racing chariot, this would never be possible. I've traveled the world and accomplished more than I ever imagined, but it will be one of my greatest honors to cross the finish line as a proud U.S. Marine."

Harvey's custom chair will be donated to Ainsley's Angels in his honor for use by disabled U.S. veterans and special needs families participating in future Marine Corps Marathons.

Sandi Constantino-Thompson

Colts Neck, N.J.

Marines of NWS Earle Reunite, Welcome Army Medal of Honor Recipient

Their gathering looked quite different this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but it didn't stop a small group of Marines who served with Marine Corps Security Forces, Naval Weapons Station Earle throughout the 1970s to 1990s from reuniting in Colts Neck, N.J., Sept. 20-23, 2020.

The guest of honor at the reunion was Medal of Honor recipient Sergeant Sammy L. Davis, USA, pictured in the center, known by many as "the real Forrest Gump." Davis spoke about his time in Vietnam and the events that led to the award before passing his Medal of Honor around to the Marines and family members in attendance, telling them, "This medal is yours—I am just the caretaker." Davis is the cousin of the reunion organizer, Dusty Wright.

Submitted by Dusty Wright

COURTESY OF DUSTY WRIGHT



Arlington, Va.

Vietnam Medal of Honor Recipient Reaches Final Resting Place

During a Nov. 4, 2020, reception at the Fort Myer Officers' Club in Arlington, Va., Sergeant Major Gene Overstreet, USMC (Ret), 12th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps; Ms. Georgie Carter-Krell, Gold Star mother of Medal of Honor recipient Private First Class Bruce W. Carter; and Col Timothy Mundy, USMC (Ret), Director of the Marine Corps Association Foundation, visited with each other following the interment of PFC Carter's remains at Arlington National Cemetery.

PFC Carter was a member of 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment in Vietnam and was killed on Aug. 7, 1969, during Operation Idaho Canyon, when his unit was pinned down by enemy fire. According to his Medal of Honor citation, which was awarded posthumously in 1971, Carter exposed himself to the enemy in order to deliver effective fire and enable his unit to break contact. As he led other Marines away from a brush fire caused by the firefight, an enemy grenade landed near them and PFC Carter unhesitatingly threw his body on the grenade to save his fellow Marines. He originally was buried in his home state of Florida, but his mother and several other local Marines had him moved to Arlington to be buried with his fellow fallen brothers-in-arms this fall.



COURTESY OF COL TIMOTHY MUNDY, USMC (RET)

From 1970 to 1973, then-Major Carl E. Mundy Jr., who later became 30th Commandant of the Marine Corps, was on I&I duty in Miami, Fla., and assisted Georgie Carter-Krell as she grieved the loss of her son. Col Mundy was proud to attend the ceremony and reception and represent his late father.

MCA&F

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

A Founding Reservist

Marine Gunner Charles “Elmer” E. Clark, USMCR

By GySgt Brian Knowles, USMCR

Editor’s note: The following article received an honorable mention in the 2020 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. The 2021 contest is open until March 31.

In January of 1917, the United States was not officially involved in World War I although hostilities had been raging in Europe since August of 1914. Since then, war had spread throughout the globe. Combat was sharp and quick in many remote battles and campaigns.

The main slugfest between the Central Powers and the Allies had resulted in the deaths of millions of soldiers in Europe. The U.S. Marine Corps had been watchful of the fighting and was aware they were not prepared to join the fight. With only about 14,000 Marines on its rolls in 1916, they could not engage on the grand scale of the Western Front if the U.S. became involved.

Limited funding, training and personnel available slowed preparations for war. The Naval Act of 1916 made significant changes to the role Marines would play if the U.S. joined the war. A clause within the act authorized the creation of a Marine Corps Reserve, which was established on Aug. 29, 1916. The Reserve was meant to quickly expand the numbers of Marines capable of fighting in Europe. Trench warfare dominated the Western Front, and naval campaigns ranged across the seas. Millions of American soldiers, Sailors and Marines were needed. The U.S. Marine Corps Reserve (USMCR), a cadre of trained, seasoned and professional Marines, would enable the Marine Corps to expand into a force able to join the fight.

Charles Clark personified a veteran Marine who could continue his service and share his knowledge through service in the Marine Corps Reserve. Clark’s combined service spanned nearly 18 years. He was described by his commanding officers as steady, vigilant, and showing “a



**Marine Gunner Charles “Elmer” Clark
USMCR**

The founding of the Marine Corps Reserve on Aug. 29, 1916 created a career opportunity for Gunny Clark. ... he was a highly seasoned Marine. The expansion of the Corps resulted in a critical need for Marines with his expertise.

marked aptitude for the service.” Between August 1916 and the declaration of war by the U.S. in April of 1917, only 35 Marines were assigned to the USMCR. Clark was one of these first Reserve Marines, joining on Jan. 15, 1917. His military experience and training placed him at the right time with the right knowledge. His aptitude for instruction and training of thousands of Marines validated the Marine Corps Reserve’s purpose.

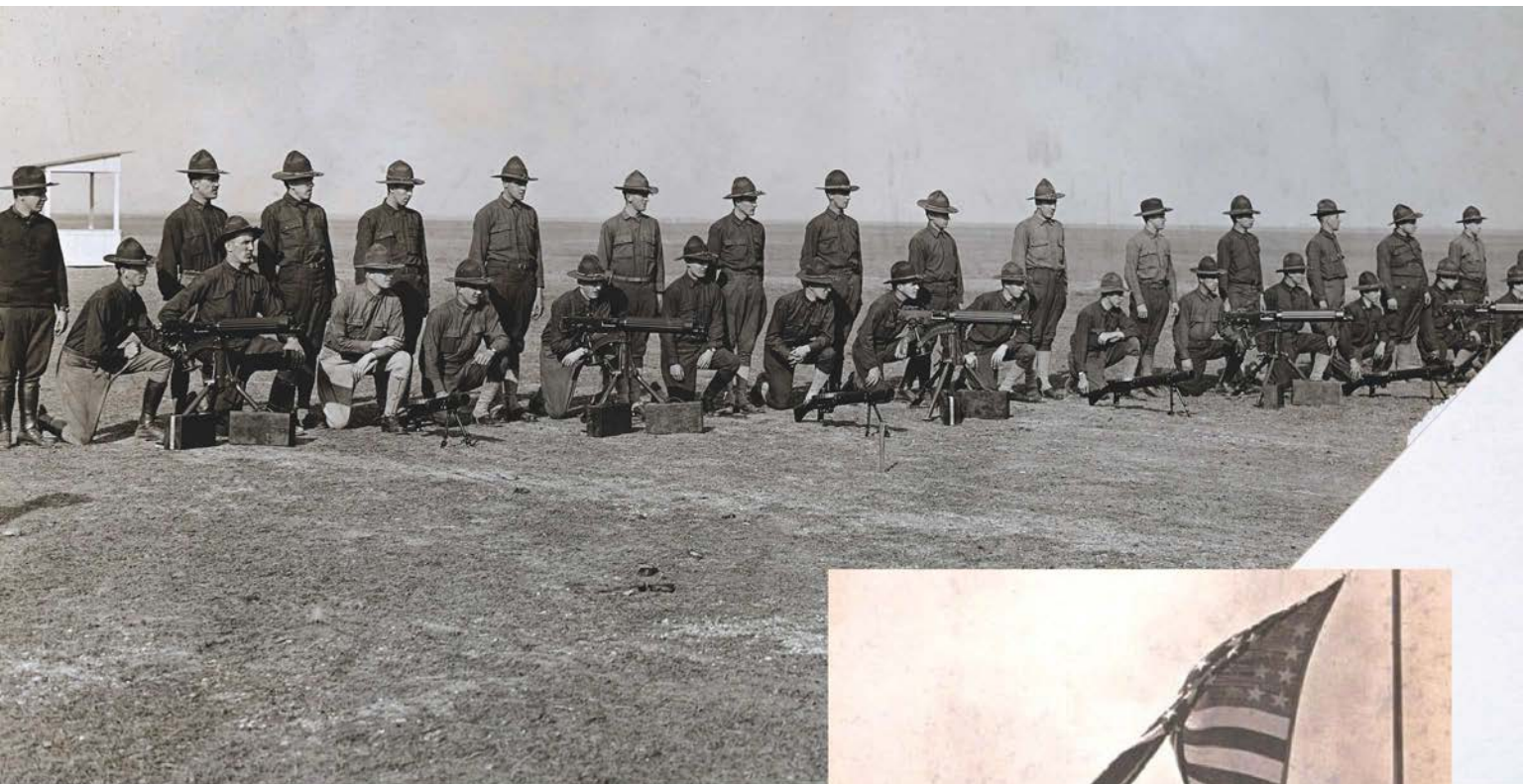
Charles Ellsworth Clark, known as Elmer, was born Nov. 2, 1867, in Dayton, Ohio, where he grew up with his father, John M. Clark, and his brother, William R. Clark. Before he began his military career, Elmer had established his professional career in Dayton as an electrician. He married later in life and didn’t have children.

The Spanish-American War began on April 21, 1898, when Elmer was 31 years of age. He enlisted May 4, 1898, with Company F, 1st Ohio Volunteer Cavalry Regiment with the National Guard and was appointed a corporal. His unit traveled to Florida by July to ship out; however, the war was progressing well for the U.S., and limited shipping made supply difficult. An armistice stopped the fighting on Aug. 13, 1898, and a treaty ended the war in December.

Clark and his unit spent August and September in Alabama awaiting orders. The regiment was finally returned to Ohio, given a 30-day furlough, and disbanded soon after. He was mustered out on Oct. 23, 1898, and returned to his civilian career as an electrician.

Something about military life must have sparked Clark’s motivation for service. Fourteen months after discharge from the Ohio Cavalry, he joined the U.S. Marine Corps. He enlisted on Jan. 15, 1900, and served until Jan. 15, 1917. He began his reserve enlistment the same day, placing him as “inactive” in the Fleet Marine Corps Reserve (FMCR).

The chronology of Clark’s active service is incomplete, but sections of his career are seen in correspondence saved



within his service record. Details of all his postings and assignments were either not retained, lost or went unrecorded. William Clark, Elmer's brother, explained that "Elmer was always a very good rifle-marksman." Records show that for several years, Elmer was a member and later a coach for the Marine Corps Rifle Team. He was stationed at Camp Perry, Ohio, and then at Sea Girt, N.J., to train with the team.

William Clark also wrote that Elmer spent a few years with the Marines in China, probably between 1909 and 1912. A highly sought-after posting, China Marines lived comfortably due to cheap labor and plentiful goods and services. Elmer likely jumped at the opportunity to serve in the Asian country.

William Clark explained more details about his brother's service. "In March 1913, he [Gunnery Sergeant Clark at the time] was stationed at Washington, D.C. (Marine Barracks, Washington Navy Yard) after having served in China for a year or two." In March of 1913, William described a flood in Dayton, Ohio. "He [Gunny Clark] received permission to go to Dayton as his immediate relatives lived there. For several weeks he served under Major Rhodes and Captain Harrison Hall in flood relief and sanitary work at Dayton, Ohio, from March to April 1913." Gunny Clark was certainly concerned about the welfare of his hometown and his family.

A year later, GySgt Clark was among the Marines of the U.S. Atlantic Fleet, landing at Vera Cruz, Mexico, in April of

Above: Gunner Clark was one of the primary machine-gun instructors for Marines heading to Europe during World War I. (Photo courtesy of National Archives)

Right: Formal raising of first U.S. flag in Veracruz, Mexico, on April 27, 1914, by Sailors and Marines of USS *Utah* and USS *Florida*. Then-GySgt Clark and his fellow leathernecks were withdrawn from Mexico later that year.



1914. He sent his family a postcard from Mexico dated May 16, 1914. The urban warfare that occurred after landing was new to the Marines and required some adjustment. Marines and Sailors garrisoned the port until relieved by U.S. soldiers. The Marine expedition and all other U.S. forces that landed in Mexico were withdrawn by November 1914. Clark returned to Washington for the next two years.

The founding of the Marine Corps Reserve on Aug. 29, 1916 created a career opportunity for Gunny Clark. At 49 years

old, with 17 years of service, he was a highly seasoned Marine. The expansion of the Corps resulted in a critical need for Marines with his expertise. No explanation is given about why he departed active service, other than his service contract was to expire.

The average lifespan of a man in 1916 was just 50 years, which suggests Clark, an "old man" compared to his men, must have been thinking about his remaining years. Transitioning to the Reserve was an honorable means to continue serving while restarting his civilian life. He likely

met Cydney E. Dymock, the woman he would marry, after returning from China, and sought to begin a civilian life with her.

Clark began his Reserve service on Jan. 15, 1917, as he transferred to the FMCR. Residing in Philadelphia, in an inactive status, he would be aware of the war news from Europe, the U-boat attacks in the Atlantic, and the possibility of the U.S. entering the war. Only 77 days into his service, he was mobilized on April 2, 1917, on the same day President Wilson asked Congress for a declaration of war against Germany. The declaration of war was formalized on April 6, 1917.

GySgt Clark was quickly placed on detached duty from the Marine Barracks in Philadelphia to the Marine Corps School of Instruction, Savage Arms Corporation of Utica, N.Y. Clark married Cydney in June of 1917, and she probably accompanied him to the new posting. His age and Reserve status aside, the need to train thousands of Marines in weapons

employment is likely why Clark was not sent to Europe.

Gunny Clark's technical knowledge and field experience allowed him to supervise field training and instruct weapons usage at the school. His expertise in machine guns was also utilized in training aircrew and pilots. The use of machine guns in Marine Corps aviation greatly expanded throughout the war.

As an instructor in Utica, Clark was appointed a "Marine gunner," an infantry weapons officer, the modern-day equivalent of chief warrant officer-2, in the FMCR on June 5, 1918. Gunners were the first warrant officers for the Marine Corps, with the rank being used as of March 24, 1917. Rigorous qualifications made selection to "Marine gunner" a high honor.

He accepted the promotion to Marine gunner and executed his oath of office on June 12, 1918. He remained at the School of Instruction in Utica, N.Y., as an instructor and his performance reviews

list him as "excellent" throughout his tenure at the school.

When the U.S. entered the "Great War" in April of 1917, the Aviation Section of the U.S. Army, which was assigned within the Army Signal Corps, contained only 227 airplanes and five balloons. These were mainly training types. The U.S. Navy and Marine Corps counted even fewer aircraft. U.S. military aviation was woefully unprepared for war.

The Allies also requested tens of thousands of American-made aircraft. Industry did not have the ability to fill the orders. Manufacturing aircraft was just one issue. Having trained crews and pilots were other major problems. Although not trained to fly, with his expert knowledge of weapons, along with coaching and instructor experience, Clark was an exceptional instructor for aerial weapons training.

The success of American aviation was in the Liberty engine and training of pilots and crew. High morale, determination and fortitude of Americans helped to achieve air superiority over battlefields. Gunner Clark's greatest accomplishment was in training infantry and aviators to operate weapons on the ground and in the air.

The armistice halted fighting on Nov. 11, 1918. Although the fighting had ended, instruction continued at the school. On Jan. 16, 1919, Gunner Clark underwent a physical examination by the school's medical staff and, "no physical defects or ailments were found." However, the next day, he was admitted to the local hospital. Doctors initially thought it was malaria or influenza, possibly contracted from the steady flow of students he encountered.

Standard treatments for these illnesses failed to remedy his sickness. Further examinations at another hospital in Utica showed he had contracted "bacilli tuberculosis," impacting his immune system, which would slowly destroy his lungs. An influenza pandemic had swept the globe throughout 1918, but medical science was just beginning to explore microbiology and virology. There was no cure for tuberculosis (TB), meaning it would eventually kill him; a cure would not be discovered until 1949.

Gunner Clark was placed on a 30-day sick leave and sent to Saranac Lake, a hospital in Utica, N.Y., for observation. This hospital also confirmed the TB. After recovering from a high temperature and breathing difficulty, he was returned to duty on March 5, 1919. Sadly, he would never fully recover, and his illness would continue to afflict him.

On March 13, 1919, Gunner Clark was ordered to Mare Island, Calif., as a machine-gun instructor. It was thought that the warmer climate would help his breath-

ACCEPTANCE

Utica, N.Y.,
June 12, 1918.

SIR: I hereby accept the appointment as a ~~Secretary~~ ^{Marine Gunner} in the United States ~~Marine Corps~~ ^{Fleet Reserve} dated June 5, 1918; with rank from June 5, 1918, transmitted by letter of the Major General Commandant dated June 10, 1918.

Very respectfully,
Charles E. Clark
~~SECRETARY~~ U. S. Marine Corps.
Marine Gunner,

TO THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY.

OATH OF OFFICE Officers' records

Having been appointed a ~~Secretary~~ ^{Marine Gunner} in the United States ~~Marine Corps~~ ^{Fleet Reserve}, I, *Charles Edward Clark*, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter: So help me God.

Charles E. Clark

Subscribed and sworn to before me this twelfth day of June, 1918.

John J. Dooley
Major, M.C.R.

THE ANNEXED BLANKS ARE TO BE FILLED BY ALL OFFICERS SUBSCRIBING TO THE ABOVE OATH.

PLACE OF BIRTH.		State or Territory of which a Citizen.	Date of Birth.
City, Parish, or County.	State		
Dayton,	Ohio	Ohio	November 2, 1867.

COURTESY OF NATIONAL MILITARY RECORDS CENTER

Clark's acceptance letter and oath of office to the grade of Marine Gunner. He executed the oath on June 12, 1918.

ing. He was detached from the school in Utica on March 24, 1919, to Marine Barracks, Mare Island Navy Yard, Calif. He and Cydney reported to his new post on March 31, 1919. Even suffering from TB, his performance reviews were rated "excellent." In all categories, he received the highest marks of 4.0 out of a possible 4.0. He was described as "calculated, even tempered, forceful, active, cautious, and fair talking." His proficiency rating indicated that he "has initiative, is intelligent, has excellent judgment, and is terrific in his performance of duty."

Despite his outstanding performance as a Marine and instructor, Gunner Clark's deteriorating health brought an end to his active service. There was also a post-war initiative to release reservists to inactive status. On Aug. 20, 1919, Clark was re-assigned to inactive duty and he and his wife returned to Philadelphia. He served his reserve requirements through recruiting duty.

Just beginning to reestablish his civilian life, Gunner Clark was admitted to a local hospital on Nov. 24, 1919, with pulmonary tuberculosis. Since he was a veteran, he was transferred to League Island Naval Hospital. On Nov. 28, 1919, the Navy's Bureau of Medicine and Surgery authorized Clark to select any naval hospital for his hospice care. Cydney cared for him throughout his treatment. His final request was to be placed on active status while receiving treatment. It was not approved.

Clark remained in the League Island

Naval Hospital as his condition deteriorated. He was unable to eat and suffered severely from deteriorated breathing. A medical report stated, "Patient in semi stupor throughout day." On Dec. 30, 1919, 52-year-old Marine Gunner Charles "Elmer" Ellsworth Clark died at 3:35 p.m. He passed due to "effects of tuberculosis, which he has contracted while on active duty." His remains were interred a few

An influenza pandemic had swept the globe throughout 1918, but medical science was just beginning to explore microbiology and virology. There was no cure for tuberculosis (TB), meaning it would eventually kill [Clark].

days later, Jan. 2, 1920, in the Northwood Cemetery in Philadelphia.

Upon Clark's death, Cydney was eligible for a widow's pension. Additionally, a \$100 check was sent by the Marine Corps Veterans' Family Assistance Fund. Her pension was \$25 a month, but Cydney refused to accept assistance from the government. In March of 1920, she wrote to thank the Marine Corps and stated that her "brother was well-employed and would accept her as a dependent." She also stated that she had contracted tuberculosis from

caring for her husband and expected to pass shortly.

As one of the first Marines to join the Reserve before the war, Gunner Clark should be remembered as a founding reservist of the Marine Corps Reserve. Although not sent to Europe, Gunner Clark contributed to victory through his ability to instruct Marines in the employment and maintenance of weaponry, notably machine guns. Aviators and infantrymen alike benefited from his instruction. By retaining Gunner Clark, the Marine Corps Reserve fulfilled its mandate of preparation and readiness of Marines for wartime support of the active component, augmenting and reinforcing active forces for employment across the spectrum of crisis and global engagement.

Gunner Clark was a great instructor and an outstanding Marine. Thousands, perhaps tens of thousands of Marines, would join the fight in France with his instruction to help win victory and honor for the Corps. He helped bring an end to one of the bloodiest wars in human history. The Marine Corps Reserve can be proud of Gunner Clark as one of its founding members.

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



One of Gunner Clark's last assignments in 1919 was at the Marine Barracks at Mare Island, Calif., above, where he once again served as a machine-gun instructor.

Responding to an IED Blast

By Miles Vining
and Kevin Schranz

Editor's note: This excerpt was taken from the book "Into Helmand With the Walking Dead" by Miles Vining and Kevin Schranz and is told from the perspective of Vining.

One afternoon on Quick Reaction Force (QRF) rotation, we hear a faint explosion, not loud at all, but it comes from the southern portion of Camp Leatherneck. Explosions are such a common occurrence at Leatherneck because of all the explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) controlled detonations of bad ammunition that they are rarely worth a second thought. But this one is different; it came from the south whereas the controlled dets are announced beforehand and come from the north. We kind of look at each other and say, "Well, that don't sound good."

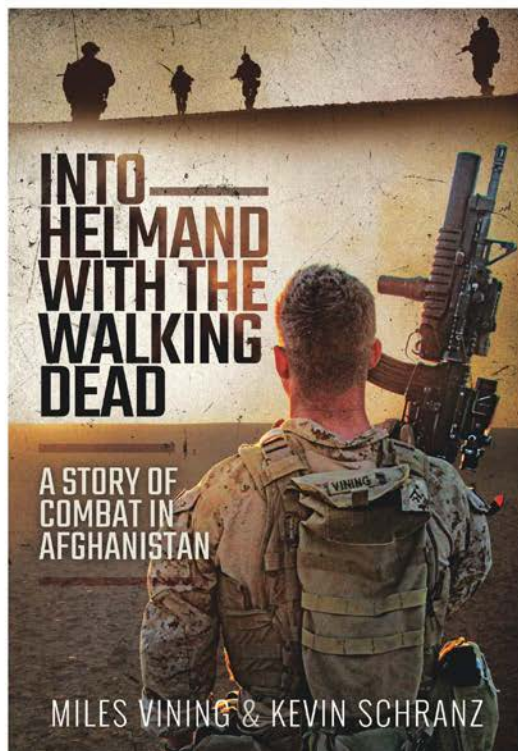
A second later Sergeant Leonard runs in yelling, "QRF mount up!" Obviously, somebody needs us and in a bad way.

Scrabbling as fast as we can, we mount up. Frog top on, lacing boots up, throwing a flak over my head and Velcroing it together, night vision goggles, extra batteries—got them—rack a round in my M4, check my 203 HE (high explosive) grenades and throw my extra gear pack in the truck along with my helmet. Rev the trucks up and do all the system checks, lights, CTIS (Central Tire Inflatable System), ECMs (Electronic Countermeasures) turned on, Blue Force trackers signed into. Stuff some MREs (meals, ready to eat) under the seats because you never know how long you're going to be out there. Place the ammo cans in the turret mounts, lock the guns in and wipe them down real quick with CLP (Cleaner, Lubricant, Preservative), clip that gunner's harness in. Switch the truck Prick-one-fifty-two radios on and get solid comm checks with the other trucks and then turn the dismount radios on and get checks with them back to



COURTESY OF MILES VINING

Cpl Miles Vining (above) takes a break during a foot patrol while carrying a Thor device used to jam remote IED frequencies. He and fellow 1/9 rifleman, Cpl Kevin Schranz, wrote a book (below) about their experiences as Marine riflemen during two deployments to Afghanistan.



the combat operations center. Op-check the Thor and CMD metal detectors, extra batteries for them too ... we don't know if we're dismounting or not either. Stash those sickle sticks and unbutton shoulder pockets to leave the tourniquets hanging out in case you need them real quick in a massive trauma hurry. The

whole time this is going on, you want to know the details—what's happening—to form a mental picture of what we're getting into.

Could just be some idiot patrol broke a mine roller and needs a wrecker—easy day. Or someone's in contact and needs another vehicle element to bail them out on the eastern wadi. Either way they need you there. Running to the pisser for a last-minute piss, I catch up to the LEP, Mr. Gibbs. "Hey sir, what's going on? You know anything?"

He pauses for a second and replies "Yeah, Motor T got hit with an SBVIED [suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive device], three guys med-evacked, two urgent."

Damn, an SBVIED? Those things are no joke, especially if it blew right next to one of our trucks. But two urgent?

At least there're no dead so far; get them back to the Bastion Role Three as soon as possible. Those docs are amazing and they'll be able to fix them up and get them out to Ramstein or Bethesda within days. I think as far back as World War II guys have always held out that if casualties can at least make it back to a larger, rearward aid station, they'll make it. And why wouldn't they? The aid stations in the rear have all the amenities and surgical expertise of a hospital, and they are amazing at what they do. Get them there in that golden hour and they'll be fine. They might be missing limbs or an eye, but they'll live and that is the most important part.

This isn't Hawthorne where the nearest hospital is 40 minutes away by helo but Bastion, a brisk five-minute ride on an emergency American dust-off or British Chinook Tricky (medevac) flight. We link up with EOD at the back gate of Camp Leatherneck, make sure our comms are good with them, and then we depart friendly lines out to the site of the convoy. Going out the back gate always is a burden because of the terrain: it's popping you out right into the desert. Whereas going out the north gate brings you to Highway One,

which is a hardball so at least you get to have an easy journey before heading south and into the area of operations. After a bumpy ride of about 20 minutes, we arrive at the blast site. EOD guys head up to the site while my truck pulls security. I get out with my corpsman buddy Zhao, and we set up a roadblock consisting of traffic cones and sea wire. In the distance, I see some sort of a block or building and a number of Marines wandering around it. I look through my RCO but I still can't really make it out, even through four-power magnification.

Leonard gets on the net and says, "Hey One Alpha, send Vining over here so we can talk to the people here."

So, I trek over to where all the Marines are. At this point, we don't know if it was an IED or a suicide vehicle that hit the MRAP (Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle); we just know that

The massive tires are a hundred meters away and turned inside out from the explosion. The engine block is completely blown away and almost every single item inside the truck has been blown out the back and is laying in pieces all around it.

Motor T got hit while on a supply run from Patrol Base Boldak. In fact, from where we are, we can actually see the easternmost portions of Camp Leatherneck, and the G-boss tower of Boldak. That's how close the convoy

was to both the bases. But we still assume it was an IED, so I make my way over very cautiously staying in the tracks of previous vehicles as the road hasn't been cleared as yet.

The building that I couldn't make out turns out to be a 6x6 MRAP, laying on its left side, and the huge circular gap in the middle of it turns out to be the hole where the turret used to be. I get up to the vehicle and things are just a complete mess. The hull is mostly intact, but all the windows on the right side are completely blown out. The massive tires are a hundred meters away and turned inside out from the explosion. The engine block is completely blown away and almost every single item inside the truck has been blown out the back and is laying in pieces all around it. The turret itself is laying on its side, 20 meters from the truck. I peer inside the turret hole and everything inside is



While on patrol in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, in late December 2013, LCpl Patrick Tomassi, a grenadier with 1/9, talks with some local children.

CPL AUSTIN LONG-USMC

strewn all over. Outside the vehicle are trails of the gunner's blood and mucus.

One of my Motor T buddies comes over, really calm with himself. He is a sergeant, and a POG (person other than a grunt), usually the worst possible combination, but he's cool, a good guy. Completely casual he relates how he found Erickson propped up against the mud, how the Navy medical senior chief in the back had his legs all f----- up, how Erickson's face was completely mashed in, but still breathing somehow. The explosion was so big that he felt his own truck had been hit even though he was two trucks ahead of Erickson's. Just like us, they swept their way over to the truck, thinking it was an IED of some sort, so we're on the lookout for secondaries. He walks off and we go on about our business.

A few minutes later, I hear sobbing, uncontrollable sobbing. I look over and it's the Motor T gunny with his hand on the sergeant's shoulders, trying to

**They tell me a little
but then start asking
for compensation for their
damaged well. I give them
this long stare, thinking,
“One of our guys is ... dead
and all you want is
compensation for your
damned well?”**

comfort him, trying to tell him there's nothing they can do for Erickson, that he was pronounced dead at the Bastion Role Three. The well that the MRAP crushed is connected to a compound right next to it. The family, minus the women, are outside, squatting on the edge of it, looking at us. I start talking

to them in Pashtu about what happened. They tell me a little but then start asking for compensation for their damaged well. I give them this long stare, thinking, “One of our guys is ... dead and all you want is compensation for your damned well?” I almost tell them as much but catch myself.

We all just kind of stand around it for a bit, in total shock at the utter devastation. When you spend so much time inside an MRAP or M-ATV (MRAP-All-Terrain Vehicle), you get accustomed to believing that it'll protect you from just about anything. Well, at least an MRAP will. M-ATVs have a nasty habit of splitting right down the middle and turning into a catastrophic kill, meaning five dead Marines going home in steel containers, later flag-draped pine boxes lowered into the ground with weeping mothers staining the ground with their tears. We know our vehicles aren't completely invincible, but to see one like Erickson's so torn up



Sgt Bryan Early, a squad leader with 1/9, directs a Marine where to provide security during a patrol in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, Dec. 19, 2013.

CPL AUSTIN LONG, USMC



During a 2014 deployment to Helmand Province, Afghanistan, Cpl Miles Vining covers his sector with the M4/M203 rifle/grenade launcher. Poppy fields are visible in the background; much of the Taliban's maneuvering revolved around protecting poppy cultivation and the illicit opium trade. (Photo courtesy of Miles Vining)

Book Tells the Rifleman's Story About Helmand Province Deployment

"There's nothing I did that was special," said Miles Vining, in his straightforward way, which is why he wanted to write a book about his experiences as a typical infantry Marine on the front lines in Operation Enduring Freedom. His new book, "Into Helmand With the Walking Dead," does just that.

Vining, a rifleman who deployed to Afghanistan with 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, had read many of the books about combat in Iraq and Afghanistan; however, they all seemed to be written about extraordinary circumstances and experiences. Vining and his coauthor Kevin Schranz, a fellow 1/9 rifleman, wanted to write about the ordinary. They wanted a written record of the day-to-day experience of the rifleman—the lance corporal—so that the American public could understand it. "This is a simple tale. This is about the grunts," writes Schranz in the book's preface.

"This is a testimony of what it was like to serve, to grow up as a young man and to serve as an infantryman ... all its glory and glory at the same time," said Vining. "This is my testament to 'the suck,' to being on deployment."

Vining, whose father worked for the State Department, spent most of his formative years in Thailand, Burma and Malaysia but all the while, he had the idea that he wanted to enlist in the Marine Corps. "I can't really offer any grandiose story," said Vining. "It was a very intrinsic thing that I felt ever since childhood. For me there was never a why, there was always just a question ... of how I was going to serve ... I wanted to be in combat. I wanted to go to war. I wanted to fight," he said. "I just felt it in myself. I could have said I was motivated by 9/11, I was probably 10 years old when the towers fell ... and I was really interested in military history. I could say all that, but really, at the end of the day, it was just really something that was in my bones."

He enlisted in 2010 and after recruit training at Marine

Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., and infantry training, he was assigned to 1/9, known since the Vietnam War as "The Walking Dead." After his enlistment was complete in 2014, Vining went to college and earned a degree in central Eurasian studies.

He and Schranz started writing about their deployment in 2014. Tragically, Schranz took his own life before the book was finished, which Vining said strengthened his resolve to follow through with its publication.

The book was published in October 2020 and it wasn't long before Vining started receiving feedback. One of the most memorable comments was from the wife of one of the Marines he served with. She told Vining that she was speaking on her husband's behalf because he was still too emotional to discuss the deployment. She thanked Vining for giving a voice to that community—the typical rifleman—and that generation of young men who volunteered to go to war.

For Vining, writing was beneficial as he transitioned back into civilian life. "The actual process of writing it was an extremely cathartic experience in terms of going over things," he said. "It's still very visceral and real in terms of death, in terms of relationships, in terms of the community and it's been very cathartic in reading and writing it in terms of dealing with that stuff and working through it. It's made a huge difference in where I'm at today," he added.

"I've actually run into a lot of guys from my own battalion ... [and] other guys who have said 'I'm really proud of you for writing it, it's really awesome that you got it out, but I'm not ready to read that just yet. I'm not ready to open that door.' My answer to that is ... you need to bust down that door and you need to have that cathartic experience. If you don't, that door to that dungeon will stay closed forever."

Nancy S. Lichtman



Marines with Bravo Co and Charlie Co, 1/9 conduct standard pre-combat checks on a range outside Camp Leatherneck, Helmand Province, Afghanistan, Jan. 31, 2014.

and mangled, plants a little thought in the back of your brain housing group: this could easily happen to you next time you're out on a mounted op.

The recovery operation took more than six hours. EOD guys combed the area and did their post-blast analysis from which they deduced that the vehicle used had to have had over 500 pounds of explosives. We searched the area, looking for pieces of the MRAP to bring back and throw in the vehicle. The heavy parts such as the tires we just left them. EOD got all the ammunition that was in the truck, put it in a pile far away from the vehicle and blew it in place for fear the ammunition had become unstable from the IED blast. We heard over the radio that the ramp ceremony was going on back at Bastion.

Kristel, in his twisted humor, said, "Thank God we don't have to be at that. It was so cold that last time we were there for V's." Some of us laughed, me included, because although it was true, it didn't make the joke any sicker.

Then the wreckers came out and started the dirty work of lifting the entire vehicle onto the flatbed of an LVSR (Logistic Vehicle System Replacement). Hoisting a 40-ton tactical vehicle is not joke and requires a considerable amount of skill on the part of Motor T. We went searching for remnants of the suicide vehicle in the field next to the MRAP. Hefner actually found the driver's jawbone, so we plastic-bagged it for evidence collection. His Tennessee accent was unmistakable, "Hey guys! I faund the ... jaaaw! I gawt his jaaw!"

With everything cleaned up and completed, we mounted back up in the vehicles and headed back to base. Doc, the Sir, Hanney, and Watson were where I left them earlier to talk to the local villagers.

Doc asked, "What happened, man?" Their only frame of reference was the turned-over MRAP as seen from their vantage point 300 meters away on security.

I told him, "F--- man, that whole truck was f----. The turret was completely blown off, the tires were 100 meters away, and I saw the gunner's blood and mucus in front of where the truck

CPL ERIC S. WILTERDINK, USMC

CPL ERIC S. WILTERDINK, USMC



Marines with Scout Sniper Platoon, Headquarters and Support Company, 1/9 participate in a range aboard Camp Leatherneck, Helmand Province, Afghanistan, April 19, 2014, in order to BZO weapons and test fire weapons before a mission.



COURTESY OF MILES VINING

The Marines of 1/9 gathered for a memorial service at Camp Leatherneck after Sgt Daniel Vasselian was killed while leading his men to support another unit that was pinned down by heavy machine-gun fire.

stopped, apparently his whole ... face was mashed in. Chief broke both his knees, and the A driver broke his arm.”

The rest of the trip back to Camp Leatherneck was in silence as we rolled through the south gate and back to our spot on QRF at the company lot.

What happened was when the log run left Boldak, a white Toyota Corolla started trailing it. As the convoy got about a kilometer away from Boldak, it sped up to the rear truck and the driver detonated his 500 pounds of explosive right alongside it. The force of the explosion completely disintegrated the car but flipped the 40,000-pound MRAP onto its side and perpendicular to the road, flattening a local Afghan well. The vehicle commander had his left shoulder broken, the Navy chief who was in the back broke both his legs, and the turret

We heard over the radio that the ramp ceremony was going on back at Bastion. Kristel, in his twisted humor, said, “Thank God we don’t have to be at that. It was so cold that last time we were there for V’s.”

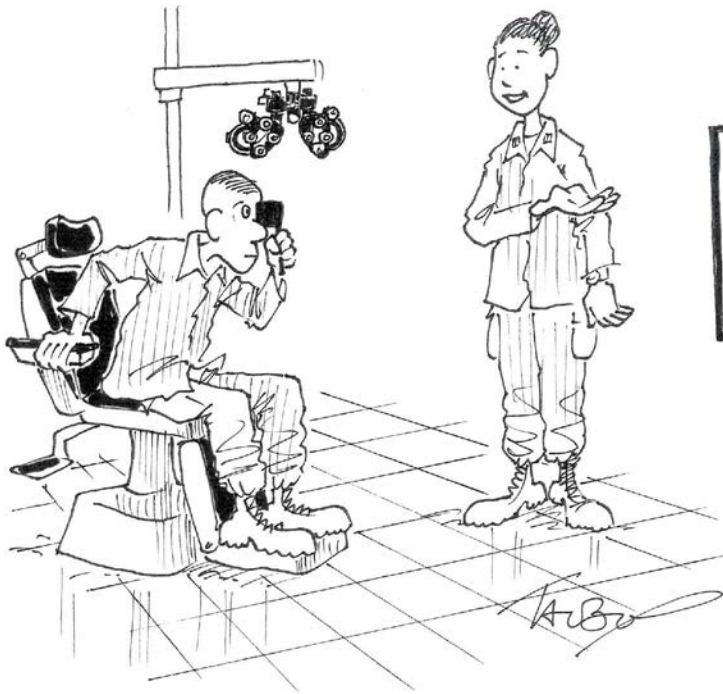
gunner had his face mashed in because the entire turret assembly flew off and took him with it.

It was the turret gunner’s first deployment: Lance Corporal Caleb Erickson from Michigan was killed on Feb. 28,

2014. Some of us blamed our restrictive rules of engagement for allowing this to happen. If this had been 2011, that car would have been shot up when it passed the 100-meter mark. But even then, there is no guarantee that would have made a difference.

*Author’s bio: Miles Vining enlisted in the Marine Corps in 2010. He was a rifleman assigned to 1st Battalion, 9th Marines at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., and deployed with the battalion to Helmand Province, Afghanistan. Upon being discharged, he studied at Indiana University Bloomington. Currently, he volunteers with a humanitarian group in Southeast Asia in addition to re-searching historical and contemporary small arms from the Middle East and Central Asia for *Silah Report*.* 🇺🇸

Leatherneck Laffs



"Now, cover your left eye and tell me, what is the smallest target you can see?"



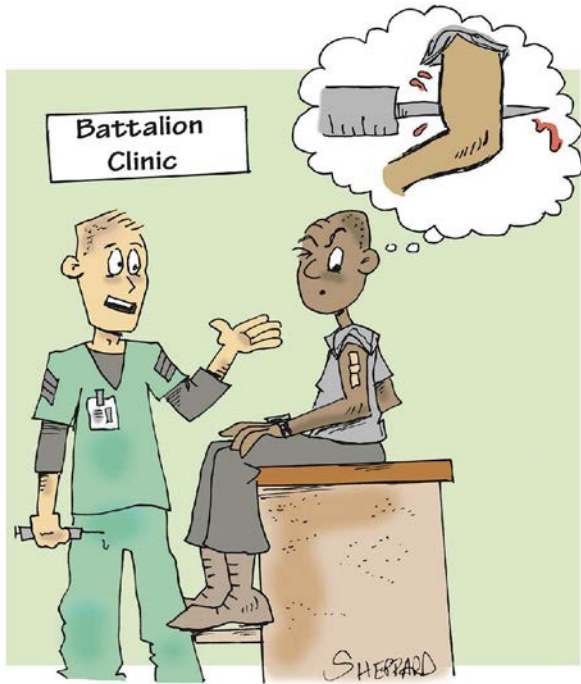
"Only officers have abdominal pain. You have a bellyache."



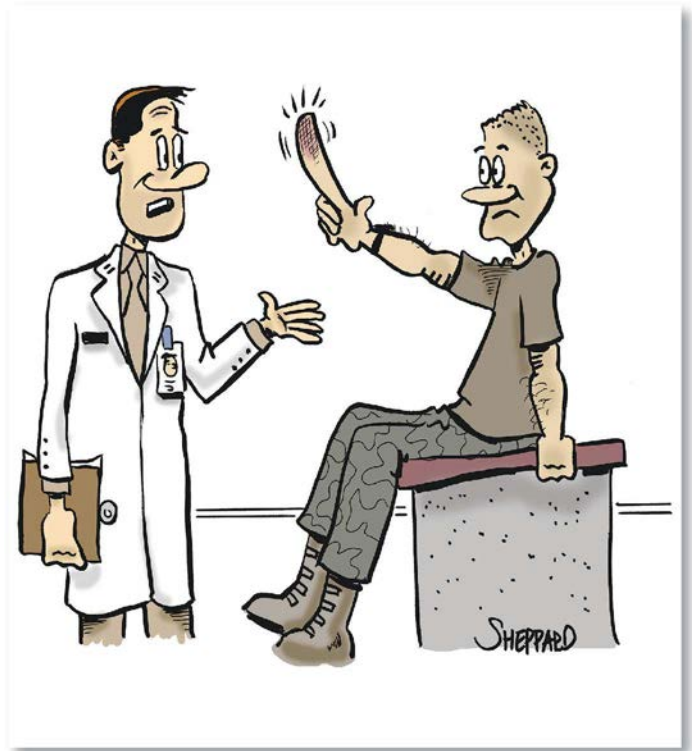
"Negative for chemicals and pollen. Looks like you're allergic to your Drill Instructor."



"One is out from giving and the other is out from getting."



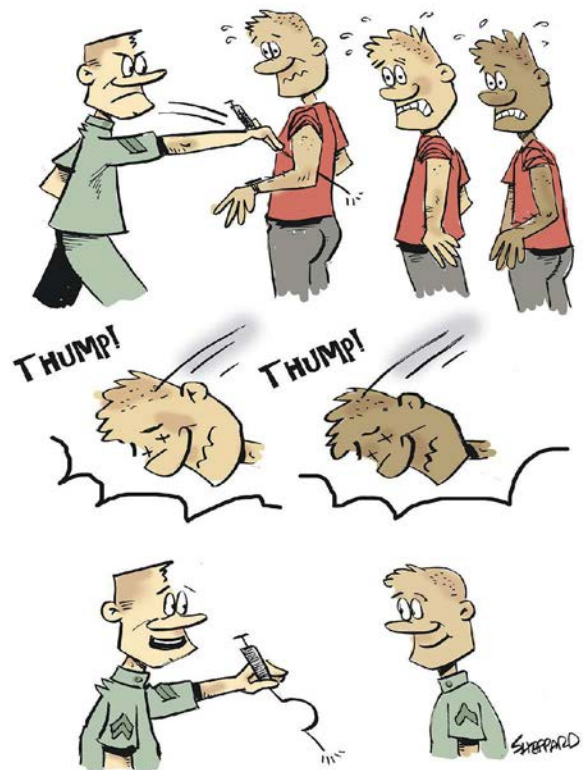
"You can open your eyes now."



"It's TFS ... Trigger Finger Syndrome."



"And then I told the gunny it wouldn't fit, Doc."



"Gets them every time."



CPL TIMOTHY HERNANDEZ, USMC

Marines at Camp Schwab, Okinawa, Japan, play a game of Memoir '44, a war-themed strategy board game based on historical World War II battles, in December 2019. The Marine Corps plans to break ground during fiscal year 2021 for a Wargaming and Analysis Center at MCB Quantico.

Marine Corps to Build Innovating Wargaming Center

The Marine Corps will soon build a state-of-the-art facility to better visualize the threat environment, gain competitive advantages and simulate future operating environments. The Marine Corps Wargaming and Analysis Center is expected to break ground during fiscal year 2021 and will be uniquely designed to leverage modern simulation technologies and to enhance the wargaming experience for Marines. Once complete, the center will enable better equipped and trained Marines and improved decision-making on the battlefield.

Located aboard Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., the 100,000-square-foot facility is expected to house more than a dozen “wargames” each year, including two large-scale, 250-person exercises. Simulations will offer a realistic representation of future operating environments.

“In order to stay ahead of peer competitors, it is vital that the Marine Corps conduct constant wargames,” said Lieutenant General Eric Smith, the deputy commandant for Combat Development & Integration (CD&I). “The data that comes from such wargames enables us to more rapidly determine which capabilities we will need for future fights. A wargaming center at Quantico ensures that these wargames take place at the home of combat development, the Warfighting Laboratory (MCWL), Marine Corps Uni-

versity and our acquisitions command and ensures that this purpose-built facility is easily accessible for all those in the National Capital Region who similarly need this capability.”

The wargaming center will include an auditorium, conference room, gaming classrooms, and other spaces to support wargaming needs.

As part of its mission to acquire information technology and ground weapon systems for the Marine Corps, Marine Corps Systems Command (MCSC) is working with CD&I, MCWL and industry to build the facility and procure the required capabilities.

“The Marine Corps Wargaming and Analysis Center will serve the Commandant of the Marine Corps, Headquarters Marine Corps staff, and the operating forces,” said Sharleene Prieur, MCSC’s deputy program manager for the Wargaming Capability. “It will also support the Corps’ ability to wargame with the Office of the Secretary of Defense and our [Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental and Multinational] partners.”

The wargaming center’s capabilities will enable users to identify issues, consider objectives, and scope and analyze the problems. The resulting wargames will provide data and analytics to inform decisions affecting force development, force management, system functionality and service functionality.

“The true value proposition of wargam-

ing lies in the construction of a competitive framework allowing the thinking enemy to confront and thwart his opponent and thereby challenge concepts, capabilities and force design,” said William J. Lademan, Ph.D., technical director for the Wargaming Division at MCWL. “Constructing this framework produces the added benefit of being able to investigate hypotheticals, concepts and technologies in a timely and cost effective manner.”

Through the wargaming center, Marines will be able to run “excursions” and iterations while controlling specific factors. When Marines are able to game a multitude of scenarios, they can make necessary, educated assessments to validate or adjust force design-related decisions. Simulations will support all existing and developing weapon platforms and capabilities in all regions of the globe.

Wargames simulate realistic warfare, and many include computer-based exercises or other artificial vehicles that allow users to consider scenarios for obtaining success in a hostile environment. The Marine Corps employs wargames to enhance tactical and strategic decision-making, test new tactics and strategies, and predict trends in future conflicts.

Wargaming has become increasingly important in recent years as the United States’ adversaries continue to strengthen. To combat growing threats, several military branches are leveraging wargaming simulations into their training and education process.

In his 2019 Commandant’s Planning Guidance, General David H. Berger, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, emphasized the importance of wargaming in supporting the future Marine. He called the effective integration of wargaming into force design, education and training, “essential to charting our course in an era of strategic fluidity and rapid change.”

In 2019, Major General William F. Mullen, the commanding general of Marine Corps Training and Education Command, spoke about the importance of building a wargaming center to house 21st-century simulation activities.

“We have to get Marines to make more decisions under pressure against a live, thinking enemy trying to defeat them,” said MajGen Mullen. “[The wargaming center will] help us gain that intellectual edge.”

The new facility and associated architecture and staff are explicitly designed

to achieve advanced wargaming and analytics.

“By using sophisticated wargaming and analytic methods and technology to enhance design methodologies in considering complex and fluid problems, the Marine Corps will produce refined outcomes that support concept development, force design and operational problems in compressed time periods—and will do so continuously,” said Colonel Timothy Barrick, director of the Wargaming Division at MCWL.

The wargaming center is scheduled for completion in the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2023. It is expected to reach initial operating capability in fiscal year 2024 and hit full operational capability in fiscal year 2025. The Wargaming Capability Program Office at MCSC will continue to provide acquisition support for the facility throughout its life cycle.

Matt Gonzales

Pendleton Marines Help Evacuate Families During DeLuz Fire

When a fire ignited on Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., Sept. 30, 2020, threatening homes and a day care center, a handful of Marines leapt into action to see if they could help their neighbors.

Corporal Colton Lahr, an engineer equipment mechanic with 1st Transporta-

tion Support Battalion, Combat Logistics Regiment 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group, was in his barracks room when the power went out. He joined a large group of Marines outside where he noticed fire and smoke in the distance.

He realized the fire was getting close to the DeLuz Child Development Center (CDC) and became concerned. Lahr enlisted the help of Lance Corporal Jonathan Stevens, LCpl Mackenzie Langaker and Cpl Benjamin Wisneski, all heavy equipment operators with 1st TSB, to come with him to help the families in the area.

“When we got near the CDC, we were told that the building was already evacuated,” said Wisneski. “We were happy to hear that they got them out so fast. Then we decided to go start knocking on doors because we could see that between fighting the fire, the police officers and the fire department didn’t have enough people to help everyone.”

“The firefighters did the best they could to evacuate the houses that were in the most immediate danger, so we did everything we could to supplement their efforts,” said Langaker.

As they went along, the Marines ran into Gunnery Sergeant Candido DeLeon Jr., the utilities chief with 7th Engineer Support Battalion, 1st MLG. DeLeon had been home for lunch when the fire broke out. He and his wife grabbed their

emergency bags shortly after receiving the evacuation notice. On his way out, the gunny decided to go to the South DeLuz housing area to see if he could assist in any way. There, he ran into the other four Marines, who were already going door-to-door assisting people and saving pets that were alone.

“It was absolutely chaotic during the fire,” said DeLeon. “The smoke was thick where we were. We literally went door-to-door and sometimes had to crawl through small windows to get into houses.”

According to Stevens, the air smelled like a campfire, and after running to a couple of houses, his lungs started to burn.

“During the event, I was just running on adrenaline because I didn’t notice the smoke bothering my eyes until after the event,” said Langaker. “One of the things that I didn’t notice until we were done was that I was also entirely drenched in sweat.”

After all was said and done, the Marines helped more than 20 families evacuate and rescued approximately a dozen animals, according to DeLeon.

“Seeing those selfless Marines out there helping others when they could’ve been in their barracks rooms safely in their beds feels good,” said DeLeon. “If it wasn’t for those Marines we wouldn’t have gotten out the animals that we did and helped as many people as we did.”

MCB Camp Pendleton



LCPL KERSTIN ROBERTS, USMC

From the left, Cpl Colton Lahr, Cpl Benjamin Wisneski, GySgt Candido DeLeon Jr., LCpl Mackenzie Langaker and LCpl Jonathan Stevens are pictured at MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., Oct. 2, 2020. Together, the five Marines helped evacuate families and pets during a fire that burned approximately 25 acres and threatened homes in the DeLuz Housing area.

“Sun Sets” as Harrier Squadron Prepares for Lightning

Marine Attack Squadron (VMA) 311 conducted a “sundown” ceremony at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Ariz., Oct. 15, 2020. The sundown comes as the Corps continues its transition from the AV-8B Harrier to the F-35 Lightning II.

In the spring of 2022, VMA-311 will reactivate as Marine Fight Attack Squadron (VMFA) 311, operating the F-35C Lightning II at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif. Similarly, another Harrier squadron, VMA-214, will begin flying the F-35B at VMFA-214, based at MCAS Yuma.

The VMA-311 “Tomcats” were initially commissioned in 1942 as a fighter attack squadron at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C. The Tomcats deployed in support of the WW II island hopping campaign and flew the first Marine jet combat mission in 1950 during the Korean War. VMA-311 was named the Marine Corps Aviation Association’s Attack Squadron of the Year in 1988 and 1991 and became the first Marine squadron to employ the AV-8B Harrier in combat during Operation Desert Shield. VMA-311’s Harriers were the first to fly combat missions in Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom and participated in the

first combat sortie of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003. With a longstanding tradition of aviation “firsts,” VMA-311 remained an integral force in the nation’s forward presence around the globe.

“The reputable Tomcats have an exceptional level of esprit de corps, representing 78 years of superior performance,” said Sergeant Major Colin Barry, VMA-311 sergeant major. “The Tomcats imbued a level of morale within each other that was unmatched, but I have no doubt the newly adopted VMA-214 Black Sheep identity will be embraced, and they will continue performing remarkably.”

While VMA-311 is proud to have employed the Harrier in support of numerous conflicts and operations, the transition to the F-35 marks one of the many advancements that the Marine Corps is taking to maintain air superiority and ensure mission readiness. Though the F-35B and AV-8B both offer vertical lift and takeoff capabilities, the F-35 is unmatched in terms of versatility, lethality and reduced pilot fatigue. The F-35 represents the future of the Marine Corps tactical aviation and will deliver strategic agility, operational flexibility and tactical supremacy to the Marine air-ground task force.

Third Marine Aircraft Wing continues

to “Fix, Fly and Fight” as the Marine Corps’ largest aircraft wing, and remains combat-ready, deployable on short notice, and lethal when called into action.

3rd MAW

Landing Support Battalion Reactivates Aboard Camp Lejeune

In accordance with the Commandant’s Planning Guidance and force design restructuring, 2nd Marine Logistics Group (MLG) reactivated 2nd Landing Support Battalion (LSB) during a ceremony at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., Oct. 16, 2020.

After years of dormancy, the battalion was “stood up” again to support aerial delivery and beach landing operations in support of tactical logistics missions for 2nd MLG and II Marine Expeditionary Force. The unit was designed to absorb its capabilities from 2nd Transportation Battalion, a unit also recently restructured as a result of force design modernization efforts taking place across the Marine Corps.

“The re-establishment of 2nd Landing Support Bn comes during a time of significant transformation within the Marine Corps. Small landing support elements will be vitally important to enable throughput and sustainment of distributed forces,”



LCPL JULIAN ELLIOTT-DROUIN, USMC

LtCol Keith Bucklew, the commanding officer of VMA-311, taxis down the flight line in an AV-8B Harrier during his last flight at MCAS Yuma, Ariz., Oct. 14, 2020. The following day, the squadron conducted a sundown ceremony in preparation for its transition to the F-35C Lightning II when the squadron reactivates in 2022.

said Lieutenant Colonel Randall L. Nickel, the commanding officer of 2nd Landing Support Bn. “Whether this is accomplished in the littorals via amphibious ships or via aerial delivery, landing support to the Fleet Marine Force is essential to ensure mission accomplishment.

The battalion consists of a Landing Support Company, a Beach and Terminal Operations Company, a Landing Support Equipment Company and a Headquarters and Service Company.

The companies will be at the forefront of the Corps’ renewed focus on expeditionary advanced base operations, a warfighting concept enabling a persistent forward naval presence that has long been the hallmark of U.S. expeditionary forces.

“As the Marine Corps focuses on becoming proficiently trained and equipped as a naval expeditionary force-in-readiness, 2nd Landing Support Bn will provide a critical link between the Navy and Marine Corps capabilities for dispersed maritime operations and the distribution of logistics across the operating areas,” said Sergeant Major Victor C. Mancini, the battalion sergeant major. “The Marines and Sailors of this battalion are excited

to be part of the force transformation.”

The unit has a storied history and served in multiple overseas campaigns over the past century including supporting combat operations in World War II, and was first activated as Shore Party Detachment, 2nd Marine Division on Nov. 17, 1941, at Camp Elliott, Calif.

In February 1942, the unit was re-designated as 2nd Pioneer Battalion and went on to support major combat operations during WW II on Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Saipan, Tinian and Okinawa. Following the end of WW II the unit underwent a variety of re-designations and relocations over the decades as the unit continued supporting Marine Corps amphibious operations around the world. It was re-designated as 2nd Transportation Battalion on March 30, 2000.

The mission of 2nd Landing Support Battalion is to provide throughput support for II MEF and other Marine air-ground task force operations in order to enable the distribution of equipment, personnel and supplies by air, ground and sea.

2ndLt Kevin Stapleton, USMC



LtCol Randall L. Nickell, CO of 2nd Landing Support Bn, unfurls the organizational battle colors during a reactivation ceremony at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., Oct. 16, 2020. The battalion was reactivated to support aerial delivery and beach landing operations in line with the Commandant’s Planning Guidance. (Photo by Sgt Dengrier Baez, USMC)

Crazy Caption Contest

Winner



CPL DALTON S. SWANBECK, USMC

“You aren’t fooling anybody, Gunny. I know you aren’t the youngest Marine in the company!”

Submitted by:
Toby Maes

This Month’s Photo



CPL ALIZE SOTELO, USMC

(Caption) _____

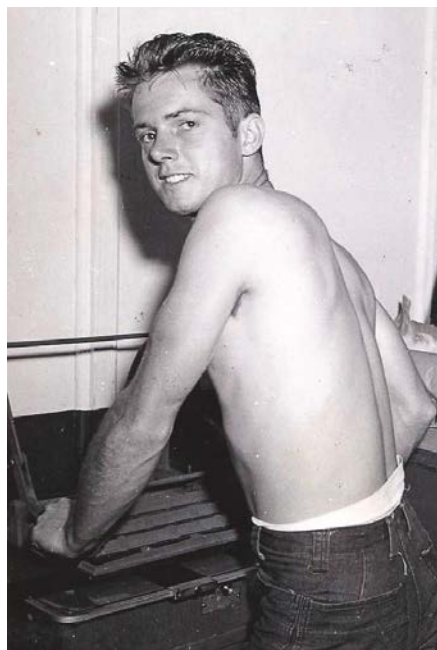
Name _____

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.

Through the Lens of the Past: Marine Photographs Okinawa Using Family Scrapbook as a Guide



COURTESY OF CPL CARLA ELIZABETH O, USMC



COURTESY OF CPL CARLA ELIZABETH O, USMC

Cpl Carla Elizabeth O, pictured in the right photo, poses on Camp Foster, Okinawa, Japan, March 30, 2020, recreating a photo taken of her great-great-uncle, U.S. Navy photographer Keith Zimmerman, pictured in the left photo during his WW II service.

By Cpl Carla Elizabeth O, USMC

Editor's note: The following article received an honorable mention in the 2020 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. The 2021 contest is open until March 31.

When Keith Zimmerman died, no one wanted his photos. It was not until decades later that I stumbled upon them at a family party. I am a servicemember myself—a Marine—now stationed in Okinawa, Japan, where Keith had been 75 years before.

To flip through the pages of Keith's scrapbook is to take a violent, emotional journey through the Pacific during World War II. Keith, my mom's great uncle and godfather, documented his experience as a photographer in the United States Navy with no filter. Black and white

photographs of coy Hawaiian hula dancers are only a page-turn away from a Fijian man holding severed human heads. American servicemembers pose next to Pacific-island locals in loincloths. They climb coconut trees, fish from makeshift piers and struggle to recover American planes. The women in his photos are frozen in time just as he saw them—some topless, smiling or staring with a look of skepticism, and some dead, their skulls crushed, limbs sprawled out and dresses covered in blood.

The scrapbook has few captions to explain what it displays, but a note next to one image gave me pause. "To give you an idea of what a bat looks like." That note alone meant that Keith had not made the scrapbook for himself, but to aid him in someday answering all the questions it raises.

When I started looking for those answers, I found that he hadn't shared much at all.

I called Keith's son, Kayle, to ask about

his dad's experience or explain some of the photos. He couldn't tell me anything.

"I never asked about the war," he said.

Keith's niece, Nova Ann, said the same. "We never asked, and I don't think he would have wanted to talk about it. I think it would've brought up memories that he'd have rather forgotten."

But there were aspects of Keith's life which indicate that try as he might, he did not forget the war.

When family history failed to help piece together Keith's service, I turned to crowdsourcing. I posted the photos to a Facebook group called "Everything Okinawa" and let the internet have its way.

People tagged their friends, asking, "Doesn't this look like that park you took me to?" and "Isn't this by your house?" Okinawans translated some of the text, and web historians linked me to websites where I found some of the service records for Keith's ship, USS *Tangier* (AV-8).

USS *Tangier* was a seaplane tender with the primary mission of recovering downed American airplanes and their pilots from the ocean. After the tragedy at Pearl Harbor, which Keith photographed from an airplane, my great-great-uncle and the ship were sent to deliver Marines and supplies to Wake Island. When Wake Island was surrendered, *Tangier* was diverted to Midway to disembark the men and equipment of Marine Fighting Squadron 221 and take on civilian evacuees.

Keith's photos match the text I found online. His captions on one page read, "Civilians coming aboard at Midway" and "Disembarking at Pearl Harbor civilians we brought from Midway right after Dec 7 attack."

The years 1942 through 1944 were spent bouncing between Hawaii and various Pacific islands including Fiji, the Philippines, New Caledonia and Papua New Guinea. Precisely when and where the ship and Keith were located was not possible to determine from the records I found.

It is only from his sparse captions that I could tell for certain that they were



KEITH ZIMMERMAN



CPL CARLA ELIZABETH O. USMC

A monument at Nagakusku Castle Ruins in Kitanakagusuku, Okinawa, Japan, in 1945, (left) photographed 75 years later, (right) on March 1, 2020.



KEITH ZIMMERMAN



CPL CARLA ELIZABETH O. USMC

The Nagakusku Castle Ruins in Kitanakagusuku, Okinawa, Japan, in 1945, (left) and on March 1, 2020 (right).

in Okinawa at all. One caption reads, “Leaving for Okinawa,” and another is a photo of a sign for Nakagusuku Castle Park.

I can’t say exactly when Keith arrived or left Okinawa, but history tells us that on April 1, 1945, U.S. Marines made an amphibious assault on the island. This battle, also known as Operation Iceberg,

was a bloody battle. When Okinawa was declared secured on June 21, 1945, the death toll among U.S. servicemembers was more than 12,000. Approximately 90,000 Japanese combatants and 150,000 Okinawan civilians also died during the battle.

Living in Okinawa today, it’s hard to imagine that we were ever enemies at war.

At every turn along my quest to retrace Keith’s steps, Okinawans appeared to help me. I struggled through Google Translate with people at Awase Bijuru to understand its significance, and a woman walked nearly a mile in the wrong direction to help me locate a shrine. She had no idea why I wanted to find it, but when she couldn’t explain how to get there in words,



KEITH ZIMMERMAN



CPL CARLA ELIZABETH O. USMC

Awase Bijuru in Okinawa City, Okinawa, Japan, as seen in 1945 (above left) and again 75 years later, (above right) on Feb. 29, 2020.



KEITH ZIMMERMAN



CPL CARLA ELIZABETH O. USMC

An engraved stone at Awase Bijuru in Okinawa City, Okinawa, Japan, photographed in 1945, (above left) and on Feb. 29, 2020 (above right).



KEITH ZIMMERMAN

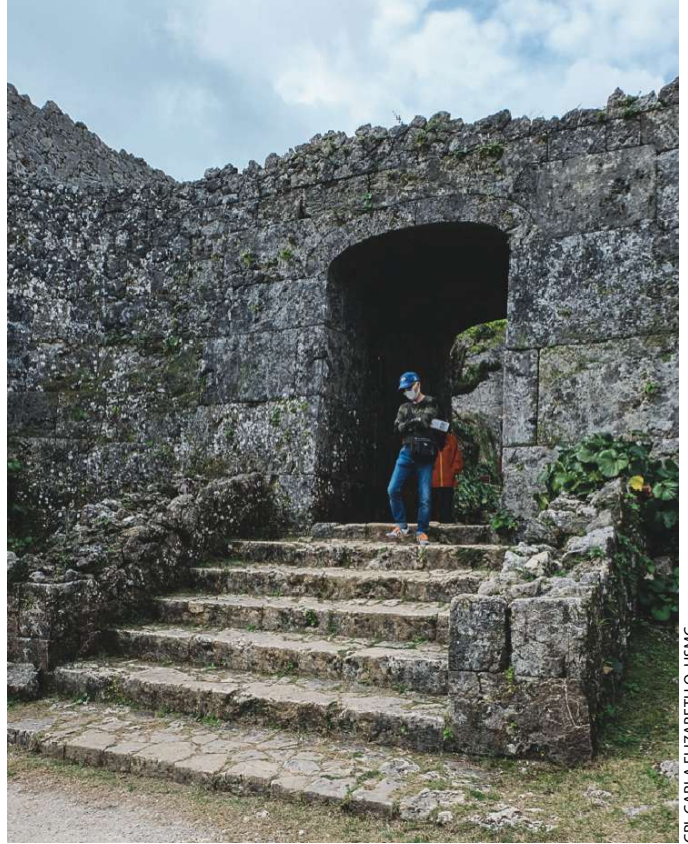


CPL CARLA ELIZABETH O. USMC

An archway at Awase Bijuru in Okinawa City, Okinawa, Japan, in 1945, (left) and on Feb. 29, 2020 (right).



KEITH ZIMMERMAN



CPL CARLA ELIZABETH O, USMC

A corridor at Nakagusuku Castle Ruins in Kitanakagusuku, Okinawa, Japan, in 1945 (left) and as it looks 75 years later, (right) on March 1, 2020.

she didn't hesitate to walk me there herself. The places that Keith's photos show abandoned, overgrown and scarred by war are today well-kept and overrun with American and Japanese tourists alike.

When I first found a place that Keith had been and held his photo to the structure in front of me, I was overwhelmed. To look through the lens of my camera and to know that Keith had done the same thing, I couldn't help but wonder if he would have ever guessed that the daughter of his beloved great-niece, the little girl he held in 1994, would be here. I wondered if *this* is what he wanted people to feel when they opened his scrapbook—for us to know what he had seen and why he had seen it, so that someday, the generations after him might enjoy them in peace.

There is no question that the cost of war for Keith's family—my family—was high. But after chasing his ghost across Okinawa and finding only well-kept ruins in its place, I take solace in knowing that their sacrifices were not in vain. It is for them that I laugh with Okinawans as we struggle through language barriers and trek down winding trails to find the places my ancestor had been.

Distance is a fact of serving in Okinawa. We are far from home, our families and our support networks. But despite that distance, we are infinitely closer to history. Re-creating Keith's photos brought me closer to the island, its people and the significance of my own identity as a

photographer and a United States Marine.

My great-great-uncle watched, firsthand, the battles that inspired me to join the Corps. He witnessed history, and he successfully captured it on film so that we can all see for ourselves the true cost of war. But Keith failed to capture the cost that war had on him, and part of that cost is that his own story was largely lost. So, while my quest left me with more questions than answers, it taught me the

true importance of storytelling to finish the thousand words left unspoken by even the most telling of photographs.

Author's bio: Cpl Carla Elizabeth O is a native of Portland, Ore., and Brooklyn, N.Y. O is a combat correspondent and is currently serving as a broadcaster at the Armed Forces Network, Marine Corps Base Camp Butler, Okinawa, Japan.



COURTESY OF CPL CARLA ELIZABETH O, USMC

U.S. Navy photographer Keith Zimmerman, (front, center) and other U.S. service-members gather for a photo before leaving for Okinawa, Japan, 1945.

SEA STORY OF THE MONTH

Cook? I Don't Want to Be a Cook!

I was born in the small town of Salem, N.J. Since the age of 7, I wanted to be a United States Marine following in my father's footsteps. In 1969, I was 17 years old and a senior in high school. One day I met a Marine recruiter, Sergeant Knight. He asked me what I wanted to do after high school, and I proudly said, "I want to be a Marine." He then asked me what I wanted to do in the Marines, and I told him that whatever the Marine Corps needed, I would do. He suggested that I go to Parris Island on an open contract.

On Oct. 15, 1969, I headed to Parris Island. I was introduced to Staff Sergeant Glen Davis, my senior drill instructor (DI), and two assistant DIs, Sergeants Davis and Hargrove. About seven weeks into boot camp the platoon was ready to hit the rack but not before the DI yelled, "All those on an open contract take one step forward." I was one of about 25. As the DI walked past each of us, he shouted out different MOSs and when he got to me, he shouted out, "Cook!"

That night I mustered up enough courage to pound on the bulkhead shouting, "Sir! Private Cawman requests permission to speak to the drill instructor, Sir!" He yelled through the hatch, "Get in here, Private. What is your problem?" I said, "Sir, today the Marine Corps made the private a cook." Sgt Davis said, "Congratulations, now get out!"

After boot camp and advanced infantry training, I reported to Montford Point for four weeks of Food

Service School. I learned an uninspiring poem: "They said to join the Corps and fight like a man, but they took my M16 for a frying pan. Hut two, three, four heroes we can make, but they don't give purple hearts for a falling cake." Damn, I did not want to be a cook. Each morning we got into the uniform of the day, which for a cook was white trousers, white T-shirt and a white paper hat looking like a squad of Good Humor ice cream men. We would march to cook school but before we could go into the classroom, we had to

We jogged past Recon chanting, "Flour, shortening, yeast and salt, sugar and milk makes a malt. Left, right, left." It was pretty embarrassing.

jog around the perimeter of the school's parking lot. Gunnery Sergeant Farmer would stand in the middle of the parking lot turning around in small circles as we jogged around the perimeter.

One particular morning, Force Recon Marines marched by us. They had on helmets and camouflage utilities, and their faces were painted with camouflage colors. I started drooling and fantasizing and then they started a slow jog while chanting, "I want to be a Recon Ranger. I want to live the life of danger, oorah!" GySgt Farmer yelled, "Okay bean burners sound off!" We jogged past Recon chanting, "Flour, shortening, yeast and salt, sugar and milk makes

a malt. Left, right, left." It was pretty embarrassing as Recon started laughing at which time GySgt Farmer yelled, "Come on belly robbers. Let me hear it!" and we repeated our chant of "Flour, shortening, yeast and salt, sugar and milk makes a malt."

Fortunately, God looks out for fools and kids and off to Vietnam I went. My friend and brother Marine, Eugene Zuro, received several Purple Hearts, and I feel that I should have been in the bush fighting next to him.

After Vietnam, I volunteered for Marine Security Guard (MSG). Midway through MSG School I was told to report to the colonel. My heart sank because I heard over and over that food service was a critical MOS and it was very hard to experience other opportunities. As soon as I reported to the colonel, he said, "Lance Corporal, I see you are in food service." I thought, "Here we go. He's going to tell me that I'm in a critical MOS and I have to go back to the fleet." Instead he asked me if I would accept a tour at the Embassy in Paris, France. The colonel informed me that the morale was low for the 40 Marines assigned there.

After three years in Paris, France, and being promoted to staff sergeant and later to gunnery sergeant, I became a recruiter. Although the Vietnam-era left a sour taste in many of the educators' mouths and they were reluctant to provide us with lists to contact students, I was invited into many of the schools in my area to speak in the culinary arts programs. I let my dress blues speak loudly while I addressed the students on the art of feeding 1,000 Marines three meals a day.

I spent 11 years on recruiting duty and retired a master sergeant. God really does look out for fools and kids, so I say, "Thanks for making me a cook."

MSgt Douglas A.
Cawman, USMC (Ret)
Beaufort, N.C.

Dressing Down Was Warranted

In 1955, I was a private first class with aviation ordnance shipping to Korea. Midway, we were redirected to NAS Iwakuni and I learned I was to become an MP. The company was made of about 60 men living in a tent area next to Navy dependent housing as Marines were not allowed to have dependents overseas.

We covered the main gate, the back gate, town patrol and the brig. We served as the honor guard for visiting dignitaries as well as trained to become the base drill team. The drill team performed on special occasions at the wishes of the base commander.

One of these occasions was Armed Forces Day when the public was invited to see a display of the aircraft and the daily operations of the base. The morning dawned on what would be a very hot steamy day; it had rained heavily during the night. We drilled on a flight line that was covered with puddles. All went well, and our superiors and the public liked it, and Sergeant Valenzuela, who had trained us, was pleased. We were sweating profusely, and our shoes were soaked from marching through the puddles. After drill, Sgt Valenzuela marched us to the Enlisted Club for refreshments. I sucked down three or four cold 16-ouncers before we had to saddle up for another performance.

Back at the flight line and before the onlooking crowd, we began our next drill. Midway through, Sgt Valenzuela gave the command, "Left flank, march." I was in the right column of the platoon and turned right (those 16 ounces) and was suddenly marching alone.

Sgt Valenzuela, realizing the obvious, quickly gave the command, "To the rear, march." I was relieved to see the platoon marching toward me so I fell into my slot, and performed a rear march. Our platoon finished the drill unerringly.

The crowd must have thought the mistake was part of the drill. Sgt Valenzuela later gave me a dressing down but that was the end of it. Thanks, Val for saving the day!

Cpl Frank Maginnis
USMC, 1954-1958
Holyoke, Mass.

The Gunny Turned Purple

My first duty station assignment after Parris Island and ITR at Camp Geiger in 1966 was with Headquarters Company, Force Troops, Fleet Marine Force Atlantic at Camp Lejeune. Upon checking in, I was informed that the next morning the company was to participate in a full-blown Force Troops review and inspection by the commanding general. As all my uniforms had been stuffed into my seabag, everything was wrinkled and utterly inappropriate for standing inspection. The company gunny helped me iron and square away my stuff. We were up half the night getting ready. He placed me in the middle of the formation to bury this raw recruit in hopes that I would be quickly passed over by the inspection team.

As the general, his chief of staff, the company commander and the company gunny proceeded down the ranks occasionally

choosing a Marine to present the manual of arms, it was my fervent prayer that they would pass me by because the brand-new M14 rifle was a weapon with which I was not familiar. The night before I had found that I could not smartly cock and lock the M14 receiver with this new weapons stout spring.

Indeed, I was quite relieved when the inspection team did pass me by but was startled when the general did an about face and stood before me staring intently. He then walked around me and asked my age. I was a 135-pound tow-headed youth whose face had never needed a shave. I responded, "Sir, the private is 19." He said, "I don't believe it! You don't look a day over 16. By God, we are not going to fight this

The gunny began to turn multiple shades of purple and shouted one inch from my face, "Privates do not argue with generals!"

[Vietnam] war with children!" To the others he said, "If this man is not 19 years old, I want him discharged today. His head is not to rest on a Marine Corps pillow another day." I shouted, "The private is not a child! I am 19. That Marine pillow is going to be mighty soft on my head tonight!"

The gunny began to turn multiple shades of purple and shouted one inch from my face, "Privates do not argue with generals! If the general says you are a child, you ARE a child." Tears of exasperation, anger and fear of being discharged streamed down my face. The gunny said, "Don't you dare flare your nostrils at me, Private, and wipe those tears off your face."

The general placed his hand on my shoulder and kindly said, "It's all right, Son. If you are truly 19, you can stay a Marine." Knowing that the gunny was likely to figuratively murder me later, the general said, "Go easy on this man, Gunny. He's got spirit."

I served another 12 years on active duty and in the Marine Corps Reserve, becoming a gunnery sergeant myself.

GySgt George Dunlop
USMC, USMCR, 1966-1978
Draper, Va.

Army and Marine Relations

In February 1951, while part of a tank convoy moving up over a mountain pass in east central South Korea, our M26 had brake problems, and we dropped out of the convoy. Sometime later, a service company mechanic came and fixed the brakes. The convoy was long gone so we headed down the road figuring that we would eventually find them. We were cruising down the road when the tank suddenly ran out of gas, and the tank commander, without our seeing him, jumped off and caught a passing jeep.

We stopped passing vehicles and asking for any spare gas that they had. An Army captain stopped and asked us where our tank commander was. We answered, "We don't know, Sir." He then asked where we were going. Again we answered, "We don't know, Sir." Getting a bit angry he asked, "Where are you coming from?" At the repeat of our previous answers he started cursing and angrily drove off. Obviously, he left with a low opinion of Marines.

We took off and eventually found our tank commander and our outfit north of what was left of the town Wonju.

SSgt Len Martin
USMCR, 1949-1957
Tallahassee, Fla.

I Should Have Skipped The Birthday Ball

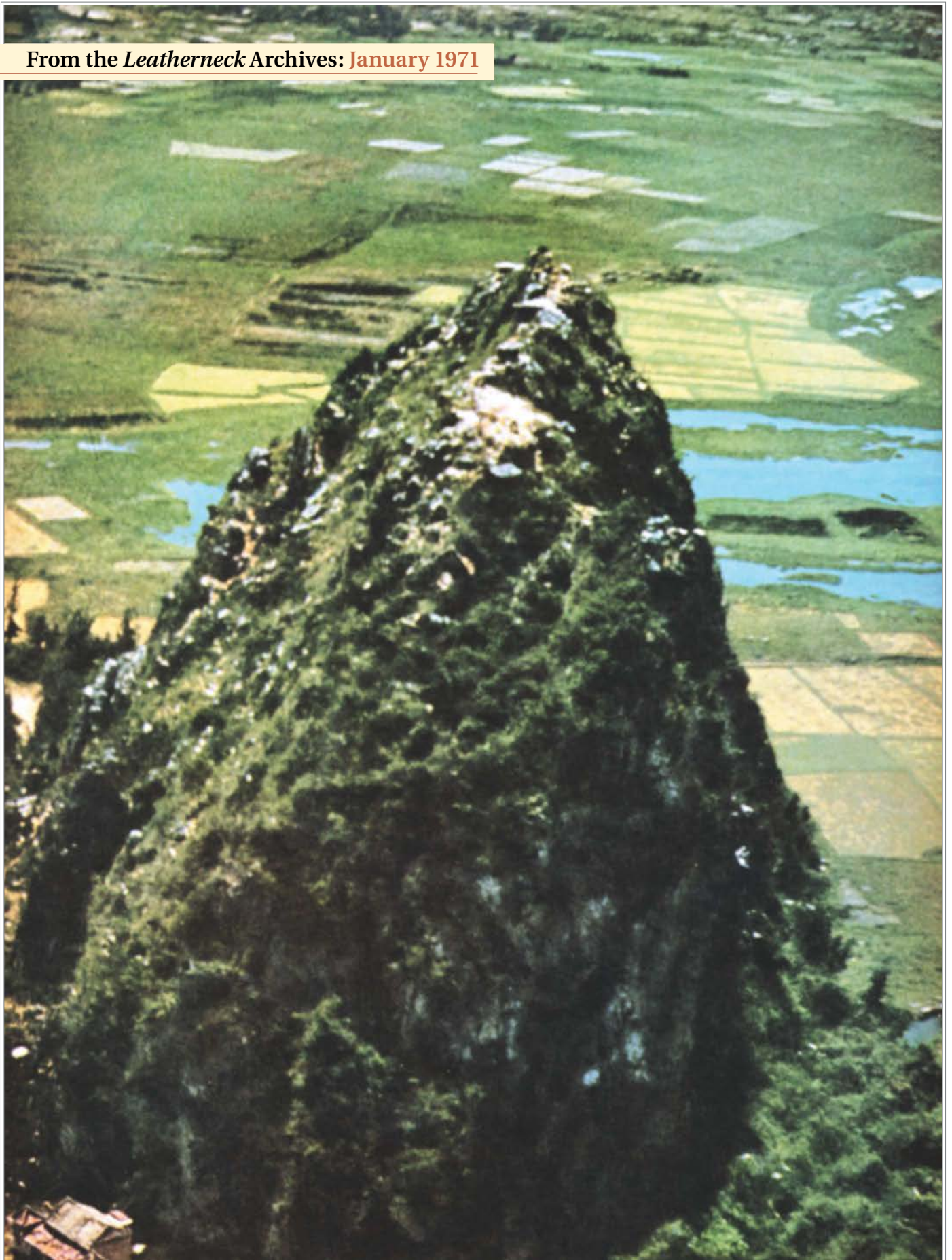
While serving at Marine Barracks Hunter's Point, San Francisco, in 1968, I had the pleasure of attending my first Marine Corps Birthday Ball. It was the 193rd birthday of our beloved Corps. Our guest speaker was none other than Colonel Gregory "Pappy" Boyington. I was one of the flag bearers at the event and I was also sicker than a dog. I didn't go to sick bay because not wearing my dress blues for the first time was not an option. Neither was missing my first birthday ball, and I damn sure didn't want to miss seeing the legendary Pappy Boyington.

Prior to the ceremony, I had unwittingly allowed my flag to lower right on top of Col Boyington's shoulder. I quickly raised the flag. I felt like passing out from not only the embarrassment but from being very sick. The colonel turned and looked at me and said, "Sergeant, you aren't looking too good, perhaps you should sit this dance out." He then suggested to our CO that I should be replaced, which I immediately was. I spent the remainder of the birthday ball at the back of the auditorium alone with barf bucket in hand.

GySgt John D. Foster
USMC (Ret)
Palm Springs, Calif.

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." 🍷

From the *Leatherneck* Archives: **January 1971**



The Crow's Nest, one of the peaks of the Marble Mountains, was the site of a crucial observation post for 2nd Bn, 1st Marines near Nui Kim Sahn, Vietnam in 1971.

Crow's Nest

Story and photos by
SSgt Jim Elliott, USMC

The Marble Mountains, are a half dozen peaks of crystallized limestone. Aloof, forbidding and grotesquely beautiful, they jut up improbably in the fertile lowlands just south of Da Nang like angry sores on an otherwise smooth skin of plains, rice paddies and waterways.

The villagers of Nui Kim Sahn earn their livelihood from the mountain complex. The metallic clink clink of hammer and chisel against stone echoes continually from the village as its men, women and children ply an ancient art to carve handsome sculptures from hunks of raw marble.

The men of 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, headquartered near the mountains, have done some sculpturing of their own—they've chiseled out observation posts (OPs) on three of the peaks. But, unlike the villagers of Nui Kim Sahn, the livelihood of the Marines doesn't depend on their finished product—their very lives do.

To the Marines, each of the peaks has its own personality. Aside from "Marble Mountain" itself (so-named because it provides nearly all the stone used by the villagers), there's "Chin Strap," a double-humped mountain providing two small OP's called "Ostrich" and "Roadrunner," and two unmanned peaks called "Big No-Name" and "Little No-Name."

And, finally, there's the "Crow's Nest." It is here that 16 Marines, two soldiers, one land-locked Sailor and five dogs of questionable breeding serve as the primary "eyes" for U.S. forces in the Da Nang area.

It's not an easy life. Working, eating and sleeping atop the Crow's Nest is comparable to setting up housekeeping in a stone jungle. Huge, jagged rock formations, their uneven edges like cutting blades, are everywhere. Covering an area roughly the size of a football field, it's difficult to find a flat surface large enough to set up a folding cot. It's almost impossible to walk from one point to another in a straight line, and twisted ankles and bruises are as common as the gnats and mosquitoes. It's hot in the daytime and cold at night. Shelters can be built for protection against the heat and cold, but it's risky business;



As Cpl Racette spotted possible enemy troop movements, his radioman, LCpl Cliff Devost, relayed the grid coordinates to a 105 mm gun battery below.

more than once strong winds have blown them, and very nearly their occupants, off the side of the mountain.

There's no MOS in the Marine Corps for "mountain climbing," but if there were, the Marines who man the Crow's Nest would probably be first in line. Small as mountains go (its height is estimated at about 400 feet), the Crow's Nest makes up for its lack of size by rising almost straight up; its sheer cliffs and unpredictable footing provide a challenge to the amateur about as inviting as the Matterhorn.

But, unless you're lucky enough to catch a resupply chopper, climbing is the only way to reach the top or to get back down again. The Marines have made it a little easier on themselves by lowering a single rope from top to base, but it's still quite a climb.

"You can say that again," puffed Staff Sergeant Dave Aasen as he pulled himself over the final hump and let the inch-thick rope fall from his hands. "This will make your skin leak no matter how good a shape you're in." He cocked his hand in an arc and ran it across his forehead; rivulets of sweat poured off and he slung them aside with a whip-like motion. "But once you get to the top, you can appreciate the value of having an OP up here."

A better position to observe from would be hard to find. The Crow's Nest provides an almost limitless view in all

directions. To the north is Da Nang City, the sprawling Da Nang Air Base and the Marine Marble Mountain Air Facility; to the south, LZ Baldy, almost 20 miles away, is visible; to the west, Charley Ridge looms far in the distance and to the east are Barrier Island and the South China Sea.

"Like they say in the song, 'On A Clear Day You Can see Forever,'" Aasen chimed in. He chuckled at his own joke and entered one of the hootches the Marines had built from discarded ammo boxes and other scrap lumber. On one side was a faded sign that read: "Welcome to Crow's Nest - The Friendly Mountain Resort." And indeed, in a different time, a more peaceful atmosphere, adventurous vacationers might well pay handsome sums for the view, the privacy and the clean air afforded the Marines.

"Yeah, that's possible," Aasen agreed. He reached in his pack, pulled out some lukewarm cans of soft drinks and passed them around. "But our job here now is far from being a vacation. A helluva lot of people are depending on us to carry out our mission. We goof up and the price of our mistake is going to be some dead Americans. We're going to make sure that never happens."

The primary mission of the men on the Crow's Nest is to spot enemy rocket sites aimed at Da Nang and to provide



The Marines manning the Crow's Nest were resupplied by CH-46 helicopters from nearby MAG-16.

general observation support for Marine ground and artillery units in 2/1's Area of Operation.

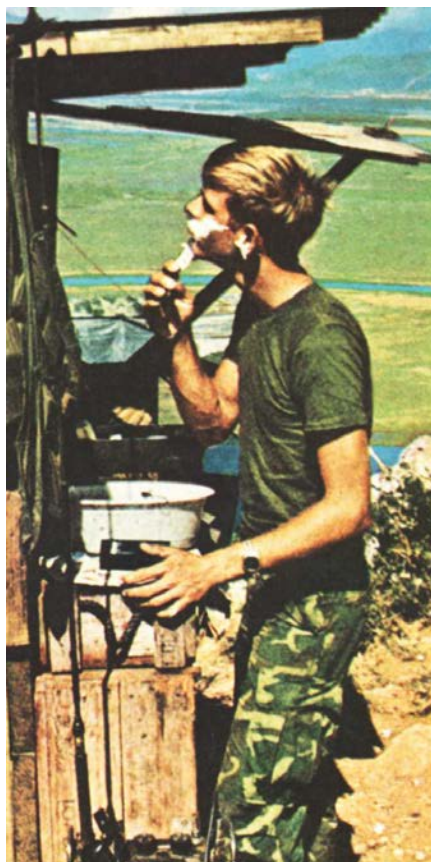
"Until recently, this area was known as the 'rocket belt,' " Aasen said. "The enemy would throw in rockets almost every night, aiming for the Da Nang airfield mostly. The job of the men here was to get return fire on the rocket sites as quickly as possible.

"But the situation has changed," he continued. "Our mission is still the same, but the enemy has been throwing very few rockets around lately. So, most of our time is spent detecting enemy movement in the area and observing for friendly artillery."

As the senior enlisted man, Aasen is responsible for the overall performance and welfare of the men on Crow's Nest, as well as those on the two smaller OPs. The Marines call him simply "Staff." He's a veteran of 19 years as a Marine "grunt," and wears two Purple Hearts for wounds received in Korea. Serving his second tour in Vietnam, Aasen has a reputation for looking out for his men.

"I've got a fine bunch of troops here," he said matter-of-factly. He paused to slap playfully at one of the men's "adopted" mutts. "They know what I expect of them. As long as they do their job, I stay off their backs."

The men on Crow's Nest are resupplied



HM3 Jim Tylasley, the OP's corpsman, "celebrated" his birthday with a clean shave atop the Crow's Nest.

by helicopter once every three days. Fresh water is delivered, but only enough for drinking purposes and a daily shave. Food is plentiful, but C-rations and dehydrated meat products make up the bulk of the diet. There is no electric power, so perishables such as milk, fresh fruits and vegetables cannot be kept for any length of time. To combat these conditions, Aasen has devised what he calls his "honor system."

"This means that as long as a man isn't on day watch, he's free to go down the mountain to get a shower, hot chow or go to the PX just about any time he wants to," Aasen explained. "The only thing I insist on is that he be back up here by 1700. Each man stands a four-hour watch every night, and as long as they're alert and ready when that watch comes up, then I'm happy."

This system has done much to raise the morale of the men on Crow's Nest. "Their spirits are pretty high," Aasen agreed. "But there's another reason for that, too. A lot of men up here are nearing the end of their tour. And for a grunt, this isn't a bad way to wrap up the year."

"Ain't that the truth," a cheerful voice injected. It belonged to Corporal Mike "Dizzy" Disdier, 19, the OP's "short-timer." His 12-month tour would be up in a few days. His wife and a nine-month-old daughter he'd never seen were waiting for him back in Key West, Fla.

Disdier was attached to Co E, 2/1, and his job was that of Forward Observer (FO) for the battalion's 81 mm mortars. He now had an additional duty—snapping in his replacement, Private First Class Don Rader, a muscular 27-year-old ex-dock worker from Chicago.

Disdier was in the main observation tower, a small wooden structure on the west end of the mountain. It was equipped with two AN/PRC-25 field radios, mounted 20-power ship binoculars, and a large “starlight scope.”

A veteran of four months on the Crow's Nest, “Dizzy” had served previously as a radio operator with F/2/1. During a river crossing with that company on Feb. 9, 1970, he earned the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for saving a fellow Marine from drowning.

“My job is to observe enemy infiltration routes,” he said. “I make routine checks of known routes and keep my eyes peeled for new ones. If I spot something, I plot the area on my map and relay the grid coordinates to the mortar battery. Once the rounds start landing, I call in whatever adjustments are necessary to get them on target.”

Rader nodded his head when Disdier spoke as if once again committing his duties to memory. He had six months experience as a member of a mortar crew, but this was to be his first attempt at being an FO. But he was accustomed to challenges.

“I've wanted to be a Marine for as long as I can remember,” Rader said. “But when I turned 18, my draft board gave me a 1-Y (medical deferment) classification. It was a minor thing; I had hay fever as a child. But it took me eight years to get them to change that classification to 1-A so I could join the Corps.”

In his new job, Rader would be sharing the observation tower with two other



Cpl Mike Disdier and PFC Don Rader called in night firing missions to an 81 mm mortar platoon at the base of the Crow's Nest.

Marines, Cpl Terry Racette, 21, and Lance Corporal Cliff Devost, 18, spotters for the six 105 mm guns of “Bravo” Battery, 1/11. The battery's guns were located in the “stack arms” area (site of the now disbanded in-country R&R center) near 2/1 headquarters.

“We work as a team,” said Racette, who was also nearing the end of his tour in Vietnam. “I'm the FO and Devost is my radioman. What we look for are enemy rocket sites, artillery positions or troop movements; anything the mortars can't reach.”

Racette is one of the few Marines manning the OP who was there during the last major rocket attack on Da Nang, “It was about six months ago,” he recalled. “There were two volleys, probably 15 or 20 rockets in all. As soon as we saw the first flashes, our own 106 mm recoilless rifle here on the mountain opened up. Then we passed down the grid coordinates to the 105 mm battery. By the time they commenced firing, the flashes had stopped. I don't know how many ‘Charlie’ planned to throw in

that night, but a sweep of the area a few hours later turned up 11 unfired rockets.”

The 106 mm recoilless rifle, heaviest armament on the Crow's Nest, is braced on a 10-foot wooden platform in the center of the peak. It belongs to the 106 mm platoon of H&S Co, 2/1. Its section chief is Sgt George Spear, a 20-year-old Marine from Cullman, Ala. His three-man crew consists of Sgt Mike Blake, 19, LCpl Clyde Brown, 18, and LCpl Patrick Yount, 19.

“Normally, I'd have a four-man crew,” Spear said as he climbed the ladder up to his gun's position. “But the fourth billet calls for a driver ...” He left the sentence dangling; obviously a driver was not in demand on the Crow's Nest.

Spear had two years in the Corps, and all but four months of that time had been spent with 106 mm units. During his first tour in Vietnam he served with a recoilless rifle platoon attached to 1/26.

“We're one of the few artillery pieces in this area that can fire automatically without gaining grid clearance first,” Spear said. “If we spot flashes from enemy rockets, we're authorized to fire three quick rounds. Then we check-fire and call battalion to get further instructions.”

Spear's gun crew is part of a nine-man security force under the control of Sgt Robert Farmer, 20, of Newington, Ga. The other Marines responsible for the overall security of the Crow's Nest include LCpl Dan Mrozek, 20, LCpl Larry Coulter, 19, LCpl John Lezeoli, 19, LCpl Tony Baca, 20, and PFC Ken Lewis, 18.

Farmer, who has spent 14 months of his two years' active service in Vietnam, keeps his security element together on the east end of the mountain. “I don't really have enough men to cover all sections of the OP in case of a ground attack,” he said. “If we're hit hard, we'll pull back to the center where we can concentrate our firepower in all directions from the highest point.”



A crew of Marine engineers was quickly initiated to the dangers of living on the Crow's Nest when a pallet of lumber was deposited precariously on the side of the 400-foot mountain.

The possibility of a ground attack on the Crow's Nest is not as remote as it may seem. In April 1970, a force of about 20 Viet Cong struck the Marines with small-arms fire and RPG's. "It happened about midnight," Farmer said. "We returned fire and they broke off contact after about 20 minutes. We didn't suffer any casualties, and apparently, they didn't either. We checked the route of attack the next morning, but all we found were a lot of shell casings."

The men on the Crow's Nest rely heavily on small arms and fragmentation hand grenades for their defense. "We keep about 500 frags on hand," Farmer said. "All we have to do is roll them down the mountain as fast as we can pull the pins." The OP's other weapons include M16 rifles, two M-79 grenade launchers, two M-60 machine guns and some .45-caliber pistols. Placed strategically around the sides of the mountain are Claymore Anti-Personnel Mines and trip flares. The Marines have also filled metal ammo boxes with TNT, adding nails, rocks and other items for shrapnel.

The Marines under Farmer couldn't be classified as a superstitious lot, but recent enemy boasts have them at least interested. "It all started with reports of a broadcast by Hanoi Hanna (North Vietnam's answer to Tokyo Rose and Axis Sally) a few weeks ago," Farmer said with a sheepish grin. "She reportedly forecast a 'Marble Mountain Massacre,' even giving the names of the units that were going to do us in!"

The Marines don't put much stock in the report—the communists have made many such boasts in the past and have been unable to carry them out—but Farmer admitted that, "maybe we've all begun to keep just a little sharper eye when darkness rolls around."

One of the best "eyes" on the Crow's



The OP's 106 mm recoilless rifle position offered a panoramic view of the area, confirming the advantages of placing an OP on the Crow's Nest.

Nest belongs to the U.S. Army—a 23-inch Xeon Searchlight operated by a two-man team from Battery G, 29th Artillery Regiment, near Da Nang. Connected to a 28-volt field generator, it is capable of producing 125 million candle-power. By throwing an over-ride switch, its power can be increased to 150 million candlepower for brief periods.



Sgt Mike Blake aligned a 50-cal. spotter round as Sgt George Spear loaded the 106 mm recoilless rifle.

"We also have infrared capabilities," said Spec-4 Bill Pastre, 21, senior member of the team. "We make nightly sweeps of the area, but it depends on the situation as to what light we use. If there are friendly patrols in the area, we use the infrared so as not to expose their position; if not, we'll use the visible beam."

Pastre claims to have no difficulties working with the Marines. "It'd be a little late to start having problems now," he said. "I've worked with the Corps since I got in country 10 months ago. My light and I have been attached to the 26th, 5th, 7th and now the 1st Marine Regiment. Hell, I feel like I'm part Marine myself!"

Adding to the Crow's Nest inter-service family is Hospital Corpsman Third Class Jim Tylasley, the Navy corpsman. "My birthday dessert," Tylasley said wryly as he poured C-ration peaches over C-ration pound cake. He had just turned 22.

"I do general preventive medicine," he said. "Mostly, I treat minor cuts and bruises, headaches and upset stomachs. Anything more serious, I see that the man gets taken down to the Battalion Aid Station. My main reason for being up here permanently is in case we come under attack."

Tylasley's private celebration was interrupted by the deafening roar of a CH-46 helicopter coming in low and slow. "Resupply," he shouted. "Hope they bring in something different for a change."

A check with the OP's communications chief, Private Richard Robb, 19, revealed that "something different" was indeed aboard the chopper. "The pilot says he's bringing in a crew of engineers," Robb said as he popped a yellow smoke grenade. The newest man on the Crow's Nest, he had the dual responsibility of keeping the Marines' six field radios in peak condition and of assisting the helicopter pilots in landing on the OP's tiny 25'x45' landing zone.

Robb handled his first resupply like a pro. The "46" made a pinpoint landing and deposited its cargo of seven Marine engineers without incident. Two other choppers were flying overhead with external loads of lumber and other building materials.

"I don't believe it," exclaimed Sgt Mike Blake of the 106 mm recoilless rifle crew. "They're really going to build us some livable hootches!" Blake had good reason for wanting a new home; his old one had been blown away a week earlier by a windstorm.

"We could see the storm coming from the north," Blake said, "but there was no warning that the winds would be so strong. There were two of us inside the hootch when all of a sudden the tin roof started



In addition to the Crow's Nest, Marines from 2/1 also carved out observation posts on a twin-humped mountain called "Chin Strap."

flapping and the center beam cracked like a match stick. We had just enough time to grab most of our gear and crawl out before the whole thing went over the side." Three other hootches were to suffer the same fate before the storm abated.

Even as Blake gave his account of the storm, the engineers were already at work. One group was unloading a pallet of lumber that barely missed sliding off the side of the mountain, while another was busy digging the foundation for the first hootch.

"We'll erect four new buildings and remodel three others," said Second Lieutenant Harold Copperberg, a platoon commander with "A" Co, 1st Engineer Battalion. "By using cement foundations and good lumber, they should hold up in any storm."

Copperberg grimaced as he watched his men trying to dig through the marble and stone-infested dirt. "Ordinarily, we could finish a job this size in two days," he said. "But in this stuff it'll probably take us a week or 10 days."

To the men on the Crow's Nest, "a week or 10 days" sounded just fine. For the "short-timers," the only new homes they were really interested in were in places like Florida, Illinois, Michigan and Ohio. And for those remaining, what were a few more nights out in the open when you could look forward to new quarters, complete with screens to keep out the mosquitoes?

"Yep, things are always looking up on the Crow's Nest!" It was Aasen, the "Staff." It was difficult at first to tell



Marines from the 1st Engineer Bn erected sturdy hootches on the mountain's wind-swept summit.

whether the statement was intended as a pun or an observation.

Aasen ran a calloused hand through his closely cropped hair, then spoke in a soft voice. "These men deserve all the comfort they can get. They're doing one helluva job, and they rate living like human beings up here." There was no mistaking his sincerity now; most of the Marines here were young enough to be his sons, and a tone approaching that of paternal pride had crept into his voice.

"Know what I'd like to see?" he said suddenly. "I'd like to see the morale go as high as this mountain!"

A few moments later, cheers and yells began floating across the Crow's Nest. A wall of the first new hootch had been raised into place by the engineers. Aasen smiled.

And if you've never seen what a man's face looks like when he's just seen a wish come true ... well, you should have been there that day. There on top of the Crow's Nest. 🐼

Passing the Word

Compiled by Sara W. Bock

Free Entry into National Parks For Veterans, Gold Star Families

In support of America's military members and families, U.S. Secretary of the Interior David L. Bernhardt announced at the Iowa Gold Star Museum on Oct. 28, 2020, that Gold Star families and U.S. military veterans would be granted free access to national parks, wildlife refuges and other federal lands managed by the Department of the Interior starting on Veterans Day, Nov. 11, 2020.

"With the utmost respect and gratitude, we are granting veterans and Gold Star families free access to the iconic and treasured lands they fought to protect starting this Veteran's Day and every single day thereafter," said Secretary Bernhardt.

Entrance fees for the National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and standard amenity recreation fees for the Bureau of Land Management and the Bureau of Reclamation sites will be waived

for veterans and Gold Star family members. They will have free access to approximately 2,000 public locations spread out across more than 400 million acres of public lands, which host activities including hiking, fishing, paddling, biking, hunting, stargazing and climbing.

"I would like to express my great appreciation to the Department of the Interior for building on the success of the America the Beautiful National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Annual Pass for military families and extending the benefit to Gold Star families and to those who have served in support of our nation, in part, to secure these treasured lands," said Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America CEO Jeremy Butler. "Exposure to outdoor recreation can provide a wide range of mental health benefits, and given our nation's ongoing veteran suicide crisis, this is a welcome step forward using a whole of government approach to improve the lives of veterans."

Many department-managed lands have direct connections to the American military, such as frontier forts, Cold War sites, battlefields, national cemeteries and memorials. These special places pay tribute to our veterans and serve as reminders of their courage and sacrifice throughout the history of our nation, from Minuteman National Historic Park, where colonists stood in defense of their rights, to Yellowstone National Park, which was protected from vandalism and poaching by the 1st U.S. Cavalry before the National Park Service was established, to Mount Rushmore, where modern warriors often attend reenlistment ceremonies.

For purposes of this program, a veteran is identified as an individual who has served in the United States Armed Forces, including the National Guard and Reserves, and is able to present one of the following forms of identification: Department of Defense Identification Card, Veteran Health Identification Card, Vet-



NPS/KAYLA VOGT

Arches National Park near Moab, Utah, is one of approximately 2,000 public locations managed by the Department of the Interior which U.S. military veterans and Gold Star family members can now access free of charge, thanks to an expansion of the America the Beautiful National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Annual Pass program.

eran ID card or Veterans designation on a state-issued U.S. driver's license or identification card.

Gold Star family members are next-of-kin of a member of the United States Armed Forces who lost his or her life in a "qualifying situation" such as war, an international terrorist attack or a military operation outside of the United States while serving with the United States Armed Forces.

The Interagency America the Beautiful National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Annual Pass program already includes a free annual pass for active-duty members of the U.S. military and their dependents. Other free or discounted passes are available for persons with permanent disabilities, fourth grade students, volunteers and senior citizens age 62 years and older.

U.S. Department of the Interior

Amid Pandemic, DPAA Updates Families in Virtual Format

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) conducted its first-ever virtual Family Member Update (FMU) from Little Rock, Ark., Nov. 7, 2020.

FMUs play a vital role in keeping an open flow of communication with families regarding their missing and unaccounted-for loved ones. Continuing to keep communication available for the families amid the COVID-19 pandemic has been top priority for DPAA and prompted the holding of this virtual FMU, taking extra care to keep everyone safe yet informed.

"After having to cancel six family meetings earlier this year, we wanted to be able to connect and communicate with you, and thus we have our very first virtual Family Member Update," said Kelly McKeague, DPAA's director. "It's not an overstatement that the mission we share is a sacred one simply because it involves your missing loved one, but it is also a moral imperative because your loved one made the supreme sacrifice on behalf of a grateful nation.

U.S. Senator John Boozman from Arkansas shared a video message with family members during the FMU.

"Just like our POWs and those missing in action fought with resolve in defense of our nation and its ideals, so too shall we be determined to bring the men and women who served in uniform home, no matter where they are or how long they have been gone," said Boozman. "We must commit to never giving up looking for those who wore our nation's uniform and give answers to families waiting to hear their loved one has been found."

DPAA is working to account for the more than 81,000 DOD personnel who



COURTESY OF DPAA

Dr. Franklin Damann, DPAA's Deputy Laboratory Director, gives a presentation explaining DPAA's scientific capabilities during the virtual briefing from Little Rock, Ark., Nov. 7, 2020. This was DPAA's first-ever virtual FMU and was held so DPAA could continue to inform families about their efforts to locate America's missing and unaccounted-for servicemembers.

remain missing from the Vietnam War, the Korean War, the Cold War and World War II. Family Member Updates have been conducted since 1995, giving families in-person updates regarding the search for their missing loved ones. DPAA is committed to finding our missing and giving their families and their nation the fullest possible accounting.

SGT Jarel Chugg-Guerra, USA

New App Puts Resources At Servicemembers' Fingertips

The "My Military OneSource" mobile app is now available for servicemembers and their families for free by downloading it on Google Play or the Apple App Store.

Military OneSource exists to put as many resources as possible in one place, so people have an easier time finding what they need, said Erika Slaton, the associate director for Military Community Support Programs at Military OneSource. The app makes accessing information and resources more convenient when users are away from their computers and are only carrying a smartphone.

Each year, Military OneSource connects hundreds of thousands of servicemembers and their families to resources that help improve their quality of life, including childcare options, relationship counseling, parenting tips, tax services, financial and legal assistance and more.

The user-friendly design of the new My Military OneSource app is based on comprehensive data analysis and user input, including in-depth interviews with more than 300 servicemembers, spouses and service providers; analysis of user

satisfaction data input from military leadership and program managers; and a thorough review of best practices, Slaton said.

"To ensure the My Military OneSource mobile app continues to meet the needs of the military community, we will evaluate user feedback to help inform ongoing updates and enhancements, as well as new features," said Slaton, who added that feedback is particularly important to improving the site.

Besides the app, users can visit the Military OneSource website or call the toll-free call center, which is manned 24/7/365.

Users can trust the My Military OneSource app, website and call center because it guarantees their confidentiality with a few mandatory exceptions, Slaton said. Military OneSource must disclose illegal activities and situations in which an individual may be likely to harm him or herself or others.

Those eligible for Military OneSource support are Department of Defense servicemembers, including National Guard and Reserve irrespective of activation status, DOD expeditionary civilians, Coast Guard members when activated for the Navy, survivors, veterans up to 365 days post-separation or retirement, and family members of all the categories listed.

Military OneSource is a DOD-funded program that provides free comprehensive information, support and resources on every aspect of military life.

David Vergun



LtGen Anthony Lukeman

Lieutenant General Anthony Lukeman, the driving force behind the modernization of the Marine Corps Association during his decade-long tenure as executive director, died Nov. 11, 2020, at the age of 87.

LtGen Lukeman came to the MCA in 1989 and was responsible for leading efforts to computerize the association. He also took an active role in *Leatherneck* and *Marine Corps Gazette*, reading every issue before it was published each month. "I was thrilled to be in the company of writers. There is nothing more important than informing Marines," said LtGen Lukeman.

Before LtGen Lukeman took the helm of MCA, he served for 35 years in the Marine Corps. He was commissioned a second lieutenant after his 1954 graduation from Dartmouth College. He later earned a master's degree in business administration from The George Washington University, and was a graduate of Marine Corps Command and Staff College and National War College.

He served in all three active Marine Divisions and commanded infantry Marines at the platoon, company, battalion and regimental level. He served tours in Vietnam with 3rd Marine Division in 1966 and 1967 and with the Vietnamese Marine Corps in 1974 and 1975. He helped plan and execute the evacuation of U.S. and Vietnamese citizens from Saigon in 1975.

Other assignments included Director of Manpower Plans and Policy Division, Headquarters Marine Corps; Commanding General, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton; CG, Marine Corps Recruit Depot/Western Recruiting Region, San Diego; and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Military Manpower and Personnel Policy).

His awards include the Defense Distinguished Service Medal; Bronze Star with combat "V"; the Meritorious Service Medal with two gold stars in lieu of a second and third awards; and the Joint Service Commendation Medal.

When LtGen Lukeman retired from the MCA in 1998, he was honored by the staff of *Marine Corps Gazette* with a bronze plaque of his final editorial for the magazine. The plaque read: "In appreciation for the 115 issues that you so diligently proofread. We thought it only appropriate to return the favor—we could find no errors in this editorial."

LtGen Lukeman later said, "The two magazines were the most important part of my job. You could be 22 or 90 years old, they bound the generations of Marines. That's what makes us a special breed."

Nancy S. Lichtman

Robert H. "Bob" Albers, 83, of Chilton, Wis. He served in the Marine Corps and then later had a career with Proctor and Gamble.

Leonard R. Berry, 81, of Indianapolis, Ind. He served from 1957-1961 and was assigned to the MarDet aboard USS *Princeton* (CVS-37).

CWO-4 Edwin A. "Ted" Buckhout, 93, of Hadley, Mass. He enlisted when he was 17 and went to boot camp at Parris Island. He was part of the occupation forces in Japan after WW II. He later had a 39-year career in civil service.

LCpl Tim Conners, 80, in Oakland, Calif. He served from 1959-1963. He was assigned to D/1/9 at Camp Hansen, Okinawa and was a member of the MCAS El Toro pistol team in 1963.

LCpl Billy A. Dayers, 69, in Riverside County, Calif. He and his best friend enlisted on the buddy plan and started boot camp at MCRD San Diego in January 1968. He served a one-year tour in Vietnam with Comm Co, Headquarters Battalion, 3rdMarDiv.

John W. DePauw, 75, of Green Bay, Wis. He enlisted after graduating from high school. He later earned a degree in biology.

David Dinkins, 93, of New York, N.Y. He was a Montford Point Marine who enlisted in 1945. "I figured a way to stay alive is to be well-trained," said Dinkins in a 2005 interview. "Well, and the way to be well-trained is to be a Marine," he added. The war ended before he had completed training. After his discharge, he attended college and then law school. In 1989 he was elected mayor of New York City. He was the city's first and only Black mayor.

Adam C.ENZ, 35, of Fairfield Township, Ohio. He was assigned to 2/7 and served three tours in Iraq.

Cpl Phillip A. Fazzini, 86, of Millville, Ohio. After his graduation from boot camp at MCRD Parris Island, he was assigned to the MarDet aboard USS *Des Moines* (CA-134). He was a member of the MCA&F. He also was a member of the Seagoing Marine Association and the MCL, serving as the commandant of the Lt Terrance C. Graves Det. #1330.

George A. Flores, 87, of Anaheim, Calif. He enlisted when he was 17 and served for 25 years.

James L. Gadbury, 96, of Monticello, Ill. During WW II, he was assigned to C/1/9, 3rdMarDiv. He saw action on Guadalcanal, Bougainville, Guam and Iwo Jima.

Roger Grimsley, 74, of Green Valley, Ariz. He enlisted in 1968 and later had a career in the trucking industry.

Alan C. Groll, 92, of Algoma, Wis. He enlisted after his 1945 graduation from high school and served in Germany as part of the peacekeeping force. He later went to college and had a career in civil engineering.

Sgt Ernest D. Harwood, 90, of Shaftsbury, Vt. He was a veteran of the Korean War. After the war, he had a career with Stanley Tools. He was also an avid outdoorsman.

SSgt Donald Hickman, 89, of Villa Park, Calif. He enlisted the day after his high school graduation in 1950. He fought in the Korean War and saw action at the Chosin Reservoir. After the war he served at Camp Pendleton and MCAS El Toro. He later attended college and dental school and had a successful dental practice in California. For 40 years he taught a weekly dental class at his alma mater, which he did free of charge. He also was known to donate his dental services to those who could not afford to pay him.

Edward W. Hoth, 89, of Hazlet, N.J. He was a Marine who served in the Korean War and was a veteran of the fighting at the Chosin Reservoir. After the war, he had a career with General Motors. He was a member of the VFW, American Legion and MCL.

James Kazlauskas, 92, of Orange County, Calif. He was a Marine who served from 1945-1948.

John P. Kenny, 87, of Santa Fe, N.M. He enlisted in the Marine Corps after his high school graduation and then later attended college to earn a degree in forestry.

Sgt Robert J. Kowalski Sr., 82, of Clark, N.J. He was a Marine who served from 1955-1959. He spent 25 years as New Jersey state trooper and then returned to school to pursue a degree in teaching. He spent many years as a teacher and coach.

Charles B. LeMieux, 91, in Oak Park, Ill. During WW II, he served in Guam and China, where he was wounded.

Sgt James McGovern, 85, of Florham

Park, N.J. He served from 1954-1962 and was assigned to 3rd Tanks, 3rdMarDiv in Okinawa. After the war he was an iron worker.

Sgt Quines “Ruben” McKindra Jr., 73, of Springfield, Ark. He enlisted in 1965 and served two tours in Vietnam. He later had careers in law enforcement and as a small-business owner.

Paul V. Mitchell, 94, of Ewing, N.J. During WW II he served with 4thMarDiv and saw action on Iwo Jima. After his 1951 discharge, he earned his bachelor’s degree from Drexel University and became a partner in an accounting firm. He later opened his own Certified Public Accounting practice. He was a member of the MCA&F.

PFC Lewis “Lew” Robinson, 97, of Marshall, Mich. He enlisted in 1942 and served in the Pacific with VMSB-133 as a gunner on the SBD Dauntless dive bomber. After the war, he had a 38-year career with the U.S. Postal Service.

Willard L. “Willy” Roffers, 84, of Green Bay, Wis. He enlisted after his high school graduation and served until 1958.

Marcell M. Ronquille Jr., 73, of West Monroe, La. He served one tour in Vietnam where he was wounded. He later had a career as Baptist clergyman.

Cpl Mark P. Saldana Sr., 56, of Austin,

Texas. He enlisted in 1981 and graduated from MCRD Parris Island, S.C. He earned his aircrew wings and went on to serve as a CH-46 crew chief with HMM-262 at MCAS Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii. He later had a career with the Austin Fire Department as an emergency medical technician.

LtCol Richard A. Searle, of San Antonio, Texas. His 23 years in the Marine Corps included combat in the Korean War and service during the Vietnam War. After his 1976 retirement, he earned a college degree and had a career with Mercy Regional Medical Center in San Antonio.

George T. “Tom” Seaver, 75, of Calistoga, Calif. Before he earned the nickname “Tom Terrific” as a right-handed pitcher for the 1969 “Miracle Mets,” he went to boot camp and served at MCB Camp Pendleton. He served eight years in the Marine Corps Reserve and said that enlisting was the turning point in his life. He was the Rookie of the Year in 1967 and was a three-time Cy Young Award winner. He played professional baseball for 20 years and then had a career as an MLB broadcaster for NBC. He was inducted in the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1992.

Richard E. Seeley, 91, of Martinsburg, W.Va. He was a veteran of the Korean War

who saw action at the Chosin Reservoir. His awards include the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart. He was a member of the MCL and the VFW. He was dedicated to helping his fellow veterans and spent more than 10,000 hours volunteering at the VA medical center in Martinsburg.

Maj Michael G. Sessions, 65, of Fayetteville, N.C. During his 20-year career in the Marine Corps, he served in various duty stations around the world including Diego Garcia, Okinawa, Japan, and Hawaii. When he was a major serving as a Marine liaison officer at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, he completed training there and qualified as a Green Beret. After his retirement he worked for several years as a contractor at Fort Bragg and later for Northrup Grumman.

Thomas Siefke, 100, of Toledo, Ohio. He was a ParaMarine who landed on Iwo Jima in 1945. He was wounded twice during the battle.

William J. “Bill” Simcic, 81, of Anaheim Hills, Calif. He served in the Marine Corps after graduating from high school.

MSgt Kent W. Smolen, 69, of Gretna, La. During his 21 years in the Marine Corps, he was assigned to HMX-1. He deployed in support of Operations



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Desert Shield and Desert Storm. He was a member of the MCA&F.

William E. "Bill" Spice, 80, of Green Bay, Wis. After his graduation from high school, he served in the Marine Corps Reserve.

GySgt Steve Stibbens, 83, in Dallas, Texas. He was a Marine combat correspondent who reported from Vietnam early in the war while he was assigned to *Stars and Stripes*. During his next assignment with *Leatherneck*, he returned to Vietnam several times to provide photos and stories for the magazine about the Marines serving there.

He was awarded the Bronze Star with combat "V" and was named the Military Photographer of the Year for 1964-1965. He was a friend to *Leatherneck* and the magazine republished his article "Hot LZ: Vietnam" in the October issue.

Albert H. Stone, 89, of Gresham, Ore. He served in the Marine Corps during the Korean War. He later had a career as a school principal.

Col Thomas D. "Tom" Stouffer, 76, of Winchester, Va. He was commissioned a second lieutenant after his 1966 graduation from the Naval Academy. During his 29-year career his assignments included commanding an infantry company in Vietnam, CO of Marine Barracks, Guan-

tanamo Bay, Cuba, and Chief of Staff, First Force Service Support Group during Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm. His awards include the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit (two awards) and the Bronze Star.

Marvin Strombo, 96, of Missoula, Mont. He enlisted during WW II and served in the Pacific. He was assigned to a scout-sniper platoon in the 6th Marine Regiment, known as the "40 Thieves," and was one of the main sources for the recently published book "40 Thieves on Saipan," by Joseph Tachovsky. He saw action on Tarawa, Saipan and Tinian. In 2017, he traveled to Japan to return a Japanese flag to the family of the soldier he had taken it from after the fighting ended on Saipan.

Donald R. Tancredi, 91, of Wilmington, N.C. He enlisted in 1947 and served for nine years as an aircraft maintainer. He later had a career in helicopter maintenance and was employed by Kaman, Boeing and the DOD in that capacity. He was a member of the MCL and the VFW.

Paul L. Van Rite, 65, of Green Bay, Wis. He was a Marine who served from 1976-1982.

LtCol James A. Wagner, 101, of Richmond, Va. He was a veteran of WW

II, who fought on Guadalcanal, New Britain, Pavuvu and Peleliu.

Betty J. Warpet, 96, of Bradley, Ill. She was a Marine who served for four years during WW II.

Richard L. Wilson, 93, in Missouri Valley, Iowa. He was a Marine who served in the Korean War and saw action at the Chosin Reservoir. After the war, he had a career with Union Pacific Railroad, later retiring to the family farm.

Jerry "Wing" Winger, 71, of Howard, Wis. He was a Marine who served during the Vietnam War. He later had a career with Chicago Northwestern Railroad.

Sgt Earl D. Wright, 72, of Lexington, Okla. He enlisted in 1965 and served four years, which included a tour in Vietnam.

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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"Bloody Tarawa"

APR 17-30

VHPA Saigon, Delta & III
Corps
APR 13-18 Pre-Tour Dalat

AUG 1-9

Guadalcanal Op Watchtower

AUG 14-27

Germany—"Rise & Fall of the
Third Reich"

NEW MAY 1-7

Civil War Adventure "North
to Gettysburg" Bull Run-
Gettysburg-Antietam

AUG 21-31

Vietnam I-Corps with
SGTMAJ Overstreet

MAY 22-31

WWI Devil Dogs in France
Belleau Wood-Reims

MAY 27-JUN 9

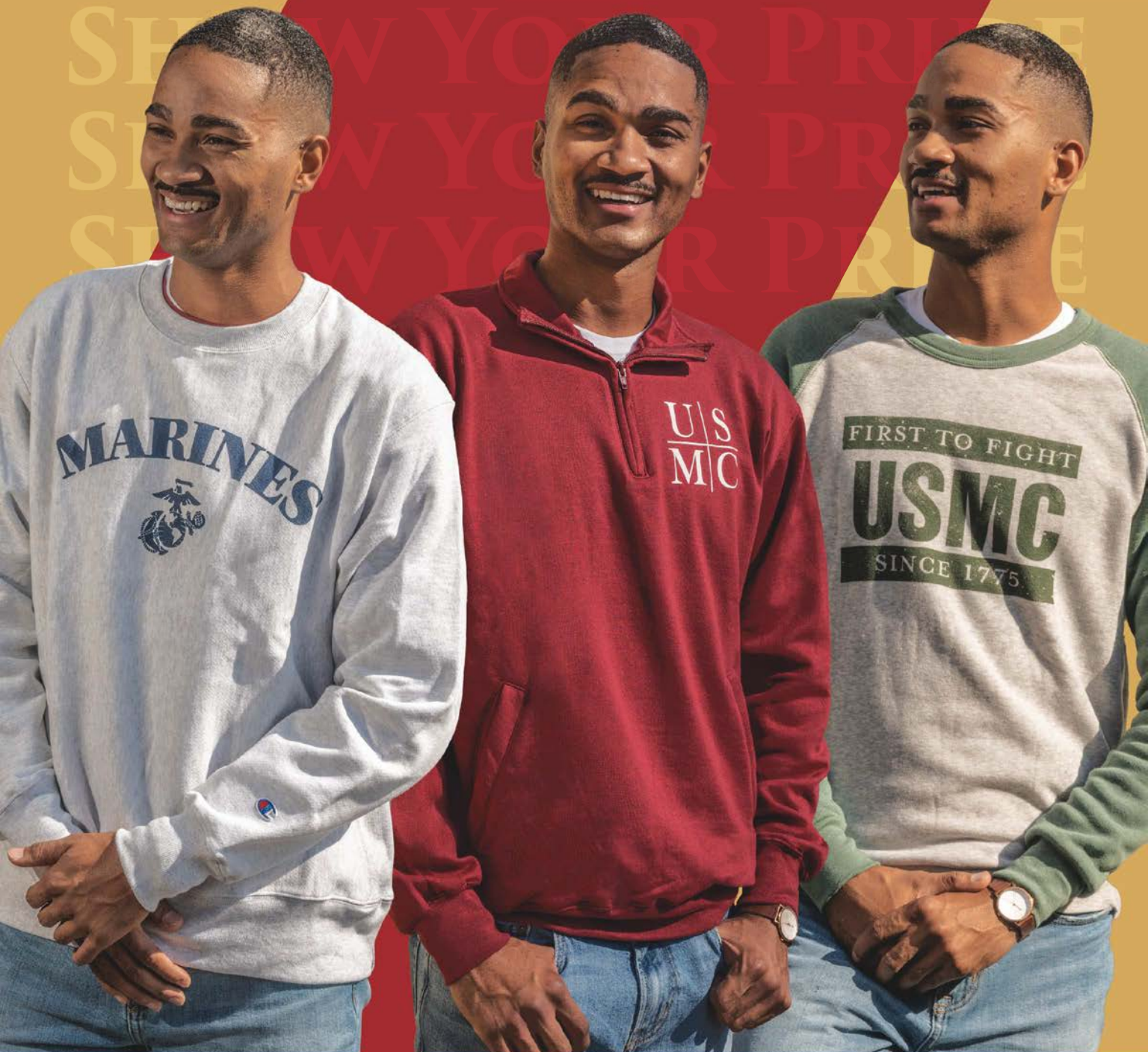
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SOUND OFF
[continued from page 7]

get him the hell out of there. The movie is fiction, but it is based on a real-life Niland family during World War II in which three of four brothers were killed in combat.

Capt Richard Dixon, USMCR (Ret)
Clifton, Va.

A Marine

They come from all walks of life. Various family members who have dedicated their lives pledging their loyalty and honor to protect the United States and the country's Constitution against all enemies. To further protect the homefront many have given their all, the supreme sacrifice with their lives. They are known for their valiant duty to service and commitment to their country. They are the spirit and proud tradition of the Marine Corps. They are known for their courage and fearlessness to overcome all impossible obstacles to accomplish their missions. Some are known as the fallen heroes in battle from the past and present. He or she who stands by me in battle will be a proud part of the Marine brotherhood and sisterhood for eternity.

I pray that this will bring some peace and comfort to all those families who have lost a loved one in the service of

our country. For they are the fallen heroes along with the families who have someone serving in the military today.

Cpl John Messia Jr., USMC (Ret)
1950 to 1954
Brockton, Mass.



Mike K. King received this pin from the American Red Cross for donating 4 gallons of blood in the past several years. (Photo courtesy of Mike K. King)

The American Red Cross

In your October issue of *Leatherneck* I read the article, "A Trusted Symbol: For More Than a Century, the American Red Cross Has Faithfully Served Marines in Crisis." I've enclosed a picture of the pin I received from the Red Cross for donating

4 gallons of blood in the past several years which I am very proud of just as I am proud of being a Marine. With all that's going on in the world today no matter what color skin you have, underneath, our blood is all red.

Mike K. King
Paducah, Ky.

As an Old Corps veteran from the last century (1960 to 1970), I appreciate how today's Marines are being taken care of and how they conduct training to defend us. The stories, "The Call to Volunteer: Veterans Donate Their Time Talents; Uplifting and Uniting Communities," "A Trusted Symbol: For More Than a Century, the American Red Cross, Has Faithfully Served Marines in Crisis," "During Pandemic, To-Go-Chow Becomes Vitally Important," [We—The Marines] and "At Quantico, MCCS Develops App to Aid Quarantined Marines," [Passing the Word], hit the spot. Keep up the good work!

Capt Doug Caldwell
USMC, 1965-1979
Plano, Texas

Navy Recruiter Out to Lunch

I subscribe to *Leatherneck* and read Sergeant Ed Belfy's letter in the October

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U.S. Marine Corps 185th Anniversary
MARINE CORPS RECRUIT DEPOT
 SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA



10 NOVEMBER 1960



Menu



- SHRIMP COCKTAIL
 CREAM OF TOMATO SOUP
 SWEET PICKLES OLIVES STUFFED CELERY
 GRILLED T-BONE STEAKS
 BAKED POTATOES
 WITH CHEESE SAUCE AND CHIVES
 BUTTERED MIXED VEGETABLES
 ASSORTED FRUIT AND VEGETABLE SALADS
 ASSORTED SALAD DRESSINGS
 HOT ROLLS BUTTER JAM
 MARINE CORPS BIRTHDAY CAKE ICE CREAM
 FRESH MILK ICED TEA COFFEE
 ASSORTED FRUIT ASSORTED NUTS AND CANDY

COURTESY OF CPL MARTIN JOHNSON, USMC

Cpl Martin Johnson attended his first Marine Corps Birthday dinner more than 60 years ago and kept the menu as a souvenir.

[Sound Off] issue about an Air Force recruiter out to lunch and also Mac Mackechnie's story [Sea Stories] in the November issue about Marines ending up in Corps by accident.

My story is similar. While talking to Marine recruiter Staff Sergeant Jackman about when and where I would leave for boot camp, two of my high school classmates walked past the door on the way to join the Navy. They asked me if I was going to be a Marine, and I said, "Yes, for three years. I know you are going for four years." They asked the staff sergeant if they could go for three also. He said, "Yes." The Navy chief showed up and asked the staff sergeant if he was stealing his recruits. The staff sergeant said they came here on their own.

We all went to boot camp together and ended up in Platoon 204 along with Sgt Belfy and his two friends.

So, as far as I can tell, it is Marine Corps 10 - Air Force and Navy 0.

Cpl Gary D. Lyle
 Tucson, Ariz.

Help Set the Record Straight

I have a question regarding Marine Corps history. When did the Marine Corps begin requiring its aviation officer candidates to undergo Marine Infantry Officer Training at Quantico? Was it in the 1950s after the end of the Korean War? Didn't the Marine Corps get its aviators out of the old Navy Aviation Cadet Program? Didn't people like Ted Williams, the Boston Red Sox baseball player and Lieutenant General Frank Petersen, the first African-American Marine Corps aviator and the first African-American who achieved the rank of brigadier general in the Marine Corps, come out of that program? Please set the record straight on the chronology of how the training requirements evolved.


It was 40 years ago in July and August 1980, that I was at Quantico's Camp Upshur for the Platoon Leadership Class Program, the PLC Junior Course. I was a skinny 19-year-old sophomore history major at nearby George Mason University in Fairfax, Va. I was in "Lima" Company, 5th Platoon.

Gregory G. Paspatis
 Alexandria, Va.

Marine Corps Birthday Dinner, November 1960

I am sending the menu from my first Marine Corps Birthday dinner in November 1960—60 years ago. I was in boot camp with Platoon 281 and nearing graduation on Nov. 10, 1960. The memories are crystal clear after all these years. To say the least, boot camp was a memorable experience.

Cpl Martin Johnson
 USMC, 1960-1966
 Portland, N.D.

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



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Reunions

Editor's note: The following reunion information was current as of Dec. 1. Given that things are rapidly changing due to the spread of the COVID-19 virus, please continue to check with the reunion points of contact for the most up-to-date information.

• **Marine Corps Engineer Assn.**, Sept. 23-25, Fredericksburg, Va. Contact Maj Charlie Dismore, USMC (Ret), (512) 394-9333, www.marcorengasn.org.

• **Marine Corps Cryptologic Assn.** is planning a reunion in September, Las Vegas, Nev. Contact Edgar Kitt, 2250 Heavenly View Dr., Henderson, NV 89014, (702) 454-1646, edgarkitt@earthlink.net.

• **Marine Corps Disbursing Assn.**, Aug. 8-12, Reno, Nev. Contact MGySgt Kevin Gascon, USMC (Ret), (760) 458-2655, mojorisin68@hotmail.com, www.usmcdisbursers.com.

• **Marine Air Traffic Control Assn.**, Sept. 19-26, San Antonio, Texas. Contact Steve Harris, (509) 499-8137, sandkh2@gmail.com.

• **11th Marine Regiment, OIF (20th anniversary)**, March 31-April 1, 2023, Camp Pendleton, Calif. Contact Casey Harsh, casey.harsh@gmail.com. Facebook group: The Cannon Cockers of OIF-1 (20-Year Reunion 2023 Group).

• **STA Plt, 2/8 (1989-1993)** is planning a reunion. Contact Mike Moriarty, mmoriarty81@comcast.net.

• **1/27 (1968)** is planning a reunion in July, Las Vegas, Nev. Contact Felix Salmeron, (469) 583-0191, mar463@aol.com.

• **"Stormy's" 3/3**, Sept. 27-30, Branson, Mo. Contact Burrell Landes, (303) 734-1458, bhanon@comcast.net, www.stormys33.com.

• **H/2/7 (RVN, 1965-1970)**, June 24-27, Jacksonville, Fla. Contact Steve Cone, (843) 424-8279, scone1948@yahoo.com.

• **Marine Expeditionary Brigade-Afghanistan, Task Force Leatherneck (2009-2010)**, May 7-9, Quantico, Va. Contact reunion committee, taskforceleatherneck@gmail.com.

• **Philippine Embassy Marines (1976-1977)**, Nov. 10, North Carolina. Contact Tim Craig, phildream2017@gmail.com.

• **TBS, Co F, 6-70**, June 10-13, Quantico, Va. Contact Col Tom Kanasky, USMC (Ret), (202) 366-3156, tkanasky@earthlink.net, or Col Mitch Youngs, USMC

(Ret), (703) 493-9435, mitchyoungs@verizon.net.

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

• **TBS, Co D, 4-73**, is planning a 50th-anniversary reunion in 2023, Quantico, Va. Contact Col Bill Anderson, USMCR (Ret), (540) 850-4213, binche57@yahoo.com, or Col Bob Donaghue, USMCR (Ret), (614) 840-0267, ip350haven@comcast.net.

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

• **Plt 2057, San Diego, 1971**, is planning a reunion. Contact K.L. Christeson, (816) 830-1498.

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

• **USMC A-4 Skyhawkers**, Oct. 21-24, Las Vegas, Nev. Contact Mark Williams, 10432 Button Willow Dr., Las Vegas, NV 89134, (425) 327-6050, usmcskyhawker21@gmail.com.

Mail Call

• Michael J. Hagle, 6112 Springleaf Circle, Fort Worth, TX 76133, (214) 577-6717, to hear from or about **Sgt Roland HERNANDEZ**, who was a mortar

instructor at **MCB Camp Pendleton, 1989-1990**, and later transferred to **3/3, Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii**. He was assigned to **HQ Co, 3rd Marines, Kaneohe Bay, in 1993**.

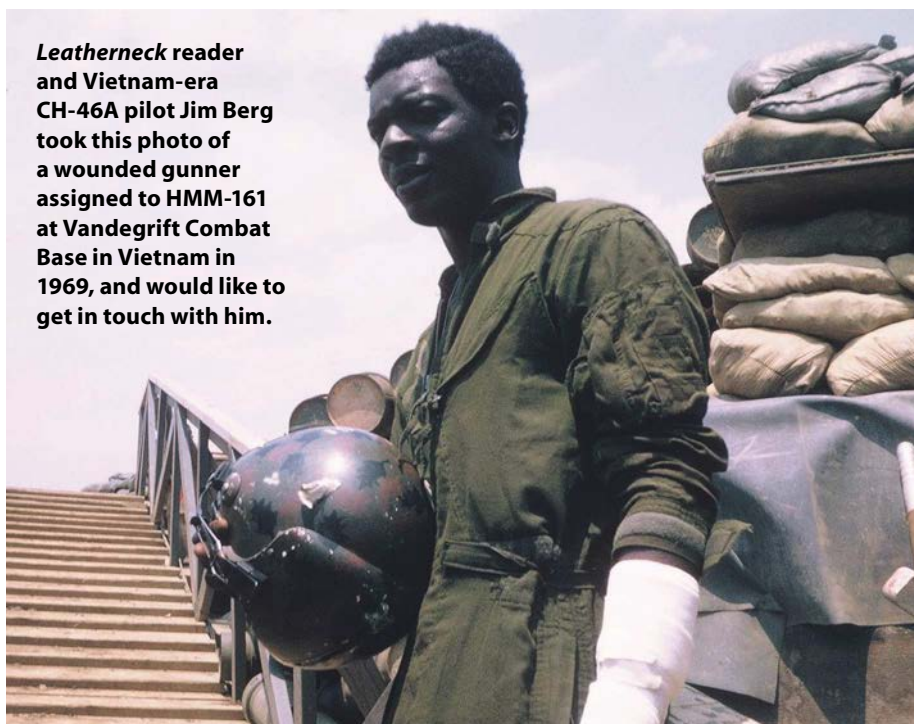
• Sgt William "Bill" Friedlander, sgtnypd@yahoo.com, to hear from or about anyone knowing the current status and location of **Capt or Maj William S. SWIGGERT**, whose last known billet was **I&I staff, F/2/25, 1968-1970**.

• Sgt Robert A. Mattson, (847) 370-0209, rmattson7248@gmail.com, to hear from or about **Sgt Charles David WRIGHT**, who he served with from **1969-1975** while assigned to **1/9, 3rdMarDiv and MCRD Parris Island Weapons Bn**.

• George Meegan, captaingeorgemeegan@gmail.com, to hear from or about **GySgt Donnie R. HAMM**, who was assigned to **D/1/2, 1964-1966**, and **MSgt Bobbie SELLERS**, who was assigned to **Marine Barracks Philadelphia, 1962-1963**.

• Jim Berg, 803 Old Austin Rd., San Antonio, TX 78209, (210) 260-6200, jimberg513@gmail.com, to hear from or about the **Marine gunner pictured below**, who was assigned to **HMM-161** and survived a .50-caliber slug lodged in his helmet in **Vietnam in 1969**. He was dropped off at **Vandegrift Combat Base** via CH-46, where he was treated before returning to Quang Tri.

Leatherneck reader and Vietnam-era CH-46A pilot Jim Berg took this photo of a wounded gunner assigned to HMM-161 at Vandegrift Combat Base in Vietnam in 1969, and would like to get in touch with him.



JIM BERG

Wanted

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

• Frank DeLira, (402) 618-3459, frank.delira@msn.com, wants a **platoon photo** and **recruit graduation book** for **Plt 3080, San Diego, 1982**.

• Robert Theodore Ferris, (470) 330-1904, robtferris@gmail.com, wants a **recruit graduation book** for **Plt 2042, San Diego, 1979**.

• Brianna Locke, brianna.a.locke@gmail.com, wants a **recruit graduation book** for **Plt 4004, Parris Island, 2006**.

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

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CORPSMAN UP!

For years hospital corpsmen have accompanied Marines into battle. They were always there when someone yelled, "**Corpsman Up!**" Some even lost their own lives saving a Marine. *Leatherneck* is looking for **your story** on how your "Doc" saved your life. If you have a story that you would like to share with our readers, submit it to Patricia Everett at:

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

or email them to:

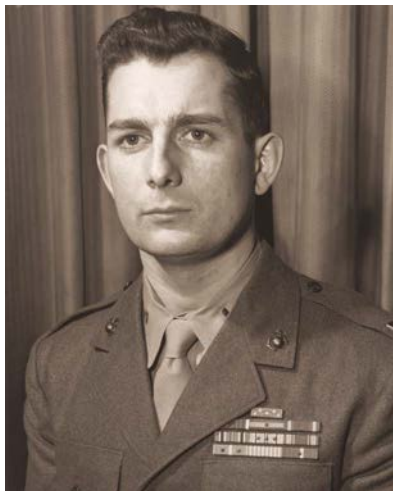
p.everett@mca-marines.org

— *Leatherneck* Editor



Saved Round

By Nancy S. Lichtman



USMC

Archie Van Winkle

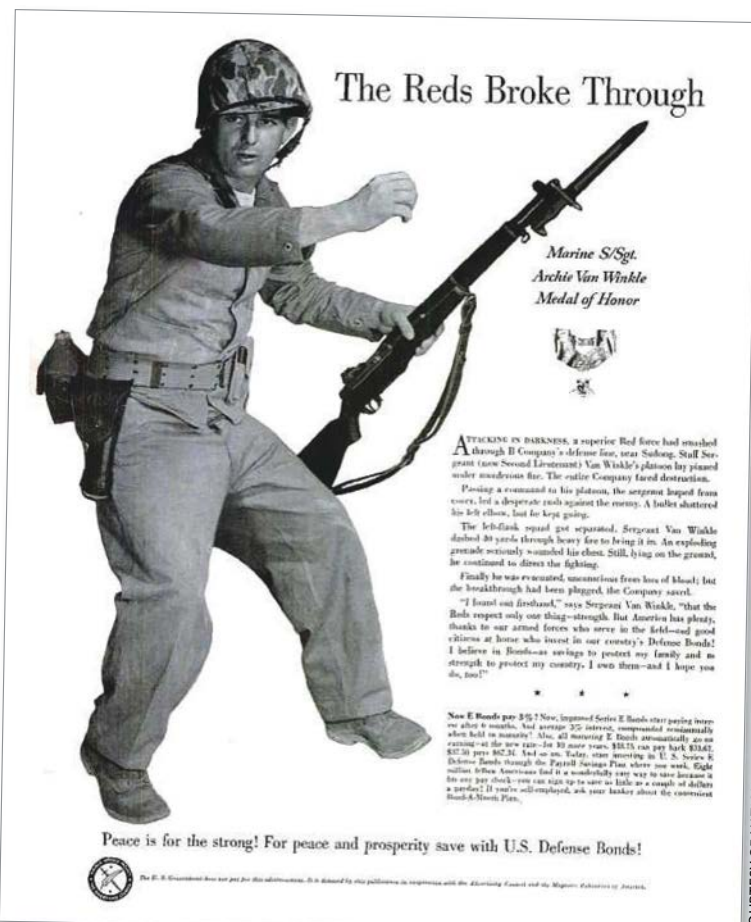
A MUSTANG'S VALOR—Staff Sergeant Archie Van Winkle, USMCR, thought he was on the receiving end of a practical joke when he got a phone call saying that he had a telegram from the Commandant of the Marine Corps. The telephone operator in Van Winkle's hometown of Everett, Wash., assured him that it was no joke, and a stunned Van Winkle listened to the operator tell him that he had been approved for the award of the Medal of Honor.

In a White House ceremony on Feb. 6, 1954, President Harry S. Truman presented Van Winkle with the nation's highest award for valor for his actions in Korea on Nov. 2, 1950. According to the award citation, despite multiple wounds, he "boldly spearheaded a determined attack through withering fire against hostile frontal positions."

Like so many other men who fought in the Korean War, Van Winkle was a seasoned combat veteran of World War II where he saw action in the skies over the South Pacific with Marine Scout Bombing Squadron 142. He received the Distinguished Flying Cross for his heroism during one of his many missions as a radioman/gunner in the Douglas SBD Dauntless dive bomber. After the war, he returned to college and was later called back to active duty during the Korean War.

After he was fully recovered from the wounds he sustained in Korea, Van Winkle once again returned to civilian life—until yet another call from the Marine Corps. He was commissioned through the meritorious noncommissioned officer program and later served in combat a third time—this time in Vietnam. As the commander of 1st Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, he was the recipient of the Bronze Star with combat "V" for his actions during the Battle of Khe Sanh. Van Winkle would later retire as a colonel in 1974.

To read more about some of the Marine Corps' famous mustangs, see "Mustangs of the Corps" on page 26. 🐾



COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES, USMC



USMC

Above: LtCol Archie Van Winkle, left, with the 3rdMarDiv Commander, MajGen Raymond G. Davis in Vietnam, 1968. Both Marines were combat veterans of three wars and Medal of Honor recipients for their actions during the Korean War.

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