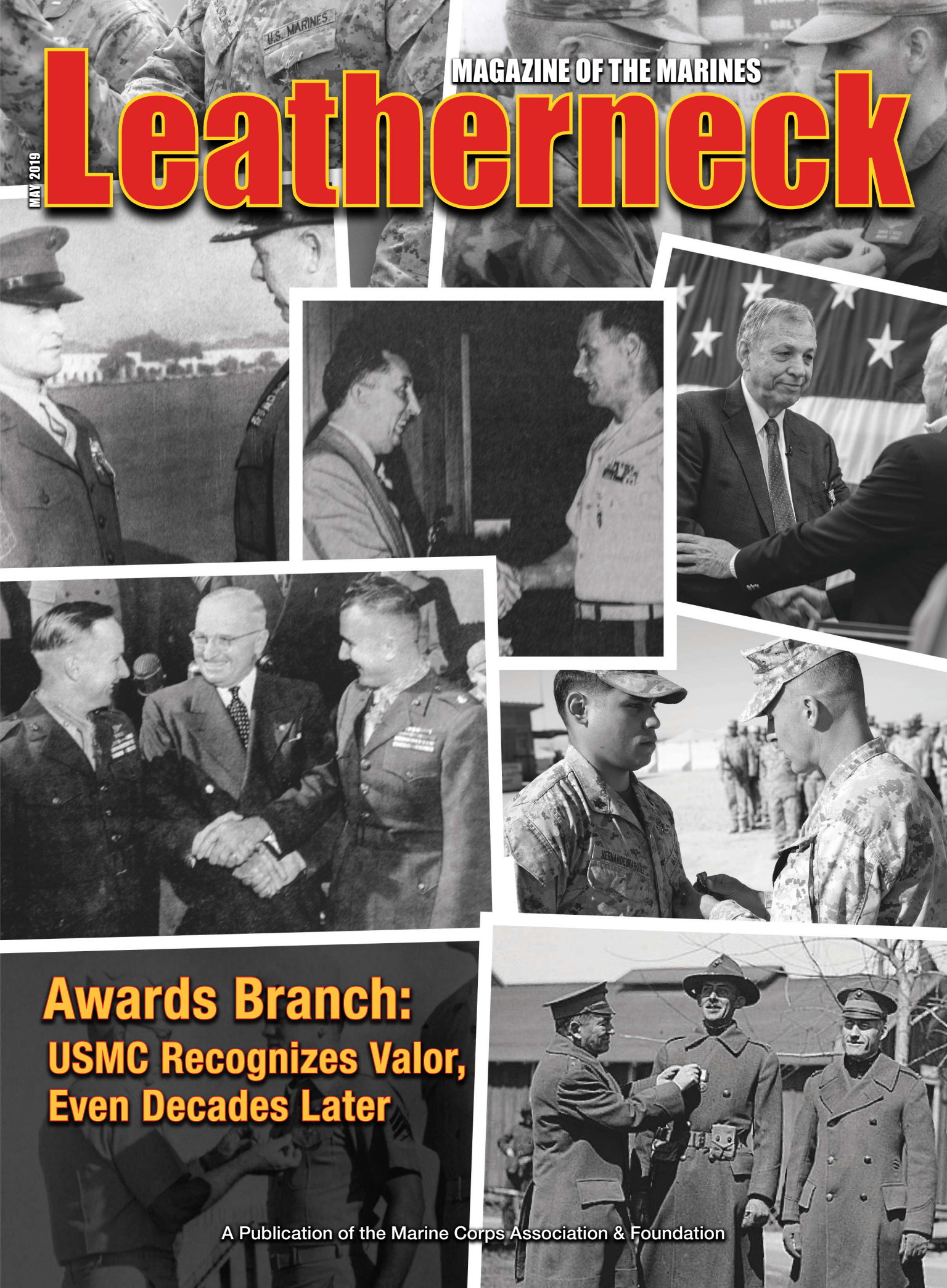


MAY 2019

MAGAZINE OF THE MARINES

Leatherneck



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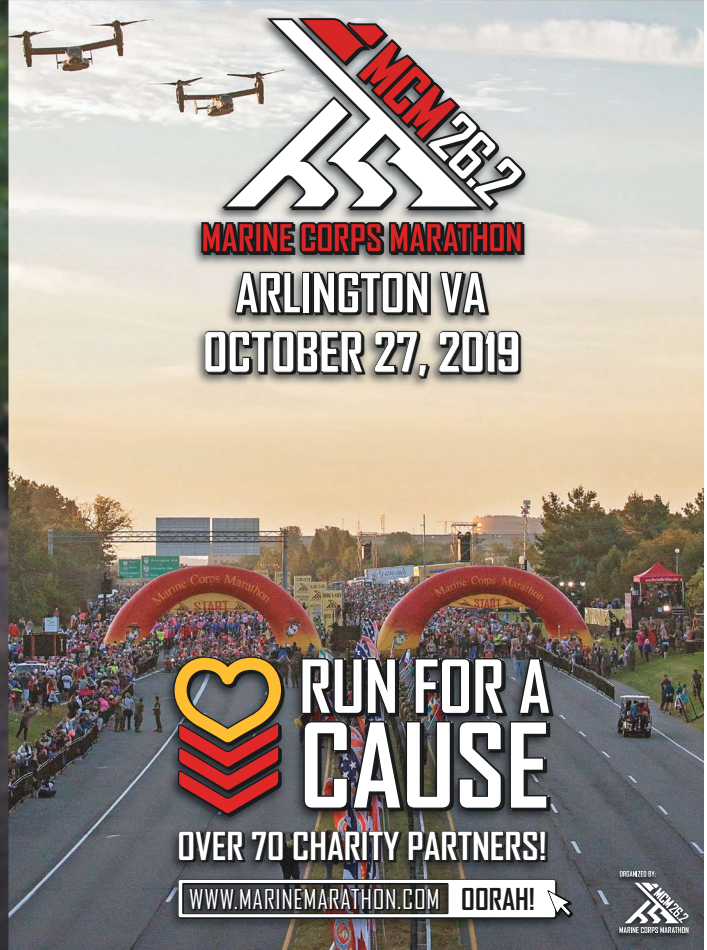


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COVER: The Awards Branch at Headquarters Marine Corps develops awards policy and processes all awards for Marines. This month’s cover shows the results of the Awards Branch’s dedicated efforts through the years as leathernecks are presented with their well-deserved awards. Cover designed by Abigail Wilson. Copies of the cover may be obtained by sending \$2 (for mailing costs) to *Leatherneck Magazine*, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134-0775.

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.)

In past readings of the Sound Off section in *Leatherneck* magazine, something was mentioned by veteran Marines as to who can really claim the title Marine. Two books recently got me thinking about my service and what the other Marines were talking about in the Sound Off section.

To start with, I am not a natural born reader. Many people I know absolutely love to pick up a book and read, but that was never me. I read the Bible and *Leatherneck* faithfully. Anything else, no.

When my son, Corporal Maxwell Pratt (USMC, 2007-2011) was stationed in Okinawa, he sent home two books for me to read which I put on the coffee table and never read. From there they went into a closet in his old room, forgotten.

About a month ago while going through his old closet, I spotted the books and thought I would bring them downstairs and put them back on the coffee table. This time something was different. I actually had a desire to look inside one of them and check it out.

After about a week I had finished (to my amazement) both books. The first book was "With the Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa" by E.B. Sledge. The second was "China Marine: An Infantryman's Life After World War II" by the same author. Did I stand on those yellow footprints? Yes. Did I complete boot camp? Yes. Did I spend four years wearing the fabric of our nation? Yes. Do I have an honorable discharge on my Marine Corps room wall with a DD-214 to prove it? Yes. Did I ever have to lay it all on the line and prove myself like those who have been in combat? No. Where do I go from here? I have a whole new admiration and respect for those who have, that's for sure.

The next time I'm talking with friends about service and such things, my braggy nature about my service will have to take a back seat. The immense sacrifices others have made leave me in awe. Any bragging to be done will be about our combat Marines. Let's never take our hard-fought freedoms for granted when we think we're having a bad day. Remember our combat Marines then and now.

After reading "With the Old Breed"

my question to myself as a 0151 admin clerk is, "Are you a Marine, Hugh?" My answer, "Yes, barely."

Semper Fidelis to all my brothers and sisters in our beloved Corps—past, present and future.

LCpl Hugh B. Pratt
USMC, 1983-1987
Bath, Mich.

Iwo Jima Commemorative Coin

The Central Florida Marine Corps Birthday Committee offered a special twist to the routine commemorative gifts of previous years for its 243rd Marine Corps Birthday celebration. A commemorative coin, with the image of the Marine Corps War Memorial, was offered for those wishing to order one. What made this coin special was that each one contained a small amount of sand from Iwo Jima. The response was overwhelming and they were delivered in time for the ball. While waiting to receive mine, I briefly considered what the odds were that the sand in my coin was trod on by the Marines who made the climb up the side of Mount Surabachi and planted the Stars and Stripes on the crater's rim. Maybe John Basilone shook some out of his shoes while leading his Marines on the beach. The Sherman tank Cairo might have been rolling over *my* sand when it was disabled by a landmine.

So many scenarios and images flash

by. Who knows if Jack Lucas used his body to smother two Japanese grenades in the same volcanic sand? So many possibilities. Every person who now has one of these coins can rightfully make the same argument for the sand in their coin. They now own a small piece of Marine Corps history. What an honor to possess a portion of hallowed ground. Master Sergeant Sean Osmond and his team hit a grand slam this year. They will be hard pressed to equal or surpass this coin.

GySgt Thomas C. Teuscher
USMC (Ret)
Orlando, Fla.

Flag Flown in Honor of My Grandfather

My grandfather Paul Emerson Riege fought with 1/5 during World War I at Belleau Wood. I wanted to share this picture of an American flag that was flown in my grandfather's honor at the Marine Memorial at Belleau Wood in France. The flag was then returned to me and is now on display at my hotel in Gallup, N.M.

When I received the flag, I sat for a bit taking it all in. That flag has been to Belleau Wood and back, like my grandfather. A trip that I hope to someday make myself. I am so honored to have this flag that was flown for my grandfather.

Kenneth P. Riege
USAF, 1985-1993
Gallup, N.M.



This flag was flown at the Marine Memorial at Belleau Wood in France in honor of Paul Emerson Riege who fought at Belleau Wood in World War I.

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James G. Elliott Co. Inc.
New York: (212) 588-9200
Chicago: (312) 236-4900
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Email: mca@mca-marines.org

LEATHERNECK AND MCA&F MEMBERSHIP PRICES
1 year \$42; 2 years \$79; 3 years \$119

Leatherneck also is available in digital format at www.mca-marines.org/leatherneck.

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

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Send address changes to: *Leatherneck Magazine*, Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134.



Leatherneck (ISSN 0023-981X) is published monthly by the Marine Corps Association & Foundation, Bldg. #715, MCB, Quantico, VA 22134. Copyright 2019 by MCA&F.

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Leatherneck Laffs No Laughing Matter

In the February issue of *Leatherneck* in the Leatherneck Laffs section, I must take exception to the Tet holiday (I use this term loosely) cartoon. It shows two individuals peering over a fence while a bunker is being dug surrounded by sandbags and razor wire. These individuals are remarking that the individual digging gets this way around the Tet holiday.

At the battle for Hue in Tet 1968 we lost more than 200 Marines and corpsmen with nearly 1,400 wounded. Those of us who survived Tet '68 and the Battle for Hue recall those days in our nightmares, especially during the anniversaries. It's no laughing matter to us. I am truly disappointed in its publication.

HM2 Dennis "Doc" Noah
USN, 1967-1968
Baltimore, Md.

• *Doc, you're right. My apologies.—*
Editor

D-Day Tribute

I was standing at the entrance to the American Cemetery in Brittany, France, in August 2017. We were there to visit and pay our respects to my wife Claire's Uncle Allen, who perished in World War II, on Aug. 8, 1944. At 27 years of age, he died defending our way of life and left behind a young wife. As we gazed over the 4,000-plus tombstones at this cemetery of American soldiers who died to free France and the world, we were awestruck by its haunting beauty. When we approached the tombstone, our guide rubbed sand from Omaha Beach across his name, as is the tradition, and we laid an American flag and flowers over his grave. "Taps" was then played throughout the entire cemetery. I've never been more proud to be an American than at this moment, and it would bring anyone to tears to experience this.

As anyone who knows me and Claire, they know our love for travelling through France in the summertime. Yet, for all the visits we've made, we have never gone to Brittany and Normandy where, of course, D-Day took place. We have always found the French people to be so friendly and hospitable to us anywhere in France, but these regions were different. I don't really have the words to describe how much they revere and love Americans there. When anyone found out we were Americans, we experienced the most heartfelt "thank you" we have ever received. They told us that Americans saved their country and their lives and gave the ultimate sacrifice for their country. They are eager to point out that they are passing this knowledge

on to their children so that it shall never be forgotten.

While in the medieval town of Saint Malo, we read a story written by a reporter covering the surrender of the Germans who were occupying the town. After a particularly bloody and drawn-out battle, the Nazi leader finally surrendered. It was a very formal ceremony in which the Nazi colonel presented his 80 remaining troops to surrender to several hundred American soldiers who had finally liberated the town.

About halfway through the ceremony, an older German soldier burst from his line and runs right into the American troops. Guns are quickly drawn, but the man runs up to one particular young American soldier and hugs him fiercely. The young soldier was his son that he had sent to America to go to school 15 years earlier. Of all the places a German soldier and an American soldier could be during this world war, this father surrenders to his own son. Could life be any more strange, horrible, and beautiful all at the same time?

I urge everyone to visit this extraordinary land where they truly embrace Americans.

Lance Silver
Paso Robles, Calif.

Remembering My Fellow Combat Correspondents

On page 54 of the January issue, [Corps Connections], the story, "Symposium Recognizes Contributions of Combat Correspondents Past and Present," was very interesting to me. I worked with Colonel Don Dickson, Master Sergeant Tom Bartlett, Lou Lowery, Ron Lyons, Major Jack Dyer and Captain Dale Dye as a combat artist. I have pictures of all of them in my Marine Corps scrapbook.

MSgt Carl M. "Bud" DeVere Sr.
USMC (Ret)
Longmont, Colo.

Rank Changes

I read with interest the Sound Off letter by Art Smalley in the March issue. I too was an E-3 corporal awaiting promotion to sergeant, now corporal E-4, though for me, I was discharged before that happened. I was told, or led to understand, that I was considered to be "acting" corporal E-4 until promotion. Smalley said that acting part never really happened. Only in my mind's eye was I a step, and a small one at that, over a newly promoted lance corporal, as we could still be considered as a noncommissioned officer. We were never the equal to the E-4 sergeant or newly promoted E-4 corporal. We were still only "actors."



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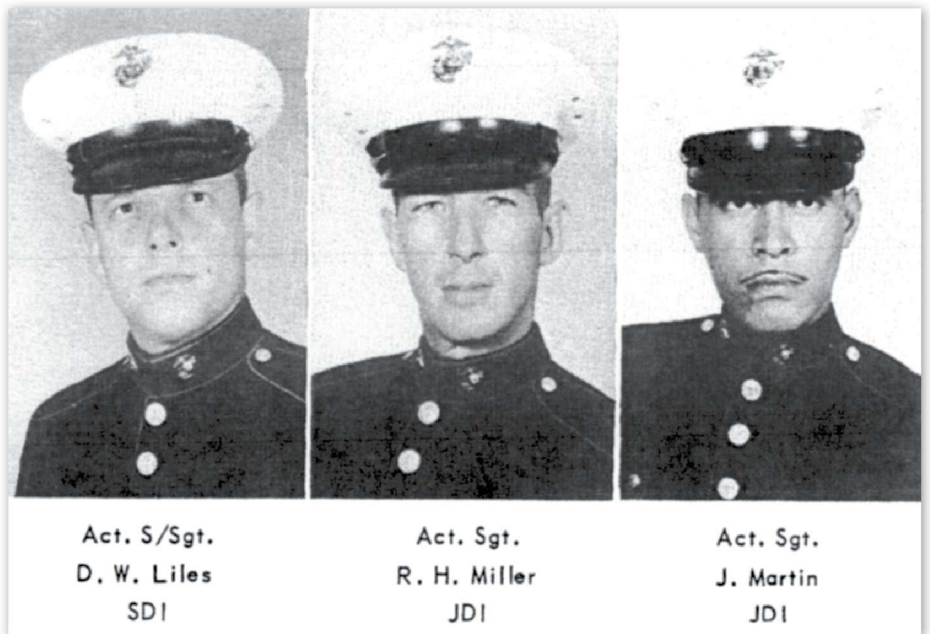
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Upon my release from active duty, still not having been promoted to E-4 corporal, both my newly issued MCR/Inactive ID card and my DD-214 showed my rank as lance corporal.

To my surprise, three years later when I received my final Honorable Discharge Certificate, it showed my rank as corporal (E-3), not lance corporal. I thank the Marine Corps for this small typo.

Cpl Joe Williams
USMC, 1956-1959
Venice, Fla.

So many different memories about the rank change of Jan. 1, 1959, and here I come with yet another one. There indeed was such a thing as an “acting” rank for a while. I was promoted to staff sergeant in 1956. When the ranks changed I became an acting staff sergeant E-5 until I was promoted to staff sergeant E-6 in 1961. I have copies of letters I sent out showing my acting rank on the return address. When I enlisted in the Marine Corps in November 1948, the highest enlisted rank was master sergeant E-7. That was my goal—to achieve master sergeant until I retired. I had to settle for gunnery sergeant E-7 instead. I was satisfied that I had made my goal, and had I extended my time in the Corps, I would have eventually added



A page from MCRD Parris Island’s 1959 graduation book shows Marines “acting” rank. (Photo courtesy of Jack McKeon)

the two extra ranks to my sleeve. I don’t feel as if I was cheated out of any rank.

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

I could not resist reacting to the letter in the March issue by Art Smalley regard-

ing rank changes in 1959. My platoon, 173 MCRD San Diego, graduated in December 1959. Here is a page from my recruit graduation book that should settle this argument. It shows all the noncommissioned officer with “Act.” before their ranks.

Our drill instructors told us of the

F4F Wildcat on Guadalcanal: August 1 - 10

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rank changes and why they were acting at this time. I hope this evidence settles the discussion.

Jack McKeon
USMCR, 1959-1965
The Woodlands, Texas

January Leatherneck Cover

I am requesting two copies of *Leatherneck's* January cover that shows the folded American flag that was presented to relatives of Private John M. Tillman, USMC.

I am a member of the Marine Corps League, Aloha Detachment #363, in Honolulu, Hawaii. On April 6, 2018, members of our Detachment attended the interment of Marine Pvt Tillman at the National Cemetery of the Pacific, known to us as the Punchbowl. It was a pleasure to meet several of Pvt Tillman's relatives who had traveled from the mainland to attend his military burial with full military honors. As an interesting fact, Pvt Tillman was reinterred in the same grave where he had rested for many years as "unknown."

On Memorial Day that year we laid several flower leis on his grave and were able to send pictures to his relatives through Mr. James C. Horton, the Director of the Punchbowl cemetery.

Our intent is to forward one of the copies of the cover to Pvt Tillman's next of kin via Mr. Horton.

LtCol Paul R. Fields, USMC (Ret)
Kailua, Hawaii

Ike Jacket or Battle Jacket?

In the December 2018 Sound Off regarding uniform changes, Captain Macsay states he was issued an "Ike" jacket in boot camp. In January 1956, I was assigned to Platoon 116 in San Diego. My drill instructor was Staff Sergeant Charles Soltysiak who told us our short jacket was a "battle" jacket. He heard one of the recruits say it was an Ike jacket and told us if he wanted to call it an Ike jacket, he could join the Army.

We all used the term battle jacket throughout my three-year enlistment. I never heard anyone call it a Vandegrift jacket, but as a corporal I could be outranked.

Wesley L. Roscoe
Madison, Wis.

On page 66 of the March 2019 issue [Sound Off] it tells of the Winter Service jacket being known as the Vandegrift jacket because it was named by Commandant Vandegrift. While this may have
[continued on page 64]

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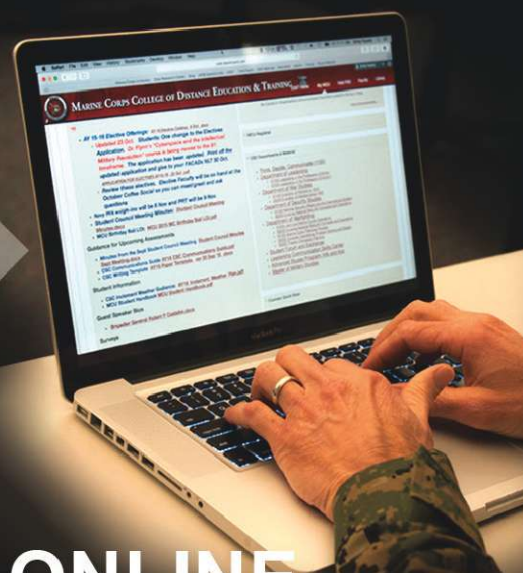


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In Every Clime and Place

Compiled by Sara W. Bock



LCPL URSULA V. SMITH, USMC

Above: Marines with 2nd Tank Bn, 2ndMarDiv maneuver through a course of fire in an M1A1 Abrams tank at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., Feb. 10. The unit conducted marksmanship qualifications as part of a semi-annual training exercise to certify tank crews for operational readiness.



LCPL URSULA V. SMITH, USMC

A Marine with 2nd Tank Bn, 2ndMarDiv prepares to run a course of fire in an M1A1 Abrams tank during platoon and section tank gunnery training at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., Feb. 10.

CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C. Fire Away: 2nd Tanks Conducts Gunnery

The smell of burning fuel permeated the air and the sound of heavy machinery grew loud as M1A1 Abrams tanks rolled downrange at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., Feb. 10.

Marines with 2nd Tank Battalion, 2nd Marine Division conducted platoon and section tank gunnery from January to March—a semi-annual qualification that all tank crews must complete to maintain operational readiness.

“We’re doing live-fire section and platoon gunnery so we can learn how to fight better as a section of tanks instead of with individual tanks like we do for a basic crew qualification,” said Gunnery Sergeant Benjamin Bohm, company master gunner, Company A, 2nd Tank Bn, 2ndMarDiv. “Being able to come out here and do live fire really helps our occupational proficiency grow rather than training in a simulator.”

During the gunnery, Marines are evaluated on their ability to engage targets efficiently while working cohesively as a tank crew.

“It’s our job to understand what our role is as a tank crew so we know how to handle every piece of information, big or small, that comes into our area,” said Corporal Jonathen Casberg, a tank crewman with Co A. “This training allows us to work better as a crew and understand each other easily when it comes to engaging a target.”

According to Lance Corporal Ashton Yarbrough, a tanker with the company, live-fire ranges train crewmembers to support infantry units during potential combat operations. Yarbrough added that tank platoons are effective because they are able to put direct fire on enemy targets, allowing infantry units to better maneuver on the battlefield.

The gunnery gave Marines within the battalion the opportunity to learn their specific billets within the tank crew.

“The tank community has a lot of knowledge to pass down,” said Casberg. “At the end of the day, each tank crewman has learned and done their job to make sure that we can go out and execute our mission.”

Cpl Liah Smuin, USMC



LCPL DRAKE NICKELS, USMC

Sgt Nicholas Attikai, a flight line crew chief with VMM-164, directs an MV-22B Osprey while being stabilized by Sgt Carlos Rodriguez, a tiltrotor airframe mechanic with VMM-164. The squadron conducted a hung gear malfunction drill at MCAS Camp Pendleton, Calif., March 12, to ensure that in the event of a landing gear malfunction, the pilot, aircrew and ground crew could conduct an emergency landing.

**CAMP PENDLETON, CALIF.
Roll Out the Mattresses: VMM-164
Conducts Hung Gear Drill**

When most people think of a mattress, they imagine a good night’s sleep, but for Marines on emergency reclamation teams they know that when the mattresses roll out, it’s time to get to work.

On March 12, pilots with Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 164 hovered over Marine Corps Air Station Camp Pendleton, Calif., in an MV-22 Osprey as they prepared to make an emergency landing—on a stack of mattresses.

Known as a hung landing gear drill, VMM-164 simulated the malfunction to train Marines to understand their role during a real-world situation.

“This drill is important because it is critical that we practice like we play as it pertains to emergency procedures,” said Captain Ayleah Alejandre, aviation safety officer with Marine Aircraft Group 39, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing. “Three pallets



LCPL DRAKE NICKELS, USMC

Marines with VMM-164 rehearse an emergency landing scenario by staging mattresses on the flight line during an MV-22B Osprey hung gear malfunction drill at MCAS Camp Pendleton, Calif., March 12.

Servicemembers with the Royal Thai Air Force, U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Air Force work together during a “cyber range,” as part of the first-ever Cobra Gold Cyberspace Field Training Exercise, which was held at the Royal Thai Air Force Headquarters in Bangkok, Thailand, Feb. 20. The cyber range was a simulated computer exercise that focused on identifying critical vulnerabilities within a network and working to correct those deficiencies.



SSGT MATTHEW J. BRAGG, USMC

of stacked mattresses are taken out and strapped down on the landing pad—one for the nose gear and two for the main gear.”

Marines learned the importance of this training from pilots and crewmembers that have had firsthand experiences with emergency landings. Major Thomas J. Dunn, director of safety and standardization with VMM-164, once experienced a landing gear malfunction in real life and knew how to respond because of this type of training.

“I was coming into a landing, and the gear did not come down—it is a very uncomfortable situation especially because of fuel requirements, enemy threat and all that,” said Dunn. “In 2008, I found myself turning around over Baghdad International [Airport] at 1,500 feet, going through the emergency procedures, [but] we did get the landing gear to come down.”

With realistic and relevant training, VMM-164’s Marines prepare for emergencies that could occur so that the squadron is ready when things don’t go as planned.

Cpl Gabino Perez, USMC

BANGKOK, THAILAND Cobra Gold 19 Includes First-Ever Cyber Range

The Royal Thai Armed Forces, along with the U.S. Marine Corps and Washington Air National Guard, executed the first Cobra Gold Cyberspace Field Training Exercise (FTX) at the Royal Thai Air

Force Headquarters in Bangkok, Thailand, Feb. 11-22.

The Cyber FTX was a combined defensive cyber operations training event focused on identifying and defending critical information and warfighting systems against a cyberspace attack. In recent years, there has been a heavy emphasis on increased protection in the cyberspace domain within the Department of Defense, which makes cultivating cyberspace defense with multinational partners the next logical step in becoming better trained to combat the growing threat.

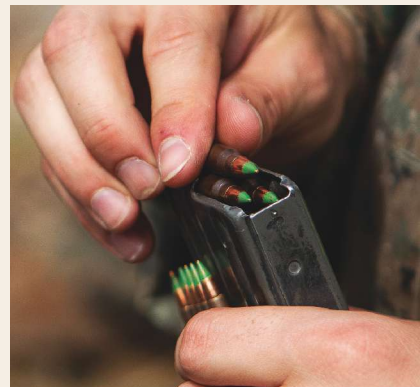
The cyber range allowed Royal Thai and U.S. forces to work together to patrol a network, like a squad conducting a security patrol, in order to illuminate and eradicate adversary presence. If they detected any threat, then those details were reported up the chain of command to the Cyber Defense Operations Center (CDOC) in order to find an effective solution to defeat the threat.

“This cyber range is important, especially for the Marine Corps, because we’re getting our first real repetitions and sets as the [Defense Cyber Operations –Internal Defensive Measures Company] working together,” said a defensive cyber operator with DCO-IDM Co, 7th Communication Battalion, III Marine Expeditionary Force Information Group. “We’ve been training constantly up until this point, and this is the first time we can actually implement what we’ve learned and put it to trial by fire.”

During the cyber range, Thai and U.S.



Below: A Marine with the 31st MEU loads a rifle magazine before platoon attack training at Camp Schwab, Okinawa, Japan, Feb. 28. During the training, Marines with Charlie Co, BLT 1/4 refined their ability to accomplish the mission of the Marine rifle squad. (Photo by GySgt T.T. Parish, USMC)





GYSGT T.T. PARISH, USMC

LCpl Daniel Penalosa, a rifleman with Charlie Co, BLT 1/4—the ground combat element of the 31st MEU—provides security during platoon attack training at Camp Schwab, Okinawa, Japan, Feb. 28.



GYSGT T.T. PARISH, USMC

Marines with Charlie Co, BLT 1/4 load rifle magazines prior to beginning platoon attack training at Camp Schwab, Okinawa, Japan, Feb. 28. The company's Marines acted as the airborne raid specialists for the 31st MEU.

OKINAWA, JAPAN Rifle Squad Integral to 31st MEU Success

Marines with “Charlie” Company, the airborne raid specialists with Battalion Landing Team, 1st Battalion, 4th Marines, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, trained to live up to the Marine rifle squad’s mission of, “locate, close with and destroy the enemy by fire and maneuver, or repel the enemy’s assault by fire and close combat,” during platoon attack training at Camp Schwab, Okinawa, Japan, Feb. 28. BLT 1/4 is the ground combat element for the 31st MEU, the Marine Corps’ only continuously forward-deployed MEU, which 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.

forces operated on a training network run by the Washington Air National Guard, which simulates as close to a real-world network as possible.

Within the cyber range battle space, the Thai and U.S. forces each patrolled their assigned fields. This allowed them to simulate an environment where each force could identify assets critical to the mission, detect anomalous activity, report through the CDOC to the simulated Combined Cyber Fusion Center, and apply appropriate defensive measures.

“This exercise isn’t just about the technical part,” said Royal Thai Air Force Group Captain Amorn Chomchoey. “It’s about making all of the team members work together as a single unit and strive together to achieve common goals.”

Chomchoey stressed that defensive cyber operations are important not only during war but also during times of peace. A lot of the techniques and tactics used to hack into friendly networks are already available on the internet, he added.

“Hopefully as we move forward, we can continue to find common ground and have

more people involved,” Chomchoey said. “It’s not just our mission to fend off the bad guys, but also ensure everything is going according to plan and the network continues to run and support the mission.”

In its 38th iteration, Exercise Cobra Gold 19 continued to demonstrate the commitment of Thailand and the United States to their long-standing alliance, promoted regional partnerships and advanced security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.

SSgt Matthew Bragg, USMC

NUNAVUT, CANADA **Marine Super Hercules Crew** **Makes History in Arctic Circle**

A Marine KC-130J Super Hercules and crew traveled farther north than any other Marine C-130 crew in history when they conducted a logistics support mission to Canadian Forces Station (CFS) Alert, Nunavut, Canada—the northernmost permanently inhabited place in the world—Jan. 22-23.

The Royal Canadian Air Force usually conducts the logistics support mission

weekly in order to provide the required sustainment and transportation of military and civilian personnel to and from CFS Alert.

“For us, we were doing an extended cold weather training mission,” said Corporal Kristian Maguire, a crewmaster with Marine Aerial Refuel Transport Squadron (VMGR) 252, Marine Aircraft Group 14, 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing, based at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C. “We just took one of their flights from them, and we moved the cargo and equipment that they needed.”

With 9,500 pounds of cargo, seven Marines from VMGR-252 and two Royal Canadian Air Force personnel flew the KC-130J for seven hours before landing at Thule Air Base, Greenland, a joint United States Air Force and Danish base, where they spent the night prior to arriving at CFS Alert.

Approximately halfway to Thule, the team switched from normal navigation using magnetic headings to polar navigation using true headings. This was due to the large variations between magnetic

LEHNIN, GERMANY



151LT CHRISTIN ST. JOHN, USMC

FROM THE ROOFTOP—A Marine with Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force–Crisis Response–Africa gives commands during a bilateral training exercise with German soldiers from Fallschirmjäger Regiment-31 at a German military training facility in Lehnin, Germany, Feb. 12. SPMAGTF–CR–AF is deployed to conduct crisis response and theater security operations in Europe and Africa.



MAJ DUSTIN SCHEGLE, USMC



COURTESY OF CAPT DEAN ASZMAN, USMC

Marines with VMGR-252 landed at CFS Alert, Nunavut, Canada, Jan. 23, where the temperature was 22 degrees below zero. The harsh environment and cold weather offered a unique training opportunity for the KC-130J crew, requiring them to create multiple contingency plans.

north and true north since they were traveling only 508 miles from the North Pole, according to Major Dustin Schelegle, the aircraft commander for the flight.

On Jan. 23, the crew departed Thule Air Base and flew 90 minutes north to CFS Alert, where they landed on a 5,500 by 150-foot gravel strip covered in snow and ice, Schelegle said.

The sun was absent from the sky with temperatures at 22 below zero when the servicemembers made history as they landed at CFS Alert.

With the harsh, cold-weather environ-

ment, the pilots and crew created multiple contingency plans due to the potential for drastic changes in weather.

“Once we got up there we were coordinating with them [Canadians] about requirements for extra gear in the Arctic. They had Arctic survival kits, which aren’t actually even in our publications ... so we had to borrow those from them,” said Schelegle. “We even brought a PMA 207 [flight philologist] who came out looking at our gear for our maintainers.”

A flight philologist’s job is to manage the procurement, development, support,

Above: A KC-130J Hercules with VMGR-252 sits on a snow-covered flight line at CFS Alert, Nunavut, Canada, the northernmost permanently inhabited place in the world, in late January. The crew’s Marines earned the distinction of traveling farther north than any other KC-130J crew.

fielding and disposal of the Navy’s Tactical Airlift Program Systems.

“Having a PMA 207 on board allowed them to learn different things from the Canadians [...] like having the survival kits for when you go up into the Arctic,” said Schelegle. “We are pushing for the possibility to get the Arctic kits and looking forward to seeing what that is going to look like in the future, because if we ever start fighting in an environment like that ... that’s something you are going to need for the survival of the aircrew and passengers.”

From the approval of the mission to takeoff, VMGR-252 and the Royal Canadian Air Force accomplished all the administration and logistics within 14 or 15 hours, according to Captain Dean Aszman, the KC-130J copilot.

“It was impressive to see we were able to get all these people and cargo all the way into the Arctic Circle, something that’s never been done in Marine Corps history,” said Aszman. “I’m super grateful, honored and proud of this opportunity that the Marine Corps has given me.”

Sgt Jessica Etheridge, USMC



Edinburg, Texas

Medal of Honor Flag Presented to Vietnam War Gold Star Mother

During a special ceremony in Edinburg, Texas, Jan. 14, Gold Star mother Dolia Gonzalez received the Medal of Honor Flag on behalf of her son, Sergeant Alfredo Gonzalez, who was killed in action in Vietnam on Feb. 4, 1968, during the Battle of Hue City, and posthumously was awarded the nation's highest award for valor. Major General Bradley S. James, Commanding General, Marine Forces Reserve and Marine Forces North, presented her with the flag at Freddy Gonzalez Elementary School, which is named for the Medal of Honor recipient.

Retired Sergeant Major Eddie Neas, who served alongside Gonzalez in "Alpha" Company, 1st Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment in Vietnam, attended a Medal of Honor flag presentation in October 2018, when another member of the company, SgtMaj John Canley, USMC (Ret), was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions during the Battle of Hue City. After Canley received his flag, Neas mentioned to one of the active-duty Marines in attendance that Gonzalez had never received a flag for her son. Soon afterward, General Robert B. Neller, Commandant of the Marine Corps, approached Neas and said he would make it happen.

Neas and eight other Marines from Alpha Co, 1/1 traveled to Texas to see Mrs. Gonzalez—who calls the members of her son's unit "her boys"—receive the flag. Coincidentally, while in Texas,



CPL TESSA WATTS, USMC

they ran into a Marine who served with Bravo Co, 1/1 during 1967 and 1968, and they shared stories and photos with each other.

"It's absolutely amazing what happens when Marines get together—no matter where we gather," said Neas. During their trip, the group also was able to visit the Museum of South Texas, where there is a display honoring Sgt Gonzalez.

Submitted by SgtMaj Edward Neas, USMC (Ret)



COURTESY OF DUSTY WRIGHT

Hazlet, N.J.

Annual Reunion Includes Memorable Visit

For Marine veterans who served at Naval Weapons Station Earle, Colts Neck, N.J., during the 1960s to 1990s, the highlight of their most recent annual reunion, held Sept. 28-30, 2018, at NWS Earle, was a visit with 93-year-old Gunnery Sergeant Ralph Ruocco, USMC (Ret), at his home in Hazlet, N.J. Ruocco was stationed at NWS Earle in the late 1940s and shared stories from his time in the Corps with his visitors.

"The Marines in attendance requested that we visit Ralph every year," said reunion coordinator Dusty Wright, adding that the group sang "The Marines' Hymn" before leaving Ruocco's house. "Ralph put many of the younger Marines to shame. He was first to his feet, locked, cocked and singing on key," Wright said.

The group began reuniting in 2011 as a way to remember Sergeant Major Michael S. Curtin, who served at NWS Earle from 1985 to 1988 as a staff sergeant and was killed in the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center on 9/11.

Through their reunion listing in *Leatherneck's* "Reader Assistance" department, the Marines have reconnected over the years at their annual gathering and stay in touch via a Facebook group.

Submitted by Dusty Wright



STEPHEN M. DAVIS

Carlsbad, Calif.

West Coast Marines Connect at MCA&F I MEF Dinner

Marine Corps Association & Foundation board member Sergeant Major Al McMichael, USMC (Ret), second from right, visited with attendees at the MCA&F I Marine Expeditionary Force dinner, held Feb. 6 at the Carlsbad Westin, Carlsbad, Calif.

Lieutenant General Joseph Osterman, Commanding General, I MEF, spoke to the hundreds in attendance including more than 150 active-duty Marines who attended for free as part of MCA&F's professional development programs.

Each year, MCA&F hosts numerous events made possible through the donations of generous corporate sponsors, which foster networking, camaraderie, professional development and often include the presentation of MCA&F-sponsored awards for Marines in various occupational specialties. For a list of upcoming events, visit <https://mca-marines.org/events/>.

MCA&F



HENRY SCHWARTZ

Triangle, Va.

Presentation, Book Signing Held at NMMC

Leatherneck senior editor Nancy S. Lichtman visited with Clay Bonnyman Evans, author of "Bones of My Grandfather: Reclaiming a Lost Hero of World War II" during a presentation and book signing event at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle, Va., Dec. 8, 2018.

Evans, the grandson of Medal of Honor recipient First Lieutenant Alexander "Sandy" Bonnyman Jr., killed Nov. 22, 1943, on Tarawa, chronicles his grandfather's life and the successful recovery of his remains from Tarawa in 2015 in his book, which was released in July 2018.

Evans shared some of the fascinating story with *Leatherneck* readers in "Finding the Haystack: History Flight Locates Lost Cemetery on Betio Island, Tarawa," which appeared in the November 2018 issue.

Leatherneck



SGT EMMA NORRIS, USMC

Cedarburg, Wis.

Active-Duty Marine, WW II Veteran Share Semper Fi Spirit

Staff Sergeant Nicholas Ranum, a marketing and communications Marine with Marine Corps Recruiting Station Milwaukee, Wis., visited 96-year-old Ruth Voight-Holman, a Marine veteran of World War II, at Lasata Senior Living Campus in Cedarburg, Wis., Jan. 23. He talked with her and the two Marines bonded over their experiences in the Corps.

Voight-Holman enlisted in 1944, worked as an administration Marine, and was discharged as a corporal.

"I loved it and have been proud ever since," she said. "I am the only one in my family to join the Marines and will be proud of that for the rest of my life."

SSgt Ranum gave Voight-Holman some Marine Corps gear to keep in her room.

"That she was able to share her story with me was incredible and such an honor," Ranum said.

Sgt Emma Norris, USMC

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

LIFE ON A BULL'S-EYE



LEATHERNECK FILE PHOTO

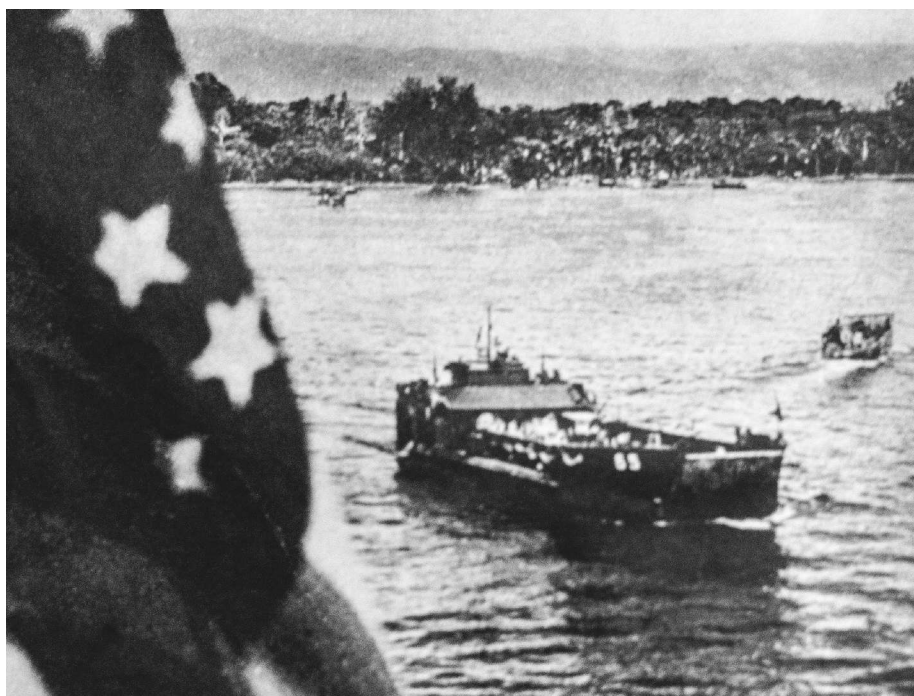
A tower of thick smoke rises hundreds of feet from a burning oil dump on Puruata. The fire was set just before daybreak when Japanese bombers struck the tiny exposed island off Bougainville.

By Capt Patrick O'Sheel, USMC

"Honest to God, on this island it's like living on a bull's eye," said Doctor Wimp. He said it as if he were about to cry. His voice was high-pitched with the same fatigue which seemed to be gnawing at his eyes. We passed a number of Marines on the narrow jungle trail and when they greeted him, he had barely enough energy to answer them, pushing the words out in a kind of gasp.

Jesse J. Wimp is a lieutenant in the Navy medical corps, a middle-aged, stocky, energetic man with a booming, infectious laugh. But during our first meeting, on Puruata Island just off Bougainville, he didn't laugh at all. The trail we were travel-

Puruata Island's Smooth Beach Was Superb For Unloading Materiel, But The Japanese Made It A Hellish Spot To Be



LEATHERNECK FILE PHOTO

From atop a mast of an LST, a camera catches a flag symbolic of the victory won by American forces at Bougainville. The small LCT pictured is returning from a ferry trip to mainland. The bigger LSTs could not dock at Bougainville.

ing that morning led to a bomb crater and to the shrapnel-punctured body of a Marine. The doctor's errand was simply to pronounce the man dead, verify the cause of death, and issue instructions concerning disposal of the remains.

Four others had been killed and 21 wounded by Japanese bombs during the night, and the doctor and his corpsmen had scrambled about for hours in the evil darkness, straining to hear the moans of the wounded above the noise, working desperately to stop the blood and get the worst cases back to the tiny pillbox "hospital" for plasma transfusions and emergency operations.

It had been like that for five straight nights. Still other nights of terror had gone before; more were to follow. The daylight hours were better, but there were times when enemy aircraft streaked low across

the water and strafed the tiny island. Guns hidden on the Bougainville mainland had paid their respects with a few salvos of high explosive shells.

Puruata Island—the "bull's-eye"—is a geographical trifle, the sort of place cartoonists have in mind when pondering the affairs of castaways. It lies about 1,000 yards off Cape Torokina on Bougainville, where the Marines landed last Nov. 1, and looks for all the world like a handful of jungle that has been plucked from the mainland and cast adrift on the pale green waters of the Coral Sea. The island stretches a mere 700 yards one way and 400 the other, rimmed to seaward by coral reef and on the mainland side by a white sandy beach.

That beach turned out to be one of the most important in all the South Seas. It was the better one of the only two beaches



LEATHERNECK FILE PHOTO

LSTs could back right up to Puruata's beach to unload vital rations and supplies, but the requirement to unload quickly led to piling up stocks which created inviting targets for Japanese bombers.



LEATHERNECK FILE PHOTO

Above: Daylight often disclosed casualties. Here, a Navy doctor pronounces a Marine killed during the night by bomb fragments. A few minutes later the doctor and corpsmen shared a garbage pit as a shelter during an air raid.



LEATHERNECK FILE PHOTO

Puruata became more than a supply depot. It also was a base hospital where the wounded from Bougainville were brought over in Higgins boats for transfer to LSTs.

in the captured area which were negotiable by the Navy's prime movers, the LSTs. It made Puruata Island the freight yard of the Bougainville offensive—and the favorite target for Japanese bombers.

When Major General Allen H. Turnage, commander of the 3rd Marine Division, referred to the "astonishing success" of the Navy supply system in helping to win the Bougainville campaign, his tribute included the men of Puruata Island. These, in the main, were Marine Pioneers—a unit specially trained in the tasks of unloading ships and establishing supply dumps ashore. From early November to late in January they went about their grueling job with such avidity that they broke all speed records for unloading LST's; then broke their own record several times. The Navy was grateful. Even at sea the LSTs are a relatively sluggish craft (hence the nickname "Large Slow Target"). But when beached during an unloading operation, they are a rare invitation to enemy aircraft—sitting ducks, unable to maneuver for safety. What the Pioneers did on Puruata was as much a victory as any achieved by their comrades fighting in the Bougainville jungle.

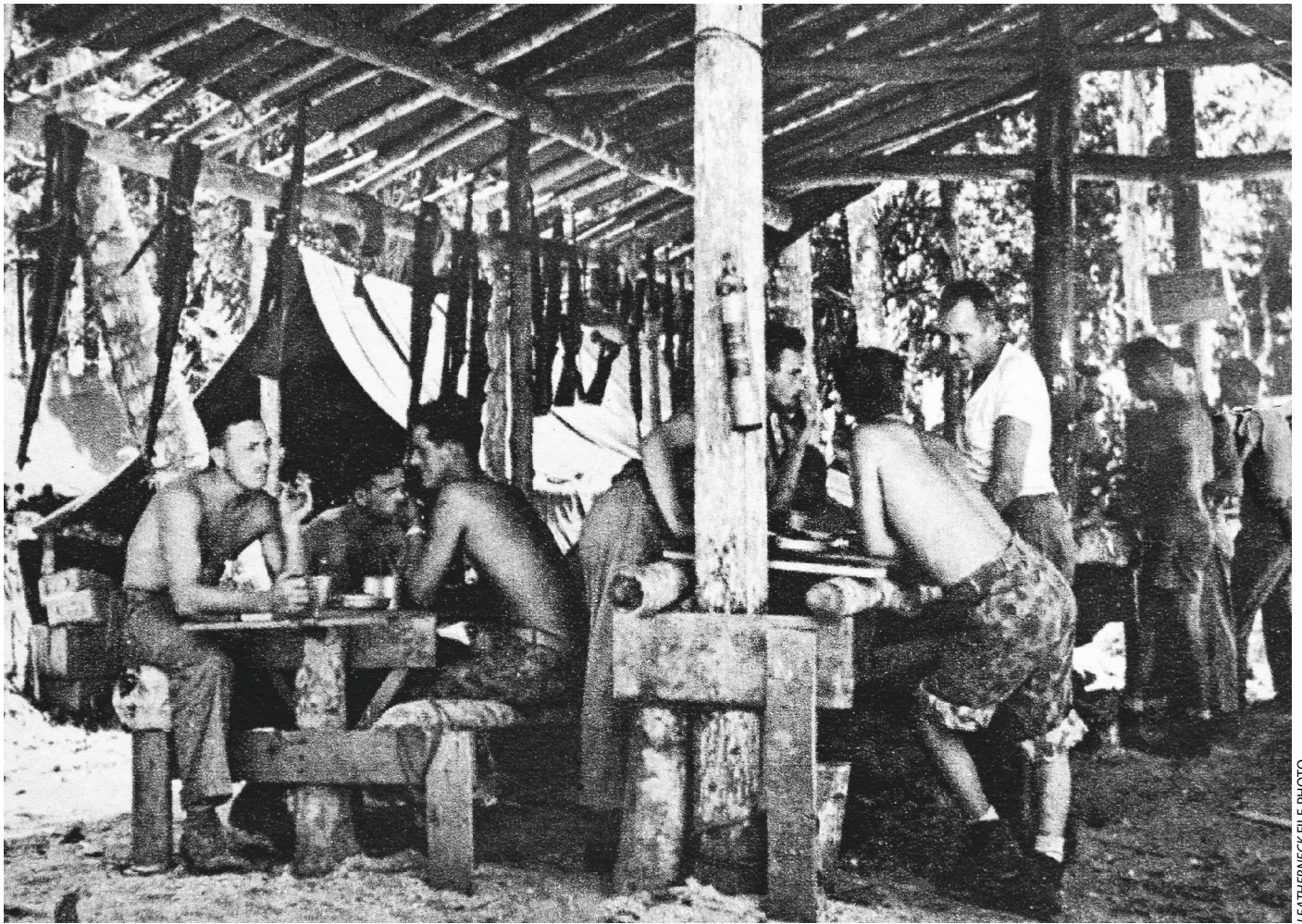
It would have been a staggering assignment just to handle the equipment and supplies needed to maintain the combat troops. On top of this, however, came the vast quantities of machines and materiel used to build the airfields so swiftly created by the Seabees. "And even that's only half of it," said one of the Puruata Marines. "What really hurts is that every damn stick we drag ashore here one day has to be loaded back on tank lighters and LCTs and then shipped over to the mainland." It was a case of "in and out, in and out," he told me, "this is just a stopover!"

And so the men of Puruata fought day and night. From dawn till dusk they wrestled chow and ammunition, fuel and guns, trucks and tanks, and steel mat for landing strips. From dusk till dawn they fought for a few hours of sleep between the wails of the air raid warning sirens and tried to ignore the devil's concert of anti-aircraft fire and falling bombs. Volunteer gunners rushed to man the machine guns mounted on trucks, and volunteer stretcher bearers rose from the safety of their foxholes to hunt the wounded when the enemy bombs hit home. One night the fuel dump was blasted into an inferno; another night an ammunition pile was ignited. And when these things happened, the men of Puruata, their muscles aching from yesterday's labors and their minds fogged and edgy from the night's ordeal, would give that something extra that wins our battles by risking their lives in salvage



LEATHERNECK FILE PHOTO

A scene from the deck of an LST provides a striking picture of the unloading operations on tiny 400-by-700-yard Puruata.



LEATHERNECK FILE PHOTO

A Marine mess hall on Puruata was a shelter built by the Japanese who had garrisoned the island before Marines landed. The roof originally was made of large jungle leaves. Note the rifles slung handily on pegs inside the railings.

work, rolling barrels of oil away from the fire as hoses sprayed over them, manhandling high explosives out of the danger area.

One day when things were quiet, Dr. Wimp was in a talkative mood in his headquarters at the aid station of the Pioneer unit. He had just come back from a beach-combing expedition, his pockets loaded with seashells. He said he was sending them home to Kirksville, Mo., where his three youngsters would get a kick out of using them to decorate the backyard fish pool.

"It's been quiet for three days now," he said. "And for three nights, which is a hell of a lot more important.

"The way things were going, the troops on the front lines actually sympathized with us. It's a fact. I know because I see so many of the battle casualties. They bring them over from the mainland and put them aboard the LSTs going back to rear-base hospitals. They often told me they were just as glad they'd never had to live on Puruata.

"I don't want to see anything like this again. We've had six war neurosis cases, and honest to God, it's amazing we haven't

had more. Days like today are what saves us all from going nuts.

"It isn't being afraid so much, although there isn't a Marine on Puruata who frankly won't admit he's been afraid. It's the strain when you work like hell all day and maybe get strafed, and then you get bounced around half the night by the bombs and the antiaircraft guns. This island sits out here on the water on a moonlight night just begging for bombs, and every one that comes down sounds like it's going to get right in under the covers with you.


"And when there isn't any moon, they come over and drop flares. The other night one of them came all the way down and landed in one of our aid stations. It took so long to come down that a couple of Marines claim they got out a book and started to read by the light of it. I believe them—I don't mean they actually did any reading, but it was something to do to get their minds off the Japanese bombers flying around overhead.

"Maybe I see only the worst of it—me and the corpsmen. Incidentally, all my corpsmen have been commended twice by the generals over on the mainland. For

instance, it seemed pretty bad the night we used up our last bottle of plasma on the last wounded Marine we brought in. I prayed, honest to God, that the [Japanese] would stay away the rest of the night. They didn't, but they dumped their next load in the water. But what I mean is that nobody else knew at the time about that plasma running out.

"And we've shot down seven planes between our antiaircraft and the kids just went out and grabbed a machine gun and started shooting. Hell, it hasn't been one-sided at all really. Just a nightmare. The [Japanese] never stopped us unloading ships and getting the stuff delivered across the way.

"And you know," said the doctor, "you've got to hand it to these crazy Marines. There isn't anything so bad they can't find a wisecrack to fit it. A while ago when we were having our third raid in one night, I heard a kid running for his foxhole and yelling: 'Hang onto your false teeth, boys—they may be dropping sandwiches.'

"Honest to God, the only thing I could think about was how good a sandwich would go right about then!" 

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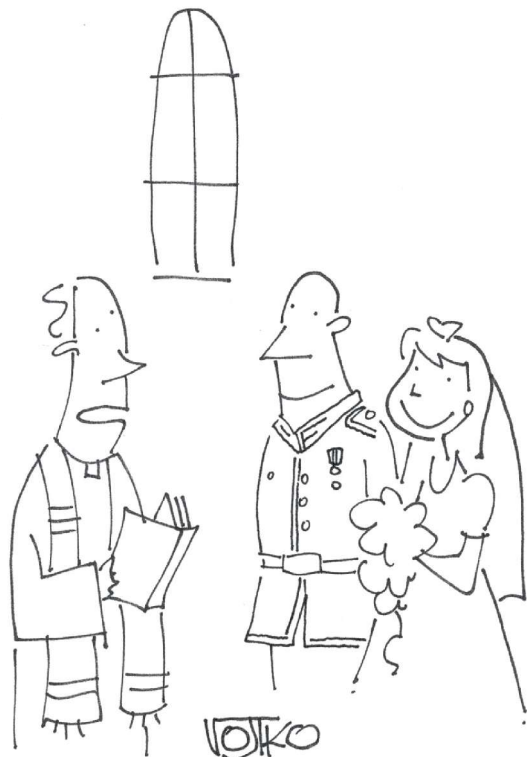
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Leatherneck Laffs



"Semper Fi is okay, but 'I do' is traditional."

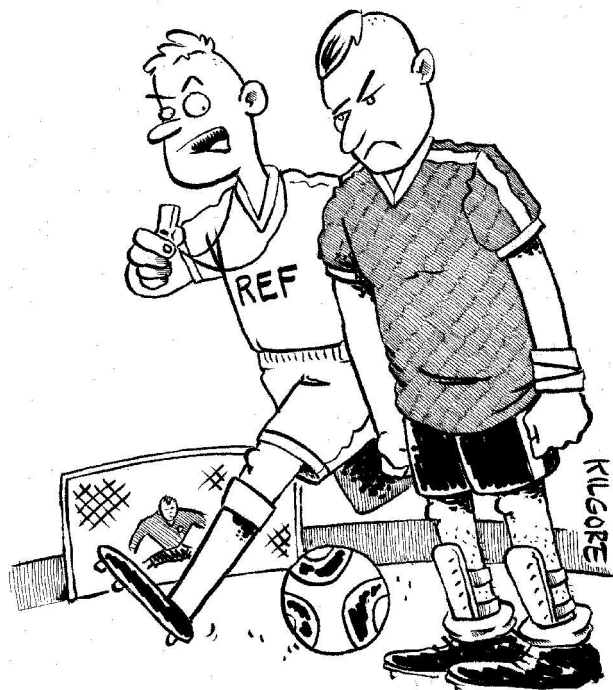


"The General thought Spotify was a missile defense system."



"You say it looks much harder than it is.
OK, don't look!"





"Pull up those socks and tuck in that shirt."



"My favorite part is the free ammunition."



"If only the battle were in this other country.
They have better WiFi."



"I think it's a zebra."

LZ MARGO:

Lest We Forget

By Kyle Watts

The elevator doors opened, delivering me to the hotel's first floor. In the hallway, a sign stood on an easel outside a vacant conference room. "Battalion Landing Team 2/26. Reuniting and Remembering." A somber photograph filled the board beneath the headline. A Marine stood behind his machine gun in a knee-deep fighting hole. His helmet was missing and his flak jacket hung open. His eyes glazed over in a thousand-yard stare. Superimposed words alluded to the story on his face. "LZ MARGO ... LEST WE FORGET."



COURTESY OF ALAN GREEN

I searched Landing Zone (LZ) Margo online before I arrived. The results were disappointing and scant. Whatever it was, veterans came from around the nation to remember it. They invited me to join them and document the experience. I felt bad, having never even heard of the place. I wished I could see through the eyes of the man in the photo to grasp the story they told.

I followed signs to the continental breakfast room and paused at the entrance. Hotel guests packed the room, but I immediately picked out the table full of men I was there to meet. Unsure of where I fit in, a voice from behind prodded me along.

"You here for the reunion?"

"Yes, I am."

"You somebody's son?"

"No sir. I'm the writer."

"Ah, the writer! Come on, these are the guys you want to speak with."

He walked me to the table and introduced me to the group. They grabbed a chair and made room. I listened to their discussions as I ate my breakfast. Shortly after I joined them, another interruption followed.

"Y'all are veterans?"

All of us looked up. The woman posing the question was not looking at me, so I kept my mouth shut. Forty years separated me from anyone else around the table. I doubted she considered me one of the group. Though not as trim as they once were, and more grayed, the men surrounding me were indeed veterans. No matter their age, even an outsider cannot mistake a bunch of Marines. The gentlemen closest answered for the group.

"Yes, we are. Marine Corps."

"Oh alright! What brings everyone to Detroit?"

"Here for a reunion. I haven't seen these guys in 50 years."

"Oh wow! Well, thank y'all for your service!"

Without waiting for a reply, the stranger walked away to her own table. Everyone looked at each other with a familiar blank expression. This must have been the thousandth time they heard it since their country decided they deserved respect.

"It just feels hollow," one of the men finally remarked.

Another veteran described the best "thank you for your service" he ever received, when the owner of a restaurant ordered several rounds of drinks for him, on the house. Another passed around a humbling thank you note and \$10 bill, left on his truck anonymously by a gold star mother.

One of the veterans adeptly closed the conversation to a resounding, silent affirmation.

"The best respect we get is from each other."

I reflected on their comments as we finished eating. In their eyes, my Eagle,



Globe and Anchor allowed me a seat at their table. They welcomed me as a brother. I realized, though, I was no different from the clueless stranger who disrupted our conversation. I did not understand what these Marines had experienced any more than she did. How could I possibly capture it with words?

We left the dining area and entered the conference room. No agenda dictated the day, other than allowing Marines to catch up after 50 years. This proved an easy task. I watched them speak as if they were lifelong friends.

"This is incredible," reflected one veteran, "it feels like we are just picking up right where we left off."

They laughed at each other's stories from boot camp and experiences from the rear in Vietnam. Many of the veterans fought together through the siege at Khe Sanh. Even the discussions of this

Marines inserting into LZ Margo exit a CH-46 helicopter.



COURTESY OF TOM ROADLEY



KYLE WATTS

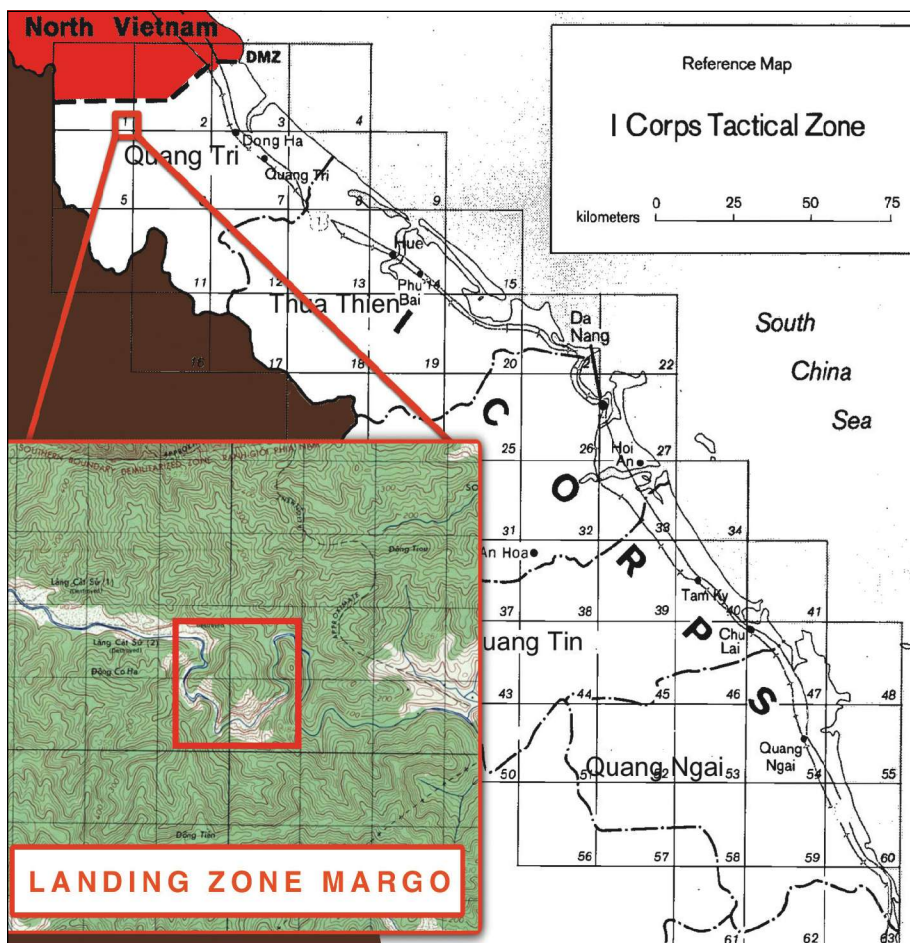
infamous battle eventually led to the place that altered their lives.

“I put more Marines in body bags at Margo than I ever did at Khe Sanh.”

The sentiment echoed around in many forms. One person spoke of a senior enlisted Marine who survived LZ Margo. In his younger days, this Marine fought the Chinese at the Chosin Reservoir. Even he proclaimed Margo worse than any attack he experienced in Korea.

I discovered an alarming majority of the men present were Purple Heart recipients. Further investigation revealed most of them were wounded on the same day—Sept. 16, 1968. I overheard one Marine discussing his foot that was blown off. I watched him walk in a perfect gait to refill

At their September 2018 reunion, 2/26 veterans Teddy Banks, left, and Steve Haisley remember the chaos at LZ Margo.



COURTESY OF KYLE WATTS

his glass and return to his table. When a seat became available, I approached.

“John, did I hear correctly, you lost a foot at Margo?”

“Yeah, out on patrol a few days before the attack. I stepped on one of those toe-popper mines. Took the end of my foot off. They got me out that day. The mine took my foot, then gangrene took the rest.”

He continued talking as he lifted his pant leg and removed a prosthetic limb extending down from his knee. I struggled temporarily, processing his words and his leg, now separated above the table before me. He discussed the surgeries, the constant pain, how prosthetics advanced over the years and the normalcy of it all now.

“I walk 5 miles every day after breakfast.”

I hoped my words were appropriate, but continued feeling my inexperience. I surveyed the room, filled with Marines as extraordinary as the one seated next to me. I felt the bond between them. I saw regret and sorrow for their brothers lost at LZ Margo, and I saw the open wounds left inside. I sensed the importance of this reunion and the healing power it possessed. No one outside the unit knew details of the battle. Their Corps glossed over it as an embarrassing footnote. Their country belittled the scars it left. These men grew accustomed to being ignored.



Maj Jarvis D. Lynch

COURTESY OF KENT WONDERS

They kept each other alive and fighting through Vietnam. Their memories of each other faded little through half a century. Now, the enduring camaraderie was precisely the reason they came.

I worked my way from man to man piecing together the story. How was it possible I had never heard of Margo?

What could have happened that haunted the survivors for the rest of their lives? One man pulled me aside.

“Let’s get you with the general. He’s the person you need to talk to.”

Major General Jarvis D. Lynch, USMC (Ret) entered the room. Every Marine present shifted. Fifty years ago, they knew him as a major and the battalion operations officer. It was plain to see that he was still their “Chesty” Puller. I introduced myself and asked him to tell me how the battalion ended up at Margo. He told me their journey began at sea.

Aboard USS *Princeton* (CV-37), 2nd Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment reformed as a Battalion Landing Team (BLT). Gaining tanks, artillery, reconnaissance, engineers and more, the battalion grew as a truly powerful force. Word spread of a coming operation in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). They could never be sure. The battalion passed from regiment to regiment, operating in different areas. They called themselves “The Nomads.” They had no home.

They arrived at Camp Carroll in early September, just south of the DMZ. Lynch worked to solidify their orders. Generals in charge of their fate placed the battalion in LZ Margo, 15 miles from the Laos border, deep in enemy territory. Word passed to move out in 24 hours. While the battalion prepared, Lynch learned as much as he could about their destination.

Intelligence told him Margo was established two months earlier. It transitioned into a fire support base, but currently sat abandoned. The LZ occupied a hilltop, blasted barren by U.S. airpower. Triple-canopy jungle surrounded it for miles. Draws and ravines created an uneven surface on the hill. As a result, only one chopper fit in the zone at a time. A map revealed steep slopes down from three sides of the hill into the Cam Lo River, flowing in a jagged horseshoe around the LZ. The hilltop looked small, certainly too small to accommodate a BLT. Most concerning, the hill was actually low ground. Fingers and mountains rose up in all directions.

Margo would be the first of several stops across the DMZ, sweeping the NVA back towards the coast. The single helicopter limit in the LZ meant the insert would be painfully slow. It dawned on Lynch that the operation was set to commence on Friday the 13th.

“That date was not lost on the Marines,” he remembered.

We spoke for nearly an hour before the general left the room. Our conversation created as many questions as it answered. The LZ seemed such an obviously poor choice. How did the battalion get stuck

there? I learned I was not the only one still asking the question.

I found Lieutenants Kent Wonders and Alan Green, who told me their stories. As the assistant to Maj Lynch, Wonders remained close to the command post (CP). When they arrived, sporadic rifle fire targeted the incoming choppers, but the insertion proceeded without incident. Marines quickly filled the LZ. Maj Lynch immediately sent the rifle companies north of the hill.

Wonders moved around the CP and units still occupying the LZ. He took stock of their new home as he walked. Bomb craters and old, shallow fighting holes dotted the hilltop. It reminded him of World War II photos from the Pacific. Water pooled in a hole at the bottom of a draw, filled by a natural spring. Several Marines surrounded the pool filling their canteens.

“We might run out of food, but at least we have water.”

Wonders arrived back at the CP sooner than he anticipated. Somehow, the LZ seemed smaller in reality than it looked on the map. Marines in every direction settled in. He found one of the radio operators digging a hole and dropped his gear next to it.

“Mind if I help? We can share this one.”

“Works for me, sir, but good luck getting anywhere. This hill is like a rock!”

Wonders grabbed his entrenching tool and jabbed at the ground. The pick sank less than an inch. Several hours of digging yielded a hole 18 inches deep, large enough for one man to lie flat. It seemed more like a coffin than a fighting position. Exhausted, the Marines dropped their e-tools. An explosion north of the LZ interrupted their rest.

“What was that? Mortar?”

“Sounded like a mine. Fox is down there on patrol. Probably one of our own mines, left over by whoever was here before us.”

Shouts for corpsmen echoed up the hill. The radio in the CP crackled to life, calling for a medevac. Wonders took a swig from his canteen and surveyed the surrounding heights.

“First casualty. We haven’t even seen the enemy yet.”

Alan Green arranged his platoon of 81 mm mortars. He picked an old bomb crater for his Fire Direction Center (FDC), and fanned the rest of the platoon out to dig gun pits. The awkward terrain prevented normal dispersion. The Marines attempted to dig in, but quickly hit rocky soil. Instead, they unpacked their mortar ammunition and filled the ammo boxes with rocks and dirt, stacking them up around their mediocre holes.

They established primitive firing positions to support the rifle companies in the bush. They worked to deepen the holes



COURTESY OF KENT WONDERS

Lt Kent Wonders

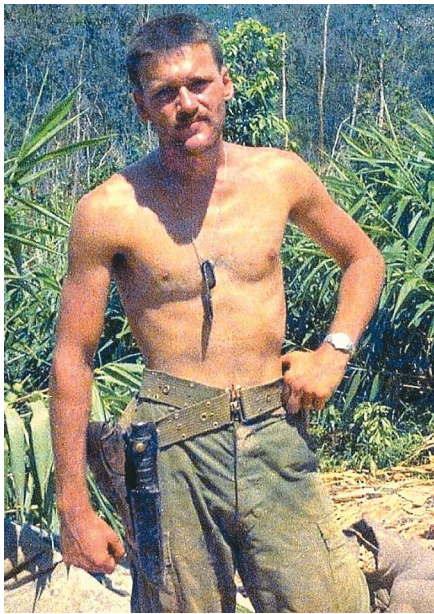
and dial in their aiming stakes. Wiremen strung telephone landlines from the FDC out to each of the eight gun pits. The radioman established contact with forward observers in each company. As the Marines fortified the FDC and brought in ammo, Green noticed a large megaphone sitting next to the radio. “USS *Princeton*” was stenciled on the side. His ammo sergeant noticed the quizzical look on his face and answered the question before Green could ask.

“I liberated it from the Navy before we



COURTESY OF ERIC SMITH

The spring site, bottom left, within LZ Margo. Farther up the hill, Marines prepare a mortar gun pit and other fighting positions.



COURTESY OF ALAN GREEN

Lt Alan Green

left the ship. Didn't seem like they were using it."

The rifle companies north of the LZ worked their way into the hills. They discovered multiple NVA encampments. All were vacant, but showed signs of recent use. Empty mortar pits surrounded the area, dug in deep enough to cover with camouflage and hide from aerial observers. Well-worn trails weaved through the jungle. The NVA carved staircases into the hillsides and reinforced the steps with bamboo. In the steepest parts, they crafted bamboo handrails.

For three days, Marines encountered the enemy, with casualties on both sides. The NVA kept them at arm's length, all around but avoiding a large-scale

engagement. Marines from "Hotel" Company captured a prisoner. The enemy soldier revealed plans for an impending attack that night. Shortly after dark, two Marines in a listening post outside the perimeter were overrun. One of them was killed. Explosions lit up the surrounding jungle as artillery from Camp Carroll and Lt Green's 81 mm mortars fell. From their position back at LZ Margo, Wonders and Green looked toward the black sky in awe as red streams of fire, like dragon's breath, licked the ground over and over. A U.S. Air Force "Spooky" gunship created a wall of bullets around the Marines. The artillery and gunship kept pace all night. A sense of relief came over the Marines when day broke the following morning.

"That's when the order came," they told me.

I recalled my earlier conversation with MajGen Lynch. On Sept. 15, he had received a confusing call from regimental HQ which ordered the battalion's rifle companies back to the LZ. The puzzling nature of the transmission did not surprise him. Marines assumed the NVA heard every word of their unencrypted communication. The order itself, however, concerned him most. Several hundreds of Marines already crowded Margo. It made no tactical sense to pack in several hundred more. Lynch argued his point. He knew the NVA watched their every move. The situation on the ground made it nearly impossible to comply. For reasons unclear, the order stood. Lynch directed the companies to about-face and head back to the LZ.

Lynch continued arguing. The order was a disaster waiting to happen.

The officer on the opposite end of the radio ran his concerns up the chain of command. Lynch hoped common sense would prevail. While he waited, he ordered the rifle companies to about-face once again back into the hills. As expected, all three companies surprised the pursuing NVA and firefights erupted. At the same time, Foxtrot Marines spotted 20 NVA soldiers with mortar tubes on their backs wading across the Cam Lo River, just west of the LZ.

Lynch raised higher headquarters once more, armed with these new developments. He grew louder and more exasperated with each breath. He shed any concern for his own reputation in an effort to make his point.

"It was an exercise in the use of profanity," he gently recalled.

Higher refused to hear it. The order stood. To make matters worse, an arbitrary time limit was assigned for Lynch's compliance. Higher also directed Lynch to squeeze the entire battalion south of an arbitrary grid line that ran through Margo on the map. The person who made this call was not factoring any tactical implications. Through all the cryptic language, Lynch finally deciphered the reasoning behind the order. A B-52 Arc-Light mission was coming. These high altitude carpet bombings devastated huge swaths of the jungle. One was already on the way. The entire battalion needed to be in the LZ by 2 p.m. on Sept. 16 in order to keep a safe distance.

Lynch passed word. A sense of dread pervaded the CP. Lt Wonders returned to his hole and grabbed his e-tool. The Marine who helped him dig the first day watched him hacking away again.

"What's going on, sir?"

"Come on. We need to make this deeper."

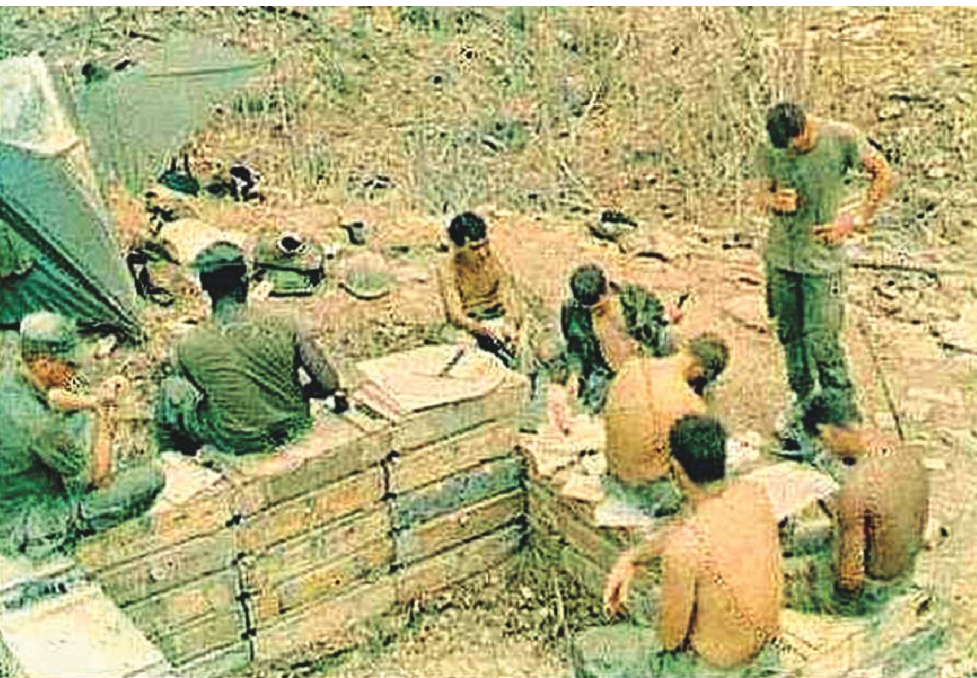
The unfolding tragedy revealed itself to me in pieces. I listened to Marines around the room. Each had his own story. On the morning of the 16th, the rifle companies reversed direction a final time and headed back to Margo. Most of the Marines were out of water and looked forward to refilling their canteens at the spring in the LZ. Echo Company entered the perimeter last. By the time they arrived, there was nowhere for them to go. Lance Corporal Teddy Banks, an 18-year-old rifleman, helped carry a Marine KIA up the hill. He placed the body at the casualty collection point, then joined his friend, Harry Rivers. Banks stripped off his gear and lay down his rifle, thankful to doff the burden. He noticed a cache of supplies dropped farther up the hill.

"Hey Rivers, I'm gonna head up there and see if I can find some chow. I'll be



COURTESY OF KENT WONDERS

Maj Lynch, center with hands on hips, and other Marines from the CP looking toward the hills to the north of LZ Margo. The first mortar attack began shortly after this photo was taken.



The 81 mm mortar Fire Direction Center at LZ Margo. Lt Alan Green, far right, standing, listens with his Marines to radio traffic.

COURTESY OF ERIC SMITH



Teddy Banks aboard the hospital ship USS *Repose* (AH-16), following his evacuation from LZ Margo. After a month of recovery, Banks returned to the bush with 2/26.

COURTESY OF TEDDY BANKS

right back.”

Banks made it halfway to the supplies. Suddenly, a sound echoed across the hill. “THOOMP, THOOMP, THOOMP, THOOMP, THOOMP.”

It sounded distant, yet close. Banks knew the sound of outgoing mortars, but had never been on the receiving end. Other, more experienced Marines let him know what was about to occur.

“INCOMING! INCOMING!”

Before he could react, mortar rounds exploded at the top of the hill, showering him in debris.

“THOOMP, THOOMP, THOOMP, THOOMP.”

He instantly regretted dropping his

gear. He sprinted back down the hill. Rivers and the others in his squad were gone. Banks threw on his helmet and slid his arms through the flak jacket. As he grabbed his M16, an explosion flung him through the air. He felt like someone had trampled him over, running up his right side. When the shock of the explosion wore off, Banks examined himself. He saw blood on his arm, but could not move it to inspect the wound. His helmet fell off as he tumbled, but his right hand still clutched his rifle. He tried to stand but could not move his right leg. The mortars fell in a downpour, raking across the LZ. Banks used his working left side to crawl up a small incline, where the rest of his

squad moved. He reached the top and looked down the other side. The remains of Harry Rivers filled the bottom of a small crater. His hole took a direct hit.

On the other side of the LZ, Private First Class Steve Haisley, from Hotel Co, watched the mortars explode in rapid succession. Deafening shock waves pulsed towards him, and black smoke billowed with each impact. The rounds began to move, walking his direction. Haisley found a hole nearby with a Marine taking cover.

“Move over, I’m coming in!”

He curled up as he dove into the hole. It was not deep enough to fully protect him. He closed his eyes, but heard the explosions coming closer and closer. For the first time in his life, Haisley fully expected to die. He had been in Vietnam for five months. He had been afraid before, even believed he would be killed. His teenage invincibility always pushed the fear aside. This was different. He saw exactly how he would die, and heard death coming. Haisley opened his eyes. He locked onto the Marine next to him, a kid just like himself. Would this be the last face he saw?

“Please God, I’m 19! I can’t die yet! Not like this!”

A mortar crashed down next to the hole. Haisley felt a searing sledgehammer plow into his left arm. Surprised, he looked down at unrecognizable carnage hanging from his shoulder. He did not even notice the hole in his back. He thought to investigate the arm further. With mortars falling all around, Haisley stood. The half of his arm below the elbow fell dead, severed completely, except for a shred of skin. He froze, fixated on his forearm suspended by a thread. The Marine with him reached up, grabbed his belt, and yanked him back down into the hole.

“Get down! You’re hit pretty bad!”

He stabilized Haisley on the bottom of the hole and yelled over the roar.

“CORPSMAN!”

Near the CP, Alan Green and seven other Marines took cover in the FDC. When the mortars began, Green dove into the crater and instinctively placed both hands over his crotch. Every Marine with him mirrored his defensive posture. The look on one young Marine’s face spelled terror, just as much as the sound of death raining down. Screams filled the air along with the explosions. Several of Green’s mortar crews took direct hits. The big guns broke and flew in pieces; the Marines manning them did as well.

After several minutes of constant bombardment, a shout came from higher up the hill.

“Fire mission! Fire mission!”



A Marine O-1 Bird Dog observation plane circles LZ Margo as the battalion settles in. Note the jungle-covered hills surrounding the battalion. (Photo courtesy of Tom Roadley)

Staff Sergeant James Doner, from the Reconnaissance Platoon, saw muzzle flashes in the distance. He grabbed his map and worked out the grid coordinates. He shouted them down the hill to the Marines in the FDC. They immediately went to work. One of the Marines picked up the telephone to communicate with the gun crews. After several attempts, he turned to Green and yelled over the explosions.

“I can’t get a response! I think all the landlines are cut!”

Green crossed the FDC to snatch the stolen megaphone. He jumped out of the hole and surveyed the hill. Smoke obscured his line of sight on some gun pits. Some were just gone. Other mortars tubes stood tall, ready to take the fight back at the NVA. He crouched and lifted the megaphone to his lips.

“Fire mission! Fire mission! Come on you United States Marines! Get out of your holes and get on your guns!”

His booming voice roused the Marines into action. They readied their ammo and adjusted the mortars to the coordinates Green communicated. As he jumped back into his hole, Green looked out across the gun pits. Only the top half of the tubes protruded above the rim of their holes. Hands flashed up into view dropping rounds down the tubes. The sound of his own mortars firing mixed with the incoming rounds, nearly indistinguishable. It felt good to fight back.

Two hundred mortar rounds fell on LZ Margo in less than 10 minutes. They continued falling. The NVA walked rounds back and forth across the tightly packed

hilltop. Explosions and gunfire kept the volume at a deafening level. If a pause in either happened to coincide, screaming filled the void. Smoke enveloped the hill, limiting visibility. Despite the chaos, initial shock gave way to courage.

An M60 machine gun opened up from a hole a few meters from Green. Corporal

Joe Cooper blasted away at a distant enemy, unseen from Green’s position. When the barrel burned bright red and overheated, Cooper grabbed it off the gun with his bare hand, replaced it with a new one, and continued firing. Higher up the hill, SSgt Doner and another Marine also opened up with their M60. Mortars landed near Cooper and Doner, peppering their bodies with shrapnel and knocking them off their guns. Green turned back in time to see an entire mortar crew, loaded with ammo, pop up and dash from their gun pit. An explosion knocked their mortar out of action. The Marines sprinted through smoke and shrapnel to the nearest firing gun.

“A squad leader in the old gun became an ammo humper on the new gun,” Green told me. “It was incredible, and guys died doing it. It was inspiring. It was heart-breaking. It was the most amazing thing I’ve ever seen.”

At the spring, Marines were caught in the open filling canteens. Lance Corporal Clifton Spiller ran to their aid when the rounds walked away. He picked up a wounded Marine and moved towards the nearest corpsman. The mortars walked back his direction. He knelt, dropped the Marine, and lay over top of him. Explosions rocked the spring again. Spiller jerked as metal and rocks ripped his body. Two others, Private First Class Larry McCartney and Lance Corporal Gary Daffin, observed the carnage from a nearby hole. Daffin told McCartney to head to the CP and find a corpsman while he went to aid Spiller and the others by the water. They stood from their hole,



COURTESY OF STEVE HAISLEY

Steve Haisley, pictured here with his younger brother, endured months of recovery and multiple surgeries to reattach his arm. He returned home to Chicago, Ill., where his treatment continued at Naval Station Great Lakes.

turned their backs to each other, and headed in opposite directions. Simultaneously, a mortar exploded between them. Shrapnel buried into McCartney's flak jacket and rifle, but he sustained only minor wounds. On Daffin's side of the blast, a large piece of metal flew between the back of his helmet and collar of his flak jacket, nearly decapitating him. McCartney recovered quickly enough to catch Daffin before he fell, killed instantly. By the time help arrived, Clifton Spiller and every other Marine around the water-hole, except McCartney, was dead already.

Kent Wonders lay flat listening to the mortars. By the time he made it to his coffin-sized hole, three other Marines had already squeezed into it. He shoved his face down between two of their backs, while the rest of him remained above the rim of the hole. Nearly 20 minutes of nonstop steel rain had passed. It seemed like an eternity, drawing out his wait for death, and taunting him with every close explosion. He could not begin to guess how many mortars had fallen. Suddenly, it stopped. The only sounds filling the LZ were the screams of the wounded and cries for corpsmen. Machine-gun fire came from down the slope on the north side of the LZ. Wonders stood in time to see Marines with rifles running toward the northern perimeter.

"What's going on?"

"Ground attack! They're coming up the hill!"

Marines filled gaps in the line and

poured fire down the hill. The NVA force in sight seemed smaller than would have been expected to follow such a barrage. Seeing the amount of Marines still ready and willing to fight back, the NVA retreated into the jungle.

Wonders returned to the CP. Dead and wounded Marines lay everywhere. Those unscathed rushed around the LZ helping out however they could. The battalion surgeon worked close by. Wonders saw him performing a tracheotomy, while the wounded piled up around his position. Wonders found Maj Lynch on the radio. Chaos reigned as everyone attempted to grasp the extent of what happened. Wonders offered to take charge of organizing the wounded for medevac. Marines carried their buddies into the collection point. Corpsmen triaged the wounded for evacuation and set the dead aside. Wonders prepared the highest priority Marines to be evacuated on the first bird, then moved onto organizing the wounded for the second. Just as the battalion had come into the LZ, one chopper at a time would carry them out.

A corpsman miraculously made it to Steve Haisley while the mortars still fell. He applied a tourniquet to Haisley's arm and treated his other wounds. Haisley barely retained consciousness as he waited for medevac. The first chopper finally arrived. Marines carried him onto the bird, one of the most critical casualties. He sensed the chopper lifting into the air.

"Help me! Please, help me!"

The cry filled the inside of the helicopter, so loud it could be heard over the intense whine of the engines. Haisley looked around for the source. Another wounded Marine lay on the floor several feet away. Haisley realized the Marine was staring right at him.

"Help me! Help me!"

Haisley wondered if the Marine was asking him to help somehow. He looked around the chopper again. Above his head, the helicopter crew chief stood at his door gun looking down at the dying man. Above the noise, and through his helmet, even he heard the screaming. What was he supposed to do? What was anyone supposed to do? Haisley returned his gaze back to the Marine and found him still staring.

"Help me!"

Haisley extended his good arm and grasped the man's hand. He held it firm and watched the man continue pleading. His screams grew faint as the helicopter continued on. When they stopped completely, the Marine's gaze fell from Haisley's face. His hand went limp. Haisley kept his own gaze, and the Marine's hand, held firm.

Teddy Banks found shelter in a crater to wait out the remainder of the barrage. A corpsman helped him to a casualty collection point, where he waited for medevac. Banks still could not move his legs. His right arm hung motionless and numb, yet his fingers remained locked around his rifle. The corpsman attempted



A CH-46 waits as Marines carry the wounded aboard for medevac at LZ Margo.

to pry the rifle loose, but Banks' fingers would not budge. Despite his wounds, Banks clearly saw he was one of the lesser-wounded and was therefore lower priority. He would be there for a while.

In the wake of the attack, Alan Green consolidated his platoon. Four of his eight mortars were destroyed. Several of his Marines were already moving their wounded and dead to the LZ for evacuation. Green joined in the effort. He saw the wounded stacking up waiting for their helicopters. Poncho liners covered the dead. As he passed, Green paused over two bodies. What remained had been devastated beyond recognition. When Green returned to the gun pits, his platoon sergeant approached. Everyone in the platoon was accounted for except two. They searched the position once more, then returned to the LZ. Green surveyed the wounded for his Marines. Images of the two mangled dead returned to him.

"All of the sudden, it hit me," Green remembered, "That's got to be my Marines."

They located dog tags on the bodies, confirming his gut feeling. The platoon sergeant marked all Marines accounted for.

Kent Wonders continued getting the wounded out of LZ Margo. Chopper after chopper touched down and waited as Marines rushed up and down the tail ramp. One chopper prepared to lift off. Wonders ran to the front of the bird and signaled for the pilot to hold. Two more Marines in critical condition were on their way. Despite the already full cargo bay and sitting exposed on the LZ, the pilot waited. Wonders signaled him once the Marines were loaded and the chopper groaned skyward.

Wonders organized the next group for evacuation. Volunteers came from everywhere to help carry the wounded.

"THOOMP, THOOMP, THOOMP, THOOMP!"

Mortars exploded again across the LZ. Everyone dove to the ground without time to find a hole. The explosions walked closer, wounding the wounded again, along with others who had escaped the first barrage. Wonders poked his head up. As far as he could see, men lay on top of the Marines they were carrying when the attack began. He rolled over the Marine next to him and closed his eyes.

The second barrage stopped mercifully shorter than the first. Nearly 100 more rounds fell. More wounded came to the LZ. Choppers landed again and Wonders resumed his mission.

Helicopter after helicopter ferried the wounded out of Margo. Wonders marveled that none were caught by mortars. He knew enough wounded remained



Above: Photo taken after the second attack at LZ Margo on Sept. 16. Marines care for the wounded and mourn their dead.

Right: Marines pile weapons left behind by their wounded owners or destroyed in the mortar attacks. Piles were consolidated into black nets and then picked up by helicopters.

that the dead would not make it out until tomorrow. As the sun faded, a final chopper landed in the LZ. Maj Lynch observed as Marines filed up and down the tail ramp, loading casualties. He finally grabbed a radio operator as Marines continued transporting wounded.

"Get ahold of that pilot and tell him he needs to get out of here. He's already overloaded."

The radio operator relayed the message.

"Sir, he says he can take more."

"No, he can't. He's overloaded. Tell him to get out of here!"

The last casualty entered the bird, and the pilot launched. The chopper struggled to gain altitude. It slid through the sky off

the hill, then dropped into the valley below line of sight. The Marines on the ground waited for the sound of the crash to reach them. Suddenly, the chopper sprang up again as the pilot jettisoned fuel. Everyone breathed a sigh of relief. As soon as the helicopter was out of sight, a single echo cut their relief short.

"THOOMP."

They dove for cover as the mortar exploded exactly where the chopper had sat moments earlier.

Medevacs resumed on the morning of the 17th. The NVA attacked LZ Margo with mortars twice more, killing and wounding more. Piles of destroyed and blood-covered gear dotted the LZ—helmets,



COURTESY OF TOM ROADLEY

rifles, flak jackets— all individual items left by their wounded owners. Marines filled black nets full of the excess gear and helicopters picked them up. The sight of these loads departing proved equally disturbing as the medevac birds. Between the two days' barrages, nearly 30 Marines were killed and 160 wounded.

How could this have happened? Who could have ignored every sign, and forced these Marines into such a position? I reflected on the men I spoke with. Most of them had little or no idea why they were at Margo in the first place. They followed orders. They did their jobs. They sacrificed so much for little purpose. The angrier I became, the more I realized my reaction to their stories did not mirror what I saw in them. Every single Marine at LZ Margo was wounded. They carry these wounds still. They buried Margo deep inside and pressed on. I expected to find bitterness. Instead, I saw thankfulness.

Many of the Marines chose a life of service after Vietnam. Several, like Gen Lynch, stayed in and retired from the Marine Corps. Teddy Banks left the Marines for 11 years before reenlisting. He retired as a gunnery sergeant, after going to war a second time in Operation Desert Storm. He counseled his young Marines, telling them they would not be the same person by the time they made it home. Some, like Steve Haisley, served outside the military. After multiple surgeries to reattach his arm, Haisley regained extremely limited use. Despite this disability, he became a police officer, serving 37 years. No matter their chosen profession, by the time the veterans of 2/26 arrived in Detroit, their lives reflected a dedication to their Corps, communities, and families.

For the second day of the reunion, Sunday, Sept. 16, the veterans planned a formal ceremony of remembrance. I looked forward to the day. I hoped I might learn as much about Margo's impact as I had about its history. Several speakers presented during the morning. Gen Lynch discussed the background of the operation and why they were at Margo. Looking around the room, it occurred to me this was the first time many of those present ever heard these details about the operation.

Steve Haisley addressed the group as well.

"My life is divided into two parts; before Vietnam and after. Sept. 16th, 1968, was the single most defining day of my life. I remember laying in that hole and begging God for my life. I'm sure I promised God everything that my 19-year-old mind could come up with. I remember laying on the floor of the medevac chopper



COURTESY OF TOM ROADLEY



CHARLENE MATERA

Kyle Watts, left, and 2/26 veterans Steve Haisley, center, and John Webb. Both Haisley and Webb were severely wounded at LZ Margo.

hearing the screams of the Marine next to me. I've never felt so helpless in my entire life. When the medevac chopper landed, they took us into the triage area. I remember very vividly two men standing over my litter discussing my chances. I heard one of them say, 'he's lost a lot of blood, I don't think he's going to make it.' I remember thinking, 'I am 19 years old. I cannot die. I am not going to die.'"

In 2014, Haisley went to the VA for an appointment related to his arm. The bloodwork they performed revealed something more sinister. He had cancer. Despite his tour in Vietnam lasting only five months, the cancer was directly linked to Agent Orange exposure. He considered how to tell his family. He reflected on his life and all the ways Vietnam had defined it. The next morning he sat at his computer. He went online to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Virtual Wall, and scrolled through photographs of Marines killed at Margo.

"I realized, who am I to be sad or feel sorry for myself? These guys never had a chance at life. I have lived 50 years longer than them. They would have given anything to have been wounded and lived the life I have. They would have given anything to be sitting here, right now, with cancer."

To this day, Haisley starts his daily routine by sitting at his computer and reflecting on the faces of the Virtual Wall. His comments can be found under many photographs.

"My life has been so blessed. I can see now that the worst things in my life have turned out to be the best things. They have made me who I am today."

The afternoon of the ceremony centered around the return of two dog tags. Alan Green made contact with two Marine veterans, a father and son, who bought a pile of American dog tags in Vietnam during one of their trips. One set belonged to Clifton Spiller, killed on Sept. 16 at the spring in LZ Margo. The mangled condition of the tags painted a solemn picture of his death, shielding another from the exploding mortars. Another set of tags belonged to Lancaster Brown-Bey, killed after Margo a few weeks later in the operation. Brown-Bey's sister, a Detroit native, attended the ceremony to accept her brother's tags.

The ceremony ended with a Roll Call of Honor. Individuals around the room stood and listed off the Marines killed in action through the operation, both at Margo and in the weeks afterward. For each name given, their photograph was displayed on the screen.

"Lance Corporal Lancaster Brown-Bey, Detroit, Michigan, age 19. Died Oct. 1, 1968."

"Private First Class James Claude 'Bull' Durham Jr., Lincoln Park, Michigan, age 19. Died at LZ Margo on Sept. 16, 1968."

"Corporal Rodney Bradford, Chicago, Illinois, aged 19. Died at LZ Margo, Sept. 16, 1968."

The list continued on and on. When the

names of Echo Company Marines came, Teddy Banks stood to sound them off.

"Private First Class John Martin Donohue, Gregory, Michigan, age 17. Died at LZ Margo on Sept. 16, 1968."

"Lance Corporal Harry Eugene Rivers, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, age 19. Died at LZ Margo on Sept. 16, 1968."

Banks continued. Others followed. In total, 49 names were listed. They ranged from 17 to 27 years old. Some were in the final days of their tour. Some had been in country less than a week. Name after name, face after face, was announced. The gravity of what these Marines carried the past 50 years impacted me more completely. They told me LZ Margo defined them. They spoke of it in painful, distant memories, unearthed for the reunion. The memories came quickly, though, detailed and alive. This place they longed to forget was the place they could never forget and became the great paradox of their lives.

"Years after I became a police officer, I got my own office," Steve Haisley told me. "I covered the walls and my desk with all my old Marine Corps stuff. The guys called it my war room. They'd come in and tell me, 'Vietnam was years ago, you need to get over it.' I'd tell them I could never get over it. I didn't want to get over it. Our memories of the guys we lost there keeps them alive. If I forget them, who will remember?"

Bagpipes played "Amazing Grace." The men surrounding me bowed their heads. Their tears disclosed the living reality of the wounds Margo left. I realized this would be the closest I could come to understand what it meant to them. I wondered if I could endure the things they had. I hoped I might come to emulate their strength. I marveled at their stories. Men like Jarvis Lynch, Alan Green, Kent Wonders, Teddy Banks, Steve Haisley and all the others. They were each the story of LZ Margo. How could I possibly capture it into words? I stood in awe and silently thanked them for allowing me to be there.

Author's bio: Kyle Watts is a former Marine captain and communications officer. He lives in Richmond, Va., with his wife and three children. He recently won the Col Robert Debs Heintz Jr. Award for his article "The Flying Ladder: Emergency Extractions and the Lifesaver from the Sky," published in the April 2018 issue of Leatherneck. He is the founder of Battlesight Zero, an online historical publication with the mission of honoring military veterans by telling their stories. For more information, visit www.bzo.history.com.

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ABIGAIL WILSON

Rodney Wilkerson, a human resources specialist with MMMA-3, examines records as part of a review of veteran awards, within the Awards Branch at MCB Quantico, Va., March 8.



AWARDS BRANCH

MMMA Works to Ensure Accuracy, Recognition For Deserving Marines

By Sara W. Bock

When Ray Kelley and Winfield Spear reconnected at a 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment reunion in 1980, they hadn't seen each other—or even spoken—since 1967, when they both rotated out of Vietnam.

As the two conversed, Spear asked Kelley a question that caught him by surprise: Had he ever received the Bronze Star he recommended him for?

“He didn't know what I was talking about,” said Spear of Kelley, who as a young lance corporal was involved in Operations Hickory and Beau Charger as a machine-gun team leader with Com-

pany D, 1/3, on May 18, 1967, when he led his team on a mission to support and relieve an adjacent company that had become inundated by enemy fire.

Kelley maneuvered his Marines to a vantage point that allowed them to engage the enemy, which then attracted heavy gunfire on their position. When his team began to sustain casualties, without hesitation, Kelley placed himself out in the open to transport two wounded Marines to the platoon command post. He was wounded as he returned to his fighting position, determined not to leave his machine gun behind, and continued to engage with the enemy while disregarding his own injuries.

Then a lieutenant, a platoon commander attached to the battalion's tank company, Spear observed from the command post Kelley's heroic actions under hostile fire.

Spear strongly believed that Kelley was deserving of an award for valor in combat. When the fighting that day ended, he filled out the necessary paperwork to nominate the lance corporal for a Bronze Star and submitted it to the company staff to be passed up the chain of command.

But Kelley never received the Bronze Star—and as Spear learned at the reunion, he wasn't even aware he'd been written up for one. The battalion's Marines spent so much time in the field and engaged with the enemy that they understandably

fell behind in keeping up with paperwork and administrative tasks. The paperwork for the award, they surmised, must have been lost or misplaced. Like many who served in Vietnam, their focus was not on awards, but simply on making it home, then trying to find some sense of normalcy while dealing with visible and invisible wounds as well as with hostility from those who opposed the war.

“We all went in the closet, so to speak,” said Kelley of life upon his return home from Vietnam.

After the 1980 reunion, Kelley and Spear again went their separate ways, both certain that too much time had passed to do anything about the award that was well-deserved but had never been received.

“I didn’t follow up on this, because in my opinion it was too late to do anything,” recalled Spear.

Many more years went by, but in the early 2000s, Spear started to think about the missing paperwork and couldn’t shake a growing sense of duty to see it through. The more he thought about it, the more determined he became.

“I said, ‘I’m going to get it done,’ ” he recalled—and instead of the Bronze Star, this time he was going to nominate Kelley for the Silver Star. After reading numerous award citations, which at this point were being written for the actions of U.S. servicemembers in Afghanistan, Spear was certain that Kelley’s heroism in May 1967 warranted the nation’s third-highest award for valor in combat.

He had no idea where to begin, so he visited the local Marine reserve unit in Albuquerque, N.M., near his home, where he spoke with a first sergeant on the I&I staff. The first sergeant gave him a copy of the OPNAV 1650 form he would need to submit, and Spear completed it to the best of his ability with the help of his wife, who he says was instrumental in helping him navigate the process. He then submitted the form to Headquarters Marine Corps. What Spear didn’t realize at the time was that this would be the beginning of an approximately 15-year effort, full of frustrations and roadblocks.

Because nearly 40 years had passed since Kelley’s actions, each required task was far more difficult and time-consuming than Spear anticipated.

The award recommendation required endorsements from officers in Kelley’s chain of command. Spear solicited the help of Ken Hicks, who was a lance corporal in Kelley’s unit and was now a retired major, to help him in his efforts to track them down.



After presenting Ray Kelley, center, with the Silver Star for his actions in Vietnam on May 18, 1967, Capt Winfield Spear, USMC (Ret), second from left, addresses those in attendance at a ceremony at the National Museum of the Marine Corps, May 18, 2018.

COURTESY OF NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MARINE CORPS



As a lance corporal serving as a machine-gun team leader with Co D, 1/3 during Operations Hickory and Beau Charger in 1968 in Vietnam, Ray Kelley, left, repeatedly exposed himself to enemy gunfire in order to transport wounded Marines to safety. He continued to engage the enemy even after he was injured.

COURTESY OF NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MARINE CORPS

Hicks and Spear spent two or three years trying to locate the company commander, Captain Edmund Aldus, before learning that he had passed away in 1995.

Around the same time, they tracked down two eyewitnesses who, like Spear, had observed Kelley’s heroism that day: a Marine from Kelley’s gun team and a rifleman from Spear’s platoon who volun-

teered to go forward when the shooting intensified. Both provided affidavits that corroborated the proposed citation and summary of action Spear had written as the originator of the award.

As he made progress, Spear continued to submit paperwork to Headquarters Marine Corps, but without all of the required documents they were unable to verify



Records were archived using microfilm, which is stored in labeled boxes and drawers, (above) until the early 2000s. Today, a digital awards processing system is used. Awards specialist Betty Hill, (right and above right), loads a microfilm reel to view historical records belonging to the Awards Branch, March 8 at MCB Quantico, Va. (Photos by Abigail Wilson)

the award in order to pass it on to the applicable review board. He had rewritten the proposed citation numerous times, but it still wasn't quite what they were looking for.

Since the company commander was deceased, Spear focused his efforts on going up the chain of command and began searching for Major Peter Wickwire, who was the battalion commander at the time of the incident. This search ended on a positive note: Wickwire, now a retired colonel, was still living and would do what he could to help.

But just when his persistence seemed to be paying off, a series of hospitalizations and health issues forced Spear to put the project on the back burner for two years.

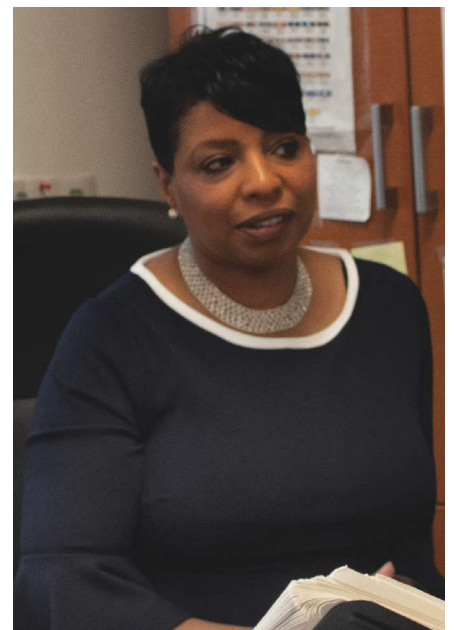
"I dropped this whole thing," Spear said. Until one day, when an unexpected phone call changed everything. On the other end of the line was Betty Hill, an awards specialist with Headquarters Marine Corps' Awards Branch, Manpower Management Military Awards (MMA), located at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va.

Hill had reviewed a file that contained all of the paperwork Spear had submitted

over the years. She told Spear that she believed that Kelley had a strong case for a Silver Star, and explained what he needed to do to submit a package that could be verified by the Awards Branch and passed up the Marine Corps chain of command before being reviewed by the Secretary of the Navy's awards board and the Secretary of the Navy himself, the approval authority for historical awards. He needed to again rewrite the proposed citation and provide a minute-by-minute account of Kelley's actions, and the battalion commander—Col Wickwire—would have to endorse the OPNAV 1650. By this point, both eyewitnesses had passed away, but the sworn statements Spear had collected from them years earlier remained valid.

It would take a year after the complete package was submitted, but another phone call from Hill late in 2017 brought Spear the news he had been waiting for. Kelley's Silver Star finally had been approved, 50 years after his actions.

Spear was overjoyed to call Kelley and share the news after he had begun planning a presentation ceremony on a particularly important day. On May 18, 2018, the 51-year anniversary of the incident,



Kelley was awarded the Silver Star at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle, Va.

In the audience that day was Betty Hill, and when it was his turn to speak, Spear, who had the honor of presenting the Silver Star to Kelley, made sure to acknowledge her for her integral role in getting the award processed.

"I introduced her and said that if it hadn't been for her, I don't think we'd be here today. This was the lady that pulled

it all together,” said Spear of his remarks to the 160 individuals who attended.

Hill, who has 26 years of awards experience, is one of a staff of 12 civilians and five active-duty Marines who make up the Awards Branch, which is tasked with developing awards policy and processing all awards, both active duty and historical, as well as responding to inquiries from Congress, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV), the Commandant of the Marine Corps and individuals regarding specific awards.

Kelley’s Silver Star is just one of a number of Vietnam-era awards that have made headlines around the Corps in recent years. Most notably, in October 2018, Sergeant Major John L. Canley was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions at Hue City in 1968, an upgrade from his previously awarded Navy Cross.

These “historic awards” were made possible through the National Defense Authorization Act of 1996, Title 10, Section 1130, which allows for awards to be approved outside the time limit of three years to originate an award and five years to present it.

In order to be approved, upgrades like Canley’s Medal of Honor require new and relevant information that wasn’t available at the time of the action, said Hill, adding that the majority of the “1130 cases” are for new awards, like Kelley’s Silver Star, and not for upgrades.

Many of the 1130 cases are originated after reunions and annual get-togethers when veterans discuss awards, said Major Alejandro Quinn, USMC (Ret), who works alongside Hill in MMMA-3, which handles historical awards. What many Marines don’t realize, said Quinn, is how much extensive research is conducted after a package is submitted to them.

“The process is not an easy process,” said Quinn. “We can get a case and it’ll take us a month or longer just to research and get ready. Some cases, because we have to send them back for corrections, take six months to a year to locate people and get people to sign things and get documents rewritten. And that’s before you even go before the board.”

Each award request must go through a member of Congress in order to be considered, but just because a representative’s office submits it to the Awards Branch doesn’t mean the package is complete. Quinn and Hill often communicate at great lengths with the actual originator of the award—like Hill did with Capt Spear—to get everything submitted properly. It’s important to note that the law requires that the service branch act as the



A stack of records and paperwork sits on a desk in the MMMA-3 office at MCB Quantico, where a dedicated staff handles the review process for historical awards. The process of extensively researching and validating the 1130 cases is extremely time consuming and must be completed before an award nomination can be passed to a review board. (Photo by Abigail Wilson)

neutral processing party and may not compile any of the original package, said Colonel Emily Swain, USMC (Ret), the MMMA branch head. And when reviewing requests for historical awards, the Awards Branch staff must follow the guiding regulations for awards that were in place at the time of the event in question—not the rules that are in place today.

When they receive a Section 1130 case for an award from World War II, for

example, they have to look at the SECNAV regulation for that award during World War II.

“One of the things to emphasize here is the level of research and detail to make sure that the award is written in a way that is accurate for the award they’re being submitted for,” said Gunnery Sergeant Edward Mosley, USMC (Ret), MMMA-3 section head.

The majority of the Section 1130 re-

quests the Corps has received in recent years are from the Vietnam War, but there have also been some from actions during World War I and World War II, as well as a few from Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Another time-consuming step in the research and verification process involves ordering records from the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, Mo., the repository for military personnel records. The records are not digitized, so once they are ordered it can take up to six months or more to receive them. Sometimes, the records requested are on loan to another agency or entity, such as the Department of Veterans Affairs, and can't be transferred to MMMA until they've been returned. The Awards Branch is required to not only verify the records of the Marine who is recommended for an award, but also the records of the award originator, each of the eyewitnesses and members of the command. This helps determine the legitimacy of their claims.

"Everything is validated ... to verify each person's whereabouts in comparison to the incident," said Quinn.

If they are able to verify everything in the awards package using individual records, unit records, command chronologies and historical resources, the staff then puts together a research paper outlining everything they have discovered and reviewed, said Hill. Everything is then sent to the branch head for approval; if it passes muster, it is submitted to the board.



CPL ALEXANDER HILL, USMC

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan brought to the forefront the need to revise criteria for certain awards. In 2011, one such revision was made when mild TBI was added to the list of injuries that may qualify for the Purple Heart due to the growing research surrounding the long-term effects of IED blast exposure.

"Unfortunately this is a long process, but our goal is to make sure that the best possible package is sent forward," said Hill. "We never guarantee that an award is going to be approved, but we guarantee that we put forth every effort to verify, and the board will receive the best package possible."

Not only does MMMA-3 process Section 1130 requests, but its staff also has

been tasked with handling a series of reviews ordered by Congress to determine whether certain Marines were discriminated against and wrongfully denied the Medal of Honor. They currently are in the process of reviewing the records of Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander war veterans, and have completed reviews of Jewish American, African-American and Hispanic American Marines who received the Navy Cross but may have been deserving of the nation's highest award for valor.

Throughout history—and particularly over the past two decades—changes to the nature of warfighting have necessitated changes to the Marine Corps' awards system.

"In regular peacetime, awards are not as present an issue," said Swain. "Awards are more in the forefront—there's an entire new generation of Marines that are now very engaged in doing amazing things and being in a position to be observed doing all these amazing things," she added, noting that the words "while engaged with the enemy," specific to awards for action or service in combat, is a phrase that Marines in some eras never would have dealt with.

For post-9/11 veterans in particular, emerging technology and changing warfare have transformed the battlefield and required the Department of Defense to reevaluate criteria for certain awards.

In 2011, the Corps implemented revised criteria for the Purple Heart that lifted



USMC



SGT ANDY MARTINEZ, USMC

During a Feb. 1 ceremony in Portland, Ore., Maj Edward F. Wright, USMC (Ret), pictured on the left in Vietnam as a second lieutenant serving with "Lima" Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, was awarded the Silver Star for his actions on Aug. 21, 1967, when he led a reaction force to rescue soldiers and Marines who had been pinned down by the enemy, exposing himself to intense enemy fire and successfully rescuing the surrounded troops.



During a March 8 meeting, MMMA staff members, from the left, Rodney Wilkerson, Jon Vigon, Betty Hill, Maj Kimberly Wade, Alejandro Quinn and Capt Nelson Hooker discuss their current workload and taskings at MCB Quantico, Va. The Awards Branch staff is made up of 12 civilians and five active-duty Marines who develop awards policy and process all awards, both active duty and historical. (Photo by Abigail Wilson)

the requirement for a Marine to have lost consciousness due to a mild traumatic brain injury (TBI) in order to qualify for the Purple Heart. Instead, Marines who sustain concussive injuries caused by enemy action and remain conscious may qualify for the medal if they are determined by a medical officer as “not fit for full duty due to persistent signs, symptoms or findings of functional impairment for a period greater than 48 hours from the time of the concussive incident.” The change, which was made retroactive to Sept. 11, 2001, was influenced by a growing body of research within the Department of Defense regarding mild TBI—often caused by blast exposure from improvised explosive devices (IEDs)—and its long-term effects.

The prevalence of IEDs in Iraq and Afghanistan also led to a 2012 change in the eligibility criteria for the Combat Action Ribbon, determining that Marines and Sailors could receive the award for taking “direct action to disable, render safe, or destroy an active enemy emplaced improvised explosive device (IED), mine, or scatterable munition” after Oct. 7, 2001.

Most recently, in 2017, in response to new Department of Defense-wide policies concerning devices worn on certain awards, the Corps issued guidance regarding the bronze letter “V” (valor) device as well as two brand new devices—

“R” (remote impact) and “C” (combat conditions). Service-specific achievement medals are no longer eligible for the “V” device, which is now only authorized on awards recognizing specific acts of valor.

The new “R” device is now authorized on certain personal decorations “to denote the medal was awarded for the direct hands-on employment of a weapon system, or for other warfighting activities that had a direct and immediate impact on a combat operation or other military operation from a remote location.” Intended for drone operators, cyber network operators



Silver Star



Purple Heart



ABIGAIL WILSON

As of 2017, devices authorized for wear on certain awards now include the “C” for combat conditions and “R” for remote impact. The bronze letter “V” for valor is now only authorized on awards recognizing specific acts of valor, a departure from past DOD policy.

Capt Nelson Hooker, MMMA-2, is responsible for handling all of the personal awards for current active-duty Marines. His advice to today's Marines is to learn from the past and submit awards immediately after the action occurs.

and in some cases joint terminal attack controllers, forward air controllers or artillery Marines, among others, the addition of the device acknowledges the role that technological advancements increasingly play in Marines' ability to impact the battlefield from outside the "enemy threat envelope."

For meritorious service under combat conditions, the "C" device is authorized for a number of awards—among them, the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal and the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal—in which the recipient was personally exposed to hostile action or was at significant risk of such an exposure. It is not authorized on the Bronze Star or other valor awards, as those already require exposure to hostile action.

The new devices and the accompanying rules and regulations only apply to awards for which the date of action was on or before Jan. 7, 2016.

According to Captain Nelson Hooker, MMMA-2, who handles all the personal awards for the current force, it's important to note that in historic cases, the award



ABIGAIL WILSON

regulations from the time in question still apply to those award requests.

"We no longer do the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal with 'V' for the current force; however, [on] a historic case from Vietnam our board can still go back and recommend a NAM with 'V' because those rules existed at the time," said Hooker. "On the flip side of that, someone from Vietnam or World War II or Korea could not receive a Navy and

Marine Corps Commendation [Medal] with the 'R' device because the 'R' device wasn't in existence at the time."

Changes in technology have not only affected the criteria for certain awards, but also have improved the way the Awards Branch processes them. Since the early 2000s, the Corps has used an awards processing system in which the entire process is digitized. The newest iteration of the system, the improved awards processing system (iAPS), was merged with the existing system almost a decade ago, and is considered to be the premier system for processing and archiving awards within the Department of Defense.

Looking to the future, Major Quinn believes that iAPS will help streamline the process for historical awards.

"Assuming the 1130 processing is going to continue on 50 years from now, whoever succeeds us will be able to have better records," said Quinn. "We have those right at our fingertips and it cuts down on a lot of our research time."

Speaking to the current active-duty force, Hooker emphasized the importance of submitting awards in a timely manner within the three-year time limit so that the award won't be considered a section 1130 request. His advice: get the award in immediately after the action.

"As time goes by, it's a lot harder to recall those things ... the time keeps dragging by, suddenly chain of command members are deceased, originators are deceased, and that makes it 10 times harder," said Hooker.

A retired gunnery sergeant, Mosley urges Marines to not undervalue their accomplishments, and encourages leaders in the Corps not to undervalue the actions of their Marines.

"We as Marines say, 'We're just doing our job,' " said Mosley. "We're taught to be hard, tough, but humble, and a lot of times with these Vietnam 1130 cases it was the same then. They were humble—'just doing my job'—and then years later they're getting together and they talk about these things ... but at that point it's tough and it's a long process."

Whether an award is presented a few months after an action or 51 years later, as in Raymond Kelley's case, it is vitally important that deserving Marines are given the recognition they are due.

Yvonne Carlock, the deputy communications and strategy officer for Manpower & Reserve Affairs, echoed Mosley's sentiments:

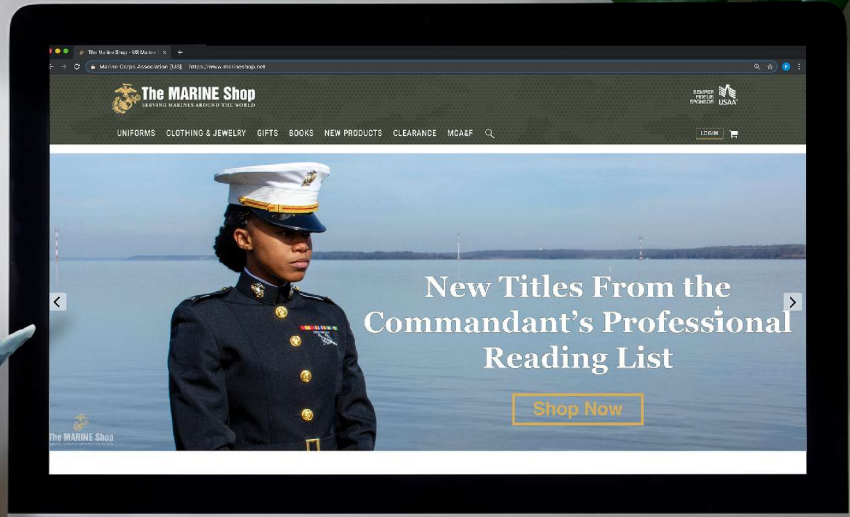
"What a lot of people consider valor, Marines consider duty." 🇺🇸



CPL PATRICK OSINO, USMC

BGen Stephen M. Neary, CG, 2nd Marine Expeditionary Brigade, left, and SgtMaj Joy M. Kitashima, right, present a Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal to LCpl Matthew Ellis, a 2nd MEB intelligence specialist, at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., Dec. 11, 2018. The Awards Branch staff emphasizes the importance of recognizing Marines for meritorious service or acts of valor and strives to ensure that all are given the credit they deserve.

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CPL JUANBUSTOS, USMC

Marines at the School of Infantry-West, Camp Pendleton, Calif., receive the first JLTV to be fielded to the Marine Corps as a replacement for the HMMWV, Feb. 28. The new vehicle comes in several different variants and employs 21st-century technology for the full range of military operations.

Corps Fields First JLTV

Marine Corps Systems Command (MCSC) Program Executive Officer Land Systems fielded its first Joint Light Tactical Vehicle to Marines at the School of Infantry-West during a ribbon-cutting ceremony at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., Feb. 28. Andrew Rodgers, program manager for the Light Tactical Vehicles program at PEO Land Systems, presented the Corps' first JLTV to Colonel Kyle Stoddard, the commanding officer of SOI-West.

"This begins the fielding of 55 JLTVs to supporting units throughout the East and West Coasts, as well as Quantico, Va., and Camp Johnson, N.C.," said Rodgers during the event. "Over the next three to four years, we will increase our production rates and have 5,500 JLTVs fielded by the end of 2023. By the end of 2026, we will have 9,091 JLTVs fielded."

The JLTVs are intended to replace the

Corps' legacy fleet of High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles in a one-for-one swap. The handover in late February marked the first of 55 vehicles that will be headed to Marines in supporting units at SOI-West, SOI-East, The Basic School at Quantico and the Motor Transport Maintenance Instructional Company at Camp Johnson through the end of May, said Rodgers.

"The HMMWV was first fielded to the Marine Corps in 1984 with 1970s technology," said Rodgers. "It did a great job, and achieved its mission in the '80s and '90s, and got us through the first couple of years when [Operation Iraqi Freedom] and [Operation Enduring Freedom] started. But the changing of the battlefield and the requirement to have an armored capability with an engine that could carry additional weight necessitated ... the JLTV, which will carry us through the 21st century."

The JLTV family of vehicles comes in

different variants—general purpose, heavy guns carrier, utility and close combat weapons carrier—all providing protected, sustained, networked mobility that balances payload, performance and protection across the full range of military operations.

PEO Land Systems plans to start fielding the JLTV to operating forces this summer, starting with 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C. Operational infantry battalions with I Marine Expeditionary Force and III Marine Expeditionary Force will start receiving the JLTV in September.

Ashley Calingo

Working Together: USMC, San Diego Affirm Continued Partnership

The city of San Diego and Marine Corps Installations Command signed a new Memorandum of Understanding

(MOU) at San Diego City Hall, Feb. 21, demonstrating a mutual drive to promote a more progressive city.

The MOU emphasizes the partnership between San Diego and the Marine Corps working toward new “Smart City” technology such as unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), renewable energy and the city’s “Get It Done” mobile application, which can be used to report issues to the local government. It is essential that the community shared by Marine Corps Air Station Miramar and the city of San Diego continues to grow and lead the way in technological developments.

In 2015, National Geographic named San Diego as one of the world’s “smart cities.” The city has implemented programs that promoted technological growth in the areas of city operations, customer service and public safety, and continues to improve in these areas.

“The word ‘smart city’ is a general term that describes a city pushing boundaries in technological development,” said Lieutenant Colonel Brandon Newell, Installation werX West Coast lead. “We look at examples of these technological advancements that vary from 5G LTE [long term evolution], larger bandwidth, drones and everything in between.”

In the past, the city of San Diego and MCAS Miramar have led the way in technology innovation, including UAS testing, autonomous vehicle testing, Lime Bike rentals, smart stoplights, energy and water conservation efforts and safety advancements.

The signing of the MOU indicates that both the Marine Corps and the city are committed to working together, said Newell, adding that the two partners intend to find new areas of advancement in which to improve.

There will be regularly scheduled meetings between the city and Marine Corps leaders to discuss and review ongoing projects and identify new areas for collaboration.

“San Diego and the Marine Corps have a long history of working together, and this agreement is a testament to our partnership,” said Major General Vincent A. Coglianesse, Commanding General, Marine Corps Installations Command. “Marine Corps Air Station Miramar and the city of San Diego have significant ties with infrastructure, utilities, and both see opportunities to partner in developing innovation solutions on resilience, improved services and transportation.”

MCAS Miramar

“Night to Shine” Gives Marines Opportunity to Volunteer

Attending the prom is widely considered a rite of passage for American teenagers, but those with special needs don’t always have the opportunity to attend a traditional prom. In an effort to help make the experience possible for them, Marines and Sailors with 2nd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment volunteered at the fifth annual Tim Tebow Foundation’s “Night to Shine” event in Wilmington, N.C., Feb. 15.

“We had roughly 75 to 80 Marines and



CPL LIAH SMUJIN, USMC

A Marine with 2/6 helps his buddy pick out food during the fifth annual Tim Tebow Foundation’s “Night to Shine” event in Wilmington, N.C., Feb. 15. Marines and Sailors with the battalion volunteered at the event and helped make it a memorable evening for young adults with special needs.

about 15 Sailors from the battalion who participated in the event,” said Captain Wayne Worthington, 2/6 assistant operations officer. “The dance coordinators shared with us that at last year’s event they didn’t have enough volunteers and some participants were left without partners. This year we definitely answered that call.”

The annual event is held by more than 650 churches around the world on the same night and aims to provide “royal treatment” to special needs guests, with activities like dancing, karaoke and bingo.

“The way the event was set up had something for everybody,” said Corporal John Zura, an infantry assaultman with 2/6. “It covered everything, ensuring all of the guests were capable of doing something that they enjoyed.

According to Worthington, volunteering within the community is another way the Marines in the battalion continue their service to their nation. Major Allister Howard, the battalion executive officer, heard about the volunteer opportunity while listening to the radio on his way to work.

“We serve our country by constantly



SGT JAKE MCCLUNG, USMC

MajGen Vincent A. Coglianesse, CG, Marine Corps Installations Command, right, signs a Memorandum of Understanding with Kevin L. Faulconer, left, mayor of San Diego, at San Diego City Hall, Feb. 21. The agreement highlighted the continued partnership between MCAS Miramar and the city.

training to deploy but we don't always get to be of service to our local communities as much as we would like," said Zura. "Having the opportunity to attend events like this allows us to take a step back and realize that there are other ways to serve as well."

Cpl Liah Smuin, USMC

Largest MCX in the Corps Opens at MCAS Iwakuni

After seven years of joint planning and execution, Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan, continues to grow and improve the quality of life for its residents with the opening of the largest Marine Corps Exchange (MCX) in the world, March 14.

Leaders from all corners of the Marine Corps gathered at MCAS Iwakuni to cut the ribbon before a crowd of local Japanese and U.S. civilians, servicemembers and

their families, signifying that the MCX was open for business.

The new MCX is double the size of its predecessor, covering 90,000 square feet with a 32 percent increase in inventory. Among the new features are a food bar and prestige cosmetic shop, as well as a video gaming room and a Nerf shooting range in the toy department.

Each addition selected for the MCX was designed to give customers a taste of life back in the United States. The MCXtreme bike shop, which previously existed off site, has a space in the new building.

"On each military base, the exchange plays an integral [role on] the installation," said Rusti Rausch, the chief of retail and services with MCCA. "Because the exchange is such an integral part of this base, we wanted to give you a taste of the state-side shopping experience. You will see new shops, new brands and new concepts."

Bringing the new MCX to life was a joint effort of MCCA Headquarters, local contractors and other entities. Construction of the facility cost more than \$60 million.

"I've been inside many MCXs while being in the military, and this new store has definitely exceeded my expectations," said U.S. Navy Culinary Specialist 2nd Class Hudson Burns of Carrier Air Wing 5. "I am definitely surprised by the amount of products they had on display. Overall, I would rate my experience an 11 out of 10. I definitely recommend checking it out."

Among those in attendance at the ribbon-cutting ceremony were senior leaders including Lieutenant General Michael Rocco, the Deputy Commandant for Manpower and Reserve affairs; Brigadier General Paul Rock Jr., the commanding general of Marine Corps Installations Pacific, and BGen Sean



LCPL CODY ROWE, USMC

FINAL FLIGHT—From the left, LtCol Andrew Rundle, LtCol Julian Flores, Maj Judson Riordon and Maj Christopher Larson stand next to the last EA-6B Prowler at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C., before its final flight to the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center in Chantilly, Va., the companion facility to the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum, where it will be on display. The aircraft was assigned to the last remaining Prowler squadron in the Corps, Marine Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron (VMAQ) 2, Marine Aircraft Group 14, 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing, which held a deactivation ceremony on March 8. Active since 1977, the Prowler flew operations in support of NATO, Southeast Asia, Operation Desert Storm, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Inherent Resolve.

A crowd gathers as Marine Corps leaders and distinguished guests prepare to cut the ribbon to officially open the new MCX at MCAS Iwakuni, Japan, March 14. The air station is now home to the largest MCX in the Corps, which boasts double the square footage of its previous building.

Salene, the assistant wing commander of 1st Marine Aircraft Wing.

“We have a whole network of installations in MCIPAC and each one is special in its own way, but what I think is cool about the opening of this store is that it is [located] on the ‘crown jewel’ installation of the Marine Corps,” said BGen Rock. “MCAS Iwakuni is a dramatic demonstration of the strength of not just the Marine Corps and Navy teaming up, but also our alliance with Japan. That makes this store the crown jewel of the crown jewel.”

During the March 16 MCX grand opening, approximately \$100,000 in prizes were given away.

Cpl Stephen Campbell, USMC



CPL ANDREW JONES, USMC

Crazy Caption Contest

Winner



LCPL A.J. VAN FREDENBERG, USMC

“Last call, one beer left.”

Submitted by:
Daniel K. Hundley
St. Nuevo, Calif.

This Month's Photo



LCPL MATTHEW KIRK, USMC

(Caption) _____

Name _____

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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.

SEA STORY OF THE MONTH

Rank Has Its Privilege

In 1975 my first duty assignment was working for the Division Inspector of the 3rd Marine Division. Along with other administrative duties, I would drive the colonel to bases and training locations on Okinawa. One routine activity was taking him to various battalion headquarters buildings to be part of officer augmentation meetings. Most of the time the utility uniform was sufficient, but with formal meetings, the service uniform with ribbons and badges was required.

On one occasion, we drove to Camp Schwab in extreme monsoon-type rain. Once we passed through the front gate, the colonel realized he didn't have his dress raincoat with him. Too late to turn around, we devised a creative plan for him to stay dry. As we entered the parking lot, I drove up the wide sidewalk to the battalion headquarters entrance as close as possible. Knowing this was going to get someone's attention in a negative way, I carefully popped the jeep over the curb and toward the double doors.

I could see office personnel looking out the front windows. A master sergeant came rushing out the front door armed with a stern look and identical vocabulary. I stopped the jeep within 4 feet of the entrance, and the colonel, with his collar and shoulder eagles glistening, stepped out and walked past the master sergeant who was holding the door open. I carefully put the jeep in reverse backing away from the wet master sergeant. I

knew I dodged his wrath having the colonel with me.

Deciding not to gloat and to keep a low profile for the balance of the day, I lined up with the other jeeps in the parking lot. When the rain finally passed, drivers started exiting their jeeps and from a safe distance each snickered, shaking their heads, giving me a thumbs-up. They had seen what happened, and I was their entertainment for a few minutes.

The moral of the story: when or if a colonel asks you to be creative with him or her, accomplish the mission. Rank has its privileges.

SSgt Michael Shultz
USMC, 1975-1988
Rockford, Mich.

Weekend Pass

I was at Camp Lejeune in the summer of 1959 as a 17-year-old private first class with combat engineers. One day, the company clerk phoned our platoon gunny, a World War II and Korean War veteran, to get a name for the weekend 96-hour pass. My name was given, and I enjoyed a 96-hour pass in Pennsylvania.

I returned on Tuesday, and on Wednesday the phone rang in our shop. It was the company clerk again looking for a name for the coming weekend pass. I was alone in the shop so I gave them my name and took another 96-hour pass.

I never thought about possibly being reported absent without leave (AWOL) on Friday morning. The first sergeant assured them I wasn't AWOL and that I had a 96-hour pass. They never figured it out and I didn't say a word.

1stSgt Ron Maxson
USMC (Ret)
Greensburg, Pa.

Hidden Booty

While training for the invasion of Japan in April 1945 at Camp Tarawa, Parker Ranch, on the island of Hawaii, our platoon was assigned regimental guard duty. One of the duties was to watch the regimental officers' beer and liquor supply which was in a 14x14 pyramid tent surrounded by a 6-foot-high barbed wire fence and had a 24-hour sentry.

One of our close buddies had the midnight to 4 a.m. watch and was told to expect us at 2 a.m. We bound and gagged him, cut the wire and took off with a case of good U.S. whiskey. We buried it behind a wall beyond the outhouses surrounding the tent camp.

Needless to say, at reveille everyone was ordered out of their tents and officers scoured each tent only to find nothing. We left the booty buried for two weeks until things cooled down then we enjoyed a few good weekends.

We had 12 of our 52 platoon members from Co E, 2nd Battalion, 27th Marines, 5th Marine Division, return from Iwo, only four of whom were not wounded.

Walter P. O'Malley
Clinton, Mass.

An Innocent Hello

In the summer of 1968, I was at the U.S. Embassy Brussels, Belgium. "Top" called me into his office and told me to go with the chief, a Navy Seabee, to the embassy rooftop. The chief was carrying what looked like a rifle case.

On the rooftop the chief opened up the rifle case and pulled out a 35 mm camera with a telephoto lense attached to a tripod. He then aimed the camera at the

Soviet embassy and asked if I would like to take a look. As I was looking through the viewfinder I said, "Chief, there are two angry looking Russians, one with binoculars, looking back at us." I waved at them and the chief said, "You're going to owe me a beer for not telling Top about that wave."

Sgt Ernest V. Tom
USMC, 1965-1971
Monterey Park, Calif.

Blivet Tactics

In the mid-1980s, I was a first lieutenant Radar Intercept Officer (RIO) with Marine Fixed-Wing Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 212. At the time, the "Lancers" were conducting a six-month deployment to Iwakuni, Japan, flying the venerable McDonnell Douglas F-4S Phantom II.

Suffice it to say that Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni was a dismal place. Rainy, damp, gray and cold; a crematorium was the main business out in the local town.

A weeklong detachment to Osan Air Force Base in South Korea was a welcome escape for both aircrew and maintenance personnel. Such a detachment meant two things: Outstanding two-versus-two training against Air Force F-16s, and even better shopping.

Yes, the city of Osan was a shopper's paradise. Renowned for good deals, shopping in Osan was best summarized by the statement, "You go broke saving money." With real bargains on wool overcoats and silk suits, and its perceived bargains on counterfeit Polo shirts and Converse basketball shoes, Osan was the ideal place to buy gifts for the wife and kids.

There was just one

problem: how do you get all that merchandise back to Iwakuni when you're flying an F-4S?

Enter the blivet. Looking like an external fuel tank, the blivet was a cigar-shaped, metallic container that was affixed beneath the Phantom's right wing. In the center of the blivet's right side there was a small square door panel that could be removed by undoing about a thousand screws and then anything could be stuffed into a blivet and ferried anywhere in the West Pacific.

On Feb. 15, 1986, my section of two F-4s faced a dilemma. Earlier in the week, we had flown to Osan with an empty blivet on each F-4. Maintenance troops had removed them for the week's training flights. Now the blivets were back on our jets and crammed full of merchandise; however, we were scheduled to fly a two-versus-two against F-16s and then fly directly back into Iwakuni. The crux of our dilemma was the blivets.

Against F-16s, the standard F-4S game plan was to get maximum knots on the jet, shoot them in the face, achieve a close aboard pass, and blow through the merge. To turn-and-burn with Air Force "Lawn Darts" was not an option. The F-4S would not survive.

Which led to the question, at those maximum airspeeds, would the blivet remain on the F-4? Or would it be ripped from the jet, causing our container of gifts to rain down upon some hapless South Korean farmer?

Worse yet, what if an F-16 entered the merge with an offensive advantage, and an F-4S was forced to turn and engage? That led to a second question, at those G-forces, would the blivet be torn from the F-4? It wasn't looking like a good day for South Korean farmers.

In the pre-brief planning,



COURTESY OF LT COL JOHN "PING" SCANLAN, USMC (RET)

From left to right, Steve "Bird" Hoenie, Joe "DMitch" Mitchell and Brian "Hollywood" Nicholas took a trip to Osan AFB South Korea, to take advantage of the good shopping deals. The goods were loaded in the blivets for the trip back to Iwakuni.

the young lead pilot suggested employing "blivet tactics"—not flying the F-4S to its maximum parameters in order to ensure that the blivets remained on the wings.

My pilot—a salty "Top

"I'll be damned if I'm going to fly blivet tactics! By God, this is a fighter squadron!"

Gun" graduate—vehemently countered with, "I'll be damned if I'm going to fly blivet tactics! By God, this is a fighter squadron!"

Then more questions arose. Even if the blivets did remain on the jets, would that rickety door panel survive the airspeeds and/or the Gs? What if the door panel came off?

The lead RIO chimed in, another crusty Top Gun graduate, and said, "I can just hear an F-16 calling a kill shot, 'Fox Two on the F-4 streaming shit out of his blivet!'"

Frustrated, the young lead pilot proffered canceling the F-16 portion of the flight and just going straight back to Iwakuni. Again, my pilot vehemently countered, this time with, "I'll be damned if I'm going to cancel a two-versus-two with F-16s. By God, this is a fighter squadron!"

It may be hard to believe, but in the end, common sense prevailed. We emptied the blivets of all our merchandise and gave it to the maintenance troops, dispatching them to ensure its safe return back to Iwakuni in the troop transport aircraft. The beer bribe probably helped.

Then we flew a two-versus-two against the Lawn Darts and survived. We landed at Iwakuni with two

empty blivets still under our right wings.

LtCol John "Ping" Scanlan
USMC (Ret)
Hilton Head Island, S.C.

Editor's note: Read LtCol Scanlan's article about Operation Deny Flight on page 54.

Do you have an interesting story from your time in the Corps that will give our readers a good chuckle? Maybe it's a boot camp tale or a good old sea story that will have us in stitches? We would love to hear your stories and see any accompanying photographs. 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." Spread the word! 🦋



JAVIER CHAGOYA

Marine Corps students at the Naval Postgraduate School pose for a photo outside Herrmann Hall on the Monterey, Calif., campus. The Marines are part of a volunteer youth mentorship program designed to reach out to local children.

Leadership Through Mentorship Is an Ever-Evolving Process

“Once you’ve learned something with experience, you have the burden of sharing this knowledge.”

—GySgt Frank Dugger

By Col Amy Ebitz, USMC

As Marines, we pride ourselves on our leadership skills. Successful organizations from corporations to governments offer various leadership programs or principles through which the management or executive leadership attempt to mold values. Although varied somewhat depending on the organization,

leadership itself is very personal to the individual in both performance and in what we seek in our own leaders as examples and guides. Leadership at every level, however, is generally missing the most important element—the real development of subordinates through dedicated mentorship.

Leaders imprint traits, negative and positive, on others. In a generational or

Traits of An Effective Mentor

ACTIVE LISTENER Listen as much (or more) than you talk. Active listening is crucial for an effective leader to practice. There is no “one size fits all” solution to every situation. Sometimes, to share experiences and potentially help a mentee avoid a pitfall, a mentor will jump to give the answer to the test without hearing the real concern. This could lead to subpar guidance and can rob the mentee of the benefit of talking through a problem or goal. It is like going to a doctor and being given a diagnosis and pushed out the door before explaining all of the symptoms. Sometimes, in talking through concerns, people come up with the right answer on their own. It is crucial for mentors to know when to talk and when to just listen.

Not everyone will take the same path as advised or make what others feel is the right decision. This is not a personal slight and should not be taken as such. The important thing is that mentors are providing their mentees with tools for their kit bags. It’s likely that both parties will learn something. Our own experiences make us good teachers. It is crucial not to underestimate the value of bad “leadership” and to look for the lesson in every experience, especially negative ones. Ingrain those examples, put them in your kit bag and use them, too.

RESILIENT How leaders conduct themselves in the worst of times is more important than how they conduct themselves in the best of times. Handling adverse situations with dignity and grace sets a far better example than losing composure or worse, allowing personal concerns to bleed into how you present yourself on a regular basis. Regardless of the challenge, how a leader perseveres sets a tone for others to follow, whether the tone is positive or negative.

PATIENT This is easier for some than others. It takes patience to sit back and let someone figure things out alone, but when it happens, it is great to see. For better or worse, it is also likely that lessons learned personally are better ingrained. More importantly, leaders who wait patiently allow mentees to build a foundation upon which they can teach others.

KNOW THE AUDIENCE Yogi Berra once said, “You can observe a lot by just watching.” This seems simple enough, but it is important for leaders to learn to read how well what they say is received. Leaders should evaluate whether mentees truly listen when they offer advice. Are you missing the mark? Are they making their grocery list in their head while you drone on? Leaders must watch how others interact within their space, both with leaders and peers. You can learn a lot by just watching.

RESPECTFUL If someone honors a leader by asking for time and guidance, leaders must make the time. Mentors should not take phone calls or type emails while a mentee is speaking. It is crucial to be respectful of others’ time and concerns; make eye contact and give undivided attention. Leaders should think of the messages they send and remember that the example they set teaches others how to behave as well.

HUMOROUS Having a sense of humor is key to dealing with some of the worst life throws our way. A particular benefit of humor is that it puts others at ease and gives them permission to lighten up and even laugh. Well-played humor is a great communication tool when making a point to a mentee.

PERSONABLE But don’t take it personally. A great leader’s guidance goes toward the greater good of an



Officers participate in a Senior Leadership Mentorship Seminar at the Pacific Views Event Center at MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., Jan. 19, 2016. The annual seminar was hosted by the National Naval Officers Association and provided junior officers with the opportunity to ask senior officers questions regarding career advancement and personal development. (Photo by PFC Emmanuel Necochea, USMC)

organization or the personal success of the mentee. It is not all about the leader. Great leaders look at the bigger picture and understand how everything fits.

INQUISITIVE Most people like to talk about themselves and their experiences and asking questions helps to develop a more complete picture. In turn, using a mentee’s experiences to highlight success and potential failures is a meaningful way for a leader to make a mentorship experience more personal.

HONEST Leaders are not helping someone that comes to them for guidance if they are not completely honest. There are various techniques on this ranging from “brutally honest” to “tip-toeing” and hoping mentees figure it out on their own. If leaders know their audiences, as stated above, they will know which method will be most effective in each situation.

KNOW YOUR LIMITS If a mentee asks for something with which a leader cannot help, it is important for the leader to be straightforward and honest. Leaders can connect the individual with a referral to someone who will be better positioned to assist, whether that is someone with greater technical expertise or someone who can provide mental/physical/spiritual guidance. Stay in your own wheelhouse. There’s a line between being a mentor and a doctor/preacher/expert in another field; be conscious of that and point mentees in the right direction if they need something more than a mentor can provide.

TELL STORIES It is likely if someone seeks out a leader, it is because he or she is seeking to learn from the leader’s experiences. Leaders should share relevant experiences, whether good or bad. Marines love to tell and hear stories, and storytelling allows others to relate to the challenge or situation. Allowing others to learn from personal experiences and avoid potential pitfalls is the epitome of mentorship.



LCPL BRIDGET M. KEANE, USMC

SSgt Zachary Curran, senior DI, Plt 2110, Co E, 2nd Recruit Training Bn, leads his recruits in a guided discussion May 2012, aboard MCRD San Diego. The role of the senior DI throughout recruit training is to develop recruits into disciplined, physically fit Marines, but also mold them into Marines with strong moral values.

ganization like the Marine Corps, that has the potential to become ingrained and resonate indefinitely. Like leadership styles, mentorship is personal to the mentor and the mentee. It also is very fluid, and long-term mentor relationships change as both parties involved gain experience. Sometimes, the relationship fades as one person outgrows the other. Mentorship and leadership should be ever-evolving experiences that result in constant learning, self-reflection and mutual benefit that can last a lifetime. I am still learning from mentors who impacted my career early on. I often recall things they said or did that did not make much sense at the time, but these lessons become clear to me with age and experience.

What we associate most with mentorship is a form of “talent management” within an organization. Talent management is related to a formal process of shaping, promotions and enhanced training, resulting in further opportunities. Although talent management is very important and complements the mentorship process, true mentorship generally is a less regimented relationship. Mentors choose someone to mold or mentees choose someone for guidance. Through both talent

management and mentorship, the goal is to develop successful decision makers, managers, and leaders of organizations and provide them with the best tools available to be successful. A common factor with talent management and mentorship is that good leaders are always looking to influence the next generation.

“To have a successful mentorship, you need to show real interest in your Marines. Getting to know your Marines will make all the difference.”

—SSgt Craig W. Harriman

Mentorship goes beyond talent management and has other facets as well. It is a great opportunity to identify—in the leader and the mentee—the strengths and weaknesses that can be polished. Mentorship is about knowing people and using their strengths for the benefit of the organization and the individual.

It also involves the ability to recognize, discuss and, more importantly, address deficiencies beyond the fitness report. A great benefit of this process is the self-reflection and learning that takes place for the mentor as well as the person being mentored. Mentors are positioned to learn as much as they teach.

There is a sense of humility that comes with being a leader, and, more importantly, being a mentor. The accomplishments of those a leader-mentors are not their own, and there is no credit involved. The goal for a mentor is to witness mentees exceed them in accomplishments. The quiet sense of pride a leader feels when witnessing the success of another human being, knowing they may have played a small part in that success, is rewarding enough.

Author’s bio: Col Amy Ebitz is an active-duty Marine who currently is serving as a Federal Executive Fellow with the Brookings Institution. She most recently served as the antiterrorism branch head within the J3 of the Joint Staff and was the Commanding Officer of 3rd Law Enforcement Battalion.

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Operation Deny Flight

“Bengals” Demonstrated the Prowess of F/A-18D Hornet In the Skies Over Bosnia

By LtCol John Scanlan, USMC (Ret)



The weapons load-out on the F-18Ds for missions in the skies over Bosnia. (Photo courtesy of LtCol John Scanlan, USMC (Ret))

A war in Bosnia-Herzegovina that began on March 1, 1992, was a territorial conflict resulting from the breakup of Yugoslavia. In early April of 1994, Bosnian Serb forces attacked the United Nations Safe Area in the city of Goražde. Several days later in another attack, a United Nations Protective Force (UNPROFOR) soldier was killed and several others were injured. Thus, the UNPROFOR commander requested North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) air strikes.

On April 10, 1994, in response to that request, two U.S. Air Force F-16 Fighting Falcons bombed a Serbian tank and command post. The next day, two U.S. Marine Corps F/A-18C Hornets strafed additional targets. Those Hornets were stationed at Aviano Air Base in northeastern Italy and belonged to Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 251. The “Thunderbolts” were nearing the end of a six-month deployment in support of Operation Deny Flight, the NATO venture that had begun one

year earlier, to enforce a no-fly zone over Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Watching these events unfold were members of another Marine Corps F/A-18 squadron inbound to replace VMFA-251 in four short days. At their home base—Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, S.C.—the VMFA(AW)-224 “Bengals” sat poised to participate in the conflict with 12 brand-new, two-seat, F/A-18D Hornets.

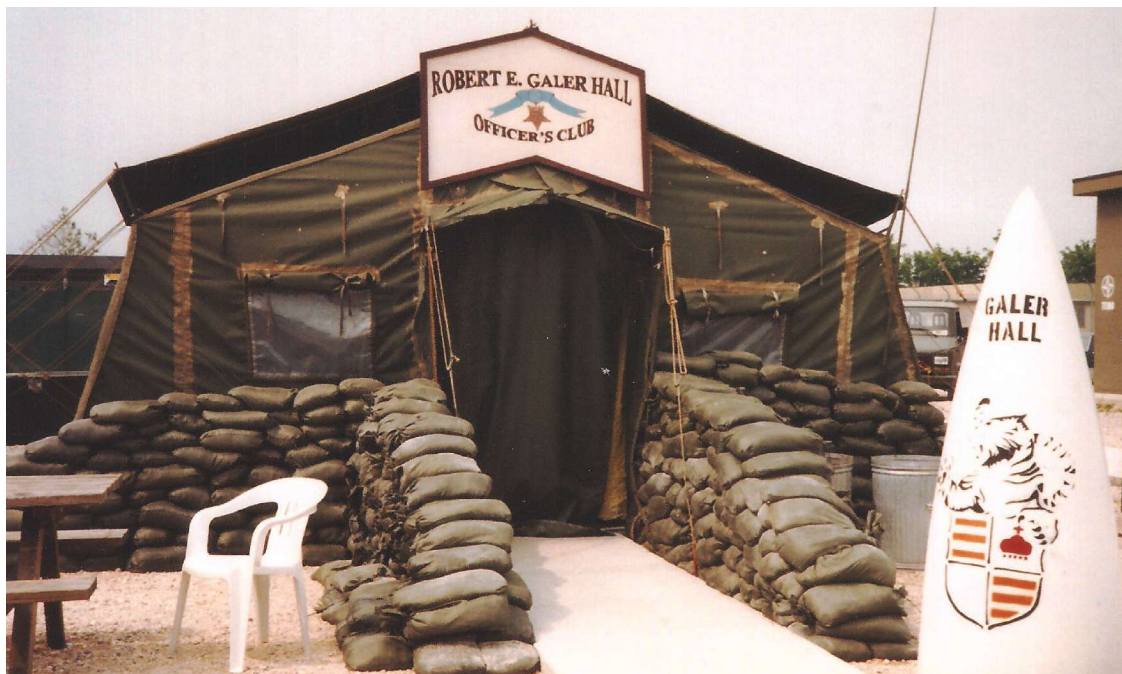
In the early morning hours of Thursday, April 14, 1994, the Bengals departed Beaufort. After eight hours of flying, which included seven aerial refuelings, the Bengals arrived at the Naval Station Rota in Spain. The next day, they continued on to Aviano where VMFA-251 welcomed them with a cookout.

The Bengals’ new home was a NATO air base under USAF control. Aviano consisted of several distinct areas including Area F, the flight line. It was this area that the squadron would become intimately



The VMFA(AW)-224 “Bengals” sat poised to participate with 12 brand-new, two-seat, F/A-18D Hornets.

MAJ JOSEPH A. PAPAY, USMC



Above: A Hornet crew from VMFA(AW)-224 flying their newly delivered F/A-18D prepared to “attack” a target during an August 1993 exercise in North Carolina.

Left: Marines from VMFA(AW)-224 lived in a large tent city which included its own officers’ club, Robert E. Galer Hall, named after a Marine aviator who received the Medal of Honor for heroism in aerial combat during the Battle of Guadalcanal.

COURTESY OF LTCOL JOHN SCANLAN, USMC (RET)

A Soviet-designed Mi-8 Hip was forced to land during VMFA(AW)-224's first combat air patrol during Operation Deny Flight.



COURTESY OF LTCOL JOHN SCANLAN, USMC (RET)

familiar with as the Bengals moved into temporary tents there. Living in a massive tent city that was located just yards from the runway, the Bengals would be eating, sleeping, showering, exercising and relaxing in those tents for months to come.

VMFA(AW)-224 commenced flight operations on Sunday, April 17, but their sorties stopped short of entering Bosnia-Herzegovina. Instead, the Bengal F/A-18Ds halted at the aerial refueling track, turned around, and returned to Aviano. The same familiarization flights were conducted the next day. Then on Wednesday, April 20, participation in Operation Deny Flight officially began.

Bengal F/A-18Ds were scheduled for a 2:45 a.m. brief and a 4:40 a.m. take-off to fly the squadron's first anti-air warfare combat air patrol. No sooner had the Bengals entered Bosnia when the Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) vectored the two Hornets onto an airborne Hip (the NATO code name for the Soviet-designed Mi-8)—a medium, twin-turbine, transport helicopter that could also act as a gunship. In the pre-dawn

darkness, VMFA(AW)-224's Hornets forced the Hip to land using procedures that were made up on the fly.

In predeployment training, VMFA (AW)-224 had only anticipated intercepting three types of fixed-wing aircraft:

- The G-2 Galeb (English translation-Seagull): a single-engine, two-seat, advanced jet trainer and light, ground-attack aircraft.
- The J-21 Jastreb (Falcon): a single-engine, single-seat, turbojet, fighter-bomber aircraft, with a secondary capability as a low-level interceptor.
- The J-22 Orao (Eagle): a twin-engined, single-seat, subsonic, ground-attack, Close Air Support (CAS), and tactical reconnaissance aircraft, with a secondary capability as a low-level interceptor.

After the early-morning challenges with the Hip, the commanding officer tasked the operations officer to formulate a game plan against rotary-wing aircraft and disseminate it to the aircrew.

Meanwhile, Operation Deny Flight continued with a true spirit of international cooperation. On Saturday, April 21, two F/A-18Ds acted as an Airborne Forward Air Controller for two French Mirage F-1s. If tensions in Bosnia-Herzegovina erupted into a full ground war, this mission would be the Bengals' bread and butter.

In May, the Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC) shifted the squadron to a night schedule that highlighted the capabilities of the new F/A-18D. Conducting four-hour combat air patrol missions while wearing night vision goggles (NVGs), the Bengals traversed the dark skies over Bosnia-Herzegovina. The international cooperation continued, with their Hornets receiving fuel from L-1011 Tri-Stars from the Royal Air Force.

In early June, the CAOC added force protection to the squadron's list of missions. On Saturday, June 4, F/A-18Ds went airborne carrying the High-Speed, Anti-Radiation Missile (HARM). Now Bengal aircrews played a deadly game of cat and



COURTESY OF LTCOL JOHN SCANLAN, USMC (RET)

Capt John "Ping" Scanlan was a radar intercept officer with VMFA(AW)-224 when he deployed in support of Operation Deny Flight in 1994.

Bengal aircrews played a deadly game of cat and mouse against the Soviet radar systems of Bosnia-Herzegovina's surface-to-air missiles (SAM).

mouse against the Soviet radar systems of Bosnia-Herzegovina's surface-to-air missiles (SAM).

Accepting the new mission, however, did not mean an end to the others. On Wednesday, June 8, a combat air patrol intercepted a Hip that had taken off from a soccer field in Posuje and forced it to land. Simulated close air support on NVGs was conducted on June 19, and two days later, the Bengals flew in the Italian Cellina Meduna Training Range to escort a C-130 Hercules as it dropped U.S. Army paratroopers. By the end of the month, another four-hour combat air patrol had intercepted two different Hips. NATO was certainly getting its money's worth out of the F/A-18D.

July rolled around and the CAOC demanded still more tasks from the new, two-seat Hornet. An afternoon flight in the middle of the month diverted south from Bosnia-Herzegovina down to the Adriatic Sea to protect U.S. Navy ships.

The CAOC also began tasking VMFA(AW)-224 with 30-minute alerts. Here, the aircrew briefed a particular mission and then sat in the ready room for eight hours awaiting the CAOC's call to launch. The pace continued into August with the Bengals assigned to conduct reconnaissance missions over Sarajevo. Due to a recent spate of flare-ups, the squadron was flying with two 1,000-pound Mark-83 bombs, and the four-hour combat air patrols

continued during which their HARM often received SAM launch indications. The rest of August was marked by routine, uneventful, four-hour missions with the intercept of a lone Hip from the Posuje soccer field highlighting Friday, Aug. 19.

The light at the end of the tunnel became brighter on Tuesday, Sept. 20, when the advance party for VMFA(AW)-332 arrived at Aviano. The Moonlighters were another F/A-18D squadron from Beaufort and were scheduled to replace 224 during the first week of October.

On Oct. 7, VMFA(AW)-224 departed Aviano and spent that night at Lajes, a Portuguese airfield in the Azores Islands. The next day, the squadron returned to Beaufort. The deployment would best be summarized as six months of international cooperation in the support of a NATO-imposed no-fly zone. Furthermore, it highlighted the amazing capabilities of the new F/A-18D. Having been assigned multiple combat missions for six months, VMFA(AW) demonstrated that no aircraft on earth could do what the new F/A-18D could do.

Author's bio: LtCol John Scanlan, USMC (Ret) is a 1983 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy. He is a frequent writer for Leatherneck. He resides in Hilton Head, S.C. 🇺🇸

The rules of "Tent City" are posted on the NATO air base in Aviano, Italy where VMFA(AW)-224 was headquartered while in support of Operation Deny Flight. (Photo courtesy of LtCol John Scanlan, USMC (Ret))





Archibald Henderson, fifth Commandant of the Marine Corps, was 74 years old during the riots of 1857.

The Grand Old Man And the Plug Uglies

By MSgt Jeff Dacus, USMCR (Ret)

Tensions over immigration have been an American problem with protests and demonstrations filling the streets. Political parties have used the topic of new Americans as a focal point of their party platforms—and not for the first time in our nation’s history. The tensions in

1857 were similar to those of today, except the political party at the center was the relatively short-lived American Know-Nothing party.

Fierce anti-immigrant feelings fostered the birth of the Know-Nothings, who also were virulently anti-Catholic. The party began as the Native American Party in 1855. A group that followed the Know-Nothing philosophy was formed about the same time and, because of their distinctive top hats, were called the Plug Uglies.

During the election of June 1, 1857, more than 1,000 Plug Uglies, mostly natives of Baltimore, Md., filled the streets of Washington, D.C., and tried to close the polling places. At first, they merely shoved and verbally abused potential voters, but this failed to stop the masses of voters or close the polls. As more and more of the Plug Uglies, joined by groups of local street toughs, increased the pressure on voters through the threat of physical violence, potential voters fled and some polls were shut down. The troublemakers chased people they thought were immigrants, beating them and breaking windows in local businesses owned by foreigners.

The sitting mayor, William Magruder, had narrowly won the last election beating out a Know-Nothing candidate in 1856, and the Plug Uglies blamed his victory on the votes of recent immigrants. Now they wanted to ensure their candidates would win this mid-term election by intimidating the opposition. As violence against citizens increased, Mayor Magruder sent 56 policemen to attempt to restore order, but most of the officers simply ran away and Magruder was forced to yield the streets to the thugs. At least 20 people were injured, including several policemen.

At 11 a.m., a desperate Magruder pleaded for federal assistance from President James Buchanan. Buchanan was the son of Irish immigrants from Ulster and understood immediately the problem

that the citizens of Washington faced. The Plug Uglies were running rampant, armed with pistols, knives, stones, brickbats and even a blacksmith’s sledgehammer and oak club were seen. Federal help was urgently needed as the police were increasingly unable to control the crowds. The president ordered Archibald Henderson, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, to assemble men from the Marine Barracks and report to the mayor of the federal city.

Henderson was born in 1783 in Virginia and had served in the Marine Corps since 1806. After several shore assignments and commands, he was appointed Colonel Commandant in 1820. Henderson was pivotal in preventing President Andrew Jackson’s proposed dissolution of the Corps. He



Capt Jacob Zeilin



Capt William Maddox

achieved legendary status when he took to the field with his Marines during the Seminole War. After receiving Army General Order 33 to join the soldiers in battle, he posted a note on the door to his office: “Have gone to Florida to fight Indians. Will be back when the war is over.” In 1857, Henderson had been Commandant for nearly 37 years. He wasted no time in turning out his Marines.

Henderson dispatched veteran Major Henry Tyler with two companies of Marines totaling 115 men to march from the Barracks toward the main center of the disturbance at City Hall on Judiciary Square. Sixty of the Marines had been in the Corps for less than a week and many were immigrants. Onlookers watched as the leathernecks advanced menacingly through the streets. Groups of rioters occasionally mocked and jeered the federal troops as they made their way closer and closer to the hub of rebellious behavior. A small figure in an overcoat, carrying an umbrella walked behind the detachment of Marines.

“Men, you had best think twice before you fire this piece at the Marines.”

—Archibald Henderson

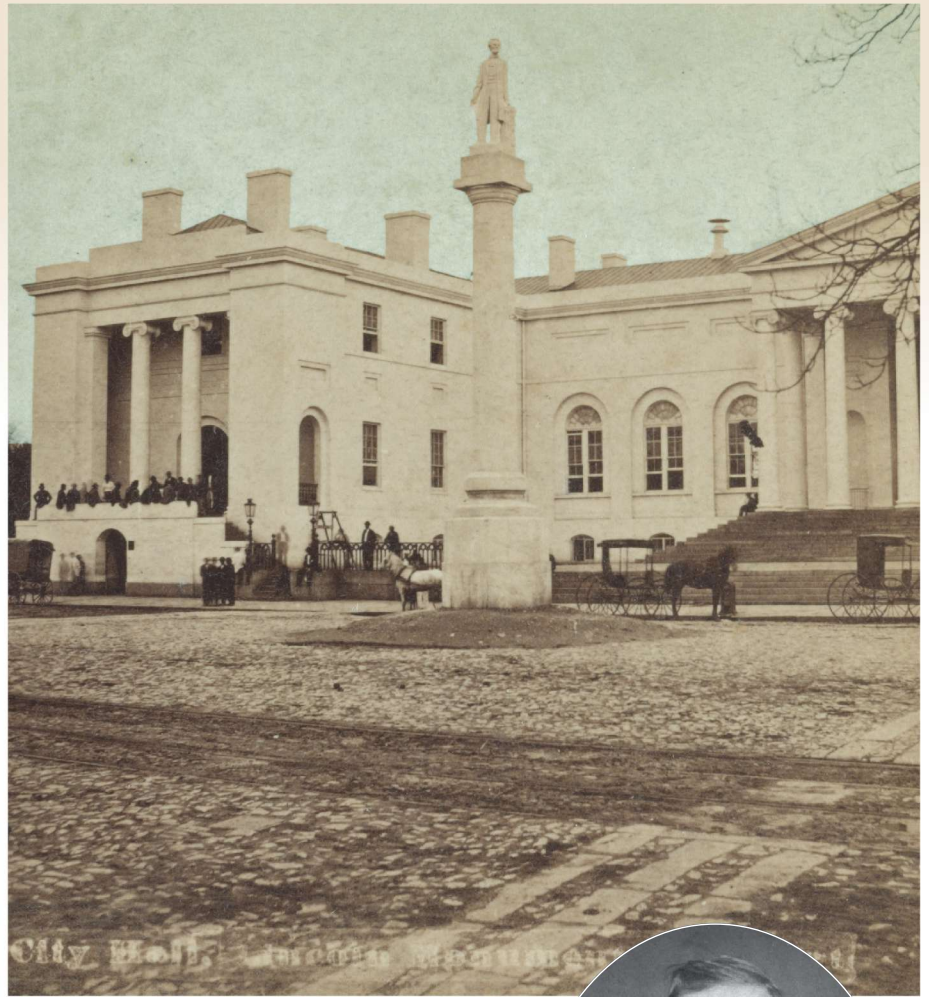
Arriving at City Hall, the Marines were informed by the mayor that the rioters were congregating at Mount Vernon Square with a small brass cannon they had stolen from a firehouse. Tyler immediately marched his two companies of Marines, one commanded by Captain Jacob Zeilin and the other under Captain William Maddox, both Mexican War veterans, to disperse the crowd and seize the cannon. The Marines arrived at the square to find the Plug Uglies had loaded the cannon with gunpowder, rocks and lead shot.

Suddenly, from out of the crowd ambled an old man, carrying an umbrella. Walking directly to the cannon, 74-year-old Archibald Henderson placed himself directly in front of the muzzle of the weapon. In a calm, steady voice, he warned the men huddled around the weapon: “Men, you had best think twice before you fire this piece at the Marines.”

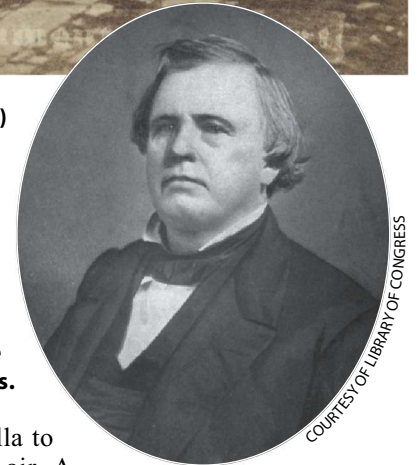
Without further gesture or comment, he turned to the crowd and then calmly but firmly asked them to disperse, adding that the Marines’ muskets were loaded. As the rioters considered his words, Henderson suggested Tyler move in and seize the cannon. Most of the crowd hung back but a few in the crowd, not intimidated, continued to fire random shots or threw rocks at the Marines.

Taking advantage of the crowd’s temporary shock, Maj Tyler sent a detachment from Zeilin’s company to take the cannon. The leader of the party, Lieutenant Charles Henderson, Archibald’s son and another veteran of the Mexican War, led them forward and wrested the cannon from the startled protesters. As the crowd resumed its belligerence, young Henderson had his men drag the cannon to the rear of the Marines’ line to keep it from being recaptured.

The crowd moved in closer, tossing stones that hit several Marines. Some of the rioters fired shots and one struck home, wounding a Marine in the face. The mayor, obviously shaken, exclaimed, “Why don’t you fire?” to the leathernecks and several of the new recruits heard only the last word. Leveling their muskets, the inexperienced Marines fired into the crowd. Others joined in and more shots hit the insurgents. Several were killed or wounded before Tyler and the other officers stopped the shooting.



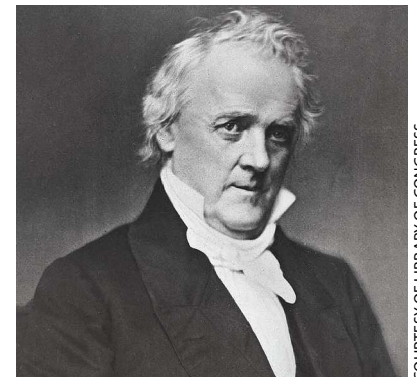
City Hall in Washington, D.C., (above) photographed sometime between 1868 and 1930. The statue in the foreground, the Lincoln Monument, did not exist when the Plug Uglies created a disturbance there in 1857. Mayor William Magruder (inset) called on President Buchanan to provide assistance in dealing with the increasingly violent Plug Uglies.



COURTESY OF LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

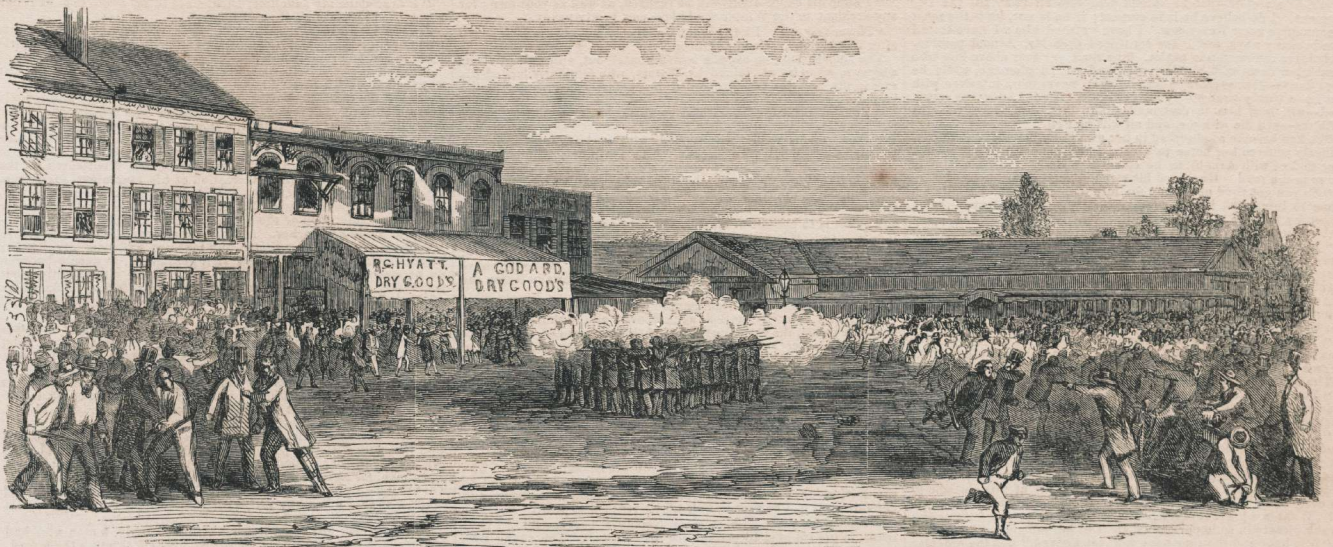
The Commandant used his umbrella to deflect a sergeant’s musket into the air. A moment later, a rioter rushed up to the Corps’ senior Marine and aimed his pistol at his head from only 2 feet away. The pistol discharged but the shot went wild. The sergeant took careful aim and shot the man in the arm. Not only was the rioter physically wounded but he was humiliated when the “Grand Old Man of the Marine Corps” grabbed him by the neck and dragged him off.

The mob continued to threaten the Marines and occasionally fired shots or threw bricks. Another Marine was injured when he was shot in the shoulder. Tiring of the action, Maj Tyler reformed his Marines, ordered them to reload, and level their muskets at the crowd. It was enough to frighten



President James Buchanan

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SCENE OF THE WASHINGTON RIOT. THE MARINES FIRING UPON THE MOB, HAVING SEIZED THE CANNON USED BY THE RIOTERS. DAGUERRETYPE BY WHITEHURST.

One of the Baltimore rowdies shot in the leg; John Fouche, severely; Samuel Fenton, in the arm; Mr. Lawrenson, (*Mercury*), shot through his hat, grazing his head.

It is rumored that several were killed and many wounded not mentioned in the above list—among whom are one or two women and a small boy.

All that were killed or wounded, were peaceable citizens, passing by or quietly looking on.

PHILOSOPHY OF POLITICAL RIOTS.

The Baltimore Patriot, speaking of the affair so disgraceful to the country, very justly remarks: "It is plain to us that the countenance given to these lawless demonstrations, and the immunity from punishment enjoyed by the ruffians who engage in political disturbances, no matter how sanguinary they may prove, are the fruitful sources from which this fearful condition of things has sprung, and that those who regard such matters with apathetic indifference, taking no steps to bring the rioters to punishment, are as much to blame as the offenders themselves. There can, in reality, be no difficulties occurring where the right-minded members of a community actively exert themselves to preserve the peace. Public indignation is a stronger weapon than arms in individual hands. But how is this feeling usually displayed? Previous to an election every incitement necessary to encourage braves and gladiators to provoke a conflict is freely used. Large sums of money are collected and lavishly dispensed—the miscreants are courted, caressed, feasted and flattered—revolvers are purchased for them and placed in their hands—inflammatory harangues are made from the hustings, and shielded from the consequences of their crimes by powerful political friends, these fighting men go forth, intent upon taking possession of the polls and recklessly sacrificing human life, in the effort to accomplish their purpose. How can we hope to perpetuate our freedom if such acts are permitted in broad day and in the capital of the Republic? History tells us that the worst of all despotisms is the despotism of a mob; that mob law is the perversion of justice, and that when the boundary is once broken down between the constituted authorities and the multitude, the general health of the body politic is seriously endangered."

OTELIA CLAYTON;
OR,
THE FORSAKEN BRIDE.
BY MISS A. E. DUPUY.

The top illustration in this page from the June 20, 1857, issue of Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper shows members of the Know-Nothing party rioting to prevent immigrants from voting. The bottom illustration depicts Archibald Henderson, umbrella in hand, intervening to stop the riot.

the throng of rioters, who slowly receded and then disappeared completely. The streets cleared, Tyler sent most of his detachment to City Hall as a show of force and another group to the railway station to intercept any more agitators arriving from Baltimore.

Word spread quickly about the presence of the Marines, and Plug Uglies en route to Washington turned around and returned to Baltimore. Police easily arrested those rioters who attempted to escape on the train. Local troublemakers simply went home.

The Election Day riots were over. As a group, the Plug Uglies did not go away completely and remained a destructive force in Baltimore for

ties of love, but I do not hesitate to say that since I have known him, I have discovered that there are electric chords in every nature which respond to the touch of one congenial with it, though they

best service you could render me would be to undo what you have done, if that were possible; as it is not, I can do nothing less than forgive it."

"In the end it may be a safeguard. God works mysteriously sometimes; but we seldom fail at last to see the wisdom which guides all for the best."

The approach of Mrs. Arnold ended the conversation, and as the clergyman was an elderly widower, she considered it her privilege to make herself as fascinating as she possibly could. Otelia sunk into silence, and while her voluble companion talked of the beauty of the weather, the condition of the church, and the few poor in the neighborhood toward whom her benevolent sympathies could be extended, Mr. Carleton had an opportunity of observing Miss Clayton more carefully than usual.

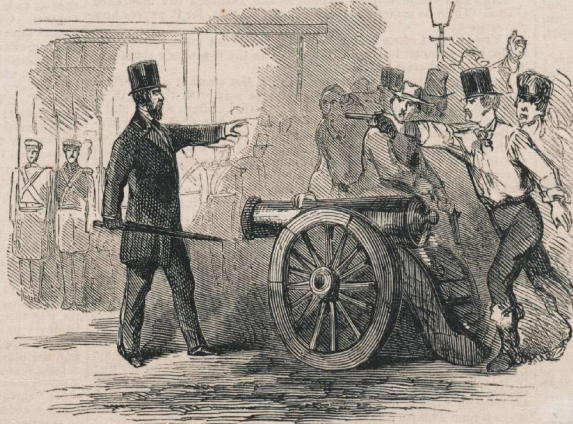
Her deep mourning was more becoming to her than the fantastic mixture of colors in which she had formerly arrayed herself; and the sufferings through which she had lately passed had developed and strengthened a character remarkable, even from childhood, for its strong individuality. The expression of her features had changed and softened; there was less of mockery—more of tender and passionate feeling than the observer had ever expected to see upon them, for Otelia Clayton had been a problem to him since he had first remarked her wayward childhood and uncured youth. Born for happiness he did not believe she was, for there was too much restless vitality about her; too eager a seeking after excitement to indicate a healthy condition of mind. And he comprehended that to give a new interest to existence after the awful tornado which had swept across her life path, a new passion was as necessary to her as sunshine to the deluged earth over which the tempest had raged in its wrath.

She fancied herself still safe—that the reins were in her own hands, when he clearly saw that already they were held by another; and a vague fear fell upon him as he thought how reckless, how all-absorbing, the love of this passionate, fervent-hearted creature would be. If it were suitably returned, all would be well; if not—he shuddered at the probable alternative; but the supper-bell summoned them to the dining-room, and, for the time, his speculations ended, for the housekeeping at the Park was unexceptionable, and Mr. Carleton was a little of a bon vivant.

Otelia came out of her dreamy reverie, and did the honors of the table in so graceful and hospitable a manner, that the good man was tempted to indulge his appetite even more than usual.

Anita usually waited behind her young lady's chair, but this evening she was absent; and when Miss Clayton inquired for her, she was informed that the nurse had gone to Staunton for a few hours, but would be back in time to perform her usual duties at night. As Anita had the privilege of going when it suited her inclinations, no comment was made, and it did not occur to either of the party to connect the absence of the quadroon with the recent visit of Arnold to the Park.

That all suspicion of the understanding which existed between them might be avoided, it was the custom of Anita to meet her confederate a few miles from the Park, on a portion of his road which



GENERAL HENDERSON URGING THE RIOTERS NOT TO FIRE.

thrill not, save at the call of the master spirit. You think this a strange unmaidenly confidence, I dare say; but since you know so much of the influences that fetter me, you may as well know something of the workings of the vital machinery within."

"From this I gather that this young man is the master-spirit who is to rule your destiny?"

"I have not admitted that. I once thought my cousin Arthur stood in that relation to me: now Mr. Arnold is in the ascendant. A mightier than he might come along, and scatter his influence to the winds. There is such a thing as rivalry even in love, and my sex is accused of not being ever constant. Let us cease this unprofitable discussion, Mr. Carleton, and enter the house, where I expect tea is waiting. Mrs. Arnold has been on the piazza watching us for the last five minutes, and wondering why we linger thus."

This sudden change in her tone caused the clergyman to regard her with surprise; he felt that she wished to mystify him, and induce him to put less weight on the admissions she had so candidly made. He detained her a moment, while he earnestly asked,

"Let the future develop what it may, Miss Clayton, you will

be. If it were suitably returned, all would be well; if not—he shuddered at the probable alternative; but the supper-bell summoned them to the dining-room, and, for the time, his speculations ended, for the housekeeping at the Park was unexceptionable, and Mr. Carleton was a little of a bon vivant.

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several more years. They became associated with anti-union groups and the Copperheads during the Civil War, most noticeably in the draft riots of 1863.

The intervention of the Marines allowed the police to retain control of Washington, D.C. Both Mayor Magruder and President Buchanan thanked the Marines for their efforts.

Author's bio: MSgt Jeff Dacus, USMCR (Ret), lives in Vancouver, Wash., where he teaches history to 8th-grade students. His 23 years as a Marine include a combat deployment during Operation Desert Storm as a tank platoon sergeant.



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LCPL ISAIAH GOMEZ, USMC

During a Feb. 15 visit to Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., the Honorable Phyllis L. Bayer, center, Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Energy, Installations and the Environment, accompanied by LtGen Charles G. Chiarotti, Deputy Commandant for Installations and Logistics, left, toured privatized military housing and spoke with military spouses about ongoing restoration efforts.

DOD Seeks Ways to Improve Family Housing Initiative

Because the health, safety and welfare of servicemembers is a top priority for the Defense Department, DOD officials are looking for ways to improve the Military Privatization Housing Initiative (MPHI) that was established in the 1990s.

When DOD saw the need to improve housing conditions on its installations 25 years ago, it sought ways to leverage the expertise of private-sector partners, said Pentagon spokeswoman Heather Babb during a press event on Feb. 8.

“The department needed to improve its on-base housing to address retention, recruitment and quality-of-life concerns,” Babb said.

Since Congress authorized the MPHI in 1996, DOD has privatized 99 percent of its family housing inventory in the U.S.—more than 200,000 units at about 150 installations.

MHPI partners have constructed nearly 80,000 new housing units and performed major renovations to more than 50,000 additional housing units and also have made cosmetic improvements and basic repairs to the remaining housing.

“The program transformed the quality of on-base housing much faster than traditional military construction could have,” she added.

Housing privatization also provides for long-term reinvestment. Residents who choose to live in privatized housing sign a lease and pay rent to the project, just as they would rent housing off base.

Privatization projects, through 50-year deals, use rental income to pay project expenses such as property management and taxes and to pay off project debt that financed housing redevelopment. Funds are also set aside for future redevelopment to keep the homes in good condition for residents 10 to 20 years from now and beyond, Babb explained.

Still, there is room for improvement, Babb added. That’s why working with privatized housing partners to address reports of unhealthy living conditions at any DOD installation is a top priority for Robert McMahon, assistant secretary of defense for sustainment, who provides programmatic oversight of DOD’s housing privatization program.

“We want to ensure that our installations provide safe, quality housing to military families,” McMahon said. “The privatized program resulted in great long-term improvements in base housing, and we must continue to actively manage this program to ensure its long-term success. If there are problems, we will address them.”

McMahon, along with counterparts from the military departments, recently

met with executives representing each of the privatized housing partners to look for ways to improve the initiative and better ensure residents have a positive living experience.

“We are committed to working together to take care of our soldiers, Sailors, airmen and Marines—and, equally important, their families,” he said.

At the meeting, McMahon outlined a common vision between DOD and privatized housing partners to provide safe, high-quality and affordable housing where military members and their families will want, and choose, to live.

“We recruit the individual, and we retain the family,” he said. “Where we can do better, we have a responsibility to do so.”

Jim Garamone

Veterans History Project Launches New Online Exhibit on the GI Bill

The Library of Congress Veterans History Project (VHP) launched “The GI Bill: 75 Years of Opportunity,” Feb. 6, an online “Experiencing War” website feature that explores the impact of the GI Bill on 15 veterans interviewed for the VHP collection.

The Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944, signed into law on June 22, 1944, and colloquially known as the GI Bill, was a landmark piece of legislation that offered educational benefits, low-cost mortgages, low-interest business loans and unemployment benefits to returning World War II veterans. In the 75 years since its passage, the transformative potential of the GI Bill has continued as it has provided economic and educational opportunities to generations of veterans.

One of the veterans highlighted in “The GI Bill: 75 Years of Opportunity” is John W. Warner, former Secretary of the Navy and former five-term senator from Virginia. As both a World War II Navy veteran and Korean War Marine Corps veteran, Warner used the GI Bill to earn his college and law school degrees. During his 2005 VHP oral history interview, he credits this revolutionary legislation for his political success, stating, “If it hadn’t been for [his military training] and the GI Bill, I wouldn’t be sitting here in the United States Senate today. It’s as simple as that.”

In 1975, Persian Gulf War Marine Corps veteran Michael Arndt was drawn to military service by the promise of a college

education. By 2002, five years after separating from military service, Arndt was in the process of taking full advantage of the GI Bill's educational benefits. "I'm just having the time of my life in school. It's all coming full circle what I worked for, for 22 years," he said.

Less than three months after the terrorist attacks on 9/11, Missouri native Kara Ann Kittrell joined the Army, hoping to be deployed to Iraq where she could do her part on behalf of her country. After serving, Kittrell went on to use the GI Bill to earn a degree in international business.

Other collections featured in "The GI Bill: 75 Years of Opportunity" include Stanley Karnow, a World War II veteran who used his educational benefits as the basis for a career as a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, and Korean War veteran Ralph Pyle, who obtained his commercial pilot's license.

To access all of the veterans' collections in "The GI Bill: 75 Years of Opportunity," visit www.loc.gov/vets/stories/ex-war-gi-bill.html.

Congress created the Veterans History Project in 2000 to collect, preserve and make accessible the firsthand remembrances of U.S. war veterans from World War I through the more recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, so that future generations may hear directly from veterans and better understand the realities of war. The Library of Congress is the world's largest library, offering access to the creative record of the United States—and extensive materials from around the

world—both on-site and online. It is the main research arm of the U.S. Congress and the home of the U.S. Copyright Office.

Library of Congress

Arlington Cemetery Expansion: Early Work Begins Next Year

For its second act of expansion, Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia plans to grow southward onto property formerly occupied by the Navy Annex. Work there will begin next year, said the cemetery's executive director, Karen Durham-Aguilera, who spoke March 12 before the House Appropriations Committee's subcommittee on military construction, veterans affairs and related agencies.

Durham-Aguilera told lawmakers the cemetery plans to break ground on the first phase of the project in 2020. She also thanked them for providing the appropriate funds to make it happen.

"With Congress's support, the Defense Access Road project is fully funded with \$60 million and the Southern Expansion is partially funded with \$219.1 million no-year funding, toward a \$350 million requirement," she said.

Both projects, which include a plan to reroute Columbia Pike, which runs alongside the cemetery to the south and a plan to develop reclaimed land and bring it up to the standards of the cemetery, are currently underway.

The road project should be complete by 2022, with the second phase of the project slated to begin the same year and completed in 2025.

"Southern Expansion will add 37 acres of burial space and extend the cemetery's active life," Durham-Aguilera said. "We will continue to provide quarterly reports to Congress, outlining the progress of these important projects."

In fiscal year 2018, nearly 6,500 service-members, veterans and eligible family members were buried at Arlington. While the expansions will extend how long the cemetery can remain active, it will not be enough.

Durham-Aguilera noted that the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act requires the establishment of revised criteria for interment that preserves the cemetery as an active burial ground. To help inform that decision about eligibility criteria, Arlington National Cemetery has conducted two public surveys of nearly 260,000 respondents and held meetings and listening sessions with key stakeholders including more than 25 veteran and military service organizations.

"Arlington National Cemetery's enduring mission is to represent the American people for the past, present and future generations by laying to rest those few who have served our nation with dignity and honor, while immersing guests in the cemetery's living history," Durham-Aguilera said. "We are committed to ensuring confident graveside accountability, our cemetery maintenance, our fiscal stewardship, and preserving the iconic look and feel of the cemetery."

C. Todd Lopez



WAYS TO SOUND OFF



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LETTERS | Leatherneck, Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134

SOUND OFF

[continued from page 7]

been true, I don't believe that name stood the test of time. I do recall that in 1956, when issued both the jacket and coat in boot camp, we were told it was not to be called an "Ike" jacket as that was what the Army wore. As I recall, the jacket was

called a "battle" jacket and the coat, a blouse. This is the first time I heard it referred to as the Vandegrift jacket.

In the book "The Eagle, Globe, and Anchor 1868-1968," printed by the History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, it states, "In July 1958, Printed Change No. 25 of Chapter 49 was issued." This change specified that the "jacket, men's green" (winter service jacket) worn since 1946 would be obsolete by June 30, 1960. However, due to exigencies of the period, this jacket was authorized to be worn under certain circumstances until 1968.

Joe E. Williams
USMC, 1956-1959
Venice, Fla.

Regarding Master Sergeant Carl M. "Bud" DeVere Sr.'s letter in the Sound Off section of the March issue, he says that the short jacket was called the Vandegrift jacket. I was issued that jacket shortly before graduating from boot camp in February 1952, along with the complete wardrobe; a blouse and the short "Ike" jacket. I never heard it called anything else. It was referred to as the Ike jacket by one and all, including the drill instructors. I don't ever recall it being called the Vandegrift jacket. Few recruits would

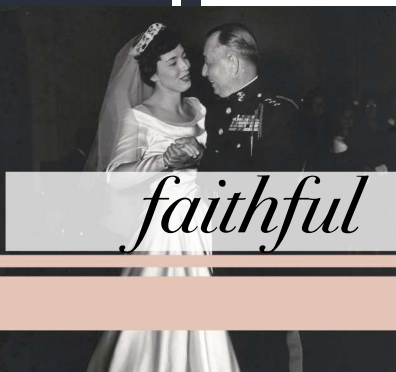
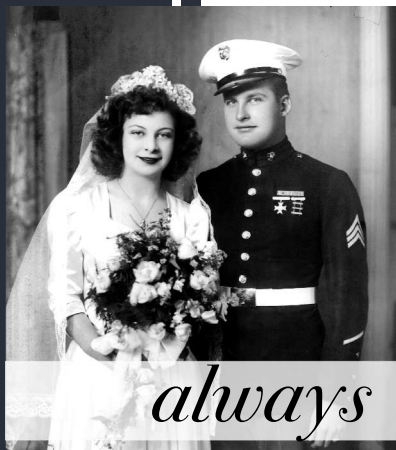
even have known who General Vandegrift was, as hallowed as his name is.

Andre Monzain
USMC, USMCR, 1951-1959
Scarsdale, N.Y.

Rifleman Badge and Mexico Medal Identification

I recently visited a gift/antique shop and purchased a couple of items that I would appreciate your input as to the details and distinction of the pieces. The first is a rifle expert badge that was listed as a World War I Army badge. Since it was nearly identical to the same badge I qualified for in the 1960s, I figured it was mismarked as Army. I have since watched a James Cagney movie of the 1930s in which he played a returning doughboy and had the same type and style of badge on his uniform.

On my USMC issue, it has crossed rifles, probably an M1 with sling, and the words "Rifle Expert" on the bar above it. As to the one in question, it appears to be a WW I-era rifle Springfield and the words "Expert Rifleman" on the bar. My question is, did the Army and Marine Corps issue the same badge during WW I or do I actually have a Marine antique with a history that my imagination will provide?



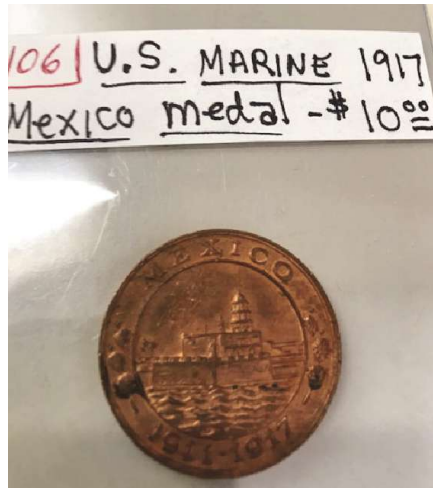
Whether you're getting married at the local courthouse or walking down the aisle in a cathedral, wedding planning is stressful and we are here to help. From locations and lodging, to uniforms and regulations, Marine Corps Association & Foundation Weddings is a one-stop resource page to help you and your family plan this momentous occasion.

Find more information at
www.mca-marines.org/marine_corps_weddings





COURTESY OF CPL KEN GOODWIN



COURTESY OF CPL KEN GOODWIN

The rifleman badge and Mexico medal were found in an antique shop by Cpl Ken Goodwin who is requesting help in identifying the pieces.

At the same place and time, I also purchased what was labeled as a 1917 U.S. Marine Mexico Medal. I suspect it was the equivalent of a challenge coin but have no idea of its actual origin or significance.

Cpl Ken Goodwin
Bradley, Ill.

• *We did a search on Army marksmanship badges and could find nothing that resembles the one you purchased. Our bet is*

that the shop mislabeled it, and it is in fact an earlier version of the Marine Corps' expert badge but we'd love to hear from our readers who are experts on badges and insignia.—Editor

Olongapo

I read about the Olongapo City memories, "Sailors Ran for Cover," in the March *Leatherneck* [Sea Stories], and had flashbacks of ships loaded with Army troops on the main deck on their way to

Vietnam: The USS *Turner Joy* (DD-951), coming into Subic Bay with significant damage as my ship, USS *Galveston* (CL-93) was headed to Yankee Station.

Olongapo had a lot of Sailors and Marine Detachment Marines who found the "girl of their dreams" and were going to get married. We were never in port very long as duty always called.

Our WestPac tour ended in late 1965 and we rotated back to San Diego, our home port. I have always wondered who, why and how we lost Subic and Clark Air Force Base in that vital part of the world. Subic Bay was, Ichiban, numbah one, and very friendly to the USA.

John Sanchez
Hanford, Calif.

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 🐦

What More Can I Say About Our Beloved Corps

Twenty-four seven, from Hell to Heaven,
The President's Nine Eleven,
Marines, leathernecks, devil dogs, jarheads,
Uncle Sam's misguided children, gyrenes,
Whatever you choose to call us?

Our reputation throughout history precedes us.
In any terrain, we will eventually reign.
In every invasion, we rise to the occasion.
In every challenging place
the Marine Corps is never a disgrace.

A Marine's job is never done
until he has intensely and creatively adapted,
improvised and overcome.

It has always been said,
"A Marine on a mission has no excuses
and no obstacles achieving his goals
before he or she is dead."

In every nook and cranny, we fight to protect
mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, grandchildren,
Old Glory, and even your salty old granny.

Our most deeply ingrained, conditioned belief
from boot camp is divine,
as we never leave our
dead or our wounded behind.



One of our greatest features
is how we care about all living creatures.
Don't ever forget how we
safeguard your dearest pet.
We are so discreet
we even care about grandma's parakeet.

Whether you like it or not, we are hot.
We are the Devil Dogs on the spot.
Let us not forget our heritage,
"Semper Fi, do or die," no passion, no fire,
no fire no fury, no guts, no glory.
One of the most powerful slogans about the
Marines in Iwo Jima was ever so true,
"Uncommon Valor was a Common Virtue."

The United States Marine Corps
will prevail and endure forever more.
Like days of old when Spartans and Knights
were brave and bold,
the Marine Corps is an unforgettable tradition,
forever courageous and bold, indestructible
and resilient like pure solid untarnished gold.

How can I possibly say more
about our beloved Corps?
Bob Concordia
West Chester, Pa.

In Memoriam

Compiled by Nancy S. Lichtman

Edward B. Atkinson Jr., 78, of Yakima, Wash. He enlisted in 1958 and later served two tours in Vietnam.

Violet (Mehmen) Bowman, 87, of Missoula, Mont. During her two years in the Marine Corps she served at MCB Camp Pendleton.

Cpl Henry N. Bufano, 84, of Newark, Del. He was an aviation electronics technician assigned to VMF-312 at MCAS Cherry Point, N.C., from 1954-1957. He later had a 35-year career with IBM.

Dale L. Bundy, 81, of Sun City, Ariz. He served in the Marine Corps.

Lorraine (Zwart) Campbell, 94, in Arroyo Grande, Calif. She was a Marine who served during WW II. She later served in Japan as a member of the U.S. Department of State.

Cpl Alcide J. Champagne, 94, of Raceland, La. He enlisted after finishing high school and was assigned to the 27th Marines, 5thMarDiv. He served in Japan after the war. He was a member of the American Legion, the Lions Club and his community's volunteer fire department.

SgtMaj Benjamin T. Duncan Jr., 84, of Corpus Christi, Texas. His 29 years in the Marine Corps included service in the Korean War and the Vietnam War. He was a member of the MCA&F.

Lawrence K. "Larry" Erickson, 88, of Green Bay, Wis. He enlisted in 1947 and served until 1950.

Michael J. Gardiner, 76, of Melbourne, Fla. He served in the Marine Corps.

Stephen A. Harris, 70, of Imnaha River Woods, Ore. He enlisted in 1967 and served one tour in Vietnam, where he was wounded. His awards include the Purple Heart.

Doyle J. Jordan, 95, of Oneida, Wis. He was a Marine who served during WW II.

Cpl Kevin Lasser, 70, of New Rochelle, N.Y. He was a Marine Corps veteran of the Vietnam War.

Cpl William M. Lutes, 82, of Missouri City, Texas. After graduating from boot camp at MCRD San Diego, he was assigned to the 3rdMarDiv where he was a radioman in the 3rd Tank Bn. He served in Japan and the Philippines.

William J. "Doc" Moorman, 93, of Ocean City, Wash. He was an FMF corpsman in WW II and the Korean War.

Donald P. Mueller, 99, of South Range, Wis. During WW II he was a Navy Seabee. Assigned to Naval Construction Bn 133, he saw action on Iwo Jima.

Jackie "Jack" Nagel, 84, of Green Bay, Wis. After his 1953 graduation from high school, he enlisted in the Marine Corps. During the Korean War, he was assigned to 1st Bn, 1st Marines, 1stMarDiv. He later had a career in law enforcement.

Alfred K. Newman, 94, in Bloomfield, N.M. He was a Navajo code talker who served during WW II. From 1943-1945, he was assigned to 1st Bn, 21st Marines, 3rdMarDiv and saw action on Bougainville, Guam, Iwo Jima and New Georgia.

Doris J. Olson, 96, of Green Bay, Wis. She served in the Marine Corps during WW II.

Cpl Charles D. Porter, 95, of Dolgeville, N.Y. He saw action in the South Pacific during WW II. He later served in the Navy Reserve.



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MSgt Thomas J. Priddy, 96, of Williamstown, N.J. His 30-year career in the Marine Corps included service during WW II and the Korean War.

Col George E. Rector Jr., 64, of King George, Va. Following his 1976 graduation from the Naval Academy he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps. He served for 29 years.

Walter T. "Terry" Scarborough Jr., 96, in Parsons, Kan. He was part of the Naval Aviation Cadet program during WW II. After he completed flight training in Pensacola, Fla., he was commissioned a second lieutenant in 1943. He flew F4U Corsairs during the war. After the war ended, he returned to college and earned a degree in physics. Recalled to active duty during the Korean War, he flew transport aircraft and helicopters. He remained in the Marine Corps until his 1968 retirement.

George Schmidbauer, 82, of Green Bay, Wis. He enlisted at age 17 and went to boot camp at Parris Island. After completing Sea School in San Diego, Calif., he was assigned to USS *Lake Champlain* (CV-39). He later attended college using the GI bill.

GySgt August J. Shumaker, 88, of Fredericksburg, Va. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1950 and saw combat in

Korea and Vietnam. His awards include the Bronze Star with combat "V," and the Combat Action Ribbon.

Cpl Douglas H. Smith, 76, of Putnam Station, N.Y. He enlisted in 1967 and graduated from boot camp at MCRD Parris Island, S.C. He completed three tours in Vietnam.

Col Frederick A. Buddy Smith, 88, of Richmond, Va. He served on active duty from 1953-1955 with the 3rdMarDiv in Japan. During the Korean War he was assigned to 2nd Bn, 1st Marines, 1stMarDiv and 3rd Bn, 5th Marines, 1stMarDiv. He left active duty for a career in the Marine Corps Reserve while also pursuing a civilian career as an executive in the petroleum industry.

Albin J. Sweet, 98, of Whitewater, Wis. During WW II he served in the South Pacific. He saw action on Guadalcanal, Guam and Iwo Jima.

Cpl Henry D. Tucker Jr., 72, of Swoope, Va. During the Vietnam War he was a force recon Marine.

Kenneth L. Urbach, 76, of Mantorville, Minn. He enlisted in the Marine Corps after his 1963 graduation from high school. He served in Vietnam as a radio technician.

Michael P. "Mike" Vallier, 70, of Abrams, Wis. He enlisted in the Marine

Corps in 1967 and served two tours in Vietnam.

Arthur J. Van Gompel Jr., 83, of Green Bay, Wis. He was a Marine Corps veteran of the Korean War. He later worked as a school custodian.

Dean E. Wert Sr., 97, of Quarryville, Pa. He served in the South Pacific during WW II and was assigned to duty in China in 1946.

Jonathan W. Wiltsie, 32, of Billings, Mont. He deployed once to Iraq and twice to Afghanistan. He later worked for a private security company and was assigned to the U.S. embassy in Iraq.

Wayne G. Woller, 74, of Durham, N.C. He was a Marine who served in the Vietnam War.

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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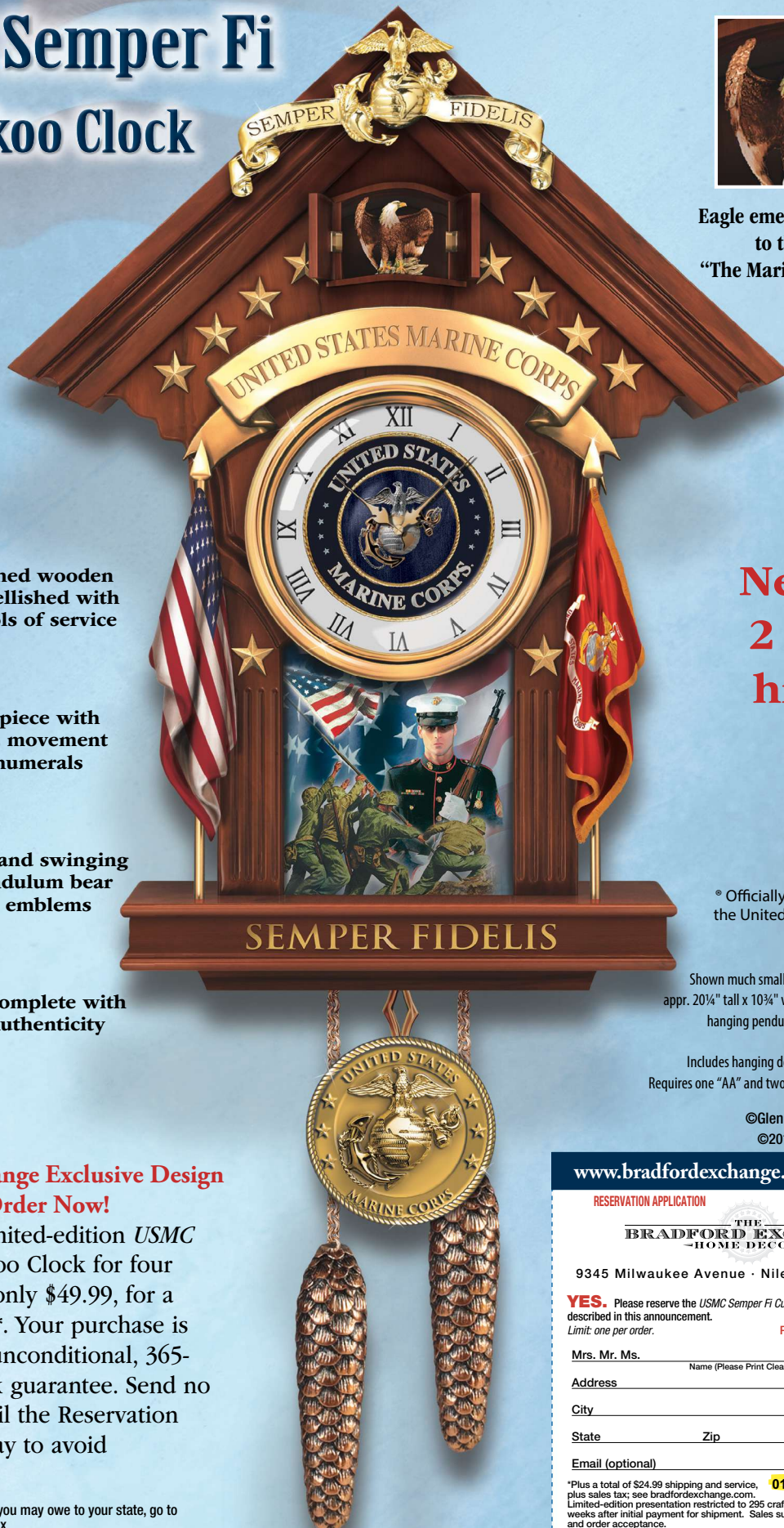
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Reunions

• **1stMarDiv Assn. (all eras)**, Aug. 3-12, Louisville, Ky. Contact June Cormier, P.O. Box 9000, Box #902, Oceanside, CA 92051, (760) 763-3267, june.oldbreed@fmda.us.

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

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

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

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

• **West Coast Drill Instructor Assn. (SgtMaj Leland D. "Crow" Crawford Chapter)**, Aug. 1-4, San Diego, Calif. Contact Gregg Stoner, (619) 884-9047, greggstoner22@aol.com, or CWO-3 Chip Dykes, USMC (Ret), (760) 908-2322, www.westcoastdi.org.

• **"Marines of Long Ago" (all eras)**, May 21-23, St. Augustine, Fla. Contact Joe "Red" Cullen, (203) 877-0846, aircooledmg7@aol.com.

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

• **1st MAW Assn. Vietnam Veterans**, June 13-16, Crystal City, Va. Contact Frank "PACO" Arce, frankpaco69@aol.com, or Al Frater, teanal@optonline.net.

• **Black Marines Heritage Group**, June 20-23, Alexandria, Va. Contact Bernard Colebrook, (540) 720-2633, Bobby Wallace, (352) 259-2435, or Patricia Mims, (760) 717-2949, www.blackmarinereunion.com.

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

• **Marine Corps Recruiting Service** (all who served in a recruiting command, officer or enlisted), Sept. 11-15, Bluffton, S.C. Contact Larry Risvold, (803) 760-4575, larryrisvold@att.net, <http://marinecorpsscruitingsservice.com>.

• **Landing Support Battalion**, May 9-11, Camp Pendleton, Calif. Contact Margaret Jackson, (760) 725-6518, margaret.jackson@usmc.mil.

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

• **1/3 (all eras)**, Sept. 17-22, Branson, Mo. Contact Don Bumgarner, (562) 897-2437, dbumc13usmc@verizon.net.

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

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

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

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

• **H/2/7 (RVN, 1965-1970)**, June 20-24, San Diego, Calif. Contact Dan Steiner, (618) 567-4077, dsteiner49@yahoo.com.

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

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

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

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

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

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

• **TBS, Co C, 2-67**, May 12-15, Fredericksburg, Va. Contact Bill McBride, (210) 656-6035, bill.mcbride@gmail.com, or Ed Walsh, (610) 459-1879, eireish1@aol.com.

• **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 H, 8-69 (50th Anniversary)**, June 6-9, Arlington, Va. Contact Dennis Mroczkowski, m4ski@comcast.net, or Thomas Molon, ncmolons@suddenlink.net, www.facebook.com/basicschoolhotelcompany69.

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

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

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

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

• **VMO/VMA/VMF/VMFA-251 (all**

REUNIONS

Whether you are reuniting with boot camp buddies or hosting a Division-level reunion, MCA&F has the information you need to start planning your event.



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www.mca-marines.org/resource/marine-corps-reunions

Leatherneck is also standing by to help you get the word out. Send information about your upcoming reunion to s.bock@mca-marines.org





COURTESY OF JOHN STEVENSON

Leatherneck reader John Stevenson would like to hear from members of Plt 178, Parris Island, 1961. The recruits were told they were the first to win the “golden boots” for drill competition, track and field trophy and the rifle range trophy.

eras), Nov. 7-10, Charleston, S.C. Contact Steven Dixon, (404) 944-1268, skdixon@bellsouth.net.

Ships and Others

- **USS *Hornet* (CVS-12) and Apollo Program 50th anniversary**, July 18-22, Oakland, Calif. Contact Sandy Burket, P.O. Box 108, Roaring Spring, PA 16673, (814) 224-5063, hornetva@aol.com.

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

Mail Call

- CWO-3 Chip Dykes, USMC (Ret), (760) 908-2322, to hear from **present and former drill instructors** interested in becoming members of the SgtMaj Leland D. “Crow” Chapter of the **West Coast Drill Instructor Association** (no dues or fees).

- John Stevenson, (440) 479-6004, jsworkouts@ameritech.net, to hear from members of **Plt 178, Parris Island, 1961**.

- Ed Tuthill, tut429@hotmail.com, to hear from members of **Comm Plt, HQ Btry, 12th Marines, Korea, 1982**, and **NGF Plt, HQ 2/1, Beirut, 1983**.

- John Keene, 9066 Hopkins Branch Way, Mechanicsville, VA 23116, jkventure@aol.com, to hear from Marines who served with his cousin, **Capt Robert B. WALLS, a Huey pilot with VMO-2 in Dong Ha, RVN, 1967-1968**, who was killed in a **KC-130F crash at MCAS El Toro on July 30, 1970**.

- Cpl A.C. Martin, (810) 305-2869, to hear from or about **Lt DOTSON**, who served with **2/11 in Korea, 1953-1954**.

- John Sanchez, 777 E. Palm Dr., Hanford, CA 93230, (559) 970-1018, to hear from or about **Sgt John BROADNAX, a Force Recon Marine** who was a patient at **Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton, Calif., in 1962**, for a back injury sustained during training.

Wanted

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

- Wayne Spires, 2419 Bromley Ave. Apt. A, Granite City, IL 62040, (618) 501-3012, spireswaynel6@gmail.com, wants a **recruit graduation book for Plt 316, San Diego, 1967**.

- Joe Ratell, (570) 876-1840, wants a

copy of **“The History of the Pioneer Marine Battalion at Guam and Samar, 1899-1901”** by John Clifford, Brass Hat paperback historical reprint.

- Gary Ewing, (517) 388-3691, garysr2033@gmail.com, wants a **recruit graduation book for Plt 2033, San Diego, 1978**.

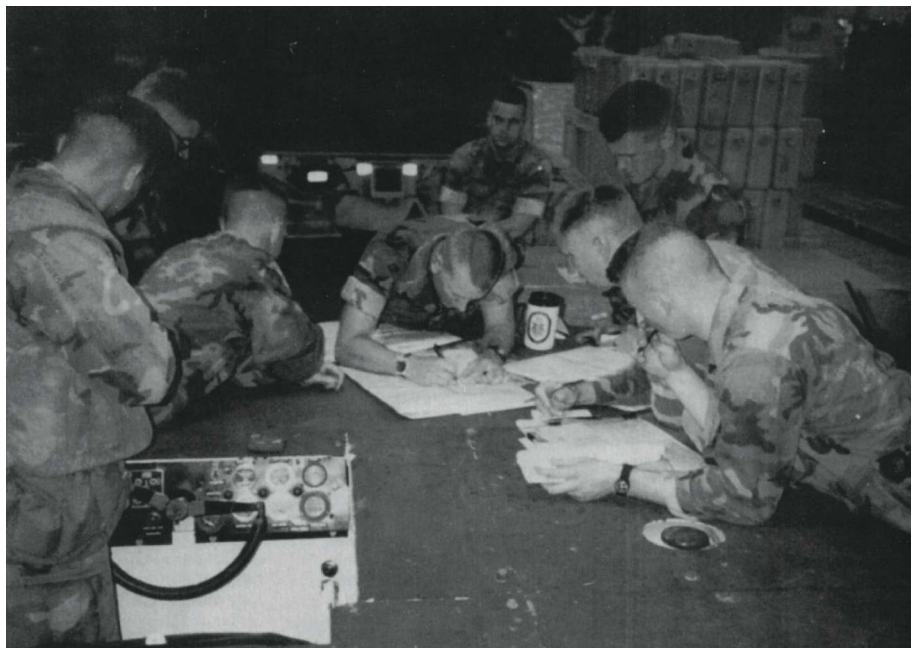
Sales, Trades and Giveaways

- Richard Bollwerk, rbollwerk@icloud.com, has **recruit graduation books for Plt 115, Parris Island, 1957; Plt 2022, Parris Island, 1959; Plt 270, Parris Island, 1960; Plt 2072, Parris Island, 1977; and Plt 2055, San Diego, 1977** for sale.

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Saved Round

By Hailey Bullis



PH2 BRETT SIEGEL, USN

In preparation for the mission to rescue downed Air Force F-16C pilot Capt Scott O'Grady, 1stLt Martin Wetterauer, center, conducted a training briefing with Marines of the 24th MEU (SOC) in the hangar bay of USS *Kearsarge*.



SGT JOHN JAMISON, USMC

Marines from the 24th MEU (SOC) debark a CH-53E on the deck of USS *Kearsarge* following the completion of the successful TRAP rescue mission of Capt Scott O'Grady.

MARINES RESCUE BASHER 52— On the early, foggy morning of June 8, 1995, the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) (Special Operations Capable) set out to rescue U.S. Air Force Captain Scott O'Grady, call sign Basher 52, from the Bosnian countryside after his F-16C Fighting Falcon was shot down on June 2 by a surface-to-air missile (SAM).

Capt O'Grady, assigned to the 555th Fighter Squadron at the Aviano Air Base in Italy, was flying a routine patrol in support of Operation Deny Flight, the enforcement of the NATO no-fly zone over Bosnia-Herzegovina.

O'Grady evaded capture by Serbian forces by hiding in bushes during the day and only moving at night until he was able to successfully radio for help at 2:08 a.m. on his sixth day in enemy territory.

Soon after O'Grady made radio contact with U.S. forces, two Marine CH-53E Super Stallions, whose call signs were Dash 1 and Dash 2, and two AH-1W Super Cobras were deployed for the Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel (TRAP) rescue mission of O'Grady.

The TRAP team of Marines from the 24th MEU (SOC) on board USS *Kearsarge* (LHD-3) made it to the landing zone without incident, thanks in part to the fog covering the countryside that morning. Unfortunately, the fog that had provided the team with protection also meant poor visibility for the pilots, which made the landing difficult.

One of the Super Stallions piloted by Capt Paul Fortunato, USMC, was able to land and rescue O'Grady from a hilltop.

The TRAP team faced enemy fire on their way out of the landing zone as the heavy fog had dissipated. Despite this, the team managed to avoid major damage and safely delivered O'Grady to *Kearsarge* just hours after he radioed for help from enemy territory.

O'Grady publicly thanked those involved in his rescue, calling Marines the "real heroes." 🇺🇸

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through valor made,
A debt too deep
to be repaid,
From their courage
freedom born,
To remember them
the poppy worn.



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