

DECEMBER 2019

MAGAZINE OF THE MARINES

Leatherneck

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**Going to “War” —
2ndMarDiv Conducts
Largest Field Exercise
In Decades**



**Behind the Scenes
At the Boneyard**

**Task Force Scorpion
Adapted their Tactics
To Defeat the Enemy**



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**MARINE
RAIDERS**



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DECEMBER 2019
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50 Fixing For a Fight: 2ndMarDiv Prepares For "War" at Twentynine Palms, Calif. *By the Staff of 2nd Marine Division*

The 2nd Marine Division recently kicked off the largest and most complex unscripted force-on-force field exercise in decades which pitted 2ndMarDiv units against 1st Marine Division's 7th and 4th Marine Regiments, along with British Royal Marines' 40 Commando Battle Group and the Royal Canadian Air Force's 408 Tactical Helicopter Squadron.

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COVER: A UH-1Y Venom helicopter with HMLA-269, 2nd MAW, flies during MAGTF Warfighting Exercise 1-20 at MCAGCC, Twentynine Palms, Calif., Oct. 23. See "Fixing For a Fight: 2ndMarDiv Prepares For 'War' at Twentynine Palms, Calif.," on page 50. Photo by PFC Patrick King, USMC. Copies of the cover may be obtained by sending \$2 (for mailing costs) to *Leatherneck Magazine*, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134-0775



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Letter of the Month

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

Giants of the Corps

The article, “Saviors of the Corps: Generals Louis H. Wilson Jr. and Robert H. Barrow,” by Second Lieutenant Rykar Lewis, in the August issue, reminded me of my third day of boot camp. Our series was at the PX receiving our first haircuts. With my last name beginning with “S,” I was toward the end of the line so my duty was sweeping up the already shorn hair.

A “sergeant” with a boatload of stripes with something unfamiliar in the center of his insignia walks into the shop and yells, “Attention on deck!” I assumed the position of attention. Next, a four-star general entered and also commanded, “Attention on deck!” I’m thinking if the sergeant and general both give this order, who’s next? In walks General Louis H. Wilson. He talked for several minutes and left.

Talk about being impressed! It was our third day of boot camp and we were in the presence of the Commandant, Assistant Commandant and Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps. I have never forgotten this.

Forrest L. Secord Jr.
Lansing, Mich.

I read with great interest Second Lieutenant Rykar Lewis’s excellent article in the August issue of *Leatherneck* on the contributions of two Commandants, Generals Louis H. Wilson and Robert H. Barrow. Both were pillars of the Corps and made lasting contributions to our success. However, I feel the statement, we emerged from the conflict [Vietnam War] as a wounded organization, and at possibly the lowest point in our history, is a gross overstatement.

I was a field grade officer during that time from 1968 until I retired from active duty 10 years later. Certainly we had problems as the war wound down, but it had more to do with personnel management policies than any other single factor. Individual personnel replacement sounded good but it was disaster on morale and unit cohesiveness. We learned our lesson and didn’t make the same mistake in Desert Storm and subsequent conflicts in the Middle East.

Gen Leonard Chapman was the Com-

mandant when we finally left Vietnam. The Marine Corps had 315,000 Marines on active duty during that time. The Commandant’s goal was to immediately reduce the Corps to 200,000. Separation of those with misconduct issues could be done within two weeks.

I worked for and knew Gen Wilson when he was the G-3 of 1st Marine Division and when he was the commanding general of 3rd Marine Division. I served at Headquarters Marine Corps when he became Commandant. His vision and direction resulted in activating the Air/Ground Combat Training Center at Twentynine Palms. I was involved in that effort, identifying funding sources to get it off the ground.

I only knew Gen Barrow by reputation but he was a solid regimental commander of the 9th Marines. He was a warrior.

I hope this does not detract from Lt Lewis’ fine effort but I feel the need to set the record straight.

LtCol Paul E. Westphal, USMC (Ret)
1958 to 1978
Bluffton, S.C.

Where Are the Marines From the Movie “The D.I.?”

I have always wondered what happened to the Marines who were used as extras and had speaking roles in the movie “The D.I.,” starring and directed by Jack Webb, such as Corporal John R. Brown who played Sergeant O’Neil. I am sure letters have been submitted and printed in *Leatherneck* magazine on this subject, but I do not recall ever coming across them since I first started reading the magazine in 1988. Is it possible I could receive some



Cpl John Brown, playing a sergeant in “The D.I.,” tried not to blush as Monica Lewis moved in close.

information on at least some of these Marines, such as Cpl Brown and others? Did they stay in the Corps as a career, did any end up in Vietnam and so forth? Also, have any of the watches given to the Marines by Jack Webb ever surfaced? I have wondered what they look like. I appreciate any information *Leatherneck* can provide.

I would also like to state that if I did not join the Marine Reserves in 1988, I know I would not be where I am today, with a career in law enforcement, with the values and lessons instilled in me during boot camp and what I experienced and learned during my time in the Reserve, especially my time at 3rd ANGLICO.

Rich Boyd
Lake Elsinore, Calif.

• *We here at Leatherneck can’t answer your questions so I’m hoping some of our faithful readers have some knowledge about “The D.I.” Marines. As I’m sure you saw in the September Saved Round, we featured some photos that were taken on set during the movie’s filming. For more information on the movie, read the article, “The D.I.” by TSgt Robert A. Suhosky, in the June 1957 issue in our archives online.—Editor*

Reader Spreading the Word

Colonel Reinwald, I read with interest your editorial, “From the Editor’s Desk,” in the September issue. In your article, you mention that subscriptions to *Leatherneck* magazine are down and you were reaching out to your readers asking that they try to spread the word about *Leatherneck* to others.

I have subscribed to *Leatherneck* for many years and in years past I used to bring your magazine, after reading each issue, to the local Veterans Hospital located in nearby Northampton, Mass., as well as to the Soldier’s Home in Holyoke, where I used to volunteer with the Veteran’s History Project.

Prior to that, before I retired, I used to bring your magazine to work so it could be shared by other Marines in hopes that they too would subscribe. Now, at age 70, I bring my *Leatherneck* to my doctor’s office or my wife’s doctor’s office, where I discreetly leave them in the magazine racks, along with the other magazines for patients to pick up and read.

My rationale for doing this is that I hope that another Marine or Navy corpsman will spot the magazine, read it, and

TSgt ROBERT A. SUHOSKY, USMC

hopefully take it home with them so they can subscribe themselves.

I am a Vietnam veteran, 1968 to 1969, and served again from 1990 to 1991 as a platoon sergeant with a Marine Reserve infantry unit and enjoy reading articles from these two periods of time in our history.

MGySgt Lee Forester, USMC (Ret)
Westfield, Mass.

• *Thank you very much for your help in promoting Leatherneck. I especially liked that you've been passing out copies of the magazine for years. While there's no way to capture how many memberships/subscriptions are due to your efforts, I'm sure you made an impact and we here at the Magazine of the Marines greatly appreciate it.—Editor*

A Lonely Christmas

On Dec. 2, 1950, I was in the Taebaek Mountains in North Korea as an ammo carrier for a .30-caliber air cooled machine gun with "How" Company, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines. I participated in the assault against the Chinese atop the mountain ridge who were attempting to block the Marine convoy loaded with wounded heading south on the only road to Hungnam. I was hit in the leg and the attending corpsman came to my aid. He

cut through my foul-weather clothing, checked the wound and placed me in my sleeping bag. Since I had not slept more than 15 minutes in three or four nights, I conked out, exhausted.

When H/3/5 moved out before dawn, my Marine buddies and the corpsman came back to evacuate me. Since each thought the other had evacuated me, I was inadvertently left behind. When I awoke, H/3/5 had already moved over the ridge and the Chinese had reoccupied the hill. They were so cold they were no longer a fighting force and I was able to hobble off the hill and made my way to the road convoy.

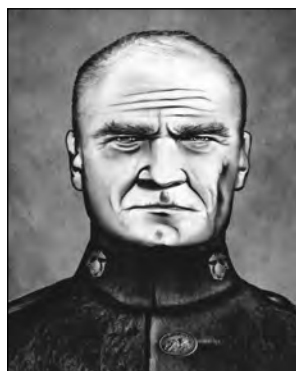
We reached Hagaru-ri and I was flown on a C-47 with nurse Lillian Kiel. I didn't think nurses were authorized in the combat zone but there was my angel. I ended up in Osaka Army Hospital just before Christmas.

On Christmas Eve, the lightly wounded sat on bunks, mostly sad, as it was our first Christmas away from home. Before lights out we heard a loud clumping of boots climbing up the stairs. We couldn't believe it was a gunnery sergeant dressed in a red makeshift jacket and a cotton beard carrying a bag slung over his shoulder. He preceded with his ritual "Ho ho ho!" and passed out woven Christmas stockings. The socks contained tangerines, hard rock candy, nuts, cheese and fruitcake. To this

day I am the only one who insists on a fruitcake at Christmas from my daughter who only buys the best—rum soaked with pecans on top.

The Christmas stockings had been donated by the subscribers of the *Milwaukee Journal* newspaper. Needless to say our spirits soared.

Fast forward about 20 years ago. I was the newspaper supervisor placing black and white advertising for one of the big auto manufactures. In order to place advertising each local newspaper was assigned advertising space. Space size consisted of a two-page spread, full page spread and 1/2-page spread. I always doubled the space for the *Milwaukee Journal* in appreciation of their Christmas gift in 1950. After about two years of "heavying up" the *Milwaukee Journal's* insertions, the vice president in charge of media came to my office, closed the door and quietly asked, "How come the *Milwaukee Journal* receives two times the normal designated number of space insertions?" I told him my stocking story and how the homesick young Marines felt back in 1950, and that I wanted to reward their thoughtful patriotism. The vice president was a "by the book" kind of guy so after relaying my story, I asked him, "Where do I send in my resignation?" He got up, opened the office door, raised



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his hand and waved goodbye. He never ever questioned the *Milwaukee Journal's* insertions again.

Because of the *Milwaukee Journal's* kindness and a not-so-grizzled gunnery sergeant, we had a nice Christmas that December.

PFC Ronald W. Camillo
USMCR, 1948-1951
Livonia, Mich.

Article Fills in Gaps For Marine's Family

The September issue of *Leatherneck* contained an article titled, "Tough Going for Easy Company." It mentioned a Marine named Private First Class James W. Ojida from North Bangor, N.Y. I am proud to say that Marine was my uncle and I am also a Marine. During the battle for Peleliu, James was severely burned and never regained his finger prints. The burn scars from his finger tips to mid-biceps remained with him for life.

James was discharged from the Corps with the rank of staff sergeant. James passed away in 1966 leaving six children. His children did not know about his early years and this article will help them understand some of the few odd habits he had. His brother, Henry, was an influence on my going into the Marine Corps, later followed by my son Brian.

Reading about the Marine Corps history brings some surprises on occasion as with this article.

Robert Ojida
Fort Covington, N.Y.

I Served in USS Pueblo

This is in reference to the letter by Sergeant Ken Fields in the August *Leatherneck*. He states of his involvement with the crew of USS *Pueblo* (AGER-2), when we returned to the States after our imprisonment in North Korea.

I am one of the two Marines on the ship that he refers to. It is always interesting to get another view of what was going on at the time as we were really out of it as we acclimated to being free again.

The debriefings were intensive followed by the court of inquiry.

Robert Chicca
Bonita, Calif.

My First Letter to Leatherneck

I have been a *Leatherneck* reader since March 1953. Many times I've thought about writing, but never have. I just finished the article, "One Man Stand," on Master Gunnery Sergeant Riensche, by Kyle Watts, in the September issue. It was an outstanding piece of Marine Corps history.

I retired in April 1985 after 32 wonderful

years. I had two tours in Vietnam—as a grunt the first time and as first sergeant on my second tour. I waived the sole survivor right since my brother, Sergeant Major Melvin Davis, was killed in action in 1967. I have been involved in Marine support activities ever since, both active duty Marines and JROTC.

I cannot believe that MGySgt Riensche did not receive the Medal of Honor. What he did was amazing. During my 32 years, I've never heard of anything more heroic. I've often heard that the Corps almost always downgrades awards. In 1966, I recommended three of my Marines for the Bronze Star. They finally were awarded Navy Achievement medals with combat "V." This was for an action under enemy fire, saving two wounded Marines.

After reading the article I guess the scuttlebutt about downgrading is straight scoop. I wish that I had the honor of knowing "Top."

SgtMaj Earl R. Davis, USMC (Ret)
Mathews, N.C.

• *Sergeant Major, I've never been able to ascertain what actions rate the Medal of Honor vice a Navy Cross or other awards. I agree with you that MGySgt Riensche is deserving of the nation's highest award. I also strongly believe that more than three Marines should have received the Medal of Honor in Iraq and Afghanistan. As a former adjutant, I absolutely understand the need not to inflate awards and to ensure consistency but much like Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter's famous quote about "knowing it when I see it," it seems obvious that heroics such as MGySgt Riensche's should be recognized with the Medal of Honor.—Editor*

Almost Enlisted

I was about to meet with a young man, recently discharged from the United States Air Force, for breakfast at a local restaurant. I was going to welcome him back to the community and buy his breakfast. I was the first to arrive and stood in line at the hostess desk. In front of me was a young man I judged to be about 18. He had a short haircut and sported a Marine Corps T-shirt that featured the famous yellow footprints known by every Marine who passed through Parris Island or San Diego and the name of a certain unit. The shirt also bore other Marine Corps symbols. He was with another man, a bit older, and I decided I was going to buy this young Marine's breakfast as well.

When he looked at me, I said, "Semper Fi!" He didn't respond so I assumed he hadn't heard me. I moved closer and said, "Where are you stationed?" There was a pause, an awkward silence, and then he

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said, "I'm not stationed anywhere. I almost enlisted . . ." Whatever he said after that wasn't important. It turns out that, according to him, he did physical training with a group of recruits for six months but was leaving for college that very afternoon. He didn't enlist. He wasn't a Marine. He wasn't even a Marine recruit, yet here he was with a military haircut wearing a shirt that led me, and everyone else who saw it, to believe that he was a Marine. He wasn't. I didn't buy him breakfast. Because I had my church polo shirt on, I was polite. But, inside, I was cold.

Perhaps the same is true with the other military branches, but those of us who actually earned the title United States Marine take this stuff very seriously. He was actually lucky I was the one behind him in line. I know plenty of Marines and veterans who would have made a public issue of it right there in the restaurant. Some might even have ripped it off, risking an assault charge.

Wearing a military shirt isn't the same as a college shirt or sweatshirt. I have a University of Tennessee shirt. Except for continuing education classes taken when I worked for the Tennessee Department of Human Services, I took no classes at UT. I have had an Atlanta Braves baseball cap and an Atlanta Falcons shirt. No one

thinks I played for those teams. It's a fan thing. It's perfectly acceptable. Dressing in a manner designed to make other people think you are something when you are not is unacceptable. It's pretentious. It's deceptive. It's posing. It's a lie.

If I see someone wearing a Vietnam veteran or Afghanistan War cap, or the like, I make the assumption that person has been to war. I treat them as such. I am not a Vietnam veteran. I am, however, a member of the Vietnam Veterans of America Association and I am a member because they allow Vietnam-era veterans to join. I support that organization. However, I do not wear anything that might identify me as a combat veteran or an in-country veteran of that war. I do not own a Vietnam veteran shirt or ball cap. That honor is for those who have been there and done that, in my estimation. I am a Marine veteran, a Cold War veteran. That is enough for me, because it's what I am.

There is a term called stolen valor. It refers to those who fraudulently pose as veterans, or those veterans who pretend that they did more than they actually did by wearing unauthorized medals, ribbons, or rank, for example. The Stolen Valor Act of 2013, signed into law by Barack Obama, under certain circumstances, makes such posing a federal crime. It's

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wrong and it dishonors those who truly paid the price and didn't "almost enlist." It is not a crime, under the Stolen Valor Act, to falsely pretend to be in the military. What it is, however, is an indication that the person is either ignorant or that the person has a lack of integrity.

In the Marine family, I don't know about the others, there's a bit of an exception for families of Marines. For example, when a Marine veteran dies and the Marine Corps League presents the widow or widower a Fallen Marine Certificate, the local Marine Corps League also presents the Marine Corps eagle, globe and anchor symbol to the survivor in the form of a lapel pin or a brooch. They are told they will always be part of the Marine family and to wear it proudly. There are bumper stickers, caps, pins, and shirts for Marine dads, Marine moms, and other family members. If I see a man wearing a USMC T-shirt and comment on it, and he says, "My granddaughter is the Marine, not me," I congratulate him and welcome him to the family. But to parade around in public hoping that someone will think you are a military person by having the haircut and a piece of clothing? Nope. That's just wrong.

You didn't "almost enlist," as hundreds of thousands of people, perhaps millions,

have claimed. You either did or you didn't. If you chose not to enlist, fine. There's no military draft in this country so there's no obligation to serve. Only 1 percent of the people in this nation currently serve in the military. Most of those who did serve do not think less of someone who chose another path. But we also have no respect and little patience with the pretenders. Leave the shirts, the caps, and the pins to those who earned the right to wear them.

David Epps
Sharpsburg, Ga.

How Times Have Changed

The other day I saw a young Marine walk out of the commissary wearing a T-shirt, shorts and "go aheads" (shower shoes). How times have changed. I remember when we were not allowed to go into a Marine Corps facility unless we were wearing a shirt with a collar along with other appropriate civilian attire. To go on liberty we had to wear a collared shirt, not be on the duty section and have our liberty card at the ready. We could then head over to "swoop circle" and grab a ride to go to wherever we wanted to go for a penny a mile.

Living in the barracks consisted of one large squad bay and steel bunk beds with sagging springs and a mattress that were

probably leftover from the Korean War. Reveille was 0500, fall out for PT, shower, shave and then fall in for morning chow formation to be marched to the battalion mess hall. No stragglers. The community head always had a urinal marked for use by the unfortunate few who contracted a social disease while on liberty. For some reason the word urinal always seemed to be spray painted on the walls in the heads as "URNIAL." Maybe the police sergeant had one of the career privates that were still allowed in the Marine Corps do the painting.

If we didn't have enough money to go on liberty, we could always go drink beer at the slop chute. There we had the luxury of drinking beer out of paper cups while immersing ourselves in the camaraderie of our fellow Marines. I guess paper cups were used so we wouldn't hit each other with bottles when we decided to have a little fun. Heck, who needed bottles when we had folding metal chairs to do battle with. A little bit of inter-battalion rivalry never hurt until the military police came along. Then we all walked away with arms draped across one another as if we were lifelong friends.

Very few Marines owned a car. If they did, it was a "junker" but it did run and got
[continued on page 68]



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In Every Clime and Place

Compiled by Sara W. Bock

SETERMOEN, NORWAY MRF-E Rotation Transferred To Marines of 1/8

The Marines of 2nd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment began their six-month training rotation during a Marine Rotational Force-Europe (MRF-E) transfer-of-authority ceremony in Norway's Setermoen Army Base, Sept. 27.

During the ceremony, Lieutenant Colonel Anthony Johnston, the commanding officer of 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, handed over the battle colors of MRF-E to LtCol Michael Stansberry, the commanding officer of 2/6.

"Through five major security cooperation exercises and 10 military-to-military engagements, 1st Battalion, 8th Marines and our enablers across the operating forces have demonstrated our firm commitment to our NATO allies and partner nations," said Johnston. "Our personnel and equipment are capable of not only operating, but thriving, in any climate. We will ensure these skill sets are passed along appropriately to our replacements, and we will share our experiences with the operating forces at large."

The ceremony was presided over by Major General Patrick J. Hermesmann, commander of U.S. Marine Corps Forces



SGT JUSTIN TOLEDO, USMC

Above: Marines with MRF-E check the functionality of an unmanned aerial system before flight in Setermoen, Norway, Oct. 10. The rotational force focuses on regional engagements throughout Europe by conducting various exercises, cold weather and mountain warfare training, and military-to-military engagements.



LCPL LARISA CHAVEZ, USMC

MajGen Patrick J. Hermesmann, commander of U.S. Marine Corps Forces Europe and Africa, speaks to attendees at the MRF-E transfer of authority ceremony in Setermoen, Norway, Sept. 27, during which the Marines of 2/6 took over the rotation from the Marines of 1/8.

Europe and Africa, and was attended by Chief of the Norwegian Army, MajGen Eirik Johan Kristoffersen and other senior officers of the Norwegian Armed Forces and Brigade North, also based in Setermoen.

“We are especially proud of our MRF–E Marines and Sailors for all they do here in Norway and throughout Europe,” said MajGen Hermesmann. “I am confident that our strong bond with our NATO ally Norway will continue and grow stronger through continued military-to-military engagement, and the shared hardship of tough, realistic training in this austere environment.”

The Marine Corps rotational presence in Norway facilitates military exercises in the Nordic region that support NATO and United States European Command campaign plans, increase interoperability with allies and partners, and improve the Marine Corps’ cold weather and mountain warfare proficiencies.

MRF–E

CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C. **Intel Marines, British Soldiers** **Share Capabilities in** **Infantry Immersion Trainer**

Marines with 2nd Intelligence Battalion, II Marine Expeditionary Force Information Group strengthened their relationship with British Army Reserve soldiers from 5th Military Intelligence (5MI) Battalion during Exercise Phoenix Odyssey at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., Sept. 11-19.

The exercise originated in 2014 and is designed to promote cohesion between British and U.S. military units so they are better prepared to work alongside one another. The weeklong training placed the two units inside the Infantry Immersion Trainer at Camp Lejeune where the Marines and British soldiers conducted detaining operations, handled “prisoners of war,” and found simulated improvised explosive devices. The urban setting of the IIT allowed for realistic training, and interactive role players gave the combined force of intelligence operatives a realistic setting in which to apply their skills.

“It’s important to train together,” said Lance Corporal Alexander Pino, a patrol leader with 2nd Intelligence Battalion. “On deployments we work with other countries, so the more time and training we get with them, the better we will work with them.”

The training affords Marines and British soldiers the opportunity to share intelligence operations capabilities with one another, expanding their mutual capabilities to work as NATO allies in the event of real-world operations.



LCPL TAYLOR SMITH, USMC

LCpl Alexander Pino, a patrol leader with 2nd Intel Bn, demonstrates a detaining movement during Exercise Phoenix Odyssey at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., Sept. 12. The exercise allowed U.S. Marines and British soldiers to share their respective intelligence operations capabilities and expanded their ability to work together in the event of real-world operations.



LCPL TAYLOR SMITH, USMC

Marines with 2nd Intel Bn and British soldiers with 5MI Bn conduct room-clearing operations while participating in a live-action simulation during Exercise Phoenix Odyssey, Sept. 12. The Marines welcomed their British counterparts to MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., where they trained together for nine days.

“These exercises are not only great in what they achieve for learning objectives, but also just how we can iron out ‘creases’ so when we deploy we can work shoulder-to-shoulder,” said British Army Lieutenant Colonel Angel Sedgwick, the commanding officer of 5MI Battalion.

Bilateral training exercises like Phoenix Odyssey serve to provide crucial training opportunities to share intelligence operations capabilities.

“We train together to learn how to work with one another in the intelligence operations center, so that in the event we have to deploy, it’s important we understand how to do the same processes,” said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Tevis Lang, USMC, a master analyst with 2nd Intel Bn. “If we understand each other, we can work together anywhere.”

LCpl Taylor Smith, USMC



CPL KENNY GOMEZ, USMC

Above: A Marine with SPMAGTF–CR-AF posts security during QRF training at Naval Station Rota, Spain, Sept. 30.



CPL KENNY GOMEZ, USMC

During the QRF training rehearsal in Rota, Spain, Sept. 30, a Marine with SPMAGTF–CR-AF sets up communication equipment.



CPL KENNY GOMEZ, USMC

SPMAGTF Tested on Quick Reaction Skills

Marines with Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force–Crisis Response-Africa 20.1, Marine Forces Europe and Africa, conducted quick-reaction force training at Naval Station Rota, Spain, Sept. 30. The rehearsal increased the Marines’ ability to conduct link-up procedures, on scene and en-route trauma stabilization, and offensive and defensive operations. SPMAGTF–CR-AF is deployed to conduct crisis response and theater security operations in Africa and promote regional stability by conducting military-to-military training exercises throughout Europe and Africa.

Above: MV-22 Ospreys with SPMAGTF–CR-AF prepare to extract Marines from a landing zone at Naval Station Rota, Spain, Sept. 30.

Below: A simulated casualty is extracted by SPMAGTF–CR-AF Marines during QRF training in Rota, Spain, Sept. 30, which included training in on-scene and enroute trauma stabilization.



CPL KENNY GOMEZ, USMC



LCPL GAVIN UMBOH, USMC

Marines from VMA-231 perform preflight checks on an AV-8B Harrier before a training mission with the 175th Fighter Squadron, 114th FW of the South Dakota Air National Guard in Sioux Falls, S.D., Oct. 5. While participating in Exercise Banzai Badlands, the squadrons conducted force-on-force training consisting of simulated air-to-air combat and air-to-ground strikes to enhance interoperability and readiness.

SIOUX FALLS, S.D.

Marines Act as Enemy in the Sky During Banzai Badlands

Marine Attack Squadron (VMA) 231 supported the South Dakota Air National Guard's 114th Fighter Wing (FW) by acting as an opposing force to help provide realistic air combat scenarios during the three-day, total force readiness Exercise Banzai Badlands at Joe Foss Field in Sioux Falls, S.D., Oct. 3-5.

"This exercise went through the full spectrum of our [capabilities] and their capabilities, which boils down to close air support, air-to-ground training and air-to-air combat training," said Major Nate Smith, a pilot with VMA-231. The exercise consisted of simulated air combat, ground strikes and defense against simulated ground attacks. In the air, the 114th FW practiced striking enemy bases and destroying enemy aircraft. While on the ground, personnel practiced protecting against simulated missile, chemical and ground attacks.

"VMA-231 is here to support the 114th FW's training," said Smith. "This is to help them evaluate readiness for combat and validate previous training."

AV-8B Harriers with VMA-231 provided the 114th FW pilots, who fly F-16 Fighting Falcons, with aircraft and skillsets they aren't accustomed to fighting against. The Marines used simulated surface-to-air missile turrets and missile sites to provide the 114th FW simulated targets. VMA-231 and the 114th FW engaged in

simulated air-to-air combat during the fighter wing's air-to-ground strikes.

Exercise Banzai Badlands enabled the 114th FW to engage in realistic training, solidifying their skills and procedures. The exercise also gave VMA-231 the opportunity to exercise many of the squadron's organic capabilities in a high-tempo training environment, including the logistical challenges of moving a squadron from North Carolina to South Dakota, conducting aircraft maintenance in an unfamiliar scenario, and Marine pilots working in a new environment.

"Coming to South Dakota allows VMA-231 to exercise all of its logistical functions, and being in a new environment brings new challenges," said Smith. "It also gives a chance to train in the joint environment which is really important."

The maintainers worked long hours ensuring aircraft were safe and ready for consistent flight missions. The pilots got a chance to fly and simulate fighting against unique opponents and aircraft with unfamiliar capabilities.

"This exercise demonstrated that we are capable of doing our job at a moment's notice, regardless of the conditions," said Captain Taylor Hiester, USAF, an F-16 pilot with the 114th FW.

Many challenging training missions were conducted during the three-day simulated force-on-force training. In deployed environments, U.S. forces from different branches with different procedures are likely to work together on the

battlefield. Exercises like Banzai Badlands give units a chance to practice working together and interacting to gain a mutual understanding of each other's tactics and service-unique skillsets.

"The Air Force and the Marine Corps are never going to war alone," Hiester said. "Joint training operations like this allow us to show synergy between our forces and ensure that we can conduct the mission properly."

LCpl Gavin Umboh, USMC

MALAYSIA

Tiger Strike: Malaysian Rifle Squads Embed With Marine Platoons

Marines and Sailors from the *Boxer* Amphibious Ready Group and 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit participated in Exercise Tiger Strike at several training locations in Malaysia to promote integration and interoperability between U.S. and Malaysian Armed Forces (MAF), Oct. 2-5.

The joint exercises included jungle warfare and survival training; amphibious assault; close air support provided by AV-8B Harriers with the MEU's air combat element, Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 163 (Reinforced); combat service support and cultural exchanges.

"What we have shared together over these past few days has been very beneficial for both us and the U.S. Marines," said Lieutenant General Dato' Suhaimi Mohd Zuki, the Joint Force Commander of the

Maj Kyle Padilla, USMC, left, the company commander with Lima Co, BLT 3/5, 11th MEU, presents a plaque to a member of the Malaysian Armed Forces during Exercise Tiger Strike in Malaysia, Oct. 4.

Malaysian Armed Forces. “This exercise shows the great friendship that Malaysia and the United States Marine Corps has in one another.”

The 11th MEU’s ground combat element, Battalion Landing Team 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines, focused on small-unit training by conducting jungle warfare training ranges alongside the MAF to sharpen their ability to respond across the spectrum of military operations and foster interoperability between the two militaries.

“Tiger Strike was a great opportunity for U.S. Marines and Sailors to further increase our capabilities alongside our Malaysian partners,” said Major Kyle Padilla, the commanding officer of “Lima” Company, BLT 3/5. “Jungle warfare presents unique challenges that we successfully trained to during our time here. Embedding Malaysian rifle squads with each Marine rifle platoon allowed us to fully integrate and learn from each other’s doctrine.”



CPL ISRAEL CHINCO, USMC

The 11th MEU consists of a command element; an aviation combat element, VMM-163 (Rein); a ground combat element, BLT 3/5 and a logistics combat element, Combat Logistics Battalion 11.

“We are honored to be here as part of the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps’ commitment to our Malaysian partners,” said

Captain Dale Heinken, USN, the commanding officer of USS Boxer (LHD-4). “Our Sailors and Marines were able to work directly with their Malaysian counterparts to share knowledge and strengthen the relationship between our two nations.”

Sgt Matthew Teutsch, USMC



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Dearborn, Mich.



COURTESY OF J. CHARLES BERNARD JR.

37th Commandant Meets with WW II Marine Veterans

General Robert B. Neller, 37th Commandant of the Marine Corps, center, met with seven Marine veterans of World War II at the Marine Corps League Hall in Dearborn, Mich., April 6.

Among the seven were 98-year-old Ed Gazel, who saw action on Tarawa, Saipan, Tinian and Ie Shima; and Arthur Russell, also 98, who fought on Tarawa, Saipan and Tinian. Both are members of the Marine Corps League Dearborn Detachment #152.

"All of the representatives of 'the Greatest Generation' were very proud and grateful at the opportunity," said J. Charles Bernard Jr., a member of the Marine Corps League Dearborn Detachment #152. "Likewise, General Neller expressed his gratitude in individual follow-up letters to all of them, which are now cherished souvenirs of the occasion."

Submitted by J. Charles Bernard Jr.

Wheatland, S.D.

Charity Ride, Indian Motorcycles Team Up To Help Wounded Veterans

Four Marines were among the 17 veterans who participated in the fifth annual Veterans Charity Ride, sponsored by Indian Motorcycle, beginning on July 25 in Salt Lake City, Utah. Along the way, the participants took in the sights of the picturesque Pikes Peak range in Colorado en route to Sturgis Motorcycle Rally in South Dakota. From the left, Marine veterans John Wood, Anthony Indrieri, Eric Morante and Kenny Toone stopped to take a photo in Wheatland, S.D., during the three-week, 3,000-mile ride.

After participating as a rider in 2018—which he says was his first time on a motorcycle—Morante returned this year as a mentor for the new participants. Injured in Iraq in 2007 and medically retired from the Marine Corps in 2010, Morante says that his experiences with Veterans Charity Ride have helped him heal physically, mentally and emotionally.

"You are in a group, but because you're on your own motorcycle, you're in your own little zone. It kind of helps people get out of the isolation but still gives the independence to let them know that they can do things on their own," said Morante. "It's like you're part of a team, but you still have your own individual mission."

A veteran-operated nonprofit, Veterans Charity Ride uses



COURTESY OF PAUL CARBONE

"motorcycle therapy" to help wounded and amputee combat veterans readjust to civilian life. The participants ride a variety of Indian motorcycles with custom-built Champion Sidecars for amputee and paraplegic veterans. By fostering a peer mentor environment, the veterans connect with one another and feel comfortable expressing themselves, said Morante. The program also helps introduce them back into the civilian community to reconnect with the country they served, stopping in towns to meet supporters along the way.

Submitted by Devon Malloy

Santa Clara, Utah

Local Toys for Tots Drive Kicks Off at Car Show

Members of the Marine Corps League Utah Dixie Detachment #1270 partnered with Darin Stevens, left, and Adam Roettger, right, co-owners of Vamp Tattoo Shop in Santa Clara, Utah, for their fourth annual car show and Toys for Tots kickoff event held in the tattoo shop's parking lot, Oct. 5.

Local car enthusiasts brought their vehicles for onlookers to admire, a local taco restaurant set up shop, and live music was provided at the event. Vamp Tattoo Shop collected more than \$750 in cash donations and six collection boxes full of toys for the Southern Utah Toys for Tots 2019 program. A project of the Marine Corps Reserve, Toys for Tots pro-



COURTESY OF WILLIAM G. FORTUNE



vides toys and gifts for children from low-income households during the holiday season. In 2018, 4,000 children in Southern Utah received gifts from the program, which is made possible through the efforts of local volunteers, the Utah Dixie detachment of the Marine Corps League and friends of the Corps like Stevens and Roettger.

Submitted by William G. Fortune

Franklin, Mass.

Marine Veteran Instrumental in Installation of New Memorial Walkway

The town of Franklin, Mass., is proud to honor those who served, and its town common is home to nine war monuments honoring local citizens who have defended their nation. A new addition to the town common, a Veterans Memorial Walkway, was completed May 27 thanks to the efforts of the Franklin Veterans' Council. One member of the council is Marine veteran Larry Bederian, pictured here on the memorial walkway. A tireless advocate for his fellow veterans, Bederian also serves as the VFW post commander in Franklin.

The bricks that line the walkway are engraved with names of U.S. servicemembers and their branch of service. The walkway can accommodate 5,000 of these bricks which are available for purchase through the town's "buy-a-brick" project. Along with the bricks, 45 granite posts flank the walkway with bronze plaques honoring the 45 Franklin veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice from World War I to Operation Iraqi Freedom.



SARA LIBERTE

Submitted by Paul Carbone



COURTESY OF BARRY HART

Paris, Tenn.

Vietnam Marine Veteran Presented With Bronze Star By Active-Duty Son

When Marine veteran Barry Hart reconnected with Captain Don Greenlaw on Facebook, decades after they served together in Vietnam, he learned that Greenlaw had recommended him for a Bronze Star for his actions as a sergeant in 1970, while serving with Headquarters Company, Headquarters Battalion, 1st Marine Division. Hart never received the award so Greenlaw resubmitted the award nomination to Headquarters Marine Corps for final approval by the Secretary of the Navy.

During a Veterans Day ceremony at the Krider Performing Arts Center in Paris, Tenn., Nov. 10, 2018, Hart was presented with the Bronze Star with Combat "V" distinguishing device in front of an audience of 500 people. Hart's son, Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Matt Hart, presented the award to his father 48 years after he had jumped on a satchel containing explosives to protect his Marines and pursued the intruder who had placed the satchel in the billeting area Hart shared with other Marines.

Hart's other sons, Josh and Nathan, also participated in the ceremony, as did his brother Gene Hart, also a Marine veteran, and his former drill instructor, Sergeant James Schnitzius of Winter Park, Fla. Sadly, Capt Greenlaw did not live to see the day Hart received the award, though he learned the award had been approved shortly before he passed away.

Submitted by Barry Hart

"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.heck@mca-marines.org. Submission does not guarantee publication, and we cannot guarantee the return of photos.



"Mr. Deeds" Goes to War

**With a Pair of
Pistol Packin' Mamas**

**Gary Cooper Escaped Bombing
but Came Home Thrilled
With Humility and Pride
Over the Job Marines are
doing in the Pacific**

By Gary Cooper

As told to TSgt Robert H. Meyers, USMC

The group I have been most reluctant to talk about it for publication since we returned. We were afraid it might appear that we were trying to capitalize on the tour. Our feelings are the exact opposite. We feel we were honored to be permitted to go into this theater of the war, and it was a privilege and an experience, I assure you, that left us all deeply touched. We will never forget it. We never want to forget it. Whatever small part we played again by having been given the chance to see and meet the group.

Our group, Una Merkel, Phyllis Brooks, Andy Arcari and I, came home with feelings of humility and profound appreciation.

We wish everyone in civilian life could see the things we saw and meet the Marines, soldiers and Sailors we were so fortunate to meet. They would then better appreciate and understand what is being done for them in this war. They would see for themselves the hardships these men endure day in and day out; hardships we back in our safe homeland cannot even imagine. They would be amazed and forever grateful at the way our group and hardships taken with a smile. They would be affected, as we were, by the warm appreciation these men display for just the slightest bit of attention or thought. They would understand why we came up with lumps in our throats many, many times during the tour.



COURTESY OF STATE LIBRARY OF QUEENSLAND

Phyllis Brooks, Gary Cooper and Una Merkel visited Brisbane, Australia, while they were touring forward locations to visit the men deployed there.

To start at the beginning, we left Hollywood on pretty short notice. We went by train to San Francisco where we spent two days rushing around getting passports and credentials in order. Then we flew by Army transport to Hickam Field in Hawaii. All of us were nervous, not so much about the trip or the scenes we were to see, but whether we would amount to anything as entertainers for the troops. None of us could be considered singers or dancers, but Andy, the accordionist, was one of the best musicians I've ever heard. But neither of the girls has ever done much, if any, singing before a live audience, and certainly I'm no singer, storyteller or tap dancer. And we didn't even have our act ready.

Well, we thought we were going to Australia first, and would have time there to get our show together. I had some old

jokes and stuff—I stole them from Jack Benny and Bob Hope—but we honestly didn't know what we were going to do. And we found that we couldn't rehearse in the ship. We were lucky to have a place to sit. But we didn't go to Australia right away. We landed at one of those tiny little islands and discovered we had a show to do for the men stationed there.

We put on a show. I don't know how, but I guess it wasn't as bad as we thought. Those men were so starved for anything in the way of entertainment they even enjoyed us. We were to find that this was true almost everywhere else we went. Those boys down there feel like they're the forgotten men of the world, and sometimes it seemed that they were, or had been.

Soon, however, we took off and it wasn't long before we were in Australia. We had

**Those men were so
starved for anything in the
way of entertainment
they even enjoyed us ...
Those boys down there
feel like they're the forgotten
men of the world.**

to fill out more credentials and passports, and then they gave us some GI clothes. I'd been wearing just my regular trousers and shirt. The GI clothes felt good. The gals had taken some nice clothes along, a few evening dresses and sports dresses and whatnot. They had a tough time keeping them in order.

At first our show was about 45 minutes long, including Andy's playing. The boys certainly went for him and his accordion. They'd yell out, requesting songs, and he'd always play 'em. He can play any tune, popular or classical. He got a lot of requests for classical pieces, too, which surprised us. After a while, though, we weren't surprised at anything we discovered with those kids.

I'd like to say this about the Marines. You never have to explain a joke or gag to them. They're right on the ball all the time. They'll jump ahead of you if you don't move fast. They're an alert outfit, and no one should ever try to "play down" to them. We found that out every time we hit a Marine camp.

We saw a lot of Marines, of course, and met many of the officers. Speaking in this connection, we'd heard some criticism that in some cases officers supposedly



COURTESY OF STATE LIBRARY OF QUEENSLAND

Gary Cooper signs an autograph for a servicewoman in Brisbane, Australia, November 1943.



COURTESY OF STATE LIBRARY OF QUEENSLAND

Film stars Gary Cooper, Phyllis Brooks and Una Merkel in Brisbane, Australia, at a press conference, Nov. 8, 1943. The stars were on their way to a tour of forward areas where they entertained the troops.



LEATHERNECK FILE PHOTO

Men out in the field discovered the long, lanky Cooper to be a modest, regular guy, ever-ready to bat the breeze or put on a show that was calculated to please them.

had monopolized visitors on a tour. We did not find this at all. Instead, most of the officers were insistent that we help with the recreation of the enlisted men first, last and always. This was true not only of the Marines, but the other branches of the service as well.

We met some of the finest people I ever hope to meet—Colonel Whaling, who was with General Rupertus' outfit and also Gen Rupertus. Una had a funny experience. She met the son of a man who used to work at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer when she was over there. He was a Marine, an enlisted man, named George Minnick. She hadn't seen him since he was a little kid and he and his sister used to bring her cakes baked by their mother. Those Marines were swell. One of them gave Phyllis a handsome ashtray carved

out of a shell, and a big sergeant named Ward gave Una a Japanese rifle captured at Tulagi. She has to have it cleared before she gets it into this country, but she's going to auction it off for war bonds.

It was this outfit, made up mostly of veterans of Guadalcanal, which "decorated" us with Guadalcanal arm patches. Col Whaling did the awarding. Do you know the girls were so touched they both cried? One Marine, a corporal, walked by Phyllis afterward and said, "Treasure that, sister. They were hard fought for, and hard won."

And then when, after our show, the whole bunch stood up and sang "From the Halls of Montezuma," the girls started bawling again. I felt kind of like it myself.

We spent about five weeks in New Guinea, playing two, three or more shows a day. Between shows we visited hospitals,

ate chow with the men, and all the time we were begging to be taken to a combat zone. But they wouldn't let us.

They treated us so carefully we were never in any real danger. Once, while we were visiting a hospital at Lei, which was only 40 minutes from the Japanese, we had an alert. You should have seen those boys hit the deck from their cots, dressed in nightshirts, pajamas or less. We didn't lose any time looking for cover either. But the Japanese didn't drop anything.

Another place we went to apparently had been expecting us. They had four slit trenches all marked off for us with signs over each lettered, "Una," "Phyllis," "Andy," and one for me. Over them was a big sign that read, "Falling Stars Dive Here."

That shows you what spirit those boys have down there. They keep right on punching all the time. Talk about morale. We at home should take lessons from them.

We kept on building our show and it was about two hours long when we really got going with it. I certainly was lucky to have the two gals and Andy. All three were simply swell. Phyllis had a song number, and Una had another which she called, "I Couldn't Say No." It was a little spicy, but not too much. We were careful not to have anything off-color in the show. We found out that the kids down there don't go for any dirty stuff when there are nice girls around. For my part of the show, I told a few bum jokes, and I sang the one song I knew. Thing called "Ragtime Cowboy Joe." Sure, I was lousy.

I'll never forget one day. We came to one camp and it was raining like the devil.



LEATHERNECK FILE PHOTO

During their travels to entertain U.S. troops in the South Pacific, Cooper and his three partners posed with some island natives during a visit to an isolated outpost.



LEATHERNECK FILE PHOTO

The entertainers traveled by plane, jeep and foot, using anything to get them to the places they were going.

We found several thousand men waiting for us. They were sitting in the mud. Not on benches or logs, mind you, but in the only place available, which was mud. We were told they had been waiting for us since 2 o'clock that afternoon, and it was after 5 p.m. when we managed to reach the spot.

That will give you an idea of how lonely those boys were for fun and the sight of someone, anyone from home. You just don't know how far away that place seems and is until you get down there. Some of the boys told us that home, their real home, seemed like a dim, pleasant dream to them. Our faces, they said, were sort

**Our faces, they said,
were sort of familiar to them
because they'd seen
them on the screen, and it
was the sight of something
familiar, not us, which meant
so much to them.**

of familiar to them because they'd seen them on the screen, and it was the sight of something familiar, not us, which meant so much to them. Just anything that would carry them back once again to the homes they had known.

One day, early in the tour, we were at a camp. It was raining, as usual. Our stage was a small plank platform with a tarpaulin stretched over for a roof. Every so often someone would ram a pole up and tilt it to let the water spill out. Someone called out and asked for the Lou Gehrig speech. That was the one we did in the Gehrig picture, where Lou said goodbye to baseball in his last appearance at Yankee Stadium. I told the boys I had forgotten—it had been more than two

Leading Man is Actually "Everyman"

Gary Cooper answered the doorbell of his dressing room at the Samuel Goldwyn Studio in Hollywood and led the way inside. He's tall, about 6 feet 2 or 3, and built like one of the fence posts he used to wire on his father's ranch in Montana. He wore grey flannel slacks, sport shoes, a canary yellow wool shirt and a coat that was unquestionably expensive but whose material seemed more appropriate for a bathroom mat.

"They're just fixing this joint up. Smells like hell. Have a seat." He talks in the same clipped fashion you hear on the screen. He waved toward a sofa and seemed very self-conscious. He was, and invariably is, when confronted with an interview.

"Smells pretty bad, doesn't it?" he asked. It did, but merely of fresh paint.

"Room'll be all right if I get a bed in it," Cooper ambled on, still ill at ease and sparring for time. "They're just fixing it up for me." He said he hadn't occupied the dressing room suite for some time. Years before it had been the luxurious dressing quarters of the late Douglas Fairbanks Sr. Only Cooper didn't say "luxurious," he doesn't use big words. He doesn't use any words, large or small, any more than he has to.

He settled his frame into an overstuffed chair and bent one leg over the right arm. Presently he had both legs dangling over the side, and soon he had reversed positions and was hanging over the left arm of the chair. Midway in the switch

he would stretch, yawn, or remove and replace his silver-rimmed spectacles. Cooper being interviewed is like a man about to get the third degree. He's as fidgety as a dog with fleas.

It seemed hours before the major topic of the interview—the tour Cooper and three others took to the South Pacific—had been launched. It probably seemed even longer to Cooper.

He was reluctant about the matter because he was genuinely afraid someone would think he was boasting or cashing in on the trip. He is modest and self-effacing to a fault when it comes to discussing himself. It isn't an act. He is just that way. Una Merkel, one of the tour members, said Cooper was never one to hog the spotlight during the trip; on the contrary, he made the other tour members the stars of the troupe.

The lanky "Coop," as his intimates call him, has been a movie star since 1925, but he hasn't acted like one. Once, caught in the middle of a legal tangle between two studios fighting over, his contract, he was valued as a \$4 million asset. He's a diamond still somewhat in the rough.

Once he started talking for *Leatherneck* about the trip—not about himself, but about the men he met, and the pride he felt in being permitted to meet them—he forgot his misgivings and became as easy as an old shoe. No wonder he's worth \$4 million to any studio.

TSgt Robert H. Myers, USMC



LEATHERNECK FILE PHOTO



LEATHERNECK FILE PHOTO

Soldiers, Sailors and Marines in the audiences especially loved the performances of “Pistol Packin’ Mama,” the smash hit of each show.

MPs had to open aisles as a result of the large crowds that turned out to listen to the touring stars.

years since we made that picture—but I went off to one side with a pencil and a piece of paper and managed to scribble most of it down from memory.

Then I got up and read it off. I told the boys it was a speech which Lou himself and his wife, Eleanor, had composed the night before the occasion; that it was the speech of one of the greatest guys in the world, a man who had lived a clean life, and was one of the greatest athletes of all time. Then, I said, he ran into misfortune and an illness that took his life, but that he had faced the bad break with the same courage and spirit that he had met everything else with.

Those words were true, just as Gehrig’s life was true and real and an inspiration for anyone who chooses to follow his footsteps. Usually the boys out in the audience kept up a line of playful chatter, but when they listened to the Gehrig speech they were so quiet you could have heard a pin drop.

Our big song number, however, came with all of us doing “Pistol Packin’ Mama.” We really gave it to them corny, and they liked it, bad as it was. Of course, the two gals were the hit of the show. As soon as the kids would see them they’d let out a howl. Some of those boys, as you know, hadn’t seen an American woman for two years or more. I can’t say enough for the girls. They worked like real troupers, which they are. They took a beating. Riding through a jungle in a jeep is not

like taking a drive down the boulevard in a limousine, but they’d go anywhere, anytime, in any kind of truck, jeep or on foot. And they always managed to arrive looking pretty. I don’t know how they did it, but they did. Once they told me they stood under a barrel shower at 2 a.m. to wash their hair because that was the only time they’d had in days.

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And I must say that two girls were never treated with more respect than they were down there. They said they never once heard a cuss word, and it seemed that everyone was so concerned with their welfare that if anyone had said anything out of the way, his buddies “would have kicked his teeth in.”

One day Una got into a big discussion with a bunch of Marines. She’s from Kentucky and speaks with a pretty deep

accent, so all the southern boys always flocked around her. They had quite a session. Then one boy from Texas wanted to know if the rest of the United States had declared war yet or was Texas still fighting it alone. That broke it up.

We didn’t have time for much personal relaxation, but once we did get to slip off on a picnic to a little island in a PT boat. I got to shoot a carbine during the ride. Another time we took a reconnaissance flight over some bad country, flying less than 50 feet over the water. For the most part, though, everyone was so considerate of our safety we couldn’t get anywhere near danger. We lived in whatever was available—native huts or ramshackle shacks. Chow was good. They’re apparently getting better food and supplies down there now than they were at first. It must have been rugged in those days.

In conclusion, it was an experience that no entertainer should miss. I’ve never been on the stage, but playing to those boys was the greatest thrill in my life, and I know it would be to anyone who has played to audiences from the stage. It is hard to explain, but those boys—well, something about them just gets you and it’s no wonder the girls had to let loose and cry once in a while.

We all want to go again and again. We don’t pretend to be brave or courageous. We are just grateful for the opportunity given us to see and meet the greatest bunch of boys in the world. 🍷

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Marines in the Revolutionary War

Detachment Assists in Daring Raid on Enemy Shores



By MSgt Jeff Dacus, USMCR (Ret)

The exploits of the great Sailor, John Paul Jones, during the American Revolution are legendary. The Scottish-born officer sailed to the Bahamas, landing Marines and Sailors in the first amphibious assault on foreign shores by the United States on March 1, 1776. On the return journey a month later, Jones took part in an embarrassing action off Rhode Island on April 6 when a single British ship escaped from the American fleet of six vessels. Later taking command of the sloop *Providence*, he spent the summer of 1776 cruising through the North Atlantic, protecting American ships and taking 16 prizes. In September of 1776, he used

his Sailors and Marines to ravage the Nova Scotia coastline near the village of Canso. Given command of the Continental ship *Alfred*, he raided the Canadian coast and captured many prizes, including HMS *Mellish* on Nov. 12. The ship contained winter uniforms for British troops that went instead to the Continental troops of George Washington's Army. Included in *Alfred's* crew were 24 Marines.

On June 14, 1777, Jones was given command of the Continental Navy's sloop of war *Ranger*, armed with 18 6-pound cannon and homeported at Portsmouth, N.H. His orders from Congress read in part: "Proceed with her in the manner you shall judge best for distressing the Enemies of the United States by sea or otherwise." The senior Marine assigned

to the ship was Captain Matthew Parke, a Virginian born in England. He was one of the original Marines enlisted by Samuel Nicholas in Philadelphia. Stubborn and opinionated, Parke was a capable officer who had served previously during the expedition to the Bahamas and the action off Rhode Island. He was assigned the task of recruiting his Marines for the upcoming cruise but evidently had little success. Naval agent John Langdon, a future president pro tempore of Congress, chose a fellow New Hampshireman, Samuel Wallingford, as the second in command of the Marines.

A gregarious young man who was well-liked by his neighbors, Wallingford grew up in New Hampshire and was serving in the militia when the break with Great



This mural “First Foreign Salute to the Stars and Stripes, 14 February 1778,” by Howard B. French, which is currently hanging in Memorial Hall at the U.S. Naval Academy, depicts *Ranger* receiving the salute of the French fleet at Quiberon Bay. (Photo courtesy of Naval History and Heritage Command)

Britain took place in 1775. He married Lydia Baker on June 22, 1775, and they had one child, George Washington Wallingford. Wallingford’s company was part of the militia that surrounded the British in Boston and forced their evacuation in March of 1776. He served briefly in upstate New York after the failed Canadian expedition, then joined Washington’s main army in time to participate in the battles of Trenton and Princeton. He returned to Exeter, New Hampshire after wintering with the army at Morristown in 1777. He was at Exeter when Langdon presented his name to the Naval Committee of Congress, and he received a letter from John Paul Jones: “You, being nominated as Lieutenant of Marines in the service of these States, are hereby

authorized and directed forthwith to Enlist as many Able Bodied Men as possible to Serve in the Navy under my Command— You are to enter all the good Seamen who present themselves—as Sundry petty Warrant Officers will be appointed from among them. I will shortly send you hand Bills for your Government—and in the Meantime the men will be Intitled to wages from the date of Entry, their reasonable Travelling expenses will be Allowed—wand a bounty of Forty Dollars for every Able Seaman will be Paid on their Appearance at the Ship.”

The bulk of the crew would come from New Hampshire with the noticeable exceptions of Captain Jones and Captain Parke. *Ranger* set sail for Europe on Nov. 1, 1777, with 30 Marines on board, clad



John Paul Jones’ recruiting handbill asking for “gentlemen” to sail on the initial cruise of *Ranger*.



In this oil painting by Charles Willson Peale, John Paul Jones wears the French Cross of the Institution of Military Merit (the gold medal hanging from a blue ribbon through the top left buttonhole). Louis XVI presented this medal to him in 1780.



A miniature portrait of Capt Matthew Parke, who commanded the Marine detachment aboard *Ranger*. The portrait by an unknown artist is dated circa 1780.



An 18th-century engraving of a sketch of John Paul Jones.

the Marines and Sailors, *Ranger* began cruising into British waters on April 8, 1778. Successfully capturing or destroying several small vessels, Jones lost the chance to capture an eight-gun vessel in part due to his poor use of his Marines. Ezra Green, the *Ranger*'s surgeon, second-guessed Jones' tactics: "Had the Captain have permitted the Marines to fire on them when they first came under our lee Quarter, [we] might have taken her with great Ease."

Ranger was successful in capturing prizes in the Irish Sea, but Jones decided on a new tactic. He decided to attack towns along the British coast in an effort to draw British resources away from the Atlantic coast of North America. As a boy, he had set sail for Virginia from the port of Whitehaven on the western coast of Scotland, and he was familiar with the port area. He decided to raid the town and set fire to the dozens of small ships and boats anchored there. Unfortunately, his unruly crew proved difficult to convince, and he was able to only gain 30 volunteers among the Sailors and Marines. Among the officers, only Wallingford and one other agreed to the expedition. On the night of April 22, Jones brought his ship in close to Whitehaven and launched two boats. Jones commanded one and Wallingford took charge of the other.

Wallingford, assisted by Midshipman Benjamin Hill and a mixed force of Sailors and Marines, was to go to the northern end of the harbor, silence any guards, destroy any military supplies encountered and set fire to the shipping in the harbor. Unopposed, the Americans fanned out throughout the northern end of the harbor but found no military installations or equipment. Jones led his men to the south where they captured four sentries and spiked the cannon in the local fort. Jones' men also set fire to the largest ship in the harbor, *Thompson*, hoping it would spread to the other vessels. Returning to their boats, Jones met Wallingford and noted the lack of flames coming from the northern end of the harbor.

Wallingford told Jones that his torches went out, and he was unable to restart them before crowds of people began to gather from the town. Jones recalled, "I naturally expected to see the Fire of the Ships on the north side as well as to find my own party with everything in readiness to set fire to the shipping in the South. Instead of this, I found the boat under the direction of Mr. Hill and [Mr. Wallingford] returned, and the party in some confusion, their light having burnt out at the instant when

in new green uniforms with white facings. *Ranger* carried dispatches for Benjamin Franklin, who was serving as Ambassador to France, including news of the recent American victory at Saratoga, and her captain was tasked by Congress with proceeding "in the manner you shall judge best for distressing the Enemies of the United States by sea or otherwise. Jones decided to raid Britain's coasts in order to "end the barbarous ravages perpetuated by the British in America." *Ranger*'s mission did not preclude taking enemy vessels, and the ship captured two small British merchantmen, *Mary* and *George*, en route.

Ranger arrived in Quiberon Bay, France, on Feb. 14, 1778, and received a salute from the French fleet anchored there. It was the first salute of the new American flag—the Stars and Stripes. Unfortunately, the voyage had not been a pleasant one. Jones was a strict captain whose autocratic ways did not sit well with the crew of independent New Englanders. The presence of the Marines on board helped

maintain a thin veil of order among the crew, but they were discontented, and changes would have to be made before *Ranger* resumed offensive operations.

The primary problem, besides Jones' stern leadership, was the capture of prizes. First, the voyage had seen only the capture of two small ships and that resulted in little prize money. Second, Captain Parke took a large share of the prize money. It seemed that the Marines needed only one officer and the junior lieutenant, Wallingford, would draw a much smaller share of any prize money. Parke, almost as unpopular among the New Hampshire crew as Jones, was sent home.

Jones decided to take the war to the British homeland: "I proposed to descend on some part of England and there destroy merchant shipping. My plan was also to take someone of particular distinction as a prisoner to hold him as hostage to guarantee the lives and exchange of Americans then imprisoned in England." After a short time of refurbishing the ship as well as training

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it became necessary. By the strangest fatality my own party were in the same situation, the candles being all burnt out." Wallingford felt relieved that he had not burned the boats used by the locals for their livelihood, saying that he "did not see that anything could be gained by burning poor people's property." It was now well past dawn, and Jones, faced with increasing numbers of angry locals pressing against his small party, decided to withdraw to his ship. The people of the town managed to get four guns into action and fired a few errant shots at the departing boats. Amused by the lack of accuracy of the townsmen, the embarked Sailors and Marines fired a few pistol shots in reply, but no one was injured.

Later that same day, Jones moved his ship a short distance into Kircudbright Bay next to St. Mary's Isle. Jones had been born only 35 miles from the island and knew the area well. The Earl of Selkirk lived on an estate there, and the captain was determined to kidnap the gentleman and hold him hostage for the release or better treatment for American seamen held in British prisons. Taking 11 men and Wallingford ashore, he marched toward the manor house.

Jones was quickly informed by locals that the Earl was away and only his wife and children, with a few servants and friends, remained on the estate. Disappointed, Jones returned to the cutter and left a small group of men to confiscate valuables. It was decided to take only "plate," objects of precious metal. Dignified and with a grace expected of her position, Helen, the Countess of Selkirk, opened the door when Wallingford knocked. At first, the Countess thought that the motley group facing her was pirates. Wallingford corrected her, stating they were, "from the frigate *Ranger*, Captain Paul Jones, Esq. Commanding,



and that they were instructed to carry away her household silver. If she complied they would neither search the house nor make any further trouble."

While a Sailor guarded the front door, Wallingford and the ship's master David Cullam waited for the servants to bring the valuables requested. Cullam proved to be a problem, demanding and abrupt in language. The Countess described him

as having "a vile blackguard look, still kept civil as he might." Wallingford was respectful and tried to write out a receipt for the goods taken, but the pen provided proved inadequate, and with time short, the Marine left her with only apologies. In a letter to her husband, she recalled the Marine, who was not comfortable taking her possessions, "a civil young man in a green uniform, an anchor on his buttons which were white, and wore a blue greatcoat. He seemed naturally well-bred and not to like his employment." After taking the silver, Wallingford and the others returned to their ship.

On April 24, Jones and his ship maneuvered from Scotland toward Ireland, near Belfast. Nearing Carrickfergus Bay, they were challenged by a rowboat serving as a picket for HMS *Drake*, a 14-gun sloop looking for *Ranger*. After capturing the boat's crew, Jones moved toward *Drake* until they were within hailing distance. "What ship is this?" queried the British captain as he hoisted his Union Jack



The victorious *Ranger* and her prize, HMS *Drake*, pictured after the battle on April 24, 1778, off Carrickfergus in the Irish Sea.

colors. “The American Continental ship *Ranger*, we have been waiting for you to come on,” replied the ship’s master. At the same moment, the Americans ran up their own colors, the stars and stripes revealed by the brisk breeze. Lt Wallingford stood on deck dressed in his finest green uniform. With its white trim, he made a great target, and another officer questioned his choice of uniform, asking him “why he came on deck for a mark to shoot at that he had better return and dress in Sailors dress which he did.”

An hour before sunset, the battle began. Jones quickly maneuvered across the bow of the British ship and raked her with grapeshot. Small balls flung like a load from a giant shotgun. The British never recovered from the first blast, and although the battle lasted more than an hour, they were unable to return effective fire. Throughout the action, Wallingford directed the fire of his Marines and exposed himself to enemy musketry. Struck by a random musket shot, the dashing young Marine was one of three Americans

killed. Five were wounded. The British struck their flag after their captain and first lieutenant, as well as three seamen, were killed. Nineteen more were wounded.

Doctor Green laconically recorded in his diary: “Lost on our side, [Lt Wallingford] killed by a musket shot in the head.” The next day, the doctor noted that they committed Wallingford’s body “to the deep with the Honours due to so brave an Officer.”

Ranger continued on around the north and western coasts of Ireland, arriving safely at Brest with *Drake* and another prize on May 8, 1778. The morale effects of the raid far outweighed the material destruction. *The Gazetteer and Daily Advertiser*, a British newspaper, reported: “The people of Whitehaven can never recover from their fright; two thirds of the people are bordering on insanity; the remainder on idiotism.” *The London Chronicle* noted the increased security measures in Britain: “A number of expresses have been dispatched to all the

capital seaports in the kingdom where any depredations are likely to be made; all strangers in this town are, by the order of the magistrates, to be secured and examined, similar notices have been forwarded through the country, and, in short, every caution taken that the present alarming affair could suggest.”

The dour Scotsman John Paul Jones felt remorse at taking the Selkirk’s silver and purchased it at auction before returning it to Lady Selkirk. In his sentimental, apologetic letter to the titled lady, he included the news that “his amiable Lieutenant lay mortally wounded,” after the battle with *Drake*. Perhaps she paused at that moment to remember the courteous young gentleman in a green uniform who had made such a great impression on her.

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. 🇺🇸



Tall ships line the waterfront during the Whitehaven Maritime Festival in 2008. This is how the waterfront in Cumbria, England, may have looked to Wallingford and his party during their raid.

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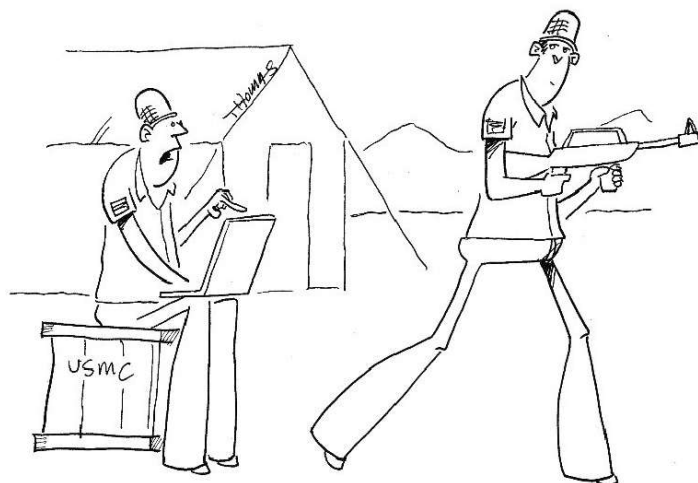


In July 2018 the Marine Corps Association Foundation supported 2nd Battalion, 8th Marines with a PME trip to Tarawa, the site of an iconic WWII Marine Corps battle. 21 Marines—NCOs, SNCOs, and officer leaders—meritoriously selected from among their peers to accompany the battalion CO and sergeant major, were provided lodging, a tour bus, and a tour guide by MCAF. The Marines of 2/8 got to stand on the beach in the same spot where their battalion landed against fierce Japanese defenses 75 years ago. As the battalion commander said, “This was an experience those Marines will remember the rest of their lives, as they were allowed to ‘walk in the same surf and sand of those who forged our legacy.’ ”

Leatherneck Laffs



"Tonight's password is 'Ho ho ho!'"



"No, no. When I said charge, I meant my laptop battery."



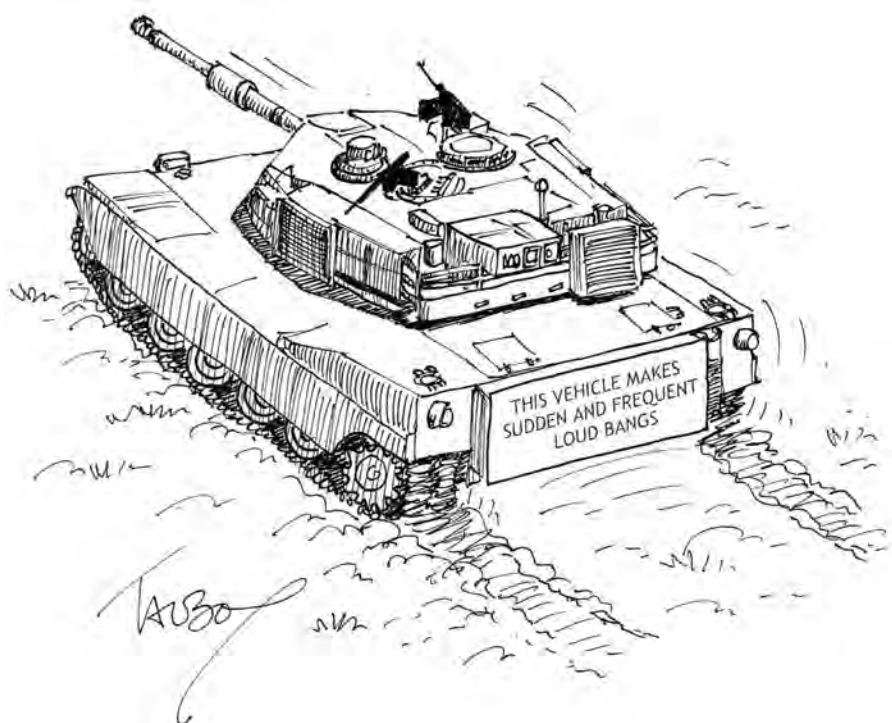
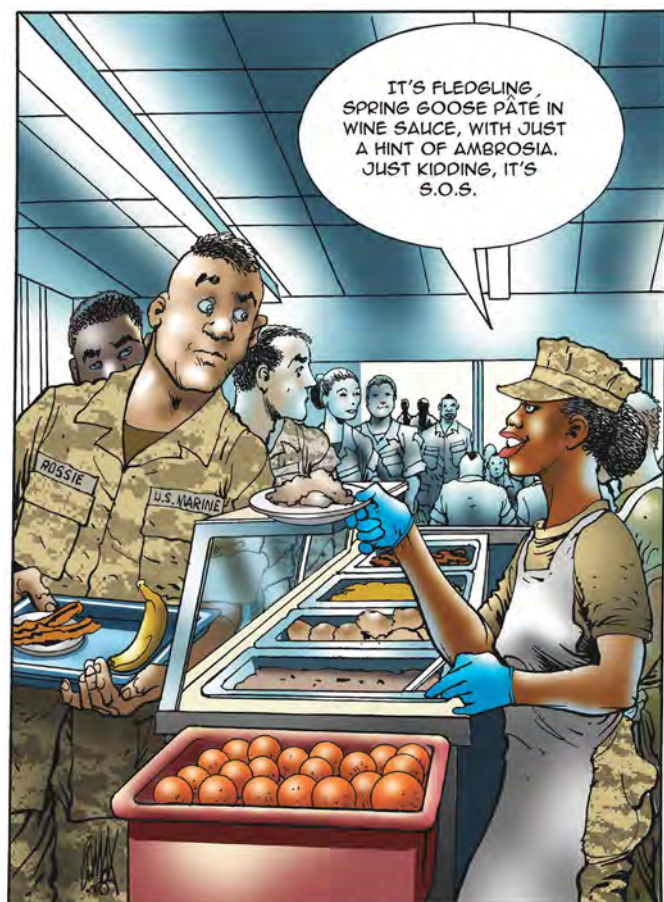
"From the halls of Montezuma,
to the stores with Christmas trees ..."



"Looks like a job for the Marines!"



"How can you stand it without Facebook?"



"Just my luck. Santa is gung-ho."

Task Force Scorpion

By BGen John F. Kelly, USMC

Editor's note: The following is an excerpt from a three-part series of articles written by then-Brigadier General John F. Kelly, 1st Marine Division's Assistant Division Commander, during Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2002-2003.

Northern Babil Province Heats Up

Although 1st Marine Division's entire zone was dangerous with criminals and unrepentant Saddam loyalists active throughout, the efforts of the "Blue Diamond" Division's Marines with the local population assisted in all but eliminating violence by midsummer of 2003. There was, however, a far northern slice of our zone where we had not yet spent much effort that grew increasingly active with hit-and-run violence.

During May 2003, as the Army continued its buildup at the end of the conventional stage of the conflict, Forward Logistics Base (FLB) Dogwood was established at a former military base in northern Babil Province astride the Euphrates River 12 miles southwest of Baghdad. This area of Iraq was a fault line between the predominately Shia south and Sunni north. Nearly all roads to Baghdad



from the south passed through this zone. The main supply route, Highway 1 from Kuwait, and alternate supply routes (ASRs), highways 8 from Al Hillah and 9 from the west and Karbala, all converged here. Most notably, however, was ASR Sue,

a narrow two-lane road that meandered through the lowland villages and agricultural fields for 22 miles. ASR Sue was a connector route and an important logistical lifeline for soldiers in Baghdad. It was used by up to 90 convoys a day.

By early June 2003, Blue Diamond-Main, now collocated with I MEF in the ancient ruins complex of Babylon near Al Hillah, received frequent reports of convoy ambushes along ASR Sue, although the number of actual attacks was difficult to determine. There was no system in place to verify reports as they came through any number of command channels.

The reports were seldom timely with often incomplete and inaccurate initial reports. For instance, in the first two weeks of June there were 51 reported attacks along this route although the standard by which an attack was measured ranged from a single driver thinking he had been shot at to the tragic wounding or death of a soldier and vehicles destroyed by combined automatic weapons and rocket propelled grenade (RPG) fire. Thankfully there were few of these. Reports at the time indicated there had been, on average,



A convoy of Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement 7-ton trucks from Transportation Support Group moves in to 1st FSSG Forward Headquarters in Iraq in 2003. (Photo by MSgt Edward D. Kniery, USMC)

three attacks per day by small arms, two per day involving RPGs.

During this period, another weapon made an occasional appearance—the improvised explosive device (IED)—a weapon that became the weapon of choice for the guerrillas. Regardless of the confusion, the Marines owned the terrain and, in response to the local commander's immediate concerns, Blue Diamond organized and deployed Task Force (TF) Scorpion.

TF Scorpion's mission and task organization evolved over time as the tactical situation changed and the enemy reacted to our increasingly successful initiatives. Initially the threat was against defenseless logistics convoys that some described as “manatees.” Convoys coming out of FLB Dogwood or down from Baghdad were not always taking the precautions prudent while operating in such a threat. This made their vehicles easy targets for a host of Iraqi predators. In the beginning the ambush action was no more than one or two assailants standing next to the road in plain sight during the day, emptying an AK-47 magazine at the approaching vehicles, and walking away. Occasionally an RPG might be fired. The convoy's immediate action was to drive through the “kill zone.” It was difficult to determine if fire was ever returned or if there was any effort on the part of convoy personnel to maneuver against the renegades.

On June 13, TF Scorpion, organized around 4th Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion (LAR), moved into battlespace carved out of 1st Bn, 4th Marines' zone and thereafter referred to as “Northern Babil.” It was reinforced with a number of smaller units and capabilities.

The first order of business was the obvious requirement to secure ASR Sue from the paid Iraqi thugs who preyed upon the convoys unmolested. This was accomplished in short order by saturating the immediate vicinity of the roadway with aggressive Marine patrols. Instead of manatees, the terrorists encountered hunters. Every would-be ambusher soon knew the capability of the light armored vehicle (LAV). Like the Cobras, the “light horsemen” of the LAR community were respected and feared; their reputations earned and well-deserved. The second task was to work with senior Army leaders in FLB Dogwood and Baghdad to encourage them to improve awareness and encourage defensive reaction by convoy personnel when departing secure logistics bases.

TF Scorpion's initial “do something right away” action was to intersperse LAVs in among the convoy's vehicles in the hopes that ambushers might engage.



SSGT DANIEL SCHRUBB, USMC

Col John F. Kelly, left, Assistant Division Commander; LtCol Stephen Santa Ana, center, Assistant Operations Officer G3; and Col John A. Toolan, Assistant Chief of Staff G3, 1stMarDiv, pictured at Camp Commando, Kuwait, during Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003. Kelly, future four-star general and White House Chief of Staff, was promoted to brigadier general in March 2003 during this assignment.



USMC

A convoy of Marine Corps HMMWVs, assigned to Co D, 1st LAR Bn, 1stMarDiv, arrives in Northern Iraq during a sandstorm, March 26, 2003.

The terrorists were ruthless but not particularly suicidal, and this tactic failed to lure many into the kill zone. Another technique in this cat-and-mouse game was to run small “Trojan horse” convoys through the area. The bait vehicles had been hardened with a wall of meals, ready-to-eat boxes filled with sand lining the outer edges of the vehicle beds to give the appearance of a defenseless logistics vehicle. The vehicles were not defenseless, however, because in addition to the driver and assistant driver in the cab (riflemen as well as logistics professionals) there were Marines hidden within the wall of boxes chomping at the bit to return fire and deploy.

Terrorist fighters must have been amazed as convoys of high-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicles (HMMWVs) or medium tactical vehicle replacements now were just as likely to stop on contact, return fire, and deploy riflemen as they were to rush past to safety. After only a few days



LCPL ANDREW P. ROUFFS, USMC

of operations the enemy adjusted tactics. They were no longer willing to stand next to the road and shoot at American vehicles regardless of how slow they traveled and helpless they appeared. The ambushers adjusted by moving farther and farther back from the road in order to survive, resulting in their fire growing increasingly ineffective. By mid-June, the number of

attacks had fallen off to a fraction of what they had been. By early July there were no direct fire attacks at all.

As effective as the combat tactics were, working the convoy routes in hopes of killing a few not-so-dedicated trigger-pullers was treating the “symptom” and not the “disease” of suspicion and hostility toward the coalition in this contested



SGT MAURICIO CAMPINO, USMC

A Marine Corps convoy enters the 2nd Bn, 6th Marines base camp guard post just outside of Muwaffaqiya, Iraq, during Operation Iraqi Freedom, in 2003.

region. There were those outside the MEF who encouraged us to go more kinetic and consider the use of AC-130s, close air support, and artillery against suspected hostile sites. We took a different approach. We needed to do what had worked so well for us throughout the rest of the zone—win the trust of the locals whom we were here to help and who were here to stay.

The TF Scorpion team implemented a parallel program of civil affairs activities in the population centers with explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) serving as a particularly effective tool in helping penetrate the civilian communities, many of which lived in terror of anticoalition forces. The use of U.S. fire support assets had been heavy here as units fought through the area in April on the way to Baghdad. There was a massive amount of unmarked unexploded ordnance (UXO) spread across the fields and villages. A tremendously effective psychological operations and information campaign, developed by the Army soldiers attached to 1st Marine Division from the 432nd Civil Affairs Battalion, first warned local citizens of the dangers of UXO and provided posters and handbills to help identify the objects.

The second aspect of the campaign was to encourage the Iraqi citizens to contact the newly arrived Marines for removal of dangerous materials from their fields, homes, schools and neighborhoods. The EOD Marines began a nonstop campaign that ultimately, over a period of many weeks, resulted in the removal of 250,000 pounds of UXO, but at the cost of several dead and wounded. This common interest also began a process of extending TF Scorpion's influence and trust into the population. The real intelligence sources would be found among the people—a reality, again, we had learned previously. Soon the people were overtly and covertly stepping forward with tips and warnings to the Marines and soldiers with whom they had developed a fragile relationship of trust.

By early July, the enemy once again changed tactics. They gave up on the ineffective and highly dangerous to themselves direct fire ambush, altering their tactics to the almost exclusive use of IEDs. These were most often mortar or artillery shells “daisy chained” together and command detonated. Soon the TF found its stride here as well, and although IED attacks rose to a high average of three a day in the first two weeks of July, they began to fall in number almost immediately to near zero by the end of the month. In dealing with the evolving threat it was clear the LAR-centric task force had the mobile patrols covered but

was in need of “grunts” to do the dirty work off-road and in the towns. The need for infantrymen to hunt down and kill this elusive enemy working in the shadows along the roadsides at night or cordon target sites for search or ambush was obvious; however, just as obvious was the need to get “boots on the ground” in amongst the citizenry of the Northern Babil and in those places where we were warned by friends, and threatened by our few enemies, not to tread. We went there first.

In late June two rifle companies—Company I, 3/7, traveling up from Karbala, and Co E, 2/5, As Samawah—were attached. In the first case the company commander selected a position adjacent to Al Mahmudiyah and directly astride a

very active IED “mixing bowl.” The company had not even unrolled their sleeping mats when they were out prowling the night on initial patrols. In exactly the same way, the second company selected a similarly dangerous position near the city of Al Yusufiyah, one that would give it access to both the population and active IED zones. Many of these tough young men were in ambush sites the first night seeking early contact and were not disappointed.

The impact of the infantry's arrival, along with the combined efforts of the task force of nearly 1,000 personnel from three services, clearly presented the enemy with more dilemmas than he could handle. The anticoalition forces were forced to alter their tactics a third time.



Col John A. Toolan, second from left, CO, RCT-1, 1stMarDiv, talks to two Iraqi employees at a train station located on the outskirts of the city of Fallujah, Al Anbar Province, Iraq, during Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003.

LCPL NATHAN A. HEUSDENS, USMC



USMC

LAR Marines guard the entrance to the Tikrit Palace compound in Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003.

We now saw the introduction of sporadic mortar attacks from hastily laid ground or vehicle borne tubes. These attacks were obviously conducted by men who were not only unskilled with the weapons but also very interested in not directly confronting the infantry who were everywhere and nowhere at the same time. Great tactical headwork by junior leaders was quick to figure the enemy's procedures, predict his routines, and set ambushes and sniper teams in those places that presented a mortar threat—and they ceased.

We once again resisted the suggestion to reply to these attacks with heavy firepower, a response that we felt would likely wound or kill innocent Iraqis. Even if innocents were not hit—and more importantly from a hearts and minds perspective—we felt it would severely erode our message that innocent Iraqi lives were as precious to us as were our own. We calculated that the use of bombs and artillery against a fleeing enemy long gone before the first ordnance struck made no tactical sense, was in fact counterproductive, and would send the message that we held the lives of Iraqis in low regard. Some argued it would show Iraqis who was boss, or show them our resolve and power. We elected

to rely on a high degree of field craft and the tactical expertise and confidence of our company grade infantry leaders.

The final stage of operations for TF Scorpion, before their relief by elements of the 82nd Airborne Division, was a spoiling attack against a large number of unrepentant former regime supporters just prior to their own offensive. Our counteractions were made possible by the wealth of actionable intelligence the small units were gleaned from the many sheikhs, clerics, police, and private citizens throughout the zone but particularly in Babil.

Long before being alerted by Commander, Joint Task Force 7 in Baghdad of the pending offensive, the G-2 (intelligence) sections at MEF and Blue Diamond, in collaboration, detected an unmistakable increase in indications and warnings focused on a four-day period corresponding to the July 14 anniversary of the founding of the Ba'ath Party in Iraq. The intelligence unquestionably pointed toward an aggressive campaign of IED and other terrorist type attacks. Our response was a simultaneous counteroffensive against a number of these suspected individuals designed and executed to disrupt the expected attack. Building up

a large number of detailed target folders we held off striking suspected individuals until July 12 in order to maximize the disruption of this plan and minimize the period of time they had available to recover.

So successful was this initiative that the division continued this tactic in an effort to round up senior regime officials, fedayeen, and terrorists until we departed the zone. By continuing the attack and taking the fight to the enemy, we greatly reduced hostile influence against us in Northern Babil. Each raid led to the next and were most often conducted by the infantry companies or attached force reconnaissance assets from the Reserves. These raids, or "cordons and knocks" as we first termed them, were typically executed at night and were backed by invaluable Cobra and Huey support from the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing. These actions were highly successful in capturing large arms and ordnance caches, IED production facilities and their technicians, Ba'ath Party stalwarts responsible for hiring local trigger-pullers, and even occasional cells working against our soldiers to the north in Baghdad. 🦋



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★ AMERICA'S ★ AIR POWER RESERVOIR

Home to Out-of-Service Marine Corps Aircraft, Arizona Desert Facility is More than Just a “Boneyard”

By Sara W. Bock

“Plane graveyard.”
“Aviation junkyard.”
“Where airplanes go to die.”

These are just a few of the misnomers that are commonly heard by personnel at the Air Force Materiel Command’s 309th Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Group (AMARG), located at

Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson, Ariz. And while the AMARG’s official nickname is the “Boneyard,” even that term seems to fall short of adequately characterizing the important role the facility plays in ensuring the continued viability of military aviation.

It’s not shocking that many perceptions

of the AMARG are misguided. It’s historically been viewed as a somewhat mysterious place, closed off to the general public with the exception of bus tours down its “Celebrity Row” of iconic aircraft, narrated by docents from the neighboring Pima Air Museum. For many, the only way to catch a glimpse inside



the fence that surrounds the Boneyard is on the big screen, where it provides a distinctive backdrop for heart-pounding action scenes in box office hits like “Transformers 2: Revenge of the Fallen.”

Covering 4 square miles of arid desert, AMARG is home to approximately 3,400 military aircraft—1,500 of which belong to the Navy and Marine Corps—as well as more than 6,000 aircraft engines. It is the largest facility of its kind in the world and the only repository for out-of-service military aircraft in the United States. Consequently, it’s a unique entity not only within the Air Force but also in

the entire Department of Defense, and is commanded by active-duty Colonel Jennifer M. Barnard, USAF, who manages the approximately 800 civil servants and contractors who keep the facility functioning smoothly on a daily basis. The work that goes on at the Boneyard, which includes storage, preservation, regeneration, parts reclamation, and disposal, as well as occasional depot-level maintenance, is all conducted with a singular mindset: that the needs of the warfighter are of the highest priority.

Within the vast areas designated for aircraft storage, row after row of helicop-

An aerial view of the 309th AMARG at Davis-Monthan AFB in Tucson, Ariz., shows the expansive swath of land that is dedicated to storing out-of-service military aircraft. (Photo by SSgt Perry Aston, USAF)

ters, fighter and attack jets, tankers and other aircraft rest directly on the rock-hard desert caliche soil, which is ideal for supporting their weight, eliminating the need for paving. Boasting low humidity year round and all but immune to natural disasters like earthquakes, tornadoes or hurricanes, the Tucson area offers prime real

A \$25 million high-bay maintenance hangar was unveiled at the 309th AMARG in December 2015. With nearly 80,000 square feet of space, the hangar accommodates a variety of aircraft for maintenance, repair and inspections for future regeneration. (Photo by SrA Chris Massey, USAF)



SARA W. BOCK



Above left: Perhaps the most well-known of this CH-46 Sea Knight's exploits was in 1975 when, under the call sign "Swift 2-2," it took off from atop the U.S. Embassy in Saigon, carrying the last U.S. Marines in the city as it fell to the North Vietnamese. The helicopter now rests at the Boneyard and eventually will be relocated to the Castle Air Museum in Atwater, Calif.

estate for the outdoor storage of aircraft that are no longer flying but still remain viable assets to the Armed Forces.

Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR), which provides full life-cycle support of naval aviation aircraft, weapons and systems and foots the bill for all Navy

and Marine Corps aircraft stored at the Boneyard, is one of the AMARG's biggest customers, second only to the Air Force itself.

"They're a significant part of our business and therefore they're significant members of our team," said Steve

Schumacher, former deputy director of the 309th AMARG, of the Navy and Marine Corps, which provide 30 percent of the Boneyard's business and maintain a permanent presence there in the form of a Navy Field Service Office. And it is, indeed, a business. As a working capital



TSGT CAROLYN HERRICK, USAF



TSGT CAROLYN HERRICK, USAF

Above: Out-of-service C-130 Hercules, some of which belong to the Marine Corps, are parked neatly in rows at the 309th AMARG in this 2016 photo. Currently, there are more than 300 C-130s at the Boneyard, making the Hercules one of the most represented aircraft on the premises—second only to the F-16 Fighting Falcon.

Below: As they are now completely retired from flying service, the Marine Corps EA-6B Prowlers have become more visible at the Boneyard in recent years.



SARA W. ROCK

fund, said Schumacher, the 309th AMARG charges the entities that own the aircraft for the services they provide, which in turn funds the salaries, equipment and parts needed to keep the facility running.

The public affairs staff at Davis-Monthan AFB and 309th AMARG provided *Leatherneck* with a rare opportunity to get an up-close look at the Boneyard's seemingly endless stretches of static Marine Corps aircraft, which are tucked

into various corners of 2,600 acres of land, adjacent to planes and helicopters once flown by the Navy, Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, some foreign military allies and federal agencies like NASA and the United States Forest Service.

There's an unmistakable, eerie stillness one can sense when walking around the Boneyard, a stark contrast to the cacophony of rumbling engines the enormous cache of aircraft would make if each were

simultaneously fired back up. The only movement in sight is from the snakes, gophers, jackrabbits and other native critters that occasionally scurry around in the shadows of wings and rotor blades.

The desert sun beats down on dozens of EA-6B Prowlers, retired in recent years following the sundown of the Marine Tactical Electronic Warfare (VMAQ) squadrons at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C., and now neatly tucked into lines with just a few feet separating them. Just a few rows down are F/A-18 Hornets with AV-8B Harriers adjacent. They will continue to trickle in to the AMARG as they are replaced in the fleet by the F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter. The large footprint of KC-130T Hercules cargo tankers, which have been replaced by the KC-130J Super Hercules variant, requires the aircraft to occupy a considerably large plot of land.

One CH-46 Sea Knight helicopter boasts the famed "white top" Marine One presidential helicopter transport paint scheme; another's tail number indicates that it once flew under the call sign "Swift 2-2," the last to lift off from atop the U.S. Embassy in Saigon in 1975, with Marine security guards on board as the North



SARA W. BOCK

Above: A newly arrived USMC F/A-18 is temporarily stored under a shelter where technicians with the 309th AMARG will remove its egress system prior to the final stages of preservation, Sept. 9.



COURTESY OF 309TH AMARG

This aerial photo, taken sometime prior to 1966, shows F-8s, F-3s, A-4s, P-2s and S-2s stored at the Boneyard in an arrangement similar to the way the aircraft are stored today.

Below: Marine Corps AH-1W Super Cobras sit directly on the desert soil at the 309th AMARG Boneyard. The climate and conditions in Tucson are ideal for the outdoor storage of military aircraft.



SARA W. BOCK



ATC BLAKE GONZALES, USAF



TSGT BENNIE J. DAVIS III, USAF

Above left: A 2019 “Boneyard Run” participant approaches the finish line of the 5K at the 309th AMARG, Oct. 5. The annual event is open to the public, making it one of the very few opportunities for visitors to set foot inside the facility.

Above right: An AMARG employee holds a C-130 Hercules engine starter that was processed, cleaned and shipped out to the active fleet within 72 hours of the initial work order tasking in 2013. The facility’s leadership emphasizes that the needs of the warfighter always come first, and the AMARG prides itself on being America’s “air power reservoir.”

Vietnamese approached and the city fell, marking the end of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War.

If these relics could talk, there would undoubtedly be thousands of stories to tell—some harrowing, some light-hearted—yet each a unique part of the history of Marine aviation. On many, messages and signatures written in permanent marker on the fuselage by pilots, aircrew and maintainers offer glimpses into some of those stories in a final tribute to a beloved “friend.”

But despite their appearance in desert storage, none of the aircraft are futile. Many will remain there for years as sources of replacement parts that will keep other aircraft of their kind flying safely—continuing to serve as an asset to operational readiness, just in a different manner than in its previous life. Others will be transferred to museums where their presence will inspire the next generation of aviators or, for some, provide a walk down memory lane. Some will eventually be disposed of

and recycled, but only after every usable element has been removed. A few will be sold to qualified recipients such as foreign military allies, state governments, schools or veterans organizations.

Occasionally, aircraft will be destined for a more unusual fate, like the front of an Air Force F-15 that was crated and shipped from the Boneyard earlier this year at the request of Air Force Recruiting Command, bound for a Captain Marvel movie display at Disney California Adventure Park in Anaheim, Calif.

Most notably, some of the aircraft at the AMARG are simply in storage, with an average of 100 each year regenerated and returned to flying status.

It's a solution the Marine Corps has turned to several times in recent decades.

Faced with readiness issues within its fighter squadrons—particularly due to delays in the F-35 program and a dwindling number of mission-capable F/A-18 Hornets—the Marine Corps announced in 2016 its plans to retrieve 23 out-of-service F/A-18s from the Boneyard to refurbish them, update their avionics and deliver them to the fleet.

And this year, while the U.S. Navy Blue Angels demonstration team awaited the delivery of a KC-130J from the United Kingdom to replace the recently retired legacy model “Fat Albert” aircraft, NAVAIR looked to the Boneyard for a C-130 to be flown by the team's Marine pilots in the meantime. The C-130, nicknamed “Ernie” by the team, retained its standard gray exterior rather than receiving the Blues’ signature paint job.

When an aircraft is regenerated, AMARG can use its own personnel to do

the necessary work or do the work in conjunction with another entity. In both of the aforementioned cases, NAVAIR sent Marines in to do the work, and AMARG provided the organic logistics support at a significant cost savings to the Department of the Navy.

Regenerating aircraft from the Boneyard is a practice that has been going on for the entirety of its existence. Established in 1946 as a solution for the post-World War II surplus of B-29 Superfortress bombers and C-47 Skytrain transports flown by the Army Air Corps, the site in Tucson was an obvious choice.

“Davis-Monthan was already here—it was a training installation in the 1940s for bomber crews,” said Robert Raine, a retired Navy public affairs specialist who serves as the AMARG's “workloader,” coordinating with customers—particularly museums—and handling requests for aircraft production tooling, which the facility also stores in the event that the equipment is needed to make parts or components for aircraft that are no longer being produced.

The Boneyard predates the Air Force

itself, which was established a year later in 1947; AMARG subsequently became an Air Force command. According to Raine, the Air Force pulled more than 400 B-29s from the Boneyard in 1950 when North Korea invaded South Korea and the U.S. entered the Korean War, doubling its number of operational bombers and helping ensure its air superiority throughout the war.

In 1965, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara ordered that the 309th AMARG store aircraft from all branches of the Armed Forces. It's a move that deputy director Schumacher says continues to make logistical sense as it keeps costs low and allows for movement of planes without having to coordinate among multiple storage sites.

Additionally, the workforce at the 309th AMARG has the technical prowess to keep up with the demand.

According to Raine, most aircraft coming to the Boneyard for storage are flown there, and from the time the pilot lands the aircraft, AMARG guarantees that it will be in storage within 60 days. During those two months (or less), a series of prepara-

A Marine Corps F/A-18 with the markings of Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 112 is relocated via a “tug” vehicle to its designated location at the Boneyard, Sept. 9, where the final steps in the storage preparation process will take place.



tions ensure that they will be properly preserved and protected from the elements.

First, they are taken to the “fuel flush farm,” where the fuel system is flushed out and injected with preservative oil. For aircraft with egress systems and ejection seats, the cartridge activating devices or detonator cords are frequently removed following the fuel flush, depending on the customer’s request. These aircraft are marked with green crosses while those whose egress systems remain intact are marked with red warnings on the side. They then head to the wash rack where Navy and Marine Corps aircraft are generally washed twice due to their frequent operation in highly corrosive saltwater environments.

After the aircraft are moved to their designated home in the desert, protective tape is applied to all crevices and gaps and a barrier “paper,” which actually is an aluminized canvas, is placed over the engine inlets. Two different types of spray-on seal, one black and one white, are applied as protective coating, which lowers the interior temperature of the aircraft, helping preserve any electronics



SARA W. BOCK



SARA W. BOCK

AMARG personnel spray a layer of black protective material onto an F/A-18 as they prepare it for storage, Sept. 9. The layers help lower the internal temperature of the aircraft, while also sealing up any crevices to keep dust, water and critters out.



SARA W. BOCK

The nose of a Marine Corps F/A-18 in storage at the Boneyard served as a blank slate for the squadron’s Marines to write their farewells to the Hornet.



or avionics within the cockpit. Once the protective process is complete, the aircraft is not forgotten. Every six months, a preservation team performs an inspection, and the spray-on process is repeated each time the coating is cut through to remove parts.

The AMARG uses different storage designations to categorize the aircraft, said Raine. No parts can be reclaimed from Type 1000 storage aircraft, which can be returned to flying service if needed—for Navy and Marine Corps aircraft, Type 1000 storage is the “CNO’s [Chief of Naval Operations] war reserve,” said Raine. Type 2000 storage aircraft can be used for parts reclamation, but only by the entity that owns it. As of Sept. 9, NAVAIR had reclaimed 282 F/A-18 parts from its Boneyard storage, with an estimated value of \$68 million if the parts

had been purchased new—not to mention the time saved by sourcing parts that can be shipped out the next day rather than waiting for a new part to be manufactured. It also has saved a staggering \$22 million on 139 parts harvested from AH-1 Cobras and UH-1 Hueys stored at the AMARG.

Aircraft in Type 4000 storage, which is not a category NAVAIR selects for Navy and Marine Corps aircraft, are reclaimed until disposed. Any government agency or U.S. service and occasionally foreign allies, depending on their military sales agreements with the U.S. government, can reclaim parts from them, Raine added.

Fielding daily requests for reclaimed parts to keep aircraft flying, the AMARG’s skilled personnel—most of whom served in the Armed Forces and many of whom are retired military—take pride in their

ability to turn around parts quickly and efficiently.

“If it’s something going to the warfighter deployed somewhere, that’s the first thing we’re going to work before anything else, and that’s built into our DNA here,” said Schumacher.

Disposal is the eventual fate of those aircraft that are no longer useful to the entity that owns them. Any and all radiological materials are removed as well as any other hazardous materials such as asbestos. Once it has been cleaned out environmentally, it’s marked for disposal and picked up by Defense Logistics Agency, which contracts with a disposal contractor to shred the aircraft, said Raine, pointing out a group of Navy and Marine Corps A-4 Skyhawks that had been marked as ready for disposal.

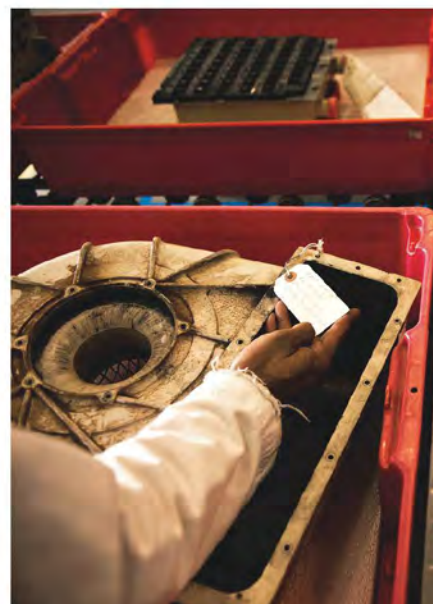


Left: This 2012 photo offers a birds-eye view of the meticulously arranged aircraft in storage at the Boneyard.



SARA W. BOCK

Above: An F/A-18 boasts the signature paint job of the “Black Knights” of Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 314, which in June retired its last Hornet to transition to the F-35C carrier-capable version of the Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter.



TSGT BERNIE J. DAVIS III, USAF

Frank Luna, a priority parts puller with the 309th AMARG, double checks parts labeled for processing from previous work orders in January 2013. The red bins signify the parts are the highest priority.

The period of time just after the Vietnam War, said Raine, marked the highest number of aircraft the Boneyard has housed at one time: a staggering 6,100. But running out of space is not an immediate concern. Currently, approximately 300 aircraft leave the boneyard each year—including those that “go to scrap”—and approximately 300 come in.

From the business side, it’s important that the AMARG leadership is attuned to the possibility of any future events that might cause an influx in their workload.

“Some of our business is highly sensitive to what’s going on in the larger services, especially,” said Schumacher, noting that planned aircraft retirements are of particular interest to the AMARG for preparation purposes. “What we find ourselves having to do is stay a little bit

closer connected than most people would expect to what’s going on in the political realm and in the force structure realm ... we try not to be reactionary, but try and anticipate so that we can actually respond.”

By anticipating what’s to come, the 309th AMARG is better equipped to respond to the needs of the warfighter. After all, said Schumacher, they call themselves “America’s air power reservoir.”

And aside from making huge contributions to the readiness of military aviation, there’s an added bonus for those who spend their days preserving and regenerating aircraft and reclaiming parts, Schumacher said with a twinkle in his eye:

“If you like aircraft, there’s no better place in the world to work than here.”



Innovation Challenge Encourages Use of MakerSpace Resources

Staff Sergeant Elissa Pedelty was awarded \$1,000 and a Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., Oct. 16, for winning the 2nd Marine Logistics Group which was Commanding General's Innovation Challenge facilitated by MakerSpace, a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) program that provides resources and activities at Marine Corps Community Services installation libraries.

A utilities Marine with Combat Logistics Battalion 24, 2nd MLG, Pedelty used additive manufacturing—also known as 3D printing—to invent a duct cover that attaches to the intake vents of Environmental Control Units (ECUs) to prevent loose gear from getting sucked into the vent and motor.

When units travel to the field, they require power generation, distribution equipment and ECUs. In order for an ECU to function properly, it requires clear pathways via ducts. Loose gear nearby can be sucked into the vent and motor, possibly burning out the motor and affecting mission readiness.

"I noticed a trend that negatively affects

the utilities community throughout the MLG," said Pedelty. "We went through a few ideas from a wagon wheel to a windmill shape, but the honeycomb design worked best for the vents."

The MakerSpace-facilitated challenge allows Marines and Sailors to submit their innovations for consideration. The ideas presented can be material, procedural or conceptual in nature. Once the ideas have been submitted, a board is convened to determine which is the most impactful or innovative.

"Marines may often feel that they are unable to make solutions to problems they see around them a reality," said First Lieutenant Alexander Walls, the innovation officer for 2nd MLG. "MakerSpace bridges that gap and allows them to break the bureaucracy and enact those solutions, and provides them the tools to do so."

Other projects currently in development at MCB Camp Lejeune's MakerSpace are flight boards for use by parachutists during jumps and scale tank models for weapons system sighting practice and vehicle identification.

"With tremendously talented Marines and Sailors, the 2nd MLG team sustains II Marine Expeditionary Force with logistics and material readiness support," said

Brigadier General Kevin J. Stewart, the commanding general of 2nd MLG. "The intent is to provide our Marines and Sailors the opportunities, tools and education to make us better."

Cpl Ashley Lawson, USMC

Battles Won: Marines Make Annual Recruiting Mission

The Marine Corps Recruiting Command achieved its assigned recruiting mission by both component and category during fiscal year 2019.

Marine recruiters and officer selection officers accessed 37,259 enlisted men and women and 1,734 officers as directed by the Commandant of the Marine Corps. The recruits and candidates exceeded all Department of Defense standards for entry to service.

The Marine Corps demands recruits meet exceptionally rigorous requirements, and those who were recruited during FY19 were no exception. More than 99 percent of recruits were high school graduates, significantly exceeding the DOD standard of 90 percent, and more than 70 percent scored in the top three tiers on the Armed Forces Qualification Test, for which the DOD standard is 60 percent.

The Marine officer candidates sel-



CPL ASHLEY LAWSON, USMC



CPL ASHLEY LAWSON, USMC

BGen Kevin J. Stewart, 2nd MLG, presents a Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal to SSgt Elissa Pedelty, left, winner of the Commanding General's Innovation Challenge, at the MakerSpace location at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., Oct. 16. Pedelty's winning design, pictured in the above right photo, was an Environmental Control Unit dust cover.



LCPL MITCHELL COLLYER, USMC

GySgt Latyra Sayers of Recruiting Station San Diego speaks with a student during a National Society of Black Engineers Conference career fair in Detroit, Mich., March 28. During FY19, MCRC reached its recruiting mission and has over the last three years selected the most diverse group of officer candidates since the inception of the all-volunteer force.

ected between fiscal years 2016 and 2019 represent the most diverse group of officers since the inception of the all-volunteer force. During that four-year period, the Marine Corps achieved more than 30 percent new officer accessions from diverse backgrounds. Equally noteworthy in FY19, more than 12 percent of officer accessions were women.

These accomplishments are particularly impressive given the myriad challenges

Marine recruiters and officer selection officers face, competing for the few highly qualified individuals who can meet stringent standards and share the fighting spirit common to all Marines. Marines on recruiting duty work in excess of 60 hours a week to find the next generation of smart, tough, elite warriors, making as many as 10,000 contacts with prospects to deliver 50 Marines to the operational forces in a typical three-year tour.

“During a tough FY19, we worked together to overcome all obstacles and find young men and women motivated to serve for the best, intangible reasons. These include pride of belonging, meeting a challenge, and service for the sake of service,” said Major General James W. Bierman, the commanding general of MCRC.

GySgt Justin Kronenberg, USMC

With Arrival of JLTV, Improvement in Payload, Performance and Protection

During the month of September, the 3rd Marine Division received its first delivery of the new Joint Light Tactical Vehicle (JLTV) at Marine Corps Base Camp Smedley D. Butler, Okinawa, Japan. The JLTV will replace the High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV) currently in use.

“The JLTV rebalances the ‘iron triangle,’ ” said Andrew Rodgers, the JLTV program manager. “Payload, performance and protection. We’re restoring the capability we had in the HMMWV prior to a war that involved [improvised explosive devices] and roadside ambushes.”

As technology progresses and new equipment is rolled out that will sustain and protect Marines, vehicles that can support heavier loads are a necessity. HMMWVs are being overloaded past their intended payload, degrading the vehicle’s mobility and range.

The JLTV trumps the HMMWV in

THE NEXT CHAPTER—Gen Joseph F. Dunford Jr., 19th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and 36th Commandant of the Marine Corps, recently retired after 42 years of service to Corps and country. His wife, Ellyn, was by his side during the ceremony in the USS *Constitution* Museum in his hometown of Boston, Mass., Oct. 11. It was a fitting location as the vessel is the world’s oldest commissioned warship afloat and is deeply connected to Marine Corps heritage. Sailors and Marines made up its original crew in accordance with the Naval Act of 1794, and during the Barbary War, *Constitution’s* Marines reached the shores of Tripoli, earning a mention in “The Marines’ Hymn.” In a farewell to servicemembers, Gen Dunford said: “It’s because of you that I am confident that we can defend the homeland and our way of life. It’s because of you that we have earned the trust and confidence of allies and partners around the world. It’s because of you that people believe in America.”



CPO ELLIOTT FABRIZIO, USN



CPL JACOB HANCOCK, USMC

The JLTV, shown here in a Sept. 13 photo, is the latest addition to the 3rdMarDiv's fleet of vehicles at MCB Camp Butler, Okinawa, Japan. With improved armor, a better engine, and durability greater than that of the HMMWV, the JLTV is a valuable new asset to the division and will greatly improve mission success and lethality.

every aspect of the triangle: a scalable engine with a base tune that currently doubles the horsepower of the HMMWV; an increased operating payload that allows for roughly 2,500 additional pounds of cargo; and increased organic protection before the addition of armor kits, which results in an increased average vehicle range before operational mission failure.

The superior vehicle will allow the division to be more capable and lethal. The plan is to field JLTVs to the entire Marine Corps by January 2034. III Marine Expeditionary Force will be fully fielded by July 2027, and its Marines have begun training on the new vehicle and remain ready to "fight tonight."

LCpl Ujian Gosun, USMC

Air Station Prepares for Arrival Of New Heavy-Lift Helicopters

A training hangar for the brand-new CH-53K King Stallion helicopter opened at Marine Corps Air Station New River, N.C., Oct. 8, in preparation for the forthcoming arrival of the aircraft. The hangar will be used by the Center for Naval Aviation Technical Training (CNATT) and will provide the most up-to-date training for maintainers.

"This is the first sign that we are actually moving forward with the program of the CH-53K," said Colonel Curtis Ebitz, the commanding officer of MCAS New River. "This allows the maintainers to get hands-on with the aircraft prior to the pilots training out in the fleet."

According to Lieutenant Colonel William Slack, the commanding officer of CNATT, the training will be different from the course of instruction students currently receive. The biggest difference will be the Helicopter Emulation Training Device. This device will provide state-of-the-art training through interactive tools to help Marines learn to remove and replace components without physically going out to the aircraft. Other differences include 3D-printed parts as well as real

CH-53K parts. This will help Marines catch and fix problems before they cause issues.

"As new developments occur, as with any aircraft, we will work them into the aircraft training with computer-based training and through the state-of-the-art maintenance trainer," Ebitz said. "This will allow the Marines to get truly hands-on training."

The students will receive hands-on training through the introduction of



LCPL TAYLOR SMITH, USMC

Col Curtis Ebitz, CO, MCAS New River, N.C., and LtCol William Slack, commanding officer of the air station's CNATT, cut the ribbon to officially open the new CH-53K King Stallion helicopter hangar during an Oct. 8 ceremony.

Col Curtis Ebitz gives a speech during the CH-53K helicopter hangar ribbon-cutting ceremony at MCAS New River, N.C., Oct. 8. The hangar will accommodate hands-on training on the new King Stallion helicopter before the aircraft hits the fleet.

the Practical Job Trainer, which will include an actual CH-53K King Stallion. The trainer will allow the Marines to familiarize themselves with the basics of the helicopter, learn aircraft component locations and perform operational checks.

“The CH-53K is a complete redesign. [The new design] improves its reliability, maintainability and survivability, while reducing the total ownership costs,” Slack said. “It increases the payload of the external carrying capacity to 27,000 pounds, which is three times the payload of its predecessor.”

The CH-53K transition is expected to be complete in fiscal year 2030, but will begin at 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing over the next couple of years with a slow integration into the fleet.

LCpl Taylor Smith, USMC



LCPL TAYLOR SMITH, USMC

Crazy Caption Contest

Winner



SGT MACKENZIE GIBSON, USMC

“We never leave anyone behind.”

Submitted by:
John Sanchez
Hanford, Calif

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.

This Month's Photo



CPL NELSON DUENAS, USMC

(Caption) _____

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____ ZIP _____

FIXING FOR A FIGHT

**2ndMarDiv Prepares For “War”
At Twentynine Palms, Calif.**



By the Staff of 2nd Marine Division

With just days to go before 2nd Marine Division kicks off the largest and most complex unscripted force-on-force field exercise in decades, planners at all levels were hard at work finalizing the plans that will earn them victory over their peer adversary (ADFOR), a regiment (reinforced)-sized force made up primarily of the 1st Marine Division's 7th Marine Regiment, along with elements of the Camp Pendleton-based 4th Marine Regiment, and a hardy complement of British Royal Marines' 40 Commando Battle Group and the Royal Canadian Air Force's 408 Tactical Helicopter Squadron.

Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Warfighting Exercise (MWX) 1-20 is about as "peer-like" a test as there is, according to Colonel David Wallis, 2ndMarDiv's lead planner, given that the "adversary" will think like Marines, be equipped like Marines, and will be completely and uniquely familiar with the geographic area of operations (AO)—all thanks to innovations in exercise design introduced by MAGTF Training Command's "ADFOR Academy," located at Twentynine Palms, Calif.

"Twentynine Palms is home to 7th Marines," said Wallis. "It's their stomping ground. The Marines of that proud regiment, and by association their British counterparts, will know every nook and cranny of this



AAVs from 2ndMarDiv are staged in a motor pool lot at Camp Wilson, MCAGCC, Twentynine Palms, Calif., Oct. 6 prior to MAGTF Warfighting Exercise 1-20.

PFC PATRICK KING, USMC



PC PATRICK KING, USMC

Above: Marines with the commanding general's JUMP Platoon, 2nd Light Armored Reconnaissance Bn, 2ndMarDiv, repair a light armored vehicle prior to a convoy at Camp Wilson, MCAGCC, Twentynine Palms, Calif., Oct. 26. The JUMP Platoon Marines are tasked to provide security and transportation for the commanding general throughout MAGTF Warfighting Exercise 1-20.



LCPL ALIZE SOTELO, USMC

HM3 Andrew Mercier, right, Hq Bn, 1stMarDiv, evaluates HM3 Norberto Cruz-Montaz from 3rd Bn, 8th Marine Regiment, 2ndMarDiv, during a live whole-blood transfusion practical application at Camp Wilson, MAGCC, Twentynine Palms, Calif., Oct. 16. The corpsmen implemented the transfusions on simulated casualties during MAGTF Warfighting Exercise 1-20.



place. It'll be tough to overcome that, but it'll force us to think outside the box and get creative in order to develop a game-changing strategy and the requisite tactical advantage.

"But the 'peer competitor' aspect goes well beyond geography," Wallis continued. "It's really largely about the military application of emergent technologies, the testing of developing theories, the art and science of operational design—which can be culture-specific—and the indomitable spirit of the warrior in the fight," he said.

Indeed, technology will play a significant if not unprecedented role in this warfighting exercise, the natural outcome of which should be both improved warfighting proficiency and a modernization of the force—two key priorities for General David H. Berger, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, and Major General David J. Furness,



Cpl Martin Seneca, bottom, and Cpl Robert Carlow, tank crewmen with Co C, 2nd Tank Bn, 2ndMarDiv, conduct proper maintenance on an M1A1 Abrams tank at Camp Wilson, MCAGCC, Twentynine Palms, Calif, Oct. 15, during MAGTF Warfighting Exercise 1-20.

LCPL JUAN MAGADAN, USMC

2ndMarDiv's commanding general. According to the Division's deputy intelligence officer, Lieutenant Colonel P.J. Croom, MWX is taking technology to the next level, in such a way that the peer fight actually may not be.

"Although they are a smaller force numerically, the [adversary force] has been equipped with several emerging technological capabilities that will allow them to realistically simulate many challenges [the ground force] might encounter when facing our pacing threats," he said. Portable GPS jamming, small Unmanned Aerial Systems swarming technology, advanced digital network probing and intrusion, and multi-faceted radio frequency disruption are just some of the means and tactics that may be used in MWX and underpin Russian and Chinese warfighting capabilities and doctrine.

And while the Marine Corps maintains an enduring mandate to mitigate the advantage gap through technology, technology alone is not a panacea. "It is by design," Croom explained, "that MWX will allow 2ndMarDiv, at the individual Marine and collective entity levels, to struggle, learn, adapt and successfully compete in an environment starkly representative of the battlefields of both today and tomorrow."

Just one of eight active-duty Marine Corps infantry regiments, the adversary force's nucleus, 7th Marines, would, on any other day, be blood brethren with regiments of the 2ndMarDiv, but during MWX each will seek to place the other in its crosshairs. From an intelligence standpoint, Croom says, nothing really changes.

"Analytic tradecraft doesn't care whether the opponent is friend, foe, or neutral. Understanding what the other side

brings to the fight, in terms of weapons systems, command and control capabilities, surveillance and reconnaissance assets, and maneuver platforms is a fundamental requirement," he continued. "In the MWX scenario, though, a healthy respect for the human factor could carry the day, and that's the beauty of this unscripted exercise."

Croom stressed that factors like the "who, what, when, where, why and how" of commanders' seminal operational experiences can drive their tactical predispositions and represent varsity-level intelligence questions for 2ndMarDiv. "Answers to those questions—combined in this case with the adversary force commanders' intimate prior knowledge of the Twentynine Palms terrain—should provoke some hard thinking and even harder decision-making for 2ndMarDiv Marines from the commanding general all



PC PATRICK KING, USMC

Above: AH-1Z Viper helicopters with HMLA-269, 2nd MAW, land during a training event at MCAGCC, Twentynine Palms, Calif., Oct 23. HMLA-269 supported the 2ndMarDiv in execution of MAGTF Warfighting Exercise 1-20.



LCPL REINE WHITAKER, USMC

Marines clear their weapons before entering the chow hall at Camp Wilson, MCAGCC, Twentynine Palms, Calif., Oct. 19. Food service Marines are supporting 2ndMarDiv's preparation and execution of MAGTF Warfighting Exercise from mid-October through early November by feeding 2,200-3,000 Marines twice a day.

the way down to that 18-year-old trigger puller,” he said.

At a minimum, the Division is counting on the smaller ADFOR, Colonel Matthew Good and his 7th Marines, along with their NATO-counterpart forces from the U.K. and Canada, to push the envelope of tactical and operational creativity at every turn. “We are literally playing in their sandbox,” Croom noted. “The expectation is that they will drive us to our limits in the most unlikely and unpredictable of engagement locations they can conjure up.”

MajGen Furness notes that history is rife with examples where underestimated and numerically inferior forces have applied brilliant combat tradecraft—and determined grit—to overcome seemingly insurmountable odds and obtain victory. He says his planners and subordinate commanders are hard at work studying all facets of the ADFOR and preparing diligently in order to avoid making such an egregious mistake, especially since the peer/near-peer exercise today could be the real thing tomorrow.

“Look, the reality is all you have to do is pay attention to know that the geopolitical scene is fluid, and that the next fight we go into may well be a peer fight,” he said. “It’s not by accident that we’ve been doing more with our European and partner-nation counterparts over the last decade than we have in a very long time—Marine Rotational Force-Darwin in Australia; Marine Rotational Force-Europe in Norway; and the Black Sea Rotational Force just to name a few. Open-source reporting would tell you that just last week we moved tanks to Lithuania,” he continued.

“As a ground-force commander, my



CPL ALIZE SOTELO, USMC

Maj Angela Nelson, CO, Communications Co, Hq Bn, 2ndMarDiv, left, talks to a group of Basic Communication Officer Course students at Camp Wilson, MCAGCC, Twentynine Palms, Calif., Oct. 21. Officers from the course toured 2ndMarDiv's rear area operations center and staging area as the division prepared to execute MAGTF Warfighting Exercise 1-20.

main focus is on ensuring my warriors are ready for the fight—any fight, in any clime or place. My decision to bring the better part of my entire Division from North Carolina to California, as well as to involve an ADFOR that thinks like us, has more advanced technology than we do, and is more familiar with the territory than we are, is all intentional,” he said, “and that’s because I see it is as a matter of when, not if, we next meet a peer competitor on the field of battle. I would argue that it will be sooner than later, and

we need to be ready in every way.

“For our part,” MajGen Furness continued, “the Marines *will* be ready, and that’s because through tests like MWX, we study, we prepare, we execute, we analyze, we seek out the imperfections, and then we do it all over again. It’s kind of like the principle behind marksmanship,” he said. “We make all those adjustments leading up to qualification day so that when it really counts we can accurately and consistently place ‘two in the head and one in the chest.’ ”



LCPL JUAN MAGADAN, USMC

LT Matthew Chen, a medical officer with 3rd Bn, 8th Marine Regiment, 2ndMarDiv, fills a syringe while conducting a live whole-blood transfusion evaluation at Camp Wilson, MCAGCC, Twentynine Palms, Calif., Oct. 18.



PFC PATRICK KING, USMC

A Marine with VMM-266, 2nd MAW, pumps fuel into a MV-22 Osprey on the Strategic Expeditionary Landing Field at MCAGCC, Twentynine Palms, Calif., Oct. 23 as part of the squadron's participation in MAGTF Warfighting Exercise 1-20.

SEA STORY OF THE MONTH

Early Retirement

Gen Louis H. Wilson Jr. came aboard as the Commandant of the Marine Corps shortly after I had been assigned to Headquarters Marine Corps. I relished his appointment because I knew that he was a tough, battle-hardened Marine who was going to set the Corps straight. And I was proven right.

As the story goes, one day Gen Wilson had to answer the call of nature. I doubt that there was a Marine throughout the Corps who didn't know about Gen Wilson being a stickler when it came to overweight Marines. Standing at the urinal next to Gen Wilson was a pudgy, overweight major who didn't bother to look up to see who was standing next to him.

It was said Gen Wilson made a comment about the major's weight. Still with head down, and not liking the comment that was made about his weight, the major replied, somewhat sarcastically, that it made no difference to him because he was going to retire in a year or so anyway. The next words the major heard were, "Major, you just retired as of today."

Knowing Gen Wilson, there is no doubt in my mind that it is a true story.

LTCol Terry Komar
USMC (Ret)
The Villages, Fla.

Phil Everly Didn't Take Requests

The Everly Brothers, Don and Phil, joined the Marine Corps Reserve in October 1961 and went through recruit training at MCRD San Diego. They were a wildly popular singing duo

of the late 1950s with hits like, "Wake Up Little Susie," "Crying in the Rain," "Cathy's Clown," and "All I Have to Do is Dream." My recruit platoon was about a month ahead of the brothers who graduated in January 1962.

I returned to Camp Pendleton from the 3rd Marine Division in April 1963 and was assigned to "Alpha" Battery, 11th Marines, then located in 16 Area. That summer Phil

One evening a
salty old sergeant,
with a few beers
aboard, wandered
into the squad bay
where the
"gun goons" were
swapping sea stories.

Everly reported to Alpha Btry for his two weeks of active duty and was billeted in the gun platoon squad bay. Phil was low-key, friendly, and got along easily with his fellow Marines.

One evening a salty old sergeant, with a few beers aboard, wandered into the squad bay where the "gun goons" were swapping sea stories. He approached Phil and asked, "You the guitar player guy I heard about?"

Phil replied that he was. "So, play me a tune on your guitar, private," said the sergeant.

Phil, keeping a straight face, responded, "I make more money singing one song than you'll make in your entire career, Sergeant; no songs for you." The

sergeant, humiliated, left in a fluster with a course set for the noncommissioned officers' club.

Phil later got out his guitar and played ballads for the enlisted swine, much to everyone's delight except the sergeant, who now looked like "Cathy's Clown."

I'll always remember Phil Everly as a gentleman, artist, and a fine Marine.

C.M. "Stoney" Brook
Santa Cruz, Calif.

Marines Get All the Glory

At 73 years of age, and five years out from a lung transplant, I work part-time at the Madison Veterans Center in Madison, Wis., as a writer-editor in the "My Life, My Story" program. I interview veterans, put their stories in their records for their care team to know more about them, and give them copies for family and friends.

Some time ago, I interviewed a 95-year-old World War II Marine veteran, who made six landings in the Pacific. He had a terrific memory and talked for 3 ½ hours. He has given me permission to share his story.

During the war, the Marine and his buddies were on USS *Monrovia* (APA-31) which was to take their unit to Saipan. A Navy chief saw the Marines and said, "All you Marines get all the glory back home. What the hell? You are not winning this war all by yourselves."

The same chief approached the Marines as the ship arrived near Saipan, saying, "What are we doing in this close? They could shoot at us from here."

The veteran Marine fondly remembered looking at the chief and saying, "We're going to land there in a couple of minutes. Do

you want to come along and get some of that glory?" The chief took off down below in a hurry.

SSgt Robert A. Hall
Madison, Wis.

Once a Marine

I was taking a trip on Amtrak out of Union Station in Kansas City, Mo. After I boarded the train we were informed that there would be a delay of approximately 45 minutes. I decided to leave the train to purchase a newspaper. The only newsstand was across the street in a hotel.

After purchasing the newspaper, I was returning to Union Station when I saw Kansas City, Kan., Mayor Sly James sitting with a friend at an open cafeteria. I knew the mayor was a Marine, so I stopped, introduced myself and asked if we had been stationed together. Mayor James looked at his friend and said with a big smile, "See, I told you he was a Marine. He didn't walk in here; he marched."

MSgt Kermit Daniel
USMC (Ret)
1960 to 1980
Liberty, Mo.

Morale-Boosting Panel Checks

One of the best ideas that the United States Marine Corps has ever come up with is the Forward Air Controller (FAC). A FAC is typically a young first lieutenant or captain aviator, who is yanked out of the cockpit and then dragged kicking and screaming to spend one year with the infantry. There, his occupational specialty is simply stated: control Marine air in the forward battlefield. This includes Close Air Support (CAS), as well as setting up and

controlling helicopter landing zones.

From 1985 to 1988, I was a radar intercept officer in the backseat of the F-4S Phantom II until the Marine Corps retired the F-4. Luckily, I had been selected for the new two-seat, F/A-18D Hornet, however, that

FAC could visually check the panels on the bottom of their aircraft for any that had come open or were missing.

After getting the FAC's approval, the F/A-18s assumed a close, parade position, and then screamed over the FAC at 500 feet and 500 knots.

With tongue in cheek, the aircrew asked the FAC for permission to fly over his position as low and as fast as was legal. That way, the FAC could visually check the panels on the bottom of their aircraft for any that had come open or were missing.

program was not to be initiated until early spring of 1990. What was I going to do for a year? I was an aviator without an aircraft—the perfect candidate to be a FAC. Thus, in October 1988, I accepted FAC orders to 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment.

Do you want to know the hardest part about being a FAC? It wasn't sleeping in the mud and the rain. It wasn't constantly being wet and cold. It wasn't humping those heavy radios. No, it was controlling aviators who, a few months before, had been your squadron mates.

As soon as aviators checked in on the control frequency, the FAC recognized their voices. He would reply to their check-in with a painful wince, thinking, "I wish that I was still up there, going 500 miles per hour and setting my hair on fire."

Consequently, upon completion of their CAS mission, F/A-18 jet jocks tried to lift the spirits of their former comrade by asking for a "panel check." With tongue in cheek, the aircrew asked the FAC for permission to fly over his position as low and as fast as was legal. That way, the

The grunts loved it.
The aircrew loved it.
The FAC loved it.

Besides motivating the hell out of the infantry Marines, who would actually cheer, a panel check served to put a smile on the face of a FAC who was currently living a miserable existence. As his former squadron mates climbed for the return trip home, the FAC always told them, "Have a safe flight. All of your panels look fine."

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

Marines React to Shanghai Landing

The most spontaneous example of esprit de corps I ever experienced during my enlistment occurred in early January 1969. The base theater in Little Hall at

The entire theater audience burst out in a loud cheer for those 1920s-era Marines who just landed.

Quantico, Va., was playing Steve McQueen's film, "The Sand Pebbles." In the film, the executive officer, Bordelles, reported to the ship's captain about a radio transmission verifying a landing by the Marines at Shanghai. With that, the entire theater audience burst out in a loud cheer for those 1920s-era Marines who just landed. It was only a movie but I found that spontaneous cheer from us all to be a remarkable display of esprit de corps.

Sgt Hank Frydel
Fredericksburg, Va.

You Might be a Jarhead if ...

You've ever used the term "Oorah" in any context other than sarcasm.

Your dream home is base housing.

You've ever rolled pennies to buy beer on a week night.

You've ever sold blood to buy beer.

You've ever financed a tattoo.

Your kid has a high and tight.

You still have your full basic issue.

Your boot polish doesn't come out of a bottle.

Your cammies have more starch than your potatoes.

You refer to McDonald's food as "chow."

You've ever bought your girlfriend a "bag nasty."

You've ever read your battle skills book for fun.

You still know all your general orders.

You refer to E-2s as "my PFC," or "young devil dog."

You call your friends "Devil Dog."

Your number one credit reference is DPP.

You think your military training is seriously worth college credit.

Your picture is outside the career planner's office.

You have whitewalls on your head, but not your car.

You have a star on your good cookie or even have a good cookie.

You still know the words

to "The Marines' Hymn."

You say things are "good to go," or "outstanding."

Your favorite game is Spades.

You still imitate your drill instructors.

You call cadence to yourself.

You get your haircut at the 7-Day Store.

You've ever given a period of instruction.

You've ever locked anybody on.

You use CLP as cologne.

You use Aqua Velva aftershave.

You have a dog named "Chesty."

You have a blues cover in the back window of your car.

You've ever done anything for love of the Corps.

You display your rank on the windshield of your car.

You have a subscription to *Leatherneck* magazine.

You use the term hard charger on a subject other than batteries.

You think your unit doesn't PT enough.

You wear your dog tags to the beach.

You still use any drill instructor clichés.

All your underwear still has your laundry number on it.

You stencil your name on your jeans.

You refer to regular clothes as civvies.

You've ever ironed your sheets for field day.

Bil Pederson
Mauston, Wis.

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

San Diego Motorcycle Group Rides to Benefit TOYS FOR TOTS

By Col J.S. Anderson, USMC (Ret)

“If you build it, they will come.” It is fitting to borrow the idea made famous in the movie “Field of Dreams” to describe what El Cajon Harley Owners Group member and retired Marine Mike Harris has accomplished. Conceiving, planning and leading the annual El Cajon Harley Owners Group’s Toys for Tots Ride since 2014, Harris has diligently and tirelessly worked to grow the event to donate toys and cash to the Marine Corps Reserve Toys for the Tots Program in the San Diego region. From around 30 participating bikes in 2014, he grew the event to include roughly 400 bikes in 2018.

For the first three years, departing from El Cajon Harley-Davidson, Harris led the group ride of toy-festooned motorcycles first to the Miramar National Cemetery to pay respects to our fallen, then on to the Marine Corps Reserve Center to drop off toys to the Marine Corps Reserve’s 4th Tank Battalion. This relatively small endeavor took a dramatic turn in 2016 thanks to TV coverage featuring Harris.

After viewing the 2016 televised story about the toy run, Sheryl Kerstiens of the Del Mar Thoroughbred Club (DMTC) contacted Harris and proposed a partnership to benefit children in San Diego. A new concept for the annual ride began

taking shape during that preliminary telephone conversation and associated initial planning meeting in January 2017. The timing was especially significant for the community. The NFL’s Chargers football team had departed San Diego for Los Angeles, ending their annual toy drive supporting Toys for Tots.

Building began, and they came to help Harris meet the Toys for Tots Foundation’s objective to “help less fortunate children throughout the United States experience the joy of Christmas.”

Beginning in 2017, the Del Mar Race-track would be the ride destination with iron horses meeting thoroughbred horses during the fall horseracing season. Harris, Kerstiens and others set to planning the significantly expanded and more complex event. At meeting after meeting, numerous organizations and Marine Corps units willingly came to the table to plan the way ahead: El Cajon Harley-Davidson, Del Mar Thoroughbred Club, El Cajon Harley

Owers Group, 4th Tank Battalion and 4th Medical Battalion from Marine Forces Reserve, and Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego. Though the event was several months away, an ad hoc committee made up of individuals from these organizations worked to develop the framework for the ride.

The 2017 event, the first in the new model, was a success with an estimated 300 bikes joining the ride. By the end of the day, hundreds of toys and approximately \$8,600 were donated to the local Marine Toys for Tots Program. All involved agreed with Harris that it could be bigger and better in 2018, so they set about building the next event. Leading the planning were Harris, Kerstiens and Staff Sergeant (now Gunnery Sergeant) Jeff Cantu, the San Diego Toys for Tots Coordinator. Countless hours and many meetings, emails and texts all contributed to building upon 2017’s success.

In the months leading up to the ride, Harris singlehandedly worked to inform the broader motorcycle community about it. Traveling as far away as Nevada and Arizona, he rode countless miles, visiting groups to tell them about the ride, urging that they buy some toys and come out to support children. He did not limit the outreach only to Harley-Davidson, but also met with riders of Indian, BMW, Spyder, and Gold Wing motorcycles. All bikes were welcome. If folks from out of town did not want to ride all the way to El Cajon to participate in the ride, they could head straight to the race track to join in the event, which many did. Harris expanded his horizons after he mentioned the ride to a car club member during one of El Cajon’s summer cruise-ins. Not only were motorcycles welcome, but car clubs also began participating. A website, Facebook page, and Twitter account were created to help get the word out.

Building began, and they came to help Harris meet the Toys for Tots Foundation’s objectives to “help less fortunate children throughout the United States experience the joy of Christmas; to play an active role in the development of one of our nation’s most valuable resources—our children; to unite all members of local communities in a common cause for three months each year during the annual toy collection and distribution campaign; and to contribute



A motorcycle loaded with toys that were donated to the Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots program in the San Diego area in 2018.



Marine veteran Mike Harris, with passenger Erin Dockery, leads the annual El Cajon Harley Owners Group Toys for Tots ride (above). Key players in planning the event were (inset) Harris, left; Sheryl Kerstiens, DMTC, center; and SSgt Jeff Cantu, 4th Medical Bn and San Diego Toys for Tots Program Coordinator.



Above: One of the toy-laden bikes.



Left: Members of the El Cajon Harley Owners Group are ready to begin registration for their 5th annual Toys for Tots Ride in 2018.



Marines from 4th Tank Bn and 4th Medical Bn at the Del Mar Race Track gates stand ready to accept donated toys.



Above: Marine veteran Mike Harris, left, with radio personality Clint August, of the El Cajon Harley Owners Group at local San Diego TV station KUSI, got together to advertise the event.

Left: Bikes staged at El Cajon Harley-Davidson before the 2018 ride.

to improving communities in the future.”

The 5th Annual El Cajon HOG Toys for Tots Ride in 2018 was spectacular. Hundreds showed up at El Cajon Harley-Davidson, which General Manager Brett Dickinson and Marketing Manager Niki Kastlunger opened early that Sunday to host the ride. For the small registration fee of \$15 and at least one new, unwrapped toy, participants enjoyed a full breakfast sponsored by the El Cajon Elks and Lloyd’s Collision and Paint, and Motorcycle Monkey coffee provided by local KGB-FM radio personality Clint August. The first 250 to register received a special commemorative challenge coin sponsored by El Cajon Harley-Davidson and a complimentary opportunity drawing ticket. During registration and breakfast, tickets were on sale for both a 50/50 drawing and an opportunity drawing, with 100 percent of the proceeds destined for Toys for Tots.

Prior to departure, Harris led the riders in the Pledge of Allegiance and held the preliminary opportunity drawing and the 50/50 drawing. Then California State Senator Joel Anderson spoke to the riders, thanking them for all they were doing, as well as handing out Certificates of Appreciation to volunteers who made the event possible. Once Harris provided the ride briefing, it was time to head for the bikes. Departing El Cajon Harley-Davidson, the group ride passed under a large American flag held aloft by firefighting equipment and a crew from Heartland



In the Del Mar Race Track paddock prior to the “Riders Up” call are, left to right, LtCol Smith, I&I, 4th Tank Bn; Mr. Joe Harper, CEO and President of Del Mar Thoroughbred Club; Col Dockery, CO, MCAS Miramar; SgtMaj Exlos, 4th Tank Bn Sergeant Major; and SgtMaj Walton, MCAS Miramar Sergeant Major.

Fire and Rescue. With an El Cajon Police Department escort, the bikes safely departed. The next stop was the Del Mar Racetrack.

The racetrack provided the riders with special motorcycle access, free parking, free admission with the donation of a new unwrapped toy, free grandstand seating and the use of the Corona Beach House patio at the track. Toys for Tots banners were everywhere. At the Stretch

Run Gate, the riders were greeted by two Marine Corps tactical vehicles, and uniformed Marines and Sailors of 4th Tank Bn and 4th Medical Bn manned the gates collecting the donated toys, which volunteer Sailors counted and loaded for transportation to the Marine Reserve Center. Anyone coming to the track that day, not just ride participants, received free Stretch Run admission with the donation of a new unwrapped toy.



In the winner's circle after the Del Mar Toys for Tots Ride dedicated horse race, a check was presented for more than \$13,000. By the end of the event, in addition to donated toys, more than \$17,500 had been raised.

On the Corona Beach House patio, ride volunteers ran the vastly expanded opportunity drawing and silent auction, awarding 195 prizes, including Marine Corps baseball caps and shirts, gift certificates for meals, passes for local attractions, teddy bears in Marine Corps Dress Blues, autographed country music CDs, NASCAR race tickets, gift baskets, vacation stays at a Las Vegas Resort, dozens of T-shirts, Pulstar sparkplugs, artwork from renowned artists, a certificate to attend a San Diego State University football game, a custom knife, motorcycle helmets, sunglasses, motorcycle riding gear and a GoPro camera. These were possible due to the more than 50 sponsors from across the nation, including GoPro, Columbia River Knife and Tool, American Tire Depot, Cohn Restaurant Group, Good Guys Rod and Custom Association, artist Rick Timmons, HJC, Schuberth North America, Gary Sinise Foundation, Icon Motorsports, RinseKit, Madson sunglasses, Sunward Flag, Hot Leathers, Law Tigers, South Point Casino and Resort, Las Vegas Motor Speedway, Fastenal, Phil's BBQ, Café Moto, eMarine PX, Sgt Grit and others. From their vantage point on the Corona Beach House patio, riders followed the drawing and watched the horses in the paddock area below prior to

each race while enjoying the outstanding food and beverages.

The culminating highlight was the dedicated horse race—the fifth race of the day—the Del Mar Toys for Tots Ride. Leading up to the race, the 1st Marine Division Band marched onto the track and performed a rousing version of “God Bless America,” further motivating the crowd. Prior to the horses taking the track for this unique race, Harris and senior Marines were in the paddock participating in the “Riders Up” call, signaling to the jockeys that it was time to mount up. In the Winners Circle after the race, Sheryl Kerstiens of DMTC was joined by Harris, senior Marines, and the winning jockey, horse owner and horse trainer for a special ceremony. Holding up a large check, they informed the crowd the El Cajon HOG Toys for Tots Ride participants and race-track patrons had together raised more than \$13,000 for the local Toys for Tots Program. This easily topped the 2017 result of \$8,600. The crowd was not done, because by the end of the day, more than \$17,000 and over 1,000 toys were donated to the San Diego area Toys for Tots Program.

The El Cajon Harley Owners Group was everywhere throughout the day manning the registration tables, setting up the

breakfast area, conducting the drawings and 50/50 ticket sales, as well as managing parking at the dealership and serving as road captains. Their efforts, together with other non-HOG volunteers and DMTC folks, ensured the event ran smoothly.

The El Cajon Harley Owners Group built it, and the community came to help support Toys for Tots. Year after year, the event has grown to include more bikes, more toys and more cash. One retired Marine and HOG member's vision has come to fruition. Harris vows 2019 will be even bigger and better.

Editor's note: All photos are courtesy of the author.

Author's bio: Colonel Anderson served on active duty from 1972-2002, serving in the U.S., Japan and England. FMF assignments included commanding MASS-2 and MACG-18, plus non-FMF duties such as guard officer, Marine Barracks United Kingdom, and senior military assistant to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict. Subsequent to military retirement, he worked in public education and as president of a non-profit supporting junior enlisted personnel and wounded warriors.



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Passing the Word

Compiled by Sara W. Bock



CPL ASHLEY GOMEZ, USMC

LCpl Chase Hudgens plays the guitar as an example of coping mechanisms that can effectively be used to handle everyday stress during a “Building the Warrior Within” event at Marston Pavilion, MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., Sept. 24.

“Building the Warrior Within” Aims to Reach Marines Before Crisis Hits

North Carolina-based Marines and Sailors attended “Building the Warrior Within,” an annual suicide prevention event focused on mental, emotional and physical fitness at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., and Marine Corps Air Station New River, N.C., Sept. 24 and 27.

According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, suicide is the tenth leading cause of death in the United States each year, and it’s the second leading cause of death for military members, says the Center for Deployment Psychology.

In 2018, 75 active-duty and reserve Marines ended their own lives, and 63 percent of them were 25 years old or younger. This is the highest suicide rate the Corps has seen among its ranks in the last decade. “Building the Warrior Within” is designed to equip servicemembers with tools to manage life’s stressors.

“The majority of Marines who die by suicide have no known history of seeking behavioral health care,” said Major Craig Thomas, a spokesman with Manpower and Reserve Affairs, Headquarters Marine Corps.

Hundreds of Marines and Sailors attended this year’s expo to learn about mechanisms to cope with adversity and to discover resources that are available to

them if and when they experience unwelcome, negative, self-defeating or suicidal thoughts. The event also promoted different resources available to Marines and Sailors on base, off base and online.

“I’ve never been to “Building the Warrior Within” or any other event like this,” said Lance Corporal Chase Hudgens, a motor transport operator with 2nd Transportation Support Battalion. “I think it’s good that our commands encourage us to go and learn about resources we might need one day.”

If you are experiencing a crisis and need someone to talk to, the DSTRESS line provides free, anonymous counseling for Marines, Sailors and their families 24 hours a day, 7 days a week over the phone at (877) 476-7734.

Cpl Ashley Gomez, USMC

Process Now Begins Earlier When Leaving Active Duty

The first significant alterations to the Defense Department’s Transition Assistance Program (TAP) since 2011 took effect with the new fiscal year, Oct. 1.

The purpose of the program remains



CPL ASHLEY GOMEZ, USMC

LCpl Larry Brown participates in a game during the interactive “Building the Warrior Within” suicide prevention event on Sept. 24 at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C.

the same, but the new requirements will reflect a different process of execution. Marines will be introduced to a more robust life-cycle process that provides a proactive planning experience emphasizing post-transition goals at least a year in advance of end of active service (EAS) or retirement.

“It is our hope that these changes will provide ample time for transitioning servicemembers to begin thinking about their transition and begin planning accordingly,” said Tamre H. Newton, the director of DOD’s Transition to Veterans Program Office.

The mandatory components of TAP are applicable for all servicemembers who have at least 180 continuous days or more on active duty, including members of the National Guard and reserves.

The transition process previously included mandatory pre-separation counseling, attendance at the weeklong Transition Readiness Seminar (TRS), capstone review, and finally, the commander’s verification.

The updated transition process will be more tailored to post-separation goals



and Marines will be required to start the process earlier to ensure a smoother transition to civilian life.

As of Oct. 1, the process includes initial counseling with a personal and professional development staff member no later than 365 days prior to EAS or retirement, during which they will begin the development of an Individual Transition Plan (ITP) to identify their unique needs in the transition process and their post-transition goals. Before the 180-day mark, the required training will incorporate one day of Department of Defense-facilitated training (Marine Corps Transition Day), one day of Veterans Affairs Benefits and Services, one day of Department of Labor employment preparation and a two-day session focused on the track selected by the Marine during his or her initial counseling. The track options are employment, education, vocational training or entrepreneurship. Transitioning servicemembers must elect at least one track, but may attend more than one based on their goals.

The capstone event, which is the culminating event in which commanders verify achievement of career readiness standards and a viable ITP, must happen no later than 90 days before separation.

For more information, contact your local installation's Transition Readiness Program. You can also connect with the Marine for Life network on LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter.

Compiled from DOD
and MCCS releases

In Japan, Grocery Shopping Is Vital to Cultural Adaptation

Mikie Watanabe, a Japanese cultural adaptation specialist with Marine Corps Community Services, Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, took 20 air station residents on an adventure to learn more about local Japanese restaurants and grocery stores at Fresta Mall in Iwakuni City, Sept. 20. The outing takes place four times a year to help familiarize the residents with Japanese lifestyles so that they feel more comfortable exploring Iwakuni City by themselves.

When United States military personnel and their families are sent overseas, they are exposed to different cultures and lifestyles. The Cultural Adaptation Programs are in place to help them better recognize their surroundings and gain appreciation for the people and places around them.

This particular trip included stops at Fresta Supermarket and a sushi restaurant, where they learned how to order food and the differences between American and Japanese sushi.

In the grocery store, Watanabe help



Mikie Watanabe, a Japanese cultural adaptation specialist with MCCS, left, shows Jaclyn Kupka, a resident of MCAS Iwakuni, how to tell the difference between firm and soft tofu at Fresta Supermarket in Iwakuni City, Japan, Sept. 20. (Photo by LCpl Trista Whited, USMC)



LCPL TRISTA WHITED, USMC

With the help of a Japanese local, Jaclyn Kupka practices ordering food at a sushi restaurant in Iwakuni City, Japan, as part of a cultural adaptation program outing, Sept. 20.

translate labels on products, explained the differences between American and Japanese versions of foods and gave the air station residents booklets to translate simple phrases that help shoppers navigate the store. Watanabe believes it is important for U.S. civilians and military personnel to understand Japanese culture.

"I do these trips several times a year to get the new residents familiar with Japan

because when they become familiar, they no longer sit in their rooms all day, scared to experience the world due to the language barrier. They now want to get out and experience more of Japan and are more willing to learn simple phrases in Japanese," said Watanabe.

LCpl Trista Whited, USMC



In Memoriam

Compiled by Nancy S. Lichtman

SSgt Daniel Bertrand, 74, of Green Bay, Wis. He enlisted after his high school graduation and served a tour in Vietnam. He later had a career as a correctional officer and warden.

Cpl James "JR" Blakley, 39, of Henrico County, Va. He was assigned to Echo Co, 2/8 and served in Iraq and the Persian Gulf. He had a degree in electronic engineering technology.

Ralph L. Buechner, 95, of Mount Horeb, Wis. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1942 and served in the Pacific. He saw action on Bougainville and Iwo Jima. After the war, he had a career in banking and was the director of Mount Horeb State Bank.

Gilbert E. Bundy, 80, of Hamilton, Ohio. He served as an aviation mechanic in the Marine Corps. He later worked for Northwest Airlines.

Richard D. Casaus, 88, of Albuquerque, N.M. He enlisted in 1948 and served four years. During the Korean War he saw combat at Pusan, Inchon and the Chosin Reservoir.

1stSgt J.L. "Sarge" Collins, 83, of Jellico, Tenn. His 21 years in the Marine Corps included a tour in Vietnam. His awards include the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart.

GySgt Donald R. "Gunny" DuPree, 71, of Lufkin, Texas. He enlisted in 1968 and retired in 1988. During his 20 years in the Marine Corps he served in Vietnam, Beirut and Grenada.

Alfred J. Fagon Jr., 87, of Bennington, Vt. He enlisted in 1950 and served in the Korean War. His awards include the Purple Heart.

CWO-3 John M. George, 46, of Corona, Calif. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1993 and served for 21 years.

Col Richard Gibbs, 89, of La Madera, N.M. He was a Marine who served during the Korean War and the Vietnam War. His awards include the Purple Heart.

Larry L. Gingerich, 71, of Lee, Fla. He was a trumpet player in "The President's Own" United States Marine Band.

Dennis J. Golueke, 60, of Green Bay, Wis. He enlisted in the Marine Corps after his 1976 graduation from high school and served for three years.

Antonio O. Guerrero, 72, in Bakersfield, Calif. He was a Marine who served from 1968 to 1970 and saw action in Vietnam.

Matthew R. Gurule, 32, of Belen, N.M. He enlisted in 2005 and was a veteran of

Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

Gilbert G. Gutierrez, 75, of Alexandria, Va. He served at Quantico for two years after his college graduation. He later had a career consulting in national and international policy issues.

Cpl Laura A. Hammond, 95, of Pleasant Grove, Utah. She was a Marine who served during WW II.

PFC Deborah K. Herbert, 67, of Lancaster, Pa. After completing boot camp in 1970, she served at MCB Quantico.

Claude F. Hone, 99, of Sioux Falls, S.D. During WW II, he flew the F4U Corsair in the South Pacific. He saw action in the skies over Guam, Saipan, Iwo Jima and Okinawa. He later served in the South Dakota ANG and had a 60-year career in real estate.

SSgt Michael D. Hunt, 88, of Woodridge, Ill. He was an aircraft engine mechanic assigned to VMA-121, MAG-12, 1st MAW during the Korean War. He was a longtime member of the MCA&F. He also belonged to the MCL, VFW and American Legion.

Col William K. Jenkins Sr., 93, of Portland, Ore. During WW II he served in the Navy. After the war, he earned a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering, and in 1950, he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps. During the Korean War he was a platoon commander assigned to Co B, 1st Bn, 7th Marines. His awards include the Purple Heart.

Raymond P. Jepson, 72, of North Clarendon, Vt. During his four years in the Marine Corps, he served two tours in Vietnam. His awards include two Purple Hearts.

Arthur A. "Art" Johnson, 93, of Effingham, Ill. During WW II, he served with 3rdMarDiv. He saw action in the Pacific and was wounded on Iwo Jima. After the war he had a career in insurance.

GySgt Harold J. Kumbalek, 89, of Rio, Wis. His 20-year career in the Marine Corps included two tours in Vietnam as well as assignments on Okinawa and in Alaska. He was a member of the MCA&F.

Stanley Long, 92, of Trenton, Ohio. During WW II, he served on Guam.

Sgt Jean P. Lovato, 70, of Albuquerque, N.M. He enlisted in 1967 and his three years of service included a tour in Vietnam. He was assigned to L/3/3, III Marine Amphibious Force. His awards include a Purple Heart.

PFC Harold G. Lowry, 93, of Portland, Ore. During WW II he was assigned to 4thMarDiv and saw action in the Marshall Islands and on Saipan and Tinian. During the Battle of Iwo Jima, he was wounded. After the war he attended college and then played minor league baseball. His awards include a Bronze Star.

Ronnie Lupe, 89, in East Fork, Ariz. During the Korea War he served in the Marine Corps with Co I, 3rd Bn, 1st Marines, 1stMarDiv.

Charles C. Mannschreck, 74, of St. Joseph, Mo. He was a Marine Corps aviator who flew helicopters in Vietnam.

Capt Joe Morrisette Sr., 83, of Bismarck, N.D. His 21 years in the Marine Corps included one tour in Vietnam.

Maj Roger J. Nemetz, 89, of Palm Desert, Calif. In 1953, he was a second lieutenant assigned to 2/3 in Korea. After the war he completed college and had a career with Jewel Food Company. He also served in the Marine Corps Reserve and was XO of 2nd Bn, 24th Marines.

Gregory W. Olson, 72, of Portland, Ore. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1968 and served a tour in Vietnam as a forward observer for an ANGLICO unit.

Eleanor E. (Murphy) Opolinsky, 96, of Burlington, Conn. She was a Marine who served during WW II.

Ronald Pettet, 76, of Florence, Wis. He served in the Marine Corps from 1962 until 1966.

Davis C. "David" Radder, 75, of De Pere, Wis. He was a Marine Corps veteran of the Vietnam War.

Rich Richey, 81, of Green Valley, Ariz. He was a Navy officer who transferred to the Marine Corps in 1965. He served two tours in Vietnam. After his return to the States, he served as part of the Marine Corps Amphibious Warfare Team.

Chuck Root, 74, of Swannanoa, N.C. His 27 years in the Marine Corps included two combat tours in Vietnam.

Cpl Daniel T. Sampo, 64, of Oneida, Wis. He enlisted in the Marine Corps after his graduation from high school and served from 1973-1975.

LtCol Robert E. "Bob" Santee, 95, of Tigard, Ore. He was a Marine Corps veteran of WW II who was recalled to active duty during the Korean War. He remained on active duty, retiring in 1968 after serving a tour in Vietnam.

GySgt Harold G. Sexton, 70, of Mansfield, Ohio. During his 20-year Marine Corps career he served in Vietnam.

SSgt Robert "Cajun Bob" Thoms, 75, of Wasilla, Alaska. He enlisted at age 17 and was an MSG Marine at U.S. embassies in Nigeria, Congo and Greece. In 1967-1968, he served two tours in Vietnam.

As a platoon commander with D/1/5, 1stMarDiv he was awarded the Silver Star for his actions during the Battle of Hue City. On Feb. 15, 1968, Co D came under hostile fire during their assault of the arch tower along the eastern wall of the citadel. He was leading his squad to the objective when the attack was halted due to casualties and intense enemy fire. He then moved the assault to the heaviest contact and refused medical treatment when he was wounded by grenade fragments. According to the award citation, his men, inspired by his "fearless leadership and aggressive fighting spirit," seized the tower. "After establishing a hasty defense, he redistributed ammunition and supervised the evacuation of the wounded. Despite intense North Vietnamese mortar and rocket fire throughout the night, he maintained his position until directed to withdraw." Despite being wounded a second time, he refused evacuation in order to stay with his Marines and lead them in a successful counterattack the next morning.

Maj John A. Toolan, 87, of Brooklyn, N.Y. He enlisted in the Marine Corps and later earned a commission. For nearly four decades he was a claims manager with Allstate Insurance. He spent countless hours engaged in community service, including doing free income tax preparation for senior citizens.

His son, LtGen John A. Toolan Jr., USMC (Ret), and two of his grandsons, Maj Sean A. Toolan, USMCR and Capt Michael P. O'Brien, USMC, followed in his footsteps and also became Marines.

SSgt Roger F. Trexler, 76, of Harwich, Mass. He enlisted after his high school graduation and served with the 2ndMarDiv. He later had a 50-year career as a civil engineer for the Maryland State Highway Administration.

Sgt Peter Henry Valade, 78, of North Attleboro, Mass. He was a Marine who served in Vietnam from 1968 to 1969 with Co G, 2/26, 1stMarDiv as an infantry Marine in all duty positions, including fire team leader, squad leader, platoon guide and platoon sergeant. His awards include the Navy Achievement Medal with combat "V."

Sgt Lawrence R. Walsh, 74, of Pahump, Nev. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1964 after his high school

graduation and went to MCRD San Diego. During a tour in Vietnam he was a radio operator assigned to MABS-36. He was also a door gunner on UH-34s. His son is also a Marine.

LCpl Gerald M. Wollard, 81, of Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla. He was a Marine who served from 1957-1960. He completed boot camp at MCRD San Diego and served at Camp Pendleton and Hawaii. He later had a career with the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad. He was a member of the MCA&F.

Timothy G. "Tim" Workman, 94, of Casper, Wyo. During WW II, he was a Marine Raider who served in the South Pacific. His awards include two Purple Hearts.

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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JULY 2-12

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SOUND OFF [continued from page 7]

us from point A to point B. We all shared in the gas expense. Holly Ridge, N.C., had a drag strip where we watched Art Afrons run his “green monster” powered by a jet engine until he crashed it on his second run. A big night on the town was in “J-ville” on Court Street, where we had to dodge the hucksters who wanted you to buy a gold plated bible to send to your mother. That all changed when I left for Vietnam in 1965.

Good times, good memories and great lifelong friends. Semper Fi!

Capt Dan Macsay, USMC (Ret)
1962 to 1982
Trent Woods, N.C.

No 3.5-inch Bazookas at Peleliu

I thoroughly enjoyed the article “D-Day at Peleliu,” in your September issue. Those World War II Marines are one of the reasons I enlisted in the Marine Corps. I did notice an error in the article, however. Early on, the author refers to destroying a Japanese tank with a 3.5-inch bazooka. I do not believe Marines were equipped with 3.5-inch bazookas during WW II. The 3.5-inch rocket launcher wasn’t introduced into the fleet until sometime

in the 1950s. Up until then they were equipped with 2.36-inch rocket launchers.

I believe that it was during the Korean War that the 2.36-inch rocket launcher proved only moderately effective against North Korean T-34 tanks which led to the development of the 3.5-inch rocket launcher.

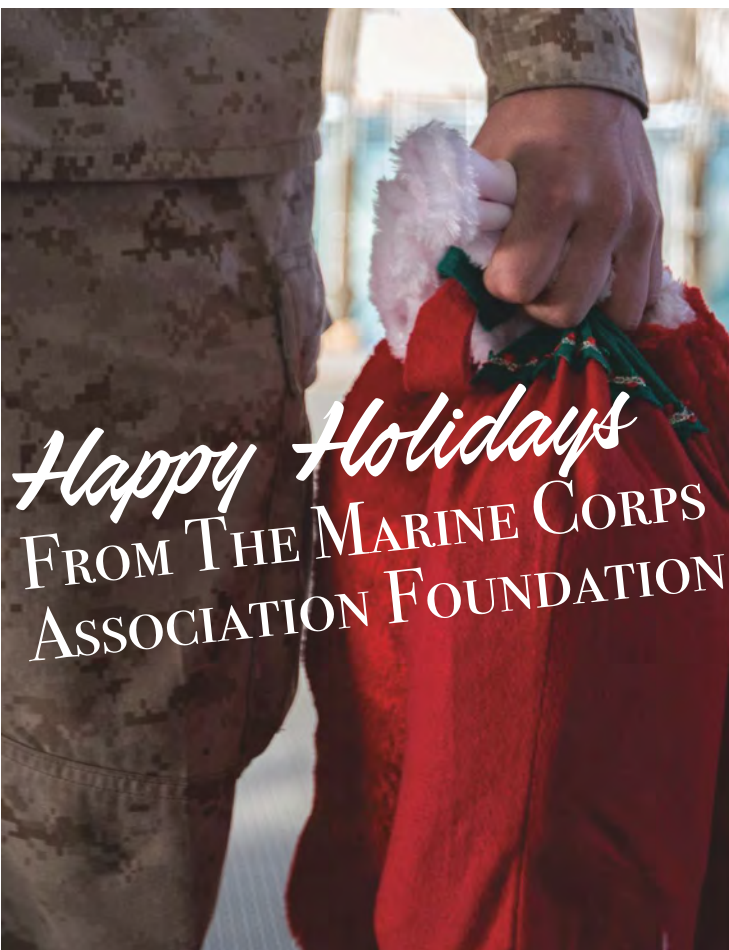
Cpl Larry Simeone
Watertown, Mass.

Why I Downplay Being a Marine

I understand Lance Corporal Hugh B. Pratt’s sentiments in his Sound Off letter [May issue] and I appreciate Sergeant C.C. Westlake’s response [August issue]. Like LCpl Pratt, I tend to downplay my being a Marine, especially with other Marines.

One, I was drafted but I volunteered to be inducted into the Marine Corps. I already had an older brother in the Air Force and a younger brother in the Army. Two, I only served two years from 1968 to 1970 after turning down an offer to go to Officer Candidates School (OCS) since I decided to not make a career in the Corps and OCS would require extending my service. Three, the Marine Corps stationed me on Okinawa and not Vietnam.

In addition, veterans who served during the Vietnam War but did not serve in the war zone are expected to refer to them-



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selves as Vietnam-era Marines or veterans and not Vietnam War Marines. This clearly implies a less honorable status than a Vietnam War combat Marine or veteran. And it is hard to find hats, lapel pins or bumper stickers as a Vietnam-era Marine. They're all Vietnam War Marines so I do not display them.

On the one hand, I have great respect for Vietnam combat Marines understanding that they went through much more than I did so I use the term Vietnam-era Marine. World War II veterans do not make such a distinction, recognizing that all served their country during a war as they were assigned. And civilians, at that time, assumed I served in Vietnam and treated me with the same disrespect of veterans at that time.

Even though I downplay my being a Marine and use the term Vietnam-era Marine, if anyone else belittles my service as a Marine, I will proudly defend my service as a Marine.

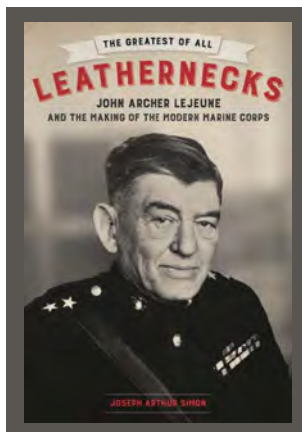
I did volunteer to be a Marine even though I was drafted and I made it through Parris Island as a private first class. I graduated second in my class at the Marine Corps Vietnamese Language School in Camp Del Mar outside San Diego. One does what the Corps tells you to do as best you can. I suspect the Corps dropped

me off on Okinawa because I had two brothers at that time serving in the Vietnam War zone. My younger brother served two tours in Vietnam and was seriously wounded by shrapnel from a booby trap ending with a medical discharge, Purple Heart and Bronze Star. He died decades later from Hepatitis C from that shrapnel and transfusions on the battle field. Vietnam is rife with hepatitis. Why else would the Corps give me a 9940 Vietnamese Language MOS and station me on Okinawa where they speak Japanese and place me in purchasing after I graduated top in my class at Supply School, not Purchasing School at Camp Lejeune?

I left the Marine Corps as an E-4 corporal with a meritorious mast which is not bad for someone who served only two years.

Cpl Frank E. Williams
USMC, 1968-1970
Raleigh, N.C.

• *While I empathize with you downplaying your veteran status, I take exception with your comment that being a Vietnam-era Marine "clearly implies a less honorable status than a Vietnam War combat Marine or veteran." The distinction has more to do with accuracy than honor. Honor and dishonor in the Corps relate*



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The Shoes

Several years ago, our son, Staff Sergeant Alex A. Ramon III received the dreadful news of the passing of a close Marine friend, Corporal John C. Flynn. They had previously served together on one of many combat tours in Iraq/Afghanistan. Alex was John's squad leader. With tears in his eyes, our son slowly said, "Dad, one gets calloused in seeing awful things in war, but you never get used to seeing a fellow Marine die."

Our son was processing the news when another phone call interrupted his thoughts. The family of Cpl Flynn was requesting our son's presence. A Marine was needed to supervise and assist the funeral home on the proper placement of their son in his dress blue uniform. Our son left to support his friend's family.

Arriving in Arkansas, our Alex immersed himself in the sorrowful task at hand. At the funeral home, he immediately noticed that John's shoes for his dress blues were missing. A call to the family requesting the shoes provided no results. Without further burdening the family, our son took the initiative and acted quickly to remedy the situation in time for the funeral. Alex subsequently kept in touch with John's family and provided them comfort the best he could.

Two years later, the unimaginable occurred ... our son passed away. How can you understand or explain the pain of losing a child? Nothing can prepare you. Remembering what our son endured with the task of supervising the preparation of his friend for the funeral, we requested the Marine assigned to this duty not be a friend nor an acquaintance of Alex. We did not want to inflict more sorrow on any of Alex's friends.

Funeral arrangements had to be made and we were numb. The sudden loss placed us in limbo but just like John's family, we received a call from the funeral director who said, "We have received the uniform, but we still need his shoes." We had no idea where our son's shoes were.

As funeral arrangements were progressing, minus the shoes, one of the Marines who came by to give his condolences had been contacted by John's family, and said John's family wanted

to speak with us. John's dad told us his family was coming from Arkansas and would like to attend our son's funeral. I said, "Of course, this would be nice. My wife and I would be extremely grateful and would surely welcome the support." John's father paused then proceeded to request a favor. John's father said, "It would be an honor if you would allow Alex to wear John's shoes." At this point I was stunned since I knew the funeral home needed shoes for our son's uniform. Had John's father spoken to the funeral home? I was confused, but at the same time relieved. "Of course we would do it, it would be an honor," I answered.

Hearing this, John's father recounted the story of how his family could not locate John's shoes before their son's funeral. Now that time had passed, they had unexpectedly found the shoes and went on to describe the unselfish act our son performed the day of their son's funeral. Knowing John's shoes were missing, Alex had taken immediate action, taking off his shoes and placing them on his friend. We had no idea all this had occurred. Our son had never mentioned what he had done.

We shared with John's family that we could not find Alex's shoes to give to the funeral home. Now we knew why.

The burial proceeded, and our son was buried with John's shoes as John was already buried with Alex's shoes.

Although it has been years since our son's funeral, it feels like yesterday. An invisible wound remains, but faith remains the best remedy for the pain especially believing that God intervened in the lives of

these two Marines and made this amazing story possible. Two different families, from two close friends, were tasked to walk in each other's shoes. What is left now, is a loving, indelible memory of our sons and a living testament of the bond Marines share that transcends explanation.

"Rest in peace Marines ... as you proudly walk through Heaven's pearly gates sharing each other's shoes."

Capt Alex A. Ramon
San Antonio, Texas



Cpl John C. Flynn, top left, and SSgt Alex A. Ramon III, top right, served together in Iraq. They were photographed together at the Euphrates River.

COURTESY OF GARY FLYNN

[continued from previous page]

to behavior and deliberate actions, not assignments or duty stations which as you so correctly point out, are usually at the discretion of HQMC.—Editor

Irish Pennants

In the Sound Off letter, "Rank Restructure" in the September issue, assistant staff sergeant was listed in error and should have read "acting staff sergeant." We apologize for the error. 🍀

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

Reader Assistance

Edited by Sara W. Bock

Reunions

- **1stMarDiv Assn. (all eras)**, Jan. 27-31, 2020, Camp Pendleton, Calif. Contact June Cormier, (760) 763-3268, june.oldbreed@fmda.us, www.1stmardivassociation.com.

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

- **Iwo Jima Veterans (Marines, Navy and all other WW II veterans)**, Feb. 12-15, 2020, Camp Pendleton, Calif. Contact Dan Zepeda, 1052 W. Sunsang Ct., Ontario, CA 91762, (951) 201-6251, zepeda012@msn.com.

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

- **Marine Air Traffic Control Assn.**, Sept. 23-27, 2020, San Antonio, Texas. Contact Steve Harris, (509) 499-8137, sandkh2@gmail.com.

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

- **1st CEB/Super Breed Assn.**, Feb. 15, 2020, Camp Pendleton, Calif. Contact Phil Bryant, 31700 Via Cordoba, Temecula, CA 92592, (760) 696-1642, admin@superbreedassociation.com.

- **11th Engineer Bn, 3rdMarDiv**, Aug. 10-16, 2020, Washington, D.C. Contact Gene Spanos, (847) 532-2963, genethemarine@gmail.com.

- **I/3/7 (all eras)**, April 22-25, 2020, Myrtle Beach, S.C. Contact Dennis Deibert, 6007 Catherine St., Harrisburg, PA 17112, (717) 652-1695, dennisdeibert8901@comcast.net.

- **3d 155s, M/4/12, 3rdMarDiv**, Sept. 13-17, Branson, Mo. Contact SgtMaj Gordon Niska, USMC (Ret), (770) 868-8694, sniska@windstream.net.

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

- **Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (40th anniversary reunion)**, March 2-3, 2020, MacDill AFB, Fla. Contact LtCol Cal Lloyd, USMC (Ret), 16115 W. Course Dr., Tampa, FL 33624, (813) 417-4627, clloyd02@verizon.net.

- **41st OCC/TBS 3-67**, Oct. 22, 2020,

San Diego, Calif. Contact Paul Disario, (559) 273-9549, pdisario@comcast.net.

- **TBS, Co F, 6-70**, April 30-May 3, 2020, Quantico, Va. Contact Tom Kanasky, (202) 366-3156, tlkanasky@earthlink.net, or Mitch Youngs, (703) 493-9435, mitch.youngs@verizon.net.

- **TBS, Co I, 9-70**, Aug. 20-22, 2020, Quantico, Va. Contact Scott Kafer, 16436 Turnbury Oak Dr., Odessa, FL 33556, (202) 403-7680, scottkaf@mac.com.

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

- **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.

- **VFA-125 (1980-1990)**, Sept. 15-17, 2020, NAS Lemoore, Calif. Contact MSgt Ben Spotts, (970) 867-8029, benjo1993@msn.com.

Mail Call

- Lenny Pugliese, (718) 494-2398, lpugliese@verizon.net, to hear from anyone who can **identify the Marine** pictured in the **below** photo, which was taken in **September or October 1968**

near **Tam Ky, Vietnam**. He was serving with **CAP, 1st Plt, 1/3**.

Wanted

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

- SSgt Virginia Irons, virginia.ironson@usmc.mil, wants a **platoon photo** and **recruit graduation book** for **Plt 185, Parris Island, 1968**. Drill instructor was **Sgt D.M. GOULDE**.

Editor's note: An entry and photograph in "Mail Call," August 2019 issue, should have stated that Larry Iles was looking to hear from members of Comm Section, H&S Co, 1/3, 3rd MarDiv, Camp Hague, Okinawa, 1958. Mr. Iles can be reached at 7906 Rosina St., Long Beach, CA 90808.

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



Leatherneck reader Lenny Pugliese would like to hear from the Marine pictured in this photo, taken in the fall of 1968 near Tam Ky, Vietnam, or from anyone who can identify him. He was assigned to the Combined Action Program, 1st Plt, 1/3.

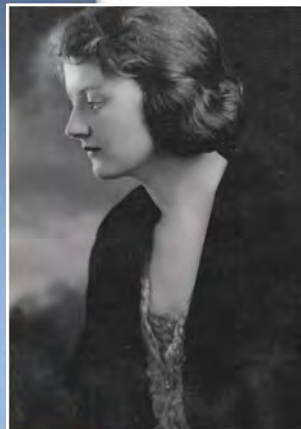
COURTESY OF LENNY PUGLIESE

Saved Round

By Ben Kristy



COURTESY OF NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MARINE CORPS



COURTESY OF NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MARINE CORPS



COURTESY OF NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MARINE CORPS

MARINE FAMILIES THRIVE IN EVERY CLIME AND PLACE—In June 1925, Second Lieutenant (later General) William O. Brice, a newly minted naval aviator, and his wife Rebekah arrived for duty on Guam. He was assigned to Marine Scouting Squadron One, where he flew the Curtiss HS-2L aircraft, like the one pictured below left.

For the newly married couple, neither of whom had previously ventured far from their small, rural South Carolina home towns, being assigned to the far-flung Pacific island was an exotic adventure.

Although cloth and other sewing supplies were limited, Rebekah Brice was able to order this mesh and lace overlay dress with hand-embroidered floral details from a highly skilled local dressmaker. In his Marine Corps History Division oral history, Gen Brice later recalled that his wife “loved” living on Guam where she “led a most active life, both indoors and outdoors, socially and otherwise.” The Guam Golf Club, organized in 1923, was a center of social activity on the island, and this dress was very likely worn for numerous social activities held here.

Rebekah’s Guamanian dress is one of the many items that will be displayed in the National Museum of the Marine Corps’ forthcoming “Marine Families” exhibit. 🇺🇸

Author’s bio: Ben Kristy is the collections chief for the National Museum of the Marine Corps.



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