

DECEMBER 2021

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MAGAZINE OF THE MARINES

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TROY E. BLACK**

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Contents

LEATHERNECK—MAGAZINE OF THE MARINES

DECEMBER 2021
VOL. 104, No. 12

Features

14 Maneuver Warfare

By Sgt Hunter Williamson, USMC

This Honorable Mention article from the 2021 *Leatherneck* Writing Contest describes how maneuver warfare can assist the Marine Corps in fighting foes in this new strategic era beyond the battlefield.

22 James Ayling: From Immigrant to a Founding Member of the Marine Corps Reserve

By GySgt Brian A. Knowles, USMCR

James Ayling was one of the first Marines to join the Marine Corps Reserve but not before he was court-martialed, busted in rank and kicked out of the Corps.

36 Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Troy E. Black: "Mission First, Marines Always"

By Sara W. Bock

During an exclusive interview with *Leatherneck*, SgtMaj Troy E. Black discussed the challenges of his post, what motivates and inspires him, and how Marines are adapting to the Corps' modernization efforts.

50 "Once a Marine": Documentary Focuses on What it Means to Go to War

By William Treuting

"Once a Marine" is a documentary directed by Stephen Canty, a Marine who served two tours in Afghanistan with "Charlie" Co, 1st Bn, 6th Marines, and depicts how the shadow of war remains constant in the lives of the Marines he deployed with.

58 Diamond Diplomacy: Marines, Baseball and the Occupation of Japan

By Kater Miller

In 1945, the men from 2nd Bn, 27th Marines, 5thMarDiv played a baseball game against a Japanese team. The game, preserved on film, served as a small indication that the war was truly over.

Departments

2 Sound Off

8 In Every Clime and Place

20 Leatherneck Laffs

30 Sea Stories

46 We—the Marines

56 Corps Connections

64 Passing the Word

66 In Memoriam

71 Reader Assistance

72 Saved Round



COVER: SgtMaj Troy E. Black, Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, stands in front of the Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington, Va., on Aug. 19. Read *Leatherneck's* exclusive interview with SgtMaj Black beginning on page 36. Photo by Sgt Victoria Ross, 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 member or provide a one-year courtesy subscription to a non-member whose letter is selected.)

When I was a small boy, I saw Marines marching on our main street in their dress blues and I said to myself, I want that uniform. A few years later, after having read everything I could about the Marines, I knew that I had to earn the title Marine. I enlisted prior to graduating from high school, and approximately three weeks later, on July 2, 1973, I took that plane ride to San Diego and started my transformation from a kid to a Marine. I remember my recruiter telling me the morning that I left, "Whatever they say or do to you is just training."

I was assigned to Platoon 3066, 3rd Battalion, and my drill instructors (DIs) were Staff Sergeants H.T. Tucker and J.R. Christopher and Sergeant J.L. Bilbo. Boot camp was tough, but that was to be expected. We started with 86 recruits and graduated 61. The hardest part of training for me was mastering the M14 rifle.

My father passed away when I was six and then it was just my mom and me. Having no one to teach me about weapons, I struggled in boot camp with the M14. On pre-qualification day I didn't qualify, and I was the only recruit in my platoon that didn't. That evening, I was summoned to the duty hut where all three DIs were present. I thought I was going to die that night.

I was told to sit down. The DIs took off their covers and spoke to me on equal terms and inquired if I had ever handled or fired a weapon before, and I told them that I had not. To say I was scared was an understatement, but they put me at ease and went over snapping-in week basics. The next day I fired for record. At the 500-yard prone position, I needed to score a bulls-eye to qualify as a marksman—anything less than a five score and I would be an "unk."

Just prior to my last shot, my senior DI gave me a thumbs up. I fired and got up and didn't even see the white disc come up until I saw my fellow recruits smiling and clapping and my DIs smiling. Prior to marching back from the range to the barracks, I was called out front of the platoon, presented the guidon and then I led the platoon back to the barracks. I

understand that it was unusual to have a full platoon qualify, so I know the DIs were proud.

I graduated and had a successful four-year career in the Marine Corps and retired from the Indiana National Guard. The Marine Corps instilled confidence and pride in me. Both my sons served in the Marines and participated in Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom, so we are Marines through and through. I want to thank my drill instructors for a job well done. I understand why the Corps gets the best of the best for DIs.

Cpl Robert L. Lipps
USMC, 1973-1977
Richmond, Ind.

Recruit Graduation, 1968

I had just graduated my last series of recruits with Co K, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, MCRD San Diego, Calif., in November 1968. At the time I was awaiting orders to Vietnam. My daughter, Kim Hickson, was 3 years old at the time and came to the graduation. She is now grown and a pilot with American Airlines.

MSgt Roy W. Powell, USMC (Ret)
Pensacola, Fla.



GySgt Roy W. Powell, USMC (Ret), stands with his 3-year-old daughter, Kim Hickson, after he graduated his last series of recruits in November 1968.

A Curious Vietnam Veteran

I was with "Golf" Battery, 3/12 in 1966, when we fired artillery support for our brave 0311 Marines on the ground and in the bush. We were up north along Highway 9 from Dong Ha to the Rock Pile. We took numerous photos of each other, our gun locations and the aftermath of our battles.

Artillery units were targets of the NVA troops up north. I retained all my photos as well as photos we all shared. The Marine Corps was part of my life history and needed to be documented. I enjoy sharing the photos and the background stories for any and all that ask about the war. My only regret was our politicians "quitting" while we were ahead.

After reading Gunny Larry D. Williams' letter, "First Patrol in Vietnam" in the October issue, I was both impressed and confused at the same time. I couldn't help but wonder what "upset" the Gunny 16 years after the fact that caused him to destroy his photos. I'm thinking it wasn't the Marine Corps as he retired at the rank of gunnery sergeant from our Marine Corps. I tried to bring some photos back, but they were confiscated as contraband in Staging Battalion at Camp Hanson, Okinawa.

In closing, I want to say Semper Fi, Gunny and wish you and your family all the best during these difficult times.

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

Thanks for Printing My Letter

Many thanks and much appreciation for printing my [Sound Off] letter, "5thMarDiv Article a Disappointment," in the October issue when I expressed disappointment in the article, "History of the 5th Marine Division" that was published in the August issue. I came up short on two counts in my letter. In the first paragraph I wrote that I was 5 years old in August 1945. That should have read August 1944. The actual date the 27th Marines, including the 1st Battalion, departed from San Diego was Aug. 12, 1944. I also wrote that the 5th Marine Division Association is the last one standing of the three World War II divisions. That is incorrect. I have just learned that the 6th Marine Division Association is alive and well. They have an excellent web site: <https://www.sixthmarinedivision.com>. Survival of these Associations can be

COURTESY OF MSGT ROY W. POWELL, USMC (RET)



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President/CEO,

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LtGen Charles G. Chiarotti, USMC (Ret)

Publisher: Col Christopher Woodbridge, USMC (Ret)

Editor: Col Mary H. Reinwald, USMC (Ret)

Senior Editor: Nancy S. Lichtman

Copy Editor: Jessica B. Brown

Staff Writer: Sara W. Bock

Editorial/Production Coordinator
Patricia Everett

Art Director: Jason Monroe

ADVERTISING QUERIES:

Defense Related Industries/Business:

Contact: LeeAnn Mitchell

advertising@mca-marines.org 703-640-0169

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EDITORIAL OFFICES

Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134

Phone: (703) 640-6161, Ext. 115

Toll-Free: (800) 336-0291

Fax: (703) 630-9147

Email: leatherneck@mca-marines.org

Web page: www.mca-marines.org/leatherneck

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credited to the children and grandchildren of the Marines who so honorably served our nation and Corps with the 5th and 6th Marine Divisions. Sadly, not many of those who fought with these superb Marine Divisions in WW II are with us today, but their children and grandchildren have not forgot them.

John Butler

Temple Terrace, Fla.

• *The 6th Marine Division recently gathered for its final reunion, and members of the Leatherneck staff were on hand to talk with some of the surviving members of the Division. An article about the reunion will be published in an upcoming issue of the magazine.—Editor*

Tragedy at the Pentagon

I truly enjoyed the article, "Instincts Told Them to Flee—Regardless, Marines Went Forward Into a 'Hellish Place,'" in the September issue. Offices closest to the impact area of the west facade of the Pentagon were occupied by Mr. Peter Murphy, Counsel to the Commandant of the Marine Corps. The impact of the plane occurred just below the office of Mr. Murphy. Both Corporals Garofola and Hague began evacuating offices and attempted to determine routes to the outside of the building. Garofola did what Marines are trained to do.

Sergeant Francis Pomrunk cleared his area in the building adjacent to the crash site, then went to assist people out of the building to safety. Both Lance Corporal Dustin Schuetz and LCpl Michael Vera took charge and got many people safely out of the building. Both kept going back into the smoke-filled building looking for survivors. They did what Marines do—leave no one behind.

I thought your article would have been more complete if you had noted in the beginning that American Airlines Flight 77 crashed into the west facade of the Pentagon at 9:37 am on Sept. 11, 2001. It would have also been interesting to note that six crew members, 53 passengers, and five hijackers were on the airplane as well as 125 people at the Pentagon who lost their lives. A total of 189 people lost their lives in the attack, however, so many lives were saved by the heroic actions of Marines.

PFC Palmer Sweet

North Garden, Va.

Jerry Coleman, My Kind of Hero

During my second career as curator of the San Diego Air & Space Museum, I had the opportunity to rub elbows with more than a handful of heroic and famed military pilots and astronauts, many

whose names you would recognize. All have accomplished great things and deserve the respect and admiration of the general public. However, some rode their status to prominent positions in society, capitalizing on that fame while others were content to live and love life as it was handed to them.

I have a favorite story that I tell of one such hero from the second category. His name was Jerry Coleman. Old time baseball fans may recognize the name as that belonging to the gifted second baseman, who played during the New York Yankees golden years between 1949 and the Korean War. Jerry was good, very good. He won the World Series MVP award in 1950 and helped his Yankees win four of the six series in which he played. He went on to local fame as the play-by-play radio announcer for the San Diego Padres for 40 seasons. But his real strength wasn't in his bat or his glove, or even at the microphone—it was in his character. Already in the Yankee farm system, Jerry joined the Marine Corps on his 18th birthday and entered the aviation cadet program. Before he was 20, he was engaged in combat, flying Dauntless dive bombers in the Pacific where he completed 57 missions before returning home at war's end.

His baseball career flourished when he rejoined the Yankees until he was called up during the Korean conflict to once again go to war. Displaying the same selfless courage and enormous patriotism as he did 10 years earlier, he completed 63 more missions, this time in AU-1 Corsairs. Was he disappointed or bitter that his promising baseball career was so rudely interrupted? No. He often said that no award in the world would ever mean more to him than earning his wings of gold—that the proudest day of his life was the day they were pinned to his chest. Clearly, here was a guy with lots to crow about but did I mention humble? Jerry passed away several years ago but during his life he exemplified, to me at least, just what a real hero should be.

At a Rockies/Padres game in Denver a while back, the Jumbotron lit up asking the crowd if they could name the only major league baseball player to have seen aerial combat in two wars? Up came the names of three other players, including Ted Williams, who was a Marine pilot during World War II. The fourth name to come up was Jerry Coleman. The man who never really took himself too seriously poked his broadcast partner Ted Leitner and asked, "Hey Ted, 'whadda' they got my name up there for?" Leitner responded, "It's you jerk, you're the guy." "Oh yeah, I guess I am," responded Coleman.

I'm not sure he was ever consciously

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aware of or seriously recognized his unique accomplishments in the military and baseball. That wasn't his style. Ever the character, who used to tease and tell people that Mickey Mantle was his roommate. I believe he normally spent his off time when he wasn't in the broadcast booth walking the halls and visiting the wounded at the naval hospital in San Diego. He didn't feel special on those days and in fact he never did. He was my kind of hero, but you never called him a hero, at least not to his face. He might readily argue with you and convincingly explain that the real heroes were those who never came back. Such beauty, such wisdom. Rest in peace Jerry. God bless you and thanks for your service.

Terry Brennan
San Diego, Calif.

A Treasured Gift

I recently attended the Aviation Officer Candidate School (AOCS) reunion. It was awesome. Sharing memories when I was a drill instructor at NAS Schools Command with a former AOC was great. Dana Barclay was a member of my first graduating class 51 years ago.

As awesome as that reunion was, nothing in my military or police career could top what happened yesterday.



COURTESY OF LCDR DANA BARCLAY, USN

LCDR Dana Barclay, right, presented Sgt Connie Mack Cramer with a jar of lava rock from Iwo Jima during an Aviation Officer Candidate School reunion, Oct. 2.

Lieutenant Commander Dana Barclay presented me a small jar with actual lava rock sand from Iwo Jima. His presentation brought me to tears. I could only think of the thousands of Marines who were killed on that island. I will treasure this gift.

I served eight years in the Marine Corps

with one tour in Vietnam and received three Purple Hearts. LCDR Barclay was commissioned Oct. 30, 1970, and flew F-4 Phantoms and F-14 Tomcats. To my dear friend Dana Barclay, "Thank you, Sir."

Sgt Connie Mack Cramer
Pensacola, Fla.

Experiences With the M16

I spent five months of my tour in Vietnam as an armorer for "Lima" Co, 4/11. We had all heard the rumors about Marines outside Khe Sanh who died in foxholes with their "Matty Mattels" disassembled.

Not mentioned in the article, "This is My Rifle": From the Hill Fights in Vietnam to Today: The History of the M16" in the October issue were several items including the silver magazines, the plastic tip added to the piston, and the 20/18-round magazines. Then there were the older M16s that had the open flash suppressor which was preferred to the later closed suppressor which was harder to clean.

Strict instructions were given to never remove the pins from the trigger housing. One day we were test firing and expending old ammo. One of the guys came to me about his rifle saying the pins came loose. Seems he had been taking the pins out which led to his rifle being useless. I put the pins back in but when they fell out

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WHERE THINGS START TO GET BETTER.

again, I asked if he had been removing them. A nearby lieutenant heard me bawling him out and ordered the Marine to fill sandbags as a punishment. Months later, when that same lieutenant went on R&R in Hawaii, I was given his rifle and .45 pistol to store while he was gone and had to clean them. Seems the "Louie" had not once cleaned his rifle. The bore was completely blocked. I took it to the captain and soon after, all officer weapons were inspected weekly.

The 20/18-round magazines were straight, not curved like the modern ones. I call them 18 round mags because anyone who put in 20 rounds ended up with a jam after firing the first shot. As armorer, I felt I had to experiment and tried loading 20 rounds in the magazine. It jammed. I tried loading one round by hand and then putting the magazine in. It jammed. I was hoping that loading a single round and then inserting the magazine with 18 rounds would work. It jammed. Only a 20-round magazine loaded with just 18 rounds would work.

I only saw one silver mag and they jammed a lot. One nice feature was that the 20/18-round mags fit nicely into the ammo pouches. The ammo pouches held seven mags and it was the custom to wear
[continued on page 68]

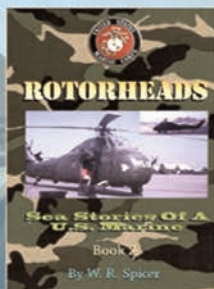
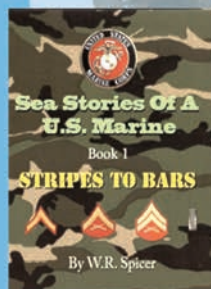
MESSAGE TO OUR READERS

Unprecedented challenges in the nation's supply chain as well as labor shortages and other lingering impacts of the pandemic response have directly impacted the printing and distribution of our magazines. Many loyal readers of *Leatherneck* have experienced delays in the delivery of their magazines in the last few months. Given the widespread disruptions in the paper market, rising fuel prices and fewer workers available in the printing facility as well as in the USPS and private shipping industries, we ask for your patience over the next several months. Thank you for your understanding and don't forget that you can access the digital edition of the magazines at <https://mca-marines.org/magazines/> and on our mobile app. Your steadfast support of the Magazine of the Marines and the Marine Corps Association is greatly appreciated.

Mary H. Reinwald
Colonel, USMC (Ret)
Editor, *Leatherneck*

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In Every Clime and Place

Compiled by Sara W. Bock

OKINAWA, JAPAN

Blue-Green Team Brings

Integrated Lethality in the Littorals

U.S. Marines and Sailors from across III Marine Expeditionary Force and elements of U.S. 7th Fleet executed Exercise Noble Jaguar, an integrated naval exercise in and around Japan, Sept. 27-30.

While closely monitoring simulated adversary activities, these forces received the order to rapidly mobilize and immediately began to move. Concealed through the cover of darkness and a small footprint on the electromagnetic spectrum, Marines with 3rd Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment quickly reached a nearby port where they loaded multiple High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) launchers and readied for embarkation on USNS *Brunswick* (T-EPF 6), an expeditionary fast transport ship.

“The first half of the exercise was focused on mobility ... working with the Navy to ensure that we can effectively embark and disembark,” said Captain Nathaniel Wasik, a HIMARS platoon commander with 3/12.

While putting HIMARS aboard Navy vessels is not a new concept, expeditionary fast transports provide a unique platform that can support a wide variety of military objectives.

“Missions such as Noble Jaguar are important because they provide an opportunity to experiment with different configurations and capabilities and allows both the embarked forces and the ship’s crew to better realize the full mission potential,” said Andy Peretti, captain of USNS *Brunswick*. “The more frequently we practice embarkation and utilization of the vessel, the more prepared we will be to effectively respond to any contingency.”

Upon arriving at their destination, the HIMARS moved into concealed positions ready to spring into firing points at an expeditionary advanced base (EAB) on Okinawa.

Meanwhile, Marines leveraged sensing capabilities, such as the Ground/Air Task Oriented Radar; connections with Link 16 to share targeting data with USS *Carl Vinson* (CVN-70) and USS *Howard* (DDG-83) sailing in the Philippine Sea; and F/A-18s with Marine Aircraft Group 12 operating in the surrounding airspace. This information sharing and networked command and control enabled joint strikes against maritime and land-based targets.

“The power of joint targeting is when



LCPL KREE LAING, USMC

Above: In support of Exercise Noble Jaguar, an MV-22B Osprey with Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 262 conducts a long-range insertion from Okinawa to Camp Fuji, Japan, Sept. 30.



LCPL KREE LAING, USMC

LCpl Brayden Barnett, a rifleman with 2nd Bn, 3rd Marines, provides security during Exercise Noble Jaguar at Combined Arms Training Center, Camp Fuji, Japan, Sept. 30. This portion of the exercise focused on coastal defense and counter-landing operations across a distributed maritime environment.



LCPL UJIAN GOSUN, USMC

A Marine with 3rd Bn, 12th Marines employs a HIMARS in support of a fire mission as part of Exercise Noble Jaguar in the Central Training Area on Okinawa, Japan, Sept. 30. The Navy and Marine Corps leveraged integrated command and control and joint sensors to expand battlefield awareness, share targeting data and conduct long-range precision strikes in support of sea control and sea denial in contested maritime environments.

you can bring multiple assets to bear on a single point,” said Lieutenant Colonel Joshua Montero, operations officer for 12th Marines. “We are combining those strikes together—from air, land and sea.”

Simultaneously, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment prepared for a long-range insertion via MV-22B Ospreys to seize and retain key maritime terrain more than 600 miles away. After traveling from Okinawa to Camp Fuji, nearly 200 U.S. Marines engaged and promptly defeated a simulated adversary force. During follow-on operations, 2/3 established an additional EAB and continued to deny critical terrain, thereby enabling maritime maneuver.

“Noble Jaguar showcased 3rd Marine Division’s capability to connect a network of sensors from across the joint force, forming a seamlessly integrated kill chain,” said Major Brian Spillane, future operations officer for 3rdMarDiv. “This integrated network can bring lethal effects to bear in all domains, anywhere in the theater.”

By employing expeditionary advanced base operations concurrently across

multiple distributed locations, III MEF demonstrated how it can integrate with the joint force to conduct counter-landing operations and anti-surface warfare missions across multiple domains. III MEF and 7th Fleet executed these actions during Noble Jaguar to maintain readiness and display U.S. resolve to preserve regional security.

1stLt Annika Pearson, USMC

MOUNT HOGUE, CALIF. CH-53K Executes Recovery Mission During Operational Evaluation

On Sept. 5, Marines in two CH-53K King Stallions from Marine Operational Test & Evaluation Squadron (VMX) 1 successfully executed the recovery of a downed Navy MH-60S Knighthawk helicopter in the White Mountain Range 20 miles north of Bishop, Calif. The mission to lift the 15,200-pound search and rescue helicopter involved challenging conditions at an altitude of approximately 12,000 feet above sea level.

VMX-1 viewed the recovery as an opportunity to operationally evaluate the CH-53K in a unique and extreme environ-

ment. The MH-60S Knighthawk the Marines recovered had experienced a hard landing during a search and rescue mission, which thankfully resulted in no casualties among its crew.

The VMX-1 Heavy Lift Detachment had been operating out of Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif., conducting a strenuous period of operational test on the aircraft, which was in its second month of Initial Operational Test and Evaluation (IOT&E).

The accomplishment highlighted the Marine Corps’ efforts to retain a next-generation heavy lift capability in support of the service’s future operating concept. Marine Corps aviation looks to the CH-53K as a much-needed replacement for its current heavy lift helicopters.

The CH-53K is intended to be a critical enabler for the execution of Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations, providing logistics support to a forward-deployed, distributed force. It is designed to provide greater payload capability in all environments at both sea-level and high-altitude conditions. VMX-1’s conduct of CH-53K IOT&E provides the opportunity



LCPL COLTON BROWNLEE, USMC

Above: Marines, Sailors and civilians work to partially disassemble a Navy MH-60S Knighthawk helicopter during a recovery mission on Mount Hogue, Calif., Sept. 4. The helicopter had made a hard landing during a search-and-rescue operation.



During the initial operational assessment for the CH-53K King Stallion, Marines from VMX-1 were called upon to lift the MH-60S from Mount Hogue, Calif., Sept. 4, marking the first official fleet mission for the new aircraft.

LCPL THERESE EDWARDS, USMC

for the Marine Corps to validate the aircraft's performance and ability to meet the service's needs prior to full rate production.

VMX-1 Marines had just completed one of the most rigorous phases of the aircraft's IOT&E, which consisted of evaluating the helicopter in mountainous and desert terrain. This previous testing prepared the detachment well for the exhaustive, detailed planning and risk management associated with a high-altitude, heavy weight external lift.

"The team at VMX-1 took all precautions as they planned for this lift, to include a thorough risk management analysis to identify all concerns. The team then executed this mission according to the plan in an exceptionally professional manner with thorough briefs and debriefs for all personnel involved," said Colonel Byron Sullivan, the commanding officer of VMX-1.

The Marine Corps hopes to use the CH-53K to optimize the force for naval expeditionary warfare in contested spaces in partnership with the joint force, allies and partners. If it performs as required during IOT&E, Marine Corps aviation will be better postured to support the projection of naval power by integrating with and supporting the larger naval campaign.

Maj Jorge Hernandez, USMC

KOROR, REPUBLIC OF PALAU **Investing in the Future: Marines** **With Task Force Koa Moana** **Repair Local School**

When the Marines of Task Force Koa Moana 21, I Marine Expeditionary Force, heard in late August that the only public high school in the Republic of Palau needed repairs, there was only one thing they could do: offer to help.

"We are helping out the Palau High School by replacing the roofing for their bathrooms and fixing the damage on their concrete staircases that has been caused by environmental conditions and time," said Corporal Toby J. Vargas, a combat engineer.

Vargas and a team of 11 other engineers quickly began by assessing the damage and taking measurements. With materials in hand, the Marines got to work armed with drills, electric saws, hammers, will-power and a desire to help others. Despite constant rain, they were able to complete the project in three days.

The repairs really helped improve the school, said Vice Principal Melanjane Pedro.

"We have had these problems for a couple of years. Seeing them get fixed really makes the students feel happier and



CPL MARVIN E. LOPEZ NAVARRO, USMC

Above: Cpl Toby J. Vargas and Cpl Cameron E. Tejada, combat engineers with Task Force Koa Moana 21, I MEF, repair the roof of Palau High School in Koror, Republic of Palau, Aug. 27. The task force's efforts strengthen and enhance the relationship between the U.S. and partner nations in the Indo-Pacific region.



CPL MARVIN E. LOPEZ NAVARRO, USMC

LCpl Ethan W. Zoet, a combat engineer with Task Force Koa Moana 21, I MEF, takes measurements while assisting with repairs to Palau High School, Aug. 27. The Marines and Sailors of the task force demonstrated their commitment to the people of Palau by conducting various engineering projects across the island.

safer," said Pedro. "I believe the Marines that helped the school with this project set a really good example for the students."

This community outreach event was one of several planned engineering projects for Task Force Koa Moana 21, all in an effort to reaffirm the United States' commitment to the Compact of Free Association and to help the Republic of Palau become more prosperous, stable and secure.

"Seeing Marines around Palau makes us feel safe. We're thankful for the hard

job the Marines are doing," said Pedro.

Task Force Koa Moana is designed to strengthen and enhance relationships between the U.S. and partner nations and states in the Indo-Pacific region while remaining COVID-19 safe. The task force has the unique opportunity and privilege of working with the Republic of Palau in a show of commitment to its people and its partners and allies in the Indo-Pacific region.

Sgt Marvin Lopez Navarro, USMC

NAVAL BASE BERGA, SWEDEN NIMES, FRANCE

Marines of 1/6 Strengthen Relationships with Swedish, French Counterparts

The third iteration of Exercise Archipelago Endeavor, a bilateral, infantry and maneuver-centric exercise, took place during the month of September, with Naval Base Berga in Sweden providing the venue for Marines to work side-by-side with their Swedish counterparts and enhance their ability to work together in real-world operations.

The exercise focuses on the exchange of knowledge between U.S. and Swedish Marine units in the Stockholm Archipelago. This year, U.S. Marines and Sailors from 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment and 2nd Marine Division participated alongside Swedish Marines from the 204th Rifle Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment.

During Archipelago Endeavor, Marines from both nations honed skills and processes associated with mission planning, sniper tradecraft, machine-gun tactics, patrolling, amphibious raid tactics utilizing the combat boat 90 (CB-90), the employment of unmanned aerial surveillance systems and the fusion of indirect fires in support of units maneuvering throughout a vastly dispersed littoral environment.

Made up of nearly 30,000 wooded islands, islets and crags, the Stockholm



1STLT PAUL ORTIZ, USMC

A leatherneck with 1/6 provides security near a Combat Boat 90 during Exercise Archipelago Endeavor at Berga Naval Base, Sweden, Sept. 22. The exercise strengthened operational capabilities and strategic cooperation between the U.S. Marine Corps and Swedish Armed Forces.

Archipelago offers an ideal environment for the Marine forces to practice expeditionary advanced base operations, which consists of seizure of key maritime terrain, conducting sea denial operations and supporting sea control in a simulated contested area.

The culminating event of the exercise required efficient, simplified interoper-

ability to be leveraged by both forces as they utilized CB-90 assault craft for raiding numerous small islands throughout the archipelago. Archipelago Endeavor ultimately increases the capabilities and lethality of both forces while also strengthening a strategic partnership in the Baltic Sea.

1stLt Paul Ortiz, USMC



PFC SARAH PYSHER, USMC

A reinforced platoon from 1/6 conducts an after-action debrief during Exercise Archipelago Endeavor in Sweden, Sept. 11.

The Marines of 1/6 continued to train alongside partner nations in the month of October, building on their longstanding and close relationship with French forces during Exercise Baccarat 2021 in Nimes, France, Oct. 6-27.

Exercise Baccarat is a French-hosted training evolution which focuses on increasing cooperation and mutual understanding among NATO allies. As part of the exercise, U.S. Marines from 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division and their French counterparts in the 2nd Foreign Infantry Regiment conducted endurance training, patrolling evolutions, aerial assaults and offensive/defensive maneuvers.

“We are enjoying this valuable opportunity to train alongside our French allies,” said Captain Thomas White, the commander of “Charlie” Company, 1/6. “The chance to strengthen our relationship with an important ally while conducting demanding and realistic training is vital to our ability to perform in any clime and place.”

Exercise Baccarat is a three-week joint exercise between 2nd Marine Division and the French Foreign Legion that challenges forces with physical and tactical training, as well as provides the opportunity to exchange knowledge that assists in developing and strengthening bonds.

2ndLt Mark Grill, USMC



LCPL JENNIFER REYES, USMC

Above: LCpl Gabriel CarrascoValentin of 1st Bn, 6th Marines, conducts warmups with a French Legionnaire during Exercise Baccarat in Nimes, France, Oct. 8. The three-week exercise between 2ndMarDiv and the French Foreign Legion included physical and tactical training, as well as an opportunity to exchange knowledge.

Below: Cpl Devin Sims, a team leader with 1/6, participates in an obstacle course during Exercise Baccarat in Nimes, France, Oct. 8.



LCPL JENNIFER REYES, USMC

Maneuver Warfare



SGT DANNY GONZALEZ, USMC

Reconnaissance Marines with the Maritime Raid Force, 31st MEU, head to a CH-53 Super Stallion with Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 262 (Reinforced), during a simulated visit, board, search and seizure mission aboard dock landing ship USS Germantown (LSD-42).

By Sgt Hunter Williamson, USMC

Editor's note: The following article received an honorable mention in the 2021 Leatherneck Writing Contest.

Major Richard A. "Rick" Stewart, USMC (Ret) sponsored the contest, through the Marine Corps Association.

Scenario

The night sky twinkled with cosmic light. Its natural beauty and wonder captivated Lance Corporal Miguel Rodriguez as he stood watch along the tree line on the subtropical island. Ahead of him lay the South China Sea, its gentle black surface reflecting the night sky like a blurry, wavy mirror.

Looking out over the water, Rodriguez's eyelids weighed heavy with fatigue. Constant displacement did not favor rest, much less sleep. His exhaustion made him almost oblivious to the subtropical humidity that he so deeply hated.

Miguel's twin brother faced the opposite problem—frigid cold. Fidel envied Miguel for being in the warm tropics of the Indo-Pacific while he shivered day and night

in the Atlantic's North Sea. Still, Fidel had one thing Miguel did not: a photo on the Marine Corps' official Twitter page. If nothing else, at least Fidel had a dope profile picture lined up when he returned stateside.

Halfway across the world, Staff Sergeant Samantha Jones reviewed a Tweet awaiting publication. The stoic image of a Marine looking out from a bush accompanied by a concise but general caption met the social media campaign marks outlined in the Free and Open Indo-Pacific strategy. Jones checked her watch once more before posting. It was just a minute shy of noon in Washington.

The tweet appeared at the top of Steven Mynars' feed.

"Lance Corporal Miguel Rodriguez, a rifleman with @3d_Marine_Div, stands watch at an undisclosed location in the South China Sea as part of efforts to ensure a #FreeAndOpenIndoPacific," read the caption.

The former 0311 and current Secretary of State paused to examine the photo, a relatable image that invoked memories of his time on active duty. He pondered for

a moment the vastly different experience of servicemembers now.

Across the Indo-Pacific and north Atlantic, small, mobile forces of Marines were positioned at expeditionary advance bases to deter Russian and Chinese military aggression. Their forward positioning was part of a whole-of-government strategy that Mynars had helped craft.

The approach drew heavily from maneuver warfare, an unusual source that raised eyebrows when Mynars first presented it. Maneuver warfare was something many officials, himself included, had believed only applied to war and conflict. However, the Secretary of State found its tenets of speed, initiative, boldness, surfaces and gaps, and decision-making to be useful for navigating the modern geopolitical landscape. In due time, so had his peers across the U.S. government. Maneuver warfare's concepts of complexity, disorder, uncertainty and ambiguity also helped officials like himself orient themselves in an uncertain world.

Following Mynars out of his office, an aide carried a statement written with his Japanese, Australian and Indian counterparts condemning recent aggression by China's maritime militia around the Spratly Islands. The message was the diplomatic piece of a response that also involved military, information and economic measures. Each played its own part in achieving strategic objectives related to China.

As he took his place at the podium beside the Japanese Foreign Minister, Mynars thought about the young Marine in the photo. He, like so many others, was playing a part in a grand strategy, one carefully designed to maximize the full potential of American power in every domain. Mynars knew that victory was not guaranteed, but he held hope that the tenets offered by maneuver warfare would guide him and others in the U.S. government in their ongoing competition with Russia and China.

An aide signaled that it was time to begin. Across the room, the cable news networks went live. It was time for the world to watch America make its next move.



CPL SAVANNAH MESIMER, USMC

Marines with Co A, 1st Bn, 3rd Marine Regiment, 3rdMarDiv, post security around a CH-53E Super Stallion at the Jungle Warfare Training Center, Okinawa, Japan, Aug. 6, 2020. The Marines were participating in an air assault to increase their proficiency at air insertions and maneuvering through simulated enemy terrain.

Maneuver Warfare and the Return of Great Power Competition

After 30 years of American pre-eminence, the world has begun awakening to an emerging new order. Russia and China are on the rise and are seeking to reshape the rules as their power grows. The U.S.-led international order that helped enable their resurgence is under threat.

How the U.S. should respond has spurred considerable literature and discussion, with debates ranging from the correct definition—Cold War 2.0? Great Power Competition?—to what exactly it entails—conflict? Cooperation? Both?

As part of an effort to direct Marines' attention to this new strategic era, Headquarters Marine Corps in December published MCDP 1-4 Competing, which explores competition through the lens of maneuver warfare. The publication does a thorough job of understanding competition, but its focus is mostly limited to the Marine Corps' supporting role.

As both MCDP 1-4 and MCDP 1 Warfighting note, military force is but one tool available for achieving policy objectives. Governments may also employ diplomatic, informational/ideological or economic means. This essay seeks to

expand upon both publications by exploring how the U.S. can apply these four tools in conjunction with maneuver warfare for a whole-of-government approach to Great Power Competition with China and Russia across several issues.

We typically perceive maneuver warfare as a mindset applicable only to conflict and war. Yet as MCDP 1-4 makes clear, its tenets are also relevant to competition. Attributes like speed and decision making, surfaces and gaps and complexity are just as present in competition as they are in war.

In adopting these tenets to competition, it is important to remember that maneuver warfare is a mindset rather than a playbook, a flexible approach we apply differently depending on the situation at hand. Each issue in the contemporary security environment is unique in its own way and accordingly requires a unique response. Similarly, Russia and China are not two sides of the same coin. An effective approach toward one might be ineffective against the other.

This new strategic era requires serious attention and consideration. In their path to great power, Moscow and Beijing are also seeking to forge a world more accommodating to their interests. Increasingly,

we see friction between American, Chinese, and Russian values and objectives on issues like human rights, free speech, freedom of navigation, and respect for state sovereignty.

These conflicting goals and values highlight the impact that culture has on the way countries view the world around them. MCDP 1-4 defines this as a country's orientation, which in addition to culture is also shaped by factors like language and history. Understanding aspects like orientation is critical for formulating a strategy for great power competition suited to the complex security environment of the 21st century. Furthermore, while the nature of state competition remains the same, issues like climate change, arms control, nuclear proliferation, artificial intelligence, advances in weaponry and technology and social media make today's multipolar era different from those in the past.

For one, the speed at which change occurs is daunting and is one reason why maneuver warfare, a mindset that emphasizes speed of action, is so well-suited for competition with Russia and China. The nation that succeeds will be the one that not only adapts to this rapid tempo but thrives in it.



SGT DANNY GONZALEZ, USMC

Broadly speaking, nations engage in competition—or cooperation—through four means: diplomacy, information, military and economics (DIME). Knowing how and where to apply the specifics of these tools requires a strong foundation in the art, science, and dynamic of competition. Relations between states are not cleanly defined by peace or war. Instead, a competition continuum exists between two extremes: pure peace and total war. In between lays political warfare, economic competition, gray zone, hybrid war and conflict.

Furthermore, the means of engaging in competition—through coercion, attraction, or information—also entail a nuanced application of DIME in an environment clouded by many of the same attributes found in war, such as uncertainty, fluidity, friction, disorder and complexity.

Another similarity competition shares with war is its constant evolution. While the nature of competition—the struggle between states for primacy—remains constant, its shape changes according to developments in technologies, doctrine and tactics. In order to stay ahead, states

During a simulated visit, board, search and seizure mission aboard the dock landing ship USS *Germantown*, Marines provide security.

must rapidly adapt and respond to the world around them. This imperative ties in with decision-making, initiative, speed and surfaces and gaps. In a bid to maintain a competitive edge, governments must respond to change more rapidly than competitors. Furthermore, they must remain on the lookout for vulnerabilities to exploit and opportunities to shape the environment. Failure to do both allows rivals to do so instead, forcing a belligerent adversary to respond to conditions rather than set them.

Critical also are innovation and adaptation, which require physical, moral and mental forces. A country needs the resources and assets, moral drive and mental fortitude to compete against other states. Without these, it is limited in its ability to achieve policy goals and challenge similar efforts by competitors.

One key difference between war and competition is that while war is typically a zero-sum affair, competition can be both zero-sum and positive-sum—both sides can benefit instead of just one. This distinction is important to keep in mind. While in conflict we strive to impose our will on a rival, competition involves a strong degree of willing or unwilling cooperation achieved through coercion or attraction that compels or induces a rival into an action or position favorable to us.

These tenets of maneuver warfare are prevalent in a host of issues ranging from nuclear proliferation to cybersecurity. The state that best recognizes and exploits them stands to benefit the most.

Diplomacy: Allies and Partners

America's array of alliances and partnerships is unmatched. These ties give Washington a strong competitive advantage, as it can leverage its allies and partners against Russia and China on a number of issues. Indeed, such ties are one of America's strongest surfaces.

However, as China continues to rise militarily and economically, Washington's ability to face Beijing alone will increasingly weaken. Just as the U.S. has worked with its European allies and partners through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to resist the Soviet Union and now Russia, Washington should also cooperate with Indo-Pacific nations in response to China. This is, of course, far easier said than done, especially in light of China's economic clout.



SGT AUDREY RAMPTON, USMC

Marines demonstrate room clearing techniques for Japan Ground Self-Defense Force servicemembers during Exercise Forest Light Western Army at Kirishima Maneuver Field, Kumamoto, Japan, Jan. 27, 2020.

Marines with Co B, 1st Bn, 5th Marine Regiment, move up the range at Range 410A while participating in ITX, 3-21 at MCAGCC Twentynine Palms, Calif, April 9, 2021.



LCPL ANDREW BRAY, USMC

Economics and International Development

China's economy is its greatest strength, a surface that is as impenetrable as America's security ties. Its market access and foreign investment pose a significant counterbalance to America's alliances and partnerships, as does its trade relations with nations around the world. Countries rely on China for trade and investment like they rely on the U.S. for security.

Yet this does not mean that the U.S. is weak economically. The standing of the U.S. dollar cannot be overlooked. Its basis as the global reserve currency and American dominance of the global financial system allows the U.S. to coerce and attract rivals and partners alike without resorting to military force.

The significance of China's economy is its basis as Beijing's center of gravity, the source from which the rest of its strength stems. Without a solid economic foundation, China would not enjoy the strength and influence that it has today.

Economic competition will require the U.S. to challenge China's economic strength by offering alternatives to financial incentives like the Belt and Road Initiative and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership. China's controversial lending habits and debt trap diplomacy offers a gap

in Beijing's economic surface that the U.S. can exploit to expand its soft power through provisions of more responsible lending and investment that countries so desperately need for development.

Defense and Security

Unsurprisingly, the tenets of maneuver warfare are most widely applicable to defense and security-related issues. Challenges ranging from nuclear proliferation to terrorism entail varying degrees of competition and cooperation.

While China often pursues foreign policy objectives through economic means, Russia is far more willing to use military force to achieve its own. In 2014, Russia displayed strong initiative, speed, surprise, boldness, and exploitation of gaps when it invaded Crimea amidst an opportunistic period of domestic political upheaval. This move was followed by a series of similar hard power actions in other parts of the world. In an attempt to spread its influence, Russia has also deployed troops and government-connected private military contractors like Wagner to battlefields across the Middle East and Africa. Shortly after its annexation of Crimea, Russia sent troops to Syria to back an ally on the brink of defeat and gain a strategic foothold in the Middle East, which allowed Moscow to challenge

Washington's efforts in Syria. In Libya, the Central African Republic and Nagorno-Karabakh, Russia has exploited similar conflicts and political instability to insert forces and spread its influence.

Similarly, China has acted with initiative and boldness by building military bases on maritime features in the South China Sea. Its constant intrusion of Taiwanese airspace and encroachment of disputed territories in the region appear to be an attempt at boundary stretching—acts short of war intended to change the status quo.

These Gray Zone and Hybrid War tactics are key examples of Russia and China working to identify and develop weapons and strategies that exploit American surfaces and gaps and overcome its competitive advantage in military strength. Furthermore, these moves have shaped the international environment to make it more advantageous to their interests. In both cases, the U.S. has been forced to respond to conditions set by competitors rather than setting them itself.

As it approaches competition with Russia and China, the U.S. must understand Moscow and Beijing's own surfaces and gaps and then similarly develop, acquire and apply exploitive weapons, tactics and technologies with speed, initiative and boldness. Ideally, the U.S. would achieve surprise, but its ultimate



LCPL CLARENCE WIMBERLY, USMC

Leathernecks with 2nd Transport Support Battalion prepare to anchor ropes to a humvee during the ITX on Twentynine Palms, Calif., on May 13, 2016.

aim should be shaping, or, rather, maintaining or restoring, the rules-based order it helped create. It can do so primarily through coercion, and specifically deterrence. As it does so, it must constantly reassess its approach with the OODA Loop cycle to ensure that it remains effective and relevant.

Not every security-related issue will, or even should, be met with competition,

however. Some, such as arms control and nuclear proliferation, can be managed through cooperation. The New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty is an example of the U.S. and Russia working together to address a common threat. Iran's nuclear program and North Korea's arsenal of weapons of mass destruction present other areas for the U.S., China, and Russia to cooperate.

Cyber Security and Technology

Cyber and technology form an unprecedented component of today's security environment. The ability to instantly share information and ideas online and the rate of technological growth and innovation are the driving force behind the evolution of competition.

The ability to collect and sort vast amounts of data and the difficulty of attributing cyberattacks has made cyber warfare a preferred tactic for competing states. Furthermore, cyber warfare falls below the threshold of violence, which allows states to work toward achieving their objectives without the risks carried by more overt methods.

In another attempt to circumvent U.S. strengths, Russia and China have exploited significant gaps in American cyber defense. Both have targeted critical vulnerabilities and gained access to government data and networks. As competition deep-



CAPT MICHAEL WRIGHT, USMC

Marines and Sailors from 3rd Bn, 5th Marine Regiment and 3rd MAW conduct an air assault from MCAS Camp Pendleton, Calif., to the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center in Bridgeport, Calif., as part of Mountain Exercise 5-20 on July 11, 2020.

ens, China and Russia will seek further cyber vulnerabilities and may one day use these breaches for more destructive means. For this reason, the U.S. must invest in stronger cyber defense. Maneuver warfare notes that a robust defense is essential to a successful offense. As the world, and militaries in particular, become more technologically dependent, strong cyber defense is paramount.

The speed of technological growth is a defining feature of the 21st century. A country's ability to innovate, develop, adopt and implement new and emerging technologies across industries will be crucial for staying ahead of competitors. This holds true for sectors ranging from military—developing, adopting, and implementing new technologies and weaponry, to commercial businesses—manufacturing and producing key technologies that will drive the fourth industrial revolution. In particular, 5G technology has proven to be a major area of competition between China and the U.S., as evident by Washington's punitive actions against Huawei over security concerns.

The internet and social media have also become an asymmetrical battlefield ripe for exploitation. Competition of ideas and ideology occurs alongside the weaponiza-

tion of information to achieve strategic aims. When Russia manipulated American-hosted social media platforms such as Facebook to spread misinformation about the 2016 presidential election, it innovatively exploited a critical vulnerability in U.S. democracy to sow discord and division.

An effective U.S. approach to cyber and technology-related issues will emphasize speed, innovation, adaptation and defense. Competition will occur more than cooperation on most issues. The U.S. must constantly strive to lead technological growth and remain vigilant to cyber-related vulnerabilities that rivals will seek to exploit.

Conclusion

The tenets of maneuver warfare provide a means of understanding and approaching each of these challenges. Surfaces and gaps exist in every issue. The country that stays ahead is the one that decides and acts with the greatest degree of boldness, initiative and speed, ideally achieving surprise but ultimately shaping the action in its favor. Over a long span of time, this shaping will create wider gaps within a rival's surface ripe for exploitation. Not every issue is zero-sum, and states may cooperate rather than compete on some;

however, the ultimate aim for states is to advance their interests. Their approach ultimately must entail a strategy to compete, deter and win. Maneuver warfare provides an ideal framework for achieving that end.

A familiar cloud of dirt lifted as the Osprey landed. For what seemed like the millionth time, Lance Corporal Rodriguez made his way aboard the aircraft. He did not know where the bird would take him next, but as he fastened himself into his seat, he took a small bit of solace in the knowledge that his efforts were part of a well thought out comprehensive plan.

Through a window on the port side of the Osprey, Rodriguez watched the sun dip into the South China Sea. He never tired of watching such beautiful sunsets. For a brief second, he wondered about his brother and the sunsets he saw halfway across the world. Moments later the bird entered the air, bound for yet another strategic destination.

Author's bio: Hunter Williamson is a freelance journalist and student at the American University of Beirut. He served in the United States Marine Corps from 2016-2021, most of which he spent in the Indo-Pacific.

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"I see you have all the gifts for the Marines wrapped and ready to go."



"It's 4:01 a.m. I thought I'd let you guys sleep in since it's Christmas."



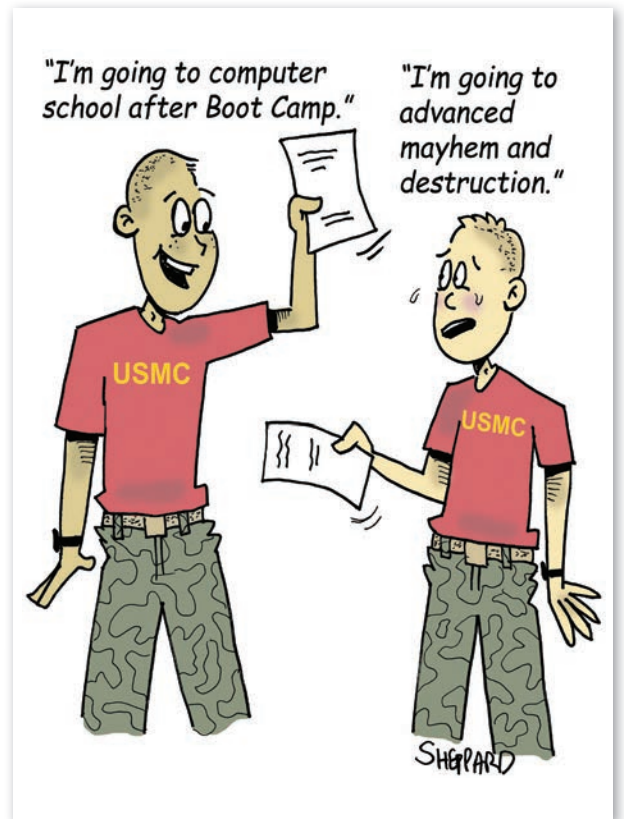
12 Days of Marine Christmas (Sung to the Twelve Days of Christmas)

1. A haircut and a green tee
2. Two boots a shining
3. Three uniforms starching
4. Four DIs counting cadence
5. Five ditches digging
6. Six clips of ammo
7. Seven days of rifle range
8. Eight hour marches
9. Nine miles running
10. Ten obstacles climbing
11. Eleven tests are taking
12. Twelve weeks of Boot Camp

SHEPARD



"Just don't leave me anything heavy that I'll have to carry back to the base."



"The general decorated the tree himself."



"I'm not interested in seeing your high school grade point average."

James Ayling

From Immigrant to a Founding Member Of the Marine Corps Reserve

By GySgt Brian A. Knowles, USMCR

Young Marines just starting their careers learn quickly that Marine Corps discipline can be harsh and that mistakes are not easily forgiven. Those who find themselves occasionally afoul of Marine Corps regulations should take heart from the career of First Sergeant James Ayling, a sea-service Marine at the turn of the 20th century, who fought in the Spanish-American War, as well as in three campaigns of the “Banana Wars.” But before he became one of the first 34 Marines to join the Marine Corps Reserve (USMCR) before the start of World War I, making him a founding member of the USMCR, he was court-martialed twice and busted in rank repeatedly, promoted to sergeant twice and to corporal at

least three times throughout his career. Even though he was once kicked out of the Corps at the explicit order of the Commandant, he somehow found his way back into the service’s good graces and eventually served 30 years.

James Ayling was born in May of 1870 in Limehouse Borough, London, England, along the banks of the River Thames, to a Scottish father and Irish mother.

He never attended school but learned to read and write. His only work before immigrating was as a baker. At the age of 22, he made his way to the United States and settled in San Francisco, Calif., before joining the U.S. Marine Corps on Oct. 21, 1893.

Records describe him as 5 feet, 10 inches, 150 pounds, with brown hair, blue eyes, and a “ruddy” complexion. He was

tattooed on his chest and both forearms. Unfortunately, no known image of Ayling exists. His first duty station at Mare Island Navy Yard, Calif., went smoothly enough with an overall service rating of “Good” and an “Excellent” character despite a long list of infractions.

Ayling’s early offenses included: talking on post; late at reveille; disobedience to orders; insubordination; breaking into a paint shop; and absent from reveille. His worst transgression, earning him 112 days restriction, was telling an officer of the day that he had permission for weekend liberty while already on restriction and staying out for three days longer than allowed. In total, during his first two years of service, Ayling was punished with 255 days of restriction, wearing double irons for 10 of those days.



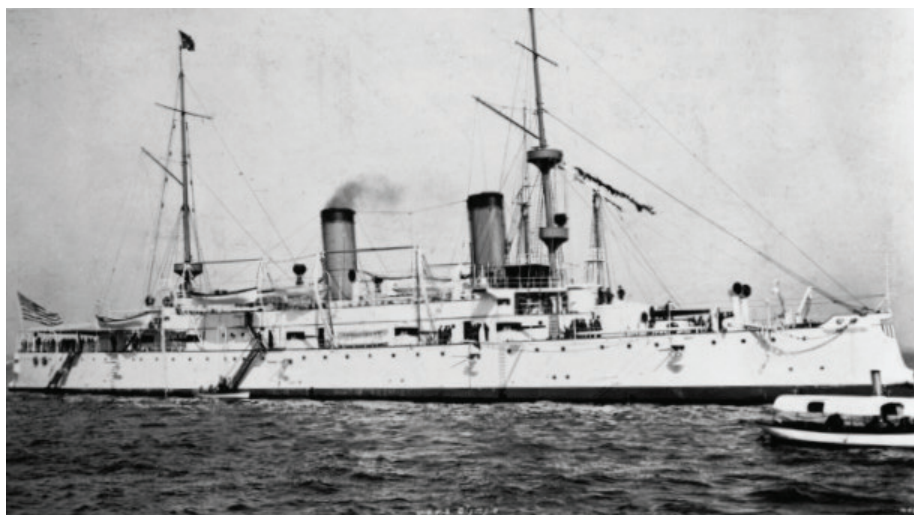
Training on transporting wounded servicemembers was conducted at Mare Island, Calif., July 1918.

Ayling's first sea tour was just as rocky and included the first of many close calls in ending his career. His first at-sea posting was aboard USS *Olympia* (C-6). *Olympia* incorporated innovative features including electrically primed gun batteries, refrigeration systems, electric lighting and forced-air ventilation. Ayling must have been fascinated by the design and technology of the ship for later in his career, he would reenlist for Reserve duty at a radio communications station. The ship also helped pioneer the use of wireless communication equipment in the U.S. Navy. Quality of life was much better compared to older vessels. As a new ship, *Olympia*, with Private Ayling in the Marine Guard Detachment, began her first operational deployment when she set out from Mare Island on Aug. 25, 1895, to join the Asiatic Squadron, fated to become notorious in the "Battle of Manila Bay" in 1898 as Commodore George Dewey's flagship.

Starting his shipboard life badly, Ayling "Refused Duty" and suffered a Summary Court Martial. Unfortunately for Ayling, punishments were more severe out at sea. He was found guilty, and his punishment was 20 days of solitary confinement on bread and water rations. On its way crossing the Pacific, the cruiser coaled in the Hawaiian Islands. While visiting Maui and Oahu, Ayling was late returning from liberty ashore and earned 90 days restriction and given a 4th Class "Bad" performance rating. *Olympia* then headed westward across the Pacific with severe weather causing repeated fires in the coal bunkers, all crew assisting in damage control. Ayling's ship nonetheless reached Yokohama, Japan, and became the squadron's flagship. The ship then cruised Japanese waters, visiting Yokosuka, Kobe and Nagasaki.

What should have been an exciting and eventful first sea tour for Ayling turned out to be a harsh experience. He was given an overall rating of "Bad" by the ship's guard commanding officer, Captain William Biddle, for his professional duties and personal conduct. Ayling's only "Excellent" rating was in sobriety. Likely, ceremonial pomp and showing-of-the-flag duties on a flagship must not have suited Ayling's motivations. The commodore, ship's captain and the captain of the Marine guard expected the best of the crew, which Ayling was not yet prepared to give of himself for the Marine Corps.

Found in dereliction of duty off Japan and discovered "Sitting on Post," Captain Biddle had tolerated enough of Private Ayling's failures and ordered him transferred. Before *Olympia* sailed on to China and Russia, Ayling was transferred back



Above: USS *Olympia* at anchor, 1899. *Olympia* was one of the most advanced ships in the U.S. Navy at the time of her commissioning. Below: Marines and Sailors of the ship's company eat at their mess aboard USS *Olympia* in 1898.



to duty at Mare Island and put aboard USS *Concord* (PG-3) for the return voyage back to the States. Oddly enough, during the two-month return voyage, Ayling was again receiving "Good" and "Excellent" ratings from the captain of *Concord*. While *Olympia* would cruise the Far East and later win victory at Manila Bay during the Spanish-American War a few years later, Ayling would fight in another major naval battle in the Caribbean.

In July 1896, Ayling's next sea duty was on the battleship USS *Oregon* (BB-3), where he found himself in trouble almost immediately and regularly thereafter. As a member of the ship's guard, things didn't improve much during his two years aboard *Oregon*. Once, he had neglected to clean his rifle, even after being ordered to, and thus failed an inspection. He was cited for a variety of offenses, both major and minor. He was repeatedly late to reveille, had a habit of shirking duty on post, and "using

foul language on berth deck." More than once, he was disobedient and insubordinate both to NCOs and officers. This earned him two days of solitary confinement on bread and water rations. He was routinely given extra duty hours and placed on restriction repeatedly for his nefarious conduct. Because of these discipline difficulties, when Ayling completed his first enlistment term, he received a discharge rating of "Good," one rating lower than the customary "Excellent."

The routine of peacetime or garrison duty has traditionally been quite different from wartime service. The focus and motivation for honor, courage, and commitment to the country created by war have certainly adjusted many Marines' attitudes throughout the Corps' history. Private Ayling, troubled as he was, soon found his motivation to straighten up his conduct and improve his performance.

In 1898, long before the Panama Canal

was completed in 1914, ships on the U.S. West Coast wanting to journey east had to sail around the entire South American continent. The lengthy and often perilous journey took more than three months. When the war with Spain began in April 1898, the Navy knew it would need its most modern battleships in the Caribbean, and so it ordered *Oregon* to fire all boilers and make for Cuba with urgent haste.

Oregon steamed from San Francisco around Cape Horn to Key West to join the North Atlantic Squadron in early May 1898—a journey of 14,500 nautical miles, completed in 66 days. She joined the U.S. blockading fleet and assumed patrolling for the breakout of the Spanish Fleet, which occurred June 3, 1898.

The speed and firepower of *Oregon*, an advanced ship for the 1890s, had earned her the nickname “Bulldog of the Navy.” The ship’s armament was four 13-inch guns and eight 8-inch guns. Her armor belt was 18-inches, but with 11,000-horsepower engines, she was propelled through the water at a speed of 17 knots, making her one of the fastest battleships of the fleet. During the Battle of Santiago de Cuba, *Oregon*, the only ship in position and with enough speed, chased down the Spanish cruiser *Cristobal Colon*. *Oregon*’s firepower and speed prevented *Cristobal Colon*’s escape and led to her run aground on Cuban shoals. Marines and Sailors from *Oregon* boarded and attempted to save *Cristobal Colon* from sinking, but she was scuttled by the Spanish crew.

For his involvement in the battle, assisting in the naval gunnery and then with the Marine boarding party, Private Ayling received the West Indies Campaign Medal (later renamed the Spanish Campaign Medal). Ayling’s service and conduct during the Spanish-American War turned the page on his disciplinary malfeasance. He did not become a model Marine just yet, but his reckless and irresponsible actions were curbed considerably.



**West Indies
Campaign Medal**

From *Oregon*, Ayling’s first enlistment nearing its end, he was transferred to Protected Cruiser USS *Atlanta*, laid up “out of commission” at the New York Naval Yard, to await his discharge on Oct. 20, 1898. Not content to return to work as a baker and after enjoying nearly a month as a civilian, the 28-year-old Ayling reenlisted at the Brooklyn Naval Yard on Nov. 15, 1898. Private Ayling was assigned to USS *Chicago* (CA-14) Dec. 1, 1898, *Chicago* being recommissioned the

same day. *Chicago* was a step down from *Oregon*. As an older protected cruiser built in 1885, *Chicago* was roughly half the size of his former ship. It was one of the first steel-hulled ships in the U.S. Navy and still had masts for sails to supplement its boilers. However, *Chicago* was the flagship of the South Atlantic Squadron, which also allowed cruising of European, Mediterranean and Caribbean waters.

Ayling was fortunate once again in experiencing some of the best liberty ports for Marines and Sailors. However, minor infractions led to Ayling serving extra duty hours and placement on restriction

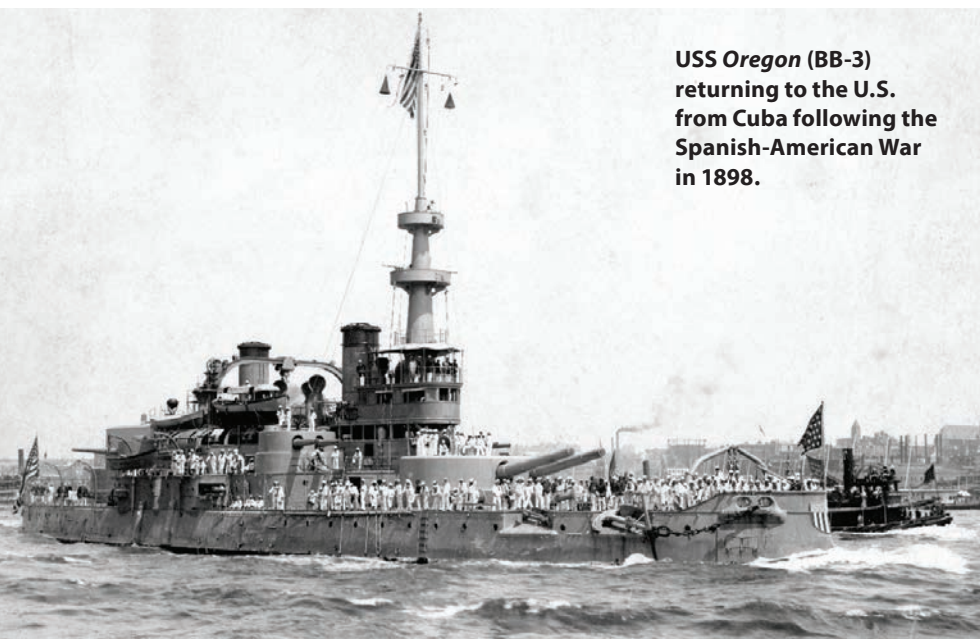
several times. The infractions: he was late to formation; disobedient to orders; late returning from liberty; and “taking water from Scuttlebutt.” Over his two years aboard ship, his performance records show he was making an effort to limit his misconduct and prove his ability. Taking water from the scuttlebutt seems an innocuous offense until one remembers that fresh water was still a precious commodity at sea in this era.

Chicago was back to New York by Oct. 2, 1899, to participate in the naval parade of ships to honor former Asiatic Squadron Commander, Admiral Dewey. A month later, Ayling’s ship was once again at sea taking station as the flagship of the South Atlantic Squadron. On July 7, 1900, the U.S. Census recorded Private Ayling at Montevideo, Uruguay, with *Chicago*.

Before *Chicago* again returned to the U.S., Ayling transferred to USS *Atlanta* on March 9, 1901. The Protected Cruiser was assigned a sea tour with the South Atlantic Station, Ayling’s second tour. Ayling quickly impressed his new superior and he was soon promoted to corporal on March 21, 1901. *Atlanta* then cruised off the coast of Brazil and throughout the South Atlantic until November of 1902, when she was transferred to the Caribbean Squadron. On Jan. 1, 1903, while aboard *Atlanta*, near Culebra Island, Puerto Rico, Ayling accidentally suffered a dislocated right knee joint. The ship’s doctor recommended a transfer to a naval hospital in the U.S. for further treatment and recuperation.

Corporal Ayling was sent to the Marine Barracks at 8th and I Streets in Washington, D.C., for recovery. Once healed, he was stationed at Marine Barracks, Norfolk, Va., in February 1903. Receiving perfect performance reviews in his assignments in the District and Norfolk, he was promoted to sergeant in April 1903 and was later transferred back to “8th and I” to await the end of his enlistment on Nov. 14, 1903. He received “Excellent” character and performance ratings.

Taking eight days as a civilian before reenlisting, the 33-year-old Sergeant Ayling signed his third enlistment on Nov. 21, 1903. Continuing his good performance at “8th and I,” he was rewarded with assignment to the “U.S. Marine Battalion World’s Fair” in St. Louis, Mo. The detachment was to participate in the 1904 centennial celebration of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, colloquially known as the St. Louis World’s Fair. John Philip Sousa led the Marine Band’s performances there as well. By May 1904, Sergeant Ayling and his Marines were providing ceremonial and security support for the fair.



**USS Oregon (BB-3)
returning to the U.S.
from Cuba following the
Spanish-American War
in 1898.**



A view of the second-floor corridor of a building where Marines rescued historic artifacts, books and documents from a disastrous fire in 1904.

COURTESY OF ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH ARCHIVE

Ayling's prior discipline problems were minor compared to what would come next. Whatever the reason, he did not acquit himself honorably. Beginning with failing a uniform inspection, he was confined to quarters. Things went badly for Ayling from there. The court-martial record shows that on June 25, 1904, Sergeant Ayling was found guilty for "being drunk and creating a disturbance ... at the World's Fair, St. Louis, and

being impertinent and disrespectful to an Army Officer." An intoxicated Ayling had attended the Hagenbeck Animal Show & Circus and began a disturbance. An Army officer, also in attendance, ordered Ayling to end his ruckus. Ayling's response was rude and disobedient. The public incident became an embarrassment and was reported to Marine Corps headquarters. Forced by public and political pressure, Ayling was court-martialed for his poor

choices at the World's Fair. Fortunately for the Marine Corps, the incident was not reported by the press at the highly publicized fair. Unfortunately for Ayling, he was reduced in rank to private and dishonorably discharged from the Marine Corps at the explicit order of the Commandant, Major General George F. Elliott.

Later in the year, the Marine contingent at the fair displayed great courage when they helped save irreplaceable artifacts, books and art after a museum caught fire and was all but destroyed. Occurring in the night, they rushed to the scene, lending assistance to firefighters. Unable to contain the fire, Marines continued entering the building, even as it burned, to retrieve items. Sergeant Ayling's personal conduct was less than ideal; however, his training and leadership to his Marines taught them persistence and perseverance. Ayling and the Marine Corps were proud of the Marines jumping into danger to save lives and property.

Ayling's whereabouts from July 1904 until June 1907 are unknown. We can



COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES

A Marine band leads the procession into Forest Park and through the fairgrounds during the Dedication Day Parade at the 1904 World's Fair, St. Louis, Mo..

assume that he stayed in St. Louis, as he would later reenlist from there. Likely, he gained employment during the World's Fair and continued writing his petitions for reinstatement to the Commandant for a second chance with the Marine Corps.

After three years, in June of 1907, Ayling's request for a waiver from the Commandant to reenlist was approved. His sergeant rank was reinstated as well. The circumstances of his high-profile dismissal from the service were not forgotten but overlooked due to the need for experienced Marines. Ayling had to hit bottom with his dishonorable discharge

before he could straighten himself out, although his bad behavior had not yet run its full course.

Back in the good graces of the Corps, he was ordered to Mare Island and then to sea-duty aboard the Armored Cruiser USS *South Dakota* (ACR-9) through 1908. Apparently, his prior conduct of mischief and misdeeds helped him become an excellent ship's police sergeant. He would regularly perform outstandingly in his duties with naval gunnery and police duty throughout the rest of his career; however, he still had ongoing issues with obedience to orders and his sobriety.

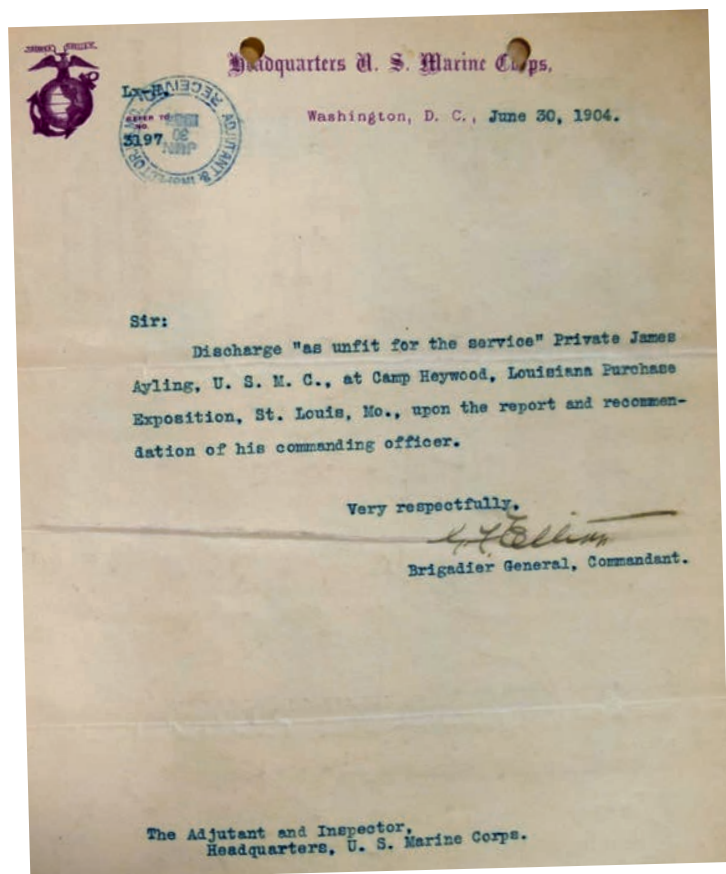
In December 1908, he was transported on Auxiliary Cruiser USS *Buffalo* (AD-8), arriving in February 1909, to Marine Barracks Puget Sound Naval Yard, Wash. Ayling's vices would catch up with him while there. An event during liberty nearly destroyed his career once again. On May 6, 1909, the report read, "Scandalous conduct tending to the destruction of good morals and discipline. Recommended to be reduced in the rank of Private." A further recommendation was made for another dishonorable discharge.

No details are known of what the "scandalous conduct" entailed, but regardless, Ayling was again at the mercy of the Commandant to judge his fate. On May 22, 1909, he was reduced in rank to private and given an immediate transfer to Marine Barracks Sitka, Alaska, by order of Commandant Elliott.

Ayling had barely arrived in Sitka and had just been given a temporary appointment to corporal when his rebelliousness and trouble with alcohol got to him again. He was again "reduced to Private for being unfit and unworthy to hold the rank of an NCO." A week later, he was found to be under the influence of liquor when returning from liberty, and luckily, received only a warning and a transfer to sea duty. Commenting on men stationed in remote garrisons, a Naval squadron commander once remarked, "Men who do not get drunk are not plentiful in the Navy or Marine Corps." Private Ayling spent June of 1909 on his best behavior and by the end of the month, he was returned to Puget Sound to await a sea duty assignment.

Ayling wouldn't wait long. On Sept. 20, 1909, he was stationed on USS *Washington* (ACR-11). Needing an experienced NCO on the ship's guard detachment, Private Ayling was reappointed again as a temporary corporal. He kept focused and well behaved throughout 1910 with *Washington* stationed with the North Pacific Squadron. Back at sea in early 1911, *Washington* next sailed for Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, assigned to the Caribbean Squadron. By January 1911, Ayling was a sergeant again, with a temporary warrant this time. On June 11, 1911, while *Washington* lay at anchor in Guantanamo Bay, Ayling reenlisted once again.

By this point, Ayling was an expert gunnery NCO and found himself transferred quickly between ships to impart training to Sailors and Marines. These were choice sea-duty assignments aboard some of the biggest ships in the Navy. He went from *Washington*, on July 13, 1912, to USS *Nebraska* (BB-14). Then, on July 20, he was transferred to USS *Illinois* (BB-7). On Dec. 16, 1912, he was sent back to *Nebraska* for transit to Marine Barracks



Left: BGen Commandant George F. Elliott's letter discharging Sgt Ayling, "as unfit for the service," after an incident at the World's Fair in St. Louis, Mo., June 30, 1904. Below: BGen Elliott later provided a waiver for Ayling to reenlist after being court-martialed.

DATE AND NATURE OF ANY WAIVER.

Dishonorably discharged from the Marine Corps July 11, 1904.

Received authority to reenlist from Brigadier General, Commandant June 3, 1907. RHL-ale No. 3197.

DECLARATION OF APPLICANT.

I, James Ayling, desiring to ENLIST in the UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS for the term of FOUR YEARS, Do DECLARE that I am 37 years and _____ months of age; that I am not married; that there is no one dependent upon me for support; that I have never deserted from the United States service, or been discharged therefrom on account of disability, by sentence of a court-martial, or by order, before the expiration of the term of enlistment, and I know of no impediment to my serving honestly and faithfully as a marine for four years.

Given at St. Louis, Mo. the 11th day of June, 190 7

WITNESS: Harry Emcis Sergeant, U.S. Marine Corps.

James Ayling (signature of applicant, in full.)



Visitors crowding the grounds at the World's Fair on "Pike Day," St. Louis, Mo, June 4, 1904. (Courtesy of *The Atlantic*)

Boston, Mass., serving there from Dec. 30, 1912, until February 1913.

On a short tour of duty, February to April 1913, during one of the many "Banana Wars" interventions the Marine Corps was employed to reconcile, Ayling conducted police duties ashore in Cuba, maintaining peace and deterring insurrectionists. In November 1913, Ayling's detachment was renamed Company D, 2nd Advanced Base Regiment and returned to Boston. A month later, in December 1913, his company was sent to Pensacola, Fla., in response to the building tensions and possible war with Mexican revolutionaries. Repositioned to Culebra, Puerto Rico, Ayling readied his men for combat and a possible landing on the Mexican coast.

In April of 1914, Sergeant Ayling, along with hundreds of Marines gathered from ship's detachments of the U.S. Atlantic Fleet, participated in the seizure of Vera Cruz, Mexico. Along with Ayling were a number of far more famous Marines: Colonel John A. Lejeune, Colonel Littleton W.T. Waller and Major Smedley Butler. The attack on Vera Cruz was in response to an ongoing revolution in Mexico, which threatened political and economic relations with the U.S. and further destabi-

lization of Mexico. President Woodrow Wilson received approval from Congress to intervene and ordered the seizure of the port city and interception of weapons shipments, severely weakening the illegitimate rebel leadership.

The street-fighting that occurred after landing was new to Ayling and the Marines, requiring considerable adjustment in tactics. Marines and Sailors garrisoned the port for several months until relieved by U.S. soldiers. The Marine expedition and all other U.S. forces that landed in Mexico were withdrawn by November 1914. However, Sergeant Ayling's direct participation in the Vera Cruz fight was short for on the first day of the engagement, he was seriously injured when he fell from a ladder while attempting to climb the roof of a building during a skirmish. He was safely evacuated and soon recovered. In September 1914, he was promoted to first sergeant (temporary warrant).

The beginning of 1915 found 1stSgt Ayling with a transfer that took him back to his old ship USS *Oregon*, assigned to the Pacific Squadron and based at San Diego, Calif. The aging vessel was showing her wear and age. As such, she was

limited to patrolling along the Pacific Coast. On June 14, 1915, while aboard *Oregon*, Ayling signed his fifth enlistment contract.

Ayling was headed back into combat while assigned to the 29th Company, having been transferred in February 1916. In June 1916, they shipped by rail to the Port of New Orleans, La., with the rest of the 4th Marine Regiment to board the troop transport USS *Hancock*. They shipped out for the Dominican Republic to restore order and provide protection from insurgents.

When a revolution broke out on the Caribbean island nation, Ayling landed with the 29th Co on June 21, 1916. Marines were to occupy, administer and reform the country. Marines also prevented use of the country by Germany as a base in which to attack U.S. shipping and destabilize other Central and South American nations. Ayling was under fire in multiple engagements throughout June and July of 1916. Deployed in small units to suit the mountainous jungle terrain, he marched his detachment from Monte Cristi to Santiago. He fought hostiles at Las Tricheras (June 27), Dona Antonia (June 28-30), and Guayacanes (July 3).

For his leadership and dedication, he was authorized a permanent warrant to his first sergeant rank on Dec. 24, 1916. Ayling, fighting in his last Banana War, would help create garrisons, train local police and continue patrols until Jan. 5, 1917. He was then transferred to the Brooklyn Naval Yard. Only in 1924 were U.S. forces finally withdrawn from the Dominican Republic, with a new government established to maintain peace and a new treaty agreement recognized.

Upon his return to the U.S. in early 1917, First Sergeant Ayling learned the Marine Corps had just created a Fleet Marine Corps Reserve (FMCR). At the age of 47 and with 21 years of service, he was likely considering retirement and pursuit of civilian opportunities. The Reserve offered him an option to both serve and pursue a career and family. He decided it was time to leave active service for the Reserve. He reenlisted to the FMCR on March 1, 1917. Soon after, he took a job as a New York City policeman.

The Marine Corps was aware of the severity of the “Great War” in Europe, raging since 1914, and knew they were not prepared if the U.S. would get involved. Creation of a Reserve would provide experienced NCOs and ready Marines to quickly increase the Marine Corps’ expeditionary forces. However, founded only on Aug. 29, 1916, the Marine Corps Reserve was just counting its first three dozen Marines when the U.S. declared war against the Central Powers in April of 1917.

The Corps had global commitments to maintain with roughly 14,000 Marines in 1916. These included ship’s guard detachments, counter-insurrection police actions and naval base garrison duties. Even if fully mobilized, the Corps could not hope to engage on the grand scale of the Western Front campaigns. A Marine Corps Reserve would provide the manpower to solve the wartime expansion if time allowed for the many thousands to be recruited, trained and organized. Eight months from creation to declaration of war brought just 34 Marines into the Reserve, hardly a drop in the bucket to fulfill its mission.

Recruitment into the Reserve ranks continued with all personnel immediately going on activated orders. The Inactive (Drilling) Reserve was mobilized out of existence during the war. By war’s end, more than 10 percent of the Marine Corps

consisted of Reserve Marines. Of the 72,000 total Marines within the Corps, there were 7,456 Reserve Marines on muster rolls by December 1918. This included 269 female Marines, who could only serve on Reserve enlistments. The Reserve had grown by 21,929 percent from the founding 34 Marines.

Ayling was successful in his Reserve duties and helped the USMCR to fulfill its function of creating trained and ready

mobilized for a critical Active service posting in early 1918.

Activated from the Reserve on April 9, 1918, Ayling was assigned to the Naval Radio Station at New Brunswick, N.J. He assumed his first sergeant duties to administer and train the Marines of the station. The wireless transceiver station was the primary radio communication link between the United States and Europe throughout the war. The communications technology must have reminded Ayling of his time on *Olympia*.

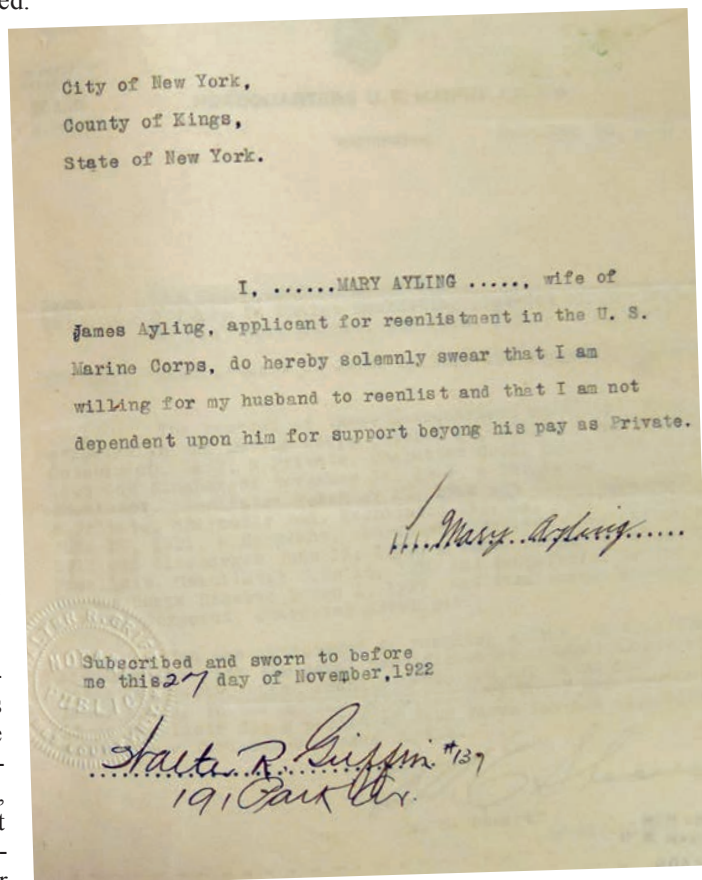
The war ended on Nov. 11, 1918, and the demobilizations began soon after. However, given the need for his experience and administration abilities, Ayling was kept on active service until July 21, 1919. Once demobilized, he was returned to the Eastern Reserve District in New York City but continued first sergeant duties at the Naval Radio Station in New Jersey as an attached Reservist.

Just after the war, Ayling met and married a single mother of two, Mary Cornwell, on Nov. 10, 1921. Mary, her son (Francis) and daughter (Anna), and Ayling would buy a home on Washington Avenue in Brooklyn to settle down. As the home was just a block away from the Brooklyn Naval Yard, the sights and sounds of service life were never far away.

By November 1922, all

Marine Reserves were demobilized; 90 percent of the Corps’ wartime strength had been discharged. As a highly seasoned, “salty” Marine, Ayling knew how he could continue to serve his adoptive country after the war. He provided strong leadership to his Reserve Marines and continued to set an “Excellent” rating example with his performance. However, with demobilization complete, potential recruits looked to civilian employment instead of the military, especially in the very slim budget years of the 1920s. During this time, drills were voluntary, and only the two-week annual training was paid. On Nov. 23, 1922, Ayling’s five-year Reserve enlistment ended. He would reenlist one last time on Dec. 1, 1922, to temporary active service for the Reserve at the Brooklyn Naval Yard. His wife Mary was required to provide her written consent and acknowledgment of the financial hardship and stresses of a military spouse for the reenlistment to proceed.

On March 1, 1923, after three months



Sgt Ayling’s wife, Mary, consenting to her husband’s reenlistment to the Marine Corps, Nov. 27, 1922.

Marines to support and augment wartime expansion of the Corps, which is similar to the Reserve’s primary directive today. From the beginning, the Marine Corps Reserve was fulfilling its intended purpose. The modern mandate clarifies the mission as preparation and readiness of Marines for wartime support of the active component, augmenting and reinforcing Active forces for employment across the spectrum of crisis and global engagement.

Receiving an “Excellent” performance rating in his Reserve status, 1stSgt Ayling served at Marine Barracks, New York City, throughout 1917. He assisted in recruitment, training and retaining Marines with prior wartime service and signing new recruits. The Eastern Reserve District kept Ayling as a recruiter, administrator and senior advisor until he was

of active service, by Ayling's request, he was returned to Inactive (Drilling) Status. Commandant of the Marine Corps, Lieutenant General John Lejeune, approved the request. Returning to civilian employment, Ayling assumed a position as a bank clerk.

The Marine Corps believed the Reserve had delivered very efficient and useful service during the war. Future conflicts would require similar contributions. Ayling understood the importance of the Reserve and remained one of the few to support its existence. Notwithstanding best efforts to retain combat-experienced Marines and recruit new members, by June 30, 1923, the entire Marine Corps Reserve would dwindle to a mere 579 Marines.

Public Law 512, passed by Congress in February 1925, reinvigorated the Marine Corps Reserve with greater organization, funding and status. Many senior officers and NCOs of World War II owed their continued service to the Reserve. With this solid footing, the Reserve would not only endure but develop into a true Reserve Component that would ably support the Marine Corps through World War II, Korea and Vietnam, and throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. At the Brooklyn Naval Yard, First Sergeant Ayling would continue his support and provide leadership, helping

to set the fledgling USMCR toward becoming a renowned organization.

Finally, on May 15, 1926, the 56-year-old James Ayling retired as a first sergeant from the Marine Corps Reserve after 30 years and 10 days of combined service in the active and Reserve components of the U.S. Marine Corps. General Lejeune wrote to Ayling for his retirement, "You have served your country long and faithfully, and your record is a credit to yourself and to the Marine Corps. This office extends a sincere wish that you may have every happiness in your well-earned retirement."

Ayling and his wife lived happily at their home in Brooklyn. To supplement his retirement pay, he rented rooms of the house. In 1943, James Ayling died of stomach cancer in New York City at the age of 73. He was provided full military honors in his funeral and burial. He was interned at Holy Cross Cemetery, Brooklyn, N.Y.

As one of the first Marines to join the Reserve before the "Great War," we can proudly call 1stSgt Ayling a Founding Reservist of the Marine Corps Reserve. Even with his brazen conduct as a young Marine, perhaps exactly because of his troubled record, Ayling represents a turn-of-the-century sea-service Marine. A young immigrant who went looking for

his place in the world often found himself in trouble but eventually proved himself through service and dedication. Ayling followed his path as a Marine to represent the U.S. in liberty ports around the world, maintained high standards of naval gunnery and military police, contributed to victory in naval battle at Santiago de Cuba, fought an amphibious landing at Vera Cruz and trained Marines and secured communications in World War I. Although, for the Marine Corps, his most outstanding achievement and legacy was to continue his duty and support the Marine Corps Reserve during a time of struggle and reformation as a component. All Reserve Marines can be proud of 1stSgt James Ayling as a founding member of the USMCR.

Author's bio: GySgt Brian Knowles serves as the communications strategy and operations chief for Marine Forces Reserve, Communication Strategy Office. He has served in the USMCR since 2001. His former historian duty stations include U.S. Africa Command and Marine Corps History Division. In his civilian employment, he works for the U.S. Air Force as Wing Historian, 434th Air Refueling Wing, Grissom Air Reserve Base in Indiana.



Are You Ready?



Angela Maness
Sr Vice Commandant
Sooner Detachment #559
Oklahoma City, OK



Laura Brown
Adjutant / Paymaster
Alamo Detachment #315
San Antonio, TX

Toys For Tots

Preserve Traditions

Young Marines

Funeral Honors

Color Guard

MCLMembershipCommittee@mcleague.org

SEA STORY OF THE MONTH

I Won't Do That Again

It was August 1966, and I was in boot camp during the worst time of the year, summer, for training at Parris Island. The nights were hot, and the days were hotter. The sand fleas and mosquitoes were part of the training as was explained to us by our drill instructors (DIs). I was assigned to 3rd Battalion's Platoon 3073, in one of the relatively new brick and mortar barracks. Our DIs were Sergeants McKinney and Woods and Staff Sergeants Moorer and Peavy. There were 100 recruits who represented a cross section of American youth. It was the height of the Vietnam War, and there was no doubt, according to our DIs, we were headed for Southeast Asia after our training.

Born in Scranton, Pa., and raised by a father who had experienced World War II, I was never exposed to guns or any instruments of death and/or destruction. I can't say that I enjoyed boot camp, but I can say that it was an experience that I did not take lightly. Unlike high school where I seldom paid attention to my teachers, I was focused on every bit of information that I thought would be of value in war.

We were at the rifle range and were being introduced to all the pistols, rifles and weapons that we were likely to need in combat including grenades. On this day we were seated on bleachers facing the instructors who were demonstrating the proper techniques for using grenades. They showed us the different types as well as how to arm and throw them. Most importantly, they showed us the

destructive power of live grenades by throwing them from behind cinder block walls. As we watched our DIs demonstrating these highly effective weapons, the instructor pulled the pin of the grenade he had in his hand and threw it into the bleachers where we

There was complete pandemonium as everyone scattered to try and avoid what we thought was going to be a disaster. I can't explain what was in my mind at that moment other than to pick up the grenade and throw it back at the instructors.

were seated. It landed right in front of me. There was complete pandemonium as everyone scattered to try and avoid what we thought was going to be a disaster. I can't explain what was in my mind at that moment other than to pick up the grenade and throw it back at the instructors.

After calm had returned to this unbelievable scenario, I was dragged out in front of the platoon and summarily physically and mentally abused for exhibiting a behavior that had not been Marine Corps approved and more importantly for potentially destroying Marine Corps property. I spent that night outside the barracks completing 10,000 squat thrusts counted by my fellow recruits and warned

that if I did not complete them by reveille, the entire platoon would be doing them in the heat of the day.

Sgt Daniel Ceccoli
USMC, 1966-1968
Boca Raton, Fla.

Pass and Review Could Have Gone Better

On Oct. 31, 1955, I participated in an inspection with retiring Lieutenant General Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller.

I smartly went to inspection arms as Chesty executed a left face staring me right in the eye. While I struggled with the bolt on my rifle, LtGen Puller said, "What's wrong, Marine?" My honest reply was, "Sir, this is stuck." LtGen Puller moved on and a captain came before me, opened the bolt and handed me back my rifle. He took my name and moved on.

I breathed a sigh of relief and thankfully I heard nothing more of my face-to-face encounter with Chesty.

Cpl Eugene Brooks
Akron, Ohio

Speed Made a Difference

In the fall of 1968, I was temporarily assigned duty as the commanding officer of Marine Corps Training Facility, Camp Fuji, Japan. Consisting of several thousand acres of maneuver area, Camp Fuji was used by both American Armed Forces and Japanese Self-Defense Forces. Originally it had been controlled by the Japanese Imperial Army, but after the end of World War II was managed by the Army, which turned over administrative responsibility to the Marine Corps in 1955. Prior to 1965, Marine units on Okinawa made extensive use of Camp Fuji which permitted large-scale exercises not feasible on

the limited areas available on their home base. While the area was still actively utilized by the Japanese Self-Defense Forces, Marine usage was practically nil once operations began in Vietnam.

Personnel at Camp Fuji consisted of a small number of Marines who supervised a contingent of Japanese nationals such as security guards, interpreters, secretaries, maintenance men, and telephone operators. At morning colors, the American and Japanese flags were raised while an audio tape of both countries' national anthems was played over the PA system. The Japanese anthem sounded strange to me, but I knew little of Japanese music.

Later I was invited to an event hosted by the commandant of the Japanese schools during which the Japanese national anthem was performed. It didn't sound like that played at Camp Fuji every morning at colors. When I returned, I asked the telephone operator to let me borrow the audio tape which she played each morning at colors. I took it to my quarters and played it on my own device. Old timers will recall that audio tapes could be recorded/played at different speeds. Higher speeds such as 7 1/2-inches per second (ips) provided greater fidelity but used more tape while a lower speed such as 3 3/4 ips gave lesser fidelity but conserved tape. It quickly became apparent as to why the Japanese anthem played each morning sounded strange. It had been recorded at 3 3/4 ips while the "Star Spangled Banner" had been recorded at 7 1/2 ips. At morning colors, the telephone operator played

the U.S. national anthem followed by the Japanese anthem but did not adjust the tape player to the different speed. We had been hearing the Japanese anthem each morning being played at twice the speed to which it had been recorded. I instructed the telephone operator hereafter to make the speed adjustment prior to playing the Japanese anthem. I don't know how long the tape had been played incorrectly or why a Japanese national had not complained about the abuse of their national anthem.

My tour at Camp Fuji lasted only a couple of months before I received orders to the MACV staff in Saigon.

Col Richard H. Stableford
USMC (Ret)
Dumfries, Va.

Me and Doon

I was a plane captain in VMA-212 from 1961 to 1963 at Kaneohe Bay Hawaii. In October 1962, VMA-212, along with the rest of MAG-13 and the 1st Marine Brigade, went on maneuvers to Dillingham Air Force Base in the northern part of the island. At Dillingham

we lived in eight-man tents with dirt floors which turned to mud when it rained. The heads were at the end of the company street and consisted of two piss tubes and a row of toilet seats, all out in the open exposed to the elements. When it rained, it rained in buckets which meant the company street became a sewer. Adding to the misery, the "guerillas" would pop into our tents in the middle of the night, weapons on full auto, and machine gun everybody. My buddy "Doon" and I decided we were going to do something about that. Doon was from Cincinnati. Nobody knew why, but he got the nickname from the cop character "Muldoon" on the old TV sitcom "Car 54, Where Are You." Doon was a funny guy. He talked so fast you couldn't understand what he was saying most of the time. I would say, "Doon, slow down, I can't understand you." He would say, "I'm not talking too fast, you're listening too slow."

One day Doon and I cooked up a plan. There was a hill with a lot of jungle-type foliage between our

tent and the head. This was the place the guerillas used for camouflage before attacking us. Our plan was to wait until late at night, stealthily crawl to the top of the hill and charge down the other side into their midst.

That night, after lights out, we became ninja warriors. We stealthily left

We started sliding. Rocks started falling around us. We rolled into each other, bouncing off trees, using vocabulary we learned in boot camp, until we landed on top of where the guerilla should have been.

the tent while the rest of the men were asleep. It was a dark night and we blended into the shadows.

When we got to the piss tubes, we went into a low crawl. Those of you with field experience can imagine what a low crawl would be like anywhere near a piss tube. We had to get on the other side of the hill so that we would be above what we thought was the guerilla staging area. We began pulling ourselves uphill, hand-to-tree, until we reached the top. The higher we got, the steeper it got. We encountered several obstacles. As an example, toilet paper, when wet, became attached to you. We reached the opposite side of the hill and paused to prepare for the final assault by removing the white streamers inadvertently picked up during our approach. Also, we needed to make sure our weapons were unclogged from the overflow. Then we heard it, a metallic sound at the base of

the hill. The guerillas were preparing to shoot up our tent. We started crawling downhill, but it grew steep. We started sliding. Rocks started falling around us. We rolled into each other, bouncing off trees, using vocabulary we learned in boot camp, until we landed on top of where the guerilla should have been. We beat around in the bushes for several minutes, yelling our war cries and bumping into coconut trees and each other until we managed to wake up the whole company. The guerilla was long gone.

At daybreak, we went back to investigate the suspected guerilla hideout from where the metallic sound originated and found a pile of C-ration cans—our squadron dump. Somebody had thrown an empty can on the dump just as we reached the top of the hill which made the metallic sound that brought us charging down the hill. We may not have captured a guerilla, but we were never attacked again after that night.

Midway through the exercise at Dillingham, we were called to morning muster and told to pack our seabags. We were going to war. Kennedy had announced a naval blockade of Cuba. Back on the Kaneohe flight line, our legal officer told us all to write our wills and send them home. Exciting times.

Cpl Norm Spilleth
USMC, 1960-1964
Minneapolis, Minn.



COURTESY OF CPL NORM SPILLETH

While on maneuvers at Dillingham Air Force Base in Hawaii, VMA-212, MAG-13 and the 1st Marine Brigade were housed in eight-man tents and had to contend with flooding rain.

Do you have any interesting stories 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 membership for the "Sea Story of the Month." 🦁

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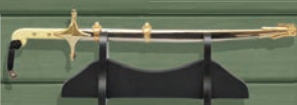


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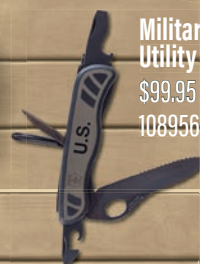
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Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps TROY E. BLACK: “Mission First, Marines Always”



SGT VICTORIA ROSS, USMC

SgtMaj Black speaks to lieutenants at The Basic School at MCB Quantico, Va., Nov. 1. Throughout his tenure, he's enjoyed the opportunity to visit Marines at schools and units across the Corps.

By Sara W. Bock

As the Marine Corps continues to modernize and reshape the force in preparation for the future fight, Sergeant Major Troy E. Black, the 19th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, describes the 2 ½ years he's served thus far as the senior enlisted advisor to the Commandant as “a period of innovation and change.” But the seasoned combat veteran—an infantryman by trade—refuses to lose sight of what he believes is the Corps’ most valuable asset: and it isn’t shiny new equipment.

“We have a tendency to think of re-

sources and innovation and modernization in terms of ‘things.’ You hear a lot about ‘5th-gen aircraft.’ You hear ‘shipbuilding.’ You hear ‘weapon systems.’ These are things,” said Black. “I would offer that the most important ‘thing’ is the individual Marine ... it’s really all about people. Mission first, Marines always,” he added unequivocally.

During an exclusive interview with *Leatherneck* at his office in the Pentagon, Aug. 3, Black, a self-described “uber-optimist,” revisited this sentiment numerous times, taking it even further to include Marine families, who he says are part of the “fiber” of the Corps. He spoke at

length about the myriad challenges that he and General David H. Berger, the 38th Commandant of the Marine Corps, have faced since July 2019, when Gen Berger took command of the Corps and Black assumed his post. But he’s quick to point out that while the events of the past two years have been unique, their predecessors all faced various hurdles that tested their mettle. “We’re on number four or five right now,” Black said as he listed off the various circumstances that have arisen on their watch.

From a global pandemic to social unrest, a contentious election season, a change in administration and the official end to the 20-year war in Afghanistan—the latter of which hadn’t occurred at the time of our interview, but we discussed over the phone in October—Black is midway through his tenure and appears to have taken these challenges in stride.

It becomes clear as Black talks about leadership in the era of COVID-19, which he believes “restricts training and innovation ... and being around people in groups where you can interact and actually innovate and move the force forward,” that he’s the ideal sort of senior enlisted leader the Corps needs during these turbulent, largely unprecedented times. He comes across as levelheaded and seemingly unfazed by what he calls “the churn” of the job, while appearing disinterested in any of the fringe benefits his post affords him.

From his position in support of the Commandant, Black has had an up-close view of the threat that COVID-19 posed to the Corps’ readiness and continued modernization, as well as a hand in ensuring that the Marine Corps remained

From a global pandemic to social unrest, a contentious election season, a change in administration and the official end to the 20-year war in Afghanistan ... Black is midway through his tenure and appears to have taken these challenges in stride.



SGT MICHELE HUNT, USMC

While serving as the battalion sergeant major with Combat Logistics Battalion 5, 1st Marine Logistics Group (Forward), SgtMaj Black, left, assisted LtCol Robert Meade in casing the battalion colors at Camp Dwyer, Afghanistan, in July 2012.



SgtMaj Black visits with Marines at Weapons Field Training Battalion, MCB Quantico, Va., in October 2019. The time he spends with junior Marines, he says, gives him hope for the future of the Corps. (Photo by Sgt Kelly L. Timney, USMC)

“The Marine Corps is the most adaptive force we have in the United States.

Last summer, I MEF, in the midst of all of the churn of COVID protocols in particular, deployed and returned 9,000 Marines. The mission didn’t stop—and therefore the training didn’t stop. And that’s all on junior leaders.”

ready at a moment’s notice: “Our adversary didn’t slow down, they didn’t stop doing things—nor can we ... national defense doesn’t stop because of COVID,” Black said.

“The Marine Corps is the most adaptive force we have in the United States,” Black said with resolve. “Last summer, I MEF [Marine Expeditionary Force], in the midst of all of the churn of COVID protocols in particular, deployed and returned 9,000 Marines. The mission didn’t stop—and therefore the training didn’t stop. And that’s all on junior leaders. You want inspiration? It’s not us up here with fancy chevrons and stars on our collars ... I’m inspired every day when I see it. Every day. It’s the joy of the job.”

And while Black draws his own inspiration from watching young Marines take on leadership roles, he recognizes that there’s a certain inspirational value associated with the post he holds as well as a sacred responsibility.

“Millions have worn the cloth: only 19 have ever gotten there,” he said of the Corps’ senior enlisted billet. “It’s good for everybody else to see the different chevron and the pomp and circumstance—that’s powerful. But for those who are in the seat, there is work to be done.”

After 33 years of service to country and Corps, Black hasn’t lost sight of where he



SGT KELLY L. TIMNEY, USMC

During a tour of Marine Helicopter Squadron 1, SgtMaj Black shakes hands with a Marine at MCB Quantico, Va., Oct. 9, 2019.

came from and often calls to mind his own years as a junior Marine when he reflects on how the young Marines of today will lead the Corps of the future.

“I think sometimes we believe from generation to generation, ‘Oh, these generations aren’t as good.’ I can’t imagine what someone thought of me when I was Lance Corporal Black. ‘Oh, you guys

aren’t going to be able to do anything,’ and a year later we’re in Desert Storm. ‘You can’t make it,’ and then we’re in 20 years at war,” he said.

Having participated in the U.S. invasion of Panama in 1989, Operation Desert Storm/Desert Shield in 1990, and numerous combat deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, Black’s service



SGT VICTORIA ROSS, USMC

SgtMaj Black takes a close look at the BRU-41/A Improved Multiple Ejector Rack with the help of LCpl Grace Wagner, left, during a tour of the Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron (MAL5) 31 ordnance department at Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, S.C., July 21, 2020.



USMC

SgtMaj Black spends time in the field with Marines at The Basic School, MCB Quantico, Va., Sept. 10, 2020.



USMC

During a visit to MCRD San Diego, Calif., in February, SgtMaj Black observes recruits doing abdominal crunches. As the Corps prepares to abandon the crunch and transition to a timed plank for the annual PFT, Black emphasizes the importance of reevaluating the status quo to determine if there's a "better way."

record is brimming with expertise, yet he recognizes that today's young Marines don't yet have the wealth of combat experience as those of recent decades past. But, he says, that doesn't mean they won't rise to the occasion when their nation calls.

"They know one thing—they know the non-negotiables," Black said of junior Marines, referring to his memo that was published in *Leatherneck* and *Marine Corps Gazette* in January of this year. His "non-negotiables": core values; discipline and good order; professional military education and professional and personal development; physicality and expeditionary mindset; training for the purpose of warfighting; history, tradition and protocol; leadership and leadership development; and drill and ceremony, are, in his words, resolute and fundamental to the identity and success of the Corps "regardless of the battles being fought or the generation of Marines fighting them."

And while the Marine Corps' warfighting doctrine is undergoing a period of drastic change, Black emphasizes that

these "non-negotiables" will remain constant.

"We locate, we close with, we fight, we train, we win, but we always teach Marines to say, 'OK, that sounds good—is there a better way?' Always," said Black. "That's not a new thing. The Commandant is harnessing the fact that that's just part of the nature of being a Marine ... that doesn't mean cut away our foundation of who we are as Marines, as a disciplined force."

This interwar period, Black insists, is an opportunity to hit the "reset" button, innovate and retrain the force in preparation for the next conflict. And it's no different, he says, than other similar periods throughout the Corps' history.

"We re-baseline ourselves, and what we come to find out is the things that made us successful on Sept. 12 of 2001, the day after 9/11, are the very same things that made us successful 15-plus years after. What are those things? It's the non-negotiables," Black said.

"We're in an adaptive period, which is exceptional, because that's where the

Marine Corps always finds itself in these interwar periods: adapting to the next fight while maintaining the lessons learned throughout history," he added.

In the weeks following our sit-down interview, all eyes were on Afghanistan as the U.S. pulled its last remaining troops from the country and the Taliban swiftly took control. Marines with the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit and Task Force 51/5 supported evacuation operations at the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul, and 11 Marines and one Navy corpsman were among the 13 U.S. servicemembers killed when a suicide bomber attacked the airport's Abbey Gate, Aug. 26.

On Oct. 18, during a phone call with *Leatherneck*, Black had a message for all those who had served in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and subsequent operations in Afghanistan after combat operations ended in 2014, particularly those who may have felt like their service and sacrifice were in vain.

"Great job," Black said. "I've only seen the best out of Marines in that

Below: While visiting the Armed Forces Retirement Home in Washington, D.C., in 2019, SgtMaj Black chats with a retired Marine resident.

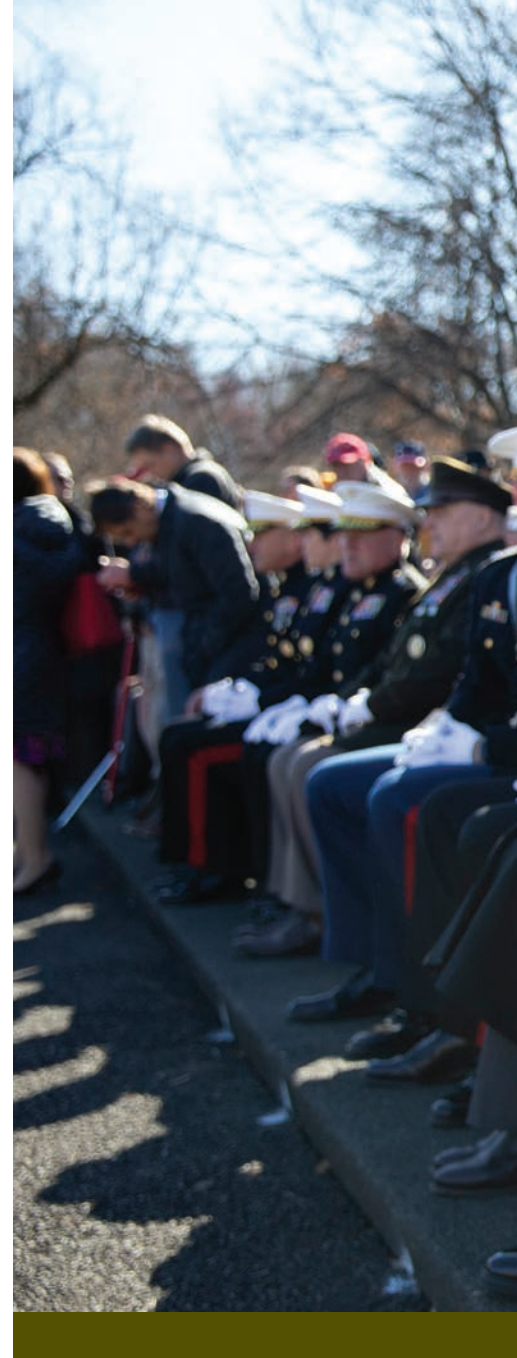


SGT KELLY L. TIMNEY, USMC



SGT VICTORIA ROSS, USMC

SgtMaj Black, center, visits with SgtMaj Micheal P. Barrett, USMC (Ret), 17th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps; SgtMaj Alford L. McMichael, USMC (Ret), 14th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps; SgtMaj John L. Estrada, USMC (Ret), 15th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps; and SgtMaj Ronald L. Green, USMC (Ret), 18th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, at the Home of the Commandants, Marine Barracks Washington, D.C., in August.



environment ... the most impactful tour of my career was in Afghanistan in an infantry battalion, and just seeing those phenomenal things those Marines, those Sailors and their leaders there did. I'm impressed by memories of that experience every single day. I could go on and on, but at the end of the day, I don't think Marines should ever feel as if our time was wasted there."

Black is laser focused on the future. As Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, he

Black is laser focused on the future. As Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, he has continually pushed for enhanced professional military education (PME) opportunities for enlisted Marines. ... He sees these opportunities as crucial to equipping the enlisted force to take on more independence and responsibility at lower levels.



USMC

has continually pushed for enhanced professional military education (PME) opportunities for enlisted Marines, ones that are centered on “the institution, our policies, practices, our warfighting methodology.” He sees these opportunities as crucial to equipping the enlisted force to take on more independence and responsibility at lower levels as the Corps shifts its focus to expeditionary advanced base operations (EABO) in accordance with the Commandant’s Force Design 2030.

“How we develop the enlisted force is critical to how we’re going to fight in the future,” said Black. “By the way, fighting in the future is fighting today. In the time we’ll have this interview, there are Marines somewhere that are engaged with the enemy, an adversary. Whether it’s in cyber, whether it’s on the ground, whether it’s through a theater security cooperation

... we are always in competition, we are always in conflict somewhere.”

He points out that from day one of boot camp, Marine recruits are given leadership positions within their platoons as guides and squad leaders. “You’re in charge day one. Yesterday you had long hair. Today you have no hair. You’re in charge. And we build that trust continuum from day one of recruit training,” said Black, who previously served as a drill instructor at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., and later as an instructor at DI School.

Recently, while on official travel, Black ran into a group of Marine Corps poolees in an airport in Texas, headed for recruit training. One of the poolees was in charge of the others without any Marine recruiters present.

“They weren’t doing things they weren’t

SgtMaj Black and his wife, retired Marine 1stSgt Stacie Black, attend a wreath laying ceremony at the Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington, Va., commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Iwo Jima, Feb. 27, 2020.

supposed to do, they were in line, they had their paperwork, and it was a poolee getting other poolees on the plane. That’s not even a PFC or lance corporal. That’s a poolee,” said Black of his observations that day. “So absolutely it’s about the junior Marine because those junior Marines become sergeants major, master gunnery sergeants and general officers sometimes. You’ve got to start somewhere.”

When asked what his number one concern is regarding today’s Marines, Black didn’t hesitate for a second before replying, “Mental health.” He’s taken a



PFC ALLEN SANDERS, USMC

From the left, Gen Berger, Donna Berger, SgtMaj Black, retired 1stSgt Stacie Black, SgtMaj Green and Andrea Green proceed down “Center Walk” at Marine Barracks Washington, D.C., at the Friday Evening Parade, July 26, 2019, the day Black assumed the post of Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps.

keen interest in human performance and what he refers to as the five “domains” of fitness: behavioral, mental, spiritual, social and physical. “All of those things affect mental health,” he said. Black expressed his gratitude to Gen Berger for tasking him with sponsoring a study on human performance and the resources and support the Marine Corps provides and should provide going forward—the results of which are expected soon.

“That one’s probably the one that’s at the forefront of my drive right now,” Black said.

“Being able to have a strategy to bring those things together and focus on you as the individual, so that you are part of the ‘team’ and the team collectively performs better, is why we win on the battlefield.”

Continuing the conversation regarding mental health, Black expressed his concerns about the lasting effects of the isolation associated with COVID-19 protocols, particularly in the early stages of the pandemic.

“One of the most consistent aspects of suicidal behaviors, whether it’s ideations,

attempts or actual suicide is isolation,” Black said. “Stay away from people, cover your face, isolate, communicate through social media, which we know for a fact can have damaging effects ... all those things are the only options in a fully restrictive COVID environment.”

Black makes it clear that he’s not debating the protocols, but that he’d be remiss not to take seriously the effects they’ve had on Marines and their families. He often thinks about family members feeling more isolated during deployments; young recruits who arrive at boot camp and have lacked social interaction over the last year-and-a-half; and kids, including his own, who have missed out on the traditional school experience.

When we followed up with Black during the October phone call, the Marine Corps, by order of the Department of Defense, was in the process of enforcing its mandate that all servicemembers become fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Reports suggested that the Corps lagged behind the other service branches in percentage of troops vaccinated.

“It’s been FDA approved just like every other vaccine,” Black said. “There are some nations that won’t allow us to come and provide us the ability to do our national security mission because we can’t even get into their countries now unless we’re vaccinated. It’s a 100 percent readiness issue. No politics involved in this.”

What keeps him going, day after day, amid the challenges of the job? Black cracks a smile and jokes that his staff would answer for him: “Coffee.” But his tone quickly changes to sincere.

“What keeps me going is I won’t let your Marines down,” Black said. “I don’t think it’s a sense of thinking that in four years all of ‘this’ has to be achieved. There’s absolutely no way to do that, otherwise you’ll fizzle out like a spark. There is an expectation that senior leaders in our Marine Corps are doing things that are in the best interest of the most junior Marines. I think what keeps me invested is that.”

Black also credits his family numerous times throughout our interview, often

“What keeps me going is I won’t let your Marines down. ... There is an expectation that senior leaders in our Marine Corps are doing things that are in the best interest of the most junior Marines. I think what keeps me invested is that.”



SGT VICTORIA ROSS, USMC

In his office in the Pentagon, SgtMaj Black looks at a photograph he took in Sangin, Afghanistan, on July 26, 2010, which he says was his “best day” in the Marine Corps.



SGT VICTORIA ROSS, USMC

SgtMaj Black speaks to leathernecks at Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 314, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., during his visit with 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing units, Feb. 11.

gesturing toward the wall beside his desk, which is lined with photos of his wife, retired Marine First Sergeant Stacie Black, and their four children. The couple met while both were drill instructors at Parris Island and were married in 2002. For his two children who are still living at home, the opportunity to live in the official residence at Marine Barracks Washington, D.C., is a unique one, Black says.

There’s another photo in his office he takes down off the wall and brings over to the conference table. He took the photo, he says, on July 26, 2010, in the green zone of Sangin, a town in Afghanistan’s Helmand Province, while serving as the sergeant major of 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment. The photo depicts his battalion commander sitting alongside a company commander—a Marine captain—who is talking to his squad leaders over the radio, directing the fight.

“You can see the look on their faces, there are rounds inbound now, there’s lead in the air, and a battalion commander [is] allowing a subordinate commander to do his job,” said Black, motioning toward the individuals in the photo. “He’s directing that fight, and beside him is the battalion commander, there to support if necessary. That’s leadership.”

That day, Black says, was his “best day” in the Marine Corps. The rifle company he’s referring to was about a week into an operation that ultimately cut a path from the desert to the Helmand River, he recalls, something that had not been accomplished by those who had previously been operating in that area.

“Anything you can think of that can occur in 5 kilometers. I saw Marines telling jokes, Marines eating chow, lieutenant interacting in a KLE [key leadership engagement] with the local leader,” said Black. “I’ve been in the infantry my whole career, I’m an infantryman by trade. That day was probably the most intense combat I’ve been in ... when you want to see the machine work, it worked on that day. Everything. Combined arms, small unit leadership, initiative, resupply, air support.”

He makes no mention of it during our interview, but it was during that same deployment that Black earned a Bronze Star with Combat “V” device. On one of



SGT VICTORIA ROSS, USMC

Black, right, and his wife, Stacie, host the Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Ramon Colon-Lopez, USAF, and his wife, Janet, at the Friday Evening Parade at Marine Barracks Washington, D.C., Aug. 7, 2020.

dozens of missions he participated in, an improvised explosive device (IED) blast killed one of his Marines. According to his award citation, Black disregarded his own safety and ran across hundreds of yards of “unswept territory” to retrieve him, refusing to leave his brother-in-arms behind.

As we get into a conversation about the state of recruiting and retention, it’s apparent that Black still maintains the same mindset that drove him to recover that fallen Marine: each individual is valuable to the Corps.

“If the data is correct, fewer and fewer individuals in society qualify to enter service,” said Black straightforwardly. “If that’s true, and we maintain bringing in about 30,000 Marines a year, then what we have we have got to retain more of.”

He strongly believes that the process of recruiting and the process of retaining should not be viewed as separate entities. “They are the same thing,” he said.

“Every bit of time, education, training, learning, every bit of blood, sweat and tears from that individual is an investment,” Black added. “At the end of that four-year investment, the millions of dollars invested in that individual is not a commodity that you can just say, ‘OK, we’ll replace you with a PFC.’”

He points out that the Marine Corps has never in its history missed its recruiting goal, but retention is more of a challenge when the economy is strong and the civilian job market is likely to entice some Marines to leave active duty.

“If we don’t invest in retaining that Marine, they will definitely take all that experience, all that training, education and investment and use it outside. So, the thought that the lieutenant getting augmented is ‘just a lieutenant’ or that corporal that’s fighting for reenlistment is ‘just a corporal’—well, corporate America wants the lieutenant and wants the corporal ... we have to prioritize and talk about that more when we talk about retention,” Black said.

Black cites ongoing concerns about social media behavior among Marines and the relative lack of accountability involved when individuals are hiding behind a computer screen.

“Like everything else, if you want to solve a problem, you throw training at it, you throw leadership at it, you throw time at it. You throw all these things at it to at least educate the force on what’s right and what’s wrong. I don’t think anybody believes it’s right to say and do some of the things that they do on social media, whether they’re in uniform or out,” he

said with candor. “There’s a maximum effort campaign to educate the force on ‘you probably shouldn’t do that.’”

Overall, Black’s outlook on the current state of the Marine Corps is overwhelmingly positive. In fact, “exceptional” is the word he uses.

He alluded to the forthcoming change to the Corps’ annual physical fitness test (PFT), in which timed planks will replace the abdominal crunch. It’s yet another instance, he says, of examining the status quo and determining if there’s a better way—particularly one that is less likely to cause lower back problems, which he said is especially of concern for infantry Marines.

“If you see anybody in the modern fitness world, you don’t see anybody doing a crunch or a sit-up,” said Black. “If there’s better, let’s do better ... if we find that there are better ways to measure fitness then we will do things differently in order to develop that fitness.”

When asked about the progress that’s been made since formerly closed combat arms military occupational specialties were opened to female Marines, as well as about female recruits now training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego rather than only at Parris Island, Black treated it as a non-issue.

“How well are they doing? They’re Marines. There’s a standard—follow the standard,” Black said succinctly. “Recruits are recruits, regardless of gender, and they are coming in knowing nothing about the Marine Corps and they all leave being Marines ... Training day one’s training day one, no matter what squad bay you’re in,” he added.

At the end of the day, Black is energized by the enthusiasm he sees when he visits with Marines across the fleet. They’re receptive to the Commandant’s push for innovation and, despite continued concerns about the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, seem excited to follow the Commandant’s directive to “move faster.”

“Every group we stand in front of, I see morale, I see motivation, I see esprit de corps, I see Marines working to be as proficient as they can at their jobs, and I see, overwhelmingly, a highly disciplined force,” Black said, adding with confidence: “I’d be a fool to think that there’s not hope for the future.” 🇺🇸

“Like everything else, if you want to solve a problem, you throw training at it, you throw leadership at it, you throw time at it. You throw all these things at it to at least educate the force on what’s right and what’s wrong.”

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MARINE CORPS RECRUIT DEPOT SAN DIEGO

The Marine Corps Association and the following companies would like to extend congratulations to Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego on their 100th anniversary.



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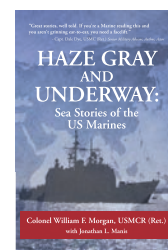
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Marine Corps “Gets Smart” on AI

Artificial intelligence (AI) may soon be a reality for the Marine Corps: The technology has the potential to be a game-changer for the recruitment and retention of highly talented Marines.

Senior Marine leaders from Marine Corps Recruiting Command and Manpower and Reserve Affairs visited the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory in Columbia, Md., Sept. 22, to learn about AI programs.

“As a service, we continue to research and seek out opportunities to meet the Commandant’s Force Design for 2030,” said Brigadier General Ahmed T. Williamson, Director, Manpower Plans and Policy Division. “We are honored to have this opportunity to get an inside look at how analytics and technology of artificial intelligence can better support our initiatives of recruiting and retaining talented Marines.”

The rapid advancement of powerful AI technology has the potential to create a highly interconnected presence, which Marine Corps leaders could use as a tool to enhance recruiting and retention efforts.

“Imagine a non-invasive interface that allows Marines to communicate with machines at the speed of thought to solve complex problems, facilitate mutual learning and optimize infinite amounts of data through natural language processing, human machine interfaces and artificial intelligence,” said Dan Yaroslaski, a tech-

nical and project manager with the laboratory’s Tactical Intelligence Systems Group. “We are trying to go beyond imagining this and move toward making it a reality.”

General AI uses machine learning and data sets to help identify human elements, talents and propensity for manpower management. AI could allow the Marine Corps to advance its capabilities to engage and manage the current force as well as identify talented prospects.

Laboratory staff at Johns Hopkins demonstrated additional intelligent system programs that might improve the Corps’ future talent management. These programs have the capability to assist the recruiting force by focusing its prospecting efforts and helping accelerate the transformation process of enlisted recruits and officer candidates.

“Machine learning and artificial intelligence can assist recruiters in finding, attracting and recruiting applicants who demonstrate the talent attributes we seek above the minimal mental, moral and physical requirements for enlistment. The Marine Corps is building a more mature, more capable and more resilient force needed to succeed in competition against adversaries today and on the complex future battlefields of tomorrow,” said Major General Jason Q. Bohm, the commanding general of Marine Corps Recruiting Command.

Sgt Kenny Gomez, USMC

Female Infantry Marine: “It’s Self-Rewarding”

“Fire!”

“Correction, right 100, drop 200.”

“Hanging on six charge two.”

“Gun six half load.”

“Fire!”

Another round hits. She stands by for the forward observer to find any directive discrepancies and call over the radio with the newly corrected data. The radio operator then repeats the corrective target points to the fire direction center (FDC).

Within milliseconds of hearing the call, her head shoots down toward the M16 plotting board. Her hand is fast at work plotting the data, using a protractor and pencil. She has the new points ready and yells out to the FDC chief, who then communicates to the gun line. She hears the commands called and the impact of the mortar and waits eagerly for the next set of data to plot.

Lance Corporal Claudia Murphy, the first female mortarman to serve in Battalion Landing Team 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, enlisted and joined the infantry community after the ban on women serving in combat arms roles was phased out between 2013 and 2016.

“I think my drive comes from wanting to prove to myself that I could do it,” said Murphy. “I want to be real, open and honest because it is tough, but anyone can do it, despite what others may think. We’re just Marines in the infantry.”

Murphy enlisted in the Corps with an open contract, but after talking with her drill instructor at boot camp, she discovered her desire to be an infantry Marine.

“If I was going to join the military, I was going to join the hardest branch I could,” Murphy said. “On top of that, I thought, ‘Why not just go all the way and join the infantry?’ I said to myself, ‘I think I can do it.’ So I did.”

As a mortarman with the FDC, Murphy is responsible for plotting new data points, which are then communicated to the gun line. It’s a high tempo, fast-paced job and she continues to prove that she’s up to the task.

“As more women join the infantry, it’s becoming more normalized,” Murphy said. “Especially with some units, they aren’t exposed to it yet; it’s still very new and different. There’s a cultural norm and it’s actively changing. They say we’re breaking barriers, but at the end of the day



BGen Ahmed Williamson, MajGen Jason Bohm and SgtMaj Adan Moreno listen to a presentation on Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence from staff members with Johns Hopkins University’s Applied Physics Laboratory in Laurel, Md., Sept. 22. Marine Corps leaders are researching modernization efforts to support the Corps’ Force Design initiatives of recruiting and retaining talented Marines.

SGT KENNY GOMEZ, USMC



LCpl Claudia Murphy, the first female mortarman to serve with BLT 3/5, 31st MEU, conducts a deck shoot aboard USS America (LHA-6), in the Pacific Ocean, July 14. (Photo by Cpl Karis Mattingly, USMC)



LCpl Claudia Murphy, right, speaks with her team leader prior to conducting a deck shoot aboard USS America (LHA-6) in the Pacific Ocean, July 14.

we're just trying to do what everyone else is doing. I am just trying to do my job."

Murphy explained that since childhood, she's always strived to achieve things considered "challenging" and "tough." It wasn't about proving anything to others—it was for herself. She continued to do so as a Marine, and she calls her decision to join the infantry "self-rewarding."

"I wouldn't change my decision, and I would do it again. I would make the same decision as I did the day I decided to join the infantry. I wouldn't be who I am today without it," she said.

Murphy is currently attached to BLT 3/5 with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit aboard USS America (LHA-6).

Cpl Karis Mattingly, USMC

Marines 3D Print, Test Part For Mine-Clearing Rocket Motor

The Marine Corps continues to leverage additive manufacturing to benefit the warfighter.

This summer, the program manager for ammunition, frequently referred to as "PM Ammo," at Marine Corps Systems Command 3D printed a headcap for a rocket motor used to detonate an M58 Mine Clearing Line Charge (MICLIC). The MICLIC is a rocket-projected explosive line charge that provides a demining capability for Marines.

"The process of 3D printing allows Marines to create a physical object from a digital design," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Justin Trejo, a project officer with PM Ammo, MCSC. "We essentially

CPL KARIS MATTINGLY, USMC



TONYA SMITH

CWO-2 Justin Trejo, a project officer with PM Ammo, MCSC, displays a 3D-printed headcap for a rocket motor used to employ an M58 MICLIC at MCB Quantico, Va., July 21. MCSC successfully developed and tested the headcap to support the Marine Corps' mine-clearing missions.

3D printing is the next generation of the Marine Corps."

Trejo believes additive manufacturing aligns with the vision of the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General David H. Berger, in that 3D printing helps increase Marines' battlefield efficiency. Trejo said the manufacturing method enables the warfighter to be "lighter and faster," critical attributes when supporting various missions.

"We're able to create equipment parts and other assets for whatever particular mission we're engaged in," said Trejo. "This 3D-printed headcap represents the Marine Corps going above and beyond to support our Marines."

Matt Gonzales

created a 3D-printed product and incorporated it into a highly explosive system."

Marines use the MICLIC to clear paths through minefields and other obstacles on the battlefield. However, traditional manufacturing methods for creating the headcap can be timely and costly, said Trejo. MCSC wanted to identify a more efficient method for producing the part. PM Ammo found the answer to this dilemma in additive manufacturing.

In 2019, PM Ammo began exploring alternative solutions for manufacturing the headcap. After many hours of research as well as developing and testing a prototype headcap, the team collaborated with Naval Surface Warfare Center (NSWC) Corona Division to produce a 3D-printed version.

Earlier this year, NSWC Corona produced the 3D-printed, stainless steel solution. A month later, PM Ammo representatives assessed the 3D product during a test event at Yuma Proving Ground in Yuma, Ariz. The evaluation involved launching the rocket motor to detonate the mine-clearing line charge.

Trejo said the event went flawlessly.

"The rocket motor fired off just as intended and the line charge detonated as it is supposed to, which was a significant moment for us," said Trejo. "In the future, we'd like to attempt to 3D print the headcap with its nozzles attached."

He stressed the significance of the successful test event because it further confirmed the effectiveness of 3D printing, which has been growing in popularity within the Department of Defense.

Additive manufacturing provides Marines with a streamlined solution to meet their needs. In 2019, MCSC established its Additive Manufacturing Operations Cell (AMOC) to serve as a 24/7 help desk for Marines who need assistance with

3D printing and other sustainment and manufacturing solutions.

AMOC is available to answer questions, field requests for prints and fully vet any part that requires fabrication by a Marine organization. The team of skilled Marines and civilians has employed additive manufacturing to develop everything from innovative maintenance tools to a reinforced concrete bridge.

Caleb Hughes, an engineer with MCSC's PM Ammo who supported the Yuma testing event, said 3D printing saves the Marine Corps time and money.

"The previous process of traditional manufacturing is outdated, while 3D printing is a more modern manufacturing technique," said Hughes. "I truly believe

How to Save a Life: Marines Learn Tactical Combat Casualty Care

On Sept. 8, Marines with 9th Engineer Support Battalion (ESB), 3rd Marine Logistics Group listened intently to instructors during a Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC) course at Camp Hansen, Okinawa, Japan. TCCC is the first step in a trauma life support situation to reduce preventable deaths while operating in a forward-deployed environment. Upon finishing the course,



LCPL COURTNEY ROBERTSON, USMC

Sgt Alexander Koenke, an EOD technician with EOD Co, 9th ESB, 3rd MLG, practices TCCC on a simulated casualty at Camp Hansen, Okinawa, Japan, Sept. 9. The battalion is conducting TCCC courses in order to allow more Marines to become certified in combat lifesaving.



LCPL COURTNEY ROBERTSON, USMC

HM3 Justin Harvey, a TCCC instructor with 9th ESB, 3rd MLG, instructs Marines on providing proper TCCC on a simulated casualty at Camp Hansen, Okinawa, Japan, on Sept. 9.

Marines become certified in combat lifesaving.

In the early 1990s, TCCC was introduced as a Naval Special Warfare biomedical project and was used by Navy SEALs, Army Rangers and Air Force Paratroopers. The project focused on improving the ability of special operators to provide timely care when higher echelon medical support is not immediately available. Studies showed that 90 percent of combat deaths happened before the individual reached a treatment facility. The majority of these deaths were from extremity hemorrhages or “bleeding out.” This in turn proved that tourniquets are one of the most effective death-preventing tactical treatments.

“Why is this course important to our mission and the Marine Corps Expedi-

tionary Advanced Base Operation concept?” asked Lieutenant Colonel Marcus Gillett, the battalion commander of 9th ESB, to the group of Marines. “If ‘doc’ becomes the casualty, who in turn is going to continue to provide aid to him and to the potential Marines to the left and right of you? The more Marines who can provide life-saving aid enables us to be ready for combat.”

Gillett plans for every Marine in the battalion to participate in the TCCC course, which is led by the battalion’s corpsmen.

“Realistically, the ratio between Marines to corpsmen is about 100-to-1. The more Marines that are educated, the more lives could be saved on the battlefield,” said Hospital Corpsman Third Class Anthony Nail. “I also know I am not going

to have my entire medical team with me, so if I go down, I want to feel confident that my Marines will know what to do.”

Nail and fellow corpsman HM3 Justin Harvey conducted the first iteration of the TCCC courses during the battalion’s mass training. They worked together to make the curriculum appropriate for each style of learning and to make sure each Marine was given the tools to properly conduct lifesaving tasks. The course involved two days of formal learning in a classroom setting, with practical applications during the lessons.

Harvey and Nail spent plenty of time going over the useful mnemonic device “MARCH PAWS,” a checklist to follow during the tactical field care and evacuation portion of TCCC. MARCH PAWS stands for massive hemorrhaging, airway, respiratory, circulation, head, pain, antibiotic, wounds, splint.

“TCCC is the most important role in traumatic medical care—without effective TCCC, our wounded have no chance to make it to the next echelon of care. TCCC is the first responders, and they are the first to spot the injuries and to treat them accordingly,” Harvey said. “I want to trust and know that from what I teach, they are going to be able to be a first responder effectively and save lives.”

On top of in-class instruction, Marines were led to a training facility where they practiced on lifelike and anatomically correct simulation dummies. The dummies can have injuries ranging from gunshot to burn wounds to loss of entire limbs. They also “bleed” and even have the ability to “talk” to the trainees and express pain.

While the TCCC course is focused on timely medical care on the battlefield, it also teaches useful skills that can be employed in everyday life.

Sergeant Alexander Koenke, an explosive ordnance disposal technician with Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company, 9th ESB, was a returning TCCC student in the September course. He participated in a combat lifesaver course in 2016 and opted to take the TCCC as a refresher.

“There is a lot more than just the added confidence on the battlefield to take away from TCCC. In life you’re going to run into situations outside of the Marine Corps where people are going to get hurt,” Koenke said. “For example, I once ran into a motorcycle accident, and the guy had a pretty bad traumatic amputation to his leg. I had to apply the skills I learned in TCCC in 2016 and put on a tourniquet. You just never know when you’re going to find yourself being the first responder for someone in need.”

LCpl Courtney Robertson, USMC





Stephen Canty, back row, third from left, deployed to Afghanistan with Charlie Co, 1st Bn, 6th Marines. He interviewed his fellow leathernecks for a documentary, *“Once a Marine.”* The film focuses on what it’s like to go to war and then transition to civilian life when the deployment ends. This is Canty’s squad, *“Squad Awesome,”* after a patrol in Marjah during the summer of 2010.

“Once a Marine”

Documentary Focuses on What it Means To Go to War

By William Treuting

“Once a Marine, always a Marine!” This famous slogan encompasses how the values and ethos of the Marine Corps remain with the Marine—even after being discharged from active-duty service. For many Marines, there are aspects of their service which remain ingrained within their daily lives: the memories and experiences of war. *“Once a Marine,”* a documentary directed, produced, and filmed by Stephen Canty, a Marine who served two tours in Afghanistan with “Charlie” Company, 1st Battalion, 6th Marines, depicts how the shadow of war remains omnipresent in the lives of his fellow Marines following their return from a combat deployment. The film is the culmination of a seven-

year effort to open a dialogue between veterans, their friends and families, as well as the civilian community as to what it means to go to war and the long-term effects war has on veterans.

In many military documentary films featuring combat veterans, there is often a disconnect between the person behind the camera and the person being interviewed: the person behind the camera is trying to extract experiences which he will never truly understand, while the interviewee is trying to describe experiences the cameraman cannot comprehend. *“Once a Marine”* is different. The combat footage featured in the documentary was filmed exclusively by members of Charlie Co, the interviewees include men from Canty’s own unit as well as the mother of a fellow Marine, and the veil between the

interviewer and interviewee is lifted—they are talking to one of their own, someone who endured their experiences with them. While war footage is featured prominently in the film, Canty endeavors to reveal an aspect of war that every combat veteran must overcome: coming home.

Through the array of combat and funeral footage, stories of trauma, and the unforgiving truth of these Marines’ experiences, *“Once a Marine”* does not solicit the viewer’s pity; rather, it forces the audience to do what any person should do when speaking to veterans (let alone anyone who has experienced trauma) about their experiences: listen and learn. For a friend, family member, or acquaintance of a combat veteran, the film discusses how civilians can intentionally or

unintentionally alienate combat veterans from being able to express their personal experiences in a healthy way and impresses upon the civilian viewer a need to reevaluate their own interactions with service members and veterans. This film is a great resource for veterans—especially those who may be less inclined to share their experiences—who want to help their families and friends better understand their wartime experiences and how they continue to affect them. Furthermore, it emphasizes the necessity of maintaining an active relationship with the men and women you served with in order to provide the crucial support structure to transition into civilian life and treat both the mental and physical wounds of war. Combat is not the only time you can save the life of a fellow servicemember.

I recently sat down with Canty, who served from 2007-2011, to talk about his documentary film project, “Once a Marine.”

What was the process of making your film? How did you transform it along the way and end up with your finished product?

Originally, when I came home, I fell into filmmaking. I had been an amateur photographer in the Marine Corps and picked up my first DSLR [digital single-lens reflective camera] between my two deployments in Garmsir and Marjah [Afghanistan]. When I set out to make my first film ... I was so isolated that I didn’t have any of that when I got out; I didn’t even have two or three people in Charlottesville that I could ask to be in some film that I was making. So, I turned to the guys that I served with for their help. We have a secret group on Facebook for the guys in Charlie Company, and the first post that I made years ago I said something like, “Hey I’m thinking about making a documentary about coming home. Maybe I’ll come up and film you guys just hanging out.” I had a very ill-defined idea of what to do, and I finally got [in touch with] one of my fellow Marines to come and sit down for an interview. The initial aim was to set out and make a documentary about the surface-level, almost about the logistics of coming home: how do you find a job or how do you feel about your friends and family now that you’re going through this experience?

The original idea of the film was just finding a job, coming home, and not liking

the people you were around; it was not too deep. Then someone finally came down, my medevac. I remember the content of the interview, and I thought, “Wow, that went a little deeper than I thought.” By the second interview I had a guy drive all the way up from Florida—I was living in Charlottesville [Virginia] at the time—did the interview and told me about the day our friend Zachary Smith died, and then he got in the car and thanked me for letting him do the interview. All of a sudden, I had this depth that I didn’t expect, and I didn’t really know what to



Stephen Canty

I realized that this was going to be a totally different film than I originally set out to make. It was going to be a gut punch and more honest, raw, and emotional than what I meant to make.

do with it. Weirdly enough, I remember taping the interview and it did not really hit that hard; however, when I went back and re-watched the interview, I think I cried for days because I was forced to reckon with it in a sense.

By the third interview, my friend comes down and starts telling me about his struggle with heroin, and at that point I realized that this was going to be a totally different film than I originally set out to make. It was going to be a gut punch and more honest, raw, and emotional than what I meant to make.

I had the idea in 2012 but I did not

start filming until 2013. The interviews came first; the first couple guys came to my house and then I went down to my brother’s—who is also a Marine—and I went to his house in Jacksonville and ended up interviewing Keith, who was a sergeant. Now I’m interviewing my platoon leader. I had gone from lance corporals and corporals to now I was talking to some of our leadership. After that interview, I had three or four put together and I made a trailer. Then I tried to do a Kickstarter but that didn’t go very well. As I went, I learned more about filmmaking and my equipment improved slightly, but by the time I finished all the interviews and the majority of filming around 2014, I had 10 hours’ worth of interviews and had collected as much combat footage as I could.

I started collecting footage from all the guys who had taken any video on deployment; all the combat footage in the film were filmed by guys in Charlie Company, 1/6 Marines. Then one of the guys in our unit reached out to me, and he was a combat cameraman who had seen the trailer on the Facebook page, and he said, “Hey, I got some footage. I don’t know if you want to use it for your film.” I let that go for two years because I did not have the filmmaking chops or understanding to realize that if you know a guy whose job was to take video, you’re probably going to want the footage in your film. I finally reached out to Mabery, the combat cameraman, and asked, “Do you still have that footage?” and he said, “Yes, but it’s on DV tapes.” I then had to save money to get him an old Panasonic DV camera like the one he had on deployment and send it to him and say, “Here’s a camera and a hard drive, could you digitize it and send it back to me?” He did and then had three-four hours of this beautiful, professional footage.

For a while I had the middle, but I didn’t have the end or beginning. So, I raised a little more money and took a second trip around the East Coast around 2016 and reached out to the mother of Zachary Smith—who was one of the guys who died on our deployment three days into our second deployment. In Garmsir [the first deployment], we saw a decent amount of combat, but we had the combined arms fury of the Marine Corps. So, we would take fire, duck behind a wall, and say, “Building 17,” and a Huey or Cobra would streak overhead and blow the building to bits. Marjah was more of a stand-up fistfight because we did not have access to those assets, either indirect fire

or air. We lost him three days into our deployment, and it set the tone right off the bat that this was going to be a totally different deployment than the first. So, on that trip I reached out to his mom and she says, “Why don’t you come and visit?” I went to upstate New York to visit her and visit his grave, and for somebody who was coping with that whole experience by avoiding it, that was the exact opposite of standing at the foot of your friend’s grave. She was an amazing woman, an incredible loving, caring person, who understood the pilgrimage so to speak. As I’m starting to leave, she says, “I heard about your film, I’ve seen the trailer, I want you to take Smith’s wedding footage, his funeral footage, and his memorial service in Afghanistan.” Smith was the kind of guy where even a five second clip of him at the altar getting married you could tell the kind of person he was, and then I had

I could to honor everyone’s contribution and sacrifice.

If you catch it, there’s even snippets of my own experience like when Donahue was talking about shooting a guy who later turned out to be blind and deaf; you can hear me mumbling that Doss and I had to go and pick up that body. Then it cuts to Doss talking about going up to pick up the body and having nightmares that it was his dad, and I was the point man on that patrol to go ahead and pick up that body.

One of the things that was really hard about making that film was that I noticed each guy I talked to had different explanations for everything, and different justifications and reasons they would put on everything. After you interviewed nine Marines and the mother of one of those Marines who died, you get 10 different explanations or justifications that you start to realize that you cannot hold onto any

editing is already hard enough, and the last thing I want to do is stare at myself for seven years. There was a point when I had finished the principal shooting, and other guys came up to me and said, “Can I be in the film?” They had seen early cuts, but once I started reviewing early cuts, I did not do any more shooting because of the observer effect: the act of observation can influence the results. I felt like if these guys had seen earlier cuts of the film that they would be putting on a different version of themselves because they were aware of what the project was going to be like.

Once you had your finished product, who were you trying to reach? Who was the intended audience? You mentioned previously that you wanted a lot of Marines to see this, but how broad of an audience were you trying to go for?

One of the things you will notice, the film does show that we went here and there, we did these deployments, and it does a little bit of “these are the dates.” However, I tried to avoid too much specificity to the extent where guys who served in Iraq thought, “This isn’t for me.” I really wanted to make it more about going to war and coming home from that, regardless of where you served or what time you served. The greatest compliment I had was after a screening in 2015 where I had a Vietnam guy come up to me, shake my hand, and say, “Thanks for telling our story.” So, it’s not just Marines but all people who have been to war, but even short of going to war—whether or not you have actually been.

I had a friend of mine from South Africa who was a photojournalist say, “That really resonated with me, and when someone says this, I felt that.” I tried to make it resonate with anyone who has been to war, but also, it’s a weird thing. I remember in an early cut, I showed at a five-year Marjah reunion, also in 2015, so five years before I finished, the film ends and I remember one of my boys—there is about 20 of us in the room—goes, “**** man, you gotta put some music there at the end to amp it back up.” I asked, “What do you mean?” and he said, “I don’t want people walking away from it with pity.” Then I realized that he is absolutely right. You really had to control this narrative in a sense; this stuff hurts and all these people went through really horrible things, but I do not want you walking away feeling sorry for us. I want you walking away just getting a mode of understanding.

So, in some ways, I made it for the guys, and when I say Marines, that is shorthand for anyone who has been in combat,



In this screenshot from the film “Once a Marine,” Deb Schiano pulls weeds from the area around her son’s grave during December 2013.

the end, which is his funeral, because I wanted to show people the actual cost. You hear that somebody dies and stuff, but then to look at the face of his family as they bury him reminds you that there is a real toll to it, and it is not just losing your friend or these Marines but this is somebody’s kid.

A lot of people would say, “... it’s good, release it now, no need to keep working on it.” I did a screening in Santa Fe on Memorial Day in 2015, and the audience was mostly veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan. They thought it was an amazing film and that I didn’t have to keep working on it as it was good enough, but I always had this need to do the best

one thing and put a pin in it and say that is the truth. That was the burden too, some of the guys were anti-war, some of them aren’t, some might say “well, we’re doing the right thing,” and other ones saying we weren’t, and I just had to struggle with that back and forth.

To what extent did you want yourself in the narrative aside from the man behind the camera?

I wanted to completely keep myself out of the narrative. I felt that the few times that I am in the film were by necessity because I wanted the film to stand on its own. I think that it comes from how



One of the Marines from Squad Awesome provides overwatch during a 2010 patrol through Marjah.

Marines, soldiers, whatever. However, in a lot of ways too, I made it for their families to see it. One of my friends that I was in with had a brother who was a sergeant in the Army, and his parents had the gall to say to him, “Why are you bothered by your experience? Your brother went to Iraq and he doesn’t have that same stuff you’re dealing with!” You will see it in the film, some guys say how they never talk to their wife about it. I want “Once a Marine” to serve as a shorthand for that conversation because even if you are not going to talk about it, at least this way you can watch with your wife, your family, or friends, and they can walk away going, “Is any of that stuff true?” and then you can say, “Yes.”

As a kid, my grandfather was a Pacific Marine, and he only told five or six stories and they were always funny. He told me how the officers had taken this Japanese car and they were driving it all over Tinian or Saipan, and my granddad and his buddies took a bazooka and blew the car up. Then, all the officers come up saying, “What the hell are you doing?” and they responded, “Oh, we thought there were a bunch of Japanese officers inside, Sir.” Funny stories like that. Then

I remember I was 12 years old, and I only heard him talk about it seriously once, and he was talking about riding up in the amphibious vehicles making their initial push on one of those islands. He would talk about how one of them got hit directly by artillery and killed 30 of his

If you are not going to talk about it, at least this way you can watch with your wife, your family, or friends, and they can walk away going, “Is any of that stuff true?” and then you can say, “Yes.”

friends instantly. That was the only time I heard him crying and it scared me as a kid because he was the toughest guy and strongest dude I had ever met and to hear one fraction of his experience really shook me. In my granddad’s case, I knew that he had been an artillery scout and then was transferred to Motor T, and when I went in the Marine Corps I said,

“Oh, what a pogue.” Then at his memorial service when he died, one of his friends came up to us and says, “You know your grandad spent 30 days behind enemy lines.” I said, “What do you mean?” He responded, “You know why he stopped being an artillery scout? Because he went out, they got ambushed, and he was the only one who survived, and then spent 30 days sleeping under dead bodies and hiding in the jungle before he could make it back to a friendly unit.” So, you hear that sort of **** and you go, “Whoah!” It is for Marines, for soldiers, for their families, for someone who had a grandfather go through it or a brother, anyone who wants to understand what war does or can do to you.

I think one of the best reviews—Doss who is the guy in the film who struggles with heroin—one of the best reviews on Amazon was his mom saying, “I had no idea what he went through, and I only saw him using drugs and stuff, and I didn’t understand at all.” All of the reviews were, “Thanks for giving me a little understanding of what my son went through.”

After the first 15 minutes, it seems like a normal military documentary—we went



Brendan Donahue, one of the Marines who was featured in the documentary, takes a smoke break just before a uniform inspection in 2010.

over there, and this is what we did—and then as it starts to unravel, now you get to hear about a guy whose friend died in front of him, and now you are hearing about people using heroin, then it goes into this kid who kills himself. I also wanted to subvert expectations because a lot of people who come into it want to watch this kind of thing for entertainment ... I wanted to take what at first seems like a typical military documentary and then hit you with the real emotional pain of it as it went on.

There are a lot of times in the film where the camera will hold onto people for uncomfortably long. We as humans do not want to see people cry because it makes us uncomfortable. However, there were times when I could cut away to b-roll or shorten this up, but what I really wanted was the audience to look these guys in the eye. I thought, “If you want to learn about this, I will force you to sit there and stare it in the face.”

How should civilians approach veterans about their experiences in a way that is beneficial to servicemembers?

A buddy of mine said it in the film but I ended up having to cut it, “The first thing that everyone tries to do is relate. ‘Oh, my uncle, my cousin, or brother went over and it ***** him up and he killed a bunch of people.’ ” They do not want to hear

their experience and let it be; instead, they always try to relate themselves back to your experience. I tried to help people have a better understanding through “Once a Marine,” but I also wanted people to understand that they could not understand—that if somebody is telling

One of the best things to come out of the film was encourage people to reconnect ... These guys will die for you, but when you get out, you let those relationships fall by the wayside.

you this stuff, listen, learn, and ask intelligent questions. When I tell people about the film they say, “Oh, it’s about PTSD,” and I say “No, not really.”

Making that film has really taught me, and the advice I would give to anyone trying to make a film, that if you ask somebody a question—for instance, I asked Heath in the film what it was like to be blown up and he said it hurt—I would then wait and try to film that empty space because everyone gives you that reflective answer first: “It sucked.”

I would let them sit there and wait five to 10 seconds before they would give me the honest answer; they would not give me the prepared answer that they had to avoid that. A lot of people will ask, “What was deployment like?” and the response will be, “It was hot, it sucked.” However, if you wait, then they will dive a little deeper, only if you’re listening and trying to understand.

I would go out of my way to see people, regardless of the film. I would say, “Hey, I’m near Houston, passing through there tomorrow. Can we get together?” Early on, a lot of guys when they get out won’t answer your calls or say that they would love to get together but when you try to hammer out a plan they back away. At first I took it personally, then I realized that even though that person might be one of my closest friends and we had both been through an experience that only a handful of people went through, me coming for lunch was bringing out more than just hanging out with a friend for lunch. A lot of these guys would tell you—for months out, weeks out, days out—that they would get together and then cancel the day before or not even answer the phone. When I started taking pictures and posting them on Facebook saying, “Hey, here is me with two of the boys in California,” and we got together, that really started to encourage people to

go out of their way and say, “So and so only lives an hour away from me in North Carolina, let me see what he is up to.”

One of the best things to come out of the film was encourage people to reconnect because these are the guys that will pull you out of an open field when you got a bullet in you and the Taliban still has a PKM on that field. These guys will die for you, but when you get out, you let those relationships fall by the wayside. We had a recent reunion which was just for 1/6; we had another one that was for III MEB which was this huge event with 10,000 people invited and a couple hundred showed up, and the most recent one for 1/6 guys in this really loud, cramped bar. All the guys from Charlie Company went back to the hotel, and we had 30 guys in a hotel room, having a great time. But every time we do those things, you will see someone having a breakdown, and then you see this outpouring of love. Alcohol is involved and I remember seeing this one guy start to sob, and five and six of my friends get around him and pat him on the back and he says, “I feel like such ***** for crying, dude,” and they say, “Hey, it’s OK.”

We’ve all felt this way, no one judges you for feeling this way, and we’ll circle around you and protect outsiders from seeing this and we love you and care about you. I would like to see more stuff that fosters those relationships and keeps them alive. I have one of these guys who tells me, “My grandad used to tell me they were some of the greatest friends on this ship or in this platoon,” and then after the war ended they never talked to them again. But in this era there is no excuse. I cannot even tell you about the suicides in the battalion, but out of a company of 180, it has been five, six, ten guys. You always kind of feel like, “*****, we failed him,” and I know it’s not entirely true, but I feel that keeping that network alive is the most helpful thing you can do because these are the guys.

And people today say, “It’s an all-volunteer-force, they volunteered for this.”

I had someone tell that to me once, and what I told her was, “I volunteered so that it would stay an all-volunteer-force. I volunteered so that your son wouldn’t have to go.” When my little brother went to join, he came down to visit me and kept asking all of my buddies, “What do you think? Should I join?” and they all said, “No, dude, don’t join.” Then he said, “If you could go back and not join the Marine Corps, would you?” Nobody said yes; they would all still do it. He said, “Ok, that’s the

answer. You’re not going to tell me to do it, but you would not go back and change it if you could. That’s what I want to do.”

I joined at 17. I graduated high school early to go to boot camp, and you really can’t know what you’re getting into. I think one of the most frustrating aspects of the whole experience for me was the war wasn’t the worst part. I remember six months before I got out, we came back and had a new chain of command which had come from drill instructors or non-combat billets, and then the way they started going, “You guys need to get yourself together, this is embarrassing.” The amount of pressure they put on us to go from field Marines to garrison Marines—we were literally doing drill and stuff once we got back. I remember thinking, “Even the guys in the Marine Corps don’t understand. What these guys need more than anything is a break.”

Where do you see “Once a Marine” fitting into the legacy of the United States Marines Corps?

I would just like it to be part of the history of the Marine Corps, so to speak. It took me seven years to make the film, and it went through a lot of different iterations before it landed on where it is now. I have always been really eternally grateful to the guys that put their heart out there and put a lot of their private and personal experiences of that they were dealing with in that film, and the seven years of editing was really about honoring what they have given me and their honesty. I remember seeing a comment where somebody said, “This better not be some Hollywood ***** where everyone is crying like a *****.” Well, there is some crying in there, but I would not say that they are weak. One of the things I always strived for was not going into that, not making it a victim story or sob story, and to show that we did not need people’s pity—we just wanted their understanding or at least their attention. I grew up reading “With the Old Breed,” “Helmet for My Pillow,” and those types of books, and I really looked up to those guys as well as the Vietnam guys. To have “Once a Marine” to be a part of that lineage, the Corps’ tradition, that is more than I could ever hope for.

Editor’s note: “Once A Marine” is available for streaming on Amazon Prime. Photos are courtesy of Stephen Canty.

Author’s bio: William Treuting is a military historian and associate editor for Marine Corps Gazette. This is his first article for Leatherneck. 🍌

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Paramus, N.J.

Amid Pandemic, Boy Scout Strives to Ensure Community's Veterans Aren't Forgotten

A New Jersey Boy Scout made national headlines earlier this year when he played "Taps" on his trumpet every evening at dusk for more than a month outside the Veterans Home at Paramus. It all started when Alex Saldana overheard his father, Dave, a Marine veteran who works in local law enforcement, talking about how the home had been hard-hit by the pandemic, with the loss of more than 80 veterans to COVID-19. The 15-year-old immediately asked, "What can I do?"

For the residents of the home and the family members of those who died, the gesture meant the world, and the Saldana family received numerous messages thanking Alex for remembering them.

According to Dave Saldana, one veteran told Alex, "We were forgotten," to which Alex replied, "Not anymore."

Alex Saldana's efforts didn't stop there. For his Eagle Scout project, he requested a wish list from the home and rallied his local community to collect essential items for the veterans, including body wash, deodorant, diabetic socks, shirts and sweatpants. Monetary donations poured in from across the country as people saw him featured on the news for playing "Taps" outside the home. The thousands of items he collected were enough to supply all three of New Jersey's veterans homes.

Members of the Gooney Bird Detachment of the Marine Corps League were proud to support Saldana's efforts and attended the



COURTESY OF AL FRATER

donation event in Paramus, June 25, during which the Boy Scout and musician played "Taps" and "The Marines' Hymn" on his trumpet. From the left, Alex's father Dave Saldana, Al Frater, John Hernandez, Alex Saldana and Pat Korczak gathered for a photo after unloading boxes of donations at the home. Later this year, Saldana plans to redo the home's garden, including building benches so the residents can enjoy the outdoors.

Submitted by Al Frater

Ocean City, Md.

First State Marines Kick off Toys for Tots Season with "Christmas in July"

The First State Detachment of the Marine Corps League and Jolly Roger Amusement Park in Ocean City, Md., teamed up with local restaurants Fish Tales Bar & Grill and Duffy's Tavern for an annual "Christmas in July" Toys for Tots fundraiser, July 24-25. During the event, Jolly Roger's Dean Langrall, pictured on the left, presented a \$1,500 donation for Toys for Tots to Rick Pounsberry, the senior vice commandant of the First State Marines.

To encourage participation in the Toys for Tots drive, visitors to the amusement park could make a \$20 minimum donation or bring a toy in exchange for a 20 percent discount on Jolly Roger Park purchases. The event served as a kickoff for the local Toys for Tots



COURTESY OF BOB BRODERICK

season during which volunteers will collect toys to be distributed to economically disadvantaged children in Worcester, Wicomico and lower Sussex County communities in December. Despite the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, First State Marines were able to collect and distribute more than 5,000 toys in 2020. Toys collected this season will be stored in a central location where the toys are sorted by age and gender for distribution through local social welfare agencies, church groups and local community volunteers.

Since 1947, the Marine Corps Reserve's Toys for Tots program has provided holiday gifts for underprivileged children across the United States.

Submitted by Bob Broderick

Yuma, Ariz.



CARY COLLINS

VMFA-211 Dedicates Harrier, Remembers Fallen Marines

Marines, Sailors, veterans and Gold Star family members gathered at the Open Air Museum at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Ariz., Aug. 19, to unveil and dedicate a retired AV-8B Harrier from Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 211, Marine Aircraft Group 13, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, in memory of Lieutenant Colonel Christopher Raible and Sergeant Bradley Atwell.

Marine Lieutenant General Jon M. Davis, as well as Colonel Benjamin K. Hutchins, the commanding officer of MAG-13. The aircraft was repaired and returned to service after the attack and continued to provide surface and air support as one of the last AV-8B Harriers operationally flown on the West Coast.

Cpl Levi Voss, USMC

When 15 Taliban insurgents breached the perimeter of Camp Bastion in Kandahar Province, Afghanistan, in September 2012, the two Marines gave their lives defending their fellow Marines, as well as the aircraft of VMFA-211. LtCol Raible, the squadron's commanding officer, coordinated with his Marines to initiate a counter-attack to minimize potential casualties, and during the fight that ensued, he and Sgt Atwell were killed by a rocket-propelled grenade, and nine of the squadron's aircraft were damaged or destroyed.

The dedication ceremony for the Harrier—which has visible bullet holes from the attack— included remarks from retired

Carter County, Ky.

Retired Marine, *Leatherneck* Contributor Receives Quilt of Valor

Retired Marine Major Al Bevilacqua, a veteran of the Korean War and the Vietnam War who also served on an exchange tour with the French Foreign Legion in Algeria and has been a contributing writer for *Leatherneck* for decades, was recognized by his local Carter County, Ky., chapter of the Quilts of Valor Foundation during a special quilt presentation, Sept. 21. He was honored to receive a quilt that was hand-sewn by volunteers who donate their time and fabric to show their appreciation for veterans in their community.

Upon accepting the quilt, Bevilacqua chose not to focus his remarks on his own service, but on the service of four of his fellow Marine veterans and friends who are no longer living: Irvin Richard Stone, William Dennis "Denny" Weissgerber, Peter Thomas Meletis and John McGee "Duke" Alston.


"With your permission, I would like to accept this fine tribute in their names," Bevilacqua said to representatives of Quilts of Valor and those family members and friends in attendance during the presentation.

The Quilts of Valor Foundation, founded in 2003 by Catherine Roberts, whose son, Nat, was serving in Iraq at the time, has made and awarded more than 250,000 quilts for veterans to date. Members of the organization's 600 local chapters rely on donations from their communities to help fund the sewing projects, which recognize the service and sacrifice of those who have served.

Submitted by Gloria Bevilacqua



COURTESY OF GLORIA BEVILACQUA

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



The filmographer set up his camera in the outfield to capture the game from different angles. The camera placement provides an outstanding view of the Japanese batter and Marine pitcher and catcher.

Diamond Diplomacy:

Marines, Baseball and the Occupation of Japan

By Kater Miller

In the Marine Corps archives, there is film footage of a unique baseball game in which a baseball team composed of U.S. Marines played against a Japanese team in Saga City, Japan. The film itself seems to be the only record of the game. The Marines in the film are from 2nd Battalion, 27th Marine Regiment, 5th Marine Division, which fought across Iwo Jima in February and March 1945. Saga City had been firebombed by the U.S. Army Air Forces on Aug. 5, 1945, though the bombing paled in comparison to those of the larger raids that cities like Tokyo suffered. One of the most striking details about the game is the date that the game was played in occupied Japan: Nov. 4, 1945, just a few months after Japan's surrender. How could the two groups, both terribly affected by the war, come together as good sportsmen for a lighthearted game of ball?

It was not the first or last such baseball game played by

U.S. military baseball teams against Japanese teams. In fact, baseball played an important role in the occupation of Japan after World War II ended. Since it was the most popular sport in both countries, the familiar game helped to heal the trauma of both nations reeling from the effects of a devastating and horrific war. The film shows an important aspect of the occupation where the two former combatants participate in a pastime that they both enjoyed without violence or rancor.

Japan and the United States share a long history of baseball teams traveling to each other's countries on goodwill tours, starting when Waseda University's team toured the United States in 1905. Marine baseball teams faced Japanese opponents as early as 1910 when Waseda University toured Hawaii and took two out of three games from the Marines. Marines also faced Waseda more than a dozen times in China in the 1920s and 1930s. The 4th Marine Regiment's baseball team embarked on a successful goodwill tour of Japan in 1930, where they played against

Since it was the most popular sport in both countries, the familiar game helped to heal the trauma of both nations reeling from the effects of a devastating and horrific war.

college and corporate semi-pro teams. In 1927, Waseda University played the powerful Quantico Marines at Quantico, with Japanese Ambassador Tsuneo Matsudaira and Major General Commandant John A. Lejeune in attendance. The Marines emerged victorious with a score of 9-6, but a July 1927 *Leatherneck* article indicated that it was due to Waseda's sloppy baserunning as they outthit the Marines 15-12.

WW II impacted baseball in the United States and Japan in different ways. The requirements for manpower by each country's military strained college and professional sports teams. Young, able-bodied men were needed to serve, and professional baseball leagues in both countries did little to protect their players from service. It was not a foregone conclusion that professional baseball would continue during the war in either country. In the United States, the major leagues, minor leagues and semi-pro leagues did, as did many college baseball teams, with the consent of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, arguing that the entertainment value of baseball was too high and would be good for morale.

Baseball did not fare as well in Japan. Pro-war, anti-American factions of the government looked upon baseball suspiciously. The National Professional Baseball League, which formed in 1936, truncated their 1944 season to 35 games, then canceled the 1945 season altogether.

Below left: The manual scoreboard appears in the film several times throughout the game. The final score was 10-5 in favor of the team of Marines.

Below right: The Saga City baseball team sit in their "dugout" before the game. The team had complete uniforms and equipment, even though baseball was a low priority in the late stages of the war.



Marine baseball players pose for the movie camera before the game. Shots of both teams were captured by the filmographer.

College baseball programs met a similar fate. In the minds of many, baseball was a foreign sport that was nearly incompatible with the Japanese culture. In 1942, when the Japanese government restricted the broadcasting of civilian programming to support war mobilization, it meant that no games were broadcast in, even though baseball broadcasts were not the specific target of the move. In contrast, the American military aired games for deployed servicemembers, even if the broadcast was delayed.

In the United States, baseball was considered a morale-building venture that helped Americans endure war rationing. Major League Baseball suffered from the war mobilization effort, losing most of their young talent to the draft. The average age of the players of the Major League increased steadily through the war as younger players left the field for military service. By the end of the 1944 season, many critics thought that Major League Baseball



would not last another season. However, the league did survive by using players too old or not physically capable of joining the military.

While the professional baseball leagues in the United States suffered from talent drain, Americans did not go without baseball. On the contrary, the U.S. military built powerful teams that would have rivaled many of the best baseball teams in history. Military team rosters boasted numerous all-stars, and they traveled the country and abroad playing in exhibition games to enhance the morale of those in service. Baseball exhibition games popped up everywhere there were large numbers of troops. In 1943, even Major League Baseball considered staging regular-season games overseas for the benefit of the troops.

In 1944, the U.S. Army suggested a plan for a World Series that pitted service teams against each other as a War Bond sales drive. According to the plan, the best-regarded military teams would play a series of games, some on military bases for the benefit of those in the service, and others in town for civilians. The Army wanted to invite the Navy's Great Lakes team, the U.S. Army's 20th Armored Division Team and the Parris Island base team. While this plan was not enacted, it demonstrates that the military thought of creative ways to use the popularity of baseball to support the war effort.

In September 1944, the U.S. Navy and U.S. Army put two powerful sides together for the "Servicemen's World Series." The series took place in Hawaii and was slated to

last seven games, but the series proved so popular that they ended up playing 11 games instead. The Navy walloped the Army, taking the series 8-2-1. The Army invited the Navy to play again the following year, but the Navy had shipped its all-star talent to remote bases in the Pacific to play exhibition games for deployed troops and declined the offer.

While much of the nation's baseball talent coalesced into a few military super teams, the rank and file continued to play baseball too. Commanders encouraged athletics to help keep their Marines in fighting trim, especially when military training had become too grueling. Athletic officers preparing to embark were warned that while some athletic equipment was available in supply depots in the Pacific, it was best to go and purchase softballs, baseballs, gloves, and bats where they were commercially available and take the equipment with them as there was not enough extra equipment in the supply system to go around. On nearly every island in

the Pacific, engineers cleared spaces to make baseball diamonds, and intramural service leagues appeared everywhere.

When 2nd Bn, 27th Marines of 5th Marine Division deployed from Camp Pendleton, Calif., to Camp Tarawa, Hilo, Hawaii, off-duty Marines participated in athletic leagues, including baseball leagues, at the Kamuela Athletic Field. While on duty, they trained to assault Iwo Jima as part of the V Amphibious Corps.

Ted De Bary wrote about the devastation in the cities ... the people in these cities almost always steered the conversation to Major League Baseball and the 1945 season's pennant races.



The first baseman of the Marine team awaits the throw to first on a groundout. He dropped the baseball and the batter safely reached first base.



Local Japanese girls play the drums as a part of the festivities surrounding the baseball game.

At Iwo Jima, the Marines of the battalion saw some of the most brutal combat of the war. When they were finally pulled off the line, the battle-weary Division was designated to land on Miyako-Jima of the Ryukyu Islands in support of the Okinawa Campaign. Their role in the battle was mercifully called off. The Division was originally slated to recover and train in Guam to prepare for the invasion of the Zhoushan Archipelago off of mainland China. The Marines were elated as they discovered that they would not stop in Guam and instead returned to the familiar Camp Tarawa.

The main body of the Division arrived in Hawaii on April 12. The Marines recuperated from their time on Iwo Jima and renamed their baseball field to Iwo Jima Field. They played baseball during the summer of 1945, and their next target changed as well. Instead of assaulting Zhoushan, they prepared to land on Kyushu the southernmost of Japan's Home Islands, as part of Operation Olympic. Japan's formal surrender on Sept. 2, 1945, once again changed the Marines' mission. The Division prepared to occupy Japan. Their mission was to restore order, enforce the terms of the surrender agreement, and assist with the repatriation of the Japanese military.

The 2nd Bn, 27th Marines arrived in Japan in late September and were tasked to patrol the area in and around Saga City, the site of the future baseball game. When the 5thMarDiv arrived in Japan, the Division Special Services Office brought athletic equipment with them. Special services personnel built volleyball courts, basketball courts, football fields and baseball fields at every billeting location when possible. They organized inter-unit tournaments, and they estimated that 25 percent of Marines participated in the activities daily.

Athletics played an important part in the occupation, both for the occupying forces to enhance the morale and physical fitness of war-weary combat troops waiting to return home, but also as a welcome distraction for the Japanese people, who



Judoka perform Judo throws before the game begins. The Marine Corps taught elements of Judo to Marines as part of hand-to-hand combat training.

had experienced extreme privations during the war. Ted De Bary was an interpreter sent to Tokyo and surrounding cities to survey the damage to the area sustained during the war. In a September 1945 letter to a colleague, De Bary wrote about the devastation in the cities that had been subjected to relentless bombardment. De Bary said that the people in these cities almost always steered the conversation to Major League Baseball and the 1945 season's pennant races. He believed that to the inhabitants of Tokyo, talking about baseball was more desirable than talking about destruction.

During the late stages of the war, most baseball stadiums in Japan had been converted to house air defense batteries and as equipment marshaling yards. General Douglas MacArthur prioritized the restoration of the stadiums to playing condition. College baseball returned in October 1945 when the Marines' familiar opponent, Waseda University, played their archrival, Keio University. Professional baseball returned in November with some



Throngs of local residents attended the game. Lots of men wore uniforms to the game, and it is possible that they were military personnel who had repatriated to Japan by November.

exhibition games, and the first full season since the start of the war was played in 1946.

On Sept. 22, 1945, a news release by NBC announced an Army baseball team would travel throughout Japan, playing baseball against the Japanese sides, starting with the University of Tokyo. The proceeds from each game were intended to go to war orphans. But the baseball games between American teams and Japanese teams were not necessarily popular. The formal surrender was not even three weeks old.

Quite a few American servicemembers did not approve of the effort, thinking it would show how Americans could easily forgive and forget the atrocities committed by the Japanese military during the war. Army Technical Sergeant Howard Hurwitz wrote a letter to *Yank* magazine showing his disapproval. A poem that went into syndication in the

United States mocked the effort. Often, the American public and servicemembers who did not perform occupation duty in Japan held harsher views of their former enemies than the troops that actually went to Japan. Those in Japan had more sympathy for the civilians in the area after having viewed their appalling living conditions. In November 1945 Marines reported that there were no instances where Japanese military members had violated the terms of the surrender. They also reported excellent compliance with American forces, which further elicited feelings of goodwill.

The game of Nov. 4, 1945, was not the only game between Americans and the Japanese, but the one thing that makes the footage stand out is that it was filmed in color. Other than the film, very few details of the game are available. None of the Supreme Command Allied Powers reports mention the game, nor do the 5thMarDiv's War Diaries or command chronologies. The postwar publication, "The Spearhead; the World War II History of the 5th Marine Division" mentions a few games between Marines and locals and states that the locals were pretty good at baseball. Other than that, most of the information about the game comes from this limited piece of ephemera. A short biography of Malcolm "Mel" Waite appeared in the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. Private First Class Waite served as an automatic rifleman in the battalion. In the biography, he claimed that he played left field during the game, had eight RBIs, and hit for the cycle in the Marines'

A kendoka (left) poses in armor. Kendo and Judo, Japanese martial arts, were suppressed in Japanese schools soon after the baseball game. Two kendoka (below) perform a fighting exhibition for the crowd of Marines and Saga City inhabitants.



Looking at the game, emotions must have been running high. The Marines wanted to demobilize and go home. The Japanese wanted to put their country back together, but the entertainment-deprived populace relished the opportunity to participate in the day's festivities.

10-5 victory. He went on to play in college as a relief pitcher for the University of Washington from 1947-1951, then played for several years in semi-pro leagues before becoming a high school science teacher.

The game carried a carnival-like atmosphere. The lot at which the game was played was named Antonelli Field, after the battalion's commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel John Antonelli. Rows of uniformed women marched in and participated in running competitions. There was a Kendo and Judo exhibition performed for the Marines, even though the Allied occupation efforts began to curb these activities in an effort to stamp out militarism. There was a group of women in black uniforms playing drums for the audience. Even though the Japanese government took a hostile stance towards baseball, the Saga team had uniforms that were in good order, and so did the Marines. Throngs of civilians showed up to cheer on their team.

The filmographer at the game worked to capture the event in excellent detail. He set his camera up in different locations to capture various aspects of the game. He filmed the crowds and the scoreboards and a lot of other little details that add to the beauty of this film. After four years of brutal, terrorizing combat, the former foes got together and played a spirited game.

Looking at the game, emotions must have been running high. The Marines wanted to demobilize and go home. The Japanese wanted to put their country back together, but the entertainment-deprived populace relished the opportunity to participate in the day's festivities and while the Americans took the game with them wherever they went, the Japanese people finally got the game back. It is easy to look at the game as a return to normalcy for both groups of people using the commonly understood universal language of baseball.

By the following year, baseball returned for teams at all levels in both countries. Marine Corps Sports Hall of Famers Gil Hodges, Ted Williams, Jerry Coleman and



Above: While a Japanese batter waits for his pitch, his teammates take their spots in the on-deck circle.



Someone, likely a local resident, made a paper sign announcing the Nov. 4 baseball game at Antonelli Field. The 2nd Battalion Occupiers were leathernecks from the 2nd Battalion, 27th Marines.

Ted Lyons exchanged their boondockers for spikes and went back to their Major League clubs to continue their illustrious baseball careers, and the era when the U.S. military fielded the best teams in baseball ended.

Editor's note: All photos are still images from video number 162591 from the United States Marine Corps History Division collection at the United States Marine Corps Film Repository at the University of South Carolina.

Author's bio: Kater Miller is the outreach curator at the National Museum of the Marine Corps and has been working at the museum for 11 years. He is developing an interpretive plan for the Marine Corps Sports Gallery as part of the Final Phase expansion underway at the museum. He served in the Marine Corps from 2001-2005 as an aviation ordnanceman. 🦾

Passing the Word

Compiled by Sara W. Bock

NEA Grants Will Provide Arts Programming Nationwide For Military-Connected Individuals

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), in partnership with Mid-America Arts Alliance, has launched a new grant program as part of Creative Forces: NEA Military Healing Arts Network. The Creative Forces Community Engagement grants will support arts engagement programming for military and veteran populations and family members, providing opportunities for creative expression and strengthening resilience.

Creative Forces is an NEA initiative in partnership with the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs which seeks to improve the health, well-being and quality of life for military and veteran populations exposed to trauma, as well as their families and caregivers. The deadline to apply for these new grants, Dec. 15, is quickly approaching.

"This national grant program furthers the work of the NEA Creative Forces initiative in recognizing the important role that the arts can play in supporting our nation's military and veteran communities," said Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Denis McDonough. "I was re-

cently able to see firsthand the benefit of creative arts therapies in a veterans' hospital, and I look forward to seeing how artists and community arts organizations will utilize creative arts programming to contribute to the health and well-being of their local military and veterans as well as their families and caregivers."

The Creative Forces Community Engagement grant programs will serve a broad military-connected population, including active-duty servicemembers, guardsmen, reservists, veterans, and military and veteran families, as well as caregivers and healthcare workers providing care for servicemembers and veterans. The aim of these grants is to expand programming into the community and address the distinct experiences, challenges and strengths of military and veteran families, care providers and veteran populations.

"Our military servicemembers and their families have sacrificed to protect and defend the freedom of our nation," said Ann Eilers, acting chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts. "The projects supported by this grant program will recognize that arts engagement can provide a powerful outlet for fostering

community and personal connections. We are pleased to be working with Mid-America Arts Alliance to develop and manage this new program."

Creative Forces Community Engagement projects will require at least one partner and be led by or include at least one organization with a history of creative or artistic programming. Partnerships among arts organizations and veteran and military service organizations are highly encouraged.

"Through projects Mid-America Arts Alliance has funded and experienced in our region, we have seen the tremendous ability for the arts to make social connections and foster resiliency with members of the Armed Forces, veterans, and their families, among others," said Todd Stein, President and CEO of Mid-America Arts Alliance. "The Creative Forces Community Engagement grants seek to promote creativity, health and healing with military-connected populations across the country."

For the complete guidelines and to apply for a Creative Forces Community Engagement grant, visit www.maaa.org/creativeforces.

National Endowment for the Arts



COURTESY OF BRENDA MALITZ

Veterans participate in a stone carving symposium offered by the Washington State Arts Commission and Northwest Stone Sculptors Association, in conjunction with Creative Forces, an initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts. The program is accepting applications for a new grant program that will expand arts programming for military veterans.

Initiative: Remote Work Benefits Military Spouses

As the leader in identifying and providing solutions to military spouse unemployment and under-employment, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Hiring Our Heroes has launched a new initiative focused on remote work opportunities.

The Remote Military Spouse Economic Empowerment Zone (MSEEZ) is a collective framework for businesses that offer remote employment opportunities to military spouses. These businesses and community partners will work together to identify opportunities as well as barriers to entry for military spouses seeking employment via the "hire, train and advocate" pillars.

First Lady Jill Biden, a military mother and grandmother and longtime military family advocate, kicked off this groundbreaking effort during a virtual event, Sept. 16.

"A recent study showed that 8 out of 10 military spouses said remote work was the ideal career situation. For families it means mom or dad doesn't have to start over at each duty station, and for employers, remote work helps retain these workers, even if they are relocated," said Biden.

Since 2018, Hiring Our Heroes has launched more than 20 MSEEZ to combat the economic impact that military spouse unemployment and underemployment have on 21st-century military families by facilitating collaboration between local and national employers, educational institutions and community resources.

"Remote and flexible work options, like telework, are actually a great way to do business, especially with a population as resilient and adaptable as military spouses," said Hollyanne Milley, the spouse of General Mark Milley, USA, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The Remote MSEEZ working group includes Amy Uthe of Freedom Learning Group; Briana Pruitt with Instant Teams; Jenny Boyles from Freedom Makers; and Timothy Parlatore of Parlatore Law LLP.

"We will leverage this working group to challenge employers to break the cycle of military spouse unemployment by hiring, training and advocating for flexible and remote career opportunities," said Uthe.

For more information, visit www.hiringourheroes.org.

U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Wreaths Across America Announces 2022 Mobile Education Exhibit Tour

This month, volunteers across the nation will lay wreaths on the graves of America's veterans, a tribute made



The Wreaths Across America Mobile Education Exhibit will wrap up its 2021 tour this month and will make another cross-country trip beginning in February 2022.

possible by the nonprofit organization, Wreaths Across America. What many may not realize is that throughout the year, the organization sponsors a Mobile Education Exhibit that remembers the nation's fallen veterans, honors those who serve and teaches the next generation about the value of freedom.

In February of this year, the exhibit began its national tour in Alabama, and it will conclude as a member of "the escort to Arlington," the weeklong outreach event which will culminate at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia for Wreaths Across America Day, Dec. 18.

Next year's national tour will also begin in February and head to South Carolina, Georgia and Florida. In March, it returns to Alabama and then visits Mississippi for the first time. In April, Louisiana and Arkansas will be the focus of the tour. The tour heads north in May and visits Ohio, Michigan and parts of Wisconsin. The exhibit will then travel to Minnesota. From there, it will make its way out West, welcoming home Vietnam Veterans in areas of the country including Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, Washington and Oregon. Starting in September, the exhibit

will stop in Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma and Missouri before joining next year's escort to Arlington.

"The goal of the Wreaths Across America Mobile Education Exhibit is to bring communities together and teach about the organization's mission while remembering the service and sacrifice of our nation's heroes," said Don Queeney, Director of Transportation and the Mobile Education Exhibit for Wreaths Across America. "The exhibit serves as a mobile museum, educating visitors about the service and sacrifice of our nation's heroes, as well as to serve as an official 'welcome home' station for our nation's Vietnam veterans."

All veterans, active-duty service-members, their families and members of the local community are invited and encouraged to visit the exhibit as it travels across the country.

To learn more about the exhibit or submit a request for it to come to your community, visit <https://www.wreathsacrossamerica.org/mee>.

Wreaths Across America



In Memoriam

Compiled by Nancy S. Lichtman

William V. Brinker, 64, of Chicago, Ill. He was a Marine who served from 1974-1980.

Claude C. Campos, 82, of De Pere, Wis. He enlisted in 1958 and served until 1961. He later had a career in information technology.

MGySgt James "Jimmy" Coker, 86, of Sneads Ferry, N.C. During his 32-year career, he served two tours in Vietnam. After his retirement from active duty, he had a 20-year career as a civil servant at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C. His awards include the Meritorious Service Medal and the Navy Commendation Medal with combat "V."

Capt Robert G. Davis, 85, of Milwaukee, Wis. He was commissioned after graduating from Stanford University with a degree in mechanical engineering. He later had a six-decade career with The Trane Company.

CWO-2 Albert A. Debnar, 89, of Alexandria, Va. He was a veteran of the Korean War and served two tours in Vietnam. He later was a Foreign Service Officer in the State Department. His awards include the Purple Heart.

Francis L. "Sonny" Dodd, 95, of Anna, Ill. He enlisted during WW II and saw action during the Battle of Iwo Jima.

James Emrick, 75, of Portland, Ore. He was a Marine who served in Vietnam.

Richard T. "Dick" Farmer, 86, of Cincinnati, Ohio. He served in the late 1950s before beginning a successful decades-long career in business. He was the founder of Cintas Corporation, which he took public in 1983. He later established the Farmer Family Foundation, which supported charities for veterans.

Capt William E. "Bill" Ferris II, 97, of Silver Spring, Md. After earning his naval aviator wings in 1944, he was an instrument flight instructor. In 1945, he was assigned to VMF(N)-541 on Peleliu, where most of his flights in the F6F Hellcat were training missions for the planned invasion of Japan. After the war ended, the squadron was transferred to Peiping, China, to fly reconnaissance missions.

He later had a career in real estate. One of his sons is a Marine.

Capt Thomas Gaines, 75, of Roseville, Mich. He served in the Marine Corps and later had a career teaching mathematics at the university level.

Thomas R. Goetz, 71, of Little Sturgeon, Wis. He served in the Marine Corps after graduating from high school.

He later owned and operated a resort.

Saginaw Grant, 85, in Hollywood, Calif. He served in the Marine Corps before embarking on an acting career that included roles in film and TV including "Breaking Bad," "Veep," and "Community." He was a member of the Sac and Fox Nation of Oklahoma and was an award-winning Pow Wow dancer.

Robert M. "Bob" Greer, 74, of Spokane, Wash. He enlisted after his 1965 graduation from high school. He served a tour in Vietnam and was wounded twice. His awards include two Purple Hearts.

Charles D. Guay, 85, in Appleton, Wis. He enlisted after his high school graduation.

CWO-4 James T. Hardin, 70, of Garden Grove, Calif. He served 10 years on active duty and 20 years in the Marine Corps Reserve. His assignments included detachment commander for Det A, MWCS-48 and maintenance officer for MATCS-48.

Sgt Gerald E. Herlik, 88, of Green Bay, Wis. After his discharge from the Marine Corps, he had a career as a police officer in Green Bay, eventually retiring as a lieutenant.

CWO-4 David L. Horne, 81, of West Palm Beach, Fla. He had a 33-year career in the Marine Corps Reserve, primarily with 6th Comm Bn, while also teaching health and physical education in New York City high schools.

Capt James D. Jerrell, 90, of Vacaville, Calif. He enlisted after his 1952 graduation from the Colorado School of Mines. After he was commissioned, he served as an artillery officer. During his 25-year career, he served in Korea and Vietnam. He started a drafting business after he retired from the Marine Corps. He was a member of the MCA.

Martin Kehoe, 77, of Chicago, Ill. He enlisted after his high school graduation and served a tour in Vietnam. His awards include the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart. He later had a 35-year career with the Chicago Police Department.

Sgt Dennis E. Laine, 76, of Alameda, Calif. He enlisted in 1963 and completed recruit training at MCRD San Diego, Calif. He was assigned to an artillery unit at MCB Camp Pendleton. Other assignments included serving as brig warden at Treasure Island, San Francisco.

Leo J. Landon, 95, of Farmington, N.M. He was a Marine who served in WW II.

Cpl Miles A. "Sonny" Lawson, 83, of Kingwood, Texas. He enlisted in 1955 and served in Wpns Co, 3/3.

Paul W. "Bud" Mealhow, 97, of Shellsburg, Iowa. He enlisted in 1943 and served in WW II. He was wounded during the Battle of Saipan. His awards include the Purple Heart.

Raphael J. "Ray" Parins, 89, of Green Bay, Wis. He was a Marine who served during the Korean War. He later owned a plumbing business and served as president of Associated Master Plumbers.

SgtMaj Alan "Spike" Roberts, 73, of Fredericksburg, Va. After graduation he worked for the railroad for several years before enlisting in the Marine Corps. He had a 31-year career and worked for the VA after his retirement. He later formed a consulting firm.

Donald "Don" Roche, 94, of Portland, Ore. He served in the Pacific during WW II.

William E. Scherger, 76, of La Habra, Calif. He enlisted in 1963 and served a tour in Vietnam.

Earl W. Schoen, 94, of Green Bay, Wis. He enlisted when he was 17 and served in the South Pacific during WW II.

MGySgt James L. "Jim" Smith, 81, of Wichita, Kan. His 20-year career in the Marine Corps included a tour in Vietnam. He later worked for a government contractor at the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico.

LCpl Douglas J. Spangle, 69, of Portland Ore. He served from 1969-1975 and completed a tour in Vietnam.

Acof "Ace" Steier, 97, of Green Bay, Wis. He enlisted in 1942 and served in the Pacific. He saw combat on Gaudalcanal, Tarawa, Iwo Jima and Saipan. His awards include two Purple Hearts.

Capt Adlai Stevenson III, 90, in Chicago, Ill. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1952 and served in the Korean War. He later was commissioned and served in the Marine Corps Reserve. A graduate of Harvard law school, he served in the U.S. Senate from 1970-1981.

Col John C. Studt, 91, of Hartland, Maine. He enlisted in 1950 and was wounded in the Korean War. After the war, he completed his college education at UC Berkeley and was commissioned a second lieutenant. He served in Vietnam and saw action at Khe Sanh, where he was wounded multiple times.

He retired in 1982. He was a member of the MCA.

Capt Burrel E. Sumner, 100, of Blountstown, Fla. He was one of the Marine Corps' enlisted pilots, flying combat missions in the Corsair during WW II and the Korean War. He later was commissioned, and during his 20-year flying career, he accumulated more than 7,000 hours of flight time. His awards include the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal with two stars. After his retirement, he was actively involved with the Silver Eagles Association, a fraternal order of naval aviation's enlisted pilots, twice serving as the group's national president. He spent many years volunteering more than 5,000 hours in the restoration department of the National Museum of Naval Aviation in Pensacola, Fla. He was a friend to *Leatherneck's* In Memoriam editor, and he never tired of telling tales about flying the Corps' famous "bent-wing bird."

Cpl Margaret E. Talmage, 100, of Laurel, Mont. She enlisted in 1943 and completed recruit training at Camp Lejeune, N.C. She later served in California as a supply clerk.

Col Frederick L. Tolleson, 88, of Seattle, Wash. He was commissioned a second lieutenant after his graduation from the U.S. Naval Academy. During his 30-year career, he served as the CO

of USS *Ranger's* (CVA-61) MarDet and E/2/7 in Vietnam. In 1971 he was a senior advisor to the Vietnam Marine Corps and he was awarded the Silver Star for his actions during that tour. According to the award citation, while Brigade 147 of the Vietnamese Marine Division was heavily engaged with the enemy, Tolleson participated in numerous aerial missions, flying over enemy terrain to provide a direct link between the brigade and U.S. supporting arms. "On [March 21, 1971] during the heaviest day of fighting in the entire operations, he flew at extremely low altitude over enemy lines to observe and assess the tactical situation. Although his helicopter was struck by enemy fire ... and nearly incapacitated, he completely disregarded danger and remained on station providing critically needed supporting fire and expert assistance to the brigade. His outstanding coordination of artillery, fixed wing aircraft and helicopter gunship strikes, coupled with his tactical observations to the ground commander, contributed significantly to an overwhelming enemy defeat."

Other awards include the Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal and Navy Commendation Medal.

Sgt Richard T. "Dick" Tracy, 101, of Franklin, Ohio. He was assigned to

1stMarDiv during WW II and saw combat in the Pacific. His awards include two Purple Hearts.

Col Malcolm S. Underwood, 91, of Stuarts Draft, Va. He served on active duty during the Korean War and later had a career in the Marine Corps Reserve. Assignments included serving as the commander of various reserve units. He was a member of MOAA, the American Legion and the MCA.

Capt Alan W. Wincek, 71, in Delaware, Ohio. He was a comm officer with MCAS-6, VMAQ-1, VMAQ-2 and VMAQ-3.

William A. Young, 81, of Hazlehurst, Wis. He enlisted in the Marine Corps after his graduation from high school. He later owned a commercial construction company.

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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SOUND OFF [continued from page 7]

the bandoliers crossed with 14 mags and another in the flak jacket vest pocket. The trick was to get seven extra mags. I wonder how the 25 round curved mags are carried. The old bandoliers carried seven pouches of 10-round clips.

LCpl Joseph P. "Snuffy" Jackson
Loudonville, N.Y.

I love my monthly *Leatherneck*! [I am] enjoying the new look and style also.

I read "This Is My Rifle," the history of the Marine Corps transition to the M16, with great interest in the October issue. Here is how this Marine experienced the change.

When I attended Platoon Leaders Class (PLC) as a junior in the summer of 1970, we were issued and qualified with the venerable M14. We appreciated the look and feel of steel and oiled wood (sometimes fiberglass) on this classic, but heavy, weapon.

The next summer, as a senior, we got the M16A1, black rifles, Mattel specials, and .22s. The drill instructor informed us that the Marine Corps was switching over, but only for the duration of Vietnam. It was not a Marine's rifle, he said, as it had lousy sights, was hard to change dope,

hard to clean, easy to break and useless in a bayonet fight. Drill movements also changed, e.g., stack arms, and some platoons added a certain swing to the manual of arms to accommodate the shorter length.

Upon graduation and commissioning, I attended The Basic School. We had M16s locked to each lieutenant's rack. We trained hard with those rifles for 26 weeks but when range week came, they collected them and swapped in M14s. This was to ensure our success using a "real" rifle.

The duration of Vietnam came and went. The M16 resolved its issues and is now world renowned. Shooting scores and the number of expert badges have increased. It has evolved into a Marine's rifle without a doubt. I'm still a little doubtful, however, about the vertical butt stroke.

1stLt A.J. Caminiti
USMC, 1972-1976
New Hyde Park, N.Y.

Hollywood Marines

My brother, Private William "Bill" Niader, and his Marine buddies took this photo in a phony jailhouse in Hollywood, Calif., before going overseas in December 1944. Many Marines took photos like this before shipping out. Private Niader was killed June 12, 1945, at 19 years of age, on Kunishi Ridge in Okinawa by a Japanese



COURTESY OF FRANK NIADER

Pvt William Niader took a "Hollywood Marines" photo with his Marine buddies before shipping out to Okinawa in 1944.

mortar shell as he struggled to bring in a wounded Marine by stretcher from the exposed open ground dominated by the ridge.

Frank Niader
Wayne, N.J.

Christmas Dinner 1954

GIBLET GRAVY

SHRIMP COCKTAIL
ROAST TURKEY
BREAD DRESSING

CRANBERRY SAUCE

BUTTERED CORN

SNOW FLAKE POTATOES
CANDIED SWEET POTATOES

BUTTERED CAULIFLOWER

PICKLES

STUFFED CELERY HEARTS

HARD CANDY

OLIVES

LETTUCE WEDGES
WITH
FRENCH DRESSING

MIXED NUTS

FRUIT CAKE

ICE CREAM

PUMPKIN PIE

APPLES

ORANGES

MINCE MEAT PIE

HOT ROLLS

BREAD

&

BUTTER

COFFEE

Mess Sgt.: WALTER H. BOSSE T/Sgt. U.S.M.C.

Asst. Mess Sgt. LAWRENCE MORGAN Sgt. U.S.M.C.

Sub-Unit One, H&S Co, 3rd Service Regiment, 3rdMarDiv, FMFPAC were treated to a Christmas feast at Camp Carver, Kobe, Japan in December 1954.

Christmas Dinner, Camp Carver Kobe, Japan

Camp Carver was a small installation in the middle of Kobe, Japan. As far as I know, there were no other military bases around. Living conditions were austere. We lived in Quonset huts with a kerosene stove for heat. Chow was decent but ordinary so you can imagine our surprise when we saw the menu for our Christmas dinner and what was prepared for us. No one expected the sumptuous repast. You could hear the chatter and see eyes wide open in surprise when the guys walked in with the meal. We thought it amazing that something so elegant was prepared for us.

Sgt Joe Hardiman
USMC, 1953-1956
Massapequa, N.Y.

Reflections of Vietnam

I fought in the Vietnam War as a Marine. The most healing thing that helped me was revisiting Vietnam in 2010. Even though their government was communist, the South Vietnamese people were resilient in their recovery and truly showed their welcome to me, which I was much surprised by. I had gone there with a battle brother, Harry Locklear, a chopper pilot in the Vietnam War.

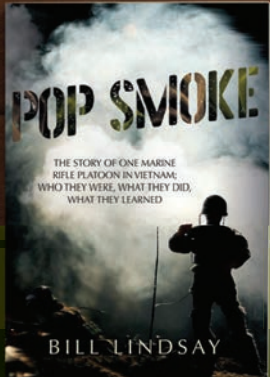
In all wars, innocent people suffer the most and die in poverty caused by

actions of war. Unlike any other place in the world, these people have suffered from war for more than 1,000 years. I know no other people in the world that suffered more than they have. Behind their smiles I also saw a heartfelt relief that peace had finally come to them no matter who rules their government. Their healing brought peace to me because, in my mind, that is what I was fighting for. I was fighting for them in their civil war to bring them peace. Even though we won every battle, the bottom line is, come to the victor come the spoils of war, and in this case, the spoils of war was peace for them.

In a strange way, that was kind of healing for me in a very humbling way. Peace

has its price and God only knows they paid the price for it. We also paid the price right along with them and to see them at peace with themselves, I can honestly say they deserved it more than anyone in the world. No matter what your spiritual belief is we all pray for peace.

I also noticed while there that in the south, the government was in the shadows also learning that freedom of enterprise, freedom of movement, and other freedoms can coexist without infringing on their government controls and taxing. They, the people of the south, thrive on this while the north is still trying to learn it. Movement is the only noticeable difference. In the past, it was walking, running, and man-



POP SMOKE

by BILL LINDSAY

As a veteran Marine, Lt Bill Lindsay knew that the men who fought in Vietnam never got the recognition they deserved. His latest work, "Pop Smoke," provides a more thorough description of the men who fought, the conditions they faced, and the adversaries they overcame.

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The net proceeds from the sale of this book are being donated to the Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation.



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at the black sands of Iwo Jima, then we can visit and find healing in Vietnam and its people we were sworn to help protect and maybe prosper. If not for the healing of our hearts, then for the healing of our souls.

Cpl Robert C. LeBeau
USMC, 1966-1969
Stockton, Calif.

A Wound Veterans Share

The poem below was written days after we retreated from the Afghanistan battlefield. It is some rambling thoughts about world events involving all our fighting men and women.

32 years in the submarine Navy,
Not so much as a scratch,
So many earned the title "warrior,"
While I was deep protected by a hatch.

I have the greatest respect for combat vets,

Many spilled blood to keep me free,
Their bravery and fears shared with brothers,

Their wounds and decorations intimidate me.

As combat veterans have told me,
A noncombatant can never know,
The emotions of the combat warrior,
When into enemy fire they go.

Today I have more in common with combat vets,

Through all our wars we did not yield,
Today I received a serious wound,
Retreating from the Afghan battlefield.

You should be proud of your service there,

You were the superior force by far,
I won't be able to show my wound,
It's a wound that leaves no scar.

My wound does not bleed,
You may find this beyond belief,
We vets all have a wound in our backs,
We were wounded by the Commander in Chief.

CDR Dick Boyce, USN (Ret)
The Villages, Fla.

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

WAYS TO SOUND OFF



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run rickshaws to get from point A to point B, which they did and still do today and they did not give it up. Then they added to the mix the invention of bicycles and bicycle rickshaws, then came motorbikes and motorbike rickshaws. After that cars, buses, taxis, trucks, and trains and planes. Believe it or not, this all still exists even to this day despite all the wars that come their way.

They are a proud Vietnamese people. I believe they are slowly moving away from communism by wealth, enterprise and by the still quasi freedom of feeling happy for the first time from no more wars. Vietnam is also being helped along by all those governments that fought on their land, friend or foe, which was there earlier for their rich resources but not their freedom and peace. The world's rich investments are now pouring in money, and with their new upbringings, they are turning it into a place to visit with their rich history of war and culture.

If our fathers can visit and find healing

Reader Assistance

Edited by Sara W. Bock

Reunions

• **National Montford Point Marine Assn.**, July 12-16, 2022, Shreveport, La. Contact Ronald Johnson, (504) 202-8552, vice_president@montfordpointmarines.org.

• **USMC Weather Service**, June 19-24, 2022, Overland Park, Kan. Contact Kathy Donham, (252) 342-8459, kathy.donham@hotmail.com, or Dave Englert, engertd@psci.net.

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

• **I/3/7 (all eras)**, April 27-30, 2022, Myrtle Beach, S.C. Contact Dennis Deibert, 6007 Catherine St., Harrisburg, PA 17112, (717) 652-1695, dennisdeibert8901@comcast.net.

• **M/3/7 (RVN)**, May 11-14, 2022, Annapolis, Md. Contact George Martin,

(443) 822-3597, m37bulldog@aol.com.

• **Marine Expeditionary Brigade-Afghanistan, Task Force Leatherneck (2009-2010)**, May 13-15, 2022, Quantico, Va. Contact reunion committee, taskforceleatherneck@gmail.com.

• **TBS 3-64**, April 5-7, 2022. Contact Hugh Doss, hudoss@aol.com.

• **TBS 4-67, 5-67** "Rally at the Alamo," April 19-22, 2022, San Antonio. Contact Ken Pouch, (860) 881-6819, kpouch5@gmail.com.

• **TBS, Co C, 3-72**, April 20-23, 2022, Quantico, Va. Contact Col Joe Mueller, USMCR (Ret), (818) 815-8331, jnm21213@yahoo.com.

• **TBS, Co D, 4-73**, is planning a 50th-anniversary reunion in 2023, Quantico, Va. Contact Col Bill Anderson, USMCR (Ret), (540) 850-4213, binche57@yahoo.com, or Col Bob Donaghue, USMCR (Ret), (617) 840-0267, ip350haven@comcast.net.

• **VMFA-451**, March 8-12, 2022,

Beaufort, S.C. Contact Sgt Mark Lyons, reunionvmfa451@yahoo.com.

Sales, Trades and Giveaways

• Bill Pilgrim, (620) 521-1492, marinecorps1955@yahoo.com, has more than **200 recruit graduation books** from Parris Island and San Diego that he's been collecting for 15 years in an effort to provide them to Marines, free of charge, who are looking for a copy. He is **looking for someone to take over his efforts** as he is no longer able to do so.

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

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Saved Round

By Nancy S. Lichtman

A FAMILY'S ANGUISH AND AN INFAMOUS DAY—When the Japanese attacked the U.S. fleet at Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, Private William George "Bill" Turner was a radio operator assigned to Marine Scout Bombing Squadron 231 at Ewa Mooring Mast Field, Oahu, Hawaii. During the attack, he supplied ammunition to Technical Sergeant Emil S. Peters, who was firing a belt-fed Browning .30-caliber machine gun from one of the aircraft parked on the airfield. The two Marines reportedly downed two enemy aircraft before both men were wounded. Pvt Turner, 22, died on Dec. 12 as a result of the wounds he received during the attack.

He was awarded the Bronze Star posthumously for his actions during the air raid and was later honored by Pacific Fleet commander Admiral Chester Nimitz.

Pvt Turner's family in rural Algona, Iowa, didn't learn of his death until late in the evening on Dec. 25. According to the Dec. 30 edition of *The Algona Upper Des Moines*, a telegram arrived at the Turner household shortly after 5 p.m. on Christmas Day, bringing the sad news of Pvt Turner's death. His mother had been holding out hope that

her son would recover, having been notified via telegram of his wounding. "Throughout Algona [on] Christmas evening there was universal sadness and sympathy, but as the Turner family said, it was a favorable stroke of fate that the news did not come [until] the close of the day. The family had spent most of the holiday season in the belief that he was still living," reported the local paper.

Turner's sister, Ruth, told the Mason City, Iowa, *Globe Gazette*, that a Marine Corps official wrote a letter to the family telling them of William's bravery during the attack. According to the *Globe Gazette*, the letter concluded with the following statement: "It is needless to say that your great loss was our great loss, and we, of this group, are all very proud to have known William as the fine upstanding American boy that he was."

Pvt Turner was buried at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu, Hawaii, but the family held a memorial service for him in Algona in early January 1942. The First Presbyterian Church was filled to capacity as people gathered to pay their respects to the family of the town's first casualty of World War II.



Pvt William Turner



The Marine Air Group 21 hangar at Ewa Field burns after it was hit by bombs from Japanese aircraft on Dec. 7, 1941.

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