

JULY 2021

MAGAZINE OF THE MARINES

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COVER: Pvt Miranda Femenella, "Lima" Co, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, is photographed with her eagle, globe and anchor aboard Camp Pendleton, Calif., April 22. The Eagle, Globe and Anchor Ceremony takes place after the Crucible during recruit training at both Marine Corps Recruit Depots and signifies the transformation from recruit to Marine. Photo by Sgt Alina Thackray, 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.)

One dark evening in March 1953, I would experience something that still resonates nearly 70 years later—enough to bring on a chill. I would never again experience what I did on that extraordinary night. I assumed, I anticipated, I waited for that special night to reoccur, but it never did.

During recruit training we were given a test after evening chow which was unusual as we very seldom left our squad bay during the evening. Maybe it was that we were five or six weeks into this thing and feeling pretty good about our progress as recruits; maybe just the fact that Staff Sergeant James McCrory had had enough time with us to begin establishing a level of trust. Things were rather quiet and mellow (that's not a word to be used lightly on Parris Island) when we fell out and organized our squads into marching order. It was dark, a totally moonless night, so seeing beyond the man in front of you was at best difficult.

SSgt McCrory forward marched us along the main battalion street heading the half mile or so to the testing hall. Things were normal—normal in the sense that we were stepping out pretty good benefiting from the half dozen or so weeks constituting several hundred hours of drill on the parade field. SSgt McCrory had a sing-song tone to his cadence that we all had grown very comfortable with and about halfway down the pitch-dark street it suddenly dawned on me that there was no cadence for us to keep the beat of heels synchronized. Those heels of 65 Marines were hitting the hot top with the timing of the finest Marine Drill Team or marching band. The difference was we had no music and were doing this all on our own. SSgt McCrory had gone silent. Maybe he had recognized that we finally had gotten it, and he let us, for the first time ever, march without his cadence. It was an emotional moment as we moved smartly down the street to the sound of our heels hitting the pavement at the same instant. Thump. Thump. Thump. Not a man out of sync. I could sense I was not alone in recognizing what was happening. Those heels were one. We were all feeling it.

Sixty-five kids who only a handful of weeks ago couldn't have organized a two-car parade. It was incredible. I had never before and never since experienced this type of teamwork or coordination. It was a true "Band of Brothers." A moment never forgotten. This was what they called Marine pride. We were, for that small moment in time, more than a great marching band. We had become a world class symphony orchestra and the maestro was SSgt James Patrick McCrory. God, what a feeling that was. For someone like me, it gave this huge sense of belonging to something. We had bonded on that dark street and I had the sense of security that only comes with being totally comfortable with those you're with. The Marines had made me proud—proud to be a Marine.

Ralph Wright
Lady Lake, Fla.

Compliments for MCA Website

You have consistently gone above and beyond. Your content this past month in regard to the Battle of Okinawa has exhibited more than I would ever have expected. I was specifically fond of "Last Major Battle of WW II and the First Model of a Joint Operation" material. The comprehensive list of maps, articles, books, videos, and podcasts illuminate that momentous chapter of the Marine Corps as well.

As a student of history, Afghanistan veteran and current reserve member, I know that I can rely on you for productive, informative and inspirational content. Thank you again, and I look forward to supporting your mission.

Sgt Matt Norris
Scarborough, Maine

• One of our goals in developing our relatively new Professional Development page on the MCA website was to provide our members and readers with additional information on battles and other elements of Marine history including the videos, maps and podcasts you mention. We're constantly expanding and invite everyone to check out <https://mca-marines.org/professional-development/> for "the rest of the story."—Editor

"Full Metal Jacket"

This letter is in response to Corporal Carl R. Withey's letter in the April issue responding to Cpl William K. Bauer's comments [February issue] on the movie

"Full Metal Jacket" and their boot camp experiences. Cpl Withey is very fortunate, to say the least, to have gone through boot camp and saying, "I do not recall a single time any of my DIs ever laid a hand on any of us during the time I spent at Parris Island." He believes that not any of the drill instructors would have hurt them physically.

I am aware that Marine recruit training has changed very drastically through the years. However, from my experience, "Full Metal Jacket" recruit training was realistic enough to bring vivid memories of the boot camp that I went through at MCRD San Diego, Calif., in 1948.

Most of our DIs were World War II veterans. They knew the realities of war. I am thankful that their training was strict and gave us the skills that prepared us for combat. They instilled in us the confidence and belief that Marines are the best fighting force and would be victorious. Of course, we learned of our traditions and our historic battles. We learned about the fighting men of past battles who are part of our great history. It was instilled in us that Marines never give up.

Throughout boot camp there were many instances of different punishments inflicted to get us to shape up. Some disciplinary measures were quite harsh. Examples: a recruit who messed up had to fill his dungaree trouser pockets with sand and by the end of the day, doing our routine of drilling, exercising, etc., the recruit showed us the result of the sand rubbing against his thigh. The skin had rubbed off. You can imagine the pain. The recruit did not cry out nor complain.

If a recruit did not act fast enough in response to a command of "move out!" he received a kick on his rear end. Another favorite target of a DI's boondockers was a recruit's shin. In my case, I could not remember the answer to how to find north by focusing on the Big Dipper to locate the North Star at night. I was ordered to bend over, grab my ankles, and the DI swatted my rear with a bayonet.

I mention these only to point out that Cpl Withey's boot camp experience was a hell of a lot more pleasant compared to mine and other Marine recruits of our time. In no manner am I complaining. I realized very early on that this was the real thing. This was what it took to get through to become a Marine. That is the way it was. We experienced stressful, strenuous physical tasks including rigorous bayonet



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*For DAP details reference MARADMIN 279/20



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fighting and long hikes and with pride, happily donned our dress blues with PFC stripes and went home on 10-day leave upon graduation.

My experience as a Marine enabled me to be successful in my endeavors and in overcoming obstacles later in civilian life. In my opinion, R. Lee Erme performed excellently in his portrayal of a Marine DI and did not do a serious disservice to the Marine Corps and our DIs. Even now at the age of 92, I am still proud to have served my country as a United States Marine.

SSgt Santiago Salazar
USMC, 1948-1952
Orange, Calif.

Fellow Marines

I am happy to have received my May copy of *Leatherneck* today—it is my only magazine. I was in the U.S. Army twice, once underage at 16 years old in 1940 and then in 1949 onward. It took me two times to finally get it right and join the U.S. Marines. I managed to stay squared away and attain the rank of sergeant. I rue the fact I stayed in the Marines three years. It's said that ignorance is bliss. Looking back, I should have stayed in the Corps, period.

I have many certificates and articles but nothing from the Army or Air Force except my honorable discharges. That's OK as I am proud of all items. I'm still referred to as Sergeant Champagne, U.S. Marine. I will be 91 years old in July, Lord willing. At present I live in my daughter's home in Sequim, Wash., but I plan on moving out soon as I own a house at Gold Bar, Wash., near Stevens Pass. I still get around OK physically so far. I miss all of my former pals wherever they are.

Sgt J.J. Champagne Jr.
Sequim, Wash.

Enlistment by Default

Inspired by the many letters I've read in *Leatherneck* concerning enlistments by default, I share mine. After graduating high school in Indiana, I went to Chicago for a job in a meat packing plant in anticipation of enlisting in the Navy at some point. The point arrived and I took a bus to the downtown recruiting station. It was near noon and I was waiting next to the Navy office which was closed for lunch. An old (to me) Marine sergeant came out of an adjoining office and asked what I was waiting for. I told him I wanted to join the Navy and was waiting for the recruiter. He asked, "Why do you want to join the Navy?" I told him, "Because I want to go aboard ship and see the world." He responded, "Well, Marines serve aboard ships and serve all over the

world." I asked him what did Marines do on Navy ships? He said, "They protect the ship's captain and guard Sailors in the brig. Come into my office and I'll show you some pictures of Marines aboard ship as well at U.S. embassies all over the world." And he did.

I told him, "Sign me up!" He asked my age and I told him I was 17. He then asked if my parents would sign a consent form for me to enlist early. I told him they didn't know what my plans were but would never sign if they did. The good sergeant told me to fill out some preliminary paperwork and return when I turned 18, which I did. Over the years while on cruises to the Med, Taiwan, Philippines and others, I early on came to realize what a terrible mistake I avoided that summer in 1956.

Capt W.D. Penn, USMC (Ret)
1956 to 1977
Waldorf, Md.

March Issue Articles Resonated With Reader

I especially liked the articles "Social Media ... Passing the Word in the 21st Century" and "Survivors Helping Survivors Heal": TAPS Provides Peer Support, Resources and Comfort in Tragedy," in the March issue. We take care of Marines and their relations be they family or otherwise.

Doug Caldwell
Plano, Texas

Puzzling Question Answered

This is in response to SSgt Robert D. Minton's post regarding Marine One Security personnel in the April issue. I was assigned to HMX-1 Security Detachment from 1976 to 1980. All security personnel were Military Police, MOS 5811. We all attended the U.S. Army Military Police School for our training.

Sgt Art LePine
USMC, 1976-1980
Tampa, Fla.

Author of Sea Stories Loves to Read Others' Tales

I just received my May issue of *Leatherneck*. I always go through it cover to cover each month but have been looking intensely since I wrote my story on leeches [Sea Stories] titled, "Pesky Little Blood Suckers." I just wonder how many Army and Marine Corps Vietnam veterans shudder at the thought of them. Our afterthoughts of the NVA bullets and mortars stay with us forever, so I hope my story brought a smile and a laugh to all who read about my Marine unit's leech invasion. No casualties reported except the leeches. It brought a bit of laughter to me again. I had never told my wife about the leeches so now she knows. I'm sure

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Iraq and Afghan combat veterans have their own complementary type of story to tell, and I hope to read them.

GySgt Larry D. Williams, USMC (Ret)
Yuma, Ariz.

Hell's Half Acre

Having participated in the re-enactment of Washington's crossing of the Delaware on Christmas Day for 25 years, I take account with several comments in the article, "Hell's Half Acre" in the May issue. Primary is that Cadwalader did not cross the Delaware at Neshaminy Ferry as planned. Although his light infantry was able to cross with Marines rowing, his artillery and other troops were unable due to heavy snow, sleet and treacherous ice on the river. Consequently, he recalled all troops back to Pennsylvania. This kept the Marines from entering the fray that Christmas Day. A third crossing farther south was also called off for the same reason. However, the Marines made a name for themselves in the Battle of Princeton. This was also where Captain William Shippin is said to be the first Marine killed in battle on colonial soil. In fact, there is a plaque with his name on it at the center square in Princeton.

Thomas R. Blair
Sun City West, Ariz.



COURTESY OF JACK STUBBS

WW II Marines William Darling and Braswell Deen attended "Kilo" Co, 3/1's reunion in Savannah, Ga., Nov. 17-19, 2016.

History of the 1stMarDiv

"The History of the 1st Marine Division Through World War II" by Joel D. Thacker in the April issue was very interesting and informative. Having served in "Kilo" Co, 3rd Bn, 1st Marines in Vietnam, everything about the 1stMarDiv is of interest. In 2016, Kilo Co, 3/1 (K Co in World War II) held a reunion in Savannah, Ga. We

were fortunate to have the honor of two WW II Marines who served in Co K, 3/1 attend the reunion: William Darling and Braswell Deen (who unfortunately passed away in December 2020) served in 2nd platoon and fought in the Battle for Peleliu and Battle for Okinawa.

Jack Stubbs
Albany, N.Y.

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Sixty-four years ago, my senior drill instructor (DI) named me the outstanding man of Platoon 140 at the graduation ceremonies held at MCRD Parris Island, S.C. Whether that honor was merited was never questioned by any of my fellow Marines; our DI's decisions were never disputed. That brings me to the crux of this inquiry. Are today's enlisted Marines as disciplined as were their predecessors? Let's not compare weapons. My M1 Garand, proclaimed to be the finest assault weapon ever invented, as suggested by General George Patton, might not have the fire power of an M4 or M16, but those of us who used the World War II rifle were accurate and could still probably score as high as today's riflemen. There have been rumors that today's graduates from Parris Island and San Diego are sometimes reluctant to recognize us older veterans or call out to us when we wear hoodies and boonie caps affixed with the eagle, globe and anchor. It is said by some of my generation that the use of the moniker or greeting of "Semper Paratus" or "oorah" are things of the past and that pride in service is on the wane. It has even been said that some Marine Corps officers and senior noncommissioned officers are encountering a less-enthusiastic group

of recruits. Now, it is my hope that such doubts will be proven wrong and that our present-day Marines are still among the best war fighters in the mold of a Chesty Puller. Let's hope so. Oorah!

Dr. Allen R. Remaley
Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

Memory of Chance Meetings

Our plane from Okinawa touched down in the stultifying heat of Da Nang just after midnight in July 1970. I was one of the 100 or so Marines who filed into the reception center to be processed and sent to our respective units. Somewhere in the distance artillery boomed—the first shots I had heard fired in anger. The sounds of war would become increasingly familiar over the next year but at that moment everything was new and strange except for the voice I heard calling my name. "Fed! Hey, Fed! Is that really you?" I wheeled around in disbelief to see who was calling me. I had been in Vietnam for about 15 minutes and the fact that I was being paged was mind-boggling. That's when I saw George with a big smile on his face working his way through the crowd.

George and I had been stationed at Camp Pendleton with the 5th Marine Division where he was a combat photographer. We had been fairly close. I had helped

him shop for an engagement ring and in publishing a book of poems he had written. To see him now, a recognizable face in my first moments in country, was as welcome as it was unexpected. We talked for a few minutes and I asked the questions all FNGs ask on their arrival in a combat zone before George headed off for his R&R flight and I boarded a deuce-and-a-half for 1st Marine Division headquarters. I figured that was the last I'd see of George, but due to the fortunes of war and the relative freedom of a combat photographer, our paths did indeed cross again, twice.

About six months later I was asleep in my hooch at Red Beach, where III MAF was based, when I was roughly shaken awake, and a bottle of champagne was thrust into my face. It was George. How he had found me and where the champagne had come from were mysteries I was not able to solve before George stumbled off into the darkness. The next time I saw him was on Okinawa as I was being processed for my return to the world. I was checking the latest flight manifest for my name when George ambled past to our mutual surprise. He told me that his enlistment had expired, and he had been technically a civilian for his last few

[continued on page 66]

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In Every Clime and Place

Compiled by Sara W. Bock

UNITED KINGDOM Marine F-35 Squadron Joins HMS *Queen Elizabeth* Air Wing

Five F-35B aircraft with Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 211, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, based at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Ariz., arrived in the United Kingdom on April 27 to conduct final training for a first-of-its-kind carrier deployment aboard Her Majesty's Ship *Queen Elizabeth* as part of Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 21.

During CSG-21, VMFA-211, the "Wake Island Avengers," will integrate with the U.K.'s 617 Squadron, "The Dambusters," to form the largest fifth-generation carrier air wing in the world.

"Moving the Marines, aircraft and equipment to the United Kingdom required coordinated planning, complex logistical effort, diligent maintenance and seamless execution," said Lieutenant Colonel Andrew D'Ambrogi, the commanding officer of VMFA-211. "Now that we have arrived in the United Kingdom, we are reintegrating with our U.K. counterparts and focused on providing both the commodore of CSG-21 and U.S. combatant commanders with ready, combat-capable, fifth-generation aircraft."

This deployment comes ahead of CSG-

21's worldwide deployment later this year, marking the first full operational deployment of a U.S. F-35B squadron aboard a British aircraft carrier. This combined deployment marks another high-water mark in the United States' special relationship with the U.K. and 3rd MAW's employment of the Marine Corps' most advanced aircraft anywhere in the world.

According to Major General Christopher Mahoney, the commanding general of 3rd MAW, the wing "continues to be actively engaged in operations around the world. We have trained extremely hard and are looking forward to partnering with our British allies aboard the HMS *Queen Elizabeth*. She is a beautiful ship and represents a great capability [...] This deployment will demonstrate the superior lethality that highly trained Marine crews and our fifth-generation aircraft bring to the U.S. and U.K. team."

In preparation for this deployment, VMFA-211 trained in all aspects of F-35 employment and sustainment. The Avengers previously completed a qualification and training deployment last fall as part of HMS *Queen Elizabeth*'s air wing in the U.K.

The Marines of 3rd MAW continue to

"Fix, Fly and Fight" as the Marine Corps' largest aircraft wing and remain combat ready, deployable on short notice and lethal when called into action.

Capt Tyler Hopkins, USMC

FORT BRAGG, N.C. Marines Train for Future Fight, Near-Peer Threats

Marines and Sailors with 10th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division participated in Exercise Rolling Thunder 21.2 at Fort Bragg, N.C., and Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., April 19-29. Rolling Thunder is a live-fire exercise that takes place in a dynamic scenario in which Marines employ distributed fires through Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations (EABO).

This iteration of the exercise had unique components that affected every subordinate unit in 10th Marine Regiment. It was the first time the regiment was able to conduct fire missions with High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS). This weapon system gives the Marine Corps a competitive edge against peer threats by providing longer range and more precise fires capabilities than the M777 howitzer. HIMARS has been in use by the 1st and 3rd Marine Divisions, but 10th Marines was able to temporarily acquire the system for the exercise, which allowed them to gain more familiarity with employing HIMARS as the force continues the modernization effort that will result in a large increase in precision fires assets across the Corps. "Romeo" Battery HIMARS crew members explained that they are rockets on wheels and will make 2ndMarDiv more flexible.

"Currently we are shooting in support of the 23rd Marine Regiment as they execute EABOs against the 9th Mechanized Infantry Brigade," said First Lieutenant Cordel Frovarp, a field artillery officer with 1st Battalion, 10th Marines. "This training is in line with the Marine Corps Force Design 2030 as we start to prepare for combat in anti-area access denial environments. This training allows the Marines to try new things that will prepare them for fights now and into the future."

In addition to the use of HIMARS, this was the first time that Exercise Rolling Thunder involved the use of unmanned aerial systems (UAS). These systems provided the regiment with expanded



A1C JESSI MONTE, USAF

Marine Corps F-35B Lightning II Joint Strike Fighters assigned to MAG-13 stand ready on the flight line at Royal Air Force Lakenheath, England, April 26. Aircraft and personnel from VMFA-211 will support the United Kingdom's Carrier Strike Group deployment later this year.

Marines with 1/10, 2ndMarDiv prepare to use HIMARS in support of a live-fire artillery exercise during Exercise Rolling Thunder at Fort Bragg, N.C., April 18. The long-range mobile rocket system allows Marines to employ precision fires onto a target.



PFC SARAH PYSHER, USMC

Right: Marines with 1/10, 2ndMarDiv load a HIMARS with 227 mm rockets during Exercise Rolling Thunder, April 18. The exercise, which took place at Fort Bragg and Camp Lejeune, N.C., allowed Marines to rehearse employing distributed fires via simulated EABOs.

capabilities in aerial reconnaissance and fires observation, which increased situational awareness and acted as a sensor for expedited decision making.

“We use an R-80D SkyRaider drone,” said Lance Corporal Jacob O’Toole, an intelligence specialist with 1/10. “Marines should train with them more. They have a lot of capabilities such as plotting points, locating attacks and targets, and it can record and take pictures for briefings.”

Exercise Rolling Thunder is conducted twice a year for 10th Marines and its subordinate battalions to gain confidence and increase proficiency in operating in austere environments. This year, 10th Marines was complemented by heliborne, fixed-wing and UAS support to provide expeditionary fires capable of rapid maneuver and employment in support of apex battalion task forces.



PFC SARAH PYSHER, USMC

“This iteration is the first time 10th [Marine] Regiment has the ability to work with engineers and have them establish berms and cover that integrate with our battery defense,” said Corporal Xavier Ortiz, a field artillery cannoneer with 1/10.

Marines received data from an observer that was extensively processed in a very short period of time. This process results in the right prioritization of targets, the

accurate and timely delivery of the right munitions to that target so the desired effect is achieved, and the assessment of those effects after the fire mission is completed. This process is critical to all forms of military maneuver, and extensive training scenarios like Rolling Thunder 21.2 are crucial for preparing Marines.

“We are just part of a working body system,” Ortiz said. “The forward observ-

A rocket is fired from a HIMARS system by Marines with 1/10 at Fort Bragg, N.C., April 26. The regiment's participation in Exercise Rolling Thunder increased its combat readiness.



PFC SARAH PYSHER, USMC

Right: An R-80D SkyRaider drone prepares to take flight at Fort Bragg, N.C., April 21. During Exercise Rolling Thunder, small unmanned aerial systems provided increased situational awareness for the 10th Marine Regiment as they improved their EABO skills and proficiency in operating in austere environments.



PFC SARAH PYSHER, USMC

ers are the eyes, the fire support are the brains, and we, the 0811s, are the muscle.”

Effective training and mission readiness were the end goals of Exercise Rolling Thunder—just another tool in 2ndMarDiv and the Marine Corps’ tool belt to achieve a more lethal and capable warfighting organization that is ready to fight against peer threats.

PFC Sarah Pysher, USMC

OKINAWA, JAPAN

Pacific Pioneer: 9th ESB Practices EABO Concepts, Naval Integration

Marines and Sailors with 9th Engineer Support Battalion, 3rd Marine Logistics Group honed their Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations capabilities and “Fight Now” concepts in support of III Marine Expeditionary Force on training areas throughout Okinawa, Japan, during Exercise Pacific Pioneer, April 8-23.

Pacific Pioneer served as an opportunity

to rehearse Marine air-ground task force and joint integration as well as fulfilling training and readiness requirements for the battalion’s semi-annual Marine Corps Combat Readiness Evaluation.

According to 9th ESB’s operations officer, Major Brian Kujawski, the 2019 planning guidance and reemphasis on naval integration from 38th Commandant of the Marine Corps, General David H. Berger, were a key focus of the exercise.

“Throughout Pacific Pioneer, Navy Seabees with Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 4 (NMCB-4) were integrated down to the platoon and squad levels across the entire battlespace, providing intelligence integration, reconnaissance support, non-standard bridging expertise, and vertical and horizontal construction support,” said Kujawski. “Their ability to seamlessly operate within Marine formations was key in allowing us to establish survivable command, control and logistics

nodes in every area of our training.”

The exercise began with an engineer reconnaissance team of 9th ESB Marines and Navy Seabees with NMCB-4 deploying via assault support aircraft to training areas on Ie Shima and at the Jungle Warfare Training Center. This integrated team immediately began preparations for the establishment of the battalion forward presence. Upon receiving their simulated mission, the battalion began operational planning and echeloned subordinate forces to multiple training areas across the island prefecture.

The battalion deliberately crafted command post operations to be conducted without any standard internet services, forcing communications through redundant and lower signature means to allow the battalion to command and control through mission type orders and a focus on decentralized execution at the company and platoon level. The scenario was built to split Okinawa into four separate islands, forcing creative planning to overcome tactical-level engineer and logistics problems that commonly arise when conducting dispersed operations. The battalion’s forward headquarters was also intentionally placed on the island of Ie Shima to add a realistic planning dynamic associated with moving personnel and equipment across littoral waterways via ferries, simulated “land bridges” and assault support aircraft.

“Each company essentially controlled their own ‘island’s’ warfighting functions and provided once-daily situation reports

during pre-arranged communications windows,” said Captain Samuel Houghtling, 9th ESB’s assistant operations officer. “The intent was to give the commanders on the ground the necessary breathing room to solve complex problems with their teams, while the staff and commanding officer liaised with higher and adjacent headquarters to answer resource shortfalls and push support to subordinate units as needed.”

With established forward basing, along with command-and-control structure, the battalion began executing missions with support from Combat Logistics Regiment 37, Combat Logistics Battalion 4, 3rd Landing Support Battalion and key units from across the MEF in Marine Wing Support Squadron 172 and 12th Marine Regiment.

Training included engineer reconnaissance and provisional infantry maneuvers at the Jungle Warfare Training Center; survivability, mobility and counter-mobility operations; support to forward arming and refueling points with bulk fuel Marines attached to MWSS-172; tactical-level bulk fuel operations; air delivery operations; and explosive ordnance disposal exploitation training.

The exercise also demonstrated the integration of Seabees with Bridge Company during conventional bridging operations at Naha Military Port. This joint element practiced supporting the movement of long-range precision fires over littoral waterways and transporting a 12th Marine Regiment High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) and Joint Light Tactical Vehicle via an improved ribbon bridge. Bridge Co used this training venue as an opportunity to certify mission essential training standards before full divestment of conventional bridging capability takes effect later this year.



Marines with 9th ESB and Navy Seabees with NMCB-4 load a JLTV onto an improved ribbon bridge during Exercise Pacific Pioneer at Naha Port, Okinawa, Japan, April 21. (Photo by LCpl Alyssa Chuluda, USMC)

“While we still own the equipment, we must be ready to use it in a fight at any moment,” said Captain Brian Hundley, Bridge Co commander. “During Pacific Pioneer, we successfully conducted conventional rafting for one JLTV and one HIMARS, maneuvering the HIMARS asset to a notional forward location where it could have a better effect on the enemy from an area it would otherwise be unable to reach.”

Throughout the exercise, 9th ESB faced a notional adversary that tested a number of legacy methods for fuel distribution across the battlespace. The battalion reconfigured its existing Amphibious Assault Fuel System into smaller, conceptual

Modular Fuel Systems (MFS), and dispersed them across a much wider space in order to increase survivability and gain redundancy in support of refueling ground and aviation assets. Additionally, the battalion designed the conceptual MFS to be interoperable with heavy motor transportation assets, allowing them to achieve a distributed network of fuel capabilities robust enough to bring 2.7 million gallons of fuel ashore.

“The lines of effort employed by Bulk Fuel Company throughout the last year and during this exercise are informing service-level reorganization and capability development initiatives. The Marines’ outside-the-box thinking and innovation will continue to have a substantial impact on future concepts of support for transporting bulk fuel,” said Captain Dorothy Hernandez, Bulk Fuel Co commander.

Throughout the operation, the battalion combat operations center on Ie Shima continued to provide command and control, adapting and overcoming a simulated communications-degraded environment.

“Simply put, I am proud to say that the Marines and Sailors surpassed my expectations. During Pacific Pioneer, we enabled MEF operations by generating

LCpl Htoo Htoo Baw, a metal worker with Engineer Support Co, 9th ESB, welds pieces of metal together in support of 9th ESB’s Explosive Ordnance Disposal Marines on Kin Blue Training Area, Okinawa, Japan, during Exercise Pacific Pioneer, April 20.



SGT HAILEY CLAY, USMC

engineering effects throughout the operating environment in order to set conditions for the MEF to conduct shaping and decisive operations against the exercise enemy,” said Lieutenant Colonel Paul Bock, the commanding officer of 9th ESB. “Pacific Pioneer reinforced our strong relationship with the Seabees; highlighting the power of the Navy and Marine Corps team, coming together to form a naval engineer force that supports the MEF and the fleet.”

Based out of Okinawa, 3rd MLG is a forward-deployed combat unit that serves as III Marine Expeditionary Force’s comprehensive engineer and combat service support backbone for operations throughout the Indo-Pacific area of responsibility.

1stLt Jonathan Coronel, USMC

CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C.

Logistics Exercise Tests II MEF’s Movement, Transport Capabilities

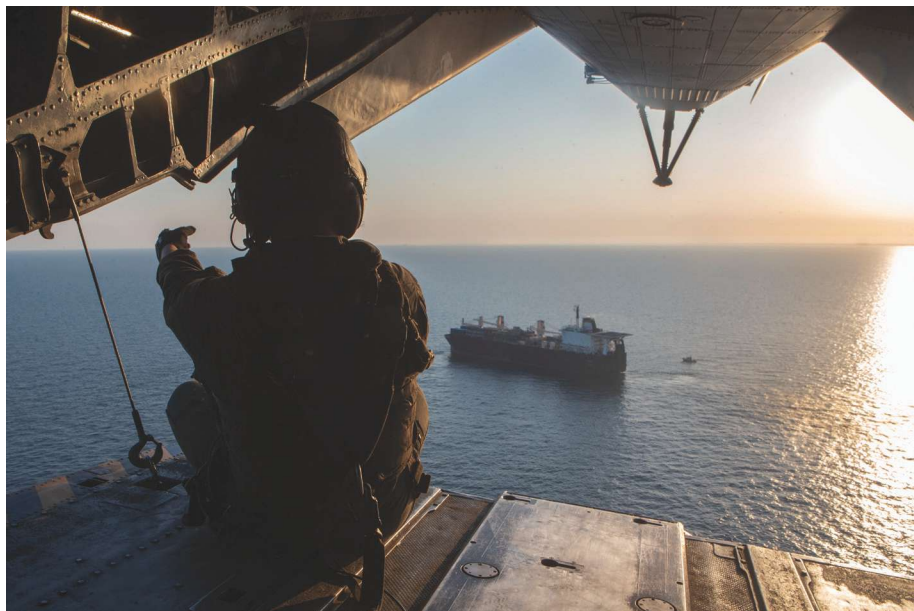
Marines with II Marine Expeditionary Force executed Exercise Dynamic Cape 21.1, a maritime prepositioning exercise that included an Operational Logistics Exercise (OPLOGEX) with a subsequent final exercise event, April 7-28.

Dynamic Cape was a MEF-level exercise which supported the development of command and control and logistics capabilities across different areas of operation. The scenario-based training incorporated movement of military equipment, personnel, transportation and cross communication between II MEF and its allies and partners.

With external support from the Norwegian Army’s Brigade North, Marines with II MEF, 2nd Marine Expeditionary Brigade and 2nd Marine Logistics Group participated in the exercise. The OPLOGEX took place across the eastern United States, including Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., Military Ocean Terminal Sunny Point, and Blount Island, Fla. The logistical exercise showcased the Marines’ ability to transport military equipment by rail, motor transport and ship. The OPLOGEX component of Dynamic Cape was conducted by the recently activated 2nd Landing Support Battalion, 2nd MLG.

“This is our first major exercise since the activation of 2nd Landing Support Battalion,” said Lieutenant Colonel Randall Nickel, the commanding officer of 2nd LSB. “Marines of 2nd LSB were supporting the reconstitution of the equipment that was assigned to the MAGTF during Exercise Dynamic Cape. The realistic quality of the exercise was apparent when put to the test.”

Dynamic Cape served as a crucial exer-



LCPL CALEB STELTER, USMC

Above: Sgt Kaleb Clark, a crew chief with HMH-461, sits on the ramp of a CH-53E Super Stallion as the aircraft departs USNS *D.T. Williams* off the East Coast of the United States during Exercise Dynamic Cape, April 5.



CPL ADAEZIA CHAVEZ, USMC

Marines with 2nd MLG chain a high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle onto a rail car at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., April 13. Exercise Dynamic Cape was a command and control exercise simulating a contested environment to enhance operational readiness between II MEF partner militaries and other DOD entities.

cise for many components of the Marine air-ground task force in refining and instilling combat readiness across many occupational fields.

“The processes that we established for Dynamic Cape 21 are exactly the same processes that we would use in a combat operation,” said Major William Hemme, the arrival and assemble operations group supply officer. “As part of Dynamic Cape and the Operation Logistics Exercise, we have downloaded and we are reconstituting a single ship, the USNS *D.T. Williams*.”

Hemme stressed the importance of a realistic simulation for those who are

responsible for the embarkation and disembarkation of equipment from one location to another.

“For this particular exercise, we intentionally set up so that we would have the most realistic training we could have with the supply processes implemented,” said Hemme.

Throughout Dynamic Cape, II MEF showcased command and control capabilities and achieved a major movement of personnel and equipment in a realistic training environment.

Sgt Elizabeth Gerber, USMC



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Cpl William T. Perkins:

Combat Photographer and Medal of Honor Recipient



By LCpl Aidan Hekker, USMC

Editor's note: The following article is the second-place winner of the 2021 Leatherneck Writing Contest. Major Richard A. "Rick" Stewart, USMC (Ret) sponsored the contest, which is open to enlisted Marines through the Marine Corps Association. Upcoming issues of Leatherneck will feature the third-place winner and honorable mention entries.

Many people in the world serve their time on this earth as if getting through a prison sentence, not knowing the impression they leave. They work, eat, sleep and socialize all while attempting to build a foundation for their lives and perhaps stumble upon an innate sense of purpose. In the modern age of information, the legacy of individuals can be established through their creativity, wealth, or their action. As Marines, we are held to the highest standard of character in both the words we say and the actions we take. Our legacy is instilled from the souls of Marines who didn't necessarily die for their God or their country, but for the men and women fighting beside them. Corporal William T. Perkins Jr. established his legacy with a little bit of courage—and a camera.

Born on Aug. 10, 1947, Perkins grew up hearing the exciting history of his family's military service. He was an eager young man who found a love for photography in high school and was determined to exercise his talents as a Marine Corps photographer. After boot camp, Perkins was stationed at the Marine Corps Supply Center in Barstow, Calif., where many of the photos he took were of parades and other events—hardly the kind of thrilling service Perkins thought he signed up for. This assignment motivated him to apply for motion picture photography training in the U.S. Army Signal Center at Fort



Monmouth, N.J. He was thrilled to finally be able to do exactly what he wanted. The next step for Perkins was to follow his passion to the Republic of Vietnam.

On July 17, 1967, Perkins landed in Vietnam to document the war for the American people to see. War typically consists of engaging the enemy with rifles and explosives, but Perkins did his shooting with a camera. He was initially assigned to 3rd Marine Division in the mountainous region of Phu Bai in central Vietnam. He documented local culture, terrain and the American endeavors that were taking place. This documentation was important for American history because it allowed for the unseen to be seen. It shows the American people where we were and what we did there. Believe it or not, the American objective in Vietnam was not to destroy our opponent but to show the enemy they could not win. That important distinction



Cpl William T. Perkins, second from left, films a medevac on the afternoon of Oct. 12, 1967, during Operation Medina. *Leatherneck* correspondent SSgt Bruce Martin was also covering the operation and he took this photo about two hours before Cpl Perkins was killed. To learn more about this final photo of Perkins, see *Saved Round* in the March 2018 issue of the magazine.

SSGT BRUCE MARTIN, USMC

combined with a vague understanding of why we were there in the first place made American citizens show little support for the war. However, due to a clash of communism and political interests in the West, our involvement was provoked to secure the independence of the Vietnamese nation.

On Oct. 11, Perkins was assigned to “Charlie” Company, 1st Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, to document the ongoing engagement and destruction of the North Vietnamese Army (NVA), in Operation Medina. The operation was taking place in the Hai Lang Forest Reserve in the Quang Tri Province of South Vietnam. The forest was considered a base area for the NVA and had not been engaged yet due to a lack of U.S. and South Vietnamese forces. The day after his arrival, the NVA ambushed Co C at Landing Zone Dove, the headquarters for 1st Marines, battering them with a cluster of rounds and grenades.

He documented local culture, terrain and the American endeavors that were taking place. This documentation was important for American history because it allowed for the unseen to be seen. It shows the American people where we were and what we did there.

Operation Medina began on Oct. 11 as two battalions of the 1st Marines made a helicopter assault into LZ Dove in a III MAF drive to clear enemy base areas in the thick Hai Lang forest south of Quang Tri City.



USMC

While protecting themselves from a storm of rounds, a grenade caught the eyes of Perkins and Antal as it landed only a few feet behind the log protecting them. With his camera strapped to his chest, Perkins yelled out, “Incoming grenade” as he dove over the explosive to protect his fellow Marines.

All morning, Co C repelled the enemy assault and cleared the landing zone for medevac helicopters to fly out the injured. Amongst the consuming chaos of the assault, Perkins documented the last helicopter leaving the landing zone. The echoing blades grew quieter as the sun fled past the horizon and Perkins took some of his last photos, though he was unaware of that fact. Without a moment to relax, three companies of Vietnamese insurgents ambushed the command post from multiple sides. The amount of pressure instilled by the enemy was 10 times the force endured earlier that morning.

In the disarray, Perkins found cover behind a log with three other Marines: Corporal Fred Boxill, Lance Corporal Michael Cole and LCpl Dennis Antal. While protecting themselves from a storm of rounds, a grenade caught the eyes of Perkins and Antal as it landed only a few feet behind the log protecting them. With his camera strapped to his chest, Perkins yelled out, “Incoming grenade” as he dove over the explosive to protect his fellow Marines. Shrapnel wounded Antal and Boxill but the blast instantly killed Perkins.

Perkins was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor by President Nixon on June 20, 1969, the only combat photographer to receive the Nation’s highest award. His citation states, “Through his exceptional courage and inspiring valor in the face of certain death, Corporal Perkins reflected great credit upon himself and the Marine Corps and upheld the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.” Along with Perkins, eight other Marines died that day.

The legacy Perkins wanted to leave may very well be a mystery

now lost in the fog of war. Perhaps he had always imagined giving up his life to save someone else, but who dies for someone they’ve only known for a day? What drives a human being to operate outside of themselves? There is an innate sense of responsibility and connection in every Marine—fighting the same battle, against the same enemy, with the same risks. There’s a beauty in that. It’s a beauty that most people will never comprehend in their entire lives. You could fight all of your natural instincts in order to save the lives of your comrades.

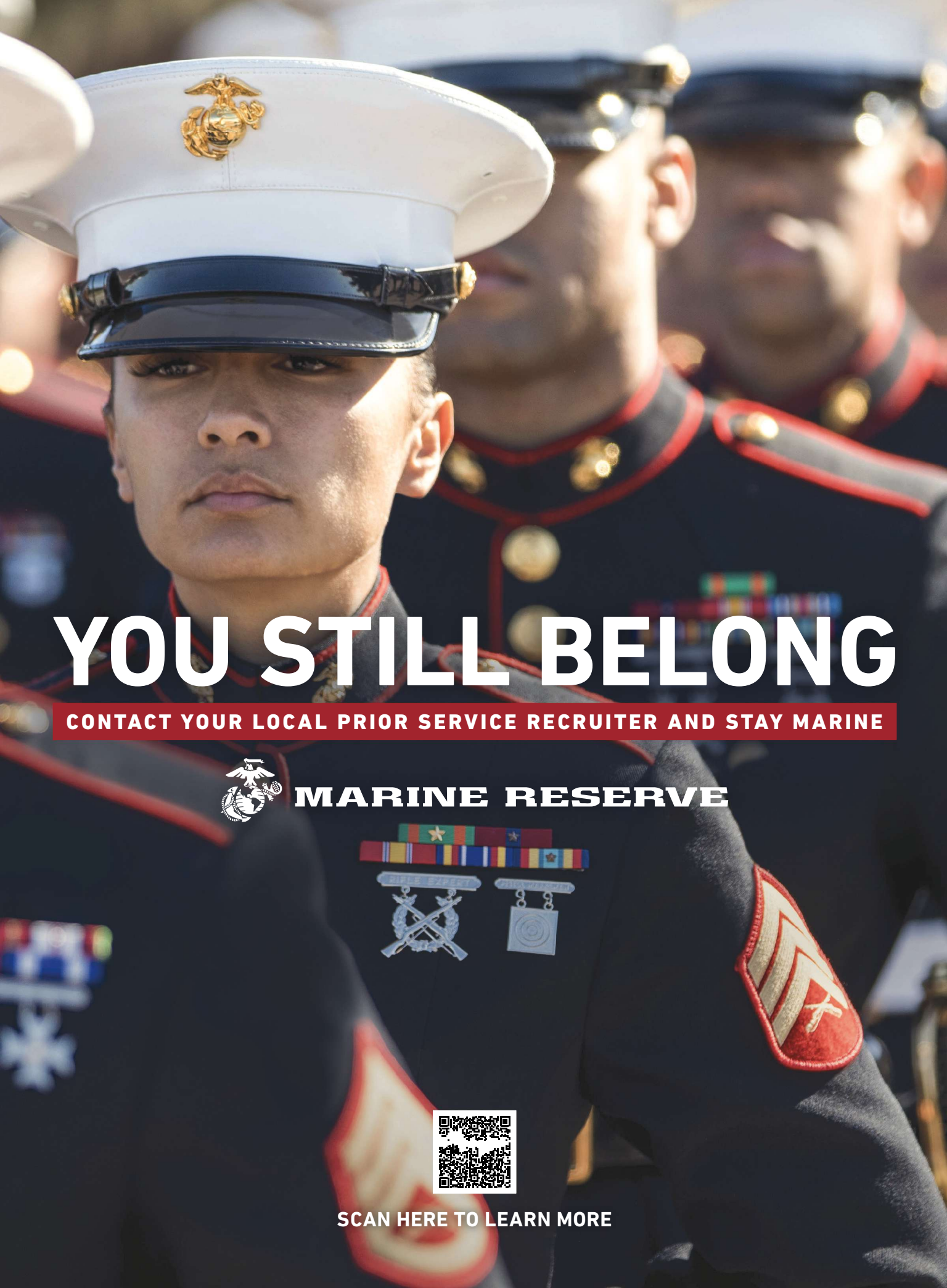
This concept is trained and instilled in the minds of Marines. This is a legacy. It’s our legacy. It provokes motivation, humility and a sense of understanding about why Marines do what they do. It isn’t just a sense of responsibility or duty that compels us to perform courageous acts, but a desire to protect and surrender ourselves to each other. We do this because we are a hive, a single entity composed of many different men and women. We’re not individuals, but a unit. In that, our legacy is secured, and if we embrace our training, values and heritage, instead of living a prison sentence, we’re living an honor.



USMC

Marines and journalists wait in the safety of a trench beside Con Thien’s landing zone until the arrival and touchdown of the helicopter that will take them from the base back to Dong Ha on Oct. 2.

Author’s bio: LCpl Aidan Hekker joined the Marine Corps in September 2019. After graduation from recruit training, he attended the Defense Information School in Fort Meade, Md., where he studied photography, videography, graphic design, writing and public affairs. He is currently stationed at Camp Pendleton, Calif., with I Marine Expeditionary Force Information Group.



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History of the 4th Marine Division



Leathernecks of the 23rd Marines on Roi stop to look across the lagoon at Namur. The black plume of smoke was the result of a large explosion which took the lives of many members of the 24th Marines.

By Lt John Chapin, USMC

Editor's note: This is the fourth in a series of articles from the Leatherneck archives about the Corps' Divisions during World War II. Prepared by what was then known as the Historical Division of the Marine Corps, the article traces the 4th Marine Division's activities in the Pacific.

The overwhelming successes of the Japanese in their early campaigns in the Pacific made it obvious that the number of combat Divisions in the Marine Corps would have to be greatly increased. The 1st Marine Division and elements of the 2nd had been engaged for a month in the grim struggle for Guadalcanal when the 3rd Division was organized on Sept. 8, 1942. By mid-February 1943, the 3rd was en route to the Southwest Pacific.

Now began the formation of the 4th Marine Division. The 23rd Marines became the nucleus for its rifle units. This regiment had originally been activated on July 20, 1942, and had served as part of

the 3rd Division. However, it was detached from the 3rd on Feb. 15, 1943, and five days later was designated for the 4th.

On March 26, the 24th Marines was organized. In order to form the last rifle regiment, the 23rd Marines was split in two. This subdivision supplied the personnel for the 25th Marines, activated on May 1, 1943.

The formation of the Division's artillery regiment was begun as early as Feb. 20 when a battalion of the 12th Marines was redesignated as part of the 14th Marines. On June 1, 1943, the 14th was organized as a complete unit. The engineering regiment of the Division also had its start on Feb. 20 when elements of the 19th Marines were redesignated as part of the 20th Marines. This regiment was formally activated on June 15, 1943.

All units other than the 24th Marines formed the new Division's East Coast echelon, which received its training at Camp Lejeune, N.C., during the summer of 1943.

The 24th went into training at Camp Pendleton in California. Three separate reinforced battalions from the East Coast

formed the nucleus of the 24th Marines, reinforced. It was reinforced there by detachments of engineer, artillery, medical, motor transport and special weapons personnel. The 4th Tank Battalion was likewise a member of the West Coast echelon at this time.

The 23rd Marines, the oldest regiment in the Division, was chosen to initiate the East Coast echelon's movement westward to Pendleton. From July 3-12, 1943, it was engaged in this transfer. August found the remaining units' period of training at New River nearly over. Veterans of broiling summer heat at Tent Camp, landings on Onslow Beach, artillery problems at Verona and the close combat school at Courthouse Bay, packed up their gear in anticipation.

By Aug. 9, the movement to California had begun. At this time, the strength of the East Coast echelon stood at 6,220 officers and men. The 25th Marines embarked at Norfolk and sailed through the Panama Canal to San Diego while the rest of the units traveled overland by train.

On Aug. 16, 1943, the 4th Division was formally activated at Camp Pendleton with



Marines under fire leap from a beached amphibian tractor during the January 1944 landing in the Marshall Islands.

Signal Company. Its naval complement was furnished by Task Force 53.

On Jan. 21, the 4th arrived in the Hawaiian area, and the following day it departed. Now the great secret was revealed: the Division was headed for the Marshalls and its objective there was the assault and capture of Roi and Namur islands. It constituted, with the 15th Defense Battalion, the Northern Landing Force.

The Seventh Infantry Division of the Army, plus two defense battalions, formed the Southern Landing Force, which was to seize Kwajalein Island.

The plan of attack called for landings on D-day on the islets adjoining Roi and Namur, which was done with a minimum of opposition. The same afternoon, on Jan. 31, assault troops proceeded into the lagoon.

The regimental objective of RCT 23 was Roi with its strategic airfield. On the right, RCT 24 assaulted Namur, where the preponderance of warehouses, barracks and pillboxes were situated. Opposition on Roi was comparatively light, and at 8 a.m. on Feb. 2, Roi was declared secure.

Namur proved to be a different story. The men disembarking on the beaches were met by brisk fire from the enemy. Gradually, organized resistance was crushed. Namur was conquered by the afternoon of Feb. 2, in approximately 24 hours.

After the seizure of the Division's two main objectives, some 55 smaller islets in the Northern Landing Force zone of responsibility were occupied.

A recapitulation of the Division's losses showed 190 killed in action and 547 wounded, for a total of 737 casualties. The Japanese lost 3,472 men killed and 264 taken prisoner for a total of 3,736.

Departing from Kwajalein atoll at various times, units of the 4th Division arrived at their advance base on Maui at irregular intervals. The last sections reached there March 10.

After long and arduous training, it became obvious that the Division was getting ready to shove off again. By May 13, the men were aboard their ships, and the 4th Division left Maui.

The 4th was part of a huge expedition bound for the Marianas Islands, with the objective of seizing the Japanese bases of Saipan, Tinian and Guam. The islands were deep within the enemy's defenses. Saipan, for example, lay 3,226 miles from Pearl Harbor, but only 1,370 miles from



Marines on Roi-Namur work their way through the ruins of a building that was used by the Japanese to store ammunition.

Brigadier General James. L. Underbill, USMC, as acting commanding general. Two days later, Major General Harry Schmidt, USMC, took over command, and BGen Underbill became Assistant Division Commander.

At the end of August, the Divisional strength had climbed to 12,687, and the staff and regimental commanders were assigned as follows:

Colonel William W. Rogers, Chief of Staff; Col Merton J. Batchelder, D-1; Major Gooderham L. McCormick, D-2; Col Walter W. Wensinger, D-3; Col William F. Brown, D-4; Col Louis G. DeHaven, 14th Regiment; Col Lucian W. Burnham, 20th Regiment; Col Louis

R. Jones, 23rd Regiment; Col Franklin A. Hart, 24th Regiment; and Col Samuel C. Gumming, 25th Regiment.

This was the team that was to lead the 4th Division through its final intensive training and overseas to its first beachhead.

By Sept. 10, the last of the East Coast echelon, the 25th Marines, arrived at Camp Pendleton, and the Division was together as an organic unit for the first time.

At the turn of the year, it was 19,446 strong. Its training culminated in maneuvers at San Clemente Island from Jan. 1 to Jan. 6, 1944. The Division was now reinforced by several amphibian tractor battalions and by the 1st Joint Assault

Tokyo. The route of approach was flanked by Japanese strongholds in the Carolines. The Japanese fleet was still a powerful threat.

But the assaulting Marines had help on many sides. With ships and planes, the Navy was fighting systematically to prevent enemy reinforcements and supplies from reaching the 4th Division's target islands. Even to the west, close to Japan, there were American fighting units to support invasion submarines.

Finally, and yet almost suddenly, it was D-day, June 15. Off the beaches of Tanapag Harbor, RCT 4, the Division reserve, was conducting a demonstration in conjunction with the reserve regiment of the 2nd Division that lasted from pre-dawn to H-hour plus 60. Subsequent intelligence indicated this diversionary maneuver succeeded in detaining at least one enemy regiment in the northern area.

The landing was vigorously opposed. With the 2nd Division going in abreast of it in the north, the 4th's first wave hit the beach at 8:43 a.m. and was met with intensive fire. The Marines got ashore, but the going was tough, and the casualties were mounting. Supporting waves were pounded on their way in by heavy Japanese artillery and mortar fire. But they fought ahead.

At 12:30 a.m. on June 16 the attack be-

gan. By this time, elements of all Divisional artillery, although subjected to considerable enemy counter-battery fire, were firing in support and the medium and light tanks were operating. The 4th was also helped by air strikes and naval gunfire.

During the night of June 16-17, elements of the 27th Army Division began landing to join in the bitter struggle. RCT 165, an Army outfit, was moved up on the right flank of the Fourth Division to assist in the final drive for Aslito Airfield. The entire 4th Division was ashore by June 17, and its attack that day was launched with four Regimental Combat Teams abreast. From left to right, the RCTs were the 23rd, 24th (minus detachments), 25th and 165th.

Late in the afternoon, elements of RCT 25 had penetrated to the barracks area of the airfield, but a withdrawal was necessary to maintain contact on the right with RCT 165, which had advanced more slowly. Thus, as night fell, the 4th Division stood at the edge of its assigned objective. However, a gap between RCT 23 and the 2nd Division existed and from it the 23rd had been receiving very heavy enfilade fire.

The next day's advance was impeded by uncertainty over the boundaries between the 4th, the 2nd and the 27th Divisions,

and gaps between the Divisions left places where strong enemy units offered much resistance.

The end of the day on June 18 found the 4th holding a line secured within itself but out of contact with the units on its right and its left. A drive by RCT 25 resulted in a Division of the enemy forces when RCT 25 reached the opposite shore of the island.

Next day, following heavy artillery and rocket preparation, a tank-led attack was launched by the 4th, resulting in the establishment of a strong line. This venture succeeded in closing the gap between the 4th and the 2nd Divisions, though contact was maintained tenuously by patrols.

June 20 saw RCT 25's capture of Hill 500, a commanding feature of the terrain. Withdrawing from this position, the Japanese troops moved northward along the coast, while the 4th mopped up its newly taken area.

On June 22, the 4th continued its attack, driving 2,500 yards northeast to the base of Kagman Peninsula. In the following days it received strong new support in the form of additional men, artillery, tanks and airplanes.

RCT 23 struggled to clean out the cliff line at Karaherra Pass to establish a suitable line of departure from the base of the sheer cliff onto the coastal plain.



This photo, taken at Garapan, shows the type of fighting the 4thMarDiv participated in on Saipan.

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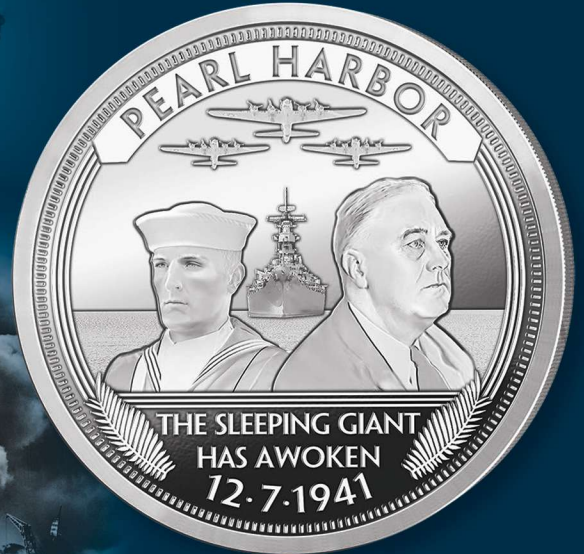
HONORING THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF PEARL HARBOR

Front showcases the
USS Arizona

Back portrays a sailor and
FDR with warplanes above



Richly plated in
99.9% silver



Dates of the
Arizona's service

Shown larger than actual size of 38.6mm diameter

References the famous
"Sleeping Giant" quote

This fine collectible is not legal tender and bears no monetary face value. Design subject to change

KEY DETAILS

EXCLUSIVE TRIBUTE:

The 80th Anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor and the United States' entry into WWII.

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On July 24, 1944, the 4thMarDiv landed on Tinian. After the battle, Tinian became an important base for further Allied operations in the Pacific campaign.

The coast was about half a mile from the cliff. Throughout July 7, RCT 23 struck at northward-fleeing Japanese with long-range heavy-weapon fire from the cliff. This artillery fire caused more than 500 casualties among the enemy's ranks.

On the same day, the Japanese launched a last desperate banzai attack down the west coast of the island. The left flank of the 27th Army Division was penetrated, and the enemy smashed from 2,000 to 3,000 yards toward Garapan. They were finally checked by elements of the 3rd Battalion, 10th Marines.

With four regiments abreast, the 4th broke through the enemy cliff line and reached the western coast of Saipan on July 8.

The Americans' final assault was made on July 9 (D+24). Starting at 6:30, three regimental combat teams jumped off to finish the long struggle by seizing Marpi Point and the 0-9 line. All organized resistance ended that afternoon.

The Division's casualties for the Saipan campaign totaled 5,981, but with its cooperating forces, the 4th helped to wipe out 28,000 Japanese.

With the end of the Saipan operation came several command changes. On July 12, MajGen Harry Schmidt left the 4th Division to become Commanding General, Northern Troops and Landing Force and Commanding General, V Amphibious Corps. Command of the 4th Division went

to MajGen Clifton B. Gates. Lieutenant General Holland M. Smith continued as the commanding general of Expeditionary Troops, Task Force 56 and assumed command of Fleet Marine Force, Pacific.

Preparing the Division for its coming assault on Tinian was a race against time. The Division was not assembled as a whole unit until after it had finished its share of the mopping-up on Saipan, on July 16. This left only a week in which to get all equipment and personnel ready for the assault on Tinian. After its heavy losses on Saipan, the Division, reinforced, could muster only 16,843 officers and men for the Tinian battle.

As July 24 dawned, a supporting bombardment of Tinian mounted in fury. Eleven battalions of shore-based artillery were joined by the fire of two battleships, a heavy cruiser and two destroyers. Off Tinian Town, where the best landing beaches were, the 2nd Division conducted a diversionary demonstration.

At 7:50 a.m., both assault RCTs, guided through the artillery smoke by planes, hit the beach. After the wall of fire that had greeted the Division's landing on Saipan, it was a relief to encounter only moderate small arms and mortar fire this time. Tactical surprise had been achieved.

As night fell, it was apparent that the Division's landing was a success. In spite of the difficulties caused by the bottleneck

beaches, the whole Division had been landed in nine hours. A beachhead 4,000 yards wide and 2,000 yards deep had been seized at the cost of 240 casualties.

A threatened counterattack came when, from 2 a.m. on, enemy forces, supported by artillery fire, surged against the 4th Division's perimeter in wild banzai charges that piled their dead up in tiers.

The following morning 1,241 enemy dead were found in the immediate vicinity of the Division's defense perimeter. Victory in the night battle had been complete.

Tinian Town was captured in ruins on July 30, but the Japanese defenses stiffened on the next day. The Marine reaction was quick and strong. At 8:30 the attack began. With the 2nd Division on its left, the 4th Division jumped off. Caves, antitank guns, minefields and the cliff line itself, reinforced the enemy defenses.

On Aug. 1, the Division attacked again and reached the final sheer cliff that overlooked the small southern coastal plain. The 2nd Division had also driven through to the end of the island that afternoon. At 6:55 p.m. on the same day Tinian was declared secured.

The capture of the island had cost the Division 1,906 casualties. But nearly 9,000 Japanese had been wiped out through death or capture. For its part in the campaign, the 4th Division received the Presidential Unit Citation.

There followed the usual vast amount

of training and reorganizing, and a little liberty at Hawaii. Then, toward the end of January, the Division set off again for combat. The main body sailed Jan. 27 from Oahu.

Eniwetok was the first stop (Feb. 5-7). From there the Division sailed to the Saipan-Tinian area, arriving on Feb. 15. On Feb. 16, it left for its next point of attack, Iwo Jima, 660 miles from Tokyo, 625 miles from Saipan, but 3,330 from Pearl Harbor. In addition to its strategic location in the innermost ring of the Japanese home defenses, it was the enemy's main base for the interception of American B-29s.

Early on the morning of Feb. 19, the Division arrived at Iwo. Lying off the island was the vast array of naval invasion force. From every side, the warships were laying down their bombardment, and overhead, wave after wave of planes hit the island, rocket-firing, bombers, fighters and dive bombers. H-hour was set for 9 a.m.

The assault BLTs were boated at an early hour in their LVTs. The reserve battalions and the reserve regiment (RCT 24) were to use LCVPs. The Division landing plan provided for RCT 23 to land on the left (Yellow) beaches, while RCT 25 would use the right (Blue) beaches. From left to right, the assault BLTs were 1/23, 2/23, 1/25 and 3/25.

By 8:15 a.m., the first three waves of assault troops were formed and waiting behind the line of departure. At 8:30, they were on their way in. The weather was good and the surf moderate. The naval gunfire, air strikes and rocket and mortar barrages from LCIs were saturating the beaches now, and only moderate enemy fire fell on the leading waves. As they neared the shore, the support fire moved inland in a "rolling barrage." At 9:02 a.m., they hit the beach.

As the naval gunfire lifted, the Japanese opened up. They went to work with every weapon they had. Soon a solid sheet of fire was pouring down on the beaches and incoming waves. It was the heaviest enemy mortar and artillery fire yet seen in any operation. Boats were hit: they broached and clogged the beaches. Personnel casualties mounted rapidly. Vehicles ashore found the sandy volcanic ash and the first terrace (with its 40 percent grade) nearly impassable. Tanks bogged down. Every move was under direct observation of the Japanese on top of the cliff line to the right and on Mount Suribachi to the left.

By night of D-day the Division had put ashore all three of its rifle regiments, less some Support Group elements, two battalions of artillery and some heavy shore party equipment. Despite the withering enemy fire and extremely heavy casualties, the assault units had driven ahead and

established a line including the eastern edge of Airfield No. 1 and of sufficient depth inland from Blue Beaches to guarantee success in holding the beachhead. Full contact with the Fifth Division had been established, and adequate supplies were ashore for a continuation of the attack.

The night of D-day was spent in trying to get ready for the next day's operations. Some units had suffered terrible casualties. BLT 3/25, for example, had lost 50 percent of its men. Reserve companies and battalions were sent in to join or to relieve the most battered units. On the beach that night, in spite of all efforts, no appreciable progress was made in clearing away wrecked landing craft. Enemy harassing fire continued to fall all night long throughout the Division zone.

At 8:30 a.m., the assault began with RCT 23 on the left and RCT 25 on the right. Through bitter enemy opposition, the 23rd Marines, reinforced with tanks,

main part of the 5th Division wheeled and drove up the west side of Iwo Jima. RCT 28 was detached to capture Mount Suribachi in the south. Side by side with the 5th, the 4th Division also wheeled to the right and advanced to the northeast. LVTs, DUKWs, and a few weasels worked their way through the heavy surf, the clutching sand, and the wall of wreckage to maintain the flow of high priority supplies.

On Feb. 21 (D+2), after repulsing a night counterattack by the Japanese, the 4th attacked again. RCT 25 moved forward along the right flank by the East Boat Basin. RCT 23 on the left gained little. Its advance against numerous pillboxes and extensive mine fields was extremely costly and very slow. The Division combat efficiency was down to 68 percent.

Although the day's advances averaged only 100-250 yards, the enemy had been driven from the cliff heights and quarry area on the Division right flank, while the left flank was approaching Airfield

Across Iwo Jima's black sands, Marines of the 4thMarDiv shell Japanese positions cleverly concealed back from the beaches. Here, a gun pumps a stream of shells into Japanese positions inland on the tiny volcanic island.



COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES

fought its way across Airfield No. 1 to complete its capture by 4 p.m. On the other flank, RCT 25 made little progress. Minefields prevented the use of tanks; the terrain was unfavorable; enemy resistance was fanatical; and the 25th's left flank was necessarily anchored to the adjoining unit of the 23rd Marines.

During the day, the remainder of the 14th Marines came ashore and went into position. RCT 24 (minus its two detached battalions) remained in the Division's reserve.

The 4th and 5th Divisions moved ahead. After splitting the island on D-day, the

No. 2. Reinforcements were becoming available. At 4:30 p.m., RCT 21 of the 3rd Division, in reserve, was released to the 4th Division and soon thereafter the whole regiment was ashore. During the night the usual enemy attack was repulsed by the Fourth Division.

Early in the morning of Feb. 22 (D+3), RCT 21 began a passage through the lines to relieve RCT 23. This was a long, slow process, as every move had to be made under observed fire from the high ground in front of Airfield No. 2. By 11:30, the relief had been effected and now RCT 21 attacked northward. At the end of the



LEATHERNECK FILE PHOTO

A wave of 4thMarDiv Marines hit the beach at Iwo as they plunge into some of the bloodiest fighting in Marine Corps history.

day, the southern edge of Airfield No. 2 had been reached. On the other flank of the Division, the 25th Marines had made gains along the coastline.

The American flag was raised on Mount Suribachi at 10:37 on Feb. 23 (D+4).

After the usual preparatory barrage, the assault troops jumped off for the day's attack.

Due to the rough terrain, tanks were able to furnish little assistance during the day. RCT 24, on the right, averaged gains of 300 yards. However, RCT 21 on the left was unable to make any advance except on the extreme right. They were checked by difficult terrain and extremely stubborn enemy resistance from pillboxes, emplaced tanks, 47 mm guns sighted so as to cover both airstrips of Airfield No. 2, high-velocity flat-trajectory weapons, heavy artillery, mortar and automatic weapons.

Continuous artillery, naval gunfire and air support failed to break the determined and fanatical resistance in this critical area. By now, the Division's casualties had mounted to 3,163.

It was decided to make the maximum effort of the Division on the left flank during the following day (Feb. 24, D+5). The plan was to eliminate the enemy salient and seize Airfield No. 2. Strong tank support was given to RCT 21. An intensive naval and artillery barrage was laid down. Although RCT 21 was delayed in beginning its attack by the late arrival

of its tanks, it managed to penetrate to the southeastern edge of both strips of the airfield by 11:30 a.m.

After another artillery preparation at midday, the 21st continued its tank-infantry attack. Considerable gains were made on the right, but its left BLT (2/21) was unable to advance. Meanwhile, RCT 24, on the Division's right flank, was fighting a slow and bloody battle for "Charlie-Dog Ridge." The hill was finally taken at 3:20 p.m. The Division's combat efficiency had been reduced by now to 60 percent. More troops had been pouring ashore all day, however, and the 3rd Division was now ready to take over a section of the lines.

At 7 a.m. on Feb. 25 (D+6), the 21st Marines reverted to control of the 3rd Division, and that Division went into position in the Airfield No. 2 area on the left of the 4th Division. At the same time, RCT 23 moved up to the front and returned to action on the left of RCT 24. Little progress was made until tanks were sent through the 3rd Division zone to outflank and attack the pillboxes and anti-tank guns holding up the 23rd. On the right, RCT 24 gained very little.

Starting about Feb. 26 (D+7), the Division began working its way into the enemy's main defense line of prepared positions. For the next week it moved slowly forward, suffering bloody losses. It was engaged in the most savage type of close combat. The Japanese line was

based on a series of strong points known as Hill 382, the Amphitheatre, Turkey Knob and the village of Minami.

RCT 23 reached the southwest slopes of the vital Hill 382 on Feb. 26 and was met by a murderous wall of fire there. For days, that hill was the scene of the bitterest kind of fighting with first RCT 23 and then RCT 24 attempting to capture it and keep it.

After days of bloody battering, the Japanese pocket at Turkey Knob was nearly isolated. RCT 25, however, was worn out, and on March 3, it was relieved by the 23rd Marines. The blockhouse on the cliff-top was partially reduced that afternoon. In spite of mined approaches covered by Japanese fire, it was attacked by demolition teams and flame-thrower tanks. RCT 23 succeeded in cutting off Turkey Knob completely and then mopping up began in the Minami area.

The Division had broken the back of the Japanese line, but at a terrible cost. As of March 3, it had lost 6,591 men. Despite the additional strength of a draft of replacements, the Division had fallen to the 50 percent mark of combat efficiency.

The Division now shifted the direction of its attack to the southeast in order to move parallel to the terrain corridors. With the fall of Hill 382, the Amphitheatre was outflanked and bypassed. March 5 was a day of general reorganization which allowed the troops a momentary breathing spell. The next day, the Division went into

the attack again. All three rifle regiments were now in the line. Die-hard Japanese defenders continued to hold out in the Minami pocket. The advance continued slowly for days. The terrain was extraordinarily rough. Crevices, draws, ravines, cross-compartments and hills were all filled with cave and tunnel systems. Half-tracks and tanks were unable to move into the area. Advancing troops would be met with fire from one quarter and when they attacked there, they would be hit from a different side by Japanese using underground passages.

The enemy had to be rooted out by assaulting squads depending on their own weapons. Supporting arms usually could not be brought to bear. Antipersonnel mines were sown in cave mouths, approaches, tunnels, paths; deadly accurate snipers were everywhere. But the Marine lines kept moving forward, compressing the enemy into an ever smaller zone.

Finally, the pressure grew so great that the enemy was forced to come out of his camouflaged, fortified holes and counter-attack in force. On the night of March 8-9, the intensity of the Japanese fire began to increase around 6 p.m. Rocket, mortar, grenade, rifle, and machine-gun fire rained down on the Division's lines, reaching a peak about 8 p.m. Enemy infiltration

began along the front of all three regiments with the main effort being made against RCT 23. At 11:30 p.m., the Japanese attacked BLT 2/23 in force, attempting to break through to Airfield No. 1. Although this was not an all-out banzai charge, the attack was apparently well-planned.

First, the enemy probed for weak spots in our lines. Next, he made good use of the terrain to infiltrate. Some Japanese, well-armed and carrying demolition charges, reached command post areas. The Japanese were finally thrown back by the Marine rifle units aided by intense artillery fire.

On March 11, the 20th day after the landing, the Division reached the ocean, following the penetration of patrols the previous day. RCT 23 overcame weak enemy resistance and by 10:55 a.m. its patrols were on the beach. At the end of the day, combat patrols were on the beach. By sunset, the units were mopping up in the 23rd's zone. Over at the Division's right flank, however, RCT 25 was meeting heavy opposition and considerable fire. Here, in a pocket of indescribably wild terrain, the Japanese chose to make their last stand so as to exact as heavy a toll of Marines as they possibly could. Except for this one small pocket, the 4th Division

had crushed the enemy in its zone of action on in 20 days.

Mopping up and the elimination of the final Japanese pocket (by RCT 25) occupied the troops' time for several days. The area of resistance was studded with caves and emplacements which could not be penetrated by tanks or other support weapons. The Japanese defenders, as usual, fought until they were individually routed out and killed by riflemen, demolition and grenade teams, and flame-throwers.

During the night of March 15-16, a party of nearly 60 Japanese tried to break out of the hopeless corner into which they had been driven. The attempt failed as they were forced back into their caves. This was the last gasp of the enemy. By 10:30 on the morning of March 16, the final pocket was wiped out, and at 11, the entire zone of the 4th Division was reported secured.

The 4th Division had paid a heavy price. It had suffered a total of 9,090 casualties, of which 1,731 were killed in action. Iwo had been defended by an estimated 22,000 Japanese who had been completely wiped out. Actual count of the number of enemy dead in the 4th Division zone came to 8,982. Probably another thousand were sealed in caves or buried by the enemy.





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From the Corps to Capitol Hill:

Marine Veterans of the 117th U.S. Congress Continue Service To Country

By Sara W. Bock

For 15 members of the 117th United States Congress, which convened on Jan. 3, the title “Marine” was one they earned long before “Senator” or “Congressman.” Today, they sit in the venerated chambers of the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate, and though they no longer wear the uniform, their experiences in the Corps—and the values instilled in them during their service—remain deeply ingrained in their identities as elected officials.

They're among the smallest group of military veterans to serve in Congress since World War II. In total, 91 veterans currently hold office in the nation's legislative branch, a number that continues to trend downward from its all-time high in 1971, according to the Pew Research Center, when vet-

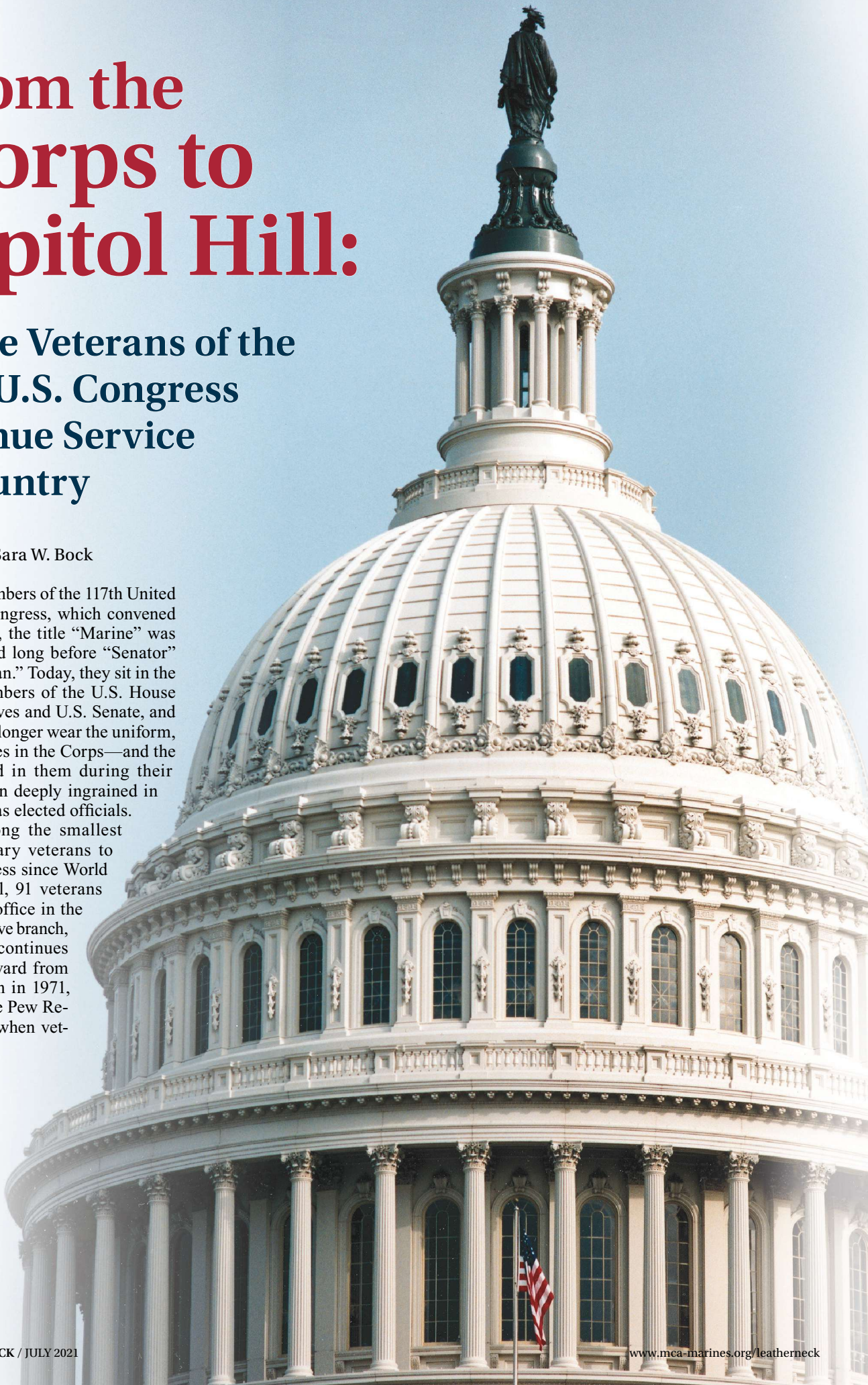


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OF THE CAPITOL

erans serving in Congress made up an impressive 72 percent of the House and 78 percent of the Senate.

Though they're small in number, the Marines—12 of whom serve in the House and three in the Senate—seem to be leading the charge among their veteran counterparts. From the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, on which Marine veteran and Republican congressman from Illinois, Mike Bost, serves as the ranking member, to the Marine-heavy For Country Caucus, a nonpartisan group of military veterans in the House of Representatives, co-chaired by Marines Jared Golden, a Democrat from Maine and Van Taylor, Republican from Texas, the Marines of the 117th Congress are working on behalf of not only their constituents, but also their fellow veterans, active-duty and reserve servicemembers and military families, drawing on their experiences as Marines and veterans themselves to help enact legislation that improves the lives of those who have served.

And they haven't forgotten their Marine Corps training. When a violent mob stormed the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, Marine veterans Sen. Todd Young, Rep. Ruben Gallego and Rep. Mike Gallagher were among those who made headlines for taking action and jumping into "Marine mode" as they assisted their colleagues in the evacuation of the House and Senate floors and prepared to defend their safety if necessary.

Leatherneck reached out to the offices of all 15 Marine veterans serving in the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate, and we were able to talk with seven of them prior to press time. They hail from all sides of the political spectrum and all corners of the nation: from California to Mississippi to Maine and everywhere in between. They're members of different generations with diverse backgrounds and vastly different life experiences. Their Marine Corps experiences are varied too. Some were enlisted, others commissioned officers; some served on active-duty, others in the Reserve; and some saw combat while others served during peacetime. But despite their differences, these Marines-turned-politicians all spoke about applying their experiences in the Marine Corps to their role as legislators, and how the values and principles they learned during their time in service shaped them into the people they are today. They may not see eye-to-eye on all the issues, but in an era marked by political divisiveness and partisan rhetoric, their stories of service and dedication to their country provide a glimmer of hope for the future.

Representative Jared Golden (D-ME)

After leaving active duty in 2006, with deployments to both Afghanistan and Iraq in the rearview mirror, Jared Golden struggled to transition back to civilian life. The Marine infantryman, who enlisted in 2002 in the wake of the 9/11 attacks and first deployed in 2004 with 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, felt like he was part of something truly purposeful when his unit ran regular patrols out of a forward operating base in the Hindu Kush Mountains in Afghanistan's Kunar Province alongside Army special forces.

After a second deployment, this time along the border of Iraq and Syria near Husabayah, Golden left active duty and returned to his hometown of Lewiston, Maine.

"I would tell young Marines to maybe have a better plan than I did because I didn't have one," Golden recalls with a laugh. He briefly worked as an RV mechanic by day and at a pizza restaurant by night, "just trying to figure life out," he said. Thanks to the influence of some good role models, Golden later enrolled in Bates College in Lewiston and earned an undergraduate degree in U.S. history and political science. During his college years, he spent a summer teaching in Kabul, Afghanistan, and later worked in the Middle East in the



COURTESY OF REP. JARED GOLDEN

freight forwarding industry as a contractor for the U.S. State Department. This experience led him to Washington, D.C., where he worked in the office of Senator Susan Collins of Maine, advising on matters related to homeland security.

A few years later, Golden moved back to Maine and was urged to run for the state House of Representatives with many individuals suggesting to him that as a state representative, he might be able to help his fellow veterans.

"I had had some struggles with the transition—also things like access to health[care] and mental health as I went through that transition," said Golden,



Golden deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq before returning home to Maine, where he eventually served in the state House of Representatives prior to his election to Congress in 2018.

COURTESY OF REP. JARED GOLDEN

Representative Jared Golden (D-ME)

who knows firsthand what struggles today's post-9/11 veterans face. "I saw gaps in benefits or resources that were there to help young veterans, benefits that were largely invisible, and people had to kind of stumble upon them. So, I thought, 'Maybe I can lend my own personal experience and the experience of those I served with, who I was still in touch with, to improving how the government informs Marines or veterans about what can be helpful to them, and what's out there for them.' That's why I first ran for office."

After being elected to the Maine House of Representatives in 2014, Golden had an opportunity to take his passion for helping his fellow veterans to the national level and was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 2018, representing Maine's second congressional district. He serves on the House Armed Services Committee and is a co-chair of the For Country Caucus for the 117th Congress, committed to working with his fellow veterans on both sides of the aisle to create a more productive government. During his first term in Congress, Golden was thrilled to help procure a 16-bed inpatient care unit for veterans

struggling with substance abuse in his home state of Maine—something they previously had to travel to neighboring states for—a mission of his he had been hoping to accomplish since he was first elected to his state legislature.

Golden says he's proud of his time in the Corps and even more proud of the Marines who are currently serving.

"I'm constantly re-evaluating what I learned in the Marines and applying it to my life today," said Golden. "One thing that I'm often sharing with people in Washington and within my own Democratic caucus is a different understanding about leadership than what many people have. I learned it in the Marines and inside the context of a squad with a platoon. I often tell people that the right person to lead a mission today may not be the right person to lead that team for a different mission. You've got all these different people in a team with different skillsets. They bring different assets to the table. And part of being a good leader is knowing how to get the most out of the team, and sometimes that means recognizing when to lead yourself and when to follow and push other people out into those leadership positions."



Golden, pictured on the right alongside a Marine buddy, credits his service in the Corps with giving him a greater understanding of leadership and a personal knowledge of the struggles many veterans face during their transition to civilian life and beyond. (Photo courtesy of Rep. Jared Golden)

Representative Van Taylor (R-TX)



Sept. 11, 2001, was Van Taylor's last day of drill at his Marine Reserve unit, 4th Civil Affairs Group, at the Anacostia Naval Annex in Washington, D.C. He had plans to eat lunch at the Pentagon, but instead watched it burn. The Texas native and Harvard graduate, who earned his commission through the Corps' Platoon Leaders Class, had joined the ranks of the Marine Corps Reserve after nearly four years as an active-duty intelligence officer, returning to the classroom to earn an MBA at Harvard Business School. The events of 9/11 changed the trajectory of his life.

"I made an oath to continue to serve my country and make a difference, and I actually drove back to Texas and that Friday I was at 4th Recon Battalion in San Antonio, Texas, and 18 months later was leading the first platoon into Iraq on D-day for my brigade, Task Force Tarawa—March 21, 2003," Taylor said. "Accomplished every mission, brought every man home to their families, and married the girl who sent me a letter every day I was there."

After his return home, the decorated Iraq War veteran, who had been interested in public service and active in Republican politics in his local Collin County, Texas, government, decided to run for an open seat in the Texas House of Representatives in 2010. He

was elected and four years later was elected to the Texas Senate. After four years in the state Senate, Taylor was elected by Texas' third congressional district to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives.

"I like to say political careers are always sequential in hindsight," Taylor said. "That was not a path I had envisioned but a path that the doors opened. I was in the right place at the right time and continued to serve."

Armed with the Marine Corps' core values of honor, courage and commitment, and a focus on teamwork and hard work that he learned as a Marine officer, Taylor says he strives to make a difference through his work in Congress. In the Corps, "if you worked hard, trained hard and sat down and respected other people and listened to them, regardless of their rank, you would learn from them," he said. It's a philosophy he still applies today.

As a co-chair of the For Country Caucus, alongside his Democratic counterpart Rep. Jared Golden, Taylor is proud of the work that he and his fellow veterans are accomplishing across party lines. The caucus has endorsed legislation such as the Gold Star Family Tax Relief Act, which was passed in the fiscal year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act; worked to help ensure the passage of the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act, which extended benefits to servicemembers who were exposed to Agent Orange when serving off the coast of Vietnam; and is currently working to pass legislation to build a Global War on Terrorism Memorial in Washington, D.C.

"I think that veterans tend to be statistically more bipartisan, and I think they're used to being in an environment where you don't ask what somebody believes, you just say, we're both on this plane together, or we're both in this foxhole together, or we're both in this tank together, and we're here to get a job done," said Taylor. "That mission focus really advantages veterans to do better—to reach across the aisle and work to get things done—and to seek common ground and then in turn to accomplish missions."



COURTESY OF REP. VAN TAYLOR

Taylor, who as a young Marine captain participated in the initial invasion of Iraq in 2003, is pictured here in Kuwait with the flag of his home state of Texas.



COURTESY OF REP. VAN TAYLOR

Upon his return home from Iraq, Taylor reunited with his soon-to-be wife, Anne, pictured on the left.



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What Your Senators, Representatives Can Do for You

As a Marine spouse and the military field representative for Congressman Scott Peters, I often hear from veterans, active-duty servicemembers and reservists who request assistance with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), their branch of service or other federal agencies. All members of Congress employ casework staff who assist with federal agency concerns, and military and veteran issues make up a significant portion of these casework requests. Rep. Peters represents California's 52nd District encompassing Poway, Coronado and northern San Diego, and his office has succeeded in returning more than \$5 million to constituents who contacted us seeking help. We are especially proud to help uphold the nation's commitment to those who have served, and assisting constituents in this way is one of the most important functions of Congress.

Veterans and military servicemembers deserve timely responses and full and fair consideration of their requests, and congressional offices can help to cut through red tape that may accompany federal agency communication. Caseworkers have lines of communication with federal agencies that can produce faster response times than standard public points of contact. While congressional offices cannot direct federal agencies to make specific decisions inconsistent with their policies, they serve as liaisons to ensure established policies are being followed and also help facilitate timely communication. We often hear from frustrated constituents who just need to speak with someone and have had trouble reaching the best contact to resolve their concerns.

Congressional caseworkers can initiate inquiries to request status reports on pending matters, obtain answers to constituent questions, provide policy clarifications from higher levels of leadership, determine appeal options and even request reconsideration of previous decisions in some cases. Inquiries note "congressional interest" in the matter,

and federal agencies are required to provide a written response. Debt waivers, expedited appeal decisions, benefit adjustments, disability percentage increases, resolution of policy disagreements, and approval of requested treatment plans are all outcomes that casework requests may be able to produce, depending on the circumstances of each case.

For example, veteran constituents often request congressional assistance when they have not received timely responses to benefit claims, have trouble obtaining medical referrals or personal records, or seek to submit a complaint about a disappointing experience. Military servicemembers often seek assistance with pay disparities, basic allowance for housing (BAH) corrections, policy disagreements or requests for assistance with orders. Often, congressional offices can point out extenuating circumstances such as advanced age, terminal illness or financial hardship to elevate urgency and expedite individual cases as needed.

Congressional inquiries do not always result in the outcomes constituents seek, and Congress is limited by stringent ethics rules, but inquiries can provide answers and explanations in line with federal agency policies. Inquiries also can alert both the agency and the congressional office to issues that may require corrections internally to improve processes for the future. Additionally, when constituents bring concerns to the attention of Congress, this can generate new legislative ideas for representatives to introduce to solve common problems.

To begin the casework process and reach a congressional office, constituents can visit www.house.gov or www.senate.gov, input a home address, conduct a search for the representatives from their area and locate a Privacy Act Waiver form from the website to begin the inquiry process. Caseworkers provide assistance free of charge and can often help to facilitate meaningful results for deserving constituents.

Jessica B. Brown

Representative Salud Carbajal (D-CA)



COURTESY OF REP. SALUD CARBAJAL

Since his election to the U.S. House of Representatives in 2016, Congressman Salud Carbajal has often called to mind something he observed in the Marine Corps Reserve while serving alongside people from all walks of life: everyone was treated the same, regardless of socioeconomic background, race or ethnicity.

“You have people throughout the country that served and all with a common purpose,” said Carbajal of the Marine Corps. “You learn early on that it doesn’t matter if your father is a farm worker the way my father was, or your father is a United States senator. Everybody is treated the same and everybody is there for a common purpose.”

Carbajal’s experiences as a reservist—a mortarman who spent most of his time in Weapons Company, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment in Port Hueneme, Calif.—shaped his

view of what teamwork is all about: learning to set individual differences aside and work together toward a common goal.

“I think being a veteran and Marine reminds us and helps us, with the guiding principles of the Marine Corps, to strive to make decisions for country over party,” said Carbajal. “We’re all the same at the end of the day and we’re all rowing towards the same goals and mission, and that is the wellbeing of our country. To make it better. To work in the best interest of our nation, not the silliness of politics.”

Carbajal enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserve in 1984 while studying at the University of California, Santa Barbara. After graduating from boot camp at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, he returned to college, and spent the following summer at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., to train in his military occupational specialty as a mortarman. During the Gulf War, Carbajal was mobilized for Operation Desert Storm and was on standby at Marine Corps Base Camp

Carbajal, who enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserve in 1984, is pictured on the left in the photo below taken at MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif.



COURTESY OF REP. SALUD CARBAJAL



COURTESY OF REP. SALUD CARBAJAL

Lejeune, N.C., to relieve the Marines who had deployed to the Middle East. When the war ended sooner than expected, he returned home to California, and in 1992, when his eight-year contract commitment came to an end, he separated from the Marine Corps Reserve as a sergeant.

Carbajal, who says he was an avid *Leatherneck* reader during his time in the Corps, first felt the pull to public service while acting as the chief of staff for a district supervisor in Santa Barbara County, Calif.—a position he later ran for and served in himself for 12 years. He credits his time spent serving in local government with helping him build on the lessons of teamwork and cooperation he learned in the Marine Corps as he worked with his colleagues to achieve things in a bipartisan manner.

“That ethos ... I think carries on now to my service in Congress, where I strive for bipartisanship,” said Carbajal, who serves on the House Armed Services Committee and is a vice chair of the For Country Caucus of military veterans.

Carbajal is working with his veteran colleagues to improve funding for nutrition programs for low-income children across the nation, which he cites as a national security issue. “We have found that many of our young people are not ready or able to serve in the military because of obesity issues,” he said.

Though decades have passed since his time in the Marine Corps, Carbajal says that the principles he learned in the Corps continue to guide him on a daily basis.

“Discipline and the rigor of the Marine Corps certainly give you the confidence to move to tackle big problems and challenges: not just get caught up on little things, but not to be intimidated by tackling some of the biggest challenges that our country faces, and really work to try to overcome and bring about solutions to those many challenges,” Carbajal said.

Representative Mike Bost (R-IL)



COURTESY OF REP. MIKE BOST

Marine Corps service runs in the family for Representative Mike Bost of Illinois, who remembers his grandfather, who served in the Corps during the Korean War, handing him a copy of *Leatherneck* magazine when he was just 10 years old. His uncle, also a Marine, served in Vietnam. Bost enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1979 and served as an electronics radio repairman, spending time at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif., and Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Ariz., before he was honorably discharged as a corporal in 1982. But the family legacy doesn't stop there: his son, a judge advocate, is a lieutenant colonel in the Marine Corps Reserve, and his grandson is a newly minted Marine who graduated from Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego last December.

Despite his family's history of service, Bost says he didn't intend to join the Marine Corps. That changed on Nov. 4, 1979, when he watched the news coverage pour in as a group of militant Iranian college students breached the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and held 52 Americans hostage—among them, a detachment of Marine Security Guards. Within days, Bost, who felt certain that the Iran Hostage Crisis would spur a military conflict, showed up at his local recruiter's office to enlist.

After leaving active duty, Bost returned home to Murphysboro, Ill., and took over his family's trucking business, meanwhile taking an interest in local politics. "My wife told me to either shut up or get involved," Bost said with a laugh. He ended up serving in several positions in

his local government and in 1992 ran for the Illinois State House of Representatives—an election he lost that year but won two years later when he tried again in 1994. After 20 years of representing his local constituents on the state level, Bost was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 2014. And, in a perfect illustration of the common saying, "it's a small Marine Corps," he served in the House alongside retired Marine colonel and decorated Vietnam War veteran Paul Cook, congressman from California, who had been Bost's commanding officer at Communication-Electronics School at MCA GCC Twentynine Palms decades earlier.

Bost knows firsthand the struggles that veterans can face in obtaining benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs for service-related disability claims. At the time of his discharge from the Marine Corps, his high frequency hearing loss was determined to be service-related; however, due to miscommunication and bureaucratic red tape, he never received his disability benefits and was unsuccessful in his multiple attempts to apply for them.

A young Mike Bost, pictured in the photo on the right, enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1979 after the Iran Hostage Crisis evoked in him a sense of duty to his country. His family's connection to the Corps spans multiple generations, and his son, LtCol Steven Bost, pictured with Rep. Bost (below) at the Congressional Marine Mess Night in 2019, is currently serving in the Marine Corps Reserve.



COURTESY OF REP. MIKE BOST



COURTESY OF REP. MIKE BOST

"I helped carry and was the chief sponsor of the reform bill when we reformed the appeals process," Bost said of his work on the House Committee on Veterans Affairs, of which he is now the ranking member. "My experience in the Corps not only gave me that drive, but what it also did was, the ability to work with others, and leadership capabilities, is something that only someone with a background in the military could understand."

Not only does Bost rely on his personal experiences as a veteran to inform his work in Congress, but he also calls to mind the leadership principles that were instilled in him as a young enlisted Marine.

"You've got to become a good follower before you become a good leader; you've got to respect those around you and understand that a difference of opinion is not anything that you fall out over, it's just a difference of opinion," said Bost of the lessons he learned in the Marine Corps. "You learn that conflict is inevitable, combat is optional."

Representative Jake Auchincloss (D-MA)



COURTESY OF REP. JAKE AUCHINCLOSS

When freshman Democratic Congressman from Massachusetts Jake Auchincloss reflects on where life has taken him, he credits many of the opportunities he's had to his grandfather Melvin Glimcher, the son of Jewish refugees who left the Ukraine in the early 20th century to flee the Russian pogroms and settled in the state Auchincloss calls home today. In 1942, at the age of 17, Glimcher went to a Marine Corps recruiting office to enlist, but his mother caught wind of his plan, showed up and dragged him out by the ear while screaming at the recruiting sergeant. He persisted, and the following day, he showed up again and convinced the recruiter to let him join the Corps, where he eventually was sent to Purdue University to study science.

"The Marine Corps, at a time when ... Jews were under threat of extermination and the South Pacific was going badly, sent this poor, skinny, 17-year-old Jewish kid to Purdue to study engineering because they thought he was pretty smart," said Auchincloss of his grandfather. "He turned that engineering degree from Purdue into really a groundbreaking scientific career in the science of bone formation and orthopedic surgery and became the first Jewish chair of orthopedic surgery at Mass General and a world-renowned scientist, because the Marine Corps ultimately took a chance on him."

When Auchincloss graduated from Harvard College in 2010, with the troop surge in Afghanistan underway,

he too felt an undeniable pull to become a Marine.

"I felt like at a time when we were asking a very small fraction of our country to fight the whole war for us, that it was incumbent on me to serve as well," Auchincloss said.

Keeping in mind a lesson he learned from his grandfather—"Don't tell your mom if you're going to try to join the Marine Corps," he jokes—Auchincloss told his mother he had a "summer internship" at the Department of Defense as he prepared to attend Officer Candidates School in Quantico. He laughs as he describes the mix of pride and fury she displayed when he finally told her the truth.

Auchincloss commanded a platoon in Afghanistan in 2012 and a recon unit in Panama in 2014 before returning to Massachusetts, where he spent his days working in the public sector and his evenings working as a city councilor in his hometown of Newton. For the young politician, working in



COURTESY OF REP. JAKE AUCHINCLOSS

Then-Capt Auchincloss is pictured here leading a combined special operations mission in Panama in 2014. As a newly elected member of Congress, Auchincloss—who remains a member of the Marine Corps Individual Ready Reserve—often calls to mind the motto of Officer Candidates' School: "Leadership by Example."

local government was rewarding in large part, he says, because it was "solution oriented," much like the Marine Corps.

When Rep. Joe Kennedy announced he was running for the U.S. Senate, leaving his seat in the U.S. House of Representatives open in 2020, Auchincloss felt like he had something to offer—that he could bring people together and get things done. He ran for the seat and won, and in January was sworn in as a first-term member of Congress.

"It doesn't always feel solution oriented at the national level, it feels performative—it can feel like politi-

cians are playing to their base," said Auchincloss. "But my training in business, my training in local government, my training in the Marine Corps has always been solution oriented. As they say in the Marines, you don't rise to the occasion, you fall to your level of training, so I feel like I've been trained for this moment in Congress."

As he serves his constituents in Washington, Auchincloss says he strives to live up to the motto of the Marine Corps' Officer Candidates School: "Leadership by Example."

"We have not seen that in the last number of years, that federal leaders have always led by example, and I think it's helped to contribute to the loss of trust in the federal government and to the people's increasing lack of confidence in the things they hear from representatives and executive leaders," said Auchincloss.

As part of the new generation of leaders in Congress, Auchincloss, who is a major in the Marine Corps

Individual Ready Reserve, hopes to see more of his fellow veterans run for office. His advice for them?

"Delete your Twitter and social media apps and go knock on doors. Go really meet voters where they're at," said Auchincloss. "When you go knock on doors ... what you meet are decent, moderate people who want good services, who want to be able to trust their elected officials, and who want to do right by their neighbors. I think if we spent more time talking to one another at our local level, in person, and less time yelling at each other behind keyboards, we'd be in better shape."

Representative Steven Palazzo (R-MS)



COURTESY OF REP. STEVEN PALAZZO

If there's one thing that Rep. Steven Palazzo credits his years in the Marine Corps Reserve with, it's pushing him out of his comfort zone. The Republican Congressman from Mississippi, who began serving in his state's House of Representatives in 2006 and served until he was elected to the U.S. House in 2010, is the grandson of a World War II Marine who served in the Pacific theater and saw action at Guadalcanal and Okinawa.

Palazzo, who attended boot camp

at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., in 1989 while attending college, was activated in 1990 for Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm where his unit advanced to the border of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait border during the short-lived conflict.

"Joining the Marine Corps, getting out of your comfort zone, you meet people from every walk of life, and you have to work with them," said Palazzo, who left the Marine Corps when his reserve commitment ended and joined the Mississippi Army National Guard, in which he still serves today. But the mentality he learned in the Marine Corps—how to accomplish a mission alongside people with different backgrounds, experiences and opinions—is something he continues to rely on in his work in Congress.

Palazzo is proud to have worked on legislation that helped secure equal benefits for reservists and guardsmen deployed alongside their active-duty counterparts, an issue that his background equipped him to understand. He hopes to see more of his fellow

veterans run for office on the local, state, and federal level. "I think if you've got a mix of military experience and civilian experiences outside of politics then you're going to have more value than a career politician," said Palazzo, who previously worked as a certified public accountant in the private sector before entering the political sphere.

In January, on the 32nd anniversary of the day he first stood on the yellow footprints at MCRD Parris Island, Palazzo traveled back to the depot for a walk down memory lane. But his visit was more than just a nod to the past: it also gave him a renewed sense of hope for the future of the country he loves.

"Seeing those young men and women reassures me that as long as we have a strong Marine Corps, we're going to have a strong America," said Palazzo. "Semper Paratus is not just something that we say, it's something that we live."



As a young Marine, Palazzo, pictured in the left photo in Kuwait during Operation Desert Storm, was pushed out of his comfort zone—an experience that he says prepared him for his work in the Mississippi state legislature and later the U.S. House of Representatives. He also continues to serve today as a member of the Mississippi Army National Guard.

COURTESY OF REP. STEVEN PALAZZO





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Other Marines in the 117th U.S. Congress:

House of Representatives

- Mike Gallagher (R-WI)
- Ruben Gallego (D-AZ)
- Jack Bergman (R-MI)
- Conor Lamb (D-PA)
- Seth Moulton (D-MA)
- Greg Pence (R-IN)

Senate

- Richard Blumenthal (D-CT)
- Dan Sullivan (R-AK)

Senator Todd Young (R-IN)

When Senator Todd Young first ran for public office in 2010 and was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, he felt equipped to serve because of the leadership traits he had acquired during his five years as an active-duty Marine officer. He remained in that seat until 2017, when he was elected to the U.S. Senate, where he continues to serve the people of his home state of Indiana today.

The 1995 graduate of the United States Naval Academy, who served as an intelligence officer with Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron 2 at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C., before a tour on recruiting duty in the greater Chicago area, credits his service in the Corps with teaching him not only courage under fire and physical strength, but even more importantly, virtues like empathy, humility and forbearance.

“In the Marines, I got exposure to all different types of people from different places, from different socioeconomic backgrounds, races and ethnicities and different life experiences,” said

Young. “That’s one way and perhaps the best way to cultivate empathy, is by exposing oneself to people who are different from you, and working through differences, and identifying commonalities and then working on projects together.”

Serving during the unique post-Cold War but pre-9/11 timeframe, Young’s work in the burgeoning unmanned aerial vehicle community largely consisted of counter-narcotics missions and training alongside U.S. Customs and Border Patrol to monitor the Southern border of the United States. While he doesn’t believe one has to serve in the military in order to be an effective public servant, he says that his own experiences as a Marine have proven to be an asset in the Senate.

“It makes you especially sensitive to the sacrifices that our men and women



COURTESY OF SEN. TODD YOUNG



COURTESY OF SEN. TODD YOUNG

in uniform make on our behalf, and the responsibility that all of us have to ensure that our veterans are cared for,” said Young. “I think I’m more sensitized to the gravity of decisions associated with committing our men and women to military engagements and the importance of trying to avoid them at all costs.”



BEYOND THE FENCE LINE

Understanding MCAS Futenma and
Okinawa's Grievances



COURTESY OF SONATA

Left: An aerial view of MCAS Futenma, Okinawa, Japan, taken in May 2010. It was established as a U.S. military air base in 1945.

Below: An F-35B Lightning II jet assigned to VMFA-121 awaits refueling at MCAS Futenma, Okinawa, Japan, Dec. 17, 2020.



LCPL DALTON J. PAYNE, USMC

By Sgt Kyle Daly, USMC

The call was sent out over the air station’s tower frequency.

“An H-53 just went down, H-53 just went down.”

At 2:18 p.m., on a hot August day in 2004, the worst that could happen, did happen. A CH-53D intending to land at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma in Okinawa, Japan, couldn’t remain airborne. The transport helicopter, with a rotor diameter stretching a little more than 72 feet, crashed about 300 yards from the air station’s fence.

Wrapped by a highly condensed city

of homes, businesses, parks and schools, MCAS Futenma’s location on the Pacific island provides no breathing room for emergency landings outside the air station’s fence line.

The crew of the large helicopter, call sign “Dragon Two Five,” lost control of their tail rotor and quickly declared an emergency: “Mayday, Mayday, Mayday.”

The aircraft struck the side of an administration building at Okinawa International University. The impact ruptured a fuel tank, and a fire erupted.

A transcript of the air station’s tower radio calls provides a glimpse of the terrible scene.

The crew of another aircraft, call sign “Dragon Three One,” reported they could see the crash site.

“Dragon Three One has contact with the, uh, fireball to the, uh, southwest of the field.”

Futenma Marines who witnessed the crash climbed over two fences to get to the downed helicopter. They pulled the injured crew from the aircraft. All three crew members—two pilots and a crew chief—survived with injuries. No one on the ground was killed or injured.

An investigation would later find that improper maintenance caused the crash. Specifically, maintainers failed to install a cotter pin on a bolt in the aircraft’s tail rotor section. The bolt fell out, and subsequent events led to the tail rotor departing the aircraft.

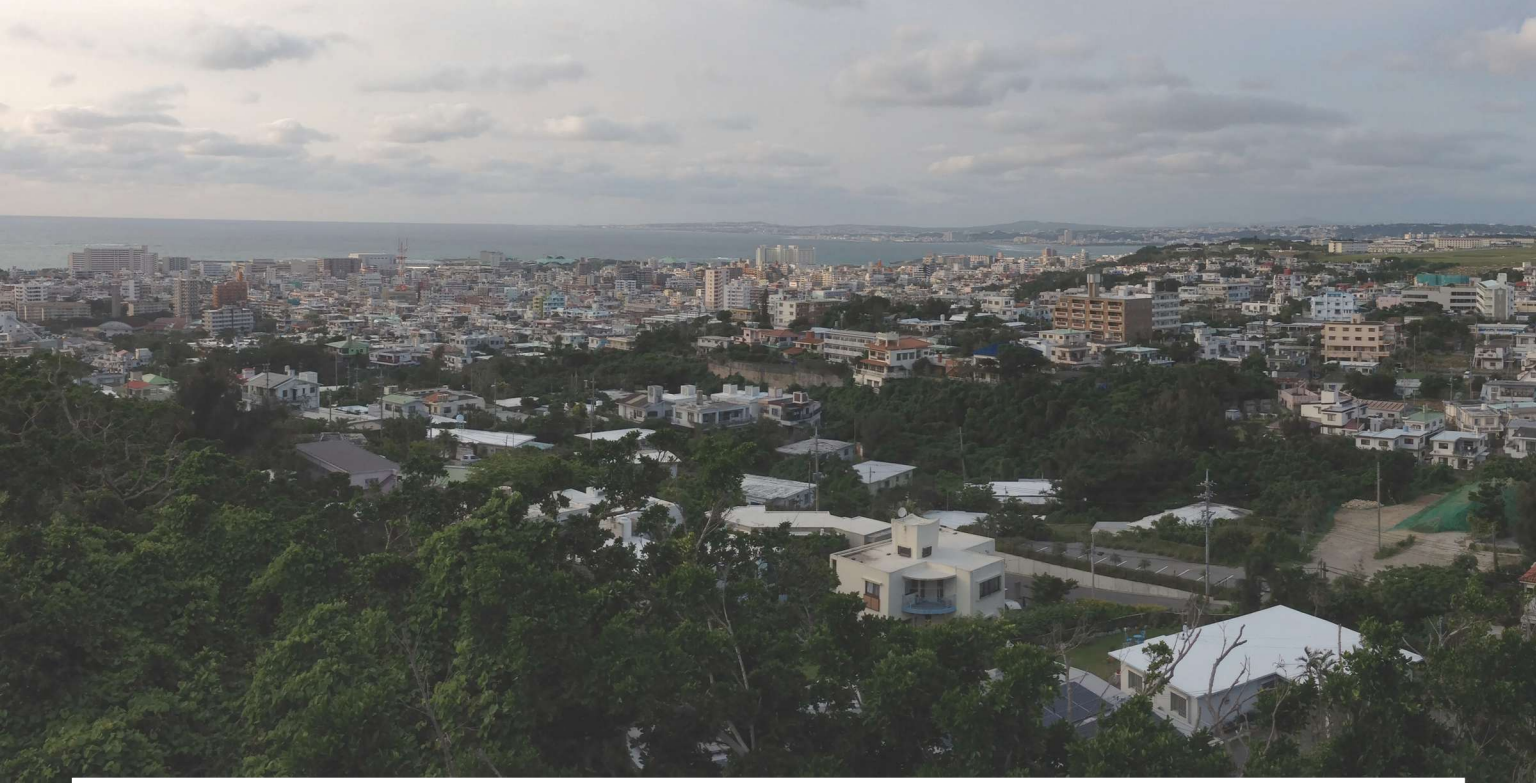
The commander of the 1st Marine

Aircraft Wing, Brigadier General Duane D. Thiessen, later praised the actions of the aircrew, who had avoided causing loss of life on the ground. In his endorsement of a command investigation report, Thiessen would write that “this was a mishap that should never have occurred.” A Marine spokesman would be quoted in a November 2004 *Stars and Stripes* article saying that the Marine Corps was “in the process of imposing appropriate administrative actions against some of the Marines” involved. The same article stated that maintenance procedures were reviewed, and additional preflight checks were implemented to ensure that such a crash never happened again.

In the hundreds of aviation mishaps by U.S. military aircraft in the decades since World War II, the one that occurred on Aug. 13, 2004, in Okinawa, doesn’t, on the surface, seem to stand out. None of the crew died. No one on the ground was killed or injured. The crash was not combat-related, nor did it occur behind enemy lines. And, as the investigation found, the cause of the crash was unique only to the aircraft itself.

Because of these facts, I knew I had to ask Dr. Fumiaki Nozoe, an associate professor at Okinawa International University, a question that other Marines like me might have when looking at the past.

At Nozoe’s university, there stand the remnants of a charred tree that was burned by the fire of the 2004 crash.



The tree's remains serve as a memorial for the incident.

"Why is there a memorial?" I asked Nozoe during a Zoom call in early April. "Why is this remembered?"

Each year, on the anniversary of the crash, students and faculty gather at the charred tree.

The university president, in a speech, calls for the closure of MCAS Futenma, and then students also give speeches not only to remember the 2004 crash, but to discuss "the Futenma issue" and their feelings about "the more broad Okinawa base issue," Nozoe told me.

The word "issue," in this sense, is an all-encompassing term that covers, but is not limited to, the following topics: the potential danger of another crash at Futenma; a now 25-year-old agreement to close Futenma; the delayed construction of an airfield where Futenma's operations can be moved; and an anti-base sentiment magnified by politicians and activists.

I knew what Nozoe meant when he said "issue," a word that also shares a synonym in academic papers and opinion pieces online. This synonym is "problem," as in the "Okinawa problem" or "base problem."

It wasn't until recently that I knew of these terms.

Servicemembers stationed in Okinawa often have a limited understanding of this island and the issues and the problem that so many activists, politicians and local residents discuss.

I should know. I'm one of those servicemembers.

For the past three years, I've lived and worked at MCAS Futenma, flying in and out of the air station as a crew chief on the MV-22 Osprey.

Inside this American bubble, I've progressed with my aircraft maintenance qualifications and climbed the Marine Corps ranks, concentrating on the day-to-day tasks and not giving much

"We don't have a deep well of institutional thinkers and people who have a good understanding of Japan and the history. Part of the problem comes from the turnover in personnel of all ranks."—Joe Stavale

thought to what happens beyond this base's fence line. After all, why should I?

In 2014, Joe Stavale, now a retired Marine Corps lieutenant colonel, wrote an article published in *Marine Corps Gazette* in which he addressed "an American deficiency that deserves better attention."

Stavale, who served as a foreign area officer specializing in Japan, wrote that "Americans are still struggling to maintain an effective level of institutional understanding and continuity on the issues that are important to Japan and are embarrassingly surprised and frustrated by Japanese viewpoints and positions

on issues that impact the U.S.-Japan alliance."

Speaking to Stavale on the phone in early April, I read him the passage from his six-year-old article and asked whether he still believes this struggle is true today. Without hesitation, Stavale affirmed that it is.

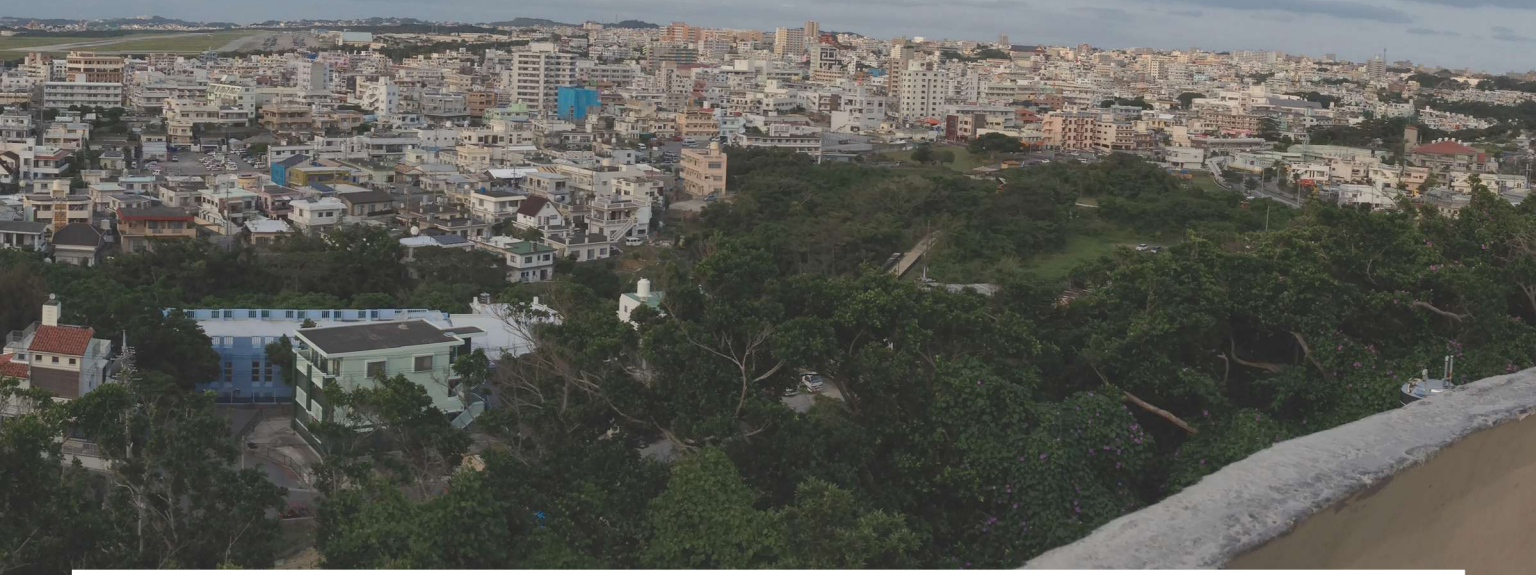
"We don't have a deep well of institutional thinkers and people who have a good understanding of Japan and the history," Stavale told me.

Part of the problem comes from the turnover in personnel of all ranks, he explained. Those stationed in Okinawa and elsewhere in Japan are in country for periods as short as six months, or for many, three years.

The U.S. and Japanese governments have a strong security alliance born out of agreements reached between the two countries following the conclusion of World War II. The two governments both agree that the military's presence on Okinawa is strategically significant, not just to Japan and the U.S., but to the security of the region.

"Understanding the Japanese and their viewpoints on defense and the U.S. military presence in Japan will enable American stakeholders to better manage the alliance and ensure a politically stable future as we rebalance to make our forces operationally ready, regionally dispersed, and politically stable," Stavale wrote in his 2014 article. "Failing to break through just a veneer understanding of our alliance partner's views and attitudes will perpetuate miscalculations, incorrect assumptions, a reactive posture

A view from the Kakazu Height Park Observatory, Nogiwan, Okinawa, on April 29, 2014. (Photo by Superkamaji)



toward the media and public opinion, frustration at all levels of coordination and policymaking, and the adoption of unsuccessful positions that will fail in finding a mutually acceptable outcome to common challenges in the future.”

I asked Stavale if it is important for Marines like me—junior Marines and NCOs, not the ones making major decisions—to understand the alliance and the issues attached to it.

This young generation of Marines ask tough questions, he said. They ask why.

“Maybe before, we were too reliant on the leadership to make the connections,” he said. Going forward, Stavale added, we should “rely on the junior personnel to make the professional linkages.”

“But to do that you have to have a good understanding of the alliance—why you are even based here.”

When I posed this same question to an Okinawan resident, a Marine of a much older generation, he responded with this advice: “In principle, I think it’s always better to know the situation that you’re in.”

“It Was Shattered”

In March, during a week of relaxed coronavirus restrictions for the Marines stationed in Okinawa, I ventured to a coffee shop in downtown Naha, the island’s capital city, to meet with that 84-year-old Marine, a man who first stepped foot on the island six decades ago.

We sat at a table inside the shop, located on the second story of a shopping mall. Doug Lummis looked at me

through his oval-shaped glasses. He wore a black beanie that fit snugly over his long, scraggly hair. He had a white beard and wore a brown jacket that covered a blue button-down shirt.

With his adult son at his side, Lummis asked me to look into his eyes and tell him the truth: “Are you a policeman?” he said.

I laughed at the question and assured him I was not a police officer.

“OK, I believe you,” he said, with a pinch of humor in his voice.

Though it put me at ease for the interview, I knew there was perhaps a kernel of sincerity in wanting to know if I had ties to law enforcement. That’s because, in addition to being a U.S. military veteran, a retired university professor, and a published author, Lummis is also an activist.

Lummis is the coordinator for the local chapter of Veterans For Peace, a nonprofit organization made up of U.S. veterans who are against armed conflicts and intervening in the affairs of other nations. He has participated in anti-base protests, including an ongoing sit-in at the construction site of the new airfield designed to replace Futenma.

Knowing this and being aware of the gulf that exists between an anti-base activist and an active duty servicemember, I began the interview on common ground. Lummis and I are both Marines, and we both received orders to Okinawa. I first asked him to describe his service.

Lummis served for three years in the Marine Corps, 1958 to 1961, fol-

lowing his studies at UC Berkeley in California. After finishing The Basic School in Quantico, Va., followed by a year stationed at Camp Pendleton in California, Lummis completed his short time in the military on this Pacific island.

When he arrived in the early 1960s, about 15 years removed from the Battle of Okinawa, the island was still under U.S. control.

“It was shattered,” Lummis said of the island. “Many people were living in what you would call slums, that is to stay, hand-built houses—hand built out of scraps by amateur builders.”

Despite the low wages of U.S. servicemembers at that time, the 84-year-old described the economic gap between Okinawans and Americans as “gigantic.”

“If you took that money and stepped off the base, you were rich,” he said.

Okinawans, many of them farmers who no longer had land to farm on, would find things to sell to American servicemembers—trinkets, candies, cigarettes, “or their bodies,” Lummis said.

The U.S. military occupied Japan for about seven years following the war’s end in 1945. When the U.S. returned Japan to its people in the early 1950s, the two governments agreed to allow American military forces to be stationed in the country. A revised agreement reached in 1960 specifies that those U.S. military forces in Japan are meant to provide security to Japan and to maintain peace in the region. Under a new constitution drafted after World

Below: Col Henry Dolberry Jr., CO, MCAS Futenma, greets a representative from the 15th Anti-Air Regiment of the Japan Ground Self Defense Force Oct. 26, 2020.



LCPL ZACHARY LARSEN, USMC



War II, Japan had vowed not to settle disputes through armed conflict.

But while most of Japan gained back its sovereignty in 1952, a civil administration that fell under the U.S. War Department controlled Okinawa and other Ryukyu islands. The administration created a democratic government for the islands, but U.S. officials could overrule any laws passed by that government. It wasn't until 1972 that Okinawa was finally returned to Japan. But in the period between the end of World War II and the return to Japan, the American military on Okinawa assumed control of former Japanese military installations and built other bases, according to a 2016 Congressional Research Service (CRS) report.

"The United States paid locals for the acquired land, but in some cases this purchase reportedly involved deception or outright coercion, using bulldozers and bayonets to evict unwilling residents," the report states. "During the period of American administration, Okinawans had no political authority or legal redress for crimes committed by servicemembers—though the worst crimes were prosecuted through court martial."

During his time on the island, Lummis said he witnessed "structural discrimination," or the unfair treatment of Okinawans built into the system in which they lived.

In the officers' quarters, according to Lummis, each room had a housemaid.

"A young woman who would wash our clothes and make the beds and clean the

rooms," he said. "And the wages were fixed. We were told if we gave more, it would disrupt the Okinawan economy."

Witnessing poverty and all its consequences—seeing what Okinawans had to do to feed themselves—affected Lummis. He ended his service in Okinawa and took a ship to mainland Japan where he enrolled in a language school. Lummis would eventually return to UC Berkeley for graduate studies during a decade in which the northern California college campus saw its share of student protests. He got involved in the Free Speech Movement, which protested the ban of political activities on campus. Lummis would later return to Japan and teach at a women's college for 25 years before retiring. In 2000, he moved to Okinawa, the island where his wife is from.

Differences Between Okinawa and the Mainland

Okinawans are ethnically different from other Japanese citizens. Before it became a Japanese prefecture in 1879, the Ryukyu Kingdom, which includes Okinawa and other nearby islands, was, for more than four centuries, "a nation of courteous officials, farmers, fishermen, and traders," according to George H. Kerr's book "Okinawa: The History of an Island People." Okinawa's location between mainland Japan, China and other East Asian countries—an ideal outpost for trade—caught the eye of both Asian and Western nations long before World War II.

During the war, Japan gave little

thought about Okinawa, "and did virtually nothing to prepare it for the crisis of invasion," according to Kerr's book.

"Okinawa retained importance only as a potential field of battle, a distant border area in which the oncoming enemy could be checked, pinned down, and ultimately destroyed," Kerr writes.

During the Battle of Okinawa, between 40,000 and 100,000 civilians died.

Lummis explained that Japanese today speak of "structural discrimination" against the Okinawans in terms of the U.S. bases.

He told me a story of a woman from mainland Japan who visited him in Okinawa. The woman was part of a movement that supported Article 9, the section of Japan's constitution that declares the country will not use war to handle international disputes. Lummis was driving the woman through a residential area next to the base's fence line.

"She looked at the fence and houses alongside and said, 'I could never live in a place like that.'" The woman, he explained, was referring to the Okinawan residences next to the fence.

"At first it sounds like a powerful, anti-base sentiment, but then wait a

Japanese protesters gather outside MCAS Futenma in Ginowan, Okinawa, on Nov. 8, 2009.



NATHAN KEIRN

minute, what did she just say? You could rephrase it as, 'I can't imagine how those people could live in a place like that,'” he said. “In other words, look at what a sensitive, aware, sympathetic person I am, compared to [Okinawans]. They just live there and don't even care. In the U.S., I guess they call that a 'dog whistle.'”

Although the island of Okinawa makes up less than one percent of Japanese land, the tiny prefecture houses about half of the 53,000 U.S. military personnel in the country, according to the CRS report. The Okinawan prefectural government's website for its Washington, D.C., office states that more than 70 percent of land exclusive to U.S. military facilities in Japan is based in Okinawa.

“Some Okinawans see the decision to host the bulk of U.S. forces on Okinawa as a form of discrimination by mainland Japanese, who also do not want U.S. bases in their backyards,” the report states.

In September 1996, 89 percent of participating Okinawan voters cast ballots in favor of a non-binding referendum that called for the reduction of U.S. military bases on the island. That vote—the first time Okinawans voiced their opinion on the matter—came during a year in which

Conversations about reducing the American military's presence on Okinawa were sparked by the horrible actions of three servicemembers—two Marines and a Sailor—in September 1995, when the three men, all in their early 20s, abducted and raped a 12-year-old Okinawan schoolgirl.

both the U.S. and Japanese governments were making major changes in the U.S.-Japan alliance.

Conversations about reducing the American military's presence on Okinawa were sparked by the horrible actions of three servicemembers—two Marines and a Sailor—in September 1995, when the three men, all in their early 20s, abducted and raped a 12-year-old Okinawan schoolgirl.

Stavale, who retired as a lieutenant colonel in 2019, was a sergeant stationed in Okinawa when the incident happened.

“It was just so shocking and embarrassing,” Stavale said. “It was not our finest hour at all. We should be held to a higher standard. Nobody should have any fear or worry that a U.S. servicemember would do anything to hurt them.”

The incident sparked protests attended by thousands, gained the attention of the international press, and pushed both the U.S. and Japanese governments to discuss how to alleviate the burden of the American military on Okinawa—a burden that included the military's use of land, aircraft noise and crimes committed by servicemembers.

That's when the idea was proposed: close Marine Corps Air Station Futenma.

“A Base for Rapid Reinforcement”

“The original agreement called for the [air station's] functions to be relocated within five to seven years and Futenma would be closed,” said Dr. Robert Eldridge, a former deputy assistant chief of staff of government and external affairs for Marine Corps Installations Pacific. “I don't think D.C. understood what the functions of Futenma are when they were discussing it.”

In March, inside my barracks room on Futenma, I spoke to Eldridge via Zoom. Eldridge has written multiple books and opinion articles about the U.S.-Japan alliance and the importance of Okinawa for the security of the region.

He received his doctorate in political science from Kobe University. He worked as a political adviser for both U.S. and Japanese government officials and was also with military commanders during the humanitarian response to the great earthquake and tsunami that struck Japan in 2011.

In his writings, Eldridge has pointed out the importance of MCAS Futenma.

The airfield was constructed in 1945 during the Battle of Okinawa as a location for American forces to station B-29 bombers, according to a 2012 article Eldridge wrote, called “The Okinawa ‘Base Problem’ Today.” In 1976, it was designated a Marine Corps air station.

In the event of an emergency, aircraft intending to land at Naha International Airport on the island’s southwest side or at Kadena Air Base farther north can divert to Futenma. In the event of a tsunami, Futenma, unlike Naha, is located on higher ground and could be used as “an emergency hub,” according to Eldridge.

Futenma is also one of a handful of bases designated to support United Nations Command-Rear forces if the need arises. Its 9,000-foot runway can support large transport aircraft. Kadena Air Base also has this UN designation.

Kadena and Futenma are two American military airfields that are about a 20-minute drive from each other, depending on traffic. On the surface, it would seem like overkill to have two major air bases on a small island, but the Air Force doesn’t operate like the Marines, who have ground troops that also live and train on Okinawa.

“Being co-located in Okinawa with the ground troops, the aircraft facilities at Futenma allow the Marines to train and deploy together, which is essential to the Marine-Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) doctrine,” Eldridge writes.

Eldridge told me there was an idea to merge the operations of Kadena Air Base and MCAS Futenma, but it never gained traction.

“The main issue why they should never think of doing that is that you should never purposefully eliminate your options in a contingency,” he said. “By closing Futenma, you’re giving China a huge advantage in a



Marines with 1st MAW participate in a formation run on MCAS Futenma, Okinawa, Japan, May 28, 2019.

contingency—you just made it infinitely easier for them. One less target to bomb. Etcetera. Etcetera.”

Former U.S. Secretary of Defense William Perry, who led the department from 1994-1997, also described the importance of Futenma in a 2017 documentary made by the Japanese media organization, NHK.

“The primary purpose of Futenma is to serve as a base for rapid reinforcement of our troops in South Korea in the event of an attack from North Korea,” he said.

In such a situation, Perry added, Futenma would serve as a facility for reinforcement as other air units move to the region from places such as Hawaii, Alaska and the continental United States.

“We never considered just giving up the base,” Perry said of the agreement reached between the two governments in 1996. “We always considered what can we do to keep the capability that we feel is vital and lessening the negative impact on the Okinawan people.”

“High-Level Arm Twisting”

Although its closure was proposed more than two decades ago, MCAS Futenma is very much open for business. The air station houses two Osprey units and provides maintenance spaces for other rotary wing aircraft. Fixed-winged aircraft use its runway for training.

Marines like me live and work at the base, maintaining and flying on aircraft and training with ground troops on a continuous basis.

So, why is it still here?

The question has a complex answer, but that answer can be summed up with one word: politics.

In January 1996, Ryutaro Hashimoto became the prime minister of Japan. During a visit to the United States only weeks into his term, Hashimoto brought up the possibility of closing Futenma to President Bill Clinton. Even at that time, Okinawan residents living near Futenma had complained for years about the noise of aircraft and expressed



SSGT LAURA GAUNA, USMC

The report stipulated that the base be returned within five to seven years, but only “after adequate replacement facilities are completed and operational.”

majority with just over 50 percent.

Despite this majority, the city’s mayor Tetsuya Higa agreed to allow construction of the heliport. A Reuters news report at the time described the mayor as succumbing to “high-level arm twisting” by the Japanese prime minister, who “dangled the prospect of 150 million yen (about \$2 million) in sorely needed economic assistance to Okinawa.”

Higa subsequently resigned.

Even though he initially agreed to cooperate with the central government’s effort to replace Futenma, then-Okinawa Governor Masahide Ota came out against the heliport proposal after Higa resigned, Eldridge writes.

In 1998, Ota lost a re-election bid, and a “nominally conservative” governor, according to Eldridge, took his place. That governor, Keiichi Inamine, a businessman with no background in politics, was “viewed as pliable.”

Governor Inamine eventually spoke in favor of the agreement to build a replacement facility and close Futenma. That’s because, according to Eldridge, Okinawa played host to the G8 Summit in 2000, which brought world leaders, including President Bill Clinton, to the island.

“That was seen—correctly—as a quid pro quo for accepting the relocation,” he said.

It was decided that the Henoko district of Nago, where the Marine Corps’ Camp Schwab is located, would be the site of the new facility, and that it would be a landfill project. But the Japanese government moved slowly, and anti-base protesters continued to fight the project.

In late 2004 and early 2005, with Donald Rumsfeld at the helm of the U.S. Department of Defense, American officials decided to go back to the drawing board and reconsider the option of Henoko as a replacement site.

Eldridge advocated for another replacement site at the Katsuren Peninsula on the east side of central Okinawa. Eldridge’s plan, which was actually an idea that came from an Okinawan construction company president with ex-

concern about the airfield’s proximity to so many schools.

“One reason that the prime minister was so interested in helping Okinawa was that his political mentor was the prime minister that actualized the return of Okinawa back in ’72,” Eldridge said. “So there’s a lot of sentimental feelings that this prime minister had toward Okinawa.”

Hashimoto resigned as prime minister only two years later.

According to Eldridge, every prime minister who has followed, except for Hashimoto’s immediate successor, Keizo Obuchi, who suffered a stroke and later died less than two years into his term, never had that same connection with the southern prefecture. That’s one reason Okinawans have struggled to be heard on the issue of military bases.

In the weeks and months following the September 1995 rape and the massive anti-base protests that erupted from the incident, the U.S. and Japanese governments established what was called the Special Action Committee

on Okinawa (SACO), which was tasked with proposing solutions to alleviate the burden of housing American military forces on the island.

The SACO Final Report, which came out in December 1996, recommended that thousands of acres of land used by the U.S. military be returned to Okinawa residents. This included MCAS Futenma. The report stipulated that the base be returned within five to seven years, but only “after adequate replacement facilities are completed and operational.”

In the years to follow, the Futenma issue, which included a proposed replacement facility on the northern part of the island, would both begin and end political careers in Japan, from mayoral seats to the prime minister’s office.

In 1996, a proposal emerged to build a heliport in waters east of Nago City in northern Okinawa. The city held a vote in December 1997 that asked residents to weigh in on the proposal. Although it wasn’t a simple “yes” or “no” option for voters, those who opposed the plan appeared to have the

perience building offshore landfills in the area in the 1990s, called for the building of an artificial island that would hold a heliport and two runways. The benefits included a short construction process, minimal impacts to the environment and a location that was away from residences.

“This concept incorporates the biggest lesson from Futenma—don’t build an airfield where people live or can live,” Eldridge wrote in 2019. Eldridge predicts that the day the Henoko replacement facility opens for operation—if it opens—“noise” and “danger” complaints will begin pouring in.

Many groups supported Eldridge’s plan, including the Marines, local politicians and business leaders in the Okinawa Chamber of Commerce and Industry, he said.

“The Pentagon liked my plan too, and they told me in an email ‘this is the best plan ever,’ ” Eldridge said. “But, they said, ‘the Japanese government has to propose it.’ And they said, ‘for the Japanese government to propose it, the Okinawans have to propose it.’ ”

In the end, Japan did not want to shift gears. In 2006, the Japanese and U.S. governments agreed to keep pushing forward with the Henoko idea in a deal meant to realign American military forces in Japan and eventually relocate approximately 8,000 Marines to Guam. The agreement called for the targeted completion of the replacement facility by 2014, which would come and go.

Today, the Japanese government still hasn’t shifted gears, with construction at Henoko taking place and anti-base protesters still trying to disrupt the project.

Politics, however, have been the leading disrupter.

In 2010, Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama resigned because he broke a campaign promise to move Futenma’s operations off Okinawa, thus keeping the Henoko project alive.

Okinawa Governor Hirokazu Nakaima, who took office in 2006, won his election while being “vague” on the base issue, said Doug Lummis. In 2010, however, Nakaima’s campaign called for the complete removal of Futenma’s operations from the island. He won the 2010 election and maintained that position throughout his second term.

But his stance seemed to change when, in 2013, he struck a deal with the government of Japan, giving his approval for the Henoko landfill project—an approval required by law, and one that only the governor of the prefecture could



Today, the Japanese government still hasn’t shifted gears, with construction at Henoko taking place and anti-base protesters still trying to disrupt the project. Politics, however, has been the leading disrupter.

provide. It was the last major hurdle Japan’s central government had to clear before it could begin the construction project. News reports state that, in return, Japan’s prime minister promised Nakaima a huge spending package for infrastructure and development projects on the island.

Nakaima lost his seat the following year to Takeshi Onaga, an Okinawan

mayor who was against the Henoko project. Onaga’s successor and Okinawa’s current governor, Denny Tamaki, was elected following Onaga’s unexpected death in 2018. Tamaki has maintained Onaga’s anti-base stance.

According to a 2019 CRS report, Onaga and Tamaki have “employed a variety of political and legal strategies to prevent or delay construction of the [replacement facility] at the Henoko site.” This has included taking the central government to court.

In February 2019, a non-binding referendum was held on Okinawa with a 52 percent turnout. Of the voters who cast ballots, about 72 percent opposed the construction of a new base. According to CRS, “most Okinawans oppose the construction of a new U.S. base for a mix of political, environmental, and quality-of-life reasons.”

Lummis explained that Okinawans’ opinions on the base issue are not so black and white; that is, there isn’t a group in favor of having the bases versus

Marine AH-1Z Vipers assigned to HMLA-267 take off after refueling at MCAS Futenma, Dec. 16, 2020. MWSS-172 Marines conducted a refueling point to support the flight operations of 1st MAW at MCAS Futenma, Okinawa, Japan, while the main fueling station was closed for maintenance.



LCPL GERARDO W. CANO, USMC

a group against having bases.

Michael Bosack, a former deputy chief of government relations at Headquarters, U.S. Forces Japan, wrote an article in 2018 that explained the gray area Lummis described. Bosack described the differences among the island's elected leaders.

"There are plenty of Okinawan politicians who enjoy great relations with the bases they host but oppose the terms of the intergovernmental agreements that dictate the existence of those bases," Bosack wrote. "Conversely, there are politicians who recognize the strategic importance of U.S. bases in Japan without wanting Okinawa to have an unequal share of the base-hosting responsibility, let alone bearing that responsibility in their own constituencies. Further, there are anti-base politicians who see cooperation with base-related initiatives as a means to extract the maximum amount of concessions from the central government for their constituents."

In December 2019, the Japanese government announced the Henoko project would take another 12 years because more would have to be done to improve a soft seabed where the proposed runways are to be constructed, according to a *Japan Times* article. It also will cost three times as originally estimated.

That means Futenma will likely be open well past the year 2030—three and a half decades after the two governments called for its closure.



Two MV-22 Ospreys with VMM-262 prepare to take off from MCAS Futenma, Okinawa, Japan, Sept. 29, 2017, in support of Exercise KAMANDAG.

LCPL ANDY MARTINEZ, USMC

“Of Course it’s Dangerous”

The thing that shows why Henoko is “such a joke,” Eldridge said, and why better plans for a replacement facility haven’t been considered, is that the original reason for closing MCAS Futenma was the so-called danger to the local community.

Eldridge disagrees with this assessment, pointing out that no Okinawan resident has been killed or injured since the airfield came into existence.

But, according to Eldridge, the people he argues with will point to the 2004 CH-53D crash as an example of the danger the air station poses. In response, Eldridge reminds them that the crash happened eight years after the two governments originally agreed to close Futenma “within five to seven years.”

“If you’re saying Futenma is such a dangerous airfield, why haven’t you helped with the speedy relocation?”

I discussed the same idea of danger with Lummis, who has argued in his public writings that the safety restrictions that apply to military airfields in the U.S., specifically “clear zones” at the end of the runways where crashes are likely to occur, don’t apply to Futenma, an airfield in a foreign country. Futenma’s clear zones, as depicted in a 2012 environmental review for basing the MV-22 Osprey at the air station, extend beyond the base’s fence, where schools and other buildings are, Lummis writes.

“Well, of course it’s dangerous,”

Lummis said of Futenma. “I think that the people operating the base know that it’s dangerous, and I think they’re being as careful as they possibly can.”

The military, Lummis said, will do what it can to make things as safe as possible, adding, “so long as it doesn’t interfere seriously with normal operations.”

Futenma’s clear zones, as depicted in a 2012 environmental review for basing the MV-22 Osprey at the air station, extend beyond the base’s fence, where schools and other buildings are.

Lummis also acknowledged that in the event of a crash, it’s rare for the people on the ground to get hurt; it’s more likely the people in the aircraft don’t walk away.

“Accept Such a Reality”

Dr. Nozoe, who has taught at Okinawa International University for eight years, has conducted research on the history of the U.S.-Japan alliance. He is not Okinawan, he’s from mainland Japan.

During our conversation, I asked the

university professor whether he and his students hear aircraft flying in and out of MCAS Futenma.

“Yes, of course,” Nozoe affirmed, adding that sometimes he has to stop class because of the noise.

The Japanese government, Nozoe said, made improvements at the university to mitigate the noise, such as strengthening the windows. In addition, improvements were made to the air conditioning system, which is required on hot days when the windows have to be shut for the aircraft sounds.

However, many of his students are used to the noise, and they just accept living with the U.S. military on the island, he said. If they think about the base issue, they’ll have to think about the unfairness of Okinawa hosting so many military installations.

“They don’t want to think about that, so they can’t help but accept such a reality,” he said.

Author’s bio: Sgt Daly is a Southern California native who joined the Marines after working as a full-time journalist. He graduated from Arizona State University with a bachelor’s degree in journalism. In 2019, he won the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation’s MSgt Tom Bartlett Award for Outstanding Writing. His previous work and contact information can be found at kylejdaly.com.



Marines stand in formation on the flight line on MCAS Futenma, Okinawa, Japan, June 7, 2019 during the MAG-36 change of command ceremony.

LCPL MADELINE JONES, USMC

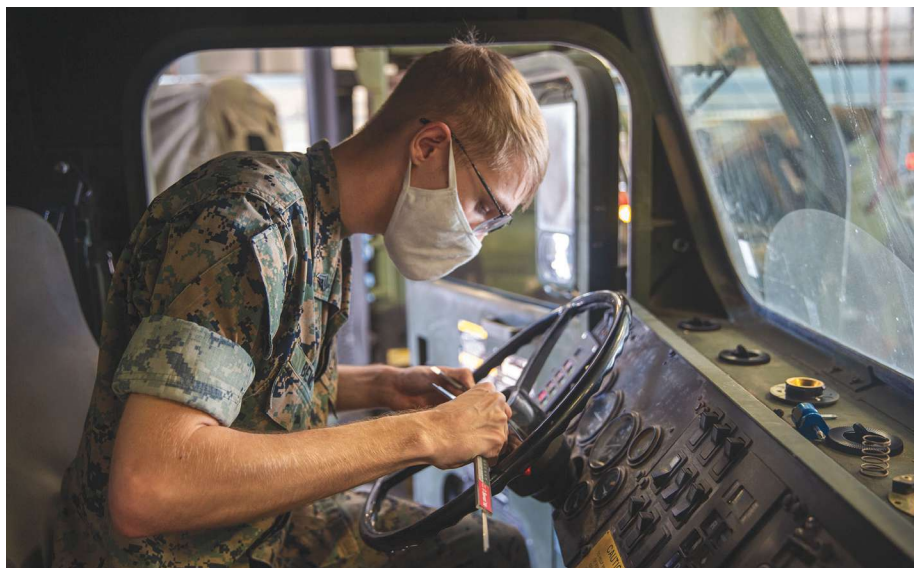
Motor T Mechanics Design, Produce Innovative Tool

In recent years, the Marine Corps has actively pursued and awarded the most innovative ideas, encouraging Marines and Sailors of all units and military occupational specialties to identify ways to mitigate problems and streamline processes to improve their working environments. Dozens of creative ideas have evolved and are now implemented on the ground to help make the job easier for those servicemembers who face obstacles and challenges in their work centers each day. For motor transport mechanics, an innovative steering wheel remover device is now available to help prevent hundreds of tactical vehicles from being “deadlined,” thanks to the innovation of two Camp Pendleton-based Marines: Staff Sergeant Kyle Owens, a motor transportation chief with Combat Logistics Battalion 5, Combat Logistics Regiment 1, 1st Marine Logistics Group, who came up with the idea and created the prototype, and Corporal Aiden Bemis, a digital manufacturing engineer with 1st Supply Battalion, 1st Marine Logistics Group, who was able to mass produce the tool Owens designed.

Last year alone, Marine Corps units submitted 136 requests to replace steering wheels and steering wheel columns that were cracked or broken, rendering Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacements (MTRV) and Logistics Vehicle System Replacements (LVS) temporarily useless until a new part arrived.

“If the part is in stock, the truck can be fixed in about a week,” said Owens. “But since the replacement part is a fairly large item, supply doesn’t usually have a lot in stock. When it has to be ordered, it can take weeks or months to come in before our truck is back on the lot.”

The tool previously used to remove the steering wheel is often the cause of the cracking. The 10-way slide hammer kit, a component of the motor transport common “B-Kit,” requires a significant amount of pressure and then a forced yank in order to release the column. This activity often causes the steering wheel column to crack, which renders the steering wheel inoperable, requiring a replacement. Steering columns are the housing for all the lighting wires, so the columns often are removed when trucks have lighting issues that cannot be solved with a simple lightbulb change. The steering wheel has to be removed



GYSGT MICHELLE HUNT, USMC

Above: Cpl Aiden Bemis, a digital manufacturing engineer with 1st Supply Bn, 1st MLG, I MEF, measures a steering wheel column at MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., April 29.

Below: Cpl Bemis, right, and SSgt Owens, left, demonstrate the old method of steering wheel removal. Owens designed a tool that could effectively remove a steering wheel without causing damage, and it is now being mass produced for use across the Corps.



GYSGT MICHELLE HUNT, USMC

to troubleshoot the wire housing unit. Because of the pressure applied to the steering wheel when the pulley is applied, it almost always cracks from the force.

“I was a young corporal working on trucks, and I was tired of getting chewed out for breaking the wheel,” said Owens. “I was bored at lunch with my buddy one day and we just started brainstorming a better way we could get the steering wheel off without breaking it every time.”

There were some discarded tools and pieces of metal around the motor pool, and Owens saw a standard washer that

looked about the same size as the center piece of the MVTR steering wheel. With a little creativity, he found a way to use the washer to create a customized tool that could remove the steering wheel while keeping it intact.

“I drilled three holes into the washer and welded a nut to the hole in the middle,” said Owens. “The nut had the proper threading to allow a bolt to be screwed in the middle of the wheel, and with enough pressure, it pops the steering wheel right off.”

The other two holes were drilled in

MCRD San Diego Graduates First Female Recruits

A platoon of newly minted Marines broke barriers when they became the first female graduates of Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, Calif., in the history of the Marine Corps, May 6. After a century of training only male Marines, MCRD San Diego welcomed women to “Lima” Company, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, the first integrated company at the West Coast installation, earlier this year. Until now, female Marines have completed boot camp solely at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C. In April, the recruits in the company’s all-female Platoon 3241 completed the challenging 54-hour “Crucible” event on the steep terrain of Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., earning their own coveted eagle, globe and anchor.



PFC Leslie Cook reunites with her family following the Lima Co graduation ceremony at MCRD San Diego, May 6. Cook was one of the 53 female recruits to graduate after training with the first female integrated company at the West Coast recruit depot.



Female recruits at MCRD San Diego are given instructions during pick-up by their drill instructor, Feb. 12.



SGT SARAH RALPH, USMC

Above: SSgt Carmen MedinaPonce, a drill instructor with Lima Co, 3rd Recruit Training Bn, inspects the back of a new Marine's collar at MCRD San Diego, May 5. MedinaPonce was one of the DIs to train the first female integrated platoon at the Corps' West Coast recruit depot.

Right: Lydia Eitel, a recruit with Plt 3241, provides security during the Crucible. (Photo by Sgt Alina Thackray, USMC)



LCPL GRACE KINDRED, USMC

A new recruit with Lima Co, 3rd Recruit Training Bn steps off the bus during receiving at MCRD San Diego, Feb. 9 and immediately began the transformation from civilian to Marine.

the washer to align with the holes in the steering wheel. By screwing two bolts through the washer into the holes in the steering wheel, the washer was fastened securely to the wheel. At that point, Owens screwed a third bolt into the welded nut, and eventually it applied enough force against the steering wheel column to remove the wheel with nothing cracking.

“When I realized it worked, I put that washer in my pocket and took it with me to every unit I went to,” said Owens. “Any time I would see another mechanic trying to remove a steering wheel using the slide hammer, I would toss them my washer and save them from the butt chewing they’d get if they cracked that wheel.”

It was 2012 when Owens first starting using his handmade tool, and as a young Marine, he never really considered it a groundbreaking idea. But eight years later, while serving as the chief in his section, Owens was approached by his unit’s innovation officer, who was looking for Marines with good ideas. He thought of his washer, which had been used so many times the threading on the nut was almost completely stripped. He asked how he could suggest the idea to get something similar in every single mechanic’s kit so that cracked steering wheels could become a thing of the past.

“My biggest thing was figuring out if there was a way to make more, so that the lance corporals and corporals under me wouldn’t have to deal with some of the same challenges I did,” said Owens. “If I can help make their life easier, that’s all that matters, because I know what it’s like to be that young Marine getting in trouble for breaking something, and I’m thinking to myself, ‘Well, how else am I supposed to get the job done?’”

Owens’ washer tool was submitted for the Commandant’s Innovation Challenge, but it was also taken to 1st Supply Battalion’s digital manufacturing team (DMT) with the hope of duplicating the tool and producing more for other motor pools.

As a digital manufacturing engineer, Cpl Bemis provided the capability to make Owens’ dream a reality. Utilizing his background in computer aided design (CAD), Bemis took the device and began designing the replica blueprint for mass production.

“What the DMT does is identify parts in the supply chain with long lead times that break often and cost a lot of money that we can produce for way less,” said Bemis.

Originally a field radio operator, Bemis is now part of a small group of Marines in the Process Reform Office who use CAD to take an established item and reverse engineer it so it can be replicated through 3D printing.



SGT DANA BEESLEY, USMC

The Honorable Thomas W. Harker, Acting Secretary of the Navy, center, tours the new Combined Heat Plant site during his visit to MCRD Parris Island, S.C., April 1. The visit provided an opportunity for the secretary to observe recruit training and present the depot with the 2021 Secretary of the Navy Environmental Award.

Using a 3D scanner, Bemis was able to scan Owen's gadget to record the exact measurements required for printing. The first model was made of plastic and broke the first time it was tested; but after a few minor adjustments, the ultimate version was completed and tested with success. The final tool was printed with 17-4 steel and popped off its first steering wheel with ease and, most importantly, no damage.

GySgt Michele Hunt, USMC

Parris Island Receives Award For Environmental Sustainability

During a visit from the Honorable Thomas W. Harker, the Acting Secretary of the Navy, Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., was recognized for its efforts in leading the way on environmental sustainability, April 1.

Harker presented the depot with the 2021 Secretary of the Navy Environmental Award, which recognized its excellence in integrating environmental and operational sustainability efforts and mitigating impacts from storm surge and sea level rise through 2065.

In a memo announcing MCRD Parris Island as this year's winner, Harker said that the depot's efforts "demonstrated that early and deliberate planning could yield a benefit cost ratio of 5.21, providing \$675 million of net infrastructure, training and human health benefits, thus maximizing the operational budget and securing the depot's mission."

The depot also was recognized for maintaining a partnership with nearby Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, S.C., and the Lowcountry Council of Govern-

ments, a partnership that resulted in a \$467,000 grant from the Office of Economic Adjustment in fiscal year 2021 to address local resiliency efforts. The award is a recognition of long-running efforts aboard the depot to support energy conservation and environmental sustainability.

In 2019, the depot finished construction on a new power plant that works toward achieving energy security and resilience for the depot as well as conserving energy and water usage. The project provides several on-site distributed sources of generation, coupled with battery storage and a smart utility grid that will reduce the number and duration of utility outages.

Commander Andrew Litteral, USN, a public works officer at MCRD Parris Island, said the award is an example of the work that comes from Navy-Marine Corps joint efforts.

"Naval Facilities Engineering Systems

Command developed a handbook for adapting to climate change, and Parris Island was chosen to be the pilot location to use the handbook to perform a study on how the installation can adapt to become more resilient," said Litteral. "We were able to get all the stakeholders together—from recruit training to experts in adapting to sea-level rise—to develop long-term strategies for adaptation and more immediate responses like measurement devices to better understand what changes are occurring right here."

GySgt Tyler Hlavac, USMC

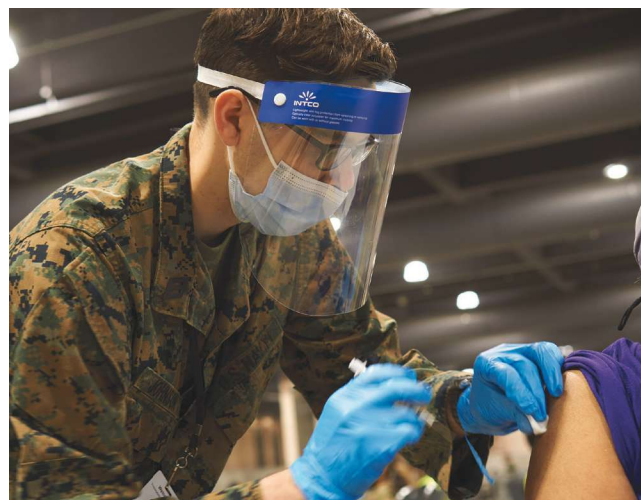
Marines, Sailors Support Philadelphia Mass Vaccination Site

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania holds a special place in U.S. Marine Corps history. In 1775, Captain Samuel Nicholas, the first commissioned officer in the Continental Marines who would later go on to become the first Commandant of the Marine Corps, was directed by Congress to raise two battalions of Marines. He used Tun Tavern, a saloon that no longer physically stands but remains tattooed across the heart and soul of every U.S. Marine, as the first Marine Corps recruiting station when he was looking for a "few good men."

This year, the Marines landed back in Philadelphia fighting their latest adversary: COVID-19.

In February, the Marines and Sailors of Combat Logistics Battalion 22 returned to their roots in the "City of Brotherly Love," serving at the state-run, federally supported Center City Community Vaccination Center in the Pennsylvania Convention Center alongside Federal Emergency Management Agency and state and city partners.

The vaccination center, which has been administering COVID-19 vaccines around the clock, is but a small piece of the nationwide effort to fight the pandemic. For several Pennsylvanians on the "blue-



1ST LT KEVIN STAPLETON, USMC

A Navy corpsman assigned to CLB-22 administers a COVID-19 vaccine to a local community member at the Pennsylvania Convention Center in Philadelphia, April 26.

green team,” their return to the Keystone State has been a uniquely personal one.

“I’ve always loved Pennsylvania. It’s a pride thing. This is where I was born and raised,” said Hospitalman Josiah Johnson, USN, a vaccinator with 2nd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, who was one of many hospital corpsmen who collectively had administered more than 275,000 vaccines as of April 29. Johnson worked alongside Navy medical officers like Lieutenant Commander Christopher Connell, a critical care nurse with 2nd Medical Battalion and a Pennsylvania native who attended Drexel University in Philadelphia.

“To come back now and ... provide what the city needed, that’s fulfilling,” said Connell, who was serving an observation supervisor at the convention center. “I hope that people see what the Navy and Marine Corps can do when we’re called upon.”

At the vaccination center, Connell worked with his Marine counterparts, who served in non-clinical support roles to assist with patient registration, processing and answering questions about the vaccination process.

Staff Sergeant Jacob Maurer, an explosive ordnance disposal technician with Combat Logistics Battalion 22, served as a shift leader supervising 30 Marines at the convention center. The seasoned staff noncommissioned officer from Warwick, Pa., saw his own feelings about getting the vaccine change dramatically after



1STLT KEVIN STAPLETON, USMC

A Marine with CLB-22 supports the City Community Vaccination Center at the Pennsylvania Convention Center in Philadelphia, Pa., April 27. The Marines working at the site served in non-clinical support roles.

receiving a close-contact notification while visiting his family on a routine leave period in Pennsylvania.

Maurer was forced to adjust his leave plans and quarantine in accordance with CDC guidelines. He soon learned that several of his family’s neighbors became

gravely ill and were diagnosed with COVID-19 shortly after he started his isolation period, which heavily influenced his decision to ultimately get vaccinated in preparation for the Philadelphia mission.

“I was actually really hesitant to begin with. I was not for [receiving] the vaccine,” Maurer said. “I got educated.

This is not some social media post; the pandemic is a real thing.”

Marines rarely get the opportunity to serve in a humanitarian capacity within the United States, and Maurer relished the fact that the unique capabilities of the Navy-Marine Corps team were leveraged to help his fellow Pennsylvanians.

As they entered the third month of providing vaccinations for his neighbors, Maurer and his colleagues reflected on their service in Philadelphia with an immense sense of pride.

“We’re here to help, that’s the entire goal,” he said. “I’m glad I can serve the people, especially my home state. It’s been a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.”

1stLt Kevin Stapleton, USMC



Crazy Caption Contest

Winner



SGT LUKE KUENNEN, USMC

“The plane captain said the oil drain plug was under here somewhere.”

Submitted by:
Craig Hanna
Sylvania, Ohio

This Month’s Photo



SGT BROOKE C. WOODS, USMC

(Caption) _____

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____ ZIP _____

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

SEA STORY OF THE MONTH

Failed Experiment

One of the instructors for my Officer Candidates School platoon in March 1966 proudly wore gold jump wings on his blouse and gave me my first salute as a new lieutenant. After giving him the traditional silver dollar, I was bold enough to have a conversation with him. My first question was to ask about his jump wings. He said that he was a Force Recon Marine and explained a little about what this meant. I was very impressed and somewhat envious.

After serving in Vietnam as an infantry platoon leader in 1966 and 1967, I reported to Camp Pendleton as a first lieutenant. While waiting

for assignment, I learned that 5th Force Recon had a billet for a platoon leader so I applied, went through a PT test, and received the assignment. Then began a whirlwind of training, scuba qualification, jump school, mountain training, submarine lockout/in, and continuous snooping and pooping around Camp Pendleton.

In February 1969, someone decided that we could stay underwater longer if we jumped with our regular twin 90 cubic foot scuba tanks, rather than the small tanks used by Underwater Demolition Teams (UDT). That is how my platoon sergeant, Sergeant Deutsch, and I found ourselves stepping off the ramp of a CH-46 helicopter 1,400-feet above

Lake O'Neil. Our parachutes were rigged on the back of the large tanks, my mask was attached to the front of my reserve, and I wore my UDT fins. Sgt Deutsch was similarly outfitted except he had the heel loops of his fins on his arms, rather than wearing them.

Once I stepped off the ramp, the large fins acted as a plane, and that, along with the extra weight on my back, changed my aerodynamics enough that the chute started streaming. So instead of spending my time getting ready to shed my chute once I hit the water, I was busy deploying the reserve. As soon as I pulled my reserve handle, the facemask went flying and the reserve chute fell between my legs. I shook it out a couple of times until it opened. I hit the water on my back with both chutes partially open. I sank to the bottom about 40- to 50-feet and just sat there until the safety divers got to me. We had the Aqua Lung regulators and fortunately we had turned on our air before jumping so it was easy to reach up and find my mouthpiece. Sgt Deutsch had no problems with his chute deploying correctly since he jumped without his fins on.

I left the Corps in August 1969, and we never jumped again using this rig. The 5th Force Recon was deactivated soon after. After several inquiries over the years to both Force and battalion recon units, I believe that this "experiment" was never repeated, leading to the conclusion that Sgt Deutsch and I were the only Marines dumb enough to "volunteer" for such a stunt.

Capt Bob Sanders
USMC, 1966-1969
Bend, Ore.

No Way to Meet The President

While serving on recruiting duty at RS Saint Louis during 1964, Corporals Jost, Kinslow and Woody and I were assigned as escorts for the ladies of the head table at an event at which President Johnson was to speak. After escorting the ladies to their table, we four split up to various points of the room. I chose to place myself next to the elevator while waiting for the President's appearance, expecting him to enter stage left in the room. Standing there in my dress blues and new pair of spit-shined shoes, the elevator opened and out came someone who stepped on my new shoes—on the toe no less! A big hand was placed on my shoulder and a deep voice said, "Sorry about that, son." That was my introduction to the President of the United States. At the time I thought this to be upsetting. Now as I look back, I find it funny. And no, he did not replace my ruined shoes.

SgtMaj E.D. Elliott
USMC (Ret)
Olney, Ill.

I Surrender!

I just finished reading an article in a World War II magazine about our troops being hit by friendly fire during the invasion of Sicily and it prompted me to send you this story.

In mid-August 1945, our regiment, 27th Marine Regiment, 5th Marine Division, at Camp Tarawa (Parker Ranch) on the island of Hawaii was training for the invasion of Japan. We were using live ammo, including artillery fire. I was in a rifle platoon of 52 men, and as we advanced over wide open terrain with



COURTESY OF CAPT BOB SANDERS, USMC

Lt Bob Sanders wearing his scuba gear before his jump on Feb. 27, 1969.

ditches and small holes, we would take cover at times. One morning, four of us were in a hole when bullets started bouncing off the rocks above our heads. Unbeknownst to us, the company and regiment had pulled back about 25 to 35 yards. I immediately put a white handkerchief around the tip of my M1 rifle and started waving it over our heads. The commanding officer started yelling, "What the hell are you people doing out there?" Needless to say, we hadn't gotten the word to pull back.

Around noon, word came down that the Japanese had surrendered. That's when those of us who were survivors of Iwo Jima started talking loudly saying, "Let's get back to the tents and quit this live ammo problem."

Cpl Walter P. O'Malley, USMC
Clinton, Mass.

An Unexpected Foe

In January 1968, while I was still green, I was in the village of Ap Thuy Tu, Vietnam, during a night patrol when we took light small arms fire. Our combat base was not far away and fired mortar flares overhead. As the flares descended, it got brighter on the ground. I started backing up into the shadows, and after I backed a few feet, I "felt" a presence nearby. I turned around and saw a very large water buffalo looking at me. During the day, these beasts did not like Marines in their rice paddies. I looked at the water buffalo and honestly said quietly, "Excuse me," and slowly walked away.

I've been reading *Leatherneck* magazine for many years and always wanted to share my stories. I really enjoy how *Leatherneck* features stories from all the wars my fellow Marines have participated in and how our current Marines are training. My Vietnam flak jacket looked a lot different than those

of today's Marines. I am very proud to have served 20 years in two wars, the Vietnam War and the First Gulf War, before I retired.

Keep up the great work at *Leatherneck* magazine making every U.S. Marine proud.

GySgt Larry D. Williams
USMC (Ret)
Yuma, Ariz.

Wrong Time for Jokes

Like many Marines I did a one-year tour of duty on the island of Okinawa, Japan, better known as the "Rock." I was with the 9th Marines at Camp Schwab. After being there a couple of months, it became my company's turn to pull one week of guard duty, so we were taken from our barracks and put in the guard barracks at the other end of the base. As luck would have it, I pulled the 1200 to 0400 shift. We would fall out into formation just before our shift and were assigned our posts, then loaded on a deuce-and-a-half and driven to our posts. On one occasion, another PFC and I loaded into a jeep which drove off the base, headed down the main road a bit and then turned on a dirt road. We drove up this winding dirt road for what seemed a couple of miles and then came to a stop. This was our post, way out in the middle of nowhere. We were guarding an ammo bunker lodged in the side of a hill. The jeep unloaded us and drove off. There was nothing around us but dark jungle.

After walking our post for a couple hours, we noticed a set of headlights coming up the long, winding road and figured it must be the officer of the day coming to check on us. We both stood side by side in front of the bunker awaiting his arrival. Soon a jeep stopped about 30 feet from us, and a figure got out and began to approach. The young PFC with me came to

port arms, took a couple steps forward and yelled, "Halt! Who goes there?" The reply came back, "Captain Marvel. Officer of the day." The young PFC waited a few seconds then answered back, "Captain Marvel advance to be recognized by Superman!" My jaw dropped. I could not believe what I had just heard. This young Marine was looking to get us both thrown in the brig. The officer walked up to the Marine and in a low tone of voice which I could not hear, and probably did not want to, spoke to him, then turned to me and said, "Marine, report your post." I did as I was taught to do in boot camp. We both came to

"Halt! Who goes there?" The reply came back, "Captain Marvel. Officer of the day." The young PFC waited a few seconds then answered ...

"present arms," the officer returned our salute, got back in his jeep and drove away. Once he was out of sight, the young PFC turned to me and said, "Do you think I should have said Batman instead?" I just shook my head and went back to walking my post.

Later that day I had learned that Capt Marvel was his real name and he told that young Marine that if he wanted to be a wiseass, he would see to it that he would walk this same post at this same hour for the remainder of his tour on the island.

Sgt Steve Pratt
USMC, 1969-1977
North Bennington, Vt.

Surname is a Catch-22

I was doing my annual training with the Reserve Liaison Unit. I was working on a reserve unit coming

in for training and needed to contact them to get the information on the number of officers, staff and enlisted Marines, and other information like gender and their plans, etc.

I came across an interesting name, Staff Sergeant Sergeant. While monitoring the unit, I was able to speak with him for a short time. He said that in the beginning those who heard "Private Sergeant" thought that something was wrong with the speaker. It was the same when he was "Private First Class Sergeant." When it came to Corporal Sergeant, lots of notoriety and unwanted duty occurred. When Sergeant Sergeant came about, some thought the speaker either was stuttering or the Marine was hearing impaired. By the time he became a staff sergeant, all was fixed in Marines' minds. This is because the military uses rank before surname. As the Marine wanted to make it a career, there would be no more unusual rank/name combinations. He confided in me that if he has a son or daughter, he will name them Sergeant Major Sergeant.

Thank you for giving the Marines an outlet to express themselves with humorous experiences. During this time of shut-ins because of the virus, I put pen to paper and had a good time remembering.

CWO-4 David L. Horne
USMC (Ret)
West Palm Beach, Fla.

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



COURTESY OF MACARTHUR MUSEUM OF ARKANSAS MILITARY HISTORY

“I Never Had Any Idea It Would Get Home”

Ellis Underwood, Stanley Troutman, and the legacy of a split second on Saipan.

This iconic photo taken by photographer Stanley Troutman ran in the July 24, 1944, edition of the *St. Petersburg Times* with the caption, “Hot and weary after fighting on the western beaches below Saipan’s Mt. Marpi, PFC T. Ellis Underwood ... takes a long cool drink of water from his canteen. Beads of perspiration glisten on the weary Leatherneck’s unshaven face.”

By Geoffrey W. Roecker

Private First Class Thomas Ellis Underwood was not thinking about the grand scope of history on the afternoon of July 8, 1944. He just wanted a drink of water.

Sweat beaded on his brow and dripped in rivulets down his face, tracing lines through a few days’ accumulations of dust and grime. Twenty-three days of beating sun, followed by rain almost every single night, had bleached the cotton twill of his clothing in ever-lightening shades of green. He untucked his helmet cover, letting it hang down over his neck like an old-fashioned havelock, and rolled his sleeves as high as he could. In the time-tested tradition of the combat veteran, Underwood carried only what he needed: canteens and carbine, shovel and shelter half, rations and smokes, and whatever small personal items would fit into the gas mask bag which doubled as his haversack. There were only two exceptions—the pistol on his hip and the Japanese sword tucked under his arm. They were extra weight, but discarding either was out of the question.

The heat was oppressive, even for a Florida native like Underwood, and he

had plenty on his mind—another day of heavy fighting, another day as an acting squad leader—as he unscrewed the canteen cap and took a swig of tepid water. As he did, he heard the double click of camera shutters. Two photographers approached, inquiring about his name, hometown and unit; they scribbled in their notepads as rifle shots popped a few yards away. Underwood lit a cigarette and looked back over his shoulder. One of the cameramen snapped a final frame. Then Underwood returned to his squad, and

the photographers wandered off in search of new subjects. Neither party thought much about the encounter.

This chance meeting between PFC T.E. Underwood and the two photographers—Stanley Troutman and W. Eugene Smith—resulted in some of the most iconic pictures from the Pacific theater of operations, and a legacy that would long outlive the Marine with the famous face.

Thomas Ellis Underwood was born in Parker, Fla., on May 16, 1922. His family moved from the Panhandle to Pinellas



COURTESY OF GEOFFREY W. ROECKER

Brothers Cpl George Washington “Joe” Underwood, Alpheus “Edison” Underwood, and Ellis Underwood were photographed together for the Oct. 28, 1942, issue of their hometown newspaper, the *St. Petersburg Times*.



Marines advance on an enemy dugout beside a railroad track, Saipan, July 8, 1944. A few minutes later the Japanese charged out but did not reach the Marines.

SSGT MAURICE E. GARBER, USMC

County in 1925, and young “Ellis” grew up in St. Petersburg with four older siblings and a kid brother. Their father, George Underwood, worked as a mechanic and general laborer; Cora Lee Crosson Underwood kept their small house in order. All of the children completed grammar school and averaged a year or two of high school before joining the workforce or starting families of their own. Three of the boys, John, George “Joe,” and Ellis, were on the payroll of the Florida Fishing Tackle Manufacturing Company.

This job suited Ellis to a T. He was an athletic, outdoorsy youth who enjoyed baseball, basketball, football, swimming, hunting and horseback riding. Fishing was his great passion, and for the aspiring angler, working in the shop that made

Barracuda Brand Lures (the “Famous Fish Getters”) must have been a dream come true. Ellis dropped out of St. Petersburg High School in 1940 and began working full-time. He specialized in winding fishing rods made from hand-selected Burma cane and took home \$18 a week for his labors. Whenever he could, Ellis took his own rod and tackle box down to his favorite spot—John’s Pass at Madeira Beach—and spent his time casting for trout.

As war clouds gathered on the American horizon, the Underwood family prepared to meet the storm. Joe Underwood quit the tackle factory in August 1941 to enlist in the Army. Shortly after Pearl Harbor, John picked up a defense job at the Tampa shipyards. Ellis also moved

In October 1942, Ellis and his youngest brother Edison entered a Navy recruiting office together. Edison emerged as an apprentice seaman, while Ellis signed up for the Marine Corps.

on; he tried his hand at plumbing but registering for the Selective Service seems to have planted the idea of volunteering. In October 1942, Ellis and his youngest brother Edison entered a Navy recruiting office together. Edison emerged as an

apprentice seaman, while Ellis signed up for the Marine Corps.

One year later, PFC Underwood was a proud member of Company B, First Battalion, 24th Marines—part of the brand new 4th Marine Division. He could march for miles, live outdoors without complaint, maneuver a rubber boat in heavy surf, camouflage a position, lead a fire team, and had appeared as an extra in the Hollywood feature film, “Guadalcanal Diary.” “Like the real thing,” he wrote to his parents, though he was glad he only had to shoot the amphibious landing scene once. He was capable with a rifle, dangerous with a carbine, and an expert with a bayonet. His disciplinary record was clean—a glance into his baggage revealed three New Testaments—and his professional conduct was beyond reproach.

Ellis soon proved his worth in combat. His battalion participated in the battle of Roi-Namur in the Marshall Islands, and Company B was on the receiving end of the only serious Japanese counterattack. A banzai charge slammed into their lines before dawn on Feb. 2, 1944; the company

Troutman was a well-seasoned photographer but received absolutely no military training before drawing his first assignment. “I was not issued a weapon,” he remarked. Instead, he carried a “45” Speed Graphic—the same camera he used with the civilian press.

fell back briefly, reorganized, and retook the lost ground. While the engagement was small by later standards, it still cost B/1/24 a lot of blood and pain—including most of their 3rd Platoon being “virtually wiped out.” As they recuperated at Camp Maui that spring, PFC Underwood was placed in charge of a four-man fire team—his first foray into small unit leadership.

He would put this new experience to the test on Saipan.

While Ellis Underwood trained in the territory of Hawaii, Stanley Troutman was getting the hang of life in uniform. As a photographer for Acme Newspictures in Los Angeles, Calif., Troutman’s portfolio included homicide scenes, film premieres, sporting events, natural disasters, and the celebrity trials of Charlie Chaplin and Errol Flynn. Press photographers were exempt from the draft, but Troutman didn’t feel right about sitting out the war. When the chance to go overseas and shoot for the War Picture Pool arose in early 1944, he jumped at it. “Acme bought me an officer’s uniform,” Troutman remembered. “In the Navy, we were [equivalent to] a Lieutenant Commander. I wore my officer’s uniform to Pearl Harbor—and then the Marine Corps outfitted me with the fatigues and high-top shoes I wore for the next couple of years.”

Troutman was a well-seasoned photographer but received absolutely no military training before drawing his first assignment. “I was not issued a weapon,” he remarked. Instead, he carried a “45”



Co B, 1st Bn, 24th Marines on Tinian, Aug. 5, 1944. Ellis Underwood is shown at left in the back row holding a flag. (Photo courtesy of Geoffrey W. Roecker)

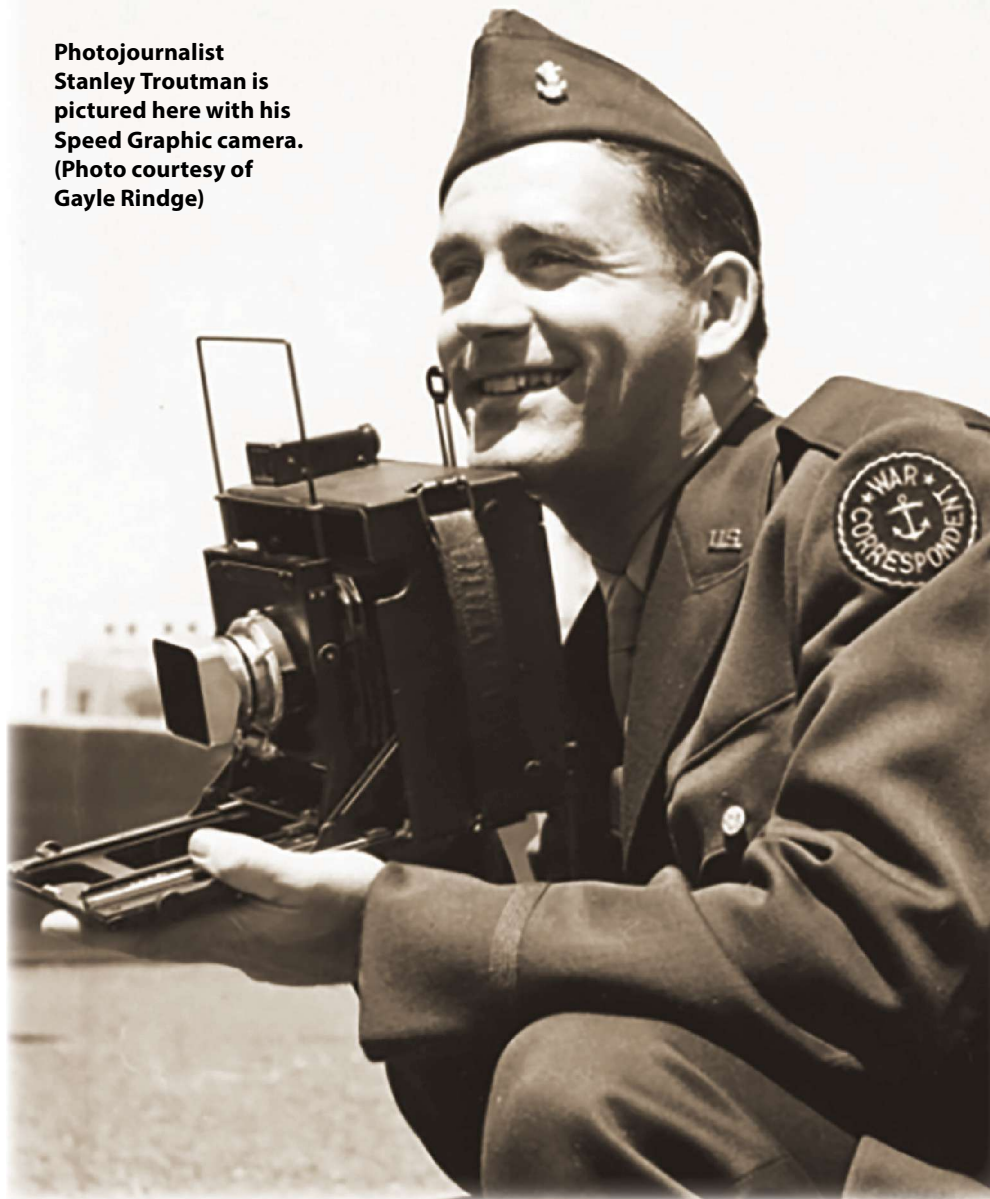
Speed Graphic—the same camera he used with the civilian press. His editors offered some sage advice: “Don’t go in with the first wave.” They wanted him alive—besides, the pictures of a devastated beachhead would have a greater impact on readers back home. So Troutman packed up his gear and boarded a transport for the Mariana Islands.

As planned, Troutman arrived on Saipan a few days after the Marines hit the beach. This was his first assignment, and the transition from civilian photographer to combat correspondent was extremely jarring. “Being away from my wife and daughter was an adjustment,” he said. “I had to eat C-rations, which tasted like dog food.” Fortunately, he found a teacher in W. Eugene Smith, another professional photographer with previous combat experience. “We were the only two [press] photographers assigned to Saipan,” Troutman continued. “Every day we went out to take pictures. The Marines supplied all the film. I kept track of each shot by hand on a notepad, which I sent along with the film packs to Pearl Harbor for processing and censorship.” Even as he got a handle on his job, Troutman was still disturbed by the sights and sounds of Saipan. “Adjusting to seeing death was the most difficult.”

By July 8, 1944, Ellis Underwood was no stranger to the sight of death. He landed on June 15—not in the first wave, but close enough to catch some artillery on the way to the front line. Early the next morning, a shell killed his battalion commander, LtCol Maynard C. Schultz; that night, Japanese infiltrators attacked “Baker” Co’s lines using civilians as shields. The horrifying scene was burned into memory: Marines blown in half by grenades, shooting their buddies in the confusion, sobbing when daylight revealed civilian women and children among the dead. In the days that followed, they were shelled by flat-trajectory antiaircraft guns at Aslito Airfield, crossed burned-out cane fields, withstood an attack by Japanese tanks, scaled the mountainous central spine of Saipan, and suffered countless personal indignities, tragedies, and triumphs along the way. They caught the flank of the biggest banzai attack of the Pacific War but suffered only a handful of minor casualties. Underwood’s platoon was whittled down to the point where he was an acting squad leader. He fell sick at the end of June but was back in action by Independence Day, anxious to see the end of the battle.

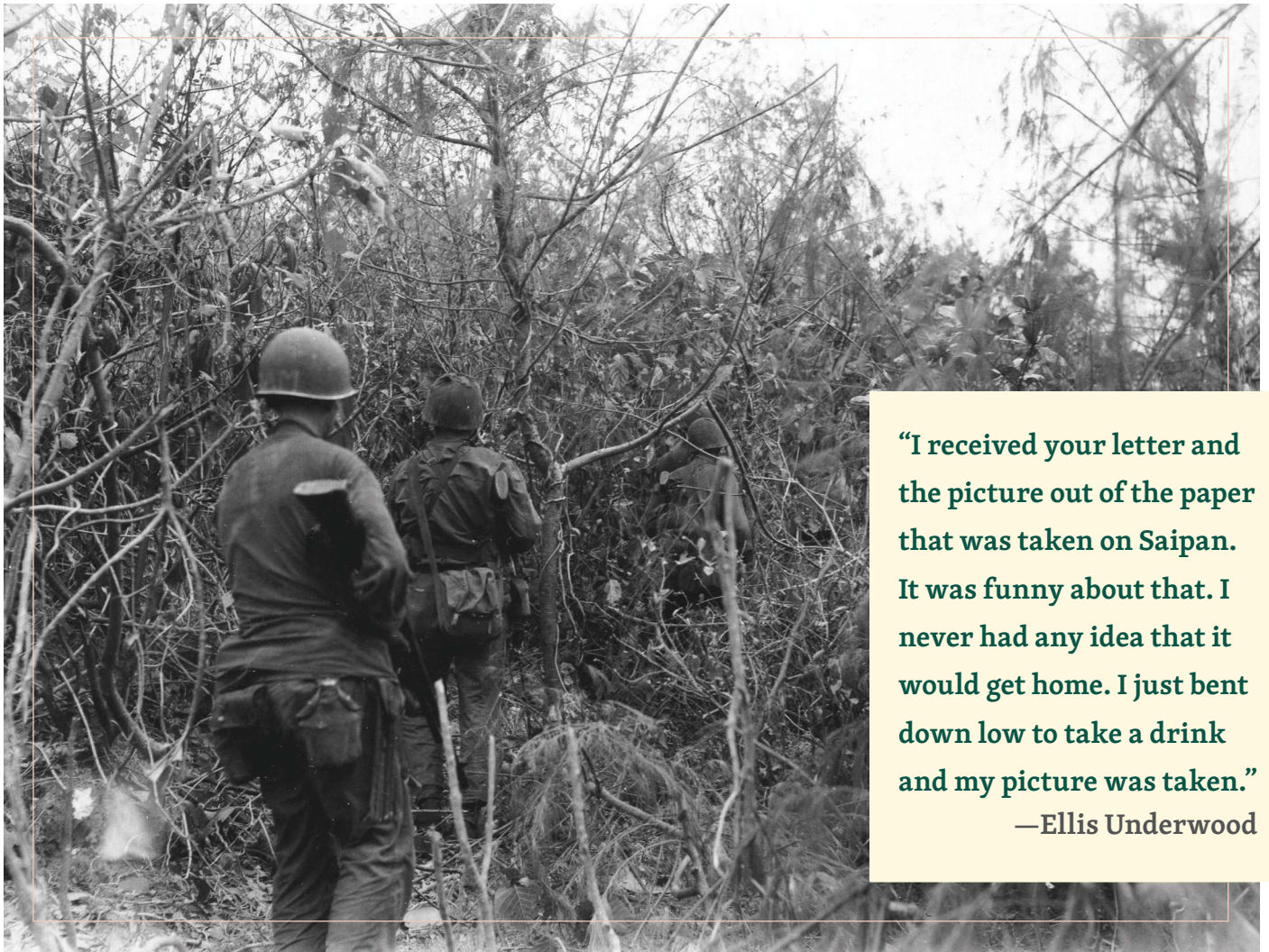
The atmosphere felt different that morning. “Little opposition was encountered,” recalled 1stLt Frederic A. Stott in his book, “Saipan Under Fire.” “And many civilians

Photojournalist Stanley Troutman is pictured here with his Speed Graphic camera. (Photo courtesy of Gayle Rindge)



SGT NICK RAGUS, USMC

Saipan casualty reports are recorded at the 1/24 command post. From left, SgtMaj William Dolly, Sgt William Burbridge, and Sgt William D. Sammon.



“I received your letter and the picture out of the paper that was taken on Saipan. It was funny about that. I never had any idea that it would get home. I just bent down low to take a drink and my picture was taken.”

—Ellis Underwood

Fighting their way through thick brush, Marines slowly approach their last objective in the heart of the Japanese empire on Saipan, July 8, 1944. (Photo by SSgt Maurice E. Garber, USMC)

joyfully emerged from their hideouts as we scrambled down a cave-infested cliff line. Among those whom we released were two priests, several nuns, and many of their Chamorro followers. Their joy gave us some indication of the welcome our brothers-in-arms were receiving at the same time from the people of Normandy.” The good fortune did not last long. “The beaches extending north from Tanapag were honeycombed with an intricate series of trenches, dugouts, and low-lying pillboxes” continued Stott. “At close range [the Japanese] opened up with all they had, stopped half the battalion short of the sea, and inflicted heavy casualties, including Lt Al Santilli of Fordham football fame.” Tank support ended the threat, but “it was very depressing to have suffered so heavily at a time when we thought the organized opposition practically ended.”

It was a red-letter day for Stanley Troutman, too. “My experience up front was something I’ll never forget,” he wrote to his wife. “Gene Smith and myself [*sic*] decided to go for a day and see if we couldn’t get some good action pictures.”

After spending his first night in a foxhole, Troutman joined the advance to the beach. “Things were going along swell until a Japanese machine gun pinned us down,” he continued. “No kidding, honey, I stayed on my stomach for two hours. Finally a tank came along and knocked them out. During the time I was pinned down, one fellow behind me and one at my side was wounded so guess the good lord [*sic*] was with me.” Troutman’s big Speed Graphic was hard to handle under fire, but Smith clicked away with his 35 mm camera, recording the rescued civilians, the Marines fighting over a farmhouse, and the tanks rolling up to the rescue.

Then they spotted the tired, begrimmed Marine reaching for his canteen. A few hundredths of a second for each photograph, a few more moments to take some notes. “4th Division Marine PFC T.E. Underwood (24th Bat.) of St. Petersburg, Florida,” wrote Smith. “A portrait of a weary warrior who has been through one of the toughest days of his life. And still at the moment the picture was taken under fire.” Troutman jotted down similar notes:

“T.E. Underwood, St. Petersburg FL, Marine drinking water from canteen.” Then it was over. Ellis went back to his squad and the photographers, tired and low on film, shot a few more stills and headed back to the press tent. They had captions to write and film to mail off to Pearl Harbor. Neither they nor Ellis had any idea how the pictures turned out.

Ellis Underwood survived the last few days of fighting on Saipan; he witnessed the bloody mass suicide of civilians at Marpi Point and took part in a three-day mopping up mission before arriving at a rear area camp. He received a field promotion to corporal, welcomed replacements to his squad, and fired off a few letters to his parents. “Just a few words to let you know that I’m okeh [*sic*]. I know you’ve been looking for a letter from me for some time, but I haven’t had much chance to write until now. I’m on Saipan and have been since the first day of [the] invasion! It was plenty tough and the fighting was rugged, but it is pretty well mopped up now. In fact, I suppose you people at home know more about what is

going on than I do.” Ellis took care not to mention the preparations afoot for another invasion—Tinian—scheduled for July 24, 1944. “I’m sending Pop a Japanese saber [sic] and bayonet that I picked up during the operation,” he continued, adding that he wanted “to come home, go fishing, and catch a few of those trout that are running through the Pass now. There’s plenty of water around me, but I haven’t been fishing for anything except a few Japanese. I got seven on this operation and helped get a lot more!”

The news of his whereabouts beat the letter home. Stanley Troutman’s photograph of Underwood was printed, passed by censors, and released to the War Picture Pool. Newspapers liked to print “hometown hero” stories of local boys in action, and the *St. Petersburg Times* ran the photo under the headline “St. Petersburg to Saipan,” on July 24, 1944. “Hot and weary after fighting on the western beaches below Saipan’s Mt. Marpi, Marine PFC T. Ellis Underwood, son of Mr. and Mrs. G. A. Underwood, 6229 29th Street North, takes a long cool drink of water from his canteen,” announced the caption. “Beads of perspiration glisten on the weary Leatherneck’s unshaven face.” George and Cora Underwood, thrilled to see their son alive and well, clipped out the photo and dropped it in the mail.

The clipping reached Ellis just as the battle for Tinian was coming to an end. “I received your letter and the picture out of the paper that was taken on Saipan,” he wrote on Aug. 5. “It was funny about that. I never had any idea that it would get home. I just bent down low to take a drink and my picture was taken. The fellow asked me my name and home address. Heavy fighting was going on where the picture was taken and the island wasn’t secured for about six or eight days later.” A few days later, Cpl Underwood and the survivors of Baker Co were on their way back to Camp Maui.

The battles for the Mariana Islands concluded, but the war was far from over. With his baptism of fire behind him, Stanley Troutman became a prolific combat photographer. He followed Marines, soldiers, and airmen into combat on Tinian, Guam, Peleliu and the Philippines; he photographed prisoners of war being released from prison camps in China. At the very end of the war, he turned down a choice spot for the surrender ceremony on the USS *Missouri* and hitched a ride

to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, becoming the first American newsman to witness the aftermath of the atomic bombs. Troutman’s stark photographs of the ruined cities were among the best of his long career.

W. Eugene Smith, shooting for *Life* Magazine, also went on to further combat; his photographs of Saipan, Iwo Jima and Okinawa are among the best-known images of WW II. He shot three frames of Ellis Underwood; two made it to print and are easily recognized today. The last frame, showing Underwood looking back over his shoulder with a cigarette dangling from his lips, symbolized the suffering and determination of a nation—a sentiment so universal that many families have seen their own relative staring out of the

in his hands, so he picked up a discarded Browning Automatic Rifle and “valiantly led a spirited attack” with “aggressive courage and inspiring leadership.” The position fell, but not before Ellis went down with shrapnel wounds in his back. He died on the battlefield at the age of 22.

At last, the war ended. The other Underwood boys came home safe and sound and went back to civilian life. George and Cora Underwood received their son’s medals—the Bronze Star with combat “V,” the Purple Heart, his commendation for Saipan, unit citations and campaign ribbons—and a little box of his belongings including his glasses, his Bibles, his letter-writing kit, Christmas cards, and a cigarette lighter. These mementos joined the Japanese sword



GEOFFREY W. ROECKER



After he died during the fighting on Iwo Jima, 22-year-old Ellis Underwood was buried in Sunnyside Cemetery in St. Petersburg, Fla.

masterful photograph. Notably, Underwood is sometimes thought to be Army Sergeant Angelo Klonis, although further research debunks this claim.

Ellis Underwood never knew his status as an icon. In February 1945, he landed on Iwo Jima—his fourth campaign in 12 months. After a few days of fighting, he was evacuated to a transport ship and treated for a contusion on his head. The wound was not enough to be his ticket off the island, and on March 1, 1945, he returned to the fray.

When shipping out for Iwo Jima, the Marines of Co B, 1st Bn, 24th were told, “We’re sending you into the jaws of death, and we want you to bring back the jawbones.” And on March 4, Corporal Underwood did his best to follow those orders. As his platoon advanced into the “Meat Grinder,” a hidden Japanese fortification opened fire. Ellis deployed his squad; a bullet shattered the carbine

and bayonet sent home from Saipan. Cora never got over her loss; she died in December 1946 and was buried in St. Petersburg’s Sunnyside Cemetery. Today, most of the family rests in a small plot in this unassuming cemetery—including Thomas Ellis Underwood, a young man immortalized in film.

Author’s note: Stanley Madison Troutman passed away on Jan. 2, 2020, at the age of 102.

*Author’s bio: Geoffrey W. Roecker is a researcher and writer based in upstate New York. His extensive writings on the WW II history of 1st Battalion, 24th Marines, including a series on the photos of Ellis Underwood, is available at www.1-24thmarines.com. Roecker is the author of “Leaving Mac Behind: The Lost Marines of Guadalcanal” and advocates for the return of MIA personnel with his project *Missing Marines*. 🇺🇸*

Mims, Fla.



COURTESY OF TOM FITZGERALD

Marine Veteran Gives Back, Provides Caisson Services For Local Funerals

Marine veteran Tom Fitzgerald and his wife, Denise, have found a unique way to give back to veterans and their family members in their local community: providing caisson services in some of Florida's national and private cemeteries. For Fitzgerald, it's been a fulfilling way to combine his Marine Corps experience with his in-depth knowledge of his home state's military history.

sense of pride during unfortunate and untimely passings," said Fitzgerald, who served in the Corps from 1982 to 1986 and attained the rank of sergeant. "Supplanting sorrow with pride is our mission. Our payment is experiencing the transformation and knowing that the loved ones will never forget their veterans."

Submitted by Tom Fitzgerald

Sarasota, Fla.

On 89th Birthday, Korean War Veteran Receives Silver Star

For some Marines who demonstrate heroism and bravery on the battlefield, recognition is long overdue due to various circumstances. Such was the case for Salvatore Naimo, who finally was presented with the Silver Star on his 89th birthday, March 17, in his hometown of Sarasota, Fla., for his actions in Korea in September 1951.

Naimo was a rifleman assigned to "Howe" Company, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, nearly 70 years ago, when he found himself in the area north of the 38th parallel called the "Punchbowl" in a battle against the Chinese Army. The company had established a defensive position on a key hilltop where then-Corporal Naimo's platoon occupied the left flank. On Sept. 14, 1951, the Chinese Army began a barrage of mortar fire on the Marines in an attempt to once again control the terrain. A direct hit critically injured two Marines in the fighting hole next to



GYSGT ERIC ALABISO II, USMC

Naimo. Immediately, he charged from his position to the casualties, picked up the first Marine and ran to the corpsman at the back of the company's formation. Naimo and the Marine he was carrying were struck by another close round. Now injured himself, Naimo again picked up his fellow Marine and pressed on to the corpsman's position. Naimo then went back to get the second Marine. As Chinese forces advanced up the hill, Naimo jumped in a fighting hole and began to fire his own rifle, throw grenades and fire other weapons stashed nearby. His efforts helped to successfully push back the enemy, and Howe Co retained the hill.

Naimo's platoon commander, who had said he would be putting Naimo in for a medal, was killed in action two days later. Decades later, Naimo's award was approved by the Headquarters Marine Corps and was presented to him by Colonel John Polidoro, Chief of Staff, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Central Command.

GySgt Eric Alabiso II, USMC, and 1stLt John Coppola, USMC

Quantico, Va.

USO Quantico West Celebrates First Birthday

The USO's Quantico West location celebrated its first birthday during a ceremony held on Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., March 8. Lisa Marie Riggins, president of USO of Metropolitan Washington-Baltimore, pictured on the left, and Colonel William C. Bentley III, the commanding officer of MCB Quantico, pictured on the right, cut the cake to commemorate the occasion and celebrate the USO's efforts to strengthen America's military servicemembers by keeping them connected to family and home throughout their service to the nation.

USO Quantico West, located on the west side of the base near The Basic School, is located inside the newly renovated Austin Hall and offers music, art, seasonal festivals, spouse events and programs to assist those transitioning to civilian life. It is open 365 days a year and includes a snack bar, kitchen, theater room, small business center, gaming room, fire pit and more.

USMC



Garner, N.C.



Combat-Wounded Marine, Family Given a Place to Call Home

Staff Sergeant Matthew Polizzi, a wounded Marine veteran, and his family will soon have a new place to call home in Garner, N.C., thanks to Operation: Coming Home, a joint volunteer project of the Home Builders Association of Raleigh-Wake County, N.C., the United States Veterans Corps, and companies who build and donate homes for wounded veterans. Polizzi and his family were honored March 11 during a special flag-raising ceremony as Mattamy Homes continued construction on their new home.

"We've moved around so much, so it will be really nice to be able

to have the kids in one school and not have them moving around to different schools all the time, and somewhere they can have their own bedrooms," said Polizzi, who served in the Marine Corps for 14 years, deployed four times and was wounded in Afghanistan. The family will receive the keys to their brand-new home during a ceremony in July.

For more information about Operation: Coming Home, visit <https://www.hbawake.com/operation-coming-home.html>.

Submitted by Renee Carlson

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

Personnel With Overseas Orders Now Eligible for Assistance With Pet Travel Costs

The Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society announced May 11 that an interest-free loan of up to \$5,500 is now available to help Marines and Sailors cover the costs of pet travel while executing permanent change of station orders to or from an overseas base. Servicemembers may apply for this assistance to cover the cost of up to two pets when the Department of Defense is unable to support PCS travel options for dogs or cats.

“Due to COVID-19, commercial and military flights have reduced capacity for transporting pets, causing a significant financial burden on our Sailors, Marines and families serving overseas,” said Rear Admiral Dawn Cutler, USN (Ret), the executive vice president of NMCRS. “Pets are treasured members of our families and now Sea Service families won’t have to go into debt or make the difficult decision of leaving their pets behind due to expensive travel costs.”

To apply for this assistance, the servicemember will need to provide verification of pet ownership, a pet passport where required, DOD pet travel paperwork and an estimate of pet travel costs when military flights are not available. The

servicemember also is responsible for completing necessary steps and covering costs to ensure the pet is prepared for travel. For more information, visit <https://www.nmcrs.org/financial-assistance-and-counseling> or email casework@nmcrs.org.

Since 1904, NMCRS has provided need-based financial assistance and education to active-duty and retired members of the United States Navy and Marine Corps, their eligible family members and survivors. Headquartered in Arlington, Va., the society is a nonprofit charitable organization staffed by more than 3,000 volunteers and a small cadre of employees in offices around the world—both ashore and aboard ships.

NMCRS

Modernized GI Bill Platform Soon to Be a Click Away

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs awarded a contract earlier this year to transform the operations of the GI Bill to a digital platform, improving education benefits and customer service delivery to nearly one million students served each year.

Referred to as the Digital GI Bill, this platform will enable VA representatives to call, email, text and chat with GI Bill

beneficiaries; grant the Veterans Benefits Administration immediate access to beneficiary records; and respond to questions from colleges and universities instantaneously.

“We are in the beginning stage of implementing a multi-year, joint undertaking with select vendors working together to deliver a modern, integrated solution for our GI Bill students,” said Thomas Murphy, the acting VA undersecretary for benefits. “Throughout implementation, VA will seek feedback from students, schools and partners to ensure we are meeting their needs effectively as they pursue their academic and vocational goals.”

The Digital GI Bill developed by Veterans Benefits Administration and VA’s Office of Information and Technology features improved customer and financial services, allowing for timely and accurate delivery of payments and real-time eligibility and benefit information. It also will allow students to engage with VA electronically; ensure proper compliance and oversight of GI Bill programs; and provide support for program and policy requirements to keep up with the ever-evolving changes within the academic community and job market.

VA is using \$243 million received under the CARES Act to support the Digital GI Bill modernization overhaul.

VA

Portraits in New Exhibit At Ohio Veterans Museum Focus on Faces of PTSD

A new exhibit entitled “Depicting the Invisible: Portraits of Veterans Suffering from PTSD” opened April 3 at the National Veterans Memorial and Museum in Columbus, Ohio.

The exhibit features a series of large format, multimedia portraits and an award-winning documentary film shot by award-winning artist Susan J. Barron and will be on display through Jan. 2, 2022.

“Through her captivating portraits, Susan J. Barron challenges us to confront the invisible realities of individuals with PTSD,” said Lieutenant General Michael Ferriter, USA (Ret), the museum’s president and CEO. “We are proudly partnering with Susan to create a dialogue around the stigmas of PTSD to eliminate the isolation and connect veterans with communities.”

The series of 14 hauntingly beautiful



A1C TAYLOR SLATER, USAF

A servicemember’s corgi sits in a dog crate at the Ramstein Passenger Terminal, Ramstein Air Base, Germany, May 29. The Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society recently began offering assistance with pet travel costs associated with PCS orders to or from an overseas base.



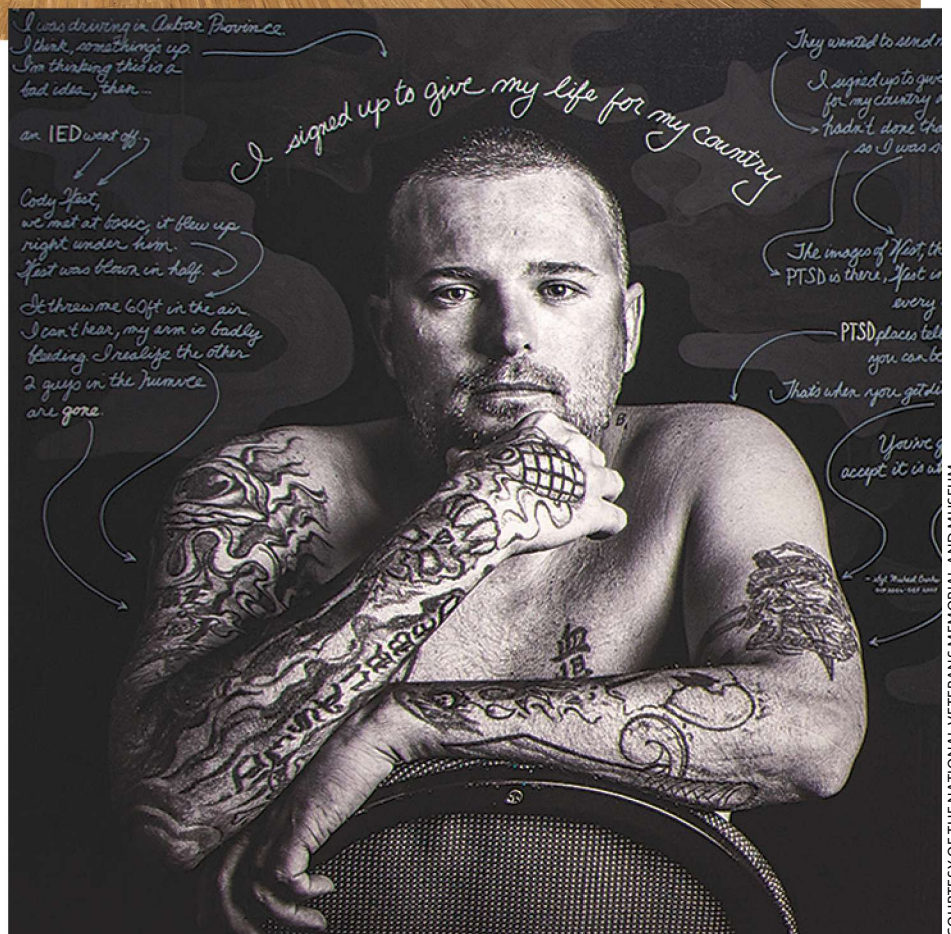
COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL VETERANS MEMORIAL AND MUSEUM

6-foot by 6-foot works on canvas was created through a combination of photographic imagery, paint and text telling the veterans' stories. Each veteran in the portraits makes unflinching eye contact with the viewer as they share the truth of their challenges, triumphs and hopes in their own words.

"As an artist, I wanted to shine a light on this epidemic of PTSD and suicide. I want to give these veterans a voice," said Barron, who traveled the country for two years collecting veterans' stories. It is her hope that the veterans who participated in the project will find their participation to be cathartic, and feel they are making a difference by giving back.

The National Veterans Memorial and Museum takes visitors on a narrative journey telling individual stories and sharing experiences of veterans from all military branches throughout history. The memorial and museum also honors the sacrifices of men and women in service and their families. History is presented in a dynamic, participatory experience with photos, letters and personal effects, multimedia presentations, interactive exhibits, online events and digital content. For more information, visit www.nationalvmm.org.

National Veterans Memorial and Museum



COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL VETERANS MEMORIAL AND MUSEUM

The new exhibit, "Depicting the Invisible: Portraits of Veterans Suffering from PTSD," now on display at the National Veterans Memorial and Museum in Columbus, Ohio, features these and 11 other portraits by Susan J. Barron, all of which tell the stories of veterans who struggle with PTSD. The exhibit, which debuted at New York City's HG Contemporary gallery in November 2018, will be at the museum through Jan. 2, 2022.

Leatherneck Laffs



USMC Statue of Liberty



"Hack the enemy's computers and change all their screen savers to the American flag."



"Sir, the good news is I created an unbreakable password. The bad news is I forgot what it is."



"No, you can't go TAD to 'The Voice!' "



"Gunny caught you smoking?"



"We didn't pass inspection. I forgot to wipe my harddrive."



"Did one of you call?"



"General, your memory isn't what it used to be."

SOUND OFF
[continued from page 7]

days in Vietnam. He said he had always planned to reenlist and extend his tour but, with his newfound leverage, had wangled a 30-day leave before signing up again. Because George was one of the first people I met on my Asian adventure and also one of the last, my memories of him endure. In a time of uncertainty, he was a consoling constant.

Bill Federman
Southampton, Mass.

Marble Mountain Artisans

I've enjoyed the recent articles on Marble Mountain and its value to our mission in Vietnam. While stationed with the 1st Marine Division band at Da Nang near Freedom Hill in 1968 and 1969, I heard that Vietnamese artisans at the mountain could recreate pictures on slabs of marble, so I had a picture of our daughter, Teri, re-created on a slab. The picture of our daughter is an example of their handiwork. It is an exact likeness of her as taken from her school picture. This picture is another aspect of the mountain that is not widely known. It is an excellent example of the outstanding craftsmanship of the Vietnamese. I understand they



COURTESY OF CAPT JESSE SUNDERLAND, USMC (RET)

While stationed with the 1stMarDiv Band near Freedom Hill in 1968 and 1969, Capt Jesse Sunderland had his daughter's school picture re-created on marble by the artisans on Marble Mountain.

only had "stone age" hand tools and lots of elbow grease to work with. After cutting and smoothing the marble they cut grooves in it then used a black substance of some kind to fill in the grooves. By not observing the artisan's tools and methods,

I missed out on what would have been a very educational opportunity. Perhaps some knowledgeable reader can enlighten us about their methods. One thing for sure, that's one picture that will never fade!

Capt Jesse Sunderland, USMC (Ret)
1952 to 1979
Meridian, Miss.

Guitar Struck a Chord For Marine Dad

Marine readers might get a kick out of seeing photos of a Marine Corps-themed guitar recently made for me by my luthier son, Tad. My son grew up as a typical Marine Corps son, so the designs are mostly his ideas. Tad is a great son in all ways for this old Marine.

I can't identify any specific occasion that led to him making the guitar other than me watching him for 25 years develop his skills and the knowledge required to turn out the works of art that his guitars are. Plus, I have been hinting for years that I would like to have one when he could find time, and I'm 73 years old with no sign of getting younger.

We talked about the Marine Corps theme and a series of options, some more complicated than others. We finally settled on a simple option that could be done well. The result is the eagle, globe and anchor

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This guitar was handmade by luthier Tad Brown and given as a gift to his Marine dad. It is an acoustic archtop jazz guitar which distinguishes it from most others. The guitar weighs just under 5 lbs. which is much lighter than the typical jazz guitar.

COURTESY OF CAPT OREN BROWN

and the text, “United States Marine Corps” prominently displayed on the fingerrest. These are carved from white and gold mother of pearl shell material and inlaid into the wood. The eagle especially is a work of art with individual feathers carved on the wings, body and tail. Maybe my son is also trying to nudge me into learning to play a guitar.

It is not a manufactured guitar made

on a production line. It is a custom instrument, handmade, carved from solid blocks and pieces of exotic wood. It is totally one of a kind. It took my son about three months to complete with one entire month dedicated to the finish. The woods used are Adirondack spruce for the top, eastern red maple back and sides, and Brazilian Kingwood for the headplate, fingerboard, fingerrest, bridge,

and tailpiece. Engraved gold Waverly tuning keys and a matching USMC red and gold flight case (for transport) are also custom made.

So, the combination of the materials, design, and skills of my son result in a beautiful guitar. Beyond the beauty of the instrument though, it is a guitar which is very responsive and versatile, which means it is a great sounding jazz instrument, as well as a great all-around guitar, easy to hold and play. This guitar also has rounded edges and contoured areas where your arm rests while playing, and where your ribs would otherwise contact a hard edge, for added ergonomic comfort.

Capt Oren Brown
USMC, 1970-1974
Foothill Ranch, Calif.

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

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO TIMOTHY T. DAY

Thank you for your years of generous support for the Marine Corps Association and our Commander’s Forum programs.



“We are honored to support a process that enables current Marine leaders to learn from historic battlefields by walking the actual grounds and seeing the challenges that past warriors faced.”

—Tim Day

John W. Warner

John W. Warner, a former Secretary of the Navy and five-term U.S. Senator from Virginia, who chaired the powerful Senate Armed Services Committee, died May 25 at his home in Alexandria, Va., at the age of 94.

Warner, who was the Under Secretary of the Navy from 1969-1972 and the Secretary of the Navy from 1972-1974, was proud to be the first veteran of the Navy and the Marine Corps to lead the Department of the Navy, and throughout his decades-long career in public service, he drew from the skills he learned in the military.

“The Navy and the Marine Corps, but the Marine Corps more centrally because of the training it gave me, they were my anchor to windward my whole life,” Warner said during a 2020 interview with *Leatherneck*.

Warner’s lifetime of service to his country began when he was a teen. The 17-year-old Warner, determined to do his part for the war effort, enlisted in the

Navy but did not see combat. World War II came to an end shortly after he completed training as a radio technician.

Warner returned home in 1946 and enrolled at Washington and Lee University, fulfilling his father’s dying wish. Like so many of his fellow students, Warner used the GI Bill and while working toward a degree in engineering, he enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserve. After completing his undergraduate studies, he was commissioned a second lieutenant and attended a modified Basic School at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va. Warner began law school at the University of Virginia, but had to put his studies on hold when the Korean War began.

He deployed to Pyontaek, Republic of Korea as the communications officer for Marine Attack Squadron (VMA) 121. Warner’s experiences in Korea, particularly the death of his squadron commander and the death of a pilot who was a close friend, had a lasting impact on him. “It’s lived with me forever,” Warner said. He also said that his time

with VMA-121 shaped who he was as leader of the Department of the Navy and later during his five terms as a U.S. Senator from Virginia.

A Republican, Warner didn’t hesitate to reach across the aisle to work together with his Democratic party colleagues. “I found him absolutely remarkable in the way that he worked with people and how he was always concerned that things would turn out right,” said Lieutenant Colonel Buzz Hefti, USMC (Ret), who worked on Warner’s staff in the early 1980s. “He will always be on a pedestal for the way that he handled people, the way that he worked with the other side politically,” added Hefti, who continued a friendship with the senator even after their working relationship ended.

Throughout his career in the Senate, Warner remained dedicated to the men and women in uniform, supporting legislation that benefited veterans, including an expanded GI Bill and TRICARE for Life.

Warner’s support for the military did not go unnoticed. In 2014, the Navy



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christened USS *John Warner* (SSN-785), a nuclear-powered *Virginia*-class attack submarine, and in 2015, Marine Corps University's Quantico campus hosted a dedication for the John Warner Center for Advanced Military Studies.

To read more about Warner's life, see "Anchor to Windward" in the May 2020 issue of *Leatherneck*.

Nancy S. Lichtman

Jerry Amen, 85, of Albuquerque, N.M. He enlisted at age 17 and went to boot camp at MCRD San Diego. He served four years and later earned a degree in accounting.

Capt Ernest Botelho, 85, of Fredericksburg, Va. He was a Mustang Marine who served at various bases on the East Coast and West Coast. After his retirement, he began a new career as a master carpenter.

David B. Collier, 83, of Stuart, Fla. The son of a Marine colonel, he was born at MCB Quantico. He enlisted in 1954 and was an aviation ordnance chief assigned to VMFA-321. He later earned a bachelor's degree in economics and a master's degree in public administration. He worked for various municipalities throughout his career, including in Stuart, where he was the city manager. He was involved with aviation-related organizations throughout

his life, including the Experimental Aircraft Association.

LtCol Kenneth E. "Bing" Crosby Jr., 61, of Montclair, Va. He was a Marine aviator who flew the AH-1 Cobra. During Operation Desert Storm he was assigned to an Air-Naval Gunfire Liaison Company and on 9/11 he was in the Pentagon parking lot, when a terrorist-hijacked airplane flew into the building. After retirement, he worked as an analyst at the Pentagon. His awards include a Bronze Star.

MGySgt Robert D. Flores, 72, of Stafford, Va. After graduating from boot camp at MCRD San Diego, he completed Sea School and then reported to USS *Kearsage* (CV-33), which deployed to the Gulf of Tonkin during the Vietnam War. He was a combat photographer and digital media specialist.

During his 30-year career he served at MCB Camp Pendleton, Okinawa and Camp H.M. Smith. After retirement, he continued in the field of digital media at Defense Information Systems Agency as a multimedia specialist. He was a member of the MCA.

Robert R. Jacobs, 54, of Portland, Ore. He was a Marine who served for four years.

Harold G. Luchsinger, 76, of Portland, Ore. He enlisted after his 1963 graduation

from high school and served four years on active duty and two years in the Marine Corps Reserve.

LCpl Richard M. Miller, 71, of Newark, Ohio. He went to boot camp at MCRD San Diego in 1968. He was wounded while serving in Vietnam. His awards include a Purple Heart.

Robert C. "Bob" Rose, 95, of Green Bay, Wis. He enlisted after his 1945 high school graduation. He later had a career in the Green Bay fire department, retiring as a captain.

Leslie V. "Sonny" Wood, 86, of Howard, Wis. He was a Marine who served during the Korean War. He later had a 30-year career with the county highway commission.

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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D-Day "The Longest Day"
France - Normandy

OCT 10-23

Cathedrals of Northern France - Normandy

OCT 16-23

MHT's The Great American South (St. Augustine, FL to New Orleans, LA)

NOV 3-13

WWI Armistice Day Parade
Paris-Belleau Wood-Reims

NOV 27-DEC 8

Vietnam Delta to the DMZ

DEC 1-8

80th Anniversary of Pearl Harbor - Waikiki

DEC 4-13

Battle of the Bulge
Bastogne - Brussels

FEB 19-MAR 3

Vietnam Battlefields - "Tet/Hue"

MAR 21-28

Iwo Jima - Guam

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Reunions

Editor's note: The following reunion information was current as of June 1. Given that the COVID-19 virus is still impacting future events, please continue to check with the reunion points of contact for the most up-to-date information.

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

• **East Coast Drill Instructors Assn.**, Oct. 7-10, Parris Island, S.C. Contact SgtMaj Kenneth Miller, USMC (Ret), (828) 499-0224, usmcpidi@charter.net.

• **Marine Security Guard Assn.**, Sept. 30-Oct. 4, Alexandria, Va. Contact Steve Maxwell, (440) 506-3311, usmcmx@oh.rr.com.

• **USMC Vietnam Tankers Assn.**, Sept. 15, Warwick, R.I. Contact John Wear, 16605 Forest Green Terrace, Elbert, CO 80106, (719) 495-5998, johnwear2@verizon.net.

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

• **Marine Corps Disbursing Assn.**, Aug. 8-12, Reno, Nev. Contact MGySgt Kevin Gascon, USMC (Ret), (760) 458-

2655, mojorisin68@hotmail.com, www.usmcdisbursers.com.

• **Marine Air Traffic Control Assn.**, Sept. 19-26, San Antonio, Texas. Contact Steve Harris, (830) 460-0953, sandkh2@gmail.com.

• **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).

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

• **7th Engineer Bn Assn. (RVN)**, Sept. 9-12, Arlington, Va. Contact Norm Johnson, (810) 300-0782, nwgj@outlook.com.

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

• **2/4 Assn.**, Aug. 4-7, Fort Lauderdale, Fla. Contact Pete Gannon, (954) 648-7887, diverplus@aol.com.

• **2/9**, Nov. 8-12, Arlington, Va. Contact Danny Schuster, twoninencoic@aol.com, www.2ndbattalion9thmarines.org.

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

• **Battery Adjust, 3/11 (all eras)**, Aug. 25-29, Washington, D.C. Contact Brian Seals, (765) 580-2734, bseals2013@gmail.com.

• **C/1/12 (RVN)**, Aug. 25-29, Washington, D.C. Contact Woody Hall, (931) 242-8432, hwoodrow@charter.net.

• **1/3/1 (RVN, 1968-1969)**, Sept. 9-12, Tampa, Fla. Contact "Woody" Woodard, (727) 253-0961, december251968@hotmail.com.

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

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

• **Marine Detachment, U.S. Naval Disciplinary Command Portsmouth, N.H.**, Sept. 20-25, Scranton, Pa. Contact Don Ferry, (972) 334-0609, don.ferry1942@gmail.com.

• **TBS 3-66 & 4-66/38th and 39th OCC**, Oct. 25-28, Las Vegas. Contact Jack Sheehan, (401) 255-0387, jacksheehanjtown@me.com, www.usmc-thebasic-school-1966.com.

• **TBS 4-67, 5-67, 6-67 "Rally at the**

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Alamo,” Oct. 11-14, San Antonio, Texas. Contact Ken Pouch, (860) 881-6819, kpouch5@gmail.com.

• **TBS, Co F, 6-70**, Oct. 21-24, Quantico, Va. Contact Col Tom Kanasky, USMC (Ret), (202) 366-3156, tilkanasky@earthlink.net, or Col Mitch Youngs, USMCR (Ret), (703) 493-9435, mitchyoungs@verizon.net.

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

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

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

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

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

• **Marine Air Base Squadrons-49**, Sept. 18, Earlville, Md. Contact Col Chuck McGarigle, USMC (Ret), (609) 291-9617, (609) 284-2935, col_of_mar_ret@comcast.net.

• **HMM-165/VMM-165 (all hands, all eras)**, Oct. 21-24, Glendale, Ariz. For details, visit www.165whiteknights.com.

Ships and Others

• **USS Canberra (CA-70/CAG-2)**, Oct. 13-17, Pittsburgh, Pa. Contact Ken Minick, 2115 Pride Ave., Belpre, OH 45714, (740) 423-8976.

Mail Call

• MSgt Jerry Boyd, USMC (Ret), master.boyd1943@gmail.com, to hear from **MGySgt Roger W. HARMON, USMC (Ret)**. He also would like to hear from anyone who served with him when he was the cryptographer for **III MAF, RVN, August 1968-July 1969**.

• SgtMaj Frank E. Pulley, USMC (Ret), fepulley@aol.com, on behalf of Marine veteran Dave Schulgen, to hear from or about **SSgt LONG**, whose MOS was 1141 and who was an **instructor** at the **Basic Electrician Course/Marine Corps Engineer School at Courthouse Bay, MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., in February-March 1979**.

Wanted

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

• David Kennedy, dkennedy@ohdbalt.com, wants a **recruit graduation book for Plt 116, Parris Island, 1951**.

Sales, Trades and Giveaways

• Bil Pederson, (608) 847-4153, billlorna@frontier.com, has a **recruit graduation book for Plt 306, Parris Island, 1964**, that he will give away to any member of the platoon.

• Denny Krause, dkrause40@gmail.com, has a **recruit graduation book from Plt 2024, Parris Island, 1975-1976**, to give away. The copy is inscribed with the name **Tony Liston**.

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. 📧

Saved Round

By Nancy S. Lichtman



CPL JOHN MCCULLOUGH, USMC

MARINES HIT THE BEACH—These leathernecks of 1st Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division (above) spend a day at the beach enjoying the surf in the Gulf of Tonkin in 1969. After lengthy operations against the enemy in the northernmost sector of South Vietnam, the Marines were given a two-day rest and rehabilitation (R&R) break at Cua Viet, several miles south of the Demilitarized Zone.

The Marines kicked back and relaxed at the recreation center, located at the mouth of the Cua Viet River, where they had access to a barber shop, hot showers, nightly movies and a sandy beach with cool, clear water. According to the August 1969 issue of *Leatherneck*, each man on R&R at the center was provided with three sodas and three beers a day. Occasionally the men were even treated to live musical entertainment. Another R&R center luxury was an on-site armorer who provided maintenance for each Marine's weapons.

"Are you kidding me? A man would have to have something wrong with him not to like the place. The work is good, the living is great and we have a very good mess hall," Sergeant Steve F. Champion told *Leatherneck* in 1969. Sgt Champion



COURTESY OF MILITARY HISTORICAL TOURS

was assigned to the R&R center as a handyman and jack of all trades.

According to our friends at Military Historical Tours, the area is now a popular fishing spot (above).

If you visited the Cua Viet R&R center during the Vietnam War, *Leatherneck* would like to hear from you. Please send your stories and photos from Cua Viet to leatherneck@mca-marines.org 🐞

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