

JULY 2022

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MAGAZINE OF THE MARINES



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COVER: Marines with Marine Operational Test and Evaluation Squadron (VMX) 1 transport a Light Armored Vehicle with a CH-53K King Stallion helicopter over Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., April 27. The CH-53K King Stallion, the Marine Corps' newest heavy-lift helicopter, can lift up to 36,000 pounds of equipment, holds up to 30 troops, and features a computerized fly-by-wire system for semiautonomous piloting. Photo by LCpl Elias E. Pimentel III, 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.)

60 Years Later, Marine Reconnects With Drill Instructor

I just read Sara W. Bock’s story, “Virginia’s Lieutenant Governor, Marine Veteran Winsome Earle-Sears: ‘Leadership is Not What You Say: It’s What You Do,’ ” in the May issue of *Leatherneck*, and I thought of my similar experience. My name is Joseph Wong, and I am 89 years old. I went through boot camp at MCRD San Diego, Calif., in Platoon 102 and served in the Marine Corps from 1952 to 1955. After boot camp, I attended communications school at Camp Pendleton, Calif., and was shipped to Korea and served at Kam Song, west of Panmunjom.

In the 60 years since boot camp and service in Korea, I never ran into anyone that I had met as a Marine until 2012 when I learned about the organization Together We Served. I joined the organization, and lo and behold, I received a call

from Cpl Robert Kennedy who was my drill instructor for Plt 102 in January 1952. It was like a call from heaven. I couldn’t believe it at first but here was my inspiration and mentor speaking with me.

Cpl Kennedy had a service-connected injury that brought him from Santa Maria to west Los Angeles, where I live, for treatment. When I went to the hospital to visit him, I learned he never received the Korean Ambassador for Peace Medal after leaving the Corps. I thought he deserved the medal more than I did and surprised him by giving him mine upon our first meeting. It was like meeting a long-lost father. To see Robert, to this day, is as fresh in my mind as the day it happened. We talked for hours catching up with our lives in the 60 years since we last saw each other. I couldn’t thank him enough for the success I had in life since his training at boot camp as all important milestones in my life were governed by my Marine training. I made it a point to meet Robert every time he came for treatment. He began staying overnight at my home while in town until his passing in 2016. It was a sad day for me.

One day Kennedy surprised me. He suggested we go down to San Diego

for the 1st Marine Division anniversary dinner. I was all for it. I hadn’t been to MCRD since I left boot camp. We attended the recruit graduation and then the dinner. My surprise was meeting Cpl Robert Canright. He was the other DI of Plt 102. Kennedy had arranged for him to be at the dinner to meet me. Cpl Canright retired from the Corps and lived in the San Diego area.

So far, I haven’t heard from anyone that I served with but the two that I did meet, Corporals Kennedy and Canright, makes up for all I couldn’t contact. At my age, I’m afraid time is running out and not many Marines are left that were of my service that are still alive. Needless to say, the Corps made me who I am today, and I am proud and thankful that I was able to serve my country and citizens of Los Angeles as a law enforcement officer for 60 years as well.

Joe Wong
USMC, 1952-1955
San Marino, Calif.

Reader: “April *Leatherneck* Written Just for Me!”

The April issue of *Leatherneck* seems as though it was written just for me. I joined the Corps in August 1946 about a month after I turned 18 years old and as soon as I finished my senior year of high school. I would have joined sooner but my parents wouldn’t let me until I finished school.

Along with my memories of the rifle range and my M1 Garand, this issue brought back so many memories. We had only one drill instructor, Gunnery Sergeant McCoy, who had fought all over the Pacific. We didn’t have a “crucible” in those days, but we thought we did. We had herringbone fatigues, the tie side skivvies, the green and khaki pants with no back pockets and the army tan shoes that we had to dye mahogany.

I was recalled for the Korean War from Camp Lejeune, and I again had to qualify on the range, this time with a carbine. I was at Marine Barracks Washington, D.C., when I literally cried at the funerals of returning World War II Marines who had been killed. The Corps gave me then, and over the years, more than I ever gave to the Corps. Joining the Marines was the best decision of my life.

Cpl Bev Jordan
USMC, 1946-1952
Lynchburg, Va.



COURTESY OF JOE WONG

Joe Wong, right and Cpl Robert Kennedy reconnected after more than 60 years. Cpl Kennedy was Wong’s drill instructor at MCRD San Diego in January 1952.

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COURTESY OF SUSIE HEATH

Marines from Camp Lejeune participated in Exercise Rolling Thunder in March. From left to right are Cpl Jack Brandon, LCpl Angel Rodriguez, Cpl Luis Lopez, Cpl Miguel Martinez, and LCpl David Heath.

Sunset Marines

My son, LCpl David Heath, along with Marines and Sailors from Camp Lejeune, N.C., traveled to Fort Bragg, N.C., to participate in Exercise Rolling Thunder from March 19 to 29. The Marines are with "Echo" Battery, 2nd Battalion, 10th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division. After completing their fire mission, they noticed the beautiful sunset and decided to pose for a photo on March 29.

Susie Heath
Boise, Idaho

Knowing Maj Bevilacqua Was a Privilege

This is in reference to the Sound Off letter, "*Leatherneck* Author Maj Allan Bevilacqua Remembered," in the May issue. It prompted my memory of the contact I had with Maj Bevilacqua during 1955 at Middle Camp Fuji, Japan, and subsequently.

On Aug. 26, 1955, a provisional platoon of H/3/3 was formed for duty in Vietnam to protect U.S. merchant ships on the Saigon River. The platoon included infantry squads and heavy machine-gun sections from Weapons Co 3/3, corpsmen and others for a total of approximately 55 personnel. Sgt Allan C. Bevilacqua was one of the machine-gun section leaders. After a week or two of being issued various special equipment, receiving five immunizations, and firing new or serviced weapons in heavy rain, the deployment was called off. We all resumed our normal duties.

Frequently 3rd Marines required battalions to nominate personnel for special duties. In 3/3 each company nominated one or more individuals. One of those special duties was for a Marine to work in the regimental brig at Middle Camp. Sgt Bevilacqua was the 3/3 nominee and selected. He served as a brig guard during September 1955 to June 1956.

In 1996 I began writing a personal history and sought information through various military publications. Maj Bevilacqua responded to my requests for information about Middle Camp Fuji, Japan. He very generously provided excellent information including maps and diagrams which he created. I feel privileged to have known Maj Allan C. Bevilacqua.

CMSgt John F. Forgette, USAF (Ret)
USMC, 1951-1957

Fairhaven Village, Wash.

If These Boots Could Talk

I wrote this poem about my first combat experience as a young corporal. That was 19 years ago today. I am currently an active-duty Marine Corps sergeant major. I wanted to share it with the *Leatherneck* readers.

If these boots could talk, they would tell a tale. A tale of young Marines from "Alpha" Company, 1st Bn, 2nd Marines and the rest of Task Force Tarawa. They would tell you they witnessed bravery, chaos, tears, and the shed of blood at a young age.

If these boots could talk, they would recount stories of kicking in doors and running upstairs.

If these boots could talk, they would recount heroic acts performed by young Americans.

If these boots could talk, they would remind you that freedom really isn't free.

If these boots could talk, they would tell you about the sandstorm that grounded air.

If these boots could talk, they would tell you stories of sirens and running into a bunker at Camp Shoop.

If these boots could talk, they would tell you about the big blue building that sprayed us with 7.62.

If these boots could talk, they would tell you about the smell of burning bodies and oil.

If these boots could talk, they would tell you about putting on MOPP gear in the back of an AAV.

If these boots could talk, they would tell you about the snap of bullets going past your head.

If these boots could talk, they would tell you about the mortarman shooting from the handheld.

If these boots could talk, they would tell you about the pain of watching friends being killed.

If these boots could talk, they would



SGTMaj JAMES CABARRUS, USMC

SgtMaj James Cabarrus takes the boots that he wore in An Nasiriya, on March 23, 2003, from duty station to duty station to remind him of the brave Marines from "Alpha" Co, 1st Bn, 2nd Marines who fought with him there.

be able to tell stories for hours and hours about the events that took place on 23 March 2003 in a city called An Nasiriyah.

But they can't talk. These boots can't

talk, cry, or express even the slightest bit of emotion. They aren't able to verbally communicate and even if they were, only a select few would understand.

These boots are old now and they've lost some of their luster. These boots are no longer in use, and they sit on a shelf in my office. These boots serve as a reminder. A reminder to be thankful for each day. A reminder to cherish every hug from a loved one. A reminder to always give each day your best.

These boots have a story to tell. An amazing story of some of the finest people that I have ever known. A story of Marines who gave their absolute best up until their last gasp of air. These boots remember the names of those who paid the ultimate sacrifice that day.

These boots can't talk so I will just keep packing them up and taking them from duty station to duty station to always remind myself of the brave Marines who fought with me on March 23, 2003.

Don't worry old friends, we haven't forgot your sacrifices or your names. You guys will forever live in my heart.

Just a poem about these old boots of mine. Semper Fidelis.

SgtMaj James Cabarrus, USMC
Houston, Texas

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Letter to Dad

Attached is a letter that my oldest son, Sergeant Major E.S. Heyward, USMC (Ret), wrote to me recently. My hope is you will publish it for my fellow Vietnam veterans.

I proudly served our Corps in Vietnam from 1968 to 1970 and as such experienced the regrettable treatment that many of us received upon returning home. That experience left many questions, one of which, "Was it worth it?"

My son's letter, after all these years, puts that question into a perspective that I hope will help other veterans who have the same lingering doubts. I also hope and pray that this letter will help reinforce the gratitude the current members of our Corps are receiving today. Several members of our family are Marines; my oldest grandson, the sergeant major's son, is currently serving. May this great nation of ours never forget what it takes to become a Marine, go off to foreign shores and fight for what we truly believe.

Dad,

On March 29, 2022, Vietnam War Veterans Day, you and I were having a discussion as we often do about our past and our service as Marines. During our conversation the concept of "making a

difference" during our time came up and the following thought occurred to me.

We are both men of service and have spent significant portions of our lives in the service of our country and our Corps. While that concept is resounding to most, the hope of what each of us did while in service making a difference in the world seems to reside closer to our core.

The Vietnam War taught our country, most specifically its citizens, a great number of things on how to view the unfortunate necessity of conflict and more importantly how to treat those brave men and women who step forward to our nation's call. It saddens me that these lessons are lost on so many veterans of the Vietnam era. Vietnam was our nation's first full scale counterinsurgency conducted on a modern battlefield. Some could argue that the Korean War was such, and to a large degree I agree, but the remnants of World War II tactics and mindset I feel puts Korea into a category all to itself.

In taking a closer look, Vietnam was not only our first full scale counterinsurgency, but it was also the first time in our history that "boots on the ground" media coverage was present on the battlefield. Combine this with a very polarized society and what I think we were left with was a large

portion of the population not emotionally prepared to see firsthand the rigors of war. Many Americans took awful stances and points of view towards those returning, creating a scar that unfortunately many have a hard time recovering from. In this attempt at recovery many veterans look for purpose. They question, what was it all for?

When a young man or woman takes the oath of service, regardless of the branch of military, they write a blank check of sorts to be used in the defense of our nation. The amount of that check varies, but they all pay some. For many this concept of complete service and sacrifice causes them to look for what their check bought. In the case of our Vietnam veterans, it has purchased more than many of them realize, and while the purpose of their sacrifice and service may not be exactly what they imagined, that does not mean it is not of immense value.

The long war on terror brought with it many challenges that America had not seen before or in some time. The length of the war, the fact that it was happening simultaneously on multiple fronts, and the fact that we were attacked on our home soil first to name a few all played into the aperture from which America's citizens

[continued on page 66]



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In Every Clime and Place

Compiled by Sara W. Bock

KANEOHE BAY, HAWAII “Reducing Our Logistical Footprint”: Marines Experiment With Foraging Concepts

Marines with 1st Battalion, 12th Marines, 3rd Marine Division experimented with “21st century foraging” concepts during Exercise Spartan Fury 22.1 at Pohakuloa Training Area, Hawaii, during the month of March.

The concept of 21st century foraging enables commanders to extend and enhance operational rations for a period without needing outside logistics support.

“It is imperative that the Marine Corps logistics functions continue to adapt to Force Design and the future warfighting concepts. That includes reducing our logistical footprint,” said Lieutenant Colonel Richard Neikerk, the commanding officer of 1/12.

During the exercise, individual Marines procured dry goods and fresh produce from local suppliers. The Marines were able to find and purchase eggs, sausage, bacon, chicken, rice and canned vegetables. The food was brought back to the training area where the Marines experimented with various field cooking methods.

The Marines used lightweight, expeditionary, non-organic food service equipment such as individual cooking



SSGT OLIVIA KNAPP, USMC

A Marine with 1/12, 3rdMarDiv cooks a meal during Exercise Spartan Fury 22.1 at Pohakuloa Training Area, Hawaii, March 8. During the exercise, individual batteries procured local food and experimented with field cooking methods using lightweight, expeditionary equipment that is sustainable for long durations in austere environments.

stoves, volcano grills and an Expeditionary Food Service Trailer that is currently under development. This equipment is designed to be sustainable for long durations in austere environments and can be employed by any unit and in any environment.

The food the Marines gathered was enough to feed the battery for three days with two cooked meals a day. The warm meals were a welcome change from the self-contained, individual field rations that are typically consumed in the field. By cooking and procuring food, the Marines of the battery proved that they could sustain themselves without outside support for a duration of time. Limiting the need for external logistics support enhances a unit’s ability to be adaptable, mobile and lethal.

The data collected regarding foraging concepts utilized during Spartan Fury 22.1 will be used to develop future training and readiness standards.

SSgt Olivia Knapp, USMC

SAN DIEGO “Lightning Carrier” *Tripoli* Marks Historic First

The Navy and Marine Corps demonstrated a key capability when they operated 20 F-35B Lightning II jets from *America*-class amphibious assault carrier USS *Tripoli* (LHA-7), March 30-April 8, fully exercising the Marine Corps’ “lightning carrier” concept for the first time in naval history on an amphibious assault ship.

In his planning guidance, General David H. Berger, Commandant of the Marine Corps, spoke to the potential of the “lightning carrier” concept based on amphibious assault ships.

The demonstration featured 16 jets from Marine Aircraft Group (MAG) 13, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, with an additional four from Marine Operational Test and Evaluation Squadron (VMX) 1, all operating from *Tripoli* at a high tempo. The Navy and Marine Corps team has incrementally developed the lightning carrier concept and continues to refine its tactics, techniques, and procedures to support integrated naval operations.

“When this opportunity came up to put this many of our fifth-generation aircraft on board *Tripoli* in conjunction with operational testing, we were thrilled,” said Colonel Chad Vaughn, the commanding officer of MAG-13. “It has been an in-



SSGT OLIVIA KNAPP, USMC

SSgt Mikelot A. Edouard, battalion mess chief with 1/12, 3rdMarDiv, teaches foraging techniques during Spartan Fury 22.1 at Pohakuloa Training Area, Hawaii, March 7.

credible opportunity to train to fight as a MAG from the sea, to train our pilots, and to work alongside our Navy teammates.”

The demonstration proved that an assault carrier can be a lethal addition and provide combatant commanders with more options when employed in creative ways. An earlier concept utilized amphibious assault ships to demonstrate the “Harrier carrier” concept for AV-8B Harriers.

The concept will not change the standard make-up of an Amphibious Ready Group and Marine Expeditionary Unit (ARG/MEU). However, the exercise demonstrated the potential to use amphibious assault ships to provide the naval and joint force with lethal access, collection and strike capabilities from fifth-generation short takeoff and vertical landing aircraft in future operations.

“This demonstration proved the versatility of the *America*-class assault carrier, with its ability to embark either two squadrons of F-35Bs and a MAG command element, or a battalion-sized landing force and the associated assault support [12 MV-22B Ospreys, four CH-53E Super Stallions and six F-35B Lightning II],” said Navy Captain Joel Lang, *Tripoli*’s commanding officer. “For the fleet commander, both

options are formidable and sustainable.”

Tripoli, an amphibious assault ship, is the second *America*-class landing helicopter assault (LHA) ship. Optimized to support rotary- and fixed-wing operations, *Tripoli* carries two times as much aviation fuel, 30 percent more aviation ordnance, and, with an expanded hangar bay, more space to perform maintenance than its *Wasp*-class predecessors.

“The fifth-generation capability of the F-35B brings a significant advancement in capability to the combatant commanders, not only as a lethal strike aircraft but with the vast array of sensors that come with the F-35B’s avionics suite,” said Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Goodno, the commanding officer of Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 225. “Having two full F-35B squadrons on a ship like USS *Tripoli* capitalizes on this next-generation capability, providing the commander with a multitude of options.”

As one of the Marine Corps’ newest F-35 squadrons, VMFA-225 used the demonstration as an opportunity to operate at sea for the first time.

“The pilots and Marines of my squadron were really eager to gain experience operating at sea, test out this new capa-

bility, and work alongside an experienced squadron like VMFA-211 and the USS *Tripoli* crew,” added Goodno. “I am exceptionally proud of how well the Marines of VMFA-225 performed in our first at-sea period. It was an exciting concept and one that we all believe should gain further consideration as an option for our forces moving forward.”

The Marines of 3rd MAW remain combat-ready, deployable on short notice, and lethal when called into action.

Maj Mason Englehart, USMC

GRASMERE, IDAHO JTAC Students Benefit from Garnet Rattler Immersive Training

Nestled in the high desert hills of southern Idaho lies Saylor Creek Training Range, home to more than 100,000 acres of open-air space for local National Guard and Air Force units to utilize. For the first time in the history of 1st Marine Division and I Marine Expeditionary Force, 11 Marines underwent training to be certified as joint terminal attack controllers (JTACs) there during Exercise Garnet Rattler 2022.

From April 11-29, infantry Marines from “Baker” Company, 1st Battalion,

An F-35B Lightning II aircraft attached to VMX-1 prepares for takeoff aboard amphibious assault ship USS *Tripoli* (LHA-7), March 31. The squadron embarked aboard *Tripoli* as part of the Corps’ “lightning carrier” concept demonstration, which proved the vessel’s capability to operate as a dedicated fixed-wing carrier platform.



Capt Taylor Bussick, a JTAC student with 3rd Bn, 4th Marines, 1stMarDiv, awaits an approaching U.S. Army UH-60 Blackhawk at Saylor Creek Range in Grasmere, Idaho, during Exercise Garnet Rattler, April 28. The joint training event between Marines, soldiers and airmen is designed to qualify JTACs to be more efficient and lethal in a realistic training environment.



SGT DANA BEESLEY, USMC



SGT DANA BEESLEY, USMC

Left: 1stLt David Burnett, a JTAC student with 1st ANGLICO, I MIG, coordinates CAS for an urban assault at Saylor Creek Range, Grasmere, Idaho, April 28.

with the infantry Marines, maneuver with them, and follow orders from a ground force commander, work with a joint fires observer, and professionally communicate with an air crew at the same time while manipulating a rifle and under full combat load.”

During the training, the JTAC students were aided by close air support (CAS) from neighboring A-10 Thunderbolt II “Warthogs” and F-15 Strike Eagle Units based out of Mountain Home Air Force Base and Gowen Air National Guard Base. Major Jason Attinger, USAF, an A-10 pilot and long-range coordinator for the 190th Fighter Squadron, said that communicating with sister service units has been the catalyst for the success and planning of Garnet Rattler.

“Working routinely with the Marines makes us better at doing our job, and helps make them better as well,” Attinger said. “What the JTACs do on the ground is very important to the overall CAS mission. They bring a scheme of maneuver to the air which we may not be able to see from inside the cockpit. Their expertise on what the aircraft does to employ weapons is critical information to the ground force commander and what we can bring to the fight. They are essentially the ground force commander’s conduit to the air.”

7th Marine Regiment and prospective JTACs from various units on Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., and Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif., were trained and tested in various live-fire scenarios.

For Major David Cole and Master Sergeant Daniel Haack, JTAC program managers from 11th Marine Regiment and the orchestrators of Garnet Rattler,

the coordination and development of the exercise began when they saw an opportunity to give their students a more immersive experience through live ammunition and joint-branch communications.

“We integrate the controllers into a legitimate line company scheme of maneuver, a movement to contact seizure, and have them hold cordons in an urban setting,” Haack said. “They have to run

Cole pulled from his own experience and training as a JTAC, saying that Saylor Creek Range brought all elements of a combat scenario to the table. Prior to training events like Garnet Rattler, JTAC students were certified while postured in an observation post tower for the entirety of their certification.

“It’s great to see our vision come to life,” Cole said. “By the end of the course, I expect the JTACs to be able to integrate fully with a ground force commander and be able to maneuver with the ground element while controlling CAS, without missing a beat.”

As a student in the course, Captain Taylor Bussick, an MV-22B Osprey pilot and air officer with 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, said his prior aviation training helped him remain focused while conducting each scenario.

“Marines are maneuvering all around, rounds are flying overhead, instructors are simulating incoming fire, and we are trying to accurately communicate with the aircraft,” Bussick said. “Being able to take that mental agility and task management skills we learned during flight training and apply it here helps us stay focused and unflappable.”

Bussick said he and the other students were given a once-in-a-career opportunity to conduct true combat scenarios during Garnet Rattler.

“Out here, we are given multiple sections to manage in the stack and conduct controls in a very dynamic environment



CPL BRENDAN MULLIN, USMC

A Marine with VMGR-152, 1st MAW, directs an M142 HIMARS assigned to Kilo Btry, 2nd Battalion, 14th Marines while conducting a rapid insertion training event during WTI 2-22 at MCAS Yuma, Ariz., April 6.

working with joint assets we’re not used to,” Bussick said. “Coming out here we not only get the opportunity to work jointly with the Air Force but see tactics and procedures from other assets that we could see down range. This gives us the opportunity to work in sync with them and get exposure to their capabilities, making us a much more lethal and overall effective fighting force.”

Sgt Dana Beesley, USMC

YUMA, ARIZ.

Reservists Support WTI With HIMARS Training Event

The Marines that operate M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) launchers will play an increasingly vital role in the future of the Marine Corps. With their “rockets’ red glare,” the reserve Marines of “Kilo” Battery, 2nd Battalion, 14th Marine Regiment are able to provide rapid precision



CPL BRENDAN MULLIN, USMC

Marines prepare a HIMARS rocket launcher to be loaded onto a KC-130J Super Hercules during WTI 2-22 at MCAS Yuma, Ariz., April 6.

An M142 HIMARS assigned to Kilo Btry, 2/14, fires a rocket while conducting a rapid insertion training event at Dugway Proving Ground, Utah, April 6, in support of WTI 2-22.



CPL BRENDAN MULLIN, USMC

fire support anywhere in the world in coordination with Marine Corps and U.S. Air Force aircraft.

During Weapons and Tactics Instructor (WTI) course 2-22, held at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Ariz., the Marines conducted a HIMARS aerial insertion, known as a HIRAIN, during which they loaded HIMARS launchers onto a Marine Corps KC-130J Super Hercules and an Air Force C-17 Globemaster III and flew to a pre-planned destination in order to execute a fire mission. After firing their rockets, the Marines loaded the launchers back onto the aircraft and returned to home base.

The Marines of Kilo Battery integrated with their active-duty brothers and sisters from the KC-130J community and conducted the entire evolution in less than seven hours, a timeframe that included five hours spent flying to and from their firing position at Dugway Proving Ground, Utah.

"A HIRAIN is a HIMARS rapid infiltration—it's a capability we have that lets us get a HIMARS launcher into an advantageous position using aircraft like the C-130 or C-17," said First Lieutenant Kyle Voss, a fires direction officer with Kilo Battery.

The training was just one part of the multifaceted WTI, a service-level training exercise designed to challenge Marine aviators with a standardized set of advanced tactical training scenarios.

"Using aircraft and employing the



CPL BRENDAN MULLIN, USMC

Sgt Charles Conacher, a HIMARS launcher chief with Kilo Btry, 2/14, guides the launcher driver during WTI 2022 at MCAS Yuma, Ariz., April 5.

HIRAIN capability is an extremely effective way for commanders to deploy precision fires within the enemy's weapon engagement zone," said Voss.

A weapon engagement zone, often referred to as a WEZ, is the area that a weapon can be effectively employed. Voss believes that employing HIMARS and utilizing the HIRAIN capability is an effective way for combatant commanders

to employ precision strike assets from low-signature bases within the enemy's WEZ.

"Compared to cannon artillery, HIMARS have a few advantages. First and foremost, range," said Voss. "HIMARS are capable of reaching out a lot longer distance than cannon artillery. HIMARS also have greater precision, and obviously mobility. HIMARS are capable of relocating seconds after firing rather than the minutes for cannon artillery," said Voss.

These advantages are critical to aligning the Marine Corps with the Commandant's Force Design 2030, which is rapidly shifting the service to a force capable of employing stand-in forces from low-signature bases in a contested environment.

"HIMARS provide the precision firepower necessary for stand-in forces to counter anti-access and area-denial capabilities," said Voss. "We're rapidly deployable, reinforcing contact layer forces should competition develop into armed conflict."

Training events like the HIRAIN and courses like WTI help facilitate the Corps' transition to its newly defined role. Conducting training, integrating the active and reserve components, as well as training with sister services, ensures that the Marine Corps is ready for any challenge it may face across the globe.

Cpl Brendan Mullin, USMC



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Re-Framing the Force of the Future:

Traditions, Modernization and Talent Management Breed Success in the Information Age



From the left: Sgt Ramon Esteves, MSgt Jorge Loera, Sgt Joshua Duke, Capt Miles Essay and 1stLt Benito Escobedo gather for a photo at the reenlistment ceremony of Sgt Duke, 1st Bn, 11th Marines, 1stMarDiv, at Camp Pendleton, Calif., Feb. 8.

By Sgt Joshua E. Duke, USMC

Editor's note: The following article is the second-place winner of the 2022 Leatherneck Writing Contest. Major Richard A. "Rick" Stewart, USMC (Ret) sponsored the contest through the Marine Corps Association Foundation. Upcoming issues of Leatherneck will feature the third-place winner and honorable mention entries.

Marine Corps traditions, professionalism and ceremony have always been the primary motivating factors for potential recruits to choose the Marine Corps over other branches of the military. These same factors are what drive retention within the Corps, from skill in leadership development, to the underlying meanings held in each ceremony or uniform article, and even the stature that Marines exert while carrying themselves anywhere in the world. Civilians and Marines want to become and remain a part of The Few and the Proud. For nearly 250 years, the Marine Corps has prided itself in recruiting and retaining the best that America has to offer, training them to fight and win decisively in any climate or circumstance, and to do it with pride, honor and style. As society has changed over generations, the Marine

Corps has adapted to ensure that the best always find their way home to the Corps, and in the 21st century, change is needed again as the world and society move quickly and decisively into the information age.

The Commandant of the Marine Corps' Talent Management 2030 plan, augmenting the Force Design 2030 plan, is designed to bring the human capital within the Marine Corps into the information age by increasing focus on the skills and abilities that will be needed for America to succeed in future wars. Modernizing the Marine Corps through talent management will not hinder the physical traditions of the Marine Corps so much as it will elevate and equalize the intellectual needs and requirements for service in the most distinguished branch of America's Armed Forces. Modernization of the force does not just mean modernizing equipment, tactics and strategies to meet future threats. A large factor in force modernization includes reshaping the social structure of the force by shifting the human capital investment mindset to more accurately reflect the modern culture of

society, while maintaining and re-imaging the traditions and culture that separate Marines from other branches of the military. Cultural modernization of the Marine Corps can be achieved by focusing on, rather than relinquishing, the traditions and cultural history of the Corps, while relating those traditions and values to modern-day needs within information age society.

Leadership, professionalism, fortitude, integrity, selflessness, drive. These are some of the attributes offered through service in the Marine Corps, and these attributes will inevitably result in success in any area of life that an individual chooses to pursue. Modern society desires and requires these attributes to succeed as much as every generation that has come before. Being a Marine is a mental attitude achieved through the culture of traditions and training offered in the Marine Corps, having nothing to do with being new or old, but rather a state of evolution achieved through teaching, learning and training, ultimately unlocking the greatest and most useful potential and abilities inside an individual as a unique and profound way of life. The object and purpose of the plans to redesign the Marine Corps' force in readiness are to shift the Marine Corps' mindset to include social developments in American



By implementing policies that target the skills and abilities that this new information age generation has produced, the Marine Corps can effectively facilitate the transformation of the Marine Corps in accordance with the Talent Management 2030 plan.



Left: LtGen David Ottignon, DC, Manpower and Reserve Affairs, was a featured speaker during a luncheon as part of the MCA-hosted Force Design series at the Clubs at Quantico, Va., on March 17.

STEPHEN COLLINS

culture that have changed in the last few decades in order for the Marine Corps to appeal to and integrate information age Americans into the most deadly fighting force on the planet.

Marine Corps traditions and values have always promised to help advance the minds and bodies of Marines to ensure that they can succeed at anything they put their minds and effort into from their personal or professional lives, to impacting communities, the nation and the world, while achieving every possible success for themselves, the Marine Corps and America.

By implementing policies that target the skills and abilities that this new information age generation has produced, the Marine Corps can effectively facilitate the transformation of the Marine Corps in accordance with the Talent Management 2030 plan, delivering traditional Marine attributes that inevitably result in success to information age Americans in this new style of cyber-based society. Using targeted recruiting and retention operations designed to integrate information age insight and talent into the Marine Corps traditions, while explaining how those traditions apply to today's society and prospects for success, the Marine Corps can effectively facilitate the transformation of the force in accordance with the Talent Management 2030 plan, which in turn ensures the success of the Force Design 2030 plan.

The Talent Management 2030 plan is not an attack on the culture or traditions of the Marine Corps, nor should it be a change that is feared by "old breed" Marines—it is a shift in mentality designed to capture the changes in society that have taken place as America moves into

the information age. The 2030 plan is a top-down effort to shift the focus of retention and recruiting from a numbers game focusing primarily on physical attributes and strength, to a more intelligent approach that recognizes intellectual skill sets needed to modernize force structure effectively to meet 21st-century challenges. The Talent Management plan refocuses the human capital priorities of the Marine Corps to expand the needs for information age warfare, while retaining and emphasizing the traditions and culture of

due to physical requirements for the opportunities. The end goal should not be for all Marines to run perfect physical and combat fitness tests, and also be experts in cyberwarfare, intelligence operations or analysis. Generally, individuals excel in one of these categories or the other, notwithstanding some exceptions that can be great at both. Under policies prior to the enactment of the Talent Management 2030 plan, Marines with these information age skills leave the Marine Corps, either to make more money, or due to a lack of career options preventing career advancements in directions that benefit the desires of the individual Marine.

Current policies also make it difficult for Marines to change career paths, which is a major reenlistment disincentive. Marines joining the service don't really know what their job is going to be until they start doing it after training, and many realize they don't like their job once they find out what it is. These Marines usually end up leaving active duty when they discover that there aren't really options for career path changes. The Talent Management 2030 initiative eliminates these problems, allowing Marines to excel in their Marine Corps careers as they progress, even if that means changing career paths. The possibility of career path change has been low due to the needs of the Marine Corps. The solution for these talented individuals prior to the enactment of the Talent Management 2030 plan has been to leave the Marine Corps, even when they truly believe in the Corps and its traditions and don't really want to leave. The Talent Management 2030 plan opens the door to Marines who continue to study and self-educate, as well as Marines who take advantage of education and advancement opportunities offered through the Marine Corps, encouraging and enabling Marines to better themselves continuously to take advantage of new career path opportunities without leaving the Marine Corps.

The Talent Management 2030 plan is not an attack on the culture or traditions of the Marine Corps, nor should it be a change that is feared by “old breed” Marines—it is a shift in mentality designed to capture the changes in society that have taken place as America moves into the information age.

the Marine Corps, to include physical training. Marines under this new plan will now not only be the most lethal force on the traditional battlefields of the past, but also the most lethal force in space and cyberspace, taking advantage of information age technologies to supplement the Total Force from robotics and artificial intelligence to high-tech weaponry designed to defeat any adversary on the planet.

The 2030 plans change policies that shift the Total Force to expand focus on the intellectual skill sets needed to fight and win on the modern battlefield, specifically to enhance areas such as cyber warfare, intelligence, and counterintelligence, among others, with specific focus on the space and cyber domains in general. Retention will be directly affected by these changes to outdated policy barriers that historically closed off opportunities to Marines with needed skills, usually



BGen Ahmed Williamson, right, discusses Talent Management with other panelists Col Ty Zagurski, USMC (Ret), left, and SgtMaj Daniel Mangrum at the Force Design luncheon at the Clubs at Quantico, Va., on March 17.

Career path opportunities combined with emphasizing Marine Corps traditions and ceremony that set Marines apart from other military branches will stabilize and improve recruiting and retention across the Corps. Marines have a unique style of leadership training that results in success in the civilian world after leaving the service, creating people who have their own initiative to get things done, for personal and organizational success, and to achieve greatness at anything they choose to do in the future. Marines are physically and mentally forged through the culture of the Marine Corps and training to hold themselves, carry themselves, and speak to people with authority and confidence. Marine Corps ceremonies—from birthday balls and funeral details, to promotions and graduations—emphasize the traditions and splendor of the Marine Corps that drives retention. Implementation of these traditions under the unique decentralized command structure of the Marine Corps shape the essence of Marines, and drive victory in warfighting.

Decentralized command is the most powerful game-changing decision advantage used in warfare, enabling action-oriented decision making to take place at the lowest levels of leadership possible while still enabling strategic level organization and planning. The Marine Corps focuses on decentralized command strategies from the first day of training throughout the entire career of every Marine, providing opportunities to lead as early as possible in order to train the minds of Marines to automatically decide and act as a force of habit in accordance with Commander's intent. The Marine Corps produces the most successful civilians in society of any branch, increasing the hireability of Marines due to leadership, management, and the action-driven skills that come from forming a habit of action. Habit of action, coupled with intentional distribution of power, creates action-oriented empowered leaders that can and have changed the tide of battle throughout history, creating advantages over centralized command adversaries and forming a sense of unity that can only come from shared authority to act.

Centralized command hinders the action of every person in a military organism, slowing down the machine, leading to inaction, and creating strategic soft spots for adversaries to exploit. Nations have been lost to inaction. Marines act. Marines are trained to decide, act and innovate. They are driven to act throughout their training, encouraged to act throughout their careers, and forced to act in order to survive and succeed in the nation's smallest and most deadly fighting force. The drive to act and innovate in any situation makes anything possible and sets Marines apart from other branches. When that drive is applied to a specific generation, this generation, action-oriented information age warriors will change the face of warfare in the 21st century, creating a decision advantage for America in every domain, from land, sea and air, to space and cyberspace. Investing in modern society through the Talent Management 2030 plan will deliver this drive to act to the next generation of warfighters, ensuring the

decentralized command mindset of the Marine Corps acts as a guiding force on the future of America. Action creates victory, and America will have victory or risk losing freedom for the world.

Guided by the advancements of the 2030 plans, the Marine Corps will permanently advance the strength of the Total Force, leveraging the talent force multiplier of information age Americans to create a decision advantage leading to success on future battlefields, particularly to address challenges in the space and cyberspace domains. Relating the Marine Corps' traditions to information age Americans, from leadership training creating action-oriented minds, to the decentralized command structure that enhances battlefield tactics and strategies, will lead to achieving and maintaining decision advantages for information age warfare. Branding this new generation of warfighters with these traditions and skills will reshape modern



MajGen Michael Borgschulte, Director, Manpower Management, center, discusses the role Talent Management plays in Force Design 2030 while SgtMaj Rafael Rodriguez, M&RA, left, and SgtMaj Ronda Kirkby, MM, right, await their turn to speak during the Force Design panel on March 17.

warfare, creating a new generation of action-oriented people driven to succeed by the nature engraved on their souls through Marine Corps training. Under the new Talent Management strategy for modern manpower management, the Marine Corps will continue to mold the minds of the future, streaming into the information age, recruiting the best and retaining the best. Always ready, always faithful.

Author's note: I would like to thank 1stLt Benito Escobedo, MSgt Jorge Loera, and Capt Miles Essay for their inspiration and confidence that led to me writing this article. They encouraged me, convinced me to submit an entry, and inspired me throughout the writing process, allowing me to talk through ideas and enhance my insight into both the topics and the organization of the article, ultimately resulting in the final product being published. Semper Fidelis.

Author's bio: Sgt Joshua E. Duke is an 0621 serving with 1st Bn, 11th Marines. He was previously an Army intel analyst, deploying in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He has a bachelor's degree in intelligence with a concentration in counterintelligence from American Military University. 🇺🇸

Legendary Lensman

The story of Marine camera ace
David Duncan's exploits to get the scoop in pictures

By Jack de Chant

To the Commandant's Office in Headquarters Marine Corps, there came, not many weeks ago, a telegram relaying a message from His Excellency, Anastasio Somoza, President of Nicaragua. It requested permission to make use of the talents of Marine Lieutenant David D. Duncan for a few days down in Central America. The message stated casually that President Somoza was having a festival in his country and that he would like Duncan to fly down to Nicaragua for the weekend to take a few pictures and then fly back to Washington, all at no expense to the American government.

Unfortunately, the lieutenant was on urgent orders which could not be interrupted, and the Nicaraguan Embassy was so informed, with regrets.

Anyone considering the matter, even at Headquarters Marine Corps, would admit that it was an unusual request. And it was, to everyone but his sidekick Malakai Mo. Duncan had had the honor before.

How that came about is just one page in the diary of D.D. Duncan, the legendary lensman, who, before he came into the Corps, had been shot in both hips, bitten on both hands by deadly snakes, and was well-known from Nova Scotia to New Zealand.

Some of the rarest birds to wear the Marine Corps uniform in World War II were the combat photographers. In an outfit that has always had more characters in it than the quartermaster had shoes for, just their normal way of life was enough to put first sergeants in strait jackets and convince the other hands that photographers lived on a simple diet of hashish, super vitamins and Buck Rogers. For combat photographers, nothing was too weird to try just once for a picture, whether it was hanging by their toes from the Washington Monument or telling a Japanese in a banzai charge to "Hold that pose!"



David D. Duncan, a combat photographer, had a decades-long career as a freelance photographer covering the Korean and Vietnam wars.

LEATHERNECK FILE PHOTO

Of all these unusual birds, perhaps the one with the most brilliant plumage was the same Duncan, who until recently was that first lieutenant who wore a Fiji infantry patch on his left shoulder. The way Dave Duncan, as an officer with a photographic squadron, happened to be the only American so honored by the

masters of jungle fighting, or how he contrived to fly at 400 knots in a belly tank slung beneath a P-38, is part of the wartime legend that has grown around him.

You wouldn't get much of an idea of what makes him tick from a look at his standard statistics. He is 30 years old,

Photos like this made Duncan famous throughout a restless career of globe-trotting. Silhouetted against clouds, a Liberator crew takes off to photograph the enemy bastion at Truk, Emirau, during World War II.



DAVID DOUGLAS DUNCAN



DAVID DOUGLAS DUNCAN

Faces that would delight a cameraman provide wide scope for Duncan's art.



DAVID DOUGLAS DUNCAN

Duncan photographed Okinawans enjoying some American cigarettes.



Carrying his carbine, exposure meter and film, Duncan is prepared for his next assignment.

TSGT GEORGE CIRCLE, USMC

Brazilian than the Scotchman that he is. You might get a hint from his hands and eyes, which are those of a master craftsman, or from his terrific zest for living. But to really appreciate this poor man's Marco Polo you have to hark back to his days in knee-britches.

During his tour in grade school, he got more stick time in the hall than any other moppet and earned his liberty money collecting snakes. Mind you, he wasn't incorrigible. He just had a mind of his own. In those days the Kansas City mothers and their pigtailed progeny figured Duncan as the most horrendous little boy for miles around. That never phased Dave. He just kept right on bagging snakes until, at 12, he had one of the biggest collections west of the Mississippi. His own family gave up when Susie, their prize laundress, ran into the boondocks and never returned after finding three of Dave's specimens nestling in her wash tub.

This urge to ramble and see things was well-fed while he was in high school. Each summer Dave and his gang would buy a rattletrap for 15 bucks, wire it together, and clatter down the turnpike. In four such junkets, they managed to hit every one of the 48 states, Canada and Mexico, all at 20 miles an hour. An account of the trips would sound like Sunday night in Allen's Alley where everything happened from scaring the hell out of a customs inspector with the snakes in their cargo to pitching their tent on the front lawn of one of California's swankiest hotels.

All this time, Duncan, who a few years later would be hitting the rotos and magazines with his pictures, didn't even like photography. His yen for Leicas and light meters came soon after he had entered the University of Arizona to raise the dead as an archaeologist. He admits he found fossil-finding a little out of character, but the vision of pith helmets and staying out of school on field expeditions lured him down to Tucson in 1933.

The photo-starter was a birthday present from his sister. It was a folding Kodak with a 4.5 lens. He used it the morning he got it, taking shots of the biggest fire in Tucson. He remembers standing near the man who talked a fireman into going back into the blaze for his suitcase. It later turned out to be John Dillinger, the once-noted bandit, in disguise. The suitcase was his arsenal. But this is no Horatio Alger legend. Duncan's photos of the fire and Dillinger were not splashed across the front page the next morning. He just carted them home.

Even back on the campus Dave never let things get dull. With school under way,

Duncan catches a Marine adjusting his rigging before leaving on a mission.



DAVID DOUGLAS DUNCAN



DAVID DOUGLAS DUNCAN

One of Duncan's photos showing a "grasshopper" winging up a Laruma canyon over Japanese-held territory. Often the tiny planes drew small arms fire from the jungle where a forced landing was fatal.



DAVID DOUGLAS DUNCAN



DAVID DOUGLAS DUNCAN

Above: Delight at having his picture taken made this young boy grin.

Left: This photo of SCAT transport planes headed for Green Island was taken in the Solomons.

Dave found time to explore the wonders of the ocean floor from Mexico to the West Indies. He bubbled down in an open helmet more than a hundred times just to see what went on below and to search for coral, sponges and seed pearls. On one occasion he tried for the world's open helmet record of 109 feet but hit bottom at 82. On another, he was the first man ever to broadcast over the radio from an open diving helmet. He gave the audience the hot scoop from under the lily pads of the local fishpond.

By this time, the Miami papers had the word on Duncan's stuff and were running his diving pictures in full-page Sunday roto layouts. He was still using his folding Kodak and giving the pictures away until he found out they paid wads of the folding green for such stuff!

Aside from being a man with very itchy feet who had an eye for excitement and natural beauty, Duncan managed a stable of sidelight avocations, just to keep things going at a DI's clip. For example, there was the small matter of his boxing as a welter and middleweight in Florida. He took on a lot of tough bush-league competition and won every one of his 47 bouts, mainly on decisions. In contrast, one of his pictures in Mexico of a native fishing scene won high art honors, taking second place in Kodak's national news photo contest in 1936.

He came out of the starting gate so fast at graduation that he nearly got away without his A.B. diploma. The lure this

time was a trip in a 100-foot, two-masted schooner out of Key West bound for the Grand Cayman and the Swan Islands below Cuba.

Shoving off from the Swan Islands, the schooner plied in and out of the Mosquito Coast of Nicaragua. This is a coast which the veterans of the Banana Wars down there will tell you is aptly named. On that two-month expedition Duncan turned

The war was well under way, and while the world wondered how Mexico would behave, Duncan was clicking his shutter on many a hush-hush project Mexico was doing for the Allies.

out a photo story of the Caribbean turtle fleet that hit the pages of the *National Geographic* with 15 pictures and a long, signed article of his own.

D.D. Duncan, the deep-sea diver and archaeologist, made the big time with that layout. By now he was making a living at picture-taking and had, among other things, that facility, rare for photogs, of writing his own copy.

Turtles, then snakes again, the Pan American highway, Christmas card scenes in New England, giants of the Humboldt current off South America, Yucatan, Haiti, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Trinidad, Venezuela, Colombia and the Virgin Islands, Nova Scotia, and finally, Central America, came under the scrutiny of his fast-moving lens during the following years.

The Central American venture consisted of a combination mission for the State Department and the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs. Mainly, it was documentary stuff on hemisphere solidarity. The war was well under way, and while the world wondered how Mexico would behave, Duncan was clicking his shutter on many a hush-hush project Mexico was doing for the Allies.

Lazaro Cardenas, a Mexican ex-president, turned out the whole military establishment for this Yanqui when he made his series on defense installations in Lower California. These were the first pictures permitted in the area, and the same goes for his series on the smokeless powder plant which was turning .30-caliber shells for American rifles. Duncan did the first photo story on Mexico's guayule fields, the huge synthetic rubber effort.

The more he traveled, the more did Duncan, he of the gleaming teeth, become a laughing legend in the Spanish Americas where they made him at home in huts along trails without names and in plush rooms off marble corridors.

Duncan, the hungry one, who doesn't drink or smoke because he figures he's crazy enough as it is, has a Paul Bunyan-like appetite for the old double-thick chocolate milkshakes. In all his foreign wanderings he had taken great pains to introduce this great American concoction. He carefully schooled native merchants, from the Rio Grande to the Amazon, in the fine art of making them.

On a hot, dusty afternoon in Managua, the capital of Nicaragua, he was riding the streets in the presidential limousine with Señor Somoza. He respectfully asked the President if he would like a cold, creamy chocolate milkshake at the moment.

"But where could we get one in Nicaragua?" the very amazed President of the country asked.

Dave directed the entourage to a little sidewalk shop where he had carefully coached the help in the proper ritual. He and the President parked themselves in a little booth and ordered two "Doble Greuso!"

Señor Duncan was once more headed back into the Latin world to survey the Amazon River basin for a government rubber development when he did a smart about-face and joined the Marine Corps.

He came out of the 25th ROC, 17th AVS, as a second lieutenant and was shipped to El Toro as a photo officer in spite of protests that he wanted a rifle platoon. He was sent to the air station at Ewa, Oahu,

where, late in November 1943, he was made assistant photo officer for Marine Photographic Squadron (VMD) 254, which was on its way to the South Pacific.

He recalls his early activities in that theater as consisting of 10 or 12 routine photo recon missions over Rabaul, Kavieng and other assorted targets.

Somehow, he wrangled an assignment

**Duncan, in the middle
of the fierce fight,
remembers roaring
with laughter at the
incongruity of it all—
the Fijians happily ...
singing ... while the
Japanese crawled up
at them on all sides.**

from the 1st Marine Air Wing to do a complete photo story on the activities of South Pacific Combat Air Transport (SCAT). He rode the Douglas R4Ds ragged from Sydney to Manus for several months, covering all the angles of that air transport operation.

The cream on this cake was one he dreamed up himself. Duncan, the born

guerilla, found that SCAT was scheduled for a regular series of supply drops to the Fijian Scouts behind the Japanese lines. Their mission was to cut Bougainville in half by leaving the perimeter at Torokina and marching across the Crown Prince Range to set up a base of operations at Ibu and harass the Japanese from it.

Duncan stuffed his pack, oiled his carbine, and joined the Fijians to get this final phase of SCAT in action. The 1st Battalion, Fiji Regiment, made its forced march and set up camp 30 miles behind Japanese lines at Ibu. There, at the foot of Mount Balbi, one of the island's two active volcanoes, they hacked the Kaheli air strip out of the jungle in three days. It was only 350 feet long but big enough to serve as a target for the tree-skimming transports and to handle the liaison Cubs which flitted in and out.

Duncan's best story of that 60-day campaign had more laughs in it than a Gizmo and Eightball sortie to hear him tell it. He and Malakai Mo, his No. 1 boy, were up on the point of a small patrol when they ran smack into a mess of Japanese. Now, the brawny Fijian jungle stalkers are knife-happy by nature and do a lot of gumbeating if they are forced to use gunpowder for disposal purposes. But here they had no choice and they let go with everything in their arsenal—carbines, grenades, Enfields and mortars.

The stunned Japanese lit out in all directions and stayed there until the handful of natives decided on a strategic retreat to the top of a small knoll where they could set up a perimeter defense. The little outfit retreated as it fought with



Left: Typical portrait of a fearless Fijian with whom Duncan fought in the Ibu jungles. (Photo by David Douglas Duncan)

Below: A Marine Corsair drops a fire bomb on Japanese mountain positions that already smolder from the bombs of the lead planes of the flight.



DAVID DOUGLAS DUNCAN



DAVID DOUGLAS DUNCAN

Above: A Marine Corsair cutting loose eight 5-inch rockets over Japanese positions on Okinawa. Inset: Duncan prepared for a photo shoot inside the P-38 belly-tank secured under a wing.



LEATHERNECK FILE PHOTO

little noise and a maximum of destruction.

Then the beaming Fijians took up their positions on the tiny plateau and started singing at the tops of their voices. Malakai Mo sang while he fired his mortar from the waist and another character yodeled as he did a little track meet around the perimeter, heaving grenades as he went.

Duncan, in the middle of the fierce fight, remembers roaring with laughter at the incongruity of it all—the Fijians happily making like a small army and singing with all the gusto of the Cossack Male Chorus while the Japanese crawled up at them on all sides.

Lt Duncan came away from that episode and several others with his pictures, his scalp, and 14 notches on his carbine. Then he and the rest of the haggard battalion returned to the beaches at Empress Augusta after a five-day forced march over the mountains in a tropical downpour. Final score: 400 dead Japanese; one Fijian lost.

Along with the right to wear the blue-red-blue British Pacific Star Ribbon, there came to Duncan this letter of commendation from Lieutenant Colonel

G.T. Upton, CO, 1st Battalion, Fiji Infantry Regiment. It was addressed to Major General James T. Moore, CG, First Marine Air Wing, on March 1, 1944:

“I have the honor to draw your attention to the great services rendered by Second Lieutenant Duncan to my Unit during the engagement with the enemy near Sisivie, Eastern Bougainville in February. Second Lt Duncan originally came to our outpost at Ibu to film a SCAT ration drop and remained with my approval to record the activities of the unit. When the enemy finally attacked, 2ndLt Duncan proceeded with the advance elements and was in the thick of the fight. When I arrived as the unit was breaking contact, he was by chance the first officer I encountered, and he was able to give me a clear picture of the situation. From then on, he acted on my invitation as assistant adjutant while the unit was reforming and was of utmost help. On the long march back over the Crown Prince range, 2ndLt Duncan rendered many services and I cannot speak too highly of him both as an official photographer and an honorary member of my battalion.”

Leatherneck and half a dozen other magazines published Duncan's photo story of this sortie. The *Saturday Evening Post* and *National Geographic* both carried it with Dave's long, eyewitness account of the affair.

After 15 months on that first tour, Duncan returned to Washington. There he officially joined Public Relations, Marine Corps, and got a set of rather unprecedented roving travel orders which, among other things, assigned him to cover Marine aviation anywhere in the Pacific, wherever his stories took him.

On this tour he operated out of Air, FMFPAC on a series of jaunts which took him to Okinawa, the Philippines, Japan, and up and down China on the occupation detail.

For several of his 28 missions on Okinawa, Duncan got the Distinguished Flying Cross in the belly-tank episode. He wanted, as the key picture in his 100-photo layout on Marine close air support, a close-up of a Corsair firing rockets into a Japanese position.

After trying four other types of planes without success, Duncan cooked up his



DAVID DOUGLAS DUNCAN

A most unusual picture of the Pacific war, a Japanese soldier accompanies American airplanes on an attack on his own base.

belly-tank idea. It consisted of a tank with a plexiglass nose, secured under the wing of a P-38. It took a lot of fast-talking to convince Army Major Ed Taylor that he and Duncan ought to go chasing Corsairs making treetop rocket runs on Japanese targets.

On the first P-38 flight it was so hot in the belly-tank that Duncan sweated away 14 pounds. But he didn't quite get the pictures he wanted so they went on two more missions. Smoking along at 400 knots, Duncan finally got the pictures

he wanted. Picture editors consider one of them—a Corsair firing all eight rockets into a target—as among the most spectacular photos of the Pacific war.

Though he nearly got eliminated on a dozen occasions, Dave didn't get his Purple Heart until he went out looking for enemy shipping in a Navy PB4Y Privateer.

He survived that little nightmare, and the wrist wound he got, for a few more Okinawa missions. Then he took a quick trip to the Philippines which netted him

He took a quick trip to the Philippines which netted him what has been called the most unusual picture of the Pacific war.

what has been called the most unusual picture of the Pacific war.

It was the widely publicized one of the Japanese traitor Lieutenant Minoru Wada taken of the Japanese in the waist port of a Marine PBJ while he was guiding a large Marine bombing strike against his own well-hidden division headquarters.

Duncan turned up later as the only Marine photographer aboard the battleship *Missouri* (BB-63) during the historic surrender ceremonies in Tokyo Bay. Then, after shooting every conceivable Marine activity in Japan, he joined the First Division en route to China. Somewhere in his last hectic weeks in the Pacific, he also did a color story on the occupation of Yap Island which recently appeared in the *National Geographic*.

Very reluctantly, he finally came back to the States, laden with souvenirs, picture stories, six battle stars, the DFC, an Air Medal with two stars, and his Purple Heart. 🇺🇸



DAVID DOUGLAS DUNCAN

Having photographed every conceivable Marine activity in Japan, Duncan rounded out his assignments by being the only Marine photographer aboard USS *Missouri* (BB-63) during the surrender ceremony, Sept. 2, 1945. Here he catches LtGen Walt Sutherland making a correction in the historic document.

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A Long and Bloody Night: Holding the Left Flank at Tinian

By Geoffrey W. Roecker

The first sounds wafted ghostlike out of the darkness. Voices conversing in low tones. Clinks of metal on wood, hobnails on stones. Creaks of leather and turning wheels. Liquid pouring, breaking glass. A short laugh. A stern command. A moment of quiet. Then the voices resumed, omnipresent and invisible.

Private First Class Alva Roland Perry Jr. knew from experience what the sounds foretold. He pressed himself flat against the dirt—as flat as he could while aiming his Browning Automatic Rifle over the lip of his foxhole. He could feel the comforting presence of Leon Roquet and Wallace Holt—buddies he could trust to stick by him, even though they all knew what was coming.

The sounds grew louder. Bottles smashed. Voices swelled in chanting song. Rifle bolts clicked, blades slid from sheaths. Something landed with a thump just outside the foxhole. The three Marines braced for an explosion, waited, peered out. A rock. The Japanese had good arms. Or good aim. They were close. They might know exactly where the foxhole was.

This was just a prelude. Perry knew the voices would rise to a howling crescendo, then approach with terrifying speed. Individual words would be lost in the cacophony, but for Marines who spoke little Japanese, one word was enough to chill the blood. Banzai.

Al Perry glanced at his luminous watch: 12:30 a.m. on July 25, 1944, Jig+1 in the battle for Tinian. “This is going to be a long and bloody night,” he thought.

Perry’s outfit, Company A, 1st Battalion, 24th Marines, knew something of “long and bloody nights”: Tinian was their third amphibious operation in five months. In February 1944, as part of Operation Flintlock, they helped conquer the island of Namur in a sharp but short battle lasting less than two days. Full of confidence and fire, they hit the shores of Saipan on June 15, 1944, and entered into a maelstrom that made “the Marshalls show look tame” by comparison. A month of fighting left them

dazed and bloodied. Casualties in Battalion Landing Team (BLT) 1/24 ran just shy of 50 percent, and the ratio was even more dramatic in its subordinate units. Of “Able” Company’s 232 Marines who landed on D-day, barely 100 marched into the regimental rest area on July 13. Even those untouched by wounds or illness were indelibly marked by their experience. “I was personally exhausted from our fighting on Saipan,” Perry related. “I had lost 30 pounds and saw many of my good friends killed or wounded.”

Fortunately for Able Co, their skipper was one of the three officers still standing. Twenty-six-year-old Captain Irving Schechter, formerly a lawyer from Smithtown, N.Y., exemplified the class of reservists who possessed a deep well of leadership talent. He applied for Marine officer training in 1941 after hearing a radio advertisement seeking college graduates. “I am Jewish, and my father still had relatives in Europe,” he later explained. “If the time came when the U.S. made an amphibious landing in Europe, I wanted to be there.” Instead, he stood garrison duty in the Canal Zone before taking command of Co A in December 1942. The “green as grass” outfit felt shortchanged to get a “little, thin, sad-eyed Jewish lad ... inclined to be timid and self-effacing,” in the words of one lieutenant. “Not the natural leader type necessary to run this bunch of Marines.” They soon ate their words. Schechter pushed the company hard and himself harder. He could deliver a rousing speech one moment and lead a 30-mile march the next. His decisions were calculated and his discipline even-handed; he rarely raised his voice and made a point to never curse out an enlisted man who might be punished for defending himself. Schechter built a tough company, and they loved him for it. “Rugged Able Company,” they happily called themselves, or “Buck Schechter’s Raggedy-Assed Marines.”

Combat only enhanced the persona of “Buck” Schechter. He countermanded orders that unduly endangered his men, calmly chewed grass while making decisions, and always carried his helmet under his arm. “I told the men when they



PFC Alva Roland
Perry Jr.

COURTESY OF GEOFFREY W. ROECKER

Buck Schechter was summoned to the headquarters of Colonel Franklin A. Hart, commander of the 24th Marines. “Rusty” Hart got down to brass tacks: “Schechter, I like the way your company operates. I’d like to have Company A lead the assault on Tinian. How would you like to go in?”



COURTESY OF GEOFFREY W. ROECKER

Howard M. Kerr, right, with his machine-gun squad at Camp Pendleton, Calif., in 1943. By the time they landed on Tinian, Kerr's squad had only two members.

went in that they had to wear their helmets," he said, "but I wouldn't put on my own helmet until I felt things were really bad. This way the men could look over at me and see how things were." As a reminder of his commitment to his company, Schechter carried the dog tags of the fallen in his pocket. "He didn't let us see how many he had," remarked Perry. "Probably wasn't good for morale." Schechter's performance on Saipan earned a recommendation for the Bronze Star with combat "V," and caught the attention of senior officers planning the Tinian operation.

Tinian sits 3 miles southwest of Saipan. Although roughly the same size as its northern neighbor, it is considerably flatter—ideal for sugar cane cultivation and airfield construction. Japanese engineers constructed no fewer than four strips of varying size and capability on the island. By July of 1944, Japanese air power in the Mariana Islands was utterly destroyed; the senior aviation officer, Vice Admiral Kakuji Kakuta, was in such a state of despair that he played no role in organizing the defense of Tinian. The task fell to Colonel Kiyochi Ogata (50th Infantry Regiment) and Captain Goichi Oya (56th Naval Guard Force). Imperial Army and Navy rivalries ran high, and with the 9,000-man garrison evenly split between the branches, coordination suffered. Oya's keibitai protected the airfields while Ogata placed most of his strength at logical landing sites:



Capt Irving Schechter

COURTESY OF GEOFFREY W. ROECKER

the wide, smooth beaches at Tinian Town in the southwest and Asiga Bay to the east. He assigned a handful of troops to guard a pair of tiny beaches on the northwestern coast but spared no more. Anyone could see the impossibility of invading Tinian on such insignificant beaches.

Unfortunately for Ogata, V Amphibious Corps was preparing to do just that.

After a day or two of rest in a temporary camp near Aslito Airfield, Buck Schechter was summoned to the headquarters of Colonel Franklin A. Hart, commander of the 24th Marines. "Rusty" Hart got down to brass tacks: "Schechter, I like the way your company operates. I'd like to have Company A lead the assault on Tinian. How would you like to go in?"

If the question caught Schechter off guard, he recovered quickly. "Well, Colonel, I'd like to land with my entire company in one wave. This way, I'll have my riflemen, mortars, and machine gunners all ashore at the same time."

"That sounds like a good idea," said Hart. "I think I'll land the whole regiment in company waves." He gave Schechter priority status for new equipment and supplies and laid out the timetable:

the landings would take place on July 24, fewer than 10 days away.

Schechter quickly moved to prepare his battered company for combat. He quashed rumors of a return to Hawaii and



Above: Marine LVTs head for the Tinian landing beaches on "J-day," July 24, 1944. (Photo courtesy of National Archives)

Left: Marines come ashore on one of Tinian's beaches. The rock outcropping at left prevented the tractor from advancing onto the beach itself.

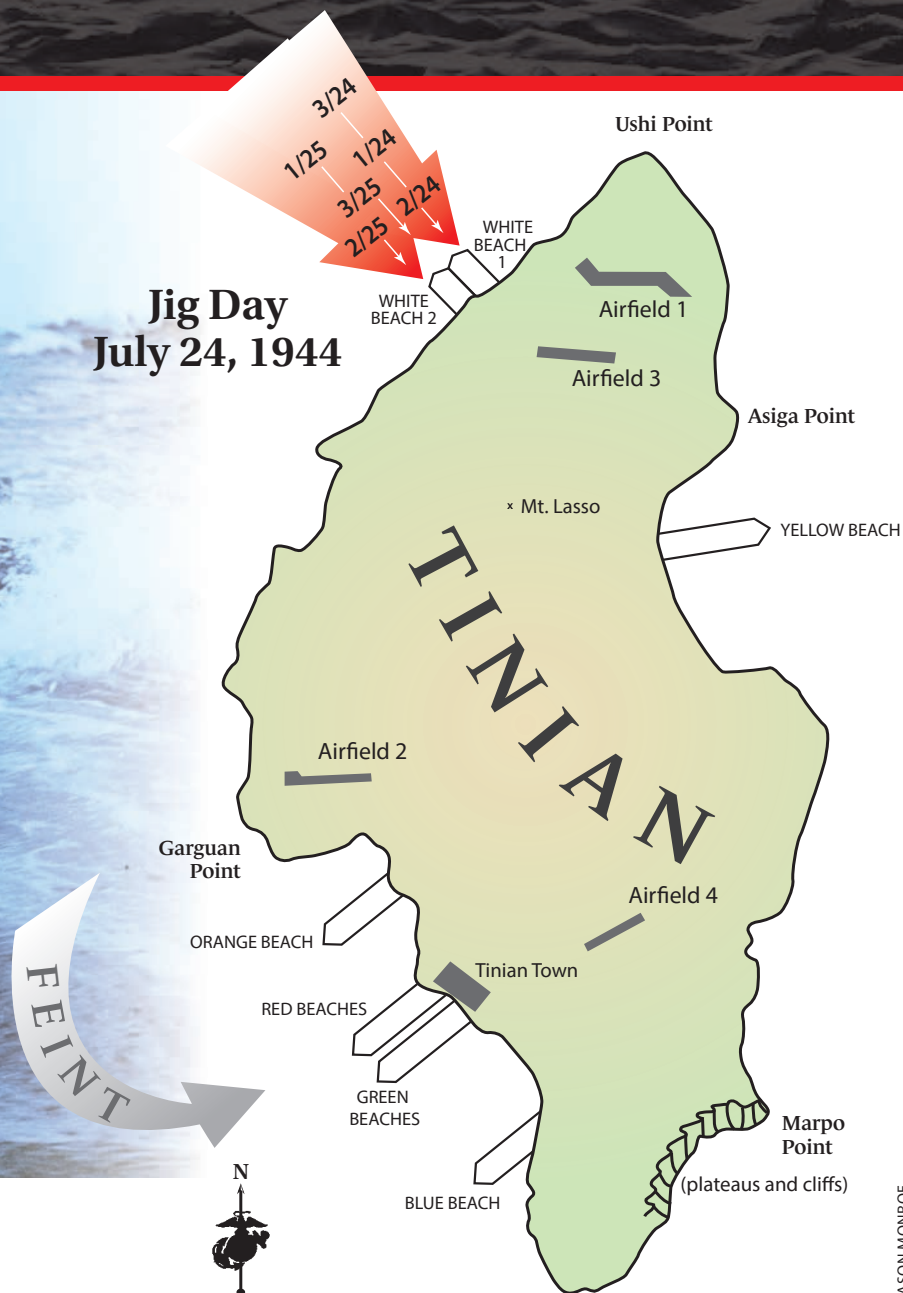
encouraged his men to rest, write letters, and get hot meals whenever possible. Platoon leaders surveyed worn-out gear, replaced damaged weapons, and requested extra barbed wire for nighttime defense. Clerks typed up recommendations for decorations (including a Silver Star Medal for Alva Perry) and a promotion list for NCOs. These new sergeants and corporals, all proven combat veterans, were key to replacing a command structure shattered on Saipan.

Reorganization could only do so much: what the company really needed was a chance to rebuild. An infusion of new

men, originally intended for the 2nd Marine Division helped fill out the ranks somewhat; a trickle of veterans returned from the hospital sporting fresh scars or shaking off the effects of disease, but the daily sick list largely negated these gains. In Able Company's machine gun platoon, "there were just 12 of us left out of 60" according to PFC Howard M. Kerr. "Each squad [originally] had eight men. I started out an ammunition carrier and ended up on the gun. One other guy and myself were the only two that were left." Rifleman PFC Lionel "Pappy" Salazar recalled that "my squad had five people out of twelve," and Oscar "Buddy" Hanson, one of the newly made sergeants, received "replacements consisting of cooks and office personnel" into his rifle squad. When they boarded LST-486 on the morning of July 23, 1944, Able Co could muster 138 men—barely half of their authorized strength.

USMC

Jig Day July 24, 1944



The assault troops were numbly resigned to the coming battle. "It was estimated that it would take two weeks of the same kind of combat we had just finished on Saipan," Al Perry recalled. "This was not what [was] promised in the movies." Perry squirreled away aboard an LVT for the night, but "slept very little ... We had the customary steak, eggs, and fried potatoes ... I was sure that if the breakfast didn't kill me, the Japanese would." Private Alva E. Gordon, a replacement making his first landing, concurred. "If you weren't scared, you didn't have very good brains," he remarked. "You didn't know from one minute to the next if you were going to be there or not—alive, anyway."

At 6 a.m. on July 24, "Jig Day," the eight LVTs carrying Able Co fired up their engines and waddled down the LST ramps and into the sea. Colonel Hart's final landing plan placed Easy Co in the first wave; Able would follow them ashore within five minutes. A few alert defenders aimed 20 mm and 40 mm guns at the tractors, but their fire was "intermittent" and most Japanese attention was fixed on a feint landing at Tinian Town. Easy Company reached Beach White One, a 60-yard strip of sand framed by steep coral cliffs, at approximately 7:50 a.m. and immediately went after the outnumbered defenders. Able Co was hot on their heels. The beach was so narrow that some tractors could not crawl up on the sand, and the Marines rolled over the sides into chest-deep water, slicing hands and knees on sharp coral. Howard Kerr watched some heavily laden Marines jump off a vehicle and disappear; he worried that they had drowned.

Ogata's few defenders gamely "appeared out of nowhere to greet us with small arms fire," said Captain Schechter. "As I waded in, I turned to give some orders to my radio operator only to see the poor guy floating in the surf. He had been hit in the head with a bullet." Nineteen-year-old Pappy Salazar was "crawling, crawling, crawling—I saw half of a Marine as I was crawling. You keep on going." Able Co swung to the left, planted their flank on the coastline, and moved slowly inland through narrow gullies and sharp crevices. Although outnumbered, the Japanese made masterful use of the terrain. The 24th Marines' action report noted that the only "heavy enemy resistance" on Jig

Day occurred in "the thick brush and caves near the beach on the left flank."

By late afternoon, Able Co had gained 200 yards and began digging in for the night. They were not quite at their objective, but Schechter knew that securing defensible ground—and leaving time to prepare positions—was more important than reaching an arbitrary line on a map. The Americans had achieved tactical surprise, but the Japanese were sure to respond. "If they can't kick us off the island this first night, we'll take over," remarked PFC Robert D. Price. "Our officers told us, 'Prepare your foxhole, dig 'em deep—we have reports that the Japanese are gonna give us everything they got.'"

The beach was so narrow that some tractors could not crawl up on the sand, and the Marines rolled over the sides into chest-deep water, slicing hands and knees on sharp coral. Howard Kerr watched some heavily laden Marines jump off a vehicle and disappear; he worried that they had drowned.

At 2 a.m., “all hell broke loose” as the Japanese unleashed “the most devastating artillery and mortar attack we had ever been under.” Explosions rocked the thin line of foxholes, sending hot shards of shrapnel shredding through equipment and bodies.

Constructing a nighttime defense required careful, almost ritualistic, planning. The “line” was a series of mutually supporting fighting positions, likely in the checkerboard pattern commonly employed on Saipan. Marines dug two- or three-man foxholes; no man fought alone, but veterans knew not to bunch up. Every available machine gun was brought forward, and battalion headquarters detailed additional crews to bolster the lines. Schechter also requested a pair of 37 mm guns from the regimental weapons company and an extra supply of anti-personnel rounds. The crew-served weapons were set at intervals and positioned to create deadly crossfires.

fumbling for a weapon in the dark could mean the difference between life and death. As the light began to fade, Marines memorized landmarks, likely avenues of approach, and the location of the nearest foxholes. If lucky, they had time for a cigarette before Schechter doused the smoking lamp.

Able Co faced north-northeast toward Ushi Point and the Japanese-designated “Northern Sector” of defense, held by one of Colonel Ogata’s reinforced infantry battalions and Oya’s 56th Keibitai. In the event of a landing, they were to “destroy the enemy at the beach,” but Ogata was vague on the specifics. The troops at Ushi Airfield interpreted this directive as calling

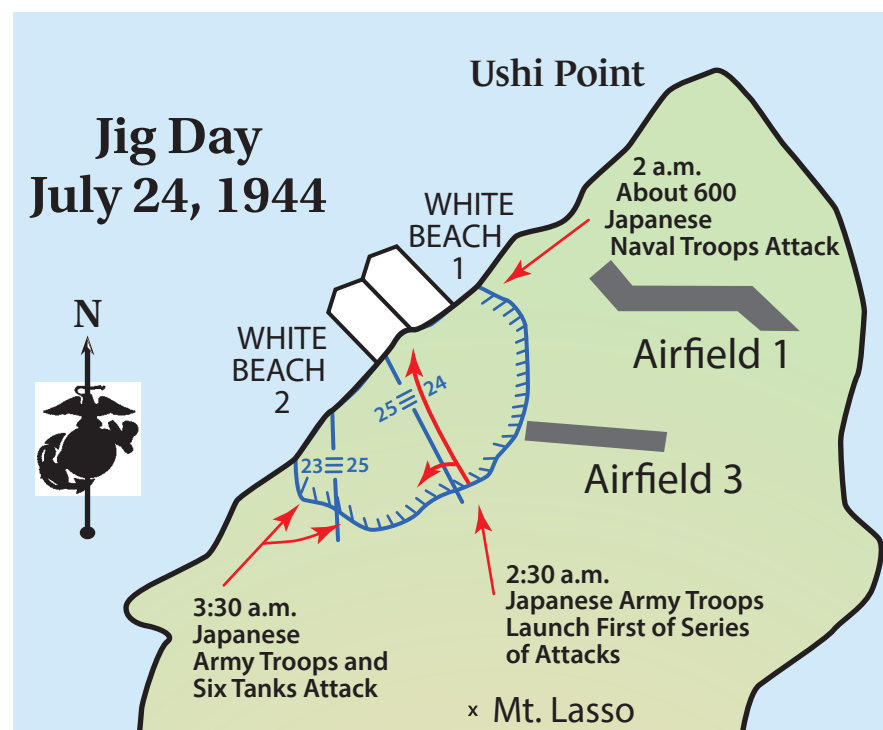
for a counterattack; they were “not trained for an infantry mission,” notes historian Carl Hoffman, but “had a fanatic will to close with the Americans, a will that compensated only in part for their lack of technique.” Armed with everything from grenades to dismounted antiaircraft guns, nearly 600 Japanese naval personnel began moving toward the coast at dusk, intending to hit the American left flank.

“People ask me what was the worst thing I can remember when in combat,” Al Perry wrote. “Well, there are a whole lot of worst things. First, a long artillery barrage. The next worst is waiting for a counterattack that you know is coming.” The Japanese chanting and catcalling sacrificed surprise for psychological impact—for both sides. While Perry felt his nerves stretched to the breaking point, young Japanese men were mustering the courage needed to sustain the last chapter of their lives. The macabre celebration lasted nearly two hours.

At 2 a.m., “all hell broke loose” as the Japanese unleashed “the most devastating artillery and mortar attack we had ever

been under.” Explosions rocked the thin line of foxholes, sending hot shards of shrapnel shredding through equipment and bodies. Howard Kerr was behind his machine gun when a shell landed nearby. “The concussion from the blast, so much pressure, it blows the wind out of you,” he said. Shrapnel killed Kerr’s assistant gunner and wounded another man. Kerr himself was riddled; he struggled to breathe with a collapsed lung but was “so angry I stayed on the gun.” He lapsed into unconsciousness, finger on the trigger.

The first Japanese troops rushed forward under the cover of the barrage and began pitching grenades. Perry flinched under a shower of dirt and metal. “Are you all right, Al?” shouted Roquet. Wally Holt dropped to the floor of the foxhole, looking bewildered. The sharp-eyed North Dakotan had spotted a Japanese soldier throwing a grenade and tried to field the missile like a baseball. He was a fraction too late; Perry saw that Holt’s right arm was mangled. “My hand is gone!” he howled.



Riflemen and BAR teams filled in the gaps. Farther to the rear, the company’s 60 mm mortar teams measured and memorized ranges, while comms men laid phone lines to the heavier 81 mm mortars near the battalion command post. Working parties hauled up Schechter’s extra bales of barbed wire and as much ammunition as they could find. Belted rounds for the machine guns were in short supply (Howard Kerr recalled specific orders to shoot sparingly) but Sergeant Buddy Hanson’s rifle squad received “extra ammunition for all guns”—a sure sign of an impending counterattack.

Finally, the men made their own personal preparations. Robert Price “found” a Browning Automatic Rifle and spent time straightening the cotter pins on his grenades. Alva Perry laid out ammunition for his own BAR—30 magazines, a total of 600 rounds—for quick access. Some Marines preferred to have their knives unsheathed, while others re-cleaned personal sidearms. Everything had to be just so: an extra second of

“I won’t be able to play baseball anymore!” Holt scrambled out of the hole and disappeared into the night.

Perry and Roquet turned to the front just as a wave of Japanese troops burst out of the bushes about 30 yards away.

Able Company opened fire so rapidly that Captain Schechter believed his men surprised a marching column of enemy troops who right-faced and raced towards his line. The Japanese hit Schechter’s barbed wire—“God, did we pile them up on it!”—and pushed through with the sheer weight of numbers. “The Japanese would yell ‘banzai,’ and my men would yell it right back at them, along with some choice obscenities,” remembered Schechter. “The most remarkable thing to me was that every single one of my men stayed put. I don’t think a single one of them broke and ran.” For his part, Schechter was racing along the line, encouraging his men, “trying to keep a lid on things.” He was, of course, without his helmet. “I was as scared as any other Marine in Company A,” he admitted. “I just tried not to show it.”

As he moved from foxhole to foxhole, Buck Schechter may have noticed similar selfless acts of bravery. Rifleman Cecil Ray Tolley was supplying ammunition to a machine-gun team when a barrage of grenades disabled both gunners. Tolley was also badly wounded but, using one good hand, got the gun back in action and fired through four boxes of ammunition—a thousand rounds—before he passed out.

PFC Charles Edward Seader, a green replacement, had spent just two weeks with Able Co; Tinian was his first time under

fire. When the Japanese threatened to break through a weak point, Seader grabbed his BAR and launched a counterattack of his own. The startled enemy fell back, but not before shooting Seader through the chest. PFC Gust Alex Pappas

worked his BAR with equal vigor and at close range. Japanese troops reached his foxhole several times, but Pappas, a stolid construction worker from Duluth, Minn., refused to budge.

Corporal Claude Thomas Henderson Jr., had long dreamed of wearing a second stripe, so much so that he sewed on new chevrons while still a PFC. His buddies called him “Praying For Corporal.” He earned his rank after Roi-Namur and showed great skill as a 60 mm mortar squad leader on Saipan. As soon as the Japanese infantry appeared, Henderson posted himself on the front lines and directed mortar fire as the range dropped to danger close. When he saw a corpsman tending a wounded Marine, Henderson provided covering fire, emptying his carbine “with deadly effectiveness” until a bullet ripped through Henderson’s neck. The corpsman quickly bandaged the corporal and tagged him for evacuation, but the wounds were fatal. Henderson died in the sickbay of USS *Heywood* (AP-12),

choking on blood and phlegm. “Not a pretty sight,” remarked a friend who witnessed the end.

PFC John C. Pope, whose heavy machine gun was attached to Able Co for the night, held the literal end of the line—“with the cliff on our left, we did not have to worry about our flank and could concentrate our fire straight ahead.” To his right,



COURTESY OF GEOFFREY W. ROECKER

Claude Thomas Henderson Jr.



USMC

A squad from Able Co, 1st Battalion, 24th Marines, prepares to advance on Tinian.



Above: A Japanese officer's sword captured by PFC John C. Pope during the banzai attack of July 25, 1944.

five Marines worked a 37 mm gun; beyond them was a BAR team, then another machine gun manned by Pope's buddy PFC Glenn E. Doster. "Red" Doster was busily dueling an enemy machine gun when a small group of Japanese broke through the crossfire. In the sudden light of a flare, Pope beheld a screaming officer running full pelt, gripping a sword "as if he was going to chop wood." Pope dropped his belt of ammo and picked up the squad's shotgun. "I swung up and fired. Probably several rifle bullets hit him at the same time as my buckshot. He went backward, but the saber continued end over end and came to rest near where I was sitting."

Pope's gunner, PFC Robert Sherrill, called for ammunition



PFC John C. Pope



and Assistant Cook Manuel Schoolus crawled forward with two fresh boxes. "Enemy knee mortar shells were falling all around and bullets were zipping and whizzing like crazy," continued Pope. "I yelled for him to get in the hole with us but he was not quick enough. A shell burst just to the right of him ... it hit 'Schools' in the neck, causing a deep gash, and [passed] under my chin and [cut] my helmet strap. He was out like a light and bleeding badly, with both hands clutching his throat. All I could do at the time was pull him into the hole behind the gun."

Alva Perry was well and truly in the thick of it. He was an exceptional gunner, firing in short, controlled bursts, but still burned out the barrel of his BAR. "I had to find another one if I wanted to live. It was pitch dark; I had to wait for the flares to provide some light ... I got out of the hole and crawled along until I found a BARman who was wounded or dead. I didn't have to go far." Roquet was gone when Perry returned, and he decided to hold the position alone. His ammunition dwindled rapidly, but "I knew I could not stop firing and load my empty magazines."

COURTESY OF GEORGE D. WEBSTER

COURTESY OF GEOFFREY W. ROECKER

Tanks advance past a Marine defensive line during the fighting on Tinian.



USMC

Salvation arrived in the form of an unfamiliar Marine. “We are out of ammunition for our mortars, so I came here to help,” he said. With perfect composure, the young stranger sat bolt upright on the edge of the hole, reloading magazines and handing them off to Perry. In foxholes all along the line, “engineers, corpsmen, communicators, naval gunfire liaison and shore party personnel” took up firing positions to help repel the attack.

The carnage continued until the sun began to rise over Tinian’s eastern shore at 5:45 a.m. Sensing failure, the surviving Japanese troops grew desperate and turned their weapons on themselves. “Many used hand grenades,” explained Sergeant Hanson. “They pulled out the pin, hit the grenade against their

head [or helmet] and held it to their face until it exploded ... approximately five to seven seconds.” A soldier with a land mine tried to jump in Hanson’s hole, but “something went wrong. The mine exploded ... it killed the Japanese soldier, the force of the explosion blowing his helmet off, and it went sailing through the air and landed in our foxhole. By this time, we were all battle weary, and in a queer kind of way there was almost some humor in it.”

Medium tanks from Company B, 4th Tank Battalion rumbled up to join the fray. Pappy Salazar was pleased to see the tanks—until one accelerated toward his foxhole. Salazar stood up to wave off the tank and was immediately shot through the shoulder by a Japanese sniper. The young Marine scuttled around behind

In the sudden light of a flare, Pope beheld a screaming officer running full pelt, gripping a sword “as if he was going to chop wood.” Pope dropped his belt of ammo and picked up the squad’s shotgun. “I swung up and fired.”



COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES

A wounded Marine is placed aboard an LVT for evacuation from Tinian. Note corpsman holding plasma bottle.

the tank and was ordered back to the beach by his platoon leader. The wound—his second in three weeks—spelled the end of his combat career.

A handful of Japanese troops remained hidden in the brush and behind the bodies of the dead, waiting for a Marine to let down his guard. PFC Price recalled “my squad leader, Sergeant Bill Linkins—terrific guy, physique like a Roman god—really a good Marine. We got word that we were gonna have another unit take over our position. Linkins stood up, a big grin on his face, and circled his arm in the air, ‘squad, assemble here’—and some Japanese out there, stacked in with the dead, shot him right through the head.”

Al Perry, deafened by hours of constant firing, went around to check on his friends. PFC Richard J. Brodnicki’s foxhole looked empty; the Marine from Buffalo lay on his face in the dirt. “I rolled him over on his back and noticed that he had

been shot between the eyes.” Corporal Winston M. Cabe “was still alive, but most of his face had been blown away. I called for a corpsman ... I was amazed at his age. He was about 35 to 40; I thought, this guy is old enough to be my father.” With a practiced eye, the Sailor sized up the situation. “First, we have to cut away the hairs from where his nose was,” he announced, rummaging through his bag. “This guy is brave as hell,” thought Perry, but awe turned to shock in an instant. “He looked me full in the face and grunted, and reached down to his stomach ... I could see his hands were full of his own intestines. He fell forward on top of Cabe and died immediately.”

Perry checked the corpsman and Cabe for pulses and, finding none, tried to cover his buddy with a blanket. He saw a blur of movement and just had time to register a Japanese soldier running at him. “The grenade exploded, and I felt a hard blow to the right side of my neck. I reached up to see how bad it was

Although it was not immediately evident to the men on the ground, the costly defeat effectively broke the back of the Japanese resistance. While Able Co never claimed nor sought sole credit for holding the vulnerable left flank of the Tinian beachhead, they played a critical role.



COURTESY OF GEOFFREY W. ROECKER

Able Co, 1st Battalion, 24th Marines on Tinian on Aug. 5, 1944. Several Marines sport fresh bandages along with their captured Japanese flags.

and felt something strange. It was the hand of the soldier that had just blown himself up. It was grasping my neck.” At this moment, Capt Schechter passed by and ordered Perry back to his foxhole. The dazed Tennessean complied and sat quietly, alone and staring into space as his friends were evacuated. Cabe miraculously survived—Perry’s blanket helped stave off the onset of potentially fatal shock—but was permanently blinded.

Schechter sent patrols out to mop up the battlefield. The area was a charnel house: shredded corpses hung from barbed wire, lay flat in the trampled grass, or dangled out of Marine foxholes. John Pope and Bobby Sherrill quietly surveyed the devastation from their gun position. “If I had known there were that many of them,” Sherrill muttered, “I would have jumped off the cliff and swam to the nearest ship.”

“I would have been right behind you,” said Pope. An official body count totalled 476 dead, “most of them within 100 yards of Company A’s lines.”

Gratefully, Able Co handed over their positions to fresh troops from the 8th Marines and reverted to regimental reserve. In 24 hours, the company suffered 40 casualties—seven dead, 33 wounded—and lost all of their remaining corpsmen. “About 30 percent casualties, which is pretty bad for one early morning battle,” concluded Captain Schechter, who estimated “about 30 men with usable weapons” fit for duty on the morning of J+1. He singled out the 37 mm gunners—who also paid a heavy cost—for special praise. “I don’t know if we could have stopped another charge without [their] shells.”

The Japanese tried to break through the Marine lines in three places on the first night of the Tinian campaign; the futile

effort cost them 1,241 lives. Although it was not immediately evident to the men on the ground, the costly defeat effectively broke the back of the Japanese resistance. While Able Co never claimed nor sought sole credit for holding the vulnerable left flank of the Tinian beachhead, they played a critical role at a crucial point in the battle. As historian Carl Hoffman notes, “the attack on the left came first and lasted longest.”

Ultimately, the campaign for Tinian was neither as long nor as bloody as Saipan and would eventually be eclipsed in history by Iwo Jima. However, fending off the big banzai on July 25, 1944, loomed large in the memories of those who lived to tell the tale. “The horrible sight I beheld is something I have never been able to forget,” remarked Buddy Hanson, six decades after the fight. “Time has not been able to erase it from my mind.”

Author’s note: Captain Irving Schechter and Private Cecil Tolley received the Navy Cross for their actions during the counterattack on July 25, 1944. Sergeant William P. Linkins Jr., Corporal Claude T. Henderson Jr., PFC Glenn E. Doster, PFC Wallace M. Holt, PFC Gust A. Pappas and PFC Charles E. Seader received the Silver Star.

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, are available online at www.1-24thmarines.com. Roecker is the author of “Leaving Mac Behind: The Lost Marines of Guadalcanal” and advocates for the return of missing personnel at www.missingmarines.com.



Pocket-Sized Storyboards:

Zippos Carried into Combat Were More than Just Cigarette Lighters

By Sara W. Bock

When he found himself on a second tour in the heavy jungles of Vietnam in 1969, Kenneth Moulton wasn't sure that this time he'd be lucky enough to make it home alive. The young radio operator and forward observer, soon to pin on the rank of sergeant, decided to mark the promotion by purchasing a memento, which in those days could be found in the pocket of nearly every Marine serving in a combat zone: a Zippo lighter.

A seemingly utilitarian buy—Moulton chose a standard brass-cased lighter from a post exchange in Da Nang—became something more consequential when, while on R&R in Bangkok, Thailand, Moulton had both sides of the lighter engraved with custom text that told the story of his service and, upon closer examination, reflected his sentiments about the grim realities of war.

In addition to basic information such as his name, service number, and years in the Marine Corps, Moulton included a quote by Julius Caesar, "Vidi, Vici, Veni," modified to take on a subtly more vulgar meaning, and most notably, a list of locations around the world with

Below: To celebrate his promotion to sergeant while serving in Vietnam in 1969, Kenneth Moulton purchased this Zippo lighter, which he had engraved to tell the story of his service and reflect his personal feelings about the war.



Zippo lighters like the one pictured above, featuring the Corps' iconic eagle, globe and anchor emblem, have been a common purchase among Marines for decades. The well-loved lighters are useful not only for lighting cigarettes but also in any situation requiring a dependable flame. (Photo by Jason Monroe)

“They’re very unique and they’re representative of the individual Marine who obtained it and had it customized to talk about their service.”—Jennifer Castro



COURTESY OF ZIPPO

Above: The 1943 original Zippo lighter packaging was a common sight for Marines serving in the Pacific theater. The lighters were so popular among servicemembers that during the war years, the company briefly manufactured them solely for military purchasers.

Left: A USMC military policeman, right, uses his Zippo to light a cigarette for an elderly Okinawan man in 1945.

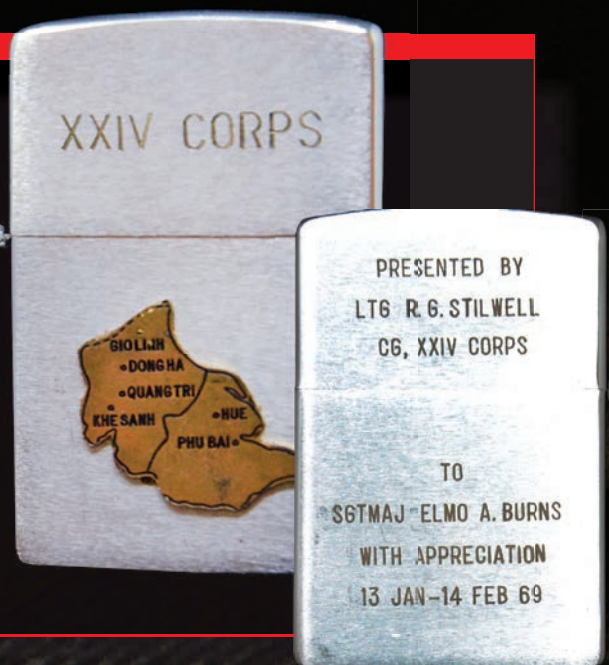


NATIVES WERE FRIENDLY AND SURPRISED AT OUR KINDNESS.

MARINE CORPS PHOTO 16-5

USMC

During the Vietnam War era, lighters like the one pictured here were common gifts of appreciation, particularly from general officers. This lighter, featuring a raised applique of Vietnam with major cities noted, is part of the collection of the National Museum of the Marine Corps, and was presented in 1969 by LtGen R.G. Stilwell to SgtMaj Elmo A. Burns, who enlisted in the Corps in 1940 and saw combat in WW II, Korea and Vietnam. In the Pacific theater during WW II, Burns saw action at Kwajalein, Saipan, Tinian and Iwo Jima. He later served as the sergeant major of III Marine Amphibious Force in Vietnam before retiring in 1973.



LCpl Ernst Woodruff, a machine gunner with Co H, 2nd Bn, 5th Marines, holds his Zippo lighter after it had been hit by a piece of shrapnel while in his pocket in the Quang Nam province of Vietnam in 1969. Woodruff was not harmed.

asterisks to mark the number of times he had visited each. Vietnam. Okinawa. Bangkok. Singapore. Wake Island. Mexico. At the bottom of the list was "CONUS," a commonly used acronym for the continental U.S., but instead of an asterisk, it was followed by a question mark. Would he ever be stateside again?

In 2015, along with other items of significance from his service in Vietnam, Moulton donated the lighter to the National Museum of the Marine Corps, where it joined an extensive collection of lighters under the care of Cultural and Material History Curator Jennifer Castro, whose other collections range from sweetheart jewelry and movie posters to toys, watches and more. And while several of the lighters she's accepted from donors were made by other brands, Zippos, known for their incomparable windproof design, have



COURTESY OF MARINE CORPS ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

long been favored by Marines and other U.S. servicemembers.

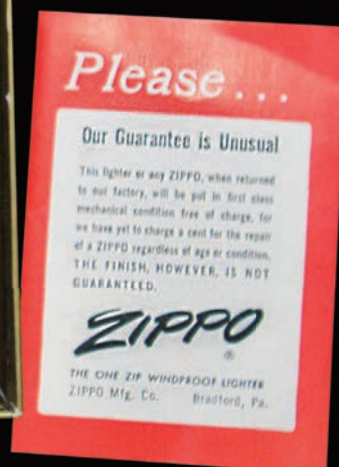
Castro compares personalized Zippos of the Vietnam era to the challenge coins that are commonly purchased and exchanged by Marines today: a small token by which to document service with a unit, celebrate promotions and occasions or say "thank you" for a job

well done. But beyond the challenge coin comparison, Castro considers them to be statement pieces, or as she likes to refer to them, "personal storyboards."

"They document a distinct period of time in an individual Marine's service," Castro said. "And the common tradition among Marines, and I feel like most servicemembers, to buy something

Donated to the National Museum of the Marine Corps, this Zippo lighter (left), a memento owned by Maj Robert A. Cadwell, came complete with its original packaging. Cadwell enlisted in the Marine Corps in January 1950 and in 1953 accepted a commission in the Marine Corps Reserve. As an officer, he served with 7th

Communications Bn in Vietnam from 1965-1966. According to the museum's collection file, "this Zippo lighter is a memento of Maj Cadwell's service career in Vietnam as a 'mustang' combat veteran." The brushed steel lighter has the words "Danang, Vietnam 1965" etched in black.



inexpensive, using it to tell their own story, their specific service during the war. [...] They're very unique and they're representative of the individual Marine who obtained it and had it customized to talk about their service."

When she accepted Moulton's donation, Castro recalls him telling her that he had purchased lighters to document his promotions in rank and to help with his "pack a day" smoking habit. And while the engraving on his 1969 Zippo is one-of-a-kind, it is just one of countless personalized lighters carried by Marines and other American servicemembers during that era.

There's another Vietnam-era Zippo lighter in the museum's collection that appears completely unremarkable. There isn't anything "personalized" about it at all, but in her collection file, Castro notes: "the silver tone Zippo flip-top lighter has a tiny knob of broken metal on one side where an emblem or insignia has fallen off."

The lighter, owned by Marine veteran Harold Ligon, once bore a brass Marine Corps emblem—the iconic eagle, globe

and anchor—on its case. While serving with Company A, 1st Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment in Vietnam in 1967, Ligon developed a nervous habit. He would reach into his pocket and rub the insignia in an attempt to ease his stress and anxiety. Eventually, the eagle, globe

**"It was his worry stone,"
Castro said of the Zippo,
which Ligon carried with
him during periods of
intense combat, including
at Hill 881 South.**

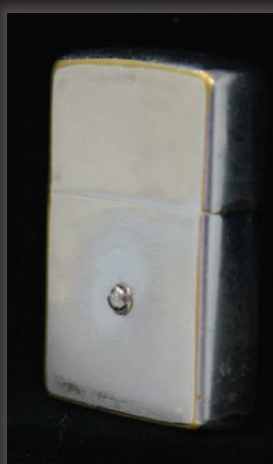
and anchor was completely worn away, leaving behind only a very small bump and a faint outline of where it once had been adhered.

"It was his worry stone," Castro said of the Zippo, which Ligon carried with him during periods of intense combat, including at Hill 881 South. She found his story to be particularly profound.

"The best ones that come in are the ones that come with the history of the Marine who served," she said.

Among the museum's most interesting Zippo lighters, most of which are not currently on display but rather are stored in a nearby auxiliary facility, a broad range of attitudes and narratives are conveyed.

Once owned by Private First Class Gary Morrison, one Zippo portrays Snoopy as a flying ace, sitting on his shrapnel-ridden dog house under a speech bubble that reads "F--- It" on one side, and an image of Snoopy with his head hung low, with a thought bubble that says "Sex" on the other. Charles Schulz's "Peanuts" cartoons had been a regular feature in *Stars and Stripes*, Castro says, and were popular among the troops, many of whom identified with the fictional beagle's various woes. Yet another lighter, donated by retired Marine Lieutenant Colonel Larry Britton, a CH-46 pilot who served with HMM-364, "the Purple Foxes"



Left: This unusual Zippo from the collection of the National Museum of the Marine Corps serves as a tangible illustration of combat-related stress. Its owner, PFC Harold Ligon, carried it in his pocket while in combat during the Vietnam War and developed a nervous habit of rubbing the eagle, globe and anchor emblem that once was adhered to the lighter case. He did this so frequently that the insignia eventually wore away completely.

Marine Vietnam veteran Gary Morrison had his Zippo lighter engraved to depict Snoopy, one of the era's most popular cartoon characters, expressing his own sentiments about the war.

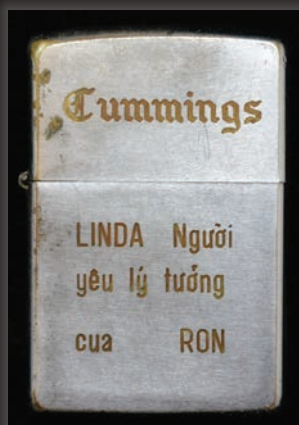


Above: This Zippo ad, which appeared in the September 1943 issue of *Esquire*, notes that sales were limited "to service men located outside continental U.S. or on high seas." According to archivist Katie Zapel, Ph.D., ads during the war years underscored the lighter's dependability in the harshest of environments. (Photo courtesy of Zippo)



This Zippo, part of the collection of the National Museum of the Marine Corps, boasts the popular Black Crackle® finish, as well as a colorful map of North and South Vietnam, with the demilitarized zone (DMZ) placed directly at the case opening. The lighter once was owned by Paul Barker, who served as the executive officer of 3rd Bn, 1st Marines in 1971.

Retired Marine Lieutenant Colonel Larry Britton, who serves as a docent at the National Museum of the Marine Corps, donated this Zippo lighter, which he carried in his pocket while he was a pilot flying CH-46 helicopters with HMH-364 in Vietnam. The lighter boasts the crest of Delta Sigma Phi, his college fraternity, as well as a quote he had engraved on the case while in country.



A Zippo lighter carried by PFC Ralph Ronald Cummings, who was killed in action in Vietnam in 1970, was found inside an Ontos vehicle while it was being restored by the National Museum of the Marine Corps in 2004 and is now part of the museum's collection.

in Vietnam, was a gift from his brother that displayed the crest of Britton's college fraternity, Delta Sigma Phi. On the other side, Britton had the following quote inscribed while still in Vietnam: "For those who fight for it, freedom has a flavor the protected will never know."

Yet another was discovered by museum employees during the restoration of an Ontos vehicle in 2004, lodged in the front engine compartment. It was traced back to PFC Ralph Ronald Cummings, a Marine rifleman who was killed in action in Quang Nam Province, Vietnam, in 1970.

"Interestingly, PFC Cummings was not a crew member or related in any way to work with Ontos vehicles," said Castro. "In discussions with veterans and curatorial researchers, it is believed that the piece fell inside the vehicle engine from Cummings' uniform pocket. Interviews with Ontos veterans revealed that Marine casualties were often evacuated from the battlefield by being thrown across the sloped front of the vehicle. It is possible that PFC Cummings was wounded or killed and placed on the sloped front of the

Ontos vehicle, and the lighter slipped from his pocket and into the engine compartment."

The engraving on the lighter reads "Cummings," and in Vietnamese, "LINDA Nguoi yeu ly tuong cua RON," which Castro says roughly translates to

"...services a Zippo lighter was called to perform: heating rations in a helmet, lighting campfires, sparking fuses for explosives, hammering nails and even signaling [...] with the famous Zippo 'click.'"

"Linda, Ron's lover." To date, Castro has been unable to track down his next of kin or anyone connected to him by the name of Linda.

"From a cultural perspective, the lighters demonstrate sort of the pride,

the flair, the esprit de corps of U.S. Marines serving overseas," said Castro. "During the Vietnam War, engravings found on lighters documented the experiences of men at a certain place and time, capturing both a wide range of sentiments and opinions about the war and individual experiences."

But the tradition of Marines carrying Zippos into combat began long before the U.S. entered the war in Vietnam. The lighter was first envisioned by George G. Blaisdell in Bradford, Pa., in the early 1930s when, while sitting with a friend at the Bradford Country Club, Blaisdell watched him fumble with an Austrian lighter that required him to use two hands to light. He began to reimagine the lighter, which worked well in windy conditions, working to craft a new and improved version that was both attractive and could be operated with ease using only one hand. The first Zippo was produced in 1933, and Blaisdell's patent application was approved in 1936. They sold for \$1.95 and came backed by a lifetime guarantee, which the company—now owned by Blaisdell's grandson, George B.



Zippo lighters in the collection of the National Museum of the Marine Corps reflect the broad range of custom designs that appear on the pocket-sized mementos.



USMC

Columnist Ernie Pyle and members of the 1stMarDiv take a smoke break on the roadside during the Battle of Okinawa in April 1945. According to Zippo company records, the creator of the lighter, George Blaisdell, sent shipments of lighters to Pyle so he could pass them out to servicemembers on the front lines.

Duke—continues to issue today for its products, which are still crafted in Pennsylvania. Remarkably, despite a steep decline in cigarette smoking in recent decades, 2021 marked the best sales year in the company's history, proof of the enduring longevity of the brand.

During World War II, the lighters were so popular among servicemembers that from 1943 to the end of the war, Zippo allocated its entire production to the armed forces, making them available for purchase only by members of the U.S. military, said Katie Zapel, Ph.D., the archives manager for the Zippo Manufacturing Company.

During WW II, said Zapel, Blaisdell "sent lighters to top military officials and the famous war correspondent, Ernie Pyle, who corresponded with Blaisdell. Blaisdell would send Pyle small shipments of lighters to give out to soldiers he met at the front. Pyle wrote back to Blaisdell, calling Zippo lighters 'the most coveted item on the battlefield.'"

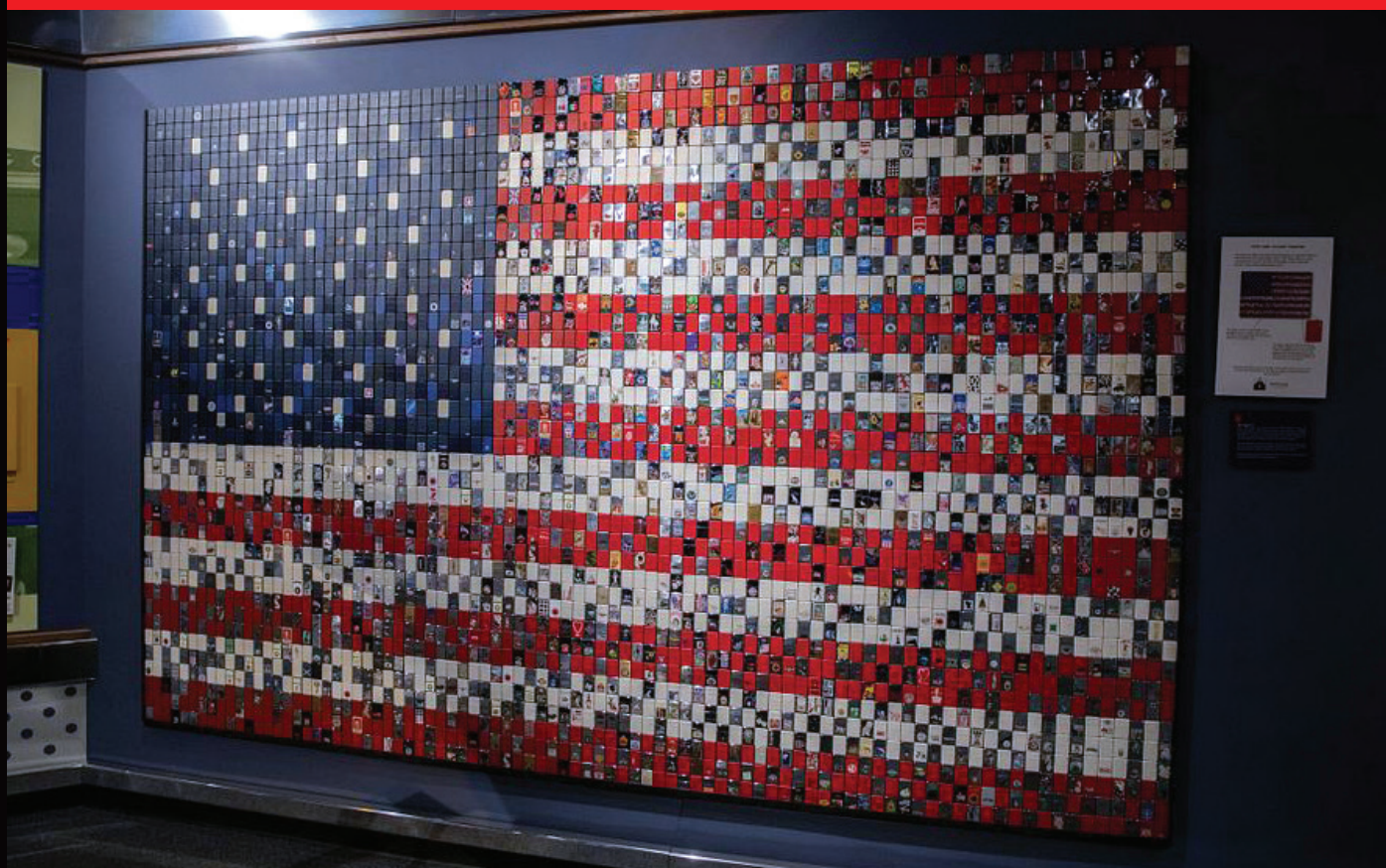
"Amid the uncertainty of war, there was one thing a [servicemember] could rely on—his Zippo lighter. In rain, wind or snow, it worked every time," said Zapel. "The company archives are filled with letters detailing the services a Zippo lighter was called to perform: heating rations in a helmet, lighting campfires, sparking fuses for explosives, hammering nails and even signaling

[...] with the famous Zippo 'click.' On several occasions, a Zippo lighter in a shirt or pants pocket even saved a life by deflecting bullets."

Zapel references a 1946 newspaper article in which Marine Colonel Bob Churley said that a Zippo lighter likely saved his life.

"Churley, a U.S. Marine serving in North China/Manchuria, was helping to hold back [Mao Tse-tung's] Chinese communist army from overtaking the region until Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist Chinese forces could arrive," said Zapel. "Churley's plane experienced a frozen carburetor and landed in communist territory. The pilot, a second lieutenant, pulled out his Zippo lighter, lit it and held it against the carburetor. It worked and they were able to fly off."

Because of a brass shortage during WW II and subsequent rationing, Zippo began making its cases from steel instead of the standard brass. To prevent corrosion, the steel cases were dipped in black paint and then baked, producing what became known as the Black Crackle® finish. According to "Warman's Field Guide: Zippo Lighters" by Dana and Robin Baumgartner, a similar shortage during the Korean War necessitated another temporary return to steel cases. In the mid-1950s, the company began stamping date codes on the bottom of each lighter, which now help collectors and historians like Castro date and identify them.



COURTESY OF ZIPPO

The American flag on display at the Zippo/Case Museum in Bradford, Pa., is created from 3,393 Zippo lighters. While Zippo lighters are not unique to the military and have been beloved by generations of Americans, the company has had a longstanding connection to U.S. servicemembers since its founding in 1932.

“They became big during World War II, but in a different way, they became such a cultural item by the Vietnam War. They were used to heat food, signal helos at night during rescue missions, and more,” said Castro. “It was reported during the time that Marines used them to set Vietnamese village huts afire while on search and destroy missions. Zippos were reportedly used so often in the country on search and destroy missions that the GIs nicknamed them ‘Zippo Missions’ or ‘Zippo Raids.’ Zippo became synonymous with flame-thrower and was used as a verb in the phrase, ‘Zippo that hut,’” she added.

For Castro, small items like Zippo lighters that might seem trivial often carry a great deal of significance and might be exactly the kind of donation the museum may be looking for to fill gaps in its collections.

“The museum collects all the things that people think we do,” Castro said. “They’ll call us up and say, ‘Hey, I have uniforms, I have weapons [...] but they don’t always necessarily think of the

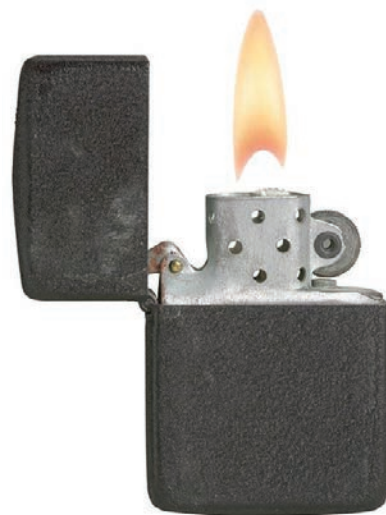
things that might tell the Marine’s individual story. There are so many more things that the museum accepts than what people normally come to us with.’ ”

To Castro, it’s significant that Zippos were an item that nearly every Marine chose to carry in their packs, their pockets or their helmet straps—and it’s a testament not only to the multitude of uses for the lighter, but also to the sentimental and personal value attached to them.

“How much stuff can they actually carry with them during combat? This was something they felt was worth carrying,” Castro said.

Author’s note: Special thanks to Jennifer Castro, the cultural and material history curator at the National Museum of the Marine Corps, for significant contributions to this article.

Editor’s note: All lighters from the collection of the National Museum of the Marine Corps were photographed by Jason Monroe. 📷



This 1943 WW II-era Zippo lighter features the Black Crackle® finish that is iconic from the era due to the rationing of brass. The lighters were made from steel and coated in a durable finish, and due to their popularity, later became part of Zippo’s regular product line. (Photo courtesy of Zippo)

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Eddystone, Pa.

MCA Leaders Visit With Longtime Uniform Supplier

Lieutenant General Charles G. "Chuck" Chiarotti, USMC (Ret), CEO of the Marine Corps Association, right, and Colonel Mary H. Reinwald, USMC (Ret), Editor, *Leatherneck*, left, visited Accent Uniforms, Inc., in Eddystone, Pa., in March, where they met with the company's president, Anthony D'Alessandro, center.

Accent is the manufacturer of all officer blue dress and service jackets sold in The Marine Shop, the retail arm of MCA. As a primary source for Marine uniforms since 1970, the company takes pride in fulfilling The Marine Shop's unique requirements for its jackets, which have a more tailored fit and extra padding. Accent is a family business run by D'Alessandro and his daughters, Carla and Anita, and also manufactures uniforms for police departments, first responders and other military organizations, including the U.S. Military Academy West Point. An Italian-born immigrant who came to the U.S. in 1960, D'Alessandro,



CARLA D'ALESSANDRO

through his hard work and dedication to providing quality uniforms for the leaders of the Corps, is a prime example of the American Dream realized.

MCA

Silver Spring, Md.

Veteran Marines Support Ukrainian Relief Efforts

When St. Andrew Ukrainian Orthodox Cathedral in Silver Spring, Md., opened a humanitarian crisis center to collect medical supplies, non-perishable food and other essential items to send to war-torn Ukraine in the wake of the Russian invasion, veteran Marines with the Sgt Jack Hettchen Jr. Detachment, Marine Corps League, stepped right in to help.

With the assistance of the Lance Corporal Robert W. Deane Detachment of the Department of Maryland Marine Corps League, they collected hundreds of requested items and delivered them to the cathedral, March 22.

"Continuing to serve helps lead healthier and happier lives for members," said Marine veteran and detachment member Mike Jadoo. "Serving as active members of our community, by supporting those in need, enables us to make a lasting, positive impact on American society."

Submitted by Mike Jadoo



COURTESY OF MIKE JADOO

Quantico, Va.



COURTESY OF HARKINS BUILDERS

New USO Center Opens at MCB Quantico

On Feb. 15, Harkins Builders celebrated the grand opening of the USO Metropolitan Washington-Baltimore's new Premier USO Center at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va. The new 5,100 square-foot location is within walking distance of the barracks and base headquarters. The project involved the restoration of an existing office building into a premier gaming center, which now features office spaces, a conference room, multiple lounge areas, a TV room,

arcade, café, support space and ADA-compliant restrooms. The exterior was touched up with a fresh coat of paint. With the help of Harkins employee-owners, Colimore Architects, and trade partners, the group collectively cut down construction costs to allow the USO to continue doing what they do best, providing support for servicemembers and their families around the world.

Submitted by Heather Wendt




COURTESY OF AL FRATER

Pomona, N.Y.

Marines Gather, Honor Those Who Served on Iwo Jima

Marine veterans Jon Hernandez, left, and Al Frater, right, of the Marine Corps League Gooney Bird Detachment in Teaneck, N.J., visited with Gene Iaconetti, center, a 98-year-old veteran of the Battle of Iwo Jima during the Marine Corps League Rockland County Detachment's annual Iwo Jima Luncheon in Pomona, N.Y., March 23. The event, which is typically held in the month of February, was attended by more than 100 individuals, including two Iwo Jima veterans and a number of veterans of World War II and the Korean War, as well as several active-duty Marines.

Submitted by Al Frater

"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. 

Leatherneck Laffs



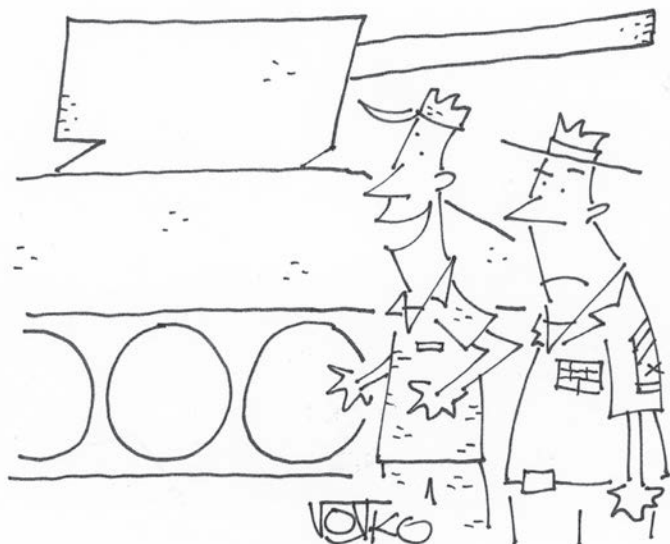
"In the Air Force
we're called
ammo troops."

"In the Navy
we're called
aviation
ordnancemen."

"In the Marines
we're called the
blow stuff up guys."



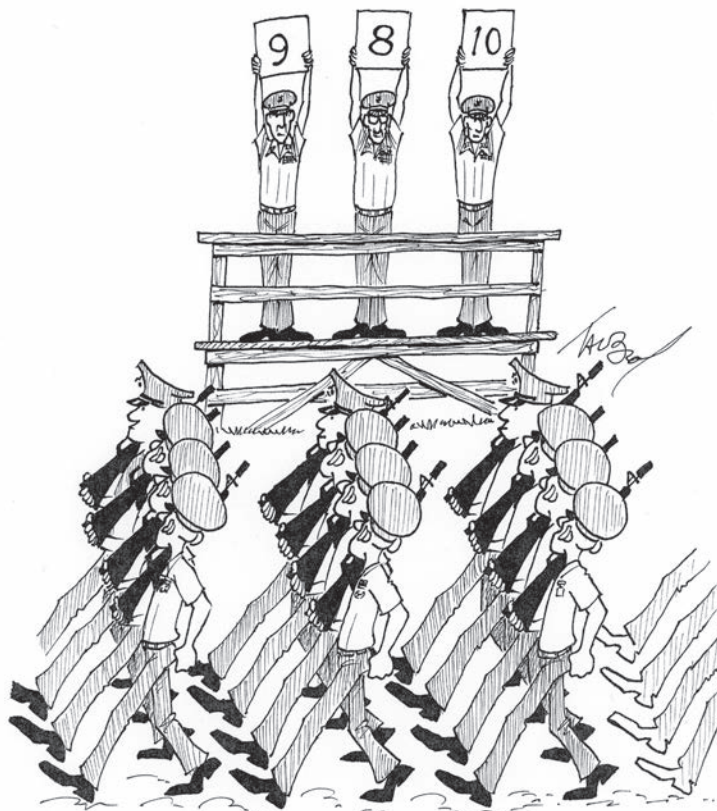
"Looks like the enemy will be surrendering soon.
They're putting their weapons on eBay."



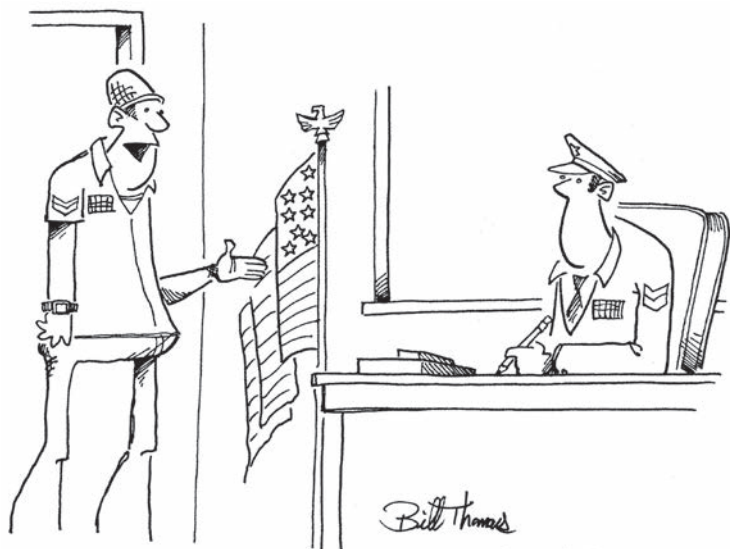
"Is this my company car?"



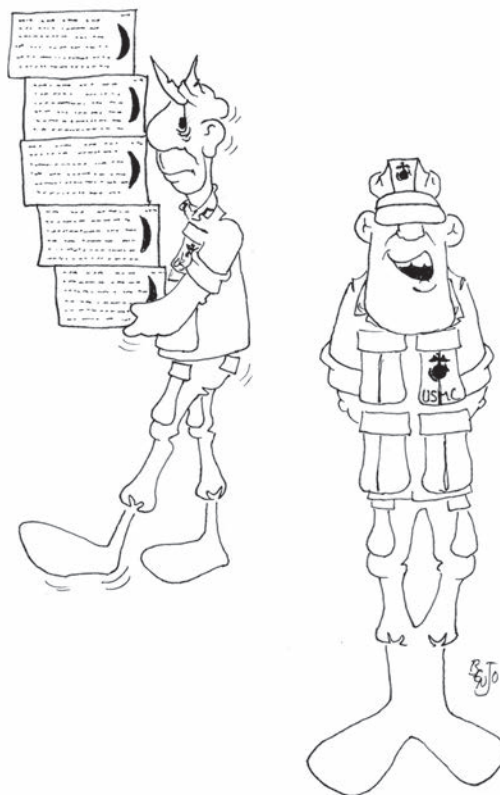
"Apparently maggot is one of his trigger words."



"Have you ever thought of becoming a motivational speaker?"



"Sir, we lost five tanks today.
Not from the enemy, but from texting while driving."



"Remember to lift with your PFC and not your back."

Innovation Campus Opens Doors For II MEF Marines

Marines and Sailors with 2nd Marine Logistics Group, in concert with II Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) and Marine Corps Installations East, hosted a ceremony on April 1 to celebrate the completion and grand opening of the new II MEF Innovation Campus, which is now open to all Marines and Sailors at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C.

The II MEF Innovation Campus, staffed and operated by 2nd MLG, is a 3,000 square-foot collaboration space that offers servicemembers and units the capabilities they need to propose solutions, leverage experimentation, pool resources and implement applications to increase war-fighting readiness across the Marine air-ground task force.

While the campus is hosted by 2nd MLG, its operational scope extends far beyond that of tactical-level logistics and combat service support.

“The Innovation Campus is a place where rank does not matter—the ideas do,” said Captain Garrett M. Brown, an innovation officer and the director of the II MEF Innovation Campus. “By creating a space where brilliant minds from across the Marine Corps can collaborate, you start to reap the benefits that just do not happen when everyone stays in their lane.”

The II MEF Innovation Campus primarily offers two distinctive facilities with state-of-the-art equipment including additive manufacturing and engineering



SGT CHRISTIAN GARCIA, USMC

Cpl Cameron Pond of 2nd MLG builds a robot at the II MEF Innovation Campus, MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., March 3. The campus was designed to help individual Marines and units maximize idea sharing, cross-domain collaboration, communication, and connectivity.

tools available for servicemembers to use at all hours of the day, seven days a week.

The centerpiece is “the Lab,” a trailer that hosts up to 10 workstations that include desktop gaming computers repurposed for use with a professional suite of computer-aided design (CAD) and drawing software to yield solutions for on-the-ground problems around the Fleet Marine Force.

A suite of rapid prototyping capabilities, to include milling machines and electronic

manufacturing gear, are also inside the Lab for all Marines and Sailors to use and create ready-made, low-cost items to benefit their units.

“Our Marines and Sailors see the potential with existing and emerging capabilities and want to do things differently and address problems they see every day in their sections and shops,” said Colonel Karin Fitzgerald, assistant chief of staff for logistics with 2nd MLG. “Our innovation challenges and course offerings are meant to empower our Marines, Sailors and civilians to find new and adaptive solutions to provide II MEF a competitive advantage in the future fight.”

The Lab has already helped facilitate several fleet-ready, 3D-printed products that have been implemented throughout II MEF, including an external gear rack for the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle and handset covers for Harris tactical radios.

The second capability is the collaboration trailer, a cooperative space for up to 30 people full of white boards, tables and meeting areas, and other amenities to make groups ranging from a regimental battle staff to a rifle squad feel right at home for planning, brainstorming, team-building and other omnidirectional idea-sharing opportunities.

“Good ideas need a home. The capabilities added to the campus create a location that naturally encourages cooperation and collaboration while providing the tools and know-how to prototype and test those new ideas,” said Brown.

Every quarter, the Innovation Campus will host the Commanding General’s Innovation Challenge, which offers a problem set for servicemembers to propose solutions for operational implementation.

Previous winners of the Innovation Challenge have cultivated proven results throughout II MEF, to include an all-in-one engine stand for intermediate-level vehicle maintenance, a QUADCON (storage cage) supply lot layout and a proposal for hazardous material treatment aboard the installation.

The campus staff and equipment are also available to assist personnel in developing ideas to submit for the quarterly challenge.

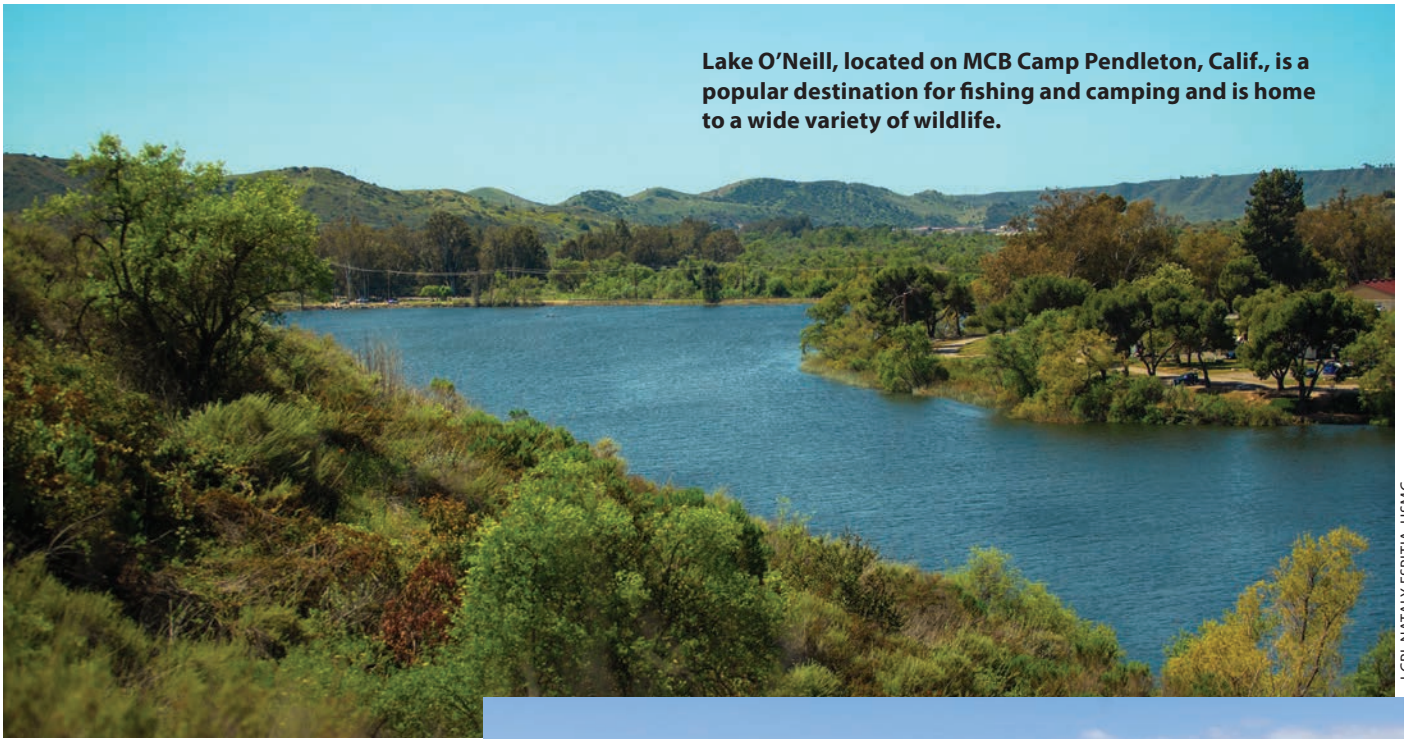
As the Innovation Campus officially opens its doors to all, its team is confident that Marines and Sailors will not only take full advantage of the wide variety of offered services but also promote forward-



SGT CHRISTIAN GARCIA, USMC

The new II MEF Innovation Campus at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., officially opened its doors to servicemembers and units April 1. The 3,000 square-foot collaboration space offers 3D-printing equipment, engineering tools and computer workstations that invite Marines to solve everyday problems by thinking outside the box.

Lake O'Neill, located on MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., is a popular destination for fishing and camping and is home to a wide variety of wildlife.



LCPL NATALY ESPITIA, USMC

Below: Nate Redetzke, a wildlife biologist with the Uplands Management Section, Environmental Security, MCB Camp Pendleton, observes wildlife on the Southern California installation, April 7. Thanks to the department's dedicated efforts, the California gnatcatcher and the kangaroo rat have moved from endangered to threatened species.



LCPL NATALY ESPITIA, USMC

thinking modernization efforts at every level of command.

"It is common to think that you have to be some radical, Steve Jobs-esque thinker to practice real innovation," said Brown. "But what people do not realize is that these people exist in every organization, and it's possible to tap into the native brainpower if you resource properly and encourage a culture that allows people to take risks."

1stLt Kevin Stapleton, USMC



Above: Melissa Vogt, a conservation law enforcement officer with Environmental Security, MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., patrols the coastline of the base, March 29. (Photo by LCpl Nataly Espitia, USMC)

Environmental Security Team Ensures Future of Camp Pendleton Coastline

At Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., every day is "Earth Day," with land and resources dedicated solely to the conservation and care of wildlife aboard the sprawling Southern California installation.

The main force to combat land deterioration and climate issues is the Environmental Security Department. The department has a very diverse staff including logistical and environmental planners and 10 biologists who manage the coastal, riparian and upland species throughout the base, which also implements policies to mitigate the loss of habitats.

"It's the job and responsibility, which drives the organization to help manage the natural resources that Camp Pendleton has," said Melissa Vogt, a conservation law enforcement officer with Environmental Security. "Camp Pendleton is a biodiversity hot spot. If it weren't for Camp Pendleton existing, all this coastline would be condos and hotels."

The installation is home to 19 federally listed species and several state species that are either threatened or endangered. One of those species is the California Least Tern, which is currently endangered. This bird lives on the coastline of California and is protected by the Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan.

"The Integrated Natural Resource



A Marine with HMH-461 inspects a CH-53K King Stallion prior to its first operational flight at MCAS New River, N.C., April 13. The flight signified the beginning of the squadron's transition from the CH-53E Super Stallion. (Photo by LCpl Elias E. Pimentel III, USMC)

Management Plan, which is a combination of military priorities, natural resource management priorities and outdoor recreation priorities, is a major document that outlines methods to help preserve this as desert habitat," said Vogt. "Every command who conducts training on or near protected land is given this document to ensure the viability of the base."

A large portion of Camp Pendleton's budget is set aside for conservation due to the amount of protected land within its boundaries. If the installation isn't protected properly, the base could lose rights to continue training in certain areas.

"If an acre of land is disturbed, depending on the species, Camp Pendleton may be required to mitigate and set aside double or even 10 times the amount of land somewhere else on the installation that can't be used for training," said Nate Redetzke, a wildlife biologist with the Uplands Management Section, Environmental Security. "Whenever the Marine Corps wants or is required to construct new courses, or move a course to another area, then they have to complete the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 process."

The Act, known as NEPA, ensures that agencies consider every aspect of a

proposed project's environmental impact and inform and involve the public of potential hazards and their alternatives.

Through the processes of the Environmental Security Department, land conservation, environmental protection and NEPA, two species aboard Camp Pendleton have been downgraded from endangered to threatened: the California gnatcatcher and the kangaroo rat.

"For any wildlife biologist that's working with a threatened or endangered species, the ultimate goal is getting the animal off the list and making sure the species is doing well," said Redetzke. "Camp Pendleton is very special. It's the most undisturbed area between Los Angeles and San Diego. Nowhere else will there be expansive land like this where habitats can be restored in order to make it more beneficial for the native ecosystem."

As a result of Environmental Security taking charge in protecting the environment, Camp Pendleton can maintain the same training environment and the same quality training opportunities for years to come while taking the appropriate measures to ensure it doesn't affect the lives of animals that are thriving in some of their only remaining habitats.

LCpl Nataly Espitia, USMC

Corps Declares IOC for CH-53K King Stallion

Lieutenant General Mark Wise, Deputy Commandant for Aviation, announced April 22 that the Marine Corps has achieved initial operational capability (IOC) in the CH-53K King Stallion helicopter. This plan supports the Marine Corps' Force Design 2030 initiative by improving capabilities and restructuring Marine Corps aviation for the future fight.

In addition to meeting IOC criteria, the CH-53K successfully completed a thorough operational test and evaluation period that resulted in more than 3,000 mishap-free hours flown in various challenging environments and terrain.

"My full confidence in the CH-53K's ability to execute the heavy lift mission is the result of successful developmental and operational testing conducted by Air Test and Evaluation Squadron (HX) 21 and Marine Operational Test and Evaluation Squadron (VMX) 1," said Wise.

The CH-53K is an optimized vertical, heavy lift, sea-based, long-range solution for the naval force and will immediately provide nearly three times the lift capability of the CH-53E, with the ability to transport 100 percent of the vertical Marine air-ground task force. Per the

Commandant's Force Design 2030 annual update, the CH-53K will complement connectors that will enable littoral maneuver and provide logistical support to a widely disaggregated naval force.

"The success to date of the CH-53K is a reflection of the hard work and effort by the Marines, Sailors and civilians at VMX-1, H-53 Program Office and Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 461, and the support we have received over many years from across the Department of the Navy and our industry partners," said Wise.

The King Stallion boasts an engine that produces 57 percent more horsepower with 63 percent fewer parts relative to its predecessor, which translates to an expanded capability to deliver internal and external cargo loads, providing the commander a mobility and sustainment capability the MAGTF has never had before.

The most notable attribute of the King Stallion is its ability to maintain increased performance margins in a degraded aeronautical environment. For example, at higher altitudes, hotter climates and carrying up to 27,000 pounds out to 110 nautical miles, the King Stallion far surpasses the CH-53E which would be limited to a 9,628-pound external load in the same environment.

The Marine Corps plans to deploy the first CH-53K Marine Expeditionary Unit detachment in fiscal year 2024, setting the initial conditions for sustained CH-53K deployments in support of MEUs.

Maj Jorge Hernandez, USMC

Marine Captain Awarded for Heroism Following LAV Mishap

Captain Timothy Cottell, the communications capabilities integration officer for Combat Development Directorate, Combat Development and Integration, received the Navy and Marine Corps Medal during a ceremony outside the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle, Va., April 8.

Brigadier General Arthur Pasagian, Commander, Marine Corps Systems Command, presented the award to Cottell for his life-saving actions on Dec. 10, 2019, while he was serving as the executive officer for "Bravo" Company, 1st Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division.

On that day, Cottell and his Marines were participating in Exercise Steel Knight, which required them to conduct a wet gap crossing of the Colorado River in a Light Armored Vehicle (LAV). As one of their LAVs began to cross, it started taking on water and was quickly pulled out into the river, turning upstream before ultimately sinking to the riverbed.



CPLERIC HUYNH, USMC



CPLERIC HUYNH, USMC

For his heroic actions in saving a Marine from a capsized LAV in 2019, Capt Timothy Cottell was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal by BGen Arthur J. Pasagian, the commander of MCSC, at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle, Va., April 8.

conducting four rounds of CPR to save the driver's life.

"The situation was not going well and just kept getting worse," Cottell recalled. "I was able to see from the shore that all the Marines were able to exit the LAV except for the driver."

Cottell detached his personal protective equipment and entered the frigid river, swimming approximately 60 feet from the shore, then descending 15 feet underwater to reach the submerged vehicle.

"I was just doing what was expected," said Cottell. "There were three other Marines out there with me. Without them, none of this would've happened."

Cottell and another officer reached the submerged LAV, where Cottell then pulled the driver out of the vehicle and began prepping him for CPR. The other Marine cleared the driver's airway while Cottell was responsible for the driver's breathing,

"I have been CPR certified prior to the United States Marine Corps, but it has since expired," said Cottell. "I was very grateful for having attended the MCIWS course, which refreshed my CPR knowledge and the difference for performing it for drowning victims."

The Navy and Marine Corps Medal is the highest non-combat medal for heroism awarded by the Marine Corps. According to his medal citation, Cottell's courageous and prompt actions in the face of personal risk reflected great credit upon him and upheld the highest traditions of the Corps.

"I believe the Marine Corps' expectation to stay calm and perform under pressure helped," said Cottell. "From start to finish, everyone knew we needed to think clearly and work together."

Cpl Eric Huynh, USMC



The museum will highlight the many accomplishments and innovations of Carolina Marines and Sailors and the enduring contributions of their host communities. It will also provide a unique and inspiring new venue for public and private events.



Carolina Museum of the Marine

Building a Firm Foundation for the Future

By Ashley Danielson

Top: An aerial rendering of the Carolina Museum of the Marine | Al Gray Civic Institute which will be located in Jacksonville, N.C. (Photo courtesy of CJMW Architecture, Carolina Museum of the Marine | Al Gray Civic Institute)

The mission of Carolina Museum of the Marine | Al Gray Civic Institute is to honor the legacy of Carolina Marines and Sailors, sustain the ideals that are the foundation of our nation, and inspire principle-committed citizens.

Originally named Marine Corps Museum of the Carolinas, the organization was founded by Major General Ray Smith, USMC (Ret) who was the commanding general for Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune from 1997 to 1999. Smith and his wife, Colleen, wanted to preserve the storied legacy of Carolina Marines and Sailors so they contacted Sergeant Major Joe Houle just before his own retirement. “We wanted someone who understands the Carolina MAGTF,” MajGen Smith said. “And someone who would work tirelessly to make the vision of an enduring tribute a reality,” he added.

Houle joined the organization in 2000, wearing a number of hats over the years, all with the

focus of building the museum. Now as Director of Operations and Artifacts, Houle works with Ashley Danielson, the Executive Director and Vice President of Development, and Richard Koeckert, the Finance Manager, overseeing the organization while a search for a chief executive officer is underway.

“Over the years we have been collecting artifacts for the museum’s exhibits,” Houle said. “Board members CWO-5 Lisa Potts, USMC (Ret) and SgtMaj Ray Mackey, USMC (Ret) have worked tirelessly with the organization’s historian, LtCol Lynn “Kim” Kimball, USMC (Ret), and museum archivist and volunteer Frances Hayden to ensure best practices in the accession and care of the artifacts,” he added.

Late in 2021, the state of North Carolina awarded \$26 million to the organization for construction of the 40,000-square-foot facility. Local government entities are joining private donors to ensure that the organization has operating capital to oversee and



COURTESY OF ASHLEY DANIELSON

Gen Al Gray, USMC (Ret), left, and SgtMaj Joe Houle, USMC (Ret) pose for a photo at Reflection and Celebration Park.

The Museum

The museum will include displays featuring Expeditionary Warfare and Amphibious Operations, Carolina MAGTF (Marine air-ground task force) Development of Maneuver Warfare Philosophy, Women Marines, Montford Point Marines, MARSOC (Marine Forces, Special Operations Command), Military Working Dogs, and Wounded Warrior Barracks among other firsts and innovations of the Carolinas. “We are honoring Marines and Sailors, and their families, whose service to the nation exemplifies civic commitment in action,” said Chairman of the Board, Brigadier General Richard F. Vercauteren, USMC (Ret).

The museum will highlight the many accomplishments and innovations of Carolina Marines and Sailors and the enduring contributions of their host communities. It will also provide a unique and inspiring new venue for public and private events including military balls, reunions, promotion and retirement ceremonies, weddings and civic events.

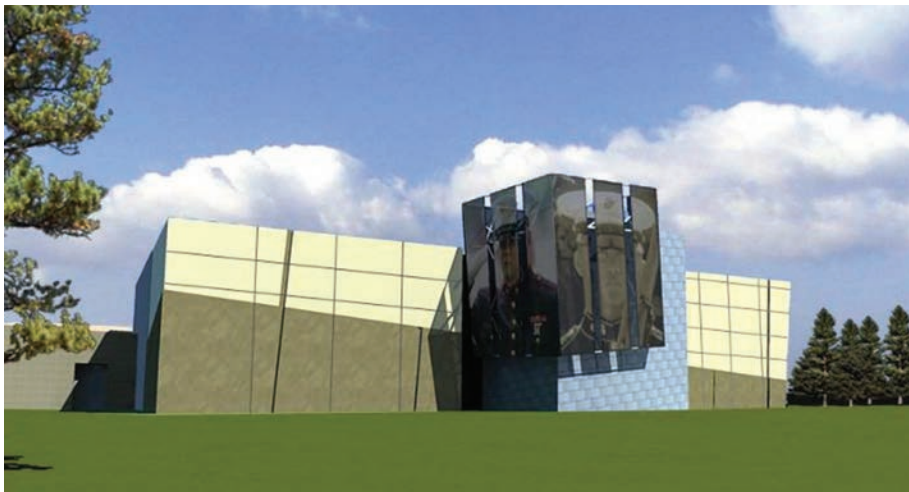
The museum’s plans have stayed the course since 2000 with award-winning architectural and engineering plans already in place. “We are building in two phases,” Vercauteren said. “Phase One,

Above: Reflection and Celebration Park, the first of the museum’s two phases, has become the site of numerous promotion and retirement ceremonies thanks in large part to its huge eagle, globe and anchor statue. (Photo courtesy of CJMW Architecture, Carolina Museum of the Marine | Al Gray Civic Institute)

run the project during construction and after its doors open. “We are excited to see this organization moving from grassroots to the national stage,” said Danielson. “We have numerous faithful supporters to which we owe a debt of gratitude.”



Above: A rendering of the Carolina Museum of the Marine | Al Gray Civic Institute. The museum will honor the legacy of Carolina Marines and Sailors and will highlight their accomplishments and innovations. (Photo courtesy of CJMW Architecture, Carolina Museum of the Marine | Al Gray Civic Institute)



The rear of the museum, as shown in this artist's rendering, will overlook the Route 17 bypass which runs through Jacksonville, N.C. (Photo courtesy of CJMW Architecture, Carolina Museum of the Marine | Al Gray Civic Institute)

Reflection and Celebration Park, was opened to the public in May 2016 and gifted to the Department of the Navy in 2018.” According to Onslow County Assistant Manager Glenn Hargett, Reflection and Celebration Park is the most “Instagrammed” site in the community. Hundreds of people—military personnel and civilians—use the park and its world’s largest eagle, globe and anchor statue as the site of promotion and retirement ceremonies, weddings and photo opportunities. Recently, thanks to gifts from Byrd Family Foundation, Patriots Walkway was dedicated at the site.

“Plans for Phase 2, the construction of the 40,000-square-foot Museum and Institute, are now underway,” Vercauteren said, adding that a Marine veteran legislator was instrumental in backing the project. “Thanks to dedicated North Carolina Senator Mike Lazzara and his success in obtaining a \$26 million construction grant this year.” Lazzara was joined in his efforts by North Carolina state representatives George Cleveland, Pat McElfraft and Phil Shepard.

“We are excited to move forward with this project,” said SgtMaj Houle. “We will show quite clearly, with our immersive exhibits, the honor, courage and commitment of Carolina Marines and Sailors.” The museum will be located near Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune and is anticipated to be a major attraction for the 138,000 Marines, Sailors and Coast Guardsmen serving in the area as well as their families and friends. Houle also expects numerous military and history aficionados as well as tourists to the state’s coastline to visit the museum.

Headwinds

As with any project, the group has encountered headwinds and obstacles along the way, including very real questions about the efficacy of museums in the current milieu. “We knew we needed to look at our business model,” said Danielson. To do that, the group began talking to other museum leaders about what does and does not work. Danielson said that one of the most compelling conversations early in her tenure with the organization was with General Alfred M. Gray, USMC (Ret), the 29th Commandant of the Marine Corps.

“We spoke about the need to increase or even restore civics education in our nation,” she recalled. “General Gray has had in mind for a number of years an institute at which individuals of all ages can learn about the foundation of our nation, the core values of our founding fathers, and the principles of creative, critical, and strategic thinking that will lead to effective civic engagement.” The synergy between the core values of the Marine Corps and the characteristics of a good citizen made sense to the group, and

plans began to create and launch the civic institute, now named for its founder, General Gray. The Al Gray Civic Institute will offer courses on site, online and on location.

The Institute

Since 1775, the United States Marine Corps has been integral to the security of our country, and integral to its mission are honor, courage and commitment. Marines are inculcated with an understanding of honor and the qualities that define not just a well-formed Marine but a well-formed person and citizen. “Marines demonstrate civic commitment in action as they defend and protect our Constitution,” said General Gray. “We want to showcase their many innovations and accomplishments while teaching to students young and old a basic knowledge and understanding of our government and our individual responsibilities in preserving our democracy for future generations,” he continued.

With Gen Gray’s leadership, Board of Directors

The synergy between the core values of the Marine Corps and the characteristics of a good citizen made sense to the group, and plans began to create and launch the civic institute, now named for its founder, General Alfred M. Gray.

Vice Chair Mark Cramer, and ethics professor James Danielson, are overseeing development of the curriculum for the Al Gray Civic Institute. “Critical Thinking for Civic Engagement,” the Institute’s first offering, has been delivered at Swansboro High School in Swansboro, N.C. and at Camp Johnson to active-duty Marines awaiting MOS training. The 15-hour course is being adapted for online presentation as well. Other classes under development include, “The Founding Principles of the United States,” “Understanding the American Constitution,” “Critical Thinking for Civic Engagement,” “Leading Self, Leading Others,” “History of Political and Economic Thought” and “Ethics at Home, School and Work.” “The Houle School” is a summer fitness, civics and leadership program for middle and high school students. The Institute also produces essays in the organization’s monthly newsletter, “Front and Center.”

Gen Gray is especially interested in teaching critical thinking which he defines as the study and analysis of problems, issues and facts to develop and form a sound judgement. “It is self-directed, self-disciplined, self-motivated, and self-corrected thinking,” he said. “This course was already conducted at Swansboro High School in 2019 with excellent results. We want to be prepared to defend our convictions and interests as well as our institutions.” Gen Gray continued, “We don’t have to take sides concerning political or religious questions which may be in dispute in America. We can endeavor to state as simply as possible those great convictions upon which nearly all Americans agree. These are the simple principles as rules of



life, beliefs that secure our order, our justice and our freedom.”

For more information and to follow the organization’s progress, visit Carolina Museum of the Marine | Al Gray Civic Institute’s website at MuseumoftheMarine.org.

Author’s bio: Ashley Danielson is the executive director and vice president of development at Carolina Museum of the Marine | Al Gray Civic Institute in Jacksonville, N.C. She has worked in nonprofit management and philanthropy for more than 30 years and is married to a Marine veteran.

BGen Dick Vercauteren, USMC (Ret), left; Gen Al Gray, USMC (Ret), center; and MajGen Ray Smith, USMC (Ret) pose for a photo at Reflection and Celebration Park. (Photo courtesy of Ashley Danielson)



Top left: James Danielson, Ph.D., teaches Critical Thinking for Civic Engagement at MCB Camp Johnson, N.C. as part of the curriculum developed by the Al Gray Civic Institute. Bottom: Students in Swansboro High School pose for a photo with James Danielson, Ph.D., and social studies teacher, Erik Matticola.

COURTESY OF ASHLEY DANIELSON

SEA STORY OF THE MONTH

A Moment Neither Will Forget

Returning stateside in June 1986 from a one-year tour with Helicopter & Maintenance Squadron 36, Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, Okinawa, Japan, I was stationed with 1st Force Service Support Group, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., as a 2161 machinist in the machine shop. About six months later, the Marine Corps had put a push on training noncombat military occupational specialty skilled Marines in field and combat skills. Having been an 0311/0331 my first four years in the Marine Corps, I was called upon to help with the training.

One day the company had gone to the grenade range to train. The training was set up in two sections. The first section using a blue dummy grenade was to familiarize the Marine with what was required to throw a grenade—how to hold it, how to pull the pin, how to prepare to throw it and how to throw the grenade. The second section of training used a green live fragmentation grenade and was the exact same course of training. I was one of the instructors in the second section of the training and was in one of the grenade-throwing pits to ensure the Marines were using the proper sequence of instruction to throw a live grenade. The training was going as well as could be expected and there were about a dozen Marines left who still needed to throw a live grenade when a short female lance corporal stepped into my pit. The 782 gear she was wearing was

too large for her body even though it was the smallest gear that supply had to issue. Standing in the pit she could barely see over the cement block wall; only the top of her helmet cleared the wall by an inch or two. She was holding the grenade in her right hand clinched tightly to her chest with her left hand next to it. I asked her if she was ready, and she smiled back and said, “Yes, Sergeant Tomasko.”

I signaled the range officer we were ready to go, and he started calling out the commands, “Pull pin! Prepare to throw! Throw!” As the lance corporal threw the grenade, her right hand hit the top of the pit wall, and the grenade came free of

**Seeing the grenade
spinning on the top
of the wall I yelled,
“GRENADE!” and
grabbed the
lance corporal ...**

her hand. Seeing the grenade spinning on the top of the wall I yelled, “GRENADE!” and grabbed the lance corporal by her flak vest, threw her to the ground, and fell on top of her.

Fortunately, the grenade fell just the other side of the pit wall and went off. I jumped to my feet and grabbed the lance corporal by her flak vest lifting her up to see if she was OK. I was so charged with adrenaline that I had lifted her off her feet and we were eye to eye. I set her down and told her as long as she was not injured, everything was fine and not to worry. When the grenade went off, it set the grass next to the throwing pit wall on

fire. We put out the fire, finished the grenade training and secured.

The end of the training exercise came and there was a long column of 5-ton trucks parked ready to return to the rear. I opened the door to climb in and there was the lance corporal; she was my driver. As we drove back to the Del Mar area, we had a great time talking about home, being Marines, and one exciting moment in life we will never forget.

GySgt Henry J. Tomasko Jr.
USMC (Ret)
Andreas, Pa.

Wrong Place at the Wrong Time

One of the most colorful characters I have met among Marine veterans is Major Mike Hemlepp. Mike passed away a few years back, but he had a sea story that he swore was a true account of a day at Da Nang during the Vietnam War. Mike was a former drill instructor who became a Mustang and was a lieutenant at the time of this story.

At the end of a long, hot day, he and a captain were using the new head that the Seabees had just built. One was in the shower and the other sitting on a four-holer when a 122 mm Katyusha rocket exploded under the new head. They were both blown outside of what remained of the building and were covered in wood chips and whatever was in the four-holer.

Realizing that they were under attack, they headed for the nearest ditch to wait out the incoming barrage.

As their thoughts raced, one of them had the presence of mind to run back to the shattered head to grab a flak jacket and the two men, buck naked, clung to whatever part of that flak

jacket the two of them could hide under, one practicing his doctorate in profanity and the other his doctorate in theology, when suddenly Mike wondered what people would think if they were killed and were found hugging each other under a flak jacket!

Sgt James Bancroft
USMC, 1977-1981
Greenville, S.C.

Hitching the Globe

“Wright, get your ass back to the tent and pack your gear. You’re going home.”

“What do you mean?”

“Listen, Wright, you questioning me? I don’t make the rules, I just obey them. They say you’re going home; you’re going home. Understood? Get over to Inchon. ... Get your gear together and get your ass out of here. Understood?”

“Yes, but is there any other way of getting out of here? I mean I’m not a big fan of another three weeks at sea.”

“Well, dummy, you’re on an air base you may have noticed. Just go over there and whenever a captain walks by, ask him if you can get a lift. If he’s a captain, he’s a pilot. Make sure he’s going where you are or at least in the same direction. Understood? And hear this, before you go, you make sure you stop by the shack and get your paperwork. Understood?”

“Yes, Sir!” I turned and headed back to the tent to pack and say goodbye. After checking in my M1, .45-caliber, and ammo belt, I left Inchon on Feb. 10, 1955. Without much trouble I found an officer headed east to Itami Air Base in Japan for a couple of days of R&R. He was more than happy to give me a lift. I picked up the seabag and quickly

stuffed the manila envelope that Sgt Doughboy had thrust under my arm into the bag and began my trek home. Getting a ride out of Korea was easy.

Once in Japan things weren't so easy as I had to find my way to Tokyo. The airport was crowded with military personnel and their families going stateside. The way Military Air Transport Service worked was you fly for free, but they set priorities by rank. Privates go to the back of the line. Not only do they get pushed to the rear, but often they stay at the rear as they get bumped should anyone show up with a higher rank. I waited nearly 48 hours in the terminal while officers, their wives, and in some cases their children and pets boarded ahead of me. Fortunately, there was a recreation room where I could get some sleep and it happened to have a pool table. Before boarding, nearly two days later, I had gotten some rest and added a few dollars to my near empty wallet.

My flight out was in one of those big-bellied transport planes but it was only going as far as Guam. I gave little concern to how far it was going as long as when it landed, I would be closer to the United States. My next hop out of Guam got me to Midway Island and there the problem wasn't distance, but landing. It really is just a spit of an island—not much more than 2 square miles. When we set down, thousands of gooney birds scattered out from under our wheels. When I left Korea, it was 10 degrees and now I was sitting in temperatures in the 80s with my winter greens on.

Before the next hop out, one of the naval staff on duty had to walk down the runway firing off his shotgun to scatter the birds before we could race down the runway and lift off to Hawaii. I finally arrived at

Treasure Island on Feb. 16, and made my way to the transit barracks.

Marines being moved from one location to another are normally housed in what is referred to as the transit barracks. These temporary barracks usually harbor the Marine for a day or two before they move on. I was somewhat surprised when I

**And hear this,
before you go,
you make sure you
stop by the shack and
get your paperwork.
Understood?**

threw down my seabag and looked across the squad bay to see another Marine who not only had a well done up sack with linens, but all the comforts of home arranged around him including a lamp. As we were the only ones in the barracks at the time, he was more than anxious to strike up a conversation.

"Goin' home?" he asked.

"You bet. And you? You stationed here?"

"... The bastards think I am. Might as well be," he said with anger in his tone.

I sat on the empty bunk waiting his explanation. It rushed out like he had been waiting a long time for someone, anyone, to sit down across from him so he could get it off his chest.

"Sons of bitches won't let me go. My time was up 23 days ago. Done everything. Had my physical, bought my ticket, and let them know they didn't have to bother with the shipping over speech. Ain't enough money in this f---ing world to get me to ship over in this outfit."

I replied, "Jesus, [you've] been here 23 days? Why so long? What's the problem?"

"Well, they won't give me my back pay. And they won't

discharge me without giving it to me. So here I sit."

"What do [you] mean they won't give you your back pay? How much is it?"

"What ... difference does it make how much? Could be a million. I wouldn't give a s---. Told them they could keep the dough, just get me the hell out of here."

He sat for a moment as if digesting the craziness of it all. "I left K-3 back in January. Got here exactly ... 24 days ago. [They] figured I just would milk it down. Listen to someone try to convince me the Corps was my future and within 48 hours I'd be landing at O'Hare. Well, was I in for a surprise."

"Why?" The thought crashed into my mind that maybe this wasn't an unusual happenstance.

"Why?" His voice raised two pitches. "... Pay records, that's ... why. I'm waiting for them to get here from Korea or wherever ... they are. They won't pay me my mustering out pay without them and say they don't discharge anyone without paying them in full."

He had no sooner finished when I was overridden with terror—pay records. I never gave anyone my pay records. In a panic I ripped open my seabag. Please! Please! Please be there! In an instant I had the manila envelope Sgt Doughboy had thrust under my arm and there they were—my pay records. I had carried them 10,000 miles never realizing how vital they were or that they were even there.

God love you Sergeant Major Doughboy, wherever you are.

Ralph Wright
Lady Lake, Fla.

All Enjoyed the Package From Home

In the summer of 1968, I was part of "Fox" Co, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines, in Vietnam. After we had completed a two-week operation humping through

the boonies hunting for the enemy, we received mail. My mail call included some letters from home and a box from Storm Vander Zee Brandt. Storm and I had been good friends since grade school. The box from Storm contained four plastic baby bottles, nipples included. I was wondering why in the world Storm would send me baby bottles. A quick shake of one of the bottles indicated that they were full of some kind of liquid. I opened one of the bottles and a single sniff of the rich odor told me what it was. A quick sip confirmed it. The four bottles were filled with my favorite brand of whiskey.

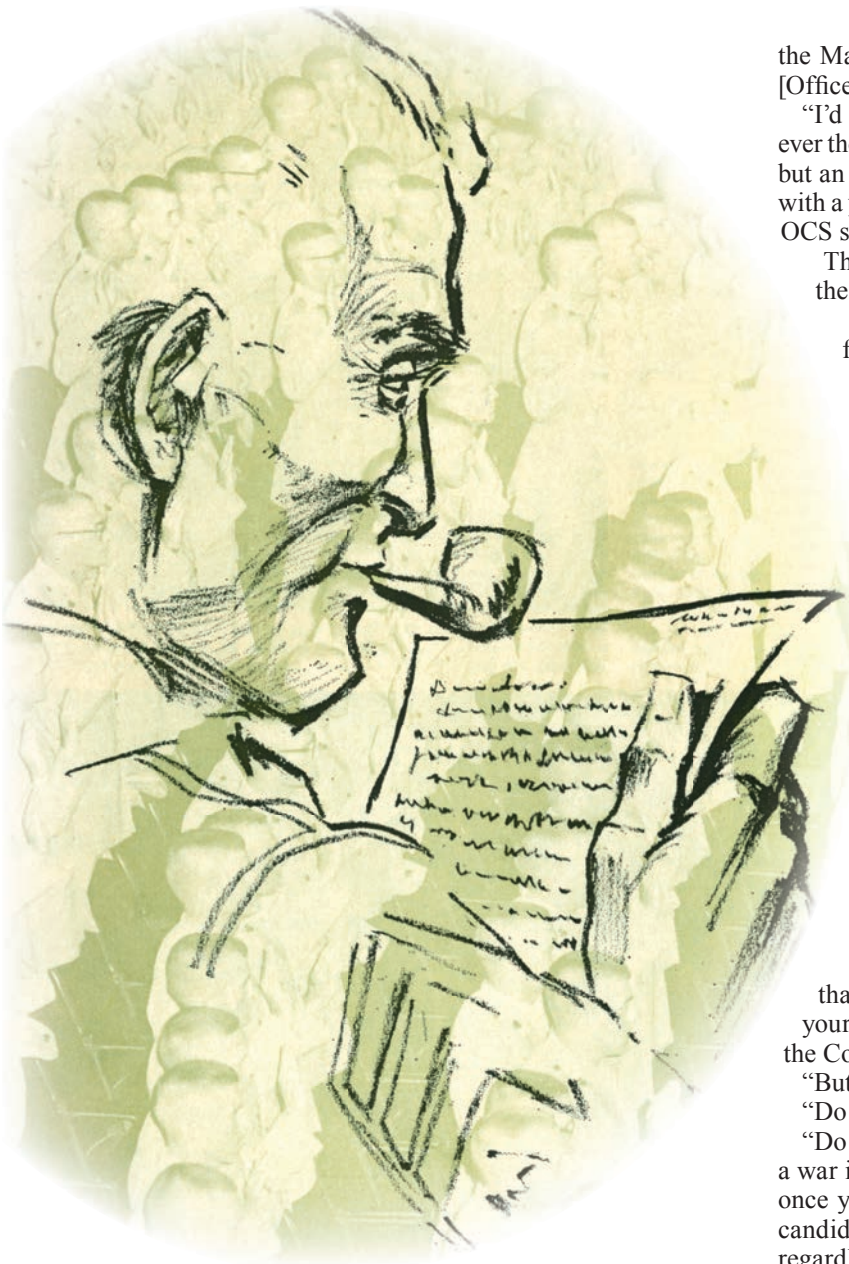
Following the tradition of Marines sharing with their fellow Marines, I shared my loot. Visualize a depleted squad of ragged, battle-worn Marines sitting on the ground in a circle passing around a plastic baby bottle. As host, I opened one bottle at a time, installed the nipple, sampled it and passed it to the Marine sitting to my left. After the first bottle made it full circle, it came back to me empty. I passed the next one to the right and repeated my duties as host for all four baby bottles. It did not take long for the whiskey to disappear. Storm is gone now, but I still say, "God bless Storm Vander Zee" whenever I take a drink of whiskey.

Sgt Birney K. Summers
USMC, 1967-1969
Manistee, Mich.

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

The Letter

By
SSgt Bob Bowen, USMC



When MSgt Mike O'Donnell received a letter from his son saying he was applying for OCS, the Top responded with some advice all Marines should read.

Master Sergeant Mike O'Donnell finished his cup of coffee and turned to the letter which had arrived with the morning mail. It was from his son, Joey, a Marine corporal with 9th Marines in Vietnam.

"Dear Dad," the letter began.

"I've been doing a lot of thinking these past few days, and I think I'm going to apply for a commission. The first sergeant called some of us in the other day and told us about a program

the Marine Corps has where an enlisted man can go to OCS [Officer Candidates School].

"I'd never thought much about being an officer before. All I ever thought about was making master sergeant one day like you, but an officer has it a lot better than an enlisted man. Besides, with a year in Vietnam behind me, and three years in the Corps, OCS should be a snap."

The letter continued in a personal vein. "How's Mom? What's the weather like back home? How're the Yankees doing?"

O'Donnell smiled at the way his son signed off: "Your future boss ... maybe," then he turned to the business at hand. As senior instructor at OCS, Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Va., Michael O'Donnell had a busy day ahead of him.

His first chore that morning was to counsel an enlisted candidate who had applied for disenrollment. Mike never liked this duty. Once, but only once, was he able to talk a man into continuing through the class. For the most part, his words were like water on a duck's back.

The reasons for dropping out were always the same, and what it all seemed to indicate was that the men weren't properly briefed on what to expect.

"If only I could talk to these men before they apply," Mike thought. And then he remembered the letter he'd just received from his son. The words "OCS should be a snap" stuck in his throat. Hell, his son was planning to come to OCS with the same thought in mind that all of the dropouts had brought with them!

That evening, Mike O'Donnell wrote him a letter.

"Dear Son," he began.

"Nothing in the world would make your old man prouder than being able to salute you. You've got a good head on your shoulders, and you have almost enough knowledge of the Corps to become an excellent officer.

"But ...

"Do you know what you're getting into?

"Do you know that the fact you've been in the Corps fighting a war in Vietnam isn't going to make a damn bit of difference once you get to OCS? You'll be a candidate here, Son, just a candidate—no better and no worse than the rest of the men, regardless of background.

"You said once that you'd rather die than go through boot camp again, Son. I know you didn't mean that literally, but the simple truth is that OCS is boot camp all over again. In fact, it's tougher here than at Parris Island or San Diego because you work individually here, not as a team.

"You know, 10 percent of all the enlisted men who come to OCS eventually drop out at their own request, the reason being, they thought it was going to be a picnic. They come here thinking we're going to teach them which fork to use, protocol, how to conduct themselves at a mess night, etc. They're sadly mistaken!

"Don't get me wrong, Son, I'm not knocking OCS, nor am I trying to talk you out of applying for a commission. I'm trying to give you some food for thought. And don't get the idea that all enlisted men have a rough time down here. They don't. The

The fact that you are officer material doesn't make you an officer; a lot of it has to do with mental attitude.

last class we graduated had 10 enlisted men at the top of their platoons, and the honor man of the entire class was an enlisted man.

"But, despite all the good things that can be said about the enlisted men who come to OCS, you can't overlook that 10 percent who drop out because; one, they couldn't hack it. Two, it wasn't what they thought it would be. Three, they weren't physically prepared. And four, they weren't mentally prepared.

"Do yourself, the Marine Corps and me a favor, Son. Think about this a lot before you make a final decision. You've got but one chance to become an officer in this man's Corps. Once you leave any officer program without graduating, for any reason, you'll never get another opportunity.

"We had an enlisted man drop out today. He told me that he'd signed up for the program because his CO had told him he believed he'd make a good officer. Don't let anybody fool you, Son. The fact that you're officer material doesn't make you an officer. A lot of it has to do with mental attitude; the mental attitude you bring with you when you come to OCS.



"If you come here thinking it's going to be a snap, that you're going to breeze through because of knowledge you've already gained in the Corps, you're going to find yourself in that 10 percent drop-out group.

"Think about what I've said, Son, and if your final decision is that you do want to become an officer, then by all means, apply.

"But, remember one thing. You may be my boss one day, but while you're here, you'll be just another candidate.

Semper Fi,
Dad

P.S. Give 'Charlie' a few lumps for me while you're over there."



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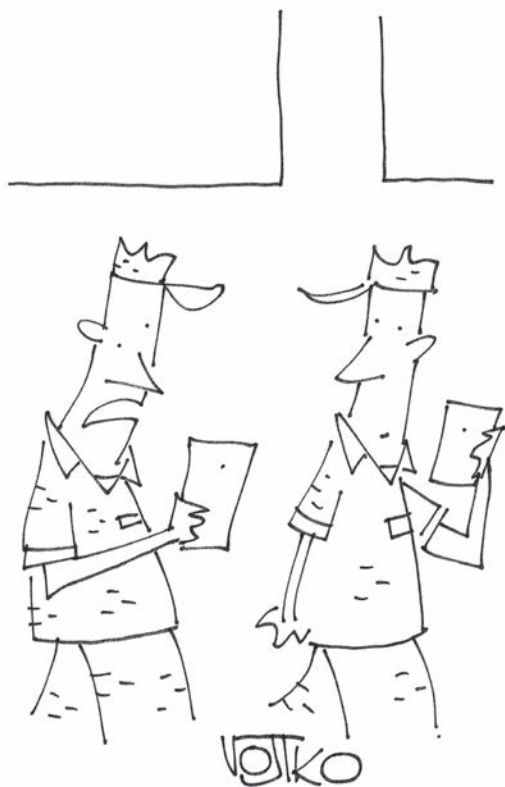
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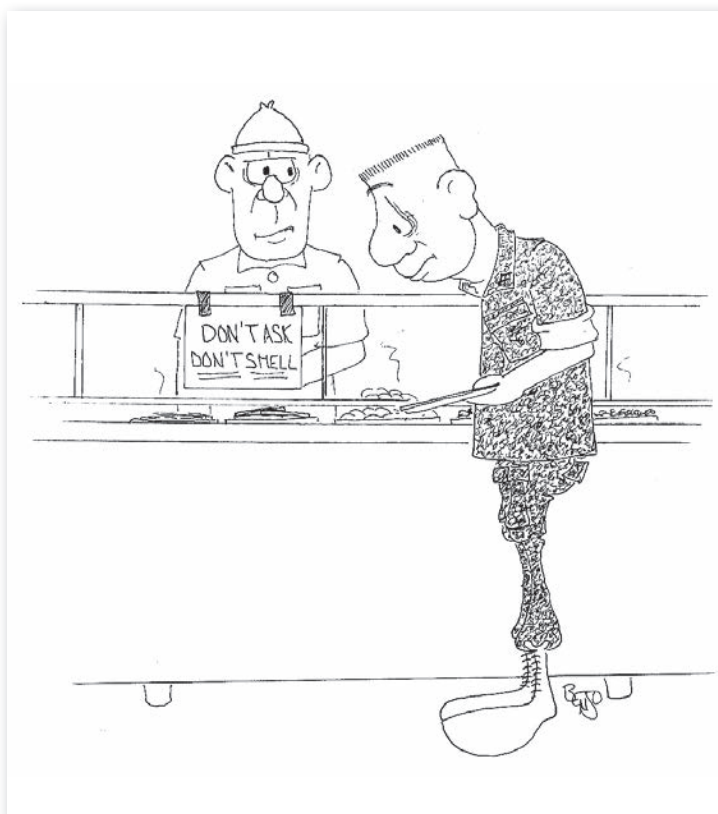
"It started out as baked beans and ended up as bean soup."



"What MRE did you get?"



"MREs may be on their way out. There's talk of providing food trucks."

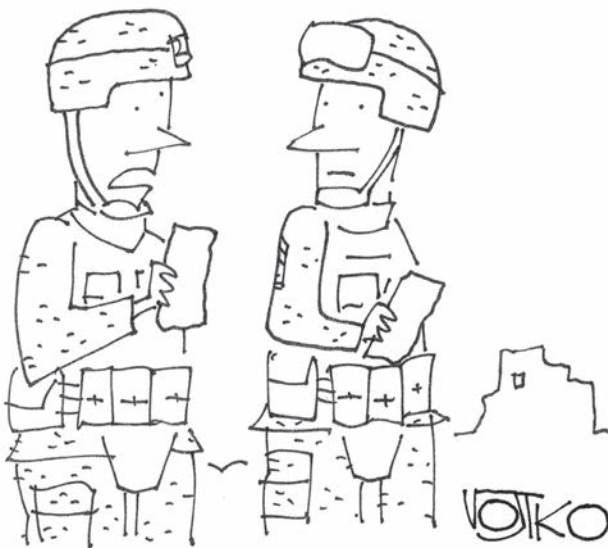




"It contains a top-secret folder—what's actually in MREs."



"This is the spice rack."



"Sgt, is this MRE gluten free?"



"Sir, you didn't get the mess hall's request for lunch meat because you had your spam filter on."

Pentagon Resumes Guided Tours

As of May 10, the Defense Department has reopened its doors to military-style hospitality. On a limited basis, visitors again are able to take guided tours of the Pentagon and see where the world's greatest military minds plan the defense of the nation.

In years past, school groups, scout troops and others could sign up to visit the Pentagon, one of the largest office buildings in the world, and visit the multiple displays in the building that pay tribute to military services, commemorate military conflicts, honor veterans, highlight U.S. military relationships with partner nations, recognize the contributions of outstanding individuals and provide information about topics important to the defense of the nation.

Tours were halted in March 2020 due to concerns over the spread of COVID-19 and remained unavailable until Pentagon Press Secretary John F. Kirby announced on May 2 that they would soon resume.

"They've been [...] preparing for quite

some time here to showcase the more than 30 exhibits that provide the history and the accomplishments of the U.S. Armed Forces and the Department of Defense," Kirby said of the Pentagon tour guides, who are active-duty servicemembers from all of the military branches. "These are our finest young men and women [...] They represent the very best of each service. It takes a lot to become a member of the Ceremonial Guard and then to go from that to becoming a Pentagon tour guide. I know how excited they are about getting back to work and getting back at it. And I know how proud they're all going to continue to make us."

Kirby said that initially, tours at the Pentagon will take place at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The detail-rich tours involve approximately 1.5 miles of walking and last about an hour. Those interested can schedule a tour by visiting <https://www.defense.gov/Pentagon-Tours/Request-A-Tour/>.

C. Todd Lopez

Marine Recruiting Partners with Halo Championship Series

As the exclusive military partner to the Halo Championship Series (HCS), the U.S. Marine Corps is digging in and doubling down along the road to the Halo World Championship, which will take place this October.

The military science fiction video game, which boasts a cult following, features simulated Marines throughout its franchise, including the new Halo series streaming on Paramount+. To celebrate the fighting spirit exhibited by teams and individual players at all levels, Marine Corps Recruiting Command has partnered with the Halo Championship Series to recognize and reward excellence in the digital gaming sphere.

"Competing at the highest level requires grit, self-determination and the will to succeed despite all odds," said Captain Michael Maggitti, director of esports and gaming, MCRC. "We are truly humbled to support the competitors and larger Halo community as they fight with the same



SSGT JACKIE SANDERS, USAF

On May 2, flanked by tour guides from all branches of the U.S. military, Pentagon Press Secretary John F. Kirby, center, announced that tours of the Pentagon would resume after a two-year hiatus due to the coronavirus pandemic.



tenacity and resolve exhibited by both the Marines of today and of the future."

The Marine Corps' sponsorship officially debuted at the Halo Championship Series Kickoff Major in Raleigh, N.C., in December 2021. The partnership includes the presentation of the "USMC Service Record" award, which recognizes the outstanding performance of an individual player, as well as the USMC Event Commendations, which award the top players with customized dog tags unique to their respective achievements. Additionally, the USMC is proud to sponsor discounted pricing for all active-duty attendees at future Halo Championship Series events across North America.

"Whether on console, PC or streaming device, the Marines are inextricably woven into the Halo universe where their fighting spirit is relied on to win humanity's toughest battles," said Maggitti. "Building from the successful launch at HCS Raleigh, we are determined in our support of the growing Halo community across all domains as they fight and win their own battles each and every day."

The partnership is part of a recruiting strategy aimed at reaching the significant percentage of "gamers" who fall within the Marine Corps' target demographic. At www.marines.com/halo, interested individuals are encouraged to take their digital skills to the battlefield: "Many digital competitors already possess transferrable skills that allow a smooth transition to winning the most significant battles—in defense of America's ideals."

MCR

VA Establishes Presumptive Service Connection For Rare Respiratory Cancers

As part of President Joseph R. Biden's Unity Agenda commitment to support the nation's veterans, the Department of Veterans Affairs has added nine rare respiratory cancers to the list of presumed service-connected disabilities due to military environmental exposures to fine particulate matter.

The following list has been added to

VA's regulations through an Interim Final Rule published in the Federal Register on April 26: squamous cell carcinoma of the larynx, squamous cell carcinoma of the trachea, adenocarcinoma of the trachea, salivary gland-type tumors of the trachea; adenosquamous carcinoma of the lung; large cell carcinoma of the lung; salivary gland-type tumors of the lung; sarcomatoid carcinoma of the lung; and typical and atypical carcinoid of the lung.

VA determined through a focused review of scientific and medical evidence that there is biological plausibility between airborne hazards and carcinogenesis of the respiratory tract and the unique circumstances of these rare cancers warrant a presumption of service connection.

"Last year we made promises to funda-

mentally change and improve how we establish and expedite presumptions—now we're keeping them," said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. "We are taking a new approach to presumptives that takes all available science into account, with one goal in mind—getting today's veterans—and vets in the decades ahead—the benefits they deserve as fast as possible."

VA has begun processing disability compensation claims for veterans who served any amount of time in the Southwest Asia theater of operations beginning Aug. 2, 1990, to the present, or Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Syria or Djibouti beginning Sept. 19, 2001, to the present.

Any veteran who has had one of the listed cancers at any time during or after separation from military service may be eligible for disability compensation benefits.

Veterans, survivors or dependents who had claims previously denied for any of these respiratory cancers are encouraged to file a supplemental claim for benefits. To apply for benefits, veterans and survivors may visit www.va.gov or call toll-free at (800) 827-1000.

VA

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Sergeant Major John L. Canley

Sergeant Major John L. Canley, who was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions during the Battle of Hue City, died May 11, in Bend, Ore. He was 84.

While Canley was the Company Gunnery Sergeant for Company A, 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, 1st Marine Division, he was heavily engaged in the fighting in and around Hue City, Vietnam, during the 1968 Tet Offensive. From Jan. 31-Feb. 6, Co A fought off numerous enemy attacks while they moved along Highway 1 into Hue in order to relieve Marines inside the city. After the company commander was severely wounded, "The Gunny" led his Marines into Hue City where over the course of several days, A/1/1 attacked multiple enemy positions. Throughout the battle, Canley repeatedly exposed himself to incoming enemy rounds in order to rescue wounded men and bring them to safety.

"The actions in the face of danger SgtMaj Canley took are incredible and remarkable," said Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Troy Black in a statement released after Canley's death. "SgtMaj Canley was a leader and warfighter who undoubtedly contributed to the battles won in Vietnam. His first priority was and has always been his Marines—a true example of *Semper Fidelis*. I'm saddened by the loss of such a great Marine, yet I'm grateful for the legacy he established for generations of warriors."

SgtMaj Canley initially received the Navy Cross for his actions in Vietnam, but thanks to the efforts of some of the Marines he had led at Hue City, including John Ligato, a former corporal in Co "A," the award was upgraded. Ligato, a retired FBI agent, spearheaded a 13-year effort to have Canley's Navy Cross upgraded to the Medal of Honor. The nation's highest award for valor was finally presented to SgtMaj Canley on Oct. 17, 2018, at The White House with veterans of A/1/1 in attendance.

Canley was born in Caledonia, Ark., in 1937 and used his older brother's birth certificate to enlist in the Marine Corps in 1953 when he was 15. His 28-year career included assignments in Korea, Okinawa and California. He also completed three combat tours in Vietnam.

Canley's other awards include the Bronze Star with combat "V," the Purple Heart, the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with combat "V," and



CPL DAMON MCLEAN, USMC

Retired SgtMaj John L. Canley renders a salute during a parade held in his honor at Marine Barracks Washington, D.C., on Oct. 19, 2018. It is a tradition for the Barracks to host a parade for Marines who receive the Medal of Honor.

the Combat Action Ribbon. In late June, a ship named in his honor, USS *John L. Canley* (ESB-6), was christened in San Diego, Calif.

To read more about SgtMaj Canley's actions at Hue City, see "Operation Gunny: A Marine's Dedication to Honor SgtMaj John L. Canley," by John Ligato, in the December 2018 issue of *Leatherneck*. Photos from his Medal of Honor ceremony were published in the same issue.

Nancy S. Lichtman

Major General Wayne E. Rollings

Major General Wayne E. Rollings, a decorated infantry officer who commanded Marines at every level, died Jan. 3, in St. John's County, Fla. He was 80 years old.

Rollings was the recipient of the Navy Cross for actions as a patrol leader with 1st Reconnaissance Company, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division (Reinforced). On Sept. 18, 1969, Then-First Lieutenant Rollings was leading a long-range recon patrol into enemy territory in Quang Nam Province, Vietnam. While the patrol's point man was firing on an enemy emplacement, his

weapon became inoperable, so Rollings rushed forward and positioned himself between the point man and the enemy. According to the award citation, he continued to deliver suppressive fire even though "small arms fire tore his clothing and ripped his gas mask, and fragments of an enemy grenade struck him in the face and legs."

His actions resulted in enemy casualties and a withdrawal of hostile forces. Rollings continued to expose himself to incoming fire so that he could direct airstrikes on all the enemy's possible egress routes. During the engagement, neither Rollings nor his point man were hit by enemy rounds. "It was a close call, I guess," he said in the April 1970 issue of *Leatherneck*. "But close calls don't count," he added.

In addition to the Navy Cross, he was the recipient of two Silver Stars and the Bronze Star with combat "V."

Born in South Carolina, Rollings began his Marine Corps career in 1960, enlisting after his high school graduation. After completing boot camp, he served as a drill instructor at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C. He left active duty in 1965 and attended the University

of Georgia on a track and field scholarship. After graduating with a bachelor's degree, he was commissioned a second lieutenant and attended The Basic School, where he was an honor graduate.

During his career, he commanded 2nd Force Reconnaissance Co; 3rd Bn, 4th Marines; 3rd Marine Regiment; III Marine Expeditionary Force in Okinawa, Japan, and II MEF in Camp Lejeune, N.C. He was a graduate of the Armed Forces Staff College and National War College. After his 1999 retirement from the Marine Corps, he was the president of the Marine Military Academy in Harlingen, Texas, until 2005.

He was a gifted athlete, and throughout his life, remained committed to maintaining physical fitness, setting a record for sit-ups multiple times. As reported in the December 1963 issue of *Leatherneck*, then-Corporal Rollings established an unofficial record by completing 5,000 consecutive sit-ups in two hours and 26 minutes. In 1981, when he was the Marine Officer Instructor at the University of South Carolina's NROTC unit, he broke a world record by completing 40,000 sit-ups over the course of 16 hours. Rollings said he took on the challenge because the previous record had been set by a Russian—he believed an American should hold

that record. After the grueling PT session, the Marine told reporters, "My wind, endurance and strength were good, but I didn't want to do too much and do any damage to my body."

Nancy S. Lichtman

John R. Arneson, 98, of Minneapolis, Minn. During WW II, he saw action in the Pacific. He was recalled to active duty during the Korean War. He later had a 34-year career in the telecommunications industry. He was a member of the VFW and the American Legion.

Andrew J. Dossett III, 94, of Newport Beach, Calif. He enlisted in 1945 and later was recalled to active duty during the Korean War. He later had a career in business.

Bruce R. Lamb, 88, of Costa Mesa, Calif. He was a college football player who joined the Marine Corps after his 1955 graduation from University of Redlands. He served until 1963.

James R. "Doc" Mayhew, 75, of San Diego, Calif. He was a corpsman from 1963-1967. He was assigned to 1st Recon Bn and 3rd Recon Bn during the Vietnam War. His awards include a Bronze Star with combat "V." He later had a career as a respiratory therapist and then in medical supply sales.

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.

Leatherneck introduces LEGACIES—a quarterly special section commemorating Marines and other servicemembers. LEGACIES provides a venue in which individuals can celebrate and recognize the lives of their loved ones by sharing their Marine Corps stories with other Marines, friends and loved ones for a small fee. *Leatherneck* will continue to run obituaries at no charge, but for those who want to further memorialize their loved one or themselves, LEGACIES is here to share those memories. Debuting in our May 2022 issue, this paid feature will run quarterly in *Leatherneck*.

For more information on LEGACIES rates, please email us at advertising@mca-marines.org. 🇺🇸



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SOUND OFF
[continued from page 6]

viewed our place in it. When comparing how the citizens of this country dealt with these “new” challenges to how they did so in the era of Vietnam the difference is night and day. I did not suffer the indignity and disrespect [you did] when I came home from Iraq and Afghanistan. I did not feel inclined to have to hide my service. But most of all, I did not have to search for a purpose. The praise, although very uncomfortable to receive, and respect that I continue to get solidifies the fact that a difference was made and that my time there had a purpose. Make no mistake I am not saying that I require the approval from others for what we did over there, what I mean is that not coming home to a feeling of abandonment from my country allows me to see more clearly.

What I wish for all Vietnam veterans is that they too can realize that everything they went through had purpose and that purpose resounds through our country and our military today. From the tactics they learned and perfected on the battlefield, to what they endured when they returned home, ALL OF IT made a difference. This difference or purpose may not be what they wanted, but the life of a serviceman

(or woman) is not about getting what you want, it’s about doing your job, making good on that check, and leaving the planet better than it was when you got here. And to all of those things, I and countless others say job well done and welcome home.

As for the dealing with the critics, those who do not understand or know what real evil looks like and then criticize the actions of those who go forward to fight it and keep it from our home shores, I would remind our veterans, particularly those of the war in Vietnam, that lions should not concern themselves with the opinions of sheep. Don’t ever forget that you’re a lion.

Sgt Edward R. Heyward
Sturgeon Bay, Wis.

Memories of Vietnam Marines

I am writing in response to Gunnery Sergeant Larry D. Williams, USMC (Ret), Sound Off letter, “First Patrol in Vietnam” [October 2021] and Sergeant John H. Allen’s response, “A Curious Vietnam Veteran” in the December 2021 issue. The letters had to do with Gunny Williams destroying his photos 16 years after Vietnam. Sgt Allen expressed his condolences and curiosity of the act.

I am the son of Sgt Vicente Rivera, 0311, who served from 1965 to 1969. After boot

camp in 1965, he was on the initial landing at Chu Lai serving with “Mike” Co, 3/7, in the Central Highlands, and later on his second tour, he served with Foxtrot Co, 2/26 in Dong Ha and Con Thien areas. As a kid, and still to this day, I have looked at and read all I could about Vietnam to include the letters and photos my dad sent home. Many of the photos and artifacts he collected were confiscated in Okinawa just as Sgt Allen’s were along with all the leathernecks returning from Vietnam.

Coming home from school in the summer of 1967, which is close to the time when Gunny Williams destroyed his photos, my dad had a fire going in the barbeque. I noticed he was throwing postcards, letters and miscellaneous photos into the fire. I asked him what was going on and he answered with an assertive tone, “Getting rid of some old memories.”

I walked away and we never spoke about it again. Luckily, most of his photos were in a different location as I, at age 18, had been looking at them and had shown them to a friend who was leaving for boot camp after his high school graduation.

After reading Gunny Williams’ and Sgt Allen’s letters, I asked my dad if he had read them. He had and went on to discuss the fire incident that had happened years ago with me. We both found it very

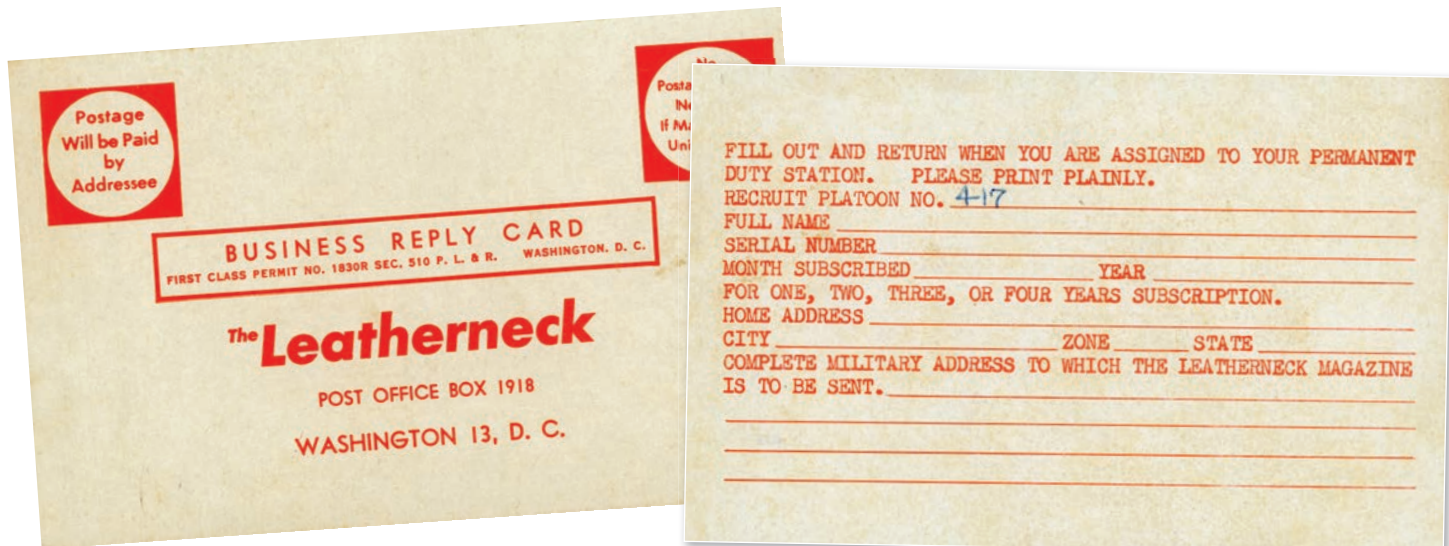


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COURTESY OF SGT GEORGE R. MURRAY JR.

While downsizing his household, Sgt George R. Murray Jr. ran across a *Leatherneck* subscription form he was given as a recruit, with "Easy" Co, Plt 417, from Parris Island, 1954. A one-year subscription at that time cost \$3.00.

curious that the timeframe between Gunny Williams and my dad destroying those memories were very similar and the two acts were quite the same. It made me think how many more Marines had done something similar.

I salute all Marines and the Marine Corps with a special regard and interest for the Marines that served in Vietnam. Thank you for your service.

My dad was told in boot camp by his

senior drill instructor that he would receive a *Leatherneck* subscription. He holds the same subscription to this day—57 years later.

Paul F. Rivera
Tucson, Ariz.

Marine Stumbles Upon Old *Leatherneck* Subscription Form

In downsizing our household, I came across this *Leatherneck* subscription

card that was given to me as a recruit at Parris Island in 1954. I was in Platoon 417, "Easy" Co, a misnomer if there ever was one, so they changed it to Echo Co, 2nd Training Battalion.

I still have my platoon graduation book, and, can have a mindset that places me back as a teenager at Parris Island in a second. I have many memories. I just sent a fellow platoon recruit a small frame with buck sergeant chevrons as a mental pickup

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as he is in a Florida nursing home and will not walk out on his own. He also served as best man at my wedding almost 67 years ago at MCB Quantico, Va.

This may give you some insight into how the *Leatherneck* was introduced to

new recruits. While I enjoyed reading it then, it is still a staple of my reading today. Thank you for your leadership at *Leatherneck* and support. Semper Fidelis.

Sgt George R. Murray Jr.
USMC, 1953-1961
Salisbury, Md.

Unintentional Demotion

In the May *Leatherneck* on page 66, there is a picture of a young Marine in dress blues. I believe someone unintentionally demoted him. The article names him as LCpl Kordell Waklatski as a guide for the President, Vice President and Secretary of Defense. He definitely is wearing corporal chevrons and has the red stripe down the trousers.

Keep up the great work. Love reading the articles every month and then give my magazine to another former Marine who reads it and then passes to another Marine.

Sgt Mike Skorich
USMC, 1963-1966
Leesburg, Fla.

Per the May issue concerning Hue leaders, "Hue City Article Raised Questions," [Sound Off] there was a huge omission and/or oversight and that was General Peter Pace. I'll not laud his accomplishments, but being the first

Marine CJCS ain't half bad and he's one hell of a leader.

Second, on page 66, the Marine pictured is a corporal of Marines not a lance corporal.

1stSgt Gregory Casler, USMC(Ret)
Kailua, Hawaii

• *Several of our readers caught our mistake in unintentionally demoting Cpl Waklatski in the caption on page 66. While we do our best to make each issue perfect, sometimes we slip up. We appreciate constructive criticism and pride ourselves on correcting our mistakes, so thank you to those like Sgt Skorich and 1stSgt Casler who pointed out our error in a respectful way.—Editor*

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

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Reunions

• **1stMarDiv Assn. (75th annual reunion)**, Aug. 13-20, Washington, D.C. Contact June Cormier, (760) 763-3268, june.oldbreed@fmda.us.

• **USMC Vietnam Tankers Assn.**, Sept. 17-20, Dubois, Wyo. Contact John Wear, (719) 495-5998, johnwear2@verizon.net.

• **Marine Corps Engineer Assn.**, Sept. 26-29, Las Vegas. Contact LtCol George Carlson, USMC (Ret), (931) 307-9094, treasurer@marcorengasn.org, www.marcorengasn.org.

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

• **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).

• **7th Engineer Bn Vietnam Veterans Assn.**, Sept. 25-28, Colorado Springs, Colo. Contact Norbert Johnson, (810) 300-0782, nwgi@outlook.com.

• **4th LAR (OEF, 2009)**, July 14-16, Reno, Nev. Contact Pat Garrahan, (209) 256-4989, pdgarrahan@gmail.com, www.4thlarreunion.com.

• **1/27**, Sept. 28-Oct. 1, San Antonio. Contact Felix Salmeron, (469) 583-0191, mar463@aol.com.

• **3/4**, Aug. 17-20, Lisle/Naperville, Ill. Contact Travis Fryzowicz, (732) 251-5518, travisjfry@gmail.com.

• **Battery Adjust, 3/11**, Sept. 20-25, Kansas City, Mo. Contact Brian Seals, (765) 580-2734, bseals2013@gmail.com.

• **C/1/12 (RVN)**, Sept. 20-25, Kansas City, Mo. Contact Woody Hall, (931) 242-8432, hwoodrow@charter.net.

• **G/2/7 (RVN)**, Sept. 14-18, San Antonio. Contact Lamont Taylor, (518) 249-7009, cinemscreenad@yahoo.com.

• **Marine Security Forces, NWS Earle**, Oct. 7-10, Colts Neck, N.J. Contact Dusty Wright, (618) 553-2205, slickstuff@nwcable.net.

• **Marine Detachment, U.S. Naval Disciplinary Command Portsmouth, N.H.**, Sept. 12-17, Charleston, S.C. Contact Don Ferry, (972) 334-0609, don.ferry1942@gmail.com.

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

• **Plt 2064, San Diego, 1965**, is planning a reunion. Contact Gary A. Gruenwald, (434) 609-3433, usmcgman74@aol.com.

• **USS Hornet (CV-8, CV/CVA/CVS-12)** and **USS Constellation (CVA/CV-64)**, Sept. 12-17, Buffalo, N.Y. Contact Sandy

Burket, P.O. Box 108, Roaring Spring, PA 16673, (814) 224-5063, (814) 312-4976, hornetcva12@aol.com, or Richard Swain, (432) 694-0227, membership@ussconstellation.org.

• **LPH Iwo Jima Class: USS Iwo Jima (LPH-2), USS Okinawa (LPH-3), USS Guadalcanal (LPH-7), USS Guam (LPH-9), USS Tripoli (LPH-10), USS New Orleans (LPH-11)**, Sept. 28-Oct. 2, Warwick, R.I. Contact Dena Rice, (615) 585-2088, denaiphone@bellsouth.net.

Mail Call

• Michael J. Hagle, 6112 Springleaf Circle, Fort Worth, TX, 76133, (214) 577-6717, michaelhagle@me.com, to hear from **Roland HERNANDEZ**, who served with **HQ Co, 3rd Marines** in **1993**. He also would like to hear from **Ricky BLACKBURN**, who served with **Weapons Plt, C/1/3, 1991-1994**.

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

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Rowell went on to train as a pilot in 1923 and was a proponent of dive bombing to support ground actions. He received the Distinguished Flying Cross and Distinguished Navy Service Medal for leading a dive bomb attack on a surrounded garrison of U.S. Marines and Nicaraguan National Guardsmen in Ocotal, Nicaragua, on July 16, 1927.

James Montgomery Flagg sold his first illustrations to magazines when he was 12, a few years before he began studying at the Art Students League in New York City. Over the course of his long career, he created illustrations for many books and magazines, but his iconic Army recruiting poster of a pointing Uncle Sam is the one for which he is most remembered.

Author’s bio: Joan Thomas is the art curator for the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle, Va. 🇺🇸

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Service CU Has Partnered With Mobius Mobility to Offer iBOT® Loan

Of the approximately 19 million veterans in the U.S., about one-third have a service-connected disability, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs. For veterans who served in the post-9/11 ERA, 41% reported a service-connected disability in August 2018, and nearly half of those had a service-connected disability with a severity rating of 60% or more, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

For our wounded warriors who rely on a wheelchair, the world is not as accessible as it should be. And while technology has evolved to help veterans who rely on mobility devices better adapt to their surroundings, these advanced devices can be costly to the purchaser.

Service Credit Union has partnered with Mobius Mobility to make its iBOT® Personal Mobility Device (PMD), a revolutionary mobility product, more financially attainable to prospective users.

Developed by inventor Dean Kamen and manufactured at Mobius Mobility in Manchester, NH, the iBOT® Personal Mobility Device is a breakthrough product for people with disabilities. The robotic, multi-modal iBOT® has features such as four-wheel drive and the ability to navigate curbs and climb



stairs. It engages its four-wheel drive to work on a variety of terrain, including sand, snow, ice and gravel. Most importantly to many of its users, the iBOT® allows people to rise up to interact with the world at eye level.

“When I’m in a social situation and I’m talking to people, and I’m able to look them in the eye and have a conversation with them, that disability just seems to fade into the background and I gain a sense of independence, and it’s just an incredible feeling,” said iBOT® user Gary Linfoot.

For many years, Service Credit Union has worked with veteran-focused nonprofits that provide grants for iBOT®s, but the organization wanted to make iBOT®s available to a wider swath of the population.

“The iBOT® is a life-changing device and we are thrilled to partner with Mobius Mobility to make this technology accessible to a wide group of people. There is no reason that someone whose life would be improved by the iBOT® should be limited from receiving one due to financial reasons, and we look forward to making the dream of having an iBOT® a reality for many,” said Mark O’Dell, Vice President of Lending at Service Credit Union.

The iBOT® loan is available to anyone who has a medical prescription for the device and meets certain criteria. No credit check is required. If you are interested in applying for a loan, please visit servicecu.org/ibot to learn more.





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