

MARCH 2022

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LEATHERNECK

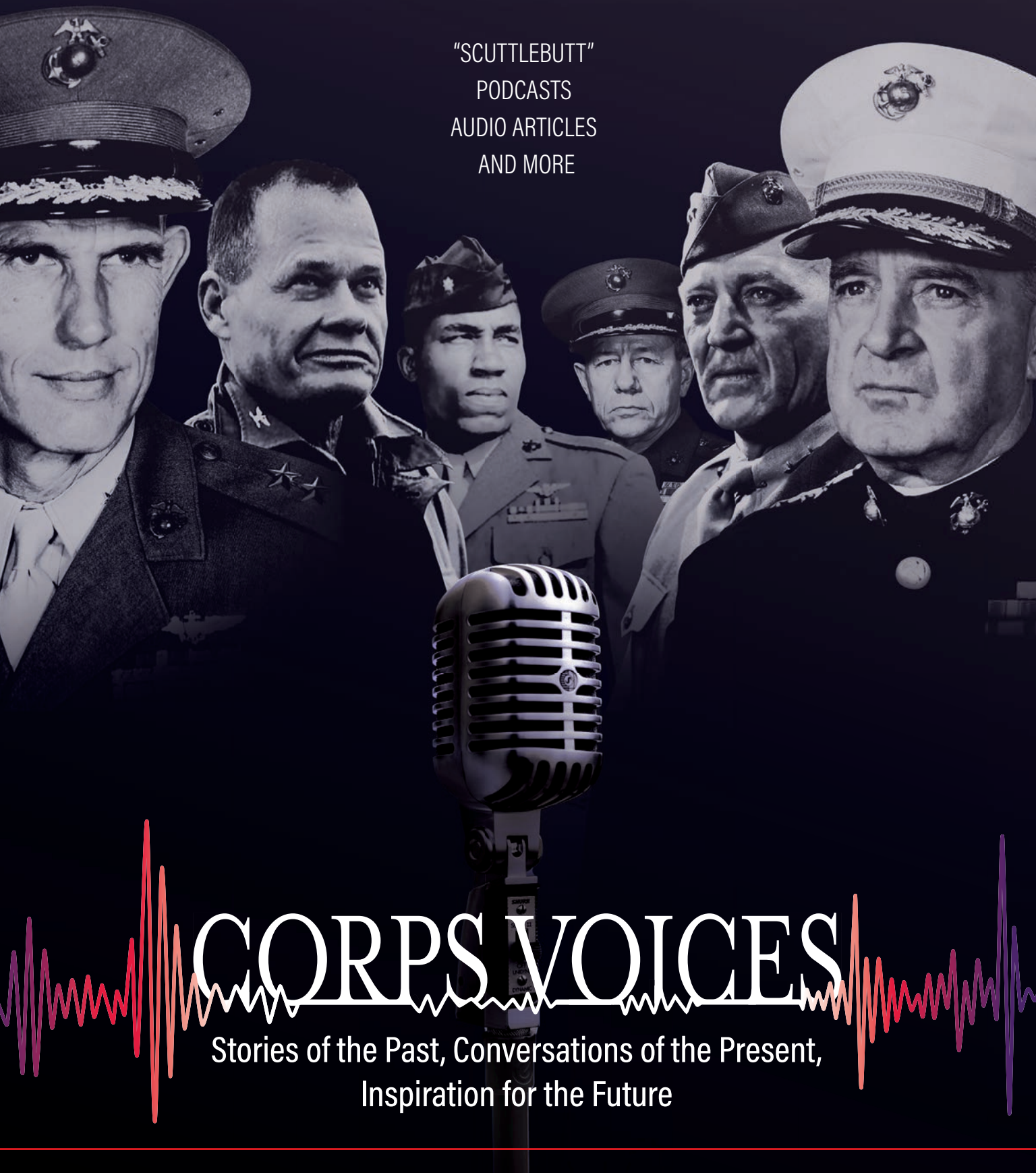
MAGAZINE OF THE MARINES

"SCUTTLEBUTT"

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AND MORE



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Inspiration for the Future

A dark, high-contrast photograph of two Marine Raiders in full tactical gear. The primary subject in the foreground is wearing a helmet with night vision goggles and a communication device, holding a rifle. A second Marine is visible in the background, also in gear. The scene is dimly lit, emphasizing the tactical nature of the operation.

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**MARINE
RAIDERS**



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COVER: "Scuttlebutt: An MCA Podcast" episodes include the impressive "Corps Voices" collection featuring interviews with some of the most revered Marines in history, including, from left to right, Marines MajGen Marion E. Carl, LtGen Lewis Burwell "Chesty" Puller, LtGen Frank E. Petersen, Gen Robert E. Hogaboom, Gen Graves B. Erskine and Gen Alexander A. Vandegrift. Cover design by Tess Hatton. 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.)

This past Thanksgiving has a special memory for me. On Thanksgiving morning, I had registered to run a 5K Turkey Trot sponsored by a local nonprofit. Although I have participated in many events over the past 50 years including triathlons, ocean swims, Century Bike rides, and road races from 5K to marathons (including the Marine Corps Marathon), this one was special as it was to be my last race. It was time to just run for fun and health. Doing a 5K at 85 years of age was on my bucket list.

At the beginning of the race, I met Second Lieutenant Daniel Josephson who is stationed at Camp Lejeune. He traveled to our area to celebrate the holiday with family. I have been following his progress in the Corps for several years

via his family and now it was time to chat face-to-face. We talked before the race, touching on his specialty (artillery) and general adaptation to Marine Corps life. He was surprised to learn that I was one of the Corps' last "buck sergeants" just before the enlisted ranking changed post-Korean conflict.

Once the race started, I lost him as he was the lead runner and eventually finished first out of approximately 100 participants. Subsequently, people were looking for him to prepare for the post-race award ceremony, but he was not to be found. Lt Josephson had returned to the race course to find me and ran with me to the finish line. A young Marine and an old Marine ran together meeting the race challenge in a very special way. This will be a lasting memory.

When I returned home and told my wife, her only comment rendered matter of factly was, "That's what Marines do." When thoughtful people like Lt Josephson are combined with the excellent leadership of our Commandant, General David



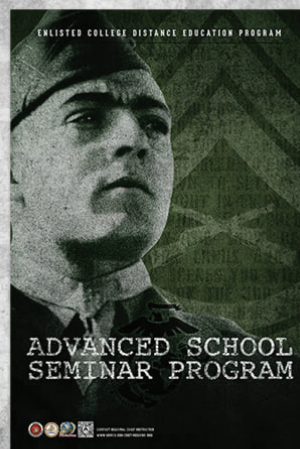
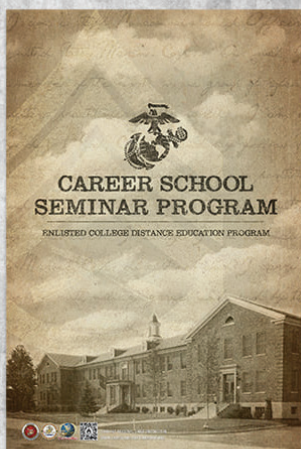
ANN MORRIS

Sgt George Murray Jr., 85 years old, met 2ndLt Daniel Josephson, at a 5K Turkey Trot in Salisbury, Md., in November 2021.

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

Reader Experienced Anti-Semitism During Boot Camp

Over the last few months, I've read statements from Marines that they were mistreated in boot camp. Yes, it's true. I was kicked several times in the back of the leg when I was out of step. I also spent several trips to the sand and wood chip pits. Did it make me a better Marine? Indeed, it did, and I don't regret it.

What I do regret is anti-Semitic attitudes that I encountered in boot camp.

Growing up in California, kids would make fun of you if you were Jewish. This continued in high school. In my senior year I decided to change my religion. I had not chosen a religion in 1965 as I was attending about six different churches.

In 1966, when I decided to enlist in the Marine Corps, my recruiter told me that I had to put a religion on my application. I told him I did not have one and he stated

that it was a requirement. He said if I was previously Jewish and had not decided on a new religion, I needed to write down that I was Jewish. I panicked. What if I put something else down and they found out that I was previously Jewish? Would they say I had lied and be grounds for not allowing me to enlist? I wrote down that I was Jewish, and it was on my dog tags.

I forgot about the incident until the first Sunday in boot camp. On Sunday morning when they grouped all the recruits together for different churches, the platoon commander yelled out, "Where's my frigging Jew?" I froze, not believing what I'd just heard. Again, he said, "I won't ask again. WHERE'S MY FRIGGING JEW?" Finally, I put my hand up and replied, "Here, Sir." The platoon commander said I was to march myself to a building near the grinder. My reply was, "Sir, I want to attend one of the Christian churches with the other recruits." His response was, "No frigging way. You belong with your own kind." I complied with his orders and every Sunday for the next seven weeks I was subjected to the same announcement, "Where's my frigging Jew?"

I survived boot camp, didn't mind the physical abuse, in fact, it made me a better person. I never did forget the horrible anti-Semitic attitudes of my

platoon commander. It was worse than physical abuse.

Sgt Todd A. Kline
Pensacola, Fla.

• *Editor's note: That type of behavior has no place in our Marine Corps. The Department of Defense and Marine Corps have made great strides in the last 50 years to ensure that hatred, extremism, racism and anti-Semitism are rooted out among the ranks.—Editor*

James Ayling Article Led Reader To do Further Research

I thoroughly enjoyed GySgt Brian A. Knowles' interesting and well-researched story, "James Ayling: From Immigrant to a Founding Member of the Marine Corps Reserve," in the December 2021 issue. This was, in my opinion, one of the most fascinating stories I've ever read in *Leatherneck* and my hat is off to the gunny. He mentions that Ayling's whereabouts between July 1904 and June 1907 are unknown. I did a bit of research at Newspapers.com, and found a couple of references to James Ayling remaining in St. Louis, the city where he disgraced himself and wound up booted out of the Corps.

After his discharge from the Corps,



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Ayling got a job as a guard at St. Louis' House of Refuge, which seems to have been a reform school or place of detention for wayward youth. The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* reported on Nov. 16, 1904, that a runaway girl from the home was caught by Ayling at Twelfth Street and Franklin Avenue. He was also mentioned in the Feb. 26, 1905, edition of the *St. Louis-Globe Democrat* as being present at a musical presentation by the boys of the home. By this time, he was also serving as drillmaster at the home.

The House of Refuge changed its name to the St. Louis Industrial School and in August 1906 took its 400 young residents to an automobile race. An article in the Aug. 19 edition of the *Post-Dispatch* notes that in the afternoon the boys were put through drills and marches by "instructor, Capt. James Ayling." The rank of captain, of course, was specific to the school's administration.

The final piece of info I found was a June 13, 1907, article from the *Globe-Democrat* about Ayling's return to the Marine Corps. The article verified that he had worked as drillmaster at the refuge home. That firmly establishes that he did, indeed, remain in St. Louis after his discharge in 1904. So now we know what he was doing between 1904 and 1907.

Again, thanks for running the piece on Ayling. I'm looking forward to more stories from Gunny Knowles, who is a terrific writer.

Charles Culbertson

USMC, 1971-1975

Waynesboro, Va.

All Gave Some, Some Gave All

A day in September 1962 stands out in my memory. I was in the Marine Corps and a plane captain in an A4 Skyhawk squadron, VMA-212, at Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii. "Hoot" was an ordnance man on that day when he was killed on our flight line. His last name was Hooten, so we called him Hoot. I remember that he was a tall, skinny kid from down south.

Our planes were being loaded with 1,000-pound bombs for a training run on the target island. I remember the sun being extremely bright as I walked out to preflight my airplane. Hoot walked out with me, and we talked about how the sun gave us a headache. He went to the string of bomb carts to help with the loading, and I went to my plane at the other end of the line. I was up on the ladder checking the cockpit when I looked up and saw several Marines running toward the flight line. I looked over the cockpit and then I saw it. A 1,000-pound bomb was laying on the cement under one of our A4Ds. It occurred to me that it was armed and the troops

running from the hangar were going to throw it in the bay just behind the line. I scrambled down the ladder and ran over to help. As I approached the bomb, I could see a body on the other side of it. It was Hoot, but it didn't look like him anymore. His head was crushed. The only way I knew it was him was by the name tag on his utilities. He was still alive and gasping for air. One of the other plane captains reached down his throat to clear it, but it was full of blood. I ran to the corpsman's office in the hangar to get the corpsman. He knelt to check out Hoot and just shook his head. There was nothing he could do.

Hoot and the other ordnance men were loading the bombs on the wing racks with one bomb on the left and one bomb on the right. Each bomb was on its own cart that would be positioned under the wing and then jacked up until the clevis hooks lined up with the rings on the bomb. The ordnance man, Hoot in this case, would position himself under the bomb and tighten down the hooks with a ratchet wrench. That's where Hoot was when a stray electrical spark set off the black powder charge that pushed the bomb away from the airplane just as Hoot was underneath the bomb, crushing him. After about a half hour, an ambulance picked him up and took him to the HMM-161 hangar for a helicopter evacuation to Tripler Hospital on the other side of the island. He was still gasping for air. They said he died on the helicopter, but he was dead when the bomb fell on him.

His name isn't etched on a wall nor is there a ship named after him, but Hoot gave his life for his country doing his duty. Whether in actual combat or on duty during peacetime, all who serve, like Hoot, risk their lives in the service of their country. All gave some, some gave all.

Cpl Norm Spilleth

USMC, 1960-1964

Minneapolis, Minn.

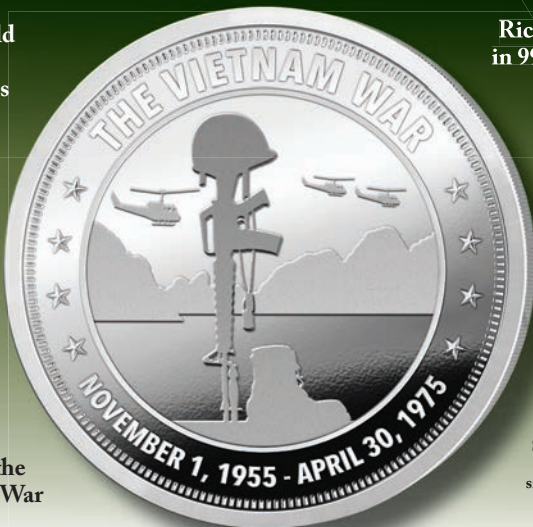
Reader Upset Over Poem That Criticized President

I'm very disappointed and upset that our *Leatherneck* magazine is now becoming politicized with CDR Dick Boyce's, USN, poem, "A Wound Veterans Share" in the December 2021 issue, slamming our President. There is no room in our Marine Corps to disrespect our President who we swore to defend regardless of our feelings or political stance. I realize that some Marines including myself were upset for pulling out of Afghanistan, but this was in the works with the previous administration. I also felt rage when President Nixon pulled out of Vietnam where I lost friends. If *Leatherneck* is changing their neutral position, then I will

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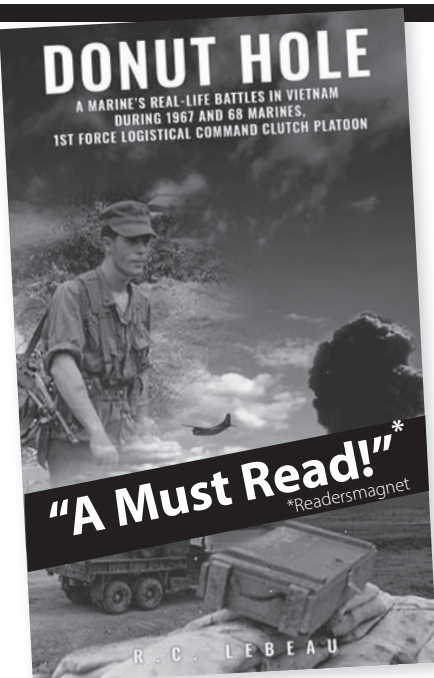
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Sgt Jim Biegger
USMC, 1964-1967
Elkhart, Iowa

• *Editor's note: You were not the only one to chastise us for the final verse of the poem, Sgt Biegger. The Leatherneck staff works hard to keep politics out of the Magazine of the Marines and create a respectful tone throughout the magazine. In our eagerness to publish more poetry, something relatively rare since we stopped Gyrene Gyngles several years ago, we weren't diligent enough in ensuring the poem met our non-political standards. It won't happen again.—Editor*

The Love of a Child

My husband, James E. Johnston, passed away on March 3, 2021. He was a 100 percent disabled Marine Corps veteran from the small town of LaRue, Texas. He served from September 1969 through December 1971. He was a lance corporal when discharged and served in the Motor Transport Division. He was deployed to Vietnam in December 1969 for one year and later was diagnosed with COPD.

I wanted to share this picture of our 4-year-old great-grandson, Lyle Owens.

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COURTESY OF WANDA JOHNSTON



COURTESY OF WANDA JOHNSTON

Left: Lyle Owens, great-grandson of Mrs. Wanda Johnston, leans in to comfort a Marine presenting the flag to Mrs. Johnston, at the funeral of her husband, James T. Johnston, far left, last March.

Lyle stood by my side comforting me during the service. As the Marine knelt to present me with the flag, Lyle went over and patted the Marine on his back and leaned over for a hug to comfort him. The gesture of love and respect by our great-grandson, I believe, was done out of compassion and recognition of his "Papaw."

I would like to see if this picture could

be published for a keepsake for Lyle and for others to recognize the sacrifice that our military men and women have made in the past. Also, to see the love from a child for the military. Thank you for your publications. My husband looked forward to receiving his every month.

Wanda Johnston
Palestine, Texas

Remembering Col Studt

Though I had learned of Col John C. Studt's death from his daughter, I was saddened again to see him listed in the "In Memoriam" column. I had the privilege to serve under John Studt when he commanded the 25th Marines in the USMCR. We were both at Khe Sanh, but I rotated home in September 1967, and

[continued on page 68]



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In Every Clime and Place

Compiled by Sara W. Bock



SGT MARIO RAMIREZ, USMC

SSgt Josphe Matero, a platoon sergeant with 2nd Bn, 8th Marine Regiment, communicates while on bilateral patrol during Resolute Dragon 21 on Ojojihara Proving Grounds, Japan, Dec. 9, 2021.

MIYAGI, JAPAN

Marines, Japanese Soldiers Complete Largest-Ever Bilateral Field Exercise

The U.S. Marine Corps and Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF) completed their largest-ever bilateral field training exercise in Japan as Resolute Dragon 21 came to a close Dec. 17, 2021.

More than 4,000 troops from 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force and the JGSDF's 9th Division, North Eastern Army combined to rehearse tactics, techniques and procedures for conducting Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations (EABO). Hundreds more from the Japan Air Self-Defense Force (JASDF) and the U.S. Navy, Air Force, Army and Space Force supported the bilateral exercise, executing integrated operations across more than 1,800 miles of the Japanese archipelago and incorporating 12 expeditionary advanced bases (EABs).

"This training is important to enhance interoperability between the U.S. and Japan—deepening mutual understanding of capabilities, equipment and fighting methods to mutually improve tactical skills," said Colonel Akira Kuroha, chief

of staff of the JGSDF's 9th Division.

Confronting freezing rain and snow, U.S. Marines and Japanese soldiers executed aerial and ground insertions into multiple training areas to seize and secure key terrain, often in contested environments replicated through force-on-force and live-fire training scenarios.

These forces rapidly established EABs featuring a variety of capabilities, to include a Bilateral Ground Tactical Coordination Center (BGTCC) responsible for synchronizing simulated strikes against maritime targets. The BGTCC coordinated multi-domain effects by leveraging sensor network interoperability, bilateral ground-based precision fires, U.S. Marine Corps and JASDF aircraft, and USS *Ralph Johnson* (DDG-114) at sea.

"In Resolute Dragon, we are building the plan together, we are sharing the targeting data together, we are choosing the asset we will use to engage that target together, and then we are going after it," said Major Ben Reading, fire support coordination officer for 4th Marine Regiment. "The BGTCC is where we come together with our allies to do all of that."

Simultaneously, U.S. Marines and JGSDF members nearly 200 miles away established bilateral fire direction centers and long-range precision fires capabilities. This capability enabled execution of simulated strikes against maritime targets and provided support to counter-landing operations through employment of both the JGSDF Surface-to-Ship Missile (SSM) systems and the U.S. Marine Corps High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS).

"We're both learning a lot from each other, and we're both bringing unique capabilities to this fight that reinforce our ability to prosecute targets anytime, anywhere," said Captain Jacob Amon, a field artillery officer and the fires EAB commander for the U.S. troops in the exercise. "The JGSDF are professional, knowledgeable, and they're really good at what they do."

Operations during Resolute Dragon 21 culminated in a comprehensive multi-domain maritime strike exercise in which JGSDF SSMs and U.S. Marine Corps HIMARS were successfully employed as part of an integrated kill web executing real-time simulated fire missions against maritime targets. Land, air and sea-based sensing from U.S. and Japanese assets expanded battlefield awareness and



LCPL DIANA JIMENEZ, USMC

Marines with 2nd Bn, 7th Marine Regiment fire at simulated "opposing forces" while conducting a force-on-force exercise during Resolute Dragon 21 on Ojojihara Proving Grounds, Japan, Dec. 14, 2021. Resolute Dragon was the largest bilateral field training exercise between the USMC and JGSDF since 2013 and the largest to ever be held in Japan.



Marines with 2nd Bn, 7th Marines set up an ambush while on patrol during Resolute Dragon 21 on Ojojihara Proving Grounds, Japan, Dec. 13, 2021. The exercise was designed to strengthen the defensive capabilities of the U.S.-Japan alliance by exercising integrated command and control, targeting, combined arms and maneuver across multiple domains. (Photo by Sgt Mario Ramirez, USMC)



LCPL DIANA JIMENEZ, USMC

Marines with Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 262 insert soldiers with the JGSDF into a landing zone during Resolute Dragon in Japan, Dec. 9, 2021.

Below: Marines with 2/8 fire 81 mm mortars while conducting live-fire defense training with the 39th Infantry Regiment, JGSDF, during Resolute Dragon 21 at Iwate, Japan, Dec. 10, 2021. The battalion is forward deployed in the Indo-Pacific under 4th Marine Regiment, 3rdMarDiv, under the unit deployment program.



LCPL SCOTT AUBUCHON, USMC



LCPL DIANA JIMENEZ, USMC

U.S. Marines and soldiers with the JGSDF prepare to receive an aerial resupply during Resolute Dragon 21 at Ojojihara Proving Grounds, Japan, Dec. 10, 2021.

provided data to confirm targets at sea, which the BGTCC processed to coordinate fire missions with assets operating across domains in support of sea denial.

“The United States military and the Japan Self-Defense Force are a powerful team—equipped to integrate and operate across the spectrum of warfare and in all domains to ensure the defense of every

piece of sovereign Japanese territory and defeat any threat to regional peace and security,” said Colonel Matthew Tracy, the commanding officer of 4th Marine Regiment. “For more than 60 years, we have stood together as the cornerstone of peace and security across the Indo-Pacific.”

Sgt Kirstin Spanu, USMC



CAMP LEMONNIER, DJIBOUTI **Reserve Squadron Joins** **Afghanistan Airlift Effort**

Reserve Marines with Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron (VMGR) 234 augmented an active-duty unit deployed in Saudi Arabia in support of Operation Allies Refuge (OAR), a United States military operation to airlift at-risk Afghan civilians including interpreters, U.S. embassy employees and other prospective Special Immigrant Visa applicants from Afghanistan in August 2021.

During OAR, a team of four pilots, six enlisted aircrew and six maintainers attached to VMGR-234 conducted 11 lifts, evacuated 838 Afghans and moved more than 200,000 pounds of cargo. VMGR-234 was the last Marine transport unit to leave Afghanistan and brought back the task force commanding officer.

“It wasn’t just pilots, and it wasn’t just KC-130s,” said Lieutenant Colonel David Girardot, a KC-130J aircraft commander with VMGR-234. “This attachment was

Marines assigned to VMGR-234 fly a KC-130J Super Hercules in formation with French Mirage fighter jets over Djibouti in July 2021. The reserve squadron, initially deployed in support of the North African Response Force, was reassigned to support the evacuation of at-risk Afghan civilians and U.S. embassy employees in August.



Right: Capt Olivia Raftshol, a pilot with VMGR-234, flies a KC-130J in support of a U.S. Air Force Special Warfare training mission over Djibouti in June 2021. Just two months later, the squadron evacuated more than 800 Afghans and moved more than 200,000 pounds of cargo while supporting Operation Allies Refuge.

extremely successful due to the positive attitude and work ethic from all of the Marines from top to bottom.”

Before assisting in OAR, VMGR-234’s mission was to go to Morón, Spain, to support the North African Response Force (NARF). The unit was detached and sent to Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti. NARF is an air-ground task force located in northern Africa, tasked with providing crisis response and aviation support to conduct rapid helicopter aerial refueling throughout the region by maintaining a continuous alert posture. NARF can also deliver personnel in order to assist tactical operations.



“We had to quickly transition from NARF to OAR,” said Girardot. “NARF is maintaining an alert posture while OAR is forward-leaning, needing a max effort requirement to provide the flight support. The days were sometimes over 24 hours long.”

During the squadron’s deployment to Camp Lemonnier, the Marines were able to conduct missions and train with a French Air Force Fighter Squadron that was also part of the coalition of forces assigned there.

Before being able to activate in support of NARF, the Marines of VMGR-234 had to requalify in accordance with their training and readiness manuals, conducting training in tactical flying with the KC-130J.

“Our number one mission in VMGR-234 is to support the active-duty Marine Corps,” said Girardot. “When NARF submits a request to VMGR-234 for support, it allows us to support the active-duty component.”

LCpl Mitchell Collyer, USMC

OAHU, HAWAII

As Base Deals With Contamination Issue, Marines Activate in Support

Japan-based U.S. Marines from Combat Logistics Regiment 3, 3rd Marine Logistics Group, executed Operation Kuleana, the response effort in support of housing residents affected by an ongoing contaminated water issue on Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam (JBPHH), Hawaii. The Marines departed Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, Japan, and arrived on Oahu, Dec. 7, 2021.

As the headquarters overseeing Operation Kuleana, CLR-3 joined Oahu-based Combat Logistics Battalion 3, CLR-3, 3rd MLG, which had been supporting response efforts from JBPHH's Halsey Terrace housing area since Dec. 3. CLB-3 was providing showers and laundry services, as well as distributing potable drinking water to affected residents at six different locations on the island.

The Japan-based CLR-3, which includes a forward command element and a detachment of utilities Marines from CLR-3's Energy Company, conducted command and control of Operation Kuleana and aided the joint response.

Led by Colonel Christopher Haar, the commanding officer of CLR-3, the team arrived from Okinawa, Japan, via Marine Corps KC-130J Super Hercules aircraft, Dec. 7. The Forward Command Element immediately integrated into the JBPHH Emergency Operations Center and began assisting support cells and joint force representatives in facilitating



SGT HAILEY CLAY, USMC

A family picks up potable water at a water distribution point in the Manana Housing Community, Pearl City, Hawaii, Dec. 14, 2021. Marines with 3rd MLG, in support of Task Force Kuleana, provided support services such as drinking water, field expedient showers and laundry facilities to residents affected by a contaminated water issue.

response efforts to those in the affected communities.

CLR-3 Marines also assisted the CLB-3 mission in support of JBPHH. CLR-3's task organized force included Marines and equipment to augment CLB-3's expeditionary field shower units and laundry facilities. CLR-3 Marines also conducted



SGT HAILEY CLAY, USMC

Cpl Alex Wall, a water support technician with Support Co, CLB-3, 3rd MLG, monitors a supply pump supporting a Field Expeditionary Shower Unit outside of Halsey Terrace housing area, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, Dec. 10, 2021.

neighborhood and structure safety watch.

"Being a Marine means being ready. In III MEF especially, we train to be ready to 'fight now.' Our team demonstrated this ability, rapidly assembling the Crisis Action Team, conducting planning and preparation for movement, and arriving here within 48 hours from receipt of mission. We are now hard at work trying to serve the folks here at JBPHH during this challenging time," said Haar.

SGT Hailey Clay, USMC

FORT MCCOY, WIS.

Cold Weather Training Tests Marines' Arctic Skills

Marines and Sailors with 2nd Marine Logistics Group participated in a two-week cold weather training exercise alongside units from 2nd Marine Division in Fort McCoy, Wis., the U.S. Army's "Total Force Training Center," Dec. 1-14, 2021.

Combat Logistics Battalion 6 and 2nd Transportation Battalion participated in various iterations of tactical-level training in extreme cold weather environments operating throughout Fort McCoy's training areas while simultaneously supporting 6th Marine Regiment's logistical requirements.

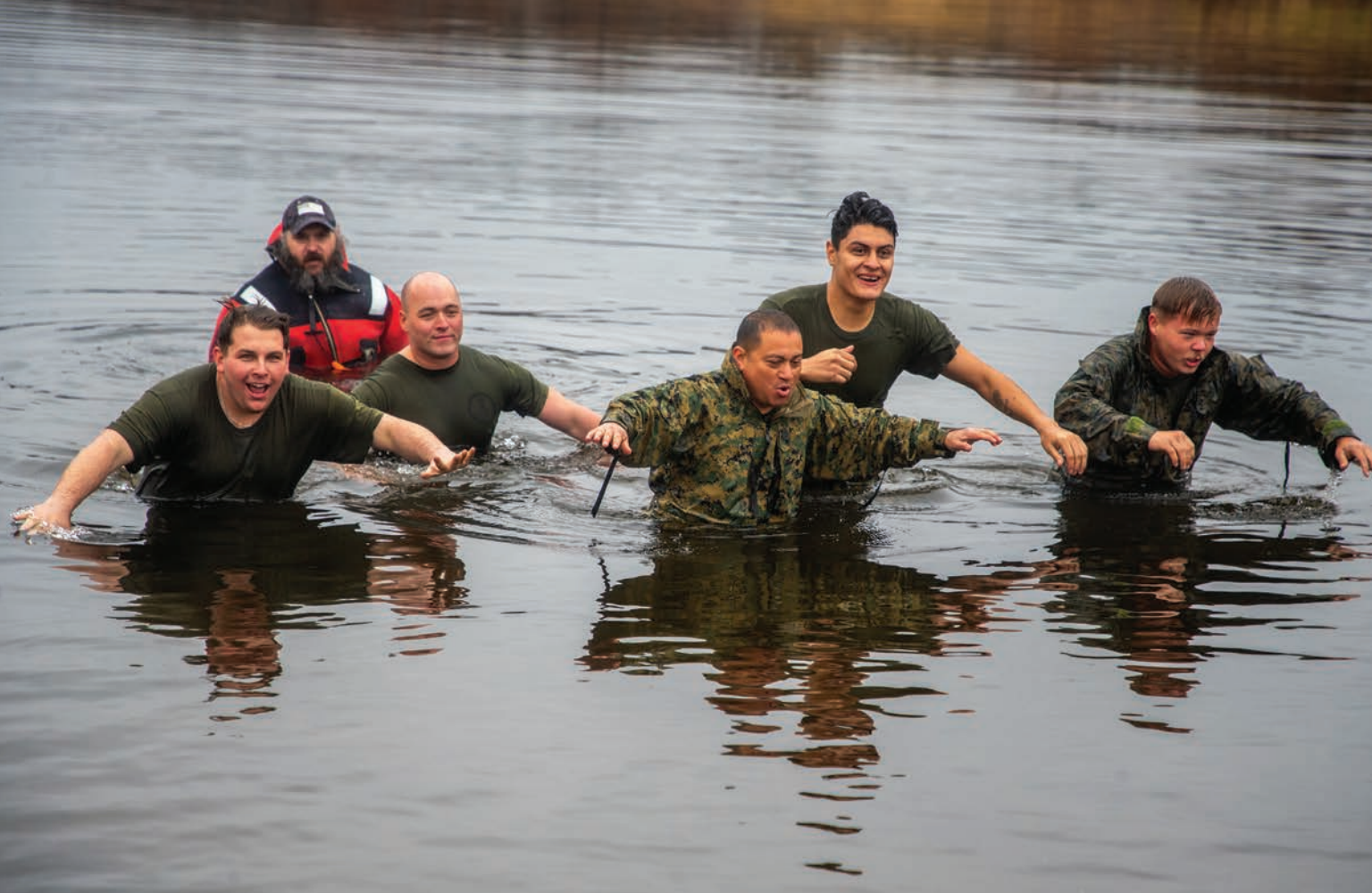
"The Marines and Sailors of CLB-6 were able to deploy to Fort McCoy and support 6th Marines—all while learning how to operate in the extreme cold. The training we received here will pay dividends in the future," said Lieutenant Colonel Michael E. Vincent, the commanding officer of CLB-6. "The Cold Weather Operations Course, the Medical Simulation Training Center, and the live fire range infrastructure was world-class and has enhanced our readiness as a combat logistics battalion."

The highlight of the exercise was the Cold Weather Operations Course (CWOC), hosted by contractors with Veterans Range Solutions and Fort McCoy's Directorate of Plans, Training Mobilization, and Security.

Modeled after training from the Army's Northern Warfare Training Center, CWOC challenged the Marines and Sailors to conduct simulated combat operations while learning a variety of cold weather sustainment tactics such as ahkio sledding, improvised shelter construction, skiing and snowshoe training, according to Fort McCoy Public Affairs.

Prior to hosting field training for CLB-6, CWOC instructors held platform training for the Marines and Sailors at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., to establish a baseline prior to deploying to Wisconsin, said lead CWOC instructor Hunter Heard.

The classroom instruction, combined



Marines with 2nd MLG participate in a hypothermia lab training event during the CWOC at Fort McCoy, Wis., Dec. 3, 2021. The course provided the Marines and Sailors training on the correct wear and usage of equipment, first aid, patrol base operations and other courses related to survival in an environment with extremely cold weather. (Photo by Cpl Christian Garcia, USMC)

with the real-world live exercise portion in below-freezing climates, provided the battalions with a comprehensive cold weather package that replicates the strenuous demands of operating in an arctic setting.

While the Marine Corps traditionally conducts cold weather training at the Mountain Warfare Training Center in Bridgeport, Calif., CLB-6 welcomed Fort McCoy as a challenging change of pace for its Marines and Sailors and benefitted from its unique location in the Midwest.

“As a Total Force Training Center, Fort McCoy has proudly hosted training for the United States Marine Corps for decades,” said Fort McCoy garrison commander Colonel Michael D. Poss. “Our Cold Weather Operations Course is designed to provide in-depth training in cold weather environment survival, and we are happy to host the Marines in that training capacity. We know II Marine Expeditionary Force will take the skills they learned at Fort McCoy and implement them as they increase their readiness levels for the Joint Force.”


1stLt Kevin Stapleton, USMC



CPL CHRISTIAN GARCIA, USMC

LCpl Andreas Alvarado with CLB-6 fires an M32 grenade launcher during a live-fire range on Fort McCoy, Wis., Dec. 9, 2021.

Sea Battle—Bougainville



USS *Columbia* (CL-56), part of Task Force 39, fires its guns during the night as the 3rd Marine Division engages the Japanese on Bougainville, Nov. 1, 1943. (USN photo)

**An alarmed Japanese admiral predicted, “Japan will topple if Bougainville falls.”
The 3rdMarDiv assaulted. Bougainville fell.**

Story by Cyril J. O’Brien

Rear Admiral Matsuji Injuin, the aggressive Japanese sea dog who had helped to sink his share of Yankee ships, listened with restrained alarm to the post-dawn report that the United States Marines at that moment were swarming ashore into the jungle mists of Empress Augusta Bay for the invasion of Bougainville.

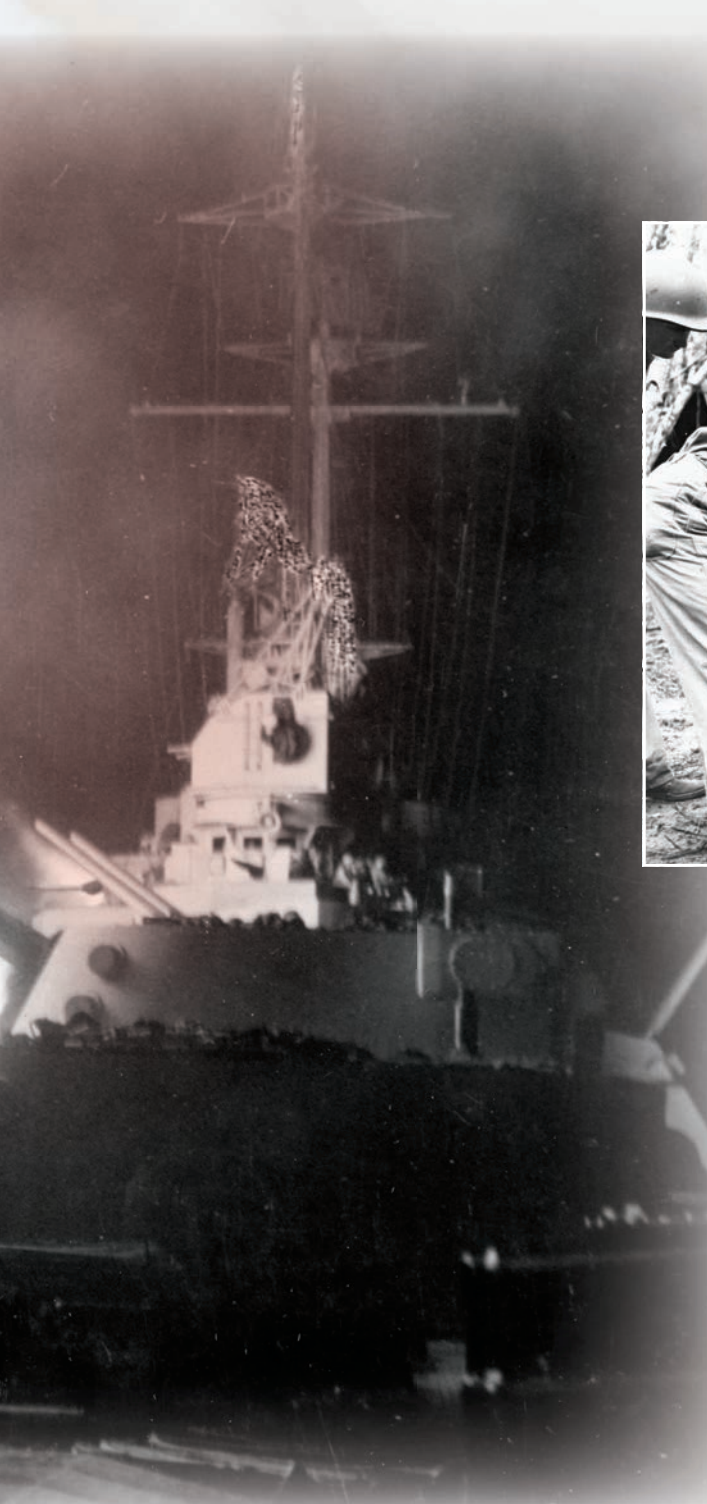
Little publicized, the assault on this volcanic hinterland of bottomless mangrove swamps was of significant value to the Japanese. Largest, and save for an islet called Buka, the northernmost of the Solomons, Bougainville was the last toehold in the theater for the forces of the Emperor. Occupied by an enemy, Bougainville could open the fire lanes to the very heartland of Japan.

For Admiral Injuin, hearty and fresh

from his audacious rescue of Imperial troops at nearby Bougainville, was still the big one.

“We must fight and fight desperately,” the admiral advised compatriots in the steel-ribbed fortress of Rabaul minutes after the Nov. 1, 1943, landing on Bougainville of the 3rd Marine Division. “Japan will topple if Bougainville falls.”

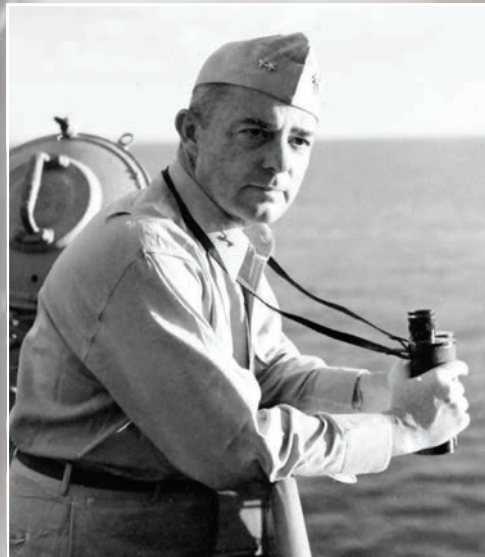
In the Japanese principal Pacific bastion of Truk, the seasoned and forceful Admiral



Below: ADM William F. Halsey Jr., seated in center, Commander, South Pacific Force, at a planning session behind the front lines on Bougainville with Major Generals Allen H. Turnage and Roy S. Geiger, November 1943.



USN



USN

Left: RADM Stanton "Tip" Merrill, Commander, Task Force 39, on board USS Montpelier (CL-57), December 1943.

Mineichi Koga, Chief of the Combined Fleet, reflected the same justified concern. He ordered all available naval forces around Rabaul to be thrown against the landing at Torokina and Empress Augusta Bay, Bougainville, and called for a counter-landing.

Koga's order released from their restless moorings at Rabaul the two 12,300-ton heavy cruisers *Myoko* and *Haguro* and the light cruisers *Sendai* and *Agano* as well as six destroyers. They made up the "interception force" and were headed by cautious combat veteran Vice Admiral Sentaro Omori. He also brought along five transports full of troops to help ensure

that the Bougainville real estate would not change hands.

Ashore, Major General Allen Hal Turnage, Commanding General, 3rdMarDiv, harbored a nagging concern. The 40,000 jungle-wise Japanese troops out front were bad enough; however, he had figured on them. It was more difficult to account in his planning for the threat at his back: a vengeful enemy fleet steaming in high dudgeon and bent on laying its powerful guns on the troops and transports of his command.

An officer who had always insisted that battle plans call for minimal casualties of his Marines, MajGen Turnage had fresh

memories of the 1stMarDiv on Guadalcanal. There the battleships *Kongo* and *Haruna* stood off Lunga Point and Henderson Field to rake the Marines, aircraft and anything that supported or sheltered them.

One 1stMarDiv rifleman who crouched in the din of that hour and a half of shelling said: "Those naval shells sounded like freight trains in the sky."

Despite the ruckus, the Japanese still didn't sink a single Marine transport. This time Koga was determined to commit no such blunder.

Out of it all evolved a naval battle, one of the longest such night encounters, in

Below: Arleigh Burke, as a Navy captain, headed Destroyer Division 45 during the sea battle for Bougainville.



Above: RADM Aaron S. Merrill, left, and CAPT W.D. Brown working with a maneuvering board on USS *Montpelier* (CL-57), during operations in the Solomon Islands, Dec. 23, 1943.

which the enemy was stopped almost within sight of the beachhead. For the officers and men of the 3rd Division it was a dangerous reminder of how much the grunts ashore rely upon the big-gun umbrella of the Navy.

This time the umbrella was held by Rear Admiral Stanton "Tip" Merrill, a flag officer of only nine months, and commander of Task Force 39. On USS *Montpelier* (CL-57), he also carried the cruisers *Cleveland* (CL-55), *Columbia* (CL-56) and *Denver* (CL-58) in his main

body. In his van there were four destroyers with four others to his rear.

Merrill pondered at that time a concern which in later years historian Walter Karig in "Battle Report: Bougainville-Empress Augusta Bay" would confirm as a fact: "Knowing the beachhead would be difficult to hold for the first few days, the Japanese decided to strike with all available force while their chance of success was greatest."

The specter of the Japanese fleet also haunted the Bougainville plans which

were made by Vice Admiral William F. Halsey, MajGen A.A. Vandegrift, Rear Admiral Theodore Wilkinson, MajGen Roy S. Geiger and MajGen Turnage.

With the enemy fleet and hostile air in mind, they drew up a 12-mile beachhead for separated and immediate unloading. Advance supply craft were loaded with only enough gear, ammunition and chow for the assault troops. Later echelons would have to come in with reserve stocks. All of the fat was cut, and the working parties had been trained like drill teams.



USS *Montpelier* (CL-57) en route to Saipan from the Marshalls to take part in the Saipan invasion, June 11, 1944.

Harguro, a Japanese heavy cruiser, operates at high speed in 1936. (Photo courtesy of U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command)



Captain Tameichi Hara, skipper of the Japanese destroyer, *Shigure*, recalls it was cool, drizzly and murky, and the visibility was limited as the “interception force” pulled out of Rabaul. A calm sea was tickled only by a southeasterly breeze that cleared the St. George Channel which washed Rabaul and provided the outlet to the famous “slot” or warship thoroughfare down the length of the Solomon Islands.

American snooper planes eyed the Japanese force as soon as it had cleared secure waters, so Admiral Halsey was able to tell MajGen Turnage in plenty of time that the enemy fleet was coming down. Some two hours from their fortress, the ships were buzzed by American aircraft which dropped bombs but did no damage. The aircraft passes shook up the Japanese admiral who knew he had been observed. To play it safe, he sent the transports back to Rabaul with their destroyer-escorts.

Now no precious and vulnerable troop ships would delay him, so Omori could lay on steam and charge in at high port for Bougainville.

Admiral Merrill was now placing his ships in position so they would block the entrance to Empress Augusta Bay. When the action opened, he would push the enemy gradually westward and away

from the Marine zone of action and make a haven for any wounded ships on the disengaged side.

Merrill sought nothing like annihilation of the enemy. He’d be happy simply to drive them away. If it took annihilation to do that, so much the better.

Flashes of heat lightning through the overcast at 11:30 p.m. on Nov. 1 outlined the slim shapes of Capt Arleigh Burke’s Destroyer Division 45 on the way back from refueling. It was comforting for Merrill. He would need every gun as he crossed the line of Omori’s force.

It was 2:27 a.m. on Nov. 2, and the landing force was getting used to the night sounds of a Bougainville jungle when Merrill’s radar screen caught the image of the oncoming Japanese. The point of contact was a scant 20 miles (west by south) of the landing beach, close enough for troops ashore to see the gun flashes on the horizon and for Sailors on the cruiser *Denver* to watch the light of the artillery flashes ashore.

The Yankee ships were in action at 2:28. Capt Burke (later to become Chief of Naval Operations) closed on the nearest of Omori’s ships and loosed 25 torpedoes. Merrill then reversed his course and that of the destroyer Division with him. It was



LEATHERNECK FILE PHOTO

Capt Tameichi Hara was skipper of the destroyer *Shigure*. He wrote the book, “Japanese Destroyer Captain,” based on his personal experiences in World War II.

a fast maneuver to confuse the enemy, avoid torpedoes and put his ships in position to fire their 6-inch guns when Burke had confirmed that his “fish” were in the water.

Fortunately for the Japanese, they were close enough to see the American force split, Burke going one way and Merrill another.

“I shuddered,” wrote Kara, “at the realization that they must have already released torpedoes. The initiative was in the hands of the enemy.

“In an instant I yelled two orders: Launch torpedoes! Hard right rudder!”

Not a single Japanese or American torpedo in those opening strikes found a target.

Merrill was not waiting the full six

minutes needed to hear if the torpedoes had struck home. He brought all guns of the cruisers to bear. Promptly the Japanese answered. It was 2:49 hours.

In their typical patterns, the Japanese 8-inch gun salvos were either short or ahead. The Americans were luckier. One shell of the first broadside slammed amidships into cruiser *Sendai*, which carried Admiral Injuin. Part of her trouble was the problem of constant maneuvering to avoid the hail of shells and the school of torpedoes. All of this intricate choreography was accomplished by giant warships, yards apart and cutting at speeds of 30 knots. It was the same on both sides.

But the *Sendai* had other troubles. The damage caused her rudder to jam, and the second and third salvos converged on her “with fantastic precision” (as Kara explains) until she exploded in fire.

Still the *Sendai* managed to clear eight of her torpedoes at her tormentors. So did *Samidare* under the experienced Yoshiro

Sugihara. One of the *Samidare*’s fish caught the U.S. destroyer *Foote*, which had lost formation, blew off her stern and left her dead in the water.

Worse, she lay in front of the oncoming American cruisers and, as Capt A.G. Shepard of the *Cleveland* reported, he had to make full rudder to avoid her by as close as 100 yards.

Unlike the Marine or soldier ashore, the Sailor sometimes feels he has little influence on the tide or shape of the battle, or the operation of his ship. Yet, the numerous shells that straddled the warships that November night must have left no doubt that somebody in command was doing something right—zigging when he should have zigged.

Samuel Eliot Morison, in his account of the battle in “Breaking the Bismarks Barrier,” tells how “Merrill maneuvered his cruisers so smartly and kept them at such range that no enemy torpedoes could hit, no matter how accurate a solution the Japanese might work out. ...”

Admiral Omori showed the same kind of skill and judgment, but he had the handicap of fighting like a blind man against an opponent who can see. The Americans had radar.

Writing from his home in Fujisawa City, Japan, Capt Kara later explained: “Japanese radars were underdeveloped. I doubt if Omori’s flagship carried any radars. Japan did not see the enemy, failed to size up the enemy and failed to locate it. The Japanese fleet was a blind man swinging a stick against a seeing opponent. The Japanese fleet had no advantage at all.”

What Japan lacked in electronic sight, however, it partially made up for in its super-brilliant airplane-dropped flares and naval gunfire star shells. Snooper planes, catapulted from Imperial cruisers, would sneak in over target ships and illuminate them with midday white, bright and colored flares.

Commander Charles H. Pollow, former radio officer on *Denver* and later a satellite

A Japanese plane downed by TF 39’s antiaircraft fire hits the water ahead of USS *Columbia* (CL-56) as she steams in column formation with her sister ships from Cruiser Division 12 during the attack on Bougainville. The foreground is filled with one of the ship’s 6-inch 47-caliber turrets and the 6-inch shell casings, Nov. 1-2, 1943. (Photo courtesy of National Archives)



Myoko, a Japanese cruiser, at Yokosuka, Japan, May 1934. (Photo courtesy of Naval History and Heritage Command)

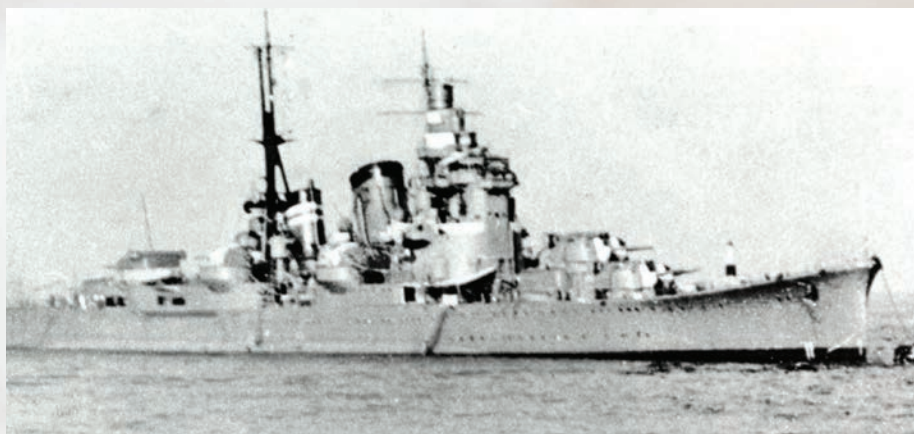
scientist at The Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory in Maryland, remembers also the glaring “unblinking” star shells ... “that would let you read the fine print in the Bible at midnight.

“Then, too,” recalls Pollow, “the Japanese cruisers had the advantage of range with their 8-inch guns. There were times when we couldn’t touch them. During one run, and we were the leading cruiser, three of the big Japanese shells banged down on us, all forward. Not one detonated. Still, the *Denver* was hurt, and was taking water. We slowed to 25 knots and even then had to cut corners to keep up.”

Nearby *Columbia* took an 8-inch plug in her sail locker, after penetrating her armor plate.

Pollow also recalls the veritable storm of smoke Merrill’s ships generated to black out the revealing flares used to such advantage to range-finding Japanese eyes.

The smoke atmosphere which swallowed so many American ships helped confuse Omori so he was convinced he had sunk U.S. cruisers which were still very much afloat. The miscalculation was probably the conclusion of lookouts who saw



geysers erupt around ships which then faded rapidly from the scene actually withdrawing into the smoke.

Things got so bad toward the end that the two Japanese cruisers were fighting a mirage. The Japanese command believed the American main body was heading south when it was around to the north. Bad spotter plane information didn’t help.

Before Admiral Omori could break away or dare to defend his wounded ships, Burke and his destroyer division was in among them. First his ships rendered the coup de grace to the enemy cruiser *Sendai*. But the Japanese were able to rescue some of their men from the *Sendai*, including

Admiral Injuin, before Burke came about. Still, *Sendai* went down with 335 men.

The *Hatsukaze* wasn’t lucky either. Damaged in a brush with the cruiser *Myoko*, she was easy prey when the U.S. destroyer *Spence* came up with a vengeance. Burke’s destroyers were invited alongside to help finish the job and the *Hatsukaze* went under the waters off Bougainville at 5:59, Nov. 2, with all hands.

In all, Japan had paid the price of a cruiser and destroyer lost, three ships damaged (*Haguro*, *Myoko* and *Samidare*) and their precious combat time loss, for Omori’s dash to the beachhead.

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DETAILS:

- Maximum 2,000 words
- Must include contact information. If active duty or reserve, please provide the following: Name, rank, unit, phone number, email, and Staff NCOIC. All others, please provide name, phone number, and email. Also provide rank and dates served if a veteran.
- Submit electronically to leatherneck@mca-marines.org in Microsoft Word Format

DEADLINE: March 31, 2022

Sponsored By Major Rick Stewart. USMC (Ret)



USS *Spence* (DD-512) steaming in Iron Bottom Sound, off Guadalcanal, with her crew manning the rails, March 23, 1944.

The United States got off with severe damage to the *Footie* (DD-511) and light injury to *Denver*, *Spence* (DD-512) and *Columbia*. Nineteen men were lost on the American side.

“By defeating and turning back Admiral Omori’s force, he (Merrill) undoubtedly saved the Bougainville landing, all for the cost of one destroyer that would fight again and do minor damage to other vessels,” Karig adds.

Now, when the Marines ashore had finished their job the top of the Solomons ladder would have been reached. New Guinea would be outflanked and GEN MacArthur could begin his leapfrog operations that would put him in the Philippines before the first anniversary of the Bougainville landing.

Capt Hara was later convinced that the Americans stopped fighting too soon in the Battle of Empress Augusta Bay.

“Had they pursued us really hot,” he wrote, “practically all the Japanese ships would have perished.”

The Japanese, according to Capt Hara, had been ordered to “contact the enemy fleet and destroy it.” The high command was “rigidly inflexible” and still clung to the 19th century formula of ship-to-ship duel.

“This may sound ridiculous and stupid to today’s Navy people, but unfortunately it was true with the Imperial Japanese Navy

“Bougainville, at the time, held two Japanese airstrips which were already untenable. An overall strategy was to back down a bit by bit, by exacting from the enemy as much sacrifice as possible ... Only Rabaul was to be held at all costs. The Americans bypassed it.”

In his Alexandria, Va., home, MajGen Turnage reaffirmed the “tenacious” and stubborn resistance of the Japanese soldiers on Bougainville.

“Their courageous attacks in six major engagements gave every evidence of a very formidable foe ... well equipped, well trained and prepared to make the supreme sacrifice against our takeover of Bougainville”

“However,” the general added, “had it not been for the superb accomplishments of Admiral Merrill’s task force, including the destroyers of Capt Burke, in intercepting, disabling, and destroying portions of the Japanese naval forces, our existence on Bougainville would have been most precarious.

“Following their defeat on D-1 and 2,



USN



LEATHERNECK FILE PHOTO

Marine officers paused briefly in a clearing at Piva Village, which was seized Nov. 10, 1943, by Marines who had pushed deep into enemy territory. Left to right, foreground, BGen Oscar Cauldwell; LtCol Robert Cushman Jr., CO of the battalion that captured the village; Col Edward Craig; LtCol James Stuart; and Maj George Percy.

the Japanese (naval and air) forces on Rabaul never recovered sufficiently to offer a substantial threat to us.”

Despite its importance as a base, and as a battle, Bougainville was never to inspire the historians, many who (3rd Division veterans feel) underplayed the campaign.

“Had we sustained excessive casualties,” MajGen Turnage conjectured, “historians might have given Bougainville front-page attention. In planning the campaign and in its execution, it was always a policy of the 3rd Marine Division to accomplish its mission with minimum losses, consistent with the attainment of the objective. The

policy paid off in three major operations for the division in World War II.

“We had hoped the successes of the Third in the boon docks would be recorded at face value. Unfortunately, such was not the case.”

But Capt Hara recalls the deadly importance Japanese Admiral Injuin attached to the 130-mile-long island, with its 10,000-foot mountains, and probably the most impenetrable jungle in the world.

“His prediction that Japan would topple after the loss of Bougainville proved to be spectacularly accurate,” Capt Hara wrote.



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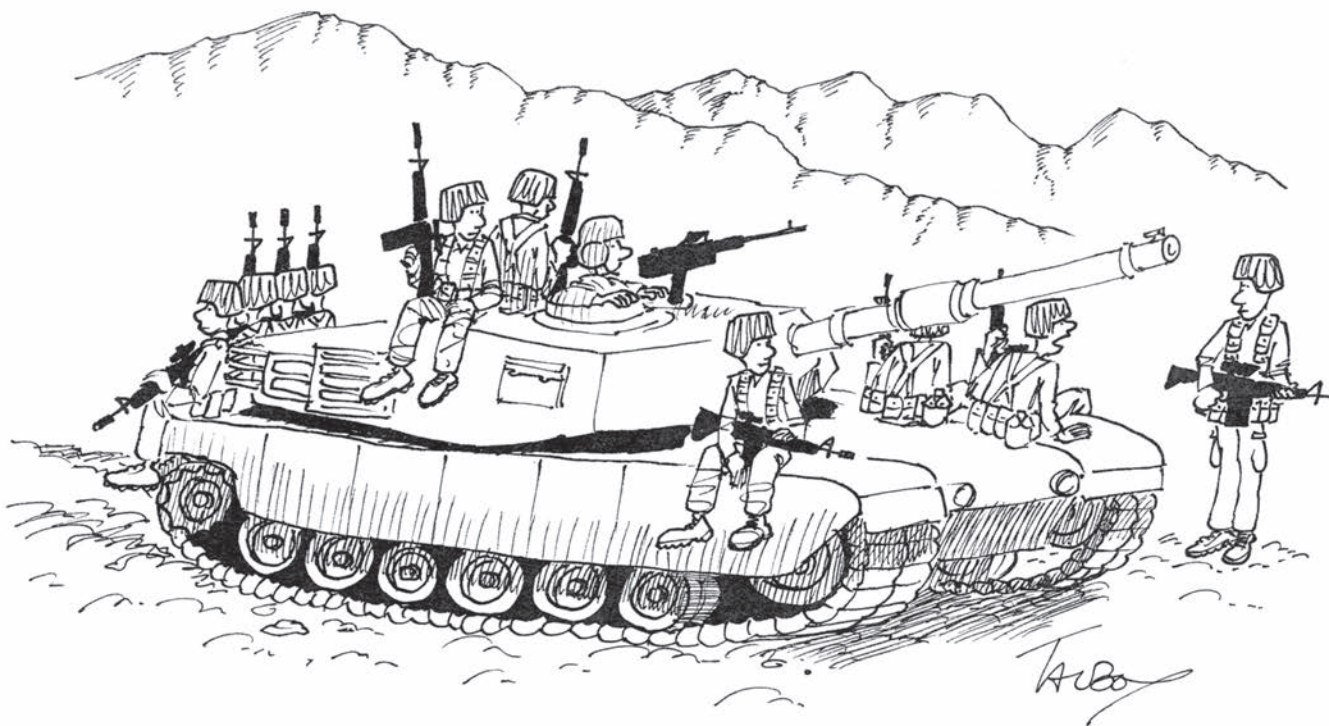
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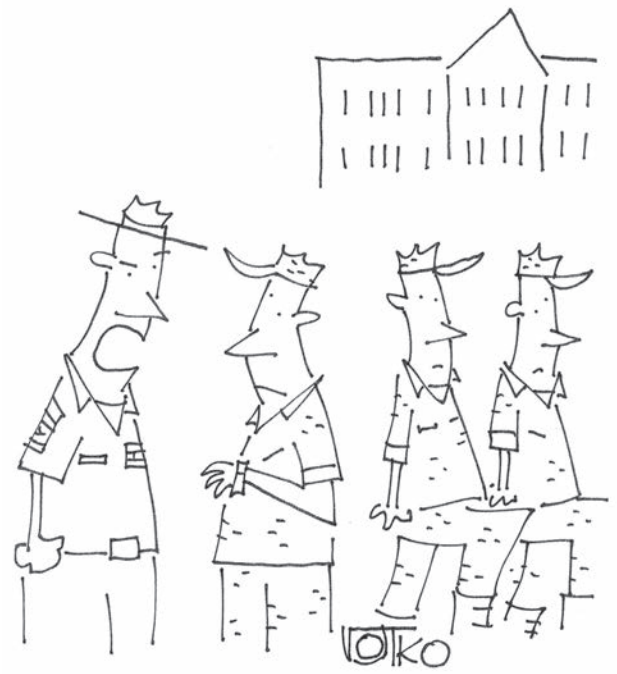
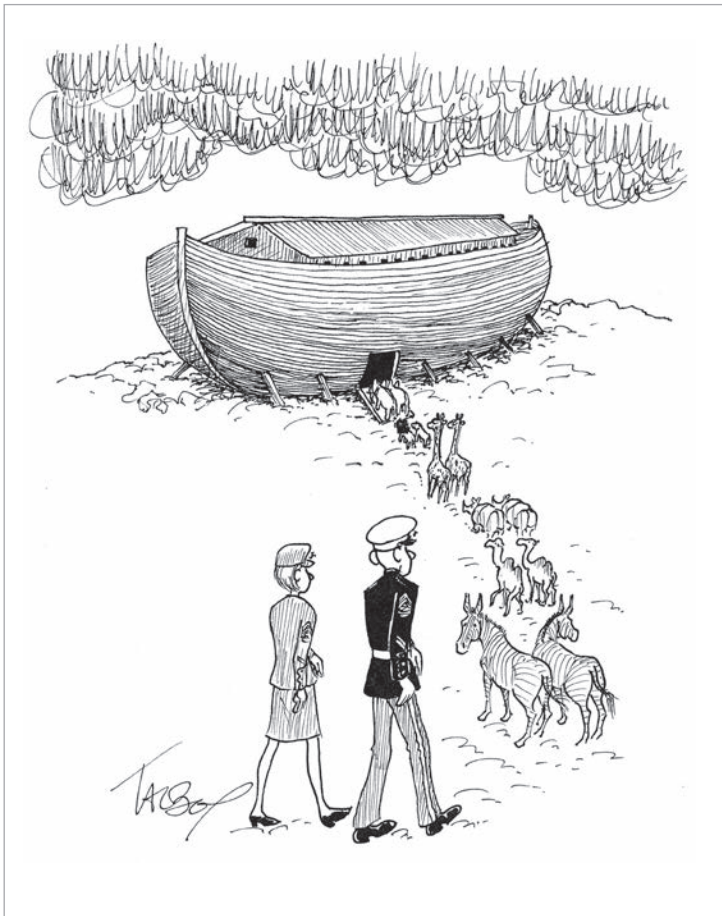
"Can I do the weekly reports at the end of the month?"



"Sergeant, I didn't notice you were here."



"We're carpooling."



"I don't care if you have your steps in for the day, keep marching!"



"General's inspection? That was today?"



"Welcome to the 3rd Very Close Air Support Wing."

“THE DIVING DEVIL DOGS OF LUZON”



Marines flew more than 20,000 sorties against the Japanese in support of the U.S. Sixth Army, often dropping bombs less than 100 yards from American troops.

USMC

By MSgt Jeff Dacus, USMCR (Ret)

“Please express to the officers and men of the Marine Air Wing, on the eve of their transfer to another assignment, my sincerest appreciation for their splendid support of the 6th Army during the Luzon Campaign. Their effective efforts were instrumental in keeping ground casualties to a minimum and contributing materially to the success of the operations.”—General Walter Krueger, Commanding, 6th Army

After the beginning of the operations at Leyte in the Philippines in October of 1944 under General Douglas MacArthur, Marines were requested to provide air support for the Army and Navy units involved in that campaign. The F6F Hellcat night fighters of Lieutenant Colonel Peter D. Lambrecht’s VMF(N)-541, arrived on Leyte on Dec. 3, 1944, followed by the F4U Corsairs of Marine Aircraft Group (MAG) 12. While the night fighters provided cover for the

landing beaches at night, the Corsairs proved versatile, performing many different missions, including dive-bombing and combat air patrols over the invasion fleet.

Along with Navy and Army fighters, the Marines, reinforced later by more bent-wing F4Us and PBJs, the Marine version of the twin-engine B-25, assisted operations on Mindanao, Negros and Cebu. The Corsairs proved adept at dive-bombing, a skill their pilots had learned in

In October of 1944, [Mitchell] decided to sharpen this weapon for future use. On Bougainville, the Marines of MAG-24, with the help of the Army's 37th Division, began a series of trials to find the best way to provide close air support for ground troops.

the campaign against bypassed Japanese occupied islands in the Central Pacific and the Bismarcks.

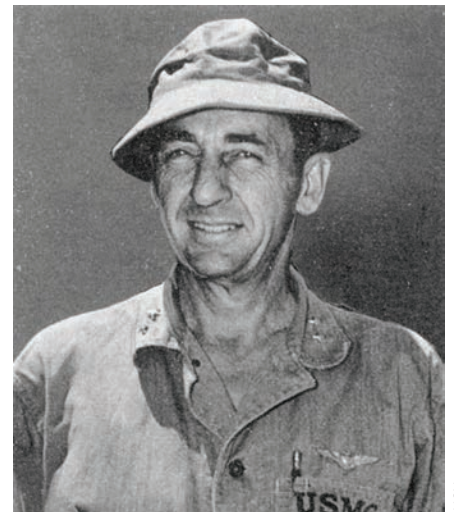
Marine flyers were provided with a unique opportunity when Army troops landed on Luzon on Jan. 9, 1945. On Jan. 19, the first of seven Marine SBD Dauntless dive-bomber squadrons landed at Mangaldan airfield on Luzon to support the soldiers. The 1st Cavalry Division, under Major General Verne D. Mudge, landed on Jan. 27 and by Jan. 31 was concentrated 40 miles inland at Guimba. Marine dive-bombers supporting the 1st Cavalry Division would face a tough test when GEN MacArthur ordered the cavalymen to strike directly for the Philippine capital of Manila. GEN MacArthur bade MG Mudge: "Go to Manila. Go around the [Japanese], bounce off the [Japanese], but go to Manila. Free the internees at Santo Tomas. Take Malacahan Palace and the Legislative Building."

This mission had been anticipated by the commander of the Marine aircraft in the Solomons, Major General Ralph Mitchell, the previous fall. A 1915 Naval Academy graduate, Mitchell had a long and illustrious career in Marine Corps aviation, including receiving a Distinguished Service Cross for action in Nicaragua. He was not a physically large man, but he was highly intelligent and creative. Mitchell realized that the Marine aircraft that had been pounding bypassed Japanese positions in the South Pacific could be an important tool in the future on the road to Tokyo. In October of 1944, he decided to sharpen this weapon for future use. On Bougainville, the Marines of MAG-24, with the help of the Army's 37th Division, began a series of trials to find the best way to provide close air support for ground troops.

The leaders of the air group used every source they could find on the subject of close air support. Using their own experiences and those of other Marine squadrons in the Solomons, they also referenced Marine dive-bombing tactics in the Nicaragua Campaign of 1927 and the efforts of New Zealanders and Army fliers in New Guinea. Led by Lieutenant Colonel Keith McCutcheon, the air group

operations officer, the staff of MAG-24 developed a simple definition of close air support: "Close Air Support is an additional weapon to be employed at the direction of the ground commander. He may employ it against targets that cannot be reached by any other weapon or in conjunction with the ground weapons in a coordinated attack. It should be immediately available and should be carried out with deliberation and accuracy and in coordination with other assigned units."

The Marines of Colonel Clayton C.



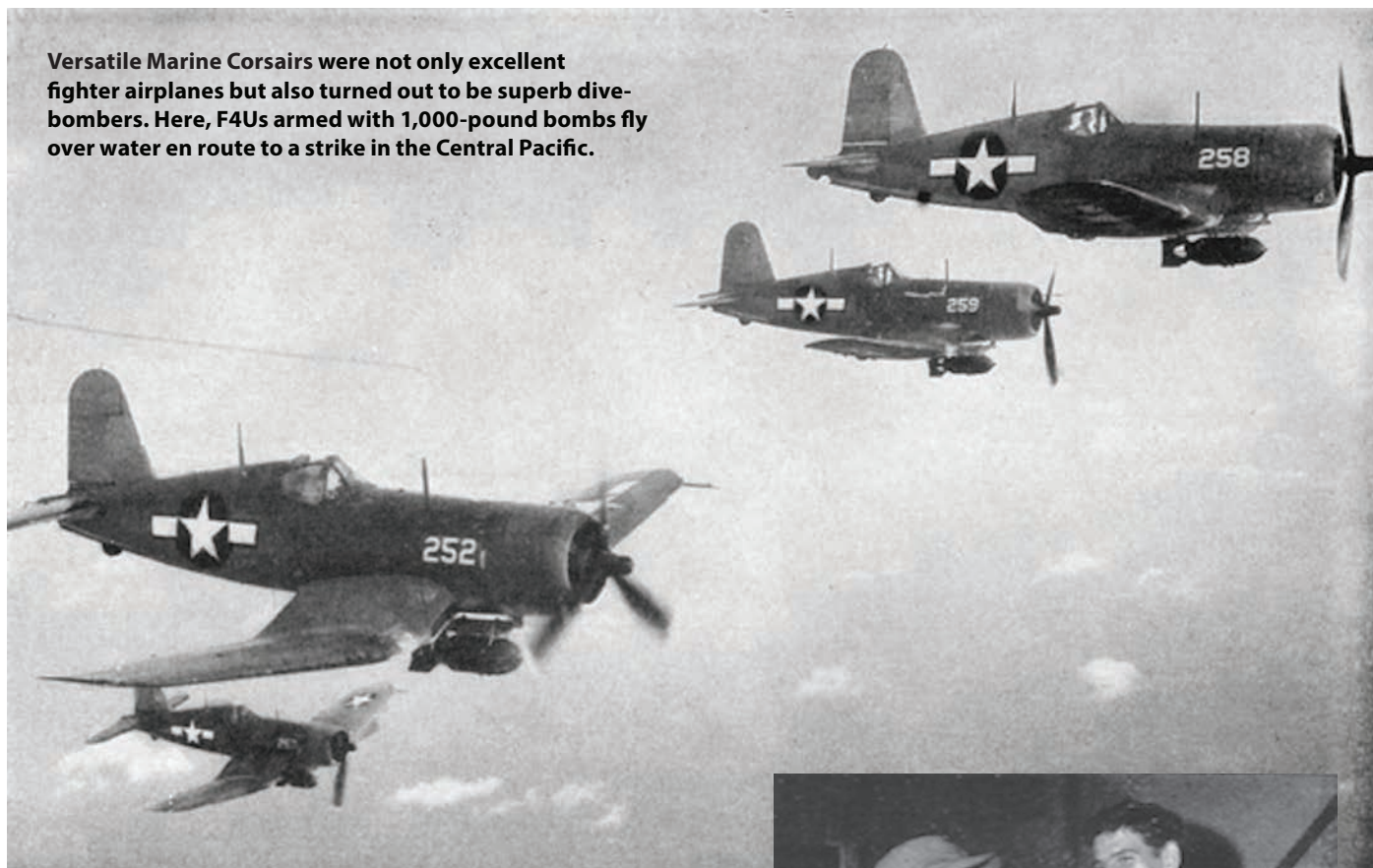
Above: MajGen Ralph Mitchell, commanding general of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing. He pushed to get Marine aircraft into the Philippine Campaign.



Maintenance crews work on an SBD engine between sorties against Japanese targets in the Philippines.

The Marines of Colonel Clayton C. Jerome's MAG-32, joined later by Colonel Lyle H. Meyer's MAG-24, trained hard to develop the most efficient techniques. They improved the Marine concept of Air Liaison Parties (ALPS) that operated on the front lines in communication with planes overhead or on standby.

Versatile Marine Corsairs were not only excellent fighter airplanes but also turned out to be superb dive-bombers. Here, F4Us armed with 1,000-pound bombs fly over water en route to a strike in the Central Pacific.



Jerome's MAG-32, joined later by Colonel Lyle H. Meyer's MAG-24, trained hard to develop the most efficient techniques. They improved the Marine concept of Air Liaison Parties (ALPS) that operated on the front lines in communication with planes overhead or on standby. The ALPs would guide the bombers into pinpoint attacks of enemy positions.

To assist the dramatic effort of the 1st Cavalry Division to take Manila, the Marine flyers stood ready with seven squadrons of obsolete Douglas SBD Dauntless dive-bombers. The squadrons had colorful nicknames: "Flying Egg-beaters" (VMSB-133), "Wild Hares" (VMSB-142), "Sons of Satan" (VMSB-241), "Black Panthers" (VMSB-236), "Flying Goldbricks" (VMSB-243), "Bombing Banshees" (VMSB-244), and "Torrid Turtles" (VMSB-341). Future Baseball Hall of Famer Jerry Coleman flew with the "Torrid Turtles." Together the squadrons would be known as the "Diving Devil Dogs of Luzon."

Operating as part of the Army's 308th Bombardment Wing, some of the SBDs

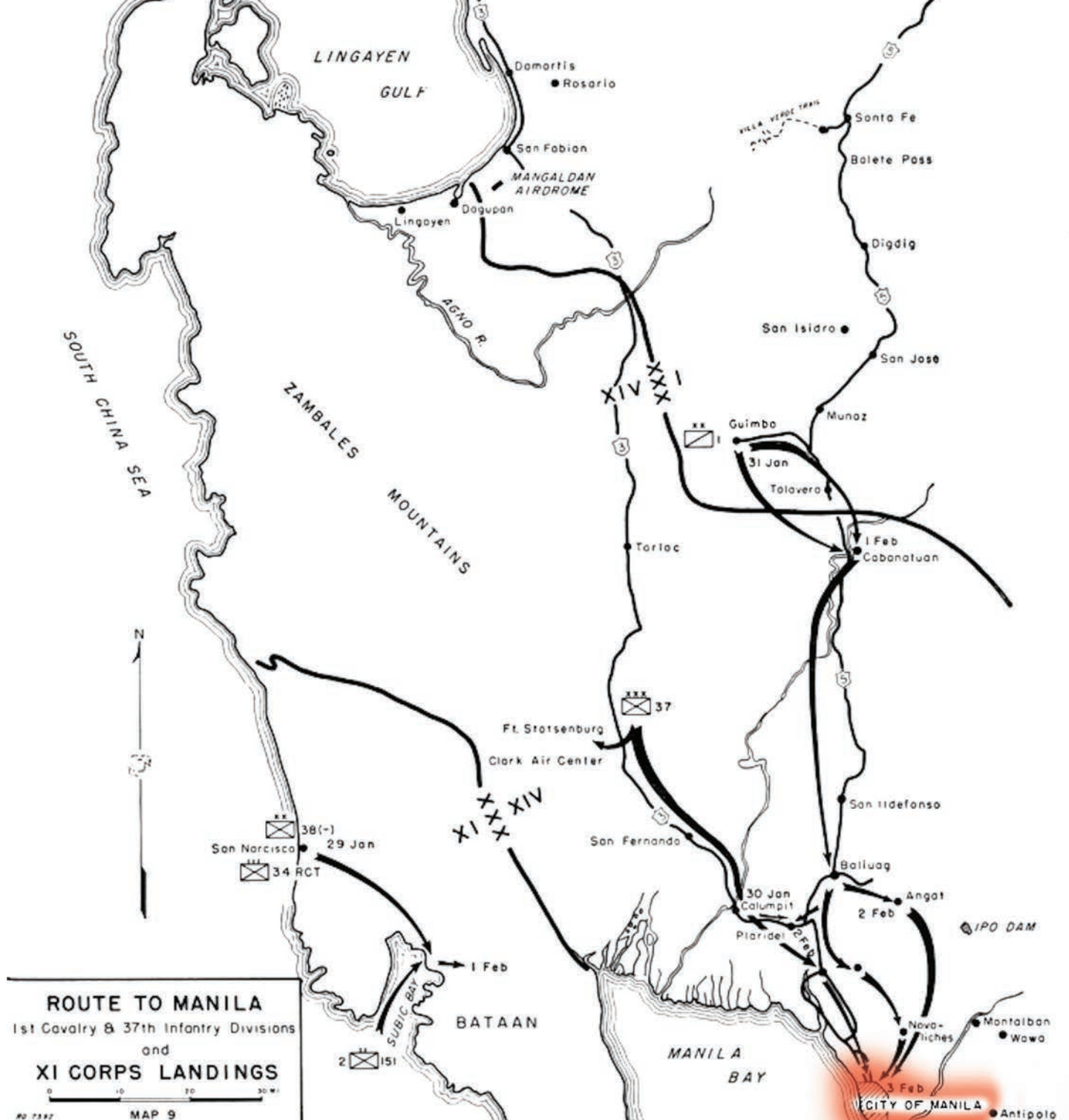
Right: Col Clayton C. Jerome talks with his driver, Cpl Ladislaus J. Blasko, after being the first Marines ashore on Luzon. Jerome's leadership during training on Bougainville and as the commander at Mangaldan on Luzon was essential to the success of close air support for the soldiers in the Philippine Campaign.



would be on "strip alert," ready for immediate takeoff, and others would be on "air alert" over ground forces as detailed by the Army's Fifth Air Force's Support Air Parties. Once onsite, the ALPs took over. When the 1st Cavalry Division was ordered to dash to Manila, the Marines were ordered to provide an "air alert" for the dashing cavalrymen. This would consist of nine Dauntless aircraft flying

over the column throughout the day. This mission was in addition to providing air support to other units in the area.

In overall command of the Dauntless squadrons at Mangaldan was Col Jerome of MAG-32. Jerome, a graduate of the Naval Academy in 1922, had served in a variety of aviation assignments in China, South America and the Pacific. An excellent pilot, he earned a Distinguished



Flying Cross in 1937 for saving four survivors of a plane crash in the jungles of Venezuela. He was director of Marine aviation in the early days of the war. Col McCutcheon served as operations officer for Jerome.

Covering the soldiers' advance provided Jerome's Marines an opportunity to put their months of training to the test. According to Major Charles Boggs Jr., in "Marines in the Philippines," if the Marines were successful, they would show that that aviation was "an immediately available, additional weapon at the hands of an infantry commander, able to function with the highest degree of coordination

and accuracy under the direction of front-line observers."

The Marine air liaison teams would be in personal contact with forward ground commanders, able to call into instant action their circling airborne comrades. By radio, panels, pyrotechnics, flashing lights, smoke or any other creative method, ALPs provided ground-to-air briefing of targets and the location of friendly troops. The ALPs then would make certain, by observing a dummy run by the flight leader, the accuracy of the pilot's flight path, and after the attack, adjust instantaneously any errors.

The "air alert" system was ideal for sup-

port of swiftly moving 1st Cavalry Division dashing through the jungles and hills toward Manila. On the cavalrymen's right flank were the troops of the 37th Infantry Division, the same men who had trained in close air support with the Marines back on Bougainville. On the left flank, there would only be the Marine Dauntless crews.

Just after midnight on Feb. 1, the 1st Cavalry Div, led by two "flying columns" of Brigadier General William C. Chase's 1st Brigade, moved out from Guimba en route to Manila. Accompanying the soldiers were two radio jeeps and a radio truck with Marines from MAGs 24 and 32. These were the first Marine air liaison parties to

Left to right: Unknown, Army MG Franklin Sibert Jr. (Commander, X Corps), Col Lyle H. Meyer (Commander, MAG-24), Army LTG Robert L. Eichelberger (Commander, Sixth Army), LtCol Keith B. McCutcheon (Operations Officer, MAG-24), and LtCol John H. Earle Jr. (Executive Officer, MAG-24).

do frontline duty with the infantry on Luzon. In the radio jeeps were Captains Francis R.B. Godolphin, a former professor of Greek and Latin at Princeton University, and Samuel H. McAloney, each with one enlisted man. Captain John A. Titcomb, MAG-24's communications officer, and two enlisted men manned the radio truck that served as a link between the radio jeeps and Mangaldan. At dawn, they approached Cabanatuan, their first major objective. Capt McAloney and his jeep driver worked closely with BGen Chase, staying always near at hand. The general frequently rode in Capt McAloney's jeep.

The 1st Cavalry Division was to sprint through the enemy lines and avoid large-scale actions. The Marine squadrons were charged with providing flank protection



COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES



USMC

Members of the 145th Infantry Regiment, 37th Division, watch as soldiers move up Highway No. 5 after a Dauntless attack on Japanese positions in the hills ahead.

and route reconnaissance. Working under the direction of the ALPs, nine SBDs were always droning overhead in a lazy circle, ready to attack any threat to the on-rushing mechanized cavalrymen. With artillery spotter planes organic to the Division, the Marines flew ahead of the soldiers looking for any signs of Japanese positions. Whenever enemy troops or roadblocks were spotted, the spotters sent the information to the ALPs. If necessary, the dive-bombers immediately destroyed the enemy by bombing or strafing.

Not long after moving out, the vehicles of the 1st Cavalry crossed the Pampanga River and encountered enemy resistance. By 1 p.m., the soldiers were locked in a bitter fight with the Japanese near Cabanatuan. The Marines operating in their nine plane flights blasted Japanese positions in nearby Angat and farther out to San Jose del Monte, finally relieved the pressure on the Army column.

The “race” for Manila was now between the 37th Division and the 1st Cavalry Division, with the cavalry in the lead. Typical of the action on Feb. 2, Major Floyd Cummings’ aviators of VMSB-133 bombed and strafed targets in San Isidro, just in front of the advancing soldiers.

Bombs fell within an area just 200 by 300 yards in size. The after-action report recorded: “Approach 11,000 feet. Push over at 9,000 feet. Release at 2,500 feet. Pull out at 20,00 feet. Angle in dive 70 degrees. Speed in knots; 250.” The report further stated that 17 of the 18 1,000-pound bombs dropped hit the target. One bomb hung up and had to be jostled loose over the sea. They also acknowledged the new

Working under the direction of the ALPs, nine SBDs were always droning overhead in a lazy circle, ready to attack any threat to the on-rushing mechanized cavalrymen.

integration between the ground and air units: “The first objective was to be the town of Lupao, Neuva Beija; by direction of ground forces command the objective was changed to San Isidro, Nueva Ecija.”

The advancing units were fortunate enough to find bridges and fordable crossings almost everywhere they went. With the 37th Division protecting the right flank and Marine air covering the left, the vehicles of the Flying Columns dashed toward Manila, sometimes at speeds of 50

miles per hour, with individual units vying for the honor of reaching Manila first.

During the afternoon of Feb. 2, after crossing the wide Angat River, the 8th Cavalry ran into a Japanese battalion dug in dominating high ground. Capt Godolphin came up with a novel idea to deal with the tough enemy position. According to the unit history: “Here the dive bombers of MAG 32 made several strafing passes at the [Japanese] without firing a shot, due to the proximity of friendly troops, and enabled the squadron (of cavalry) to slug its way into the defensive positions and rout the inhabitants.” The use of dummy runs as well as hot runs was a tactic used throughout the Philippine campaign.

The Japanese were terrorized by the faded blue SBDs and professed a fear of the “little planes that dive.” By dusk, the column was near Santa Maria. The other flying column, after a sharp battle at Sabang, turned east to follow Highway 65 south.

At 4:30 a.m. on Feb. 3, the first soldiers moved out in the last push to Manila. Slicing through the enemy line, always covered by at least nine Marine SBDs, they reached Manila at 6:35 that evening. Throughout the day, dive-bombers flew



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“I can say without reservation that the Marine dive-bomber outfits are among the most flexible I have seen in this war. They will try anything, and from my experience with them, I have found that anything they try usually pans out.”—MG Verne D. Mudge, USA



USMC

Marine Corps close air support for Army troops in Central Luzon. Douglas SBD Dauntless dive-bombers attack a target marked with white phosphorous shells as the strike is directed from front-line position on the ground.

30 miles ahead, 20 miles behind, and all along the left flank. Despite sporadic fire, the cavalymen secured the Malacanan Palace. Just after sunset, the soldiers reached Santo Tomas University and liberated more than 4,000 prisoners who had been held there for over two years.

After arriving in Manila upon completion of his mission, MG Mudge complimented the flying leathernecks: “The Marine dive-bomber pilots on Luzon are well-qualified for the job they are doing, and I have the greatest confidence in their ability. On our drive to Manila, I depended solely on the Marines to protect my left flank from the air against possible Japanese counterattack. The job they

turned in speaks for itself. We are here. I can say without reservation that the Marine dive-bomber outfits are among the most flexible I have seen in this war. They will try anything, and from my experience with them, I have found that anything they try usually pans out. The dive-bombers of the 1st Marine Air Wing have kept the enemy on the run. They have kept him underground and enabled troops to move up with fewer casualties and with greater speed. I cannot say enough in praise of these dive-bomber pilots and their gunners for the job they have done in giving my men close ground support in this operation.”

The official history of the 1st Cavalry

Division echoed the general’s praise: “Much of the success of the entire movement is credited to the superb air cover, flank protection and reconnaissance provided by the Marine Air Groups 24 and 32. The 1st Cavalry’s drive down through Central Luzon was the longest such operation made in the Southwest Pacific Area using only air cover for flank protection.”

The Marines were also assisting other Army units even as they flew in support of the Manila dash. Major General Oscar Griswold, the commander of the XIV Corps, stated: “The excellent close support furnished by Marine dive-bombers in the advance of ground troops east of Manila in

MajGen Ralph J. Mitchell, Commander, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, with a Filipino guerrilla lieutenant in northern Luzon, February 1945.

the Wawa-Antipolo sector between Feb. 1 and March 15 was a major contribution to the success of operations in that area. The coordination and skill displayed by these pilots with the resultant effectiveness of their strikes was a continuation of the fine work accomplished on Bougainville. It has been my experience, gained from association with that operation and the present one, that Marine dive-bomber pilots can always be depended on to render outstanding support to the ground troops.” Both MAG-24 and MAG-32 received Navy Unit Commendations for their part in the Philippines Operations.

The Marine aerial presence in the Philippines gradually diminished as various squadrons moved on to Okinawa. Some Marine airplanes, along with Army aircraft and Mexican Air Force P-47s, continued to support the soldiers of the 6th Army throughout the Philippines until the end of the campaign. The techniques refined by MajGen Mitchell’s Marine aviators on Bougainville, fine-tuned by future generals Clayton Jerome and Keith



USMC

McCutcheon, were important in the development of the efficient and timely close support provided by Marine pilots during the remainder of World War II, during the wars in Korea, Vietnam, Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Marine aviators flying close air support today, the envy of the world’s military organizations, are the descendants of the Diving Devil Dogs of Luzon.

Author’s bio: MSgt Jeff Dacus, USMCR (Ret) is a retired Marine tanker and public school teacher. He is the recipient of the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation 2020 General Roy S. Geiger award. He is the author of the new book, “The Fighting Corsairs: The Men of Marine Fighting Squadron 215.” He lives in Vancouver, Wash. 🐼



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LCPL DRAKE NICKELS, USMC

Cpl Giovanni Brunacini, a rifleman with Echo Co, 2/5, holds his medical bag at MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., Dec. 13, 2021. A month prior, Brunacini helped save the life of a drive-by shooting victim by employing combat lifesaving skills he learned in the Marine Corps.

Off-Duty Marine Springs into Action, Saves Life of Gunshot Victim

While visiting a friend in his hometown of Lemon Grove, Calif., Corporal Giovanni Brunacini, a rifleman with “Echo” Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, ran toward the sound of gunfire and ended up saving a life, Nov. 17, 2021.

Brunacini heard a loud popping noise followed by tires screeching. He had a decision to make: run to safety, or run toward danger.

“I went to meet my friend at Starbucks and when I went to leave that’s when I heard gunshots, which sounded like it was 200 meters away,” said Brunacini. “We both ducked down. He told people to go inside and I went to my truck to grab my med bag. I started running through the cars trying to get as much cover as I could.”

Brunacini had found himself in the middle of an apparent drive-by shooting. His primary concern was to determine

whether anyone had been injured.

“I ran up there and saw there was a man on the floor,” said Brunacini. “I got down and saw he was in a pool of blood that was forming on his left side. So I got to work.”

Brunacini then realized that the man, Robert Mansi, had multiple gunshot wounds, the most serious of which was located in his abdomen.

“I opened up my med bag and saw I needed my gauze and a [structural aluminum malleable] splint for his arm,” Brunacini said. “I went to work to stop the bleeding as best I could. I applied pressure as hard as I could to his abdomen. As I was doing that, I rolled him on his back to check for exit wounds. I kept holding pressure until the bleeding stopped.”

When the police and fire department arrived, Brunacini worked with the paramedics to keep Mansi alive.

“I told the police to hold pressure on his abdomen so I can work on his arm,” added Brunacini. “Firefighters and EMTs arrived and basically did what I had been doing. We loaded him up on the gurney and they hauled him away.”

Brunacini recalled the events and said that he was just doing what his corpsmen had taught him.

“I was combat lifesaver-certified when I first got to the fleet, and I fell in love with medical treatment,” explained Brunacini. “Being in the infantry, you’re exposed to a lot of gunfire and are taught to run towards it. That’s exactly what I did. When I got there, I had my medical bag and knew exactly what to do, because that’s what the corpsmen taught me.”

Brunacini was recognized for his courageous actions by the city of Lemon Grove and first responders, and even met with the family of the injured man.

“You saved my son’s life,” said Alicia Mansi, Robert Mansi’s mother, during an interview with ABC News 10. “So glad you were there.”

LCpl Drake Nickels, USMC

Marine Recruiting Achieves Historic Success in Diversity Representation

“To remain our nation’s modern force in readiness, we require the most capable Marines who offer diverse perspectives and experiences to better innovate and grow our capabilities to conquer adversaries and defend the United States of America.”—Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan, May 2021

The Marine Corps’ most lethal weapon

is—and will always remain—the individual Marine. Marine Corps Recruiting Command (MCRC) continues to meet the accession needs of the Marine Corps while consistently recruiting a diversified force, creating equity in recruiting processes and cultivating a culture of inclusion.

Fiscal Year 2021 was another successful year for the command as MCRC achieved all accession missions for the year and reached historic successes in diversity representation. Greater than 35 percent of all officer candidates met the criteria to be considered diverse, including 15.4 percent of female officer accessions—the highest number of female officer accessions for the Marine Corps in any given fiscal year.

“Improving diversity representation within our ranks remains a top priority to build cohesive units able to solve complex problems in war and peace. During FY21 we had historic success with diversity representation,” said Major General Jason Q. Bohm, MCRC Commanding General. “Our successes are an indication of the positive steps we have taken over the past five years as one-third of officer accessions have come from historically underrepresented ethnicities.”

Officer recruitment spans multiple years, as the pipeline to becoming a Marine officer is much longer than that of an enlisted Marine. Officers are accessed through a variety of programs like the U.S. Naval Academy, Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps, and Platoon Leaders Class.

Every program requires an applicant to remain committed for many years, including their entire time in college or while attending a service academy. In addition to the Frederick C. Branch and Pedro De Valle scholarships, the Corps added three new NROTC scholarships in FY21, to strengthen diversity representation in the program: the Lieutenant General Frank Petersen, Brigadier General Margaret A. Brewer and BGen Vincente Thomas Garrido Blaz leadership scholarships. These scholarships highlight the accomplishments and contributions of influential Marines and allow those with a similar fighting spirit an opportunity to earn a commission in the Marine Corps as they complete their studies at a participating college or university.

“Aiming to bring in the perspectives of Americans from all walks of life is key to acquiring talented men and women of

Marine officer candidates participate in a close order drill competition at OCS, MCB Quantico, Va., in August 2021. During FY21, the Marine Corps achieved the highest number of female officer accessions to date.

every race, color and creed,” said Colonel Warren C. Cook, the assistant chief of staff of operations, MCRC. “This will remain a priority and we will continue this effort in the upcoming fiscal year.”

Marine recruiters achieved great success with diverse representation in the enlisted ranks during FY21, with 48 percent of all enlisted accessions being from diverse groups. This accomplishment resulted in a 5 percent increase from 2020.

The command’s successes are a result of many years of work to ensure that every community is represented and that every qualified individual is given an opportunity to serve. This also ensures MCRC is reaching every corner of the country, covering every state, county and zip code.

“Marine Corps Recruiting Command achieved and went beyond our projected goals in diversity, both for enlisted and officer components, and this can be attributable to our deliberate assignment



TIA DUFOR

of Marines to recruit in all corners of the nation,” Cook said. “It’s how we attain a reflection and representation of the rich fabric of the American people and culture.”

Recruiters and Officer Selection Officers have a powerful marketing program that assists them in creating awareness and attracting talent. Wunderman Thompson, formerly known as J. Walter Thompson,

has been MCRC’s contracted advertising agency for nearly 75 years and understands the dynamics recruiters face. The agency works in coordination with MCRC’s Marketing and Communication section to ensure every tool is made available in order to create awareness and attract diverse talent.

“One of the challenges all recruiters and OSOs face is a lack of awareness



LCPL SAMUEL FLETCHER, USMC

Marine recruits navigate the Endurance Course at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., in 2021, a historic year for diversity representation in Marine recruitment, with nearly half of all enlisted accessions meeting the criteria to be considered diverse.

around opportunities in the Marine Corps,” said Master Sergeant Jeremiah Bentz, MCRC marketing chief. “We understand the challenges that exist daily for the individual Marines that are out there speaking with individuals from all walks of life. [...] This program aids recruiters and OSOs by creating awareness through a variety of methods, whether those be local outreach or national-level efforts. The goal is to ensure that we put the message out to every qualified individual, from every walk of life, about those opportunities that are available to them,” added Bentz.

Recently, challenges such as natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to one of the most challenging recruiting environments the Marine Corps has experienced in decades. School closures, delayed or canceled shipping activities and canceled community events all hindered recruiter activity. Marine recruiters greatly depend on these access points to make contact with select audiences and to establish influencer relationships. With the new challenges, the command explored and adapted to new methods to accomplish its mission, such as digital prospecting and the use of online communication tools.

“We overcame wildfires, blizzards, floods, a flattened shipping model, the highest reserve mission since 2010, the loss of Boot Leavers [new Marines coming home from recruit training to assist Marine recruiters], experienced closed schools, low propensity and a hyper-competitive market, all in the midst of the global pandemic and the arrival of the more deadly Delta variant,” MajGen Bohm said to the command in a message at the close of FY21. “You cannot keep Marines down. We are winners. We adapt, we overcome, and we accomplish our mission together because we know our Corps is relying on us.”

Building on its success in FY21, MCRC has taken several steps to reinforce the institution’s commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. MCRC established a Diversity Officer billet in the command’s headquarters to ensure DE&I remains an institutional priority and to perform research and analysis efforts that ensure recruitment practices are effective in reaching all segments of society.

Through the command’s extensive diversity outreach and awareness efforts, MCRC is making great progress toward the Commandant’s goal of accessing a mature, talented and diverse force capable of being the naval expeditionary force in readiness necessary to respond globally to a crisis at a moment’s notice.

MCRC



CPL BRENDAN MULLIN, USMC

Dressed as Santa Claus, GySgt Jake Paolucci with Delta Co, 4th LE Bn, MARFORRES, fist-bumps a child in Kotzebue, Alaska, Dec. 11, 2021. Each year, the “Alaska Marines” are responsible for distributing Toys for Tots donations across the state of Alaska, even in its most remote regions.

In Snowy Far-Off Northern Lands, “Alaska Marines” Assist Toys for Tots

North of the Arctic Circle, where the sun doesn’t peek above the horizon, where the weather averages below freezing for more than half the year, and where there are no roads leading in or out, children, just like those nearly everywhere else, eagerly await the arrival of a toy each December. In 2021, the “Alaska Marines” came through yet again.

Alaska’s Northwestern Arctic Borough is larger than the state of Indiana yet is home to a population of less than 7,800 residents residing within 11 different communities, many of whom are Alaskan Natives. Infrastructure is extremely limited to the villages and towns of the borough, making airplanes the only means of travel available year-round.

Due to the logistical challenges, Alaskan Natives who reside in the borough must travel to the larger community of Kotzebue

for their essential shopping. Residents also use Kotzebue as a hub to travel to larger communities for additional goods and services. As a result, most children receive few Christmas gifts due to the challenges of transporting toys and other items back to their homes.

This is where the Alaska Marines step into the picture.

“Toys for Tots is a program sponsored by the Marine Forces Reserve,” said Captain Keith Lowell, USMC. “It’s an opportunity for Marines to deliver toys to underprivileged children across the United States.”

The Marines with “Delta” Company, 4th Law Enforcement Battalion, Marine Forces Reserve, also known as the “Alaska Marines,” are responsible for collecting, sorting and distributing thousands of toys to school-age children across the state of Alaska.

The toys arrive by the truckload to the

Robert Kirk, a trail guide from Noatak, Alaska, leads 4th LE Bn Marines down a trail from Noatak to Kotzebue, Dec. 14, 2021. The Marines rely on the assistance of local Alaskans in order to reach communities within the state's Northwestern Arctic Borough in support of Toys for Tots.



CPL BRENDAN MULLIN, USMC



CPL BRENDAN MULLIN, USMC

SSgt Federico Gomez, the motor transportation chief with Delta Co, 4th LE Bn, plays the role of Santa Claus while handing out Toys for Tots donations at a school in Shungnak, Alaska, Dec. 8, 2021.

come up and they get a gift from Santa Claus, it's so special."

In total, the Alaska Marines sorted and shipped more than 3,000 toys in December 2021. Crossing the Alaskan tundra in December is no easy feat, especially for the Marines who are not native to the area. With the help of locals, the dangerous task of crossing hundreds of miles on snowmobiles in sub-zero weather becomes more like a guided expedition.

Locals like Robert "Robbie" Kirk of Noatak are more than happy to assist the Marines.

Since his first year helping with Toys for Tots, Kirk has invited the Alaska Marines into his own home as they pass through Noatak. He also acts as a trail guide for the Marines, helping ensure that they make it safely to the different communities via snowmobile.

"I really do enjoy working with people and showing them our beautiful country at the same time," said Kirk. "Toys for Tots is a program worth spending your time on. If there's anyone that's interesting in doing it, they should very much look into seeing how they can help."

Cpl Brendan Mullin, USMC



Colonel Archie T. Van Winkle Marine Corps Reserve Training Facility aboard Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, located just north of Anchorage.

"We sort [the toys] by age group and gender, and then we sort them again by village, and box them up to ship them north," said Lowell.

And north the toys go, traveling more than 500 miles to the town of Kotzebue, the largest community in the Northwest Arctic Borough. From Kotzebue, the

Marines prepare to travel to the smaller, more remote communities in the borough, from Shungnak to Point Hope, Noorvik to Deering. The Marines visit them all, via donated flights on smaller propeller airplanes and snowmobiles, dressing as Santa Claus and gifting toys to the local children.

"Really, it seems like a lot of trouble, but it's not," said Lowell. "To see the sparkle in these kids' eyes when they see Santa Claus coming into their school. When they

“SCUTTLEBUTT” PODCAST

Is Newest Addition To MCA's Library of Audio Content

By Sara W. Bock

When Vic Ruble joined the staff of the Marine Corps Association last year as creative content coordinator and deputy editor of *Marine Corps Gazette*, he knew he'd be involved in the behind-the-scenes development of the organization's first-ever podcast. What he didn't count on was that he would, by default, end up as its host. Initially out of his comfort zone perhaps, but to anyone listening, the role seems a natural fit for the former amtrac officer, a prior enlisted Marine with numerous deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan under his belt. Ruble retired from the Corps as a major in 2018 and then went on to earn a master's

degree in creative writing from American University in Washington, D.C.

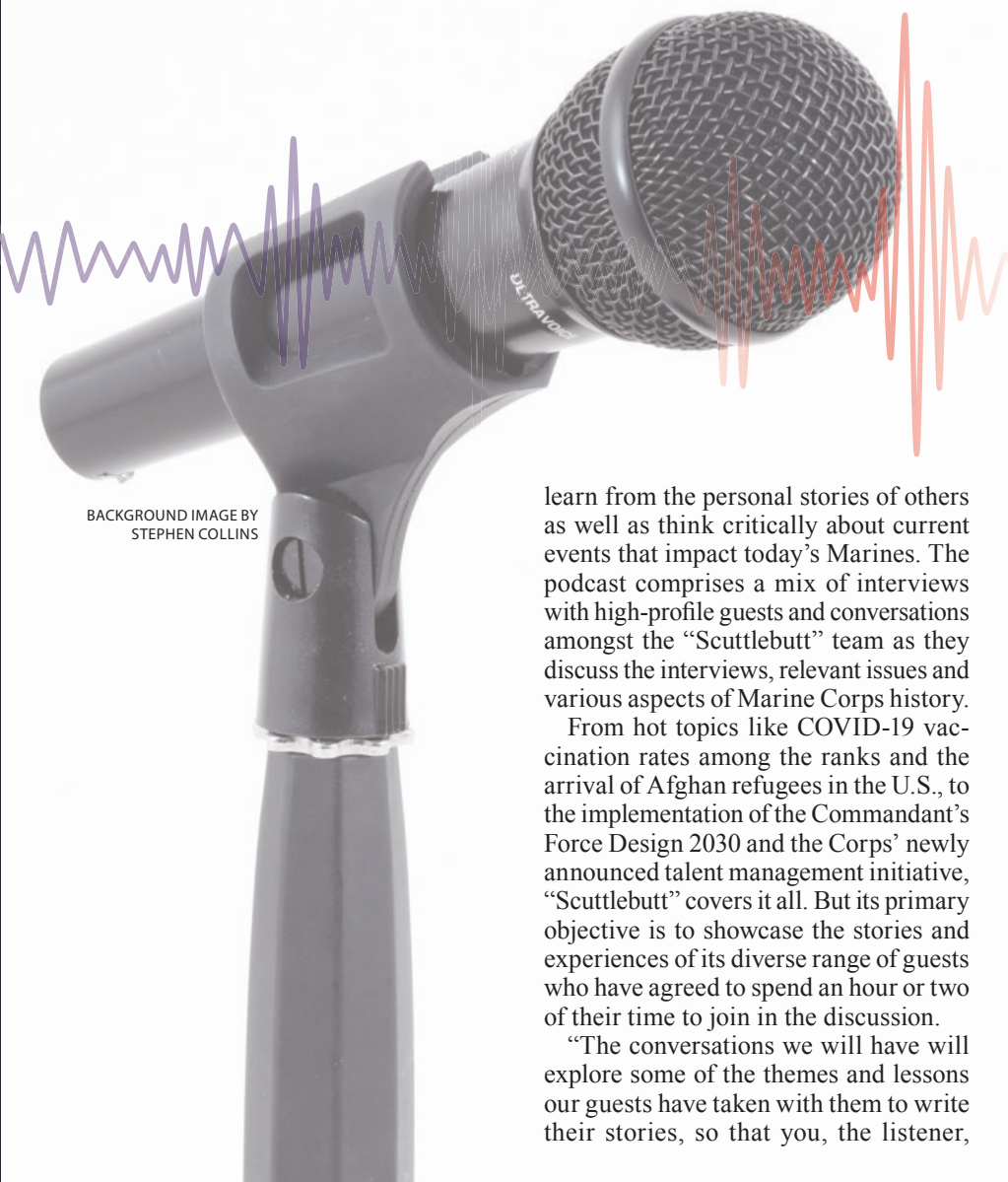
With a heavy emphasis on the art of storytelling, “Scuttlebutt: An MCA Podcast” launched its first episodes in September 2021, taking its place among the professional association's wide array of multimedia resources, which includes audio articles from its flagship publications *Leatherneck* and *Marine Corps Gazette*; an impressive “Corps Voices” collection featuring interviews with some of the most revered Marines in history, including Lieutenant General Lewis B. “Chesty” Puller; and recordings of guest speakers from MCA's professional awards ceremonies and events.

The “by Marines, for Marines” podcast,

which releases new installments weekly and is recorded on-site at the MCA headquarters aboard Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., has quickly gained subscribers, with more listeners tuning in to each subsequent episode. Ruble and the rest of the “Scuttlebutt” production team, which includes MCA webmaster Nick Wilson, who had already set up a recording room and procured the necessary equipment before Ruble came on board; *Marine Corps Gazette* associate editor William Treuting, who recently earned a master's degree in history; and seasoned journalist and *Leatherneck* deputy editor Nancy Lichtman, hope that the informal, conversational format they've created will invite listeners to



Retired Colonel Andrew Milburn, left, author of “When the Tempest Gathers: From Mogadishu to the Fight Against ISIS, a Marine Special Operations Commander at War,” chats with Vic Ruble, center, and Nick Wilson, right, during the recording of “Scuttlebutt” Episode 16, Jan 12.



BACKGROUND IMAGE BY
STEPHEN COLLINS

learn from the personal stories of others as well as think critically about current events that impact today's Marines. The podcast comprises a mix of interviews with high-profile guests and conversations amongst the "Scuttlebutt" team as they discuss the interviews, relevant issues and various aspects of Marine Corps history.

From hot topics like COVID-19 vaccination rates among the ranks and the arrival of Afghan refugees in the U.S., to the implementation of the Commandant's Force Design 2030 and the Corps' newly announced talent management initiative, "Scuttlebutt" covers it all. But its primary objective is to showcase the stories and experiences of its diverse range of guests who have agreed to spend an hour or two of their time to join in the discussion.

"The conversations we will have will explore some of the themes and lessons our guests have taken with them to write their stories, so that you, the listener,



Vic Ruble, right, engages in conversation with Andrew Milburn during a "Scuttlebutt" recording session, Jan. 12. Ruble, who interviews guests during each episode of the newly launched podcast, hopes that listeners find its relaxed format has a similar feel to friends talking in a coffee shop. (Photo by Stephen Collins)

will have more tools in your kit when it comes time to write yours," Ruble said in the promotional "teaser" episode of "Scuttlebutt," adding that his interviews with podcast guests would be akin to "coffeehouse" chats with friends.

Aptly named in a nod to the Marine Corps' naval roots—the term "scuttlebutt" can be traced back to an early 1800s term for the cask containing a ship's daily supply of drinking water, inviting conversation among those gathered around it, and later evolved into a slang term for rumor, gossip or "water cooler talk"—the podcast is informal, engaging and often brings out the witty side of its producers.

Ruble is adept at facilitating relaxed, congenial conversations with podcast guests, who have thus far included names like Marine veteran Miles Vining, who authored the 2020 book "Into Helmand With the Walking Dead"; actor Geoff Stults, who spoke about portraying military servicemembers in film and his work with the Merging Vets and Players organization; and retired Marine Sergeant Major and Navy Cross recipient Justin LeHew, who serves as the chief operating officer for History Flight.

"My goal for the podcast is for it to be a place where stories and narratives outside of the mainstream military mediums are featured and heard," said Ruble. "Just



During the third episode of "Scuttlebutt," the team talks with Marine veteran and author Miles Vining, whose book, "Into Helmand With the Walking Dead," details life in the infantry during the war in Afghanistan.

MCA Audio: How to Listen



The audio content offered by the Marine Corps Association is easily accessible on a variety of platforms. Whether you're interested in subscribing to automatic downloads of "Scuttlebutt" when new podcast episodes are released, or you'd like to hear Chesty Puller speak in "Corps Voices," there are many ways to access these recordings so you can listen on the go or in the comfort of your own home.

- On the MCA website: <https://mca-marines.org/multi-media-resources/>

- On your preferred podcast-listening platform: Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google Podcasts, Stitcher or iHeart Radio

because someone isn't a Medal of Honor winner or wasn't part of some badass special forces task force—which we have some of those folks too—doesn't mean that what they did and how they contributed was insignificant. I would like it if our listeners got the feeling that 'Scuttlebutt' features stories that highlight the many nuances of the Marine Corps and that everyone's story matters. Oftentimes, it's the stories that we don't know about that matter the most."

The burgeoning podcast and the rest of MCA's audio offerings are part of an ongoing effort to expand the association's reach and provide content that goes beyond traditional print media. This is not to diminish the role of the iconic *Leatherneck* and *Gazette*, which have been telling the Marine Corps story and inviting professional discourse for more than a century, but rather to enhance and support those efforts.

Not only does audio content provide the consumer with tone of voice, inflection and emotion, which are often difficult to adequately capture in the written word, but its format also allows for multi-tasking, such as listening while driving, exercising or doing household chores. This is particularly desirable among those whose busy schedules don't necessarily

allow them time to sit and read a magazine or book but who want to absorb new information, perspectives and stories.

"We want to be both an entertaining storytelling destination and a somewhat professional resource peering behind the scenes at different aspects of the Marine Corps," said Wilson. "We were looking to reach an audience that the MCA has struggled to keep in contact with over the years, that being the younger '25 to 45' crowd. Which, as it just so happens, is the crowd that listens to podcasts."

Podcasts like "Scuttlebutt" have soared in popularity in recent years across a broad range of demographics. According

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MCA

Justin LeHew, a retired Marine sergeant major, was the first guest on "Scuttlebutt." His interview, which spans two episodes, covers a variety of topics ranging from advice he received during his Marine Corps career to his work in MIA research, recovery and repatriation as chief operating officer of History Flight.

VIC RUBLE

Creative Content Coordinator and Deputy Editor
Marine Corps Gazette



STEPHEN COLLINS

"My goal for the podcast is for it to be a place where stories and narratives outside of the mainstream military mediums are featured and heard."

"If someone has any passing interest in the Marines, I think they'll find a lot to like in Scuttlebutt," Wilson said. "I only see growth in the future, and it'll be fun to be a part of it."



STEPHEN COLLINS

NICK WILSON

Webmaster, Marine Corps Association

NANCY LIGHTMAN

Deputy Editor, *Leatherneck*

WILLIAM TREUTING

Associate Editor, *Marine Corps Gazette*



STEPHEN COLLINS

"I want our podcast to be an entryway for civilians to become interested and invested in the Marine Corps and to help diminish the cultural/social gap between civilians and the military,"



STEPHEN COLLINS

"Ideally, the podcast discussions will lead people to pick up a magazine, either the physical copy or the digital format, to take a deeper dive into Marine Corps history."



SARA W. BOCK

From the left, William Treuting, Vic Ruble and Nick Wilson record the introduction to "Scuttlebutt" Episode 11, Dec. 2, 2021. The episode features an interview with Dr. Michael Hunzeker, professor at George Mason University and author of "Dying to Learn: Wartime Lessons from the Western Front."

Podcasts like "Scuttlebutt" have soared in popularity in recent years across a broad range of demographics.

According to Edison Research, approximately 80 million Americans, or 28 percent of the U.S. population over the age of 12, listen to podcasts each week.

BACKGROUND IMAGE BY
STEPHEN COLLINS



LUXOR



The “Scuttlebutt” podcast includes a multi-episode series discussing the amphibious nature of the Marine Corps. The second iteration of the series involves a discussion with Col Tim Hough, program manager for advanced amphibious assault, about maintaining amphibious capabilities in order to be prepared for the future fight against near-peer adversaries.

Using recorded remarks made by Gen David H. Berger, Commandant of the Marine Corps, and Gen Eric M. Smith, Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, at MCA events, the “Scuttlebutt” team dedicated Episode 7 to a discussion of Force Design 2030, the Corps’ newly announced talent management initiative and more. (MCA photo)



to Edison Research, approximately 80 million Americans, or 28 percent of the U.S. population over the age of 12, listen to podcasts each week, which is a 17 percent increase from those who listened in 2020—and this group also is more diverse than ever before. Additionally, the research company’s 2021 Infinite Dial study found that 62 percent of the population are weekly online audio listeners. It seems safe to conclude that these numbers will only continue to rise.

“The younger generation of Marines is less inclined to read a magazine than their predecessors, so with this format, we can reach those young men and women,” said Lichtman, who says she views the podcast as an audio magazine of sorts, employing some of the same concepts she’s used during her career in print media as she assists in its development. “Ideally, the podcast discussions will lead people to pick up a magazine, either the physical copy or the digital format, to take a deeper dive into Marine Corps history.”

She believes that the podcast format, which allows for a free flow of ideas between guests and hosts, fills a different need than either *Gazette* or *Leatherneck*, and helps further the association’s mission to develop leaders and to expand awareness of the traditions, history and spirit of the Marine Corps.

Lieutenant General Charles G. Chiarotti, the association’s CEO, agrees with this sentiment, stating that the “Scuttlebutt” team’s efforts contribute directly to the “rich discussion” that the association seeks to encourage among Marines and friends of the Corps.

“Through the research that they do to prepare for each podcast, to their casual on-air demeanor, they are able to uncover the more humanistic aspects of a story or personal account,” said LtGen Chiarotti, who was the featured guest on the “Scuttlebutt” Episode 6, which was released in conjunction with the 246th birthday of the Corps. “They reach a different level of understanding of an experience or a story than most are willing or able to provide through the written form,” he added.

During his appearance on the podcast, LtGen Chiarotti, who was born and raised in Italy, discussed his unconventional path to becoming a Marine, as well as the importance of professional development and what his priorities are as he takes the helm of MCA.

Prior to the recording of each episode, Ruble writes up a pre-interview show setup with discussion

BACKGROUND IMAGE BY
STEPHEN COLLINS



points and questions, and the podcast team meets to give suggestions and feedback. The result is a well thought-out, meaningful conversation that explores what it means to serve and to claim the title “Marine.”

“All of our guests have brought their own unique perspectives and personalities to this project,” said Ruble. “Some have been fun because the guest was charismatic, or I already had a relationship with them, so it really was just two friends hanging out. Others have been super informative, and I’ve just been in ‘receive mode’ the whole time as if I were a listener.”

Treuting, whose historical focus is on American military history, hopes to see “Scuttlebutt” attract both military-affiliated and civilian listeners alike and to serve as a springboard for additional audio and visual content produced by the MCA in the future.

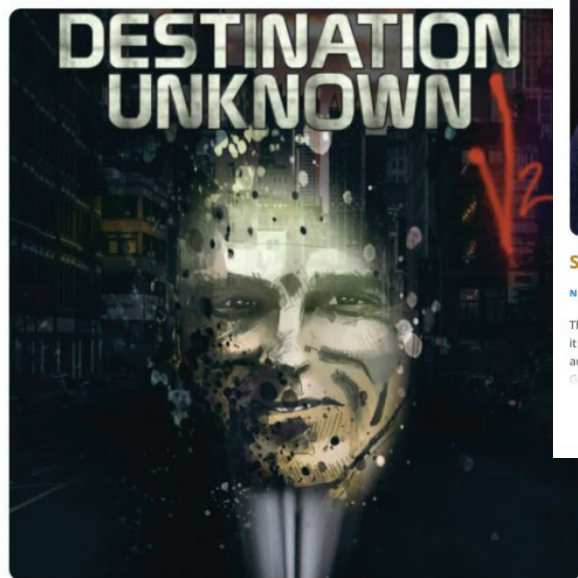
“I want our podcast to be an entryway for civilians to become interested and

invested in the Marine Corps and to help diminish the cultural/social gap between civilians and the military,” Treuting said.

There’s something for everyone among the audio resources available on the MCA website, whether it’s an oral history interview of General Frank E. Petersen, the Marine Corps’ first Black aviator, in which he describes a racial incident that occurred at Marine Corps Air Station El Toro, Calif., in 1953, part of the “Corps Voices” collection, or a speech given by Gen James N. Mattis, USMC (Ret), during an October 2019 MCA professional event. Popular *Leatherneck* articles, many of which are read by the authors themselves, also are easily accessible. And of course, “Scuttlebutt” is sure to attract an audience both young and old, from a variety of backgrounds.

“If someone has any passing interest in the Marines, I think they’ll find a lot to like in Scuttlebutt,” Wilson said. “I only see growth in the future, and it’ll be fun to be a part of it.” 🇺🇸

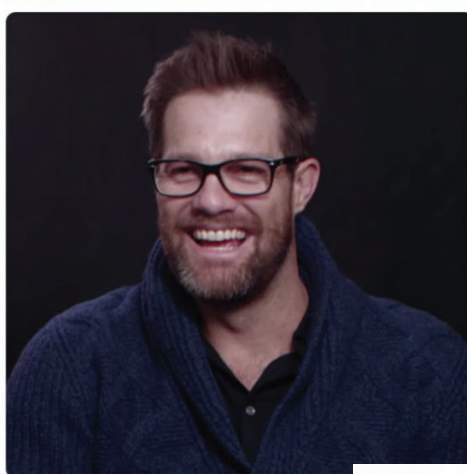
SCUTTLEBUTT



Scuttlebutt 13: LtCol Adam Yang and Destinations Unknown

NICK WILSON · DECEMBER 27, 2021 · 0 COMMENTS

Then Major, now Lieutenant Colonel, Adam Yang joined us in the studio to talk about a few different education opportunities for Marines, including the PhD program he participated in. We then dive into his work bringing Destination Unknown to life, which included a fortuitous lunch at My Deli in Quantico. Destination Unknown is a graphic...



Scuttlebutt 15: Geoff Stults, Actor Extra

NICK WILSON · JANUARY 10, 2022 · 0 COMMENTS

This week on Scuttlebutt: Vic sits down with actor Geoff Stults to... it means for an actor to take on the role of someone from the military. Geoff's affiliation with Merging Vets and Players (MVP) an...

SCUTTLEBUTT



Scuttlebutt 11: Dr. Michael Hunzeker, ACT Theory

NICK WILSON · DECEMBER 13, 2021 · 0 COMMENTS

Deterrence is more likely to prevail the more we are thinking in worst case scenarios.

On the MCA website, “Scuttlebutt” listeners can read synopses of each available podcast episode. The team continues to book high-profile guests who are willing to share their own personal experiences and perspectives.



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Simi Valley, Calif.

Prestigious Award Presented to Retired Marine Colonel

Retired Marine colonel and former Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Work, pictured third from the left, was awarded the Ronald Reagan Peace Through Strength Award at the 2021 Reagan National Defense Forum (RNDF) in Simi Valley, Calif., Dec. 4, 2021. The award also was presented to former House Armed Services Committee Chairman Mac Thornberry.

"Chairman Thornberry and Secretary Work have each devoted decades of their lives to serving and supporting our nation's armed forces. Their steadfast leadership has contributed greatly to our safety and freedom as a nation," said Frederick J. Ryan Jr., chairman of the board of trustees of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute. "Their knowledge and understanding of defense strategy, budgeting and modernization have been invaluable to preserving our competitive edge. As we honor them at RNDF, we trust that their contributions to the cause are not yet complete."

Work, who retired from the Marine Corps after a 27-year career, served as Deputy Secretary of Defense from 2014 to 2017 and was responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations and management of the Department of Defense. Prior to his confirmation



COURTESY OF THE RONALD REAGAN PRESIDENTIAL FOUNDATION AND INSTITUTE

in that role, he served as CEO of the Center for a New American Security and as Under Secretary of the Navy. In 2019, he co-chaired the inaugural Reagan Institute Center for Peace Through Strength Task Force, which produced a report detailing recommendations for the National Security Innovation Base.

Submitted by James Rogers

Houston, Texas

Veterans Take Center Field At World Series Game

Minutes before the Atlanta Braves and Houston Astros took to the field to face off in Game Two of the World Series at Minute Maid Park in Houston, Texas, Oct. 27, 2021, veteran Marines with the Houston-based McLemore Detachment, Marine Corps League, presented the Colors as U.S. Navy Petty Officer First Class Giavinni Walker performed the National Anthem.

For the Marines who participated in the color guard, the high-visibility event served as an opportunity to promote the Marine Corps League, which they consider "the best kept secret" in cities across America. It's their hope that by appearing at events like the World Series, they'll help the League recruit more members and raise additional funds.

"For us, it was a once in a lifetime experience. In our community our focus is to honor, assist and educate. Our hard work paid off



USN

and we look forward to the next challenge," said Richard Cobb, the detachment's junior vice commandant.

Submitted by Richard Cobb

Triangle, Va.



RAGAN BOLICK



RAGAN BOLICK

TBS Class Reunites, Honors Fallen Members with Plaque Dedication

Members of "Echo" Company, The Basic School (TBS) Class 5-69, held a memorial dedication ceremony at the Semper Fidelis Memorial Chapel on the grounds of the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle, Va., Oct. 29, 2021. The bronze memorial plaque, which was installed in 2020, pays tribute to the lives of the Echo Co classmates who were killed in action during the Vietnam War: Second Lieutenants James Bryan McGarry and John Price Pickett and First Lieutenant Henry Porter Rathmell.

Distinguished guests at the ceremony included Colonel Michael L. Brooks, the commanding officer of Marine Corps Base Quantico; Col Joel F. Schmidt, the commanding officer of TBS; and Sergeant

Major Fausto Cabrera, TBS sergeant major; as well as Echo Co's most distinguished classmate, retired Lieutenant General Earl Hailston. The TBS color guard posted the Colors, and the MCB Quantico Brass Quintet provided music during the ceremony.

"The most moving aspect of the ceremony were the testimonials about the three classmates, which included memories from TBS, their early lives and their ultimate sacrifice in Vietnam," said class member Joe Howard.

A reception in the museum's Leatherneck Gallery Overlook followed the ceremony.

Submitted by Joe Howard

Beaufort, S.C.



DONNA HUTCHENS

WW II, Korean War Veteran Receives Surprise Visitors

It was an exciting month for retired Sergeant Major John T. "Tom" Collier, pictured on the left, who was the guest of honor at Operation Patriots FOB Marine Corps birthday celebration and celebrated his 102nd birthday with his family on Nov. 19, 2021. He also welcomed some special visitors at his home in Beaufort, S.C., Dec. 18. Brigadier General Julie L. Nethercot, the commanding general of Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., and Eastern Recruiting Region, center, and Sergeant Major Edwin A. Mota, MCRD Parris Island and Eastern Recruiting Region sergeant major, right, surprised Collier to wish him happy holidays.

Collier, a Bronze Star recipient and veteran of World War II and the Korean War, enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1940 and attended boot camp at MCRD Parris Island. After seeing combat at Guadalcanal and Cape Gloucester in the Pacific theater and later escaping on a homemade raft from a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp in the Philippines, Collier returned to Parris Island as a drill instructor in 1945. During the Korean War, he participated in the landing at Inchon and earned his place among the "Chosin Few" during the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir. Collier retired from the Marine Corps in 1964 while again assigned to MCRD Parris Island.

The opportunity to visit with the next generation of recruit depot leaders was meaningful to Collier, who, according to his daughter, Donna Hutchens, said, "This was the best Christmas present ever!"

Submitted by Donna Hutchens

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

The Honest John firing platoon was intended to come ashore aboard a Navy LCU, offload rapidly, and set up a firing point from which to launch its two rockets at preplanned targets.



USMC



ATOMIC LEATHERNECKS:

Nuclear Rocket Artillery in the Cold War

By Jonathan Bernstein

When atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, they effectively ended World War II and ushered in a new era of warfare, but while the United States stood alone as a nuclear power for the first four years after the war, the Soviets detonated their own atomic bomb in 1949. From that point onward, the use of and defense against atomic weapons stood front and center of all U.S. military strategic planning.

For the Marine Corps, the ominous shadow of atomic warfare

meant a reimagining of amphibious warfare. How were Marines supposed to come ashore and fight when a single atomic weapon had the potential to destroy an entire assault force before it even reached the beach? How would they counter potential nuclear-armed adversaries once ashore?

In a time of shrinking budgets and shrinking forces, the coming of the Atomic Age potentially threatened the very existence of the Marine Corps. The Marines lost 85 percent of total end strength between 1945 and 1950, dropping from a zenith of 474,680 Marines in 1946, to 155,679 the following year and ultimately down to a mere 74,279 by 1950. Ever living

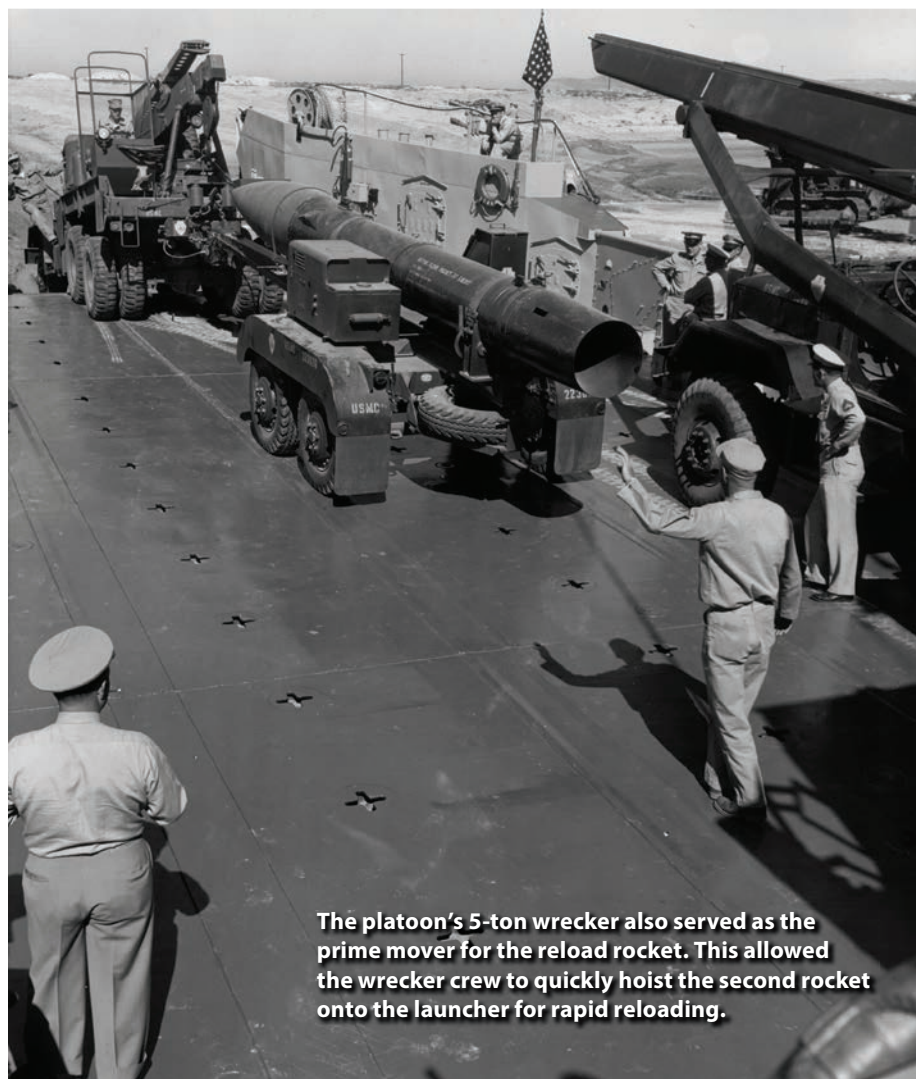
up to the adage of “adapt, improvise and overcome,” the Marine Corps had to reimagine how amphibious operations would be conducted in the Atomic Age in order to remain relevant. The National Defense Act of 1947 codified the Marine Corps’ role in protecting the nation into law and ensured its continued existence. From that point, the mission was no longer survival, but achieving and maintaining the cutting edge of American combat power in the postwar era.

The next war came sooner than many expected, and by the end of June 1950, U.S. forces were engaged in combat operations against North Korea. After setbacks and retreats through July and August 1950, the first amphibious assault to incorporate the lessons learned from the Bikini Atoll atomic tests landed the 1st Marine Division at Inchon on Sept. 15. Speed, dispersal, timing and surprise were key in getting the Marines ashore, with the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines landing at 6:30 a.m. and securing the approaches to Inchon, enabling the rest of the Division to land later that afternoon.

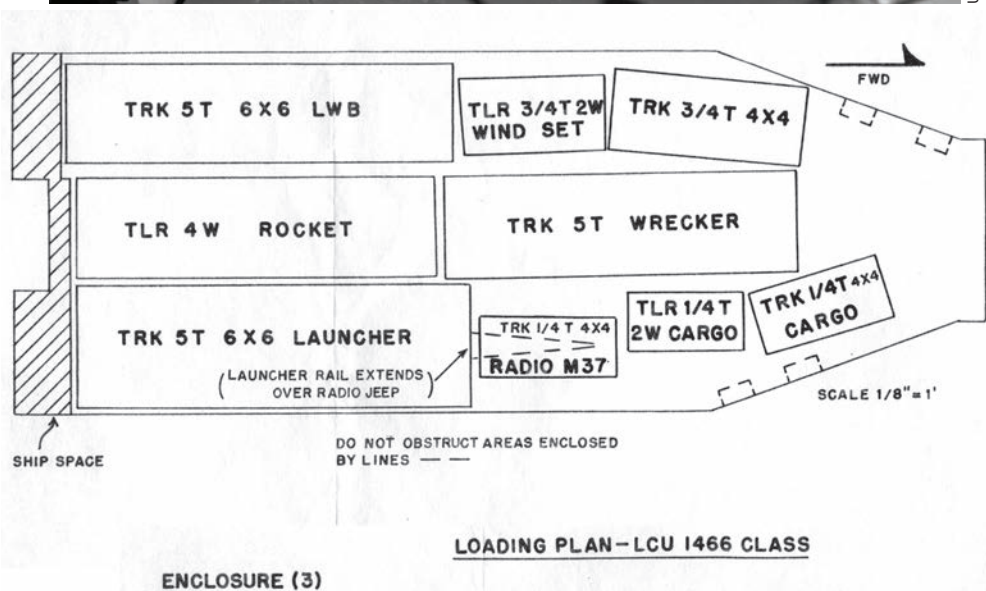
The Inchon landings showed that while the primary atomic threat to a landing force was still from an air delivered weapon and that air superiority was critical for the ground force to maintain freedom of movement, the potential of tactical nuclear weapons employment lay just over the horizon. By December of that year, the Army’s missile research and development programs kicked into overdrive with one of several goals being the production of a surface-to-surface tactical nuclear weapon to enable American ground forces to attack and destroy potential origin points of an enemy tactical atomic attack.

Development of tactical nuclear weapons took a two-pronged approach, focusing on rocket and gun systems as the delivery method. War in Korea had increased the potential for nuclear conflict, and if there was a chance of a third world war, the Department of Defense wanted to be prepared to fight on the atomic battlefield. As a result, both the gun and rocket systems were given emergency priority with prototypes planned for delivery by mid-1951.

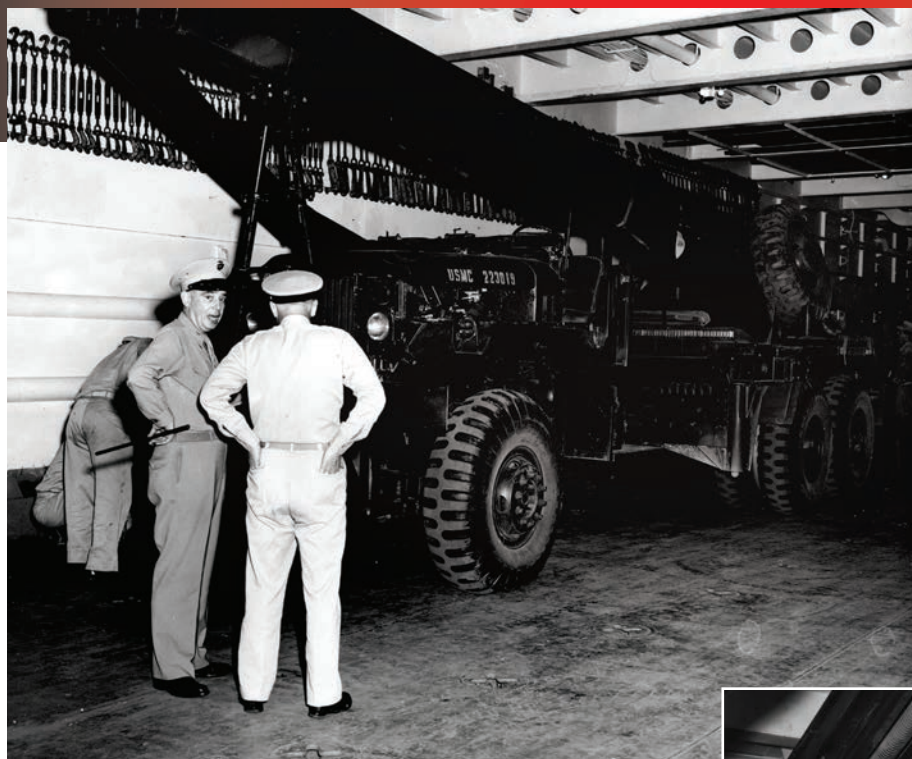
Nearly from its inception, the rocket program was intended to result in a mobile, flexible system that would allow for a quick “shoot and scoot” capability; a weapon that would fit in well with an amphibious assault force. Coming ashore via LCU or LST, the launcher and support equipment could quickly be landed, driven to a feasible launch site, and emplaced. The launcher was based on the M139C 5-ton truck, which had the load carrying



The platoon’s 5-ton wrecker also served as the prime mover for the reload rocket. This allowed the wrecker crew to quickly hoist the second rocket onto the launcher for rapid reloading.



Nearly from its inception, the rocket program was intended to result in a mobile, flexible system that would allow for a quick “shoot and scoot” capability; a weapon that would fit in well with an amphibious assault force.



USMC

Above: Although it was supposed to fit aboard an LST, the overhead in the ship's well deck prohibited the launcher vehicle from carrying a rocket. In fact, the launcher rail frame required modification for just the vehicle to fit with enough clearance.

Right: Members of the launcher crew lower the launch rail to ensure overhead clearance aboard an LST.

and off-road capability needed to properly employ the rocket. It was standardized in 1953 as the M289 transporter/launcher.

The Douglas Aircraft Company completed the first five XM31 prototype rockets, nicknamed "Honest John," by May 1951 and the test program began at the end of June, with the first launch on May 29. The program progressed steadily with modifications and improvements to the rocket and launcher over the subsequent two years. In addition to rocket modifications, the program also developed blast and fragmentation high explosive (HE) warheads, and a chemical/biological capable warhead as well.

While the atomic tests at Bikini Atoll in 1946 made it clear that a nuclear weapon employed against an amphibious assault force had catastrophic potential, the Corps quickly began looking at how to change its doctrine in order to adapt to the new status quo. Its first doctrinal push to acknowledge nuclear weapons was Landing Forces Bulletin (LFB) 2, issued on Feb. 20, 1953, titled "Interim Doctrine for the Conduct of Tactical Atomic Warfare."

However, it was the 1955 revision of LFB-2 that laid out the framework for Marine Corps atomic doctrine by stating that the Marine Corps would be "tailored to conduct operations against an enemy employing atomic munitions" and would furthermore be "organized, trained and equipped to employ atomic munitions in amphibious or other operations," with "control of the employment of atomic munitions ... decentralized at the lowest echelon possible."

This doctrinal update coincided with the arrival of the Marine Corps' six M289 launchers and associated equipment and the standing up of the 1st Heavy Artillery Rocket Battery (HARB), FMF at Camp Lejeune. The six launchers had been appropriated for in October 1954 as part of the Army's first follow-up purchase after the initial production run. The first Marine M289 launcher



USMC

While the atomic tests at Bikini Atoll in 1946 made it clear that a nuclear weapon employed against an amphibious assault force had catastrophic potential, the Corps quickly began looking at how to change its doctrine in order to adapt to the new status quo.

arrived in June 1955, with the balance of launchers, rockets and equipment arriving in August. The Fleet Marine Force was almost nuclear capable.

From LFB-2, it was clear that the Marine Corps intended to conduct amphibious landings and fight within a battlefield that had already been heavily prepped by atomic munitions. "An intensive atomic preparation of the objective area will be conducted immediately prior to the assault" pulls no punches as to the environment that the Marines were supposed to fight and survive within. Coming ashore with additional atomic weapons would ensure that enemy forces outside the prepared area and several miles inland could not serve as rally points for enemy reinforcements or survivors from the initial atomic preparation.

The Heavy Artillery Rocket Battery was designed to maximize its effectiveness under this doctrine. The battery was further

subdivided into two platoons of two launchers and the requisite support equipment to maintain both as mission capable. The 1st HARB moved to Coronado, Calif., later in the year, and by mid-May had conducted a series of tests to identify minimum operational loads for both LCU and LST-class landing craft. They also determined the proper dispersal to ensure the survivability of at least one firing unit within an assault force. The dispersal between those firing units effectively relegated the final decision for the use of atomic weapons to the section chief, an E-6, per guidance from LFB-2.

The intent of the May loading exercise was to determine whether a complete firing unit could be brought ashore by a single landing craft. Loading plans were quickly worked out and a configuration for a complete firing unit was standardized for each type of craft to rapidly facilitate combat offloading. Although there were some issues with the overhead in pre-LST-1156 class that required support from higher echelon ordnance teams, the 1st HARB determined that both the LCU and the LST would allow for a complete firing unit aboard.

Once declared operational, the 1st HARB was assigned to the Field Artillery Group, under Colonel M.J. Hooper at Twentynine Palms, Calif., conducting their first field exercise as part of the Group in February 1958, using the XM4 flash/smoke practice rocket for live fire training.

The battery deployed to Okinawa in 1960 for an 18-month tour of duty, joining U.S. Army Honest John units already there. Okinawa was and continues to be critical to the U.S. presence in Asia and served as a significant "special weapons" logistics center for all of the services through 1972. Were tensions to boil over in South Vietnam or with China, the 1st HARB was prepared to jump off from Okinawa to wherever necessary.

The 1st HARB was finally disbanded in 1965 after the decision

was made not to upgrade to the M50 improved Honest John rocket. While the principles behind the doctrine of medium range, medium yield atomic weapons were sound in theory, the practical survivability concerns became all too apparent. As the Cold War dragged on, newer, more efficient methods of nuclear weapons delivery ensured that the Marines would be able to continue with their historic mission of assault from the sea, while no longer needing to maintain an atomic force to hold the door open once they were secure on land.

The Honest John rocket and launcher failed to reach initial operational capability during the Korean War, but the concerns of a wider war spurred its development and gave the Marine Corps a tactical nuclear platform with which to defend an amphibious landing force from atomic attack. This nuclear amphibious landing capability, however small within the Corps, allowed for a far more capable Fleet Marine Force in the decade between 1955 and 1965. Aerial and artillery tube-delivered nuclear weapons outpaced the Marines' need for a surface-to-surface rocket propelled nuclear deterrent, but allowed the Marine Corps to remain a relevant and significant nuclear deterrent force in its own right throughout the remainder of the Cold War.

Author's bio: Jonathan Bernstein is the Arms and Armor Curator for the National Museum of the Marine Corps. Previously he was the Director/Curator of the Air Defense Artillery Museum. Bernstein began his museum career in 1991 at the USS Intrepid Sea Air & Space Museum and has served in a number of museum roles since then. He was an Army aviation officer, flying AH-64A and D Apache attack helicopters with the 1-104th Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, PA NG from 2006-2012. He has also published a number of books and articles on military and aviation history. 🇺🇸



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Presley O'Bannon

He Gave the Corps
More Than a Sword



COURTESY OF NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND



By Maj Ralph Stoney Bates,
USMC (Ret)

In the Bedouins' circle of tents in the large encampment, the faint soothing sounds of a stringed instrument wafted through the air as nightfall darkened the desert beyond the glow of interior tent lamps. In the tent of the lead Bedouin, holding a delicate Amati wooden chordophone and its accompanying bow in the customary manner, sat a young American man serenading the assembled tribal elders with portions of music from Mozart's Symphony No. 40. He sat cross-legged, wearing his dark-blue broadcloth coat with red facing, adorned with brass naval buttons capping each side of the front of his gold braided coat, and plain dark blue uniform trousers. On a stack of woven rugs beside him, sat his tall, short-billed cap topped with red plume. He was a lieutenant of the United States Marines. Each evening, he serenaded different groups of his multinational army.

By General Order No. 47 in 1921, John Archer Lejeune decreed Nov. 10, 1775 the official birthday of our Corps. Thus, our Marine Corps heritage began with the establishment of the Continental Marines during the war for independence from British rule; however, the Marine Corps ethos of today began during a march across the North African desert in 1805.

Continental Marines, along with the Continental Navy, were abolished after the Revolutionary War, and the Navy and Marine Corps would not appear as United States Marines and the United States Navy until 1794.

According to “Naval History and Heritage Command: Birth of the United States Navy,” “On 2 Jan. 1794, Congress resolved to create a naval force, adequate to the protection of the United States against the Algerine [Barbary] corsairs. A committee had been formed and recommended that a fleet of six frigates be constructed. The committee, as well

as the 50 congressmen who voted for the subsequent Act to provide a Naval Armament of 27 March 1794, which finally re-established the United States Navy, mostly represented maritime trading cities of the north and east, where the first calls for a naval force had originated back in 1775.”

The establishment of the United States Marine Corps would come on July 11, 1794.

During the Barbary Wars, tiring of paying tribute or ransom monies to the Barbary States, President Thomas Jefferson directed and empowered an Army captain, who had been appointed as Naval Agent to the Barbary States, to lead a military expedition against the nation of Tripoli, one of the Barbary States, in an effort to cause all Barbary States to cease boarding American

President Thomas Jefferson directed and empowered an Army captain ... to lead a military expedition against the nation of Tripoli ... in an effort to cause all Barbary States to cease boarding American trading vessels engaged in traversing trade routes in the Mediterranean Sea.

Designed with a curved blade like a traditional scimitar, this is the sword that was presented to Presley O'Bannon by the Commonwealth of Virginia, after his return from Tripoli. (Photo courtesy of National Museum of the Marine Corps)





LEATHERNECK FILE ILLUSTRATION

Hamet Karamanli, the man who was to be placed on the throne of Tripoli replacing his brutal brother, was demanding payment during the march. They had previously agreed to payment at the end of the march and threatened to revolt if not instantly paid.

trading vessels engaged in traversing trade routes in the Mediterranean Sea. In practice, the ships were looted, and American crewmen were kidnapped and enslaved with the payment of ransom monies as their only avenue from slavery to freedom. President Jefferson decided he would try another method, that of military and naval force. Thus, the appointment of William Eaton and the approval of Congress in authorizing funding for the mission left only one significant problem. With a significantly small staff, Eaton required a military force. He requested 100 Marines to assist him in acquiring a military force sufficient to accomplish his mission. He received one lieutenant of Marines by the name of Presley Neville O'Bannon, one Marine acting-sergeant by the name of Arthur Campbell, and

six Marine privates to organize, direct and control a private army of more than 1,000 soldiers of fortune, mercenaries and rowdy bounty-hunting volunteers to march together across 500 miles of hostile desert with a mission of disposing the current ruler of Tripoli and replacing him with his brother.

Lieutenant O'Bannon was 29 years old and a veteran of fighting Native Americans on the American frontier. He was a sturdy born-in-America Irishman and was tough, resourceful, brave and loyal to his Marines and his commander, William Eaton. A studied review of history reveals that without the resolute leadership of Presley O'Bannon and the loyal, disciplined Marines under his command, William Eaton would never have completed his complex mission; indeed, leading an odd

military expedition 500 miles, attacking and capturing the city of Derna and altering United States foreign policy seemed like an impossible task. That's why Eaton asked for Marines. With them, he accomplished what several U.S. Navy flotillas had failed to accomplish in several attempts—he captured a city on the coast of Tripoli and held it, and also defeated several counterattacking forces sent from Tripoli, opening the door to the city of Tripoli itself. The city of Derna would not have been captured, nor would the counterattacks have been defeated, without the support of eight Marines and a U.S. Navy fleet off its coast.

During the long march, several incidences of near mutiny, disobedience, revolt and desertions occurred during which Eaton and O'Bannon craftily and

skillfully turned near-disasters into compromise or forced the errant followers back into obedience to the rules of the march. When men deserted or willfully disobeyed, swift, sometimes brutal, oftentimes diplomatic actions resolved the matter, and group order and discipline were maintained. In one incident, an Arab cavalry force loyal to Hamet Karamanli, the man who was to be placed on the throne of Tripoli replacing his brutal brother, was demanding payment during the march. They had previously agreed to payment at the end of the march and threatened to revolt if not instantly paid. After being denied, they rode quickly and angrily from the encampment, and suddenly spun around shouting epithets of “death to the infidels” as they commenced a charge with swords drawn toward Eaton’s tent. O’Bannon quickly ordered his Marines to form a skirmish line with rifles at the ready. As the large Arab contingent charged directly at them, O’Bannon and his Marines stood their ground, and with fixed bayonets, prepared to fire one volley and engage in hand-to-hand and sword-to-sword and bayonet combat. At the last second, seeing the line of unflinching uniformed Marines with their lieutenant standing before them, sword in hand, obviously determined to fight against overwhelming odds, the mounted Arabs reined to a stop, sheathed their swords, turned and withdrew. At another event that would jeopardize the mission, the Navy Fleet commander sent a note to Eaton asking him to return the Marines under his command to the ship detachment aboard USS *Argus* before the attack on Derna. Upon hearing of this request, Lt O’Bannon responded to his direct naval superior in that regard. In a note, he wrote these exact words: “Sir, Unwilling to abandon Expedition, this far conducted. I have to request your permission to continue with Mr. Eaton during his stay on land, or at least until we arrive at Derna.” Permission was granted. Time and time again, O’Bannon and his Marines saved the day.

In his journal, Eaton wrote, “The firm and decided conduct of Mr. O’Bannon, as on all other occasions, did much to deter the violence of the savages [his reference to his mercenaries] by whom we were surrounded.”

The plan was to meet up with a U.S. Navy squadron of warships at Bomba, Tripoli, with desperately needed supplies, including food and ammunition. The meet-up was delayed for days until the ships arrived, yet Eaton and O’Bannon still maintained a semblance of order and discipline among a starving and angry army of Arabs and Christians. Finally,

they reached the agreed upon rendezvous and salvation for the United States. The Navy arrived with sufficient quantities of food and supplies, including currency needed to partially pay the recruited army and prepare for the attack on Derna. With pockets full of money and bellies full of food and drink, Eaton issued his attack order.

Eaton’s “army” arrived at a high plateau overlooking the walled city of Derna and



MARINE CORPS HISTORY DIVISION, ARCHIVES BRANCH

Above: An oil painting of Lt Presley Neville O’Bannon by Col Donald L. Dickson.

Below: Rembrandt Peale painted this portrait of William Eaton in 1815.



LEATHERNECK FILE PHOTO

its massive fort adjacent to the harbor. As three U.S. warships arrived and Eaton conferred with the captains, he divided his forces for a two-pronged attack on the city and fort. With Lt O’Bannon in charge, the Marines and a few Greek artillerymen and Christian mercenaries were to lay suppressive fires on the defenders while Hamet led the Arabs in an enveloping

movement attacking from the south into the city itself. As Hamet’s cavalry entered the city, O’Bannon and his Marines would attack the fort by frontal assault. The signal for commencing the enveloping ground attack would be as the warships opened fire on the fort and city. It was a perfectly executed attack. They had marched overland for 52 days covering over 500 miles and captured the city of Derna and its fort in two and a half hours. Eaton was wounded in the arm, and two Marines were killed in the attack. The Marines attacked and routed the few defenders still alive from the fort, and Presley O’Bannon lowered the Tripoli flag and raised the American flag in its place, the first time the American flag was flown on foreign soil.

Next, Eaton had to prepare to defend the city from the counterattack that was sure to come. The counterattacking forces of Bashaw Yusuf had been on the way since the rendezvous at Bomba, but Eaton had beaten them in the march to Derna. Yusuf’s forces finally arrived 11 days after Eaton’s forces had captured it. They attacked with 1,200 men and were immediately repulsed by the defenders, which included gunfire from two warships and sharpshooting by O’Bannon’s Marines and Greek artillerymen. The band of misfits, mercenaries and Marines had captured a city and defeated forces sent to recapture it. The road to the city of Tripoli was now wide-open.

As Eaton’s “army” trekked across the sands of North Africa, President Jefferson began having second thoughts. Arguments between Navy and Treasury secretaries each seemingly made rational sense, but Treasury’s arguments that paying tribute to the Barbary pirates would be less costly than an extended naval force off the African coast got most of Jefferson’s attention. The Louisiana Purchase had also taken a drain on the U.S. Treasury, and the increasing constant bickering between England and America seemed to be more of an issue than the pirates of North Africa. He did not know that Eaton had formed his “army” and was in striking distance of Derna when he succumbed to more serious issues such as a depleted treasury and intense friction with England. These issues would ultimately lead to the War of 1812. He sent word to abandon the ground attack. These words reached Eaton’s ears after he had completed his first objective and was preparing to issue his second objective orders—attacking and capturing Tripoli.

USS *Constitution* arrived in the harbor of Derna to immediately evacuate all Americans, but the brash Eaton saw it slightly different. He felt we owed some



Presley O'Bannon, born in Fauquier County, Va., was presented with this sword by Virginia officials who had it engraved with the words "Assault and Conquest of the City of Derne in Africa." The sword is currently on display at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle, Va. (Photos courtesy of National Museum of the Marine Corps)

loyalty to our allies. Eaton sent for O'Bannon and Hamet and informed them of the news. It was heartbreaking. Hamet had just defeated Yusuf's cavalry; they had captured Derna after marching more than 500 miles from safety with the Mamelukes in Egypt only to be ordered to retreat. He could have turned on Eaton. He could have taken his followers and departed after looting the city. He could have done many things to vent his anger. He continued to demonstrate loyalty to Eaton, however, and warned that if this information went any further and others found out about the betrayal, they would all be slaughtered. Eaton knew he was correct.

To disguise his intent, Eaton set about issuing orders regarding the defense of the city while planning to withdraw to *Constitution*. He told his forces and the residents of the city that the warship had brought reinforcements to be landed imminently, issued additional ammunition and rations and sent out scouts to reconnoiter and report on enemy disposition. Later in the evening, Marines

were sent to order Greeks and other Christians to report to the docks. Once assembled, to their surprise, O'Bannon ordered them into the boats and instructed them to remain silent as they were rowed to the ship. As Marines present at the wharf readied their weapons, Eaton sent Hamet a message requesting a meeting at the wharf for a discussion. This was an agreed upon code for Hamet to gather his group of loyal sheiks and board the boats to be rowed to the warship. Finally, once Hamet and his loyal subjects were aboard, Eaton ordered O'Bannon and his Marines to board, as he kept one boat and oarsmen for himself. Satisfied all were safely aboard, he stepped into the last waiting boat. He was on his way to board the ship when the plot was exposed. The mercenaries and the city inhabitants were incensed. Had Eaton and his loyal followers not been on a U.S. warship with its guns trained on the city, they would have been slaughtered.

It was in that autumn of 1805 when William Eaton arrived to a hero's welcome in the United States. Jefferson invited

him to dine at the White House. Senator Stephen Bradley of Vermont introduced a resolution to reward Eaton and O'Bannon and his Marines. It never materialized, however. Eaton was given a land grant by the state of Massachusetts, now in present day Maine. Hamet and Eaton maintained contact by mail, while Eaton attempted to secure monetary payment for Hamet and himself from the U.S. Congress. He was partially successful.

Eaton was a bitter man. He felt he had been betrayed by the United States government and that he had accomplished exactly what he had promised the President of the United States until his actions were stymied by politics. He continued to rant and rave, sometimes fueled by alcohol to anyone who would listen, and as he grew bolder and more outspoken, that audience was growing smaller and smaller. He died in 1811 at age 47, a broken man. Though buried with military honors, few paid any attention. He fell into the dustbin of history.

The same year that Eaton died, Presley O'Bannon was given a sword by the

state of Virginia. It was very similar to the sword given to O'Bannon by Hamet Karamanli, but he had lost that particular sword. The Virginia sword, though in the shape of a Mameluke scimitar and adorned with colorful jewelry, had his name misspelled. The inscription reads: "Presented by the State of Virginia to her gallant son, Priestly N. O'Bannon." There is no further military record of O'Bannon until the Secretary of the Navy accepted his resignation from the Marine Corps in 1807. He reunited with his wife and moved to Kentucky, where he became involved with distilling whiskey. He was elected to the Kentucky legislature several times and died at age 74. His remains were moved to Frankfort, where he was reburied with the inscription: "Captain of the United States Marines." He had resigned as a lieutenant. He was never promoted to captain.

In the final analysis, President James Madison ended the Barbary mess. A Navy matured in the Barbary Wars and gave the nation the best trained Navy officers in the world, aboard the finest ships of the time. The War of 1812 humbled the great British Navy and established the United States Navy as a global force.

Eaton's brilliance and determination are stuff of legends; however, it is the exploits of Lt Presley O'Bannon that left the largest footprint in this part of American history. The brash, tough lieutenant of Marines and his fellow enlisted men are immortalized in Marine Corps lore and tradition, though not to the level they richly deserve. During the Barbary Wars,

**The same year that Eaton died,
Presley O'Bannon was given a sword by the
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these United States Marines established a reputation far above simply being born in a waterfront tavern, conducting an amphibious landing in the Bahamas and serving with Washington's Army. Their performance held Eaton's complex, rowdy army of Christians and Arabs together. Their boldness and discipline inspired a band of over a thousand mercenaries from different nations and different religions to follow "General" (he was self-promoted from captain to general)

Eaton through thick and thin, until the end, when they were abandoned by political decisions, not military strategy. They were the first United States Marines to establish not only the reputation but also the character forming the ethos upon which our Corps now stands as the "finest ever seen." Several years later, when President Jackson attempted to abolish the Marines, Congress denied him that opportunity. Their influence on the Barbary Wars was too clear.

Today, Marine Corps officers carry more than a sword patterned after one given to O'Bannon by a grateful Hamet Karamanli. They also carry an undisputed ethos based on fact—From the Shores of Tripoli!

Author's bio: Maj Bates served on active duty for 26 years, retiring in 1981. He was an enlisted man, a warrant officer, and a commissioned officer. Highlights of his varied duties were as a drill instructor, criminal investigator, military police officer, and infantry officer. He is the author of "An American Shame: The Abandonment of an Entire American Population," a book on the Chamorros of Guam before, during and after the Japanese occupation.

Are You Ready?



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



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

Toys For Tots

Funeral Honors

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Young Marines

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SEA STORY OF THE MONTH

We Got More Than A Haircut

In the fall of 1960, I served with the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing as an engine mechanic and crew chief in HMRL-163, Marine Air Group 16, at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma in Okinawa. The squadron was commanded by Major C.B. Chambers and our top enlisted Marine was First Sergeant Gibson. During a deployment with the 7th Fleet aboard USS *Bennington* (CVS-20), we docked at Cubi Point in the Philippines and offloaded all the helicopters to operate from the base for a couple of weeks.

I needed a haircut so after the workday was over, I went to the barber shop which had three barber chairs and three barbers working. There were six of us Marines waiting in line. In one of the chairs sat 1stSgt Gibson and Lance Corporal Ingersoll was in another chair. I was sitting at the end of the waiting line as the barbers were finishing with 1stSgt Gibson and Cpl Ingersoll about the same time. The barber brought out a bottle of "smell good" to massage into 1stSgt Gibson's hair when he said, "No! Don't put that crap on my head. My wife will think I've been in a whorehouse!" The lance corporal simply said, "Go ahead and put some on my head because my wife doesn't know what a whorehouse smells like." The place erupted into so much laughter that the barbers had to stop working. The first sergeant's face turned red, but he laughed right along with us.

I really enjoyed my time in the Marine Corps.

Cpl James D. Williams
Milan, Tenn.

The DI Didn't Enjoy My Singing

My one and only funny story from my 10 weeks of Marine Corps boot camp came in the fall of 1966. It was Sunday at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego and most of the recruits of my platoon were at the base theater enjoying church services. I had elected not to attend and sat on my footlocker polishing my boots and brass. The drill instructor (DI) on duty was in the company Quonset hut with a radio turned down low playing some current rock song. I began to quietly sing along with the song when the DI screamed, "Wear, get your ass in here!" I immediately stood up, hustled over to the duty hut hatchway, knocked loudly on the door frame and when the DI said, "What is it, maggot?" I replied, "Sir,

**I thought to myself,
"Finally! I must be
getting close to the
drill instructor. He's
cutting me some
slack. How cool is
that?"**

Recruit Wear reporting as ordered, Sir."

The DI asked, "Wear, do you like hanging around listening to music?" I smiled and shouted, "Sir, yes, Sir." I thought to myself, "Finally! I must be getting close to the drill instructor. He's cutting me some slack. How cool is that?" The DI said, "Go get your weapon and report back to me." Again, I responded, "Sir, yes, Sir."

When I reported back to the duty hut, the DI had

me hand him my weapon and then he had me reach up, grab the top of the open front door, and hang there. He then had me stick my legs out behind me in an "L" shape. He then laid my M14 rifle over my calves. While I hung there listening to the radio, he said, "Wear, if that weapon falls, you are dead meat." I do not recall how long that it was, but I was one hurting puppy when he finally allowed me to drop, return my weapon to our Quonset hut and resume my polishing duties.

Sgt John Wear
Elbert, Colo.

Chocolate Chip Cookies Almost Took Down Helicopter

I was a Huey crew chief assigned to HMX-1 which is the Marine Corps squadron that transports the President of the United States. During my tour with HMX-1 from August 1975 to September 1978, my mother would ship cookies to me about once a month. Since the hangar where I worked was a high security area, you had to open all boxes so the guards could inspect the contents before taking it into the hangar.

One day before I was scheduled to leave on a flight, security called to tell me I had a package. My flight wasn't leaving for 10 minutes, so I ran over, took the brown paper off the package, opened the box, and showed the guards it was full of chocolate chip cookies. Since I was so close to my departure time, I took the package to the helicopter and stuffed it under the seat. A few minutes later the pilots showed up and we decided since it was such a nice day we were going fly with the doors "back and pinned." That means that we

were going to fly with the doors wide open.

It was great to be flying around Washington, D.C., with the doors open and the only thing keeping us from plunging to our death was a seat belt or a gunner's belt. That day I was only wearing the seat belt. About 15 minutes into the flight, as we headed up the Potomac River, I caught something out of the corner of my eye fly out of the helicopter. Then I looked down to see the round metal tin that my mother had packed my cookies in vibrating across the floor getting ready to head out the door. What had flown out of the helicopter was the brown paper that surrounded the package.

Since the door was wide open, and we were about 1,500 feet above the earth, I could not unbuckle my seat belt to grab my cookies so I slammed my foot down on top of the tin and slowly started sliding them back towards me so I could grab them. By now the pilots were on the intercom asking what was going on. I eventually got the tin close enough to my seat to grab it.

That night I called home to tell my mother the story about how her cookies almost took out the tail rotor of a Marine Corps helicopter over Washington, D.C. The worst part was I had to disclose to the pilots I had cookies aboard.

Patrick W. O'Leary
Louisville, Ky.

Sir, It's Off Limits

At the 1st Marine Regiment command post I had tower watch during an all-girl band show. I was on top of the tower with my BC scope. I angled it down so I could see the girls play. I was spotted by the crowd, and as the girls turned to see

what was going on, I waved to them. After the show I ran into the girls, and we talked for a few moments. They mentioned that they needed to go to the head but did not know where it was located. We weren't exactly set up for co-ed facilities, so I decided to take them into officer territory as I knew that would be the newest and best we had to offer.

I took along another "Charlie" Co, 1/11 Marine and placed him behind the head facing away at port arms and bayonet fixed. I, took the front. A lieutenant came walking toward the head. At attention, but still port arms with bayonet fixed, I said, "Sir, the head is off limits, Sir." He was a bit taken aback but continued toward me. I stepped in front of him again saying, "Sir, I am sorry, Sir. The head is off limits, Sir." He was getting very upset. He started in on me, but I refused to let him pass. He wanted me to explain why it was off limits, but I couldn't think of what to say in proper sentry fashion. All I could get out was that it was off limits.

When the girls came out, I stepped aside and let the lieutenant pass.

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

General Encounters

When I was a cadet at the Virginia Military Institute, there was only Army and Air Force ROTC. Marines had to choose one or the other, then attend the Marine Corps' Platoon Leader's Class (PLC) during the summer. During my second year at VMI, we got a Marine officer for the first time to teach some of the military science courses. He was great. He arranged for the Marine Band to play at halftime for a VMI home game, which was the best game any of us had ever attended. For me, the most memorable thing he did

was to get permission for the Marine option cadets to have a Marine Corps Birthday celebration.

When I went to the building where the celebration was taking place, I saw an older gentleman wearing a general officer's mess dress uniform with four stars. Our Marine officer had arranged for General Lemuel Shepherd (VMI class of 1917, Commandant 1952 to 1955), to come to VMI for our first Marine Corps Birthday. What a thrill for my first general officer encounter.

The evening I graduated Platoon Leaders Class in Quantico, Va., my parents,

After the graduation parade, someone came up behind me and tapped me on the shoulder. I turned around, and at eye level I saw the Medal of Honor ribbon. I looked a little higher, and I saw three stars.

brother, and aunt were able to attend. As I was talking to them after the graduation parade, someone came up behind me and tapped me on the shoulder. I turned around, and at eye level I saw the Medal of Honor ribbon. I looked a little higher, and I saw three stars. I immediately popped to attention and saluted like never before. A man with a southern accent said, "Son, would you mind if I had my picture made with you and your family?" I was speechless. I was standing in front of Lieutenant General Raymond Davis, hero of the Chosin Reservoir. What a wonderful experience for my second general encounter.

Both encounters showed me that Marine generals can not only turn up anywhere and anytime, but that they take an interest in the youngest of Marines and their training. The Marine Corps is fortunate to have leaders such as these.

R.L. McNeely
USMC, 1973-1977
Conway, Ark.

First Lance Corporal

In 1959 I was serving with the 3rd Pioneer Battalion at Camp Koza in Okinawa. I was selected to test for the new rank of lance corporal. At that time when Marines were promoted, they were required to pass a written test and appear before a promotion board. At the time my company was practicing minefield construction/removal and my mind was occupied with thoughts of working with the mines.

I passed the written test and prepared for the promotion board. The day came to go before the board and there were about 15 private first classes competing. I was one of the first to appear. I was an 18-year-old who was sweating beads and shaking in my dress shoes. I entered the room to face the officers and senior enlisted Marines. I marched in smartly, centered myself in front of the senior member and with a command voice spouted out, "Sir, PFC Wing reporting to the promotion board as ordered, Sir!"

The senior officer introduced himself and turned the questions over to the other members. The first officer asked, "What is a miter box?" Without hesitation, I sounded off, "Sir, a miter box is a booby trap for an anti-tank mine." Many of the board members smiled and a few chuckled. After I departed the room, I asked a couple of engineers, "What is a miter box?" They said that it was a carpenter's tool for cutting angles when

cutting wood. I thought and felt that I was dead in the water with my promotion. A few days later I saw my name on the list to be promoted to lance corporal. I was happier than a pig in poop!

When I received my promotion warrant, I had to purchase sets of two stripe corporal chevrons and metal/plastic chevrons for my utilities. It took quite some time for us to receive the cross-rifle chevrons. I'm proud that I was one of the first Marines in 1959 to be promoted to lance corporal. I held the rank of lance corporal twice, first time was in 1959, and the second time in 1966. I had broken time when I separated from active duty in 1962 to 1966 when I re-entered as a private first class.

CWO-3 Jack Wing
USMC (Ret)
Apopka, Fla.

The Generation Gap

At a party for my 84th birthday, my grandchildren were asking me about my time in the Corps. I mentioned that when I was stationed in California in 1958, Lee Harvey Oswald was in my outfit. One of my college-educated granddaughters asked, "Didn't he have his own uniform?" We all had a good laugh. I hope others will find it humorous also.

Sgt Ken Braman
USMC, 1955-1958
Doylestown, Ohio

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." 🦾

Courage in Captivity

By Maj Allan C. Bevilacqua, USMC (Ret)

Editor's note: Maj Bevilacqua, a longtime contributing author for Leatherneck, recently passed away (see obit on page 66) at the age of 91. Leatherneck is republishing "Courage in Captivity" in honor of our friend and his gift for storytelling as well as his service in Korea and Vietnam.



TSGT ROLAND E. ARMSTRONG, USMC

Col Albert D. Metz, USMC, a World War II prisoner of war, commanded the United Nations Musan-ni Provisional Command and ensured his staff, including doctors, nurses, and support personnel were ready for returning prisoners in all physical and psychological conditions.

"I was extremely proud of the conduct of U.S. Marine Corps personnel with whom I came in contact during my period of confinement. Their esprit de corps was perhaps the highest of any branch of the Armed Forces of the United States during this period."

—LtCol Gerald Brown, USAF
Senior prisoner, Camps 2 and 5

By dawn on Friday, March 27, 1953, Combat Outpost Reno had fallen. The reinforced platoon of Marines holding the exposed position had been inundated by a multi-battalion Chinese assault, and Second Lieutenant Rufus A. "Al" Seymour, one of only five Marines

left alive on the battered hillside, was being marched into captivity by a bayonet-wielding Chinese soldier.

If the tall, rangy Seymour thought about it, the Georgian may have been struck by the irony of the situation. Little more than a year before, Al Seymour, then a corporal, had been standing cellblock watches at the Camp Lejeune, N.C., brig. Now he was a prisoner himself, one of 221 Marines who would endure communist captivity during the course of the Korean War.

Like Al Seymour, the majority of those Marines, 190 of them, were ground Marines, most of whom had been physically overwhelmed by sheer weight of numbers. The remaining 31 were aviators who had



been shot down in communist-controlled territory and captured almost immediately. Some would endure captivity for the better part of three years, while others would be released after only a few weeks. All would suffer barbaric treatment that was consciously designed to weaken them physically and break them mentally.

The war did not end for these men with their capture. They would continue to fight on by other means, resisting the efforts of their captors to break their spirits and use them as propaganda tools. The fighting in the Korean War was not limited to the



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front lines; it continued in the prison camps where brave men matched their wills with those of their enemy.

Those camps were not pleasant places. Located in remote regions of North Korea and many in the far north near the Yalu River, they were all but impossible to escape from. Even if escape were possible, an escaped prisoner of European or African descent would stand no chance of remaining undetected in an Asian population. He would be faced with having to traverse hundreds of miles of hostile territory before nearing friendly lines.

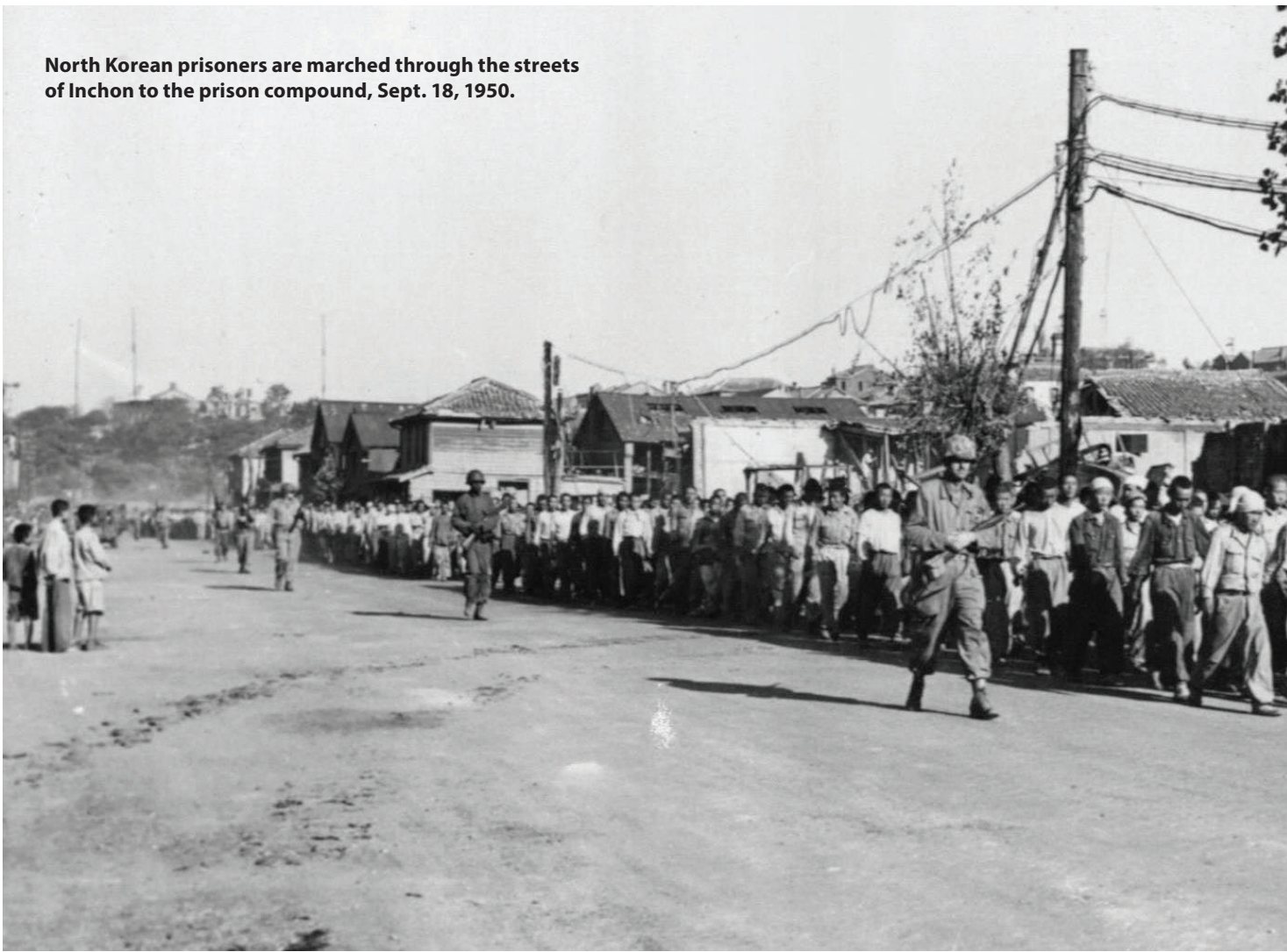
There was only one choice and that was to endure.

That endurance began at the moment of capture. Among Marine prisoners there were few, very few, who had been taken prisoner after laying down their weapons and raising their hands. Most had become prisoners after being wounded or unconscious and unable to resist, while others had been physically overpowered and clubbed senseless. As one former prisoner put it, "You fought until they reached you with a bullet or a rifle butt. ... That was the end."

Ambulance loads of returning prisoners traveled the 15 miles south from the Panmunjom exchange point to Freedom Village to be met by medical personnel, senior civilian and military UN officials, and hordes of waiting newsmen, photographers, and well-wishers.

Capture may have been the end of combat, but it was only the beginning of captivity. The first stage of that captivity was quick removal from the combat zone and transfer to a prison camp. It also was the first, the best and usually the last

North Korean prisoners are marched through the streets of Inchon to the prison compound, Sept. 18, 1950.



opportunity to escape. It is doctrinally accepted that the best chance for escape is as soon after capture as possible. This tenet was borne out by Marines who had the misfortune of being taken prisoner in Korea. With one exception, the only successful escapes were those made in the first days or weeks after capture. If a prisoner was going to get away, he had better do it quickly.

Knowing this, the North Koreans and Chinese wasted no time in removing newly captured prisoners from the combat zone and starting them on their way to prison camps. How did prisoners get to those camps? By forced march, mostly at night and in whatever weather the season offered. Rations were scarce and skimpy. Beatings and clubbing with rifle butts were dealt out much more liberally than rations.

No special consideration was accorded the weak or the wounded. They kept up as best they could, helped along by comrades or perishing by the roadside when their captors refused to allow anyone to help them. Some were shot. Others were beaten to death. Any healthy prisoner who at-

tempted to interfere could expect at best a severe beating.

Movement to the prison camps during the winter was a particularly harsh ordeal. In bitter cold driven straight from Siberia by arctic wind, wearing nothing but the clothes they had been captured in, subsisting on only a handful of food daily and denied even the most rudimentary shelter, prisoners suffered terribly. More than a few in each group died of malnutrition, exposure, untreated wounds and pneumonia. Some were hastily buried alongside the road in unmarked graves. Others were left to lie where they had fallen.

Depending upon where a man was captured, the trek to a permanent prison camp could take four or five days or several weeks. With a few notable exceptions, these camps were located along a 75-mile segment of the south bank of the Yalu River separating Korea from Manchuria. For the most part they had been small villages from which the unfortunate inhabitants had been unceremoniously evicted and sent off to shift for themselves in the bleak, barren countryside. The little

clusters of thatch-roofed houses then were ringed with barbed wire and guard towers, and prisoners were herded in. Then the real ordeal began.

Under the Chinese, that ordeal took the form of a savage, relentless assault on the spirit, will and mind, all designed to turn the prisoner against his very ideals and mold him into a propaganda tool. Every attempt was made to destroy a prisoner's allegiance to his country and his service, to break down unit cohesion and pride, to sever the prisoner from the strength of unity with his fellow captives and reduce him to a helpless individual who would respond favorably to the dictates of his captors. The goal was to create in each prisoner a sense of isolation, helplessness and hopelessness in order to make him ripe for communist indoctrination.

This indoctrination was constant and never ending. Prisoners were bombarded by lectures extolling the virtues of communism and the evils of capitalism. Political indoctrination in Marxist theory went on daily, force-fed to prisoners by English-speaking commissars, and woe to the weary prisoner who nodded off.



MARINE CORPS ARCHIVES & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Indoctrination and interrogation went hand in hand, one often masking the other in an all-out assault on the senses until the prisoner's mind reeled under the constant drumbeat. Prisoners were graded and classified as "progressive," those who at least appeared cooperative, or "reactionary," those who resisted.

Progressives were rewarded with slightly better treatment and rations. Reactionaries were punished. A favorite punishment was "the hole." Every camp had its hole, a cramped, shallow pit with insufficient room to either stand up or lie down. A prisoner confined in a vermin-infested hole foul with his own waste and that of previous occupants had to sit or crouch for days and nights on end, his only shelter from the elements the cross-barred lattice that sealed him in his living tomb.

Captain Gerald Fink, a pilot with Marine Fighter Squadron (VMF) 312, was immediately remanded to the hole for his defiant answer to an interrogator's question of why he had come to Korea: "To kill communists." Another rugged resister with a record as an outspoken reactionary, 2ndLt Roland L. McDaniel,

Below: After medical examinations, former prisoners were allowed to tell their stories to reporters if they wished to do so. Sgt Robert J. Coffee (with the tag attached to his blouse), a former POW, was interviewed by a *Leatherneck* staff correspondent.



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an artilleryman of 11th Marine Regiment, spent 10 days in the hole bound to a South Korean prisoner. When he emerged, he had pneumonia and tuberculosis.

Sickness was not reserved to occupants of the hole. It was endemic throughout the camps. Take a starvation diet of partially cooked rice, moldy beans, millet or boiled corn in quantities barely sufficient to sustain life, complicate it by near-constant exposure to the elements, and what you get is sickness run wild. Pneumonia, dysentery, respiratory infections and malnutrition were only too common. So, too, were vitamin-deficiency diseases that had been all but eradicated in America years before: beriberi, pellagra, rickets. The resulting death rate of 20 to 30 a day was predictable.

Only sickness in its near-death phase excused a prisoner from the daily indoctrination sessions. These went on and on and on, over and over and over. Malnourished and exhausted prisoners learned more of Karl Marx, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, Mao Tse-tung and the superiority of communism than they ever wanted to know. Wanting only something to eat and a warm, dry place to lie down, they were forced to participate in "self-criticism" round tables. It never stopped. For those who weren't properly attentive there was the hole.

In the case of certain selected prisoners there was, in addition to indoctrination, a relentless attempt to extract "confessions"

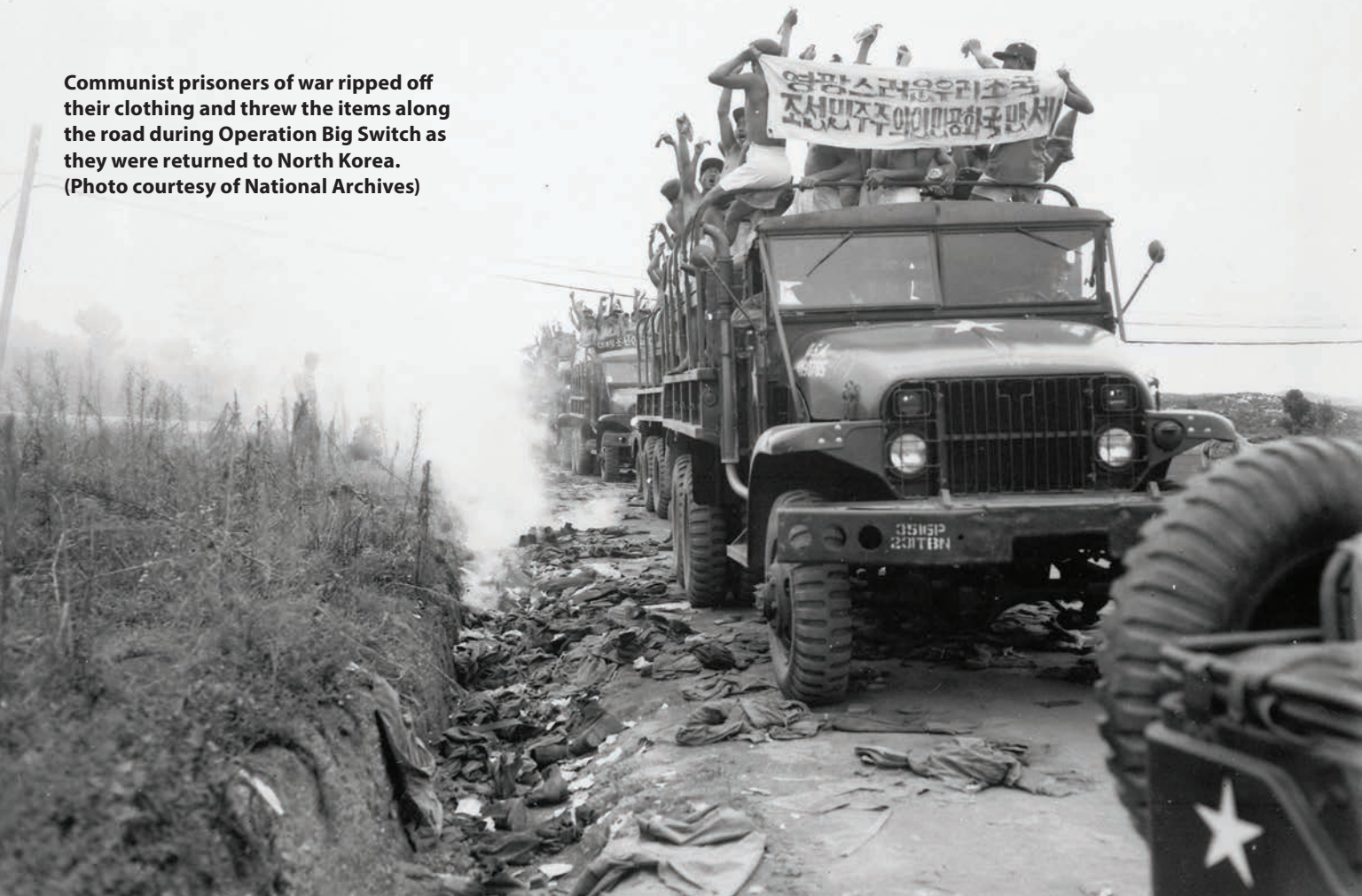
to "war crimes" and the conduct of "germ warfare." Aviators and medical personnel were particularly singled out for this treatment, subjected to hour after hour of demands to write a detailed confession of how they had employed bacteriological agents against unarmed Korean civilians.

Hospital Corpsman Third Class Billy R. Penn was kept awake for four days, kept from sleeping by kicks and blows from rifle butts, subsisting on a handful of rice each day. When he failed to break under this particular form of barbarism, he was subjected to two weeks of firing squads, another favorite form of mental torture. Every day he would be taken out into an open field where a squad of Chinese soldiers would go through all the drill of executing him, only the click of hammers on empty chambers differentiating the procedure from the real thing. Every now and then a live round was fired past him, letting him know that the next time could be the real thing. Penn didn't break.

Neither did his fellow Marine prisoners. Confronted by mistreatment and brutality on a monumental scale, they resisted through the basic instinct of remembering that they were Marines and silently vowing to never give in. They drew strength from pride in their Corps and learning to take each day in turn. They would not allow their captors to break them. They would persevere.

Slowly, surreptitiously, leaders emerged, and a network of resistance was fashioned.

Communist prisoners of war ripped off their clothing and threw the items along the road during Operation Big Switch as they were returned to North Korea. (Photo courtesy of National Archives)



Two of the best known of these resistance leaders were Lieutenant Colonel (later Lieutenant General) William G. Thrash, a pilot with Marine Attack Squadron (VMA) 121, and Major (later LtGen) John N. McLaughlin of the 1st Marine Division headquarters. Held in separate camps, LtCol Thrash and Maj McLaughlin lost no time in setting up clandestine prisoner organizations to thwart Chinese indoctrination. Each man was identified by the Chinese as an unregenerate reactionary and suffered severe punishment. Both men endured beatings and months in solitary confinement. Both continued to be pillars of resistance for their fellow prisoners.

Other Marines were no less heroic. Capt Fink, whose scathing retort to his interrogators had him cast into the hole almost immediately after his capture, was from first to last a thorn in the side of his captors. Despite being subjected to unspeakable humiliations, he never wavered, never compromised.

When he wasn't annoying his jailers, Capt Fink was aiding his fellow prisoners. Using odds and ends of whatever material he could come by, he fashioned a remark-

ably effective prosthetic leg for Air Force Maj Thomas D. Harrison, who had lost a leg when he was shot down. Using resonant wood and tubing stolen from the Chinese, Fink crafted stethoscopes for POW doctors. His most enduring artifact, a 22-inch crucifix christened "Christ in Barbed Wire," stands today in Father Kapaun High School in Wichita, Kan. It got Capt Fink

10 days in the hole, from which he emerged as pugnacious as ever. Gerald Fink never broke.

Neither did Master Sergeant John T. Cain, one of the Marine Corps' best-known enlisted pilots, who played his own mind games with the Chinese, describing in great detail for his interrogators the organization and mission of the "Fleet Logistics Wing," a completely imaginary unit. For his refusal to reveal any significant information, and perhaps in repayment for the chagrin of his interrogators at

being duped, MSgt Cain was put before a "firing squad" in the same manner as HM3 Penn. That failed to produce the desired response. Neither did 84 days of never-ending interrogation. Eventually, the Chinese just gave up on MSgt Cain.

Imagination, ingenuity, the will to en-

dure, pride in their Corps and unity with their fellow Marines were the qualities that carried them. Despite the never-ending efforts of the Chinese to stifle them, clandestine organizations carried on their work of developing cohesion and providing individual Marines with the strength of the group.

Anyone who knows Marines cannot be surprised at the ingenuity and, yes, craftiness displayed by the ones who endured captivity by the Chinese. To lift the spirits of his fellow prisoners, First Lieutenant Robert J. Gillette wrote a full-length humorous novel on toilet paper. Circulated through the camp, the story provided rare moments of levity among men faced with nothing but bleakness.

In every camp, imprisoned Marines found means to communicate with one another. As a means of exchanging information, notes were hidden under rocks near bathing points and field sanitation facilities. Information was passed orally between groups on working details. Prisoners on kitchen details baked notes into bread. Stones arranged in special fashions transmitted messages. Beyond being a means of transmitting information, these devices contributed to morale. They were the means by which a captive could thumb his nose at his captors.

At times, that nose thumbing could



Prisoner of War Medal

be blatant. In 1952, Marine prisoners at Camp 2 celebrated the Marine Corps Birthday with a suitably decorated cake fashioned from stolen ingredients and by toasting the President of the United States and the Commandant of the Marine Corps with stolen rice wine. The observance ended with a spirited singing of “The Star-Spangled Banner” and “The Marines’ Hymn.” An invited guest, Quartermaster Sergeant James Day, Royal Marines, was struck by the manner in which “the small band of USMC should be able to get together and do this sort of thing quite seriously, quite sincerely and with no thought of any consequence.”

With no thought of any consequence. Those words sum up the conduct of Marines behind barbed wire during the Korean War. At whatever cost to themselves, they kept the faith with their country, with their Corps, and with each other. In the face of an implacable enemy, they stood fast and firm, unbreakable and unbroken. They were Marines, and that was what Marines did. To do any less was unthinkable.

Eventually, they came back. In late March 1953, in an entirely unexpected development, the North Korean and Chinese communists agreed to an unconditional exchange of sick and wounded

prisoners. The wheels were quickly set in motion, and short weeks later preparations for Operation Little Switch were underway with the establishment of the Munsan-ni Provisional Command close by the 1stMarDiv railhead at Munsan-ni.

During the six days of Operation Little Switch from April 20-26, 149 Americans were among the 684 Allied captives released by the communists. Of these, 15 were Marines. Private Alberto Pizarro-Baez and Pvt Louis A. Pumphrey, who had been taken prisoner when Outpost Frisco was overrun in early October 1952, were the first Marines to return from captivity.


Along with their fellow returnees, they were taken to the newly constructed Freedom Village at Munsan-ni, where after an initial medical check, each returned Marine was met by a 1stMarDiv escort and given a utility cover with its Marine Corps emblem. The blue Chinese caps with which the former prisoners had been outfitted were unceremoniously dumped in the trash.

Operation Little Switch was only the precursor to its successor, Operation Big Switch. With the end of the Korean fighting in July 1953, more captured prisoners were returned. The first Marine among these on Aug. 5, the initial day of

Operation Big Switch, Private First Class Alfred P. Graham Jr. told of subsisting on a diet of cracked corn and serving as a pack mule to carry firewood 11 miles each day. PFC Pedron E. Aviles, PFC Francis E. Kohus Jr., Cpl Gethern Kennedy Jr. and PFC Bernard R. Hollinger all had similar accounts of the way they had become prisoners. Each had been clubbed senseless as their positions had been overrun. Each had similar accounts of the savagery and brutality of their captors.

A Marine combat correspondent, Technical Sergeant Richard E. Arnold, watched them come in. “It’s their first hour of freedom, and most tell you that they can still hardly believe it’s true. ... They don’t talk much. When they do, it’s mainly of ... prisoner life ... the poor chow and medical care ... the desire to fight communism again.”

That was the way they came back, with their heads up, with tears in their eyes and with the spirit of the Marine Corps still fiercely burning in them. Later, 192 Americans were found guilty of misconduct against fellow prisoners or various degrees of collaboration with the enemy. None of these were Marines. For them, *Semper Fidelis* was more than just a Latin phrase. It was their code of honor.

Well done, Marines! 



THANK YOU

MCA thanks the **Marine Corps Veterans Association** for generously providing *Leatherneck* and *Marine Corps Gazette* Magazines to convalescing Marines and other service members at Veterans Hospitals all over the world throughout the year.

The Marine Corps Veterans Association has spent over a decade ensuring that where there is a veteran in need throughout the country, they are there to provide assistance. “*Semper Fidelis*” are truly the words they live by!

Visit the Marine Corps Veterans Association Website to learn about their mission and support programs:
www.marinevets.org





SSGT KYLE TALBOT, USMC

Marines with 3rd Assault Amphibian Bn, 1st Marine Division, operate a new ACV at MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., Sept. 17, 2020. After suspending ACV operations in unprotected waters in September 2021, Headquarters Marine Corps announced they were set to return following the development of a new tow rope solution, Jan. 6.

Amphibious Combat Vehicles Return to Unrestricted Operations

Marine Corps Amphibious Combat Vehicles (ACVs) are set to return to unrestricted waterborne operations following the development of a new tow rope solution designed to address previous issues with the vehicle's towing mechanism, Headquarters Marine Corps announced Jan. 6.

In September 2021, the Marine Corps suspended ACV operations in unprotected waters while it worked to resolve the towing issues that were identified in several after-action reports from the field.

"Amphibious operations, including the use of amphibious ship-to-shore connectors, is a foundational aspect of Marine Corps operations and is critical to the future force and its ability to remain the nation's premier expeditionary force in readiness," said Lieutenant General David Furness, Deputy Commandant for Plans, Policies and Operations.

Once equipped with and trained to employ the new tow rope solution, units are authorized to utilize the ACV to conduct unrestricted amphibious operations, including self-recovery operations in the open ocean and through the surf zone.

Prior to the receipt and installation of the new replacement tow ropes, ACV operations remain restricted to land mobility, gunnery operations and amphibious operations in protected waters.

In addition to the new equipment and training requirements are the 18 tasks that units must complete, validate and certify prior to the resumption of waterborne operations including ensuring training and qualifications for crew and embarked personnel are properly equipped; vehicles have passed required inspections; and operations are conducted with safety boats, sea state assessments and positive

communication. These tasks stem from the comprehensive investigation into the facts and circumstances surrounding the July 2020 Amphibious Assault Vehicle mishap off the coast of San Clemente Island, Calif., in which eight Marines and one Sailor were killed.

HQMC

DOD Personnel, Families Can Now Renew Passports Online

As of Dec. 23, 2021, active-duty, reserve and retired servicemembers and Defense Department civilians and contractors and their families can renew their U.S. passports online through an online portal from the convenience of their homes, eliminating the need to go to a post office to mail their application and supporting documents. The State Department invites these qualified individuals to participate in a special pilot program that will be launched to the general public later in 2022.

In order to qualify for the online option, the individual's most recent passport must be valid or have been valid for 10 years even if it's expired now. It does not apply to children under the age of 16 or to an application that involves changes in name, gender or other personal information such as date or place of birth. No international travel can be made within three weeks of the date of renewal. The State Department will offer routine (8-11 weeks) processing and expedited processing (5-7 weeks). Online applications may be for a passport book only; passport cards may not be requested online. Applications also must be for regular (tourist) passports only. Special issuance diplomatic or official passports may not be renewed online. Applicants must live in the U.S. and must have their current passport in their possession—it cannot be damaged or mutilated. You can pay for the passport fees using a credit/debit card or an automatic clearing house



U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT

Active-duty, reserve and retired servicemembers, DOD civilians and contractors and their families may be eligible to participate in a U.S. State Department pilot program for online passport renewal this year.



In November 2021, artist Mary Whyte attends the opening of her exhibit, "We the People: Portraits of Veterans in America," which will be on display in the Combat Art Gallery at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle, Va., through July. (Photo courtesy of the National Museum of the Marine Corps)

payment transferring funds from a bank account, and applicants can upload a digital photo in the .JPEG file format.

Applicants who don't meet all of these requirements may still be eligible to renew by mail or in person.

For additional information, contact the State Department at pptmandi@state.gov.

David Vergun

Series of Watercolor Portraits Reflects Diversity, Challenges, Realities of America's Veterans

"We the People: Portraits of Veterans in America," a new exhibit featuring large-scale watercolor portraits of veterans of all ages and from all 50 states, is now on display in the Combat Art Gallery at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle, Va., where it will remain through the month of July.

Internationally acclaimed artist Mary Whyte created this series of watercolor portraits of "men and women [who] once signed a blank check on the value of their life and handed it to the American people," she says, as a way to honor this country's prior servicemembers through art.

"When I undertook this project to paint the face of America, what began as an exercise to create 50 portraits turned into an all-consuming mission to uphold and honor the hidden heroes of our country," said Whyte. " 'We the People' is not only a tour across and through these vast United States, it is a tour through the heart and soul, the duty and the commitment

of the people who protect not only our Constitution and our country but our very lives. We can only be deeply grateful, inspired and humbled by all of them, and it's my hope that this exhibition will give rise to a greater sense of gratitude for our military, as well as to inspire people to reach for what is possible. The National Museum of the Marine Corps is a fitting location for 'We the People.' "

The veterans featured in Whyte's works were selected from each of the 50 states and all branches of the military. Most served unheralded and then returned to live quietly with their families in the land they defended. According to Whyte, each represents the diversity, challenges, and realities of living in America today.

"It's fitting that the museum hosts this exhibition of watercolors of veterans from all 50 states, men and women who helped make the history we share here," Brigadier General Walker Field, President, Marine Corps University, said of the exhibition.

Visitors to the exhibition are also encouraged to visit the rest of the museum to more fully understand the sacrifices made by all veterans.

The National Museum of the Marine Corps is a public-private partnership between the U.S. Marine Corps and the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation. Admission and parking are free. For more information, visit www.usmcmuseum.com.

National Museum of the Marine Corps



Maj Allan C. Bevilacqua, who for the last 25 years was one of *Leatherneck's* most beloved freelance authors, has died at his home in Grayson, Ky. He was 91.

After retiring from a 32-year career in the Marine Corps, which included service on the frontlines in the Korean War and three tours in Vietnam, he began writing feature articles for the magazine. He was a student of history with an insider's knowledge and understanding of the Marine Corps. That, combined with his ability to spin a yarn, allowed him to weave together compelling stories of Marines and the battles they fought.

"I don't think I'm alone in saying that Al Bevilacqua was one of my favorite *Leatherneck* authors," said the magazine's editor, Colonel Mary H. Reinwald, USMC (Ret). "He was a storyteller at heart and did a wonderful job of telling the unique stories of countless Marines over the years."

Bevilacqua, who also wrote more than 25 articles for *Marine Corps Gazette*, was one of *Leatherneck's* most prolific authors, producing 80 articles for the magazine, 29 of which were stories about the Korean War. There was an old-school elegance to his writing, and he painted a picture with his words, figuratively taking readers into battle along with his subjects. His writing was straightforward, easily understood by civilians with no military experience, while still containing enough detail to satisfy even the most seasoned veteran. Bevilacqua could be funny, too, and wrote about the lighter moments Marines experience, in his book "The Way it Was: A Seabag Full of Marine Humor."

"If Al Bevilacqua had written 'Moby Dick,' I would have read it several times," wrote Master Gunnery Sergeant Renaldo R. "Ron" Keene, when he reviewed "The Way it Was," for *Leatherneck* readers in 2008. "What Bevilacqua has written is an anthology that says, yes, there once was and still is a Corps that stirred emotions and fostered professionalism, patriotism and traditions."

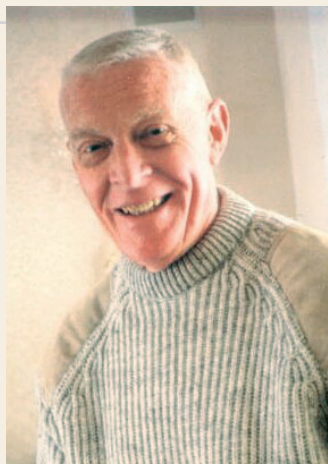
Bevilacqua, born in Cobleskill, N.Y., began his military career when he enlisted after his 1949 graduation from high school. He was a machine gunner, a seagoing Marine, a forward observer and an intelligence specialist. Assignments included a tour on the drill field at MCRD San Diego and later after being commissioned, he was an instructor at Amphibious Warfare School and Command and Staff College. He also completed an exchange tour with the French Foreign Legion in Morocco and Algeria.

"Major Al Bevilacqua shaped the careers of many Marines, officer and enlisted. However, his greatest contributions arguably came with his pen ... he took lessons learned serving alongside some of the Corps' giants, combined that with his extensive knowledge of Marine Corps history, and used his talents as a writer to present Marine Corps history to new generations in a unique gripping style," said Col Walt Ford, USMC (Ret), former *Leatherneck* editor.

Bevilacqua was not only a favorite among readers, but he was well-loved and respected by the *Leatherneck* staff. It was a joy to read, edit and design layouts for his work.

He was every bit the squared-away Marine right up until the end. He insisted on having his wife, Gloria, give him a close shave every morning, so that when he arrived on heaven's scenes, he would pass inspection.

Nancy S. Lichtman



GLORIA BEVILACQUA

Chris M. Bangart, 77, of Hortonville, Wis. During the Vietnam War he served as a radio operator. He later had a career in the insurance industry.

Col David W. Blizzard, 80, of Riverview, Fla. During the Vietnam War he was a platoon commander in 5th Marines who was wounded twice during Operation Swift. He was later assigned to 2nd Force Recon Co, and then completed another tour in Vietnam as an advisor. He was the recipient of the Silver Star for his actions on Nov. 9, 1971. According to the award citation, while he was serving as an infantry ground advisor, then-Capt Blizzard and the squads he was advising came under heavy enemy fire, and one man was wounded. "Captain Blizzard quickly reorganized the position of the troops and directed them to secure a helicopter landing zone in order to evacuate the wounded. After calling for a helicopter, he unhesitatingly ... ran 50 meters into the hail of fire, hoisted the wounded man to his shoulders and proceeded to carry him ... 300 meters to the landing zone. After the wounded had been evacuated, Captain Blizzard then ... rallied the force, took charge and led the squad on an assault of the enemy position, killing one Viet Cong and capturing another high-ranking Viet Cong officer."

Robert E. "Bob" Blount, 97, of San Antonio, Texas. He was a dive bomber pilot who flew combat missions in the Pacific during WW II.

John N. Cossette, 73, of Klamath Falls, Ore. He was a Marine who served a tour with 1stMarDiv during the Vietnam War.

LtCol William P. Cosgrove, 97, of Edgewater, Md. He was commissioned a second lieutenant after his 1944 graduation from the Naval Academy. Upon completion of officer training at MCB Quantico, Va., he was a replacement platoon commander during the Okinawa campaign. In 1952, during the Korean War, he was a rifle company commander. He retired from the Marine Corps in 1968.

Capt Elana (Brigotti) Curran, 92, of Fort Lauderdale, Fla. During the Korean War, she served in a variety of assignments, including as a housing officer in Washington, D.C.

1stLt Dennis E. "Den" Goodson, 74, of Holland, Ohio. He served from 1970-1973 and was assigned to 8th Communications Bn. He later had a career in business and accounting, retiring as the CFO for Delventhal Company in Ohio.

Darold “Tom” La Blanc, 84, of Little Suamico, Wis. After his boot camp graduation, he was assigned to Camp Pendleton where he was a cook. He later worked as a truck driver and mechanic.

LtCol Richard Lee Jr., 92, of Bend, Ore. He enlisted in 1946 and served two years. During college, he entered the platoon leader program and was commissioned a second lieutenant in 1952 when he graduated. Throughout his career, he served primarily in communications billets and completed a tour in Vietnam. His awards include the Bronze Star with combat “V.”

TSgt Anna Mae (Gold) McCrerey, 99, of Frisco, Colo. She served from 1943 to 1945 as a recruiter stenographer in Kansas City. After the war, she married a career Navy officer and later opened her own real estate brokerage.

Donald A. Ohlrogge, 97, of Sturgeon Bay, Wis. He enlisted after the attack on Pearl Harbor and served in WW II.

Earl R. Redstrom, 58, of Albuquerque, N.M. He served in the Marine Corps from 1979 to 1988.

Gary T. Ward, 70, of Charleston, W.Va. During the Vietnam War, he was an artilleryman with 1stMarDiv.

MajGen Herbert L. Wilkerson, 101, of Greensboro, N.C. He enlisted at the

outbreak of WW II and went to boot camp at Parris Island. He served in the Pacific and saw action on Guadalcanal. He was commissioned in 1945 and led Marines in combat during the Korean War and in Vietnam. In 1972 he was promoted to brigadier general and served as the commanding general of MCB Camp Lejeune. He later commanded 3rdMarDiv and III Marine Amphibious Force. Just prior to his 1978 retirement, he was the director of the personnel management division at HQMC.

Col Glenn R. Williams, 71, of Wetumpka, Ala. He was commissioned a second lieutenant in 1972 and served for nearly three decades. During Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm he deployed aboard USS *Nassau* (LHA-4) with the 4th MEB. He later deployed to Somalia for Operation Restore Hope. He was a graduate of U.S. Naval War College. His awards include the Defense Superior Service Medal and the Navy Achievement Medal with gold star.

Charles C. Wilson, 89, of Winchester, Wis. He was a Marine aviator during the Korean War. He later had a career in banking.

John C. Wittak, 72, of Manitowoc, Wis. He enlisted in 1967 and served until 1971.

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 📧

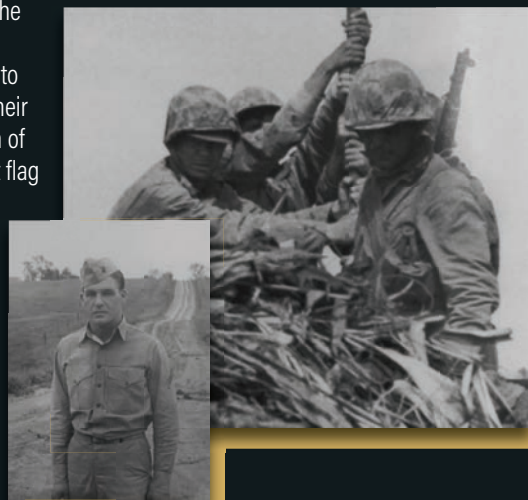
LEGACIES — *Pie Keller*

hung in the living room of his home as long as his children could remember. The sides of the black and white picture had been folded back to fit inside a picture frame. They knew their dad had also fought in the Battle of Midway as well as Bougainville and Guadalcanal. Daughter, Kay Keller Maurer recalls that her dad didn't get his Purple Heart until 1955 and he didn't really want it. Meanwhile his wife, Ruby, kept reaching out to the military until they finally sent it to him. But it was on top of Mount Suribachi that Pie Keller's legacy was captured forever, unbeknownst to his family until 2019. Forty years after his passing, it was revealed that he was in the second position in Joe Rosenthal's iconic Iwo Jima flag raising photo.

During the Vietnam War, Kay would try to use news stories to get her dad to open up about his service in WWII to no avail. But after the story hit the press that their father had been one of the Iwo Jima flag raisers, the family was contacted by the son of Corporal Robert A. Leader, who was one of the Marines pictured in Lou Lowery's first flag raising. Leader told them that he wouldn't be alive if it hadn't been for Pie Keller. The medics had missed a few of his injuries and Pie grabbed a medic's bag and finished patching him up.

Pie will be memorialized later this spring with a life-sized bronze statue in his hometown of Brooklyn, Iowa, befitting the first man from Brooklyn to enlist in the Marine Corps (or any service) after the Pearl Harbor bombing. It will join the town's flag display near the location of the last fire station where Pie served as fire chief. Brooklyn's only other well-known resident was John Wayne who briefly lived there when he was a boy, and who starred in the movie called, “The Quiet Man.” The same could be said for Pie Keller.

It was always known that Corporal Harold “Pie” Keller was on Mount Suribachi on the day that the flag raisings took place. After all, he was in the well-known “Gung Ho” photo taken on the volcano's summit that had



Legacies is a new paid feature in *Leatherneck*. For information on how to include your story or that of a loved one, please contact us at advertising@mca-marines.org or 703-640-0107.

he took over a battalion late in the siege. John led his battalion in an attack to clear one of the hills in the spring of 1968. One of his Marines wrote, “Col Studt made a believer of me that day.”

He was a huge proponent of Maneuver Warfare and war gaming. I visited him at his home in Maine a few times after he retired. In his attic he had a map of the world with every World War II capital ship and division on it. He was continuously refighting WW II on the map to see what could be learned. He was the kind of leader our Corps needs more of.

SSgt Robert A. Hall
Madison, Wis.

Why Mixed Uniforms?

My bootcamp graduation photo below, has us in mixed uniforms. I don’t remember the reason. Are there any members of my platoon that could tell me the reason?

Jim Johnson
Richmond, Va.

Ted Williams, Combat Pilot

This letter was prompted after reading about Ted Williams in the December 2021

issue. Although Ted Williams didn’t see any World War II aerial combat, he very much did in Korea. He flew 39 combat ground support attacks. As Major John Glenn’s wingman, he almost crashed and burned on one mission. His plane was on fire and Maj Glenn helped guide Williams safely back to the base where he made a successful and highly dangerous belly-landing. Ted Williams nearly lost his life.

Richard B. Ellenberger
Normandy Park, Wash.

• *Editor’s note: Legendary baseball player Ted Williams’ prowess as a combat-tested Marine Corps pilot has been the subject of various items in Leatherneck over the years, including “The Raid on Ungok,” which was published in the October 2003 issue.—Editor*

SgtMaj of the Marine Corps Troy E. Black

I was pleased to read about our current Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, SgtMaj Troy E. Black, and to learn more about him and his experiences and vision for our Corps of Marines. SgtMaj Black and his non-negotiables are, as spelled out in the article by him, fundamental to the identity and success of the Corps.

This is a very good article and tells the reader so much about this 19th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps and the state of our Marines. It is good to know that our beloved Marine Corps is in such capable hands.

The article is very well-written by Sara W. Bock. My thanks and congratulations to her on writing such an informative and detailed article about SgtMaj Black.

SgtMaj John Harlow, USMC (Ret)
Dillon, S.C.

M16 versus Stoner Rifle System

I enjoyed your article, “This is My Rifle”: From the Hill Fights in Vietnam to Today: The History of the M16,” in the October 2021 issue but you made no mention of the rifle that Mr. Stoner developed for the Marine Corps. While serving as a combat engineer doing demolition work for the 9th Marines in 1966, we had a Marine with us that was testing their new rifle for the Corps. Besides being used as an infantry rifle, it could be used as a few other weapons systems.

While in the field with this Marine on an operation, a Marine in the command group would watch over this new rifle as he got his sleep. The scuttlebutt was the higher ups did not want the Corps to have



Jim Johnson is curious as to why there were mixed uniforms in his graduation photo from MCRD Parris Island, 3rd Recruit Bn, Plt 385, on Nov. 20, 1964.

its own rifle. Would as many Marines have died in Vietnam because of the faulty M16 if the Stoner Rifle was used instead?

Cpl Andrew M. Sabol
USMC, 1963-1967
Shavertown, Pa.

• *Editor's note: Cpl Sabol, we asked the article's author, Sam Lichtman, to weigh in on your question and here is his reply.*

"The rifle to which you refer is known as the Stoner 63 and is a distinct design not closely related to the M16. It uses a different operating mechanism and is of a different overall construction. Eugene Stoner and L. James Sullivan developed the Stoner 62 and 63 at Cadillac Gage after leaving Armalite, and it was tested within the U.S. military as a potential replacement for the M16. After all, the M16 was only ever intended to be an interim to begin with until the ill-fated Project SPIW reached its conclusion. Whereas the M16 was designed exclusively as a rifle, the Stoner 63 is a versatile multi-purpose weapons system with a high degree of modularity. It can be easily swapped between rifle, automatic rifle, and belt-fed light machine gun configurations in the field. Although it never saw widespread use, the Stoner 63 was favored by the U.S. Navy SEALs as the Mk 23 Mod 0

until the 1980s due to its dependability and unique level of adaptability to various different missions. The Army and Marine Corps continued to test improved Stoner 63s until the early 1970s when funding for new small arms programs was cut due to the U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam. By that point, the M16's problems had largely been corrected and the Stoner 63A did not appear sufficiently better for the military to be willing to discard hundreds of thousands of M16s and their parts and tools in favor of the other design.

As for your point about reliability, most of the M16's problems were more due to ammunition than problems associated with the rifle itself. The Stoner 63's long-stroke gas piston system, similar to that found in the AK platform, is less sensitive to ammunition quality than the M16's hybrid gas system. At the risk of being a 'Monday morning quarterback,' I would surmise that it would have had fewer reliability problems in Vietnam than the early M16. Had the Stoner 63 become available first, or if the Ichord Committee's recommendations had failed to correct the M16's problems, it is conceivably possible that the U.S. military may have opted to adopt the Stoner 63 instead. While it appears to be a superb weapons system with a number of interesting quirks and

features, I can certainly understand why the military was not willing to make the switch.

There are countless military arms which never saw widespread use, sometimes more because they arrived at the wrong time than because of any actual design deficiencies; the Stoner 63 platform is an excellent example."

Looking Back at the Marine Corps

In 1965, one special Marine excelled as a leader of men. He was a tough and proud Marine, but more than that, he was a hard-charger and member of the "old breed." At age 37, Staff Sergeant J.R. Mickel was the senior drill (DI) instructor of Platoon 135, Co D, 1st Recruit Battalion.

To most raw recruits at Parris Island, he was God himself. He commanded their respect and led them beyond their limitations. As an 0300 infantryman, Mickel had earned the Silver Star in Korea, and had a ribbon of campaign stars. He stepped in front of one private and said, "You see these stars, boy?" "Yes, Sir!" the private responded. "You got to have guts to get these."

Mickel was a tough Marine, but so were his junior drill instructors that included Sergeants D.W. Donovan and J.W. Haynes and Corporals P.D. Crockett



A promotional poster for the Marine Corps Historic Half Marathon. The background is a blurred image of a marathon race in progress, with runners in various athletic gear. In the foreground on the left, a Marine in a camouflage uniform is seen from the back, looking towards the race. The text is overlaid on the image. At the top center, it says "MARINE CORPS HISTORIC HALF" in large, stylized white letters with black outlines. To the left of this text is a "SEMPER PARVE" logo with a star above it. To the right is a "DEVIL DOG DOUBLE" logo featuring a bulldog's head. Below the main title are five stars and the words "REGISTER NOW" in a bold, italicized font. At the bottom, the date "MAY 22, 2022" is written in large, bold, italicized white letters, followed by "RUN 13.1, 5IVE OR BOTH!" in a similar style. At the very bottom, there is a black banner with the website "WWW.MARINEMARATHON.COM" and the word "DOORAH!" with a cursor arrow pointing to it. In the bottom right corner, there is a small logo that says "ORGANIZED BY MARINE CORPS MARATHON" with a stylized "X" and "2022" above it.

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and R.R. Sibley. Indeed, they were rugged as basic training. Why was Mickel such an outstanding leader of these men? Was it because of his bulldog tattoo? Or was it his first-rate training demonstrations? He could, and did, do it all; instructions on marching drill; the manual of arms with

an M14 rifle, how to clean it, disassemble it, and reassemble it; physical training, obstacle courses—you name it.

When the platoon went on a 3-mile run, DI Mickel made keeping the pace look easy. In that humid and oppressive South Carolina heat, he showed his platoon the “Paratrooper Strut,” a way to make breathing easier. He showed how to lob along at a steady pace, raising his feet slightly off the ground. Mickel had no time for quitters.

It wasn’t his bulldog tattoo, or excellent demonstrations, nor even his stamina. It was that, within the camaraderie of the platoon, he stuck up for his men. Whatever happened, he had drilled them, and come hell or high water, he stayed right there beside them.

For example, the series commander wanted to set a “fat body” back in training like in the case of “Neuhaus, Newt.” Newt was overweight and his weight loss wasn’t on schedule. The Corps was very strict on weight balance according to one’s age and height.

Called in front of First Lieutenant R.B. Schloss, the series commander, Mickel stood up for this recruit under his leadership: “Sir, Neuhaus is losing weight and, Sir, I’ll make sure he gets the weight off on schedule. We just need

a little more time. We are working hard at it. Neuhaus says he can do it.” Neuhaus, standing at attention, agreed. “Yes, Sir! I’ll lose the proper amount of weight each week.” Knowing Mickel was a man of his word, Lt Schloss responded, “Alright, Neuhaus, but the first time you can’t keep up with the training, you’re going back.” Sgt Mickel sent the private to sick bay once a week to get weighed.

He was part of the “old breed.” Nobody who trained with him in 1965 will ever forget. If you were to see his platoon photo, you would notice that even his bulldog pup, little Bullseye, sat at attention. Why? Sgt Mickel trained him.

Ron “Tank” Rotunno
Masury, Ohio

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

• **East Coast Drill Instructors Assn.**, April 7-10, Parris Island, S.C. Contact SgtMaj K.D. Miller, (828) 499-0224, usmcpidi@charter.net, www.parrislanddi.org.

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

• **Marine Corps Aviation Association Don Davis Squadron (Aviation Logistics Marines)**, March 10-13, Myrtle Beach, S.C. Contact Kevin McCutcheon, kevinmccutcheon76@gmail.com, or Gale Rodgers, rodders770ki@yahoo.com.

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

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

• **2nd Force Recon Co**, May 12-14, Bishopville, S.C. Contact Phil Smith, (540) 498-0733, jarhed73@yahoo.com.

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

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

• **M/3/7 (RVN)**, May 11-14, Annapolis, Md. Contact George Martin, (443) 822-3597, m37bulldog@aol.com.

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

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

• **MCSFO Puerto Rico, Marine Guard Unit Puerto Rico, Marine Barracks Puerto Rico (all eras)**, May 8-12, Rio Mar, Puerto Rico. Contact Matt Schavel, (949) 212-7851, seaswirl170@gmail.com, or Grady Johnston, (404) 432-8223, 2009gj@gmail.com.

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

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

April 19-22, San Antonio. Contact Ken Pouch, (860) 881-6819, kpouch5@gmail.com.

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

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

• **VMFA-115**, March 3-6, Tucson, Ariz. Contact Patti Kaas, (717) 422-6796, kaasfamily4@gmail.com, <https://115marinereunion.com>.

• **VMFA-451**, March 8-12, Beaufort, S.C. Contact Sgt Mark Lyons, reunionvmfa451@yahoo.com.

Wanted

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

• Patrick McGee, mcgeepat70@gmail.com, wants a **platoon photo** and **recruit graduation book** for **Plt 1041, San Diego, 1981**.

• James Skeels, jimskeels7@gmail.com, wants a **recruit graduation book** for **Plt 1087, San Diego, 1967**.

• Dennis Dodd, dc.dodd58@gmail.com, (208) 952-6725, wants a **recruit graduation book** for **Plt 1064, San Diego, 1980**.

• Art Enos, (781) 718-0856, enosservices@verizon.net, wants a **recruit graduation book** for **Plt 189, Parris Island, 1958**.

Sales, Trades and Giveaways

• Art Enos, (781) 718-0856, enosservices@verizon.net, has a **platoon photo** and **recruit graduation book** for **Plt 305, Parris Island, 1961**, that he will send to anyone who needs it.

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.rock@mca-marines.org, or write to Reader Assistance Editor, *Leatherneck* Magazine, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134. 📧



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Saved Round

By Laurence Burke

BIRTH OF A LONG-LIVED INSIGNIA—

Among the many pieces of original art held by the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle, Va., is this mixed-media painting of an insignia for Marine Night Fighter Squadron (VMF(N))-531, commissioned on Nov. 15, 1942. Squadron member Capt John B. Colby designed this insignia before leaving for the Pacific theater with the squadron's last detachment in December 1943.

The insignia features a shrouded skeleton depicting Death reaching out to touch its next victim. The black background, sliver of crescent moon, and the stars around the bottom reference the squadron's night operations. The "new moon" signifies 531's role as the pioneering naval night fighter squadron which developed night-fighting tactics and equipment used in World War II. The groupings of five, three, and one stars reflect the squadron's designation as 531 with the group of five arranged to suggest the constellation "Orion," the warrior. Lightning bolts coming from the eyes represent the squadron's use of radar to find the enemy.

The figure is referred to as "skeleton" or "death" in the package that was originally submitted with the artwork for approval. The squadron gained its "Gray Ghosts" nickname sometime during the war. The Gray Ghosts continued to use this basic design through several re-designations until decommissioned as VMFA-531, flying F/A-18A Hornets, on March 21, 1992.

Author's bio: Laurence Burke is the aviation curator at the National Museum of the Marine Corps. He earned an undergraduate degree from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, a master's in museum studies from George Washington University, and a PhD in history and public policy from Carnegie Mellon University. He taught history at the U.S. Naval Academy and was the curator of U.S. naval aviation at the National Air and Space Museum.

Right: VMF(N)-531 was unique in flying modified Lockheed PV-1 Venturas as night fighters. One of the squadron's airplanes, "Eight Ball" (BuNo 29811), is seen here on Bougainville in January 1944. Its nose windows are blacked out, likely concealing an AN/APS-3 radar installation.



This is the original artwork for the squadron's insignia.



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