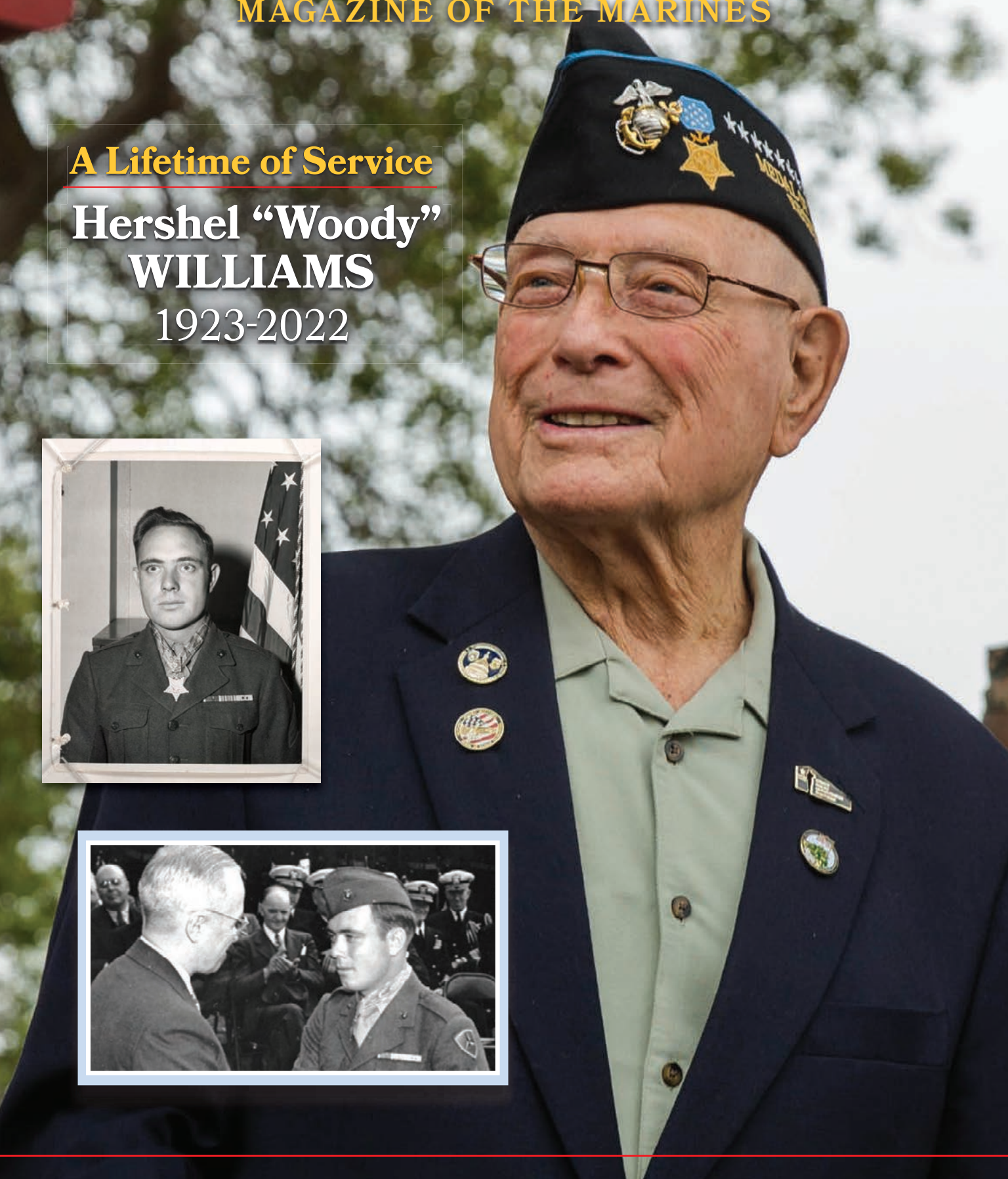
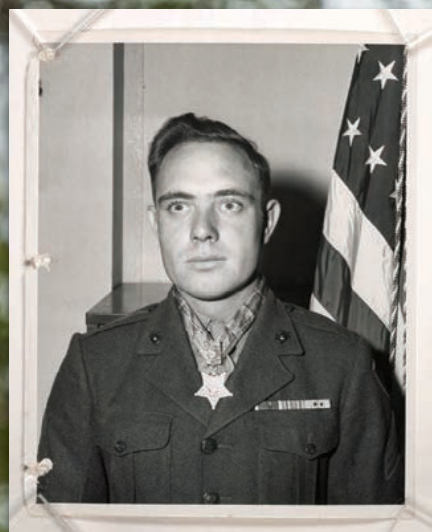


# LEATHERNECK

MAGAZINE OF THE MARINES

## A Lifetime of Service

Hershel "Woody"  
WILLIAMS  
1923-2022



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# Contents

LEATHERNECK—MAGAZINE OF THE MARINES

SEPTEMBER 2022  
VOL. 105, No. 9

## Features

### 14 Guardians in Green

By GySgt Jeremy Kofsky, USMC

This article, which received an honorable mention in the 2022 *Leatherneck* Writing Contest, details how II MEF formed a team to support elements of the 24th MEU as they retrograded from Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul, Afghanistan. The team later created a program to help Marines and Sailors deal with the traumatic event and the loss of their fellow Marines.

### 16 Dissent Done Right: Military Leaders, Doctrine Encourage Criticism

By 2ndLt Kyle Daly, USMC

When a lieutenant colonel was relieved of his command in August 2021 for publicly criticizing military leadership on social media, some questioned why. This article explains that members of the military, including junior enlisted and young officers, are allowed to openly disagree with their superiors and express criticism but must do so in the appropriate manner.

### 26 “There’s a Place for You in the American Legion”: These Marine Vets are the Face of the Next Generation of Legionnaires

By Sara W.B. ock

With 1.8 million members and 12,000 posts nationwide, the American Legion not only provides a place for veterans to gather and continue to serve, but also acts as one of the largest veterans lobbying groups on Capitol Hill. As the Legion works to attract a younger demographic of veterans, Marines who recently served are playing an integral role.

### 36 Returning Arthur

By Geoffrey W. Roecker

Arthur “B.” Ervin left home at 18 to join the Marine Corps; his service carried him to Pearl Harbor, Pavuvu, Roi-Namur, and Saipan. Eighty-two years later, the remains of the Navy Cross recipient and former Raider are finally headed home.

### 52 Khe Sanh

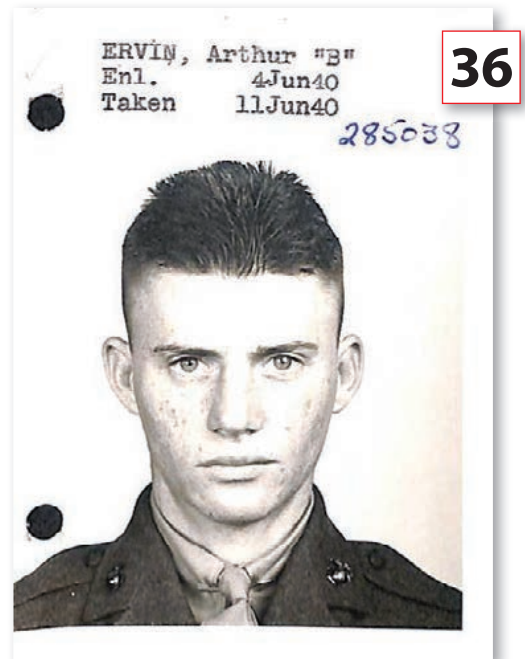
By Sgt John Martin, USMC

This article from the *Leatherneck* archives describes how Marines lived with constant harassment from enemy shelling around the battle-scarred bunkers of Khe Sanh, commencing on Jan. 21, 1968; but as reports declared the threat over, Marines weren’t taking any chances.

### 58 Food for Thought: War is Difficult Enough, Even Without Ham and Lima Beans

By Michael Archer

After the peacetime draft began in 1940, a collective cry went up from the draftees complaining about the quality of the food in the field. The Subsistence Research and Development Laboratory (SRDL) in Chicago developed plans to update these meals, issuing the first C-rats.



## Departments

- 2 Sound Off
- 8 In Every Clime and Place
- 24 Leatherneck Laffs
- 34 Sea Stories
- 46 We—the Marines
- 50 Corps Connections
- 64 Passing the Word
- 66 In Memoriam
- 70 Reader Assistance
- 72 Saved Round

**COVER:** *Leatherneck* says farewell to CWO-4 Hershel “Woody” Williams, who died June 29 at the age of 98. Williams was the last living Medal of Honor recipient from World War II. See page 66 for more about his life and service to the Corps and the nation. Cover photo by LCpl Alexa M. Hernandez. Inset photos: *Leatherneck* file photos. 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.)

As an aggressive World War II Marine Corps memorabilia collector, I visit all the local flea markets for almost anything WW II. One day in mid-summer of 2006, I was walking the aisles when I came upon an elderly gentleman wearing an Iwo Jima baseball style cap. I said, "Semper Fi" to him as I do when I meet other Marines. He looked at me and said, "I'm not a Marine." I responded, "I thought you were from seeing your cap." He introduced himself as Vernon Washabaugh and mentioned that he was on Iwo Jima but was a Navy Seabee attached to the Marines.

We continued talking, and he told me that a Marine had saved his life, twice, on Iwo. "First, I was pulled out of the water where I was about to drown. Then, on shore he yanked me out of the path of an amphibious tractor where it would have

run over me." Vernon shared that they spent several days in a shell hole together where they talked a lot. After they were separated, they never crossed paths again. He related he always wondered what happened to the Marine and if he survived the war. I asked, "Do you know his name?" When Vernon said "yes," I responded, "Give it to me and I'll do a little research."

I went home and got out my WW II Division history books and checked all three divisions on Iwo for KIAs. The Marine's name was not listed. Next, I went to my *Leatherneck* magazines and looked up Division reunions and made several calls. It was the 4th Division contact that said, "Oh yes, I recognize the name. He comes to our reunions." I was given the Marine's contact information including his phone number. I informed Vernon and that night he phoned Donald Lipsy in Wisconsin. Vernon called and thanked me for the reunion and said they talked for almost an hour.

Several weeks later, I was surprised to see that someone had placed an article

about the reunion of the Seabee and the Marine in our local paper. About a week later I received a phone call from a woman from Massachusetts asking if I was the one who facilitated the reunion, and if so, she wanted my address to send me something. She explained she was the daughter of a Seabee who also served on Iwo. About a week after our conversation, I received a copy of the once classified "Top Secret" Iwo Jima invasion plans which was a priceless addition to my collection.

I kept in touch with Vernon who was in frequent contact with Donald Lipsy. In 2007, I invited Vernon and his wife to see Clint Eastwood's movies "Flags of our Fathers" and "Letters from Iwo." Following the last movie, Vernon, who was a wood carver, presented me with a signed plate he had carved with Iwo Jima history on it. A short time later, he passed away. I had a wonderful feeling about bringing those two together after 60 years.

1stSgt Ron Maxson, USMC (Ret)  
1958 to 1979  
Greensburg, Pa.

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A poem dedicated to all the Marines that have fallen from  
Guadalcanal to Iwo Jima.

## IN MEMORIUM

THE NIGHT IS STILL THE SEA IS CALM  
THE WIND IS RUSTLING THROUGH THE PALM  
THE MOON IS LOW THE STARS ARE BRIGHT  
THE BATTLE'S OVER AND OUT OF SIGHT

TAPS ARE PLAYED FOR OUR GALLANT DEAD  
THESE BOYS WHO LIE IN A SANDY BED  
THEIR BODIES ARE COLD THEIR FACES WHITE  
THESE ARE THE BOYS WHO WENT DOWN IN THE FIGHT

MAY THEY REST IN PEACE THESE MEN SO BRAVE AND BOLD  
WHO FOUGHT THRU JUNGLE LUD RAIN AND COLD  
THESE ARE THE MEN WHO WERE FIRST ON THE SCENES  
GOD BLESS THEM ALL THE UNITED STATES MARINES

BY  
Corp Pat F. Mucciolo Jr.  
H&S Co. 25th Marines,  
4th Marine Division.

COURTESY OF JEFF KYLE

This simple poem sums up the essence of war and the individuals who have fallen.

## WW II Division's History

One of my goals in life was to collect each Division's history from World War II. It took me a while, but I found them all.

I was also able to locate "History of Marine Corps Aviation in World War II." I've yet to find "The History of the Tank Battalions" but it's out there somewhere and I will find a copy. It's a very sobering experience reading about each division's exploits from inception to stand down after the war. I can try and express the overwhelming response to each history, but I'm not one who is much for words. I think the simple poem, above, taped to the inside cover of the 4th Marine Division sums up the essence of the war and the individual part Marines played.

Jeff Kyle  
Cheyenne, Wyo.

## The Day the PX Burned Down At Camp Fuji, Japan

The letter by CMSgt John F. Forgette, USAF (Ret) published in the July *Leatherneck* [Sound Off] triggered a flood of memories from my time at Middle Camp Fuji, Japan from 1955 to 1956.

I was assigned to a heavy guns section in

a Weapons Company. One dreary Sunday afternoon several of us decided to go to the base movie. As we were waiting for it to open, we noticed smoke drifting up from behind the PX. We calmly discussed the possibility of a fire. We all decided it probably was a fire because flames were now shooting up and smoke was billowing up like a tornado.

Since it was an Army base they took care of things like the fire department, PX and most importantly, the rations for the chow hall. We had a steady diet of beans and franks, and the mashed potatoes would cling to your tray even if you turned it upside down. Most of all it was the fruit cocktail that got to me. The guy that requisitioned our chow must have loved fruit cocktail. We had it almost every day. Today I get chills each time I walk past fruit cocktail in the grocery store. We were not happy campers.

Not being fans of the Army, we stood there watching the PX burn down. A sergeant walked up and said, "I see the PX is on fire." We all said it looks that way. He then said, "Has anyone notified the fire department?" We all said, "Don't think so."

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The sergeant casually turned and said, "I'll tell them." I could tell by his casual pace he also had no love for the Army. That sergeant was later identified as Sgt Allan Bevilacqua. That was my only contact with Sgt Bevilacqua, later a major, but I have read many of his stories in *Leatherneck*.

Sgt Edward R. Hagler  
USMC, 1954-1958  
Orlando, Fla.

### Family Tragedy on Tinian

I read with great interest the article "A Long and Bloody Night: Holding the Left Flank at Tinian" in the July issue of *Leatherneck*. My uncle, Captain Harry H. Cowles, USMC, was killed when the 4th Marine Division landed on White Beach on the north side of Tinian on July 24, 1944.

My parents told me that he knew of my birth, on Dec. 20, 1943, when he shipped out for Camp Pendleton, Calif., in January 1944. Uncle Harry had worked his way through the University of Virginia before he joined the Marines.

There was another excellent article, "History of the 4th Marine Division" in the July 2021 issue. I have a copy of the book, "Fourth Marine Division in World War II," edited by Carl W. Proehl and

published by Infantry Journal Press-Washington, first edition December 1946.

As a Marine myself, I appreciate all the remembrances of all the gallant Marines who gave the ultimate sacrifice during World War II many years ago.

Palmer Cowles Sweet  
USMC, 1964-1970  
North Garden, Va.

### Thank You for "The Letter" From the Archives

Thank you for running "The Letter" from the *Leatherneck* archives in your July issue. The frank-but-supportive advice Master Sergeant Mike O'Donnell wrote to his son, Marine Corporal Joey O'Donnell, is rare these days. Top was agreeing that his son might be a good officer candidate while asking him to seriously evaluate his self-confidence with a grain of salt. It would be interesting to know what Cpl O'Donnell decided to do and how it turned out for him.

Sgt Matt McConnell  
USMC, 2005 to 2009  
Allentown, Pa.

### Many Men from My Hometown Served on Iwo

I thought your readers might find the following information interesting. During

the 36 days of the battle for Iwo Jima, there were 14 men from my hometown of Clinton, Mass., population 12,000, who fought the Japanese.

There were eight Marines who served with the 4th Marine Division, one of whom was killed. Two more served in the 5th Marine Division, two in the 3rd Marine Division, and one in the Navy who went ashore from an LST. There was even an Army anti-aircraft soldier.

There may have been more but I'm sure of these 14. There also could have been more Navy personnel involved from the more than 400 ships offshore. None of them, except myself, are still living.

Walter P. O'Malley  
Clinton, Mass

### Thumbs Up on the June Issue

Overall, there were lots of great articles in the June issue. Thumbs up on "Follow the Leader: The Influencers Our Generation Needs," using social media with new and young Marines to influence them as new generation of leaders.

"Honoring Our Promise: Toxic Exposure Victims Would Benefit from Bill Expanding VA Coverage" gets the word out to those who might have been affected at Camp Lejeune/MCAS New River from 1953 to 1987.



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“D-Day at Betio: Nov. 20, 1943,” showed a different take on the battle for me. I had read several accounts of the battle previously but this one was different. Mainly it was challenging to follow the action without a map.

“FedEx Founder Frederick W. Smith: ‘I Owe a Debt of Gratitude to the Marine Corps’” is a great example of Once a Marine, Always a Marine. Especially using his experience as a junior leader to now create and lead a worldwide organization.

Doug Caldwell  
USMC, 1965-1979  
Plano, Texas

### Reader Commends the *Leatherneck* Staff

This former Marine has been an amateur writer and reading *Leatherneck* magazine since 1950—a total of 72 years of good reading. I would like to take this time and opportunity to acknowledge and commend the editor and the editorial staff for accommodating me with my requests for a few back issues. The staff’s concern for my request was well-appreciated.

The *Leatherneck* has established the magazine to the highest tradition and heritage of our Marine Corps. Your esprit de corps I find is a trademark of the magazine.

[continued on page 68]



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# In Every Clime and Place

Compiled by Sara W. Bock



CPL FRANCESCA LANDIS, USMC

**Above: Marines with 3rd MEB stand by to load gear into a Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement truck on Camp Courtney, Okinawa, Japan, for transportation to MCAS Futenma, where they participated in ACMEX, June 8.**

**Below: While participating in ACMEX, Marines with 3rd MEB weigh crates prior to transport at MCAS Futenma, Okinawa, Japan, June 8.**



CPL FRANCESCA LANDIS, USMC

## OKINAWA, JAPAN

### Always Alert: ACMEX Tests Rapid Crisis Response Capabilities

Marines with 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB), 3rd Marine Division, and 1st Marine Aircraft Wing conducted an exercise on Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, Okinawa, Japan, to test their ability to rapidly mobilize, respond, and assist in crisis scenarios throughout the Indo-Pacific Command's (INDOPACOM)

area of operations, June 8-9.

The exercise, known as Alert Contingency Marine Air-Ground Task Force Exercise (ACMEX), consisted of rapidly mobilizing a forward command element, supplemented by scalable follow-on forces from across III Marine Expeditionary Force in a simulated mission.

The ACMEX was conducted as a no-notice, integrated, rapid-response event to prepare III MEF personnel to react quick-

ly to a crisis, counter potential threats, and assist allies and partners throughout the Indo-Pacific region in maintaining regional stability.

“From a non-kinetic standpoint, INDOPACOM has tasked III MEF with humanitarian assistance and to be ready for any type of disaster,” said Major Jeff Adusei, an operations officer for 3rd MEB. “Historically, we have dealt with kinetic fires. This ACMEX was the first time in a long time that we have rehearsed non-kinetic fires. It was a Herculean effort.”

Rehearsing non-kinetic fires meant that the Marines conducted all of the ACMEX actions without actually firing any weapon systems. In the event of a disaster, III MEF's goals will be to respond and assist in a non-kinetic way as long as the situation permits.

The Marines enhanced their warfighting mindset and preparedness through command and control, integrated logistics, synchronization of fires and effects, and “battle rhythm” working groups and discussions. They also integrated critical advanced warfighting technologies and capabilities in order to enhance response command and control.

While there are many other organizations that could respond to humanitarian or international crises, U.S. military forces support the U.S. State Department when unique capabilities are needed to cover a gap in host nation response efforts, such as aviation assets or logistics expertise.

“It's important to be ready constantly,” said Maj Alex Butta, future operations planner, 3rd MEB. “We are holding this ACM [Alert Contingency MAGTF] exercise to bring our team together and facilitate a discussion about the situations faced in a response, what the ACM is all about and how each team member plays an intricate role in its employment. Crisis could come in multiple forms; some have indications and warnings, and some do not. That is why it is critical that each team member maintain a constant state of readiness and level of resiliency.”

Through this exercise, Marines personally contributed to III MEF's ability to remain a resilient, ready and relevant warfighting organization to enable joint operational success, support strategic power projection and deliver decisive combat power across all domains and warfighting functions throughout the Indo-Pacific region.

Cpl Francesca Landis, USMC

A KC-130J Super Hercules assigned to VMGR-252 prepares to take off from Lask Air Base, Poland, April 15. The squadron was one of the 2nd MAW units that deployed to enhance NATO's capabilities in Eastern Europe at the invitation of the host nation. (Photo by Cpl Adam Henke, USMC)



### **LASK, POLAND** **Corps Provides Key Aviation Assets, Supports NATO Air Policing Mission**

Marines and KC-130J Super Hercules aircraft with Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron (VMGR) 252, 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing, deployed to Lask Air Base, Poland, under the command of U.S. Air Forces in Europe and as a key enabler to Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 312 during the first half of 2022.

VMFA-312, also a subordinate unit to 2nd MAW, deployed to the Eastern European base to conduct NATO's enhanced Air Policing (eAP) mission. The goal of NATO eAP is to demonstrate both the collective resolve of allies and the defensive nature of NATO as well as to deter aggression or the threat of aggression in the region. VMFA-312's F/A-18 Hornets flew patrols over Polish airspace as part of a joint effort to increase the readiness and responsiveness of NATO.

The KC-130J aircraft from VMGR-252 increased the distance and endurance of VMFA-312 and allied air power by providing air-to-air refueling, allowing the F/A-18s to fly for longer durations without having to land to refuel. The KC-130Js are an organic asset to the Marine Corps and a vital component of VMFA-312's success in NATO eAP.

In addition to its refueling capabilities, the KC-130J provides air assault transport of troops, equipment and supplies. This capability contributed greatly to the rapid and expeditious redeployment of 2nd MAW units from Norway, where they participated in Exercise Cold Response 2022, to Poland's Lask Air Base and Lithuania's Siauliai Air Base.

During Cold Response, VMGR-252 transported more than 600 passengers and approximately 400,000 pounds of cargo and provided more than 1 million pounds of fuel to multiple types of aircraft through air-to-air refueling. The squadron con-

ducted continuous operations, alternating between air-to-air refueling and logistical support in Greenland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Spain, Germany, Lithuania and Poland. VMGR-252 demonstrates 2nd MAW's expeditionary nature and alignment with the Commandant's Force Design initiatives to be capable of supporting joint and allied operations.

Multiple elements within 2nd MAW rapidly repositioned from the Arctic to Eastern Europe to reinforce the allied defensive posture and to support NATO eAP. The deployments have been conducted in coordination with host nations and military authorities, and although temporary in nature, they are prudent measures to increase readiness and enhance Eastern Europe's collective defense. The deployment of forces in the region is evidence of the Marine Corps' readiness and strong commitment to America's NATO allies and partners.

1stLt Sarah Eason, USMC

**A HIMARS from 5th Bn, 11th Marines, 1stMarDiv, launches an M28A1 reduced range practice rocket in support of Exercise Valiant Shield on Angaur, Palau, June 8.**



SGT SARAH STEGALL, USMC

### **ANGAUR, REPUBLIC OF PALAU Marines Show Strength, Versatility During HI-RAIN Exercise**

While participating in Exercise Valiant Shield in the Republic of Palau, June 8, Marines from 5th Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force executed a High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) rapid infiltration, marking the first time the Marine Corps has employed the HIMARS on the island of Angaur. The rapid infiltration, referred to as HI-RAIN, was possible due to improvements made to the Angaur airstrip during Task Force Koa Moana in 2020, an effort in which U.S. Marines participated.

During Valiant Shield, Marines with I Marine Expeditionary Force provided command and control for the HI-RAIN from a forward location on Guam. The exercise, which focuses on the integration of joint training in a multi-domain environment, affords I MEF the opportunity to rapidly deploy and fully integrate lethal and non-lethal capabilities in support of naval maneuver.

“HI-RAIN is the culmination of the targeting process in which the M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System is selected to engage a target,” said Captain Andrew Richards, “Quebec” Battery commander, 5th Bn, 11th Marines. “This process is based on a multitude of interoper-

able systems involving intelligence, communications and command-and-control.”

The Marine Corps can also employ HI-RAIN in support of Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations (EABO) through the insertion of precision fires assets into austere environments with minimal logistical footprint.

“The ability to do a HI-RAIN on expeditionary airfields such as Angaur means there is a variety of terrain that we can posture fires assets across the Indo-Pacific,” said Richards.

Exercises like Valiant Shield allow forces across the Indo-Pacific the opportunity to integrate Navy, Marine Corps, Army, Air Force, Space Force and Special Operations to train in precise, lethal and overwhelming multi-axis, multi-domain effects that demonstrate the strength and versatility of the joint force.

The Marine Corps exercised the use of the joint force by integrating with the 133rd Operational Support Squadron, Air National Guard, based out of St. Paul, Minn. “The use of Air National Guard assets to insert HIMARS on the island required detailed planning and coordination between Marine Corps and Air Force personnel,” said Richards. “This was the first time that squadron conducted a mission like this, which ultimately increased the experience and availability to conduct HI-RAIN in the future.”

Upon completion of Valiant Shield, Marines from I MEF will also participate in Task Force Koa Moana, increasing the MEF’s ability to rapidly respond to crises and contingencies across the spectrum of operations from humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to armed conflict.

GySgt Charles McKelvey, USMC



SGT SARAH STEGALL, USMC

**Marines with 5th Bn, 11th Marines set up communication signals prior to a HIMARS launch during Exercise Valiant Shield on Angaur, Palau, June 8. Exercises such as Valiant Shield allow the Indo-Pacific Command joint forces the opportunity to integrate and demonstrate their strength and versatility.**

**BELIZE AND MEXICO  
U.S., Colombian Troops Grow  
Partnership During Tradewinds 22**

Marines and Sailors from U.S. Marine Corps Forces South (MARFORSOUTH) and U.S. Marine Forces Reserve participated alongside military and interagency partners from 22 different partner nations during Exercise Tradewinds 22 (TW22), a major multinational exercise in Belize and Mexico in May.

Sponsored by U.S. Southern Command and hosted by various countries in and around the Caribbean, the exercise focuses on building the capacity, knowledge and expertise of participating nations in the Caribbean to better respond to security threats.

Colombia supported TW22 by sending elements of the Colombian Marine Corps to participate in the riverine training events and elements of the Colombian Army to participate in the jungle training events. The riverine training took place along the Hondo River near Chetumal, Mexico, and consisted of several key events including small boat operations, maritime navigation, water survival, boat maintenance, beach landing, maritime interdiction, riverine patrolling, helo-casting, heliborne ladder extractions and ship-to-shore movements.

“The Colombian Marines displayed a high pedigree of rigor, professionalism, proficiency and motivation. It is apparent they are extremely competent and thoroughly enjoy training with American and multinational partners,” said Master Sergeant Billy Ross, the training chief for 3rd Force Reconnaissance Company. “Having the Colombians here to train and

exchange knowledge was extremely beneficial to all partners involved.”

Colombia is a regional leader in riverine operations and has much to teach military units from all over the world. Its military operates a Riverine Center of Excellence in Turbo, Gulf of Uraba, which is designed to be the premier riverine training center in the region for teaching and exchanging expertise with partner nations. Additionally, Colombia is actively engaged in security missions inside its borders, focused on counter-narcotics,

counter-terrorism and counterinsurgency, which contributes to its capabilities and effectiveness in riverine operations. This experience allows its Marines to develop, refine and validate new approaches to littoral operations, helping to ensure regional security and stability.

“Their operations in and around the littorals have provided some fundamental insights on tactics, techniques and procedures associated with riverine and littoral operations,” said Gunnery Sergeant Julio Castellanos, MARFORSOUTH en-



**Above: A Marine with 3rd Force Recon Co, 4thMarDiv, watches from a U.S. Army UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter to make sure all personnel are accounted for after a helocast jump at Bacalar Lagoon, Mexico during Exercise Tradewinds 22, May 14. (Photo by Sgt Matthew Teutsch, USMC)**



**A Mexican UH-60M Black Hawk hovers above as U.S. Marines and servicemembers from partner nations surround an “enemy” vessel during an interdiction exercise at Four Mile Lagoon, Belize, during Tradewinds 22, May 17. The U.S. Southern Command-sponsored, Caribbean-focused, multi-dimensional exercise was conducted in the ground, air, sea and cyber domains. (Photo by Sgt Matthew Teutsch, USMC)**

**Marines with 3rd Force Recon Co, 4thMarDiv, along with Colombian Marines and members of the Suriname Navy, attempt to flip a combat rubber raiding craft while learning how to broach a vessel at Bacalar Lagoon, Mexico, May 10.**

gagement chief, who spent three years in an exchange program with the Colombian Marine Corps. “There is so much they have taught us already and that we can continue to learn from them to advance our own capabilities and concepts.”

The U.S. and Colombian Marine Corps have a historic relationship that is strengthened through shared challenges, visions, and values. Each year the two forces conduct multiple subject matter expert exchanges that provide a venue to learn from each other on topics such as amphibious planning, expeditionary logistics and leadership development. Littoral and expeditionary operations are a major focus of both nations, which facilitates increased interoperability and unity of effort.

Exercise Tradewinds provided a key opportunity to expand upon this relationship and allow Colombia to continue its role in exporting security throughout the Western Hemisphere. Not only does it provide participating nations the opportunity to conduct combined, joint and



SGT MATTHEW TEUTSCH, USMC

interagency training focused on complex multinational security operations, it enhances cooperation and interoperability throughout the region as well. Colombia and the U.S. have a lot to offer in this regard, and during the exercise, the two nations were in discussions to increase participation and co-lead a training lane during next year’s iteration of Exercise Tradewinds, hosted by Guyana.

“Exercises such as Tradewinds play a significant role in enhancing maritime security throughout the region and high-

light the importance of working with our partners and allies to achieve common objectives and regional security,” said Colonel Brian Ecarius, MARFORSOUTH Director of Plans and Exercises. “Latin America and the Caribbean are home to significant coastal and riverine environments, making it a premiere location for maritime partnerships, experimentation and the exchange of knowledge from subject matter experts in littoral operations.”

MARFORSOUTH



SGT MATTHEW TEUTSCH, USMC

**A Marine with 3rd Force Recon Co watches members of the Belize Defense Force practice helocast drills during Tradewinds 22 at Cocoyal Outpost, Mexico, May 9.**

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# Guardians in Green

By GySgt Jeremy Kofsky, USMC

*Editor's note: The following article received an honorable mention in the 2022 Leatherneck Writing Contest. Major Richard A. "Rick" Stewart, USMC (Ret) sponsored the contest through the Marine Corps Association Foundation.*

Life typically comes down to a series of mental snapshots. Births of children, first kisses, your wedding day. While these images represent happiness, joy, or other euphoric feelings, there are certain snapshots that stay with you for other reasons. Blood, screams, and charred remains are some of the snapshots that can leave lasting, almost imperceptible scars on those who have experienced these traumatic events. In September 2021 at a dusty base in Kuwait, I, along with the Sailors and Marines of the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) and "Golf" Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines were in the middle of the Warrior Transition process from the Non-Combatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) at the Hamid Karzai International Airport (HKIA). We saw another snapshot that was able to provide ways to deal with the horrible snapshots: a group of Sailors in Woodland MARPAT against a sea of desert camouflage uniforms—the men and women of the II MEF Religious Ministry and Behavioral Health (RMBH) Support Team.

During the NEO at the airport, the commanding general of II Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF), Lieutenant General William Journey, tasked the MEF chaplain to form a RMBH Support Team to surge in support of elements of the 24th MEU as they retrograded from HKIA, Kabul, Afghanistan. While the team was being formed in the last two weeks of August 2021, the events of Aug. 26 created the acute need for the team to be immediately stood up and deployed to Kuwait on Aug. 29, 2021. The rapidity of the deployment order to boots on ground was such that the RMBH Support Team was unable to procure Desert MARPATs for the entire team. To foster a sense of team unity and present a cohesive front, the leader of the RMBH, Commander Michael O'Bannon, USN made the de-

cision that would serve as one of the lasting images of the RMBH, the entire team wearing the Woodland MARPAT uniform in a desert environment.

"Honestly, the decision was pretty easy," CDR O'Bannon said, "I figured the team, which was thrown together rather quickly, should work together, and look uniform. I figured I could take the heat if anyone had issues with the uniform." He continued, "The initial formation of the team consisted of a so-called 'Sprint-Team' of Behavioral Health and Religious Support Personnel and became a full team once 26 August happened." O'Bannon led a team of two operational stress control and readiness providers, a religious program specialist, and two behavioral health technicians to provide initial holistic mental health and religious ministerial support to those experiencing the snap-

**The RMBH Support Team created a program of counseling wherein unit integrity was maintained at the company-sized level for briefs dealing with a plethora of potential transition issues.**

shots and aftereffects of the events of HKIA.

After a hectic two to three days of travel from Camp Lejeune, N.C., to Kuwait, the RMBH Support Team was able to gain concurrence from the 24th MEU commander and 2/1's commanding officer to gain their commanders' intent and lay out the proposed transition program. The RMBH Support Team created a program of counseling wherein unit integrity was maintained at the company-sized level for briefs dealing with a plethora of potential transition issues. Core among these briefs was discussing the combat operational stress continuum; transitioning to families; dealing with grief, anger, and alcohol; working through moral injury; and working through Sebastian Junger's concept of 'Tribe' in terms of healing among peers and those with similar ex-

periences. CDR O'Bannon added an additional class based on his time working with Special Operations Command (SOCOM). The class, "Why do they think they understand my experience?" covered the well-intentioned but misguided comparing of experiences of kinetic actions resulting in mental health trauma vice the experiences of HKIA NEO personnel.

All told, the RMBH Support Team conducted 27 briefs and 19 breakout sessions and engaged in continuous "battlefield" circulation of walking around the Kuwait camp and engaging personnel as needed. The team also provided force preservation advising to both commanders of the 24th MEU and 2/1. The breakout sessions allowed for venting and addressing the trauma of their experiences at HKIA while not experiencing external pressures associated with others of dissimilar experiences or ranks potentially judging the breakout session attendees. Following the recommendation of the team, the commanders made these groups optional. While attendance was mixed, those who took advantage of the groups expressed that they were highly effective. Topics included grief, spiritual fitness, stress management and sleep hygiene. The attendance in the groups varied, from female only search team (FET), junior Marines, NCOs, SNCOs, senior SNCOs, company grade officers, and field grade officers.

The battlefield circulation activities of the team presented the best opportunities for utilization of the team's enlisted members. The enlisted membership of the support team was vital to the team's ability to measure the pulse of the force, especially on the noncommissioned officer and junior Marine level, as there was not the perception of judgment. This is where the original perceived issues with Woodland MARPAT became a mission enabler, as Marines and Sailors were able to quickly ascertain who was a part of the RMBH Support Team and seek aid from them for issues the Marines were experiencing.

Some of the mental trauma issues experienced by Marines and Sailors of the HKIA NEO were:

**Moral Injury:** Marines and Sailors reported adverse feelings from exposure



COURTESY OF GYSGT JEREMY KOFSKY, USMC

**Members of the RMBH Support Team take a short break at the 24th MEU compound in Kuwait in 2021. From left to right are: RP2 Sean Richardson, 26th MEU; HM3 Rudy Chavez, 6th Marine Regiment; LCDR Alison Siepker, MSC, USN, 2nd Marine Division; HM3 Zachery Timmons, 6th Marine Regiment; LCDR Billy Nguyen, NC, USN, 2nd Marine Division and CDR Michael O'Bannon, CHC, USN, II Marine Expeditionary Force.**

to the suffering of Afghan nationals including having to turn away those without Special Immigrant Visas, the unanticipated need to use more force than expected while providing crowd control for ordinary citizens, exposure to death and dying, especially exposure to U.S. personnel killed or wounded-in-action, and the suffering of children.

**Making Sense of the Experience and Exposure:** Marines and Sailors reported difficulty coming to terms with their experience, especially having trained for kinetic engagement rather than the situation that developed.

**Guilt:** Marines and Sailors expressed “survivor’s guilt” for surviving the Improvised Explosive Device detonation of Aug. 26. Additionally, some expressed feelings of guilt for the use of force to corral the civilian population and for refusing entry to those without proper documentation.

**Return to “Normal”:** Marines and Sailors expressed concern for how rapidly

they would return to “normal,” or even if they will be able to do so.

By understanding commander’s intent, providing initial resources, further refining groups and “tribes” for more directed healing, and conducting circulation operations, the RMBH Support Team was able to provide a vast amount of support to deal with the various negative snapshots of the HKIA NEO. For those Marines and Sailors requiring more specialized or continuous care, the Team’s Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner was able to be available for initial consultations and facilitate follow-on care back at Camp Lejeune. The RMBH Support Team was also able to conduct follow-on Warrior Transition II training back at Camp Lejeune during the 24th MEU’s post-deployment period to continue the spectrum of mental health care they had begun in Kuwait.

Overall, members of the II MEF RMBH Support Team were honored to have the opportunity to surge in support of our

returning Marines and Sailors. The ability to provide warrior transition and spiritual and behavioral care in a third location decompression setting should pay dividends as those affected process their grief and begin the process of recovery. While some snapshots of life will never disappear or fade away, it is hoped the tailored efforts of the II MEF Support Team made the ability to deal and eventually live with those snapshots a little more palatable as they continue to live and have future snapshots of happier times, while not forgetting the lessons of the other snapshots of life.

*Author’s Bio: GySgt Jeremy Kofsky has been a Marine for 18 years. He has small unit operational experience on five continents. He is currently a Support Element Staff noncommissioned officer in charge at 2nd Intelligence Battalion, Camp Lejeune, N.C.*

# Dissent Done Right

## Military Leaders, Doctrine Encourage Criticism

By 2ndLt Kyle Daly, USMC

**W**hen a Marine lieutenant colonel was relieved of his command in August 2021 for publicly criticizing military leadership on social media, Major Brian Kerg received a message from one of his best Marines.

Kerg, a communications officer and operational planner, had written more than a dozen articles for a military journal. Some of the articles were critical of military practices.

The first lieutenant who messaged Kerg wanted to know why LtCol Stuart Scheller was facing negative consequences for his public criticism of senior leaders, while Kerg had never been in trouble for his writings.

“He messaged me and he had that question,” Kerg told *Leatherneck*. “Hey sir, what’s going on here? You write articles that are critical of things, and sometimes, pretty assertively so. Meanwhile, this guy comes along, and he’s being critical as well, but he’s getting canned. His career is over.”

Kerg initially wrote the Marine a lengthy response, trying to answer all his questions and concerns. But then he realized, if one person had this concern, others did as well.

That lengthy response morphed into an article that was published in the September issue of the U.S. Naval Institute’s monthly journal *Proceedings*. The article, “How Active-Duty Officers Should Criticize Policy and Practice,” explained that criticism is not only allowed in the sea services but encouraged. However, Kerg writes, it must be done appropriately and in a professional manner.

“There is a fine line between honest critique and undermining faith in the chain of command,” Kerg writes in his article. “On one side, servicemembers are given wide latitude to vigorously debate policy and practice. On the other, members risk conflating private opinion for official policy, can abuse the privilege of their office, and set bad examples to those they are charged to lead. This issue is simultaneously simple and complex.”

The “fine line” that Kerg writes about in his article seemed to fuel confusion and debate among veterans and civilians who commented on LtCol Stuart Scheller’s first video post, which was uploaded on Facebook and LinkedIn.

Scheller, a 17-year infantryman and the commanding officer of Advanced Infantry Training Battalion-East, posted the video just hours after news broke that 13 servicemembers—11 of

them Marines—had died in a bombing at the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul, where the U.S. military was engaged in efforts to evacuate personnel from the country. Scheller filmed himself talking into the camera, wearing his uniform that showed his rank insignia, name and branch of service. Scheller criticized the way in which top military leaders handled the Afghanistan withdrawal and were not admitting to possible mistakes.

“People are upset because their senior leaders let them down, and none of them are raising their hands and accepting accountability or saying, ‘We messed this up,’” Scheller said in the video.

Scheller would go on to make other video posts despite instruction from his command not to do so. He was eventually court-martialed and at a hearing in October, pleaded guilty to various charges, including conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman. In social media posts in August, he said he resigned his commission. By December, he was out of the Marine Corps. Scheller has written a book called “Crisis of Command: How We Lost Trust and Confidence in America’s Generals and Politicians.” It was published by Knox Press and will be distributed by Simon and Schuster in September 2022.

On Simon and Schuster’s website, a description of the book states: “Scheller spoke out, and the generals lashed out. In fact, they jailed him to keep him quiet ... Now Scheller is free from the shackles of the Marine Corps and can speak his mind.”

According to *Stars and Stripes*, the first video Scheller made received more than 300,000 views and 22,000

shares on Facebook and LinkedIn, and more than 4,000 comments within the first 24 hours.

One commenter, who identified himself as a medically retired gunnery sergeant, wrote, “You do not help troops by showing you have no confidence in the leadership. He’s harming the Marines who will have to deploy to this combat zone to unscrew this disaster, because if you don’t follow orders, you can have no discipline ... I do not disagree with what he said at all. But he needs to hang up the uniform and then say it.”

Another commenter, who also identified as a veteran, had a different take: “This LtCol put his neck out on the line for the Marines. He should not be punished or chastised for doing so.



CP/LJAMES CLARK, USMC

**Sgt Daniel Pluth, 1st Bn, 6th Marine Regiment, uses his laptop computer after finishing his shift in Sangin District, Helmand province, Afghanistan, Oct. 6, 2011.**

We should see leaders who are willing to sacrifice everything for their Marines, and far too often we see leaders who would sacrifice their Marines for everything.”

Kerg read the comments on Scheller’s video post and received questions from people he knew. In his article, he wrote that an analysis of the viewpoints revealed confusion about “the essential issue.” Kerg summed up that issue in one question: “Is honest, frank critique of policy and practice truly permitted?”

His answer: “Yes, it is!”

Members of the military, including junior enlisted and young officers, are allowed to openly disagree with their superiors and express criticism of policies and practices. In the decision-making process at the tactical level, young officers are taught to listen to their subordinates’ concerns. And with major policies and practices drawn up by commanders who operate at the strategic and operational levels, forums, such as military journals, exist for individuals of all ranks to voice their ideas and concerns in a public setting.

Dissent—specifically, loyal dissent, or being critical while remaining loyal to the institution—is encouraged.

This encouragement has come in the form of doctrinal publications as well as the public writings and speeches by senior military leaders. Numerous articles and essays—including Kerg’s—have been written about how to engage in that dialogue in a professional manner.

During a lecture at West Point in 2008, then-Secretary of Defense Robert Gates told future Army officers that he was impressed with how the Army’s professional journals allow officers to critique their leadership.

## “There is a fine line between honest critique and undermining faith in the chain of command.” —Maj Brian Kerg

“I believe this is a sign of institutional strength and vitality,” Gates said. “I encourage you to take on the mantle of fearless, thoughtful, but loyal dissent when the situation calls for it. And, agree with the articles or not, senior officers should embrace such dissent as a healthy dialogue and protect and advance those considerably more junior who are taking on that mantle.”

LtCol Michelle Macander cited Gates’ comment on loyal dissent in her essay published in the online national security publication *War on the Rocks* in December 2021. Macander said the inspiration for the article, “How to Dissent Without Losing Your Career, or Your Republic,” came from the Scheller episode and a media narrative that the military was stopping servicemembers from being allowed to dissent.

“That’s not the case at all,” Macander told *Leatherneck*. “You just have to do it within a certain manner. And you have to be professional while you’re doing it. I think the more people that say that, the better. And the more venues that are publishing it, the better.”

As a commander, Macander, a combat engineer officer, said she encouraged honest opinion and feedback up to the point of when a decision was made. “And then once a decision is made, you step out smartly,” she said. Macander, who was assigned as a military fellow at the Center for Strategic and International



CPL JENNIFER SCHUBERT, USMC

Recruits from Oscar Co, 4th Recruit Training Battalion, Recruit Training Regiment learn Marine Corps history at MCRD Parris Island, S.C., Oct. 29, 2014. Recruits receive six history classes that range from the Marine Corps’ founding in 1775 to recent operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.



CPL MELISSA ATLEE, USMC

**1stSgt Denise M. Ruiz, Headquarters Company, Combat Logistics Regiment 27, 2nd Marine Logistics Group, calls on a Marine during a noncommissioned officer discussion at Camp Lejeune, N.C., Feb. 11, 2010.**

Studies, said this form of dissent is taught at the tactical level, but she believes it transcends up.

Marine Corps doctrinal publications describe this type of loyal dissent.

MCDP 1, *Warfighting*, states that until a commander has reached a decision, “subordinates should consider it their duty to provide honest, professional opinions even though these may be in disagreement with the senior’s opinions.” But once that decision is reached, “juniors then must support it as if it were their own.”

*Warfighting* also states that senior leaders must encourage candor among subordinates, and that compliance for the purpose of personal advancement will not be tolerated. MCDP 7, *Learning*, goes a step further, saying that “all Marines prepare themselves to become leaders by exercising humility and being open to constructive feedback.”

**“Stick to your chain of command. Right or wrong, you’ll make few friends by going to the press or Congress to resolve a problem that could have been corrected by Marines. If you are right, there is a Marine somewhere in that chain who will see it.” —LtCol Mark E. Cantrell**

### **A ‘Precious Mechanism’**

MCWP 6-10, *Leading Marines*, references an article written in 1986 by then-retired LtGen Victor H. Krulak. Krulak’s essay, “A Soldier’s Dilemma,” published in *Marine Corps Gazette*, lays out a set of rules for subordinates on how to dissent and rules for commanders on how to accept criticism.

In the essay, Krulak emphasizes multiple times the importance of using the chain of command. Krulak describes the chain of command as “the precious mechanism by which all military activity is driven.”

“The dissenter should use it,” he writes.

The dissenter should put their idea on paper and take it to their immediate superior. However, Krulak acknowledges, a superior might not be interested in adopting the idea that a dissenter sets forth. In that case, the dissenter should seek the highest authority involved in the issue, but with his or her immediate supervisor in the know.

“But the key point is this: The idea is now in the open, well-developed and well-expressed,” he writes. “And somewhere in the chain of command there may just be someone with the interest and perception to take up the cause—if it’s a good one.”

Deciding to make a public social media post instead of using the chain of command to air a grievance was one point

brought up several times by commenters on Scheller's video post. One subject of contention among commenters was whether to trust the chain of command since senior leadership was the target of Scheller's grievances.

"The chain is fractured," one commenter said. "I have never seen such loss of confidence in my adult life."

Having faith in the chain of command is a piece of advice offered in a 1998 essay written by Marine Corps LtCol Mark E. Cantrell. The essay, published in *Marine Corps Gazette*, was titled "The Doctrine of Dissent." In the essay, Cantrell suggested that the military "develop a doctrine for dealing with dissent and the mistakes that inspire it."

Like Krulak, Cantrell was writing about the loyal dissenter, or a person who has a disagreement with an idea but remains loyal to the institution and their command. Also like Krulak, Cantrell writes that if the dissenter is unable to change their superior's mind, and if the issue is important enough, then they should go to the next person in the chain of command while having the courage to inform their immediate superior that they are taking this route.

"Stick to your chain of command," Cantrell writes. "Right or wrong, you'll make few friends by going to the press or Congress to resolve a problem that could have been corrected by Marines. If you are right, there is a Marine somewhere in that chain who will see it."

Cantrell's essay is mentioned in another article written by George E. Reed, a former Army officer and currently the dean of the School of Public Affairs at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs. The essay, "The Ethics of Followership and the Expression of Loyal Dissent" was presented at the International Leadership Association's annual conference in 2012. Reed holds a doctorate in public policy analysis and administration and is an expert on the subject of leadership.

He writes that Cantrell's essay seemed to be aimed at junior Marines since a person of a higher rank has fewer people to appeal their concerns to. "His faith that a Marine somewhere in the chain will recognize a position as right might strike some of us as hopeful at best and quite possibly naïve, yet the respect for the better nature of the organization that his approach connotes seems commendable," Reed writes.

Reed's essay, which did not exclusively focus on dissent in the military, states that the military might be unique in that it puts great emphasis on expressing dissent within the organization before one decides to take an idea or concern public. "Few other organizations emphasize the chain of command to such an extent, but most would agree that one should give the existing authorities a full opportunity to address a problem before taking it over their heads," he writes.

In speaking with *Leatherneck*, Reed, a retired Army colonel, said if a person is dissenting in the military because they think they have a better idea than a superior or they are critical of a superior's decision, one of the problems they might face is "rank perspective."

"The world I saw as a second lieutenant and my concerns and what I cared about were in many respects limited by my role and my experience," Reed explained. "My perspectives as a colonel were very different. And I'm sure the perspective of the Secretary of Defense were very different from the one I had."

**Below: Exercise participants take notes at a brief during Combined Unit Exercise (CUX) 19.1 at Marine Corps Information Operations Center, MCB Quantico, Va., April 10, 2019. (Photo by LCpl Garrett Jones, USMC)**



**Sgt Melissa Salazar, right, a food service specialist with Combat Logistics Regiment 27, 2nd Marine Logistics Group and other noncommissioned officers from the regiment raise their hands in response to a question during a class aboard Camp Lejeune, N.C., Feb. 11, 2010.**

CPL MELISSA ATTLEE, USMC

While researching the topic of loyal dissent, Reed recalls coming across literature written by a servicemember who advised the dissenter to begin with the assumption that their senior leadership is privy to information that they are not. “You need to start with that assumption,” Reed said. “That they may know something that you don’t because of the limitations of your perspective.”

That doesn’t necessarily mean that’s the end of the story, Reed explained. But it should be the starting point for the dissenter.

In a written statement Scheller gave at his court martial, Scheller said he believed that addressing his concerns “within the chain of command would be ineffective.”

“I knew my complaints would never be heard by the Commandant, the SECDEF, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, or the American people if I went through the proper channels,” he stated.

In early June, *Leatherneck* reached out to Scheller via a private message on LinkedIn to gain his perspective on how he delivered his initial message and whether there was another way to make an impact and have his concerns addressed. Scheller responded by criticizing the focus of this article, and then posted a screenshot of his response on his public LinkedIn and Facebook pages, which, as of the publication of this article, can still be viewed.

Scheller, however, did expand on his views in a February video interview with *Marine Corps Times*, stating his belief that the proper channels are “broken.”

“I thought about this beforehand,” Scheller said. “Does going through the system, via IG complaint, request mast, all of these processes, would that be effective? And I came to the conclusion that it wouldn’t be, based on my experiences of watching these processes before. And so everyone wants to talk about these processes, but they don’t address why they’re broken.”

## ‘Emotions in the Background’

LtCol Macander’s War on the Rocks article offers several criteria servicemembers must follow to achieve what she calls “allowable dissent.” Two of those criteria are to remain professional and to avoid personal attacks.

To remain professional, Macander writes the person should “avoid disrespectful language, focus on the institution or policy being criticized, and use objective analyses to bolster the argument.” In her article, Macander said that Scheller used “emotional and unprofessional language,” and that such language shouldn’t be used in a public forum when the goal is to change or improve the institution.

Cantrell’s “The Doctrine of Dissent” states that “even rational arguments sound suspect if delivered with too much feeling.”

“Although important issues will often be emotional, you’ll want to keep those emotions in the background if you wish to be persuasive,” Cantrell writes.

When Scheller posted his first video, the lieutenant colonel said he had a “growing discontent and contempt for my perceived ineptitude at the foreign policy level.” In Macander’s opinion, these words from Scheller were both “emotional” and “unprofessional.” Those who cross the line of professionalism in the military—especially commissioned officers—could face legal consequences. Some of the charges that were brought against

**“Avoid disrespectful language, focus on the institution or policy being criticized, and use objective analyses to bolster the argument.” —LtCol Michelle Macander**



Secretary of the Navy, Ray Mabus, speaks to a classroom of Marine officers at The Basic School about the future of the Marine Corps during his visit to MCB Quantico, Va., Jan. 27, 2016.

## Before You Write, Know Your Rights

Servicemembers have a lot of leeway when it comes to the publishing world. However, if this is your first time driving through this territory, there are several rules of the road you should be aware of. The following is a summary of the various rules for active-duty members of the military and Department of Defense (DOD) employees when it comes to publishing in print or online. *Leatherneck* encourages servicemembers to seek their own resources and speak to their command before engaging in personal or professional publishing.

### **Disclaimer for Speeches and Writings Devoted to Agency Matters (DOD 5500.7-R: 2-207)**

A DOD employee who uses or permits the use of his military grade or who includes or permits the inclusion of his title or position as one of several biographical details given to identify himself in connection with teaching, speaking or writing ... shall make a disclaimer if the subject of the teaching, speaking or writing deals in significant part with any ongoing or announced policy, program or operation of the DOD employee's Agency ... and the DOD employee has not been authorized by appropriate Agency authority to present that material as the Agency's position.

The disclaimer shall be made as follows:

- The required disclaimer shall expressly state that the views presented are those of the speaker or author and do not necessarily represent the views of DOD or its components;
- Where a disclaimer is required for an article, book or other writing, the disclaimer shall be printed in a reasonably prominent position in the writing itself;
- Where a disclaimer is required for a speech or other oral presentation, the disclaimer may be given orally provided it is given at the beginning of the oral presentation.

### **Acceptable Political Activities by Members of the Armed Forces (DOD Directive 1344.10)**

A member of the Armed Forces on active duty may:

- Register, vote, and express a personal opinion on political candidates and issues, but not as a representative of the Armed Forces.
- Write a letter to the editor of a newspaper expressing the member's personal views on public issues or political candidates, if such action is not part of an organized letter-

writing campaign or a solicitation of votes for or against a political party or partisan political cause or candidate. If the letter identifies the member as on active duty (or if the member is otherwise reasonably identifiable as a member of the Armed Forces), the letter should clearly state that the views expressed are those of the individual only and not those of the Department of Defense (or Department of Homeland Security for members of the Coast Guard).

### **Social Media Guidelines**

#### **(U.S. Marine Corps 20 Social Media Handbook)**

- Do not post classified or sensitive information
- Be the first to respond to your own mistakes
- Do not post defamatory, libelous, vulgar, obscene, profane, threatening, racially and ethnically divisive, or otherwise offensive or illegal information or material.
- Identify to readers or personal social media accounts that the views expressed are yours alone and that they do not necessarily reflect the views of the Marine Corps
  - Discussing issues related to your personal experiences is acceptable, but do not discuss areas of expertise for which you have no background or knowledge
  - Marines may generally express their personal views about public issues and political candidates on internet sites, including liking or following accounts of a political party or partisan candidate, campaign, group, or cause. If the site explicitly or indirectly identifies Marines as on active duty (e.g., a title on LinkedIn or a Facebook profile photo), then the content needs to clearly and prominently state that the views expressed are the Marine's own and not those of the U.S. Marine Corps or Department of Defense.

Scheller were related directly to the lack of professionalism he showed in his first and subsequent video posts.

Among the charges that Scheller pleaded guilty to at a court martial last fall were contempt toward officials and disrespect toward superior commissioned officers. In his first video, Scheller called out several high-ranking officials, including Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin and Commandant of the Marine Corps General David Berger. In her essay, Macander asserts that "had Scheller not focused on personal attacks, he may have avoided those charges."

### **A Case for Professional Writing**

Maj Kerg was encouraged both peers and junior Marines to write for professional journals. In his essay about dissent, Kerg wrote that professional journals present a good place for a servicemember to express criticism since the publishers "know the profession and serve as guard rails that can protect authors and speakers from themselves."

LtCol Macander said the original version of her essay—a more opinion-based version—was rejected by War on the Rocks. She

rewrote the essay and pitched a version that was more "fact-based." They accepted it. But that wasn't the end. "I think we went through three rounds of editing," she said. The editor had questions for her that she didn't think of, and she was forced to answer arguments that readers might have had if one of the drafts were published.

The medium in which one delivers their dissent is as important as the message, Macander writes. Social media—where Scheller decided to deliver his message—could be that medium, but it presents some challenges. "While [social media] is appealing in its power to quickly disseminate an idea to a broad audience, the ability for a dissenter to post on impulse could more easily result in an unacceptable message," Macander states in her essay. A professional journal, on the other hand, requires one to go through an editing process and a peer review.

Military journals also present disclaimers that are required by the Department of Defense. When publishing a written work on a topic related to the department and its activities, DOD employees must have a disclaimer that states that the views expressed are those of the writer and do not necessarily represent the views



CPL PAUL PETERSON, USMC

**A Marine with Combat Logistics Battalion 6, 2nd Marine Logistics Group, takes notes during a call-for-fire class held at Twentynine Palms, Calif., May 6, 2013.**

of the DOD or its components. Kerg writes that professional military journals generally have disclaimers printed in every issue and on their websites.

In the same month that Kerg's article on dissent was published, *Proceedings* also published a piece by Kerg titled "Dare to Write." In this article, Kerg writes that every leader in uniform has ideas that should be shared, and that professional writing is one of the most effective ways to do this.

His article quotes former Chief of Naval Operations Admiral John Richardson, who, in 2016, coauthored an essay that encouraged naval servicemembers to develop habits of reading and writing. Richardson encouraged servicemembers to not only write their ideas, but to expose those ideas to public scrutiny.

"An argument properly conceived and defended can be of great value to our profession," Richardson writes.

Kerg told *Leatherneck* that junior leaders in the Marine Corps are well-positioned to identify problems with ideas that have been conceived by senior leaders since those junior members—enlisted and officer—are the ones implementing the concepts from higher up. And if that junior member identifies a way to fix that problem, that idea will be wasted if it's not shared with the people that can implement the solution.

Kerg acknowledges that there are several channels a junior Marine and a young officer can take to have their ideas heard, from simply utilizing their chain of command to writing information papers or after-action reports. "That's all great and those have their place, but professional writing . . . will get your ideas in front of other leaders, in other positions who probably have a greater ability to put the idea into greater application," Kerg said. "If you develop an idea and get it into one of those (professional journals), it will be seen by people with the power to execute."

### **'If You Try, You Will Fail'**

LtCol Macander's essay in *War on the Rocks* compared Scheller's first video post with a 2007 essay written by then-Army LtCol Paul Yingling. Paul Yingling's article "A Failure in Generalship," published in the *Armed Forces Journal*, accused senior military leaders of failing to prepare U.S. armed forces for the Iraq war. The essay was not only critical of an institution—the general corps—but it also proposed solutions on how Congress could change the officer promotion system.

One line from Yingling's article is still often cited in academic

## **Where Should I Submit my Work?**

Marines and other servicemembers have many options when it comes to getting their ideas and opinions published. Here's a list of some online and print publications they can consider.

### ***Marine Corps Gazette***

Founded in 1916, *Gazette* is known as the "Professional Journal of U.S. Marines" and its purpose, as stated in each issue, is to "provide a forum for the exchange of ideas that will advance knowledge, interest, and esprit de corps in the Marine Corps." Have an opinion about Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations? How about Force Design 2030? These Marine Corps-specific topics probably fit best in a Marine Corps-specific journal. The Marine Corps Association publishes the monthly journal, which also includes a blog and social media presence. More information can be found at [mca-marines.org](http://mca-marines.org).

### ***Leatherneck***

While the *Gazette* is considered a professional journal, *Leatherneck* is the "Magazine of Marines." Think of the *Gazette* as checking into a new unit in your uniform, and *Leatherneck* as checking out of the barracks in your civilian attire. Have a funny sea story to share? This is the place to do it. New to writing? The "Sound Off" section features short letters that provide the perfect opportunity to work on your craft. *Leatherneck* is also an outstanding forum for articles on all aspects of Marine Corps history from Marines in the Civil War to today's veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan and welcomes submissions from Marines whether active, reserve, veteran or retired. And don't forget about the annual *Leatherneck* writing contest, which provides Marines the opportunity to have a feature article published. More information can be found at [mca-marines.org](http://mca-marines.org).

### ***Proceedings***

Founded in 1876, the United States Naval Institute publishes this magazine for readers interested in topics about the sea services, which includes the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard. Writers include veterans, civilians and active-duty personnel. More information can be found at [usni.org](http://usni.org).

### ***War on the Rocks***

Arguably the national security website for the current generation, *War on the Rocks* began in 2013 as a podcast and is described as a "community focused on strategy, defense and foreign affairs." Writers include civilians and active-duty servicemembers. Be prepared to break out some credentials though. They seek to publish the work from "the most authoritative, experienced, and authentic voices on defense, foreign policy and national security."

### ***Armed Forces Journal***

Described as the "leading joint-service journal of commentary and ideas for U.S. military officers and leaders," the aim for the publishers is to "provoke thoughtful debate," according to its website. *AFJ* describes most of its readers as field-grade and flag officers. The journal is published by Sightline Media Group. Go to [armedforcesjournal.com](http://armedforcesjournal.com) for more information.

2ndLt Kyle Daly, USMC

journals and by columnists today: “A private who loses a rifle suffers far greater consequences than a general who loses a war.”

In their essays on dissent, both Macander and Kerg point to Yingling as an example of someone who was critical of senior leadership but did not face any serious reprisals because of that criticism. Although he received much media attention because he was an active-duty officer who was critical of his senior leadership, Yingling eventually was promoted to colonel and was never charged with any crime under the UCMJ.

Macander puts Yingling’s essay in the category of acceptable dissent.

“The military establishment may not like hearing that it is not holding its general officer ranks accountable, but its treatment of Yingling shows that an assertion’s unpopularity alone does not make the dissent unacceptable,” Macander writes.

When *Leatherneck* contacted Yingling, who retired from the military in 2012 to pursue teaching, however, he stated in an email that some have recently used his experience to claim that an active-duty officer could “criticize the military without serious consequences.”

“Based on both my personal experience and the broader historical record, I can state with confidence that such a claim is false,” Yingling said. Yingling did not wish to state the specifics of those consequences other than the irony that by 2009, the Army was teaching his work at the Army War College, but he was not selected to attend the institution.

“I’ve never before discussed the personal consequences of my writing,” Yingling said. “I’m reluctant to do so now, as there are tens of thousands of Americans, and hundreds of thousands of Iraqis, who have suffered incalculably more from our misguided war efforts than I ever have or will from calling out those blunders.” While Yingling’s essay did not mark the

**“Here’s my answer to aspiring dissenters: Don’t do it. You can’t change the system, and you shouldn’t try. If you try, you will fail, and you and your family will suffer ...”**

**—LtCol Paul Yingling, USA**

end of his career—something he fully expected to happen—it didn’t achieve the outcome he intended.

“I’m not sure I’m the right person to ask for advice about expressing dissent, as I neither changed the system nor advanced within it,” Yingling said. “Nevertheless, it’s a fair question, and here’s my answer to aspiring dissenters: Don’t do it. You can’t change the system, and you shouldn’t try. If you try, you will fail, and you and your family will suffer, emotionally, socially, financially. ... I failed, and you’ll fail too. You are not different. You are not special. You are not ‘the one.’ ”

Yingling warned that dissenting, or speaking truth to power, is not like “Mr. Smith Goes to Washington,” “where the plucky idealist speaks truth to power, gets the job, gets the girl, and lives happily ever after.”

“After hearing all that, most of you aspiring dissenters will decide to get along and go along within the system, as you should,” he said. “However, a couple of you will persist nevertheless, speaking truth to power without considering cost or consequence. Maybe you believe the issue is too important to remain silent. Maybe you just can’t live with yourself if you do something less than the full measure of your duty. Maybe you are the one.

“As Henry Ford said, ‘Whether you think you can or think you can’t—you’re right.’ ”

*Author’s bio: 2ndLt Kyle Daly is a former journalist who enlisted in the Marine Corps in 2016. He was commissioned in 2021 and is currently stationed in San Antonio, Texas, undergoing training as a UAS officer. 🇺🇸*



**A Marine prepares to fire his M240 machine gun as part of the Advanced Infantry Course aboard the Kahuku Training Facility, Sept. 20, 2016.**

LCPL JESUS SEPULVEDA TORRES, USMC

# Leatherneck Laffs

JOINT  
Awards Ceremony



"Bronze Star and Purple Heart  
for my deployment  
to Afghanistan."

"Humanitarian award  
for delivering  
baby formula."



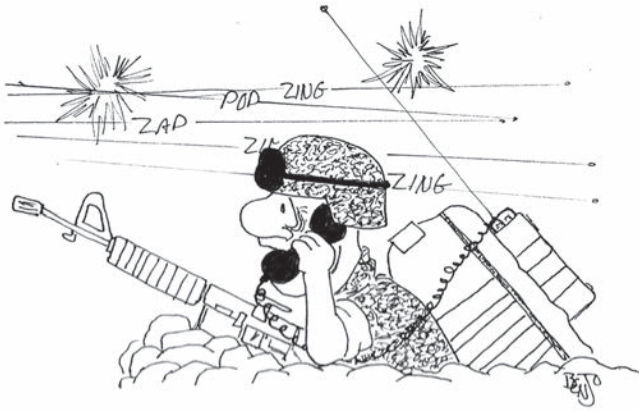
"Good news. The enemy just sent us a friend request."



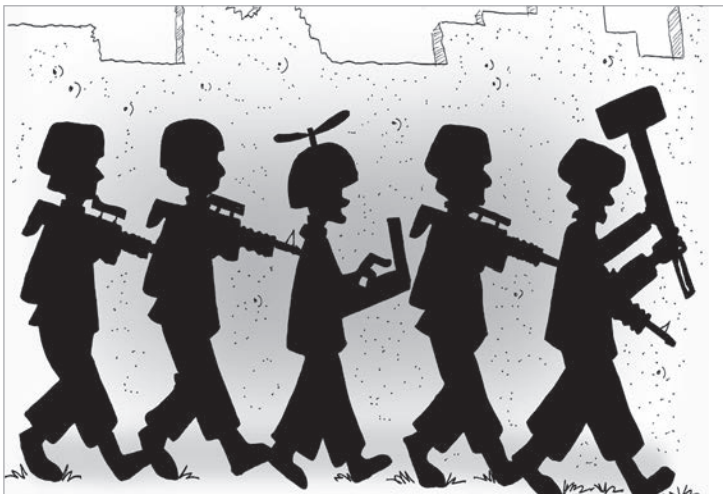
"My favorites are the ones that come in here  
with man buns."



"Hey, Recruit!"



"Mom, I don't know how you got this number but I'm really busy. No Mom, not too busy for you, but ..."



Shooter Shooter Drone Operator Shooter Breacher



"Sgt Carter liked to add elements of danger into everyday activities."



"Sir, here's the report on Military Redundancy done in triplicate."



# “There’s a Place for You in the AMERICAN LEGION”

## These Marine Vets are the Face of the Next Generation of Legionnaires

By Sara W. Bock

### Finding Purpose

Elizabeth Hartman was five years out of the Marine Corps when, in 2019, she bumped into a Vietnam-era Marine veteran in the small town of New Bern, N.C., where she resides.

“Hey, Marine, you need to continue to serve—get off your butt and come help!” she recalls Ed Hughes saying as he encouraged her to join the local American Legion Post 539. Not one to refuse orders, the 31-year-old self-described “boot lance corporal,” who had heard people complain that the American Legion was little more than a bunch of old guys in a bar, decided to see for herself.

What she found defied every stereotype: a diverse group of veterans from all generations, a large segment of them fellow post-9/11 veterans, who were committed to supporting each other and continuing to serve their community and country even after hanging up their uniforms. Today, just three years after she first set foot in the door, Hartman serves both as the post’s

commander and as Chair of the Legion’s National Legislative Council.

“Rank we leave at the door, we leave gender at the door, we leave race at the door. We just serve. And I think that’s what’s so beautiful because you can come in and you can just find that purpose,” said Hartman, who added that due to its proximity to Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, many of the post’s legionnaires are veteran Marines. “I would say a sense of purpose and a sense of belonging are the two things we frequently hear as what’s missing when someone separates from the Marine Corps. Joining an American Legion post, you belong, and you’re surrounded by people who get it.”

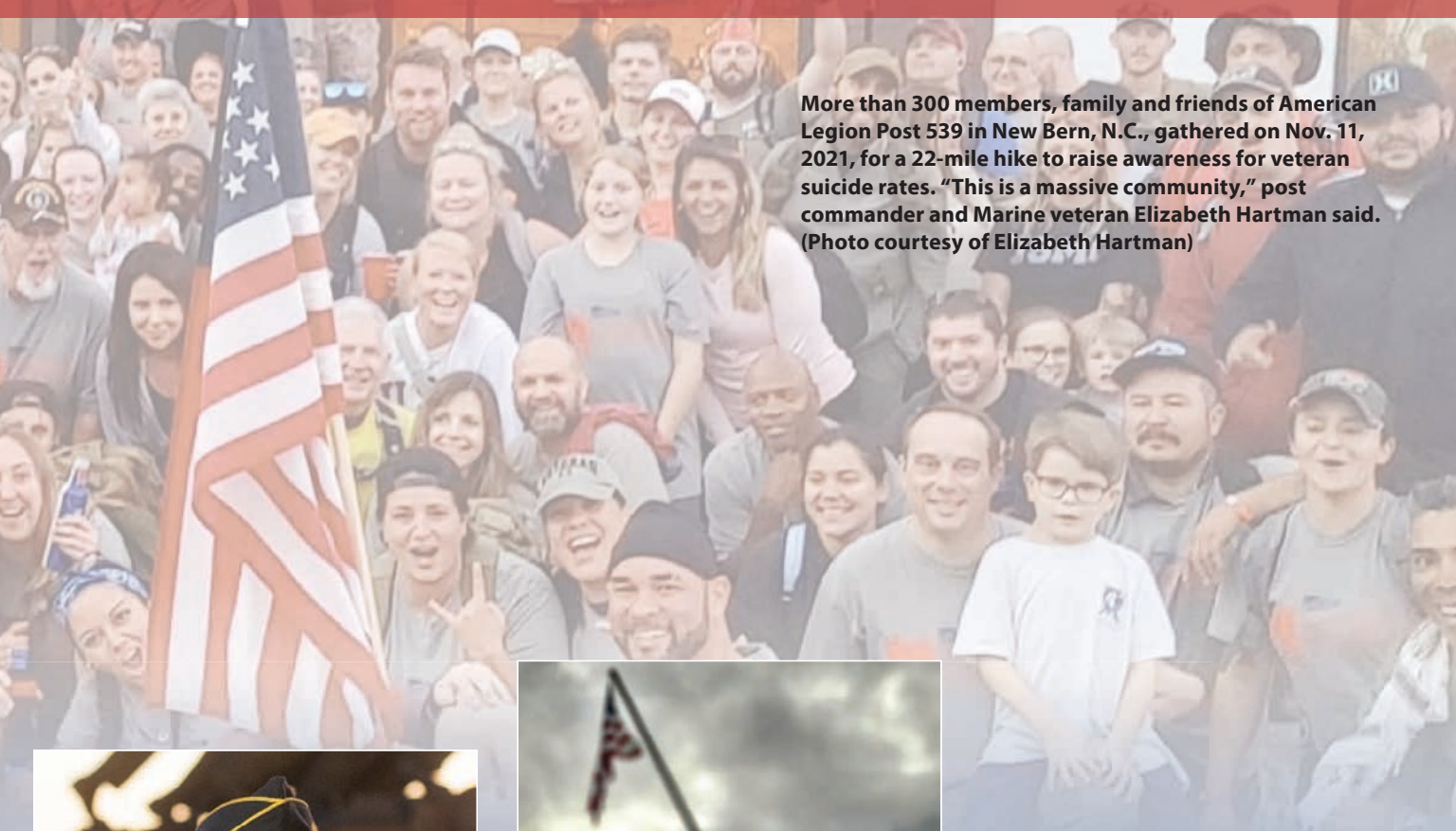
For Hartman, who served as an Arabic linguist during her time in the Corps and now works as a personal financial advisor, it’s important that Post 539 offers programming that appeals to all generations of Marines. The post has retained traditional offerings like Bingo nights and weekly gatherings at a bar,



ELIZABETH HARTMAN

COURTESY OF ELIZABETH HARTMAN

but also has added activities like a “Yak Attack” kayaking trip and an annual 22-mile hike that brings awareness to veteran suicide rates while raising funds for suicide prevention programming. Recently, when members of the post became aware that veterans’ headstones at a historically Black cemetery in the



More than 300 members, family and friends of American Legion Post 539 in New Bern, N.C., gathered on Nov. 11, 2021, for a 22-mile hike to raise awareness for veteran suicide rates. "This is a massive community," post commander and Marine veteran Elizabeth Hartman said. (Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Hartman)



**GYSGT  
CHANIN NUNTAVONG  
USMC (RET)**

COURTESY OF AMERICAN LEGION



**JEFF DALY**

COURTESY OF JEFF DALY



**SGTMAJ RON NEFF  
USMC (RET)**

COURTESY OF AMERICAN LEGION



local area had fallen into disrepair and not been receiving the same honors and recognition as veterans in the nearby national cemetery, they procured grave cleaning kits from the Department of Veterans Affairs and spent two weekends cleaning up the headstones before holding a ceremony to render proper honors for those who had been laid to rest there.

"We put a flag by each, saluted, and said their name aloud to ensure they would get the honors they deserved. I was really proud of that one," said Hartman, adding

that the post has also found other ways to serve the community in recent months, including taking three homeless veterans off the street and helping them secure housing and jobs.

A pivotal experience for Hartman took place last summer in the wake of the attack at Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul, Afghanistan, on Aug. 26, which claimed the lives of 13 U.S.

servicemembers who were assisting in the evacuation of America's Afghan allies as the Taliban took control of the country. A week later, Post 539 held a town hall meeting for anyone who wanted to talk about what had transpired.

"We had GWOT [global war on terror] veterans crying because they were trying to cope with their feelings and emotions—two seats over you had a Vietnam veteran

Right: The newly unveiled American Legion logo does not replace the organization's traditional emblem; rather, it serves as a signal of its efforts to modernize and attract the next generation of veterans.



COURTESY OF ELIZABETH HARTMAN

Above: Rachel Yuan, Post 539 finance officer, cleans a veteran's grave marker in Greenwood Cemetery, New Bern, N.C., during a community service event.



COURTESY OF ELIZABETH HARTMAN

Above: Veterans and community members attend a suicide intervention course hosted by American Legion Post 539 in New Bern, N.C. The Legion's new mental health de-stigmatization campaign, "Be the One," is largely focused on action at the local level.



COURTESY OF ELIZABETH HARTMAN

Elizabeth Hartman, commander of American Legion Post 539, enjoys a beer with fellow post members during one of the post's weekly Thursday evening gatherings.

also crying because [of] seeing a photo of Kabul juxtaposed by Saigon," Hartman recalled. "I think so often we see a different generation of veterans and we think, 'They're so different from me.' But really, we're the same and we are going through the exact same situations and emotions, and it's imperative that we come together and view ourselves as one team."

The efforts at Hartman's post are reflective of a sea change at the highest levels of the national veteran service organization, which boasts 1.8 million members and more than 12,000 posts nationwide, as it navigates the challenge of attracting the next generation of veterans to join its ranks while ensuring that its older members continue to feel valued and seen. With a recently unveiled new logo, which does not replace its iconic star emblem but rather provides a secondary "brand mark," the American Legion has its sights set on the future.

## Addressing the Suicide Crisis

Founded in 1919 by a small group of World War I veterans, the Legion has throughout its history not only provided a place for veterans to belong, but also has identified the biggest issue facing the next generation and figured out how to help solve or alleviate it. Historically, this has primarily been accomplished through lobbying efforts in Washington, D.C., where the Legion, which has one of the largest veterans lobbying groups, has played a vital role in ensuring that legislation that benefits veterans is signed into law.

“The WW I American Legion veteran set up the GI Bill for the World War II veteran, and then the WW II legionnaire took care of all the care and compensation around Agent Orange—that was the biggest issue facing the next generation,” said the Legion’s Chief Marketing Officer, Dean Kessel, who added that today, the core of the Legion’s members are Vietnam veterans who are continuing that tradition of paying it forward. “What is the biggest issue facing this generation of veteran? It’s suicide and mental health.”

Recognizing that this complex issue can’t be addressed solely through legislation, the American Legion recently rolled out its “Be the One” awareness and destigmatization campaign, which encourages individuals to, rather than quote the alarming number of daily veteran suicides, “be the one to save *one* veteran.”

“Be the one to ask veterans in your life how they are doing; to listen when a veteran needs to talk; to reach out when a veteran is struggling,” the campaign urges.

According to retired Marine Gunnery Sergeant Chanin Nuntavong, who sits at the helm of the Legion’s Washington, D.C., office as the executive director of government and veteran affairs, the organization instituted a new “Buddy Check” program at the local level several years ago, asking post members to call their fellow legionnaires to check on them and see if they need anything. Less than two years later, the stay-at-home orders that accompanied the COVID-19 pandemic made the Buddy Check concept even more vital.

“We found people who were older and

**From the left, American Legion Legislative Director Lawrence Montreuil; National Legislative Council Chair Elizabeth Hartman; and Executive Director Chanin Nuntavong stand outside the U.S. Capitol, where the Legion maintains a constant presence as one of the largest veterans lobbying organizations on the Hill.**



COURTESY OF ELIZABETH HARTMAN

needed groceries and needed help and support,” said Nuntavong, adding that at the time, the idea for the Be the One campaign had not yet been conceived. “We are incorporating the Be the One campaign into our Buddy Check program, so not only are we going to call and ask how you’re doing, but we’re really going to dive a little deeper and check on your mental health, making sure you have services if you need any, or any assistance that we can provide locally.”

## Advocating on the Hill

Nuntavong, who retired from the Corps in 2017 and previously served as public affairs advisor to the 17th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, Micheal P. Barrett, is responsible for overseeing the Legion’s lobbying arm and regularly testifies before Congress on matters concerning veterans. Since he assumed his current position, Nuntavong has had the opportunity to help ensure benefits for Blue Water Navy veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange and other herbicides while serving

off the coast of Vietnam, as well as to testify in support of the recent Honoring our PACT Act, which will give the next generation of veterans harmed by toxins, largely from burn pits, presumption of service connection and access to earned benefits and healthcare. He and his team regularly meet with senators and members of the House of Representatives and review bills to determine their impact—both positive and negative—on those who have served. The Washington, D.C., office also employs nearly 50 individuals who work to process disability compensation claims and appeals for veterans, free of charge. In 2021 alone, the American Legion secured a staggering \$14 billion in benefits for veterans.

“Quite honestly, no one is going to fight for our brothers and sisters in arms as much as the American Legion,” said Hartman, whose role on the organization’s National Legislative Council is to help ensure that veterans are aware of the Legion’s legislative agenda, know their



**Retired Marine GySgt Chanin Nuntavong, the Legion’s Executive Director of Government Affairs, participates in a ceremony at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., on Veterans Day 2018. (Photo courtesy of American Legion)**

services and resources available, and are encouraged to pick up the phone and call their representatives on matters that affect their fellow veterans.

Nuntavong understands that some individuals may be at a point in their lives where they don’t have the time or feel the need to participate in their local post, and he finds their sentiments completely valid. Still, he encourages all veterans to join the Legion because their membership fee—which is dependent on location but averages about \$40 per year—helps support the organization’s lobbying efforts on the Hill and its important work in processing veteran claims.

“Membership matters. So, if you can donate your \$30 to the Legion, you’re going to help us advocate, and then when you’re ready to walk in the door and contribute your time, we’ll be there for you,” said Nuntavong, who hopes to dispel the myth that the American Legion is little more than a smoky bar that serves cheap beer.



**American Legion Executive Director Chanin Nuntavong, a retired Marine, testifies in support of the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act before the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee at the Russell Senate Office Building in Washington, D.C., Aug. 1, 2018.**

ZACH GIBSON

## Staying Relevant

Working in the Los Angeles entertainment industry, Gulf War-era Marine veteran Jeff Daly had never even heard of the American Legion until five years ago when a friend invited him to attend a writing workshop with a group called Veterans in Media and Entertainment. The event was held at the Legion's Hollywood Post 43—incidentally, the post at which Nuntavong is a member. The colossal art-deco style building is located just down the street from the Hollywood Bowl and is home to a multi-million dollar theater. Once referred to by *The Wall Street Journal* as “the coolest club in LA you can't buy yourself into,” the structure made Daly's eyes widen with interest.

“What is this place?” he remembers asking the person sitting next to him. Before he knew it, he too was a legionnaire and just recently became the commander of Post 43. Daly also is a co-host of the Legion's national podcast, *Tango Alpha Lima*, in which he and fellow veterans have what he describes as “conversations that aren't typically associated with the American Legion.”

“We talked about the George Floyd thing because the police officers were veterans. We've done Pride Month things, Black History Month things, women's things,” said Daly of the podcast. “We're speaking to two audiences: one's internal

and one's external. Internal are the younger members or actually any members that we already have that have a perception, true or false, that the Legion's losing its relevance. And then the external is to show prospective members that we're not.”

Daly describes his post of 1,300 members as younger on average, but still representative of every living era, from World War II down to 18-year-olds who are serving on active duty.

“What drew me was the vibrance of all the members—because we have members of all ages—but [also] doing stuff,” said Daly. “We do professional development, because we're in Hollywood that means we're working with groups like Veterans in Media and Entertainment, because they bring in people to teach how to pitch a project, how to work with casting directors, get jobs behind the scenes in production. So we're engaging people in the rest of their life, not just the memory of serving. That was important. [...] That's what brought me in. What's kept me is that I also have learned to really latch on to the notion of continued service.”

When Daly suffered a stroke in March of this year, members of his post visited him every single day as he recovered.

“A lot of us, especially here, aren't from here, don't have family here, so this is a de facto family,” said Daly.

**Below: Daly, second from right, recently joined fellow legionnaires in an appearance on Fox Sports, during which they discussed football and represented the Legion and America's veterans.**



**Marine veteran Jeff Daly first attended an event at American Legion Post 43 in Hollywood, Calif., five years ago, and today serves as the post's commander. He says this large gavel is just a decoration, but jokes that if all 1,300 of the post's members showed up at once, he might need it to get their attention.**



**Above: Representing the Legion during the Long Beach, Calif., race of NTT IndyCar Series in April, Daly, who also serves as director of membership for the state of California, says he will do “whatever it takes” to bring attention to the American Legion. This year, the Legion became an official charitable partner of IndyCar, and the No. 48 car now bears the organization's new logo.**



COURTESY OF AMERICAN LEGION

**SgtMaj Ron Neff, USMC (Ret), Director of the Legion’s Americanism Division, passes out trash bags during a community service project in collaboration with the Hoosier Veterans Assistance Foundation in Indianapolis, Ind., in 2019.**

**Rediscovering Identity**

The Marine Corps was in the rearview mirror for Ron Neff, who retired as a sergeant major in 2017 and headed for corporate America.

“The people were magnificent, the pay was fantastic, but it didn’t take long. Like so many other veterans, I started to experience what I felt like was an existential crisis of identity. I felt like I didn’t have purpose, I wasn’t surrounded by Marines anymore to kind of remind me of my value to them and the organization, I began to worry about my own mental and physical health. And while things were going well with the new job on the surface, below the surface I was definitely looking, grasping for something more,” said the sergeant major, who served in Iraq and Afghanistan during his 24-year career.

A motorcycle enthusiast, Neff happened to be at a Harley-Davidson dealership near his home in Indianapolis, Ind., when a group of American Legion Riders rolled up. A fellow Marine he recognized from his time in the Corps was among them. The group invited him to visit the local post, which turned out to be less than a mile from his home, where he immediately joined and became a legionnaire.

“It kind of felt like you were

hanging out with your Marines in the field or something. The flavors vary every day, but it was there, and you knew that if you needed to be transparent, to be yourself for a moment, whether it was a period of vulnerability or just pride and confidence in your service, there was somebody there that could listen,” said Neff of his experience at his post.

Within months of getting involved, Neff, who still was dissatisfied with his career path, noticed a position had opened at the American Legion National Headquarters in Indianapolis, and applied.

“Fortunately for me I got it and I kind of feel like a Marine all over again,” Neff, who serves as director of the Legion’s Americanism Division, said with a laugh.

Americanism is one of the Legion’s “pillars,” focused on the development of the nation’s most valuable resource: its youth. As director, Neff is responsible for youth programs that include American Legion Baseball, Junior Shooting Sports, Boys Nation, the National Oratorical Contest, Youth Cadet Law Enforcement and Scouting, as well as flag etiquette, youth scholarships and the child welfare foundation.

“It’s externally focused on the same population of great Americans that we served in uniform, so it’s like being that humble servant to Americans again, and not uniquely devoted to taking care of our fellow veterans,” said Neff of his work



COURTESY OF JEFF DALY

**Above: Jeff Daly helps “spruce up” the Marine Corps presence on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., during Boys Nation 2021, one of the Legion’s most well-known Americanism programs for high school students.**

**Right: Marine veterans Elizabeth Hartman, right, and Ed Hughes, left, enjoy coffee with a member of the local community in New Bern, N.C. Hartman, who left active duty in 2014, joined the American Legion at the urging of Hughes, a Vietnam-era veteran.**



COURTESY OF ELIZABETH HARTMAN

in the division. “That’s a mandate that never goes away, but Americanism from the American Legion is really externally focused and just selling the message that this country is beautiful and amazing, and patriotism is not partisan, and that’s why we serve, this country’s worth it, and we communicate that to others.”

Neff considers becoming a legionnaire to be an extension of service and encourages all veteran Marines who are searching for purpose to find a home in the American Legion.

“There is a common excitement when you walk out of uniform. You’re looking forward to living the ‘other life,’ so to speak. But in your excitement to leave, sometimes it’s lost upon you that when you’ve selflessly served others for so long it becomes a part of your identity, an innate characteristic or trait that doesn’t go away,” said Neff, adding these words aimed at his fellow veterans: “There’s a place for you in the American Legion.”



JASON ANDREW

**Above: Chanin Nuntavong prepares to speak during a press conference outside the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., on Nov. 3, 2021. The Legion joined an effort to get language included in the Senate version of the National Defense Authorization Act that would establish a location for the forthcoming Global War on Terrorism memorial.**



COURTESY OF JEFF DALY

**Jeff Daly, pictured on the far right, joins fellow members of Hollywood Post 43 at a meeting of American Legion District 24.**

## SEA STORY OF THE MONTH

### Bang! Bang!

One of things that I used to do to relieve daytime boredom during tower watch was to take an M16 round and loosen the bullet. Then I would take a second round and do the same thing. I would then pour some of the gunpowder into the first cartridge and place it standing up on the wooden ammo boxes that made up the roof of my tower. Next, I'd take a cigarette and touch off the gunpowder. Fizzzzz! Bang! When the burn reached the bottom of the cartridge case, it would set off the primer. This would drive the primer case into the wood and the rest of the cartridge case would fly up about 8 feet into the air. I then did the same with another bullet.

I was having fun doing

this one day when I was interrupted by a call from below. I looked over the awning and down below, where a grunt lieutenant was looking up. He demanded to know what I was shooting at. I replied in my southern drawl, "I ain't shootin' at nuthin', Suh!" He wasn't buying it and started up the ladder.

I quickly scooped up all the empty shells and heaved them off the side of the tower away from the ladder and away from the front where he might have seen them. This very angry lieutenant now demanded to see my rifle. Of course, my rifle was clean as it had not been fired. I said, "See Suh, I told ya', I ain't been shootin' at nuthin'." He couldn't figure it out, but he knew something was up.

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

### Me? Chaplain's Assistant, No Way!

This short conversation has lingered in my mind for more than 65 years. While serving as assistant adjutant for VMF-235 at Marine Corps Air Detachment, Naval Air Station Atsugi, Japan, in 1955, we had a young Marine with a light duty chit for an arm injury. When asked if he would like to serve as the chaplain's assistant, he answered, "No, Sir! All those tears would shrink my uniform all out of shape!"

LtCol Thomas L. Roberts  
USMCR (Ret)  
Carlsbad, Calif.

### Failed Inspection, Liberty Denied

Thursday was field day in the barracks for VMA-212 at Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, in the early 1960s. After work at the hangar everybody had to return to the barracks to clean. Liberty wasn't sounded until the officer of the day (OD) inspected and approved the field day. Thursday was also linen survey day when we turned in our old sheets and pillowcases.

One day we had a particularly irritating OD, a new lieutenant, who walked into each squad bay wearing white gloves. He raised one white-gloved index finger, swiped it as if testing the air, and declared the barracks filthy. "Do it over," he said and turned around and left the barracks telling the duty noncommissioned officer to call him when he thought it was clean enough and not to issue liberty cards until he approved the field day.

This had the unsurprising effect of pissing off the troops. One of the guys took it to the next level. He went outside and collected palm branches, cut some twigs

and vines from the foliage in the yard and wove them together making a green garland several yards in length. He then hung the garland over the wall lockers and racks in his cubicle just before the OD came back for another inspection. When the OD got to that Marine's cubicle, he just stood there, almost apoplectic, and stammering. Our hero just stood by his rack at ease. Luckily for us the lieutenant was accompanied by our maintenance officer, a mustang major, who appreciated the humor of the situation and got a great laugh out of it. He declared field day over and liberty commenced.

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

### Inspection Arms, Really?

Near the end of Officer Candidates School at Quantico, Va., in 1961, we were on an overnight field exercise using live blank ammo. It rained all night. It was cold, wet and muddy. By dawn, we were tired and told to secure the area and throw all live blank ammo into our foxholes and cover them up. Then we marched back to mainside.

Standing in formation before being dismissed, we were given the command, "Inspection Arms." With the old M1 Garand you threw the bolt open, checked to make sure there were no rounds present, threw the bolt forward and then pulled the trigger. All of a sudden, we heard a very loud bang! Then silence. Then very loud screaming and cussing. Then we heard a very loud "whomp" and a helmet came rolling across the deck in front of me. Some poor candidate had left a live blank round in his wet and



COURTESY OF LCPL JOSEPH P. "SNUFFY" JACKSON

**Observation Post Parrot located on the east side of 1st Marine Regiment's command post, 8 miles south of Hill 327 in the spring of 1969. Rocket towers were used to counter rockets launched at Da Nang airstrips.**

muddy M1 rifle. The good news is that he was at the end of a row and there was no one to his left to catch the muzzle blast.

I was very happy it wasn't me.

Dave Marlow  
USMCR, 1959-1964  
Royalton, Ill.

### Marine Ingenuity

The first night that my battalion was in Vietnam we were on Hill 554 overlooking Qui Nhon and the South China Sea. We were two men to a foxhole at night.

The men were very nervous and had fired at fireflies and bushes. In the foxhole next to mine, a corporal pulled the pin of a hand grenade, but when he started to throw it, he saw that his target was actually just a bush. Very carefully, he handed the grenade to his foxhole buddy, being careful not to release the spoon. He then took a second grenade, pulled the pin, split it, and put a piece in each grenade so the spoon would be held in place and not explode. The next day our platoon was told we wasted too many grenades on fireflies and to turn in our remaining grenades. When our squad leader saw the two grenades with small pins holding the spoon, he was furious.

Jerry Winingier  
Joplin, Mo.

### Cameraman Takes Some ZZZs

I served proudly in the Marine Corps back in the 1970s as a helicopter crew chief on a CH-46 with Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron (HMM) 161. Our squadron participated, along with four other branches of the service, in war maneuvers known as Brave Shield at Twentynine Palms, Calif.

One day a person in civilian clothing carrying all sorts of cameras and gear boarded the helicopter. He must have been a journalist but I didn't know which

publication he was from.

Not long after taking off, I noticed that the cameraman was sound asleep. Another crew chief, Sergeant Greenie, and I decided to add to the cameraman's photo gallery. We removed our name tags, and all identifying material, lowered our dark visors and slowly and carefully took his camera and took pictures of each other holding two fingers up behind his head. When done, we put his camera back where we found it. While trying to stifle our laughter, we sat back in our original positions and proceeded to our destination.

We would have loved to have been flies on the wall watching him develop those pictures of himself sleeping with the two of us in the background. The moral of the story is know when and where *not* to fall asleep.

Cpl Calvin C. "Rope" Carl  
USMC, 1976-1980  
Burdett, N.Y.

### Court-Martial Unwarranted

One Sunday morning aboard Naval Base Guam, my buddy Williams and I were standing the 4 a.m. to 8 a.m. watch on the main gate into the base. It was around 5 a.m. when I observed a rather large frog hopping toward my side of the gate. As he got closer, I hollered, "Halt!" He totally ignored my command and commenced to enter the naval base without authorization.

By now I was a salty PFC with nine months in the Corps. I drew my .45-caliber Colt 1911, aimed it at the frog and fired. It was a clean miss, but I did manage to hit the 55-gallon GI can on the other side of the road.

Around 6:30 a.m. a local civilian also tried to run the gate. I hollered for him to halt and drew my weapon. He stopped the car. I checked his ID, chewed him out properly and let him go.

Around 8:30 a.m., Williams and I were enjoying our Sunday breakfast in the mess hall when we were surrounded by several MPs and the officer of the day. It turned out the civilian who had run the gate had reported that I shot at him. He was a houseboy for a Navy commander who took great umbrage and called the first lieutenant.

Williams and I were arrested, and I was assigned a salty old warrant officer as my defense. When I confessed to discharging my weapon, I explained what I had really shot at, but the gunner didn't believe me. He agreed to take me out to the main gate to take a look at the scene.

The gunner had me hold my .45-cal. and he ran a string from the muzzle to the GI can and realized I

was telling the truth. The houseboy was busted, and I got chewed out by the skipper, given duty to pick up trash, taken off gate duty and put on jeep patrol. The gunner and skipper saw the humor and I got my orders to Korea.

Sgt C.C. Westlake, USMC  
(Ret)  
Bozeman, Mont.

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](mailto:p.everett@mca-marines.org). We offer \$25 or a one-year MCA membership for the "Sea Story of the Month." 🐸

## LIBERTY TALES — SEA STORIES SPECIAL EDITION

*Leatherneck* is looking for your interesting, funny, or crazy stories from when you were on liberty during your time in the Corps. What mischief did you get into? Did something you or your fellow Marines plan go awry? We would love to hear your story and possibly publish it in a future issue.

Stories should be 500 words or less. If you have a photo that enhances your story, please send that also. Do not send original photos as we are unable to ensure their safe return.

Send them to Patricia Everett, *Leatherneck Magazine*, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134, or email them to [p.everett@mca-marines.org](mailto:p.everett@mca-marines.org).

—*Leatherneck* Editor



From the Walter F. Krump Collection.

# Returning ARTHUR

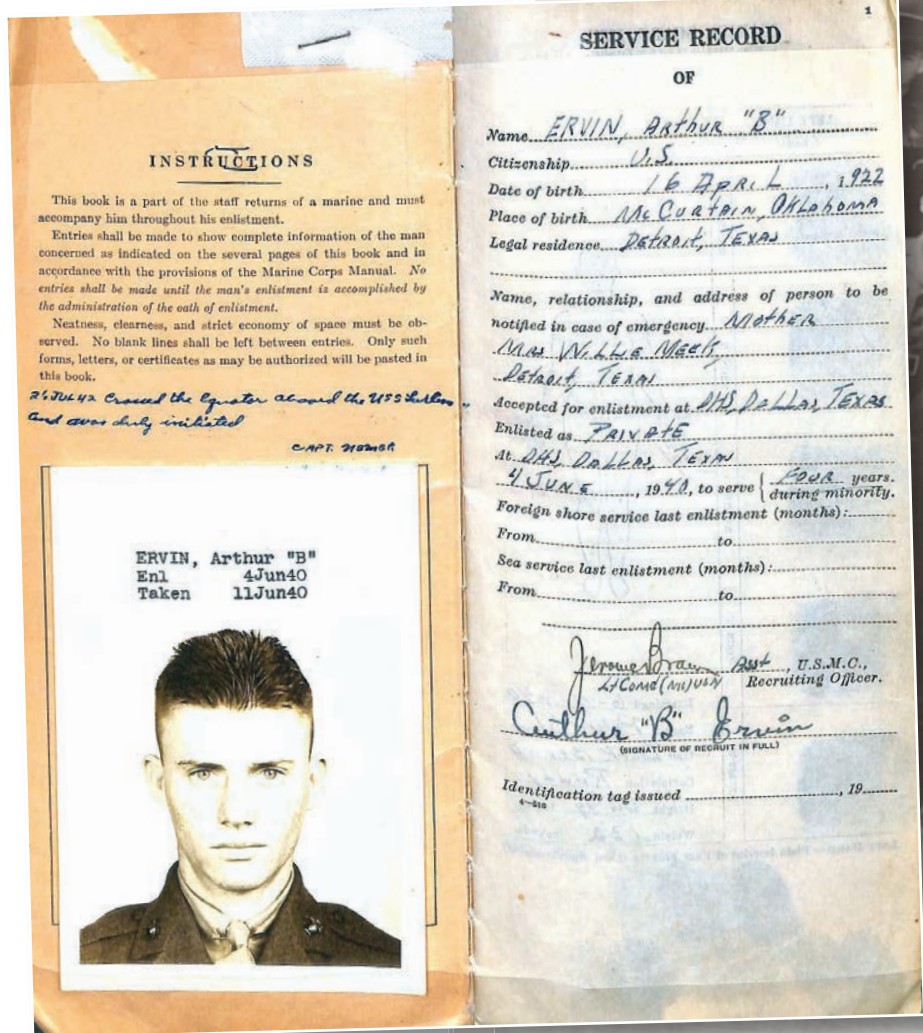
Arthur "B." Ervin left home at 18 to join the Marine Corps; his service carried him to Pearl Harbor, Pavuvu, Roi-Namur, and Saipan. Eighty-two years later, the remains of the Navy Cross recipient and former Raider are preparing for their final journey.

By Geoffrey W. Roecker

June 4, 1940, promised to be business as usual at the recruiting office in Dallas, Texas.

Among the hopeful recruits was an 18-year-old with a slight build, dark brown hair and piercing blue eyes. After a physical examination, the recruit's fingerprints were rolled in ink, and he swore the required oath and signed his name on the proper lines: Arthur "B." Ervin. He left that night for the two-day journey to Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego.

Arthur was born in McCurtain, Okla., on April 16, 1922, the third and youngest son of Arthur Bee Ervin and Willie Ray Moore. Arthur Senior worked as a miner for Progressive Coal; an explosion took his life when little Arthur was just seven months old. Willie moved her boys to Le Flore County, where she met and married a widowed farmer named William Meek. By 1932, the Meek-Ervin family was living in the small town of Detroit, Texas. Arthur



This service record book accompanied Arthur Ervin through his time in the Marine Corps. (Photo courtesy of National Archives)

attended school in Red River County; he was active in the Baptist Young People's Union, enjoyed hunting and baseball, and helped care for his two little half-siblings Jesse and Barbara Jean.

Young Arthur yearned for broader horizons. In 1934, he moved to Los Angeles with his older brother Harley. He paused his education in the summer of 1938 to work as a "district circulation manager" at the *Los Angeles Examiner*, managing a team of 40 newsboys to the tune of \$45 per week. This cosmopolitan life was short-lived: in the summer of 1939, he went home to Texas to help his twice-widowed mother with the children and later lived in Florida with his oldest brother, Harry, a Navy radioman. This

may have provided the impetus for Arthur to enlist.

Ervin earned the title of Marine at San Diego and reported for duty at the Naval Air Station, Pearl Harbor in October 1940. He arrived with a new buddy: Private James Henry Coupe of Falls City, Neb. Over the next year, "Jim and Art" became thick as thieves—both figuratively and literally. In November 1941, the pair stole a new model Plymouth Coupe, broke into Brown's Waikiki Milk Bar, and made off with \$75. Both Marines already had a few disciplinary remarks in their record books; now, charged with three significant crimes, they were thrown in the post brig to contemplate their fate.

The first Sunday of December began

Platoon 42 graduated from MCRD San Diego in July 1940. Among the new Marines was Arthur Ervin. (Photo courtesy of Kay Dyer Gay)



like any routine day. Ervin could likely hear the roar of patrol planes taking off and the footsteps of the guard relief, as he anticipated the National Anthem carried on the wind from a battleship's quarterdeck as the colors were hoisted. Then, at 7:57 a.m., new sounds—racing aircraft engines of a different timbre, explosions, gunfire, and shouts of alarm. Coupe and Ervin were released, issued pistols, and told to help where they could. In the aftermath of the surprise attack, they volunteered to help dig unexploded bombs out of the ground. That night, they surrendered their weapons and went back to their cells.

Military justice was not to be denied, even in a state of war, and a formal court-martial convened on Dec. 30, 1941. The charges were read off: "Unauthorized use of an automobile of another," "Burglary," and "Theft." Both Marines pleaded guilty and received a stiff sentence: a reduction to private and 24 months of confinement, followed by a dishonorable discharge. In



**"The roughest, toughest, oldest U.S. Navy prison," Building 84 housed "prisoners of an intractable disposition or convicted for long terms" for more than 50 years. When it closed in 1946, "Old 84" had a maximum capacity of 650 inmates.**

February 1942, Ervin and Coupe were sent to Mare Island to serve their time in the country's first purpose-built Navy prison.

The aging, overcrowded "Old 84" was regarded as one of the harshest places for a miscreant servicemember to serve his sentence. Prisoners worked hard labor, choked down terrible food, and did their time. For many, the shame of a Bad Conduct Discharge marked the end of their military service. However, in early 1942,

the Marine Corps was desperate for every able-bodied man it could get—especially those with combat experience. After two months, Ervin and Coupe were offered clemency: they would pay a fine, serve a year on probation, and make an official apology. "Ervin stated that since his country is at war, he wants nothing more than to do what he can to help," noted a court record, "that if it is at all possible, he would like to stay in the Marine Corps and after he has paid his penalty to join



**Left: Marine Raiders head ashore from USS Sands (APD-13) on Feb. 21, 1943. They landed without opposition on Pavuvu Island. Inset: Cpl Arthur Ervin in October 1943, shortly after joining Co A, 24th Marines.**

COURTESY OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES

**Many wondered if the cold,  
distant corporal would live up to  
his reputation under fire.  
As he sailed west for action for  
the third time in as many years,  
Arthur Ervin may have  
wondered the same.**



COURTESY OF GEOFFREY ROECKER

the fight with his brother Marines; that if he is allowed to do this, he promises never to get in any trouble again.”

After a few weeks of supervised duty, Ervin and Coupe joined the newly formed 22nd Marines. The “Double Deuce” was an odd mixture of men. Many senior NCOs once served in Iceland with the 6th Marines; other groups were drawn from the guard battalions or barracks detachments of western Navy yards and depots. “Boots” like Private Edwin C. Bearss of Sarpy, Montana, made up the rest. When orders came to break camp and be ready to move, Bearss noticed that “many of those Pearl Harbor Marines were so excited they found it difficult to sleep.”

They were not headed for combat yet, however. On Aug. 1, 1942, after a long voyage aboard the former luxury liner *Lurline*, the 22nd Marines arrived at Apia

Harbor, Samoa. The charm and beauty of the island quickly wore off under a rough training schedule that highlighted shortcomings in individual training—and what Bearss called “the quota of sadistic or incompetent officers and senior NCOs” in the regiment. Anxious to get out of “the backwash of war,” many in the Double Deuce leaped at a proffered chance to join a new Raider unit forming at Malifauna. Ervin, Coupe, and Bearss were among the volunteers accepted into Company C, 3rd Raider Battalion.

On Feb. 21, 1943, Private First Class Ervin slid over the side of a rubber boat as it bumped ashore. His gun crew stowed their oars, picked up their weapons and boxes of .30-caliber ammunition, and hustled into the coconut palms that grew almost to the shoreline. All around them were signs of recent Japanese occupation but not a single enemy soldier was seen.

By 12 p.m., the Marines were in possession of Pavuvu in the Russell Islands.

Occupying Pavuvu would prove more taxing to the Raiders. “Troop morale was at its lowest and ugliest,” commented a veteran, and while the men practiced combat patrolling, the real enemies were hunger, boredom, and mosquitos. Arthur Ervin was a good leader—on March 1 he made corporal and took over a machine gun squad—but also displayed a stubborn streak. He caught malaria on Pavuvu and sweated out six weeks of increasing fatigue, joint pain, and swollen glands before going to sick bay. Doctors diagnosed malaria, dengue, and “possible filariasis.” The first two ailments could be treated, but the latter had no cure; the only course of action was transfer to a cooler, drier climate where the disease would go dormant. The alternative was too terrible to contemplate—many Marines swore to seeing Samoan men afflicted with elephantiasis carrying their swollen genitals in wheeled carts.

Corporal Ervin’s Raider career was over. On May 21, 1943, he bade farewell to Jim Coupe. Ervin went back to the States; Coupe stayed with the Raiders. They would never see each other again. Sergeant Coupe was killed in action along Bougainville’s Piva Trail in November.

Ervin headed back to Red River County for a 30-day sick leave and returned to California a married man. How Arthur and Odena Gladys Good met is no longer known, but they were married on July 17, 1943, when he was 21 years old and she was just 17. Odena set up their home in Los Angeles while Arthur reported to the 4th Marine Division at Camp Joseph H. Pendleton.

Corporal Ervin joined Company A, 1st Battalion, 24th Marines in September 1943. He missed life in the Raiders and made no effort to hide his opinion. Enlisted men found him cold and aloof, even intimidating. “In all the time we were together, I never knew him to hardly smile, let alone laugh,” commented PFC George A. Smith. Officers disapproved of the corporal’s attitude towards taking orders. “Ervin was pretty much an individualist, and on first impression, not a top-notch NCO,” noted First Lieutenant Frederic A. Stott. For a time, Ervin was defined by his ailment—his platoon

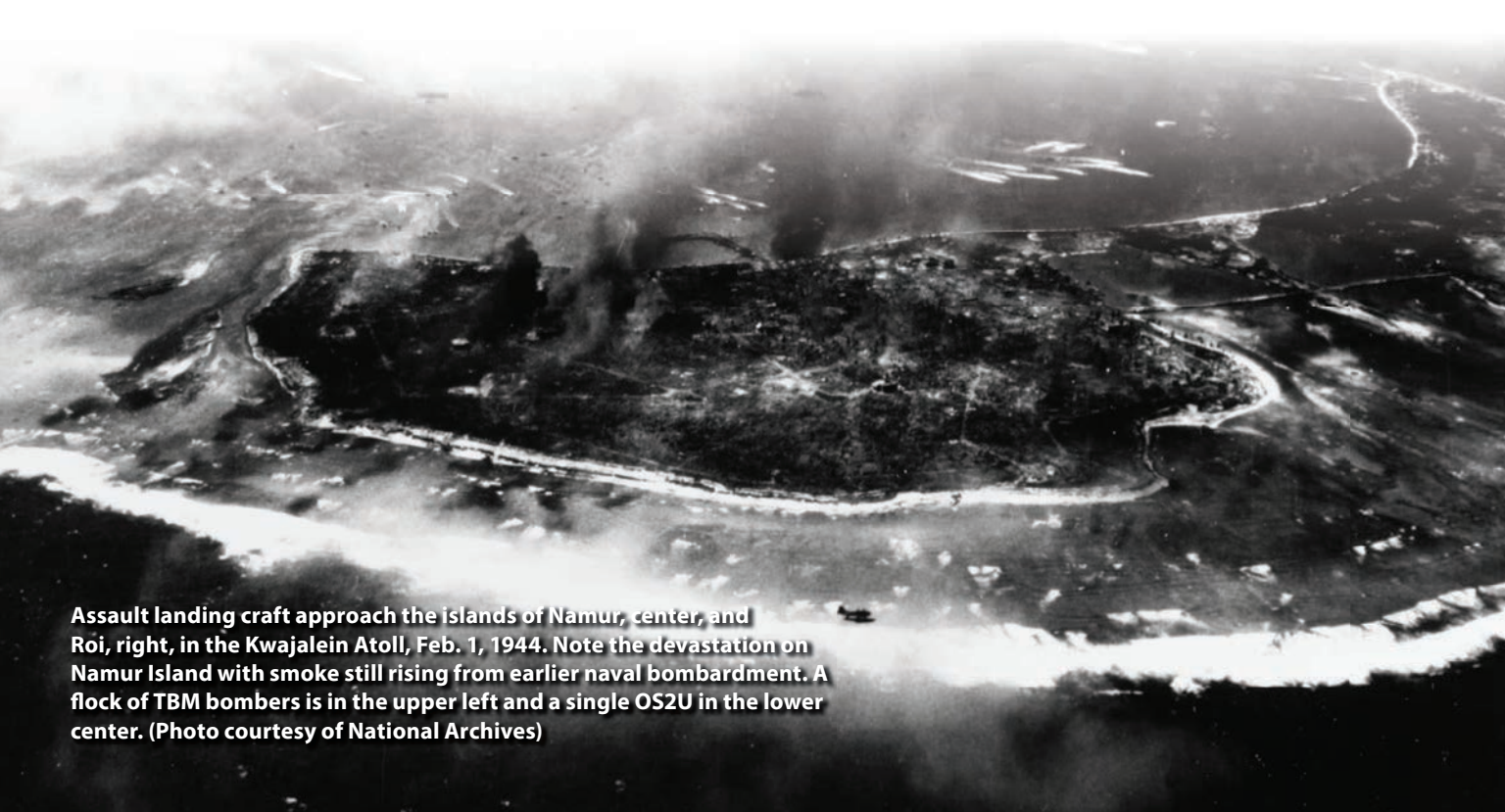
leader, 1stLt Philip E. Wood Jr., complained that “one of my squad leaders has an incurable Samoan disease”—and men joked about Corporal “MuMu” (the Samoan word for the ailment) when Ervin was safely out of earshot. He managed to make one friend, but after one liberty in Los Angeles, the other Marine had to be transferred from the platoon. Rumors swirled that Odena was somehow involved.

As the year ended, morale in Company A was high. “This is a crack outfit,” boasted Lieutenant Wood, “We’re good and will soon prove it.” Ervin sweated along with the rest—he was responsible for an entire machine gun, plus its five-man crew—and received generally high marks on his professional record. However, Ervin was still something of an unknown quantity to his comrades, both personally and professionally. When the company boarded USS *DuPage* (APA-41) on Jan. 11, 1944, and headed to sea, many wondered if the cold, distant corporal would live up to his reputation under fire. As he sailed west for action for the third time in as many years, Arthur Ervin may have wondered the same.

**Right: In New River, N.C., around December 1942: George Smith, center, with fellow Marines, John “JJ” Franey, left, and Howard “Howie” Haff, all of whom served with Arthur Ervin. The three Marines survived the war despite their wounds and were friends the rest of their lives. Looking through the door is Merle “Mother” Geesaman.**



COURTESY OF GEOFFREY ROECKER



**Assault landing craft approach the islands of Namur, center, and Roi, right, in the Kwajalein Atoll, Feb. 1, 1944. Note the devastation on Namur Island with smoke still rising from earlier naval bombardment. A flock of TBM bombers is in the upper left and a single OS2U in the lower center. (Photo courtesy of National Archives)**

**A machine gun team from the 24th Marines takes cover in a crater during the battle for Namur, Feb. 1, 1944.**

The first day of February 1944 found the twin islands of Roi and Namur ablaze, belching black smoke into the sky as American battleships, cruisers, and destroyers pasted every square foot above sea level. Aircraft roared overhead, dropping bombs or swooping low to strafe the shore. Lessons learned at last November's Betio bloodbath were being put into action. Still, the worry of "another Tarawa" was foremost in many minds.

Corporal Arthur Ervin collected his personal gear and weapon, bit off a chew of tobacco, and got his squad moving over the side of *DuPage*. As they bobbed and rocked in the surf, a few of the younger gunners began reciting lines from "Mutiny on the Bounty." A battleship loosed a broadside, nearly swamping the little Higgins boat and silencing the jokesters. They shivered in the cold spray and wondered if any enemies would be left when they got ashore.

A blockhouse exploded with an ear-shattering blast, and debris rained from the sky, wounding several men as "a dense cloud of dust, cordite, and body parts" enveloped the boat. Moments later the ramp went down, and Corporal Arthur Ervin stepped onto the sand of Namur. The island resembled "a super No Man's Land," but the unflappable corporal trotted off to the head of the column. "As long as he was in action, he stayed at least 50 yards ahead of anyone else in the company," noted Lieutenant



USMC

Wood. His inspiring bravado made him a conspicuous target. Suddenly, the ground at Ervin's feet shifted, and the muzzle of an Arisaka rifle appeared, aiming up at the corporal at point-blank range.

The .25-caliber bullet ripped upwards along Ervin's torso, leaving a long burn mark without breaking the skin. Seconds later, the ambusher was dead, and Ervin was scampering back down the road to his squad, looking pained. Solicitous Marines gathered around, asking where he was hit. In response, Ervin spat his tobacco to the ground. The gunshot had startled him into swallowing his chew; vomiting in front of his squad worried him more than the close call. The normally emotionless corporal treated his Marines to a rare smile before

heading off, the self-declared point man for Company A.

Ervin was in his element. He located a half-dozen Japanese troops in a dugout, pitched a few grenades, then organized a successful assault. Another blockhouse started spitting fire; Ervin led the way through a deserted trench system and then, annoyed by his more cautious comrades, hopped out to flank the fortification. A pistol shot knocked off his helmet and sprayed his face with bits of lead; Ervin "got mad for the first time" and took out another machine gun. He reached the blockhouse just as a bazooka round punched through the concrete; Ervin pitched grenades through the hole and disappeared inside, closely followed by



**The mortar section of A/1/24 at Camp Maui, April 1944. Ervin, the acting section sergeant, is squatting at far left. (Photo courtesy of Geoffrey Roecker)**

1st Lt Harry D. Reynolds Jr. Shots and cries echoed from within, but Ervin wasn't finished. "He hopped up on top of the blockhouse and stood there silhouetted against the sky," wrote Wood, "legs spread apart, hatless, with blood on his face and his coat flung open, firing his rifle from the hip."

A dugout full of Japanese troops had the temerity to shoot back. Ervin hopped off the blockhouse and charged their position but was felled by a through-and-through bullet wound in his chest. He tumbled into a shell hole while his buddies yelled for a corpsman. "He said he didn't want any help," continued Wood, "and hauled himself out with his [good] arm." Ervin "claimed he could still throw grenades" and wound up in a screaming argument with Lieutenants Wood and Reynolds, who had to order him off the field. Ervin steamed off under his own power but, dizzy with pain and adrenaline, was finally carried away on a stretcher.

Surgeons aboard USS *Solace* (AH-5) provided excellent care, and by the time Ervin arrived at Aiea Heights Naval Hospital, he complained only of "slight superficial tenderness" around his wounds. He received his Purple Heart while recuperating in Pearl Harbor and mailed the medal off to Odena before returning to his company on March 24, 1944. "Certainly glad to get back with the guys again," he commented. "I can do almost everything I did before. It never bothers me in the least."

The Marine Corps reorganized while Ervin was in the hospital; the mixed weapons platoon was no more, and Lieutenant Wood wanted "a hell of a good man" to help run the company's 60 mm mortars. Although a machine gunner by training, and still only a corporal, Ervin's reputation and experience soon had him "squaring the section away in fine shape." A powerful bond quickly developed between the lieutenant and the NCO. Ervin was "not given to affection," noted a comrade, "but the mutual admiration and respect which grew between the two was obvious, and they were a strongly attached pair who worked together as well as any and better than most." Indeed, it appears that the relationship transcended professionalism and became quite personal—even friendly.

On the surface, Wood and Ervin were polar opposites. Wood, an aspiring lawyer from a family of artists, was a gangly Ivy Leaguer who tended to wear his emotions on his sleeve—very much a civilian in uniform when compared to the Texan who "pissed ice water" (according to the mortarmen) and seemed to relish combat. However, a few conversations between the two would have revealed more subtle

The President of the United States takes pride in presenting the NAVY CROSS to CORPORAL ARTHUR B. ERVIN, UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS, for service as set forth in the following



**CITATION:**

"For extraordinary heroism while serving with Company A, First Battalion, Twenty-fourth Marines, Fourth Marine Division, in action against enemy Japanese forces during the Invasion of Namur Island, Kwajalein Atoll, on 1 February 1944. Advancing with his company around the eastern perimeter of the Island, Corporal Ervin skillfully located and led the attack upon each hostile strong point in this zone of action. Although wounded in a singlehanded assault upon an enemy heavy machine-gun nest, he returned to initiate a raid into an occupied blockhouse and, after climbing to a dangerously exposed position on its top, immediately poured rifle fire into a nearby Japanese trench fortification and exhorted his comrades to press home their attack. When painfully wounded for the second time, he gallantly refused to let anyone endanger himself by coming forward to help and, after pulling himself to safety and having his wounds dressed, retired only on the orders of his Commanding Officer. His determined fighting spirit and inspiring performance of duty throughout these bitter engagements reflect the highest credit upon Corporal Ervin and the United States Naval Service.

**"He hopped up on top of the blockhouse and stood there silhouetted against the sky, legs spread apart, hatless, with blood on his face and his coat flung open, firing his rifle from the hip."**

**—1stLt Philip E. Wood Jr.**

similarities. Wood and Ervin had individualistic and effective approaches to leadership, centering around disdain for petty discipline and military minutiae. Both men had lost their fathers (Wood's died in 1940), and both feared losing their loves. Wood's fiancée called off their wedding at the last minute, and Ervin was hearing rumors from home about Odena. He laid out his feelings in a letter to his older brother, Harley "Bud" Ervin:

*"I don't want Neg [his nickname for Odena] ever to feel obligated to me. I want to tell you how I feel about Neg. Bud, she is the only one for me, but thing are all the way [or] not at all, know what I*



COURTESY OF GEOFFREY ROECKER

**Ervin grins for a portrait intended for his family back home. His fellow Marines rarely saw him smile or laugh.**

*mean? I don't want to be an on something and hing go haywire."*

Bud was apparently already cautioning his younger brother, for Arthur also included the following information. "Bud, I did change my insurance if anyone gets it, Mom will get it all, I didn't change it because of what you said in your letter, I had already for a coup e reasons of my own. I know that neither you or Kay would and ever did ie to me."

The news was not all gloomy. "I was awarded the 'Navy Cross' by Admiral Nimitz last Wednesday," Ervin continued. "I am damn proud of it and sending it home to Mother." The formal presentation

at Camp Maui honored 62 4th Marine Division men who distinguished themselves at Roi-Namur. Ervin stood at rigid attention as Nimitz pinned on the blue and white ribbon and offered a handshake. The “tough little hard-boiled corporal told me afterward that he almost burst into tears,” said Wood. The celebration that followed was one to remember—or not, as Wood confided, “it was a pretty drunken night.” Ervin pinned on sergeant the next day.

Not two weeks after the award ceremony, the 4th Marine Division left their tent city at Camp Maui and boarded trucks for a short drive to the Kahului docks and the questionable comfort of troop compartments aboard USS *Calvert* (APA-32). Amphibious landing practice, including division-sized landings, and rehearsals for a multitude of plans consumed much of the month of May. For several days *Calvert* docked at Pearl Harbor, and the men were allowed ashore for supervised recreation within the limits of the Navy Yard. It may have felt like something of a homecoming for Ervin—especially when sirens started blaring and smoke rose into the sky above West Loch. A loading accident, not enemy action, caused the conflagration that destroyed several landing ships and killed hundreds of men, but the event was a heavy reminder of the dangers soon to come.

*Calvert* departed Hawaii in convoy on May 29, 1944. Once at sea, the objective was announced: the 4th Marine Division would be invading Saipan. Operation orders were issued, inspected, and digested. Bored Marines engrossed themselves in card games, books, or Monopoly. Some wrote letters home; these were deposited for mailing at Eniwetok. Whether Ervin had much to say on this voyage isn’t known, nor are his thoughts and feelings about returning to the battlefield.

In fact, only a few details about the final three weeks of Arthur Ervin’s life are known for sure. On June 15, 1944, after participating in a diversionary landing off Saipan’s northern coast, he came ashore and marched with his company through the ruins of Charan Kanoa. The mortar section was kept busy firing missions ahead of assaults and responding to Japanese attacks. Ever aggressive, Ervin volunteered to lead a combat patrol against a bypassed Japanese unit on June 20, 1944, and with “outstanding leadership, excellent judgement, and complete disregard for his own personal safety” demolished a “strong pocket of enemy resistance”

**The shooter knew more Americans would come to the rescue, exposing themselves in attempts to save their leader—and he was right. Arthur Ervin jumped up ... yelling, “Don’t worry, Phil! I’m coming for you!”**



**Treasured family heirlooms: Arthur Ervin’s Navy Cross, Bronze Star, Purple Heart and Raider patch.**

without suffering a single casualty. His officers took note, and Lieutenant Wood began mentally drafting another citation for the plucky sergeant.

The orders for July 5, 1944—D-plus-20—were familiar. “Company A was preparing to move forward again by annihilating the enemy,” wrote the skipper, Captain Irving Schechter. “Phil

[Wood] was firing his mortars in preparation.” Spotters called out general targets in the area of advance: a steeply sloping hill dotted with small buildings, caves, and ravines. The attack was scheduled to start promptly at 1 p.m., and all was proceeding as planned.

Suddenly a small group of civilians appeared, struggling towards the Marine lines. The mortars stopped firing, and within moments Wood and Ervin hurried up to Schechter. “As always,” reported the captain, “Phil and Sgt Ervin asked if they could take a patrol forward and help the natives back of our lines.” They soon returned with a collection of wounded Chamorro women and children. They had been hiding in a nearby cave; many more were still trapped, including most of the men. Enemy fighters were there too, they warned, “more than 1,000 Japanese soldiers and Marines ahead. Many without rifles, no big guns.”

Lieutenant Wood and Sergeant Ervin faced a crucial decision. Estimates of Japanese strength, though surely inflated, clearly indicated a waiting trap. On the other hand, a bombardment and assault by Marines would take a heavy toll on the helpless civilians. They had mere minutes to make up their minds: the attack needed to progress on a timetable, and King Hour was fast approaching.

The deliberations are lost, but the outcome is known. “Phil returned to the caves with his patrol,” continued Schechter. “When he was about 30 yards away, he was hit.” A Japanese bullet struck the lieutenant’s hip and exited through the abdomen. The shooter knew more Americans would come to the rescue, exposing themselves in attempts to save their leader—and he was right. Arthur Ervin jumped up, “running like a lost calf after its mother,” according to one man, yelling “Don’t worry, Phil! I’m coming for you!” according to another—and took off for his friend, with a corpsman right behind him. The Japanese gun barked again; the corpsman was shot through the shoulder, and Arthur Ervin took a bullet in his brain. He was likely dead before he hit the ground.

Mayhem erupted in the ravine as the survivors fired blindly into the trees; “a dozen men were riddled” before a rescue platoon broke the ambush. When the battle ended, a few men ventured forward to inspect the nearby cave. Nearly 60 Chamorro, Okinawan, and Japanese civilians were escorted to safety—spared from almost certain death by the actions

COURTESY OF DIANE THOMPSON



SSGT MAURICE GARBER, USMC

**Civilians approach 4thMarDiv lines on Saipan as smoke from a mortar barrage looms in the background. Their arrival is believed to be the event that sparked Wood and Ervin's final patrol.**

of the patrol. Ervin, Wood, and four other Marines gave their lives.

As the designated next of kin, Odena received Arthur's final payouts from the Marine Corps. She signed for a package of his belongings—a protractor, a ring, letters and snapshots, Japanese wallets, a religious book, a single penny. She received another package in the mail in 1945: Arthur's dog tags, a bundle of letters, and other personal items. A well-meaning Seabee stationed on Saipan found the cache wrapped in a Japanese battle flag and stuffed into an empty ammunition box. He found Odena's name, determined her relationship, and mailed the mementos back to California. The *Los Angeles Times* took enough notice to send a photographer and write a small column about the discovery.

Odena's late husband's life insurance meant a \$10,000 payout—just what a young woman working at the Goodyear plant needed. However, instead of a check, Odena received a legal notice: her mother-in-law, Willie Meek, was claiming the money. Odena had the official paperwork, but Willie had the letter from Arthur stating his intent to change beneficiaries. Neither woman was about to back down, and the case went to court. An emotionally charged debate ensued, and in April of

1946, a jury declared that Willie Meek was the lawful beneficiary. Acrimony between the families deepened until the Fifth Circuit Court heard *Gann v. Meek* and upheld Willie's right to the insurance.

The court battle overshadowed another, far more tragic question: what became of Arthur Ervin's body. In June of 1946, Odena and Willie received notices that “despite all efforts [by the Marine Graves Registration Service], the remains of the late Sergeant Arthur B. Ervin have not yet been identified.” Little other information was available to the family or, indeed, to military authorities, who declared Ervin “permanently non-recoverable” in 1949.

The truth of the matter was far more complicated.

On July 6, 1944, the busy Graves Registration troops at the 4th Marine Division Cemetery buried approximately two dozen men. Information was taken from each man; reports from their organizations were read, identification tags checked, and fingerprints taken if possible. A few of the bodies still had personal belongings; these were cataloged and sorted for shipment home to the next of kin. It was an efficient process—one repeated more than 800 times in three weeks at this one cemetery—and it was rare for a man to be buried as unidentified.

There was one such case on July 6. The body intended for Grave 829 had no ready means of identification—no tags, no personal effects, no legible name on clothing. He was buried with Technical Sergeant Arnold R. Richardson on one side and 1stLt Philip E. Wood Jr. on the other. Farther down the row were PFC Davis V. Kruse, PFC Lawrence E. Knight, and PFC Frank R. Hester. These identified men belonged to A/1/24, and all were victims of a fatal patrol the previous day.

The unknown man lay undisturbed until March 1948 when diggers from the 9105th Technical Services Unit arrived at his grave. Specialists of the 604th Graves Registration Company carefully removed his bones from the decaying poncho, noted a bullet hole in the skull, and checked for identification tags or a report of interment. Neither were found, and the unknown man became “X-64” of the 4th Marine Division Cemetery, Saipan. His remains were shipped to a military mausoleum in Manila and lay in storage for another two years.

A board of officers convened on Feb. 13, 1950, to determine the final disposition of unidentifiable remains held in Manila. “The records pertaining to Unknown X-64 have been reviewed,” they wrote, “and it is the opinion of this office that insufficient evidence is available to estab-

NAVMED H-4  
DENTAL RECORD  
(To be filled in by the dental officer)

DO NOT REMOVE FROM HEALTH RECORD

ERVIN — 285039  
ARTHUR — "B"  
Date: Place OKLA Date: 4-16-22

INSTRUCTIONS  
See Chapter 14, Section VI, Paragraphs 2811-2819, inclu-  
sive, Manual of the Medical Department, U. S. Navy.

RECORD OF FIRST DENTAL EXAMINATION

HEIGHT — 5' 7 1/2"  
WEIGHT — 134  
HAIR — BLACK  
RACE — WHITE  
FRACTURE — NONE

RECORD OF SUBSEQUENT DENTAL OPERATIONS

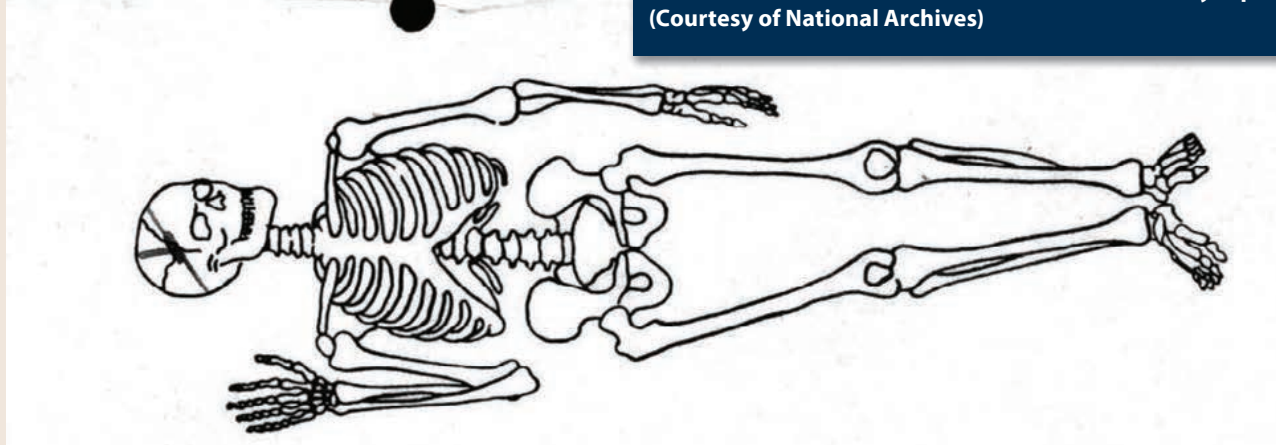
19. BLACK OUT PARTS OF BODY NOT RECOVERED

Handwritten notes: "X-64", "Saipan, 4-16-22", "4-16-22", "OD Campbell Entelaw"

PLOT OR SECTION		4	3
MOMME, F.W. 464665 USMCR 444	RICHARDSON, A.R. 26433B USMC 827	RICHARDS, T.H. 501361 USMCR 7	
DUGGAN, J.P. 504532 USMC	X-64	FREY, W.E. HAD 719 USMCR	
SIKES, D.M. 471071 USMCR	WOOD, JR. P.E. 014216 USMCR	FROST, R.C. 432148 USMCR	
VLSON, W.J. 839671 USMCR	KRUSE, D.N. 485603 USMCR	DAVIES, W.D. 298344 USMCR	
YELDS, E.R. 480246 USMC 225	KNIGHT, L.E. 815009 USMC 225	PLEMENT, G. 458568 USMCR 201	
KSTROM, W.A. 718169 USMCR	ST. JOHN, E.V. 503533 USMCR	BLACK, J.F. 399943 USMC	
DWELL, C.W. 531850 USMCR	KALINOWSKI, M.S. 436622 USMCR	LEWIS, T.Q. 261496 USMC	

The NAVMED H-4 dental chart, above left, from Ervin's service record shows distinct similarities to the postmortem dental chart of X-64. Attempts to identify X-64 after the war included completing this skeletal chart, below, which shows evidence of a head wound. Details of a post-war diagram of the 4th Marine Division Cemetery on Saipan, above right, place X-64 in the middle of other A/1/24 casualties of the July 5 patrol. (Courtesy of National Archives)

19. BLACK OUT PARTS OF BODY NOT RECOVERED



lish the identity of this decedent, and that these remains should be classed as unidentifiable." The following month, X-64 was committed to his final resting place, "a comrade in arms known but to God." Six decades later, this author set out to learn more about his Marine ancestor, Philip Wood, and the mysterious sergeant who died beside him. With the assistance of Ervin's former comrade, George Smith, and Ted Darcy's WFI Research Group, X-64 was tentatively associated with the remains of Arthur Ervin in 2011. Seven years later, X-64 was exhumed from the Manila American Cemetery; three more passed before a suitable DNA match could be found through the family of his half-sister Barbara Jean Dyer, and in June of

2022, Marine Corps Casualty Resource Officers informed the Ervin family that his remains were positively identified as X-64. Sadly, neither Barbara nor George lived to see the outcome they so dearly desired. One mystery remains unsolved: how did Arthur Ervin's belongings—including his dog tags, letters, and other personal items that would have confirmed his identity—wind up stuffed in a box and dumped in a field on Saipan? The decision destroyed his identity and wounded his family for decades. The final chapter of Arthur Ervin's long saga is coming to an end. He will be buried, at long last, in accordance with the wishes of his next of kin.

Author's bio: Geoffrey W. Roecker is a researcher and writer based in upstate New York. His extensive writing on the WW II history of 1st Battalion, 24th Marines, is available online at [www.1-24thmarines.com](http://www.1-24thmarines.com). Roecker is the author of "Leaving Mac Behind: The Lost Marines of Guadalcanal" and advocates for the return of missing personnel at [www.missingmarines.com](http://www.missingmarines.com).  
Editor's note: To read more about Geoffrey Roecker and his quest to ensure the identification of Arthur Ervin's remains, read "History Detective: Volunteer Researcher Works to Unearth the Stories of Missing World War II Marines" in the April issue of Leatherneck.

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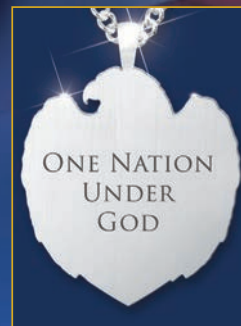
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## USNS *John L. Canley* Christened in San Diego

Expeditionary sea base USNS *John L. Canley* (ESB-6), Military Sealift Command (MSC)'s newest ship, was christened during a ceremony at the General Dynamics NASSCO shipyard in San Diego, Calif., June 26, just one month after the retired Marine sergeant major and Vietnam War Medal of Honor recipient died from complications due to a long-fought battle with cancer.

The event was attended by guests including the Honorable Meredith Berger, Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Energy, Installations and Environment); Lieutenant General Michael Langley, USMC, Commander, U.S. Marine Forces Command; Vice Admiral Ross Myers, Commander, U.S. Fleet Cyber Command/10th Fleet; Sergeant Major David Wilson, 1st Marine Division Sergeant Major; Thomas Kiss, Director, Ship Management, Military Sealift Command; Captain Austin Hanbury, *Canley's* civil service master; Jason Briggs, *Canley's* chief engineer;

the ship's crew; Sailors from the ship's pre-commissioning unit, and five Medal of Honor recipients.

The 784-foot ship honors Canley who, as a gunnery sergeant during the Vietnam War, originally was awarded the Navy Cross for his heroic actions during the Battle of Hue City while serving with Company A, 1st Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment in 1968. Fifty years after the battle, Canley's award was upgraded to the Medal of Honor, making him the first living Black Marine to receive the nation's highest military decoration for valor.

"If we operate this great ship with a fraction of the skill, tenacity and courage displayed by John Canley, our naval service will be well-positioned to meet the challenges that lie ahead," said Kiss during remarks at the ceremony.

The official christening took place when the ship's sponsor, Canley's daughter Patricia Sargeant, broke a bottle of champagne over the ship's bow.

"What we christen today is not just a ship," said Dave Carver, president of

General Dynamics NASSCO. "It is the embodiment of American unity and purpose—a beacon of freedom that will carry John Canley's legacy and the legacy of America to people all over the world."

*Canley* is the sixth ship in the expeditionary mobile base platform build for MSC and the third expeditionary staging base model. When activated, *Canley* will primarily support aviation mine countermeasure and special operations force missions. In addition to the flight deck, the ship has a hangar with two aviation operating spots capable of handling MH-53E Sea Dragon-equivalent helicopters; accommodations, workspaces as well as ordnance storage for embarked forces; enhanced command, control, communications, computers and intelligence to support embarked force mission planning and execution; and reconfigurable mission deck area to store embarked force equipment to include mine sleds and rigid hull inflatable boats.

"Navy forces are more important than ever in building global security, projecting



USNS *John L. Canley* (ESB-6), Military Sealift Command's newest ship, was christened during a ceremony at the General Dynamics NASSCO shipyard in San Diego, Calif., June 25.



SARAH BURFORD

**Patricia Sargeant, ship sponsor and daughter of SgtMaj Canley, breaks the ceremonial bottle of champagne during a christening ceremony for USNS John L. Canley (ESB-6) in San Diego, Calif., June 25.**

power, deterring foes and rapidly responding to crises that affect our national security. To do that we have to be forward, engaged and ready,” said Kiss. “This expeditionary sea base will do all those things and much more, providing our leadership with options and maneuver space and supporting the Joint Force through a unique combination of aviation support, equipment staging, command and control, and most importantly, a well-trained crew.”

*Canley* will be delivered to the MSC fleet later this year, where it will undergo testing and qualifications in preparation for its support of a variety of maritime-based missions, including Special Operations Forces and Airborne Mine Counter Measures support operations, humanitarian aid and traditional military missions.

Sarah Burford

### Marine Receives Award, Promotion For Aiding Stabbing Victim

During a ceremony held at Marine Barracks Washington, D.C., June 2, Lance Corporal Jacob A. Hudspeth was recognized for the lifesaving actions he performed while assisting the victim of a violent stabbing in the vicinity of the barracks on May 18.

Colonel Robert Sucher, the commanding officer of Marine Barracks Washington, presented Hudspeth with the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal and meritoriously promoted him to the rank of corporal for swiftly organizing a response force, rendering aid and coordinating a handoff with emergency services, which helped save the victim’s life.

“Corporal Hudspeth’s actions are commendable,” said Sucher. “His ability to maintain situational awareness, react at a moment’s notice and respond to a crisis is indicative of quality training and representative of proficient Marines around the world.”

On the evening of May 18, Hudspeth was on duty as sergeant of the guard when he received a radio transmission from a fellow Marine standing watch at an adjacent post. Watch standers at Marine

Barracks Washington had reported an injured pedestrian on the corner of L Street SE and 7th Street.

“After we heard the report, we made our way to the victim and saw the individual covered in blood,” said Hudspeth. “We brought the victim inside our post and identified five lacerations where they had been stabbed. We used our combat lifesaving gear to pack the wounds with gauze and wrap them up with bandages.”

The Marines applied pressure to slow the rate of bleeding until emergency services arrived. According to D.C. first responders, the Marines’ rapid response contributed to saving the victim’s life.

“Community safety and assisting those in need is the entire community’s responsibility,” said John A. Donnelly, Sr., District of Columbia Fire and Emergency Medical Services Chief. “This unfortunate incident highlights the value of trained citizens, in this case, the United States Marines, helping someone in need before the arrival of 911 first responders. D.C. Fire and EMS is proud to work with the United States Marines. Our partnership over the years has saved lives and made the community safer.”

“It’s a good feeling knowing we helped save a life,” said Hudspeth. “I was very impressed with my Marines’ performance. We feel that our job is very important and take training seriously and it paid off. They were able to do the right thing under pressure.”

1stLt Kayla Olsen, USMC



GYSGT DONELL BRYANT, USMC

**LCpl Jacob A. Hudspeth, a sergeant of the guard with Guard Co, Marine Barracks Washington, D.C., was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal and meritoriously promoted to corporal, June 2, for his actions in assisting the victim of a violent stabbing near the barracks in May.**

## “Not Your Typical Hauling Trailer”: JLTV-T is Designed for Use in Austere Settings

One of the Marine Corps’ latest Force Design 2030-driven changes comes in the form of a trailer and brings to mind the wise words of World War II U.S. Army General Omar Bradley: “Amateurs talk strategy, professionals discuss logistics.”

Marine Corps Systems Command has begun fielding Joint Light Tactical Vehicle-Trailer (JLTV-T) in support of Force Design’s light fleet modernization efforts.

The JLTV-T is a multipurpose platform configured to support general purpose cargo and tactical generation mobility missions. The trailer is built to operate with the Closed Combat Weapons Carrier, the General Purpose, Heavy Guns Carrier and Utility JLTV variants over the same mission profile of those vehicles. The JLTV-T’s independent suspension system enables it to carry more weight and offers improved off-road mobility over the existing fleet of legacy light tactical trailers. In addition, MCSC’s JLTV team

**The new JLTV-T boasts features such as a step assist in the rear, air brakes, removable side rails, a 12-volt electrical hook in the front and a storage compartment. The trailer propels the light tactical fleet toward the fulfillment of Force Design 2030, and units across the Corps are expected to receive initial shipments of the trailer by the end of this year. (Photos by 1stLt Isaac Lamberth, USMC)**

made adjustments to the trailer using feedback they received from the Fleet.

“The new trailer provides significantly increased payload,” said Major Elena Vallely, team lead for JLTV Systems, which is part of the Logistics Combat Element Systems portfolio at MCSC. “There will be improved trafficability, improved durability, and improved payload that provides an increased capability in line with light fleet modernization of the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle fleet.”

Not your typical hauling trailer, the JLTV-T comes with features allowing Marines greater flexibility to transport equipment with ease across long distances and difficult terrain. Conditions which need to be considered in vast austere settings such as Littoral Operations in Contested Environments (LOCE) and other concepts outlined in the Commandant’s Planning Guidance and Force Design 2030 initiatives.

In the Commandant’s 2019 Planning Guidance, General David H. Berger laid

out plans for the Marine Corps to experiment with changes in organizational structure and tactics, techniques and procedures in order to combat peer adversaries in distributed maritime terrain. The document details the Corps’ use of Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations (EABO) and concepts like LOCE to support the Joint Force. EABO would use small teams of Marines to deploy on islands—often within an enemy’s weapons engagement zone—allowing for both area sensor awareness and fires capabilities. Logistical upgrades and enhancements like the JLTV trailer will allow Marines to carry out EABO with greater ease and mobility.

Vallely said all future trucks and trailers will arrive from the factory painted green instead of the tan that has been used for the past two decades.

“The new trucks and the new trailers we’ll be procuring and fielding will be green,” she said. “Over the course of the next year we’ll be seeing a transition of the





**BLAST FROM THE PAST**—Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron test the chemical composition of a Remington Rolling Block pistol cartridge at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C., May 10. The late 19th-century pistol was recovered from the wreckage of USS *Huron* off the coast of North Carolina, and the EOD Marines were called in to work in collaboration with the Naval History and Heritage Command’s Underwater Archaeology Branch to remove the round from the pistol and render the cartridge inert so that the pistol could be displayed safely. After removing the cartridge, technicians X-rayed the round then tested the contents inside to determine chemical composition. Afterwards, the propellant inside was removed, making the artifact safe for handling.



LCPL JACOB BERTRAM, USMC

vehicle fleet to a green truck with green trailer configuration.”

The return to a green paint scheme helps shift the vehicle fleet from desert warfare to the more tropical environments where EABO concepts and tactics will most likely be employed.

The JLTV-T’s bed provides users with 147 cubic feet of storage space, said JLTV production lead Christopher Lewis. The front of the trailer has a built-in storage compartment to store braces and removable side rails. The trailer also features a step assist built onto the back, increasing accessibility and enabling Marines of differing heights to climb into the back with ease.

Lewis said the new trailer also features wedge-activated drum air brakes with an anti-locking braking system, along with a hand crank in the forward area to raise and lower the trailer in order to connect

to the truck’s towing hitch. The trailer will also have a single axle system with a weight rating of just over 9,000 pounds.

Maintainability and sustainability are critical factors in EABO. The trailer uses the same type of tires as JLTVs, making it easier for Marines to source and replace trailer tires when needed. This built-in sustainability feature leverages the organic supply system used across the JLTV family of vehicle operations. Additionally, the forward area of the trailer is outfitted with a 12-volt electrical connection point, making the trailer compatible with NATO allies in future operations.

MCSC’s JLTV program team will conduct total package fielding activities and provide limited technical inspections to units receiving the new trailer. When fielding the trailer, the team will also ensure Marines have the onsite support

of field service representatives from the trailer’s manufacturer. In addition, the program team will provide Marines with new equipment training to instructors and key personnel prior to and during fielding of the trailer.

Lewis added, “Fielding priorities continue to mature between Combat Development & Integration along with other stakeholders. We will consider the fielding timelines of the JLTV vehicle when fielding the trailer in order to ensure proper employment of the trailer capability both with the JLTV vehicle and other integrated programs in the fleet.”

According to Valley, the Marine Corps currently plans to procure and field up to 4,000 trailers. Fielding began this summer to active-duty Marine infantry divisions and Marine Expeditionary Units.

1stLt Isaac Lamberth, USMC



## Winston-Salem, N.C.



COURTESY OF WARREN BOYER

### Annual Mud Run Raises Funds for Military-Connected Charities

In 2010, a member of Marine Corps League Detachment 1075, Winston-Salem, N.C., hatched an idea to host an annual "mud run" to raise funds for veteran service organizations and other military-connected charities. Through hard work and coordination, the dream came to life, and this year the detachment held its 12th annual Percy John Fulton Marine Corps League Mud Run at the Jomeokee Park and Campground in Pinnacle, N.C. The 5K course consisted of more than 15 obstacles that included four mud pits, an ice hole pit, a "Ho Chi Minh Trail," "Mount Suribachi" rope climb and walk of shame, a slip and slide, a meat grinder, wooden walls and "A" frames, logs and tires, a cargo net climb and a grenade throw. During the six-hour event, 734 runners and courtesy registrants between the ages of 5 and 79, hailing from across the U.S., navigated the obstacles and got "dirty" for a good cause.

Thanks to the efforts of a large staff of volunteers, pictured above in the orange shirts and hats, funds generated from the Mud Run are used to support Wounded Warrior Battalion-East, Semper Fi & America's Fund, Toys for Tots, Veterans Helping Veterans Heal, Young Marines youth program, N.C. State Veterans Home in Salisbury, N.C., Wreaths Across America, the Hero Center and more. For more information about the annual mud run, visit <http://www.usmcmudrun.com>.

Submitted by Warren Boyer



COURTESY OF WARREN BOYER

## Fredericksburg, Va.

### Surrounded by Marine "Family," WW II Marine Celebrates 100th Birthday

The Jack Maas Detachment 1379, Marine Corps League, Fredericksburg, Va., celebrated the 100th birthday of detachment member Master Sergeant Ralph Wilcox, USMC (Ret), during a surprise party at his home, June 2. Also included were members of the Lance Corporal Caleb John Powers Young Marines unit, which is located in Fredericksburg.

Wilcox, pictured third from the left in a USMC sweatshirt, enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1939 and completed boot camp at Parris Island, S.C. He arrived via ship in New Caledonia in the South Pacific in 1942 with the newly activated 1st Marine Aviation Engineer Battalion, which subsequently moved to Guadalcanal. He also saw action at Peleliu and Okinawa during World War II and retired after 20 years of service. His fellow league members



COURTESY OF COL BILL ANDERSON, USMC (RET)

were proud to wish him a happy 100th birthday and give him an enthusiastic "Semper Fi!"

Submitted by Col Bill Anderson, USMC (Ret)

## Titusville, Fla.

### League Associate Member, Nonprofit Founder Receives Donation From Local Veterans

Veterans in the Brevard County, Fla., community gathered in Titusville, Fla., April 19, as retired Navy Lieutenant Commander Dean Schaff, Brevard Veterans Memorial President, pictured second from right, and retired Army Captain Donn Weaver, right, presented a check for \$1,000 to Jerry Vaughan, CEO and Founder of The Dover Detail, a nonprofit organization whose singular mission is to provide a complete and accurate uniform for any deceased member of the Armed Forces. The funds were provided by the Military Officers Association of America Cape Canaveral, Fla., chapter's Good Deeds Foundation, which provides monetary support to youth, active-duty military and veteran programs in the local area.

Vaughan, an associate member of the Marine Corps League Brevard County Detachment 513, was accompanied by members of the detachment for the presentation, including detachment commandant Dennis Herring, pictured on the left, and past commandant Vinnie Howard, third from right.

For more information about The Dover Detail, visit <https://thedoverdetail.org>.

Submitted by Vinnie Howard



COURTESY OF VINNIE HOWARD

## Washington, D.C.

### Marine Veteran, U.S. Congressman Awarded for Veteran Advocacy

For his leadership to ensure that those impacted by toxic exposure during their military service receive the health care and benefits they have earned, Congressman Mike Bost, veteran Marine and ranking member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, was awarded the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) Honor Guard Congressional Award at the organization's Honor Guard Gala Luncheon, held at the Army and Navy Club in Washington, D.C., April 27. Pictured from the left, Candace Wheeler, TAPS Director of Policy; Bonnie Carroll, TAPS President and Founder; Bost; and Ashlynn Haycock-Lohmann, TAPS Deputy Director of Policy, joined together to celebrate Bost's contributions to the veteran and military communities. According to TAPS, Bost also has worked to ensure that veterans, families, caregivers and survivors using GI Bill benefits during the COVID-19 pandemic were not penalized as a result of their school's transition to online learning.

"I am truly humbled to receive the TAPS Honor Guard Congressional Award," said Rep. Bost. "Supporting the men, women and children who lost loved ones as a result of their service to our country is a sacred duty, and TAPS sets the gold standard. I am honored by this recognition and will never stop working on behalf

of servicemembers, veterans and the families and survivors that serve and sacrifice alongside them."

Also recognized by TAPS was Congressman Mark Takano, chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, who introduced the Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act and has been a leading voice for the families of those who died as a result of illnesses connected to toxic exposure.

"We are fortunate to have such strong advocates and leaders in the House of Representatives who are committed to ensuring we do right by those whose life has included selfless service to our nation, and if they die, their families are taken care of regardless of location or manner of death," said Bonnie Carroll, TAPS president and founder.

Bost, a Republican who represents Illinois' 12th congressional district, was among those veteran Marines featured in "From the Corps to Capitol Hill: Marine Veterans of the 117th U.S. Congress Continue Service to Country," published in the July 2021 issue of *Leatherneck*.

For more information on the PACT Act and the Camp Lejeune toxic water contamination, see the June 2022 issue of *Leatherneck*.

Submitted by TAPS



COURTESY OF TAPS

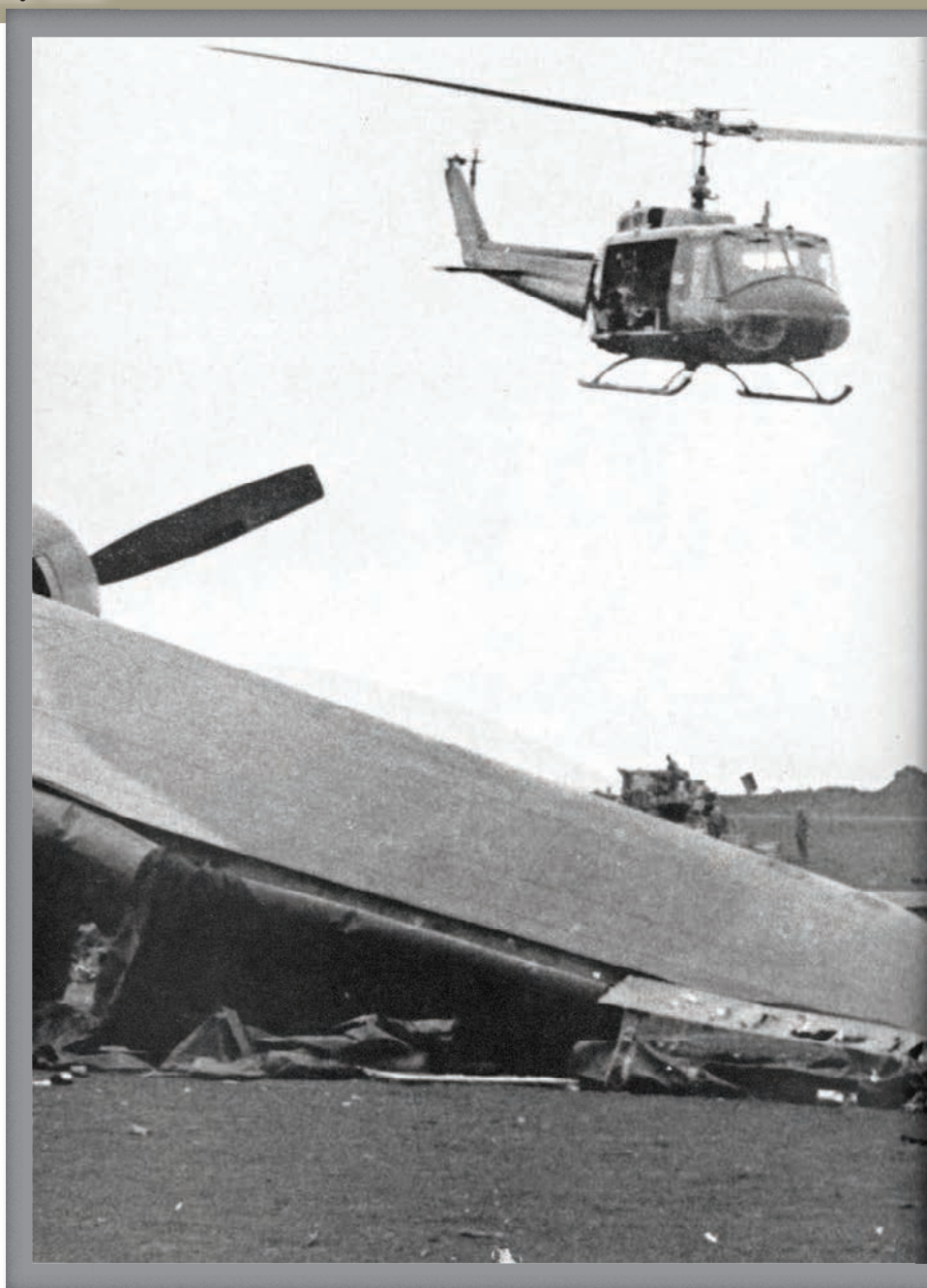
**"Corps Connections" highlights the places and events through which active-duty and veteran Marines connect with one another, honor the traditions of the Corps and recognize the achievements of their fellow leathernecks. We welcome submissions of photos from events like the ones featured here. Send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



SGT JOHN MARTIN, USMC

Col David E. Lownds

But in spite of it all,  
morale ran high.  
And Colonel David E.  
Lownds, the commander of  
the 26th Marine Regiment  
and its supporting units ...  
“never had a doubt”  
that in the event the enemy  
had elected to attack,  
Khe Sanh could have  
been defended.



# KHE SANH

Story by  
Sgt John Martin, USMC

**A**lthough the few newspapers which had filtered in shortly before the Easter weekend declared that the threat to Khe Sanh was over, the Marines who were manning the base were taking no chances.

True, they could now eat their C-ration meals above ground and engage in outdoor activities such as football and volleyball without fear of incoming rounds, but they still made it a point to keep their helmets on and their flak jackets tight about their

bodies whenever they ventured far from the safety of their bunkers.

But there was a definite release of tension in the air. With the withdrawal of several battalions from the Khe Sanh base to go into the surrounding hills to seek out the enemy and the knowledge that the road from Ca Lu was being secured by the infantry and made accessible by the engineers, the atmosphere was one of a big, inaudible “Whew!”

For 77 days, commencing Jan. 21, 1968,

the Marines had lived a life of constant harassment. It had been approximately two and one-half months of constant enemy shelling, day and night. For 11 weeks they had lived with filth, grime, red dust and rats. There had been uncountable hours, minutes, and seconds of fear, prayer, hope and death around the battle-scarred bunkers of Khe Sanh.

But in spite of it all, morale ran high. And Colonel David E. Lownds, the commander of the 26th Marine Regiment

The wreckage of several helicopters and transport planes is visible along the airstrip at Khe Sanh. (Photo by Sgt John Martin, USMC)



and its supporting units during the continual peppering of Khe Sanh, “never had a doubt” that in the event the enemy had elected to attack, Khe Sanh could have been defended.

“I had the finest enlisted men in the world,” Col Lownds stated. “And they had the best morale, under the conditions, that any commander could ask for. Since Jan. 21, there was no hot chow, no beer, and no showers available. But every Marine I saw had a smile on his face. To them goes all the credit.”

Lieutenant General Robert E. Cushman Jr., commanding general of the III Marine Amphibious Force in Vietnam, expressed his opinion as to why the North Vietnamese had never ventured to attack

Khe Sanh. “Because they’d have been slaughtered,” he said, “and they knew it!”

LtGen Cushman attributed the let-up on Khe Sanh to three things. First, he pointed out, there was the fortitude and combativeness of the Marines there. Second, there was the tremendous air effort which blasted the enemy from their positions in their hills. And third, there was the accurate barrage of artillery fire directed at the enemy by 1st Battalion, 13th Marine Regiment.

“The trouble is,” said LtGen Cushman, “that everybody counts the incoming rounds. No one ever counts the outgoing. We replied a hundredfold to every enemy shell. We beat them down. The area was becoming untenable for the enemy.”

The opinions of LtGen Cushman and Col Lownds are shared by all the Marines who can say, “I served at Khe Sanh.” Corporal Don H. Wiggins was “kind of disappointed” that the enemy had never attacked. And Lance Corporal Timothy Wright, who had been flown into Khe Sanh as a replacement in early March, during the heat of the onslaught, told us that he didn’t mind it a bit. “I knew what it was like when I found out I was coming here,” he said.

With the bigger part of the threat to Khe Sanh diminished, it was evident that a smaller force could handle the base itself and that many of the Marines would move into the hills surrounding Khe Sanh to provide a greater area of defense. Some

**Bunkers and Conex boxes littered the landscape at Khe Sanh, located in the western Quang Tri Province and bordered to the west by Laos and to the north by the DMZ and North Vietnam.**



**Right: Religious services were held deep in a bunker during the battle of Khe Sanh as two North Vietnamese Army divisions surrounded the base.**

were glad to leave their bunkers; others were not.

“I was scared out of my wits when I got here in February,” said LCpl Joe Haggard, “but, now, look ... here’s the place. We dug the bunkers and got the incoming, and now I might have to leave. There may be hot chow in other places but this ... this is home.”

Sergeant Johnny Baker shared Haggard’s opinion. “I was shaky when I got here,” he admitted. “But Khe Sanh is like any other duty station. If I’m going to get ‘blown away,’ I’ll get ‘blown away’ no matter where I’m at.”

All the Marines seemed to think of the incoming rounds in a philosophical manner. “If I get hit,” said Private First Class Robert Reyna, a member of “Alfa” Battery, 1st Battalion, 13th Marines, “there must be a reason because something is guiding my every step and movement.



I’m proud to be here and glad to be doing my part.”

And Lieutenant Charles T. Kelly, USN, one of the chaplains at Khe Sanh, had words to that effect in his Holy Saturday services held in a dingy bunker at Khe Sanh. “Men,” he said, “we must consider

ourselves dead to sin, but alive to God.”

The men sang “Rock of Ages” and “Holy God, We Praise Thy Name,” and Chaplain Kelly gave the epistle to Cpl Jim Hill to read aloud, and Cpl Dennis Finley read the gospel.

Faith, hope and sheer determination



USMC

helped sustain the Marines at Khe Sanh during those hammering days. They had faith in their own capabilities and in the pilots who had sheer determination in flaunting enemy fire to deliver their necessary cargoes.

Reminiscent of the Berlin Airlift in scope was the supply stream which flowed into Khe Sanh. In spite of heavy enemy artillery and hornets' nests of small arms fire directed specifically at many of the incoming planes, the pilots got through to Khe Sanh. They either unloaded their cargoes in precious seconds on the runway before taking off again or dropped them from the air by parachute.

And the fact that not all the supply planes flew out again was dramatized in the wreckage of several helicopters and transport planes, lying in twisted metal graveyards along the airstrip.

But the planes rolled in despite the enemy because the Marines at Khe Sanh needed the supplies to keep them going. "They did a good job," remarked Major W.T. Cook, assistant S-4 officer for the 26th Marines. "We received outstanding



These empty shell casings indicate the Marines got their licks in.

SGT JOHN MARTIN, USMC

**“Looking at an aerial view of Khe Sanh is like looking at one-third of the base. The rest is underground. From small, one- and two-man ‘hootches,’ to larger L-shaped ‘office’ bunkers, all the way up to the underground complex ...”**

support from the Air Force planes, the 3rd Marine Division, and the Force Logistics Command.”

Cpl Ernie Ross, a member of the open-air post office section at Khe Sanh, also had praise for the mail drops. “Most of the time,” he said, “the mail came in whenever they could get it to us. Once, more than

a week went by with no mail. Then they dropped in 40,000 pounds of it.”

Looking at an aerial view of Khe Sanh is like looking at one-third of the base. The rest is underground. From small, one- and two-man “hootches,” to larger L-shaped “office” bunkers, all the way up to the underground complex which housed the Combat Operations Center, the Marines lived and worked beneath the red dust carpet of Khe Sanh, their way lit only by candles and, in some places, electric lights that didn’t always work.

One of the most vital and active points was “Charlie Med,” the casualty treatment center operated by “Charlie” Company of the 3rd Medical Battalion.

Although Charlie Med treated upwards of 2,000 casualties during the siege of Khe Sanh, according to LT Edward Feldman, one of the Navy doctors there, his own biggest challenge came on the first day of the bombardment when PFC Robert Mussari was hit by an 82 mm mortar



SGT JOHN MARTIN, USMC

**PFC C.E. Jordan, left, pointed out vacated NVA positions to LCpl Robert W. Plyer during the battle for Khe Sanh.**

fuse which lodged in his stomach without detonating.

“They brought him in with a large battle dressing on his abdomen,” recalled LT Feldman, “and we took him down inside Charlie Med and padded him with sandbags.

“We didn’t know how much time we would have before the fuse detonated so Staff Sergeant Ronald Sniegowski from the 3rd Engineer Battalion stood by to help if it looked like it would go off.”

While HM3 Roger Tillotson, a Navy corpsman, stood by with four flashlights shining into the exposed area, SSgt Sniegowski handed the instruments to LT Feldman who removed the tissue around the fuse and extracted it in a 10-minute operation.

The fuse, which was slightly smaller than a hot sauce bottle, was then buried outside until an EOD team could arrive to blow it up.

“We had no anesthetic available for the operation,” Feldman said, “but he never flinched or cried once. He said he wanted to come back to Khe Sanh again.”

“This is typical of all the Marines,” Feldman went on. “They never cry out in pain. In all of our experiences, most of the casualties are more worried about their buddies than themselves. None of them wanted to leave Khe Sanh.”

PFC James C. Heard, who had arrived at Khe Sanh shortly before the hostilities began, was one such Marine. Heard was hit in the arm with shrapnel from



USMC

**A Navy corpsman carries plasma for wounded Marines at the Khe Sanh Combat Base.**

**“We had no anesthetic available for the operation,” Feldman said, “but he never flinched or cried once. ... This is typical of all the Marines ... most of the casualties are more worried about their buddies than themselves. None of them wanted to leave Khe Sanh.”**

an exploding mortar. His wound wasn’t serious enough to warrant evacuation. However, he was the type who would have wanted to come back if the injury had required him to be medevacked.

Heard shared the unanimous sigh of relief, however, after the threat to Khe Sanh had died down. “You feel real good after everything is over,” he said.

The Marine force had been largely diminished with field units swarming the hills around Khe Sanh to take enemy positions and provide a more mobile defense of the area.

And while the 11th Engineers put the finishing touches on Route 9, the supply route they had nicknamed “USMC 11,” the enemy struck again at Khe Sanh.

All day on Easter Sunday, artillery rounds fell on the base. This time, the fire was thought to come from inside Laos since Marines had captured most of the enemy gunpoints in the hills.

But incoming was nothing new to Marines in Vietnam, especially those at Khe Sanh, and the possibility of the problems involved in an enemy ground attack had been eliminated.

Perhaps one of the biggest threats to Khe Sanh during the deluge was the fear of the unknown. Newspapers had suggested that the defenders of Khe Sanh might meet the same fate as the French had in the historic battle of Dien Bien Phu. On March 14, the 54th day of the Khe Sanh saga, the word went around that North Vietnamese General Giap, who was reportedly masterminding the attack on Khe Sanh, had finished Dien Bien Phu on Day 54!

But Khe Sanh was still there, and the Marines are now certain that history will not repeat itself. 🇺🇸

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# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

## War is Difficult Enough, Even Without Ham and Lima Beans

By Michael Archer

**D**uring the 11-week-long siege of the U.S. Marine combat base at Khe Sanh in South Vietnam in early 1968, we subsisted entirely on canned C-ration meals. Ten years earlier, the name had been technically changed to “Meal, Combat, Individual,” or MCI, in the amusing, robotic nomenclature of the military. But since the meal choices stayed almost identical to the C-rations developed during World War II, the name was not widely accepted among the troops, who continued to call them “C-rats” until they were discontinued in the early 1980s. Somewhat oddly, the use of the letter “C” among Marines would

typically lead to its pronunciation using the phonetic alphabet, i.e., “Charlie,” however, this did not widely occur.

At Khe Sanh, because of strict water rationing, we could not wash mess kits so we heated these meals still in their cans over blue-flamed heat tablets or little chunks of C-4 plastic explosive ignited with a Zippo lighter. To avoid burned fingers, we would leave a hinge to the top of the can by not completely detaching the lid, which we then bent outwards to form a makeshift handle.

Each meal was designed to provide about 1,200 calories, and since we were largely sedentary, closely surrounded by the enemy and hunkered down in our makeshift bunkers and trenches against their constant artillery bombardments and sniper fire, most of us ate only two meals a day.

The accessory pack for all C-rat meals included salt, pepper, sugar, instant coffee, non-dairy creamer, two pieces of candy-coated chewing gum, a four-pack of commercial-grade cigarettes, a book of moisture-proof matches, and a packet of toilet paper.

C-rats favored us with a relatively broad menu of entrees. Early on, I decided the only main course fit for my middle-class, American palate carried the unadorned designation: “Beans with Frankfurter Chunks in Tomato Sauce.” I’m sure that among French colonial forces, who had been run out of Khe Sanh 14 years earlier, it would have carried a more exotically delectable label: *Haricots avec morceaux de Frankfurter à la sauce tomate*.

For 77 consecutive days, I ate this same meal for breakfast and dinner. It came with a small tin of hickory-flavored cheese, which I occasionally melted on top to add some variety. Yet over time, repetition becomes monotonous, so I wrote my mom a letter asking her to send me an onion and, a month later, a package arrived from her, dropped in to us with the mail from low-flying aircraft.

I knew what the package contained even before I opened it because the green tentacle of a living onion had crept through an opening in the broken box and was curling up along its side. The arrival of the onion made me instantly popular. I honed the blade of my Ka-Bar into a razor and—for those I liked—would slice away a disk of onion so thin a person could nearly read newsprint through it. That delicacy was all gone within a week, and so I returned to my trusty, simpler fare.

In my area of the combat base, cartons of C-rats were set out at a certain location every day or two. It was important to have early information about when those new cartons would arrive in order to get the good stuff. Cultivating sources close to those distributors was crucial, and often came with the price of having to give



LCPL D. J. BRUSCH, USMC

**During an operation southwest of Da Nang, Dec. 25, 1967, LCpl R.C. Cullars, of 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, seems to have cornered the market on canned fruit cocktail.**



**Above: Cpl Peter S. Munizza tries on this hat made from a C-rations box south of Da Nang, Nov. 7, 1968. (Photo by SSgt Bob Bowen, USMC)**



As far back as the Korean War, this meal had earned a variety of disparaging monikers. The one most used in Vietnam was “Ham & Mothers,” or simply “Mothers.”

up a nice dessert to the informant. It wasn't necessarily a black market, but it was certainly the kind of quid-pro-quo favoritism not too dissimilar from that seen in almost every episode of “The Sopranos.”

Once tipped off, I, like other connected guys, raced to the distribution point and, ignoring the policy of taking a single, intact, boxed meal from the carton, would tear through all the boxes left available, picking out tins of sweets like Pecan Cake Roll or Peach Slices in Syrup. Those at the end of this information chain were left with the least appetizing cans of food. The most unappealing of those, as most Marines will attest, was Ham and Lima Beans in Juices.

As far back as the Korean War, this meal had earned a variety of disparaging monikers. The one most used in Vietnam was “Ham & Mothers,” or simply “Mothers” (I trust almost everyone reading this will understand the fully articulated nom de guerre from which “Mothers” was derived). There are many theories about why this dish was so disliked. I believe it was because of its nauseating appearance, which, after being prepared for consumption could not possibly have looked any different from regurgitation.

After the peacetime draft began in 1940, in anticipation of American involvement in World War II, a collective cry went up from the draftees complaining about the quality of the food in the field, called K-rations. By then, the Subsistence Research and Development Laboratory (SRDL) in Chicago was developing plans to update these meals, issuing the first C-rats, containing only three main dishes, one of which was the much-detested Beef Hash. This lack of variety produced what was then termed “ration



SGT J.S. ADDINGTON, USMC

**Chow on the Move:** These 3rd Marine Division leathernecks escorting a supply convoy bite into fresh apples, a rarity for them, as they travel the dusty, dry route from Ca Lu to Khe Sanh in June 1968.

fatigue,” and the military issued a new guideline in 1941 calling for at least 10 varieties.

Because the hash was so universally despised (used for target practice, etc.), it was discontinued and replaced by Ham and Lima Beans in Juices. However, the meal’s final specifications would not be worked out until 1944. Consequently, “Mothers” would not make it to the field before the war ended the following year. As such, it was first consumed in battle during the Korean War.

While SRDL researchers were conjuring up this diabolical concoction, others in the complex had been tasked with making an efficient, reliable, and inexpensive can opener. Within just 30 days during the summer of 1942, that team produced the “Opener, Hand, Can, Folding, Type 1.” It was soon given the shorter title of “P-38,” because it took precisely 38 punctures (P), each made by a quick, 45-degree twist of the wrist, to circumnavigate the lid. Most Marines, however, came to know it affectionately as a “John Wayne.”

This tiny device is still considered a favorite invention in military history; one that has never been known to break, rust, or need sharpening. Credit for the invention was given to Army Major Thomas Dennehy and a civilian, John W. Speaker, an Austrian-immigrant metal shop owner. It was Speaker who invented the small, dual protruding lugs that held the blade closed, a primary specification to avoid injury when carrying it.

Because Speaker had been driven out of his country by the Nazis and wanted to help defeat Hitler in any way he could, he filed his patent as a royalty-free, nonexclusive contract, which

Within just 30 days during the summer of 1942, that team produced the “Opener, Hand, Can, Folding, Type 1.” It was soon given the shorter title of “P-38.”



**Below: Invented during World War II, the P-38 or “John Wayne” can opener was included within each C-rations box.**



JASON MONROE

meant anyone could copy the design. The device cost next to nothing to produce, and over 50 million would be made over the ensuing years.

Not only did the P-38 help keep troops sustained, it also helped to save lives more directly. Among American military forces in WW II and Korea, many would later claim that despite it not being built for that purpose, the little device was instrumental in keeping certain mechanisms of their rifles clean and operating. The rifle in question was the M1 Garand, which General George S. Patton called “the greatest battle implement ever devised.”

What an implausibly symbiotic relationship it turned out to be—the P-38 and the M1, both considered among the most perfect inventions in military history, proving to be even more perfect in tandem.

But, back to Mothers.

As mentioned, some people found this C-ration entree delicious. Many of them were from southern states where they grew up on ham and butter beans. However, in culinary use, butter beans and lima beans are distinct, the former being larger and pale yellow, while the latter is smaller and pale green.

I was surprised to later learn that many Marines in Vietnam could mitigate the “distinct flavor” of Mothers through the use of Tabasco pepper sauce, rendering them palatable. Intrigued, I did a little research to find out how Tabasco could make such a miracle possible, and how it may have gotten into the hands of enough combat troops in the field to earn such a widespread reputation.

Tabasco sauce was first produced by Maunsel White, who had immigrated from Tipperary, Ireland, in the early 19th century. White went on to become a wealthy Louisiana plantation owner, and one day a sea-captain friend brought him a handful of Capsicum pepper pods from the coastal state of Tabasco in southern Mexico. Maunsel began cultivating these peppers but found they had an unusually high oil content, making them difficult to dry in the humidity of Louisiana. However, with some vinegar and salt added, they made an excellent pepper sauce.

Before his death in 1862, White gave some of the pepper pods, along with the recipe, to his friend Edmund McIlhenny. Born in Maryland, McIlhenny moved to New Orleans, La., in 1840 and became a successful banker. After Union forces captured the city during the Civil War in 1862, Edmund,



**Above: Cpl Thomas F.G. Ernst rests his injured foot while he prepares his C-ration after completing a three-day patrol near Hill 60 north of Da Nang with Company I, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, on Aug. 13, 1968. (Photo by Cpl M.J. Coates, USMC)**

**Below: LCpl Ted Vdoric, with Company D, 1st Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment takes a break to eat canned food from his C-rations during Operation Scotland in March 1968. (Photo courtesy of Marine Corps Archives and Special Collections)**



With the advent of the Vietnam War, BGen McIlhenny, remembering how bland the food was during his time at war, developed a ration-sized vial of Tabasco.



Retired BGen Walter S. "Tabasco Mac" McIlhenny dines at his home in Avery Island, La., during the 1980s. Note the bottle of Tabasco sauce next to his wine goblet.



LEATHERNECK FILE PHOTO

**Capt Walter S. "Tabasco Mac" McIlhenny received the Silver Star and the Navy Cross in 1943 for his actions on Guadalcanal in two separate incidents.**

realizing all that Confederate money in his bank had just become valueless, and with White's recipe in hand, moved to Avery Island, La., and began cultivating the peppers and preparing the sauce, using the distinctive salt mined there. The unique shape of the bottle came about by McIlhenny's initial procurement of unused cologne bottles from a struggling New Orleans glassblower. The first bottle of sauce was sold in 1868 and was patented in 1870.

Upon his death in 1890, Edmund McIlhenny was succeeded by his eldest son, John, who expanded and modernized the business, but resigned to join Theodore Roosevelt's Rough Riders in 1898. His brother, Edward Avery McIlhenny, assumed control of the company.

Edward's son, Walter S. McIlhenny, joined the Marine Corps in 1935 and would be in on the first big fight to push back after Pearl Harbor, the invasion of the Japanese-held island of Guadalcanal in August 1942. Then-Lieutenant McIlhenny, who had been in the military long enough to know how bland the food could be in the field, brought cases of his family's Tabasco sauce when he came ashore on Guadalcanal, distributing it to his Marines, greatly improving morale. By the end of the war, "Tabasco Mac," as he came to be known, would be the recipient of the Navy Cross, Silver Star and two Purple Hearts. He retired as a brigadier general in the Marine Corps Reserve and upon the death of his father in 1949, took over running the family business.

With the advent of the Vietnam War, BGen McIlhenny, remembering how bland the food was during his time at war, developed a ration-sized vial of Tabasco, wrapped in special, corrugated-cardboard packaging, perfectly sized to be sent to friends and loved ones fighting the war and personally donated thousands of bottles of the pepper sauce to Marines serving in Vietnam.

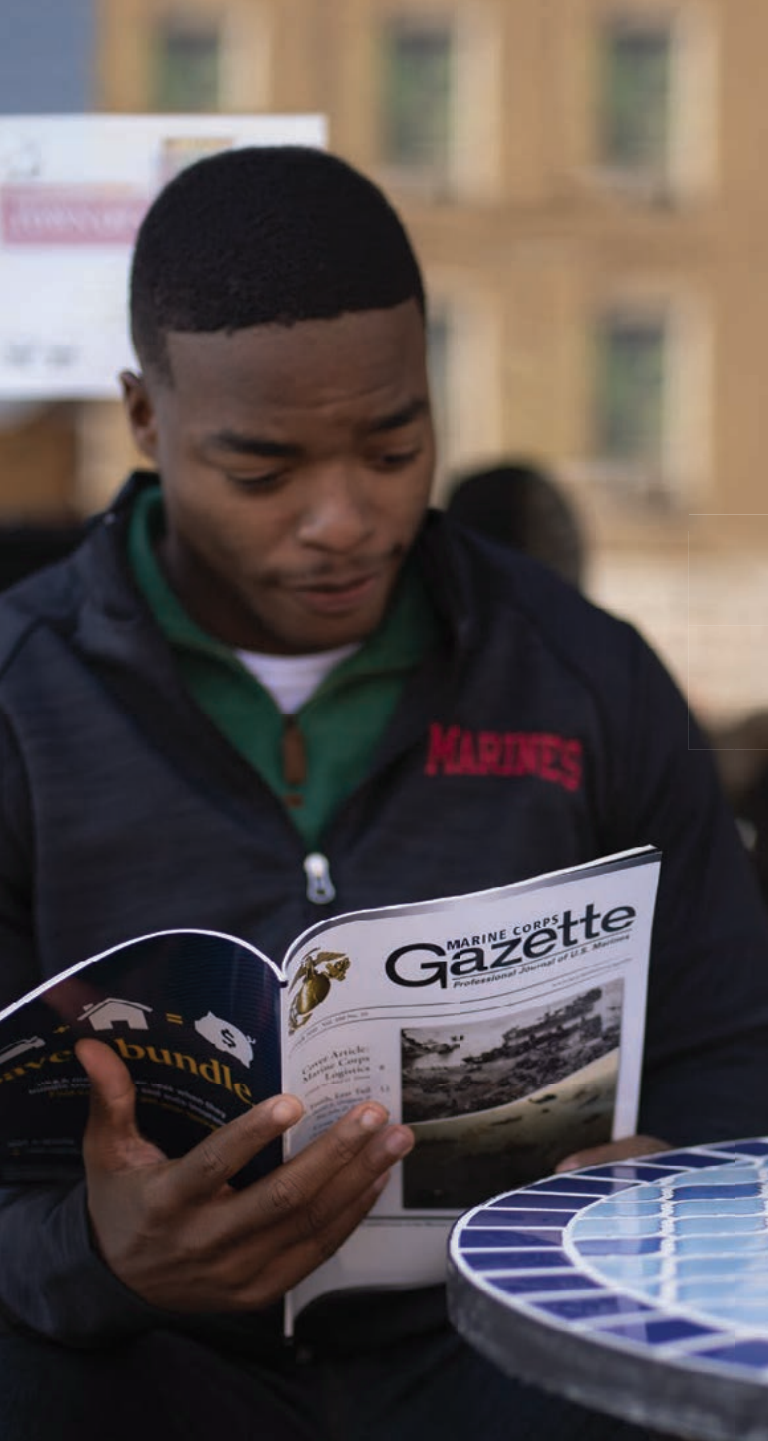
In 1966, McIlhenny produced a tongue-in-cheek companion guide called "The Charlie Ration Cookbook," helping—to some degree—rehabilitate the reputation of "Mothers."

Some food (pardon the pun) for thought: The only two wars in which Ham and Mothers were served, Korea and Vietnam, ended in negotiated ceasefires without a clear-cut victory. Yet, in the two wars before that particular entree was added to the menu of field rations, American forces were unquestionably victorious.

Just saying.

*Author's bio: Michael Archer is a Marine survivor of the 1968 siege of Khe Sanh who has published three books about his time in Vietnam: "A Patch of Ground: Khe Sanh Remembered," "The Long Goodbye: Khe Sanh Revisited," and "The Gunpowder Prince: How Marine Corps Captain Mirza Munir Baig Saved Khe Sanh," which received the Marine Corps Heritage Foundations 2019 Colonel Joseph Alexander Award for distinguished biography. Archer also had an article published in the March/April 2021 issue of Naval History magazine. For more information, please visit [www.khesanh-battle.com](http://www.khesanh-battle.com).*

LEATHERNECK FILE PHOTO



# UNIT SUBSCRIPTION PROGRAM GIVING DAY

The MCA provides units throughout the Corps with copies of *Leatherneck* and *The Marine Corps Gazette* to enhance the professional development of Marines. Help bring the Magazine of the Marines and the Corps' Professional Journal to Today's Marines by participating in the Unit Subscription Program Giving Day on Wednesday, September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022. For more information, visit the link below.

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YASUO OSKABE

**An Air Force C-17 Globemaster III sits on the runway at Yokota Air Base, Aichi, Japan. As of April, Space-A travel aboard military aircraft has resumed following a hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic.**

## **Air Mobility Command Reopens Space-A Travel**

As of April, all pandemic-related restrictions on space-available (Space-A) travel have been lifted, allowing servicemembers to apply for free flights to the U.S. and abroad. The Office of the Undersecretary of Defense temporarily suspended most Space-A travel aboard Air Mobility Command (AMC) contracted aircraft in March 2020 in order to limit the spread of COVID-19 and its impact on the force.

Medical screening protocols may still apply for travelers heading outside of the continental U.S. Members traveling to a foreign country will need to follow any testing requirements listed within the Electronic Foreign Clearance Guide, which can be accessed at <https://www.fcg.pentagon.mil/fcg.cfm>.

This reopening permits Space-A travel for uniformed servicemembers, retirees, dependents and reservists to travel both within and outside the continental U.S.

as space allows. The program's eligibility categories include, but are not limited to, servicemembers taking emergency leave unfunded travel, permissive temporary duty and post-deployment respite. Travelers should contact their nearest AMC passenger terminal to validate current documentation requirements, which routinely include Department of Defense identification card, passport, or other government-issued orders or required forms. Travelers can sign up remotely by emailing, faxing or mailing proper service documentation, or in person with a passenger service agent at the terminal. Although flights are typically free, passengers should be prepared to pay a federal inspection fee and head tax. Other costs may include phone calls, lodging, bus or taxi fares and meals.

Per DOD policy, if necessary, Space-A limitations can be reinstated to help stop the spread of any future outbreaks of COVID-19. Mobility aircrew readiness is paramount to ensuring the DOD is

postured to project mobility airpower and global reach. Space-A flights are military flights with a mission and are subject to personnel changes. Families taking advantage of Space-A flights should prepare for itinerary changes and potential commercial flight charges. For additional information on Space-A travel, visit Air Mobility Command's website at <https://www.amc.af.mil/Home/AMC-Travel-Site/>.

Compiled from reports by  
SSgt Caitlin Brink, USMC  
and Air Mobility Command

## **DOD Announces Atomic Veterans Commemorative Service Medal**

On July 5, the Secretary of Defense established the Atomic Veterans Commemorative Service Medal to commemorate the service and sacrifice of veterans who were instrumental in the development of our nation's atomic and nuclear weapons programs.

The United States' longstanding nuclear



COURTESY OF PARRIS ISLAND MARINE BAND

**EMMY HOPEFULS**—Members of the Emmy Award-nominated Parris Island Marine Band and their guests were dressed to the nines during the Southeast Emmy Awards, held at the Grand Hyatt Buckhead in Atlanta, Ga., June 18. The 50-member band received a nomination for its original composition, “You Were There,” a tribute to first responders and all those working on the front lines during the COVID-19 pandemic.

deterrence capability resulted from the efforts of military servicemembers who participated in the initial testing and development of our nation’s atomic and nuclear weapons programs. Notably, the dangerous and important work these veterans performed was often done in secret due to national security requirements.

The Atomic Veterans Commemorative Service Medal recognizes that the service and sacrifice of the atomic veterans directly contributed to our nation’s continued freedom and prosperity during the period following World War II and was pivotal to our nation’s defense during the Cold War era.

Veterans eligible for the medal are those who, while performing official military duties during the period of July 1, 1945, to Oct. 1, 1992, directly participated in the detonation of atomic weapon or devices; directly participated in the cleanup of radioactive material resulting from any such atmospheric detonation; directly participated in the cleanup of radioactive



material resulting from an accident associated with an atomic weapon; or were exposed to ionizing radiation resulting from the operational use of atomic weapons during World War II.

The director of the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) will manage the medal program. DTRA anticipates it will have medals on-hand to award to eligible individuals by the end of this year.

Eligible veterans and the next-of-kin of deceased eligible veterans will be able to apply for the medal online in the near future. Applications will be processed so that when DTRA receives its initial supply of medals they can be provided to eligible veterans or their next-of-kin in a timely manner.

## CWO-4 Hershel W. "Woody" Williams

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Hershel W. "Woody" Williams, the last living Medal of Honor recipient from World War II, who dedicated his life to public service and spent his later years working to support Gold Star families, died June 29, in Huntington, W.Va., in the VA medical center that had been named for him. He was 98.

"On behalf of all Marines, SgtMaj [Troy] Black and I are heartbroken to learn of Woody's passing," wrote Gen David H. Berger, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, in a statement posted to the Marine Corps' social media. "From his actions on Iwo Jima to his lifelong service to our Gold Star families, Woody has left an indelible mark on the legacy of our Corps."

Williams was a 21-year-old corporal armed with a flamethrower when he went into battle on Iwo Jima while assigned to 1st Battalion, 21st Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division. On Feb. 23, 1945, he volunteered to eliminate enemy machine-

guns in reinforced concrete pillboxes. "Covered only by four riflemen, he fought desperately for four hours under terrific enemy small-arms fire and repeatedly returned to his own lines to prepare demolition charges and obtain serviced flamethrowers, struggling back frequently to the rear of hostile emplacements to wipe out one position after another," according to Williams' Medal of Honor citation. "His unyielding determination and extraordinary heroism in the face of ruthless enemy resistance were directly instrumental in neutralizing one of the most fanatically defended Japanese strongpoints encountered by his regiment and aided vitally in enabling his company to reach its objective."

Following the presentation of his Medal of Honor at a ceremony in late 1945, Williams met with General Alexander A. Vandegrift, the 18th Commandant of the Marine Corps, which made a lasting impression on the young Marine, according to Andrew Biggio, Marine veteran and author of "The Rifle: Combat Stories from

American's Last WW II Veterans Told through an M1 Garand." Gen Vandegrift, himself a Medal of Honor recipient, told Williams, "That medal does not belong to you ... it belongs to all the Marines who didn't get to come home ... don't ever do anything that would tarnish that medal."

Williams was the youngest child born into a family of 11 in West Virginia in 1923. In 1928, Williams' father died and as soon as Williams was old enough, he followed his older brother into the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) to earn money to help support his mother and siblings. At the outbreak of war, Williams requested a release from the CCC so that he could return home and enlist in the Marine Corps. "As a kid, I knew several young men in the community who went to serve in the Marine Corps, and when they came home, I remember being so impressed with their Marine dress blues," Williams said in an interview with the West Virginia CCC Museum Association. "I said if I ever went to the military, that would be who I joined up with."



After his death at the age of 98, CWO-4 Hershel "Woody" Williams was given the honor of lying in state at the State Capitol Rotunda in Charleston, W.Va., (above) on July 3. On July 14, a second ceremony for family and invited guests was held in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda in Washington, D.C. A wreath laying ceremony followed at the World War II Memorial on the National Mall.

When Williams enlisted, he completed boot camp in San Diego and was sent to the South Pacific, going into battle on Guadalcanal and Guam before arriving on Iwo Jima's black sand beaches.

"Guam was more jungle-type fighting—a lot of creeping and crawling—but when we got to Iwo Jima, everything had been wiped off the island. About the only protection you could find would be a shell crater or try to dig your own hole," Williams said during an interview for the Library of Congress Veterans History Project.

Williams was wounded on Iwo Jima in early March and returned to his home in West Virginia. He was discharged from active duty, but he remained in the Marine Corps Reserve, eventually retiring as a CWO-4. He married his high school sweetheart, Ruby, and began a 33-year career with the Department of Veterans Affairs, where he worked tirelessly to serve veterans and their families.

In recent years Williams established the Woody Williams Foundation to honor Gold Star families. He had been profoundly affected by his experiences prior to his military service when he delivered telegrams in the early days of World War II—telegrams that gave families the sad news that their loved one had been killed. Williams believed that the support provided to these families was inadequate and he resolved to do something about that.

The Woody Williams Foundation spearheaded the creation of Gold Star Families Memorial Monuments in communities throughout the country. More than 100 permanent monuments have been built in recognition of Gold Star families and another 69 monuments are in progress. The foundation also provides scholarships for eligible children in Gold Star families and advocates for educational benefits for all Gold Star family members.

"As the last of America's Greatest Generation to receive the Medal of Honor, we will forever carry with us the memory of his selfless dedication to those who made the ultimate sacrifice to our great Nation," wrote Gen Berger. "The Marine Corps is fortunate to have many heroes, but there is only one Woody Williams."

Nancy S. Lichtman

### General Richard I. "Butch" Neal

General Richard I. "Butch" Neal, the 26th Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps and author of the book "What Now Lieutenant?" died June 17 in Washington, D.C., at the age of 79.

Gen Neal was an artillery officer who commanded Marines at every level during his 36 years of active duty.

Born in Hull, Mass., he was commissioned a second lieutenant in 1965 after his graduation from Northeastern University in Boston, Mass. After completing field artillery officer training, he was assigned to 3rd Marine Division in Vietnam, where he was a forward observer with 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines. He was the recipient of the Silver Star for his actions during that tour. In 1967, then-First Lieutenant Neal was serving with Company I, 3/9, 3rdMarDiv during Operation Prairie. During the night of March 30, 1967, the company established a position on Hill 70 near Cam Lo close to the Demilitarized Zone when they came under heavy enemy mortar fire. After the company commander and his executive officer were killed in the attack, 1stLt Neal assumed command, reorganized the Marines, and gained fire superiority over the enemy. "Closely supervising the rapidly changing situation, he courageously moved throughout the fire-swept area directing counter fire and encouraged his men. Simultaneously, he skillfully called for and directed air and artillery support, which was instrumental in forcing the enemy to break contact," according to the award citation.

Gen Neal later described that night: "I was 24 years old, and this was my first significant combat experience (and surprisingly, what happened—what I was called upon to do, was something I never imagined. What came afterward defined me for the rest of my life)," he wrote in "What Now Lieutenant?" his book published in 2017.

"Seeing that question in the eyes of the men on Hill 70 that day is how I learned a most valuable lesson about leadership over the course of a bloody day in Vietnam 49 years ago," the book continues.

During a later tour in Vietnam, then-Captain Neal was awarded a second Silver Star for his actions on May 22, 1970. According to the award citation, he was airborne in a command and control helicopter when an observation helicopter was hit by enemy fire and crashed. After the pilot flying Neal's helicopter landed, Neal exited the aircraft and ran to the crash site and assisted the airmen while under fire. Neal carried one injured crew member back to his helicopter and then again exposed himself to enemy fire in order to assist the second crew member who was also injured.

After returning from Vietnam, he attended Amphibious Warfare School and then took command of the 2nd 155 Howitzer Battery, 2nd Field Artillery Group at Camp Lejeune, N.C. Following completion of Marine Corps Command and Staff College, he served with the Air-

Ground Exchange Program on Okinawa. His next assignment was as Head, Operations Division, Amphibious Warfare School and he later commanded 5th Battalion, 10th Marines. In 1985, he held a staff position at U.S. Central Command followed by a tour at the Amphibious Warfare School as its director.

During Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, then-Brigadier General Neal was assigned temporary duty as the Deputy for Operations at U.S. Central Command and became a regular briefer for the daily press conferences held during the war. "That first briefing for me was another version of my "What Now Lieutenant?" moment. No, there were no bullets flying around my head or a crisis to respond to, just a lot of questions from a somewhat hostile group of folks," Gen Neal wrote.

He also wrote that he came to enjoy his role as the briefer and when the cameras were off, he took the time to speak individually with members of the press pool, learning their names and getting to know them. This built trust, wrote Neal, adding that "they came to believe that while they might not always like the answers ... the answers were truthful."

In 1992, Gen Neal was the commanding general for a joint task force whose mission was humanitarian relief for Haitian migrants at Guantanamo Naval Base, Cuba.

He commanded 2nd Marine Division and later returned to CENTCOM as Deputy Commander in Chief/Chief of Staff. He assumed the duties of Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps in 1996, retiring in 1998.

He was a graduate of National War College, and he earned a master's degree from Tulane University.

His awards include the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, Silver Star with gold star in lieu of second award, the Defense Superior Service Medal with Palm in lieu of second award, Bronze Star with combat "V," Purple Heart, Navy Commendation Medal and Navy Achievement Medal.

Nancy S. Lichtman

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](mailto:leatherneck@mca-marines.org), or [n.lichtman@mca-marines.org](mailto:n.lichtman@mca-marines.org).

**SOUND OFF**  
[continued from page 7]

I wish more success to all the readers and *Leatherneck* magazine.

Cpl John Messia Jr.  
USMCR, 1952-1954  
Brockton, Mass.

• *Thank you for your kind words about the Magazine of the Marines. I'm sure it was our production coordinator who helped you with the back issues. Patty Everett is both Leatherneck's and the Marine Corps Association's longest-serving employee. Her 41 years supporting the magazine have helped make it what it is today.—Editor*

**“No Better Friend” Brought Back Memories**

I truly enjoyed the article, “No Better Friend: Animals are Companions to Marines Serving in Every Clime,” in the June edition of the *Leatherneck*. Your articles always bring back old memories during time served. In 1971, I was stationed with the Marine advisory detachment in Pohang, Korea (KMAG). At the time it was a remote outpost with two Marine officers, seven enlisted men and one Navy corpsman.

Staff Sergeant Dubois and I arrived in January for a one-year tour working with the Korean Marines. Upon arrival I noticed a scruffy looking little dog wandering around the compound. It turned out he was the compound mascot for us Marines. His name was Spook. Spook was not fond of the Korean Marines who lived on the compound with us and served as our drivers. If a Korean Marine came close, he would snarl and bare his teeth. The Koreans had a difficult time saying Spook and when they spoke of him, they would say “Sa-pook.”

He followed us around everywhere especially SSgt Dubois who Spook became very attached to. Spook would sleep in our quarters at night, and it was pretty obvious to whom he owed his allegiance.

One day Spook went missing. We searched all over, but he wasn't to be found. We had no idea how old he was, and we thought maybe it was his time and he simply wandered off to die. Our other concern was that he wandered off the compound and was taken by a Korean and ended up on their dinner table.

Lo and behold, days later Spook showed up with comm wire wrapped around his neck. Spook escaped by chewing through the wire. You never could have seen a happier dog to be home than Spook was

that day. To our knowledge he never wandered off the compound again.

Capt Dan Macsay, USMC (Ret)  
1962 to 1982  
New Bern, N.C.

The article, “No Better Friend: Animals are Companions to Marines Serving in Every Clime,” in the June issue about Marines' love for animals really brought back memories of my earlier days as a Marine. I too am a Marine with love for animals.

As a young corporal in 1954 while serving with 1st Marine Division in Korea, I rescued a stray pup while patrolling an area near a local village. He was hungry and followed me, so I took him back to my tent and fed him from the mess hall for a few weeks. Unfortunately, he strayed, and we later learned that a local villager had taken him for food.

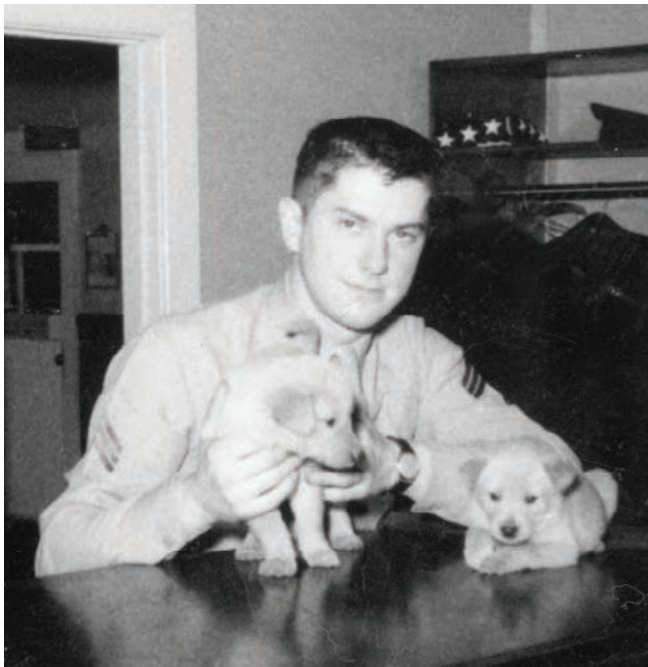
Later while serving as a sergeant at Marine Barracks, Atsugi, Japan, in 1955, I found two puppies straying along the perimeter of the base. I fed them and supported them on my \$135 a month sergeant pay. I kept one for a few months in my off-base hooch until I transferred back to CONUS and I gave the other dog to a Japanese neighbor.

My Marine Corps career spanned 25

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Far left: Sgt Chuck Cameron, while stationed at Marine Barracks Atsugi, Japan, in March 1955, found these puppies huddled together scared and hungry while on jeep patrol around the perimeter.

Left: Cpl Cameron holds the puppy that continued to follow him while patrolling villages in Korea in 1954. (Photos courtesy of Maj Chuck Cameron, USMC (Ret))

years as a staff noncommissioned officer and commissioned officer until retiring in 1977. I've always seemed to find room and love for a puppy along with horses and other animals. Even now I still have a couple of Shih Tzu gals.

The article is so right. We Marines have a heart for animals. Even in places like

Korea, Vietnam and Middle East we seem to find and care for animals.

Maj Chuck Cameron, USMC (Ret)  
Camp Hill, Pa.

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](mailto: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 🐾

# Are You Ready?



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



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

Toys For Tots      Preserve Traditions      Young Marines  
Funeral Honors      Color Guard

[MCLMembershipCommittee@mcleague.org](mailto:MCLMembershipCommittee@mcleague.org)

## Reunions

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

• **Marine Corps Engineer Assn.**, Sept. 26-29, Las Vegas. Contact LtCol George Carlson, USMC (Ret), (9 1) 307-9094, treasurer@marcorengasn.org, www.marcorengasn.org.

• **Marine Corps Disbursing Assn.**, May 21-25, 2023, Louisville, Ky. Contact MGySgt Kevin Gascon, USMC (Ret), (760) 458-2655, usmcdisbursers@hotmail.com, www.usmcdisbursers.com.

• **West Coast Drill Instructor Assn., SgtMaj Leland D. "Crow" Crawford Chapter**, Sept. 22-24, San Diego. Contact Alan Hulett, (808) 366-0199, arhulett@gmail.com, or Gregg Stoner, (619) 884-9047, greggstoner22@aol.com.

• **Marine Air Traffic Control Assn.**, Sept. 28-Oct. 2, New Bern, N.C. Contact Dan Walczak, (252) 349-4908, danimal111345@gmail.com.

• **1st MAW Assn. (RVN)**, Oct. 13-15, Pensacola, Fla. Contact Al Frater, (201) 906-119 , teanal330@gmail.com.

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

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

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

• **2/9 (all eras)**, Nov. 8-12, Arlington, Va. Contact Danny Schuster, (9 8) 302-4126, twoninecoic@aol.com, www.2ndbattalion9thmarines.org.

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

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

• **F/2/7 "Utter's Battalion"** (RVN, 1965-1966), Oct. 16-19, Savannah, Ga. Contact Ivo Alvarez, (352) 250-6583, ivojoe@aol.com.

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

• **Co A, 3rd Engineer Bn/BLT 1/9 (RVN, 1970-1971)**, is planning a reunion. Contact Gene Spanos, (847) 532-2963, genethemarine@gmail.com.

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

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

• **TBS, Co D, 4-73**, June 15-18, 2023, Arlington, Va. Contact Col Bill Anderson, USMCR (Ret), (540) 850-4213, binche57@yahoo.com, or Col Bob Donaghue, USMCR (Ret), (617) 840-0267, ip350haven@comcast.net.

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

• **USS Hornet (CV-8, CV/CVA/CVS-12)** and **USS Constellation (CVA/CV-64)**, Sept. 12-17, Buffalo, N.Y. Contact Sandy Burket, P.O. Box 108, Roaring Spring, PA 16673, (814) 224-5063, (814) 312-49 6, hornetcv12@aol.com, or Richard Swain, (432) 694-0227, membership@usseconstellation.org.

• **LPH Iwo Jima Class: USS Iwo**

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

## Mail Call

• Andrew Linkowski, (716) 292-2946, would like to hear from Marines who served with his father, **Peter LINKOWSKI, in Co F, 2nd Bn, 3rd Marines, during Operation Prairie and Prairie II, RVN, July 1966-March 1967.** His father may have been detached to **3rd Recon Bn** at the time.

• L. Spivey, P.O. Box 11100, Wilmington, NC, 28404, (910) 231-9058, ihvgr8kds@yahoo.com, to hear from or about **LCpl Franklin David "Moose" THOMPSON**, who was stationed at **Camp Lejeune, NC, between 1980-1987.** He was a friend of **LCpl Eric KING.**

• Tom Morton, (760) 727-5921, anmcan@earthlink.net, to hear from former **Lt ST. JOHN**, a Naval Academy graduate who was his platoon commander in **Vietnam** while serving with **D/1/4, 1969.**

• Kenneth Carter, kennethccarter@icloud.com, to hear from members of **Plt 10 1, Parris Island, 1966.**

## Wanted

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

• Dolores Gee Ryan, (860) 575-7790, dtg.jeg@gmail.com, wants copies of the following issues of **Leatherneck: September 1965, January 1966, February 1966, August 1966.**

• L.J., (603) 247-2271 (leave voicemail), lj\_lj87@yahoo.com, wants a **recruit graduation book for Plt 299, Parris Island, 1961.**

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



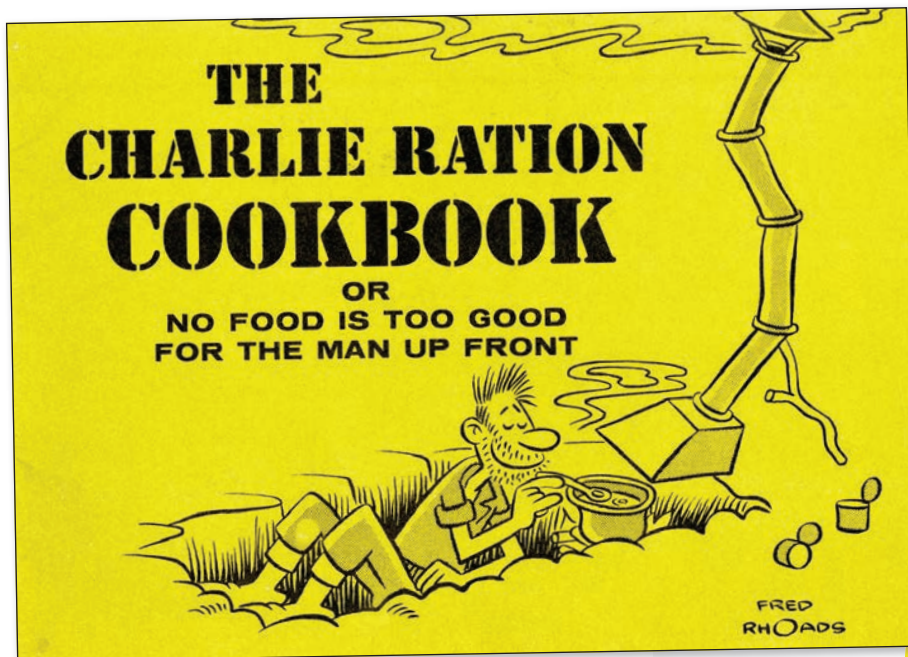
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# AT HOME AND AT THE BALL



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## FOX HOLE DINNER FOR TWO (Turkey and Chicken Poulette)

- Two spoons butter or oil or fat
- Two spoons flour
- \*One can chicken and noodles
- \*One can turkey loaf, cut up into pieces
- Three dashes TABASCO pepper sauce
- \*Salt and pepper to taste
- \*One can cheese spread
- \*12 spoons milk
- \*Crackers from one C-Ration can, crumbled

No one likes to dine alone, and this recipe is ideal to combine a variety of C-Ration Units.

Melt butter or oil or fat, add flour and stir until smooth. Add milk and continue to cook until sauce begins to thicken. Add cheese spread and cook until cheese melts and sauce is even. Empty cans of turkey loaf and chicken noodles into the cheese sauce. Season with Tabasco, salt and pepper to taste and continue cooking. Cover poulette with crumbled crackers and serve piping hot.

\*This is from your Basic C-Ration

**FINE DINING ON THE FRONT LINES**—Aware that Marines in Vietnam were often tired of eating bland C-rations, the McIlhenny Company of Avery Island, La., published “The Charlie Ration Cookbook—Or No Food Is Too Good for the Man Up Front” in 1966. The idea for the cookbook originated with Marine Brigadier General Walter S. McIlhenny, the son of the second McIlhenny Company president, whose experiences with military field rations during World War II illustrated the need for such a publication.

The cookbooks were commercially sold for \$1 with “a 2-ounce bottle of Tabasco brand pepper sauce, both neatly packaged in a special waterproof shipping tube ... postage paid” according to an advertisement in *The Pittsburgh Press* in 1967. The cookbook featured recipes for spicing up standard C-rations by combining them with Tabasco sauce and other ingredients. Recipes included “Fox Hole Dinner for Two,” “Breast of Chicken under Bullets,” “Tin Can Casserole” and “Patrol Chicken Soup” among others.

C-rations were eventually replaced in 1983 with meals, ready to eat (MREs), and McIlhenny Company Tabasco sauce was officially added to four MRE entrees in 1988. Tabasco sauce is still included in today’s MREs; however, it now comes in individual foil or plastic packets rather than small glass bottles.


BGen McIlhenny’s grandfather, Edmund McIlhenny, invented Tabasco sauce in 1840 and commercialized the product in 1868. BGen McIlhenny’s father, John Avery McIlhenny, presided over the company from 1890 to 1898, and BGen McIlhenny entered the family business in 1940. His career was interrupted by his Marine Corps service in World War II. He returned to the family

## HAM WITH SPICED APRICOTS

- \*One can fried ham, sliced with juices
- \*One can apricots with juice
- \*One can jam
- Three spoons flour
- Three spoons butter or oil or fat
- One spoon lemon juice
- One spoon soya sauce
- Generous dash TABASCO pepper sauce
- \*Salt and pepper to taste

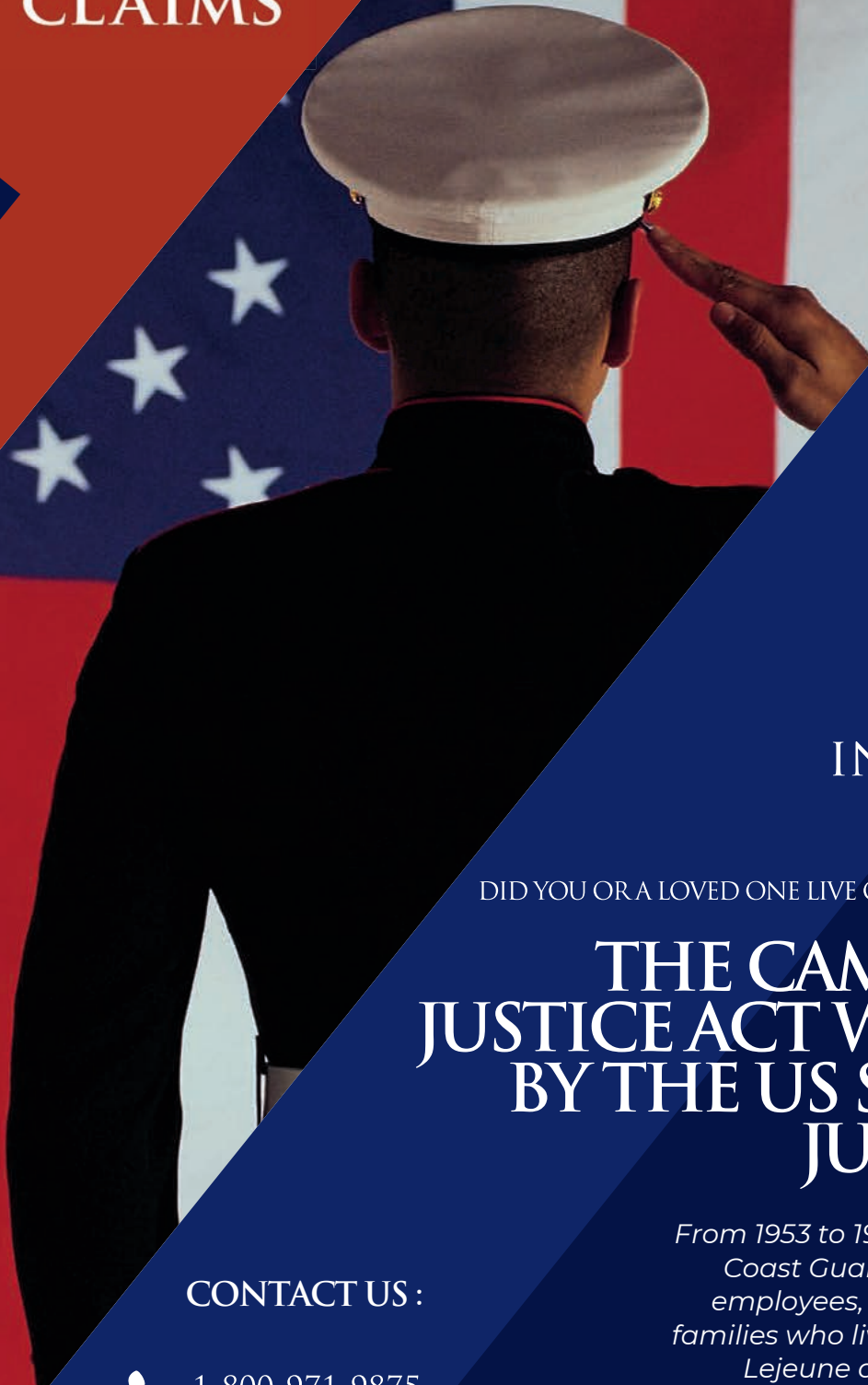
Melt butter or oil or fat, add flour and stir until well blended. Add the jam and cook until melted. Now add the juices from the ham and the apricots as well as the lemon juice, soya sauce and Tabasco. Salt and pepper to taste. Con-

business in 1946 and as president of the McIlhenny Company, he expanded and modernized the production and marketing of Tabasco sauce to help make the brand into the international culinary icon it is today.

*Author’s bio: Jennifer Castro is the Cultural and Material History Curator for the National Museum of the Marine Corps.* 



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INFORMATION

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