

SEPTEMBER 2019

MAGAZINE OF THE MARINES

Leatherneck

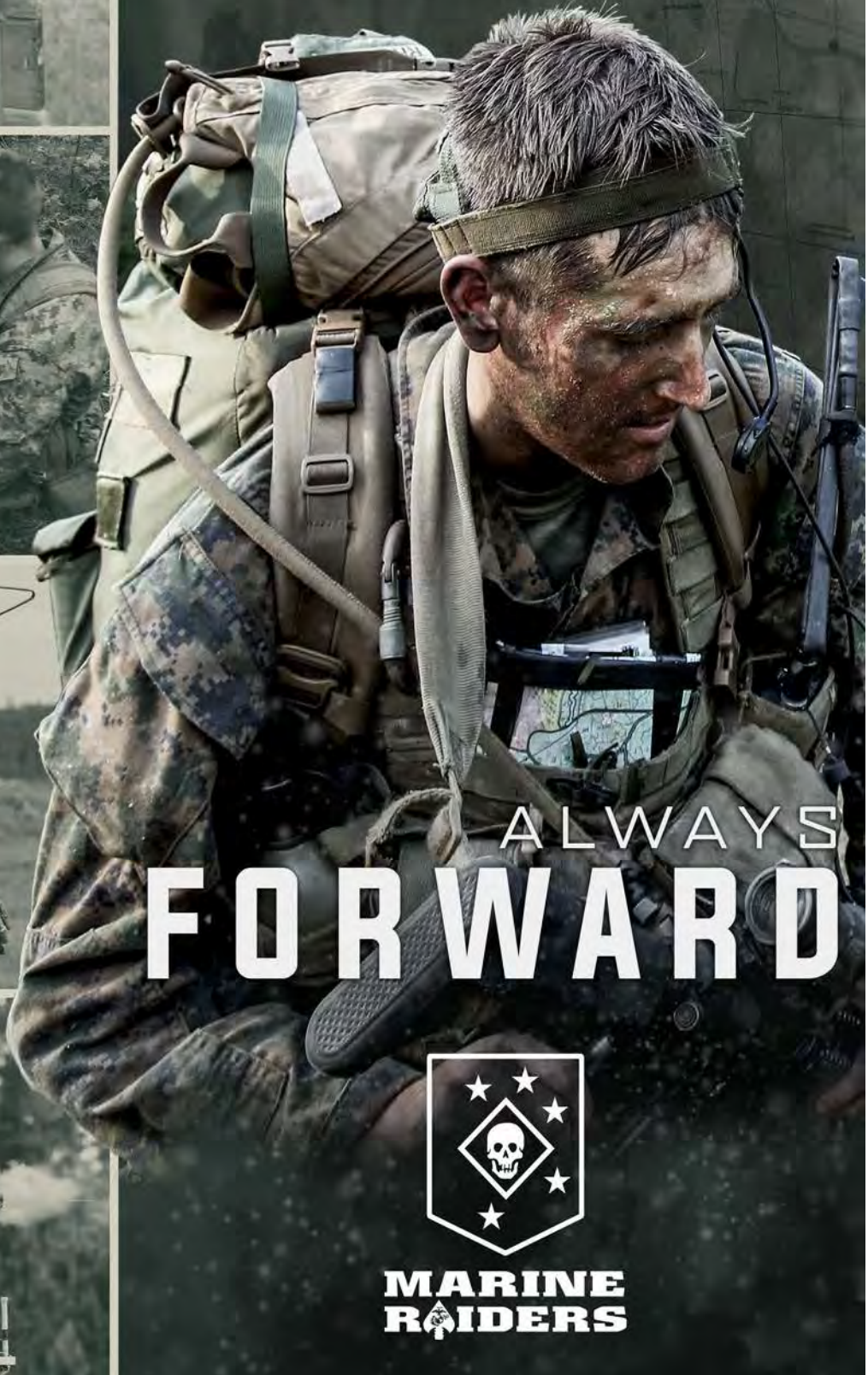
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SEPTEMBER 2019
VOL. 102, No. 9

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COVER: Sgt Zachary Dally, senior drill instructor with Plt 3053, "India" Co, gives commands to his Marines during Final Drill at MCRD Parris Island, S.C., July 10. To read more about the importance of drill instructors see "DI Jones" on page 32. Photo by WO Bobby Yarbrough, USMC. Copies of the cover may be obtained by sending \$2 (for mailing costs) to *Leatherneck Magazine*, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134-0775.

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From the Editor's Desk

Leatherneck is often referred to as an iconic magazine, and given its incredible history spanning more than a century of telling the story of Marines, I can't think of a better word to describe our beloved publication. While the golden age of magazines has passed and many magazines today are either folding or changing to a digital-only format (*Redbook*, *Money*, *Glamour*, *ESPN The Magazine*, etc.) or rerunning old issues (*MAD*), *Leatherneck* is still published and religiously read each month by Marines as well as their families and friends.

But the future for *Leatherneck* isn't as bright as it was in its heyday when circulation topped 200,000 in the middle of World War II or even at the turn of the 21st century when our subscribers reached almost 100,000. We are significantly smaller today, and slowly but surely losing readers every month. The decline in magazine readership and the incredible availability of free content on the internet have impacted us, and while we've taken cost-cutting measures, we need to ensure that our readership remains constant or, preferably, grows. We have the most dedicated readers of any magazine but we need more to ensure *Leatherneck's* longevity. So, we're asking you, our loyal readers, for help in spreading the word about one of the Corps' treasures.

By telling your fellow veterans about the magazine or buying gift memberships/subscriptions for those you know who love the Corps and its history, you help sustain both the magazine and the professional association of the Marine Corps and ensure that both thrive for the next 100 years. By sending the magazine to a young person who is thinking about joining the Corps or funding a subscription to a veterans home or assisted living facility, you're not only helping us, but also ensuring our "long and illustrious history" is available to those who truly love America and her Marines.

Of course, joining the Marine Corps Association & Foundation is more than receiving *Leatherneck* each month. Membership comes with access to both *Leatherneck* and the *Marine Corps Gazette* online at www.mca-marines.org so you can read it anywhere. Another benefit of joining is access to more than a century of articles from both magazines. For even more history and to hear what today's leaders are saying, our podcast page, where you can hear iconic Marines including Chesty Puller, Alexander Vandegrift and Al Gray as well as guest speakers from our professional dinners, is available on our homepage. We also offer members a discount on hundreds of Marine Corps-themed



CPL KAILLEY MARAGLIA, USMC

Veterans of the the Corps' 20th century wars have been faithful readers of *Leatherneck*—Magazine of the Marines. Today's Marines, veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan, continue to read our iconic magazine but in smaller numbers.

items at The MARINE Shop, and our Resources page includes vital information for veterans and transitioning Marines.

So please spread the word where you can and encourage others to join the Marine Corps Association & Foundation in order to receive *Leatherneck*. And thank you for your faithfulness and for your help ensuring *Leatherneck's* second hundred years are as iconic as its first!

Mary H. Reinwald

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

Letter of the Month

(Leatherneck will pay \$25 for a "Sound Off Letter of the Month" submitted by an MCA&F member or provide a one-year courtesy subscription to a non-member whose letter is selected.)

The last Monday in May, Memorial Day, has become many things since the Vietnam War. Memorial Day has become the signal for the start of summer in the eyes of most Americans. Those on the lookout for money-saving sales are delighted with the host of stores promoting their Memorial Day specials. Even TV and radio stations, along with the newspapers, love Memorial Day, not for the meaning of the holiday but for the increased advertising revenues. I have yet to see or hear a news service do a good job explaining how Memorial Day got started. Memorial Day for the combat veteran is, and will always be, a day of somber reverent remembrance.

Now, Vietnam Veterans Day is recognized each year on March 29. It is a coincidence that this date coincides with the anniversary of Operation Prairie 3, March 28-31, 1967. The battle at Getlin's Corner was March 30-31, 1967.

Years ago the proposed building of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., with the names of now 58,479 American service men and women who were killed or missing, at first did not meet with the approval of many veterans. One side wanted a more traditional monument such as the Marine Corps War Memorial. The minority were appeased by the addition of a bronze monument depicting three Vietnam servicemen. These men, depicted as if they were in combat, represented the white, brown, and black Americans who fought in Vietnam.

It was only after plans were more appropriately communicated that "The Wall" was to contain every name of every American killed or missing in the Vietnam War, listed by date of fatality, that the idea finally gained momentum and support with Vietnam veterans who then began donating funds for construction to commence.

"The Wall," as it is known today, has become more than just a war monument. It is a place of quiet reverence and respect. Even small children are on their best behavior at "The Wall." Vietnam vets experiencing "The Wall" for the first time are often seen in tears as they find their

brothers' names. Others can be seen standing at a distance in both quiet reflection and apprehension at seeing names for the first time.

Allow me to tell you about a Marine brother from "India" Co, 3rd Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division. He was a young lieutenant serving his first tour when he decided to make the Marine Corps his career. He served two tours in Vietnam, the second of which as an advisor to the Vietnamese Marine Corps. He had several assignments during his career that landed him in proximity to Washington, D.C. He was then, and remains today, an avid runner. He ran all around the Mall on his daily runs, including runs past "The Wall." He would often stop on the low hill facing "The Wall" and look from afar. Yet, he could never bring himself to approach the wall, containing the names of so many dead brothers.

Years passed with promotions to ever increasing responsibility, finally achieving the highest rank, four star general, in the Marine Corps. He lived at 8th and I Streets, in Washington, D.C, also known as Marine Barracks Washington. He and his wife remained in Washington after his retirement from active duty, buying a home blocks from "The Wall." His running regimen continued every morning before sunrise. Then it finally happened.

One cold morning in the dark, instead of running past "The Wall," he stopped at the then-deserted memorial. There were no visitors there. It was so cold, even the park rangers were absent. He walked down the pathway leading to the black granite reflecting from the bright lights. He knew the panel containing his brothers' names. He stopped at panel 17 East and found the names listed in alphabetical order. Fifteen names that reminded him of the brotherhood one company of Marines could hold for one another. The date, March 30, 1967, at Getlin's Corner, a day and night that would go on to shape his career as a Marine Corps officer.

I had invited him, while he was still on active duty, to be the guest speaker at one of our reunions. He had delivered hundreds of speeches but confessed that speaking to the men with whom he had fought alongside in Vietnam was going to be difficult. There is the flood of memories and emotion when one knows his audience will be made up of not just brother Marines and spouses, but also

family members of men killed in battle. His speech was entitled "Trust." He summed up the brotherhood developed by men at war. He recounted the untold hardships faced by Marines in combat and how we jelled into a brotherhood built entirely on trust. Trusting each other with our lives, on a daily basis, cementing us as one.

That first visit to "The Wall" is the toughest for all who lost brothers in Vietnam. Today the retired general still runs by "The Wall." Only now, he stops at Panel 17 East each morning at sunrise to visit a few minutes with brothers who continue to mean the world to him. Albert Anter, Ruben Armenta, Jim Blevins, John Bobo, Eddie Cannon, Larry Crumbaker, Mike Getlin, Don Krick, Jack Loweranitis, Walt Nerad, Barney Pappas, Dave Siemon, Frank Thomas, Wallace Williams and Roman Villamor.

On behalf of all Marines, thank you, General Richard I. "Butch" Neal, USMC (Ret), 26th Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, for representing the Marines of "The Flaming I," 3/9, and paying tribute to our brothers and our entire nation's dead on your daily visits to "The Wall."

Jack Riley
Boaz, Ala.

New Reader Keeps His Promise

I was honored to meet Lieutenant General Mark Faulkner, USMC (Ret), at a birthday party in Levittown, Pa., for an old Marine named Sergeant Joe Barno. I'm 89 years old and Joe Barno is 91. He was with Ammo Company, 7th Regiment, 1st Marine Division in Korea a few months before I got there in 1952. My name, although you won't believe it, is Joe Barna (note similarities in our last names). I was from Freeland, Pa., and Joe was born about 35 miles away in Nesquehoning, Pa. When they told me there was going to be a general at the party, I had to go. We had a wonderful day and I'm sure LtGen Faulkner would agree.

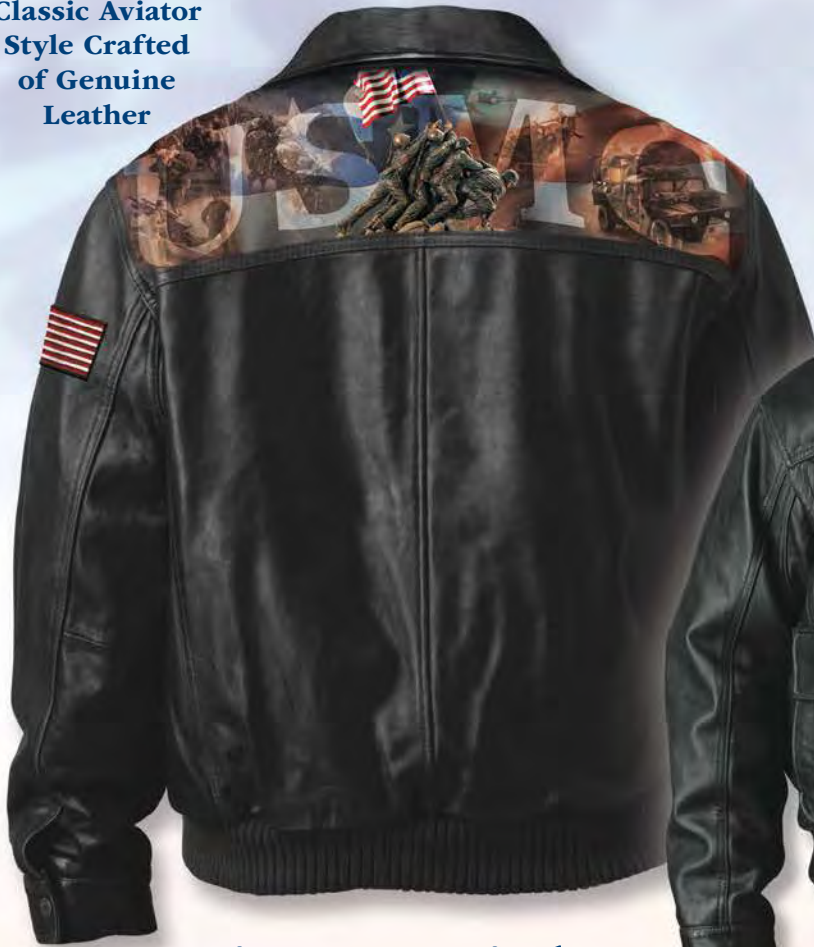
I served with Weapons Company and Co B, 1st Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division from June 1952 to July 1953. I was wounded three times, twice by shrapnel and also bayoneted in my left arm.

The Korean War was a war fought day and night but the nights were worse. I went to Korea with thousands of Marines and came back with approximately 800. I

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COURTESY OF MSGT ROD CONSALVO, USMC (RET)

MSgt Rod Consalvo, USMC (Ret), left, and Cpl Ron Smith reunite unexpectedly after 51 years at a Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day event in Verde, Ariz., this past May. MSgt Consalvo was Cpl Smith's DI in San Diego in 1968.

was a draftee but I believe I made a good Marine. This I'm proud of.

I'm part of my town's Honor Guard that at one time consisted of four Marines, a Navy Seal, a Navy corpsman and one Special Forces veteran.

I was thrilled to meet the general. He told me I better subscribe to the *Leatherneck* so I'm keeping my promise and sending in my check. If I was sure I had a few more years left, it would be for more. Thank you for the honor of meeting you.

Cpl Joseph R. Barna
Freeland, Pa.

• *For more on the general's visit with Joe Barno and Joe Barna, see Sea Stories on page 60.—Editor*

Connecting With an Old Recruit

A few months ago I attended a Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day event at the Fort Verde State Historic Park, in Verde, Ariz. Our Marine Corps League detachment had a member's recruitment booth set up along with multiple other organizations. One particular organization had a large motor home and it was used for giving veterans information on Agent Orange. I had some free time and went to investigate since I was in Vietnam from 1966 to 1967.

There were two gentlemen standing

there so I started a conversation. I asked the usual question, "Hey, anyone in the Marines?" Both gentlemen answered up, "Yes." I then asked where they went to boot camp, what year, etc. One gentleman, Ron Smith, said San Diego, 1968. I asked, "What company?" He said, "Bravo." My eyes lit up. I was a drill instructor (DI) in "Bravo" Co from 1968 to 1969. I asked him if he remembered his DIs. "Yes," he answered and named them, Staff Sergeant Daniels, Sergeant Campo and Sgt Consalvo. When I pulled out my retired ID card and showed him who I was, Master Sergeant Consalvo, USMC DI 1968-1969, I received a bear hug.

After 51 years he still remembered us. It made my year.

MSgt Rod "Top" Consalvo, USMC (Ret)
1965 to 2001
Rimrock, Ariz.

Marine Pride Lasts Forever

After reading a recent article in another publication on loss of control at Camp Lejeune I felt I needed to write. In my practice, I take care of several police officers. One is an Army reservist. He served several tours in Afghanistan. He commented that he loved going on missions with Marines because they always get the job done. He related that on one patrol they had several bad guys

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cornered in a building but couldn't get to them. Marines took care of the situation easily. A little C4 placed around the valve of a 20-pound propane bottle and they opened the building up and took care of the bad guys. Marines improvise.

Another Army officer related that he had to attend a police officer's funeral. A new police officer was to attend with him. The new officer was hired partly because he had served as a Marine. While at the funeral the Army veteran noticed the former Marine's uniform was not what he had seen with other Marines. It wasn't crisp, didn't fit right and he didn't present himself like a Marine. He approached the chief of police who then asked the new officer to bring in his Marine credentials. The officer never came back to the police department. That was Army recognizing that the officer didn't present himself as a Marine.

Another one of my patients had just finished his enlistment and had lost several close friends while on active duty with the Marines. He was asked to play in a golf tournament with several other young college types. About the second hole they went through their introductions and it became very obvious the other players were well-to-do college grads. When it came to the young Marine, they



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asked what college he had attended. He replied that he had attended the Marine Corps College with additional classes in Afghanistan. The college preppies became very quiet and then very respectfully each one shook the Marine's hand and thanked him for his service.

I am now 68 years old. I still blouse my shirts and align my belt buckle with my pants and shirt. I still work out and several of the guys I served with do the same. Marine pride. Others see it in us. That is another reason Marine Corps bases need to have "old salts" come back to share our pride.

I continue to read about our Marines in World War II in *Leatherneck* to keep abreast of current Marines, our future heroes. Get it together, Marines. You have tradition to maintain. Don't let my pride in all of you down. With all due respect to all Marines.

Sgt Howard E. Johnson
USMC, 1969-1973
Elk River, Minn.

50 Years to Make a Bad Year Better

As Americans, we rightfully celebrate the 75th anniversary of D-Day and the sacrifices made while struggling to reconcile Vietnam War deaths 50 years ago. Although I spent three years on

active duty in the Marine Corps in the early 1970s, I was stationed safely in Okinawa when the Vietnam War ended in early 1973 and never saw combat. But that war has had a lasting impact on me.

I learned that my close friend Lee Roy Herron had been killed in Vietnam on Feb. 22, 1969. I knew little of the circumstances. I thought, "What a waste of a remarkable young man's life." To top it off, when our troops were returning from Vietnam in 1969, much of America had become hardened against the war and military personnel were often treated with disrespect and disdain.

For years after 1969, I was haunted by Herron's death. I struggled with the question of why a just God would allow such a promising young man to die in a futile war. When I first saw his name on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., it was a sad moment filled with regret.

It was almost three decades later that I discovered exactly how he died. In August 1997, I heard Colonel Wes Fox, USMC (Ret), Medal of Honor recipient, speak. He mentioned that in a key Vietnam battle a stout young man from West Texas named Lee Herron had helped save the day by destroying an enemy machine-gun bunker and received the Navy Cross

posthumously. I was stunned but elated that my friend's death had not been in vain. He had saved the lives of numerous other Marines.

The next morning, around 2 a.m., I awoke with a determination to see that Herron was properly honored, remembered, and respected. It was as if I had received a personal mission from God. I have helped endow a scholarship in Lee Herron's name at Texas Tech's Vietnam Center, co-authored a book about him with veteran Marine Randolph Schiffer, and published numerous articles that commemorate his heroism and legacy.

In February, it was 50 years since Herron's death. Perhaps now is a fitting time to observe that I have been able to make 1969 a better year after all, especially for Lee Roy's family. Hopefully, others also will be able to better reconcile the D-Day success with the Vietnam War and more recent war casualties and failures and to make some bad years better.

David Nelson
Houston, Texas

Because I'm a Marine

I recently attended a Memorial Day remembrance breakfast. A major general was the main speaker and there was a good-sized crowd. Prior to the speaker,



This is the only known photo taken of 1stLt Lee Roy Herron, bottom right holding a small Bible in Vietnam, Jan. 26, 1969. He was killed on Feb. 22, 1969, and received the Navy Cross for his actions in Quang Tri Province.



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the service hymns were played. When “The Marines’ Hymn” sounded, I stood up as the only Marine in attendance and sang at a strict position of attention. No other service stood for theirs.

I was asked afterward why I would do this. My reply was, I do it for pride, I do it for tradition, I do it for my father, World War II and Korea. I do it for the Marines who came out of Chosin singing, I do it for those who stood fast at Tet, I do it for the hell experienced in Fallujah, I do it for the man for who I am named who gave his last full measure at Iwo, I do it for my son who is currently in the middle of the Pacific heading west, I do it because I am a Marine.

There are traditions that we have that are not present in any other branch. If I may, to the new Commandant, do not move to coed training. There is little, if anything, to be gained here. Do not over-politicize the Marine Corps. There is nothing to be gained here period. Allow Marines to be Marines. Allow and encourage the heroics of Gunny Basilone, allow the swagger of “Pappy” Boyington, allow the leadership of Lieutenant General “Chesty” Puller. There has been talk of again combining the Corps with the Army; demonstrate by honor, courage and commitment that this is a foolish idea.

We are absolutely special. We without question go to the hell of war with a happy heart. We do not flinch in the face of overwhelming odds. This is why the Marine Corps must be allowed. We are the tip of America’s spear. Do not dull the temper, but find ways to harden and sharpen the blade.

Thomas Reece
Fort Mill, S.C.

Shooting Badges Reloaded

In reference to Corporal Ken Goodwin’s letter in the May issue about shooting badges, I have an “Expert Rifleman” badge that I earned at Camp Pendleton in 1956. The bar on my badge reads, “Expert Rifleman.” The crossed rifles are 1903 Springfield rifles.

Cpl James T. Price
USMC, 1955-1966
Pinellas Park, Fla.

My Sergeant’s Threatening Words

In 1948 I went to boot camp at Parris Island. I had been in the National Guard for six months so they put me in charge of the group of kids heading to P.I. I was 17 years old and most of the guys were older than me. When we got to Yemassee, S.C., most of them were drunk and the

[continued on page 64]

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Snipers with Special Purpose-Marine Air-Ground Task Force-Crisis Response-Africa 19.2, Marine Forces Europe and Africa, participated in Exercise Long Precision 2019 with snipers from Spain, Italy, France and the U.S. Army's 173 Airborne Brigade at training areas near Uceda, Spain, June 10-21.

SPMAGTF-CR-AF is deployed to conduct crisis response and theater security operations in Africa and promote regional stability by conducting military-to-military training exercises throughout Europe and Africa. The Spanish-hosted exercise featured multiple training scenarios designed to expand proficiency and multi-lateral interoperability of the snipers.

"The first day we conducted barricade shoots," said Corporal Xavier Johnson, a sniper with SPMAGTF-CR-AF. "Instead of shooting off our conventional tripods, we were shooting off of barrels, construction equipment, cars and other things. We also conducted stress shoots, which required us running to different yard lines and shooting at multiple targets from different positions."

Each day of the exercise featured complex training scenarios designed to phys-

ically and mentally test the snipers in order to increase their capabilities and lethality.

"We've rehearsed setting up urban hides, infiltration and exfiltration," said Johnson. "It's been a good experience to learn how different people conduct their sniper training in different countries."

The Spanish Armed Forces put together the challenging training schedule, which allowed the multinational servicemembers to train in both day and night operations.

"Working with the Spanish has been great," said Cpl Isaac Swofford, a sniper with SPMAGTF-CR-AF. "They like to learn and they have some great facilities and ranges out here. The courses of fire for both the [M4] carbine and snipers that the Spanish have set up has been great."

The participating U.S. servicemembers also had the opportunity to increase multilateral interoperability by observing and discussing different techniques through unique scenarios. The Spanish Armed Forces also incorporated the Italian, French and American servicemembers into the scenarios so they could experience the techniques firsthand and learn a new way to do things.

"The Spanish conduct urban reconnaissance very differently than we do," said Swofford. "They integrate ropes a lot,

which is an interesting tactic to see. The rappelling training has been good as well because the Spanish have shown us some instances where it would be useful and a viable option."

The outcome of the exercise was increased interoperability, enhanced lethality and sniper proficiency, and a stronger relationship among the participating forces.

"The Spanish are very good at what they do," said Johnson. "It's been good to learn a different outlook on how people conduct their sniper training in different countries."

Capt Clayton Groover, USMC

CAMP PENDLETON, CALIF.

Southern California's Terrain Proves Optimal for CAL Training

Marine UH-1Y Venom crews with Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron (HMLA) 469, Marine Aircraft Group 39, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, conducted confined area landing (CAL) training at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., June 25.

A CAL is a type of landing that requires the pilot to land in a compact landing zone. It also may involve a string of maneuvers around obstacles such as trees, power lines and buildings. This training prepares



LCPL GUMICHOL CHO, USMC



LCPL GUMICHOL CHO, USMC

Above left: A Marine with SPMAGTF-CR-AF rappels from an abandoned building during Exercise Long Precision in Navacerrada, Spain, June 11.

Above right: A timed marksmanship range tests the ability of a Marine sniper with SPMAGTF-CR-AF in Uceda, Spain, June 10. Marine Corps snipers trained with snipers from Spain, Italy and France as well as from the U.S. Army during Exercise Long Precision.



PFC ANDREW CORTEZ, USMC

A UH-1Y Venom with HMLA-469 takes off after performing a CAL at MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., June 25. The training tested the ability of the squadron's pilots and crew chiefs to safely land in compact landing zones.

pilots for the unpredictable circumstances they may encounter in a combat zone. The moderate and predictable year-round climate and terrain of Camp Pendleton makes the base an ideal training environment for these exercises.

“The aircraft will have more power when it’s cooler, which means you can put the aircraft in a tighter landing zone and be able to take off,” said Captain Joshua Gornto, a UH-1Y Venom pilot with HMLA-469.

According to Gornto, helicopters are the most versatile aviation platform in the Marine Corps. He believes it is vital that the squadron conducts this type of training regularly as the ability to land their aircraft in confined areas gives the Marines of HMLA-469 assurance that in combat they will have quick access to the Marines on the ground.

With the assistance of aircraft crew chiefs, pilots can essentially have eyes on obstacles both below and behind them while landing in confined areas. The crew chiefs observe and inform pilots of obstacles around them to ensure the aircraft lands safely.

“Crew chiefs are responsible for the largest field of regard,” said Sergeant Preston Eisele, weapons and tactics

instructor crew chief with HMLA-469. “We must have high situational awareness to ensure the safety of the aircraft along with the crew.”

The crew chiefs also have the responsibility of manning weapons in case of enemy threat so that the pilots can focus on maneuvering. Communication between all elements of the crew is essential for safety and mission accomplishment.

“It takes a great deal of crew coordination,” added Eisele. “Talking crew chief to crew chief or crew chief to pilot during this training is a good team-building exercise.”

The pilots and their crew perform CAL exercises over the Pacific coast that runs along the border of Camp Pendleton, over mountainous terrain at different elevations, and in military operations on urban terrain towns.

“The unique part of Camp Pendleton is its diversity,” said Capt Anthony Maticotta, a pilot with the squadron. “We can land on the coast and then in the mountains without having to leave the training area.”

HMLA-469 is just one of eight 3rd MAW squadrons at Marine Corps Air Station Camp Pendleton, and the CAL is just one type of training that they perform.

Camp Pendleton’s interconnected land, sea and air ranges allow the squadrons to perform a variety of training, including live-fire training with fully functional ammunition and rockets, in conjunction with other air and ground units.

The CAL training that was conducted by HMLA-469 came just ahead of Exercise Summer Fury, during which 3rd MAW aircraft and ground units from the 1st Marine Division conducted combined-arms operations across multiple Marine Corps and Navy installations throughout the southwestern United States. The realistic three-week training exercise is intended to enhance the experience and capabilities of individual units while also improving ground and air units’ interoperability as part of a Marine air-ground task force.

LCpl Drake Nickels, USMC

COMAYAGUA, HONDURAS 2019 Hurricane Season Prompts Deployment Of Multinational Task Force

Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force–Southern Command officially kicked off its 2019 deployment with an opening ceremony at Soto Cano Air Base in Honduras, June 21.



CPL STANLEY MOY, USMC

Colombian Navy Vice Admiral Antonio Martinez, commander of the Colombian Pacific Naval Force, left, inducts MajGen Michael F. Fahey III, CG, MARFORSOUTH, as an honorary Colombian Marine after a ceremony at Soto Cano Air Base, Honduras, June 21, which marked SPMAGTF-SC's deployment to Latin America and the Caribbean.

Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández and U.S. Navy Admiral Craig Faller, the commander of U.S. Southern Command, welcomed the SPMAGTF multinational team and reaffirmed the importance of this deployment.

“The [SPMAGTF-SC] is one of the many ways U.S. Southern Command is strengthening partnerships here in Honduras and throughout Latin America and the Caribbean,” said ADM Faller. “The depth and breadth of our engagement runs the gamut from security cooperation and humanitarian missions like this one to multinational exercises.”

SPMAGTF-SC is made up of approximately 300 U.S. Marines and Sailors from various units across the country and a multinational staff that includes partner nation servicemembers from Brazil, Colombia, Peru, Chile, Argentina, Belize and Dominican Republic. The integration of regional partners for the deployment marks another milestone in developing a multinational maritime task force that will enhance humanitarian assistance and disaster response in the Latin America and Caribbean region.

For the second consecutive year, a military officer from a partner nation—Colombian Marine Lieutenant Colonel Eduar Alexander Michaels Bravo—will lead the task force as its deputy commander.

The task force’s mission is to work with partner nations to build security force capabilities in Latin America and the Caribbean through recurrent training events. The Marines and Sailors also are trained and equipped to provide timely responses to natural disasters and other potential crisis situations in the region.

“Our task organization and training will allow us to be the primary crisis response partner of choice,” said Colonel Robert Meade, USMC, the commanding officer of SPMAGTF-SC. “It’s also another large step toward the creation of the Multinational Maritime Task Force, which will be critical to regional assistance in the case of a natural disaster.”

SPMAGTF-SC will train and operate in the region until December to coincide with hurricane season and is scheduled to work in Belize, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador.

“Experience has taught us that in the aftermath of natural disasters, infrastructure to support response forces is seldom available. Therefore, our ability to respond quickly and effectively is directly linked to our interoperability with our navies,” said Major General Michael F. Fahey III, the commander of U.S. Marine Corps Forces, South. “This force is the embodiment of the spirit in this region—where friends and neighbors partner together to help and mutually support one another, especially in a time of need.”

SPMAGTF-SC’s mission is to work to promote a stable and prosperous region in Latin America and the Caribbean through integration, shared values and shared interests.

Cpl Carlos Jimenez, USMC

CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C. Marines, Sailors and Soldiers Combine Training to Improve Amphibious Readiness

Marines with 2nd Transportation Support Battalion, Combat Logistics Regiment 2, 2nd Marine Logistics Group participated in Exercise Resolute Sun, June 11-19.

The exercise allowed Marines to increase combat operational readiness in amphibious and prepositioning operations while conducting joint training with the Army and Navy during a joint logistics over-the-shore (JLOTS) scenario.

JLOTS provides operational movement capabilities to and from inaccessible areas. It is meant to strengthen interoperability between service branches so they can quickly build an improvised port and get equipment to and from wherever it is needed.

The Marines started the exercise at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., and convoyed more than 250 miles to Joint Base Charleston, S.C.

“We don’t get an opportunity to conduct long-range convoys like that all the time; it takes a lot of discipline to accomplish something of this scale,” said First Sergeant Brent Sheets of “Alpha” Company, 2nd TSB. “The Marines got to see that there is more behind their job than the routine mission they do every day in garrison.”

After the convoy reached Joint Base Charleston, the Marines embarked 38 vehicles onto USNS *Watkins* (T-AKR-315), which is used for prepositioning of ground vehicles and is designed to carry vehicles that can be driven on and off the ship.

After the cargo was embarked, *Watkins* set sail for Fort Story, Va., where the equipment was offloaded using a trident pier built by the U.S. Army’s 331st Transportation Company, 11th Transportation



Company-Level MOUT Training Prepares Marines for Real-Life Scenarios

Leathernecks with Company I, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, who refer to their unit as “Invictus,” spent more than 30 hours training nearly 150 Marines and Sailors during military operations on urban terrain (MOUT) training at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif., in late June. The training, which focused on safety, communication and situational awareness, was intended to enhance the Marines’ confidence and proficiency in the skillsets they need to operate in urban environments.

LCpl Aaron Harshaw, USMC

Left: PFCs Raul Arellano Jr., left, and Quinton Garrett, right, practice room-clearing techniques during MOUT training with Co I, 3/7 at MCAGCC Twentynine Palms, Calif., June 24. The unit trained in temperatures over 100 degrees while focusing on safety, communication and situational awareness.

LCPL AARON HARSHAW, USMC



LCPL AARON HARSHAW, USMC

Marines with Co I, 3/7 clear a building during MOUT training at MCAGCC Twentynine Palms, Calif., June 24. Members of the unit emphasized the importance of building trust during realistic training to adequately prepare them for combat situations.



LCPL SCOTT JENKINS, USMC

Above: Marines with 2nd TSB, CLR-2, 2nd MLG run aboard an Improved Navy Lighterage System as part of a JLOTS scenario during Exercise Resolute Sun at Fort Story, Va., June 17.

Battalion, 7th Transportation Regiment. Simultaneously, Amphibious Construction Battalion 2, Naval Beach Group 2 conducted a beach landing using the Improved Navy Lighterage System.

“We’ve worked smoothly with the Marines during this exercise. They are our main counterparts,” said Construction Mechanic First Class Mark Paystrup with Beach Master Unit 2, Battalion Cargo Group 10. “Because we work with them often, we are familiar with each other’s roles. What is more of an adjustment is working with the Army. It is always good to practice that interoperability between the services.”

The Navy-Marine Corps team works together all over the world, regularly conducting beach-landing operations together. The Army has only a few ship-to-shore assets, so the participating Marines



LCPL SCOTT JENKINS, USMC

2ndLt Justin Machacek, right, a platoon commander with 2nd TSB, CLR-2, 2nd MLG, works alongside Army Sergeant 1st Class Enrique Mendiet during the offload of USNS Watkins as part of Exercise Resolute Sun at Fort Story, Va., June 18. The exercise, which began at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., included a long-range convoy and the rare opportunity to work with the Army in ship-to-shore operations.

and Sailors made sure to capitalize on the training opportunity to improve interoperability with soldiers.

“What we are doing today is exactly how we’re going to fight when we need to,” said Lieutenant Colonel Jonathan Baker, the commanding officer of 2nd TSB. “We’ll never go to war alone. We’ll go as a coalition. It’s important to understand how to do this jointly.”

Another benefit to the joint training environment is fiscal responsibility with each branch only being held responsible for paying for the gear and supplies its servicemembers need.

“Doing a joint training exercise such as this one allows for all branches to get connected and get the same amount of training,” said Baker. “This is training that they have to do, so if we can get connected to that, it provides us with cost-saving opportunity and unique training situations that we would normally get through warfare.”

All 38 vehicles from 2nd TSB were offloaded and redeployed via convoy 220 miles back to Camp Lejeune within two days of USNS *Watkins*’ arrival in Virginia.

“It takes a lot of individual actions to make something like this happen. That’s the individual Marine knowing his job and doing it effectively,” said Captain Bryan Hassett, company commander of Alpha Co, 2nd TSB. “109 Marines worked together seamlessly as a unit to accomplish the mission, and that is something that needs to happen every time we go out, no matter where we are anywhere in the world.”

LCpl Scott Jenkins, USMC

KAMPALA, UGANDA **Marines Exchange Knowledge With Ugandan Soldiers**

This summer, U.S. Marines and Sailors with Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force – Crisis Response-Africa 19.2, Marine Forces Europe and Africa, advised members of the Uganda People’s Defence Force (UPDF) in reconnaissance skills, engineering and logistics at the Uganda Rapid Deployment Capability Center in Jinja, Uganda, and the Peace Support Operations Training Center in Singo, Uganda.

During the three-month training cycle, the SPMAGTF–CR-AF Ground Combat Element Marines worked in Singo to train members of the UPDF to become reconnaissance skills instructors. The training was designed to increase the Ugandan forces’ ability to train reconnaissance forces to better serve in regional peacekeeping and protect their country’s interests.



CPL MARGARET GALE, USMC

A Marine with SPMAGTF–CR-AF advises a member of the UPDF at Peace Support Operations Training Center, Singo, Uganda, June 12. The Marines shared their knowledge in reconnaissance, logistics and engineering with Ugandan forces to enhance their abilities in regional peacekeeping and infrastructure improvement.

“Over the course of the past couple of weeks we have taken the ‘crawl, walk, run’ approach with the Ugandans,” Lance Corporal Matthew Wade, a team leader with SPMAGTF–CR-AF, said June 13. “We started training alongside the UPDF members by covering weapons handling and safety rules, land navigation and reaction of enemy contact to lead us to the main focus of this iteration, which is patrolling tactics.”

In return for the tactics training given by the U.S. Marines, the Ugandans exchanged knowledge on their weapons systems, language, and formations and demonstrated fearlessness in maneuvering around wild bulls on patrol throughout the training areas.

The later portion of the partnership included counter-improvised explosive device (IED) training, improving patrolling and reporting information over radios. It was designed to increase the Ugandan soldiers’ confidence and capabilities in relaying information and avoiding potential IED threats while on reconnaissance patrols.

“The Ugandans receive input really well, they work and are eager to train,” said Wade. “It makes the learning process a lot easier and I have enjoyed working with them.”

While the reconnaissance skills training took place in Singo, U.S. Marine engineers worked in Jinja on furthering the UPDF’s knowledge on civil engineering and heavy equipment.

“For the past couple of weeks we have been advising the UPDF in bettering their engineer and logistic capabilities by starting with classroom knowledge on the capabilities and characteristics of the heavy equipment machines,” Corporal John Capwell, heavy equipment section head, said during the training. “During the upcoming weeks, students will be conducting practical application on the machines. Once they have mastered those technical skills, training will move into starting projects around the base, such as fixing roads and leveling hills to construct buildings.”

The Marines of SPMAGTF–CR-AF were confident that after the training, the Ugandan students would be able to use their knowledge to instruct future UPDF task forces responding to political crises and other regional challenges. The Ugandan soldiers will be able to apply their knowledge to help build and improve roads and infrastructure throughout their country.

“Knowing they are happy to come to work, it makes our day so much easier,” said Capwell. “They love to learn and ask questions which is great—that’s all we’re looking for ... If they keep doing that through their careers, they will be able to help a lot of people and immensely support their country.”

Cpl Margaret Gale, USMC



D-Day at Peleliu

By Dick Camp

Prelude

In the fall of 1944, General Douglas MacArthur was ready to achieve his cherished dream of returning to the Philippines. To protect his right flank during the return, it was decided that the island of Peleliu had to be captured. The coral island, some 6 miles long and 2 miles wide, was defended by 10,700 battle-hardened Japanese troops who were prepared to give up their lives for their Emperor. The veteran 1st Marine Division of Guadalcanal fame was ordered to dig them out.

At 8:30 a.m. on Sept. 15, 1944, 1stMarDiv stormed ashore on the island of Peleliu against fanatical Japanese resistance. The landing beaches were described as a hell on earth by the men who assaulted through murderous artillery, mortar and automatic-weapons fire. Hours after the landing, more than 200 Marines and Navy corpsmen had been killed, 1,146 were wounded and

58 were missing in action. Brigadier General O.P. Smith said, “These were very heavy losses and could not have been sustained for very many days without destroying the combat efficiency of the Division.”

Japanese Tank-Infantry Counterattack

At approximately 4:50 p.m., a cry went up from the 1stMarDiv front-line infantry. “Tanks!” An aerial observer had spotted tanks forming in defilade east of the ridges a short distance above the airfield. The electrifying shout brought the exhausted men out of their lethargy. “I saw a cloud of dust with the ugly snout of a ... [Japanese] tank at the head of it,” one noncommissioned officer wrote. “Then came another, then another from behind a bunker, another from here and one from there ... [Japanese] tanks pouring out of their hiding places dodging and swirling crazily about.”

The Marines were witnessing an at-

tempt by the Japanese commander to throw them back into the sea. This counterattack force, consisting of an estimated 13 to 15 light tanks of the 14th Infantry Division tank unit, supported by several hundred infantry, had been cleverly hidden behind the ridges north of the airfield.

The Japanese Type 95 Ha-Go light tank weighed 7.4 tons, had a crew of three—a commander, machine gunner and driver. It was armed with a 37 mm main gun and 27.7 mm Type 97 machine guns. LtCol Stuart reported that “the Japanese tanks were actually only light reconnaissance vehicles ... with only one-quarter inch to three eighths inch armor ... and were never intended for frontal action against heavy weapons.”

Major Nikolai S. Stevenson, the executive officer of 1st Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, was close to the edge of the airfield. “I saw to my horror, three Japanese tanks moving directly toward the center of our line. We had never encountered these



The Japanese Type 95 Ha-Go light tanks were no match for the bazookas carried by many Marines on Peleliu. Their three-man crews, including the soldier shown here, were frequent casualties throughout the battle.

“Suddenly the Sherman’s turret swiveled 180 degrees and let loose a 75 mm round that blew the turret right off the [Japanese] tank. It continued to run away like a beheaded chicken.”

in our previous campaigns [and] I wanted desperately to stop them.” He immediately set up a tank defense that employed the full list of antitank weapons.

Private First Class Robert L. Bungard rushed forward with his bazooka. “[He] coolly took a position directly in the face of a tank and destroyed the vehicle with his launcher,” according to his Navy Cross citation. “When two more Japanese tanks came crashing through the lines several minutes later, he again fired his launcher from an exposed position ... and destroyed the onrushing vehicles.” The 3.5-inch bazooka rounds easily penetrated the light armor, setting off stored ammunition and ripping the tanks apart.

Captain Richard Bruce Watkins wrote in his book, “Brothers in Battle, One Marine’s Account of War in the Pacific,” that he watched as “one of the [Japanese] got behind one of ours and was blazing away at the back of the Sherman. I remember screaming at our tank to look back ... when suddenly the Sherman’s turret

swiveled 180 degrees and let loose a 75 mm round that blew the turret right off the [Japanese] tank. It continued to run away like a beheaded chicken.”

Stevenson watched, entranced, as one of his men aimed a bazooka. “One missile hit the first tank, which burst into flame. The hatch flew open and as the crew struggled to escape, rifle shots picked them off like bugs. One bazooka misfired, but an intrepid Marine leaped forward and placed a hand grenade on the tank’s tread. The explosion caused the tank to lurch helplessly sideways, its motor roaring like a chorus of bulls.”

As described in his Navy Cross citation, Private First Class Dale C. Lyth “picked up his light machine gun and two belts of ammunition and, moving directly into the path of an attacking tank, deliberately exposed himself to its fire while he delivered accurate fire into the vision slot of the vehicle, killing its operator and stalling the tank within 30 feet of his gun. When the remainder of the tank crew

attempted to escape, he annihilated them with hand grenades.”

Private Dan Toledo “heard this rumbling sound and felt the ground shaking. I spun around and there was a Japanese tank bearing down on me. It was so close I could plainly see Japanese strapped to the side. They were dead. I pointed my submachine gun, pulled the trigger ... but click, it didn’t work! I grabbed a nearby grenade launcher and pointed it at the tank ... but it didn’t work or I was too scared and nervous to operate it properly ... I don’t know which.” The tank was so close it filled the young infantryman’s vision. “I dove down into the tiny chink I created in the ground and scrunched my body into a tight little ball. The tank treads rolled directly over me.” The hard coral sides held, keeping him from being crushed. “The tank then wheeled back around with the barrel aimed directly at me. Just at that moment when I should have died, the hatch opened and one of the tank crew popped his head to look around. That was

U.S. Marines inspect a destroyed Japanese Type 95 Ha-Go tank during the Battle of Peleliu in September 1944. The Ha-Go tanks weighed 7.4 tons and were armed with a main gun and machine guns.





Destroyed Japanese light tanks during a tank infantry counterattack on Sept. 15, 1944. Note the damage to the lightly armored “tankettes.” (USMC photo)

just enough time for a Marine nearby to drop a grenade through the hatch.”

The tanks’ advance, as one officer observed, “in what can best be described as two-echelon formations ... headed for the center of the 1st Battalion [5th Marine Regiment (1/5)]. About half of the enemy tanks had from eight to a dozen Japanese soldiers riding [tied] on the outside of the tanks.” Lieutenant Colonel Arthur J. Stuart, Commanding Officer, 1st Tank Battalion, verified the report after noting that he had seen pipe frames and an upended oil drum on the back of one wrecked tank.

The Japanese tanks passed diagonally across the 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment lines and struck at the junction between the 1st and 5th Regiments. Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Boyd’s 1/5 Marines described them as, “running around, wildly, apparently without coordination, within our lines firing their 37 mm guns with the riders on those tanks carrying external passengers yelling and firing their rifles.”

Major Gordon D. Gayle’s 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment was advancing across the southern edge of the airfield,

“as the Japanese tanks came roaring in on us. Very fortunately, I had my tank platoon right at hand—a matter of 50 yards or so away from where I was—and sent them into the fray at the critical time. The Japanese tanks were no match for our tanks ... and didn’t last long, although they did get into our front line, mostly right at the boundary between the 2nd Battalion and the 1st Battalion on the left.”

Maj Gayle took advantage of the situation, as noted in his Navy Cross citation:

“Immediately after repulsing a strong Japanese counterattack, Major Gayle skillfully seized the critical moment to cross the Peleliu airdrome, personally leading his battalion in the assault over fourteen hundred yards of open ground in the face of intense hostile mortar, artillery and machine-gun fire. Although later wounded, he refused evacuation to continue his duties, thereby contributing materially to the success with which his battalion seized and held the major portion of the airfield ... ”

Lieutenant Colonel Lewis W. Walt, executive officer, 5th Marines, watched the attack unfold from a position just to the right of 1/5. He observed “ ... four

Sherman tanks came onto the field from the 2/5 zone of action on the south end of the airfield and opened fire immediately on the enemy tanks. These four tanks played an important role in stopping the enemy tanks and also stopping the supporting infantry, the majority of which started beating a hasty retreat when these Shermans came charging down from the south. They fought a running battle and ended up in the midst of the enemy tanks.”

The Shermans quickly discovered that their armor-piercing 75 mm rounds tore right through the Japanese light tanks. They quickly switched to quick-fused HE rounds, which blasted the Type 95s apart. In the smoke and dust of the tank on tank melee, one of the Shermans was struck three times by bazooka rounds, indicative of the confusion caused by the counterattack.

Japanese Light Tank

The tanks offered a tempting target that few Marines could resist. Wild with excitement, hundreds of men opened fire with machine guns, automatic rifles, small arms and bazookas. Rifleman Russell Davis was hunkered down in the dirt

on top of a bank beside a bullet-riddled scrub palm. As the attack came closer, he brought his M1 rifle to bear and cut loose. "I fired on, and all thought of incoming fire had gone from my mind. There were pitching, bucking, wheeling shapes in the smoke and I wanted to hit them, and when one of them flamed up and rolled on its nose, I had a feeling of deep pleasure, and I was sure I had stopped it with my own fire. Later I realized that was unlikely ... but then I believed it, and hundreds of other riflemen believed the same thing."

As Davis watched, "two bazooka men posed on the lip of the bank like circus performers getting ready for a high-wire act ... the front man aimed and triggered a shot and the tank stopped and toppled over. One of the bazooka men cheered like a little boy, "Yay! Yay! That's us!"

The action was fast, furious and often confused. A Marine described the destruction of a tank only 10 yards from him: "A tank rushed for the machine gun on my right ... It was not 10 feet away when it burst into flame, leaving a trailing fire as it still rolled forward. The lower half of a twisted and burnt [Japanese] body fell not a pace from me. The machine gunners jumped to safety just in time as the tank came crashing over their position. A Marine rushed up to give the tank a squirt with his flamethrower, but the turret gun caught him square on the chest. One [Japanese] raised his head above the turret to have a look and was immediately shot to death. Another was killed as he tried to escape through the bottom hatch. Still another inside the tank raised a bloody and dirty white flag and got his hand shot off."

Lieutenant Colonel Russell E. Honsowetz of 2/1 said that when the Japanese tanks cut diagonally across the front of his battalion, they were subject to devastating fire into their flanks and didn't last long, although they did get into the front lines. "Two of them veered into my lines," he said, "and hurtled over a coral embankment, crashed into a swamp just behind the front [lines] where their crews, attempting to escape, were disposed of by the infantry."

Watkins wrote that, "... one tank had run through the 2nd Platoon position, running over Private First Class Brennan and straddling him and his flame thrower. However, he rose up behind it and was mainly responsible for its destruction by hitting it square on with flame as it stalled in the mud."

Watkins noted that he was later sum-



USMC

The Japanese light tanks were stopped by both Marine tanks and individual Marines throughout the battle. The open ground in some parts of the island did not provide any cover and left the Japanese tanks completely exposed.



USMC

More than 10,000 Japanese were killed during the Peleliu battle with another 2,500 captured. Their lightly armored tanks were "never intended for frontal action" according to LtCol Arthur J. Stuart, the commanding officer of 1st Tank Bn during the epic battle.

moned to Division headquarters after the battle because they thought one of his men was there. It was Brennan and he couldn't remember his name. He said the Japanese had taken it away after the second day. He was sent home. Watkins learned later that Brennan had been suffering from cerebral malaria and had recovered.

A second tank approached within 60

feet of Watkins' 1st Plt. "I called for antitank rifle grenades and PFC White ran up to me—but instead of firing, he handed me his weapon." Watkins' first grenade arched over the vehicle but his second hit the right tread, forcing it to stop. "The platoon then poured everything we had at point-blank range, killing the occupants as they tried to exit."

"A tank rushed for the machine gun on my right ... It was not 10 feet away when it burst into flame, leaving a trailing fire as it still rolled forward. The lower half of a twisted and burnt [Japanese] body fell not a pace from me."

Flamethrowers, bazookas and grenades were used by Marines to stop the Japanese “tankettes” as they pushed over the island of Peleliu, including this one destroyed on Sept. 15, 1944.



USMC

A third tank headed straight for the 75 mm pack howitzers of Battery E, 2nd Battalion, 11th Marines until a howitzer hit it with the first round, stopping it in its tracks. For good measure, a bazooka team fired a round into the stalled vehicle.

Meanwhile, 1/5 Marines opened up with everything they had—37 mm antitank guns, bazookas, AT grenades; all organic infantry weapons plus the 75s of the Shermans. A Navy dive bomber dropped a large bomb into what appeared to be a swarm of Imperial soldiers. The bomb seemed to do the trick as the Japanese infantrymen disappeared from the field.

Everyone on the airfield claimed credit for knocking out the tanks because everyone was shooting at them. Within minutes, the Japanese tank attack was stopped dead in its tracks—the counterattack failed. LtCol Stuart said that there was “no grounds for smugness in regard to our antitank prowess. Had the Japanese possessed modern tanks instead of tankettes and had they attacked in greater numbers,

the situation would have been critical.”

After the battle, there was an attempt to count the number of tanks in the attack. A study of the ground indicated that there may have been as many as 19 Japanese tanks. The possible discrepancy stemmed from the highly confused nature of the action itself, which made any count unreliable, and the fact that when it was over, many of the tanks had been so thoroughly demolished that it was impossible to tell which parts had belonged originally to which vehicle. One officer calculated that if every individual claim of a tank knocked out had been accepted at face value, there would have had to have been 179.5 of them.

Suffice it to say, the Japanese tank-infantry attack was a complete failure. While an estimated six Japanese tanks managed to overrun the front lines and penetrated to a depth of 150 yards, nowhere did they cause a break. Two Marines were crushed to death by the onrushing machines and a few others were burned or wounded by

flying fragments before the tanks were destroyed in their midst.

The Japanese launched several other sharp thrusts against various sectors of the Marine lines but none achieved the proportion and determination of the first attack. The most notable occurred at about 5:50 p.m., when two tanks supported by infantry started across the northern runway. The attack was again aimed at the junction of the 1st and 5th Marines. Both tanks were destroyed and the infantry was killed or dispersed before reaching the front line. Finally, before daylight on D+1, the last two Japanese tanks probed the lines but were quickly destroyed.

Author’s bio: Dick Camp, a retired Marine colonel, is the former director of operations for the National Museum of the Marine Corps, former deputy director and director (acting) of the Marine Corps History Division and a prolific author. He is a frequent contributor to Leatherneck.



Everyone on the airfield claimed credit for knocking out the tanks because everyone was shooting at them. Within minutes, the Japanese tank attack was stopped dead in its tracks—the counterattack failed.

**HONORING THE MARINE CORPS
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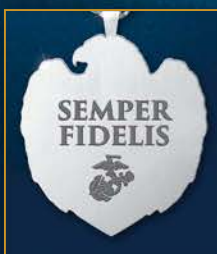
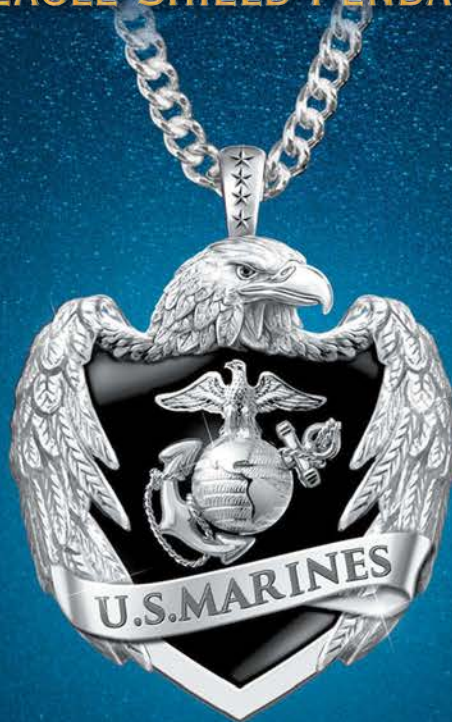
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World War II: 75 Years Ago

Tough Going for Easy Company

Their situation on Peleliu's Bloody Nose Ridge looked hopeless that night as the Japanese struck

By Sgt Joseph P. Donahue, USMC

"Easy" Company was digging in for the night. Platoon leaders dispersed their men quickly along the crest of the newly won position. Communications were tested. Orders for the night hummed from the command post to the platoon defensive lines just as darkness was settling. It was quiet on the lines.

But they were in dangerous territory. The cliffs and crags of Peleliu's Bloody Nose Ridge, where Japanese cave-dwellers were staging a spectacular defensive fight to the finish, hid draws and passes that broke company lines and harbored enemy infiltrators.

The regiment had suffered severe casualties in the first days of the drive

into the ridge. Easy Co had moved in two days ago to relieve a beleaguered unit of that regiment.

During those two days, Captain Warrick G. Hoops of New York City, company commander, had kept his command post virtually on the front lines.

His order halting the push had been given verbally. But the crest of the hill

was no place for the command post at night. He moved back 75 yards to a tiny plateau overlooking the beach road and the wreckage of Japanese officers' quarters.

"Easy One calling Easy."

Lieutenant Frank J. Miller of Glen Cove, Long Island, N.Y., twice wounded in the ridge fighting, was calling the command post. His right flank was on a ledge high above and to the right of the company nerve center.

"Unable to establish physical contact with Fox Company on right flank," came the disquieting message. "Terrain impossible."

But that wasn't the worst.

"Just detected a Japanese patrol of approximately 30 strong moving along draw in rear of lines," Miller added.

He didn't have to say that the Japanese had spotted the command post.

The bull voice of Capt Hoops clipped out an order.

"Frank," he roared into the phone, "draw back your right flank a little. Cover down with automatic weapon fire and keep me informed."

"Easy" Co had been pinned down the first day in the ridge but today had been different. Rushing, crawling and climbing, they'd pushed 350 yards, up one hill, down another, constantly under sniper and mortar fire of Japanese hidden in the caves and coral ruts of the treacherous terrain. Casualties had been comparatively light, considering the opposition "Easy" Co had beaten down.

They had welcomed the order to halt, and the rations of chow and ammunition that followed. The rough, concrete-like terrain ruled foxholes out, but piled chunks of coral formed a measure of protection. Bearded, dirty and sweaty, they dropped their tired bodies to the sun-baked, uneven ground, squirming for the angle that would be least uncomfortable. They paired off, planning to take turns dozing and watching.

But some 30 prowling Japanese interfered with those plans—particularly insofar as the 25 Marines in the company command post were concerned.

They doubled their defense perimeter. A Browning Automatic Rifle team moved in to support riflemen covering the trail which approached their position from the north and rear. Another trail led west to the beach road. Automatic fire covered that pass, also.

A new password was ordered.

First Lieutenant James Sullivan of San Diego, Calif., the company executive officer, checked his watch. It was 8:30 p.m. Minutes had elapsed since the last flare had broken overhead with a whispered "plop" to illuminate the ridge; its brilliance fading to cast eerie, grotesque

shadows. The ridge was dark and quiet.

Stones rattled down the side of the ridge skirting the command post.

"What's the password?" challenged a Marine.

A hand grenade was the only response. It landed between him and two other perimeter guards. There were screams of pain. Someone called, "Corpsman!"

A pharmacist's mate crawled toward the



First Sergeant Francis C. Roberts

injured Marines. He was stabbed by the Japanese who had killed the other three and faked a call for medical aid.

The Japanese patrol had circled the command post and was moving down the trail from the north to hit the Marine position from the rear. It was a typical Japanese infiltration maneuver. They carried nothing but hand grenades and bayonets.

"Why doesn't the BAR open up?" First Sergeant Francis C. Roberts of New Orleans, La., whispered, hardly hearing his own voice above the din of Marine rifle fire. He half knew the answer. A grenade had burst close to where he had

Miller and Gunnery Sergeant William F. Shea of Somerville, Mass., tried to draw Japanese fire away from the besieged area.

Cursing and taunting, they challenged the Japanese to "come up here and fight." But the enemy had their objective spotted. They knew their advantage.

Grenades were landing all along the edge of the plateau. The defenders moved back in search of better cover.

Lt Francis Edward Maybank of Long Island, N.Y., organized his communications men for a withdrawal—to save them and their valuable equipment. But he died with them when two grenades landed in their midst. Two Navy artillery liaison men died in the same blasts.

Calls for corpsmen and stretcher bearers went unanswered. All were casualties.

Capt Hoops, Lt Sullivan, Sgt Roberts and Lt Jay S. Ambrose of Bronxville, N.Y., a mortar officer, found themselves along a single line of defense. The situation looked hopeless.

Their ammunition was low, and the Japanese were closing in toward the stocks of grenades and ammunition which the Marines had been unable to reach when the attack opened.

"How's your ammo?" Lt Ambrose asked Roberts.

Before Roberts could reply that he was down to his last clip, a grenade struck.

"My legs," groaned Ambrose.

"Mine, too," said Capt Hoops. "Not bad, though," he added.

The radio operator was quiet—dead.

Lt Sullivan emptied his pistol in the direction of a moving shadow. There was a scream and a thud. "That's the bastard who threw it," said Sullivan.

Capt Hoops crawled toward the telephone, hoping to contact the battalion

Their ammunition was low, and the Japanese were closing in toward the stocks of grenades and ammunition which the Marines had been unable to reach when the attack opened.

seen the automatic weapon set in place.

It was tough going for the command post with Japanese grenades landing with deadly effectiveness on its outskirts, and Marines firing at every shadow.

Capt Hoops, still in communication with platoon leaders strung out along the top of the ridge, ordered them to hold their positions against possible frontal attack.

"And don't fire down here," he ordered. "You'd probably hit as many Marines as Japanese. We'll have to fight it out from here."

Above the CP, on their isolated ridge, Lt

commander, Lieutenant Colonel Spencer S. Berger. He made it and asked for more communications men.

Another grenade landed. Lt Sullivan twitched, muttered that he wanted to "check up on something," and crawled out. He never returned.

Both legs badly shattered, Lt Ambrose was unable to move.

"If only we had a machine gun," whispered Roberts to Ambrose. "I'm going to try to get one from the lines."

"Wish I could help you," returned the officer. "It's our only hope."

Roberts dragged the injured lieutenant to the edge of the plateau, rolled him off the ledge to the path toward the beach road. He was out of the danger zone at least temporarily. Later he was carried down the path to the beach road aid station by Corporal Fred N. Ludwigsen of Northport, N.Y., Private First Class Edward McDevitt of Philadelphia, Pa., and PFC Philip J. Robarge of Rice Lake, Wis.

The three had taken part in the defense of the CP. Robarge was slightly wounded.

Roberts crawled back, found Capt Hoops and PFC Joseph A. Rigney of Woodside, N.Y., firing at sounds of crunching coral and rustling underbrush.

Capt Hoops approved the machine-gun suggestion. "It's a gamble," he said, "but it's a chance."

He called to Lt William Goode Hudson Jr., of Birmingham, Ala., holding down the ridge position most accessible to the CP.

"Start a light .30 down here," he said. "We'll meet your man."

Before anyone could move, PFC Rigney was on his way toward Lt Hudson's position. More enemy grenades landed as he made his way along the side of the steep hill.

It was a miracle of instinct that guided his footsteps in the darkness. He met PFC James W. Ojida of North Bangor, N.Y., en route from the lines with the machine gun. Together, they carried the weapon back to the CP area.

By this time the Japanese virtually had moved into the company nerve center. The few surviving Marines defending the position were strung along an incline overlooking the plateau. And the Japanese had taken over the ammunition supply and were tossing Marine hand grenades.

Grenades were popping when Roberts tripped the trigger of the machine gun for the first time. He swept the command post area, his grin of triumph widening with every scream that meant a hit.

Two splashed within 20 yards as the officer and three men struggled to set up the machine gun. The Japanese seemed to know what was going on, but they couldn't locate the position of the gun.

One Japanese came crawling over the coral repeatedly whispering the password.

"You're a day late with that password," replied PFC Rigney, dropping him with rifle fire.

The rough, sharp coral made an unsteady base as Roberts fumbled to set up the tripod. Frantically, he threw it over a

pointed rock, and the gun was set in place. Rigney fed in the first belt of ammunition.

Grenades were popping when Roberts tripped the trigger of the machine gun for the first time. He swept the command post area, his grin of triumph widening with every scream that meant a hit.

The Japanese were ducking for cover, but a torrent of bullets cut them down. The machine gun jumped out of its position



PFC James W. Ojida



Cpl John W. Bonin

"The communications men," he muttered. "Hope your aim was bad on that one, Robbie."

But at that moment a cry came from the path to the beach road. "Wiremen over here," said a voice. And this time the password was given.

The machine gun chattered again, ripping the side of the ridge, spoiling a Japanese ruse that almost had worked.

The gun jammed. It was cleared just as a figure lunged toward the position. A Japanese, carrying a bayonet in one hand and a grenade in the other, was cut in half 4 feet from the hot muzzle of the gun.

The fourth and last belt of ammo was half gone when a flare brightened the terrain. The gun sprayed the north trail again. Not a movement was seen or heard.

Rigney lifted his head above the coral ledge as the flare settled close to the ground.

"They're stacked like cordwood," he shouted, pointing to the CP area where the Japanese had moved in—to stay.

They waited half an hour in silence. There were no more hand grenades; the hush was deathly, nerve-wracking.

It was almost midnight when Capt Hoops called to Lt Hudson to send a BAR team back from the lines to cover the withdrawal of the CP survivors. He didn't know that the only survivors were himself and the other three Marines in the machine gun position.

Cpls John W. Bonin of Spring, Texas, and Willard F. Tenney of Pittsburg, Kan., crawled down the side of the ridge.

The four survivors, Capt Hoops, Sgt Roberts and PFCs Rigney and Ojida, followed Tenney to the front lines while Bonin covered with his automatic weapon. The command post was set up on the front lines for the rest of the night. And the rest of the night was quiet.

At dawn they found Lt Sullivan, badly wounded, more dead than alive. Apparently he had been hit just before he crawled out of the CP the night before. He died aboard a hospital ship.

Lt Ambrose, evacuated by McDevitt, Ludwigsen and Robarge, recovered.

Thirty dead Japanese were found in and around the CP area. One had been killed as he tried to operate the telephone between company and battalion headquarters.

The Japanese defenders of Peleliu's Bloody Nose Ridge had been beaten at their own game. And although it had been tough going for Easy Co, it had this consolation for the loss of the Command Post—the withdrawal was not made until the attackers had been wiped out.

And the "withdrawal" was made to the front lines. 🇺🇸



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"We're having C-rations? This is carrying nostalgia too far!"



"I believe, recruit, you have to cut your own meat."



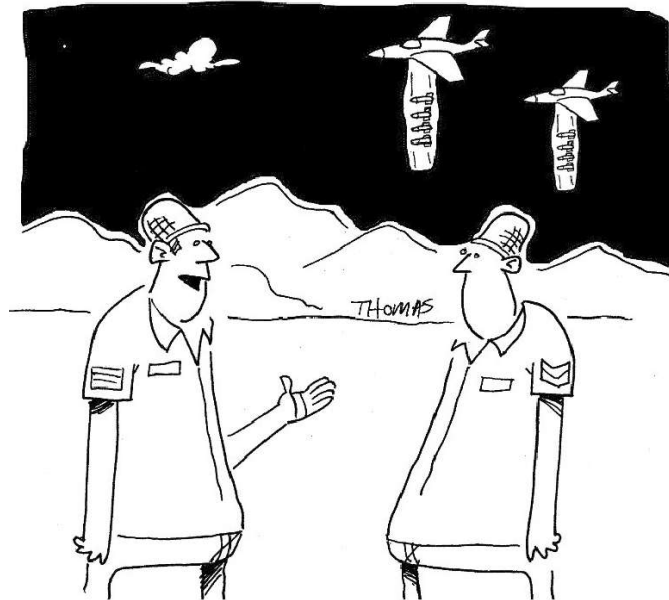
"Say 10 Our Fathers and 10 Hail Marys ... Oorah."



"If the enemy's in range, so are you."



"No sprinkles?"



"The enemy is going to find out we have overnight delivery."



"There are those who say that Kelly doesn't take war seriously enough."



"I laugh at his mumbling in case it's a joke he's telling so he'll know I laughed at it."



SGT MARIONNE T. MANGRUM, USMC

R. Lee Ermey, left; SgtMaj Harold G. Overstreet, USMC (Ret), 12th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, center; and SgtMaj Michael P. Barrett, 17th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, attend the 31st annual USMC Enlisted Awards Parade and Presentation at Quantico, Va., on Sept. 25, 2013.

The Cadence of Friendship— SgtMaj Harold G. Overstreet and R. Lee Ermey

By LtCol Alex Hetherington
USMC (Ret)

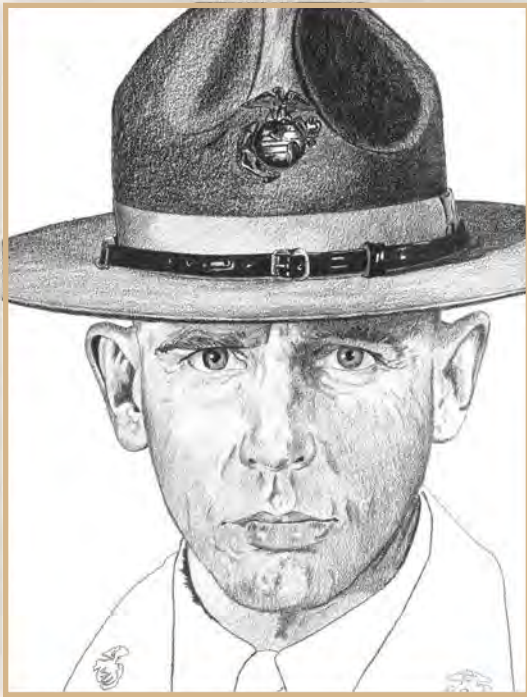
It's fitting that two of the most well-known Marines to wear campaign covers at Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD) San Diego became close friends after meeting at a Drill Instructors Association event in the mid-1990s. This was shortly after Sergeant Major Harold G. "Gene" Overstreet retired as the 12th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps (SMMC), and approximately a decade after R. Lee Ermey rose to prominence with his 1987 performance in the now-classic movie "Full Metal Jacket." As with many lasting friendships among Ma-

If SgtMaj Overstreet retains a lasting reputation as the definitive "DI's DI" within the Corps, R. Lee Ermey continues to inhabit the role of DI in the popular imagination.

rines, it was forged on the basis of shared experience and mutual respect, but in this instance, it was also due to their prominent roles as Marine Corps drill instructors and their mutual desire to give back.

Overstreet and Ermey were both born in 1944 and grew up 570 miles apart in farming communities on the great plains of Texas and Kansas respectively. Over the ensuing decades and until shortly before Ermey's passing on April 15, 2018, they frequently supported events for the veteran community, as well as the Young Marines, a national nonprofit youth education and service program for boys and girls.

Today, SgtMaj Overstreet is best known for his tenure as the 12th SMMC, during which he served as the senior enlisted advisor to the 30th Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Carl E. Mundy Jr., from 1991 to 1995. However, the accomplishments that most fully set him apart are his remarkable four tours of duty aboard MCRD San Diego, not including



COURTESY OF SGTMAJ HAROLD G. OVERSTREET, USMC (RET)

Portrait of SgtMaj Overstreet in 1974.



COURTESY OF LTCOL ALEX HETHERINGTON, USMC (RET)

It was R. Lee Ermey's award-winning role in "Full Metal Jacket" that seared his image into the American consciousness as the now almost mythical character of Senior Drill Instructor GySgt Hartman.

his own passage through boot camp there in 1966. Few, if any, living Marines have spent as much time on the drill field, or have had more to do with shaping standards of performance for the 0911 military occupational specialty (MOS) than the relentlessly cheerful and motivated Marine affectionately known today as "SgtMaj O."

After service in Vietnam during 1967 and 1968, SgtMaj Overstreet spent the majority of the 1970s in various recruit training billets, including junior drill instructor, senior drill instructor, series gunnery sergeant and chief instructor. When asked about the heavy demands placed on individuals in these critical training positions at the time, SgtMaj O explained, "I was on duty for 78 consecutive, often 18-hour days during my first training cycle as a Green Belt." After excelling at each level of recruit training instruction, he was reassigned to Drill Instructor (DI) School, where his talent for mentorship came to the forefront as an 0911 instructor, drillmaster and chief instructor. The culmination of this run to the top of the DI hierarchy was undertaking the enormous task of recording every movement in the Marine Corps Drill and Ceremonies Manual onto videotape for use as a comprehensive visual reference—an achievement that remains a staple of the DI School program of instruction almost 40 years later.

Even at this point, SgtMaj Overstreet was far from done with leaving his mark on recruit training. After his promotion to sergeant major in the early 1980s, he returned to MCRD San Diego to serve as a recruit training battalion and then the recruit training regiment sergeant major. Following those billets, he was posted to

the most senior enlisted position of Depot sergeant major in 1990, his last stop before appointment as the 12th SMMC.

If SgtMaj Overstreet retains a lasting reputation as the definitive "DI's DI" within the Corps, R. Lee Ermey continues to inhabit the role of DI in the popular imagination due to the virtual sneak peek into a Vietnam-era boot camp squad bay he provided for an audience of millions. As a Marine, he served what was then a standard two-year tour as a drill instructor at MCRD San Diego from 1965 to 1967. He also deployed to Vietnam for 14 months in 1968 and 1969. Medically retired as a



MC2 STEPHEN MURPHY, USN

Retired Marine R. Lee Ermey, left, signs an autograph for LCpl Jay Clayton, Fleet Anti-terrorism Security Team Co, at U.S. Naval Support Activity Bahrain on Dec. 8, 2008.



USMC

SgtMaj Harold G. Overstreet
12th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps



COURTESY OF SGTMAJ HAROLD G. OVERSTREET, USMC (RET)

Radio personality Mark Kessler gets a “high and tight” from SgtMaj Harold G. Overstreet, while Gunny R. Lee Erme provides close supervision.

staff sergeant in 1972 due to injuries sustained in the line of duty, he went on to attend the University of Manila in the Philippines. While there, he took on roles in locally produced films.

Erme was eventually hired as a technical advisor to director Francis Ford Coppola for the movie “Apocalypse Now,” which was filmed on location in the Philippines. In the course of his on-set duties for the movie, Erme made his first U.S. box office screen appearance playing the small role of a U.S. Army 1st Cavalry Division helicopter pilot. After this fortuitous start, he embarked on an extensive

and accomplished 38-year acting career, amassing 125 screen and TV credits, amid an untold number of appearances in a wide range of entertainment formats. He also worked narrating popular video games and serving as a pitchman for nationally televised advertising campaigns.

Perhaps the best illustration of the impact of Erme’s career, which encompassed more than 70 appearances in feature films alone, is the distinguished company he keeps as one of the few actors to appear in three movies nominated for the Best Picture Academy Award: “Apocalypse



GYSGT F.B. ZIMMERMAN, USMC

SgtMaj Harold G. Overstreet, USMC (Ret), center, shares a story with fellow Marines at the home of SgtMaj Henry H. Black, USMC (Ret), 7th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps.

Now” (1979), “Mississippi Burning” (1988) and “Toy Story 3” (2010). While the Internet Movie Database (IMDB) lists his acting “trademarks” as: “1) Known for playing military drill instructors, 2) A commanding and dynamic delivery, and 3) A tough and often scary screen presence,” he stated a preference for comedy over drama in his later career, demonstrated by his contributions to the “Toy Story” franchise and routine casting in other popular productions such as “Kung Fu Panda,” “The Simpsons,” “Sponge Bob Square Pants,” and “Family Guy.” From 2002 on, he most consistently dedicated his time to hosting the History Channel shows “Mail Call” and “Lock n’ Load with R. Lee Erme,” as well as the Outdoor Channel’s “Gunny Time,” all of which featured his knowledge of military hardware and “thorough enjoyment of getting himself knee deep in brass,” according to SgtMaj O.

Despite a lifetime of notable achievements, it was R. Lee Erme’s award-winning role in “Full Metal Jacket” that seared his image into the American consciousness as the now almost mythical character of Senior Drill Instructor Gunnery Sergeant Hartman. Although the ruthlessness and realism of the portrayal were stylistically emblematic of renowned director Stanley Kubrick, it was the authenticity of the performance that made it unforgettable. As in “Apocalypse Now,” Erme was originally hired as a technical advisor on the set of “Full Metal Jacket,” but his striking bearing, imaginative and fluent use of the Marine Corps vernacular and talent for ad-libbing soon made it clear that he was uniquely suited for the role. It was reputedly the only instance in Kubrick’s long directorial resume of celebrated screen performances that he allowed an actor to improvise his own lines. In quotes attributed to Erme on his IMDB webpage, he states that “I got to write almost everything I said ... Kubrick ate it up. He loved it. He just let me go crazy.”

When SgtMaj Overstreet was asked if Erme ever discussed how his time at MCRD San Diego was reflected in the role, he replied, “Based on the era in which he was a DI, and the limited time available to get recruits prepared for combat in Vietnam, much of what you heard and saw from him in the movie is likely to have been variations on things he witnessed at the Depot.”

A culminating moment for R. Lee Erme took place in 2002 in a ceremony at Marine Barracks Washington, D.C., where he received the honorary rank of gunnery sergeant from the 32nd Commandant of the Marine Corps, General James L. Jones, USMC (Ret), thenceforth being known simply as “The Gunny” among friends and acquaintances, as well as in his ongoing work as a TV host.

At this time, the relationship of “SgtMaj O and The Gunny” also rapidly evolved beyond a shared affinity for “old cars, old tractors and going to the swap meet,” to a purpose-driven partnership centered around support for veterans. They partnered to host a variety of golf tournaments, motorcycle rides and range days to raise funds for veteran causes. Some of their most fulfilling and



COURTESY OF LTCOL ALEX HETHERINGTON, USMC (RET)

SgtMaj O and The Gunny during one of their last appearances together while co-hosting the Young Marines Golf Tournament at Marine Corps Base Quantico on Sept. 18, 2017. In 2019, the event was renamed the Young Marines R. Lee Erme Memorial Golf Tournament with SgtMaj Overstreet continuing in his capacity as host of the event.

In the words of SgtMaj O, “we both loved being involved with teaching young people some of the basic Marine Corps skills and then putting them in charge—it’s very satisfying to watch them gain confidence and want to be in charge.”

consistent work together also started around this time when SgtMaj O delivered a request for The Gunny to serve as the celebrity spokesman for the Young Marines, which was heartily accepted. In the words of SgtMaj O, “we both loved being involved with teaching young people some of the basic Marine Corps skills and then putting them in charge—it’s very satisfying to watch them gain confidence and want to be in charge.”

At The Gunny’s interment at Arlington National Cemetery in January, SgtMaj O further summarized this shared vocation, “People would ask him to do all kinds of events, and ... there was always one simple engagement rule: if it was for veterans or the Young Marines, he was in—he would always do it ... people would stand in line all day just to get an autograph and a picture with him, and he was so gracious that he really made them feel good.” Time passes and roles change, but as the trajectories of these two remarkable Marines attest, an old DI never loses reverence for the contributions of a fellow cadence caller.

Author’s bio: LtCol Alex Hetherington is a retired Marine aviator, primarily serving with the squadrons of Marine Aircraft Group 39 flying the AH-1W helicopter. He is the current show director of the Marine Military Expos, sponsored by the Marine Corps League. 🇺🇸

DI Jones

By MSgt Luis P. Magana, USMC

Editor's note: The following article received an honorable mention in the 2019 Leatherneck Writing Contest. Major Richard A. "Rick" Stewart, USMC (Ret) sponsored the contest, which is open to enlisted Marines, through the Marine Corps Association & Foundation. Upcoming issues of Leatherneck will feature other honorable mention entries.

Recruit Jones is hiking. His pack grows heavier, and his legs are tired. Mental and physical exhaustion is setting in. As the Crucible goes on, doubt enters his mind. The environmental elements have broken him down, but he continues to march with his platoon to the bayonet assault course. Shouting, explosions in the distance, lining up—he doesn't know what is going on. He doesn't care what is going on. All he can focus on is how cold and wet he is, his misery, his self-pity and the self-doubt within his mind. There is nothing positive in sight.

As Jones and his fire team prepare to execute the course, he observes other recruits finishing their assault. They are soaked from head to toe in the course's muddy, cold water. They look defeated and absolutely miserable. He also observes a significant line of recruits waiting to be medically triaged by a corpsman. They await their turn—slouched, defeated and full of self-pity. To Jones's amazement, the recruits are invisible to the swarming drill instructors as they orchestrate chaos and ensure that the vast majority of recruits execute the course properly. Jones succumbs to his mental weakness and sees an opportunity to escape from executing the course. He falls out without permission and stumbles to the corpsman's line. He knows there is nothing wrong with him, but he continues. Other recruits also notice this opportunity and make their way toward relief.

The drill instructors now sense their weakness, and they swoop through the darkness, snatching up the majority of them, forcing them to complete their mission. They force the mentally weak recruits to challenge themselves. The recruit makes it to the corpsman's line,



WO BOBBY J. YARBROUGH, USMC

The Crucible is a 54-hour culminating event at recruit training that requires future Marines to work as a team and overcome challenges. Recruits (above and below) with Co A, 1st RTB, complete the Crucible aboard MCRD Parris Island, S.C., June 14.



SGT DANA BEESLEY, USMC

somehow unscathed. Jones is relieved and contemplates a false medical issue to bring him past the event index time.

As he stands in line, Jones grows ashamed, embarrassed and regretful as he realizes how selfish he is for not attempting to complete the course just as all of his fellow recruits are doing. He realizes that he has deprived himself of

an opportunity for development through hardship and challenge. Will the title that he will soon earn be diminished? He is the only one who knows. As he shaves every morning, he will know the answer as he is forced to look at himself in the mirror.

Thirteen years later. Boom, boom, boom! It is 2 a.m. Senior Drill Instructor



Recruits with Co B, 2nd RTB, complete numerous challenges while running the obstacle course on MCRD Parris Island, S.C., May 30. The "O" course is made up of various obstacles and is designed to help recruits build confidence by overcoming physical challenges.

LCPL DYLAN WALTERS, USMC

Staff Sergeant Jones awakes to pounding on his duty hut pine. "Recruit Ortega requests permission to speak to Senior Drill Instructor Staff Sergeant Jones, Sir!" The senior drill instructor is the only one remaining on duty since he elected to send his team home for rest and refit. His eyes remain closed, not wanting to open. SSgt Jones debates whether he will tell the recruit to simply go away. Boom, boom, boom! "Recruit Ortega requests permission to speak to Senior Drill Instructor Staff Sergeant Jones, Sir!"

The pine's echoing in the dark squad bay resonates, and the volume of the recruit sounding off is respectable. It motivates SSgt Jones to open his eyes. He allows Recruit Ortega to enter the duty hut to converse with him. The recruit enters. He is slouched, defeated and full of self-pity. He states that he can no longer continue recruit training as it is too difficult and he is ready to go home. SSgt Jones knows what the recruit is trying to do and vivid memories of his own recruit training failures surface in his thoughts. He will

not allow his recruit to make those same mistakes.

He tells the recruit to close his eyes. He tells him to picture graduation day in his dress uniform, marching the pass in review with "The Marines' Hymn" echoing across the parade deck. Excited family members are in the reviewing stands, waiting for their new Marines to be dismissed, marking the completion of recruit training. SSgt Jones inquires about who would attend his graduation, and the recruit states that his mother and fiancée would be present. He tells the recruit to imagine his platoon being dismissed, his mother and fiancée running up to him, embracing him, smiling, full of joy and pride because he has earned the title. SSgt Jones now asks the recruit to think about what he would see when gazing upon himself in the mirror if he were allowed to quit and deprive himself of an opportunity for development through hardship and challenge.

The recruit stands silent, but the senior drill instructor knows. He asks the recruit

to now imagine his mother seeing him at home after failing to earn the title and failing to complete his mission. What would she see? The recruit stands silent. SSgt Jones states that she would see her own personal failure to mentor, inspire, guide and challenge her child to be successful in his endeavors. She would feel embarrassment, remorse and sadness when seeing herself in the mirror.

He tells the recruit to stop being selfish, to stop dwelling in negativity and doubt, to take on the challenge as so many before him have done and to succeed. The recruit's breathing becomes labored, and he begins to cry. He sobs uncontrollably, and he is allowed this moment of weakness. SSgt Jones orders him to get out of the duty hut and explains that his progress would be monitored over the next few weeks.

Graduation day has come. "Platoon 3209, dismissed." Now, Private First Class Ortega has not only earned the title, but he has been recognized as a squad leader and the recipient of a meritorious promotion.



Sgt Jordan Doxtader, a student at Drill Instructor School, practices squad bay procedures on MCRD Parris Island, S.C., May 7.

LCPL DYLAN WALTERS, USMC



Left: For the first time since he left home for recruit training, PFC Nicholes Kelley visits with his family during Family Day at MCRD Parris Island, Feb. 28.

WO BOBBY J. YARBROUGH, USMC

The title is not diminished, there is no regret, and there is only success.

SSgt Jones is a successful leader with the ability to shape the environment in which he and his Marines are operating. Marines often operate in high-stress environments where negativity and the risk of failure are prevalent. Inexperienced Marines will ultimately look toward the personal example of their leadership to help guide them to the path they should take.

Initially, Jones was unsuccessful in his recruit training endeavors due to his lack

of personal experience and being presented with an opportunity to escape rigorous training. His failure serves as a painful reminder and lesson throughout his career. Success of Marines is often tied to their leaders being able to identify failure points in their subordinates, then step in to provide positive mentorship and guidance. Successful leaders are not afraid to place their Marines in situations in which they have to face and overcome adversity. A completed mission, regardless of the outcome, will provide valuable information for improvement and ultimately

a foundation to stabilize future growth.

When SSgt Jones encounters a mirror image of himself as a recruit, he shapes Recruit Ortega's environment by taking his mind off of the negative aspects of recruit training and reminding him of the goal of which he has lost sight. SSgt Jones utilizes his own personal failure and lessons learned to provide positive mentorship and guidance to give his recruit a better understanding of what he is feeling and how his actions will affect himself and others. Leaders, followers and Marines who are aware of their ability to shape the environment in which they operate will inherently be more successful.

Author's bio: MSgt Magana serves as the Correctional Programs Manager, Brig Company, Security and Emergency Services Battalion, Camp Pendleton, Calif. He has served in various occupations and billets to include enlisted musician (MOS 5524), corrections specialist and counselor (MOS 5831 and 5832), academic instructor at the corrections formal school, drill instructor, and security platoon commander. He is currently scheduled to transfer to serve as staff noncommissioned officer in charge of the Marine Corps Absentee Collection Unit. 🇺🇸



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¹Injury Facts, 2017 Edition, National Safety Council.

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One-Man Stand



By
Kyle Watts

The tank retriever ground to a halt on the beach. A gaggle of amtracs and tanks collected on the scene, awaiting its arrival. Harold Riensche climbed down from the cab and dropped into the soft sand. Waves off the Gulf of Tonkin lapped against the shore in the distance. Anywhere else, he might have relaxed and enjoyed the view.

Instead, he absorbed the mess that was now his responsibility. A tank turret protruded above a pit full of mud. The main gun seemed impotent without the tank visible beneath it. Quicksand nearly swallowed the vehicle whole. A tow pintle lay 3 feet below the surface. They would have to dig it out. Even then, how would they break the suction? The winch would have to work. Riensche thought through the grueling task ahead. A lieutenant with the amtracs interrupted his planning.

“Well, Staff Sergeant, what do you think? Better hold your retriever right there, or someone will have to come get YOU out!”

“Thanks, Sir. We’ll take it from here.”

Riensche understood why his company commander “suggested” he should come along on this recovery. As the maintenance chief for “Bravo” Company, 3rd Tank Battalion, Riensche typically oversaw maintenance back at the company headquarters (HQ). Sergeant Craig Ammon, the retriever’s commander, was competent and capable. The extravagant nature of this tank’s predicament, however, brought many “take charge types” to provide opinions on the operation. The commanding officer (CO) wanted Riensche’s extra stripe to manage any interference. The five-man recovery crew went to work.

Lance Corporal Robert Walkley and Private First Class Jimmy Dorsett stripped off their blouses and grabbed shovels. They struggled to move in the mud digging out the tow pintle. The rest of the Marines found their duties equally difficult. Everything was heavy in their



MGySgt Harold Riensche

line of work. Corporal Mike Foster maneuvered the retriever behind the tank. Riensche and Ammon removed equipment to lower the front spade, covering the width of the vehicle. Foster drove the spade forward into the ground to lock the retriever in position. They trekked back and forth through the mud, arranging snatch blocks and the winch cable. By the time they were ready to make their first attempt, all five Marines were spent.

Foster started the winch. The cable tightened. The 60-ton retriever slid forward, plowing up sand. The tank did not move an inch.

Riensche flagged down two of the tanks that were providing security and moved them behind the retriever. He ran tow cables from the retriever out to each

tank. He hoped the additional 96 tons would provide an anchor. Foster spun up the winch once more. The retriever screamed at maximum horsepower. The winch sparked and spewed smoke. Riensche gave the signal to cut it off. The tank still would not budge.

Riensche devised a less conventional plan. He sent the crew to cut long reeds out of a nearby marsh. Meanwhile, he crafted balls of C4 and fused them with blasting caps. He taped the explosives to each reed, jabbed them into the muck around the tank and wired everything together.

Foster started the winch a final time. When the retriever reached maximum horsepower, Riensche touched off the C4. Mud churned and flew up the sides of the tank. The suction broke, and the

tank emerged slowly onto solid sand. All five crewmembers dropped beside the retriever, too exhausted to celebrate their victory. By the time they stowed their gear and hooked up the tank on a tow bar, the sun was setting. They backed the tank into the waves to wash off the mud. They joined their vehicles in the water, fully clothed, praying it might cleanse their stench. With tank in tow, the retriever followed the amtracs 6 miles back to their base at Cua Viet. Riensche told the crew to rest and prepare for the trip home in the morning.

Dawn of March 24, 1969, arrived too soon. The recovery crew had filled a gap in the perimeter, rotating turns on watch all night so no one felt rested. They refueled, connected a tow bar back to the tank, and departed. Afternoon arrived before they reached the Route One bridge into Dong Ha.

Riensche radioed their progress back to HQ while they waited for their turn to cross. Another transmission came over the net as he tuned in.

“Bravo 6, this is Bravo 3. Be advised, I’ve got two tanks hit by mines. We are buttoning up now.”

Lieutenant Pete Ritch and his three tanks had swept west from Gio Linh with a company of Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) soldiers. They moved 5 miles out and were on their way back when the first tank hit a mine. Ritch radioed for the ARVN to stop and set up security.

When Riensche heard the lieutenant’s call to company HQ, he checked his watch. It was already 4 p.m. Riensche jumped into the conversation. “Bravo 3, this is Bravo 9. What’s your location? We can come help get you out.”

As his Marines repaired the track, Ritch watched the ARVN continue marching as if nothing happened. One of his operable tanks stopped to provide security, while the third continued onward. Two hundred meters ahead, that tank also hit a mine. Ritch contacted the officer in charge of the ARVN soldiers to make them stop, but again, they continued marching with no regard for the Americans’ predicament.

When Riensche heard the lieutenant’s call to company HQ, he checked his watch. It was already 4 p.m. Riensche jumped into the conversation.

“Bravo 3, this is Bravo 9. What’s your location? We can come help get you out.”

“Bravo 9, we are five clicks west of A2, heading east. We are buttoning up now and should be moving shortly. I think we can limp it back to Gio Linh.”

It did not feel right. The damage sounded light but would take time to short-track the tanks. Once the repairs were complete, they would move no more than 5 miles per hour. Ritch had to get his tanks back to base before dark. They were in the heart of Leatherneck Square, an ironic name for the enemy-infested area just south of

the Demilitarized Zone. It was no place to spend the night in disabled tanks. The retriever currently sat less than 15 miles away. Riensche decided the previous day’s recovery, now extended over 24 hours, could wait.

“Roger that Bravo 3. Heading your way. Get buttoned up, and we’ll meet you back at Gio Linh. We’ll put both tanks behind the retriever and get you to Dong Ha before dark.”

Riensche informed the recovery crew of the change in plans. They unhooked the tank and headed north. By the time they reached Gio Linh, Lt Ritch was nowhere in sight.

“Bravo 3, this is Bravo 9. What’s your status?”

“Same location. First tank buttoned up, the second is giving us a hard time, over.”

Ritch could never make it back to Gio Linh before dark now on his own.

“Roger that Bravo 3. Sit tight. We’re coming out to get you.”

The retriever rolled through the wire down the same road Ritch had taken. As they moved, Ritch informed Riensche of the ARVN company heading the



Lt Pete Ritch and his crew with their tanks at Khe Sanh, Vietnam, in 1969.

retriever's way. For a third time, Ritch requested that the ARVN company stop and provide security for the retriever. Less than a mile down the road, the column of soldiers came into view. Riensche told Foster to halt. He stood on top of the cab, waiting for someone to stop. Some of the soldiers bowed as they walked, while some waved. Most passed without a word. The entire company, over 200 strong, marched past the retriever toward their home at Gio Linh.

"So much for our security?"

With or without the ARVN, Riensche

"Alright, Mike, let's go get them. Follow those tank tracks."

Foster accelerated. The retriever lurched backward with the sudden forward motion. It shifted weight just enough to trigger a pressure plate beneath them.

The mine heaved the retriever's rear end off the ground. The Marines rocked from their seats into the steel surrounding them. When things settled, Ammon, Walkley, and Dorsett exited their hatches to inspect the damage. Riensche dropped to the ground behind them. The right side track lay broken in multiple places. Two sets of

blankly down between his legs into the vehicle. Riensche studied Foster while he finished with the radio. He looked tired. Riensche had seen him worse. This was their second time together in Vietnam. On their first deployment, Riensche and Foster carried an M-60 together on ambush patrols. They never expected to see each other in country a second time. When Riensche arrived, Foster extended his tour to stay with him. Foster was not even supposed to be there.

"Hey Mike, you want to stand watch first, and I'll go down and help? One of us has to stay up here."

Foster straightened and eased up from his hatch.

"Naw, Chief. We'll take care of it. You stay here."

He disappeared over the side of the retriever to join the others. Riensche returned to the headset to contact Lt Ritch.

"Bravo 3, this is ..."

An AK-47 bullet smacked into the .50-cal. ammo can inches from Riensche's face. Another ricocheted off the receiver and zipped past his head. Round after round followed, striking steel all around the hatch. Riensche's legs went limp, and he fell inside the retriever. As he checked himself for holes, the volume of automatic fire swelled outside. He peered into the periscope, looking over the right side of the retriever. It was shot out. He turned to the left side periscope. It was shot out

They were surrounded. Riensche grabbed the headset.

"Bravo 6, this is Bravo 9, we are under attack!"

Heavy small arms fire all around. We need help now!"

knew they could not abandon Ritch. The retriever set off once more alone.

After a few more miles, Riensche decided they had to be getting close. They crossed a large, dried up rice paddy and came over the far berm in a set of old tank tracks. Riensche ordered Foster to halt again. Waist-high elephant grass surrounded the retriever. A small, grassy mound stuck out of the earth 300 meters off, but the terrain was otherwise flat. From Ritch's directions, Riensche figured the tanks were less than 1,000 meters away.

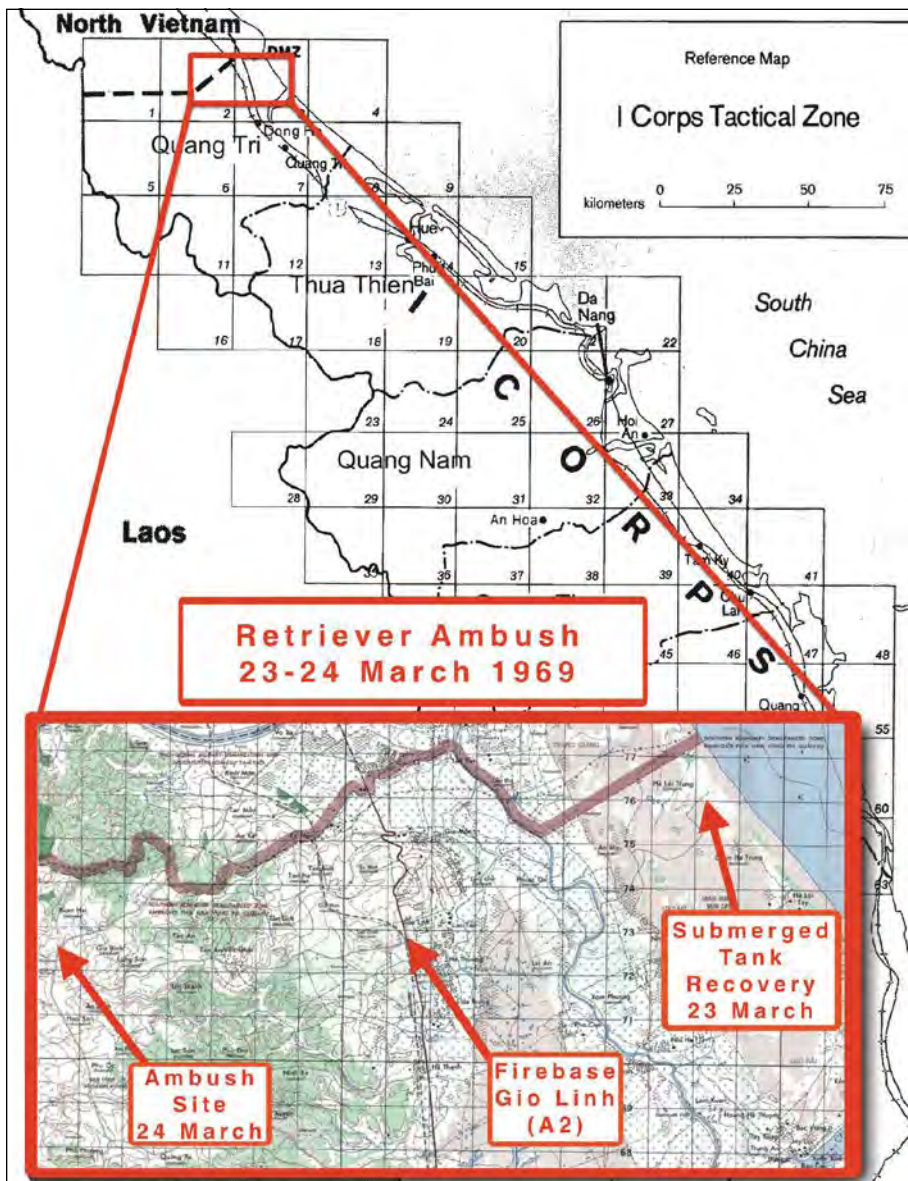
rear road wheels sheared off completely. The Marines hung their heads, knowing hours of strenuous work were required to button it up. Riensche climbed on top of the vehicle and crossed over to the tank commander (TC) hatch while the other three got to work. Standing behind the mounted .50-caliber machine gun, he grabbed the headset to call in their situation.

Foster climbed out of the driver's hatch and sat on the rear of the opening. He put his feet up on the front edge, resting his elbows on his bent knees. He stared



This tank is being towed by a retriever. The helmet of the driver, left, is visible in the driver's hatch. The tank commander, center, stands behind the 50-cal. with his back to the camera. The crane operator, right, stands half exposed in the crane operator's hatch. The last crewman, the rigger, sits in full view. No hatch existed above the rigger's seat.

COURTESY OF USMC VIETNAM TANKER'S ASSOCIATION



as well. They were surrounded. Riensche grabbed the headset.

“Bravo 6, this is Bravo 9, we are under attack! Heavy small arms fire all around. We need help now!”

He dropped the radio and grabbed an M16 inside the cab. He popped up, half exposed in the TC hatch. A North Vietnamese Army (NVA) soldier flashed through the grass. Riensche fired three rounds before shifting his aim at more movement to his left. He adjusted aim again and again. They were everywhere. The first magazine drained quickly. He fumbled with a second. Bullets fragmented off the side of the retriever and cracked through the air. The concentration of fire adjusted onto him. Halfway through the next magazine, the rifle stopped. He dropped into the cab and tried to eject the round. His sweaty hands struggled to grasp the charging handle. He jammed his fingers inside the ejection port, trying to get at the stuck round. He gave up and threw the rifle aside.

Riensche’s eyes darted around the inside of the cab. What should he do next? His hands shook uncontrollably. His blouse bounced on his chest with each heartbeat. A vision of his wife, Laura, and their three boys overtook his mind. She huddled the older two close while the baby, only six weeks old when Harold left, screamed in her arms. Riensche recognized the scene around his forlorn family. He witnessed it far too many times while on Inspector-Instructor duty in San Francisco. They were in a cemetery. It was a military funeral. The meaning was clear. He was going to die.

“Oh, God, help me!”

He closed his eyes and tried to focus. His hands began to settle. His breathing slowed. The verbal recognition of his terror diminished its power. The resignation to his fate gave him clarity. He opened his eyes. The .50-cal. above him looked ready. He stood again to unleash hell.

A bullet destroyed the ammo belt leading into the big gun. Riensche broke it off and fed it back through. He reached down and scooped up the radio onto his head. If Co B was listening, he wanted to hear their reply. An NVA soldier appeared out of the grass 30 meters away. Riensche pivoted the gun and fired. The huge bullets shredded the soldier’s body before he fell. Riensche swung the gun toward the rear of the retriever, chasing another sprinting enemy. A three-round burst sent him tumbling out of sight, blocked from view by the boom of the crane. Bullets struck the front of the cab behind Riensche. He turned the gun back toward the front and fired at the unseen enemy. Suddenly, three enemy soldiers appeared above the



Harold Riensche’s M51 Heavy Recovery Vehicle, or as the Marines called it, “the retriever,” in Vietnam.

A retriever had three methods of recovery: a tow bar, a winch and a crane. In this photo, the crane is extended for use.

grass 50 meters away, heading toward the mound in the distance. Riensche fired a long burst in front of them. The soldiers ran into his fire and dropped. The grass where they fell shook violently as they writhed beneath it.

Despite the damage Riensche inflicted, the NVA maintained the intensity of the ambush. Enemy bullets passed over his head and under his arms, impacting the retriever all around. He waited for the round that would get him. A voice came through the headset.

“Bravo 9, Bravo 6, what’s your status?”

“We are under attack! Near ambush, all around! I’m returning fire, I don’t know where my crew is! We need a reaction force out here now!”

“Roger that Bravo 9. Hold tight.”

Riensche swept fires toward the rear of the retriever again. The crane blocked his ability to cover this avenue of approach. Over the crane operator’s hatch, an M60 sat in a mount welded to the top of the cab. The maintenance chief two tours ahead of Riensche added the extra firepower for his retriever crew. It only further blocked Riensche’s view, but he knew the second machine gun would soon come into play.

“Bravo 9, Bravo 6. Be advised, I’ve been instructed it’s getting dark, and we can’t



COURTESY OF HAROLD RIENSCHÉ

send out a reaction force at night. Someone will be out to assist in the morning.”

Riensche’s heart sank. How could this be happening? They were leaving him out there to die.

“You be advised, there won’t be anyone left in the morning!!”

He dumped the headset. No one was coming so there was no point in talking to them. Riensche returned a rage of fire. Enemy rounds struck the ammo can again. The .50-cal. immediately stopped. Riensche tried to unjam the belt of ammo,

but it would not budge. Without more ammo cans, his heaviest weapon was knocked out of action.

Riensche jumped out of the hatch in full view of the enemy. He ran across the cab and removed the M60 from the mount. He peeked over the side of the retriever. A bloody hand reached out from under the fender. Riensche leaned further. The bloody hand became an arm, connected to a bloody body. Foster lay draped over a road wheel. He struggled desperately for a breath. His body had absorbed so



COURTESY OF HAROLD RIENSCHÉ

Riensche’s retriever back at headquarters for repairs after the ambush.

many rounds that Riensche dared not try to count.

“Mike!”

Foster strained his head upward. He connected his gaze with Riensche’s. The breath he fought for exhaled.

“Get some for me!”

Foster’s head slumped down, and his arm dropped limp. Riensche screamed and stood on top of the cab to resume his war.

With the M60 blazing in his hands, Riensche’s mind transported through time to his boyhood home in Nebraska. Standing on the front porch, Riensche watched the wheat fields flow in unison with the wind. Any sort of unnatural disturbance to the harmony stood out like a sore thumb. At 18, he left the farm and enlisted in the Marines. He spent two and a half years in the infantry before training as a mechanic. Now, standing atop the retriever, it seemed his entire life prepared him for this moment. The elephant grass swayed in the breeze, just like wheat. The NVA hiding beneath it gave themselves away with each movement. The M60 fit perfectly in Riensche’s hands, just as it had so many times before. His training took over and kept him in the fight.

He blew through a belt of ammo and started on a second. More NVA appeared from the grass heading toward the mound in the distance. Riensche cut them down and swiveled back to the opposite side of the retriever. The movement in the grass appeared closer each time he turned. AK-47 fire smacked the retriever and whizzed by him. He marveled that no rocket-propelled grenades came his way yet. Could that be why soldiers were sprinting for the mound?

Riensche finished a second belt and fed in a third. He resumed firing until the gun abruptly stopped. He looked down in time to see the barrel release and fall forward out of the receiver. Without thinking, Riensche snatched the smoking barrel out of the air. Adrenaline negated any pain, as the scorching metal seared his hand. He dropped the rest of the gun to reinsert the barrel.

A flash of movement caught his eye. An NVA soldier sprinted from the grass behind the retriever and disappeared under the rear spade. Riensche heard an entire magazine of AK-47 fire erupt beneath the vehicle.

The third ammo belt ended and Riensche put in a fourth. He grabbed the radio once more. He called out to Lt Ritch, less than a click away, for any help he could send.

“I’m the only one left and I’m running out of ammo!”

Riensche fired all around but eyed the

rear of the retriever. After a series of five-round bursts, the M60 stopped again. He opened the cover and found two rounds hopelessly jammed in the barrel. The M60 was done. Riensche reached down into the crane operator hatch and grabbed two grenades. He tossed one over both rear corners of the retriever, hoping to take out the enemy soldier who disappeared under the spade. He threw a few more into the grass for good measure.

Riensche located an M79 grenade launcher stashed in the cab with a bag of 30 high explosive rounds. One by one, he fired the grenades at anything that moved. The growing darkness played tricks on his eyes. Everything seemed to move. The bag depleted quickly. He dropped the M79 back into the cab and grabbed a case of unopened grenades. As he struggled to unwind the tape from the packaging, another NVA soldier appeared. He stopped 20 yards away and leveled his AK. Riensche drew his pistol from its shoulder holster and fired. The .45-cal. bullet smashed through the soldier’s face,

tumbling him backward. Riensche followed him into the grass with several more rounds.

With the immediate threat neutralized, Riensche returned to the box of grenades. They were his only hope. The .50-cal. was useless. The M60 and M16 were done. The M79 was out. He had less than 20 rounds left for his pistol. All that remained were the grenades and his Ka-Bar. He found unexpected difficulty unwrapping the grenades. His nerves rose to the extreme once more. The past 20 minutes were the most brutal and eternal of his life. He felt it about to end.

He slipped a grenade out of its sleeve and tossed it into the grass. As he worked on a second, he realized the incoming fire had ceased. He paused and studied the area around him. A cacophony of ring tones and racing heartbeats filled his ears, but nothing more. Silence diffused through the grass. Harmony reasserted itself over the sway. Could it really be over?

He ran around the top of the retriever,

**He called out to Lt Ritch, less than a click away,
for any help he could send.**

“I’m the only one left and I’m running out of ammo!”



In less than 30 minutes of nonstop firing, Harold Riensche used virtually all available ammunition for each of the pictured weapons as he fought for his life and the lives of his crew.



COURTESY OF BOB SKEELS

Sgt Al Soto in the commander's cupola of his M48A3 tank.

checking each side for the enemy. What happened to his crew? Riensche dismounted and looked under the retriever. Walkley lay across the undercarriage. His bullet-riddled body was motionless.

“Is anyone alive under there??”

Craig Ammon responded immediately.

“We’re under here, Chief! Walkley’s dead! I’m hit bad, and Dorsett is too!”

“Can you crawl out the front??”

“No, can’t move!”

“Alright, I’ll back it off you. Hold on!”

Riensche rolled Foster’s body off the road wheel and dragged him away from the retriever. He tried to grab Foster’s belt,

from, but it was friendly. He immediately recognized Sgt Al Soto standing in the commander’s cupola.

“Bravo 9, I have you in sight! Where do you want me??”

“That mound to your right! Light it up!”

The turret rotated. A long, beautiful rod of flame spewed out and set the mound a blaze. The inferno brought Riensche a sense of peace. Something about napalm always shut Charlie up.

He backed the retriever off the crew. A second tank appeared. Both must have come from Lt Ritch’s position. In the quickly fading dusk, Riensche and the

most. Now, this pilot was going to leave without taking Ammon and Dorsett.

“I’ve got two WIA in critical condition! You have to land! They have to go NOW!”

“Bravo 9, I can’t land unless it’s a secure LZ.”

Riensche grabbed the .50-cal., and made a show of racking the bolt. He swiveled in the chopper’s direction and angled the barrel skyward.

“You land it, or I will!”

A long pause followed the ultimatum.

“Roger, Bravo 9. Pop smoke in the LZ, over.”

Riensche heaved a smoke grenade into the grass. The Marines quickly loaded Ammon and Dorsett into the chopper. Riensche and the dead would have to wait for evacuation in the morning.

Darkness overwhelmed the area before the chopper lifted off. Lt Ritch’s two mined tanks limped into the position shortly after. They arranged security and settled in for the night. An AC-47 Spooky gunship circled overhead, lighting the darkness with flares. Riensche waited on high alert, scanning the grass. It flowed as softly as the wheat.

At first light, the tank crews set to work short-tracking the retriever. Another medevac chopper arrived for Walkley and Foster. Despite his burns, Riensche refused evacuation. A platoon of Marine infantry provided security as the tankers finished buttoning everything up. They connected tow bars from Al Soto’s flame tank and the retriever to Lt Ritch’s two limping tanks. Despite its own wounds, the retriever would still get one back to Dong Ha. Riensche climbed in the driver seat a final time to lead the procession. As they passed through Gio Linh and headed south on Route One, he could not help but notice the retriever had never run so well.

Following the ambush, life in the company quickly returned to normal. The pace of operations never slowed. No formal after action was ever conducted. Lt Ritch and any other Marine involved that day proceeded directly to the next operation, without time to dwell on what happened. Riensche wished he could move on so easily. Two of his Marines were dead. All of them should have been. His unit had decided he was not worth the effort of saving. He went through Walkley and Foster’s personal belongings, separating out the things to send home to their families. Each item set aside reminded him of their absence. Each item reminded him how expendable they had been—how expendable he had been.

He finished the remaining five months of his tour. Before leaving, Riensche received orders to the drill field at Parris

Riensche could not believe what he was hearing. First, no one would send a reaction force to help when he needed it most. Now, this pilot was going to leave without taking Ammon and Dorsett.

but could not close his hand. He stopped and turned his palms upward. Huge blisters had formed on all five fingers and palm of his left hand. Now that he noticed the burns, pain set in. No time for that now. Riensche unsheathed his Ka-Bar. He sliced gashes down each finger, and across his palm. He squeezed out the fluid and pus, allowing him to close the hand again. He dragged Foster away, then climbed back inside the retriever.

He called for an emergency medevac of his wounded, then slid into the driver’s seat. Movement around the mound 300 meters off captured his attention. A tank appeared—a flame tank. Riensche did not know who it belonged to, or where it came

tank crewmen tended the wounds of Ammon and Dorsett. They were both in critical condition.

A medevac chopper finally arrived, circling low over the scene. Riensche climbed back in the TC hatch and put on the headset. The pilot’s voice came through.

“Bravo 9, we’ve got you in sight. Is it a secure LZ? Over.”

“Well, it’s as secure as it’s going to get right now!”

“Roger Bravo 9. I can’t land unless it’s a secure LZ.”

Riensche could not believe what he was hearing. First, no one would send a reaction force to help when he needed it



COURTESY OF HAROLD RIENSCHÉ

Gen Leonard Chapman, 24th Commandant of the Marine Corps, awards Harold Riensche the Navy Cross at the Marines Memorial Club in San Francisco in 1970.

Island. He had heard the rumors about this duty. Married Marines going to the drill field came back divorced Marines. The thought of moving Laura and the boys from one coast to the other felt like a nightmare. After two tours in Vietnam, they had endured enough. They needed a father and husband more than the Corps needed another staff sergeant. Riensche took his discharge and left active duty. He moved his family to Petaluma, Calif., north of San Francisco, and joined the reserve unit at Treasure Island. The city of Oakland brought him on as a heavy equipment mechanic. He tried to fit in and keep his mouth shut. He provided for his family, and that was all that mattered now. The past was the past. It haunted him still.

A year later, Riensche learned he was awarded the Navy Cross for defending the retriever. He stood at attention while General Leonard Chapman, the 24th Commandant of the Marine Corps, pinned the medal on his chest at the Marines Memorial Club in San Francisco. A large

crowd of Marines, civilians and press looked on. Riensche looked through them.

“Get some for me.”

Foster. Walkley.

“Under here, Chief!”

Ammon. Dorsett. What was the point of their sacrifice?

Oh God, please, help me.

Riensche ended the night with a bottle of Jack Daniels. It eased the pain. It clouded the memory. Many bottles followed, helping blot out the past.

How powerful is time against wounds from within? A veteran’s fight to come home from war can only begin once they return. Time becomes an ally, promising relief. Vietnam had stolen a piece of Harold Riensche. Part of him died with his Marines in March of 1969. Could time revitalize the missing pieces and make him whole once more?

Five years passed. Riensche persevered down the road supporting his family. The U.S. government scrapped the war and pulled out of Vietnam. He watched

on TV as Saigon fell to the NVA and helicopters evacuated refugees from the American embassy. What was the point of his service? The news drove him further inside himself and away from what he lost.

Sixteen years passed. Riensche retired as a master gunnery sergeant from the reserve unit on Treasure Island. Young Marines noticed the Navy Cross on his chest and immediately stood taller in his presence. For Riensche, the medal dragged him back to the worst chapter of his life, killing more of him inside.

Thirty years passed. Vietnam began to fade. The future looked bright. Riensche finally neared retirement from the city of Oakland. He and Laura purchased land in Montana near their middle son, Ken. The new location promised new beginnings. While they built their future home, Ken was diagnosed with liver cancer. He passed away just one month later. In the midst of their grief, Riensche received a phone call from an old Marine. The USMC Vietnam Tankers Association (VTA) planned a reunion in Minneapolis. They wanted him to attend. Riensche turned them down. He could not think about discussing Vietnam after losing his son.

Forty-two years passed. The VTA invited Riensche again to their 7th reunion in San Diego. Laura convinced him to combine the trip with a visit to their youngest son, who was living in southern California. They spent most of the time with their son but occasionally dropped by the reunion. Riensche did not make it past the check-in table before fellow tankers recognized him and approached. He felt surprised by his interest at reconnecting with familiar faces.

In 2013, 44 years after the ambush, Riensche attended the next VTA reunion in San Antonio. Knowledge of his Navy Cross had much the same effect on the other attendees as it had years earlier on the young Marines at Treasure Island. On the first day, former Lt Bob Skeels approached the Rienschés at their table.

“Hell of a thing you did that day, Harold. I’m just sorry we didn’t make it all the way out to you that night.”

Riensche furrowed his brow.

“What do you mean, make it out to me?”

“With the reaction force. We tried to get to you, but hit two mines on the way.”

Skeels explained how three of his tanks sat in the maintenance shop at Co B HQ that afternoon. The company commander, Captain Jay Miller, received Riensche’s distress call and immediately ordered Skeels to get his tanks rolling. Al Soto, one of Skeels’ tank commanders, burst through the door of his hootch, red-eyed and ready to take the lead. They scrounged



COURTESY OF HAROLD RIENSCHÉ

Riensché, left, sits next to Bravo Co CO, Capt Jay Miller, in country.

up whatever tanks they could get—two gun tanks and the company flame tank. Soto shot out of the gate in the flame tank, with Skeels trailing close behind at top speed. They were less than 10 miles away from Riensché's position.

The reaction force got within 500 meters of the ambush. Skeels could hear the explosions and gunfire in the distance. He could not make radio contact with Riensché to let him know they were on the way. Suddenly, two of his tanks hit mines, blowing apart the track. Skeels yelled out to Soto in the lead to continue and make it to Riensché on his own. Darkness enveloped the damaged tanks before the Marines could get them buttoned up. Skeels arranged his two tanks and six Marines in the best security posture he could to wait out the night. In the distance, flares lit up the sky over the ambush site. The gunfire had ceased. He prayed the retriever crew was OK.

At first light, they repaired the damage and drove the rest of the distance to the ambush site. Everyone was already gone. Skeels exited his tank and surveyed the scene. He saw the hole in the ground where the mine stopped the retriever. An NVA soldier lay dead in the grass not far off. Riensché's huge .50-cal. bullets left the body in a grotesque state. Skeels walked a large circle around the hole. Mangled dead lay around the entire 360 degrees. He counted 13 bodies, with blood trails and drag marks revealing a higher number.

Riensché silently listened to Skeels' story. Larry Parshall, the driver of Skeels' tank, corroborated the narrative. How could this have happened, yet Riensché never knew? What about the message over

the radio that no one was coming? They tried to work out the details. Everything about that day seemed so chaotic, and the distance in time left memories hazy. Riensché knew now, though, without question, they had not abandoned him.

Following the San Antonio reunion, Laura pressured Riensché to write down his story of the ambush. She saw in his eyes a spark of something that had been missing. Could Harold be whole again? He tried to put pen to paper. Words came slowly. He spent nearly half a century erasing the day. Recovering it now seemed more impossible than a tank submerged in quicksand. Memories came and went. Flashbacks woke him at night as his brain divulged details of the day. He rose from bed each time and recorded the memories. He wanted to face them.

Two more years passed. Riensché once again attended a VTA reunion, this time in Washington, D.C. He brought with him 2,500 words on paper representing 2,500 battles won. Each brought him closer to what he had lost. He shared his story with the other tankers. They received it better than he could have imagined. They validated his facts and memories of the day. He sat for a video interview, recounting the details of the ambush. Several years earlier, this would have been unthinkable. Now, he was at peace. He understood the role of time in his breakthrough, affording him the distance



Lt Bob Skeels with members of his platoon. Sgt Al Soto stands on the far right. (Photo courtesy of Bob Skeels)

needed to heal. The true power came not from time itself, however, but through facing each memory unearthed from the past. March 24, 1969, meant so many different things to the Marines involved. Riensché saw the power of prayer and the hand of God over him. Knowing about the reaction force restored his faith in the Marine Corps and the meaning of "Semper Fidelis." Pete Ritch understood that Riensché saved more Marines than just Craig Ammon and Jim Dorsett. The ambush was waiting for him and his tanks. If Riensché had not done what he did, Ritch and his Marines might not have survived. Bob Skeels caught a glimpse of the epic one-man stand Riensché made defending the retriever. My God, what must he have endured? To all those who arrived that day and witnessed the scene, the Navy Cross could never adequately recognize his heroism.

Riensché left the reunion and returned to the house in Montana. He dropped his bags and walked onto the back deck. The sun dipped low over pine-covered hills in the distance. A gentle harmony held sway over the boughs. He closed his eyes and drew a deep breath of fresh mountain air. The quiet mirrored that in his soul. Finally, he was home.

Riensché saw the power of prayer and the hand of God over him. Knowing about the reaction force restored his faith in the Marine Corps and the meaning of "Semper Fidelis."

EPILOGUE

On March 14, 2019, just 10 days prior to the 50th anniversary of the retriever ambush, the first Master Gunnery Sergeant Harold A. Riensche Award was presented to the honor graduate of M1A1 Tank System Mechanic class 2-19. The commander of Marine Detachment, Fort Benning, Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Campbell, named the award in honor of Riensche following an initiative to develop his entry-level Marines' understanding of Marine armor history.

"Riensche's story could not be a better example of what a true tank mechanic does, is expected to do, and without any glory that goes with it," Cambell explained. "Going out behind enemy lines and being a Marine first, fighting the enemy while doing his actual job of recovering a vehicle. He is the true expectation of what every Marine tanker has of a mechanic, and there is no better example of what they do."

Lance Corporal Matt Eidson became the first recipient of this prestigious recognition. Eidson learned about Harold Riensche at the same time he discovered he would graduate at the top of his class.

"To me, it sounded like a Medal of Honor Citation," Eidson reflected on Riensche's story. "It's just heroic. You read stories or citations of Marines and other

servicemembers like that in the past and realize those are some big shoes to fill."

New mechanics coming to the schoolhouse now receive a class on the namesake of their honor graduate award. The detachment is currently creating a memorial to Riensche, displaying his photo, citation and the names of all future recipients of the award. Fifty years later, the story of Riensche's one-man stand continues to inspire and impact Marines. LtCol Campbell and his staff ensure every new mechanic knows his name and his place in the history of Marine tankers. For those joining the armor community, these are big shoes to fill, indeed.

Author's note: Thank you to Harold and Laura Riensche for your commitment to each other and our Corps. Your service and example have inspired generations of Marines, including this author.

Author's bio: Kyle Watts is a former Marine communications officer, and an award-winning contributing author for Leatherneck. He lives in Richmond, Va., with his wife and three children. He is the founder of Battlesight Zero, an online publication with the mission of honoring military veterans by telling their stories. For more information, visit www.bzo.history.com.



COURTESY OF FORT BENNING MARDET

LCpl Matt Eidson received the first MGySgt Harold A. Riensche award as the honor graduate of his class at the M1A1 Tank System Mechanic class at Fort Benning in March 2019.



COURTESY OF USMC VIETNAM TANKERS ASSOCIATION

Harold and Laura Riensche at the USMC Vietnam Tankers Association Reunion in Washington, D.C., in 2015.

Page County, Va.

Memorial Bridge Honors Hometown Hero of WW II

The scenic Compton Creek Bridge on Route 340 in Page County, Va., was renamed in memory of Marine Sergeant Richard T. Brumback during a dedication ceremony on May 22. Brumback, who was killed in action Nov. 1, 1943, at Bougainville during World War II, was a native of Page County. His niece, Teresa Brumback, center, spoke to the audience about her uncle's service and shared an original song she wrote entitled "Remembering the Uncle I Never Knew." Ms. Brumback unveiled the sign with the help of the Honorable C. Todd Gilbert, a representative from the Virginia General Assembly, left, and his legislative aide, Jeffrey Walters, right.

"The Page County Board of Supervisors resolution states they wish to honor its native son with an enduring symbol of their affection for him and their abiding regard for his service and sacrifice," said a representative from the Virginia Department of Transportation. The Commonwealth of Virginia Transportation Board approved the bridge renaming to "USMC Sgt Richard T. Brumback Memorial Bridge" in September 2018.

Submitted by Teresa Brumback



COURTESY OF VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Ocean City, Md.



COURTESY OF BOB BRODERICK

MCL Detachment Celebrates Iwo Jima Veteran

Members of the First State Detachment #689 of the Marine Corps League were honored to participate in a 93rd birthday celebration for World War II Marine veteran Morris Semiatin on the boardwalk in Ocean City, Md., June 1. The detachment's Marines presented Morris with a challenge coin and the group sang "The Marines' Hymn" together.

"Morris has a storied history in his service to our country and Corps," said detachment member Bob Broderick. After graduating from Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., in 1944, and completing subsequent training, he joined the 5th Marine Division in the Marianas as they prepared for the invasion of Iwo Jima and the ensuing battle. He witnessed both flag raisings on Mount Suribachi before being moved to the front where he was wounded in a grenade attack.

After recovering at the Naval Hospital in Annapolis, Md., Semiatin accompanied John Bradley, Rene Gagnon and Ira Hayes, known for their roles in the iconic flag raisings, on their famed U.S. Bond tours. After being discharged in 1946 he began a career as a portrait photographer for Del Ankers Photo Studios, and took portraits of U.S. presidents, kings, senators and many famous dignitaries.

The Marines of the First State Detachment invited Semiatin and his family to attend their Marine Corps Birthday Ball this year.

"Our detachment recognizes the responsibility and importance for Marines to remember and honor these greatest generation Marines," said Broderick.

Submitted by Bob Broderick

Washington, D.C.

MCAF Presents Writing Award At National War College

On June 7, the Colonel Richard Christie Writing Award was presented at the National War College in Washington, D.C., to Marine Corps staff judge advocate Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Jennings. The writing award recognizes superior writing from a Marine Corps officer and is named for Col Christie, who was a member of the National War College class of 2000 and passed away in 2003. Sponsored by the Marine Corps Association Foundation, the award includes a plaque and a check for \$1,000. Pictured left to right: Brigadier General Chad Manske, USAF, Commandant of National War College; LtCol Barb Christie, USAF (Ret), widow of Col Christie; LtCol Jennings; and Colonel Tim Mundy, USMC (Ret), the Director of Operations for MCAF.

MCAF



COURTESY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY

Jacksonville, N.C.



LCPL ISAIAH GOMEZ, USMC

Community Ceremony Honors Vietnam Veterans

Community members and leaders got together with active-duty servicemembers to honor veterans of the Vietnam War during a recognition ceremony at the Onslow Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Jacksonville, N.C., home of Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, April 27.

"I am truly honored and humbled to represent Camp Lejeune in this ceremony to commemorate those veterans who fought in Vietnam," said Colonel Scott Baldwin, deputy commander, Marine Corps Installations East-MCB Camp Lejeune, pictured on the right with retired Marine Colonel Paul Davenport. "It is a place that plays a central role in our history and our country's story in a time that includes one of the most painful and challenging eras we have ever endured as a nation."

For many veterans, the ceremony was an opportunity to pay tribute to their fallen comrades who paid the ultimate sacrifice and to reflect on their own personal sacrifices. Vietnam veterans returned to an America that was largely hostile to the war and to their service, but during the ceremony they were recognized as heroes for answering the nation's call.

Members of advocacy group Rolling Thunder read the names of 38 North Carolina natives who were prisoners of war or missing in action and never returned home.

LCpl Ashley Gomez, USMC

"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. Submission does not guarantee publication, and we cannot guarantee the return of photos.

We—the Marines

Compiled by Sara W. Bock

Iwo Jima Battlefield PME Brings History to Life

The island of Iwo Jima has become a memorial ground to honor the troops that died there in 1945 in one of the bloodiest battles the Marine Corps fought in World War II. Today, thanks to a strong alliance with Japan, U.S. servicemembers are occasionally allowed to visit the island and reflect on its history. Setting foot on an iconic battle site of WW II is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that most servicemembers do not get to experience. On July 2, Marines and Sailors stationed at Marine Corps Base Camp Smedley D. Butler, Okinawa, Japan, were fortunate to visit the island and learn about the history of the legendary battle.

A professional military education (PME) presentation, led by First Lieutenant Evan C. Clark, was held on the beach for the Marines and Sailors of 7th Communication Battalion. The group

hiked the 5-kilometer trail from the flight line to the beach, and along the way visited various memorials to those who fought during the grueling 36-day battle.

“One memorial stood out to me as especially moving,” said Clark. “There was a memorial built where the U.S. and Japanese veterans of the Battle of Iwo Jima were brought back. Where they met stands a plaque honoring their reunion.”

Following the PME, Navy Lieutenant Hal Jones, the battalion chaplain, offered a prayer and a moment of silence was held to honor and respect those who died during the battle.

“Any person that has served has seen pictures from Iwo Jima, particularly the raising of the flag on Mount Suribachi,” said Jones. “But it’s impossible to fully comprehend from just pictures as to how many bodies were here strewn all over the beach and the extreme difficulty they went through. Being here has brought a better

understanding of what took place here.”

Both Clark and Jones said they believe the PME was important and beneficial to the Marines and Sailors who attended.

“More than anything, it is a reminder of our history,” said Clark. “This is why we exist as a service. This is where we rediscover the importance of what the Marine Corps does.”

LCpl Brienna Tuck, USMC

Spiritus Invictus: Marines Team Up in Raider Competition

U.S. Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command (MARSOC) hosted the 2019 Marine Raider Competition at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., June 12. The annual event builds camaraderie, tests operational capabilities consistent with special operations missions and honors Marine Raider heritage.

The name “Raider” was adopted by MARSOC in 2015 to honor the legacy



Marines and Sailors of 7th Comm Bn listen as 1stLt Evan C. Clark conducts a PME on the beaches of Iwo Jima, July 2. Members of the unit had a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to visit the site of one of the Marine Corps’ most iconic battles.



CPL MORGAN COLLETT, USMC

Marine Raiders conduct the land navigation portion of the annual Marine Raider Competition hosted by MARSOC at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., June 12. The competition fostered camaraderie and tested participants' operational capabilities through a rigorous evolution of events.

of the World War II Marine Raiders. The elite special operations unit has conducted more than 300 operational deployments spanning more than 17 countries.

“Marine Raiders continue to make impressive contributions to Special Operations Command’s efforts around the world,” said General Robert B. Neller, 37th Commandant of the Marine Corps, during a visit to MARSOC in February for its 13th anniversary. “I am sure their World War II Raider predecessors would be as proud of them as we are today.”

The competition consisted of six teams with six team members each, hailing from 1st Marine Raider Battalion, 2nd Marine Raider Battalion, 3rd Marine Raider Battalion, Marine Raider Training Center and 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion. The teams participated in a rigorous evolution of events that tested their operational abilities consistent with special operations missions.

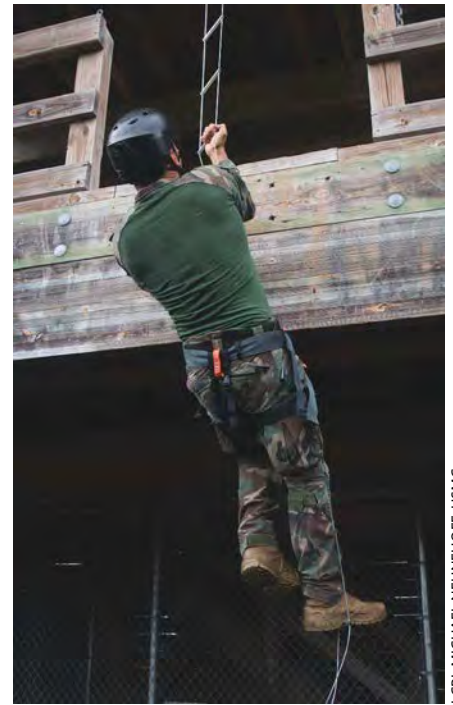
“The endurance coupled with the strength needed for some of the events was one of the most taxing parts of the competition,” said the Assessment and Selection land navigation instructor on the Marine Raider Training Center team. “Trying to pace ourselves and make sure we were maintaining hydration throughout the events while pushing through all the aches and pains was the most mentally straining aspect.”

Teams left the starting point in 15-minute intervals and were timed to make comparisons for final scores. Throughout the various challenges, teams combatted

fatigue and the mental pressure of competition while avoiding possible penalties for missed targets or performing incorrect simulated combat casualty care.

“When it came to preparing, our biggest challenge was finding adequate time to train,” said the land navigation instructor. “We got hit with some penalties because of that, but we did our best to communicate with each other and help each other through the events.”

During the competition, each team member carried more than 45 pounds



LCPL MICHAEL NEUNEHOFF, USMC

A Marine Raider climbs a rope ladder during the 2019 Marine Raider Competition which had six teams participating in events that tested their endurance and strength as they vied for the winning title on June 12.

of equipment for the duration of the 15-mile ruck course that consisted of events including rappelling; live-fire shoots; casualty carries; breaching; land navigation with resupply; and boating.

“Going in, we were expecting to be the fastest team,” said Sergeant Adam Terrazas with the 2nd Recon Bn team. “I think we came out of the gate too strong, which affected us negatively because



LCPL MICHAEL NEUNEHOFF, USMC

In preparation for the boating portion of the annual Marine Raider Competition, a team of Marine Raiders carry a combat rubber raiding craft at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., June 12.

Sgt Tyler Thomas, left, a squad leader with 2/7, throws a training grenade following the reopening of Range 105A at MCAGCC Twentynine Palms, Calif., June 17. The range was redesigned to offer multiple types of training to individual Marines and squad-sized elements. (Photo by Cpl Rachel Young-Porter, USMC)



we started to break off a little and get dehydrated, but ultimately we were able to put our minds together at each event and help one another get through the challenges.”

After all teams crossed the finish line, participants received awards for their performances in the competition.

“It means a lot to us for our recon brothers to join us,” said the Marine Raider Training Center commander during his closing remarks. “This is something we will continue to do to build camaraderie and the competitive spirit.”

Sgt Janessa Pon, USMC
and Cpl Bryann K. Whitley, USMC

Newly Opened Range Provides Enhanced Squad-Level Training

A new range designed for live-fire military maneuvers opened at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif., June 17.

Range 105A offers a series of six lanes designed for 12-member squads to practice live-fire shooting and grenade throws.

According to Training Command, squad attacks are complex maneuvers that re-



Sgt Tyler Thomas loads 5.56 mm ammunition into a magazine in preparation for a live-fire exercise at MCAGCC Twentynine Palms, Calif., June 17, just after the opening of the new Range 105A.

CPL RACHEL YOUNG-PORTER, USMC



LCPL JOSEPH SORCI, USMC

During a Marine Maker Course at MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., in January 2018, Marines gather around the fighting ring while operating robots they designed. During the first quarter of 2019, MCSC took over the Marine Corps' advanced manufacturing training and will continue the mission of equipping Marines to utilize 3D printing and other innovative techniques.

quire squad leaders to exhibit decisive leadership and responsive, accurate spontaneity while engaging the enemy.

Chief Warrant Officer James Curtis, infantry weapons officer, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, said that Range 105A helps prepare Marines and squad leaders for complex engagements by aligning training with these expectations.

"It's important to modernize training based on actions of the enemy as opposed to a safety officer telling you when to shoot," Curtis said. "This is a huge step for Marine Corps training. It offers repetition at a squad level as well as individual lanes for collective and singular attacks. That isn't typically available at Marine Corps installations."

The new range's lanes are progressive. The first five focus on individual infantry skills like combat marksmanship. In the sixth lane, the squad comes together to practice skills they learned individually and participate in a squad attack that tests the entire squad in various scenarios. The Marines engage in active fire by incorporation of automated target lifters as well as "marathon moving" or robot targets.

Sergeant Peter J. Kloetzke, a rifleman with "India" Company, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, said that he has waited for this type of training range for more than a decade.

"This range has endless capabilities," Kloetzke said. "I could train a private first class or lance corporal everything up to a squad attack in one week. I never want to leave Twentynine Palms—the training that you get here is beyond anything offered on the East Coast."

The remodeling of the range, which closed in the fall of 2018, came at a time when the Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command is focusing on modernizing its facilities to better prepare training audiences for potential conflicts against near-peer adversaries.

"This range provides infantry squad leaders with the ability to train against any threat," said Captain Anthony Kostendet, current operations officer with 7th Marines. "This gives squad leaders a platform where they can develop their own training, utilizing all weapons organic to a Marine Corps rifle squad."

Cpl Rachel Young-Porter, USMC

Supporting the Warfighter: MCSC Takes on Advanced Manufacturing Training

For years, the Marine Corps has taught innovative manufacturing techniques to Marines, equipping them with the knowledge to quickly fix equipment malfunctions on the battlefield. Next Generation Logistics, an innovation branch of the Installations & Logistics department, previously ran the training for several years.

In the first quarter of 2019, this responsibility transitioned to Marine Corps Systems Command, and the changeover led to the creation of MCSC's Advanced Manufacturing Operations Cell (AMOC).

"The innovation training allows Marines to use tools, such as 3D printing, to fix their own problems," said Captain Matthew Audette, AMOC project officer at MCSC. "We are democratizing the ability to design solutions."

The training primarily occurs with a "Marine Maker" lab in Alexandria, Va. The facility, which recently was featured on CBS News, offers tutorials in advanced manufacturing, an umbrella term en-

compassing additive manufacturing, welding, laser cutting, drone-building and other services.

“We tackle a number of facets of advanced manufacturing—not just additive manufacturing,” said Audette, adding that MCSC had been working with I&L for nearly two years prior to the transition and understood how the advanced manufacturing process operated, which ensured a smooth transition.

“Marine Corps Systems Command was the logical place for advanced manufacturing to land,” said Audette. “We’ve been working with NexLog for a while, so we had all the context of a year-and-a-half of experimentation that had already been done.”

Through the Marine Maker lab, MCSC provides instructional courses on basic computer-aided design, 3D printing and other technical skills to Marines, allowing them to produce custom parts on demand. For example, Marines have increasingly trained in cold-weather environments in recent years, creating a need for snowshoes. The clip that attaches to these shoes can easily break. A group of Marines brainstormed ideas to solve the issue, and they ultimately decided to 3D print repair clips. The group contacted AMOC and the department taught them how to print the clips to attach to the snowshoes.

In addition to the lab in Alexandria, the training sessions also can take place

at Marine Corps installations in North Carolina, California, and some overseas locations.

Additive manufacturing (3D printing) has become increasingly popular, and three years ago the Corps explored the benefits of leveraging it on the battlefield. Several programs tested this production technique and found it to be a useful and efficient solution to everyday problems.

“The entire Marine Corps saw value in additive manufacturing,” said Master Sergeant Douglas McCue, additive manufacturing lead at Headquarters Marine Corps. “After it became a program of record and more widely used across the Corps, the training transitioned to Marine Corps Systems Command.”

In a separate lab aboard Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., AMOC leverages additive manufacturing to support the warfighter. The department uses large, industrial machines to mass-produce a collection of repair parts to send to Marines. If someone needs a batch of 3D-printed parts, the department can quickly manufacture and ship them in a timely fashion.

Additive and other forms of advanced manufacturing increase efficiency in the Corps. Marine Maker Training ultimately shortens the supply chain and speeds up the time it takes for the warfighter to complete missions.

“Advanced manufacturing puts man-

ufacturing at the point of need,” said McCue. “The Corps views that as a significant advantage.”

Matt Gonzales

Camp Pendleton Fire Department Turns Up the Heat in Training

The 125,000 acres that make up Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., consist of housing, Navy and Marine Corps facilities and vast training areas with open terrain. This unique space is prime not only for training warfighters, but also firefighters. The base’s annual Wildland Fire School began June 3, bringing numerous federal and local firefighting agencies together to gain experience in fighting wildland fires.

“This unique training affords an opportunity that you may not get anywhere else, especially here in California,” said Chief John Crook, Deputy Chief, Camp Pendleton Fire Department (CPFD). “To be able to put fire on the ground and train firefighters in suppression is very critical and paramount when it comes to the fire season.”

The school gives firefighters the opportunity to work together and train using prescribed fires in a controlled environment. The “prescribed fire” method is an effective tool in safely clearing out overgrown grasslands, eliminating fuels from training areas and preventing large-scale wildland fires in the future.



Firefighters from agencies throughout Southern California participate in the annual Wildland Fire School on MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., June 3. The school, hosted by the Camp Pendleton Fire Department, involves performing prescribed burns on the installation training areas in preparation for fire season.

SGT GABINO PEREZ, USMC

A Camp Pendleton firefighter ignites a field during the installation's annual Wildland Fire School, June 3. The expansive base in Southern California provides a unique opportunity for federal and local agencies to gain experience in fighting wildland fires.

“Every year the school gets better and better, with more and more agencies asking to take part in it because of what Camp Pendleton can provide,” said Crook.

CPFD, Orange County Fire Authority, California's Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and several other fire agencies participated in the school. The training enhanced their skills in communication, fire behavior and suppression methods while also enabling them to work together with other agencies as well.

“To be better prepared in our jurisdiction and respond to wildland emergencies, we get a chance to come out to Camp Pendleton to hone our craft because we get to actually practice in a wildland environment,” said Chief Albert Ward, Battalion Chief, Los Angeles Fire Department.

Sgt Gabino Perez, USMC



SGT GABINO PEREZ, USMC

Crazy Caption Contest

Winner



SGT WILLIAMS QUINTEROS, USMC

“Now, if I could only find my sock.”

Submitted by:
Jack McHugh
Hamilton, N.J.

This Month's Photo



CPL TAWANYA NORWOOD, USMC

(Caption) _____

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____ ZIP _____

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

It Starts With Us

By
Sgt Kayla Gaudin, USMC

Editor's note: September is Suicide Prevention month. In the following article, LCpl Smith is not a real person. This is a fictional scenario.

It's 1 a.m. Lance Corporal Smith tosses and turns in his bed as thoughts race through his mind at the speed of lightning. "Why doesn't anyone care about me? Why don't I have any friends? Why does everyone always pick on the things I do wrong? Why can't I be back with my family? Most importantly, why am I all alone?" These questions flood LCpl Smith's mind. His mind won't let them leave. These thoughts and feelings of depression have been overwhelming him for weeks now. He's tried to talk, text and use social media to talk about his feelings, but nothing is making him feel better. His command is aware of his depression—he is on medium risk, and they check on him from time to time. He sits with his SNCO, and LCpl Smith tells him that he is going to be OK and that things are getting better, but as soon as LCpl Smith is alone, everything changes and his world shifts back into the deep state of depression from which he is so desperately trying to escape. Mentally, he is worn out. Physically, he is exhausted. He concludes that the only way to end this terrible suffering is to take his own life. He believes that all resources have been exhausted, and all his energy to try is depleted. He has successfully convinced himself that the world is better off without LCpl Smith. Alone at 1 a.m. in his barracks room, he has decided. No more pain, no more suffering, no more sleepless nights, no more feeling alone. No more.

He texts his mother and father and tells them that he loves them and that he is sorry. That's it. "I'm sorry." He shuts his phone off and slides it into a drawer. He takes a deep breath and thinks back to the way his life used to be when he was younger—when he was happy. Where had it changed? Why was it different? It doesn't matter now. He's made up his mind. This is the only way out.

Everyone gathers at the 7 a.m. formation for roll call after the weekend. One by one, names are called followed by

the acknowledgment and confirmation of attendance until LCpl Smith. LCpl Smith's name is called once, then twice, then three times, and is followed by nothing but an eerie silence. The platoon sergeant sends someone to check on LCpl Smith in his barracks room. Three knocks on the door, no answer. Forcible entry is used as attempts to make contact with LCpl Smith elicit no response. The door flies open. What they find would change the morale of the unit immeasurably.

It's 8 a.m. on a Monday and Mrs. Smith slips on her heels and tosses her deep gray cardigan on as she heads out the door for work. She's about to open the door when out of the corner of her eye she notices something, or someone, approaching the door. She would have been concerned if not for the distinct uniform that she remembers seeing her son wear so well. Mrs. Smith's heart fills with excitement. Her initial thoughts and feel-

the 550 cord—untied from the shower rod and stuffed into a clear bag with a red seal. No words need to be spoken. There are no suspects to be questioned. Or were there? On the surface, it would appear not, but underneath lies a truth that if left unresolved, could result in more casualties than just LCpl Smith.

LCpl Smith's room is bare. The walls, blank. The bed, stripped. The bathroom, empty. The wall locker, raided. Gone. Everything is just gone. The question is not how this tragedy could have happened, but why. Why did LCpl Smith take his own life?

Mr. and Mrs. Smith arrive at the airport to catch the first flight to Texas. Once they arrive, they take a cab to the hospital to properly identify the body of their 19-year-old son, who just the other day was telling them he couldn't wait to see them in a few weeks. The Smiths don't know what to think or feel.

He concludes that the only way to end this terrible suffering is to take his own life.

He believes that all resources have been exhausted, and all his energy to try is depleted.

ings consume her as she thinks she is going to see her son. She wonders why he is visiting and why he hadn't told her, but she doesn't care. All she cares about at that moment is that she is going to see her son. She flings the door open and waits for her son to run into her open arms. Silence as thick as a morning fog engulfs the atmosphere, and her heart jumps into her throat as her eyes well up with tears.

The Marine clarifies what the visit is truly about, and without hesitation, the Marine lunges to catch Mrs. Smith before she hits the pavement.

LCpl Smith's barracks room is taped off, and only those who wear a badge and gloves are allowed to enter. The room has gone from just a simple, everyday barracks room to a crime scene. The investigators bring their equipment into the room and start to compile evidence. The first item to go into a plastic bag is

So many questions. So numb. The cab finally arrives at the hospital after what seems like an eternity, and the couple gets out and starts the longest walk of their life. Their destination is the lowest level in the hospital: the morgue.

Mrs. Smith covers her mouth and gasps as she falls into her husband's arms as the confirmation of the body spreads through her like her pins and needles. Sobs ring out as the sheet is lifted from LCpl Smith's cold, stiff, color drained body. How could this have happened? What could have made this seemingly happy, positive boy take his own life and leave his family grasping for answers?

The investigation turns to those who knew LCpl Smith and his command. Those who knew him said that he was always laughing, joking and happy-go-lucky as a kid. His superiors said his work was stellar and he hardly ever had any errors or needed corrections up until



Mental health professionals are available throughout the Corps to assist those struggling with a variety of issues including thoughts of suicide or post-traumatic stress. If you or someone you know needs help, contact www.dstressline.com or call 877-476-7734.

one thing could not be forgiven. The Smiths discovered that while their son was displaying this negative behavior at work that called out for help, he was told to “leave it at the door, suck it up, and ensure the mission gets done because that is the number one priority in this unit.” The Smiths were appalled.

Every story is not the same when it comes to suicide. Every family, every coping mechanism, every sleepless night and every funeral are all different but one thing remains the same about suicide in the Marine Corps: it can be prevented. How? Commands need to be more involved in Marines’ lives, create a healthy and positive work environment and recognize when a problem is building up and growing from just sadness to a deepening depression. There is something we can do. All of us—every single one of us—can take an interest in our Marines’ lives. We don’t have to all agree, have the same views or even like each other, but we did all sign that line saying that we would protect and defend the citizens of the United States of America, which means defending the brother and sister to the left and the right of us. We cannot protect and defend an entire country of 327 million people if we cannot even protect our fellow Marines.

Instead of looking so far beyond, start looking right beside you and take an interest in your Marines’ lives. Don’t lose sight of our core values: honor, courage, commitment. We honor each other, we are committed to one another, and we need to have the courage to help one another in moments of hardship. There do not need to be any more LCpl Smiths, Mr. and Mrs. Smiths or commands who do not take serious action when a Marine is silently calling out for help. We have the power to change this. There is a way.

We cannot focus solely on the bigger picture and try to change the Marine Corps in one fell swoop. We must start the focus on the lower level—the foundation. Think about this: when you start building your dream house, do you just envision the bigger picture and throw a house together without your concrete,

about a month before he took his life. A month prior, there were warning signs. LCpl Smith’s work had started going downhill, and his attitude became a little less positive. He started arriving late to work, but nothing was said because LCpl Smith “was just having a rough time lately.” After this news was revealed, the question was asked, “What was going on in LCpl Smith’s life to make him feel and behave this way?” Not one person in LCpl Smith’s chain of command could answer the question. Not one person knew why LCpl Smith was heading toward depression and slowly isolating himself. Why? When they asked LCpl Smith if he thought about hurting himself due to his behavior, he told them that he wasn’t, and that was the end of the con-

versation. It shouldn’t have been the end of the conversation.

After speaking with the command, it was apparent to Mr. and Mrs. Smith that their son’s change in behavior and attitude was not taken as seriously as it should have been. The camaraderie of the unit was lacking, and the Marines’ welfare and happiness were, and are still not a high priority. Mr. and Mrs. Smith ask many questions that the command cannot answer. Why? Because leaders and peers did not know their son. They didn’t take action in being there for him when he needed it most. Just because he did not fit their idea of “someone who would commit suicide,” he wasn’t afforded the proper opportunity to receive treatment. With all of this confirmation,

LCPL MIKE ATCHUE, USMC



Col Ricardo Martinez, the Marine Corps Air Ground Command Center chief of staff, speaks at a Suicide Prevention Symposium, held at Twentynine Palms, Calif., Sept. 19, 2017. The symposium, organized by the behavioral health branch of MCCS, provided Combat Center leadership with information and resources to aid in dealing with mental health and suicide prevention.

solid base? Of course not. You could never build your dream house without a foundation, so why are we trying to build a mansion on a one-story house foundation? We must first rebuild the foundation, starting at the lowest level to establish a stable structure. The lowest level of leadership is responsible as they are the future of this organization.

We cannot deny that while there are some great leaders in this organization, there are some who struggle to stay on the path to an honorable discharge. Therefore, I believe that a mentorship program would alleviate many issues we see, particularly suicide. Marines have a buddy program in boot camp, where recruits enter the military with someone that they know to make that transition a little easier, so why is it that when we

enter the fleet, we are to fend for ourselves and hope we have someone to look out for us? Spotting those individuals who are struggling with motivation, self-esteem, leadership, or any other issues, and pairing them with a strong and motivating corporal or sergeant would provide them with a strong role model and potentially change their trajectory.

MCO 1500.61 states, “We cannot develop Marines to their fullest potential without truly knowing about them as individuals. We must know their past, their present situation, and their future goals.” This may seem all too obvious to us as Marines. Know your Marines on a personal level—duh, right? How many leaders are actually doing this? Not enough. MCO 1500.61 extensively outlines the proper techniques and ways

to effectively mentor and lead Marines, but the issue is the fact that commands are not utilizing it. Therefore, a mandatory, tracked mentorship program is needed. Before its cancellation, MCO 1500.58 stated, “The facts are, however, that not every Marine is mentored, not every Marine is held accountable, and not every Marine is provided with exacting one-on-one leadership by his or her direct senior.” This statement could not hold any more truth. I propose that the newly established fourth phase of recruit training should incorporate not only the mentoring of drill instructors but of corporals and sergeants from various commands. Doing so will allow recruits to be in a more intimate environment with the individuals that we deem the backbone of the Corps. Mentoring and



LCPL ISAAC CANTRELL, USMC

suicide ideations and pairings of noncommissioned officers (NCO) to Marines to Headquarters Marine Corps. Additionally, commands should conduct an in-depth survey to track how Marines are utilizing the program and how effective it is for mentees. Conducting an anonymous survey before the program and after a period of six months will ensure the command is fully aware of whether the mentorship is genuine and valuable.

Providing guidance is only effective if individuals are utilizing it, and I believe this is not happening as much as it should be. Therefore, each NCO should be paired with at least one Marine, but no more than two, to ensure that the program is sustainable and not overwhelming for the mentor. This also ensures that the mentee will get the most out of the program by receiving the mentor's full attention and guidance. There is no excuse for commands not to take action and use this program. The program gives the entire unit responsibility for improving not only morale but also mental health and welfare of its Marines.

Now, you might be thinking: what about the staff sergeants, gunnery sergeants, etc.? We must not try to fix everything at once. We must start with the lower level and rebuild the foundation. Once the foundation is strong again, we can then focus on the entire structure and include higher ranks and the Marine Corps as a whole. Being an NCO is not just about making sure that everyone shows up to formation or that everyone is staying out of trouble. Being an NCO is about knowing your Marines on a personal level and looking out for not only their physical welfare but also their mental welfare. It starts with positivity.

As Marines, we strive for perfection—to the eighth of an inch to be exact. This perfection only seems to be stemmed

toward the negative. In drill, we are graded based on only the movements missed and point deductions, and not our strengths displayed. Uniform inspections are for the sole purpose of finding a discrepancy and correcting it, not commenting on how sharp the Marine looks. I am not saying that we should stop correcting deficiencies or discrepancies, but what I am saying is that we can focus on the good too. Instead of solely digging to find a Marine's weakness and correct it, we must discover their strengths and amplify them. Constantly being beaten down and having flaws pointed out without ever receiving feedback on strengths is a deadly concoction that can lead to thoughts of suicide. It must stop now.

We have to stop thinking we can take care of an entire institution when we're not taking care of our brother and sister to the left and right of us the way that we should. Stop looking so far ahead into the future of your own career and start looking right beside you, what your eyes can see, to that Marine's future that you can help mold right now. We have the power to change lives. We hold the key, each and every one of us. We have two choices. We can either hold the key and never open the door to let that Marine see the light, and they will continue to suffer in darkness. Or, we can use our key to open the door and help that Marine see the light and what they can become in this life, thrive in sunshine, and let go of the darkness. To my fellow Marines, all of this starts with you. It starts with me. It starts with us.

Author's bio: Sgt Kayla Gaudin is currently an administrative specialist in the office of the Commandant of the Marine Corps. She was previously assigned to MATSG-21 in Pensacola, Fla.

teaching mentorship does not need to start when the Marine reaches their first duty station.

The mentorship program should include an emphasis on a positive mindset and teach proper coping techniques to deal with negative emotions. This should be conducted on an intimate level with small groups instead of with an entire platoon, so Marines receive that one-on-one personal mentorship. Inviting recruits to provide feedback on the experience along with suggestions will help grow and develop not only the program but also the mentors. This feedback should not only be negatively based, but positively based as well. It should include aspects of the program that can be improved upon, but also provide feedback about ways mentors are excelling. This should continue into the fleet.

Commands should be responsible for providing a report of the unit's morale,

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VA Approves Agent Orange Claims From “Blue Water Navy” Veterans

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is preparing to process Agent Orange exposure claims for “Blue Water Navy” veterans who served offshore of the Republic of Vietnam between Jan. 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975.

If you served on a Blue Water Navy vessel or on another U.S. Navy or Coast Guard ship in the coastal waterways of Vietnam at any point within that range of dates, the VA believes you may have had contact with the herbicide used to clear trees and plants during the war, which they refer to as “presumption of contact.”

Through Public Law 116-23, Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019, which was signed into law June 25, 2019, and goes into effect Jan. 1, 2020, veterans who meet the qualifications may also be considered for a “presumption of service connection” if they have a disease that is recognized as being associated with herbicide exposure.

The bipartisan act gives VA until Jan. 1, 2020, to begin deciding Blue Water Navy-related claims. By staying claims decisions until that date, VA is complying with the law that Congress wrote and passed.

“VA is dedicated to ensuring that all veterans receive the benefits they have earned,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie.

“We are working to ensure that we have the proper resources in place to meet the needs of our Blue Water Veteran community and minimize the impact on all veterans filing for disability compensation.”

Blue Water Navy veterans are encouraged to submit disability compensation claims for conditions presumed to be related to Agent Orange exposure. Eligible survivors of deceased Blue Water Navy veterans also may benefit from the new law and may file claims for benefits based on the veteran’s service.

The new law affects veterans who served on a vessel operating not more than 12 nautical miles seaward from the demarcation line of the waters of Vietnam and Cambodia. An estimated 420,000 to 560,000 Vietnam-era veterans may be considered Blue Water Navy veterans.

To qualify under the new law, these veterans must have a disease associated with herbicide exposure. These presumptive conditions are: AL amyloidosis; chloracne or similar acneform disease; chronic b-cell leukemias; diabetes mellitus Type 2; Hodgkin lymphoma; ischemic heart disease; multiple myeloma; non-Hodgkin lymphoma; Parkinson’s disease; peripheral neuropathy, early-onset; porphyria cutanea tarda; prostate cancer; respiratory cancers (lung, bronchus, larynx or trachea); or soft-tissue sarcoma (other

than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi’s sarcoma or mesothelioma).

Veterans seeking more information should contact their Veterans Service Officer, call VA’s toll-free number at 800-827-1000, or visit the VA Blue Water Navy Agent Orange website at <https://www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/hazardous-materials-exposure/agent-orange/navy-coast-guard-ships-vietnam/>.

VA

SGLI Rate Reduction Made Effective July 1

On July 1, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs reduced Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance (SGLI) monthly premium rates from 7 cents per \$1,000 to 6 cents per \$1,000 of insurance, along with Family SGLI (FSGLI) premium rates for spousal coverage at all age brackets.

SGLI is a program that provides low-cost term life insurance coverage to eligible servicemembers and their families first by keeping SGLI premiums as low as possible, while ensuring funds are available to pay claims to beneficiaries according to VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “This is just another example of VA’s efforts to provide improved services to veterans.”

The SGLI premium decrease impacts 2.1 million active-duty and reserve servicemembers and National Guard members, while the FSGLI premium decrease impacts nearly 1 million of those members who have coverage for their spouses.

This will mean a decrease of \$4 a month in premiums for a servicemember who has elected the maximum \$400,000 of SGLI coverage. Servicemembers with spouses covered under FSGLI will see an additional average monthly premium decrease ranging from 10 percent to 32 percent depending on the age and the amount of coverage for the spouse.

VA regularly reviews the claims experience and the financial position of the program and has reduced premiums whenever possible. Servicemembers with SGLI and FSGLI coverage should have begun seeing a change in the deduction from their pay during the month of July.

Reservists drilling (monthly unit training) for retirement points rather than pay or not receiving pay for other reasons will be billed by their service department for the reduced premium rates.

For more information, visit www.benefits.va.gov/insurance/sgli.asp.

VA



The amphibious attack transport ship **USS George Clymer (APA-27)** navigated the Saigon River in January 1963 and is among the vessels the VA believes may qualify for presumption of contact with Agent Orange. Effective Jan. 1, 2020, individuals who served on U.S. vessels in the coastal waterways of Vietnam and have been diagnosed with herbicide exposure-related diseases may be eligible for certain benefits.

Kid Ink performs at a concert during the 2019 Camp Foster Festival in Okinawa, Japan, July 7. More than 13,000 people attended the two-day event, which allowed servicemembers and their families to mingle with members of the local Okinawan community and enjoy food, games, music and fireworks.

Concerts and Fireworks are Highlight of 2019 Foster Festival

More than 13,000 U.S. servicemembers, their families and members of the local community gathered at the 2019 Camp Foster Festival in Okinawa, Japan, July 6-7.

Singer Jason Deruolo and rapper Kid Ink headlined the two-day festival that featured entertainment, local cuisine from Okinawan vendors, games and festival rides. The weekend's events were capped off by a fireworks display in honor of the Fourth of July.

"Foster Festival was amazing," said Lance Corporal Luis Abreu-fiallos, an aviation supply specialist with 1st Marine Aircraft Wing. "To be able to interact with all of the locals and to socialize was a great time."

Camp Foster opened its gates for the annual festival that brought the community together through food, fun and entertainment.



LCPL BRENNAN BEAUTON, USMC

Foster Festival and other open-gate events are crucial to strengthening the spirit of friendship between the people of Okinawa and the Marines on the island's military installations. Other events throughout the year include Hansen Festival, Schwab Festival, and Futenma Fest, and all encourage members of the outside community to come together.

The event was hosted by Marine Corps Community Services, which runs a comprehensive set of programs that support and enhance the operational readiness, warfighting capabilities and life quality of Marines, their families, retirees and civilians.

LCpl Angelo Garavito, USMC



LCPL MICHAEL NEUNEHOFF, USMC

RETHINK THE DRINK— LCpl Kyle Jacobsen, a motor transport chief with 2nd Low Altitude Air Defense Battalion, participates in an obstacle course wearing "drunk goggles" to simulate impaired vision during a Rethink the Drink event at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C., July 2. The event was hosted by Marine and Family Programs' behavioral health center and substance abuse counseling center to help raise awareness about risks associated with driving and boating while intoxicated. The event featured the North Carolina Highway Patrol, New Hanover Sheriff's Department, Breath Alcohol Testing mobile unit, Alcoholics Anonymous and other organizations.

SEA STORY OF THE MONTH

The Finest

In 1967, I served with the Marine Security Guards at the World's Fair in Montreal, Canada. Marines, all Vietnam veterans, manned nine roving posts throughout the pavilion. Two shifts worked six hours: 1000 to 1600 and 1600 to 2200.

Post One was outside the huge front doors while Post Two was just inside. Two lines formed for visitors. One went straight to the exhibits while the other led to the theater which showed a short film about life in America. After you reviewed the film you could proceed to the exhibits. It was on Post Two that I encountered the following.

In line for the exhibits was an elderly couple. The gentleman wore what looked to be a brown bomber jacket with numerous patches. I assumed he was a World War II veteran. As I strolled between the lines I noticed he was looking at me each time. Maybe there was something he needed. It was making me nervous.

I introduced myself and asked if there was anything I could do for them. He said, "It's the Marines' day here, huh? When is the Army here?" I politely informed him the Marines were here every day. That did not go over well with him and he replied, "I find that outrageous! All branches should be represented!" I did not appreciate his rudeness and attitude, so I thought, what the hell.

I said, "The United States wanted the finest to represent America, Sir." He exploded, "I demand to see your commanding officer!" I replied, "Captain Grosz, who wears the Navy Cross,

is not here today, Sir." Then he demanded, "Your NCOIC!" to which I replied, "Staff Sergeant Horton is with the captain, Sir." I had no idea where they were but he got the message that he wasn't going to see anyone. Grabbing his wife's arm he stormed out mumbling, "I will not be a part of this injustice."

Jon Johnson
Sidney, Ohio

Coffee, Anyone?

In 1973 my brother and I were serving in VMFA-323 in El Toro, Calif. We both received orders to DI School for Jan. 2, 1974. He ended up in 1st Battalion and I was in 2nd Bn. My "third herd" [platoon] was in third phase while he had a brand new platoon about a week or two old.

At the time we would send the "king rat" to the mess hall for a pot of coffee after evening chow. This night the king rat was busy and forgot. I was in the middle of something when I heard a tap tap tap on my door and a recruit sounding off. The private entered and gave his rank, name and platoon number. I asked him what he wanted and he told me his drill instructor, Sergeant Spotts, requested a cup of coffee.

Now the fun begins. "Who sent you?" I asked. He repeated the same. I asked if I was his DI and he said no. I told him to look at my name tag. His face went white. "If I'm Sgt Spotts and you're not in my platoon, how could I send you for coffee?" Later another private showed up and the same thing happened. I finally gave him some coffee but I always wondered what those first phase recruits talked about that night.

MSgt Ben Spotts
Fort Morgan, Colo.

Medal of Recognition

I was with "Bravo" Co, 11th Engineers and we had taken our malaria pills one Sunday morning. The next day the company gunny was sitting in our field head, right out in the open, puffing away on a smoke deciding how he was going to win the war singlehandedly. That's when the enemy rockets came in, bracketing, you guessed it, the field head. He came out of the head like a nest of hornets were after

He came out of the
head like a nest
of hornets were
after his posterior,
trousers down
around his ankles,
cigarette dangling
from his mouth.

his posterior, trousers down around his ankles, cigarette dangling from his mouth, hands yanking up his skivvies, eyes darting this way and that for any exit suitable or otherwise.

His lips parted and the cigarette dropped out of his mouth right into the bottom of his skivvies.

He stopped dead in his tracks and began pawing at his skivvies. Thwack! Thwack! Thwack! Oh my God! Run, run, run! But he couldn't run, his trousers were tripping him and he was still pawing for all he was worth.

The Corps failed him miserably. Nowhere in the manual does it address malaria pills, out of order skivvies, dropped "trou," smoldering cigarettes and

enemy rockets all in the same sentence.

The gunny was ducking and dodging, praying and cussing all in the same breath. He would have hit the deck but you can't believe the fire he was taking. Then there were the rockets. Rather than bolting, his first thoughts were for protecting his underlings. Finally his fingers grabbed that offending smoke and flung it God knows where. The rockets stopped and much was as it had been moments before. Well, almost.

He came stumbling into the bunker with his trousers riddled from one end to the other but the gunny didn't have a scratch. As he related his sad story, the look on his face was priceless. Being Marines, you know compassion is not in our creed, and we all lost it.

I just had to write him up on this but there was no appropriate medal. Since I had not met the division commander, the secretary of the Navy couldn't be reached, and the President was out playing golf, it fell to me to take action. I designed a suitable medal which I called, "The Burnt Balls Badge."

Some heavy equipment Marines cut the device out of brass, shined it to a high polish except the one burnt lower corner. Our corpsman donated a piece of ribbon and a safety pin. Meanwhile, I worked for two days properly wording the citation. I took it to the colonel and requested he make a formal presentation. When our company got back to the battalion rear, we dragged the unsuspecting gunny to the club. The colonel walked in, barked out the gunny's name and ordered him to come

forward immediately. The gunny lost no time running up and stood at attention wondering what he had done wrong. The colonel commenced reading the citation and the gunny commenced turning vermilion. When he saw that medal in the colonel's hand it was all he could do to control himself. The colonel pinned it on the gunny and advised him to not wear the medal on any of his dress uniforms under any circumstances until the big brass gave their blessing—fat chance.

Gunny drank free and freely all evening and told his harrowing adventure time and again, each telling longer than the one before. No man was ever prouder of any medal ever presented. So, if you see an old man sauntering toward you with a unique medal on his chest, step aside, come to attention and give that Marine your best salute because he has been there and done things you have never done or ever hope to do.

Capt M.L. "Huck" Gaylord, USMCR Montrose, Colo.

Sleeping Beauty

As Platoon 446 was approaching the end of boot camp at Parris Island in January 1955, our drill instructors (DIs) were slowly increasing our liberties. For example, on Saturday evenings we were given one hour for personal activities such as writing letters, cleaning rifles, shining shoes, etc. While enjoying one of those times when no DIs were in the squadbay, some of the recruits would try to catch some much-needed sleep.

The recruit next to me nodded off while shining his shoes and was really enjoying his slumber. Another recruit noticed this and pulled from his footlocker a can of aerosol shaving cream. I don't know where he got it since we were only allowed to buy tubes of Barbasol.

He proceeded to spray shaving cream on the head of the "sleeping beauty" to a height of about 6 inches. A few minutes later one of our DIs entered the squadbay and we were called to attention. The recruit who had been sleeping had no

idea what was on his head. The DI noticed it immediately. He made a beeline for the recruit and went nose to nose with him for a full 30 seconds. The recruit was shaking like a dog passing razor blades, totally oblivious to what had attracted the DI's attention. The DI then reached up and took a handful of the shaving cream and smeared it all over the recruit's face while saying, "You silly maggot." I couldn't contain myself and nearly doubled over in laughter. Next, the DI turned his wrath on me saying, "So, Private Gill, you think it's funny, don't you?"

For the next several minutes he made me regret that laugh and seemed to forget about the recruit who had caused it.

SSgt Paul Gill
USMC, 1954-1966
Shippensburg, Pa.

The Unexpected Answer

On his way to commission 10 new second lieutenants at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, N.Y., on June 15, Lieutenant General William "Mark" Faulkner, USMC (Ret),

President and Chief Executive Officer of the Marine Corps Association & Foundation (MCA&F), paid a visit to Joe Barno, a longtime member of MCA&F and loyal *Leatherneck* reader who had recently corresponded with the general. The general stopped in Barno's hometown of Levittown, Pa., on his way to the academy so he could meet the Korean War veteran and his friend, Joseph Barna, another Korean War Marine (note the incredible similarities of the names).

Both Marines had been members of the 1st Marine Division during the Korean War where Barna was wounded at Bunker Hill and Barno at Hagaru. Barno also served in the Navy during World War II and spent four years in the Marine Corps as an ammunition and demolition specialist achieving the rank of sergeant. Barna was a corporal when he left active duty after two years as a weapons specialist.

LtGen Faulkner told the veteran Marines that he was on his way to commission some new lieutenants, and he asked them, "Do you have any advice for them as they begin their professional careers?" The 91-year-old Barno thought for a few seconds and then replied, "I didn't have much time for officers."

MCA&F

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



COURTESY OF HEATHER LEO

LtGen Mark Faulkner, USMC (Ret), far right, visits with Korean War veterans Cpl Barna, far left, who received the Purple Heart after he was wounded on Bunker Hill, and Sgt Barno, in Levittown, Pa., on June 15.

Marine Vehicle Rollover Results in Fatality

A Marine with Marine Rotational Force-Darwin (MRF-D) died as a result of injuries received during a tactical vehicle accident on May 25. **Lance Corporal Hans Sandoval-Pereyra**, 21, of Fairfax, Va., was conducting routine training at Mount Bunday Training Area, Northern Territory, Australia, and was medically evacuated by helicopter to Royal Darwin Hospital where he later succumbed to his injuries.

"We are saddened by the loss of LCpl Sandoval-Pereyra. He was a beloved member of our community and our deepest sympathies go out to his family and friends," said Colonel Russ Boyce, the commanding officer of MRF-D.

LCpl Sandoval-Pereyra was an expeditionary airfield systems technician assigned to the Aviation Combat Element for MRF-D. Prior to deploying to Australia, he was assigned to Marine Wing Support Detachment 24, Marine Aircraft Group 24, based at Marine Corps Base Hawaii.

The cause of the accident is under investigation.

USMC

LtCol Henry "Jack" Bond, 86, of Orange, Va. He served in the Korean War and the Vietnam War, earning the Distinguished Flying Cross with Gold Star and the Air Medal with Bronze Star. His final tour in Vietnam was as executive officer of the VMFA-334 "Falcons." He retired from the Marine Corps in 1973.

Cpl Alvie S. Cornett, 95, of Hamilton, Ohio. He served in the Pacific during WW II. After the war, he graduated from Miami University in 1949. He retired from the Peace Company in Hamilton, Ohio.

Robert C. "Bob" Darrow, 72, of Green Bay, Wis. After graduating from high school in 1964, he enlisted and saw action in the Vietnam War. He later owned and operated JR's Bar in Green Bay for 35 years.

MSG Bruce De Young, 70, of St. George, Utah. He spent 13 months in Vietnam as part of the 3rd Recon Bn. He concluded his military career in the Army as a Green Beret in the 19th Special Forces Group (Airborne).

Edward I. Eiland, 99, of Logan, W.Va. In 1942, Edward enlisted in the United States Marine Corps and served until 1946. He was a communications officer

in the Pacific theater with 4thMarDiv, landing on Kwajalein Atoll, Saipan, Tinian and Iwo Jima. He was awarded the Silver Star for actions on June 15, 1944, when he was serving with 2nd Bn, 25th Marines on Saipan. According to his award citation, he was wounded shortly after landing on Saipan but refused evacuation and "in the face of intense enemy fire, carried a heavy radio set over 300 yards to the battalion command post. Upon arriving at the post, he began coordination of the means of signal communication within the battalion and, when a radio operator was wounded, operated the set himself until a relief could be obtained."

Peter Doherty Fitzgerald, 81, of Glens Falls, N.Y. He served as a judge advocate general officer and was stationed in Okinawa and later with the 1stMarDiv in Chu Lai, Vietnam.

Cpl Jean (Herbert) Grove, 96, of Millersville, Pa. She was a Marine who served during WW II from April 1943 until October 1945.

Ronald Haworth, 86, of Green Bay, Wis. He served in the Marine Corps from 1952 until 1955. He later worked at Wisconsin Public Service for more than 50 years.

Maj Daniel A. Henry, 71, of Twentynine Palms, Calif. He enlisted in 1965 and retired in 1992. His 27-year career included a tour in Vietnam.

Maj Paul R. Hunter, 92, of Stuart, Fla. He enlisted in the Marine Corps at the beginning of WW II. He was a Marine Raider who saw action in the Pacific. After the war he used the GI bill for flight training and became an instructor pilot. He entered the naval aviation cadet program and was commissioned a second lieutenant at the completion of his flight training. He flew combat missions during the Korean War and served until 1969. His awards include the Distinguished Flying Cross and 10 Air Medals.

PFC Richard J. Klein, 88, of Green Bay, Wis. He served from 1948 to 1950.

Dennis "Doc" Kufitic, 71, of Edinboro, Pa. He enlisted in the Navy and served as a corpsman in Vietnam with H/2/5, 1stMarDiv from 1969-1970. His awards include the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star. He later went to college and law school and was a litigator for more than 30 years.

Sgt Donald A. Laedtke, 74, of Waukesha, Wis. After leaving college in 1966, he enlisted in the Marine Corps,

joining the 1st Force Reconnaissance Co in Vietnam as a radio operator. According to one of his 1st Force Recon teammates, then-PFC Laedtke was on a patrol deep in enemy territory when the team came under attack. The team leader was killed, and all the other team members wounded. He held his position and coordinated air strikes and the team's heliborne evacuation, waiting until everyone else was pulled from the jungle until he allowed himself to be hoisted to safety. His awards include the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star with combat "V."

Cpl Juan R. Ledoux, 90, of Albuquerque, N.M. He was a Marine who served during the Korean War. After the war he earned his bachelor's degree and had a career as a social worker. He was also an adjunct professor at Fordham University.

Cpl John Lever, 94, of Levittown, N.Y. He was a Marine who served in WW II. He saw action in the Leyte Campaign in the Philippines as a machine-gun crewman.

LCpl Ronald "Ron" D. Milton, 82, of Fond du Lac, Wis. He enlisted after his high school graduation and served in Vietnam as a Recon Marine. He was an active member of the MCL.

1stLt Mac G. Morris, 97, in Princeton, N.J. After graduating from college, he was commissioned in the Marine Corps and served in WW II as a bomber pilot in the Pacific theater. His awards include two Distinguished Flying Crosses and seven Air Medals.

Sgt John Poppe, 67, of Eau Claire, Wis. After graduating from high school, he enlisted in the Marine Corps where he served as a payroll officer.

Col Archibald B. Rackerby, 98, of Spanish Springs, Nev. He was a Marine Raider who saw action in the South Pacific, including on Bougainville. He was wounded on Guadalcanal. He later owned and operated a ranch in California. He retired from the Marine Corps Reserve in 1980. He was a member of the MCA&F.

Carl L. Sulik, 78, of Eau Claire, Wis. He served in the Marine Corps from 1966 to 1967.

Walton "Gup" E. Thompson, 96, in Tilton, N.H. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1943 and trained to fly the Douglas SBD Dauntless dive bomber. As part of VMSB-341, he flew more than 60 missions over the Solomon Islands. His awards include the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal.



SGT MELANYE MARTINEZ, USMC

REPATRIATING REMAINS—Marines from Marine Corps Forces, Pacific, salute a transfer case in the Republic of Kiribati during a July 18 repatriation ceremony for the possible remains of unidentified servicemembers killed in the Battle of Tarawa during World War II. The remains were recently recovered from sites in the Tarawa Atoll by History Flight, a Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) partner organization. The remains will be accessioned in the DPAA's laboratory facility in Hawaii to begin the identification process in support of DPAA's mission to provide the fullest possible accounting for missing personnel to their families and the nation. To read more about DPAA's mission, see the January issue of *Leatherneck*.

Maurice "Maurie" Tilot, 81, of Green Bay, Wis. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1956 and served for two years.

Gustav Ferdinand Tomuschat Jr., 77, in Gloucester, Va. He joined the Marine Corps in 1959 and served two tours in Vietnam. Gustav retired in 1979.

LCpl David T. Torrel, 78, in Eveleth, Minn. He joined the Marine Corps while he was a senior in high school and spent 13 months in Vietnam.

Jerry L. Turner, 77, of Fairfield Glade, Tenn. He was a Marine who served in Vietnam. A letter he wrote was the June 2016 Sound Off Letter of the Month. He contacted *Leatherneck* to ask for help reconnecting with an old buddy from Okinawa. He had seen a picture of his friend, Joe Collins, in the magazine and wanted to contact him to return Joe's Marine Corps ring that had been retrieved from a pawn shop in Okinawa. The two friends talked to each other for the first

time since 1960. Joe told Jerry to keep the ring, and Jerry told *Leatherneck* that, "I wear Joe's ring every day and plan to have it on when they put me in the box."

Albert J. Villareal, 100, of Albuquerque, N.M. Albert served with 1stMarDiv during WW II. His awards include the Purple Heart.

Sgt Eugene Von Bargan, 88, of Cottonwood, Idaho. He joined the Marine Corps in 1951 and served in the Korean War where he was wounded.

Sgt James E. Weaver, 71, of Ogden, Utah. After joining the Marine Corps at age 17, he served two tours in Vietnam.

Ronald F. Webster, 76, of King, Wis. He served in the Marine Corps.

Thomas "Bucky" Wennesheimer Sr., 77, of De Pere, Wis. He was a Marine who served from 1958 until 1960.

CWO-4 Edmund A. Wickenheiser Jr., 80, of Columbia, Pa. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1956. During his 28-year

career, he served a tour in Vietnam and participated in Operation Desert Storm.

Cpl Carl J. Williams Jr., 80, of Leominster, Mass. He was a Marine who was assigned to Camp Lejeune from 1956-1959. He served in the Marine Corps Reserve until 1962. He later had a 35-year career in steel manufacturing. Throughout his life he was a competitive rifle and pistol shooter.

In Memoriam is run on a space-available basis. Those wishing to submit items should include full name, age, location at time of death (city and state), last grade held, dates of service, units served in, and, if possible a published obituary. Allow at least four months for the notice to appear. Submissions may be sent to *Leatherneck* Magazine, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, Va., 22134, or emailed to leatherneck@mca-marines.org or n.lichtman@mca-marines.org.

SOUND OFF
[continued from page 9]

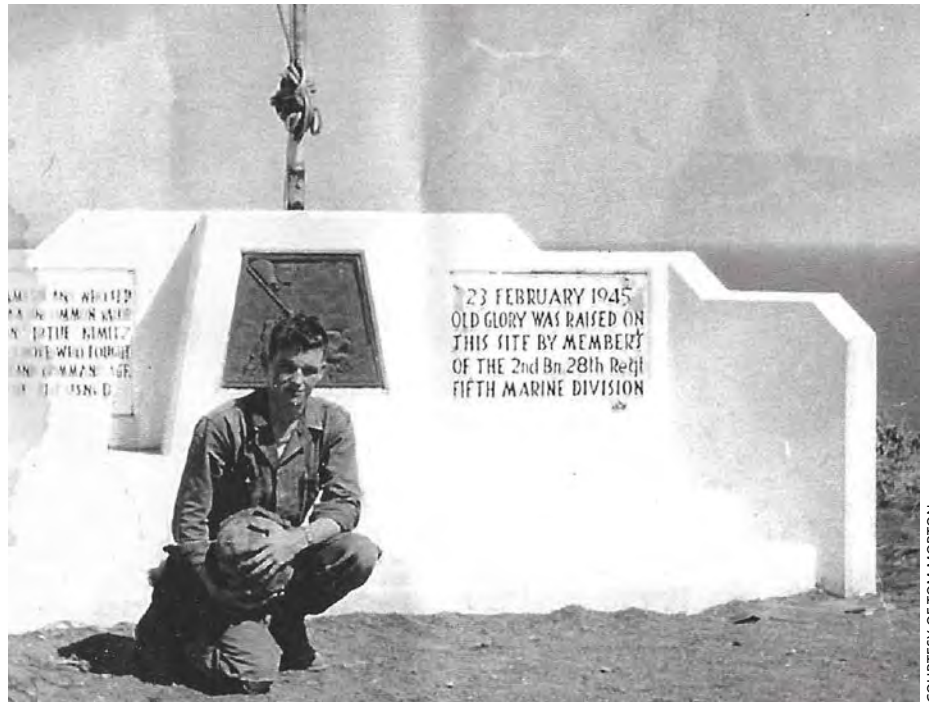
sergeant was very mad and wanted to know who was in charge. I was out of my mind with fear.

The next couple of weeks I was in charge of every dirty job that came up. After two or three weeks we got a new drill instructor—a very squared-away combat vet and decorated World War II Marine.

We had rifle practice during the day and I had to go to swim classes at night because I could not swim. Then came live fire and sighting-in for a week and then on Friday, qualification day. That whole week I did not qualify.

I was called into the sergeant's office the night before qualification. As I stood in front of him, he said, "Powers, I have been a DI for a long time and have never had a recruit not qualify in one of my platoons. If you do not qualify tomorrow, I'm going to kill you. Do you understand? Get out!"

The next day I shot sharpshooter. In those days if you didn't qualify you had to wear your clothing backwards. Ever since then, I fired expert. In fact, in 1956, my last year in the Marine Corps, I fired three points off a possible perfect score. I



COURTESY OF TOM MORTON

spent from Sept. 15, 1950 to June 2, 1951, with G/3/1 as a machine gunner in Korea.

Was it the swimming classes or was it the DI that made me a better shooter?

Cpl Thomas J. Powers
USMC, 1948-1956
Newell, W.Va.

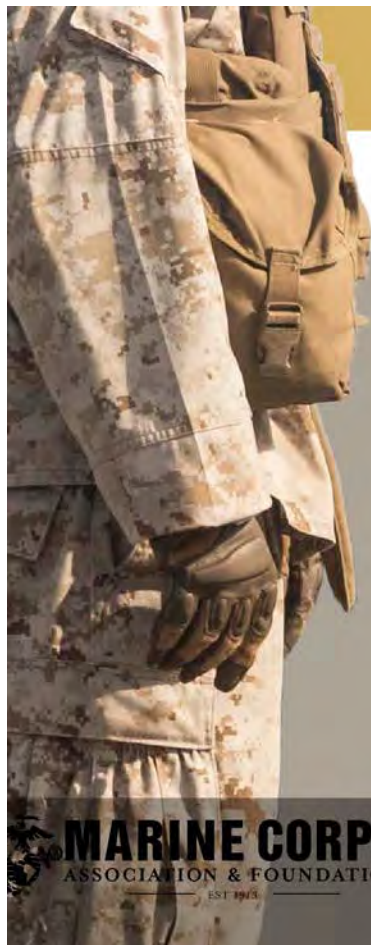
Iwo Jima Revisited

A couple of months ago my buddy Tom Morton introduced me to Gardner "Mickey" Plummer, a Legion Post 365 member who told us about a visit he made to the island of Iwo Jima in 1955, 10 years after the battle. Mickey was

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COURTESY OF TOM MORTON

PFC Gardner Plummer, left, posed for this photo on Iwo Jima in 1955. MSgt Kevin Gascon visited Iwo Jima in 2015 for the 70th anniversary of the battle of Iwo Jima. Not much had changed in 60 years.

a member of Shore Party, 3rd Marine Division at the time. At the bar that night was another Legion member and good friend, Kevin Gascon, who joined in our conversation and announced that he, too,

had made a visit to Iwo Jima on the 70th anniversary of the battle in 2015 when he was a member of Headquarters Regiment, 3rd Marine Logistics Group. Kevin and Mickey brought in some photos from their

visits to share. Taken 60 years apart, with the exception of a few gray hairs, you can see not much has changed.

Capt Raymond K. Johnson
Oceanside, Calif.

Submitted by Tom Morton

Readers Respond to Admin Clerk

At first I was kind of put off by Lance Corporal Hugh B. Pratt's letter [May issue] stating he was "barely" a Marine until I remembered I felt the same way at one time. Speaking for myself, when it comes to military occupational specialties (MOS), people who are in combat arms are at the top and then there are the rest of us. No disrespect, we all have a job to do and at any time could be called upon to lay it all on the line.

When I joined on July 7, 1968, I seriously thought there was only one Marine MOS and that was 03. The Navy took care of all other necessary tasks. On graduation day from MCRD San Diego, the platoon commander, Staff Sergeant Robert R. Sloan, said he was going to announce our MOSs. First up, 0100 admin man. The largest, brawniest member of the platoon, Private Davis, had his name called. Some chuckles and laughter were heard. The next name called was me. I was in shock. This isn't what I joined the

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MAY 16- 25

50th Anniversary of VN War I-II-III-IV Corps Delta to DMZ

AUG 1-10

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Corps for. The laughter is louder now. I remember the staff sergeant saying, “The ‘Nam can and will kill anyone.”

I ended up serving in Vietnam with H&S Co, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines from May 1, 1969 to March 15, 1970. On the night of Jan. 5 or 6, 1970, the battalion rear was attacked at LZ Ross. After the fight ended, 13 to 18 Marines, depending on your source, were counted as killed

that night. Sergeant William Adair of Bellevue, Wash., was starting his 6th and last year of Marine reserve duty. He had decided that he wanted to go to Vietnam for his final year. He volunteered. He felt duty-bound to serve his country in wartime. He was one of the KIAs. He was an admin man.

LCpl Pratt, you volunteered, you offered up your life for your country. You were lucky and suffered no serious harm. As you stated, you received an honorable discharge and presumably a good conduct ribbon. That’s twice as long as I served and I didn’t get the medal. LCpl Pratt, you *were* and still *are* a Marine. Wear it proudly.

Sgt Richard B. Ellenberger
Normandy Park, Wash.

I received my copy of the May issue of *Leatherneck* and as usual began my read with the Sound Off page. I read Lance Corporal Hugh B. Pratt’s letter, a very good letter. There seems to be some seeds of discouragement that have been sown in our Corps. Who sows seeds of discouragement? Who scatters the sheep? Who causes division?

LCpl Pratt says he reads his Bible, a very good thing. Let’s defer to a higher authority than our own. I think this will

clear up once and for all about who is able to claim the title Marine. I tip my cover to all my fellow combat Marines. They certainly are the tip of our spear. Those of us who have not served in combat situations cannot fully understand the heat of battle. First Corinthians, Chapter 12, verses 12-31 says it more completely but let me pick out the heart of it. Paul writes about the unity of the body, verse 21 says, “And the eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I have no need of you’” The head cannot say to the feet, I don’t need you. On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. The parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty while our presentable parts need no special treatment. God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it so that there should be no division in the body but its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers; if one part is honored, every part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

Our Marine Corps is one Corps made up of many members. Supply clerks, like me, truck drivers, pilots, mechanics, admin clerks like LCpl Pratt, drill instructors, etc. We are all different members of one

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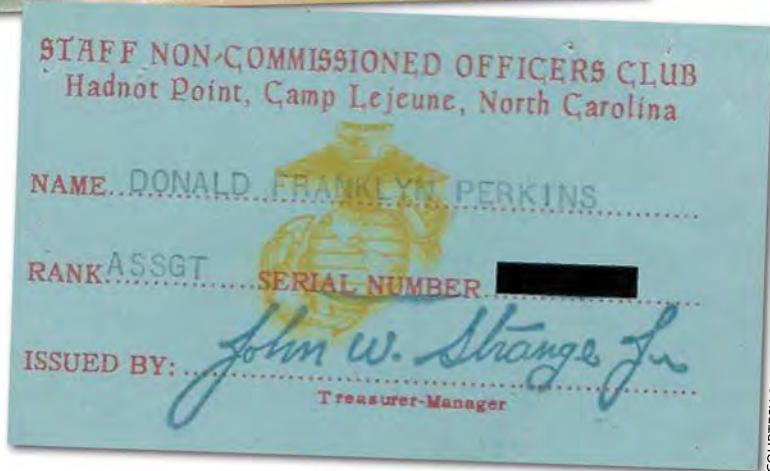
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SSgt Donald Perkins still carries his two staff non-commissioned officers' club cards.

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COURTESY OF SSGT DONALD F. PERKINS, USMC

body, our Marine Corps. One part cannot operate without the other. We all have one oath—Semper Fidelis. We are all Marines in one unit, our Marine Corps. We need unity when we are together. We have that bond that only Marines have. We are all Marines—and not “just barely,” as LCpl Pratt stated in his letter. I love all my brothers. Chin up, guns up!

Cpl Dan Gordon
USMC, 1966-1970
Campobello, S.C.

Rank Restructure

Here’s my input concerning the 1959 rank restructure. While assigned to 2nd Marine Division in 1957, I received a Hadnot Point, Camp Lejeune, N.C., staff noncommissioned officers’ club card listing my rank of staff sergeant. I received a club card with the rank of assistant staff sergeant after the restructure.

SSgt Donald F. Perkins, USMC
Raleigh, N.C.

Experimental Platoon

In regard to Staff Sergeant Dave Frees’ Sound Off letter, “What My DI Taught Me,” in the June edition, it was so special that I have shown it to so many people. I was in platoon 2014 at San Diego in 1956 which was designated an “experiment.”



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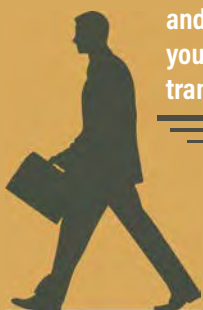
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The day we graduated we were allowed to unbutton our top button and were taken to a movie. When the movie was over, we marched across the “grinder.” It was really dark and when Sergeant Fairbanks started us out, it was on one foot. That’s all you heard. Sgt Fairbanks was heard loud and clear. “You SOBs!”

Cpl Ron Baker
USMC, 1956-1959
Chehalis Wash.

Night in the Woods

I wrote this poem in the spring of my senior year of high school in 2001. Twenty-eight days after 9/11, I went to Parris Island to become a Marine. I completed four years honorably and achieved the rank of corporal. Not a day goes by I don’t regret leaving active duty, but I did. Now I just live by the code of ethics instilled in me by the Corps.

There we sat in Belleau Woods,
Tugging at our frozen hoods.
Fingers numb and squeezed real tight,
Staring out into the night.

There is a scream loud and clear,
We take cover numb with fear.
The world explodes all around,
Men lie cringing on the ground.

Seven are dead from the blast,
Tonight just might be my last.
As one we all see the light,
Don’t give up without a fight.

Point your rifle at your foe,
Our enemy does not know.
He’s fighting men lean and mean,
Men we call U.S. Marine.

Cpl Neal L. Jackson
Submitted via email

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



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Reunions

• **3rdMarDiv Assn. (all eras)**, Sept. 17-22, Branson, Mo. Contact Roger Bacon, (215) 822-9094, rogerbacon45@yahoo.com.

• **Iwo Jima Assn. of America**, Feb. 25-29, 2020, Arlington, Va. Contact Art Sifuentes, (703) 590-1292, rsifuentes@iwojimaassociation.org, www.iwojimaassociation.org.

• **USMC Law Enforcement Assn.**, Oct. 10-13, Gatlinburg, Tenn. Contact CWO-4 Don Bolen, USMC (Ret), 1066 Mount Laurel Rd., Clover, VA 24534, usmcleanet@gmail.com.

• **USMC Vietnam Tankers Assn.**, Oct. 31-Nov. 4, Seattle, Wash. Contact John Wear, (719) 495-5998, johnwear2@verizon.net.

• **Marine Corps Engineer Assn.**, Sept. 12-14, San Antonio, Texas. Contact Maj Charlie Dismore, USMC (Ret), (512) 394-9333, www.marcorengasn.org.

• **USMC Food Service Assn.**, Oct. 3, Woodbridge, Va. Contact Maj Rick Bedford, USMC (Ret), (804) 386-6991, rdbedford1@gmail.com, www.usmcfssa.org.

• **Marine Corps Cryptologic Assn.**, Nov. 8-12, Branson, Mo. Contact John Bicknas, (850) 944-3827, (850) 375-4640, jbicknas@gmail.com.

• **Marine Air Traffic Control Assn.**, Sept. 25, Warwick, R.I. Contact Buddy Wyatt, (508) 627-3556, mrbreeze@comcast.net, www.marine-atc-association.org.

• **Marine Corps Mustang Assn.**, Sept. 17, Branson, Mo. Contact CWO-4 Jim Casey, USMC (Ret), businessmng@marinecorpsmustang.org, www.marinecorpsmustang.org.

• **Seagoing Marines Assn.**, Oct. 1-6, Louisville, Ky. Contact Bob Sollom, (540) 840-9310, sol136@msn.com.

• **The Chosin Few**, Dec. 4-8, San Diego, Calif. Contact Chosin Few Headquarters, 3 Black Skimmer Ct., Beaufort, SC 29907, (843) 379-1011, thechosinfewinc@aol.com, www.chosinfew.org.

• **Marine Corps Air Transport Assn. (VMGR/VMR)**, Oct. 3-6, San Diego, Calif. Contact Rich Driscoll, (817) 657-7768, president@mcata.com, www.mcata.com.

• **Marine Corps Recruiting Service** (all who served in a recruiting command, officer or enlisted), Sept. 11-15, Bluffton, S.C. Contact Larry Risvold, (803) 760-4575, larryrisvold@att.net, http://marinecorpssrecruiting servicereunion.com.

• **USMC Postal 0160/0161**, Sept. 29-Oct. 4, Norfolk, Va. Contact MSgt Robert I. Brown, USMC (Ret), (910) 358-7752, cbrown11@ec.rr.com.

• **MCAGCC Twentynine Palms, Calif., (all units, 1978-1982)**, Feb. 7-9, 2020, Twentynine Palms, Calif. Contact Maj Stew Rayfield, USMC (Ret), ironmajor@gmail.com.

• **Marine Barracks Fort Meade (NSA)**, Sept. 19-22, Valley Forge, Pa. Contact Bob Pepin, (508) 831-5575, rpepin@wpi.edu.

• **Marine Detachment/Barracks Bermuda (all eras)**, Sept. 15-19, Harrisburg, Pa. Contact Dennis McDonald, (763) 473-3458, (612) 247-3299.

• **3rd Engineer Bn**, Oct. 1-3, Rehoboth Beach, Del. Contact A.J. Folk, (610) 589-1362, ajfpa@comcast.net.

• **1/1 (RVN, 1965-1971)**, Oct. 23-26, San Diego, Calif. Contact Bill Kendle, (651) 248-3914, bkendle@comcast.net.

• **1/3 (all eras)**, Sept. 17-22, Branson, Mo. Contact Don Bumgarner, (562) 897-2437, dbumc13usmc@verizon.net.

• **1/5 (1986-1992)**, Sept. 5-8, Macomb, Ill. Contact Scott Hainline, (309) 351-2050, ptimfi@yahoo.com, Facebook: 1/5 USMC 1986-1992.

• **1/5 (Afghanistan)**, Oct. 9-12, Camp Pendleton, Calif. Contact Jim Hogan, (310) 728-9166, socks4heroes@gmail.com, http://scmsg.org/1-5-afghanistan-reunion.

• **1/7 (1984-1988)**, October 2019, Las Vegas, Nev. Contact Maj Bill Pedrick, USMC (Ret), bill.pedrick@gmail.com, or SgtMaj Dave Jones, USMC (Ret), drjonessgtmaj@gmail.com.

• **1/8 (1988-1996)**, Oct. 19, Atlanta, Ga. Contact James D. Harding, jharding@centuryfasteners.com, www.1-8reunion.com.

• **2/9 (all eras)**, Nov. 8-12, Arlington, Va. Contact Danny Schuster, (978) 667-4762, twoninencoic@aol.com, www.2ndbattalion9thmarines.org.

• **“Stormy’s” 3/3**, Oct. 20, San Antonio, Texas. Contact Burrell Landes, (303) 734-1458, bhanon@comcast.net.

• **3/26 (RVN)**, Nov. 10-17, Eastern Caribbean Cruise from Fort Lauderdale, Fla. Contact James Sigman, (850) 528-3854, www.funseas.com/26marine.

• **A/1/11 (RVN, August 1965-August 1966)**, Oct. 15-18, San Diego, Calif. Contact Jim Wybenga, jwybenga15@gmail.com.

• **H/2/5 (RVN)**, Nov. 7-10, San Antonio, Texas. Contact Robert Hardrick, (513) 410-0935, www.hotel25vv.org.

• **K/3/7 (all eras)**, Sept. 12-16, Nashville, Tenn. Contact Bill Gerke, (631) 433-8575, msggerke@aol.com.

• **M/3/7 (RVN)**, Oct. 9, Branson, Mo. Contact Keith and Judy Kohlmann, (920) 203-5764, jkohlmann@yahoo.com.

• **3rd 155s, M/4/12, 3rdMarDiv**, Sept. 8-12, Myrtle Beach, S.C. Contact SgtMaj Gordon Niska, USMC (Ret), (770) 856-1542, sniska@windstream.net.

• **Marine Expeditionary Brigade-Afghanistan, Task Force Leatherneck (2009-2010)**, May 1-3, 2020, Quantico, Va. Contact reunion committee, taskforceleatherneck@gmail.com.

• **Marine Corps Security Forces, Naval Weapons Station Earle**, Sept. 20-23, Colts Neck, N.J. Contact Dusty Wright, (618) 553-2205, slickstuff@nwcable.net.

• **38th/39th OCC, TBS 3-66/4-66**, Oct. 7-11, Newport, R.I. Contact Jack Sheehan, (401) 255-0387, jacksheehanjtow@me.com, www.usmc-thebasicschool-1966.com.

• **TBS 4-67**, Oct. 9-12, San Diego, Calif. Contact Ken Pouch, (860) 881-6819, kpouch5@gmail.com.

• **TBS 3-68**, Sept. 19-22, Quantico, Va. Contact Norm Hapke, 9949 Halo Circle, La Mesa, CA 91941, (619) 249-2281, nhapke@cox.net.

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

• **Plt 238, San Diego, 1965**, Oct. 15-18, San Diego, Calif. Contact Bonnie Arnold Gallegos, (608) 582-2386, hookemceg@hotmail.com.

• **Plt 331, Parris Island, 1959**, September 2019, Beaufort, S.C. Contact R.W. Wood, (205) 903-7220, bwood9@bellsouth.net.

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

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

• **Distinguished Flying Cross Society**, Sept. 15-19, Dayton, Ohio. Contact Warren Eastman, (760) 985-2810, weastman@dfcsociety.org.

• **VMO/VMA/VMF/VMFA-251 (all eras)**, Nov. 7-10, Charleston, S.C. Contact Steven Dixon, (404) 944-1268, frenchy@vmfa251.org.

Ships and Others

• **USS Canberra (CA-70/CAG-2)**, Oct. 9-13, Deerfield, Ill. Contact Ken Minick, 2115 Pride Ave., Belpre, OH 45714, (740) 423-8976, usscanberra@gmail.com.

• **USS Iwo Jima (LPH-2/LHD-7)**, Oct. 2-5, Norfolk, Va. Contact Robert G. McAnally, 152 Frissell St., Hampton, VA 23663, (757) 723-0317, yujack46709@gmail.com.

• **USS Wasp (CVS-18) Marine Detachment (1960-1970)**, Sept. 22-25, Niagara Falls, N.Y. Contact Joseph Looker, jshplooker@aol.com.

Mail Call

• Lawrence Honan, (908) 217-4765, getsome35@hotmail.com, to hear from members of **Plt 1047, Parris Island, 1966**, pictured below.

• William Napier, 10716 Gail Ct., St. Louis, MO 63123, mo.rebel44@gmail.com, to hear from or about Marine veteran **Joe ZINGALE**, who was assigned to **E/2/3 in May 1966**.

• Lora Shreffler, lora.shreffler@gmail.com, to hear from anyone who served with **Dennis Harold "Woody" WOOD**, who completed recruit training at **MCRD San Diego in 1974**; served in **Vietnam in 1975** during the evacuation of Saigon

and rescue of **SS Mayaguez**; served during the **Gulf War**; and retired in **1994** with **FAST Co in Norfolk, Va.**

• Tom Bennett, 101 Overlook Dr., Buckhannon, WV 26201, officertabennett@yahoo.com, to hear from or about **LCpl Ben GOMEZ**, who served with "**Bravo**" **Co, 1/1 during Desert Storm.**

• Capt L. Doug Ayers, USMC (Ret), (423) 641-3703, ayersd2@hughesnet.com, to hear from or about **CWO-4 Lance "Dutch" PARKER, USMC (Ret)**, who previously resided in the Bonsall, Calif., area.

• Bill Stilwagen, lzflashback@yahoo.com, to hear from or about the following Marines who served at **An Hoa** during the **Vietnam War: J.E. GRANRUD; R.L. ALVAREZ; S.H. WALSH; G.A. COAKLEY; D.R. WHITE; J.D. GUTHERTZ** and **R.J. MAIN.**

• H.E. Schweitzer, (954) 972-0555, to hear from or about **Amy KILLEEN**, daughter of the late **MajGen Calhoun J. KILLEEN.**

Wanted

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

• Jerry Thompson, (919) 917-4609, waleedsimba@msn.com, wants a **recruit graduation book for Plt 1159, Parris Island, 1974.**

• Martha Bewley, (719) 542-4592, bewleymj@yahoo.com, wants a **September 1966 issue of Leatherneck.**

• Vincent Brady, (270) 320-0995, luckycharm1479@gmail.com, wants **platoon photos** and a **recruit graduation book for Plt 1034, Parris Island, 1998**, and photos from **MCT Camp Geiger and Camp Johnson, 1998.**

• Matthew Lamb, 72 Marcshire Dr., Middletown, NJ 07748, (732) 425-9908, matthew.lamb87@gmail.com, wants a **yearbook for MAG-13, 1968**, on behalf of his father-in-law, former **LCpl Stanley Houston.**

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. 📧



FIRST RECRUIT BATTALION

PLATOON 1047

M.C.R.D. PARRIS ISLAND, S.C.

SSGT. T.J. SULLIVAN

SSGT. B. STOKES

SGT. W.E. DEAN

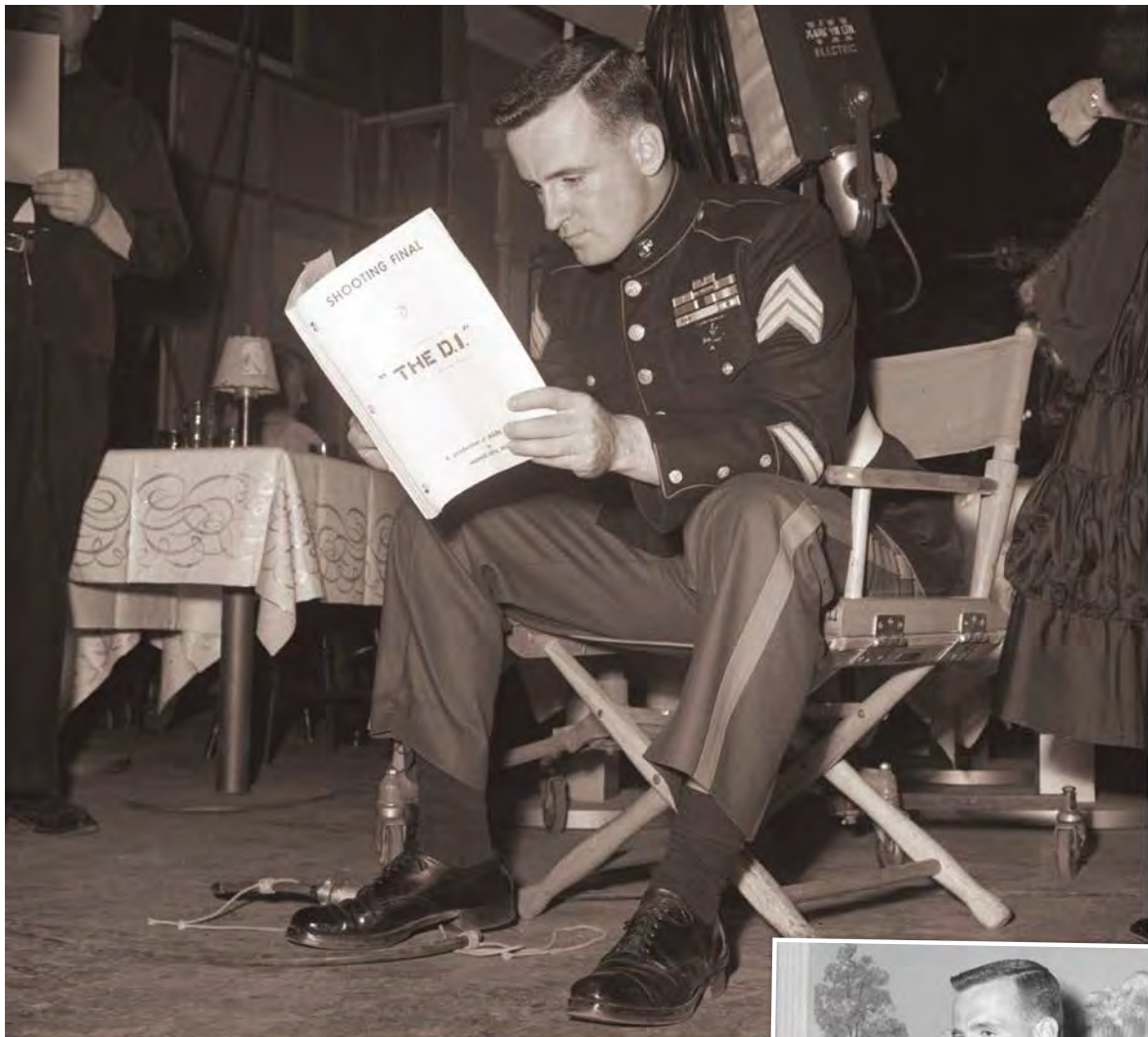
SSGT. E.E. COVEY

GRADUATED 19 - OCT. - 1966

Leatherneck reader Lawrence Honan would like to hear from members of **Plt 1047, Parris Island, 1966.**

Saved Round

By Nancy S. Lichtman



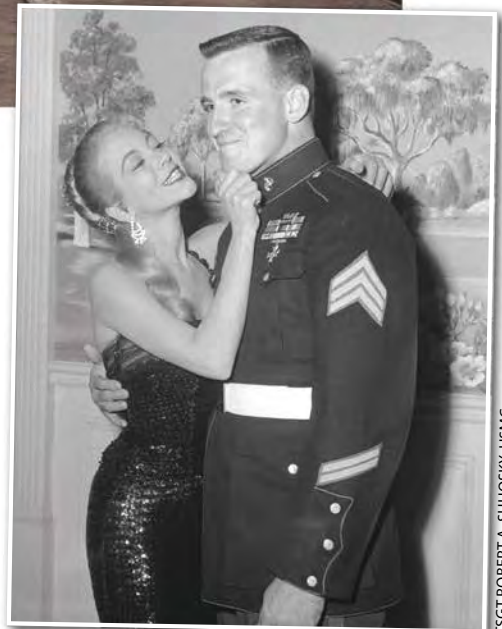
TSGT ROBERT A. SUHOSKY, USMC

FROM THE PARADE DECK TO THE SILVER SCREEN—Before R. Lee Ermey used his experiences as a drill instructor to bring the fictional character “Gunnery Sergeant Hartman” to life in the movie “Full Metal Jacket,” Corporal John Brown, a Parris Island DI, found himself with a set of orders to Hollywood. Brown, pictured above as “Sergeant O’Neil,” played a junior drill instructor with actor Jack Webb in the title role in the 1957 movie “The D.I.”

One of 53 active-duty Marines in the film, 18 of whom had speaking parts, Cpl Brown was selected for his role by lead actor Webb, who also directed the movie, based on a tape recording made at Parris Island by some of Webb’s production assistants. They recorded some of the DIs in action in order to “pick up the salty flavor” of how a DI addressed his recruits, according to a 1957 *Leatherneck* article about the movie. When Webb and the movie’s producers heard the recordings, they were so impressed by Cpl Brown’s voice that they wanted him on set as a technical advisor and cast member.

Brown told *Leatherneck* in 1957 that initially he believed the telephone caller offering him the job in the production was someone’s idea of a prank until he was given a set of orders for temporary duty on location in California. Before he knew it, he was rubbing elbows with Webb and co-star Monica Lewis, pictured in the inset photo.

Webb said the Marines in the movie were “sensational,” and when the filming was complete, he gave them all engraved wristwatches to remind them of their tour in Hollywood. 🐞



TSGT ROBERT A. SUHOSKY, USMC

MCM
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