

APRIL 2020

MAGAZINE OF THE MARINES

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Roy S. Geiger:
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In this article from the *Leatherneck* archives, Marines were sent to disarm Japanese soldiers and ensure their weapons did not fall into the hands of the Chinese Communists. Tensions came to a head when Marines guarding the 1st Marine Division's Ammunition Supply Point at Hsin Ho were ambushed by the "Ba Loo."

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By Maj Allan C. Bevilacqua, USMC (Ret)

Roy Geiger, the only Marine to command an aircraft wing and an amphibious corps was also the only Marine to command a field army. This legendary Marine started as an infantryman but made a huge impact on Marine aviation during its early days.

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By Sgt Desiree King, USMC Exercise Iron Fist 2020 is a large-scale exercise designed to enhance interoperability between the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force and the U.S. Marine Corps. It focuses on sharing amphibious doctrine

across nations by creating scenarios that demonstrate tactics, techniques and procedures associated with amphibious command and control, combined arms fire and maneuver, expeditionary logistics and operational concepts.

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Leatherneck recently talked with astronaut and veteran Marine Fred Haise who reflected on his career, the discipline he

developed as a Marine Corps fighter pilot and his participation 50 years ago in Apollo 13, the nearly disastrous lunar mission that was deemed a "successful failure."

52 **On Their Side: Exceptional Family Member Program Eases Strain on Marine Families** *By Sara W. Bock*

For active-duty Marines who have a dependent with special medical or educational needs, a mandatory enrollment program helps ensure that those needs are met without adversely affecting the Marine's career. Three families share their EFMP stories with *Leatherneck* and discuss how the program has set them up for success.



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COVER: Cpl Mark Broyles, USMC, a reconnaissance Marine with 1st Reconnaissance Bn, 1stMarDiv, provides security in the surf during Exercise Iron Fist 2020 at MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., on Jan. 21. Iron Fist enhances opportunities for the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force and the Marine Corps to share expertise in the use of amphibious vehicles, combined arms and amphibious doctrine. Photo by LCpl Britany Rowlett, USMC. Copies of the cover may be obtained by sending \$2 (for mailing costs) to *Leatherneck* Magazine, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134-0775.

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Letter of the Month

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

This is in reference to a letter by David Epps in the December 2019 *Leatherneck* titled "Almost Enlisted." It appears he ran into a young man sporting a Marine Corps T-shirt featuring our well-known yellow footprints. Mr. Epps, upon finding out this young man was going to enlist but chose a college education rather than enlisting at that point in his life, was incensed. Mr. Epps was going to buy his breakfast, but changed his mind merely based on what he saw and a cursory conversation.

As a Vietnam combat Marine veteran, I am on the watch for USMC phonies and what they represent. I myself have outed several phonies which included an indictment for stolen valor. Merely wearing a T-shirt or cap sporting USMC markings does not qualify as what is known as stolen valor. It has been deemed by our Supreme Court that merely wearing the uniform up to and including our wonderful dress blues is protected under the First Amendment as an expression of free speech. However, wearing a military uniform for the purpose of personal gain such as freebies and/or discounts is where

the line is drawn, and the crime of stolen valor is determined to be committed. It appears from Mr. Epps' letter that this young man was completely honest and forthcoming with him when asked. The young man wasn't looking for anything by wearing the T-shirt and may have even turned down Mr. Epps' breakfast offer.

I have found by my own experience in contacting people out there that it's amazing how many people are in full support of our Marine Corps and proud of who we are and what we do. Due to various reasons, they weren't able to enlist but it's their way of showing their support for our Marines. If Mr. Epps had chosen to speak with this young man further, he may have found that was the case. And who knows, that young man may well have intended to become a United States Marine Corps officer one day after completing his college education.

I guess my point here is two-fold. Talk to people about why they are wearing the Marine Corps T-shirt and know the law regarding stolen valor before jumping to conclusions. I personally am four out of five in outing phonies because I took the time to research the law and speak with people including FBI agents.

John H. Allen
Fountain Valley, Calif.

In Fairness to All Parties

I found Colonel Keil R. Gentry's well-written article, "In Fairness to All Parties: The Marine Corps Corrects the Historical Record," in the January edition of *Leatherneck* magazine quite disconcerting. I sincerely hope the 2019 Bowers Board finding is accurate, but it leaves me with much mental angst. For more than 70 years, I have accepted the identification of the five Marines and one Navy corpsman by the 1947 del Valle Board as true, valid and accurate. I was a young lad of 10 when the flag was raised on Mount Suribachi.

According to Marine Corps history, Private First Class Ira Hayes, Pharmacist Mate Second Class John Bradley and PFC Rene Gagnon were the only flag raisers to survive the Battle of Iwo Jima. They were ordered home to help sell war bonds. They were feted throughout the remainder of their lives. They were present at the christening of the Marine Corps Memorial and many other celebratory events honoring their participation with the flag raising.

If Bradley and Gagnon were truly not

among the six, and they knew it, why did they never come forth with the truth? Can it be that higher-ups directed them to keep quiet for life? Otherwise, I just cannot perceive that Bradley and Gagnon did not have the fortitude to come forward and correct the misidentification. Or is the 2019 Bowers Board finding another erroneous conclusion?

I am very troubled by this situation and its enormous impact.

Sgt Lloyd Stimson
USMC, 1953-1957
Fort Washington, Md.

Route 1 in Guam Renamed

"Guam Revisited" in the November 2019 Sound Off letters caught my eye as Guam is one of my very favorite places. After reading Mr. John Skelding's comments I felt I should add a clarification as to the main highway, Route 1, which was named Marine Drive in honor of the Marines who fought to free the island from the Japanese.

Marine Vietnam veteran John Vincent Pangelinan Gerber, who I had the pleasure of meeting several times, felt that people would simply think the name, Marine Drive, was reflective of a road running along the water. His obituary demonstrates his tenacity in having the road renamed. It states, "In 2004, he led the crusade to rename Marine Drive to Marine Corps Drive. A bill to rename the drive had been introduced but it was stalled at the legislature. In response, John went out on Route 1 and pulled a carabao cart designed to display his cause. He walked more than 27 miles, all the way from Andersen Air Force Base to the Naval Base."

Signage and maps now reflect Marine Corps Drive, the only one I'm aware of anywhere. John also created the National War Museum of the Pacific on the island that is well worth a visit. His obit, worthy of a read, can be found at: <http://noahbelew.blogspot.com/2010/08/sergeant-john-gerber-u.html>.

CWO-5 Robert W. Dart, USMC (Ret)
Niles, Ill.

Pilot Identified

I thought that if the writer, Lance Corporal James R. "Jim" Slater, of the January Sound Off letter "All in a Day's Work" was interested, you could pass on to him that the identity of the A-4E pilot he and his crew rescued was almost certainly Captain P.H. Courtney of VMA-

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A ceremony held during Co A, 3rd Shore Party Bn's return to Iwo Jima in 1956.

COURTESY OF SGT SAM ESAYIAN



Veterans who fought on Iwo Jima in 1945 were still serving there in 1956.

COURTESY OF SGT SAM ESAYIAN

211, flying out of Chu Lai. The book, "Vietnam Air Losses: USAF, Navy, and Marine Corps Fixed-Wing Aircraft Losses in SE Asia 1961-1973," by Chris Hobson, provides the information, although it doesn't give the date as Aug. 2, 1969, but rather Aug. 1. There were no A-4 losses on Aug. 2, and the details given for the Aug. 1 incident dovetail exactly with Mr. Slater's description.

Mike McElwee
Union, Ky.

Iwo Jima Revisited

I enjoyed the photos of Iwo Jima in the September 2019 issue of *Sound Off*. I also visited Iwo Jima in 1956 as a member of Company A, 3rd Shore Party Bn. We were based at Camp McGill, Japan. We arrived at Iwo Jima on USS *Mathews* (AKA-96) and participated in NAVMARLEX 1-56 during the period Feb. 17-20, 1956.

Sgt Sam Esayian
Bellevue, Wash.

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Book Review Sparked Interest

David Ekardt's book, "The U.S. Marines in the Second Creek and Second Seminole Wars," in the January issue, informed me of a part of history, American and Marine, that I was unaware. I'm not sure I needed to know this but for many years I've loved learning any subject of history, especially Marine lore. I'll most likely take a lot of criticism for saying this, but I feel very uneasy about this Marine history, especially being the enforcers of the Indian Removal Act. Not a bright spot in the American story and the Marines' part in it. But General Smedley D. Butler said often that's what our role was—enforcers. We have to take the good with the bad.

Richard B. Ellenberger
Normandy Park, Wash.

Cpl John Brown

The December 2019 issue had a question from Rich Boyd on what happened to Corporal John R. Brown after the filming of the movie, "The D.I."

I entered Parris Island on Jan. 9, 1957, and was assigned to Platoon 7, 1st Battalion. Cpl Brown was one of the drill instructors and was without a doubt the one with an odd manner in disciplining the recruits.

Cpl Brown left around the middle of February to join Jack Webb in the filming of "The D.I." I asked Sergeant Estep on graduation day if he had heard from Cpl Brown but no one had heard from him as of April 5.

I rented the film in 1992 to watch it again and to get Cpl Brown's middle initial so I could research what happened to him via the internet. I was able to find out that Cpl Brown stayed in the greater Hollywood area, married a Hollywood starlet and was discharged. I was unable to find any additional information beyond this.

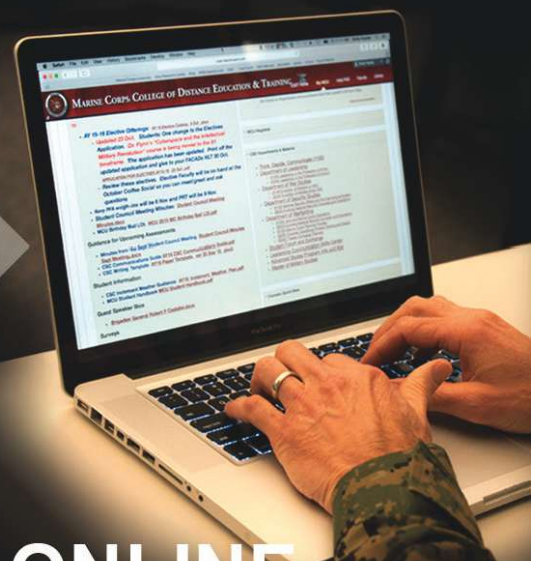
Sgt Carl Fishel
USMC, 1957-1963
Sparks, Nev.

Dangerous Flying Conditions

In light of the Kobe Bryant tragedy, I thought of another story. We were on a flight of two F-4's looking for a target of opportunity west of Da Nang. The whole area was clouded over. It may still have been monsoon season, but we got a hold of an airborne FAC (forward air controller) down below the overcast who had a target for us. The executive officer (XO) was in the lead, so we tucked in real close and started penetrating down through the clouds. As we bore downward, I got a

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TACAN fix from Da Nang to see exactly where we were. I remember after looking at the map and getting on the intercom, saying, "TJ, there are peaks higher than where we are at!" Just then we broke out below the overcast, dead center in a valley, and all you could see on either side was sheer rock. Being a junior officer, I couldn't say anything but the major I was flying with had some real choice words for the XO when we got back to Chu Lai.

Bob Ramsay
Steger, Ill.

I served with one of the captured Marines, Lieutenant Colonel James D. McBrayer Jr., in 2nd Marine Division, Camp Lejeune, during 1952-1953. His book, "Escape" published in 1995 describes the capture of the Marines in 1941. He and three other Marines escaped during the night of May 10-11, 1945, and spent time with Chinese guerrillas and Communist and Nationalist units.

CMSgt John F. Forgette, USAF (Ret)
Fairhaven, Wash.

A Marine's Marine

I am writing for my best Marine buddy who passed away several years ago. His name is Bob Frye and he served in our Corps and fought in Korea as a sergeant. When he mustered out of the Corps, he purchased a Beer Dock Drive Thru. When mothers and fathers would stop in with their sons and daughters, Bob would question them about their future plans. He always told them to make an appointment with the local Marine Corps recruiter to find out what the Corps could do for them.

Bob was responsible for so many who joined up and became United States Marines. The total was in the hundreds over the 50 years that he was in business.

Bob always had a high and tight haircut and wore a utility jacket to work every day. He personally motivated young men by the example that he set.

He and I would attend recruit graduations at Parris Island for those he helped encourage to join. I will never forget the trip when the morning of graduation it looked like rain. Bob had me stop at the 7-Day Store to pick up a box of trash bags. We arrived at graduation early so he could pass out the bags to the mothers and sisters of the graduates so they would not have to sit on a wet bleacher seat. The only problem was when they were asked to rise for the National Anthem they forgot to hold onto the bags and a gust of wind came up and blew them down on the platoons. He turned to me and in a low voice said, "Don't you say a damn word." You should have seen the looks on the recruits' faces. This is only one of the many crazy things that happened when we were together.

I am sure he is up there with the supreme commandant guarding the streets of heaven.

MSgt Dick Bowers, USMC (Ret)
Zanesville, Ohio

Leatherneck Reaches Far and Wide

The February issue of *Leatherneck* came today. As always, I look forward to it and the many good articles.

It was great to see the picture of Master Sergeant Antonio Rosa, USMC (Ret), with

[continued on page 68]



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COURTESY OF MAJ TONY MUSTAPICH

Maj Tony Mustapich wants to know if any of our readers recognize this pin.

Honorable Discharge Pin

A friend of mine, a veteran Marine, showed this pin to me recently. He said he received it when he was discharged in 1963. I had never seen one before and certainly didn't get one when I was discharged in 1972. The pin is about 3/4-inch in diameter, has a white enamel rim and the eagle, globe and anchor is raised metal.

Can you or any of your readers shed some light on this?

Maj Tony Mustapich
USMC, 1959-1972
Mesa, Ariz.

Not All Marines Left China in 1940

This is in reference to the Sound Off letter, "China Marine Association No Longer Exists" in the February issue. Readers may be interested in knowing that not all Marines left China in 1940. Marine guards at the American Embassy in Peking and Legation in Tientsin were declared POWs by Japanese forces on Dec. 8, 1941.

Information about those Marines can be found on the Ibiblio website, a digital archive, under "Marine POWs," pages 758-759. That information is part of "Victory and Occupation, History of US Marine Corps, Operations in World War II."

In Every Clime and Place

Compiled by Sara W. Bock

VOLOS, GREECE

Alexander the Great: Exercise Tests Readiness for Multinational Operations

Marines with “India” Company, 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division participated in Exercise Alexander the Great 2020 alongside Hellenic and French Armed Forces in Volos, Greece, Jan. 31-Feb. 8.

The exercise consisted of integrated battalion-level command and control and company/platoon-level combined arms training to increase interoperability, reassure allied and partner nations, improve readiness, reinforce relations and improve the ability to deploy alongside partnered forces.

“Alexander the Great is an excellent demonstration of improving military relationships between Europe and the U.S.,” said Sergeant Chad Gaddis, a squad leader with 3/2. “We come together to execute everything from small-unit training to more complex military training operations.”

During the exercise, servicemembers from the participating military forces showed their capabilities through live-

fire ranges, patrols and a beach assault. By incorporating multinational support, the countries were able to build a stronger front by combining individual specialties and experiences.

Alexander the Great 2020 began as a weeklong field operation consisting of integrated non-live-fire, squad-level tactical training, an integrated live-fire combat marksmanship range and off-hand shooting.

Once aboard the French ship *Dixmude*, a helicopter carrier, planning and preparation commenced for a beach assault. The militaries executed the beach assault on an island followed by vehicle reconnaissance and foot patrols throughout the island to various objective points.

“All the forces worked well together because we all had the same mission and goals, as well as just wanting to learn about each other’s tactics and operations,” said Sgt Mason Spivey, a squad leader with 3/2.

The annual exercise concluded with a culminating event that tested the servicemembers on the skills they learned throughout the week. By allowing the Marines of 3/2 the opportunity to work with their Greek and French counterparts,

the Marine Corps improved mission readiness and is better prepared for any potential future multinational operations and exercises.

One other vital purpose of the exercise was to prove the Marine Corps’ ability to accomplish U.S. European Command objectives.

“Hopefully in the future we’ll be able to do this exercise again,” said Private First Class Dandre Washington, a rifleman with 3/2. “The next time we do this, we can share the tactics and experiences that we learn between iterations to make us a better force. Things can work smoothly because we’re all working together as one unit.”

Cpl Ashley McLaughlin, USMC

RATCHABURI, THAILAND

Combat Engineers Share Demining Techniques

A team consisting of U.S. Marine Corps combat engineers and a Navy corpsman with 9th Engineer Support Battalion, 3rd Marine Logistics Group conducted Humanitarian Mine Action (HMA) training for demining students from the Royal Thai Armed Forces, Jan. 2-Feb. 9.



CPL ASHLEY MCLAUGHLIN, USMC

Marines with 3/2 conduct a simulated medical evacuation during Exercise Alexander the Great in Volos, Greece, Feb. 1. Training with Hellenic and French armed forces increased the Marines’ capability to deploy with partners and allies in the future.



LCPL ARMANDO ELIZALDE, USMC

Sgt Correy Lockett, left, and Sgt Ethan Camden evaluate servicemembers with the Royal Thai Armed Forces during an inert mine training lane test at Jarumanee Training Area, Ratchaburi Province, Thailand, Jan. 28. The Thai students used a handheld metal detector during the training, which taught tactics, techniques and procedures for locating and disposing explosive remnants of war and unexploded ordnance.

The training, led by U.S. and Thai instructors, consisted of formal classroom instruction and practical application on technical and non-technical surveys, handheld mine detectors and demining casualty care. The Marines worked alongside servicemembers from the Thailand Mine Action Centre (TMAC) to teach the course.

“We are partnered with TMAC, which is the national authority for land release and demining operations in Thailand,” said Staff Sergeant Gabriel Green, the staff noncommissioned officer-in-charge of the 9th ESB HMA team. “Our training course and curriculum is heavily focused on technical and non-technical surveys, as well as landmine casualty care and handheld metal detector operations.”

During non-technical surveys, deminers will travel to locations that may contain mines to conduct interviews with locals in order to gain information about the area. If the area is deemed contaminated, deminers will cordon off a perimeter and conduct a technical survey. In a technical survey, they will physically examine the minefield to define the hazards, find the unexploded ordnance and then remove the explosives.

“Small teams go out to possibly affected areas or even confirmed affected areas to conduct a survey that will more clearly define what the actual threat in that area is, including the type of mines, size of the affected area and local features,” said Green. “Remnants of war, remnants of battle and past military conflicts have left countless numbers of explosive hazards

that are still where they landed or placed decades ago that are a threat to innocent people and animals.”

Green noted that all of the participating students from the Royal Thai Armed Forces come from different HMA units across the Kingdom of Thailand. After the students graduate from the course, they go back to their units and conduct demining operations in areas known to have active landmines and explosive hazard threats.

In the course, the students are evaluated by written and performance-based exams on the technical information and skills

that were taught. The HMA instructors require the students to pass each exam with an 85 percent or higher to advance in the course.

“Working with our Thai counterparts has been truly amazing,” said Green. “The Thai instructors, many which were former students from previous years, exponentially increased our ability to pass on knowledge in a safe and effective way. [The U.S.-Thai instructor team] really made this course possible. When we leave here, I know, without the shadow of a doubt, that we made a difference in peoples’ lives.”

LCpl Armando Elizalde, USMC

CHERRY POINT, N.C. Fireball Eagle: TACP Marines Rehearse Fire Coordinating

On June 6, 1944, U.S. Army soldiers participated in the largest amphibious landing ever conducted. By the end of the battle, Allied troop casualties stood at more than 200,000. Marines fighting in the Pacific took the invasion of Normandy as a learning opportunity and adapted a better manual for amphibious fighting, implementing a system of trained pilots and artillerymen to act as the sights and coordinators for supporting fire. Today, the Marine Corps has Tactical Air Control Party (TACP) Marines to guide close air support on target and act as a link between attacks from the air, land and sea to mitigate risk of friendly fire between supporting elements.

Marines with the II Marine Expeditionary Force TACP program participated in Exercise Fireball Eagle at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C., Feb. 4-6. The training event gives TACP Marines



LCPL BRIAN BOLIN JR., USMC

MSgt Edwin Burch II, left, the assistant TACP program manager with 1/10, and Maj Steven Sprigg, an air officer with Headquarters Co, 2nd Marines, coordinate a call for close air support during Exercise Fireball Eagle at MCAS Cherry Point, N.C., Feb. 4.



LCPL BRIAN BOLIN JR., USMC

Marines with 1/2 fire M252 81 mm mortars during Exercise Fireball Eagle, Feb. 5. The training, conducted at MCAS Cherry Point, N.C., consisted of multiple scenarios using aircraft and ground support fire to simulate real warfighting situations.

realistic fire coordination experience before they attend the biannual Weapons and Tactics Instructor (WTI) course held at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Ariz.

“It’s about preparing students to go to Marine Aviation Weapons and Tactics Squadron (MAWTS) 1 WTI courses,” said Master Sergeant Edwin Burch, the assistant director for 2nd Marine Division’s TACP program. “It shows them what they can expect to see at WTI as far as situations they will have to deal with there.”

During the exercise, TACP Marines were given situations and targets to coordinate fire support between mortars from 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment and UH-1 Venoms, AH-1 Vipers and F/A-18 Hornets in support of infantry forces.

“We are basically the liaison between the forces on the ground and the forces in the air,” said Burch. “We give the ground forces the ability to bring in close air support.”

Joint Forward Observers (JFOs), enlisted Marines from artillery units, carry out the attack plans of Joint Terminal Attack Controllers (JTACs) alongside Forward Air Controllers (FACs)—who

are qualified Marine pilots on the ground who direct aircraft engaged in close air support. Graduates of the WTI course serve as squadron training officers who use their skills to act as subject matter experts on the methods of fire utilized by TACP Marines.

“This training really helps give TACP Marines the tools they need to be successful in their careers, especially at WTI,” said Captain Eric Nilsson, an AH-1Z Viper pilot and a FAC. “It basically helps the ground guys translate to the pilots what they want as far as close air support.”

Exercise Fireball Eagle gives 2ndMarDiv TACP Marines the experience to support units effectively in the field. The training that the Marines will receive at WTI will ensure the lethality of the TACP program and help strengthen the warfighting capabilities of the division.

LCpl Brian Bolin Jr., USMC

KAGOSHIMA, JAPAN Bilateral Exercise Strengthens U.S., Japanese Partnership

The bilateral U.S.-Japan training Exercise Forest Light Western Army concluded with a closing ceremony at the Kirishima

Training Area in Kagoshima Prefecture, Japan, Jan. 30.

More than 145 Okinawa-based U.S. Marines and a division of four MV-22B Osprey tiltrotor aircraft from the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit joined approximately 500 Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF) servicemembers for the regularly scheduled exercise, held from Jan. 18-30 in locations throughout Kyushu, Japan, including Camp Oyanohara and Camp Takayubaru in Kumamoto Prefecture and the Kirishima Training Area in Kagoshima.

The exercise consisted of field training events encompassing basic infantry skills, integrated vertical assaults with the Ospreys, and combined-arms operations with both allied nations’ forces completing a variety of missions together. U.S. Marines with Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, and Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 265 (Reinforced), 31st MEU, worked with their JGSDF counterparts with the 12th Infantry Regiment, 8th Division, Western Army.

The exercise culminated with full mission profile rehearsals simulating supporting operations for the seizure of captured

Japanese servicemembers with 12th Infantry Regiment, 8th Division, Western Army, board an MV-22B Osprey with VMM-265 (Rein), 1st MAW, currently assigned to the 31st MEU, while conducting vertical assault training with U.S. Marines in Kumamoto, Japan, during Exercise Forest Light Western Army, Jan. 28.

islands. The final assault included both forces working together to locate, close with and destroy a simulated enemy with bilateral supporting fires by 81 mm mortar sections managed by a combined combat operations center, military operations in urban terrain, and casualty evacuation of role players by a JGSDF UH-60 helicopter. The display of successful bilateral operations included detailed planning, rehearsals and thorough coordination between the two nations' forces.

Bilateral training is essential to ensuring that our forces are prepared to work and fight together should the need arise. Exercise Forest Light Western Army and similar training exercises serve as testament to the proven partnership between the Marine Corps and JGSDF during real-world contingencies such as actions after the Kumamoto earthquakes in April 2016. The last time that MV-22 Ospreys with the "Dragons" of VMM-265 (Rein), assigned



LCPL ETHAN LEBLANC, USMC

to the 31st MEU, were in Kumamoto, they flew from Okinawa to Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni and provided humanitarian assistance and disaster relief with the Japan Self-Defense Force as part of Joint Task Force Chinzei. This example emphasizes the importance of interoperability shared in the course of bilateral

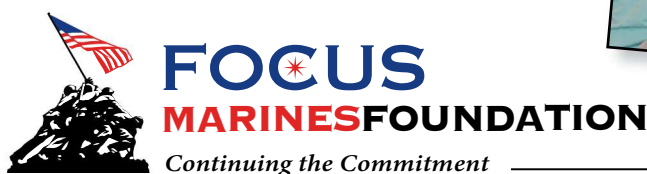
training exercises such as Forest Light Western Army.

The Forest Light series of exercises enhances the collective defense capabilities of the U.S.-Japanese alliance in a dynamic and challenging environment through a variety of bilateral training activities.

Capt George McArthur, USMC

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LCPL BRENNAN BEAUTON, USMC

LCpl Caelan Long, a supply chain and material management specialist with MWSS-172, completes a timed swim during the grueling WSA course at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, Japan, Jan. 29.

**OKINAWA, JAPAN
Advanced Training Course
Pushes Swimmers to the Max**

“Toes on the edge!”

Marines and Sailors from across Marine Corps Base Camp Smedley D. Butler, Okinawa, Japan, jumped into the pool at 7 a.m. to begin the weeklong Water Survival Advanced course after receiving the command from Petty Officer 2nd Class Kody Schwartz, USN, a water survival instructor.

The Okinawa-based Marines and Sailors endured and completed the advanced swim qualification course from Jan. 27-31 at the Fairchild Pool at Kadena Air Base.

WSA is the highest swim qualification Marines and Sailors can receive before attending the instructor’s course.

“Don’t come here thinking, ‘Oh, I kind

of know how to swim,’ ” said Schwartz. “This course is meant for people who know how to swim and want to push their abilities to the extremes.”

The students learned how to stay calm in the water even in the most stressful environments and to rescue others under any circumstance.

They learned four different types of rescues, gaining the skills and techniques necessary to rescue Marines while wearing a full Marine Corps combat utility uniform.

“It is a lot heavier,” said Sergeant Jared Lucke, a water survival instructor. “The Marines and Sailors really struggle a lot more and it takes a lot out of them.”

The course taught various techniques, including Marine Corps water survival skills and American Red Cross rescues.

On the third day of the course, the students pushed their bodies to the limits.

“Day three is their ‘Hell Day,’ ” said Schwartz. “It’s long swims, a lot of push-ups, sit-ups, flutter kicks, gutter-ups, rifle retrievals and underwater breath holds. It’s basically to challenge them and make them know that no matter what happens in the water that they’re going to be confident and rescue anybody under any conditions.”

“You have no idea what is going to happen next,” said Lance Corporal Zachary Larsen, class commander during the course. “One minute, you’re holding a brick above water or retrieving rifles, and the next you’re trying to hold a basketball down at the bottom of the deep end.”

On average, the participants swam 12 miles.

“It’s hard,” said HM2 Israel Nolen, USN, the course’s honor graduate and a corpsman with 3rd Medical Battalion. “Going through this course is no joke. I thought it was going to be easy, but it definitely pushes you to your limit and outside your comfort zone. You really have to dig deep.”

Upon graduation, the new WSA graduates returned to their units with the ability to physically train up to five people in the pool and assist Marine Corps instructors of water survival during basic and intermediate swim qualifications.

“Water survival is critical,” said Lucke. “Especially out here in Okinawa. The commandant said that this is his main focus. We [are] on an island and we just need to stop incidents from happening. I think just having Marines and Sailors trained at all times, whether you’re in uniform or not, you’ll be able to help people.”

LCpl Brennan Beauton, USMC



LCPL BRENNAN J. BEAUTON, USMC

LCpl Zachary Larsen, a combat graphic specialist with Headquarters and Support Bn, MCIPAC-MCB Camp Butler, attempts to escape a simulated attack during the WSA course in Okinawa, Japan, Jan. 29. WSA is the highest swim qualification Marines and Sailors can receive before attending the instructor’s course.



LCPL BRENNAN BEAUTON, USMC

Marines and Sailors participating in the WSA course hold their rifles above water at Fairchild Pool on Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, Japan, Jan. 29.



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Shootout at Hsin Ho



The aftermath of the attack on Hsin Ho left five Marines dead and six Communists killed, including the three shown above.

By R.R. Keene

Editor's note: Thank you to Lloyd L. Remus, a China Marine from "Charlie" Co, I/5, for recommending that Leatherneck republish this article by R.R. Keene in honor of the Marines lost at Hsin Ho. The timing was fortuitous. Lloyd recommended the article be republished in April 2020 on the anniversary of the event, but as we were working on this issue of the magazine, we learned of R.R. Keene's death. We know Ron would be happy to know that his writing is still impacting Marines. See page 65 for more about Ron's distinguished career both on active duty and in "retirement" as a writer for Leatherneck.

Tense. That was the word which best described duty in North China for Marines following the end of World War II. The word "tense" was in nearly all communiqués and reports and was felt in almost every confrontation (another oft-used word) with the Communists. In

China, the war had left more problems than it solved.

The first contingent of 5,400 leathernecks came ashore and marched into Tientsin to cheering throngs of thousands of Chinese. The parade and cheers only masked that the Marines were marching

between a rock and a hard place. China was on the verge of civil war.

The Marines had been sent to disarm Japanese soldiers, protect them from reprisals, and relieve them of their garrisons in North China's ports and communications centers. They also ensured that huge quantities of Japanese arms did not fall into Communist hands. At its peak the mission to China required nearly 50,000 Marines to be stationed south of the Great Wall.

The leathernecks were filling a vacuum that covered more than miles. When the Japanese formally surrendered at Tokyo Bay, China was divided up for grabs. The Western-dominated Nationalists, or "Koumintang," had armies numbering 3 million men and were led by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek; they controlled only southeast China.

The Communists, or "Ba Loo," had the sympathy of the people, and their leader, Chairman Mao Tse-tung, led an army of a million men. They had 170,000 regular troops in North China and were prepared to assume power in that area. However, as one leatherneck officer noted, "The presence of Marines frustrated this."

For the most part, duty in China was old hat to the Marines who'd regularly paraded down Bubbling Well Road in Shanghai before the war. Now, Peking, the capital, was called Peiping, and on Sept. 20, 1945, General Chou En-lai, the top Communist representative in wartime negotiations, warned "old China hands" Brigadier General William Wharton and Colonel Charles Brown, the Corps' advance men, "the Communists would fight if the Marines moved to Peiping."

Gen Wharton had no directive to move into Peiping, but could not let Chou's remark go unanswered. He replied that his command, the III Marine Amphibious Corps, was "combat-experienced and would drive through any force that tried to stop them."

That's when the terms "tense" and "confrontational" started appearing. Everyone understood the gauntlet had been thrown down.

However, not all duty in China was "bad" for all Marines. True, there had been extensive destruction of property, the loss of capital, and industry was at a standstill. Prices were more than 2,000

COURTESY OF HERB NEWMAN

times the level they'd been a decade earlier. Yuan, Chinese currency, dropped more than 70 percent in value within a month of Japan's surrender. Inflation had nearly wiped out China's middle class, and the intellectuals, as in every crisis, felt disillusioned.

Such concerns were for statesmen and politicians. They meant nothing to young Marines who'd just finished conquering the Pacific and received pockets full of "personality" in the form of back pay. They had powerful thirsts and a lot of living on which to catch up.

One wrote: "Although the billets were musty, damp and dirty [the Japanese had ripped out the plumbing and sabotaged heating and water supplies], wine, women and steaks were cheap." They set out to further inflate the local economy. They quickly discovered that the best they could do was visit the British Concession where "bad vodka, poor wine, poisonous Chinese whiskeys and Russian women were the main attraction." There was also the French Concession, "a large live-story bazaar and large house of ill-repute." As in the days before the war, the young officers were attracted to the White Russian girls. Thus, the extravagant living soon slowed to a regular routine, marked with rather pleasant, if only occasional, forays of liberty. And by April of 1947, most of the veterans were gone.

The leatherneck occupation of North China could be summed up as a naive and impossible mission of supporting the Nationalists while at the same time retaining neutrality. Consequently, it was inevitable they would find themselves the first Americans to battle (in the form of many skirmishes) the forces of Chairman Mao. One such skirmish was a shootout at Hsin Ho.

There were few pleasantries for those Marines assigned to guarding the 1st Marine Division's Ammunition Supply Point at Hsin Ho, a cold, desolate, windblown stop on the Peiping-Mukden Rail, 25 miles southeast of Tientsin, near the Gulf of Chihli. The train stop and majority of the company was garrisoned at Tangku a few miles west of Hsin Ho village.

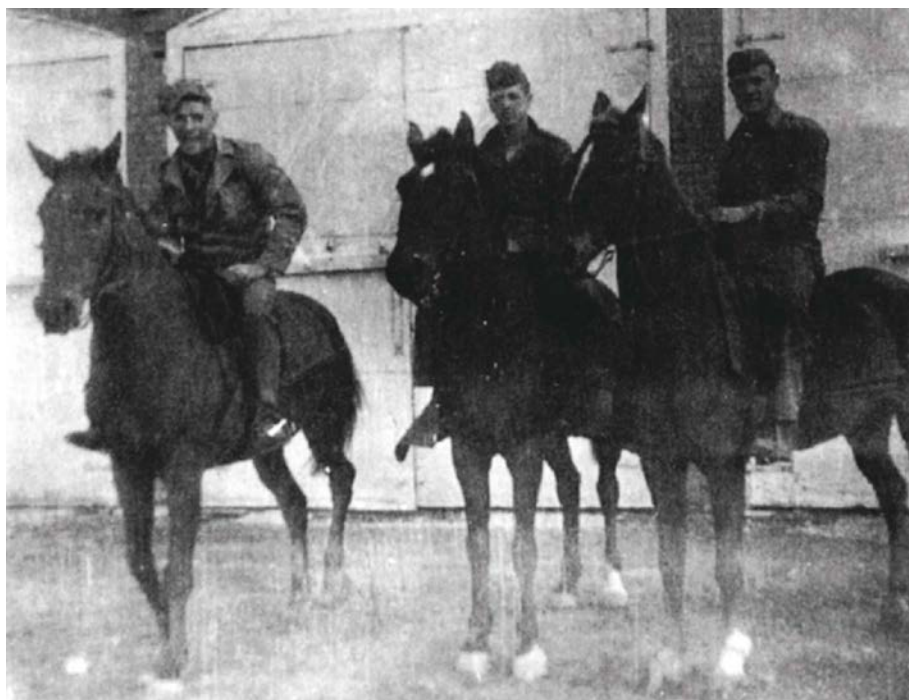
Marsh grasses for almost as far as the eye could see were all that challenged the sentries when guarding the 3-mile triangular perimeter around the ASP, formerly occupied by the Japanese. Some claimed, mostly during the mid-watch, that the place was haunted. Others who'd been raised on farms said there were strange noises that sounded like ducks.

Sergeant Herb Newman didn't care what the noises were unless they threatened his "post and all government property in view." As one of the commanders of



Sgt Herb Newman is pictured here at the ASP guard shack before the April 1947 attack.

COURTESY OF HERB NEWMAN



Marines patrolled the ASP on horses previously owned by Japanese officers during their occupation of China in WW II.

COURTESY OF HERB NEWMAN

the guard, he ensured his sentries were alert and drilled them constantly on their 11 general orders. He rode his post and patrolled the perimeter on horses, formerly mounted by Japanese officers, to ensure it.

This was no small feat for Sgt Newman, who, prior to arriving at Hsin Ho, had never been on a horse. But he had been in combat. He was a survivor of Saipan, Tinian and Iwo Jima and had the Purple Heart Medals and scars to prove it. He was a professional, one of maybe 10 in Company C, 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment who'd seen action. The others were primarily draftees who had been, for the most part, too young and too late for

Iwo Jima and Okinawa. Therefore, it fell to Sgt Newman and other not-so-much-older noncommissioned officers to see to their well-being. Although he preferred a jeep and took one whenever possible, he'd ride a horse to properly check post.

It was tedious and dull duty which could make it dangerous for those sentries foolish enough to relax their vigil. The Ba Loo had previously attacked the ASP on a cold Oct. 3 night but for the quick reaction of the leatherneck guards, the Communists may have overrun the whole place. As it was, at dawn the guard mount found one dead and one wounded Communist soldier along with cases of rifle ammunition and grenades.

It was a good bet to assume that the Ba Loo would strike again. By the spring of 1947, the Corps' involvement in China was waning, and the 1stMarDiv, all that was left of the III MAC, was wrapping up the Corps' duties on the Asian continent. A detachment from 7th Service Regiment had almost completed its job of sorting serviceable ammunition to ship out of China. Much of what remained at Hsin Ho was useable but unstable. Although no decision had been made as to turning over this ammunition to the Nationalists, the Communists were very aware that it was a possibility.

On Good Friday, April 4, 1946, Lieutenant Junior Grade Edward R. Martineau, battalion chaplain, held services. After noon chow call, the company settled into the "make and mend" routine under Second Lieutenant William R. Medlock, the officer of the day. It remained routine until a few minutes after 1 a.m. A patrol jeep driven by Private First Class Anthol Clark with PFC John Pelaro riding shotgun with his Browning Automatic Rifle made its rounds. In the back, PFC Salvatore Di Nenna manned the mounted, .30-caliber, air-cooled light machine gun with Private Joseph Powroznyk as assistant gunner. The men in the jeep paused long enough to exchange pleasantries with PFC David Sellers, the sentry on Post No. 7. PFC Di Nenna told Sellers: "Hsin Ho village was too quiet when we came through. No one was out. I wouldn't be surprised if we got hit tonight."



COURTESY OF HERB NEWMAN

This is one of the jeeps that was ambushed by Communist forces as the Marines were rushing to the aid of their fellow leathernecks.

At about the same time PFC Jacob Jereb had just assumed Post No. 3. He'd already walked the length of his post, meeting and recognizing PFC Peter Stankiewicz, the sentry on Post No. 2, and then walked back up to the donkey trail leading to the village of Peitang the beginning boundary of Post No. 4. Satisfied that the area was secure, Jereb stepped behind an ammunition shed for a smoke, which was prohibited in the ammunition area.

As he quietly indulged himself, he was

alarmed at the sound of wire being cut. The smoking lamp went out. Jereb peeked around the shed and saw Chinese cutting the perimeter's concertina wire. Jereb raised his rifle and challenged: "Bay a dung!" which means "Stand where you are!" He noticed they were very well-armed. PFC Jereb did not wait for an answer. The report from his M1 could be heard for miles.

The security system at Hsin Ho may have been adequate to discourage thievery and to hold off attacks by bandits or small raiding parties until reinforcements could arrive from Tangku, but it was not designed to cope with an attack by a force which was later put at approximately 350 well-armed Communists of the Eighth Route Army.

It was 1:15 a.m., and Chinese bugles sounded their eerie calls from the fields adjacent to Posts No. 2 and No. 3. A fusillade of rifle and machine-gun fire saturated sentries' positions.

PFC Stankiewicz was jolted into action as bullets and grenade fragments impacted around him. He opened up on the Chinese, who were apparently surprised by the accurate return fire from one Marine. Although terribly wounded, Stankiewicz pressed forward, putting his deadly fire onto the attacking Ba Loo forcing them to seek less hostile positions. All Stankiewicz could do was shoot, hold on, and hope for reinforcements.

PFC Jereb had shot his way into more than he'd been prepared for. They'd

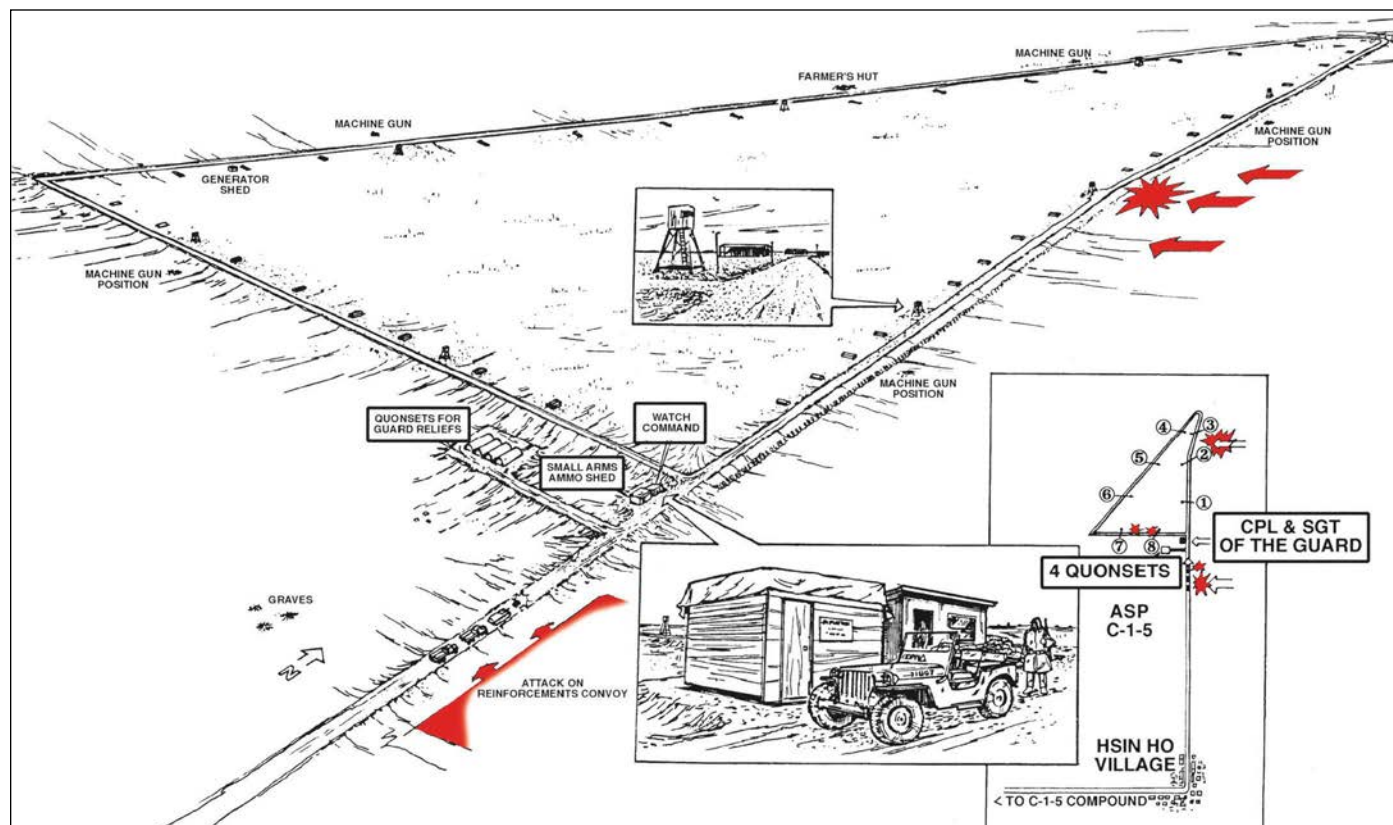


ILLUSTRATION BY HOBART WALSH

answered with lead from everywhere and threw potato-masher grenades for good measure. He'd been wounded and fell back into the field behind the ammo shed. He lay on the ground and watched as some of the attackers came looking for him. It's likely they'd have found him had not the jeep patrol caught their attention.

Hearing the shots, Di Neena broke off his conversation with Sellers, and the jeep patrol took off for Post No. 3. Jereb later said, "As they came around the corner, they ran right into the Ba Loo, who were already on the road. They bailed out of the jeep and started returning fire, but there were just too many of them. They were all around them and were throwing grenades. I thought they were all killed."

At the ASP guard shack 2ndLt Medlock also heard the firing and cranked the double E-8 field phone, raising the radio watch, Corporal James Erwin, at Tangku. "We have firing around Post 3. I don't know what the hell is going on. I have one of the patrol jeeps here at the guardhouse. Sgt Cole [Platoon Sergeant Norris Cole, commander of the guard] is going to take the 60 mm mortar team out with the jeep and a fire team. They are going to fire some illuminate so we can see what is going on."

Cole had already roused Cpl Fred L. Harrington and the rest of the mortar team.

At Tangku, Erwin woke his officers. The company commander, Captain Henry V. Joslin, who had seen action in WW II, said: "Wake the field music. Have him sound 'Call to Arms.' Call the [ammunition] dump and tell them we are on our way."

PFC Charles Dechon sounded "Call to Arms," as Erwin called the ASP on his SCR 300 radio. "Charlie Six says set Condition Red [ASP under attack]. Repeat Able, Sugar, Peter to Condition Red. Be advised Charlie is coming out."

The Marines at Tangku were moving, getting dressed as they ran to draw ammunition from the storage locker. They had no grenades, but cartridge belts previously loaded for MIs, BARs and carbines flew.

Meanwhile, PltSgt Cole's jeep had been joined by a 6x6 truck with Marines. They didn't get very far. As they passed Post 1, bullets shattered the windshields, and grenade fragments punctured the chassis of their vehicles. Cpl Harrington, who had been wounded in the initial volley, jumped out with the rest and was last seen crawling toward cover. Cole, one of the veterans of WW II, moved his Marines into a hasty horseshoe-shaped defensive line and started returning fire.

The mortarman, PFC Alfred E. Perkey,



COURTESY OF HERB NEWMAN

PFC Lloyd Remus survived the shootout at Hsin Ho but the M7 shown here was knocked out of action by a land mine as it made its way to the fight at the ASP.

Currency found by Sgt Newman on the body of one of the Chinese Communists after the attack.



COURTESY OF HERB NEWMAN

whom it was rumored enlisted underage, ignored bullets slapping the air around him. He was hit once, but pulled two 60 mm mortars from the 6-by. He also hauled out a machine gun and ammunition for all weapons. Exposed and under fire, Perkey was hit again, but got his mortar into action firing off some illumination and fragmentation rounds before being wounded once more, very badly. He then

collapsed and died at his mortar tube. He posthumously received the Silver Star.

Cole's small defensive pocket was being riddled with bullets and grenades. PFC Dale Whiteis and Pvt Frank C. Spencer Jr. were among those hit. Cole's Marines were not experienced or armed well enough to take away the Ba Loo's fire superiority, and the Communists were outflanking them. Cole told his people to grab the wounded who could walk, and he put out enough combined fire to allow them to fall back to the guardhouse.

At Tangku, engines coughed to life, and a convoy was formed. Marines of Charlie Co piled aboard, and the compound gate drew up. The lead vehicle was an M7 B1 full-tracked, self-propelled 105 mm howitzer. There was no ammunition for the howitzer, but its .50-caliber machine gun was welcome. It was followed by the company jeep and another 6-by. There was a sense of urgency because small-arms fire could be heard in the distance.

At they pulled out, those Marines remaining in the compound heard Field Music Dechon sound "General Quarters."

Joslin ordered the trac driver, Cpl Robert W. Milton, to "Floor it!" They rolled right through Hsin Ho village, made a left, and started up the road toward the ASP guardhouse and perimeter.

Erwin, the radioman, was on the M7 and was glad not to have received any fire from the village long thought to be sympathetic to the Ba Loo. He turned his attention to the ASP up ahead when a command-detonated land mine planted in the road went off. It blew the tracks off the M7 which slid to a halt. That was followed

“General Quarters” was sounded at the compound at Tangku by the Marines of Co C, 1/5 who sent a relief force to the ASP which was ambushed along the way.



by the unnerving plink of automatic weapons and small-arms fire from a nearby graveyard punching through the jeep and 6-by. Then 35 to 40 Communists closed up and started throwing grenades. Joslin ordered everyone off the vehicles.

Fortunately the road, built up because of the rainy season, offered a bit of a berm for protection. Erwin, with his radio, landed hard off the M7, but was only bruised. Not so lucky was PFC John Peterkin who was wounded by a Communist grenade. Peterkin also saw the company executive officer, First Lieutenant Mildrege Magnum, hit by machine-gun fire.

Sgt Newman begrudgingly admired the Communist ambush. He also knew the only thing saving their rear ends was that those “Communist bastards were afraid that the M7 might still be operable.” Other than that, only 15 yards separated the Marines from the Ba Loo, who had concentrated their fire on the tracked vehicle, giving the leathernecks time to seek cover. With grenade fragments and bullets whizzing past, Newman started positioning people along the berm and getting them to return fire.

Joslin assessed his situation and ordered Chief Hospital Corpsman Audrey G. Scandrett to remain with the wounded, providing several Marines for security. The rest made their way on foot toward the guardhouse.

Erwin called the ASP to let them know the relief column had been ambushed, and casualties would be coming down the road.

By 2 a.m., the rescue party could see fires coming from several ASP ammunition sheds.

The first one must have had artillery rounds because Erwin said, “When it went off, it was spectacular.” He told Joslin, “Captain, it’s just like having artillery support.” He was right. The rounds not only provided enough illumination to see the Ba Loo moving parallel with them, but the explosions were sending many of the enemy scrambling for cover.

Things had quieted somewhat when they reached the guardhouse where PltSgt Cole made his report to Capt Joslin. It was difficult for Cole. Harris and Whiteis were badly wounded. Perkey was dead. Spencer, more than likely, was dead, too. Cole apologized to his commander for not bringing out the dead and all the wounded, saying that they would have all been casualties. “There were just too many of them.”

Joslin calmly reassured his platoon ser-



China Marines and survivors of the Hsin Ho shootout at a reunion in 1992. Left to right, first row: Lloyd Remus, H.C. Powell, Paul Benavidez and Harold E. Purvis. Second row: Wesley L. Copeland, William M. Rabb, John Seeley, James Erwin and John G. Peterkin. Third row: Norman R. Osborn, Dave Sellers, Fred Harrington, Ray Prybil, Anthol I. Clark, and Jim McKenzie.

COURTESY OF LLOYD L. REMUS



COURTESY OF HERB NEWMAN



COURTESY OF HERB NEWMAN

Although the Communists succeeded in carrying off some ammunition and burning more, not all their efforts paid off. A fire started here was extinguished, and the ammunition was saved.

and the Marines loaded three of their dead, two on the hood and one in the back, and quietly walked alongside the jeep back to the guardhouse watch command.

At the watch command, Erwin, still bruised from jumping off the trac when it was hit, went to be treated by Chief Scandrett. The chief looked at Erwin and said, "We do not give Purple Hearts to clumsy Marines."

That was it. The shootout at Hsin Ho was over.

A punitive expedition from 1/5 with planes from Marine Observation Squadron 3 and Marine Fighter Squadron 211 was on the trail of the Communists at dawn, but the only Ba Loo sighted were those who had died in the attack. The Communists and their booty of ammunition and fuses which could be made into mines reached a ferry and crossed the Chin Chung River 8 miles north of Hsin Ho and disappeared.

By end of the month the ASP was being guarded by Nationalist troops. The transfer had little formality. "It was more a walking away from the ammunition than a turnover," said one Marine. Only a small detachment from 7th Service Regt remained to clean up the last stocks of serviceable ammunition at Hsin Ho. They were withdrawn to Tientsin on May 15.

In Tsingtao, the Nationalists began acquiring similar stocks of American ammunition declared unserviceable by boards of survey. The ammunition was dumped into revetments near Tsangkau Field after the local Nationalist commander was informed. Naturally enough the ammunition disappeared, and soon after so did the Marine presence in North China.

unconscious from grenade fragments to his back. He had been in so much pain that he had asked Jereb to shoot him. That pain eventually caused him to black out. He survived and was awarded the Silver Star for tenaciously holding his post.

Jereb had also found Clark. He'd been wounded in the attack, played dead and survived. The others, Di Nenna, Pelaro and Powroznik, had been killed in the initial attack. Around them were spent cartridges and many potato-masher grenades that hadn't gone off. Unfortunately for the Marines, the few that had ignited had been more than enough.

Joslin's party found everyone but Cpl Harrington. (He was eventually found and survived. After crawling away from the ambush of PltSgt Cole's vehicles, one of the Ba Loo spotted him, came over and shot him through the neck. The Communist then removed his watch and high school ring and left him for dead.)

It was nearly light when Erwin got a call that a strike of F4U Corsair aircraft would be on station at first light and that reinforcements were on their way from Peiping. Erwin radioed they had three WIAs and needed an ambulance jeep and a corpsman.

"He [to this day an unknown corpsman] showed up from nowhere," Erwin recalled. "He drove the ambulance jeep right up the leg past the sheds still on fire and through exploding ammunition. We loaded the jeep, and he barreled back down the road again."

A flight of OY spotter aircraft flew in from Tientsin, landed in a field, and after loading the more seriously wounded, flew them out. The Marines had suffered five dead and 16 wounded.

At dawn the Marines conducted a sweep of the area. They found six dead Communists. One had a rifle sling wrapped around his legs as if they'd planned to drag him off. There were large pools of blood inside the ammo sheds where Sgt Newman found one of the Ba Loo dead. The leathernecks estimated maybe a few more Communists were dead and had been carted off, and another 20 to 30 had suffered wounds.

Additionally, tracks showed that six to eight carts and a number of pack animals also carried full loads of ammunition out of the dump, but no accurate count of what was lost could be taken since the Communists blew up the remnants of the piles they had stolen from. A rear guard who had hit the northern dump area furnished covering fire until 3 a.m. when the last of the Communists withdrew. Again, as in the October Hsin Ho attack, the Communists got away.

Father Martineau came up with a jeep,

geant, "It's OK. You did the right thing."

Petty Officer 1st Class Joe "Doc" Sybillo, their corpsman, collected parkas to give to the wounded.

Newman, removing his parka, nudged Erwin and said, "I got something in my back that's driving me crazy." Erwin poked around and found a piece of shrapnel lodged in Newman. He yanked it out and handed it to Newman, saying, "Here, you've got a Purple Heart."

Newman looked at it and said, "No thanks. I already have two. I'm holding out for the Navy Cross."

Joslin said, "I'm going into the dump and see if we can find our missing." He took along Sgt Newman, Cpl Erwin and PFC Charles Fuller. It wasn't long before they found the first dead Marine. It was still dark, and they weren't sure who the man was. (He was later identified as Pvt Spencer.)

Sgt Newman was out ahead of the rest, trying to maintain contact with the Communists. The Ba Loo were pulling out as the team of Marines moved up and one of the ammo sheds caught fire. Joslin and Newman ran toward it. Fuller said, "Wait a minute, you don't run to it. We should be running away from it." Nobody listened; instead they grabbed a fire bucket with sand, cut the tarpaulin off and stamped the flames out.

They also found the patrol jeep, the 6-by and PFC Jereb. Jereb was with Clark in the front of the first bullet-riddled patrol jeep. Stankiewicz had held his post until help arrived; he was now in the back seat



ROY S. GEIGER

A Marine For the Ages

By Maj Allan C. Bevilacqua, USMC (Ret)

“Thickset, poker-faced, chill-eyed General Geiger is another Marine’s Marine.” Time magazine, October 1944

He was one of only two Marines to receive the Navy Cross for heroism in both World Wars. He was, and to this day remains, the only Marine to command both an aircraft wing and later an amphibious corps of three divisions that he would lead to victory. He was the only Marine to command a field army. He was Roy S. Geiger, and these things and more are exactly what he accomplished during his 40-year career as a Marine—a Marine who led by example.

ROY S. GEIGER COLLECTION, MARINE CORPS ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

A resume that included enlisted Marine, infantry officer and law school graduate. While it might be satisfying at this point to record that Roy Geiger was a natural-born aviator, it would not be accurate.



Above: Roy Geiger played a critical role in the early days of Marine Corps aviation when Marine pilots flew biplanes similar to the one shown here in 1925 as they worked to develop their own proficiency while also developing the Corps' air-ground team. (Roy S. Geiger Collection, Marine Corps Archives and Special Collections)



Left: At the controls of one of the Corps' earliest airplanes, Roy Geiger prepares for his first solo flight at NAS Pensacola in 1917. (Roy S. Geiger Collection, Marine Corps Archives and Special Collections)

The Early Years

It all began with a letter. On Nov. 6, 1915, First Lieutenant Alfred A. Cunningham, the first Marine Corps aviator, wrote to the Commandant of the Marine Corps, Major General George Barnett, in response to the Commandant's request for qualified officers for aviation training. "Having canvassed all those who appear

to be suitable for aviation, in order of desirability, I would place Geiger at No. 1 on the list," Cunningham wrote.

There is no record of Cunningham having met Geiger other than casually, nor is there anything suggesting that Roy Geiger had ever requested to retrain as an aviator. Nevertheless, on March 31, 1916, 1stLt Geiger reported for duty at the Naval Aeronautic Station, Pensacola, Fla. He added student naval aviator to his resume. A résumé that included enlisted Marine, infantry officer and law school graduate. While it might be satisfying

at this point to record that Roy Geiger was a natural-born aviator, it would not be accurate. What Roy Geiger did was become a superb aviator through the determined application of his lifelong quality of applying himself single-mindedly to everything he set his hand to in a relentless search for excellence. Roy Geiger never gave anything but his best.

In an old black and white photograph, left, taken at Pensacola, Geiger is seated at the controls of a Curtiss AH-13 "pusher," preparing for his first solo flight. While perched upon a flying machine that ap-

pears disturbingly akin to a box kite with wings, Geiger's face wore an expression of calm confidence. His first flight unaccompanied by an instructor was flawless. On June 9, 1917, after additional training in balloons and seaplanes, Geiger received his gold wings to become only the fifth Marine to be designated a naval aviator. At Pensacola, he also pinned on the insignia of a captain and met Miss Eunice Thompson, who would become his wife for the rest of his years.

Shortly after Roy Geiger first donned the wings of a naval aviator, America was at war. Not much later, Geiger, then a temporary major, led Number 7 Squadron of the newly established Day Bombing Group to France. It proved to be a short war, but one in which Roy Geiger would receive the Navy Cross for his leadership in guiding the squadron in bombing attacks against heavily defended targets in German-occupied areas of France. It also formed the basis of a professional belief that never left him: Marines in the air existed to support Marines on the ground. That seed would eventually germinate in the birth of a true combined arms force, the Marine Corps of today, the only such integrated force in the world.

In the post-World War I Marine Corps, that concept wasn't quite so sharp and clear. There were the twin shortages of manpower and money with which to contend. Geiger was undeterred, and in 1919, now in command of Squadron E, the sole Marine Corps aviation element in revolution-ravaged Haiti, he forged ahead. Utilizing a technique known as "glide



ROY S. GEIGER COLLECTION, MARINE CORPS ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Above: Lt Geiger began flight training in Pensacola, Fla., in 1916. A year later, he became the fifth Marine to receive his gold wings.

Right: The dedication for Brown Field aboard MCB Quantico was held in May 1922. The field was named for Lt Walter V. Brown, one of two aviators who died in the waters off Quantico during flight training in the early 1920s when LtCol Geiger served as the commanding officer of 1st Aviation Group. (Walter V. Brown Collection, Marine Corps Archives and Special Collections)



ROY S. GEIGER COLLECTION, MARINE CORPS ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Below: Marine Corps pilots, including Roy Geiger, far left, gather at Quantico in 1923.

bombing." Geiger's pilots soon were making marked inroads in the ranks of the Caco rebels who had been tearing Haiti apart. Flying in support of Colonel John H. Russell's 1st Provisional Marine Brigade and the Marine-trained and Marine-led Gendarmerie d'Haiti, the concept of combined air-ground combat made its first appearance in the annals of warfare. It was a small step in what, thanks to Roy Geiger, would become giant strides.

Roy Geiger wasn't content to sit back, put up his feet and admire his accomplishments. Always seeking to make aviation a completely balanced tool of Marine Corps combat power, his innate thirst for knowledge and professionalism drove him to the perpetual pursuit of ever-increasing responsibilities of command. In the years to come, Geiger would graduate with distinction from the Army's Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., the Army War College at Carlisle Barracks, Pa. and the Naval War College at Newport, R.I. The man who always



A powerful swimmer and diver, Geiger unhesitatingly threw off his jacket, kicked off his shoes and plunged into the dark, cold waters of the Potomac to find the wreckage of Capt Minnis' Vought VE 7.

described himself as “a Marine with a specialty in aviation” was fast becoming one of the most professionally educated officers in the Marine Corps, with a broad understanding of leading large bodies of men.

None of this is to suggest that Geiger was an egghead, long on theory and short on gunpowder. Nothing more clearly illustrates Geiger’s willingness to put his life on the line than an incident that took place at Quantico on Sept. 23, 1921, during Geiger’s tour of duty as commanding officer of 1st Aviation Group.

Building upon lessons learned in Haiti, Captain John A. Minnis, one of Geiger’s pilots, had failed to recover from his practice dive-bombing attack and plowed directly into the Potomac River under full

power. Hearing the crash from his on-base quarters, Geiger was first on the scene. A powerful swimmer and diver, Geiger unhesitatingly threw off his jacket, kicked off his shoes and plunged into the dark, cold waters of the Potomac to find the wreckage of Capt Minnis’ Vought VE 7.

All told, it took Roy Geiger 10 dives to clear the wreckage and retrieve the remains of Capt Minnis. Reaching the surface for the tenth time, Geiger was greeted by the base commander, Brigadier General Smedley D. Butler. “Were you able to find the pilot?” BGen Butler inquired. “I’ve got his body between my legs,” Geiger replied. “Please don’t ask me to go back down and get the rest of him.” Bone weary and on the narrow edge of pneumonia, Geiger waived off medical

treatment and remained on the scene until divers recovered Capt Minnis’ legs, which had been all but shredded by the force of the engine being driven into them. Two days later, when many other men might have been huddled beside a stove with a cup of hot coffee in hand, Maj Geiger led a memorial flyover at Capt Minnis’ funeral.

The Middle Years

The 1920s and 1930s were decades of explosive developments in aviation. New aircraft were practically obsolescent the moment they rolled off the production line. The British-designed, American-built DeHavilland DH-4, a Marine Corps workhorse since the days of the Day Bombing Group in France, gave way to the Vought O2-U before the year 1930



ROY S. GEIGER COLLECTION, MARINE CORPS ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS



ROY S. GEIGER COLLECTION, MARINE CORPS ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Above: Roy Geiger poses with his children in one of the Marine Corps' first aircraft in 1923.

Left: Geiger served with the American Legation in Peking, China from 1913 to 1916 before being selected for aviation training.

Geiger's objective would be the same—to make the Marine in the air fully responsive to the Marine on the ground, a two-edged sword that would confront any enemy with combat power directed at him both horizontally and vertically.

appeared on the calendar. The O2-U barely made much more of an appearance than shooting King Kong from the top of New York's Empire State Building in a motion picture than a newcomer, the Grumman Aircraft Company, introduced its F3F. The F3F, despite its enclosed cockpit and its retractable landing gear, would prove to be the last of its breed, a biplane fighter.

If you put enough quarters in the machine, eventually, you may hit the jackpot. Grumman managed to do that when it introduced the F4F Wildcat. A barrel-bodied, mid-wing monoplane that featured truly useful folding wings for space-saving below-deck storage, pilot-protecting armor and self-sealing fuel tanks arrived just in time to play an essential role in a new war that many in the Marine Corps and the Navy feared would come to the Pacific.

As each of these new tools of war entered the Marine Corps inventory, Geiger was there to shepherd them into usefulness as a component of his concept of a fully integrated air-ground combat arm. Advances in radio technology, which

only a few years before had been considered unattainable, made air-to-air and air-to-ground communications an increasing reality.

Under Geiger's guidance, operational capabilities that had existed only in theory, the Direct Air Support Center (DASC), the Tactical Air Control Party

(TACP), and the Forward Air Controller (FAC) jumped from the theoretical to the earliest beginnings of testing. In agreement with many in the Marine Corps and Navy, deeply concerned with the ever-increasing threat of war with Japan in the Pacific, Geiger was a forceful advocate for Marine Corps aviators becoming

The United States Marine Legation Rifle Team in Peking, China, 1914. Roy Geiger was a crack shot prior to becoming an aviator. (Roy S. Geiger Collection, Marine Corps Archives and Special Collections)





aircraft carrier qualified. If Marines were to be confronted by an enemy force on the many islands that would be the battlefield, they would need to be supported by Marines in the air above them from the beginning. Always, Geiger's objective would be the same—to make the Marine in the air fully responsive to the Marine on the ground, a two-edged sword that would confront any enemy with combat power directed at him both horizontally and vertically.

The influence of Roy Geiger, now a colonel, became increasingly a factor in the annual Fleet Landing Exercises (FLEX) conducted in the Caribbean during the middle and late 1930s. Under his dynamic leadership, Marine Corps aviation began to play an ever-increasing role in support of Marines on the ground. This blending of aviation and ground assets would arrive just in time, for time was growing short.

The Cactus Air Force

On Sunday, Dec. 7, 1941, the war that many in the Marine Corps and Navy had long anticipated became a reality. In one day, the Japanese pre-emptive strike against America's Pacific Fleet at anchor

in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, nearly destroyed America's naval power west of San Francisco. For the next six months, America could only fight doggedly on the defensive.

Slowly, the tide turned, and by mid-summer 1942, America struck back launching its first counter-blow in the deep South Pacific, and then-Brigadier General Roy Geiger, Commanding General, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing (1st MAW), was in the thick of it in the Solomons on the island of Guadalcanal.

The Japanese had begun construction of an airfield on the south side of Guadalcanal that could pose an unacceptable threat to the only practicable shipping route between America's West Coast and New Zealand and Australia. But the Japanese had been caught short and unprepared with nothing but a relative handful of construction troops on the island when Major General Alexander A. Vandegrift's 1st Marine Division surprised them on Aug. 7, 1942. Landing unopposed, the 1stMarDiv quickly had all objectives in hand, and Marine engineers and Sailors from Navy construction battalions, known as Seabees, immediately set about completing the airfield the Japanese had started.

The Marines of Headquarters Squadron, 1st MAW and their commanding general, BGen Roy S. Geiger, third from right, on Guadalcanal in 1942. (Roy S. Geiger Collection, Marine Corps Archives and Special Collections)

Two days later, Roy Geiger had his 1st MAW staff up and running on the partially completed airfield that had been dubbed Henderson Field, in honor of Major Lofton Henderson, USMC, who had been killed in action during the battle for Midway Island several months earlier. Due to wartime censorship requirements, however, Geiger's men continued to use the island's code name of Cactus.

At Henderson Field, the Japanese struck back viciously, and in the beginning, Geiger had few assets to stop them. While he had the airfield and a staff that functioned like a well-oiled machine, what the CG of 1st MAW couldn't field many of were aircraft. The skies above "Cactus" were exclusively Japanese, and they used this advantage like a bludgeon.

Each day, bombers from the major Japanese base at Rabaul on the island of New Britain, the northernmost of the Solomon Chain, plastered Henderson

BGen Geiger and his staff planning the Bougainville assault in 1943.

Field with bombs. As quickly as Marine engineers and Navy Seabees repaired the damage, their work was just as quickly destroyed.

Following the disastrous naval engagement of Savo Island that sent four cruisers—three American and one Australian—to the bottom, the Japanese enjoyed unopposed access to the waters around Guadalcanal. Then, in addition to the daily visits by Japanese bombers, the island was pounded nightly by heavy Japanese surface units, battleships and cruisers. In one night alone, Henderson Field was battered by more than 1,200 rounds of 14-inch and 10-inch naval gunfire. The Marines could do little more than crouch in holes in the ground and hope for the best.

Roy Geiger and his staff had it a bit better. With all the above-ground facilities obliterated by Japanese bombs and shells, the 1st MAW staff had been forced to set up shop in a cave, catching what moments of sleep that could be had in whatever corner was available. They survived as did every Marine on Guadalcanal on two meals each day, predominantly captured Japanese rations of rice and fish. Their commander, a major general now, shared these privations with them.

Slowly—agonizingly slowly—the situation began to improve bit by bit. Geiger now had some assets to fight back with. Each day brought new hope as Marine, Navy, Army Air Forces and Royal New Zealand Air Force elements made



ROY S. GEIGER COLLECTION, MARINE CORPS ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

their ways to Henderson Field. Roy Geiger was now the commander of an interservice, international air command. The tide began to turn.

The airfield itself continued to be a problem. With the runway still only half-finished, landings and takeoffs were described by one Marine pilot as “a cloud of dust in dry weather,” and “barely less than a swamp when it rained.”

At 57 years old, Geiger solved that problem in his usual fashion. Leading by example, he took the controls of a fully armed Douglas SBD dive bomber (The “Speedy D”), sent it bouncing, lurching and splashing through the rain-soaked runway and into the air. After delivering

the bomb load squarely on the intended target, Geiger returned and without comment, went back to the business of commanding.

The lesson of leadership by example was not lost on the pilots of Henderson Field, who quickly took on an attitude of “if the old man can do it, I can do it,” and began to speak proudly of themselves as the Cactus Air Force. They began sweeping the sky above of Japanese as well.

The Japanese still had one card to play, though, and they played it at a time when MajGen Vandegrift was in far off New Caledonia immersed in a planning conference with Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, the commander in chief of all

A Japanese bomber scores a direct hit on the hangar at Henderson Field on Guadalcanal in 1942. (Frederick R. Findtner Collection, Marine Corps Archives and Special Collections)



forces in the Southwest Pacific. MajGen Geiger was in command of all Marines, air and ground alike, on Guadalcanal.

On Dec. 12, 1942, the Japanese threw their Sunday punch. In a well-coordinated attack supported by air and naval gunfire, the Japanese launched an entire brigade at Lieutenant Colonel Merritt A. Edson's 1st Raider Battalion, holding the line on a ridge leading directly to the airfield. In a savage fight that lasted for two days, the Japanese were tantalizingly close to reaching their goal, only for their effort to be smashed when MajGen Geiger deployed his only reserve at just the right time and place to turn the situation around completely. The wrecked attack would prove to be the final Japanese offensive action of the Pacific War.

For Roy Geiger, there would be a second award of the Navy Cross and a well-deserved reassignment as Director of Aviation at Headquarters Marine Corps.

Amphibious Corps Commander

Admiral William F. "Bull" Halsey, USN, Commander South Pacific, and his war plans officer, Brigadier General William E. Riley, USMC, were contemplating a problem in the summer of 1943. The Marine Corps, still short of what would eventually be its wartime strength of 500,000, had still expanded to a point where multi-division operations were now possible. The commander of one such force, the renowned and highly respected Holland M. Smith, was the obvious choice for one of these, the newly designated Second Amphibious Corps (II AC). Who would be the best choice for the other? ADM Halsey later wrote about it in his autobiography.

"I discussed it with my War Plans Officer, Brig. Gen. William E. Riley of the Marines. Bill said he would go to his room and think it over. I said I'd do the same. In a very few seconds, the name of the ideal man popped into my mind, and I headed for Bill's room. He and I met halfway. His first words were, "I have the very man!" As casually as I could manage, I replied, "You mean Roy Geiger, of course."

What, an aviator in command of an amphibious corps? Bull Halsey and Roy Geiger would be working closely together to bring the war to the Japanese, and the two held a mutual respect and admiration for each other. ADM Halsey's recommendation was heartily approved by both the



LOUIS R. JONES COLLECTION, MARINE CORPS ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Army LTG Simon B. Buckner and MajGen Geiger on Okinawa in April 11, 1945. Buckner was killed two months later, and Geiger assumed command of the Tenth Army.

Commandant of the Marine Corps and the Chief of Naval Operations. Roy Geiger was appointed as commander of the I Marine Amphibious Corps (I MAC).

The story of the Marine Corps' war in the Pacific fills volumes in libraries. What has not been told is the extent of Roy Geiger's role in that war. Few commanders have been confronted with the problems of coordinating large forces spread over such a tremendous geographic area. Roy Geiger did that with consummate skill, even while his force was enlarged to three Marine Divisions—1st, 2nd, and 6th—in the midst of it.

While there was no such thing as an "easy" campaign in the Pacific War, fought in so many places where nature itself was every bit as hostile as the Japanese, Geiger's first mission, evicting the Japanese from Guadalcanal's neighbor Bougainville, proved to be the least difficult. The same could not be said of his next campaign, one that would see a portion of his force heavily engaged in

reclaiming Guam in the Mariana Islands. At the same time, one of his divisions battled Japanese on the island of Peleliu, hundreds of sea miles to the south in the Palau Group. Shuttling from one battlefield to the other to coordinate with his tactical commanders and get a firsthand view of the progress being made, Geiger kept to a schedule that would have inspired a lesser man to consider retirement.

With the arrival of the year 1945, America's relentless drive across the Pacific had sent Japan staggering back on its heels. After 37 blood-soaked days of intense, around-the-clock combat on Iwo Jima Island, Holland M. Smith's redesignated V AC had opened the door to day and night bombing of Japan's home islands. The stage was now set for the final act—the invasion of Japan proper—but where a force large enough to undertake such a mission could be assembled remained an unanswered question. There was no choice other than Okinawa.

The Japanese were well aware that

Few commanders have been confronted with the problems of coordinating large forces spread over such a tremendous geographic area. Roy Geiger did that with consummate skill.

In accordance with Gen Buckner's directive, Geiger assumed command of Tenth Army, making him to this day, the first and only Marine to command a field army.

Okinawa, and only Okinawa, was the doorway to Japan itself, and they had planned accordingly. To defend Okinawa, Japan sent Lieutenant General Mitsuru Ushijima and an army of 100,000 battle-tested troops.

They would be opposed by the 180,000 Americans of Lieutenant General Simon B. Buckner's Tenth Army composed of Major General John Hodge's XXIV Army Corps and Roy Geiger's I AC. The three had all served together in the past and held each other in high regard. So high was LTG Buckner's regard for Geiger that he designated him as his successor in command of Tenth Army should he himself become a casualty. The three made a good team and worked closely together throughout the planning phase.

The Okinawa campaign began on April 1, 1945, in what seemed at first a walkover when XXIV Corps and I AC came ashore unopposed on the western beaches of Okinawa. That condition did not last long, for Mitsuru Ushijima planned to make his fight on the Shuri Heights that stretched entirely across the central section of the island, dominating everything to the north. The Japanese lost no time in transforming the heights into an interconnected defense system, surveying and registering every foot of ground to their front for the fires of artillery and heavy mortars. Any man who ventured into that contested ground immediately became a target. The Shuri defenses became the site of relentless combat that went on and on, day after endless day.

On June 18, while visiting an observation post of one of Roy Geiger's forward units, the 8th Marine Regiment, Gen Buckner and his party were seen by a sharp-eyed Japanese artillery forward observer in the ruins of Shuri Castle. Taken under fire immediately, Gen Buckner was killed by a near-direct hit of a single 150 mm artillery round.

In accordance with Gen Buckner's directive, Geiger assumed command of Tenth Army, making him to this day, the first and only Marine to command a field army. The following day, Geiger was promoted to the rank of lieutenant general, becoming the senior Marine Corps aviation officer in the bargain.

There remained the problem of the Shuri defenses stretching entirely across Okinawa from east to west. Geiger planned to overcome these defenses, not by battering away at the heart of the Japanese position, Shuri Castle itself. Rather, he would seek to overcome the anchors of the Shuri Line, Conical Hill on the east and the trio of hills that secured the line on the west, Sugarloaf, Half Moon and Horseshoe.

In a coordinated, simultaneous attack supported by intense air and naval gunfire assets, XXIV Corps' 96th Infantry Division managed to infiltrate behind Conical

surrendered. Less than two months later, Japan itself would surrender, and Roy Geiger would move on to his next assignment as Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force Pacific (FMF PAC) in Hawaii. Sadly, it would be his last posting.

An Ending

Throughout 1946, Geiger had been plagued by an increasingly deep and ever more painful cough. On Nov. 15, 1946, he turned over the command of FMF PAC and departed for HQMC to prepare for his retirement, but fate intervened. Ever aware of his worsening condition, he entered the National Naval Medical Center at Bethesda, Md. In the presence of his wife and family, Roy Geiger died quietly of lung cancer on Jan. 23, 1947. By a special act of Congress, he was posthumously promoted to the rank of general, only the second Marine to wear four stars. He is interred today in Virginia's Arlington National Cemetery. His wife, Eunice Thompson Geiger, rests beside him.

What was Roy Geiger's legacy? What did he leave the Marine Corps? What Roy Geiger left behind is nothing less than what he fought so long to establish—he is responsible for today's Marine Corps, an integrated air-ground combat force that no other country on earth can equal.

Author's note: The only other Marine to receive the Navy Cross in World War I and World War II was John J. Nagazyna. As a gunnery sergeant in the 6th Marine Regiment, Nagazyna was awarded the Navy Cross for heroic actions at Soissons, France, in July 1918. Nagazyna received his second Navy Cross when, as sergeant major of 3rd Battalion, 22nd Marines, he organized and led a countercharge that destroyed a Japanese attack on the island of Eniwetok in 1944.

Author's bio: Maj Allan C. Bevilacqua, a Leatherneck contributing editor, is a former enlisted Marine who served in the Korean and Vietnam wars as well as on an exchange tour with the French Foreign Legion. Later in his career, he was an instructor at Amphibious Warfare School and Command and Staff College, Quantico, Va. 🇺🇸



ROY S. GEIGER COLLECTION, MARINE CORPS ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Roy S. Geiger died of lung cancer shortly before his planned retirement in January 1947 and was later posthumously promoted to four star general.

Hill and take it from the rear. At the same time, MajGen Lemuel C. Shepherd's 6thMarDiv, likewise supported, brought down Sugarloaf, Half Moon and Horseshoe.

Under the cover of darkness and in a drenching downpour, the Japanese began withdrawing from the Shuri defenses. There would yet be another month of fighting, but the issue on Okinawa had been decided. In mid-July, the last remaining Japanese troops on Okinawa, barely more than 5,000 men out of an army of 100,000, put down their arms and

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Marines with Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron (VMGR) 352 load a High Mobility Artillery Rocket System into a KC-130J Hercules during Exercise Iron Fist 2020 at MCAS Camp Pendleton, Calif., Feb. 8. Exercise Iron Fist provides realistic, relevant training necessary for effective combined military operations. (Photo by LCpl Britany Rowlett, USMC)



60 Years After Treaty, U.S. Marines, Japanese Soldiers Build on a Foundation of Cooperation and Security

By Sgt Desiree King, USMC

The rumbling of vehicles fills the air as a layer of clouds lifts from Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton's 17 miles of California coastline. The rumble increases to a roar as tracks propel the heavily armored vehicles down the deep sand into waves of the Pacific.

Two units are conducting beach landing training, and an astute observer can detect slight cosmetic differences between the assault amphibious vehicles (AAVs). A pattern change in the camouflage paint and siding distinguishes those operated

by U.S. Marines with 3rd Assault Amphibian Battalion, 1st Marine Division, from those operated by Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF) soldiers with 2nd Amphibious Rapid Deployment Regiment (ARDR), Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade. They're in the second week of Exercise Iron Fist 2020, a critical training opportunity for 2nd ARDR before they complete their amphibious certification next year at Iron Fist 2021.

Exercise Iron Fist 2020's opening ceremony fell within days of the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security by U.S. and

Japanese leaders. First drafted in 1951 on the heels of World War II, international lawmakers revised and signed the current version of the treaty on Jan. 19, 1960.

The treaty outlines conditions for lasting peace, partnership, and prosperity as well as each nation's "inherent right of individual or collective self-defense as affirmed in the Charter of the United Nations ... and common concern in the maintenance of international peace and security in the Far East." As an island nation, Japan's focus on amphibious capabilities is forefront in fulfilling this condition of self-defense.



Above: Marines with 2nd Bn, 1st Marine Regiment, 1stMarDiv, attack a hill for an amphibious assault during Exercise Iron Fist 2020 on MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., Feb. 12. Exercises like Iron Fist enhance the ability of U.S. and Japanese forces to quickly deploy sea-based assets and provide military forces anywhere in the world. (Photo by Sgt Desiree King, USMC)

Below: Japan Ground Self-Defense Force soldiers with Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade and Marines with 1st Recon Bn pull a combat rubber raiding craft to shore during Exercise Iron Fist 2020 at MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., Jan. 21.



LCPL BRITANY ROWLETT, USMC

Exercise Concept

Iron Fist is one of a handful of annual large-scale exercises designed to enhance interoperability between the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force and the U.S. Marine Corps. Most recently, Exercise Forest Light Western Army and Exercise Yama Sakura, both held in Japan, focused on infantry and combined armed tactics, honing techniques, exchanging military experience, and testing bilateral planning capabilities.

Exercise Iron Fist focuses on sharing amphibious doctrine across nations by

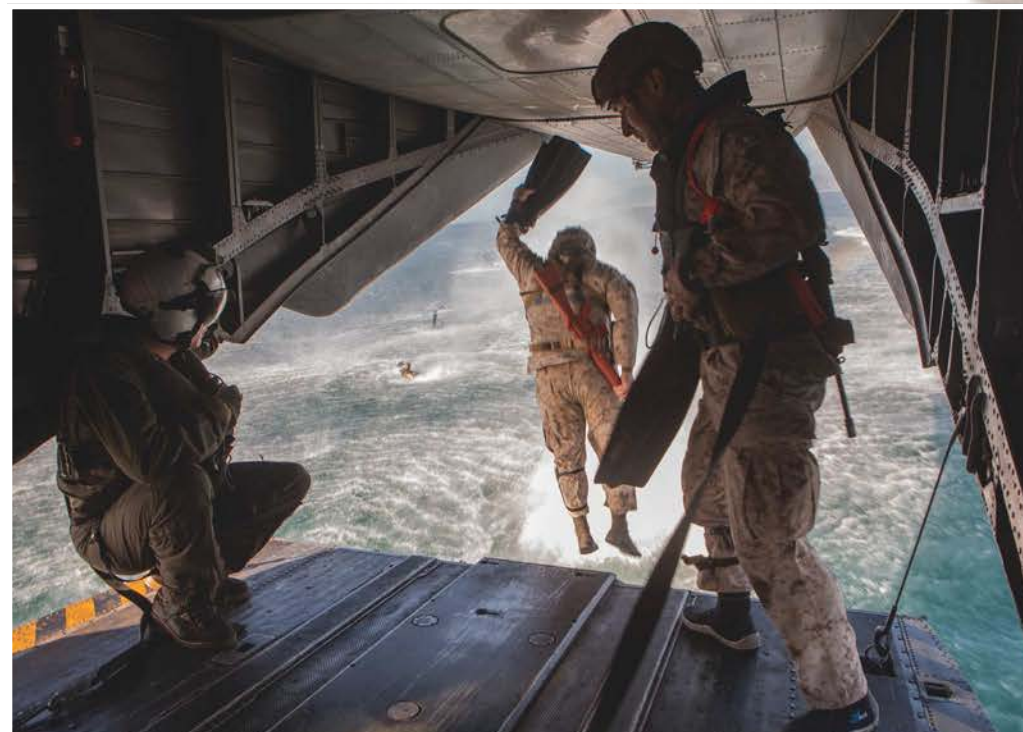
creating scenarios that allow for the demonstration of tactics, techniques, and procedures associated with amphibious command and control, combined arms fire and maneuver, expeditionary logistics, and operational concepts.

“What I’ve seen in the past with exercises like Forest Light is they’re limited in scope by their training area and by their integration with the Marine Air-Ground Task Force and our Navy counterparts,” said Captain Coleman Fuquea, a targeting officer and exercise lead planner with 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit, I Marine



CPL DAVID LUCKEY, USMC

Above: A Marine with 1st Combat Engineer Bn, 1stMarDiv and a Japan Ground Self-Defense Force soldier with Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade connect a water charge explosive during urban breaching training during Exercise Iron Fist 2020 at MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., Jan. 28.



CPL PATRICK CROSLLEY, USMC

Left: SSgt Marcos Vidal, right, a team leader with Force Recon Co, 1st Recon Bn, leads Marines and Japan Ground Self-Defense Force soldiers with Recon Co, Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade in a helocast jump during Exercise Iron Fist 2020 at MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., Jan. 22.

Right: SSgt Robert Carretero, a platoon sergeant with 3rd Assault Amphibian Bn, guides an AAV-P7/A1 as part of section-level beach landing training during Exercise Iron Fist 2020 at MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., Jan. 20.

Marines with 1st Recon Bn, 1stMarDiv, swim into the surf zone during Exercise Iron Fist 2020 on MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., Jan. 21. (Photo by LCpl Britany Rowlett, USMC)



SGT DESIREE KING, USMC

Expeditionary Force. “What you see here with Iron Fist is integration with one, a MAGTF, and two, support from [U.S. Navy’s] Amphibious Squadron 1 and [Japan’s] Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade, which is a unique unit in-and-of-itself.”

Exercise planners employed a multi-phase approach to training that began almost a year before the arrival of 2nd ARDR. The first phase ensured leaders from each participating unit had the opportunity to provide feedback and recommendations during initial planning, while the second phase set the conditions for successful execution. The third phase adopted a progressive approach that allowed participants to conduct functional training and rehearsals before executing live-fire exercises and an amphibious landing, which have little margin for error.

Ties to the Pacific

The amphibious focus of Exercise Iron Fist falls in line with the Commandant's Planning Guidance and initiatives in the Indo-Pacific region. The relevancy of a unit's ability to simultaneously respond to threats on the sea and land makes the planning and coordination that go into an exercise like Iron Fist an indispensable framework for the protection of a region with strategic significance.

"The Indo-Pacific is a large number of small islands and island chains that can affect maritime shipping routes," Fuqea said. "Historically, we've already seen how valuable that territory can be with nations expanding their power, so for the security of the United States and our allies, those amphibious operations can be crucial."

Historic Roots

Exercise Iron Fist began in 2006 when 200 soldiers from JGSDF Western Army trained with U.S. Marines for three weeks on Naval Base Coronado, Calif. While the training was considered beneficial, world events would eventually force a broadening of scope.

In 2012 Japan's leaders recognized a dedicated amphibious operational unit would be imperative for the defense of its southern islands. On March 27, 2018, following that year's iteration of Iron Fist, the Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brig-



CPL PATRICK CROSLLEY, USMC

Japan Ground Self-Defense Force soldiers with Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade are given a brief on how to properly wear a life preserver unit prior to boarding a Marine Corps MV-22B Osprey aboard USS Pearl Harbor (LSD-52) during Exercise Iron Fist 2020 off the coast of MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., on Feb. 11.

ade was stood up for the defense of Japanese territory from threats in the Indo-Pacific region. In 2019, Exercise Iron Fist and MCB Camp Pendleton became the venue for the official certification of 1st Amphibious Rapid Deployment Regiment's troops.

Iron Fist 2020's training has served as a precursor to 2nd ARDR's amphibious

certification in 2021. For this year's iteration to be successful, synergy was required from more than 1,200 servicemembers of two different cultures and 10 distinct units, representing three branches of their respective militaries—U.S. Marine Corps' I Marine Expeditionary Force, U.S. Navy's Amphibious Squadron 1, and Japan Ground Self-Defense Force's Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade.

One of the Marine Corps units was 3rd Assault Amphibian Battalion, 1stMarDiv. 3rd AA Bn's primary purpose during the exercise was to exchange best practices and procedures when operating the assault amphibious vehicle P7/A1, the same model which JGSDF purchased from the United States before officially standing up ARDB.

Following the progressive framework of the exercise itself, Marines and JGSDF soldiers first instructed each other on safety and standard operating procedures. Next, they conducted splash recovery drills in the battalion's sheltered training bay before rehearsing beach landings in the open ocean. Finally, 3rd AABn and 2nd ARDR embarked on two ships under the U.S. Navy's Amphibious Squadron 1, amphibious transport dock ship USS Portland (LPD-27) and Harpers Ferry-class dock landing ship USS Pearl Harbor (LSD-52), to execute the culminating event—a ship-to-shore amphibious landing exercise.



Japan Ground Self-Defense Force soldiers with Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade throw ropes from one amphibious assault vehicle to another in order to practice water vehicle towing operations with Marines from 3rd Assault Amphibian Bn during Exercise Iron Fist 2020 at MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., Jan. 19. (Photo by LCpl Britany Rowlett, USMC)



CPL DAVID LUCKEY, USMC

A Marine with 1st Combat Engineer Bn, 1stMarDiv works with Japan Ground Self-Defense Force soldiers from Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade to assemble a water charge explosive for urban breaching training during Exercise Iron Fist 2020 at MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., Jan. 28.

Lasting Impressions

Exercise Iron Fist challenged U.S. Marines and JGSDF soldiers to not only learn from the prescribed training, but also from working with each other. With more than a thousand participants, spread over

MCB Camp Pendleton's 200 square miles, interpreters were not always available. That didn't stop servicemembers from either country from forming a connection.

"The [job] itself ... we connect very well because we do the same thing. We

understand each other in the aspect of our working ethic," said Sergeant Salomon Segura, a section leader with 3rd AA Bn. "It's learning and teaching with the Japanese and within ourselves as well. It's creating a greater bond between us ..."

Exercise Iron Fist 2020 has officially ended, but the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security ensures that it will not be the last. Each year forces its execution to evolve; new technology is acquired, new equipment introduced, and new leaders appointed. The consistency lies in the professionalism of our organizations and the relationships made between us.

"Don't take it for granted," said Fuquea. "Allies, relationships. It's all based on interpersonal interactions; it's not anything that either nation can take for granted. And the more time we spend with each other, the more times we get put into stressful situations like Iron Fist, the more we'll build on that treaty."

Author's bio: Sgt Desiree King entered the Marine Corps in 2015 and now serves as a combat videographer with the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit on MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif. She has a bachelor's degree in film and media arts from Temple University.



SgtMaj Overstreet Returns to Vietnam

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NASA/DAVID C. BOWMAN

Astronaut and veteran Marine Fred Haise took part in a simulated moon landing in the lunar simulator at NASA's Langley Research Center in Hampton, Va., in early October 2019. He hasn't lost his touch—during the simulation, he landed on target.

A Career Filled With Adventure For Apollo 13's Fred Haise

By Nancy S. Lichtman

As the 50th anniversary of “NASA’s finest hour” is commemorated this month, Marine veteran Fred Haise reflects on his remarkable career as a pilot and astronaut.

In April 1970, astronaut Fred Haise, a Marine Corps veteran, was 200,000 miles away from Earth, on course to the moon. Haise had trained for this mission—Apollo 13—for months, and all was going according to NASA’s meticulously crafted flight plan until an explosion tore through the spacecraft.

When Apollo 13 crewmembers contacted mission control in Houston, Texas, to report the “loud bang” they had heard, flight directors were already trying to determine what had gone wrong and how to keep the astronauts alive.

For the next three days, while the world watched and waited, NASA’s engineers

and Apollo 13 astronauts—Jim Lovell, Jack Swigert and Fred Haise—worked around the clock to bring the stranded spacecraft back to Earth safely.

“Apollo 13,” the 1995 feature film about the mission, made the phrase “Houston, we’ve had a problem,” a part of our lexicon. It was more than a line of catchy dialogue, however, for Haise and his crewmates, who were in a life or death situation.

During a recent interview with *Leatherneck* to mark the 50th anniversary of Apollo 13, Haise reflected on his career,

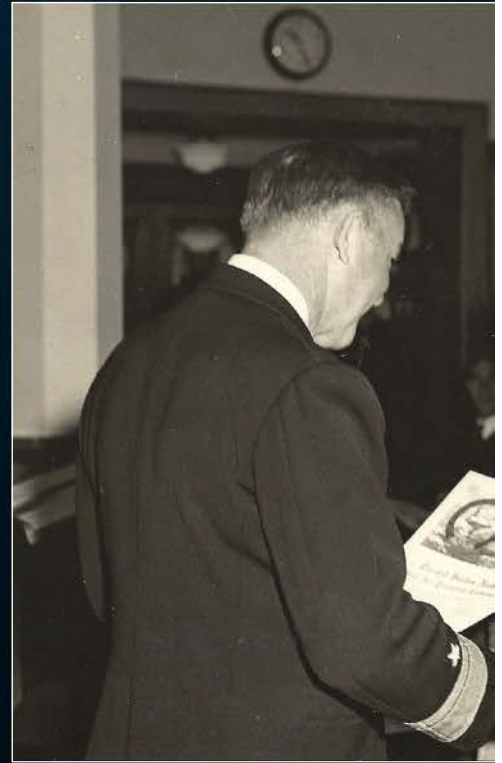


As the lunar module pilot on Apollo 13, Fred Haise trained to land in the Fra Mauro region of the moon in April 1970. The lunar landing was aborted after an explosion in the service module put the crew's lives in jeopardy. (NASA photo)

the discipline he developed as a Marine Corps fighter pilot, and the nearly disastrous lunar mission that was deemed a “successful failure.”

Fred Haise didn't have any dreams about becoming a pilot when he was growing up in Biloxi, Miss., in a Navy family. When he entered the Naval Aviation Cadet (NAVCAD) Program at Naval Air Station Pensacola, Fla., in 1952 after earning an associate degree, he had never even been on an airplane. He simply wanted to do his part during the Korean War, and the NAVCAD program was a

A young 2ndLt Haise, right, and his sister Brenda at Haise's winging ceremony in 1954.



Below: Fred Haise prepares to take off in one of NASA's T-38 aircraft at Patrick AFB, Fla., in 1970.



NASA

The Apollo 13 Saturn V lifts off from launch pad 39A at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida on April 11, 1970. (NASA photo)



COURTESY OF FRED HAISE



NASA

Above: Fred Haise, right, takes a documentation photo while fellow astronaut Jim Lovell points with his scoop during geology training in Hawaii in December 1969.

path to a commission for someone without a four-year degree.

When Haise began flight training, he found that not only was he good at it, he liked it. He credits his days as an aviation cadet under the direction of a drill instructor with helping him establish a good foundation for his career. "To stay on top of things you have to develop discipline," Haise said, adding that the Marine Corps also teaches organizational skills and leadership. "All those attributes ... serve one well in [civilian] life."

When he began advanced flight training in Corpus Christi, Texas, Haise decided to join the Marine Corps after learning he would be assigned to fly seaplanes as a Navy pilot. "I just said, 'Where's the Marine office?' because I knew Marines only got fighters or attack [aircraft]." After meeting with a Marine major, Haise became a Marine Aviation Cadet and was assigned to a fighter pilot training squadron.

Haise completed his training and did his carrier qualifications in the World War II era aircraft, the Grumman F6F Hellcat. He received the gold wings of a naval aviator and was commissioned a second lieutenant in 1954. By that time, the Korean War was over and Haise was sent to Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C., where he served with Marine Fighter Squadron (VMF) 533 flying the McDonnell F2H-4 Banshee aircraft. After about a year with the squadron, Haise transferred to VMF-114, also at Cherry Point, where he flew the Grumman F9F-8 Cougar. Haise described the Cougar as a solid aircraft, but said he preferred the

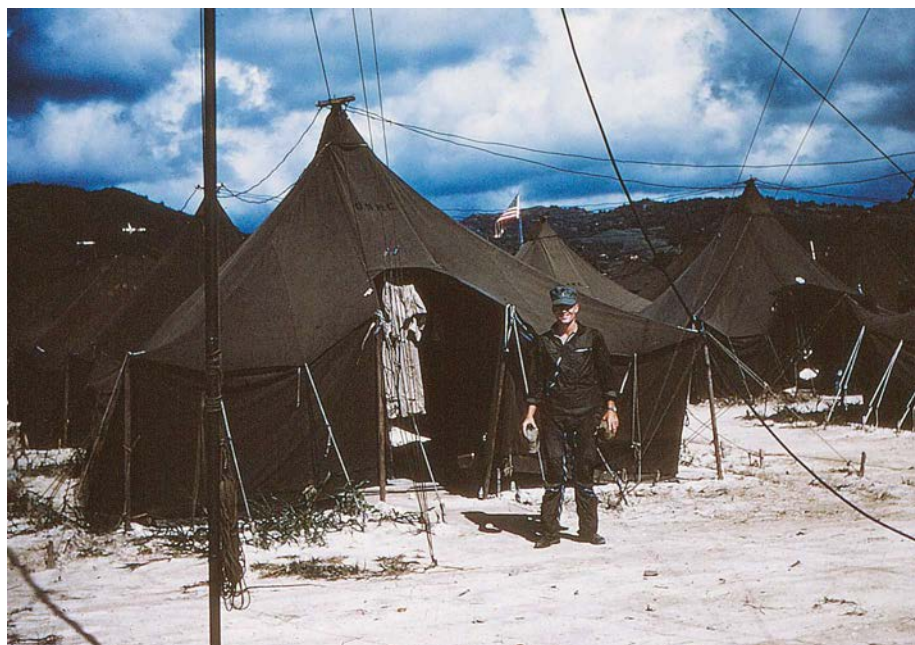
Banshee's close-air support capabilities.

"From a Marine standpoint, I think [the Banshee] was a better aircraft ... for air to ground support. You could carry more armament and it was much better for that mission."

Those were good flying days, said Haise, more than six decades later. He recalls with particular fondness the live-ordnance training the squadrons did in Vieques, Puerto Rico. That live training was the closest to actual combat Haise would ever get. "You know, as a fighter pilot, at times it feels like one square I did not fill. I never was in combat ... I never quite got to use what I had trained to do."

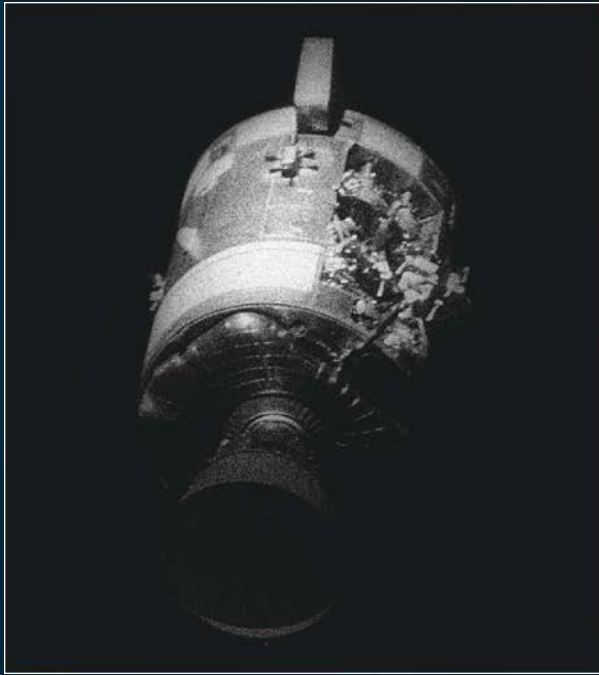
Haise's next assignment took him to Kingsville, Texas, where he continued to fine-tune his flying skills as a flight instructor. "You get to learn from watching others do things and make mistakes, so that makes you a better pilot," said Haise. But that wasn't the only reason Haise enjoyed instructing. "I thought it was great," he said with a laugh. "I got a lot of flight time." Like any pilot, Haise simply loved flying.

Haise had his sights set on building a career as a test pilot but knew that he would have to earn an engineering degree first, so he left the Marine Corps in 1956 and used his GI Bill benefits to attend the University of Oklahoma. Haise had taken mostly liberal arts classes while earning his associate degree but now, as an aeronautical engineering major, he had a heavy load of math and science courses. "It was a rough go," said Haise. "I enjoyed it ... having the flight experience, aeronautical engineering was very real-



COURTESY OF FRED HAISE

Haise stands in front of a tent at NAS Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico. When Haise was flying with VMF-533 and VMF-511 in the 1950s, he completed live-ordnance training using bombing ranges in Vieques, Puerto Rico.



NASA

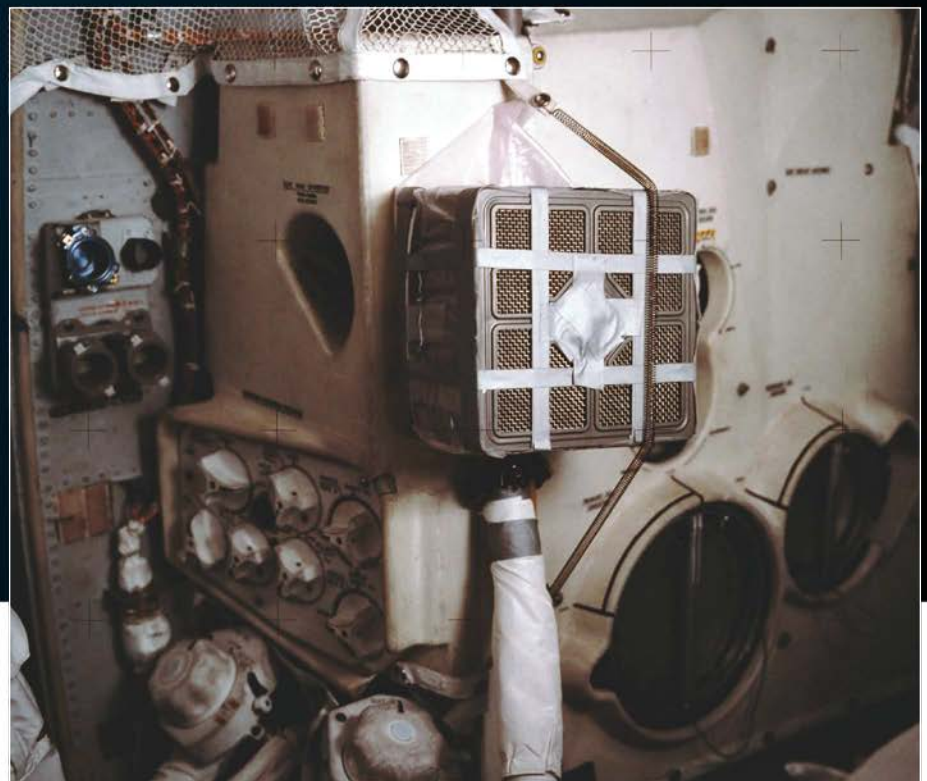


NASA

Above: Astronauts monitor the Apollo 13 emergency in mission control. Seated, from the left, Deke Slayton, director of flight crew operations; Marine Jack Lousma, capsule communicator; and Apollo 13 backup commander John Young. Standing, from the left, Ken Mattingly, original Apollo 13 command module pilot, and Marine Vance Brand, support crewmember.

Above: View of the severely damaged service module after separation from the command module, April 17, 1970. This was taken near the end of the mission.

Right: In-flight photo of the hastily engineered carbon dioxide scrubber the crew constructed using duct tape, maps and other materials they had on hand after receiving instructions from mission control. The device allowed the crew of Apollo 13 to survive by using the lunar module as a "lifeboat" after they lost power in the command module due to an explosion.



NASA

world to me, so in some respects, it made school more interesting.”

When he enrolled at the University of Oklahoma, he transferred his commission to the Air Force in order to fly with the Air National Guard (ANG). According to Haise, the transfer was more a matter of convenience than anything else.

Three years later, engineering degree in hand, Haise, a civilian although still flying in a reserve capacity with the ANG, began the competitive process of applying for test pilot slots with National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (the agency was renamed National Aeronautics and Space Administration NASA in 1958). Haise’s ANG squadron commander had discussed with him the advantages

of working for a government agency as opposed to employment with an aircraft manufacturer. “He described it right because he said, ‘If you go to a company, you will be stuck in the development of one aircraft and you might spend six years with one aircraft. At NASA, you will get a lot more versatility with the kind of projects and types of aircraft you’ll be involved with.’ ” That proved to be correct. Over the course of his career, Haise flew 80 different types of aircraft.

Haise landed a job at NASA’s Lewis Research Center in Cleveland, Ohio, (now called the Glenn Research Center) and worked there as a civilian test pilot. “A lot of noted people went through Lewis on the way uphill,” said Haise, including test pilot and future first man on the moon Neil Armstrong. A little more than three years later, Haise, like Armstrong before him, transferred to NASA’s Dryden Flight Research Center at Edwards Air Force Base in California. “That was probably the

View of the moon taken from the window of the lunar module during Apollo 13. (NASA photo)



most enjoyable flying time of my career because I was flying lots of different aircraft at any one time and ... [was] involved in a support role or direct role in about three different test programs at the same time."

In fact, the flying he was doing was so enjoyable, that Haise said he had to think twice about whether to apply for a transfer to the manned spaceflight center in Houston, Texas. Armstrong, who by that time was preparing for an upcoming Project Gemini spaceflight, didn't exactly make the life of an astronaut sound very appealing. "At one time, Neil had come back visiting and was asked 'What's it like being an astronaut?'" Armstrong's response was not encouraging. "His sum-

mary was 'Well, you sit in a lot of meetings, you sit in a simulator a lot and it's not much good flying.'"

"Compared to what I was doing, it did not sound too delightful, but I thought more about it and the thought of going to the moon was the thing. I knew if I stayed at Edwards, I would never have that chance, so that's what made me apply," said Haise. He was selected and began astronaut training in 1966. Haise's classmates in Astronaut Group 5 included two fellow Marines, Jack R. Lousma and Vance D. Brand. Another classmate was Air Force veteran John L. "Jack" Swigert, who would go on to serve as the command module pilot on Apollo 13.

When Haise entered astronaut training,

Project Gemini was drawing to a close and the planning for the Apollo program, which would land a man on the moon, was well underway. Besides learning to operate the spacecraft, Haise and his classmates took geology classes and did fieldwork to prepare them to study and collect rock samples from the lunar surface.

Haise's first crew assignment was with the future first men on the moon Armstrong and Air Force Colonel Edwin E. "Buzz" Aldrin. They were the backup crew for Apollo 8. "I spent six months with Neil and Buzz sitting in meetings and simulators and all of that," Haise said, chuckling about the accuracy of Armstrong's earlier description of an astronaut's daily schedule.

He was then assigned to another backup crew with Navy Captain James A. Lovell Jr., and Navy Lieutenant Commander Thomas K. “Ken” Mattingly. Due to some changes with other mission’s crews, Lovell, Haise and Mattingly were then tapped as the primary team for Apollo 13, the planned third lunar landing, with Lovell assigned as the mission commander, Mattingly as the command module pilot and Haise, the lunar module pilot.

A few days before the April 10, 1970, launch, however, Jack Swigert, who had been training as the backup command module pilot, replaced Mattingly who had recently been exposed to rubella (German measles). NASA officials couldn’t risk sending him into space while it was unknown whether he had contracted the disease.

“We should have known ... things weren’t going to go right when two and a half days before launch we swapped out a crewman,” said Haise. Fans of the movie “Apollo 13” may recall the scenes that portrayed friction among the astronauts as a result of that crew change. According to Haise, that simply wasn’t a realistic version of events. “Training wise, as a backup, you train equally ... and you were really prepared to go fly the mission if you had to, so there wasn’t a technical threat. Unfortunately, the movie gave a little hint of that in the way they portrayed it, but that was not an issue.”

In the two days leading up to the launch, Haise said he and Lovell cycled “through the critical mission phases in the simulator with Jack just to verify that we talked about things the same way.”

The crew change “technically wasn’t very tricky, it was emotionally ... unfair in different ways to both individuals. You normally invite people to the launch ... friends, family, and of course, Ken had all his friends and family coming. Jack didn’t have much opportunity to do that,” said Haise.

Almost three days into the flight, midway between the Earth and the moon, an explosion in one of the spacecraft’s oxygen tanks caused extensive damage to the service module. The damage to the spacecraft not only meant that landing on the moon would be out of the question, but, perhaps more significantly, flight controllers didn’t know if it was possible to get the spacecraft back to Earth.

Through ingenuity and problem solving, Apollo 13 made a safe return to Earth, in spite of the fact that, among other setbacks, the spacecraft lost power and the astronauts were unable to use the computers on board. Unfortunately, the astronauts missed the opportunity to land on the moon.



NASA



NASA

Top: After splashdown, the Apollo 13 command module is being hoisted aboard USS Iwo Jima (LPH-2) on April 17, 1970.

Above: The Apollo 13 astronauts, from left, Fred Haise, Jim Lovell and Jack Swigert, emerge from the recovery helicopter aboard USS Iwo Jima (LPH-2) after their safe return to Earth.

The harrowing events of the mission were introduced to a new generation 25 years later through the release of “Apollo 13.”

“The movie, if you look at it from the big picture, I thought told an entertaining, good story of the situation. We were people in serious trouble and a team worked together, flight and ground, to figure out things to get us home, and I think that came through loud and clear in the movie,” he added.

After returning from Apollo 13, Haise went right back into training as the backup commander for Apollo 16. He was later slated to be the mission commander for Apollo 19 with fellow Marine Colonel Gerald “Jerry” Carr as the lunar module pilot. “I thought that was great. If we

During the 1977 flight tests for the space shuttle Enterprise, crewmembers of the shuttle and the NASA 747 "host" aircraft included, from left, Fitz Fulton, Gordon Fullerton, Vic Horton, Fred Haise, Vincent Alvarez and Tom McMurtry. (NASA photo)



NASA



NASA

Above left: Haise was the commander for the first of space shuttle Enterprise's test flights from a 747 aircraft in 1977.

Above right: Astronauts Fred Haise, commander, and Gordon Fullerton, pilot, above the runway at Edwards AFB, Calif., during the final approach and landing test flight on Oct. 26, 1977.



COURTESY OF FRED HAISE

Today Fred Haise is the vice chairman of the board for the Infinity Science Center in his home state of Mississippi. He was actively involved in the fundraising and planning for the facility and its interactive displays.



COURTESY OF FRED HAISE



Haise, center, met with fellow Marines, Gen James F. Amos, 35th Commandant of the Marine Corps, and SgtMaj Micheal P. Barrett, 17th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, at Biloxi's annual Salute to the Military at the Mississippi Coast Coliseum.

would've landed, there would've been two Marines on the moon," Haise said. The Apollo program was canceled, however, after Apollo 17, and Haise never made it to the moon. Disappointed, but not one to dwell on what could have been, he kept moving ahead.

Like all squared-away Marines, Haise set about preparing for the next challenge. He went to Harvard Business School and

took a "four-month pressure cooker course" in program management and development. Back at NASA in Houston, he put those skills, along with his experience as a test pilot to use working in the developmental phase of the space shuttle program from 1973-1976, taking part in the evaluations of the design proposals for the shuttle orbiter.

After working on the program manage-

ment side, Haise was given the task of commanding the first crew to test the new shuttle orbiter Enterprise during approach and landing tests in 1977.

"I felt more pressure, particularly as we got ready to fly the first flight," he said. Haise was determined that the flight should go well in order to prevent a setback or, worse, cancellation of the program. The flights were a success. "To me it was the best flying experience ... of my career because I was in it sort of womb to tomb. I had been through all the design development and now got to fly it for the first time."

Haise left NASA in 1979 for the corporate world, signing on with Grumman



Astronauts Jim Lovell, left, and Fred Haise in front of the Apollo 13 command module, Odyssey, at the Cosmosphere in Hutchinson, Kan. On April 4, the two astronauts will attend an event at the museum marking the 50th anniversary of NASA's "successful failure." Joining them will be several members of the mission control team. (Photo courtesy of Cosmosphere, Hutchinson, Kan.)

as the vice president of space programs. He retired in 1996, and he's been actively involved in the expansion and fundraising for the Infinity Science Center in his home state of Mississippi, hoping to inspire a new generation to continue scientific pursuits, including space exploration.

Haise still represents NASA, giving speeches and making public appearances, traveling from his home in Houston to locations across the country to talk about his experiences as an astronaut.

Throughout the summer of 2019, there were ceremonies and events in celebration of Apollo 11 and the first lunar landing. And this month, Haise will travel to the Cosmosphere in Hutchinson, Kan., where

Odyssey, the Apollo 13 command module, is on display, to attend the first of many events to commemorate the 50-year anniversary of one of NASA's finest moments.

Looking back on the Apollo program, Haise is disappointed that NASA's manned spaceflight program hasn't included continued exploration of the moon or any of the planets in our solar system.

"You know going to the moon is not that far if you think about it in terms of the universe," he said. According to Haise, the Apollo program should've been the beginning of exploration of other celestial bodies in our solar system. "Certainly, I thought we'd press on and at some point, be on Mars."

He proudly pointed out that he and his NASA colleagues made history with what would be considered rudimentary avionics technology by today's standard. The computer that was on board the spacecraft didn't have a microchip processor, it was hand-wired, Haise said, and had about 1/10 of a megabyte of memory. "It was kind of extraordinary, what we were able to do with what we had," said Haise.

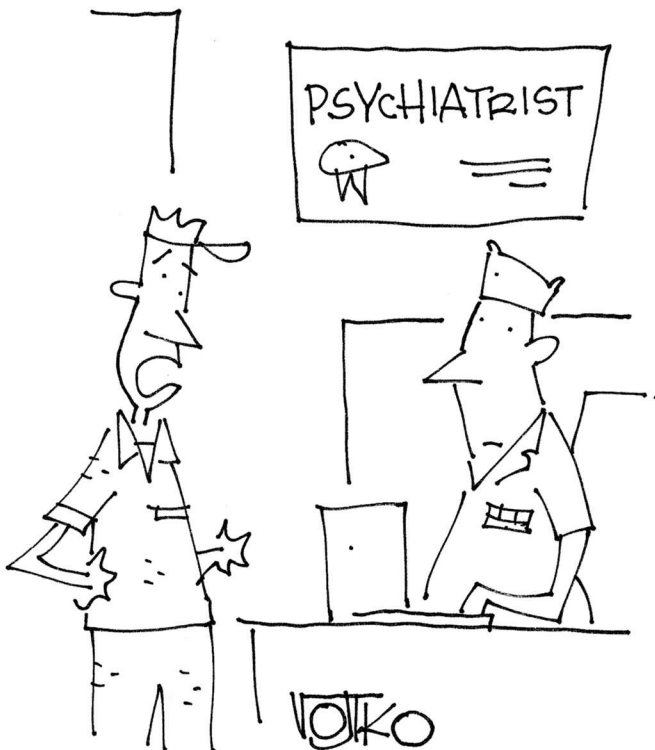
At the time, though, for Haise it was simply the next exciting challenge to be overcome in an already thrilling aviation career.

"The thought of going to the moon at the time to me... was just another great adventure," he said. 🚀

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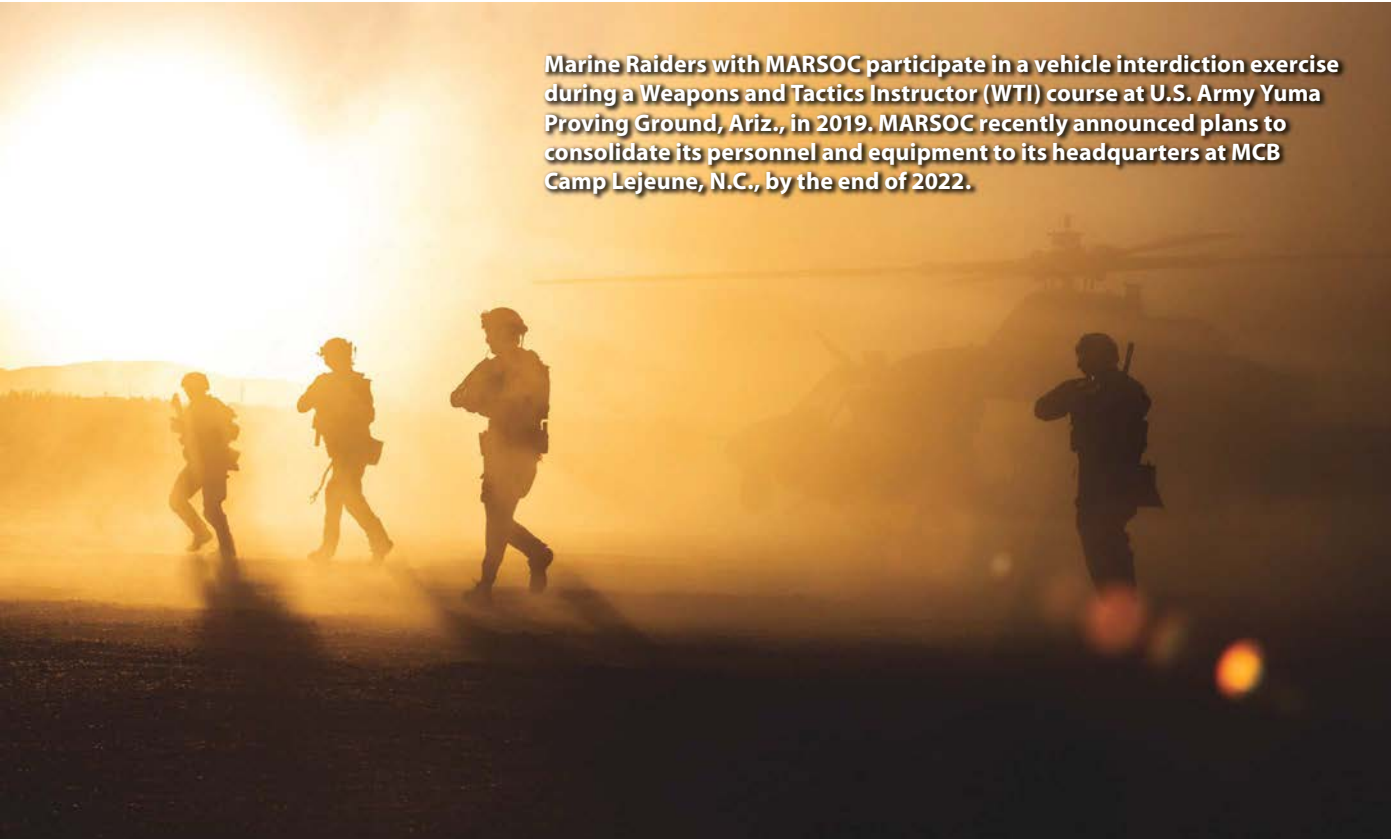
"When I said get your makeup on, I meant the woodland pattern camo, not KISS."



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"It's an urgent retrofit from supply. I looked the tank all over. If this tank ever had anything resembling it, it must have already fallen off."

A photograph showing several Marine Raiders in silhouette, walking in a line across a dusty or smoky terrain. The background is a bright, hazy orange, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The Raiders are wearing full combat gear, including helmets and backpacks.

Marine Raiders with MARSOC participate in a vehicle interdiction exercise during a Weapons and Tactics Instructor (WTI) course at U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground, Ariz., in 2019. MARSOC recently announced plans to consolidate its personnel and equipment to its headquarters at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., by the end of 2022.

CPL CODY FOWE, USMC

MARSOC to Consolidate Forces At MCB Camp Lejeune

Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command (MARSOC) will soon begin implementing a phased plan to consolidate its personnel and equipment to its headquarters aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., by the end of 2022. This initiative will relocate approximately 900 Marines, Sailors and civilian employees from 1st Marine Raider Battalion and 1st Marine Raider Support Battalion, which have been located aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., since MARSOC's inception in 2006.

"MARSOC has been pursuing numerous lines of effort to increase performance, efficiencies and capabilities in support of the 2018 National Defense Strategy's imperatives to build a more lethal force and reform the department for greater performance and affordability. One line of effort is the consolidation of all Marine Special Operations Forces to the East Coast. Consolidation will enhance the command's enterprise level agility to meet the future operating environment challenges articulated in the NDS, the Commandant's Planning Guidance, and our own vision and strategy, MARSOF 2030," said Major General Daniel Yoo,

the commanding general of MARSOC. "It will also position MARSOC for more economical experimentation, testing and evaluation of future operating concepts and near-peer offset capabilities, while streamlining organizational learning to enhance component-wide standards, performance, training and readiness across the force."

The efficiencies gained through consolidation extend beyond performance and training, with significant impacts to time and money.

Consolidation will allow MARSOC to gain back almost 2,000 man-days per year that would otherwise be lost to permanent change of station (PCS) and other TAD (temporary duty assignment) requirements not associated with deployments. This creates tangible and significant cost savings and increased readiness across the force. In addition, MARSOC will be better positioned to meet the Secretary of Defense's Deployment-to-Dwell (D2D) guidance, providing greater stability and increased quality of life to Marine Raiders and their families.

The physical movement of personnel and equipment from the West Coast will occur over three phases. The phasing plan allows for minimal disruption to normal

Marine Corps transition timelines, like those associated with PCS orders. It also provides a managed population increase to the local area. Personnel and families will begin moving from the West Coast during the traditional PCS cycle beginning in the summer of 2021.

MARSOC and Marine Corps Installations East school liaisons and community plans and liaison officers have been working together to estimate impacts on the local communities and school districts. According to Joe Ramirez, MCB Camp Lejeune Director of Government and External Relations, MCB Camp Lejeune will continue working with Onslow and Pender County schools and governments to anticipate and plan for increases in student population and to ensure that all students will be accommodated effectively and receive a quality education.

Maj Kristin Tortorici, USMC

Now Assigned to Fleet Units, Athletic Trainers Enable Readiness

After serving at both recruit depots, Marine Corps Schools of Infantry East and West, Officer Candidates School and The Basic School for the last 17 years, civilian athletic trainers are now being assigned to units in the fleet.

Since late 2018, athletic trainers have been slowly arriving at units throughout the Marine Corps to help keep Marines in the fight longer. Because of their immediate availability at the unit level to commanders and Marines, athletic trainers are able to help prevent injuries and evaluate and treat injuries when they occur.

With the combination of one-on-one care, immediate availability, and involvement with force fitness instructors in conducting training courses, education and preventative measures, commanders have seen a marked impact on operational readiness of individual Marines and their units.

“These are athletes, combat athletes,” said Whitney Lee, an athletic trainer with 4th Marine Regiment on Camp Schwab, Marine Corps Base Camp Smedley D. Butler, Okinawa, Japan. “In the civilian world, you think of [Division] 1 sports, pro sports, [they] have athletic trainers. They have them for a reason. They’re there to take care of the injury, to make sure everybody’s ready and resilient.”

Lee is one of several athletic trainers in the Marine Corps Sports Medicine Injury Prevention Program. The goal of the program is to reduce attrition and lost workdays associated with musculoskeletal injuries. The Marine Corps has been utilizing certified athletic trainers to assist in preventing or mitigating injuries to reduce the need for advanced medical intervention. In addition, athletic trainers provide nutritional and expert physical counseling and education to keep Marines fit and healthy.

“Having an athletic trainer on staff can decrease injury wait time from four weeks to two weeks, depending on what it is,” Lee said. “We’re available to catch it quickly and we’re bridging that gap of injury to Navy medicine.”

Training and education are a huge part of an athletic trainer’s job. Matthew Driscoll, an athletic trainer at Camp Schwab, treats every injury as an opportunity to teach.

“Anytime I receive a patient, I think of them not only as a patient, but as a student,” Driscoll said. “I’m getting somebody that is hurt; they want to know what is going on with them, they want to know what they can do to prevent that injury from getting worse and from happening again.”

According to Driscoll, prevention is everything. Athletic trainers want to educate the Marines on how to avoid injury by promoting proper nutrition and the right diet to sustain activities as well as proper exercise techniques.

“We do biomechanical assessments, teach maintenance exercises, and coach



SGT LIAH SMUIN, USMC

Marines with 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, compete in the pull-up portion of the Teufelhunden Challenge at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., in October 2019. The Marine Corps, which emphasizes physical fitness among its ranks, is now assigning civilian athletic trainers to units in the fleet to ensure injury prevention and help keep Marines fit and healthy.

stretching. It’s a good diverse skill set that I’m able to practice [while] working with [the Marines],” Driscoll said.

Colonel Michael Quinto, the commanding officer of Marine Aircraft Group 14, 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C., welcomed the MAG’s first athletic trainer in late 2018 and immediately witnessed the impact of having athletic trainers on staff.

“The athletic trainers that are working for you are one of the best assets that I have had as a commander,” Quinto said. “They really provide great insight into

understanding the health of your force. They are a complement to Navy medicine, so once they’ve gone through the Navy medicine process, they are both before and after an excellent asset to get your Marines back in the fight. And the final thing is, the morale of the unit as well as the individual Marine to feel as though they are ‘no-kidding’ an elite warrior in this organization is outstanding.”

Ben McGrath, an athletic trainer assigned to MAG-14, understands how important it is to keep Marines in the fight.

“Ideally we are keeping them on full



LCPL ISAH GOMEZ, USMC

Marines exercise during a Health, Wellness and Fitness Summit at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., Feb. 5. Providing units with athletic trainers will help ensure operational readiness and the health of the force.

duty as opposed to getting put on light duty and wasting two weeks basically where they can't do anything," McGrath said. "We are trying to get them back as quickly as possible and as safely as possible."

And it's working.

Corporal John Crespo, an infantryman assigned to 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment at Camp Schwab, is currently working with the athletic trainers.

"After years of being a machine gunner, constant hikes, field ops, ... having a place like this [and access to] physical therapy gives us the opportunity to rehabilitate and get healthy so we can continue fighting right," Crespo said.

Col Jason Perry, the commanding officer of 4th Marine Regiment, received his athletic trainers about a year ago. He noted how much the trainers are working to make sure they know exactly what Marines do so they can provide the right training and the right care to keep Marines in the fight.

"Both of my athletic trainers have shown just a tremendous amount of interest in the Marine Corps, how we're structured, how we work, what our day-to-day jobs

are," Perry said. "They've shown a keen interest in that and they want to find ways to contribute, even in ways we probably haven't thought of yet. I think having an open mind and seeking opportunities both in education and hands-on treatment, every aspect of physical readiness is open to your imagination with the athletic trainers."

Athletic trainers are on staff at units based in Hawaii, Japan, MCAS Cherry Point, Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., and Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif. The Marine Corps will be expanding its Sports Medicine Injury Prevention Program further throughout the operating forces in the future so that even more Marines can participate and benefit.

To learn more, visit <https://www.fitness.marines.mil/SMIP>.

Sgt Annika Moody, USMC

Sergeant Symposium Explores New Ways to Lead

Today's Marine Corps faces many unique challenges that leaders of past generations did not encounter. At the fore-

front of this next stage of our history is what many in the Marine Corps consider to be the "backbone" of the organization: the sergeant.

On Feb. 11, sergeants from around 2nd Marine Logistics Group gathered to learn and discuss leadership with senior leaders and fellow noncommissioned officers at a Sergeant Symposium hosted by 2nd MLG Corporals Leadership School at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C.

The one-day symposium consisted of classes and discussions led by senior leaders from 2nd MLG. The discussions ranged from technical professional military education to developing new ways to think and lead in a modern Marine Corps.

"We really wanted to focus on and come alongside those NCOs that are about to make that next step in their career," said Gunnery Sergeant Juan Garcia, Director of Corporals Leadership School, 2nd MLG.

Classes on roles and responsibilities, fitness reports, career progression and pride of belonging were the main topics of the morning.

A board of leaders who served in various billets and special duty assignments was



LCPL PAIGE VERRY, USMC

LAST FLIGHT HOME—Marine Corps Base Quantico Ceremonial Platoon provided honors for LtCol Paul C. Hudson at Dulles International Airport, Sterling, Va., Feb. 5. Hudson, who retired from the Marine Corps in 2019, was one of three men who died when their C-130 aerial water tanker crashed while battling the wildfires in Australia. The cause of the crash is still under investigation. Australian officials, including Ambassador Mitch Fifield and Air Force Maj Gen Andrew Freeman, attended the ceremony to pay their respects.



LCPL SCOTT JENKINS, USMC

SgtMaj Michael Martinet of CLR-27, 2nd MLG speaks to sergeants during a Sergeant Symposium at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C, Feb. 12. The symposium provided mentorship from senior leaders to help encourage and develop sergeants, considered by many to be the “backbone” of the Corps.

schools and their first duty stations, sergeants are leading, teaching and developing new Marines.

Keeping these critical members of the Marine Corps team fully ready to face any and all challenges in a rapidly changing landscape is a challenge that senior leaders from around the Marine Corps are ready to take on.

“If we don’t embrace the development of our replacements then our profession will remain stagnant,” said Sergeant Major Michael Martinet, Combat Logistics Regiment 27, 2nd MLG. “That’s one of our most important roles as senior leaders, to ensure the next generation has the tools they need to take over for us.”

LCpl Scott Jenkins, USMC



brought in to answer any questions that the NCOs had about the future of their Marine Corps careers.

“Sergeants are the muscle, the heartbeat, the true backbone; without them the Marine Corps doesn’t function,” said Garcia.

Sergeants have always played an im-

portant role in the Marine Corps and are essential to the progression of the Corps. For many prospective Marines, a sergeant is the first Marine they meet when they walk into a recruiting office. As they progress through recruit training, and the School of Infantry to their individual military occupational specialty (MOS)

Crazy Caption Contest

Winner



LCPL KARIS MATTINGLY, USMC

“What’s it going to be, snowflake?
I have a pack of devil dogs backing me up.”

Submitted by:
Bob Gilliam
Richmond, Va.

This Month’s Photo



SGT MELISSA MARTENS, USMC

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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.



On Their Side

Exceptional Family Member Program Eases Strain on Marine Families

By Sara W. Bock

It's no secret that the challenges of military life can take their toll on Marine Corps families.

From deployments and family separations to frequent relocations, the demands placed on Marines, their spouses, and children often induce stress and anxiety. And for those who have a family member—or members—with special medical

or educational needs, these challenges are often magnified, and without proper support can have a detrimental effect on the readiness of the servicemembers, their units, their families, and the Marine Corps as a whole.

In an effort to improve quality of life for families who require significant support, as well as to ensure that operational needs are met, the Marine Corps in the early 1990s established the Exceptional

Family Member Program, commonly referred to as EFMP, which was mandated by the Department of Defense for all branches of the Armed Forces. Since the program's inception, Marines have been required to enroll in EFMP if their spouse or dependent child has a chronic condition, a requirement for specialty medical care, or if their child has educational special needs.

Qualifying families generally are iden-



Left: A young participant competes in the long jump portion of a Special Olympics field meet hosted by EFMP at MCB Quantico, Va. Providing access to inclusive programs for Marine families who have children with special needs is central to the mission of the program.

Below: During the Special Olympics Young Athletes program at MCAS Cherry Point, N.C., a preschool-age child practices his throwing skills.



COURTESY OF EFMP

In 2007, as negative perceptions of the program became increasingly pervasive, the program conducted a functional analysis to assess the situation. The study was the impetus for a complete transformation.

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COURTESY OF EFMP

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COURTESY OF THE CHANEY FAMILY

Abigail Chaney, 10, was diagnosed with cerebral palsy as a baby when her dual active-duty parents were stationed in Okinawa, Japan. The family has relied heavily on the support of EFMP as they have navigated military life with the added challenge of having a child with special medical needs.

the program conducted a functional analysis to assess the situation. The results were staggering: 70 percent of respondents expressed their belief that there was a negative impact on the careers of Marines who were enrolled in EFMP.

The study was the impetus for a complete transformation.

“The focus really became about customer service; it became about case management for families,” said Stewart, whose family, still enrolled in the program at the time, was assigned a family caseworker and began receiving phone calls and offers of various avenues of support.

Over a four-year period, EFMP grew from an assignment review program in which families were assigned to one of four categories depending on the degree of the qualifying need, to a provider of direct support to families at all times. The four categories were eliminated, and each family’s case is now viewed individually.

“It used to be if you were Category 4 you could never go overseas,” said

Stewart, referring to those families with the most complex needs. “Well, of course that felt like, ‘I’m not going to progress in my career, I’m never going to get that billet that I need.’ So we transformed how we do assignments. Every Marine in EFMP is eligible to go anywhere in the world as long as we can just match what you need with what’s available in that location.”

Stewart, who joined the EFMP staff as an assignment case manager in 2009 and became the program manager in 2010, oversees its operations at the Headquarters Marine Corps level, where enrollment and assignment coordination is handled for all qualifying Marines. Her team of 12 individuals includes nurses, assignment case managers, family support specialists and other specialists who work closely with the monitors in the Enlisted and Officer Assignment branches.

“Monitors select the location based on where they need that Marine and career progression for the Marine, and then the

orders get funneled to our office,” said Stewart, emphasizing that EFMP does not make assignment decisions for the Marine Corps. “We make a recommendation after we conduct the review,” she added, emphasizing that the focus is on getting Marines to locations where their families have access to care.

The HQMC team also oversees and equips the family support offices located at each Marine Corps installation, where caseworkers work at the grassroots level to assist and advocate for the EFMP families in the local area. They provide support before, during and after permanent change of station (PCS) moves, particularly when it comes to getting connected to the right specialists, therapists, schools or other resources that will help ensure continuity of care during a time of transition.

“Some of these challenges get kind of magnified during PCS moves,” said Stewart, who emphasized that the family support offices at different installations communicate with each other to help ensure that families have a consistent experience as they transition from the care of one office to another.

Through EFMP, certain families may be deemed eligible for priority military housing on the installation, reducing or eliminating their wait time, or for specific

They provide support before, during and after permanent change of station (PCS) moves, particularly when it comes to getting connected to the right specialists, therapists, schools or other resources that will help ensure continuity of care ...



SGT TREVON PERACCA, USMC

During a 2014 EFMP beach event at MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., a volunteer and a young child with special needs enjoy time in the ocean. Organized activities for EFMP-enrolled families provide social interaction and networking in a safe, welcoming and inclusive setting.

Right: Two participants in an EFMP Special Olympics field meet held at MCB Quantico, Va., encourage each other to try their best.

housing accommodations such as one-story homes. Prior to the overhaul of the program, all families grouped in Category 4 were given priority for housing. Now, said Stewart, a new approach uses a rubric that takes into consideration the whole scope of the impact of the need that the family member has and examines the benefit that housing priority would have in order to make a determination.

EFMP also provides deployment support services, networking opportunities and social events, information and referral services, and case management, including attending individualized education program (IEP) meetings at schools at a parent's request to advocate for children who qualify for special education. IEPs are individualized legal documents based on students' needs that help ensure they receive a quality education despite their disabilities.

The program also provides respite care, allowing qualifying caregivers of children with certain special needs to have designated periods of time to take breaks to relax and recharge. And for those families who need legal services, two attorneys employed by EFMP are able to assist and advise on matters of disability-related law, landlord-tenant issues and the creation of special need trusts.

And by offering a training and education program for family members, Stewart believes that EFMP is uniquely positioned to help Marines and their spouses become advocates for themselves and for their children.

"We should help families become such great advocates that they won't need us anymore," said Stewart. "We'll always be there, of course, but we want them to build that skill, so we do a lot of education."

The drastic transformation of the program, said Stewart, paid off. By 2011, the 70 percent who cited negative perceptions of EFMP had reduced to around 30 percent, according to an audit conducted by the Naval Audit Service—and enrollment has nearly doubled.

As of January 2020, there were 8,900 sponsors enrolled in EFMP, with a total of 11,300 family members with either a medical or educational need, or both.

"I think when families came to understand what we could do for them, they didn't feel so alone," Stewart said.

She's particularly excited about a partnership between EFMP and the Special Olympics Young Athletes program that began in 2018. The inclusive, parent-par-



COURTESY OF EFMP



COURTESY OF EFMP

An active-duty Marine recognizes a participant in an EFMP Special Olympics field meet held at MCB Quantico, Va. In recent years, Marine Corps EFMP has worked to expand its mission from an assignment coordination program to a provider of support for enrolled families at all times.

participation program, designed for children with and without special needs between the ages of 2 and 7, teaches kicking, catching, balancing, running and other “pre-sport” skills. Stewart sees it as a networking opportunity for families who perhaps aren’t as interested in or comfortable with other EFMP social events, which she describes as primarily “talk-based.”

“I’ve heard parents say ‘I didn’t think my kid would be able to do something like this, and here we are together as a family playing with kids with and without disabilities,’ ” said Stewart. “It’s just a really inspiring [...] and exciting way to see people get involved.”

The program is currently offered at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., and Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C., and will be coming to Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif., later in 2020.

Stewart urges families who qualify for EFMP to give the program a chance, citing a 20-year study conducted by the Marine Corps’ Operational Analysis Directorate, which looked at 20,000 Marines, grouped by similar age, rank, marital status and family makeup, and compared career progression within the peer groups over time.

“What they found is that there is no negative impact to the enrolled population versus the non-enrolled population,” said Stewart. “So it’s empirical evidence supporting that it’s not a career ender.”

Even more convincing that the research-based evidence, Stewart added, are the families who have benefited from the program themselves. Here are a few of their stories:



COURTESY OF THE ORTEGON FAMILY

The Ortegon family, stationed at MCB Quantico, Va., has been enrolled in EFMP for nearly a decade and credits the program with helping them navigate life with two children diagnosed with autism.

The Ortegon Family: “It’s Made Me a Better Marine”

For Master Sergeant Juan Ortegon and his wife Mary Joy, receiving an autism diagnosis nearly a decade ago for their 3-year-old son, Juan Jr.—whom they call “J.R.”—was equal parts heartbreaking and overwhelming.

A few years later, they experienced the same feelings all over again when their youngest daughter, Saleya, also was diagnosed.

“EFMP really put me back together when I was in pieces,” said Mary Joy, describing the helplessness she felt during those times. The family was enrolled in the program after J.R.’s diagnosis, and

they’ve relied heavily on the support it has provided to them.

Through EFMP, the Ortegons, who also have an older daughter, now in college, have been given assistance in getting their youngest two children established with Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) providers and other therapies and services each time they’ve arrived at a new duty station. They also have greatly benefited from attending EFMP social events and connecting with other families who have children with autism or other special needs.

“When the EFMP has an event, I always go,” said Mary Joy. “It’s hard for us—we can’t really go out ... it’s very difficult in public,” she added, alluding to situations where people haven’t been able to understand or empathize with the challenges her family faces. But at the events sponsored by the EFMP Family Support Office at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., where MSgt Ortegon is on the staff of Wounded Warrior Regiment, the kids look forward to getting out of the house and socializing.

And it’s been equally beneficial for the parents.

“Sometimes, I’m frustrated and stressed, mentally drained, and I hear other families having to go through the same thing,” said Mary Joy. “We understand each other.”

For MSgt Ortegon, who hadn’t heard of EFMP prior to his family being enrolled—an occurrence that Stewart says was once very common but is less so now as the program continues to broaden its reach—the social events have allowed him the opportunity to meet and connect with other Marine dads in the program, whom



SGT JESSICA COLLINS, USMC

PFC Chad Cruz helps a child make a miniature Japanese taiko drum during “Reach Out: A Celebration of Fun and Music,” hosted by EFMP at Camp Foster, MCB Camp Butler, Okinawa, Japan, in 2017.

he says are always willing to talk and help each other out.

Being a parent to children with autism, said Ortegon, has been an adjustment for him, but he says it's had an overwhelmingly positive impact on his life.

"It's made me not just a better Marine, because I can now understand when younger Marines are going through these things, but a better husband and a better father," said Ortegon.

He calls the care and services that his children have received through EFMP a "godsend," saying that J.R., now 12 years old, was once nonverbal but now can carry on a full conversation.

Recently selected for master gunnery sergeant, Ortegon has been in the Marine Corps for 23 years. He's living proof that enrollment in the EFMP hasn't harmed his career; in fact, he credits the program for allowing him to stay focused on the mission at hand.

"What EFMP has allowed me to do is focus on my career more and help my wife more to take care of things when I'm not here," said Ortegon. "She's able to take care of it so that I can perform and do my job at the best of my abilities. I don't know if I could have done that without EFMP. I don't know if people would have understood or cared."

When J.R. was younger, said Mary Joy, he would occasionally unlock the front door of the family's home in military housing on Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., and walk into the street. The privatized housing company refused to allow the family to install locks on the top of the door to prevent him from getting out. Their EFMP caseworker advocated on their behalf and got the family permission to install the locks, ensuring safety and peace of mind.

Now that their children are school age, the challenges are different, but EFMP continues to step in and provide advocacy and support to ensure that they're receiving the services they need, such as occupational and ABA therapy, said Mary Joy. As the family prepares to relocate back to MCB Camp Lejeune this summer, they know they're in good hands during the transition.

"It's not a career ender if you join the EFMP. It's not going to hurt you," said MSgt Ortegon. "It's beneficial to your family, which is going to be beneficial to you."

Recently selected for master gunnery sergeant, Ortegon has been in the Marine Corps for 23 years. He's living proof that enrollment in the EFMP hasn't harmed his career; in fact, he credits the program for allowing him to stay focused...



COURTESY OF THE WISER FAMILY

Col Robert Wisner and his family are strong advocates of EFMP enrollment, having personally benefited from the support the program provides. Frequent relocations with a child with Down syndrome and other complex medical needs have been made easier thanks to the efforts of EFMP caseworkers.

The Wisner Family: "It's Going to Help You"

Just after their daughter, Madelyn, was born, Colonel Robert Wisner and his wife, Jennifer, enrolled in EFMP. Madelyn, who has Down syndrome and numerous other medical needs, required multiple heart surgeries shortly after birth.

"It was shaky there for the first couple of months," said Col Wisner, who is the commanding officer of Headquarters & Service Battalion, Henderson Hall in Arlington, Va. A major at the time of Madelyn's birth, Wisner was attending the one-year resident Command & Staff College at MCB Quantico, Va., which added to the family's uncertainty as he was expected to return to the fleet upon

completion of the program. They worried that their newborn daughter wouldn't have the continuity of care she needed between surgeries.

Today, the family has completed numerous PCS moves since Madelyn, now 11, was born, and the Wisers say that everywhere they have moved, they've taken the opportunity to engage with EFMP and get the resources they need to get her set up for success in a new place.

"Moving a kid like Madelyn is very labor intensive and stressful," said Jennifer Wisner. "We needed PT [physical therapy], OT [occupational therapy], speech; we needed a pediatrician, a cardiologist, and endocrinologist, an orthotist for her shoe inserts, we needed a gastroenterologist."

When they receive orders to a new duty station, one of their first phone calls is always to the new installation's family support office. Jennifer calls it "one-stop shopping," saying that the case managers are a wealth of local information and knowledge. It puts her at ease, she said, to

“Moving from school district to school district, all the standards change. ... It’s such a comfort to go into these meetings knowing that yes, I’m advocating for my child, but here’s someone who’s more knowledgeable than me who is also advocating for my child.”



COURTESY OF EFMP

An EFMP staff member assists a young child with kicking a ball during a Special Olympics Young Athletes event at MCAS Miramar, Calif.

know that they’re on her side and will help ensure that Madelyn is set up with new specialists before the family even arrives.

When the Wisers were stationed at Marine Corps Air Station New River, N.C., they saw a need in the surrounding community, and with the help of their EFMP caseworker, they started The Down Syndrome Network of Onslow and Carteret Counties, a local nonprofit for families who have a child with Down syndrome. The program has continued to thrive even after the family left the area.

Currently in a command billet in the Washington, D.C., area, Col Wisner often works extended hours, and the family has benefited from using respite care to help Jennifer get through the long days. They’ve also reached out to EFMP for sibling support for their 9-year-old son, hoping to connect him with other kids who have siblings with special needs.

“It’s so nice to connect, especially with other Marine families or other families who have children with Down syndrome,” said Jennifer.

For Col Wisner, having a child enrolled in EFMP has allowed him the opportunity to share his experiences with other families and encourage junior Marines who also have children with special needs.

“Sometimes Marines are afraid of it. They’re afraid that it could have some negative stipulations on their career,” said

Wiser. “It’s a resource that’s going to help you tremendously and you really need to take advantage of it. Just don’t abuse it or think that it’s going to get you out of doing something you don’t want to do. It’s not going to hurt you, it’s going to help you.”

The Chaney Family: “You Don’t Have to Shoulder This Yourself”

Both Stefanie and Joshua Chaney were active-duty Marines stationed in Okinawa, Japan, in 2011, when their 1-year-old daughter, Abigail, was diagnosed with cerebral palsy.

It was a chaotic time in their lives. Joshua was deployed and Stefanie had just returned from supporting a disaster relief effort in the Pacific. And due to limited medical services in Okinawa, the family was granted a humanitarian transfer to Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., where Abigail could receive the medical care she needed.

“It was at that point that EFMP kind of stepped up to the plate,” recalled Stefanie. “We were kind of stumbling around blind. We had no idea what humanitarian orders were. We didn’t know where to go from there, and EFMP kind of stepped in and said, ‘We’ve got this.’ They are lifesavers.”

From providing initial housing support and contacts for medical care and therapies, EFMP has been an asset to the Chaney family since the very beginning.

As their daughter got older, caseworkers have regularly attended IEP meetings at her schools at different duty stations to advocate for her best interests and have connected the Chaney’s with other families who have similar diagnoses.

Stefanie Chaney got out of the Marine Corps in 2013, and her husband, now a gunnery sergeant, is assigned to Fort Meade, Md. Since they’re located at an Army installation rather than a Marine Corps base or station, their EFMP support comes from the family support office at Henderson Hall in Arlington, Va. She says that both at Fort Meade and where they were previously stationed at Fort Belvoir, Va., the Marine Corps EFMP staff has gone out of their way to ensure that the family continues to be taken care of—and that their counterparts at the Army EFMP office have also provided assistance.

Abigail, now 10 years old, has benefited greatly from the advocacy that EFMP has offered in an educational setting.

“These school districts will try and make you feel guilty for trying to ask if your child might receive a little more help or therapy, and they want to tell you ‘This is all we’ll give you,’ ” said Stefanie. “To have a caseworker say, ‘No, I know these rules. This is what they rate.’ Moving from school district to school district, all the standards change. So to have somebody there who is familiar with the area and with the rules, it’s one of the greatest feelings. It’s such a comfort to go into these meetings knowing that yes, I’m advocating for my child, but here’s someone who’s more knowledgeable than me who is also advocating for my child.”

She emphasizes the importance of the crucial support the program has provided during moves and deployments. After three PCS moves since being enrolled in the program, she finds the process more predictable and is better equipped to prepare for “roadblocks and hurdles” in advance.

Having someone she can pick up the phone and call anytime, particularly when her husband is deployed, is invaluable.

“Even if they don’t know the answer right then and there, they’ll get that answer for you, and they’ve never failed to pull through for us,” Stefanie said. She’s also taken the opportunity to reach out to newly enrolled families and help ease their fears.

She encourages those parents to not be afraid to ask for help, to participate in the available networking opportunities and not to fear the “EFMP” label, which she says has been a lifeline for them—and she’s incredibly grateful.

Her message to families like hers is this: “We’re all in this together, so you don’t have to shoulder this yourself.” 🐾



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COURTESY OF JEAN LAMB

New MCL Charter Honors Memory of Local Marine Killed in Iraq

The Department of West Virginia Marine Corps League announced the charter of the Corporal William B. Fulks Detachment #1474, a new detachment in Hurricane, W.Va., Dec. 9, 2019. In attendance at the charter presentation ceremony were Medal of Honor recipient Hershel "Woody" Williams; Marine Corps League National Vice Commandant Roger Ware; Department of W.Va. Commandant Scott Kirby; and the family of Cpl Fulks. Other attendees included dignitaries from the state and local governments, Gold Star families, and Marines and family members from the Hurricane area as well as from supporting Department of W.Va. attachments.

Cpl Fulks grew up in Cabell County, W.Va., and attended Marshall

University before joining the Marine Corps, following his family's military tradition. He was deployed to Afghanistan in 2004 and in 2006 was deployed to Al Anbar, Iraq, with 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion. He died on May 18, 2006, after being injured by an improvised explosive device.

The new detachment is committed to honoring the memory of Fulks and his service and sacrifice as it preserves the traditions and promotes the interests of the Marine Corps and the Marine Corps League in veteran and community-based programs and events throughout Putnam County, W.Va.

Submitted by Jean Lamb

Olympic Valley, Calif.

Adaptive Winter Sports Event Builds Wounded Veterans' Confidence

Lance Corporal Kenta Otawa, pictured on the right, was one of five Marine Corps veterans who participated in the annual Anthem Winter Ski Fest held at the Squaw Valley Resort in Olympic Valley, Calif., Jan. 23-25. Otawa, who is blind, relied on the help of a guide during the adaptive skiing and snowboarding trip, which is designed to help wounded veterans build confidence and independence and ease their transition back to civilian life. The event was hosted by Achieve Tahoe, a provider of adaptive sports instruction for those with disabilities, and sponsored by Anthem Blue Cross, Warfighter Sports and Squaw Valley Alpine Meadows.

Submitted by Kyle Evans



BRIAN BLOOD



COURTESY OF AL FRATER

Teaneck, N.J.

Library Displays Uniform Donation From General Pace

Following a Jan. 5 dedication ceremony, the main room of the Teaneck, N.J., Public Library now proudly displays a framed Service “Alpha” coat belonging to General Peter Pace, USMC (Ret), the 16th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The general, who donated the uniform to the library, grew up in Teaneck and is a graduate of Teaneck High School.

Members of the Marine Corps League Gooney Bird Detachment #434 attended the ceremony. Pictured from the left, Al Frater, Gen Pace, Pat Korczak and John Hernandez visit with each other following the uniform dedication.

Submitted by Al Frater

Warrensburg, Mo.

“Marines Day” Lifts Spirits of Veterans Home Residents

When Latisha Koetting, the supervisor of volunteer services at the Missouri Veterans Home in Warrensburg, Mo., decided to host a “Branch of Service” week in honor of the 100th anniversary of Veterans Day, she reached out to a pair of brothers, both retired Marines who reside in the area, to help ensure that the home’s “Marines Day” on Nov. 5, 2019, would be a success.

Master Gunnery Sergeant Larry “Obie” Oberhelman, USMC (Ret), his wife, Leona, and his brother, Colonel Dennis Oberhelman, USMC (Ret), helped plan a full-day celebration of the Corps for the Marines who reside in the home and recruited numerous individuals and businesses to help make the event special. The festivities began with a breakfast cooked and served by a local business, a flyover by two local helicopter pilots, and performances by a country western gospel band and an 18-piece brass band.

“We were later told by the home staff that some veteran residents that had not ventured from their rooms for some time came out to enjoy the music,” said MGySgt Oberhelman.

The home was presented with an American flag flown over the Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington, Va., on Sept. 11, 2019, and Col Oberhelman, pictured in the center, led a traditional Marine Corps birthday cake cutting ceremony and singing of “The Marines’



COURTESY OF KEITH PIERCE

Hymn” with the assistance of Gunnery Sergeant Richard Allan, left, and Sergeant Logan Nelsen, right, of Recruiting Station Kansas City. At the end of the day, “Mail Call” lifted the veterans’ spirits with letters and pictures from students from several states.

“Our veterans were absolutely beaming by the day’s end,” said Koetting. “It never would have been possible without the help of the few and the proud ... they showed us all the importance of the service of our Marines.”

Submitted by Keith Pierce

“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. 🇺🇸



LENA STANGE

Mailbags at a U.S. Postal Service sorting center in Wiesbaden, Germany, await transport to destinations around the world. The Federal Voting Assistance Program can help ensure that servicemembers and their family members who reside out of their voter registration district are able to vote by mail.

Want to Vote? The FVAP Can Help

As November's general election approaches, the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) is ready to help servicemembers and their families exercise the right to vote.

"The Federal Voting Assistance Program works to ensure servicemembers, their eligible family members and overseas citizens are aware of their right to vote and have the tools and resources to successfully do so—from anywhere in the world," said David Beirne, the FVAP director.

Voting is a personal choice, said Beirne, who noted that many in the military community don't realize the Department of Defense has a program designed to assist them if they choose to vote. While FVAP is not a "get out the vote" program, he said, the program offers resources for the military community if they want to participate in the election process.

"There are many myths surrounding the military voting process, so the most important thing for military voters and their eligible spouses and dependents to know is that there are absentee voting resources on FVAP.gov designed to meet their voting needs when they are deployed or stationed overseas," Beirne said.

He recommends that servicemembers start the absentee voting process early

because it takes more time than voting in person.

FVAP.gov has information on state and national voting guidelines, registering to vote, using the Federal Post Card Application and requesting absentee ballots. You can also use the site to check on the status of your voted ballot.

The Federal Post Card Application is a form military and overseas voters can use to register to vote and request new absentee ballots for the year. Eligible voters should submit a new postcard every year and with every move to a new address. Many states allow you to submit it electronically. It can be completed online or by picking up a hard copy version from the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

FVAP resources are designed to assist any servicemember, voting-age dependent, and overseas citizens with voting so long as they are absent from their voting jurisdiction. Servicemembers who are home and registered to vote in their home voting jurisdiction vote by visiting their voting precinct on Election Day.

The FVAP.gov site offers a primary election calendar by state, a list of contact information for voting offices, and an online assistant for completing a federal write-in absentee ballot, which serves as a backup ballot if the voter does not receive the request absentee ballot in time.

To ensure the expedited return of voted

ballots from overseas, FVAP coordinates with the Military Postal Service Agency and the U.S. Postal Service. In previous years, FVAP also worked with the services to ensure their operational conditions factor in the return of voted ballots. This is especially true for Navy ships, which receive reminders to offload ballots before moving on with new operations.

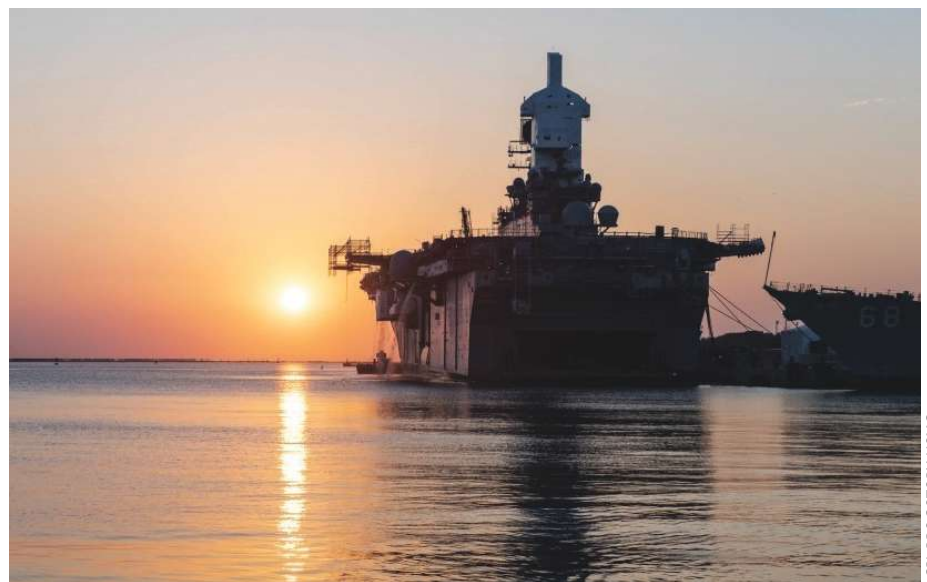
The DOD's "You Can Vote From Anywhere" website offers voting information for servicemembers and military spouses at <https://www.defense.gov/Experience/You-Can-Vote-From-Anywhere/>.

Claudette Roulo

"FMF" Returns to the Marine Corps Vernacular

In a return to its naval roots, the Marine Corps announced in MARADMIN 004/20 that it will change its terminology and again use the term "Fleet Marine Force" (FMF) rather than the term "expeditionary."

The change in terminology renews the longstanding Navy-Marine Corps relationship and brings back the mindset of a joint effort throughout the Marine Corps and the Navy. Fleet Marine Force draws on Marine Corps naval traditions and reminds Marines and Sailors of their long-fought history together. As of January, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., is now the premier Fleet Marine Force installation of the West Coast.



LCPL BROCK STORY/USMC

The Marine Corps recently announced that it has reinstated the term "Fleet Marine Force" to replace the term "expeditionary." The change is part of a renewed emphasis on the Corps' naval roots and its relationship with the Navy, which provides landing helicopter dock vessels like the Wasp-class amphibious assault ship USS Iwo Jima (LHD-7), pictured here.



LCPL TAYLOR SMITH, USMC

Veterans in Piping participant Sgt Cody Lemons cuts metal during a practical application course at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., Jan. 29. The 18-week program focuses on accelerated training of highly marketable skills such as welding and the repair of HVAC-R systems.

“I don’t think it’s a change of name, I think more importantly it is a reflection of the change of our relationship with the Navy,” said Colonel Ian Clark, Chief of Staff, Marine Corps Installations West, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton.

As the Navy and the Marine Corps return to their roots as a joint naval force, it will be some time before this shift will affect training aboard Camp Pendleton and other Marine Corps installations. Although the FMF is not a new concept for the Marine Corps, this new FMF will learn from past challenges to better enact modern solutions.

“We need to refocus on how we will fulfill our mandate to support the fleet,” tweeted General David H. Berger, Commandant of the Marine Corps.

One reason being cited for this change is a rising global threat level that calls for the need to return to a Navy-Marine Corps integrated approach to operations. Rising global tensions in the Asia-Pacific region could lead to fewer land-based conflicts, prompting the Navy and Marine Corps to begin preparing for a possible change in operational terrain. By resurrecting the FMF, the Marine Corps can return to the naval integration that it maintained before the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986. No longer acting as separate but intertwined entities will allow for greater cohesion within the Department of the Navy, thus allowing for the most effective naval effort.

“In crisis prevention and crisis response, the Fleet Marine Force—acting as an extension of the Fleet—will be first on

the scene, first to help, first to contain a brewing crisis, and first to fight if required to do so,” states the Commandant’s Planning Guidance.

The Marine Corps’ adaptive nature will ensure that whatever training challenges may arise, they will be faced head-on and accomplished. No matter the changing environments or the changing obstacles, the Navy and Marine Corps, through joint efforts, will respond.

With further instructions and strategic guidance to follow, there is no immediate change to Marine Corps and Navy training other than the reinstatement of the FMF term. However, the MARADMIN serves as a precursor for future training and operational changes. In an ever-changing world, the Marine Corps must change as well, even if that means changing back when needed.

LCpl Broc Story, USMC

Program Offers Veterans A “Pipeline” to Success

Thousands of servicemembers transition out of the military each year, and countless resources and programs are available to them as they prepare to enter civilian life.

One program, Veterans in Piping (VIP), is a pathway into an apprenticeship with the United Association (UA), a union of plumbers, fitters, welders and service technicians, that offers high-quality skills training and jobs in the pipe trades to active-duty servicemembers who are about to leave the service.



LCPL TAYLOR SMITH, USMC

Sgt Steven Hover welds steel under the supervision of an instructor during the Veterans in Piping course at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., Jan. 29.

“The program started as a veterans model for people who had already transitioned out,” said David Porter, a VIP instructor. “In 2009, we started a pilot program in Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton for active-duty servicemembers.”

The 18-week program consists of accelerated training in highly marketable skills such as welding, fire sprinkler fitting and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning and refrigeration (HVAC-R). The program and the state-of-the-art equipment used in the training are funded through the UA.

“There are nine of these programs in seven different bases across the country,” Porter said. “Six are welding focused, like here in MCB Camp Lejeune; two are HVAC-R programs and one is a sprinkler fitting program.”

The UA VIP program gives a unique opportunity for transitioning servicemembers to move into a high demand career so they can better support themselves and their families. VIP participants earn industry-recognized certifications and a direct entry into secure private-sector jobs with good pay and benefits.

“The program is a great opportunity,” said Sergeant Cody Lemons, a videographer with Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C. “Once you graduate the program, it’s a 100 percent job placement. So no matter what, everyone who graduates will have a job when they get home.”

LCpl Taylor Smith, USMC

DPAA Identifies Marines Killed During World War II

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced that several Marines whose remains were unaccounted for following the Battle of Tarawa have recently been accounted for. The Marines are:

Pvt Edwin F. Benson, 22, of West Newton, Mass. He was assigned to Company L, 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division when he landed on Betio Island in the Tarawa Atoll. He was killed on the first day of the battle, Nov. 20, 1943.

PFC Norman A. Buan, 27, of Long Prairie, Minn. He was assigned to Co C, 1st Bn, 2nd Marines, 2ndMarDiv when he landed on Betio Island. He was killed on the first day of the battle, Nov. 20, 1943.

PFC Robert J. Hatch, 21, of Woods Cross, Utah. He was assigned to D/1/6, 2ndMarDiv when he landed on Betio Island. He was killed on the third day of the battle, Nov. 22, 1943.

PFC Michael Kocopy, 20, of Gardendale, Pa. He was assigned to E/2/2, 2ndMarDiv when he landed on Betio Island. He was killed on the first day of the battle, Nov. 20, 1943.

2ndLt Ernest A. Matthews Jr., 34, of Dallas, Texas. He

was assigned to HQ Co, HQ Bn, 2ndMarDiv when he landed on Betio Island. He died on the first day of the battle, Nov. 20, 1943.

1stLt Justin G. Mills, 25, of Galveston, Texas. He was assigned to C/1/2, 2ndMarDiv when he landed on Betio Island. He was killed on the first day of the battle, Nov. 20, 1943.

Pvt William E. Rambo, 20, of LaPorte, Ind. He was assigned to H/2/8, 2ndMarDiv when he landed on Betio Island. He was killed on the first day of the battle, Nov. 20, 1943.

PFC Jack B. Van Zandt, 22, of Danville, Ill. He was assigned to A/1/6, 2ndMarDiv when he landed on Betio Island. He was killed on the third day of the battle, Nov. 22, 1943.

Pvt Channing R. Whitaker, 18, of Granger, Iowa. He was assigned to A/1/6, 2ndMarDiv when he landed on Betio Island. He was killed on the third day of the battle, Nov. 22, 1943.

PFC Louis Wiesehan Jr., 20, of Richmond, Ind. He was assigned to F/2/8, 2ndMarDiv when he landed on Betio Island. He was killed on the second day of the battle, Nov. 21, 1943.

DPAA

Carlton "Carl" Braley, 95, of Unity, Maine. He enlisted in the Navy during WW II and was a Seabee who fought with Marines during the Battle of Peleliu. After the war, he had a 33-year career in education.

Alonzo R. "Pete" Browner Jr., 74, of Indianapolis, Ind. He was the All-Marine boxing champion for two years and in 1968 was an alternate for the Olympic boxing team.

LCpl Albert L. Dean, 79, of Portland, Ore. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1958 and served until 1962. He was assigned to Marine Security Forces units in Hawaii and in California. He later had a career in law enforcement.

SSgt John J. Harrington Jr., 70, of Minooka, Ill. He was assigned to L/3/1 in Vietnam and later served with E/2/14, 4thMarDiv. His awards include the Purple Heart, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with combat "V," and Navy Marine Corps Achievement Medal with combat "V."

Christian Hazen, 62, of Green Bay, Wis. After his 1976 graduation from high school, he enlisted in the Marine Corps and served on active duty for 14 years.

Gerald P. "Jerry" Hoslet, 80, of Green Bay, Wis. He was a Marine who served from 1957-1960. He later owned and operated hair salons in California and Wisconsin.

LtCol Paul C. Hudson, 42, of Buckeye,

Ariz. He graduated from the Naval Academy in 1999 and served for 20 years, retiring in 2019. He was a C-130 pilot and a graduate of the Naval Postgraduate School.

Michael P. "Mic" Kellner, 64, of Green Bay, Wis. He enlisted after his high school graduation and served until 1978. He was a member of the American Legion.

Kenneth C. "Ken" Kern, 88, of St. Joe, Ind. He served with E/2/7, 1stMarDiv and saw action during the Korean War. His awards include the Purple Heart. After the war, he began working as a pressman, eventually owning his own printing company.

Sgt LaVern Leisgang, 89, of Green Bay, Wis. He served during the Korean War and was discharged in 1954. He was a member of the VFW and was his post's commander for several years.

Robert B. Loring, 75, of Zephyrhills, Fla. He was a Marine Corps veteran who spent countless hours as a Toys for Tots volunteer. He was a good friend to *Leatherneck*, writing more than 100 book reviews for the magazine over the years.

Ralph W. Matthews, 70, of Belton, Texas. His service from 1967-1973 included a tour in Vietnam. He later had a career as an engineer. He was a volunteer with Boy Scouts of America and a member of the MCL.

Floyd "Bambino" Monaco, 69, in State College, Pa. He was a machine

gunner with I/3/26 in Vietnam. He saw action in multiple engagements, including Operation Meade River, during which he played an active role in neutralizing an NVA bunker complex.

Leonard S. Nederveld, 94, in Diamond-head, Miss. When he was 18, he enlisted in the Marine Corps. He served in the Pacific during WW II and saw action on Iwo Jima. After the war, he had a career as an accountant. He was an active volunteer with a local Boy Scout troop. His awards include the Purple Heart.

Adelbert V. Otradovec, 87, of Suring, Wis. He was a Marine who served during the Korean War.

Larry G. Owen, 72, of Mattoon, Ill. He was an infantry squad leader who served in Vietnam in 1967.

Harold L. Pedersen, 96, of Helena, Mont. He enlisted in the Marine Corps during WW II and served with E/2/27, 5thMarDiv. He landed on Iwo Jima on his 22nd birthday. He later had a long career as a high school and college coach, impacting countless young players, and teaching them leadership skills.

Brian J. Prunty, 83, of De Pere, Wis. He enlisted in the Marine Corps after his high school graduation. He later entered the priesthood and earned several advanced degrees, including one in medical science. As a physician assistant, he volunteered in Peru.

Paul Renkas, 85, of Wabeno, Wis.

Retired Marine, Longtime *Leatherneck* Writer Dies at 73

Master Gunnery Sergeant Renaldo R. “Ron” Keene, a well-known figure in the Marine Corps public affairs community who wrote hundreds of stories about Marines, the topic he loved best, died recently in Stafford, Va., at the age of 73.

Keene came to the staff of *Leatherneck* in 1990 after retiring from the Marine Corps. During his 25 years on active duty, he earned Combat Air Crewman’s wings. His awards include three Air Medals and two Navy Commendation Medals with combat “V.” Before his retirement, he was the Marine Corps’ senior enlisted public affairs chief.

Keene served multiple tours in Vietnam, spending a total of 35 months in country. As a combat correspondent, he went anywhere Marines were so he could tell their stories. He had assignments with *Pacific Stars and Stripes* and the Far East Radio and Television Network.

Keene was a mentor to countless Marine journalists. Jeanette Haynes, who served with Keene in 1979 in the public affairs office at Camp Butler, Okinawa, said Keene’s priority was his Marines. “It was always about making sure his Marines were taken care of—always,” she said.

During Keene’s 25-year tenure at *Leatherneck*, he wrote news, features and history articles. For many years he was the Sound Off editor and readers knew him as the “voice” of the magazine, said former *Leatherneck* staff writer Isaac Pacheco. He would offer his support when he agreed with a reader’s opinion, but he had no qualms about taking letter writers to task when he felt they were out of line.

He loved the Marine Corps and everything about it: the uniforms, the rifles, the pageantry, the lore and the music. But his favorite thing about the Marine Corps, according to Pacheco, was the men and women who wore the eagle, globe and anchor, and he loved to write about them.

“He was my mentor and dear friend. He was an advocate for every ‘Snuffy,’ for every Marine, for the lore of the Corps,” said Joseph R. Chenelly, who wrote for *Leatherneck* from 2001-2005.

In 2012, Keene won the Robert Debs Heintz Jr. Award for

History Writing for his two-part article in *Leatherneck* about Saipan and Tinian entitled “Because Marines Never Forget.”

“A truly dedicated Marine, he focused on instilling a sense of history, and an appreciation for writing that history, in a seemingly limitless number of other Marines, both young and old,” said former *Leatherneck* editor Colonel Walter G. Ford, USMC (Ret). “He brought history to life, making it memorable through gripping tales told with skill and authority,” Ford continued.

He had a wide network of fellow Marine friends and he kept in touch with them on the phone and online, but he especially loved an in-person visit.

He enjoyed a cigar and it didn’t have to be a good one. He loved a corny joke as much as he loved an off-color limerick—and political correctness was of no concern to him. He could often be found in the cigar lounge at the Globe & Laurel restaurant in Stafford, Va., with the restaurant’s owner and Keene’s longtime friend, Major Richard “Rick” Spooner, USMC (Ret),

smoking a cigar and trading stories, jokes and limericks.

“I am grateful for having known Ron over the past few decades,” said Spooner. “His friendship has enriched my life and lives of many others who were privileged to have known or served with him,” he added.

On a personal note, I had an office next to Ron Keene for more than a decade. We sometimes argued about edits I made to his stories, but every now and then he’d say “you did good.” He taught me how to write obituaries and he answered many questions for me about the Marine Corps, marksmanship and life in general. Even now, when I go to the shooting range, it’s his voice I hear in my head reminding me to breathe and watch my sight picture. And sometimes, when I am at work, if I listen real hard, I can still hear how his chair would squeak when he leaned back, away from his computer screen, to survey what he had written.

Nancy S. Lichtman



MGySgt
Renaldo R. “Ron” Keene

RON LUNN

He was a Marine who served during the Korean War.

MSgt Herbert “Herb” Richardson, 83, of Spotsylvania County, Va. He was among the last active-duty Marines assigned to *Leatherneck*, joining the staff in 1967. He was a skilled photojournalist and writer, covering everything from combat operations in Vietnam to Marine Corps sports. Before coming to *Leatherneck*, he worked on the Camp Lejeune *Globe* as the sports editor, assistant editor and editor. He also did a stint at American Forces Radio and Television Network in Saigon as a news writer and newscaster before transferring to Da Nang as the news director. After his retirement from the Marine Corps, he earned a degree in communications and remained in the news business, working for Voice of America and the *Quantico Sentry*, and as a radio



BOB BOWEN

During downtime in Operation Meade in Vietnam, Herb Richardson helps a child learn how to handle a camera.

news anchor for a Fredericksburg, Va., station. He returned to the *Leatherneck* staff on multiple occasions, filling in wherever there was a need.

Maj Charles S. Snell, 77, of Hoover, Ala. He attended the University of Texas on a Navy ROTC scholarship and was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps after his graduation. He was a fighter pilot who flew the F-8 Crusader and F-4 Phantom and completed a tour in Vietnam. He later had a career in business. He was a member of the MCA&F.

In Memoriam is run on a space-available basis. To submit items, 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.

Books Reviewed

When “The Remains of the Corps” was reviewed in the March issue of *Leatherneck* there was some confusion between the military background of real-life author, Thomas W. Hebert, and the background of fictional Will Remain. Hebert served in Vietnam as a lieutenant but did not receive a Silver Star and Bronze Star as was mistakenly stated in the review. The fictional Will Remain obtained a master’s degree in creative writing from Boston University, not Hebert, who has a master’s in professional accounting from the University of Hartford. Of note, Hebert’s pseudonym, Remain, is an anagram for Marine and not the name of his mother’s family. A few other corrections include mistakenly referring to Remain’s grandson as Tom vice Will, and a main character as Kenneth vice Lawrence Blakeslee.

Leatherneck regrets the errors and hopes that they do not detract from the reviewer’s enthusiastic recommendation of the book itself.

The 368-page illustrated book is the first in a six-volume series which will follow the members of the Remain family throughout the wars and peacetime of the 20th century and is available in hard copy and paperback at www.remainsofthecorps.com and/or www.egandapublishing.com. It’s also available in e-book form on Amazon.com.

LEVEL ZERO HEROES: The Story of U.S. Marine Special Operations in Bala Murghab, Afghanistan. By Michael Golembesky and John R. Bruning. Published by St. Martin’s Press. 320 pages. The book is available through Amazon.com.

“Level Zero Heroes,” is a riveting look at the actions of one Marine Corps Special Operations team during the Afghan war. Staff Sergeant Michael Golembesky, or “Ski” as his team members christened him, served eight years in the Marine Corps, and his new book, written with John R. Bruning, details the events in his last deployment with a Marine Corps Force Reconnaissance Team). SSgt Golembesky trained as a Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC), a fully qualified ground controller of precision munitions delivered by supporting aircraft assets. Technically speaking, this is a job Marine enlisted personnel are not legally author-

ized to perform. However, when attached as a member of a Marine recon team, these highly trained staff noncommissioned officers are capable of bringing down hellfire and damnation on identified enemy targets with pinpoint accuracy. These air/ground controllers have access to firepower previous ground units could only dream about.

SSgt Golembesky and his team, Dagger 22, served in Afghanistan in late 2009 to 2010. The reconnaissance team was deployed in support of outlying forward operating base (FOB) Todd. The forward base had previously been manned by Italian troops but was now entrusted to the 82nd Airborne. The team’s first challenge was in support of a paratrooper patrol gone wrong. The troopers lost two

of their men who had drowned in the shifty and treacherous Murghab River. While trying to recover the bodies, the troopers were taken under fire by local Taliban forces. The target was destroyed and eventually the bodies of the two soldiers were successfully recovered.

The book’s title, “Level Zero Heroes,” is taken from the combat zone delegated as a low intensity fighting area. However, the recon team swiftly found out otherwise. Beyond the wire and very close to FOB Todd, the Taliban was active. Patrols took gunfire most anywhere along the river valley. The convoluted rules of engagement put various restrictions on the use of their artillery and air assets. Missions had to be approved by a combination of U.S. military planners and Afghan local officials. SSgt Golembesky and his team members had little trust in the process and worried that the task they were to perform might very well come too late for their needs. The established goal of avoiding civilian casualties often surrendered the team’s powerful advantage to the smart and savvy Taliban. Working with coalition forces posed its own set of problems. The Afghan Army and their police force often clashed; they simply detested one another. Vital information needed to be shared between people who were, more than likely, play-

ing both sides. Even allied coalition troops seemed to have their own agendas and conflicting rules of engagement. In one blue-on-blue fratricide case, an Afghan National Army (ANA) soldier murdered an American 82nd paratrooper. Tensions and trust between all the coalition groups were clearly strained to the limit. As SSgt Golembesky so clearly notes, “If the war doesn’t kill you, the politics and ramifications will. ... Therein lies the Catch 22 of being a JTAC, unmatched firepower at our fingertips, but rules of engagement that hamstringing our every move even in the thick of a firefight.”

In December 2009, in subzero weather, Dagger 22 participated in a major clearing operation designed to cut the valley and interfere with the Taliban’s movements. As this plan directly interfered with their lucrative drug trade, the Taliban reacted swiftly. As a part of this operation, members of Dagger 22 set up an observation outpost on a commanding hill they called Pathfinder. In the following four days, the Taliban fighters responded with massive attacks on Pathfinder and the surrounding valley area. With the stakes high, SSgt Golembesky controlled the air support needed to hold off the enemy and win the day.

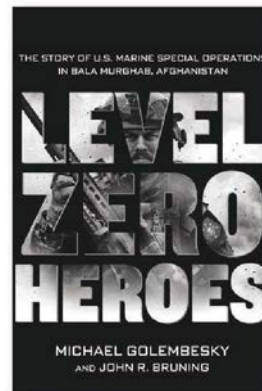
As the need for special operations troops to carry the war to our enemies, teams armed with precision air assets, will certainly be accompanying any of our future efforts. Marines like SSgt Golembesky will be on the job assuring that these war-winning assets are used with both care and cunning.

“Level Zero Heroes,” takes the reader behind the

fog of war and into the lives and enormous challenges faced by our heroic Special Operations forces. SSgt Golembesky and his co-author, John Bruning, have succeeded in allowing us to better understand the complex nature of a multinational approach to facing and defeating the new threats facing us from these 21st century terrorists.

Bob Loring

Author’s bio: Readers will recognize Marine veteran “Red Bob” Loring as a frequent Leatherneck reviewer, who has had more than 100 book reviews published in the magazine.



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SOUND OFF

[continued from page 7]

his new buddy pictured in Sound Off. I will scan the picture and the article and send it to him. Thanks for publishing it.

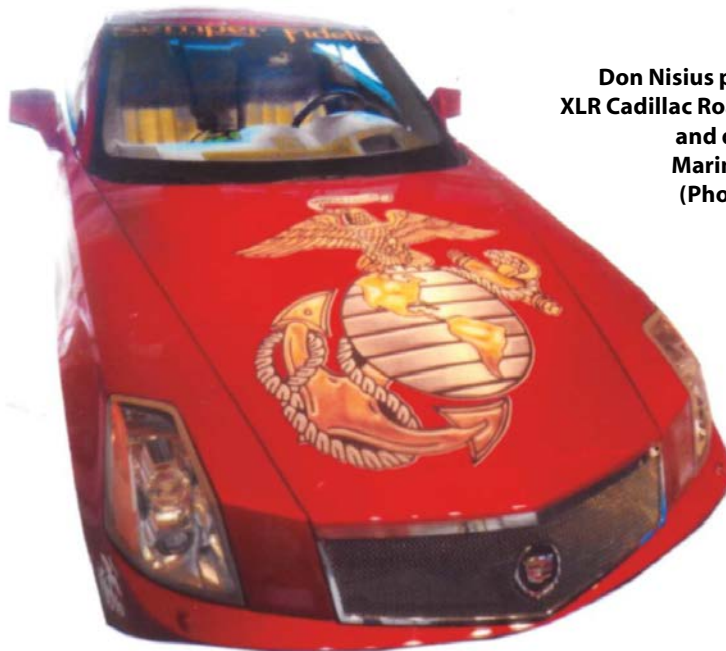
Another letter in Sound Off, in response to my Sea Story in the December 2019 issue "You Might Be a Jarhead If ..." was also great. I have a very good friend who spent four years in the Air Force. I harass him about it every chance I get, all in fun, of course.

Not too long ago he asked me, "What does 'squared away' mean?" He was serious! I could not believe what I had heard but then after I thought about it, I was reminded that we Marines kind of speak another language; i.e., deck, bulkhead, head, overhead, squared away, etc., and it never leaves you.

The two articles on Iwo Jima were of particular interest. My old football coach was there with the 10th Amphibious Tractor Bn, 4th Marine Division. He is gone now but I will send the articles to his five children.

So, you see your magazine reaches far and wide. Thanks again for a great magazine.

Cpl Bil Pederson
Mauston, Wis.



Don Nisius purchased this XLR Cadillac Roadster in 2007 and decorated it in Marine Corps style. (Photo courtesy of Don Nisius)

This is in response to Bil Pederson's quotes in Sea Stories in the December 2019 *Leatherneck* regarding, "You Might Be a Jarhead If ..." I can personally testify to 19 quotes and I can state under oath I am a Marine, especially while driving my car.

I purchased the XLR Cadillac Roadster

convertible (above) in 2007 and it's been a head turner. I tell everyone I increased the value ten-fold by adding the decals. I have also installed a very loud remote-controlled horn under the hood that plays "The Marines' Hymn." I get a thumbs-up when people pass me on the highway. When I am at a shopping mall or have

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stopped to purchase gas, people come over to get a closer look. When they see my license plate, 1ST 2GO, their first question is, “How fast does it go?” thinking 1ST 2GO means off the race line. Obviously to the Marine Corps we are the first to go in and the last out, but to answer their questions, I tell them in Wisconsin the maximum speed limit is 70 mph and it does that.

Don Nisius
USMC, 1966-1970
Madison, Wis.

No Disrespect

First of all I want to make it perfectly clear that under no circumstances did I mean any disrespect to “The Marines’ Hymn” in my November 2019 Sound Off letter [Marines Don’t Have Guns] about the difference between a rifle and a gun.

Secondly, I would like to thank those Marines who wrote in clarifying the issue for me. I especially appreciated Major James Murphy’s response to my letter in the January issue.

Finally I would like everyone to know that it was never my intent in writing my first letter to make a federal issue out of the matter, it was simply something that struck me as curious that I hoped to get cleared up for myself, which I did, by

others who knew more about the issue than I did.

Cpl Carl R. Withey
USMC, 1966-1968
Elbridge, N.Y.

Famous Quote

I am just catching up on reading my *Leatherneck* and I noticed in the December 2019 issue an editorial comment in the Sound Off section crediting Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter with a famous quote about “knowing it when I see it.” The source of this comment is a reference to the 1964 opinion by Justice Potter Stewart in *Jacobellis v. Ohio*. In writing his concurring opinion, Stewart did not know how he would define hardcore pornography. After discussing it with his law clerk, Alan Novak, Stewart finally decided that, “I know it when I see it.”

Stewart was a naval officer during World War II, and Novak served three years as a Marine officer in the mid-1950s.

Capt Richard E. Dixon, USMCR (Ret)
Clifton, Va.

Editorial Irish Pennants

On page 19 of the February issue a photo identifies a 90 mm AAA gun as a “machine gun.” The weapon shown will be familiar to Marines who served with

me in Korea as members of the 1st 90 mm AAA gun battalion FMAW.

Cpl Gene Taylor
USMC, 1952-1955
Seattle, Wash.

Thanks very much for the review of my book, “The U.S. Marines in the Second Creek and Second Seminole Wars,” in the January issue. This is the only book on the topic. There was one mistake in the article. In the line, “... led Creek Indian volunteers, were detailed as mountain troops” it should read “as mounted troops” not “mountain troops.” Thanks again for the review and Semper Fi.

Dave Ekardt
USMC, 1969-1972
Tampa, Fla.

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 🐻

Reader Assistance

Edited by Sara W. Bock

Reunions

• **Marine Corps Engineer Assn.**, Sept. 17-19, Fredericksburg, Va. Contact Maj Charlie Dismore, USMC (Ret), (512) 394-9333, www.marcorengasn.org.

• **Marine Corps Cryptologic Assn.**, Sept. 7-10, Las Vegas, Nev. Contact Edgar Kitt, 2250 Heavenly View Dr., Henderson, NV 89014, (702) 454-1646, edgarkitt@earthlink.net.

• **Marine Corps Mustang Assn.**, Aug. 11-16, Arlington, Va. Contact Jim Casey, (703) 349-0893, businessmgr@marinecorpsmustang.org, www.marinecorpsmustang.org/muster.

• **Marine Air Traffic Control Assn.**, Sept. 23-27, San Antonio, Texas. Contact Steve Harris, (509) 499-8137, sandkh2@gmail.com.

• **2nd Force Recon Assn.**, May 14-16, Jacksonville, N.C. Contact Carl Schmitt, carls@2ndforcerecon.org.

• **7th Engineer Bn Vietnam Assn.**, Sept. 10, Arlington, Va. Contact Norbert Johnson, 6100 Cochrane Rd., Marlette, MI 48453, (810) 300-0782, nwgj@outlook.com, www.usmc.org/7th/.

• **Marine Corps Air Transport Assn. (VMGR/VMR)**, Sept. 3-6, Chicago, Ill. Contact CWO-4 Dave Harshbarger, USMC (Ret), (630) 394-2568, reunion@mcata.org, www.mcata.com.

• **Force Logistics Command, Vietnam (all battalions/FLSG-A&B)**, Sept. 26-Oct. 1, Tucson, Ariz. Contact Mike Fishbaugh, 990 Little Lick Fork, East Point, KY 41216, (606) 789-5010, smfishbaugh@mikrtec.com.

• **11th Marine Regiment, OIF (20th anniversary)**, March 31-April 1, 2023, Camp Pendleton, Calif. Contact

Casey Harsh, casey.harsh@gmail.com. Facebook group: The Cannon Cockers of OIF-1 (20-Year Reunion 2023 Group).

• **11th Engineer Bn**, (in conjunction with 3rdMarDiv Assn. reunion), Aug. 10-16, Washington, D.C. Contact Gene Spanos, (847) 532-2963, genethemarine@gmail.com.

• **1/5 (1986-1992)**, Sept. 10-13, Macomb, Ill. Contact Scott Hainline, (309) 351-2050, ptimfi@yahoo.com.

• **1/27 (1968)**, Sept. 24-26, Las Vegas, Nev. Contact Felix Salmeron, (469) 583-0191, mar463@aol.com.

• **"Stormy's" 3/3**, Sept. 27-Oct. 1, Branson, Mo. Contact Burrell Landes, (303) 734-1458, bhanon@comcast.net, www.stormys33.com.

• **I/3/7 (all eras)**, April 22-25, Myrtle Beach, S.C. Contact Dennis Deibert, 6007 Catherine St., Harrisburg, PA 17112, (717) 652-1695, dennisdeibert8901@comcast.net.

• **3d 155s, M/4/12, 3rdMarDiv**, Sept. 13-17, Branson, Mo. Contact SgtMaj Gordon Niska, USMC (Ret), (770) 868-8694, sniska@windstream.net.

• **Marine Expeditionary Brigade-Afghanistan, Task Force Leatherneck (2009-2010)**, May 1-3, Quantico, Va. Contact reunion committee, taskforceleatherneck@gmail.com. (See our ad on page 13.)

• **Marine Corps Security Forces, Naval Weapons Station Earle**, Sept. 25-27, Colts Neck, N.J. Contact Dusty Wright, (618) 553-2205, slickstuff@nwcable.net.

• **MCAS "Rose Garden" Nam Phong, Thailand (1972-1973)**, June 12-16, Nashville, Tenn. Contact Harold Delamater,

(845) 297-8865, hgd1025@aol.com.

• **U.S. Naval Disciplinary Command Portsmouth, N.H. (Marine Detachment)**, Sept. 14-20, North Conway, N.H. Contact Don Ferry, (972) 334-0609, don.ferry1942@gmail.com.

• **TBS, Co H/Co I, 5-62**, April 29-May 2, Camp Lejeune, N.C. Contact Harvey Ross, (269) 462-1388, tbs.may62@aol.com.

• **41st OCC/TBS 3-67**, Oct. 22, San Diego, Calif. Contact Paul Disario, (559) 273-9549, pdisario@comcast.net.

• **TBS, Co F, 6-70**, April 30-May 3, Quantico, Va. Contact Tom Kanasky, (202) 366-3156, tkanasky@earthlink.net, or Mitch Youngs, (703) 493-9435, mitchyoungs@verizon.net.

• **TBS, Co I, 9-70**, Aug. 20-22, Quantico, Va. Contact Scott Kafer, 16436 Turnbury Oak Dr., Odessa, FL 33556, (202) 403-7680, scottkaf@mac.com.

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

• **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.

• **VFA-125 (1980-1990)**, Sept. 15-17, NAS Lemoore, Calif. Contact MSgt Ben Spotts, (970) 867-8029, benjo1993@msn.com.

Ships and Others

• **USS Canberra (CA-70/CAG-2)**, Sept. 30-Oct. 4, Pittsburgh, Pa. Contact Ken Minick, 2115 Pride Ave., Belpre, OH 45714, (740) 423-8976, usscanberra@gmail.com.

• **USS Hornet (CV-8/CV/CVA/CVS-12)**, Sept. 16-20, Buffalo, N.Y. Contact Sandy Burket, P.O. Box 108, Roaring Spring, Pa., 16673, (814) 224-5063, (814) 3112-4976, hornetcva@aol.com.

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

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Saved Round

By Nancy S. Lichtman



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“THEY GAVE THEIR LIVES FOR US”— Marines and Sailors aboard a launch from the ship *USS Montana* at Pier A, New York City, N.Y., are bound for the national memorial service that was held to honor the Sailors and Marines who were killed in Mexico during an engagement at Vera Cruz.

The fighting took place during April 1914 at the cost of 15 Sailors and four Marines killed.

On April 21, 1914, Lieutenant Colonel Wendell C. Neville, future Commandant of the Marine Corps, was the first Marine ashore at Vera Cruz, and Smedley D. Butler received his first Medal of Honor for his actions there. Another future Commandant, Colonel John A. Lejeune, also participated in the battle.

A story in *The New York Times* described the day of the memorial service beginning with the events of the early-morning hours of May 11, 1914: “In the early mist of the

awakening May morning the first of the ... flag-draped coffins was removed from the battleship *Montana* to the Battery. From that time until the last word of sympathy had been spoken over the dead by President Wilson at the Navy Yard in Brooklyn, tens of thousands of watchers followed the cortege which unwound its length through the lower city and across the Manhattan Bridge.”

During the ceremony, a visibly grief-stricken President Woodrow Wilson paid tribute to the 19 men who died saying, “They did not give their lives for themselves, they gave their lives for us, because we called upon them as a nation to perform an unexpected duty.”

For more about the engagement at Vera Cruz go to the *Leatherneck* archives online to read the three-part article “Marines at Vera Cruz.” 🇺🇸



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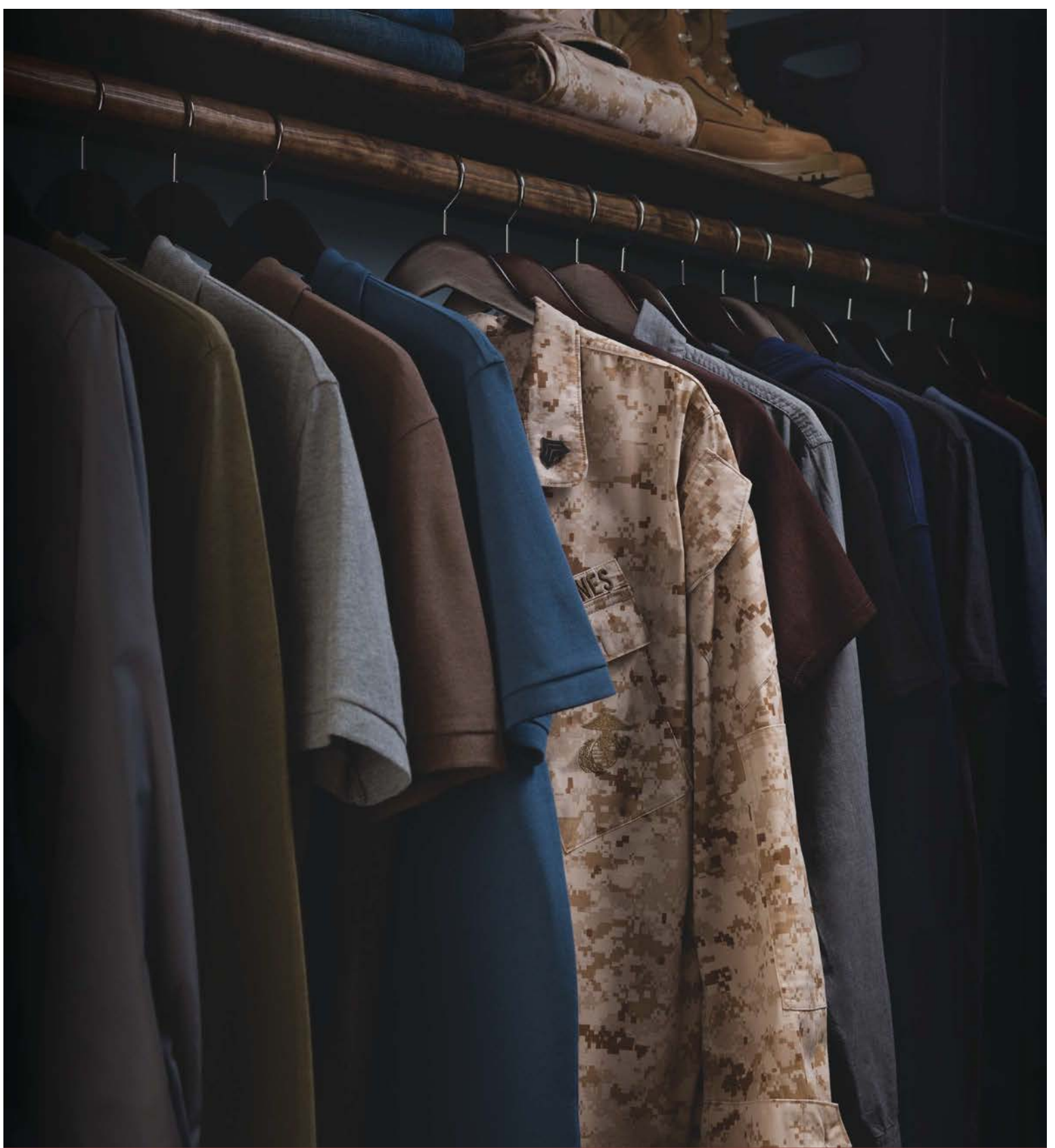


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