Edited by Owen Linlithgow Conner

ALWAYS FAITHFUL

250 Years of Remarkable Stories from the Collection of the National Museum of the Marine Corps

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250
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
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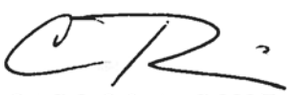
CONTENTS

FOREWORD

From the early days of the American Revolution to countless battles across our nation's history, U.S. Marines have always been the *First to Fight*. Throughout our storied history, Marines have proven they are always ready when the nation is least ready to engage the nation's foes or help those in need in every clime and place.

The National Museum of the Marine Corps preserves and exhibits the material history of the United States Marine Corps to honor the commitment, accomplishments, and sacrifices of Marines and provide the public with universally accessible platforms for the exploration of Marine Corps history. Housed within this building are the stories of Marines who shaped history, and who built the ethos that defines our Corps and is the legacy of every Marine currently serving.

As a warfighting organization with a rich history, it is with immense pride that we celebrate the 250th anniversary of the United States Marine Corps and recognize its critical role in national defense. This book chronicles the exploits of Marines through artifacts not previously on display. Each story was selected by museum curators to highlight fascinating and lesser-known facts about those who have served. Congratulations to all Marines, both past and present, and we look forward to another 250 years of warfighting excellence.



CARLOS A. RUIZ
Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps

ERIC M. SMITH
General, U.S. Marine Corps
Commandant of the Marine Corps

PREFACE

The National Museum of the Marine Corps (NMMC) opened its doors on 10 November 2006. However, the U.S. Marine Corps' earliest documented museum was established as early as 1940. Located in a small section of Little Hall on board Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia, this inauspicious assortment marked the beginning of nearly 85 years assembling a collection of artifacts spanning 250 years of Marine Corps history. From the Revolutionary War to the battlefields of Afghanistan and Iraq, these artifacts bear witness and preserve the remarkable stories of the men and women who make the Corps what it is today.

This year, the Marine Corps celebrates 250 years of achievement and history. In commemoration of this event, the curators of the NMMC are dedicating a special exhibit to highlight rare and previously unseen artifacts from the museum's permanent collection. In addition, other carefully curated stories from the long history of the Corps can be seen throughout the rest of the museum. These artifacts can be identified by the unique 250th anniversary graphics placed nearby.

At the center of this effort are 28 remarkable stories associated with each individual section and its corresponding artifacts. These stories were selected by curators from each of the NMMC's curatorial sections: Arms and Armor, Art, Aviation, Cultural and Material History, and Uniforms and Heraldry.

The artifacts and stories presented here are among the best documented pieces from the museum's collection. Some feature the personal tales of individual Marines, while others are more representative of significant events or relate to broader Marine Corps traditions. This book serves as the companion piece to the NMMC's special exhibit.

For all visitors to the NMMC, it is important to note that this exhibit is not intended to rank or rate the "top" artifacts of Marine Corps history. Rather, the purpose of the exhibit is to honor and celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Corps through a single lens of the museum's collection.

Unfortunately, the use of artifacts to cover all aspects of the Marine Corps story can be an imperfect process. Collections relating to modern concepts of race and gender were not always curated in the past, and technological achievements in aviation and battlefield technology are relatively new chapters of the Marine Corps story, particularly when viewed within the full context of 250 years of history. As a result, the collection of stories presented here is not always balanced or representative of a complete history of the Service, though all efforts were made to highlight at least some elements of these stories.

The NMMC relies on a vast array of donors and methods to acquire the artifacts that illustrate the history of the Marine Corps. Perhaps the greatest tool in this process is the concept of *Semper Fidelis*—"Always Faithful." Whether donations come from Marine veterans or their families, their pride in service and appreciation for Marine Corps history is undeniable. Many objects selected for this 250th

anniversary celebration are a result of direct contributions from the families of notable Marines, such as Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller, Smedley D. Butler, Peter J. Ortiz, and William E. Barber. But not all donations come from famous names in Marine Corps history. Artifacts belonging to Sergeant Nicole L. Gee, who was killed in action during the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021, were donated by her grieving family soon after her death. Families of the first Black Marines, who broke racial barriers during World War II, lovingly contributed their family histories to the museum, preserving the story of Marines who may have otherwise been forgotten to time. Often a primary source of artifacts are the souvenirs of Marines in foreign lands who recognized the cultural value of distinct items from exotic service locations in China or the Far East. In one case, an artifact comes from the family of a deceased Japanese soldier who preserved the last American flag flown over Wake Island before its capture by the Japanese in December 1941. In the case of other artifacts, their importance and history were immediately recognized and curated by the Marine Corps. The most obvious example of this are the American flags flown atop Mount Suribachi on Iwo Jima during World War II. Another example is the preservation of Medal of Honor recipient Major Stephen W. Pless's Bell UH-1E Iroquois helicopter gunship from the Vietnam War.

In celebration of 250 years of Marine Corps history, this exhibit and the companion text *Always Faithful* serve as the NMMC's tribute to all Marines—past, present, and future. We hope these remarkable stories honor their unique service and memory.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Assembling the artifacts and stories for this celebration of the U.S. Marine Corps' 250th birthday required decades of work by countless professionals. All museums are a combination of past, present, and future staffs working together to ensure the preservation of artifacts and history in perpetuity. Without each generation of employees, none of what we do would be possible.

Prior to the opening of the National Museum of the Marine Corps (NMMC) in 2006, there were many military and civilian employees who worked tirelessly in earlier incarnations of the Marine Corps' museum system. From the Marine Corps History and Museums Division at the Washington Navy Yard in Washington, DC, to Little and Butler Halls and the Marine Corps Air-Ground Museum at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia, these people were the original caretakers and champions of the collection we preserve today. These men and women deserve full recognition for their efforts. Colonel F. Brooke Nihart, Colonel John Magruder, Major John "Jack" Elliott, Richard "Dick" Long, Master Gunnery Sergeant Walter "Fritz" Gemeinhardt, Brigadier General Edwin H. Simmons, Major General Donald R. Gardner, Lieutenant General George "Ron" Christmas, John McGarry, Charles A. "Tim" Wood, John Griffiths, Nancy King, J. Michael Miller, Glen Hyatt, James Fairfax, Major John T. "Jack" Dyer, and Kenneth L. Smith-Christmas are but a few. Retired curator Kenneth Smith-Christmas began his career with the Marine Corps as the museum registrar in 1976. From there, he served as a dedicated and passionate civil servant, working as the curator of material history for the Marine Corps Museums Branch and later as the supervisory curator of the Marine Corps Air-Ground Museum until 2005. Even after he left Marine Corps service, Smith-Christmas remains a dedicated steward of its history and a mentor to many members of the NMMC staff today.

When the NMMC opened its doors in 2006, a new generation of museum professionals, historians, and curators followed. This team was led by curator emeritus and retired director Lin Ezell. Ms. Ezell's tireless efforts brought the NMMC into the modern era, ensuring the highest standards of care and professionalism in the organization. Her dedicated team was highlighted by the inclusion of Cornelius Abelsma, Alfred V. Houde, Stefan Rohal, Benjamin Kristy, Master Gunnery Sergeant Michael Ressler, Beth Crumley, Charles Grow, and many others.

Today, the NMMC honors the past while working toward the future, with an exceptional staff led by the former directors, Anna Pardo and David Vickers, and current director, Colonel Keil Gentry (Ret). Many curators contributed artifacts and chapters to this book that highlight their knowledge of their collections and subject matter expertise. These curators include Jonathan Bernstein, Dr. Laurence Burke, Jennifer Castro, Kater Miller, Joan Thomas, and Gretchen Winterer. The curatorial team was greatly aided in their efforts by museum collection professionals led by registrar Alexis Rager and her team of Carolyn Bowers,

Bruce Allen, Tara Spada, and countless interns and special assistants. The design and creation of the physical exhibit for the Marine Corps' 250th birthday would not have been possible without the passion and professionalism of museum exhibit specialist Jennifer Jackson. The production of this book has been made possible by Marine Corps University Press, led by director Angela Anderson (designer) and her amazing staff, Christopher N. Blaker (editor) and Jose Esquilin (photographer). All of these individuals deserve my sincerest thanks and gratitude.

Finally, this entire project would not be possible without the extraordinary generosity and support of artifact donors, individual Marine Corps units, veterans organizations, and the fundraising efforts of the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation. Individual artifact donors thanked here include Lieutenant Colonel Robert T. Sweeney, USAF (Ret); Ms. Susan Stohlman Salazar; Mrs. Julian C. Smith; Dr. Orlo J. Robinson; Mrs. Elizabeth J. Carleson; Colonel J. K. Young, USMC (Ret); General Merrill B. Twining, USMC (Ret); Captain Tim R. Lavier, USCG; Mr. Charles Reardon; Sergeant Stephen Carnilla, USMC; Mrs. Jane Brown; Mrs. Edith M. Williams; Karen L. Ciampa; Ms. Betty Jane Johnson Gerber and Mr. Nelson Johnson; David Catlin Pierce; the Machold family; the estate of Thomas R. Butler; Mrs. Martha Puller Downs; Sergeant Major Justin LeHew, USMC (Ret); Mrs. Jean M. Ortiz; Mr. Calvin C. Shepherd; Mr. Clark Adams; Lieutenant Colonel Dan Hall, USMC (Ret); and Mrs. Shizu Fukatsu. Donor organizations thanked include Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR); the U.S. Marine Raider Association; Southwest Asia Collection Team, Mobilization Training Unit (History) DC-7; and History Flight, Inc. These individuals and organizations represent the true spirit of "Gung Ho"—working together in harmony—that unites us all in preserving the history and heritage of the United States Marine Corps.

ALWAYS FAITHFUL

INTRODUCTION

As museum curators, one of our primary duties is determining what separates something that just happens to be "old" from an "artifact" that belongs in a museum. This task may seem arbitrary or at least open to broad interpretation. However, there are set standards and professional processes that are followed. This is particularly true at a national museum. An old military uniform found on the shelf at a local antique store could rise to the level of a museum artifact, but this is rare and not guaranteed. It takes hours of research and years of specific acquired skill sets to unravel the history behind an object to determine its true historical value.

As the chief curator of the National Museum of the Marine Corps (NMMC), I often cite the donation of uniforms as an analogy for how "old stuff" transforms into museum artifacts. Our most frequent donation offers are from families of Marines who want to donate their loved ones' uniforms. Most often, the uniform is an ambiguous "green coat and blue coat."

Regardless of era served, these U.S. Marine Corps service and dress uniforms are common to all Marines. Regardless of time and place, they are the artifacts that unite Marines of all generations. The vehicles, weapons, aircraft, and equipment all change, but the pride in the wearer of a Marine uniform remains constant.

These uniforms are representative of the Marine Corps as a whole as well as the service of the individual. When adorned with ribbons, qualification badges, and insignia, these same uniforms become specific to a Marine. It is the job of the museum curator to decipher and learn this history, because behind each artifact is a unique story.

Using the analogy of the "green coat," one begins to see the specific value of an artifact. A Marine Raider may have worn this World War II-era winter service uniform (the correct nomenclature of the era), or perhaps it was owned by a survivor of the Battle of Iwo Jima or a decorated veteran who fought on Guadalcanal. Sometimes the history may be less obvious; the Marine might have served in a lesser-known occupational series or was one of the relatively small number of Women Reservists who volunteered to "free a Marine to fight" in the battlefields of the Pacific. Inevitably, it is the specific history of an artifact that begins to determine its historical value to a museum collection.

Often referred to as an artifact's *provenance* (originating from the French word *provenir*), this is the information that curators research and collect, through photographs, letters, documents, and other correlating historical documentation. It is the provenance of a historical artifact that truly makes it come to life.

Guiding curators' choices are thoughtful collection rationales or collecting plans. Each specific section of the NMMC has carefully created its own plans. These plans detail the current size and scope of the museum's collections and are created by careful evaluation of artifacts already in possession, by the ability to safely house and store new collections, and by the curators' predetermined needs to grow

in a manner that will best capture the total and true history of the Marine Corps.

Whether the artifact is a tank or a rifle (Arms and Armor), a Marine's portrait or a combat artist's creation (Art), a specific type of aircraft (Aviation), a souvenir or a keepsake (Cultural and Material), or a unit flag or an individual's medal (Uniforms and Heraldry), each of these curatorial sections give preference to artifacts with associated history or provenance. It is most often this history that makes an object an artifact for the museum. This history is also where so many incredible stories reside. These stories are the concept and focus of this book as well as the NMMC's exhibit dedicated to the 250th birthday of the Marine Corps.

This book is organized into six parts: Arms and Armor; Art and Culture; Aviation; Awards and Citations; Marines and Units; and Uniforms, Flags, and Heraldry. The corresponding chapters are loosely arranged under a specific NMMC section's purview. Regardless of whether the artifact is a weapon, a relic, a personal or uniform item, or something else entirely, the stories presented here have one thing in common: they all represent the remarkable history of 250 years of the United States Marine Corps and are cared for in perpetuity by the National Museum of the Marine Corps.

PART 1

Arms & Armor

Chapter 1

THE KOREAN WAR OF 1871

By Jonathan Bernstein, Arms and Armor Curator

Featured artifact: Cannon, 1.5-inch, Korean (1975.785.1)

The United States' first interest in the Far East began very early in the nation's history, when the fledgling U.S. government sent its first representatives to China in 1784 to discuss trade relations. However, with the new nation having just begun recovery from the American Revolution and focusing on far more pressing Eurocentric concerns, the government set those hopeful trade negotiations with nations in the Far East on the back burner. It would be another 60 years before the Treaty of Wanghia opened formal relations between China and the United States and began an era of American trade with Asia. Yet even then, it would be nearly 20 more years before a permanent U.S. legation was established in Peking (Beijing), when Anson Burlingame became the first U.S. minister to China in 1862.

A permanent diplomatic presence in China and access to Chinese ports served as a jumping-off point for trade with the rest of Asia. The U.S. Navy had established the East India Squadron in 1835 to protect U.S. interests just taking hold in China and elsewhere. This naval presence proved critical to U.S. interests during the First and Second Opium Wars of the 1840s–50s and was an important tool for U.S. foreign policy in the lead-up to the American Civil War. Shipboard Marines served as the quick reaction force available to U.S. diplomats and the naval squadron commander if things in China got out of hand.

However, by the early 1860s, the Navy's attention was focused largely on domestic affairs, and with the outbreak of the American Civil War in 1861, the East India Squadron was largely left to its own devices with few ships or crews rotating through Far East deployments. However, once the war was won in 1865, the nation reunited, and attention was able to be focused on foreign policy once more. By 1866, trade with Asia returned to the forefront of U.S. foreign policy.

That year, several incidents turned American attention toward the kingdom of Korea. Korea was technically an independent part of China at that time, so U.S. diplomatic efforts began with the Chinese government. The first incident involving the United States was the wreck of the U.S.-flagged schooner *Surprise*, which ran aground off the Korean coast in June 1866. The crew was initially interned and then repatriated through China to U.S. authorities there. While the *Surprise* incident was resolved peacefully, it raised questions about the treatment of foreign nationals and dovetailed with the simultaneous issue of Korean resistance and violent reaction to the colonial French Catholic presence on the peninsula and its influence on the Korean people.

U.S. businesses and the federal government alike wanted to expand trade throughout Asia and particularly into Korea. In August 1866, the armed merchant schooner M/V *General Sherman* (1864) set out for Korean waters, intent on establishing trade relationships with Korean merchants. However, several factors were already working counter to their intent. First, the Koreans seemed to have mistaken the *General Sherman* for a French rather than an

Storming Fort Chojin by SSgt John F. Clymer, USMCR, depicts Capt MacLane Tilton leading his Marines ashore against the Korean island forts.
National Museum of the Marine Corps.

Frederick F. Low, U.S. minister to China (right), Mr. Edward Drew, and interpreters on board USS *Colorado* (1856) off Korea in May–June 1871.
Naval History and Heritage Command.

American vessel, and therefore it was identified as a threat.

The *General Sherman*'s captain and crew were warned several times that they were prohibited from proceeding up the Taedong River and conducting any sort of trading—warnings that were ignored. Accounts of the subsequent incidents vary, but as the *General Sherman* reached Pyongyang, the crew was met by a Korean official who told them to leave or be killed. The river, however, had other plans, and with the receding seasonal waters the *General Sherman* found itself grounded on a sandbar. Korean accounts claim that the *General Sherman* fired its cannon at Korean soldiers massed on the pier, killing a number of them and beginning a four-day battle, which ultimately led to the massacre of the *General Sherman*'s crew and the ship being set ablaze.

Word of the *General Sherman*'s destruction reached China a few months later, and on 15 December 1866, Minister Burlingame wrote to U.S. Secretary of State William H. Seward: "It is my painful duty to inform you that the United States schooner *General Sherman*, while on a trading voyage to Corea, was destroyed and all on board murdered by the natives."[1]

After the *General Sherman* incident, the Navy sent the sloop-of-war USS *Wachusetts* (1861) to Korea the following year to attempt to negotiate a trade agreement, with no success. In 1868, the screw sloop USS *Shenandoah* (1862) was dispatched on an identical mission, with identical results.

In late 1870, in reaction to both the *Surprise* and *General Sherman* incidents, the U.S. minister to China, Frederick F. Low, was instructed to negotiate a treaty with the Korean government to protect U.S. merchant shipping and initiate

[1] "Mr. Burlingame to Mr. Seward, United States Legation, Peking, December 15, 1866," *Message of the President of the United States and Accompanying Documents, to the Two Houses of Congress at the Commencement of the Second Session of the Fortieth Congress*, pt. 1, *1867–1868* (Washington, DC: Department of State, 1868), no. 124.

trade. The U.S. Navy's Asiatic Squadron was tasked with transporting the minister to the negotiations, and he sailed aboard the screw frigate USS *Colorado* (1856), flagship of squadron commander Rear Admiral John Rogers.

Captain McLane Tilton served as the commander of the U.S. Marine contingent aboard the squadron's five ships; as such, his mission was to ensure the minister's safety. Of course, this was in addition to overseeing the Marines' regular duties of shipboard security, manning the ships' guns, and providing an ad hoc landing force when required. In all, Tilton had a full company of Marines under his command across the squadron's five ships.

Tilton was commissioned in the Marine Corps in March 1861, a little more than a month before the outbreak of the American Civil War and was assigned to the Union's Gulf Blockading Squadron aboard the Colorado. He served aboard the Colorado through the spring of 1862, when he was transferred to Marine Barracks, Pensacola Navy Yard, Florida. He spent the remainder of the Civil War in shore assignments at both Pensacola and Marine Barracks, Washington, DC, where he was promoted to captain in 1864. Tilton commanded the Marine guard detachment at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, from 1866 to 1869, when he returned to sea duty as the ranking Marine officer in the Navy's Asiatic Squadron aboard the Colorado. His experience in the Gulf Blockading Squadron during the Civil War was of critical importance during the Korea expedition, as he had participated in both boarding and shore skirmishes during his time aboard ship a decade earlier.

In a 12 May 1871 letter to his wife sent from Nagasaki, Japan, Tilton wrote:

> *Our expedition to Korea starts from here, and after communicating with them on the river called in the French map Seoul, we go over to Chefoo on the other side of the Yellow Sea and wait long enough for the Koreans to make up their minds as to whether they will agree to treat kindly any Christians wrecked upon their strange & unknown coasts. Government of China has advised Korean Government to consider the proposition favorably.*[2]

When the Asiatic Squadron put in at Boisee Island off the coast of Inchon on 26 May, only minor local political figures came out to meet with Minister Low. Low and Admiral Rogers made it clear that their mission was peaceful

USS *Monocacy* (1864) (left) and USS *Palos* (1865) in the Han River, Korea, in May–June 1871. *Naval History and Heritage Command.*

but required meeting with dignitaries that had the power to negotiate a treaty with the United States. They wanted to meet with the Korean regent or his representative to secure safe passage for future U.S. ships and potentially to negotiate trade terms. The dignitaries left the Colorado, and further U.S. diplomatic overtures were ignored.

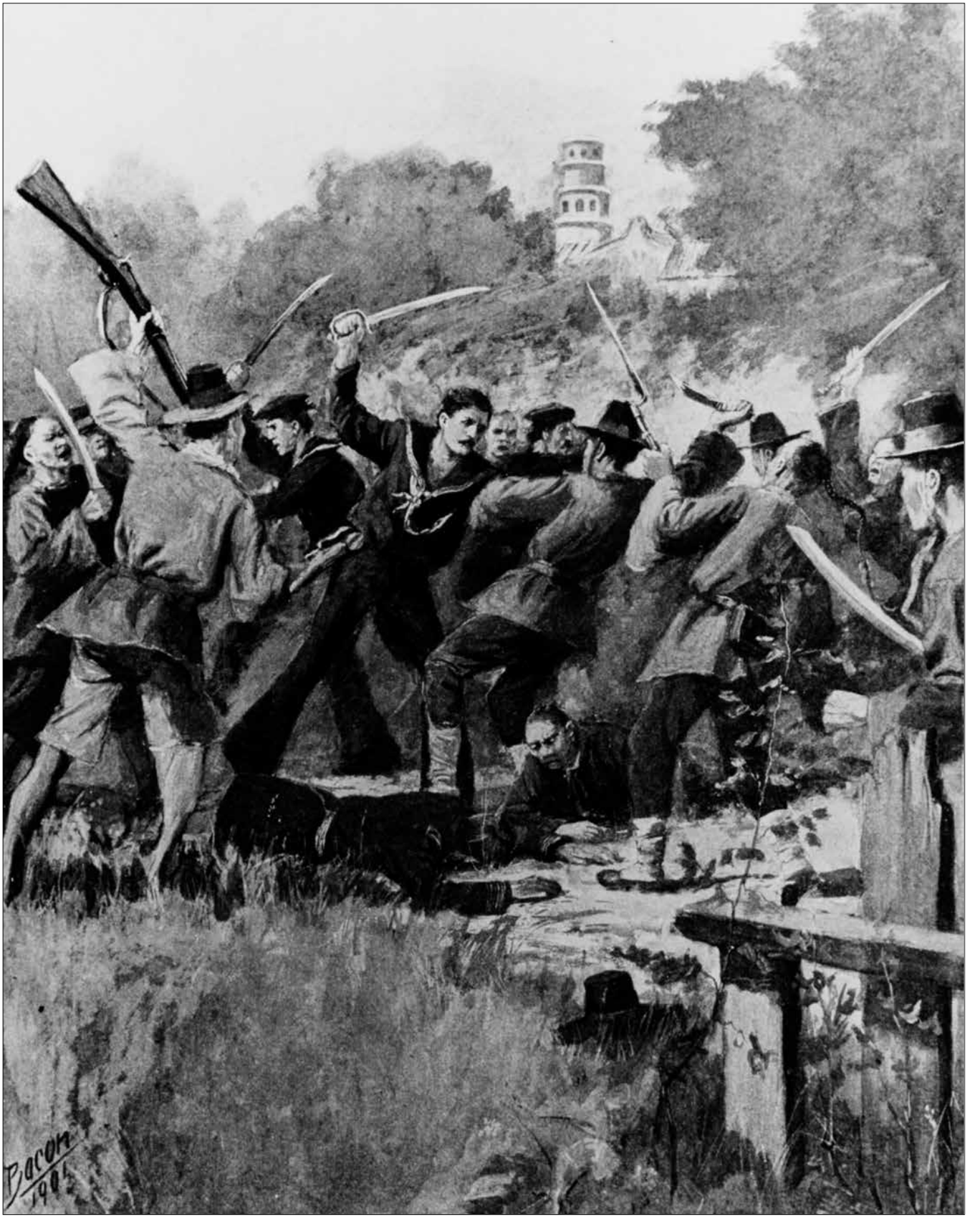
The mission came to a head on 1 June 1871, when the squadron's two gunboats, the USS *Monocacy* (1864) and USS *Palos* (1865), sailed northward toward Kangwha Island to take depth soundings and were fired upon by the fortifications there. The gunboats returned fire and silenced a number of the shore emplacements. Admiral Rogers initially wanted to land the Marines and capture the forts, but after some discussion with Minister Low, it was decided that they would wait 10 days for the Koreans to apologize.

No apology came.

On 10 June, Admiral Rogers ordered Captain Tilton and 105 Marines to disembark from their ships and land on the muddy shore of Kangwha Island, near one of the fortifications that had been silenced by the guns of the Monocacy. Capturing the first fortification with no opposition, the Marines set up a battery of seven 12-pound Dahlgren boat howitzers to command the approaches to their position and bivouacked for the night. Getting the howitzers ashore through the mud had been arduous work, and the decision to camp at the first fort was made primarily due to the Marines and sailors' exhaustion from pulling the howitzers through the mud.

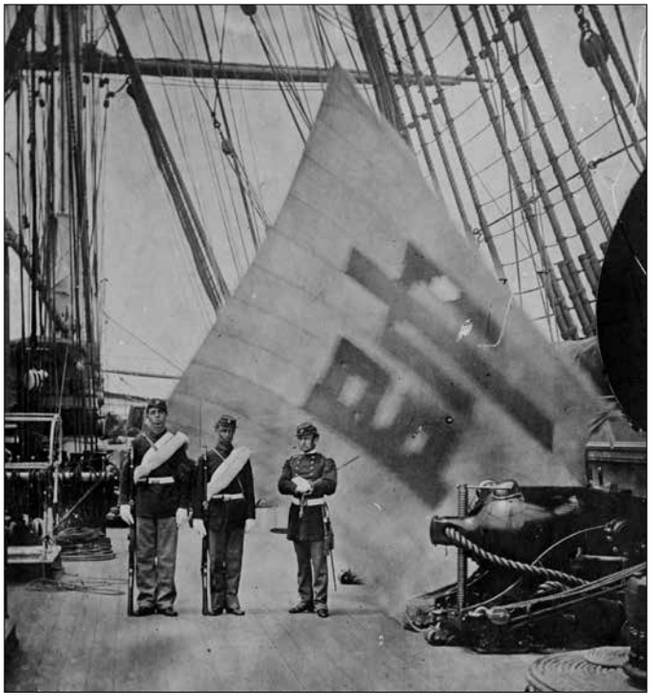
The remainder of the landing force came ashore the following morning; in all, there were 651 Marines and sailors on the island. Jumping off just after first light, the Marines

[2] McLane Tilton, letter to his wife, 12 May 1871 (Personal Papers Collection, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, Virginia).



This image depicts sailors William F. Lukes, Seth A. Allen, and Thomas Murphy battling Koreans while trying to rescue the mortally wounded Lt Hugh W. McKee during the capture of the Han River forts, 11 June 1871. Lukes, the only survivor of the U.S. Navy group, received the Medal of Honor for continuing to fight after receiving a head injury.
Naval History and Heritage Command. Originally published in Deeds of Valor, *vol. 2 (Detroit, MI: Perrien-Keydel, 1907), 89.*

The scene at Fort McKee (Kwang Fort) just after its capture by the U.S. Navy landing party, 11 June 1871. In the foreground are two of the 243 Koreans killed in the action. Three Americans were killed. *Naval History and Heritage Command.*



Cpl Charles Brown and Pvt Hugh Purvis with Capt McLane Tilton aboard the USS *Colorado* (1856) off Korea in June 1871. In the background is the Korean military flag, captured in the attack on Fort McKee on 11 June. Brown and Purvis both were awarded the Medal of Honor for taking this flag. *Naval History and Heritage Command.*

led the way. According to Tilton, "We entered this second place, after reconnoitering it, without opposition, and dismantled the battlements by throwing over the fifty or sixty insignificant breech-loading brass cannon, all being loaded, and tore down the ramparts on the front and right face of the work to the level of the tread of the banquette."[3]

The Marines and sailors demolished the fortification walls, tossed the heavy brass cannon into the Han River, and set three cannon aside to return to the United States, but the battle was not yet over. Once the fortification was cleared, the Marines led the way to the final redoubt, where more than 200 Koreans waited. This was the fort that had originally fired on the Palos and Monocacy 10 days earlier and was the most daunting of the three that the Marines would encounter.

The Marines had to cross a ravine leading up to the next fort, which left them exposed in the initial attack. Fortunately, the Korean defenders were mostly armed with single-shot matchlocks, giving them a far slower rate of fire and much lower accuracy than the Marines' trapdoor rifles. Firing at the Americans quickly gave way to throwing rocks and spears at them.

The first person over the wall was Landsman Seth A. Allen, who, according to his official death certificate, was killed when he was "struck by a gingal ball in the chest, which wounded the lungs and caused almost immediate death. The wound was received while charging with his company in the assault upon the Corean forts, Sunday, June 11th 1871, and of course occurred in the line of duty."[4] There is no description of the type of gingal (a wall-mounted musket) used, so it is very possible that Allen was struck by a projectile from one of the many brass culverins at the fort, which would have been instantly fatal.

[3] Carolyn A. Tyson, *Marine Amphibious Landing in Korea, 1871* (Washington, DC: Historical Branch, G-3 Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1966), 19.

[4] Certificate of Death, Seth A. Allen, 1871, located at *Find a Grave* database, ID 90052368.

One of three 1.5-inch culverins captured at Kangwha Island on 11 June 1871.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

Navy lieutenant Hugh W. McKee followed closely behind and became the second American to fall at the Korean fort when he was hit both by gunfire and assaulted by spear-wielding Korean soldiers. Seeing their commander fall, Marine sergeant John Coleman and Navy boatswain's mate Alexander Mackenzie rushed to his aid, fighting savagely to reach him. Mackenzie fought tenaciously to protect McKee but took a sword blow to the head. Coleman immediately came to his aid and, according to his Medal of Honor citation, rendered lifesaving first aid to Mackenzie. By this point, the Marines and sailors had breached the wall and quickly overwhelmed the roughly 300 defenders of the fortress. The fighting was intense if brief. During the melee, Marine private James Dougherty shot and killed the Korean general Eo Jae-Yeon, for which he was awarded the Medal of Honor. Marine private Hugh Purvis and corporal Charles Brown were then able to move in and capture the general's massive standard, for which they too were awarded the Medal of Honor. Hand-to-hand combat lasted only 15 minutes, and by the end, 243 Koreans and 3 Americans lay dead.

In all, 15 Medals of Honor were awarded for the battle. Three Korean brass cannons and the large 12-by-12-foot general's flag were returned to the Colorado as war trophies.

The three guns brought back to the United States were all similar in type and construction, but one lacked a breech-retaining ratchet mechanism, which identified it as an earlier weapon. It was roughly 350 years older than the other two guns and appears to be dated to 1313. That gun is currently in the collection of the U.S. Naval Academy Museum. The gun in the collection of the National Museum of the Marine Corps was manufactured in the mid-1600s, and its inscription identifies both where and when it was cast and how much it weighs: roughly 140 pounds.

All three guns are of a Chinese breechloading design, which predates many Western breechloading guns. This design allowed for a significantly faster rate of fire than a muzzleloader of similar caliber, ideal for defending an island fortress from bombardment from the water. The round, powder, and breechblock were built up as a single unit and loaded together into the top of the gun. The gun would then be aimed and touched off, knocking the breechblock back for easy removal, and another round and breechblock could be quickly loaded into the gun to maintain a steady rate of fire.

Of the three guns and flag that were brought back to the United States, the flag and one gun went to the U.S. Na-

A close-up of the culverin's inscription, which reveals its date of manufacture, its weight, and where it was built. *Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.*

The culverin was loaded through the top, with round and breechblock loaded together. A wooden wedge was then placed through this opening to secure the entire assembly in place. Once touched off, the recoil would facilitate the removal of the wedge and a new round and breechblock would be loaded together to keep up a steady rate of fire. *Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.*

val Academy Museum while the other two guns ended up in private hands. In 1953, retired U.S. Air Force lieutenant colonel Robert Sweeney donated one of those guns to the Marine Corps Historical Collection, the predecessor of the National Museum of the Marine Corps, where it remains today.

Ultimately, the U.S. expedition to Korea was a failure, with no diplomatic or trade ties being established by Minister Low. The Navy's Asiatic Squadron returned to China in early July 1871, and it would be another 11 years before the Korean government was willing or able to negotiate a treaty of friendship between the two nations. The aftermath of the 1871 battle created a significant amount of strife within Korea, ultimately leading to internal power struggles that lasted for several years. The Joseon–United States Treaty of 1882, ratified by the U.S. Senate in January 1883, established formal relations at last, and five months later, Lucius H. Foote was appointed as the first U.S. minister to Korea.

Chapter 2

THE FIRST SHOTS OF WORLD WAR I

Marines in Guam

By Jonathan Bernstein, Arms and Armor Curator

Featured artifact: Subcaliber Training Gun (2022.1.1)

When thinking about U.S. involvement in World War I, our collective memory tends to focus on the trenches of Belgium and France rather than remote islands in the Pacific. However, the first American shots in that conflict were fired not by U.S. Army soldiers in France, but by U.S. Marines on Guam within 24 hours of war being declared.

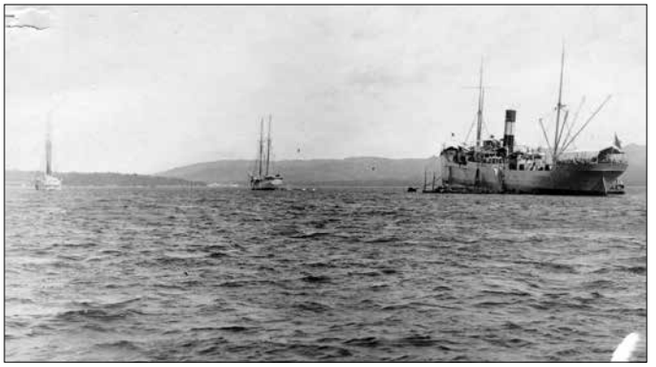
This story begins at the outset of the war in July 1914. With the opening of hostilities in Europe, the German East Asia Squadron based in Tsingtao, China, was tasked with raiding Allied merchant shipping. Within a week, the light cruiser SMS *Emden* (1916) captured the German-built, Russian-owned freighter M/V *Ryazan*, taking it in tow and returning to Tsingtao. The *Ryazan* had been built in Elbing, Germany, in 1909 with a secondary armed capability built into its design. When the Germans captured the *Ryazan*, they had a ready platform to mount the eight 10.5-centimeter guns pulled from the cruiser SMS *Cormoran* (1909), which was dead in the water back in port.

The *Cormoran*'s eight 10.5-centimeter SK L/35 fast-loading cannons were transferred to the *Ryazan*, which was then commissioned in the Imperial German Navy as the SMS *Cormoran*, taking the older ship's name and crew, and setting off as an "auxiliary cruiser" intent on harassing enemy shipping in the Pacific. While the second *Cormoran* presented a significant threat to merchant shipping, it lacked the armor protection that was standard on warships of its size. As a result, when faced by British, Dutch, or Japanese warships, the *Cormoran*'s captain, Adalbert Zuckschwerdt, elected to run and hide in the safety of several harbors across the Pacific rather than risk losing his ship to a superior force.

However, playing a game of cat and mouse across the Pacific was a significant logistical challenge, and by December 1914, Captain Zuckschwerdt was critically low on coal to fuel his ship's boilers. Early in the month, he sent three officers in a smaller boat to Guam, a possession of the then still-neutral United States, to inquire about being refueled by the facilities there. Prior to the outbreak of hostilities, German vessels routinely refueled at Apra Harbor, but once the war began, refueling a belligerent nation's ship could be seen as breaking neutrality. As a result, the naval governor of Guam, U.S. Navy captain William J. Maxwell, refused, telling the three German officers that they were now guests of the United States and were not permitted to leave. With his officers overdue and coal supplies dwindling, Captain Zuckschwerdt made the decision to head to Guam.

The *Cormoran* entered Apra Harbor on 15 December, and Captain Zuckschwerdt was informed that there was no coal available to any but U.S. shipping. Having narrowly avoided engaging Japanese warships en route, the Germans were safe for the time being. Two days after their arrival, "the Japanese cruiser *Iwate*, flying the flag of Vice Admiral Matsumura Uichi, stopped at the harbor entrance just outside the three-mile limit to inquire about the status of the *Cormoran*. Governor Maxwell sent out a small party to advise the Japanese that the *Cormoran* was interned and would

The Russian freighter M/V *Ryazan* was quickly captured by the Imperial German Navy and refitted as a commerce raider in the German-held port of Tsingtao in August 1914. Despite its crew's best efforts, most of its time at sea from August to December 1914 was spent dodging Japanese naval patrols rather than engaging Allied shipping. *National Museum of the Marine Corps.*



Apra Harbor was a critical hub for U.S. Navy vessels operating in the Pacific. With the outbreak of war in the summer of 1914, the United States maintained a neutral footing and therefore refused to refuel warships of any belligerent nations. The *Cormoran*'s arrival in December 1914 put that policy to the test and resulted in the internment of the ship and its crew for the duration of the war. *Marine Corps History Division.*

remain so until the end of the war. Satisfied, the Japanese left."[1]

With a crew of nearly 300, the *Cormoran* presented a dilemma for Governor Maxwell. At the time, the Marine garrison on Guam numbered just more than 350 Marines, with an additional 70 Navy personnel. A potentially hostile warship with a crew rivaling the garrison's strength sitting at anchor could have presented a significant threat, so the *Cormoran* was quickly disarmed. Its 10.5-centimeter guns were a significant improvement over the island's 30-year-old 6-inch guns. Those guns and their associated equipment were relocated to bolster Guam's defenses. In addition, the ship's armory was also cleared out and all small arms moved to the Marines' armory on the island.

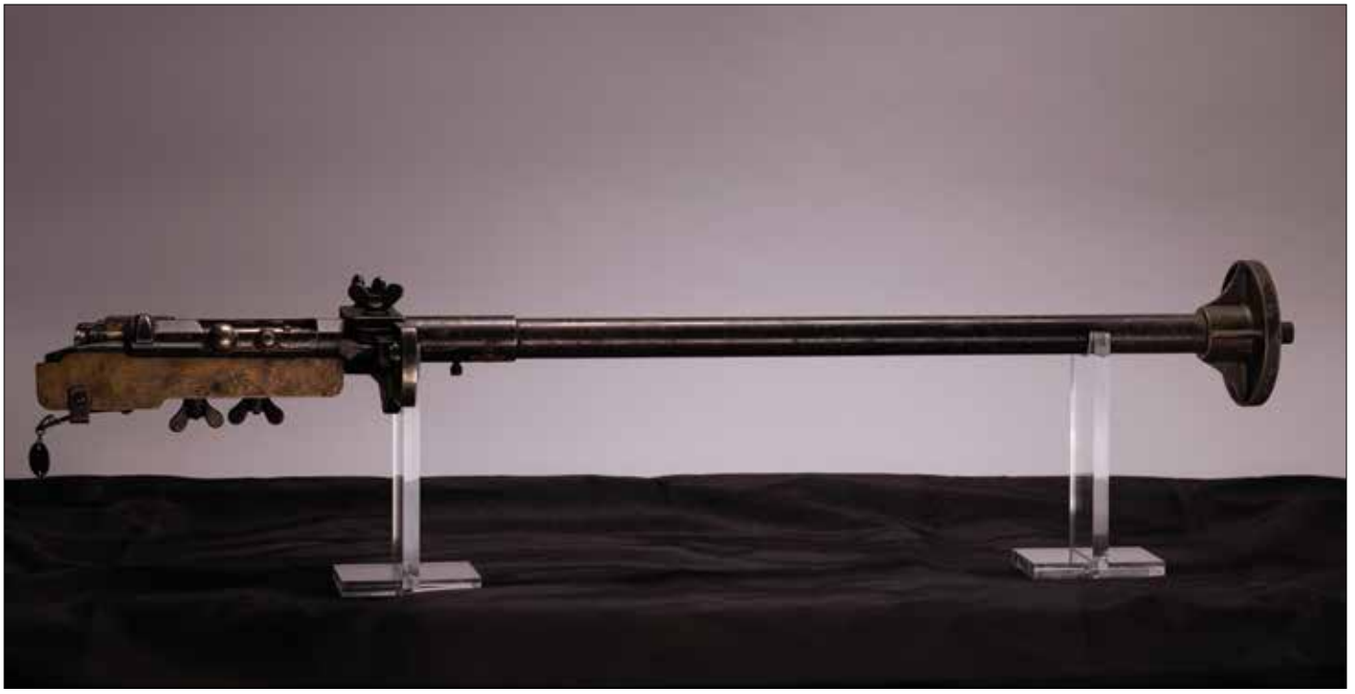
One of the weapons taken from the *Cormoran* was an oddly assembled device built around an 1871 Jaegerbuchse rifle action and chambered for 11mm x 60 ammunition. At the rifle's muzzle was a 10.5-centimeter disk designed to fit precisely into the bore of one of the *Cormoran*'s deck guns; the rear flange in front of the receiver would then be bolted to the gun's breech. This subcaliber training device, known as an *Abkomm Lauf neue Artikel* (Abkomm-Lauf n/A), was a training device that enabled gun crews to practice targeting, loading, and engaging with a projectile of similar ballistics but without wasting precious main gun ammunition and corresponding wear on the gun tube. The original Jaegerbuchse 71 serial number 5405 is located on the forward left portion of the receiver, with the new serial number for the Abkomm-Lauf n/A, 27, added to the top of the receiver and stamped on all the additional parts as well.

With the *Cormoran*'s main guns now moved ashore, the Marines were responsible for training, crewing, and employing them against potential seaborne threats to the island. The Abkomm-Lauf n/A was a critical piece of that training, since resupply of the German 10.5-centimeter ammunition would be impossible and there was plenty of 11-millimeter ammunition for the Marines to train and familiarize with their new coastal defense guns.

While Marine defense battalions would not exist until just prior to World War II, the primary functions of the 40th, 41st, and 42d Companies of Marines ashore on Guam were to serve as the island's coastal defense force and infantry force to defend it from invasion. In addition to those duties, the Marines also served as the backbone of Guam's police force, with the Marine battalion executive officer serving as the chief of police for the island's nearly 12,000 inhabitants.

For the next 18 months, Governor Maxwell and Captain Zuckschwerdt maintained an adversarial relationship. Maxwell, who was known for being confrontational, often chose to stoke the tension between the two of them to the point where they would no longer speak directly with one another. Keeping the *Cormoran* and its crew provisioned fell under Maxwell's responsibilities, as did allowing the crew to communicate with Germany's diplomatic corps.

[1] Paul Carano and Pedro C. Sanchez, *A Compete History of Guam* (Rutland, VT: C. E. Tuttle, 1964), 215–19.

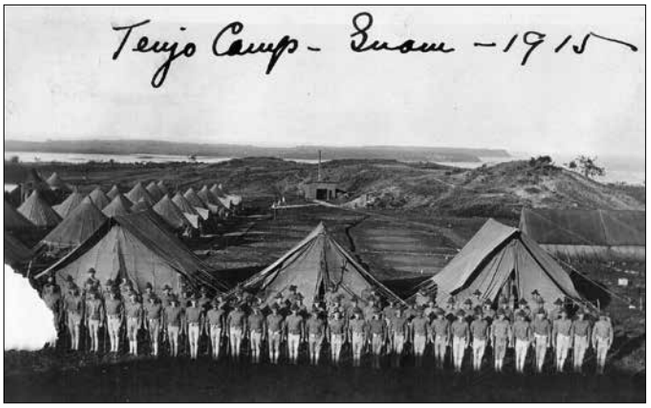


The Abkomm Lauf n/A was used to train gun crews on the proper procedures for loading, aiming, and firing the *Cormoran*'s eight 10.5-centimeter SK L/35 guns. The weapon's barrel would be inserted into the larger gun's breech, with the muzzle disk properly holding the barrel within the gun tube. It would next be secured to the gun's breech and then loaded and fired.

Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

The weapon was based around the rifle action of a Model 1871 Jagerbuchse; this example being built in 1876. Once inserted into the larger gun's barrel, the training device would be integral in teaching gun crews the proper procedures for loading and firing, without the expenditure of main gun ammunition or wear and tear on the barrel.

Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.



A company of Marines at Tenjo Camp, Guam, 1915.
Marine Corps History Division.

The Marines served as the police force on Guam and manned several patrol stations like this one across the island.
Marine Corps History Division.

Initially the U.S. State Department frequently overruled Maxwell's decisions when Zuckschwerdt would file formal complaints, but as tensions grew between the United States and Germany, that began to change. Maxwell fell ill in 1916, though, and he was soon replaced as governor of Guam by a quick succession of three different naval officers.

With Maxwell gone, local tensions eased significantly, and the Germans were treated more as guests than internees. Relations between the *Cormoran*'s crew and the local government continued to improve through the latter half of 1916. The crew was free to come ashore for supplies and entertainment. The year culminated with the wedding of the *Cormoran*'s doctor to one of the American nurses based on the island.

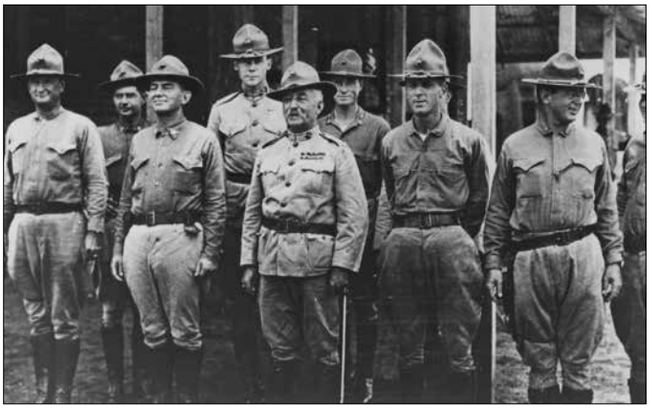
As the new year turned, however, it was clear that the United States and Germany were headed toward war. The U.S. military presence on Guam had been bolstered by an additional 100 Marines, bringing the total to 463 Marine with an additional 100 Navy personnel. The *Cormoran*'s crew was not considered a significant threat, but they could become one if Germany sought to expand its territorial claims in the Pacific. The islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota were all German possessions and could potentially serve as staging points for German expansion in the Pacific. If that happened, Guam would likely be the first target.

The Marine commander on Guam, Lieutenant Colonel Randolph C. Berkeley, had overseen the island's defenses since arriving in May 1915. Berkeley was a combat veteran of the Battle of Veracruz, Mexico, where he had earned the Medal of Honor in 1914, as well as having served in the Philippines and Cuba in the early twentieth century.

Berkeley initiated a complete revamping of Guam's defense plan shortly after his arrival. Defensive positions were improved, gun emplacements were reinforced, and the training tempo was increased. By early 1917, with the threat of war on the horizon, he put the local population on notice that all males from ages 16 to 23 would be required to serve in the island's militia.[2] On 3 February, the new naval governor, Captain Roy C. Smith, ordered the militia to report for their first training under Berkeley. Nearly 1,000 men reported for duty. School-age boys were also required to participate in physical training in the mornings before school to prepare them for future service. Were war to come to Guam, the U.S. now had a force of nearly 1,500 men to repel invaders. In addition to instructing the new militiamen in military customs, courtesies, and drill, Berkeley used the German weapons seized from the *Cormoran* to outfit them and trained them in rifle marksmanship, the employment of machine guns, and the operation of the eight 10.5-centimeter guns now strategically positioned on the island to defend its approaches. The Abkomm-Lauf n/A was a critical part of this training and allowed the militiamen to learn their new weapons without wasting precious ammunition.

Also on 3 February, a new confrontation with Captain Zuckschwerdt and his crew arose after many months of pleasantries. Governor Smith dispatched U.S. Navy lieutenant Owen Bartlett and another officer to inspect the

[2] Roy C. Smith, "Recommendations for Navy Crosses for Exceptionally Meritorious Services in Duties of Great Responsibility in the Island of Guam during the War," Correspondence with the U.S. Secretary of the Navy, 17 December 1920.



Veracruz, Mexico, 1914. In the front row at right is LtCol Randolph C. Berkeley, next to Maj Smedley D. Butler. Col John A. Lejeune is second from left. Berkeley was awarded the Medal of Honor at Veracruz in 1914 and later the Navy Cross for efforts in Nicaragua in 1922. After Veracruz, he was posted to Guam as the Marine commander on the island.
Marine Corps History Division.

LtCdr Owen Bartlett with his father, Capt Frank Bartlett, and younger brother, Ens Bradford Bartlett, in 1922. Owen Bartlett presented Capt Zuckschwerdt of the *Cormoran* with the surrender demand on 7 April 1917.
Naval History and Heritage Command.

Cormoran's coal reserve. Zuckschwerdt refused them, stating that the ship was still sovereign German property and not subject to Guam's orders. Bartlett returned to Smith with the negative reply. As Bartlett later recounted:

> *When this was received by the governor, he quietly dictated an order from the "military commander of Guam" to the captain of the Cormoran demanding that the latter permit the inspection. Also, the colonel of Marines was directed to muster his force at Piti immediately, and all small craft were assembled there preparatory to enforcing if need be the governor's demand. Things were getting tense. And this all took time.*[3]

Lieutenant Colonel Berkeley assembled his boarding force, complete with cannons, at Piti and prepared to take the *Cormoran* while Bartlett returned to the ship a second time. Zuckschwerdt again refused the inspection, and Bartlett went back to shore to telephone Smith. Smith's reply was curt: "Very well Bartlett! Confer with Colonel Berkeley. Go out and take the ship."[4]

Seeing the approaching boarding force with Bartlett in the lead boat, Zuckschwerdt capitulated, allowing Bartlett and two others to inspect *Cormoran*'s coal bunkers. The total amount of coal on board was within acceptable limits, and the situation ended without further incident. That night, Guam received a cable from the United States informing the governor that diplomatic relations with Germany had been severed. War looked inevitable.

On 7 April, an early morning coded telegraph message from the United States informed Guam's garrison that war had been declared on Germany and that the Marines should seize the *Cormoran* and its crew. Having been summoned to the governor's residence and tasked with accepting the ship's surrender, Lieutenant Bartlett was on the governor's launch and headed to the *Cormoran* just before 0800 under a flag of truce. Supporting him was a beach detachment of Marines with machine guns and cannons targeting the *Cormoran* and three companies of Marines standing by. As the Marines took their positions, the Navy's station ship, USS *Supply* (1872) moved to block the entrance to Apra Harbor in case the Germans attempted to escape.

Fifteen Marines were tasked with taking control of the *Cormoran* once it surrendered. They were aboard a separate launch from Bartlett and were approaching the ship from a different angle when they noticed one of the *Cormoran*'s launches headed away from the ship. Lieutenant W. A. Hall, the Navy officer aboard, ordered Marine corporal Michael B. Chockie to fire a warning shot across the launch's bow to get it to stop. When Chockie's warning had no effect, Hall ordered two more shots fired with the same results. It was

[3] Cdr Owen Bartlett, USN (Ret), "Destruction of S.M.S. 'Cormoran'," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 57, no. 8 (August 1931).
[4] Bartlett, "Destruction of S.M.S. 'Cormoran'."

not until the third volley, this time aimed directly at the bow and stern of the launch, that the Germans finally shut down their engines and stopped. The Great War had come to Guam, and the Marines had fired the opening volley.

The exchange that followed between Bartlett and Zuckschwerdt was one of mutual respect but clear defiance on the German's part. Zuckschwerdt explained that he would surrender his crew, but the ship was unarmed and defenseless and would not be surrendered. The two officers reiterated their positions, and Bartlett finally left without the ship's surrender. As Bartlett boarded his launch and turned to signal the operation to commence, there was a significant commotion on the deck and the crew began jumping into the water. As Bartlett remembered:

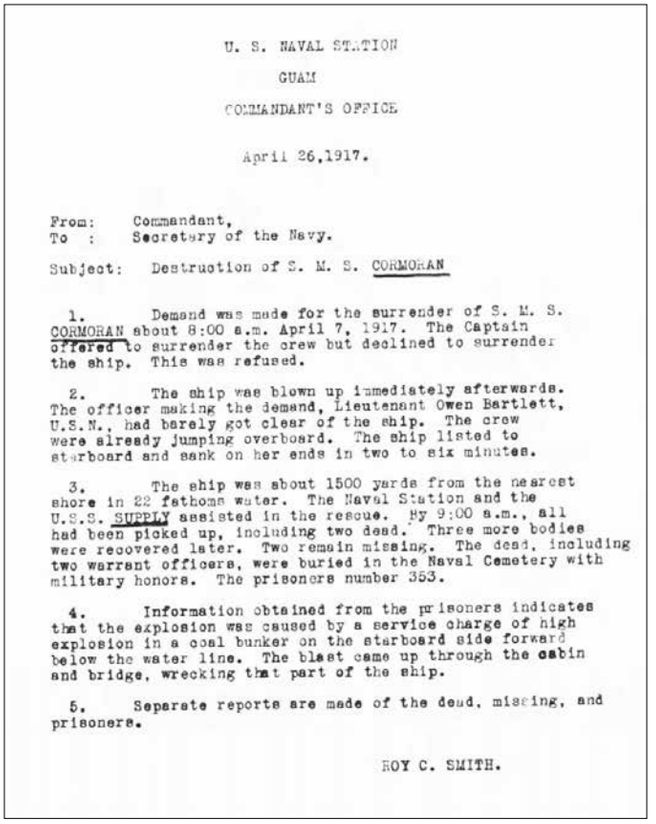
> *We had gone toward Piti at full speed perhaps a hundred yards and were just well clear of the bow, when there came the dull heavy shock of muffled under-water explosion. Red flames with little smoke shot up around the bridge of the Cormoran; pieces of debris rose, arched, fell; the bridge and region of the captain's cabin popped up, crumpled, collapsed.*[5]

Zuckschwerdt had initially refused to allow the inspection on 3 February to conceal a gasoline bomb that his crew had constructed in the coal bunker as a contingency if they were forced to surrender the ship. During its more-than-two-year stay in Apra Harbor, the *Cormoran*'s crew had built up a large enough reserve of gasoline that could be used as a scuttling charge. Faced with no alternative, the captain ordered his ship scuttled. The ship sank in just a few minutes in more than 30 meters of water.

Seven German sailors were killed in the ensuing blast, but the Marines and the *Supply* recovered 353 of the *Cormoran*'s crew, including Captain Zuckschwerdt. The Germans were moved to two separate locations on Guam in temporary prison camps administered by the Marines, with the crew near the beach at Asan and the officers at Camp Barnett on Mount Tenjo. Their stay at these locations would be short-lived. Three weeks after the scuttling of the *Cormoran*, its crew was loaded aboard the U.S. Army transport ship USAT *Thomas* (1894) and sailed for the United States, where they would spend the rest of the war at a prisoner-of-war camp in Utah.

Three years later, after World War I had ended and as awards for the war were being reviewed, Captain Smith recommended both Lieutenant Colonel Berkeley and his executive officer, Major Edward R. Manwaring, for the Navy Cross for their extremely meritorious service in improving the defenses of Guam, creating its militia, and using the weapons taken from the *Cormoran* to arm the militiamen. Unfortunately, the awards were denied, and it would be an additional seven years before Berkeley would receive his Navy Cross in Nicaragua.

Unfortunately, the chain of custody that led the Abkomm Lauf n/A to be a part of the National Museum of the Marine Corps' collection (NMMC) is unclear. It was brought to the United States between 1918 and 1941 and held as part of the Marine Corps historical collection. However, during this time, its history was forgotten, and it sat in storage in relative obscurity until the German naval historian Michael Heidler properly identified it as having been part of the *Cormoran*'s weapons complement. Heidler was able to cross-reference records at the German Navy Museum in Wilhelmshaven, Germany, and confirm that



U. S. NAVAL STATION
GUAM
COMMANDANT'S OFFICE

April 26,1917.

From: Commandant,
To : Secretary of the Navy.

Subject: Destruction of S. M. S. CORMORAN

1. Demand was made for the surrender of S. M. S. CORMORAN about 8:00 a.m. April 7, 1917. The Captain offered to surrender the crew but declined to surrender the ship. This was refused.

2. The ship was blown up immediately afterwards. The officer making the demand, Lieutenant Owen Bartlett, U.S.N., had barely got clear of the ship. The crew were already jumping overboard. The ship listed to starboard and sank on her ends in two to six minutes.

3. The ship was about 1500 yards from the nearest shore in 22 fathoms water. The Naval Station and the U.S.S. SUPPLY assisted in the rescue. By 9:00 a.m., all had been picked up, including two dead. Three more bodies were recovered later. Two remain missing. The dead, including two warrant officers, were buried in the Naval Cemetery with military honors. The prisoners number 353.

4. Information obtained from the prisoners indicates that the explosion was caused by a service charge of high explosion in a coal bunker on the starboard side forward below the water line. The blast came up through the cabin and bridge, wrecking that part of the ship.

5. Separate reports are made of the dead, missing, and prisoners.

ROY C. SMITH.

Capt Smith's communique to the Secretary of the Navy detailing the destruction of the *Cormoran*. *National Archives and Records Administration.*

[5] Bartlett, "Destruction of S.M.S. 'Cormoran'."

A close-up of the Abkomm Lauf n/A's receiver shows the serial number 27, butterfly screws that would be used to secure the device to the breech of the 10.5-centimeter gun, and the trigger lever (left) to which the gun's lanyard would be affixed for firing.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

it was issued to the *Cormoran*. His article, "The Last of its Kind?" published initially in the South African Society for Military History's *Military History Journal* in 2012, led to renewed interest in the weapon and formal acceptance into the NMMC collection.[6]

While this weapon may be the last of its kind, the historic significance of its presence at the site of the first American shots fired at German forces in World War I helps the NMMC paint a far more complete picture of the Marine Corps involvement in that global war.

[6] Michael Heidler, "The Last of Its Kind?: A Rediscovered Training Device of the German Imperial Navy," *Military History Journal* 15, no. 6 (December 2012).

Chapter 3

GHOST RIFLE OF MAKIN ISLAND

By Jonathan Bernstein, Arms and Armor Curator

Featured artifact: Rifle, Relic, M1 Garand (2016.2.347)

The first six months of World War II had not gone well for the United States. Logistically unprepared for the prospect of fighting a trans-Pacific war, the U.S. military traded land for time to build up the necessary forces and the shipping required to get them to the fight half a world away. By the summer of 1942, the tide had begun to turn with a strategic, albeit costly, victory at the Battle of the Coral Sea in May and a significant victory at the Battle of Midway in June.

The 1st Marine Division's invasion of Guadalcanal, Tulagi, and Florida islands in the South Pacific on 7 August 1942 was the first offensive amphibious operation against Japanese forces, as well as the beginning of the liberation of islands across the Pacific. But a single point of attack, however large, still offered the enemy a focal point in which to concentrate supplies and reinforcements. Ten days after the initial landings, the Marines shifted Japan's focus roughly 2,000 kilometers northeast, keeping the enemy guessing as to where their next operation would strike.

THE PLANNING

Marine Raider battalions had been conceived at the start of World War II as quick-hitting amphibious forces intended to sow confusion in enemy rear areas, making an island raid the perfect proof of concept for the battalions. Since the 1st Raider Battalion would be engaged in combat operations in the Guadalcanal area with the 1st Marine Division, the 2d Raider Battalion was tasked with the mission to raid Makin Atoll in the Japanese-held Gilbert Islands. By 22 July 1942, the operation was given the go-ahead, and the methods of transport and insertion were selected.[1] The U.S. Navy submarines USS *Nautilus* (SS 168) and USS *Argonaut* (SM 1) were to transport two understrength Raider companies from Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, to Makin to carry out a raid on the Japanese facilities there and then return upon completion of the raid. Both submarines were selected in part because of their heavy deck armament, which would be able to support the Raiders ashore. Unlike the Navy's newer *Gato*-class submarines, which were armed with 3-inch deck guns, the *Nautilus* and *Argonaut* were both armed with a pair of longer-range, harder-hitting 6-inch guns that could be brought to bear on Japanese shipping or significant obstacles ashore. Along with that, the *Argonaut* had also been fitted out as a troop transport with the capability of carrying 120 Marines.

Planning the mission according to the tidal conditions in the area was the driving factor in selecting a date for the raid. Following discussions between Commander John M. Haines, the submarine task force commander; Lieutenant Commander William H. Brockman Jr., commanding officer

[1] 2d Raider Battalion Operations Order 1-42, 3 August 1942 (Makin Island Raid File, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA).

While it is impossible to identify a single Marine with the Makin Rifle, what is known for sure is that it was used by one of the 19 Marines who fell on Makin Island. By the round still in the chamber and the single round in the magazine well, it is clear that this Marine went down fighting.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

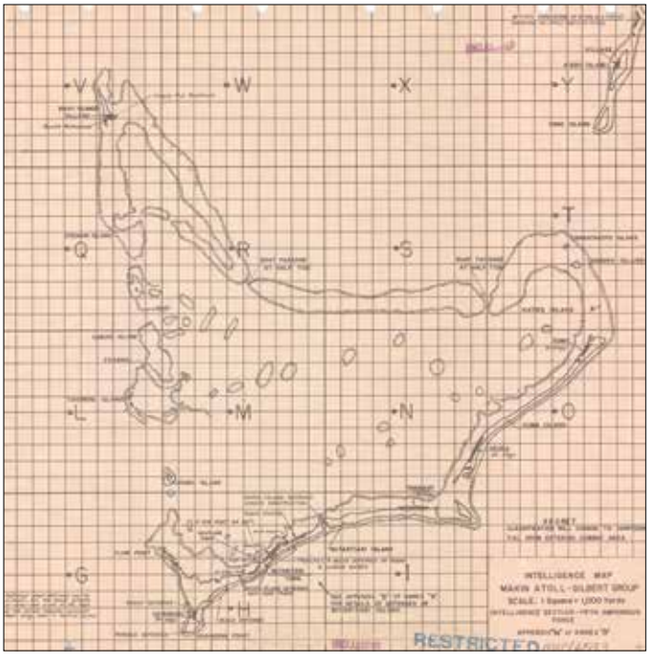
A crew member paints a Japanese flag and hashmark on one of the 6-inch/53-caliber deck guns on the USS *Nautilus* (SS 168), representing the two enemy vessels that the submarine sank with gunfire during the Makin Island Raid. Photographed at Pearl Harbor, HI, 25 August 1942.
Official U.S. Navy photo, now in the collections of the National Archives, catalog no. 80-G-11730.

of the *Nautilus*; and Major James Roosevelt II, executive officer of the 2d Raider Battalion, it was agreed that the ideal tides to get the Raiders' rubber boats over the reef and safely ashore would be on 15 or 16 August. There would be a clear window through 22 August, but lunar illumination would make it extremely dangerous in the last two days of that period. Roosevelt requested 17 August, to which Haines and Brockman agreed.[2]

The raid's objective was to land two of the 2d Raider Battalion's companies (minus one rifle section each) ashore to capture prisoners, gather intelligence, and destroy enemy equipment. The Japanese garrison on Makin was estimated at around 150 to 200 men. The Raiders were going in with 222 Marines.

The 2d Raider Battalion had been training for a mission like this since its creation several months earlier. The battalion's commander was Lieutenant Colonel Evans F. Carlson, an unorthodox Marine officer who specialized in irregular warfare. He had spent time with Chinese Communist guerrillas while stationed in China in the 1930s and learned how they fought, adopting some of those tactics for his battalion. Speed, stealth, and overwhelming firepower were the battalion's most significant characteristics. Each company had two platoons, which in turn had two sections of two squads each. Each squad was led by a noncommissioned officer armed with an M1 Garand semiautomatic rifle and subdivided into three fire teams of three Marines each armed with an M1 rifle, an M1928A1 Thompson or M50 Reising submachine gun, and an M1918 Browning Automatic Rifle. The M1 rifles used by the Raiders were among the very first received by the Marine Corps, and their use at Makin would serve as the Marines' combat introduction to the type. Armed with these weapons, a Raider battalion

[2] Transcript, Submarine Squadron Four, August 1942 (Makin Island Raid File, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA).



A 2d Raider Battalion tactical map of Makin Atoll.
Marine Corps History Division.

LtCol Evans F. Carlson, commander of the 2d Raider Battalion, on board the USS *Nautilus* (SS 168) just after returning from Makin Island, 18 August 1942. He is still wearing his field gear, with a .45-caliber pistol in a cross-draw holster.
Official U.S. Navy photo, now in the collections of the National Archives, catalog no. 80-G-11727.

line company had the equivalent firepower of a much larger unit.

Each company was to leave one section behind, embarking aboard the two submarines with six squads rather than eight.[3] The conditions aboard the submarines were hot and cramped as they departed Pearl Harbor on 8 August. The two vessels ran on the surface until a point 1,100 kilometers from Makin, which allowed the Marines and sailors some relief from the sweltering conditions below.

THE RAID

The Raiders planned to assault two separate landing beaches on Makin, designated Y and Z, with one company landing at each beach. However, when the submarines surfaced roughly 450 meters off Makin's southern shore at 0300 on 17 August, the currents and sea conditions made it difficult to maintain position to launch the Raiders' inflatable rubber boats in any organized fashion. Moreover, several of the boats' outboard motors refused to start, causing further delays, so Lieutenant Colonel Carlson gave the order to proceed to land on one beach instead of two.[4] Under cover of darkness, the Raiders made it ashore on Beach Z by 0500. The majority of the force landed together, but one boat never got word of Carlson's order and landed farther southwest at their intended point on Beach Y. The 12 Raiders in that group would be cut off from the main body for most of the day.

Hastily reorganizing into two assault companies, the Raiders consolidated their positions and planned to move out around daybreak. Radio contact via a Navy TBX

[3] 2d Raider Battalion Operations Order 1-42.

[4] Capt Walter Karig, USNR, and Cdr Eric Purdon, USNR, "The Makin Island Raid," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 72, no. 10 (October 1946).

Two U.S. Marine Raiders below decks on the USS *Nautilus* (SS 168), ready to go ashore on Makin Island, 17 August 1942. *Official U.S. Navy photo, now in the collections of the National Archives, catalog no. 80-G-11722.*

transmitter-receiver was established between the Raiders and the submarines by 0513, at which point the two vessels moved off to patrol roughly 6 kilometers offshore.[5] As dawn broke, Company A moved out to infiltrate eastward, with Company B roughly 180 meters behind and to the right. Surprise would have been complete had one Marine not negligently discharged his weapon.

Carlson ordered Company A to continue forward, with Company B establishing a defensive line "from the sea to the lagoon in the vicinity of the government house."[6] Company A quickly reached the government wharf on the north side of the island, encountering some resistance along the way. At the same time, local natives made contact with Carlson's command group and showed them where Japanese troop concentrations were. This information was passed on to the *Nautilus* and *Argonaut*, and the *Nautilus* commenced firing with its 6-inch guns at 0630. The *Nautilus* fired 12 salvos on an area about 1.5 kilometers long on the island's southern shore.[7]

While the *Nautilus* was firing on the enemy's shore positions, Company A at the government wharf radioed the positions of two Japanese ships at anchor in the harbor and requested fire on them. At 0716, the *Nautilus* had calculated a safe firing solution over the heads of the Marines to the targets and again opened fire, expending 46 rounds at the two vessels on the other side of the island. One of the

[5] After Action Report, 2d Raider Battalion, August 1942 (Makin Island Raid File, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA).
[6] "Solomon Islands Campaign—Makin Island Diversion," After Action Report, U.S. Pacific Fleet, 20 October 1942 (Makin Island Raid File, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA), 2.

[7] USS *Nautilus* Report of Marine-Submarine Raider Expedition, 24 August 1942 (Makin Island Raid File, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA), 3.

Wounded Marine Corps officer 2dLt Wilfred S. LeFrancois on board the USS *Nautilus* (SS 168) after he had been evacuated from Makin Island, 18 August 1942.
Official U.S. Navy photo, now in the collections of the National Archives, catalog no. 80-G-11726.

Sgt Clyde A. Thomason was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions during the Makin Island Raid. He was the first enlisted Marine to be awarded the Medal for actions in World War II.
Marine Corps History Division.

ships, a transport, served as a barracks for 60 Japanese marines, many of whom were killed when the *Nautilus*'s rounds found their mark. Both vessels were destroyed.

Company A's lead platoon, led by Second Lieutenant Wilfred S. LeFrancois, continued to advance through thick vegetation until it ran into Japanese reinforcements at roughly 0730. The Raiders ambushed and killed 30 Japanese Marines but suffered some wounded, including LeFrancois, who was hit multiple times in the shoulder and chest. Due to his leadership and fearlessness, he was awarded the Navy Cross for his actions just west of the government wharf.

The Raiders' advance stalled when the Marines reached the south end of the island's hospital, where they were held up by a series of enemy machine guns supported by snipers. Company B was brought up in line with Company A to better support the main effort by fire. Enemy snipers focused their efforts on those Raiders carrying the new M1 rifle, a weapon that gave the Marines a significant advantage in precise rifle fire.

One of the snipers had pinned down elements of Company A. Sergeant Clyde A. Thomason, seeing a muzzle flash originating from inside a hut in front of him, skillfully moved forward out of the sniper's line of sight. When he got to the outside of the hut, he burst in, killing the sniper with a shotgun blast before the enemy could react. Shortly thereafter, while continuing to lead his section, Thomason was killed by enemy machine gun fire. Posthumously, he became the first enlisted Marine to be awarded the Medal of Honor for valorous actions in the Pacific.[8]

A new threat materialized around 1200 with the arrival of two Japanese flying boats. One of these, a large four-engine Kawanishi H6K "Mavis," was thought to be bringing in a platoon-size element to reinforce the Japanese garrison. Both Raider companies' antitank gunners, equipped with .55-caliber Boys antitank rifles, had the range and power to

[8] Clyde Thomason Medal of Honor Recommendation (Biographical Files, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA).

Two Marine Raiders pose with an M1911 pistol and a captured Japanese rifle on board the USS *Nautilus* (SS 168) after returning from Makin Island, ca. 18 August 1942. The Marines pictured are Cpl Edward R. Wygal (left), who used a hand grenade to wipe out an enemy machine gun, and 1stSgt Chester L. Golasewski.
Official U.S. Navy photo, now in the collections of the National Archives, catalog no. 80-G-11724.

destroy the enemy flying boats. The Mavis was attacked and destroyed first, with it sinking quickly. The other type, a twin-engine Yokosuka H5Y "Cherry," was hit as it tried to take off, causing it to nose into the water and sink.

While the Japanese were unable to reinforce the island with ground troops, their land-based aircraft based some 110 kilometers away were able to bomb and strafe the island with impunity. In some cases, these aircraft bombed areas that the Raiders had pulled back from, hitting friendly Japanese forces instead. Throughout the afternoon, the island was under steady air attack, but miraculously no Raiders were hit during the bombardment.

By 1630, Lieutenant Colonel Carlson gave the order to pull back to the beachhead for extraction. The battalion's mission to destroy installations and infrastructure had not been accomplished at this point and no prisoners had been captured, but the ferocity of the Japanese resistance led Carlson to believe that the Raiders were facing a significant Japanese force that could potentially surround and cut them off from their extraction point.

After reaching the beach, the rubber boats were quickly put into the water, and again few motors started. The pounding surf became the primary adversary at this point. Only about one-third of the Raiders were able to breach the surf and paddle back out to the submarines. By the time they reached the two vessels, they were exhausted and mostly without clothes and equipment. Those that could not make it over the surf hunkered down to try again at first light.

Realizing that a daylight extraction with enemy aircraft in the area was suicide, the Raiders quickly recognized that they were stranded on Makin for a second day and began aggressive patrols around the beachhead area. It became clear that there was in fact no large force opposing them and that only a few Japanese marines remained alive. Only two snipers were encountered, and both were quickly eliminated. The Raiders destroyed a fuel dump with as many as 1,000 barrels of fuel, the main radio station on the island, and several other installations. The submarines returned at around 1930, and after making radio contact with the Raiders ashore they agreed to shift to calmer waters toward the entrance to the lagoon on the western shore. The majority of the remaining Raiders were aboard the two submarines by 2330.

While the majority of the raiding force made it back to the submarines, nine Raiders remained on Makin and were captured, and all of the dead were left behind. The raid had been a success in achieving two of its three main objectives. The Raiders virtually wiped out the Japanese garrison there, but their departure allowed the enemy to rebuild. While no Japanese prisoners were captured, the raid caused the enemy to focus their building efforts on an island with little strategic importance and yielded some small pieces of actionable intelligence.

THE AFTERMATH

Soon after the raid ended, the Japanese brought in reinforcements and quickly captured the nine Raiders left behind. These Marines were eventually transferred to Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands and executed. The 21 Raiders killed on Makin were buried in a mass grave by the local populace.

Due to Japanese uncertainty toward American intentions in the Gilbert Islands, they began reinforcing the garrison on Makin very soon after the raid. By November 1943,

A Charles Waterhouse painting of members of the 2d Raider Battalion attempting to breach the surf and return to the waiting submarines USS *Nautilus* (SS 168) and USS *Argonaut* (SS 166).
National Museum of the Marine Corps.

there were more than 400 Japanese troops, an equal number of Korean laborers, and a small tank detachment on the island to protect the seaplane base there. It took the U.S. Army's 165th Infantry Regiment three days to liberate the island during the Battle of Makin.

In the late 1940s, the U.S. Department of Defense began a theater-wide sweep of the Pacific in an attempt to recover remains of those Americans killed in action during World War II. Two Army officers were sent to Makin, where they were led to a grave on the southwest side of the island, but they were ultimately unsuccessful in finding any American remains. The officers concluded that construction on the island had destroyed the graves of U.S. military personnel, and further search was canceled.

It was not until the late 1990s, after interviews were conducted with surviving natives who had been alive during the raid, that the location of the mass grave was identified. By December 1999, a recovery team had located 20 complete sets of remains, 10 of which were identified through their dog tags. Others were later identified either by dental records or DNA. One skeleton appeared to have been a local islander, which left two Marine Raiders still unaccounted for. With reference to Raiders drowning in their attempt to return to the submarines, it is possible that those two can be accounted for as lost at sea.

The Marine dead on Makin were buried with their weapons and equipment, making the excavation somewhat dangerous. Fifty-five hand grenades were found, along with .30- and .45-caliber ammunition. Helmets, canteens, and fittings from canvas equipment were also found. Among them was a coral- and sand-encrusted M1 Garand rifle.

This rifle returned to the United States along with the remains of those 19 Marines, eventually making its way to the collection of the National Museum of the Marine Corps (NMMC). There, an extensive conservation process began in 2016 to remove the coral accretions and stabilize the rifle from further deterioration. Conservation revealed that there were two live .30-caliber rounds still in the rifle, one

Marines and sailors on board USS *Nautilus* (SS 168) as the submarine entered Pearl Harbor after the Makin Island Raid, 25 August 1942. One of the men, in second row, left center, is holding a Japanese rifle captured on Makin.
Official U.S. Navy photo, now in the collections of the National Archives Catalog, no. 80-G-11729.

A close-up of the pristine bore cleaning brush found inside the rifle's buttstock cleaning kit.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

in the chamber and the other in the magazine well. The Marine who carried this rifle went down fighting.

Conservation also revealed the rifle's cleaning kit and combo tool still in the buttstock. While the combo tool was severely corroded, the sealed cleaning kit was in near-perfect condition, as were its contents. The rifle itself suffered significant corrosion and deterioration of its wooden stock. The rear of the receiver, where one would find the rifle's serial number, is completely rusted through. The operating rod, trigger guard, and butt plate are almost completely gone. The rest of the rifle, however, is remarkably intact.

In February 2022, nearly 80 years after its loss, this M1 rifle from the Makin Island raid arrived safely at the NMMC weapons storage facility and began the exhibit process for display in the museum's World War II gallery. In late 2023, conservation mounts were built that will ensure the rifle's continued preservation while on exhibit, and it was installed in the World War II gallery for all to see. While the identity of the Marine who carried it remains unknown, this rifle will forever stand as a touchstone to the Raiders' heroism and sacrifice.

Chapter 4

THE M60'S LAST HURRAH

By Kater Miller, Curator

Featured artifact: M60A1 Tank (1991.515.1)

The ground campaign of Operation Desert Storm kicked off on 24 February 1991. This ground assault was a short affair, lasting roughly 100 hours before U.S. president George H. W. Bush called for a ceasefire. It was not the first time that U.S. Marines engaged in ground combat during the Gulf War, as they had previously executed daring artillery raids and fought in the Battle of al-Khafji (29 January–1 February 1991). For the Marines, the ground war consisted of infiltrating a barrier berm that separated Saudi Arabia from Kuwait, punching through two obstacle belts, and advancing to liberate Kuwait City.

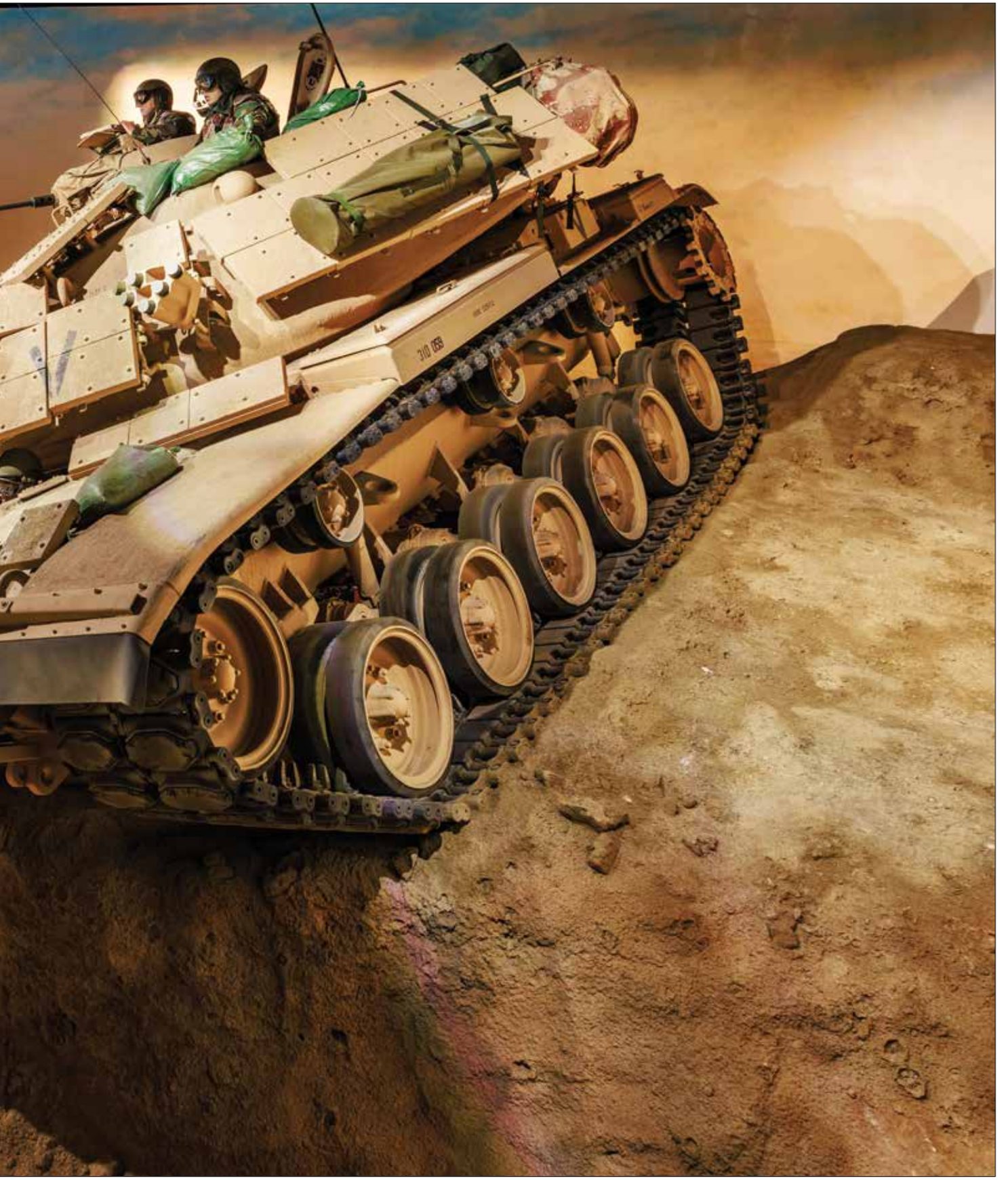
During Operation Desert Shield, the leadup to Desert Storm, the Marines prepared to oppose the Iraqi Army, whose soldiers had dug in in southern Kuwait. Marines stationed on amphibious assault ships in the Persian Gulf threatened to perform an amphibious landing on the Kuwaiti coast, thereby keeping the Iraqis there from reinforcing the obstacle belt. Much of the United States-led Coalition shifted west while the looming threat of the Marines at sea held the Iraqi Army in place.

A large berm stood on the border of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. The berm was constructed before Desert Shield as a method to limit the wanderings of the Bedouin tribes. Though not constructed as an impediment for a military force, it would still need to be breached by the Marines. Beyond the berm, the Iraqi military had built two obstacle belts in Kuwait. These belts were comprised of barbed wire, mines, tank traps, and ditches that were designed to slow an assault, making enemy forces vulnerable to artillery attack. Iraqi president Saddam Hussein, who thought a Coalition assault would unfold in Kuwait, believed that he could grind the war into a bloody stalemate in the same way that the Iran-Iraq War had unfolded in the 1980s. However, U.S. Army general H. Norman Schwarzkopf Jr., commander of U.S. Central Command, planned for the Marines, flanked on either side by multinational Arab forces, to push the Iraqis out of Kuwait. Meanwhile, a large Coalition force would push north into Iraq through its lightly defended border with Saudi Arabia and then swing to the east to cut off Iraqi troops fleeing Kuwait in a maneuver called the "Hail Mary" or the "Left Hook."

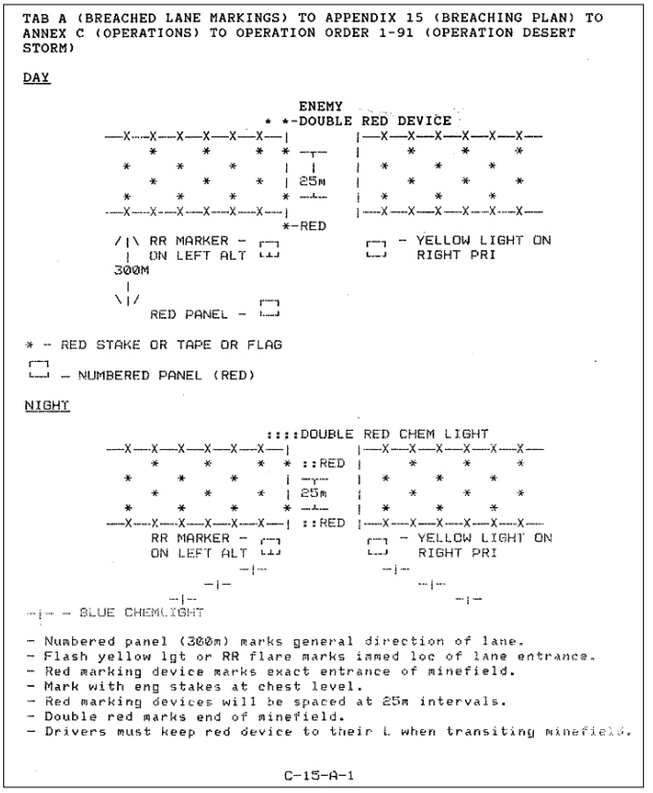
Though a massive air bombing campaign preceded the ground assault, the Iraqi Army remained a formidable force. The Marine ground forces faced a determined, dug-in, and armored enemy. Major General J. Michael Myatt, commanding general of the 1st Marine Division, organized four task forces (TF): TF Papa Bear, TF Ripper, TF Grizzly, and TF Taro. TF Papa Bear and TF Ripper were mechanized and had the 1st and 3d Tank Battalions, respectively, attached to their organizations to provide an armored punch as they began their assaults on the Iraqi obstacle belts. Marine engineers masterfully prepared the way into all of the obstacle belts, earning high praise from General Schwarzkopf.

Just after midnight on 24 February, the 3d Tank Battalion crossed the border and stopped in an assembly area just short of the first of two obstacle belts in occupied Kuwait.

Genesis II on display at the National Museum of the Marine Corps.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.



Genesis II's crew standing in front of the tank. It was concealed under radar-scattering camouflage netting with its main gun barrel protruding. From top left, clockwise: Capt Ed Dunlap, Cpl Sean Pulliam, LCpl Sean Gardner, and Cpl David Schmidt.
Courtesy of Ed Dunlap.



TAB A (BREACHED LANE MARKINGS) TO APPENDIX 15 (BREACHING PLAN) TO ANNEX C (OPERATIONS) TO OPERATION ORDER 1-91 (OPERATION DESERT STORM)

DAY

ENEMY
* *-DOUBLE RED DEVICE
*-RED
25m
/|\ RR MARKER - ON LEFT ALT 300M
- YELLOW LIGHT ON RIGHT PRI
RED PANEL -
* - RED STAKE OR TAPE OR FLAG
- NUMBERED PANEL (RED)

NIGHT

::::DOUBLE RED CHEM LIGHT
::RED
25m
::RED
RR MARKER - ON LEFT ALT
- YELLOW LIGHT ON RIGHT PRI
- BLUE CHEMLIGHT

- Numbered panel (300m) marks general direction of lane.
- Flash yellow lgt or RR flare marks immed loc of lane entrance.
- Red marking device marks exact entrance of minefield.
- Mark with eng stakes at chest level.
- Red marking devices will be spaced at 25m intervals.
- Double red marks end of minefield.
- Drivers must keep red device to their L when transiting minefield.

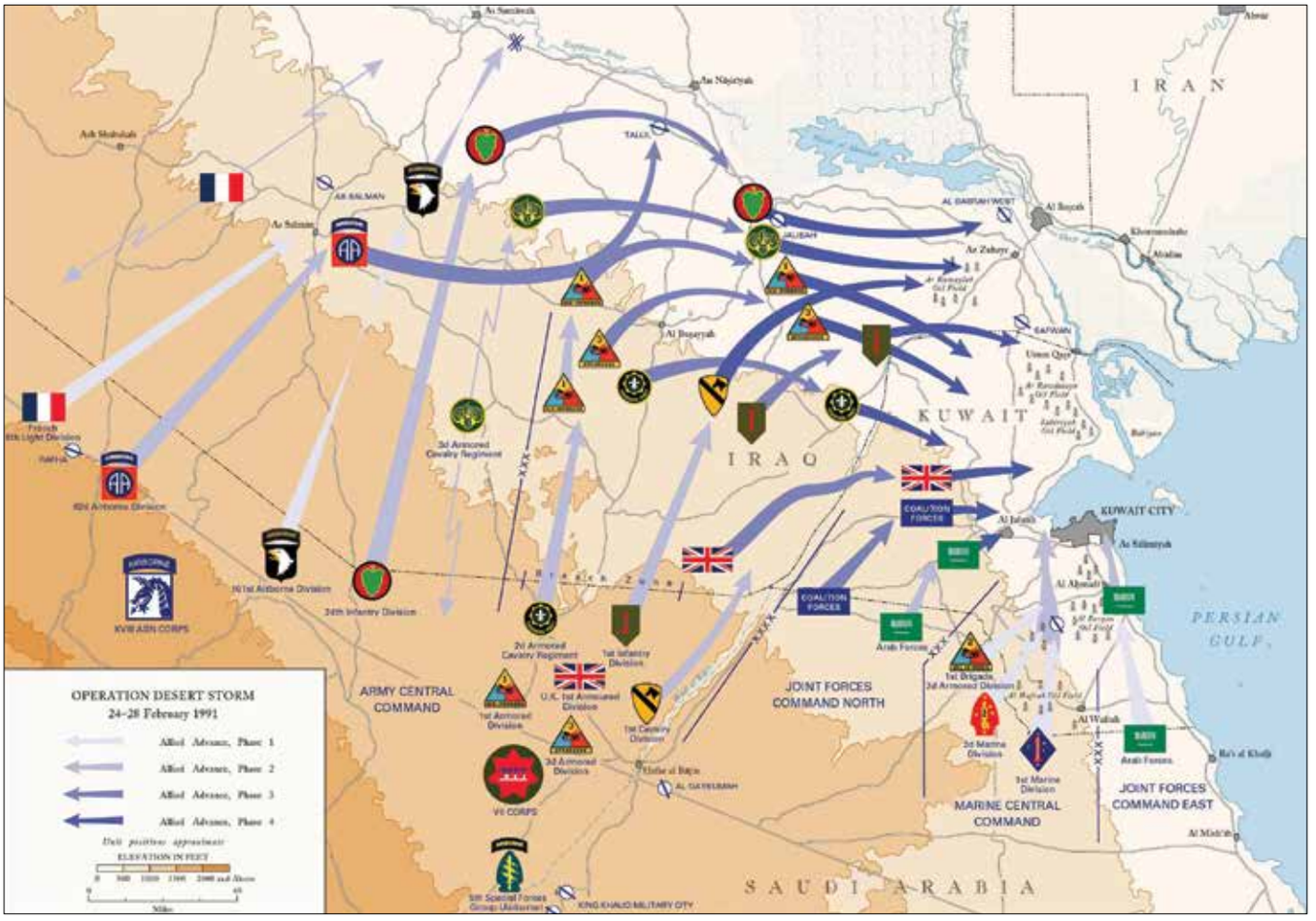
C-15-A-1

Marines watched the obstacle belts and practiced breaching operations in the months before the ground assault began. Operation Order 1-91 outlined the procedures for marking and transiting minefields in Kuwait.
Official U.S. Marine Corps Order.

At around 0400 local time, TF Ripper began assaulting across the first obstacle belt, with the 3d Tank Battalion in the lead. By early afternoon, TF Ripper had penetrated both obstacle belts and entered the al-Burqān oil field. They engaged Iraqi defenses in the oil field that afternoon and destroyed 11 Iraqi tanks. The task force then turned left to advance on Ahmad al-Jaber Air Base.

The Marines' rapid breach of the Iraqi obstacle belt surprised everyone except the Marines themselves. As soon as the Marines had arrived in the Persian Gulf during Desert Shield, they began studying the obstacle belts and practiced breaching them. The rehearsals worked; the Marines went through the obstacles so quickly that General Schwarzkopf was afraid that Iraqi units would be able to escape from Kuwait before coalition troops were in place to block their retreat. The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, U.S. Army general Colin L. Powell, received a phone call explaining that the Marines had smashed through both lines, forcing him to pressure U.S. Army leaders to catch up. Many Army units inside Iraq had reached their objectives by the late morning on 24 February and expected no more movement until the following day. The Marines' success forced them to resume their advance.

Marines study a sand table map of the obstacle belts in Kuwait. They needed to breach the obstacle belts quickly to avoid being caught in Iraqi artillery barrages and armored counterattacks while unable to maneuver.
Courtesy of Michael O'Neal.



The movement of Coalition forces in the famous "Hail Mary" or "Left Hook" of the ground campaign. Coalition forces blocked the escape route for Iraqi troops that remained in Kuwait.
U.S. Army Center for Military History.

After securing Ahmad al-Jaber Air Base, TF Ripper oriented its attack toward Kuwait International Airport. However, the Iraqis launched a counterattack, which the 3d Tank Battalion fended off before resuming the advance. By the evening of 25 February, the 1st Marine Division approached Kuwait International Airport. Smoke from pervasive oil fires slowed the Marines' advance, forcing them to wait until the following day. Another set of obstacles to traverse and continued poor visibility meant the Marines could not surround and fully secure the airport until the morning of 27 February. There, the Marines paused while a joint Arab military force liberated Kuwait City. Major General Myatt then waited for word of a ceasefire or orders to begin an attack on the Iraqi capital of Baghdad. But the assault on Baghdad was not to be. Early on the morning of 28 February, President Bush ordered a ceasefire after it had become clear that the Iraqi military had been thoroughly defeated.

During Desert Storm, the Marine Corps sent a team of historians to scour the area for items to preserve for posterity. They chose to send back to the United States a Marine Corps M60A1 main battle tank called *Genesis II*. The M60A1 is a relic of the Cold War, entering service with the U.S. military in 1959. *Genesis II* was chosen because its tank commander led Company C, 3d Tank Battalion, the lead tank company to cross the border into Kuwait.

According to the crew *Genesis II*, company commander Captain Ed Dunlap resembled Genesis lead singer Phil Collins, so they chose to name their tank after Collins's band. The crew also painted "Shoot-N-Loot" on the tank's gun barrel as a tongue-in-cheek reference to their instructions that they were going to Kuwait to liberate the country and not to shoot at and loot the populace.

Genesis II is not the only M60A1 tank preserved as a museum piece by the Marine Corps. 3d Tank Battalion commander Lieutenant Colonel Alphonso "Buster" Diggs's tank

Genesis II and crew somewhere in Kuwait waiting to cross the line of departure.
Courtesy of Ed Dunlap.

Marines of the 3d Tank Battalion outside Kuwait City at Kuwait International Airport. This tank was fitted with a mine rake as a measure to help clear the minefields that the Marines encountered during the ground assault.
Courtesy of Michael O'Neal.

A photograph showing Capt Dunlap's resemblance to the Genesis drummer Phil Collins.
Courtesy of Ed Dunlap.

LtCol Alphonso "Buster" Diggs commanded the 3d Tank Battalion, the armor component of Task Force Ripper, during Operation Desert Storm. His M60A1 tank, "Buster," is on loan to the U.S. Army Armor and Cavalry Collection.
Courtesy of Michael O'Neal.

Genesis II parked outside of the Marine Corps Air-Ground Museum at Quantico, ca. 1992.
National Museum of the Marine Corps.

David Tucker (left) and Jamie Green (right) prepare to stencil "Shoot-N-Loot" back on *Genesis II*'s barrel.
Photo by Mardi Reese.

has also been preserved. This tank, called *Buster*, is preserved and currently on loan to the U.S. Army Armor and Cavalry Collection at Fort Benning, Georgia. Before becoming part of the collection of the National Museum of the Marine Corps (NMMC), *Buster* stood as a monument in front of the Marine barracks at the U.S. Army Armor School at Fort Moore, Georgia, before the Marine Corps eliminated tanks from its inventory as part of its *Force Design 2030* force restructuring plan.[1]

The Marine Corps deployed these Cold War-era M60 tanks to the Persian Gulf in support of Desert Storm. For the U.S. armed forces, Desert Storm was the first—and last—hurrah for the M60 in major combat roles. The Marine Corps upgraded their M60s to improve their accuracy and survivability and included passive night vision sights for the gunner and tank commander. The M60s deployed during Desert Storm featured explosive reactive armor, which exploded when hit to dissipate the destructiveness of an antitank round. The M60's main armament was a 105-millimeter main gun, compared to the 120-millimeter main gun on the U.S. Army's M1 Abrams main battle tank. The Abrams was also faster, more reliable, more survivable, and presented a smaller silhouette. Immediately after returning from Kuwait, the Marine Corps purged the M60s from its inventories and completed the transition to the Abrams. The 3d Tank Battalion was deactivated in the summer of 1992.

When *Genesis II* came to the old Marine Corps Air-Ground Museum in Quantico, Virginia, it sat outside in the humid environment, causing some corrosion problems and paint damage. Because of the corrosion, *Genesis II* needed to be restored. The NMMC developed a partnership with Marine Depot Maintenance Command (MDMC) in Albany, Georgia, to complete the restoration. The NMMC has worked with MDMC for other restoration projects in the past. The crews there understand the museum's exacting standards and have always exceeded its expectations.

The newly restored *Genesis II* arrived at the NMMC in September 2016. It took two days for riggers to place the tank on its mount. *Genesis II* was the first artifact installed in the museum's Final Phase galleries, which interpret Marine Corps history from 1975 to 2015.

[1] Gen David H. Berger, *Force Design 2030* (Washington, DC: Headquarters Marine Corps, 2020).

PART 2

Art & Culture

Chapter 5

THE BAGGAGE OF WAR

A China Marine's Valet Bag

By Kater Miller, Curator

Featured artifact: Painted Leather Bag (2007.90.1)

The bag below belonged to Mathew H. Stohlman, a China Marine. He was born in Louisville, Nebraska, in 1917 and graduated from Louisville High School in 1936 before joining the U.S. Marine Corps in 1939.[1] He completed recruit training (boot camp) at Marine Corps Base, San Diego, California. After training to become a radio operator, he was assigned to Tientsin, China, as a high-speed radio operator. He traveled to China on the U.S. Navy transport USS *Henderson* (AP 1), steaming on 23 March 1940.[2]

Stohlman arrived in China as a massive drawdown of Marines stationed there had begun. The Marines had first arrived as legation guards during the Boxer Rebellion at the turn of the century and had been stationed in Peking (Beijing) as part of the legation guard since 1905.[3] During the early part of a near-civil war in China in the 1920s, the 4th Marine Regiment arrived in Shanghai to protect American interests in the International Settlement of the city. The U.S. Army's 15th Infantry Regiment arrived in Tientsin in 1912 and remained there until it was removed and sent to Fort Lewis, Washington, in 1938. Detachments of Marines were also stationed in Tientsin (Tianjin) and Chingwangtao (Qinhuangdao).

The Marines serving in China were famous throughout the Corps for living a privileged lifestyle. Even privates could afford cleaning and laundry services, rickshaw rides, and cheap goods from the local economy. Marines took advantage of international enclaves within the cities of China, which offered shops, clubs, sports clubs, bars, casinos, and recreation establishments. Marines also had access to cheap tourist trips through the country. Many Marines owned items that were custom made or elaborately embellished.

Despite having luxury at their fingertips, things were not always good for the China Marines. In 1932, Chinese and Japanese military forces clashed in Shanghai in what became known as the "January 28 incident."[4] The Marines erected barriers on the south side of the Soochow Creek and watched Japanese troops burn the district of Chapei (Zhabei) on the opposite bank. The U.S. Army's 31st Infantry Regiment, newly arrived from the Philippines, reinforced the Marines' defense sector.

Many troops and civilians in the International Settlement watched with horror as the battle unfolded. The incident was short lived, lasting from late January to early

[1] "Obituary," *Journal* (Plattsmouth, NE), 22 April 2004, 8.

[2] "Company B, Marine Detachment, Tientsin, China, 1–31 March 1940," *Muster Rolls of Officers and Enlisted Men of the U.S. Marine Corps, 1798–1958* (Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA).

[3] Chester M. Biggs Jr., *The United States Marines in North China, 1894–1942* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2003), 136.

[4] Walter Brown, "Japanese Bombard Civilians in Shanghai's Chapei," United Press International Archives, 2 February 1932.

Pvt Mathew H. Stohlman's valet bag.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

March, but international relations in China were rapidly deteriorating, and the international community viewed with consternation the hostile stance that the Japanese were taking in mainland Asia.

In July 1937, Japan again took an increasingly aggressive posture in China, resulting in another battle between Chinese and Japanese forces known as the Marco Polo Bridge incident. Many historians agree that this event marked the true beginning of World War II. Again, the Marines in the International Settlement watched as war kicked off while they stood by and could do nothing about it. The Marines erected more bunkers as the fighting and chaos spread. The Japanese government used the battle as an excuse to send more soldiers to China. Huangpu River, known in Shanghai as "battleship row," became filled with Japanese warships. In August, the 2d Marine Brigade, built around the 1st and 2d Battalions of the 6th Marine Regiment, left San Diego to reinforce the 4th Marines in Shanghai. Though the International Settlement remained neutral, this did not stop the Japanese from bombing the U.S. Navy river gunboat USS *Panay* (PR 5) in December 1937, sinking the gunboat and killing three American sailors.[5] The United States considered a military response before the Japanese government formally apologized and agreed to pay for the destroyed vessel. In February, as the fighting in China cooled off, the 2d Marine Brigade left Shanghai, leaving the 4th Marines once again the sole American unit in the city.

[5] Manny T. Koginos, *The Panay Incident: Prelude to War* (Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Studies, 1967), 28–30.

A close-up of the bag's paint.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

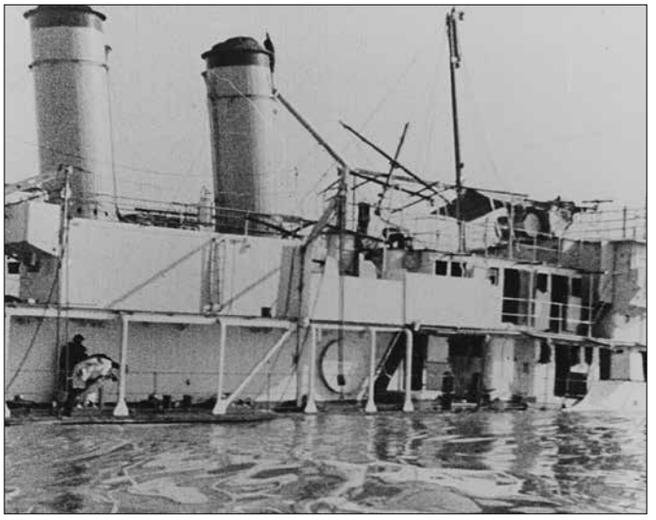
It quickly became apparent that the world was on the verge of another global conflict. Relations between the governments of the United States and Japan cooled again, and the United States placed embargoes on the resource-poor industrial nation. The 15th Infantry Regiment, stationed in Tientsin, was removed from China and returned to the United States. A small detachment of Marines from the legation guard went to Tientsin and occupied the regiment's old headquarters building and barracks.

While Japan continued to increase its military presence in China in the late 1930s, the United States found itself more isolated than ever. In September 1939, Germany invaded Poland, which prompted France and England to declare war on Germany. World War II had officially begun. The British, French, and German soldiers at the International Settlement evacuated so that they could face the new threat in Europe as well as in British possessions such as Singapore and Hong Kong. This left the Marines in Shanghai quite alone.

Private Mathew H. Stohlman arrived in Tientsin on 4 May 1940. For the next year and a half, until the U.S. entry into the war in December 1941, the Marines still left in China had little international help to rely on. The Marines' dependents were ordered to leave the country. The commanding officer of the 4th Marines, Colonel Samuel L. Howard, saw the writing on the wall. Through the early autumn of 1941, he petitioned to get his regiment out of Shanghai and station it at the U.S. naval base in Cavite, Philippines, instead. While he waited for an affirmative, he did not replace the Marines who were cycled out of service, so the regiment's

Marines watch the Chapei District burning from across the Soochow Creek.
Naval History and Heritage Command.

USS *Panay* (PR 5) defenses.
Naval History and Heritage Command.



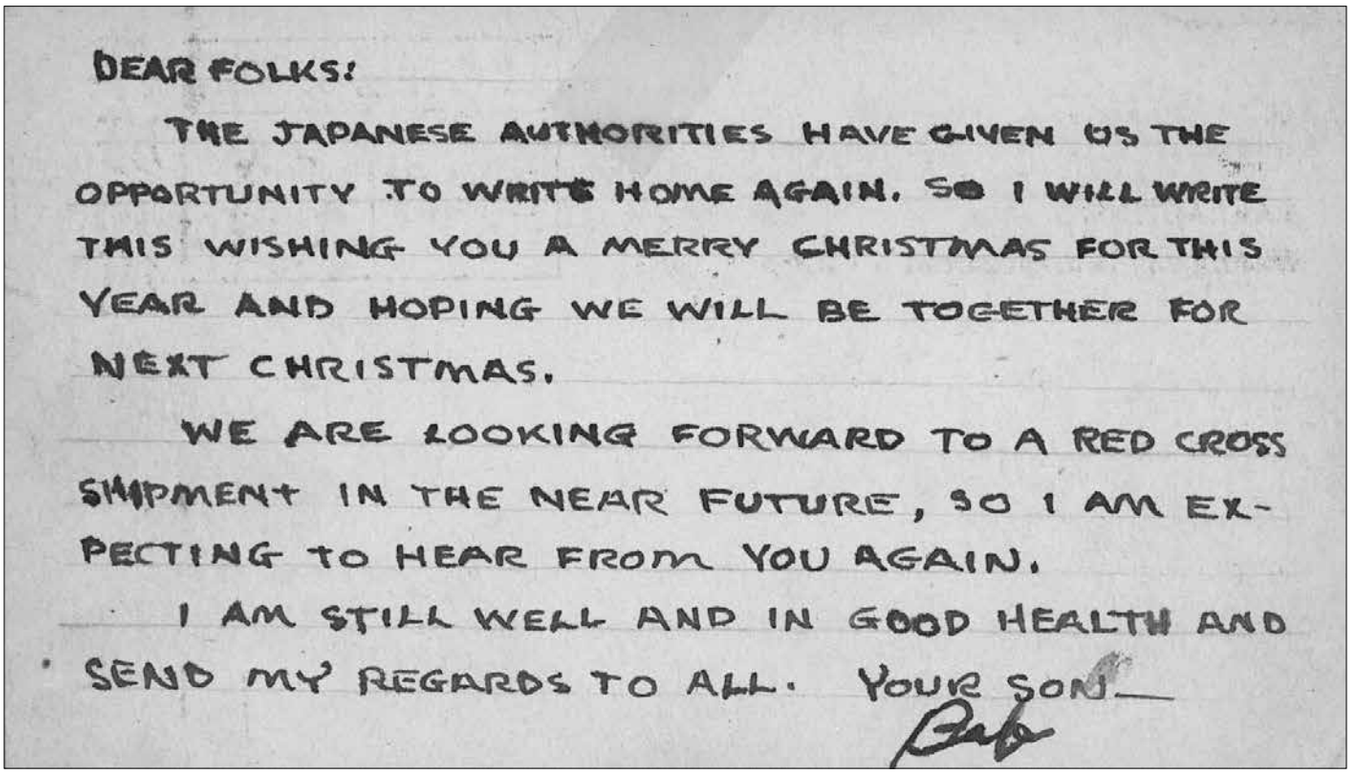
USS *Panay* (PR 5) sunk.
Naval History and Heritage Command.

A Japanese tankette during their conquest of Shanghai in 1937.
Naval History and Heritage Command.

Marines standing in formation at their barracks in Tientsin, 1939. The compound had recently been evacuated by the U.S. Army's 15th Infantry Regiment.
Naval History and Heritage Command.

number dwindled. Finally, in late November the order came for the 4th Marines to transfer to the Philippines.

With the 4th Marines gone from Shanghai, there were very few Marines left in China. Only the legation guards and the detachments at Tientsin and Peking, with just more than 200 Marines, remained. They received orders to depart China on 10 December, but this was too late. When the Marines awoke on the morning of 8 December, they suddenly



DEAR FOLKS!

THE JAPANESE AUTHORITIES HAVE GIVEN US THE OPPORTUNITY TO WRITE HOME AGAIN. SO I WILL WRITE THIS WISHING YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS FOR THIS YEAR AND HOPING WE WILL BE TOGETHER FOR NEXT CHRISTMAS.

WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO A RED CROSS SHIPMENT IN THE NEAR FUTURE, SO I AM EXPECTING TO HEAR FROM YOU AGAIN.

I AM STILL WELL AND IN GOOD HEALTH AND SEND MY REGARDS TO ALL. YOUR SON—

Bob

A postcard sent from prisoner of war Robert Murphy to his parents in 1944.
Robert Murphy Collection, Marine Corps History Division.

found themselves at war and surrounded by Japanese forces. Japan had attacked the United States at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and was commencing a massive offensive across much of the Asia-Pacific.[6]

The Marines in China were without hope. They were extremely outnumbered, and there was no chance of rescue. Even if they could leave the compound in Tientsin, they were literally surrounded by thousands of Japanese troops who had been at war in China for more than four years. With no other choice, the Marines surrendered to the enemy. They were soon joined by Marines captured at Guam and Wake Island.

Under the terms of their surrender, the Marines' Japanese captors allowed them to place articles of baggage into storage. They found a Swiss storage company to agree to hold their bags in a warehouse in China for the duration of the war. Stohlman packed his trunk and bag with all the personal items that would fit, including a German camera, photograph albums, custom suits, and brand-new ice skates.[7] The Marines were initially allowed to keep a seabag full of clothing, which they desperately needed for the brutal North China winter that was unfolding.

Stohlman's trunk and bag entered storage while he became a prisoner of war. He was imprisoned in several different camps in China: first Tientsin, then Woosung, and then Kiangwan. Later in the war, he was transferred to a camp in Kawasaki, Japan, and finally to a camp in Niigata. While in captivity, Stohlman was allowed to write letters to his parents, which traveled through the Swiss Red Cross headquarters in Berne, Switzerland, to his home in Nebraska. Because of this circuitous route, letters often took 10 months to make the trip. Stohlman's first letter does not say much, only that he read from his Bible daily and that he worked on a vegetable farm. The letter had his signature in his handwriting and was proof that he was still alive, the first such proof since December 1941.[8]

On 1 January 1943, Stohlman wrote another letter, which was several paragraphs long. He had been moved to

[6] George B. Clark, *Treading Softly: U.S. Marines in China, 1819–1949* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001), 123–4. China is across the international date line.

[7] Susan Stohlman Salazar, "Biographical Information for the National Museum of the Marine Corps" (Los Angeles, CA, n.d.).

[8] "Mat Stohlman Writes Parents," *Louisville (NE) Weekly Courier*, 8 October 1942.

Mail destined for American prisoners of war in Japan and the Philippines, 1943.
Naval History and Heritage Command.

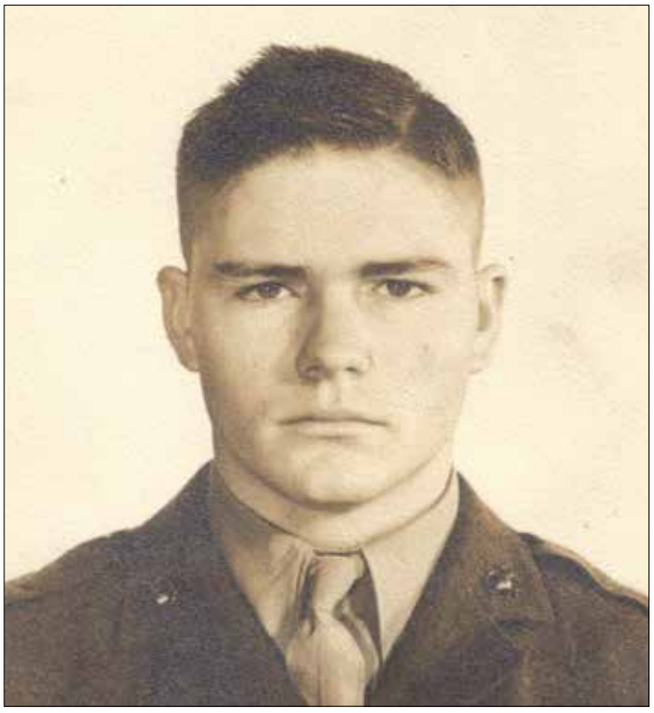
Tokyo and asked his parents for food such as corned beef, butter, and honey, as well as cigarettes and pipe tobacco. He also asked his parents to write the Commandant of the Marine Corps to see if he had been promoted and find out what kind of backpay he would receive once released from captivity. A newspaper article appearing in the *Louisville Weekly Courier* explained how to send packages to Stohlman, which involved sending them to Switzerland, where they would be transferred on a Swedish ship to Tokyo.[9]

In September 1943, Stohlman wrote another letter from his camp in Kawasaki. This brief letter took six months to arrive in Nebraska. In it, he wrote that he was working every day and was in good health, and he again asked for packages of food to be sent to him. He never received any packages from home. Despite his assurances, a photograph of Stohlman in captivity that was taken roughly around the same time as he wrote his letter shows that he was not in good health and was actually quite malnourished. Chester Biggs Jr., a Marine who wrote of his experiences in the war, mentioned that the Marine prisoners of war were starving from the moment they were captured until the end of hostilities.[10]

In 1944, Stohlman contacted home via an interesting method: a shortwave radio. He sent a message that was relayed to Mrs. W. N. Tappert of Mojave, California, who wrote the local newspaper in Louisville. She could not understand the Marine's whole name but knew that his first

[9] "Mat Stohlman Writes Again," *Louisville (NE) Weekly Courier*, 26 August 1943.

[10] Chester M. Biggs Jr., *Behind the Barbed Wire: Memoir of a World War II U.S. Marine Captured in North China in 1941 and Imprisoned by the Japanese until 1945* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2011), 187.



Stohlman days after arriving at boot camp at Marine Corps Base San Diego, CA, January 1939. *Courtesy of Susan Stohlman Salazar.*

Stohlman on Christmas Day 1943 at Kawasaki Camp 5-D. The rough conditions that he and his fellow prisoners of war endured during their captivity are evident here. *Courtesy of Susan Stohlman Salazar.*

name was Mathew. Through some detective work, the newspaper figured out that it was their local hero and published his message, which again asked for food, candy, and tobacco to be sent to him. He reported that he finally received two Red Cross packages, but no packages had arrived from his parents.[11]

On 19 September 1945, just weeks after Japan's officials surrender to the United States and its allies, the *Evening World-Herald* of Omaha, Nebraska, reported that Stohlman had been liberated from his prison camp.[12] He traveled home on the vehicle landing ship USS *Ozark* (LSV 2) to Terminal Island near Los Angeles, California, and was then moved to the naval hospital in Long Beach, California, for medical treatment. Like all prisoners of the Japanese during the war, Stohlman was sick and malnourished due to nearly four years of starvation and abuse at the hands of his captors. Nearly a quarter of the Allied prisoners interned by the Japanese died in captivity.[13] Fortunately, the China Marines fared better. Of the 204 Marines and sailors captured in North China in 1941, 184 survived their ordeal and came home.[14]

After his discharge from the Marine Corps, Stohlman returned to his home in Nebraska.[15] In 1946, he received a message that one of his bags was in storage in Los Angeles. He had assumed that he would never see it again. When he retrieved the bag, he found that it had been looted of some of his expensive photography equipment and handmade

[11] "Mat Stohlman Writes Again," *Louisville (NE) Weekly Courier*, 4 May 1944.
[12] "Omaha with Three Nebraskans Freed," *Evening World-Herald (Omaha, NE)*, 19 September 1945.
[13] "What Life Was Like for POWs in the Far East during the Second World War," Imperial War Museum, accessed 31 January 2024.
[14] Biggs, *Behind the Barbed Wire*, 199.
[15] "Prisoner of Japs Returns Home," *Louisville (NE) Weekly Courier*, 22 November 1945.

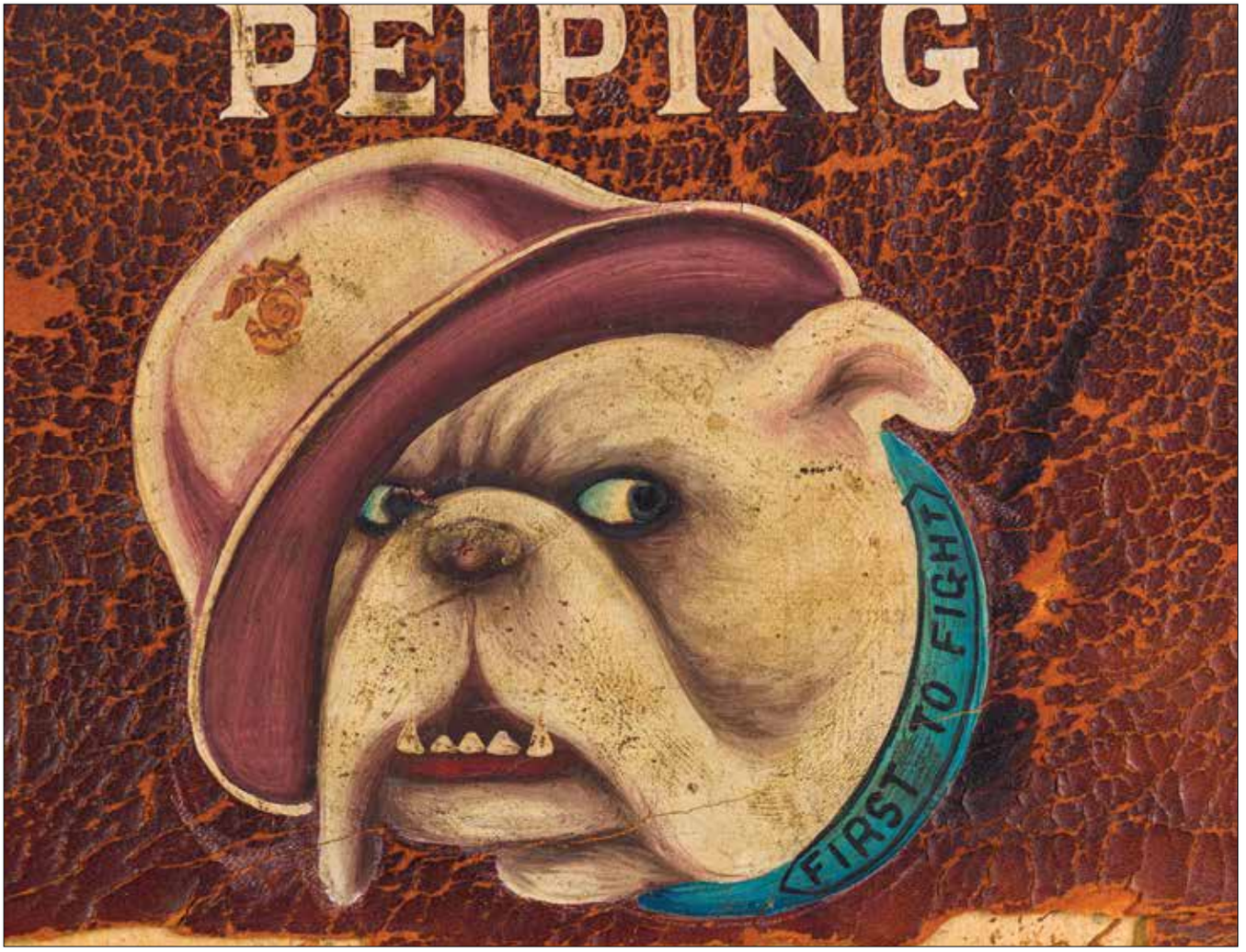
Malnourished Allied prisoners of war held in the Aomori Prison Camp near Yokohama, Japan.
Naval History and Heritage Command.

robes that he had acquired for his family before his capture. His expensive ice skates were still inside, much to his delight. According to his daughter Susan Stohlman Salazar, he retrieved the bag, put it on a shelf, and went on with his life.[16]

Ornately decorated and made of leather, this normally expensive bag was something that an enlisted Marine could afford on their meager salary in China. It displays the locations where Stohlman served as well as a beautifully painted dragon. The items that he stored in the bag for the duration of the war, most of which were stolen from him, were also high-quality and something that an enlisted Marine could only afford in China. This bag and Stohlman's story are a microcosm of the many things the China Marines and their fellow prisoners of war endured at the hands of their Japanese captors. Stohlman survived his captivity, despite abuse and starvation, but many captured soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines did not. Mathew Stohlman lived a long life, retiring from the Los Angeles County Flood Control District and passing away on 7 April 2004.[17]

[16] Susan Stohlman Salazar, "Biographical Information for the National Museum of the Marine Corps" (Los Angeles, CA, n.d.).

[17] "Obituary," *Journal* (Plattsmouth, NE), 22 April 2004, 8.



Top and left: details of Stohlman's painted valet bag.
Photos by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

Chapter 6

SEAGOING ART

A Marine Tradition of Seabags

By Kater Miller, Curator

Featured artifacts: Painted Duffel Bag (2014.37.1) (Painted Green, Trip Markings, Dragons); Painted Duffel Bag (2014.60.1) (Trip Markings, Tank Painting and Art); Painted Duffel Bag (2015.207.1) (Iceland); Painted Duffel Bag (2010.20.1) (Yorktown Survivor); Painted Duffel Bag (2014.61.1) (I Got Mine); Painted Duffel Bag (1994.84.1) (1930s, Old Eagle, Globe, and Anchor); and Painted Duffel Bag (FIC-4.1.416) (Fleischauer)

A faded seabag specked with dust
Lies mute upon the attic floor.
Nobody knows where it has traveled
Except its owner and the Corps.

~ Harry A. Koch[1]

The humble seabag might be the most ubiquitous piece of equipment that an enlisted U.S. Marine will own during their career. In boot camp, the seabag is one of the very first things a young recruit is issued. After the recruit receives their seabag, they then receive the rest of their issue, which they proceed to cram into it. This rite of passage was as true in 1943 at the Marine Corps Recruit Depots at Parris Island, South Carolina, and San Diego, California, as it is today.

Enlisted sailors on warships in the early frigate navy originally had sea chests, but they eventually switched to bags that look like modern seabags today to save space aboard the cramped, wooden warships. Seabags held sailors' uniforms, and early on, sailors had to carry their mattress and hammock attached to their seabag.

The seabags of the nineteenth century look very similar to those today, consisting of a flat bottom and cylindrical tube and a closing mouth, closed by a drawstring or heavy grommets over a loop. Originally, these bags were considered government property. A Marine Corps manual from 1916 stated that a Marine leaving the Corps would return their canvas seabag to the quartermaster, who would clean it and repair it if necessary, and it would then be reissued to the next Marine who required one. This practice continued until at least World War II with excess bags.

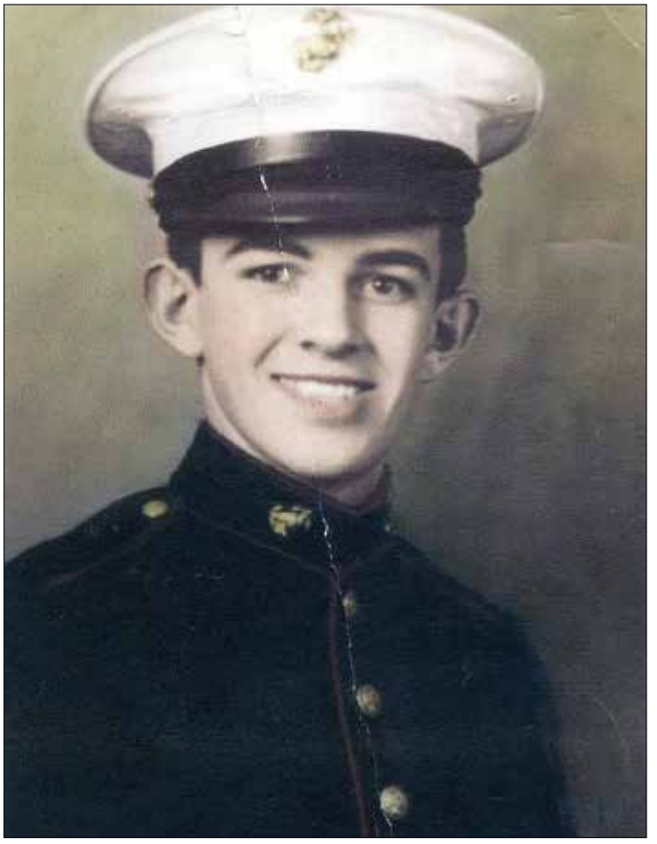
Almost immediately, sailors and Marines began decorating their seabags to show personal flair. They wrote their names on them; they drew on and painted them with ornate designs; and they wrote the locations where they had been. Sometimes, a seabag displayed a unit's tactical markings or insignia. This personalization gives us, the modern viewer, a glimpse into the lives of these Marines and sailors.

In World War II Marine Corps veteran Robert H. Leckie's autobiography, *Helmet for My Pillow*, he stated that he packed his seabag before landing at Guadalcanal in August 1942 and did not see it again until after the war.[2] During World War II, this was the case for many of the Marines deployed in the Pacific theater. They lived out of their knapsacks and haversack combinations along with their 782 gear and utility or combat uniforms. When the war ended, tens of thousands of seabags made their way to warehouses in the United States and waited for their owners to pick them

[1] Excerpt from Harry A. Koch, "The Seabag," *Leatherneck* 44, no. 10 (October 1961): 87.

[2] Robert Leckie, *Helmet for My Pillow* (New York: Random House, 1957), 51–52.

Alastair C. Parr's painted seabag. On this side, Parr's hometown is visible, along with a dragon.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.



Alastair C. Parr.
National Museum of the Marine Corps.

up. After a while, the Corps advertised the warehouses in newspapers and *Leatherneck* magazine in the hopes of getting the bags matched with their owners.

The canvas bags of World Wars I and II vary slightly from today. Today, Marines' seabags are green, made of nylon, and have shoulder straps to make them easier to carry. When this author deployed on the amphibious assault ship USS *Peleliu* (LHA 5) in 2003, every Marine in their berthing space had one small personal locker to use, and they had to store their seabags in a big storage room in a large pile. Finding one's own seabag was not easy. It seems that personalizing one's seabag allowed for a more practical way of finding the bag in a large mass of featureless, identically constructed bags. Doing so might allow a Marine to locate their seabag more quickly.

This exhibit at the National Museum of the Marine Corps (NMMC) includes seven personalized seabags that show a glimpse of their owners' character. The Marines who altered these bags had different levels of artistic ability. The bags span a little more than a decade in time and range from the inane to the sultry and profane, but they all serve as diaries of the Marines' experiences and help tell stories of their owners. These bags also demonstrate how diverse the Marine Corps is, and how Marines truly serve in any clime and place.

ALASTAIR C. PARR

This seabag was owned by Private First Class Alastair C. Parr of Sayre, Pennsylvania. Born on 16 April 1926, he joined the Marine Corps in the spring of 1944. After training, he was assigned to the 15th Marines, an artillery regiment of the 6th Marine Division that had been formed on Guadalcanal in late 1944. He landed on Okinawa on 1 April 1945, just shy of his 19th birthday, and went through the nearly three-month-long battle unscathed. It is unclear why Okinawa is not represented on his bag while other Pacific battlefields are; he did not arrive in the Pacific in time to see combat on Guadalcanal, Eniwetok, Saipan, or Guam—these were just places that he visited either as part of a replacement draft or while training en route to Okinawa.

Parr's seabag also displays a list of places he traveled, though Okinawa is conspicuously absent.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

The Battle of Okinawa was the last major ground campaign of World War II, as well as the only combat operation for the 6th Marine Division. The Marines that survived the battle then prepared to assault the main islands of Japan, a campaign that would have caused a terrible loss of life. However, the two atomic bombs dropped on Japan in August 1945 abruptly ended the war, but such a sudden end meant that there were still huge contingents of Japanese forces deployed throughout Asia. The Allied effort quickly transformed to oversight of the surrender and demobilization of these troops. Some Marines went to Japan, while others, such as Parr's unit, went to China. For the first time since 8 December 1941, the U.S. Marines would be in China again.

Parr had his seabag painted in China while on occupation duty there. In addition to the bag bearing the name of his hometown, it is ornately painted with dragons and designs. For some reason, Parr chose to have the khaki-color canvas bag painted green, which has flaked off over the years. Enlisted Marines did not have a lot of money to ship items home, and the massive demobilization effort after the war ended kept many of them from buying a lot of souvenirs. This bag became a souvenir for the young Marine, in addition to serving as a practical item that he could use to carry his essential gear.

WILLIAM D. GERMAIN

This seabag belonged to Sergeant William D. Germain, who joined the Marine Corps in the summer of 1942. His seabag helps shed light on his journey in the Corps. He traveled quite a bit throughout the Pacific during World War II, and his bag is divided into "Trip I" and "Trip II," which detail his first and second trips outside of the United States, with a brief interlude between.

Though he enlisted too late to participate in the campaign on Guadalcanal, Germain did travel to the South Pacific with the 2d Replacement Battalion. From the bag, one can see that he attended boot camp at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot at San Diego. He then underwent infantry training at Camp Elliot in San Diego before joining the 2d Replacement Battalion.

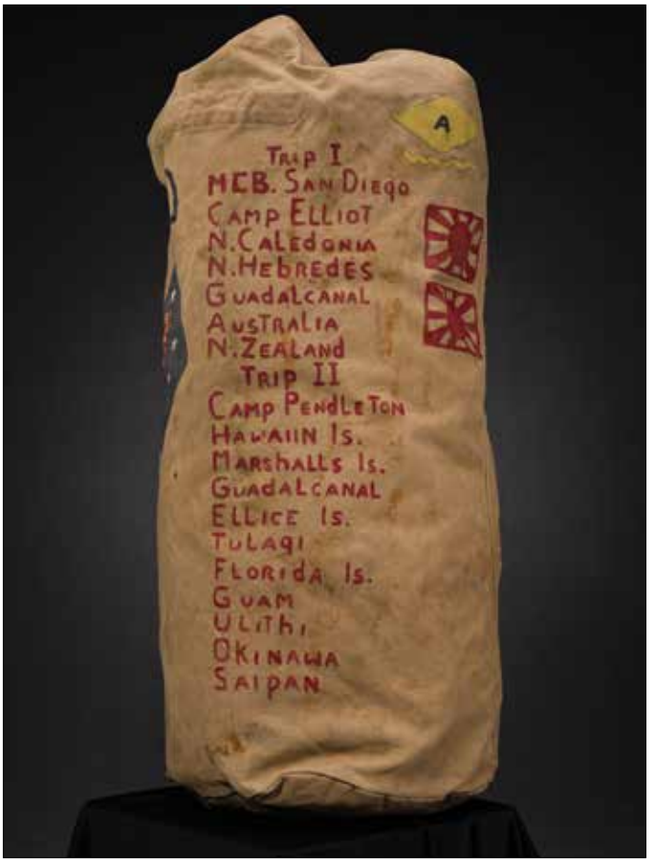
Replacement battalions were created in September 1942 to refill Marine units that had suffered from attrition to casualties or reassignment.[3] When Germain went overseas, the concept was brand new. As part of the 2d Replacement Battalion, he went to New Caledonia, New Hebrides (this is misspelled on his bag), and finally Guadalcanal, receiving orders to join Company H, 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, before the Marines were pulled off the island. He then went to Australia and New Zealand before returning to the United States.

Once back in the United States, Germain began "Trip II," which started with Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, California, and proceeded to the Hawaiian Islands, the Marshall Islands, Guadalcanal, Ellice Island, Tulagi, Florida Island, Guam, Ulithi, Okinawa, and finally Saipan. During this trip, Germain saw combat in the Marshall Islands and at Guam and Okinawa.

Prior to deploying outside of the United States for the second time, Germain was assigned to the brand-new 1st Armored Amphibian Tractor Battalion, which was activated in August 1943. These units operated the armored ver-

[3] Gordon L. Rottman, *U.S. Marine Corps World War II Order of Battle: Ground and Air Units in the Pacific War, 1939–1945* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 255.

William D. Germain's seabag.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.



Germain's travels in the Marine Corps.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

Germain's platoon photograph. He is number 8.
National Museum of the Marine Corps.

sions of the landing vehicle, tracked (LVT) that the Marines were using in their assaults across the Pacific theater. LVTs were originally conceived as amphibious logistics vehicles capable of carrying supplies from ships, through the surf, and up onto land. Marines used them at Guadalcanal in this capacity, but by November 1943, the Marines were using these vehicles to deliver combat Marines over a reef and onto the shore at Tarawa in the Gilbert Islands. The vulnerable, thin-skinned steel vehicles were originally armed with machine guns and provided with extra armor. Later, they saw the addition of a turret with a 37-millimeter tank gun and, after that, a 75-millimeter howitzer. This provided the Marines with a huge boost in firepower on the invasion beaches, through the armored LVTs were not as well-protected as an actual tank. They provided the best support-

An LVT(A)-4 makes an appearance on Germain's seabag, along with the symbol of III Amphibious Corps.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

A turtle with boxing gloves was an unofficial symbol of armored amphibian operators.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

ing fire when in the water, because that gave the Japanese defenders less of an opportunity to hit them.

Germain became an armored amphibian tractor crewmember and was assigned to Company A, 1st Armored Amphibian Tractor Battalion. He first saw combat with that unit at Roi-Namur in the Marshall Islands in January–February 1944. His next assault was during the Battle of Guam in July–August 1944. He operated an LVT(A)-1 armed with a 37-millimeter gun on a turret during those operations.[4]

Germain participated in the Battle of Okinawa in April–June 1945, landing in the initial assault that began on 1 April. His battalion had since switched to the more powerfully armed LVT(A)-4, which carried an open top turret with a 75-millimeter howitzer. Germain and his unit left Okinawa on 7 July and returned to Saipan in the Mariana Islands to prepare for the invasion of Japan that thankfully never materialized.[5]

After the war, Germain returned to the United States and was discharged from the Marine Corps. He served in the Marine Corps Reserve during the Korean War, but he spent this time at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, where he was promoted to sergeant.

Apart from the place names on his bag, Germain also painted the 1st Marine Division patch to honor the division he had served with on Guadalcanal. He also has representations of his armored LVT, along with Japanese flags and a fighting turtle. One of the more important marks on this bag is the Unit Numerical Identification System symbol. In 1944, Marine Corps divisions began using a tactical marking system in which each division had a shape symbol and three

[4] "Company A, 1st Armored Amphibian Battalion, Fleet Marine Force Pacific, 1–31 July 1944," *Muster Rolls of Officers and Enlisted Men of the U.S. Marine Corps, 1798–1958* (Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA).

[5] "Company A, 1st Armored Amphibian Battalion, Fleet Marine Force Pacific, 1–31 July 1945," *Muster Rolls of Officers and Enlisted Men of the U.S. Marine Corps, 1798–1958* (Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA).

A group of LVT(A)-4s make an assault on Okinawa.
Marine Corps History Division.

numbers that identified what unit a Marine or equipment belonged to. The system was largely unknown until recent years, where a key was uncovered that illustrated the 4th and 5th Marine Division symbols.

HARRY H. ALLEN

It has been said that whoever possesses Iceland holds a pistol firmly pointed at England, America, and Canada.

~ Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill[6]

This seabag differs from some of the others in this collection in that it does not serve as a travel diary. However, this bag is beautifully painted to represent the 1st Marine Provisional Brigade's deployment to Iceland before the United States officially became embroiled in World War II. The art on the bag is still very crisp, and it is clear that the artist could work at a high level of skill. This bag belonged to Harry H. Allen, who joined the Marine Corps in June 1940 and volunteered for service with the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade.

During the early European conflict in World War II, the United Kingdom had a garrison on Iceland, which Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill believed was a vitally important strategic location. Nazi German forces were then steamrolling Western Europe with their *blitzkrieg* (lighting war). Iceland shared a king with Denmark. When Denmark was defeated and occupied by Germany in April 1940, Churchill endeavored to rush British troops to the island. By May, British troops were ashore in Iceland, but these were vital troops that the United Kingdom could not afford to lose to occupation duty.

The United States, though not yet involved in the war, did not want to see a Nazi invasion of Iceland. On 16 June 1941, the 1st Marine Brigade (Provisional) was formed in Charleston, South Carolina. Their orders stated: "in Cooperation with the British Garrison, Defend Iceland Against Hostile Attack." The new brigade, which was mainly com-

[6] Winston S. Churchill, *The Grand Alliance* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1950), 138.

After Harry H. Allen's trip to Iceland, he received the Bronze Star with V device for heroism on Saipan in 1944, landed on Iwo Jima in 1945, and was at the Battle of Chosin Reservoir in 1950.
Marine Corps History Division.

Harry H. Allen's seabag, representing his time with the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

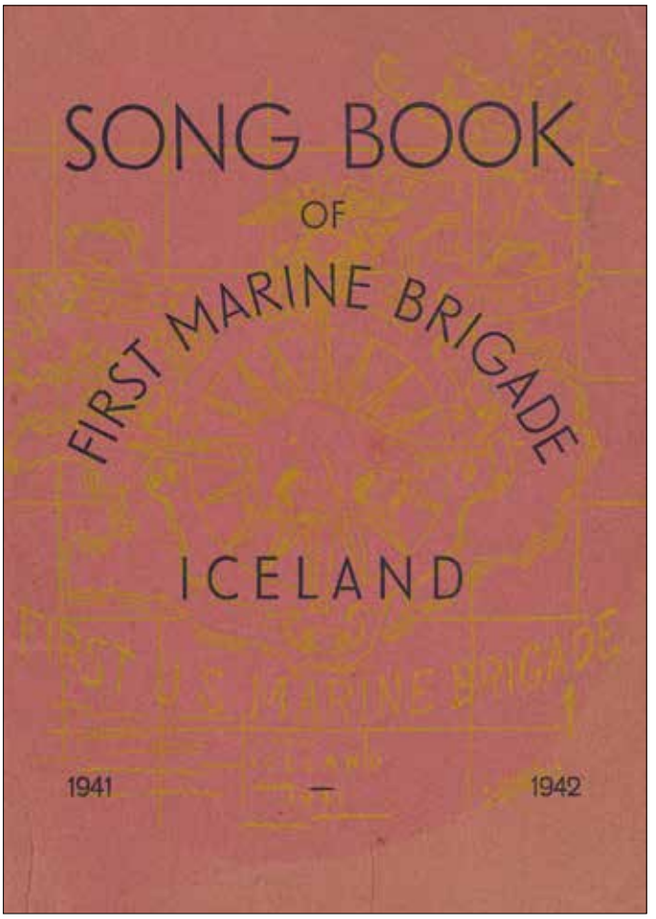
posed of the 6th Marine Regiment, the 5th Defense Battalion, and 2d Battalion, 10th Marine Regiment, steamed from the United States on 22 June and arrived in Iceland on 7 July. The British wanted the Marine brigade placed under their command, but since the United States had not entered the war yet, the Americans declined. The British did loan trucks and provided drivers and turned over their permanent camps to the Marines. On 16 August, Churchill reviewed a joint parade and wrote, "There was a long march past in threes, during which the tune 'United States Marines' bit so deeply into my memory that I could not get it out of my head."

Conditions in Iceland were rough. The Marines suffered a harsh winter without adequate cold weather gear. Brutal cold and 100-mile-per-hour winds made even the simplest task, such as going to the mess hall, dangerous. The brigade installed ropes to help the journey and ensure that Marines did not get lost outside and die from exposure. The mountainous, rugged terrain made travel throughout the island difficult. Storms made travel by ships difficult as well. Worse, as the winter wore on, there were fewer hours of daylight each day.

In September 1941, U.S. Army units began arriving on the island, and the Marines were soon placed under the command of Major General Charles Bonesteel Jr. The soldiers and Marines prepared for a potential German airborne invasion. Enemy reconnaissance flights became a frequent occurrence.

The Commandant of the Marine Corps, Major General Thomas Holcomb, planned to recall the Marine brigade back from Iceland as quickly as he could, as it was becoming apparent that the Corps would need to focus their war efforts in the Pacific, not Europe. The Marine Corps was beginning to expand and had recently activated the 1st and 2d Marine Divisions, so the Service simply could not afford to have experienced Marines stuck on a small outpost in northern Europe. All they needed were enough trained soldiers to take their places. Though the Marines on Iceland heard rumors that they would be replaced by the fall of 1941, they spent Christmas that year on the island. That same

Pvt Robert C. Fowler is welcomed
by British Gnr Harold Ricardi, July 1941.
Naval History and Heritage Command.



Allen's songbook was full of patriotic music,
religious songs, and parodies of popular tunes
from the United States.
Marine Corps History Division.

Prime Minister Winston Churchill
reviews the Marines on Iceland.
Marine Corps History Division.

Marines train in the misery
of ice and snow in Iceland.
Marine Corps History Division.

The 1st Provisional Marine Brigade wore polar bear patches in Iceland. Marines adopted the patch to match the British Army's 49th Infantry Division. *National Museum of the Marine Corps.*

month, as the war kicked off in the Pacific, things became far more dire for the Corps. As the Japanese onslaught carried across the theater, the Marine garrisons on Wake Island and Guam were lost, and the 4th Marines were stranded in the Philippines, their chances looking bleak. The Corps desperately needed the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade back in the United States to strengthen its building efforts.

Allen served in Iceland from October 1941 to March 1942. He went on to have a storied combat career. Though measles kept him from deploying with the newly created 3d Marine Division, he deployed as a wireman with the 4th Marine Division. Though his seabag does not say so, he fought on Kwajalein in the Marshall Islands, Saipan and Tinian in the Mariana Islands, and Iwo Jima in the Volcano Islands. He was awarded a Bronze Star for heroism on Saipan.

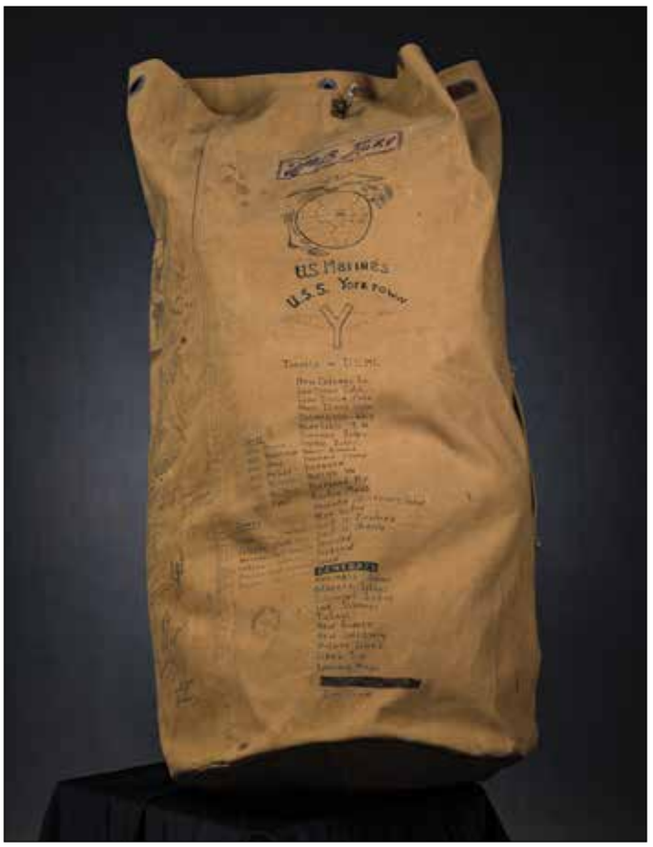
This seabag shows how some Marines have true artistic talent. It also illustrates the partnership that the Marines developed with their British allies in Iceland.

WILLIAM B. KUHL

This seabag belonged to Sergeant William B. Kuhl, a Marine who survived the sinking of the aircraft carrier USS *Yorktown* (CV 5) at the Battle of Midway in June 1942.

Kuhl joined the Marine Corps in 1940, served until 1946, and then reenlisted during the Korean War. He was assigned to the Marine detachment on the *Yorktown*. Sea duty

William B. Kuhl standing with his seabag after he was reunited with it. *National Museum of the Marine Corps.*



William B. Kuhl's seabag.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

was one of the most prestigious posts in the Marine Corps at the time. Like other seabags in this collection, Kuhl's bag depicts a list of all of the places he visited. In a unique twist, he also asked his fellow Marines on the *Yorktown* to sign his bag. He also drew an Eagle, Globe, and Anchor with ink, while another one was painted on. At some point before the Battle of Midway, Kuhl lost this seabag.

The *Yorktown* participated in the Battle of Coral Sea on 4–8 May 1942. The carrier suffered major damage in the battle, and the Imperial Japanese Navy believed that they had knocked the ship out of action for some time. However, the *Yorktown* returned to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, by the end of the month and was quickly repaired enough to steam to Midway, where the next great battle between the U.S. and Japanese navies was to take place. The patched-up carrier departed Hawaii for Midway on 30 May, just two days after it had returned.

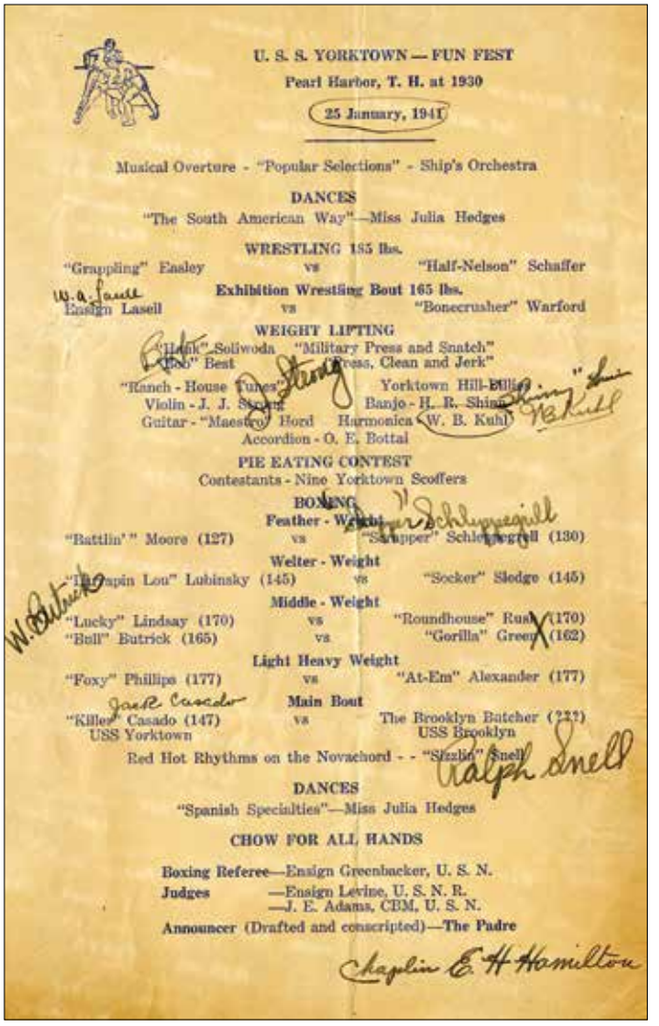
During the Battle of Midway on 4–7 June, Douglas SBD Dauntless dive bombers from the *Yorktown* fatally struck the Japanese aircraft carrier *Soryu*, one of the four Japanese carriers in the Midway invasion force. Unfortunately for the *Yorktown*, a flight of Japanese dive bombers found the U.S. carrier and attacked, landing three hits, including one down the ships funnel, which caused severe damage to the ship's patched-up engine room. Despite the damage, the *Yorktown* was still capable of making enough speed to launch and recover aircraft due to the superb capabilities of the damage control teams. Later in the day, however, a torpedo attack from Japanese planes doomed the ship. The carrier started to list uncontrollably, and the commanding officer, U.S. Navy captain Elliott Buckmaster, ordered the crew to abandon ship.

The *Yorktown* did not sink overnight, so sailors began making their way back aboard for repairs and hoped to salvage the ship. However, a Japanese submarine located the carrier and launched a spread of torpedoes, mortally wounding the *Yorktown.*

When the *Yorktown* was abandoned, Kuhl was in the water for three and a half hours before being picked up by one of the carrier's escort ships. Eleven members of the *Yorktown*'s Marine detachment did not survive the war. Their names are circled on the bag.

Kuhl tracked his service in the Marine Corps on his bag for two more years at sea until he lost it. One of his friends

USS *Yorktown* (CV 5) arrives at Pearl Harbor after the Battle of the Coral Sea. Dockworkers and sailors pulled off a miracle repairing the ship quickly in time for the Battle of Midway.
Naval History and Heritage Command.



U. S. S. YORKTOWN — FUN FEST
Pearl Harbor, T. H. at 1930
25 January, 1941

Musical Overture - "Popular Selections" - Ship's Orchestra

DANCES
"The South American Way"—Miss Julia Hedges

WRESTLING 185 lbs.
"Grappling" Easley vs "Half-Nelson" Schaffer

Exhibition Wrestling Bout 165 lbs.
Ensign Lasell vs "Bonecrusher" Warford

WEIGHT LIFTING
"Hank" Soliwoda "Military Press and Snatch"
"Bob" Best "Press, Clean and Jerk"

"Ranch - House Tunes" Yorktown Hill-Billies
Violin - J. J. Stang Banjo - H. R. Shinn
Guitar - "Maestro" Hord Harmonica - W. B. Kuhl
Accordion - O. E. Bottal

PIE EATING CONTEST
Contestants - Nine Yorktown Scoffers

BOXING
Feather - Weight
"Battlin'" Moore (127) vs "Snapper" Schlesiegrill (130)

Welter - Weight
"Tarzapin Lou" Lubinsky (145) vs "Socker" Sledge (145)

Middle - Weight
"Lucky" Lindsay (170) vs "Roundhouse" Rus[illegible] (170)
"Bull" Butrick (165) vs "Gorilla" Green (162)

Light Heavy Weight
"Foxy" Phillips (177) vs "At-Em" Alexander (177)

Main Bout
"Killer" Casado (147) vs The Brooklyn Butcher ([illegible])
USS Yorktown USS Brooklyn

Red Hot Rhythms on the Novachord - - "Sizzlin'" Snell

DANCES
"Spanish Specialties"—Miss Julia Hedges

CHOW FOR ALL HANDS

Boxing Referee—Ensign Greenbacker, U. S. N.
Judges —Ensign Levine, U. S. N. R.
—J. E. Adams, CBM, U. S. N.
Announcer (Drafted and conscripted)—The Padre

Chaplin E. H. Hamilton

Kuhl played the harmonica in the 1941 Funfest.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

Despite putting up a thick barrage of antiaircraft fire, *Yorktown* was hit by several enemy bombs and torpedoes during the Battle of Midway.
Naval History and Heritage Command.

Yorktown finally succumbed to its wounds on 7 June 1942.
Naval History and Heritage Command.

was working at the Service's Reclamation and Salvage Office and was about to reissue the lost seabag to a new recruit when he recognized it, rescued it, and returned it to Kuhl. Kuhl's son later donated it to the NMMC.

JOHN F. FIELDS

This seabag, the oldest in this exhibit, belonged to John F. Fields. Fields joined the Marine Corps in 1934 and went to radio operator's school following boot camp. He spent time at the Marine barracks on Guam; then ended up in the Embassy Guard Detachment in Peiping (Beijing), China; and then transferred to the 6th Marines when they were in Shanghai in 1938 so that he could travel back to San Diego with the unit. He fell ill at some point and stayed at the U.S. Naval Hospital in San Diego until his eventual medical discharge in 1939.

This seabag has one of the better Eagle, Globe, and Anchor displays of the NMMC's collection. It also features the placenames of Mexico, Hawaii, Wake Island, Guam, Hong Kong, China, and Cavite written on it. Had Field remained in the Marine Corps in some of these places, he likely would have been on the losing end of the Japanese offensive in the Pacific in 1941–42. Hawaii, Peiping, Wake Island, Guam, and the Philippines were some of the first places hit in the Pacific theater of World War II, with most of the Allied contingents at the latter four having the misfortune of becoming casualties or prisoners of war in some of the most grueling conditions imaginable.

JOHN E. LANDSTOM

John E. Landstom's seabag is the least artistic in this collection. In many ways, it exhibits the jocular nature of a Marine private out on deployment. The bag bears the statement: "China Duty: I got Mine," complete with a crude drawing of a hand performing an obscene gesture. It also has numerous poorly drawn Chinese characters as well as a crudely painted 1st Marine Division patch.

Landstrom had an interesting military career. He joined the Oregon National Guard in April 1929 when he was only 16. He served for three years, and then the day after his discharge he joined the Marine Corps. He served in the Corps from April 1932 to March 1936, spending time with different detachments. After that, he worked for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. He reenlisted in the Marine Corps in 1945, and had to attend boot camp a second time, this time as a 32-year-old. He graduated boot camp in July, reported to Camp Pendleton for advanced training, and became an amphibian tractor crewmember. He was in Tientsin at the end of the war for duty in North China.

ROBERT F. FLEISCHER

Robert F. Fleischer painted this seabag, which is the most risqué of the collection. In addition to a list of all the places that Fleischauer traveled, the bag features not one but two pinup girls.

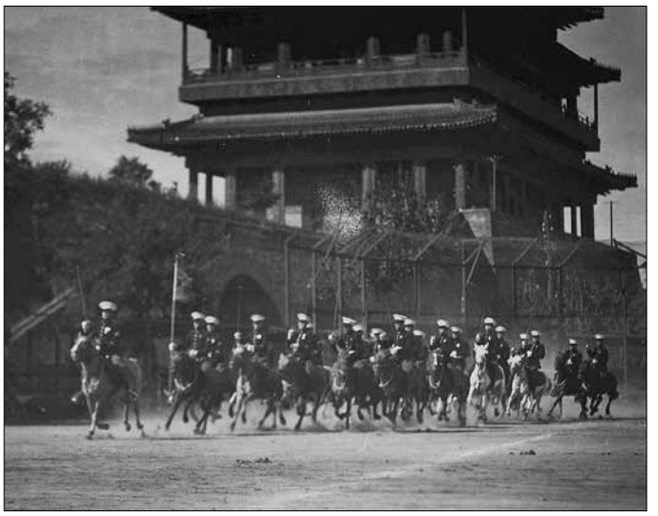
Originally from New Britain, Connecticut, Fleischauer joined the Marine Corps in 1942, immediately after graduating high school. He was assigned to 1st Battalion, 24th Marines, with whom he landed at the island of Roi-Namur during the invasion of the Marshall Islands in January–February 1943. After the battle, his unit went to Maui to prepare for their next operation. While on the island, Fleischauer was inspired to get a tattoo of an Eagle, Globe, and Anchor. Sadly, the eagle carried a ribbon with the misspelling of "Semper Fidles."

Fleischauer next participated in the landings at Saipan and Tinian in the Mariana Islands in June–August 1944. He received a minor wound on Saipan and was badly wounded on Tinian, leading to his evacuation from the island. A grenade fragment tore a chunk from his misspelled tattoo.

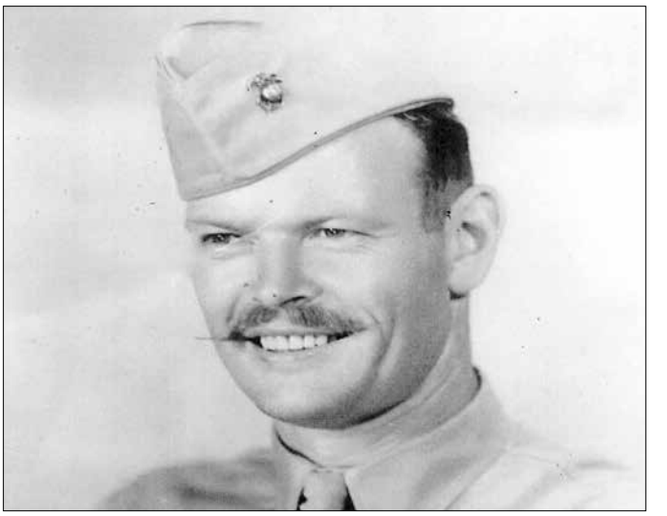
Fleischauer returned to the United States and was discharged from the Marine Corps in 1946. After attending art school, he rejoined the Marine Corps as an art instructor for the Marine Corps Institute. He then served in Korea during the Korean War. After his return, he was assigned to *Leatherneck* magazine and later became art director for the *Marine Corps Gazette*. He retired from the Marine Corps in 1967 as a master sergeant but remained on the *Gazette* staff until his 1995 retirement. He passed away in 2000.

Fleischauer's seabag is customized with a list of all the places he was stationed at or visited during his service through his discharge and first reenlistment, including his boot camp stint at Parris Island, combat tours in the Marshall and Mariana Islands, and finally his tour at the Marine Corps Institute. The bag also features a hand painted pinup girl, which is a unique example of the style of bawdy art loved by American servicemembers during this period.

John F. Fields's seabag.
Photos by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

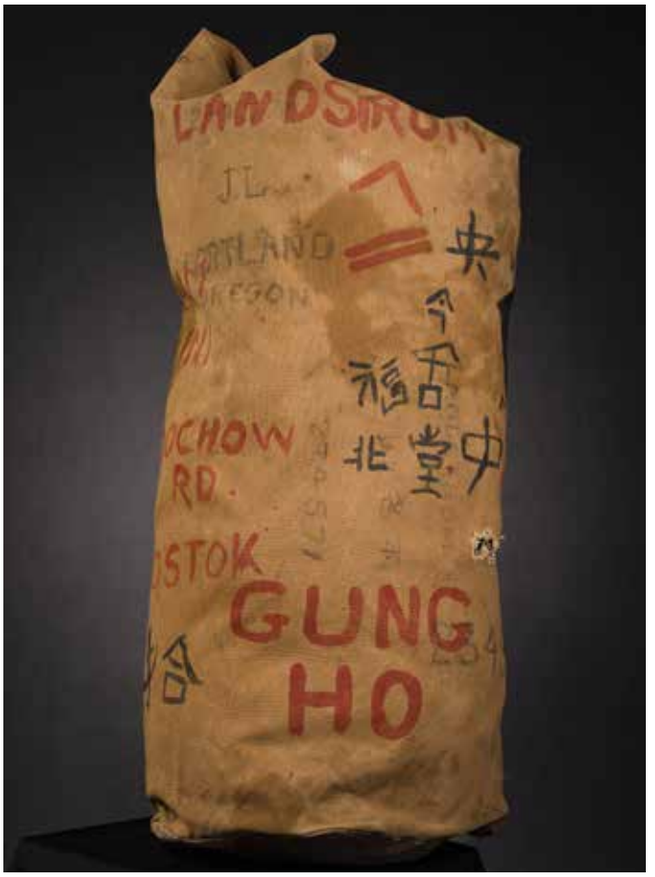


Fields was stationed in Peking (Beijing) directly outside the Chienmien Gate.
Marine Corps History Division.



John E. Lanstrom during his second tour in the Marine Corps.
National Museum of the Marine Corps.

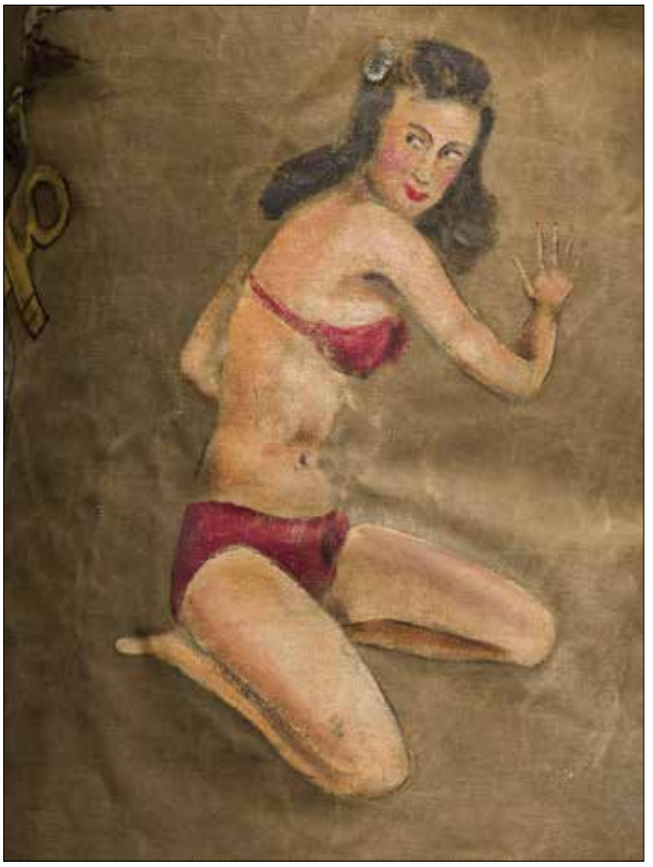
Fields transferred to the 6th Marines when the regiment arrived in Shanghai to reinforce the 4th Marines after the Second Sino-Japanese war began.
Marine Corps History Division.



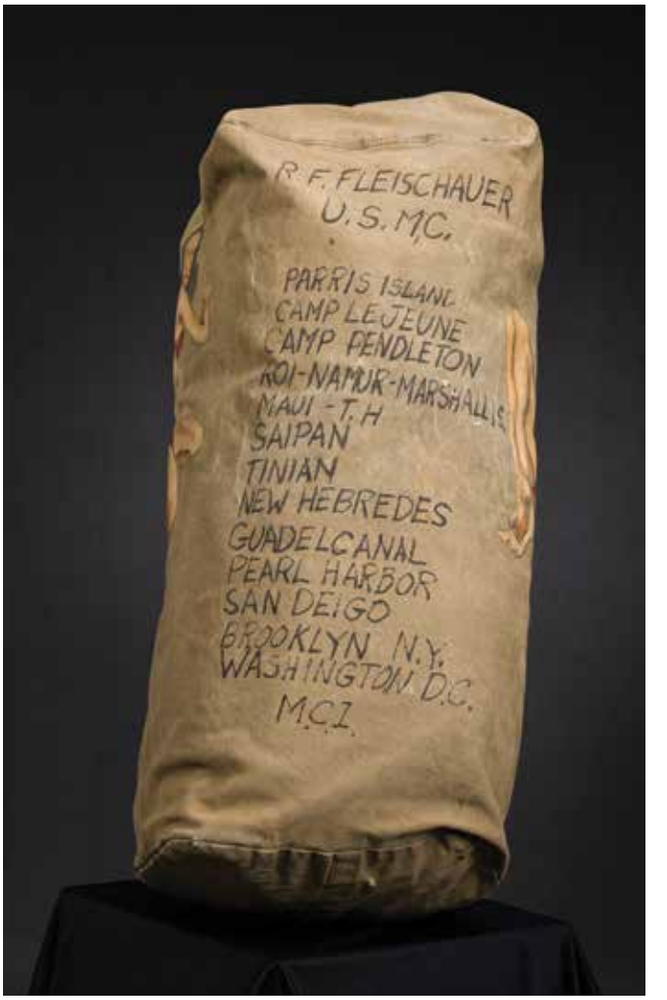
Landstrom was not the best artist,
but he had a great time decorating his bag,
including a rude gesture on the side.
Photos by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

Top: A large surrender ceremony in Tientsin, China, in October 1945. Marines had surrendered to the Japanese in the city on 8 December 1941. *Marine Corps History Division.*

Left: Robert F. Fleischauer and his dog, "Devil Dog," on Maui after the battle of Roi-Namur. *Leatherneck* 83, no. 10 (October 2000): 15.

Fleischauer, a talented artist, decorated his seabag with pinup girls.
Photos by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.



Fleischauer decorated his seabag and documented his tour.
Photos by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

Chapter 7

THE REAL HOLLYWOOD MARINES

Tarawa Oscar

By Jennifer Castro, Cultural and Material History Curator

Featured artifact: Academy Award, *With the Marines at Tarawa* (1944) (1985.795.2)

This Oscar award was presented to the U.S. Marine Corps in 1945 by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for "Best Documentary Short Subject" for the film *With the Marines at Tarawa*. The film was directed by Louis Hayward, a former actor who joined the Marine Corps in July 1942.[1] Captain Hayward led a team of photographers ashore at Tarawa Atoll on 20 November 1943, the first day of the Battle of Tarawa, where they took hundreds of photographs and 5,000 feet of motion picture film.[2] The film follows the story of the three-day battle that took place on the atoll, resulting in an Allied victory but costing the Marines more than 3,000 casualties. Filmed in color, it begins with Marines of the 2d Marine Division learning that they are going to participate in the invasion and concludes with the final capture of the island and the raising of the American flag. The Oscar was accepted by Lieutenant General Julian C. Smith, who had commanded the 2d Marine Division at Tarawa, on behalf of the U.S. Marine Corps at the Academy Awards ceremony on 15 March 1945 at Grauman's Chinese Theater in Los Angeles, California.

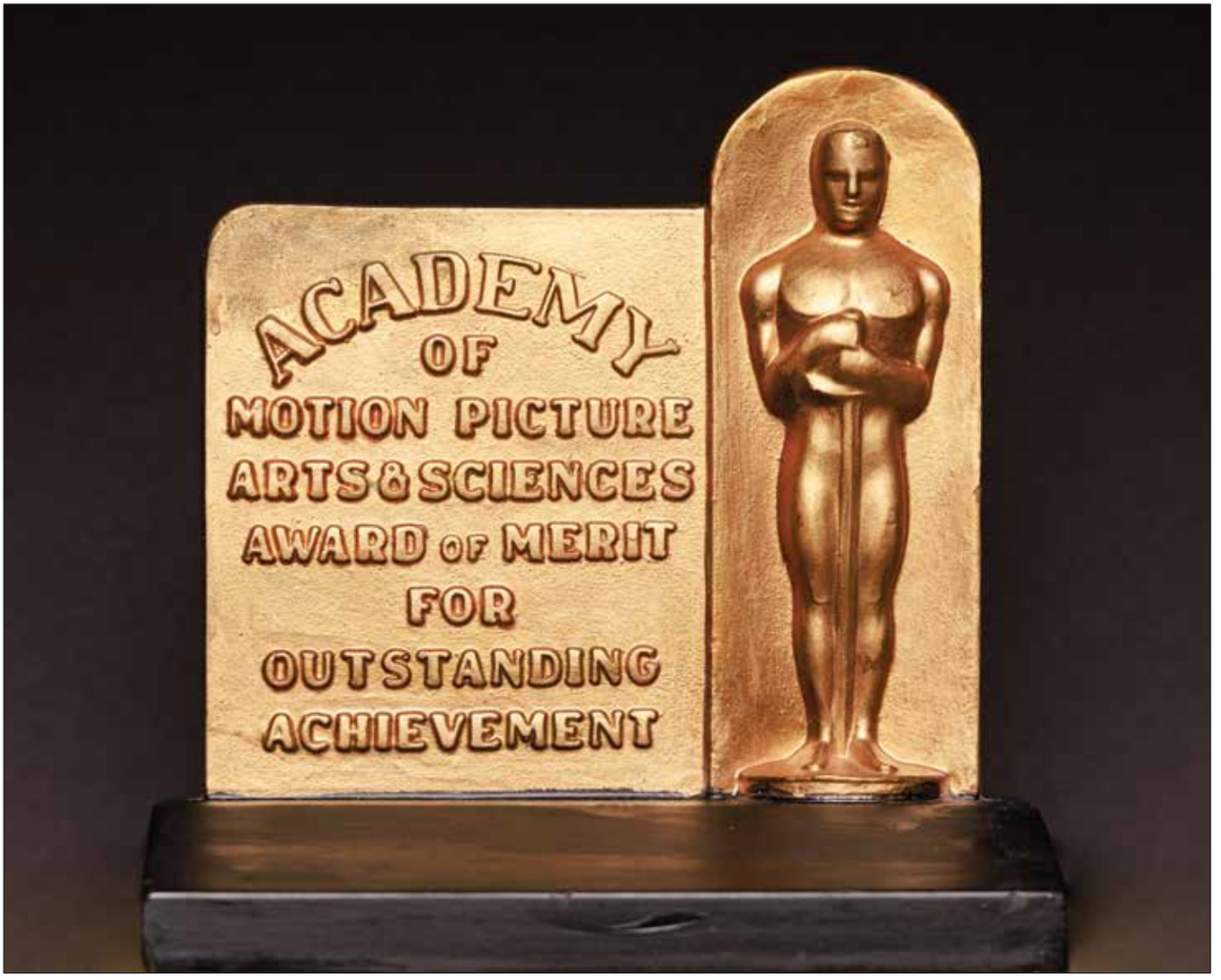
Made of plaster, unlike the better-known gold figurine awards, this award is referred to as a "plaque." Prior to World War II, there were quite a few award categories that received plaques made of bronze rather than the gold statuettes as their official award from the Academy. A change of rules occurred for the 18th Academy Awards ceremony on 7 March 1946, at which the Oscar statuette was given to winners in nearly all the competitive award categories. The Academy permitted past winners in nonstatuette categories to exchange their plaques for a statuette.[3]

This Oscar is remarkable as it is one of the few remaining original plaster Academy Awards known to exist. Because of the metal shortage that occurred during World War II, the Oscar statues were made of painted plaster for a period of three years (1942–44), with the agreement that recipients could exchange their plaster awards for the traditional gold-plated ones following the end of the war. With the change in the rules regarding which categories received the Oscar statuette, the Marine Corps received the traditional statuette after the war was over. This Oscar has a small piece of paper affixed to its bottom that states the following:

[1] "Marine Corps Schools Detachment, Marine Barracks, Quantico, Virginia, 1–31 July 1942," *Muster Rolls of Officers and Enlisted Men of the U.S. Marine Corps, 1798–1958* (Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA); and "Louis Hayward Joins Marines," *New York Times*, 11 July 1942, 11.

[2] James E. Wise Jr. and Anne Collier Rehill, *Stars in the Corps: Movie Actors in the United States Marines* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1999), 31.

[3] Libby Wertin, email messages to author, 12–20 May 2014.

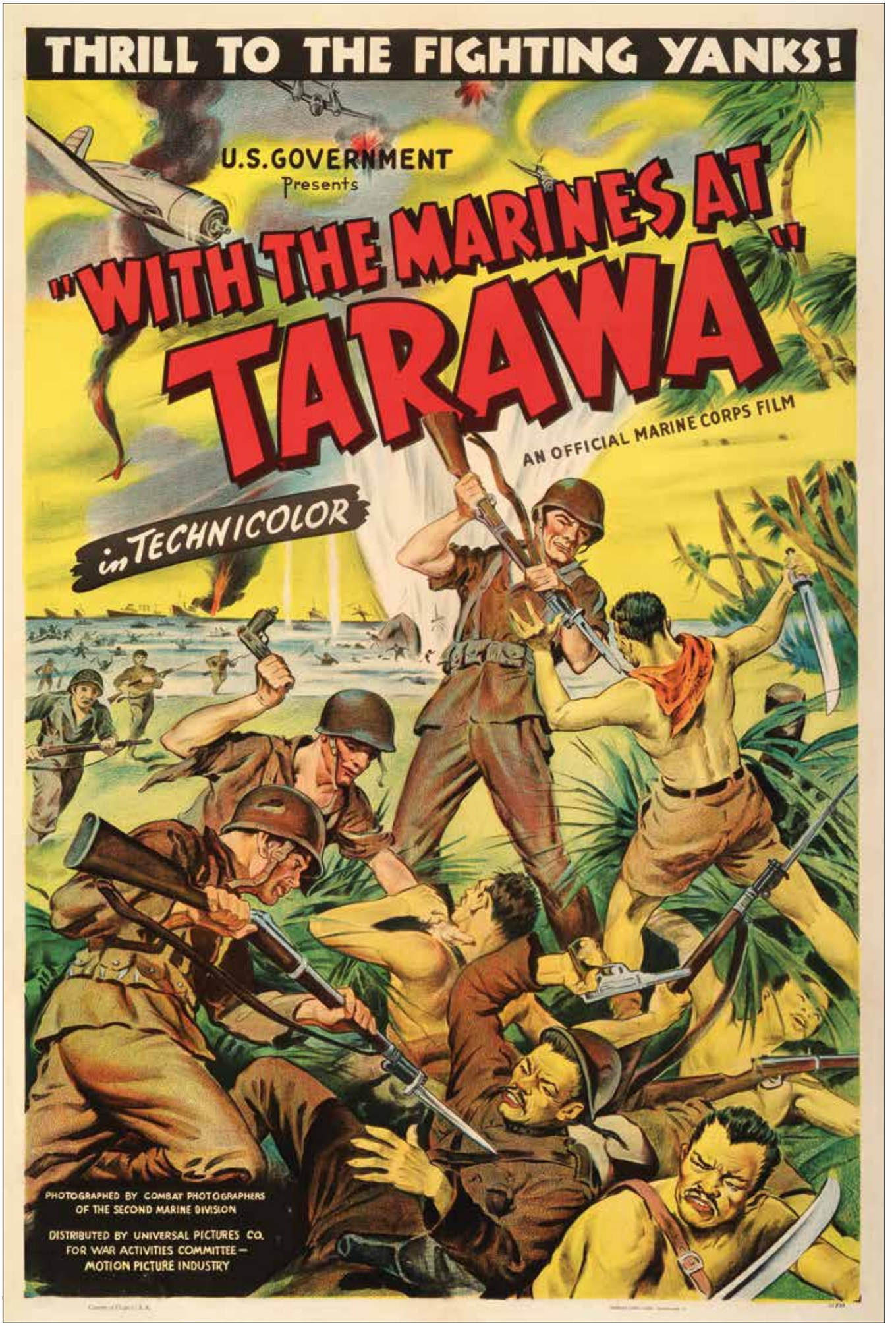


The plaster Oscar presented to the Marine Corps for the Best Short Documentary film *With the Marines at Tarawa. Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press; the Oscar is a copyrighted and registered mark of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.*

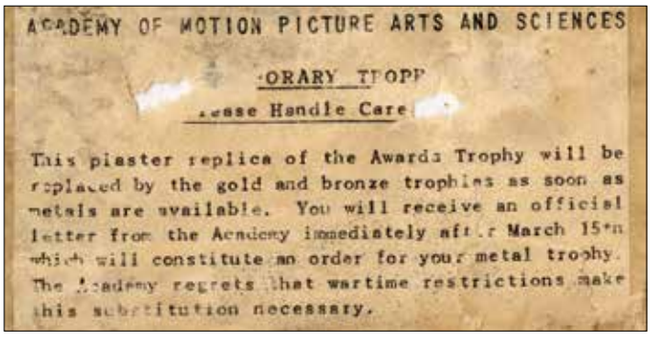
ACADEMY OF MOTION PICTURE
ARTS AND SCIENCES
HONORARY TROPHY
Please Handle Carefully

The plaster replica of the Awards Trophy will be replaced by the gold and bronze trophies as soon as metals are available. You will receive an official letter from the Academy immediately after March 15th which will constitute an order for your metal trophy. The Academy regrets that wartime restrictions make this substitution necessary.

Because award recipients were still unknown at the time of presentation, there were no engraved metal plates with the winner's information affixed to these awards. The winners were directed to return the Oscar to the Academy to have an engraved plate made with their information attached. For some unknown reason, this Oscar did not have a metal plate. The National Museum of the Marine Corps is fortunate to have both the plaster plaque and the traditional Oscar for *With the Marines at Tarawa*. The Oscar statue received by the Marine Corps after World War II is currently exhibited in the museum's World War II gallery.


THRILL TO THE FIGHTING YANKS!
U.S. GOVERNMENT
Presents
"WITH THE MARINES AT TARAWA"
AN OFFICIAL MARINE CORPS FILM
in TECHNICOLOR
PHOTOGRAPHED BY COMBAT PHOTOGRAPHERS OF THE SECOND MARINE DIVISION
DISTRIBUTED BY UNIVERSAL PICTURES CO. FOR WAR ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE — MOTION PICTURE INDUSTRY

LtGen Julian C. Smith receives the Oscar from Charles Russell of Price Waterhouse while presenter Bob Hope, standing at Smith's left, looks on during the 17th Academy Awards ceremony on 15 March 1944 at Grauman's Chinese Theater in Los Angeles, CA.
Norman T. Hatch Collection, Box 11, Folder 4, Collection 3395, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA. Photo is also in the collection of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, photo ID number 700097.


ACADEMY OF MOTION PICTURE ARTS AND SCIENCES

ORARY TROPH

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Above: The label that was originally affixed to the plaster Oscar.
National Museum of the Marine Corps.

Opposite page: A poster for the film *With the Marines at Tarawa.*
National Museum of the Marine Corps.

The Academy Award presented to the Marine Corps for the Best Short Documentary film *With the Marines at Tarawa* is currently on display in the National Museum of the Marine Corps' World War II gallery.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press; the Oscar is a copyrighted and registered mark of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

PART 3

Aviation

Chapter 8

THE BIRTH OF MARINE COMBAT AVIATION

Talbot and Robinson

By Laurence M. Burke II, PhD, Aviation Curator

Featured artifacts: Medal of Honor, Gunnery Sergeant Robert G. Robinson (1974.2871.1); and Medal of Honor, Second Lieutenant Ralph Talbot (1981.526.1)

The Medals of Honor awarded to U.S. Marine Corps pilot Second Lieutenant Ralph Talbot and his observer/gunner, Gunnery Sergeant Robert G. Robinson, for their actions in France in October 1918 were the first such decorations awarded to Marine aviators. The two Marines served in Northern France during World War I with the Marine Day Wing of the United States' Northern Bombing Group (NBG). Their most harrowing action during the war, and the primary reason for their Medals of Honor, was a running fight on 14 October when they were separated from their group during a bombing raid and had to fight off numerous German fighter planes alone.

The NBG was a Navy-Marine Corps organization with a convoluted development beginning in early 1918. By the end of May, the group's final form had been set: four Navy night bomber squadrons and four Marine day bomber squadrons all targeting German U-boat bases in the occupied Belgian cities of Bruges, Zeebrugge, and Ostend. While the organization was set, however, resources to put the plan into action were still lacking.

Marine Corps aviator Major Alfred A. Cunningham was the source of one of the ideas that led to the creation of the NBG. He had spent much of the winter and spring of 1918 working to assemble personnel for four Marine squadrons of fighter aircraft. He was still working to gather the necessary personnel when the Navy informed him that his Marine squadrons would fly day bombers instead of fighters. One source for these badly needed aviators was the Naval Aviation School at Pensacola, Florida. Cunningham convinced numerous fledgling naval aviators that they would get into action in Europe much sooner if they transferred to the Marine Corps and Cunningham's First Marine Aviation Force (FMAF).[1]

Ralph Talbot was one of these recruits. Interested in flying, he joined the Navy's aviation training program in October 1917. He earned his naval aviator's certificate on 10 April 1918 and recommissioned in the Marine Corps little more than a month later. He was assigned to Squadron C of the FMAF. Robert Robinson had enlisted in the Marine Corps in May 1917 and was serving with the 92d Marine Company at Quantico, Virginia, when he was reassigned (likely as a volunteer) to Squadron C on 17 June 1918. The FMAF's first three squadrons (A, B, and C) boarded a transport for Europe on 18 July. The fourth squadron, D, was still forming in the United States and would ship overseas in October.[2]

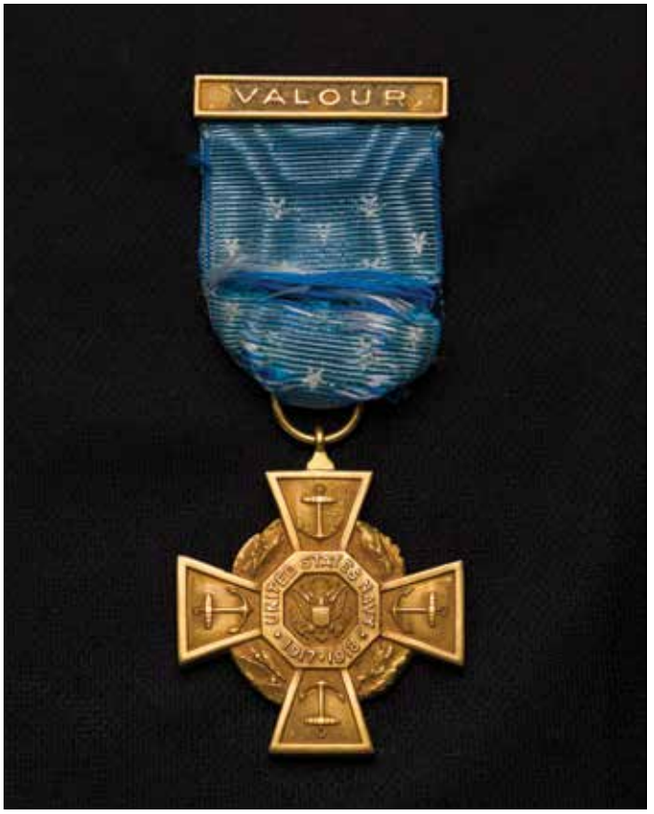
After arrival of the FMAF in France, Cunningham

[1] Laurence M. Burke II, " 'What to Do with the Airplane?': Determining the Role of the Airplane in the U.S. Army, Navy, and Marine Corps, 1908–1925" (PhD diss., Carnegie Mellon University, 2014), 661–97; and LtCol Edward C. Johnson, *Marine Corps Aviation: The Early Years, 1912–1940* (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1977), 15–17.

[2] Alan E. Durkota, *Medal of Honor*, vol. 1, *Aviators of World War One* (Stratford, CT: Flying Machines Press, 1998), 75, 78; and Johnson, *Marine Corps Aviation*, 19.

GySgt Robert G. Robinson's Medal of Honor (obverse).
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

GySgt Robert G. Robinson's Medal of Honor (reverse).
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.



2dLt Ralph Talbot's Medal of Honor (obverse).
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

2dLt Ralph Talbot's Medal of Honor (reverse).
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

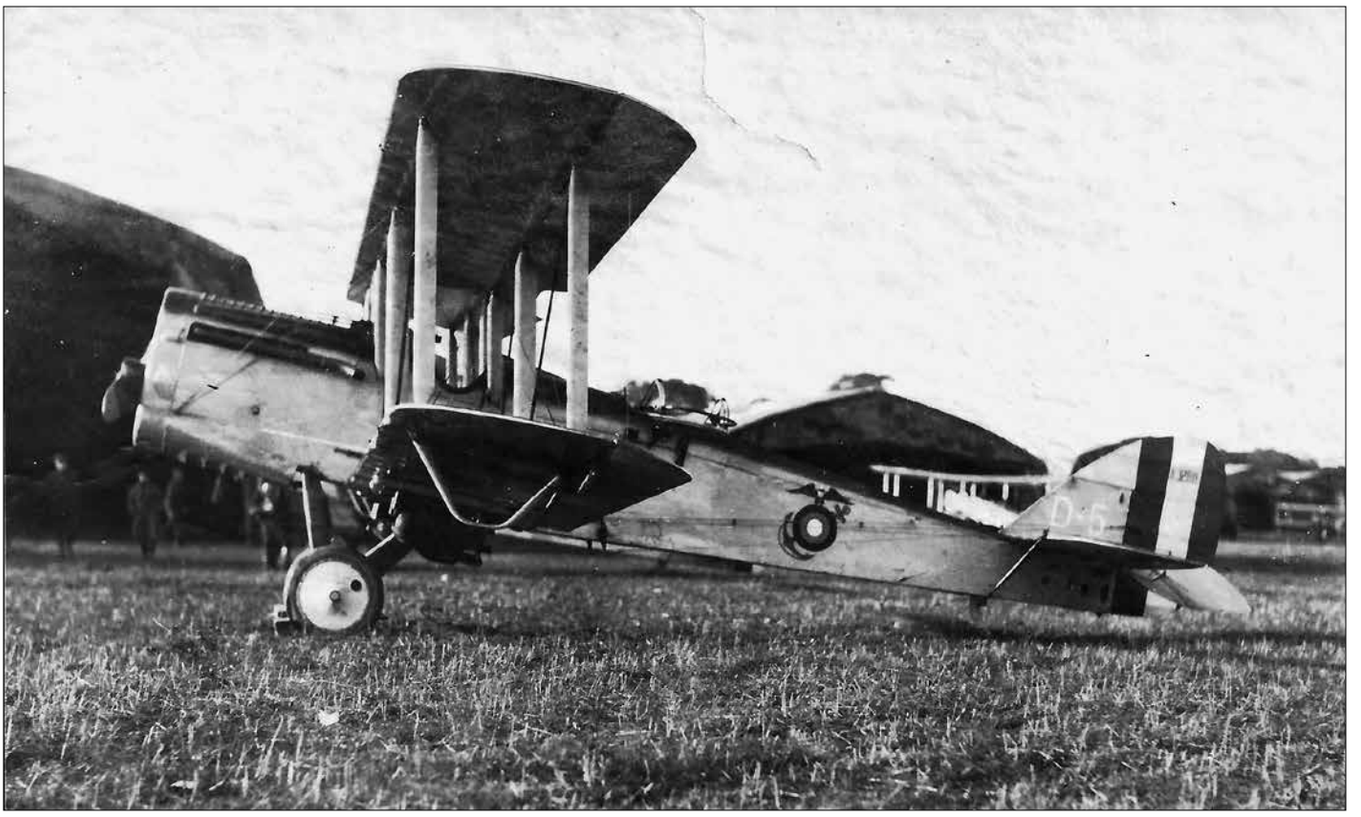
A commissioning photograph of Ralph Talbot.
Marine Corps History Division.

Robert Robinson wearing his flying gear. Between the wind across the open cockpits and the extreme cold at high altitudes, every flight was a fight to stay warm.
Marine Corps History Division.

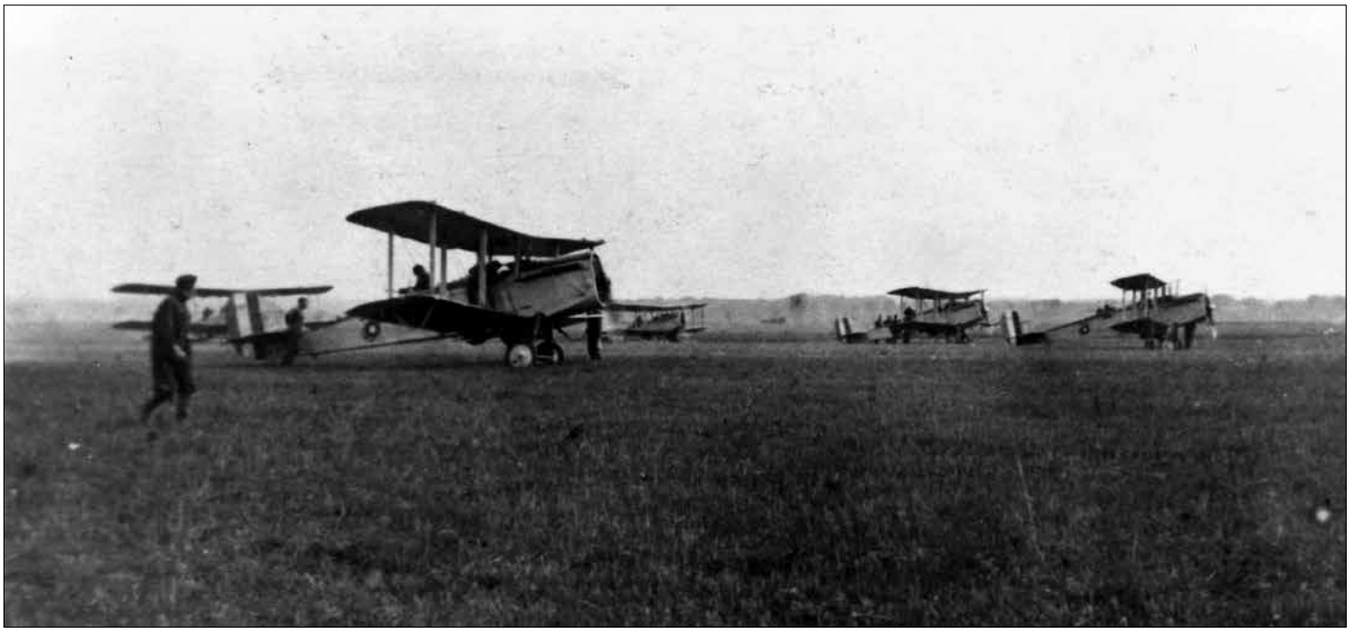
discovered that his squadrons' aircraft—which he had been told were in France—were not ready for use. Production delays, shipping problems, and confusion at the French port over where the aircraft crates were supposed to go (with few people having heard of the NBG yet) left his squadrons without aircraft and nothing to do. As it happened, British day bombing squadrons in the area had full complements of aircraft but a shortage of aircrew to fly them. These former Royal Naval Air Service squadrons, now part of the new Royal Air Force (RAF), were flying the British Airco DH.4 two-seat biplane and the very similar Airco DH.9. Cunningham quickly arranged for his Marine aircrews to fly with the RAF squadrons while their own aircraft were being located, uncrated, reassembled, repaired (as many suffered damage during shipping), and updated as necessary.[3]

Talbot and Robinson were probably first thrown together when assigned to the RAF pilots pool in Audembert, France, in September 1918. There, they received training in RAF equipment and tactics. By the end of the month, they were assigned to the RAF's No. 218 Squadron. While 218 Squadron was a DH.9 squadron, Talbot and Robinson, then a corporal, flew in one of the first U.S.-built DH-4s to reach the Marines, aircraft D-1. On 3 October, they helped airdrop food (canned rations in sacks with some dirt to cushion the impact) to French troops who had been isolated by German forces and impassable mud. The sacks of food were dropped from about 500 feet, exposing the planes to intense antiaircraft fire from German rifles and machine guns. During the next several days, the two participated in more traditional bombing raids. Their U.S.-built DH-4, with its U.S.-designed Liberty engine, was faster than the British DH.9s, so the Marines were often tasked with protecting the raids from enemy fighters, using twin-fixed forward-firing guns and a single machine gun on a flexible mount fired by the observer/gunner. Talbot and Robinson experienced their first aerial combat during a mission on 8 October, when nine German fighters attacked their for-

[3] Burke, "What to Do with the Airplane?," 702–14; and Johnson, *Marine Corps Aviation*, 20–24.



Aircraft D-5 (BuNo A3280), a U.S.-built DH-4. Note the FMAF logo on the side of the plane (incorporating the U.S. roundel) and the bombs on racks under the wings.
Marine Corps History Division.



Marine Day Wing planes prepare for a mission in France.
Marine Corps History Division.

This painting by Col Charles H. Waterhouse, USMCR (Ret), depicts Talbot escaping across the trenches with an unconscious Robinson slumped over in the rear seat. German soldiers are firing rifles and machine guns at the airplane. *National Museum of the Marine Corps.*

mation. The two Marines engaged all nine, shooting one down and successfully making their escape. Their time with 218 Squadron came to an end on 12 October, when they flew their DH-4 to La Fresne aerodrome, one of the Day Wing's bases in France.

By this time, the Day Wing had been able to obtain enough aircraft—a mixture of U.S.-built DH-4s and British-built DH.9As, both powered by Liberty engines—to mount its own bombing missions. The first of these occurred on 14 October, when eight Day Wing bombers took off from La Fresne to attack a railway center at Thielt, Belgium. One turned back with mechanical problems, but the remaining seven (including Talbot and Robinson's plane) struck the objective and turned for home. On the way back to base, they encountered 12 German fighters. Two of the Marine planes fell out of formation due to engine trouble, but the Germans seemed to concentrate only on one of those, the one crewed by Talbot and Robinson.

Robinson quickly shot down one of the attackers, but two more attacked from below. One of the German planes managed to shatter Robinson's left elbow with bullet fire, leaving his arm hanging on by a few tendons. Robinson bravely continued to fire one-handed at the enemy, but his gun jammed. Talbot was not passive while this was going on, maneuvering his airplane around with the intention of using his forward-firing machine guns, but both jammed while he was pressing his attack. In the meantime, Robinson managed to clear the jam in his gun, and he may have shot down a second German plane, but he was struck again by bullets, once in the stomach and once in the thigh. This caused him to collapse, unconscious, in the rear cockpit, on top of the control cables, making it difficult for Talbot to control the plane. In spite of this, Talbot—whose guns were still jammed—faked an attack on another German plane. His bluff worked, and the German pilot turned away, giving Talbot an escape route. Talbot dove toward the ground, evading fire from the one German plane that followed him and crossed over the front lines at a mere 15 meters above ground. Once safely on the Allied side of the front (the German pilot did not follow him across), Talbot headed for a nearby Belgian airfield located next to a field hospital. Surgeons there were able to save Robinson's life and even reattach his arm. Talbot, meanwhile, was able to fly his damaged aircraft back to La Fresne.

The aftermath of Talbot's fatal crash.
Marine Corps History Division.

Robinson spent the rest of the war recovering from his wounds, while Talbot continued to fly missions for the Day Wing. On 26 October, Talbot was making a flight to test a rebuilt engine. The engine was unable to provide power for a proper climb, and the plane's landing gear clipped an embankment around the airfield's bomb dump. The impact tore off the gear and flipped the plane over, throwing the observer/gunner free but trapping Talbot under the plane, which exploded in a mass of flames. Despite the plane's ammunition beginning to cook off, men rushed to try to put out the fire, move bombs to safety, and rescue Talbot. Unfortunately, their efforts to save Talbot were in vain—when the flames were extinguished, Talbot's body was found with the engine resting on his chest. He likely died in the initial crash.[4]

Talbot and Robinson were ultimately awarded the Medal of Honor on 11 November 1920 for their actions on 14 October 1918. The citations for both Marines are the same and state that Talbot fired at the enemy to make his escape, but before he died Talbot had told the story of his guns jamming to a fellow pilot, who in turn recorded the tale in a letter to Talbot's mother following Talbot's death.

The National Museum of the Marine Corps holds both Marines' medals in its collection. Robinson's is on display in the museum's World War I gallery, while Talbot's is currently in storage. Incidentally, these two medals look different from the Medal of Honor's more familiar star-shaped design. In 1919, U.S. secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels decided that there should be separate designs for Navy Medals of Honor awarded for combat and noncombat heroism. The existing star shape became the noncombat version. Talbot and Robinson received the new combat version of the Medal of Honor, designed by Tiffany & Company of New York City, which has since become known as the "Tiffany Cross." In August 1942, the U.S. Department of the Navy decided that the Medal of Honor would only be awarded for heroism in combat and that the star-shaped design would be used.[5]

[4] Johnson, *Marine Corps Aviation*, 22–24; and Durkota, *Medal of Honor*, 78–85.

[5] John E. Strandberg and Roger James Bender, *The Call of Duty: Military Awards and Decorations of the United States of America*, 2d ed. (San Diego, CA: R. James Bender Publishing, 2004), 72.

Chapter 9

THE LAST STAND OF CAPTAIN HENRY T. ELROD

By Laurence M. Burke II, PhD, Aviation Curator

Featured artifacts: Relic, Part, Propeller, Aircraft, Grumman F4F-3 Wildcat (1983.278.1); and Medal, Medal of Honor, Captain Henry T. Elrod (1977.326.1)

The United States claimed the uninhabited Wake Island in 1899, with the idea that it could serve as a station for a new submarine telegraph cable to the U.S. colony of the Philippines.[1] Wake remained uninhabited until 1935, when Pan American Airways (Pan Am) began developing the location as a stopover point for its flying clippers. At that time, the United States was prohibited by treaty from establishing new military bases in the Pacific, but the civil facilities that Pan Am planned at Wake could also be used by the U.S. Navy.[2] In 1939, the treaty restricting new fortifications in the Pacific had expired, and the Navy began planning to expand the Pan Am station at Wake, turning it into a Navy seaplane base. Work began in January 1941. By December of that year, the construction was about 65 percent complete, but little had been done to build defensive fortifications.[3] The advance detail of the U.S. Marine Corps' 1st Defense Battalion had only begun arriving in August. The first airplanes from Marine Fighter Squadron 211 (VMF-211) arrived on 4 December, joining an advance party of about one-fifth of the squadron's ground crew.[4]

At 0650 on the morning of 8 December 1941, local time (7 December in Hawaii and the United States), a radio operator on Wake learned of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The Marine defense garrison, only up to about half its intended strength, rushed to what defensive positions existed. The lone aircraft squadron on the atoll, VMF-211, was also not up to full strength or equipment, but it scrambled to get its 12 brand-new Grumman F4F-3 Wildcat fighters ready for combat. The squadron had just switched over to Wildcats from the older Brewster F2A Buffalo fighters, and the pilots were scheduled for their first gunnery practice later that day. Four planes had taken off for the dawn patrol and were airborne when news of the Pearl Harbor attack came in. They landed at 0900 and took off again after refueling. Captain Henry Talmadge Elrod, the squadron's executive officer, led one of the two 2-plane sections in this second flight.[5]

[1] LtCol Robert D. Heinl Jr., *The Defense of Wake* (Washington, DC: Historical Section, Division of Public Information, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1947), 65–66.

[2] John Wukovits, *Pacific Alamo: The Battle for Wake Island* (New York: New American Library, 2003), 18.

[3] Samuel Eliot Morison, *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II*, vol. 3, *The Rising Sun in the Pacific, 1931–April 1942* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1948), 225, 227; and *Building the Navy's Bases in World War II: History of the Bureau of Yards and Docks and the Civil Engineer Corps, 1940–1946*, vol. 2 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1947), 157–58.

[4] S. E. Smith, ed., *The United States Marine Corps in World War II* (New York: Random House, 1969) 2–3; and Alan R. Millett, *Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps* (New York: Macmillan, 1980), 354–55.

[5] BGen John F. Kinney, *Wake Island Pilot: A World War II Memoir* (Sterling, VA: Potomac Books, 2005), 55, 57–58.

Capt Henry T. Elrod's Medal of Honor.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

Capt Henry T. Elrod's Medal of Honor (reverse). The inscription reads: "The President of the/United States/to/Capt. Henry T. Elrod/USMC/Deceased/For Gallantry Above and Beyond/the Call of Duty Against/Enemy Japanese Forces on/Wake Island/8 to 23/December/1941."
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

A Grumman F4F-3 Wildcat propeller from Wake Island.
National Archives and Records Administration.

A composite photograph of Wake Atoll. The airfield on Wake Island is at lower right.
National Archives and Records Administration.

Capt Henry T. Elrod.
National Archives and Records Administration.

At about 1200, 34 Japanese Mitsubishi G3M2 twin-engine bombers, later to be codenamed "Nells" by the Allied forces, bombed and strafed the atoll, destroying seven of VMF-211's Wildcats on the ground and damaging an eighth, damaging the squadron's air-ground radio, destroying the already limited supply of spare parts along with the repair manuals for the planes, and setting fire to the aviation gas tanks. In addition to this, the strike ultimately killed close to one-half of the squadron's 55 personnel, while another 11 were injured. Unfortunately for the Marine defenders, the Japanese bombers were able to approach and depart the atoll while hidden by storm clouds, and the noise of their approach was masked by the booming surf. The U.S. naval base lacked radar to detect the incoming raid, and damage to the radios meant that the base was unable to vector the combat air patrols (two sections of two Wildcats each) to the targets. The attacking Japanese bombers escaped without being engaged by the Wildcats. The Marine planes landed shortly after the attack, and Elrod's plane, number 9, struck some bomb debris, bending its propeller and damaging the engine.[6]

[6] Robert Sherrod, *History of Marine Corps Aviation in World War II* (Washington, DC: Combat Forces Press, 1952), 37–38.

A Japanese photograph shows a formation of Mitsubishi G3M bombers in flight. *San Diego Air and Space Museum.*

During the next several days, the surviving squadron personnel did their best to keep as many of their five surviving aircraft, including Elrod's repaired number 9, in the air as possible. Using only hand tools that had survived the attack, the severely reduced squadron cannibalized their nonflying aircraft for parts and made other repairs as best they could.[7]

A Japanese landing force arrived at Wake on 11 December. Expecting minimal resistance, this force was quite small—just 450 troops—and supported by three light cruisers and six destroyers with no air cover. Marines crewing the surviving coastal defense guns on the atoll were able to turn back this force, sinking an enemy destroyer and inflicting damage on other ships. VMF-211 put four Wildcats in the air, each carrying two 100-pound bombs. These aircraft hit and damaged two of the Japanese light cruisers as well as one transport and one destroyer, while Elrod was credited with sinking the destroyer *Kisaragi* (no. 21) when his bombs detonated the ship's depth charges. VMF-211 was able to fly six more sorties before the Japanese were out of range, with the Wildcats bombing and strafing damaging another three ships. But Elrod's plane (number 11) had been damaged by antiaircraft fire, and he wrecked just short of the airfield on his return. Only two Wildcats were available to oppose the Japanese bombers that arrived over Wake four hours later. The next day, 12 December, Elrod shot down 2 of the 22 Nells that bombed the atoll.[8]

In the face of the failure of the first landing attempt at Wake, the Japanese reinforced their landing forces and added two aircraft carriers (and their escorts) from the force that had carried out the Pearl Harbor attack. The first Japanese carrier strikes, involving bombers escorted by fighters, hit Wake on 20 December, opposed in the air by only two Marine Wildcats. Two days later, the Japanese carrier planes struck again. During this raid, the last two flyable Wildcats were lost, and the 20 remaining able-bodied Marines of VMF-211 took their place in the line of defenses, truly embodying the idea that every Marine is a rifleman.

The second Japanese invasion force struck on 23 December, with the first troops landing on Wake shortly after 0230. Elrod was leading the defense of a 3-inch antiaircraft

[7] Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 42; and Kinney, *Wake Island Pilot*, 59–60.

[8] Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 40–41; Morison, *The Rising Sun in the Pacific*, 234; and Wukovits, *Pacific Alamo*, 91–92.

Cat and Mouse over Wake by Marcus W. Stewart Jr. This painting depicts a VMF-211 Wildcat trying to shoot down a Japanese bomber.
National Museum of the Marine Corps.

gun when his unit was surrounded. At one point, he stood up with an M1928 Thompson submachine gun to successfully break a Japanese charge. He died later when he was shot in the head while standing up to throw a grenade. He was buried near where he fell along with other U.S. casualties of the battle.[9] The Marine Corps posthumously promoted Elrod to major and awarded him the Medal of Honor for his defense of Wake against overwhelming odds both in the air and on the ground.

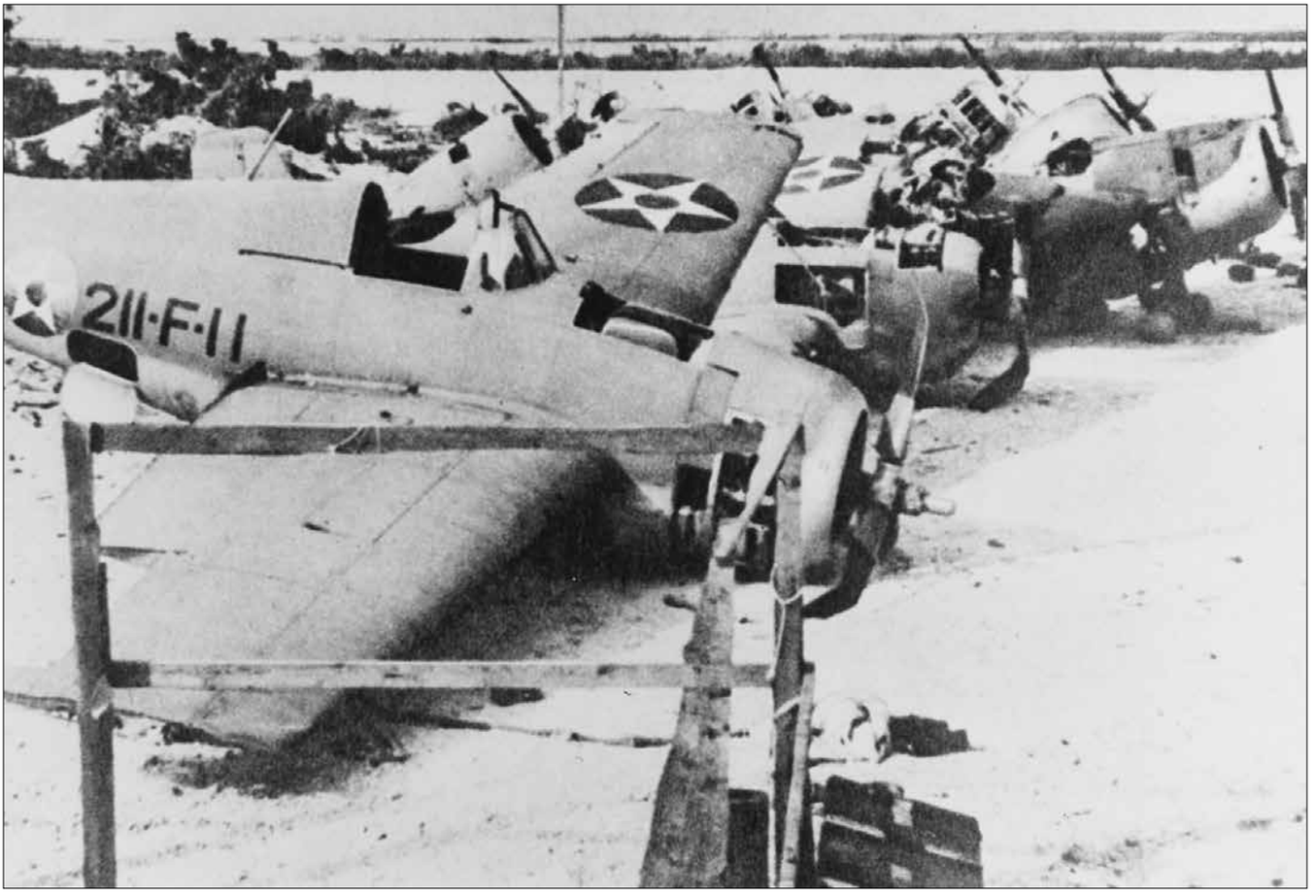
The garrison commander on Wake, U.S. Navy commander Winfield S. Cunningham, reported the successful Japanese landing to his superiors in Hawaii at about 0500 on 23 December with the famous message: "ENEMY ON ISLAND—ISSUE IN DOUBT." At about 0800, facing dwindling ammunition supplies, sustaining increasing casualties, and knowing that the naval relief force sailing from Pearl Harbor to reinforce Wake had been ordered back to Hawaii, Cunningham made the difficult decision to surrender the atoll. The surviving defenders, along with about 1,100 civilians—mostly contractors working to establish the Navy seaplane base along with a handful of Pan Am staff—were taken prisoner by the Japanese.[10]

Wake remained under Japanese control until the end of the war, finally surrendering to a detachment of Marines on 4 September 1945. Construction forces soon moved in to restore the airfield and extend it for commercial use. In 1955, a Coast Guardsman in charge of the atoll's LORAN (long-range navigation) station created a makeshift memorial from the engine cowling, bent propeller, and tailhook of a damaged Marine Wildcat, reportedly from Elrod's damaged number 9 plane but more likely from the crashed number 11 since number 9 went missing in action on 22 December.[11]

[9] Wukovits, *Pacific Alamo*, 171, 189–90.

[10] Morison, *The Rising Sun in the Pacific*, 248, 252–53.

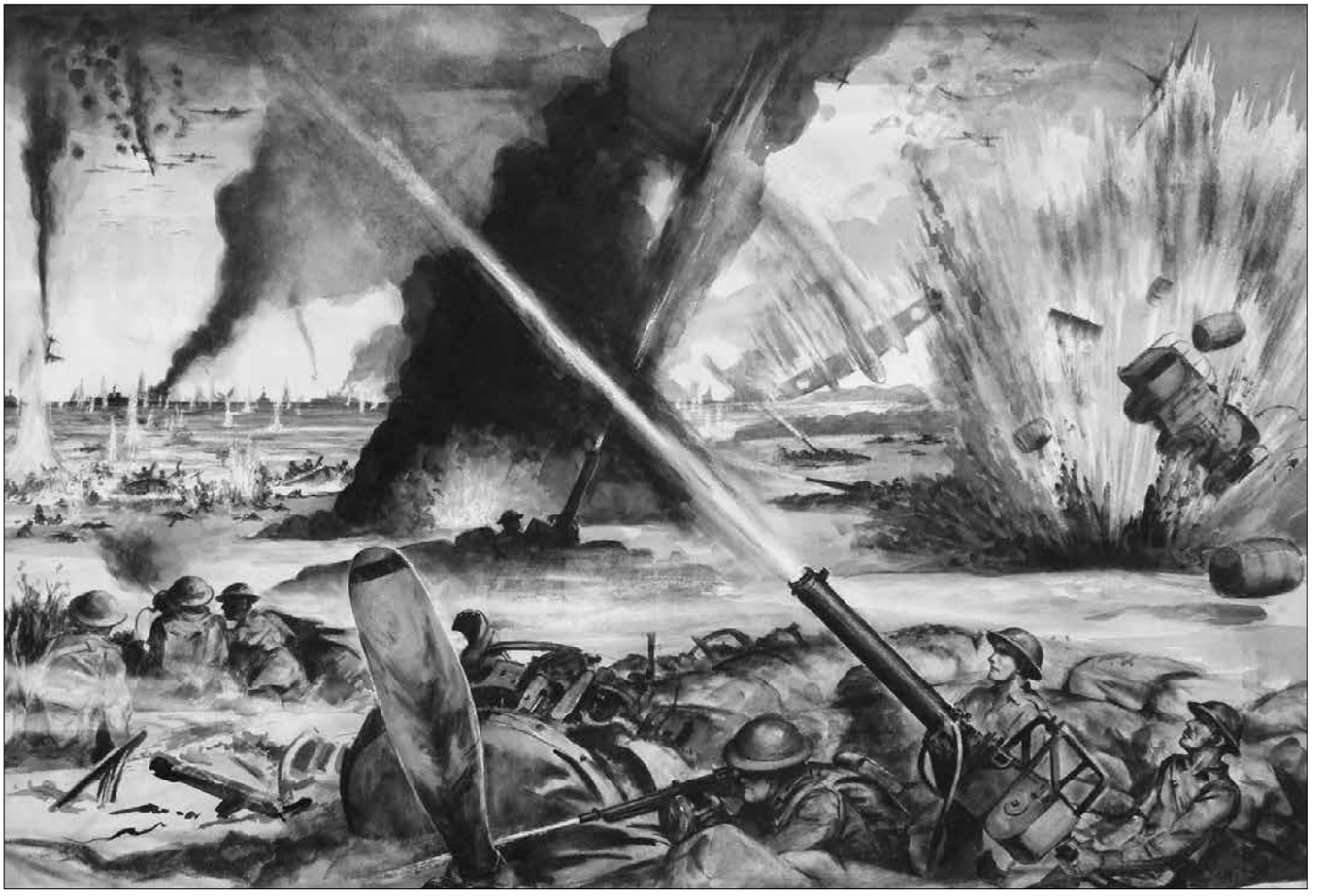
[11] Caption to U.S. Department of Defense photo A420788; and Gregory J. W. Urwin, *Facing Fearful Odds: The Siege of Wake Island* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 434–36.



The remains of VMF-211's Wildcats on Wake.
National Archives and Records Administration.

In 1964, this was replaced by a permanent memorial to the defenders of Wake, and the airplane parts were removed and delivered to the collection of what is now the National Museum of the Marine Corps. The cowling was restored to like-new condition for installation on the FM-1 Wildcat (a wartime copy of the F4F-4 that was built in idled General Motors automotive factories) at the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum in Washington, DC, where it remained for many years.[12] But the propeller and tailhook remain in their damaged state, attesting to the difficulties faced by VMF-211 and the heroic Major Elrod.

[12] National Museum of the Marine Corps, catalog file 1995.84.



Sea – Wake Island by E. Franklin Wittmack. Wittmack painted the scene in 1943, when few details of the battle were known in the United States. It does not accurately depict any of the action on the atoll but does convey the sense that most Americans had of the battle.
National Museum of the Marine Corps.

The first Wake Island memorial built by Lt Marshall K. Phillips, USCG, in 1955.
National Archives and Records Administration.

Chapter 10

IN THE HIGHEST TRADITION

Captain Stephen Pless's UH-1E

By Laurence M. Burke II, PhD, Aviation Curator

Featured artifact: Bell UH-1E Iroquois (1984.1797.1)
in the National Museum of the Marine Corps' Legacy Walk

The U.S. Marine Corps does not maintain dedicated combat search-and-rescue teams. Instead, this is a mission that any Marine helicopter squadron may be tasked with conducting. Even so, the rescue effort of Captain Stephen W. Pless in Vietnam in 1967, carried out in a helicopter not equipped to carry more than its own aircrew, is an anomaly. That fact, combined with the intense combat that Pless and his crew experienced as they rescued three stranded U.S. Army soldiers, resulted in a Medal of Honor for Pless and Silver Stars for each of his crew. The helicopter they flew that day is now on display at the National Museum of the Marine Corps.

On 19 August 1967, Pless and his crew—copilot Captain Rupert E. Fairfield Jr., Gunnery Sergeant Leroy N. Poulson, and Lance Corporal John G. Phelps—were flying a Bell UH-1E Iroquois helicopter gunship, BuNo 154760, callsign "Cherry 6." They were scheduled to escort a Marine Sikorsky UH-34D Seahorse helicopter on an emergency medical evacuation (medevac) mission near Chu Lai. The UH-34D was having mechanical difficulties, so Pless decided to fly ahead. While on their way to the pickup, the crew heard a call for help: a U.S. Army Boeing CH-47 Chinook transport helicopter, with wounded aboard, had been forced down by enemy ground fire. The helicopter's crew chief, along with three other soldiers for security, had gotten out to inspect the damage when a grenade exploded near the nose of the aircraft and National Liberation Front (NLF) forces began closing in. The Army pilot lifted off to find a safer spot to inspect his aircraft, but the four soldiers could not get back aboard in time and were left behind in close contact with the enemy. Once airborne, the pilot radioed his predicament and called for someone to help the soldiers left behind.

Responding to the call, Pless arrived over a beach about 1.5 kilometers north of the mouth of the Tra Khuc River (about 120 kilometers south of Da Nang) to find 30–50 NLF fighters surrounding the Army soldiers, some of them beating and bayoneting the Americans. Seeing no other aircraft in the area, Pless checked with his crew, who unanimously gave the thumbs-up to go down and help the soldiers. Pless made a low pass about 15 meters from the ground, at which point he saw one of the soldiers, Staff Sergeant Lawrence H. Allen, wave to the helicopter. Seeing this, Pless ordered Poulson, on the starboard-side door M-60 machine gun, to open fire. Fearing that he might hit the Americans, Poulson fired at the edge of the mob. This led the enemy to make a break for the tree line, at which point Pless pulled up, spun around, and fired all 14 of his white phosphorous rockets into the group. Pless then circled around and began firing his helicopter's four fixed M-60s into the smoke from his rockets. Phelps called it "the most remarkable airmanship I've ever seen."[1] Making multiple strafing runs, Pless man-

[1] LtCol Joseph A. Nelson to Secretary of the Navy Paul R. Ignatius, "Medal of Honor Recommendation for 26 August 1967," enclosure 4 (statement of LCpl John G. Phelps).

Capt Stephen W. Pless's Bell UH-1E Iroquois "Huey" gunship at the National Museum of the Marine Corps.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

aged to force the enemy back to the tree line, many times flying so low that mud kicked up by his gunfire soon covered his windshield. Running low on ammunition, Pless decided to land, despite his helicopter not being equipped to carry any more people.

Pless fired the last of his ammunition from his fixed guns at the enemy in the tree line and then spun the helicopter around to point out to sea. This put the helicopter between the wounded soldiers and the enemy, with the port side facing the enemy. Phelps, the door gunner on that side, fired bursts from his M-60 to keep the enemy at bay. Meanwhile, as soon as they touched down, Poulson unhooked from the aircraft and jumped out to aid the nearest wounded soldier—Allen—who, with Poulson's assistance, was able to walk to the helicopter. Poulson then went out again for a second man, who was bigger and heavier than Allen and unconscious. Poulson kept sinking into the soft, powdery sand while trying to lift the lifeless soldier. Phelps and Fairfield both saw Poulson struggling and jumped out the starboard door to help him. As Fairfield exited the doorway, he spotted NLF troops less than 3 meters from the rear of the helicopter. Fairfield quickly dismounted the starboard door gun and killed them. He then ordered Phelps back to his gun to provide cover, while he and Poulson made slow progress dragging the second soldier back to the helicopter.

The two Marines then headed for the third casualty but were having problems moving him across the sandy beach. Pless ordered Phelps to leave his gun and help them. Phelps asked Allen if he thought he was able to use the door gun. Allan said yes, so Phelps gave Allen his spot at the door gun

The crew of "Cherry 6" (from left to right): GySgt Leroy N. Poulson, gunner; LCpl John Phelps, crew chief; Capt Rupert E. Fairfield Jr., copilot; and Capt Stephen W. Pless, pilot.
Marine Corps History Division.

and jumped out of the helicopter again. Fairfield and Phelps carried the soldier by his shoulders and had their pistols in their free hands, firing back at the enemy, while Poulson carried the soldier's feet. When an NLF fighter approached them with what Phelps believed was a hand grenade, Phelps dropped the soldier and emptied his pistol at the enemy, killing him. The three Marines were then able to get the third casualty into the helicopter. At this point, a U.S. Army UH-1B helicopter gunship appeared in the area, responding to the same call that had brought Pless to the aid of the trapped soldiers, and began making its own strafing runs to suppress the intense fire aimed at Pless and his crew.

Fairfield and Poulson then went for the fourth soldier, who appeared to be dead. Fairfield confirmed this by checking for a pulse and heartbeat and finding neither. He then tried to find identification tags but was unsuccessful. As Fairfield returned to the helicopter, a South Vietnamese H-34 medevac helicopter was seen approaching. Fairfield yelled to Pless that the H-34 could pick up the body; they should try to save the three wounded soldiers they already had aboard. Pless took off over the water to escape the NLF gunfire. He and his crew had been on the ground for about 5–10 minutes.

With the three wounded soldiers aboard, Pless's UH-1E was at least 225 kilograms over its maximum weight, to say nothing of whatever decrease in performance there might

A gunship from Marine Observation Squadron 6 escorts two UH-34s as they lift off from a Vietnamese beach in October 1967.
Marine Corps History Division.

have been due to damage done by the enemy's rounds. The helicopter's skids bounced off the water four times as Pless ordered his crew to jettison the empty rocket pods and their personal armor. Lifting into the air, Pless contacted local air control and requested suspension of all artillery missions between their current location and the nearest hospital at Chu Lai so that they could fly low and in a straight line without worrying about accidentally running into an artillery shell or its explosion. Despite the Marines' efforts, only Allen survived.

Though it appeared to Pless and his crew that they had been alone in the rescue area, there were other U.S. Army aircraft in the area when they arrived. At least one Army UH-1 "slick" (armed only with door guns) was also there, but its crew had been unable to tell the difference between friendly and enemy forces on the ground before Pless began his first low-level run, which came about 30 seconds after the UH-1 crew spotted the activity on the ground. Despite being so lightly armed, this crew added the firepower from their door guns to help defend Pless's crew, exhausting their own ammunition before Pless left the beach.

An unarmed Army Cessna O-1 Bird Dog light observation plane was also there, trying to direct U.S. Air Force North American F-100 Super Sabre fighter-bombers to provide air support, but that pilot was not trained as a forward air controller (FAC). Air Force captain Donald D. Stevens, who was a trained FAC, was scrambled from a nearby airbase in his Cessna O-2 Skymaster—another light, unarmed observation plane—and arrived after Pless's helicopter had already left. Stevens took over control of the F-100s and later coordinated an Army Reaction Force into the area to suppress the NLF forces and recover the last body on the beach. To give a sense of what Pless's crew had been up against, the Army force, though larger and better armed than Pless's crew and supported by six helicopter gunships, never advanced off the beach due to heavy ground fire from at least 10 enemy automatic weapons positions. Stevens reported that he had "never seen more intense groundfire" during the nine months he had been in Vietnam.[2] After the Army force was extracted, Stevens continued to direct air-

[2] LtCol Joseph A. Nelson to Secretary of the Navy Paul R. Ignatius, "Medal of Honor Recommendation for 26 August 1967," enclosure 9 (statement of Capt Donald D. Stevens, USAF).

Duty First by A. Michael Leahy. This painting depicts the actions of Pless and his crew in fighting off the enemy while rescuing the second soldier. *National Museum of the Marine Corps.*

strikes against the enemy positions until darkness and heavy thunderstorms forced him to return to base. He estimated at least 50 NLF fighters had been killed by Pless, his crew, and the other aerial strikes before the Army force landed. Pless's crew would later be credited with 20 confirmed enemy killed in action (KIA) and another 38 probable KIA.[3]

Pless was awarded the Medal of Honor for this mission, with his crew each receiving Silver Stars for their actions. In addition to his Medal of Honor, Pless was also awarded a Silver Star, a Distinguished Flying Cross, a Bronze Star, and numerous Air Medals along with other awards for his service in Vietnam. He was later promoted to major before dying in a motorcycle accident in Pensacola, Florida, on 20 July 1969.

Pless's helicopter was repaired and continued in service with Marine Observation Squadron 6 through June 1971 and other Marine Corps squadrons until 1977, when it was put into service with a Navy helicopter training squadron at Pensacola. In 1983, the Navy retired it, and it became part of what was then the Marine Corps Air-Ground Museum in Quantico, Virginia. In 1988, the helicopter was loaned out to the Liberal Air Museum in Liberal, Kansas, where it

[3] In addition to the already cited statements, this narrative was derived from LtCol Joseph A. Nelson to Secretary of the Navy Paul R. Ignatius, "Medal of Honor Recommendation for 26 August 1967," enclosures 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7 (statements of Capt Rupert E. Fairfield Jr., GySgt Leroy N. Poulson, WO James van Duzee, USA, WO Ronald Redeker, USA, and SSgt Lawrence H. Allen, USA); and Maj Gary L. Telfer, LtCol Lane Rodgers, and V. Keith Fleming Jr., *U.S. Marines in Vietnam: Fighting the North Vietnamese, 1967* (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1984), 207–9.

retained its red and white Helicopter Training Squadron 18 colors. In 1991, the Marine Corps museum system recalled the loan, and the helicopter was sent to a commercial firm to begin the process of restoring it to its 1967 appearance. Work on small details, informed by interviews with Fairfield and Phelps, continued to 2005, when the helicopter was hung in the new National Museum of the Marine Corps building, where it can be seen today.

PART 4

Awards & Citations

Chapter 11

A GAG DOWN UNDER

The 1st Marine Division's George Medal

By Owen Linlithgow Conner, Chief Curator

Featured artifacts: George Medal with Citation and Pin (1974.8.1);
and Australian-made 1st Marine Division Patch (1984.643.1)

When times are at their worst, U.S. Marines have often found a way to alleviate their problems through dark humor. This unique sense of humor regularly benefits from the misery of watching others' discomfort. It is a long-standing comic tradition. In the 1930s, the famous vaudeville performer Will Rodgers once quipped, "Everything is funny, as long as it's happening to somebody else." In the case of the Marines, however, dark comedy often came at their own expense.

In poking fun at their shared suffering, Marines have a long and storied tradition of creating unofficial gag medals, which typically take the form of grandiose comic citations in recognition of the absurdity of any given situation. The most famous example of such an award is the famous Soochow Creek medal from China in the 1930s. These medals were created and "issued" to Marines who were forced to serve as spectators—who happened to be ducking live munitions and facing the threat of gas attacks—during two separate phases of the Chinese Japanese wars in 1932 and 1937.[1]

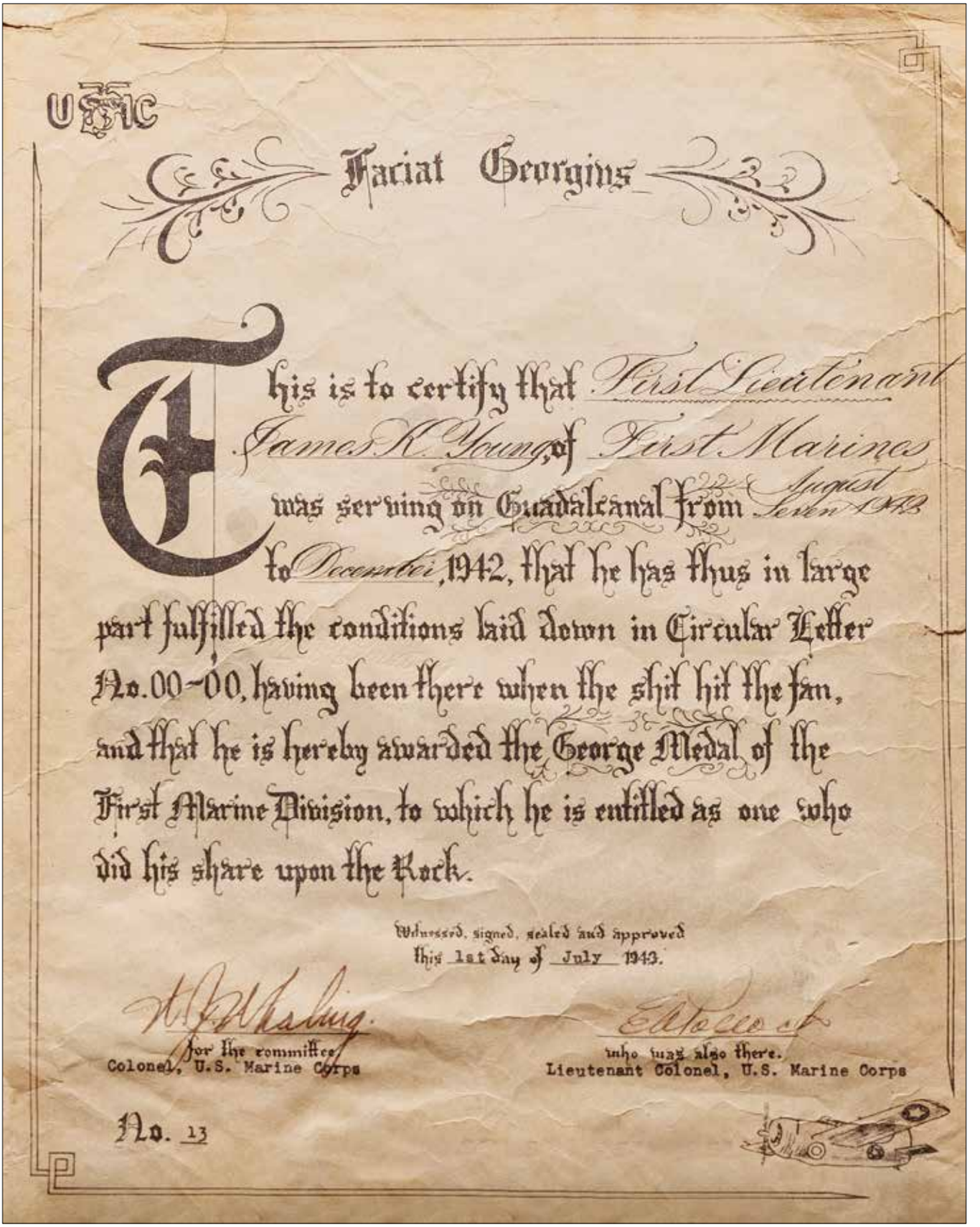
Inspired by their suffering during the World War II campaign on Guadalcanal in 1942, a small group of Marines with the 1st Marine Division decided to design their own novelty medal. Exposed to more than four months of savage combat on Guadalcanal, the battered division arrived in Australia in 1943 determined to heal and rebuild. During this period, talented officers from the division intelligence section set out to create an "award" in recognition of their continual misfortune. Ever since their formative days at New River, North Carolina, these Marines felt that their division was always assigned the hardest work. Following a popular idiom of the time—"Let George do it!"—the expression became the division's unofficial motto. As a result, their medal was christened the "George Medal."

To properly understand the dark humor of the George Medal, it is important to understand the history of the events surrounding it. The Guadalcanal campaign was possibly the most crucial action of the Pacific theater in World War II. It occurred in the early days of the war when American victory was not assured, and the Japanese Empire still held the upper hand. U.S. naval victories at the Battles of the Coral Sea and Midway had begun to blunt Japan's imperial ambitions, but an enemy victory on Guadalcanal could reenergize their efforts and spell disaster for the Allied forces in the Pacific.[2]

The initial landing of elements of the 1st Marine Division on Guadalcanal, Tulagi, and Florida Islands in the South Pacific's Solomon Islands chain on 7 August 1942

[1] "The Soochow Creek Medal," *Walla-Walla*, 15 April 1933.

[2] Henry I. Shaw Jr., *First Offensive: The Marine Campaign for Guadalcanal*, Marines in World War II Commemorative Series (Washington, DC: Marine Corps Historical Center, 1992), 1.


USMC

Faciat Georgius

This is to certify that First Lieutenant James K. Young, of First Marines was serving on Guadalcanal from August Seven 1942 to December, 1942, that he has thus in large part fulfilled the conditions laid down in Circular Letter No. 00-00, having been there when the shit hit the fan, and that he is hereby awarded the George Medal of the First Marine Division, to which he is entitled as one who did his share upon the Rock.

Witnessed, signed, sealed and approved
this 1st day of July 1943.

for the committee
Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps

who was also there.
Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps

No. 13

Original George Medals were accompanied by a humorous certificate created by the 1st Marine Division's lithographic section.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

The 1st Marine Division received their proverbial "hot potato" during the Battle of Guadalcanal.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

marked the United States' first significant ground offensive against the Japanese. Their goal was to prevent the Japanese from using Tulagi and Guadalcanal as staging bases and airfields. It was not going to be an easy fight. The Marine landing forces had been hurriedly assembled, while the U.S. Navy, still licking its wounds from severe losses of ships and sailors in its recent naval victories, were desperately short of available warships and valuable transports.[3]

The future days of U.S. naval dominance and limitless resources were a distant hope in 1942. While American innovations such as radar would provide a future edge, these systems were untested and still in their infancy from an operational perspective at this time. As a result, the fierce fighting that would occur in the Guadalcanal area from 7 August 1942 to 9 February 1943 became a titanic see-saw of brutal combat, with U.S. and Allied naval and air forces ruling the daytime and the Japanese ruling supreme at night. During the naval Battle of Savo Island on 8–9 August 1942, the Imperial Japanese Navy displayed its excellence in night fighting. The enemy's superior optics gave them the edge and a shocking victory over U.S. Navy rear admiral Richmond K. Turner's amphibious fleet, which was operating in Savo Sound, the strait that stretched between Guadalcanal and Florida Island. Three American and one Australian heavy cruiser were sunk, while an additional cruiser and destroyer were heavily damaged. More than 1,000 Allied sailors were killed. Following their defeat at Savo Sound—renamed "Ironbottom Sound" by the Marine spectators—the naval commanders on the scene reconsidered their roles and risks in the battle. They chose to withdraw their transports and reposition their vital aircraft carriers to fight another day.

[3] Shaw, *First Offensive*, 4.

This initially left the 1st Marine Division with a mere 17 days of rations and just 4 days of ammunition for the ensuing battle.[4] The Marines felt abandoned and cut off.

After nearly six months of back-and-forth fighting, U.S. forces on the islands would ultimately prevail over the Japanese, but victory came at a heavy cost. Between the Marines and U.S. Army soldiers, approximately 1,598 officers and enlisted were killed, and more than 4,700 were wounded. The heroic Marine, Army, and Allied aviators flying from Henderson Field on Guadalcanal suffered nearly 300 casualties. The Japanese lost close to 25,000 troops in ground operations.[5] Despite the U.S. Navy's true valor in the campaign, the Marines held long memories and would not forget "the touch and go" peril they were exposed to during the campaign. The shock of watching their transports sail away and the horrors of enduring nighttime Japanese naval bombardments created lasting memories. When they were finally relieved, these sentiments were carried back with them to Australia as they took time to rest, recover, and refit.

An Australian-manufactured 1st Marine Division patch worn by LtCol Merrill B. Twining.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

SOME HISTORY OF THE GEORGE MEDAL

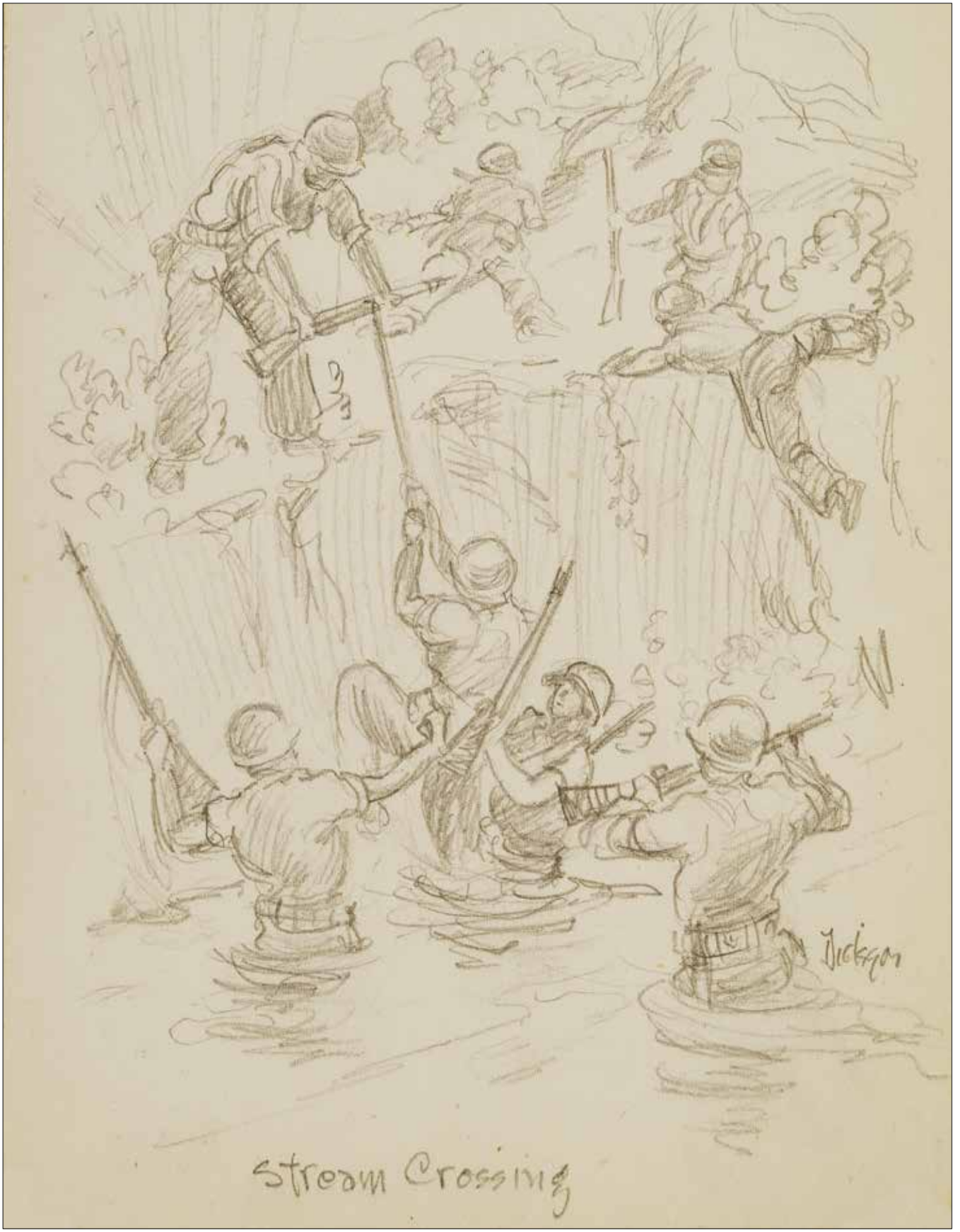
During the campaign on Guadalcanal, Marine Corps lieutenant colonel Merrill B. Twining served as the 1st Marine Division's assistant operations officer and later assistant chief of staff. Along with deserving credit for helping to plan the Marines' eventual victory, he can also lay partial claim to inventing the infamous George Medal.

In postwar interviews, Twining recalled that, "One evening on Guadalcanal . . . a group of us were discussing the situation—the enemy, the lack of support, chow, ammunition, and everything else, when I suggested that we design a medal to commemorate the campaign." The satirical idea was an immediate hit. Twining continued, "We all got a good laugh out of that."[6] As a distraction from the horrors of war, the Marine officers continued to expand upon their idea and add more humorous touches. It was decided that the medal should recognize their ignoble distinction as the "Let George Do It" division. To add a touch of class to the title, they employed a British military officer and coastwatcher on Guadalcanal, Captain Martin Clemens, to translate their title in Latin. As a result, "Let George do it" became the more sophisticated *Faciat Georgius*.[7] The specific heraldry of the medal would add additional humor. A large Saguaro cactus represented the "cactus" codename for the island of Guadalcanal. The focal point of the award depicted a large U.S. Navy admiral's uniform sleeve and hand dropping a proverbial "hot potato" into a small scrambling Marine's outstretched hand. The reverse of the medal was less subtle and more scatological in nature. Original suggestions for a depiction of a Japanese soldier relieving himself, strategically placed near a large running office fan, were eventually overruled in favor of a more conservative cow exercising the same bodily action. A formal inscription followed below:

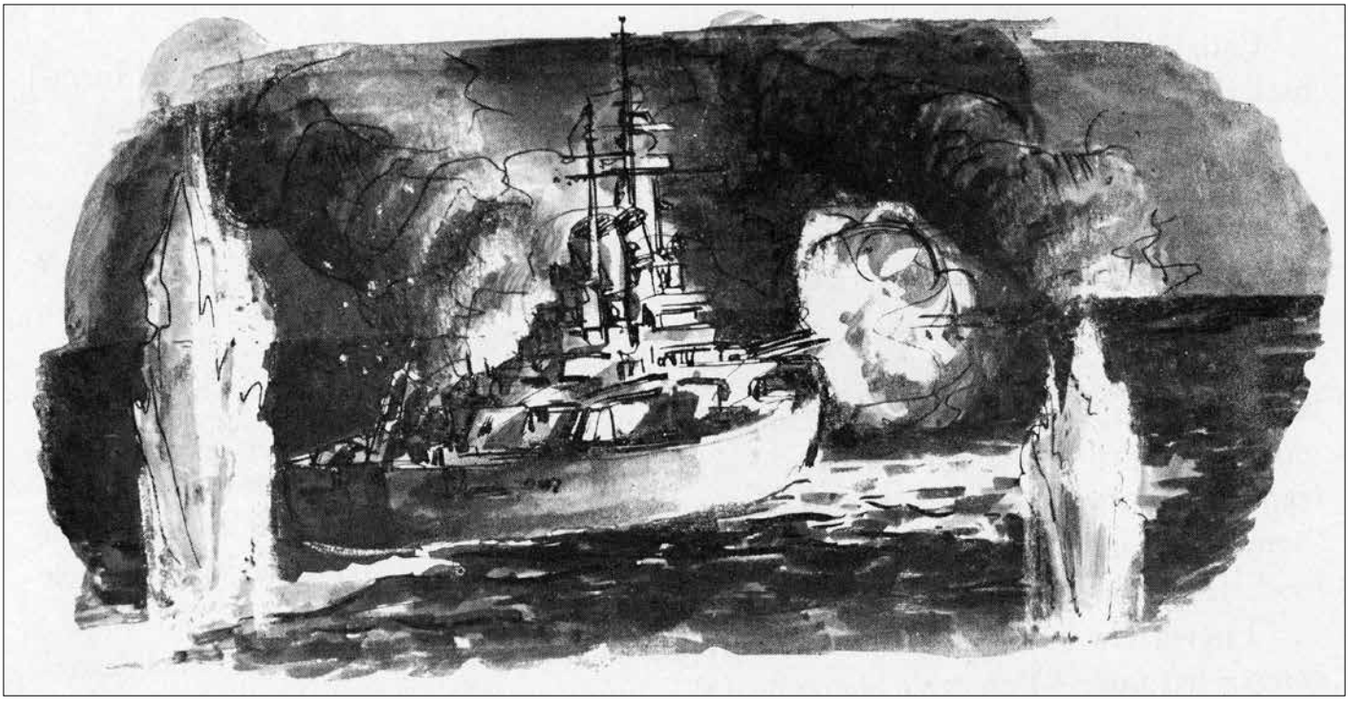
IN FOND REMEMBRANCE
OF THE HAPPY DAYS SPENT
FROM AUG 7th 1942
TO JAN 5th 1943
U.S.M.C.

In lieu of a colorful, decorative fabric ribbon, it was further decided that the ribbon would be made from a well-worn combat uniform in recognition of the Marines' down-trodden status. To formally design the conceptual medal, the Marine officers enlisted the help of Donald

[4] Shaw, *First Offensive*, 14.
[5] Shaw, *First Offensive*, 51–52.
[6] P. L. Thompson, "Let George Do It," *Leatherneck* 65, no. 8 (August 1982): 24.
[7] Thompson, "Let George Do It," 25.



Marine officer Donald L. Dickson took part in the fighting on Guadalcanal, often taking time to sketch images of the conditions that the Marines endured there.
National Museum of the Marine Corps.



This image comes from the 1st Marine Division's postwar book, *The Old Breed: A History of the First Marine Division in World War II*, by George McMillan (1949). *Official U.S. Marine Corps photo.*

Right: A Dickson sketch portraying Marines on Guadalcanal. *National Museum of the Marine Corps.*

Dickson, a talented artist who later became the editor of *Leatherneck* magazine.[8]

When the 1st Marine Division arrived in Melbourne, Australia, in January 1943, the Marines finally had the time and ability to make their humorous medal a reality. According to at least one source, they were thwarted on the first try. The division's press officer, Lieutenant Herbet C. Merillat, was turned away by a local manufacturer who recognized that the award was not officially approved and feared repercussions from military authorities if he allowed his staff to create it.[9] Undaunted, the division staff looked elsewhere. They sent the division's intelligence section clerk, Corporal Vernon C. Stimpel, with their conceptual artwork to a small engraving shop near Little Collins Street in Melbourne. There the engravers created a crude sand cast mold. Stimpel donated his own herringbone twill utility uniform

[8] Thompson, "Let George Do It," 25.

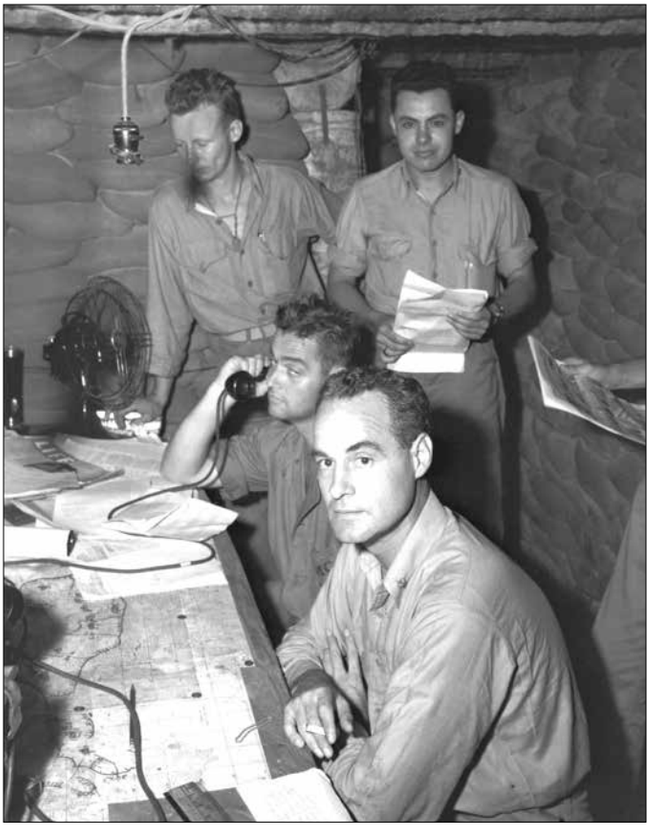
[9] Richard D. Camp Jr., "The 'George Medal' and Guadalcanal," *Military Heritage* 6, no. 5 (April 2005).

A Marine takes cover during one of many nightly shellings of Guadalcanal by Japanese warships offshore.
National Museum of the Marine Corps.

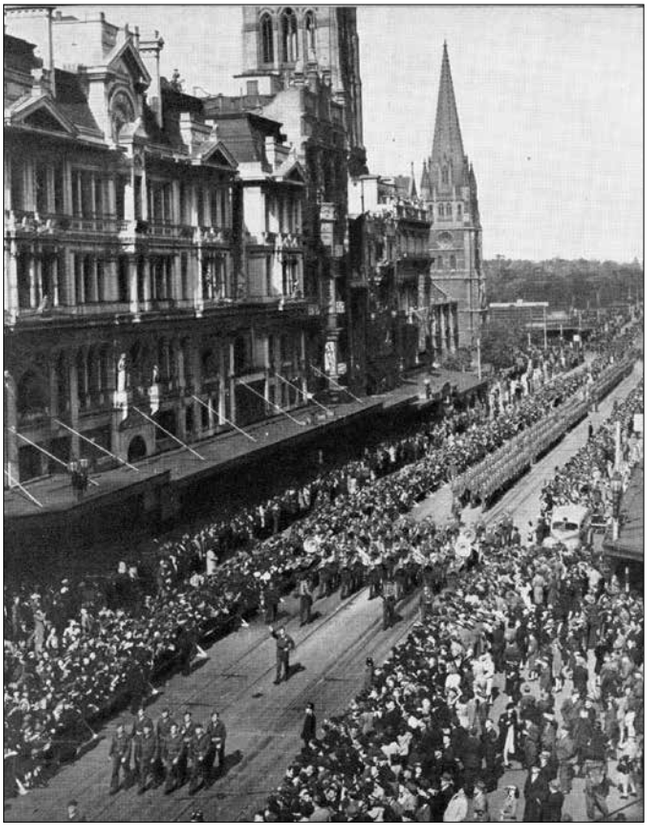
to be cut apart and serve as the source for the first run of the medals' ribbons. In a previously unpublished letter to the 1st Marine Division Association written in 1974, Stimpel clarified these long-forgotten details on the true origins of the medals' creation. In this letter he also noted that the initial order called for 100 awards to be cast. These original medals had a traditional medal pin and clasp attached to the herringbone twill fabric ribbon. Additionally, the distinctive stripes of a Navy admiral were clearly seen on the sleeve of the arm on the medal's front. Stimpel owned medal #45 of the initial 100 medals made. His letter further clarified that as the medal's popularity and demand grew, a second run of 400 awards were made by the same engraving shop. Over time, each subsequent casting began to lose the original detail of the first batch, with small details such as the admiral's sleeve markings becoming less prominent. This later contract also forfeited the traditional metal pin and clasp; they were presented with a comically oversized laundry bag safety pin instead. The division's lithographic section created a formal numbered certificate for each Marine entitled to the "award."[10] For many years, veterans and collectors have repeated the unverified story that the original casting mold broke at an unknown time. This makes determining exactly how many original Australian medals were produced forever unknown. However, another mold for manufacturing new George Medals still exists. This was donated to the U.S. Marine Corps History and Museums Division circa 1978. The artifact came from the son of Brigadier General James J. Keating, who had served as the commanding officer of 3d Battalion, 11th Marines, on Guadalcanal. According to the family, Keating had commissioned its manufacture after the war ended to create more George Medals for veterans who had previously been unable to obtain one.[11] These were then presented at various veterans' reunions, thereby confirming at least a third type of medals created.

[10] Letter from Vernon C. Stimpel to 1st Marine Division Association, 13 March 1974.

[11] Kenneth L. Smith-Christmas, curatorial memorandum for object 1981.63.1.



Future Marine Corps general Merrill B. Twining (forefront) plans Marine operations during the Guadalcanal campaign.
Official U.S. Marine Corps photo.



The 1st Marine Division marches through the city of Melbourne, Australia, following their withdrawal from Guadalcanal.
Official U.S. Marine Corps photo.

Right: Vernon Stimpel receives a decoration following the Battle of Guadalcanal.
National Museum of the Marine Corps.

Chapter 12

FRONT-ROW SPECTATORS TO THE START OF WORLD WAR II

The Soochow Creek Medal, 1937

By Owen Linlithgow Conner, Chief Curator

Featured artifact: Soochow Creek Medal (2021.24.1)

In 1937, the 6th Marine Regiment was rushed to Shanghai, China, to reinforce the 4th Marine Regiment there. The city was set to play a key role in a massive battle. Following an international incident between Chinese and Japanese forces on the Marco Polo Bridge in Beijing, a chain of uncontrollable events was set in motion. With a brigade of Marines serving as spectators, a full-scale war between the two Asian powers was about to erupt.

In Shanghai, Chinese generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and his National Revolutionary Army occupied the city. This would be the Chinese army's first major stand against the might of the Imperial Japanese Army (IJA). Recognizing the importance of the battle, the Chinese Nationalists committed a large portion of their most elite, well-trained divisions. As a result, the Battle of Shanghai became one of the largest engagements of the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–45) and involved nearly 1 million combatants.

As modern historians revisit Western-dominated narratives of World War II, it is now argued that this epic battle marked the true beginning of the Second World War. Ironically, the U.S. Marine Corps was at the center of it all, but no Marines ever fired a shot. Their mission was to protect their sector of the foreign settlements along the Suzhou Creek (a.k.a. the Wusong River and in the 1930s to Westerners as Soochow Creek). In recognition of this unusual "service" during the battle, the Marines commissioned an unofficial medal. First struck in 1932 and then restruck in 1937, the Soochow Creek Medal celebrates their ignominious role in one of the greatest but least-known battles of World War II. The artifact is a fascinating reminder of the strange role that Marines played in one of the most unusual "battles" in the 250-year history of the Corps.

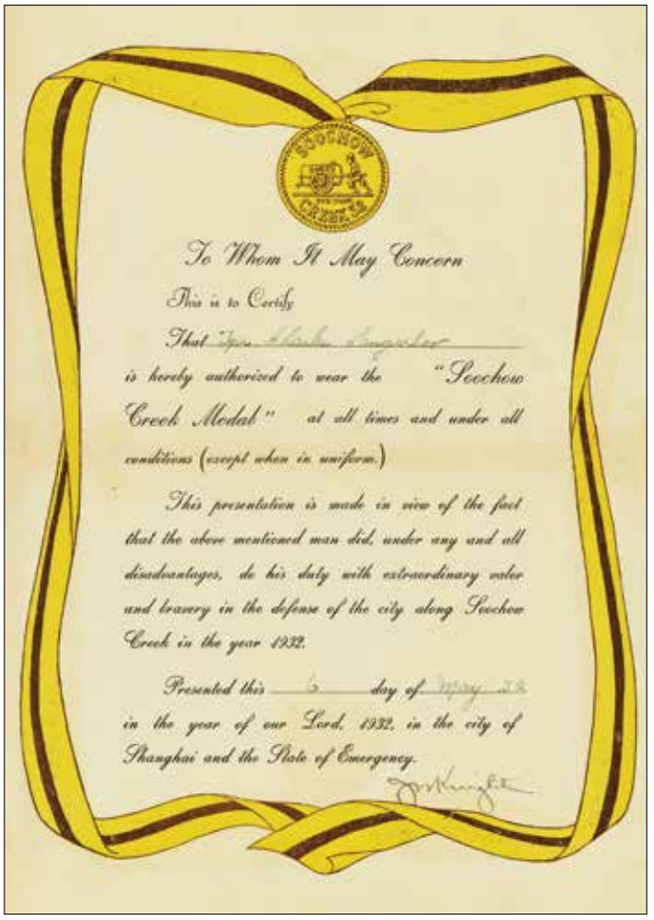
BACKGROUND TO THE BATTLE

China long served as the epicenter of conflict between Asian and colonial powers. Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Empire of Japan gradually embedded itself on the Asian mainland and sought to expand its presence there. In the process, a dramatic series of events began to unfold, eventually leading to the deaths of approximately 25 million people in Asia.[1]

Following Japan's dominant victory over China in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–95), the IJA made no secret of its disdain for the convoluted series of independent, corrupt, and warlord-led provinces that nominally amounted to the Chinese "nation." Japanese military planners, set on establishing a new empire of their own, believed that China was a pseudo-nation in decline, ready to be conquered and exploited. The Japanese were not alone in seeing the potential for exploiting China. In fact, they were late to the game. For decades, European nations and the United States had established enclaves of commerce and legations in Chinese

[1] Richard B. Frank, *Tower of Skulls: A History of the Asia-Pacific War, July 1937–May 1942* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2020), 9–11.

There were several versions of the Soochow Creek medal created by Marines in China. This version was created in 1937, following the Battle of Shanghai.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.



All versions of the Soochow Creek medal came with their own official certificate. This is an example of the 1932 award.
Marine Corps History Division.

cities such as Shanghai, Hong Kong, Tianjin, and Beijing. Following the Boxer Rebellion (1899–1901), the Chinese were forced to allow foreign soldiers and marines to protect legations, communications, and railways. However, as time went on, Japan's "China Garrison Army" grew to an unprecedented size, dwarfing the other nation's numbers and violating the terms of the original agreements.[2] The Japanese military was determined to make up for lost time versus the other Western nations. When renegade IJA forces seized all of Manchuria in 1932, they established a new vassal state of Manchuko and turned their sights on the rest of China. By 1937, the Japanese had conquered much of the country's north, all the way to the Great Wall.

Standing in the way of the Japanese Empire was a fragmented and dysfunctional coalition of Chinese forces. The largest and most powerful belonged to the Kuomintang, or Nationalist Party. They were led by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, a former military academy commandant and decorated officer who had risen through the ranks to assume control and national prominence. However, his coalition of forces were far from ideal. Among the various dysfunctional factions of the Nationalist Party were an odd mixture of conflicting personalities, ideologies, and competing strategies.[3] In addition to confronting Japanese expansion, Chiang's Nationalists had fought an earlier civil war against Chinese Communists and then held a tenuous truce with their leader, Mao Zedong.[4]

At the time of the Battle of Shanghai, Chiang commanded more than 2 million soldiers. However, their impressive size was significantly off set by the varying levels of training, quality, and loyalty of these forces. The backbone of the Na-

[2] Frank, *Tower of Skulls*, 5.

[3] Frank ,*Tower of Skulls*, 2–3.

[4] Frank, *Tower of Skulls*, 22.

Marines stationed at their defensive positions along Soochow Creek in 1937.
Marine Corps History Division.

Left: A Marine stands guard while watching the battle between the Japanese and Chinese armies.
Marine Corps History Division.

tionalists consisted of approximately 300,000 elite soldiers who were well-armed and trained by German advisors. An additional 600,000 well-equipped soldiers belonged to assorted regional leaders who had been traditionally loyal to Chiang's orders. The last portion of Chiang's army consisted of around 1 million soldiers from various regions with limited obedience to the Nationalists or their interests. This included approximately 50,000 Chinese Red Army soldiers, of which a little more than one-half were properly equipped or armed.[5]

[5] Frank, *Tower of Skulls*, 22–23.

THE BATTLE OF SHANGHAI, 1937

By August 1937, full-scale war was inevitable. For weeks, the Imperial Japanese Navy sent more than 30 warships with their accompanying naval infantry to Shanghai. In turn, Chiang moved his German-trained 87th and 88th Divisions into defensive positions in the city's streets. Unlike North China, the city of Shanghai was a symbolic center of China. It was a modern city with key industrial capabilities. It was also a city with a highly visible foreign presence due to the large International Settlement there. On 13 August, Chiang ordered his army to hold the city at all costs. Almost immediately, a massive refugee and humanitarian crisis ensued. Thousands of Chinese citizens fled their neighborhoods, seeking to find relative shelter in or near the foreign settlements.[6]

The fighting commenced on 14 August, when Chinese Nationalist aircraft took flight from their airfields to surprise the Japanese warships and sink them. Tragically, whether due to pilot error or mechanical malfunction, numerous bombs and torpedoes missed their mark. Instead of striking the Japanese cruiser *Izumo* (1900), the munitions landed in the middle of one of Shanghai's busiest market streets, killing scores of Chinese civilians and foreign tourists.[7] The bodies of the dead were stacked near the famous Palace and Cathay Hotels, the latter being a popular attraction for U.S. Marines on their off-duty hours. With all hope of tactical surprise now eliminated, both sides continued to reinforce and dig in. When fierce urban combat erupted, casualties were heavy on both sides, and the city began to be leveled by Japanese artillery and air power. Unlike previous "incidents" however, the Chinese were now prepared to fight a total war that would be measured not in weeks or months but in years.[8]

The battle raged for more than three months. Large swaths of Shanghai were reduced to rubble by Japanese bombardment. Even the International Settlement was not spared. On one occasion, a Japanese bomber deliberately struck a tramcar, killing dozens of Chinese men, women, and children. Other inadvertent stray munitions also struck the allegedly "safe area." Foreign journalists were taken to the city's famous North Station to see the destruction of its railways. After numerous attempts to retreat or regroup,

Marines in China remained neutral during the fighting between Chinese and Japanese forces. *Marine Corps History Division.*

the Nationalist Army began to concede defeat by November 1937. As the heroic remnants of Chaing's army withdrew, a bizarre sight was revealed to the International Settlement's defenders. Outside their protected enclave, the entire city lay devastated. Soochow Creek served as the geographical boundary for the spectacle. On one side, the foreign streets and homes remained unscathed and bustling, while the city on the other side of the river resembled a "barren moon-landscape."[9] With approximately 750,000 Chinese soldiers defeated by 250,000 Japanese soldiers, the Battle of Shanghai remained the largest urban action of World War II until the Battle of Stalingrad in 1942–43.[10] The attacking Japanese forces suffered 40,372 casualties, 9,115 of whom were killed in action. Chinese casualties were more severe, with official records suggesting that 187,200 were killed or wounded in action. Subsequent studies by historians, however, suggest that the number was much higher, nearing a quarter of a million.[11]

[6] Rana Mitter, *Forgotten Ally: China's World War II, 1937–1945* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013), 98–99.
[7] Mitter, *Forgotten Ally*, 100.
[8] Mitter, *Forgotten Ally*, 101.
[9] Mitter, *Forgotten Ally*, 102–6.
[10] Frank, *Tower of Skulls*, 32.
[11] Frank, *Tower of Skulls*, 35.

Interactions between Marines and Japanese soldiers in Shanghai ranged from cordial to tense on any given day.
Marine Corps History Division.

THE SECOND CHINA INCIDENT: FROM THE MARINES' PERSPECTIVE

For the U.S. Marines defending Shanghai, the massive battle was a surreal event. Despite its size and potential geopolitical impact, it was commonly referred to as the "Second China Incident." The first "incident" between Chinese and Japanese forces in Shanghai had taken place in 1932, and like its successor, it caused the Marines to similarly reinforce and fortify their defense sector. This was a perilous time, as the incident caused numerous near-direct confrontations with Japanese forces. On several occasions the Japanese attempted to infiltrate neutral international settlements to attack Chinese units from their flanks. This made things extremely difficult for the 4th Marines, who sought to avoid assisting Japan's blatant aggression and wished to remain neutral.[12]

Recalling the issues that arose in 1932, the U.S. government and Marine Corps paid considerable attention to the defense of the International Settlement in 1937. Working closely with the local Shanghai Volunteer Corps, U.S. and British forces again took up defensive positions in their assigned sectors.[13] On the American side, the effort was led by the 4th Marines, who began building sandbag bunkers and placing barbed wire to prevent any infiltration of the foreign area from either Chinese or Japanese troops. Prior to the incidents of 1932 and 1937, U.S. defense plans fo-

[12] George B. Clark, *Treading Softly: U.S. Marines in China, 1819–1949* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001), 94–95.

[13] The Shanghai Volunteer Corps was a paramilitary unit organized after 1870 to protect the International Settlements in the city. Falling under the authority of the Shanghai Municipal Council, they were equipped by the British army and lead by an appointed officer. Various communities withing the settlement each contributed members to serve in subunits of the organization. These consisted of volunteers from the United States, Germany, Russia, Great Britain, and the Philippines, as well as a unit made up of Jewish members. Robert Bickers, "The Shanghai Volunteer Corps," *Robert Bickers* (blog), 19 April 2013.

Combat Post Number 4 was one of 58 fortified positions maintained along Soochow Creek during the battle. *Marine Corps History Division.*

cused on the threat of a Chinese attack on the International Settlement, as had happened during the Boxer Rebellion. These new battles between the Nationalist Chinese and an ever-increasingly aggressive Japanese military brought more grave concerns—the worst being that the Japanese might decide to ignore the foreign powers' neutrality and attempt to take over the area by force.[14]

The Marines' first experiences of the Battle of Shanghai occurred as they were still fortifying their positions. They were present when two Chinese bomber aircraft missed their intended target, the Japanese cruiser *Izumo*, and stray bombs landed within the settlement, killing numerous French and other foreign citizens.

Now aware of the danger, the Marines erected 58 defensive positions along the 6,500 meters of waterway. Within this line, they positioned nearly 30 machine guns and had plans for a defense in depth, should the occasion arise in which they needed to fall back. Initially numbering a little more than 1,000 Marines, the regiment was soon reinforced. The Marine detachment from the heavy cruiser USS *Augusta* (CA 31), flagship of the U.S. Navy's Asiatic Fleet, provided around 100 Marines and armed sailors to add to their numbers, while another small contingent hastily arrived from Cavite, Philippines, shortly thereafter.[15]

By mid-August, the Nationalist Chinese forces began to lose ground to the Japanese. The Marines could do little but watch and try to avoid misfired bullets and shells that occasionally flew in their direction. A few Marines and one Navy corpsman were lightly wounded, but no serious casualties occurred. On 19 September, the first significant Marine reinforcements arrived. After a month on the settlement's front lines, the 4th Marines were partially relieved. The transport USS *Chaumont* (AP 5) delivered the 2d Marine Brigade headquarters along with the attached 6th Marines, more than doubling the Marines' defensive numbers.[16]

Private Earl A. Lavier of the 6th Marines observed the fighting. In a letter sent home to his family and later republished in the *Detroit Free Press* newspaper, he recounted what he saw, noting that "airplanes [were] dropping bombs on the Chinese every day." The shelling was so intense that Lavier and his fellow Marines could not sleep in their sand-

[14] Clark, *Treading Softly*, 110.

[15] Clark, *Treading Softly*, 111–12.

[16] Clark, *Treading Softly*, 112

A 1937 Soochow Creek medal (left) is pictured next to an original 1932 version of the medal.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

bagged positions. Situated just two city blocks from the raging battle, every window in the Marines' nearby billet was shattered by concussions from the blasts. The true nature of the coming war in Asia was also seen by Lavier, who observed a horrifying scene: "The [Japanese] lined up a lot of Chinese and shot them. . . . We were just across the creek, about 40 feet away, and could not do a thing to help them. . . . It was not a very nice sight."[17]

As Japanese forces pushed the Chinese Nationalists past the defensive sector of the Marines and other foreign powers, tensions began to ease. As early as October 1937, the "so-called war fever" came to an end. The 4th Marines in Shanghai returned to playing sports, with victories by their softball and baseball teams taking up most of their news in *Leatherneck* magazine that month.[18] The reinforcements with the 2d Marine Brigade headquarters and the 6th Marines departed on 17 February 1938, returning the 4th Marines to their uncontested and unofficial title as the sole "China Marines."[19]

THE STORY OF THE SOOCHOW CREEK MEDALS, 1932 AND 1937

During both the 1932 and 1937 "China incidents," Marines did their best to make light of their unusual situation. The crisis of 1932 inspired their first efforts at creating a humorous, unofficial medal in recognition of their service. The first references to the creation of the award came in the 13 February 1932 edition of the China Marine's newspaper *Walla Walla*. In it, the tongue-in-cheek columnist asks:

> *Now that the war is on, "when do we get our medals" is one of the natural questions which is being asked nowadays—particularly around Headquarters where other men have time to think about such things now and then. Well, men, here it is. The latest suggestion for a medal as struck by G. Whiz Wolfe and approved unofficially by all who*

[17] "It Happened in Michigan: Eyewitness to War," *Detroit Free Press*, 26 December 1937; and Artifact File, Soochow Creek Medal 2021.24.1, National Museum of the Marine Corps, Triangle, VA.
[18] L. Guidetti, "Fourth Marines, Shanghai, China," *Leatherneck* 20, no. 10 (October 1937): 20.
[19] James S. Santelli, *A Brief History of the 4th Marines* (Washington, DC: Historical Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1970), 19.

An original example of the 1932 medal with its humorous depiction of a Chinese civilian pushing a "honey bucket." *Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.*

The reverse-side inscription on Pvt Earl A. Lavier's 1937 medal. *Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.*

have seen it. The ribbon is to be made of brilliant yellow silk—and the disc itself—well, is it appropriate?[20]

Regarding the latter question, the writer was referring to the first incarnation of the medal's medallion. It depicts a Chinese civilian pushing a crude wheelbarrow with the word "honey" written on it. This scene was a comical rendition of one of the less pleasing aspects of duty at Soochow Creek. As a tributary of the Yangtze River, the creek also served as a collection and transportation hub for human waste from the city of Shanghai. There, large sampans referred to as "honey barges" by the Marines carried the foul-smelling excrement to a nearby disposal area, where local farmers would later harvest the landfill in wagons for use as agricultural fertilizer.[21]

The reverse of the medal was cast with the inscription:

PRESENTED TO
(Engraved with Marine's Name)
FOR BRAVERY AND VALOR
BATTLE OF SOOCHOW CREEK
SHANGHAI 1932

A humorous award certificate issued with the medal noted that the decoration was to be worn "at all times and under all conditions (except when in uniform)."[22]

Marine Corps muster roll records from the era show that the fictitious designer "G. Whiz Wolfe" was Private Ronald D. Wolfe. Wolfe served as a member of Headquarters Company, 4th Marines, Marine Corps Expeditionary Force, Shanghai, China, from July 1930 to April 1932. Subsequent columns in the 15 and 30 April 1933 editions of *Walla Walla* provided additional clues to how the medals could be obtained and their cost, the most colorful of which stated:

Who among you have not dreamt of the deeds of "daring do," who has not fought great battles? Who

[20] *Walla Walla*, 13 February 1937.

[21] Ken Harrington, "Splat Attack Became Legend" (unknown source article, curatorial file, National Museum of the Marine Corps, n.d.), 68.

[22] Collection 766, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

has not summoned his courage and taken his life in hand to wade into the midst of adventure and strife? Who has not at some time imagined himself crowned a hero before an admiring throng of captive maidens? . . . [Now] your chance has come to be decorated. To wear on your manly chest a distinguishing mark of bravery. Don't be a common Marine, get a Soochow Creek Medal and be a hero. . . . No palpitating breast is complete without one. See your company clerk now and give him your order. There is only a limited amount of these medals that will be put on sale, so get your name in on that list. After these are gone there won't be any more, and the price is only $2.00 Mex(ican).[23]

Where the original purchase of the medals came from, and who ordered them, remains unknown and undocumented today. The medals were available in both bronze and gold finishes. Many sources speculate that the vendor was possibly a local businessman named Tuck Chang. His jewelry and engraving shop often advertised in the 4th Marines' newspaper with the sales pitch: "Marines, get your jewelry and medals where they are made right." However, modern collectors believe that this is not the case due to the variety of medals and varying qualities found in many personal and museum collections.[24]

Despite the newspaper's convincing sales pitch that "there won't be any more" of the 1932 medals, the award reappeared following the Battle of Shanghai. The first editions of these medals remained unchanged, except for the new date of 1937, but a more conservatively designed version soon replaced the "honey bucket"-hauling "Chinaman" with a more officially acceptable Marine Corps, eagle, globe, and anchor design on the front. Sales continued to be strong for some time, with Marines often trying to acquire the awards Stateside even after transferring back home from the Far East. Medals were also purchased and engraved to wives and even the appropriately named regimental dog "Private Soochow."[25]

These remarkable artifacts remain prized additions to any Marine collection dedicated to preserving the history of the glory days of the original China Marines. They also serve as a stark reminder to the days when Marines played their small role in the opening salvos of the greatest military conflict of the twentieth century in World War II.

[23] "The Soochow Creek Medal," *Walla Walla*, 15 April 1933.

[24] Dirk "Haig" Salverian, donor correspondence, 27 February 2024.

[25] "Who's on the Asiatic Station," *Walla Walla*, 5 October 1940.

PART 5

Marines & Units

Chapter 13

A PRESIDENT'S MARINE

Jimmy Roosevelt

By Kater Miller, Curator

Featured artifact: Colonel James Roosevelt II's Service Coat (2016.2.12)

James "Jimmy" Roosevelt II was a lot of things in his life: businessman, politician, political leader, secretary to the president, and most interestingly, U.S. Marine. All four of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's sons who survived to adulthood joined the military during World War II, and all of them went into harm's way. Elliot Roosevelt served as a reconnaissance pilot in the U.S. Army Air Forces and as a military aide to the president. Franklin D. Roosevelt Jr. joined the U.S. Navy and served on destroyers, receiving a Purple Heart and a Silver Star for his bravery. John A. Roosevelt also joined the Navy, serving in the supply corps on the aircraft carrier USS *Wasp* (CV 18), rising to the rank of lieutenant commander, and earning a Bronze Star. Three of the four Roosevelt brothers served in the nation's naval Service, which is little surprise considering their father served as assistant secretary of the Navy during World War I.[1]

Born on 23 December 1907, Jimmy Roosevelt was the second child of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt. He led a privileged life. He attended the Groton School, an elite preparatory school in Groton, Massachusetts, and graduated from Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. At Harvard, he enrolled in the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps.[2] His father served as a New York state senator (1911–13), as assistant secretary of the Navy (1913–20), as governor of New York (1929–32), and finally as the longest-serving president in American history (1933–45).

In 1936, while visiting his father at the Little White House in Warm Springs, Georgia, Jimmy Roosevelt met a dynamic Marine Corps officer named Evans F. Carlson who would later set the course of his military career.[3] Carlson had spent time in China and was bucking to go back to the Far East to see how the Chinese armies were fighting against Japan in the Second Sino-Japanese War. Carlson had also attempted to learn Mandarin and Chinese culture while he was there. After meeting President Roosevelt as the second-in-command of the Marine detachment at Warms Springs, the president asked Carlson to keep tabs on the Japanese military's operations in China. Returning to China in 1937, Carlson embedded with the Eighth Route Army, a Chinese Communist Army unit specializing in guerrilla warfare. Carlson returned to the United States ready to share his views on fighting this kind of irregular

[1] "Sons of the Commander in Chief: The Roosevelt Boys in World War II," Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, 31 January 2018.

[2] "Brigadier General James Roosevelt," Marine Corps History Division, accessed 13 May 2024.

[3] "Camp Roosevelt Vignettes," *Leatherneck* 19, no. 1 (January 1936): 7, 50–51.

Col Jimmy Roosevelt attends his father's fourth presidential inauguration in 1945.
Official U.S. Marine Corps photo.

war and how the Marine Corps might be able to use similar tactics to strike fear into the Japanese forces should the two nations become embroiled in war.[4]

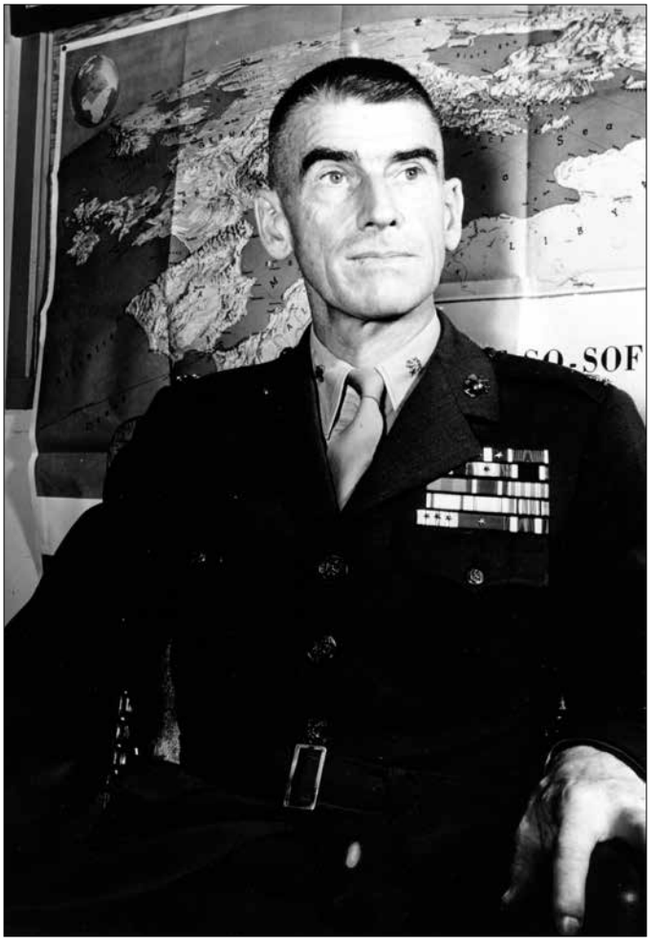
Jimmy Roosevelt's involvement with the Marine Corps came in late 1936, after the presidential election of that year. The newly reelected President Roosevelt wanted to take a goodwill tour of South America, but he needed a close relative to accompany him. His wife Eleanor did not want to make the trip, so the president agreed to take his eldest son in her place. In Jimmy Roosevelt's autobiography, he stated that he was always drawn toward the Marines because of their uniqueness, and it so happened that his father wanted to commission him to make him an official aid. Roosevelt was directly commissioned as an officer in the Marine Corps Reserve. As he put it, "It was ridiculous, really, but my papers came through and he made me a lieutenant colonel. It was just that easy." Father and son steamed to South America on the heavy cruiser USS *Indianapolis* (CA 35).[5]

Jimmy Roosevelt remained in the Marine Corps Reserve after the trip. He had trouble performing as a lieutenant colonel while on training exercises, though he did try. He soon moved away from the White House. Following a scandal in which he allegedly funneled business to the insurance agency that he was president of Roosevelt resigned his role as his father's advisor in the White House. He then moved to California to establish himself on the West Coast and resumed work at his insurance agency. Roosevelt realized that he could not continue to serve as a Marine Corps

[4] Maj Jon T. Hoffman, USMCR, *From Makin to Bougainville: Marine Raiders in the Pacific War*, Marines in World War II Commemorative Series (Washington, DC: Marine Corps Historical Center, 1995), 3, 5.

[5] James Roosevelt and Bill Libby, *My Parents: A Differing View* (Chicago, IL: Playboy Press, 1976), 233–35.

Col Roosevelt's Marine Corps service coat.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.



Evans F. Carlson made a huge impact on Jimmy Roosevelt's military career.
Official U.S. Marine Corps photo.

lieutenant colonel effectively, so he resigned his commission. But he did not stay out of the Corps long.[6]

In 1937, Japan launched a full-scale invasion of China, and in 1939, Germany invaded Poland. Though there was a strong sentiment of isolationism in the United States, the Roosevelt administration knew that it was only a matter of time before the United States became involved in the widening conflict.

On 24 November 1939, Jimmy Roosevelt received a new Marine Corps Reserve commission as a captain and worked hard to become a good Marine. In early 1940, he was assigned to active duty due to the massive war that was unfolding throughout the world. He served as a battery commander in 2d Battalion, 10th Marines, until January 1941, when he was ordered to go oversees as an assistant naval attaché and was stationed at the British Army's Middle East headquarters in Cairo, Egypt. In this capacity, Roosevelt visited Crete, Palestine, and Iraq before returning to California.[7]

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on 7 December 1941, Jimmy Roosevelt requested an assignment with a combat unit in the Corps. Meanwhile, Carlson agitated for a special group of Marine commandos to practice guerrilla warfare behind enemy lines such as the Chinese soldiers of the Eighth Route Army. In December 1941, Roosevelt even wrote to his father requesting the formation of a Marine commando unit. Though the Commandant of the Marine Corps, Major General Thomas Holcomb, did not want to create special commando units, he was overruled by President Roosevelt, who saw potential for victories that would give heart to the American public. British prime minister Winston S. Churchill even put his thumb on the

[6] Roosevelt and Libby, *My Parents*, 233–35.

[7] "Brigadier General James Roosevelt."

LtCol Roosevelt with his father and officers of the USS *Indianapolis* (CA 35) on its South America goodwill tour. *Official U.S. Marine Corps photo.*

scales in support of the commando units.[8] In the opening weeks of 1942, two units were created.

At Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia, 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Merritt A. Edson, was redesignated as the 1st Separate Battalion. This battalion would be renamed the 1st Raider Battalion on 16 February 1942. On 4 February, the 2d Separate Battalion was formed at Marine Corps Base San Diego, California, under Lieutenant Colonel Carlson. Unlike the 1st Separate Battalion, this unit was created without the backbone of an existing battalion. Edson was as opposite to Carlson as could be. He built his battalion into the best possible light infantry unit, organized in a conventional manner, with the idea that his Marines would hit the enemy hard behind the invasion beaches before a main assault to soften resistance to the amphibious landing. Carlson, on the other hand, eschewed traditional rank structures and created three-man fire teams to attack the enemy. He wanted to fight a guerrilla war, operating behind enemy lines to kill enemy soldiers and strike fear into their hearts. Both groups practiced using rubber boats for rapid, quiet insertion.[9]

Staffing a brand-new battalion on the West Coast became a problem, as the Marine Corps was expanding and there were not enough trained Marines to go around. One third of Edson's 1st Raider Battalion was shipped to California to form a cadre for the 2d Raider Battalion. Carlson dismissed most of Edson's cadre because he viewed them as being unable to switch to his mode of leadership, which created rancor between the two groups that lasted for the remainder of the war and beyond. Carlson wanted Marines who he could mold to his vision and who would fight because they believed it was the right thing to do. He conducted "ethical indoctrination" within his unit so that they would understand what they were fighting for.[10]

Carlson selected Captain Jimmy Roosevelt as his execu-

[8] Hoffman, *From Makin to Bougainville*, 1.

[9] Hoffman, *From Makin to Bougainville*, 5.

[10] Hoffman, *From Makin to Bougainville*, 5.

Japanese troops march
into Peiping (Beijing), China.
Naval History and Heritage Command.

Carlson, Roosevelt, and their Marine Raiders
during training in California.
Marine Corps History Division.

tive officer. Roosevelt was an unlikely candidate as a leader of a commando unit. He was ungainly and tall, standing at six feet, four inches. He wore glasses and his feet were so flat that he could not wear the boots that the Marines of the time wore in the field. Instead, he wore canvas athletic shoes when he wore his utility uniform.[11]

Together, Carlson and Roosevelt trained their Raiders hard. The Marines conducted 65-kilometer forced marches. They trained in knife fighting. They rode rubber boats in the surf off the California coast. They also were not granted liberty very often. Carlson's Marines remained cloistered for much of the time they were in California training for combat.[12]

Ten days after the 1st Marine Division landed at Guadalcanal, Tulagi, and Florida Islands in the South Pacific, the 2d Raider Battalion launched one of the most daring raids of the war. On 17 August 1942, two companies of Raiders under Lieutenant Colonel Carlson and now-Major Roosevelt launched rubber boats from the decks of the submarines USS *Argonaut* (SM 1) and USS *Nautilus* (SS 168) to conduct a raid on Makin Atoll in the Central Pacific. The raid was supposed to draw the attention of the Japanese away from Guadalcanal, and the Raiders were to try to capture prisoners and gather intelligence. The Marines landed on the island of Butaritari, which hosted a Japanese seaplane base and a small contingent of soldiers. The raid was planned to take one day, so each Raider only carried two canteens, a C-ration, and two D-ration bars ashore. By the end of the first day, the Marines were out of food and water.[13]

Roosevelt's personal leadership helped keep the raid from devolving into a disaster after the Marines were not able to leave Butaritari on the first day as planned due to

[11] Brian Altobello, *Into the Shadows Furious: The Brutal Battle for New Georgia* (New York: Presidio Press, 2000), 76.
[12] Hoffman, *From Makin to Bougainville*, 5.
[13] Gordon L. Rottman, *Carlson's Marine Raiders: Makin Island, 1942* (Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, 2014), 77.

Top: Roosevelt leads a brief for a group of officers of the 2d Raider Battalion.
Marine Corps History Division.

Right: Then-LtCol Merritt A. Edson, commander of the 1st Raider Battalion. Carlson and Edson were polar opposites.
Marine Corps History Division.

heavier-than-expected surf. Seawater swamped the rubber boats' engines, and the exhausted Raiders had to paddle out of the surf. The next morning, 18 August, 70 Marines remained on the island. Roosevelt himself had made it out early that morning, and he personally rescued three Marines on the way back to the submarine. The Marines on the island could not evacuate because of Japanese air patrols, and the submarines waiting to pick them up had to spend the day submerged to protect themselves. Roosevelt helped arrange for one of the submarines to enter a protected lagoon on Butaritari so the remaining Raiders could withdraw. That night, the Marines completed their withdrawal from the island. Tragically, several Marines were left

Carlson and Roosevelt hold a captured Japanese flag from the Makin Island raid.
Marine Corps History Division.

Adm Chester W. Nimitz greets Maj Roosevelt aboard the USS *Argonaut* (SM 1) after it pulled into Pear Harbor following the Makin Island raid.
Marine Corps History Division.

behind, and they were captured by the Japanese and executed a few weeks later.[14]

The surviving Marines pulled into Pearl Harbor to a hero's welcome. Both Carlson and Roosevelt received the Navy Cross for their gallantry on the raid.[15] Though the raid had nearly been a complete disaster, it offered a tremendous morale boost for the American public, which had seen so many defeats since the United States entered the war. However, as the 2d Raider Battalion begin to prepare for its next operation, Carlson's "long patrol" on Guadalcanal (6 November–4 December 1942), Roosevelt received orders to Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, California. There, he was to form and command the 4th Raider Battalion and to establish the Raider Training Center, an eight-week course to train replacement Raiders.[16]

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[14] Hoffman, *From Makin to Bougainville*, 8.
[15] Hoffman, *From Makin to Bougainville*, 9; and "Brigadier General James Roosevelt."
[16] Hoffman, *From Makin to Bougainville*, 23; and "Brigadier General James Roosevelt."

Roosevelt leads the newly created 4th Raider Battalion in the South Pacific. He would soon be hospitalized and would not get to take part in the landings on New Georgia. *Marine Corps History Division.*

Roosevelt's green service coat with unit patch. *Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.*

Roosevelt did not stay in California long, deploying with the new 4th Raider Battalion to the island of Espiritu Santo in the South Pacific, where the battalion prepared to participate in the New Georgia campaign. Roosevelt began training his unit for the operation, with his command now falling under the 1st Raider Regiment, commanded by Colonel Harry B. Liversedge. Before the operation commenced, Roosevelt fell ill and was evacuated back to the United States. He did not participate in the New Georgia campaign.[17]

Back in California, Roosevelt bought this green service coat from Phelps-Turkel, a high-end department store in Los Angeles. During the war, many department stores and tailors made officers' uniforms for the U.S. military, with this coat being an example. Other manufacturers included Brooks Brothers, A. M. Bolognese and Sons, and Alexander's of San Diego.[18] Officer-quality uniforms were made of a finer material than enlisted uniforms, but they also went for a much higher price.

In the spring of 1943, now-Lieutenant Colonel Roosevelt participated in the Aleutian Islands campaign as an observer. In November 1943, while attached as an observer to the U.S. Army's 27th Infantry Division, he participated in the capture of Makin Atoll during the Gilbert Islands campaign. He received the Silver Star for remaining under fire and exposing himself to danger for the duration of the three-day assault.[19]

During the last year of the war, now-Colonel Roosevelt

[17] "Brigadier General James Roosevelt."

[18] There are examples of each of these uniforms in the collection of the National Museum of the Marine Corps.

[19] "Brigadier General James Roosevelt."

Roosevelt's green service coat (inside tag).
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

Roosevelt with several U.S. Marine, Navy, and Army Air Force officers aboard a Navy warship waiting for the landings at Kiska Island to begin.
Marine Corps History Division.

trained Marines in preparation for the invasion of Okinawa. Following the Okinawa campaign, he transferred to the Philippines to participate in the consolidation of the Southern Philippines on the staff of U.S. Navy rear admiral Ralph O. Davis, the commander of Amphibious Group 13. He was transferred back to the United States in July 1945 and released from active duty in October. Roosevelt remained in the Marine Corps Reserve until 1959, when he was promoted to the rank of brigadier general and retired.[20]

Following his service in World War II, Roosevelt held leadership positions in the Democratic Party and campaigned for President Harry S. Truman's reelection campaign. He also ran for governor of California in 1950 but lost to the incumbent, Earl Warren. However, Roosevelt did become a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from California in 1955 and served in this capacity through 1965. After his decade-long stint in Congress, he unsuccessfully ran for mayor of Los Angeles.[21]

James Roosevelt's experience in World War II was much tougher than it could have been. As the president's son, he could have chosen to remain out of harm's way in a stateside billet, but instead he chose to serve in combat with the Marine Corps. He sought out a tough assignment that put him at great risk to be killed or captured. His service coat is a reminder of his service to his country as a U.S. Marine, when he exhibited great leadership and courage under fire. Brigadier General Roosevelt's service coat is now part of the Raider Collection at the National Museum of the Marine Corps.

[20] "Brigadier General James Roosevelt."

[21] "James Roosevelt," United States Congress Bioguide, accessed 13 May 2024.

James "Jimmy" Roosevelt.
Marine Corps History Division.

Chapter 14

MARINE LIFE IN MAGIC CHINA

By Jennifer Castro, Cultural and Material History Curator

Featured artifacts: Smoking Jacket (Robe) (2008.81.1); Plaque, from the Green Howards, Shanghai, 1927 (1983.220.1); Napkin Ring, Cloisonné, W. Williams (1971.14.1); Napkin Ring, Cloisonné, J. Papas (1983. 224.1); Lighter, Peiping (2018.136.36); Riding Crop, L. A. Brown (1977.1281.1); Swagger Stick, L. A. Brown (1977.1280.1); and Album, Embroidered (on loan from the Marine Corps History Division) (COLL/3832)

In the U.S. Marine Corps, there is no greater honor than earning the title of Marine. But throughout the Corps' 250 years of history, many subcultures and other titles have also been used. For nearly half of the twentieth century, it was the title of "China Marine" that carried the most adventurous allure.

Marines were associated with China since the first U.S. Navy vessels began making port calls there in the early 1800s and until the evacuation of dependents and U.S. military personnel in the early days of World War II. For all that time, service in the Far East was exotic and mysterious. China was a duty station with its own unique lifestyle. During the course of a Marine's service, the ability to serve abroad in this far-off land was a must-have experience, particularly at the height of China Marine life in the 1920s and 1930s.

BACKGROUND HISTORY OF MARINES IN CHINA

Of all the exotic locations that Marines have inhabited throughout history, China has always remained unique within the Corps' social, economic, and cultural history.[1] In 1819, the frigate USS *Congress* (1799), commanded by Captain John D. Henley, became the first U.S. Navy ship to visit the Far East. Henley was directed by the U.S. secretary of the Navy, Smith Thompson, "to proceed upon important service, for the protection of the commerce of the United States in the Indian and China Seas."[2] The Marine detachment aboard the *Congress* likely were the first Marines to ever step foot in China.[3] The United States, emulating France and the United Kingdom, tried to establish peaceful relations with the Qing Dynasty, as China was known at the time, for trade. The Chinese were generally opposed to foreigners. In 1844, the United States and the Qing Dynasty signed the Treaty of Wanghia, which was the first formal treaty signed between the two nations. The agreement was analogous to what the United Kingdom had gained with the signing of the Treaty of Nanjing (Nanking) in 1842.[4]

At the turn of the century, Marines serving in China were primarily based in cities such as Shanghai, home to the country's largest International Settlement; Peking (Beijing), where the American Legation was located; and Tientsin (Tianjin). Occasional international incidents or domestic concerns, the most notable of which occurred in 1927, 1932, and 1937, resulted in Marine reinforcements coming ashore

[1] George B. Clark, *Treading Softly: U.S. Marines in China, 1819–1949* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001), 1.

[2] J. Travis Monger, "USS *Congress* Becomes the First U.S. Navy Ship to Visit China, 1819," *Sextant* (blog), 10 August 2022.

[3] China was then known as the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911), founded by the Manchus, who were a separate ethnic group from the Han. "Qing Dynasty, 1644–1911," National Museum of Asian Art, accessed 14 May 2023.

[4] "Treaty of Wangxia (Treaty of Wang-Hsia), May 18, 1844," University of Southern California U.S.-China Institute, accessed 14 May 2023.

A train leaving from Quantico, VA, for Philadelphia, PA, with field pieces and Marines bound for duty in China, 29 March 1927.
International Newsreel photo, from the collection of Dirk Salverian.

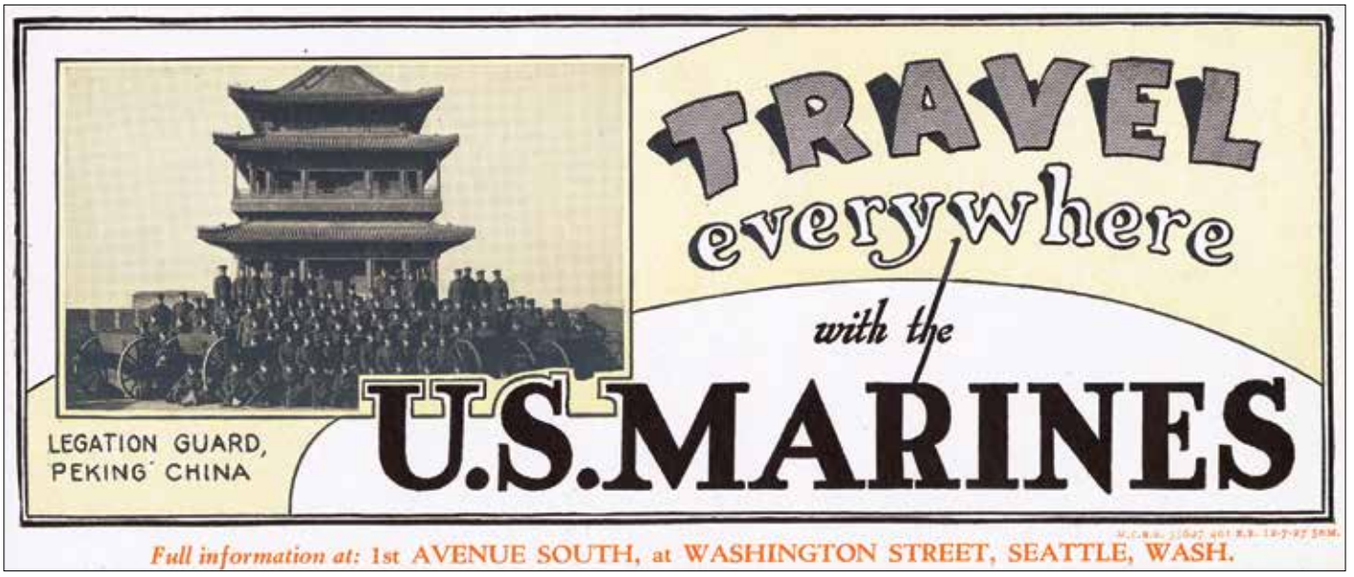
from Navy ship detachments with the U.S. Asiatic Fleet or being sent to China by transport ships from the United States or the Philippines.

LIFESTYLES OF MARINES IN CHINA

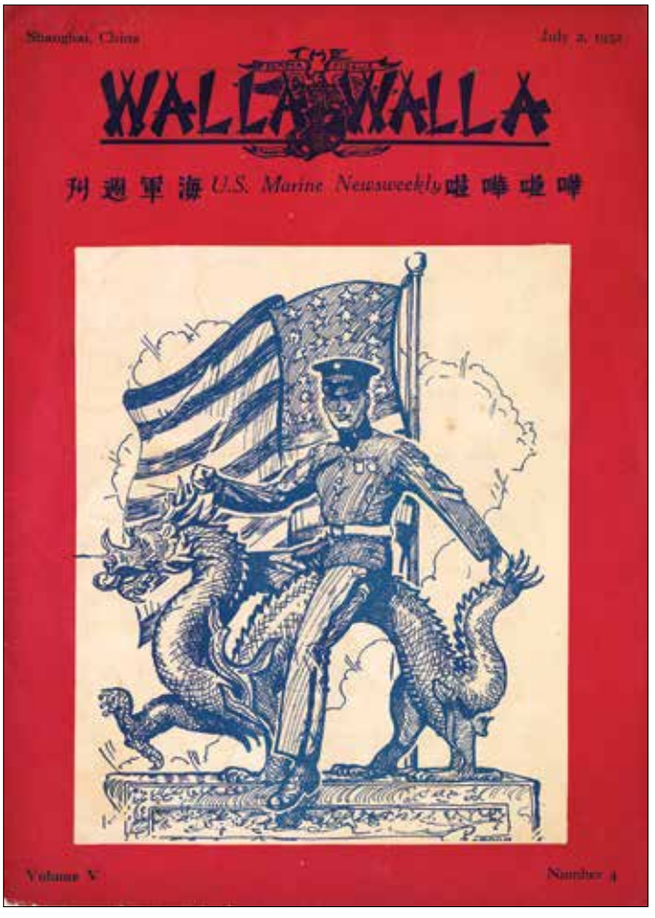
In the early twentieth-century, young men joined the Marine Corps for a variety of reasons, including a dependable salary, job security, and more. Most dreamed of leaving home, traveling abroad, and seeing the world. For most, the start of their journey as a Marine began with a visit to a Marine Corps recruiting station, where their questions about enlistment and service opportunities were answered by recruiters armed with colorful brochures. These artistically attractive pamphlets and other ephemera were dedicated to inspiring men looking for a life of excitement. Possible service locations within the United States included California, New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Seattle, and Washington, DC, while far-flung locations in the tropics such as the Philippines or the Caribbean islands were also featured. If one was not sure where to serve, there was always the option to serve aboard ship, which could offer a sampling of many different locations. For many Marine recruits, however, duty in China stood alone. Recruiting materials from 1937 beckoned young recruits "to follow the trail of adventure, travel to out of the way places of the world. You'll find them in the Virgin Islands, the Philippines, Guam and the mystical land of the Far East—CHINA."[5]

China was a location unlike any other, and certainly worthy of all capital letters in the recruiters' brochure. It was more than just a duty stop—it was where the empires and cultures of the West and East collided. It was also a place where even the average enlisted Marine could afford luxuries, see worldly sights, and lead a life of excitement unheard of anywhere else.

[5] "Magic China" (M.C.P.B. 70607), Marine Corps Official Recruiting Brochure, 12 June 1937.



A recruiting poster encouraging those interested in travel to join the Marines.
Photo from the collection of Dirk Salverian.



A weekly newsletter highlighting the
Marine presence in China.
Walla Walla Newsweekly *5, no. 4 (2 July 1932),*
from the collection of Dirk Salverian.

THE COLORFUL LIVES OF THE CHINA MARINES

In 1930, there were 19,380 men serving in the Marine Corps: 1,208 officers and 18,172 enlisted. The strength of the Corps continued to decrease until 1940, after World War II had begun in Europe, when there were 28,345 total Marines serving.[6]

Roughly correlating with this era of a downsized Marine Corps was the Great Depression (1929–39). The suffering in the United States during this time made the idea of military service even more appealing, providing hopeful young men the chance to escape the nation's economic issues. After enlistment and completion of their training, Marines were assigned duty stations across the country and abroad. The lucky ones found themselves on a ship to China. There, they may be assigned to the American embassy in Peking, at the Legation Quarter where several foreign diplomatic legations or embassies were located, or at the International Settlement in Shanghai. Countries that maintained legations in the Legation Quarter grew over the years. In 1901, there were 11 countries that included Germany, Austria-Hungary, Belgium, Spain, the United States, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, and Russia. By 1911, these were joined by Sweden, Portugal, Denmark, and Brazil, and by 1922 they were joined by Nor-

[6] "End Strengths, 1795–2015," Marine Corps History Division, accessed 14 May 2024.

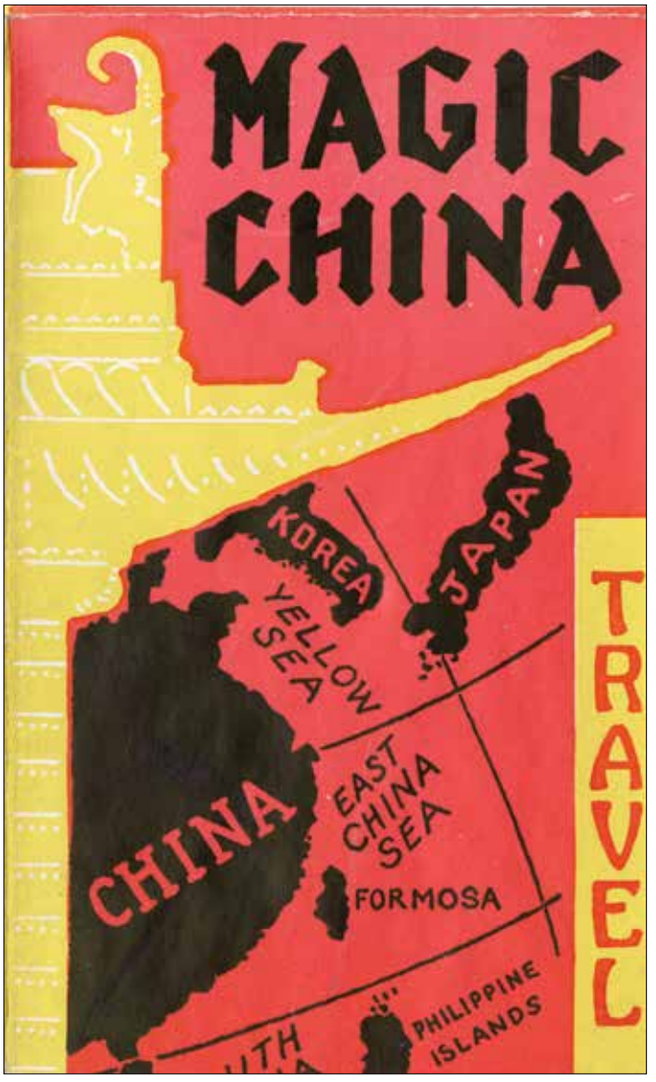
way, Uruguay, and Brazil.[7] Marines were also stationed at the International Settlement, an enclave under the control of several different countries that included British, American, and Japanese citizens. Marines also served in Tientsin, where there were several foreign enclaves, concessions that included the United Kingdom and the United States.

In 1940, Private First Class William H. Chittenden was assigned to the Marine detachment at the American Embassy in Peking. In his biography, he recalled how he finally got his chance to travel and see the world:

> *Finally, it happened! The barracks bulletin board carried a notice that "volunteers will be considered for openings for duty on Asiatic station." That was Saturday, February 10 (1940). As soon as I read the notice, I was in the company office to volunteer. That was the whole reason I had enlisted. As the recruiting office brochure said, "MAGIC CHINA." Then the wait began. . . . In five days, the names were on the barracks bulletin board. PFC Chittenden, William H., USMC #276245 made the list*![8]

China was a strange mix of the old and new. There were old customs, seemingly ancient buildings, hand-drawn rickshaws, as well as twentieth-century ideas and modern amenities.

Word of mouth from Marines who served in China in the early 1900s documented duty protecting American lives, property, and commerce; guarding the American Embassy; and serving at their military posts among other assignments. Marines in Shanghai and Peking lived quite well. They often had Chinese servants to do their chores, and they enjoyed the fine accommodations at the enlisted club, including $1 Johnnie Walker Black Label whiskey. Weekends consisted of meeting girls at the clubs, touring sites in China, and purchasing fine trinkets and souvenirs on a basic enlisted man's salary. In 1923, a Marine private first class earned $30.00 a month; a corporal, $42.00; a sergeant, $54.00; and a sergeant major, $126.00. This pay remained basically the same from 1923 to 1940.[9] Compared to Stateside duty stations, the value of those dollars was enhanced significantly in China.



A "Magic China" Marine Corps recruiting brochure (M.C.P.B. 70607) dated 12 June 1937. *Photo from the collection of Dirk Salverian.*

Off-duty hours in China afforded Marines with a chance to take liberty and enjoy both educational and

[7] Michael J. Moser and Yeone Wei-Chih Moser, *Foreigners within the Gates: The Legations at Peking* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1993), 119. See also the 1924 Fei Shi map of the Foreign Legation Quarter and its surrounding area in Peking (Beijing), China, at Geographicus Rare Antique Maps, accessed 14 May 2024.

[8] William Howard Chittenden, *From China Marine to Jap POW: My 1,364 Day Journey through Hell* (Paducah, KY: Turner Publishing, 1995), 33.

[9] Information taken from *Registers of the Commissioned and Warrant Officers of the United States Navy, U.S. Naval Reserve Force and Marine Corps* (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 1923–40), hereafter *Navy Register*. *Navy Register* (1923), 354; *Navy Register* (1930), 486; *Navy Register* (1935), 576; and *Navy Register* (1940), 678. Monthly pay based on first enlistment period and consolidated pay rate information found in a chart compiled by Erik Maddox.

A postcard featuring a Marine riding in a hand-drawn rickshaw sent by Pvt Glen E. Densmore to his family while serving in Peking, China.
Photo from the collection of Dirk Salverian.

recreational opportunities. The Legation Guard YMCA in Peking offered sightseeing trips for Marines and other servicemembers to visit historic sites of interest. These included the Great Wall of China, the Temple of Heaven, the Temple of Agriculture, the marble five-arched pailous at the Ming tombs, the Lama Temple, the Forbidden City, the shops in Chien Men (Zhengyangmen), the Winter Palace (Yuanmingyuan), the Summer Palace, the Great Pagoda in the city of Soochown (Suzhou), Tiger Hill, and the City Temple.[10]

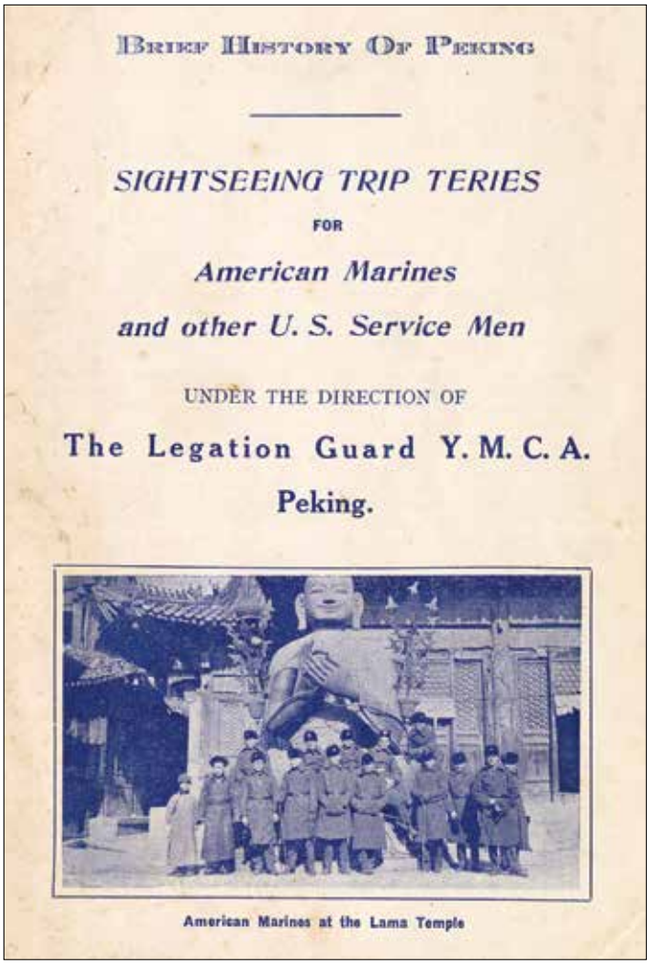
For less cultural forms of recreation, the Marines could visit local athletic facilities, the YMCA, theaters, shops, hotel restaurants, local bars, the 4th Marines club, and the privates' and noncommissioned officers' clubs. Many Marines enjoyed meals at one of many restaurants located in Shanghai, such as the Sun Ya Restaurant located on 719 Nanking Road. In an article written by Bill Savadove titled "A Short History of Gluttony in Shanghai" appearing in the 1936 guidebook *Shanghai High Lights, Low Lights, Tael Lights*, the author gave this advice:

> *Cantonese restaurant Sun Ya was "probably the best spot to get a Chinese dinner" while Jimmy's restaurant was "Where most foreigners eat and meet." Jimmy's was the forerunner of the fast-food giants operating in China today. The owner was a former U.S. Navy Sailor named Jimmy James.*[11]

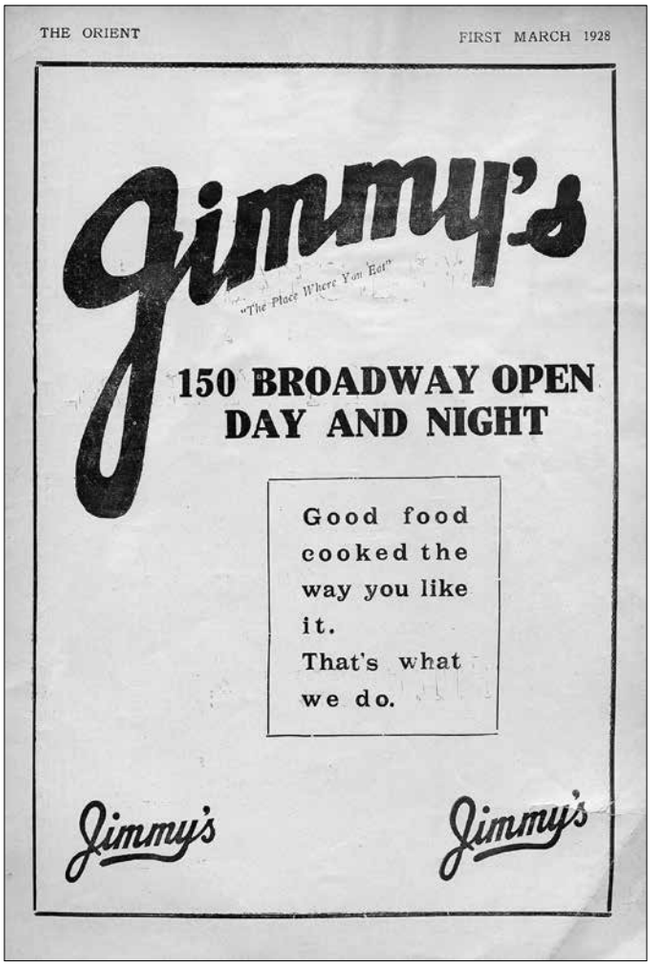
A similar 1936 article in *Leatherneck* magazine states that "the Fourth Marine is furnished ample social life within his own organization. Weekly dances are held during the winter months. The best entertainers that can be obtained put on excellent floor shows and the crowds must be limit-

[10] Chittenden, *From China Marine to Jap POW*, 57–58.

[11] Bill Savadove, "A Short History of Gluttony in Shanghai," *Historic Shanghai* (blog), accessed 14 May 2024.



A booklet for one of a series of sightseeing trips that Marines could enjoy in China. *Photo from the collection of Dirk Salverian.*



An advertisement for Jimmy's restaurant in *The Orient Magazine*, March 1928. *Photo from the collection of Dirk Salverian.*

ed so they will have room to perform. Bridge parties weekly at the Navy 'Y' . . . the large lobby is crowded every Monday evening, and the competition is keen. Enlisted men's clubs of the highest caliber round out the social opportunities for men in the Regiment."

The 4th Marines Club in Shanghai was established in 1938. It was a large complex with a bowling alley, a theater, a restaurant, a ballroom, multiple bars, and plenty of slot machines to entertain any Marine looking for something to do during their down time. The club was owned and operated by a curious Shanghai civilian who went by the name of Edward Thomas Riley. His initials "ETR" appeared on the back of all the club's tokens. He was born Fahnie Albert Becker in Colorado and was known by many aliases throughout his life. He was introduced to Shanghai while on the Yangtze River Patrol during a stint in the U.S. Navy. After his return to the United States and discharge from the Navy, Riley was arrested and sentenced to 25 years in prison for his role in a robbery and attempted kidnapping. He escaped after two years, burnt his fingerprints off with acid, and made his way back to Shanghai, where he established an empire based on gambling, crime, and debauchery. He became known as the "Slot Machine King," and at the height of his power he controlled all the slot machines operating in the International Settlement. This included, of course, the slot machines at the 4th Marines Club.

Riley's association with the Marines in Shanghai went beyond the proprietorship of their club. Nefariously, of the Marines who deserted from their station while in Shanghai, many joined the "Friends of Riley" and transferred their

The 4th Marines Club in Shanghai.
Jacob L. Craumer Collection (COLL/1958), Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

loyalty from the Corps to the kingpin who had ingratiated himself with the young China Marines.[12]

INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIPS AND CAMARADERIE IN CHINA: THE GREEN HOWARDS

The wonders of international life in China were not limited to Asian experiences. Duty in the nation also provided Marines with the opportunity to meet fellow servicemembers from around the Western world. The servicemembers of many different military forces fostered unique relationships that included a tradition of friendly competition, sports, and recreation with the U.S. Marines. The 4th Marines developed a particularly strong friendship with the men of a well-known Yorkshire regiment of the British Army called the Green Howards.

Captain Lemuel C. Shepherd Jr. (later to become the 20th Commandant of the Marine Corps) served as the adjutant for the 4th Marines when stationed in China in the 1920s. He was impressed by the British battalions. He especially enjoyed the exchange of mess nights with the British. As the regimental adjutant, he was responsible for conducting the 4th Marines' parades. The 1st Battalion of the Green Howards had a fine fife and drum corps that Shepherd was very impressed with. In November 1927, the Shanghai municipal council provided the 4th Marines with musical instruments that included drums, fifes, and piccolos, and the new musical assemblage was named the "Fessenden Fifes"

[12] Summarized from Andrew David Field, "The Fate of Jack Riley, Shanghai's Notorious Slot Machine King," *Shanghai Sojourns* (blog), 29 June 2018; *China Weekly Review*, 12 April 1941; "China: Tough Taipan," *Time*, 28 April 1941; and Paul French, *City of Devils: The Two Men Who Ruled the Underworld of Old Shanghai* (New York: Picador, 2018).

after Sterling Fessenden, president of the council. The bandmaster of the Green Howards taught the Marine musicians how to play the fifes provided. Once a week, the 4th Marines paraded through Shanghai to the beat of the Fessenden Fifes' music. When the Green Howards left Shanghai, the Fessenden Fifes marched them down to the Bund and onto their ship.[13] The 4th Marine Regiment thereby became the only unit in the Marine Corps equipped with a fife and drum corps.[14]

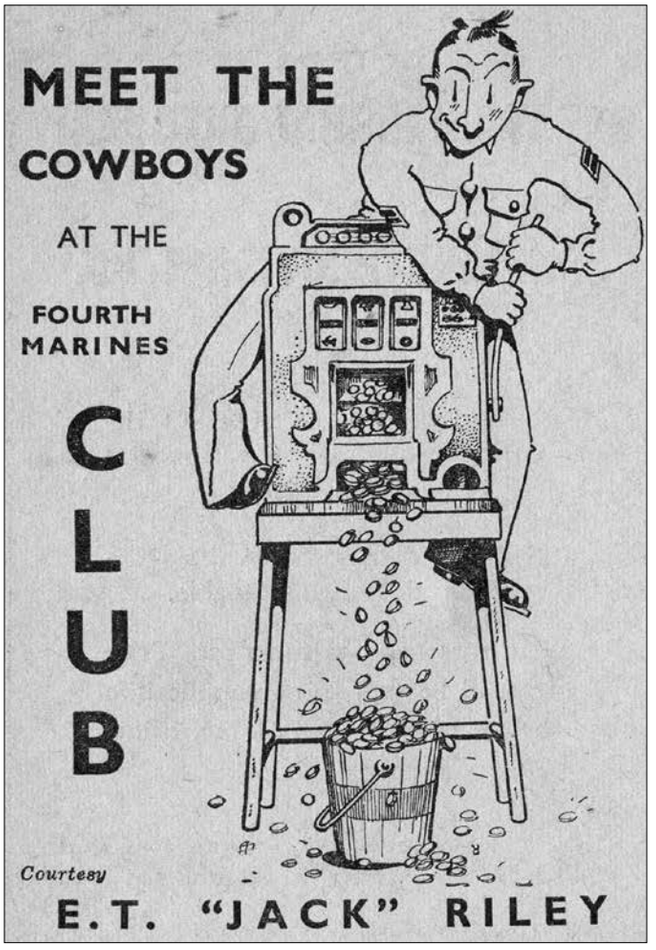
CHINESE SOUVENIRS

While enjoying the "China Marine" lifestyle, enlisted Marines were able to make their money go much further in the Far East. With vast numbers of foreign tourists and citizens living in the international settlements, local Chinese entrepreneurs, store owners, and tradesmen set up operations in these economic zones to profit from the foreigners' stable incomes. Because of the relative wealth of foreigners, these Chinese entrepreneurs were often highly talented—certainly more so than those usually looking to make a quick buck off military servicemembers.

It was not uncommon for Marines to purchase and bring back mementos or souvenirs to proudly document their service overseas. Decorative souvenir garments were popular with Marines both before and after World War II. Marines often admired the work of local Chinese craftsmen and tailors who embroidered beautiful designs featuring animals, dragons, and other figures and patterns on clothing. Many designs and iconography became associated with a specific local tailor or region in China. One of the more decorative textiles that Marines were known to have purchased included colorfully embroidered smoking jackets that are illustrative of classic Chinese needlework of the period. They are tangible reminders of a special era in the cultural history of the Corps.

Local Chinese craftsmen also embroidered beautiful designs on the covers of photo albums, personalizing them for each Marine to document their service in China. Chinese craftsmen often became known for their signature designs, and it was not uncommon for Marines to admire the craftsmanship of the work done on a piece owned by a fellow Marine. Quickly, word of the skills of the local tailors and craftsman spread from one Marine to another.

Marines also visited shops such as Teh Ling in Peking



An advertisement for Edward Thomas Riley's slot machines at the Fourth Marines Club. Walla Walla Newsweekly *13, no. 6 (13 July 1940), 6.*

A club token used in the slot machines at the 4th Marines Club in Shanghai. Edward Thomas Riley's initials appeared on the back side of all the club's tokens. *Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.*

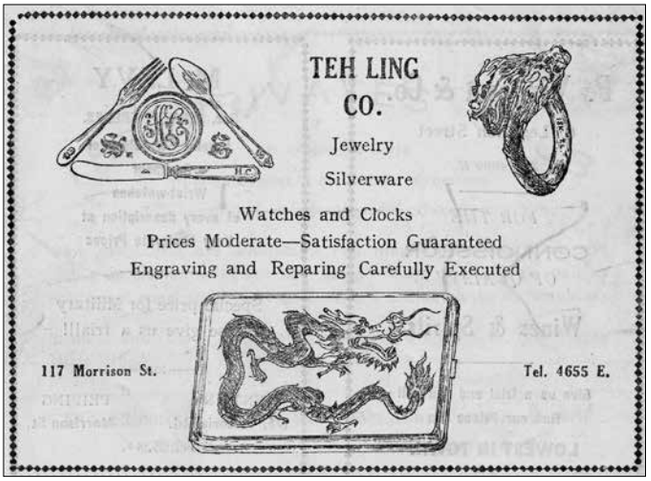
[13] BGen Edwin H. Simmons, USMC (Ret), "Remembering General Shepherd," *Fortitudine* 20, no. 2 (Fall 1990): 5.

[14] James S. Santelli, *A Brief History of the 4th Marines* (Washington, DC: Historical Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1970), 16.

The back (left) and front (right) of an embroidered smoking jacket that was purchased in China by Cpl Alvin Honken.
Photos by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

A sterling silver engraved plaque, which reads: "From Lieutenant Colonel F.F.I. Kinsman and Officers 2nd Battalion the Green Howards to the Officers, Fourth U.S. Marines to commemorate their service together in Shanghai, 1930–31."
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

and Tuck Chang in Shanghai, both of which sold jewelry, watches, rings, sterling silver cigarette cases, engraved lighters, and swagger sticks featuring detailed decorations, many of them exotic and mysterious looking dragons. These popular shops also produced sterling silver trophies for sporting events such as polo and marksmanship and shooting competitions. Teh Ling's shop was located on Morrison Street in Peking, not far from the Legation Quarter, which was home to the diplomatic community and the guard forces that protected them. The business specifically produced



An advertisement for the Teh Ling Company in Peking, China. American Embassy Guard News *5, no. 9 (1 July 1937).*

items marketed toward U.S. Marines stationed in the city. He was known for producing high-quality items that made him a favorite among the Marines serving at the American Legation before and after World War II.[15]

Smoking was the norm for men and women in the 1930s, and it was considered fashionable to carry one's cigarettes in a cigarette case. Although cases could be made from varying materials, those made of silver seemed to have been very popular at the time in both the United States and abroad. While in China, Marines who smoked often purchased silver lighters and cigarette cases decorated with dragons. These were also personalized by engraving the owner's name or initials and the location where they were serving. Small items like these were easy to purchase and send home to girlfriends, friends, and family as gifts.[16]

Marines also purchased custom engraved pewter drinking mugs and personalized cloisonné napkin rings that featured their names, dates of service, the names of clubs or duty stations, and dragons curving around the sides. Some of these items were tied to membership in Marine Corps clubs such as the Sergeants Mess.

While in China, many Marines also purchased custom engraved swagger sticks and riding crops for personal use. Marines used canes, riding crops, and swagger sticks since the mid-nineteenth century. According to a reference file held by the National Museum of the Marine Corps,

A custom engraved lighter. *Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.*

> *The first official sanction for this custom was given in 1915 when Marines, both commissioned and enlisted, were authorized to carry swagger sticks when on recruiting duty to increase military bearing and appearance. By 1922 the Marine Corps uniform regulations authorized the swagger stick for all enlisted men on liberty or furlough and requested all commanding officers to encourage the carrying of the stick "to increase the smartness of the marine." This directive continued in effect until the uniform regulations of 1937 when it was omitted without comment, but the practice had fallen into disuse in the early 1930s except among the Marines in China.*[17]

This "badge of authority" was typically only authorized for use by commissioned officers. Once the young, enlisted Marines stationed in China found that they too were

[15] Dirk Salverian, "Teh Ling: Silversmith to the China Marines," U.S. Militaria Forum, 14 May 2023.
[16] Salverian, "Teh Ling."
[17] Curator Reference File on Swagger Sticks (Document A03E-hvm), National Museum of the Marine Corps, 20 September 1952.

A souvenir of enlisted Marine Alexander Glus's service in Peking, China.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

Custom cloisonné napkin rings belonging to enlisted Marines William Williams (left) and Julius Papas (right).
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

officially sanctioned to carry swagger sticks, they found local craftsmen who could create personalized custom pieces with dragons engraved on the handles and curling around the length of the piece, along with the Marine's name or initials affixed on silver plates on the sides or engraved on the top.

THE END OF AN ERA: WORLD WAR II AND THE END OF THE CHINA MARINES

Due to the worsening political situation between the United States and Japan and war in Europe in the late 1930s, several of the countries represented in the Legation Quarter left Peking. British military forces departed the legation in August 1940, leaving U.S. military forces as the main foreign stronghold in the Legation proper. With the United Kingdom at war with Germany, British forces "were more

Marines posing with their swagger sticks in Peking, China.
Jacob L. Craumer Collection (COLL/1958), Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

Maj Luther A. Brown's personal swagger stick.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

Maj Luther A. Brown's personal swagger stick (engraved detail).
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

urgently needed elsewhere . . . it was felt that the force maintained in North China was inadequate to resist a serious attack from the Japanese."[18]

The departure of the British forces from the Legation Quarter marked a significant turning point in this history. The U.S. military forces in Peking, particularly the Marines, were left as the primary foreign military presence in the area. However, escalating tensions between the United States and Japan as well as the strategic disadvantages regarding a potential Japanese assault against U.S. forces in China prompted a reevaluation of their position as well.

Shortly before the entry of the United States into World War II and the onset of the Pacific War following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on 7 December 1941, the United States' strategic imperatives in Asia shifted dramatically. This focus moved toward reinforcing more pivotal locations in the Pacific, which led to the decision to withdraw the U.S. Marines from China. By November 1941, anticipating the inevitable conflict with Japan, orders were issued for the withdrawal of the Marines to the Philippines, which were deemed more strategic for the defense of American interests in the Pacific.

The task of overseeing the American Legation and remaining American interests in Peking was left to a small group of U.S. diplomats and a minimal military presence, essentially marking the end of an era. These individuals were soon forced to surrender to the Japanese forces that swept through the region in December 1941. The capitulation of the remaining U.S. military and diplomatic personnel symbolized the effective conclusion of the Marine Corps' longstanding presence in China, a period often romanticized and remembered for the service and sacrifices of the China Marines.

The withdrawal and subsequent surrender of these U.S. personnel to the Japanese not only marked a strategic pivot in the U.S. military's focus during World War II but also symbolized the end of the unique role of the China Marines in American military history. The presence of Marines in China, which had begun in the nineteenth century, was characterized by their duty protecting American legations, citizens, and interests during turbulent times in Chinese history. The end of this era coincided with broader geopolitical shifts during World War II, leading to the reconfiguration of global powers and the onset of the Cold War, further distancing the U.S. military from its former roles in China.[19]

At the end of World War II, Marines from the 1st and 6th Marine Divisions served on occupation duty in China to assist with the surrender of Japanese forces and supervise the repatriation of defeated Japanese troops from 1945 to 1949, while the Chinese Civil War was raging throughout

[18] "British Withdraw Troops from China; U.S. Forces Remain," *New York Times*, 10 August 1940.

[19] For place names in China and similar references, this chapter uses the names used in U.S. and Western sources from 1920 to 1941, which tended to follow the Wade-Giles romanization system for Mandarin Chinese.

Maj Luther A. Brown's personal riding crop.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

Right: Maj Luther A. Brown's personal riding crop (engraved detail).
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

the country.[20] In an October 1945 Chinese edition of *Stars and Stripes* newspaper, an article states that "the troops of the 1st Marine Division entered Tientsin to assume police duties in the hotspot where Chinese Nationalist and Communist troops have been at bayonet points. Cheering Chinese lined the Hai River banks (river that connected Peking to Tientsin) as units of the Marine Division poured ashore." Many Marines had just taken part in a brutal five-year-long war across the Pacific and now found themselves in what was once a coveted duty location serving as peacekeepers between the Chinese Nationalist and Chinese Communist forces, thinking that the war was supposed to be over and yet it was not. The Marines could only hope that things would soon return to the "normal" of years past. To their disappointment, they never did. Nothing would ever be the same in China.

[20] Clark, *Treading Softly*, 131.

Plans for the withdrawal of the Marines from China began in late 1946, and Marines began returning to the United States in 1947. Tsingtao became the only Marine Corps duty station in China on 1 September 1947, when the rear echelon of the 1st Marine Division left for the United States and the remaining Marines combined under a new command in Tsingtao. Their job was to ensure the security of U.S. naval training activities—Fleet Marine Force, Western Pacific, commanded by Brigadier General Omar T. Pfeiffer.[21] The Marines in China were able to take liberty and enjoy some social and recreational opportunities, but the ceaseless hostilities between the Nationalist and Communist forces continued with increasing violence, lessening these kinds of opportunities for the Marines who remained to maintain the security and safety of U.S. civilians and troops in the country. For all intents in purposes, by 1947, "Magic China" was no more.

[21] Santelli, *A Brief History of the 4th Marines*, 23.

Chapter 15

MINI MARINES OF CHINA

By Jennifer Castro, Cultural and Material History Curator

Featured artifacts: Coat, Uniform, Officer, Child's (2010.2. 1); Coat, Uniform, Enlisted, Child's (2010.2. 2); Belt, Sam Browne, Child's (2010.2.5); and Cap, Uniform, Officer, Child's (2012.120.1)

In a 1947 book review of *Letters of a Combat Marine*, Lieutenant General Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller noted from his career experience that "it takes all sorts of people to be Marines."[1] However, even the legendary Chesty Puller may have been surprised by the story that follows here.

Many American families have long held the men and women of the U.S. Marine Corps in high regard. It should therefore come as little surprise that they were also proud to allow their children to dress and emulate them. Some of the earliest documented children's "Marine Corps" uniforms date from World War I and interwar period. These little "Mini Marines" wore their uniforms with pride and respect, in homage to those serving their nation. This is the story of two such children and their unusual "enlistment" in the Marine Corps in China in the 1930s.

DIPLOMATIC BEGINNINGS AND FAMILIAL BONDS

Nelson Trusler Johnson served as U.S. minister plenipotentiary to China from 1928 to 1935 and as U.S. ambassador (or envoy) extraordinary to China from 1935 to 1941.[2] A newspaper story from the era described him as "[a] little portly of build, with thinning sandy hair."[3] More significantly, as a diplomat, Johnson possessed the knowledge and experience of Chinese culture and politics that helped shape early twentieth-century U.S. policy in the Far East.

Johnson married Jane Beck of Cody, Wyoming, on 10 October 1931 in Tientsin (Tianjin), China. They had a son, Nelson Beck Johnson, soon after. The family lived in the city of Nanking (Nanjing). As a U.S. government minister, Johnson often made for an unusual sight on his bicycle, "unlimbering himself for the diplomatic duties of the day."[4] On 25 September 1935, he was appointed as the U.S. ambassador to China. In addition to his promotion, his good fortune continued with the birth of his second child, Betty Jane Johnson, in 1941.

A DIPLOMAT'S MINI MARINES

On numerous occasions, China's history of civil unrest and international incidents during the twentieth century resulted in the deployment of U.S. Marines to the Far East to protect American interests and citizens there. This made China a complex and high-stakes post for any American diplomat. However, Johnson's knowledge and expertise of

[1] Lt David Tucker Brown Jr., USMCR, *Letters of a Combat Marine* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1947).

[2] "Veteran in China Now Ambassador of U.S.: Mr. Nelson T. Johnson Presents His Credentials: Exchange of Mutual Good Wishes," *North China Herald*, 25 September 1935.

[3] "Faith of American Diplomats," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 14 August 1928.

[4] "Envoy to China Is Bicycle Fan," *Charlotte Observer*, 16 June 1935.

Child-size custom Marine Corps uniforms worn by Nelson and Betty Jane Johnson.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

Chinese history, culture, and politics ensured a long period of work at the U.S. embassy, even with the turbulence within the country as well as the expanding Japanese occupation before the official outbreak of World War II.

The American Legation and the U.S. embassy were both located in the southwest corner of the Legation Quarter of Peking (Beijing). In 1935, this small slice of America in the Far East had nearly 500 Marines serving there, with their number increasing and decreasing depending on the level of civil unrest in the country.[5]

Ambassador Johnson's two children, Nelson and Betty Jane, were both born in Peking and grew up in China. During one of their few visits to the United States, their grandfather was shocked to learn the children's poor command of the English language. The children grew up speaking Chinese, due to the constant care of their two Chinese *amahs* (nursemaids).[6] The Johnson children were also heavily influenced by the presence of the local U.S. Marines. These China Marines were well respected and admired among the foreign legation for their dedication, professionalism, and

[5] "Marine Detachment, American Legation, Peiping, China, 1–31 January 1935," *Muster Rolls of Officers and Enlisted Men of the U.S. Marine Corps, 1798–1958* (Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA).

[6] Betty Jane Gerber, "Afterword," in George W. T. Beck, *Beckoning Frontiers: The Memoir of a Wyoming Entrepreneur*, ed. Lynn J. House and Jeremy M. Johnston (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2020), 261.

Top: Detail of the enlisted collar ornament on the enlisted dress uniform worn by Betty Jane Gerber. *Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.*

Right: Nelson and Betty Jane Johnson wearing their custom-made Marine Corps uniforms. *Courtesy of Betty Jane Gerber.*

military bearing. They also happened to enjoy playing with the ambassador's children and humored their presence as a welcome distraction from service overseas.

Due to their children's fascination with the well-dressed Marines, Johnson and his wife had a child-size Marine Corps noncommissioned officer uniform made for their son Nelson. The locally made costume was an exact miniature copy of a senior enlisted Marine's dress uniform. It featured original Marine Corps buttons and collar devices, sergeant major chevrons, a white dress belt, and a uniform cap with the proper insignia. This same uniform was later worn by Nelson's younger sister Betty Jane after he had outgrown the uniform.

When Betty Jane was old enough to play Marine, the Johnson family next commissioned a complete, custom-tailored Marine officer dress blue uniform. This new uniform

An advertisement for uniforms and civilian clothing at the Post Tailor Shop, American Embassy Guard, Peiping. North China Marine Magazine *1, no. 6 (December 1941), 41.*

was even more detailed than the first, as it came equipped with a child-size leather Sam Browne belt and the appropriate jeweler grade officer insignia and ornamentation.

The children's military exploits were documented in Johnson family photographs. These images depict little "Sergeant Major" Betty Jane and "Lieutenant" Nelson wearing their uniforms during official parades and other Marine Corps events held in the Legation Quarter.

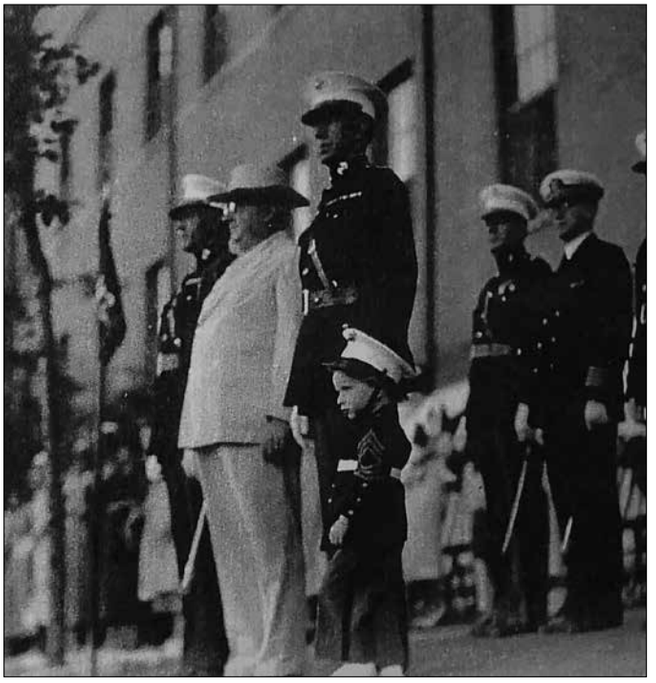
The family's love for the city's Marines ran deep. Not content with just the dress uniforms, the family also purchased locally made China Marine fur hats for the children. These were the same beloved winter hats that their heroes wore. Family photographs dating to 1935 show Johnson standing in a white suit with Colonel Presley M. Rixey, holding the hand of a very young Nelson, during a parade with other Marine officers standing behind them. At the time, Rixey was serving as the commanding officer of the Marine detachment at the American Legation. Other family photographs show the children posing for pictures in their uniforms, marching in parades, and—in line with their father—participating in ceremonies alongside Marine officers during a review of troops on the legation grounds.

HOSTILITIES INCREASE; WAR BEGINS

Ambassador Johnson's family remained in Peking until tensions between the United States and Japan rose to unacceptable levels of concern. Like many Western citizens living in legation settlements, they would be evacuated in the months prior to the U.S. entry into World War II. Johnson was recalled soon after. The United States began redeploying elements of the 4th Marine Regiment from China to the Philippines in November 1941. Only a small group of Marines and diplomatic personal remained in China at the outbreak of war between the United States and Japan on 7 December 1941.

Desiring a less stressful and quieter post as well as to be reunited with his family, Johnson accepted a new job as

One of the two children of Ambassador Johnson following the footsteps of Marines during a review of troops.
Courtesy of Betty Jane Gerber.



Nelson Johnson holding the hand of Col Presley M. Rixey during a parade in China.
Courtesy of Betty Jane Gerber.

U.S. ambassador to Australia in September 1941 and served there through 1945. While in Australia, the Johnson children accompanied their parents to Melbourne. They were reunited with their Marine heroes in January 1943, when the 1st Marine Division arrived in Australia for nine months of recuperation after intense combat operations on the island of Guadalcanal in the South Pacific. Ambassador Johnson and the division's commanding officer, Major General Alexander A. Vandegrift, met together while in Melbourne. The two men knew each other from their years of service in China. In 1935, Vandegrift had reported to Peking as a lieutenant colonel and served as executive officer of Headquarters Detachment, Marine Detachment at the U.S. embassy in Peking. He served there until departing as a colonel in the spring of 1937. During their reacquaintance in Australia, Vandegrift appointed Betty Jane as an official private first class and Nelson as a sergeant major of the Marine Corps. Each of the ambassador's children received their own Marine Corps promotion document, stating their permanent appointment for "For Duty with the First Marine Division only."

Following the war's end, the Johnson family returned to Washington, DC, where Johnson went on to serve as the secretary general of the Far Eastern Commission, overseeing the occupation of Japan after the end of World War II.

Chapter 16

BLOODY RELIC OF BELLEAU WOOD

Albertus W. Catlin

By Gretchen Winterer, Uniforms and Heraldry Curator

Featured artifacts: Small Box Respirator, Gas Mask Bag (1991.303.1b); and Medal, Purple Heart (2016.185.18)

Give 'em hell, boys!
~ Brigadier General Albertus W. Catlin[1]

World War I had been raging for three years in Europe by the time the United States entered the conflict in April 1917. Russia's withdraw from the war in March 1918 allowed Germany to reallocate forces to the western front, aiming to annihilate the British and French troops fighting there. The American Expeditionary Forces (AEF), which included the 4th Brigade of the U.S. Marine Corps, began arriving in France in June 1917. The 4th Brigade was composed of the 5th Marine Regiment (which had arrived alongside the first U.S. troops in June 1917), the 6th Marine Regiment, and the 6th Machine Gun Battalion (both of which arrived in February 1918). The Marines moved from Verdun to Chaumont en Vexin, and then to the Château-Thierry sector. By the beginning of June 1918, the bolstered German offensive pushed the British and French back to within 75 kilometers of Paris and forced the AEF to the front lines. In a calculated offensive attack, the Marines were ordered to capture Bois de Belleau (Belleau Wood) from the Germans. After 31 days of constant fighting, the Marines successfully pushed the Germans back. Following several more battles, including those at Saint-Mihiel, Blanc Mont, and the Argonne Forest, the Germans agreed to an armistice in November 1918, thereby ending the war.[2]

The Battle of Belleau Wood (1–26 June 1918) was a major turning point in the war and a pivotal moment for the Marine Corps. On the first day of the battle, more than 1,000 Marines were killed or wounded, which was a higher casualty number than the Corps had experienced across its entire existence. But by the war's end, the Marine Corps has solidified its evolvement from seagoing Marines to a global force in readiness on land and sea.

Legends were born at Belleau Wood. Four future Commandants of the Marine Corps participated in the battle: Wendell C. Neville, Thomas Holcomb, Clifton B. Cates, and Lemuel C. Shepherd Jr., Gunnery Sergeant Daniel J. Daly, and Colonel Albertus W. Catlin also played major roles in the U.S. victory. Catlin commanded the 6th Marines; at 49 years old, he was already a seasoned Marine with a long career under his belt.

Albertus Wright Catlin was born in New York on 1 December 1868. He attended the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, where he was the captain of the football team for three years before graduating in 1890. Catlin completed his required sea duty aboard the protected cruiser USS *Charleston* (C 2) and commissioned into the Marine

[1] BGen Albertus W. Catlin and Walter A. Dyer, *With the Help of God and a Few Marines* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1919) 112.

[2] Annette D. Amerman, *United States Marine Corps in the First World War: Anthology, Selected Bibliography, and Annotated Order of Battle* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps History Division, 2016).

Col Albertus Catlin in the early 1900s.
Library of Congress.

MajGen Omar Bundy (left) with Col Albertus Catlin near Sommedieue, France, in April 1918.
U.S. Army War College, Historical Section.

Corps as a second lieutenant in 1892. He finished first in his class at the Marine Corps School of Application in 1893, was promoted to first lieutenant, and spent time aboard the protected cruiser USS *Cincinnati* (C 7). Catlin was then transferred to the second-class battleship USS *Maine* (1895) and commanded the ship's Marine detachment until 1898, when an explosion aboard caused it to sink in Havana Harbor, Cuba. Catlin survived, but 261 of the ship's 355 crewmembers were killed.[3]

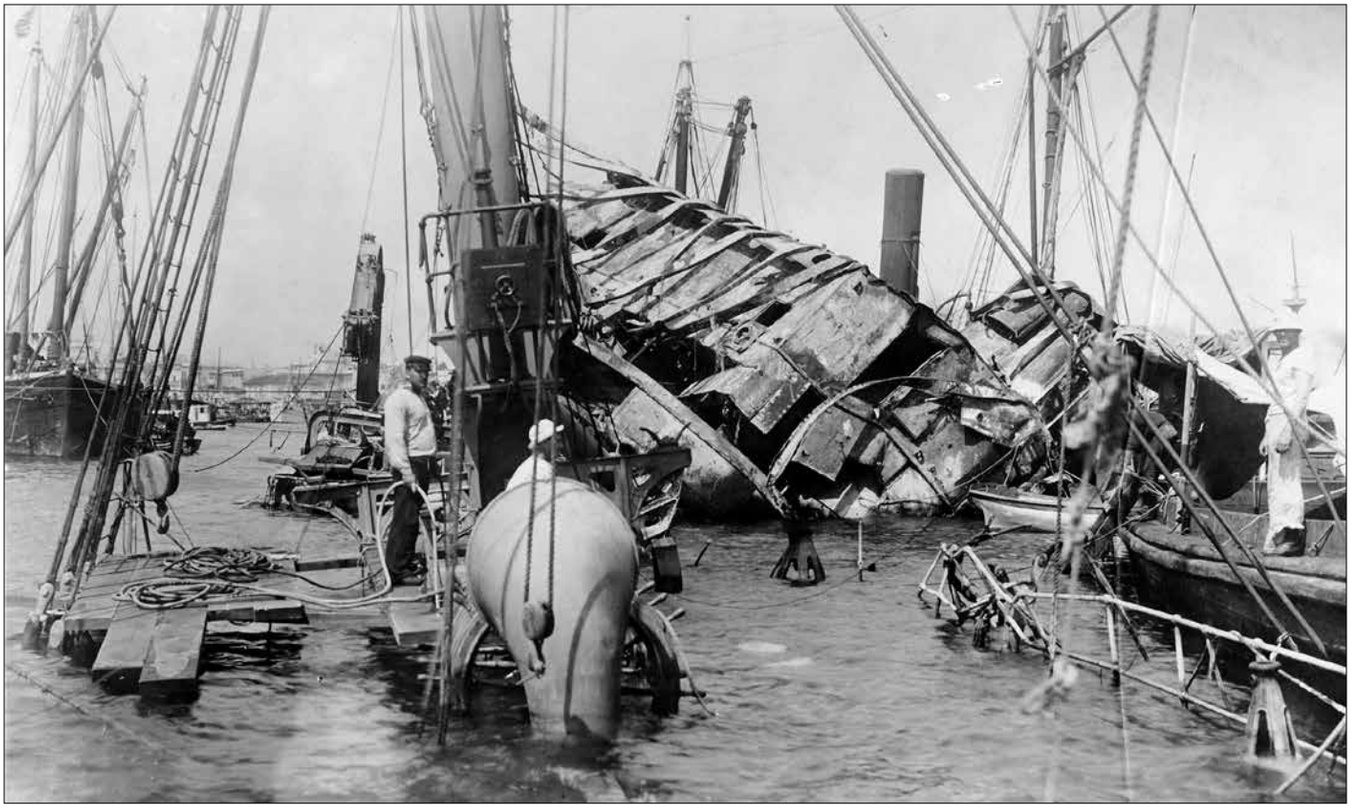
Catlin briefly served in the Spanish-American War (1898), during which he participated in the blockade of Santiago de Cuba before being promoted to captain and assigned to the Marine barracks at Port Royal, South Carolina. During the early 1900s, Catlin served in the Philippines, the Dominican Republic, and Cuba. In 1914, while serving aboard the battleship USS *Wyoming* (BB 32), Catlin earned the Medal of Honor for leading the provisional 3d Marine Regiment, comprised of Marine ship detachments from the U.S. Atlantic Fleet, into Veracruz, Mexico, and capturing the city. His citation reads: "For distinguished conduct in battle, engagement of Vera Cruz, 22 April 1914. Eminent and conspicuous in command of his battalion, Maj. Catlin exhibited courage and skill in leading his men through the action of the 22d and in the final occupation of the city."[4] Veracruz was the first action in which Marine officers were eligible to receive the United States' highest military award.

Catlin was promoted to lieutenant colonel in October 1915 and colonel in August 1916. He was commanding the Marine Training Camp at Quantico, Virginia, when he was assigned to lead the 6th Marine Regiment in France. On 6 June 1918 at Belleau Wood, Catlin oversaw the Marines' advance across the wheat field and into the woods. As the Marines prepared to move forward, he offered four words of encouragement: "Give 'em hell, boys!"[5] That evening, Catlin was struck by a German sniper. "It felt exactly as though

[3] "USS *Maine* Memorial (Mast of the *Maine*)," Arlington National Cemetery, accessed 14 February 2024.

[4] Medal of Honor Citation, Albertus W. Catlin, 4 December 1915 (Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA).

[5] Catlin and Dyer, *With the Help of God and a Few Marines*, 112.



A U.S. Navy diving crew at work on the wreck of the USS *Maine* (1895) in 1898, seen from aft looking forward. *Naval History and Heritage Command.*

someone had struck me heavily with a sledge," he wrote in his memoir. "It swung me clear around and toppled me over on the ground. When I tried to get up, I found that my right side was paralyzed."[6] The bullet, fired from 600 yards away, penetrated Catlin's gas mask, pierced through his right lung and exited his back. He recalled, "I suffered but little pain and I never for a moment lost consciousness. Nor did any thought of death occur to me. . . . I was merely annoyed at my inability to move and carry on."[7] French Army captain Tribot Laspierre pulled Catlin into a trench and placed the colonel's damaged gas mask over his face while the pair waited for the heavy artillery fire and gas shells to subside. After evacuation nearly two hours later, the mask was cut off of Catlin and salvaged by Laspierre. Catlin survived his wound and was sent back to the United States on 22 July 1918.[8]

For his service in France, Catlin received the Croix de Guerre with palm. During his recovery at Headquarters Marine Corps, he was promoted to brigadier general, and his last assignment was command of the 1st Marine Brigade in Haiti before his retirement in December 1919. Catlin's remarkable Marine Corps career spanned nearly 30 years. He spent his final years battling continued illness from his combat wound until his death on 31 May 1933. He is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

When the United States entered World War I, its military forces were wildly unprepared for chemical warfare, unlike their English and French comrades. AEF forces began using the French M2 gas mask, though, by design, it was only adequate to protect against light chemical attacks. In 1918, AEF forces began to use the British Small Box Respirator (SBR), which fit snug over one's face with eyepieces, a nose clamp, and a mouthpiece. The hose attached to the mouthpiece on one end and a box filter on the other. The filter fit inside a canvas-style bag with an adjustable strap.[9]

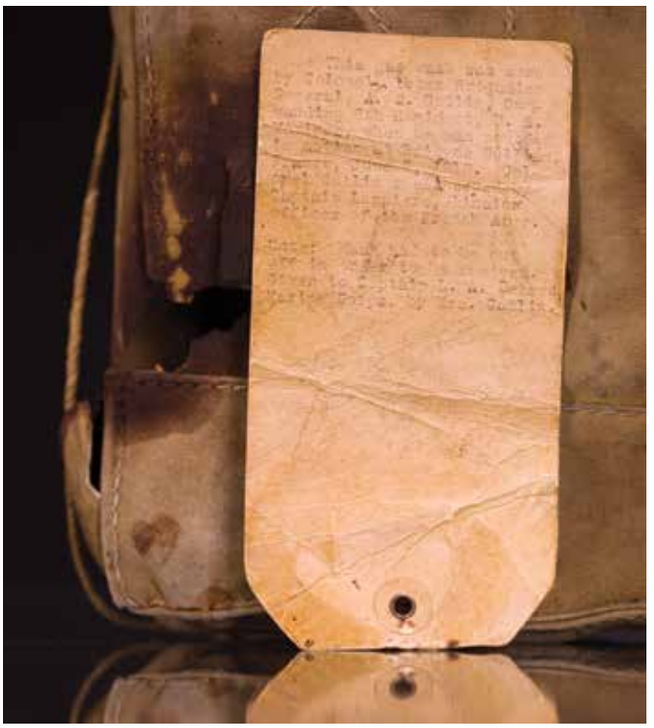
[6] Catlin and Dyer, *With the Help of God and a Few Marines*, 118.
[7] Catlin and Dyer, *With the Help of God and a Few Marines*, 119.
[8] Catlin and Dyer, *With the Help of God and a Few Marines*, 120–22.

[9] Bret Werner, *Uniforms, Equipment, and Weapons of the American Expeditionary Forces in World War I* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer, 2006).

Wearing gas masks at Verdun, France, 1918.
Marine Corps History Division.

The staff of RAdm Charles J. Badger, commander in chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, in a planning session on board the USS *Wyoming* (BB 32) in 1913. Those present around the table are, from left to right: Lt Gardner L. Caskey, USN; LtCdr Walton R. Sexton, USN; LtCdr Frank R. McCrary, USN; Lt Stanford C. Hooper, USN; Maj Albertus W. Catlin, USMC; and Cdr Carl T. Vogelgesang, USN.
Naval History and Heritage Command.

BGen Albertus W. Catlin, photographed ca. 1919.
Naval History and Heritage Command.



A carrier, gas mask, and M-1917, with gas mask bag tag donated to the National Museum of the Marine Corps.
Photos by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

BGen Catlin's Medal of Honor, with a custom neck band added by Catlin.
National Museum of the Marine Corps.

The Purple Heart medal presented to Catlin in 1932 for wounds received at the Battle of Belleau Wood.
Photos by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

Eventually, the United States developed its own gas mask, the Corrected English Small Box Respirator, or M1917, which was styled remarkably similarly to the English SBR, with only a few minor changes.[10]

This bloodstained gas mask carrier was worn by Colonel Catlin when he was severely wounded during the Battle of Belleau Wood. Catlin was shot in the chest; the bullet penetrated the bag, leaving it stained with his blood. The bag could have very well saved Catlin's life.

A small paper tag, which accompanied the artifact when it was donated, describes Catlin's wounding. It states, "This gas mask was worn by Colonel later Brigadier General A. W. Catlin, Commanding 6th Regiment, U.S. Marines, when wounded in action at Bois de Belleau, France, June 6, 1918. Colonel Catlin was rescued by Captain Laspiere, liaison officer of the French Army. Note: Mask had to be cut off to be removed. Given to Captain L. A. Dessez, Marine Corps, by Mrs. Catlin."

Brigadier General Catlin's other awards include, but are not limited to, the Purple Heart; the Sampson Medal; the West Indies, Philippine, and Haitian Campaign Medal; the Cuban Pacification Medal; the Mexican Service Medal; the Croix de Guerre with palm; and the Legion of Honour.

[10] Alec S. Tulkoff, *Equipping the Corps 1892–1937* (San Jose, CA: R. James Bender Publishing, 2010).

Chapter 17

FROM THE HALLS OF MONTEZUMA

The Collection of Major Levi Twiggs

By Owen Linlithgow Conner, Chief Curator

Featured artifacts: Officers Undress Coat (2008.3.5); White Trousers (1994.190.1); Officers Dress Blue Coat, ca. 1840–1847 (2008.3.1); and Officers Dress Green Coat, ca. 1830–1840 (2008.3.4)

The National Museum of the Marine Corps (NMMC) is the primary repository for more than 65,000 artifacts that span the history of the U.S. Marine Corps.[1] The size of the collection is significant, but the eras with which these artifacts are associated are not evenly distributed. The majority of the collection dates from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This is primarily because history was actively collected by the museum in its different iterations, beginning with the first-known Marine Corps museum in Quantico, Virginia, in 1940.[2] Another reason for the preponderance of twentieth- and twenty-first-century artifacts is due to simple math. Prior to World War I (1914–18), the Marine Corps was not a large branch of Service. From 1775 to 1900, there were never more than 4,000 total Marines in uniform. When it comes to officers, these limited numbers become even starker. For example, at the start of the Mexican-American War (1846–48) there were only 42 officers in the entire Marine Corps.[3] As a result, the existence of any nineteenth-century artifacts are extraordinarily rare.

One notable collection that defies these odds is associated with Major Levi Twiggs, who served in the Marine Corps from 1813 to 1847. His name is little known outside the world of Marine Corps history aficionados, but he is most often recognized as a beloved officer of the era who died leading an assault on Chapultepec Castle in Mexico City, Mexico, on 13 September 1847.[4] The singular association of this tragedy is factual but unfair. The full history of Twiggs is far more complex and interesting, and his collection of early Marine Corps artifacts is one of the most significant in the collection of the NMMC.

Born in Richmond County, Georgia, in 1793, Levi Twiggs was the son of Major General John Twiggs, an American military officer who rose through the ranks of the Georgia Militia during the American Revolutionary

[1] Office of the Museum Registrar, National Museum of the Marine Corps, Triangle, VA. As of 28 February 2023, the official artifact count was 65,717.

[2] Kenneth L. Smith-Christmas, "Why Things Are the Way They Are at the Marine Corps Museum" (unpublished paper, Marine Corps Museum, Quantico, VA, n.d.) 1-2. "The original museum was founded in 1940 at Little Hall, MCBQ [Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia]. Battle trophies from WWI [World War I], flags, etc., were displayed on its second deck with a series of about a dozen mannequins in approximations of Marine Corps uniforms from 1775 to WWI, that were curated by Colonel J. J. Capolino. Starting in 1946, CWO [Chief Warrant Officer] Harold Johnson took over, and started an accessions ledger, listing what was then in the collection."

[3] Albert A. Nofi, *Marine Corps Book of Lists: A Definitive Compendium of Marine Corps Facts, Feats and Traditions* (Conshohocken, PA: Combined Publishing, 1997), 31–33.

[4] "Mourning Order (The Death of Major Twiggs)," Headquarters Marine Corps, 20 November 1847 (Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA).

The uniforms of Mexican War-era Marine Corps officer Maj Levi Twiggs are among the earliest and rarest in the collection of the National Museum of the Marine Corps.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

This portrait of Maj Levi Twiggs depicts the officer as he looked at the time of his death in 1847.
National Museum of the Marine Corps.

War (1775–83). At start of the War of 1812 (1812–15), Levi Twiggs was a student at Athens College in Georgia. He asked his parents' permission to join the military, but he was denied and forced to remain enrolled in college. A year later, Twiggs's persistence paid off. He was allowed to leave school and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps on 10 November 1813. Following promotion to first lieutenant in 1815, Twiggs received his first major assignment as commander of the Marine detachment aboard the U.S. Navy frigate USS *President* (1800).[5] The ship was captained by none other than Commodore Stephen Decatur Jr., an inspiring young naval officer already famous for his heroism in burning the stranded frigate USS *Philadelphia* (1799) during the First Barbary War (1801–5).[6]

It was on board the *President* that Twiggs saw his first combat. In January 1815, the frigate became engaged with a blockade fleet of the British Royal Navy outside New York Harbor. Despite the *President*'s formidable 55-gun armament and well-documented speed, the ship was at a distinct disadvantage, as it had run aground while leaving port and sustained considerable damage to its hull and masts. Unable

[5] Official U.S. Marine Corps Biographies, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.
[6] "Stephen Decatur, 5 January 1779–22 March 1820," Naval History and Heritage Command, accessed 10 April 2023.

Lt Twiggs and his Marine detachment fought valiantly during their ship's engagement with the HMS *Endymion* (1797). *Naval History and Heritage Command.*

This hand-painted flag was presented to the Marine Corps around 1840 by the artist, Joseph Bush of Boston. Known as the "Bush flag," it is the oldest known flag to have been used by the Marine Corps. *National Museum of the Marine Corps.*

to outrun the pursuing British warships, Decatur decided to fight the faster HMS *Endymion* (1797) before the rest of the British fleet could join in the attack. The American captain had already established himself as a national hero for his courage in the First Barbary War, the Quasi-War with France (1798–1800), and earlier actions in the War of 1812.[7] Decatur's daring plan of escape did not disappoint. He called on the crew of the *President* to disable the *Endymion* and to board and capture the enemy ship. Hours of broadsides and cannon fire ensued. The *President* tried in vain to position itself alongside the *Endymion*, while the British captain skillfully avoided the American's attempts. All the while, Levi Twiggs's Marines fought valiantly from their positions among the ship's tops, firing volley after volley onto the *Endymion*'s decks.[8] Ultimately, the skill of the Royal Navy's gunners carried the day, and after receiving significant damage to the *President*'s hull, Decatur was forced to surrender. In his after-action report he noted the Marines' skill: "Lieutenant Twiggs displayed great zeal, his men were well supplied, and their fire incomparable."[9] Period newspaper accounts claimed that Twiggs's 56-man Marine detachment fired more than 5,000 cartridges during the engagement.[10] When Decatur offered his sword to the victorious British captain of the *Endymion*, it was returned to him in an act of admiration for the American crew's noble defense. Decatur, Twiggs, and the rest of the *President*'s officers spent the rest of the war as well-cared-for prisoners on the island of Bermuda.[11]

Following the end of the War of 1812, Twiggs served in numerous Marine Corps shore and duty stations before rising to the rank of captain in 1830. In 1836–37, he took part in fighting with the Creek and Seminole Indians in Georgia and Florida.

During the Mexican-American War, Twiggs, now a major, was part of a battalion of Marines raised in New York in June 1847. Assigned to the American forces under the command of U.S. Army major general Winfield Scott, the Marines landed at the port city of Veracruz, Mexico, and joined the advancing American columns in their attack on Mexican forces just outside Mexico City. The enemy soldiers and military cadets, led by General Antonio López de Santa Anna, held fortified positions surrounding Chapultepec Castle. On 13 September, Twiggs led a detachment with

[7] "*President* I (Frigate)," Naval History and Heritage Command, accessed 10 April 2023.

[8] Irvin Anthony, *Decatur* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931), 224–27.

[9] Official U.S. Marine Corps Biographies, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

[10] *Daily National Intelligencer*, 22 November 1847, 1–2.

[11] Official U.S. Marine Corps Biographies, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

Left and top: Levi Twiggs's personal umbrella is engraved with his name on its ivory top.
National Museum of the Marine Corps.

ladders and other engineering equipment in a daring attack to breach the castle walls. With Twiggs leading from the front, the attack was successful, but not before the Marine officer was shot through the heart by enemy musket fire. The assault helped break the Mexican defense and ultimately allowed the combined American division of soldiers and Marines to march on Mexico City. This action served as the original inspiration for the phrase "From Tripoli to the halls of Montezuma," which is emblazoned on one of the earliest known Marine Corps colors. The phrase later served as inspiration for the famous lyrics of the Marine Corps Hymn.[12]

The earliest documentation of Levi Twiggs's artifacts being donated to the Marine Corps is noted in correspondence to the Commandant of the Marine Corps dated 2 July 1953. This memorandum notes the arrival of the personal papers of both Levi Twiggs and his son, U.S. Army lieutenant George Twiggs, who was also killed in the Mexican-American War just weeks before his father. They were donated by Sarah A. Machold (née Morris), the great-great-granddaughter of Levi Twiggs. At this time, Machold informed the Marine Corps of her great-great-grandfather's uniforms and personal items being held in the collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art in Pennsylvania. She subsequently requested their transfer to the Marine Corps, and the art museum agreed to do so. This same memorandum noted the identification of another Twiggs relative, U.S. Army Colonel William W. West III, who would later donate a period portrait of Levi Twiggs and his uniform sash.[13]

The artifact collection of Levi Twiggs ranges from his personal umbrella to fatigue and dress uniform pieces that span the entirety of this Marine Corps career. Arguably the two most significant items are his Regulation 1833 and 1839 coats. These rare uniforms are a critical link in the history of the Marine Corps' dress blue uniforms that are still worn today.

[12] Official U.S. Marine Corps Biographies, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

[13] Official U.S. Marine Corps Research File, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

Levi Twiggs's pattern 1833 dress uniform coat is displayed in the National Museum of the Marine Corps' "Early Years" gallery.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

Levi Twiggs's 1840 pattern uniform, officer sword, and pistol are part of the collection of the National Museum of the Marine Corps.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

Twiggs's 1833 pattern uniform marked an unusual break from what became the Marine Corps' tradition of dark blue dress uniforms. During the administration of U.S. president Andrew Jackson (1829–37), the decision was made for the Marine Corps to return to green uniforms colored similarly to those worn by Continental Marines during the American Revolutionary War.[14] This decision was problematic for several reasons. Due to manufacturing shortages in the United States, the Marine Corps quartermaster was forced to importante the green broadcloth material from Great Britain.

The interior sleeve of Twiggs's undress uniform retains his original eighteenth-century signature.
National Museum of the Marine Corps.

[14] Charles H. Cureton, "Parade Blue, Battle Green," in *The Marines* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps Heritage Foundation, 1998), 135.

This proved costly and was politically unpopular given that England had been an enemy of the United States in two major wars. Moreover, the unique green color was difficult to manufacture due to the dyes used. Primary sources document how almost immediately upon the issue of these new uniforms, complaints began to reach Marine Corps headquarters regarding the uniforms fading with minimal wear both on land and at sea. Seagoing Marines experiencing the worst of these issues saw their Continental green coats fade to unusual yellow or blue-green colors. While the green uniforms amounted to a failed experiment, they did contribute to the history of today's modern Marine Corps dress uniforms. This was the first time in which the sleeve cuffs of the uniform were adorned with lace and buttons indicating the wearer's rank. While the ornate gold lace would eventually disappear, the tradition of brass buttons with decorative trim remains to this day in enlisted Marine dress coats.[15]

Following the end of the Jackson administration, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, Colonel Archibald Henderson, quietly reverted to the dark blue dress uniforms that Marines preferred.[16] This Regulation 1839 uniform was worn through the Mexican-American War and marked the beginning of an uninterrupted tradition of dark blue dress uniforms that continues today.

[15] Cureton, "Parade Blue, Battle Green," 136.
[16] Cureton, "Parade Blue, Battle Green," 136.

Chapter 18

A MARINE LESS ORDINARY

The Life of Major General Smedley D. Butler

By Owen Linlithgow Conner, Chief Curator

Featured artifacts: Coat, Dress, Blue, Officer (1999.42.111); Medal, Medal of Honor, Navy (1999.42.99); Medal, Medal of Honor, Navy (1999.42.100); and Medal Bar (including Navy Distinguished Service, Army Distinguished Service, Brevet, Sampson West Indies with USS *Resolute* bar, West Indies Campaign, Philippine Campaign, China Relief Expedition, Marine Corps Expeditionary, Nicaraguan Campaign, Mexican Service, Haitian Campaign, Dominican Campaign, World War I Victory, Yangtze Service, and Haitian Medaille Militaire) (1999.42.40)

In the 250-year history of the U.S. Marine Corps, there have been many colorful, highly decorated Marines. Few, however, compared to Major General Smedley D. Butler. From his unusual name to his unusual career, Butler was a Marine like no other.

Smedley Darlington Butler was commissioned in the Marine Corps in 1898 at the age of 16. Two years later, he was promoted to the rank of captain by brevet for his heroic conduct during the Boxer Rebellion in China. He served in nearly every campaign of the Marine Corps from 1898 to 1931[1]. His first Medal of Honor was awarded in 1914 for "distinguished conduct in battle" during the U.S. occupation of Veracruz, Mexico.[2] His second Medal of Honor came less than two years later, when he led an attack on Fort Riviere, Haiti. Butler was one of only two Marines to receive two Medals of Honor.[3]

While combat evaded him in World War I, Butler was highly decorated for his command of Camp Pontanezen near Brest, France. He became a brigadier general at age 37 and a major general at age 47. Between promotions, he spent two years on leave while serving as the director of public safety for the city of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, during the worst of Prohibition. A return to China in 1927 saw the culmination of a long career. But even in retirement, Butler's life was far from ordinary.

Outside of his "traditional" Marine Corps service, Butler added to his status. A passionate sportsman, he developed and fielded athletic teams and even constructed his own stadium at the Marine Corps barracks in Quantico, Virginia.[4] He was often seen in the stands, megaphone in hand, cheering his Marines on.[5] While sometimes disdainful toward the intellectual side of military strategy, he was a champion of the use of new field equipment, mechanized vehicles, and aircraft on the battlefield.[6] Butler famously took his Quantico Marines on several long maneuvers to Civil War battlefields in Virginia and Pennsylvania.

[1] "Butler, Smedley Darlington, 'Ol' Gimlet Eye,' MajGen," U.S. Marine Corps Medal of Honor Biographies, Marine Corps History Division, 5 November 1951 (AHC-1265-hph), 1, hereafter Butler Biography.

[2] Medal of Honor Citation for Maj Smedley D. Butler, USMC, Veracruz, Mexico, 22 April 1914, Award Citations File, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, hereafter Medal of Honor citation (1914).

[3] The other two-time Marine Corps recipient of the Medal of Honor was SgtMaj Daniel J. Daly.

[4] Mike Smith, "Butler Stadium Hand-Dug, Built by Smedley's Marines," *Quantico Sentry*, 18 August 2020.

[5] Butler Biography, 3.

[6] Anne Cipriano Venzon, *General Smedley Darlington Butler: The Letters of a Leatherneck, 1898–1931* (New York: Praeger, 1992), 1–2.

MajGen Smedley D. Butler served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1898 to 1931.
Marine Corps History Division.

Butler's officer dress blue uniform coat.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

During his 33-year career, Butler earned a handful of colorful nicknames, including "The Fighting Quaker," "Maverick Marine," "Old Gimlet Eye," "General Duckboard," and the "Fighting Hell-Devil"—each well-earned with their own colorful stories.[7]

EARLY DAYS

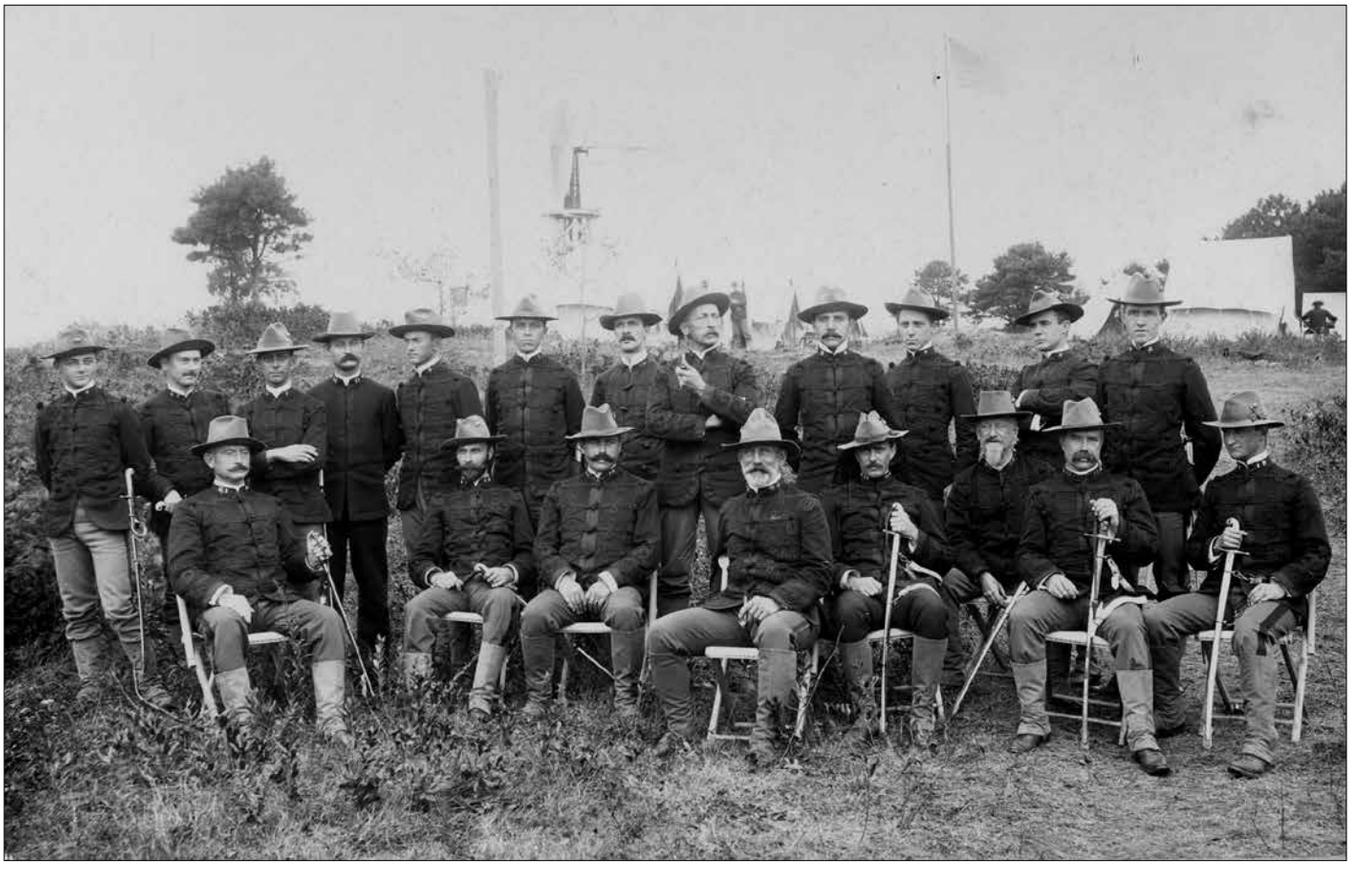
Smedley Darlington Butler was born on 30 July 1881 in West Chester, Pennsylvania.[8] Raised as a Hicksite Quaker, his father, Thomas S. Butler, served as a local lawyer and then judge before being elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1897. Serving the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for 32 years, the elder Butler chaired several important committees, including the Committee on Naval Affairs for 10 years in 1919–28). He remained in office until his death in 1928.[9]

When the Spanish-American War broke out in 1898, Smedley Butler was just 16 years old. Inspired by a parade of the 6th Pennsylvania Volunteers, he became desperate to enter military service. The teenage Butler seized his chance when he overheard his father telling his mother that Congress had just approved the recruitment of 43 new U.S. Marine Corps officers. Smedley informed his mother that he would hire a stranger to impersonate his father if she did not grant her parental consent for him to join the Corps. Reluctantly, Maud Butler traveled to Washington, DC, with her son. Fortunately for the strong-willed Butler, two key factors aided his effort to enlist at 16. The first and most significant was the friendship of the Commandant of the Marine Corps, Colonel Charles Heywood, with his father. The second was the rather curious fact that Congress had set no age limit for men applying for new commissions.[10] With his parents' eventual consent, Smedley Butler was officially commissioned as an officer in the Marine Corps on 20 May 1898.

[7] Lowell Thomas, *Old Gimlet Eye: The Adventures of Smedley D. Butler* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1933), 5, 253.
[8] Thomas, *Old Gimlet Eye*, 4.
[9] "Butler, Thomas Stalker, 1855–1928," United States Congress Bioguide, accessed 14 May 2024.
[10] Venzon, *General Smedley Darlington Butler*, 6–7.

Butler is the only Marine officer to receive two Medals of Honor during his career.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

Butler's valor, campaign, and service medals.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.



Butler (standing third from left), as a young lieutenant, poses with fellow Marine officers. Several of the older Marines had served in the American Civil War.
Marine Corps History Division.

Butler's first proper introduction to the Marine Corps came with his deployment to Cuba. On 10 June 1898, Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Huntington landed with a battalion of Marines on the beach at Guantanamo Bay. Entrenched on the high ground, they were subjected to constant harassment from Spanish guerrillas. Sometime later, Butler and a small group of fresh young lieutenants were sent to reinforce them. Arriving by boat from the armored cruiser USS *New York* (ACR 2), Butler formally reported to a group of bedraggled veterans asking to meet with Huntington. Chiding the welcoming committee for their lack of respect toward officers, Butler was soon shocked to learn that the white-bearded Marine they had scolded was none other than the colonel himself. Many of these veteran officers had served in the Marine Corps since the American Civil War. As Butler organized the veteran Marines under his command, he began to take full stock of their bravery and professionalism. He came under sporadic but ineffective fire for the first time and took extensive mental notes of the standards he would now be expected to live up to. By the time of the Spanish surrender on 13 August 1898, he was relieved, but he was now fully aware of the true "spirit of the Corps."[11]

Butler's next adventure took place in China in 1900. At the turn of the twentieth century, European powers and the United States maintained a strong trading presence in China. The individual nations' spheres of influence added to the already problematic issues of a fractured nation. As a response, a secret Chinese society was formed in 1897. Called *I Ho Chaun* (The Fists of Righteous Harmony), or more colloquially the "Boxers," they set about attacking foreign influences and Chinese Christians. The fighting reached a climax in 1900, when the Chinese empress expressed her open support for the organization. The Boxers laid siege to foreign settlements in the cities of Peking (Beijing) and Tientsin (Tianjin). In response, the foreign powers rushed reinforcements to China to support their communities. The

[11] Thomas, *Old Gimlet Eye*, 11–22.

Unites States deployed U.S. Marines and soldiers to the effort. When the initial relief forces fought skirmishes with the imperial Chinese army, the situation grew even more dire.[12]

Additional Marine relief forces were summoned from the detachments on U.S. Navy warships as well as at Guam and Cavite, Philippines. First Lieutenant Butler, then serving with the Cavite detachment, was given the command of a company with Major Littleton T. Waller's relief force. Their orders sent them to Tientsin in search of an earlier relief column. During the long march on the city, they were joined by Russian forces and Royal Welch Fusiliers. The fighting was heavy, and the Marines suffered casualties. When Private C. H. Carter was wounded and accidentally left behind by the relief column, Butler and First Lieutenant Arthur E. Harding led Privates Thomas W. Kates, Albert R. Campbell, Charles R. Francis, and Clarence E. Mathias to rescue him. The Marines carried their wounded comrade more than 25 kilometers back to their column. For their heroism, each of the enlisted Marines received the Medal of Honor, while Butler and Harding received battlefield brevet promotions to the rank of captain.[13]

The 19-year-old Butler's receipt of a brevet commission was a significant honor. The brevet award was a military tradition that dates to at least the seventeenth century. Employed by English royalty to promote civilians and the upper class, the simplified tradition carried over to the United States in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[14] The U.S. military adopted the practice of awarding brevet commissions, most notably for valorous conduct on the battlefield. When presented, the officer was usually advanced one or two levels of rank and granted a new commission.[15] At the time, this was the highest honor a Marine officer could receive, as Marine officers were not entitled to receive the Medal of Honor until authorized by Congress in 1915.[16]

Capt Smedley Butler's U.S. Marine Corps Brevet medal. *Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.*

Following the heroism of Private Carter's rescue, Butler's bravery continued. During the Battle of Tientsin, he was assisting in the recovery of a wounded Marine when struck by enemy rifle fire in the right thigh.[17] The wound was significant, but the bullet had missed the bone, so Butler was able to join his fellow Marines in their march on Peking.[18] As he led another attack through the city's ancient Tartar Wall, he was struck again by Chinese fire. Awakening later in a small guardhouse, Butler's rescuers thought that he had been shot through the heart. Thankfully, this

[12] Venzon, *General Smedley Darlington Butler*, 13–16.

[13] Venzon, *General Smedley Darlington Butler*, 20. Pvt Thomas W. Kates' Medal of Honor is a part of the collection of the National Museum of the Marine Corps. It can be seen on display in the museum's exhibit dedicated to the Boxer Rebellion.

[14] John E. Lelle, *The Brevet Medal* (Springfield, VA: Quest Publishing, 1988), 11–12.

[15] Officers received the brevet rank but not the pay level of the new rank. They were also technically outranked by officers with higher nonbrevet rank, although they could serve at positions commensurate with their brevet rank if no officers with that permanent rank were available. It was a confusing system that often led to arguments over command.

[16] Dwight S. Mears, *The Medal of Honor: The Evolution of America's Highest Military Decoration* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2018), 48–49.

[17] Thomas, *Old Gimlet Eye*, 62–64.

[18] Venzon, *General Smedley Darlington Butler*, 24.

In 1899, Lt Butler was briefly assigned to duty with the Marine battalion at Manila, Philippine Islands. *Marine Corps History Division.*

was not the case. He was struck by a ricocheting enemy musket ball, which hit the second button of his uniform blouse. The flattened metal button saved his life but tore off a portion of his chest skin, where a large tattoo of the Marine Corps emblem was inked. Despite all this, Butler returned to action once more.[19]

MORE INTERVENTIONS AND TWO MEDALS OF HONOR

After the eventual victory of the foreign powers in China, Butler returned to the United States in 1901. The following years entailed the command of various ship detachments on Navy warships as well as minor posts in the continental United States.[20] Overseas assignments to Puerto Rico, Panama, and Nicaragua provided Butler with additional experience in colonial warfare and a crash course in the complexities of international politics. His numerous adventures in Nicaragua involved a daring attack on the fortress of Coyotepe and a humorous story of him single-handedly swiping a pistol from a rebel general's hand.[21]

The pattern of U.S. intervention in Central America reached a chaotic climax in 1914 following revolution in Mexico. The United States initially supported a military coup led by Mexican Army general Victoriano Huerta but then declined to recognize the government formed by his faction. Several international incidents, including the detention of U.S. Navy sailors, rising concerns from U.S. businesses with interests in Mexico, and a German attempt to deliver arms to the country, brought the crisis to a boiling point. Foreign settlements in Mexico City and oil interests in Tampico brought foreign military powers into the region, with a near repeat of an intervention not unlike that during the Boxer Rebellion.[22] As a result, U.S. president T. Woodrow Wilson sent special envoy John Lind to Mexico to develop plans for a full-scale American intervention.

At this time, Butler was given the opportunity to add spy to his already exotic resume. In an era lacking a U.S. national intelligence gathering network, Butler was enlisted to conduct regional reconnaissance in Mexico. He toured the country, alternately posing as a former Panama Canal Zone railroad employee, a city planner, a guidebook writer, and a naturalist.[23] This charade allowed him to visit Mexican Army units, installations, and forts to inspect their capabilities and arms in anticipation for a full-scale invasion of Mexico.

While the Lind-Butler invasion plan was never fully enacted, the military occupation of the Mexican port city of Veracruz did occur. Commencing on 21 April 1914, the armed intervention pitted U.S. Marines and Navy sailors against a mixture of retreating federal Mexican soldiers, hastily armed civilians, prison inmates, and cadets. The fighting lasted for several days. Originally charged with simply capturing the waterfront, the Americans eventually occupied the entire city.

By every measure, the occupation of Veracruz was an unusual and confusing moment in American military history. International politics, foreign business interests, and controversial decisions by U.S. Navy commanders left a

[19] Thomas, *Old Gimlet Eye*, 73–75.

[20] Butler Biography, 1.

[21] Hans Schmidt, *Maverick Marine: General Smedley D. Butler and the Contradictions of American Military History* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998), 46.

[22] Schmidt *Maverick Marine*, 63–66.

[23] Schmidt *Maverick Marine*, 63–66; and Mark Strecker, *Smedley Butler, USMC: A Biography* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2011), 56–57.

complex narrative for future historians to untangle. Further muddying the waters were the suspect numbers of Medals of Honor awarded to officers and enlisted personnel for the minor action. With more than 50 awards conferred, officers who were ineligible to receive the prestigious award prior to 1915 benefited the most. Navy officers received the lion's share of recognition, while nine Marines earned the honor. In the case of Butler, he was at least awarded the Medal of Honor for his courage and participation in the engagement, his citation noting his "distinguished conduct in combat" and "eminent and conspicuous command of his battalion."[24]

In his autobiography *Old Gimlet Eye*, Butler made his displeasure in receiving the Medal of Honor clear. He mailed the award back to the U.S. Navy Department with a statement that he had done nothing to earn this "supreme decoration." The medal, however, was soon returned to him with a letter from Rear Admiral Frank F. Fletcher insisting that he did deserve the award and that he was ordered to accept and wear it.[25]

Following his adventures in Mexico, Butler had little time to rest. Disagreements between Haitian and American banks over defaulted railroad construction loans caused tension between the two nations. Haitian soldiers occupied Haitian banks to prevent the U.S. seizure of the banks' assets, and U.S. Marines landed to seize the gold reserves held in the Haitian National Bank to hold for collateral against the loans. Haiti's strategic location near the Panama Canal and intertwinements with U.S. investors made yet another American intervention inevitable. Fighting between the minority French-speaking Haitian upper classes and the majority Creole-speaking lower classes brought constant dysfunction. As a result, on 28 July 1915, U.S. Marines and sailors landed at Port-au-Prince, seized the city, declared martial law, and arrested revolutionaries. When the Haitian National Assembly elected a new president, U.S. Navy rear admiral William B. Caperton refused to recognize the legitimacy of the elections and selected his own president of Haiti.[26]

The installment of a new Haitian government by the United States inflamed internal divisions on the island. Impoverished rebels living in the mountainous regions of the country began to fight back. Calling themselves the *cacos*, they took up arms and violence erupted. As a result,

The reverse inscription to Butler's first Medal of Honor. *Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.*

additional Marines under the command of Colonel Waller and Major Butler arrived in August 1915 to quell the uprisings. When the rebels surrounded a local town, Butler was dispatched to address the issue. In the ensuing actions, the Marines were often vastly outnumbered but were able drive the *cacos* away due to their superior firepower. Following a concerted effort by the Marines to isolate the *cacos*, the rebels took to occupying numerous small French-built stone fortifications. Once again, the Marines set out to eliminate these forces, despite heavy rains and a lack of knowledge of the mountainous jungles. In a march on Fort Capois, they came under sporadic fire and lost their heavy machine gun when a pack horse was killed and swept downriver. A veteran gunnery sergeant under Butler's command named Daniel J. Daly volunteered to find and return the weapon. Butler knew Daly from his service in the Boxer Rebellion, when Daly had earned the Medal of Honor. He described Daly as "hard boiled" and as a Marine who one could "strike a match on his whiskers."[27] That night, Daly set out alone to recover

[24] Medal of Honor citation (1914).

[25] Thomas, *Old Gimlet Eye*, 180. RAdm Frank Friday Fletcher had been awarded the Medal of Honor for simply commanding the occupation of Veracruz.

[26] Strecker, *Smedley Butler*, 59–61.

[27] Strecker, *Smedley Butler*, 63.

An artist's depiction of Smedley Butler, Ross Iams, and Samuel Gross storming Fort Riviere.
National Museum of the Marine Corps.

the much-needed machine gun. He returned the next morning with the weapon strapped to his back. For his heroism, Daly was awarded a second Medal of Honor.

During the subsequent weeks, pressure by the pursuing Marines on the cornered rebel forces set the stage for a climactic battle at Fort Riviere. Situated formidably atop a mountain ridge, the rebels' positions seemed impregnable to the Marine force of 600. Never daunted by a challenge, Butler proposed an unusual plan of assault. He organized his Marines to conduct their attack simultaneously on the fort from multiple directions. Under heavy covering fire from their machine guns, Butler and just 24 Marines identified a narrow drainage tunnel from which they could infiltrate the citadel.[28] The pathway was a mere four feet high and three feet wide. Recognizing that he alone had led his Marines into this plan of action, Butler prepared to go first, until Sergeant Ross L. Iams saw his officer's natural hesitation. Iams immediately quipped, "Oh, hell, I'm going through," and led the charge. Butler was dismayed when his orderly, Private Samuel Gross, followed suit. The Marines made the hazardous trek, crawling through the drain with Butler third in line. Rebel bullets ricocheted off the walls but remarkably missed them. As they exited, a fierce period of hand-to-hand combat ensued. By Butler's estimation, the Marines faced a force of 60–70 *cacos.* When the remainder of the Marines exited the tunnel, the fierce fight came to an end.[29]

For his extraordinary bravery and forceful leadership in the engagement, Butler received his second Medal of Honor, the Haitian Medal of Honor, and the Haitian *Me-*

[28] Strecker, *Smedley Butler*, 64.

[29] Thomas, *Old Gimlet Eye*, 203–7.

daille Militaire.[30] Iams and Gross also received the Medal of Honor.

In the aftermath of putting down the *caco* rebellion, the newly installed pro-U.S. Haitian government was required to create a new national police force. Butler was selected to organize and lead the constabulary force, known as the *Gendarmerie d'Haiti*. Units would be led by U.S. Marines who would be commissioned as Haitian officers. By any modern interpretation, the venture was of dubious legality and overtly imperialistic. But as the commandant of the *Gendarmerie*, Butler embraced his position and set out to build national roads, irrigation systems, and utility infrastructure to improve the lives of the common Haitian citizenry. The results of Butler's work as a national police officer were mixed, but in the end, they were overtaken by more urgent national matters when, on 6 April 1917, the United States declared war on Germany and entered World War I.[31]

WORLD WAR I: A COMPASSIONATE LEADER OF MEN

To Butler's great consternation, his leadership of the Haitian constabulary, with its complex political roles, seemed to trap him in Haiti. He desperately wanted to join the fight in Europe. Months went by as Butler exchanged a flurry of letters to gain a new command.[32]

On 3 July 1918, Butler reverted to his Marine Corps rank of colonel and assumed command of the newly formed 13th Regiment at Quantico.[33] Organizing the new unit at the newly constructed base was difficult, but it served him well in his future duties.

On 15 September, the 13th Regiment shipped out for France aboard the transport USS *Von Steuben* (ID 3017). The journey did not go well. After several days at sea, Butler fell severely ill with influenza. Doctors feared for his life when it was determined that this was the same sickness that had begun to sweep through U.S. military units across the nation that year. When the ship arrived at its destination port of Brest, France, Butler was miraculously on the path to recovery, but he had been weakened. The 13th Regiment was sent to a processing center known as Camp Pontanezen.

The reverse inscription to Butler's second Medal of Honor. *Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.*

Butler was shocked to learn that, due to his illness, he was to be relieved of his command of the regiment and be given command of the camp instead. The wretched conditions he found there were shocking. The only solace he could take was in the fact that he was simultaneously promoted to the rank of brigadier general—an impressive accomplishment at the age of 37.[34]

Camp Pontanezen may not have been the combat command Butler desired, but it was vital to the Allied war effort. It was an enormous staging and supply base just outside Brest, which provided the only deep-water harbor for the embarkation of U.S. forces.[35] By the war's end, more than 790,000 U.S. soldiers and Marines had passed through the base.[36] To reach that level of success, however, the camp needed vast improvements. As commander, Butler inherited a center beset with poor weather, which made improvised footpaths and inadequate roads become

[30] Medal of Honor Citation for Maj Smedley D. Butler, USMC, Fort Riviere, Haiti, 17 November 1915, Award Citations File, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

[31] Strecker, *Smedley Butler*, 66–73.

[32] Strecker, *Smedley Butler*, 73.

[33] Annette D. Amerman, *United States Marine Corps in the First World War: Anthology, Selected Bibliography, and Annotated Order of Battle* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps History Division, 2016), 223.

[34] Stecker, *Smedley Butler*, 74–75.

[35] Amerman, *United States Marine Corps in the First World War*, 224.

[36] Strecker, *Smedley Butler*, 75.

BGen Smedley Butler in France, ca. 1918.
Marine Corps History Division.

impenetrable muddy rivers. There were no floors in the barracks and tents, so the troops were forced to endure even more mud. Complicating matters, thousands of incoming servicemembers were arriving with the flu and had to be quarantined, further straining the facility. The installation's water supply was also contaminated by local farms, and the troops lacked adequate stoves for heating. Here, Butler's prior experience in building roads, utilities, and infrastructure in impoverished nations paid off. When the U.S. Army's chief of supplies temporarily left Butler in charge of his command, Butler seized his opportunity to make improvements. Quickly organizing a working party of 7,000 troops, they marched on the Army warehouses to requisition massive quantities of wooden planks (a.k.a. duckboards), shovels, axes, picks, and kettles.[37] During the operation, Butler led by example. When he encountered a frustrated soldier struggling to carry a plank, he took on the burden himself, much to the pleasure of his cheering men. Upon arriving at the entrance of the camp, Butler was confronted by a military policeman who scolded him for blocking traffic. The vehicle in question was Butler's personal staff car, traveling behind him and stocked with needed supplies. The young policeman did not recognize the general and was in disbelief when Butler told him that it was his car. When the car's driver stopped to address Butler, the embarrassed policeman quickly realized his error.[38]

Word of Butler's exploits quickly spread, with the troops under his command now referring to him lovingly as "General Duckboard." Camp Pontanezen adopted the ladder-like wooden sidewalks that they constructed from the planks as its official insignia. It was painted on the camp's vehicles, and a shoulder patch was worn on the troops' uniforms. Even the base newspaper adopted the name *The Duckboard.*[39]

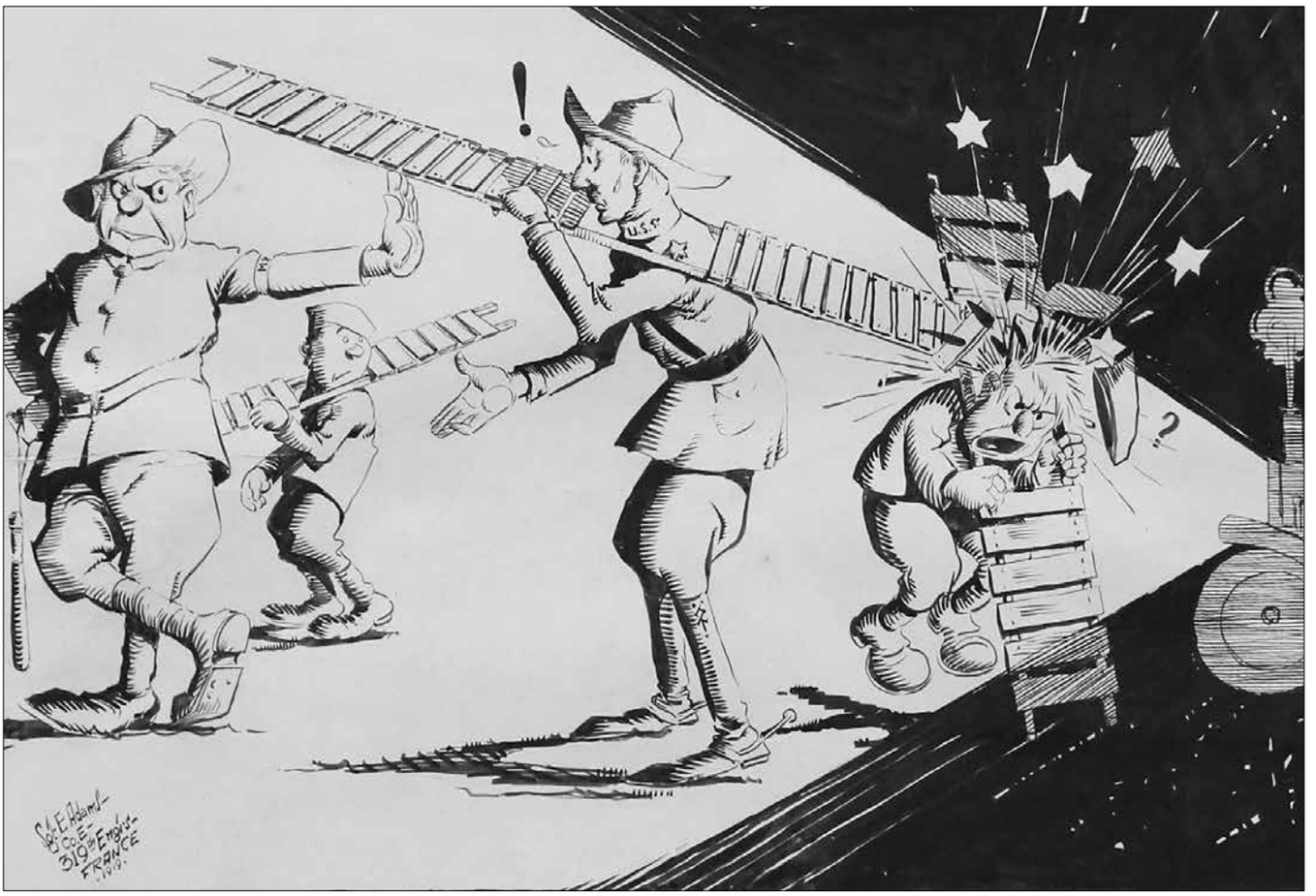
As commander of the camp, Butler's reputation as a compassionate leader of men was cemented. He often cut red tape and ignored regulations to aid in the comfort of soldiers and Marines. Hot soup was served to anyone who needed it, 24 hours a day. Extra blankets, laundry facilities and a delousing plant were also provided. While the conditions were never made perfect, the servicemembers who were loyal to Butler revered him and morale was high. In recognition of his nonstop energy and devotion to the troops, Butler received the U.S. Army's Distinguished Service Medal, the U.S. Navy's Distinguished Service medal, and the rarely awarded French *Ordre de l 'Étoile Noire* (Order of the Black Star).

Following the end of the war in November 1918 and demobilization, Butler returned to Quantico. There, he inherited command of yet another base that was in dire need of improvements. Dirt roads and potholes were known to swallow vehicles. Butler set out to correct these issues, beautify the base, and make it a showpiece where Marines would be proud to serve. One part of this effort was the construction of a massive football stadium. Approximately 150 Marines worked for 80 days on the project, hand-excavating tons of dirt. When the base musicians complained that they could not perform manual labor, Butler had them play music while the Marines dug. Provided with just $5,000 for the entire project, Butler used it all on the purchase of cement to form the stands for bleachers and retaining walls. When his funds were expended, he set about acquiring everything

[37] Strecker, *Smedley Butler*, 75–76.

[38] Thomas, *Old Gimlet Eye*, 252–53.

[39] Thomas, *Old Gimlet Eye*, 253.



This World War I-era cartoon depicts BGen Butler following his encounter with a military police officer.
National Museum of the Marine Corps.

else for free. For example, scrap metal was obtained from local railroads. While not fully completed until after World War II, the monstrous undertaking was remarkable. The football teams Butler organized to play at the stadium were equally impressive, winning 38 of their original 42 games. The stadium held as many as 60,000 fans and bares Butler's name to this day.[40]

In peacetime, Butler looked for other ways to find positive publicity for the Corps. Every fall, he led Marines on extended maneuvers to Civil War battlefields, employing aircraft, track towed artillery, and trucks. Over several days, the Marines would train with their modern weapons and then conduct historical reenactments of Civil War battles. These events were timed to fully garner congressional support for the Marine Corps. They were also attended by the

Butler's love for his fellow Marines was legendary. Here, he marches alongside a fellow Marine during the Civil War maneuvers.
Marine Corps History Division.

[40] Smith, "Butler Stadium Hand-Dug, Built by Smedley's Marines."

The French Order of the Black Star is a colonial award presented for extraordinary service to the French nation. Butler received the award in recognition of the aide he provided to thousands of French colonial soldiers who served at Camp Pontanezen.
National Museum of the Marine Corps.

national press and even observed in person by President Warren G. Harding.[41]

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SAFETY FOR PHILADELPHIA: CRIME BUSTING IN THE AGE OF PROHIBITION

Following the passing of the 18th Amendment and the National Prohibition Act, the widespread use and consumption of most alcohol in the United States was banned. In the ensuing years, the consequences of this moral campaign led

[41] Strecker, *Smedley Butler*, 82.

Butler leads Marines cheering for the Marine Corps football team.
Marine Corps History Division.

to massive unintended issues with rising crime, violence, and gangs profiting from Prohibition.

By 1924, the city of Philadelphia was particularly hard hit. The city's mayor, W. Freeland Kendrick, had run on the predictable campaign slogan of making the streets safe once again. He proclaimed that it would take a real-life general to do so—a man who fell outside the corruption of politics and who could not be bought, bullied, or bluffed.[42] The candidate had to be a full general, a resident of Pennsylvania, and would ideally have some sort of law enforcement background. Only Smedley Butler fit the bill.

Butler was reluctant. He did not wish to leave his beloved Marine Corps. He informed Freeland that the only way he would accept the position would be if he were granted a leave of absence from active service to take on the job. Remarkably this occurred when President Calvin Coolidge did just that.[43] Butler's new position was unusual—as the director of public safety for the city of Philadelphia, he led not only the city's police department but its fire department as well. This all occurred while he was still technically an active-duty Marine general. In his private comments to friends, Butler explained he was simply taking on the role

[42] Thomas, *Old Gimlet Eye*, 264.
[43] Venzon, *General Smedley Darlington Butler*, 242.

Butler takes the oath of office as the director of public safety in Philadelphia, PA, in 1924.
Marine Corps History Division.

CMC John A. Lejeune poses with BGen Butler during a Marine Corps sporting event.
Marine Corps History Division.

as a "detail" while on leave.[44] This was not a retirement position, but a temporary assignment to clean up the city of Philadelphia.

Once committed, however, Butler set about his new job as he did all his Marine Corps missions. He immediately unleashed numerous 48-hour raids against illegal speakeasies, saloons, brothels, and gambling ventures. His next efforts focused on the elimination of corrupt and unproductive police officers. He placed more officers on the street, cut red tape, and employed revolutionary new policing concepts with patrol cars and early radios.[45] Butler characterized these efforts as "just like war," with his men taking and consolidating sections of the "front lines" to then prepare and move on to the next assault.[46]

Unlike actual combat with his Marines, Butler soon realized that not everyone in the same uniform was on his side. After two weeks of raids, he was angered to learn that many of the locations were back in full operation days later. Butler was often prohibited by corrupt officials from firing the police officers who allowed this to happen, so he set about reassigning hundreds of officers to different districts where they were not being bribed or benefiting from the local vice.[47]

Despite Butler's greatest efforts, by the end of his first year, Kendrick was feeling the pressure of corruption at the highest levels. Cleaning up the city would not be a one-year task. It was in fact an immensely complicated, if not impossible, undertaking. The mayor approached the Marine Corps and President Coolidge to request a second year of personal leave for Brigadier General Butler. The request was granted; however, Kendrick began to waver in his support. What was essentially a political ploy in hiring a celebrity general to clean up his city had become a complex prob-

[44] Strecker, *Smedley Butler*, 85.
[45] Venzon, *General Smedley Darlington Butler*, 243.
[46] Schmidt, *Maverick Marine*, 147.
[47] Schmidt, *Maverick Marine*, 147.

lem. Butler was incorruptible and not willing to simply play along.

While Butler as police chief was appreciated by local churches, community groups, and average law-abiding citizens, he was less beloved by the city's upper-class community, who often enjoyed and participated in breaking the same laws he was looking to enforce. He went head-to-head with adversaries who were much more underhanded and difficult to identify than rebels or bandits during foreign interventions. Increasingly frustrated and thwarted at every turn, Butler learned that President Coolidge would not grant him a third year of leave. As he tenured his resignation from the Marine Corps to continue anyway, he was told that he was no longer wanted and was fired by Kendrick.[48]

Thankfully for Butler, his longtime friend John A. Lejeune was the current Commandant of the Marine Corps. Butler's resignation was denied, and in January 1926 he received orders to San Diego, California, to command the Marine barracks there.

A CAREER COME FULL CIRCLE: A RETURN TO CHINA AND THE END OF AN ERA

In March 1927, Butler once again received orders to China. He was 27 years removed from the heroism of his days as a 19-year-old lieutenant in the Boxer Rebellion. This time, he commanded the entire 3d Brigade, an impressive, modern force comprising the 4th and 6th Regiments along with additional reinforcements. The China he encountered was vastly different than the one he remembered. Instead of participating in a foreign intervention, fighting fanatical Boxers and the Imperial Chinese Army, Butler was ordered to protect American citizens caught up in a brutal Chinese civil war. Nationalist Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek's forces were bent on eliminating Chinese warlords in every major city and province. American citizens lived in fear for their lives and property.

After his arrival in China, Butler set about his work with his usual energy and vigor. Hell-bent on not allowing his Marines to repeat the behavior he observed from foreign militaries in 1900, he immediately gave orders and clarified their mission. This time, the Marines were not in China to defend colonial interests of the European and Japanese empires—they were only there to protect American lives and property. Butler, in his own words, refused to become the "cat's paw" of foreign ambitions.[49] Drawing on the lessons of modern warfare that he had learned from the annual maneuvers at Quantico, he created a mechanized rapid reaction force. Marines armed with heavy automatic weapons and submachine guns were organized into truck units that could be immediately deployed to any location in an offensive manner. They were supported by Marine aviation rapidly conducting reconnaissance.

As nerves settled, Butler ordered his Marines to be kind to the Chinese citizens. This endeared them to the local population, in contrast to the other nations' armies. They also set about fostering goodwill. Once more, Butler became a builder. Marines helped improve local highways and assisted in various other construction efforts. As always, concerned with the morale and disposition of his men, Butler also encouraged them to hone their appearance and pass the time through drill and other activities. Looking to the British Army and the U.S. Army as their competition and inspiration, the Marines polished their uniforms and weapons, going as far as to even nickel-plate their bayonets.[50] One humorous story from these efforts was recounted by U.S. Army soldier Charles G. Finney. As a member of the "Old China Hands," the 15th Infantry Regiment, he observed how Butler's Marines were jealous of the soldiers' exquisitely polished wooden M1903 Springfield rifle stocks. Not to be outdone, Butler's Marines set out to polish their weapons even better. The soldiers were impressed with the Marines' efforts, but they refused to tell their rivals that they employed two sets of rifle stocks in their Service: polished stocks for parades and inspections and unpolished stocks for field maneuvers.[51]

While Butler took immense pride in being a fighter and not a politician, his years of experience in Haiti and other interventions also came full circle in China. He attended numerous ceremonies and banquets to establish improved relations with the Chinese. He also observed the Imperial Japanese Army, commenting in private on their obvious future ambitions for the conquest of China.

On 24 December 1927, Butler's unusual experience as the head of the Philadelphia fire department came into play. When the Standard Oil Company's Tientsin manufacturing plant caught on fire and ignited 1 million pounds of candle grease, he directed a fire brigade of more than a thousand

[48] Strecker, *Smedley Butler*, 90–91.

[49] George B. Clark, *Treading Softly: U.S. Marines in China, 1819–1949* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001), 66–67.

[50] Thomas, *Old Gimlet Eye*, 290.

[51] Charles G. Finney, *The Old China Hands* (New York: Doubleday, 1961), 159–61.

Marines to fight the flames. The warehouse was perilously close to nearby stocks of gasoline and oil. Fighting the fire for four days, the Marines were able to avoid an even larger catastrophe.[52]

When Butler returned to the United States in 1929, he left an assignment where the culmination of his life experiences had been on full display. His return to Quantico saw him promoted to major general. At just 48 years-old, he was the youngest Marine officer to achieve the distinction.

In the final years of his career, Butler added a few more stories to an already remarkable career. When he discovered that the town of Quantico had become a hot spot for local bootleggers, he ordered his men to boycott the local businesses. After the reputable merchants took matters into their own hands and drove the illegal activities out, Butler ordered a parade down the tiny town's main street, led by a Marine band.[53]

Foreshadowing the next phase of his life as a civilian, Butler was reprimanded by the U.S. secretary of the Navy, Charles F. Adams III, after giving a speech in which he explained to his audience how the United States government had forcibly installed the Nicaraguan president in 1912. He was also involved in an international political scandal and a near-court-martial when he retold stories regarding Italian dictator Benito Mussolini. The death of Major General Wendell C. Neville, who died in office as Commandant of the Marine Corps in 1930, and the retirement of Major General Lejeune the year before left Butler without two of his oldest friends in the Corps. When he was passed over for appointment to Commandant of the Marine Corps, he made up his mind to finally retire and did so in 1931.[54]

POSTWAR POLITICS AND A COUP TO OVERTHROW THE U.S. GOVERNMENT

As a civilian, Butler remained active in the public eye. He earned money as a public speaker with various veteran organizations and rotary clubs. In a brief foray into mainstream politics, he ran for the U.S. Senate in 1932. His platform championed common Americans suffering through the Great Depression and proposed improvements to roads and utilities. His campaign stood little chance, however, as he ran against the repeal of Prohibition. As a result, he was easily defeated, ending his career as a politician.[55]

Smedley Butler at his retirement ceremony at Marine Corps Base Quantico, VA. *Marine Corps History Division.*

Butler remained a champion of the military servicemembers he had served with. As the Great Depression took its toll, the United States' World War I veterans were particularly hard hit. In the spring of 1932, an army of the unemployed descended on Washington, DC, and established camps near the Capitol. As veterans of the war, they had been promised a financial bonus for their service. By law, however, this one-time payment was only to be given to their families at the time of their death or by 1945. Given their current struggles during the Depression, the veterans demanded that the bonuses be awarded in 1932. Their protest did not end well. Ordered to relocate their camps by President Herbert C. Hoover, U.S. Army general Douglas MacArthur launched a full-scale assault on the "bonus

[52] Thomas, *Old Gimlet Eye*, 292–95.
[53] Thomas, *Old Gimlet Eye*, 299.
[54] Thomas, *Old Gimlet Eye*, 303–4.
[55] Jonathan M. Katz, *Gangsters of Capitalism: Smedley Butler, the Marines, and the Making and Breaking of America's Empire* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2022), 312.

marchers." Employing cavalry and tanks, his soldiers teargassed the veterans and their families to prevent what he believed was an attempt to overthrow the U.S. government.[56]

Just nine days before, Butler had sympathetically toured the veteran's camps. Accompanied by his college-age son, they inspected the poor conditions there. Urged on by his admirers, Butler soon found himself on stage before an estimated 16,000 veterans. Butler's impromptu speech bolstered their morale, praised their patriotism, and proclaimed, "they didn't speak of you as tramps in 1917 and '18!" He was so moved by the collective suffering and concerns of the veterans that he and his son spent the night with them, telling war stories and sharing breakfast the next morning.[57]

Butler's sympathy and ability to rally down-trodden veterans in the "Bonus Army" did not go unnoticed. In 1933, he was approached by a wealthy businessman named Gerald McGuire, who had ties to the American Legion.[58] McGuire asked Butler to give a series of speeches critical of newly elected President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal at upcoming veterans events. Butler was immediately suspicious, especially after McGuire began to boast about his group's wealth and financial connections to influential institutions and individuals on Wall Street. Butler's concerns were further confirmed when McGuire began to make comparisons to paramilitary veterans' organizations in France and Italy. The mystery businessmen had sought Butler out with the misinformed belief that the Marine general and champion of "the common man" could be tricked, or bribed, into creating a similar veterans' movement.

For the second time in his life, Butler took on the duties of a spy. This time, however, he was not infiltrating the Mexican Army, but rather a potential military plot to end the New Deal and overthrow democracy in the United States.

Keeping detailed notes on the plotters that approached him, Butler reached out to a journalist friend from his days in Philadelphia, Paul Comly French, who was a reporter with the *Philadelphia Record.* With Butler's influence, French secured an interview with McGuire. During their conversation, McGuire admitted his desire to see a fascist government in the United States. He further elaborated that Butler could raise an army of 1 million men overnight and that the Du Pont family could purchase arms for them directly from the Remington Arms Company on their personal credit.[59]

French's newspaper story was published on 21 November 1935. The headline read "GEN. BUTLER CHARGES FASCIST PLOT." Remarkably, the story was met with skepticism and mockery by some. *Time* magazine's counter headline called it a "Plot without Plotters." Financial backers accused in the story called it ridiculous and outright fantasy.[60] The accusations, however, were serious enough to be brought before the U.S. House of Representatives' Un-American Activities Committee. As a complex web of details and financial involvement was unveiled and denied, the committee caught McGuire in several lies and misstatements, but it was never able to fully trace the bribes he offered back to other conspirators. In the end, despite numerous questions remaining unanswered and open lying under oath by those involved, the committee's inquiry ended without any charges being filed. Later transcripts from the testimony even redacted the names of key conspirators. The committee's final report simply stated that while they had uncovered evidence of a proposed plot, they simply did not discover anyone who had acted on it.

The later years of Butler's life were filled with a passion for preventing unnecessary U.S. military interventions and wars. Speaking even more freely than he did as a Marine officer, he tirelessly traveled the country to give radio addresses, speeches, and interviews on the topic. His written arguments were eventually compiled into a book titled *War Is a Racket*.[61] In it, he argued that the U.S. military should focus all of its energy on the defense of the nation alone, avoiding corporate or imperialistic ambitions.[62]

In retrospect, by 1939, Butler's fear of Marines being sent to fight for the Standard Oil or United Fruit Companies was becoming increasingly outdated. A new war had erupted in Europe. As he hectically continued to protest foreign entanglements, events of the world began to pass him by. A German *blitzkrieg* (lightning war) rolled through Poland in September 1939. In May 1940, Germany turned its army towards France and the United Kingdom. Two great empires were in a monumental fight for their very survival.

After completing a six-week speaking tour, Butler ad-

[56] Strecker, *Smedley Butler*, 122.

[57] Katz, *Gangsters of Capitalism*, 314–15.

[58] The American Legion is a veterans organization founded in 1919, primarily by World War I servicemembers. The organization continues today with nearly 2 million members and 13,000 posts worldwide. "History," American Legion, accessed 14 May 2024.

[59] Strecker, *Smedley Butler*, 130–31.

[60] Strecker, *Smedley Butler*, 131–32.

[61] MajGen Smedley D. Butler, USMC (Ret), *War Is a Racket* (New York: Round Table Press, 1935).

[62] Venzon, *General Smedley Darlington Butler*, 311–12.

mitted in his personal correspondence the inevitability of a Second World War. His tireless efforts to protect American lives had taken its toll. He felt increasingly fatigued and lost more than 20 pounds from his already diminutive stature. Hoping to get some rest, he checked into the Philadelphia Navy Yard hospital on 23 May 1940. He would never recover. Smedley Darlington Butler died of cancer four weeks later with his family by his side.

Chapter 19

THE GOLDEN YEARS OF "CHESTY" PULLER

By Owen Linlithgow Conner, Chief Curator

Featured artifacts: Humidor with Pipe (2006.24.1 and 2006.24.3); Door Plate (2006.24.8a); Bulldog Figurine (2006.24.18); and Identification Card (2006.24.21a)

Throughout 250 years of U.S. Marine Corps history, there is one Marine most often cited as the greatest of all time—Lewis Burwell Puller. Best known by his nickname "Chesty," he remains a legendary figure to this day, equally beloved by Marine officers and enlisted alike. Puller was a five-time Navy Cross recipient, and the tales of his heroism and bravery are encyclopedic in volume, with a corresponding collection of medals and awards to match.[1]

Aside from his battlefield heroics, there was more to the man, particularly in the later years of his life. After retiring from the Marine Corps in 1955, Lieutenant General Puller returned to his home state of Virginia. This phase of life did not come easily to the general, but he soon adapted, with all the hallmarks one might expect of the quintessential Marine. Always a devoted husband to his wife, Virginia, he promised her that he would be mindful of his failing health, in the same surprisingly uncharacteristic sensitive manner as he had done in correspondence with her during their first years of courtship.

Puller was a devoted father to his two daughters and son and never compromised in providing for their education and needs, despite his limited savings. From the early days of his marriage, he had promised to buy his devoted wife a home of her own with two chimneys. They found their idyllic cottage in Virginia's hometown of Saluda, Virginia.[2]

In 2006, the National Museum of the Marine Corps received a large donation of personal items and artifacts from the family of Lewis B. Puller. Among these were the general's personal smoking pipes, favorite books from his beloved library, and Marine Corps-themed mementos. These artifacts are an important reminder of the humanity of this legendary Marine. The lore of the bulldog-faced general often portrays him as superhuman, but this is untrue. Lewis Puller was a simple enlisted Marine who rose through the ranks and met extraordinary challenges. He was also a loving husband and father who lived in retirement in a small town in Virginia.

THE GENERAL RETIRES, 1955

Chesty Puller's official retirement ceremony was an anticlimactic end to his amazing career. Already a major general, he received his third star during the ceremony, being promoted to the rank of lieutenant general. Puller refused

[1] The Navy Cross was created in 1919. It is the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps' second highest award for extraordinary heroism, second only to the Medal of Honor. Initially granted for both distinguished service and heroism in combat, the Navy Cross was limited to a combat-only valor medal in 1942.

[2] Col Jon T. Hoffman, USMCR, *Chesty: The Story of Lieutenant General Lewis B. Puller, USMC* (New York: Random House, 2001), 503.

Lewis B. Puller received numerous honors as a Marine. In retirement, he was also a loving father and husband. *Marine Corps History Division.*

to have a large celebration. The event was limited to two news correspondents, a Marine captain and gunnery sergeant, and Sergeant Major Robert L. Norrish. In a heartfelt gesture to his Marines, Puller had asked Norrish to pin his new rank insignia on his uniform. The sergeant major had served under Puller as a private in 1926. In the subsequent interview with the correspondents, Puller explained that he had chosen Norrish because he "wanted to show my great admiration and appreciation to the enlisted men in the Marine Corps and the junior officers." When asked if there was any moment of his career that he regretted, Puller informed them that it was only the present moment, and the fact that he "won't be present for the next war." As the final photos were taken, his last official words were, "I hate like hell to go."[3]

Despite his reluctance to leave the Marine Corps, Puller regrouped and set about doing the best that he could for his family. Puller's wife's mother, Virginia Evans, had recently been in a serious traffic accident. He was fond of his mother-in-law and wanted to support her and his wife. So, he set aside his initial plans to move to Richmond, Virginia, to keep his family together and happy in his wife's hometown of Saluda.[4]

[3] Hoffman, *Chesty*, 500–1.
[4] Hoffman, *Chesty*, 501.

Puller displayed this ceramic Marine bulldog prominently in his personal library in retirement.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

Puller was a lifelong pipe smoker. This humidor and pipe stand was a gift to the general from his fellow Marines.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

Puller's official government identification card used in retirement.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

THE PULLER'S DREAM HOME

About 160 kilometers from Quantico, Virginia, Saluda is adjacent to the lower Rappahannock River. During the 1960s, fewer than 200 people lived there. With his booming voice and diminutive stature, Chesty Puller was never one to blend in with a crowd—particularly when the town and surrounding area could barely form one. Interviews with local Saluda (and nearby West Point, Virginia) citizens recall Puller's retirement fondly. In 1962, Marine correspondent Master Sergeant Robert S. Kinsman quoted the town's treasurer as saying, "Lewis is around town just about every day. He never bothers to take his car and says people are getting too lazy to enjoy a walk these days." Every Sunday, Puller attended Christ Church, where his occasional speeches to the congregation made them "sit up and take notice." Chesty had grown up just 25 kilometers away in West Point. There he was a star football, baseball, basketball, and track athlete, despite weighing a mere 135 pounds.[5]

The Puller family home was a modest one-and-a-half story cottage. The land was neatly landscaped, with ample room for trees, hedges, and pathways, and the interior of the home held enough room for the family's favorite antiques and Puller's expansive military history library. The home's

[5] MSgt Robert S. Kinsman, "Official U.S. Marine Corps Release no. 9-62" (Quantico, VA: Informational Services Office, Marine Corps Schools, n.d.), 1–2.

most unique feature were the twin fireplaces and chimneys located on each side of the structure. Virginia Puller had always admired similar homes with dual chimneys, and Chesty was proud to finally have one for her after nearly 40 years of military service across the United States and the world.

Puller was a prolific reader and treasured his personal library. Many of his books were about the American Civil War, in which his grandfather was killed. His books were often dated and inscribed with his personal notes or noted as gifts from the authors. A particular favorite was Douglas Southall Freeman's *Lee's Lieutenants: A Study in Command*. This three-volume Civil War classic discussed the leadership and personal qualities of the various Confederate officers, and Puller took meticulous notes from it, neatly underlining specific qualities and attributes that caught his eye. Some of his most beloved books were gifts sent to him during World War II from his wife. These were dated and notated, showing that even while at war, Chesty Puller took time to study and learn from the past.[6]

CARING HUSBAND: CHESTY'S LOVE FOR VIRGINIA PULLER

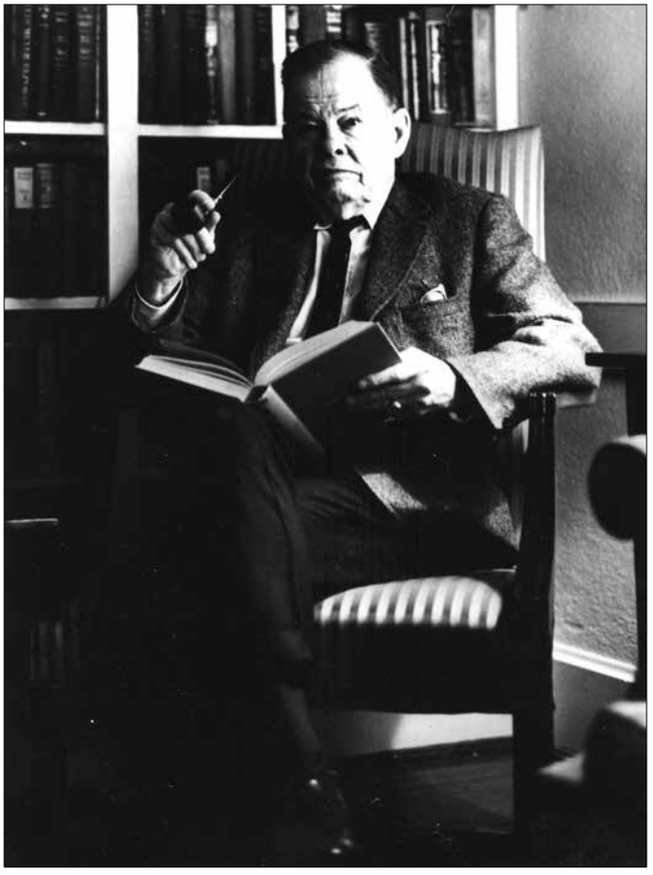
Puller's sensitivity and affection for his wife may come as a surprise to those who have only heard the mythology of the spartan Marine. As a young Marine, Puller found little time for romance or any distraction from his profession. This all changed, however, when he was home on leave and attended a local cotillion in 1923. There, he encountered Virginia Montague Evans. She was the daughter of a Puller family friend and had grown from a freckle-faced child to a young woman. Puller was 27 years old, and she was just 16. Years later, Puller's eldest daughter recalled that "winning her hand was his hardest battle."[7] Despite numerous proposals, it would take nearly 14 years of tender letters and courtship before Virginia finally surrendered to the Marine captain. Chesty was 40 years old and Virginia 29 when they finally agreed to marry in 1937.

Even when separated across vast distances, Puller never failed to write to his wife to express his love and admiration for her. In 1941, in the months immediately prior to the U.S. entry into World War II, Puller was assigned to the dwindling Marine Corps forces in China. Despite the constant fear of hostilities erupting, he still found time to write home. In his letters, Puller professed his continual love for

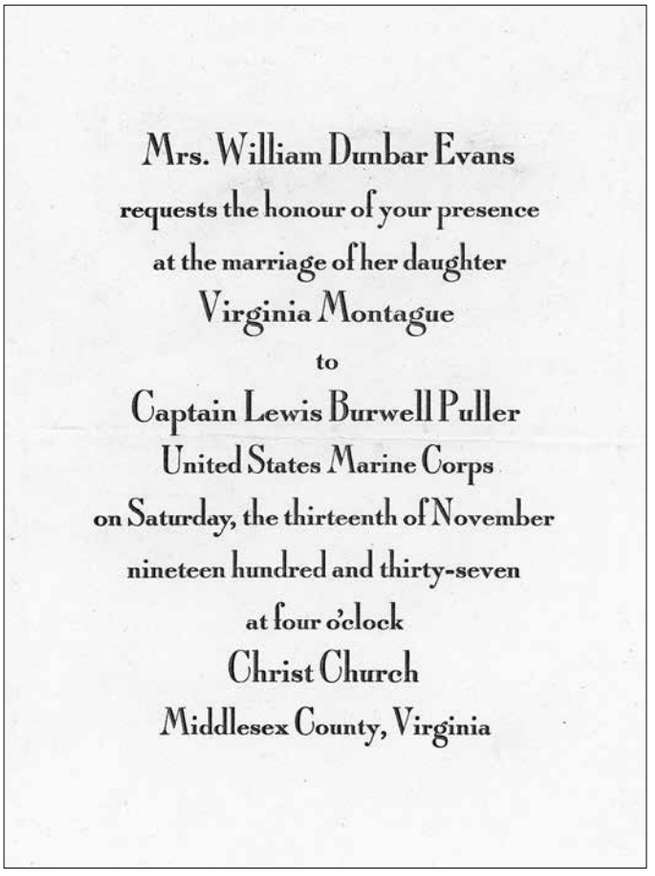
Lewis Puller with his wife, Virginia, on the front steps of their home in Saluda, VA.
Marine Corps History Division.

Puller enjoys a walk at his family home in Saluda, VA.
Marine Corps History Division.

[6] National Museum of the Marine Corps Collection File 2006.24.
[7] Ellen Robertson, "Virginia Puller, General's Widow, Dies at Age 97," *Richmond (VA) Times-Dispatch*, 8 February 2006.



Puller's personal library was filled with military history. In retirement, he enjoyed hours of reading and relaxing with his customary pipe in hand.
Marine Corps History Division.



Mrs. William Dunbar Evans
requests the honour of your presence
at the marriage of her daughter
Virginia Montague
to
Captain Lewis Burwell Puller
United States Marine Corps
on Saturday, the thirteenth of November
nineteen hundred and thirty-seven
at four o'clock
Christ Church
Middlesex County, Virginia

Lewis and Virginia Puller's wedding invitation from Christ Church in 1937.
Marine Corps History Division.

Virginia and their newborn daughter. He requested that his wife send him monthly photos of their child and lovingly insisted that if she misbehaved, he could not bear the thought of punishing her; the baby girl reminded him too much of his beloved wife and it would break his heart to do so. By all family accounts, this remained true for the duration of Puller's life with his children. The fierce old Marine simply loved his children too much to seriously punish them.[8] In the Puller household, it was Virginia who enforced the family rules and Marine Corps discipline.

LOVE OF HIS CHILDREN

Puller became a father for the first time on 27 May 1940 with the birth of his daughter Virginia McCandlish Puller. She was born in Shanghai, China, while Puller was assigned to the 4th Marine Regiment, and he was immensely proud of the accomplishment. In letters to his family, he dutifully noted, "Ordinarily I don't brag but I believe I have a right to now." China in the summer of 1940, however, was not a good place or time to raise a family. Japanese aggression in the region had only increased since the Battle of Shanghai in 1937, and the U.S. military was in the process of relocating large portions of its forces in the area to avoid direct conflict. When Puller was notified that Marine Corps dependents were to return to the United States, it was one of the "happiest days of his life," as he could rest easier knowing that his wife and daughter would be safe if war occurred. By January 1941, his daily letters home to both of his "Virginias" professed his attachment to both and how he missed them more and more each moment they were apart.[9]

As his oldest child, Puller was always proud of Virginia McCandlish. She was his brightest child academically and

[8] Hoffman, *Chesty*, 128–29.

[9] Hoffman, *Chesty*, 126.

The Puller family poses for a picture, ca. 1950.
Marine Corps History Division.

a perennial straight-A student.[10] Shortly after she graduated from Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts, in 1961, she married a young Marine officer, Second Lieutenant William H. Dabney. Dabney was previously a Marine sergeant who graduated from the Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, Virginia, in 1960.[11] Puller's son-in-law was a proud addition to the family. He would eventually rise to the rank of colonel and received the Navy Cross and Silver Star for his heroism in commanding Marines on Hill 881 South during the Vietnam War.

In August 1945, Puller proudly welcomed the surprise dual birth of his daughter Martha Leigh Puller and son Lewis Burwell Puller Jr. The twins' birth came at an uncharacteristically quiet time for the Puller family when Chesty had returned stateside during the last months of World War II. Puller celebrated having a son by purchasing the newborn an army of tin soldiers that same Christmas. Martha was Puller's star athlete who excelled in swimming. Like her older sister, she would go on to marry another young Marine officer, Michael P. Downs.[12] Downs rose to the rank of brigadier general and served as the commanding officer of Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

Puller's son Lewis Jr. always held a special place in his father's heart. From an early age, Chesty encouraged his son's love for the outdoors and baseball, often accompanying him in these hobbies. Despite some setbacks in the young man's life (he had briefly attended the Virginia Military Institute for one year before transferring to the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia), Puller always stood by and encouraged his son. The general made a

[10] Hoffman, *Chesty*, 468.
[11] Hoffman, *Chesty*, 522.
[12] Hoffman, *Chesty*, 531.

Lewis B. Burwell Jr. was commissioned in the Marine Corps in 1968.
Marine Corps History Division.

LtGen Lewis B. Puller's fifth and final Navy Cross medal.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

concerted effort to not force Lewis Jr. into a path following in his own footsteps, but Lewis Jr. nevertheless joined the Marine Corps during the Vietnam War. Lewis Jr. was commissioned as a second lieutenant on 1 February 1968. In recalling his father's affection for him, Lewis Jr. told a story of their last talk before he deployed to Vietnam. Puller tried to encourage his son with a historical story, but the old general broke down and wept before finishing his speech. With his father's embrace, Lewis Jr. noted that it was the first time he had ever seen his father cry.[13]

Lewis Jr. was deployed to South Vietnam in August 1968. He arrived as a replacement officer following the horrific Battle for Hue City during the Tet Offensive. He commanded a rifle platoon with Company G, 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, the same regiment his father had commanded during the Korean War. In short order, Lewis Jr. was lightly wounded by an enemy booby trap, receiving his first Purple Heart. On 11 October 1968, his company was conducting a cordon-and-search operation in a Vietnamese village. During the enemy's subsequent attack, Lewis Jr. stepped on a booby trap constructed from a 105-millimeter artillery shell. The tremendous explosion severed the young lieutenant's legs, removed portions of both hands, and caused severe internal injuries. Only the skill of the company's corpsman was able to save Lewis Jr. from immediate death. He was taken to the military hospital in Da Nang before being sent to Japan for higher levels of treatment. The news of Chesty Puller's son's wounding became national news in the United States. Puller learned of his son's fate in a call from the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Lewis W. Walt.[14] Deeply grieving, Puller immediately attempted to travel to Japan to see his son. Official correspondence within the Marine Corps documents the office of General Walt preparing to attempt to assist in Puller's transportation.[15] Despite the doctor's concerns, Lewis Jr. was soon transported back to the United States for continuing treatment. In Lewis Jr.'s later Pulitzer Prize-winning autobiography *Fortunate Son: The Healing of a Vietnam Vet*, the young Marine recalled the first time his father saw him in the hospital. As Chesty stood by his son's bed, his initial attempts to remain unshaken quickly failed, and the general wept silently. Lewis Jr. was unable to move to try to console him. As he remembered, "It was only the second time in my life that I had seen my father cry, and as the nurse led him from my room, I felt an aching in my heart that all but eclipsed the physical pain from my wounds."[16]

[13] Hoffman, *Chesty*, 532.

[14] Hoffman, *Chesty*, 533.

[15] 1stLt Lewis B. Puller Jr., Official Biographical File, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

[16] Lewis B. Puller Jr., *Fortunate Son: The Healing of a Vietnam Vet* (New York: Grove Press, 1991), 162.

Puller's age, coupled with the strain of his son's wounds, took a severe toll on his life from this point forward. Chesty would have a series of strokes in the following years. In 1970, he was hospitalized for months following an intense seizure. Pneumonia and kidney failure followed, with the general spending his last days in an assisted living facility. When Puller passed away on 11 October 1971, his devoted son Lewis Jr. was by his side.[17]

During his 37 years in the Marine Corps, Lewis B. Puller received five Navy Crosses, the Army Distinguished Service Cross, the Silver Star, and two Legions of Merit. He received nearly 20 other campaign and service awards dating from the Banana Wars through the Korean War. However, despite his history as the most decorated Marine in the history of the Corps, he cherished one honor as much as all of these put together—his home and the title of loving husband and father to his beloved family.

[17] Hoffman, *Chesty*, 535.

Chapter 20

FROM AN-NASIRIYAH TO TARAWA

Living the Motto

By Jonathan Bernstein, Arms and Armor Curator

Featured artifacts: Relic, Helmet, M1 (2019.162.7); Relic, Canteen, M1942 (2019.162.11); and Relic, Cross, Cemetery (Name Post, Robert Hillard) (2019.162.23)

The U.S. Marine Corps motto *Semper Fidelis* (always faithful) has long been a touchstone to Marines both during and after their time in uniform. The concept of always being faithful to one's country and comrades has gotten many Marines through some of the most difficult times they have ever faced. For some, the motto becomes part of their very being. Whether on the battlefield of an-Nasiriyah, Iraq, or facilitating the discovery and repatriation of long-missing U.S. servicemembers, retired Marine Corps sergeant major Justin D. LeHew has come to exemplify that motto.

LeHew enlisted in the Marine Corps in the summer of 1988 and upon graduation from boot camp was sent to Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, California, to attend the Assault Amphibian School. His first 18 months in the Corps were spent on deployments to Okinawa, South America, and Saudi Arabia during Operation Desert Shield (2 August 1990–17 January 1991), all as a member of the 2d Assault Amphibian Battalion.

The 2d Assault Amphibian Battalion provided the mobility for two of the 2d Marine Division's infantry regiments and the division's combat engineers. Lance Corporal LeHew crewed one of the battalion's AAVP7A1 assault amphibious vehicles (AAV) as they rolled northward into Iraqi-occupied Kuwait at 0530 on 24 February 1991, the opening of the ground campaign in Operation Desert Storm (17 January–28 February 1991). The 1st and 2d Marine Division moved northward, breaching the defensive berm just north of the border and clearing paths through Iraqi minefields and obstacles as they went. At a press briefing on 27 February, as the ground campaign came to a close, the commander of U.S. Central Command, U.S. Army general H. Norman Schwarzkopf Jr., praised the Marine divisions for their race north: "I can't say enough about the two Marine divisions. If I use words like "brilliant" it would be an underdescription of the absolutely superb job that they did in breaching the so-called impenetrable barrier. . . . It was a classic . . . absolutely superb operation, a textbook, and I think it will be studied for many, many years to come as the way to do it."[1]

During the next few years, LeHew excelled as an AAV commander and became an instructor at the Assault Amphibian School at Camp Pendleton, being named instructor of the year for two consecutive years. From there, he was selected for Drill Instructor School and served as a drill instructor, inspiring young Marine recruits to live the Marine Corps motto. As a result, Staff Sergeant LeHew was voted as the recipient of the Dan Daly Award twice by his fellow drill instructors as the best among them.

[1] LtCol Dennis P. Mroczkowski, USMCR, *U.S. Marines in the Persian Gulf, 1990–1991: With the 2d Marine Division in Desert Shield and Desert Storm* (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1993), 39.

Lehew's insight into what motivates Marines to keep their faith with each other is pervasive throughout his history. "Every Marine came into the Marine Corps to fight. They either have something to prove to themselves or someone else," he said. "It's the kids that can't hold their personal life together that win battles. It's the kid the platoon teases, or the kid that his buddies tease because he shoots marksman, that holds off half the Fedayeen. His biggest fear is not that he'll fail, but that he'll let his buddies down. What makes us elite is that we don't want to let each other down."[2]

By the beginning of the new millennium, Gunnery Sergeant LeHew was back with the 2d Assault Amphibian Battalion at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, as a platoon sergeant. The next three years were a whirlwind of preparation for war following the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, with the battalion deploying to Saudi Arabia in early 2003. As the specter of war loomed large in early March of that year, the 2d Marine Expeditionary Brigade, known as Task Force (TF) Tarawa, would be among the first U.S. units to invade Iraq when the "go" order came. Company A, 2d Assault Amphibian Battalion, was attached to 1st Battalion, 2d Marine Regiment, for the operation and was tasked with transporting the battalion's infantry to the fight. Crossing into Iraq on 21 March, TF Tarawa made rapid progress, securing Jalibah Airfield, roughly 50 kilometers south of an-Nasiriyah, by the following afternoon.

An-Nasiriyah was the first major Iraqi city encountered by the U.S. invasion forces, and TF Tarawa immediately ran into stiff resistance. Their objective was to secure the bridges across the Euphrates River and the Saddam Canal to the river's northeast. As the task force moved out in the early morning, lead elements ran into a southbound damaged U.S. Army High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV, or Humvee) from the 507th Maintenance Company. An Army convoy had made a wrong turn and ended up deep behind enemy lines. By the time they realized their location and attempted to reverse course, they were in downtown an-Nasiriyah and getting shot to pieces in what became known as "ambush alley."

During the next three hours, the Marines fought to reach and secure the survivors of the Army convoy and secure the an-Nasiriyah bridges. Company A reached the remnants of the 507th Maintenance Company, and Gunnery Sergeant LeHew led the rescue effort there, securing

GySgt LeHew takes a break on top of his AAV, somewhere in Iraq, 2003. *Official U.S. Marine Corps photo.*

the wounded and beleaguered soldiers for movement southward. Company A secured the southern end of the Euphrates bridge, enabling Company C to continue the advance northward to capture the second bridge.

A severely damaged AAV from Company C came speeding southward from the northern bridge, reaching Company A's positions and coming to a halt. The vehicle's rear was almost completely destroyed, with the wreckage and debris burying the Marines inside. LeHew and his company corpsman, U.S. Navy hospitalman Alex Rodriguez, immediately jumped into action, dismounting their AAV and running under fire to get to the wounded Marines in the stricken vehicle.

Among those wounded on the AAV was Corporal Matthew Juska, who was in bad shape with a major head wound and possibly a broken back. LeHew remembers, "We had to get him out of there." LeHew and Hospital Corpsman First Class Alex Velazquez worked tirelessly to recover all the Marines aboard the burning AAV. Most were dead, but their remains would be returned to their families. Juska ultimately survived and would see LeHew a year later at Camp Lejeune as he processed out of the Marine Corps.[3]

For his actions in rescuing both the survivors of the 507th Maintenance Company and the Marines aboard the AAV, LeHew received the Navy Cross. His citation reads:

For extraordinary heroism as Amphibious Assault Platoon Sergeant, Company A, Task Force

[2] Cpl Matthew S. Richards, "U.S. Marine Corps 1st Sgt. Justin Lehew," *Defend America*, 6 August 2004.

[3] Lisa Burgess, " 'This Is How Custer Must Have Felt': Gunnery Sgt. Justin D. LeHew, Navy Cross," *Stars and Stripes*, 14 June 2005.

SgtMaj LeHew speaking in front of the Iwo Jima Memorial, ca. 2011.
Official U.S. Marine Corps photo.

Tarawa, I Marine Expeditionary Force in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM on 23 and 24 March 2003. As Regimental Combat Team 2 attacked north towards An Nasiriyah, Iraq, lead elements of the Battalion came under heavy enemy fire. When the beleaguered United States Army 507th Maintenance Company convoy was spotted in the distance, Gunnery Sergeant Lehew and his crew were dispatched to rescue the soldiers. Under constant enemy fire, he led the rescue team to the soldiers. With total disregard for his own welfare, he assisted the evacuation effort of four soldiers, two of whom were critically wounded. While still receiving enemy fire, he climbed back into his vehicle and immediately began suppressing enemy infantry. During the subsequent company attack on the eastern bridge over the Euphrates River, Gunnery Sergeant Lehew continuously exposed himself to withering enemy fire during the three-hour urban firefight. His courageous battlefield presence inspired his Marines to fight a determined foe and allowed him to position his platoon's heavy machine guns to repel numerous waves of attackers. In the midst of the battle, an Amphibious Assault Vehicle was destroyed, killing or wounding all its occupants. Gunnery Sergeant Lehew immediately moved to recover the nine Marines. He again exposed himself to a barrage of fire as he worked for nearly an hour recovering casualties from the wreckage. By his outstanding display of decisive leadership, unlimited courage in the face of heavy enemy fire,

and utmost devotion to duty, Gunnery Sergeant Lehew reflected great credit upon himself and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.[4]

LeHew later returned to Iraq for two additional combat tours, in 2005 as a company first sergeant with the 2d Assault Amphibian Battalion, during which he received a Bronze Star for valor, and in 2009 as the battalion sergeant major of the 1st Force Reconnaissance Battalion. He returned to the Assault Amphibian School at Camp Pendleton in 2010 as the schoolhouse sergeant major and then assumed responsibility as the regimental sergeant major for the 3d Marine Regiment. His final assignment in 2013 was at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia, as the sergeant major of Marine Corps University.

Sergeant Major LeHew retired from the Marine Corps in July 2018 after 30 years of service. The next chapter of his life would see a continuation of his dedication to the ideals of the Marine Corps motto and establish him as a civilian leader in the challenge of bringing home U.S. servicemembers still missing in action. The promise of never leaving a fallen comrade behind is the central purpose of History Flight, a nonprofit organization specializing in research, recovery, and repatriation of missing servicemembers. Keeping true to the faith of those servicemembers—that they would be brought home—is at the heart of the Marine Corps' motto.

History Flight was originally incorporated in 2003 as a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the preservation of U.S. military aviation history. The organization focused on World War II veterans and their families and providing rides in World War II-era airplanes to the public. However, there was a deeper intent to the organization's activities. The funds from rides sold in their North American B-25H Mitchell, Boeing PT-17 Stearmen, and North American T-6 Texan airplanes were used to support efforts to locate and recover missing servicemembers from World War II battlefields. As the number of World War II veterans has waned, the organization has shifted its focus almost completely to those servicemembers still missing in action. The organization's founder, Mark Noah, spearheaded the effort to locate and repatriate the more than 78,000 World War II servicemembers still missing in action and has since grown History Flight into the premier organization working with the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) to identify, recover, and reunite the remains of Americans lost overseas with their loved ones.[5]

The year 2008 saw the beginning of History Flight's largest project, which continues today: the location of remains of U.S. Marines killed on Betio Island, Tarawa Atoll, during the Gilbert Islands campaign in November 1943. History Flight's first visit to Tarawa resulted in the recovery of three Marines whose bones were openly displayed by the island's natives. The recovery and subsequent identification of those three Marines led to additional interest and funding to continue the search.

With more than 400 U.S. Marines, sailors, and airmen still unaccounted for on Tarawa, the task was a daunting one. Part of the problem was the speed with which Tarawa was developed into a logistics hub after the battle. Runway expansion and construction of new buildings on Betio rapidly used up a great deal of space, including that of some smaller cemeteries that were hastily dug in the battle's immediate aftermath. As the spearheading unit attempting to account for those buried on Tarawa, the U.S. Army's 604th Graves Registration Company covered many of the Pacific battlefields beginning in 1944. Their efforts on Tarawa in 1946 enabled a significant amount of the hastily buried dead to be exhumed and consolidated into one cemetery, but many were still left unaccounted for. By the 1950s, the new U.S. Department of Defense was reluctant to continue expending funds on these efforts in an increasingly strained fiscal environment and therefore was willing to write off the remaining 78,000 missing in action servicemembers from World War II.

History Flight's initial successes enabled it to develop a long-term strategy for the Tarawa missing, which began a 15-year, ongoing project to bring them home. The three Marines found on Tarawa were positively identified in 2014. Since then, History Flight's research, coordination with the local populace, and professional excavation have unearthed a significant number of additional remains buried with equipment and uniforms, the largest of which occurred in 2015–16, when the remains of 51 servicemembers were located in what had been Cemetery 27. This area had not been identified in 1946 and had been untouched until History Flight's discovery.[6]

In 2019, after Justin LeHew came aboard as the organization's chief operating officer, History Flight donated sev-

[4] "Justin D. LeHew," Hall of Valor Project, accessed 7 May 2024.

[5] "Interview with Mark Noah," Pacific Wrecks, accessed 7 May 2024.

[6] History Flight Artifact Accession Report 2019.162, National Museum of the Marine Corps, 2019.

Marines on Tarawa take refuge behind an LVT-1 of the 2d Amphibian Tractor Battalion.
Marine Corps History Division.

eral artifacts discovered on Tarawa during its excavations. Because these artifacts were not associated with any specific sets of Marine remains but were relics discovered on the battlefield, LeHew worked with DPAA to have them preserved with the intent of donating them to the National Museum of the Marine Corps (NMMC). "It was all pretty much relic status," he said. "But for the trained eye . . . it was the entire battle history of the U.S. Marine Corps of that time period. . . . I knew I had to do something to preserve this."[7]

One of the more fascinating artifacts found during the excavations is an M1942 enamel canteen. With aluminum supplies going primarily to aircraft production during the war, canteen production shifted to more readily available materials. The first steel canteens were ordered and only produced in 1942. These were dipped in either blue or black enamel to coat their surfaces and prevent rust. While effective, the enamel paint tended to fragment when hit, potentially causing additional fragmentation injury. Because of this, the Army chose not to use this type of canteen and passed most of the production run to the Navy and Marine Corps. The Tarawa canteen, a black enamel example, was produced by the Republic Stamping and Enameling Company. Although it is encrusted with coral sand, it still retains a good amount of its enamel finish, and when found, it still held half a canteen of water.

Along with this canteen, History Flight donated several pieces to the NMMC that would have belonged to Marines on Tarawa. After Marines fell in battle, they were often covered with or carried on their camouflaged ponchos to a casualty collection point. The remnants of a poncho, brittle and tattered but intact, were among the items discovered, along with pocket change, field dressings, and assorted other items.

The most striking artifacts are the remnants of three

[7] Michael E. Ruane, "Lost Grave Markers Surface from a Distant World War II Battlefield," *Washington Post*, 18 September 2021.

When this coral-encrusted black enamel canteen was recovered from a gravesite on Tarawa, it was still half full of water. The enamel finish is still visible on the lower portions of the canteen.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

A temporary grave marker that identified the grave of Pvt Robert W. Hilliard from 2d Battalion, 2d Marines, who was killed in action on 20 November 1943.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

hastily constructed crosses bearing the names of three Marines that fell on Tarawa. All three crosses tell different stories of Marines who were killed on Tarawa in three days of intense fighting. Sergeant Bernard A. Marble was in Company L, 3d Battalion, 8th Marines, and landed on Red Beach 3 on D-Day (20 November 1943). He was killed on the second day of the battle as his battalion pushed south from Red Beach 3 and onto Tarawa's main airfield.

Private First Class Clarence S. Hodgson was a mortarman in Company H, 2d Battalion, 8th Marines. Hit in both legs on the second day of the battle, he was evacuated to a hospital ship offshore, where medical personnel worked desperately to save his life. He succumbed to his wounds on 22 November and was buried at sea. The cross was erected in his memory at one of the makeshift cemeteries on Tarawa.[8]

Private Robert W. Hillard was one of 61 Marines from Headquarters Company, 2d Battalion, 2d Marines, killed on 20 November. The company's landing craft reached shore and dropped their ramps right in the face of several Japanese machine guns, cutting the Marines to pieces as they attempted to come ashore.

While History Flight's largest focus has been on Tarawa, the organization has also been instrumental in recovering and identifying the remains of more than 160 U.S. servicemembers in 15 different countries. To date, nearly 400 addi-

[8] Ruane, "Lost Grave Markers Surface from a Distant World War II Battlefield."

A Marine's helmet that was recovered along with the canteen and grave marker. The helmet, while in relic condition, still has remnants of the cloth camouflage cover adhering to it. *Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.*

tional sets of remains located by History Flight have yet to be identified and are undergoing testing.

The stories that these artifacts enable the NMMC to convey are the final pieces in keeping with the motto Semper Fidelis. These objects allow museum curators to speak about those Marines lost on Tarawa and keep their memory alive, while simultaneously honoring a member of TF Tarawa and the "Hero of an-Nasiriyah," who continues to keep true to the motto by remaining always faithful to his Marines.

Chapter 21

COLONEL PETER J. ORTIZ

An OSS Marine in Europe

By Jonathan Bernstein, Arms and Armor Curator

Featured artifacts: Medal, Navy Cross (2011.5.1); Medal, Legion of Merit (2011.5.2); Medal, Purple Heart (2011.5.3); Medal, British, Order of the British Empire (2011.5.5); Insignia, Cap, Eagle, Globe, and Anchor (2011.5.12); Insignia, Rank, Collar, Colonel (2011.5.13 a-b); Insignia, Basic Parachutist (2011.5.14); Insignia, Special Force Wing, OSS (2011.5.16); and Medal, Prisoner of War (USA) (2011.5.27)

Since the end of World War II, the island-hopping campaigns in the Pacific theater have become synonymous with the U.S. Marine Corps experience in that conflict. Yet oddly enough, one of the Marines' most decorated officers never set foot in the Pacific theater. Nothing about his career was "standard," so it is unsurprising that Colonel Peter J. Ortiz would be among a handful of Marines that fought in Europe and North Africa. His exploits would become legendary in both Marine Corps and Hollywood history.

By the time he enlisted in the Marine Corps in June 1942, Ortiz already had a significant amount of combat experience on two continents. Although he was born in the United States, he was raised in France by an American mother and a French father. At age 19, looking for some excitement and a relief from his studies, he enlisted for a five-year tour with the French Foreign Legion, much to his parents' dismay.

Ortiz excelled in the Foreign Legion and was promoted quickly. He spent most of his time in French Morocco, where he absorbed the region's language and culture to better understand his surroundings and his enemy, since the Legion was regularly engaging groups of bandits. By the end of his five-year enlistment, he was commanding an armored car squadron as a sergeant. The Legion wanted to keep him on and offered him a commission to stay.

Ortiz had other plans, however, and in 1937 made his way to the United States to see his mother in California and to try to break into Hollywood as a technical advisor on war films. This proved a more challenging task than he had realized. He had some limited successes, and he was able to build several relationships with Hollywood "movers and shakers" that would benefit him later in life. But by the end of the following year, he was looking back toward the military and the thrill of combat. He soon headed back to France to rejoin the French Foreign Legion in the face of the looming Nazi German threat.

Following the German invasion of Poland and the subsequent declarations of war on Germany by France and the United Kingdom in September 1939, Ortiz attempted to find passage to France several times, finally arriving in mid-October. He rejoined the French Army as a sergeant in the newly raised 11th Foreign Infantry Regiment (*11e Régiment Étranger d'Infanterie*, or REI) and participated in the early campaign against Germany on the Western front. During this phase, the 11th REI was primarily in defensive positions near the city of Thionville, where aggressive patrolling at the squad and platoon level was the primary method of engagement against the Germans. Ortiz was quickly recognized for his leadership and skill in leading such patrols and was awarded a battlefield commission in May 1940, just in time for the German invasion of France.

With his technical and mechanical expertise, Ortiz was given command of the regiment's motorcycle platoon, with

It is unclear exactly when this photograph was taken, but it was taken in Algeria during Peter Ortiz's first stint with the French Foreign Legion.
Marine Corps History Division.

which he led numerous hit-and-run raids against the enemy and critical scouting missions.[1] The 11th REI would bear the brunt of the German assault on Bois d'Inor in late May 1940, holding the line against the German *56th Infantry Division*'s onslaught.

In the face of the overwhelming German *blitzkrieg*, the 11th REI replenished its losses in the early weeks of June 1940 and moved south to the town of Saint-Germain-sur-Meuse. As the French forces staged their last desperate gambits against the advancing German forces, Ortiz fought valiantly while "the 11th stood fast as a rock against the German tide of invasion that rolled around it. The 11th Regiment fought until it was engulfed!"[2] Just before his capture, Ortiz was gravely wounded while attempting to destroy a fuel dump, leaving him partially paralyzed from the waist down due to shrapnel in his spine.

Ortiz spent the next 15 months as a prisoner of war in various prison camps in Austria and Germany, where he recovered through the efforts of a German surgeon. During that time, he became a constant nuisance to his captors, who labeled him as "dangerous." He attempted to escape a few times, finally succeeding in October 1941. Once free, he carefully made his way to Portugal, arriving two months later and boarding a ship bound for the United States.

[1] "11th Foreign Infantry Regiment," French Foreign Legion Information, 7 November 2019.

[2] "Peter Ortiz" (Biographical Files, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA), hereafter Ortiz Biography.

Arriving in the United States less than a week after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, Ortiz immediately attempted to brief the U.S. Army on his knowledge of the situation in France, including how he escaped his captivity, and offered his services to the U.S. military. The U.S. Army Air Forces (USAAF) intelligence section tentatively offered him a commission, but after bureaucratic red tape ground the process to a halt, Ortiz decided to head west to California to rest and regain his strength at his mother's house. Six months later, after hearing nothing further from the USAAF, Ortiz enlisted in the Marine Corps on 22 June 1942.

From the start, Ortiz was a standout recruit. During his 10 weeks of boot camp at Parris Island, South Carolina, he made his experience and discipline readily apparent. He enjoyed the training, although he made it clear that his experience training as a member of the French Foreign Legion had been more difficult. At his graduation, Ortiz wore all his French military awards that he had earned during his two tours with the Foreign Legion, which garnered him a great deal of attention. Colonel Louis R. Jones, the chief of staff at Parris Island, wrote to Lieutenant General Thomas Holcomb, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, recommending Ortiz for a commission:

> *Private Ortiz had made an extremely favorable impression upon the undersigned. His knowledge of military matters is far beyond that of the normal recruit instructor. Ortiz is a very well set up man and makes an excellent appearance. The undersigned is glad to recommend Ortiz for a commission in the Marine Corps Reserve and is of the opinion that he would be a decided addition to the Reserve Officer list. In my opinion he has the mental, moral, professional, and physical qualifications for the office for which he has made application.*[3]

Ortiz accepted an officer's commission and pinned his lieutenant's bars on his uniform on 1 August 1942. He was assigned to Company D, 1st Battalion, 23d Marines, at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, and shortly after arriving there he requested to attend the Marine Corps parachutist course, since he had already completed French parachute training during his second tour with the Foreign Legion. However, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the forerunner of today's Central Intelligence Agency, took great interest in Lieutenant Ortiz's unique qualifications and requested him on loan from the Marine Corps. In a letter to Lieutenant General Holcomb, written a week after Operation Torch, the Allied invasion of North Africa in November 1942, Colonel Keller E. Rockey stated, "The rather unique experiences and qualifications of Lieutenant Ortiz indicate that he would be of exceptional value to American units operating in North Africa."[4]

Indeed, Ortiz's experiences in Morocco, his fluency in French, German, and Arabic and his aggressive spirit made him an ideal candidate to conduct operations for the OSS in North Africa. He was promoted to captain on 3 December 1942 and was on a ship to Tangiers, Morocco, by the end of the month. Officially, he was assigned to the naval attaché's office, but he was tasked with developing the U.S. Western Task Force's reconnaissance plan and leading reconnaissance teams behind German lines to gather intelligence.

Ortiz quickly set about getting to know the locals and built a reconnaissance team that was able to blend in with the local populace and operate with near invisibility far into German-held Tunisia. During one such mission, he and his team were caught by U.S. soldiers as they crossed back into friendly territory and were presumed to be spies. Ortiz, wearing his Marine utilities under his local garb, was initially unable to convince the soldiers that he was an American. After all, why would a U.S. Marine be in North Africa?

In late March 1943, Ortiz led another reconnaissance patrol into German territory and ran into a German patrol. During the ensuing firefight, he was shot in the hand and wounded badly but held his position, ultimately fighting off the German patrol by throwing hand grenades to force them back. His team got him back to Allied lines, and he subsequently spent some time in a hospital in Algiers, Algeria, recovering from his wounds, where he was awarded his first Purple Heart. Due to his successes in building the reconnaissance capabilities for Allied forces in North Africa, Ortiz was recalled to OSS headquarters in Washington, DC, a few weeks later to begin planning for operations in France the following year.

At that time, the OSS Special Operations branch was coordinating with the British Special Operations Executive (SOE) to create a joint team to support covert action in occupied France. The team was code named "Union." According to the OSS, "Once dropped into an occupied area,

[3] Benis M. Frank, "Colonel Peter Julien Ortiz: OSS Marine, Actor, Californian," California State Military History and Museums Program, 1996; and Ortiz Biography.

[4] Frank, "Colonel Peter Julien Ortiz."

Shortly after his arrival in France in March 1944, Ortiz began working with local Maquis fighters against the occupying Germans. His OSS Special Force wing is clearly displayed on the arm of his M1943 field jacket.
Marine Corps History Division.

Ortiz developed a reputation for blatantly wearing his dress uniform in occupied France, almost daring the Germans to capture him.
Marine Corps History Division.

[special operations] personnel linked up with resistance groups, identified their operational needs, arranged drop zones, and then radioed for supply drops."[5]

On the faintly moonlit night of 6 January 1944, Union boarded a black-painted Handley Page Halifax bomber from the British Royal Air Force's (RAF) No. 138 Squadron at Tempsford airfield north of London. The airplane, commanded by Warrant Officer Pick, lifted off at 2012 and turned southeast towards France.[6] The mission, codenamed "John 38," was to insert the three-person team (one British, one American, and one French) near Vercors in southeastern France to help organize the French Resistance and establish a regular supply chain. The nearly three-hour flight would be accomplished at low level, with the Union team jumping at the minimum allowable height for their parachutes to open. Three other teams were intended to be inserted into France that night, but two were forced to turn back without dropping due to lack of contact on the ground. The RAF aircrew carrying Ortiz and his team successfully made contact, and the operatives dropped in without incident.

Once on the ground, Ortiz's next adventure was well underway. Since the team had been assembled and trained under British SOE procedures, all three operatives had jumped in civilian clothes, per SOE practice. However, each had his uniform packed in his equipment bag to properly identify him as a member of the military and not as a spy.

During this mission, Ortiz gained a reputation for wearing his Marine Corps officer's service uniform, complete ribbons and insignia, while training with the French Resistance, or *Maquis*. The German occupiers were aware of his presence and had heard rumors of a U.S. Marine officer and his uniform. One encounter particularly stands out, and there are several published accounts that differ in their outcome. The basic story recounts that Ortiz, clad in a long cloak, entered a local bistro where several German officers were drinking. Apparently, the Germans called for all the patrons to drink a toast to Adolf Hitler and to Germany. When one mentioned the American Marine officer, Ortiz drew back his cloak, revealing his uniform and a pair of M1911 pistols and proceeded to call for a toast to President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the U.S. Marine Corps. One version of the story has Ortiz opening fire on the Germans, while the more likely version has him slipping away without firing a shot. In either case, Ortiz's bravery deep within occupied France was unmatched.

While in France, Ortiz led several *Maquis* hit-and-run raids on German military infrastructure, often inflicting

[5] "Special Operations," Office of Strategic Services, accessed 7 May 2024.
[6] *No. 138 Squadron: Operations Record Book, 1941–1945* (National Archives, Kew, Richmond, UK), 124.

Ortiz is presented with the Navy Cross by Adm Harold R. Stark in London.
Marine Corps History Division.

considerable damage on the enemy forces. But participating in combat operations and training the *Maquis* were not his only roles. When four downed RAF aircrew were recovered by the *Maquis*, Ortiz volunteered to get them safely to the Spanish border, some 483 kilometers away. Not only did he successfully deliver the British fliers to freedom in Spain, but he also returned to his team just a few days later.

On 22 May 1944, the Union team was exfiltrated by airplane and brought back to the United Kingdom for debriefing and preparation for their next mission. The Allied invasion of Normandy was imminent, and the focus within the OSS headquarters in England had temporarily shifted completely to Northern France. On 6 July at OSS headquarters, U.S. Navy admiral Harold R. Stark, the commander of U.S. Naval Forces Europe, presented Ortiz with the Navy Cross for his actions as part of the Union team.

Due to his familiarity with Southern France and his performance during the Union I operation, Captain Ortiz was chosen to lead a new team, codenamed Union II. This team was, in effect, the prototype for the new Operations Group teams that would follow later in the month. Instead of leading a three-person team, Ortiz had seven under his command, five of whom were Marines. A USAAF intelligence officer, Captain Francis L. Coolidge, and a Free French officer rounded out the roster. This larger team was ideal for leading direct-action raids against German targets in occupied France in the two weeks leading up to Operation Dragoon, the Allied invasion of Southern France.

The Union II team boarded a 388th Bomb Group B-17G at Knettershall Army Airfield on the evening of 1 August 1944 and took off for Southern France.[7] The mission ran into trouble almost immediately when Sergeant Charles R.

[7] Maj Robert E. Mattingly, *Herringbone Cloak—GI Dagger: Marines of the OSS* (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1989), 118.

Operation Union II Team, 2 August 1944 (from left): Sgt John Bodnar, Maj Peter J. Ortiz, Sgt Robert LaSalle, Sgt Fred Brunner, Capt Frank Coolidge, and Sgt Jack Risler.
Marine Corps History Division.

Perry's parachute failed on the jump, killing him. The remainder of the team regrouped on the ground and linked up with their French Resistance contacts.

The team linked up with Captain Jean Bulle, who commanded the French Resistance battalion that bore his name. While Ortiz and Bulle planned their training to arm the 3,000 *Maquis* fighters in the region, the 388th Bomb Group continued to fly missions over the area, dropping nearly 1,000 containers of weapons and ammunition in the ensuing two weeks. This irregular force would be critical in sowing confusion in the areas north of the invasion beaches and landing zones during Operation Dragoon.

Ortiz's primary mission was identifying critical logistics hubs, fuel and ammunition depots, and infrastructure that could potentially support the reinforcement of the invasion beaches. During the rapid Allied advance northwards, any chaos that he and his team could sow would aid the advancing U.S. 7th Army and lessen the effectiveness of the German forces they had to face.

On 16 August, Ortiz, accompanied by Captain Coolidge, Gunnery Sergeant Robert E. LaSalle, and Sergeants John P. Bodnar, John R. Risler, and Frederick J. Brunner, attempted to sabotage the roadway between Albertville and Bourg-Saint-Maurice when they were identified and attacked by a large German force outside the town of Montgirod. The team retreated to more defensible positions, ultimately taking cover in the town of Centron. Coolidge was hit in the leg, and he and Brunner pulled back to the bank of the Isere River, where Ortiz gave them the go-ahead to cross.

Ortiz, Bodnar, and Risler continued to put up a significant fight against the Germans, moving from position to position and firing madly. It became increasingly clear that if they continue the fight, the Germans—and more specifically the Nazi Gestapo—would exact revenge reprisals on the town's residents and burn the town to the ground. This was not an acceptable outcome to Ortiz, and so he ordered Bodnar and Risler to retreat across the river while he intended to surrender to spare the town. The two Marines refused to leave Ortiz, preferring to surrender with him than leave him behind.

The Germans were initially confused as to who was surrendering, stunned that a U.S. Marine officer and two noncommissioned officers had held up their battalion without any other support. The three Marines were taken into custody after a pledge was secured that no reprisals would fall on the town after their surrender. The Germans remained true to their word, and the Marines began the long trek to a prisoner-of-war camp in Germany. Six days later, the advance elements of the U.S. Army's 36th Infantry Division liberated Centron.

The three Marines initially attempted to claim that they were paratroopers who had been mis-dropped during the invasion of Southern France. The ruse worked initially, but when they arrived at the headquarters of the German *157th Reserve Division*, their interrogating officer knew exactly who they were and their role in aiding the *Maquis*. The Marines moved together to holding area in Italy and then to Austria, finally arriving at the Marinelager-Nord prisoner-of-war camp outside of the town of Westertimke in north-central Germany by mid-September. The camp primarily housed British and Canadian Royal Navy personnel and Royal Marine commandos, but there were a handful of U.S. personnel there as well. Ortiz, who became the ranking American officer there, was separated from the Bodnar and Risler, who were to be quartered with the rest of the enlisted personnel.

Eight months of captivity, attempted escapes, starvation, and hardship ended in April 1945. The prisoners at Marinelager-Nord were ordered to march south from the camp as the advancing Allies closed in. It was clear to the prisoners that the guards did not care much about keeping them together, so Ortiz and a few others were able to slip away from the main formation. After hiding out in the woods for a few days, they realized that they would be better off heading back to the camp, where they would at least have some shelter from the elements.

British forces liberated Marinelager-Nord on 27 April 1945. Ortiz, Bodnar, and Risler requested to join the liberating unit of Royal Marine commandos to get back

Col Ortiz's Navy Cross with Gold Star in lieu of a second award is currently on exhibit at the National Museum of the Marine Corps alongside his Prisoner of War Medal and his Member of the Order of the British Empire Medal. Already an accomplished parachutist by the time he joined the OSS, Ortiz also earned both the Army parachutist wings and the OSS's coveted Special Force wing.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

into the fight. Because of their weakened condition, they were refused and sent back to the United Kingdom and freedom.

After returning to England, now-Major Ortiz underwent an extensive debriefing on his prisoner-of-war experience and his overall experience as an OSS officer in Europe during the war. His evaluation listed him as:

> *An aggressive, alert, energetic and highly competent field officer who has led a life of romantic adventure the past 14 years. Coming from a privileged but broken home, he never acquired the conventional standards of this culture. A childhood spent in travel both in the United States and abroad accustomed him to change and excitement. Six years in the Foreign Legion whetted his thirst for adventure which 6 years of service in this war have not quenched. He already holds the Navy Cross and minor decorations and is the type who will win more. He views difficulties as a challenge which add spice to his job. He is dynamic and an excellent field leader. He is highly recommended for an SO field mission but is not regarded as a good candidate ever for a desk assignment.*[8]

During his debrief, Ortiz requested to be dropped into French Indochina as his next field assignment, a plan endorsed by Gerald E. Miller, the chief of the OSS Special Operations Division. He also requested to keep his team of OSS Marines together, which Miller too endorsed. Interestingly, in his 1 June 1945 letter to OSS headquarters, Miller made it clear that Ortiz would need a clearly defined mis-

[8] OSS Debrief Form 2725, May 1945, USMC History Division Biographical Files: Peter Ortiz

Col Ortiz's Eagle, Globe, and Anchor, colonel's rank eagles, and Legion of Merit and Purple Heart with Gold Star medals. Ortiz was wounded in combat twice while serving in the OSS, once in North Africa and once in France.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

sion in Southeast Asia, stating that "I wish to accent the point that he must be given an active and specific mission. Being a person of vast energy, extremely capable and courageous, it almost necessarily follows that he is a restless individual and if forced to remain static after arriving in the theater, will not react very favorably."[9]

By the end of June, the OSS Special Operations branch initiated Ortiz and his team's transfer from the European theater of war to China, and they began preparations for a new mission against the Japanese. However, the war was rapidly ending in the Pacific. The Japanese Empire surrendered to the Allies on 15 August 1945, leaving Ortiz and his team without a mission. By 4 September, the OSS released Ortiz back to the Marine Corps Reserve, where he was assigned to the General Service Unit, 11th Reserve District in San Diego, California.

In January 1946, Ortiz's second Navy Cross finally caught up with him. With his recent separation from active duty, there was no formal presentation, but the citation reads:

> *The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting a Gold Star in lieu of a Second Award of the Navy Cross to Major Pierre (Peter) J. Ortiz (MCSN: 0-12779), United States Marine Corps Reserve, for extraordinary heroism while serving with the Office of Strategic Services during operations behind enemy Axis lines in the Savoie Department of France, from 1 August 1944, to 27 April 1945. After parachuting into a region where his activities had made him an object of intensive search by the Gestapo, Major Ortiz valiantly continued his work in coordinating and leading resistance groups in that section. When he and his team were attacked and surrounded during a special mission designed to immobilize enemy reinforcements stationed in that area, he disregarded the possibility of escape and, in an effort to spare villagers severe reprisals by the Gestapo, surrendered to this sadistic Geheim Staats Polizei. Subsequently imprisoned and subjected to numerous interrogations, he divulged nothing, and the story of this intrepid Marine Major and his team became a brilliant legend in that section of France where acts of bravery were considered commonplace. By his outstanding loyalty and self-sacrificing devotion to duty, Major Ortiz contributed materially to the success of operations against a relentless enemy and upheld the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.*

With the war over and the thrill of combat behind him, Ortiz turned his attention back to Hollywood to focus on technical advising on military matters. From 1947 to 1957, Ortiz acted in and advised on 29 films and television episodes, often playing small roles and serving as the on-set military technical advisor. He appeared in *Twelve O'clock High* (1949) with Gregory Peck; *Scirocco* (1951) with Humphrey Bogart, *Abbott and Costello in the Foreign Legion* (1950) with the comedic duo; and *Rio Grande* (1950) and *Flying Leathernecks* (1951) with John Wayne.

Word of Ortiz's experiences in World War II traveled quickly around Hollywood. The film *13 Rue Madeleine* (1947)

[9] Correspondence between Gerald Miller (Chief, Special Operations Branch and Capt Harrison Barrow, OSS Special Operations Area Officer), 1 June 1945, USMC History Division Biographical Files: Peter Ortiz.

Ortiz and director John Ford worked together on a number of occasions. Both had served in the OSS during the war, which became the foundation for an enduring friendship.
Marine Corps History Division.

was loosely based on his exploits and benefited greatly from his technical advising. Four years later, Ortiz was again approached to make a film on his time in Europe, and this time he would be a part of the scriptwriting team. The film *Operation Secret* (1952) was intended to be directly inspired by his OSS exploits, but as the project commenced, it was clear that the production team had other intentions. "They had stipulated that I was to help in the screenplay, but [they] never consulted me," Ortiz told reporter Bob Thomas from the *Newport Daily News*. "They did a lot of things I didn't particularly approve of, but on the other hand they did some things that I thought were good."[10]

Ortiz remained in the Marine Corps Reserve through the early 1950s. He was promoted to lieutenant colonel in late 1951 and moved to the Inactive Reserve rolls by early 1953. Ortiz retired from the Marine Corps in 1955 and was promoted to colonel after his retirement.

[10] Bob Thomas, "Peter Ortiz: One Actor Whose Life Reads like Motion Picture Thriller," *Newport (RI) Daily News*, 20 April 1953, 11.

Chapter 22

THE CHOSIN FEW, HOLDING TOKTONG PASS

Fox Company, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines

By Kater Miller, Curator

Artifact: Guidon, Fox Company, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines

This is a story of U.S. Marines surviving against all odds due to their tenacity, training, and leadership. This is the story of one unit—a company cut off from the rest of its division in the dead of winter and surrounded by a numerically superior enemy. This is the story of Fox Company, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, stuck on a mountain in North Korea while being repeatedly battered by an overwhelming number of Chinese soldiers during the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir in the first year of the Korean War. The Communist Chinese soldiers facing Fox Company were not the pushover Asian army that U.S. Army general Douglas MacArthur, commander in chief of the United Nations (UN) Command, expected. They were well-trained and had recently been victorious over the Chinese Nationalist forces in a decades-long civil war. This guidon, the unit standard of Fox Company, represent the Marines who fought to survive long enough to make it out of Toktong Pass alive.

North Korea's invasion of South Korea in June 1950 caught most of the world off-guard. The U.S. military had been in a drawdown since the end of World War II five years earlier, with the Marine Corps having been reduced to two understrength divisions. During that summer, North Korean forces pushed South Korea's army south from the 38th Parallel, the dividing line between the Soviet Union-supported North Korea (officially the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, of DRPK) and the nominally democratic South Korea (officially the Republic of Korea, of ROK). The meager UN occupation forces in South Korea could do little to stop the surprise attack. Elements of the U.S. Army's 24th Infantry Division were rushed in from Japan to stop the attack, and a provisional Marine brigade soon followed. Things on the peninsula looked bleak. The combined U.S.-ROK forces formed a small perimeter around the town of Pusan in the southwest, which would be remembered as the Pusan Perimeter.

To save South Korea from collapse and to relieve pressure on the troops at the Pusan Perimeter, MacArthur formulated an audacious plan to run around the North Korean army and split the Korean Peninsula in two. From there, he believed that he could retake the South Korean capital of Seoul, annihilate the enemy forces, and reunite the peninsula into a single political unit. He did not believe that the Soviet Union or the People's Republic of China (PRC) would invade to help their Communist allies in the north.

MacArthur directed U.S. Army lieutenant general Edward M. Almond to lead the UN landing at Inchon, just west of Seoul. The U.S. Navy and Marine Corps had reservations about the plan. First, Almond was not well-versed in amphibious warfare. Further, the tidal waters at Inchon moved nearly 10 meters between high and low tides, and the bottom of the bay was covered with thick, sucking mud. Therefore, the invasion had to be undertaken in a spring tide, during which the water would be highest at high tide.

The guidon of Fox Company, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

The landing had to occur on 15 September, or the UN forces would have to try again the following month. Finally, the shore of the region had large seawalls, which would make getting ashore even more of a challenge than normal.

Almond had command of the U.S. Army's X Corps, comprised of the 1st Marine Division and the 7th Infantry Division. The Battle of Inchon began on 15 September with the Marines of 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, seizing the small island of Wolmido, which commanded the inlet of the bay.[1] That same day, Marines and soldiers landed in landing craft, vehicle, personnel (LCVPs) with ladders lashed to their fronts so they could climb up over the seawalls. The invasion was successful, and X Corps pushed back North Korean resistance. The UN forces continued forward toward Seoul, taking the city on 27 September.[2]

The surprised North Korean forces holding the Pusan Perimeter began withdrawing in earnest, pulling back behind the 38th Parallel.[3] The 8th U.S. Army pushed north towards Seoul en route to the Yalu River, the boundary

[1] BGen Edwin H. Simmons, USMC (Ret), *Over the Seawall: U.S. Marines at Inchon*, Marines in the Korean War Commemorative Series (Washington, DC: Marine Corps Historical Center, 2000), 19.

[2] Col Joseph H. Alexander, USMC (Ret), *Battle of the Barricades: U.S. Marines in the Recapture of Seoul*, Marines in the Korean War Commemorative Series (Washington, DC: Marine Corps Historical Center, 2000), 45.

[3] Roy E. Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, June–November 1950*, United States Army in the Korean War (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1992), 565.

Gen Douglas MacArthur, center, and LtGen Edward Almond, right, watch the final landing preparations at Inchon.
Naval History and Heritage Command.

Marines loaded in landing craft head toward the seawalls at Inchon. They have lashed ladders to the bows of the landing craft so that they can climb over the seawalls.
Marine Corps History Division.

between North Korea and China, veering to the west as it approached the Chinese border.

Meanwhile, the Marines and soldiers of X Corps reembarked on their landing vessels and traveled around the Korean Peninsula to land on the east coast of North Korea, coming ashore at Wonsan. MacArthur ordered X Corps to take an eastern approach to the Yalu River simultaneously with the 8th Army. The 1st Marine Division was to drive north of a place called the Chosin Reservoir and then sweep west to make liaison with the 8th Army.

The Marines and soldiers of X Corps expected the war to be over by Christmas. They marched quickly to the north, establishing supply posts along the way. As the Marines worked their way up the winding mountain road around the Chosin Reservoir, the U.S. forces prepared and served a full Thanksgiving meal, much to the shock of other UN forces, who could not believe that the Americans were taking the time or straining the logistical resources to provide turkeys and pies to troops spread out over such a wide front. The war was proceeding so well that some U.S. units were even preparing to ship equipment back to their bases in Japan. The 7th Infantry Division and ROK I Corps reached the Yalu River with relative ease.[4]

MacArthur and Almond were convinced that the Chinese Communist Army would not help the North Korean Army—at worst, they believed that a small, easily contained infiltration might occur.[5] However, PRC leader Mao Zedong ordered a huge contingent of his troops, fresh from their victory against the Chinese Nationalist Army, to secretly cross the Yalu River and attack the UN troops making their way to the border. These Chinese Communist forces traveled by night and hid from UN aircraft during the day. They concealed themselves and did not use roads whenever

[4] Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu*, 741–42.
[5] Lynn Montross and Capt Nicholas A. Canzona, *U.S. Marine Operations in Korea, 1950–1953*, vol. 3, *The Chosin Reservoir Campaign* (Washington, DC: Historical Branch, G-3 Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1957), 36.

MajGen Oliver P. Smith and BGen Edward A. Craig cut a cake celebrating the Marine Corps birthday.
Marine Corps History Division.

Fox Company conducts a rifle inspection in the late November snow.
Marine Corps History Division.

possible.[6] U.S. troops passed by hidden Chinese regiments while they were on the road north. While there were limited engagements between the two sides and some prisoners taken, the full gravity of the situation was not known for several more weeks. It was becoming clear that China was intervening, but no one knew to what extent.[7]

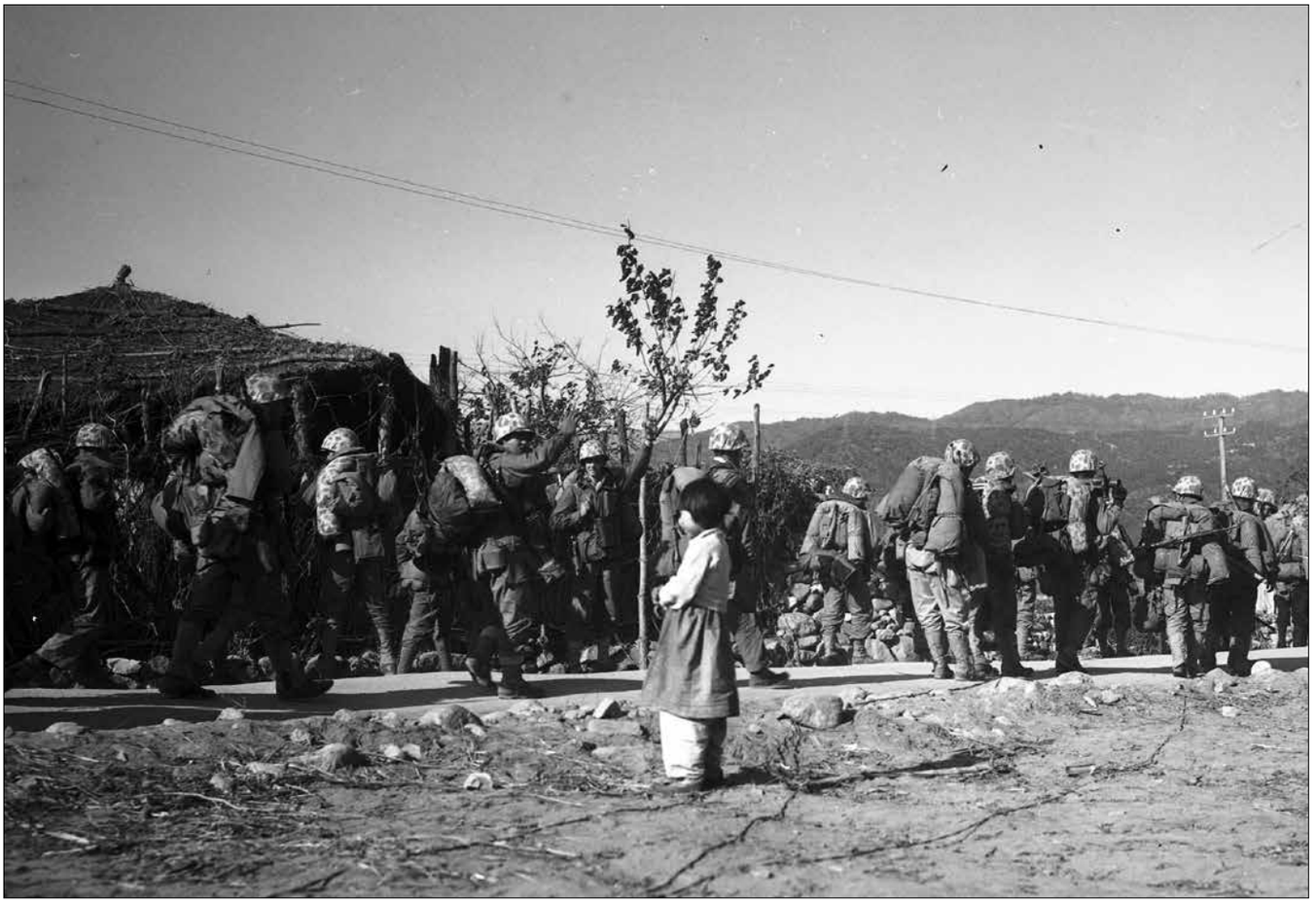
Fox Company, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, had a serious disadvantage. The company had taken many casualties at Inchon, and much of the unit was composed of fresh replacements, some of whom were reservists who had not even attended boot camp. A few of these Marines had only been through a few drill sessions with their reserve units. Others were World War II veterans in the Inactive Reserve who felt irritated that they had to fight again, many believing that they had already done enough in service of their country. However, these replacements did include a Silver Star recipient from the Battle of Iwo Jima—Captain William E. Barber. Barber soon became the officer in command of Fox Company.[8]

At first, Barber was not popular with the Marines under his command. He arrived to his new unit with a starched and ironed uniform, and he made his Marines shave and wash their uniforms. He did not believe that the war would be short, and so he ordered his Marines to begin conditioning hikes. He also made them practice their marksmanship as they made their way up to the Chosin Reservoir.[9]

The area that the Marines operated in was a logistical nightmare. North Korea was a mountainous, rugged landscape with few passable roads. By late November, the Marines were stretched out on the single road from Toko-Ri, several kilometers south of the Chosin Reservoir, all the way to Yudam-ni, in the northwest corner. They were unaware that Chinese forces had already moved around the reservoir, and they did not know how many enemy troops were in the area.[10] It was a disaster in the making. The commanding general of the 1st Marine Division, Major General Oliver P. Smith, was afraid that moving his division up without protection on his flank was foolish, and he wrote to the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Clifton B. Cates, that he thought the exposed Marines would get hit hard from the west if they continued driving north.[11]

The UN ground forces were heavily mechanized, with trucks, tanks, and artillery all needing to use the one road that stretched from south of the harbor at Hungnam all the way north past Yudam-ni. This put the 1st Marine Division at great peril because it had no alternative route through

[6] Montross and Canzona, *The Chosin Reservoir Campaign*, 81.
[7] Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu*, 750.
[8] Simmons, *Over the Seawall*, 50–51.
[9] Simmons, *Over the Seawall*, 51.
[10] Montross and Canzona, *The Chosin Reservoir Campaign*, 103–4.
[11] Bob Drury and Tom Clavin, *The Last Stand of Fox Company: A True Story of U.S. Marines in Combat* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2009), 16.



The 7th Marines march north along the Main Supply Route.
Marine Corps History Division.

which to escape if it ran into trouble. Conversely, the large Chinese Communist army was very lightly armed. They brought along little artillery support or heavy weapons, and they did not have good medical support. The soldiers wore quilted cotton clothing and canvas shoes. They had a mix of weapons, from former Lend-Lease American-manufactured Thompson submachine guns to Soviet-produced aluminum PPSH-41 submachine guns (nicknamed "burp guns" due to unique sound they made due to their high rate of fire).[12] Each Chinese soldier carried his own ammunition and was expected to capture U.S. weapons and food on the battlefield.[13] This made the Chinese troops much more vulnerable to the region's bitter cold than the UN forces, but it also made them less beholden to roads.

While the Marines worked up the only road, known as the Main Supply Route (MSR), the Chinese forces filtered around both the east and west banks of the Chosin Reservoir and continued infiltrating areas as far as 55 kilometers south of the Marines' positions. None of the Americans knew how many Chinese troops had made it into North Korea, but the Marines knew that they were there.

As the Marines continued their advance, Smith insisted on setting up supply posts along the route.[14] Almond thought Smith was being overly cautious, needlessly slowing the advance of X Corps. Smith had the main road from the coast reinforced so that tanks could travel to support the Marines. He also had Marine engineers hasten to construct an airfield at Hagaru-ri as soon as the Marines arrived there. The division's three regiments (the 1st Marines, 5th Marines, and 7th Marines) continued to leapfrog up the road, with Colonel Homer L. Litzenberg being ordered to take the 7th Marines to Yudam-ni. Smith did not want to order the 7th

[12] Montross and Canzona, *The Chosin Reservoir Campaign*, 190.
[13] Montross and Canzona, *The Chosin Reservoir Campaign*, 92–93.
[14] Thomas E. Ricks, "O. P. Smith: The Most Underrated General in American History?," *Foreign Policy*, 21 September 2010.

Food froze as soon as Marines tried to eat it.
Marine Corps History Division.

Marines to Yudam-ni until he could get Colonel Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller's 1st Marines closer to Hagaru-ri. Smith felt that having his regiments spread across the only supply road could lead to disaster, but Almond ordered the 7th Marines to advance anyway.

The Marines enjoyed a Thanksgiving meal on 23 November. Every effort was made to ensure that every Marine in the division received a traditional feast. The following day, MacArthur arrived in Korea to announce the beginning of the offensive that was to win the war in two weeks.[15]

The 7th Marines worked their way around the western road to Yudam-ni. The road on the pass was described as having a cliff on one side and a chasm on the other, a precarious position for the Marines' route of travel. Smith personally ordered Litzenburg to leave two companies of Marines on mountains along the MSR to protect the route from enemy attack. Litzenburg left Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, on a hill close to Yudamn-ni and placed Fox Company, 2d Battalion, on a mountain overlooking Toktong Pass, a mountain pass on the MSR between Hagaru-ri and Yudamni. Both companies were isolated and alone, and they were about to face some of the toughest fighting of the entire Korean War.

The U.S. Army's 3d Infantry Division was ordered to protect the southern half of the road. Smith wanted to get Puller's 1st Marines up to Hagaru-ri before he began his attack north. However, the 3d Infantry Division did not make it up to Toki-ri in time, so Smith had to move the 5th and 7th Marines and leave the 1st Marines south of Hagaru-ri to protect the MSR. The 5th Marines briefly moved east until they were relieved by the U.S. Army's 31st Regimental Combat Team (RCT). Once relieved, the 5th Marines followed the 7th Marines to the northeast part of the reservoir.[16]

Toward the end of November, horrible weather set in for the 20,000 Marines of the 1st Marine Division who were spread out over North Korea. Though the reported temperatures have become exaggerated over time to be 40–50 degrees Fahrenheit below zero, the Marines did face temperatures of 20–25 degrees below zero. Staying warm enough to stave off hypothermia and frostbite became a challenge. Farsighted thinker and Marnie Corps quartermaster major general William P. T. Hill had begun shipping cold-weather gear to Korea in October, a move that saved many Marines' lives. The Marines wore a long, pile-lined parka and layered their clothing to boost its effectiveness. Most wore wool gloves with leather mittens and shoe-pacs, a cold weather boot that had a rubber bottom section and leather upper section. Marines were issued two wool insoles and two pairs of socks that they were supposed to switch out when necessary to keep accumulating sweat from freezing and exacerbating frostbite.[17] There was some misery as food in C-ration cans froze solid and the Marines on the line had no way to warm it up. Many units used heating tents with a woodfire stove to heat their rations. Marines coming off the line added the contents of their daily rations to a bubbling pot of "slum" on the stove to keep a steady supply of edible food.[18]

The 5th and 7th Marines dug in at Yudamn-ni and prepared to move further north and west. Smith's command post and the airfield under construction were located at Hagaru-Ri. RCT 31, also known as Task Force Faith, occupied the southeastern shore of the reservoir. The 1st Marines were spread out over the northern half of the road that stretched from Hagaru-ri to the coast, and the 3d Infantry Division operated on the southern half.

Barber led Fox Company to dig in above the road at Toktong Pass. The road wound around the mountains on the west side of the reservoir, though it did not hug the side of the lake. The Marines had a commanding view of the road. They dug into the frozen, rocky ground with the

[15] Simmons, *Over the Seawall*, 41.

[16] Simmons, *Over the Seawall*, 43–44.

[17] Simmons, *Over the Seawall*, 27.

[18] Simmons, *Over the Seawall*, 33.

intention of holding the pass while the remainder of the 1st Marine Division passed through on their way to the Yalu River. Their main objective was to keep the approximately 5 kilometers of the MSR in front of them open.[19]

Though the Marines were aware of the presence of Chinese forces in the area, they knew nothing of the onslaught coming their way. The Chinese planned to isolate the 7th Marines, which they believed was the only UN regiment in Yudam–ni, to divide the MSR and defeat the Marines piecemeal. However, the 5th Marines had completed their movement from Hagaru-ri, so the Chinese soldiers faced a force nearly twice as large as was originally estimated.[20]

On the night of 27 November and the morning of 28 November, all hell broke loose as Chinese forces attacked all along the Marines' lines. Many of the Marine companies were pushed off the hills that they occupied at Yudam-ni, suffering hundreds of casualties through the night. The Chinese captured both the 5th and 7th Marines' command posts. By morning, the Marines at Yudam-ni were battered and forced back from many of their positions that they had held through the night.[21]

That same night, with his Marines dug in on the hill overlooking Toktong Pass, Barber began hearing noises in the hills. Gunfire suddenly erupted from a rocky knoll overlooking his command post. The company's 3d Platoon was overrun almost instantly. Chinese soldiers ran past Private Hector A. Cafferata Jr., who was at a listening post in front of the platoon. Having removed himself from his sleeping bag that he was using to protect against the extreme cold, he started using his entrenching tool to bash grenades back at their throwers. Cafferata later joked that he was a terrible baseball player, but that night he did not miss. He fought back with grenades and rifle fire and was credited with killing 15 attackers. When a grenade landed in a trench with wounded Marines inside, Cafferata dived in and threw it back, but it blew up as he released it, wounding his hand. He continued this all night, and he did so in his socks, as he had not put his shoes on all night despite the cold. By morning, his feet were badly frostbitten. Eventually, Cafferata was shot by an enemy sniper and finally allowed himself to check into the battalion aid station for treatment.[22]

It turned out that the extreme cold was a double-edged sword for the Marines. The morphine syrettes used by Navy corpsmen to help with manage pain froze solid. The corpsmen kept the tiny containers in their mouths to keep them from freezing.[23] The cold also froze wounds, thereby saving the lives of several Marines who would have otherwise bled out. However, lifesaving plasma also froze and could not be used, dooming several of the wounded.[24]

Though many accounts of the battle state that the Chinese attacked in human waves, in actuality they attacked in well-disciplined groups of 50–100 soldiers.[25] Once these units attacked, they were usually not pulled back until they had become ineffective due to casualties or low ammuni-

PFC Hector A. Cafferata Jr. received the Medal of Honor for his actions on the morning of 28 November 1950. *National Archives and Records Administration.*

[19] Simmons, *Over the Seawall*, 50.
[20] Simmons, *Over the Seawall*, 126.
[21] Simmons, *Over the Seawall*, 55–57.
[22] "Hector Alberta Cafferata Jr.," Congressional Medal of Honor Society, accessed 13 May 2024.
[23] Drury and Clavin, *The Last Stand of Fox Company*, 109.
[24] Montross and Canzona, *The Chosin Reservoir Campaign*, 191.
[25] BGen Edwin H. Simmons, USMC (Ret), *Frozen Chosin: U.S. Marines at the Changjin Reservoir*, Marines in the Korean War Commemorative Series (Washington, DC: Marine Corps Historical Center, 2002), 48.

The Marine Corps had just adopted the helicopter before the outbreak of the Korean War. In Korea, Marine helicopter pilots braved the cold and enemy fire to evacuate wounded Marines, deliver messages, and supply badly needed batteries to operate radios.
National Archives and Records Administration.

tion. The main Chinese tactic was called a "short attack," which played into PRC general Peng Dehuai's belief that Americans were afraid of close combat. Small groups of Chinese soldiers attacked in quick succession, hoping to break through enemy lines.[26]

Barber had to keep adjusting his lines to reinforce weak spots in his defensive position. Chinese soldiers made their way to the company command post, and a hand-to-hand fight ensued. By morning, Cafferata was the only Marine from 3d Platoon still fighting because everyone else was either dead or too wounded to fight. Wounded Marines piled into a Korean hut-turned-aid station. They were told that helicopters would come in the morning to evacuate them to safety, but the helicopters never came.[27] During the night, 20 Marines were killed and 54 more were wounded. When daybreak finally came, eight Australian CAC Mustang fighters flying close air support helped drive the Chinese soldiers off the hill and gave the surviving Marines a much-needed opportunity to rest and regroup.[28]

Charlie Company, severely battered that same night, lost-one third of its Marines and had to be rescued on 28 November by Able and Baker Companies of Lieutenant Colonel Raymond G. Davis's 1st Battalion, 7th Marines. Litzenburg ordered Barber to move his Marines to Charlie Company position, but Fox Company had too many casualties to move. Davis attempted to reach Toktong Pass to rescue Fox Company as well but ran out of daylight, forcing his battalion to return to the more secure—though not safe by any means—perimeter at Yudam-ni.[29]

Though the 1st Marine Division had been hit hard that

[26] Simmons, *Frozen Chosin*, 48.
[27] Simmons, *Frozen Chosin*, 57.
[28] Montross and Canzona, *The Chosin Reservoir Campaign*, 190.
[29] Montross and Canzona, *The Chosin Reservoir Campaign*, 192–93.

Airdrops, like the one pictured here, became the Marines' lifeline since the MSR was no longer passable after the first night's attacks.
Marine Corps History Division.

The Marines at Yudam-Ni prepare to evacuate south to Hagaru-ri to combine forces behind MajGen Smith's perimeter.
National Archives and Records Administration.

night, Almond did not seem to understand the gravity of the situation. To the east, the soldiers of RCT 31 were barely hanging on as well. At Hagaru-ri, Smith's command post was vulnerable to being overrun. The 1st Marine Division headquarters was cut off from all three of its regiments, and the road connecting it to the 5th and 7th Marines at Yudamn-ni in the northwest and the 1st Marines at Toko-ri to the south had become cut off from traffic. Whether or not Almond and MacArthur comprehended the gravity of the situation, the 1st Marine Division was in real trouble.

The Marines of Fox Company had no choice but to stay put, but now they were more isolated than ever. Barber reasoned that the company could hold on and defend "Fox Hill" if they were resupplied by air. Fox Company received airdropped supplies to replenish their stocks of ammunition, food, and medical supplies.[30] The Marines erected heated aid stations to care for the wounded Marines who could not be evacuated and spent the day improving their positions. Barber sent out patrols, which determined that the company was surrounded. The only external help the Marines would receive was the 11th Marine Regiment's howitzer fire coming from Hagaru-ri.

On the second night of battle, Fox Company was attacked again. Barber was shot in the leg, but he continued to lead his Marines. After being wounded, he maintained his composure. Even though he was unable to walk under his own power, he moved throughout his company's positions, first with the help of a makeshift crutch and later being carried by stretcher, to direct and reassure the defenders. This night, the casualties were much lighter, with 5 Marines killed and 29 more wounded.[31]

On the third night of battle, the Marines remained surrounded on Fox Hill. A voice shouting from the hills told the Marines to surrender and that they would be treated well. The Marines responded by firing a volley of illumination rounds from their 81-millimeter mortars and opened fire. No Marines died as a result of fighting on the third night.[32] But Barber's wound was worsening, as the bullet had lodged into his hip and his leg was becoming infected. He finally relented and allowed himself to be injected with morphine, but he told his subordinates to examine his orders to make sure that they were coherent.[33]

Almond was beginning to understand the gravity of the situation for X Corps. The 3d Infantry Division covering the port at Hungnam was split, the 7th Infantry Division was

[30] Simmons, *Frozen Chosin*, 63.

[31] Simmons, *Frozen Chosin*, 63.

[32] Simmons, *Frozen Chosin*, 66.

[33] Drury and Clavin, *The Last Stand of Fox Company*, 251.

Elements of LtCol Raymond G. Davis's 2d Battalion, 7th Marines, enter the Fox Company line.
Marine Corps History Division.

under attack at the Yalu River, and RCT 31 was facing annihilation. On 29 November, Almond ordered Smith to take command of all of the troops around the Chosin Reservoir. He also ordered that the troops around the reservoir pull back and get behind the lines at Hagaru-ri. RCT 31 did not have much luck pulling back to the perimeter. They were surrounded and severely bloodied. Only a remnant of the unit was able to pull back. Many of the survivors had to walk across the frozen reservoir to escape.

By 1 December, the airstrip that the Marine engineers had been building under fire was complete enough for transport planes to use. Now supplies could be airlifted in and casualties airlifted out. The chances of survival for wounded Marines and soldiers shot up drastically.[34]

Planning for a full UN evacuation of North Korea began in earnest. Almond approved the destruction of excess materiel. The U.S. Navy prepared to take on troops at Hungnam, and Smith prepared his division to leave Yudam-ni and return to Hagaru-ri. He also ordered troops from Tokori to form a task force and drive to Hagaru-ri to help bolster the defenses there. RCT 31 began trying to break out of their encirclement to the relative safety of Smith's perimeter.

The Marines had to fight for three days to reach Hagaru-ri. Crucially, the troops at Yudam-ni would rescue Fox Company off Fox Hill along the way. Now, the 1st Marine Division would need to consolidate its forces and breakout to the coast. The 5th Marines used the MSR, while the 7th Marines hiked along the hills flanking the road to push any Chinese defenders from the area. Chinese troops set up roadblocks and blew up a bridge to slow the column's progress, but Marine aviators strafed and bombed enemy positions and Marine engineers patched up the bridge to reopen it for vehicle traffic. Davis's 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, reached the beleaguered Fox Company at midday on 2 December. The battalion joined the company's defense perimeter, and now there were enough Marines on Fox Hill to command the MSR from above.[35]

The next day, the 1st and 7th Marines entered the defensive line at Hagaru-ri. They were greeted with welcome mess tents that provided pancakes, syrup, and coffee around the clock. The entire division rested for a few more days before beginning their final push to the port of Hungnam for evacuation. Air evacuations continued, and during the first five days of December, 4,312 UN troops were evacuated from the Chosin Reservoir by aircraft.[36]

The surviving U.S. Marines, soldiers, sailors and British Royal Marines in the Chosin Reservoir began their final drive south on 6 December, fighting most of the way. They had two major obstacles to overcome, apart from the cold and Chinese divisions. The first was that the Chinese had blown out two bridges, which threatened to halt vehicle traffic. The second was that thousands of Korean refugees fleeing the Chinese were following close behind the column of UN troops marching south, representing a burgeoning humanitarian crisis.[37]

Marine engineers repaired the bridges. The bridge that spanned the dam gatehouse at Funchilin Pass required the airdrop of a metal span by parachute out of the back of a Fairchild C-119 Flying Boxcar transport aircraft. Once the UN troops were across the bridges, engineers blew them up to keep the Chinese forces from using them and to create space between the rear of the UN forces and the refugees.[38]

Though surrounded, outnumbered, and fighting bitter cold far from the safety of the harbor, the Marines finally arrived in Hungnam to embark on vessels to take them out of North Korea. The 1st Marine Division had faced a very real possibility of annihilation, and it was a miracle that

[34] Simmons, *Frozen Chosin*, 75.

[35] Montross and Canzona, *The Chosin Reservoir Campaign*, 264–65.
[36] Simmons, *Frozen Chosin*, 89.
[37] Montross and Canzona, *The Chosin Reservoir Campaign*, 309–31.
[38] Montross and Canzona, *The Chosin Reservoir Campaign*, 302–3.

After the airstrip at Hagaru-ri was long enough to handle cargo aircraft, large airplanes delivered supplies and evacuated the wounded, increasing their chances for survival.
National Archives and Records Administration.

The MSR was a single-lane unpaved road that winds through the mountains. The Marines sent patrols to the tops of the mountains to clear them of Chinese troops so vehicles could pass underneath.
Marine Corps History Division.

it survived. Fox Company was a microcosm of the division as a whole. Outnumbered and without hope of rescue, the Marines dug in and fought a determined enemy. They took so many casualties that they could not extricate themselves from a seemingly hopeless situation. Instead of leaving their wounded behind, the rest of Fox Company remained on Fox Hill at Toktong Pass and repulsed the Chinese for five days until rescue came. It was a very near thing too, as Barber had

Capt William E. Barber received the Medal of Honor for his leadership and bravery as he led Fox Company at Toktong Pass.
Marine Corps History Division.

LtCol Raymon G. Davis received the Medal of Honor for actions on 1 December 1950 at Hagaru-ri.
Official U.S. Marine Corps photo.

been wounded on the second day of battle, six out of seven company officers were also wounded, and a Chinese attack nearly wiped out the company command post. Nevertheless, Fox Company continued to hold until relieved. Nearly half of the company became casualties, with 26 killed, 89 wounded, and 3 missing in action.[39]

In all, Marines received 14 Medals of Honor at the Chosin Reservoir, three of which were to Marines on Fox Hill. The first was to Private Cafferata, who hit back enemy grenades with an entrenching tool like a baseball bat and continued to fight despite being seriously wounded. The second went to Captain Barber for leading his Marines for five days against the Chinese onslaught, despite having a serious wound.[40] The third went to Lieutenant Colonel Davis for his efforts in leading his battalion over rugged hilltop terrain to relieve the Marines of Fox Company and get them off of Fox Hill.[41]

[39] Simmons, *Frozen Chosin*, 86.

[40] "William Earl Barber," Congressional Medal of Honor Society, accessed 13 May 2024.

[41] "Raymond Gilbert Davis," Congressional Medal of Honor Society, accessed 13 May 2024; and Simmons, *Frozen Chosin*, 112.

PART 6

Uniforms, Flags, & Heraldry

Chapter 23

CIVIL WAR COMMANDANT

Leading the Corps amid a Country Divided

By Gretchen Winterer, Uniforms and Heraldry Curator

Featured artifact: Coat, Full Dress, Colonel John Harris (V-0-67)

A ship without Marines is like a garment without buttons.

~ Admiral David D. Porter, U.S. Navy, 1863[1]

As the U.S. Marine Corps' highest-ranking officer, the Commandant is responsible for preparing and executing all military and administrative duties of the Service. The Commandant reports directly to the U.S. secretary of the Navy, the U.S. secretary of defense, and the president of the United States. In the 1800s, the Marine Corps faced a set of challenges that were not entirely foreign to them: proving their relevance, leadership, and fighting capabilities to a war-torn country. The role of the Commandant was more important than ever before in defending the Marine Corps against scrutiny and molding it into an elite fighting force. Colonel Archibald Henderson, the fifth Commandant, began the Service's transition from its continental infancy into what is more closely recognized today. His successor, Colonel John Harris, continued to shape the Marine Corps through the troubling years of the American Civil War.

A CRITICAL ERA FOR COMMANDANTS

Archibald Henderson was appointed Commandant of the Marine Corps on 17 October 1820. During his 52-year career in the Corps, he fought in the War of 1812 as a young officer, led Marines during the Second Seminole War in 1836–37 and the Mexican War in 1846–48, and oversaw several international expeditions. He also fought for the Marine Corps behind the scenes.

In 1829, Colonel Henderson went head-to-head with President Andrew Jackson, arguing against the president's desire to combine the U.S. Army and Marine Corps for economic and organizational reasons. Jackson addressed Congress, "I would also recommend that the Marine Corps be merged in the artillery or infantry . . . that corps has, besides its lieutenant-colonel commandant, five brevet lieutenant-colonels, who receive the full pay and emoluments of their brevet rank." Congress disagreed and in 1834 passed *An Act for the Better Organization of the United States Marine Corps*. The act stipulated that the Corps "shall, at all times, be subject to, and under the laws and regulations which are, or may hereafter be, established for the better government of the navy, except when detached for service with the army by order of the President of the United States."[2] Henderson died in 1859 after serving as Comman-

[1] "Famous Quotes," Marine Corps History Division, accessed 13 May 2024.

[2] *An Act for the Better Organization of the United States Marine Corps*, 37th Cong., 1st sess., ch. 19, 25 July 1861.

AN ACT for the better organization of the United States marine corps.

SEC. 2. *And be it further enacted*, That the said corps shall, at all times, be subject to and under the laws and regulations which are or may hereafter be established for the better government of the navy, except when detached for service with the army by order of the President of the United States. Subject to the laws of the navy, except, &c.

SEC. 3. *And be it further enacted*, That the officers, non-commissioned officers, musicians, and privates, shall take the oath prescribed by law, and that all enlistments shall be for the term of four years, during which period marines, so enlisted, shall be, and are hereby, exempt from all personal arrest for debt or contract. Period of enlistments. Exempt from personal arrest for debt.

SEC. 4. *And be it further enacted*, That the officers of the marine corps shall be, in relation to rank, on the same footing as officers of similar grades in the army: *Provided*, That no officer of the marine corps shall exercise command over any navy yard or vessel of the United States. To rank with officers of similar grad's in the army.

SEC. 5. *And be it further enacted*, That the officers of the marine corps shall be entitled to, and receive, the same pay, emoluments, and allowances, as are now, or may hereafter be, allowed to officers of similar grades in the infantry of the army, except the adjutant and inspector, who shall be entitled to the same pay, emoluments, and allowances, as are received by the paymaster of said corps; and the non-commissioned officers, musicians, and privates, shall be entitled to the same pay, rations, clothing, and allowances, as they now receive.* Pay and emoluments.

* The officers of the corps are allowed the same pay and allowances as officers of the infantry of the army under the act for the better organization of the marine corps, approved June 30, 1834; and the enlisted men the same pay and bounty for re-enlisting

An Act for the Better Organization of the United States Marine Corps, *37th Cong., 1st sess., ch. 19, 25 July 1861.*

dant for 39 years. His leadership helped the Marine Corps evolve from a small fighting force to a formidable, reliable, and independent Service.[3]

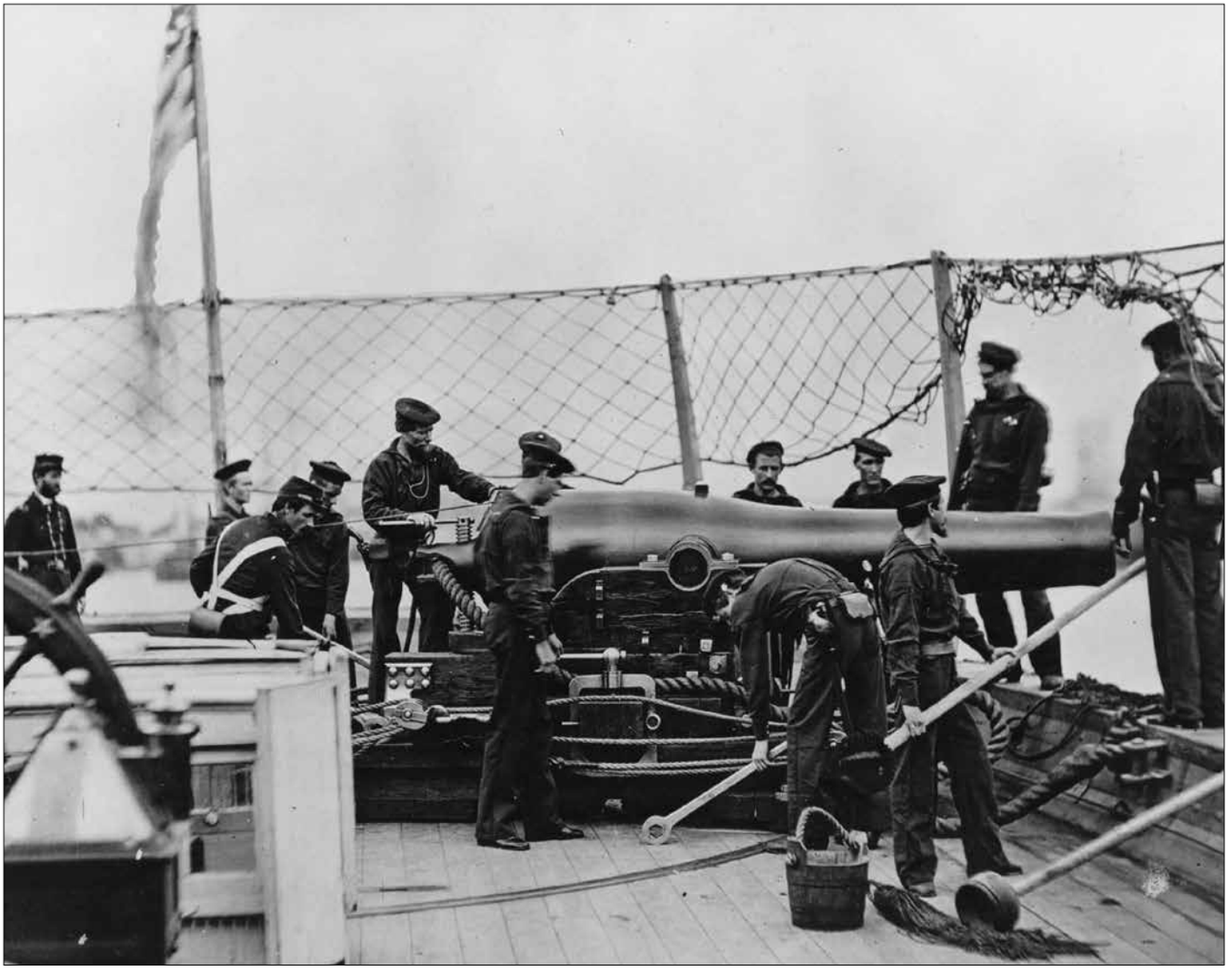
Henderson's successor, John Harris, was commissioned in the Marine Corps in 1814. Like Henderson, he participated in the War of 1812. As a young second lieutenant, Harris witnessed the bombing of Fort McHenry in Baltimore, Maryland, in September 1814. He wrote in a letter home, "I think the handsomest sight I ever saw was during the bombarding to see the bombs and rockets flying from our three forts . . . the firing continued for over twenty hours."[4] Fortunately for Harris, this was the extent of his combat experience. The majority of his military career was spent aboard ships and on barracks duty, mainly in the northeast. On 7 January 1859, Harris was appointed Commandant of the Marine Corps. He was 68 years old and had already served in the Marine Corps for nearly 45 years, making him

Col John Harris, 6th Commandant of the Marine Corps. *Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, DC.*

the Service's most senior officer.[5] However, Harris's lack of field experience left much to be desired in terms of leadership. To many of the Marines he led, he was seen as an older, overweight officer who garnered little respect from those under his command. But the American Civil War soon brought Harris a chance to prove his—and the Corps'—fighting capabilities.

On 19 April 1861, President Abraham Lincoln issued Proclamation 81, declaring a blockade of all ports in South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, and Texas. One week later, Lincoln amended the proclamation to

[3] "Colonel and Brevet Brigadier General Archibald Henderson, USMC," Marine Corps History Division, accessed 13 May 2024.
[4] Letter from John Harris to William Harris, 17 September 1814 (War of 1812 Collection, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, MD).
[5] "Colonel John Harris, USMC," Marine Corps History Division, accessed 13 May 2024.



A shipboard Marine assists his fellow sailors in loading a 9-inch Dahlgren smoothbore gun on a slide-pivot mounting aboard a U.S. Navy gunboat during the Civil War. *Naval History and Heritage Command.*

include Virginia and North Carolina.[6] The U.S. Navy was subsequently responsible for protecting more than 3,500 miles of shoreline. The Navy's fleet grew from 42 vessels to nearly 700, and its fighting force grew from 11,000 to 50,000 strong.[7] In 1860, the Marine Corps included 46 officers and 1,755 enlisted. By the end of the Civil War in 1865, that number had more than doubled to 3,860-87 officers and 3,773 enlisted.[8] By comparison, in May 1865 the U.S. Army was comprised of approximately 1 million soldiers.[9] Commandant Harris was presented with an opportunity to develop the Marine Corps into an amphibious assault force. Instead, he remained steadfast in retaining Marines on guard duty aboard Navy ships. His decision was warranted.

Part of the Marine Corps' challenges in the latter half of the nineteenth century was the longstanding "good ole boy" mentality. Commissions were rarely earned; instead, they were offered through nepotism or political ties. Addition-

[6] Abraham Lincoln, "Proclamation by the President of the United States of America on Blockade of Confederate Ports," 18 April 1861 (Alfred Whital Stern Collection of Lincolniana, Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC).

[7] Allan R. Millett, *Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps* (New York: Free Press, 1991), 91.

[8] "End Strengths, 1795–2015," Marine Corps History Division, accessed 13 May 2024.

[9] David Vergun, "150 Years Ago: Army Takes on Peacekeeping Duties in Post-Civil War South," U.S. Army, 4 August 2015.

A Marine officer and five enlisted Marines with fixed bayonets, photographed outside the Washington Navy Yard in April 1864. *Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, DC.*

CMC John Harris's full dress coat. *Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.*

ally, performance incentives were essentially nonexistent. Officers' pay had not increased since 1798, and promotions were few and far between. In the book *The History of the United States Marine Corps,* author Allen R. Millett explains, "In 1860 the most junior captain had eighteen years of service and the most senior captain thirty-nine."[10] As such, individual Marines desired little more obligations than they already had, especially since they were not going to be compensated for going above and beyond. As a small force, the Marines performed their shipboard guard duties admirably and continued to do so throughout the Civil War, with limited time on shore as part of landing parties and occupying forts and towns captured by Union forces.[11]

Furthermore, Harris avoided volunteering Marines for assignments that more closely aligned with the Army. The Marines had thwarted attempts by both Congress and the president to combine the forces before, and they did so again in 1863. Harris wrote to Navy rear admiral David D. Porter on 1 December 1863, "Sir: In consequence of an effort which I understand it about to be repeated at an early day during the ensuing session of Congress . . . to transfer the Marine Corps to the Army as an additional regiment . . . Will you be so good as to give me your opinion as to the necessity for and the efficiency of marines on shore and afloat in connection with the Navy!"[12] Porter responded, "A ship without Marines is like a garment without buttons."[13] Harris fought the same fight as his predecessor, Henderson, and was too able to prove the Marine Corps' efficacy.

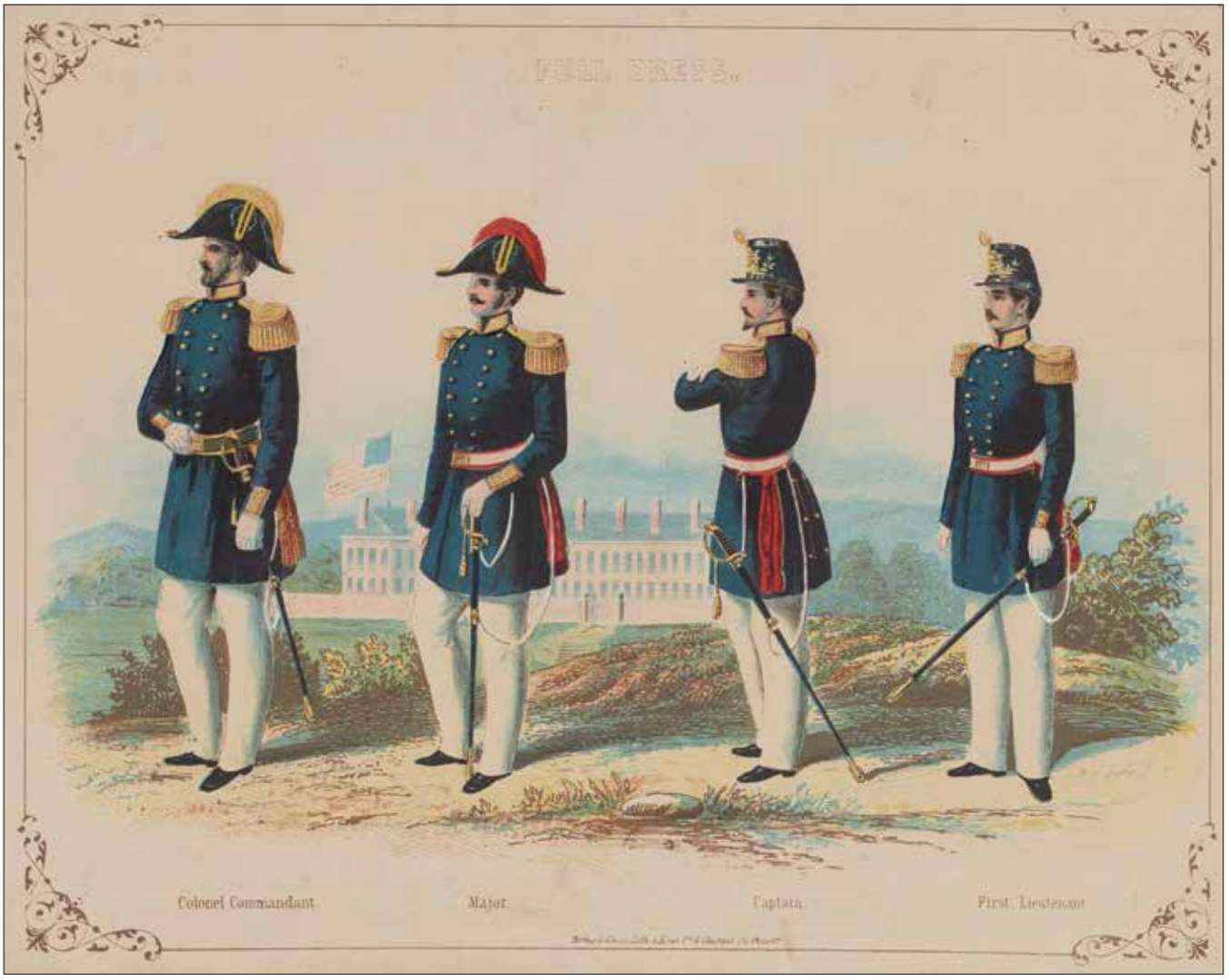
Commandant Harris died in office on 12 May 1865, having served in the Marine Corps for more than 50 years. While his tenure as Commandant was short, Harris ef-

[10] Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 87.

[11] Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 92.

[12] Letter from Col John Harris to Adm David D. Porter, 1 December 1863, in *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion*, ser. 1, vol. 25, *Operations: Naval Forces on Western Waters, May 18, 1863–February 29, 1864* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1912).

[13] "Famous Quotes," Marine Corps History Division, accessed 13 May 2024.



An excerpt from the 1859 Marine Corps uniform and dress regulations showing various officer uniforms.
Regulations for the Uniform and Dress of the Marine Corps of the United States, October 1859 *(Philadelphia, PA: Charles DeSilver, 1859).*

fectively led the Corps through some of the nation's most turbulent years, maintained the Corps' autonomy from the Army, expanded the Corps' numbers, and pushed his Marines to excel at their shipboard duties. Harris's leadership helped mold the Marine Corps into the Service it is today.[14]

This 1859 full dress double-breasted frock coat was worn by Colonel Harris during the Civil War. When he assumed duties as Commandant, he wore the uniform of his actual rank (colonel) and not the special Commandant uniform prescribed in the 1859 regulations. A Commandant's coat would have "two rows of large size marine buttons on the breast, eight in each row, placed in pairs."[15] Field officer's coats similarly had eight buttons in each row, but these were spaced equal distances, as seen on Harris's coat. Marine Corps uniform regulations were updated in 1859, though Harris's coat carried over several aspects of the earlier 1834 variations, such as the vellum lace arrangement on

[14] "Colonel John Harris, USMC."

[15] *Regulations for the Uniform and Dress of the Marine Corps of the United States, October 1859* (Philadelphia, PA: Charles DeSilver, 1859).

Close-up images of Col Harris's shoulder epaulets featuring an infantry horn, colonel insignia, and oversized bullion fringe. *Photos by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.*

the collar and sleeves as well as the cuff loop positions.[16]

The coat denotes Harris's rank with oversized bullion fringe on the shoulder epaulets featuring an infantry horn and colonel insignia, as well as ornate braiding on the cuff of each sleeve. Due to Harris's size, the front of the coat had been extensively altered during his career to allow its continued use. This complete uniform is one of the earliest officer uniform artifacts at the National Museum of the Marine Corps.

[16] LtCol Charles H. Cureton, USMCR (Ret), and David M. Sullivan, *The Civil War Uniforms of the United States Marine Corps: The Regulations of 1859* (San Jose, CA: R. James Bender Publishing, 2009), 78.

Chapter 24

ONE UNIFORM, MANY STORIES

The Marines of Montford Point

By Owen Linlithgow Conner, Chief Curator

Featured artifacts: Coat, Service, Winter, Enlisted (2012.19.1 a-c); Coat, Utility (2010.89.3); and Medal, Congressional Gold Medal, Montford Point Marines (2012.67.1)

When artifacts are offered to the National Museum of the Marine Corps (NMMC), the first objects most often discussed are inevitably a U.S. Marine's most prized and personal belongings: their green service coat and dress blue uniform. Artifacts such as the dress blue uniform and eagle, globe, and anchor insignia are the common threads that bind Marines old and new, regardless of periods served or the duties or tasks performed. They are products of Marines' common heritage and traditions. The weapons and vehicles used may change, but wearing the uniform is a unifying experience. In accepting these donations, the NMMC seeks to preserve the history and personal stories of the individual men and women of the Marine Corps and their unique personal stories.

Unfortunately, this was not always the case within the Marine Corps' museum system. All too often it was assumed that a "blue or green coat" was something the museum already had in abundance. Not enough questions were asked of the individual donors regarding the story of the Marine that wore these uniforms. What did they do in the Marine Corps? Where did they serve? What was their experience in serving? As a result, specific gaps formed in the Marine Corps' collecting. In 2012, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General James F. Amos, asked the NMMC to help in honoring the service of the first Black Marines. These pioneering Marines came through the ranks and earned their title at Montford Point, a segregated training base located at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, in the 1940s. They were honored by the United States by being awarded the Congressional Gold Medal for their service in World War II. In support of this achievement, the Marine Corps wished to see their experience highlighted in its national museum.

Remarkably, as curators scoured the NMMC's collection, few if any period artifacts from Montford Point Marines were found. As a result, the museum immediately set out to correct this deficiency. The staff at the NMMC reached out to veterans, their associations, and families, and significant donations soon followed. During the course of 13 years, new artifacts and history were discovered, and with the help of the Montford Point Marines, their story came to be properly displayed and honored. This history is best seen today in the NMMC's World War II gallery, where a case filled with artifacts highlighting these Marines can be seen. Each object tells the story of remarkable individuals who played their groundbreaking role in the origins of diversity of the modern Marine Corps today.

MONTFORD POINT MARINES, 1942–49

On 25 May 1942, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, Lieutenant General Thomas Holcomb, issued a formal instruction to recruit the first "colored male citizens" into the ranks of the Marine Corps. This decision was made reluctantly and with reservations. Classified Letter of Instruction Number 421 stated in stark terms the types of challenges

This artifact case dedicated to the history of Black Marines was added to the National Museum of the Marine Corps' World War II gallery in 2012. The collection highlights a Service-wide effort to honor and preserve the story of the Montford Point Marines.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

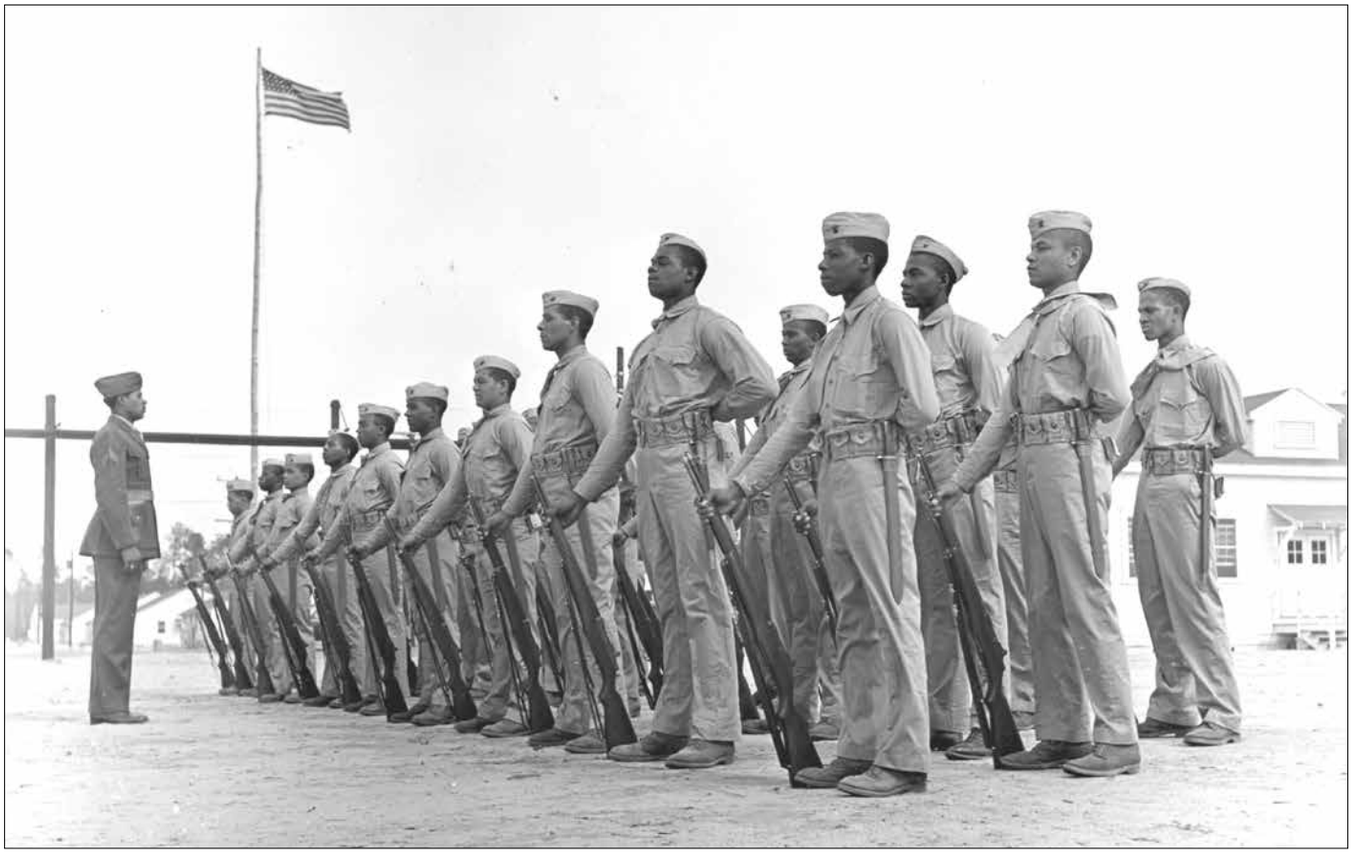
that faced these first Black Marines. The order decreed that "in no case shall there be colored noncommissioned officers senior to (white) enlisted men in the same unit." The Commandant was publicly quoted saying that Black Americans were "trying to break into a club that doesn't want them" and that to satisfy their intent to see combat in the war they should look elsewhere and join the U.S. Army.[1]

Confronted with the prevalent mindset of the era, the Montford Point Marines found inspiration within their own ranks. They had their own noncommissioned officers (NCOs) and looked to these men, such as Edgar R. Huff and Gilbert H. Johnson, to lead them. This internal focus helped them rally around one another in their specific units, based on the camaraderie and shared pride of being Marines.

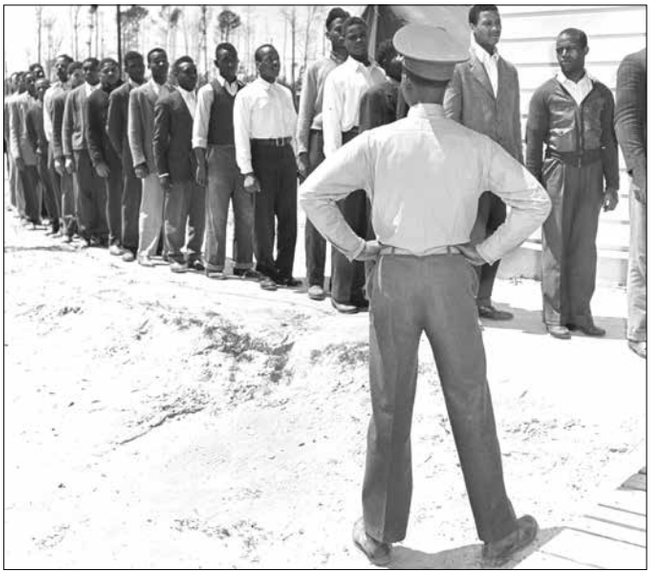
The first Black Marine combat units were the 51st and 52d Defense Battalions. Formed in August 1942 and December 1943, respectively, they would see limited action in defending island bases in the Pacific. Most Black Marines served in 49 depot and 12 ammunition companies. These units were independently assigned to serve alongside all-White Marine units.[2] Ironically, it was within these less glamorous support units that Black Marines would first see combat, particularly during the battles for Saipan, Tinian, and Guam in the Mariana Islands in 1944 and the later epic battles for Iwo Jima and Okinawa in 1945.

[1] Owen L. Conner and Charles Grow, "World War II and the Origins of Diversity," *Leatherneck* 95, no. 2 (February 2012): 56.

[2] Gordon L. Rottman, *U.S. Marine Corps World War II Order of Battle: Ground and Air Units in the Pacific War, 1939–1945* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 35.



The first Black Marine recruits arrive at Camp Montford Point, New River, NC, in 1942.
Official U.S. Marine Corps photo.



Montford Point Marines were recruited from across the United States to fill the Marine Corps' ranks. Some members volunteered after being drafted, while others were drafted directly into the Service.
Official U.S. Marine Corps photo.

THE MARINES BEHIND THE UNIFORMS

One of the first Montford Point Marine donors to the NMMC was 87-year-old Calvin C. Shepherd. Among his possessions was his original Marine Corps winter service uniform coat.

Calvin C. Shepherd was born on 5 April 1925 in Memphis, Tennessee. He enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserve on 16 August 1943. Following his initial training at Montford Point, he was assigned to vehicle maintenance before finding his permanent assignment in ammunition and ordnance work. In early 1944, Shepherd was promoted to the rank of corporal and deployed to the Pacific with the 4th Marine Ammunition Company. Falling under the command of III Amphibious Corps, support units such as Shepherd's were vital to the success of the complex amphibious assaults being undertaken by the Marine Corps in the Pacific theater of war. Marine depot supply and ammunition companies often worked with shore party landing units to unload critical supplies and ammunition directly to the beach, passing

SgtMaj Gilbert Johnson (left) was among the first Black Marines to be trained as drill instructors. He was later in charge of all recruit training at Montford Point. While deployed to the Pacific as a member of the 52d Defense Battalion on Guam, he personally led 25 combat patrols.
Official U.S. Marine Corps photo.

these on to the Marines on the front lines who desperately needed them.[3]

The Montford Point Marines serving in the segregated 4th Marine Ammunition Company almost saw action at Saipan in June–July 1944, as they were held in reserve with III Amphibious Corps. But they would have to wait for real combat until the assault and capture of Guam in July–August 1944. At 0830 on 21 July, Shepherd and his unit landed with more than 54,000 troops—36,933 Marines and 17,758 soldiers—to take back the island from the Japanese. They took part in the fighting until 9 August 1944.[4] By the campaign's end, Marine units from III Amphibious Corps had suffered 1,567 killed and 5,308 wounded. The Army's 77th Infantry Division suffered 839 casualties.[5]

Shepherd escaped the battle physically unscathed and continued to serve in the Pacific during the occupation of Guam. Following the war's end, he was honorably discharged from the Marine Corps in February 1946. The 4th Marine Ammunition Company was deactivated just weeks later on 8 March 1946.

The uniform that Shepherd wore home is the same green wool enlisted winter service uniform coat currently displayed at the NMMC. It is an interesting uniform for several reasons, highlighting Corporal Shepherd's unique service. On the left sleeve is the III Amphibious Corps unit patch. It features a red shield with a curled Asian dragon embroidered with yellow and black thread. The Roman

[3] Rottman, *U.S. Marine Corps World War II Order of Battle*, 35.
[4] Rottman, *U.S. Marine Corps World War II Order of Battle*, 334.
[5] Cyril J. O'Brien, *Liberation: Marines in the Recapture of Guam*, Marines in World War II Commemorative Series (Washington, DC: Marine Corps Historical Center, 1994), 44.

Calvin C. Shepherd receives his recruit training at Montford Point in 1943.
National Museum of the Marine Corps.

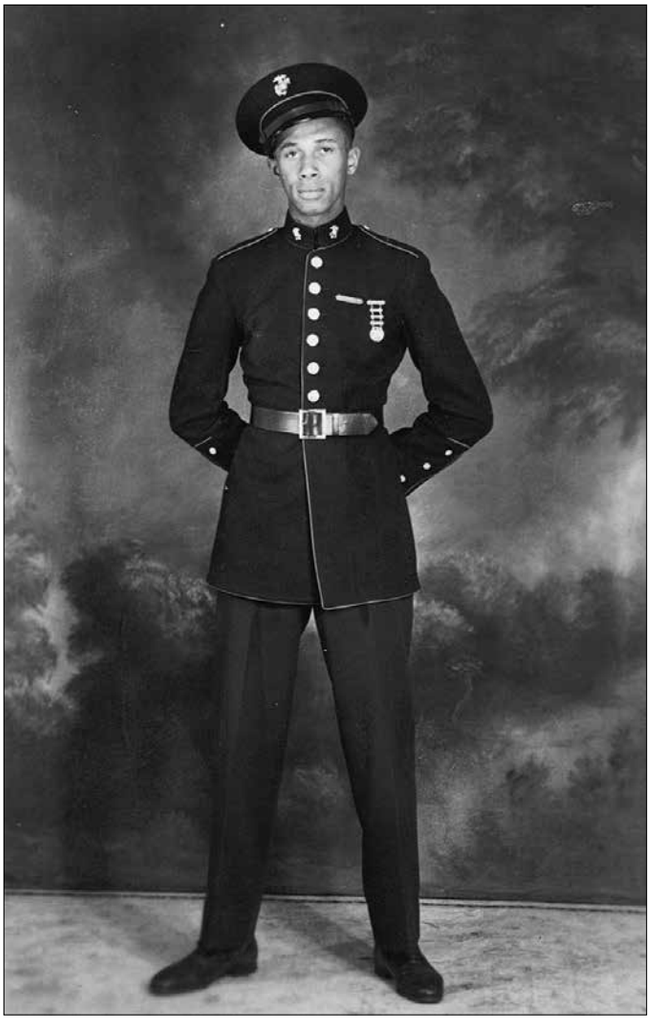
Shepherd's III Amphibious Corps patch is proudly worn on the left sleeve of his service coat.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

numeral "III" is stitched above the dragon in white. This shoulder sleeve insignia represents Shepherd's segregated company's service within the much larger III Amphibious Corps during World War II. On the lower cuff of the same sleeve is a small, unauthorized flaming ordnance bomb patch. These small specialty patches were influenced by U.S. Navy uniform rates and patches, but by the height of World War II they were no longer being formally issued at the Headquarters Marine Corps level. This, however, did not stop many Marines from procuring them locally and having them sewn to their uniforms to express unit pride in their responsibilities during the war.

As an NCO, Shepherd's left sleeve retains his corporal's chevrons. These are notable as the rank is only sewn to one sleeve. This use of only one chevron rank per uniform coat came from limited wartime rationing. First noted in Letter of Instruction Number 198 on 9 September 1942, the order aimed to conserve wartime materials. When Marine NCOs were promoted, they would remove their previous pair of ranks and turn them into the supply office for reuse. They would then be issued one new chevron rank to be placed on their left sleeve. The order was rescinded by Letter of Instruction No. 198 on 9 September 1945, but many Marines serving overseas did not have an opportunity (or interest) to update their uniforms by the time they were discharged at the war's end.

Another Montford Point Marine uniform displayed in the NMMC's World War II gallery belonged to Captain Frederick C. Branch. Branch holds the honor of being the first Black Marine to be commissioned in the Marine Corps.

Born on 31 May 1922 in Hamlet, North Carolina, Branch was educated at Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte,



Calvin Shepherd poses for a family portrait in his dress blue uniform. He was proud to have obtained this uniform, as they became limited issue to Marines during the war. Marines who did not have the dress blue uniform issued often had to buy them independently from uniform tailors.
National Museum of the Marine Corps.

Sheperd's left sleeve displays a small red specialty patch, recognizing his pride in serving in an ammunition company in the Pacific theater of war.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

North Carolina, and Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He received his draft notification in May 1943 and joined the Marines Corps.[6] Despite his higher education, Branch was not offered an officer's commission due to his race. He was instead assigned to the 51st Defense Battalion. Promoted to the rank of corporal, Branch spent two years serving on Ellice Island in the Central Pacific. All the while, the young Marine remained undaunted in his aspira-

[6] Myrna Oliver, "Frederick C. Branch, 82; First Black Officer in the U.S. Marine Corps," *Los Angeles Times*, 12 April 2005.

2dLt Frederick C. Branch is pinned with his officer insignia by his wife on 10 November 1945. He was the first Black Marine officer in the Marine Corps Reserve.
Official U.S. Marine Corps photo.

Frederick Branch's World War II-era utility uniform is displayed with his name marked in black ink above the chest pocket.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

Frederick Branch and his wife dedicate Branch Hall on board Marine Corps Base Quantico, VA, in 1997.
Official U.S. Marine Corps photo.

tion to become an officer. Knowing that he needed to impress his superiors before he could apply for a commission again, he set out to win the favor of his battalion's White commanding officer. Branch wore his uniform impeccably and secured a role in delivering the officer's daily mail. Over time, he won the colonel's admiration.[7] When the 51st Defense Battalion was deactivated in July 1944, Branch finally received his chance to become an officer. He was ordered to return to the United States and report to the Marine detachment at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana, for officer training with the Navy's V-12 program.[8] There, he made the dean's list and was ordered to Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia, after graduation. The sole Black Marine in a class of 250 officer candidates, Branch noted that he was treated fairly and, for the first time in his Marine Corps ser-

[7] Matt Schudel, "Frederick C. Branch; Was 1st Black Officer in U.S. Marine Corps," *Washington Post*, 13 April 2005.
[8] Oliver, "Frederick C. Branch."

vice, the same as everyone else. After receiving his commission, he was ordered to Camp Pendleton, California, where he served as a platoon commander, a battery executive officer, and a battery commander with the 1st Anti-Aircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalion. As the commander of an all-White platoon, Branch later recalled, "I went by the book and trained and led them; they responded like Marines do to their superiors."[9] Entering the Marine Corps' inactive reserve, Branch returned to Temple University in 1947 and graduated with a physics degree. He returned to active duty in 1952 during the Korean War and was promoted to the rank of captain before resigning his commission in 1955 to become a teacher in Philadelphia. He became the science department chair at Murrel Dobbins High School, where he remained for 35 years before retiring in 1988.[10]

In 1997, Branch returned to Quantico for the dedication of a newly renovated building bearing his name, Branch Hall. Touring the facility with his wife, he was interviewed by local media, and he likely donated his World War II-era utility coat to be displayed for all the Marines working there. No records remain for how long this exhibit lasted, but during a cleaning day in 2005, the artifact was found crammed unceremoniously in a footlocker. The conscientious Marines who discovered it thankfully recognized its significance and transferred the coat to the NMMC. The unfortunate way that the coat had been treated led to significant efforts by the museum to better track and retain records for all historical property held by units and borrowers across the Marine Corps in the future. Today, the NMMC maintains accountability for more than 1,700 artifacts and 188 units and borrowers of history outside the museum's walls.

[9] Cpl Gregory S. Gilliam, "Standing Alone," *Marines*, September 1997.
[10] Gilliam, "Standing Alone."

Chapter 25

"BAREFOOT MARINES"

American Samoans in World War II

By Owen Linlithgow Conner, Chief Curator

Featured artifacts: Lava-Lava (1997.66.1); and Garrison Cap (1997.66.2)

In 250 years of U.S. Marine Corps history, the distinctive style and appearance of Marine uniforms has always played part in the Service's unique sense of identity and pride. However, from the very beginning, the Marines often designed their uniforms based on practicality and a limited budget. The original green uniforms worn by the Continental Marines, for example, were not inspired by the green uniforms of European armies' expert riflemen, but rather by the abundance of green fabric already found in Philadelphia warehouses.[1] As the Corps evolved and expanded, its uniforms followed more traditional influences. These designs were inspired by dominant powers of their respective eras, such as England, France, and Germany.

In the early twentieth century, Marine uniforms evolved to be more practical, but they often retained elements of earlier eras, particularly with dress or full-dress attire. This was generally based on an appreciation of their history but was equally a preference for conservative appearance and uniform simplicity. In the modern era, however, the Marine Corps has evolved to meet changing demographics. The role of female Marines serving equally and side by side with male Marines has introduced new styles to their dress and service uniforms.[2] In the name of religious and cultural accommodation, the Marine Corps has also authorized distinctive headgear and grooming standards for Sikh American Marines.[3]

This acceptance of new styles and cultural adaptations may seem like a surprise and an indication of the pressures of modern times, but historically this is not the case. In the past, the Marine Corps previously set precedence with similar flexibility in uniform design. This is best illustrated during World War II, when in the name of functionality, practicality, and respect for distinct Polynesian culture, unique Marine Corps uniforms were created and worn by American Samoan Marines. These uniforms were unlike any seen before or since.

HISTORY OF THE BAREFOOT MARINES

American Samoa was first established as a U.S. territory in 1900. It is comprised of several islands and coral atolls, the largest being the island of Tutuila.[4] Due to its strategic value and deep-water harbor at Pago Pago, the islands were

[1] LtCol Charles H. Cureton, "Parade Blue, Battle Green," in *The Marines*, ed. BGen Edwin H. Simmons, USMC (Ret), and J. Robert Moskin (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps Heritage Foundation, 1998), 131.

[2] Kaitlin Kelly, "New Dress Blues for Females Provide Unified Look for Marines," *Leatherneck* 102, no. 2 (February 2019): 33–34.

[3] Philip Athey, "A Sikh Marine Is Now Allowed to Wear a Turban in Uniform," *Marine Corps Times*, 5 October 2021.

[4] "American Samoa," U.S. Department of the Interior, accessed 7 May 2024.

The uniform worn by Samoan Marines during World War II is one of the most unique and rare uniforms in Marine Corps history.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

Marines of the 1st Samoan Marine Battalion stand ready for inspection in their distinctive dress uniforms. *Nusbaum collection, Marine Corps History Division.*

administered by the U.S. Navy. From the very beginning, native Samoans played a role in its defense. The first Samoan naval forces were organized to serve as police and guards for the island. Known as the Fita-Fita Guard, service within the unit became a source of pride to the islanders. Positions were limited, and members were officially recognized as members of the U.S. Naval Reserve.[5] They were also uniquely dressed. The navy uniform consisted of just four pieces. A bright red muslin turban-style head wrap was accentuated by a distinctive waist sash of the same color. In lieu of trousers, the men wore a traditional *lava-lava*, or cotton sarong in Navy blue serge. The uniform was completed with the wearing of a plain white undershirt and no shoes.[6]

Prior to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on 7 December 1941, the U.S. Navy had already recognized the importance of American Samoa in the defense of the Pacific theater and began to reinforce its position there. The first reinforcements to arrive were Marines from the 7th Defense Battalion. Even when paired with the existing Fita-Fita naval reserves, the Marines realized that they would need additional forces to defend the islands. As a result, the U.S. government authorized the creation of a new battalion of 500 troops. Designated the 1st Samoan Marine Battalion, the unit was activated on 1 July 1941 and placed under the command of the 7th Defense Battalion.[7]

The Samoan Marines were based in the eastern and western districts of the island's defense. The battalion's

[5] Col Robert H. Rankin, *Uniforms of the Sea Services* (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, 1962), 211.

[6] 1stSgt Nelson Huron, Notes from United States Naval Station, Tutuila, Samoa, 28 February 1925 (Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA).

[7] Timothy Heck, B. A. Friedman, and Walker D. Mills, eds., *On Contested Shores: The Evolving Role of Amphibious Operations in the History of Warfare*, vol. 2 (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press, 2024), 276–300, https://doi.org/10.56686/9798986259581.

PFC Jaskirat Singh is the first Sikh Marine allowed to wear his articles of faith after graduating from recruit training on 11 August 2023.
Official U.S. Marine Corps photo by Jesse Lora.

smaller subunits consisted of a rifle company and three support platoons. These Marines operated 6-inch naval guns and heavy machine guns. Interestingly, the Samoan Marines were provided with overseas pay, even though were defending their home islands.[8] They also formed a unit softball team that regularly defeated their fellow American servicemen and became the best on the island.[9]

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and simultaneous assault across the Pacific, tensions on the Samoan Islands ran high. On 11 January 1942, a Japanese submarine

[8] William Block, "Barefoot Marines," *Trading Post* (American Society of Military Insignia Collectors) 53, no. 3 (July–September 1994): 2.

[9] LtCol Kenneth S. Giles, USAF, donor correspondence, National Museum of the Marine Corps, 22 December 2004.

American Samoans take the oath of enlistment in the Marine Corps, ca. 1941. *Nusbaum collection, Marine Corps History Division.*

Barefoot Marines stand in parade formation. *Marine Corps History Division.*

shelled the main island of Tutuila. Targeting the primary U.S. naval station there, damage was minimal, but the submarine's shell fire managed to strike the Navy dispensary and ironically the home and business of the island's sole Japanese citizen.[10]

Thankfully, this attack would be the only instance of an enemy incursion during the war. By the summer of 1942, Allied victories in the Battles of the Coral Sea and Midway thwarted the Japanese advance in the Pacific. As a result, the Samoan islands began to take on a supporting role in the war effort. America Samoa served as a base for the deployment of U.S. forces rather than as a key defensive position. The 1st Samoan Marine Battalion remained active until January 1944, when its companies were slowly disbanded over the course of the year and its Marines were reassigned to Marine Barracks, Naval Station Tutuila, Samoa Islands. While the experience of the 1st Samoan Marine Battalion was short-lived, these fascinating Marines played a special part in Marine Corps uniform history—marking the first time that the wearing of shoes was against regulations.

THE UNIFORM OF THE BAREFOOT MARINES

The official combat or service/utility uniform of the 1st Samoan Marine Battalion initially consisted of the same 1937 regulation khaki cotton summer service uniforms worn by all Marines in the early days of the war. In the field, these uniforms were paired with the M1917A1 steel helmet (similar to the helmets worn by U.S. servicemembers in World War I) and standard Marine Corps-issue load-bearing equipment such as the M1923 cartridge belt and suspender system.[11] Photographic documentation during the war also shows that some Samoan Marines chose to wear camouflaged burlap covers on their helmets, similar to the Marine

[10] "American Samoa," Nevington War Museum, accessed 7 May 2024.

[11] Alec S. Tulkoff, *Grunt Gear: USMC Combat Infantry Equipment of World War II* (Mountain View, CA: R. James Bender, 2003), 142.

Raiders and often seen in early operations on Guadalcanal and Tulagi. Despite their similarity to standard Marine Corps combat uniforms, the Samoans still did not wear boots or shoes and remained barefoot even in the field.

Some of the first official documentation for the supply of the distinctive Samoan Marine dress uniform items comes from the commanding officer of the 1st Samoan Marine Battalion to the U.S. Marine Corps Depot Quartermaster in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Dated 29 July 1941, the letter requested the procurement of official Marine Corps insignia for their uniforms. This would consist of a red felt shield patch with a yellow embroidered eagle, globe, and anchor insignia. It was sewn on the side of the men's red-piped khaki garrison caps and displayed on the lower half of their khaki cotton lava-lava dress. Samoan Marines who received promotions above the grade of private were also entitled to wear standard Marine Corps chevrons on their lava-lava. Marine Corps dress chevrons of scarlet and gold, ranging from private first class to sergeant, were officially acquired via this purchase order. More unusual for this uniform procurement was the commanding officer's request for 200 yards of "scarlet cloth, approximately 42 inches wide, for use in making sashes" and the need for 1,500 yards of "scarlet tape" to be used as the piping for the Marines' lava-lava. The uniform was completed with the request for a supply of white cotton undershirts, the same as "regular Marine Corps issue,"[12] And, once again, no boots or field shoes were required.

While the Marines of the 1st Samoan Marine Battalion were never called to defend their home island from a Japanese invasion, their unique place in the history of the Marine Corps is assured. Their patriotism and esprit de corps remain unquestionable. The story of the "Barefoot Marines" also serves as an important reminder of the Marine Corps' ability to improvise and adapt to new circumstances and cultures while at the same time retaining the pride and identity of all U.S. Marines. This investment in the American Samoan people and their culture is repaid today in the disproportionate service of their people in the U.S. armed forces. Based on their population, America Samoa enlists more servicemembers per capita than any other U.S. territory or state.[13]

As the war progressed, the Samoan Marines transitioned to the same herringbone utility combat uniforms worn by all Marines.
Marine Corps History Division.

The Samoan Marine insignia is one of the rarest Marine Corps patches of World War II.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

[12] Original primary source documents from Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

[13] Tracey Long, "American Samoans' Strong Military Tradition," KIRO 7 News (Seattle), 27 May 2021.

Chapter 26

A FLAG'S JOURNEY

From Mount Suribachi to the National Museum of the Marine Corps

By Owen Linlithgow Conner, Chief Curator

Featured artifact: Flag, U.S. National Ensign (1974.2765.1)

On the morning of 19 February 1945, the first U.S. Marine Corps assault units landed on the beaches of Iwo Jima, prepared to wrest the island away from the Japanese. While the first waves of troops were surprised by the lack of enemy fire, all illusions of a quick and easy victory came to a halt as the Japanese let loose with a barrage of rifle, machine gun, mortar, and artillery fire on the Marines as they stacked up on the beaches.

The invasion of Iwo Jima differed from earlier battles in the Pacific theater of World War II in many ways. The assault marked the first time that U.S. ground forces landed on a Japanese home island. It was also the most highly covered invasion of the Pacific War. Sixteen Marine Corps combat correspondents and ten civilian reporters took part in the first stages of the invasion.[1] This media coverage was a far cry from the early days of World War II, when a rare few combat correspondents were allowed to participate in U.S. landings and the primary images that came back to the United States to document the battle often originated with battlefield artists rather than photographers. Those early stories and illustrations often took weeks to reach the United States, as they slowly made their way across the vastness of the Pacific. With so many journalists of all types observing and taking part in the action, the Battle of Iwo Jima certainly did not suffer from a lack of historical documentation.[2]

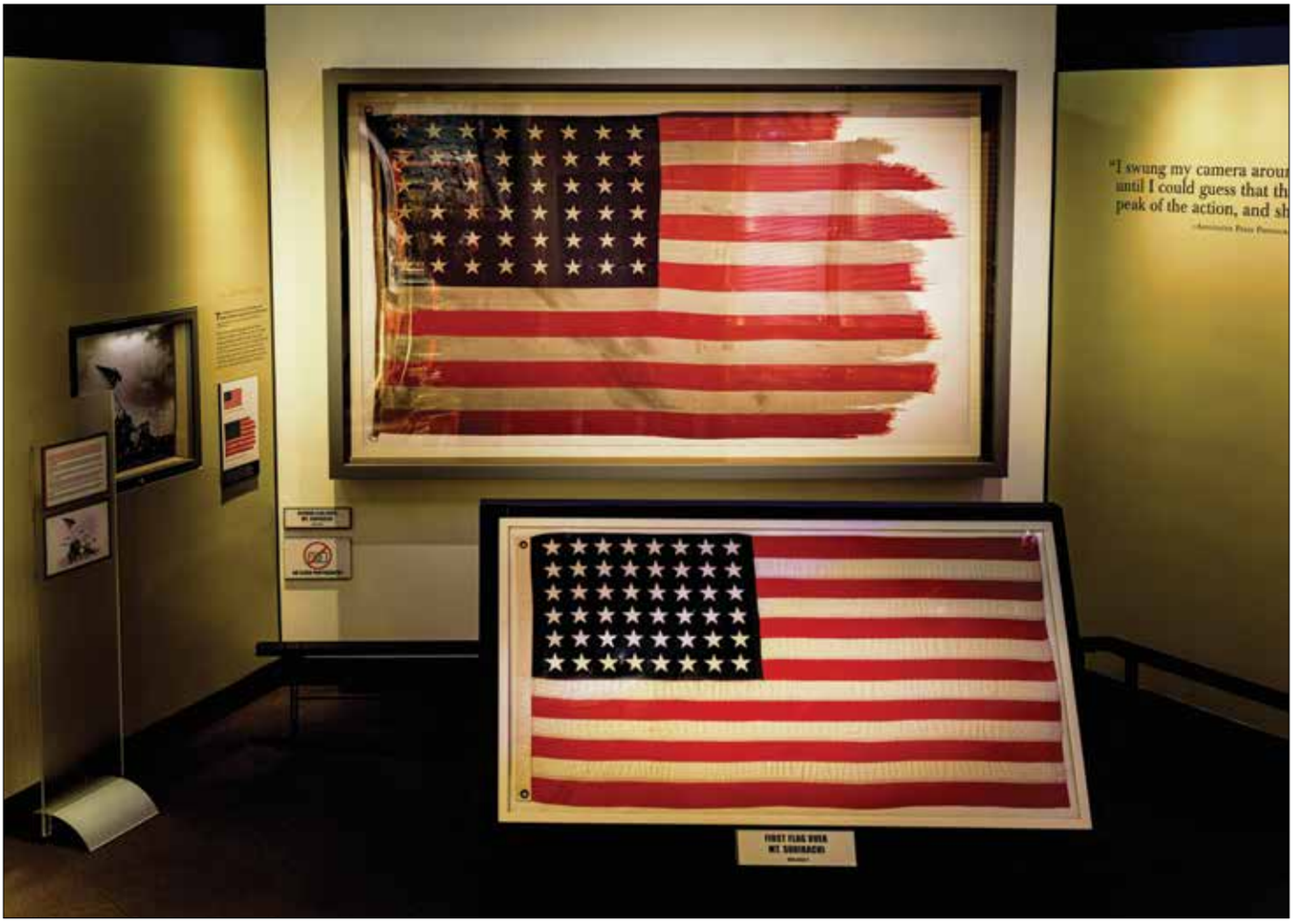
On D+4 (23 February, four days after the first landings), a small group of Marines gathered to perform a reconnaissance patrol of Mount Suribachi, located on the southeast end of Iwo Jima. The dark, rugged, bomb-battered feature marked the highest point of the island and served as a key location for Japanese artillery spotters. Carefully ascending the mountain, the Marines reached the top after around 40 minutes. To their surprise, they met little resistance. Recognizing the significance of the moment, the Marines rushed back to their lines to inform their officers of the good news.[3]

First Lieutenant Harold G. Schrier, the executive officer of Company E, 2d Battalion, 28th Marine Regiment, 5th Marine Division, was quickly ordered to take a Marine platoon to the summit. He was provided with a medium-size

[1] Public Relations Officer to Director, Division of Public Relations, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, Washington DC, 21 April 1945, 5-6 (Box 89, Record Group 127, Iwo Jima, 4th and 5th Marine Divisions, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC).

[2] For more on the impact of this historical documentation on the facts of battle and activities on the island, see Brianne Robertson, ed., *Investigating Iwo: The Flag Raisings in Myth, Memory, & Esprit de Corps* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps History Division, 2019).

[3] Hal Buell, *Uncommon Valor, Common Virtue: Iwo Jima and the Photograph that Captured America* (New York: Berkley Publishing, 2006), 99.



The two most famous flags flown over Iwo Jima currently reside at the National Museum of the Marine Corps. *Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.*

U.S. flag that measured 55.5 inches wide by 28.5 inches tall.[4] Once Schrier's Marines had secured the position, they were ordered to raise the flag to signal their success.

Oft-repeated accounts of the first flag raising unquestioningly state that the flagpole used came from a nearby Japanese water cistern or was a piece of pipe that just happened to be nearby. The pipe also just happened to have a .30-caliber bullet hole in the exact location that allowed the lower half of the flag to be tied down. If true, this seems unbelievably fortunate. In 2020, a collection donated to the National Museum of the Marine Corps by the family of U.S. Navy radioman third class Earl M. Lewis challenged this "fact." Lewis was a member of the Marine Corps' 1st Joint Assault Signal Company (JASCO) during the Battle of Iwo Jima. This unit coordinated and controlled field artillery, naval gunfire, and close air support during the battle. In postwar stories, Lewis maintains that Marines confiscated the center tent pole from his JASCO position to carry to the top of Mount Suribachi. While the story is based on just one primary source, it does seem more plausible that a locally procured pole with a prepunctured hole was carried up the mountain by Schrier's platoon. Contrast this with the idea that a perfectly sized pipe, punctured in the perfect spot for a 28.5-inch flag, was simply found on top of the mountain. Further bolstering Lewis's claim are period specifications for numerous large military command tents. Many of these show that center tent poles in the 13- to 18-foot range were commonly used.[5]

Regardless of the origins of the pole, at 1030 that morn-

[4] Official conservation measurements come from "Flag, National, U.S., 48 Star" [1974.2312.1], Catalog File, National Museum of the Marine Corps, hereafter U.S. flag catalog file.

[5] Earl Lewis Collection [2020.51], Catalog File, National Museum of the Marine Corps.

The first flag flown above Mt. Suribachi.
National Museum of the Marine Corps.

Associated Press photographer Joe Rosenthal captured arguably one of the most famous images in United States history. The second flag in this image has a long and fascinating story in its final journey to the National Museum of the Marine Corps.
Official U.S. Marine Corps photo.

ing, Schrier and his Marines succeeded in raising the first flag atop Mount Suribachi. The event was captured on film by Sergeant Louis R. Lowery, a Marine Corps combat photographer. Numerous oral histories from the war documented how the moment was received. Marines in their fighting positions ashore Iwo Jima cheered as best they could while the battle continued. Numerous warships from the invasion fleet sounded their horns in recognition of the first flag raised.[6]

Over the years, many reasons have been suggested for why the first flag was removed in favor of the more famous second, larger version. However, the reality of events makes the true story quite simple. Once the original flag was raised, its small scale compared to Mount Suribachi became obvious to all. Lieutenant Colonel Chandler W. Johnson, the commanding officer of 2d Battalion, 28th Marines, ordered it to be replaced with a larger flag simply to make it easier to see.[7] Johnson sent Second Lieutenant Albert T. Tuttle to

[6] Buell, *Uncommon Valor, Common Virtue*, 101.
[7] Robertson, *Investigating Iwo*, xx–xxi.

the landing beaches to obtain a larger flag, one that was "large enough that the men at the other end of the island will see it. It will lift their spirits also."[8] Sergeant Michael Strank confirmed this account, noting that the Marines' intention was to fly a flag so large so that "every son of a bitch on this whole cruddy island could see it."[9]

The flag obtained by Tuttle was provided by U.S. Navy Reserve lieutenant (junior grade) Alan S. Wood, communications officer for the landing ship tank USS *LST 779*. Wood had rescued the flag from a salvage depot at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, before his ship deployed.[10] An official U.S. Navy Size 7 Ensign, the flag originally measured 106 by 56.5 inches."[11] According to Wood, it was the largest on board the *LST 779* and was flown almost exclusively on Sundays as the ship crossed the Pacific.[12]

This second flag more than doubled the first in size. It was quickly provided to Private First Class Rene A. Gagnon, who was serving as a runner between Johnson's headquarters and Schrier's platoon. Among reporters, word spread about the events of the morning's first flag raising. On his way up the summit, Associated Press photographer Joseph J. "Joe" Rosenthal encountered Sergeant Lowery, who told him that he had missed the flag raising but that the view from the position was still worth the climb. Disappointed, Rosenthal almost turned around, but eventually he decided to see what was happening atop Mount Suribachi regardless. When he arrived, Rosenthal noticed several Marines preparing the larger flag. Even as an excellent professional photographer, Rosenthal was unsure of his chances of getting a good photograph of the flag as it was lifted. He later recounted, "it's chancy that I would get the position right. . . . [M]ost of this stuff is like shooting a football play. Things change so quickly in action." Undaunted, he scouted a position appropriately distant from the action and built a small platform of sandbags and rocks to stand on. As he began a brief conversation with Marine Corps correspondent Sergeant William H. Genaust, they were interrupted by the sudden raising of the new flag. As he lifted his 4 x 5 Speed Graphic camera, Rosenthal recalled, "I wasn't thinking about the first picture . . . or the second picture. My response was good . . . I could only hope that it turned out the way that it looked in the finder."[13]

1stLt Harold G. Schrier's patrol raises the first U.S. flag on Iwo Jima.
Official U.S. Marine Corps photo.

Unsure of the quality of the photographs he was able to capture, Rosenthal decided to ask the Marines to pose for a backup image of the flag in case the originals did not work out. He called this photograph his "Gung Ho" image. Posing a group of celebrating Marines in this way was a common tactic of correspondents of the era, getting as many men and their hometowns in the newspapers as possible. With his day completed, the Rosenthal descended back down Mount Suribachi and sat down to a well-earned meal of rations before returning to his transport ship to have his film sent to Guam as quickly as possible.[14]

As Rosenthal's film was processed on the evening of 23 February, it was carefully developed by Staff Sergeant Werner H. Schmitz and passed along to the Office of War Information for approval. Schmitz immediately recognized that one photograph of the flag raising stood alone in quality

[8] Bernard C. Nalty and Danny J. Crawford, *The United States Marines on Iwo Jima: The Battle and the Flag Raisings* (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1995), 5.
[9] Robertson, *Investigating Iwo*, xx.
[10] Letter from Lt(JG) Allan Wood, USNR, to BGen Robert L. Denig, USMC, Director, Division of Public Information, Headquarters Marine Corps, 7 July 1945, hereafter Wood to Denig.
[11] U.S. flag catalog file.
[12] Wood to Denig.
[13] Buell, *Uncommon Valor, Common Virtue*, 107–11.
[14] Buell, *Uncommon Valor, Common Virtue*, 111–12.

The exact origins of the pipes used in the Iwo Jima flag raisings have long been speculative, with new claims only coming to light in recent years.
Official U.S. Marine Corps photo.

and composition.[15] Rosenthal's iconic image was relayed to the United States in lightning fashion by the standards of the era. Sent to San Francisco, California, via the Associated Press Wirephoto service (an early form of fax machine), it appeared on the front page of several American newspapers almost immediately. On 25 February 1945, *The New York Times* used the image on the front page of its Sunday newspaper. Other publications quickly followed suit, and the photograph soon became synonymous with U.S. victory in World War II—even though the battle was still raging on at Iwo Jima.[16] By the summer of 1945, the photograph's cultural impact had only increased, with it being repurposed for recruiting and war bond posters, made into sculptures, and even winning the Pulitzer Prize for its photographer.[17] In many ways, Joe Rosenthal's image of the second flag raising marked the United States' first modern media sensation. It was a viral image that came decades before the term was invented.

Recognizing the importance of the photograph and the moment it captured, the Marine Corps, under the direction of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, did its best to recall the surviving servicemembers who were believed to have participated in the second flag raising. The Corps also ordered

[15] Robertson, *Investigating Iwo*, 47–48.
[16] Robertson, *Investigating Iwo*, 48–49.
[17] Robertson, *Investigating Iwo*, 57.

The iconic second Iwo Jima flag is significantly larger and was more visible to the Marines fighting below Mount Suribachi.
Official U.S. Marine Corps photo.

An original Seventh War Loan poster as designed by artist C. C. Beall.
National Museum of the Marine Corps.

both the first and second Iwo Jima flags to be safely secured and preserved for historical purposes. The now-famous second flag flew over Iwo Jima for more than three weeks. It was finally taken down on 14 March 1945. At that time, a third Iwo Jima flag was then raised at the V Amphibious Corps landing force command post as the U.S. Navy Military Government of Iwo Jima was established.[18] Official correspondence from Headquarters Marine Corps, dated 26 April, documents the return of the flags to the United States.[19]

THE SEVENTH WAR LOAN: "NOW . . . ALL TOGETHER"

On 12 April 1945, President Roosevelt died in Warm Springs, Georgia. One of the president's lasting legacies was his dedication to numerous war bond tours during World War II, designed to help finance the greatest—and costliest—war in American history. In part to honor Roosevelt's legacy and friendship, Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau Jr. aimed to make the Seventh War Loan Drive the biggest and most successful yet.[20]

Government officials were concerned that the public's interest in the loan drive, to be known as the "Mighty

[18] "American Flag Raised in the Corps Command Post on Iwo Jima," Official U.S. Marine Corps Correspondence, from Gen Alexander A. Vandegrift, Commandant of the Marine Corps, to MajGen Harry Schmidt, Commanding General, V Amphibious Corps, 25 March 1945.
[19] Official U.S. Marine Corps Correspondence, Headquarters, V Amphibious Corps, 26 April 1945.

[20] Karal Ann Marling and John Wetenhall, *Iwo Jima: Monuments, Memories, and the American Hero* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 103.

Before taking his famous photograph, Joe Rosenthal carefully built a small platform for his series of images. *Official U.S. Marine Corps photo.*

Seventh," would need to be raised. To create excitement, a near-perfect symbol of American patriotism would be required. The loan drive's organizers were given this improbable gift with the publication of Rosenthal's photograph. Under the guidance of Theodore R. "Ted" Gamble, a former movie theater owner turned director of the War Finance Division of the U.S. Treasury Department, an oil painting of the photo was commissioned. The artist was C. C. Beall, a well-known commercial illustrator and portrait artist of the period. After a brief competition between other works, the composition was selected as the primary poster for the loan drive. The next hurdle came in selecting an appropriate title for the image. Numerous advertising agencies submitted ideas, such as "Lend a Mighty Hand"; "Shoulder Your Share!"; "Spirit of the 7th!"; and "Now, All Together!" The loan drive organizers eventually settled on "Now, All Together for the 7th."[21]

The second "Rosenthal flag" next appeared on 9 May 1945, when it was raised to half-staff at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, DC, in honor of President Roosevelt. Iwo Jima veterans Private First Class Ira H. Hayes, Private First Class Rene A. Gagnon, and Navy pharmacist's mate second class John H. Bradley performed the honor. The event was part of a media campaign to commence the flag's 33-city journey as a part of the Seventh War Loan Drive. It would be hoisted again in New York City; Chicago, Illinois; Boston, Massachusetts; and numerous other cities large and small. As a part of the tour, the flag was either raised on a flagpole, on a replica Iwo Jima statue, or by the three veterans. The Seventh War Loan Drive began on 14 May and ended on 30 June 1945. Its target goal was to raise $14 billion. Remarkably, it collected more than $26 billion.[22]

Official correspondence dated 18 July 1945 from the Of-

[21] Marling and Wetenhall, *Iwo Jima*, 104, 107.

[22] "Seventh and Eighth War Loan Collection Finding Aid," Pritzker Military Museum and Library, Chicago, IL, 2016, updated 2018.

Ira Hayes, John Bradley, and Rene Gagnon pose with the second flag during the Seventh War Loan drive.
Official U.S. Marine Corps photo.

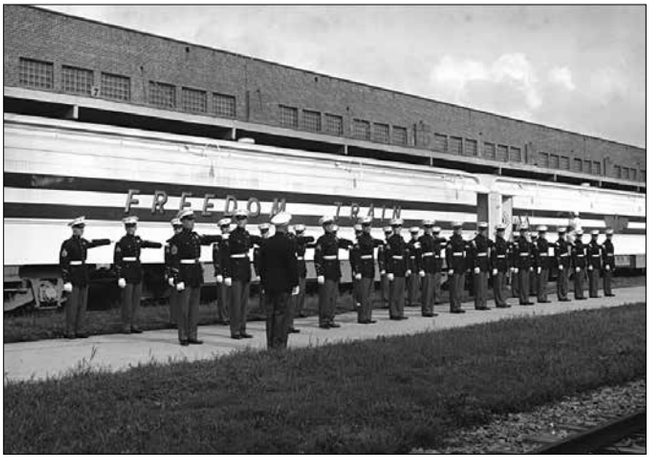
This simplified Seventh War Loan poster was used throughout the country during the tour's record-breaking success.
National Museum of the Marine Corps.

fice of the Curator, Marine Corps Museum, acknowledged the three flags' acceptance to their home in Quantico, Virginia.[23] This was the first known Marine Corps museum, founded in 1940 at Little Hall, Marine Corps Base Quantico. The museum's collection consisted of battle trophies from World War I, historical flags, and weapons displayed on the second floor of the building. The displays were complimented with numerous uniform mannequins in approximations of Marine Corps uniforms from 1775 to World War I.[24]

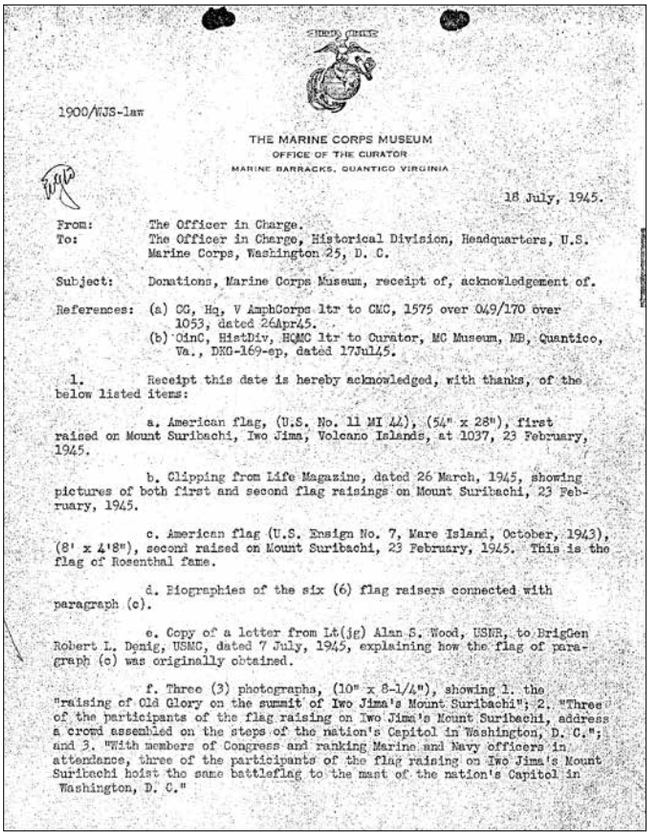
A misconception of historical artifacts in museums is that objects are either displayed or placed in storage in perpetuity. The two flags flown atop Mount Suribachi, however, are different. Even as museum artifacts, their cultural relevance has led them to always lead an active life. Curatorial records dated 26 July 1946 document the first of many times that a famous Iwo Jima flag was placed on temporary loan by the museum. Most of these early displays were associated with veteran reunions, particularly those involving the 5th Marine Division. Subsequent loans occurred in the 1950s. At these conventions, the iconic flag was displayed proudly by the Marine division that raised it.

In 1947, the flags were given a more unusual opportunity to travel the United States. Following World War II, members of the administration of President Harry S. Truman felt that patriotism across the United States was declining. As a result, they decided to organize the world's most unusual traveling historical road show. Dubbed the "Freedom Train," this historical exhibit would be housed in a train and travel the length of the country and back. It would contain some of the United States' most significant artifacts, including Thomas Jefferson's personal copy of the Declaration of Independence, a first-edition copy of Thomas Paine's pamphlet *Common Sense*, George Washington's copy of the U.S. Constitution, the U.S. Bill of Rights, Abraham Lincoln's draft of the Emancipation Proclamation, surrender documents signed by the Japanese Empire aboard the USS *Missouri* (BB 63) to formally end World War II, and the iconic second flag raised on Mount Suribachi. Guarding these historical treasures was a Marine security

[23] Official U.S. Marine Corps Correspondence, from Officer in Charge, Office of the Curator, Marine Corps Museum, Marine Barracks, Quantico, VA, to Officer in Charge, Historical Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, Washington, DC, 18 July 1945.
[24] Kenneth L. Smith-Christmas, "Why Things Are the Way They Are at the Marine Corps Museum" (unpublished paper, Marine Corps Museum, Quantico, VA, n.d.), 1.



The Marine Corps security guard for the Freedom Train stands in formation for one of their hundreds of stops across the United States in 1947.
National Archives and Records Administration.



1900/WJS-law

THE MARINE CORPS MUSEUM
OFFICE OF THE CURATOR
MARINE BARRACKS, QUANTICO VIRGINIA

18 July, 1945.

From: The Officer in Charge.
To: The Officer in Charge, Historical Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, Washington 25, D. C.

Subject: Donations, Marine Corps Museum, receipt of, acknowledgement of.

References: (a) CG, Hq, V AmphCorps ltr to CMC, 1575 over 049/170 over 1053, dated 26Apr45.
(b) OinC, HistDiv, HQMC ltr to Curator, MC Museum, MB, Quantico, Va., DKG-169-ep, dated 17Jul45.

1. Receipt this date is hereby acknowledged, with thanks, of the below listed items:

a. American flag, (U.S. No. 11 MI 44), (54" x 28"), first raised on Mount Suribachi, Iwo Jima, Volcano Islands, at 1037, 23 February, 1945.

b. Clipping from Life Magazine, dated 26 March, 1945, showing pictures of both first and second flag raisings on Mount Suribachi, 23 February, 1945.

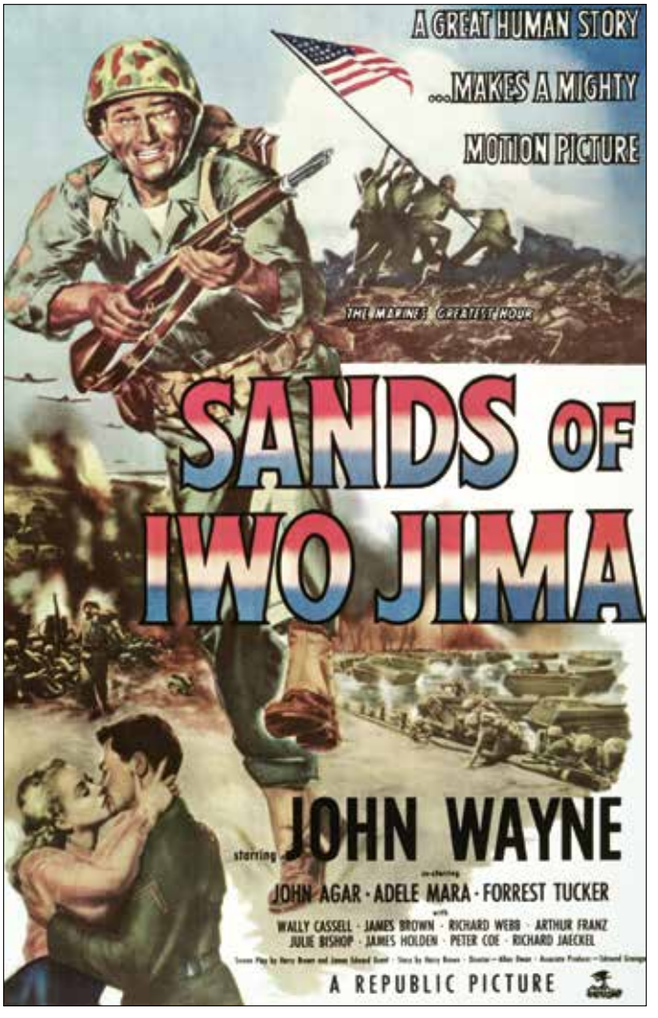
c. American flag (U.S. Ensign No. 7, Mare Island, October, 1943), (8' x 4'8"), second raised on Mount Suribachi, 23 February, 1945. This is the flag of Rosenthal fame.

d. Biographies of the six (6) flag raisers connected with paragraph (c).

e. Copy of a letter from Lt(jg) Alan S. Wood, USNR, to BrigGen Robert L. Denig, USMC, dated 7 July, 1945, explaining how the flag of paragraph (c) was originally obtained.

f. Three (3) photographs, (10" x 8-1/4"), showing 1. the "raising of Old Glory on the summit of Iwo Jima's Mount Suribachi"; 2. "Three of the participants of the flag raising on Iwo Jima's Mount Suribachi, address a crowd assembled on the steps of the nation's Capitol in Washington, D. C."; and 3. "With members of Congress and ranking Marine and Navy officers in attendance, three of the participants of the flag raising on Iwo Jima's Mount Suribachi hoist the same battleflag to the mast of the nation's Capitol in Washington, D. C."

This receipt for the flags from Iwo Jima is one of the earliest museum documents in the collection of the National Museum of the Marine Corps.
National Museum of the Marine Corps.



An original movie poster from the John Wayne film, *The Sands of Iwo Jima.*
National Museum of the Marine Corps.

guard detachment comprised of 3 Marine officers, 23 enlisted Marines, and 1 Navy corpsman. The exhibit would travel to 322 cities and nearly every state capitol, totaling more than 60,000 kilometers. More than 34 million Americans turned out to attempt to view the exhibits, with 3.5 million given the opportunity to walk inside the train to view its contents. The museum cases were built with bulletproof glass and secured by state-of-the-art locks. Marines were placed throughout the train to watch over the artifacts and to act as impromptu tour guides.[25]

Following the Rosenthal flag's journey on the Freedom Train, it was seen again in 1949 when it was reunited with the three Iwo Jima veterans from the Seventh War Loan Drive. They appeared alongside the original artifact in the John Wayne film *The Sands of Iwo Jima*. In the film's climatic scene, the veterans present Wayne, playing the fictional role of Marine Corps sergeant John Stryker, with the actual Iwo

[25] Sgt Jorge Vallejo, "Freedom Train: 1947," *Marines* (March 1988): 23–24.

This image of the second Iwo Jima flag is from the late 1990s when the flag underwent extensive conservation. *National Museum of the Marine Corps.*

Jima flag for a Hollywood recreation of the Marine Corps' defining moment. Despite the nation's weariness of war films by this time, the film garnered four Academy Award nominations and was a resounding box office success.[26]

During the 1950s, the two Iwo Jima flags settled into a less glamorous lifestyle as traditional museum artifacts. While occasionally still sent out for 5th Marine Division reunions, they were more often simply displayed in the early Marine Corps museum system. During the 1960s, the historical displays were moved to Butler Hall at Marine Corps Base Quantico. Then, in the 1970s, a museum was established under the Marine Corps History and Museums Division at the Washington Navy Yard in Washington, DC.[27]

Over the years, early mounting and display techniques for the two flags began to take their toll. In 1998, the Marine Corps recognized the need to properly conserve and frame the flags. Funding was approved by Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Charles C. Krulak. The flags were sent to professional conservators for treatment and framing, current with modern museum standards. All the flags' markings and damage were thoroughly documented for the first time. In-depth analysis of the fabrics, weaves, and thread counts were also noted in curatorial records. Once placed in specially constructed pressure-mounted frames, the flags returned to the Washington Navy Yard.[28]

In the early 2000s, the second and first flags were sent out, respectively, for brief loans and exhibition at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History in Washington, DC, and the National WWII Museum in New Orleans, Louisiana. These travels marked the flags' final temporary journeys.

Today, the two iconic Iwo Jima flags are a proud part of the permanent collection at the National Museum of the Marine Corps. The second flag is on display in the museum's World War II gallery, while the first flag rotates on an annual basis each year on the anniversary of the Battle of Iwo Jima.

[26] *Sands of Iwo Jima*, directed by Allan Dwan (Los Angeles, CA: Republic Pictures, 1949).

[27] Smith-Christmas, "Why Things Are the Way They Are at the Marine Corps Museum," 1.

[28] Kenneth L. Smith-Christmas, "Measures Ensure Iwo Jima Flags' Survival," *Fortitudine* 28, no. 3 (2000): 12–13.

Chapter 27

WAKE ISLAND FLAG

The Fall of the Pacific Alamo

By Laurence M. Burke II, PhD, Aviation Curator

Featured artifact: U.S. National Ensign (1982.975.1)

In 1956, a rather remarkable flag found its way back to the United States. A Japanese woman, Shizu Fukatsu, formally presented an American flag to U.S. Marine major general Alan Shapley, commanding general of the 3d Marine Division.

This was one of the American flags flying over Wake Atoll on 23 December 1941, the date that the atoll fell to the Japanese after a heroic resistance by its U.S. Marine defenders. It was taken as a souvenir by Mrs. Fukatsu's son, Taro Fukatsu, who had been an officer in the Japanese landing force that took the atoll.[1] The story of Wake's resistance kept American morale up in the immediate aftermath of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. That this flag continued flying over the atoll during the battle makes it a powerful symbol of the Marines' stubborn defense against incredible odds and despite their own inadequate resources.

The Japanese began bombing the American outpost on Wake mere hours after their attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December (8 December Wake time). The attacks continued for the next two weeks, including near-daily aerial raids and one amphibious landing attempt on 11 December, which was repulsed. These attacks slowly whittled away at the defenders' resources, which were already limited; both the 1st Marine Defense Battalion detachment and Marine Fighter Squadron 211 (VMF-211) were understrength and lacked critical equipment and material even before the attacks began. But, as the first Japanese attempt to invade the island proved, this lack of resources did little to diminish the willingness of the Marines to defend the atoll with what they had left.

On 23 December, the Japanese launched a second assault on Wake with a landing force about twice the size of that used in the first attempt and with the support of two aircraft carriers, which the first assault did not have. With no more flyable planes, the remaining Marines of VMF-211 joined the defense as infantry. While the landing Japanese troops were stopped or even eliminated in several places, the largest enemy force on the atoll's main island soon approached the U.S. command post, forcing Navy commander Winfield S. Cunningham, the garrison's commanding officer, to surrender to the invaders.

Even before the surrender, the U.S. media began making connections with another plucky American defense against overwhelming odds a century earlier, referring to Wake as the "Alamo of the Pacific." The surrender of Wake only cemented the comparison, although the U.S. defenders, along with the majority of the roughly 1,200 civilian contractors on the atoll, were taken into captivity for the duration of the war rather than killed in battle or executed immediately afterward, which had been the fate of the Alamo defenders in 1836. That said, five of the American prisoners of war were ritually beheaded by the Japanese on the ship taking them to a prisoner-of-war camp in China,

[1] The story of the flag's return is derived from the catalog file at the National Museum of the Marine Corps.

The Wake Island flag on display in the National Museum of the Marine Corps. A Grumman F4F Wildcat in the exhibit, representative of the aircraft used to defend Wake, is visible as a reflection in the flag's canton.
Photo by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.

An illustration of the Battle of Wake Island by Albin Henning. Henning created this image before details of the defense of Wake became known, so it does not accurately reflect what happened, but it does convey the Marines' spirited defense against the Japanese assault.
Official U.S. Marine Corps photo.

This Vic Guinness recruiting poster takes inspiration from President Franklin D. Roosevelt's description of the Marines' defense of Wake.
National Museum of the Marine Corps.

Japanese forces on Wake return the atoll to the United States on 4 September 1945.
Official U.S. Marine Corps photo.

and 98 civilians kept on Wake as forced labor were executed by the Japanese—a war crime—following a U.S. Navy carrier air strike on the atoll on 5 October 1943.[2]

Though Wake had been considered an important part of the U.S. defense system in the Pacific before World War II, the atoll was bypassed and isolated as part of the Allied island-hopping campaign. U.S. carrier air forces did strike the atoll a few times during the war to train new pilots and ensure that the Japanese forces there would not be a threat.[3]

Wake remained under Japanese control until shortly after the formal Japanese surrender aboard the battleship USS Missouri (BB 63) in Tokyo Bay on 2 September 1945. Two days later, the Japanese garrison on Wake returned the atoll to a force of Marines under Major General Lawson H. M. Sanderson. Colonel Walter L .J. Bayler, the last Marine to leave Wake in 1941 before it was captured, was the first American to set foot on the atoll after the Japanese surrender.

Though Wake was once again under the American flag, at least one of the flags taken down in 1941 when the Americans surrendered remained in Japan. According to Mrs. Fukatsu, her son, Taro Fukatsu, had been the only one of 12 officers in the Japanese landing force to survive the Battle of Wake. When he returned to Japan in the spring of 1943, he gave this flag to his mother to keep for him, telling her that he had gotten it on Wake. He returned to combat and died as a lieutenant commander on 25 October 1944 in the Battle of Leyte Gulf. His family held on to the flag for many years, as it was the only thing they had by which to remember their son and brother. By 1956, however, they decided that it was proper to return the flag to the United States.[4] The flag is now in the collection of the National Museum of the Marine Corps, where it serves as a powerful memento of the dogged but ultimately doomed resistance of the Marines on Wake.

[2] The narrative of the battle for and surrender of Wake Island is derived from Gregory J. W. Urwin, *Facing Fearful Odds: The Siege of Wake Island* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997); and John Wukovits, *Pacific Alamo: The Battle for Wake Island* (New York: New American Library, 2003).

[3] Clark G. Reynolds, *The Fast Carriers: The Forging of an Air Navy* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1968), 154, 246, 365.

[4] Catalog file, National Museum of the Marine Corps.

Chapter 28

A PHOTOGRAPH THAT TOUCHED A NATION

By Gretchen Winterer, Uniforms and Heraldry Curator

Featured artifact: Gloves, TAA M-PACT Mechanix, Pair (2023.21.1a-b)

Throughout its history, the U.S. Marine Corps has undertaken many humanitarian missions, demonstrating a commitment to aiding civilians in times of crisis. In 1900, during the Boxer Rebellion in China, Marines provided essential food supplies to famine-stricken civilians. During the Banana Wars in Central America and the Caribbean in the early twentieth century, Marines played a vital role in safeguarding civilians amid civil unrest.

This ethos of understanding and addressing the needs of local populations continued into the Marine Corps' missions in the Middle East. When the Global War on Terrorism began in Afghanistan in 2001, the importance of ground intelligence became evident. One significant challenge faced by U.S. and Coalition ground forces was establishing trust with local indigenous populations, particularly women residing in local villages. Cultural norms often hindered interactions between men and women, creating additional barriers. Women within these villages possessed invaluable knowledge about the surrounding areas. Recognizing this potential, the Marine Corps examined of the role that female Marines could play in directly engaging with Afghan women. Thus emerged the concept of Female Engagement Teams (FETs).[1]

The Marine Corps began the FET program in 2009 in Afghanistan. FETs deployed in small teams consisting of two or three members, typically attached to a battalion, company, or platoon. They went through traditional combat training but also developed communication skills to better connect with local women and children. Sergeant Sheena Adams wrote in a 2013 *Leatherneck* article that "FETs were brought in to talk to the other 50% of the population that the male infantry could not [talk to], but we ended up being so much more than that. Females have that soft side that makes the males want to open up and talk to . . . to the local population even though we are carrying our weapons we are not viewed as a threat but as someone willing to help."[2] FETs gathered information from Afghan families and communicated with women while respecting cultural norms. The presence of these teams provided the Marine Corps with an additional tool for engaging with the Afghan population. This, however, did not come without the repercussions of operating in combat zones. According to the Service Women's Action Network, "more than 300,000 women deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, with 166 women killed in combat operations and more than 1,000 wounded."[3] Sergeant Nicole L. Gee was one of those casualties.

Sergeant Gee, originally from Roseville, California, joined the Marine Corps in 2018 and was subsequently at-

[1] "Female Engagement Teams–FETs," National Museum of the Marine Corps, accessed 7 May 2024.

[2] Sgt Sheena Adams, "Female Engagement Teams," *Leatherneck*, 27 May 2013.

[3] Craig Collins, "Semper Fi: Women in the Marine Corps," *Defense Media Network*, 23 May 2018.

Sgt Nicole Gee calms an infant during the evacuation at Hamid Karzai International Airport in August 2021.
Photo by Sgt Isaiah Campbell, Defense Visual Information Distribution Services.

tached to Combat Logistics Battalion 24, where she focused on maintaining ground electronics transmission systems. In early 2021, she was assigned a 7-month deployment to Afghanistan with the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit, in support of the U.S. withdrawal from the region and the accompanying noncombatant evacuation operation. Gee served with an FET dedicated to assisting Afghan women and children.

Sergeant Gee arrived at the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul, Afghanistan, on 15 August 2021. Eleven days later, she was killed in a suicide bombing attack at the airport. She was just 23 years old. Twelve other servicemembers, 11 of whom were Marines, were also killed in the attack, with 18 more being injured. Just days before her death, Gee shared a heartfelt social media post depicting her caring for an Afghan infant, accompanied by the words, "I love my job."[4] It is estimated that the FETs, including Gee, helped screen about 124,000 evacuees in Afghanistan.

Sergeant Gee's body was returned to the United States on 29 August 2021 and was laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery on 29 September 2021. During her memorial service, Sergeant Mallory Harrison, a close friend of Gee, remarked, "She lost her life so others may live and, without a doubt, she died proud. Proud of who she was, proud of what she was doing, and proud to be a United States Marine."

[4] "Nicole Gee, Sergeant, U.S. Marine Corps," Foundation for Women Warriors, accessed 7 May 2024.

Sgt Gee with the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit during an exercise on 5 April 2021.
Official U.S. Marine Corps photo by SSgt Mark E. Morrow Jr., Defense Visual Information Distribution Services.

Sgt Gee posted this picture to her Instagram account, standing next to a long line of evacuees at Hamid Karzai International Airport.
Nicole Gee, Instagram account.

These TAA M-PACT Mechanix gloves were donated to the National Museum of the Marine Corps in 2023 by Cheryl Juels, Nicole Gee's aunt. These gloves are similar to the ones that Sgt Gee wears in her touching photograph; she was likely rotating between the two pairs of gloves while processing evacuees. Included in the donation were two handwritten notes from one of Gee's fellow Marines, LCpl Layla Loughman, who detailed the situation surrounding the photograph: "One of our first days in Kabul Sgt. Gee and I got sent to the front at the North Gate. . . . We were dealing with a stressful situation with a mother and a baby. . . . I looked up at Sgt. Gee who was smiling at this baby. Amidst all the chaos, she was always able to put a smile on."

Photos by Jose Esquilin, Marine Corps University Press.


UNITED

A photograph from a memorial for Sgt Gee.
Photo by LCpl Aliannah Bartok, Defense Visual Information Distribution Services.

Opposite page, top:
A U.S. Marine Corps carry team transfers the remains of Sgt Nicole L. Gee of Sacramento, CA, on 29 August 2021 at Dover Air Force Base, DE.
Photo by Jason Minto, Defense Visual Information Distribution Services.

Opposite page, bottom:
A Marine presents Sgt Gee's husband, Jarod, with a U.S. flag during her funeral.
Photo by Elizabeth Fraser, Defense Visual Information Distribution Services.

CONCLUSION

In the fall of 2024, the National Museum of the Marine Corps (NMMC) opened two major galleries. Known officially as galleries 13 and 14, these new additions nearly complete the museum's circular layout, providing chronologically consecutive galleries and exhibits from 1775 to the present day.[1] Due to several years of delays, NMMC staff members began to refer to galleries 13 and 14 as the museum's "final phase." This was based mostly on the physical completion of the museum's original architectural plans, but it also became a point of historical reflection for the museum's curators. What comes next? For the first time in the history of the museum, the Marine Corps story was "nearly complete."

The reality, however, is that history never stops. There is no final project date for the NMMC. This is because history is alive and being made, or rediscovered, every day. In countless attics, garages, and closets, Marines and their families still have stories to tell and artifacts to share. There will regrettably be new wars. There will be more missions and operations for the Marine Corps. Correspondingly, there will be new stories and artifacts to document and preserve outside of these first 250 years.

The NMMC can never truly complete its mission without the American people. The Marines and donors who support the museum make this all possible. The museum is forever diligent and looking forward to preserving the history of the Marine Corps and the United States. As a reader of this book, we encourage readers and visitors to never hesitate to reach out to us to share or preserve your Marine Corps history. The Marines of today march forward in the shadows of the Marines of the past, but they are all united in one motto—*Semper Fidelis*, "Always Faithful"—to our history and to each other.

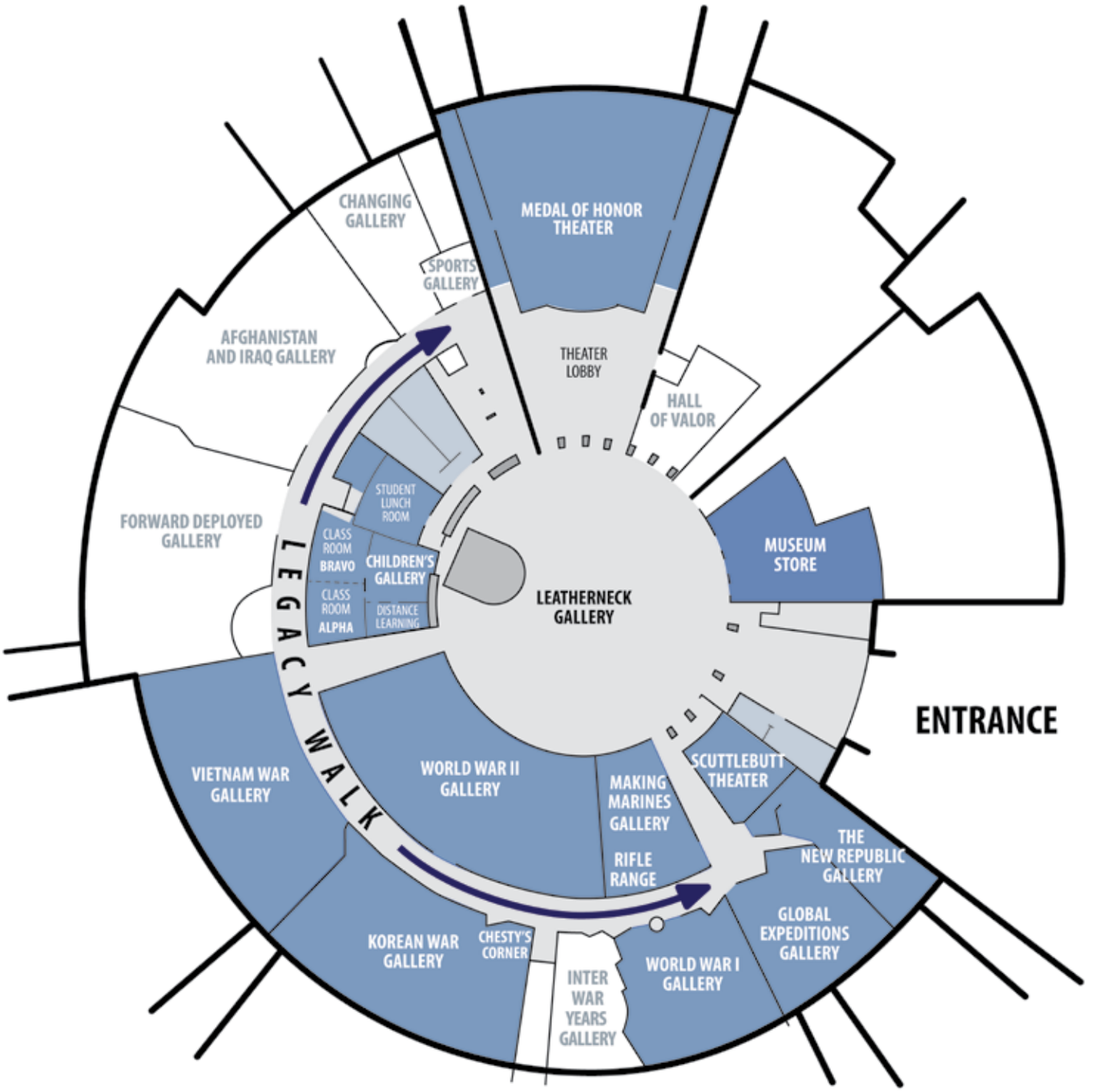
For more information, please visit the NMMC website at **https://www.usmcmuseum.com/**.

NATIONAL MUSEUM
OF THE
MARINE CORPS

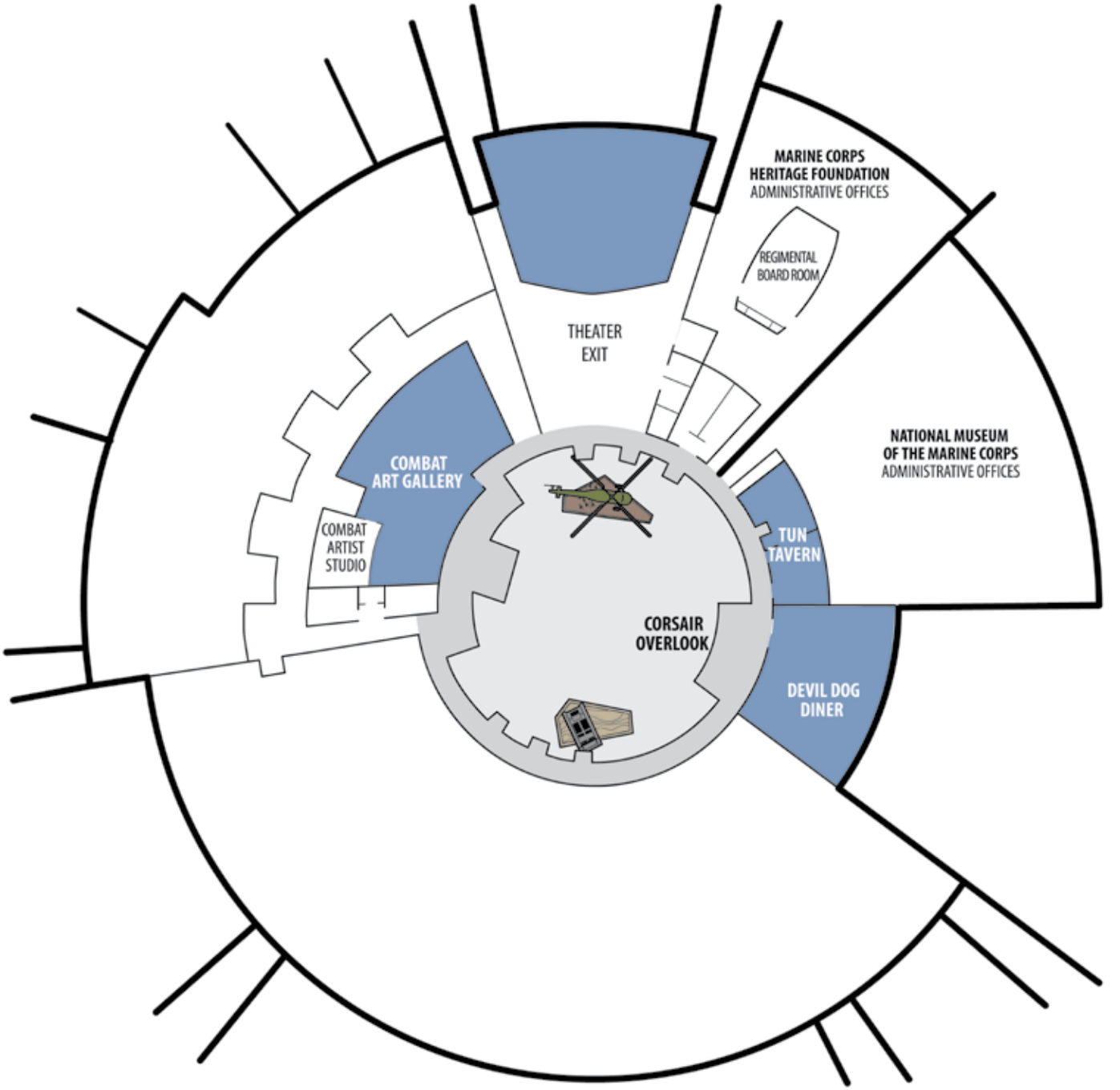
[1] When the NMMC opened in 2006, it debuted its World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War galleries, along with a Legacy Walk and Timeline exhibit. In 2010, the museum opened a second phase of galleries that covered the founding of the Marine Corps through World War I. By 2025, the museum will cover every period of Marine Corps history except the interwar years of the 1920s and 1930s. This much-anticipated gallery is planned to open at a date that has yet to be determined.

Appendix A

MAP OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MARINE CORPS



First deck of the NMMC.



Second deck of the NMMC.

Appendix B

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MARINE CORPS

INTRODUCTION

The National Museum of the Marine Corps (NMMC) collects objects in support of its mission, which is to preserve and exhibit the material history of the U.S. Marine Corps. It is important to understand the distinction between *museum* and *archives* to fully understand the museum's mission to honor the commitment, accomplishments, and sacrifices of Marines; support recruitment, training, education, and retention of Marines; and provide the public with a venue for the exploration of Marine Corps history. An archive refers to an organization that collects and preserves historical records and documents for research purposes. A museum, conversely, is a heritage institution designed to cultivate, preserve, and display artifacts to the public. Museums present a single, expansive body of knowledge and the context necessary for audiences to interpret and navigate a specific time and place in history. The 65,000+ uniforms, weapons, vehicles, medals, flags, aircraft, works of art, and other artifacts in the NMMC's collections present the long history of the Marine Corps from its creation in 1775 to the present.

The road to establishing the NMMC as it now stands in Triangle, Virginia, was long but deliberate; one that was sustained by Marines, civilians, and the American public who believed that it was essential to collect, restore, and maintain the history of the Marine Corps within the fabric of American culture. The NMMC's artifact collection precedes any formally established museum, resulting from the combination of the Marine Corps Historical Center at the Washington Navy Yard and the Marine Corps Air-Ground Museum in Quantico, Virginia.

CHRONOLOGY

1933: The Commandant of the Marine Corps, MajGen Ben H. Fuller, directs the commanding general of Marine Barracks Quantico to establish a trophy room to exhibit historical objects and photographs. The commanding officer of Marine Barracks Washington, DC, borrows artifacts from the Historical Branch, Headquarters Marine Corps, to exhibit in the Sousa Band Hall.[1]

1940: The Commandant of the Marine Corps, MajGen Thomas Holcomb, directs the establishment of a museum at Marine Corps Base Quantico on the second floor of the new Quantico Recreation Center (now Little Hall). The museum houses a series of built-in wall cases containing mannequins clad with historical uniforms, as well

[1] *Ben Hebard Fuller: A Register of His Papers in the Archives Branch* (Quantico, VA: Archives Branch, History Division, 2011).

as flags, weapons, trophies, and medals.[2]

Early 1950s: The Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen Lemuel C. Shepherd Jr., orders Marine Corps Reserve Col John H. Magruder III to return to active duty to oversee the Marine Corps Museum at Quantico.[3]

1960: Col Magruder and a staff of five move the Marine Corps Museum to Building 1019, next to Little Hall. During his tenure as museum director, Magruder procures additional buildings that allow the museum to create exhibits focused on Marine Corps aviation history.[4]

1973: The Marine Corps Museum moves its collections and staff offices into Building 2014, the 1920s-era brig at Quantico.

1976: The Quantico-based Marine Corps Museum (Building 1019) closes. The art, artifacts, and some staff offices are moved to the Washington Navy Yard into a new Marine Corps Museum.[5]

1978: The Marine Corps Aviation Museum opens at Quantico; it is located at Brown Field near the present-day Officer Candidates School. Exhibits focus on the role of World War II Marine aviation.[6]

1979: The Marine Corps Historical Foundation is established as a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting and maintaining the official history of the Marine Corps, including that of the History and Museums Division.[7]

1985: BGen Edwin H. Simmons orders that the Marine Corps Aviation Museum be renamed the Marine Corps Air-Ground Museum. Exhibits are updated to include air-ground combat operations.[8]

Late 1980s: The U.S. Congress authorizes each military Service to develop its own national museum to house, preserve, and interpret its history for the American public. Congress's authorization allows for the creation of the partnership between the Historical Foundation and the Marine Corps.[9]

1990: A third hangar is added to the Marine Corps Air-Ground Museum.

1995: The Historical Foundation discusses building a new heritage center at Quantico instead of expanding the Marine Corps Air-Ground Museum.

1998: The Historical Foundation changes its name to the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation (MCHF). The MCHF's efforts broaden support for the museum and its educational endeavors. The Marine Corps funds the design, exhibitions, artifact conservation, and federal staff salaries, while the MCHF raises the funds to build the 120,000-square-foot structure to be executed in two phases: phase I includes the concept and initial build and phase II expands the NMMC's total area by another 117,000 square feet.

1999: The MCHF launches a capital campaign to build a heritage center at Quantico.

2000s: Congress authorizes a joint venture between the Marine Corps and the MCHF for the design and construction of a multipurpose facility to be used for historical displays for public viewing, curation, and storage of artifacts, research facilities, classrooms, offices, and associated activities that will be known as the Marine Corps Heritage Center.[10]

July 2001: Following a national competition, Fentress Bradburn Architects of Denver, CO,

[2] Robert J. Sullivan, "Why Shouldn't the Marine Corps Have a Museum of Its Own?," *Marine Corps History* 5, no. 1 (Summer 2019).

[3] Sullivan, "Why Shouldn't the Marine Corps Have a Museum of Its Own?"

[4] Sullivan, "Why Shouldn't the Marine Corps Have a Museum of Its Own?"

[5] Sullivan, "Why Shouldn't the Marine Corps Have a Museum of Its Own?"

[6] "United States Marine Corps Air/Ground Museum," Aviation Enthusiasts Corner, accessed 16 July 2024. Brown Field became the home of Officer Candidates School in 1940. Brown Field was originally an airfield developed to accommodate aircraft after World War I. It was named for 2dLt Walter V. Brown, the first pilot fatality at Marine Corps Air Facility Quantico.

[7] "Our Mission," MarineHeritage.org, accessed 16 July 2024.

[8] Sullivan, "Why Shouldn't the Marine Corps Have a Museum of Its Own?"

[9] 10 USC 8618: Marine Corps Heritage Center and National Museum of the Marine Corps at Marine Corps Base, Quantico, VA.

[10] Pub.L. 108-291, Marine Corps 230th Anniversary Commemorative Coin Act, 108th Cong. (6 August 2004).

	is selected as the winner of the design for the NMMC.
2002:	Prince William County, VA, deeds 135 acres of land from Locust Shade Park to the Marine Corps.[11]
15 November 2002:	The Marine Corps Air-Ground Museum closes in preparation for the opening of the NMMC.[12]
2003:	General contractor Centex Corporation leads the NMMC's groundbreaking. The Marine Corps contracted with exhibit designers Christopher Chadbourne and Associates of Boston, MA, as well as Design and Production of Lorton, VA.
31 August 2005:	The Marine Corps Museum at the Navy Yard closes in preparation for the opening of the NMMC. The art, artifacts, and staff are relocated to Quantico. The Museums Branch becomes a division of Marine Corps University.
10 November 2006:	The NMMC opens in Triangle, VA, on the 231st birthday of the Marine Corps. Along with the Leatherneck Gallery, Making Marines, and the Legacy Walk, the museum opens galleries covering World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.[13]
6 June 2010:	The NMMC opens historical galleries covering the 1775 birth of the Marine Corps through World War I.
27 March 2015:	The NMMC and MCHF beak ground for a 70,000-square-foot expansion to house a large format theater, a children's gallery, an extension of the Legacy Walk, and new galleries to tell the history of the Marine Corps from 1976 to 2016.[14]
9 July 2017:	The NMMC opens the Combat Art Gallery, featuring 100 works and 22 artists.[15]
23 July 2017:	The NMMC opens the Medal of Honor Theater featuring the film *We, the Marines*.[16]
November 2017:	The NMMC opens the expanded Education Suite and Children's Gallery.
Fall 2024:	Historical galleries covering the history of the Marine Corps from 1976 to the present are opened to the public.

[11] *Environmental Assessment: Route 1 Improvements, Project A* (Washington, DC: Federal Highway Administration, Department of Transportation, 2003), 3-14.

[12] Kenneth L. Smith-Christmas, "Exhibits News: Air-Ground Museum Closes Doors Forever," *Fortitudine* 30, no. 1 (2003): 10–11.

[13] Sullivan, "Why Shouldn't the Marine Corps Have a Museum of Its Own?"

[14] Adele Uphaus-Conner, "Final Phase of Construction at NMMC Proceeding on Schedule," MCB Quantico, 2 October 2015.

[15] National Museum of the Marine Corps, "NMMC Opens Combat Art Gallery," press release, 15 June 2017.

[16] National Museum of the Marine Corps, "Medal of Honor Theater Opens at National Museum of the Marine Corps," press release, 18 July 2017.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Jonathan Bernstein is the arms and armor curator for the NMMC, arriving aboard the museum in July 2020 after nine years as the director of the U.S. Army's Air Defense Artillery Museum. His published works include six books on aviation history and numerous articles in *Leatherneck* and other magazines. In 2005, Mr. Bernstein left the history PhD program at Texas Tech University in Lubbock to attend U.S. Army flight school and served as a Boeing AH-64 Apache helicopter pilot with the 1st Battalion, 104th Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, with the Pennsylvania Army National Guard from 2007 to 2012. He holds a bachelor of arts in history from Purchase College, State University of New York, and a master of arts in museum studies from Texas Tech University.

Laurence M. Burke II is the aviation curator for the NMMC. He is the author of *At the Dawn of Airpower: The U.S. Army, Navy, and Marine Corps' Approach to the Airplane, 1907–1917* (2022). After receiving his PhD in history and public policy from Carnegie Mellon University in 2014, he taught in the history department of the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD, as a postdoctoral fellow. He then served as the curator of U.S. naval aviation at the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, DC, for nearly five years before joining the NMMC in 2021. In addition to his PhD, he possesses a bachelor's degree in science and technology studies from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, NY, and a master's degree in museum studies from the George Washington University.

Jennifer Castro was appointed the curator of the cultural and material history collection at the NMMC in January 2009. She is an original plank holder of the museum and previously served more than 23 years as the museum's collections manager and registrar, joining the staff of the Marine Corps History and Museum Division at the Washington Navy Yard in Washington, DC, in 1987 after working on the staff at the Smithsonian Institution's Center for Museum Studies. A native of Maryland, she is a graduate of Mary Washington College (now the University of Mary Washington) in Fredericksburg, VA, with bachelor of arts degrees in historic preservation and art history. She is responsible for two ever-changing temporary exhibits at the NMMC, one that features new acquisitions to the collection and another that documents artifacts with unusual stories and represents the diversity of the museum's collection.

Owen Linlithgow Conner is the chief curator of the National Museum of the Marine Corps (NMMC). He began his career at the museum as an intern and special assistant in 2005. He was hired as the museum's assistant uniforms and heraldry curator in 2006 and promoted to senior uniform curator in 2012. He has served as the curatorial section chief since 2022. As a plank holder of the NMMC, Mr. Con-

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Kater Miller is the outreach curator at the NMMC. He began working at the museum in 2010 as the assistant ordnance curator. He served in the Marine Corps from 2001 to 2005 as an aviation ordnanceman. After his time in the Marine Corps, he used the GI Bill to earn a bachelor's degree in history from Valdosta State University, GA, and a master's degree in history from George Mason University.

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