

# FORTITUDINE

BULLETIN OF THE MARINE CORPS HISTORICAL PROGRAM

HISTORICAL BULLETIN VOLUME 33, NUMBER 3

2008



RETAINING OUR HISTORICAL MEMORY...COMBAT CORRESPONDENT ARRIVES...FIRST AND LONGEST POW'S OF WWII  
ORAL HISTORY IN KOREA...MARINE TALES FROM HILL 881...MARINES IN LEBANON, 1982-1984  
ORAL HISTORIES OF THE GULF WAR...ENDURING FREEDOM ORAL HISTORIES...BEYOND MAYAGUEZ

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# FORTITUDINE

Motto of the United States Marine Corps in the 1812 era

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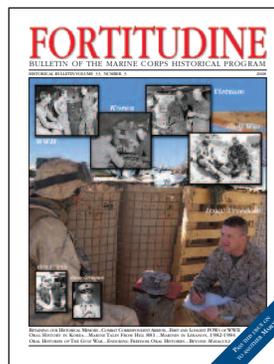
2008

*"We can only know who we are by being certain of  
who we have been."*

Gen Leonard F. Chapman, Jr.  
24th Commandant of the Marine Corps

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Cover: a montage of Marine Corps official photographs representing a chronological order of wars Marines have recorded and maintained oral histories.

This bulletin of the Marine Corps historical program is published for Marines, at the rate of one copy for every nine on active duty, to provide education and training in the uses of military and Marine Corps history. Other interested readers may purchase single copies or four-issue subscriptions from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office. The appropriate order form appears in this issue.

## Retaining our Historical Memory



*Dr. Charles P. Neimeyer*

For a number of years now, the History Division has maintained a robust oral history program. This edition of *Fortitudine* is dedicated to this program and its contributions to Marine Corps history. Fully functioning as a sub-branch of the division since 1965, Oral History's first historian was the legendary Benis Frank, a combat veteran of World War II and Korea. During his time as chief oral historian, Ben Frank amassed a tremendous amount of taped material that ranged from an extensive seven-hour-long interview with the legendary Louis B. "Chesty" Puller, to recordings with Commandants Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr. and Clifton B. Cates, to Graves B. Erskine, and thousands of hours of tape from individual Marine combat veterans of all ranks who served during World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. It was Ben who established the processes and procedures for identifying and cataloging various oral histories currently in use by the branch today. Based on the path breaking work of Columbia University historian Allan Nevins, the History Division greatly benefited from Ben's personal touch. His crowning glory was the establishment of a robust oral history program that captured on tape for all posterity the thoughts, activities, and ideas of senior Marine Corps leaders and selected notable Marines.

Since the Vietnam War, field interviews have remained the number-one priority for the Oral History Branch. Vietnam-era Marine Commandant, General Wallace M. Greene, Jr. was fully convinced that oral history could provide the Corps with a treasure trove of "lessons learned" gathered from the personal experiences of thousands of returning combat veterans. As a result of his emphasis, oral history has

archived over 14,000 interviews from veterans of the Cold War, Beirut, Desert Storm, and Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, many of which were recorded directly by History Division field historians.

If historians want to enliven their research with direct primary source accounts on a battle or operation since 1965, they need look no further than History Division's extensive files and tapes. In sum, these taped histories provide researchers with a specific snapshot in time. One particular oral history I especially enjoy listening to is a taped interview conducted by a Marine combat correspondent going ashore in a U.S. Navy landing craft at Iwo Jima on the second day of the battle, 20 February 1945. As you listen to the tape, you can actually hear the rapid and deep booming sound of naval gunfire being fired directly over the approaching landing craft, and you are immediately struck by the sheer amount of noise that accompanies a battle in progress. If a researcher wants to get a first person "feel" for what it must have been like for thousands of Marines going ashore in similar landing craft on "D-Day" (19 February 1945), one only need listen to a few minutes of this tape.

While we in the History Division are indeed quite proud of our extensive collection, the use of oral history is not without its pitfalls. During the early years of building the collection, it was not unusual for Ben Frank and others to amass the taped interviews in the name of expediency without ever getting around to providing the tape with a transcript or even a summary of what was being discussed on the tape. Thus, without a transcript or summary, the

tape is cumbersome for a researcher who might have to listen to hours of taped conversation that may or may not directly relate to his or her historical project. Moreover, just because a veteran makes a statement on tape does not mean it is factually accurate. Sometimes veterans forget events, names, and locations from a battlefield now long in the past. There are inherent weaknesses to the conversational structure of a taped interview. It is absolutely incumbent upon a researcher to further corroborate the facts before using them as a confirmed reference. Finally, individual interviews usually only give a researcher a constricted glimpse of the overall activity going on in a particular battle or operation. Good use of oral histories requires researchers to review multiple interviews at various levels of command in order to get a fuller and more accurate picture of what was going on.

The History Division's oral history program plays a crucial role in the retention of the historical memory of our Corps. Our collection spans interviews provided by nearly every Commandant since General Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr., to young Marines just out of boot camp and currently serving in combat zones around the world. The collection is an invaluable tool to researchers and buffs alike. Many Marines usually do not think their personal stories are very important, but I always remind them that Marines make history every day whether they realize it or not. As current Oral History Branch Head Dr. Fred Allison noted, "oral history allows the Marines of yesterday and today to speak to those of tomorrow and indeed 100 years hence." I must say I certainly agree with him. *Semper Fidelis.* □1775□

## Oral History

The Marine Corps Oral History Collection contains approximately 15,700 oral history recordings of Marines, and those who fought with them, who have offered their reminiscences and experiences from every conflict and operation over the last 100 years. Most of the interviews are housed in the Audio-Visual Information Repository of the Marine Corps Archives and Special Collections located at the Gray Research Center in Quantico, Virginia. A sub-series of this collection is the Marine Corps Career Interview Oral History Collection, which contains over 200 career Marine interviews, most of which have been transcribed into 200- to 400-page transcripts, bound, and distributed throughout the Marine Corps community. History Division is working on scanning these and providing full electronic access in the future. The scope of the Marine Corps Oral History Collection spans 1898 to 2008, including a small

number of reminiscences from the Spanish-American War (1898), Abyssinia (1903), Cuba (1906-1917), The Great White Fleet (1907-1909), Panama (1908-1910), and Honduras (1924). A larger number of interviews have been gathered on the more recent conflicts including World War I (45), Nicaragua (45), Haiti (40), Santo Domingo (21), and China (88). Since the relationship between the Marine Corps and the Library of Congress started during World War II, both institutions have been leading collectors of Marine interviews. Each article in this issue of *Fortitudine* discusses some aspect of every major conflict the Marine Corps has been involved in since World War II. The individual writers captured what they believed to be the essence of the program at the time, including differing techniques in collection, modern application to writing projects, and overall usefulness to students of Marine Corps history. —Rob Taglianetti

### *National Museum of the Marine Corps*

## Combat Correspondent Collection Arrives

by Owen L. Conner  
Curator of Uniforms and Heraldry

Throughout World War II, Colonel Robert L. Denig's radiomen used recording equipment loaned by the U.S. Congress to capture the sounds of the war in the Pacific, interview Marines, and produce radio broadcasts heard around the world. The Library of Congress holds about 1,600 of these vintage recordings in its Marine Corps Combat Recordings Collection (1941-1945). The collection can be searched using the SONIC database.

In the summer of 1941, the U.S. Marine Corps established a new public relations agency to promote recruitment and disseminate stories, photographs, and motion pictures. Colonel Robert L. Denig was selected to lead the organization. A 36-year veteran of the Corps, Denig had served with Major General Thomas Holcomb during World War I. Equally talented as a combat officer and an administrator, Denig modernized the Marine Corps' public relations programs and stationed official combat



Photo by Owen Conner  
SSgt James Moser, Jr.'s bible and Swiss-made "Hermes Baby" 1940s typewriter served him well during his combat tours.

correspondents around the world. Known affectionately as "Denig's Demons," these photo and print journalists were recruited by the Marine

Corps from a pool of the best and brightest of the era. They hailed from such illustrious newspapers as Washington D.C.'s *Evening Star*, *Times Herald*, and *Washington Post*, the *Philadelphia Bulletin*, and the *New York Daily News and Mirror*. Once enlisted, the correspondents were sent to boot camp alongside their fellow Marines and were promoted to the rank of sergeant when assigned to the field.

One of these "Demons" was a 28-year-old staff reporter from the *Evening Star* named James F. Moser, Jr. Originally from Culpeper, Virginia, Moser had worked at the *Star* since 1937. He was married with an infant daughter and was a police beat reporter. When he was drafted in 1943, he volunteered for service in the Marine Corps and was eventually assigned to the 1st Marine Division. As a minor hometown celebrity, his career was well documented. Local Virginia newspapers and colleagues at the *Evening Star* traced his Marine training, honors, and eventual travels

across the Pacific with periodic updates and photos. In return, Moser sent them short, unofficial briefs documenting his observations on everything from curious island religious ceremonies to historical and geographic facts about New Guinea.

In his more official capacities, Sergeant Moser served as a combat correspondent from December 1943 to February 1944, taking part in 1st Marine Division operations in the Battles of Cape Gloucester and New Britain. In 1944, when it was announced that there was a shortage of correspondents for the upcoming invasion of Guam, Moser volunteered to temporarily serve with the 3d Marine Division. Typical of many of "Denig's Demons," he was constantly on the lookout for firsthand material for his news stories. During the fighting for Guam, Moser landed with the initial assault waves and accompanied Marines involved in the most intense areas of fighting on the island. While filing reports from the beach, he was painfully wounded in the ear by a Japanese mortar fragment. For most Marines, the injury would have entailed a temporary respite from battle, but Sergeant Moser refused to be evacuated when he learned he was the only surviving correspondent from his combat team. After receiving first aid, he continued to report on his unit's activities from the frontlines, and in the process, he was constantly exposed to enemy machine gun, mortar, and rifle fire. On repeated occasions, he left comparatively secure positions to observe individuals and units involved in the most serious fighting.

In recognition of the "courage and professional skill" he exhibited in the battle, Sergeant Moser was awarded the Bronze Star and Purple Heart. An unusually detailed Bronze Star citation was signed by Lieutenant General Holland M. Smith, and Moser was later personally awarded the medal by the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Alexander A. Vandegrift.

After recovering from his injuries, Moser returned to the 1st Marine Division. As a staff sergeant, he con-



Marine Corps Photo collection

*Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. Alexander A. Vandegrift awarded SSgt Moser the Bronze Star for "courage and professional skill" after the Battle of Guam in 1944.*

tinued to cover the division's combat operations through the invasion of Okinawa. His news stories were distributed to stateside newspapers and *Leatherneck* magazine and were used in various other public relations activities. In June 1945, he accumulated enough points to come back to the United States. He resumed his job with the *Evening Star* as the police beat reporter and continued to work for the paper for more than 25 years. After a brief period of retirement, Moser went back to work for the *Free-Lance Star* in Fredericksburg, Virginia, until his death on 17 September 1991.

On 12 March 2008, the National Museum of the Marine Corps officially accepted a collection of artifacts from Moser's family into its permanent collection. Among the items were his personal bible and the Marine Corps-issue combat correspondent typewriter he carried through two years of war. The bible has a small steel plate attached to the front cover and was ritually stored in Moser's breast pocket over his heart throughout his years of action. The book's inlay is inscribed by his sister and also contains a cartoon sticker of a Marine urging the postal carrier to "rush Marine mail!"

Staff Sergeant Moser's military model typewriter was built in Switzerland by Hermes in the 1940s. Known as the "Hermes Baby," the model was famous for its small size, light weight, quiet keystroke, and rugged durability. As a Marine Corps equipment item, it was painted a matte olive drab and included a solid metal cover that was designed to protect the machine while traveling. Moser's cover shows the remnants of official military shipping decals and portions of two painted Hula Girls who once adorned the protective covering.

As the National Museum of the Marine Corps works to preserve both the material and cultural history of the Marine Corps, the collection of Staff Sergeant James F. Moser, Jr., serves as a wonderful reminder of the caliber of citizens the "Greatest Generation" produced. Often, national conscription and "citizen-soldiers" are associated with youth, but during World War II, it also brought specialized skills and experience to the Nation's Armed Forces. These professional men and women set aside successful careers and families and served their nation in its time of greatest need. □1775□

## The First and Longest Held POWs of World War II: North China Marine Embassy Guards—Part II

by Rob Taglianetti  
Oral Historian

*The Marine Corps History Division has 410 World War II interviews, collected by historians from the beginning of the modern Marine Corps oral history program in 1963 to the present day. The Library of Congress has 2,049 in its Veterans History Project.*

Almost two months after their capture by the Japanese on 8 December 1941, 189 North China Marines were transferred to their first prisoner-of-war camp at Woosung, 15 miles outside Shanghai, China. For some, this first year of their captivity was the longest; since everything was still new, they were not yet desensitized to a POW's monotonous existence, and the chance of repatriation still kept many alert for signs of hope. Older Marines such as Sergeant Major Cecil M. Dietz, one of the senior ranking enlisted men, settled in for what he fully expected to be a very long prison confinement. Dietz recorded in his daily diary that "all this will be forgotten or seem like a bad dream." He was correct on most of his observations and this one is still true for most of the last 15 survivors, now 66 years later. They have not forgotten how they were mistreated, but it is like a bad dream many wish they could forget.

Sergeant Major Dietz was two years out from a 30-year retirement when the Peiping Embassy was surrounded by thousands of Japanese soldiers on 8 December 1941 (7th in the United States). He had survived two wars and three active expeditions. For most of his time as a captive, Dietz was adjutant and in charge of at least one barracks of 200 men. Because he was adjutant, he was allowed to own and use a typewriter to issue reports or type up official correspondence between the Marines and Japanese camp authorities. For almost four years Dietz secretly used his type-



Japanese wartime photograph

*Japanese officials confer with American and British officers at Woosung Prison Camp. Clockwise: Col William W. Ashurst, Cdr Leo Cromwell, Maj James P. Devereux, Merchant Captain Malcolm R. Peters, Wake civilian engineer Raymond R. Rutledge.*

writer to record his daily activities in the form of a letter to his wife and children. Through 100 inspections, he cleverly hid his diary under his trunk, always expecting it would be found and never imagining it would make it home years later.

The Woosung prisoner-of-war camp offered barely adequate living conditions. As they entered the pitiful camp that was to be their home for just under one year, many men awoke to the realization that they were not going to be repatriated as they viewed the sun baked and gaunt faces of the Wake Island Marines and civilians—men suffering tremendously in the North China winter because they were still clothed with the summer garb they were captured in. Colonel William W. Ashurst and his assistant Major Luther A. Brown, the senior ranking military officers, represented the Marines to the prison camp authorities. From the first day, Colonel Ashurst filed complaints and petitioned the authorities about the needs of the POWs. The camp included seven old wooden barracks, which were 210 feet long by 50 feet wide and contained no furnishings except raised wooden platforms that slept

230 men. The camp commandant, Colonel Yuse, informed the new arrivals they were now prisoners of Japan and would be thus treated to hard work, harsh treatment, and a meager diet. At one point, there were as many as 1,790 prisoners at Woosung including the China Marines, the Wake Island Marines, about 1,000 civilians who worked on Wake Island, the crews of the USS *Wake* and the British HMS *Peterel*, as well as various merchant marines.

Unknown to the Japanese, the Marine prisoners included several expert radio technicians. Within a few days of arriving at Woosung, Private First Class Jerold B. Story led a group of daring Marines up through the roof of their barracks into the room where their luggage was locked up by the Japanese. The Marines' mission was to retrieve several shortwave radio parts that were carefully secreted throughout several crates back when they were first taken prisoner. Within hours, Technical Sergeant Charles Pierce was able to reconstruct the radio parts into a working radio and found he could pick up KGEI on Treasure Island in San Francisco. The

radio was concealed behind a 2-foot by 6-inch board in the wall of the room of three officers, including Captain John A. White. Throughout their time as prisoners in China, the secret radio was never discovered. This radio was a carefully guarded secret that possibly as few as half a dozen even knew about. Not even Sergeant Major Dietz knew of its existence, but his diary is loaded with incredibly accurate rumors that they could not have otherwise heard. This small handful of individuals had full knowledge of the progress of the war, perhaps even better than their camp authorities. They carefully leaked out news at the appropriate times and probably warned all prisoners not to talk around the Japanese guards about the rumors. This can be observed in Dietz's diary as he accurately learned of "rumors" of D-Day, successful bombing missions, the recapture of the Philippines and Guam, a turnover in the Japanese government, the destruction of the Japanese naval fleet, and news of "a Navy Task Force working within a few hundred miles of their position" (Iwo Jima). Many rumors circulated the day of or within 24 hours of the actual events. The captives loved to receive captured airmen into the camp population as they often brought firsthand news of how things were going in the United States, especially concerning the support for the war.

The Japanese rationed out rice, soup, and sometimes meat or fish to the POWs. Total calories were about 2,150 on a good day but were mostly carbohydrates, which contributed to a high rate of edema. It was enough to live and work off of but not enough to keep one healthy. For the first two months their diet was very meager. A small bowl of rice, a bowl of stew, and tea three times a day was all they got. In April of 1942 rations were increased to about 650 grams of rice per man per day, plus small amounts of meat. The meat was later discontinued, and fish or squid was given to the prisoners on a few occasions. They were often hard pressed to find any meat in their "soup." The only potable liquid was



Personal Papers of PFC Matthew H. Stohlman  
*Japanese guards took this photo of PFC Matthew H. Stohlman at the Kawasaki POW camp.*

tea served in cups five times a day. The only source of water was a surface well, which all prisoners were warned not to drink from. Dietz recorded his weight on an available scale at various times in his diary. Even before they were transferred to their first camp, Dietz had lost 20 pounds in just over one month on Japanese rations and a few care packages from Chinese friends. After four months in captivity, he weighed just 150 pounds and leveled out for the remainder of the war at 145. One particular civilian could not eat rice and died of malnutrition very quickly. Another civilian was unable to eat the bread or stew but sold it and tried to

*Japanese guard reads the news of the Singapore defeat to the haggard Woosung camp prisoners.*



Japanese wartime photograph

live off of rice alone; he got beriberi and dropsy, and eventually died.

The prisoners were allowed to grow a garden in which as many as 400–500 men worked while assigned to farm details. In August of 1942, the gardens began to produce but the Japanese took most of the vegetables. On a few very rare occasions, the Japanese would provide the prisoners some food other than the normal rations. On the Japanese emperor's birthday, the POWs each received two apples and a quarter pound of peanut butter and another time received fried fish. One constant in the prisoners' diet was that as the war progressed, the food became progressively worse. Good news for American submarines meant bad news for food shipments and supplies. At times the "meat" that was supposed to be in their soup included fish in various states of decay and moldy rice became common. Hedgerow soup, as they called it, was certainly not enough to keep them healthy through the winter. Items from the garden used in soups included lettuce, spinach, and even weeds.

The Marines who spent most of their captivity in China attributed their survival to the arrival of regular Red Cross shipments; roughly 14 packages over three and one-half years for each POW. In a letter after the war, Lieutenant Colonel Luther A. Brown wrote, "Only POWs can really

know what good work the Red Cross has accomplished. Had it not been for Mr. Edouard Egle (Shanghai Red Cross delegate) and his staff at Shanghai, the mortality rate in our camp would without doubt have been much greater." The contents of a typical Red Cross package included milk powder, processed cheese, liver paste, corned beef, margarine, lunch meat, salmon, sardines, and sugar. When shipments were held up and multiple boxes were received at one time, the officers in charge would ration the distribution to supplement their meager Japanese rations for the longest amount of time, usually one week.

On 17 March 1942, one week after five other prisoners escaped and were captured, four Marines including Corporals Charles W. Brimmer, Jerold B. Story, Connie G. Battles, and Private First Class Charles A. Stewart escaped from the camp and hid out in the home of a British woman. When the Japanese authorities discovered they were gone, the noncommissioned officer in charge of their farm detail was immediately locked up. Then about 100 Marines, including the entire farm detail and their bunkmates, were jammed into an extremely confined space for one, followed by the release of 50 one week later, then 40 the following week, and then the

remaining 10 after another week. After a month consumed with indecision on which course of action to take, the Japanese found the four escapees and surrounded the house they were in. After being interrogated and beaten for long hours, they were tried by court-martial and sentenced to serve four years in prison. Corporal Brimmer received seven years since the Japanese thought he was the leader. After laughing at a joke among themselves, the Japanese judge increased Brimmer's sentence to nine years. Corporal Story later escaped from the Ward Road Jail and, with help from friendly Chinese guerilla forces, was able to get back into United States custody.

While at Woosung, there were two unfortunate deaths. On an evening in April of 1942, a guard brought his rifle down on an indifferent civilian POW who refused to halt at the guard's command. He was shot and the lesson was learned not to take any commands lightly. One morning late in the summer of 1942, a Corporal Bucher was working on a farm detail outside the camp's electric fence. As he attempted to throw a sack of bean plants over the fence, he slipped and fell onto the fence, and was electrocuted. The fence was supposed to be shutoff during the day.

Woosung lay within a flood plain

*Marines line up at microphones and say "I am well, how are you." The Japanese later used these in broadcasts to aid their own propaganda, but U.S. citizens picked them up on shortwave radio and got news to their families.*

Japanese wartime photograph



that ensured the camp was one large mud field at least for the duration of the rainy seasons. The POWs' first task that spring was to drain and level it for use as a Japanese parade ground and prisoner athletic field. The men also did farm work and repairing of roads. The officers were never forced to do manual labor, but in some cases they were made to supervise the enlisted men. Most officers freely chose to work in the gardens.

The prisoners held athletic events on their camp compounds, and on at least one occasion, as many as five softball games were played in one day. The Japanese camp authorities, at least once, donated cigarettes to the winners to use as prizes for the emperor's birthday field day events. The prisoners also observed Memorial Day with wreath laying ceremonies at the POW cemetery. With all the hard work and opportunities to vent their stress on the sports field, the captives were still stretched thin for food, strength, health, and encouragement.

Getting news about the United States' economy, support for the war, and the success of the war was critical to helping the prisoners carry on and stick it out for the remaining time. While the Japanese were advancing unopposed in the first six months of the war, the POWs were allowed to have a radio in each barracks tuned to a Japanese propaganda station. About the time of the U.S. victory at Midway, the radios were removed. By August 1944, the Japanese stopped allowing the captives to even read the Japanese propaganda newspapers which could no longer hide the truth that the war was beginning to look bad for Japan. "We can not even get the Shanghai papers now," Dietz noted and that it "must be pretty bad when they won't let us even read their own propaganda!!!!" Many of the prisoners' families back home learned news of their sons via radio messages out of Japan. Although the POWs did not say much more than hello to their families, the Japanese would later attempt to mix the recorded voices with Japanese news to manipulate public opinion in the United States, Japan, and China.

The captives and their families were just happy to get whatever news they could. Every professional broadcaster and amateur shortwave radio hobbyist in the free world picked up these messages and passed them on to the families as best they could. Families often received telegrams from the War Department the day after their son's voice was broadcast. It was not unusual for a family's mailbox to be jammed with almost a hundred letters and several vinyl recordings from dozens of states. Sometimes recorded messages from their families were sent over shortwave radio and passed on to the POWs via telegram.

Toward the end of their 11 month stay at the Woosung Prisoner of War Camp, the Japanese administered medical examinations to determine which of the prisoners were best fit to send to Japan and sell off as slave labor to privately owned factories and docks. On 18 September 1942, 70 prisoners were sent to Japan-Fukuoka 3-B, including 69 civilians and one Marine. On 3 November 1942, 58 Marines and 12 civilians were sent to Japan-Fukuoka 3-B. About 25 of these POWs were North China Marines. Dietz lamented in his diary that by December of 1942 they had lost 30 North China Marines, including 1 death, 4 escapees, and 20 transferred to Japan. Toward the end of the war, Dietz learned that one man among this group of 20, his radioman in Peiping, China, was killed in a U.S. bombing raid while working at a factory—a tragic but unavoidable accident. Prisoners who were transferred to Japanese factories in both 1942 and 1943 worked with the various processes of steel production, such as running steel presses, forges, and lathes. Those at the docks unloaded ships, often with the most archaic forms of one-man load bearing techniques.

On 6 December 1942, the Woosung Camp was closed and all POWs were transferred to the Kiangwan Prisoner of War Camp. Those prisoners who were not ill or elderly were marched 10 to 12 miles. One reason for the move was that this camp was nearer to Shanghai to facilitate supply. Although the capacity of this camp

reached 1,800 at one point, Dietz recorded in his diary that "I sincerely believe that this camp is the best of all the war prisoner camps that the Japanese government have." In addition to the crude facilities for cooking, medical, storage, and a brig, the POWs developed certain types of industry, including a tin shop, tailor shop, shoe shop, and a carpenter shop. The prisoners relied heavily on regular supplies from the International, American, and Canadian Red Cross but many of their needs dictated that they would have to repair and otherwise fashion certain things they needed.

Just after arriving at Kiangwan, the prisoners celebrated their second Christmas in captivity with a dinner. Christmas 1942 included a miracle that came out of nowhere in the form of a man they considered an angel from heaven, at the time. Jimmy James was in the United States Army in China during the 1920s. After getting out at the age of 22, he opened a very successful hamburger business which eventually turned into multiple stores. Although the Japanese invaded China in 1937, they allowed him to continue his business. One day in 1942, he read a proud boast in a Japanese-controlled paper: "Hordes of Defeated American, British POWs in the Shanghai Prison Camp." This angered him so much that he did everything in his power to secure permission to deliver a Christmas meal within a week's time! In famine-wracked China, James found and roasted 350 turkeys with dressing, sweet potatoes, hundreds of mince meat pies, candy by the boxful, 1,500 Christmas cards signed by women, including nuns, who wrote notes and signed them, gathered Christmas decorations, scrounged up 7,750 cups of coffee, and pulled into the Shanghai prison camp, like Santa Claus, on 25 December 1942. The Marines can still taste that meal today. James was later imprisoned himself but was released by the end of the war. At a 1989 North China Marine POW reunion, he was finally honored, including receiving a letter from President Ronald W. Reagan. The North China Marine POWs are still not

over that meal 66 years later. Not only did Jimmy James' feast arrive that second Christmas in 1942, but the captives also received supplies from the Red Cross that made the holiday season much more survivable. The prisoners always got something special each and every Christmas. "At least we ate one good meal a year," Dietz recorded in 1943.

By international law, the Japanese were required to pay the POWs for their work but by late 1943, Dietz recorded that what they were being paid per day was equivalent to about one penny in U.S. dollars. At the Kiangwan Prisoner of War Camp in early 1943, the Marines were put to work building a small mountain, which some of the men called a miniature Mount Fuji. The mountain was a long time in the making as the POWs built it one wheelbarrow at a time. Some were told that this mountain was intended to one day serve as part of a recreation complex, but it ended up becoming a rifle range. What started out as a project employing 100 turned into a working party of 600. Although the men needed more food for energy, this outdoor work was good for them compared to being cooped up all day inside their dingy barracks. The summer heat in China caused many prisoners to suffer from extreme fatigue.

Good news for the U.S. war effort excited the POWs, yet at the same time meant bad news for their work and treatment. Toward the end of 1943, the front lines of the Pacific theater drew closer to Japan, and the Japanese workforce began to dwindle enough that Japanese private industries began to call for POW workers to be sent to Japan to work at docks and factories. Before the end of the war, all but a handful of the North China Marines found themselves in the home islands of Japan. □1775□

*(To be continued)*

*The author thanks Richard Dietz for quotes from his father's diary and John Powers for his expert knowledge and guidance.*

## Oral History Interviewing in Korea

by Charles R. Smith  
Head, Histories Branch

*The Marine Corps History Division has 250 Korea veteran interviews in its collection, dating from 1963 to the present. The Library of Congress has 855 Korea Marine interviews in its Veterans History Project.*

One phase of the mission of a small group of Marine reservists on duty in Korea in 1951 was to secure through interviews, information not ordinarily available in official unit reports or war diaries. The advantages of using the interview method were definite and specific: it would provide information on the reasons behind staff planning and decisions during operations; it would make possible an accurate description of terrain and weather factors and their effect on operations; it would make available comments on equipment and materiel under field and combat conditions; and it would cover small unit tactics and operations.

This task was carried out by two teams of the 1st Provisional Historical Platoon, one attached on temporary additional duty status to the 1st Marine Division and the other to the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing. The concept of a platoon of this type, populated by mobilized Reserve historians, and activated only during wartime was developed by Lieutenant Colonel Robert D. Heinl, Jr., the head of the Historical Section at Headquarters Marine Corps following World War II. (For a detailed account of the platoon and its activities, see Benis M. Frank, "Korean War's 'Fighting' 1st Provisional Historical Platoon," *Fortitudine*, summer 1989.)

The platoon was somewhat successful in carrying out its primary missions of assisting in the preparation of unit historical diaries, special action reports, and preserving and forwarding historical documents to Headquarters Marine Corps, although the major Marine commands in Korea were already fulfilling these missions.



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) SC365618

*Historians were often billeted in the public information tent of the 1st Marine Division, which served both as office and living quarters.*

But in supplementing these documents with interviews and personal observations, the "the historians," as Benis Frank noted, "were just not militarily professional enough to perform this mission meaningfully."

Despite the fact that the teams had no tape recorders, they did manage to conduct more than 150 interviews, by jotting down both questions and answers and then, often three or four months later, preparing a type transcript, which averaged two and one half pages. Few have survived. Those interviews that have survived are incomplete. For example, while the number of interviews concerning the withdrawal from Chosin Reservoir is limited, the character of the material covered is even more limited. There is coverage of small general actions, but only one interview dealing with artillery support; none are from the tank crews, truck drivers, engineers, or 4.2-inch mortar crews, who played such an important part in the movement from Hagaru-ri to Hungnam. Consequently, whole segments of the story are missing.

Also, while a majority of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing interviews covered the same topic several times at different command levels and there-

fore produced a comprehensive picture of an action, the 1st Marine Division interviews did not. Opinions were sought from pilots, squadron leaders, logistics officers, ordnance officers, forward air controllers, and tactical air controllers in an effort to substantiate information gathered concerning close air support tactics and weapons. While artillery support was vital in ground operations of 1950–1951, it was covered from the point of view and based on the experiences of one individual at one command level. As the logistics officer with the 3d Battalion, 11th Marines, he was not in a position to get an overall picture of artillery support. Interviews should have been with artillerymen, as well as those requesting and receiving fire support, in order to determine the effectiveness of the artillery support.

Because of these and more fundamental problems, regular Marine officers were ordered to duty with the platoon, but even with these regulars manning the teams, the division and wing were unhappy with the platoon and they made it clear that its services were no longer needed. The platoon, was eventually disbanded and personnel within the division and wing assumed the jobs that the historians did. □1775□

## Marine Tales from Hill 881, South Vietnam

by Greg A. Macbeak  
Technical Writer

*Lessons learned in attempts to capture comprehensive interviews throughout the Korean War gave historians the wisdom and incentive to change their approach when it came to collecting oral histories. The Marine Corps History Division hired historian Benis Frank, who helped organize an unprecedented collection effort that gathered thousands of interviews recorded in Vietnam, and thousands more collected by base and unit historians. The Marine Corps History Division has about 10,000 Vietnam interviews collected during and just after the war, and about 100 since. The Library of Congress holds about 1,200 in its Veterans History Project.*

Oral History collects information about a particular war or battle from a personal perspective of the individual Marine who was there. It is this personal perspective that gives oral history its unique ability to portray military events with an ambience that is not always conveyed by unit chronologies. This article recounts a few personal tales, during the time of the Khe Sanh battle, from one of the hill fights—Hill 881 South (881S)—from the Marines who were there. Khe Sanh was an isolated combat base on a plateau in the northern mountains of I Corps, western Quang Tri Province, Vietnam. Surrounding Khe Sanh Combat Base (commanded by Colonel David E. Lownds of the 26th Marines) were a group of hills of tactical importance; these hills were labeled 1015, 950 (east of the Rao Quan River and due north of Khe Sanh), 558, 861, 881N, and 881S (northwest of Khe Sanh). These hills were scenes of ferocious fighting between the Marines and the *People's Army of Vietnam* (North Vietnamese) from the early days of 1967 through 1968.

Hill 881S was about seven kilometers northwest of Khe Sanh and was defended by Company I, 3d Battalion,

26th Marines, under Captain William H. Dabney. One of the Marines under Captain Dabney was Lance Corporal Gary K. Parker, who helped to resupply Hill 881S. Corporal Parker had joined the Marines because of trouble at home and found himself in Vietnam, which he described as a “life-changing situation” and “very spooky.” He related that much of the fighting on Hill 881S occurred at night: “It was scary because you couldn’t see your hand in front of your face.” He said that the North Vietnamese were so near to the Marines’ trenches that you “could hear them talking, could smell the marijuana.” He went on to say that the North Vietnamese “could be 10 feet in front of you and you wouldn’t even know it.”

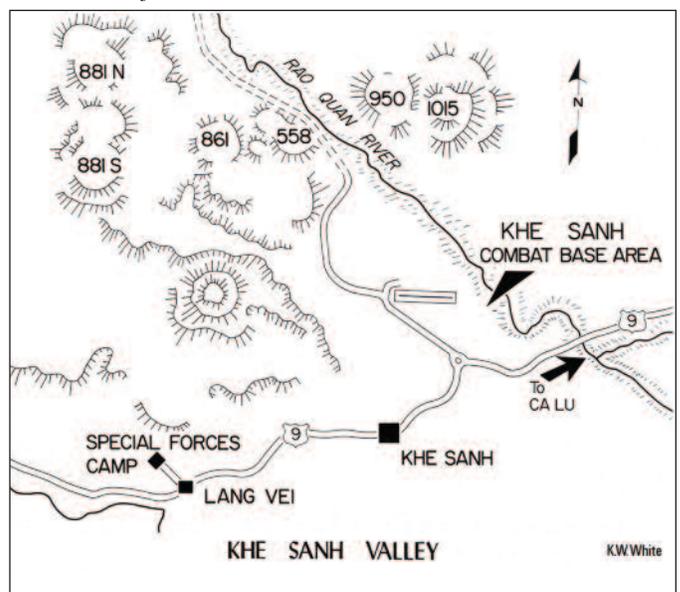
Corporal Kenneth S. Warner also told of a similar feeling of dread while on patrol. While patrolling in a valley between Hills 881S and 881N, he stopped with his patrol and heard “footsteps behind me.” He went on to say that this was the “eerie and scariest feeling in the world like we were being watched.” His gut feeling was on the mark for, on 19 January 1968, his unit got ambushed halfway up Hill 881N. The next day, while patrolling with Captain Dabney, he got wounded. After being medevaced out and recovering, Corporal Warner was back on Hill 881S with India Company and Captain Dabney.

Each Marine who made it to Hill 881S, not only had to face his fears, but for the Marines in helicopters, they faced some of the worst weather and hostile

environments. For Corporal Bob Steinberg, who was assigned to HMM 364 as a crew chief, his first visit to Khe Sanh and Hill 881S impressed him as being “very serene” and an “isolated, desolate” country. However, it was soon after this initial impression that Corporal Steinberg would see things differently, flying in CH-46s to resupply the Marines on the hills around Khe Sanh.

The Marines on Hill 881S were cut off from any kind of land resupply so they were absolutely dependent on CH-46s for food, water, and ammunition. The CH-46s resupplied the hills with 15 helicopters in groups of three, according to Major Alfred Zindin. With armed UH-1 Hueys on either side for protection, the CH-46s would carry anywhere from 4,000 to 5,000 pounds of supplies in large nets. The helicopters would slow to 5 to 15 knots and then drop their loads about 50 feet above the hilltop. The CH-46 pilots would use the “hellhole” (a hatch in the bottom of the helicopter) in order to avoid dumping the sup-

*The map below shows the locations of the hills surrounding Khe Sanh Combat Base during the hill fights and the siege. Hill 881 South is shown about seven kilometers northwest of the combat base.*



plies down the slope of the hill. If the pilots came under fire, they would “pickle the load” (dump and run) so as not to lose the crew and helicopter.

These flights of helicopters with support aircraft were known as “super gaggles,” and according to Corporal Herrick R. Lord, were the “only thing that saved us.” Though the super gaggles brought in tons of supplies, the Marines still faced deprivation while on Hill 881S. Corporal Lord related how food and water were very tight and had to be restricted. In fact, the Marines ended up scrounging up old cans of food that had been thrown away, competing with the indigenous “huge rats.” Apparently, these ferocious vermin did not fear the Marines because several Marines got bitten and had to get rabies shots. However, the Marines were not deterred by huge rats and scrounged up enough food to make their infamous “Tabasco casse-

roles.” The deprivations didn’t end with the lack of food; the Marines were short on water, and thus didn’t shave, and their “clothes were rotting off” according to Corporal Lord.

Though things were tough for the Marines, there were bits of humor and relief from the fighting. On one of the super gagle flights, a Marine got his foot caught on the netting and went for a spin in the air. Luckily he didn’t drop and made it back to the ground, safe and sound. On another occasion, according to Corporal Lord, one night his unit saw thousands of torches of what they believed to be North Vietnamese. They called in artillery and made short work of that formation. That same night, another guy said that he saw a torch and more artillery was called in on this unlucky enemy; however, the torch turned out to be a firefly—the Marines blew up a

hillside, not the bug. And of course, one can not fight a war without a sweet treat; James Sigman (rank not given) relates how one day his lieutenant asked him if he wanted some ice cream. Sigman said yes, and the lieutenant pulled out a carton of ice cream meant for Hill 861. Everybody gorged themselves on ice cream, but due to the high sugar content of the ice cream, some of the Marines got diarrhea.

Oral history listens to the individual Marine’s story that very often does not show up in the official histories. Oral history takes us behind the scenes and shows us the inner Marine as he or she confronts tough conditions with ingenuity and verve. If oral history is successful, it is because these Marines were willing to share their personal stories—where the few did make the difference at Hill 881S, South Vietnam. □1775□

## *Marine Corps Chronology*

# Marines in Lebanon, 1982-1984

by Kara R. Newcomer  
Reference Historian

*The Marine Corps History Division has about 100 Lebanon interviews in its collection, dating from 1982 to the present.*

The following is a reprint from the 1987 History Division publication *U.S. Marines in Lebanon, 1982-1984*, by Benis M. Frank. This year marks the 25th Anniversary of the 23 October 1983 bombing of the headquarters building of Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, in Beirut that claimed 241 American lives.

### 1982

**25 August** - Roughly 800 Marines of the 32d Marine Amphibious Unit (MAU), commanded by Colonel James M. Mead, land in Beirut as part of a multinational peacekeeping force to oversee evacuation of PLO guerrillas under Israeli siege. Force also includes 400 French and 800 Italian soldiers.

**10 September** - Evacuation of PLO complete; 32d MAU is ordered out of

Beirut by the President of the United States.

**26 September** - Preparations for redeployment are underway, in the wake of the assassination of Lebanese President-elect Bashir Gemayel, an Israeli push into Muslim West Beirut, and the massacre of Palestinians at the Sabra and Shatilla refugee camps. Marines and sailors of the 32d MAU receive the Navy Unit Commendation for their part in the PLO evacuation, in ceremonies on board the USS *Guam* (LPH-9), 60 miles off the coast of Lebanon.

**29 September** - The 32d MAU returns to Beirut, to join 2,200 French and Italian troops already in place.

**30 September** - Marines suffer first casualties (1 KIA; 3 WIA) while clearing unexploded ordnance from the vicinity of Beirut International Airport.

**30 October** - The 32d MAU is relieved by the 24th MAU, commanded by Colonel Thomas M. Stokes, Jr.

**4 November** - The 24th MAU extends its presence in Beirut to the eastern (Christian) sector, patrolling the “Green Line” that divides the city into sectarian parts.

**3 December** - 24th MAU artillery is moved ashore. (Battery of six 155mm howitzers)

**10 December** - 24th MAU armor is moved ashore. (Platoon of five M60A7 tanks)

**13 December** - Marines commence training of Lebanese Armed Forces. About 75 Lebanese soldiers undergo 21 days training in basic infantry skills and helicopter assaults.

### 1983

**29 January** - Emergency communication network established between American and Israeli forces as tensions mount between adjacent ground units.

**2 February** - Captain Charles B. Johnson confronts three Israeli tanks as they attempt to pass through his company checkpoint, in the most seri-

ous incident to date.

**15 February** - The 32d MAU, now re-designated the 22d MAU and still commanded by Colonel Mead, returns to Lebanon to relieve the 24th MAU.

**21 February** - Marines commence four days of relief operations in the town of Quartaba during Lebanon's worst blizzard in memory. With Syrian acquiescence, Marine helicopters also fly into Syrian-held territory in Lebanon's central mountains to rescue victims of frostbite and exposure.

**16 March** - Five Marines WIA in first direct attack on American peacekeeping troops. Islamic fundamentalist group Jihad Islami claims responsibility.

**17 March** - The 24th MAU receives the Navy Unit Commendation for service in Lebanon between October 1982 and February 1983.

**18 April** - A large car bomb explodes at the U.S. Embassy in Beirut, causing massive structural damage and killing 61, including 17 Americans. More than 100 are injured. Islamic fundamentalists again claim responsibility.

**5 May** - Marine helicopter with six aboard, including Colonel Mead, is hit by ground fire as it investigates artillery duels between Druze and Christian gunners.

**17 May** - Lebanon-Israeli withdrawal agreement is signed.

**30 May** - The 24th MAU, commanded by Colonel Timothy J. Geraghty, relieves the 22d MAU.

**25 June** - Marines conduct first combined patrols with Lebanese Army troops.

**27 June** - The 22d MAU receives the Navy Unit Commendation for service in Lebanon between 15 February and 30 June 1983.

**22 July** - Two Marines and one sailor WIA by shrapnel during shelling of Beirut International Airport, part of a general pattern of increasing indirect fire against the Lebanese Army, the airport, and the Multi-National Force.

**10 August** - About 27 artillery and mortar rounds are fired by Druze militia from the high ground east of Beirut into Beirut International Airport,



Marine Corps Official Photo (DN-SN-84-05173)

*A CH-53 Sea Stallion helicopter lifts off the Marine compound at Beirut International Airport.*

resulting in one Marine WIA. Rockets also hit the Defense Ministry and the Presidential palace, and three cabinet ministers are kidnapped by the Druze.

**11 August** - Eight more rocket/artillery rounds fired into Beirut International Airport. No casualties.

**16 August** - Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Paul X. Kelley, visits the 24th MAU.

**28 August** - A combat outpost manned by 30 Marines and Lebanese Army troops east of Beirut International Airport comes under fire from semi-automatic weapons and rocket-propelled grenades. Marines return fire for the first time with rifles and M-60 machine guns. No friendly casualties after a 90-minute firefight.

**29 August** - A heavy rocket, mortar, and artillery attack on 24th MAU positions on eastern side of Beirut International Airport results in 2 Marine KIA and 14 Marine WIA. Marines retaliate with 155mm artillery.

**30 August** - French and Italian command posts hit by mortar fire. One French KIA; five Italian WIA.

**31 August** - Department of Defense authorizes hostile fire pay of \$65 per month for Marines and sailors of the 24th MAU serving in Lebanon. Marines retaliate with 155mm artillery after Muslim shelling of U.S. Embassy residence.

**1 September** - Joint Chiefs of Staff directs deployment of Amphibious Ready Group ALPHA with the 31st

MAU embarked from the Western Pacific to the Mediterranean in the vicinity of Lebanon.

**3 September** - The 35th MAU is activated in the Western Pacific to replace the 31st MAU.

**4 September** - Israeli forces withdraw to positions on the Awali River, creating a void to be filled by factional hostilities among the Lebanese.

**6 September** - Rocket attack on Beirut International Airport from Druze positions in Shouf mountains results in two Marine KIA; two Marine WIA. Total since 28 August: four KIA; 28 WIA.

**8 September** - Frigate USS *Bowen* fires 5-inch guns in first American use of naval gunfire support, silencing a Druze militia battery that had shelled Beirut International Airport. Marines also responded with 155mm artillery fire.

**10 September** - Battleship USS *New Jersey* is alerted for deployment to the Eastern Mediterranean.

**12 September** - 31st MAU arrives off Lebanon and assumes standby role.

**16 September** - Destroyer USS *John Rodgers* and frigate USS *Bowen* respond with 5-inch gunfire into Syrian controlled parts of Lebanon, after continued shelling near the residence of the U.S. ambassador.

**19 September** - USS *John Rogers* and USS *Virginia* fire 338 five-inch rounds to help Lebanese Army troops retain hold on strategic Shouf Mountains vil-



Marine Corps Official Photo (DN-SN-83-05607)

*Marines from the 32d Marine Amphibious Unit walk down the bow ramp of the tank landing ship USS Manitoiwoc (LST-1180). The Marines were part of a multinational peacekeeping force assigned to Lebanon after a confrontation between Israeli forces and the Palestine Liberation Organization.*

lage of Suq al Gharb. American role shifted from “presence” to direct support of Lebanese Armed Forces in the perception of rebel factions.

**20 September** - Residence of U.S. ambassador shelled; USS *John Rodgers* and USS *Virginia* respond.

**21 September** - USS *John Rodgers* and USS *Arthur Radford* responded to shelling of Marines at Beirut International Airport.

**23 September** - Indirect fire on Marine positions countered by 155mm artillery fire and 5-inch gunfire from USS *Virginia*.

**24 September** - USS *New Jersey* arrived off Lebanese coast following high-speed transit from duty off Central America.

**26 September** - Cease-fire went into effect at 0600. Announced by Saudi Arabian and Syrian officials in Damascus and supported by Druze. Talks begin on formation of new coalition government for Lebanon. Marine casualties to date: five killed, 49 wounded.

**1 October** - 31st MAU departed Mediterranean for Indian Ocean in response to threatened crisis near Strait of Hormuz.

**5 October** - Two Marine helicopters hit by ground fire.

**8 October** - Two Marines wounded by sniper fire.

**13 October** - One Marine wounded by grenade fragments.

**14 October** - One Marine killed, three wounded by sniper fire. Marine sharpshooters responded, setting off three-hour firefight. Ceasefire of 26 September allegedly still in place.

**15 October** - Marine sharpshooters kill four snipers.

**16 October** - One Marine killed, five wounded by sniper fire.

**19 October** - Four Marines wounded as attempt to ambush Marine convoy with car bomb was thwarted.

**23 October** - Suicide truck loaded with equivalent of 12,000 pounds of explosives destroys headquarters building

*The headquarters building of Battalion Landing Team 1/8 lies in ruins after the 23 October 1983 suicide bombing that killed 241 Americans.*

Marine Corps Official Photo



of BLT 1/8 at Beirut International Airport. Almost simultaneous suicide attack destroys building occupied by French paratroopers. U.S. casualties: 241 KIA; 70 WIA. French casualties: 58 KIA. Marine replacement airlifts, via 13 C-141 aircraft, begin the same day.

**25 October** - Commandant of the Marine Corps visits wounded in West German hospital and flies on to Lebanon to inspect scene of suicide attack.

**4 November** - Department of Defense establishes commission headed by Admiral Robert L.G. Long, USN (Ret.) to investigate 23 October suicide attack at Beirut International Airport. Suicide driver blows up Israeli headquarters in Tyre, killing 29 soldiers and 32 prisoners.

**7 November** - Brigadier General James R. Joy arrives in Beirut to assume command of Marine operations in Lebanon.

**19 November** - The 24th MAU is relieved by the 22d MAU, which had participated in the 25 October–2 November Grenada intervention en route to the Mediterranean. Brigadier General Joy is in overall command of Lebanon operations for the Marines.

**22 November** - Defense Secretary Weinberger states that the 23 October suicide attack on the Marines was car-



Marine Corps Official Photo (DN-SC-87-12081)

*U.S. Marines, armed with M16 rifles, take cover behind sandbags during a terrorist attack. The Marines were deployed in Lebanon as part of a multinational peacekeeping force following confrontation between Israeli forces and the Palestine Liberation Organization.*

ried out by Iranians with the “sponsorship, knowledge, and authority of the Syrian government.”

**4 December** - Marines at Beirut International Airport come under heavy fire from gun positions in Syrian-held territory. Marine casualties: eight KIA; two WIA. U.S. Navy retaliates with gunfire. Earlier in the day, a 28-plane raid was conducted on Syrian anti-aircraft positions in the mountains east of Beirut, in retaliation for Syrian fire directed at American aerial reconnaissance missions. Two U.S. aircraft are downed, in this first combat mission over Lebanon.

**15 December** - The battleship USS *New Jersey* delivers 16-inch gunfire on anti-aircraft positions in the Syrian-occupied mountains southeast of Beirut, as the Syrians continue to fire at U.S. reconnaissance flights over the area. This was the USS *New Jersey*'s first action off Lebanon.

**28 December** - The Long Commission releases an unclassified 140-page report on the 23 October suicide attack.

## 1984

**8 January** - A Marine is killed by unidentified assailants as he exits a helicopter at a landing zone on the edge of downtown Beirut. The helicopter flew to safety, after returning fire with its machine guns.

**13 January** - Marines in the Beirut International Airport area fight a 30-minute battle with gunmen firing from

a building east of their perimeter.

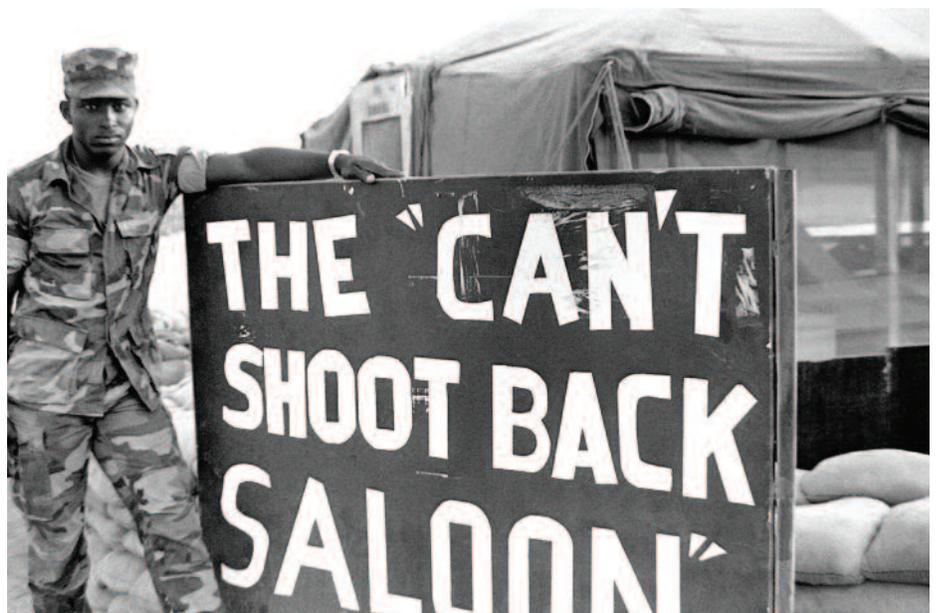
**15 January** - Druze gunners close Beirut International Airport for three hours with intense 23mm fire on Marine positions east and southeast of the airport. U.S. forces respond with small arms fire, mortars, rockets, tank fire, and naval gunfire from the battleship USS *New Jersey* and destroyer USS *Tattnall*. No U.S. casualties.

**2 February** - Heavy fighting erupts in the suburbs of Beirut, between the Lebanese Army and Shi'ite militiamen.

**3 February** - Shi'ite leadership calls for resignation of Muslim cabinet mem-

*A Marine stands with a sign that signifies the feelings of the multinational peacekeeping force, in reference to the order that they could not use their weapons unless it was absolutely necessary to protect themselves and their fellow Marines.*

Marine Corps Official Photo (DN-SN-84-00715)



bers and urges Muslims in the Lebanese Army to disregard the orders of their leaders. Prime Minister Wazzan and the Lebanese cabinet resign, to clear way for formation of new coalition government.

**6 February** - Druze and Muslim militiamen seize much of Beirut in street fighting and demand resignation of Amine Gemayel.

**7 February** - President Ronald W. Reagan announces decision to redeploy Marines from Beirut International Airport to ships offshore, leaving a residual force behind to protect the U.S. Embassy and other American interests. Increased reliance on air strikes and naval gunfire support indicated.

**8 February** - USS *New Jersey* bombards Druze and Syrian gun batteries in Lebanon in the heaviest and most sustained American military action since the Marines arrived in Lebanon in 1982.

**10-11 February** - American civilians and other foreigners evacuate Beirut by helicopter.

**21 February** - U.S. Marines officially begin their withdrawal from Beirut to U.S. Sixth Fleet ships offshore.

**26 February** - Withdrawal of the 22d MAU complete. □1775□

## Oral Histories of the Gulf War, 1990-1991

by Paul Westermeyer  
*Histories Branch*

*The Marine Corps History Division has more than 150 Gulf War interviews in its collection, dating from 1991 to the present. The Library of Congress has 245 in its Veterans History Project.*

During the Gulf War of 1990–91, the History Division deployed five field historians: Colonel Charles J. Quilter, Colonel H. Avery Chenoweth, Lieutenant Colonel Charles H. Cureton, Lieutenant Colonel Dennis P. Mroczkowski, and Lieutenant Colonel Ronald J. Brown. In addition to taking photographs and collecting historically significant documents, these historians conducted a large number of oral history interviews with Marines deployed to the Gulf. These interviews form the core of the oral histories collected on the Gulf War, and are now stored in the Visual Research Archives of the Gray Research Center; most can be located by asking the staff to perform a subject search on the terms “Desert Shield” and “Desert Storm.”

The oral histories collected by the division’s field historians cover the broad sweep of the Marine experience in the Gulf; they include interviews

with pilots, infantry officers, reconnaissance Marines, armored battalion officers, headquarters, and service support Marines. In addition, there are interviews with the major Marine commanders in the Gulf. Lieutenant Colonel Brown later covered the experiences of Marines participating in Operation Provide Comfort, the 1991 humanitarian relief mission in northern Iraq. After returning to the States, the field historians used their collected documents and oral histories to produce monographs in History Division’s nine volume *U.S. Marines in the Persian Gulf, 1990–1991* series.

In addition to the interviews conducted by field historians during the event, History Division historians have since conducted interviews with Gulf War veterans to fill gaps in the record and further illustrate the Marine experience in the conflict. Some of the highlights of these efforts include indepth interviews with General Walter E. Boomer (I Marine Expeditionary Force and MarCent commander), Major General Fadhel Basri, former commander of the *16th Infantry Division of the Iraqi Army* and Lieutenant Colonel Clifford M. Acree,

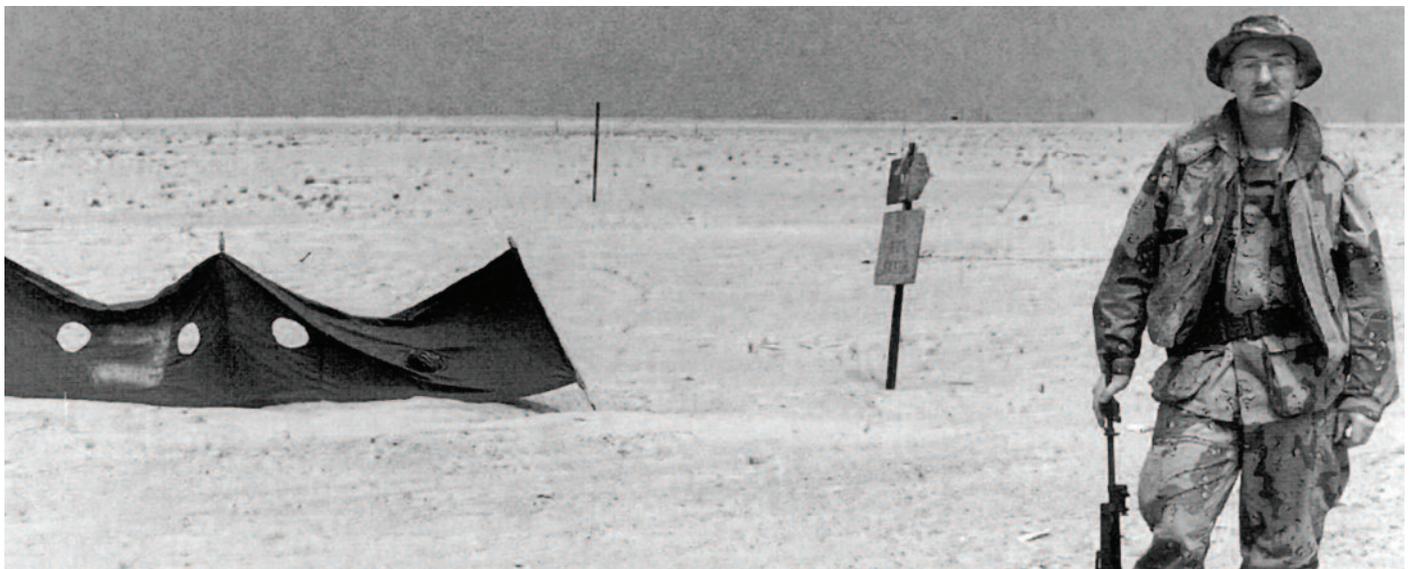
one of five Marines captured by the Iraqis during the conflict. Many of these interviews are available in the Visual Research Archives; those which are not are available at History Division.

During the Gulf War, the Marine Corps deployed Battlefield Assessment Teams overseas. These teams conducted interviews rather than true oral histories; they were conducted to learn lessons from the conflict, not to preserve the historical record of events. Nonetheless they provide an important view of Marines during the conflict, and many of these interviews are transcribed and preserved in the Southwest Asia Collection of the Gray Research Center Archives.

Currently, History Division is producing an official history of Marines in the Gulf War, and a companion to this piece is an oral history anthology, collecting some of the more interesting interviews concerning the conflict. Like the Korean War, the Gulf War was relatively short, but thanks to the efforts of the field historians and Battlefield Assessment Teams, it will not be a “forgotten war.” □1775□

*In March 1991, field historian LtCol Dennis P. Mroczkowski stands at the entrance to lane “Blue 3,” where he participated in breach control group operations.*

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 07891291



## Collecting Oral History: Operation Enduring Freedom

by Dr. Nathan S. Lowrey  
*Histories Branch*

*The Marine Corps History Division has about 400 9/11 and Operation Enduring Freedom interviews, collected by historians between 2001 and 2008. The Library of Congress has a few dozen in its Veterans History Project.*

At least as far back as the ancient Greeks, military historians have prized firsthand accounts as primary sources of information. Because the informants witness the battle as either participants or observers, their personal recollections are often more accurate than secondary sources and can illuminate details not always contained in official records. For example, they can highlight the context in which a conflict occurred, how the battle may have deviated from the plan, and the contributions of individuals or small units lost in the melee.

It was not until World War II, however, that Army historian Samuel Lyman Atwood Marshall systematized the collection and preservation of such data. He advocated group debriefings, conducted immediately following a particular combat action, as the preferred method for gathering information. While this technique represented a great advance in oral history collection strategy, it required that a historian be on hand to conduct the interview; it overlooked the downside

of collaborative accounts; and it made the transcription of multiple voices more difficult. While always a difficult task, modern field historians have fine-tuned the collection process.

While collecting approximately 376 interviews during Operation Enduring Freedom, eight researchers from the History Division took a modified approach to documenting Marine operations in Afghanistan, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Guantanamo Bay. First, they tended to arrive at the tail end of the conflict, enabling them to collect on the full range of operations conducted by the units, but soon enough after the events that the experiences encountered were fresh in the participants' minds. Second, they developed a comprehensive collection plan, targeting key personnel, while systematically working down the chain of command: commanding officers and their principle staff, junior commanders, and Marines involved in significant events. Third, after returning to the United States, the field historians meticulously summarized the content of each interview and had key accounts transcribed to facilitate use by future researchers. Finally, the oral history effort was part of a comprehensive strategy that included the collection and preservation of operational documents, photographic images, and historic artifacts submitted

to appropriate agencies at the Gray Research Center and the National Museum of the Marine Corps. This strategy contrasts sharply with the encounter approach, which is to traverse the battlefield while hunting human-interest stories for public consumption.

The rationale behind the History Division's oral history program is to preserve operational information—enhancing students' education, informing the public, and honoring the deeds of Marines. Oral history interviews collected during Operation Enduring Freedom have been particularly effective in revealing the nature of Marine operations in Afghanistan. For example, although efforts to interdict the Taliban's westward escape from Kandahar during December 2001 were among the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit's major tactical achievements, unclassified documentation of the operation remains sparse. Yet by collating data from eleven oral history interviews collected by four different historians, I was able to reconstruct a detailed account of events occurring along Highway 1 (presented as a chapter in the division's forthcoming history of *Marine Operations in Afghanistan, 2001–2002*, which is scheduled to appear early in 2009).

*Marine light armored vehicles from the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit head east toward Kandahar, leaving little room for anything else on the narrow asphalt road known as Route 1 on 9 December 2001.*

Photo by Sgt Joseph R. Chenelly



The following synopsis of one engagement illustrates how the personal experiences of several key participants can contribute to a more informative account by addressing particular aspects of the overall event.

On 4 December 2001, Lieutenant Colonel Christopher M. Bourne led elements of Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, north toward Highway 1. After a grueling 90-mile trek across the desert, they established patrol base Pentagon on the south side of the Arghandab River, which Captain Richard W. Whitmer and Company B subsequently secured. On the evening of 6 December, Major Thomas J. Impellitteri and Company B, 1st Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, crossed the river, negotiated their way through a small farming hamlet, and established an ambush along the highway. When the lead vehicle in a widely dispersed Taliban convoy reached the roadblock early the next morning, Gunnery Sergeant John A. Dailey and Marines from the Force Reconnaissance platoon dispatched the enemy in a brief but intense firefight. After withdrawing to their objective rally point,

*HM3 Lori Butierries, temporarily attached to Battalion Landing Team 1/6, stands guard over a group of Afghan women and children as infantrymen search their homes in Khabargho, Zabol Province.*

Photo by GySgt Keith A. Milks



Captain Michael D. Bryan, the company's forward air controller, directed Captain Michael J. Colletta and other orbiting close air support assets onto the three remaining enemy transport vehicles, which had attempted to skirt the Marines' position.

On the other hand, I have also used the same technique to explore the diversity of experiences encountered by personnel during cordon and search operations conducted by the 22d Marine Expeditionary Unit in 2004. Sensitive to indigenous cultural values, they attached 12 women from the command, aviation, and support elements to several infantry units then searching remote mountain valleys for enemy sympathizers and weapons caches. Besides documenting how they conducted the searches, contrasting related accounts drawn from men, women, officers, enlisted, sailors, and Marines revealed a wide range of personal perspectives. The study emphasized how individual dedication and combined effort had contributed to their successful accomplishment of the mission, but it also indicated that additional cross training

would improve unit cohesion during future field operations.

While I am an obvious advocate of oral history, principally because of its ability to provide context and put a face on dry institutional narratives, the ideal scenario is when historians can combine personal experience with official documents, operational graphics, and photographs. Consider for a moment how we might enhance the ambush account by using data from operations orders, situation reports, and intelligence summaries to specify or verify who did what, where, when, and why. Then add a map depicting not only the location of significant events, but also the surrounding terrain. Finally, include a revealing photograph that links the various types of information visually, and we have succeeded in preserving a robust account of Marine combat operations. The fortunate researcher will find most of this data available in the form of a unit's command chronology, prepared by the participants.

As the war against terrorism continues for America's operational forces, so does the documentation effort at History Division. Chief Warrant Officer 3 Timothy S. McWilliams, a recent graduate of California State University-Chico with an MA in military history, has just deployed to Central Command's theater of operations. While there, he will continue to collect and preserve historical information reflecting Marine operations in both Afghanistan and Iraq. Upon his return, he will distill the data into a written report that will introduce us to the Marines currently serving in harm's way—so we may experience and appreciate their continued commitment vicariously. □1775□

## Governance and Economic Development in Ramadi and Fallujah, January 2008

by Col Michael D. Visconage  
*Field Historian*

*The Marine Corps History Division has approximately 4,000 Operation Iraqi Freedom interviews in its collection, dating from 2003 to the present. The Library of Congress has about 100 in its Veterans History Project.*

*Colonel Charlton, 1-3 Brigade Combat Team, Ramadi*

My second day in Ramadi starts with the morning battle update with 1st Brigade, 3d Infantry Division, Brigade Combat Team (1-3 BCT) at Camp Ramadi on the western edge of the city. My first interview is with the brigade commander, Colonel John W. Charlton. Charlton is on his third tour in Iraq. He is mentioned in *Cobra II* for his role in Baghdad during the initial invasion. His second tour was on the staff of 3d Infantry Division. We talk for an hour and a half, and he walks me through the more violent and kinetic part of their tour, which started in January 2007. The average number of friendly killed-in-action was 10 per month when he arrived. A year later, it has been 224 days without an attack. During three named operations in the spring of 2007, they cleared the city house by house of al Qaeda in Iraq and partnered with the Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police to hold the areas they had cleared.

Now, their non-kinetic fight is decentralized, pushed down to two Marine battalions working under 1-3 BCT, their companies, and ultimately to the platoon level for execution. If the overall Multi-National Corps-Iraq fight in Iraq is decentralized, the governance and economic development phase is more so. Joint Security Stations are set up in every neighborhood, something like a police station on steroids, where Coalition forces and Iraqi Police live and work. Over the intervening months, they have been able to continue to improve security and make good progress on

building up the Iraqi Police, repairing the electric grid, and bringing in the first small business loans. “We’re no longer focusing on the big stuff—we’re working on small neighborhood programs,” Charlton said.

Even information operations are decentralized, with 80 percent of the information operations products prepared at the local level—a big change from early 2007 when these products had to be approved at the highest levels. Each Joint Security Station is able to communicate over loudspeakers through a project called the voice of Ramadi and with locally printed and posted flyers. If we were in guerilla warfare earlier, we are now practicing guerilla marketing.

*Captain Steele, Company G, Joint Security Station Warar*

After our meeting, Colonel Charlton takes me out in his convoy to meet up with the Company G, 2d Battalion, 8th Marines, (G 2/8) company commander at a district council meeting next to Joint Security Station Warar in Ramadi. There are 10 Iraqis in the

meeting; three are in traditional Arab keffiyeh headdress. They smoke like chimneys. They are being briefed by three U.S. military officers (members of the Provincial Reconstruction Team and civil affairs) on the status of the electricity supply, which took a downward dip recently. Also in the room are the company commander, Captain Christopher T. Steele, his civil affairs noncommissioned officer, and his interpreter. What comes out in the discussion is the underlying concern that the mayor does not recognize the district councils, so this causes problems getting forward movement on resolution of neighborhood issues. We are served the traditional Iraqi tea and some interesting packaged bakery snack. This goes on for about another 90 minutes. As Steele says later, after a few meetings the relationship with the local leaders becomes easier, “It’s the rule of seven meetings. Once you learn it’s OK to let your hair down, you make progress. I legitimately view them as friends.”

After the meeting, I walk across the street with Captain Steele to a Joint

*Capt Christopher T. Steele (right), commanding officer of Company G, 2/8, meets with local community leaders at the Warar Iraqi Police Station, Ramadi, 9 January 2008.*

Photo by Col Michael D. Visconage



Security Station, which is run by one of his lieutenants and includes a contingent of Iraqi Police. The Iraqi Army is now officially working outside the cities, so it is just the Marines working with the Iraqi Army, going out on joint foot patrols and keeping their finger on the pulse as the situation develops. Steele talks about his mission to train, develop, and facilitate the ability of the Iraqi Police to protect the city and to partner with local level authorities. The Marines in his company partner with the Iraqi Police at seven Iraqi Police stations in the district. He has his company reorganized along the lines of a mini-battalion, with lieutenants and noncommissioned officers filling traditional “S” section duties.

The Joint Security Station is another tumble-down sort of cast concrete building with lots of side rooms. It is cold outside this time of year, and even colder inside the building. There are cardboard boxes of snacks and sundry items on plywood shelves in the Marine area of the Joint Security Station—more goodies from home. They live off of T-rations, but recently the Iraqi Police have brought standing food vendors into the Joint Security Station who offer pita sandwiches and a few other fresh foods. When I stop by, they are making some kind of hush puppy-like deep fried treat. In the Joint Security Station, the Marines who are not on duty are relaxing. Two are playing Halo 3 on an Xbox 360. If this wasn't a war, it could be some kind of crazy, filthy frat house that would certainly be condemned by U.S. standards.

The Marines split up their patrols—half during the day and half at night. The excitement of the day is that three improvised explosive devices were found last night, poorly hidden around some trash on a street in this precinct. The human intelligence channels are already churning, and there may be a raid tonight to roll up those suspected. We take a vehicle convoy to another Joint Security Station, located on “Give Me Street”—so named for the children who quickly gather as the three-vehicle humvee convoy turns onto the dead-end street that leads to Joint Security Station

Thayla. It is a two-building complex along the northern edge of the city—another site with a team of Marines and a contingent of Iraqi Police. They keep an eye on the nearby hospital and the surrounding community. Second Lieutenant Kyle Kurtz is in charge and he is an entrepreneurial junior leader. He has taught himself a good bit of Arabic, and there are jokes back and forth among the Marines about the risks of “going native.” They move in and around the community, maintaining contacts with residents and businesses, making intentional stops to buy food or a soda while still being watchful of security, but in a more subtle way than was the case a few months ago. This builds trust and relationships—counterinsurgency warfare by the book.

*Lieutenant Colonel Bargeron, 2d Battalion, 8th Marines, Ramadi*

I meet with their battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Jay Bargeron, Jr. after dark back at Camp Ramadi. He sees the local conditions improving by leaps and bounds ever since they assumed the battle space on 1 November. He has the ability to fund local improvements through the use of Commander's Emergency Response Program funds; \$16 million was spent at the battalion level on projects in 2007. I asked him about the “irreversible momentum” discussed in the operations order published by Multi-National Corps–Iraq in late December. When will we be able to move to tactical over watch? Strategic over watch? From Bargeron's perspective, we are in the irreversible momentum stage: “We're very close to it. The citizens of Ramadi have seen the stark comparison between 2004/2005 and now. No one has any vested interest in letting things go back to the way they were.”

The last fun of the day comes in the form of my first ride on the tilt-rotor MV-22 Osprey from Ramadi to Fallujah. The travel time on mission Steadfast 10 is cut in half compared to the usual helicopter ride. The load and unload process is awkward and time-consuming. The time spent in the hover for takeoff and landing seems excessive and there is a lot of vibra-

tion on landing. It also kicks up a lot of dirt. On the plus side, the climb out is an interesting feeling—unusual to be sitting in helicopter-like airframe that climbs out like a plane.

*Lieutenant Colonel Dowling, 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, Fallujah*

The morning is cold and wet, with light rain and temperatures slightly above freezing in Fallujah. I learned later that they had snow in Baghdad, 50 kilometers to the east. After breakfast, I head to the Multi-National Forces–West headquarters building to plan for the day. Things are in flux, and the bulk of the morning is lost in coordinating details. I did manage to set up an opportunity to link up with 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines, at their headquarters in nearby Camp Bahria.

The battalion commander with responsibility for Fallujah is Lieutenant Colonel Christopher S. Dowling. A former enlisted Marine who got his start as part of the ceremonial detail at Marines Barracks, Washington, D.C., Dowling is strong in his Catholic faith but has a broad sensitivity to the Islamic culture of the city and is charged with coaxing the city along to self-sufficiency. One of his efforts in the city has been to engage with the local imams and to start conversations about their traditions and community standards. Educating himself on the tradition of helping the needy during Eid (the Muslim holiday marking the end of Ramadan, the Islamic holy month of fasting), he arranged to donate 20 goats to various mosques for slaughter by the imams and provisioning to the poorer residents of the precincts.

As we drive along Route Fran, a main route and landmark for Marines and soldiers who fought there in 2004–5, Dowling points out the markets that are open and the used car lots that have sprung up. There are weddings being held again, he says. Another barometer of the local environment is the “souk,” or central market. In the world of subtle, intangible metrics, the souk is a key indicator. Dowling, reflecting his knowledge of local customs, is aware that gold is the traditional wedding gift. Tucked away



Photo by Col Michael D. Visconage

*LtCol Christopher S. Dowling, commanding officer of 3/5, discusses the business climate with Hajji Mohammed at his restaurant on Route Fran in Fallujah, 8 January 2008.*

in a corner of the souk, a gold vendor had reopened a few months ago—the first time in recent memory. As of his last visit, there were now over 10 gold merchants in the souk.

With businessmen, Lieutenant Colonel Dowling has initiated the same casual engagement. Hajji Mohammed is one example. Noticing the new restaurant on Route Fran, Dowling stopped in one day and started asking questions about what he needed to make business better. He has done this four or five times, slowly building a rapport with Hajji Mohammed. He is also implementing some of the changes that came out of their conversations.

When we stopped there today, I was able to speak with Hajji Mohammed about the business climate and the efforts to rebuild while we stood at his front counter and sipped Iraqi tea. He has opened a new dine-in and carry-out kabob eatery. He also renovated five small shops next to the restaurant and leases them to other vendors. Through Dowling's interpreter, Al (an Egyptian and former hotel manager in Baghdad who lived in the U.S.), I ask him about his restaurant. Did he have to borrow money to renovate? No. (Mohammed's family is well off). Was he in business at this location before the fighting? No, but he had a restaurant location in the

souk. He also says that he had started to build a site in the Mansour district of Baghdad after the fall of Saddam, but left before it was completed because of sectarian violence.

At the next level up, the Regimental Combat Team has an Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team headed by a State Department officer and usually staffed with United States Agency for International Development, Department of Agriculture, Small Business Administration, military, and others to spearhead the effort to bring in projects to restore basic services and start micro-loan programs for new businesses. They are also assessing and starting to stand up former Iraq state-owned industries in the province.

Lieutenant Colonel Dowling is a man of average height and build, with a weathered look of a boxer who lasted through some tough matches. He focuses his junior leaders on maintaining discipline at their outposts, while still promoting the same unconventional approaches to winning over the Iraqis and ousting extremists. Dowling has opened the city back up to vehicle traffic, although all persons entering the city by main roads are stopped and checked with biometric screening devices before entering. He is having barbed wire removed and Iraqi Police

checkpoints have been improved and painted with bright colors to make them less emblematic of a war zone and more a part of the normal cityscape. Concrete barriers along the main road are also painted with pleasant scenes—an initiative taken on by the Iraqis. There are solar-powered street lamps along Route Fran.

Dowling's battalion is spread out in the city at joint security stations. Like in Ramadi, the Marines are doing joint foot patrols with the local Iraqi Police. They get out and interact at schools, local mosques, and with the citizens in general. Dowling is quick to give credit to 2d Battalion, 6th Marines, the battalion that completed Operation Allujah, clearing the city precinct by precinct and setting up joint security stations with the Iraqi Police. Next week they are planning a city-wide soccer tournament with the winning team to play against the Marines. We stop by one of his joint security stations just north of Fran on a side street across the street from a school where Dowling has been setting up a computer class. A second lieutenant is in charge and is positive and upbeat about the situation in his area. When we return to the humvees, we find Iraqi children in the street crowding the first sergeant and the Marines of Dowling's security detail for candy, pencils, and whatever they happen to have. It is getting late, so it is back to the checkpoint at the eastern end of the city. The operation is clearly one of outreach and development at this time. The battalion has had no casualties since Dowling assumed the mission from 2/6 in September.

I had been to Fallujah last in late June 2007. Anbar Province continues to lead the pace of progress by six to nine months over other parts of the country. Soldiers and Marines are working the issues of governance and economic development in concert with the Iraqis. There are certainly many hurdles left. The issues they are wrestling with are ones that others regions will soon face. It is a much better situation now compared to the death-dealing that was the norm 8, 12, or 36 months ago. □1775□

## Beyond *Mayaguez*: The Marine Corps and the Cambodian National Renaissance

by LtCol Larry L. McFall  
Field Historian

After over 30 years of deliberate, if not conspicuous absence, the Marine Corps has recently re-engaged with the government and people of the Kingdom of Cambodia. In the decades since the end of hostilities in Southeast Asia, U.S. Marines have maintained a mission in the region, revolving around joint U.S./Japanese and Philippine security, disaster relief, humanitarian assistance, and participation in exercise Cobra Gold in Thailand. Throughout that time, relations varying from openly hostile to chilled diplomacy necessitated that the Corps avoid Cambodia. As relations with Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia have warmed in the last few years, the Marine Corps has led in the effort to reach out to Cambodia via a Cambodia Theater Security Cooperation visit by a Marine expeditionary unit as well as a visit by a Marine Corps War College class. The recent Marine Corps interest reflects the dawning of a significant opportunity in U.S. theater security efforts in the

region. The result has been the first Marine visits since the tragically successful rescue operation to recover the hijacked S.S. *Mayaguez* and her crew.

The *Mayaguez* recovery operation in May 1975 was a hastily executed joint operation in response to the illegal seizure by Cambodian Communist forces of the U.S. flagged container ship in international waters. The operation ended with the recovery of the ship and all its crew, but at a very high price. Many factors, including the complexities of joint operations and lack of intelligence regarding the raid sites on Koh Tang Island (the assumed detainment site of the imprisoned crew), resulted in the deaths of 11 Marines, 2 sailors, and 2 airmen. There were 50 personnel wounded, and of the 15 U.S. Air Force helicopters supporting the operation, only two escaped unscathed. Three Marines were reported missing on Koh Tang Island after the operation and were later declared dead.

The operation marked a bitter end

to decades of U.S. combat operations in the region and contributed to a correspondingly strained relationship between the United States and Cambodia that has only recently seen significant improvement. The surrender of the Khmer Republic to the Khmer Rouge on 17 April 1975, five days after U.S. Marines evacuated Phnom Penh, ushered in the now well-documented years of genocidal horror and subsequent Vietnamese occupation that finally ended when the last Vietnamese troops left Cambodia in September 1989.

Since then, Cambodia has moved very slowly to recover from the devastating political genocide that nearly stripped the small nation of all vestiges of intellectual and economic capital. National recovery has been hampered by constant internal political friction. Remnants of several Communist, former Communist, and nationalist factions continue to jockey for influence. Governmental and public corruption has also been a constant roadblock to progress.

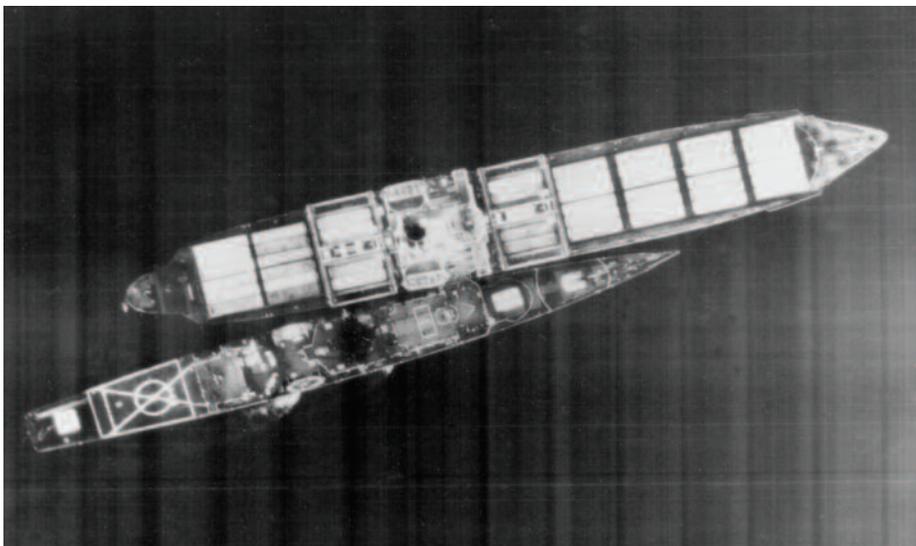
The United States opened a diplomatic mission in Phnom Penh on 11 November 1991, and when the freely elected Royal Government of Cambodia, a constitutional monarchy, was formed on 24 September 1993, the United States and the Kingdom of Cambodia immediately established full diplomatic relations. In May 1994, a U.S. ambassador was installed in the newly designated embassy. Cambodia was accepted into the World Trade Organization in October 2004.

In recent years, relations between the two countries have thawed significantly. According to the U.S. State Department:

In the past two years, bilateral relations between the U.S. and Cambodia have strengthened.

*The escort ship USS Harold E. Holt (DE 1074) alongside the container ship S.S. Mayaguez near Kho Tang Island off the coast of Cambodia in May 1975. This incident contributed to a cold relationship between the United States and Cambodia that has only recently seen significant warming.*

Department of Defense Photo (USMC)



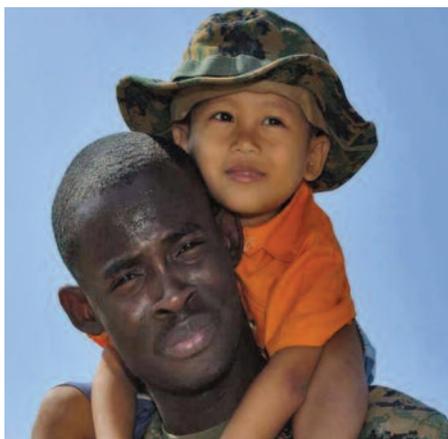
The U.S. supports efforts in Cambodia to combat terrorism, build democratic institutions, promote human rights, foster economic development, eliminate corruption, achieve the fullest possible accounting for Americans missing from the Vietnam War-era, and to bring to justice those most responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law committed under the Khmer Rouge regime.

The Marine Corps has been very active lately doing its part to strengthen these relations. The well-executed theater security cooperation visit of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (31st MEU) in November and December 2007, and the visit by the Marine Corps War College class this past February both serve as good examples of inexpensive, effective means by which United States regional theater security cooperation goals can be advanced.

The 31st MEU and sailors from the USS *Essex* spent six days conducting operations at five different sites around this small country, roughly the size of Missouri, “to foster goodwill, promote cultural understanding, and

*A young Cambodian boy takes an opportunity to catch a ride on the shoulders of a 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit Marine. The 31st MEU recently spent six days participating in medical, engineering support, community relations, and military to military activities in the small Southeast Asian Kingdom.*

Marine Corps Photo Collection



Marine Corps Photo Collection

*Marines from the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit participate with local Cambodian villagers in the opening of a bridge built by these Marines. Projects such as these have helped improve relations with the small yet strategically located country.*

facilitate [American Embassy] Cambodia Country Team and [U. S. Pacific Command] goals and objectives.” These operations included medical and dental treatment, engineering construction support, community relations projects, and military to military activities. The Marine and Navy team set up multiple medical and dental clinics treating almost 5,000 patients. Teams visited three schools and an orphanage, assisting with English instruction, performing much-needed facilities maintenance, and simply enjoying the kids. The unique resources and capabilities of the Marine air-ground task force were brought to bear as it leapfrogged across the country, busily engaging in activities from military to military training to replacing two nearly impassable bridges relied on by a remote Muslim village for its livelihood. Colonel John L. Mayer, commanding officer of the 31st MEU, spoke volumes when he said, commenting on the synergistic effect he saw of Marines working with non-governmental service-oriented organizations, that “they gave 10 people sight that had never had sight before.”

In support of its regular curriculum requirements, the Marine Corps War College recently made a trip to Asia that included the first visit to Cambodia by a United States war college. Nineteen students and faculty from the Marine Corps War College spent four days visiting military bases and receiving briefs by several government agencies, including the Ministry of National Defense and the Supreme National Economic Council. Both sides gained insight; the students commented repeatedly on the value of the visit. Air Force Colonel Robert Mahoney, the War College’s academic dean, noted that students had “learned more about Third World militaries in that trip than they had learned in all their years of service.”

The Marine Corps War College group also arranged for a staff ride to Koh Tang Island, the island on which the three Marines were listed as missing after the *Mayaguez* operation in 1975. As it happened, the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command was also engaged in a remains recovery operation there at the time of the Marine Corps War College visit. Joint



Photo by LtCol Larry L. McFall

*A typical street scene in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Local children as well as adults are often busy soliciting from compassionate passers-by. Although ranking as one of the poorest countries in the world, recent Marine Corps visitors noticed a general atmosphere of almost joyful industrialism, which they found encouraging.*

POW/MIA Accounting Command was established 1 October 2003 when the Central Identification Laboratory, Hawaii, combined with Joint Task Force-Full Accounting. It currently has two recovery teams deployed to Cambodia. The first team is scheduled to excavate two sites in northern Cambodia. One site is associated with a McDonnell Douglas F-4E aircraft crash, which resulted in the loss of an Air Force pilot and navigator, and the other may contain remains of a missing Army soldier. The second recovery team is excavating on Koh Tang Island. The remains recovery operations executed by Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command have provided yet more opportunities to strengthen bilateral relations with the fledgling constitutional monarchy. The Royal Cambodian government has gone out of its way to accommodate the command's requests and has provided material and personnel support for the operations. The American deputy chief of mission in Phnom Penh indicated that Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command operations in Cambodia have enhanced diplomatic relations.

The Marines of Marine Corps War College left Cambodia with a much

clearer understanding of the security challenges of burgeoning democracies, especially one on the doorstep of arguably the hottest theater of the current war. The discourse during all the briefs was candid. General H. E. Neang Phat, secretary of state for the Cambodian Ministry of National Defense, made it clear to the Marine Corps War College Marines that he believes his country has great potential for recovery and a workable plan. He made it just as clear that personnel challenges and the great need to combat governmental corruption and to institute governmental and economic reform may trump their plans if headway is not made. He is attempting to restructure the military in the face of drastic budget reductions resulting from a major shift in fiscal priorities toward economic stimulus. The planned restructuring includes transitioning a traditional army brigade to a marine brigade that will be responsible for the defense of coastal areas. General Neang also sounded a clear note of concern as he expressed his government's appreciation for sincere offers of assistance while sometimes feeling squeezed between rival benefactors. One case in point may be the

current construction of a small explosives plant south of Phnom Penh with which the Cambodians are receiving assistance from the People's Republic of China.

There is a perception among the Marines who visited Cambodia that the Cambodians have purpose, energy, and are willing to work hard to effect change. Even the beggars seemed to display a measure of purposefulness and were anything but the lethargic examples of the bottom of the economic ladder seen in other developing countries. People sweep the streets and till the land with the tools they have. Apparently few have acquiesced to poverty. This bodes well for future development as their economic council has articulated a strong desire to be a part of the world economy.

SE Asia continues to be an area of strategic significance, particularly in light of clear Chinese regional intentions, the significant percentage of global commerce transiting the regional sea lanes, and the growing radical Islamic threat. The similarities to other U.S. theater security concerns in the current global war and in particular Africa and South American Theater Security Cooperation operations are clear and compelling. Cambodia could be a source of ever-needed goodwill and support in this long war. They have made commendable strides in breaking free from tyrannical leadership toward an open society grounded in respect for individual liberty. In addition, their shifting fiscal priorities have not been without effect. While 2007 figures suggest Cambodia is sharing in the region's current inflation woes, the 2007 estimate of annual GDP growth was a healthy 9.05 percent.

Although not meteoric, the Cambodians are clearly a people on the rise. Colonel Mahoney put it very succinctly when he wrote, "U.S. interests are served by engaging Cambodia," and if these recent Marine Corps operations are any indication, the Corps is once again on the cutting edge of service to a great nation in perilous times. □1775□

# Tribute to the 268 American Servicemen Who Died for Peace: Lebanon, 1982-1984

by Robert V. Aquilina, Assistant Head, Reference Branch  
and Kara Newcomer, Reference Historian

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the 23 October 1983 suicide bombing that destroyed the headquarters building of Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, at Beirut International Airport, Lebanon. The explosion killed 241 Marines, soldiers, and sailors and represented the largest number of Marines killed on a single

day since D-Day at Iwo Jima.

In tribute to the Americans who gave their lives in Lebanon for the cause of peace, *Fortitudine's* "In Memoriam" is printing the following listing of all 268 American servicemen—soldiers, sailors, and Marines—who died during the 1982–1984 deployment to Lebanon. Unless otherwise indicated, all of the following per-

sonnel were members of the United States Marine Corps. This listing was taken from the late Benis M. Frank's *U.S. Marines in Lebanon, 1982–1984*, published in 1987 by the History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, Washington, D.C. The next issue of *Fortitudine* will return to the usual "In Memoriam" format.

□1775□

## American Deaths in Lebanon, 1982–1984

Cpl Terry W. Abbott	Cpl Mecot E. Camara	HM3 William D. Elliott, Jr., USN	Sgt Freddie L. Haltiwanger, Jr.
LCpl Clemon Alexander	PFC Bradley J. Campus	LCpl Jesse J. Ellison	LCpl Virgel D. Hamilton
PFC John R. Allman	Maj Randall A. Carlson, USA	PFC Danny R. Estes	Sgt Gilbert Hanton
Cpl Moses Arnold, Jr.	LCpl Johnnie D. Ceasar	PFC Sean F. Estler	LCpl William Hart
PFC Charles K. Bailey	LCpl Sam Cherman	LCpl Thomas A. Evans	Capt Michael S. Haskell
LCpl Nicholas Baker	LCpl Randy W. Clark	HM3 James E. Faulk, USN	PFC Michael A. Hastings
LCpl Johansen Banks	PFC Marc L. Cole	PFC Richard A. Fluegel	LCpl Jeffrey T. Hattaway
LCpl Richard E. Barrett	SP4 Marcus E. Coleman, USA	Cpl Steven M. Forrester	Capt Paul A. Hein
HM1 Ronny K. Bates, USN	PFC Juan M. Comas	HM3 William B. Foster, Jr., USN	LCpl Douglass E. Held
1stSgt David L. Battle	Sgt Robert A. Conley	Cpl Michael D. Fulcher	PFC Mark A. Helms
LCpl James R. Baynard	Cpl Charles D. Cook	LCpl Benjamin E. Fuller	LCpl Ferrandy D. Henderson
HM Jesse W. Beamon, USN	LCpl Curtis J. Cooper	LCpl Michael S. Fulton	GySgt Matilde Hernandez, Jr.
GySgt Alvin Belmer	LCpl Johnny L. Copeland	Cpl William R. Gaines, Jr.	LCpl Rodolfo Hernandez
PFC Shannon D. Biddle	Cpl Bert D. Corcoran	LCpl Sean R. Gallagher	Cpl Stanley G. Hester
PFC Stephen B. Bland	LCpl David L. Cosner	LCpl David B. Gander	GySgt Donald W. Hildreth
Cpl Richard L. Blankenship	Sgt Kevin P. Coulman	LCpl George M. Gangur	SSgt Richard H. Holberton
PFC John W. Blocker	Sgt Manuel A. Cox	SSgt Leland E. Gann	HM3 Robert S. Holland, USN
Capt Joseph J. Boccia, Jr.	LCpl Brett A. Croft	LCpl Randall J. Garcia	LCpl Bruce A. Hollingshead
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*HM3 Benjamin A. Rowland stands at attention during the Beirut Memorial ceremony in Jacksonville, NC, 23 October 2007. The 1983 Beirut barracks bombing during the Lebanese Civil War destroyed a building killing hundreds of service members, the majority of whom were U.S. Marines.*

Photo by Cpl James P. McLaughlin



# Cradle of Conflict: Iraq and the Birth of the Modern U.S. Military

by Paul Westermeyer  
Histories Branch

Michael Knights, *Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD. 2005, ISBN 1-59114-444-2, 462 pp., \$39.95*

Iraq invaded neighboring Kuwait on 2 August 1990, instigating 17 years of conflict with the United States. After a long confrontation and a short, violent resolution, coalition forces removed Iraq from Kuwait in the spring of 1991. Although a cease-fire was declared, the two nations continued to struggle militarily and politically for another decade and more. The invasion of Iraq in 2003, followed by the capture and eventual execution of Saddam Hussein, eventually ended the de jure struggle against his Baathist state, but the U.S. remains in Iraq today, still struggling to achieve its original de facto strategic objective: a sound, secure Iraq that threatens neither its neighbors nor regional stability.

Michael Knights' *Cradle of Conflict* examines the operational and strategic aspects of this conflict year by year. The first four chapters detail the initial challenges of Desert Shield and Desert Storm and the immediate aftermath. The military achievement of the United States and its allies is given more thoughtful consideration than most works on the period achieve. And Iraq's successes, most notably the survival of the *Republican Guard* and the preservation of its strategic programs, are carefully examined in detail.

The next four chapters, which are the most revealing, cover the "war between the wars." From the moment it signed the cease-fire agreement at Safwan, Iraq began to circumvent and struggle against its terms, as the United States, in turn, sought to enforce these terms as strictly as possible. The contest was played out militarily in the northern and southern "No Fly Zones." While the Americans employed the zones as a means of keeping Iraq weak and under continual surveillance, the Iraqis used them as opportunities to

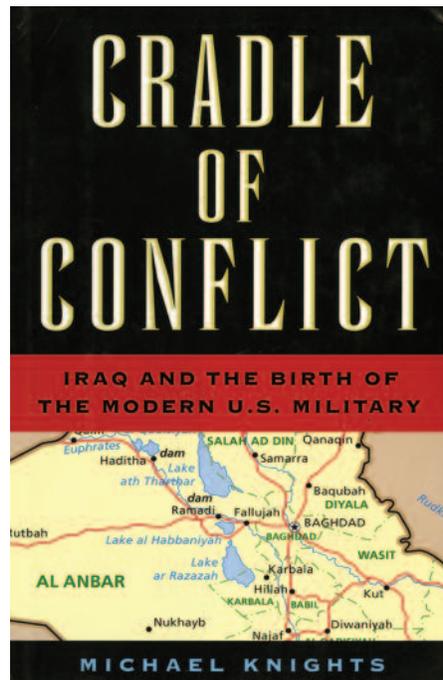
test American aerial capabilities and procedures. The Iraqis deliberately provoked crisis at their convenience, while conducting a large and competent deception campaign to mask their own strengths and weaknesses. The United Nations inspectors, searching for weapons of mass destruction, created the perfect theater for this deliberate strategy of brinkmanship, which Knights terms "cheat and retreat."

The final three chapters explore the American invasion of Iraq in 2003, its prelude, and the subsequent insur-

itary in many effective ways. Air superiority was skillfully countered by deception operations, while ground dominance was met with a willingness to suffer extensive casualties. Military weakness was masked by political bombast and diplomatic intrigue. In each case, the goal was to husband those forces most crucial to the government's survival. Saddam's strategic goals were simple: survive, remain in power, and continue to resist. His own capture and eventual execution signaled the final failure of the first two goals, but the third goal remains at issue.

Knights is a military analyst rather than a historian, and his work should be seen in that light. He conducted numerous interviews and had access to the required sources, evidenced in his numerous citations and extensive bibliography. His intent was not to construct a rigid historical account, but to narrate and analyze the events. The work is occasionally dense and aimed at the specialized reader; he does not shy from the use of acronyms or technical terms. Despite these quibbles, the book is very readable.

Knights has produced a concise, accurate, and insightful account of the conflict between the United States and Iraq. He covers the military and intelligence aspects of the conflict extremely well but pays insufficient attention to the politics, especially the ways in which American domestic politics have shaped the options available to the U.S. military. On the other hand, Knights' conclusions avoid the clichéd partisan opinions that poison the analysis of so many books on the current conflict. Examining a 15-year-long war is an intimidating task, but Knights manages it with aplomb and skill. This book is an extremely valuable study of modern warfare—one that every serious student of the American military should read. □1775□



gency up until the national elections of January 2005. In addition to providing an excellent summary of these events, Knights effectively contrasts Iraq's miscalculation of America's intent and capabilities with America's failure to anticipate the character and scope of resistance after Saddam Hussein's government had been removed from power.

Throughout the book, Knights demonstrates how the ruthless and innovative Iraqi government responded to the prima facie superior U.S. mil-

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