FORTITUDINE

Volume 38, Number 2 2014

FORTITUDINE

Bulletin of the Marine Corps Historical Program

Cover Art: The amphibious assault ship ***"USS Nassau (LHA 4) cruises in the Gulf of Oman"* by John C. Roach**. with air cover provided by two Marine Corps AV-8B Harrier IIs of Marine Attack Squadron 331 (VMA-331). On 25 January 1985, the "Doodlebugs" became the first fully operational AV-8B Harrier II squadron in Marine Corps service. The squadron deployed on the *Nassau* to the Persian Gulf and eventually flew 243 sorties, dropping 256 tons of ordnance, and became the first Marine Attack Squadron to conduct combat operations from a general purpose amphibious assault ship. While supporting Operation Desert Storm, an AV-8B Harrier II from the squadron was shot down by an SA-7 (in Russian known as 9K32 "Strela-2," a man-portable, shoulder-fired, low-altitude surface-to-air missile) over Safwan, Iraq, on 27 February 1991. The pilot, Capt Reginald C. Underwood, was killed in action. (U.S. Navy History and Heritage Command Art Collection)

Inside Cover Art: ***"Marine Bugler"* by Capt Charles Grow.** This watercolor depicts a Marine bugler sounding reveille at a Marine helicopter base. (Marine Corps Combat Art Collection)

Back Cover Art: "***Harriers Fire the Trenches***" **by Col H. Avery Chenoweth.** AV-8B Harriers from Marine Aircraft Group 13 drop napalm to "fire" oil-filled trenches in Kuwait. (Marine Corps Combat Art Collection)

Inside Back Cover Art: ***"Battle of Belleau Wood"* by Tom Lovell.** June 1918, Marines in the Battle of Belleau Wood during World War I. (Marine Corps Combat Art Collection)

PRESIDENT
of Marine Corps University
Brigadier General Thomas D. Weidley
DIRECTOR
of History Division
Dr. Charles P. Neimeyer
DIRECTOR
of National Museum of the Marine Corps
Lin Ezell

PRODUCTION STAFF
Fortitudine Managing Editor
Gregory A. Macheak
Visual Information Specialist
W. Stephen Hill

MARINE CORPS
HISTORY DIVISION
3078 Upshur Avenue
Quantico, Virginia 22134
Telephone (703) 432-4877
http://www.history.usmc.mil
history.division@usmc.mil

This Bulletin of the Marine Corps Historical Program is published for Marines to provide education and training in the uses of military and Marine Corps history. Other interested readers should contact the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, for individual copies or subscriptions to *Fortitudine*.

COMMANDANT OF THE
MARINE CORPS
Department of the Navy
Headquarters United States
Marine Corps
3000 Marine Corps Pentagon
Room 2B253
Washington, DC 20530-3000
OFFICIAL BUSINESS

PCN 104 012 20100

Director's Comments

Dr. Charles P. Neimeyer
Director, History Division
Marine Corps University

June 2014 was a month of anniversaries. Recently, President Barack H. Obama went to France along with many other world leaders to celebrate and remember the 70th anniversary of the allied landings on the beaches of Normandy. On 6 June 1944, 73,000 American soldiers stormed ashore, including 15,600 airborne troops of the 101st and 82d Airborne Divisions. In all, more than 160,000 Allied troops landed that day on five assigned invasion beaches. It represented the largest amphibious landing in modern history, larger even than the later invasions of Iwo Jima and Okinawa. While the liberation of Europe should be remembered, other days—"D-Days"—are often forgotten, although just as important in American history. For me, two come immediately to mind: the gallant assault of the 4th Marine Brigade at Belleau Wood on 6 June 1918 and the 15 June 1944 invasion of Saipan just nine days after the allied landings at Normandy.

Each year, a senior Marine Corps leader makes a pilgrimage to the Belleau Wood battlefield, usually around Memorial Day, to remember the deeds accomplished and the sacrifices made by an earlier generation of U.S. Marines. The Wood is truly sacred ground to the Corps. This year, Commandant of the Marine Corps General James F. Amos made the trip. In a moving wreath laying ceremony at the Aisne-Marne American Cemetery and Memorial adjacent to the battlefield, the Commandant noted that if the French troops, U.S. Marines, and U.S. Army soldiers had not held the Belleau Wood sector, "Paris would not [have been] saved." The Commandant rightly pointed out that, for 20 days in June 1918, "the fate of Europe hung in the balance."

Belleau Wood was an important engagement in American history. While it only involved a single brigade

U.S. Marines capture a Maxim machine gun nest in this painting by Frank E. Schoonover of the fighting in Belleau Wood.
Marine Corps Combat Art Collection

of Marines, the fighting bordered on the horrific. More than 50 divisions of German troops were made available to German General Erich F. W. Ludendorff for his spring offensives of 1918, and he was able to penetrate the allied lines all the way to the north bank of the Marne River, about 59 miles from Paris, before being stopped by newly arrived American forces.

The Marines of the 4th Brigade along with the 9th and 23d U.S. Army infantry regiments combined to become the U.S. Army's 2d Division. These troops were subjected to repeated and increasingly desperate assaults by the Germans from 2 to 5 June 1918. Suffering heavy casualties, the Germans withdrew into a defensive posture along the lines opposite the 2d Division. Sensing the time was right to counterattack, on 6 June 1918, the Marines were ordered to assault the Germans, known to be in Belleau Wood. Attacking across a waist-high wheat field, the 5th and 6th Marine Regiments along with the 6th Marine Machine Gun Battalion steadily advanced against heavy fire. Suffering nearly 50 percent casualties—the highest in Marine Corps history until World War II—the leathernecks conducted repeated assaults against German strongpoints until they slowly reduced the defenders. By 26 June 1918, Major Maurice E. Shearer, commanding officer of the 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, was able to proudly state that the "Woods now U.S. Marine Corps entirely."

This work illustrated one of the "Enlist Now" posters that depicted famous battles of World War II. This specific image was used on the poster entitled, "Saipan and Tinian." The poster reads, "When SAIPAN and TINIAN were needed as bases for superfort attacks on Japan, the veteran Second and Fourth Marine divisions stormed Saipan's beaches on 14 June 1944. With only ten days' rest after the fall of Saipan, the dauntless Marines crossed to Tinian to complete the triumph!" Painted in oil on a panel by Capt William H. Victor Guinness.

Marine Corps Combat Art Collection

For the troops engaged, Belleau Wood was a nightmare. The Germans fought tenaciously for every square inch of the woods. The Marines often fought them in hand-to-hand combat and frequently had to attack wearing gas masks. In the 42.5 acre Aisne-Marne cemetery, 2,288 American World War I casualties are buried. At least 251 of the graves hold unidentified remains. Many of these honored dead made the ultimate sacrifice at Belleau Wood.

Belleau Wood proved that the American soldier (and especially its U.S. Marine contingent) was ready to fight against the veteran German Army in France. Many French and British observers, long used to the trench warfare carnage of the western front, questioned whether the Americans had what it took to conduct an offensive against these defenders. Belleau Wood proved that America was ready and willing to fight hard for the Allies. While the fight there was not as significant as later op-

erations in the Meuse-Argonne sector, Belleau Wood proved to be a bloody but important icebreaker for the U.S. Marines. After Belleau Wood, the U.S. Army's 2d Division, now commanded by a Marine and future Commandant, Major General John A. Lejeune, led the way to victory just a few months later.

A second overlooked June "D-Day" anniversary took place on 15 June 1944. Interestingly, the number of troops dedicated to the operation (71,000 men) was nearly equal to that used by the Americans during the D-Day landings at Normandy (73,000 men). Saipan's assault forces included the 2d and 4th Marine Divisions and the U.S. Army's 27th Division. The success of American forces at Saipan, closely followed by the capture of Tinian, Guam, Mariana Islands, enabled the American Central Pacific offensive to penetrate within bomber range of the Japanese homeland.

Saipan is as significant as Normandy for a number of reasons. First, Saipan was the first island taken by the Americans that possessed a sizeable Japanese civilian population. These civilians had long been convinced by their Japanese Army garrison that Americans were barbarians and cannibals and that it was better to commit suicide than surrender to them. Indeed during the three-week battle, large numbers of Japanese civilians did just that, leading American wartime planners to conclude that any invasion of Japanese home soil would generate similar self-destruction, only on a much larger scale. Second, Saipan was also the scene of a fairly significant disagreement between senior U.S. Marine Corps and Army leaders when Marine Lieutenant General Holland M. Smith relieved Army Major General Ralph C. Smith of his command of the 27th Division during the height of fighting on the island. Enraged over what he saw as the unfair treatment of his subordinate, Lieutenant General Robert C. Richardson, in administrative command of all Army forces assigned to the Central Pacific, hesitated to ever allow Army commanders to serve *under* Marine leadership during the war in the Pacific. Finally, the seizure of Saipan and Tinian enabled the Army Air Corps to station its new long-range Boeing B-29 Superfortress bombers within range of the Japanese home islands. Soon, B-29 bombers, flying from Saipan's Aslito Airfield, began conducting around-the-clock bombing raids on all major Japanese home island targets.

The fall of Saipan also saw the power and influence of Prime Minister Hideki Tojo come to an abrupt end within the government of Japan. From that point on, he had less input on the direction of the Japanese war effort. Following the conclusion of the war, senior surviving Japanese military leaders all pointed to their defeat at Saipan and the corresponding naval battle on the Philippine Sea as the beginning of the end.

Like Belleau Wood in the World War I, the fighting on Saipan represented a watershed in the war for the Marine Corps. Places like "Purple Heart Ridge," "Hell's Pocket," and "Death Valley" became painful and well-known landmarks to the Marines and soldiers engaged against a fanatical enemy. At Saipan, Japan changed its operational strategy and, instead of attempting to immediately counterattack an invasion as they had done at Guadalcanal, they shifted to a policy of attrition intended to make America pay dearly for every square inch of ground gained. Saipan was also where Marines and soldiers absorbed the war's largest banzai assault by more than 3,000 Japanese soldiers who broke through the U.S. Army's 105th Infantry Regiment before being stopped by artillerymen and service troops behind the front lines. In the past, banzai assaults had usually occurred at the beginning of a fight. Now, the Japanese were conducting them as a last-ditch attack when hope of a successful defense had long passed.

June is replete with historical anniversaries. However, it is important that we remember those that took place in the Pacific as much as we presently do for the European theater of operations. While the Normandy landings were indeed America's main effort in June 1944, the Marines of the 2d and 4th Divisions, as well as the U.S. Army's 27th Division, created a true second front for the Japanese in Tokyo. The B-29 bombers over Tokyo were proof of that. It was no coincidence that Vice Admiral Chuichi Nagumo, commander of the Japanese carrier strike force that smashed Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, committed suicide on Saipan. The Saipan campaign should be remembered as America's second D-Day, and the men of the U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Army who participated in its capture should never be forgotten.

In June 2015, the Marine Corps History Division will celebrate another anniversary. By next year, we hope to publish the inaugural issue of the *Marine Corps History* magazine. This new publication will replace our venerable historical news bulletin, *Fortitudine*. Staff historians are currently working on articles that will illuminate various aspects of our rich Marine Corps history. We will still feature our book reviews and other stories of interest, but in the future, we will focus on full-length, scholarly feature articles that will enable our community of readers to gain a more in-depth understanding of the rich history of our Corps. We here in the History Division are very excited about impending launch of the new *Marine Corps History* magazine. We hope you like it. •*1775*•

Origins of the Gator Navy:

Amphibious Shipping in Support of Landing Operations

Part II

Douglas E. Nash Sr.
Historian, History Division
Marine Corps University

As World War II drew to a close, amphibious warfare as practiced by the U.S. Marine Corps-Navy team had come a long way since the 1934 Marine Corps' *Tentative Landing Operations Manual* was published. Advances in tactics, ship construction, naval gunfire, close air support, communications, and landing craft during World War II made the ship-to-shore movement the ultimate expression of the art of amphibious warfare. By 5 August 1945, amphibious warfare, as practiced by the U.S. Armed Forces in the Pacific theater of operations, had reached its highest state of development, far beyond anything that its earliest advocates could have envisioned. The Battle of Okinawa, Operation Iceberg, was the culmination of amphibious operations in that theater, but as prolonged and bloody as it was, the battle served mainly to set the stage for the even larger operations being planned against mainland Japan. Okinawa, the last stepping-stone on the march to Tokyo, played a major part in these operations as a staging and supporting base for Operation Olympic, which was to be the first of two parts of Operation Downfall, the invasion of Japan.

However, these anticipated amphibious assaults involving dozens of U.S. Marine Corps and Army divisions—using hundreds of the then-cutting-edge landing ships, tank (LSTs) over a dozen landing ships, dock (LSDs), and thousands of landing vehicles, tracked (LVTs) against the Japanese mainland—would never take place. What unfolded instead was a peaceful occupation and the creation of a military government for Japan, in which the Marine Corps would play a significant role. Nonetheless, the overall consensus within the Navy and Marine Corps was that the doctrine of amphibious assault, and the technical means to carry it out, had been perfected as much as possible given the limits of the available technology.

Any technological advances made became moot in July 1946 when the United States tested two atom bombs on the Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands. Operation Crossroads clearly demonstrated the devastating effect of these weapons upon an assembled fleet of 95 obsolete or surplus warships, resulting in a unanimous conclusion that the use of amphibious shipping for an assault against an enemy possessing such weapons would be suicidal. These tests also led most leaders in the U.S. Armed Forces as well as in government (except the Marine Corps) to believe that, with the advent of nuclear weapons, amphibious warfare as practiced in World War II was an anachronism and that amphibious forces, including the Marine Corps, would become relics of a bygone era.

The Marine Corps—proud of its wartime accomplishments as an amphibious assault force, mindful of its tremendous sacrifices, and concerned about preserving its impressive gains as a warfighting service—refused to listen to this supposed death knell. Between 1946 and 1948, the Marine Corps was virtually on its own in the pursuit for amphibious shipping, with few advocates in the defense establishment and the U.S. government. The Navy, sensing that the tide was turning against amphibious warfare due to its perceived vulnerability to nuclear weapons, decided to devote almost no funding to the development of new amphibious shipping for almost 10 years, choosing instead to invest in the development of larger aircraft carriers and nuclear-powered submarines, as well as carrier-based aircraft to deliver nuclear weapons.

Adding to the strain between the two sea Services in the immediate aftermath of World War II was the scrutiny being applied by the new Joint Chiefs of Staff, as well as the president of the United States, toward the Marine Corps' role and mission beginning in 1948. By all accounts, the very existence of the Marine Corps was threatened; had not the American public intervened with pressure on Congress, the Fleet Marine Force (FMF) may have been dissolved or at the very least relegated to the role it had performed at the turn of the previous century, serving as ships' detachments and guards at naval facilities. At best, the Corps would have become once again a force useful only for fighting small wars, with little if any amphibious shipping dedicated toward its support. The Corps, however, avoided dissolution with the passage of Public Law 416 by the 82d Congress on 28 June 1952. The law specifically detailed the composition and missions of the Marine Corps. While this

U.S. Navy photo

USS Bexar *(APA 237), an attack transport of the Haskell class, cruises off the coast of North Carolina in November 1955. It carried the Marines of 2d Marine Division to the Mediterranean in January 1948, the first ready battalion to experience service afloat since 1904.*

topic is worthy of additional study, this article focuses instead on the story of the post-World War II "Gator" Navy and the continuing evolution of amphibious shipping in support of landing operations carried out in partnership between the sea Services.*

Unlike the World War II period when the Gator Navy had an unproven doctrine and unlimited funding, the postwar Gator Navy possessed a great deal of experience waging amphibious warfare, including a well-developed, proven doctrine. However, the Navy faced severe funding constraints that limited what it could do to man, maintain, and modernize its fleet. Over the next 70 years, the continued development of the amphibious fleet became as much a story about interservice wrangling behind the scenes as it was about the ships themselves.

At war's end, the Marine Corps was not merely satisfied with what it had achieved or in simply resting on its accomplishments; it looked for better ways to get troops ashore even faster and in greater numbers than in World War II, despite the challenges posed by the advent of nuclear weapons. Over the next decade, the Marine Corps aggressively sought to improve its amphibious capabilities, encouraged not only by the evolution of technical means but by national-level strategic realities resulting from the Cold War and also the need to actively participate in the various interservice roles and missions controversies.

When the dust had finally settled, the Marine Corps-Navy partnership led to the design of new ships, landing craft, and rotary-wing aircraft specifically tailored to address amphibious warfare doctrinal and training requirements. Lack of funding, however, kept most of these projects on the drawing board for a decade until the nation's strategic priorities began to change in the late 1950s. Those priorities reflected a doctrinal shift from a massive retaliation against the Soviet Union to a flexible response to threats posed by their surrogates around the United States' periphery.

Between 1945 and 1956, the Marine Corps made do with World War II-era ships and landing craft and only slightly updated versions of the same. Since the size of the Corps had shrunk considerably, it and the Navy realized that the vast amphibious fleet of the last war could no longer be justified and thousands of battle-tested ships and craft were quickly mothballed, scrapped, or sold to Allies to help them rebuild their own fleets. The downsize also allowed the Navy to retain its newest and best ships, including dozens of LSTs, LSDs, attack cargo ships (AKA), and attack transports (APA), for Marine Corps-Navy use. Gone were such "rust buckets" as the USS *Zeilin* (APA 3)—originally a passenger ship built

*A good source for further reading on the roles and missions debated in the late 1940s can be found in Aaron O'Connell's *Underdogs: The Making of the Modern Marine Corps* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012).

during World War I—used in the Guadalcanal Campaign in the Solomon Islands. The replacements included modern ships, such as the USS *Bexar* (APA 237), a Haskell-class attack transport commissioned in October 1945.

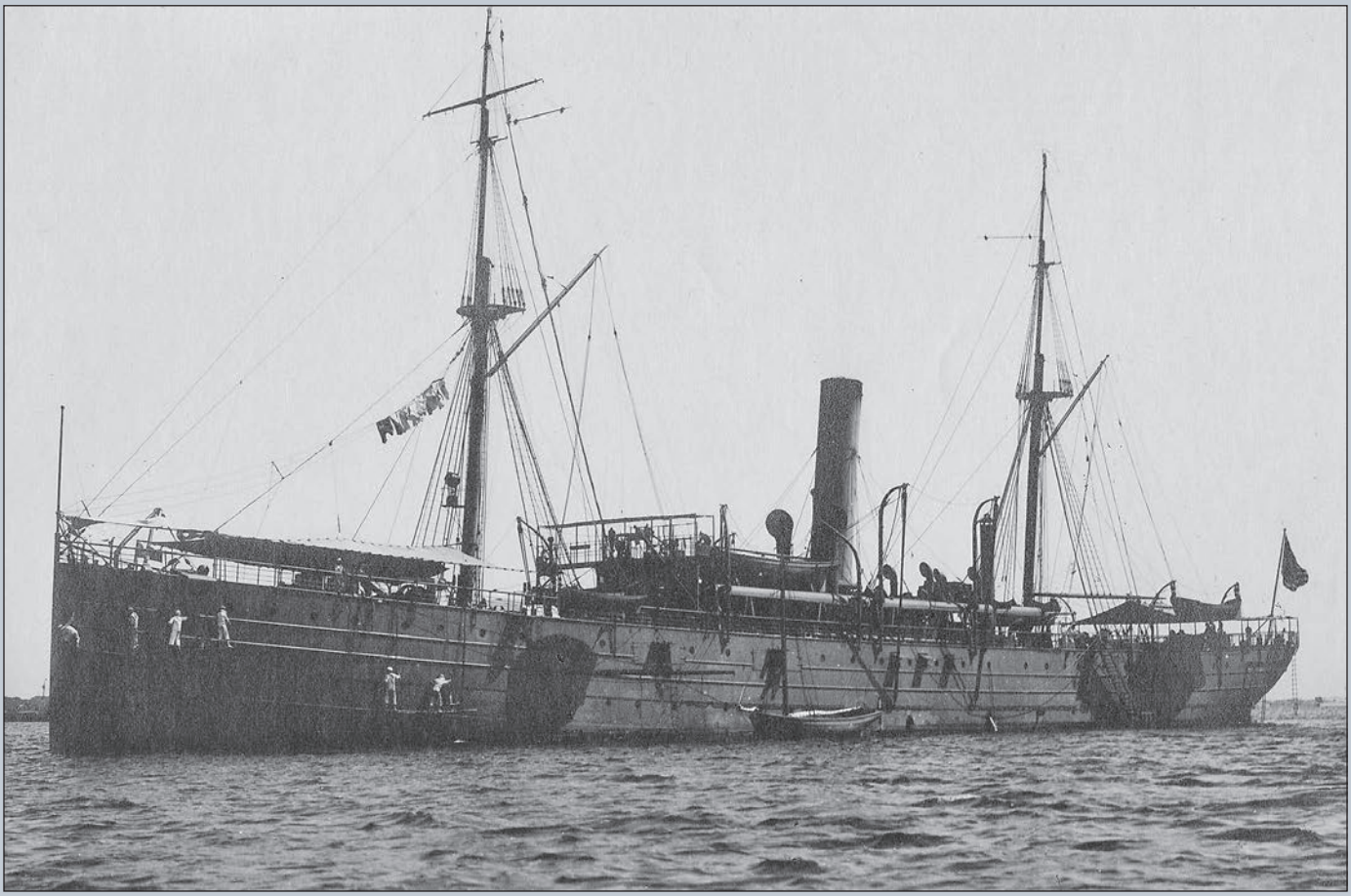
The Marine Corps also retained the newest model of the LVT, known by Marines as the "amtrack." The LVT-3 Bushmaster was introduced in the closing months of the Pacific Campaign in World War II, seeing its baptism by fire at Okinawa. Larger, more powerful, and capable of carrying more cargo than its predecessors, the LVT-3 would continue to be used well into the 1950s as the modified LVT-3C. The addition of overhead cover and a machine-gun turret corrected some of the deficiencies identified during World War II, making the Bushmaster more survivable and lethal than earlier versions of amtracks. LVT(A)-4 "amtanks" with their 75mm howitzers had done well at Iwo Jima and Okinawa, serving as the mobile firepower for the first wave of the assault, but these models were already obsolete and a replacement would have to be found. Changes from both earlier models were incorporated into the design of the LVT-5, which was envisioned as a multipurpose vehicle with command, engineer, cargo, personnel, and fire-support variants that debuted in the late 1950s.

While the Services were heavily engaged in postwar roles and missions controversies, the Marine Corps was occupied with more pressing concerns. While most of the Corps was focused on training, downsizing, realignment, garrisoning a defeated Japan, stabilizing China, providing stewardship over the liberated Pacific Islands, and moving between duty stations, new dynamics quietly introduced in December 1947 would have a major impact on the life of the sea Services—the revival of the "afloat-ready battalion." The concept reemerged after a 40-year hiatus and a concentration on vertical envelopment, using airborne troops; however, it exerted a substantial influence on the size of the amphibious fleet during the ensuing decades.

Originally conceived as "Huntington's Battalion" during the Spanish-American War of 1898 and briefly reintroduced between 1902 and 1904 in Caribbean waters as "Heywood's Battalion" and "Pope's Battalion" (all named after their commanders: Colonel Robert W. Hun-

USS Panther *(AD 6) was the first U.S. Navy transport ship to carry a Marine Corps afloat-ready battalion during the Spanish-American War and in the Caribbean from 1898 to 1904.*

U.S. Marine Corps photo



tington, 9th Commandant of the Marine Corps Charles Heywood, and Colonel Percival C. Pope), the Navy and Marine Corps were in agreement. Having a ready battalion embarked on troopships would provide a powerful option for a local commander or U.S. ambassador whenever a crisis was eminent in a country lacking any other American military presence. The ready battalion would also enable the State Department to send a diplomatic signal to any parties ashore involved in conflicts threatening U.S. interests. With such a battalion, the United States would not only have the military means at hand to calm the situation but could deploy troops ashore to restore peace by force if the situation warranted.

The transports used to carry these afloat ready battalions, the USS *Panther* (1889 later reclassified AD 6) and USS *Prairie* (AD 5), were both old converted coastal passenger steamers and not necessarily the largest or most suitable ships available, but both were adequate for the task. Although the afloat-ready battalion concept was temporarily employed again after the Spanish-American War from 1902 until 1904, the Navy, Marine Corps, and State Department internalized the lesson that having such a force available served as a useful coercive measure that furthered U.S. foreign policy and helped to protect American lives and property in such countries as Panama and Colombia.

This concept evolved into what became known two decades later as "small wars" or gunboat diplomacy. The costs, however, of keeping as many as two battalions at a time engaged in a mission soon proved prohibitive for the Marine Corps, which was paying the lion's share of the expenses. The practice was discontinued after the last-afloat ready battalion, commanded by Major John A. Lejeune, disembarked at Philadelphia in 1904 following a "float" (Marine slang for an extended period on board a ship) in the Caribbean. The concept of the afloat-ready battalion was not forgotten, but events during the intervening years—including World War I, the Banana Wars, and World War II—ensured that the Marine Corps would not revisit the concept for several decades.

The concept was revived again on 20 December 1947, when a crisis in the eastern Mediterranean necessitated sending an amphibious task force as a show of support for the democratic governments of Greece and Turkey. The State Department, led by Ambassador George F. Kennan, had been pressuring the Navy for months to set up an afloat-ready battalion for what they saw as an eventual intervention, but the department's efforts were rebuffed. Facing the threat of Communist expansion in the region, the State Department again requested through the Department of the Navy that a Marine battalion landing team (BLT) be deployed immediately with the Sixth Fleet to bolster its striking power and to send a clear message to the Kremlin in Moscow that its interference in Balkan affairs would not be tolerated. The request to the chief of naval operations was finally approved, and the 2d Marine Division was ordered to send a reinforced battalion to augment the Sixth Fleet by providing a ready landing force.

This battalion was the precursor to what we know as the modern Marine expeditionary unit (MEU). The 1,000 Marines of the 2d Marine Division (Reinforced) with embarked vehicles, tanks, artillery, and logistical support sailed from Morehead City, North Carolina, to the Mediterranean Sea on board the *Bexar* and the attack cargo ship USS *Montague* (AKA 98), marking the first long-term deployment of a Marine amphibious force since 1904. Both ships, while vastly superior in capability compared to the *Panther* and *Prairie*, were World War II veterans, as were many members of the crew and the embarked Marines. The *Bexar* could embark as many as 1,561 men and was equipped to carry as many as 18 landing craft, vehicle and personnel (LCVP) and 2 landing craft, medium (LCM) at speeds approaching 17 knots. With crowded troop spaces cooled only by external forced air, the troopships were hot and uncomfortable, but still more than adequate for the mission. Marine Corps aviation, limited to several squadrons of World War II-vintage Chance Vought F4U Corsair fighter planes, was embarked on board the carriers assigned to the Sixth Fleet.

Though this force remained afloat for three months from 5 January to 12 March 1948 and was prepared to carry out an amphibious assault if called upon, the battalion did not possess a combined staff for embarked air and ground units (aviation assets remained under Navy control) and lacked many other capabilities, such as organic LVTs and the contemporary equivalent of today's air-ground liaison company. Although the battalion was small compared to future embarked forces, the deployment initiated the Marine Corps policy of maintaining what would later become a semipermanent air-ground task force with the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean, which was copied by the Pacific Fleet several years later. When the battalion departed the theater in March 1948, it was replaced by another battalion from the 8th Marine Regiment, thus marking the beginning of a continuous presence that, with a few breaks resulting from greater national priorities such as the Korean War, still remains forward deployed today.

Another, even more consequential event occurred a year prior to that, when Lieutenant General Roy S.

U.S. Marine Corps photo

An HTL-2 "Flying Banana" troop-carrying helicopter takes off from the deck of the aircraft carrier USS Palau *(CVE 122), during exercises conducted in the Potomac River near Quantico, Virginia, on 8 May 1950. An HO3S-1 observation helicopter hovers in the background.*

Geiger, fresh from observing the results of Operation Crossroads, penned an urgent letter on 21 August 1946 to the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Alexander A. Vandegrift. Geiger recommended that the Marine Corps devise a new way to carry out amphibious operations since atomic weapons had clearly made World War II-style mass amphibious assaults obsolete. In turn, the following month, Vandegrift ordered the Deputy Commandant, Lieutenant General Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr., to convene a special board, conducted by Brigadier General Oliver P. Smith, Commandant of the Marine Corps School at Quantico, to determine the effects of nuclear weapons on amphibious operations and how to overcome the effects.

Shepherd's board was given three tasks: to study the potential use of helicopters to carry assault troops during the ship-to-shore movement, to study the effects of the detonation of an atomic bomb on amphibious shipping, and to determine what special equipment was needed for future amphibious operations. The board faced a vexing challenge posed by the advent of nuclear weapons. To successfully conduct a landing operation, an amphibious force had to concentrate its power within 5,000 yards of the shore, but paradoxically could not survive if attacked by nuclear weapons unless the unit dispersed. Existing landing craft were too slow and lacked the ability to cover the necessary distance; so with the ships and equipment currently in the inventory, fighting in such a dispersed manner was impossible.

The board decided to focus the bulk of its effort on examining the use of helicopters, then in their infancy, to determine the aircraft's suitability to support amphibious operations, at least in concept. With their greatly increased speed compared to amtracks and latent troop-carrying potential, enough helicopters launched from dispersed platforms at sea could approach the landing area from different directions. By doing so, Marines could avoid enemy beach defenses altogether by going around their flanks and concentrating on the objective behind the beach defenses, thus achieving the mass needed to overcome the enemy without subjecting the initial assault waves to undue risk. Subsequent waves of traditional landing craft could then commence the ship-to-shore movement once the enemy's ability to resist was hindered by the helicopter assault and traditional naval bombardment.

On 16 December 1946, the MCSB published its recommendations, which stated that the Marine Corps should concentrate on the vertical envelopment possibilities offered by helicopters, as well as examine the possibility of using submarines and giant seaplanes to land troops ashore. Even though contemporary helicopters were technologically limited when carrying out the new concept, testing and experimentation were ordered to proceed immediately, resulting in the creation of Marine Experimental Helicopter Squadron 1 (HMX-1)—the Marine Corps' first helicopter squadron charged with this mission. A great deal of faith was placed in the belief that the aviation industry would come up with the technical solution to accommodate vertical envelopment, much like in the 1930s when the Marine Corps wrote amphibious warfare doctrine for landing craft that did not yet exist.

Without a working doctrine, however, the purchase of any suitable helicopters for testing and the establishment of test bed units would have been impractical. Work on the doctrine began almost immediately after another MCSB was ordered and established in March 1947. This board was tasked with updating amphibious doctrine to include helicopters and with determining how to incorporate the technology into the concept of vertical envelopment in conjunction with traditional amphibious assault. The board published its findings on 1 December 1948 in a report titled "Military Requirements of Helicopter for Ship-to-Shore Movement of Troops and Cargo"; it immediately appealed to an eager reading audience among a group of young officers who had been impressed with the potential that helicopters offered and who had been lobbying the Marine Corps to buy more.

Besides the lack of suitable helicopters, the board also noted the lack of a sea-based launching platform that could carry troops and equipment into combat. Submarines, seaplanes, and aircraft carriers had all been seriously considered, but tests conducted between 1948 and 1950 proved that submarines and seaplanes were ill-suited for carrying the number of troops and the quantity of equipment necessary to carry out a large-scale landing. Undeterred, submarine and seaplane advocates pursued the concept into the mid-1950s with no results. Troopships and cargo ships were impractical for carrying more than one helicopter at a time, while amphibious ships built during World War II, such as LSTs and LSDs, lacked the space to launch and recover helicopters. Fleet carriers were deemed too important to be used for what the Navy viewed as an unessential diversion that was

The photo shows the Landing Ship Tank, Mahoning County *(LST 914). The bow doors can be seen in the lower right corner of the photo.*
U.S. Navy photo

peripheral to its primary mission. The one bright spot was the Navy's loan of the USS *Palau* (CVE 122), a Commencement Bay-class escort carrier, for shipboard testing of helicopters beginning on 1 May 1948.

This was the first recorded use of an aircraft carrier being dedicated, though temporarily, to exclusively support Marine Corps helicopters. Though Marines had flown off many carriers during World War II using fixed-wing aircraft, the new vertical envelopment concept was different because it required a floating base that would accommodate only helicopters and a BLT. Fixed-wing aircraft would still be carried on board fleet carriers. Additionally, handling characteristics involved in landing a helicopter on an aircraft carrier deck versus land were variable depending on wind direction, ship's heading, and other factors influencing flight at sea. For the tests, the *Palau* hosted five Sikorsky HO3S-1 observation helicopters of HMX-1 during Operation Packard II to simulate ship-to-shore assault landings against an enemy defending the beaches at Onslow Beach near Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, in May 1948.

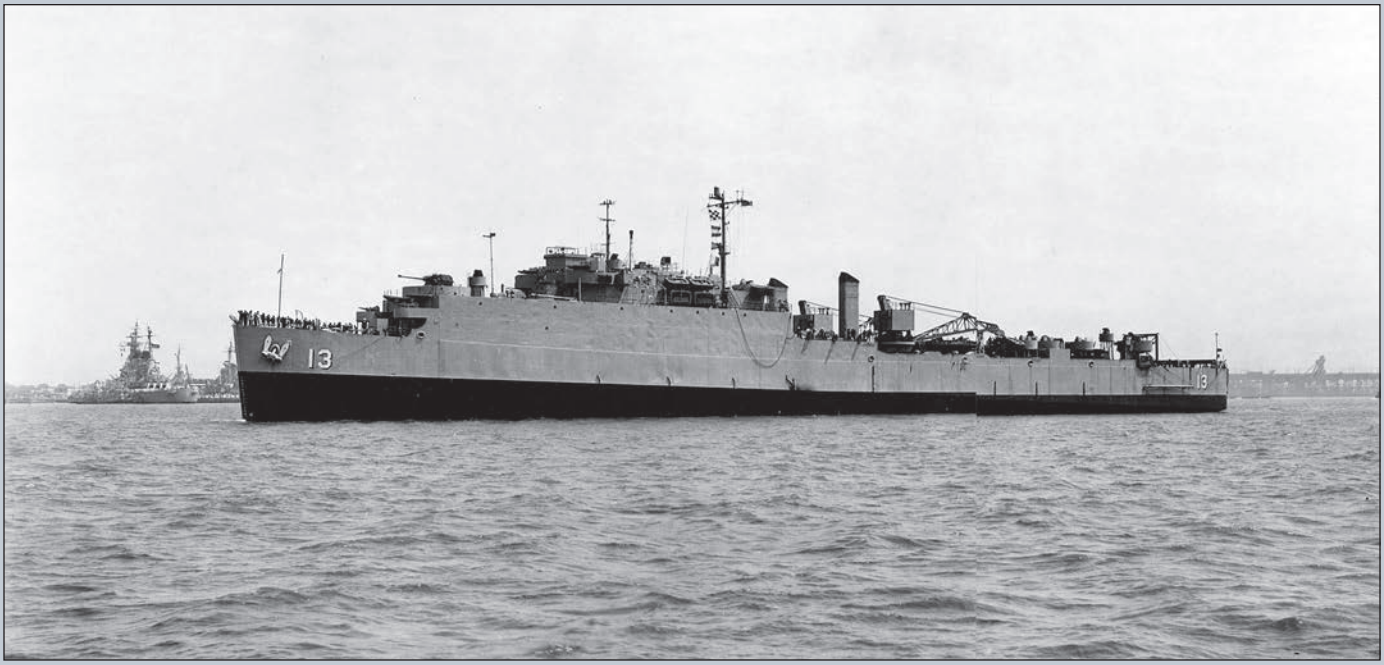
Though the helicopters could carry only three passengers apiece, enough sorties were flown from the deck of the *Palau* to land a simulated BLT ashore. The test was declared a success, and further development of vertical envelopment tactics, techniques, and procedures resulted in the November 1948 publication of the Marine Corps' tentative manual *Amphibious Operations–Employment of Helicopters*, also known as Phib-31. Marines continued using loaned aircraft carriers for testing purposes and for amphibious exercises until 1956, when a modified helicopter carrier for the Corps' exclusive use was finally commissioned.

But aside from the development of doctrine and the tests conducted on helicopters during exercises, very little changed regarding the Gator Navy between 1946 and 1950. The Marine Corps continued to shrink in size, and its amphibious shipping, with associated landing craft, became increasingly obsolete. Though the Marine Corps won a partial victory in the roles and missions debate, budget cuts in the late 1940s and scrutiny from the White House and the Joint Chiefs of Staff after 1948 meant that any landings conducted by the Corps would be done using old equipment. This raised little concern outside the Marine Corps, because many people inside and outside the military believed that amphibious warfare was a thing of the past and that any funding dedicated to prolonging its use would be a waste of resources.

Those perceptions began to change in September 1950 when the Navy, Marine Corps, and Army conducted the largest amphibious operation since World War II during the amphibious invasion of the Korean port of Inchon. A combined force of two divisions changed the course of the Korean War when they successfully seized a beachhead, moved inland, liberated Seoul, and

USS Casa Grande*, a World War II vintage Landing Ship, Dock (LSD 13), is shown during the Korean War on 30 April 1951. Not only could this ship launch a variety of landing craft from its well deck, but its versatile design was used in future LSD versions as well as the new Landing Transport, Dock (LPD).*

Norfolk Navy Yard photo NY6 7214



contributed decisively to the destruction of the Korean People's Army. Though all of the ships and most of the landing craft involved were of World War II vintage (interestingly, most of the LSTs were manned by loaned Japanese crews), the doctrine and experience gained during World War II made possible one of the boldest amphibious operations in history. Most of the initial assault waves were launched from attack transports aboard LCVPs, with a significant portion of follow-on waves being carried ashore using LVTs. This was a reversal of the method previously employed in the Pacific, where LVTs were included in the first three waves of an assault. Due to the high seawall at Inchon that precluded their use, the LVTs came in the follow-on waves instead or were used to seize outlying islands not protected by seawalls.

The only significant change to the practice of ship-to-shore movement between World War II and the Korean War was that LSDs were now used to launch LVTs instead of LSTs, which were considered irredeemably slow. A new launching method had been devised that involved the much faster LSDs steaming parallel to the beach; each craft would then stop, flood its well deck, and launch up to 20 LVTs, an even faster method than the one that relied on LSTs. The LVTs, once launched, would then form up and conduct their assault in an identical manner to that deployed during the assaults on Iwo Jima and Okinawa. Tanks continued to be launched out of the well deck using vintage landing craft, tank (LCT) and landing craft, medium (LCM) or "Mike" boats.*

Since helicopters capable of carrying enough troops were not yet available, rotary-wing aircraft were not used during the assault phase at Inchon, though the test conducted during Operation Packard III in May 1949 showed that Piasecki HRP-1 "Flying Banana" helicopters, when launched from the *Palau*, could carry up to eight men. That particular helicopter's unreliability and short range precluded its use in combat, though a number of more advanced Bell HTL-2 helicopters were later used in Korea to ferry supplies and evacuate the wounded. The smaller HO3S-1 helicopter, though used extensively, was primarily employed for observation and liaison but was not suitable for carrying troops.

A glimmer of the promise offered by helicopters was displayed on 15 April 1951, when Marine Helicopter Transport Squadron 161 (HMR-161), using Sikorsky HRS-1s, flew 224 Marines and their equipment to a position near the front lines in Korea, marking the first time in history that helicopters carried troops into combat. That promise was fulfilled six months later in October during Operation Bumblebee when a dozen HRS-1 helicopters from HMR-161 flew 958 Marines of the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, in 156 sorties over 15 miles from their base to the crest of a mountain on the front lines to relieve another battalion in a little more than six hours. Operation Bumblebee marked an important point in the development of Marine Corps aviation, showing that helicopters could carry enough troops in the first wave of an amphibious operation to achieve mass on an objective in a relatively brief period of time.

The landing at Inchon proved once more that the Marine Corps, with its amphibious capability, still had a place in the United States' arsenal despite the nation's continued fixation on nuclear war with the Soviet Union and the doctrine of massive retaliation. Vertical envelopment, as a concept for conducting assaults, was becoming increasingly accepted among the Services and defense planners, though for different reasons. The U.S. Army began to experiment with large numbers of helicopters, even developing a concept that involved transporting an entire infantry division into a nuclear battlefield on board helicopters. An influential group of young Marine officers even advocated the radical concept of an all-helicopter amphibious assault, which would completely replace landing craft during the ship-to-shore movement. This, in turn, led to highly energized discussions between the all-helicopter group and the more conservative majority that was still skeptical of the helicopter's utility.

While technological advances brought helicopters closer to their full potential, doctrinal developments continued apace. The debate between the all-helicopter assault and a balanced approach had to be settled, because it was clear by the mid-1950s that funding for the former would simply not be available. Therefore, the 21st Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Randolph M. Pate, sought a means to reconcile the two competing schools of thought. A second board chaired by General Robert E. Hogaboom was convened on 4 June 1956 at Marine Corps Schools (MCS) at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia, to conduct a thorough and comprehensive study of Marine Corps doctrine and force structure and to make recommendations to the Commandant for the optimum organization, composition, and equipment of the FMF. The board was also tasked to evaluate a proper approach to assessing the newly developed concepts of amphibious warfare that emphasized the role of helicopters on the nuclear battlefield.

After much discussion and fiery debate between the all-helicopter proponents and those favoring a more

*LCTs and LCMs would be replaced in the mid-1960s by landing craft, utility (LCU), a craft that combined the best features of both.

balanced approach, the board finally recommended in its final report on 7 January 1957 that vertical envelopment be used to land the initial assault waves, but the FMF must still rely on traditional amphibious equipment (such as LVTs and LCVPs) to bring subsequent assault waves (including tanks and artillery) and supplies ashore. The Hogaboom board finally laid to rest the all-helicopter concept and recommended a complete restructuring of existing division, regiment, and battalion tables of organization and equipment to lighten the Marine division and provide the FMF with a more flexible and rapidly deployable force, which saw its debut in 1963. This decision guaranteed the continued need for traditional amphibious shipping and landing craft, while allowing for the purchase and use of additional rotary-wing aircraft and the activation of new helicopter squadrons.

The Hogaboom board also gave renewed impetus to a previous idea—which had been discussed as early as 1942, during the invasion of Guadalcanal—to form a self-sufficient integrated Marine task force capable of operating independently on nuclear or nonnuclear battlefields. The task force would be composed of what would be known later as the four core elements or functions: command, ground combat, logistics, and aviation. This idea, which matured into the concept appropriately named the Marine air-ground task force (MAGTF), picked up momentum during the early 1950s when sufficient helicopters were procured that finally placed the concept of vertical envelopment within reach.

As originally envisioned in the 1951 Harris board (named after its head, Major General Field Harris), which was established to explore the concept and design of organizational structures, a MAGTF should be a scalable force ranging in size from battalion to division and include a BLT combined with an aviation element, a logistics support element, and a command element—a force totaling approximately 2,000 Marines. This force, later called a Marine expeditionary or amphibious unit (MEU/MAU), would be self-sustainable for up to 15 days and would be embarked on a three- to five-ship Navy flotilla that what would, by 1965, be labeled an amphibious ready group (ARG).* The force could be employed in either a nuclear or nonnuclear scenario, but the MAGTF's scalability, flexibility, and speed of deployment made it ideally suited to serve as an amphibious force in readiness, equally able to fight nonconventional wars in the developing world as well as conventional ones against Soviet forces.

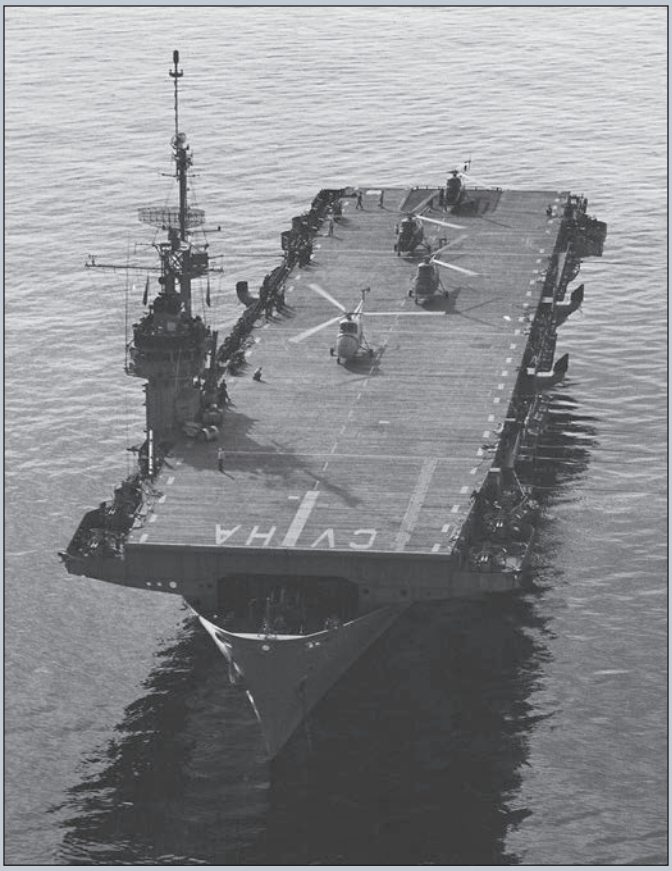
The first true MAGTF was formed in January 1953 and activated as the 1st Provisional Air-Ground Task Force at Marine Corps Air Station Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii. By 1956, the tentative doctrine was well developed and, with the impetus provided by the Hogaboom board, Marine Corps Order 3120.3 was issued on 27 December 1962. This crucial document not only articulated the doctrine but also stipulated the size of each air-ground task force and how those units would be employed; the order also governed what types and how many amphibious ships would be required to transport such a force. The largest MAGTF envisioned was a Marine amphibious corps (MAC) that could be formed by a Marine expeditionary force consisting of two or more Marine divisions, an air wing, a logistics support element, and command element—a force totaling as many as 100,000 Marines.

The maturation of MAGTF doctrine was critical because without it, and its acceptance by the Navy, the Marine Corps had no justifying or motivating force behind the need to modernize and build more amphibious shipping. Knowledge of what a potential MAGTF might require in terms of berthing space, helicopter landing spots, vehicle and equipment parking space, and cargo weight also helped the Navy calculate how many ships, ARGs, and amphibious squadrons (PhibRons) would be needed to carry it, thus allowing the Navy's force developers to attach a quantifiable number and cost estimate for its future shipbuilding budget.

For example, based on the types of amphibious shipping available in 1954, the Navy would require 16 World War II-era ships (9 LSTs, 3 APAs, 3 AKAs, and 1 LSD) to carry a regimental combat team-size MAGTF, the equivalent of 3 of today's ARGs with a total of 9 ships. The larger the force, the greater the amphibious shipping requirement became to carry it. The national military strategy in effect at the time required that an MEF with one division be available for deployment on both East and West Coasts simultaneously; moving one MEF-size MAGTF alone would require 60 ships, a strategy that would have required the Navy to keep at least 120 amphibious warfare ships in commission. This estimate represents an elusive number the Navy has not attained since the end of World War II.

Since the Navy realized that nearly all of its existing

*The terms "amphibious" and "expeditionary" have alternated frequently in the past 50 years when used to describe this type of unit. Whether the Marine Corps represents itself to Congress as an expeditionary force or an amphibious force is dependent on the global situation at the time. While the argument can be made that both terms are applicable, it has resulted in confusion over the years. Local sensibilities also applied. Marines in Vietnam changed "expeditionary" to "amphibious" at the request of Army Gen William C. Westmoreland, who was concerned that the South Vietnamese would think of the French Expeditionary Corps when they heard the term Marine expeditionary force.



U.S. Marine Corps photo

Helicopters (HRS) of the 3d Marine Aircraft Wing prepare to take off from the USS Thetis Bay *(CVHA 1; later redesignated as LHA 6) during AGLEX 57-G, an exercise conducted off the coast of California on 2 December 1956.*

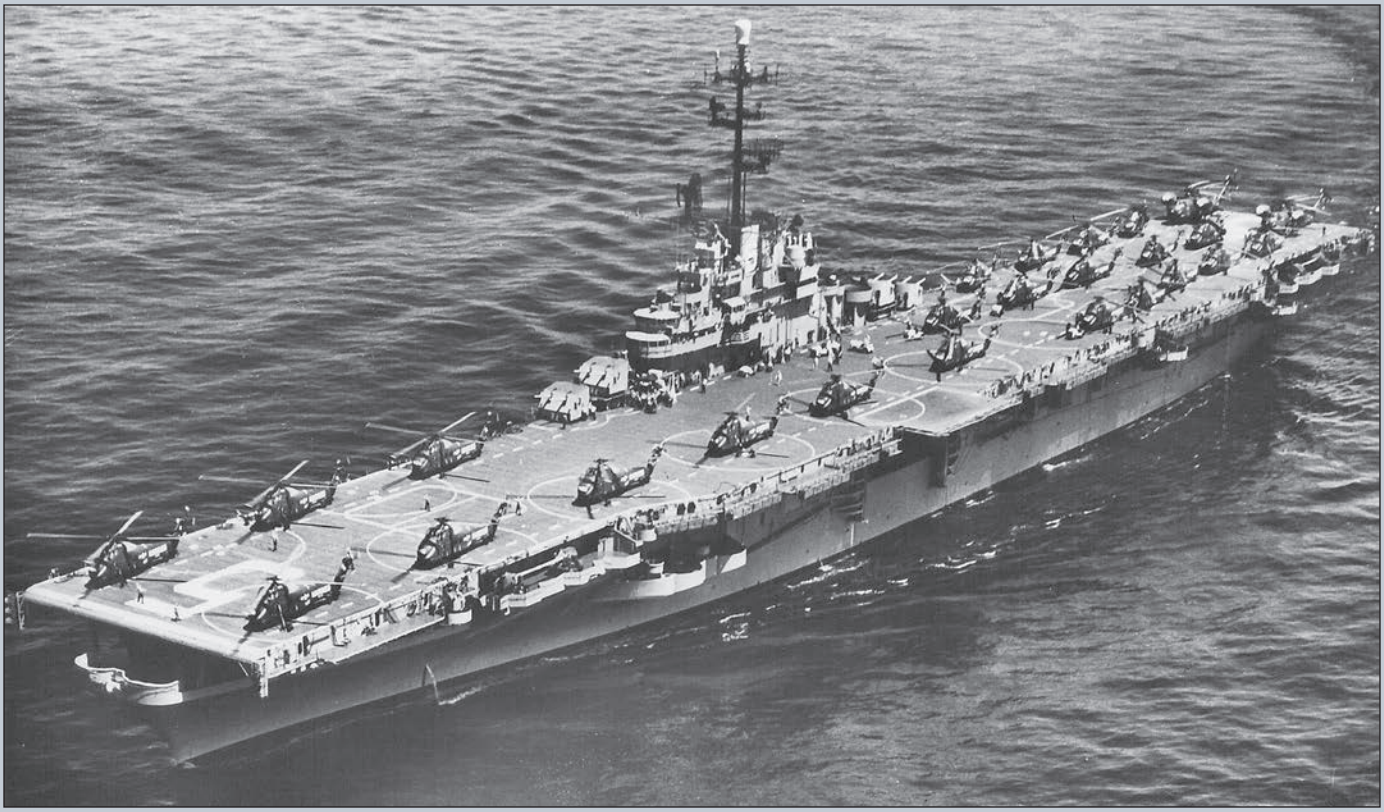
amphibious shipping would have to be replaced no later than 1969, a new impetus was dedicated to ship design beginning in 1954, with a renewed emphasis on developing a helicopter carrier that could replace some or all of the functions currently being performed by troopships and cargo ships, and could shelter and launch helicopters. Other amphibious shipping, such as LSDs, LPTs, and landing platform docks (LPDs), were not neglected either since the Navy realized that it would not be prudent to base the entire amphibious fleet on one type of ship.

Loading plans developed at the time for a MAGTF specified that an MEF with one Marine division and an air wing would require a minimum of 12 of the yet-to-be-built large deck helicopter carriers or landing platform, helicopter (LPH), and 24 LPHs would be needed to support two MEFs. Funding for such an ambitious project was simply not available within the Navy's constrained budget; so even with the changes in amphibious doctrine, smaller, less comprehensive solutions had to be found to carry the force even if it meant building fewer helicopter carriers and more of the comparatively inexpensive ships, such as new LSTs, LSDs, troopships, and cargo ships. In the interim, World War II-era ships continued to sail, carrying embarked BLTs around the world until most of the antiquated ships were retired in the early 1970s.

As envisioned, the concept of a successful deployment and engagement meant that once a MAGTF and its assigned amphibious task force reached its objective, sufficient numbers of amphibious ships, including helicopter carriers and cargo ships, would be required to carry everything the MAGTF commander needed to operate, depending on the length and type of mission, for up to 30 days. In theory, this flexibility would allow the MAGTF commander to plan for sufficient means to carry out the unit's immediate tasks without going through the joint chain of command for additional support, a factor that would delay any response to a given crisis. Of course, even with sufficient amphibious shipping on hand, the MAGTF commander would still continue to rely heavily on the Navy's aircraft carriers and other surface combatants for air superiority, close air and naval gunfire support, all vital for the conduct of a successful amphibious operation. To reach an agreement with the Navy on what would make this concept work, a series of amphibious warfare conferences was initiated in 1955 to hammer out the doctrinal details.

The updated 1958 amphibious doctrine that resulted from these efforts had an immediate impact throughout the Marine Corps and resulted in a far-reaching reorganization. The doctrine also impacted the afloat-ready battalions, which also underwent reorganization to align them with the new MAGTF concept and updated tables of organization. While this was a long overdue change, Marine Corps leadership recognized that to put such a force afloat, regardless of its size, additional new and improved amphibious shipping were necessary. Even the smallest MAGTF with only a composite helicopter squadron and a BLT would still need a large-deck ship to carry its aircraft. Also, the Marine Corps could not count on the Navy to provide fleet carriers for the MAGTFs, because these major surface combatants were required for the Navy's mission of operating fixed-wing aircraft in support of the fleet and conducting antisubmarine warfare.

Therefore, for the Marine Corps in the late 1950s, the primary problem remained. Besides the need for capable troop-carrying and logistics helicopters and a doctrine describing how to employ them, suitable seagoing troop transports and launch platforms were still required for an amphibious force to carry out a vertical envelopment of an objective ashore. Despite numerous

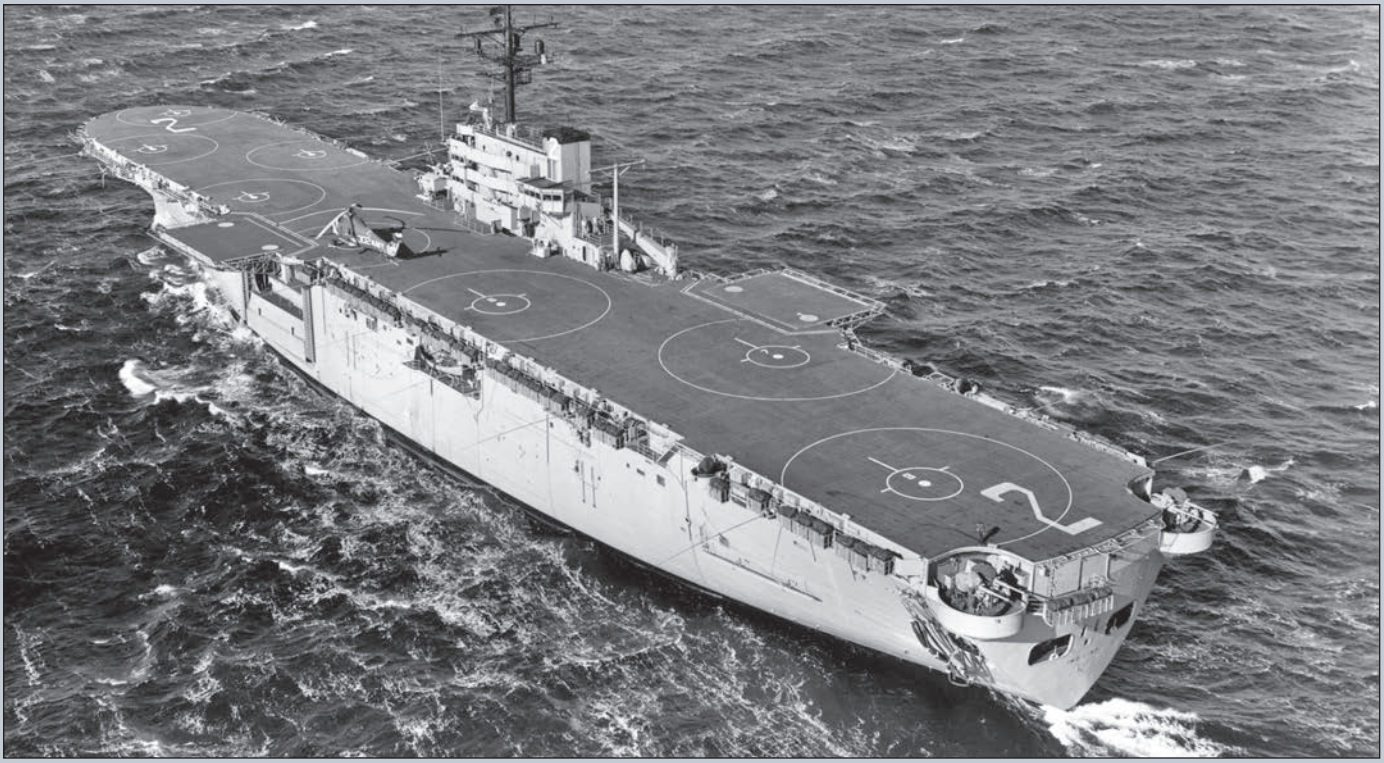


U.S. Marine Corps photo

(Top) Based at the Futenma Marine Corps Air Facility in Okinawa, MAG-16 (Marine Aircraft Group 16) pilots fly HH-34 helicopters off of the flight deck of the USS Princeton *(LPH 5), a converted World War II Essex-class fleet aircraft carrier, sometime in 1961. In the background, several HR2S heavy-lift helicopters can be seen warming up.*

U.S. Navy photo

The bottom photo shows the USS Princeton *(LPH 5) with Marine HH-34 helicopters on the flight deck during the first flight operations from the ship while serving as an LPH-type helicopter carrier on 13 April 1959.*



U.S. Navy photo

The photo shows an aerial view of the amphibious assault ship USS Iwo Jima *(LPH 2) while underway during sea trials in the Puget Sound, near Seattle, Washington.*

experiments involving helicopters and various types of aircraft carriers conducted with the Navy between 1947 and 1955, it was not until 20 July 1956 that the Marine Corps finally began to operate aboard its first LPH, the USS *Thetis Bay* (CVHA 1, originally designated CVE 90), a converted World War II-era escort carrier.

This marked a major milestone in the development of amphibious warfare after World War II. For the first time, the Marine Corps had a dedicated ship that could carry enough helicopters to launch the embarked BLT of a MAGTF. Though old and hardly ideal, for most of its brief second career the *Thetis Bay* served as an excellent test platform to work out the practical aspects of the vertical envelopment doctrine until other converted fleet carriers and purpose-built amphibious assault ships of the Iwo Jima class could join the fleet. In the meantime, most Marines serving with forces afloat would continue to sail on board aging LSTs, LSDs, troopships, and cargo ships built during World War II.

Converted to the first assault helicopter aircraft carrier, the 10,440-ton *Thetis Bay* could carry up to 940 troops and 20 Sikorsky HR2S-1* heavy-lift helicopters at a top speed of 19 knots. Just as important, it could also carry up to 265 tons of cargo to support troops once ashore, though this was insufficient to sustain such a force ashore for more than a few days. Also noteworthy was the mixing of crews. Since the Navy was suffering from an overall shortage of personnel, the Marine Corps had to make up the difference by assigning several hundred of its own men to augment the ship's complement of 600 men, exclusive of the embarked BLT. Also, since the *Thetis Bay* lacked sufficient berthing spaces for the entire BLT, it had to be augmented by several other ships to carry the balance of the troops and embarked cargo and equipment.

Despite its makeshift origins, the *Thetis Bay* would more than make up for the investment of $15 million; it would serve for seven years as both a seagoing test platform and the prototypical heart of the modern amphibious ready group, taking part in numerous training exercises and contingency deployments in the Pacific, Atlantic, Mediterranean, and Caribbean oceans. The lessons learned from launching and recovering aircraft, embarking and disembarking BLTs, and Navy-Marine Corps cooperation proved invaluable when larger and more modern helicopter carriers joined the fleet.

The *Thetis Bay* was followed within the next five years by three more converted LPHs, all of them World War II-era Essex-class carriers that were being phased out in the fleet by larger, newer carriers. While old, these ships could carry up to 30 helicopters at a time and a complete

* The HR2S-1 was the largest and fastest helicopter in the Western world at this time.

BLT of 1,950 men. Plus, the converted carriers—USS *Boxer* (LPH 4), USS *Princeton* (LPH 5), and USS *Valley Forge* (LPH 8)—could carry more than 2,000 tons of cargo and had plenty of deck and hangar space. Air traffic control equipment on the converted LPHs was partially updated, though much of its World War II-era communications systems were left in place as well as a substantial part of its armament, including five-inch 38-caliber dual-purpose guns useful for naval gunfire support.

At 27 knots, the three converted carriers were faster than any other amphibious ship, though with a crew of 1,332 men, they were very expensive to operate. Due to continuing delays in funding that impacted naval construction, the purpose-built helicopter ships were repeatedly delayed, causing the Essex-class LPHs to remain in service longer than anticipated, but with the arrival of the LPHs in the amphibious fleet, the Marine Corps finally had the capability that, when teamed with existing shipping such as LSTs and LSDs, could land an entire division-size MAGTF ashore using both helicopters and traditional landing craft. These ships filled the gap until the seven purpose-built LPHs (Iwo Jima class) slowly replaced them over the next decade. The last Essex-class LPH, the *Boxer*, was finally decommissioned in January 1970 after more than 25 years of continuous service at sea.

These new ships, long delayed due to continuing shortfalls in the Navy's shipbuilding budget, were built as "amphibians" or "gator freighters" from the keel up. The first of the Iwo Jima class, its eponymous namesake LPH-2, was commissioned on 26 August 1961. It was both shorter and lighter than the converted Essex-class carriers, measuring 556 feet in length (versus 820 feet) and weighing empty at 10,989 tons (versus 25,800 tons). Since the Iwo Jima class was capable of only 21.3 knots (the top speed that most of the existing amphibious fleet could maintain), its single-screw, two-boiler steam-turbine engine saved enormous amounts of fuel and was therefore much cheaper to operate than the World War II carriers, which were powered by four-screws, four-boiler steam-turbine engines.

Because the new LPHs were purpose-built from the keel up, the ship design featured more efficient use of available space, allowing it to carry as many as 2,000 BLT Marines in air-conditioned berthing spaces and 26 of the larger Sikorsky UH-34 Sea Horse piston-engine helicopters. They were also equipped with a state-of-the-art air traffic control and communications suite, and some ships of its class were fitted with the necessary equipment to serve as amphibious force flagships. Modernization and other improvements also reduced the overall size of the crew to 594, less than half of what it took to man the Essex-class ships.

When the last of the seven Iwo Jima-class ships (USS *Inchon* [LPH 12]) joined the fleet, one could argue that with the helicopters then being fielded—in-

The U.S. Navy Tank Landing Ship, USS Newport *(LST 1179), leaves the port of Rota, Spain, after a visit on 13 February 1982.*
U.S. Defense Imagery photo DN-SC-82-08583

U.S. Marine Corps photo

The U.S. Navy's first Amphibious Transport Dock ship (LPD 1), USS Raleigh*, gets underway off the Atlantic Coast, ca. 1960.*

cluding the massive Sikorsky CH-53 Sea Stallion heavy-lift transport helicopter that could carry up to four times the number of troops than the earlier models as well as four tons of cargo—the concept of amphibious warfare conducted by vertical envelopment was finally a reality. By the early 1970s, sufficient amphibious shipping assets of all types were available, and enough helicopters were on hand to conduct amphibious sea-air assaults with a MAGTF of two divisions—though this would require the use of nearly all LPHs then in service. More than 74 amphibious-capable ships of all types were needed to carry and transport the force, with two-thirds of the assaulting force going ashore by helicopter and the remainder coming ashore on board traditional landing craft and amphibious assault vehicles.

Despite the modernity of the new LPHs, this new class of ships had one shortcoming. While the *Iwo Jima* and its sister ships could launch helicopters and carry the initial assault waves of their embarked BLTs ashore, they lacked the capability to offload vehicles or cargo quickly. Even disembarking troops was a slow and laborious process, because the ships lacked enough space to operate the appropriate number of helicopters to carry all of the landing team in one lift. In short, while a tremendous technical achievement, the new amphibious ships of the Iwo Jima class proved less flexible in actual use than anticipated. Therefore, reliance on older amphibious shipping continued until a better solution was presented by the Navy's Bureau of Ships. Fortunately, a sufficient number of World War II-era ships still existed in the fleet to fill this gap, but even these had significant limitations and were aging rapidly.

By the mid-1950s, the Navy understood that the 1940s-era LSDs would soon reach the end of their serviceable life, as would the original models of the LST. Both were needed to launch landing craft for amphibious assaults and had become even more important since the new LPHs lacked a well deck to launch landing craft. While the design of both crafts was sound, little funding was available to build additional new LSDs; the eight ships of the Thomaston-class LSD commissioned in the mid-1950s were essentially modified copies of the World War II version. Even the new Talbot County-class LSTs, which began coming off production lines in 1952, had proven to be too slow, at 14 knots, to keep up with the amphibious fleet, which was designed to ideally cruise at 20 knots. The Navy deemed this speed as necessary for all of its ships, including the amphibious fleet, to outrun most types of Soviet submarines in production at the time. Anything incapable of maintaining that speed was destined for the ghost fleet. So the search began in January 1961 for a 20-knot LST, a challenge that proved far easier to issue than to carry out.

U.S. Navy photo

The new Amphibious Transport Dock ship, USS San Antonio *(LPD 17), transits the Atlantic Ocean as part of the USS* Iwo Jima *Expeditionary Strike Group, supporting maritime security operations in the U.S. Fifth and Sixth Fleets areas of responsibility, 6 September 2008.*

The design characteristic of earlier LSTs that prevented the ships from reaching speeds higher than 14 knots was the same feature that made them so indispensable—their ability to beach themselves and unload cargo through the ship's forward clamshell doors. These same doors, which were wide enough for large vehicles such as tanks to exit through them, resulted in a rather blunt bow design that caused a tremendous amount of resistance, making high speeds impossible with its conventional diesel power plant. After much experimentation, the Navy's Bureau of Ships finally settled on the Newport class, which did not resemble the earlier LSTs in any way. Design challenges slowed development, however, and it was not until 1966 when the keel for the first of its class was finally laid down at the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard in Pennsylvania.

First, in order to design a bow that would allow the ship to reach a speed of 20 knots, the Bureau of Ships' designers eliminated the clamshell doors and replaced them with a retractable ramp that was stored on deck and lowered from the bow upon reaching the shoreline. To launch LVTs and other amphibious craft, a well deck was added at the stern that would function similar to that of an LSD. Larger and longer than the World War II LST, the new ships—which were commissioned beginning in June 1969 with the USS *Newport* (LST 1179)—were 563 feet long and weighed in at a hefty 4,975 tons empty. Able to carry as many as four landing craft, utility (LCU) or 24 LVTs, 400 troops, and 500 tons of cargo, the Newport class of ships could cruise at 22 knots, more than fast enough to keep up with the rest of the fleet.

Despite these improvements, the ship's increased weight and deeper draft made it impractical for beaching, so the Newport-class ships were forced to unload most of their cargo using the well deck and pontoon sections, which were carried amidships on the outside of the hull and used as a seagoing pier. The bow ramp worked well with thin-skin vehicles, amtracks, and the 53-ton M60A1 Patton main battle tank then in use at the time, but the ramp proved to be too flimsy for the heavier 70-ton M1A1 Abrams main battle tank that the Marine Corps began to field beginning in 1990. In contrast, the World War II-era LSTs had been more economical and the traditional cargo ships of the Mariner class were even more so, being able to carry 20 times more cargo. Clearly, the LST was an idea that had run its course. All of the Newport-class LSTs were decommissioned by 2000.

Another type of amphibious ship capable of supporting several helicopters at a time and carrying more cargo arrived on the scene in 1963, with the commissioning of the first landing ship, personnel, dock (LPD) ships of the USS *Raleigh* class (LPD 1).* Similar in appearance

*These ships were later redesignated as amphibious transport, docks though the nomenclature LPD was retained.

U.S. Navy photo 090821-N-3542S-277

(Top) A tug assists the USS Oak Hill *(LST 51) as it enters port after returning home from nearly three months of operations in South America, supporting the Southern Partnership Station 2009, 21 August 2009.*

U.S. Navy photo

(Bottom) The last of the traditional troopships, USS Paul Revere *(APA 248), served in the amphibious fleet until 1980. The ship was later sold to the Spanish Navy and rechristened the SPS* Castilla*; it carried thousands of U.S. Marines throughout the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. This picture was taken 26 April 1996 off the coast of La Spezia, Italy.*

to the older LSDs, LPDs had shortened well decks, allowing the accommodation of as many as 980 Marines of a BLT. It could carry as many as six helicopters on its flight deck at a time compared to an LSD, which could only land two helicopters on its smaller mezzanine deck. These older ships also lacked the shelters needed to repair helicopters and the support equipment necessary to control, refuel, and maintain them, something for which the LPD was specifically constructed.

In addition to supporting rotary-wing aircraft, LPDs

could carry as much as 2,500 tons of cargo, which could be unloaded onto landing craft through its shortened well deck or offloaded directly at pier side, thus offering a faster, more modern alternative to the older troopships, which were gradually being replaced. The newer ships were faster, could carry as many troops in greater comfort than a troopship, and were more versatile. Their well decks enabled small- and intermediate-size landing craft to load or unload cargo and could launch amtracks. Significantly, LPDs offered equipment and working spaces to control flight operations both day and night, including the tactical air navigation system (TACAN), a capability the LSDs lacked.

Despite the advantage of being able to launch and recover helicopters, LPDs were primarily intended to augment, but not replace an LPH, which lacked a well deck. When teamed with an LSD, a three-ship group composed of one of each of these type of ships could carry the bulk of the landing craft and helicopters to support an entire MAU or a MEU of 2,200 Marines and sailors. The precursor to the three-ship ARG was initially created on 12 October 1964 when the *Raleigh* joined two other ships of the Atlantic Fleet's amphibious task force (including the *Boxer*) for Operation Steel Pike, the largest peacetime amphibious training exercise ever conducted. The landing exercise took place off the coast of Spain from October to November 1964.

The 3 LPDs of the Raleigh class, followed by 12 more of the similarly configured Austin class, served as mini-helicopter platforms as well as cargo ships and could even serve as amphibious task force flagships if required. For troop comfort, the Raleigh class was air-conditioned—a huge selling point for the embarked Marines. The Raleigh-class ship's proven ability in support of amphibious operations quickly earned it a place in the Gator Navy as the fleet's jack-of-all-trades. While all but one ship of the Austin class has been retired (the USS *Denver* [LPD 9] is scheduled to be decommissioned in September 2014), 10 LPDs are currently serving with

The Amphibious Force Command Ship, USS Mount Whitney *(LCC 20), gets underway off the Virginia Capes (close to the Chesapeake Bay mouth) in 1986.*

U.S. Marine Corps photo

U.S. Navy photo

The amphibious assault ship, general purpose, USS Tarawa *(LHA 1), is underway while celebrating her sixth birthday.*

the fleet, including 9 of the stealthy new San Antonio class, which began arriving in the Navy's ARGs in 2006. Though initially suffering from design issues, which have been largely rectified, the ships of the San Antonio class will carry the Gator Navy well into the mid-century.

Six years after the first LPDs began to reach the fleet, a new generation of LSDs were commissioned beginning with the Anchorage class in 1969; they arrived just in time to replace the ancient World War II-era LSDs and the ships of the Thomaston class, the last of which was launched in 1955. Rather than replace LPDs, the new class of LSDs were remarkably unchanged from their predecessors, offering mainly upgrades in technology, such as power plants, electronics, and defensive armaments. The strength of the LSD remained its well deck, just as it had been with its World War II predecessor. This design feature ran the length of the entire ship, enabling it to launch as many as 50 amtracks, which continued to form the core of the amphibious assault waves until the advent of the Boeing Vertol CH-46 Sea Knight medium-lift helicopter in the mid-1960s. Newer classes of LSDs—including the Anchorage class, Whidbey Island class, and Harpers Ferry class—were introduced to the fleet in 1969, 1985, and 1995, respectively, a testament to the continuing utility of this type of ship. As of 2014, 12 LSDs are still serving in the Gator Navy, including the Little Creek, Virginia-based USS *Oak Hill* (LSD 51) of PhibRon 4.

Hidden in this vast fleet of new LPHs, LPDs, LSTs, and LSDs were dozens of aging attack troopships, such as the USS *Paul Revere* (APA 248) and USS *Francis Marion* (APA 249), which landed Marines the old-fashioned way—hand-over-hand down cargo nets that were thrown over the gunwales of the ship, into awaiting Welin davit-launched LCVPs bobbing alongside the ship. These two ships, representative of their types, were commissioned in 1958 and 1961, respectively. Each displaced 17,098 tons, was 564 feet long, and was powered by two steam turbine engines that could propel them through the water at a respectable 20 knots. Each could carry as many as 2,078 troops, in addition to 529 crew members, and offered a helicopter landing pad mounted aft.

Their "stick and boom" cargo handling equipment could unload cargo dockside or into the ship's organic landing craft (7 LCUs and 12 LCVPs). The ships could also carry as much as 2,050 tons of cargo—vehicles, tanks, artillery, and other supplies—stored in their cavernous holds. However, they were often crowded and

lacked air conditioning, but these sturdy ships were adequate for the task. Incredibly, both of these ships served as troopships until being decommissioned in 1980, long after hundreds of similarly classed ships had gone to the shipbreakers. Thousands of Marines sailed aboard these ships, remaining on station offshore during dozens of crises around the world during the 1950s, 1960s, and well into the 1970s. These ships provided valuable overflow amphibious capacity, especially when the situation required more than a single ARG to carry a regimental combat team or larger force ashore.

No less important for the evolution of the Gator Navy was the continued development of the amphibious command ship (LCC). During World War II, the amphibious fleet had first used old World War I-era battleships, but when these ships proved unsuitable, modified cargo ships were used to carry the commanders and their staffs and the communications equipment needed to maintain contact with higher, lower, and adjacent staffs, as well as with units comprising the landing force. Additional cargo ships were taken in hand, during their construction, to provide more suitable command platforms, but there were never enough to meet the need.

Designated during World War II as amphibious force flagships (AGCs), these ships were beginning to show their age, were slow, and provided limited space to house the expanding suite of devices needed to stay in contact with the fleet through satellite and other forms of communications. Not surprisingly, the Navy kept these ships in the inventory during the 1950s and '60s since new designs were too expensive to build given the fiscal constraints of the time. Ships such as the World War II-era USS *Mount McKinley* (LCC 7) and the USS *Eldorado* (LCC 11) soldiered on until they were decommissioned in 1970 and 1972, respectively.

In the early 1970s, these ships, as well as several others, were replaced with two purpose-built amphibious command ships, the new USS *Mount Whitney* (LCC 20) and the USS *Blue Ridge* (LCC 19). What set these two ships apart was that not only were they built as LCCs but they were based on the hulls of the last two amphibious assault ships of the Iwo Jima class, thus accounting for their resemblance to the earlier amphibious assault ships.

Continually upgraded with the latest in communications and electronic equipment, both ships—commissioned in 1970 and 1971—still serve today as the amphibious force flagships of the Sixth and Seventh Fleets. Manned by combined Navy and civilian crews, the ships provide living spaces, staff working areas, communications, and a combat information center that allows the amphibious force commander and his staff to exercise command and control over both forces afloat and ashore until command can be passed to the commander of the landing forces.

The next significant evolution in the development of the modern Gator Navy was the commissioning on 29 May 1976 of the new class of general purpose amphibious assault ships that combined the best features of an aircraft carrier, an LSD, an LPD, an LST, and an LCC—the amphibious assault ship, general purpose (LHA) of the five-ship Tarawa class. Compared to the ships of the Iwo Jima LPH class, those of the Tarawa class were nearly twice as large, approaching the length (at 833 feet) of fleet carriers such as the USS *Nimitz* (CVN 68), which stretched to 1,092 feet. These enormous ships displaced nearly 40,000 tons when loaded and sailed at a top speed of 24 knots.

While they carried roughly the same number of troops as the Iwo Jima class (1,900 men), the Tarawa class carried as many as 41 helicopters (CH-46s) or a mix of various types, including the large CH-53s. A Tarawa-class ship's well deck could accommodate up to seven LCMs, four of the larger LCUs, or several dozen AAV-7 amphibious assault vehicles, the successor to the amtrack. In addition to this critical capability, the Tarawa class was also equipped with a robust, state-of-the-art sick bay, with four operating rooms, 17 beds in its intensive care ward, 48 beds in its primary care ward, and a dentist office. With the ability to treat critical combat-related injuries, as well as civilians needing medical care in the wake of a humanitarian disaster ashore, the Tarawa class of amphibious assault ships and the classes that followed offered greater medical care capability than the larger Nimitz-class fleet of aircraft carriers.

As important as this feature was to the Gator Navy, the combination of a well deck with a full-size flight deck did not reach its full potential until March 1979; tests conducted then proved that the vertical, short takeoff and landing (VSTOL) AV-8A Harrier "jump jet" made by Hawker Siddeley could operate from the deck of the USS *Tarawa* (LHA 1). For the first time, the Marine Corps had a ship capable of hosting its own fixed-wing aircraft, which allowed every element of the MAGTF to sail together. Shortly thereafter, every ARG with a Tarawa-class LHA that put to sea carried a squadron of six AV-8s, thus providing every MAGTF with its own organic close air support. In 2002, the last ship of the Iwo Jima class, the *Inchon*, was decommissioned, leaving the Tarawa class and the follow-on Wasp class as the premier amphibious assault ships of the U.S. Navy.

From a technological perspective, the Tarawa-class

U.S. Navy photo 080609-N-IW408-072

(Top) The USS Essex *(LHD 2) performs a stern-gate marriage with a Landing Craft Utility (LCU) while back loading elements of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (31st MEU) off the coast of Thailand after completing Operation Cobra Gold 2008 on 9 June.*

U.S. Navy photo 131109-N-ZZ999-330

(Bottom) The USS America *(LHA 6), the first of its class, which is replacing the Tarawa class of amphibious assault ships, returns to Huntington Ingalls Shipyard after completing sea trials. During the trials, the ship's main propulsion, communications, steering, navigation, and radar system were tested for the first time at sea, 9 November 2013.*

ships had no peers; and no other nation could match its capability. However, the Navy's shipbuilding program envisions a 30-year life cycle for all new ship construction, a policy formulated during the 1950s. Simple wear and tear, compounded by the effect of salt water upon the hull and combined with the ship's ability to accommodate technological upgrades, tend to limit how long the Navy can use a ship before it becomes too expensive to maintain and operate. First launched in 1976, the earliest unit of the Tarawa class reached the end of its useful service life in 2006, requiring a replacement to be constructed before that point in order to have a safe margin of overlap within the fleet. Thus, its replacement, the eight-ship Wasp class, designated as a multiple-purpose amphibious assault ship (LHD), was commissioned beginning in 1989.

Like its predecessor, the ships of the Wasp class incorporated a large flight deck, combat operations center, on board hospital, and well deck, while still having berthing spaces large enough to embark a BLT of more than 2,000 men. Unlike the Tarawa class, it was built from the keel up to carry not only helicopter squadrons, but also to carry a McDonnell Douglas AV-8B Harrier II squadron with all of its support services, including additional fuel storage, armament bays, maintenance spaces, and ordnance storage needed to keep the aircraft in fighting readiness. Augmented by an LSD and LPD, an ARG that comprised of each of these ships, can carry and deploy a BLT of more than 2,200 Marines ashore for as long as two weeks without being resupplied. The last of the Wasp class, the USS *Makin Island* (LHD 8), was commissioned in 2009.

Wasp-class ships and the sole remaining Tarawa-class ship, the USS *Peleliu* (LHA 5), are scheduled to be replaced no later than 2025 by five America-class ships and a new class of amphibious assault ship not yet designed. Designated as a landing helicopter assault (replacement) ship (LHA(R)), the USS *America* (LHA 6), to be commissioned in 2014, is essentially a modified version of the *Makin Island*. *America* will be able to carry 6 of the new Lockheed Martin F-35B short takeoff/vertical landing (STOVL) joint strike fighters, 12 Bell Boeing MV-22 Osprey tilt-rotor helicopters, and as many as 13 other types of helicopters. In one sense, this newest class, weighing in at 45,693 tons, is a throwback to the Iwo Jima class, because it was constructed without a well deck to accommodate the increased amount of fuel, ordnance, and repair spaces needed to maintain and operate the larger and more complex F-35Bs and MV-22s. While the ability to carry such a large number of fixed-wing and STOVL aircraft provides an important addition to the Gator Navy, the lack of a well deck ensures that the need for LSDs and LPDs will continue into the middle of the century.

Currently, the Gator Navy inventory stands at 32 ships, including 10 amphibious assault ships (8 LHDs, 1 LHA, and 1 LHA(R)), 10 LPDs, 12 LSDs, and 2 LCC ships for command and control of any large-scale amphibious operations. The Marine Corps' goal of 38 amphibious warfare ships, as noted in the Navy's 30-year shipbuilding plan released in 2012, will not be attained due to budget constraints, but effects from the funding issues can be mitigated in wartime by speeding up the time required for maintenance. Three additional ships (two LPDs and one LHA(R)) are scheduled for delivery over the next four years, while four older ships will be decommissioned during the same period.

Including ships that are currently undergoing scheduled maintenance and post-commissioning shakedowns, a sufficient number of ships still exist in the inventory to support as many as seven MEUs at one time, an equivalent of two MEBs. While not as numerous as the amphibious fleet of the 1950s and '60s, today's Gator Navy is large enough, when fully assembled and augmented by civilian-manned ships of the Maritime Prepositioning Force, to support a division-size amphibious operation. Additionally, new ships coming on line, such as additional America-class LHA(R)s and San Antonio-class LPDs, are able to support newer systems being fielded that possess much greater capability that those of the past, including the F-35B and MV-22.

Though not the focus of this article, a brief mention should be made of the various craft used to move Marines from ship to shore, known in today's parlance as "connectors." Just as the ships have evolved in the past 70 years, so have the amtracks, landing craft, helicopters, and fixed-wing aircraft of the MAGTF. From the very beginning, the size and capability of the various craft have influenced the size of the ships designed to accommodate them, with the trend moving toward larger sizes and greater displacements. As the sizes of landing or parking spots for aircraft and landing craft increased so has the requirement for more onboard fuel and ammunition storage space, factors driving the ever-increasing expansion of ships' dimensions. For example, the early Sikorsky HRS-2 helicopter had a rotor diameter of 53 feet and weighed nearly 5,000 pounds empty; the new MV-22 tilt-rotor aircraft has a combined rotor diameter of nearly 85 feet and weighs a hefty 33,000 pounds without a load. These factors, as well as other considerations, greatly influenced the design of amphibious ships, such as the need to strengthen and widen flight decks.

U.S. Navy photo 111010-N-KD852-492

The modern Gator Navy, underway off the coast of Southern California, 11 October 2011. In the foreground, the amphibious dock landing ship, USS Pearl Harbor *(LSD 52), on the right the USS* Makin Island *(LHD 8), and to the upper left, amphibious transport dock ship, USS* New Orleans *(LPD 18).*

The original troop-carrying helicopter, the relatively small HRP-1 Flying Banana, could carry only eight troops in 1948. After much design and experimentation over a period of 20 years, the requirement for a troop-carrying helicopter gradually evolved with the introduction of the UH-34 Seahorse—the most prolific Marine helicopter of the late 1950s and early 1960s—to a design culmination in the even larger CH-46 Sea Knight, first fielded in 1966. This helicopter could carry as many as 25 troops at a top speed of 166 miles per hour and is still in use today as the aerial equivalent of the amtrack. Its replacement, the newest addition to the aerial amphibious fleet, is the MV-22 Osprey VSTOL tilt-rotor aircraft, capable of carrying as many as 25 troops over 500 miles at speeds approaching 300 miles per hour, nearly twice the speed of the CH-46. This performance permits the type of rapid, deep vertical envelopment originally envisioned by the first Hogaboom board in 1947, although it places additional demands in terms of maintenance, fuel, and overhead space within the hangar deck.

However, not every Marine nor every weapon of a MAGTF will go by air—in fact, even with today's aircraft, only two-thirds of the assault force will move ashore in this manner. Though the heavy-lift CH-53 helicopter will carry some of the MAGTF's vehicles and weapons ashore, follow-on waves of logistics and support elements, such as tanks and artillery, still have to go ashore the tried-and-true method—by using the modern equivalent of the LCM, the LCU. Though slow and cumbersome in comparison to the MV-22, LCUs are still the mainstay of the ship-to-shore connector fleet and will continue to see service in the years to come.

The AAV-7—successor to the smaller LVT-1s and LVT-2s used on the Tarawa-class ships—can carry up to 21 fully equipped Marines and is launched from the well deck of an LSD, LPD, or an amphibious assault ship. Much like their World War II predecessors, the AAV-7, which began entering service in 1972, can move from ship-to-shore in less than 30 minutes at a speed of 6 knots, while providing limited armor protection for the men inside. Just as was done in World War II, the

vehicle can assault an enemy-held beach and continue attacking inland as part of a tank-infantry combined arms force. The AAV-7 vehicles—now reaching the end of their serviceable life—are scheduled to remain in use past 2020 while the Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC) works to develop a follow-on amphibious assault vehicle with greater speed and armor protection.

One of the last additions to the Gator Navy is the landing craft, air cushion (LCAC). This hovercraft is designed to use the surface air effect to move over water or land at a high rate of speed after being launched from the well deck of an amphibious assault ship, LSD, or LPD. The craft can carry as much as 70 tons of cargo (including the M1A1 Abrams tank) or as many as 24 troops with equipment at speeds exceeding 45 miles per hour. Though not designed to operate as an assault craft since it lacks armor, the LCAC speeds up the ship-to-shore movement tremendously, facilitating rapid loading and unloading on the beach. Combined with the LCU, the hovercraft can move the majority of the MAGTF's supplies and equipment from the ship to the shore. The Navy's service life extension program (SLEP) will keep the LCAC operating within the ship-to-shore connector fleet for several more decades until the Navy designs and fields a replacement.

Although the post-World War II evolution of the Gator Navy did not happen with quite the same degree of speed and intensity as what transpired between 1934 and 1945, dramatic improvements have still occurred during the ensuing decades. While the venerable World War II amphibious fleet continued to serve with distinction well into the 1960s, new families of amphibious ships were created beginning in the 1950s that reflected the impact of changing doctrine and technology on the fleet's composition. The need to disperse the fleet in the face of the nuclear threat forced the Marine Corps to devise innovative ways to get troops ashore expeditiously while bypassing enemy centers of resistance. The resulting doctrine of vertical envelopment and the helicopters that gave life to it forced long-term design changes in amphibious ships that continue today.

This doctrine, combined with the concept of the modern MAGTF and the need to field ready forces on permanent stations around the world, has led to the development of the Gator Navy that Marines and sailors know today. But whether Marines or sailors are deployed aboard an amphibious assault ship, such as an LHA or an LHD, or are serving aboard an LPD or LSD, they form an integral part of the team that supports the Marine Corps' ability to conduct its primary mission—

U.S. Navy photo by MC 2d Class Ian Carver

An AAV7A1 amphibious assault vehicle launches from the well deck of the amphibious transport dock USS New York *(LPD 21) underway in the Arabian Sea on 18 June 2012.* New York *and the embarked 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit, deployed with the* Iwo Jima *Amphibious Ready Group, is supporting maritime security operations and theater security cooperation efforts in the U.S. Fifth Fleet's area of responsibility.*

to serve as the nation's expeditionary force in readiness. To achieve this, individual Marines first relearn how to become "amphibians"—soldiers of the sea—operating from amphibious ships to assemble, prepare, equip, and supply forces to conduct operations ashore.

It is important to note that the Marine Corps, in partnership with the Navy, has sailed on numerous types of amphibious ships and throughout the last 70 years has developed a successful amphibious operations doctrine. The Gator Navy of today is a product of decades of experimentation, adaptation, and innovation, creating a force that is able to project national power from the sea in ways that the pioneers of the 1930s could only imagine. Whether serving at sea as a member of an MEU, MEB, or MEF, today's Marines still have the means—the ships, landing craft, and aircraft—to deploy by air or surface means and are trained to do both. While Marines can and do deploy via the U.S. Air Force's Boeing C-17 Globemaster III cargo aircraft, Fleet Marine Force Reference Publication 2-12 notes that the Marines' forte is to "come from the sea." So while the ships, the doctrine, and the means to get ashore continue to change and evolve, those currently serving in the Corps, whether ashore or at sea, should remember that at the end of the day, it all comes down to that fact. •*1775*•

"Woods Now U.S. Marine Corps Entirely"

Annette D. Amerman
Historian, History Division
Marine Corps University

This past May, two History Division historians provided a professional military education (PME) lesson to the Marines slated to participate in the Memorial Day ceremony at the Aisne-Marne American Cemetery near Belleau Wood. This article provides a short overview of that moment, but mostly the personal observations of a historian.

Photo by author

The Countess of Belleau drinks from the fountain as Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen James Amos looks on.

"Retreat Hell! We've just got here!" and "Come on, you sons of bitches—do you want to live forever?" usually spring to mind when one is asked about Belleau Wood.* Having read a considerable amount of personal accounts, official documents, and published histories of the battle, I was still not fully prepared for the experience, nor could I completely grasp the scope and magnitude of the battle. I had to walk the ground, stand in the woods, climb out of the gullies, and witness the terrain personally; and I was lucky enough to do just that with members of the 6th Marines. On 24 May 2014, I led a detachment of the 6th Marines through the hills, valleys, and villages surrounding the famed area of operations, ending in the woods themselves. This was more than a simple PME lesson—I was walking the hallowed grounds that so many fought and died for 96 years earlier, and it was not lost on me that I was there with the actual unit representing those who had fought so many decades before.

We disembarked the tour bus at a point near Les Mares Farm. The farm was the first point of contact for the U.S. Marines and Germans—at this point of the tour, I described how Lieutenant Lemuel C. Shepherd Jr. and his 14-man outpost showed the Germans what excellent marksmen Marines were. "A Marine with a rifle, that's all in the hell we had . . . but we held our lines," Shepherd reported years later in an oral history. The vantage point from Les Mare Farm gives one a better understanding of terrain, defilade, cover, and concealment. The wheat was nearly chest high and the tree foliage fully grown—I could only imagine that it must have looked that way in 1918. This is also the point where today's Marines finally understood that there was no single wheat field, but actually a multitude of wheat fields and woods that their forerunners had to cross and take.

We continued throughout the French countryside, stopping at key points along the way, such as the ravines and gullies that Marines used as lifelines—areas where the Marines could maneuver unseen by the preregistered German artillery—and the church steeple from which German snipers harassed Marines in the town of Bouresches. It was in Bouresches that my group stopped to

*"Retreat Hell" is typically attributed to Capt Lloyd W. Williams, but is also claimed by LtCol Frederick M. "Fritz" Wise. "Come on you sons of bitches" was shouted by GySgt Daniel J. Daly.

Photo by author

Col Peter Ferraro (Ret) wrapping up his PME at the Marine Memorial with the Marines of the 2d Marine Division Band.

Photo by author

Maj David S. Williams, regimental intelligence officer of the 6th Marines, stands in one of the holes that remain on the battlefield.

have lunch prepared by the residents of the town. Boureseches Mayor Monsieur Dominique Frex graciously made the town's community center available to our group; a kindness acknowledged, as we departed, by Colonel Ryan P. Heritage, 6th Marines commanding officer.

Our last stop was Belleau Wood itself. It was at this point that the Marines and I parted company. I wanted to give them the maximum time possible to walk through the woods where their predecessors had fought so valiantly. Visible reminders remain even after all these years—impact craters, fighting holes, and trenches still scar the ground. They are easy to see, but difficult to distinguish from one another. The Marines of my group disappeared into the woods and began to investigate on their own, occasionally seeking me out with questions. Many were surprised to see the hunting lodge and recalled seeing photos of it after the battle. Considering the age and the devastation seen by this ground, it was surprising to many that so much remained unchanged. The 50 Marines on my tour were soon joined by Marines of 2d Marine Division Band, which had been trailing us throughout the day.

We regrouped below the wood in the Aisne-Marne American Cemetery where hundreds of Marines are buried. The cemetery hummed with activity as staff worked to tie up loose ends before the next day's Memorial Day ceremony. The groundskeepers had upheld their finest standards—each grave was pristinely kept; not a blade of grass was out of place. We could not express enough gratitude to the staff for their efforts—the pride in their work and the respect shown for those resting in eternal peace is clearly evident. I left feeling humbled by everything I had witnessed that day—courage, compassion, reverence, and honor. I should also note my gratitude for my fellow guides that day, Colonel William "Bill" Anderson, Colonel Peter Ferraro, Lieutenant Colonel Michael "Mike" Kelly (each retired Marines), and Mr. Ray Shearer of the American Overseas Memorial Day Association for their fine efforts, instruction, and patience.

While my official work was complete on Saturday, we remained to attend the Memorial Day ceremony as well as to march into the small town of Belleau where the "Bulldog fountain" awaited a sea of Marines longing to drink from it and thereby ensuring 20 years of additional life. Prior to the official ceremony, a private ceremony was held at the WWI Marine Memorial at Belleau Wood. This year, the Commandant of the Marine Corps General James F. Amos attended alongside General Bertrand Ract-Madoux, the French Army Chief of Staff. Both men spoke of the history made in the woods and the valiant efforts of French soldiers and American Marines. At the end, General Amos presented General Ract-Madoux with the Legion of Merit.

The official Memorial Day ceremony started at 0945 and went on until noon. It was full of the requisite pomp and speeches; local children gave performances and

Photo by author

Col Ryan P. Heritage, commanding officer of 6th Marines, with Annette Amerman at the Marine Memorial.

both (French and American) military bands played for the gathered crowd. I was pleasantly surprised to see so many locals attending the ceremony—clearly a sign of deep respect and appreciation. After the ceremony concluded and before we all marched to the "Bulldog fountain," many of the locals asked the Marines for photos—just as if they were Hollywood celebrities.

The march down to the fountain, and subsequent speeches by the Commandant and others, concluded activities for the day (unless you were being promoted or retired, which took place after most had departed). The Commandant presented a glass of fountain water to the Countess of Belleau, the 90-something owner of the fountain and surrounding grounds. Cheers of "ooh-rah" and whistles sounded as the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps removed his cover and proceeded to let the water from the fountain flow directly over his head before taking a drink. With that, a less-than-linear line formed; everyone, myself included, wanted their photo taken drinking from the fountain, which was cold and refreshing.

There was far more to this trip than I can report in this format; however, the purpose was to instruct the Marines on the events of June 1918 and let them actually walk the ground. I believe each Marine came away with a better appreciation of the events and a reverence for their predecessors. This trip also gave the local population the chance to interact with men and women cut from the same cloth as those who had fought there 96 years before, as well as the opportunity to express their continued gratitude. Lastly, it gave this historian (who did not serve in the military) a better understanding of what these brave souls were up against and accomplished. I suspect that as long as the stories of Belleau Wood continue to be told, thousands of Marines will continue to make the pilgrimage to France and once again Major Maurice E. Shearer's words of 26 June 1918 will ring true, "Woods now U.S. Marine Corps entirely." •*1775*•

In Memoriam:

Dr. Stephen S. Evans

Annette D. Amerman
Historian, History Division
Marine Corps University

The U.S. Marine Corps and History Division lost one of its own on Sunday, 22 June 2014 when Dr. Stephen Stewart Evans, acquisitions editor in the Editing and Design Branch passed away unexpectedly at home at the age of 60. As many know, Steve came to the History Division (HD) as "Colonel Evans" in December 2006; he quickly became a well-liked member of the staff with his personable ways, his positive attitude, booming voice, and boisterous laugh.

Steve Evans was born in 1954 and raised in the Philadelphia area. After earning a bachelor's degree in social studies at West Chester University, he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps in 1976. While serving with the Marine Corps Reserve, Evans continued his education, earning a master's in social studies at West Chester University as well as attending Amphibious Warfare School, Command and Staff College, and National Security School. In 1995, Steve received his doctorate from Temple University—his dissertation, "The Lords of Battle: Image and Reality of the Comitatus in Dark-Age Britain," was subsequently published by The Boydell Press in 1997.

Steve was recalled to active duty in 2006 to work at the History Division. His decorations include the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal with one gold star, and the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal. While Steve had extensively published scholarly books and articles as well as monograph-length government reports and monographs prior to his arrival at HD, he compiled, edited, and published *U.S. Marines and Irregular Warfare, 1898–2007: Anthology and Selected Bibliography* for HD in 2008.* He retired from the Marine Corps Reserve as a colonel in 2008. Just two short years later, in 2010, Steve returned as a civilian when he was hired as the inaugural acquisitions editor for Marine Corps University Press; a job in which he excelled due to his jovial and gregarious ways. He took pride in his work and was always willing to discuss the Press and possible articles for the *Marine Corps University Journal*.

It was not surprising that his knowledge of medieval history* was unrivaled at HD, and he could easily be coaxed into debating the historical veracity of King Arthur with colleagues. His kindness was also well known—in advance of my first trip to North Wales to visit Edwardian castles, Steve loaned me several books and maps; he was also the first person to ask me about my trip upon my return. His Welsh heritage was readily apparent with his gift of storytelling and his office decorations. Steve Evans is survived by his parents Phillip and Mary Evans, his wife Kristin, daughters Victoria Wilson-Richards and Denise Maddox, his twin brother Craig, and brothers Doug and Eric, as well as several grandchildren, nieces, and nephews.

Dr. Steve Evans' passing has left an indelible mark in the hearts of his family, friends, and coworkers. •*1775*•

Hwyl fawr am nawr...**

**The Heroic Poetry of Dark-Age Britain: An Introduction to its Dating, Composition, and Use as a Historical Source* (Washington DC: University Press of America, 1997); *The Lords of Battle: Image and Reality of the Comitatus in Dark-Age Britain* (Suffolk, UK: Boydell & Brewer, 1997); "The Dating of Beowulf" in *Classical and Medieval Literature Criticism* (Farmington Hills, Michigan: Gale, 2001); "Comitatus" in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Medieval Warfare and Military Technology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010)

**Welsh for "Goodbye for now..."

Marines at Mare Island

Major David W. Kummer
Historian, History Division
Marine Corps University

The U.S. Marine Corps presence in Northern California centered around the San Francisco area. Originally known as Yerba Buena, San Francisco provided the backdrop for early Marine Corps operations. Not until the Civil War did the Marine Corps have a significant and lasting presence at Mare Island but the roots of the Corps' long ties to the area can be traced back to Jacksonian era presidents. Successive administrations focused on continued American expansionism across the North American continent and settled permanent borders to prevent foreign powers, namely Great Britain, from encroaching on American sovereignty. By the early 1840s, American designs on both the Oregon Territory and California were a powder keg that threatened to bring the nation to war once again. Relations with Mexico festered over reparation claims for abuses suffered by American merchants and citizens at the hands of corrupt Mexican officials and criminal elements. Until a monetary settlement could be reached between the two nations, Mexico's willingness and ability to pay the ever-mounting claims made California a convenient settlement to satisfy those assertions, extend the American empire to its natural extent, and thwart foreign powers from isolating the Oregon Territory.

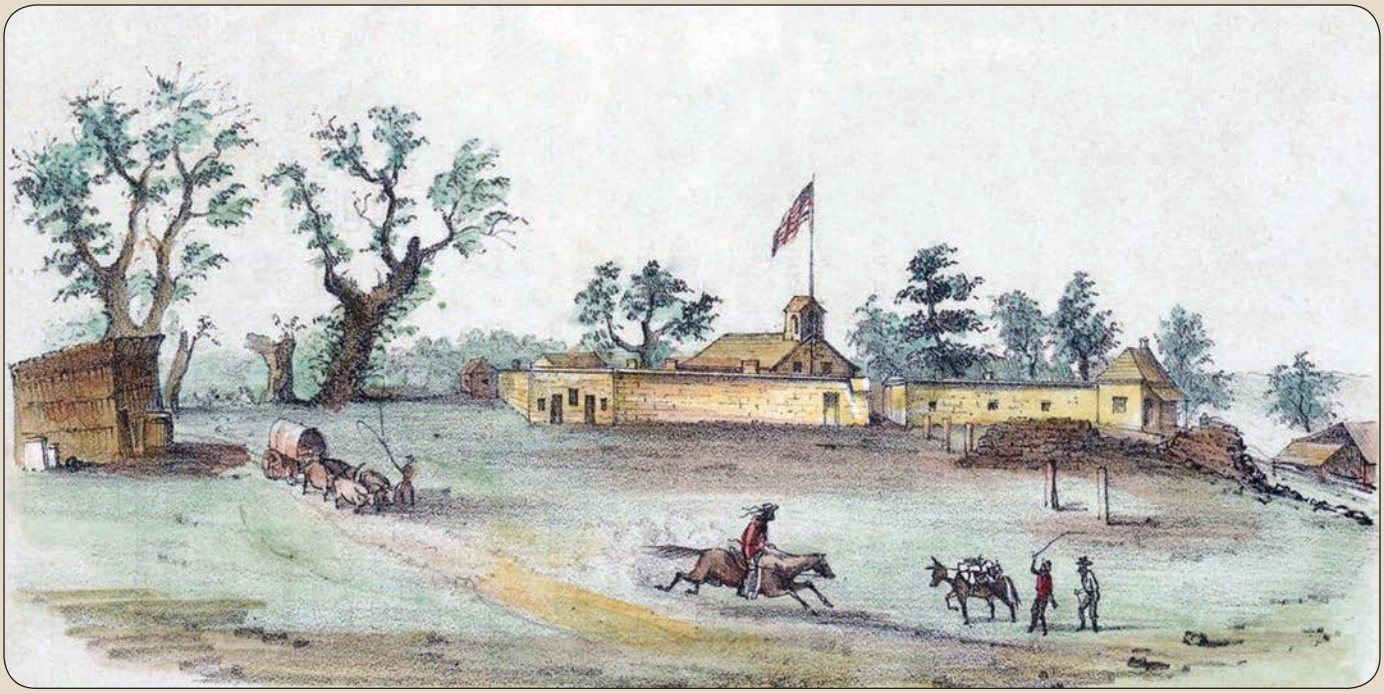
Beginning with President Andrew Jackson's second term, efforts to purchase California from Mexico were repeatedly rebuffed. The election of James K. Polk to the presidency placed expansion again in the forefront of national politics. However, the United States' annexation of Texas in 1845 only served to further erode relations with Mexico. Obtaining California was one of the president's stated goals for his term; however, John Slidell, Polk's special envoy to Mexico, was turned away by the Mexican government when he attempted to settle U.S. claims for additional territory. By early April 1846, with American troops in an uneasy standoff along the disputed Texas border with Mexico and naval forces patrolling Mexican waters, the U.S. administration ended its efforts to peacefully settle American claims and buy Mexican territory.

California, like Texas, rebelled against Mexico in 1836, forcing Mexican troops from most of the area. Mexico's weak government, which had undergone a series of coup d'états, was unable to reestablish much control over the break-away territory. The vacuum of power set California up as a tempting target for both European powers and an emerging America. Militarily, California's defenses at Yerba Buena and Monterey were left to decay as colonial Spanish-era fortifications or *presidios* languished after Mexican independence and subsequent revolts. By the time of the Mexican-American War, the only viable barracks in the region were the Sonoma Barracks built by General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo in 1835. Left to its own devices, California devolved into a "virtual state of civil war" between two rivals, Governor Pio de Jesús Pico and Commandante General Jose Antonio Castro. As the two rivals fought for control of California, they also tried to prevent outsiders from undermining their efforts.

In April 1840, Castro arrested approximately 60 American and British traders and business owners for inciting a rebellion. Almost all were found guilty and jailed. After one American died at the hands of his captors, the sloop USS *St. Louis* (1828) was ordered to Monterey, about 100 miles south of present day Mare Island, California. Facing the guns of the *St. Louis* and the Marine guard ashore, Castro reluctantly freed the prisoners and agreed to protect foreigners under his jurisdiction.

Two years later in 1842, amid deteriorating Mexican-American relations and rumors of war, Marines again went ashore in California. While on patrol off the coast of Peru, Pacific Squadron commander, Captain Thomas ap Catesby Jones, received word from a passing merchantman that the United States and Mexico had gone to war. Jones ordered the frigate USS *United States* (1797) and sloop USS *Cyane* (1837) to make sail for California to prevent any other foreign power from forcibly seizing it.

When the *United States* arrived at Monterey, her commander, Captain James Armstrong, went ashore to force Mexican authorities to surrender California. On 20 October 1842, Mexican officials came on board to sign the official articles of surrender. By noon, the Marines ashore hoisted the American flag over California. However, the Navy's victory was short lived as it soon



Library of Congress

A period colored lithograph of Sutter's Fort, California, in 1849

learned that the United States and Mexico were in fact not at war. Just two days later, Captain Jones restored California to the Mexican government and returned seized arms while Marines lowered the flag before departing.

In the following years, American and Mexican relations continued to deteriorate; California was in turmoil over Mexico's unsuccessful attempt to regain control of its rebellious province. After Mexico refused to sell California, President Polk turned to the filibuster to bring about annexation. By 1845, Americans in California made up roughly 10 percent of a population whose overall loyalty to Mexico was suspect at best. Polk hoped that a subversive effort from within would prod Californians toward a peaceful annexation like that of Texas. To that end, Polk sent several secret agents into California, including Marine First Lieutenant Archibald H. Gillespie. Gillespie had just returned from a two-year sea duty as commander of the Marine Guard of the USS *Brandywine* (1825), but he seemed an odd choice for this mission. His wife later recounted that he was selected because he was both well educated and an "excellent Spanish scholar." It also helped that Gillespie's childhood guardian was prominent New Jersey politician Joseph W. Reckless.

In late October 1845, Gillespie reported to President Polk and received secret orders to assist the U.S. consul at Monterey, Thomas O. Larkin, with helping Californians establish a government receptive to U.S. annexation. Gillespie ensured secrecy during his transit overland by memorizing his dispatches and travelling through Mexico disguised as a "whiskey salesman, representing the McDougall's Distillery of Glasgow, Scotland." After reaching the west coast of Mexico, Gillespie boarded the *Cyane* for final passage to California. In spite of his previous efforts to obscure the true nature of his journey, Gillespie's "secret mission" was well known among naval officers of the Pacific Squadron by the time he reached California.

In April 1846, Gillespie arrived in California and met with Consul Larkin to brief him on President Polk's plan. He next sought out the armed surveying party led by U.S. Army Brevet Captain John C. Fremont. In addition to official government orders, Gillespie also carried instructions from Fremont's father-in-law, the powerful Missouri senator, Thomas Hart Benton. The Fremont expedition, which began under the pretense of mapping the headwaters of the Arkansas River, crossed the mountains and made its way to California, arriving in early December 1845 at Sutter's Fort, California, approximately 50 miles northeast of Mare Island.

By spring, Fremont neared the coast of Monterey. However, Fremont's band of hardened explorers and his own "antics" to stir up local American settlers forced General Castro to expel Fremont. Gillespie caught up with Fremont's expedition as it neared the Oregon border in early May 1846. After receiving Senator Benton's instructions, Fremont reversed course and headed back, certain

that Great Britain intended to forcefully seize California.

At sea, the Pacific Squadron patrolled what is now the western coast of the United States and Mexico. Rumors of an impending war did not stop U.S. naval ships from regularly making port calls along the Mexican coast, which were infamous for illicit trade, gaming, and animal smuggling. Though the "Oregon and Mexico question" was ever present, rival navies generally enjoyed good relations because U.S. and British ships frequented the same ports. The Pacific Squadron's commander, Commodore John D. Sloat, concentrated his ships at the Mexican port of Mazatlán to enable him to receive information and quickly act in the event of war. The arrival of mail from the East Coast was a major event, which could either confirm or further inflame rumors. Ashore, U.S. sailors and Mexican soldiers regularly scuffled, and general lawlessness abounded as tensions with Mexico escalated in the spring of 1846.

On 28 March, the arrival of mail sent the Pacific Squadron into a flurry of activity as ships dispersed to establish an American presence all along Mexico's west coast. The dispatches revealed that the U.S. Navy was already blockading Mexican ports in the Gulf of Mexico, and American troops, commanded by General Zachary Taylor, confronted the Mexican army with only the Rio Grande separating the two armies. Despite the troubling news, Sloat remained at anchor in Mazatlán, unwilling to get overly aggressive given the embarrassment of the Navy mistakenly seizing ports four years earlier. However, by late April, elements of Sloat's squadron had anchored at Monterey where the two sides continued an uneasy peace. In early June, Sloat finally had confirmation of war and made sail for Monterey to begin the naval conquest of California.

In early June, news arrived back at Monterey that Lieutenant Gillespie had intercepted the Fremont expedition, making its way back into California and fighting several skirmishes with native tribes. The USS *Portsmouth* (1843), which had been at anchor for over a month, left Monterey for Yerba Buena and arrived two days later. Second Lieutenant Henry Bulls Watson, who commanded the ship's Marine Guard, readied his Marines for the upcoming conflict with drill and marksmanship training. By mid-June, California was in a state of chaos as American immigrants revolted and captured General Vallejo, commandant of Northern California, along with the arms and equipment at the Sonoma Barracks. They transported General Vallejo back to Sutter's Fort and proclaimed California to be the independent "Bear Flag Republic."

Fremont's party, having made its way back to Sutter's Fort, absorbed the revolutionaries, accepted their prisoners, and made for the coast to take on General Castro's forces. After crossing San Francisco Bay and spiking the rusty guns at the old Spanish Presidio, which overlooked the bay, Fremont's party returned to its Sonoma headquarters. Floating in the bay and waiting for orders from Sloat to provide more than arms and equipment, the *Portsmouth* could only offer material support to Fremont and Gillespie.

For the Marines and sailors of the *Portsmouth*, Yerba Buena was an ideal port for crewmen engaged in such mundane tasks as "cleaning, caulking, and watering the ship"; they also speculated on rumors that filtered down and took on added credibility with each passing day as more reports arrived from Sutter's Fort and Monterey. On 2 July, Commodore Sloat, who arrived on the frigate USS *Savannah* (1842), remained at anchor off Monterey after deliberations with Consul Larkin. Mindful of Polk's designs, the pair hoped to cajole the Californians into a peaceful acceptance of American rule and decided to wait several more days, even though they now had confirmation that a state of war existed between Mexico and the United States. The rejection of a provisional government friendly to the United States by both Governor Pico and General Castro, along with the threat of British intervention, finally spurred Sloat into action.

On 7 July 1846, naval officers went ashore to demand the surrender of Monterey. By mid-morning, a landing party of approximately 250 men, which included 85 Marines commanded by Captain Ward Marston, came ashore and assembled at the customs house. The Marines promptly raised the American flag over the town and garrisoned the barracks formerly used by General Castro's troops.

Two days later at Yerba Buena, known as San Francisco by 1847, the *Portsmouth* also conducted an unopposed landing. Soon after, Marines were formed in front of the customs house as the flag was raised over the town. The Marine detachment, commanded by First Lieutenant Watson, commandeered the old customs house and used it for the first unofficial Marine barracks in California and the San Francisco Bay area. Because many locals feared the arrival of the Americans, only a small crowd gathered when a proclamation was read, claiming the town for the United States. As the local garrison commander, Watson organized and trained the local militia and convinced frightened women that the Marines would not only protect property but also their lives and virtue.

On 9 July 1846, Navy Lieutenant James W. Revere, a descendant of Paul Revere, carried word of the Ameri-

can occupation to Monterey, Yerba Buena, and Sonoma. Less than a month after its inception, the Bear Flag Republic ceased to exist. Upon receiving word from Revere, the Bear Flag leaders brought down the flag and ran up the Stars and Stripes, generally concluding the American conquest of Northern California.

Following the Mexican-American War, the American military, for the most part, provided the foundation for local governance until California was admitted to the Union in 1850. From the outset, the discovery of gold and subsequent influx of would-be prospectors made the San Francisco area a center of military investment in California. While most of the Army's posts were focused on the frontier to guard against border incursions and Native American uprisings, naval forces anchored their presence in California with the development of the Mare Island Navy Yard.

General Vallejo remained one the area's leading citizens after the war. He held vast land grants from the Mexican government and, soon after California's conquest, he began selling off parcels to speculators. Chief among them were U.S. Consul Larkin and Dr. Robert B. Semple, who ironically had been a captain in the Bear Flag Revolt* and one of Vallejo's captors.

Mare Island sits opposite the town of Vallejo. The island's western shore lies on San Pablo Bay, while its eastern extremity is the Mare Island Strait. The strait, which separates Mare Island and Vallejo, drains the Napa Valley. The strait was attractive for naval purposes because its channel could accommodate large ships, and siltation from mining runoff was not an issue at the time. The island's southern tip faces Carquinez Strait, formed by the terminus of the region's two largest rivers, the Sacramento and San Joaquin.

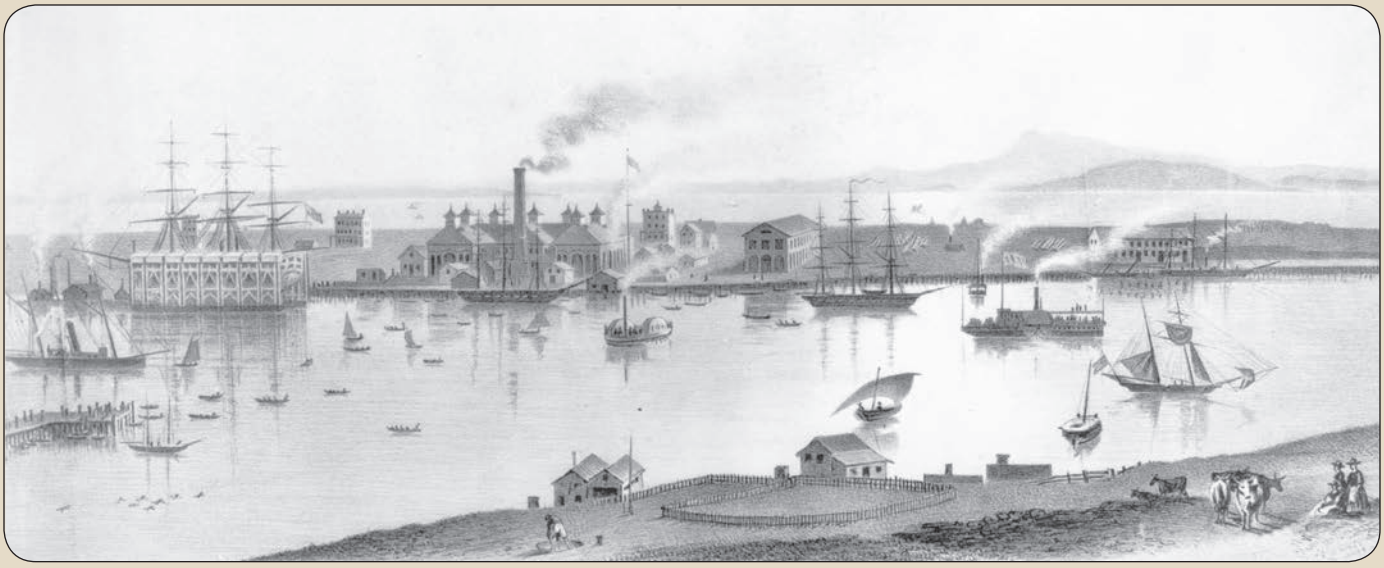
General Vallejo sold much of his land, which became townships on the north side of San Francisco Bay; he also named Mare Island, or *Isle de la Yegua* in Spanish, as a result of an accident. Early in the history of Vallejo, a ferry ran between Vallejo and the neighboring town of Benicia along the Carquinez Strait. The ferry was crudely constructed, using barrels that previously transported whale oil. The barrels, which acted like large pontoons, were fastened together using various planks to form a deck. The ferry's deck was partitioned with several corrals to transport livestock between the towns. During one transit of the straits, the cumbersome ferry capsized in a gale. The cargo, which was mainly horses, including a white mare owned by Mariano Vallejo, went into the churning waters. Many of the animals drowned, but a few, including Vallejo's prized horse, managed to get ashore on what is now Mare Island. Several days after the storm, Vallejo located his horse and sent a party to capture it along with the other surviving livestock. From that point on, Vallejo referred to the desolate island as Mare Island.

The Marine Corps temporarily located its first barracks in San Francisco, California. The Army also established defenses in the San Francisco area around existing installations, such as the nearby Presidio. However, both services soon shifted their attention toward building new facilities closer to Sacramento along the Carquinez Strait. In 1849, the Army bought property in Benicia, California, and established the Benicia Arsenal as its headquarters. Likewise, the Navy shifted its presence in 1854 from San Francisco to Mare Island. After its founding, Mare Island remained the epicenter of the West Coast naval presence for the better part of a century. Mare Island's first mission was to support the Pacific Squadron, which protected American interests and commerce on the West Coast. After the Mexican-American War, the Pacific Squadron expanded from a modest 4-ship formation to 14 ships. However, the Navy had no repair facilities in the Pacific, which required damaged ships to make the arduous and time-consuming voyage around Cape Horn at the tip of South America to East Coast shipyards.

Before its development by the U.S. Navy, Mare Island sat largely desolate except for perennial grass called sea oats, some wild livestock, and one squatter. Meanwhile, the U.S. government contracted for a floating dry dock to be constructed and shipped to San Francisco Bay. Contractors in New York built the dry dock in sections and shipped it to the West Coast. The subsections arrived on four different ships in the fall of 1852. Concurrently, the secretary of the Navy, William A. Graham, convened a board to establish a suitable location for a Navy yard and repair facilities so the government could stop relying on civilian contractors.

In 1853, the board members, chiefly Commodore Sloat and civil engineer William P. S. Sanger, recommended Mare Island as a suitable site to purchase and build the proposed Navy yard. Later in the year, the U.S. government bought the island for nearly $84,000. While the board worked on a site plan, labor shortages forced contractors to rely on out-of-work sailors to assemble the floating dry dock. The dry dock, made of 11 sections

*A group of 33 Americans under the leadership of Ezekiel Merritt and William Ide invaded the largely defenseless Mexican outpost of Sonoma. With a cotton sheet and some red paint, they created a makeshift flag with a crude drawing of a grizzly bear, a single red star (a reference to the Lone Star Republic of Texas), and the words "California Republic" at the bottom. From then on, the independence movement was known as the Bear Flag Revolt.



Library of Congress

A lithograph of Mare Island in December 1855, as viewed from Vallejo, California, shows the first buildings constructed as part of the Sanger plan as well as the sectional floating dry dock in its first test with the frigate USS Independence.

that were almost 130 feet long by 33 feet wide, was the first of its kind assembled on the West Coast and was capable of supporting a 3,000-ton ship. Despite a shortage of skilled labor, the sailors "proved to be invaluable workmen" and were paid a comparatively high wage, ranging from $5 to $9 a day. Contractors also added an incentive for efficiency by taking a page from the Navy and serving a daily grog (liquor cut with water) ration. By the fall of 1853, the extra incentive ensured that the dry dock was completed and ready to be floated to its new mooring in the Mare Island Strait.

With the purchase of the site, the board recommended a development plan based on Sanger's surveys of the island. The "Sanger plan" called for the Navy yard to be built on the northern end of the island, a reinforced wharf along the Mare Island Strait, and included the floating dry dock, supporting warehouses, and repair facilities. Away from the waterfront, the plan included streets for both Navy and Marine Corps officers' quarters and reserved areas for a hospital and a Marine barracks.

Commander David G. Farragut, who would achieve renown on the Mississippi River and at the Battle of Mobile Bay during the Civil War, was the first commandant of Mare Island Navy Yard. Shortly after his arrival in 1854, Farragut and his civil engineer, Daniel Turner, set about to put the Sanger plan into action. However, Farragut and Turner were forced to modify the plan when they discovered elements of it were impractical to build as planned due to existing topography. With a revised plan and under Turner's supervision, the shipyard's first buildings were constructed between 1854 and 1860.

The outbreak of the American Civil War added to the importance of Mare Island because the Pacific Squadron's duties included guarding commerce and the bullion shipments carried by mail steamers to Panama. Hard currency not only helped the Union war effort but also made a tempting target for Confederate raiders. While the Army fortified the entrance to San Francisco Bay and Alcatraz Island, the Pacific Squadron commander, Flag Officer Charles H. Bell, requested that the secretary of the Navy, Gideon Welles, send a Marine battalion to guard the Navy yard.

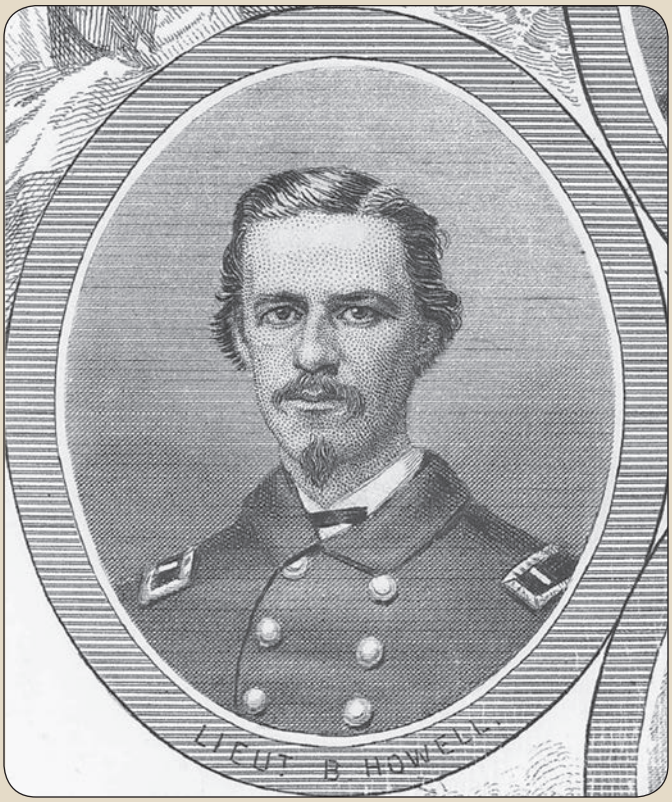
Acting on Welles's orders, Colonel Commandant John Harris reassigned Major Addison C. Garland from command of Marine Barracks Brooklyn to the new battalion, which consisted of 7 company grade officers and 140 enlisted Marines. On 1 December 1862, Garland and the bulk of the battalion departed New York bound for California on the U.S. mail steamer *Ariel*. Learning about the valuable cargos transported from California via the mail steamers, Confederate Captain Raphael Semmes of the CSS *Alabama* (1862) warship was determined to intercept one of the mail ships loaded with California bullion. With information gleaned from New York newspapers captured from other prize ships, Semmes knew the approximate departure and arrival dates of these "treasure-steamers." Semmes' plan to capture bullion shipments would enable the nascent Confederate Navy to buy several more swift commerce raiders to disrupt Union shipping and wreak havoc on the nautical insurance companies based in New York.

Almost a week at sea passed uneventfully for the Marines on board the *Ariel*; however, as the ship steamed off the coast of Cuba on 7 December, a sail appeared in the distance. The mystery ship flew Union colors so initially there was no distress on board the *Ariel*. As the mystery ship closed, sailors on board *Ariel* were surprised when the Confederate flag was run up. Major Garland hastily formed up the battalion to repel potential boarders, but the *Alabama* fired a 68-pound cannon shell into the *Ariel's* foremast, shattering it and sending a succinct surrender message to all on board. The *Ariel's* captain initially refused, but on the advice of Major Garland and several Navy officers, and having about 500 women and children as passengers, he raised the white flag.

The *Alabama* had captured a "bullion ship" but the wrong one. When Captain Semmes found out that the ship carried no gold, he sent a prize crew on board. Confederate Marine officer First Lieutenant Beckett J. Howell, a former U.S. Marine himself, also came on board to make an appeal to Garland's Marines to join the Confederate States Marine Corps. The entire battalion refused the offer and was made prisoners of war, after being forced to surrender all of their brand new equipment and arms. However, without Marines of his own, Semmes requested that Garland's Marines guard the *Ariel's* liquor storerooms to prevent the prize crew from pilfering it. After two days, Semmes released the *Ariel* to continue her voyage under a ransom bond of $260,000.

Nearly two dozen Marine Corps officers, including 1stLt Beckett Kempe Howell, took commissions in the Confederate States Marine Corps during the American Civil War.

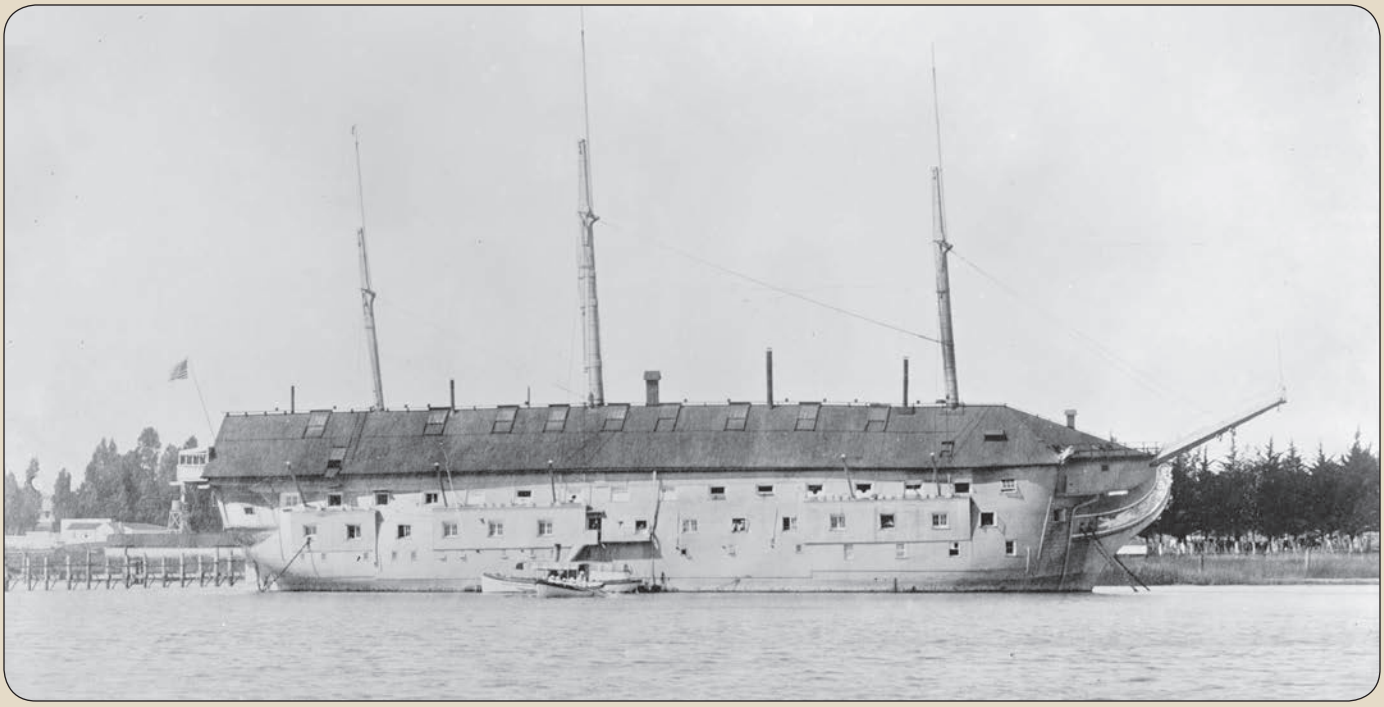
U. S. Marine Corps photo



Garland's Marines, on parole and bound by the promise not to take up arms against the Confederacy again, arrived off Mare Island in late December 1862 minus their arms and equipment. The Marine battalion found its quarters to be less than ideal. While the Sanger engineering plan had reserved an area for a Marine barracks, none had been built. As a result, Garland's command, along with four women contracted for laundry services, was billeted on board the damp and cold receiving ship, USS *Independence* (1814). Garland had to designate separate berthing and "screened off . . . dressing rooms" for the women in what was probably one of the first instances where women, employed by the U.S. government, were knowingly quartered on board a commissioned naval vessel. As he requisitioned new equipment and arms along with pay for the men, Garland worried that San Francisco merchants would not accept government paper notes in a town flush with gold-rush hard currency.

For Mare Island's commandant, Thomas O. Selfridge, the arrival of the Marine battalion was initially of no benefit. While Major Garland's Marines waited to be exchanged as prisoners of war, their duties were limited. Captain Semmes further limited the Marines, at least temporarily, when he confiscated all of the battalion's weapons and equipment. Garland even questioned whether his Marines could legally stand guard duty at the Navy yard. In a letter dated 13 January 1863, Garland received word from Commandant Harris that Garland's Marines were officially exchanged, and the Marines could resume normal duties since nothing in the exchange precluded it.

By late January, the battalion received a new issue of equipment and arms. Garland reported that, in addition to getting their quarters on board the *Independence* "ship-shape," his Marines began regular guard duty at the Navy yard. They also started standing watch over the island's magazine and explosive shell complex, comprised of several buildings located on the southern end of Mare Island. At the time, no facilities existed for starting a fire and cooking their rations near the highly explosive kegs of black powder in the magazine. Therefore, each morning the guard detail would cook its rations and float from the Marines' quarters in a small boat about two miles down the Mare Island Strait to relieve the previous watch.



Library of Congress

The USS Independence *shown here moored at the Mare Island Naval Shipyard, ca. 1900, was often referred to as "Noah's Ark" given its reconfiguration as a floating barracks with a gabled roof and permanent gangway that resembled popular renderings of the biblical ship.*

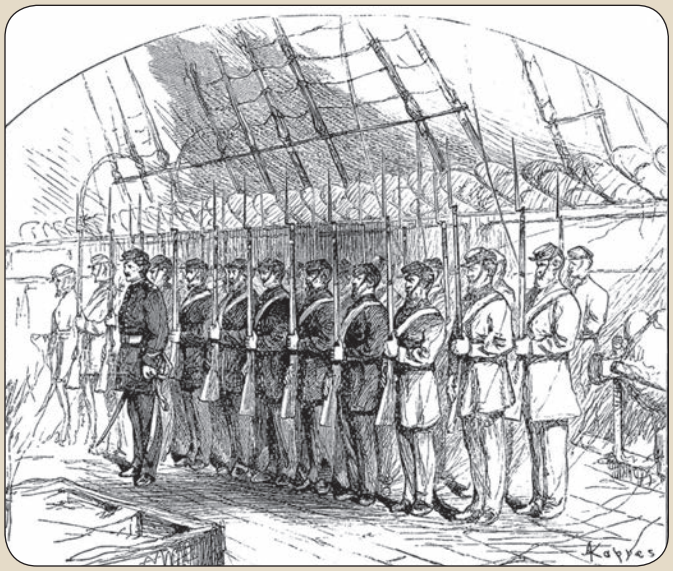
The Marines guarded a complex of several buildings, the oldest of which is Magazine A1, constructed around 1857. Compared with other ordnance storage buildings on the West Coast, Magazine A1 was the oldest magazine, constructed from sandstone originally used as ship ballast. All the island's original buildings share a similar design in that they are rectangular with gabled roofs; however, what set Magazine A1* apart from the others is a wreathed eagle atop an anchor over the entrance.

Overall, Marines at the Pacific Station did not participate in the Civil War. At Mare Island, Marines continued their traditional duties guarding naval property. Shipboard Marines assigned to the Pacific Squadron patrolled the coast for elusive Confederate raiders, such as the CSS *Shenandoah* (1864), and observed the actions of the French Navy during the French intervention in Mexico. Aside from the occasional excitement, such as temporarily guarding Confederate prisoners bound for military trial at Fortress Alcatraz, duty for Marines on ship or ashore at the Navy yard was routine.

The boredom and monotony at Mare Island sometimes boiled over with friction between the Marines and sailors at the Navy yard. In one instance, one of the battalion's company grade officers challenged Commandant Selfridge's son to a duel over a small insult. Selfridge's successor, the third commandant of the Navy yard, Captain David S. McDougal, argued with the Marine battalion commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Matthew R. Kintzing, about flying the barrack's flag. McDougal's reports filtered back to Washington, DC, forcing the Commandant, Colonel Jacob Zeilin, to intervene and warn the Marines to comply with orders of the Mare Island commandant.

The Marine Guard present arms on board a U.S. naval vessel assigned to the Pacific Squadron.

Scribner's Monthly magazine, April 1872



*The original Magazine A1 was damaged after an explosion in 1901, and portions were rebuilt.

At sea, life could also cause Marines to act out. Private Alexander McClure, part of the Marine Guard on board the Pacific Squadron's flagship, USS *Lancaster* (1858), rebuffed orders to stand watch saying, "I won't do it and will not go on post for any d——n man on this ship." While most punishments meted out by a naval court martial consisted of confinement in a ship's brig, in McClure's case, he was sentenced to serve three years at a California state prison.

McClure likely served out his term at the infamous San Quentin State Prison, first constructed in 1852. Originally, General Vallejo tried to bring the state capital and its first prison to Vallejo, opposite Mare Island. He and a business partner, James M. Estell, leased land to run a new state prison; however, when the state decided not to locate the capital in Vallejo, the general dropped out of the prison project. As a result, the San Quentin prison was built on the opposite side of San Pablo Bay from Mare Island. In its early years, conditions at San Quentin were, in many cases, almost a certain death sentence for prisoners because physical management of the prison was leased to contractors who were often more concerned about profit than prisoner safety and sanitation. Luckily for McClure, corruption scandals and the resulting reforms of the early 1860s improved the conditions. However, the San Quentin prison was still overcrowded and rife with riots and mass escape attempts that often ended in deadly violence.

For some Marines that served at Mare Island during the Civil War, the city of Vallejo would become home. One such Marine was Sergeant John A. McInnis, who was part of Major Garland's battalion that arrived in late 1862. He was one of six noncommissioned officers in the battalion and later served as its first sergeant before leaving the Marine Corps in 1876. McInnis opened a dry goods and grocery business in Vallejo and became one of its leading citizens and a city trustee in 1878.

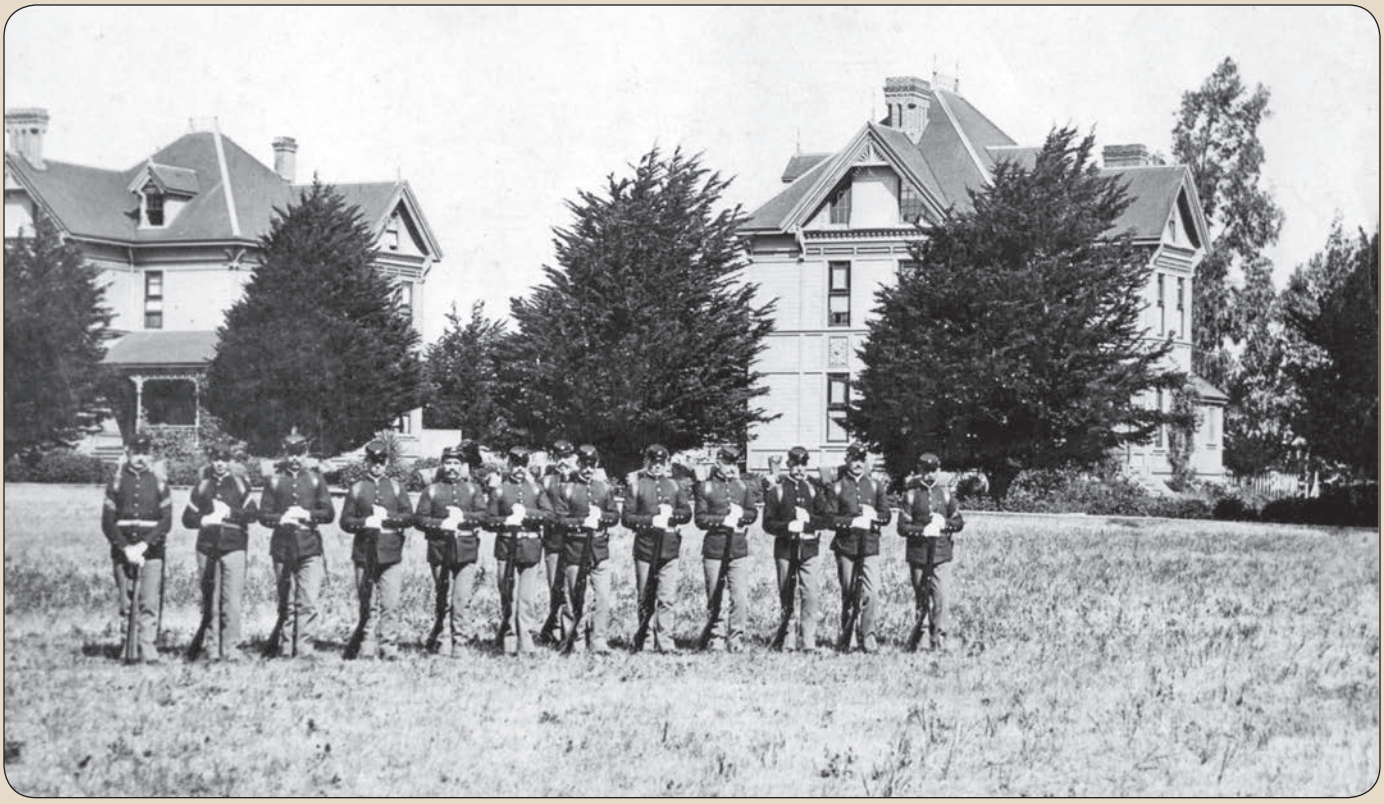
After the Civil War, budgets were slashed and naval ships, including the monitor, USS *Comanche* (1864), rusted away at Mare Island's waterfront while waiting to be sold off; however, the need for repair facilities on the West Coast kept a funding lifeline for the Navy yard. By the mid-1870s, the Navy had invested $4 million into Mare Island's infrastructure to build and repair ships, including the West Coast's first dry dock, and a large magazine on the southern end of the island. However, local politics and scandal were a continuing drag on the Navy yard output, which saw cronyism dictating worker hiring and wages that paid twice the going rate of their East Coast peers.

Despite often being over budget and under producing, the siltation of the Mare Island channel, rather than corruption, threatened to close the Navy yard. The rapid silt buildup in the channel threatened access to newer classes of ships. In 1882, Congress ordered the Navy to assess all of its facilities' ability to support the new "steel" Navy. However, even with siltation, Mare Island's existing infrastructure made it critical to naval operations in the Pacific. As a result, Mare Island dodged the first attempt to close the yard.

The Mare Island Navy Yard developed generally east to west with the wharf and dry dock situated along the Mare Island Strait. Perpendicular to the waterfront sat large two-story, redbrick gabled industrial support buildings. In the rear of the industrial area, officer quarters were laid out along Walnut Street. These first naval officer quarters were "uniformly ugly," three-storied, redbrick gabled dwellings that seemed to spread out "like the wings of a bird."

For more than a decade, Marines were housed in temporary facilities. Marines were billeted in several places, one of which was on board the *Independence*. She was launched on 22 June 1814 and guarded Boston Harbor during the later stages of the War of 1812. The ship went on to serve as the flagship of the Navy's Brazil Squadron (in 1837) and the Home Squadron (in 1842). During the Mexican-American War, the ship transferred to the Pacific Squadron, arriving at Monterey in January of 1847. She was recommissioned in 1854 and again served as the Pacific Squadron's flagship; however, by 1856, her sailing days were over, and she went into port at Mare Island where she was moored until being decommissioned in 1912. In her new role, the venerable old ship served as a receiving ship and where Marines were first housed after they arrived in late 1862. The *Independence* also served as Mare Island's first infirmary and then as the Navy yard's prison until the Navy built facilities as part of the Sanger plan.

Besides the *Independence*, Marines also used the loft in the massive but unfinished redbrick foundry as quarters, also known as Building 85. The Marine barracks, completed in 1871 under the guidance of civil engineer Calvin Brown, was built on the 24-acre Marine Corps area reserved as part of the original Sanger plan. It was a yellow-brick, two-story building that was 500 feet long and 40 feet wide. In addition to berthing spaces for the Marines, it also contained a laundry, bakery, and kitchen with mess facilities. In front of the barracks lay an expansive parade ground. Behind the barracks sat the newly constructed naval prison, which was a two-story, redbrick building made secure with "heavily barred" windows and doors. The prison could house as many as



U. S. Marine Corps photo

Marines stand on the parade ground in front of the original officer housing, conducting a semaphore flag drill, ca. 1875.

100 prisoners. As the Navy yard grew, new buildings replaced the old and, by the mid-twentieth century, the old barracks and parade ground were long gone. The barracks had been razed, and the parade ground converted into a baseball diamond.

The Marine barracks, one of the largest in the Marine Corps at the time, was very up to date. Commandant Brigadier General Jacob Zeilin's intention behind such a large building was to cut the costs associated with transferring Marines from the East Coast to outfit the Marine Guard detachments in the Pacific Squadron, which required a large barracks and a correspondingly large Marine presence at Mare Island. However, given efforts to abolish the Marine Corps outright and reduce its budget in the two decades following the Civil War, Zeilin and his successor were hard-pressed to fill the barracks given manpower limitations mandated by Congress.

Funds to maintain the building also required the constant attention of the Commandant of the Marine Corps. In 1878, Colonel Commandant Charles G. McCawley requested nearly $22,000 to repair barracks throughout the Marine Corps, including Mare Island. By 1886, the Mare Island barracks were again in need of repairs, and Marine Corps Quartermaster Major Horatio B. Lowry requested $3,000 to maintain them and did the same four years later.

South of the parade ground sat Building M1, which had been built in 1870 and used as the personal quarters for the Marine commanding officer. When built, local contractors refused payment in "greenbacks," and the government paid $5,000 in gold to build the house. The structure was originally built as a two-story sheathed in white-painted stucco; it was then remodeled around 1900 with Classical Revival features—entablatures above most windows, a boxed cornice with frieze and supporting scroll brackets, and a column-supported, semicircular arched portico. Major Lowry requested $15,000 to build three new officer quarters in 1888 (M2, M3/4, and M5) on the north side of the parade ground. These two-story, wood-frame dwellings were built in a unique Queen Anne/Westlake style, which architectural historians suggest may hint at the relative "independence" of Marines in the area.

The Corps also made technological updates to make life easier for Marines living in the barracks and officers assigned to Mare Island. In 1881, the Marine Corps added water tanks for officer quarters and the barracks and also spent $400 to provide natural gas service. By 1890, Lowry requested an additional $3,000 to wire the

structures for electricity in both the Marine barracks and officer housing, which enabled them to cut off gas service from Vallejo.

While spending funds to update and maintain buildings may have been an easier sell, improved living standards for enlisted Marines lagged throughout much of the Corps. Commandant McCawley was successful in some aspects, such as curbing Navy yard commandants' authority over that of the Marine barracks commanders, streamlining the promotion system for noncommissioned officers, and adding noncommissioned officers to the pension system. However, he had to fight for basic things like sheets and pillowcases in addition to increasing the paltry rations afforded Marines. Even as late as 1890, when Second Lieutenant John A. Lejeune reported to the Marine Barracks Portsmouth, Virginia, enlisted Marines racked on double-tiered iron bunks, using sacks filled with straw as makeshift mattresses. Their daily rations were even worse, consisting of a spartan meal of "bread, coffee, molasses, cheese, and a slice of bologna sausage."

Life at Mare Island for enlisted Marines was generally better than for other Marines throughout the Corps. Captain Henry C. Cochrane, a Civil War veteran, held a close regard for the welfare of his men. He railed against profiteering sutlers* who took advantage of Marines on base. He was also at odds with the barracks' commander, brevet Colonel James "Dubby" Forney, on a variety of issues, including marksmanship and troop welfare. Cochrane was a prolific writer on a variety of subjects. At the behest of the Commandant, he worked on rebuttals to attacks made by naval officers, such as Lieutenant William F. Fullam, whose views sought to radically alter the role of Marines in the "new Navy."

Cochrane's emphasis on troop welfare was supported by the new Commandant's efforts to stem desertions among enlisted Marines. Colonel Commandant Charles Heywood, who had been the de facto Commandant for the last two years of McCawley's tenure, was reform minded. Chief among his priorities was an effort to combat high desertion rates by improving barracks life. He had the Marine Corps transition from the old straw-filled sacks to modern mattresses. He also successfully lobbied to have the Army Reform Act, which nearly doubled funding for rations, to include the Marine Corps in 1892. Heywood credited these two reforms with reducing desertions among barracks Marines by 20 percent.

For Mare Island Marines, the two decades after the war were relatively quiet. Marines continued their traditional duties guarding the yard and meeting launches that crossed from Vallejo to Mare Island—when approaching the pier, official visitors saw signage that read, "landing for government boats only," and entered a "chapel-like structure, with belfry and bell-rope." The Marine sentry at the pier was just one of many stations where Marines assigned to the barracks stood duty. In addition to guarding the pier, the magazine, and the naval prison, they also guarded the pay director's office and the Navy yard commandant's quarters, carrying "an ugly-looking bayonet." The Marines maintained such strict security that officer's quarters were seldom locked, and often times the doors were left open. At night, one had to be careful wandering about, especially around the wharf. If anyone, including officers, was challenged by a sentry and did not know the countersign of the day, they "might find a comfortless bed in . . . the guardhouse . . . until morning."

Beginning in early 1863, Marines stood guard over various posts at the Navy yard. However, the poor roads and long distances between posts made patrolling on foot both a challenge and relatively ineffective. In 1903, Yard Commandant Rear Admiral Bowman H. McCalla introduced the mounted guard to patrol the entirety of Mare Island. Twelve horses, used by McCalla's mounted guard, were housed in a corral situated south of the barracks near the Naval hospital. For the Marines, assignment to the "Horse Marines" meant standing a three-day shift of four hours on and eight hours off. However, the Horse Marines also received special benefits, which included extra leave ashore during their two days off post. Evidently, Marines not assigned to the mounted guard liked to joke about the Horse Marines and came up with the ditty, "Captain Jinks of the 'Horse Marines,' he feeds his horse on pork and beans."

Marines also had other duties at the yard, both ceremonial and functional. Official visits not only broke the routine but were a special occasion for Marines to show off their martial skill and discipline. In 1866, Marines took part in ceremonies honoring Vice Admiral David G. Farragut, the Navy yard's first commandant, during his visit to Mare Island. In 1874, the battalion turned out for the official visit by David Kalākaua, the last reigning king of the Hawaiian Islands. In addition to ceremonial duties, Marines also staffed the Navy yard's fire department and manned the one piece of fire equipment called the "Hero." On 21 September 1880, the day after the Navy yard installed its first electrical fire alarm, Marines helped to "roll out the red carpet" for President Rutherford B. Hayes when he made the first presidential visit to Mare Island.

*A civilian provisioner to a military base often with a shop on the post.

U. S. Navy photo

The Duquesne*, flagship of the French Pacific Fleet, sits anchored opposite the government landing at Mare Island, ca. 1887. Marine sentries checked visitors into the yard at the chapel-like entry.*

During the 1890s, Marines were called out on numerous occasions. Seagoing Marine Guard detachments of the Pacific Squadron made landings to protect foreign legations and American interests at various times in Hawaii and throughout South America. The Mare Island command also provided detachments for special duties. In 1891, a detachment of Marines from Mare Island, commanded by Captain Cochrane, was assigned the task of enforcing a moratorium on seal hunting in the Bering Sea. For several years, tensions between the United States and Great Britain had grown over the unregulated harvesting of seals for the fur industry. By 1886, more than 30 ships, mostly operating from Canada, were rapidly depleting the seal population. Five years later, the sealing fleet had grown to 70 ships. The United States, under pressure from conservationists, began to seize Canadian ships and equipment found three miles from shore, which incensed Canadian commerce interests and garnered official protests from Great Britain.

Under a compromise, both the United States and Great Britain agreed to a temporary ban on seal hunting and a joint patrol of the area to curtail illegal poaching. Cochrane's Bering Sea Detachment joined other British and American ships in June 1891. The chartered steamship, *Al-Ki*, was designated as the holding ship for all illegal poachers apprehended on the patrol. The Americans rendezvoused off Sitka, Alaska, while the British marshaled off Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

To maintain communications over the 1,200-mile journey, Cochrane split his small detachment into smaller groups of Marine Guards for each ship who then used signals to communicate between ships. Cochrane trained his men to operate small boats to board suspect sealing ships and also ensured that the men were proficient with their arms and drilled them constantly. While most of the work of the detachment remained at sea, they did go ashore to provide a demonstration at Iliuliuk Bay in the Aleutian Islands in Alaska and later at Sitka

King David Kalākaua, one of the last Hawaiian monarchs, made his official visit to the naval yard at Mare Island in 1874.

Hawaii State Archives

U.S. Marine Corps photo

Marines from Mare Island, ca. 1890, were called upon many times in the last decade of the nineteenth century.

for the locals who were impressed by the Marines' "soldierly appearance."

After arriving in Sitka in August, Cochrane sent several Marines on board two sealing ships to act as prize crews under the command of a naval officer. The detachment also took the opportunity in Sitka to visit the Marine Guard from the tugboat USS *Pinta*; the Marine Guard had been detached to serve ashore and establish a garrison. Besides providing a review for the governor of Alaska and other officials, Cochrane took time to make sure his Marines maintained proficiency with their weapons and had them build a target range.

By September, the short Alaskan summer ended and winter storms began to churn the already rough seas. Of more than 80 suspect sealers estimated to be in the area, the joint patrol had boarded and warned more than 70, and the rest had gone back to port or Russian waters. Those that failed to cease operations saw their ships captured as prizes along with 48 prisoners who were sent to Victoria for final determination. However, the *Al-Ki's* crew, comprised of "foreigners" and "union men," was a constant threat to the ship's master, Captain W. E. Plummer. Before his ship steamed for home, Plummer asked Cochrane if the Marines would come to his aid should his crew attempt a mutiny. Cochrane replied that he would "set every d——d one on the beach . . . and we will take the ship to San Francisco." This response ended any potential problems with Plummer's crew, and the Bering Sea Detachment steamed for home on 5 October 1891.

During the Pullman railroad strike of 1894, California saw the most support for the strike outside of Chicago, Illinois. However, the California state government had few resources and little will to break the strike. Under the pretense of maintaining military communications and the continued delivery of mail and commerce, the federal government intervened in early July. While the strike was broken quickly by a show of force in Los Angeles, California, approximately 3,000 striking workers from Sacramento were less inclined to disperse when confronted with California Guardsmen, who were sympathetic to the strike but lacked both uniforms and equipment.

With U.S. troops already spread thin, the Army requested and received permission from President Stephen Grover Cleveland to use naval forces at Mare Island to augment Army units destined for Sacramento. On 10 July, Colonel William M. Graham, commandant of the Presidio, took charge of a force of more than 500 men, which included a battalion of Marines, commanded by Major Percival C. Pope. Arriving on 11 July, Pope's command included several batteries of the U.S. Army's 5th Artillery. For the better part of the next six weeks, Pope's men helped disperse striking workers of

the American Railway Union and manned the Gatling guns arrayed to protect the offices at the rail yard. On 14 July, a second battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Commander W. H. Reeder, was composed of about 370 sailors and Marines; they were mustered from ships docked at Mare Island and departed for Oakland, California, which was still a potential hotbed of strike activity. Faced with an overwhelming force, which also included two regiments of National California Guardsmen, the strike was largely quelled in Northern California despite some lingering violence. While most of the units deployed from Mare Island returned by late July, some of Pope's Marines continued to guard trains and railroad property against saboteurs into mid-August.

Major Pope commanded about 180 Marines at Mare Island in January 1898, as tensions with Spain smoldered over promised reforms in Cuba. Following the explosion on board the USS *Maine* (ACR 1) in Havana, Cuba, on 15 February 1898, war seemed imminent. In the wake of the Maine disaster and subsequent findings of the Naval Board of Inquiry, stories in the "yellow press" surfaced that fed anti-Spanish sentiment throughout the country.

Col Percival C. Pope commanded the Marine battalion that served with the Army in 1894 in response to the railroad strike in California.

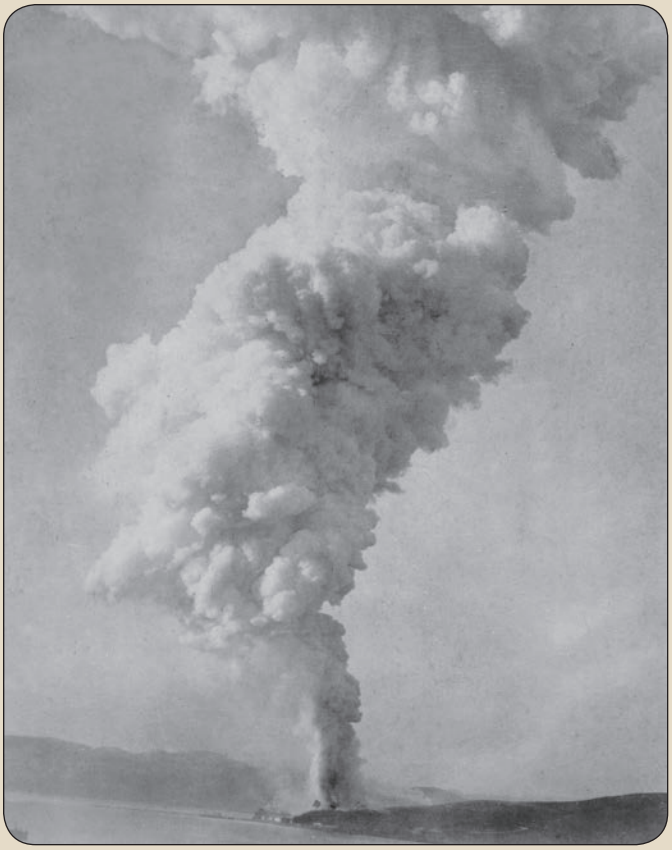
Library of Congress

At Mare Island, reporters from San Francisco and Vallejo flocked "like hungry ducks" to interview Navy yard commandant, Rear Admiral William A. Kirkland, for his opinions on the anticipated war with Spain. Meanwhile, extra workmen were hired, nearly doubling the workforce in a month, to rapidly finish repairs to ships along the waterfront. Marines stood guard at Mare Island's magazines as the Navy prepared to ship three carloads of ordnance, including Gatling guns and all of the 6-pounder, 3-pounder, and 1-pounder ammunition they could muster, via train to the East Coast.

Since the mid-1890s, the barracks had maintained a small recruiting office in San Francisco. New recruits reported to Mare Island and were drilled before being sent off for service with Marine Guard detachments or for duty at far off Sitka. In March 1898, patriotic fervor in the area produced about 25 new enlistees, who were drilling at the barracks. On 7 March, as the Navy began preparations in case of war, it ordered the USS *Oregon* (BB 3) from her home station at Bremerton, Washington, to San Francisco. While the battleship took on coal, ammunition, and stores at Mare Island, her Marine Guard was augmented with eight Marines from the Mare Island Barracks.

During the last stages of the Hawaiian monarchy, Marines landed in 1889 and again in 1893 to secure American interests. Marines from Mare Island played a part with U.S. annexation of the islands in 1898. In July, the commander of the naval forces on the Pacific station steamed from San Francisco to Hawaii on board the USS *Philadelphia* (C 4) to take part in the official annexation ceremonies. Before the ship departed, the Marine barracks transferred 53 men, commanded by First Lieutenant C. M. Perkins, to serve as the ship's Marine Guard detachment. On 12 August, the Marine detachment joined the Marines from the USS *Mohican* (1883) ashore to take part in the official ceremony at Honolulu, Hawaii.

Mare Island Marines also played a part in the build-up of forces ashore in the Philippines following the Spanish-American War. America's sudden rise to empire status in the wake of the stunning Spanish defeat created a need to expand the nation's naval services. Congress responded by authorizing the expansion of the Marine Corps in March 1899 to more than 6,000 men and 200 officers. At the same time, Admiral George Dewey requested a battalion of Marines to protect the new naval station at Cavite in the Philippines, whose inhabitants were rapidly veering toward armed insurrec-



Library of Congress

On 5 June 1901, a fire erupted in Magazine A1, one of the first buildings guarded by Marines at Mare Island in late 1862.

tion, soon after the Spanish were defeated. The Marine Corps organized a battalion at Marine Barracks New York City, New York, which was commanded by Colonel Percival C. Pope. The battalion travelled cross-country via train and arrived at Mare Island on 19 April 1899. Pope's battalion camped overnight at the Marine barracks before shipping out the next day on board the USS *Newport* (PG 12) bound for Cavite.

A second East Coast battalion, commanded by Major George F. Elliot, was organized toward the end of the summer. After a six-day journey by train, Elliot's battalion arrived at Mare Island. The unit camped overnight before shipping out for Cavite, but not before the barracks transferred a dozen privates to the battalion. As the situation in Cavite deteriorated, a third battalion, commanded by Major Littleton W. T. Waller, who would later go on to conduct a controversial campaign on Samar in the Philippines, was organized from various Navy yards including Mare Island. The main body of the battalion arrived at Mare Island on 7 November before steaming for the Philippines on board the SS *City of Sydney*. All told, six battalions of Marines shipped out or staged at Mare Island to either reinforce the naval stations in the Philippines or defend America's new territories, including Guam.

As the Navy expanded its footprint in the San Francisco area around 1900, it established the Yerba Buena Naval Training Station on the 155-acre Yerba Buena Island in San Francisco Bay. Besides training facilities, the Navy also built quarters for Navy and Marine Corps officers where the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge meets the island today. Quarters 8 was reserved for the commander of the Marine camp, which was located on the south facing slope of the island. On the morning of 5 June 1901, Marines stationed at Yerba Buena may have seen the towering pillar of smoke that originated from Mare Island some 20 miles away. The black column was the result of about 13,000 pounds of gunpowder exploding and igniting a fire that gutted the old stone magazine Building A1. Luckily the four-foot-thick sandstone walls contained most of the fire, though several other adjacent buildings that held shells and fixed ammunition caught fire before being extinguished. In the aftermath, the chief of the Bureau of Ordnance credited the Marines and sailors, "who by their prompt and vigorous action . . . prevented the destruction of other magazines."

Since first arriving on Mare Island, Marines guarded prisoners first on board *Independence* in her brig and later at the naval prison. By 1905, the prison held 93 prisoners with sentences ranging from three months to three years. During the time the Russian cruiser *Lena* was detained at Mare Island, the Marines also guarded Russian sailors.* Marine Private Charles V. Dougherty recounted that several of the Russians had deserted, and once detained by the United States, the ship's captain asked permission of the Navy yard commandant, Rear Admiral McCalla, to hang the four men from the yardarm. McCalla declined and instead had them held at the naval prison. Dougherty speculated that, after the war when the *Lena* left port, the men would be made examples of "in a hanging bee after passing the three mile limit" into international waters.

As the Navy and Marine Corps grew, given their new duties worldwide, so did the number of Marines stationed at Mare Island. By 1905, the barrack's muster roll had almost doubled when compared with the average manpower seen at Mare Island the previous 40 years. Greater numbers of sailors and Marines at Mare Island also meant more disciplinary problems. In 1909, the prison expanded

*On 15 September 1904, during the Russo-Japanese War, President Theodore Roosevelt ordered the Russian Warship *Lena* which had sought refuge in San Francisco to make repairs, to be taken to Mare Island and de-militarized for the duration of the conflict to avoid breaking United State neutrality.

its holding capacity by adding 72 cells with a total capacity of 124 prisoners. The naval prison's commanding officer, Captain A. G. Matthews, lamented that the chronic overcrowding forced the Marine guards to place prisoners in the corridors of the prison to sleep at night.

As the jail grew so did the duties of the battalion so much so that the naval prison required its own detachment. On 20 July 1911, the Marine battalion, which was organized into four companies, transferred Marines of Company C for duty at the prison. The company was redesignated as 33d Company in 1914 and again as the Naval Prison Detachment in 1916. Prisoners were kept busy on working parties at officer quarters and the barracks or doing manual labor at a rock quarry behind the prison. The Marines sometimes kept up to 80 prisoners employed quarrying the stone used to repair and build roads on the island. Not all work was hard labor, and for some of the lucky prisoners, jobs taught such skills as those at the blacksmith and carpenter shops adjacent to the quarry.

The 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire was another occasion on which the Marines from Mare Island were called upon for aid. Marines supported the rescue and recovery efforts and maintained domestic order in the aftermath. Within hours of the disaster, U.S. military forces landed at Fort Mason, California. Those forces included Marines from the barracks and the receiving ship *Independence* at Mare Island, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Lincoln Karmany, and Marines from Yerba Buena Island, commanded by Captain Arthur T. Matrix. For the first few days in the wake of the disaster, the military cooperated with local authorities, despite not having official orders from Washington, DC. Soon after, however, a dispute over whom the Marines should report to erupted between Rear Admiral McCalla and his Army counterpart. At the same time, local authorities and Army officials had their own issues, which rose all the way to the secretary of war, William H. Taft.

Despite the deteriorating relations after the first few days, Marines and sailors on the ground performed admirably. While Mare Island suffered damage from the quake, the San Francisco offices of the assistant paymaster and quartermaster and the warehouse were destroyed. In the aftermath, these small detachments pitched in with Karmany's battalion to aid the city before relocating to new offices in Berkley, California. The Navy marshaled its firefighting tugs to aid hard-pressed city firefighters. Marines helped rescue victims and fight fires in the city. Marine Lieutenant Fred A. Udell was a patient being treated for kidney disease at the Mare Island Naval Hospital, and shortly after the earthquake hit, he joined other Marines in San Francisco where

Prisoners held at the Mare Island Naval Prison are put to work under the watchful eye of the Marine detachment assigned to the prison, ca. 1915.

U. S. Marine Corps photo

Library of Congress

Citizens of Vallejo welcome the Great White Fleet during its visit to San Francisco in 1908. The float was built by workers at Mare Island.

they extinguished fires, protected banks from looters, and rescued citizens from dangerous situations.

Another Marine, Lieutenant John H. White, confined in the naval prison awaiting court-martial on charges of drunkenness and profanity, was released to join the aid effort. His efforts garnered the special notice of Rear Admiral McCalla, and the charges were subsequently dropped, though he was warned not to find himself in the same situation again. Marines, such as Private W. P. Bruton, worked on an explosives party, which blasted firebreaks amongst the debris in an attempt to stem the fire from spreading. Following the fires, Marines saw extensive additional duty, patrolling to curtail looting and preventing price gouging.

In 1907, President Theodore Roosevelt Jr. demonstrated the United States' growing naval might by sending the "Great White Fleet,"* the U.S. Navy Atlantic fleet, on a circumnavigation of the globe. By this time, however, siltation had rendered the Mare Island Strait too shallow, and the dry dock was too weak to accommodate these new ships. As a result, the fleet visit to San Francisco relied on the refurbished civilian dry dock at Hunter's Point.

Even with the Marine Corps' new prestige and large expansion following the Spanish-American War, the Fullamites'* battle over the role of the Marine Corps in the "new Navy" came to a head again at the end of 1908. President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 969 that not only redefined the roles of Marines and organized them for expeditionary duty but also removed some of the Marines' traditional duties, including ship guard detachments. Within days, the U.S. Pacific Fleet had dropped its Marine Guard detachments at various Navy

*Sent around the world by President Roosevelt from 16 December 1907 to 22 February 1909, the fleet consisted of 16 new battleships of the Atlantic Fleet. The battleships were painted white except for gilded scrollwork on their bows.

*Referring to RAdm William F. Fullam and reformers who urged that the current ideal of the Corps be destroyed and Marines be formed into permanent battalions and given their own transports, so that they could accompany the fleet either as an expeditionary force or to seize and fortify advance bases.

National Archives and Records Administration

The Great White Fleet with the USS Virginia *(BB 13) in the foreground sits anchored off the coast of San Francisco during its 1908 visit.*

yards, including Mare Island. The Marine Corps viewed Order 969 as a prelude to absorption by the Army. However, with support from Congress, Marine Guards were soon back onboard ships the following summer. Even though Marines were back on Navy ships, the Corps' mission evolved with the nation's new overseas empire. At Mare Island, the importance of yards for the naval services made it the natural distribution center for Marines destined to garrison posts throughout the Pacific.

By 1909, Marine Barracks Mare Island was showing its age. The barracks had sustained serious damage from the 1898 earthquake, and the nearby original Navy hospital (constructed in 1869) had been completely destroyed by the quake. As a result of the damage, one wing of the barracks was used as a makeshift hospital for the better part of two years. In December 1900, a storm wrecked the barracks, carrying away 4,000 square feet of its tin roof, and falling trees took out electrical power across the base. To minimize structural damage to the barracks, the Navy lent several large sails to make a temporary covering for the damaged sections. The 1906 earthquake also damaged many buildings at the Navy yard, including the barracks, which further hastened its decline.

In addition, the old barracks was too small for the number of men then stationed at Mare Island. Almost 60 percent of the enlisted men were forced to live in tents on the parade ground due to inadequate space. The tents were neatly arranged in four rows bisected by a company street. The tent rows ran parallel to the barracks, and each row was separated with wooden boardwalks. Each canvas tent was pitched over a raised wooden platform and housed two men. Given a choice, many of the Marines reportedly preferred tents to the old barracks because of "the cool, fresh air." The men still residing in the barracks were "crowded together in small, badly arranged rooms without regard to modern ideas of sanitation and health." In 1908, an outbreak of bubonic plague in San Francisco caused concern on Mare Island, especially with large numbers of Marines living in tents, because rats "in considerable numbers" infested the island. Luckily though, Mare Island was not affected by the outbreak despite the crowded conditions.

In July 1911, the Marine Corps formally established two recruit depots on the West Coast—one at Puget Sound, Washington, and one at Mare Island. However, the Corps soon found that the smaller depots were not ideal because the sites lacked the proper equipment and adequate support infrastructure for training. Consequently, in the summer of 1912, the Corps began to consolidate recruit training on both coasts.

Mare Island was selected as the West Coast depot. Commanding Officer Colonel Waller reorganized the barracks to accommodate the new depot. The Marine barracks, previously, was organized into four companies: A, B, C, and D. Companies A and B were detailed to man the numerous watch posts at the yard and round out detachments for sea service and various posts in the Pacific. Company C was detailed to man the naval prison, and Company D was the designated training com-

U.S. Marine Corps photo

By 1912, many Marines at Mare Island lived in tents on the parade ground due to a surge in the number of Marines assigned to the base and the dilapidated conditions of the old barracks.

pany for new recruits. However, with the added influx of recruits from the various recruiting stations, Colonel Waller detailed a new company—Company I—to train recruits, while Company D reverted to the barracks detail. First Lieutenant Littleton W. T. Waller Jr. commanded the new recruit training company. Company I was composed of a small support staff, athletics instructors, one first sergeant, two sergeants, and nine corporals to drill new recruits.

During the year, Mare Island trained approximately 500 new recruits, and the large consolidated depot resulted in a "decided improvement" over several small depots. However, the new influx of recruits put additional strain on existing facilities, especially the old barracks, which could not accommodate the steadily increasing numbers. With an average of 650 Marines stationed at Mare Island, many men continued to live in tents on the parade ground, which Marine Corps officials complained was both inefficient and expensive.

With the establishment of larger recruit depots, the Marine Corps also introduced a new screening system that was credited with reducing desertions by one-third due to a thorough examination process. However, even with the improved screening process, the system still had deficiencies. In September 1912, three recruits "eloped" en route to the depot, and six deserted shortly after arriving from the various recruiting stations out west. After arriving at the depot, potential recruits could be rejected for reasons ranging from being married* to physical ailments, such as flat feet or acute gonorrhea. The new system also used fingerprinting to identify fraudulent enlistees with prior service. Even then, both consolidated depots were still plagued by insufficient equipment and facilities, although there were savings in transportation costs.

One component of the new focus at recruit depots included a new training regimen, which adopted the Swedish system of physical fitness, or "essentially modern calisthenics." Most of the European powers and even Japan had adopted the Swedish fitness approach. In addition, the Swedish system was relatively cheap to implement, requiring little in the way of equipment. An added advantage for the Marine Corps was that the Swedish system was oriented toward training recruits to instantly obey shouted commands during the regimen.

The Marine Corps also placed emphasis on marksmanship during recruit training. In the past, Marine Corps officers had taken time to drill their men and make time for target practice on board ships and during shore parties. More importantly, marksmanship began as part of Commandant McCawley's reforms in the early 1890s to ensure the Marine Corps' relevancy in the "new Navy." In 1906, Congress added an incentive for

*The Marine Corps would not accept enlistments from married recruits, and it was not until 1961 that first-term enlistments could come in with dependents per Marine Corps Order P1100.61, published 6 February 1961.

U.S. Marine Corps photo

Marines in the early 1900s practice their marksmanship at the 200-yard range at Mare Island.

Marines to become qualified shooters by authorizing an extra $1 to $3 per month extra "beer money" depending on their score. However, with the addition of formal recruit training at Mare Island in 1911, the depot lacked adequate facilities for long-range marksmanship.

The recruits had access to 200- and 300-yard ranges, but they fired over San Pablo Bay, and as such, long-range firing had to be completed elsewhere. In the interim, the Army allowed the Marine Corps to use the range at Fort Barry, California, to train recruits and ship detachments based at Mare Island. By 1913, construction on a new range was well under way because the 500- and 600-yard ranges did not have "a clear background" and could not be used.

On 16 April 1914, the 4th Marine Regiment was organized with Marines based at Puget Sound and Mare Island, under the command of Colonel Joseph H. Pendleton. The rapid mobilization resulted from tensions with Mexico after American sailors from the USS *Dolphin* (PG 24) were seized by Mexican authorities. Tensions escalated when a German ship, loaded with arms, headed toward Mexico in violation of a U.S. embargo. In reaction, President Woodrow Wilson ordered naval forces to mobilize and stand ready off the Mexican coast.

For Marines at Mare Island, April was a time of rapid transition to expeditionary duty. The Barracks Detachment, Companies A and B, and the 33d Company transferred most of their available Marines to augment the new regiment. The Barracks Detachment transferred almost half of its manpower to round out the 36th Company and regimental headquarters. Company A was gutted when it transferred 116 of its 132 men to either the 35th Company or embarked with the 31st and 32d Companies on the USS *South Dakota* (ACR 9). Company B shipped out 37 percent of its on-hand strength to the 36th Company or rounded out units from Puget Sound. The 33d Company lost half of its manpower to the 34th Company.

On 21 April, just five days after the regiment was organized, the 31st and 32d Companies and elements of the regimental headquarters from Mare Island embarked on the *South Dakota*. The 34th and 35th embarked on the collier USS *Jupiter* (AC 3), bound for Mexican waters. On 2 May, as the regiment gathered off the coast of Mazatlán, the USS *West Virginia* (ACR 5) landed the 36th Company at Mare Island. The naval show of force and presence of the 4th Marine Regiment, now comprised of 10 companies, helped ease tensions. By early July, the regiment returned to California, disembarked, and went into camp near San Diego, California, at North Island. In late July, the 35th Company was deactivated, followed by the 36th Company in October. The regiment's 1st Battalion, commanded by Major John T. Myers, was ordered back to Mare Island in December, and the remainder of the regiment established a new barracks at San Diego.

In December 1914, the 4th Marine Regiment was assigned to exposition duty. Major Myers' 1st Battalion supported the Panama–Pacific International Exposition at San Francisco, and the 2d Battalion and regimental headquarters supported the Panama–California Exposition at San Diego. The 1915 Panama–Pacific International Exposition was held to belatedly celebrate the opening of the Panama Canal and the 400-year anniversary of Vasco Núñez de Balboa's discovery of the Pacific. The exposition, which ran for nearly 10 months, faced a multitude of obstacles (most notably the after effects of the 1906 earthquake and fire) to even become a reality. After several years of fundraising, lobbying, and organizing, construction began in 1913. Nearly 700 acres along the San Francisco waterfront was landscaped and transformed to build the various exhibit halls. World War I threatened international participation, most notably for England and Germany, which did not build pavilions, and caused many to press the organizers to postpone the event. However, with construction almost complete, the exposition opened despite the conflict.

Library of Congress

A period political cartoon shows caricatures of Germany and England contemplating attendance at the 1915 Panama–Pacific International Exposition held in San Francisco.

Painting by LtCol John J. Capolino

John P. Sousa, director of the United States Marine Band from 1880 to 1892, brought his private band to the Panama–Pacific International Exposition and gave performances over a three-month period, including a special march he composed for the occasion entitled "Pathfinder of Panama."

In February 1915, 1st Battalion's three companies occupied a "model camp" along with a 20-piece band for the duration of the exposition. In addition to exhibiting drills and acting as guards for important visitors, the battalion also used technology of the day to show scenes from Marine Corps life with a "special auto–projectoscope." At night, the battalion manned the "Scintillator," a highly choreographed light and color display that used searchlights and colored screens to create a "psychedelic light show" for the crowds. Evidently, the influence of *The War of the Worlds* by H. G. Wells and lingering hysteria from the passing of Halley's Comet in 1910 caused some to worry that the displays might initiate an extraterrestrial encounter.

In some ways the 4th Regiment's Exposition duty at both San Francisco and San Diego marked the beginning of the Marine Corps' shift in focus away from Mare Island and toward Southern California. Following then-Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1914 West Coast tour and the Panama-California Exposition later that year, a plan to relocate Marine recruit training from Mare Island to San Diego built momentum. By the summer of 1915, even the Commandant Major General George Barnett came to view San Diego's weather and location as advantageous for training despite the costs associated with having to construct an entirely new base. As a result, the Marine Corps' West Coast recruit training moved from Mare Island to San Diego in the early 1920's.

The Mare Island Naval Shipyard had a tremendous impact on naval operations in the Pacific, Marine Corps recruiting, and barracks operations. Over the course of its service life, Marines at Mare Island assisted in the construction of more than 500 ships and the repairs of thousands more. When its closure was announced in 1993 as part of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process, the Navy yard still employed more than 9,000 civilian workers and had been visited by four sitting U.S presidents. In spring 1996, the shipyard officially closed its doors, ending 142 years of U.S. Navy history. •*1775*•

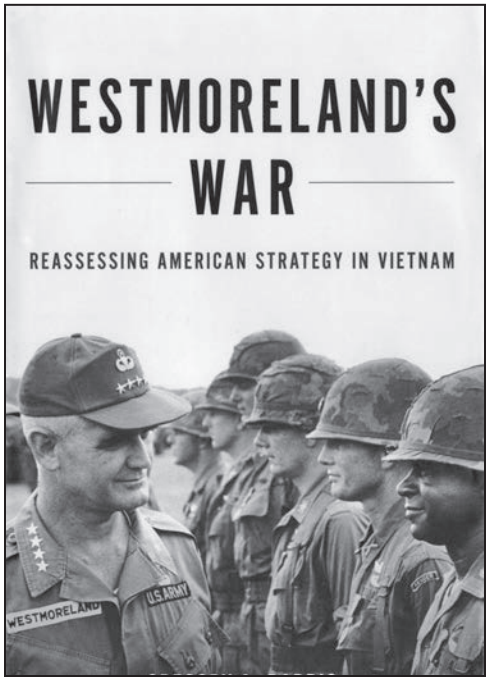
Westmoreland's War

Dr. Nicholas J. Schlosser
Historian, History Division
Marine Corps University

Westmoreland's War: Reassessing American Strategy in Vietnam, by Gregory A. Daddis (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2014).

Why did the United States lose the Vietnam War? This question has cast a long shadow ever since the fall of the Republic of Vietnam to communist forces in 1975. Despite over two decades of economic and military support, the latter of which ultimately took the form of a half-million strong expeditionary force, the United States ultimately failed to preserve the independence and viability of its Southeast Asian client-state. How did this come to pass?

Statesmen, journalists, analysts, and scholars alike have attempted to answer this question, and a massive corpus of literature has emerged over the past forty years dissecting the challenges, setbacks, and mistakes of American policy-making in Vietnam from the late 1940s to 1975. A substantial amount of this work has focused on the U.S. military in general and the commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam, Army General William C. Westmoreland, in particular. Studies such as Andrew Krepinevich Jr.'s *The Army and Vietnam* and John A. Nagl's *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*: *Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* have lambasted the Army as a plodding organization mired in institutional inertia that was unable to adapt to the multifaceted challenge of fighting the Viet Cong insurgency. Inextricably wedded to the application of massive firepower and attrition warfare, the Army attempted to fight the Vietnam War the same way it had fought World War II. This ill-conceived strategy led to a frustrating and inconclusive stalemate.



Westmoreland has long stood as the personification of the lumbering Vietnam War Army. A graduate of the United States Military Academy, a successful officer during World War II, and a protégé of General Maxwell D. Taylor, Westmoreland was amongst the most esteemed of America's soldiers when he was designated the Commander, United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (ComUSMACV) in 1964. Four years later he was replaced by General Creighton Abrams Jr., promoted to Army Chief of Staff, and became a scapegoat for America's failure to achieve victory. Since then, historians such as Lewis S. Sorley III have pilloried the general for his supposedly stubborn insistence on trying to destroy the Communist forces through attrition, utilizing futile search-and-destroy operations. In short, the qualities that had made Westmoreland such a successful officer in World War II proved to be liabilities on the complex counterinsurgency battlefield. Sorley's general thesis is well-encapsulated in the title of his most recent work on the commander: *Westmoreland: The General Who Lost Vietnam*.

Astonishingly, it has taken more than 40 years before significant scholarship has emerged bringing this popularly accepted narrative into question. Nevertheless, over the past decade or so historians such as Gian P. Gentile, Andrew J. Birtle, and Brian McAllister Linn have done a great deal to correct the image of the cumbersome U.S. Army beholden to conventional warfare. In line with this research, Gregory A. Daddis's *Westmoreland's War: Reassessing American Strategy in Vietnam* tackles the caricature of the ineffectual Westmoreland. The book provides a thorough comprehensive reevaluation of American strategy during the Vietnam War.

Daddis, an Army colonel and professor of history at West Point, presents two central, rather provocative arguments. First, William Westmoreland's strategy in Vietnam was a multifaceted one that effectively reconciled the objective of securing South Vietnam with the limited means at his disposal. The second is that this did not particularly matter. In placing so much attention on Westmoreland's strategy, analysts and scholars alike have allowed their interpretive vision to be effectively skewed, leading them to ignore the bigger issue at hand: that the survival of South Vietnam depended

on far more than an effective American military strategy. As the author contends, "In the end, the possibility exists that the war in Vietnam was not fully about the US Armed Forces, the possibility that the war's outcome resulted from circumstances beyond the influence of American military power. American historians, however, long have wished their readers to believe that the United States lost in Vietnam because of its own strategic missteps." (p. 172)

The author builds these two assertions on a firm foundation of documentary evidence, drawing considerably from the personal papers of Westmoreland, the papers of deputies such as William DePuy, Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV)'s command histories, and *The Pentagon Papers*. As these sources demonstrate, Westmoreland set about devising a strategy that was comprehensive and designed to counter the communist's own multidimensional offensive against South Vietnam. Confronting an enemy with no identifiable "Achilles heel," Westmoreland battled the Communists on many fronts. Far from relying only on large-scale search-and-destroy sweeps, he balanced these operations with pacification programs and a committed effort to train an effective South Vietnamese military force.

Daddis's research also refutes the notion that the Army was unwilling to shift from a conventional mindset and adapt to fighting an insurgency. As he observes, "Had Westmoreland demanded nothing more than the physical attrition of enemy forces, one might expect to find different divisions fighting in similar fashion across the breadth of Vietnam. Such was not the case." (p. 118) Westmoreland and commanders in the field always conceived of the conflict in terms of "parallel" wars in which pacification was carried out alongside conventional operations against communist forces. Contrary to the assertion that Westmoreland neglected civil and pacification operations, the author notes that in, "1967, 60 percent of American units focused on offensive operations against main force units, while 40 percent spent their time on operations related to pacification and local security." (p. 132) Utilizing programs such as the Office of Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS), Westmoreland deployed civilian and military operatives to oversee agricultural development, public works projects, and rural improvement initiatives. Nevertheless, for all the time and manpower invested into the pacification effort, MACV was unable to effectively extricate the Communists from South Vietnam's villages. This had less to do with Westmoreland and more to do with the basic problems afflicting South Vietnam's political culture. Daddis asks, "How could CORDS personnel break the bonds between rural peasants and the [National Liberation Front] if the two groups had been collaborating long before the Americans arrived in South Vietnam? In the final analysis, the United States had invested enormously in the fallacious assumption that it could transform local circumstances in a foreign country." (p. 134)

Many scholars of the Vietnam War have examined the conflict in search of another strategy, or a "better war." Critics want to believe that a clear alternative existed. If only the United States better understood counterinsurgency and focused on the people, then the war would have been won and South Vietnam saved. Nevertheless, as Daddis's book demonstrates, MACV actually understood the principles of fighting insurgencies better than many have since claimed, carried out pacification operations, and focused on providing security to the people. In spite of this, the United States still failed to prevent South Vietnam's collapse. It underestimated the will of the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong to pursue the struggle to topple the southern republic and overestimated Americans' ability to overcome the crippling political, social, and economic weaknesses of the South Vietnamese polity. Westmoreland was hardly alone in making these mistakes. Indeed, if Daddis's work demonstrates anything, it is that placing the blame for losing Vietnam at the feet of one individual is not only simplistic, but also leads us to ignore the deeper, more fundamental factors that led to the United States' failure in Southeast Asia. •*1775*•

U.S. Marine Corps Oral and Video History Section Move

Dr. Fred H. Allison and Dr. Tom M. Baughn
Historians, History Division
Marine Corps University

On 1 October 2012, Drs. Fred Allison and Tom Baughn, with the U.S. Marine Corps History Division's Oral and Video History Section, moved from Building 3078, Marine Corps University (MCU), to the Audio-Visual Information Repository (AVIR) area in Breckinridge Hall, MCU, on Quantico, Virginia. The move allows for the consolidation of the oral history collection and provides full-time staff for the AVIR. The AVIR became the repository of the oral history collection after it was relocated from the Washington Navy Yard, DC, to Quantico in 2005; since that time, History Division civilian personnel and reserve officers* of the Field History Branch have added more than 6,000 interviews to the collection.

The AVIR consists of large work, office, and shelving areas. These areas contain the oral history collection of more than 20,000 interviews, an assortment of equipment for processing audio-visual material, and a large collection of film and video. With this unorganized mass of materials on hand, Dr. Charles P. Neimeyer (director of the History Division/Gray Research Center) mandated that Drs. Allison and Baugh organize the AVIR to ensure that the collections are properly preserved and archived and to make them accessible for researchers.

Consequently, Baughn and Allison organized the office, large works, and shelving areas for more efficient use and preservation of the materials stored in the AVIR. One of the first tasks was protecting the legacy collection of Vietnam-era field history interviews; these interviews were stored on approximately 8,000 reel-to-reel audio tapes still in the original cardboard boxes with many of them severely deteriorated. Dr. Baughn led the preservation project, but GRC archives staff supported the venture. All of the reel-to-reel tapes were transferred from cardboard boxes into archival quality plastic boxes; the archives database was updated with descriptions for each interview—nearly 15,000 descriptions as some tapes contained multiple interviews.

*Reserve officers with the Marine Corps History Division conduct interviews with military personnel during current and ongoing military operation, such as Afghanistan (counterinsurgency) or the Philippines (humanitarian relief).

Photo by author

An oral history interview conducted in the OVHS interview room by Dr. Allison with LtCol John E Mades.

To highlight the AVIR's improved organization and appearance, Allison and Baughn established a new name for the office: the Oral and Video History Office (OVHS). Dr. Allison continues to manage the oral history program—collecting oral history interviews and processing incoming new and backlogged interviews. He added more than 500 interviews into the collection in 2013.

Dr. Baughn undertook the difficult project of organizing and assessing—i.e., turning over materials for archiving to a repository—the Marine Corps' large film and video collection. The collection includes more than 30,000 film and video titles, dating from the 1930s to the present. The film formats include 35mm, 16mm, 8mm, Umatic, VHS, Beta, and DVDs. The films depict aspects of Marine Corps history (however loosely defined), ranging from World War II combat footage to azaleas blooming at Camp Lejeune in 1953. In many cases, the films have no accompanying documentation and no apparent defining system for organization. Baughn saw the process as twofold: to preserve the films and to orga-

Photo by author

Dr. Baughn showing how he has organized the electonic documents into an accessible digital collection.

nize the collection for easy accessibility by researchers. He evaluated the records through shot cards (filmmakers descriptions of their films) or information in the total records and information management or TRIM database, a task that took many hours. To preserve the film collection, Dr. Baughn contacted the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) and Library of Congress (LOC) in Washington. He negotiated with NARA and LOC to transfer the film to both facilities for long-term preservation. In the interim, Dr. Baughn supported customer requests by digitizing more than 100 films and more than 1,000 DVDs of films and videos in the OVHS.

To organize the film collection, Dr. Baughn also updated the TRIM database with more detailed descriptions of oral history and video history materials. Working with the archives staff and consultant, Anthony Stone, a new dataset and record types were designed for existing and future database records.

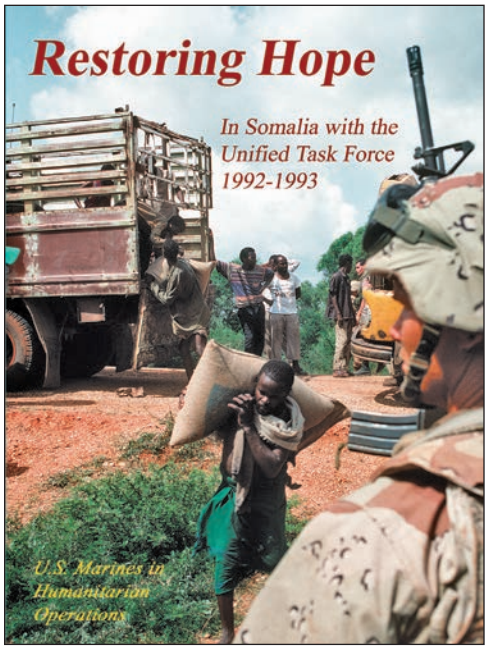
Another major component of the OVHS reorganization was the optimization of workspaces and the shelving area. The workroom was filled with unprocessed audio and video items and specialty equipment for processing sound and video recordings. Dr. Baughn evaluated the various types of specialty equipment and then began to retire or replace 30 pieces of legacy equipment. He also reorganized the shelving room, moving more than 70 cases of excess supplies to a warehouse. To facilitate the accessibility of the films and videos on the shelves, he labeled the collection with database record numbers, which creates a shelving system arranged according to media format. The various office spaces were rearranged to maximize efficient processing of recordings, serving the needs of researchers and enhancing the aesthetics of the areas. With this cleanup and rearrangement, Dr. Allison was able to establish a dedicated room for recording oral history interviews.

In conclusion, the transfer of the oral history office to the AVIR was more than just an office move. The AVIR (now the OVHS) is functional once again, the oral history program is unified, and the audio and video recording collections are better organized and preserved. As a result, the accessibility of the extensive collection of Marine Corps oral and video history materials is greatly improved. •*1775*•

Unified Task Force Somalia

"First to Write" highlights the History Division's past work through excerpts from earlier publications.

In 1992 an international Coalition formed Unified Task Force Somalia (UNITAF) to provide security for the shipment of humanitarian relief supplies to the war-torn country and to establish the conditions needed for a replacement United Nations (UN) command. Commanded by Lieutenant General Robert B. Johnston, UNITAF was comprised of forces from more than a dozen nations, as well as all four branches of the U.S. armed forces. UNITAF forces began arriving in Somalia in December 1992 and turned over operations to UN Operations Somalia II (UNOSOM II) in May 1993. Marines returned to Somalia two years later, in March 1995, to evacuate the last of the UN forces in Somalia. This excerpt describes some of the earliest hostile interactions Marines experienced with General Mohamed Farah Hassan Aideed's faction.



This excerpt comes from Colonel Dennis P. Mroczkowski's *Restoring Hope: In Somalia with the Unified Task Force 1992–1993* (Washington, DC: History Division, U.S. Marine Corps, 2005), 66–68. This book can be downloaded for free in its entirety as a PDF from the History Division's full collection of publications at http://www.history.usmc.mil.

Mogadishu

A more serious and direct threat to UNITAF personnel and mission accomplishment came two weeks later. On 6 January 1993, a convoy moving through Mogadishu was fired on from two of the authorized weapons storage sites belonging to General Mohamed Farah Hassan Aideed's faction. Lieutenant General Robert B. Johnston knew he had to take strong and immediate action against such an egregious and violent threat.

Throughout the remainder of that day, a plan was developed by Marine Forces Somalia (MarFor) and coordinated with the UNITAF staff.

The plan was simple but effective, and by using all the types of firepower available, it was also a dramatic demonstration of UNITAF power. Company K, 3d Battalion, 9th Marines, and Company C, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, would surround the two weapons storage sites. Light armored vehicles from the 3d Light Armored Infantry Battalion were to screen the area, and snipers would be positioned to overlook the target areas. A reserve force was formed from a company of the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) (MEU [SOC]) and positioned at the embassy compound. The two rifle companies (Team Alpha and Team Bravo) were strengthened by the attachment of M1A1 Abrams tanks and amphibious assault vehicles, as well as high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicles (humvees) mounting tube-launched, optically tracked, wire-guided (TOW) missiles and heavy machine guns. Team Alpha, Company K, also had four light armored vehicles. Seven helicopters were assigned to the operation, three [Bell] AH -1Ws [Super Cobras] with [AGM-14] Hellfire missiles and four [Bell] UH-lNs [Hueys] with 20mm guns.

At 2200, Colonel Michael W. Hagee of the UNITAF staff met with Brigadier General Ali Mohamed Kedeye Elmi, one of Aideed's chief subordinates.* Colonel Hagee informed General Elmi that because of the recent violations, the authorized weapons storage sites were invalidated and were surrounded by UNITAF troops. The Marines would enter the compounds at dawn of the next day, 7 January, and confiscate all the equipment and weapons located there.

By 2300, the two storage sites were surrounded and kept under surveillance throughout the night. Psychological operations teams from the U.S. Army's Company B, 9th Psychological Operations Battalion, were attached to each of the rifle companies. At 0553, they began to broadcast warnings to the Somali fighters that they were surrounded and, that if they came out with their hands up, they would not be hurt. At about the same time, the helicopters appeared in the sky.

*At the time, General Aideed was in Addis Ababa [capital of Ethiopia] for the preliminary reconciliation talks.

The Somalis in weapons storage site Number 8 surrendered. But those in the other site, Number 2, chose to resist. The helicopter crews and snipers reported that one of the tanks in the compound was manned and two Somalis were also preparing to fire a heavy antiaircraft machine gun. The commanding officer of the task force, Colonel Jack W. Klimp ordered a sniper to shoot the crew of the machine gun. The sniper did so, and also fired a round against the barrel of the weapon, rendering it unserviceable. This opened the engagement, which was short, sharp, and one-sided. Initially, the Marines came under a heavy volume of fire from recoilless rifles, machine guns, and small arms, but this was quickly suppressed. At 0615, the helicopters were cleared to fire their rockets against targets in the compound. They continued to fire for about 30 minutes, interrupting their fire only once for another psychological operations broadcast. At 0647, the tanks entered the compound, followed 14 minutes later by the Marines of Company K.*

Resistance ended, except [for] some sporadic sniping at the aircraft. The riflemen cleared the buildings that had not been destroyed by the helicopters. Major General Charles E. Wilhelm declared the area secured at 0926, by which time additional trucks were en route to help carry off the confiscated weapons. In addition to numerous small arms and ammunition, there were 4 M47 [Patton] tanks, 9 howitzers of various calibers, 13 armored personnel carriers, 3 antiaircraft guns, 11 mortars, and 1 recoilless rifle. All was accomplished at the cost of only one casualty, a corporal wounded by an accidental discharge.

The action was a blow to General Aideed's prestige and pride. At a staff meeting later that day, General Johnston mentioned that Aideed "was embarrassed by his lack of control [over his soldiers] and regrets what happened."

The commanding general also told his staff that "[we] told Aideed we view his initiating clan fighting to be destabilizing . . . [We] want all to know how we regard what they do . . . We communicated with the faction involved. They accept responsibility and we don't expect to see it again." More importantly, UNITAF had demonstrated to all factions that "our reach is long." •*1775*•

*Colonel Klimp referred to this part of the action as a "bluff." The tanks had no ammunition for their main guns, although they did have rounds for their machine guns. It was believed the armor of the MlAl Abrams tanks would be proof against anything the Somalis had, and the machine guns would be firepower enough.

Society for Military History Conference

Paul W. Westermeyer
Historian, History Division
Marine Corps University

Founded in 1933, the Society for Military History is the leading professional organization for military historians in North America. From 3 to 6 April 2014, the Society held its 81st annual meeting in Kansas City, Missouri, near the National World War I Museum. The conference, "Transformational Conflicts: War and Its Legacy through History," included more than 200 papers presented during more than 60 panels and round tables. Historians from Marine Corps History Division and Marine Corps University in Quantico, Virginia, presented nine papers among five panels. Those panels included the following:

"Other Fronts During World War I"

Chaired by Dr. Donald F. Bittner and commented on by Dr. Scott Stephenson of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. Panelists: Dr. James S. Corum presented the "Battle of Riga, 1917" from Baltic Defence College in Estonia; Dr. William T. Dean III presented "France in the Middle East and the Great War" from Air Command and Staff College at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama; and Dr. Edward J. Erickson presented "Wasp or Mosquito?: The Ottoman View of T. E. Lawrence" from Marine Corps University.

"The Marine Corps and the Great War: Preparation, Implementation, and Commemoration"

Chaired by Colonel Peter J. Ferraro (Ret) and organized by J. Michael Miller of the Marine Corps History Division. Panelists: Dr. David J. Bettez presented "Marines and Remembrance of World War I" from the University of Kentucky; Michael Miller presented "The Landing at Vera Cruz after 100 Years: America's Entry into World War I" from Marine Corps History Division; and Dr. Geoffrey L. Rossano presented "Marine Aviators in Search of a Mission, 1917–1918" from Salisbury School in Connecticut.

"Presidential Panel (History Association) Topics in Military History"

Chaired by Dr. Mark Gilbert, and organized and commented on by Dr. Doug Streusand of Marine Corps University. Panelists: Dr. Richard DiNardo presented "The Falsest of Truisms: Who Really Does Write History?" from Marine Corps University; Dr. Bruce I. Gudmundsson presented "Weapons and Empire, 1830–1930" from Marine Corps University; Dr. Wayne E. Lee presented the "Evolution and Early Human Conflict: A Review of Theories and Evidence" from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; and Dr. Stephen Morillo presented "Integrating Military History into World History: Networks, Hierarchies, Culture" from Wabash College in Crawsfordsville, Indiana.

"Marines as Innovators? Developments in the Marine Corps during the 20th Century"

Chaired by Dr. Gudmundsson, organized by History Division's Dr. Nicholas J. Schlosser, and commented on by Dr. David Ulbrich of Rogers State University Panelists: Annette D. Amerman presented "Rivals or Partners: Integrating Marine Corps Aviation and Naval Aviation during World War I" from Marine Corps History Division; Lieutenant Colonel Edward Nevgloski, USMC presented "Planning for War: The Marine Corps and Contingency Planning for Indochina and South Vietnam, 1951–1965" from Twentynine Palms, California; and Dr. Nicholas J. Schlosser presented "The Ambivalent Legacy of Small Wars in the United States Marine Corps" from Marine Corps History Division.

"Changing Tides: The 20th Century Transformation of Amphibious Warfare"

Chaired by Corbin Williamson, organized by Paul Westermeyer of History Division, and commented on by Lieutenant Colonel Keith F. Kopets, USMC. Panelists: Dr. Serhat Guvenc presented "Turkish Amphibious Operations during the Cyprus War of 1974" from Kadir Has University in Turkey; Colonel Douglas Nash, USA (Ret) presented "The Evolution of Amphibious Warfare in the Pacific during World War II" from Marine Corps History Division; and Paul W. Westermeyer presented "The Influence of Amphibious Power after the World Wars" from Marine Corps History Division.


TOM
LOVELL