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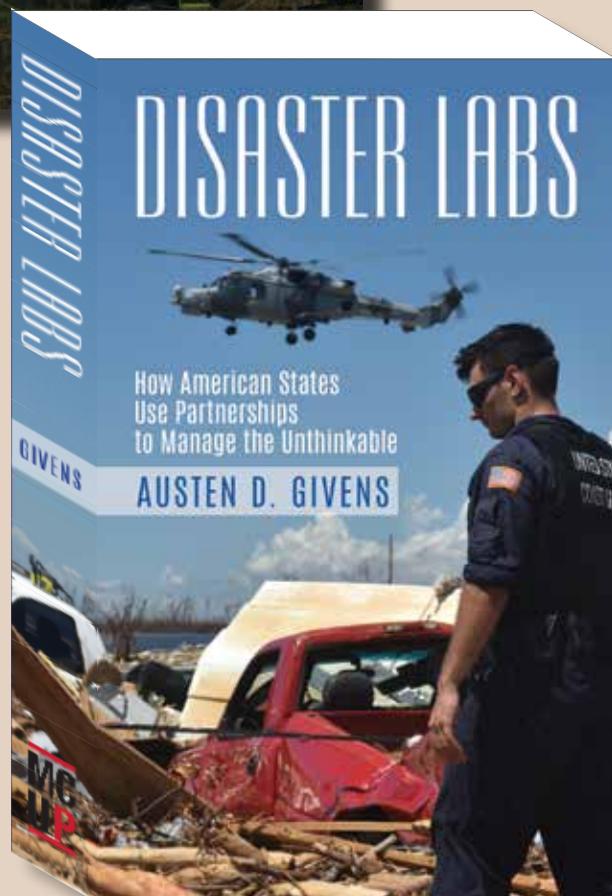
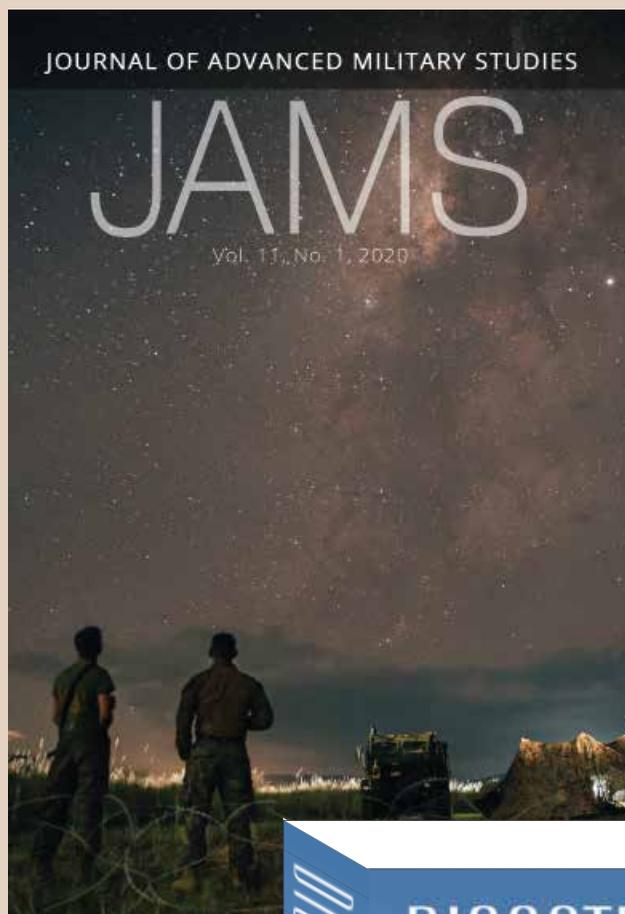
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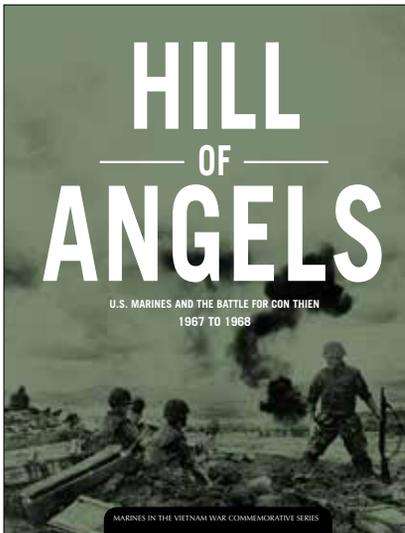
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Volume 6, Number 1

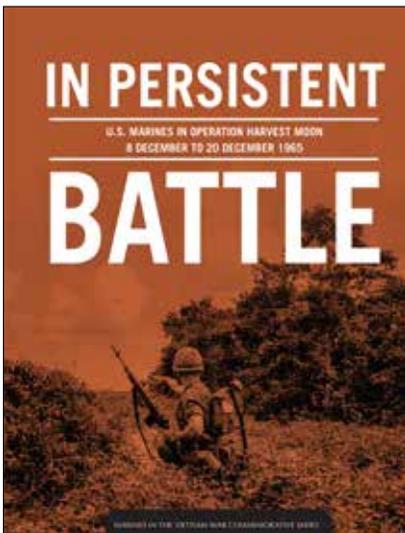
Summer 2020

- Director's Foreword 3
Edward T. Nevglowski, PhD
- ARTICLES
- "Getting the Shells to Fall Where You Want Them": Coordinating
U.S. Naval Gunfire and Air Support in the Interwar Period 5
Chris K. Hemler
- The "Scholastic" Marine Who Won a Secret War: Frank Holcomb,
The OSS, and American Double-Cross Operations in Europe 18
Colonel Nicholas Reynolds, USMCR (Ret)
- The Brain of the Marine Corps: Alfred M. Gray's Establishment
of the Marine Corps Combat Development Command 30
Ryoko Abe, PhD
- Photographic Essay: With Hotel Company, 2d Battalion,
5th Marines, in An Hoa 47
Major Barry Broman, USMCR (Ret)
- Highlight from the Marine Corps Archives
From Parris Island to the Pacific: The Service of Edward LeRoy
Parke in His Own Words 62
Alisa M. Whitley
- REVIEW ESSAY
*The U.S. Army Campaigns of World War I: Supporting Allied Offensives,
8 August–11 November 1918 and The U.S. Army Campaigns of World War I:
Meuse-Argonne, 26 September–11 November 1918* 73
Reviewed by Major Peter L. Belmonte, USAF (Ret)
- BOOK REVIEWS
- Killing for the Republic: Citizen-Soldiers and the Roman Way of War* 76
Reviewed by Frank Kalesnik, PhD
- Implacable Foes: The War in the Pacific, 1944–1945* 78
Reviewed by Christopher N. Blaker
- The World at War, 1914–1945* 80
Reviewed by Robert Niebuhr, PhD
- Subordinating Intelligence: The DoD/CIA Post-Cold War Relationship* 82
Reviewed by Jonathan Carroll

VOTED NOTABLE
GOVERNMENT
DOCUMENTS



2016
Hill of Angels
*U.S. Marines and the Battle
for Con Thien, 1967 to 1968*
by Col Joseph C. Long



2017
In Persistent Battle
*U.S. Marines
in Operation Harvest Moon,
8 December to 20 December, 1965*
by Dr. Nicholas J. Schlosser

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- Turning Point, 1967–1968* 84
Reviewed by Major Timothy Heck, USMCR
- Forging a Total Force: The Evolution of the Guard and Reserve* 86
Reviewed by Bradford A. Wineman, PhD
- Forgotten Soldiers of World War I: America's Immigrant Doughboys* 88
Reviewed by Lawrence Provost
- War and Remembrance: The Story of the American Battle
Monuments Commission* 89
Reviewed by Keith D. Dickson, PhD
- Combat: US Marine versus German Soldier—Belleau Wood 1918* 91
Reviewed by Braden Hall
- Time in the Barrel: A Marine's Account of the Battle for Con Thien* 93
Reviewed by Rachel Basinger

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DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD

Edward T. Nevgloski, PhD

Since its birth in 1775, the Marine Corps has maintained a tradition of connecting its history with the personalities of the men and women who have worn and who currently wear the uniform. From stories of heroics under fire or leadership in peace and in war to Service-wide efforts to improve on the Corps' warfighting capacity, the Marine Corps has always been an agile organization made up of unique personalities. Whether an individual wears the uniform for 4 years or 40 years, a focus on mission is what sets them apart from the average citizen and military professional, just as innovation and adaptability set the Corps apart from the other Services. As hallmarks of the Corps, innovation and adaptability will play a leading role in its future. General David H. Berger, 38th Commandant of the Marine Corps, has called on Marines to emphasize these qualities as he prepares the Service for a war that is more characterized by technological advances, naval operations, and great

power competition than by sustained land operations against small and regional powers.

How will the Corps' history figure into this new operational future? To address this issue, historians must also be innovative and adaptable. Simply recording and narrating the bare facts of history or the lives and careers of notable individuals is not enough. Instead, scholars must strive to illuminate and frame history; improve our collective understanding of it; winnow out the lessons that may be drawn from past successes and failures—even question the metrics by which successes and failures are judged in their time; bring new perspectives to bear on past events; and re-evaluate events in light of newly available data or de-classified information. History is not static—it evolves through constant reinvestigation and reinterpretation by scholars in an ongoing dialog with the past and with each other.

This marks the second issue in which the double-blind peer review process, the standard among scholarly journals, has been used to evaluate the scholarship of articles, replacing the previous method of evaluation by the journal's editorial board. The first three articles have been vetted using this method. Chris K. Hemler recalls the pioneers of amphibious development and their efforts during the interwar years to integrate naval gunfire and close air support with landing forces, techniques Marines implemented, refined, and perfected throughout the Pacific and carried into

Dr. Edward T. Nevgloski is the 28th director of the Marine Corps History Division. He retired from the Marine Corps on 30 September 2017 at the rank of lieutenant colonel and with more than 28 years of service to the nation. His civilian education includes a bachelor's degree in history from East Carolina University in Greenville, NC; a master of arts in military history from Norwich University in Northfield, VT; and a doctor of philosophy in war studies from King's College, London. Dr. Nevgloski is also a graduate of the Marine Corps' Expeditionary Warfare School, Command and Staff College, and School of Advanced Warfighting.

the next century. Next, Colonel Nicholas Reynolds's article on Frank Holcomb, one of the Corps' most intellectual officers and an integral part of the Office of Strategic Services in Europe in 1944 and 1945, teaches us that Marines can in fact do more than fight. Then, Dr. Ryoko Abe recounts the establishment of the Marine Corps Combat Development Command, dubbed "the brain of the Marine Corps," by 29th Commandant General Alfred M. Gray Jr., who also authored the Corps' tested and proven warfighting philosophy.

Major Barry Broman's photographic essay on the Marines of Company H, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, recorded during his tour in South Vietnam in 1969, presents a view of servicemembers in the trenches, where the Marine Corps forges its reputation. The History

Division's head archivist, Alisa Whitley, introduces readers to the service and sacrifice of Edward L. Parke, largely in his own words, during the Second World War. Finally, as usual, a selection of book reviews will open the reader's eyes to new scholarship in military history. Readers are encouraged to consume and interact with the resources offered by History Division. If a topic piques your interest or has not been covered fully, please join the conversation by submitting an article for publication. History Division can be found online at the Marine Corps University website's research portal or on social media through Facebook @CorpsHistory and Flickr at usmcarchives.

• 1775 •

“Getting the Shells to Fall Where You Want Them”

COORDINATING U.S. NAVAL GUNFIRE AND AIR SUPPORT IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD¹

by Chris K. Hemler

Abstract: During the years of peace between the First and Second World Wars, it is clear that Navy and Marine Corps planners failed to sufficiently address several problems that would confront American forces in the looming conflict with Japan. Of these, one of the greatest omissions concerned the application of naval and aerial fires in support of an amphibious landing. Though American officers recognized and resolved concerns over landing craft, logistics, casualty evacuation procedures, communications, and much more, planners failed to adequately address the difficulties of controlling and coordinating supporting firepower in a triphibious operation. The 1934 *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations* highlighted the individual roles of naval gunfire and air support without confronting the more general coordination of land, sea, and air efforts, and it minimized the importance of flexibility and continuous coverage in amphibious fire support.

Keywords: triphibious operations, amphibious landings, amphibious fire support, naval gunfire support, aerial support, coordination of firepower, interwar period, *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations*

Traditional accounts maintain that the U.S. Marine Corps deserves near-unqualified praise for its pioneering work in amphibious warfare during the years of peace between the First and Second World Wars. Though some challenges remained—these authors reason—the Marines had resolved every predictable hurdle of the amphibious assault. Led by visionaries such as George Barnett, Earl H. Ellis, John A. Lejeune, and John H. Russell, the

a reliable doctrine. In these widely accepted interpretations, the implication is that the fighting itself was the only problem yet unsolved in the approaching war with Japan.²

Despite this rousing narrative, it is clear that Navy and Marine Corps planners failed to sufficiently address several problems that would confront American forces in the looming conflict with Japan. Of these,

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<https://doi.org/10.25218/mch.2020060101>

¹ Charles Barrett, “Correspondence: Major C. D. Barrett to CDR H. A. Flannigan,” 15 October 1931, Historical Amphibious File (HAF) 70, COLL/3634, Marine Corps History Division (MCHD), Quantico, VA, 3.

² For representative interpretations, see Richard Wheeler, “Prologue: The Corps Finds a Mission,” in *A Special Valor: The U.S. Marines and the Pacific War* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2006), 1–3; LtGen Victor H. Krulak, *First to Fight: An Inside View of the U.S. Marine Corps* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1984), 71–87; Dirk Anthony Balleendorf and Merrill Lewis Bartlett, *Pete Ellis: An Amphibious Warfare Prophet, 1880–1923* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1997), 159–62; and David J. Ulbrich, *Preparing for Victory: Thomas Holcomb and the Making of the Modern Marine Corps, 1936–1943* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2011), 43–70.

one of the greatest omissions concerned the application of naval and aerial fires in support of an amphibious landing.³ Though American officers recognized and resolved concerns about landing craft, logistics, casualty evacuation procedures, communications, and much more, planners failed to adequately address the difficulties of controlling and coordinating supporting firepower in a triphibious operation.⁴

A Task Too Tall: The Amphibious Assault in the Early Twentieth Century

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, conventional military wisdom ruled that assaulting an enemy-held shore was an irrational, impractical, and even idiotic proposition. Contemporary technology seemed to grant almost every advantage to the defender. Inherently, land-based guns benefitted from a more stable firing platform, larger shells, and more reliable targeting methods. These characteristics promised increased range, improved accuracy, and more destructive power over shipboard ordnance. To seize a defended shore—in the face of machine guns, entrenched artillery, and preregistered mortars—amphibious troops would need to overcome marked disadvantages. For the attentive student, the task seemed all but impossible. As British admiral John Arbuthnot Fisher put it during the First World War, “Any naval officer who engages a fort worthy of the name deserves to be shot.”⁵

Indeed, the Allied disaster at the Dardanelles in 1915 seemed to confirm the death of the amphibious assault as a sensible military operation.⁶ In their attempt to land on the Gallipoli peninsula and expel the Ottoman Empire from the First World War, British

and French forces met stunning failure. At its heart, the operation suffered from poorly trained, under-equipped troops unprepared for the challenge of their assignment. But these Allied shortcomings were multiplied by several tactical errors of the highest degree. Several units landed on the wrong beaches, touching down on territory that did not even appear on their maps. In the opening moments, British and French commanders acted with indecision and failed to mount any momentum along the tenuous beachhead. Air support, naval gunfire, and artillery all proved insufficient. Amidst the chaos, Ottoman counterattacks stole any semblance of initiative from the floundering assault. By January 1916, Allied forces had abandoned the landing and retreated from the theater.⁷

In the aftermath of the bungled Gallipoli attack, military officers and advisors alike had renewed reason to retire the amphibious assault. For most military theorists of the day, the mere “name Gallipoli [became] synonymous with incompetence and failure.”⁸ Even the chief of staff of the Royal Navy squadron during the Dardanelles operation, Commodore Roger J. B. Keyes, declared that “[one of] the most valuable lessons we learnt from the original landings was the folly of attempting to storm a defended beach in daylight.”⁹ The twentieth-century amphibious assault, it seemed, was suited for few but a martial madman.

Such deep-seated doubts over offensive landing operations were hardly unique to British officers of the day. Skepticism ran deep in the U.S. Army as well, where officers were quick to point out the inherent advantages of the defender. In a focused piece on coastal defense procedures, Major General William G. Haan summarized the attacker’s precarious situation: “An enemy landing from boats on an open beach will consist largely of infantry without transportation, with limited ammunition and with no artillery except

³ See Craig C. Felker, *Testing American Sea Power: U.S. Navy Strategic Exercises, 1923–1940* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2007), 88–109; and Allan R. Millett, *Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps*, rev. ed. (New York: Free Press, 1991), 332–33.

⁴ *Triphibious* refers to concurrent land, sea, and air actions.

⁵ As quoted in Arthur J. Marder, *The Anatomy of British Sea Power: A History of British Naval Policy in the Pre-Dreadnought Era, 1880–1905* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1940), 495.

⁶ Gunther E. Rothenberg, “From Gallipoli to Guadalcanal,” in *Assault from the Sea: Essays on the History of Amphibious Warfare*, ed. LtCol Merrill L. Bartlett (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1983), 177–82.

⁷ Rothenberg, “From Gallipoli to Guadalcanal,” 177; Jeter A. Isely and Dr. Philip A. Crowl, *The U.S. Marines and Amphibious War: Its Theory, and Its Practice in the Pacific* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1951), 17–21.

⁸ Theodore L. Gatchel, *At the Water’s Edge: Defending against the Modern Amphibious Assault* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2011), 10.

⁹ Roger Keyes, *Amphibious Warfare and Combined Operations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1943), 53.

the smallest portable guns.”¹⁰ In Haan’s mind, the outcome was predetermined: the inadequate firepower of the landing force would be no match for a mobile defense with artillery, obstacles, and modern machine guns at its disposal. In nearly every consideration, the amphibious assault was an onerous—perhaps even futile—endeavor.

Against this stern and well-founded resistance, however, the U.S. Marine Corps began to think intentionally about the complexities, challenges, and potential solutions of the modern amphibious assault. Alerted by Japan’s growing ambitions in the Pacific and already serving the twentieth-century Navy as an

advanced base force, the Corps embarked on an energized search for purpose. Hopeful that the amphibious mission would bolster and confirm the Corps’ contribution within the American armed forces, several key leaders redirected the Service’s attention and embarked on a tumultuous transformation of the Marines’ capabilities, structure, and commission. The decades ahead promised change for the Corps, but few could have predicted just how fundamental, and ultimately decisive, that change would be.

Setting a New Course: The Marines as Amphibious Pioneers

The Marine Corps had emerged from the First World War with newfound credibility, combat experience, and, most importantly, public support. Throughout their service in General John J. Pershing’s American Expeditionary Forces—and most notably at Belleau Wood—the Marines displayed remarkable courage,

¹⁰ “Joint Army and Navy Action in Coast Defense: Part III, A Positive System of Coast Defense (Army),” *Journal of United States Artillery* 53 (December 1920): 569. Historian Brian Linn labels Haan one of the foremost military thinkers of the post-World War I period. See Brian McAllister Linn, *The Echo of Battle: The Army’s Way of War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 125–26.



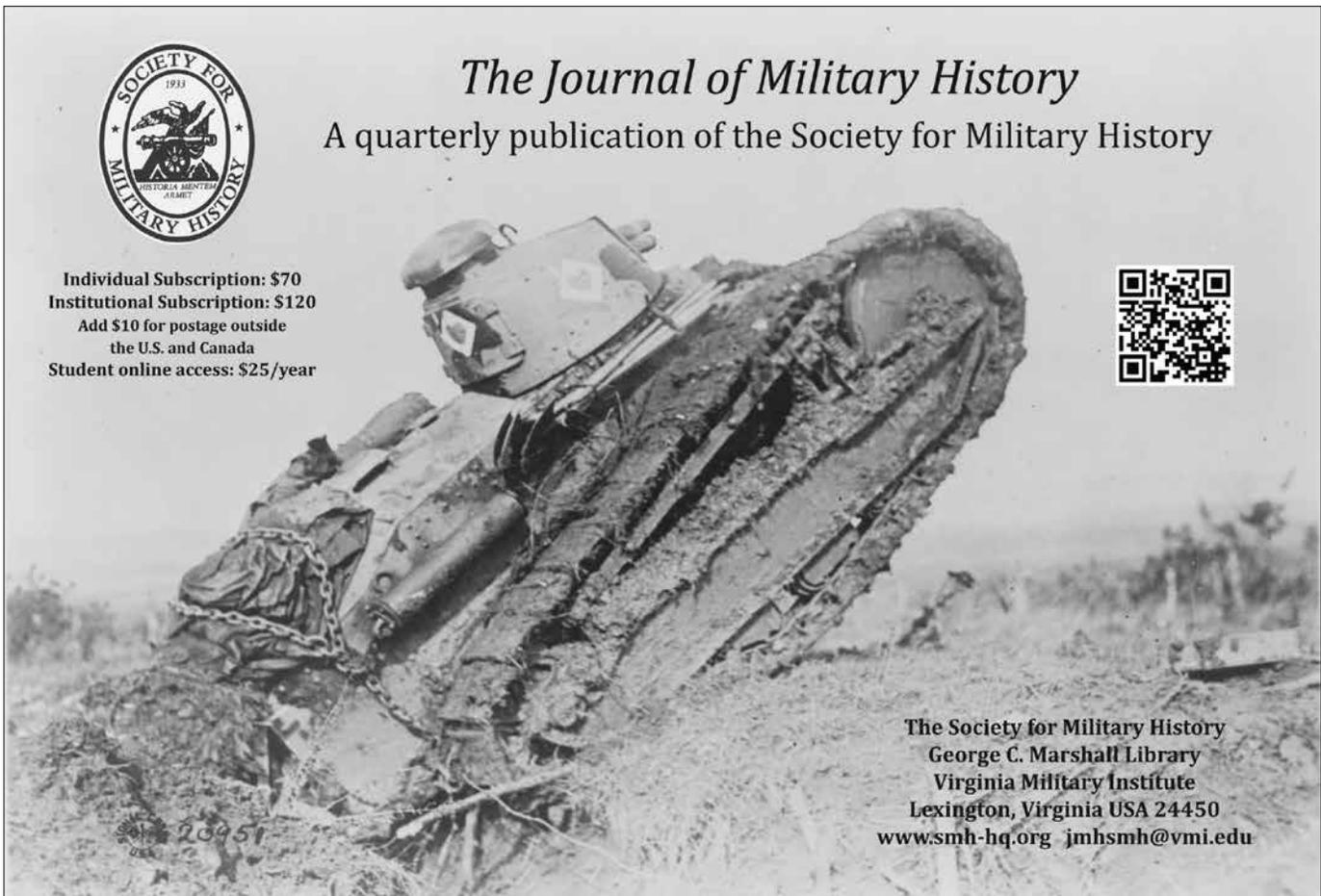
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grit, and resiliency. Enjoying more autonomy and higher-quality recruits because of their Service's relatively small size, the Marines used their wartime exploits to nurture their identity as an elite, specialized force. A dash of embellishment on top—aided by the complicity of the American press corps—solidified the Marines' image all the more. Even before the belligerent nations made their peace at Versailles, France, in 1919, the Marine Corps had bolstered its reputation as a distinct and unparalleled American fighting force.¹¹ Yet, even in light of a reinforced image, Marines and outsiders alike continued to disagree about the Corps' proper role in the American military apparatus. Should the Corps continue a trend of expeditionary service, act as a colonial police force, or reassert its naval roots and purpose?¹² Though the Service had strengthened its standing, the First World War further compromised the existential purpose of the Marine Corps.

In the shadow of the First World War, then, the Marines returned much of their focus to their prewar function as an advanced base force of the U.S. Navy. Under this vision, which found both its roots and its strength in the ideas of the indomitable naval theorist Alfred Thayer Mahan, the Marines were to act as a maritime force capable of securing and defending overseas bases that would, in turn, sustain American warships anywhere in the world. By seizing an expanding web of coaling stations for the U.S. fleet, the Marine Corps would play a fundamental role in any future naval conflict.

Despite an obvious amphibious connection with the Marines' future operations in World War II, this early concept of advanced base operations differed in one basic element: it was a reactive, defensive force rather than a robust team built for offensive landing operations. Based on the early model, the Marines were to seize vacant territory and fortify it for battle. At most, they anticipated nominal resistance. More likely, the Marines expected to land ashore and simply

claim the bases as their own. As two notable Marine historians revealed, "in practice all of the training concentrated on the defense. . . . The advance-base force was in actuality little more than an embryo coastal artillery unit."¹³

Two Marines in particular deserve credit for gradually shifting the Corps' attention from the defense of unoccupied shores to the rapid, offensive seizure of strengthened enemy posts. The first, Lieutenant General John A. Lejeune, became Marine Commandant in 1920 and set the Service on a progressive but patient path toward aggressive amphibious operations. Unsettled by growing Japanese aggression in the Pacific and alarmed by the significant territorial concessions made to the Japanese at Versailles, Lejeune connected American security in the Pacific with the United States' ability to launch offensive landing operations across the region. Pursuing his vision for a modern Marine Corps, Lejeune slowly refined and buttressed the Corps' purpose in light of contemporary security concerns.¹⁴

Lejeune was hardly the first to acknowledge the growing rift in the Pacific. Indeed, by the early 1920s, the Navy Department identified Japan as its most likely future enemy and began deliberate preparations for the looming contest. The Americans' resultant plan—famously labeled War Plan Orange—went through a series of revisions in the succeeding decades, each of which centered on defending the Philippines and leading a prolonged naval campaign to capture Japanese bases across the Pacific. Here, Lejeune's shift toward offensive amphibious operations neatly paralleled (indeed, reflected) the Navy's intention to turn back Japanese expansion. War with Japan would compel a succession of amphibious assaults across the Central and Western Pacific. Lejeune, and Marine leaders who followed, were determined to position the Marine Corps for that exact task. Of course, shifting the Marines' focus to offensive landing operations not only helped solve the operational problems of a future Pa-

¹¹ Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 303–18.

¹² Robert Debs Heintz Jr., *Soldiers of the Sea: The United States Marine Corps, 1775–1962* (Baltimore, MD: Nautical and Aviation Publishing Company of America, 1991), 231–32.

¹³ Isely and Crowl, *The U.S. Marines and Amphibious War*, 23–24.

¹⁴ Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 322–25.

cific War, it also delivered an existential purpose for the post-World War I Corps.

To study the growing problem in the Pacific with more focus, Lejeune appointed a brilliant young staff officer by the name of Lieutenant Colonel Earl H. Ellis. Though Ellis was known as a heavy drinker with a fiery temper, he also carried an equally established reputation as one of the Corps' most talented strategic thinkers. Even for the disciplined and professional Lejeune, Ellis's aptitude as a Marine officer far outweighed his dangerous penchant for stiff drink. As commanding general of the 2d Marine Division during the First World War, a subordinate once alerted Lejeune that Ellis appeared "indisposed" because of his usual habits and might therefore be unsuited for his battlefield duties as adjutant. In reply, Lejeune snapped that "Ellis drunk is better than anyone else around here sober."¹⁵

Having established a personal rapport with Lejeune, Ellis emerged from World War I ready to tackle the general's next great task: that of confronting the Japanese in the Pacific. Alongside the Navy Department's broader development of War Plan Orange, Ellis quickly acknowledged the disturbing but unavoidable work that awaited the Corps. To win a contest in the Pacific, the Marines would have to prepare for a succession of concentrated amphibious assaults. As the prescient Ellis well knew, such attacks would be met by fierce and organized Japanese resistance from hardened island positions. In words that would become prophecy, Ellis declared: "The landing will entirely succeed or fail practically on the beach."¹⁶

Fatefully, Ellis would not live to see the theoretical battles that he studied with such vigor and diligence. In 1923, he died mysteriously on Palau Island while on a self-appointed reconnaissance mission to study existing Japanese defenses.¹⁷ Nonetheless, his capstone research, eventually christened "Operation

Plan 712: Advanced Base Operations in Micronesia," formed the Corps' interwar foundation of amphibious strategy and doctrine. In part, Ellis's pioneering work helped advance the rising stature and expectations of the Marines. By 1927, a Navy Department directive specifically assigned amphibious landing operations to the Marine Corps, and in 1933, Navy *General Order 241* reorganized the Corps as a Fleet Marine Force. Through these bold bureaucratic moves—and in large part thanks to the energetic leadership and vision of Lejeune and Ellis—the Service found itself explicitly assigned and structured for its budding amphibious mission.¹⁸

Painful Fits and Starts: Early Amphibious Exercises and Doctrinal Progress

Administrative change was one thing, but if the Marines were to embrace and develop their nascent mission, they would need practical, hands-on experience. In 1922—just months after Ellis completed his landmark research—the Corps formed a provisional battalion and dispatched it to Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, and Culebra, Puerto Rico, for a series of landing exercises. The following year, a detachment of Marines practiced amphibious landings at Cape Cod, Massachusetts. By early 1924, the Marine Corps had solicited participation from the Navy's Atlantic Fleet and several nearby Army contingents for a further sequence of exercises at Culebra.

These early amphibious maneuvers—or Fleet Problems as they were called—presented the Marines with a number of obvious challenges, perhaps too many to address at once. The 1924 operations at Culebra revealed embarkation difficulties, poor timeline coordination across the force, inefficient loading procedures, and inadequate transport shipping (both in number and in quality). The most pressing concern exposed in the Caribbean maneuvers, however, con-

¹⁵ Quoted in Ballendorf and Bartlett, *Pete Ellis*, 5.

¹⁶ LtCol Earl H. Ellis, "Advanced Base Operations in Micronesia," *Operation Plan 712*, HAF 165, COLL/3634, MCHD, Quantico, VA, 28.

¹⁷ Though the circumstances remained mysterious for decades, recent evidence shows that Ellis drank himself to death, allowing his personal vice to get the best of him. Ballendorf and Bartlett, *Pete Ellis*, 140–41.

¹⁸ Isely and Crowl, *The U.S. Marines and Amphibious War*, 24–26, 33–35; and LtCol Frank O. Hough, Maj Verle E. Ludwig, and Henry I. Shaw Jr., *Pearl Harbor to Guadalcanal: History of U.S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Historical Branch, G-3 Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1958), 11–14.

cerned the Navy Department's landing craft. Navy and Marine officers alike found the attack craft too few in quantity and generally unsuited for the task. Although the inadequacy of the boats appeared at this early stage of the interwar period, it would take years before the Corps settled on a permanent model.¹⁹

After their Caribbean ventures, the Marines completed one final landing exercise on the island of Oahu, Hawaii, in the spring of 1925 before tabling their practical amphibious training for more than five years. Sidelined by events abroad, Marine expeditionary service in China and Nicaragua siphoned both valuable troops and senior leaders' attention from the amphibious mission. Accordingly, not until the mid-1930s would the Service resume its practical landing exercises and refocus its full attention on the seizure of enemy-held islands.

To their credit, senior Marine leaders quickly reasserted the Marines' amphibious role in the aftermath of the Chinese and Nicaraguan expeditions. Under Commandant Ben H. Fuller and Assistant Commandant John H. Russell, the Corps set out to develop the requisite doctrine for the task in front of it; indeed, as the years passed, conflict in the Pacific seemed only more likely. Beginning in 1931, Fuller and Russell took increasing advantage of the resident faculty, staff, and students at the Marine Corps Schools in Quantico, Virginia, and assigned them to study amphibious landing operations. By November 1933, Fuller had ordered that Quantico discontinue all ongoing classes, form specialized committees to study particular aspects of the task, and otherwise dedicate complete focus to the creation of a suitable manual.²⁰

The resulting doctrine, codified as the *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations* in 1934, became the Marines' interwar roadmap. In the words of historians Jeter Isely and Philip Crowl, the manual represented "pioneer work of the most daring and imaginative

sort."²¹ The study, later adopted and rebranded as the Navy's *Fleet Training Publication 167*, addressed command relationships, transportation, logistics, and preparatory training as it related to offensive landing operations. Spurred by visionary leaders such as Lejeune, Ellis, Fuller, and Russell, the impromptu committees tackled their commission with vigor and, within a few years, provided a firm theoretical foundation for the Corps' future niche.²²

On top of its more general guidance, the *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations* acknowledged the essential roles of naval gunfire and air support during offensive landing operations. Lacking artillery in the opening minutes (perhaps even hours) of the assault, the landing force was compelled to rely on alternative forms of supporting firepower. As the manual flatly stated: "A landing operation against opposition is, in effect, an assault on [a] defensive position modified by substituting initially ships' gunfire for that of light, medium, and heavy field artillery, and frequently, carrier-based aviation for land-based air units until the latter can be operated from shore."²³

Though the manual recognized the significance of sea-based fire support in an amphibious operation, naval gunfire presented a number of practical challenges for American forces at the time. First and foremost, naval guns were designed for combat at sea. Cannons fired along low, relatively flat trajectories that maximized their nautical range. But, when firing in support of a landing, this flat shell path meant that even a minor gunnery error could endanger the friendly landing force as it floated and then fought its way ashore. Similarly, contemporary naval guns used armor-piercing shells with a heavy outer casing designed to penetrate the skin of enemy ships before the shell's delayed fuse initiated the explosion. Yet, this characteristic also failed to translate with comparable effect. When fired against beach targets, the armor-piercing shell buried itself in the sand before

¹⁹ Felker, *Testing American Sea Power*, 94–100; and Heinl, *Soldiers of the Sea*, 258–59. For an inside look at the Marines' interwar development of landing craft, see Krulak, "Chapter 5: Ideas but No Boats," in *First to Fight*, 88–99.

²⁰ Heinl, *Soldiers of the Sea*, 299–301; Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 329–31; and Isely and Crowl, *The U.S. Marines and Amphibious War*, 35–36.

²¹ Isely and Crowl, *The U.S. Marines and Amphibious War*, 36.

²² Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 322–43; and Isely and Crowl, *The U.S. Marines and Amphibious War*, 34–44.

²³ *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations*, 1934, HAF 39, COLL/3634, MCHD, Quantico, VA, paragraph 1-34.

detonating, thus reducing both its destructive range and power.²⁴ Trajectories and shell design, however, were not the only limitations of interwar naval gunfire support. While the landed artillery crew fired from a stable position, sailors at sea fired from a moving platform amid rolling waves and threatening swells. Although artillery ashore operated in close proximity to the infantry units they supported, especially in the condensed beachhead of an amphibious assault, ships at sea fought from dedicated firing stations, typically between 6 and 11 miles offshore. At such dislocated distances, the ships depended on remote observers—either ashore or airborne—to assist in targeting, record effects, and make spotting adjustments during battle. To add even more complexity, ships steamed at speeds approaching if not exceeding 20 knots while they maneuvered and perhaps even evaded enemy threats within the coordinates of their assigned firing station. Inherently, radio communications became more difficult across sand, surf, and sea. In short, projecting a single, accurately placed naval shell on a land target under the chaotic circumstances of amphibious combat was no simple task.²⁵

If controlling naval gunfire was difficult, coordinating it within the broader efforts of an American task force was a formidable chore during the interwar period. Yet, alongside a Navy culture committed to conventional surface operations and the emergence of the aircraft carrier, the challenge of cross-community coordination became all the more acute. Perhaps for this reason, the *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations* focused on the distinct and independent execution of naval gunfire, and the Marines' treatise largely neglected the indispensable coordination of firepower.²⁶ Although the manual devoted 28 pages to the "Em-

ployment of Naval Supporting Groups" in amphibious operations, not even 1 full page went to the section on "coordination of ships' gunfire."²⁷ Instead, most of the chapter's ink went to the organization of the naval task force, the positioning of the vessels, and the most effective fuse-shell combinations for targets ashore. As the Navy and Marine Corps were destined to learn in the future bouts in the Pacific, amphibious assaults required close and committed cooperation. Even one component out of tune with the larger scheme could spell disaster for the entire endeavor.

The *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations* also addressed aerial support with unfettered confidence but offered little on how to integrate and synchronize aircraft within the larger scheme of the battle. While assigning pilots tasks such as reconnaissance and close support of the landing force, the authors of the manual failed to adequately address coordination between sea-based and aerial fires. The treatise discussed aerial spotting—by then an established mission for aviators—but did not delve into the intricacies of air-ground coordination or communication.²⁸ In these ways, the 1934 manual continued to highlight the individual roles of naval gunfire and air support without confronting the more general coordination of land, sea, and air efforts.

While dedicating scant attention to aerial coordination, the *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations* also minimized the importance of flexibility and continuous coverage in amphibious fire support. Here, the authors valued centralization over responsiveness, dictating that fire support should be "carefully regulated by a firing schedule" rather than remain sensitive to the actual progress of the landing force.²⁹ Instead of demanding a continuous umbrella of firepower to protect and enable the attacking infantrymen, the manual accepted that "the time gap between the lift of beach fire of offshore supporting ships and the landing of the first assault wave is inherently large."³⁰ By conceding a significant hiatus in fire support just as

²⁴ Lt Walter C. Ansel, USN, "Naval Gun Fire in Support of a Landing," *Marine Corps Gazette* 17, no. 1 (May 1932): 25–26.

²⁵ *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations*, "Chapter II: Employment of Naval Supporting Groups," paragraphs 2-300–2-325; Maj R. D. Heintz Jr., "Naval Gunfire Support in Landings," *Marine Corps Gazette* 29, no. 9 (September 1945): 40–43; and Isely and Crowl, *The U.S. Marines and Amphibious Warfare*, 38–39, 50.

²⁶ On the Navy's interwar dismissal of naval gunfire and amphibious operations—what the author terms "a strategic afterthought"—see Felker, *Testing American Sea Power*, 88–109.

²⁷ *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations*, paragraph 2-318.

²⁸ *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations*, paragraphs 2-415–2-428.

²⁹ *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations*, paragraph 2-318.

³⁰ *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations*, paragraph 2-318.

the landing force approached the beach and choosing centralization over flexibility, the Marines' pre-war theory failed to deal with the dynamic conditions of an amphibious assault. Such formulaic firepower would hardly be enough to put a landing force ashore.

The manual's noticeable omissions concerning naval gunfire may perplex the present-day observer, but they appear representative of broader Marine distrust in naval gunfire at the time. Just as now-Commandant Russel had arranged the initial development of the *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations* in 1931, the Marine Corps chartered a special board of three Marine officers in Quantico to investigate the capabilities and limitations of naval gunfire in support of amphibious operations. The committee's eventual report, *Naval Gunfire in Support of Landings*, though nominally confident, revealed more skepticism and cause for concern than the final version of the *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations* admitted several years later.

Although the committee displayed apparent confidence in its opening and concluding remarks, after closer inspection, the details of the report exposed several alarming issues. Rather prophetically, the report recognized one of the great unknowns that would plague the Navy and Marine Corps in the opening battles of the Pacific more than a decade later: the amount of naval gunfire support required to aid an amphibious assault. As the committee concluded on this matter, naval artillery could do the job, but it was difficult "to state in general terms what constitutes adequate artillery support, that is, the number of guns required to successfully attack on a given front."³¹ Devoid of practical experience, few Navy or Marine officers had even a notion of how many naval guns were adequate and—more importantly—how many naval guns were inadequate when supporting a landing operation.

If uncertain about the exact number of naval vessels and guns required to send the landing force ashore,

the 1931 Quantico board did recognize the importance of continuous fire support as the Marines approached the beach. Unlike the Corps' later manual, the special board discussed the dilemma between firepower coverage and the Marines' arrival on the beach with transparency and candor. If the assault was to succeed, the committee reasoned, the task force must "reduce to a minimum the interval between the lifting of the artillery fire from the hostile position and the arrival of the attacking infantry in that position."³² But although they acknowledged what the *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations* later omitted, the board members still stopped short of proposing a solution to the intractable issue: just how were Navy and Marine units to choreograph this delicate balance between effective fire support and the very safety of the troops making their way ashore? Whether the members of the 1931 committee were discouraged or simply uncertain how to address such coordination, they seemed satisfied to have recognized the problem without rectifying it.

Despite these underlying concerns, the general conclusions and recommendations of the board displayed steadfast confidence, just as the *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations* would three years later. Though accepting the complexity and inherent challenges of the modern amphibious assault, the 1931 committee touted that specialized equipment, diligent practice, and advanced training would all ensure success. In a display of confidence that future Marines were sure to take issue with, the board decreed that "with boats in sufficient numbers, of the proper type, speed and equipment, and with properly trained crews, the advance over water offers no particular disadvantage in itself."³³ At another point in their comments, the board judged that "the yearly target practices of the fleet demonstrate clearly that if the enemy positions were visible on the ground, and the form of the terrain and visibility permitted direct laying on the target, ships' guns could deliver an accurate, effective fire on hostile positions, so concentrated that attacking infantry could advance within reasonable assaulting dis-

³¹ Special Board, Marine Corps Schools, "Enclosure A: General Discussion of Landing Operations," in *Naval Gunfire Support of Landings*, 18 February 1931, HAF 66, COLL/3634, MCHD, Quantico, VA, 5, hereafter "Enclosure A: General Discussion of Landing Operations."

³² "Enclosure A: General Discussion of Landing Operations," 7.

³³ "Enclosure A: General Discussion of Landing Operations," 4.

tance before the fire would have been lifted.”³⁴ Though aware that these conditions for success were more exceptional than typical, the board failed to investigate what might happen when enemy positions were not visible on the ground and enemy forces deliberately camouflaged, misled, and confused American plans. Of course, Japanese units were to take unforgiving advantage of such oversights.

While the special board’s 1931 report included concerning details, neither the committee’s formal conclusions nor the Marines’ *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations* that followed seemed willing to engage with the messy, difficult, perhaps even hopeless dilemma between appropriate naval gunfire coverage and the advance of the landing force. Looking past the official sources and into a personal conversation within the Marine Corps, however, it seems that frustration and skepticism ruled the day. Following his participation on the special board, Major Charles D. Barrett penned a biting letter to a fellow naval officer that revealed deep-seated doubt on the matter. In the context of a personal letter, Barrett seemed much more willing to discuss the inherent and perhaps insurmountable difficulties of the job. Given Barrett’s familiarity with the topic and his participation on the 1931 special board, his discussion of the problem deserves to be quoted at length.

If the [enemy] machine guns open fire at a range as great as 1500 yards and the fire was immediately observed by the ships, they could only shell the beach for two or three minutes at the most, with [friendly] boats traveling at eight knots. It is more than likely that an alert enemy would hold his machine guns’ fire until the disembarkation from the boats actually began, when help from the ships would be absolutely impossible.³⁵

Once the landing force reached the beach, Barrett continued, the problem became even more acute:

Theoretically, aero planes should be able to call for panels and thus keep you advised of the location of your front lines, but practically this does not work out so well.³⁶ Panel men get killed; troops rushing forward cannot watch every plane for signals; troops in woods do not see the panels; planes get shot down

The question then arises as to how to insert artillery fire into this melee and at what stage in the game; that is, from the artillery or ships which previously have not been firing. It seems absolutely impossible while the troops are still moving forward. If you wait until a battalion is stopped, the artillery fire will come too late as the damage will have been done. If you tell the front line troops to stop and call for artillery fire as soon as fired upon, the result manifestly would be a halting hesitating attack and not the energetic operation pushed home to the limit which must be expected from troops that are to succeed.

The foregoing discussion deals primarily with the question of where and when to put the fire, and does not consider the mechanical difficulties of *getting the shells to fall where you want them*. Communications manifestly offer some troublesome problems. Then there is the question of getting the shells to fall on the enemy without doing damage to your own troops.

³⁴ “Enclosure A: General Discussion of Landing Operations,” 7.

³⁵ Charles D. Barrett, “Correspondence: Major C. D. Barrett to CDR H. A. Flannigan,” 15 October 1931, HAF 70, COLL/3634, MCHD, Quantico, VA, 1–2.

³⁶ The term *panel* refers to an “air panel” or board used to communicate between ground forces and friendly aircraft. The ground troops placed these colored panels on the ground to inform pilots of friendly positions and the progress of the attack. This was an early (and cumbersome) method of communication in the early days of air command and control.

We know that we can rarely succeed without artillery fire. If the fire falls on your own troops, it is not simply a question of killing some men, but the result is worse than not having any artillery at all, because the morale of the troops will be destroyed.³⁷

Having established his reservations, Barrett offered a concluding admission that would appear almost verbatim in the Marines' *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations* three years later. Unable to remedy the delicate balance between naval gunfire and the mobile landing force, Barrett conceded that on-call fire support was simply too dangerous, too difficult, and too impossible for the amphibious assault. Accordingly, naval gunfire "support of infantry will have to be, in the future as in the past, according to some prearranged plan" specific to each assault but scripted according to a "timeline" or firing schedule.³⁸ Even for officers as conflicted as Barrett, the timeline solution prevailed over a more responsive and adaptable approach to fire support.

Turning into the Fog: The 1930s Fleet Landing Exercises

With their doubts in hand, Navy and Marine officers alike knew that to make tangible progress with the amphibious assault, they must turn their efforts to practical fleet training. The *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations*, for all its groundbreaking theory, remained little more than an intellectual appraisal in 1934. As General James C. Breckinridge, then in command of Marine Corps Schools in Quantico, put it, the authors of the manual had been "largely groping in the dark."³⁹ The head of the manual's Aviation Committee expressed a similar conviction, stating that their

team had tackled its assigned tasks "with a lantern in one hand and a candle in the other."⁴⁰ Having wrestled with the theory, it was time for practical learning.

Yet, even as a few diligent leaders labored to turn the Navy and Marine Corps' attention toward amphibious training, they encountered a series of hurdles. First and foremost, a shift toward amphibious warfare faced opposition within the Navy Department itself. As historian Craig C. Felker has shown, many senior Navy leaders remained averse to amphibious operations throughout the 1930s. Primarily, their disapproval reflected concern that an amphibious pivot would necessarily dilute other training initiatives and compromise the identity of the fleet. Enchanted with the ideas of Alfred Thayer Mahan, traditionalist officers clung to conventional naval warfare and the great theorist's vision of decisive battle. From this perspective, amphibious operations were nothing more than "a distraction from sea control."⁴¹ As Mahan's disciples saw it, battleships were designed to fight the enemy at sea, not play second fiddle to a landing force laboring its way ashore. In this view, amphibious operations not only degraded but endangered American battleships by tethering them to specific terrain—the landing beach. Restricted to nearby waters, the fleet remained under constant threat from enemy airfields and shore batteries. Under such constraints, Mahan's descendants found it difficult to abide.⁴²

In addition to cultural aversion within the Navy Department, a shortage in manpower plagued the Marines' ability to develop their amphibious efforts. As early as 1932, Commandant Fuller had written that

the reduction of the enlisted strength of the Marine Corps from 18,000 to 15,343 has made it impossible for the corps to carry out its primary mission of supporting the United States Fleet by maintaining a force in readiness to

³⁷ Barrett, "Correspondence: Major C. D. Barrett to CDR H. A. Flannigan," 2–3, emphasis added.

³⁸ Barrett, "Correspondence: Major C. D. Barrett to CDR H. A. Flannigan," 4.

³⁹ James C. Breckinridge, "Remarks of General Breckinridge," in "Conference Proceedings Discussing, Approving, or Commenting on the Various Headings and Sub-Headings of the Tentative Manual for Landing Operations," 1934, HAF 41, COLL/3634, MCHD, Quantico, VA, 1.

⁴⁰ "Remarks by Captain Campbell, Aviation Committee, Landing Operations Manual," in "Conference Proceedings Discussing, Approving, or Commenting on the Various Headings and Sub-Headings of the Tentative Manual for Landing Operations," 1934, HAF 41, COLL/3634, MCHD, Quantico, VA, 1.

⁴¹ Felker, *Testing American Sea Power*, 100.

⁴² Felker, *Testing American Sea Power*, 100.

operate with the fleet. On the present strength only weakly skeletonized organizations of such arms that are essential to a modern military force can be maintained.⁴³

At the time of Fuller's words, the Great Depression had helped to cap the Hoover-era Marine Corps. Yet even as the interwar years ticked by—and war became more likely—the Marines' manpower problem persisted. Five years later, in 1937, the enlisted force had grown by only 1,100 personnel. By 1939, total enlisted manpower reached just 17,500. Convinced that offensive naval forces had helped precipitate World War I, and equally certain that the Marine Corps represented an aggressive, interventionist tool, Congress embraced isolationist policies and strict caps that kept the Service modest in size.⁴⁴

On top of its general manpower constraints, a litany of military duties helped to further dilute the Marine Corps' interwar focus on amphibious training. As late as 1937, just 24 percent of the Service's enlisted personnel served in Fleet Marine Force units. The remainder of the Corps filled shipboard duties, domestic and foreign guard duties, and expeditionary units (particularly in China). By 1939—and even as the international crises in Asia and Europe became more acute—the proportion of Marines in the Fleet Marine Force actually dropped to 20 percent, just 3,422 of its 17,500 enlisted troops. Not until 1940 did the Fleet Marine Force's proportion of manpower begin to surge, when 42 percent of the Corps served in such a capacity.⁴⁵

Even in spite of 1930s personnel challenges and the powerful influence of Mahanian theory, the Navy

and Marine Corps did begin to shift some attention toward the amphibious mission. After a hasty 1934 fleet maneuver in the Caribbean, the two Services initiated a series of large-scale amphibious exercises meant to test American doctrine and procedures between 1935 and 1941. Appropriately titled Fleet Landing Exercises, or FLEXs for short, the annual drills drew together landing troops, naval gunfire platforms, and aviation sections for common training. Within the exercises, the Navy and Marine Corps made notable progress in particular elements of the amphibious assault. The design of landing craft improved reliably, with Andrew Higgins's Eureka prototype (eventually the famed Higgins boat) and the lesser-known Donald Roebling's amphibian tractor (a.k.a. alligator) both emerging from the FLEX continuum. In addition, casualty evacuation procedures, beach organization practices, and the logistics behind the assault all matured.⁴⁶

But in spite of these humble strides and a genuine desire for realistic training conditions, the Services' annual maneuvers suffered from debilitating artificialities. To reduce confusion on the beaches and maximize safety, the exercise umpires used stationary flags to represent enemy units and wooden targets to signify enemy pillboxes and bunkers. Consequently, the drills looked more like target practice than realistic maneuvers. Gunfire officers embraced area bombing over point-targeting, confident that a broad sweep of naval fires could do the job for the landing force. The umpires often prohibited naval gunfire training while friendly troops were ashore and instead directed the naval guns to fire on separate beaches and islands. Safe from each other's fires, the detached American forces failed to appreciate the tremendous complexity and onerous burden of coordinating naval gunfire under the chaotic and dynamic circumstances of an amphibious attack.⁴⁷

Artificialities hampered the integration of aviation units in a comparable manner. Following FLEX 3

⁴³“Report of the Major General Commandant of the United States Marine Corps,” in *Annual Reports of the Navy Department for the Fiscal Year 1932* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1932), 1163.

⁴⁴*Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy for the Fiscal Year 1937* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1937), 17; *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy for the Fiscal Year 1939* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1939), 19; and Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 320, 335.

⁴⁵*Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy for the Fiscal Year 1937*, 17; *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy for the Fiscal Year 1939*, 19; and *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy for the Fiscal Year 1940* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1940), 18.

⁴⁶B. W. Gally, “A History of U.S. Fleet Landing Exercises,” 3 July 1939, HAF 73, COLL/3634, MCHD, Quantico, VA; Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 338–40; and Krulak, *First to Fight*, 88–99.

⁴⁷Gally, “A History of U.S. Fleet Landing Exercises,” 5–6; and Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 337–41.

in 1938, Captain W. C. Lemly drafted a biting critique of the operation: “First of all I should like to speak of artificialities. The San Clemente [California] Exercise was full of them. The realistic element was not stressed enough.” Because of the limitations, Lemly charged, the exercise was “little more realistic than a map problem.” In his piercing conclusion, the aviator professed that “the training and benefit the squadron received in carrying out this operation order, other than through a vigorous exercise of the imagination, was practically nil.”⁴⁸

Throughout the FLEXs, Marines training ashore complained that the aviators lacked familiarity with the ground situation and were therefore unable to provide effective air support. Mechanical problems and communication errors often delayed the aircraft, leaving troops to clamor for more flexibility and responsiveness from their comrades overhead. In most training runs, the naval pilots focused on internal capabilities and missions, with only peripheral concern for amphibious integration.⁴⁹ Almost completely, units valued training safely over training realistically. As historian Allan Millett summarized, “The aviation bombing and strafing practices were, like the shore bombardments, so restricted by safety precautions that their utility was limited.”⁵⁰ Throughout the interwar exercises, and in part because of the maneuvers’ limitations, timely and effective air support remained elusive.

FLEX planners tolerated artificialities in the annual drills for a number of understandable—if not entirely defensible—reasons. First and foremost, commanders prioritized the safety of their troops and the survival of their equipment over the authenticity of battlefield conditions. For most officers, the desire to preserve life and limb was simply too strong. Budget limitations and a desire for simplicity also pushed the exercises toward artificiality. Training in a separate

and scripted manner meant that the naval gunners could focus on their task of delivering shells ashore while the landing force focused on its mission of attacking the beach. Each of these factors contributed, however innocently, to unrealistic training conditions in the 1930s FLEXs.

In short—as the Navy and Marine Corps focused almost singularly on their own individual tasks—the FLEXs consistently avoided the messy but essential business of coordinating triphibious operations and, in particular, triphibious firepower. Efficient and safe as it was in peacetime drills, the isolated and careful approach left little emphasis for the larger integration of the task force. Instead of refining communication procedures and cooperation techniques between shipboard gunners, attacking aircraft, and infantry units, most ships obsessed about proper shell and fuse combinations for the wooden targets they prosecuted. The landing force was equally content to focus on its own journey from the transport ships to the beach, as well as the logistics and other internal support measures that would sustain it ashore. Absorbed in their own quite challenging tasks, few leaders were concerned about the delicate orchestration of land, sea, and air actions.

Even as early as 1936, however, lonely voices of concern surfaced. Rear Admiral Hayne Ellis, after observing Fleet Landing Exercise Number 2, argued that the landing force was understrength in both firepower and personnel. The exercise, he judged, had provided insufficient training on the integration and fire support necessary to seize the beach. He came to the depressing conclusion that “against any sort of determined and resourceful opposition it is believed that the strength of the Fleet Marine Force is totally inadequate, for the purpose designated.”⁵¹ Following the next annual drill in 1937, Lieutenant Colonel B. W. Gally added to the admiral’s skepticism, arguing that even “complete and detailed orders cannot make up for a lack of training in a composite organization consisting of units that have not previously trained

⁴⁸ Capt W. C. Lemly, “Lessons Learned by Aviation from Fleet Landing Exercise No. 3,” 1938, HAF 118, COLL/3634, MCHD, Quantico, VA, 1.

⁴⁹ David L. Nutter, “Gunfire Support in Fleet Landing Exercises,” 1939, HAF 73, COLL/3634, MCHD, Quantico, VA; Rothenberg, “From Gallipoli to Guadalcanal,” 178; and Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 337–41.

⁵⁰ Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 338.

⁵¹ As quoted in Gally, “A History of U.S. Fleet Landing Exercises,” 6.

together.⁵² By 1938, yet another critic went so far as to offer a solution in their post-exercise report: “Troops should be required to request naval gunfire support to give needed training in coordination.” Dodging the task was foolish, they continued, since these exact types of bombardments seem “quite certain to be required of our battleships in case of war. It is an intricate problem for which we lack much preparation.”⁵³

The following year, Navy commander C. G. Richardson reflected these same sentiments, petitioning that “[our] fire control must provide for great flexibility of fire . . . and gun groups must permit heavy fire to be laid down immediately on any target observed.” Since the interwar theory and associated war plans called for landing operations, he continued, “it is squarely up to us who comprise the naval service to accept this decision and proceed to the solution of the problem, no matter how involved or how difficult it may be.”⁵⁴ But the pleas of Richardson and his predecessors often fell on deaf ears, as the majority of the naval officer corps sustained its preference for conventional fleet engagements.

Put simply—and in spite of the lonely critics—the late 1930s exercises revealed that U.S. Navy officers expected the destructiveness of their guns to win the battle outright. They would fire on the enemy, offload

the Marines, and return to their cherished purpose of fighting at sea. Naval aviation’s mission, except for the most committed of carrier warfare proponents, was to support battleship gunnery and reconnoiter the battlefield. For the Marines’ part, they appeared content that supporting firepower would knock down enemy defenses, get the landing force ashore, and adequately assist the attack.

Between the world wars, very few American officers—either Navy or Marine—anticipated the inherent complexity and difficulty of triphibious coordination, integration, and flexibility. Each of these principles seemed unworthy of their close attention or concern. Between 1935 and 1941, the Navy and Marine Corps’ FLEXs failed to sufficiently address the orchestration of land, sea, and air operations. If the landing force was to get ashore against a fortified, prepared, and equipped enemy, someone had to synchronize the troop movements with the supporting munitions. The Navy and Marine Corps’ dismissal of these challenges during the interwar years bordered on professional ignorance. More tragically, it left the Americans categorically unprepared, at the outbreak of the Second World War, to effectively coordinate and integrate firepower during a contested amphibious assault.

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⁵² Gally, “A History of U.S. Fleet Landing Exercises,” 8.

⁵³ “Report of Gunnery Exercises,” in *Fleet Training Publication 203-1*, 1939, HAF 148, COLL/3634, MCHD, Quantico, VA, 44, 46.

⁵⁴ Cdr C. G. Richardson, USN, “Naval Gunfire Support of Landing Operations,” 1939, HAF 64, COLL/3634, Quantico, VA, 4, 33–34.

The “Scholastic” Marine Who Won a Secret War

FRANK HOLCOMB, THE OSS, AND AMERICAN DOUBLE-CROSS OPERATIONS IN EUROPE

by Colonel Nicholas Reynolds, USMCR (Ret)

Abstract: This article focuses on a little-known contribution to Allied victory in Europe after D-Day by a part of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the Special Counterintelligence (SCI) teams of the X-2 (Counterintelligence) Branch. Using a combination of private papers, unpublished studies, and OSS records, the author looks through the eyes of the commander of the SCI teams, Frank P. Holcomb, son of wartime Commandant General Thomas Holcomb. A Marine Corps reservist and OSS officer, Holcomb received a rudimentary orientation from the British in counterespionage and deception operations before creating his own highly successful units to perform those missions. In short order, the OSS went from having almost no such capability to neutralizing every German stay-behind agent in France and Belgium and turning a number of them back against the enemy to feed the Third Reich deceptive reports, accepted as genuine, thereby making a significant contribution to the security of the Allied armies. This article offers examples of OSS successes as testament to the skill and fortitude of a Marine Reserve officer serving on independent duty.

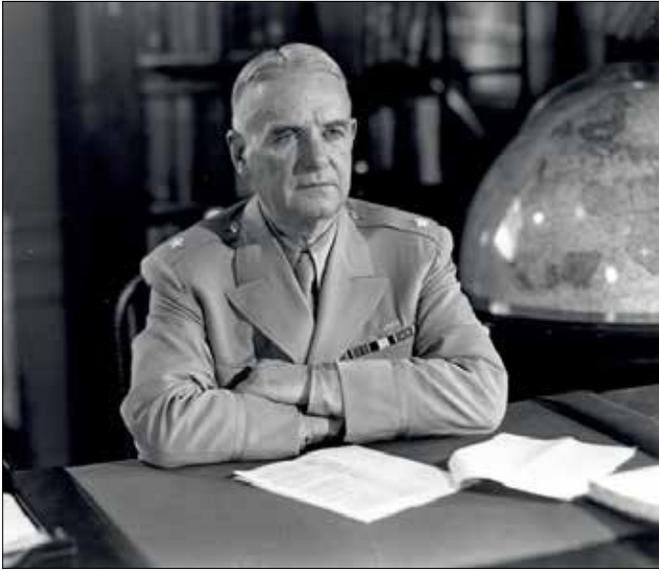
Keywords: Office of Strategic Services, OSS, X-2, Double-Cross System, counterintelligence, Frank Holcomb, Thomas Holcomb, William J. Donovan, World War II, intelligence operations, Special Counterintelligence

From 1945 onward, scholars and practitioners have asked: just what did America’s wartime intelligence agency, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), accomplish during World War II? To say that OSS director William J. Donovan and his outfit prepared the ground for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) is not enough. Recent attempts to answer this question by Donovan biographer Douglas C. Waller and intelligence historian Troy J. Sacquety focus, re-

spectively, on the organization’s overall contribution to the war effort—OSS made a solid, if not dramatic, contribution to victory—and on the campaign fought by Detachment 101 in faraway Burma, where there was a very good return on a small investment of personnel and materiel.¹ Another way to answer the question is to take a close look at the record of X-2, the OSS’s counterintelligence element, in Europe during 1944–45, particularly through the eyes of one of its leaders,

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¹ Douglas Waller, *Wild Bill Donovan: The Spymaster Who Created the OSS and Modern American Espionage* (New York: Free Press, 2012); and Troy J. Sacquety, *The OSS and Burma: Jungle War against the Japanese* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2013).



National Archives identifier number 6851006, Portrait Photos of Donovan, 1942–1946, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, 1919–2002, RG 226, folder 19, NARA

William J. Donovan, shown here as a brigadier general, the Office of Strategic Services director who was looking for “a special type of officer . . . with a scholastic approach . . . tempered by practical experience.”

Frank Holcomb.² This Marine Reserve officer’s remarkable achievements, particularly in counterespionage and deception, show how quickly the OSS could learn and how much it could accomplish. Before 1943, the OSS had only a rudimentary grasp of any form of counterintelligence, let alone operations to find and turn enemy spies. OSS decided to enter that field and to develop a new capability. In short order, Holcomb learned how to become an effective practitioner of this arcane craft, and turn it to the Allies’ advantage after D-Day by neutralizing every spy the Germans had left behind in Western Europe as well as exploiting many of them to report disinformation.

The story begins in the summer of 1941, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Office of the Coordinator of Information (COI) for Donovan. It would be one of the offices in the executive branch;

² The best detailed study of X-2 is by Timothy J. Naftali, “X-2 and the Apprenticeship of American Counterespionage, 1942–1944” (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1993). An early, official postwar study by an OSS officer focuses on France in 1944 and 1945. John B. Oakes, Edward R. Weismiller, and Eugene Waith, *A History of OSS/X-2 Operation of Controlled Enemy Agents in France and Germany, 1944–1945*, vol. I (Washington, DC: Strategic Services Unit, War Department, 1946).

Donovan would report directly to the president. The aging but still very energetic lawyer and colonel in the Army Reserve, who was on leave from his firm, immediately tested and expanded his powers, which included scouting for organizations to support COI. One possibility was for the COI to affiliate with the U.S. Marine Corps in some way (undetermined at the time it surfaced), an idea that the Marines quickly and emphatically rejected. Marine Corps leadership feared that the COI tail might one day wag the Marine Corps dog.³ The first step could be a presidential order to give a Marine commission to Donovan, the amateur with political connections. The next step could be an influx of “personnel other than regular Marine officers” who could “very easily get out of hand and out of control.”⁴ Either would dilute the professionalism of the Corps. At one point in January 1942, Commandant of the Marine Corps General Thomas Holcomb commented privately that he was “terrified that . . . [he] may be forced to take this man [the outsider Donovan]” into the Marine Corps.⁵ But, perhaps as the result of a complaint from the Commandant to the president, the COI stayed close to the White House, and Donovan and the Commandant’s

³ MajGen Charles F. B. Price to Cmdt MajGen Thomas Holcomb, 16 January 1942, as reproduced in Maj Robert E. Mattingly, *Herringbone Cloak—GI Dagger: Marines of the OSS* (Quantico, VA: History and Museums Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1979, 1989), 249, hereafter Price to Holcomb, 16 January 1942. Price even used the term *hobby* when referring to Donovan’s activities.

⁴ Price to Holcomb, 16 January 1942.

⁵ Thomas Holcomb to Samuel W. Meek, 19 January 1942, as reproduced in Mattingly, *Herringbone Cloak—GI Dagger*, 254. At page 313, Mattingly lists the names of 71 Marines who served in the OSS. While there is no one definitive roster, the overall total may have been higher, perhaps in the hundreds. A World War II commemorative pamphlet discusses the variety of positions that Marines occupied in Europe and North Africa. LtCol Harry W. Edwards, *A Different War: Marines in Europe and North Africa*, Marines in World War II Commemorative Series (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1994).

relationship was never put to the test.⁶ Holcomb even proved willing to help Donovan solve another one of his threshold problems: how to get qualified people for his start-up. Donovan told Holcomb that he needed “a special type of officer, one with a scholastic approach to problems of war, tempered by practical experience in the field”—a variation on his supposed requirement for a PhD who could win a bar fight.⁷ Holcomb had just the right man for Donovan: the warrior-scholar William A. Eddy. He would eventually be assisted by Holcomb’s son Franklin, better known as Frank.⁸

Eddy had distinguished himself during World War I as the intelligence officer for the 6th Marines, the elder Holcomb’s wartime regiment, and after the war as the president of Hobart College in New York. Eddy joined COI in mid-1941, and was soon on his way to Tangier, Morocco, to serve Donovan undercover as naval attaché to the American Legation. Strategically located on the northwest shoulder of the continent just outside the straits of Gibraltar, it was the largest U.S. mission in North Africa.

Eddy recognized the French-speaking Frank Holcomb’s potential for this assignment, and, while preparing to deploy, sounded him out about going to



Official U.S. Marine Corps photo
Gen Thomas Holcomb, 17th Commandant of the Marine Corps and
father of Frank Holcomb.

⁶ Thomas Holcomb to Barney, 10 February 1942, as reproduced in Mattingly, *Herringbone Cloak—GI Dagger*, 265, implying a demarche: “This suggestion was made by very high authority, and . . . my reaction was complete disapproval of the idea.” “Barney” is almost certainly then-BGen Clayton Barney Vogel; the “very high authority” was likely Roosevelt, with whom Holcomb had a warm relationship. See, for example, David J. Ulbrich, *Preparing for Victory, Thomas Holcomb and the Making of the Modern Marine Corps, 1936–1943* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2011), 40, 50.

⁷ Mattingly, *Herringbone Cloak—GI Dagger*, esp. 1–21, 275. In this chapter, Mattingly discusses the relations between the Marine Corps and Donovan, and includes as appendices correspondence among Marine general officers about the subject, as well as the letter from Donovan to Holcomb, dated 16 February 1942, requesting suitable personnel.

⁸ Frank Holcomb initially deployed overseas for the Office of Naval Intelligence and would formally join OSS only in 1943. Mattingly, *Herringbone Cloak—GI Dagger*, 22–39. These pages describe Eddy and Holcomb’s backgrounds, as well as their work in North Africa. For a slightly more general history, see Hal Vaughan, *FDR’s 12 Apostles: The Spies Who Paved the Way for the Invasion of North Africa* (Guilford, CT: Lyons Press, 2006). Frank Holcomb’s OSS personnel file is another basic source. Franklin P. Holcomb personnel file, box 341, Entry #224, Record Group (RG) 226, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) II, College Park, MD, hereafter Holcomb personnel file.

Tangier.⁹ The slight, intense 24-year-old had the qualities that Eddy—and Donovan—were looking for: the theoretical tempered by the practical.¹⁰ Frank Hol-

⁹ Frank Holcomb stated simply, “I was contacted one day by an old [family] friend, William A. Eddy” and that they forged an excellent working relationship. Frank Holcomb, interview with George Gallup, 1989, copy in the possession of the subject’s daughter, Sarah Holcomb, hereafter Holcomb interview with Gallup. References in the interview support the cited year as 1989, though the exact date was not noted. The first page has a penciled notation: “Interview by George Gallup Hope Town Bahamas 1980s.” The only known copy is this transcript. Gallup was the famous pollster, who lived near the Holcombs in their retirement in the Bahamas. He conducted the interview at the request of Holcomb’s wife.

¹⁰ Frank Holcomb, interview with Gibson Smith, 15 December 1978, copy in the possession of Sarah Holcomb of an original held in the Thomas Holcomb Collection, box 24, folder 1, Historical Resources Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, hereafter Holcomb interview with Smith. Although the ostensible topic of the interview was Gen Thomas Holcomb, his son describes his own childhood and adolescence at some length in the opening pages of the transcript. See also Holcomb interview with Gallup.



Courtesy of Sarah Holcomb

Frank Holcomb, studying in his room at the Commandant's House while an undergraduate at Georgetown University sometime between 1938 and 1941.

comb had followed his father overseas to posts in Beijing and Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. Especially after the elder Holcomb became Commandant of the Marine Corps in 1936, his son listened to discussions of strategy over dinner at the Commandant's House at the Marine Barracks in downtown Washington, DC. That same year, the younger Holcomb contracted a virulent, near-fatal infection from a wrestling mat and, in the days before penicillin, lingered on for two excruciating years. His injury disqualified Holcomb for active military service; for the rest of his life, he could not bend his right knee and walked with a limp. When he emerged from this illness, he was a young man in a hurry, determined to make up for lost time. His determination to demonstrate to himself and others that

there were still so many things that he could do well would drive him to excel during the coming war.¹¹

Sailing whenever he could, he took charge of a 27-foot sailboat, *Moondance*, and at least once sailed up the East Coast to Rhode Island by himself. When on dry land, he threw himself into his studies. From 1938 onward, he attended the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University, Washington, DC, where an extracurricular assignment was to research and write position papers for congressmembers and senators.

¹¹ This is the author's conclusion following a discussion with Sarah Holcomb, Frank's daughter, while preparing a profile of Holcomb for a publication based on an OSS exhibit at the CIA Museum. *Office of Strategic Services 1942-1945, Official OSS Exhibition Catalogue* (Washington, DC: Center for the Study of Intelligence, CIA, 2015), 9.



Official U.S. Marine Corps photo

William A. Eddy as a captain (standing, center) during World War II.

Though he did not always agree with their policies, especially Senator Gerald P. Nye's isolationism, this work "opened up a whole new life" for Holcomb.¹² In 1938, he went on a summer course to Germany and while touring kept his ears open for talk of evolving German tactics.¹³

By the time Donovan was staffing COI in mid-1941, the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) had made Holcomb a job offer that must have been exciting for an undergraduate with an interest in foreign affairs. With Georgetown University's blessing, he eagerly accepted, and went to work at Main Navy, a nondescript

concrete temporary World War I-era building on the National Mall between the Lincoln and Washington Memorials. There, despite his youth, he was made responsible for portfolios in the Western Hemisphere Division. One was for Martinique, the French colony in the Caribbean that was home to a French naval base and to at least 200 tons of the country's gold reserves, both important to the United States since metropolitan France had fallen to the Germans. Holcomb became adept at monitoring developments on the island through legal travelers—an activity akin to infiltrating spies into the enemy's camp. After the 1941 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, he donned the Marine Corps uniform without attending any formal military train-

¹² Holcomb interview with Gallup.

¹³ Holcomb interview with Gallup. With his return to the United States, Holcomb shared his impressions with his father and other Marine officers.



Courtesy of Sarah Holcomb

Frank Holcomb in U.S. Marine Corps uniform during World War II.

ing and, as a Reserve officer on active duty, continued to work at ONI.¹⁴

Though occupied by neutral Spain for the duration of the war and surrounded by Spanish Morocco, Tangier was its own international zone that belonged to no one and to everyone. In 1942, it was a hotbed of intrigue, not unlike the Casablanca of the famous Hum-

¹⁴ One of the basic sources for Holcomb's wartime career is his Application for Federal Employment (SF-57), 11 August 1948, copy in the possession of Sarah Holcomb, who took possession of her parents' home and its contents after their deaths, hereafter Holcomb Application for Federal Employment. During an interview about his father, Holcomb commented, "Most of us [Reservists working at Main Navy] never had military training as such," and at least initially were unclear about such things as military courtesy. Holcomb interview with Smith. In all Services, direct commissions were not uncommon in World War II for well-connected or specially qualified individuals.

phrey Bogart film, where enemies, future enemies, and neutrals faced off against each other. At his arrival in Tangier in the spring of 1942, Holcomb assumed the position of assistant naval attaché under Eddy, where, alongside the more conventional attaché activities, he also performed unconventional work. In addition to routine reporting, Eddy and Holcomb were immersed in various projects that would today fall under the rubric of covert action: soliciting support for the Allies from the always rebellious Riffian tribes; generating a hit list of Gestapo officers and agents (the actual assassinations were never approved); identifying Vichy officials who could be bribed; and attempting to persuade Washington to support French colonial troops willing to fight the Germans.¹⁵ Their work became ever more pressing as the Allies stepped up their preparations for the invasion of nearby French territories in Morocco and Algeria that would take place toward the end of the year.

In July 1942, Holcomb showed his pluck by standing his ground against a group of at least seven Italians who tried to "pummel" him for allegedly spitting on their flag during an encounter on city streets. Much later, Holcomb would recount, tongue perhaps partly in cheek, how his attackers—male and female—had piled out of a small passing car with an Italian standard on its fender and accosted him, shouting excitedly. When he asked what the problem was, "they said, 'You spat on our flag.' And I said, 'Look here, whoever has written your story has forgotten the fact that [some Europeans] . . . spit, but Americans never spit; it is not part of our way of life.'" Holcomb's tart rejoinder did not defuse the situation. But while he was pondering whether to use his pistol, his date, "a very lovely English girl," is said to have advanced on the Italians and driven them away. Reports of the incident circulated through Washington, even reaching the president's desk.¹⁶

¹⁵ *Riffian* refers to the Berber peoples occupying parts of northeastern Morocco known as the Rif, an Arabic word meaning "edge of cultivated area." Mattingly, *Herringbone Cloak—GI Dagger*, 29–31.

¹⁶ Mattingly, *Herringbone Cloak—GI Dagger*, 32, contains a description of the incident. A better source is Holcomb himself. Holcomb interview with Gallup; and Holcomb interview with Smith.

During the same month, COI morphed into OSS, still under the irrepressible Donovan, and grew into a full-service, stand-alone intelligence agency. Before long, Eddy took charge of all OSS operations in North Africa. By late 1942, Holcomb had established an excellent reputation with OSS even though he was still working in an ONI billet. In December 1942, Donovan wrote Holcomb's superiors that he had nevertheless "aided our work [that of OSS] in every way possible."¹⁷ A little more than two months later, Donovan wrote a note to General Holcomb to let him know that he was "delighted" that his son would soon be joining OSS.¹⁸

In May 1943, Frank Holcomb made the long trip back to Washington, DC, and met with many of the senior officers in Donovan's entourage. Holcomb took what must have been an unusual step for a new hire, even in an unconventional outfit like OSS, making it clear that he was "fed up" with Spanish Morocco and wanted to move on; he was eager to make use of his language skills and knowledge of the Continent.¹⁹ As a result, OSS considered him briefly for Special Operations—paramilitary—work in France but soon came up with a better fit.²⁰ On what was to be the last day of his visit, he met with James R. Murphy, a peacetime lawyer who was now head of the newly established counterintelligence branch of OSS, X-2. Holcomb would remember meeting Murphy in his office, where, without wasting time on pleasantries, Murphy gave Holcomb the news that would change his life: "I hope you understand that you are the new chief of counterespionage for the Mediterranean . . . and North African theater and that you will carry that command up into Europe."²¹ Holcomb had had no

inkling of Murphy's intent, but said that it sounded "fine" to him.²²

Learning from the British

After his consultations in Washington, Holcomb stopped in London on his way back to North Africa to meet with the British, considered by themselves and by most other Allies to be the masters of this arcane art. From them, he would learn methods of operation and with them work out liaison and reporting policies.²³ Holcomb's testimony about his time in London is sparse—not surprising since much of what he learned would remain highly classified for some 25 years after the war. He confined himself to writing that "he joined a group of four X-2 representatives who . . . constituted the nucleus for the development of X-2 plans in the European Theatre . . . and was formally if but slightly introduced to special sources."²⁴ Another X-2 veteran, Richard W. Cutler, has left a more complete account of what X-2 officers experienced in London. It was only in London, Cutler wrote, that "the war's top secret could be explained . . . and then only by its owner, the British."²⁵ That was, of course, the Ultra secret, the fact that the British had painstakingly broken a number of German codes, even though they were enciphered by the famous Enigma machines, considered unbreakable by the Germans. Among these codes were those used by the *Abwehr*, German military intelligence, to run its agent networks. This meant that the enemy's secret operations were transparent to the British.

German . . . officers or agents in occupied lands radioed Berlin each night about concluded or planned operations. The Germans lived and breathed details. A typical message might speak of recruiting a Frenchman as a Ger-

¹⁷ Donovan to Frank Knox, 3 December 1942, copy in the possession of Sarah Holcomb. Holcomb was still a Marine reservist on active duty. That status would not change for the duration of the war no matter where he worked.

¹⁸ Donovan to Thomas Holcomb, 15 February 1943, copy in the possession of Sarah Holcomb. Donovan did not specify the exact date when Frank Holcomb would officially join OSS.

¹⁹ Ellery C. Huntington to Cmdr R. Davis Halliwell, USNR, 5 June 1943, copy in the possession of Sarah Holcomb, hereafter Huntington to Halliwell. Huntington appears to be quoting Frank Holcomb.

²⁰ Huntington to Halliwell.

²¹ Holcomb interview with Gallup.

²² Holcomb interview with Gallup.

²³ "History of X-2 Branch/OSS North African Theater," anonymous unpublished manuscript, undated, copy in the possession of Sarah Holcomb, presumed to be authored by Frank Holcomb.

²⁴ "History of X-2 Branch/OSS North African Theater."

²⁵ Richard W. Cutler, *Counterspy: Memoirs of a Counterintelligence Officer in World War II and the Cold War* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2004), 14.

man agent, give his real name, false name, and occupation, and describe his mission and method of operation.²⁶

Ultra made it possible for the British to run the Double-Cross System, whereby they had doubled captured German agents back against the Nazis. As Cutler later wrote, “[I]n a darkly lit auditorium, a high-ranking officer . . . [treated the Americans to] a theatrical explanation of how the British had protected England against German spies during the Battle of Britain in 1940 and thereafter.”²⁷ Although some agents were walk-ins, most were identified through decrypted messages and apprehended when they landed on British soil. Then they were given the choice of collaborating or being executed. A few refused to collaborate and were executed, but most chose to collaborate, and became part of a complicated and interlocking web of misleading messages to Berlin.

Holcomb and his colleagues also were read in on Operation Fortitude, an offshoot of Double-Cross.²⁸ Fortitude was an elaborate deception designed to lead the Germans to believe that the landings in Normandy would be a feint and that a powerful command known as the U.S. First Army Group was about to land to the north in the Pas-de-Calais shortly thereafter. Fortitude operated on many dimensions—misleading reports by double agents, simulated radio traffic, parking lots filled with rubber tanks. If it succeeded, it could cause the enemy to maintain a large reserve for a second landing that would never come, thereby dramatically improving the chances of the friendly troops on the actual landing beaches.

The American officers were, in Cutler’s words, “duly impressed” by Britain’s “spectacular achievements,” which would eventually include the identi-

fication from intercepts of *Abwehr* messages of some 3,500 German agents in Western Europe.²⁹ The British example inspired Cutler “to [help] make X-2 . . . a top-notch counterespionage branch.”³⁰ The few pieces of Holcomb’s official correspondence that survive bear witness to the same determination for X-2 to make a stellar contribution despite the considerable obstacles in its way. These included rivalry with British counterparts (who supported the expansion of X-2, but also wanted to control its operations) and other OSS officers (who resented the prerogatives of X-2, which claimed to be an elite within OSS, which also considered itself to be an elite organization), not to mention the rest of the American Expeditionary Forces (which were not entirely comfortable with OSS in the first place). Undaunted, Holcomb worked hard to accomplish his mission upon his return to North Africa: developing a complete understanding of German intelligence operations in the area; identifying German officials, operatives, sources, and stay-behind assets; and eventually running double agent/deception operations back at the Germans.³¹

D-Day and After

Toward the end of 1943, OSS’s X-2 had finalized its plans for Special Counterintelligence (SCI) units after D-Day, scheduled for the spring or early summer of 1944. These units would have a three-fold mission: to serve as secure conduits of Ultra information to headquarters in the field, to neutralize enemy agents, and to run deception operations. X-2 chief Murphy met with Holcomb in Algiers, Algeria, in December 1943, and was favorably impressed by the young major’s accomplishments in North Africa, which had run the gamut from smuggling an agent through hostile territory, to forging relationships with local French intelligence officers and stealing secret files about the enemy.³² He was ready for more responsibility. This led

²⁶ Cutler, *Counterspy*, 16. There are a number of works on the theory and practice of the British Double-Cross System. The first (and still one of the best) is J. C. Masterman, *The Double-Cross System: The Incredible True Story of How Nazi Spies Were Turned Into Double Agents* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972).

²⁷ Cutler, *Counterspy*, 16.

²⁸ Cutler, *Counterspy*, 17. The first, and still useful, book about Fortitude is Anthony Cave Brown, *Bodyguard of Lies* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975).

²⁹ Cutler, *Counterspy*, 17.

³⁰ Cutler, *Counterspy*, 17.

³¹ “History of X-2 Branch/OSS North African Theater.”

³² Naftali, “X-2 and the Apprenticeship of American Counterespionage, 1942–1944,” 457. See also Holcomb interview with Gallup for a description of agent operations.

to his transfer to London in January 1944 to prepare to command American SCIs in France.

Holcomb now had to create a working organization out of whole cloth in time for the Normandy invasion on 6 June 1944. His first step would be to think the problem through and then organize for success; he described his work between January and July 1944 as the “development of theory of SCI, launching it with SHAEF [Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force] and [the] Armies [subordinate to it], development of procedure, [and] training of [more than 100] personnel.”³³ This would be a first for OSS. Now, a part of X-2, which had been in existence less than a year, was preparing to conduct a particularly sophisticated form of warfare.

Holcomb was impressed by the quality of the raw material painstakingly collected by the British during the preceding two years from a variety of sources.³⁴ It would be up to the Americans to organize and put it to good use. Especially important were the names and addresses of suspected collaborators and enemy agents in strategic French towns and cities. They became Holcomb’s primary targets. According to Ultra decrypts, they had instructions to remain in place after the German forces retreated and to report on Allied forces. These stay-behinds posed a serious threat. If they remained free, they could report accurate information (dangerous enough in itself) and thereby pose a threat to the deception operations that the SCIs would conduct.³⁵

Holcomb landed in Normandy on 7 June, the day after D-Day.³⁶ He remembered hoping, as he was on his way out of London, that there were no German agents on hand to notice that the city seemed to have been deserted overnight, its streets now eerily quiet and

tense. He need not have worried. The British Double-Cross System had done its job well, having neutralized every agent that the Germans had dispatched to the island kingdom. A few hours later, he descended from a landing craft onto one of the American-held beaches with “a half-dozen or so of my people” while German bombs still fell—strong incentive to move inshore and continue the mission from the 12th Army Group’s mobile headquarters.³⁷ By August, his preparations for the liberation of Paris were complete. He would participate as one of the forward team leaders. Two units in the field and one being formed in London became the Paris Task Force, which took on the mission of securing and exploiting German intelligence targets in the French capital before establishing an X-2 hub.

There was more than a little drama as Holcomb and his subordinates drove into Paris with the first waves of Allied troops, maneuvering toward their objectives around firefights, jubilant crowds, and retreating Germans.³⁸ He stood out in his Marine Corps uniform—so unlike the U.S. Army uniform—and because of his limp. He later recalled that “hordes of Parisians just came down on all sides and I got a lot of sympathy. I had to get out and kiss a number of them . . . one kept patting my leg,” assuming it was a war wound and asking if it still hurt. Holcomb also recalled another vivid memory of Germans trying to escape in carts and cars “loaded with typical soldier loot: chickens, washbasins, mirrors, anything that you could imagine.”³⁹ But then French women poured out of the surrounding buildings, and started to beat the Germans with shovels and anything else they could lay their hands on. Holcomb thought to himself that the melee would not end well for the enemy.⁴⁰

Riveting as such scenes were, Holcomb knew that he had to pull away and move quickly to prevent the Germans from destroying files that could be of interest. One objective was the Petit Palais, a venerable

³³ Holcomb Application for Federal Employment. See also Timothy J. Naftali, “X-2: An Appreciation” (paper presented at the OSS/Donovan Symposium, Washington, DC, 19–20 September 1986), 20.

³⁴ Holcomb interview with Gallup. Holcomb declared that “[t]he British were really the architects of this” and that thanks to two years of hard work, “our files were very good.”

³⁵ Holcomb interview with Gallup. Holcomb discussed the operation’s vulnerabilities, in particular how “one single leak” could have a catastrophic effect.

³⁶ Holcomb interview with Gallup.

³⁷ Holcomb interview with Gallup. Holcomb could not remember on which beach he landed but thought it might have been Omaha.

³⁸ The date was probably 25 August 1944. Holcomb states that he arrived in Paris the day before Charles De Gaulle made his presence known, which was 26 August. Holcomb interview with Gallup.

³⁹ Holcomb interview with Gallup.

⁴⁰ Holcomb interview with Gallup.



U.S. Army NARA file #111-SC-193008, War & Conflict Book #1057, National Archives and Records Administration

The liberation of Paris in August 1944 was one of the highpoints of Holcomb's wartime career. This photograph, taken on 26 August 1944, captures the kind of chaos and excitement he experienced.

downtown museum, built for the Universal Exposition of 1900, which X-2 wanted to use as an interrogation center.⁴¹ Family lore has it that Holcomb's team exchanged shots with the departing Germans at the museum.⁴² The OSS *War Report* recorded that X-2/Paris captured "a large number of enemy agents and espionage officials" and that, by the end of September, it had "in hand six enemy W/T [wireless/telegraphy] agents, either operating or preparing to operate under

its control."⁴³ These were agents with their own radio sets, able to tap out reports by Morse code to their handlers in Germany. Capturing them was both a goal in itself and a prerequisite to further exploitation.

After the liberation of Paris, Holcomb took on the additional duty of SCI officer for SHAEF, a significant step up for him.⁴⁴ He was now responsible for all SCI units operating in the rear of the Allied armies in Western Europe as they advanced toward Germany

⁴¹ Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, *Is Paris Burning?* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965), 276. Collins and Lapierre interviewed Holcomb.

⁴² Sarah Holcomb, email to author, 3 May 2020.

⁴³ *War Report, Office of Strategic Services*, vol. 2, *Operations in the Field* (Washington, DC: History Project, Strategic Services Unit, War Department, 1949), 251.

⁴⁴ Holcomb, Application for Federal Employment; and William J. Donovan, "Recommendation for Legion of Merit for Holcomb," 26 September 1945, Holcomb Personnel File.

in the second half of 1944. He proceeded to establish approximately 8–10 SCI units in many parts of France and ran them out of the new Paris headquarters.

After finding and neutralizing enemy agents, the most important operations were deception operations—turning the same agents against their erstwhile masters. The purpose was to focus German attention away from the actual threats onto imaginary threats, in the manner of Operation Fortitude before D-Day. As with the original Double-Cross System in England, this was difficult, painstaking work, especially given the need to coordinate input from multiple sources to prevent inconsistencies and reinforce the intended message. But unlike his English counterparts, Holcomb did not have the advantage of operating on an island denied to the enemy. Given the fast pace of operations and the general chaos that attends ground combat, the pressure was enormous.

Betty Ann Lussier, a member of the X-2 staff, described what it was like to conduct such operations in the south of France in the summer and fall of 1944.⁴⁵ She was a trained pilot who had found her way to OSS, which initially assigned her to X-2 as a clerical employee (the fate of many, if not most, women who joined OSS). Once in the field, her potential was obvious, and she became a de facto counterintelligence officer. In words that no one is likely to use today, her OSS personnel file records that she was “treated not as a secretary but as an officer whose ability had gained respect.”⁴⁶ Her small team, a handful of indoctrinated OSS personnel, started by analyzing a variety of sources: a list of suspects generated by SHAEF, a blacklist of French citizens known to have collaborated with the Nazis, a captured German intelligence manual, OSS regional studies, and leads from Ultra decrypts. Then they considered collateral information of various sorts—interrogation reports, damage reports, residency patterns, evidence of radio transmissions—and

made educated guesses about who might be a German spy. The next step was to knock on doors and ask questions. Once, at a remote farm that seemed too prosperous, the team played a hunch and, after knocking on the door, started with a provocative, “Where is the radio?” The stunned agent pointed to the barn, and allowed himself to be doubled back against the Germans, transmitting misinformation. Lussier’s team developed and ran these operations in accordance with Holcomb’s general guidance and direction, given by message and in person during two visits in late 1944.⁴⁷

Historian Timothy Naftali concluded that the SCI program in France succeeded far beyond expectations.⁴⁸ Charged with counterespionage and deception, this subset of X-2 had neutralized and turned every German stay-behind agent in the path of Allied armies after D-Day. The official OSS *War Report* concluded that the advantage to American security by controlling enemy espionage was inestimable.⁴⁹ In other words, Holcomb stood up and ran operations to deny accurate information to the Germans while feeding them inaccurate information that would mislead them about Allied strengths and intentions. A gauge of success was the view from the German side: between December 1944 and April 1945, Germany awarded Iron Crosses for exceptional performance to three of its agents who were actually operating under American control. After the war, Nazi intelligence officers who had received transmissions from the controlled agents revealed that, in at least two flagship cases, they had never considered the possibility that their agents might have been turned. On the contrary, those agents were in virtual competition for the designation of best stay-behind agent.⁵⁰ Captured German

⁴⁵ Betty Lussier, *Intrepid Woman: Betty Lussier’s Secret War, 1942–1945* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2010), esp. 167–201. Though brief, her OSS personnel file tracks with her memoirs. Betty Ann Lussier personnel file, box 467, Entry #224, RG 226, NARA II, College Park, MD.

⁴⁶ Recommendation for Theater Commander Certificate of Merit, 18 June 1945, Betty Ann Lussier personnel file, box 467, Entry #224, RG 226, NARA II.

⁴⁷ Lussier, *Intrepid Woman*, 187, 193.

⁴⁸ Naftali, “X-2 and the Apprenticeship of American Counterespionage, 1942–1944,” 601–2. See also Naftali, “X-2: An Appreciation,” 19–20, 24, which reinforces that conclusion.

⁴⁹ *War Report*, vol. 2, 249–57. This is the closest thing to a lessons-learned analysis on Holcomb’s work that has survived. Holcomb himself did not dwell on any specific lessons, although he did cite some of his accomplishments in his 1989 oral interview with Gallup.

⁵⁰ *War Report*, vol. 2, 257; and Oakes, Weismiller, and Waith, *A History of OSS/X-2 Operation of Controlled Enemy Agents in France and Germany*, 331.



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records later confirmed that X-2 had neutralized every single *Abwehr* stay-behind agent in France.⁵¹

Conclusion

In 1944 and 1945, Holcomb's personal makeup and circumstances combined to great effect. Driven to succeed by family tradition and personal injury, he seized the opportunity that he seemed to have been made for. For the most part, he had to learn on the job. Both planner and operator, a rare combination in an officer with so little experience, he learned how to do things that no American intelligence organization had done before. His OSS personnel file contains praise for his "great capacity for organization, discipline, and coordination in an enterprise which was novel in American military intelligence experience."⁵² Writing his own playbook, he developed a concept of operations, trained and organized his subordinates, and led them on the battlefield. Paris was the high point. Commanding the SCI units that liberated the French capital in August 1944, he established and supervised a system that neutralized the entire network of German stay-behind agents, thereby helping to guarantee the security of Allied operations. After neutralizing the agents, Holcomb's SCI units used them to channel false information to the enemy. His accomplishments garnered the young Marine officer, just 27 years old on 15 August 1945, three awards usually reserved for far more senior officers, including the Legion of Honor from the French Government and the American Legion of Merit.⁵³

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⁵¹ Naftali, "X-2: An Appreciation," 24-25.

⁵² Donovan, "Recommendation for Legion of Merit for Holcomb."

⁵³ Donovan, "Recommendation for Legion of Merit for Holcomb"; and Provisional Government of the French Republic, Legion of Honor Award Citation, 6 June 1946, Franklin P. Holcomb personnel file, box 341, Entry #224, RG 226, NARA II.

The Brain of the Marine Corps

ALFRED M. GRAY'S ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MARINE CORPS COMBAT DEVELOPMENT COMMAND

by Ryoko Abe, PhD

Abstract: This article examines how 29th Commandant of the Marine Corps General Alfred M. Gray strengthened the Corps' "brainpower" as a key element in his efforts to rehabilitate the Corps' warfighting capabilities. Gray's brainpower reform included both the establishment of the Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC)—to serve as a "skull"—and other educational reforms that would develop the Corps' brain, which was expected to yield new warfighting concepts. This article stresses that the transition from the Marine Corps Development and Education Command to MCCDC was not just the establishment of a new organization but was Gray's challenge to bring about fundamental change to how the Corps would prepare for future warfare. While his predecessors mainly focused on modernization of existing equipment and formations after the end of the Vietnam War, Gray intended to transform the Corps' requirement system to produce new doctrine, education, training, equipment, and organization. The new requirement system was designed as a warfare-based, concept-based, and future-based system. This article also emphasizes that this new requirement system had been studied and designed by then-unknown colonels prior to Gray's inauguration as Commandant. Although Gray did not see his new requirement system through to completion, his efforts were an important beginning to the new system.

Keywords: Brain of the Marine Corps, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, MCCDC, brainpower, intellectual reform, doctrinal innovation, doctrinal reform, educational reform, maneuver warfare, future warfare, warfighting concepts, warfighting doctrine, requirements system, Alfred M. Gray

In the nineteenth century, the Prussian Army had the reputation of being an intellectual organization led by its general staff. At the beginning of

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the twentieth century, Spenser Wilkinson, a British military historian, described Helmuth Karl Bernhard Graf von Moltke's Prussian general staff as the *brain of the army*. The Prussian general staff paved the way for intellectual warfare by conducting intelligence missions, operational planning, research, and education during times of peace to prepare for future wars. During the Austro-Prussian War of 1866, von Moltke and his staff managed to solve their military problem by using new technology created from ideas generated during peacetime intellectual pursuits. One of their ideas was to transport separate troops and concentrate them at a decisive point; another was a decentralized command system referred to as *Auftragstaktik*

(mission tactics). The train was employed effectively because these new notions had been formed by von Moltke and shared within the brain of the army during times of peace. About a century later in North America, General Alfred M. Gray Jr. attempted to build such a brain for the U.S. Marine Corps.

This article examines how Gray, as the 29th Commandant of the Marine Corps, rebuilt the Marine Corps into an intellectual warfighting organization. He regarded improving the Marine Corps' "brainpower"—in tandem with improvements to the training program—as key to rehabilitating its warfighting capabilities. From 1987 to 1991, under Gray's strong leadership, the Marine Corps underwent a series of reforms to strengthen its capability to prepare for and carry out warfare.

Some existing research has outlined Gray's overall reform. In *Semper Fidelis*, which illustrates the Marine Corps' comprehensive history from the American Revolutionary War to the early 1990s, author Allan R. Millett discussed Gray's multiple attempts to increase the Corps' combat readiness.¹ Gray's main effort each year as the Commandant is also demonstrated in Gerald H. Turley's *The Journey of a Warrior*. According to Turley, one of Gray's priorities in his first year as Commandant was to transform the Marine Corps' intellectual power as well as reforming its training, persuading James H. Webb Jr., secretary of the Navy, to continue developing the Bell Boeing V-22 Osprey, and deciding to require female Marines to attend Basic Warrior Training.² While these works have summarized Gray's general changes, they have been less successful in explaining the purpose and process of each reform.

The Marine Corps' concept of warfare fundamentally shifted when Gray adopted the maneuver warfare concept as the Corps' main way of thinking about warfare in its official capstone doctrine, *Warfighting*, Fleet Marine Force Manual 1 (FMFM-1), published in

1989. The maneuver warfare philosophy described in *Warfighting* seeks to collapse an enemy's will and ability to fight through rapid and unexpected actions. In the last decade, the field of doctrinal reform has attracted significant attention.

According to Fideleon Damian, the notion of maneuver warfare resulted from individual Marine officers' passion and serious effort to enhance their intellectual fighting ability. Damian contends that the development of the warfighting concept was led by individual officers outside the Marine Corps' organizational hierarchy. According to Damian, in the 1970s, young officers such as then-major Michael D. Wyly, a creative military thinker who taught at the Amphibious Warfare School (AWS), and some captains began to study the maneuver warfare concept with the support of John R. Boyd, a U.S. Air Force pilot and Pentagon consultant, and William S. Lind, a legislative aide to U.S. senator Gary S. Hart. From the 1980s through the 1990s, they argued with their opponents about the effectiveness of maneuver warfare in the *Marine Corps Gazette*. Some of the captains who were assigned to the 2d Marine Division (2d MarDiv) managed to persuade Gray, its commander at the time, to exploit the concept in the division's exercises. After being inaugurated as Commandant in 1987, Gray officially introduced maneuver warfare to the Marine Corps' manuals.³ The integration of Boyd's ideas and the discussion of maneuver warfare within the Marine Corps in the 1970s and 1980s is examined in Ian T. Brown's *A New Conception of War: John Boyd, the U.S. Marines, and Maneuver Warfare*. Boyd's ideas provided a new conceptual framework of warfare to Marines when they faced a new type of mission, mechanized operations in Europe in the 1970s. Maneuverists in the Marine Corps agreed with Boyd that the Corps could destroy its enemy by destroying their will to fight rather than physically destroying enemy forces. Conversely, they sometimes misunderstood Boyd's statements, to their detriment. Most seriously, the maneuverists failed to understand Boyd's concept of *moral conflict* and

¹ Allan R. Millett, *Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps* (New York: Free Press, 1991), 632–35.

² Col Gerald H. Turley, *The Journey of a Warrior—The Twenty-Ninth Commandant of the US Marine Corps (1987–1991): General Alfred Mason Gray* (Bloomington, IN: iUniverse, 2012), 300–34.

³ Fideleon Damian, "The Road to FMFM1: The United States Marine Corps and Maneuver Warfare Doctrine, 1979–1989" (master's thesis, Kansas State University, 2008).

claimed the German employment of *blitzkrieg*, German operations and tactics during World War II, as their ideal military operations.⁴

The maneuver warfare concept was not only adopted in Marine Corps manuals but also applied to its operations on the battlefield. For instance, Anthony J. Piscitelli argues that maneuver warfare was reflected in the 1st Marine Division's (1st MarDiv) 2003 thunder run to Baghdad in his *The Marine Corps Way of War*, which made a major contribution to the discussion of development of maneuver warfare in the Marine Corps' operations. The commander of 1st MarDiv, James N. Mattis, decided to invade Baghdad using an unconventional route into Iraq to disrupt Saddam Hussein's will and capability to defend the country. After capturing the al-Basrah airport in southern Iraq, the division rushed to an-Nasiriya, leaving the seizure of al-Basrah to the British. Marines advanced on the fires in an-Nasiriya toward the north. When 1st MarDiv entered Baghdad, the Marines penetrated extremely rapidly—bypassing the Iraqi main forces where they were heavily positioned—to surprise the Iraqi forces and Saddam. Mattis commanded 1st MarDiv by mission type orders.⁵

Although the adoption of the maneuver warfare concept into the Marine Corps' doctrinal manuals was a great change in the history of its doctrine, doctrinal innovation was but one aspect of Gray's intellectual reform. Doctrinal reform does not automatically translate into a new way of operation. Rather, a force is transformed when a new concept is institutionalized into education, training, and personnel systems and integrated with equipment and organization. According to author Eitan Shamir, a new concept adopted in a military force's doctrine develops as a result of an interplay between external factors such as changes in warfare, civil-military relations, and internal factors such as technology, personnel policies, education,

and training.⁶ To fight with maneuver warfare, Gray attempted to shift not only Marine Corps doctrine but also its organization, training, education, equipment, and leadership. This was a complex change to rebuild the Corps into a professional warfighting organization. However, the institutionalization of the maneuver warfare concept has yet to be adequately researched. The results of this study will contribute to a better understanding of how the adoption of a new concept into a doctrine is transformed into a new way of warfare in a military force.

To conduct maneuver warfare, the Marine Corps needed to become an intellectual warfighting organization. To achieve this goal, Gray strongly believed that he needed to reform the Marine Corps' brainpower; in his first annual statement and report to the U.S. Congress in February 1988, he emphasized the importance of doing so. In the report, he defined the Corps' future warfare as “a high tempo, fluid, combined-arms, maneuver-oriented conflict,” and its aim would “be to collapse [its] opponents.”⁷ In this style of warfare, the Marine Corps' advantage comprised tactics and operational art, rather than equipment.⁸ Gray declared that the Corps' training and brainpower should be improved to raise the standards of its tactics and operational art to meet his expectations and to enable the Corps to “train the way it will fight.”⁹ His brainpower innovation to transform Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia, into “the intellectual center of the Corps, where innovative and conceptual study will ensure proper attention to the conduct of military operation” included at least two parts.¹⁰ The first phase was Gray's establishment of the Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC), which would contain the Corps' brainpower (serving as a kind of skull). The

⁴ Ian T. Brown, *A New Conception of War: John Boyd, The U.S. Marines, and Maneuver Warfare* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press, 2018), 136–40.

⁵ Anthony J. Piscitelli, *The Marine Corps Way of War: The Evolution of the U.S. Marine Corps from Attrition to Maneuver Warfare in the Post-Vietnam Era* (El Dorado Hills, CA: Savas Beatie, 2017), 167–81.

⁶ Eitan Shamir, *Transforming Command: The Pursuit of Mission Command in the U.S., British, and Israeli Armies* (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), 6, 7.

⁷ Gen A. M. Gray, CMC, *The Annual Report of the Marine Corps to Congress, in Department of Defense Appropriations for 1989: Hearings Before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations House of Representatives*, 100th Cong., 2d Sess. (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1988), 894, 895.

⁸ Gray, *The Annual Report of the Marine Corps to Congress*, 894.

⁹ Gray, *The Annual Report of the Marine Corps to Congress*, 895.

¹⁰ Gray, *The Annual Report of the Marine Corps to Congress*, 895.

second phase was educational reform. To fill the skull of MCCDC with a brain—that is, Marines who were well-qualified to produce creative warfighting ideas—Gray reformed the Corps’ educational program.

This article serves as a first attempt to explore how Gray strengthened the Marine Corps’ brainpower, with a focus on the process of establishing MCCDC. The author first argues that the transition from the Marine Corps Development and Education Command (MCDEC) to MCCDC involved not only the creation of a new institution but also an attempt to bring about a fundamental change in the Corps’ preparation for warfare. Gray’s predecessors were also innovative Commandants who reformed the Marine Corps’ equipment, organization, and training. For example, in the 1970s, the 26th Commandant, General Louis H. Wilson Jr., redefined the Corps’ focus as maintaining operational readiness and versatility by air-ground teams during a difficult time when the Service was facing a dilemma.¹¹ The shift in the American defense policy from a focus on Vietnam toward Europe meant that Marines needed to adapt to a new environment and new way of fighting called *mechanized operations*, which included the risk of decreasing the Corps’ traditional amphibious capability.¹² Thus, Wilson integrated two functions—mechanized and amphibious operations—in the concept of “operational readiness” and “versatility” and began combined arms exercises at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, California. In contrast, Gray made an energetic effort to convert the requirements system itself, which produces and provides new doctrine, education, training, equipment, and organization to the Marine Corps. The novel requirements system was designed to be warfare-based, concept-based, and future-oriented. The role of the MAGTF Warfighting Center established at MCCDC was defined as creating the Marine Corps’ future warfare concept. As he

explained in his 1987 annual report to Congress, the new command’s purpose was “to teach Marines how to think in, and about war.”¹³ Gray took the initiative to transform the doctrine, education, training, equipment, and organization based on this idea.

The second proposition of this article is that the new requirements system was designed by historically unknown colonels, Colonel Michael D. Wyly, Colonel Patrick G. Collins, and Colonel R. C. Wise. Prior to Gray’s inauguration as Commandant, they analyzed the problems of the Marine Corps’ existing requirements system and studied what kinds of systems were appropriate for a warfighting organization. Before 1987, there were lonely and isolated colonels who pondered how to win a war and how the Marine Corps should prepare for it. Their attitudes and remarks sometimes provoked angry responses from their superiors and colleagues, because their ideas were often not consistent with accepted common sense in the Marine Corps during the 1980s. Despite this, they remained determined.

Finally, this article offers a case study that underscores the difficulty of reforming a military force, even though there may be strong leadership present. In the history of the Corps, Gray, an experienced fighter, demonstrated exceptional command of problem solving. However, even he sometimes failed to implement his goals in official documents. When he did not manage to do so, he used other approaches, such as expressing his thoughts to his fellow Marines in an interview in the U.S. Naval Institute’s *Proceedings* or simply practicing his ideas without including them in official documents. The shift toward the Marine Corps becoming an intellectual warfighting organization was not completed by the end of Gray’s time. However, his successors—such as the 31st Commandant, General Charles C. Krulak, and the 32d Commandant, General James L. Jones—continued his efforts.¹⁴ Gray’s commandancy marked the beginning of a significant new period in the Corps’ evolution.

¹¹ Gen Louis H. Wilson, “CMC Reports to Congress: ‘We Are Ready. Spirit is High,’” *Marine Corps Gazette* 61, no. 4 (April 1977): 19.

¹² Terry Terriff, “Innovate or Die: Organizational Culture and The Origins of Maneuver Warfare in the United States Marine Corps,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 29, no. 3 (2006): 485–93, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390600765892>.

¹³ Gray, *The Annual Report of the Marine Corps to Congress*, 895.

¹⁴ 30th Commandant Gen Carl E. Mundy’s interest lay in other areas.

Alfred M. Gray

In the history of the modern Service, Gray's background was unique. As the author Samuel P. Huntington pointed out in *The Soldier and the State*, regarding the dominance of senior officers from the American South in the U.S. Army and Navy in the nineteenth century, most of Gray's predecessors in the twentieth century were from the South or Midwest.¹⁵ They were graduates of such Service academies as the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland; the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, New York; and the Virginia Military Institute in Lexington. In contrast to his predecessors, Gray grew up in Point Pleasant Beach, New Jersey, and was an independent learner who had not completed his formal higher education. It is interesting that while his predecessors mainly concentrated on reforming materials such as equipment and formation, Gray practiced intellectual reform.

The Great Depression, which led to a severe economic downturn in the industrialized world, influenced Gray deeply. His mother's relatives, who had lost their jobs, moved to his parents' house and stayed there. After graduating from high school, he did not enter a military academy or an Ivy League school. Instead, he attended Lafayette College in eastern Pennsylvania on an athletic scholarship but left halfway through his college career for financial reasons. After returning to New Jersey, working construction and cleaning trucks at night, he decided to enlist in the Marine Corps in 1950, when the Korean War broke out.¹⁶ To some extent, he was free from the traditional educations typically received by officers at prestigious universities, which instilled in young, predominantly upper-class students "the classic values: discipline, honor, a belief in the existing values and the rightness of them;" in other words, to justify the economic, social, and political system of the time and accept it as common sense.¹⁷ Thus, Gray could have been suspi-

cious of the existing preconditions and common sense that pervaded the Marine Corps, which were sometimes incompatible with leading Marines to a military victory.

As an enlisted Marine, Gray served as part of the Amphibious Reconnaissance Platoon, Fleet Marine Force (FMF), Pacific. After being commissioned as a second lieutenant in 1952 and attending The Basic School in Quantico, he served as an artillery officer with the 2d Battalion, 11th Marines, and then as a commanding officer in Company A, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, in Korea. From 1956 to 1961, he engaged in military intelligence missions abroad in Kamiseya, Yokohama, Sakata, and Akita in Japan, as well as in Hawaii. During the Vietnam War, then-major Gray served as a regimental communications officer, regimental training officer, and artillery aerial observer as part of the 12th Marines, 3d Marine Division. Then, he commanded 1st Radio Battalion elements throughout the I Corps, III Marine Amphibious Force (MAF), in Vietnam from September 1967 to February 1968.¹⁸ In the 1970s, Gray, then commander of the 4th Marine Amphibious Brigade, was in Europe. In the mid-1970s, the Marine Corps sent forces to carry out mechanized exercises on the northern front of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). General Wilson selected Gray to assume command of 2d MarDiv, FMF, Atlantic (FMFLant), in June 1981 and, as lieutenant general, he was assigned as commanding general of FMFLant, II MAF, and FMF, Europe, in August 1984.

Gray considered military professionalism critical for Marine officers in terms of commanding Marines and winning in warfare. His remark, "I am looking for warriors to follow me," displayed with his portrait in the Gray Research Center in Quantico, reflects this belief.¹⁹ Throughout his career, he demonstrated to Marines his understanding of what was required to be a commander. First, a commander should have a stronger passion for tactics and operational art than anyone else. Anthony C. Zinni, who later became commander in chief of U.S. Central Command, described his

¹⁵ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press/Harvard University Press, 1985), 213-14.

¹⁶ Scott Laidig, *Al Gray, Marine: The Early Years, 1950-1967*, vol. 1 (Arlington, VA: Potomac Institute Press, 2013), 1-11.

¹⁷ David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest* (New York: Random House, 1972), 51.

¹⁸ Laidig, *Al Gray, Marine*, 1-11.

¹⁹ As quoted in the legend under Gray's portrait, hung in the Gray Research Center, Quantico, VA, observed on 31 July 2017.

first impression of Gray as a Marine with a warm and wonderful personality, and more importantly, with an enthusiasm for tactics. Then-captain Zinni first met Lieutenant Colonel Gray in the late 1970s while they both served in the 2d MarDiv. The young captain was deeply impressed by Gray because he had “the same enthusiasm for tactics and leadership and things that usually I was hearing from captains and lieutenants.”²⁰ A lieutenant colonel with a passion for tactics was not very common in the Marine Corps in the late 1970s.

Second, Gray believed that to command Marines, an officer had to develop military judgment. Gray developed his military judgment both through commanding troops and reading military history. He had been a close friend of Boyd and Wyly, who conceptualized maneuver warfare, and a proponent of their work. He had a strong reputation in the Corps for his focus on the importance of military history. For Gray, reading military history was not for mere entertainment. Rather, he believed that an officer should read military history to learn how great commanders of the past made decisions on the battlefield. Gray stated, “Marines will study real war—not fanciful war sometimes projected by peddlers of technology. By studying combat history, we learn how successful commanders think.”²¹ While he commanded the 2d MarDiv, he recommended his Marines read military history books such as *Infantry Attacks* (1937) by Erwin Rommel, *Lost Victories* by Erich von Manstein (1955), and *Strategy* by B. H. Liddell Hart (1929).²² As Commandant, Gray initiated the Professional Reading List program, which distributed a list of mainly military history books to Marines.

Finally, taking responsibility for his own decisions as a commander and his Marines’ actions was an important characteristic of Gray’s throughout his career. For example, he attempted to accept full respon-

sibility for what happened to Marines of the ground combat element of the 24th Marine Amphibious Unit (MAU) in Beirut in 1983, as the 2d MarDiv commander. On 23 October 1983, the headquarters of the 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regimental Battalion Landing Team, at Beirut International Airport was attacked by a terrorist bomber’s vehicle; 241 servicemembers died and 60 were injured. Most of the dead and injured serving in the 24th MAU had been deployed from 2d MarDiv, commanded by Gray. According to Zinni, Gray—after investigating the incident—submitted a letter of resignation to indicate that he assumed responsibility for it. Although Gray was not the operational commander in Beirut, he took responsibility for the casualties. From this action, Zinni learned the significance of taking responsibility as a commander, he said, pointing out that Gray’s sense of responsibility held him accountable not only for his decisions and their outcomes, but also for what happened to Marines under his watch. Zinni further reflected, “What I learned from General Gray is. . . . You stand up and you take responsibility. And so most people want to know that somebody was in charge and accepts responsibility. It doesn’t mean that you made the mistake or it’s your fault, but you accept responsibility.”²³ Gray would be appointed Commandant of the Marine Corps in 1987.

The Marine Corps in the 1980s

To understand why Secretary of the Navy James Webb appointed Gray as the 29th Commandant, one must explore the problems facing the Service at the time that Gray felt he must address. First, some Americans both within and outside the Marine Corps doubted senior officers’ professionalism. When terrorists attacked the headquarters of the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, of the 24th MAU in Beirut, 220 Marines died. The American people watched the damaged barracks on the news and questioned whether the mission—designated a *presence*—in Lebanon was worth the lives of 241 American servicemembers. Government commit-

²⁰ Gen Anthony C. Zinni, USMC (Ret), Oral History Transcript, 27 March 2007, Dr. Fred H. Allison, 27 March 2007 session, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, 2014, 237, hereafter Gen Anthony C. Zinni, 27 March 2007 oral history transcript.

²¹ “Interview: General A. M. Gray Commandant of the Marine Corps (Part II),” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 116, no. 5 (May 1990): 144.

²² “Maneuver Warfare,” from the personal collection of Gen Alfred Gray, provided to the author 10 July 2017.

²³ Gen Anthony Zinni, USMC (Ret), Oral History Transcript, 25 June 2007 session, Dr. Fred H. Allison interviewer, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico VA, 2014, 346–49.

tees researched the cause of the tragedy. The committee organized by the secretary of defense to conduct an independent inquiry into the attack pointed out that commanders at different levels had not shared their interpretations of what *presence* meant; each commander had his own interpretation. The committee also concluded that the Marine Corps had failed to change its mission, although the character of the war had shifted. Some members of Congress were angry that the senior officers did not seem to take responsibility for the tragedy. The report published by the House of Representatives Armed Services Committee concluded that the MAU's defense level had not been sufficient. According to the report, the commanders in Lebanon neither provided enough defense nor revised their defense plan, even though the terrorism threat had become more serious. Senior officers who had visited Beirut were also denounced for being unaware of the need to strengthen the MAU's defense level.²⁴ Suspicions of senior commanders' capabilities arose not only outside but also from within the Corps. Some officers who commanded a company in Vietnam expressed their disappointment regarding senior officers' indifference toward tactics.²⁵

Second, when President Ronald W. Reagan's second term began in 1985, the problem of the Marine Corps' budget potentially decreasing emerged once again. During Reagan's first term, from 1980 to 1984, the president greatly increased defense spending, advanced the Strategic Defense Initiative, and supported groups in fighting communists in the developing world. The administration aimed to force the Soviet Union to enter severe competition and become economically exhausted. In contrast, during Reagan's second term he needed to solve the financial deficit. In 1985, Congress passed the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act, which would automatically lower expenditures when

the president and Congress failed to agree on a deficit reduction plan. After the Democratic Party won the midterm elections in 1986, Congress passed a budget resolution to reduce the defense budget.

Establishment of a Warfare-Based Requirements System

On 1 July 1987, Secretary of the Navy Webb appointed Gray as the Commandant. When Reagan's second term began in 1985, having built up a military force and the economy, Reagan chose to negotiate with the Soviet Union, particularly regarding arms control issues. In March 1985, the new leader of the Soviet Union, Mikhail S. Gorbachev, who was a flexible thinker and supported democracy, was inaugurated as the general secretary of the Communist Party. At the Reykjavik Summit held in October 1986 in Iceland, both leaders talked about how to reduce nuclear forces. Under dramatically changed circumstances, the Corps began a new era. Gray took on the mission of rehabilitating his Service's warfighting capabilities.

For Gray, the relaxing of political tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union did not mean that the Marine Corps would not need to maintain its warfighting capability to as high a standard as in 1983, when U.S.–Soviet relations had reached their worst point. Rather, Gray emphasized the importance of remaining a part of the American naval expeditionary force. He explained that the Marine Corps should have been NATO's reserve as Russia developed a blue water navy that would remain a military threat for the United States and its allies. Also, Gray stressed that “it is more essential to have forces in the right place at the right time, with the right kind of capability for the right reasons.”²⁶ The Marine Corps should be prepared—as a naval expeditionary force—to make a contribution within NATO, in any situation in the Pacific, and in conflicts in Third World regions.²⁷

Gray regarded improving the Corps' brainpower as key to revamping it and gave the highest priority

²⁴ Benis M. Frank, *U.S. Marines in Lebanon, 1982–1984* (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1987).

²⁵ Gen Anthony C. Zinni, 27 March 2007 oral history transcript; and LtGen Paul K. Van Riper, USMC (Ret), interview with LtCol Sean P. Callahan, 20 February 2014, interview 1 of 3, transcript (Oral History Program, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA).

²⁶ “Interview: General A. M. Gray Commandant of the Marine Corps,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 116, no. 4 (April 1990): 48.

²⁷ Alfred M. Gray, “Annual Report of the Marine Corps to Congress,” *Marine Corps Gazette* 72, no. 4 (April 1988): 25.

to doing so in his first year as Commandant, as well as upgrading the training program. Gray's brainpower reform mainly involved establishing MCCDC and educational reforms. He attempted to create a home for this new brainpower by organizing MCCDC and by redesigning the Corps' educational programs so that an officer who studied at the Command and Staff College or the newly established School of Advanced Warfighting would be able to produce new warfighting ideas at MCCDC or make an independent decision as a commander at the Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF). During the summer of 1987, MCDEC studied the structure of the new command and reported on the concept underlying its organization to Gray several times. On 18 September, Gray approved of the concept submitted by the MCDEC and ordered it to form an organizational plan for MCCDC by 10 November, which he endorsed on 4 November 1987, establishing MCCDC.

Gray explained MCCDC's basic organization to all Marines in a special piece titled "Establishment of the Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC)" in the December 1987 issue of *Marine Corps Gazette*. MCCDC was established with five centers: the MAGTF Warfighting Center, the Training and Education Center, the Intelligence Center, the Wargaming and Assessment Center, and the Information Technology Center.²⁸

One of Gray's goals for establishing MCCDC was to build a requirements system to produce doctrine, education, training, equipment, and organization from a warfare perspective rather than that of policy or administration. In the 1970s and 1980s, the importance of reflecting this view was emphasized by both Marines and the critics outside the Marine Corps. For example, more than a decade earlier in 1976, Colonel R. C. Wise observed that the FMFs' engagement in MCDEC's mission was very limited. Wise outlined this concern in his study titled *A Study of the Mission, Function, and Organization of the Marine Corps Development and Education Command*. In his analysis,

he explicitly questioned the fact that none of the FMF commands or forces had required the MCDEC to deploy a liaison officer even though the FMFs must be considered a sole customer of MCDEC's products. He proposed deploying a liaison officer from MCDEC to each Marine Expeditionary Force commander.²⁹ Almost 10 years later, Major C. J. Gregor argued in the *Marine Corps Gazette* that no organization in the Corps had identified what changes were essential for its doctrine, tactics, organization, and leadership; according to Gregor, MCDEC had been designed to identify them. However, in reality, Marine Corps Headquarters had the power to bring about these changes, while MCDEC's power to influence Headquarters was restricted. Moreover, Headquarters, which conducted a lot of daily work, was too busy to determine the requirements.³⁰

Even before being inaugurated as Commandant, Gray was worried that it took too long to deploy newly developed equipment and training programs to Marines in the field due to bureaucratic procedures within the Corps. These concerns were clearly expressed in his *All Marines Message (ALMAR) 232/87, Restructuring the Marine Corps Organization for Combat System Acquisition*.

One of my principal objectives is to streamline our systems acquisition process. The current process, which has evolved over a number of years, is less responsive to the needs of the operating forces than desired, is not well suited to the streamlining initiatives occurring within the DoD [Department of Defense] and is slow to exploit emerging technology. I desire more active involvement of the operating forces in identifying deficiencies in existing systems and in defining

²⁸ Gen A. M. Gray, "Establishment of the Marine Corps Combat Development Command," *Marine Corps Gazette* 71, no. 12 (December 1987): 7-9.

²⁹ Col R. C. Wise, *A Study of the Mission, Functions and Organization of the Marine Corps Development and Education Command*, 1 November 1976, Studies and Reports folder, box 52, Marine Corps History Division (MCHD), Quantico, VA.

³⁰ Maj C. J. Gregor, "Our Changing Corps," *Marine Corps Gazette* 68, no. 8 (August 1984): 20-22.

new requirements. The time it takes to translate a requirement into a developmental effort must be shortened to ensure that technology advances are not encumbered by a lengthy staffing and review process. The number of entities involved in the research, development, and acquisition process must be kept to an absolute minimum to ensure that combat systems are fielded to meet the threat, and, are logistically supportable, affordable and acquired in a timely way. Finally, clear lines of authority, responsibility, and accountability must exist throughout the acquisition process.³¹

As a head of the MCDEC Development Center and a commander, Gray recognized that the Marine Corps had failed to deploy new equipment, such as the Light Armored Vehicle (LAV), or new training programs rapidly because of “well-established administrative procedures.”³² After assuming his duties as Commandant, Gray adopted two ways to create a new mechanism to develop and deploy new doctrines, education, training, equipment, and organization reflecting the FMFs’ needs as soon as possible. First, the decision-making process in peacetime to prepare for warfighting and administrative and policy missions would be separated, an approach employed by the Prussian Army. Very importantly, Gray created MCCDC to devise the Corps’ future warfighting vision and capability, while limiting Headquarters’ role and responsibility to administrative and policy missions. Thus, the mission to form the Corps’ future vision and identify the requirements for doctrine, education, training, equipment, and organization was given not to Headquarters but to MCCDC, which would take

initiative in shaping the Corps’ future warfighting capabilities. Second, the FMFs, which train the Marines in peacetime, and the MAGTF, which fights in wars, were involved in the warfighting decision-making process during peacetime.

The period 1987–88 was a time of reorganization under the Corps’ new requirements structure. A MCCDC transition team was established to discuss the command’s role and organization in detail in fall 1987. The team defined MCCDC’s commander as the FMFs’ representative, responsible for improving the MAGTF’s ability for operations.³³ The MCCDC commander would identify the needs of the mission and the requirements for changes in the doctrine, education, training, equipment, and organization. With regard to the concepts, plans, doctrine, education and training, and organization plan, MCCDC would develop them while the Marine Corps Research, Development, and Acquisition Command (MCRDAC) would be in charge of the development and acquisition of equipment.³⁴ Headquarters would be responsible for Marine Corps policy, joint/Service plans, resource management of fielded systems, and Corps-wide operations including bases, as well as act as staff advisor to the Commandant.³⁵ In other words, Gray mainly channeled warfighting development functions through MCCDC, and directed administrative and policy missions toward Headquarters.

Gray’s ALMAR directive to eliminate the administrative process to increase the speed of responding to the FMFs’ needs followed the reorganization of Headquarters and MCDEC in both 1987 and 1988. The divisions and centers belonging to MCDEC and Headquarters were relocated to MCCDC, MCRDAC,

³¹ *All Marines Message (ALMAR) 232/87, Restructuring the Marine Corps Organization for Combat Systems Acquisition*, Studies and Records Reorganization: Establishment of Marine Corps Research, Development and Acquisition Command, November 1987 Studies and Reports folder, box 53, MCHD, Quantico, VA.

³² Turley, *The Journey of a Warrior*, 130–292.

³³ Coordinator, Warfighting Center Working Group, to Head, Marine Corps Combat Development Command Transition Team, “Enclosure (5) To Warfighting Center (WPC) Working Group Report, Glossary of Terms.” Studies and Reports Reorganization: Working Group Report, December 1987 Studies and Reports folder, box 54, MCHD, Quantico, VA.

³⁴ “Enclosure (5) To Warfighting Center (WPC) Working Group Report, Glossary of Terms.”

³⁵ “Memorandum for the Commandant of the Marine Corps: Activation of MCRDAC,” 16 October 1987, Studies and Records Reorganization Reorganization-Stand Up of MCRDAC June–December 1987 Studies and Reports folder, box 53, MCHD, Quantico, VA.

and Headquarters based on newly defined missions and functions. The sections for research and studies, which had been dispersed throughout MCDEC and Headquarters, were combined at MCCDC, while the sections for equipment development and acquisition were placed at MCRDAC. Gray ordered the following bodies to be transferred to MCCDC: MCDEC's Doctrine Center, the Plans Division of its Development Center, its Amphibious Warfare Presentation Group, and Headquarters' Studies Branch of the Research, Development and Studies (RD&S) Department. Headquarters' Training Division was integrated into MCDEC's Education Center within MCCDC. The following were transferred to MCRDAC: other sections of MCDEC's Development Center, as well as sections of RD&S, Headquarters' Installations and Logistics Department, which was reorganized into the Acquisition Division, and Headquarters' Purchases Division.³⁶

Adoption of a Concept-Based Requirements System

The creation of MCCDC was also intended to transform the requirements system, which had been based on physical elements, into one based on concepts to produce new doctrine, education, training, equipment, and organization. Gray believed that developing and adopting new equipment without any concept tended to hinder the effective use of the defense budget.³⁷ Alternatively, it was likely to cause the development of equipment that did not meet the needs of operational forces. Furthermore, maintaining a requirements system based on physical elements meant that the Marine Corps' innovation was to some degree dependent on its present weapons and formations. When discussing the adoption of the maneuver warfare concept in

the 1980s, some officers opposed it, claiming the new concept was not appropriate for the Marine Corps formation at the time. One of the objections was that MAGTFs were organized and equipped to fight a limited, defensive response to threats, so that maneuver warfare was not suitable for the Marine Corps.³⁸ The development and adoption of a new way of war was limited by the existing equipment and organization at the time. Therefore, Gray and his reformers were convinced that it was essential to abolish the present physical element-based requirements system and design an alternative one.

Before Gray founded MCCDC, the MCDEC was not necessarily successful in developing a new warfighting concept. For example, Wise had raised the issue of the absence of an underlying concept in his research about MCDEC's structure, mission, and functions published in 1976. In the report, he revealed a concern among officers about the dominance of technology at MCDEC's Development Center. Wise explained that "the Development Center is too equipment oriented," which was a concern voiced by about half the interviewees who were or had been members of that center. In each instance, the statement was unsolicited. Further exploration revealed that most believed equipment took precedence over other all other Development Center functions, usually to the detriment of the latter and occasionally to their exclusion. Cited among the slighted functions were organization, doctrine, tactics, techniques, plans, and studies. One might logically predict the dominance of equipment by virtue of its nature when compared to other Development Center products. Equipment is tangible; doctrine is not. Weapons kill; studies do not. No one denigrated the importance of equipment, rather they decried the relative lack of importance that they perceived in other areas. Two Development Center divisions—Plans and Studies (P&S) and Organization, Doctrine, Tactics, and Techniques (ODT&T)—were singled out by interviewees as too important to the Marine Corps to be relegated to second-class status. There was no disagreement about the importance of

³⁶ ALMAR 232/87, *Restructuring the Marine Corps Organization for Combat Systems Acquisition*; "Meetings on CMC Reorganization/Relocation Initiatives of 17,18, and 21 September 1987," Studies and Reports Reorganization CMC Reorganization/Relocation Initiatives of 17,18, and 21 September 1987 (2d draft) October 1987 folder, Studies and Reports, box 53; "U.S. Marine Corps Organization for Combat Systems Research, Development and Acquisition, Briefing Presented to ASN (RE&S)," 22 October 1987, Studies and Reports Reorganization: Organization for Combat Systems Research Development and Acquisition: Brief, October 1987 Studies and Reports folder, box 53, all, MCHD, Quantico, VA.

³⁷ Alfred M. Gray, interview with author, 10 July 2017.

³⁸ Damian, "The Road to FMFM 1," 64–65.

P&S and ODT&T functions, yet their very presence within the Development Center permitted and even fostered relegation. That should not be.³⁹

Then, Wise offered a solution to the problem of equipment's dominance. Although it was not obvious how much Gray's reformers in the 1980s referred to Wise's study—if at all—his solution could be regarded as the origin of the concept-based requirements system. Wise suggested that the P&S Division, which had been given second-class status, should take initiative in the Marine Corps' requirements system. Wise's new requirements system consisted of five stages: 1) the Commandant provides guidance to the P&S Division; 2) the P&S Division suggests the necessary equipment, FMF structure, doctrine, tactics, techniques, and education and training; 3) the Commandant approves this package; 4) the plan is sent to the FMFs to be tested and refined; and 5) the Marine Corps introduces newly developed products.

In a paper published in 1986, Colonel Patrick G. Collins, one of Gray's close friends, recommended a more refined resolution to mitigate the heavy dependence on equipment. His paper, "Concept Paper 2-86 Combat Development Capability for the US Marine Corps," examined the Marine Corps' entire force modernization process. Collins supported Wise's observation of the Corps' deep dependence on equipment. According to him, some Marines working at MCDEC were concerned that while the Corps succeeded in creating and deploying new equipment in the 1980s, it had not fully formed training programs or doctrines to use them. He identified two reasons. First, the future warfighting concept—which developers would refer to in order to identify the Marine Corps' deficiencies and requirements—was not defined. Second, a process to build a training program, force structure, and doctrine had not been institutionalized, while one for equipment had been.⁴⁰

³⁹ Wise, *A Study of the Mission, Functions and Organization of the Marine Corps Development and Education Command*.

⁴⁰ Col P. Collins, "Concept Paper 2-86 Combat Development Capability for the US Marine Corps," 31 January 1986, Studies and Reports Reorganization Concept Paper 2-86: Combat Development Capability of the US Marine Corps by Col. P. Collins, January 1986 Studies and Reports folder, box 52, MCHD, Quantico, VA.

MCCDC and its Warfighting Center were intended to work as the brain of the Marine Corps during peacetime. According to Wilkinson, the main peacetime functions of the chief of the General Staff of the German Army, supported by the Great General Staff, were "actual arrangements for particular wars," "training of officers to the art of command," and "scientific study of war as a means of forming and exercising the faculty of generalship."⁴¹ Under Gray and his reformers' design, the command element of each operational force or Marine force provided to a unified combatant commander would work for planning during operations and Headquarters would work for policy and administrative works. More importantly, MCCDC would become an intellectual spring for scientifically studying war; developing the warfare concept; training officers; and identifying the needs for changes in the doctrine, organization, and equipment during peacetime.

Collins proposed a solution to the lack of concept and absence of a system to develop training, organization, and doctrine within the Marine Corps. First, the processes for developing a concept and identifying requirements needed to be integrated. Second, a process for developing training, doctrine, and force structure needed to be shaped and accepted. Third, these three processes of development and the process of developing equipment needed to be unified. To practice the proposals, he suggested that the Development Center's P&S Division be renamed the Combat Developments Division (CDD) to devise the Corps' present and future warfighting requirements.⁴²

After Gray was inaugurated as Commandant, Wise's solution and Collins's suggestions that a research institution would outline the Corps' future warfighting requirements and that all development processes would be integrated, were rapidly realized. As already observed, Gray designated MCCDC to craft the Corps' future vision. More importantly, Gray established an institution within MCCDC to assign

⁴¹ Spenser Wilkinson, *The Brain of an Army: A Popular Account of the German General Staff* (Westminster, UK: Archibald Constable, 1895), 139.

⁴² Collins, "Concept Paper 2-86 Combat Development Capability for the US Marine Corps."

integrated intellectual tasks. Gray's vision was to create an intellectual spring by combining intellectual functions (e.g., studying, developing new ideas, and assessing and identifying requirements based on newly developed notions) into one institution.

The *MCDEC Organizational Study*, published in August 1987, recommended forming a new institution called the Warfighting Development Center, which was renamed the MAGTF Warfighting Center, briefly demonstrating its responsibility for "operational concepts, studies, requirements, and doctrine" and for publishing warfighting booklets and doctrines.⁴³ In September 1987, Gray ordered the Warfighting Center to play a central role in the Marine Corps' long-term and midterm planning.⁴⁴ By assigning this duty to the Warfighting Center instead of the Development Center, he intended to shift the requirements system from being focused on equipment to concepts. The Warfighting Center's mission was illustrated in greater detail in a report submitted by the coordinator of the Warfighting Center's working group to the head of the MCCDC transition team. The paper states that the Warfighting Center's mission would be to support the MAGTF; to develop concepts, plans, and doctrine; to identify and assess the need for changes; and to participate in the creation of joint and combined doctrines. In addition, like the Prussian and German general staffs, which had stressed the importance of the scientific study of war based on military history, Gray introduced historical research to support the formation and evaluation of concepts, plans, and doctrine. The Warfighting Center would also be responsible for monitoring the progress of MCRDAC.⁴⁵

⁴³ *MCDEC Organizational Study*, August 1987, Studies and Reports Reorganization MCDEC Organizational Study August 1987, w/Change 1, August 1987 Studies and Reports folder, box 53, MCHD, Quantico, VA.

⁴⁴ *Meetings on CMC Reorganization/Relocation Initiatives of 17,18, and 21 September 1987*, Studies and Reports Reorganization CMC Reorganization/Relocation Initiatives of 17,18, and 21 September 1987 (second draft), October 1987 Studies and Reports folder, box 53, MCHD, Quantico, VA.

⁴⁵ Coordinator, Warfighting Center Working Group to Head, Marine Corps Combat Development Command Transition Team, "Warfighting Center (WFC) Working Group Report," 11 December 1987, Studies and Reports Reorganization: Working Group Report, December 1987 Studies and Reports folder, box 54, MCHD, Quantico, VA.

The Warfighting Center's organizational plan was mapped out and approved by Gray on 9 March 1988. In 1988, the MAGTF Warfighting Center consisted of the Doctrine Development Branch, the MAGTF Propensity and Requirements (P&R) Branch, the Concepts and Plans Branch, the Assessment/Studies and Analysis Branch, the Special Operations/Low Intensity Conflict Branch, and the Support Branch. The Historical Section was organized into the Assessment/Studies and Analysis Branch. Dr. Victor K. Fleming, one of the first civilian scholars with a doctorate hired by MCCDC, was transferred to this section from the Headquarters History and Museums Division.⁴⁶

In addition to creating the MAGTF Warfighting Center, Gray and his reformers adopted a process through which the center could identify the Marine Corps' future requirements based on concepts instead of equipment. Prior to Gray's appointment as Commandant, Colonel Zinni at Headquarters and Lieutenant Colonel Wilson at MCDEC's Development Center had already begun to shape the process.⁴⁷ To build it, Gray's reformers attempted to strictly define each concept. They called their product the "concept based requirements system" and defined it as a "process for determining MC [Marine Corps] future warfighting requirements through development and analysis of operational concepts."⁴⁸ In addition to being grounded in concepts, the new requirements system was future-oriented. First, the Commandant's intentions for the Corps' future would be described in a document called the *Marine Corps Campaign Plan*. Gray's view of an operational concept to employ the MAGTF would then be presented in the *Marine Corps Long-Range Plan, 2000–2020*. In the next step, the MAGTF Warfighting Center would launch a mission area analysis to investigate the Corps' existing capability to reveal the lack of doctrine, training, education, force structure, and

⁴⁶ Command Chronology, Command Chronology MCCDC, Warfighting Center 1988 folder, Marine Corps Education and Development Command, box 447, MCHD, Quantico, VA.

⁴⁷ Collins, "Concept Paper 2-86 Combat Development Capability for the US Marine Corps."

⁴⁸ "MCDEC Reorganization," Studies and Reports Reorganization MCDEC Reorganization-Status Brief, ACMC Committee, October 1987 Studies and Reports folder, box 53, MCHD, Quantico, VA.

equipment to achieve the future plan illustrated in the *Marine Corps Campaign Plan*. The identified lack would be incorporated into the *Marine Corps Midterm Operational Plan*. The MAGTF Warfighting Center would modify the doctrine, training, force structure, and materials to eliminate the shortage in the *Marine Air-Ground Task Force Master Plan, 1992–2002*. Finally, the requirements for these elements would be published.⁴⁹

Gray assigned Colonel Wyly to the MAGTF Warfighting Center. As mentioned earlier, Wyly was an unconventional Marine officer in the 1970s and 1980s. Like the extremely creative, imaginative, and logical Major General J. F. C. Fuller of the British Army in the beginning of the twentieth century, Wyly was very intellectual and focused on reforming warfighting capabilities. After commanding a company in Vietnam and receiving directions from Bernard E. Trainor, director of MCDEC's Education Center, to redesign tactical instruction at AWS, Wyly developed a new education package based on maneuver warfare in 1979. While commanding his company in Vietnam, he questioned the effectiveness of the Marine Corps' existing manuals. Since the manuals were mainly about detailed procedures, it took time for Marines to deal with rapidly changing problems on the battlefield.⁵⁰ This was a fatal flaw on the battlefields of Vietnam, where the Marine Corps' enemy was very light and flexible. Wyly believed that on a battlefield, a Marine commander should make judgments independently. After returning to the United States, he examined how commanders could make judgments independently by comparing the amphibious operation of Germany in World War I and the Marines in World War II in his master's thesis at George Washington University. The thesis, "Landing Force Tactics: The History of the German Army's Experience in the Baltic Compared to the American Marines in the Pacific," identified the difference between Germans' and Americans' purposes and ways. The German Army's

aim was to destroy an enemy's will, while the U.S. Marine Corps' objective was to take a bridgehead. For their purposes, the German Army focused their efforts on the enemy's gaps, identified by a reconnaissance force. Meanwhile, the Marines focused on fires and moving forward in lines.⁵¹ At AWS, Wyly encouraged young captains to make independent judgments by using conceptual frameworks such as *surfaces and gaps, mission tactics, the main effort, objective, and reserve*.⁵² Gray assigned Wyly to the Concepts and Plans Branch of the MAGTF Warfighting Center in 1989, where he began to write the draft of the *Marine Corps Campaign Plan* in "Proposal for 1990 Marine Corps Campaign Plan." Although there had been vigorous objections to the draft, especially from the director of the MAGTF Warfighting Center, the first *Marine Corps Campaign Plan* with Gray's signature was published.⁵³

Some of Wyly's ideas were reflected in the first official *Marine Corps Campaign Plan*, while others were not. Both documents, "Proposal for 1990 Marine Corps Campaign Plan" and the first official *Marine Corps Campaign Plan*, demonstrated the future vision of the Marine Corps' personnel policy, training, education, doctrine, and organization. It is useful to outline the recommendations in not only the official *Marine Corps Campaign Plan*, but also in Wyly's draft, because in some subjects, Gray's directives and personal beliefs have much more in common with Wyly's suggestions in the proposal than in the official plan.

Wyly's fundamental assumption was to rebuild the Corps' personnel policy, training, education, and organization, which was consistent with the new warfighting doctrine of maneuver warfare. Regarding personnel policy, Wyly proposed extending the length of a tour to maintain unit cohesion. Moreover, Wyly thought the number of officers above the company grade should be decreased to avoid creating jobs not relevant to warfighting, and to solve the problem of over-

⁴⁹ "Warfighting Center (WFC) Working Group Report"; and "Marine Corps Campaign Plan (MCCP)," Turley/Gray Marine Corps Campaign Plan (MCCP) 9 folder, Gerald R. Turley/Alfred M. Gray Research Collection, box 14, MCHD, Quantico, VA.

⁵⁰ Damian, "The Road to FMFM 1," 73–75.

⁵¹ Michael D. Wyly, "Landing Force Tactics: The History of the German Army's Experience in the Baltic Compared to the American Marines in the Pacific" (master's thesis, George Washington University, 1983).

⁵² William S. Lind, *Maneuver Warfare Handbook* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985), 71–133.

⁵³ Michael D. Wyly, unpublished memoir, "Country and Corps: One Marine's Struggle to Serve Them Both and The Choice He Made," 351–420.

centralization. In terms of promotions, Marines should be evaluated by two traits: strength of character and warfighting competence. In addition, Wyly drew particular attention to the problem of careerism for the Marine Corps. Careerism should be eliminated because for Wyly it could hinder a Marine from being a leader. He observed that “whether careerism is driven by a quest for power, a need for money, a search for a stepping stone on the road to success, envy of someone else, jealousy, a wish for an easy life, or any other motivation, the result is the same. People can sense when they are being taken advantage of and they resent it. Perhaps Marines feel the resentment more sharply,” he suggested, pointing out that “we joined to serve our country, not to serve some prima donna who is in it for himself.”⁵⁴ He continued to show his serious concern that careerism “takes moral courage to question a senior’s opinion and state one’s own; to report bad news; to make tough judgments about subordinates; and to do many of the other things military effectiveness demands.”⁵⁵

For training, Wyly emphasized the importance of increasing speed. He states, “Speed is critically important when a unit is required to change from one maneuver to another. For instance, changing direction, shifting from defense to offense and back again, moving out on short notice, responding to sudden enemy action, all these things and many others are crucial tests of a unit’s preparedness for war, all measured from the standpoint of speed. Speed is of the essence in requiring and delivering fire support.”⁵⁶ Wyly also claimed that unit training should largely consist of force-on-force free-play training (in which each unit fights unscripted, without a detailed scenario to follow) to stimulate a Marine to take initiative, and exploit their imagination, and to increase speed of the training. Education should be shifted from focusing on teaching military knowledge to military judgment because, in maneuver warfare, a commander is required to make independent decisions in times of un-

certainty. Also, Marine doctrine based on maneuver warfare would be divided into the following subjects: warfighting, tactics, operational art, strategy, organizing for war, amphibious operations, and aviation.⁵⁷

To what extent did Wyly’s recommendations exert an influence on Gray’s practice of the concept-based requirements system? His overall direct impact on the official *Marine Corps Campaign Plan* was limited. Wyly’s idea is more closely reflected in the official plan’s education section, however. Gray shared Wyly’s belief that the focus of the Marine Corps’ military education needed to change from knowledge to judgment. In a document titled “Training and Education” sent to the commanding general of MCCDC, Gray stressed that “my intent in PME [professional military education] is to teach military judgment rather than knowledge.”⁵⁸ Gray affirmed that although knowledge is surely important, it should be taught in the context of teaching military judgment, not as material to be memorized and regurgitated. Although the official *Marine Corps Campaign Plan* does not assert that the main effort of the Corps’ PME would be changed from knowledge to judgment, it does state that “the intent of PME is to teach military judgment in addition to providing knowledge.”⁵⁹

Wyly’s influence on other sections of the *Marine Corps Campaign Plan* was more restricted. While the section on personnel encouraged a three-year tour to create unit cohesion, as Wyly advocated, his other recommendations—to decrease the number of officers, to eliminate careerism (which regards being promoted as more important than anything else), and to evaluate Marines by their strength of character and warfighting ability—were not adopted. In contrast, the official plan refers to the importance of a Marine’s quality of life. The significance of force-on-force training is not mentioned in the training section of the official plan. It only refers to the need to develop realistic train-

⁵⁴ Michael D. Wyly, “Proposal for 1990 Marine Corps Campaign Plan,” 10, provided to the author by Dr. Bruce Gudmundsson.

⁵⁵ Wyly, “Proposal for 1990 Marine Corps Campaign Plan,” 11.

⁵⁶ Wyly, “Proposal for 1990 Marine Corps Campaign Plan,” 18, 19.

⁵⁷ Wyly, “Proposal for 1990 Marine Corps Campaign Plan,” 33.

⁵⁸ Commandant of the Marine Corps to Commanding General, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, “Training and Education,” 18 October 1988, Command and Staff College Curriculum Revision 1988 folder, Command and Staff College December 1989–1990, box 12, MCHD, Quantico, VA.

⁵⁹ “Marine Corps Campaign Plan (MCCP).”

ing standards. In the doctrine section, the official plan suggests publishing specific area doctrines, such as MAGTF, combat support, aviation, and nuclear biological chemical.⁶⁰

More importantly, the official plan did not adopt Wyly's fundamental belief that the Marine Corps should be rebuilt in line with the new warfighting concept for maneuver warfare. The *Marine Corps Campaign Plan* consists of proposals in distinct fields (e.g., warfighting, doctrine, organization, planning, acquisition, personnel, training, education, legislative affairs, and public affairs), without any fundamental assumption on which the proposals would be based. Rather, his belief was partially reflected in proposals in each field.

However, some of Wyly's ideas, which did not become part of the final plan, were shared or were practiced by Gray. For example, in an interview in the U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* in 1990, Gray stressed the need to eliminate unhealthy careerism because no matter how careerism was driven, the outcome would be resentment from others. He stated that "no matter if careerism is driven by a desire for power, a need for money, a search for a stepping stone to success, envy of someone else, a wish for an easy life, or any other selfish motivation, the result is the same. Sooner or later, people sense that they are being taken advantage of and they resent it."⁶¹ He required Marines to make it a priority to serve their country, rather than themselves. Marines "joined to serve our country, not to serve some prima donna who is looking out for number one," he said.⁶² Although being ambitious is a human being's natural characteristics to some extent, if a Marine put the most important consideration on being promoted or obtaining the next career after retirement, he or she would not be able to concentrate on tactics or operational art as a leader. Moreover, the doctrines of *Campaigning* (FMFM 1-1), which focuses

on the operational level of war, and *Tactics* (FMFM 1-3), which centers on the tactical level of war, were published in 1990 and 1991, respectively, as Wyly had suggested.

Conclusion

The establishment of MCCDC yielded not only the creation of a new organization, but also a crucial change in how the Marine Corps would prepare for future war. Gray believed that to engage in maneuver warfare, it was necessary to strengthen the Marine Corps' brainpower and he reformed its brainpower by establishing MCCDC and developing new educational programs for officers. Gray's predecessors were also innovative leaders. However, only Gray and his close friends clearly understood that one of the Corps' most serious problems in the post-Vietnam War era was its requirements system; in other words, the Corps' method of changing doctrine, education, training, equipment, and organization. The influence of the administrative perspective on the Corps' requirements system was much stronger than that of the warfare perspective. Sometimes, the speed of the development and the deployment of new weapons was too slow due to a complicated administrative process. Furthermore, the requirements process involved too much technology, while the new maneuver warfare concept was officially undeveloped. As a result, combined arms exercise at Twentynine Palms, based on the concept of attrition warfare, had been implemented.

Gray and his reformers produced a new requirements system, which was designed as warfare-based, concept-based, and future-oriented. Gray created MCCDC to take the initiative in the fundamentally changed new requirements system and in the preparation for warfighting during peacetime. To increase the influence of the warfare perspective on this process and to mitigate the influence of the administrative angle, Gray aimed to create a vision for future warfare and identify the needs of doctrine, education, training, equipment, and organization at MCCDC rather than Headquarters. To carry out this goal, the research and studies sections, which had been separated into MCDEC and Headquarters, were integrated into

⁶⁰ MAGTF Warfighting Center, "Marine Corps Campaign Plan (MCCP)," 20.

⁶¹ "Interview: General A. M. Gray Commandant of the Marine Corps (Part II)," 150.

⁶² "Interview: General A. M. Gray Commandant of the Marine Corps (Part II)," 150.

MCCDC. Furthermore, the commander of MCCDC was defined as the FMFs' representative to involve the FMFs in the requirements process.

The concept-based requirements system Gray implemented had been already outlined by some colonels such as Wise, Collins, and Zinni before Gray was appointed Commandant. At MCCDC, the MAGTF Warfighting Center—the intellectual spring—was established. MCCDC created new warfighting concepts and initiated the requirements process, while the MAGTF Warfighting Center was responsible for shaping future plans and developing concepts and doctrine based on studying military history. The future-oriented and concept-based requirements process was designed as follows: the Commandant's intent for the Corps' future vision would be presented in the *Marine Corps Campaign Plan*; then, the requirements would be identified based on the plan. The first *Marine Corps Campaign Plan* was published in Gray's era. Tasking MCCDC with the role of identifying the needs of doctrine, education, training, equipment, and organization and introducing the concept-based requirements system provided the Marine Corps the potential to prepare for warfare based on new approaches such as maneuver warfare, as Gray intended.

Much of the success in establishing MCCDC as the brain of the Marine Corps originated in both Gray's strong leadership and the historically unknown colonels' intellectual efforts. Prior to Gray's tenure as 29th Commandant, different colonels had analyzed the problems of the existing requirements system and designed an alternative relevant to a warfighting organization. The new design was a result of their analysis and proposals. Wise discovered that the FMFs' influence on the present requirements system was very limited. Wise and Collins also raised the issue of excessive dependence on technology and lack of concept within the Corps' requirements process. To solve these problems, they proposed that a division of MCDEC, which had been in charge of studying concepts, should take initiative in the requirements process. Zinni described the process of how this division would lead the development of new doctrine, education, training, equipment, and organization. Wyly wrote a draft of

the first *Marine Corps Campaign Plan*. Although Gray's strong leadership was certainly important to practicing warfare-based, concept-based, and future-oriented requirements system, it would have been insufficient without the ideas and proposals of these other leaders.

The introduction of the warfare-based, concept-based, and future-oriented requirements system highlights the difficulty of reforming military force. Wyly's attempt to introduce a future plan that was completely consistent with the maneuver warfare concept did not succeed in its entirety. Some of his ideas were introduced in the official *Marine Corps Campaign Plan*, but some others were not. Even though Gray and Wyly shared the belief that careerism should be eliminated and that doctrine regarding each strategic, operational, and tactical level should be published, these suggestions were not supported by the organizational hierarchy between the Commandant and the head of the concept branch of the MAGTF Warfighting Center, the MCCDC. Gray exploited alternative ways to demonstrate his ideas to Marines, such as highlighting the importance of eliminating careerism in his interview issued in *Proceedings*, and publishing *Campaigning* (FMFM 1-1) and *Tactics* (FMFM 1-3).

Although Gray and his reformers did not bring to fruition their new requirements system, their efforts represented a significant beginning for the new system. Gray's efforts were succeeded by the 31st and 32d Commandants, Krulak and Jones. Future research should examine if the Corps' doctrine, education, training, equipment, and organization have been developed based on warfighting ideas created by the MAGTF Warfighting Center, or not. How has the study of military history supported the development of new warfighting concepts? Ton de Munnik claims that "military history provides a realistic notion of battle dynamics," but the notion is about the past.⁶³ In contrast, operations research does this with the image of present and future equipment, but conducted in an artificial environment manipulated by its players. How have the advantages and disadvantages of each

⁶³ Col Ton de Munnik, "Teaching War," in *The Oxford Handbook of War*, ed. Yves Boyer and Julian Lindley-French (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012), 463.

military history vignette or wargame been discussed in the Marine Corps? Did the Marine Corps in the 1990s prepare its doctrine, education, organization, and equipment based on the intellectual and warfare or an administrative and policy perspective, and on concept or technology and organization? How is it

done today? How was MCCDC transformed during the 1990s and 2000s? Is there any difference in characteristics between the Marine Corps' requirements system during wartime and during peacetime? Examining these questions would increase our knowledge of how a military force prepares for future warfare.

• 1775 •

PHOTOGRAPHIC ESSAY

With Hotel Company, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, in An Hoa

by Major Barry Broman, USMCR (Ret)

The 5th Marine Regiment, known as the 5th Marines, stands as one of the most storied fighting units of Americans at war. It first saw combat in the First World War when it helped stop a German offensive at Belleau Wood in France, where thousands of Marines are buried, mute testimony of the vicious fighting. It spearheaded America's first offensive campaign in the Pacific at Guadalcanal in 1942. It endured a brutal winter and massive Chinese Army attack at the Chosin Reservoir in Korea in 1950.

The 5th Marines spent five years in Vietnam between 1966-71, much of that time based in a small, remote village called An Hoa in the province of Quang

Barry Broman dropped out of college in 1962 to work for a year as a photographer for the Associated Press in Bangkok, Thailand, with assignments in South Vietnam and Cambodia. He received a bachelor of arts in political science from the University of Washington, Seattle, in 1967 and at the same time was commissioned a second lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve through the Naval Reserve Officers' Training Corps. He went on active duty in 1968 after receiving a master of arts in Southeast Asian studies at the University of Washington. Broman served as a platoon commander and company executive officer with Company H, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, in Vietnam for seven months in 1969. He then served in 1st Marine Division's G-5 (civil affairs) and extended his Vietnam tour by six months. Part of his extension was spent as U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, liaison officer in Thailand. Promoted to captain, he served as the Camp Pendleton, CA, press officer and then commanded Company H, 2d Battalion, 7th Marines. He joined the Clandestine Service of the Central Intelligence Agency in 1971 and served for 25 years. He has written/photographed 15 books and produced nine documentary films. He lives with his wife Betty Jane in Kirkland, WA. This article did not undergo peer review.

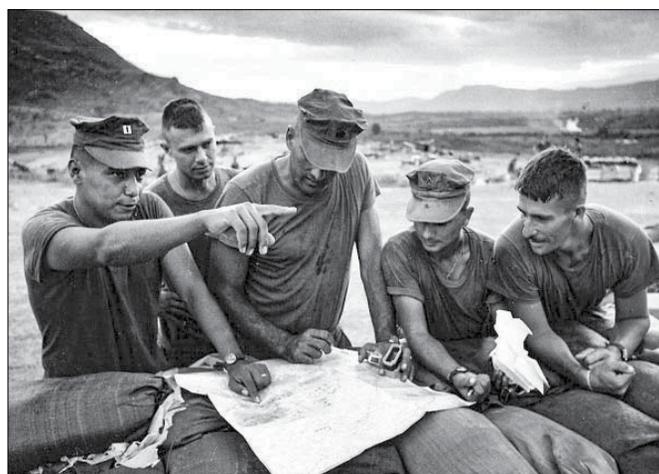


Photo by Maj Barry Broman, USMCR (Ret)

Capt Robert Poolaw with Company H staff. From left: 1stLt Clark, artillery forward observer, SSgt Frederick Pulifico, GySgt Anthony Marengo, and 1stLt Dean Andrea.

Nam in central South Vietnam. Serving as one of three infantry regiments of the 1st Marine Division (1st MarDiv), along with the 1st and 7th Marines, the 5th Marines at An Hoa were the closest Marine unit to North Vietnamese Army (NVA) units infiltrating Vietnam from Laos, home to the network of roads known as the Ho Chi Minh Trail. The regiment's mission was to find, fix, and destroy the NVA as it attempted to attack Da Nang, a major city in the province and, more importantly, the Da Nang Air Base, a major NVA target and, at the time, the busiest airfield in the world.

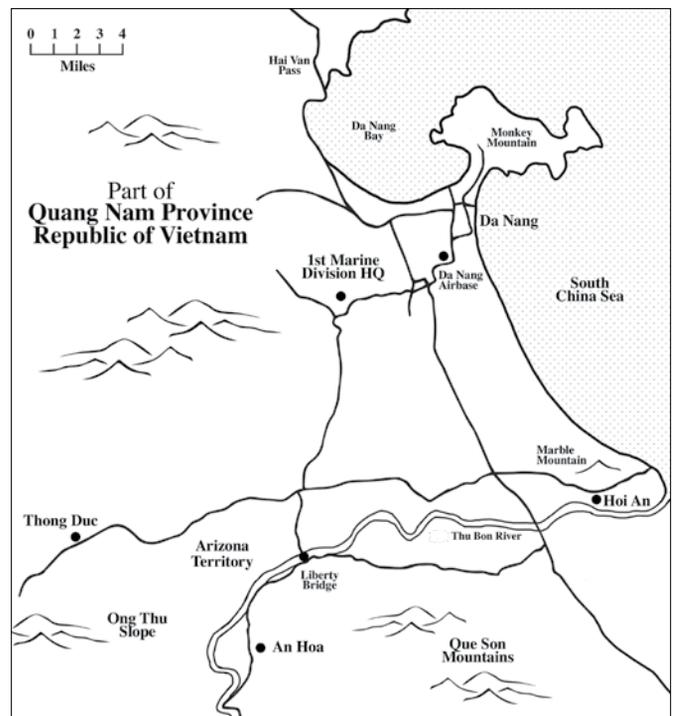


Photo by Maj Barry Broman, USMCR (Ret)

Artillery support on Operation Taylor Common from 2d Battalion, 11th Marines.

This photographic essay focuses on the officers and enlisted members of Company H, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, who served at An Hoa Combat Base, Quang Nam Province, Republic of Vietnam, in 1969, and is based on the author's personal experiences with the company.¹ An Hoa stood at the end of the line of friendly villages. It was virtually surrounded by villages sympathetic to South Vietnamese Communists called Viet Cong and their northern allies of the NVA who infiltrated the area from Laos to the west.

In early February, Company H was in An Hoa, the regimental headquarters, preparing for Operation Taylor Common II, a foray into the Annamite Range of mountains along the border with Laos, set to kick off a few days later. The commanding officer was Captain Ronald J. Drez of New Orleans, Louisiana, on his second combat tour in Vietnam. During the runup to the operation, the company distinguished



Map by Seth Broman, adapted by MCUP

Map of part of Quang Nam Province, 1969.

¹For more on the U.S. Marine Corps in Vietnam during this period, see Charles R. Smith, *U.S. Marines in Vietnam: High Mobility and Standdown, 1969* (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1988).



Fire caused by an incoming NVA 107mm rocket at An Hoa. No casualties resulted.

Photo by Maj Barry Broman, USMCR (Ret)



Photo by Maj Barry Broman, USMCR (Ret)
The gate to a Buddhist temple in An Hoa constructed out of used Marine Corps artillery containers, showing local children happy to pose and some of the civic action work done by Marines at An Hoa in 1969.



Photo by Maj Barry Broman, USMCR (Ret)
Company H officers and gunnery sergeant in An Hoa, 1969. Back row from left: 2dLt William Vonderhaar, 2dLt John McKay, GySgt Charles Jackson, Capt Ronald J. Drez, 1stLt Barry Broman, 2dLt Homer Brookshire. Front row from left: 2dLt Jeff Steger and 2dLt James Hartneady.



Photo by Maj Barry Broman, USMCR (Ret)

Sandbagged bunker and tower at An Hoa Combat Base, 1969.



Photo by Maj Barry Broman, USMCR (Ret)

Young Vietnamese boys on water buffaloes watch a passing convoy of Marines near An Hoa.

itself on Operation Meade River. The company was transported into the mountains aboard Boeing Vertol CH-46 Sea Knight helicopters to a hilltop, where earlier Marines had rappelled from helicopters and blown down the trees. There was no room to land because of the jagged tree stumps, so Marines jumped about 10 feet into the debris and quickly set up a 360-degree perimeter without opposition of the NVA and incurring no friendly casualties. The multibattalion operation was planned to disrupt enemy infiltration from Laos nearby and destroy enemy base camps. Unfortunately, Marines were not allowed to enter Laos, an officially neutral country that had been invaded by tens of thousands of NVA to ease the movement of troops and materiel south. Cutting the Ho Chi Minh Trail could have changed the whole tenor of the war.

The first platoon-size combat patrol from the company's tight perimeter was along a well-worn trail. The patrol ended in an ambush by a few NVA trail watchers. One Marine was wounded, requiring medical evacuation via a *jungle penetrator*, an enclosed capsule big enough for one person. A CH-46 helicopter lowered the penetrator through triple canopy trees, the wounded Marine was placed inside, and the pene-

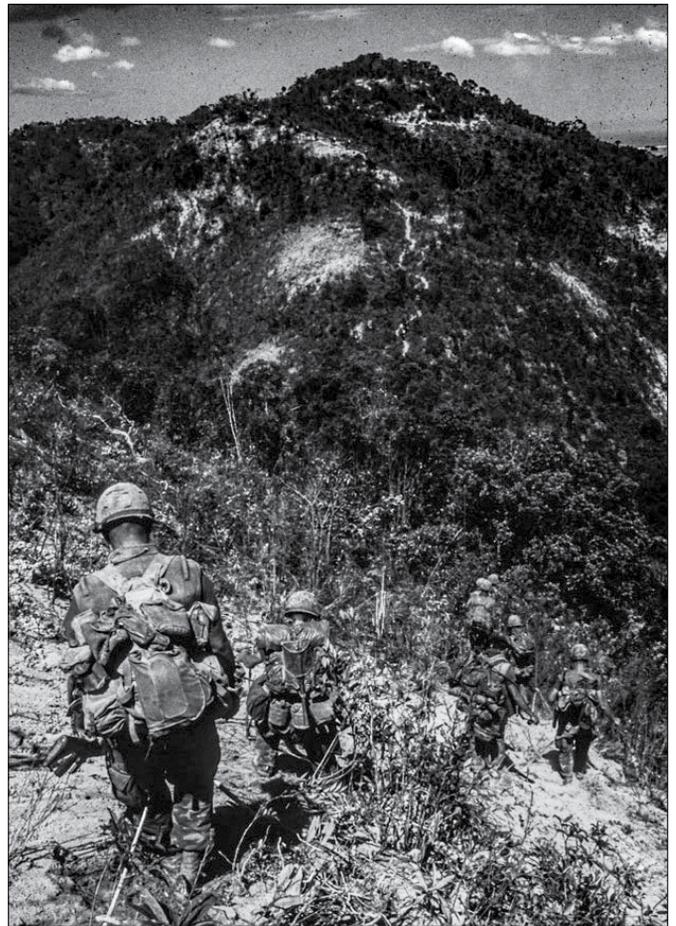


Photo by Maj Barry Broman, USMCR (Ret)

Marines in the mountains on Operation Taylor Common.



Photo by Maj Barry Broman, USMCR (Ret)
1stLt Barry Broman, company executive officer.



Photo by Maj Barry Broman, USMCR (Ret)
Boeing Vertol CH-46 Sea Knight helicopter at An Hoa Combat Base preparing to take an external load of supplies to be flown to 5th Marine units in the field.



Photo by Maj Barry Broman, USMCR (Ret)
Helicopter carrying reconnaissance Marines on a mission flying over Company H in the Arizona Territory.



Photo by Maj Barry Broman, USMCR (Ret)
2dLt Jeff Steger, left, and 1stLt Barry Broman getting ready for a breakfast of C-rations in a Vietnamese rice paddy.



Photo by Maj Barry Broman, USMCR (Ret)

Company H in Arizona Territory, Quang Nam Province, Republic of Vietnam, 1969. At right is LCpl Al Gautschi.

trator was winched up. Thirty minutes later, they were in a hospital in Da Nang.

A miniature bulldozer was brought in by air to clear off the blown trees and level the hilltop so that 105mm artillery from the 2d Battalion, 11th Marines, could establish a firebase to support infantry in the mountains. At night, ambushes and listening posts were set up. Contact with the enemy was light, and the coolness of the mountain air was offset by swarms of malaria-bearing mosquitos and leeches that seemed very fond of Marine blood. After a month in the mountains, the company was back in An Hoa to shower, eat hot chow, and prepare for some tough fighting ahead in the lowlands.

The company's next destination was a hotly contested piece of territory in Quang Nam Province located just north of the Thu Bon River and An Hoa.

This was known as the Arizona Territory, a collection of villages that supported local Viet Cong. For years, 5th Marine units had crossed and recrossed this inhospitable zone, which straddled a main infiltration route to Da Nang. In addition to enemy forces, the territory was heavily booby trapped, the major cause of Marine casualties. There were no local fighters of military age to be seen in the Arizona Territory except when they fired at the Marines. Every rice farmer's hut had a bomb shelter that could also be used as a bunker against Marines. Marines entering villages found only old sullen folks with hostile eyes and young children who beseeched Marines for candy, food, and cigarettes. Marines are suckers for little kids and freely shared rations with the exception of C-ration cans, which made excellent booby traps when paired with a hand grenade and a trip wire. Marines also provided



Photo by Maj Barry Broman, USMCR (Ret)

LCpl Larry McDonald and a new Vietnamese acquaintance during an operation in the Arizona Territory.



Photo by Maj Barry Broman, USMCR (Ret)

Wounded Marine being medically evacuated from the field near An Hoa.

medical treatment for the civilians, including medical evacuation by helicopter for the seriously wounded.

Captain Drez rotated home with Bronze Star and Purple Heart medals and went on to pursue a career as a researcher and author of military-themed books. He was replaced by Captain Gary E. Brown, who was soon transferred to work in the Combined Action Platoon (CAP) program, which paired Marine squads with local-force militia for the defense of villages.² For much of the time the company was in the Arizona Territory, Captain William C. Fite III was the commanding officer. Fite had served as an advisor to the South Vietnamese Marines on his first tour and was a savvy and experienced officer.³ A newly assigned officer, Second Lieutenant Theodore R. Vivalacqua, a U.S. Naval Academy graduate, was later killed in action leading an assault in the territory.⁴ The company went to great lengths to minimize friendly losses by relying on supporting arms, notably artillery and close air support. Most casualties were caused by booby traps. Aggressive patrolling for the enemy paid off. On one occasion, the 1st and 2d Battalions fixed and engaged an NVA regiment in the Arizona Territory heading for Da Nang with heavy air and artillery support. The Marines sustained few casualties in the sharp action that destroyed the regiment. Both battalions received a Meritorious Unit Citation for that lopsided victory.

In the Spring of 1969, an NVA sapper unit attacked the artillery of the 2d Battalion, 11th Marines, at An Hoa not far from the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines' cantonment. All units on the perimeter raced to respond.

² For more on the CAP Program, see MSgt Ronald E. Hayes II (Ret), *Combined Action: U.S. Marines Fighting a Different War, August 1965 to September 1970* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps History Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 2019).

³ For more on Marine advisors, see Col Andrew R. Finlayson (Ret), *Marine Advisors with the Vietnamese Provincial Reconnaissance Units, 1966–1970* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps History Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 2009); and Charles D. Melson and Wanda J. Renfrow, comp. and eds., *Marine Advisors with the Vietnamese Marine Corps: Selected Documents Prepared by the U.S. Marine Advisory Unit, Naval Advisory Group* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps History Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 2009).

⁴ Vivalacqua would receive the Silver Star (posthumously) for his service during this action. See "Theodore R. Vivalacqua," Hall of Valor Project, accessed 3 June 2020.



Photo by Maj Barry Broman, USMCR (Ret)

Easter services observed in the Arizona Territory, 1969.



Photo by Maj Barry Broman, USMCR (Ret)

McDonnell-Douglas F-4 Phantom II dropping napalm in close air support.



Bomb strike near An Hoa.

Photo by Maj Barry Broman, USMCR (Ret)



Photo by Maj Barry Broman, USMCR (Ret)

Corpsman attends to wounded Vietnamese civilians during operations near An Hoa.

The few Marines of Company H in the rear, many of them two-time recipients of the Purple Heart medal, manned defensive bunkers, with machine guns behind barbed wire and a minefield waiting for the enemy to attack. Intense ground fire erupted at the artillery wire. All but one of the NVA sappers were killed in the failed attack, and in the morning all sector commanders were convoked for a meeting at the attack site. The sole NVA survivor of the attack cooperated fully in showing how they cut their way through the extensive barbed wire defenses of the Marines. Stripped to his skivvies and armed only with a wire cutter, the youthful enemy moved quickly and quietly through the wire, a sobering experience for the spectators.



Photo by Maj Barry Broman, USMCR (Ret)

Captured NVA sapper demonstrating how he cut his way through defensive positions at An Hoa.



Photo by Maj Barry Broman, USMCR (Ret)

Marines of Company H, 5th Marines, passing through elephant grass during an operation on Go Noi Island, an enemy stronghold 16 kilometers southwest of Da Nang. Passage was made easier by following the path made by a tank.

Easter Day 1969 was quiet in the Arizona Territory as the battalion chaplain was flown into Company H's position to perform Easter services. There must be some truth about there being no atheists in foxholes as everyone wanted to attend the service.⁵ Only two volunteers stepped forward to man machine guns on the perimeter. The services were held without incident. The sound of hymns wafting over the rice paddies must have sounded strange to the listening Viet Cong nearby.

When a Marine tripped a booby trap, it was common practice to call for a Marine helicopter to take the wounded for medical treatment in Da Nang only a few minutes away by chopper, but one day no

helicopter was available to evacuate an injured Marine; all Marine air assets were employed elsewhere. The injured Marine was bleeding out and Captain Fite got on the radio personally pleading for a medevac helicopter. Suddenly, a voice broke in on the emergency frequency. It was an Army helicopter pilot in the area who overheard the call for a medevac. He volunteered to come in for the wounded man and when his chopper approached, the Marines popped a smoke grenade. The Army helicopter landed and the young warrant officer pilot saved the life of a Marine.

A Marine infantry company in the field was fortunate if it included a Marine with hunting skills among them, such as Lance Corporal Cletus Foote, a soft-spoken Hidatsa from the Siouan people in North Dakota. Foote was at home in the bush and did his job well. He liked to walk point, alert for booby traps

⁵There has long been debate about the origin of the phrase "there are no atheists in foxholes." See "Religion: Atheists & Foxholes," *Time Magazine*, 18 June 1945.



Photo by Maj Barry Broman, USMCR (Ret)

PFC Dennis Mobray, Company H unit diary clerk, sleeping at company command post in the field.

or ambushes. It was a dangerous job, but he relished danger. On a company-size sweep in the Arizona Territory one day, Foote walked point. The company was spread out in good order, carefully looking for the elusive enemy, and in the words of poet Robert W. Service, “dog-dirty, and loaded for bear.”⁶ Suddenly, Foote raised an arm and the company stopped. He was kneeling in a bamboo tree line.

“What’s up, Foote?” the executive officer asked. “We are being followed,” he replied in a calm and quiet voice. “Foote, you are walking point. How can you see someone following us?” the executive officer asked. “There is a lone NVA with a pack and rifle behind us

on the right rear of the company. I saw him,” Foote replied.

As the company moved ahead, Captain Fite ordered the scout-sniper team that was attached to the company to fall out in the next tree line and wait for the NVA. Two minutes later, a shot rang out; the sniper had found a target. Fite sent a Marine to check and found a dead NVA soldier with a pack and rifle more than 800 meters from the sniper. The Marine took the rifle and the company moved on. Many years later, Foote became a chief of the Hidatsa tribe on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation in the Bakken oil field.

In a sharp firefight with NVA in well-concealed bunkers in the Arizona Territory, Lieutenant John McKay, another Naval Academy graduate, took a bullet through the head from an AK47 at point-blank range. The lieutenant had gone to the aid of a Marine

⁶ Robert W. Service, “The Shooting of Dan McGrew” in his collection *The Songs of a Sourdough*, author’s ed. (Toronto, Canada: William Briggs, 1907).



Photo by Maj Barry Broman, USMCR (Ret)

LCpl Ernst Woodruff, a machine gunner in Company H, with his damaged Zippo lighter that was hit by shrapnel.



Photo by Maj Barry Broman, USMCR (Ret)

From left: 1stLt Barry Broman, Capt Robert W. Poolaw, and GySgt Anthony H. Marengo in the field near An Hoa.



Photo by Maj Barry Broman, USMCR (Ret)

South Vietnamese president Nguyen Van Thieu visiting An Hoa Combat Base in February 1969.

who had been hit while assaulting a bunker. Captain Fite sent the executive officer (the author) to take over McKay's platoon. Gunnery Sergeant Saima' Auga Napoleon went with him and on the way encountered two Marines bringing McKay back, still conscious but missing an eye. His life was saved by Corporal Joseph Hatton, who killed the NVA who shot the lieutenant. A medevac/resupply chopper was landing nearby, so Napoleon carried him to the helicopter. McKay recovered, returned to active duty wearing a black patch, and eventually retired as a full colonel. Not long after, Captain Fite was seriously wounded by a mortar round and was medevaced to Da Nang. He recovered, stayed in the Corps, and retired with the rank of full colonel.

Private First Class Dennis Mobray from Spokane, Washington, was probably the only member of Company H who craved action. He was well liked and also envied, as he was the only Marine in the company who was forbidden to go into the bush. No booby traps or malaria for Mobray. He was the company unit diary clerk and the only one trained to use the machine that recorded all the company's administrative activities. The chagrined tow-headed teenager beseeched the first sergeant to be allowed to go into the bush and finally wore him down. Mobray flew into Arizona Territory on a resupply helicopter under orders to update everyone's next-of-kin data, allotments of pay for family, etc. What Mobray really wanted was to get into a firefight so he could qualify for a Combat Action Ribbon (CAR), which identified him as someone who has been in combat. He was in luck. He got his firefight, got his CAR, and lived to go home to Spokane.

Lance Corporal Elton Armstrong, a machine gunner from Jamaica, also sought a souvenir from the Arizona Territory.⁷ He wanted a Soviet semiautomatic SKS enemy rifle, less well known than the AK47 but highly valued by Marines because they could take

⁷ Armstrong was awarded a Silver Star for this action. See "Elton Armstrong," Hall of Valor Project, accessed 3 June 2020.

it home as a war souvenir.⁸ The rifle featured a folding aluminum bayonet and a wooden stock. During a nasty firefight involving NVA fighting from well-prepared bunkers, Armstrong assaulted a bunker firing his M60 machine gun from the hip as he advanced. Twice, Chicom (Chinese Communist) grenades were thrown at him and twice he outran them, never dropping his weapon. Armstrong continued the attack and, with the help of a few Marines, finally took the bunker. Later, when asked why he risked his life several times to take the bunker, he said, "I heard an SKS firing from the bunker and I wanted that rifle." Armstrong's assistant gunner was Private First Class Steve Russell, a Marine from Birmingham, Alabama. Russell and Armstrong formed a friendship that has lasted half a century. Russell still travels to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to see Armstrong, who now lives in a Veterans Administration hospital.

Armstrong was not the only foreign-born Marine in the company. A German-born machine gunner, Lance Corporal Ernst Woodruff, called Woodie, was one of the company's characters. One morning, after Woodruff had killed three NVA in an ambush, an officer called out to him as he walked into the company's perimeter carrying his machine gun on his shoulder and sporting a peace symbol on his helmet.

"Woodie," he called. "How can you kill three men before breakfast and wear a peace symbol on your helmet?"

"It is easy *leutnant*," he replied. "I am [a] hypocrite."

When Lance Corporal Peter M. Nee from Cashel, County Connemara, Ireland, tripped a booby trap and was killed instantly, it hit the company hard. Everyone was taken with the wit and charm of the young Irishman, who in addition to being a fine Marine was also a poet. Many years later the author put flowers on his grave on the rugged Connemara coast of western Ireland.⁹

⁸ The SKS was designed in 1943 by Sergei Gavrilovich Simonov. Its complete designation, SKS-45, is an initialism for *Samozaryadny Karabin sistemy Simonova*, 1945.

⁹ Brian McGinn, "An Irishman's Diary," *Irish Times* (Dublin), 29 May 2000.



Photo by Maj Barry Broman, USMCR (Ret)
Memorial for Marines of Company H, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, killed in action, An Hoa.

Another company commander was Captain Robert W. Poolaw, from the Kiowa Nation in Anadarko, Oklahoma. He was a quiet but tough former enlisted Marine on his second Vietnam tour. Poolaw was wounded in action while commanding Golf Company and when he recovered from his wounds, he was assigned to Company H after Captain Fite was medevaced.¹⁰ The gunnery sergeant at the time was Anthony H. Marengo from Brooklyn, New York, a veteran of numerous tours in Vietnam and a recipient of Silver

¹⁰ "Valor in Black and White: War Stories of Horace Poolaw," Smithsonian, video, 1:27:8, 11 November 2016.

Star, Bronze Star, and three Purple Heart medals.¹¹ In a departure from the company's normal patrolling in search of the enemy, it was ordered to assist a Vietnamese Regional Force (RF) militia unit at a hilltop outpost near an NVA infiltration route. Acting on intelligence that the NVA were coming, Company H was sent to augment the poorly armed RF under the command of an old warrant officer who had served in the French colonial army in Vietnam a generation earlier. They welcomed the Marines warmly. Company H quickly set up with their Vietnamese allies' defensive position and brought along a new weapon, an AN-M8 CS (carbon monosulfide) or tear gas pack. The pack could launch 40 nonlethal CS grenades against an assaulting enemy. It was the first time Company H had employed the weapon.

Night fell and the Marines embedded with the Vietnamese militia prepared for a fight. Before long, NVA were spotted moving down the mountainside with the help of a Starlight scope night-vision device. The company's 60mm mortar set up and prepared high-explosive and illumination rounds for instant deployment. Machine guns were placed to afford interlocking fields of fire. The listening post was called in as the North Vietnamese crept closer. Captain

Poolaw thought this would be a good chance to test the new AN-M8 gas pack. It all depended on one thing: the wind. If the wind was against the Marines, there was no way they would fire the AN-M8 and let the gas blow into their own positions. Fortunately, the wind was in their favor and when the NVA moved in close, they fired the gas pack. Forty nonlethal gas grenades descended into the path of the enemy as the Marines fired an illumination round from the mortar to light up the battlefield, then the Marines and the RF opened fire. The fight did not last long. The NVA were taken completely by surprise and ran aimlessly trying to get away from the CS gas. As they were cut down by rifle and machine-gun fire, the North Vietnamese survivors quickly retreated into the jungle, leaving more than a dozen dead and their weapons behind. The captured weapons were left with the militia, which could claim a bounty of \$75 for each AK47. Company H returned to An Hoa with no friendly casualties. Captain Poolaw eventually retired from the Marine Corps and returned to Oklahoma. Gunnery Sergeant Marengo retired from the Corps as a sergeant major and immediately joined the U.S. Secret Service, where he made a second distinguished career in the service of the United States.

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¹¹ See "Anthony Marengo," Hall of Valor Project, accessed 3 June 2020; and United States Oral History Collection, Vietnam Interviews, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

HIGHLIGHT FROM THE MARINE CORPS ARCHIVES

From Parris Island to the Pacific

THE SERVICE OF EDWARD LEROY PARKE IN HIS OWN WORDS

by *Alisa M. Whitley*

Archives preserve the physical historical records of those who have come before so that their stories may be told and studied. Through their preservation work, archives enable current and future generations to understand the different experiences, identities, places, and situations encompassed by their collections. The collections housed in the Marine Corps Archives preserve evidence of the lives and experiences of many Marines, such as shrapnel damage on a World War I letter, blood on what would become a last letter home, or sand in the folds of maps from Iraq. In a world where seemingly endless amounts of digital content is available at our fingertips, it is easy to overlook those historical resources that cannot be found through a quick online search or easily viewed on a screen. As archivists endeavor to digitize as much as possible to make collections more widely accessible, there are still many stories that can only be told through physical artifacts. The documents and ephemera left behind by Marines guide the way into the future through the resources of archives.

Alisa M. Whitley is branch head and an archivist of the Historical Resources Branch of Marine Corps History Division. As a highlight of the collections held by the Historical Resources Branch archives, this article did not undergo peer review.

After leaving Guam on 28 July 1945, at 15 minutes past midnight on 30 July, the USS *Indianapolis* (CA 35) was struck by torpedoes from a Japanese submarine. Twelve minutes later, the ship rolled completely over and plunged down into the depths of the Pacific. Among the ship's complement were 39 members of the Marine detachment, commanded by Captain Edward LeRoy Parke. Of those 39 Marines, only 9 of them survived. Since the sinking of the *Indianapolis* is a tragic chapter in U.S. Navy history, and there were so few Marines aboard, it is not a story that is generally told from the Marine Corps perspective. The letters of Edward LeRoy Parke, written to his father, offer a rich narrative of Parke's experiences as a Marine, culminating in his untimely death in the sinking of the *Indianapolis* 75 years ago. These letters were graciously donated to the Marine Corps History Division in 2015.

According to the age certificate submitted by his mother when he enlisted, Parke was born on 29 October 1913 in Middleburg, Virginia. His parents, Betty Gorse and Clarence Parke, married in August 1905; after 29 years of marriage, they divorced in June 1935. His father was an associate in the Converted Insurance Division of the Veterans Administration and also owned a tobacco farm in Davidsonville, Maryland. His mother remarried an Army officer who was sta-



*Edward L. Parke, Official Military Personnel File,
National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, MO*

Edward L. Parke's enlisted photograph, 15 August 1938.

tioned in the Virgin Islands. Edward graduated from the Petworth School in Washington, DC, in June 1925 and attended American University, where he studied political science, graduating in 1933.

On 4 August 1938, Parke enlisted in the Marine Corps and was stationed at Parris Island, South Carolina. He wrote to his father in October of that year.

Dear Dad:

I received your letter two weeks ago, but have been so damn busy that I've had no time to write. About the only free time I have is on Sunday and that is the time I devote to my washing and ironing. I'm becoming quite a laundress, or should I say launderer, learning to wash my own clothes, starch my trousers, darn socks, sew on buttons, and keep a glistening polish on my

boots. I may not be a brilliant master of military strategy, but I'm a four point soldier in personal hygiene and appearance.

We're finished Marines now; adept in the use of rifle, hand grenade, bayonet, automatic pistol and bush warfare.¹

Later that year, Parke was attached to the USS *Henderson* (AP 1) as a member of the Marine detachment. He served as a captain's orderly and pointer in the 3-inch antiaircraft artillery battery.

Dear Dad:

Just a few lines while I have the time and opportunity to write. I am now stationed aboard the U.S.S. *Henderson*, leaving Norfolk the seventeenth of October for the West Coast and then China. I've been in so damn many different places in the last two weeks—that is since leaving Parris Island—that it would have been useless to write and send an address.

The work aboard this ship amounts to nothing at all. In fact you don't have enough to do. I'm standing two watches at present, telephone operation one day, Captain's orderly the next. Nothing to do and all day to do it in.

The food aboard is extremely good. The only drawback is the lack of space for sleeping and bathing, and the fact that I have to bathe out of a bucket.

It's great sport taking a bath under these conditions and you have to take one a day. You can hardly imagine forty men attempting to bathe

¹ Edward Parke to Clarence Parke, 2 October 1938, Edward L. Parke Collection (COLL/5627), Marine Corps History Division (MCHD), Quantico, VA.

and shave in a space designed for ten. I often think I'm shaving my face and it turns out to be someone else's backside. However it all turns out for the best, someone shaves mine.²

In April 1939, Parke was transferred to the Marine detachment aboard the USS *Pennsylvania* (BB 38) where he served as the admiral and captain's orderly and as a range keeper for the secondary battery. In a 30 April 1939 letter, he describes life on board his new ship.

I am now doing duty on the *Pennsylvania*, the flagship of Admiral [Claude C. Bloch] Block, and what a pig iron so and so this battle wagon is. Bad food, poor quarters, and no liberty but I suppose the honor of serving on the flagship makes up for all of those.

We've been here in Balboa [Panama] since Thursday and during that period I've had five hours liberty. It wasn't much but it gave me a chance to see a part of Panama that I'd never seen before. This was my third trip here but previous to this trip I'd done no sight seeing due to the fact I was serving on ships that granted all night liberty but cargo operations curtailed leave during the day.³

In October 1939, he was detached to the Naval Fire Control School, Washington, DC, completing the course by June 1940, and being assigned to the Sperry Director School, Brooklyn, New York. At the completion of the Director School and being awarded the certificate for "operation, maintenance and adjustment of the M-4 director," he was transferred to the 4th Defense Battalion at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

² Edward Parke to Clarence Parke, 14 October 1938, Edward L. Parke Collection (COLL/5627), MCHD, Quantico, VA.

³ Edward Parke to Clarence Parke, 30 April 1939, Edward L. Parke Collection (COLL/5627), MCHD, Quantico, VA.

In 1938, the Marine Corps decided to establish defense detachments that were intended to repel minor naval raids and raids by small landing parties. These detachments would consist of 5-inch coastal defense guns, 3-inch antiaircraft artillery guns, a machine gun battery, and a searchlight battery. One of these detachments, the 4th Defense Battalion, had been formed at Parris Island in February 1940. The battalion moved to Guantánamo in February 1941, remaining there until October. Parke shares his feelings on being stationed in Cuba in this 23 February 1941 letter.

Dear Dad:

I don't know what you think had happened to me, but the chaos and confusion of the past month and a half have made it impossible for me to even think of writing a letter let alone start one.

We are now on the sunny isle of Cuba, that "Pearl of the Caribbean," and what a God-forsaken hole it is. It is so bad that I have coined a phrase, that to my mind, fits it very aptly—"Cuba is the place, created by the Devil, to take care of the over-flow from Hell."

This "Island of the Damned" has two sorts of weather—scorching suns and torrential rains. You either fry your brains in the heat, or wade in mud up to your armpits. It rained so much the first two weeks we were here that I began to grow webs between my toes.⁴

With their exercises completed in Cuba, the 4th Defense Battalion embarked for Pearl Harbor, arriving just seven days before the attacks. On 7 December, the present defense battalions were able to offer limited and generally ineffectual opposition from their

⁴ Edward Parke to Clarence Parke, 23 February 1941, Edward L. Parke Collection (COLL/5627), MCHD, Quantico, VA.

stations in and around the Navy yard, due to the lack of a ready supply of ammunition. Since they had only arrived days before, many of their weapons had not yet been unloaded from the ship and set up on shore. Nevertheless, the battalions had 25 machine guns in action within an hour and a half of the start of the attack and they managed to down three Japanese planes. None of the defense battalions' heavier weapons were ever fired.⁵

Following the attacks on Pearl Harbor, Parke's mother wrote to his father.

Dear Clarence—

Am worried terribly about Eddie. Had a letter from him last Thursday saying that he reached Honolulu on the 20th of November. Have sent two cablegrams to him since Sunday—but no reply. Please, please go to the Navy Department and see what you can find out about our kid. In his letter he said that he was going to write you as soon as he finished my letter.

He wasn't positive about staying there but thought he might be sent to either Wake [Island] or Guam. Please do your best to get what information you can and please write me. Will be anxiously waiting to hear from you. I am frantic about that child. Pardon my brief notes. Am worried.

As ever—Ed's Mother—Betty⁶

On 12 December 1941, Edward wrote a brief note.

Dear Dad:

Just a few hurried lines to let you know I'm alright. Think of me this holiday season.

Love,

Edward L. Parke⁷

In subsequent letters, Parke did not elaborate on his experiences at Pearl Harbor. When his father heard from him again, it was January 1942.

Dear Dad:

Just a few lines to let you know that I'm still alive and kicking. My mail has finally caught up with me, but I don't have much time to write letters. Under the present regulations we are not permitted to discuss the war, or any of its phases, but I was present and took part in the opening act.

What I've seen and done will have to be related when we get together again, but the Lord only knows when that will be.⁸

In addition to his everyday duties, Parke was also hard at work trying to obtain his commission as a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps Reserve. He requested that his father obtain a transcript from American University and three letters of recommendation to submit to Headquarters Marine Corps.

In support of a commission, E. H. Callahan, chief, Converted Insurance Subdivision, Veterans Administration wrote:

I have known this young man for fifteen years or more, since he was a school boy. His father, Mr. Clarence L. Parke, is my official associate and one of my best friends. I have had occasion to observe Sergeant Parke in his home

⁵ Maj Charles D. Melson, *Condition Red: Marine Defense Battalions in World War II* (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1996).

⁶ Betty Gorse to Clarence Parke, 9 December 1941, Edward L. Parke Collection (COLL/5627), MCHD, Quantico, VA.

⁷ Edward Parke to Clarence Parke, 12 December 1941, Edward L. Parke Collection (COLL/5627), MCHD, Quantico, VA.

⁸ Edward Parke to Clarence Parke, 23 January 1942, Edward L. Parke Collection (COLL/5627), MCHD, Quantico, VA.

and elsewhere and I believe him to be qualified physically, mentally and morally for the commission he seeks. He has been endowed with natural intelligence and physical stamina far above that possessed by the average man. These qualities have been supplemented by a first class formal education, acquired technical knowledge and skill and a broad practical experience for one of his years, all of which, in my opinion, should make him an ideal officer. I recommend him without reservation.⁹

Future Marine Corps historian and Marine, Captain Robert D. Heinl Jr., was at that time serving as a battery commander with the 4th Defense Battalion. He wrote in a memorandum of recommendation of meritorious noncommissioned officer for appointment as second lieutenant:

Staff Sergeant Parke has either served under me or been under my close observation for (14) fourteen months. During this period, he has consistently demonstrated outstanding qualities of leadership, intelligence and initiative far beyond those required of his grade. He is not only an able fire-control technician but a noncommissioned officer of loyalty, discipline and zeal.

The service record book of Staff Sergeant Parke indicates that he served afloat, in the Fleet Marine Force, and on foreign shore duty, since the date of his enlistment, 4 August, 1938. He is a graduate of the director course of the Sperry Gyroscope Company; of the Primary Class, Navy Fire Control School; and of the Mathematics

and Mechanics for Civil Engineering Course of the Marine Corps Institute.

He has had no average marking lower than 4.5, and his average markings during the past thirteen months have been 5.0. He holds a letter of commendation from the Commandant, Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, for having participated in the handling of certain munitions under exceptionally unfavorable conditions during February, 1941. Parke served as Aviation Cadet, USNR from July, 1935 to April, 1936, as a member of Pensacola Class 81-C, from which he was honorably separated by reason of ineptitude for aviation. He participated with credit in the defense of the Navy Yard, Pearl Harbor, T. H. against enemy forces on 7 December 1941, and has since taken good part in active operations.

In my opinion, Staff Sergeant Edward LeR. Parke, U.S. Marine Corps is qualified mentally, morally and physically for appointment to the grade of second lieutenant in the Marine Corps Reserve. Had no limitation on age prevented it, the undersigned would readily have recommended him for a Regular appointment.¹⁰

The commanding officer of Parke's battery received a memorandum on 3 March 1942 stating that at the age of 28, he was ineligible for a commission in the Marine Corps Reserve, but he was eligible for a temporary commission in the Marine Corps. In July 1942, Parke received his commission and was appointed a second lieutenant. Meanwhile, on 27 April 1942, Parke's father, Clarence, went to register for the draft. He was 59 years old and listed his son, stationed at

⁹E. H. Callahan to LtGen Cmdt, 5 February 1942, Edward L. Parke, Official Military Personnel File, National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, MO.

¹⁰Memorandum, Robert D. Heinl Jr. to MajGen Cmdt, 5 February 1942, Edward L. Parke, Official Military Personnel File, National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, MO.

REGISTRATION CARD—(Men born on or after April 28, 1877 and on or before February 16, 1897)			
SERIAL NUMBER U 2755	1. NAME (Print) CLARENCE- LEROY PARKE (First) (Middle) (Last)		ORDER NUMBER
2. PLACE OF RESIDENCE (Print) Cottage Farm Davidsonville Maryland (Number and street) (Town, township, village, or city) (County) (State)			
[THE PLACE OF RESIDENCE GIVEN ON THE LINE ABOVE WILL DETERMINE LOCAL BOARD JURISDICTION; LINE 2 OF REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE WILL BE IDENTICAL]			
3. MAILING ADDRESS Cottage Farm Davidsonville Maryland (Mailing address if other than place indicated on line 2. If same insert word same)			
4. TELEPHONE +	5. AGE IN YEARS 59	6. PLACE OF BIRTH Indianapolis (Town or county)	
(Exchange) (Number)	DATE OF BIRTH Oct 30 1882 (Mo.) (Day) (Yr.)	Indiana (State or country)	
7. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS Edward L. Parke U. S. Marine Corp. Pearl Harbor			
8. EMPLOYER'S NAME AND ADDRESS Veterans administration Wash. D.C.			
9. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS Veterans administration Wash. D.C. (Number and street or R. F. D. number) (Town) (County) (State)			
I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE.			
D. S. S. Form 1 (Revised 4-1-42)	(over)	16-21630-1	Lawrence L. Parke (Registrant's signature)

War II Draft Registration Cards, 1942, digital image, National Archives via Ancestry.com, accessed 26 December 2018
World Draft Registration Card for Edward Parke's father, Clarence Parke, born 30 October 1882.

Pearl Harbor, as the person who would always know his address. However, by that time, the younger Parke had left Pearl Harbor, offering his father only a line in his next letter saying, "We were transferred over two months ago, but naturally I am unable to say, or hint, where we are at the present. From now on the letters you receive will be very irregular, but you remember the old saying, 'no news is good news'."¹¹ During this time frame, the 4th Defense Battalion established itself on the island of Efate in the Pacific to start building an airfield. In August 1943, the unit was stationed on Vella Lavella in the Solomon Islands in support of the I Marine Amphibious Corps. In October of that

year, Edward shared his opinion on his place in history by writing:

Things out here have apparently cooled off to a certain extent, but not so long ago we were experiencing some rather hectic days and nights. As you probably know [it is a] great deal more pleasant to read history than to assist in the making of it. History has a habit of relating only the high lights, but the thousands of small, insignificant incidents that make up those high lights can be very, very grim while they are directly concerned with you.¹²

¹¹ Edward Parke to Clarence Parke, 4 May 1942, Edward L. Parke Collection (COLL/5627), MCHD, Quantico, VA.

¹² Edward Parke to Clarence Parke, 12 October 1943, Edward L. Parke Collection (COLL/5627), MCHD, Quantico, VA.

For his actions during these “hectic days and nights,” Parke was awarded the Bronze Star. His citation reads:

For heroic service as Commanding Officer of an Antiaircraft Group Battery attached to the Fourth Defense Battalion, Fleet Marine Force, in action against enemy Japanese forces on Vella Lavella, New Georgia Group, Solomon Islands, from August 15 to October 31, 1943. Attacked by fourteen enemy dive bombers while his battery was vigorously repelling Japanese aircraft menacing our shipping in the Barakoma Area, First Lieutenant Parke ably controlled the determined and accurate performance of the battery, effectively bringing his 50-cal. guns to bear on the diving bombers as he continued to ward off the enemy’s aerial attacks on our shipping with his 90-mm weapons. First Lieutenant Parke’s inspiring courage and zealous devotion to duty during this period of intensive combat contributed materially to the success of our forces in the destruction of forty-two Japanese aircraft. His gallant conduct throughout was in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.¹³

As Parke was serving in the Solomon Islands, the USS *Indianapolis* was participating in actions against the Japanese on Tarawa and then Saipan before relocating to the Mariana Islands. It was here that First Lieutenant Parke joined on 1 September 1944 as the commanding officer of the Marine detachment aboard. He shared his excitement about his new post with his father in a letter dated 29 September 1944.

¹³ Edward L. Parke, Official Military Personnel File, National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, MO.

Dear Dad:

It has been a long time since my last letter and from the looks of things my letters will be more infrequent than the past. We only get a chance to post our mail when we are in port and port is something this packet doesn’t know much about.

My luck is still holding out! What I go through now is a long far cry from what I went through in the past. The only discomfort I suffer now is lack of sleep, and I never thought I’d live to see the day when I could be at the scene of an action in clean khaki, freshly shaven and a cup of coffee in my hand. I must admit it is a lot more comfortable, but somehow—when the whole show is over—you don’t have the same feeling of satisfaction. The feeling of a job well done. It is probably due to the fact that your individual part is so small, so insignificant to the part played by the men on the beach.

As I told you before I left I chased my ship about 15,000 miles before I finally made connections. I travelled by every means of transportation except dog sled and ox cart.

I received my promotion 31 July and am more than satisfied with my new command.

All for the present.

Love,
Ed¹⁴

A month later, he lamented not being a part of the big action at the Battle of Leyte Gulf in the Philippines, but was hopeful of his future chances, writing, “I don’t know whether my luck is good or bad. I managed to see some fair action since I joined the ship,

¹⁴ Edward Parke to Clarence Parke, 29 September 1944, Edward L. Parke Collection (COLL/5627), MCHD, Quantico, VA.



Palmer Rixey Collection (COLL/1348),
Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA

The first and second wave of landing craft approaching Saipan in the Mariana Islands, as seen from the USS *Birmingham* (CL 62). USS *Indianapolis* (CA 36) is visible in the middle distance and Tinian Island lies beyond it.

but unfortunately we are not with the 'Bull' [Admiral William F. Halsey Jr.] so we missed the really big one that is filling the papers now. I have a fair idea that our boss [Admiral Raymond A. Spruance] will take us to the doorstep of Tokyo on our next move. Here's hoping.¹⁵

The next stop for assistance from the *Indianapolis* was Peleliu. From 12-29 September 1944, the ship bombarded the island before and after the landings. In November 1944, Parke was ordered on leave and sent stateside for 10 days. He writes without the expectation of censorship from San Francisco, California.

The last move I made was Palau where the "old man" [Admiral Spruance] took our packet in so close I thought he wanted us to throw hand grenades

on the shore batteries, but it certainly gave us a grand stand seat for the fighting ashore. It was one of the grandest spectacles I ever expect to see. Up until this time I had only seen the fighting in my own vicinity and as a rule you were so busy ducking that you didn't see very much, but here the fighting was spread out like a giant panorama. You could take your pick of the action from the initial landing, the battle for the air-strip, to the last assault on "Bloody Nose Ridge."¹⁶

Clarence Parke would not hear from his son again until April 1945, when he wrote, "We took part in the first two raids on Tokyo and participated in the occupation of Iwo Jima."¹⁷ He wrote again the next month:

Well here I am back in the States again, but I don't know for how long. We arrived this morning and I am snatching a few moments to dash off a few lines to let you know I am still in one piece and in good health. My luck certainly held out during the past four months and from the looks of things it will continue to do so. When I speak of luck I do so reservedly. I am still alive which is lucky, but my luck at cards and dice as bad as ever.¹⁸

At the end of June 1945, Parke wrote this joyous, but also introspective letter.

Dear Dad:

I know this letter will come as a surprise, and I also realize that I should have written sooner, but since Mon-

¹⁵ Edward Parke to Clarence Parke, 31 October 1944, Edward L. Parke Collection (COLL/5627), MCHD, Quantico, VA.

¹⁶ Edward Parke to Clarence Parke, 22 November 1944, Edward L. Parke Collection (COLL/5627), MCHD, Quantico, VA.

¹⁷ Edward Parke to Clarence Parke, 10 April 1945, Edward L. Parke Collection (COLL/5627), MCHD, Quantico, VA.

¹⁸ Edward Parke to Clarence Parke, 2 May 1945, Edward L. Parke Collection (COLL/5627), MCHD, Quantico, VA.

day I have been swamped with work and was unable to write until now. I also thought of sending a wire but during these times I dislike that form of communication very much as that is the form used by the Navy Department for informing the next of kin of the death of someone in the service.

The whole thing is that I was married last Saturday to Miss Eleanor Wright of Chicago Ill [Illinois].

I have known her since last October and I believe I mentioned the fact I intended to marry her in one of my previous letters.

I believe that I thought the whole thing out very carefully and do not think I have made a mistake. However time alone will show whether I have or not.

As far as my financial affairs are concerned they remain about the same. My insurance remains unchanged. That is to say to be divided between you and mother. The \$1,000—I believe that is the amount I sent home when I was in the islands—goes to you. The six month's pay—in the advent of my death—I would like to go to mother, so I have made her my beneficiary for it.

As a married officer my pay has been increased \$111.00 per month so I intend to send Mary \$150.00 per month to do with as she likes.

I don't intend to sound morbid, but for the past six months it is beginning to look as if my luck might not hold out. Each time things get a little closer.

I don't intend to get killed, but I am really not in the least afraid of anything that might happen. Anyway if anything should happen to me I figure that you and Mother should be the

ones to receive any benefits that may result from it.

Mary intends to come to Washington as soon as she can arrange for someone to stay with her mother who has been very ill. At the present time Mary is staying with friends of ours here, but will leave for Chicago, 2 July 1945. I hope—when you meet her—you two will like each other.

Love and regards to all
Ed⁹

This would be the last letter that Clarence Parke would receive from his son. On 12 August 1945, he received an official telegram informing him that his son was missing in action following the sinking of the *Indianapolis*. On 17 August, he received a letter confirming the authenticity of the telegram, but it was not until 15 September of that year that he received the telegram confirming his son's death.

Edward Parke was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal posthumously. His citation reads:

For heroic conduct while attached to the USS *Indianapolis*, following the sinking of that vessel by enemy Japanese forces, three hundred miles north of the Palau Islands, in July 1945. Struggling in the oil-covered sea for a period of three days without food, drinking water or a life raft, Captain Parke worked continuously to keep together a group of survivors from the sinking ship and to rescue those who were helpless or in difficulty. Voluntarily giving away his own life jacket to support the exhausted on several occasions, he persisted in his self-sacrificing efforts on behalf of his men until he collapsed from complete exhaustion. A leader of indomitable

⁹ Edward Parke to Clarence Parke, 28 June 1945, Edward L. Parke Collection (COLL/5627), MCHD, Quantico, VA.

CLASS OF SERVICE This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.	<h1>WESTERN UNION</h1> <p>A. N. WILLIAMS PRESIDENT</p>	1201	SYMBOLS DL = Day Letter NL = Night Letter LC = Deferred Cable NLT = Cable Night Letter Ship Radiogram
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The filing time shown in the date line on telegrams and day letters is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination.

0BRC213 55= WASHINGTON DC 14 641P
 MR CLARENCE L PARKE (FATHER)
 DAVIDSONVILLE, MD

1945 SEP 15 AM 12 16.

DEEPLY RERET TO INFORM YOU THAT YOUR SON CAPTAIN EDWARD L PARKE USMC PREVIOUSLY REPORTED MISSING IN ACTION WAS KILLED IN ACTION 30 JULY 1945 IN THE PACIFIC AREA IN THE PERFORMANCE OF HIS DUTY AND SERVICE OF HIS COUNTRY. WHEN INFORMATION IS RECEIVED REGARDING BURIAL YOU WILL BE NOTIFIED. PLEASE ACCEPT MY HEARTFELT SYMPATHY
 A A VANDEGRIFT GENERAL USMC COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE COPRS.

30 1945

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

Edward L. Parke Collection (COLL/5627), Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA

The Western Union telegram informing Parke's family of his status change from missing in action to killed in action.

courage, Captain Parke, by his devotion to others, saved the lives of many who otherwise might have perished and his valiant conduct throughout was in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.²⁰

Following Parke's death, his father received his son's medals including the Navy and Marine Corps

Medal, American Defense Service Medal, Bronze Star, Purple Heart, and World War II Victory Medal. His mother also received duplicate medals. Having only been married approximately a month, Mary Wright had to submit their marriage certificate as proof so she could receive his pension.

Much as with Parke's circuitous route through the Marine Corps, his letters went on a journey of their own. The donor of the collection, Meegan Delphia, tells us that when her father, Ronald Murphy, died in the summer of 2014, she was named as the executor of his estate. Her father was retired from the Air National Guard and a Navy veteran. He was also a collector who frequently went to flea markets, estate

²⁰ Edward L. Parke, Official Military Personnel File, National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, MO.

sales, and auctions. She believes that he purchased the box of letters at an estate sale in Vermont. It is unknown how the letters ended up in Vermont, but we are grateful to both of them for saving the letters and finding them a permanent home. Edward Parke gave his life for his country, and allowing the public to read these letters resurrects his memory from the depths of

the Pacific into the collective consciousness to make sure he is not forgotten.

The entirety of the Edward Parke Collection can be found on the Marine Corps History Division Flickr page at USMCArchives.

• 1775 •

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REVIEW ESSAY

Major Peter L. Belmonte, USAF (Ret)

The U.S. Army Campaigns of World War I: Supporting Allied Offensives, 8 August–11 November 1918. By Paul B. Cora and Alexander A. Falbo-Wild. (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2018. Pp. 87. \$11.00 paperback; free e-book.)

The U.S. Army Campaigns of World War I: Meuse-Argonne, 26 September–11 November 1918. By Richard S. Faulkner. (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2018. Pp. 79. \$9.00 paperback; free e-book.)

To commemorate the centennial of World War I, the U.S. Army's Center of Military History produced a series of eight booklets that cover various aspects of the United States' involvement in the war. At 8.5 inches x 5.5 inches, with around 80 pages of text, maps, illustrations, and pictorial covers, the booklets are small in scale but contain much good information.

In *The U.S. Army Campaigns of World War I: Supporting Allied Offensives, 8 August–11 November 1918*, historians Paul B. Cora and Alexander A. Falbo-Wild examine the U.S. military contribution to the final offensives that resulted in the defeat of the Central Powers. Sometimes called The Hundred Days Offensive, these battles saw American forces fighting under their own Army command as well as under French or British command. The authors cover American military action in the following campaigns: the Somme offensive 1918, Oise-Aisne 1918, Ypres-Lys 1918, Meuse-Argonne 1918, and Vittorio-Veneto 1918. The scope of the subject, of course, is quite large, but the constraints imposed by the format compel the authors to provide only an introduction or overview of the topic. In this case, Cora and Falbo-Wild have succeeded quite well.

Following a four-page introduction and explanation of the strategic setting of the western front in 1918, the authors cover the operations of selected U.S. units in the various campaigns under consideration. Many of the topics will be familiar to readers: the advance from the Vesle to the Aisne Rivers by the 3d, 4th, 28th, and 77th Divisions in August and September; the struggles of the 27th and 30th Divisions near Mont Kemmel in Flanders, Belgium, and then at the Saint Quentin Canal in August and September; and the bloody attacks of the 2d and 36th Divisions at Blanc Mont in October.

Seasoned students of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) will appreciate the coverage of the participation of elements of the 33d Division in the attack at Hamel on 4 July 1918 and the assault on Chipilly Ridge during the Battle of Amiens the following month. In both cases, American doughboys fought under Australian and British command. The authors cover the actions of the 370th Infantry Regiment, composed largely of the African American 8th Illinois Infantry Regiment, Illinois National Guard, fighting under French command near Vauxaillon in September and October. Cora and Falbo-Wild also describe the attacks of the 37th and 91st Divisions, temporarily under Belgian Army command, along the Scheldt River in November 1918.

Another lesser-known campaign covered here is the Vittorio-Veneto campaign. The 332d Infantry Regiment was detached from the 83d Division and sent

Maj Peter L. Belmonte, USAF (Ret), holds a master's degree in history from California State University, Stanislaus, and is the author of several books, including *Days of Perfect Hell: The U.S. 26th Infantry Regiment in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, October–November 1918* (2015) and *Play Ball!: Doughboys and Baseball during the Great War* (with coauthors Alexander F. Barnes and Samuel O. Barnes, 2019).

to Italy to take part in the fighting during the final days of the war. The authors describe some interesting aspects of the campaign, including the 332d Regiment's efforts to deceive Austrian intelligence about the numbers and types of American troops in Italy, as well as the postwar occupation duty of parts of the regiment in Austria and Montenegro.

Cora and Falbo-Wild conclude with a two-page analysis of the U.S. efforts described in the booklet. Sixteen colorful maps nicely depict each of the battles covered, and 11 photographs enhance the text. Overall, this brief treatment of some often-overlooked aspects of U.S. military participation in the war is a fine introduction and overview of the subject.

In *The U.S. Army Campaigns of World War I: Meuse-Argonne, 26 September–11 November 1918*, historian Richard S. Faulkner writes about “the largest and most costly military operation in American history” (p. 7). Involving more than 1 million Americans and more than 135,000 French, the 47-day battle was part of the final Allied push that resulted in the defeat of Germany and its allies. To summarize such a vast and complex operation within 80 pages required a great deal of skill and a strong grasp of the subject. Faulkner, an award-winning historian and author of *Pershing's Crusaders: The American Soldier in World War I* (2017), is equal to the task and succeeds quite admirably. After a four-page introduction and discussion of the strategic situation on the Western Front by September 1918, Faulkner proceeds to cover the battle chronologically. While describing the flow of combat during the campaign, Faulkner covers such well-known topics as the Lost Battalion, the patrol for which future Army Sergeant Alvin C. York earned the Medal of Honor, and the so-called race for Sedan. He also covers each of the AEF divisions engaged in the widespread fighting. The result is a brief but panoramic review of the campaign.

Students of the AEF know that the Meuse-Argonne was not without its difficulties for the American Army, and Faulkner addresses these. Starting off, General John J. Pershing, commander of the AEF and First Army, assigned relatively inexperienced units to the first day's assault; indeed, the green 79th Division

had the most difficult assignment in their attack on Montfaucon. A terrible road network behind the lines did not help the supply and transportation issues, and during the battle, units and individuals were still learning tactics, command and control, and combat logistics. Concurrently, Pershing had to contend with the difficulties of working with Marshal Ferdinand Foch, the Allied general-in-chief. On October 12, Pershing made “perhaps his wisest decision as the AEF's commander” when he recognized the insurmountable difficulties of commanding both the AEF and the First Army (p. 41). Accordingly, he turned over command of the First Army to Lieutenant General Hunter Liggett, enabling Pershing to coordinate the overall effort while commanding all American forces in France. Liggett, who “had a far more sophisticated understanding of the realities of the Great War battlefield and was better [than Pershing] at harnessing the material advantages that the Americans held over the Germans”, was able to bring some degree of order to the First Army effort (p. 74). By 1 November, the First Army had solved or at least mitigated many of its difficulties, and 10 days later the war ended.

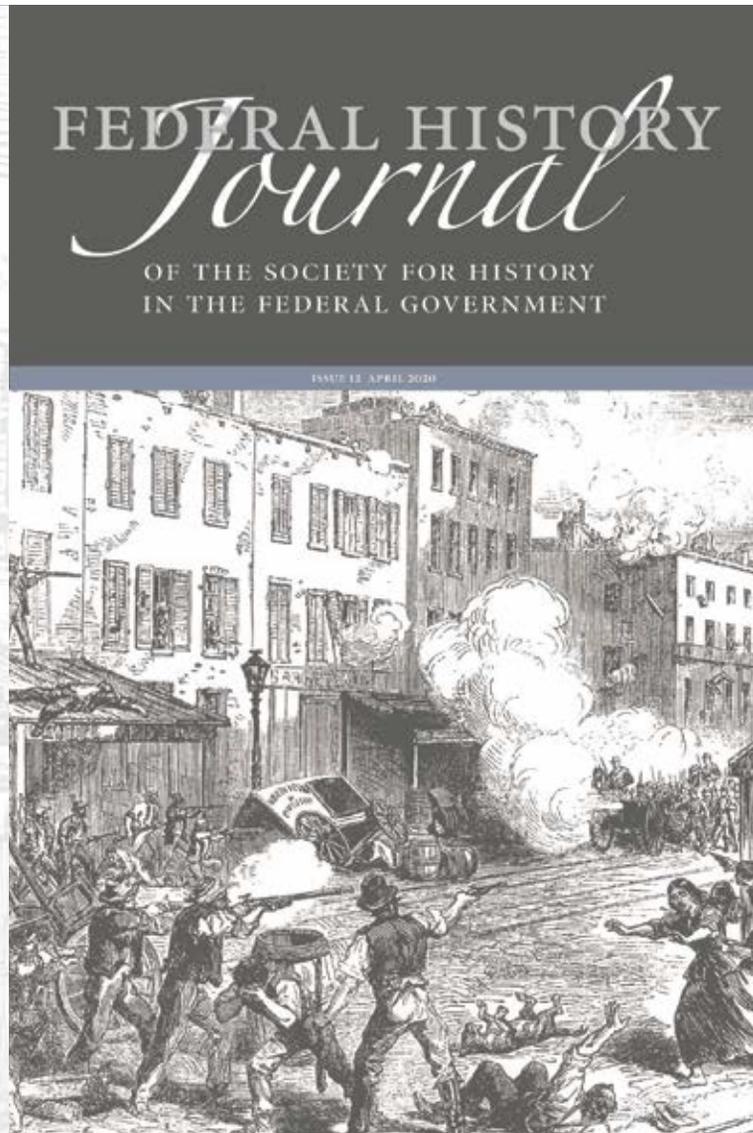
Faulkner's five-page concluding analysis is a concise summary of the problems facing America's military effort during the campaign; to a great degree, it can be applied to all the contending armies during the war. In the end, the American Army succeeded in the Meuse-Argonne, but at the high cost of “26,277 men killed and another 95,786 wounded” (p. 7). As Faulkner rightly concludes, it “was a case of ‘winning ugly,’ but it was still a victory” (p. 75). The 12 maps covering the battle are helpful and nicely produced, and 17 photographs illustrate the troops, weapons, and terrain described in the booklet. This is a fine summary of an important and complex campaign that greatly contributed to the Allied victory.

These booklets are designed to be brief and informative. Format constraints make it impossible for the authors to cover in detail such important topics as the evolution and improvement in tactics, command and control, and logistical support, as well as the position of the American Army in coalition warfare. The book-

lets are works of popular history designed for wide public consumption. They do not have endnotes, but each one contains a listing of 8 or 12 books for further reading. Readers who are not yet familiar with U.S.

military contributions to the Great War will benefit most from these booklets, but they are also helpful, concise summaries for those who have already studied the AEF.

• 1775 •



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BOOK REVIEWS

Frank Kalesnik, PhD

Killing for the Republic: Citizen-Soldiers and the Roman Way of War. By Steele Brand. (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019. Pp. 392. \$34.95 cloth and e-book).

Steele Brand's *Killing for the Republic: Citizen-Soldiers and the Roman Way of War* examines the impact Roman culture and society had on military operations. The virtues and values of the Roman Republic produced yeoman farmers who were also citizen-soldiers willing to kill, and if necessary, to die for Rome. Disciplined and rugged, Rome's warriors also exercised initiative and a sense of honor, putting their comrades and the state above self-interest. Brand argues that Rome's armies triumphed repeatedly despite occasional setbacks, eventually establishing an empire that dominated the Mediterranean world. After centuries of success against foreign enemies, Rome's warriors succumbed not to external enemies but to themselves in a series of fratricidal civil wars following the death of Julius Caesar in 44 BCE. The empire established by Augustus preserved the trappings of the old Roman Republic, but Rome's soldiers were no longer citizen-soldiers; they were professionals committed to a lifetime of service to the emperor.

Brand uses five battles to trace the growth and demise of the Republican army, starting with Sentinum (295 BCE) and concluding with Philippi (42 BCE). The first battle was fought against a coalition of Rome's enemies (Gauls and Samnites), while the second was a clash between legions supported by foreign allies and auxiliaries. Other battles include the capture of New Carthage (209 BCE) by Scipio Africanus in Spain during the Second Punic War; the defeat of the Macedo-

nians at Pydna (168 BCE); and another clash between Romans at Mutina (43 BCE). Each battle is covered in detail in a distinct chapter, in which the political and social situation is also described, placing the events in the context of the overall growth and decline of the Roman Republic.

This approach has both strengths and weaknesses. The author relies on ancient sources, which he cites and comments on. In this regard, the book is useful for its insights into classical scholarship. This can go too far, however. In the chapter on Mutina, Brand describes Cicero's role in the events following Caesar's death at great length, particularly his efforts to rally key personalities to a coalition committed to preserving the Roman Republic. While interesting from a political and social standpoint, one wonders if the troops actually fighting even knew who Cicero was. The following chapter on Philippi pays much more attention to the common soldier, many of whom (on both sides) were Caesar's veterans. Citing Appian's *Civil Wars*, the author describes the particularly brutal nature of the fighting, in which both the defeated commanders, Brutus and Cassius, committed suicide, the latter prematurely when the results of the battle were still not conclusive. Brand concludes the chapter: "There was no longer a republic and no need for republican soldiers. The men who would now serve the emperors had not merely killed their fellow Romans; they had killed their own nature as citizen-soldiers" (p. 312).

Brand notes the influence of Roman history on the United States' own founding fathers. The following passage is worth quoting in full:

In an attack on his dreaded enemy, Thomas Jefferson said that Alexander

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Hamilton adored Julius Caesar. The story is that while the two were serving under [General George] Washington, Jefferson was hosting a dinner at his own home. Hamilton had noticed three busts, but in his ignorance, he did not know who they were. Jefferson told him that they were Francis Bacon, Isaac Newton, and John Locke, which he considered his “trinity of the three greatest men the world has ever produced.” Hamilton was said to have summarily dismissed such silly sentiments and responded that “the greatest man that ever lived was Julius Caesar” (p. 201).

The United States was modeled on the Roman Republic, with its living constitution, separation of powers, and system of checks and balances. Nevertheless, this passage shows that even a founding father currently held up as a pop-culture icon could admire and potentially emulate a tyrant bent on crushing the very values America’s founders embraced. Brand ex-

presses a longing for the United States to return to its own days of the citizen-soldier instead of the professional volunteer (he himself interrupted his academic career to serve as an intelligence officer in the U.S. Army), arguing that voters might be less inclined to support wars they themselves would be called on to fight.

In conclusion, *Killing for the Republic* is worth reading for those interested in Roman history, particularly the interplay between its cultural, military, political, and social aspects. While the book does provide interesting insights into the influence of Roman history on the United States’ founding fathers, this reviewer does not fully accept the idea that the United States needs to return to a reliance on citizen-soldiers. The American military still relies largely on people serving in the Reserves and National Guard with competent professionalism. Also, active duty personnel are typically deployed overseas for months, not the years their Roman predecessors could expect, even in the days of the Republic. Nevertheless, this book is recommended, particularly to those with an interest in ancient history and its relevance today.

• 1775 •

Christopher N. Blaker

Implacable Foes: The War in the Pacific, 1944-1945. By Waldo Heinrichs and Marc Gallicchio. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. Pp. 728. \$34.95 cloth; \$24.95 paperback.)

As the year 2020 marks the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II, a close look at Waldo Heinrichs and Marc Gallicchio's *Implacable Foes* is perhaps timelier now than ever before. This hefty, all-encompassing volume pays special attention to the Pacific War's final phases—most notably, the last year and a half of war as the United States and its Allies raced across the Southwest and Central Pacific toward Japan. Following the defeat of Nazi Germany and the end of the war in Europe in May 1945, the United States shifted from waging a two-front war to the fight against a single enemy. While that should have meant that their task had become easier, the opposite soon proved true—though an Allied victory over the Japanese was inevitable, that victory was remarkably delicate and fraught with political and military complications, and many things very nearly went wrong along the way.

That both Heinrichs and Gallicchio are experienced military historians supports the authority of their work, and that Heinrichs himself is a veteran of World War II enriches their interest in and passion for their subject. The authors dive into incredible detail to cover the end of the Pacific War, including the perspectives of politicians, military officers, and frontline servicemembers alike, as well as delving deep into the strategic, tactical, logistical, and political sides of a period of World War II that is glossed over in many other histories. They also explore the relationships between the various Allied nations at war with Japan, reminding readers that while the United States was the undisputed leader of the Allies in the

Pacific, it was by no means singlehandedly responsible for Japan's defeat.

The book is divided into two sections: the first nine chapters cover combat operations on the ocean road to Tokyo between April 1944 and June 1945, while the last four highlight the final months of the war between the Allied conquest of Okinawa and the capitulation of Japan. After summarizing the Pacific War's "defensive phase" of 1942-43, the authors launch into the "assault phase" of 1944-45, weaving a narrative that includes bloody campaigns at New Guinea, the Mariana and Palau Islands, the Philippines, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa. Here, the authors do an expert job of covering the conduct of these battles, relying on official U.S. Army and Navy histories of the war to provide background for each operation and separate monographs and veterans' memoirs to truly flesh out what happened on the shores of those Pacific islands.

Meanwhile, Heinrichs and Gallicchio continue to remind readers of the obstacles that faced the Allies during this phase of the war, including Japan's stubborn willingness to fight to the bitter end no matter the cost incurred, a hostile rivalry between the U.S. Army and Navy that threatened to derail combat operations before they could even begin, conflicting priorities between the European and Pacific Wars that existed before the defeat of Germany, and a particularly delicate political position at home in the United States. The last of these is perhaps most important, since, the authors argue, the American public was becoming increasingly unwilling and unable to handle the war lasting much longer, wanting to transition their wartime economy to one of peace and demanding that their government begin bringing U.S. servicemembers home from overseas. That volatile political climate at home ensured that among the United States' two chief military options to end the

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war, a lengthy siege of Japan or a costly invasion of the enemy's home islands, the latter would inevitably be chosen.

Great attention is paid in the book's final chapters to the political and military complications that the United States faced when it became apparent that an invasion of Japan was necessary. Here, the authors' biggest overarching argument is presented: that the United States' use of the atomic bomb was a necessity that ended the Pacific War in a way that allowed America and its allies to swiftly defeat Japan and avoid incurring the overwhelming military casualties that would have been inevitable during an amphibious invasion.

The atomic bomb remains one of the most controversial and hotly contested subjects of not only World War II but also American history as a whole. This book dispels the oft-repeated myth that the war was already won by the time the United States dropped two atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. The Allies were winning, no doubt, but there is a substantial difference between *winning* and having *won* a war, the difference typically made up in lives, time, and treasure. The authors provide evidence that the Japanese government was willing to fight on even in the event of an Allied invasion of its homeland, regardless of the military or civilian casualties incurred. Readers are reminded that the American public would not stand for another extended land campaign in the Pacific and were already stomping for demobilization in all theaters of war. The authors also address new problems that began creeping up during the invasion's planning phase, including the inability to transfer enough troops from Europe to the Pacific quickly enough, the risk of mass Japanese kamikaze attacks against the Allied fleets during the campaign, and the harsh reality that Army and Marine divisions in the Pacific that had been sufficiently bloodied by campaigns in the Philippines and at Iwo Jima and Okinawa were

not yet strong enough to make another assault. The atomic bomb, it appears, was both the best and only option the United States had to end the war.

Implacable Foes works as an argument in favor of the atomic bomb, proving how costly the Pacific War had become by the summer of 1945 and how the United States, despite its military supremacy, was not politically strong enough at home to keep fighting the war as it had during the preceding year and a half. Historians can and will continue to debate the morality and necessity of the atomic bomb forever, both sides armed with practical arguments and effective supporting evidence. Fortunately for the sake of *Implacable Foes*, the authors make their position abundantly clear, regardless of whether the reader agrees or disagrees with them, arguing that the bomb allowed for a faster conclusion to the war, fewer Allied lives wasted in the Pacific, and the ability to rebuild Japan as an ally in the postwar international community.

In *Implacable Foes*, Heinrichs and Gallicchio ultimately achieve their goal of illustrating the final phase of the Pacific War in great detail and structuring a well-argued and -supported thesis regarding the United States' use of the atomic bomb. The inclusion of a dozen maps relative to the Pacific War; helpful, easy-to-follow footnotes; and the inclusion of both Allied and Japanese sources only serve to strengthen the book's value, though an imbalanced attention given to the Army's ground campaigns to the detriment of the Navy at sea risks leaving readers interested in naval history wanting. While casual readers may find the work far too long and excruciatingly detailed to keep their attention, military historians and serious enthusiasts of World War II will no doubt benefit greatly from reading it. This book is not simply a retelling of the Pacific War's final chapters, but rather an effective illustration of how the United States approached its victory over Japan and an argument staunchly in favor of the indispensability of the atomic bomb.

Robert Niebuhr, PhD

The World at War, 1914–1945. By Jeremy Black. (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2019. Pp. 351. \$98.00 cloth; \$39.00 paperback; \$37.00 e-book.)

Scholarship on World War II is prodigious and the continued interest for both students and the general public alike is proof that more works will be forthcoming in the foreseeable future. One of the questions, of course, for any author writing on this period to ask is how they can contribute to such a well-covered field. Archives have been combed through for decades now, and only a handful of topics—such as prisoners—remain understudied. The purpose of *The World at War, 1914–1945*, however, transcends World War II and tries to build a sense of continuity in the way we understand the broader period from 1914 until 1945.

Author Jeremy Black rightly mentions how the “attempt to provide a common narrative” that links the world wars has been problematic so far (p. 1). Fritz Fischer’s scholarship, most notably in *Germany’s War Aims in the First World War* (trans. 1967), remains divisive, as have some of the works encouraged by the Fischer thesis, including Daniel Jonah Goldhagen’s *Hitler’s Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (1996). Goldhagen, of course, tries to explain why Germans in particular were anti-Semitic and prone to violence, which is not altogether difficult, given events such as the September Plan of 1915. Imperial Germany’s fumbling of power politics boldly stated or foreshadowed ideas such as *Lebensraum*, an economic reorganization of Europe, and the sort of racialist ideas that culminated in the Holocaust. Numerous other scholars implicitly link the world wars when they teach on Adolf Hitler, for example. Joachim Fest’s dated yet impeccable biography of the Nazi dictator

spends significant time looking at the late nineteenth century and trying to understand topics such as the worldview and influence of Pan-Germans and Marxists, and then link Hitler’s experience in World War I with his deliberate moves to prompt World War II.

Black’s work offers something broader in scope yet stays close to military aspects to show the continuities between these wars. The book has a clear organization schema and remains consistent across the chapters in terms of content covered. With a focus on the causes of the two conflicts and then a detailed section on land, sea, and air warfare in World War I, the interwar period, and World War II, the book is predictable (in a good way) and lends itself to understanding the period through important similarities. The author does a nice job reminding the reader at various points of these similarities, which helps serve to keep the narrative engaging and on track with the book’s purpose. Additionally, what makes this book interesting is the attempt to offer a global view on this larger period and not favor the Eurocentric outlook that dominates the field. *The World at War, 1914–1945* is a well-written and informative book that tries to step beyond the sorts of controversies that have appeared in the past when considering the first half of the twentieth century. A sober analysis of a prodigious amount of detail and data go a long way toward making this book worth reading. It also begs the reader to use the information presented as a launching pad to ask more questions.

This reviewer does, however, note that while the global approach was refreshing, the coverage seemed spotty at times. Black does a nice job mentioning the importance of China in this period, but other countries’ coverage seem hastily included. Brazil appears a couple of times, which makes sense, since it took

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part in both world wars; but nothing in-depth was discussed, nor did the author point the reader toward further scholarship on Brazil's contribution, especially in World War II. The Spanish Civil War factored into the interwar section, yet again the author might have talked more about how all of the participants or sponsors learned from the various campaigns. Black mentions aspects of what the Germans gained, but this was only part of the story. Speaking more broadly, there was a missed opportunity in taking the global approach, or at least pointing readers to consider other related topics following a modest overview. For example, the Chaco War, fought between Bolivia and Paraguay (1932–35), served as a sort of bridge between the two world wars. Both sides relied on technology such as tanks, airplanes (as bombers, fighters, and recon), machine guns, and artillery, and employed veterans of World War I (mainly German commanders and White Russian émigrés). Furthermore, from a strategic perspective, the Chaco War proved that most technology favored the defender, yet commanders relied stubbornly on morale or faith to overcome the obvious. This was of course similar to the world wars, except when offensive forces consisted of highly trained and disciplined soldiers. Following that, the logistics factored into the Chaco War's success and replicated the German failure at the Marne and the inability to prosecute World War II deep inside Russia. Few people know of the Chaco War, so it was not a surprise to see its omission; yet, this is precisely where new scholarship on well-known topics can break new ground. Black might have reiterated some general thoughts on the Chaco War and its similarities to the world wars. Ernst Röhm, after all, helped train the Bolivian Army for a short time before returning to lead to the *Sturmabteilung* (SA). Citing some of the established works

on the Chaco War might have encouraged the reader to pursue the idea of continuity and consider further areas of comparison in the theme of globalized war.

One other area that seemed to beg for more information was in how military thinking evolved from 1914 to 1945. Black covers this when he mentions Mikhail N. Tukhachevsky, for instance, and the ideas of deep battle alongside a reference to the Stormtroopers of World War I and the blitzkrieg that the Germans employed later. Yet, there was a bit more that could have been included, or references made for further reading. For example, that author might have discussed how Charles de Gaulle developed ideas on deep/mechanized battle techniques but how the French famously failed to employ the sort of training among noncommissioned officers to enact such complex battlefield maneuvers as the Germans did. Just as Omer Bartov's work has shown how the German war machine wore down once these noncommissioned officers died in the Soviet Union by the end of 1942, Black shows that the German failures at the Marne were largely owing to an inability to prosecute complicated plans while relying on foot and horsepower.

Finally, in terms of audience, this book is likely the most useful to students who need to cover a lot of background information on the period of 1914–45. This can come in handy as a great reference book to cite all sorts of tidbits and to direct readers to more information on certain larger topics. This text might be useful in some undergraduate courses, as well, especially survey courses on modern military history; it would definitely be a valuable resource as recommended reading, but especially for those students doing some sort of extended paper or thesis.

Jonathan Carroll

Subordinating Intelligence: The DoD/CIA Post-Cold War Relationship. By David P. Oakley. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2019. Pp. 264. \$50.00 cloth and e-book.)

David P. Oakley's exploration of the post-Cold War relationship between the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Department of Defense (DOD) tracks the realignment of CIA operations over time, from being a mile wide and an inch deep to an inch wide and a mile deep. *Subordinating Intelligence* details how the CIA—America's only independent intelligence agency, which was established to provide strategic-level intelligence gathering during the Cold War—was forced to narrow its operational focus from the strategic to the tactical level to fulfill the new post-Cold War priority of supporting military operations. This shift, Oakley argues, has resulted in the loss of the CIA's status as an independent intelligence agency due to its increasing subordination to the DOD. This is symptomatic of the increased militarization of U.S. foreign policy since the end of the Cold War, a policy reinforced by the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, under the mantra "DoD leads, all others support" (p. x). As Oakley explains, this process was neither sudden, nor subtle. The perceived intelligence failures during operations in Grenada and Beirut, blamed on the CIA, convinced some that the priority for intelligence agencies should be to support the military effort first and foremost. This, despite the CIA facing a shrinking budget and reduced personnel, whilst struggling to maintain a global awareness of threats to American interests in post-Cold War. Through legislation, presidential directives, and the successful examples of Panama and Operation Desert Storm supporting the case for the integration of intelligence efforts under the auspices of the DOD, the CIA was progressively nudged toward focusing only on tactical support for military

operations, narrowing its focus, but also deepening that narrower focus.

This work is significant because it tackles an issue long overlooked in recent scholarship: the effect the end of the Cold War had on the American intelligence community. Oakley's insight, unique due to his career in both the military and the CIA, is compelling as this experience has provided him the knowledge of where to look, who to talk to, and what questions to ask in terms of sources. In this regard, *Subordinating Intelligence* makes use of extensive interviews coupled with Oakley's clear grasp of who the main players were, their backgrounds, and their motivations. Moreover, to his credit, Oakley does not approach the problem as being a vacuum occupied solely by the CIA and the DOD. He very effectively historicizes the transition from an independent CIA to a subordinated organization by highlighting events in the wider military, political, and intelligence spheres. How such events shaped the process along the way is shown through his use of senate and congressional records and presidential archives. Does Oakley achieve his purpose? In the main, yes; but *Subordinating Intelligence* is a balanced, clearly articulated, and thoroughly researched book. The evolution of the CIA-DOD relationship and the change therein is clearly illustrated. However, this book falls short of the review snippets on the back cover claiming this is the "most comprehensive treatment" of the CIA-DOD relationship. While this book is excellent, compelling, and informative, there are two issues detracting from its strength and impact. These are both errors of omission—one minor, the other major.

First, there is a problem of organization. *Subordinating Intelligence* is divided into two broad time periods: 1982 to 2001, and post 11 September 2001 to the present day. While admittedly only a minor critique, there is little exploration of the CIA-DOD relation-

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ship from 1947 to 1982 or, more importantly, during the Vietnam War. Oakley's thesis is that the post-Cold War period is *the* key turning point in the CIA-DOD relationship. A brief analysis of the relationship during the Cold War or during Vietnam would have provided a comparative example to strengthen the case for arguing change.

The second issue is in a slightly different vein but is of major concern. The very contentious issue of intelligence efforts regarding weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and the justification for the invasion of Iraq in 2003 is almost completely ignored. In fact, WMD are only mentioned in relation to Desert Storm. While reviewing a book should only entail evaluating the work itself, not what one wishes was there, in *Subordinating Intelligence* it is unavoidable. Put simply, this is because, for a work on the intelligence community half dedicated to the post-9/11 period, this is a glaring omission.

A book only has so many pages, however, and while *Subordinating Intelligence* is not short, it is also not lengthy. Was there room to briefly address the Cold War relationship or to provide an examination of whether the CIA-DOD relationship, or the conse-

quences of subordinating intelligence efforts under the umbrella of the military, had a part to play with WMD and Iraq post 9/11 without making it a 500-page test of endurance? This reviewer would argue that there was. This would have been central to strengthening Oakley's argument, but also to the key message of contemporary relevance in *Subordinating Intelligence*. That message, like a golden thread permeating the book, is a warning. While the CIA can neither be all-knowing and omniscient, nor all things to all people, intentionally limiting the focus of America's only independent intelligence agency to supporting military operations comes at a price. That price, as Oakley consistently and persuasively reiterates, is the loss of strategic intelligence analysis in favor of focusing on the tactical here and now. Consequently, Oakley suggests that Russia, the rise of China, and other unforeseen threats or future challenges to American interests may not be receiving the attention they merit from the CIA while this subordination continues. Despite the disappointing omissions, this is a compelling work that will promote more scholarly enquiry into the role of intelligence agencies post-Cold War to the modern day.

Major Timothy Heck, USMCR

Turning Point, 1967–1968. By Adrian G. Traas. (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2017. Pp. 80. Free e-book.)

The 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War has resulted in a renewed publication effort by official historians across the U.S. government. Organizations such as the Marine Corps History Division and the U.S. Army Center of Military History are publishing a variety of commemorative and scholarly works, focusing on single battles or on larger campaigns and concepts. Among these is Adrian G. Traas's commemorative pamphlet, *Turning Point, 1967–1968*. Designed for a general reading audience rather than a military or scholarly one, *Turning Point* describes several key American operations during that critical time, most importantly the Tet offensive, which marked a shift in American perceptions and the conduct of the war. Overall, *Turning Point* is a cursory study that opens the door for more in-depth reading and research.

By 1967, after several years of inconclusive but costly fighting, Army General William C. Westmoreland, the chief of the U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (USMACV), remarked that American efforts in Vietnam required visible progress “on all fronts—political, military, economic, and psychological” (p. 7). America, he believed, lacked the political will to sustain a long-term commitment of troops in South Vietnam without overt signs of victory. His North Vietnamese counterparts also saw 1968 as a turning point in their war. In their estimation, 1968 was an ideal time to launch the *tong cong kich/tong khoi nghia* (general offensive-general uprising) against the South Vietnamese government.

The book starts with broad-brushed outlines of the war in Vietnam at the strategic level, an operational laydown of allied ground forces across South Vietnam, and then focuses on U.S. Army combat operations in this crucial year. After establishing the

strategic context, Traas provides table of organization-type data, outlining the picture of American and allied forces in South Vietnam, the vast majority of whom were from the U.S. Army. Omitted, however, are details on how North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces were arrayed. This omission makes it difficult for the reader to compare the strength of the allied forces with their enemy.

Combat operations are recounted geographically, starting with the Army 2d Field Force (II Field Force) command's operations toward the Cambodian border outside of Saigon. Countering II Field Force's operations, the North Vietnamese and their Viet Cong allies launched ambitious operations of their own, attempting “to fight a battle with three divisions in a region spanning several provinces, a step toward its goal of conducting even larger operations in the future” (p. 22). Multiple named operations followed and are covered in limited detail.

Next, Traas covers operations of the Army's 9th Infantry Division in the Mekong Delta, focusing around Long An Province and its crucial rice harvest. After covering battles about supply lines and firebases, the book moves to the Western Highlands and the South Vietnamese II Corps' area of operations, largely focused around Dak To. Traas finishes 1967 with a brief look at Army operations in I Corps in northern South Vietnam, an area largely manned by Marine Corps units under III Marine Amphibious Force.

The author lays out the context of the well-documented Tet offensive before describing combat operations in greater depth. Overall, he deftly focuses on large operations while occasionally providing details at the battalion or below level, giving the story a human touch. With the conclusion of clean-up operations in March, Traas provides Westmoreland's attritionist assessment of the offensive before briefly

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covering public and political reaction in America. Despite recent literature regarding the impact of Tet on the American public, Walter Cronkite's assessment of a lost war is omitted as it is out of the pamphlet's scope.⁶ The book also briefly covers civilian losses and the My Lai massacre. Combat around Khe Sanh and later fights in the vicinity of Tan Son Nhut Air Base and in Saigon conclude the operational history of the pamphlet. Traas finishes with a brief analysis of the impact of the year on the war's eventual outcome.

As a commemorative pamphlet, *Turning Point's* value for scholars is limited. The work lacks a bibliography, instead containing a very limited "Further Reading" section in which the most recent work was published in 1993. Given the volume of recent material on the Vietnam War, specifically about the crucial events of 1967-68, this oversight severely inhibits the ability of the pamphlet to be considered an

authoritative official source or analysis. Furthermore, academic historians will observe the omission of footnotes or endnotes from the final text. As a brief commemorative pamphlet, the omission is understandable but unfortunate.

In his brief concluding analysis, Traas states, "War is a test of wills, and although Tet was a military disaster for the Communists, the failed offensive had seriously shaken America's willingness to continue the fight" (p. 74). The turning point year of 1967-68, through a series of tactical and operational victories for the United States, failed to produce strategic results. *Turning Point* covers one of the most important phases of the Vietnam War in clear, concise prose, supplemented with well-rendered maps. While its focus and depth are limited by its format, the work is not without merit or use in its role as an official history.

• 1775 •

⁶ See Edwin E. Moïse, *The Myths of Tet: The Most Misunderstood Event of the Vietnam War* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2017).

Bradford A. Wineman, PhD

Forging a Total Force: The Evolution of the Guard and Reserve. By Colonel Forrest L. Marion, USAFR (Ret), and Colonel Jon T. Hoffman, USMCR (Ret). (Washington, DC: Historical Office, Office of Secretary of Defense, 2018. Pp. 311. \$34.00 paperback; free e-book.)

The Historical Office of the Office of the Secretary of Defense has published an institutional monograph examining the contributions of Reserve and National Guard forces during the Global War on Terrorism to highlight their crucial role in the nation's defense since the 11 September 2001 attacks. The book, however, begins with an extensive background (almost one-half the book) on the history and heritage of Reserve military forces going back to the founding of the nation in the late eighteenth century, establishing the ideological and functional groundwork that carried forward for the next 200 years. Through its first hundred years, the United States relied primarily on the citizen-soldier, the precursor of the National Guard, as the foundation of the nation's defense. However, by the twentieth century, the First World War effectively ended the idea of every male citizen bearing arms in defense of the nation; warfare and national interests had now rendered that notion outdated. The nation then shifted to a mass draftee military to provide the manpower for any future declared conflict, leaving the Reserves searching for a new role and identity in national defense. Even through World War II and most of the Cold War, the optimistic rhetoric did not match the action when it came to Reserve readiness. Only the Armed Forces Reserve Act of 1952 actually addressed a policy approach for using Reserves as for the next three decades, little else was done legislatively or functionally to address their role or utilization. It was not until the 1980s with the Ronald W. Reagan era's military build-up and the crystallizing of total force policy that the Reserves were made to be more truly ready for a large global conflict.

The book's focus then transitions to the post-Cold War era and a new collection of challenges and decisions as the Reserves had to redefine themselves again once massive conflict with the Soviets was no longer a strategic imperative. This was complicated by the 1991 Gulf War, which began the process with a jarring wakeup call that found the Reserves unprepared, inadequate, and having to contend with entrenched anti-Reserve biases both from the policymakers and operating forces. The next watershed moment was the 11 September attacks, which pushed the Reserves into combat roles for the first time in more than a decade. While most initial mobilizations were small and isolated, the real test was Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) in 2003. The authors provocatively argue that the U.S. military commitment in this conflict nearly broke the Reserve force. The unexpected length and severity of OIF forced the Department of Defense to take a hard look at the length and frequency of deployments, equipment problems, proper training, and health issues, prompting policymakers under Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates to make notable improvements to address the challenges to keep the Reserve forces viable and functioning. After 2011, the deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan began to wind down, and the authors' focus shifts to the most important question moving forward: Could policy ever go back or was regular dependence on the Reserves by active forces to accomplish missions now a permanent reality? The narrative then projects forward and examines the impending challenges for the Reserve forces in the future, particularly with readiness and integration.

However, in the conclusion (perhaps in a well-meaning effort to applaud the sacrifices of the nation's reservists), the authors make the historically problematic assertion that today's Reserves represent "a mili-

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tia nation return[ing] to its roots” (p. 187). While the militiamen in the early days of the American republic and the Reserve service personnel of the twenty-first century do share the distinction of serving as citizens first and only secondarily as part-time soldiers that can be called on in times of national emergency, unfortunately the similarities end there. The United States embraced the militia system more as a socio-cultural construct by relying on the civic virtue of a citizen defending the homeland in the stead of a large, standing professional army. Service in the militia was seen as a republican responsibility of all male citizens and an expected duty of democratic citizenship. Until World War I, America maintained large state militias while relying on only a tiny active duty force. Most importantly, the militia was seen as the bulwark of homeland defense (i.e., protection against foreign invasion and domestic threats). Today, the

United States supports a large standing professional army and a sizeable Reserve force (smaller than the active duty force), which has now transitioned into an “operational reserve” used to supplement manpower requirements primarily for military missions overseas. Any connection made between these two organizational models, even if well intentioned, needs a more thorough context.

Regardless, this book presents an exceptionally written and well-documented testament to the contribution of the Reserve forces during the Global War on Terrorism and the broader history of the United States. It provides a much-needed resource for understanding where Reserves have fit into larger strategic decision-making and conceptualization of the nation’s defense while appreciating their broader challenges and sociopolitical impact.

• 1775 •

Lawrence Provost

Forgotten Soldiers of World War I: America's Immigrant Doughboys. By Alexander F. Barnes and Peter L. Belmonte. (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing, 2018. Pp. 192. \$29.99 cloth.)

At a time where there is great debate regarding legal and illegal immigration, the contributions of American immigrants in wartime military service cannot be denied. *Forgotten Soldiers of World War I: America's Immigrant Doughboys*, written by Alexander F. Barnes and Peter L. Belmonte, captures the courage and sacrifice of this special group of Americans in the Great War.

Forgotten Soldiers of World War I illuminates the key moments in the military service of immigrant Americans in a chronological fashion and, while focused primarily on the U.S. Army, the book also highlights the important contributions of immigrants serving in the U.S. Marine Corps. To provide a foundational understanding of the immigrant experience in the war, American draft laws and the different categories of men who registered for the draft are covered. Some men who were drafted were later erroneously thought to have mental defects when the issue was simply a language barrier. Some men had their names changed either intentionally or through misspelling. Very few shirked their duty.

Maintaining a camaraderie amongst immigrants in the military was easier early in the war, especially for those who joined local National Guard regiments. However, as the war continued and America took on an increasingly monumental role, National Guard units were either broken up as individual soldiers served as replacements for other units or as regular Army soldiers began serving in the now-federalized National Guard units.

Though they took place a hundred years ago, many of the experiences of immigrant doughboys captured in the book will be recognizable today, including the rigors of basic training, the hurry-up-and-wait approach, supply issues, exposure to individuals from much different backgrounds, and the carnage of war. The story continued for immigrant Marines and soldiers beyond the Armistice of November 1918. Like the rest of the military, most immigrants in the American military simply wished to return home as rapidly as possible. However, the logistical problems of returning them home, coupled with occupation duties, made a quick return to the states difficult for many.

The First World War did not see a flawless mobilization, but America successfully rose to the challenge of transforming a citizen military into a lethal and effective fighting force. A large part of this was due to the patriotic contributions of fighters who were not Americans by birth, but who more than showed their devotion to their adopted land. Their service is forever enshrined in this good book.

Forgotten Soldiers of World War I: America's Immigrant Doughboys is a valuable read for anyone interested World War I, the immigrant experience, the logistics of creating, training, and fighting in a new military, and the overall individual experience of soldiers and Marines.

• 1775 •

Keith D. Dickson, PhD

War and Remembrance: The Story of the American Battle Monuments Commission. By Thomas H. Conner (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2018. Pp. 376. \$50.00 cloth, e-book.)

The American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) is a federal agency established by Congress in 1923. The president of the United States appoints the members of the board, who serve voluntarily and without pay. The ABMC supervises the overseas cemeteries of American war dead for the First and Second World Wars and battlefield monuments. These impeccably maintained cemeteries capture the essence of American values, serving “as living reminders of the role Americans have played in the defense of freedom far from their own shores” (p. 7), which have served over the generations to create a spiritual bond between the fallen and the people who live nearby.

Thomas H. Conner has written a well-crafted and thorough history of this little-known agency. It is good history because it carefully and judiciously pulls from primary source material as well as a broad range of secondary works to tell a compelling story. Immediately after the First World War, questions were raised about the American soldiers buried overseas: Should they remain or be returned home? Amid much debate, the War Department gave American families the choice of having the remains of loved ones returned home or having them stay in Europe. An enormous logistical effort took place for several years after the war to repatriate more than 46,000 bodies back to the United States, leaving about 30,000 American war dead to be consolidated in permanent cemeteries located on ground that was a significant portion of a battlefield Americans had fought on. The War Department also created a Battle Monuments Board within the War Department to supervise the marking of American battlefields in Europe. It operated

from 1921–23 until the ABMC took over its duties. The establishment of American cemeteries on far distant battlegrounds, as well as their location, arrangement, purpose, and design was largely the work of one person, the first commissioner of the ABMC: John J. Pershing, former commander of the American Expeditionary Forces. He recognized the significant symbolic importance of the American dead and the monuments that commemorated their service and sacrifice. Conner describes Pershing particularly well as “a man with a uniquely profound connection to the soldiers who, in his view, had won a great victory for a noble cause, and animated by a strong desire to portray and preserve the memory of that victory in shrines that would outlast time itself” (p. 51).

Everything that makes American war cemeteries so strikingly beautiful—the Italian marble Latin crosses and Stars of David and their precise geometric arrangement, the size and design of the chapels, the inscriptions, and memorial statuary—was established by the ABMC. Pershing’s desires held great influence, and no detail was too small for his oversight. Eventually, the ABMC approved 11 monuments to commemorate American involvement in the war. The largest were located on the battlefields Pershing selected as the most important and were positioned where they can be seen for miles. By 1937, the commission had completed its work, but continued maintaining and preserving the monuments and cemeteries. With the onset of the Second World War, these sites again became battlefields and were overrun with the defeat of France in 1940. Conner recounts the deep sorrow the American employees of the ABMC experienced having to abandon their posts and their dogged efforts to return to their duties. Few sites suffered damage, but American caretakers would have to leave again with America’s entry into the war. The ABMC would not

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return until 1944 and again found little damage, due, as Conner notes, to the “countless instances of courage, resourcefulness, devotion, and loyalty on the part of scores of citizens from both sides of the Atlantic” (p. 175).

After the war, the ABMC essentially continued to follow the path Pershing had so ardently established, including the design and construction for the 14 new cemeteries and associated buildings that were to be created in Europe, Africa, and Asia. About 90,000 American dead were reburied, headstones prepared, chapels designed and constructed, and art work and designs for sculptures reviewed and approved between 1947 and 1950. Information on individual grave markers was the same as for the World War I graves, with one exception. World War II unknowns would be identified as “comrade in arms” replacing the inscription “an American soldier” found on the World War I headstones, which was deemed more representative of all U.S. military Services (p. 201). George C. Marshall (a World War I veteran and the architect of victory in World War II) succeeded Pershing after his death in 1948 and supervised the establishment of American memorials until his own death in 1959. Marshall founded the new American cemeteries in France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Belgium as particularly important symbols in the context of the Cold War to emphasize the commitment of the United States to a free Europe.

Conner covers two anomalous burial situations that gained wide attention and consumed the commission’s time. The most difficult was the location and relocation of the remains of General George S. Patton Jr. in the Luxembourg cemetery. Patton’s widow and the secretary of defense struggled with Marshall to make an exception for the location of the general’s grave and finally won out. Patton’s grave is the only one in an overseas American military cemetery not aligned in harmony with all other headstones. The ABMC also acceded to the Roosevelt family’s request to bury a World War I casualty, Quentin Roosevelt, next to his brother, Theodore Roosevelt Jr., who was buried at the Normandy American cemetery. After years of lobbying, the family was allowed to transfer

the remains at private expense. The ABMC rejected a memorial over the sunken battleship USS *Arizona* (BB 39) in Pearl Harbor, and battled the Department of the Army to establish the cemetery in Hawaii along the pattern of all of its other cemeteries. Eventually, the ABMC was able to build a chapel, but could not get the Army to allow the marble crosses that mark American cemeteries overseas.

The ABMC has been involved in building war memorials for the American Expeditionary Forces, the Korean War Veterans Memorial, and the World War II Memorial, all of which are located in Washington, DC, and administered by the National Park Service. In recent years, the commission has been working to add interpretive facilities to assist in passing on the stories of those who fought and died to generations now no longer connected to a living memory of the events that unfolded on the ground the graves occupy.

Conner has written a very readable and fervent tribute to the work of the most invisible yet arguably most important of federal agencies, but seems content simply to tell the story of the ABMC. He repeats a theme that the cemeteries and memorials are “distant outposts of honor and memory” (p. 8), but does not explore how or why the spiritual appeal of American national identity came into these physical manifestations. A further exploration of the role of collective memory in sustaining and deepening bonds—especially in expressing the unity of a community through sacred rituals of remembrance—would have been very valuable, reflecting, in essence, what the ABMC has done throughout its existence. The history of the ABMC is in itself an exploration of cultural memory, especially in terms of its singular characteristics of concretion of identity, capacity to reconstruct, and obligation.¹⁰ Conner’s presentation, while informative and evocative, falls somewhat short in going further to address the essence of the larger meaning of the ABMC’s work.

• 1775 •

¹⁰ See Jan Assmann and John Czaplicka, “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity,” *New German Critique*, no. 65 (Summer 1995): 125–33, <https://doi.org/10.2307/488538>.

Braden Hall

Combat: US Marine versus German Soldier—Belleau Wood 1918. By Gregg Adams. (Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, 2018. Pp. 80. £12.99 paperback; £12.46 e-book.)

Well-organized and filled with facts and details, *US Marine versus German Soldier—Belleau Wood 1918* is a very broad examination of the combatants and actions involved in the World War I battle of Belleau Wood. The book is one of the latest editions in the publisher's *Combat* series and closely follows the series premise of exploring battles between great historical rivals. Numerous photographs and several color spreads give character to the book, which also includes battle maps and battlefield examinations. These additions are crucial to giving a boots-on-the-ground perspective to the fighting. Although much scholarship has been written about this revered U.S. Marine Corps fight, author Gregg Adams creates a fascinating narrative that highlights the people and strategies involved on both sides of the conflict.

Adams communicates this information through a well-structured examination, which is one of the book's best qualities. Adams analyzes the battle in focused chapters. The introduction details the broader scope of World War I, while the second chapter introduces readers to the strategies, tactics, communications, and firepower that played a role in the outcome of the battle. Firepower is especially important, as the battle confirmed the German reliance on the light machine gun. The later chapters focus on specific major assaults performed by the Marine units, as well as a final analysis of the battle and its aftermath. The organization of the book is logical and supports a general understanding of how and why the events at Belleau Wood occurred.

As a fighting force, the 4th Brigade of Marines that assaulted Belleau Wood was unique among the

American Expeditionary Forces. Its 5th Marine Regiment had a large contingent of veterans: 12 percent. Meanwhile, 60 percent of its 6th Marine Regiment was made up of college graduates. Both units were enthusiastic to enter combat and determined to win. The high expectations held by the Marines made an impression on their German opponents. German war diaries noted that captured Marines considered membership in the Corps to be an honor far above that of other American units, and the nerve of the Marines in combat was unshaken even in the face of overwhelming firepower (p. 25).

In comparison, the German Army units that defended Belleau Wood were optimistic and hungry for victory as well. The army was in the midst of a successful offensive, and was composed of hardened veterans. *Infanterie-Regiment 461*, commanded by Major Hans Otto Bischoff, defended the wood and benefited from its commander's previous bush fighting experience in Africa. Bischoff deployed his units in a manner that took advantage of the harsh terrain. Adams explains that even though both sides entered the battle with a similar confidence level, the German soldiers suffered considerably as they incurred severe losses, remained in combat conditions, and defended against the tough Marine assaults.

German tactical doctrine during the outset of the battle was ideal for the situation, according to Adams. Light machine guns were supported by riflemen. Bischoff controlled local artillery support, and he was able to modify his defensive line to fit the bush-like environment of the woods. However, reinforcing units discarded Bischoff's carefully laid lines for a more traditional model that was better suited for trenches, and that is when the Marines began breaking through German lines.

Alone and in small groups, the superior marksmanship and martial prowess of the Marines put the Germans at a disadvantage. The Marines were able to erase prior failed assaults—across open fields and without reconnaissance and proper artillery support—by taking advantage of German missteps and learning from their own. Lack of preparation and poor intelligence played a major role in the casualties suffered by Marine units. Adams attributes this in part to the lack of experience among the American commanders. The commanders of the 4th Brigade operated without vital information and failed to take steps to acquire accurate information before ordering assaults. Sadly, as Adams points out, the cost of these mistakes was countless Marine casualties. Victory was ultimately achieved only after American military staff properly assessed the battlefield and operated with proper artillery support.

Overall, *US Marine versus German Soldier* is a quick introduction to Belleau Wood, and confers an important understanding of the battle without delving into a lengthy study. Adams concentrates on comparing and contrasting the armaments, attitudes, and tactics of each side before writing about the actual battle. This background information is important as events play out on the battlefield. The concluding analysis is helpful in realizing the importance of the battle outside the mythos of the Marine Corps, even though it occurred near the end of the war. It sparked a drastic morale improvement for the war-weary British and French armies, while it lowered that of the Germans. The battle did not win the war, but it showed the Germans the war needed to end before the Americans arrived in greater numbers.

• 1775 •

Rachel Basinger

Time in the Barrel: A Marine's Account of the Battle for Con Thien. By James P. Coan. (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2019. Pp. 256. \$34.95 cloth and e-book.)

The Marine Corps base at Con Thien, located roughly 3.2 kilometers from the Vietnamese demilitarized zone (DMZ), was the location of intense fighting during the Vietnam War from February 1967 to February 1968, particularly during the months of September to October 1967. It received national attention on 1 October 1967 when CBS aired a special report on Con Thien hosted by Mike Wallace.

Because it was the site of fierce fighting, claiming a high number of Marine casualties, Con Thien (Vietnamese for Hill of the Angels) became known as “the meat grinder” and “our turn/time in the barrel.” Given its close location to the DMZ atop a prominent hill stripped of forest cover, Con Thien became a bullseye target for the North Vietnamese. It was considered strategically important, however, as it provided unrestricted views to the surrounding areas, including to the coast on the east and to Marine bases farther south.

Now, however, Con Thien's name has faded into nothingness for almost all Americans, except those who served during Vietnam and many current Marines. James P. Coan has rectified this unfortunate phenomenon with *Time in the Barrel: A Marine's Account of the Battle for Con Thien*, a compelling personal narrative that is not only accessible to the lay public but also interesting to those who served during the Vietnam War and to military historians.

While Coan gives excellent background on Con Thien for those who are unfamiliar with the base in his introduction, *Time in the Barrel* is not an account of the Battle of Con Thien or even the author's personal account of his time serving off and on at Con Thien in

September 1967–July 1968. Rather, it zeroes in on the author's personal experiences as a tank platoon commander during the months of September and October 1967 when the base of Con Thien experienced the greatest amount of bombardment.

Beginning in September 1967, the base would be hit by at least 200 North Vietnamese artillery and mortar rounds daily, peaking at more than 1,000 rounds on 25 September 1967. As Coan writes, “Battalion staff at Con Thien estimated that we had received over 1,000 rounds of artillery, mortars, and rockets that day” (p. 147). Coan begins his narrative on 10 September, when he first received his assignment to Con Thien, and ends with his brief rotation off Con Thien that started on 14 October 1967. While Coan and his tank platoon would rotate on and off Con Thien several times in the coming months, his focus is on the one-month period of his first rotation.

In a style similar to E. B. Sledge's in *With the Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa* (1981) and *China Marine: An Infantryman's Life after World War II* (2002), Coan describes the Battle of Con Thien in the fall of 1967 “from the perspective of a novice second lieutenant assuming his first combat command” (p. xi). He includes descriptions of the bombardment, his interactions with others, daily life on the base—regularly mentioning the vileness of the rats who lived in the bunkers—and his own thoughts and fears, connecting them to significant events that occurred to all on Con Thien, such as the bombardment of 25 September.

Time in the Barrel is distinct from Coan's other book, also about Con Thien, *Con Thien: The Hill of Angels* (2004), which included information from archives and official documents in addition to his personal experiences. Instead, *Time in the Barrel* almost exclusively focuses on the author's personal experiences, requiring very few additional sources. Coan, however,

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holds himself to the highest of standards and lists several sources about Con Thien and the Vietnam War in general in the bibliography.

This reviewer found the author's style captivating. Coan seemed to describe life on Con Thien in a way that captured the vicissitudes and challenges the Marines faced without becoming too informal or haphazard. It was clear from the presentation of the material that Coan had considered his time on Con Thien quite extensively and had taken the time to recount his memories in an eloquent fashion. Coan's inclusion of the typical and ubiquitous profanity and foul language often used by Marines in battle was not gratuitous—though, confusingly, he included symbols for some vulgarity, which did not seem to keep with the tenor of the book describing the life of Marines.

Coan's flashbacks to his life before the Marine Corps and at Officer Candidates School in the first two chapters were somewhat jarring, as well. These nonchronological reflections back to earlier times in his life interfered with the organization and flow of the book. Chapters 1 and 2 are full of such flashback accounts. However, by the third chapter, Coan seemed to get into a groove and the work became the proverbial page-turner. Readers less well-acquainted with military language and abbreviations will appreciate the included glossary of terms and abbreviations.

In addition, Coan's inclusion of his Vietnam diary in Appendix B was one of the highlights of the book. It was the perfect juxtaposition to the more academic yet still highly personal content of the book with the informality and raw reflections of a journal.

Coan's title promised to include his personal reflections during "the hellish days of a pivotal conflict of the Vietnam War" (back cover), and this he did remarkably well. One sentence in the preface encapsulates the entire book: "Throughout this narrative, I share my most personal thoughts, fears, and frustrations because, to fully grasp the enormity of the fierce struggle for Con Thien, that story needs telling through the perspective of personal experience" (p. xii).

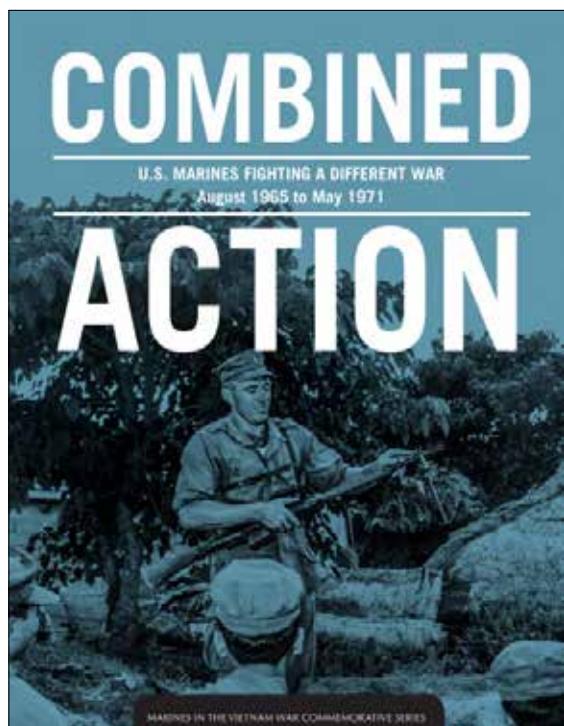
It is for this reason that Vietnam War historians, current Marines, and the lay public ought to read *Time in the Barrel*, as it is a microcosm for the Vietnam War as a whole. In the words of Don North, a television news reporter who covered Vietnam from 1965 to 1973, "Con Thien showed American Marines at their best and American political and military leaders at their worst."¹³ There is no better way to experience the emotions and stress of the battlefield as well as the extraordinary acts of valor of so many Marines than through the personal account of one man.

• 1775 •

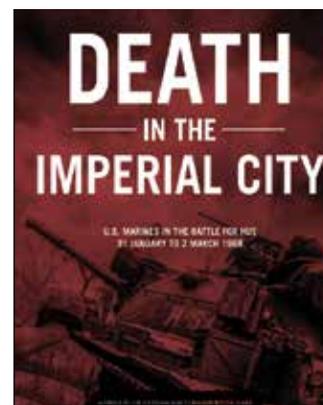
¹³ Don North, "A Little Piece of Hell," *New York Times*, 4 July 2017.

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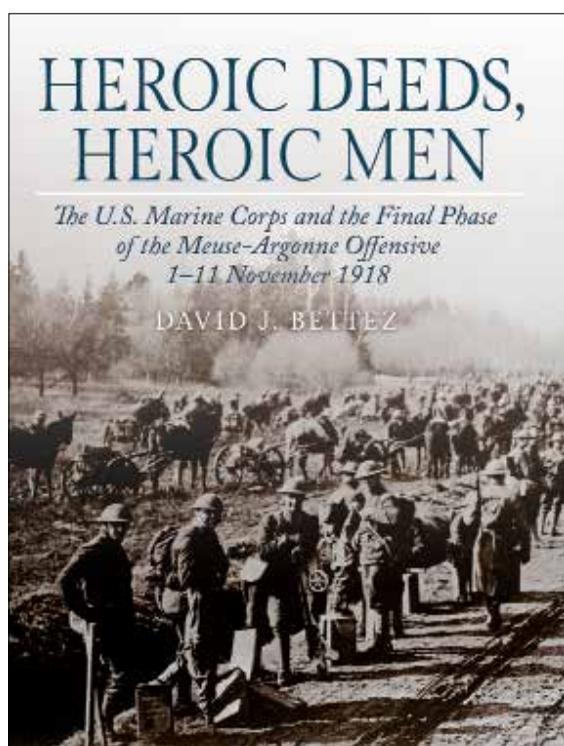


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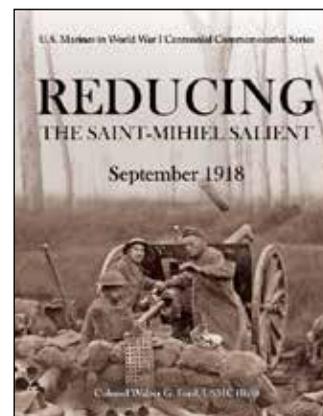
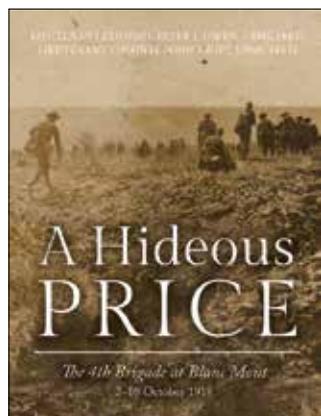


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