

MARINE CORPS HISTORY

VOLUME 10, NUMBER 1

SUMMER 2024



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Headquarters Marine Corps
3000 Marine Corps Pentagon
Room 2B253
Washington, DC 20530-3000

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

PCN 10600011300

ISSN 2381-375X (print)

ISSN 2381-3768 (online)

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Cover art: *Tarawa, 20 NOV 1943*, Col Charles H. Waterhouse, USMCR, courtesy of the National Museum of the Marine Corps

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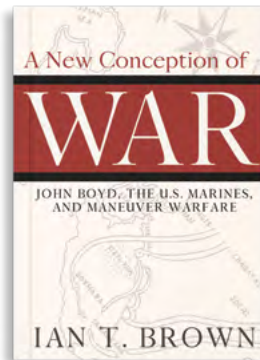
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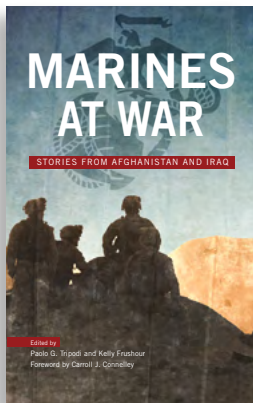
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*Journal of Advanced
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*A New Conception of War: John Boyd,
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IN MEMORIAM

Charles R. “Rich” Smith

2 OCTOBER 1943–6 JANUARY 2024

By Paul Westermeyer

Longtime Marine Corps historian Charles R. Smith passed away at his home on 6 January 2024. He was born and raised in Northern California to Gordon and Barbara Smith and was the oldest of three children. He is survived by his brother Russell, his sister Carolyn, and his ex-wife Barbara Rhenish.

Rich, as he preferred to be called, served honorably in Vietnam with the U.S. Army’s 101st Airborne Division (Air-mobile) in 1968 and 1969, first as an artilleryman and then as a historian. He earned bachelor of arts degrees in history and political science from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and a master of arts degree in history from San Diego State University. He joined the Marine Corps’ History and Museums Division in July 1971 as a historian, retiring as senior historian and Histories Branch head in 2011 after 40 years of service. He wrote or edited 11 major works on Marine Corps history and published innumerable articles in various periodicals.

The first of his major works was the official history *Marines in the Revolution: A History of the Continental Marines in the American Revolution, 1775–1783*, published in 1975 in time for the U.S. Bicentennial celebrations. In addition to the research and writing of that manuscript, he provided historical research support and commentary for noted Marine Corps artist Lieutenant Colonel Charles H. Waterhouse’s series of



Photo courtesy of Barbara Rhenish

Charles R. “Rich” Smith.

paintings on Marines in the Revolution, the Frigate Navy, and the Mexican War.

Rich was particularly versed in the early history of the Corps but remained a font of knowledge on all Marine Corps history. He wrote *U.S. Marines in Vietnam: High Mobility and Standdown, 1969*, published in 1988, another major official history, and was part of the team of historians responsible for the monumental *U.S. Marines in Vietnam: The Defining Year, 1968*, published in 1997. He also wrote a monograph on Marine humanitarian operations, *Angels from the Sea: Relief*

Paul Westermeyer is a historian at Marine Corps History Division.

Operations in Bangladesh, 1991, published in 1995, and edited the Korean War commemorative series into a single volume in 2007.

In 2005, as head of the Histories Branch, he was one of the senior leaders shepherding the transfer of History Division from its long-time headquarters at the Washington Navy Yard to its new parent command, Marine Corps University, Education Command, at Quantico, Virginia. In 2009, he completed rewriting *Marine Corps Order 5750.1H*, the foundation order for History Division and its mission, realigning the order with the realities of the division after its 2005 move and reorganization.

Rich was a quiet professional who was a tireless mentor to countless younger historians, Marines, and interns in his decades at History Division. He remained available to his interns as a mentor long after their service, promoting official history as a profession beyond the Marine Corps. His final work, a coauthored history of Marines in the Frigate Navy, 1798–1859, is still under production and will be a worthy capstone to his record after publication.

Rich was the epitome of the government historian, working diligently to preserve, record, and promulgate the history of the U.S. Marine Corps. He will be sorely missed. Rich's publications for History Division include the following.

-
- Santelli, Gabrielle M. Neufeld. *Marines in the Mexican War*. Edited by Charles R. Smith. Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1991. 59 pp.
- Shulimson, Jack, LtCol Leonard A. Blasiol, Charles R. Smith, and Capt David A. Dawson. *U.S. Marines in Vietnam: The Defining Year, 1968*. Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1997. 805 pp.
- Smith, Charles R., ed. *U.S. Marines in the Korean War*. Washington, DC: Marine Corps History Division, 2007. 741 pp.
- , ed. *The Journals of Marine Second Lieutenant Henry Bulls Watson, 1845–1848*. Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1990. 420 pp.



Photo by Charles D. Melson, "History 101: A Tour of the Historical Branch," *Fortitudine* 29, no. 1 (2001): 12.

Historical Section head Charles R. Smith in the offices of Marine Corps History Division, where he supervised the efforts of a staff of four producing publications and oral histories.

- Smith, Charles R. *Securing the Surrender: Marines in the Occupation of Japan*. World War II Commemorative Series. Washington, DC: Marine Corps Historical Center, 1997. 45 pp.
- . *Angels from the Sea: Relief Operations in Bangladesh, 1991*. U.S. Marines in Humanitarian Operations. Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1995. 116 pp.
- . *U.S. Marines in Vietnam: High Mobility and Standdown, 1969*. Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1988. 403 pp.
- . *Marines in the Revolution: A History of the Continental Marines in the American Revolution, 1775–1783*. Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1975. 491 pp.
- . *A Brief History of the 12th Marines*. Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1972. 84 pp.
- Waterhouse, Col Charles H., and Charles R. Smith. *Marines in the Frigate Navy, 1798–1835*. Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1985. 14 plates. 36 pp.
- . *Marines in the Revolution: A Pictorial History*. Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1975. 32 pp.