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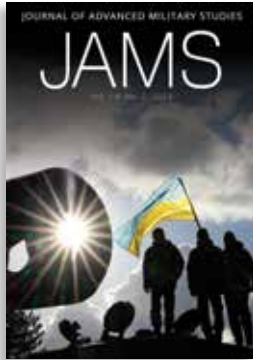
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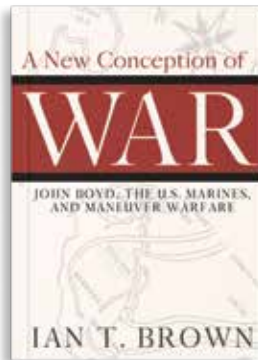
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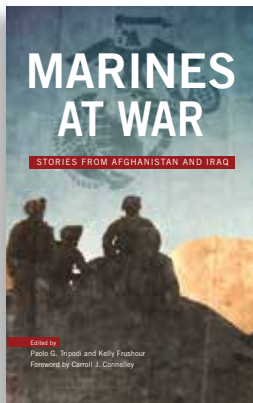
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*Journal of Advanced
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JAMS

The *Journal of Advanced Military Studies* focuses on topics within the international relations, political science, security studies, and political economics spectrum. The Fall 2024 issue of JAMS will focus on amphibious operations. Article submissions are due by 31 May 2024. Book reviews, review essays, and historiographical essays also welcome.

Article submissions for all three journals should be between 4,000 and 10,000 words, footnoted, and formatted according to the *Chicago Manual of Style* (17th edition). For more information about submission guidelines or to submit an article idea, please visit our website or contact MCU_Press@usmcu.edu.

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FROM THE EDITORS

This issue of *Marine Corps History* is presented for your reading pleasure and professional growth as part of Marine Corps University Press's continued effort to provide a high-quality, peer-reviewed academic journal on the history of the U.S. Marine Corps. This is the only journal focused exclusively on the history and heritage of the Corps, which demands the kind of serious treatment that only top-notch academic work can provide. We believe every contribution to this issue meets that standard and contributes toward that aim.

The first article of this edition is written by Michael Westermeier, a military historian with extensive experience in the U.S. National Parks, Marine Corps History Division, and National Museum of the Marine Corps. "An Odyssey through Satan's Kingdom: Marines at the 1863 Night Attack on Fort Sumter and Their Experiences as Prisoners of War" addresses the many dimensions of Fort Sumter, South Carolina, from its strategic significance over time down to its tactical aspects. Westermeier's analysis shows that as formidable an obstacle as Fort Sumter was, the efforts to seize it were hamstrung by dysfunction between Union Army and Navy commanders, between Navy and Marine leaders, and even within the Marine Corps itself, where local commanders strove to make do without the right personnel, equipment, training, and time for the task at hand. The most significant contribution of this article reflects Westermeier's broad experience telling human stories. His explanation of the 1863 attempt by the Union Navy and its

Marines to seize Fort Sumter is integrated into a human narrative that follows some of the participants from the time of their enlistments through the dysfunctional operation, their subsequent captivity, and even their lives as veterans after the Civil War. As much as this article is about highlighting the human impacts of inter-Service rivalry, it also speaks to the increasing complexity of amphibious operations during the war and the Navy-Marine Corps team's lack of preparedness for such missions, a problem that would not be corrected for more than seven decades.

The second article comes from Elisabeth J. Phillips and details the birth of the American military canine program in the opening months of World War II. Phillips describes the early efforts of a nonprofit organization called Dogs for Defense and their gradual integration into formal programs by the War Department and Navy Department. In so doing, Phillips highlights the type of public-private cooperation that made critical contributions to the war effort, suggesting the importance of continuing such ventures to this day as our military encounters new problems. Phillips also details the less-than-perfect performance of the Services and their war dog units, and the way they adapted as learning organizations over time. Of particular significance to this journal, "From Mascot to Marine" shows that the Corps was unique in the way it treated its dogs not as weapons systems but as Marines. Phillips narrates the experience of these dogs from enlistment through their training, operational service, and return to civil society as veterans. The

parallels with humans living these same experiences is clear, enhancing our ability to recognize these canine servicemembers as Marines.

Lieutenant Colonel Brian Donlon's contribution to this issue takes a different approach from the first two articles, focusing on the Service's experience, in this case its peacetime cold-weather exercises in Norway from 1978 through 1986. In an excellent piece of organizational history developed from primary sources, Donlon shows that the Corps had a clear strategic mandate to be prepared to fight on the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) Northern Flank, but was slow to adapt a combat capability equal to this imperative. The earliest company-level exercises indicated that Marines operating in the High North needed to start by getting their priorities straight—first they needed to learn how to survive, and only after that could they learn how to move and then fight effectively in Arctic conditions. Progress beyond even the first stage, however, was hampered by two things. First, the Corps' culture emphasized toughness to overcome obstacles rather than careful preparation. Second, senior Marine leaders prioritized operational flexibility over specialization. Both resulted in preparation for Arctic warfare getting scant attention, yielding unsatisfactory performance in the High North, even when Marine failings were repeatedly called out by allied partners. Donlon shows that the Marine Corps did establish a positive trajectory starting in 1981 and developed important capabilities over time as a result of improved training and equipment and novel operational concepts. The key ingredient to making these happen was acceptance of the basic reality that Marines could not simply tough it out in the frigid environment and that a degree of specialization was required. Another critical ingredient was the leadership of General Alfred M. Gray Jr. as commander of the 2d Marine Division and then Fleet Marine Force Atlantic. Gray, supported by various Commandants over the years, implemented a deliberate plan for improvement through conferences, focused training, and a Service-level equipage effort, and leveraged a new mode of deployment marrying a fly-in echelon with equipment prepositioned in Norway. Critically,

General Gray fostered a leadership climate that made organizational learning and adaptation possible. The implications are clear for today's Marine Corps, especially as it considers operating in the High North once again.

This is the third issue of *Marine Corps History* to include a historiographic essay, a feature the editors intend to become a regular part of its role as a high-quality academic journal promoting Marine Corps history. These essays are guides to the many works written on various important topics, helping those readers who are not deeply familiar with the subject understand the most influential accounts available. These historiographies highlight the contributions made by people writing from different perspectives and source bases, as well as the historical debates that result. In this issue, Dr. Zachary Matusheski analyzes works addressing the Marine Corps' involvement in the planning, conduct, and exploitation of the amphibious operation to seize Inchon in September 1950. Though the Corps is generally hailed for its involvement in what some regard as U.S. Army general Douglas MacArthur's amphibious masterstroke, Matusheski's thorough study of the many works on the subject informs our readers of the major historical debates. His analysis shows the influence of the individual backgrounds of researchers writing in the context of specific times, as well as the results of different techniques and dependency on particular sources. Matusheski's judgments about these works highlight the most credible analyses that have shaped our understanding of Marine involvement in Operation Chromite and command relationships in the Korean War. Just as importantly, he identifies sources and aspects of these topics that would be most fruitful for further study. In the end, Matusheski's study has realized the highest ambitions of the editors in encouraging historiographic essays, providing our readers with an excellent reference on the history of Operation Chromite that will offer direction for future work to advance our understanding of this aspect of Marine Corps history. Finally, we end this issue with a series of book reviews that will be of interest to the readers of *Marine Corps History*.

We also include in this issue a memorial piece about Marine corporal Daniel Clay Arnold, who served during World War II, participating in actions on Eniwetok and Guam, and went on to work as a member of the clandestine services until his retirement in 1979.

Please consider making your own submissions for feature articles, historiographic essays, and book reviews. Contributing to *Marine Corps History* means

contributing to the Marine Corps, helping advance our understanding of its experiences and culture, and providing the kind of critical examination that promotes operational wisdom and effective leadership. The most important value of *Marine Corps History* lies in what it does for the future, helping Marines understand their Corps and the nature of the problems they will continue to face. The value of this journal depends on what readers like you bring to the table.

•1775•

An Odyssey through “Satan’s Kingdom”

MARINES AT THE 1863 NIGHT ATTACK ON FORT SUMTER AND THEIR EXPERIENCES AS PRISONERS OF WAR

By Michael Westermeier

Abstract: The assault on Confederate-controlled Fort Sumter, South Carolina, ended in disaster, and the U.S. Marines who managed to land on its rubble-covered shores would end up in the worst prison in the Confederacy, a place from which most would never return. This article traces their journey and details their ordeal, throughout which Marines demonstrated the qualities and character traits that have defined their Service since its inception. They resisted their captors, largely supported their chain of command while imprisoned, refused to divulge information when interrogated, and sought opportunities to escape and rejoin the fight.

Keywords: Fort Sumter, Civil War Marines, prisoners of war, POWs, Confederate prisons

On the night of 8 September 1863, the U.S. Navy tugboat *Daffodil* (1862–67) towed 400 Marines and sailors from the naval brigade on Morris Island and the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron of the U.S. Navy toward Confederate-controlled Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, South Carolina. The fort had been battered by a sustained Union Army and Navy bombardment with shells that weighed hundreds of pounds, reducing one side of the fort to a slope of crumbling rubble and dismounting almost all of the fort’s heavy artillery. Rear Ad-

miral John A. Dahlgren, the commander of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron, thought that a swift amphibious assault by his Marines and sailors would secure the battered fortress and open the way for his gunboats to enter Charleston Harbor and capture the city. The assault ultimately ended in disaster, and the Marines who did manage to land on the rubble-covered shores of Fort Sumter would begin an odyssey that would take some of them to the worst prison in the Confederacy, a place from which most would never return.

The abortive Union assault on Fort Sumter was not foreordained to fail, but fail it did due to the inability of the Army and Navy commanders to work together to achieve the strategic and operational goals outlined by the president. Institutional stovepipes began at the top, with an intense rivalry between the War and Navy Departments that filtered down through their respective Services and often had disastrous consequences on battlefields where earth and water collided. Although there were instances of ef-

Michael Westermeier was a U.S. Army field artillery officer from 2004 to 2011 and later worked as a park ranger at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, VA, after receiving a master’s in military history from Norwich University, Northfield, VT. He served as a historian with the Marine Corps History Division from 2017 to 2020 and currently is the exhibit curator at the National Museum of the Marine Corps. The author would like to thank the amazing staff at Fort Sumter and Fort Moultrie National Historical Park, especially park rangers Kaley Crawford, Andrew Solgere, and Krista Pollett, for helping him during his site visit to Fort Sumter. He would also like to thank Dr. C. Russell Horres Jr. and Dr. Stephen Wise for their invaluable help on this project. <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-8833-0237>. <https://doi.org/10.35318/mch.2023090201>

fective local cooperation, such as Rear Admiral Andrew Hull Foote's effective working relationship with Major General Ulysses S. Grant and Brigadier General John Pope on the Tennessee, Cumberland, and Mississippi Rivers, the Charleston campaign was not one of these. Once the ultimate prize, Fort Sumter, appeared ripe for capture, the Union Army and Navy command relationship collapsed and the Marines and sailors at the tip of the assault suffered horrendously for the vainglorious ambition of their commander.

The Path to the Kingdom

The path that led to the naval assault on the night of 8 September 1863 began in 1828 when Congress passed the first appropriation bill to construct a masonry fort on the shallow shoal extending from James Island into Charleston Harbor. The fort was part of the Third System of Coastal Forts, initiated in 1821 with the intent of shielding the United States from future aggression by European nations. President James Monroe provided a summation of the intent behind the Third System fort in his second inaugural address:

By these fortifications, supported by our navy, to which they would afford like support, we should present to other powers an armed front from the St. Croix to the Sabine [rivers], which would protect, in the event of war, our whole coast from interior invasion; and even in the wars of other powers, in which we were neutral, they would be found eminently useful, as, by keeping their public ships at a distance from our cities, peace and order in them would be preserved, and the government would be protected from insult.¹

Charleston already had strong fortifications at Fort Moultrie on Sullivan's Island, but the fort's guns could

not reach an enemy ship hugging the southern side of the harbor's main ship channel. Castle Pinckney, a masonry fort on Shutes Folly Island, and Fort Johnson on James Island could prevent shallow-draft watercraft from entering the southern side of the harbor but could not create an effective crossfire with Fort Moultrie to prevent attacking ships from forcing their way through, much as British warships had done in May 1780. Fort Sumter was envisioned as the linchpin of Charleston's harbor defenses, a manufactured island with a five-sided masonry fort that could cover the fire gap between the existing defenses and effectively close the main ship channel into the harbor.²

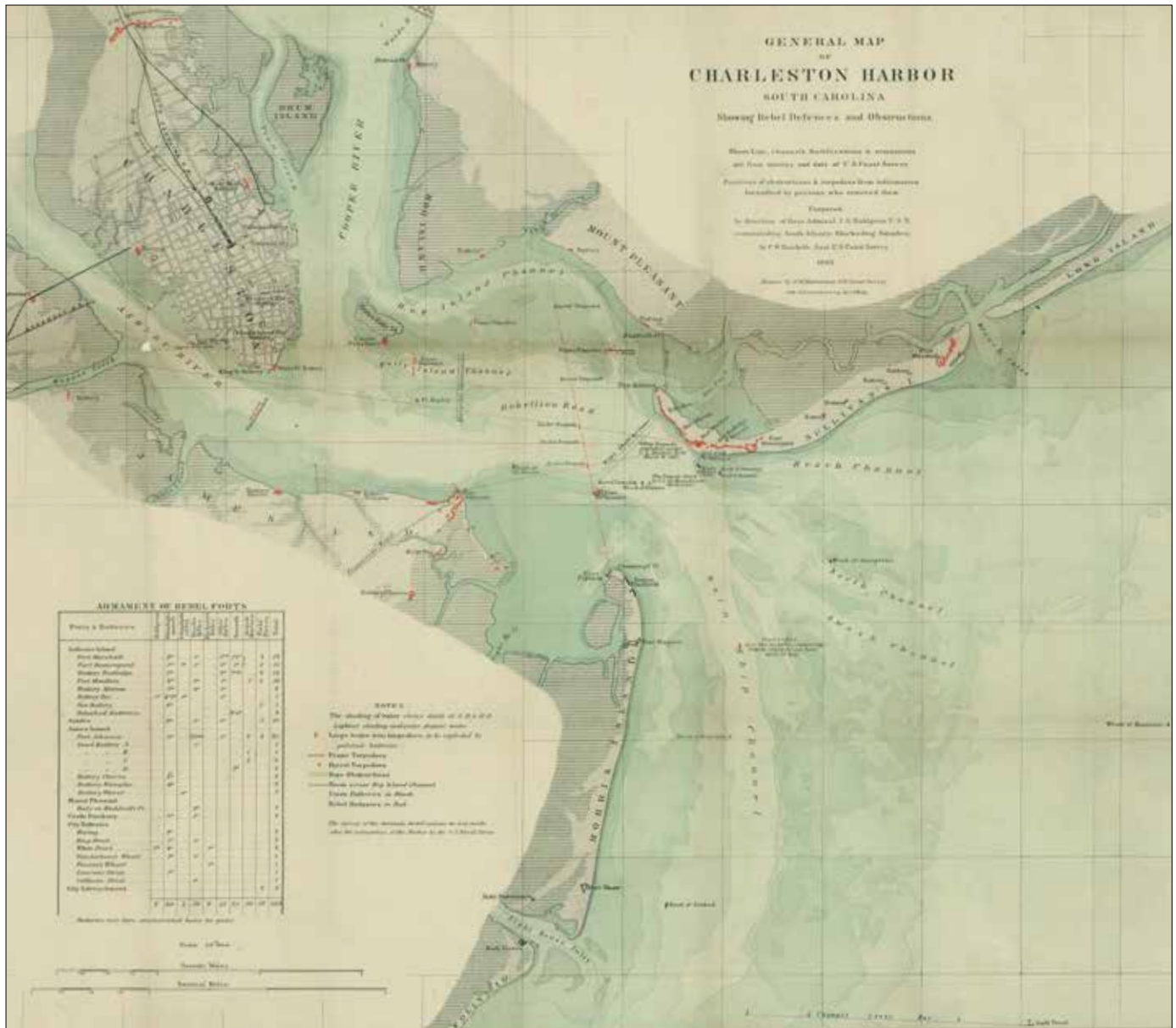
While Fort Sumter was a valuable harbor defense component, it assumed an even greater importance as a symbol for both the nascent Confederacy and states that remained loyal to the Union in April 1861. U.S. Army major Robert Anderson, commanding the U.S. soldiers manning the fortifications of Charleston Harbor, moved his troops from Fort Moultrie to Fort Sumter on the night of 26 December 1860, six days after South Carolina seceded from the Union. Anderson made the decision to evacuate to Fort Sumter in the face of the increasing likelihood that South Carolina's militia would attempt to seize Fort Moultrie and other U.S. Army fortifications in Charleston by force.³

South Carolina governor Francis Wilkinson Pickens ordered the occupation of Castle Pinckney and Fort Moultrie on 27 December 1860 and the construction of fortifications on Morris and James Islands to surround Fort Sumter beginning in January 1861. The Confederate guns could prevent resupply ships from reaching Fort Sumter, but Fort Sumter's guns could also effectively close Charleston Harbor by firing on ship traffic negotiating the main ship channel. After months of negotiations, the impasse finally ended when Confederate brigadier general P. G. T. Beauregard, commander of the Confederate forces in Charleston, issued his final surrender demand to Ma-

² Patrick M. Hendrix, *A History of Fort Sumter: Building a Civil War Landmark* (Charleston, SC: History Press, 2014), 14.

³ David S. Heidler and Jeanne T. Heidler, "Fort Sumter, Bombardment of (12–14 April 1861)," in *Encyclopedia of the American Civil War: A Political, Social, and Military History*, ed. David S. Heidler and Jeanne T. Heidler (New York: W. W. Norton, 2000), 756.

¹ "Second Inaugural Address of James Monroe, Monday, March 5, 1821," Inaugural Addresses of the Presidents, 19th Century Documents: 1800–1899, Avalon Project, Lillian Goldman Law Library, Yale Law School, accessed 2 November 2023.



Map by Bowne and Co., 1865, courtesy of Henry Rowe Schoolcraft Map Collection, Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division, call no. G3912.C4 1865.W51

Map of the Confederate defenses of Charleston Harbor, SC, created by the U.S. Coast Survey in 1865.

for Anderson just after midnight on 12 April 1861. After a two-day bombardment, Anderson surrendered Fort Sumter after agreeing to terms that allowed all his troops to evacuate the fort and fire a 100-gun salute to the U.S. flag.⁴

The Confederate firing on Fort Sumter precipitated U.S. president Abraham Lincoln's call for 75,000

volunteer soldiers to invade the Confederate States of America and marked the beginning of the American Civil War. It also marked Fort Sumter and Charleston's transformation from an important fortification and center of commerce, respectively, to a powerful symbol of independence for the Confederacy and a focal point for revenge for the Union. Assistant Secretary of the Navy Gustavus V. Fox voiced a feeling common among many in the Union when he wrote in June 1862 that "the Fall of Charleston is the fall of

⁴ Heidler and Heidler, "Fort Sumter, Bombardment of (12-14 April 1861)," 759-60.

Satan's Kingdom.”⁵ Consequently, whichever military Service captured Charleston would also propel itself above the other in the nation's esteem.

Fox openly admitted his drive to surpass the Army when he told Rear Admiral Samuel F. DuPont in June 1862, “I feel that my duties are two fold; first, to beat our southern friends; second, to beat the Army. We have done it so far and the people acknowledge and give us credit.”⁶ The competition between the Services was fostered through a lack of a joint U.S. military command. President Abraham Lincoln, as commander in chief, was the only person in the U.S. government who could issue orders to the Navy and the Army. The Army could readily win laurels, since the vast number of land battles and operations attracted gallons of newspaper ink. The Navy, conversely, was tasked with the vital but relatively unseen mission to enforce the blockade on the Confederacy and transport troops and supplies. The Service that achieved the greatest share of the glory would be able to command a greater share of the congressional budget.

The Navy Batters at the Gates

Capturing Charleston seemed like the ideal mission for the Navy to steal the Army's thunder. Unlike other major Confederate cities such as Richmond, Virginia, and Atlanta, Georgia, the Navy could capture Charleston as a major component of a joint operation or, conceivably, by conducting a purely naval action by sailing into the harbor and forcing the city to surrender under threat of naval bombardment. The Navy had proven its ability to defeat land-based fortifications when DuPont's fleet pummeled two fortifications at Port Royal, South Carolina, into submission and occupied the town in November 1861, so a naval assault on Charleston did not seem out of the realm of possibility.

Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles ordered Rear Admiral DuPont to begin preparations for a

purely naval operation to seize Charleston in January 1863. Welles, along with Assistant Secretary Fox and President Lincoln, believed that the newly built ironclad warships—including the single-turreted monitors and multigun ships like USS *New Ironsides* (1862–66)—could weather the storm of shot and shell from Charleston's shore defenses and enter the harbor, forcing the city's surrender. Along with their armor, the ships also mounted the newest in naval heavy artillery. The new *Passaic*-class monitors mounted an 11-inch and a 15-inch Dahlgren gun in their revolving turrets, while the *New Ironsides* had 14 11-inch Dahlgren guns along with two 150-pound Parrott rifles and two 50-pound Dahlgren rifles. DuPont's squadron for the planned naval attack against Charleston would be able to bring 31 pieces of heavy naval ordnance to bear on the harbor's defenses.⁷

DuPont, who was skeptical of the ironclad's ability to act with impunity in the face of shore batteries armed with heavy rifled cannon, launched his naval assault against Charleston on 7 April 1863. DuPont's ships faced more than 76 Confederate guns mounted in Forts Moultrie and Sumter and Batteries Gregg and Wagner on Morris Island, although the weight of shot fired by the Confederate guns was less than that of shot fired by DuPont's ships. Moreover, the Confederate defenses extended below the waterline in the form of a rope and log boom placed across the main shipping channel between Forts Moultrie and Sumter strewn with recently invented but highly effective floating mines, known during the Civil War as torpedoes. DuPont's ironclads were heavily damaged during the attack and inflicted little damage on the Confederates' earth and sand fortifications which

⁵ G. V. Fox to S. F. DuPont, 3 June 1862, in *Confidential Correspondence of Gustavus Vasa Fox, Assistant Secretary of the Navy 1861–1865*, vol. 1, ed. Robert Means and Richard Wainright (New York: Devinne Press, 1919), 128, hereafter Fox letter to DuPont, 3 June 1862.

⁶ Fox letter to DuPont, 3 June 1862, 126.

⁷ E. Milby Burton, *The Siege of Charleston, 1861–1865* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1970), 135–37.



Photo by Haas and Peale, courtesy of Civil War Photographs, 1861–65, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, call no. LC-B8156-1 Members of the naval battery at Morris Island, SC, beside their 5-inch, 80-pounder Whitworth rifles in July or August 1863. Two Marines can be seen on the left side of the photograph.

absorbed the explosive force of their shells. The double-turreted ironclad steamer USS *Keokuk* (1863), built with lighter armor than the other ironclads, was riddled with holes from 90-plus hits and ultimately sank near Morris Island. DuPont and the Army commander tasked with occupying Charleston after its capture, Major General David Hunter, were subsequently relieved of command following their failure to capture Charleston and replaced by Brigadier General Quincy A. Gillmore and Rear Admiral John A. Dahlgren.⁸

Combined Operations and a Grueling Siege

Gillmore seemed to be the ideal choice to lead the Union Army's X Corps and head Army operations against Charleston's fortifications. A skilled artilleryman and engineer, he had directed the siege and bombardment that led to the fall of the masonry Fort Pulaski outside Savannah, Georgia, in April 1862. Although Gillmore was not noted for his skill in directing field armies, his skill as an engineer and knowledge of modern heavy artillery and its capabilities against fortifications up to that point in the war made him a sound choice. His political connections through the influential *New-York Tribune* editor Horace Greeley certainly did not hurt his cause.

Dahlgren was not an obvious choice to command the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron in the attack on Charleston. He was a recognized genius with naval guns, having developed the widely used and epony-

⁸ Burton, *The Siege of Charleston, 1861–1865*, 137–45.

mously named Dahlgren boat howitzer and naval gun before the outbreak of the Civil War. However, he had spent most of his career ashore at the Washington Navy Yard and had relatively little experience commanding at sea compared to his peers. His position at the Navy Yard did provide him with access to powerful men, including the technology-fascinated President Lincoln. Dahlgren's friendship with Lincoln eventually bore fruit when Dahlgren was promoted from captain to rear admiral and later received command of the ironclads under Rear Admiral Foote when Welles replaced DuPont as commander of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron. When Foote died unexpectedly in New York on 26 June 1863, Dahlgren received command of the squadron with the mission to capture Charleston.⁹

Dahlgren and Gillmore renewed their attacks on Charleston, but quickly realized they could not capture the city without working together. Dahlgren could not overcome the Confederate defenses to enter the harbor, and Gillmore could not capture the fortifications surrounding the city without extensive naval support. On 7 July 1863, Dahlgren and Gillmore cooperated on the Union amphibious assault against the Confederate forces entrenched on Morris Island. The plan called for Navy launches armed with Dahlgren boat howitzers to carry Gillmore's infantry from Folly Island across the Folly River and seize the Confederate fortifications on the southern end of Morris Island. Meanwhile, the Army's heavy guns, hidden in camouflaged positions on Folly Island, would open fire on Confederate artillery positions on Morris Island, while Dahlgren's monitors would move in close to place the Confederate positions in a deadly cross-fire.¹⁰

After a few delays, Gillmore launched his assault on Morris Island on 10 July 1863. The Union infantry captured the southern end of the island following an intense land and naval bombardment of the Confederate positions and a short but intense bout of hand-to-hand fighting in the Confederate earth-

works. The Confederate troops fled into the massive Battery Wagner earthwork after suffering more than 300 casualties compared to the Union's 15 killed and 90 wounded. However, the exhausted Union forces failed to launch an immediate attack on the disorganized Confederate forces at Battery Wagner and allowed Confederate general Beauregard to send reinforcements.¹¹

Two subsequent assaults by Gillmore's troops on Battery Wagner, supported by the guns of Dahlgren's ironclads, failed with significant casualties. Gillmore decided that he would have to reduce Battery Wagner through the laborious process of bombarding the Confederate earthworks with his heavy guns and slowly advancing his earthworks forward to the battery's walls. The grueling siege, combined with disease and exposure to the harsh South Carolina summer, caused Gillmore to lose more than 16 percent of his forces while a further 14 percent were hospitalized from disease. Furthermore, several of Gillmore's regiments at Port Royal, South Carolina, were scheduled to muster out soon, forcing him to send the veteran 6th Connecticut Volunteer Infantry from Morris Island to Port Royal. This attrition, combined with Union general-in-chief Major General Henry W. Halleck's injunction that Gillmore could conduct the operation if he did not request forces from other theaters caused Gillmore to question if it would be possible for him to successfully conclude the Morris Island operation.¹²

Dahlgren tried to increase the Navy's commitment to the campaign to ease Gillmore's concerns and, quite possibly, increase the Navy's visibility in the campaign by providing a land element to support the Army on Morris Island. Dahlgren brought the steamer *USS Wabash* (1856–1912) from Port Royal to Charleston and used its 635-man crew to form detachments to relieve crews on the stifling monitors, perform picket boat duty around the squadron, and form a 170-man naval battery equipped with two British 5-inch Whitworth cannons captured from a Confederate blockade runner. He also wrote to Secretary of the

⁹ Craig L. Symonds, *Lincoln and His Admirals* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 207, 238–39, 243.

¹⁰ Stephen R. Wise, *Gate of Hell: Campaign for Charleston Harbor, 1863* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994), 64–68.

¹¹ Wise, *Gate of Hell*, 68–72.

¹² Wise, *Gate of Hell*, 120–21.

Navy Welles to request additional sailors and Marines and to apply political pressure on the Army through the president to send more troops to Morris Island.¹³

Send in the Marines

While pressuring the Army for more troops would take time, Welles embarked quickly on forming a regiment of Marines to send to Dahlgren. Commandant of the Marine Corps Colonel John Harris reported to Welles on 23 July 1863 that by taking Marines from across the barracks and receiving ships on the East Coast, he could provide 400 troops to form a battalion commanded by Major Jacob Zeilin.¹⁴ That same day, Welles ordered Harris to prepare a Marine battalion formed as Harris described in his report “at the earliest possible moment” and prepare them for transport via steam ship to Port Royal.¹⁵ Zeilin left from New York on 31 July with 260 Marines aboard the contracted U.S. Army steamer *SS Arago* (1855), while another 200 Marines from Boston, Massachusetts, embarked on 25 July 1863 aboard the recently commissioned former Confederate blockade runner *USS Aries* (1863) for transportation to Port Royal and ultimately Morris Island. By 6 August 1863, the battalion of 460 Marines had arrived at Morris Island, which Dahlgren decided to combine with Marines from the ships’ detachments of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron to form a regiment.¹⁶

Dahlgren had high expectations regarding his new regiment of Marines. He issued detailed instructions regarding how the regiment should be organized and equipped to operate alongside the soldiers on Morris Island. This included such instructions as, “The dress of the men should be such as to enable them to execute their duties in this hot climate. . . . The prop-

er protection of the head is to be attended to”; “The white belts on dark clothes offer too good a mark, their color must be changed”; and “It is my wish that the men shall also be accustomed to use charges of buckshot when close action is expected, particularly in an assault.”¹⁷ He also saw them as a core component of his naval strike force, ordering that “there will be a detail of boats from the vessels of the squadron sufficient to land the regiment conveniently. About half crews will be furnished for these boats.”¹⁸ Dahlgren expressed his desire that the regiment be prepared to execute operations as quickly as possible to take advantage of any opportunity. He wrote in his orders regarding the Marine regiment, “The regiment is to be divested of all luggage that can possibly be spared, and always be prepared to move on instant notice; rapidity of movement is one of the greatest elements of military power.”¹⁹

Dahlgren may have envisioned his Marine regiment as a capable strike force, but the reality was that the Marines assembled on Morris Island were a mixed bag of new recruits, Marines accustomed to sea duty, and only a handful of officers and enlisted with serious combat experience on land. The Marine regiment commander, Major Zeilin, had served in combat in California during the Mexican War and had led the Marine battalion at the First Battle of Manassas on 21 July 1861.²⁰ The next senior Marine, Captain Edward McDonald Reynolds, had served in Mexico with the Marine Battalion during the Mexican War and was wounded in the arm when he participated in the cutting-out expedition in Pensacola, Florida, on 13 September 1861 that resulted in the burning of the Confederate privateer *Judah*.²¹

¹³ Wise, *Gate of Hell*, 121.

¹⁴ Col John Harris, “Report of Colonel Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps of the Effective Men of Different Stations,” in *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion*, ser. 1, vol. 14 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1894–1922), 386, hereafter *O.R.N.*

¹⁵ Gideon Welles, “Order of the Secretary of the Navy to the Colonel Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps to Send Marines to Port Royal,” *O.R.N.*, ser. 1, vol. 14, 387.

¹⁶ RAdm John A. Dahlgren, “Report of Rear-Admiral Dahlgren, U.S. Navy, Regarding General Matters,” in *O.R.N.*, ser. 1, vol. 14, 428.

¹⁷ Dahlgren, “Report of Rear-Admiral Dahlgren, U.S. Navy, Regarding General Matters,” 429.

¹⁸ Dahlgren, “Report of Rear-Admiral Dahlgren, U.S. Navy, Regarding General Matters,” 429.

¹⁹ Dahlgren, “Report of Rear-Admiral Dahlgren, U.S. Navy, Regarding General Matters,” 429.

²⁰ BGen Jacob Zeilin biographical file, Historical Resources Branch, Marine Corps History Division (MCHD), Quantico, VA.

²¹ Capt Reynolds assumed command of the Marine regiment on Morris Island from Maj Zeilin after Zeilin fell ill and went on to assume command of the Marine Barracks in Portsmouth, NH, shortly before the evacuation of Fort Wagner. Capt Edward McDonald Reynolds biographical file, Historical Resources Branch, MCHD.



Photo by Haas and Peale, courtesy of *Civil War Photographs, 1861–65*, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, call no. LOT 4166-B, no. 31 Two 100-pound Parrott rifles in Battery Stevens, commanded by 1stLt James Wilson from Battery C, 1st U.S. Artillery, after the fall of Battery Wagner.

A few of the enlisted men had combat experience as well. Private Wilson Siddell, for example, enlisted in the Marine Corps on 18 May 1861 and fought under Major Zeilin at the First Battle of Manassas on 21 July 1861 with only a few weeks of training.²² Privates David Long and Robert B. Scanlin had a similar introduction to service in the Marine Corps, enlisting on 4 June 1861 and 21 June 1861, respectively, and marching to Manassas with the Marine battalion as

²² Wilson Siddell case file, certificate no. 930, Case Files of Approved Pension Applications of Civil War and Later Navy Veterans (Navy Survivors' Certificates), 1861–1910, publication no. M1469, ID: 580580, Records of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Record Group 15, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), via Fold3.

well.²³ While these Marines had “seen the elephant,” their combat experience was nearly two years behind them in September 1863.²⁴

²³ Marine Barracks Washington muster roll, July 1861, Muster Rolls of the U.S. Marine Corps, 1798–1892, Microfilm Publication T1118, 123 rolls, ID: 922159, Records of the U.S. Marine Corps, Record Group 127, via Ancestry.com; and Robert B. Scanlin case file, Case Files of Approved Pension Applications of Civil War and Later Navy Veterans (Navy Survivors' Certificates), 1861–1910, publication no. M1279, ID: 561929, NARA, 18, via Fold3.

²⁴ *Seeing the elephant* refers to American Civil War soldier slang for engaging in combat. A soldier who survived their first battle would be said to have “seen the elephant.” The phrase originated from advertising for traveling menageries in the 1830s encouraging people to “come see the elephant,” a rarity in North America, and thus “seeing the elephant” became shorthand for “gaining knowledge of something through actual experience.” Tracy L. Barnett, “Seeing the Elephant,” *Civil War Monitor*, 4 January 2022.

Most of the Marines' active service—outside of duty at the various Marine barracks—up to their arrival in South Carolina had been on board ships as part of Marine detachments. Young Marine officers such as First Lieutenant Charles H. Bradford and Second Lieutenant Robert L. Meade, commissioned in 1861 and 1862, respectively, were tasked with leading Marines in their duties on ships enforcing the blockade or searching for Confederate commerce raiders in the Atlantic. Most of the shipboard Marines' time was occupied with ceremonial duties, weapons training, and maintaining order among the sailors on board. Private Josiah Gregg related that during his cruise on the USS *Vanderbilt* (1862) his primary duties consisted of standing on the quarterdeck in dress uniform, drilling with small arms and naval guns, and target practice.²⁵ The only experiences approximating combat he recorded in his diary involved drunken sailors. He related one story: "Had quite a time with a sailor who was brought off drunk. He was very boisterous and called the First Sergeant and others the foulest names he could think of. Was put in irons but made so much noise that he was brought on deck and gagged and the hose played on him."²⁶ Soon after that incident, Gregg recorded, "The sailors have managed to get liquor aboard somehow which has caused considerable fighting among them and three more were put in the brig."²⁷ Sergeant Miles M. Oviatt, a Medal of Honor recipient, described the monotony of Marine sea duty when he wrote in his diary, "We have become accustomed to the same routine of . . . sea life, it comes almost second nature, and live in kind of lethargy."²⁸ This would have comprised most of the Service experience of orderly Sergeant Jesse Chisholm, one of the most senior Marine noncommissioned officers on Morris Island and a 10-year veteran of the Marine

Corps whose entire career had been spent either in the barracks or performing sea duty.

Major Zeilin recognized that this "lethargy" along with the inexperience of the new recruits in the regiment left the Marines on Morris Island wholly unsuited for the tasks that Dahlgren expected them to perform. Zeilin wrote a long report to Dahlgren on 13 August 1863 to lay out his concerns.

I wish to state that the force of marines, collected at New York from the various posts, the receiving ships and other ships then at home, and now united with the marines of the South Atlantic Squadron for operation ashore on Morris Island, is incompetent for the duty assigned it. . . . The Marine Corps is accustomed to act in small detachments on board of ship and ashore, and opportunities rarely offer to have more than one company together, and therefore when several detachments are united it is absolutely necessary that they should have time to become organized and drilled as a battalion and to know their officers and their duties on a larger scale. Many of these men are raw recruits . . . and until they are exercised for some time under their present officers with whom they are unacquainted, it would be very dangerous to attempt any hazardous operation requiring coolness and promptness on their part; and no such duty they could be called upon to perform requires such perfect discipline and drill as landing under fire. As few of these have ever seen an enemy in any position, they would doubtless fall into great confusion despite the best efforts of their officers.²⁹

²⁵ Pvt Josiah Gregg, *The Diary of a Civil War Marine*, ed. Wesley Moody and Adrenne Sachse (Madison, WI: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2013), 18–19, 38.

²⁶ Gregg, *The Diary of a Civil War Marine*, 42–43.

²⁷ Gregg, *The Diary of a Civil War Marine*, 42–43.

²⁸ Mary P. Livingston, ed., *A Civil War Marine at Sea: The Diary of Medal of Honor Recipient Miles M. Oviatt* (Shippensburg, PA: White Mane Publishing, 1998), 12.

²⁹ Maj Jacob Zeilin, "Report of Major Zeilin, U.S. Marine Corps, Regarding the Incompetency of the Battalion under His Command for the Duty Assigned," *O.R.N.*, ser. 1, vol. 14, 489.



Photo courtesy of Robert L. Meade biographical file, Archives, Marine Corps History Division

An undated, post-Civil War photograph of Col Robert L. Meade. Meade was captured leading Marines during the night attack on Fort Sumter on 8 September 1863.

Zeilin continued in his report: “Blame rests on no one; the exigencies of the service require unusual numbers of men; the old soldiers are mostly at sea, and drafts from shore stations must be filled by new men; men were detailed for this battalion that had not been drilled one week.”³⁰ The men Zeilin described included Private Henry Bradshaw, enlisted on 18 March 1863, and Private Edwin Reynolds, enlisted on 12 June 1863, along with 29 other Marines in the regiment who had enlisted between March and July 1863. They were afforded little time to learn military skills beyond rudimentary individual and small unit drill, mounting guard, and the basic use of small arms.

Combat was not the place for new Marines to learn their trade, and the environment of Morris

Island made it even more difficult. When Zeilin attempted to drill the Marines on the beach, many of them collapsed under the brutally hot August sun. Drilling at night was not a satisfactory solution as the officers could not see well enough to properly conduct the drill evolutions. This left only the few hours around dawn and sunset to conduct training, time that was also needed for general camp duties. Furthermore, the Marines, unaccustomed to living in camp on shore, proved ignorant of basic soldier skills such as cooking or maintaining basic sanitation, leaving the Marines “out of sorts, sick, and intractable.”³¹

The Capture of Battery Wagner and Heavy Guns versus Sumter’s Walls

Events would not wait for the Marines to develop the “perfect discipline and drill” that Zeilin believed they required to serve effectively. Army general in chief Major General Henry Halleck reluctantly sent Gillmore 10,000 additional troops, which arrived on Folly and Morris Islands in the first weeks of August 1863. Half of the reinforcements, 11 regiments, 8 of which had served in the now-disbanded XI Corps of the Army of the Potomac and were veterans of the Battles of Chancellorsville and Gettysburg, were formed into a division under Brigadier General George Henry Gordon. The other 5,000 troops came from Major General John G. Foster’s command in North Carolina, including a brigade of Black soldiers of the 1st, 2d, and 3d North Carolina Volunteer Infantry Regiments, the 55th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment, and the Philadelphia-raised 3d U.S. Colored Infantry Regiment. This brigade joined the Black 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment, veterans of a valiant but ultimately failed attack on Battery Wagner earlier in the campaign. The additional soldiers allowed Gillmore to push his trenches in front of Battery Wagner forward at a faster pace as well as begin a bombardment of Fort Sumter with his heavy artillery.³²

³⁰ Zeilin, “Report of Major Zeilin, U.S. Marine Corps, Regarding the Incompetency of the Battalion under His Command for the Duty Assigned,” 489.

³¹ Zeilin, “Report of Major Zeilin, U.S. Marine Corps, Regarding the Incompetency of the Battalion under His Command for the Duty Assigned,” 489–90.

³² Wise, *Gate of Hell*, 138.

The bombardment of Fort Sumter began at 0500 on 17 August 1863 with two 10-inch mortars, nine 6.4-inch and six 8-inch Parrot rifles, two 5-inch Whitworth cannon manned by sailors and Marines of the naval battery, and a 10-inch Parrot rifle that fired explosive shells weighing nearly 250 pounds. The Navy supported the bombardment with the monitors USS *Patapsco* (1862) and *Passaic* (1862) while wooden gunboats bombarded Battery Wagner with long-range fire to prevent counterfire against Gillmore's batteries. The guns began with solid shot to break apart the masonry walls of Fort Sumter, followed by explosive shells to widen the breaches created. On the first day of the bombardment alone, the Federal guns fired more than 700 projectiles at Fort Sumter. Six days of intense bombardment followed, turning Sumter's gorge wall into a crumbled mass of shattered bricks.³³

Confederate general Beauregard recognized that the devastating bombardment had rendered the fort useless as an artillery fortification. Following a visit to the fort on 22 August 1863, he ordered the removal of most of the remaining guns in Fort Sumter to Fort Moultrie on Sullivan's Island across the main ship channel. Additionally, he ordered the opening of the boom across the channel moved to Sullivan's Island so it could be protected by Fort Moultrie. Although Fort Sumter was no longer useful as a harbor fortification, it still maintained value as an anchor point for the channel obstructions and as a powerful symbol for Charleston's defenders. In light of this, Beauregard decided to garrison Fort Sumter with an infantry battalion to prevent any amphibious landings, despite the fort's battered condition and uselessness as an artillery platform.³⁴

Gillmore, increasingly frustrated with Dahlgren for not bypassing Fort Sumter and entering Charleston Harbor, turned his siege guns onto Battery Wagner. He planned to capture Wagner and Battery Gregg, located on Cummings Point at the northern end of Morris Island, to establish siege batteries to further batter Fort Sumter. As August came to an end, Gill-

more and Dahlgren subjected Battery Wagner to a sustained bombardment with the Army's heavy siege guns, naval guns from the monitors and the USS *New Ironsides* (1862), and mortars. The devastating bombardment was in preparation for a third ground assault on Battery Wagner on 7 September 1863.

Beauregard could see that Battery Wagner was no longer defensible and, anticipating a new Union assault, decided to evacuate the 1,000-plus Confederate troops. Charleston's defenses were still formidable despite the loss of Fort Sumter as an artillery position and the loss of Batteries Wagner and Gregg. The loss of 1,000 badly needed soldiers, however, would have severely affected Beauregard's ability to defend Charleston from further attacks. The Confederates were able to execute an evacuation on the night of 6–7 September 1863 as Gillmore's forces occupied their forward assault positions in front of Battery Wagner. The evacuation went off almost without a hitch, aside from the failed destruction of Battery Wagner's ammunition magazine. Gillmore's forces, along with Zeilin's Marines, occupied the deserted batteries on the morning of 7 September after a bitter 60-day siege.

The Odyssey Begins: Assaulting the Breach at Fort Sumter

With the batteries captured, Fort Sumter appeared ripe for the taking. Admiral Dahlgren quickly sent a surrender demand to the garrison at Fort Sumter on hearing that the batteries had been evacuated. Beauregard responded, "Refuse to surrender Fort Sumter. Admiral Dahlgren must take it and hold it if he can."³⁵ Dahlgren had already decided to attack the fort in the event they refused to surrender. He had telegraphed Gideon Welles on 7 September 1863, notifying him about the evacuation of Batteries Wagner and Gregg and his demand for Fort Sumter's surrender, and concluded his message with, "If [Fort Sumter's response

³³ Wise, *Gate of Hell*, 156–65.

³⁴ Wise, *Gate of Hell*, 161.

³⁵ Ens M. L. Johnson, "Report of Ensign Johnson, U.S. Navy, to Rear-Admiral Dahlgren, U.S. Navy, forwarding memorandum for General Beauregard, C. S. Army, regarding surrender of Fort Sumter," in *O.R.N.*, ser. 1, vol. 14, 548.



Photo by Haas and Peale, courtesy of *Civil War Photographs, 1861–65*, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, call no. LC-B8156-43 A Fort Sumter, photographed on 23 August 1863, following the start of the Union bombardment. The large-caliber rounds from the Union artillery caused the fort's walls to crumble and created a roughly 45-degree ramp leading from the sea into the fort.

is] in the negative, I shall move at once on it and the obstructions. A monitor has already taken position.”³⁶

Dahlgren felt pressure from his superiors and public opinion to do something to capture Charleston as quickly as possible. Dahlgren would undoubtedly have been in agreement with his friend and political ally Assistant Secretary of the Navy Gustavus V. Fox when he wrote to Acting Rear Admiral Samuel Phillips Lee, commander of the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron, regarding Union major general John Adams Dix’s failure to attack from Norfolk toward Richmond in June 1863, “Every rash act of this war has been crowned with success and here is the most glorious opportunity ever afforded, yet Dix contents himself with raids that inflict no injury except upon the

feelings of the enemy.”³⁷ Dahlgren was in Washington during the frustrating campaigns of the Army of the Potomac in 1862 and spring 1863 when an apparent lack of initiative on the part of Army officers handed the Union a string of embarrassing defeats. He felt that momentum was on his side following the capture of Morris Island and that the bombardment of Fort Sumter had rendered it indefensible to an amphibious assault.

However, Dahlgren would have benefited from a pause to consider that a “rash act” was not necessarily synonymous with thoughtfully considered, disciplined initiative. While Major General George B. McClellan’s lack of initiative arguably stymied his campaign on the Virginia peninsula in 1862, Major General John Pope’s “rash act” at Second Manassas that same year resulted in disaster. Major General Ambrose E. Burn-

³⁶ RAdm J. A. Dahlgren, USN telegram to Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy, 7 September 1863 (Received 12:25 p.m., 10 September 1863), in *O.R.N.*, ser. 1, vol. 14, 549.

³⁷ Thompson and Wainright, *Confidential Correspondence of Gustavus Vasa Fox, Assistant Secretary of the Navy 1861–1865*, vol. 2, 259.

side's rash decision to cross the Rappahannock River at Fredericksburg in December 1862 in the face of well-entrenched Confederate forces after losing the element of surprise nearly resulted in the destruction of the Army of the Potomac.

Capturing Fort Sumter, in Dahlgren's opinion, was also the only way for his ships to pass the Confederate batteries on Sullivan's Island and enter Charleston Harbor. He later wrote in his autobiography that despite the destruction wrought on Fort Sumter, "The garrison yet held it and if deprived of their heavy cannon could still use their muskets and light artillery as to sweep the water of any boats that might attempt to remove the obstructions."³⁸ A rash act might secure the position and enable Dahlgren's sailors to cut the boom across the main ship channel and allow the ships to pass Sullivan's Island as far from its guns as possible.

Finally, Dahlgren was acutely aware of the public and political criticism that had ousted Rear Admiral DuPont from command of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron following his failure to capture Charleston earlier that year and the newspaper chatter that seemed to indicate he might be heading for the same fate. He recalled in his autobiography, "For some weeks previous to the capture of Morris [Island] various remarks began to appear in the [public] correspondence depreciative of the naval service in this quarter—which then were utterly incomprehensible to me."³⁹ Dahlgren suspected that General Gillmore was the one responsible, possibly trying to shift the blame for the long siege at Morris Island. A naval assault that captured Fort Sumter would erase the bad press for the Navy and secure Dahlgren in his command.

The operation to capture Fort Sumter began inauspiciously on 8 September 1863 with a breakdown in the relatively cordial operational relationship between Dahlgren and Gillmore. Dahlgren sent a message to Gillmore at 1300 on 8 September 1863 stating

simply, "I will assault Fort Sumter tonight."⁴⁰ Gillmore replied to this message six hours later stating that he also planned a night landing against Fort Sumter and that, "In an operation of this kind there should be one commander to insure [sic] success and prevent mistakes. Will your party join the two regiments that I have designated and let the whole be under the command of the senior officer, or will the two parties confer and act in concert? The former method, I think, is much to be preferred."⁴¹ Dahlgren replied, "I have assembled 500 men and I can not [sic] consent that the commander shall be other than a naval officer. Will you be kind enough to let me know what time you will move and what the watchword will be, to prevent collision?"⁴² Gillmore's response was garbled during transmission, but was subsequently recorded as, "You decline to act in concert with me or allow the senior officer to command the assault on Sumter, but insist that a naval officer must command the party. Why this should be so in assaulting a fortification, I can not [sic] see. . . . We must trust to chance and hope for the best. No matter who gets the fort if we place our flag over it."⁴³

Whether it was a desire to outshine Gillmore or capitalize on the perceived momentum of the capture of the entirety of Morris Island, Dahlgren chose to rush ahead with his plans to conduct a night landing to seize Fort Sumter. On the morning of 8 September 1863, he ordered Commander Thomas H. Stevens, captain of USS *Patapsco*, to organize a flotilla of boats for the attack with volunteers from the squadron's ships, the naval battery on Morris Island, and the Marine regiment. The news of the planned assault was

⁴⁰ Adm John Dahlgren telegram to BGen Quincy A. Gillmore (U.S. Flag-Steamer *Philadelphia*, Off Morris Island, September 8, 1863—1 p.m.), *O.R.N.*, ser. 1, vol. 14, 607.

⁴¹ BGen Quincy A. Gillmore telegram to Adm John Dahlgren (Morris Island, September 8, 1863—7 p.m.), *O.R.N.*, ser. 1, vol. 14, 608.

⁴² Adm John Dahlgren telegram to BGen Quincy A. Gillmore (U.S. Flag-Steamer *Philadelphia*, Off Morris Island, September 8, 1863—8:10 p.m.), *O.R.N.*, ser. 1, vol. 14, 608.

⁴³ BGen Quincy A. Gillmore telegram to Adm John Dahlgren (Morris Island, September 8, 1863), *O.R.N.*, ser. 1, vol. 14, 608–9. Gillmore noted during the compilation of military records after the war that the first 30 words were transmitted from shore to Dahlgren and the subsequent parts of the message were relayed to Navy liaison Lt Preston that same night for delivery to Dahlgren.

³⁸ Peter C. Luebke, ed., *The Autobiography of Rear Admiral John A. Dahlgren* (Washington, DC: Naval History and Heritage Command, Department of the Navy, 2018), 87.

³⁹ Luebke, *The Autobiography of Rear Admiral John A. Dahlgren*, 94.

met with enthusiasm by the young Marine officers on Morris Island. Second Lieutenant Frederick Tomlinson Peet recalled, “Volunteers were called for among our officers, and all the Lieutenants volunteered. Our Captain, Charles G. McCauley [sic], said he would not volunteer, for he knew he would be ordered to command us, and it was so. But one of us had to remain, and [Second Lieutenant Robert L. Meade] and I threw up a cent to see who would go; he won, and I remained with the balance of my Company.”⁴⁴

The young Marine officers might not have been so enthusiastic had they known what awaited them on the two-acre pile of debris in Charleston Harbor. While the sustained bombardment of Fort Sumter had turned the gorge wall into rubble, it had not diminished the fort’s ability to defend itself from an amphibious attack. The artillerymen garrisoning Fort Sumter were withdrawn on 4 September 1863 and replaced by Confederate major Stephen Elliott and 350 soldiers from the 1st Battalion, South Carolina Infantry (known as the Charleston Battalion). Elliott quickly turned the fort into a formidable redoubt, building barricades in the breaches and placing his men on constant alert. While the gorge wall had been turned into a roughly 45-degree ramp, the loose rubble would make it extremely difficult for attackers to scale. Furthermore, the infantrymen were well supplied with Ketcham hand grenades and “fire balls.”⁴⁵ Elliott also coordinated with the heavy gun batteries on Sullivan’s Island, Fort Johnson, and Battery Simkins to support his position in the event of a boat attack by using a red signal rocket to alert them to fire on the waters immediately around the fort. Finally, the four-gun Confederate ironclad CSS *Chicora* (1862)

anchored behind Fort Sumter each night to drive off any attackers with its massive naval guns.⁴⁶

The Confederates’ defensive preparations were also supported by intelligence-gathering. Confederate salvagers had recovered the Union codebooks from the wrecked monitor USS *Keokuk* following DuPont’s assault on Charleston in April 1863 and were able to read signal traffic between Dahlgren’s ships and signal stations on Morris Island. Furthermore, the Confederates had the Union forces under constant observation, so that when boats from Dahlgren’s fleet began assembling at the southern end of Morris Island it became obvious that Dahlgren would soon take General Beauregard up on his challenge to take Fort Sumter if he could. Major Elliott’s infantrymen—highly motivated to defend Fort Sumter as sons of Charleston—were fully prepared and expecting the boat attack on the night of 8 September 1863.⁴⁷

In stark contrast to Elliott’s careful defensive preparations, Dahlgren’s assault plan was rushed and haphazard, perhaps even rash. The Marine volunteers from Morris Island were loaded into boats and assembled along with other boats from the squadron at Dahlgren’s flagship, the USS *Philadelphia* (1861). The officers involved in the assault went on board the flagship for Dahlgren to brief them on the operation. Marine second lieutenant Robert L. Meade recalled,

I went on board the Flag and saw the [admiral] who was enthusiastic of taking Fort Sumter, which was the object of the expedition. He seemed extremely anxious that we should “not let the Army get ahead of us” on any consideration, but gave us no orders whatever in . . . the attack, telling us simply that we would be towed near the fort and that, thereafter, our “own common sense” would tell us how to act.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Frederick Tomlinson Peet, *Personal Experiences in the Civil War* (New York: F. T. Peet, 1905), 85.

⁴⁵ There is some contention among experts on what the “fire balls” were exactly. There is substantial evidence that they were balls of pine resin or pine tar that were to be ignited and thrown down onto wooden boats, forming a sticky napalm-like flaming mass. It is also possible that they were Mason jars filled with lamp oil to act like nineteenth-century Molotov cocktails. Ketcham hand grenades, egg-shaped explosives with fin assemblies and percussion detonators, have been recovered during excavations at Fort Sumter and are on display in the museum occupying the grounds of the fort today.

⁴⁶ Maj Stephen Elliott, CSA, “Detailed Report of Major Elliott, C.S. Army, Commanding Fort Sumter,” *O.R.N.*, ser. 1, vol. 14, 637–38.

⁴⁷ Elliott, “Detailed Report of Major Elliott, C.S. Army, Commanding Fort Sumter,” 638; Burton, *The Siege of Charleston, 1861–1865*, 195; and Wise, *Gate of Hell*, 57.

⁴⁸ Robert L. Meade, *Robert L. Meade Journal, 1863–1864*, Robert L. Meade Collection, COLL/2216, box 6, folder 1, Archives Branch, MCHD, 85–86.

Commander Thomas H. Stevens, assigned to lead the operation by Dahlgren, had several reservations about the haphazard organization of the assault. He recalled many years later, “My judgment opposed the movement on the grounds that we were without reliable knowledge of the internal or external condition of the fort, and of the practicability of scaling the walls, for which no provision had been made; that sufficient time had not been allowed for the proper organization of a force for service of so desperate a character; that the enemy had been fully notified that some demonstration was to be made by the gathering of boats around the flagship in open daylight.”⁴⁹ Stevens claimed after the war that he sought to decline the command, to which Dahlgren replied, “You have only to go and take possession [of Fort Sumter]. You will find nothing but a corporal’s guard in it.”⁵⁰

Regardless of Stevens’s reservations, he formed a plan of attack on the fort. He divided the sailors and Marines into four divisions, with one division under Navy lieutenant Francis J. Higginson making a feint on the northwest angle of the fort while the remainder would make the main assault against the partially destroyed gorge wall. Marine captain Charles G. McCawley, in charge of 106 Marines armed with rifles, was to provide covering fire for the assault groups of sailors armed with pistols and cutlasses. Once the sailors landed, the Marines were to cease firing, land, “and use the bayonet.”⁵¹

The Marines and sailors waited aboard the Navy tug *Daffodil* until approximately 2200, at which point they embarked on the boats. The boats were arranged in a double line, secured to a tow line behind the tug, and waited for the operation to begin. Second Lieutenant Robert L. Meade found himself in the USS *Lodona’s* (1863) cutter with 15 Marines and 4 sailors serving as oarsmen. While the boats waited behind the tug, the watchword “Detroit” was passed from boat to

boat in the event the naval assault ran into Gillmore’s soldiers to prevent fratricide.⁵² The *Daffodil* got underway at 2300, but instead of heading straight toward Fort Sumter, it moved about the harbor in a pattern that was incomprehensible to the men in the boats.⁵³ Commander Stevens explained this unusual series of maneuvers in his report when he wrote that he had sailed about the harbor trying, unsuccessfully, to coordinate support for the landing from the monitors USS *Lehigh* (1863) and *Montauk* (1862).⁵⁴ The Marines and sailors had spent an exhausting day trying to organize the assault, and some, like Lieutenant Meade, took the opportunity to catch a quick nap as the *Daffodil* cruised back and forth.⁵⁵

Caught between the Fire and the Sea

Finally, between midnight and 0100, the *Daffodil* approached to approximately 800 yards from Fort Sumter in preparation for the attack. Lieutenant Meade asserted that the boats were not organized into their divisions prior to attaching to the *Daffodil’s* tow line, a serious organizational misstep. Meade wrote, “Where I was, there was a general ‘Skrimmage’ for Divisions. . . . I pulled around, trying to find even one boat of the 4th Division, my boat having been made fast to the line as it was then forming irrespective of divisions.”⁵⁶ This confusion was exacerbated by the tide, which caused the boats to drift apart even as they attempted to form their assault divisions.⁵⁷ When Lieutenant Higginson’s boat division pulled toward Fort Sumter

⁵² Gillmore later claimed that the 2,000 soldiers he assigned to assault Fort Sumter were unable to embark on the attack due to unfavorable tidal conditions around Morris Island on the night of 8 September 1863. *Robert L. Meade Journal, 1863–1864*, 87.

⁵⁴ Cdr T. H. Stevens, “Report of Commander T. H. Stevens, U.S. Navy, Commanding USS *Patapsco*, Port Royal, 21 September 1863,” *O.R.N.*, ser. 1, vol. 14, 626. The monitors do not appear to have played any significant role in supporting the assault. This might be due to the captains’ hesitancy to maneuver toward Fort Sumter at night after what had happened to the monitor USS *Weehawken* (1862) on 7 September 1863 during its reconnaissance of Fort Sumter. The ship ran aground and was then pummeled severely by Confederate artillery for several hours. Only a lucky shot that exploded an ammunition magazine in Fort Moultrie bought *Weehawken* enough of a reprieve to eventually refloat and escape out of range before it was irreparably damaged.

⁵⁵ Meade, *Robert L. Meade Journal, 1863–1864*, 87.

⁵⁶ Meade, *Robert L. Meade Journal, 1863–1864*, 88.

⁵⁷ McCawley, “Report of Captain Charles G. McCawley, USMC, Marine Battalion, Morris Island, 9 September 1863,” 667.

⁴⁹ RAdm Thomas H. Stevens, “The Boat Attack on Fort Sumter,” in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, vol. 4, ed. Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel (New York: Century Company, 1888), 49.

⁵⁰ Stevens, “The Boat Attack on Fort Sumter,” 49.

⁵¹ Capt Charles G. McCawley, “Report of Captain Charles G. McCawley, USMC, Marine Battalion, Morris Island, 9 September 1863,” *O.R.N.*, ser. 1, vol. 14, 623.

to initiate their feint, many of the other confused boat crews followed, mistaking his movement for the main attack on Fort Sumter. Commander Stevens, on seeing this development, ordered the remaining boat divisions to initiate the general assault on the fort.⁵⁸

Captain McCawley found it impossible to organize the Marine boats in the dark and ordered the boats near his own to follow him behind the Navy boats rowing toward Fort Sumter to provide covering fire for the sailors per Stevens's plan. The boats advanced toward the fort from the east, aiming for the northeast point of the gorge wall.⁵⁹ As the boats advanced within a few yards, a sentry from the 1st Battalion, South Carolina Infantry, challenged the boats and then opened fire. The sentry's fire was quickly joined by the rest of the garrison, who commenced a rapid musketry fire on the advancing boats. The garrison also launched a signal rocket, and the presighted guns at Fort Moultrie, Fort Johnson, and Battery Simkins opened fire with grapeshot, cannister, and explosive shells.⁶⁰ The *Chicora* also sailed out from behind the fort and added its naval guns to the violent cannonade. The rapid deluge of shot and shell struck the waters all around the fort, some even impacting Fort Sumter.⁶¹

McCawley ordered his Marines to return fire, and they began firing their rifles as Confederate musket balls blasted through their wooden boats, splashed noisily into the water, or thudded into human flesh. As the Marines and sailors rowed closer to the fort, the Confederates hurled grenades and fireballs along with chunks of blasted masonry to sink or swamp the open boats. Several of the leading Navy boats under Lieutenant Commander Edward P. Williams pressed through the fire and made it to the fort. Williams

quickly realized the precariousness of his position and that friendly fire was striking among his sailors. Williams wrote later, "The boats that held back opened fire with their revolvers, the shot striking among us who were halfway up the walls. Hoping to find a place where we could close with the enemy, I ordered the boats outside to cease firing and land, repeating the order several times. Lieutenants Meade and Bradford of the Marine Corps at once ceased firing and landed."⁶² Second Lieutenant Meade recalled, "I opened fire and kept it up for a short while, when I heard a voice ashore to 'Stop firing and land,' which I did as well as possible, my men suffering from the musketry fire and the bricks, hand grenades, and fire balls thrown from the parapet. Immediately on striking the beach, I gave orders to land and find cover, which the men lost no time in executing."⁶³

The Marines and sailors who reached the fort found themselves confined to the jumbled mass of rubble from the destroyed gorge wall that had come to rest on the gorge face and the 25-and-a-half-foot wide esplanade that ran the length of the gorge wall and was exposed at low tide. However, after reaching the esplanade, they discovered that they were unable to clamber up the pile of rubble, as any attempt was met with either a fall and slide back down, hurled bricks and grenades, or blasts of musket fire. Additionally, the steep angle of the rubble field made it nearly impossible for the men to fire back at their tormentors. The Confederate defenders methodically wrecked the small boats, leaving the more than 100 Marines and sailors who made it to Fort Sumter trapped between the Confederate fire and friendly fire from pistol-wielding sailors still afloat.⁶⁴

Commander Stevens realized that continuing the disorganized attack in the face of such heavy fire would be pointless. He observed in his official report, "The evidences of preparation were so apparent and the impossibility of effecting a general landing, or

⁵⁸ Stevens, "Report of Commander T. H. Stevens, U.S. Navy, Commanding USS *Patapsco*, Port Royal, 21 September 1863," 626.

⁵⁹ Stephen Elliott Jr., "Report of Major Stephen Elliott, Jr., Major, Artillery, Provisional Army of the Confederate States," *O.R.N.*, ser. 1, vol. 14, 636.

⁶⁰ Meade, *Robert L. Meade Journal, 1863–1864*, 89; and McCawley, "Report of Captain Charles G. McCawley, USMC, Marine Battalion, Morris Island, 9 September 1863," 667.

⁶¹ Stephen Elliott Jr., "Detailed Report of Major Elliott, C.S. Army, Commanding Fort Sumter, Headquarters, Fort Sumter, 12 September 1863," *O.R.N.*, ser. 1, vol. 14, 637.

⁶² Edward P. Williams, "Report of Lieutenant Commander E. P. Williams, U.S. Navy, Roxbury, Massachusetts, 27 September 1864," *O.R.N.*, ser. 1, vol. 14, 628.

⁶³ Meade, *Robert L. Meade Journal, 1863–1864*, 89.

⁶⁴ Williams, "Report of Lieutenant Commander E. P. Williams, U.S. Navy, Roxbury, Massachusetts, 27 September 1864," 628.

scaling the walls, so certain that orders were given to withdraw.⁶⁵ The retreat proved just as disorganized as the advance. Captain McCawley had just yelled orders for the boats under his command to land when he saw them turn away from the fort and follow “the crowd of others which were going out.”⁶⁶ McCawley pulled ahead to the lead boat as it approached the *Daffodil* and discovered that it belonged to Commander Stevens. They narrowly avoided a friendly fire incident when the *Daffodil* hailed them and threatened to fire until they were convinced that the boats belonged to Stevens and McCawley.⁶⁷ The scattered boats converged on the *Daffodil* and then returned to Dahlgren’s flagship by 0400 on 9 September 1863.⁶⁸

As the boats regrouped around the *Daffodil*, the Marines and sailors sheltering along Fort Sumter’s esplanade remained trapped between the waters of Charleston Harbor and the unremitting fire of the 1st Battalion, South Carolina Infantry. The “galling” fire prevented the officers from organizing the men, who sheltered in the craters to avoid the showers of grenades, fireballs, and musket fire.⁶⁹ The casualties stacked up in front of the fort: First Lieutenant Bradford was shot in the groin, sailmaker William S. Brayton from the USS *Powhatan* (1850), was shot in the hand and leg, Private Wilson Siddell received a ghastly gunshot wound in the forehead, tearing his flesh and crushing his skull but leaving him still alive.⁷⁰ Private John McIntyre was killed instantly while Sergeant Peter Mulhall; Corporal Black; and Privates Samuel Johnson, Michael Gettings, and Johnathan Mullen received wounds from musket fire or grenade

fragments.⁷¹ Command broke down in the face of the chaos. Meade recalled, “*Pour moi* [For me]—I did not know what to do. I only saw one officer and as I did not know him, I concluded not to report to him—but wait awhile . . . or go in search of [Commander] Stevens or [Captain] McCawley—as things happened, I became a passive spectator of what was going on around me.”⁷² Meade recalled how dire his situation was in a letter to his mother two days after the battle: “I am extremely fortunate in escaping with my life, as it was rather hot in my vicinity. Nearly all the men in my boat were hurt.” Meade was hit in the back by two bricks, saying that they bruised him “but no damage was done by them.”⁷³

Lieutenant Commander Williams became increasingly aware of the futility of his situation, unable to advance but, with their boats destroyed or sinking, unable to retreat. “I would not surrender,” he wrote later, “but some of the men from Lieutenant Bradford’s boat, he having been mortally wounded when landing, surrendered and were ordered [by the Confederates] around to the left, to come into the fort. I stopped these and ordered them under the walls. Soon finding it was only losing my men without gaining anything, on a consultation with the officers, I surrendered and was shown inside the fort.”⁷⁴ The 107 unwounded or wounded but ambulatory Marines and sailors were “ordered to ascend the ‘gorge face’ of the

⁶⁵ Stevens, “Report of Commander T. H. Stevens, U.S. Navy, Commanding USS *Patapsco*, Port Royal, 21 September 1863,” 626.

⁶⁶ McCawley, “Report of Captain Charles G. McCawley, USMC, Marine Battalion, Morris Island, 9 September 1863,” 667.

⁶⁷ McCawley, “Report of Captain Charles G. McCawley, USMC, Marine Battalion, Morris Island, 9 September 1863,” 667.

⁶⁸ McCawley, “Report of Captain Charles G. McCawley, USMC, Marine Battalion, Morris Island, 9 September 1863,” 667; and Stevens, “Report of Commander T. H. Stevens, U.S. Navy, Commanding USS *Patapsco*, Port Royal, 21 September 1863,” 626.

⁶⁹ Meade, *Robert L. Meade Journal, 1863–1864*, 90; and Williams, “Report of Lieutenant Commander E. P. Williams, U.S. Navy, Roxbury, Massachusetts, 27 September 1864,” 628.

⁷⁰ Wilson Siddell case file, certificate no. 930.

⁷¹ The author was unable to determine Corporal Black’s first name from the Marine Corps Muster Rolls or reports after the attack on Fort Sumter, but he is mentioned in multiple sources. Meade, *Robert L. Meade Journal, 1863–1864*, 7. It is difficult to determine the total number of casualties from the small boat attack on Fort Sumter. Maj Stephen Elliott, CSA, reported the Union casualties as 3 killed, 15 wounded, and 127 prisoners. LtCdr Edward P. Williams reported 3 killed at Fort Sumter, 2 mortally wounded, and 107 captured. Dahlgren’s report listed 3 killed and 114 prisoners. Ships within the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron received the wounded and killed boat crews and apparently were not reported in Dahlgren’s official report but can be found in some of the ships’ reports. A good estimate for total Navy and Marine Corps casualties for the operation would be between 134 and 150 killed, mortally wounded, wounded, missing, or captured. Using 400 total participants in the operation, that puts the landing force’s casualty rate at approximately 33.5 percent of the force engaged.

⁷² Meade, *Robert L. Meade Journal, 1863–1864*, 90. The naval officer he encountered was most likely LtCdr Williams.

⁷³ 2dLt Robert L. Meade to his mother, Robert L. Meade Collection, COLL/2216, box 6, folder 1, Archives Branch, MCHD.

⁷⁴ Williams, “Report of Lieutenant Commander E. P. Williams, U.S. Navy, Roxbury, Massachusetts, 27 September 1864,” 628.



Photo by George N. Barnard, 1819–1902, courtesy of Civil War Photographs, 1861–65, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, call no. LC-B811-3052 LOT 4166-C

The gorge wall of Fort Sumter, photographed in 1865. The wooden stakes at the top of the crumbling wall were added following the night attack on 8 September 1863.

parapet, which was accomplished with no little difficulty—the ground up mortar and brick being anything but secure footing—showing us that even had the whole party landed, we would not have been able to accomplish anything.”⁷⁵ The officers surrendered their swords and pistols to Confederate major Elliott.⁷⁶ However, in a last act of defiance, most of the enlisted Marines and sailors threw their weapons and equipment into the waters of the harbor before clambering into the battered fort.⁷⁷

“Treated with Every Kindness by the Officers”: Initial Confinement in Charleston

The Marines and sailors were received by Elliott, his second-in-command, and the Confederate surgeon assigned to the fort. They were “treated with every kindness by the officers,” and the exhausted men slumped to the ground. However, as Meade recalled, they “got no sleep owing to our extremely uncomfortable condition, being wet and covered with mud. I was so saturated with salt water and brick dust that I did not dry for 48 hours.”⁷⁸ The Confederates collected their prisoners in the center of the fort, then moved out onto the esplanade to collect the wounded who could not move. While the Confederates tended to the wounded, the Marines and sailors, after promising not to attempt an escape, were allowed to walk freely about Fort Sumter after first light on 9 September 1863.⁷⁹

Thirty-two Marines entered captivity on the night of 9 September 1863 when the Marines and sailors were loaded aboard a steamer at the temporary dock at Fort Sumter for transport to Charleston. Meade assumed duties as the ranking Marine officer for the mortally wounded First Lieutenant Bradford, with Sergeant Jesse M. Chisolm as the highest-ranking noncommissioned officer. A total of 26 privates, 2 corporals, and 2 sergeants were dutifully recorded as pris-

oners by the Marine battalion commander, Captain Edward McDonald Reynolds.⁸⁰

The prisoners landed at Charleston and were marched under guard toward the city’s notorious Old City Jail. Meade recorded that the guard “marched us a tedious distance to the City Jail. The people of Charleston were in attendance throughout our walk and I must say behaved with all the consideration their swinish propensities admitted of, hooting and cursing us.”⁸¹ The accommodations in the Old City Jail made their reception seem friendly by comparison. Meade wrote later that they were confined in rooms with pine plank floors without furniture and they were forced to use their soggy coats for pillows while enduring the crawling centipedes, cockroaches, and lice that scurried across them in the darkness. The jail ration, a large communal iron pot of “mush,” was served daily at 1500. Fortunately, many of the Marines were able to receive their baggage, including money, through a flag of truce and were able to supplement their rations by purchasing food from outside the jail.⁸²

The wounded prisoners were taken to a hospital, most likely the Marine Hospital since it was next to the Old City Jail, to receive additional treatment for their wounds. Surgeons were able to save Sailmaker Brayton’s wounded hand, but his wounded leg was amputated. Private Siddell’s ghastly head wound required the surgical removal of a “silver dollar-size” portion of his skull at the top of his forehead. He remained in a Charleston hospital for three months before he recovered sufficiently enough for transfer to a prison.⁸³ First Lieutenant Bradford later died from the severe gunshot wound to his groin two weeks after his arrival in Charleston. Meade recorded that Corporal Black also died in the hospital, but Sergeant Peter Mulhall and Privates Samuel Johnson, Michael Gettings, and Johnathan Mullen ultimately recovered.⁸⁴

⁷⁵ Meade, *Robert L. Meade Journal, 1863–1864*, 91.

⁷⁶ Meade, *Robert L. Meade Journal, 1863–1864*, 92.

⁷⁷ Meade, *Robert L. Meade Journal, 1863–1864*, 91; and Elliott, “Detailed Report of Major Elliott, C.S. Army, Commanding Fort Sumter, Headquarters, Fort Sumter, 12 September 1863,” 639.

⁷⁸ Meade, *Robert L. Meade Journal, 1863–1864*, 92–93.

⁷⁹ Meade, *Robert L. Meade Journal, 1863–1864*, 93.

⁸⁰ Capt Edward McDonald Reynolds, “Statement of the Marines Absent from the Marine Battalion following the storming of Fort Sumter,” *O.R.N.*, ser. 1, vol. 14, 622.

⁸¹ Meade, *Robert L. Meade Journal, 1863–1864*, 93.

⁸² Meade, *Robert L. Meade Journal, 1863–1864*, 94.

⁸³ Wilson Siddell case file, certificate no. 930, 28.

⁸⁴ Meade, *Robert L. Meade Journal, 1863–1864*, 7.

The captured Marines received several visitors during their initial incarceration in Charleston, notably Confederate Marine first lieutenant Henry L. Ingraham. Ingraham had resigned his commission as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps on 8 March 1861. He accepted a commission in the Confederate Marine Corps and was stationed in Charleston during the fighting there in 1863. His purpose for visiting the Marines in the Old City Jail was most likely to see if any of his former comrades had been captured. They were also visited by a reporter for the *Charleston Courier*, “who came for the purpose of manufacturing lies,” recalled Meade. He continued, “He was assisted by us, we furnishing them to him readymade when the subject was about the nation or fleet lawfully, I hope.” Many other visitors came during the next four days, some to harangue the captives about the futility of the Union cause but most just to get a look at the Yankee prisoners and satisfy their curiosity.⁸⁵

Clams and Tunnels: Inmates of Richland County Jail

The Marines’ stay in the Old City Jail was relatively short. On 13 September 1863, they were loaded on a train and transported to Columbia, South Carolina, and housed in the Richland County Jail. The officers and enlisted were separated into different rooms and the dull routine of life as a prisoner in the jail began. Their day started at 0600, when the Confederate non-commissioned officer of the guard woke the prisoners and led them out to the jail yard for a half hour. After that, they were counted and locked back into their cell to engage in “lounging and card playing until breakfast,” which consisted of scouse—a stew of meat and crumbled hard tack—meal cakes, and scorched cornmeal boiled into an ersatz coffee. The rest of the day was occupied by more card playing, lounging, napping, or reading, with another half hour of yard time at 1030, followed by dinner, more lounging and tobacco use, yard time again at 1630, followed by evening activities, including more lounging and “a little singing.” Bedtime was enforced at 2000, when the

prisoners put on all the clothing they had available to them, wrapped up in a blanket if they had one, and slept fitfully on the plank floor.⁸⁶

The enlisted Marines and their surviving officer, Meade, were held in the Richland County Jail until 13 November 1863. On that date, the enlisted sailors and Marines were loaded onto trains for transportation to Richmond, Virginia. Lieutenant Meade and the naval officers captured at Fort Sumter remained in the Richland County Jail along with Union Army officers and some of the wounded men who had not been released from the hospital in Charleston prior to 13 November.

One advantage of the boring routine was that the confined officers had plenty of time to plan escapes. Meade recorded the first escape on 13 December 1863, when a U.S. Navy officer and an Army officer broke out of the jail and sought out members of the Underground Railroad—an antebellum network used to help escaped enslaved people flee to the north—to make their way to Union lines. Two more officers escaped the following night, also intent on locating the Underground Railroad. The prisoners who remained in the jail were able to conceal their fellow inmates’ escape until 15 December using an unnamed “ingenious, though old, contrivance.”⁸⁷

Confederate Army Captain Rufus D. Senn, the commander of the Richland County Jail’s guard, was incensed when he discovered the four officers had escaped. “Captain Senn complained bitterly of our hard treatment of himself,” recalled Meade, “and in his conversation called us ‘men.’” Senn’s reference to Meade, a Marine officer and member of a distinguished military family, as a *man*—a term reserved for enlisted servicemen—and not as a gentleman made his hackles rise. He wrote,

For devilment’s sake, I corrected him, telling him that all the men had been sent to Richmond—He waxed forth and informed me that he would speak as he pleased, and that he would sub-

⁸⁵ Meade, *Robert L. Meade Journal, 1863–1864*, 95–97.

⁸⁶ Meade, *Robert L. Meade Journal, 1863–1864*, 100–1.

⁸⁷ Meade, *Robert L. Meade Journal, 1863–1864*, 102.

mit to no dictation from me, at which I informed him that . . . if he persisted in refusing us the respect to which we were entitled, that we would use our own pleasure in answering his questions, all we could do as prisoners.⁸⁸

Captain Senn's anger toward Lieutenant Meade appears to have cooled after the last of the four escapees were recaptured on 23 December. Meade's journal entries for the next three months were preoccupied with the packages he received from home, including books to occupy his time and boxes of packaged *quahaugs*, which when opened proved to hold "excellent whiskey" instead of clams. Meade shared his bounty with his fellow officers, remarking that Lieutenant Commander Williams, who had "lost colour in his confinement is again picking it up under the influence of an occasional clam [whiskey]."⁸⁹ The prisoners, at least the officers, seemed to only be limited in the quality of their fare by the packages or funds they received through the mail from home. They also busied themselves with reading and collaborating on an article on an unrecorded subject for future publication.⁹⁰

All the leisure activity masked a more desperate endeavor. On 7 March 1864, Meade wrote, "About 12:00 p.m. I was awakened by [Captain] Senn's coming in our room and saying, 'Gentlemen, I have found your hole.'" The imprisoned officers had been digging a tunnel under the walls of the jail to launch another, greater, escape attempt. Meade recalled, "We were of course greatly astonished, and finding concealment of our little plot no longer necessary gave him all the information he desired relative to the tunnel." The tunnel became a minor tourist attraction, drawing curious guards, local citizens, and even the Richland County Grand Jury.⁹¹ Although the guards did not mete out any severe punishments for the escape attempt, they did decide to consolidate all the prisoners, both of-

ficers and the remaining enlisted, in a common room on the second floor of the jail to prevent any future tunneling efforts.⁹²

The officers and enlisted men remained confined together in the same room, with periodic excursions to the jail yard, for the remainder of their time in the jail. The stress of the close confines was exacerbated by rumors of the resumption of prisoner exchanges. Consequently, when the enlisted men were informed on 9 March 1864 that they would not be allowed to enter the "officer area" of the cell, a faction formed around some of the more disaffected and vocal enlisted to oppose the restriction. The Confederate lieutenant of the guard backed the officers in establishing the restriction and refused to interfere in the matter.⁹³

Conflict between the prisoners and the guards also increased. Meade recorded that he "had a little trouble with one of the sentries in the yard, for which the Lieutenant of the Guard sought me to 'reprimand' me. I gave him my mind on the subject and he left unsatisfied. . . . Our men quite annoying and insolent indirectly."⁹⁴ Captain Senn, apparently seeking to ease the tensions, mediated the disagreement between Meade and the lieutenant of the guard and then granted the prisoners access to the yard for the full day, only making them return to their crowded cell to sleep at night.⁹⁵

Navy lieutenant George C. Remy took the opportunity of the extra yard time to call the sailors and Marines together to discuss their recent inappropriate conduct toward their officers. Three of the men, Meade recorded, "were very insolent to him. . . . Hall and Davis, sailors, and J. W. [Wilson] Siddell, a Marine." He continued, "Siddell, who has been a prime mover among them [the disgruntled enlisted men] was *very* insolent in word and actions, saying when he was told that he would be reported when across the lines that he 'didn't care a d—n, he was not afraid.'" Meade must have been very chagrined at the Marine's behavior since he recorded in his journal, "I shall make

⁸⁸ Robert L. Meade was the son of long-serving U.S. Navy Capt Richard Worsam Meade II and nephew of Army of the Potomac commander MajGen George Meade. Meade, *Robert L. Meade Journal, 1863–1864*, 103.

⁸⁹ Meade, *Robert L. Meade Journal, 1863–1864*, 105–6.

⁹⁰ Meade, *Robert L. Meade Journal, 1863–1864*, 106.

⁹¹ Meade, *Robert L. Meade Journal, 1863–1864*, 107.

⁹² Meade, *Robert L. Meade Journal, 1863–1864*, 107–18.

⁹³ Meade, *Robert L. Meade Journal, 1863–1864*, 108.

⁹⁴ Meade, *Robert L. Meade Journal, 1863–1864*, 109.

⁹⁵ Meade, *Robert L. Meade Journal, 1863–1864*, 110.

a report of him to Colonel Harris [the Commandant of the Marine Corps].”⁹⁶ Siddell might have been due some grace, however, as he was the Marine who was shot in the head and survived during the night attack on Fort Sumter. Postwar testimony by his brother in support of his pension claim recorded that his injury inflicted permanent personality changes and that “he suffers from headache almost constantly, and from nervousness. Exposure to noise and to the sun, or to excitement, causes great suffering and dizziness.”⁹⁷ In contrast, Meade sought to record the privates who maintained their discipline during the confinement. He wrote in his journal that Privates Gettings and Johnson were “orderly and respectful. . . . I will do them a good turn if I can.”

That night, one of the provocateurs moved to set up his bunk in “officer country” and refused to leave when he was ordered. Once again, Captain Senn had to intervene and force the enlisted man back onto his side of the room amid “various insolent remarks about their officers” by the enlisted prisoners. The situation was coming to a head, so Lieutenant Remy spoke to Captain Senn the next morning and singled out a sailor named Jason Davis as the primary instigator of antagonism against the officers. Senn had Davis seized, placed in irons, and confined in solitary confinement for 10 days on bread and water. The exemplary punishment seemed to have the desired effect, as Meade does not record further discord in his journal from that point forward.⁹⁸

The Marines and sailors in the Richland County Jail waited, holding onto the hope of exchange and return to the north, as vicious battles raged around Atlanta, Georgia, and in the Wilderness of Spotsylvania County in Virginia in the spring and summer of 1864. The broken exchange cartel began again in fits and starts, and by September 1864, the Marines and sailors imprisoned in the Richland County Jail were no-

tified that they would be exchanged soon. Meade and his fellow Marines had been exchanged by 19 October 1864. After a brief visit home, the new Commandant of the Marine Corps, Colonel Jacob Zeilin, ordered now-First Lieutenant Meade to report to the Brooklyn Navy Yard to resume his duties as a Marine officer.⁹⁹

Meade went on to serve 41 years in the Marine Corps and retired on 26 December 1903 as a colonel; he was promoted to brigadier general on the retired list in 1905. He served in the Spanish-American War, where he fought in the Battle of Santiago de Cuba while aboard the USS *New York* (ACR 2). In 1899, he embarked for the Philippines to fight in the Philippine Insurrection, and fought at the Battle of Tientsin in China during the Boxer Rebellion on 13–14 July 1900. During his career, the Marines transitioned from a primarily shipboard guard force to an expeditionary force trained in modern infantry tactics and able to fight effectively on land.

Andersonville: Hell on Earth

The Marines who were transported to prison in Richmond, Virginia, in November 1863 had a vastly different experience of captivity than those who remained in the Richland County Jail. The Belle Isle prison stockade in the James River, where the Marines were transferred after a short stay in Libby Prison, was packed with more than 8,000 Union military prisoners in an area built for a maximum of 3,000 prisoners. Although they were supplied with 300 tents, these were not enough to provide shelter for the additional prisoners. Consequently, many prisoners dug holes in the ground for shelter against the elements. This might have been sufficient in a warmer climate, but a lack of blankets and warm clothing combined with inadequate shelter and poor rations led to as many as 14 men a night freezing to death during the winter of 1863–64.¹⁰⁰

Disease in the camp ran rampant, and the large number of prisoners drove the already expensive war-

⁹⁶ Meade, *Robert L. Meade Journal, 1863–1864*, 110, emphasis original but edited. J. W. Siddell is Wilson Siddell, the Marine who suffered the severe gunshot wound to the head at Fort Sumter and had spent three months in a Charleston hospital before he recovered sufficiently to be transported to the Richland County Jail.

⁹⁷ Wilson Siddell case file, certificate no. 930, 61.

⁹⁸ Meade, *Robert L. Meade Journal, 1863–1864*, 111.

⁹⁹ Col Jacob Zeilin, CMC, to Lt R. L. Meade, Robert L. Meade Collection, COLL/2216, box 6, folder 1, Archives Branch, MCHD.

¹⁰⁰ David S. Heidler and Jeanne T. Heidler, “Belle Isle,” in *Encyclopedia of the American Civil War: A Political, Social, and Military History*, 207.



Photo by Andrew Jackson Riddle, 1828–97, courtesy of the Liljenquist Family Collection of Civil War Photographs, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, call no. PH-Riddle, no. 2

Union prisoners drawing rations at Andersonville Prison, 17 August 1864. The meager rations lacked important nutrients, causing the Marines imprisoned there, as well as other prisoners, to die from malnutrition or other comorbid diseases.

time food prices in Richmond even higher, reducing the already meager rations provided to the prisoners. By the end of 1863, the average prisoner ration at Belle Isle consisted of a square of corn bread and a thin soup. This inadequate ration was insufficient not only in quantity but nutritional quality, further exacerbating the spread of disease. Additionally, military and political leaders in Richmond feared that the Union penetration to the Rappahannock and Rapidan Rivers during the closing months of 1863 placed the city at risk of a Union cavalry raid that might free thousands of prisoners to run amok. In light of this, the Confederate leaders decided to move the Union prisoners in Richmond farther south beginning in February 1864.¹⁰¹

The Confederates had begun construction on a new prison camp designed to hold up to 10,000 prisoners near Andersonville, Georgia. Officially known as Camp Sumter, but known by its more common and infamous nickname Andersonville, it was located near a rail depot that would simplify prisoner transport to the prison from Richmond. Since the price of lumber had risen beyond the budgeted funds, the Confederate prison administration chose not to construct barracks for the prisoners but instead built an open-air holding area surrounded by a log stockade. The prisoners would be left to their own devices to manufacture crude shelters—known in Union Army slang as *shebangs*—out of scrap wood, blankets, and earth. The Confederate engineers deemed a slow-running stream that meandered across the southern one-third of the camp as sufficient to provide drinking water and car-

¹⁰¹ Heidler and Heidler, “Belle Isle,” 207.

ry away any human waste deposited at the latrine, or “sink,” located downstream from where the drinking water was to be drawn.¹⁰²

The Marines imprisoned at Belle Isle began their journey to Andersonville in March 1864. They were loaded onto boxcars and traveled south on the increasingly dangerous Confederate railroad system. The southern rail industry had limited capacity for construction and maintenance before the war, and the Union blockade further hampered efforts to maintain a safe and efficient rail system. The Marines experienced the decline of the Confederate rail system firsthand when their train derailed. The Marines were bounced around the box car as it jumped the track, and one Marine, Private Robert Scanlin, reported that he seriously injured his left abdominal area when he was thrown into a broken bench during the accident, causing an internal “rupture.”¹⁰³ The Marines eventually made it to Andersonville, only to be met with a hell that made Belle Isle seem like paradise by comparison.

The prison population of Andersonville had grown beyond its maximum capacity by the time the Marines arrived. The sluggish stream proved inadequate to carry away the waste of thousands of men, and the prison kitchens located upstream, along with waste from the guard camp, ensured that the water was already polluted by the time it entered the stockade. Private George Weiser of the 10th New Jersey Volunteer Infantry Regiment recalled the desperate water situation, “The Rebs had a cook house on the outside near the ditch, and much of the dirt from their cook house would get in the water, which made it very bad to drink.”¹⁰⁴ The sink was supposed to provide a contained space for feces and prevent contamination

of the stream from sources inside the prison. However, sick soldiers were often unable to walk across the three acres of muddy ground to reach the sink and would resort to digging holes near their shebangs and defecating into them. The holes would overflow or flood in the rain, causing the contents to “boil over and run down the hill.”¹⁰⁵

The waste attracted millions of flies from the surrounding Georgia farmland, which laid their eggs in the filth. Weiser recalled, “This was the cause of creating millions of maggots, and when we would lay down to sleep hundreds of these maggots would crawl over us. Some of them would crawl in our ears and in our mouths.”¹⁰⁶ The prisoners also carried lice with them from other prisons or Army camps; the parasites thrived in the densely packed prison stockade. Weiser wrote, “The ground or sand seemed to be full of these lice and at any time we could see them crawling on us from off the ground.”¹⁰⁷

As if living in hovels covered in vermin and filth was not bad enough, the prisoners at Andersonville were also poorly fed. The Confederate commissary struggled to supply adequate food as the population of the prison climbed to more than 31,000 prisoners by July 1864. A typical ration was a few ounces of low-quality pork or beef, corn bread, cornmeal or rice, and occasionally molasses in place of the meat ration issued once daily.¹⁰⁸ This fare was invariably issued uncooked or partially cooked, which in a prison bereft of combustible material resulted in many prisoners having to consume their meat raw or undercooked. Additionally, the cornmeal, rice, and meat diet was severely deficient in vitamins and minerals, particularly vitamin C. The abysmal sanitary conditions combined with the meager diet were responsible for the three great killers of Andersonville prisoners: diarrhea, scurvy, and starvation.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰² Alicia Rodriguez, “Andersonville (1864–1865),” in *Encyclopedia of the American Civil War: A Political, Social, and Military History*, 48–49.

¹⁰³ Scanlin case file, 81. The “rupture” appears to have been a tear of the abdominal wall or a hernia.

¹⁰⁴ Pvt George Weiser, “Do You Men Ever Expect to Get Out of This Prison Alive?: Memoirs of George Weiser,” in *Giving up the Ghost: A Collection of Prisoners’ Diaries, Letters and Memoirs*, ed. by William L. Styple et al. (Kearny, NJ: Belle Grove Publishing, 1996), 6. Unfortunately, there are no full first-person accounts left from the Fort Sumter night attack Marines imprisoned at Andersonville. The author relied on other soldiers’ accounts as exemplary of the average prisoner’s experience at Andersonville.

¹⁰⁵ Weiser, “Do You Men Ever Expect to Get Out of This Prison Alive?: Memoirs of George Weiser,” 6.

¹⁰⁶ Weiser, “Do You Men Ever Expect to Get Out of This Prison Alive?: Memoirs of George Weiser,” 6–7.

¹⁰⁷ Weiser, “Do You Men Ever Expect to Get Out of This Prison Alive?: Memoirs of George Weiser,” 7.

¹⁰⁸ Pvt George A. Hitchcock, “Death Is Doing His Share of the Work Faithfully: Diary of George Hitchcock,” in *Giving up the Ghost*, 61.

¹⁰⁹ Rodriguez, “Andersonville (1864–1865),” 49–50.

The Marines who entered Andersonville in March 1864, already weakened by a winter in Belle Isle Prison, perished shortly after their arrival. Among the first to die was Sergeant Jesse Chisholm, who succumbed to diarrhea between 15 and 27 April 1864.¹¹⁰ Chisholm, a 10-year veteran, was quickly followed by Private Edwin Reynolds, who died on 23 April with just 10 months in the Marine Corps.¹¹¹ Meade received news of Chisholm's death on 9 July 1864, by which point 10 of the 25 enlisted Marines imprisoned at Andersonville had succumbed to the effects of scurvy, malnutrition, or diarrhea.

The Marines continued to die through July into August. Private Henry Bradshaw, with just over a year in the Marine Corps, died of starvation on 21 July 1864.¹¹² Private Michael Martin was admitted to the prison hospital on 31 July 1864. The hospital was, in some ways, worse than remaining in the hovels inside the stockade. Patients were lain on the ground with little or no medical attention beyond collecting their bodies when they died and placing them into one of the grave trenches outside of the prison. Private Martin suffered this fate when he died on 5 August 1864 and joined the thousands of other prisoners buried under the red clay soil.¹¹³

Mental anguish also bedeviled the prisoners trapped in Andersonville. The extreme heat, pervasive filth and vermin, lack of shelter and food, and the seemingly random shootings of prisoners who approached too close to the "deadline" combined to drive many men to despair. Private George Weiser wrote, "There were men that had been the bravest of the Country, who had stood before the enemy in the heat of battle and fought until they were wounded or



Photo courtesy of Civil War Photographs, 1861–65, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, call no. LC-B813-6547 A
 BGen Quincy A. Gillmore led the U.S. Army forces on Morris Island during the siege of Charleston beginning in June 1863. The photograph was taken before his promotion to major general in July 1863.

captured, but now they are so reduced and starved that their hearts sink, their strength is gone, and they are passing away forever. There is nothing in this pen but famine and danger."¹¹⁴ Union prisoner John Simmons recalled, "The first sight to a new prisoner as he came into the pen caused him at once to be thoroughly disheartened, and I saw many soon after they came in, sit down, and it seemed to me they never rose up again, but sat there moaning and crying until they died; and then they were carried out and thrown in a trench, never to be heard of again by us or by their friends at home."¹¹⁵

Sleep was often impossible due to the lack of bedding and inadequate shelter, but also due to the

¹¹⁰ "Sworn Statement of Robert B. Scanlin regarding the Death of Sergeant Jesse M. Chisholm," in Jesse M. Chisholm case file, Case Files of Approved Pension Applications of Widows and Other Dependents of Navy Veterans, compiled ca. 1861–ca. 1910, 23, via Fold 3; and Dorence Atwater and Clara Barton, *A List of the Union Soldiers Buried at Andersonville* (New York: Tribune Association, 1866), 70.

¹¹¹ Selected Records of the War Department Commissary General of Prisoners Relating to Federal Prisoners of War Confined at Andersonville, GA, 1864–1865, film publication no. M1303, Records of the Commissary General of Prisoners, Record Group 249, NARA, 0419, via Ancestry.com, hereafter Film publication no. M1303.

¹¹² Film publication no. M1303, 0419.

¹¹³ Film publication no. M1303, 0501.

¹¹⁴ Weiser, "Do You Men Ever Expect to Get Out of This Prison Alive?: Memoirs of George Weiser," 13.

¹¹⁵ John Simmons alias John Hall, "That Darkest of All Hours: Memoirs of John Simmons, William W. Jellison, Eli J. Wamsley, Ichabod Preston," in *Giving up the Ghost*, 54.



Photo courtesy of Civil War Photographs, 1861–65, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, call no. LC-B811-3416 [or 3417, if using full-length image] LOT 4182

RAdm John A. Dahlgren posing next to a 50-pound Dahlgren gun aboard USS *Pawnee* (1859), ca. 1865. Dahlgren took command of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron in June 1863 during the siege of Charleston and ordered the naval assault on Fort Sumter on 8 September 1863.

nightly attacks by “raiders.” The raiders were prisoners who banded together to prey on other prisoners and steal their clothing, food, or money until the camp authorities established a prisoner-led police force and hanged the worst offenders. The men were reduced to filthy, starving wretches concerned only with receiving and consuming their meager rations and then counting the hours until the next ration issue. The only hope they had to cling to was the ever-present

rumors of exchange or parole. The rumors invariably proved false, but the thought of escape or parole was the only thing that sustained many of them as they slowly wasted away from scurvy and diarrhea.¹¹⁶

By September 1864, only 6 of the 25 Marines from the Fort Sumter attack imprisoned at Ander-

¹¹⁶ Sgt William Farrand Keys, “Death Will Soon Be Regarded as Our Best Friend: The Diary of William F. Keys,” in *Giving up the Ghost*, 39.

sonville remained alive. Fortunately for them, Major General William Tecumseh Sherman's march across Georgia following his capture of Atlanta forced the Confederates to begin moving prisoners out of Andersonville to prevent their liberation. Also, the rumors of exchange had finally come true, at least for the Marines captured at Fort Sumter. The survivors were marched, along with other Union prisoners, out of Andersonville and on board a train for transfer to the Florence Stockade in South Carolina, while they awaited their impending release.

One Marine, Private David Long, understandably did not believe that he would actually be exchanged after months of rumors and speculation that came to nothing. The Florence Stockade was another open prison pen, much like Andersonville, and must have surely given Private Long the final motivation he needed to affect his escape. He wrote in a postwar affidavit that he remained in the pen only two hours before escaping. He eluded Confederate search parties for five days before he was recaptured and sent to the Confederate prison in Salisbury, North Carolina, where he remained until the prison was liberated by Union soldiers in March 1865.¹¹⁷ The five other Marines who remained in the Florence Stockade were soon transferred to Richmond, Virginia, for exchange. They received their parole at Varina, Virginia, on 18 October 1864 and returned to the Marine Barracks in Washington, DC, by 20 October.¹¹⁸

Although the six Marines had survived their ordeal, their health was permanently broken. Private Scanlin weighed 167 pounds when he was captured at Fort Sumter and only 62 pounds when he was paroled.¹¹⁹ He remained in a hospital in Washington, DC, until February 1865, when he was discharged and sent to his home in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, by the surgeon at the Marine Barracks, who believed that Scanlin would not live much longer. Scanlin survived, but he suffered from rheumatism, chronic diarrhea, heart disease, and

a hernia on his left side requiring a truss from the injury he sustained in the train derailment for the rest of his life. Like many enlisted Marines during the Civil War, Scanlin's only other occupation had been as a laborer, and his illnesses made it extremely difficult to earn a living. Additionally, he spent much of what money he did earn on doctors and so-called patent medicines in an effort to cure his chronic ailments.¹²⁰

Conclusion: A Fight between Elephants

The night attack on Fort Sumter on 8 September 1863 marked the end of serious Union attempts to take the fort or Charleston Harbor. The Union Army force on Morris Island was reduced as military activity increased in other theaters in 1864, although heavy artillery remained in position and periodically bombarded Fort Sumter until the end of the war. After General Sherman captured Savannah, Georgia, he turned north to ravage South Carolina. Confederate forces evacuated Fort Sumter and Charleston on 18 February 1865 and retreated north toward North Carolina. Ultimately, the U.S. Army had the distinction of raising the U.S. flag at Fort Sumter when Major John A. Hennessy of the 52d Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry Regiment rowed to the abandoned fort on 18 February and raised the regimental flag.¹²¹

The attack did not have any impact on how the Union Navy conducted subsequent amphibious attacks during the war. The same tactic—sailors assaulting a fort with pistols and cutlasses while Marines provide covering fire with muskets—was used again at Fort Fisher in North Carolina in January 1865 with devastating results for the Marines and sailors. If anything, the attack highlighted the limitations of the Civil War-era U.S. Marine Corps to perform duties as a landing force against a defended objective. Marines in small boats lacked the firepower needed to overcome entrenched defenders or the communications to effectively coordinate supporting fire from naval gunboats or battleships. Additionally, their primary func-

¹¹⁷ David Long case file, Case Files of Approved Pension Applications of Civil War and Later Navy Veterans (Navy Survivors' Certificates), 1861–1910, publication no. M1469, ID: 580580, NARA, 7, via Fold3.

¹¹⁸ Scanlin case file, 90.

¹¹⁹ Scanlin case file, 18.

¹²⁰ Scanlin case file, 81.

¹²¹ Burton, *The Siege of Charleston, 1861–1865*, 318–19.

tion as guards aboard ships or at naval bases resulted in a lack of practical experience conducting massed maneuvers as infantry. It would be nearly eighty years before technology and the Marine Corps' doctrine development would allow them to make successful landings against entrenched enemy forces.

The African proverb, "When elephants fight, the grass suffers," is an apt metaphor for the 1863 night attack on Fort Sumter. The rivalry between Secretary of War Edwin Stanton and Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles filtered down to the commanders in their respective Services. Although Dahlgren and Gillmore initially worked well together during the siege of Battery Wagner, their cooperation disappeared as soon as Fort Sumter—a prize that would boost both their own and their Service's prestige—appeared ripe for the taking. The Marines and sailors under Dahlgren's command lacked the training and experience necessary to undertake a complicated night attack on a for-

tified position. Furthermore, Dahlgren's rush to launch the attack practically ensured a disaster given the limited time he provided Commander Stevens to plan and organize his assault force. The failed attack had limited impact on Dahlgren and Gillmore. Gillmore was promoted to major general following the evacuation of Battery Wagner and went on to command the Union Army's X Corps in the Bermuda Hundred area of Virginia, while Dahlgren continued in command of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron and went on to command the U.S. Navy's South Pacific Squadron for two years after the war. Ultimately, it was the Marines and sailors who would suffer, many paying the ultimate price, for their commanders' thirst for glory and the rivalry between two Services that should have worked together to defeat the enemy of their country rather than pursue self-aggrandizement at the expense of the other.

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From Mascot to Marine

THE LONG WALK TO THE AMERICAN MILITARY DOG PROGRAM

By Elisabeth J. Phillips, MA

Abstract: During World War II, the military dog became synonymous with patriotism and a symbol of the fight for a free world. In the absence of a military dog program at the beginning of the war, the United States was the exception among Western powers. The establishment of an official military dog program during World War II was a critical step in the development of the country's military. Through the creative collaboration of civilians and military personnel, the K-9 Corps and Dogs for Defense organization produced trained military dogs that had immediate positive impacts on the battlefield. The creation of the American military dog program laid the foundation for the continued utilization of the military dog, served as the proving ground for the capabilities of dogs, and expanded the understanding of how dogs might be used on the battlefield. This piece distinguishes the U.S. Marines' military dog program separately from the Army's.

Keywords: war dog, military dog, military working dog, dogs, World War II, Marine Corps mascots, World War I, sentry dog, sled dog, pack dog, messenger dog, scout dog, K-9 Corps

Introduction: Dogs for Defense and the K-9 Corps

People who haven't been at the front don't know what a little companionship means to a man on patrol duty, or in a dugout, or what a frisky pup means to a whole company. . . . If we can't get a dog we'll take a goat, or a cat, or a pig, a rabbit, a sheep, or, yes, even a wildcat. . . . We'll

take anything for a trench companion—but give us a dog first.¹

During the First World War, British lieutenant Ralph Kynoch articulated a fact of warfare known intrinsically by soldiers for generations: there is a unique place on the battlefield for humankind's best friend, the dog. Decades later and an ocean away, this same feeling permeated American hearts. In 1944, Thomas Yoseloff wrote, "Those who love dogs know that they are truly man's best friend, and in this instance they are helping men of good will in the task of preserving the democratic tradition, so that the enslaved peoples of the earth can once again walk as freemen."² Marine Captain William B. Putney, commanding officer of the 3d War Dog Platoon, wrote of his experiences with

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¹ Ann Bausum, *Sergeant Stubby: How a Stray Dog and His Best Friend Helped Win World War I and Stole the Heart of a Nation* (Washington, DC: National Geographic, 2014), 43.

² Thomas Yoseloff, *Dogs for Democracy: The Story of America's Canine Heroes in the Global War* (New York: Bernard Ackerman, 1944), 11–12.



Official U.S. Marine Corps photo, courtesy of Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division (Left to right) PFC Jerry Ogle, 23, of Bend, OR, with dog Sergeant; PFC Marvin W. McBane, 20, of Minneapolis, MN, with dog Rex; and Cpl Willard Layton, 26, of Bayard, WV, with dog Bones. These Marines were the first to attend the Dogs for Defense school at Fort Armstrong, Honolulu, HI, where they learned to train dogs to be sentries and also the art of attack, ca. 1943.

the dogs in World War II, “For their contribution to the war effort, the dogs paid a dear price, but the good they did was still far out of proportion to the sacrifice they made. . . . They embodied the Marine Corps motto, *Semper Fidelis*.”³

When the United States entered World War II, there were no plans for using dogs in the field. While European forces had experienced great success with the animals in World War I, and the soldiers of the American Expeditionary Forces bore witness to the

usefulness of military dogs, the United States had never initiated its own comparable program, and even in the beginnings of World War II had no intention to do so. But once a connection was made between a qualified civilian organization, Dogs for Defense, and the military, the first steps were made toward a military dog program. Through the diverse environments of the home front, Europe, and the Pacific, military personnel were able to evaluate the abilities of dogs and the requirements for their effective use. By the war’s end, it had become clear that a military dog program was an essential component to the American military. The work accomplished by civilians and

³William B. Putney, *Always Faithful: A Memoir of the Marine Dogs of WWII* (New York: Free Press, 2001), xi.

military personnel in developing this program during World War II was invaluable not only to the early war effort, but also to its continued success within the American military structure.

A mixture of dedication and chance brought about the birth of the American military dog program in early 1942. Less than four months after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Army quartermaster general, Edmund B. Gregory, activated the K-9 Corps, the first American military dog program. The road from 7 December 1941 to 13 March 1942 was neither smooth nor predestined, and it was the work of civilians and their fledgling nonprofit, Dogs for Defense, that initiated the development of the K-9 Corps. These individuals were all members of a community known as the Fancy, made up of “breeders, trainers, professional and amateur; kennel club members, show and field trial judges, handlers, veterinarians, editors, writers; in short, people who have to do with dogs—who own dogs and love them.”⁴ Collectively, they represented the most knowledgeable figures in their fields on dog breeding, abilities, and training practices, which allowed them to recognize the value of dogs to American military efforts at home and overseas. In reading accounts of Pearl Harbor, they saw weaknesses exploited by the Japanese that the abilities of a trained dog could seamlessly fill, and they were driven to provide these canines to protect America.

While the leaders of Dogs for Defense marketed their mission to the government, trainers began working with select dogs to qualify them for sentry work and provide demonstratable proof of dogs’ capabilities. The canine recruits made rapid progress, but the campaigns led by Harry I. Caesar, president of Dogs for Defense, for official government contracts hit dead ends.⁵ Canine organizations, including the Professional Handlers’ Association and the Westbury Kennel Association, provided legitimacy to Dogs for Defense through financial contributions or, as with the American Kennel Club, through vocal approval



Official U.S. Marine Corps photo, courtesy of Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division
Pvt Michael PiPoi of Needham, MA, and his partner charge through the smoke of battle during training at the War Dog Detachment School, Camp Lejeune, NC. Doberman Pinschers and German Shepherds were trained by the Marines for scout, sentry, and messenger duties in the South Pacific enroute to Tokyo.

of its mission.⁶ Despite these affirmations, campaigns, and demonstrations, it would be the aforementioned chance that connected the U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps and Dogs for Defense. One of Gregory’s subordinates, Lieutenant Colonel Clifford C. Smith, had not only heard of Dogs for Defense, but had witnessed several of its earliest graduates in action guarding supply depots. Smith saw the potential and presented it to Gregory, who thought the “dogs were worth a trial.”⁷ He sought funding for a fledgling program of 200 dogs and inquired with the American Theater Wing regarding a prior offer of financial assistance. The organization’s public relations counsel, Sidney Wain, encouraged Gregory to instead contact Dogs

⁴ Fairfax Downey, *Dogs for Defense: American Dogs in the Second World War, 1941–45* (New York: Daniel P. McDonald, 1955), 15.

⁵ Downey, *Dogs for Defense*, 19.

⁶ Downey, *Dogs for Defense*, 18.

⁷ Downey, *Dogs for Defense*, 19.

for Defense. As a result of this connection, on “March 13, 1942, the Army transferred its authorization for 200 trained sentry dogs to DFD [Dogs for Defense]. The date is notable for it marks the first time in the history of the United States that war dogs were officially recognized.”⁸ Finally, Dogs for Defense had the much-needed military contract and the first official military working dog program in the United States, the K-9 Corps, began.

Exactly a month later, on 13 April 1942, the first three sentry dog graduates went on duty at the Munitions Manufacturing Company, located in Poughkeepsie, New York.⁹ These were followed by nine dogs dispatched to Fort Hancock in Sandy Hook, New Jersey, under the command of U.S. Army major general Philip S. Gage, and 17 sentries to Mitchell Field on Long Island and to Staten Island.¹⁰ In July, Gage reported that after several months of continual use, the sentry dogs were seen to have an exceptional purpose “during the night blackout when their superior hearing more than compensated for the limited range of the soldier sentries’ vision.”¹¹ Additionally, the sentry dogs “tremendously boosted the morale of the soldier.”¹² In small numbers, immediate success was easily achieved, but it would quickly be seen that the logistics and colossal demands of a full-scale program would tax both the K-9 Corps and Dogs for Defense’s resources to the fullest, forcing the collaboration closer together in the process of marketing, fundraising, recruiting, transporting, and supplying the necessary dogs. These obstacles would be overcome through trial and error, producing qualified military dogs and handlers that indisputably changed the outcome of patrols, battles, and campaigns spanning from the home front to Guam, and laying the foundation for an enduring military dog program in the United States.

First Steps: Recruiting, Organizing, and Training Military Dogs

Dogs for Defense initially provided all training facilities, trainers, and resources for its sentry dogs through the collaboration of 402 kennel clubs and more than 1,000 individuals across the United States, but it became apparent that its system would need to undergo centralization to produce the estimated 125,000 dogs now demanded by the Quartermaster Corps.¹³ Such organization became possible once Secretary of War Harold L. Stimson gave the quartermaster general permission to expand the military dog program beyond sentry dogs on 16 July 1942. Military dogs would now include “search-and-rescue sled dogs, roving patrols, and messenger services,” and by this announcement it allowed the individual Service branches to decide how dogs would be used.¹⁴ While central oversight would be provided by the U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps, per an order from Stimson that removed the burden from Dogs for Defense, each branch would be granted flexibility in its training and utilization of the dogs to best suit the Service’s everyday needs. The Marine Corps deviated sharply from the other branches, and developed its own practices for recruitment, training, and the logistics of outfitting its War Dog Platoons. Through the oversight of the Quartermaster Corps, a total of six K-9 training centers were established during the course of the war. Each facility served a distinct purpose and provided opportunities for training simulations through varied terrain. Many of these locations graduated handlers and a small quantity of dogs that could then be transported back to their original stations to continue training other soldiers.¹⁵ Through this method, military dog training was able to occur across the country at any military posting. While military dogs were not necessary in every circumstance, such flexibility greatly increased the scope of the military dog program.

Four K-9 training facilities were established by the end of 1942 at Front Royal, Virginia; Fort Rob-

⁸ Downey, *Dogs for Defense*, 21.

⁹ Downey, *Dogs for Defense*, 18.

¹⁰ Michael G. Lemish, *War Dogs: A History of Loyalty and Heroism* (Washington, DC: Brassey’s, 1996), 38.

¹¹ Downey, *Dogs for Defense*, 19.

¹² Downey, *Dogs for Defense*, 19.

¹³ Downey, *Dogs for Defense*, 22.

¹⁴ Lemish, *War Dogs*, 40.

¹⁵ Thomas R. Buecker, *Fort Robinson and the American Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004), 92.

inson, Nebraska; Camp Rimini, Montana; and San Carlos, California.¹⁶ Two more facilities opened soon after at Cat Island, Mississippi, and Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. Both dogs and handlers were trained at these facilities, preparing them for their specialized service either abroad or on the home front. While a few of the facilities trained dogs for any military branch and most positions, others were highly specialized by either branch or dog specialty, as is evidenced by Camp Lejeune. This facility was run by the Marine Corps directly, and all dogs who passed through its training were deployed in one of the Marine War Dog Platoons.¹⁷

Once the K-9 Corps training centers were established, the enlistment parameters had to be refined, particularly regarding the accepted breeds. In the beginning, the Quartermaster Corps provided broad guidelines for acceptable dogs: "Any purebred dog of either sex, physically sound, between the ages of one and five years, with characteristics of a watch-dog, qualifying under the physical examination and standard inspection of Dogs for Defense."¹⁸ In the selection of breeds, there was some disconnect between the military and Dogs for Defense, as the latter began recruiting from a pool of 32 acceptable breeds, but the military narrowed the parameters by 1944 to include only 5 breeds for general use: "German and Belgian Shepherds, Dobermans, Collies . . . and Giant Schnauzers"; 3 breeds for sled dogs: "Malamutes, Eskimos, and Siberian Huskies"; and 2 breeds for pack dogs: "Newfoundlands and St. Bernards," which were all carefully selected for their consistent traits that made them dependable resources.¹⁹ The Marine Corps was, once again, unique from the other military branches because it worked directly with the Doberman Pinscher Club of America to acquire well-bred Dobermans for its K-9 teams. Across most branches, purebred male dogs were the standard preference, but

crossbred dogs or a spayed female would be accepted as well. The Coast Guard was the exception, as it typically preferred female over male dogs.²⁰

Each dog's temperament and abilities were also considered, as regardless of how well-bred, a dog without a drive to work or with a skittish nature would not be able to perform the functions of any military dog position. The dog had to be physically and mentally sound and able to handle the rigors and stressors of battle without faltering.²¹ Even if the dogs did not possess any prior formal training, the most important factors in determining their fitness for duty were breed, temperament, and physical fitness. Without the right combination of working drive, intelligence, loyalty, and bravery, a dog would not succeed in active combat and would be a greater danger than asset to the soldiers. Initial evaluations were oftentimes faulty, as a dog's behavior while under shellfire could never be truly predicted. The dogs were desensitized to weapons, explosions, and the clamors of battle as much as was possible in training scenarios, but even these experiences could not prevent shellshock and other traumatic disorders from occurring in the canines. As a result, even as war dogs were being sent to the front lines in droves, there was a consistent turnover rate requiring a ready supply of fully trained dogs and handlers, which necessitated the continuation of recruitment efforts across the country.

Due to the relative infancy of the dog training field, most of the dogs accepted into the Dogs for Defense program were predominantly untrained, necessitating that their trainers begin from the basics of *sit* and *stay* before progressing to the detailed work that the dogs would be conducting in their military roles. After their acceptance into basic training, dogs were transported to their designated facility. In the Marine Corps, dogs were shipped in crates labeled with their originating location and former owner's contact information. They were also provided with food and water for the journey, facilitated through Railway Express train systems, and sent to Camp Lejeune in

¹⁶ Seth Paltzer, "The Dogs of War: The U.S. Army's Use of Canines in World War II," *On Point* 17, no. 1 (Summer 2011): 35.

¹⁷ "Department of the Navy, U.S. Marine Corps. War Dog Training School, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. 12/1942-ca.1946," National Archives and Records Administration, accessed 8 November 2023.

¹⁸ Downey, *Dogs for Defense*, 25.

¹⁹ Downey, *Dogs for Defense*, 34.

²⁰ Lemish, *War Dogs: A History of Loyalty and Heroism*, 42.

²¹ Downey, *Dogs for Defense*, 36.



Official U.S. Marine Corps photo, courtesy of Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division
A German Shepherd leaps silently over the high wall on the training course that all Marine war dogs were required to master before being assigned to combat duty and deployed.

North Carolina.²² Across the military branches, trains were the preferred method of transporting dogs. The longer and slower travel permitted the dogs to be exercised, rather than confined to their crates for the duration of the journey, which assisted in eliminating some excess energy and nerves prior to their arrival for training.

When dogs arrived at their designated training facility, they were given a brief period, ranging days to weeks, to become accustomed to military life and allow all screenings to take place, such as veterinary appointments, grooming, and finalization of enlistment paperwork. Of all of the military branches, only the Marine Corps designed and maintained record books for each military dog. These books were started on the dog's enlistment and contained essential information, including the dog's qualified military roles, medical history, handlers, service record, and discharge destination, be it a return to its original family or put up for adoption. It also indicated the military rank earned by the dog, which was determined based on the length of the dog's service.²³ Private first class rank was achieved with three months of service, corporal with one year, sergeant in two years, platoon sergeant in three years, gunnery sergeant in four years, and master gunnery sergeant with five years of service.²⁴

Typically, the training process for the dog and their handler took between 8 and 12 weeks, although certain specialties could take several weeks longer.²⁵ It began with basic training that acclimated the dogs to military service and provided foundational obedience training. Once they finished this step, trainers were able to determine which specialty best suited the



Photo by Pat Terry, courtesy of Records of the U.S. Marine Corps, 1775–9999, General Photograph File of the U.S. Marine Corps, 1927–1981, ID no. 176250470, NARA, College Park, MD
PFC Homer J. Finley Jr. and Jan stand regular sentry duty.

dog. The remainder of the training prepared the dog and its handler for their specific role. The K-9 Corps was aware from the onset of the project that it was just as critical to select the proper handlers as it was the dogs, for it would be the K-9 team as a unit that produced results, not the dog working in isolation. Furthermore, the trainers had to be highly intelligent, physically fit, and above all, possess “a genuine love for dogs.”²⁶ The trainers knew that to treat a dog harshly would only break its spirit and make it hesitant to perform tasks in the future, especially for the individual who had abused it. Rather, the dogs needed to be treated with genuine love and care. They were to be corrected with only words, never physical punishment, and spend as much time as possible with their handlers to forge the inseparable bonds needed to survive on the battlefield. It was well-known in the amateur as well as international dog training commu-

²² “Shipping Instructions: U.S. Marine Corps War Dogs,” box 5, War Dogs Official Pubs, Manuals Reports, War Dogs, Collection 5440, Archives, Marine Corps History Division (MCHD), Quantico, VA.

²³ “U.S. Marine Corps Dog Record Book of Beau V. Millhell,” 33, Container #1 “Entry #UD-WW 100: War Dog Service Books 12/1942–06/1946,” Record Group (RG) 127, Records of the U.S. Marine Corps, War Dog Training School, Camp Lejeune, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), College Park, MD.

²⁴ “U.S. Marine Corps Dog Record Book of Frederick of St. Thomas (Fritz), Serial No. 1,” container no. 1 “Entry #UD-WW 100: War Dog Service Books 12/1942–06/1946,” RG 127, Records of the U.S. Marine Corps, War Dog Training School, Camp Lejeune, NARA, 33.

²⁵ Arthur W. Bergeron Jr., “War Dogs: The Birth of the K-9 Corps,” U.S. Army, 16 March 2016.

²⁶ Downey, *Dogs for Defense*, 39.



Courtesy of Records of the Office of War Information, 1926–1951, RG 208, Photographs of the Allies and Axis, 1942–1945, ID no. 315834317, NARA, College Park, MD

Marine sentries and war dogs kept nightly vigils along the shores of Okinawa to guard against surprise enemy landings. Silhouetted by the setting sun are PFC Lucien J. Vanasse of Northampton, MA, and King, a Doberman-Pinscher of a Marine War Dog platoon.

nities that treating a dog with kindness produces the best results.

Field and training manuals, such as the 1943 *War Dogs, Training Manual* (TM) 10-396, standardized these training principles for handlers.²⁷ In addition to following the structures outlined in the manuals and by the trainers, the handlers demonstrated their devotion to their charges by spending their free time working and playing with their dogs to ensure they were prepared for the trials ahead.²⁸ The handlers were responsible for caring for all the needs of their dogs, including regular grooming, exercise, feeding, and maintenance

of their kennels. Not all initial dog and handler pairings were successful, but it was a small matter to move the dogs around until a suitable match was made. It was more important to build a confident team than it was to force the first assigned pairing of soldier and dog. Once the dogs and handlers graduated from their training, they were assigned for duty. There were six military dog specialties, and each had its own distinctions based on the branch it was intended to serve. It was key that dogs were not cross-trained between roles, as this would cause confusion and prevent the dog from adequately serving in its position.²⁹

The Roles of the Military Dog

Sentry Dogs

The sentry dog was the forerunner to all other military dog specialties. The sentry dogs were trained to guard and patrol a fixed location such as a plant, factory, or supply depot. Qualified sentry teams of a handler and dog were noted to be “the equal of six men on regular guard duty.”³⁰ As defined in *War Dogs*, “The sentry dog, as the name implies, is used primarily on interior guard duty as a watch dog. . . . This class of dog is trained to give warning to his master by growling or barking or silent alert. . . . The dog, being kept on leash and close to the sentry, will also assist as a psychological factor in such circumstances.”³¹ Dogs would patrol with their handler around their designated facility, searching for any intruders, to prevent sabotage or destruction of government property. A unique aspect of sentry dog training was the tight bond handlers were encouraged to forge with their canine partner. Once assigned to the sentry track, dogs were not permitted to interact with any other humans aside from their handler, and the handler could not interact with any other dog.³² The goal was to “instill in his dog the idea that every human, except himself, is his natural enemy.”³³ Once successful, the dog would naturally alert to the presence of any human while on duty, protecting their

²⁷ Downey, *Dogs for Defense*, 54; and *War Dogs, Training Manual* (TM) 10-396 (Washington, DC: U.S. War Department, 1943). Traditionally, *War Dogs*'s author has been identified as Alene Erlanger, as she had left *Dogs for Defense* to create films and training manuals for the military by the time of its publication.

²⁸ Downey, *Dogs for Defense*, 46.

²⁹ *War Dogs*, 96.

³⁰ Yoseloff, *Dogs for Democracy*, 12.

³¹ *War Dogs*, 97, 99.

³² *War Dogs*, 101.

³³ *War Dogs*, 100.



Official U.S. Marine Corps photo, courtesy of Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division

Pvt Leo Crismore, USMCR, of Bloomington, IN, practices his silent whistle, which was used to direct and recall Marine dogs during scouting expeditions.

handler from threats long before human senses would have detected them. In a memorandum distributed by the Headquarters Hawaiian Department on 14 October 1942, it was noted that “the performance of the war dog unfailingly reflects the work habits and attitudes of the master. If the master is exact, energetic, and ‘on the job’, the dog will be the same. If the master is slothful and careless, the dog will, in time, acquire the same characteristics.”³⁴

³⁴ “Notes on the Handling, Feeding, and Care of War Dogs,” file no. 1 C-1130 “Animals—Sentry & Warning Dogs,” 1942–43, Marine Garrison Forces Correspondence, 1941–45, Index to 1455-40, RG 127, Records of the U.S. Marine Corps, NARA.

While most sentry dogs were not trained to attack, they were encouraged to intimidate by lunging and barking at the unknown individual. There was a thorough training process to acquire the right amount of aggressiveness in the sentry dog depending on their natural temperament; if the dog was too aggressive, the handler would work to lower the dog’s natural excitability, but if the dog was timid or too friendly, they would be encouraged to become more aggressive through simulated attacks and in group trainings with appropriately aggressive dogs.³⁵ The key element

³⁵ *War Dogs*, 103–5.



Official U.S. Marine Corps photo, courtesy of Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division

Shown in this photograph is Sgt Raymond G. Barnosky of Pontiac, MI, with a message-carrying dog in training.

of sentry dog training was to produce a dog distrustful of all people except for its handler so that they would alert to all threats, whether perceived or real.

Scout Dogs

The scout dog worked to detect hidden threats long before its handlers. Scout dogs differed from sentry dogs in that they were not limited to the protection of a single location but were tasked to look after a group of soldiers. They were trained “to detect and give silent warning of the presence of any foreign individual or group,” and they must be able to do so in any terri-

tory, familiar or foreign to the dog.³⁶ Scout dogs would walk point with their handlers at the front of their unit during patrols, movements, or expeditions. In so doing, they were able to detect threats and ambushes from enemy combatants and prevent casualties. A key element in scout training was reinforcing silent alerts, which varied between dogs as some “stood tense, others crouched suddenly. Some pointed like bird dogs. With some their hackles rose or a low growl rumbled

³⁶ *War Dogs*, 113.

in their throats.”³⁷ It was critical that the dog learn to avoid barking at all costs, as that would destroy any element of surprise the alert provided the soldiers. The scout dogs were trained to work in reconnaissance patrols, combat patrols, guarding outposts, and leading scouting groups. They had to be capable of handling diverse terrain ranging from cities to jungles and work at any time of day or night without faltering. While they could work on or off leash, being on leash was always preferred because it provided the handler with greater control of the dog and prompt responses to alerts.

Scout dogs saw considerable action in the Pacific theater, where the dense jungles permitted the Japanese to ambush American soldiers. Captain William Putney, who directly oversaw the 2d and 3d War Dog Platoons, recorded his experiences with the Marine military dogs in the Pacific in his memoir, *Always Faithful*, in which he related a particularly painful event that took place on Guam. Putney had just finished field surgery on a dog when he was informed that one of the handlers, Private First Class Leon M. Ashton, had been walking point with his scout dog, Ginger, when she had alerted to an enemy presence. The lieutenant leading the patrol doubted Ginger, forcing Ashton to continue forward toward the potential threat. Ginger charged into the tall grass, but when Ashton followed, he was fatally shot through the neck. Ginger was reassigned to another handler, Private First Class Donald Rydgig, but he too would be killed before the war was ended. As Putney recounted, “Ginger alone survived the war.”³⁸ Putney recorded many more stories such as Ginger’s, which gradually became more common as military dogs were fully integrated into the armed forces. Handlers would be killed or mortally wounded by enemy combatants even with the scout dog’s alert, and the dog would need to be reassigned to a new handler, if possible. Some dogs could not make the transition from one handler to another and had to be returned to their families in the United States. Even if not all lives could be saved, scout dogs like Ginger

minimized the losses that did occur, and without fail became beloved members of their platoons.

Putney recalled another K-9 team that saw action on Guadalcanal. Allen Jacobson and his Doberman, Kurt, had walked point in front of a group of the 21st Marines, and Kurt alerted to an enemy presence.³⁹ Jacobson was able to dispatch two Japanese soldiers, but a mortar shell exploded right next to him and Kurt, severely injuring both. Jacobson would be sent for immediate medical assistance, where he was treated for shrapnel wounds “in his back and shoulders,” but Putney pronounced that he “would be all right once he got to the hospital ship.”⁴⁰ Kurt would not be so fortunate. Putney immediately noticed “a wedge-shaped hole in his back about three inches wide, strangely with very little blood,” as the blast and shrapnel had cauterized the blood vessels.⁴¹ The overarching concern was that “the wound would kill Kurt if the tissue over the spine swelled enough to exert pressure on the cord,” but continued survival also brought the risk of infection.⁴²

With scarce medical supplies and limited resources at his disposal, Putney worked tirelessly to stabilize Kurt. Although the wound was closed, Putney’s fears regarding spinal pressure were realized, and morphine proved ineffective in halting Kurt’s convulsions.⁴³ Putney did all that he could, but “at 3 A.M., Kurt stopped breathing.”⁴⁴ Several hours later, Putney learned that Kurt’s alert of the Japanese soldiers had uncovered their outpost for a large Japanese force. In the ensuing battle, at least 350 Japanese soldiers were killed.⁴⁵ The report from the commanding officer of the 3d Battalion, 21st Marines, acknowledged that “if Kurt had not discovered the Japanese outpost, his battalion would have stumbled into the main body of the defending force, with great losses.”⁴⁶ Although Kurt’s alert came with the greatest sacrifice, his work was instrumental in saving the lives of hundreds of Marines

³⁹ Putney, *Always Faithful*, 165.

⁴⁰ Putney, *Always Faithful*, 161.

⁴¹ Putney, *Always Faithful*, 161.

⁴² Putney, *Always Faithful*, 163.

⁴³ Putney, *Always Faithful*, 165.

⁴⁴ Putney, *Always Faithful*, 165.

⁴⁵ Putney, *Always Faithful*, 165–66.

⁴⁶ Putney, *Always Faithful*, 166.

³⁷ Downey, *Dogs for Defense*, 56.

³⁸ Putney, *Always Faithful*, 164.

and exemplified the work conducted daily by the war dog platoons in the Pacific theater.

Attack Dogs

Closely entwined with the sentry dog, the attack dog served a dual purpose. In addition to the standard sentry training, attack dogs received a specialized curriculum in apprehending targets through biting. While not all sentry dogs were trained to attack, attack dogs were generally trained for sentry work in addition to apprehending targets, whether saboteurs or fleeing prisoners of war. A fine balance had to be struck with the attack dogs, as they had to understand the difference between an enemy and a friend and discern which was to be attacked and which to be protected. The dog “attacks off leash on command, or on provocation, and ceases his attack on command or when resistance ends.”⁴⁷ Critical considerations had to be taken when selecting attack dogs, particularly with their personality. The *War Dogs* manual reported that “in general, a dog which is rated under-aggressive cannot be taught to attack. The dog of average aggressiveness can be taught, though less readily, than an animal rated as overaggressive. The only difficulty in teaching the latter consists in securing prompt cessation of attack upon command.”⁴⁸ Training required a soldier to act as an aggravator, teasing and riling the dog, while wearing a densely padded sleeve that formed both the target for the dog’s bite and his reward for successfully apprehending the aggravator.⁴⁹ Arms were the ideal target for attack dogs, as they were a nonlethal target that forced the aggressor into submission through the force and pressure of the bite more so than a breaking of skin. Once fully trained, these dogs could assist or replace a sentry dog team and were often assigned to guard prisoners and transports.⁵⁰

Messenger Dogs

Messenger dogs were trained to supplement radio and telephone technology, acting as a failsafe for when

those resources were broken or destroyed, and often providing the only stable means of communication between combat areas and command centers. Messenger dogs were unique from other military dogs because they required teams of two handlers and two dogs. The canine duo was trained to go between their two masters, locating them by scent at distances of up to a kilometer. For the dogs, this was an exciting “game of hide-and-seek. . . . A dog’s delight was evident when he found one of his masters after a long run and hunt. He would obey a command to sit while the message was taken from the carrier-pouch on his collar and, praised and petted, beat a jubilant tattoo with his tail.”⁵¹ The dogs were intended to be a substitute for human messengers because they were faster and harder for the enemy to target, thereby providing a more stable method of communication while preventing the unnecessary loss of human life.⁵² In their training, they were given the ability to work from fixed locations and moving bases during day and night. This enabled them to be used to transport supplies ranging from telephone wire to carrier pigeons and in tandem with scout dogs on patrols, on battlefields, and for transport of resources.⁵³ The messenger dogs needed to be trusted to make executive decisions regarding their routes and bypassing obstacles without losing focus on their target.

Messenger dogs needed to develop equally close bonds with both of their handlers to ensure the drive to find them was present when they were on duty. They were trained to associate a special collar with the task. It was designed to hold folded or rolled papers, and only placed on the dog immediately before it was dispatched. After completing its mission, the collar was removed, indicating to the dog that it was now off duty. The work of the messenger dogs was invaluable, as they were able to function as a backup when technology failed and at greater speeds than humanly capable; in most instances, messenger dogs were four to five times faster than a human at the same task.⁵⁴

⁴⁷ *War Dogs*, 106.

⁴⁸ Putney, *Always Faithful*, 13.

⁴⁹ Putney, *Always Faithful*, 109.

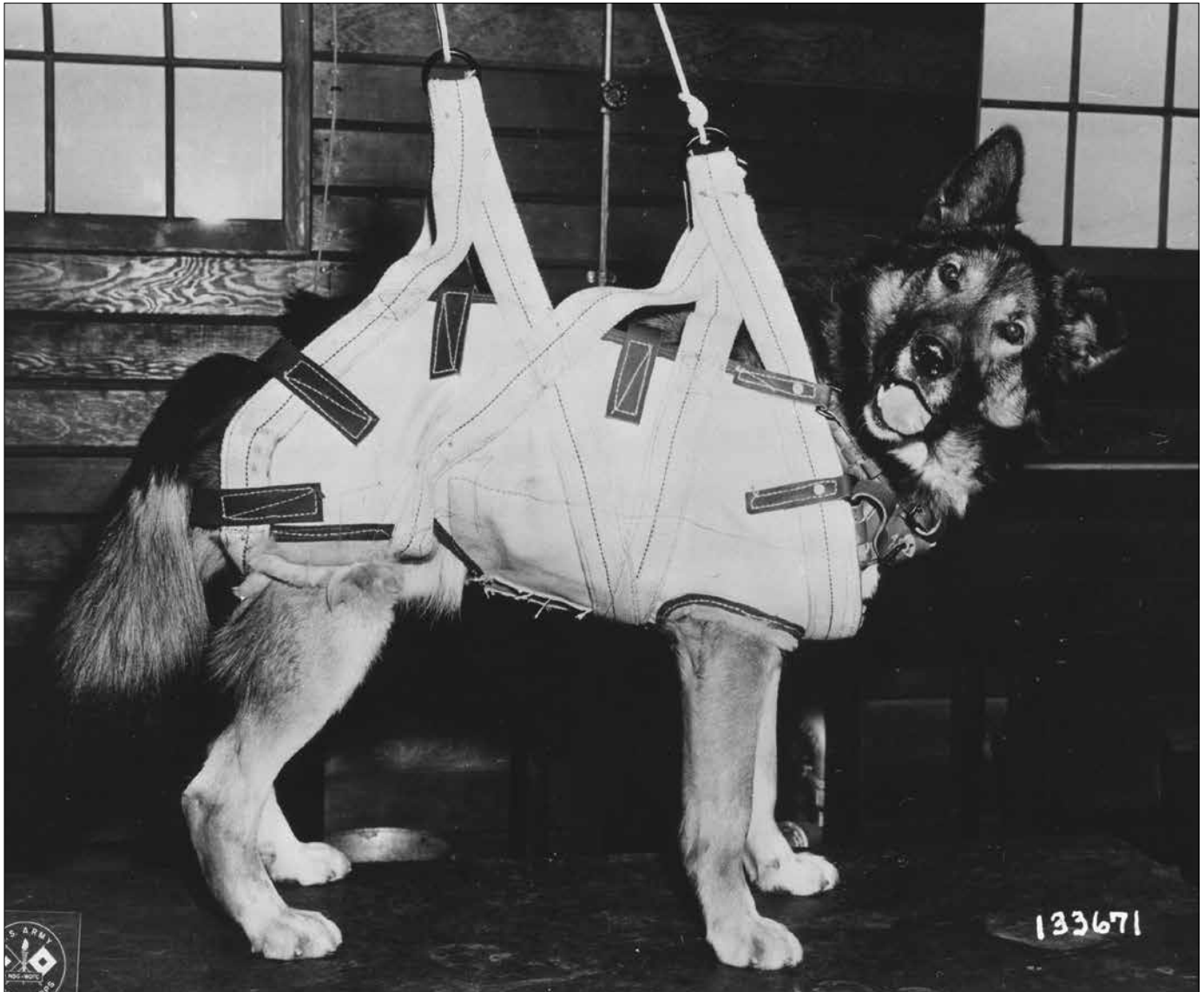
⁵⁰ Putney, *Always Faithful*, 106.

⁵¹ Downey, *Dogs for Defense*, 56.

⁵² *War Dogs*, 121.

⁵³ *War Dogs*, 121.

⁵⁴ Lemish, *War Dogs*, 18.



Courtesy of Records of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer, 1860–1985, RG 111,

Photographs of American Military Activities, 1918–1981, ID no. 175539073, NARA, College Park, MD

A sturdy German Shepherd, Pal, is fitted for a dog parachute harness. Pack and sled dogs were dropped by parachute to help rescue pilots forced down in Northwestern Canada. The dogs were guided down by a flight surgeon, who also carried food and medical equipment. Trained by the Remount Services, Quartermaster Corps, war dogs were used by the U.S. Army not only in warfare but also to bring aid and relief to victims of mishaps and accidents. War Dog Reception and Training Center, San Carlos, CA, ca. 1944.

Despite appearing to be an antiquated system, messenger dogs were an indispensable resource to many American troops, especially those stationed in the Pacific, and they saved countless lives through their dedicated work. Putney recalled his best messenger dog, Missy, “a white German Shepherd” who was “assigned to Pfc.’s Claude Sexton and Earl Wright.”⁵⁵ She was one of the fastest dogs assigned to their platoon, and

had the courage to run through any obstacle to complete her mission, whether she was required to “swim rivers under fire, traverse fields with explosions, and crash through jungle vines and brush.”⁵⁶ While Missy did not see extensive use in combat zones, she was the subject of a newsreel that showcased the abilities of messenger dogs.⁵⁷ Messenger dogs numbered among

⁵⁵ Putney, *Always Faithful*, 43.

⁵⁶ Putney, *Always Faithful*, 44.

⁵⁷ Putney, *Always Faithful*, 44.

the smallest of military dog specialties in World War II, but they remained an essential component of the military structure, one whose existence provided surety in communication and saved the lives of human messengers.⁵⁸

Sled Dogs

The sled dogs, a program first initiated in the early years of the 20th century, finally saw use within the greater U.S. military structure. The established sled dog program transitioned into an Arctic search-and-rescue unit. Unlike the other specialties, which needed to have entire training and transportation programs developed in real time, the sled dogs had nearly four decades of precedent to enable seamless integration into the military dog structure. A manual had been released in 1941, *Dog Team Transportation*, Field Manual 25-6, outlining the care of sled dogs and the logistics of transporting the dogs, handlers, and gear. A revised edition of *Dog Team Transportation* would be released in 1944, providing sled dog units with the most current guidance for being most effectively used by their teams. At Camp Rimini in Montana, sled dogs experienced “refinement of the dogs themselves through a breeding program, improved training techniques, and organizational equipment assigned to military units.”⁵⁹ Despite being included in the Dogs for Defense program, few sled and pack dogs were donated, as the accepted breeds were a small minority among dog owners in the United States, forcing the government to purchase the dogs from Alaska and Canada.⁶⁰ As search-and-rescue teams, the sled dogs were deployed to conduct a rescue when an injured or stranded pilot was discovered by air patrols. Although the sled dog program transitioned into an experimental unit more than an active military Service, it still provided immense benefit through the hundreds of lives the dogs saved in their search-and-rescue operations as well as

the work they contributed to developing adequate gear for future military dogs.⁶¹

Casualty and Mine-detection Dogs

The casualty and mine-detection dog programs experienced little success. The search-and-rescue casualty dogs transitioned out of the traditional Red Cross or mercy dog role of World War I into a formalized military position in World War II. It was a short-lived program, as the training methods used during World War II and the circumstances in which the dogs were deployed did not have the same effectiveness of their predecessors in World War I. The casualty dog program was widely considered a failure at the time, but not due to the efforts of the dogs, who succeeded in locating soldiers. Their struggle was a result of faulty training methods that led to difficulties in differentiating between the unhurt, the wounded, and the deceased, as the dogs would commence an alert for any soldier they found, regardless of his condition.

Conversely, the mine-detection dogs, or M-dogs as they were nicknamed, had immense theoretical potential. M-dogs were intended to “locate mine fields, lead the way around them, or point a safe path through them.”⁶² The British had trained mine dogs to great success during the war, building interest and excitement for an American program, but the training methods proved to be subpar.⁶³ Trainers utilized attraction and repulsion methods with the M-dogs. Attraction was based on the sense of smell, locating the components of state-of-the-art nonmetallic German mines and alerting to their presence.⁶⁴ Repulsion was far less successful because it relied on shocking the dogs with buried wires in an effort to create an association between buried items and discomfort. However, both were flawed strategies from the beginning. After several trial demonstrations, it was revealed the dogs trained in the attraction method were alerting to hu-

⁵⁸ *War Dogs*, 121.

⁵⁹ Dean, *Soldiers and Sled Dogs*, 27; and *Dog Team Transportation*, Field Manual 25-6 (Washington, DC: War Department, 1941).

⁶⁰ Dean, *Soldiers and Sled Dogs*, 27.

⁶¹ Dean, *Soldiers and Sled Dogs*, 68.

⁶² “Army’s M-Dogs Detect Enemy Mines,” *Military Review* 25, no. 3 (June 1945): 25, Articles/Extracts: Army Sources, Ca. 1912–2003, War Dogs, Collection 5440, War Dogs Articles, Clippings, box 4, Archives, MCHD.

⁶³ Anna M. Waller, *Dogs and National Defense* (Washington, DC: Office of the Quartermaster General, Department of the Army, 1943), 32.

⁶⁴ Waller, *Dogs and National Defense*, 32.



Official U.S. Marine Corps photo, courtesy of Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division
 Marine Corps war dogs disembarking from of a landing barge with their Marine partners in a practice landing.

man odor around disturbed earth, while the repulsion method was doomed to failure, as it was well-known that dogs respond to positive reinforcement over negative stimuli.⁶⁵ Military publications still purported that the M-dogs were “the elite of the K-9 Corps” as late as 1945.⁶⁶ In later years, the M-dog program would be restarted “and provide outstanding service. The differences were time, money, and solid information combining for the big payoff.”⁶⁷ Although not every military dog program was an immediate success, they all were instrumental in constructing the framework for a stable military dog program that would continue beyond the confines of World War II.

⁶⁵ Lemish, *War Dogs*, 94–97.

⁶⁶ “Army’s M-Dogs Detect Enemy Mines,” 25.

⁶⁷ Lemish, *War Dogs*, 97.

Military Dogs in Action

With handler and dog prepared for deployment in their specialty, they would be sent as teams to support American military personnel in the Pacific and European theaters. Fifteen war dog platoons were dispatched by the Army and 10 by the Marine Corps during the course of the war to serve overseas.⁶⁸ The Army’s war dog platoons were divided, with seven going to Europe and the remaining eight to the Pacific.⁶⁹ Marine war dog platoons were also dispatched overseas, and the canine Marines served in “the Bougainville operation (1 November to 15 December 1943). . . . Guam (21 July to 15 August 1944), Peleliu (15 Septem-

⁶⁸ Downey, *Dogs for Defense*, 58.

⁶⁹ Bergeron, “War Dogs.”



*Official U.S. Marine Corps photo,
courtesy of Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division*

This photo shows how the dogs were lowered over the side of a ship in landing operations. A dog would be wrapped inside a coverall blouse and lowered from the side of the ship.

ber to 14 October 1944), Iwo Jima (19 February to 16 March 1945), and Okinawa (1 April to 30 June 1945),” as well as on Saipan and in Japan.⁷⁰

Once dispatched to combat zones, the dogs proved to be life-saving resources for the troops in their vicinity, accurately and consistently fulfilling,

if not exceeding, their mandates. The most damaging and critical struggles the dogs and handlers faced were rooted in human error. In both Europe and the Pacific, doubt about the scout dogs’ alerts led to injuries and deaths from waiting ambushes. Such casualties could have been prevented if the scout dog’s initial alert had been trusted, but the scout dog was a new technology, and most of the military was never briefed on proper implementation of the dogs and their handlers. There

⁷⁰ “War Dogs in the Marine Corps in World War II,” War Dogs in the Marine Corps, Historical Resources Branch, MCHD, accessed 13 November 2023.

were also issues with comradery between the dog platoons and the other soldiers, as many of the latter either thought little of the dogs and their handlers or felt resentful. In most circumstances, once the dogs proved themselves, their work was trusted implicitly, but it was a process that would only be accomplished through time and experience.

The Marine Corps heavily used its military dogs throughout the war. It would be the Pacific theater that proved to have the most enduring and large-scale impact on the military dog program. In such battles as those for Bougainville and Iwo Jima, the military dogs of the Marine Corps showed their value in the thick jungles and open beaches. In every combat zone, the dogs were not immune to dangers beyond their human enemies, as diseases, accidents, and shellshock affected dogs in the thousands. These factors maintained a steady need for dogs in the Pacific until the end of the war. The Marine Corps also placed military dogs on the home front and, in some of its first uses of military dogs, made requests for qualified sentries as early as 7 June 1942, when the 1st Defense Battalion, Fleet Marine Force, requested 12 dogs for use in guarding Palmyra Atoll in Hawaii.⁷¹ In a message on 1 July 1942, commanding officer C. W. LeGette reiterated that these dogs were necessary to supplement the human sentries' abilities. He wrote,

Due to the constant noise of the surf on the barrier reef, the absence of visibility on moonless nights, and the density of the vegetation on these Islands, it is possible for the enemy to place ashore reconnaissance patrols undetected. It will require a 200 or 300 percent increase in personnel to deny the enemy this very likely possibility . . . It is believed that the use of dogs as indicated above would greatly reduce

the chances if not prevent the enemy placing patrols ashore undetected.⁷²

The Marine Corps unit received 39 sentry dogs in December 1942 that were introduced into its patrol structure, and an additional 125 dogs were put in service elsewhere in the Hawaiian Islands.⁷³ Eleven of the dogs received were evaluated in a report dated 2 March 1943, in which it was determined that four of the dogs were "no good" around .30-caliber machine gun posts and would need to be reassigned within the 1st Defense Battalion.⁷⁴ Rather than replacing the dogs outright due to their skittish nature around the guns, Lieutenant Colonel John H. Griebel, the commanding officer, thought it more prudent to continue training the dogs for use on their bases.⁷⁵

Conversely, the 16th Defense Battalion of the Fleet Marine Force did not see an equal value in the sentry dogs. In his 5 March 1943 report, the commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel R. P. Ross Jr., wrote, "War dogs are not considered of great value at this station, but naturally they contribute somewhat to the security during darkness."⁷⁶ The terrain at the battalion's posting on Johnston Island was not favorable to the dogs, as there was little shade to protect them from the heat of the day that was exacerbated by the surrounding water.⁷⁷ Ross's resulting decision was to return 6 of his 16 sentry dogs to the training facility at Pearl Harbor.⁷⁸ Most of the Marine defense battalions posted in the Hawaiian Islands found good use for

⁷¹ "Dogs, Request For, June 7, 1942" file C-1130 "Animals-Sentry and Warning Dogs," 1942-43, Marine Garrison Forces, Correspondence, 1941-45, box 1, index to 1455-40, RG 127, Records of the U.S. Marine Corps, NARA.

⁷² "Dogs, Request For, July 1, 1942," file C-1130 "Animals-Sentry and Warning Dogs," 1942-43, Marine Garrison Forces, Correspondence, 1941-45, box 1, index to 1455-40, RG 127, Records of the U.S. Marine Corps, NARA.

⁷³ "War Dogs Requested Through June 1943, 7 December 1942," file C-1130 "Animals-Sentry & Warning Dogs," 1942-43, Marine Garrison Forces, Correspondence, 1941-45, box 1, index to 1455-40, RG 127, Records of the U.S. Marine Corps, NARA.

⁷⁴ "Warning Dogs, March 2, 1943," file C-1130 "Animals-Sentry and Warning Dogs," 1942-43, Marine Garrison Forces, Correspondence, 1941-45, box 1, index to 1455-40, RG 127, Records of the U.S. Marine Corps, NARA.

⁷⁵ "Warning Dogs, March 2, 1943."

⁷⁶ "Warning Dogs, March 5, 1943," file C-1130 "Animals-Sentry and Warning Dogs," 1942-43, Marine Garrison Forces, Correspondence, 1941-45, box 1, index to 1455-40, RG 127, Records of the U.S. Marine Corps, NARA.

⁷⁷ "Warning Dogs, March 5, 1943."

⁷⁸ "Warning Dogs, March 5, 1943."

their sentry dogs, especially during night patrols when human senses were at their weakest. A review of the Marine defense battalions on Palmyra, Johnston, and Midway Islands revealed a diverse experience. Palmyra and Midway bases both found good uses for the dogs and requested additional dogs to supplement their existing teams, while Johnston's base was the only one to see the dogs as "not of great value."⁷⁹ These evaluations revealed that not only were the dog and handler critical considerations, but that the terrain and appropriate equipment to maintain the dog's health and effectiveness on duty were equally important to the canines' perceived value. A single military dog solution, tactic, or program for the entire U.S. military was not practical or feasible. Rather, the handlers and soldiers on the ground would serve as essential testing components in the process of understanding how best to utilize a military dog force.

In the Pacific theater, the conditions necessitated the use of not only sentry dogs, but also scout and messenger dogs on a routine basis. The success of military dogs in the Pacific was newsworthy from the very beginning of their use, as discoveries were continually being made regarding the practicalities of utilizing dogs in a war zone. A sentry dog named Hey was present at Guadalcanal in December 1942 with the Marine Corps, and successfully thwarted an ambush from a Japanese sniper.⁸⁰ During the Palau operation conducted by the Corps, the forces were able to recognize that the sentry and messenger dogs were most effective at night, because the dogs were spooked by the heavy artillery fire they experienced during the day.⁸¹ In October 1944, it was reported that the Marine Corps had transitioned out of using its Red Cross, or casualty, dogs because they were found

to be ineffective in the context of the Pacific theater.⁸² Instead, these dogs were retrained as messengers, a position far more useful in the humid jungles that disrupted communication equipment. The few casualty dogs who were used in combat still served well despite the unfavorable conditions. Jack was one of these dogs who managed to locate and bring medical assistance to several wounded soldiers despite suffering an injury of his own on the journey.⁸³ Deeply attached and loyal, the war dogs would serve their comrades as much as they were able, regardless of the danger.

While fighting on Iwo Jima, the 6th Marine War Dog Platoon's military dogs immediately distinguished themselves on the beaches on 19 February 1945. In the early days of the campaign, the dogs were primarily utilized as sentries to detect the Japanese before they initiated their attacks.⁸⁴ On 23 February, a Doberman Pinscher named Carl alerted his handler 30 minutes prior to a Japanese attack, which provided the Marines ample time to prepare a defense.⁸⁵ The next day, routine patrols led by Jummy, a German Shepherd, and Hans, a Doberman Pinscher, identified the presence of enemy troops that were subsequently defeated.⁸⁶ A messenger dog, Duke, was also used 25–27 February to deliver messages and casualty reports from the battalion to the regiment command post, a task in which he was successful at least four times.⁸⁷ Through the effective and timely alerts of sentry and scout dogs, combined with the reliable messengers, it was determined that the military dogs were a valuable asset to the military operations, with the caveat that the dogs were discovered to be of no practical

⁷⁹ "Recommendations Concerning Dogs, March 22, 1943," file C-1130 "Animals—Sentry and Warning Dogs," 1942–43, Marine Garrison Forces, Correspondence, 1941–45, box 1, index to 1455-40, RG 127, Records of the U.S. Marine Corps, NARA.

⁸⁰ H. I. Brock, "Mentioned in Dispatches: The Front-Line Dog Has Proved Himself a Hero. Here Are the Stories of His Valor," *New York Times*, 23 January 1944, 119.

⁸¹ "Annex A—Phase II—Special Action Report—Palau Operation Infantry," Collection 5440 War Dogs—Special Action Report—Palau Operation ca. 1944 file, box 5, War Dogs Official Pubs, Manuals Reports, War Dogs, Collection 5440, Archives, MCHD, 3.

⁸² "Dog Heroes of the Marine Corps," *New York Times*, 8 October 1944, 99.

⁸³ Brock, "Mentioned in Dispatches," 119.

⁸⁴ "Combat Report of the Sixth Marine War Dog Platoon While Engaged in the Operation on Iwo Jima," file no. 14, "Information on War Dogs; Combat Report & Training, 1943–45," box 26, ONI-OCNO File Interviews to Supply Area, 2d Base Depot, History and Museums Division, Reports, Studies and Plans Relating to World War II Military Operations, 1941–1956, RG 127, Records of the U.S. Marine Corps, NARA, 1.

⁸⁵ "Combat Report of the Sixth Marine War Dog Platoon While Engaged in the Operation on Iwo Jima," 1.

⁸⁶ "Combat Report of the Sixth Marine War Dog Platoon While Engaged in the Operation on Iwo Jima," 1.

⁸⁷ "Combat Report of the Sixth Marine War Dog Platoon While Engaged in the Operation on Iwo Jima," 2.

use until ground had been taken through a successful assault.⁸⁸

Despite rigorous training protocols, the military failed to account for the scale of artillery fire in combat zones and its effects on dogs. Although the dogs were trained alongside gunfire, vehicles, and faux enemy combatants, most had never experienced prolonged artillery bombardments. This resulted in a number of dogs being returned early to the United States when they developed shellshock, which crippled their abilities to work on the front lines. One such dog was Andy, serial number 71 in the Marine Corps, a young Doberman Pinscher who was trained as a scout and attack dog. Andy served on Guadalcanal and Bougainville, where he distinguished himself as “an outstanding point and patrol dog.”⁸⁹ However, his record noted that despite his excellent work, he “would not be good for further combat duty. Due to results caused by shell fire in combat.”⁹⁰ Even though Andy, who later lost his life in the line of duty, was posthumously given an honorable discharge that noted his character as outstanding, he was not immune to the traumas inflicted by warfare.⁹¹

War dogs were also traumatized by the loss of their handlers. Due to the training methods that made the dogs completely dependent on their handlers, many dogs were rendered unusable if their handler died in battle. A reporter for the *New York Times* described the bond of dog and handler, writing that “in this way the intelligent animal soon becomes the alter ego of the man whose range and quickness of perception he so broadly extends.”⁹² It was not guaranteed that dogs could transition into a partnership with a new handler, and those who could not make the switch had to be sent back to the home front to



Photo by Cpl A.D. Hawkins,
courtesy of Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division
Pvt Ruth H. Whiteman of Philadelphia, PA, greets her Doberman Pinscher, Pvt Eram Von Luteneimer, at Camp Lejeune, New River, NC, where both entered boot camp training with the Marine Corps Women's Reserve and the Marine Corps Dog Detachment. Von Luteneimer was owned jointly by Pvt Whiteman and her brother, Sgt William F. Hinkle of the Philadelphia Police Department. Whiteman's husband, CPO Howard Whiteman, USN, was stationed overseas with a Seabee construction battalion.

be detrained. One such dog was a two-year-old cocker spaniel, Pistol Head, who had served for 48 missions alongside his handler, Lieutenant Colonel S. T. Willis. Willis was killed in action on his 51st mission, and Pistol Head was inconsolable to such a degree that his comrades worried he would die of grief. It was arranged for Pistol Head to return to Willis's wife in the United States in the hope that her companionship would help him survive.⁹³ While nothing further is recorded about Pistol Head, many dogs shared similar experiences when faced with the loss of their handler.

⁸⁸ “Combat Report of the Sixth Marine War Dog Platoon While Engaged in the Operation on Iwo Jima.”

⁸⁹ “U.S. Marine Corps Dog Record Book of Andreas V. Wiedehurst, Serial No. 71,” container no. 1, serial no. 1–Serial No. 76, RG 127, U.S. Marine Corps War Dog Training School, Camp Lejeune, entry no. UD-WW 100: War Dog Service Books 12/1942-06/1946, NARA, 19.

⁹⁰ “U.S. Marine Corps Dog Record Book of Andreas V. Wiedehurst, Serial No. 71,” 4.

⁹¹ “U.S. Marine Corps Dog Record Book of Andreas V. Wiedehurst, Serial No. 71,” 40.

⁹² “Dogs to Aid in War,” *New York Times*, 15 June 1942, 34.

⁹³ “Dog Veteran of War Sent to Hero's Wife,” *New York Times*, 28 July 1944, 14.

After the Battle: Returning to Civilian Life

In every combat theater, the military dogs distinguished themselves and proved their value to military operations. Casualties were inevitable, with many dogs losing their lives in the line of duty, from illness, or psychological breaks from the trauma of their experiences. Those who survived their tour of duty had to go through the process of detrainning. Even while the war was ongoing, dogs were processed through detrainning for a multitude of reasons, including injuries or illness, shellshock, and their positions phasing out. The detrainning process required the dog unlearn all of the skills and tasks that had served their purposes on the battlefield. At the conclusion of the war, there were roughly 8,000 military dogs who needed to proceed through this program. Dogs for Defense came forward to oversee the detrainning and adoption of the dogs, and, in conjunction with the government, helped to cover the costs for returning these dogs back to the United States.⁹⁴

The detrainning process took several weeks and had the dog acclimating to human interaction, the noise and activity of towns, and restraining their instincts to attack when provoked.⁹⁵ One of the final tests that dogs had to pass was a field test in a busy town or city. The dogs would be exposed to a variety of noises, people, and experiences, including an interaction with an aggressive individual.⁹⁶ Should the dog pass all of these scenarios without attacking, it was considered ready to return to civilian life. Although the number was few, there were dogs who, due to their aggressive temperament or traumas, could not be rehabilitated and had no other option than to be euthanized.⁹⁷ Each dog who passed through the detrainning program was sent home with a manual outlining the care and treatment of war dogs, which highlighted the commands and behaviors that the owner should in no circumstance use for their own safety.⁹⁸ The return to

civilian life was predominantly a success, and the war dogs were able to settle into a well-deserved retirement.

Despite the fearful mutterings of those concerned about allowing canine veterans back into society, there was no shortage of loving homes and accolades awaiting them. In Rockford, Illinois, the former war dogs were honored by receiving the freedom to wander their city as they pleased, and license fees were waived for the remainder of their lives.⁹⁹ As early as 1944, there was public interest in adopting military dogs for both practical and sentimental reasons. Many households recognized the value of a trained dog for protection, but the demand for these dogs far outweighed the available supply.¹⁰⁰ The original owners and handlers of the dogs were given first preference in adopting them after they were discharged. Many handlers reached out to the owners to inquire about adopting their canine partner, as the deep bonds forged between them were made through the stress of training and combat. There were reports in the press that “so far, no owner has refused to give his dog to the soldier asking for it.”¹⁰¹

One such fortunate handler was Private Richard Reinauer, who was granted permission to adopt his military dog partner. Rick, Marine dog number 471, was returned to his original owner, Robert Bell, who in turn transferred ownership to Reinauer in 1946.¹⁰² Not all handlers were so fortunate, as in the case of Marine dog Derek, a Doberman Pinscher, whose owners had to make difficult decisions in favor of their dog. During the war, Derek had two handlers, and one, Private First Class Henry Marsili, reached out to Mrs. Priscilla Dunn, Derek’s owner, to request ownership following the war’s end. Marsili had been Derek’s handler for two years and inquired to “possibly see

⁹⁴ Downey, *Dogs for Defense*, 109.

⁹⁵ Downey, *Dogs for Defense*, 109–10.

⁹⁶ “Many Army War Dogs Lose Minefield Jobs as New ‘Means’ Find Non-Metal Detonators,” *New York Times*, 28 January 1945, 7.

⁹⁷ Downey, *Dogs for Defense*, 110.

⁹⁸ Downey, *Dogs for Defense*, 112.

⁹⁹ “Dog Heroes to Get ‘Key to City,’” *New York Times*, 23 September 1944, 17.

¹⁰⁰ “Army to Keep Dogs Until the War Ends: Few Trained Animals Will Be Released Now, Officials Say,” *New York Times*, 25 February 1944, 3.

¹⁰¹ “Many Army War Dogs Lose Minefield Jobs as New ‘Means’ Find Non-Metal Detonators,” *New York Times*, 28 January 1945, 7.

¹⁰² “Letter from H. W. Buse, Jr. to PFC Richard Reinauer, January 23, 1946,” Collection 4498—Personal Papers: Richard Reinauer—Correspondence: Discharge of War Dog Rick, 1946 File, Collection 4498 Personal Papers Richard Reinauer—War Dogs, Archives, MCHD.



Photo by Lt A.M. Fuller, courtesy of Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division

Marine Devil Dogs, veterans of the Bougainville fighting, were honored by a review of the canines in training at Camp Lejeune, NC. Colonel, a bulldog mascot of the Marine War Dog Training Company, made his appearance dressed for the occasion. Other members of the reviewing party were former instructors and two of the handlers who were overseas with their dogs.

some way . . . into letting me keeping him.”¹⁰³ He was aware of other handlers who had received permission to adopt dogs, and was hoping for a similar response, spending much of the letter praising Derek’s qualities and great service. Mrs. Dunn was willing to consider Marsili’s request, but later decided against it on the grounds of his living situation. As she explained in a later memo,

We drove to New York City with the dog so he could see him. We had decided that although we did not want

to give up “Derek” we would do so gladly if he would be happier with his Marine buddy. But the location that he lived in was entirely impossible for a dog like Derek to live—uptown New York City far away from any place to roam or run. So we brought him back to Cambridge and he adjusted overnight as though he had never been away.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ “Letter from Henry Marsili to Mrs. Frank Dunn, December 15, 1945,” Collection 3182 Frank Dunn—Scrapbook (2 of 2) file, Personal Papers, Coll 3812—Frank Dunn, Archives, MCHD.

¹⁰⁴ “Memo from Priscilla Dunn,” Collection 3182 Frank Dunn—Scrapbook (2 of 2) file, Personal Papers, Coll 3812—Frank Dunn, Archives, MCHD.

Conclusion: The Legacy of the Military Dogs of World War II

When the time came and orders were given, the military dogs of the United States proved themselves admirably in World War II. Each dog represented thousands of dollars, hundreds of personnel hours, and countless resources to train and equip for service, but their success was far from guaranteed. The story of the American military dog is one of overcoming adversity and doubt, stumbling through the unknown blindly, and fighting against the worst of odds for the sake of a bond between a handler and their canine friend. It took more than 150 years for the first military dog program to be officially initiated in the United States. The impetus of the Second World War, combined with the brave and dedicated work of civilians within Dogs for Defense, formed the perfect environment for such an event to occur. Beginning with sentry dogs on the home front, then expanding to sentries, scouts, search-and-rescue, messengers, and mine dogs, each represented an important development in the military dog institution. Beyond practical uses, the dogs provided psychological and morale benefits to the soldiers with whom they served, revealing the happiness and selfless love that still existed despite the horrors and atrocities permeating their daily lives. The place of military dogs in the United States was now firmly established. Through their dedicated service in the United States, Europe, and the Pacific, the dogs proved their valor and value by serving as a consistent, trustworthy partner to their handlers and the soldiers around them. While mistakes were made, trial and error revealed not only the best practices for utilizing war dogs on the battlefields of World War II, but also how they might be adapted for future use. It became clear that where American soldiers were present, so too should there be a dog. The skills of canine soldiers, combined with their indomitable loyalty, made them a true threat to enemy forces.

By the end of World War II, the American military dog program had exceeded all initial aspirations. In less than five years, the Army, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard had transitioned from possessing not a single trained dog to training more than 20,000 canine

soldiers, each capable of fulfilling one of a number of specialties. Unlike the precedent set by European military dog programs, the American military dog program was not disbanded when the war ended. It was condensed into four Army platoons that would continue to serve and begin a breeding program to maintain a supply of qualified war dogs.¹⁰⁵ Unfortunately, without the assistance of an organization such as Dogs for Defense, there were often few advocating for the best interests of the dogs. In the time following World War II, the efforts of military dogs slipped to the wayside of public and military interest as other military programs garnered more attention in the era of the Cold War. This made it easy for the regulations regarding military dogs to be overlooked. Nearly all of the estimated 10,000 dogs who served in Vietnam would be left behind, classified as “surplus equipment.”¹⁰⁶ It would not be until 2000 that President William J. “Bill” Clinton would sign “Robby’s Law” into effect, which ended the systemic euthanasia of military dogs when they became too old to work.¹⁰⁷ Through “Robby’s Law,” retiring military dogs are made available for adoption, providing them the opportunity for a quiet and peaceful retirement after years of dedicated service. Following the precedent set by Dogs for Defense, nonprofits and other civilian organizations help offset the costs of caring for retired military dogs, ranging from costly medical expenses to the daily necessity of food. The work accomplished in the first steps of the American military dog program was monumental, laying the foundation for future growth of the program into the present day.

Dogs held a unique position in American culture during the Second World War. They provided a rallying point that nearly everyone could support, regardless of personal beliefs, backgrounds, or demographics. The donation of pets represented the greatest sacrifices in displays of loyalty, patriotism, and selflessness, as families gave up their dearest companions to danger-

¹⁰⁵ Downey, *Dogs for Defense*, 108.

¹⁰⁶ Kristie J. Walker, “Military Working Dogs: Then and Now,” *Maneuver Support* (Summer 2008): 27.

¹⁰⁷ Sarah D. Cruse, “Military Working Dogs: Classification and Treatment in the U.S. Armed Forces,” *Animal Law* 21, no. 1 (2014): 259.

ous futures, without a guarantee of reunification. The end of the war brought difficult decisions for many families as dog handlers begged to be allowed ownership of their canine partners. Regardless of the home to which they returned or found anew, the military dog veterans were given the highest honors and praises available to them in postwar life. Over time, scholars have uncovered the stories of these brave dogs and the handlers who pioneered the first military dog program in the United States. From the works of veterans such as William Putney and Robert Fickbohm to detailed surveys by Michael G. Lemish and Charles Dean, the history of the American military dog program is being documented.

With the end of World War II, the dogs were promoted to a place of honor among other veterans. In parades, newspaper articles, movies, and books, the

accomplishments of these dogs were lauded. Marine dog Derek frequently participated in parades, hospital visits, and interviews surrounding his war service. Canine veteran Thor, a boxer from Altoona, Pennsylvania, was a celebrity in his small town; he visited any business he liked, often receiving treats from the staff, and was transported by taxis and buses.¹⁰⁸ Whether the dog served in New Jersey or Iwo Jima, alerted to 25 attacks or 1, guarded the president of the United States or a crate of rations, they each played a pivotal part in the success of American military efforts in World War II. In their faithful service during the war and their subsequent retirement, they showed that the bond between human and dog endures all things, even unto the worst of humanity, and that survival through such odds was not only possible, but that the life afterward was worth living.

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¹⁰⁸ "Eiche and Thor—About the Collection," Robert E. Eiche Library, Penn State Altoona.

An “Entirely Different Ballgame”

THE MARINE CORPS AND NATO EXERCISES IN ARCTIC NORWAY, 1978–86

By Lieutenant Colonel Brian Donlon

Abstract: The U.S. Marine Corps consistently delivered substandard performance during training exercises in the Arctic in the late 1970s to mid-1980s. An examination of archival records, journal articles, student papers, and interviews with participants provides two explanations for the long period in which Marines were regarded as “rather poor winter warriors.” First, to overcome the challenges of Arctic operations, the Marine Corps had to make sustained, often slow, improvement in the three-step process of learning to survive, move, and fight in the Arctic. Second, the Corps’ culture simultaneously hamstrung and accelerated improvement in this Arctic trinity. Ultimately, the Corps’ slow road to success in the Arctic highlights the dependence of strategic change on proficiency at the lowest tactical levels.

Keywords: Arctic, Norway, arctic exercises, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO, Cold War, military innovation

In March 1978, a group of frustrated U.S. Marines met in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, to debrief their recent participation in Arctic Express 78, a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) exercise in Arctic Norway. The officer in charge of the exercise force, company commander Captain Bruce A. Gombar, began his comments by detailing the stark deficiencies in training and equipment his Marines faced during their deployment. He claimed that “the equipment the Marine Corps now uses for cold weather is based on stuff we used in Korea. It is antiquated. It is too bulky. It is too heavy.” Though the Korean winter had tested the Corps’ mettle during the famous 1950 retreat from the Chosin Reservoir, such conditions were dwarfed by the much harsher climatic and geographic challenges of the Arctic. Gombar also criti-

cized as insufficient the few weeks of training afforded his Marines, stating, “There has got to be an extensive period of indoctrination before going over there. There should be a long period, at least two months, before a unit goes on an exercise in the Arctic.”¹ The Marine Corps, he argued, was insufficiently acknowledging the unique challenges of Arctic operations.

Even more emphatic were the concerns of Gombar’s company gunnery sergeant, R. F. Singer. Singer spoke at length and with great emotion, asserting that “if we went to war tomorrow, we would arrive with troops that would be seeing snow for the first time in their lives and one thing that I think we have to drop right now, is the idea that we did it in Korea, we can do it in Norway. . . . In Norway we are talking about Arctic warfare, not cold weather warfare, we are talking about Arctic warfare and it is an entirely different ballgame.” Singer questioned the wisdom of a rapid

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¹ Maj John J. Clancy III et al., Arctic Express 78 After Action Review, audio recording, 14 May 1978, Oral History Program (hereafter OHP), Archives, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA (hereafter MCHD), tape 1, 4:50, 13:30.

deployment to Norway, challenging his interviewers to imagine “the shock, when this kid from Florida, [or] Puerto Rico, who has never seen snow in his life, steps off of a C-130 and they [officers] say [to him]: ‘the enemy is that way.’” Finishing with the dire prediction that “in time of war we are going to be in a heap of trouble if we fly a BLT [Battalion Landing Team] over there,” Singer claimed that a vast and icy chasm separated strategic aspirations from tactical reality.² It was one thing to sing of combat in the “snow of far-off northern lands.”³ It was quite another to actually fight there.

The next seven years confirmed the accuracy of Gombard and Singer’s negative assessments of Marine Corps capabilities. In 1979, normally reserved Norwegians even commented on the questionable state of the Corps’ cold-weather capability, telling a *New York Times* reporter, “If you [the Marine Corps] want to do the job up here, do it well. Otherwise, drop it.”⁴ An official Marine Corps report written in 1983 admitted “embarrassment” at the Service’s inadequacy in the cold, particularly in comparison to other NATO troops.⁵ As one officer sheepishly admitted in 1985, “Previous performance during winter exercises in North Norway . . . have been of a lower standard than we as Marines like to accept.”⁶ Despite a mountain of opinions and publications, the Corps seemed unable to meet the challenge of the Arctic.

This substandard performance is puzzling as, in the later 1970s and early 1980s, the Marine Corps had strong external and internal incentives to excel on the Northern Flank. With assigned tasks in war plans, political pressure to prove its value to NATO, and desires for budgetary security and institutional relevance, the Corps had many reasons to excel in these highly pub-

licized exercises.⁷ Further, the Corps’ cherished self-image as a global force ready for “every clime and place” should have encouraged more intentional preparation for the Northern Flank.⁸ Despite such political and cultural motivations, however, for almost a decade the Marine Corps’ record in Norway was one of meager improvement and inconsistent proficiency. Not until 1985 did the Service begin a run of successful exercises, suddenly emerging as a “credible force in the cold weather environment of Norway.”⁹

An examination of archival records, journal articles, student papers, and interviews with participants provides two explanations for the long period in which Marines were regarded as “rather poor winter warriors.”¹⁰ First, to overcome the challenges of Arctic operations, the Marine Corps had to make sustained, often slow, improvement in what contemporaries commonly referred to as the three-step process of learning to “survive, move, and fight” in the Arctic.¹¹ No force could effectively fight the Soviet threat without first learning to *survive* and *move* in Arctic weather and terrain. This demanded appreciation of and deliberate preparation for the unique environment of northern Norway. Second, features of the Corps’ culture (not aberrant bugs) simultaneously hamstrung and accelerated improvement in the Arctic trinity.¹² Experienced and innovative leaders, appropriate resources, and realistic training would prove necessary to overcome lackadaisical “Marine macho” and closely related over-generalized readiness for every climate.¹³ Ultimately, the Corps’ slow road to success in the Arc-

² Clancy et al., Arctic Express 78 After Action Review, tape 1, 7-10.

³ Quotation from the “Marine’s Hymn.” For lyrics, see Col Robert Debs Heintz Jr., *Soldiers of the Sea: The United States Marine Corps, 1775–1962*, 2d ed. (Baltimore, MD: Nautical and Aviation Publishing Company of America, 1991), front matter.

⁴ John Vinocur, “U.S. Marines Struggle to Cope with Norway’s Arctic,” *New York Times*, 26 May 1979.

⁵ LtCol M. G. Coe, “Cold Winter 83, Norwegian Army OJT, After Action Report,” 1983, Exercises, box 166, folder 6, Archives, MCHD, 2.

⁶ Maj M. E. Clough, “Cold Winter ’85: ‘Good to Go’ Arctic Warriors,” *Marine Corps Gazette* 69, no. 9 (September 1985): 65.

⁷ Allan R. Millett, *Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps*, 2d ed. (New York: Free Press, 1991), 608.

⁸ “Every clime and place” is a line from the “Marine’s Hymn.” See Heintz, *Soldiers of the Sea*, front matter.

⁹ Maj Jerry L. Durrant, “In Every Clime and Place: USMC Cold Weather Doctrine” (student paper, U.S. Army School of Advanced Military Studies, 1991), 14.

¹⁰ Capt Arne O. Hagtvedt, “Letters: Traveling Light on Skis,” *Marine Corps Gazette* 69, no. 9 (September 1985): 67.

¹¹ Office of Naval Research, “Conference on Cold Weather Operations, 1982,” 1982, Studies and Reports, box 209, folder 6, Archives, MCHD, 3–10; and BGen Richard F. Vercauteren, interview with author, 22 September 2021.

¹² The author is indebted to Professor Katherine Unterman for suggesting this metaphor.

¹³ Volunteer Training Unit 12-50, USMCR, Anchorage, Alaska, “Arctic and Cold Weather Warfare,” 1977, Studies and Reports, box 208, folder 16, Archives, MCHD, 17.

tic highlights the dependence of strategic change on proficiency at the lowest tactical levels.

Though Marines had participated in earlier exercises in Norway, the importance of these events grew in the mid-1970s as an alignment of interests drew together the Corps and the Norwegian military. The need to defend Norway had been a part of NATO war planning since 1957.¹⁴ Part of NATO's vulnerable Northern Flank, Norway's strategic significance lay in its position relative to the maritime choke points known as the Greenland–Iceland–United Kingdom (GIUK) Gap. Though the GIUK Gap was not decisive terrain equal to NATO's Central Front in Germany, in wartime its possession was essential. The flow of reinforcements to Western Europe relied on control of the GIUK. Similarly, naval offensives against the Soviet Navy's Northern Fleet would first have to transit the gap.¹⁵ As one contemporary defense intellectual explained, "World War Three may not be won on the Northern Flank, but it could definitely be lost there."¹⁶

In 1965, however, NATO planners pronounced Norway's airfields and coastline indefensible against the growing Soviet forces located in Murmansk, the northwesternmost region of Russia.¹⁷ By 1977, a force of 400 combat aircraft and 7 Soviet divisions, including motorized rifle divisions, an airborne division, and a naval infantry brigade, stood poised to form the Soviet Northwestern TVD (theater command). Though all ground units but the airborne and naval

infantry brigade were maintained at Class B levels of personnel, they possessed special equipment for arctic warfare and robust infrastructure for rapid reinforcement to wartime strength and had rehearsed potential missions in major exercises in 1968, 1970, and 1975.¹⁸ Intelligence estimates—confirmed post-Cold War by retired Soviet generals—assessed that Soviet war plans included the seizure of coastal Norway, likely through an amphibious and airborne *coup de main* combined with a multidivision invasion into Finnmark, the nation's northernmost region.¹⁹ NATO needed a solution for its Norway problem, specifically a well-trained force capable of rapid deployment.

Throughout the late 1960s and 1970s, the Norwegian populace grew increasingly alarmed by the build-up of Soviet strength on Murmansk's Kola Peninsula.²⁰ In June 1968, as NATO weighed its response in case of violent repression of the Prague Spring, the Soviet

¹⁴ Anthony Cave Brown, ed., *Dropshot: The United States Plan for War with the Soviet Union in 1957* (New York: Dial Press/James Wade, 1978), 80, 96, 150, 180.

¹⁵ Mats R. Berdal, *The United States, Norway, and the Cold War, 1954–60* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 48, 174–75; and David B. Crist, "A New Cold War: U.S. Marines in Norway and the Search for a New Mission in NATO," in *New Interpretations in Naval History: Selected Papers from the Fourteenth Naval History Symposium Held at Annapolis, Maryland, 23–25 September 1999*, ed. Randy Carol Balano and Craig L. Symonds (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2001), 344–45.

¹⁶ Robert Weinland, "War and Peace in the North: Some Political Implications of the Changing Military Situation in Northern Europe" (Conference on the Nordic Balance in Perspective: The Changing Military and Political Situation, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University, Washington, DC, 1978), as quoted in Marian K. Leighton, *The Soviet Threat to NATO's Northern Flank* (New York: National Strategy Information Center, 1979), 94.

¹⁷ NATO North Atlantic Military Committee, Standing Group, "Memorandum for the Military Committee, Contingency Study, Northern Norway," 14 October 1965, DSGM—Standing Group, NATO Archives Online, 3.

¹⁸ Class B personnel are those deemed essential to local foundational operations. Capt G. R. Villar RN, "Amphibious Warfare Forces in Europe and the Soviet Union," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 103, no. 11 (November 1977): 112–13, 115–17; Rolf Tamnes, *The United States and the Cold War in the High North* (Brookfield, VT: Dartmouth Publishing, 1991), 234–35; Robert G. Weinland, "The Soviet Naval Buildup in the High North: A Reassessment," in *The Military Buildup in the High North: American and Nordic Perspectives* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1986), 30–41; Henry Van Loon, "The Kola Fortress-I," in *NATO's Defence of the North*, ed. Eric Grove (London: Brassey's, 1989), 49–57; and MajGen Sir Jeremy Moore RM, "Land-Air Operations in the North," in *Britain and NATO's Northern Flank* (New York: St. Martin's, 1988), 133–39.

¹⁹ RAdm Edward Wegener, FRGN, *The Soviet Naval Offensive: An Examination of the Strategic Role of Soviet Naval Forces in the East-West Conflict*, trans. Henning Wegener (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1975), 28–32; VAdm Rolf Steinhaus, FRGN, "The Northern Flank," in *Problems of Soviet Sea Power as We Approach the Twenty-First Century*, ed. James L. George (Washington, DC: American Enterprise for Public Policy Research, 1977), 137–57; Director of Central Intelligence, "National Intelligence Estimate 11-15-82: Soviet Naval Strategy and Programs through the 1990s," March 1983, 19, 50; Kjell Inge Bjerga, "Politico-Military Assessments on the Northern Flank 1975–1990," Conference Report (Bodø, Norway: Parallel History Project, 20 August 2007), 2–3; Phillip A. Petersen, *The Northwestern TVD in Soviet Operational-Strategic Planning* (Washington, DC: Office of Secretary of Defense, Office of Net Assessment, 2014), 1–2, 15–20; and Petteri Jouko, "Fragile Border?: Role of the Border Guard in the Finnish Defence Planning during the Early Cold War" (Conference Paper, 47th Congress of the International Commission of Military History, Wrocław, Poland, 2 September 2022).

²⁰ John Lund, *Don't Rock the Boat: Reinforcing Norway in Crisis and War* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 1989), 19; Tamnes, *The United States and the Cold War in the High North*, 252–71, 278–94; Rolf Tamnes, *Norsk Utenrikspolitikk Historie*, vol. 6, 1965–1995 (Oslo, Norway: Norwegian University Press, 1997), 61–146; Crist, "A New Cold War," 345–48; and Orlo K. Steele and Michael I. Moffett, *U.S. Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center, 1951–2001* (Washington, DC: History Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 2011), 97–98.

Union executed a highly threatening demonstration of its new strength in the High North. Between 7 and 12 June, 50,000 Soviet troops suddenly appeared within 2 kilometers of the mere 450 Norwegian troops manning the Norwegian-Soviet border near Kirkenes. Soviet authorities refused to explain why this snap exercise had occurred or why hundreds of tank and artillery cannons pointed directly at Norwegian defensive positions. Shaken by this clear warning to NATO, the Norwegian government asked their press to “kill the story” to prevent panic.²¹ As a result of this and other acts of intimidation, by 1975, Norway had expanded its defense expenditures, achieving the highest growth rate in the alliance.²² Citizens of a small state, torn between “fear of abandonment” and “fear of being drawn into the competition of extraneous powers,” Norwegians increasingly surrendered to the former, reversing their longstanding reticence toward NATO and favorably viewing its role in their defense.²³

Meanwhile, the Marine Corps acceded to pressure from the Gerald R. Ford and James E. “Jimmy” Carter administrations to take more seriously its assigned mission as NATO’s reserve, a responsibility the Service had long honored in the breach. As the Corps studied a potential European conflict, however, it feared that on NATO’s Central Front its Marine Air-Ground Task Forces (MAGTFs) would lose unit integrity, with its aircraft commandeered by the Air Force and ground units employed piecemeal under the Army.²⁴ Service studies questioned whether the Corps even possessed sufficient tanks and antitank weapons to credibly face a Soviet motorized rifle or tank division attacking over the open terrain common

to northern or central Germany.²⁵ As a result of such concerns, throughout the 1970s many Marines claimed NATO was the wrong fit for the Corps.²⁶

In contrast to NATO’s Central Front, a Norway contingency mission offered a means of demonstrating value to NATO in a manner that suited Marine Corps capabilities and preferences.²⁷ Flying over Arctic Norway in 1978, the commander of Fleet Marine Forces Atlantic (FMFLANT), Lieutenant General Robert H. Barrow, saw an environment where a lighter force had a chance against Soviet formations. Coastal Norway’s narrow roads and constricting defiles could limit the forces a Soviet motorized rifle division could bring to bear, all while stringing out its logistics train and exposing its flanks to attack from land and sea.²⁸ Most importantly, in Arctic Norway, the Corps could avoid the Army and Air Force’s *idée fixe* of Central Germany’s Fulda Gap, allowing it to fight independently according to its own doctrine.²⁹ In Norway, MAGTFs might have a chance of fighting and winning.

Policymakers formalized this marriage between a nation seeking military aid and a Service in quest of a realistic yet politically valuable mission. Beginning in December 1976, a bilateral study group comprising U.S. and Norwegian military officers, defense officials, and diplomats detailed potential points of cooperation between the two nations.³⁰ In 1978, these

²¹ Kirsten Amundsen, *Norway, NATO, and the Forgotten Soviet Challenge* (Berkeley, CA: Institute of International Studies, 1981), 36–37.

²² “Probing NATO’s Northern Flank,” *Time*, 27 June 1977, 26; and Col Joseph H. Alexander, “The Role of the Marine Corps in the Defense of North Norway,” U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 110, no. 5 (1984): 184.

²³ Johan Jørgen Holst, *Norwegian Security Policy for the 1980’s* (Oslo, Norway: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 1982), 16, CNA Library; and Johan Jørgen Holst, “Norwegian Security Policy: The Strategic Dimension,” in *Deterrence and Defense in the North*, ed. Johan Jørgen Holst, Kenneth Hunt, and Anders C. Sjaastad (Oslo, Norway: Norwegian University Press, 1985), 100.

²⁴ Col R. H. Thompson, “II MAF NATO Employment Conference Report,” 18 May 1978, Studies and Reports, box 260, folder 1, Archives, MCHD, 2, 6, 9, and encl. 3, 1–7; and Col John Jack William Hilgers, interview with author, 11 February 2022.

²⁵ LtCol M. T. Cooper and Maj B. L. McClain, “Marine Corps Tank and Antitank Capability Improvement Measures Staff Study,” April 1975, Studies and Reports, box 227, folder 4–6, Archives, MCHD, iv, 8, 10–11, 18, 32, C-1–C-6.

²⁶ Maj Perry W. Miles, “Finding Better Use of the USMC than Commitment to NATO,” *Marine Corps Gazette* 61, no. 12 (December 1977): 31–34; Col Ernest R. Brydon, “No Tanks in Europe,” *Marine Corps Gazette* 60, no. 11 (November 1976): 13; and Capt Mark F. Cancian, “NATO Obsession to the Corps,” *Marine Corps Gazette* 63, no. 6 (June 1979): 24.

²⁷ Crist, “A New Cold War,” 350–51.

²⁸ Gen Robert H. Barrow, interview with BGen Edwin H. Simmons, 13 December 1989, transcript (Oral History Section, MCHD), 405.

²⁹ Gen George B. Crist, interview with Benis M. Frank, 10 January 1989, transcript (Oral History Section, MCHD), 185–91. For more on the U.S. Army’s central front fixation, see John L. Romjue, *From Active Defense to AirLand Battle: The Development of Army Doctrine, 1973–1982* (Fort Monroe, VA: U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command Historical Office, 1984), 82–86; Paul Herbert, *Deciding What Has to Be Done: General William E. DePuy and the 1976 Edition of FM 100-5* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Combat Studies Institute, 1988), 25–36; and Frederick W. Kagan, *Finding the Target: The Transformation of American Military Policy* (New York: Encounter Books, 2006), 19, 67.

³⁰ Tamnes, *Norsk Utenrikspolitikks*, 61–90.

efforts culminated in an order from Secretary of Defense Harold Brown directing the Marine Corps to commence planning for the “rapid reinforcement of Norway with an airlifted, brigade-sized force.”³¹ The Marine Corps had been officially designated as the U.S. contribution to the defense of Arctic Norway.

As the seven ensuing years would demonstrate, however, the Corps had to first come to terms with the environmental challenges unique to its new mission. The Northern Flank offered both promise and peril. The long Norwegian coastline, cut with deep cliff-lined fjords, ice-free due to the warm waters of the Gulf Stream, suggested a littoral perfect for military landings. The reality, however, was that adequate beaches were few and ringed by towering snow-covered mountains, rising sharply from the sea. The climate inland was harsh, with temperatures as low as -45 degrees Fahrenheit, winds more than 40 knots for more than 10 percent of the year, snow depths of 2–3 feet for 200 days a year, and snowbanks higher than 10 feet. Below the rocky, barren peaks, roads were few and often poorly kept. For most of the year, the best mobility was off-road where a deep blanket of frozen snow allowed movement on skis or specially designed tracked vehicles. As a result, Norwegian defense proved most vulnerable to Soviet attack in the depth of winter when the temperatures were coldest and the snow at its deepest and hardest-packed. These harsh months were also those for which Marines were least prepared.³²

Military units in the Arctic had to first respect the cold. As a study written by Marine reservists stationed in Alaska opined in 1977: “No other climate in the world is so unforgiving and merciless to the unprepared, the untrained, and the under-equipped. . . .

In many respects, as an ‘enemy,’ it can be far deadlier to one’s troops than any opposing forces one is likely to encounter.”³³ Hypothermia, frostbite, trench foot, chilblains (skin lesions), snow blindness, dehydration, and death from exposure stalked military columns in the High North.³⁴ Cold weather and combat injuries could occur far from roads, presenting a logistical nightmare for treatment. At a 1982 bilateral cold weather conference, one physician used history to describe the effects of cold weather, saying, “Napoleon started with 385,000 and had 250,000 cold weather injuries and/or dead. The Germans, in just two months, November and December 1941 and into 1942 had 100,000 cold weather injuries requiring 15,000 amputations. Close your eyes and imagine that load on your medical evacuation system.”³⁵ Worse still, troops had to confront the winter climate, cold-weather injuries, and the enemy during extended periods of darkness, as the polar sun often lay below the horizon. As one officer later described this environment, “In the Arctic it is about surviving, moving and fighting. In that order. If you try to fight, move, and survive you are going to die.”³⁶

Company-size forces sent to Norwegian winter exercises in 1978 and 1979, however, seemed to disregard the realities of this hellishly cold and dark environment. Equipped with Korean War-era cold-weather clothing and World War II surplus wooden skis and snowshoes and lacking a dedicated cold-weather training facility in the United States, Marines predictably performed poorly.³⁷ A nonchalant approach to predeployment training principally caused this lack of proficiency. For example, during Arctic Express 78, 40 percent of the Marines who conducted preparatory training never deployed due to transfer, court-martial, injury, or other causes. As a result,

³¹ Alexander, “The Role of the Marine Corps in the Defense of North Norway,” 186; Tamnes, *The United States and the Cold War in the High North*, 247; and Crist, “A New Cold War,” 357–59.

³² The description of the effects of Norwegian geography and climate on military operations are taken from Maj John Victor Rowland, RM, “The Land Battle for North Norway in the 1980s: A Perspective of Russia’s Strategy and Tactics for the Arctic Theater” (research paper, Marine Corps Command and Staff College, 1979). Rowland was a British Royal Marines officer with experience operating in Norway. Several of the officers interviewed by the author referenced Rowland’s work and expressed that it was well-known in the Marine Corps during this time.

³³ Volunteer Training Unit 12-50, USMCR, Anchorage, Alaska, “Arctic Mobility Study, 1977,” 1977, Studies and Reports, box 208, folder 11, Archives, MCHD, 2.

³⁴ “Conference on Cold Weather Operations, 1982,” 3-58–3-91.

³⁵ Office of Naval Research, “Norwegian–United States Cold Weather Conference: Final Report,” 1987, Studies and Reports, box 265, folder 6, Archives, MCHD, 3–97.

³⁶ Vercauteren interview.

³⁷ Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 609; and Steele and Moffett, *U.S. Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center, 1951–2001*, 98.

two weeks before flying to northern Norway, 33 new Marines, all untrained for Arctic warfare, joined the exercise force. Liabilities in extreme cold weather, these Marines dragged down the tempo and lethality of their own unit and the better-trained and better-equipped NATO allies.³⁸ The following year, a similarly poorly trained group of Marines deployed for Cold Winter 79. In an embarrassing incident, Norwegian soldiers rescued a group of hypothermic Marines from a mountaintop. Meanwhile, prominent newspapers circulated rumors that the Marine Corps' exercise force was concealing a high number of cold-weather casualties. Assessing this dangerous incompetence, one Norwegian officer commented that the issue was not a lack of "strength or will"; individual Marines had proven sufficiently tough. Rather, the problem was a prioritization of toughness over adequate training, resulting in an "overwhelming" number of "elemental mistakes."³⁹

This prioritization reflected what Alaskan Marine reservists had maligned as dangerous overreliance on the Corps' ethos of toughness. In a grassroots cold-weather manual written in 1977, they predicted the poor outcome of the 1978 and 1979 exercises, stating that in the Arctic "there is no room for showoff antics to impress other services with the Marine 'macho', or ability to tough it out."⁴⁰ Three years later, these same Reserve officers wrote a second manual, claiming that the Marine Corps had not heeded their earlier warnings. Inexperienced leaders and negligent planners, they argued, relied too heavily on the allegedly innate toughness of Marines and not enough on methodical preparations. Basing their claims on personal observations of recent exercises and conversations with NATO allies, the officers expressed fears that the Corps was "not really facing up to the challenges and realities" of the Arctic.⁴¹

Precedent existed for the default emphasis on machismo feared by the Alaskan reservists. For ex-

ample, following a February 1964 winter exercise at the Mountain Warfare Training Center (MWTC) in Bridgeport, California, a regimental commander, Colonel Angus M. Fraser, recommended that future units not use tents in the subzero alpine environment. Tents, Fraser stated, interfered with the rapid acclimatization of Marines to the weather. More critically, they did not imbue in Marines the mental toughness needed to endure extreme cold. If implemented, this reckless recommendation might have proved perilous for future training exercises. Fortunately, Fraser's division commanding general, Major General William T. Fairbourn, rejected the recommendation, describing tents as both essential to safety and tactical success.⁴² Where Fairbourn gained this insight is unclear, however, with the deactivation of MWTC in October 1967, the already limited number of Marine Corps leaders trained for cold-weather operations decreased even further.⁴³ Subsequently, as the Corps pivoted to the Arctic, Marines in the late 1970s and early 1980s suffered from inexperienced leadership, poor equipment, and inadequate training. Trapped in the *survive* step of the Arctic trinity, Marine Corps units fell far short of the expectations of NATO allies.

As the scale of its participation in cold-weather exercises expanded beginning in 1980, the Corps continued to underestimate the demands of training for Arctic warfare. The deployment of 36th Marine Amphibious Unit (36th MAU) to Anorak Express 80—the first battalion-size winter deployment of Marines to northern Norway—set the tone for the next four years of exercises.⁴⁴ Despite the fact that it was formed specifically for Anorak Express 80, 36th MAU was an ad hoc force with a training plan designed for multiple scenarios.⁴⁵ This immediately put it at a disadvantage when compared to the specially organized, trained, and equipped cold-weather formations of

³⁸ Clancy et al., Arctic Express 78 After Action Review, tape 2, 53:42.

³⁹ Vinocur, "U.S. Marines Struggle to Cope with Norway's Arctic."

⁴⁰ Volunteer Training Unit 12-50, "Arctic and Cold Weather Warfare," 17.

⁴¹ Mobilization Training Unit AK-1, USMCR, Anchorage, Alaska, "Arctic and Cold Weather Warfare, Volume III," 1980, Studies and Reports, box 209, folder 2, Archives, MCHD, xi.

⁴² 2d Battalion, 1st Marines, "SNOWFEX 1-64 Post Exercise Report," 1964, Exercises, box 91, folder 10, Archives, MCHD.

⁴³ Steele and Moffett, *U.S. Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center, 1951-2001*, 88-89.

⁴⁴ 36th Marine Amphibious Unit, "Anorak Express 80, Final Exercise Report," 1980, vol. 1, Exercises, box 160, folders 1-6, Archives, MCHD, 5.

⁴⁵ 36th Marine Amphibious Unit, vol. 2, 5-9; and 1st Battalion, 2d Marines, "Command Chronology August 1979-May 1980," 9 May 1980, Command Chronology Files, Archives, MCHD.

other NATO participants. The most glaring manifestation of this ad hoc structure was the flawed training plan imposed on 1st Battalion, 2d Marines, the principal exercise force. Despite the efforts of its battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel John W. Ripley, an officer experienced in cold-weather operations, the unit suffered through a frenetic predeployment training plan.⁴⁶ Beginning with combined arms training in the humidity of Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, his Marines next traveled to the dry heat of Twentynine Palms, California. Epitomizing the irony of a unit bound for Norway first training in the Mojave Desert, Marines lugged both their desert and cold-weather equipment with them to California.⁴⁷ After a month in the high desert, they traveled to the Sierra Nevada Mountains for training at a partially reopened MWTC.⁴⁸ Unfortunately, the weather proved unseasonably mild. As the official after action report stated, “More severe weather would have been required to thoroughly complete tactical pre-deployment Arctic Warfare training.”⁴⁹

Notably, 36th MAU’s illogical work-up was no accident. Marine Corps leaders saw their Service as an “expeditionary force in readiness” with a “worldwide” mission, demanding “flexibility, mobility and global character.”⁵⁰ Deploying units, they argued, even those executing a specific task such as 36th MAU, had to be ready for contingencies beyond their primary mission, even at the expense of specialized training. Arctic Norway would severely test this theory.

As expected, the low temperature, ice, snow, and precipitation faced at Anorak Express 80 far exceeded anything 36th MAU had previously experienced. The conditions affected both the performance of the Marines and, more tellingly, the maneuver and fire support

assets critical to waging the “fast-paced, armor-mech operation” for which the MAU had been task organized.⁵¹ Artillery batteries proved difficult to emplace in the deep snow, making them slow to move and vulnerable to counterfire. Artillery and mortar fuses sometimes failed to detonate in the snow or rounds landed in deep snowbanks, defying the ability of an observer to adjust the fire.⁵² The 36th MAU proved a force far from adequate to halt a Soviet advance, even on the favorable terrain of northern Norway.

Simultaneously, the promise of easy maneuver also proved illusory. Employing a robust detachment of amphibious assault vehicles (AAVs), 36th MAU attempted to launch amphibious operations to outmaneuver enemy units. Unfortunately, a dearth of landing areas along the rocky coast and narrow beach exits limited the usefulness of this tactic. Once past the coast, mobility severely worsened. Marines learned that AAVs could not easily traverse snow, often overheating as they plowed through deep banks. Meanwhile, 36th MAU’s trucks and jeeps crawled through narrow passes, unable to move off the icy roads. Though the Norwegian Army did provide a few purpose-built Swedish Bandvagn 202s (BV-202s), there were not enough of these wide, rubber-tracked vehicles to maintain the desired pace of operations.⁵³

Similarly, dismounted infantry struggled through the deep snow and bitter cold. The majority of Marines moved on snowshoes, heavily burdened by equipment and packs weighing more than 90 pounds. Only small reconnaissance elements had attained marginal proficiency on cross-country skis. These skis, drawn from World War II and Korean War stocks, were antiquated. Made of wood and requiring careful waxing, they attached to the heavy vapor barrier boots—nicknamed Mickey Mouse for their resemblance to the round white feet of Walt Disney’s famous creation—using onerous bindings featuring an aluminum plate at the toe. The aluminum plate had a major defect: with every stroke of the ski, it made a clapping

⁴⁶ Steele and Moffett, *U.S. Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center, 1951–2001*, 123–24.

⁴⁷ 36th Marine Amphibious Unit, “Anorak Express 80,” vol. 1, 1, 6; and MajGen James R. Battaglini, interview with author, 17 September 2021.

⁴⁸ Steele and Moffett, *U.S. Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center, 1951–2001*, 98.

⁴⁹ 36th Marine Amphibious Unit, “Anorak Express 80,” vol. 1, 7.

⁵⁰ Thompson, “II MAF NATO Employment Conference Report,” 2; and Gen Louis H. Wilson, interview with BGen Edwin H. Simmons, 25 June 1979, transcript (Oral History Section, MCHD), 203, hereafter Wilson oral history.

⁵¹ 36th Marine Amphibious Unit, “Anorak Express 80,” vol. 2, 1-1.

⁵² 36th Marine Amphibious Unit, “Anorak Express 80,” vol. 2, 5-11, 6-2.

⁵³ 36th Marine Amphibious Unit, “Anorak Express 80,” vol. 2, vi-1, 9-2-9-3, and vol. 4, 15.



Photo by JFC Gary Miller, USN, no. 6349936, Combined Military Service Digital Photographic Files 1982–2007, Records of the Office of the Secretary of Defense 1921–2008, RG 330, NARA, College Park, MD

Marines of 36th MAU coming ashore onto Kjerkevik Beach from a Landing Craft Utility (LCU) 1655 during Exercise Cold Winter 81. Note the thick parkas, heavy snowshoes, and large rucksacks.

noise akin to stomping on concrete, hardly the noise desired for a reconnaissance element. Whether in vehicles or afoot, 36th MAU quickly found itself road-bound, exposed to attacks from well-trained opposing NATO exercise forces.⁵⁴

While an increased allocation of aviation units at Anorak Express 80 did alleviate some shortfalls in mobility, this also raised concerns of tactical feasibility. First, 36th MAU employed its helicopters in an unrealistic manner. Modern Soviet air defenses could easily destroy helicopters, forcing low-altitude flying techniques to hide from radar and dodge ground

fire.⁵⁵ Even flying behind Norway's sharp mountains and snow-covered ridges did not guarantee safety. Due to the immobility of dismounted Marines, helicopters had to land close to enemy positions, exposing the aircraft to enemy missiles and guns. Additionally, despite readily available cold-weather flight publica-

⁵⁴ 36th Marine Amphibious Unit, "Anorak Express 80," vol. 2, 3-3, 9-3; Lessons Learned, in 36th Marine Amphibious Unit, "Anorak Express 80," vol. 2, 1; Col John C. Scharfen, "Cold Weather Training: The Absolute Necessity," *Marine Corps Gazette* 65, no. 2 (February 1981): 41; and LtGen Richard F. Natonski, interview with author, 23 September 2021.

⁵⁵ The 1973 Yom Kippur War demonstrated the efficacy of integrated radars, surface-to-air missiles, and anti-aircraft guns. In a conflict with the Soviet Army in Norway, the Marine Corps would have faced such sophisticated air defenses, exposing helicopters to significant risk, specifically while in the slow final approach to landing zones. These risks would increase with proximity to concentrations of enemy forces. While there were tactics to mitigate these risks, none were foolproof. When exercises ignored these realities of modern warfare to compensate for deficiencies in over-the-snow mobility, they cultivated potentially deadly wartime habits. For a discussion of the Corps' need to recognize and adapt to modern air defenses, see Maj Frederic L. Gatz, "Training Helicopter Crews," *Marine Corps Gazette* 59, no. 4 (April 1975): 49–50; and Maj G. W. Caldwell, "The Destruction of the Soviet Air Defense System," *Marine Corps Gazette* 69, no. 12 (December 1985): 65–70.



Photo by Cpl H. M. Coffey, no. 6367704, Combined Military Service Digital Photographic Files 1982–2007, Records of the Office of the Secretary of Defense 1921–2008, RG 330, NARA, College Park, MD

A Marine patrol from Company F, 2d Battalion, 2d Marine Division, moves through icy wooded terrain during Exercise Alloy Express 82.

tions, Arctic conditions surprised 36th MAU's pilots. Flying in the days before global positioning systems, they found navigation over featureless white snow fields challenging, particularly during the long Arctic night. More treacherously, powdery snow created whiteout conditions as helicopters landed, blinding the aircraft crew and causing disembarking Marines to disappear into a machine-made blizzard.⁵⁶ The shortfalls of Anorak Express 80, cataloged in hundreds of after action report entries, foreshadowed future exercises where survival seemed the best the Marine Corps could hope for.

The next exercise, Cold Winter 81, exacerbated the deficiencies experienced at Anorak Express 80. Task organized in what its operations officer later described as “ad hocery at the highest level of ad hocery,”

the exercise force executed a predeployment plan emblematic of adherence to over-generalized readiness for any climate.⁵⁷ The Marines of Cold Winter 81 first spent a month in Panama conducting jungle training before traveling to Twentynine Palms for combined arms training. They then boarded an amphibious ship for a training scenario involving “Cuban backed guerrilla [sic] forces in a Latin American country.”⁵⁸ Next, they completed a mere 14 days of training at Camp Ripley, Minnesota, where weather again proved unseasonably warm.⁵⁹ Ultimately, the exercise force would spend more time sailing to Norway than training for the cold weather it would face there.

⁵⁷ Vercauteren interview.

⁵⁸ 1st Battalion, 6th Marines, “Command Chronology, July–December 1980,” 5 January 1981, Command Chronology Files, Archives, MCHD, 4.

⁵⁹ 1st Battalion, 6th Marines, “Command Chronology for the Period of 1 January 1981 to 30 Jun 1981,” 8 July 1981, Command Chronology Files, Archives, MCHD, 1, 3–4.

⁵⁶ 36th Marine Amphibious Unit, “Anorak Express 80,” vol. 2, III-3, III-3–III-4, IV-1.

Predictably, this flawed training produced a poor outcome as Marines failed to adapt to the unique Arctic environment. For example, a common technique in milder climates was for subordinate leaders to travel to headquarters to receive orders for the next day's attack. These leaders would then return to their units to issue more specific instructions. This method depended on free and quick movement. At Cold Winter 81, this assumption proved invalid. Weighed down with aged equipment and inadequately trained on snowshoes, Marines moved sluggishly back and forth through the icy cold and long darkness of the Arctic night. When morning came, time spent planning and coordinating had already exhausted the attacking force. Fortunately, improvements did occur in terms of small unit survival, as demonstrated when "during a white out, a squad hunkered down had to be rescued the next day, luckily they had been trained for these circumstances."⁶⁰ At least this time, the Corps would not suffer rumors of mass evacuations of frostbitten and hypothermic Marines. Unfortunately, merely surviving the weather and avoiding bad press fell far short of NATO expectations.

Preparation for Alloy Express 82 began with comparative advantages. The exercise force, again a task-organized 36th MAU, contained leaders with experience in Arctic conditions, including the commanding officer, Colonel Carl E. Mundy III, operations officer Major James R. Battaglini, and a highly respected junior officer, First Lieutenant Edward Gregory. Following the youthful yet experienced Gregory's lead, 36th MAU executed a four-phase training plan culminating in 15 days spent at Camp Ripley. Unfortunately, while Camp Ripley provided low enough temperatures, it also had an unusual lack of precipitation (ironically, while 36th MAU trained in Minnesota, its home base in coastal North Carolina received unseasonably heavier snowfall). The lack of snow perpetuated insufficient proficiency in over-the-snow mobility. More damaging, however, were the three weeks spent sailing to Norway, which reversed Marines' tolerance for cold weather and prevented sustainment training.

More significantly, the warships had limited storage space, curtailing the amount and types of specialized equipment 36th MAU could carry.⁶¹

As a result, on arrival in Norway, Marines at Alloy Express 82 proved once again road-bound and slow. Frequent high winds and bitter cold exacerbated the situation. Even simple activities, such as pitching tents, could take hours as Marines waddled in deep snow in their oversized parkas, thick mittens, and heavy boots.⁶² Undermining hopes of showcasing a Marine Corps amphibious assault, 60-knot gusts and a wind chill of -40 degrees Fahrenheit delayed the culminating landing. Embarrassingly, only a few kilometers away in a better-sheltered fjord, a British Royal Marines unit landed easily, quickly taking their objective. The next day, 36th MAU's public affairs officer, Captain Dale A. Dye, found himself explaining this awkward contrast to Norwegian journalists and the very Soviet Army observers who NATO hoped to deter with a show of Arctic proficiency.⁶³ Ultimately, all that 36th MAU had to show from its improved training plan was enhanced survival skills. While this was not inconsequential, as demonstrated when a patrol successfully rescued themselves—without casualties—after breaking through the ice of a frozen lake, it was far from the defensive force.⁶⁴

Recognizing these disappointing results, leaders acknowledged that something had to change if the Marine Corps were to move past *surviving* to *moving* and *fighting*. A glimmer of this occurred during Alloy Express 82, when Mundy vetoed a plan to use helicopters to compensate for the slowness of Marines

⁶¹ Battalion Landing Team 2/2, "Alloy Express Post Exercise Report," 9 April 1982, Exercises, box 165, folder 3, Archives, MCHD, 1-1; Gen Carl E. Mundy, interview with BGen Edwin H. Simmons, session 12, transcript (Oral History Section, MCHD), 121, hereafter Mundy oral history; Battaglini interview; Capt Dale A. Dye, interview with the author, 11 March 2022.

⁶² Battalion Landing Team 2/2, "Alloy Express," 4-27, 4-46-4-47, 4-50; and Battaglini interview.

⁶³ Knut Sletbakk, "Landsettin i Bjerkvik blåste vekk, men Øvelse Alloy Express går etter planen," *Fremover* (Narvik, Norway), 13 March 1982; "Kongen til Alloy Express," *Arbeiderbladet* (Oslo, Norway), 13 March 1982; Knut Falchenberg, "Amerikansk landgang ble stanset av været," *Aftenposten* (Oslo, Norway), 13 March 1982; Mundy oral history, 143; Battaglini interview; and Dye interview.

⁶⁴ Battalion Landing Team 2/2, "Alloy Express," 4-7; and Battaglini interview.

⁶⁰ Vercauteren interview.

moving on snowshoes over switchbacked roads and trails. Ignoring the pleas of his subordinate commanders, he refused to cheat past the reality of the Arctic conditions. In a real war, Mundy pointed out, enemy anti-air missiles would easily destroy any aircraft that attempted such a maneuver. The Marine Corps, he argued in the exercise after action report, could no longer afford to use technology to mitigate inadequacy in over-the-snow mobility.⁶⁵ It was past time for the Corps to learn to fight like Norwegians.

As Mundy opposed the use of technological shortcuts to get around the central problems of Arctic warfare, other senior leaders implemented similar reforms. Speaking in March 1982 at the first bilateral cold-weather combat operations conference, Major General Alfred M. Gray Jr., the commanding general of 2d Marine Division, admitted to an audience of Norwegians and Marines that his Service's equipment and training was grossly inadequate. After detailing a litany of deficiencies, however, he ended his keynote address optimistically, saying, "Drawing on the experiences of our Norwegian friends . . . I would hope that this conference and others like it would permit us not only to fight but to win."⁶⁶ This was not merely public flattery. Rather, it signaled Gray's commitment to substantial changes in how units trained, deployed, and equipped for Norway.

While in command of 2d Marine Division, Gray gained a reputation as a leader who prioritized hard, realistic field training and championed experimentation.⁶⁷ His advocacy for the cold-weather conference evidenced this emphasis. Gray insisted that the 1982 conference would differ from previous events held in North Carolina, occurring in Norway and featuring bilateral participation. To ensure that the results did

not end up bureaucratically stillborn, Gray convinced the Office of Naval Research to record and analyze the proceedings. Gray found an enthusiastic partner in the Norwegian Army.⁶⁸ For four days, Marines and Norwegians candidly examined the Corps' embarrassing performance in cold-weather operations, proposing solutions that included better cold-weather clothing, higher-calorie rations, modern skis, more appropriate tactics, and more comprehensive training. The post-conference report demonstrated this spirit, providing a long list of action items and ruthlessly pointing out which of these had been identified in the past but never addressed.⁶⁹ Gray's presence at the head of 2d Marine Division between 1981 and 1984, as well as his subsequent assignment as commander of FMFLANT from 1984 to 1987, proved critical for the organizational climate in which future exercises occurred. Gray's subordinate commanders could not claim that they lacked direction to sensibly prepare for the unique environment of the High North.

In the background of the discussions at the cold-weather conference was an emerging capability known as the Norwegian Air-Landed Marine Expeditionary Brigade (NALMEB).⁷⁰ The NALMEB originated in 1978 amid Carter administration skepticism. Planners recognized that time, distance, weather, and competing priorities made it unlikely that NATO's mobile forces could reach the Northern Flank before Soviet forces could seize key terrain. The Northern Flank needed a faster means of reinforcement. A bilateral concept, the NALMEB envisioned Marines rapidly flying to Norway, drawing prepositioned equipment, and then deploying to northern Norway. Initially hesitant to involve itself in land-based prepositioning akin to Army facilities in Germany, the Marine Corps relented when it learned that the prepositioned material would not be drawn from existing Service stocks. Instead, NALMEB would consist of new equipment, purchased with additional funding. For the often cash-strapped Corps, this was too good a deal to re-

⁶⁵ Battalion Landing Team 2/2, "Alloy Express," 4-46, 4-50; Battaglini interview; and Dye interview.

⁶⁶ "Conference on Cold Weather Operations, 1982," 3-12-3-13.

⁶⁷ Terry C. Pierce, *Warfighting and Disruptive Technologies: Disguising Innovation* (New York: Frank Cass, 2004), 87; Gerald H. Turley, *The Journey of a Warrior: General Alfred M. Gray, 29th Commandant of the Marine Corps (1987-1991)*, 2d ed. (Arlington, VA: Potomac Institute Press, 2017), 120-33; MajGen Harry W. Jenkins, *Challenges: Leadership in Two Wars, Washington DC, and Industry* (n.p.: Fortis, 2020), 177; MajGen Harry W. Jenkins, interview with author, 27 September 2021; Vercauteren interview; Col John Bicknas, interview with author, 11 February 2022; and LtGen Michael Dana, interview with author, 20 October 2022.

⁶⁸ Steele and Moffett, *U.S. Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center, 1951-2001*, 105.

⁶⁹ "Conference on Cold Weather Operations, 1982," 6-3.

⁷⁰ "Conference on Cold Weather Operations, 1982," 3-12.



Photo by Cpl H. M. Coffey, no. 6368224, Combined Military Service Digital Photographic Files 1982–2007, Records of the Office of the Secretary of Defense 1921–2008, RG 330, NARA, College Park, MD

A Marine of Company A, 1st Battalion, 2d Marine Division, caught in a severe Norwegian blizzard during Exercise Cold Winter 83.

fuse, even if it meant drifting from its preferred amphibious doctrine.⁷¹

The NALMEB had to also overcome political opposition in Norway. As an antinuclear weapons nation with a firm no-basing policy, Norway wished to avoid appearing escalatory to the Soviet Union. The Norwegian government deemed as too provocative sites proposed in northern Norway near Narvik. By 1981, negotiators reached a compromise, selecting sites near Trondheim in central Norway. Additionally, the United States agreed that no aircraft or systems capable of firing nuclear weapons would be forward deployed. Though the Trondheim caves lay more than 600 ki-

lometers from the main combat zone, the NALMEB concept offered viable means of rapid deployment. As NALMEB's stores expanded, exercise forces could increasingly draw well-maintained equipment, specially selected for the Arctic environment, including leased BV-202s and the new BV-206s.⁷² This first Service dalliance with prepositioning, occurring alongside the birth of the Maritime Prepositioning Force, had both strategic and tactical implications. As NALMEB developed, Marines on the ground gained increased capability to move to and within Arctic exercises.

In his remarks at the bilateral conference, Gray also highlighted the importance of the reactivation and expansion of the Corps' cold-weather training facility in California, the MWTC. While training occurred at MWTC during the workup for Anorak Express 80, this was an exception. Founded in 1951,

⁷¹ Jerry L. Durrant, "The Norway Airlanded MEB's Role in Crisis Response for the 1990's" (student paper, U.S. Army School of Advanced Military Studies, 1992), 22; Leif Lundesgaard, *Brigaden i Nord-Norge 1953–1995* (Oslo, Norway: Elanders Forlag, 1995), 268; Mundy oral history, 123; Rolf Tamnes, *Norsk Forsvarshistorie*, vol. 5, 1970–2000 (Bergen, Norway: Eide, 2000), 31–164; Edwin H. Simmons, "Robert Hilliard Barrow, 1979–1983," in *Commandants of the Marine Corps*, ed. Allan R. Millett and Jack Shulimson (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2004), 451; Barrow oral history, 407; and Wilson oral history, 141.

⁷² Alexander, "The Role of the Marine Corps in the Defense of North Norway," 188; Tamnes, *The United States and the Cold War in the High North*, 266–67; and Crist, "A New Cold War," 359–61.

MWTC fell into disuse in the mid-1960s as a result of the Vietnam War. In this period, a reduced cadre offered only small-scale training in limited subjects. The promise of a mission on the Northern Flank inspired a return to large unit training. In 1981, Barrow, now Commandant of the Marine Corps, decided to reactivate MWTC, stating that the facility would be instrumental for “skills that just cannot either be taught or learned by the seat of the pants.”⁷³ In his 1982 remarks, Gray pointed to Bridgeport as the “vital ingredient” to prepare units for Norway.⁷⁴ He stipulated that while improvements to long-neglected facilities would take time and that economic realities limited how many battalions he could send to California each year, these conditions would improve. By the summer of 1984, his predictions proved accurate, and training at MWTC became the standard for units deploying to Norway.⁷⁵

The next exercise, Cold Winter 83, came too early to benefit from these improvements in leadership, prepositioned equipment, and training at Bridgeport. Though the time spent at Camp Ripley increased to 22 days, the weather again proved uncooperative. While temperatures were sufficiently frigid, there was very little snow, forcing the reconnaissance platoon to travel to a nearby civilian ski resort to learn cross-country skiing on machine-groomed snow.⁷⁶ The mild weather at Camp Ripley and systemic issues with manning, training, and equipping forces for the Arctic resulted in predictably abysmal performance at Cold Winter 83. Most troubling was flawed coordination with the Norwegian Army. Particularly heavy snowfall limited the movement of NATO communications, artillery, and logistics units. As a result, frequent, sometimes heated, disputes arose between Marine Corps and Norwegian Army units about boundaries, road usage,

defensive positions, and areas cleared of snow.⁷⁷ This seemed hardly the behavior of an effective alliance.

The next year’s exercise, Teamwork 84, however, showed the benefits of NALMEB and reforms to equipment and training. The exercise force, 4th Marine Amphibious Brigade, drew logistical sustainment and one artillery battery’s worth of equipment from NALMEB. This first use of prepositioned equipment demonstrated the value of the concept and set the stage for future operations. Additionally, the Marine Corps evaluated new equipment fielded as a result of Gray’s bilateral 1982 cold-weather conference. Some Marines at Teamwork 84 tested new Gore-Tex parkas and trousers and polypropylene long underwear. Their review of the lightweight, fast-drying clothing was inevitably enthusiastic after years of over-sized, water-absorbing parkas and base layers. Additionally, cleats, specially designed for ice and snow, were used on select AAVs, adding improved traction and increased off-road ability.⁷⁸ Finally, and most importantly, Teamwork 84 demonstrated a new model of training. While most of the exercise force repeated the typically inadequate 10-day cycle at Camp Ripley, two rifle companies followed this initial training with 26 days at MWTC learning to cross-country ski. This decision had an immediate impact on the conduct of the exercise, significantly increasing the exercise force’s mobility, especially when combined with BV-202s and BV-206s carrying logistics and pulling ski-borne troops up steep slopes in a technique called skijoring.⁷⁹ For the first time, a Marine Corps unit had trained large numbers of Marines on skis and outfitted them

⁷³ Steele and Moffett, *U.S. Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center, 1951–2001*, 103, see also 19, 85, 87–90, 98–99.

⁷⁴ “Conference on Cold Weather Operations, 1982,” 3–11–3–12.

⁷⁵ MajGen Harry W. Jenkins, audio recording (Oral History Section, 23 June 1996, MCHD), tape 1, 14:40, hereafter Jenkins oral history; Steele and Moffett, *U.S. Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center, 1951–2001*, ix–x, 112; and Jenkins interview.

⁷⁶ 1st Battalion, 2d Marines, “Alpine Warrior Operation Order 1-82,” November 1982, Exercises, box 165, folder 4, Archives, MCHD, C-13-A-1; and 1st Battalion, 2d Marines, “Command Chronology July–December 1982,” 1983, Command Chronology Files, Archives, MCHD, 4–5.

⁷⁷ 2d Marines, “Cold Winter 83 Post-Exercise Narrative,” 1983, 4-D-2-E-4, Exercises, box 166, folder 8, Archives, MCHD, 3–4.

⁷⁸ Regimental Landing Team 2, “After Action Report, Teamwork 84,” 1984, Studies and Reports, box 210, folder 1, Archives, MCHD, 56, 58; and BGen Norman H. Smith, “Arctic Maneuvers 1984,” *Marine Corps Gazette* 68, no. 12 (December 1984): 34, 36.

⁷⁹ Regimental Landing Team 2, “Alpine Warrior 83, Implementing Instructions for 4th Marine Amphibious Brigade, Operations Order 3-83,” November 1983, exercises, box 166, folder 3, C-1-A-1-C-1-I-4; 4th Marine Amphibious Brigade, “Command Chronology, July–December 1983,” 21 February 1984, Command Chronology Files, 4; 2d Battalion, 2d Marines, “Command Chronology, January–June 1984,” 16 July 1984, Command Chronology Files, IV–1; 3d Battalion, 8th Marines, “Command Chronology, January–June 1984,” 30 June 1984, Encl. 1, Command Chronology Files, 2; and Regimental Landing Team 2, “Teamwork 84,” Archives, MCHD, 19, 21, 72.



Photo courtesy of MGen Harry W. Jenkins Jr., U.S. Marine Corps

Marines of 1st Battalion, 2d Marine Regiment, skijoring behind a BV-206 in Northern Norway during Exercise Cold Winter 85.

with modern cold-weather equipment. Though most units remained miserably slow-moving and underperforming, the Corps had finally proven that it could achieve the *move* step in the cold-weather trinity.

Observers would rightly praise Cold Winter 85 as an exercise that finally united proper training, equipment, and leadership, reversing seven years of poor performance.⁸⁰ This success directly resulted from conscious efforts to imitate Norwegian tactics and techniques for extreme cold. The primary inspiration behind these efforts was Colonel Harry W. Jenkins, the commanding officer of 2d Marine Regiment from 1984 to 1986. A former instructor at MWTC, he was a proficient mountaineer, a cross-country skier, and an avid student of military history, specifically winter

warfare.⁸¹ Jenkins would eagerly apply this experience and education to the challenges of the High North.

Traveling to Norway for a Cold Winter 85 planning conference, Jenkins found the Marine Corps the subject of polite, if public, ridicule. In the opening comments for the conference, the exercise director, Norwegian brigadier Asbjørn Lerheim, flatly evaluated Marines' performance in cold weather as substandard, even if their presence in Norway was necessary. As Jenkins later explained, "The Norwegians were saying, we love to have you here. You help to keep the Russians off our backs. But we don't think you are any good." This was a fair critique, as Jenkins admitted, "The training program was insufficient, it was incomplete, they [the Marines] didn't have enough time in the snow." Returning home from the conference, Jenkins directed his staff: "We are going to do something different with this one."⁸²

⁸⁰ Regimental Landing Team 2, "After Action Report Cold Weather Training and Operations," 1985, Exercises, box 169, folder 10, Archives, MCHD, II-E-3-3; LtCol William H. Schopf, "The MAB in Norway," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 112, no. 11 (November 1986): 39; Richard F. Natonski, "Cold Weather Combat: What Is the Marine Corps Doing About It?" (research paper, Marine Corps Command and Staff College, 1988), 6; and Durrant, "In Every Clime and Place," 13.

⁸¹ Steele and Moffett, *U.S. Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center, 1951–2001*, 83–84, 102; Jenkins, *Challenges*, 43; and Jenkins interview.

⁸² Jenkins oral history, tape 1, 22:10; and Jenkins interview.



Photo courtesy of MGen Harry W. Jenkins Jr., U.S. Marine Corps Well-trained and confident Marine Corps ski-troops from 2d Marines on the move in Northern Norway during Exercise Cold Winter 85. They are carrying wooden Northland skis.

What Jenkins had in mind were dramatic changes in training for the Arctic. This redesign involved maximum use of MWTC and the NALMEB. The entirety of the exercise force spent five weeks at MWTC before going to Fort Drum, New York, for further cold-weather training.⁸³ Their goal was what many argued was unachievable: to train and equip an over-the-snow capable regimental headquarters and infantry battalion, a total of more than 1,000 Marines proficient on cross-country skis.⁸⁴ Adding to this emphasis on mobility, Jenkins's staff coordinated a NALMEB draw of BV-202s and BV-206s at wartime levels, more than previous units.⁸⁵ Finally, 2d Marines conducted extensive night training to prepare Marines to move on skis in the long Arctic darkness.⁸⁶ That Jenkins's ambitious

⁸³ 2d Marine Division, "Training Sequence for Winter Operations in North Norway," 1984, Exercises, box 169, folder 5, 1; II Marine Amphibious Force, "Arctic Warfare Training for 4th MAB Units," 1984, Encl. 1, Exercises, box 169, folder 4, 1; and Regimental Landing Team 2, "Cold Weather Training," II-C-2, all Archives, MCHD.

⁸⁴ Skepticism that Marines could gain proficiency on skis was deep-seated and widespread throughout the Marine Corps. See Scharfen, "Cold Weather Training: The Absolute Necessity," 36; Alexander, "The Role of the Marine Corps in the Defense of North Norway," 191; and Wilson oral history, 209.

⁸⁵ 2d Marine Division, "Initial Planning Conference for Cold Winter 85," 1984, Exercises, box 169, folder 3, Archives, MDCD, 4; and Clough, "Cold Winter '85: 'Good to Go' Arctic Warriors," 68.

⁸⁶ 1st Battalion, 2d Marines, "Cold Winter 85 Post Employment Report," April 1985, Exercises, box 169, folder 3, Archives, MCHD, 1-2.



Photo courtesy of MGen Harry W. Jenkins Jr., U.S. Marine Corps Gen Paul X. Kelley, Commandant of the Marine Corps (on right, in camouflage uniform), and his aide LtCol Frank Libutti visit Col Harry W. Jenkins's (second from right, pointing) field command post during Exercise Cold Winter in Northern Norway in 1985. Capt James T. Kenney, the headquarters commandant, stands second from left.

vision went unchallenged reflected the enduring influence of Gray's support for risk-taking experimentation within 2d Marine Division.

Jenkins and his staff also sought ways to realistically exploit the advantages of helicopters. The commander of the helicopter squadron assigned to Cold Winter 85, Lieutenant Colonel John F. Dennis, a cold-weather operations enthusiast, had written his 1978 Command and Staff research paper on the subject.⁸⁷ During a reconnaissance of northern Norway training areas, Jenkins and Dennis imagined night landings of ski-borne troops high on the reverse slopes of mountain plateaus, protecting the helicopters from enemy air defenses and muffling their audible signature. Dismounted Marines would then ski down the slopes in the darkness, attacking the flanks and rear of the enemy position before dawn.⁸⁸ These tactics imitated examples from Jenkins's historical studies, specifically the maneuvers of the Finns against the Russians in

⁸⁷ Maj John F. Dennis, "Considerations for Employment of Marine Corps Helicopters in a Cold Weather Environment" (research paper, Marine Corps Command and Staff College, 1978).

⁸⁸ Jenkins oral history.

1939 and the Germans in Norway in 1940 and 1944.⁸⁹ Effectively employing helicopters and backed up with BVs hauling logistics, these tactics brought the cross-country ski into modern warfare. Meanwhile, Dennis, working with his talented and imaginative squadron maintenance officer, Major James Ledford, developed innovative measures to ensure that, despite the harsh climate, sufficient aircraft would remain available to the exercise force. As Mundy had demanded in 1982, appropriate air-ground integration had occurred.⁹⁰

When Cold Winter 85 commenced, 2d Marines proved well prepared. In the first phase of maneuvers, the battalion deployed for the exercise flew into a remote valley and conducted a night ski march, enveloping the enemy and forcing the exercise umpires to reset the scenario. Stirring from his sleeping bag, one surprised British officer exclaimed, "What are you doing here? Americans can't ski!" The 2d Marines would repeat the tactic again, this time destroying the opposing force's artillery, overrunning the command post, and encircling the British, Canadian, and Dutch units. As a senior enlisted member of the British paratroopers complained, "Don't you people ever stop coming?"⁹¹ In disbelief, Lerheim traveled to the site to see for himself this significant change in the performance of the Marine units.⁹² Months later, in a letter written to the *Marine Corps Gazette*, a Norwegian officer praised the Marines of Cold Winter 85, admitting

that previously "Marines were known in these parts as rather poor winter warriors" but that "this year's exercise . . . proved to us all that the Marines have come a long way."⁹³ He then described the elation he felt as he watched Marines unexpectedly outflank his position on skis. Norway had found its Arctic ally.

Meanwhile, Jenkins used the success of Cold Winter 85 as a platform to advocate for better training and equipment. When the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Paul X. Kelley, visited the exercise, Jenkins detailed the extensive training required to create the over-the-snow capable force. He also showed Kelley the stark contrast between Norwegian and Marine Corps cold-weather equipment as well as promising experimental items tested during the exercise. Jenkins then ambushed Kelley, bringing forward Representative Robin J. Beard, a U.S. congressman who had participated in the exercise as a Reserve officer. Together, they told Kelley that both the focused training plan and new equipment ought to become the Service norm. Returning to the Pentagon, Kelley attacked the problem "like a man possessed," directing standardized training and better gear.⁹⁴

The next year's exercise, Anchor Express 86, demonstrated the changed trajectory of Marine Corps operations in the High North. Predeployment training at MWTC repeated the intensive ski training of Cold Winter 85. In a sudden move, the Corps' logistical bureaucracy deployed experimental skis for testing and issued all Marines in the exercise the Gore-Tex parkas and trousers that had received such acclaim at Teamwork 84. After training at U.S. Army Fort Drum, New York, the exercise force flew directly to Norway and conducted a full rehearsal of a NALMEB draw. Returning with his squadron, Dennis eschewed established, and thus easily targeted, airports, ambitiously launching his helicopters from austere landing areas plowed out of the snow.⁹⁵ Cold Winter 85 had created the model that would be used up to the end of the

⁸⁹ For more on these historical examples, see Earl F. Ziemke, *The German Northern Theater of Operations, 1940–1945* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1959); Allen F. Chew, *Fighting the Russians in Winter: Three Case Studies* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1981); Jack Adams, *The Doomed Expedition: The Norwegian Campaign of 1940* (London: Leo Cooper, 1989); James F. Gebhardt, *The Petsamo-Kirkenes Operation: Soviet Breakthrough and Pursuit in the Arctic, October 1944* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1989); Henrik O. Lunde, *Hitler's Pre-Emptive War: The Battle for Norway, 1940* (Philadelphia, PA: Casemate, 2009); and Pasi Tuunainen, "Training the US Army to Fight the Red Army in Winter: Former Finnish Officers and Military Knowledge Transfer from Finland to the United States During the Early Cold War, 1947–1964," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 29, no. 1 (2016): 110–38, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13518046.2016.1129877>.

⁹⁰ Regimental Landing Team 2, "Cold Weather Training," III-1; Clough, "Cold Winter '85: 'Good to Go' Arctic Warriors," 68; and Jenkins interview.

⁹¹ Clough, "Cold Winter '85: 'Good to Go' Arctic Warriors," 66, 69.

⁹² Durrant, "Every Clime and Place," 14; Jenkins oral history; and Jenkins, *Challenges*, 188.

⁹³ Hagtvedt, "Letters: Traveling Light on Skis," 67.

⁹⁴ Jenkins interview.

⁹⁵ Jenkins, *Challenges*, 189.



Photo by Cpl J. D. Gonzales, no. 6429074, Combined Military Service Digital Photographic Files 1982–2007, Records of the Office of the Secretary of Defense 1921–2008, RG 330, NARA, College Park, MD

A Marine Corps Boeing Vertol CH-46 Sea Knight helicopter landing in “white out” during Exercise Cold Winter 87. Although this photograph was taken during an exercise in 1987, it is representative of the extreme climatic conditions facing helicopter pilots during all winter Arctic exercises.

Cold War.⁹⁶ The Corps had finally proven up to the final step in the Arctic trinity. Thanks to the right leadership, training, and equipment, the Marine Corps was ready to *survive, move, and fight* in the High North.

Conclusion

Considering its proud tradition of innovation, the Marine Corps’ long tolerance of mediocrity on the Northern Flank presents a historical puzzle. That the Corps eventually overcame its steep learning curve in

the Arctic is impressive. Yet, larger questions remain. Why did change take so long? What factors allowed the Corps to achieve its goals? Finally, what does this example suggest about military innovation in new operating environments and strategies?

Analysis of Marine Corps Service culture through the metaphor of “bugs and features” provides one possible explanation for the long road to improved Arctic performance. Typically, when things go wrong, organizations point to bugs in the system while, when things go right, success is attributed to a positive feature. The example of the Marine Corps in Norway challenges this simple paradigm. Both poor

⁹⁶ Steele and Moffett, *U.S. Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center, 1951–2001*, 111–26.



Photo by Cpl J. D. Gonzales, no. 6429073, Combined Military Service Digital Photographic Files 1982–2007, Records of the Office of the Secretary of Defense 1921–2008, RG 330, NARA, College Park, MD

A Marine Boeing Vertol CH-46 Sea Knight helicopter taking off from a featureless snow-covered ridgeline during Exercise Cold Winter 87.

performance and eventual success stemmed not from bugs but from features of its Service culture.⁹⁷

Among the features of its culture, the Marine Corps had long deliberately cultivated an image of elitism and toughness.⁹⁸ Possessing the smallest budget in the Department of Defense and a mission that overlapped with other Services, the Corps painted

itself as “first to fight,” ready to do more with less.⁹⁹ Recruit training and Service life indoctrinated this ethos, emphasizing that the timeless will of the individual Marine could overcome any challenge.¹⁰⁰ This ethos, commendable in many scenarios, was exactly what drove Alaskan reservists to decry the danger of trying to “tough out” the Arctic. As they explained in 1980, “Avoid at all costs what we have termed ‘Marine Macho’ thinking. It is not manly and does not enhance the Corps image to needlessly endanger the lives of

⁹⁷ For a study of the effects of Service culture on peacetime military training and organization, see Elizabeth Kier, *Imagining War: French and British Military Doctrine Between the Wars* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997).

⁹⁸ Craig M. Cameron, *American Samurai: Myth, Imagination, and the Conduct of Battle in the First Marine Division, 1941–1951* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 49–54; and Aaron B. O’Connell, *Underdogs: The Making of the Modern Marine Corps* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 27–29.

⁹⁹ The best example of this is the 1946 testimony to Congress of CMC Gen Alexander A. Vandegrift that “preceding the recent war the United States possessed the world’s top ranked Marine Corps at an annual cost of \$1,500 per Marine and the world’s eighteenth place Army at a cost of \$2,000 per soldier.” As quoted in Victor H. Krulak, *First to Fight: An Inside View of the U.S. Marine Corps* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1984), 37.

¹⁰⁰ O’Connell, *Underdogs*, 34–42.

Marines just to put on a show for a sister service or satisfy one's own image of what the term 'Marine' should mean."¹⁰¹ Yet, so entrenched was the image of elite toughness that even Ripley, an officer experienced in cold-weather operations, defaulted to a heavy emphasis on physical training before Anorak Express 80. While individual fitness no doubt enhanced Marines' performance in the Arctic, no amount of strength and endurance could replace insufficient and inappropriate training and knowledge. It was this exact spirit Norwegian officers challenged in 1979, telling the *New York Times*, "There was no failure of strength of will, but just an inability to cope."¹⁰²

Marine Corps hesitation for regional specialization also had a debilitating impact. The Corps saw itself as an "amphibious force-in-readiness" with a mission that was global in nature.¹⁰³ In this view, excessive preparation for any single mission theoretically came at the cost of overall flexibility. Senior leaders voiced a fear of overspecialization. Under General Louis H. Wilson, Commandant from 1975 to 1979, the Corps had emphasized the need to "stay balanced. Stay relevant. Stay ready. Don't chase the latest trend."¹⁰⁴ Even Mundy, despite demanding greater realism at Alloy Express 82 and commanding the MEB at Cold Winter 85, authored a *Marine Corps Gazette* article to counter calls for greater specialization by junior officers and cold-weather experts. He rested his argument firmly on the totem of general-purpose force readiness, asserting that "the Nation cannot afford for us to lose the ability to do what its Marines are for: go wherever, whenever, and do whatever is required."¹⁰⁵ Though logical, this perspective was also potentially counterproductive, spawning overgeneralization, the equally dangerous antithesis of overspecialization. Overgeneralization explains the illogical workups for both Anorak Express 80 and Cold Winter 81 as well as delays

in reinvigorating the cold-weather training facilities at MWTC and purchasing better equipment. In preparing for "every clime and place," the Corps failed to recognize the unique demands of the Arctic.

Fortunately for the Marines of Cold Winter 85 and the exercises that followed, other features of Service culture balanced out overemphasis on toughness and flexibility. Specifically, innovative leadership, appropriate resources, and realistic training allowed the Corps to overcome the challenges of the Arctic. Though these qualities would come together at Cold Winter 85, the roots of each existed throughout the incremental process of a Service learning to *survive*, *move*, and *fight* in the Arctic.

As the intra-Service school of military innovation theory would predict, leadership proved key to eventual Marine Corps success in the Arctic.¹⁰⁶ Both as commanding general of 2d Marine Division between 1981 and 1984 and later at FMFLANT, Gray set the climate needed for innovation. It is difficult to overstate the significance of Gray's emphasis on experimentation and realistic training during this period. He established the vital protective umbrella for his subordinates to experiment, even at the risk of failure. It was this setting that allowed Mundy at Alloy Express 82 to reverse the easy cheat of using helicopters to unrealistically mitigate abysmal over-the-snow mobility. Similarly, absent Gray's example, it is unlikely that Jenkins would have chosen to "do something different" at Cold Winter 85, imaginatively and effectively melding Scandinavian ski tactics, helicopters, and night operations.¹⁰⁷

Leadership also mattered at lower levels. As senior and mid-grade leaders grew in experience, so did small-unit leaders. Every after action report and manual of the period clearly emphasized that cold-weather operations were fundamentally a small-unit leader's fight. This was the indoctrination in cold-weather skills Gombard had wished for his Marines in 1978. Recurring exercises in Norway, often involving the same units and some of the same Marines, built the institu-

¹⁰¹ Mobilization Training Unit AK-1, "Arctic and Cold Weather Warfare, Volume III," xvii.

¹⁰² Vinocur, "U.S. Marines Struggle to Cope with Norway's Arctic."

¹⁰³ O'Connell, *Underdogs*, 241–45.

¹⁰⁴ Wilson, Oral History, 203; and Gen Anthony C. Zinni, Career Interview, Transcript, 2014, 265, OHP, MCHA.

¹⁰⁵ BGen Carl E. Mundy, "Training in Arctic Warfare," *Marine Corps Gazette* 69, no. 9 (September 1985): 71–72.

¹⁰⁶ Stephen Peter Rosen, *Winning the Next War: Innovation and the Modern Military* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 21.

¹⁰⁷ Jenkins oral history.

tional knowledge that allowed junior officers to lead training, as in the case of the youthful Gregory at Alloy Express 82. While Jenkins deserves full credit for his vision for Cold Winter 85, he later admitted that he took command of 2d Marines at “exactly the right time” to harness the experience of young officers and noncommissioned officers and benefit from the climate set by Gray.¹⁰⁸

Working in tandem with leadership were improvements in resources. As political scientist Suzanne Nielsen argued in her study of U.S. Army innovation in the 1970s and 1980s, doctrinal change requires reallocation of resources.¹⁰⁹ Within the short exercise life cycle, no single commander could reform the archaic nature of Marine Corps cold-weather equipment. This was an institutional problem. Experimentation at Teamwork 84, however, indicates that the impetus of Gray’s 1982 bilateral cold-weather conference was beginning to effect change. Jenkins’s skillful politicking at Cold Winter 85 ensured that such experimental gear became the norm, greatly alleviating the misery of Marines using World War II- and Korean War-era clothing and kit. Of equal importance was the gradual embrace of Norwegian equipment, specifically the BVs. Not amphibious, these vehicles did not fit the Marine Corps’ preferred way of war. Nonetheless, the lease of BVs under NALMEB points to a growing realization of the importance of specialization in the Arctic, whether Scandinavian tracked vehicles or customized cleats on AAVs.

More important than these gradual improvements was the repositioning of equipment in the NALMEB, arguably the most drastic change during the period. As Secretary of Defense Brown indicated in 1979 when he challenged Commandant Barrow about whether Marines “always have to storm ashore,” the NALMEB was vastly different from the Corps’ preferred doctrine of amphibious assault.¹¹⁰ Though it met initial resistance, once fully accepted, supplied,

and employed, the NALMEB provided a source of equipment readily accessible and perfectly tailored to the theater. These advantages were critical to long-term success in Norway.

But for practical enhancements in training, the ambitious objectives of Cold Winter 85 would have proven stillborn. Starting with the move away from the chaotic predeployment plans of Anorak Express 80 and Cold Winter 81, prioritized schedules, such as the four-phase plan for Alloy Express 82, gradually improved the quality of training. Training designed specifically for the Arctic environment—insertion by helicopters, movement in darkness, attacks on skis—relied on lengthy and heavily focused periods in the field. This stands in sharp relief to the experience of Cold Winter 81, where Marines sailed to Norway with only two weeks training in the cold after extensive periods spent in jungle, desert, and tropical islands. Specialized environments simply demanded specialized training.

The right training facilities also mattered. The craggy alpine ranges of the Sierra Nevada Mountains of MWTC were the closest approximation available of the jagged and towering coastline of Norway. The five weeks spent by 2d Marines at MWTC, prior to three weeks at Fort Drum, followed by direct flights to Norway, ensured climatic acclimation and sustainment of key skills. The Cold Winter 85 training plan was surely the envy of Marines in previous exercises and points to the significance of the reopening of MWTC and Jenkins’s aggressive use of the base. Of all the lessons of this period, this focused training plan would prove the most enduring, remaining the standard into the 1990s.¹¹¹

For contemporary military practitioners and scholars, the example of the Marine Corps in the Arctic between 1978 and 1985 advances two final conclusions tied to the problems of military change and the making of strategy. First, a lens of Service culture helps explain how features of toughness and flexibility hamstrung progress even as features of leadership, re-

¹⁰⁸ Jenkins interview.

¹⁰⁹ Suzanne C. Nielsen, *An Army Transformed: The U.S. Army’s Post-Vietnam Recovery and the Dynamics of Change in Military Organizations* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College Press, 2010), vii–viii.

¹¹⁰ Simmons, “Robert Hilliard Barrow, 1979–1983,” 451.

¹¹¹ Steele and Moffett, *U.S. Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center, 1951–2001*, 112.

sources, and training advanced proficiency. This example suggests that future Marine Corps innovation will have to overcome similar organizational preferences. Despite the plaudits of academics and the Service, the Corps has not always proven naturally innovative.¹¹² Like any other organization, it may require tangible measures to ensure lasting reform and modernization.

Second, changes in strategy often depend on tangible improvements at the lowest tactical level. As the NATO Arctic exercises of the late 1970s and early 1980s demonstrated, a wide gulf existed between the “big blue arrows” contained in NATO war plans and the true capabilities of a shivering Marine on skis. Northern Norway provided the Marine Corps its best chance to beat a larger, more heavily armored Soviet opponent, but only if the Corps made the right tactical adaptations. The Corps initially forced its preferred doctrine on its new mission, inadvertently delaying

improvements in Arctic proficiency. Only through leaders imposing tangible, often micro-tactical, improvements in resources and training, did the Marine Corps advance from *survive* to *move* and *fight*, eventually proving equal to NATO’s best cold-weather units.

Ultimately, operational art—the linking of strategic ends with tactical actions—demands appreciation of conditions at the tactical level. Future strategic pivots to new theaters or missions will likely fail absent realistic consideration of and adaptation to new conditions. As the Marine Corps of the 2020s embraces new pacing threats, littoral terrain, missions, concepts, and technology, it would be well served to face its new environment as Gunnery Sergeant Singer did in 1978, equally recognizing both the potential opportunities and palpable realities faced in an “entirely different ballgame.”

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¹¹² Krulak, *First to Fight*, 67–99; and 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 (June 2006): 475–503, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390600765892>.

HISTORIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

The Landing and Liberation

A HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE KOREAN WAR'S OPERATION CHROMITE, SEPTEMBER 1950

By Zachary M. Matusheski, PhD

In fall 1950, United Nations Command (UNC) forces, with U.S. Marines in the lead, executed an amphibious landing at Inchon, Korea, initiating an offensive on Seoul that changed the course of the Korean War. Known as Operation Chromite, the advance into Inchon and Seoul scrambled North Korean forces and enabled the UNC 8th Army to break through the Pusan perimeter. These campaigns also made it possible for UNC forces to reach the 38th parallel days after Marine Corps and other Allied forces liberated Seoul. At the same time, the stunning victory at Inchon had a more deleterious effect on military decision-making in the days ahead. Few questioned General Douglas MacArthur in the months following the campaign, a silence that contributed to the disastrous Chinese intervention and the difficult winter fighting of 1950–51.

The significant turn in the war brought on by Operation Chromite has generated considerable scholarly argument regarding the operation's significance and the Marine Corps' performance, including conflicting assessments of MacArthur's

contribution to the campaign, ranging from celebrations of his choices to more nuanced interpretations. Chronological distance from the operation enabled historians in the twenty-first century to interrogate common conclusions about the campaign and open it to comparative analysis. Declassified documents offer further encouragement to examine Chromite in all its complexity. Evaluation of these historiographical trends and sources encourages scholars to rethink Chromite's position in modern military history, how it speaks to leadership techniques, and the insights it offers into Marine Corps performance in the Korean War.

A review of Operation Chromite's basic history is necessary to fully understand the historiographical trends and available archival resources. To adequately capture the campaign's origins, historical analysis must begin not in September 1950 but with U.S. leaders' contradictory approach to security after World War II. On the one hand, the United States took a leading role in world security, forming numerous alliances and international institutions in the context of emerging Cold War rivalry. On the other hand, U.S. military forces atrophied after 1945. Imposition of defense budget ceilings and other efforts by the Harry S. Truman administration, abetted by a thrifty Congress, left a shell of a force in place. Postwar cuts left units undermanned and at low levels of readiness. The Marine Corps fought an especially difficult political battle to

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prove the value of Marine air support and a Marine expeditionary capability.¹

In this context, the Soviet Union–supported Democratic People’s Republic of Korea’s (DPRK) attack on the United States and United Nations–backed Republic of Korea (ROK) in June 1950 created a major military crisis when DPRK forces crushed ROK forces. The underprepared U.S. Army units backstopping the retreating Koreans suffered repeated reverses. At the same time, the UN established a U.S.-led coalition (the UNC) to help the ROK. Intense DPRK pressure on UNC lines near Pusan motivated U.S. military leadership to find a way to change the tide of the war.²

General MacArthur, in command of the UNC coalition, hatched a provocative plan called Operation Bluehearts to reverse the tempo of the war. In early July 1950, MacArthur proposed landing at Inchon and then advancing on Seoul, but the DPRK had other plans. By the end of the month, North Korean pressure on the United Nations position forced MacArthur to concede that the operation would have to be postponed until September.³

MacArthur based his commitment to an Inchon landing and drive to Seoul (Operation Chromite) on his experience working with U.S. Navy and Marine forces in World War II and his reading of the Korean War and military strategy. The general believed that by landing at Inchon and pushing to Seoul, he could cut the DPRK’s logistical lines. Additionally, UN forces along the Pusan perimeter and at Seoul would create a hammer-and-anvil force that could break the DPRK’S efforts. MacArthur believed a stunning victory in Seoul would impress both America’s Asian allies and adversaries, repairing the damage that early reverses had done to the U.S. image. He also worried

delay would extend operations into winter and risk direct Soviet or Chinese intervention.⁴

High-ranking Navy, Marine, and Army officers all questioned MacArthur’s plans. Navy leaders pointed out that Inchon’s tides made the city a difficult place to land. Navy, Marine, and Army officials supported alternative landing sites, with Navy and Marine officers advocating a landing at Posung-myon, 48 kilometers south of Seoul.⁵ MacArthur rejected each of these arguments because he believed, in biographer Arthur Herman’s words, that the capture of Seoul “transcended matters of strategy” because it was the capital of Korea and thus had high symbolic value.⁶ He also thought the success of a bold landing at Inchon would further cement his name and reputation in history. To convince naysayers, MacArthur proclaimed in August 1950, “We shall land at Inchon, and I shall crush them [the DPRK].”⁷ During the run-up to the landings, MacArthur was not always transparent with the Joint Chiefs of Staff and others, especially if he believed they could ruin his plans for Inchon.

To achieve his vision, MacArthur made another controversial choice: he appointed his loyal chief of staff, Major General Edward M. Almond, as commander of the X Corps, a unit comprising the 1st Marine Division, 7th Infantry Division, and attached Allied and supporting units. MacArthur’s confidence in the operation’s success led him to decide against appointing a new chief of staff to replace Almond, who would instead hold both the X Corps command and chief of staff of the Far Eastern Command (FECOM) position. Almond’s abrasive leadership style and intimacy with MacArthur created problems within the X

¹ See Steven L. Rearden, *History of the Secretary of Defense: The Formative Years, 1947–1950*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 1984), 365–67, 386–96. See also Doris M. Condit, *History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense: The Test of War, 1950–1953*, vol. 2 (Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 1988), 5–10.

² Sheila Miyoshi Jager, *Brothers at War: The Unending Conflict in Korea* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2013) 73–80. See also David Halberstam, *The Coldest Winter: America and the Korean War* (New York: Hyperion, 2007), 82–168.

³ Roy E. Appleman, *United States Army in the Korean War: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu (June–November 1950)* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1973), 488–89.

⁴ See H. W. Brands, *The General vs. the President: MacArthur and Truman at the Brink of Nuclear War* (New York: Doubleday, 2016), 153–58; Stephen Taaffe, *MacArthur’s Korean War Generals* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2016), 60–65; Geoffrey Perrett, *Old Soldiers Never Die: The Life of Douglas MacArthur* (New York: Random House, 1996), 545–47; and Richard C. Thornton, *Odd Man Out: Truman, Stalin, Mao and the Origins of the Korean War* (Dulles, VA: Brassey’s, 2000), 265.

⁵ Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu*, 494.

⁶ Arthur Herman, *Douglas MacArthur: American Warrior* (New York: Random House, 2016), 735.

⁷ BGen Edwin H. Simmons, “Over the Seawall: U.S. Marines at Inchon,” in *U.S. Marines in the Korean War*, ed. Charles R. Smith (Washington, DC: Marine Corps History Division, 2007), 87.

Corps, especially in relation to its large Marine Corps component.

Choosing Almond over a Marine general was all the more striking given the Corps' role in Operation Chromite. Marine forces had been part of the plan from the beginning. Their role only grew over time, with the 1st Marine Division bearing much of the weight of the operation. Additionally, the Marines had made a titanic effort to coordinate and move Marine reservists (dubbed the "Minutemen of 1950") from across the United States to meet the mission's needs.⁸ Only with the commitment and fast work of Marine leadership was Operation Chromite possible, at least as MacArthur conceived it.

The weather also posed a challenge to campaign preparations. On 3 September 1950, Typhoon Jane ruined some supplies and stopped the transfer of others. Meteorologists forecasted another typhoon in Jane's wake, which motivated MacArthur to accelerate his plans. The 1st Marine Division commander Major General Oliver P. Smith and others worried that common practices to prepare for amphibious operations that had guided the Marines during World War II were being shortened or ignored to make the operation fit MacArthur's time frame. The breakneck speed to get Operation Chromite launched made the operation a great gamble.⁹

Fortune favored the X Corps in the first days of the campaign. Following American and British naval bombardment and air strikes, Marines of the 1st and 5th Marine Regiments captured Wolmido island, a key geographic feature connected to Inchon, and other important positions in the city on 15 September. By the next day, Marine units advanced far into Inchon, enabling Smith to set up his command post in the city. During the night of 17 September, Kimpo Airfield fell to the 5th Marine Regiment. Good news continued to come with the arrival of the 32d Infantry Regiment of the 7th Infantry Division and the fall of key North Korean positions in the hills between Kimpo Airfield

and the Han River. The Marines' skillful capture on 21 September of Yeongdeungpo, a city between Inchon and Seoul, raised their esprit de corps.¹⁰

However, the confidence inspired by these campaigns would be tested as North Korean resistance stiffened. Between 17 and 20 September, thousands of North Korean soldiers arrived in Seoul. U.S. Marines faced difficult fighting reminiscent, historian and retired Marine Corps colonel Allan R. Millett wrote, of "Iwo Jima intensity" in the Ansan-Yonhui Ridge complex, a set of terrain features armies had historically fought over since the sixteenth century.¹¹ Marine casualties rose sharply as the North Koreans secured their position.

Striving to meet MacArthur's goal of capturing Seoul by 25 September, Almond pressed Smith to accelerate the attack. When Smith refused, fearing that rushing would cause unnecessary risks, Almond changed plans and drew the 32d Infantry Regiment into the fight. In this moment of tension and others throughout the campaign, Almond undermined Smith. Almond's micromanaging continued well after Inchon and would create problems within the X Corps in the months to come.

Despite Almond's efforts and MacArthur's claims to have liberated Seoul on 25 September, intense urban warfare wracked Seoul. From 25 through 28 September, DPRK forces attacked UNC forces along Ma Po Boulevard and other thoroughfares. Pockets of DPRK forces fired on U.S. Marines from behind makeshift barricades set up in the streets. Smith worried that MacArthur, ROK president Syngman Rhee, and other leaders might come under attack from the DPRK holdovers in the city during the ceremony formally turning the city over to the ROK government on 29 September.¹²

Such a disaster did not come to pass. By the campaign's end, the 8th Army pushed well beyond the Pusan perimeter to connect with the X Corps. The X

⁸ Lynn Montross and Capt Nicholas A. Canzona, *U.S. Marine Operations in Korea, 1950–1953: The Inchon-Seoul Operation*, vol. 2 (Washington, DC: Historical Branch G-3, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1955), 18–22.

⁹ Simmons, "Over the Seawall," 92–97.

¹⁰ Col Joseph H. Alexander, "Battle of the Barricades: U.S. Marines in the Recapture of Seoul," in *U.S. Marines in the Korean War*, 146–54.

¹¹ This region was also known as the Hill 296 complex. See Allan R. Millett, *The War for Korea, 1950–1951: They Came from the North* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010), 254–55.

¹² Alexander, "Battle of the Barricades," 188.

Corps would continue to fight in the north until early October, when the Marines were shipped to Wonsan for another amphibious landing. This time, however, the UNC's luck ran out as the decision to push north of the 38th parallel triggered Chinese intervention, leading to one of the most challenging retreats in modern military history in late November and December 1950.

Cold War–Era Historical Analysis of Operation Chromite

Access to both internal documents and interview subjects gave government-employed historians the first chance to undertake serious study of Operation Chromite. Historian and World War I veteran Lynn Montross and Korean War veteran Captain Nicholas A. Canzona's 1955 study *U.S. Marine Operations in Korea, 1950–1953: The Inchon Seoul Operation* offered an early analysis of the campaign. Emphasizing the desperate fighting along the Pusan Perimeter and the DPRK's relationship with the USSR, Montross and Canzona find Operation Chromite to have been a strategic necessity, effusively praising MacArthur's leadership. Montross and Canzona accordingly interpret the discord between Almond and Smith as a positive feature in their relationship that was "more likely to sharpen than [to] blunt [the] military intellects" of the two leaders.¹³ This conclusion connected to Montross and Canzona's larger purpose to celebrate inter-Service cooperation, a point that is notable as inter-Service rivalry was alive and well in 1955.

While offering plaudits to the other Services and allies, Montross and Canzona celebrate Marine Corps performance throughout the campaign, citing special action reports and interviews with key participants to highlight the logistical feat of supporting the operation effectively. The authors also celebrate parts of the campaign that went well, like medical Service support. Errors during the campaign are ascribed to the "premature acceptance" of nuclear weapons as the primary way to meet security needs after World War II.¹⁴

Here, Montross and Canzona speak less to the operation and more to the concerns of 1955 when President Dwight D. Eisenhower sought heavy cuts to military spending and greater reliance on nuclear strikes to contain Communist expansion.

Another government-sponsored history, historian and X Corps veteran Roy E. Appleman's *United States Army in the Korean War: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu (June–November 1950)*, offers a more nuanced analysis, although it reaches similar conclusions. Like Montross and Canzona, Appleman deems Chromite to have been a necessity, especially as he claims that fighting along the Pusan perimeter had been indecisive. He also portrays the campaign in a positive light, although he underscores heavy losses in the fight for Seoul. Appleman breaks most starkly with Montross and Canzona in his portrayal of MacArthur. While Montross and Canzona depict MacArthur as an inspiring, visionary leader, Appleman contextualizes his ideas about the campaign within his career during World War II and his commonsense understanding that "mobility and war of maneuver have always brought the greatest prizes and quickest decisions to their practitioners."¹⁵ This difference is in accord with Appleman's highly detailed, less positive discussion of the campaign and the first months of the war more generally.

Of the many nongovernment-sponsored Korean War histories published in the first 40 years following the operation, historian and retired Marine Corps colonel Robert Debs Heintz Jr.'s award-winning *Victory at High Tide: The Inchon-Seoul Campaign* remains the most cited in studies of Operation Chromite. First published in 1968 and reissued multiple times, this volume relies on interviews with participants because key archival sources like the Joint Chiefs of Staff papers, the Douglas MacArthur Library collection, and other sources were closed to the public. Similar to the government-sponsored studies, Heintz finds the operation strategically necessary.

However, unlike other scholars, Heintz is critical of MacArthur and Almond, especially MacArthur's

¹³ Montross and Canzona, *U.S. Marine Operations in Korea, 1950–1953*, vol. 2, 39.

¹⁴ Montross and Canzona, *U.S. Marine Operations in Korea, 1950–1953*, vol. 2, 97.

¹⁵ Appleman, *United States Army in the Korean War*, 488.

decision to appoint Almond head of the X Corps instead of relying on Marine Corps commanders. Heintl concludes that creating the X Corps instead of using the Fleet Marine Force headquarters constituted an “unnecessary improvisation.”¹⁶ Heintl continues that the Almond-led X Corps provided insufficient guidance in the campaign’s planning stages. He disapproves of Almond’s heavy-handed involvement in the latter stages of the campaign, especially the pressure he placed on Smith to bring the campaign to a conclusion via night fighting on 25 September 1950. He also emphasizes inter-Service rivalry, detailing Marine officers’ objections to Almond’s orders and arguing that the Marines never received due credit for the operation’s success.

Post–Cold War Era Analysis of Operation Chromite (1990–2010)

The end of the Cold War rivalry and declassification of key government documents in the 1990s and 2000s encouraged new analysis of the Inchon landings and the fight for Seoul. In 1993, MacArthur biographer D. Clayton James and historian Anne Sharp Wells published *Refighting the Last War: Command and Crisis in Korea, 1950–1953*. Using declassified archival records from the Douglas MacArthur Memorial Library, National Archives and Records Administration, and U.S. Army, along with memoirs, James and Wells’s study analyzes the Korean War through close readings of the performance of five key leaders and the history of six “most crucial command decisions,” including Operation Chromite.¹⁷ James and Wells openly question the strategic necessity of the campaign, observing that the fighting in Naktong broke DPRK logistical and communication lines, and that U.S. and ROK forces outnumbered DPRK forces. The real utility MacArthur and the Marines found in the dramatic landings was that the operation made them relevant again. Success at Inchon burnished MacArthur’s reputation and res-

cued the Marines from becoming, in General Lemuel C. Shepherd’s apt words, “only a ship landing force under Navy control.”¹⁸

James and Wells follow these observations with a critical analysis of the campaign, specifically faulting MacArthur’s appointment of Almond as both X Corps commander and FECOM chief of staff because it enabled Almond to prioritize the needs of X Corps for troops and supplies consistently over the 8th Army’s equally important demands. From James and Wells’s vantage, this created unnecessary dissension within the 8th Army. In their final analysis of the campaign, James and Wells conclude that the “immediate glorious afterglow” following Seoul’s liberation led American leaders to believe they had destroyed the DPRK’s forces, when in fact most senior DPRK officers and a significant part of the Korean People’s Army (DPRK’s army) had escaped north of the 38th parallel.

This negative perspective on the operation continued into the 2000s. In 2004, historian and retired Marine Corps colonel Russel H. S. Stolfi took aim at Smith’s campaign decisions in a *Journal of Military History* article entitled “A Critique of Pure Success: Inchon Revisited, Revised, and Contrasted.” Comparing the Inchon operation to the German 1941 Baltic offensive, Stolfi faults Smith and his subordinates for having “little sense of urgency” in moving from Inchon toward Seoul after the successful landing.¹⁹ Smith’s systematic clearing of positions near Kimpo enabled the DPRK to, in Stolfi’s words, “regain its balance and gather forces for a strong defense” of Seoul.²⁰ Stolfi believes that had the U.S. commanders acted as the Germans had in 1941, they would have captured a more intact city and more thoroughly defeated DPRK forces at a lower cost in personnel and material.

While provocative in its conclusions, this study has serious flaws. It is hard to imagine two historical examples that are more different than the landing at Inchon and the German offensive, especially in

¹⁶ Robert Debs Heintl Jr., *Victory at High Tide: The Inchon-Seoul Campaign*, 8th ed. (Baltimore, MD: Nautical and Aviation Publishing Company of America, 1992), 259.

¹⁷ D. Clayton James and Anne Sharp Wells, *Refighting the Last War: Command and Crisis in Korea, 1950–1953* (New York: Free Press, 1993), xi.

¹⁸ James and Wells, *Refighting the Last War*, 160.

¹⁹ Col Russel H. S. Stolfi, “A Critique of Pure Success: Inchon Revisited, Revised, and Contrasted,” *Journal of Military History* 68, no. 2 (April 2004): 511, <https://doi.org/10.1353/jmh.2004.0075>.

²⁰ Stolfi, “A Critique of Pure Success,” 517.

their respective historical contexts, which pertains directly to Stolfi's conclusions about Smith's leadership. For example, Stolfi criticizes Smith's concerns about MacArthur's visit on 17 September 1950, instead of focusing on operations to take Seoul. Recognizing the historical context of that moment, however, requires acknowledging the risks inherent in MacArthur's visit and his influence on the campaign's origin and execution. Smith could not simply ignore MacArthur. Additionally, the sources for this study are lacking. Stolfi relies too much on Montross and Canzona for details of the Inchon operation despite the availability of archives, memoirs, and oral histories. These flaws aside, Stolfi's contribution still matters because it encouraged fresh thinking on Marine performance and leaves room for future scholars to leverage comparative analysis to better understand the campaign.

Allan R. Millett offered perhaps the most pointed critique of the operation in his 2010 book *The War for Korea 1950–1951: They Came from the North*, a richly sourced study that covers the June 1950 attack to the start of armistice negotiations in July 1951. Millett opens his assessment of Chromite in blunt terms: the campaign did not help defeat the DPRK military. Instead, it created overconfidence in MacArthur and U.S. strategy. The landings at Inchon and liberation of Seoul were a “strategic success” only “in the minds of its American participants, who badly needed a victory of any kind in September 1950.”²¹ Generally bad news from Korea during the summer of 1950 made Seoul's liberation shine bright. In Millett's account, the collapse of the DPRK near the Pusan perimeter was the product of the efforts of the 8th Army and 5th Air Force, not the shock of the landings.

Millett is also critical of both MacArthur and Almond. He portrays MacArthur as both delusional and theatrical to the point of making poor decisions. According to Millett, Almond's ignorance of Marine Corps practices and amphibious operations make him appear a neophyte whose “enthusiasm exceeded his grasp of reality.”²² Millett's review of Marine per-

formance is even-handed. He acknowledges Marine valor while also identifying the sheer luck that helped move Marine units forward. In the sum of its parts, including its strong footnotes and bibliographic essay, this book is an excellent source for understanding the campaign's many dimensions.

More Recent Analysis of Operation Chromite

Studies on Operation Chromite during the past decade have continued to ask new questions about MacArthur and Almond's contributions to the campaign. For example, in his historiographical essay in *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Korean War*, historian Michael Pearlman examines popular writing about the campaign to understand why many continue to celebrate MacArthur's contribution and the campaign when scholars like James, Wells, and Millett have proven it was not a pivotal victory. Pearlman's well-researched essay concludes that Army and Navy “service pride” and the heavy losses before Inchon elevated the operation and motivated journalists, military officers, and other writers to argue for its military necessity.²³ Pearlman's perspective is a renewed call to reconsider the immediate and long-term legacy of the campaign.

Historian Stephen R. Taaffe extended the criticism of MacArthur and Almond in *MacArthur's Korean War Generals*. Taaffe mines oral history interviews and uses MacArthur's and others' written criticisms of Appleman's *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu*, held at the National Archives. Taaffe's book highlights the poor leadership MacArthur, Almond, and others exhibited during the first 11 months of the Korean War. Taaffe finds fault in MacArthur's dual appointment of Almond as X Corps commander and FECOM chief of staff. That decision, Taaffe reasons, failed to conform to Army protocol and created unnecessarily difficult coordination between the 8th Army and X Corps that was, in Taaffe's words, “simply asking for trouble, especially because there was bad blood” between Almond

²¹ Millett, *The War for Korea, 1950–1951*, 240.

²² Millett, *The War for Korea, 1950–1951*, 245.

²³ Michael Pearlman, “Inchon Landings,” in *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Korean War*, eds. James I. Matray and Donald W. Boose Jr. (London: Routledge, 2014), 341.

and 8th Army commander Walton H. Walker.²⁴ As in Millett's analysis, Taaffe's Almond emerges as a poor leader whose criticism of Marine decisions shows his ignorance of amphibious operational best practices. Taaffe's clear writing and his efforts to contextualize each commander's views makes his indictment of MacArthur and Almond compelling.

However, not all scholars agree with Taaffe, Millett, and others' negative assessment of MacArthur and Almond. More recent studies have employed innovative techniques to make the case that MacArthur and Almond excelled during the Inchon operation. In a 2018 article for *Armed Forces and Society* entitled "The General's Intuition: Overconfidence, Pattern Matching, and the Inchon Landing Decision," political scientists Pascal Vennesson and Amanda Huan argue from an interdisciplinary perspective that MacArthur's optimism about the operation did not lead to poor decisions. To pursue this topic, they leverage cognitive psychological methods, historical analysis, and other tools to claim that MacArthur's experience with amphibious operations in World War II, his practiced ability at "pattern recognition," and his understanding of military history enabled him to see the potential in landing at Inchon and convince others to support him.²⁵ Vennesson and Huan's perspective provides an alternative view on MacArthur's leadership apart from emphasizing his skills as a dramatic bureaucratic infighter and toward an appreciation for MacArthur's views on history and command.

The importance of ideas about command and the role of experience along with Service culture features prominently in historian and retired Army officer Michael E. Lynch's groundbreaking biography *Edward M. Almond and the US Army: From the 92nd Infantry Division to the X Corps*. In this book, the first scholarly biography of Almond, Lynch uses an extensive collection of archival documents to reinterpret Almond's military biography. In the Korean War portion of the

book, Lynch counters criticism of Almond's dual role of X Corps command and as MacArthur's chief of staff by pointing out the heavy load of leading the X Corps. In practice, Almond could not both run X Corps and serve as chief of staff to FECOM. Many FECOM decisions fell to Major General Doyle O. Hickey, Almond's deputy and acting chief of staff. Additionally, Lynch argues the Almond–Smith rivalry stemmed more from Service culture clashes and differences of perspective on how to run an amphibious operation than Almond's bad leadership practices. While no apologist for Almond, Lynch offers a thought-provoking perspective on Almond's approach to the operation that future scholars of Chromite should take into account.

Along with the ongoing debate on MacArthur and Almond's choices, additional recent studies comparing Operation Chromite to other such undertakings have also proved fruitful. This approach has opened up new questions and insights on the campaign missed in earlier studies. For example, in *Storming the City: U.S. Military Performance in Urban Warfare from World War II to Vietnam*, national security analyst Alec Wahlman reviews the battle for Seoul as a case study in twentieth-century urban warfare. In his discussion of the efforts to recapture Seoul and four other cases of urban warfare, Wahlman finds "transferable competence and battlefield adaptation" as the keys to success in twentieth-century warfare.²⁶ By Wahlman's reckoning, "transferable competence" means that skills gained in one type of fighting could be transferred to a different type of fighting. Adaptation centers on battlefield improvisation. In essence, Wahlman argues that in the case of Seoul's liberation, Americans achieved military success through strong training and a capacity for on-the-ground problem-solving.

Comparative analysis leads Wahlman to assess Marine performance in Operation Chromite positively. Marines overcame many challenges on the battlefield despite, as Wahlman observes, the "pau-

²⁴ Taaffe, *MacArthur's Korean War Generals*, 93.

²⁵ Pascal Vennesson and Amanda Huan, "The General's Intuition: Overconfidence, Pattern Matching, and the Inchon Landing Decision," *Armed Forces and Society* 44, no. 3 (July 2018): 503, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X17738771>.

²⁶ Alec Wahlman, *Storming the City: U.S. Military Performance in Urban Warfare from World War II to Vietnam* (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2015), 6.

city of attention” given to urban warfare from 1945 to 1950.²⁷ Marine mastery of combined arms, the general strength of the logistical system, and on-the-ground problem-solving bridged difficulties arising from Almond and others’ emphasis on speed. Wahlman uses the campaigns for Aachen and Manila in World War II to heighten the contrast. The insights of this study invite further urban warfare comparisons, especially those from the 1960s and after.

Oceanographer and Army reservist Thomas M. Mitchell’s *Winds, Waves, and Warriors: Battling the Surf at Normandy, Tarawa, and Inchon* offers another example of the analytical usefulness of comparing Operation Chromite to other campaigns. Drawing on his understanding of oceanography and military campaigns, Mitchell underscores the significance of tidal science and landing obstacles. These commonly known aspects of the campaign emerge as all the more significant as Mitchell reasons how “embayments” like the Inchon harbor “can amplify the ocean tide and create conditions inside the bay much more severe than those outside” it.²⁸ Observations like these and Mitchell’s efforts to bring Inchon into conversation with the Normandy landings and Tarawa campaign make Marine performance all the more impressive. Still, Mitchell’s overreliance on one memoir, Eugene Franklin Clark’s *The Secrets of Inchon*, and a few secondary sources means Operation Chromite’s rich archival base remains to be examined for a fuller comparison of the Marine landing to similar World War II-era campaigns.

Bibliographies and Archival Resources Available on Operation Chromite

Extensive bibliographical guides and large declassified archival resources make it possible for the next generation of studies of Chromite to be strongly supported with direct evidence. In terms of general guides to the literature, Allan Millett’s *Korean War: The Essential*

Bibliography stands out. This slim, accessible volume begins with a cogent summary of the key details of the war. In each essay that follows this orientation, Millett reviews the literature on each aspect of the war, including not only the history of each campaign but also the changing international context from 1950 to 1953. For a bibliographic guide more closely tied to the operation, students of the campaign should consult historian and Korean War veteran Paul M. Edwards’s *The Inchon Landing, Korea, 1950: An Annotated Bibliography*, which provides excellent coverage of writings on the landings from the 1950s to the mid-1990s. Edwards’s book is especially helpful in tracking *Marine Corps Gazette* articles published during this period.

Varied archival collections are also available to enterprising researchers. For example, the Historical Resources Branch of the Marine Corps History Division at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia, maintains a large collection of archival resources related to the Korean War that includes maps, personal papers, and photographs. The personal papers of General Smith are housed in this repository. Another good place to find relevant archival material is the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. This archive holds the papers of General Almond, numerous soldier surveys from the 32d Infantry Regiment, and other sources related to the X Corps. The Douglas MacArthur Memorial and Library preserves not only MacArthur’s personal correspondence but also radiograms and other messages from the general headquarters of the UNC. The personal papers and oral histories of many of MacArthur’s key advisers can be found there as well. These unique sources, along with the holdings of the National Archives at College Park, Maryland, provide a great deal of data on Operation Chromite for historians and students to mine.

Conclusion

While scholars have pursued many avenues of analysis related to the Inchon operation, questions about the operation remain. The operation’s effect on the Korean War and its place in Cold War strategy is a continuing conversation that does not look like it will soon conclude. Questions about MacArthur, Almond,

²⁷ Wahlman, *Storming the City*, 178.

²⁸ Thomas M. Mitchell, *Winds, Waves, and Warriors: Battling the Surf at Normandy, Tarawa, and Inchon* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Press, 2019), 81.

and Smith's performance, easily trackable with the robust archives available, continues to be a useful way to examine ideas about what makes effective leadership. Comparative analysis and the integration of interdis-

ciplinary methodologies promise more nuanced and holistic assessments of Marine performance and other aspects of the campaign. Accordingly, Operation Chromite continues to merit close historical analysis.

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IN MEMORIAM

Corporal Daniel Clay Arnold

15 JULY 1925–5 MARCH 2023

By Lieutenant Colonel Timothy Heck

Corporal Daniel Clay Arnold passed away on 5 March 2023. His first exposure to the Marine Corps was on a Boy Scout trip to the World's Fair in the late 1930s. There, Arnold saw the U.S. Marine Corps Drum and Bugle Corps and, as he recounted in his oral history interview with Marine Corps History Division, they inspired in him a desire to “join the Marine Corps, come Hell or high water.”¹ The onset of World War II offered Arnold just that opportunity, and he enlisted on 27 February 1943 at age 17.

In the spring of 1943, Arnold reported to Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, South Carolina, for boot camp, an experience he described as “a bit brutal.” On his first morning at Parris Island, Arnold skipped shaving, as he had little facial hair, and remarked “it would have been glorifying it if I had gone in to shave it.” Arnold’s drill instructor, himself only a private or private first class, then plucked out the offending whiskers with a pair of pliers. Graduation and departure from Parris Island were a “welcome respite.”²



Photo courtesy of family of Daniel C. Arnold

Cpl Daniel C. Arnold

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¹ Daniel C. Arnold, interview with LtCol Timothy Heck and Maj Robert Jorgensen, 9 July 2022, transcript (Oral History Section, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA), hereafter Arnold 9 July 2022 interview.

² Arnold 9 July 2022 interview.

From Parris Island, Arnold was transferred to the Engineer Training Battalion at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, but he desired to be part of a “fighting outfit” and requested transfer to the first unit going overseas.³ Transferred to a replacement draft, Arnold sailed for Hawaii via the Panama Canal and

³ Arnold 9 July 2022 interview.

there joined Company G, 2d Battalion, 22d Marines, in January 1944. Then part of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade, 22d Marines sailed into action shortly thereafter, landing at Eniwetok Atoll (now Enewetak) in the Marshall Islands on 18 February 1944.

On Eniwetok, the regiment first employed the fire team concept, which then-colonel Wallace M. Greene Jr. remarked “really paid off.”⁴ Arnold was a Browning Automatic rifleman, providing the base of fire for his team to maneuver against Japanese forces. Fighting on Eniwetok took approximately a week, with 22d Marines taking losses at a steady rate. Also landing on Eniwetok was a Marine lieutenant named Cord Meyer Jr., with whom Arnold would work in Taiwan two decades later. About the fighting on Eniwetok, Meyer later wrote,

We were hard hit there, and with terrible clarity the reality of the event came home to me. . . . So it came over me what this war was, and after that it wasn't fun or exciting, but something that had to be done.⁵

Following combat on Eniwetok, Arnold and the 22d Marines sailed to Guadalcanal so the unit could recover and prepare for its next landing. After several months of training, on 21 July 1944, the regiment landed on the island of Guam, south of the Orote Peninsula, under heavy fire from Japanese shore emplacements. Arnold, again with his Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR), was part of the first wave, landing not far from Meyer's machine gun platoon. Meyer was wounded, taking fragments to his eye, and was evacuated shortly thereafter.⁶ Arnold was more fortunate, making it off the beach and inland with his platoon.

On Guam, Arnold participated in fierce fighting and against determined Japanese counterattacks.

⁴ As quoted in LtCol Robert D. Heintz Jr. and LtCol John A. Crown, *The Marshalls: Increasing the Tempo* (Washington, DC: Historical Branch, G-3 Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1954), 123.

⁵ As quoted in Capt John C. Chapin, *Breaking the Outer Ring: Marine Landings in the Marshall Islands*, Marines in World War II Commemorative Series (Washington, DC: Marine Corps Historical Center, 1994), 24.

⁶ Casualty card for Cord Meyer Jr., World War II Casualty Cards, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

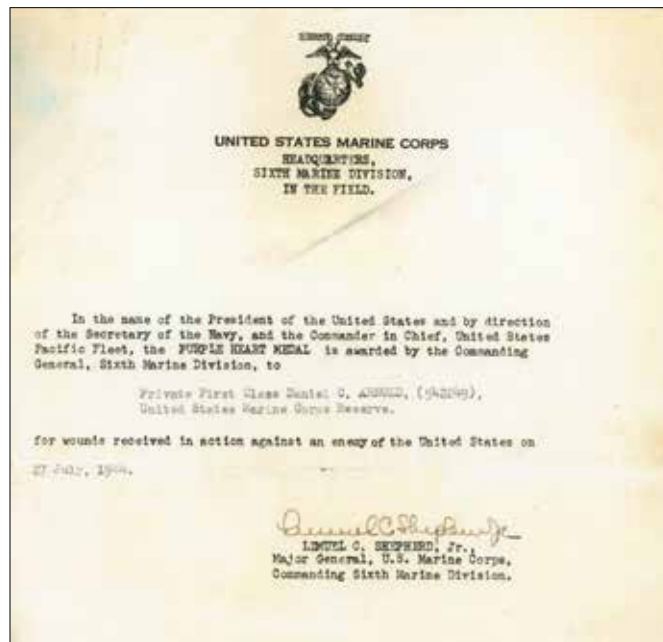


Photo courtesy of family of Daniel C. Arnold
Arnold's Purple Heart certificate issued by MajGen Lemuel C. Shepherd Jr., commanding general of the 6th Marine Division.

It was here, also, that he encountered his first Marine Corps armor. Working with tanks, he later remarked, was decidedly risky as they were a “beautiful magnet . . . [for] as soon as we got around the tanks, all Hell broke loose.” Arnold, like other Marines on the island, also suffered from a lack of water. On his third day ashore, with canteens empty and throat parched, he used his BAR and a magazine of armor-piercing ammunition to open a water pipe so he and his fellow Marines could have something to drink.

On 27 July, while on a patrol near the Orote Peninsula, Arnold was wounded in his left arm by Japanese fire.⁷ Evacuated to an aid station, he remained there for several days before leaving to rejoin his unit, hitchhiking to return to the front. Near the end of the battle, Arnold participated in a patrol that encountered Japanese soldiers wearing equipment taken from dead Marines, including Sergeant Peter B. Saltonstall, son of the then-governor of Massachusetts, Leverett A. Saltonstall. The patrol killed the Japanese and recovered the Marines' equipment.

⁷ Casualty card for Daniel Clay Arnold, World War II Casualty Cards, Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.



Photo courtesy of family of Daniel C. Arnold
MajGen Vang Pao, Royal Lao Army, and Arnold drinking to each others' health and good fortune during a traditional Baci ceremony somewhere in Laos in the early 1970s. The white cotton strings on their wrists symbolize putting the body's 32 spirits back in harmony.

Arnold's encounter with the water pipe was not the only drinking-related event on Guam. One patrol in the Orote took them through an area that had been the site of a battle the night before. Here, Arnold saw "acres and acres of sake and beer. Acres! Piled as high as you can reach. . . . I still don't understand how they could get it so high."⁸ The area, it turned out, was the storehouse for the Imperial Japanese Navy's alcohol in the Central Pacific.⁹ The next day, Arnold's unit moved through the cache, hurried along because you "don't let Marines loose in a place like that. Otherwise, it's a disaster."¹⁰

After the regiment's return to Guadalcanal in late August 1944, Arnold was ordered by his platoon commander to apply for officer training, which was "about the only thing I didn't volunteer for," he later recalled.¹¹ Selected, Arnold returned to the United States and joined the Navy College Training Program (V-12) at Villanova University. War's end meant the

end of funding and Arnold, promoted to corporal, was discharged on 16 January 1946, his service described as "honest and faithful."¹² Returning to Pennsylvania, Arnold worked temporarily as a mason's apprentice before joining the U.S. Army's Counterintelligence Corps and the 82d Airborne Division.

Work for the Counterintelligence Corps brought Arnold to Europe, where he learned what he called "a smattering of German and Russian."¹³ In 1952, as a sergeant first class, he was discharged and shortly thereafter joined the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). In the CIA, Arnold focused on operations in Asia, where his previously acquired linguistic and regional experience "were never used."¹⁴ As part of the clandestine service, Arnold served in a variety of posts across Asia, including four separate posts as the chief of station in Seoul, Taipei, Bangkok, and Vientiane. In Taiwan, he worked for Cord Meyer Jr., determining in their first meeting that they had both landed on Guam with 22d Marines in 1944.

Arnold's ways, methods, and personality made him a presence within the agency. In a possibly apocryphal story recounted by several who knew him, at one post where he was chief of station, Arnold worked with another former Marine. Every Monday morning, Arnold was alleged to have gone down the passageway, sticking his head in each office and lambasting the resident officer for not having done more work on the weekend—with one exception. When he got to his fellow Marine's office, he would politely say, "Good morning. How are you today?" After exchanging small talk, Arnold would resume his walk, haranguing the next officers in turn.

It was in Laos that Arnold's role was outsized for the size of the country and his position. In the early 1970s, back at CIA headquarters at Langley, Virginia, he led the Vietnam Operations (VNO) program, overseeing and coordinating operations throughout Southeast Asia. From there, he was posted as chief of

⁸ Arnold 9 July 2022 interview.

⁹ William Manchester discusses the find in William Manchester, *Good-bye, Darkness: A Memoir of the Pacific War* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 2002), 285.

¹⁰ Arnold 9 July 2022 interview.

¹¹ Arnold 9 July 2022 interview.

¹² "NAVMC 70-PD Honorable Discharge, U.S. Marine Corps," no. A295843 issued to Daniel Clay Arnold, 16 January 1946, supplemental to Arnold 9 July 2022 interview.

¹³ Arnold 9 July 2022 interview.

¹⁴ Arnold 9 July 2022 interview.

station in Laos, where he was the de facto commander of more than 30,000 troops in combat, mainly Hmong guerrillas working with and for General Vang Pao, Royal Thai Army “volunteers,” and more than 200 aircraft belonging to the CIA’s Air America. As the country was falling to the Communists in 1975, Arnold assisted in the evacuation of Pao, his family, and numerous other Hmong leaders.¹⁵ He did so against political limitations and overcoming an American aviation presence that had seen significant capabilities reduced across Southeast Asia.

After Laos, Arnold returned to Langley and a rapidly changing agency. Then led by retired Navy admiral Stansfield Turner, the CIA embarked on restructuring and downsizing, culling positions, encouraging retirements, and shrinking the Directorate of Operations. Arnold, like many of his clandestine peers, saw the writing on the wall and retired in 1979. In 1980, *New York* magazine commented on his resignation,

None were fired; all were driven out by [Admiral Stansfield] Turner’s behavior. . . . Arnold left because he was appalled by what was happening to the clandestine services and he had lost all respect for Turner’s integrity and his capacity to exercise leadership.¹⁶

Readers interested in learning more about Arnold as a spymaster can find discussions of his un-

orthodox methods and style in Barry Broman’s *Risk Taker, Spy Maker: Tales of a CIA Case Officer*.¹⁷

Following his retirement, Arnold remained active in the international affairs world, including running his own business and serving on numerous boards, including Jefferson Waterman International. He eventually semiretired to Buck’s County, Pennsylvania, where he proudly displayed a 6th Marine Division sticker on his car. He graciously sat for an oral history interview with Marine Corps History Division’s Field History Branch on 9 July 2022 where, always in charge, he led with the question, “Why do you want to talk to me? I didn’t do anything. Is it because I’m the only one left?”¹⁸

In addition to his Purple Heart and multiple unit citations earned while with 22d Marines, Arnold was also decorated for his service with the CIA. In 1975, he was awarded the Distinguished Intelligence Medal for his work in Laos. In 1979, he received another Distinguished Service Medal. For work in the Republic of Korea, he received the Order of National Security Merit Gukseon Medal for work that had “greatly contributed to the safeguarding of the national security of the Republic of Korea.”¹⁹

Arnold is survived by his widow, Dr. Linda Chaille-Arnold, several children, and numerous grandchildren. His celebration of life was held in July 2023 at his favorite watering hole, the Black Bass Pub in Buck’s County, and was attended by a cross section of Marines, CIA contacts and peers, and friends.

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¹⁵ See Tim Weiner, *Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA* (New York: Doubleday, 2007), 343–45.

¹⁶ Michael Leeden, “Tinker, Turner, Sailor, Spy,” *New York* magazine, 3 March 1980, 40.

¹⁷ Barry Broman, *Risk Taker, Spy Maker: Tales of a CIA Case Officer* (Haverford, PA: Casemate, 2020). Broman, who served as a Marine officer in Vietnam, has published several articles in *Marine Corps History*. See “Marines and Vietnamese: A Photographic Essay” 8, no. 1 (Summer 2022) and “Photographic Essay: With Hotel Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines, in An Hoa” 6, no. 1 (Summer 2020).

¹⁸ Arnold 9 July 2022 interview.

¹⁹ Office of the President, “Citation: Order of National Security Merit Gug-Seon [sic] Medal,” 30 April 1976.

BOOK REVIEWS

Major Peter L. Belmonte, USAF (Ret)

The First Code Talkers: Native American Communicators in World War I. By William C. Meadows. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2022. Pp. 378. \$24.95, paperback; \$36.95, cloth; \$29.95, e-book.)

Native American code talkers in the U.S. military during World War II have received some well-deserved attention from historians. Less known, however, are their predecessors who served in the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) during World War I. In *The First Code Talkers: Native American Communicators in World War I*, William C. Meadows brings notice to these Doughboys after a century of obscurity. Meadows, a professor of anthropology and Native American studies at Missouri State University, Springfield, has written two other books about Native Americans and the military.

Meadows first provides an overview of the historiography of Native American code talkers in both World Wars. He has consulted a wide array of primary and secondary sources to enable him to tell the history of the first code talkers. The disparate sources reflect the fact that World War I code talking was an impromptu phenomenon resulting from immediate needs at various times and places; it was not universal or necessarily widespread. Meadows then provides an overview of Native Americans in the military during the war. He discusses the views of advocates of segregation and integration as well as the overall goals of Natives and non-Natives regarding military service. Some saw military service as an “Americanization” agent while at the same time hoping the Native servicemembers would nurture their perceived warrior ethos to excel in fighting the Germans. Meadows clearly brings out the conflicting nature of these goals.

Next, the author covers specific episodes of the use of indigenous code talkers. Meadows analyzes the various accounts to try to determine who came up with the idea to use Native Americans to communicate, when were they first used, and who were the code talkers. Not surprisingly, there is no consensus on these claims. He first covers the use of Eastern Band Cherokee soldiers in the U.S. Army National Guard’s 30th Infantry Division as code talkers during the fighting along the Hindenburg Line in early October 1918. Unfortunately, due to the nature of the “experiment,” the names of the soldiers involved cannot be determined; Meadows has, however, produced a short list of possibilities.

Meadows then focuses his attention on the best-documented of the code talkers, eight Choctaw soldiers of Company E, 142d Infantry Regiment, 36th Division, and their work during the fighting in the Champagne sector in late October 1918. Skillfully wading through the vast number and types of sources, Meadows presents a fine account of the fighting at Forest Ferme on 26 and 27 October and as good an account of the code talkers as is possible. While all known code talking was done over telephone lines using Native languages without encoding, the Choctaw were the only known code talkers “to have devised specially encoded terminology in World War I” (p. 226). They did so just before the end of the war and did not have a chance to use the code in combat.

Following this, the author discusses the lives of some of the Choctaw soldiers after the war and the beginning of public recognition for the code talkers. In one instance, Meadows thoroughly analyzes the documents and sources pertaining to actions that resulted in the award of the French Croix de Guerre to a

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Choctaw soldier in the 36th Division. This case study illustrates the difficulties of establishing precise facts even for something comparatively well documented; it also illustrates the care that historians must exercise when evaluating sources.

Meadows also examines the employment of Oklahoma Cherokee, Comanche, Osage, Sioux, and Ho-Chunk soldiers as code talkers. The best attested of these are two Ho-Chunk soldiers of Company A, 7th Infantry Regiment, 3d Division, who probably used code talking as early as June 1918. Specific information on other cases is tenuous and sparse. Throughout the narrative, Meadows shows that “the use of Native American languages for communications was not an extant military practice but an impromptu adaptation or experiment made near the end of the war” (pp. 223–24). This has made it difficult to determine the names of code talkers and their specific cases.

The author provides a chapter dealing with post-war recognition of these men as they received accolades, medals, and other honors during a period of years as their deeds became known. The author was instrumental in bringing recognition to some of these soldiers. Meadows evaluates the effectiveness of code talkers’ military impact. About the use of Choctaw code talkers, the best-documented instance of Native code talkers, Meadows rightly concludes that, while effective, “claims of its being the deciding factor of

Allied success are unsupported” (p. 199). In the end, Meadows concludes: “Beyond saving lives in World War I, the greatest contribution of WWI Native American code talkers is arguably the precedent that they set and the expanded use of the strategy in World War II” (p. 251).

That Meadows is not primarily a military historian is evident from the numerous minor errors regarding units, terminology, campaigns, and timelines. For example, Meadows describes the first American infantry fatalities as “privates Enright, Gresham, and Hay” (p. 166). In fact, Gresham was a corporal; in the same brief account, he misidentifies those soldiers’ unit of assignment, and he confuses the actions of the 1st Division at Cantigny, Soissons, and the Saint-Mihiel Offensive. Although a bit distracting, such errors do not impact the thrust of the book: code talkers.

The book is amply documented, but Meadows has chosen to use a parenthetical citation format coupled with endnotes. The result can be distracting. There are 22 photographs and illustrations as well as several tables to support the text. Despite the errors noted above, *The First Code Talkers* is an important addition to the historiography of the AEF as well as the history of American indigenous peoples and is recommended to readers interested in those topics as well as those interested in wartime communications and intelligence.

Chris Booth

Air Power's Lost Cause: The American Air Wars of Vietnam. By Brian D. Laslie. (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2021. Pp. 272. \$41.00, cloth; \$28.00, paperback; \$36.00, e-book.)

Demonstrating an incredibly deep and comprehensive understanding of aviation-related activities during the Vietnam War, author Brian Laslie has crafted in *Air Power's Lost Cause: The American Air Wars of Vietnam* an incredibly compelling account of the conflict from every perspective associated with flight. Laslie argues that the various aspects of airpower throughout the conflict were so different that it could and should be broken down and categorized into six separate "air wars." These separate but interrelated air wars are the air-to-ground war in North Vietnam, air-to-air war in North Vietnam, air-to-ground war in South Vietnam, the U.S. Navy's air-to-air and air-to-ground war, the air wars in Laos and Cambodia, and finally the U.S. Army's air mobile war. This unique distinction allows for Laslie to address each aspect in full and directly, without having to follow a strict chronological timeline that would easily become confusing by jumping from one theater and one avenue of airpower to another. Finally, Laslie attempts to debunk, with success, that the myth of airpower, if only employed earlier or on different targets, would have been able to bring about victory in the conflict.

One of the major strengths of this book is the manner in which the author details how the persistent dysfunction between Service components and commands during the Vietnam War, combined with an ill-conceived overall strategy for the conflict, made the application of airpower more difficult. Laslie deftly analyzes the complex and convoluted command and control system in place during the Vietnam War, and how internecine, territorial squabbles complicated the employment of airpower. A prime example

of this was in the begrudging deployment of Boeing B-52 Stratofortresses through the Strategic Air Command (SAC), such as when units on the ground called for their assistance, the 7th Air Force could not authorize them but instead had to relay the request to SAC Headquarters in Omaha, Nebraska. Laslie dryly sums up the aforementioned scenario: "Calling this command-and control system inefficient would be generous" (p. 35). The inclusion of such complexities in chains of command in this book (along with helpful wire diagrams for the reader), sheds important light on how airpower was at times not only fighting the enemy, but also itself in terms of efficiency and effectiveness during the Vietnam War.

The complexities that faced airpower in Vietnam were more than just organizational, and Laslie does a great job detailing the numerous other hindrances that aviators faced during their operations. In all six air wars that Laslie covers in *Air Power's Lost Cause*, he expertly notes the tactical and technical struggles that plagued American pilots and crew during the conflict. These issues ranged from in-flight combat maneuvers that were doctrinally sound for war against the Soviet Union in Europe but were deadly for the conflict in Vietnam, to weapons systems that grossly underperformed and reduced mission effectiveness. Laslie also notes other interesting aspects that reduced the effectiveness of airpower, such as the usage of technology that was out of place in the jungles of Southeast Asia. The best example of this was the employment of covert electronic warfare by the U.S. Air Force, a complex system of sensors and computers that were to be dropped into positions over the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Codenamed Operation Igloo White (1967–73), Laslie states that, unsurprisingly, the system "was beset with problems from the beginning" (p. 131), and overall provided scant results comparative to the dan-

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ger it placed on American personnel involved in the operation.

Although Laslie frequently illustrates problems that were associated with airpower during the Vietnam War, he also describes areas of success for American efforts of the conflict as well. Discovering that the air-to-air kill ratio did not seem to be as slanted in favor of American pilots as expected before the war, Laslie notes that Air Force and Navy leadership reacted quickly to create more robust training programs (Aggressor Squadrons and Top Gun, respectively) to better prepare their pilots for combat in Southeast Asia. American leadership also modified tactics to reduce danger to American aircrews, demanded higher standards from manufacturers of weapons systems, and employed more useful technology as it was developed, all of which helped improve the effectiveness of airpower. Laslie is also incredibly consistent in ascribing successes to the American pilots and air crews that flew during the Vietnam War, always highlighting their bravery, skill, and leadership, while assigning any blame for mission failures to the organizational, technical, and tactical flaws that existed at the time.

The final aspect of this book is the author's commitment to disproving the "Lost Cause" associated with airpower during the Vietnam War. This ideology, which Laslie describes as one that was prevalent among portions of Air Force leadership, was that with just more bombing, earlier bombing in the war, or the bombing of different targets, airpower could have won the war for the United States. Laslie repeatedly illustrates throughout the book that airpower never

achieved its desired strategic results of limiting the flow of resources from North Vietnam to South Vietnam or encouraging the North Vietnamese people to lose the will to continue the fight. Interestingly, the author proves how airpower was critically important on a tactical level and was often the deciding factor in American victories on the battlefield. However, these tactical successes were not enough to translate into strategic victories, and Laslie does a solid job explaining why the "Lost Cause" ideology associated with airpower in the Vietnam War is incorrect.

Overall, author Brian Laslie has crafted a very engaging account of airpower during the Vietnam War. While this book is best suited for someone with at least a working knowledge of the Vietnam War and aviation-related terminology, it is not so technically driven that a novice in the field will not find value. It must be noted that the majority of the book is focused on the Air Force and Navy, and the contributions of the U.S. Marine Corps are underserved (and sadly there is no mention of U.S. Coast Guard pilot participation in Air Force Combat Rescue Forces operations). Also, the inclusion of a few well-placed maps could have been beneficial in helping a reader better visualize complex aviation-related dynamics, such as route packages across North Vietnam. Nevertheless, these small quibbles aside, this book is a significant contribution to the field of study and should be read by anyone with a desire to know more about American airpower in Vietnam, its successes, its hindrances, and the courageous servicemembers who participated in the conflict.

Jim Dietz

Continent in Crisis: The U.S. Civil War in North America. Edited by Brian Schoen, Jewel L. Spangler, and Frank Towers. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2023. Pp. 272. \$125.00, cloth; \$35.00, paper; \$34.99, e-book.)

The first thing a reader looks at is a book's title. After this, a look at the back cover provides a summary. In this case, the back states "this book focuses on the continental dimensions of the U.S. Civil War." A reader expecting essays on concrete aspects of the war, such as logistics, strategic- or operational-level war management, or detailed analysis of personnel, ships, or munitions will be disappointed. *Continent in Crisis* is relatively uninterested in concrete details; instead, its essays discuss intangible philosophical questions such as What is legitimacy? And What is the limit of national sovereignty?, as well as debating the role of America's growth within a world context at the beginning of the Civil War.

This is not light reading. Though none of the essays exceed 30 pages, if you are not already well-versed in the American Civil War or nineteenth-century U.S. relations with Mexico and the British Empire, this is not for you. Indeed, it will be obvious before you complete the introduction that *Continent in Crisis* targets readers with in-depth understanding of the time period and the sociopolitical concepts and terminology discussed within the book's eight distinct essays. The other sign that this book is meant as serious scholarship is that the introduction has 26 citations of its own, even as it offers brief overviews of each essay, the topics discussed, and touches on the historiography and its evolution during the past several decades.

The gist of the book comes in Brian Schoen's essay (rather than the introduction he cowrote). *Continent in Crisis* is part of an effort by select historians to "remedy" past scholarship trapped by "entrenched

national histories" preventing proper analysis of the Civil War's place in history. It is a sweeping statement, but eight essays and passing references to the war's historiography leave ample room for skepticism. As contrast, when Niall Ferguson wished to counter conventional thinking regarding World War I with *The Pity of War* (1999), he used more than 600 pages to make his case for a reinterpretation of that conflict.

Still, *Continent in Crisis* explores some worthy ideas. Alice Baumgartner addresses the traditional narrative that escaped slaves inevitably headed north, noting the number of escapees who made their way to Mexico and then placing this within the framework of assumptions that Mexico was corrupt and ineffective, unable to be an active participant in the events leading up to 1861, offering details such as Texas's insistence that, because of *Dred Scott v. Sanford* (1857), the state had a right to recover escaped slaves who passed into Mexico, even if the use of armed forces were necessary: essentially arguing that Texas's laws superseded those of a sovereign nation.

John Craig Hammond's essay, "Inveterate Imperialists: Contested Imperialism, North American History, and the Coming of the U.S. Civil War," addresses the issue of sovereignty as part of American expansion from 1800 through 1860. Hammond's title is intentional and he shows that U.S. expansionist intentions were present throughout the antebellum period, but with an important observation: expansionism was desired by all citizens, not just regional political interests. Expansionist policies were welcomed by all elements of society, including free Black Americans. Acknowledging that he is dealing with a broad, complex issue, Hammond works to summarize the nuances differentiating what each constituency sought with America's move west, as well as efforts to subsume the Caribbean and Canadian west. What is striking in Hammond's

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essay is the evidence that this expansion, in all directions, was assumed to be inevitable and natural, that the limit on expansion was only internal American politics rather than international diplomacy. Hammond's assessment is diametrically opposite recent British imperialism scholarship suggesting that past assumptions of universal societal support for British imperialism was incorrect, that the lower classes had little interest in expansion and saw no benefit from it. The exception Hammond illustrates, the contrast between his findings and other works, is worth exploring: Is U.S. expansion exceptional compared to European empires or later with post-Meiji Japan?

From a current-affairs standpoint, the essay with the most pertinence to modern warfare is Beau Cleland's "The Pirates and their Abettors in This Province." Its focus is the capture of the merchant, *Chesapeake*, on 7 December 1863 by British citizens from New Brunswick and Nova Scotia rather than the Confederate Navy. This is key for Cleland, who argues that this was part of a naval tradition of nonstate-sanctioned violence in North America opposing the wishes of central governments. Just as important was the willingness of local government officials to tacitly support these attacks and raids as a way of balancing

the scales with Washington and London, even though attacks such as that on the *Chesapeake* were clearly pirate attacks without legal sanction, such as a letter of marque. Cleland emphasizes the confused and conflicting responses to these attacks. He does not make the comparison, but a parallel exists to modern pirate attacks off the Niger Delta, the Gulf of Aden, and along the Singapore Strait.

The book's conclusion asserts that de facto power and the perception of law and order are both intertwined and contested, as illustrated by the included essays. But is this much of a conclusion to reach? Power and constraints on power, the attempts to break those constraints, go back beyond the Greeks and Romans. Given the specificity of the essays, generalized conclusions based on the periphery of the American Civil War should be examined with skepticism.

Unfortunately, *Continent in Crisis* is too disjointed and specialized to be of much value to a hobbyist or general historian. Specialists in antebellum America and the Civil War are unlikely to have interest in all eight essays. For experts, it is better to wait until *Continent in Crisis* is available for checkout in a university library to read specific essays of interests rather than purchasing the book.

Major Bobby Jorgensen, USMCR

Attack at Chosin: The Chinese Second Offensive in Korea. By Xiaobing Li. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2020. Pp 280. \$29.95, hardcover; \$24.95, e-book.)

The Chosin Reservoir campaign holds a prominent place in American military history, with the Marine Corps particularly lionizing the men of the 1st Marine Division who struggled in the cold and snow of North Korea. The countless books written about the battle almost invariably approach the subject from the American point of view. In their telling, the Americans are seen fighting off human wave attacks consisting of faceless hordes of Chinese troops as they struggle to salvage the tactical fight from the operational missteps that left them exposed and surprised. Rarely in these stories does the reader get anything more than a cursory explanation of Chinese motivations, and even then, the Chinese intervention is frequently explained away as simply wanting to help a fellow Asian Communist regime (such as in Hampton Sides's *On Desperate Ground*). While this oversimplification can be attributed to limited archival access, the result is a body of analytical work available to Western audiences that is broadly one-sided and incomplete. Xiaobing Li has fortunately stepped into that breach with *Attack at Chosin: The Chinese Second Offensive in Korea*, a campaign analysis from the Chinese perspective.

Attack at Chosin aims to provide Western audiences with an operational history of China's involvement in the Chosin Reservoir campaign. Emphasis is placed on explaining why the People's Liberation Army (PLA) was unable to destroy the 1st Marine Division and how that result informed the PLA's evolution in later years (p. 9). The book relies on access to Chinese language sources, particularly interviews, archival material, and histories which only became available to international audiences in the twenty-first century.

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These primary sources are used to place the Chosin Reservoir campaign within the broader strategic and operational aims of China's so-called War to Resist the United States and Aid Korea (WRUSAK). The book's narrative unfolds within 162 pages spread evenly over an introduction, six chapters, and a conclusion. The history is followed by another 80 pages of notes, terms, and bibliography, all of which help the reader gain a fuller understanding of the Chinese campaign.

Li opens the book with an overview of existing scholarship on the campaign, paying particular attention to the existing gaps in Western understanding of China's rationale for joining the war and how the Chosin campaign fit into that rationale. In doing so, Li makes the point that the Chosin campaign's aim of driving the United Nations (UN) forces back toward the 38th parallel was China's first attempt at implementing its concept of *active defense* by employing military power outside of China's borders to help defend the Chinese homeland (p. 7). After identifying the book's purpose, Li proceeds to place the campaign into a deeper historical context from the Chinese perspective. He devotes the entire first chapter to explaining the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) strategic situation at the start of hostilities. Fresh off a successful expulsion of Japanese forces from the Chinese mainland, the CCP spent the succeeding three years in gradually overwhelming the Nationalist forces of Chiang Kai-shek's (Jiang Jieshi in Li's preferred transliteration system [p. xi]) Guomindang. By 1950, the CCP found itself in sole possession of the Chinese mainland and prepared to finish off the remaining Guomindang forces via a series of amphibious assaults on the few remaining coastal islands to which Jiang Jieshi had retreated. The biggest holdout was Taiwan, which the PLA's 9th Army Group was positioned against to attack when the Korean War exploded.

As the UN (principally the United States) rallied forces to defend South Korea, the United States sent naval forces into the Taiwan Strait, and land forces directly onto the island. This was done to prestage combat power near the conflict zone, and to forestall the war's expansion beyond the Korean peninsula. While the United States viewed this step as a prudent defensive measure aimed at containing the conflict, the CCP viewed it as an escalation and direct intervention by Western forces into the Chinese civil war. When the UN went on the offensive in Korea, the CCP found itself potentially threatened from three directions: from the south, where the West was beginning to intervene in Vietnam's affairs, from the east where the United States was prestaged in (and by extension defending) Taiwan, and from the northeast where U.S. and UN forces were on the march toward the Chinese border. Li gives the reader a glimpse into the CCP's strategic decision-making as it weighed these three threats and ultimately decided that the ground-based threat from Korea was the most immediate threat to the party's nascent and fragile hold on the country. Thus, the reader comes to see the CCP's decision to intervene in Korea as part of an active defense while delaying the assault on Taiwan (and its attendant reunification with the mainland) indefinitely. This insight is valuable, as it provides Western readers with often missing context around the CCP's view on Korea's relation to their broader strategic aims. It also shows readers that General Douglas MacArthur's approach to the Yalu was not in fact the strong *casus belli*, as is commonly portrayed. Indeed, the decision to send PLA forces onto the peninsula was made concurrently with MacArthur's expanding war aims following his success at Inchon, and before U.S. forces began their race for the Yalu.

Having provided this important context to understand China's involvement in the war, Li next walks the reader through the explicit campaign aim and operational history of the PLA's campaign to destroy the U.S. forces around the Chosin Reservoir. Li illustrates the important shortfalls that hindered the campaign's progress and directly contributed to the PLA's implementation of questionable tactics in the

face of overwhelming Western firepower. The PLA's lack of sound intelligence, overestimation of its own capabilities following several years of successful fighting on the mainland, and severely limited logistics and transportation network led it to commit the *9th Army Group* into the Chosin Reservoir area undersupplied and underequipped. The reader sees the decisions and events that led to the deployment deadline continually being moved up, which ultimately resulted in the *9th Army Group* entering combat underfed, inadequately armed, and improperly clothed to face the harsh North Korean winter.

The starving Chinese troops fell back on a military culture that valued human spirit over technological advancement, throwing themselves into massed attacks to overwhelm U.S. forces through sheer numbers. Li offers anecdotal glimpses into the tactical fights but keeps the book moving by focusing on the maneuver of armies and divisions—firmly the operational level of war. Thus, the reader sees the campaign designed to isolate and annihilate the various U.S. regiments and follows as the lack of supplies and hostile weather conspire to force the campaign off track. The inadequate logistics and shortened timeline forced the *9th Army Group* to attack piecemeal rather than waiting for all forces to be positioned for a coordinated assault on the Americans. After several nights of overwhelming losses, the *9th Army Group* culminated and, though weeks of hard fighting lay ahead while the U.S. forces conducted their withdrawal, by the third day of the battle the PLA were unable to destroy the Americans as desired. This is an eye-opening detail for Western readers, as the common perception is that Marine forces were at risk of annihilation throughout their fighting retreat.

Li concludes the book with a discussion of the PLA's lessons learned from the Chosin campaign and how those lessons influenced the remainder of the war, and, indeed, the PLA's development throughout the subsequent decades. Li shows the reader the results of the *9th Army Group's* rapid and deep postmortem analysis of the campaign. While the CCP viewed the campaign as a success for having contributed to driving UN forces back from the Yalu, the *9th Army*

Group viewed the Marines' survival as a failure. Within weeks of the campaign's conclusion, the *9th Army Group* identified the logistical and tactical shortcomings that contributed to their inability to mass adequate forces. In the intervening months, they worked to overcome these shortfalls, and by the time the front stabilized near the 38th parallel in 1951, the PLA had a more robust supply network operating on the peninsula. This point again proves revelatory, as the PLA's human wave attacks during the Korean War are often thought of as illustrating the organization's inability to adapt and evolve. Li shows this to not be the case, noting that self-evaluation began almost immediately after the battle's conclusion with a series of meetings at the army group level. By March 1951, critical reports had been issued covering operational shortcomings across command echelons from the army group down to the division level. These forthright assessments were then incorporated into the PLA's plans for the spring 1951 campaign (pp. 135–37). Li's illumination of this openness for introspection and self-criticism has important ramifications for continued study of this war and for thinking about PLA capabilities in the future.

Attack at Chosin is an extremely valuable contribution to the holistic study of the Korean War. While primarily looking at the operational level of war, Li offers the reader important strategic context to help readers rethink the causes of the war's expansion. Li

also sprinkles in enough tactical anecdotes to give the reader a human glimpse into the PLA formations while preventing the story from stalling out. The book generally moves quickly but does occasionally bog down when making repetitive points. The author does a great job of referencing PLA units and commanders to assist with tracking movement throughout the campaign, though he is sometimes inconsistent in his addressing of U.S. forces, such as his labeling of the 5th Marine Regiment as the 5th Marine Division (p. 120) and his occasional mislabeling of the Regimental Combat Team 31 subunits and their commanders. Nevertheless, readers are likely familiar enough with the battle that these minor mistakes will not detract from the story's progress or the book's value. While a *dramatis personae* would be useful for reference, Li consistently provides the individual's role whenever discussing PLA officers, which greatly helps the reader's recall.

Overall, this book offers tremendous insight to both scholars of the Korean War and casual students of the battle. With tensions once again rising between the United States and China, Li's work also offers valuable historical context for modern decisionmakers thinking about the PLA's strategic and operational evolution and thinking. *Attack at Chosin: The Chinese Second Offensive in Korea* is a great resource, and audiences will benefit greatly from studying Li's scholarship.

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Lieutenant Colonel Robert Kirchubel, USA (Ret), PhD

FDR in American Memory: Roosevelt and the Making of an Icon. By Sara Polak. (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2021. Pp. 264. \$57.00, cloth and e-book.)

World War II remains “the war” and Franklin D. Roosevelt the president who led the United States to victory. Despite the passage of generations, plus numerous wars and more than a dozen presidents in the interim, it is hard to imagine another war or president displacing these two any time soon, in either the popular, academic, or military spheres. Add to this a skillful handling of the subfield of memory, which investigates how we remember events, people, or things, and we have a recipe for a successful and thought-provoking book on Roosevelt in cultural memory.

In *FDR in American Memory: Roosevelt and the Making of an Icon*, Sara Polak has done just that. Readers who are already familiar with Roosevelt as wartime commander in chief have much to gain from her book. Polak shows how Roosevelt—the nephew of a former president and acknowledged American icon—and those around him worked from an early stage to create a carefully crafted, favorable narrative. She gives a hint of her thesis on page 2: “This book is driven by a wish to understand how memory is produced and [how] icons function in culture.” She does this by investigating six categories: novels, popular biographies, films, documentaries, memorials, and museums (which she points out are neither rigid nor mutually exclusive). Her two main thematic anchors are culture (American—then and since) and rhetoric (persuasive communication).

Polak’s introduction is a must-read for those who wish to really understand the arguments in *FDR in American Memory*. Here, she clarifies terms she will use throughout: *remembrance*, *cultural memory*, *lived memory*, *communicative memory*, *autofabrication* (her word for Roosevelt’s special skill), and others. While

we may believe we know Webster’s definition of these words, it is important to share Polak’s nuances. She also introduces another subfield that may be new to some: disability studies. Most of us know where Roosevelt fits in the spectrum of race, class, and gender; why should his disability from polio be treated differently? We tend to view historical figures (and frequently people in general) by the first three social constructs, so why is the fourth often shoved in the background? Roosevelt’s disabilities were certainly very real to him; they were his constant companions. But part of his autofabrication was passing as nondisabled when it suited him. If leadership is about the power dynamic, while the media may have colluded to keep his disability from the American public, countless generals and admirals—the likes of Winston S. Churchill and Josef Stalin—could not ignore his wheelchair.

Polak chronicles and analyzes Roosevelt’s manipulation of his future memory from an early age, modeling himself after cousin Teddy as assistant secretary of the Navy and governor of New York. Of course, between these two positions he was struck with polio, adding another layer of complexity to his task. But the disability represented just another ball the self-described “juggler” had to keep in the air; he portrayed masculinity (look at his upper body and hands in photographs) while simultaneously being paralyzed. From the start, Roosevelt had a critical helper and codependent, his wife Eleanor. She functioned as the president’s second pair of eyes, first at home and then in far-flung theaters of war. While he had to cater to the prejudices of southern Democrat politicians, she could project care and concern to the nation’s Black and other marginalized populations. The pair went hand-in-glove when laying the foundations for a positive memory of him. And Polak does not let us forget that Roosevelt was the first president

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to create a library to enshrine his memory—so far the only one to do so while still in office.

While Roosevelt was certainly not the first leader of his generation to use radio, he did so in a novel way, calculated both to burnish his iconic status and improve how he would be remembered. Unlike Adolf Hitler, who harangued and lectured his audience in person and over the radio, Roosevelt held warm, familiar fireside chats and similar addresses; many Americans almost believed they were guests in his home. In this way, he built an “imagined community,” highlighting the collective nature of memory creation. In addition to Eleanor and his staff, the president enlisted all willing Americans in his effort. The relationship worked both ways. After a fireside chat, the White House mailroom would be swamped with letters from listeners reaching out to him. It did not matter if the comments were pro- or anti-Roosevelt; the communication worked to cement future memories of him. Finally, the avuncular spirit of the connection mattered more than any content.

In many ways, Roosevelt, his administrations, and wartime leadership at home and among the Allied coalition are the yardsticks by which we still judge American chief executives. Subsequent presidents have labored to have an equally successful first 100 days. Since 1945, there have been numerous attempts to replicate his vitality with a new New Deal or simi-

lar knock-off. Works Progress Administration murals of Whiggish America still grace many post offices and public spaces. The art series the *Four Freedoms* by Norman Rockwell is another example of how much in America is associated with the person of Roosevelt. Of course, in the collective American memory there is nothing more superlative than the “greatest generation,” which he led during the “good war.”

Polak’s reference to Studs Terkel’s *“The Good War”: An Oral History of World War II* is intentional as she brings our memory of the Roosevelt administration full circle. While not completely at odds with Tom Brokaw’s trope, for a Black or Jewish American, or even a White American in the Tennessee River Valley (when the new electrical power infrastructure gave life to the Manhattan Project, not modernity to average people’s lives), the 1930s and ’40s were not the greatest of times. We tend to forget that today. Especially in the military context, during the Korean, Vietnam, or Afghanistan and Iraq wars, many asked, “Why can’t America today pull together as one toward total victory like in World War II?!” Starting with Teddy, Polak goes so far as to posit that the twentieth century was a “Rooseveltian Century.” This is the powerful pull of *FDR in American Memory*, both as a book title and food for thought for anyone interested in this critical phase of national and global history.

•1775•

Alan K. Lamm, PhD

The Quaker Sergeant's War: The Civil War Diary of Sergeant David M. Haworth. By Gene Allen. (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 2020. Pp. 96. \$24.95, paperback.)

Editor Gene Allen's *The Quaker Sergeant's War: The Civil War Diary of Sergeant David M. Haworth* is a fascinating firsthand account of East Tennessean David M. Haworth, who decided against his Quaker and Southern heritage to sign up and fight as a Union soldier in the American Civil War. East Tennesseans had voted more than two to one against secession, and after the state's majority decided to join the Confederacy, many in East Tennessee wanted to secede and form their own state loyal to the Union government. Haworth most likely would have stayed out of the conflict but was forced to make a decision in the face of aggressive conscription agents of the Confederate Army. He and some 31,000 Tennesseans, mostly from the east, chose to fight for the Union and against slavery. Haworth and his brothers fled their homes and arrived at London, Kentucky, where they joined the 3d Regiment, Tennessee Infantry (U.S.). Haworth kept a diary throughout the war and saw combat in numerous battles such as the Battle of Resaca, Georgia, where one of his brothers was killed and another was seriously wounded.

Allen does an excellent job of establishing the background and context of Haworth's life in East Tennessee. As noted, the Haworth brothers would probably have remained neutral, but pressure built as more aggressive actions were taken by the Confederate government to recruit young men into

military service, and, as East Tennessee experience demonstrates, the American Civil War was often a civil war within the civil war as neighbor fought against neighbor. The result saw hundreds of East Tennessee men captured and imprisoned in their attempt to escape to Union lines. The Haworth brothers, on the other hand, were successful. Allen skillfully incorporates background events into Haworth's narrative, which helps the reader to make sense of his story.

Haworth had the opportunity to see President Abraham Lincoln early in the war, and later to meet Unionist William G. "Parson" Brownlow. Brownlow would later provide assistance to Haworth at critical moments. Indeed, at the end of the war, Brownlow, now Union military governor of Tennessee, gave Haworth a pistol for self-defense as the soldier-turned-civilian headed home to see friends and face foes who had fought on the other side of the conflict. Allen does include a note that Haworth and his brothers left East Tennessee after the war and settled in southwestern Missouri. One wonders if that decision was inspired by the devastation done to their region or due to the hostility Unionists faced back home from their former Confederate neighbors. An expansion on that part of Haworth's story would have made a stronger ending for Allen's book. Additionally, a few more photos and illustrations would have added much to this work as well.

Other diaries of from Tennessee of that era have recently come out such as *A Very Violent Rebel: The Civil War Diary of Ellen Renshaw House*. But Allen's publication of David Haworth's diary shows the experiences and thoughts of a common East Tennessee Unionist soldier, something unique and often missing in our study of the American Civil War.

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William M. Morgan, PhD

The Road Less Traveled: The Secret Battle to End the Great War, 1916–1917. By Philip Zelikow. (New York: Public Affairs, 2021. Pp. 352. \$30.00, cloth; \$18.99, paperback and e-book.)

It is always a delight to read a fresh and novel rethink of a supposedly settled historical issue. Philip Zelikow's *The Road Less Traveled* is just such a book. The standard view of why World War I ground on—despite horrendous casualties and a strategic stalemate—until Germany collapsed in late 1918 is that the combatants never abandoned their expansive war aims or their beliefs in ultimate triumph. In a highly readable account, Zelikow finds this interpretation wanting. He persuasively argues that by late 1916, politicians within Germany, Britain, and France might have accepted a mediated peace if skillfully orchestrated by President Woodrow Wilson, the only major leader not part of either alliance. A professor of history at the University of Virginia, Zelikow worked on international policy for several administrations, including serving as counselor of the State Department in 2005–7. Deeply researched in primary and secondary sources, this book reflects an insightful synergy of academic and practitioner expertise. Zelikow deftly explains how diplomatic ineptness prevented Wilson from achieving the peace conference he fervently sought during the crucial months before the Germans renewed unrestricted submarine warfare on 1 February 1917, a step which soon brought the United States into the war.

The peace window opened in August 1916. Even after two bloody years of strategic stalemate, none of the British, French, or German generals could imagine a path to victory other than grinding repetitions of offensives that so far had failed to win the war. However, by late summer, elements within German, French, and British governments considered a negotiated settlement. Fearing that a direct approach would

be seen as weakness and encourage enemies to fight harder, they looked to Wilson as a mediator.

Germany made the first move. With the kaiser's blessing, Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg secretly requested that Wilson involve himself in the peace process and declared that Germany would happily accept mediation. The request included a note from the kaiser (p. 4). Appalled by the immense loss of life, Wilson greatly desired an end to the war. He was campaigning for reelection in November 1916 on the grounds that he kept the United States out of the war. A “peace without victory”—a return to something close to the status quo ante bellum—would end the carnage and prevent America from being dragged in, which was Wilson's great fear.

War fatigue hit the British and French as well as the Germans. As Wilson pondered Germany's mediation request, French president Raymond Poincaré met with Britain's King George V, who was visiting British troops in France. Poincaré declared that he favored a quick end to the war, which by the end of 1916 had cost the lives of 5 percent of French males, some 927,000 individuals. He thought Wilson might soon offer to mediate the conflict. Poincaré urged that the Allies should be prepared to state their bottom-line peace terms. The king relayed these sentiments to his cabinet. Most British leaders knew victory was far off. Despite fierce internal debate about war strategy and peace ideas, Prime Minister Herbert H. Asquith could not forge a consensus. Party strife complicated a decision, with the ambitious secretary of state for war, David Lloyd George, portraying himself as a strong man who could lead Britain to a grind-it-out victory. In late 1916, as British war finances hit rock bottom, Lloyd George replaced Asquith as prime minister.

Wilson's weaknesses undercut his peace efforts. First, and most important, he did not understand the

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value of what professional diplomats call the *policy process*. Achieving peace would require a lot more than simply suggesting it to the warring powers or inviting them to a neutral site to bargain. Should Wilson merely convene a meeting but not participate, or should he actively mediate the talks? Would Wilson act as an arbitrator, breaking deadlocks? Should he sketch the outlines of a solution, such as a return to the status quo ante bellum, a so-called peace without victory? Should he require the warring parties to declare their fundamental war aims before the talks? None of the parties were eager to lay out their goals before negotiations began, yet they wanted some assurance that their most basic goals would probably be addressed. For the British and the French, that meant German evacuation of Belgium and all or nearly all of France. For Germany, it meant gaining concessions that would prevent a peace agreement from being considered a defeat. Perhaps that might mean keeping a portion of Alsace, seized from France in 1871, or avoiding reparations for damage to Belgium and France, where the war in the west had been fought.

Several factors influence peace talks during wartime, such as an accurate understanding by the warring parties of their ability to fight on, a realistic assessment of their chances for victory, and the potential popular backlash of quitting a war after immense sacrifices (audience costs). As Oriana Skylar Mastro argues in her excellent recent study, a primary consideration is the necessity to show strength before opening talks, or an adversary may well assume weakness in capability or resolve and drive even harder for victory.¹ Not showing weakness was clearly a goal of the combatants in 1916–17. Though they knew their own problems, they were unsure about the enemy's capacity to continue the war. They needed to be persuaded, enticed, or maneuvered into committing to peace and realistic war aims.

Second, Wilson's personality and excessive self-reliance prevented him from enlisting the right kind of help. Zelikow correctly describes Wilson as skilled

at “judging and reacting,” but unskilled at “designing and implementing” (p. 274). Not knowing what he needed, Wilson did not surround himself with the necessary advisors. He overly relied on Edward M. House, who could gather opinions and report back, but who was not the skilled planner and organizer that Wilson needed. Secretary of State Robert Lansing was no better: an anglophile lawyer who could parse the law and judge whether wartime actions violated it but lacked the interest and ability to act as an impartial facilitator. Even when Wilson recognized the quality advice coming from young foreign service officers such as Joseph C. Grew in Berlin and William H. Buckler in London, he failed to place these individuals in positions of “operational responsibility” (p. 227). The Department of State was tiny given the power and influence of the country it served. In short, within Wilson's close circle, no one knew how to operationalize the president's peace concept into a stressful, high-stakes multinational event.

Third, with too much on his own plate, Wilson moved slowly and cautiously, as Germany and Britain drifted away from the idea of a peace conference and back toward winning the war. The president preferred to do everything himself. In November and December 1916, he worked alone on his peace plan. By this time, German distrust had soared as Wilson had done nothing concrete for four months. The kaiser's support for a peace initiative ebbed and the newly appointed, hyperconfident generals Paul von Hindenburg and Erich Ludendorff refocused on winning the war.

Nor did Wilson move the British toward peace. When Britain tried to sell unsecured war bonds in late 1916, Wilson approved a Federal Reserve warning to American banks not to buy such risky bonds. The British realized, as did Wilson when he approved the warning, that they could not have financed the current tempo of the war past the spring of 1917. Yet, the cautious Wilson strangely did not use that lever to pull Britain into a peace conference or at least a set of reasonable war aims.

In early January 1917, wielding the detailed plan of German naval chief, Admiral Henning von Holtendorff, the generals and admirals urged unrestricted

¹ Oriana Skylar Mastro, *The Costs of Conversation: Obstacles to Peace Talks in Wartime* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019).

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submarine warfare to win a quick victory. Holtzen-
dorff's plan seemingly guaranteed a quick victory.
Chancellor Bethmann had no rebuttal. The kaiser ap-
proved unrestricted U-boat warfare as of 1 February.
As Holger Herwig has shown, this gross strategic mis-
calculation brought German defeat.² And it closed the
peace window. The infamous Zimmermann Telegram
drew the shades. Two months later, the United States
entered the war.

Two developments scuttled chances for another
peace effort. Most important, American entry imme-
diately solved British and French financial problems
and boosted Allied military capacity during the lon-
ger term. Second, the March 1917 revolution began a
slow deterioration in the Russian war effort, culmi-
nating in Russia leaving the war in early 1918, allow-
ing the Germans to focus on the western front. Both
camps, therefore, grew more optimistic about victory
and held tightly to their war aims during almost two
more years of horrific military and civilian deaths.

The Road Less Traveled shows the danger of rely-
ing on rational thinking to surmount a crisis. A peace
in late 1916 would have saved millions of lives and
vast treasure in a stalemated war. Yet, the emotional
twists and turns of internal politics (in Britain, for
example), gross strategic miscalculation (the German
decision for unrestricted submarine warfare), and the
weak diplomatic skills of President Wilson and others
prevented a peace that would have benefited all par-
ties. Zelikow persuasively shows that a policy process
that includes goal setting, formulation of an action
plan, implementation, and continual evaluation and
revision can enable a nation, or group of nations, to
seize an opportunity. Diplomatic success does not just
happen; it is made to happen.

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² Holger H. Herwig, "Total Rhetoric, Limited War: Germany's U-Boat Campaign, 1917–1918," *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1998).

Aaron Peterka

The Ledger: Accounting for Failure in Afghanistan. By David Kilcullen and Greg Mills. (London: C. Hurst, 2021. Pp. 368. £14.99, paperback.)

A highly informative work, *The Ledger* by David Kilcullen and Greg Mills is one of the first books to render an in-depth analysis of Afghanistan's fall to the Taliban in August 2021. Picking up where books like Carter Malkasian's 2021 *The American War in Afghanistan* left off, *The Ledger* lives up to its name, offering a broad accounting of the myriad political, economic, and military missteps that plagued the 20-year U.S.-led war there.

Based on their experiences as counterinsurgency and development advisors in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Africa, Kilcullen and Mills argue that the Afghan War "was eminently winnable" given the Coalition's successes in reforming Afghan society through advances in health care, education, and women's rights. Yet, repeated blunders beginning in 2001 and "flagging Western political commitment" gradually led to deteriorating conditions that led to the Taliban's eventual victory (pp. 37–38). Among the most devastating errors were the lack of a coherent, long-term strategy; the inability to foster regional stability, especially in Pakistan, to deny the Taliban valuable external financial and material support; the United States' failure to deal with the severely weakened Taliban from a position of political and military strength in the 2001 Bonn Conference; and the massive corruption and waste stemming from the incredible influx of international financial aid. The authors also draw attention to the failure of multilateralism in Afghanistan, as well as the West's inability to truly understand both the country and region's nature, "arrogantly assuming its own ways were best" (pp. 277–83).

What ultimately emerged by the time the United States declared its transition from a counterinsurgency mission to one of security force assistance in 2015 was an Afghan state totally dependent on external financial and military aid and increasingly isolated from its people in the countryside. Compounding the deterioration was the fact that Afghanistan's military was a Western-style force ill-suited to continue the fight against the Taliban, let alone maintain control of the 200-plus bases turned over to it as the U.S.-led Coalition withdrew. By the summer, after Western logistical and maintenance support had ended, Afghanistan was deprived of vital air and logistical assets. Additionally, its best troops had been ground down against a Taliban enemy that had largely preserved its fighting strength in its Pakistani sanctuaries, patiently awaiting the U.S. withdrawal as it launched repeated offensives that chipped away at Kabul's control.

To present their thesis, the authors organized the book into an introduction and conclusion bracketing five chapters of content across 312 pages, plus an index and notes. Although not a straight military history chronicling battles and campaigns, the book's overall organization allows for a comprehensive narrative that guides the reader through the multitude of complexities that characterized the Afghan War, and the decisions that eventually led to the events of 15 August 2021. It begins by evoking the parallels between the American commitments in Vietnam and Afghanistan, stating that "these are not new dilemmas," before proceeding to a vivid account of the authors' efforts to rescue Afghan president Ashraf Ghani's private secretary from Taliban retribution (pp. 2, 6–8). The next two chapters demonstrate the historical continuity of past Afghan campaigns' mistakes by tracking the evolution of the U.S. mission, followed by a compare/

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contrast with the Soviet Union's ill-fated Afghan war in the 1980s.

With the historical background established, chapter 3 begins assessing the U.S.-led war's principal failures, namely political failures in Afghanistan, failed policy toward Pakistan, the failure of international economic aid, and the corruption it engendered. This segues into chapter 4, "Endgame," which discusses the Afghan military and civil government's gradual disintegration beginning in 2015. This includes detailed analyses of the "selection/destruction cycle" that eroded Afghan security forces' fighting prowess, and how the construction of an Afghan military in the United States' image hindered its ability to fight the Taliban insurgency.

In effect, the authors avow that the concentration of Afghanistan's best troops in special forces units deprived conventional units of competent officers and noncommissioned personnel that would have formed the backbone of a more effective fighting force. Instead, these Special Operations Forces units acted as quick-reaction forces that were thinly spread across the country, thus leading to their gradual destruction as they hopscotched from one crisis to another. Finally, Kilcullen and Mills also criticize the decision to create a Western-style military in Afghanistan, since Afghanistan's history clearly proved that the Afghans hardly needed any lessons in waging war.

Chapter 5, "The Ball Keeps Bouncing," attempts to assess the impacts of the failed counterinsurgency effort in Afghanistan and its possible implications. In short, the Taliban's victory has emboldened other insurgent forces, particularly in regions like Africa's Sahel. Using Somaliland as an example of success, Kilcullen and Mills hold firm that future interventions like the one in Afghanistan must facilitate success from within and not attempt to build it externally. This is one of the key lessons featured in the conclusion, which among other items, stresses a coherent strategy, patience, negotiating from a position of strength, not underestimating the enemy, and acting upon local needs rather than imposing external perceptions (pp. 292–94).

Giving substance to these chapters is an array of primary materials, including online news articles from newspapers like the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, as well as secondary sources like Steve Coll's *Ghost Wars* and *Directorate S*, and David Galula's *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* from 1964. However, among the most effective sources are the authors' personal experiences in Afghanistan. These often come through in the form of interviews the authors held with pro-Taliban forces in 2009 and 2011, community and business leaders in Kandahar City in 2008, and interviews with Provincial Reconstruction Teams in 2009, to name a few. Such materials give the book an air of authenticity, allowing the reader to see in stark detail the many complexities and contradictions that characterized the United States' longest war. This enables the book to stand as a primary source in its own right.

Nevertheless, this can be a double-edged sword if one is seeking a certain degree of impartiality. While Kilcullen and Mills grant that "there is plenty of blame to go around," especially across the administrations of four U.S. presidents, they are exceptionally scathing in their appraisal of the current executive (p. 31). No doubt this is due to the strong emotions still surrounding the fall of Kabul, which manifest in the authors' writing, leading to unnecessarily biting and loaded critiques of certain current U.S. officials' moral and personal character. On top of this, *The Ledger* also makes a pessimistic prognostication concerning the global impact of the United States' Afghan withdrawal, particularly that it has damaged U.S. credibility among its allies. Calling it a "blow to the moral authority of the US" that has reverberated around the world, the authors add that America's withdrawal from Afghanistan damaged its reliability as an ally, but they do not discuss how that has been the case (p. 310). Both observations indicate that more historical distance from the Afghan War is needed before such sweepingly comprehensive statements about its ramifications can truly be examined.

Despite these negatives, *The Ledger* still contains important insights into the intersection of local and

regional issues and interests, and how the U.S.-led Coalition in Afghanistan failed to adapt its strategy to account for them, thus leading to the country's fall. Moreover, it offers potential lessons for future nation-building interventions that can be gleaned from America's Afghan experience, although readers who

pick up this book would be well advised to have some familiarity with the Afghan War and the principles of counterinsurgency doctrine. Still, while an important source from two counterinsurgency experts who were there, this book is far from the final word on the end of America's longest war.

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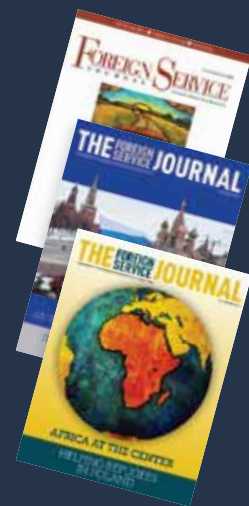
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Philip C. Shackelford

To Rule the Skies: General Thomas S. Power and the Rise of Strategic Air Command in the Cold War. By Brent D. Ziarnick. (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute Press, 2021. Pp. 312. \$41.95, cloth.)

With his book *To Rule the Skies*, Brent Ziarnick sets out to correct widely held misconceptions, which is perhaps one of the most difficult tasks a scholar can face. In this case, Ziarnick is challenging two mainstream characterizations of U.S. Air Force general Thomas S. Power—one that vilifies Power as a “tyrannical sadist,” and another that denigrates Power as a “carbon copy” of the perhaps more dynamic General Curtis E. LeMay. Given that scholars have generally overlooked Power in favor of other figures and other topics, Ziarnick claims that “history has accepted a caricature” of a man that “deserves” to be recognized on his own merits—including a brave and innovative mind and a strategic understanding of technology and its importance to both the Air Force and the United States. He also asserts that the modern Air Force and U.S. Space Force can benefit from an updated understanding of how an “air and space atomic vision,” championed by Power, was first articulated, and ultimately lost. By examining pivotal moments in Power’s career and his influence on major developments during both World War II and the early Cold War, Ziarnick makes a convincing case that General Power should receive further and more balanced treatment in historical scholarship (pp. 1–9).

Ziarnick begins by examining Power’s early life, highlighting various circumstances that demonstrated an appetite for hard work as well as determination. In 1922, Power dropped out of high school to work in support of his family, and in 1927–28, he logged hours of study in the public library after work and on

weekends to pass a tough admissions exam to the Air Service Primary Flying School, which he did. Ziarnick uses Power’s admission into flying school and other episodes to push back against narratives that question Power’s intelligence due to his lack of a college degree, with the persistent objective of providing corrective nuance to popular caricature. Another example is Power’s key role in orchestrating the low-altitude firebombing of Tokyo, largely attributed to Curtis LeMay, but which Power played an instrumental part in brainstorming and planning, and ultimately leading the actual mission as well (pp. 4, 13–17, 34–41, 47).

Another of the leading perceptions associated with General Power is that he was, in a word, mean—sadistic, hard—a hatchet man who brooked no compromise. Ziarnick highlights specific episodes that nuance this characteristic as well, including Power writing a character reference for a wing commander who had misplaced a folder of classified material, as well as the generous handling of a Lockheed U-2 Dragon Lade pilot who had drifted into Soviet airspace while on a mission in the Arctic. These episodes, along with the observation that Power would take time to listen if someone completely disagreed with him, suggest that although Power might have been strict, he was also fair—not the sadistic tyrant he was sometimes made out to be (pp. 45–46, 158–60).

Finally, Ziarnick describes Power as a man who thought strategically about high technology and how it could be deployed in America’s defense and about related implications for the future of the U.S. Air Force. Ziarnick illustrates that Power was frustrated by efforts on the part of the Robert S. McNamara Department of Defense to focus on limited war to the detriment of Strategic Air Command, and even when it was clear that political winds did not blow in Power’s favor, the general did not stop advocating

Philip C. Shackelford is a military historian and librarian currently serving as executive director at the Lee Itawamba Library System in Northeast Mississippi, having previously served as library director at South Arkansas Community College in El Dorado, AR. He is the author of *Rise of the Mavericks: The U.S. Air Force Security Service and the Cold War* (2023) and studies intelligence, national security, and the U.S. Air Force during the Cold War era.

for decisions he felt would prepare the Air Force and the country for long-term success. A key part of this narrative is Power's dedicated support of space power, and of developing space capability within Strategic Air Command—steps that he supported enthusiastically and advocated for at high levels. Power's vision, however, would ultimately remain unfulfilled, although his beliefs never wavered (pp. 167, 174–95).

Well-researched and written, Ziarnick's book presents a convincing argument that General Thomas S. Power merits deeper understanding and that his contributions to the U.S. Air Force, possibly overlooked, are not only valuable but important for un-

derstanding current trends facing policymakers today. Ziarnick's narrative conveys an urgency, an impulse to confront and disprove prevailing public perceptions about General Power that, aside from being incorrect, preclude a balanced understanding of the general's career and impact, positioning Ziarnick well to argue that caricatures of General Power may have survived as long as they have due to "willful ignorance." This book is recommended for those interested in the history of the U.S. Air Force at large but also those concerned with science, technology, and strategic thought in the Cold War (p. 224).

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Colonel Cornelia Weiss, USAF (Ret)

Women, Peace, and Security in Professional Military Education. Edited by Lauren Mackenzie, PhD, and LtCol Dana Perkins, PhD. (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press, 2022. Pp. 267. Free.) <https://doi.org/10.56686/9798985340365>.

This book is a first step to preserve the rich history of Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) works by military and civilian authors who have entered WPS writing competitions. In this book, the two editors, Dr. Mackenzie, the leader of the Marine Corps University (MCU) WPS Scholars Program, and Lieutenant Colonel Perkins, the director of WPS Studies at the U.S. Army War College, showcase the 2021 WPS papers submitted for the Joint PME “Best of” WPS Writing Competition. These papers are the top papers of various WPS schoolhouses, including the MCU WPS Writing Award. The contributors range in rank from second lieutenant to colonel to civilian. They serve in the Air Force, the Army, the Navy, and the Marine Corps. Missing is a contribution from the Coast Guard, which I trust the Commandant of the Coast Guard, Admiral Linda L. Fagan, will remedy. As I read the contributions, what is also missing are the insights from authors who contributed works for past WPS writing competitions, such as the 2013 National Defense University WPS Writing Award competition winning paper, “Marine Female Engagement Teams in Afghanistan,” as well as past Naval War College WPS writing competitions. To ensure we are not deprived of the insights of past winners, but instead have the opportunity to build on their experiences and insights, this reviewer recommends that MCU create an

anthology of past winning papers, continue publishing the winning papers of future competitions, and that such competitions not exclude the backbone of our military, the enlisted.

While the works address topics as diverse as gender perspective, gender neutrality, gender and violence, mainstreaming WPS in professional military education, the nexus of climate change, migration, and human trafficking, hegemonic masculinity, and operationalizing WPS, a dominant theme is the lacuna of leadership. Second Lieutenant Elizavetta Fursova highlights General Robert H. Barrow’s testimony before Congress (and the many Marines who viewed videos of his testimony) that not excluding women from the combat arms branches “would destroy the Marine Corps” (p. 78). U.S. Army lieutenant colonel Ellen I. Coddington calls for leadership, stating that “senior leaders must take the lead” including “leading by example” (pp. 22–23). But, as Army major Danielle Villanueva discloses, “leadership did not observe training unless there were dignitaries or political personnel visiting” (p. 226). U.S. Navy commander Kristen Vechinski reveals that the commander in chief’s 2021 *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance* “does not call out the WPS agenda specifically” (p. 37). Army colonel Douglas Winton decries the lack of executive agent for WPS (p. 55) and sponsor at the Army War College (p. 57). U.S. Air Force captain Elizabeth Jane Garza-Guidara tackles the tough issue of the highest femicide rate in Latin America (p. 85), arguably exacerbated by the “U.S.-funded Salvadoran military strategy against the FMLN.”¹ And Amy Patel points out that “government and nongovernmental organiza-

Col Cornelia Weiss, USAF (Ret), a graduate of the Inter-American Defense College, successfully urged the drafters of the 2011 U.S. Women Peace and Security National Action Plan to include professional military education. She holds a doctor of jurisprudence from Vanderbilt University School of Law and a master’s degree in defense and security studies from Chile’s National Academy of Strategy and Policy Studies (ANEPE). Her publications have had international impact, most recently the attorney general of the Brazilian state of Paraná citing a coauthored paper of hers in a case to end discrimination against women in the police. The ideas and opinions presented in this review are hers alone and do not necessarily represent those of the U.S. Department of Defense, the U.S. Marine Corps, or Marine Corps University.

¹ Sophie Huttner, “El Salvador’s Femicide Crisis,” *Yale Review of International Studies* 10, no. 2 (Winter 2019): 27.

tions should raise awareness about trafficking within communities of higher risk of experiencing climate change. . . . [to] help ensure migrants do not fall victim to traffickers' false promises" (p. 112).

The solution: lead. U.S. Army National Guard colonel Steven J. Siemonsma, in explaining John Kotter's Leading Change framework, asserts "change can be attributed to leadership in 70 to 90 percent of the time" (p. 43). Army major Sarah E. Salvo highlights the findings of the 2014 *Report of the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee* that "commanders who strive to implement the core elements of the [SHARP] program to the lowest levels and take personal ownership of promoting climates of dignity and respect on a daily basis have consistently demonstrated success in reducing—even eliminating—sexual harassment and assault" (p. 156). But Army leaders fail to examine aspects of Army culture that enable sexual harassment and battery (p. 123) and neither "acknowledge their responsibility" nor "their power to change" (p. 154), such as the senior installation commander at Fort Cavazos (formerly Hood) who responded, "What can I do about it?" (p. 157). As the secretary of the Army said in 2020, "Without leadership, systems don't matter. This is not about metrics but about possessing the ability to . . . look out for the best interests of our soldiers" (p. 164). Yet, as U.S. Air Force lieutenant colonel Casey M. Grider points out, the 17th Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff admits, "Every time we open new doors in women's professional lives . . . we end up wondering why it took us so long" (p. 99). U.S. Marine Corps lieutenant colonel Natalie Trogus provides the 2018 tweet of Afghan major Abdul Rahman Rahmani about U.S. major Brent Taylor to demonstrate the transformational power of example. Rahmani tweets, "Let me admit, before I met Brent [Taylor], even I did not think that a woman and men should be treated equally. Your husband taught me to love my wife Hamida as an equal and treat my children as treasured gifts, to be a better father, to be a better Husban[d], and to be a better man" (p. 169).

What writing is awarded by whom and how provides insight as to what military leadership values and what it does not. While the Chief of Staff of the Army

leads an annual ritual in awarding the General Douglas MacArthur Leadership Award for company-grade officers who demonstrate the ideals of duty, honor, and country (p. 143), there is no annual ritual for awarding the Best of WPS Writing Award, and the Chief of Staff of the Army does not present the WPS Award. Instead, the 2021 WPS Award winner received a Joint Staff J-5 certificate and a personalized note from the U.S. Army War College Director of WPS Studies (p. xii). Given that General MacArthur's first demand for reform to the government of Japan in post-World War II occupied Japan was the "emancipation of women," the Chief of Staff of the Army should award subsequent General Douglas MacArthur Leadership Awards to company-grade officers who embody MacArthur's first demand, a demand that occurred more than a half-century before United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325.² In selecting awardees, this reviewer urges the Chief of Staff of the Army to consider a contributor to this book, the 2021 West Point graduate Second Lieutenant Elizavetta Fursova.

Fursova's paper provides new insights. Her work highlights arenas in which women's physical performance "surpasses men," including "aerobic capacity," "resistance to muscular fatigue," and "recovery following exercise" (p. 62). During World War II, Soviet Aleksandr Gridnev observed, "Our experience showed that women fighter pilots in the majority of circumstances, much better than men, endured g-loads to the body which arose during abrupt and sharp changes of aircraft altitude—in steep banking turns, combat turns [chandelles], and during abrupt exits from a dive. Also women pilots had greater endurance than men during high-altitude flights without oxygen."³ Fursova's explanation that the leg tuck was an area in which women did not surpass men (p. 75) leads one to wonder about the implicit determination by the U.S. Army that there is a higher correlation between being successful in combat and the leg tuck, rather than

² Cornelia Weiss, "The Nineteenth Amendment and the U.S. 'Women's Emancipation Policy' in Post-World War II Occupied Japan: Going Beyond Suffrage," *Akron Law Review* 53, no. 2 (2019): 386–430.

³ As quoted in Reina Pennington, *Wings, Women, and War: Soviet Airwomen in World War II Combat* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 124–25.

aerobic capacity and resistance to muscular fatigue. About a recent visit to the U.S. Naval War College, Irish major general Maureen O'Brien reflected, "They are hung up with the physical standards. They don't include flexibility in these physical standards. If they did, half of the men wouldn't pass it."⁴

For subsequent editions, the reviewer recommends inserting the biographies of all contributors. The glossary of key WPS concepts and terms further supports the work. For subsequent editions of the

glossary, the reviewer also urges incorporating language used in the 2021 winning entries: Charter on WPS, gender blindness, gender performance, gender awareness, gender lens, gender injects, gender sensitive, gender institutionalization, Gender Advisor (GENAD), Gender Focal Point (GFP), meaningful participation, structural barriers, femininity, masculinity, toxic masculinity, military masculinity, hypermasculine, hegemonic masculinities, machista, and machismo.

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⁴ MajGen Maureen O'Brien, "Advancing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda," IIEA, 16 June 2023, YouTube, 28:39–29:10.

Thomas Zacharis

The Control War: The Struggle for South Vietnam, 1968–1975. By Martin G. Clemis. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2018. Pp. 400. \$39.95, cloth; \$32.95, e-book.)

Nine Days in May: The Battles of the 4th Infantry Division on the Cambodian Border, 1967. By Warren K. Wilkins. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2017. Pp. 430. \$39.95, cloth; \$26.95, paperback; \$21.95, e-book.)

The fight for contested politico-military spaces and the battle for influence and control over land and population had always been critical components in the war for South Vietnam. The Tet Mau Than (Tet, year of the monkey) offensive proved that even though the Communist armies failed to achieve any of their strategic goals, that military operation ended in a stalemate at best. Furthermore, it undermined support from the American rear echelon by adding impetus to the swelling wave of pacifism inside U.S. Congress and the public in general. It became obvious that new initiatives were needed if the United States hoped to win the war.

In *The Control War*, Martin G. Clemis, assistant professor of history and government at Valley Forge Military College, maintains that, contrary to popular conceptions, the crux of the war all along lay not in “winning the hearts and minds” or gaining the love and affection of the rural peasantry. As he puts it, “spatial contestation,” territoriality, and efforts to control geography and the human environment, were salient features in the fight to establish political hegemony and determine the future social and political order of South Vietnam. Or as one American advisor expressed it at the time: “Get control of the people first and teach them to love us later” (p. 298).

Clemis’s study argues that the operational environment, including both the natural and the human-made worlds, were the locus, medium, and determinant of the conflict. It was a struggle that the Republic of

Vietnam and the United States ultimately lost. To a vast degree, this was the result of the pacification program’s failure to completely eliminate the Communist insurgency or destroy the insurgent antistate inside South Vietnam. *The Control War* will undoubtedly generate more controversy, but its provocative perspectives may be of interest to scholars of the Vietnam War.

In *Nine Days in May*, Warren K. Wilkins, author of *Grab Their Belts to Fight Them: The Viet Cong’s Big-Unit War Against the U.S.*, examines nine days of ferocious fighting between 18 and 26 May 1967, pitting the 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, the 3d Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, and the 3d Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment of the 1st Brigade, U.S. Army’s 4th Infantry Division, against elements of the 32d and 66th Regiments of the 1st North Vietnamese Army Division in Vietnam’s Central Highlands. This region, encompassing the Cambodian border, consisted of semimountainous terrain full of deep rain forests. There, North Vietnam had established the B3 Front, with the tasks of infiltrating the territory around Saigon while also drawing American forces inland from their coastal bases. U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, aware that the Viet Cong were being reinforced from the Central Highlands, devised and launched Operation Francis Marion to interdict the infiltrators between 6 April and 11 October 1967. At the same time, however, President Lyndon B. Johnson, wishing to avoid violations of the Cambodian border on his own part, prohibited the U.S. Army from conducting cross-border raids, allowing only temporary, limited ground operations in Cambodia. As a result, the 4th Infantry Division was essentially compelled to fight a defensive war in Central Highlands.

Thomas Zacharis was born in Thessaloniki, Greece. An enthusiast of history, particularly of the Napoleonic era, he is the author of many book reviews and articles on this and other subjects in several journals. For his writings about the Napoleonic era, he was decorated by the president of International Napoleonic Society.

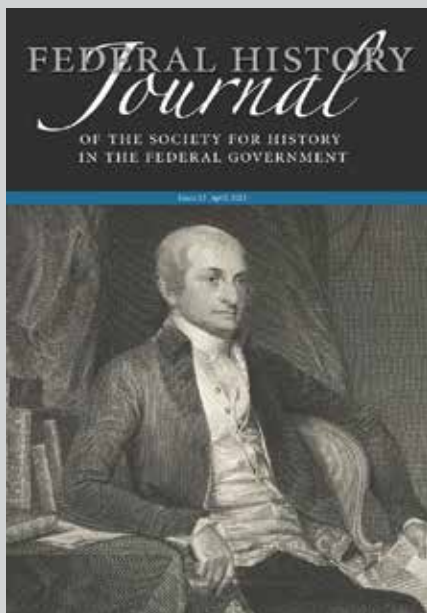
By collected interviews from participants from the 4th Division's 1st Brigade, Wilkins recreates the struggle in which that unit became embroiled from 18 to 26 May. Although relatively overlooked by posterity, the brigade was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation (Army) for its performance during that period, with three of its soldiers posthumously being

awarded the Medal of Honor. Operation Francis Marion ultimately helped protect Pleiku Province, but on the other hand, it also compelled the Americans to dispatch reinforcements from the coast as Hanoi had hoped. Military scholars will find Wilkins's book a worthy addition toward filling another gap in the overall picture of the Vietnam War.

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