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DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD

Edward T. Nevgloski, PhD

The year 2020 will go down in history as the year of many twists and turns. Of them all, COVID-19 (the SARS-CoV-2 virus) has to be the most interesting, especially as the United States and the world continue to study not only the virus but also how to combat it. As we continue to apply best practices to care for one another and beat the virus, one bright spot is that many Americans have taken to reading as a way to pass the time in quarantine. Others have taken up writing. I can attest to this, as the History Division surpassed its annual average of requests for archived documents, photographs, and oral histories from historians eager to use their time constructively. So for as long as the pandemic is with us, which hopefully will not be much longer, it is nice to see so many reconnecting with the art of research and writing, especially on topics related to Marine Corps history. Keep the articles coming!

The Winter 2020 issue of *Marine Corps History* covers a wide spectrum of fascinating topics and makes for some great quarantine reading. Lauren Bowers's article on the "Marines' Hymn" from its origins up to 1919 presents a very interesting snapshot of how this song grew from a collection of themes to what many Marines view as the Service's battle cry.

Though the origins of its melody and lyrics are somewhat hazy, the "Marines' Hymn" nevertheless showcases the innovative spirit of the Corps through an evolution that was both by chance and by design.

Speaking of innovation, the Marine Corps has for years sat at the center of military innovation in everything from concepts and doctrine to warfighting equipment. When Marines put their minds to something, the final result is typically a gamechanger. That, of course, is the easy part. The difficulty is when you, the Marine—for all the right reasons push for your own employer to adopt your invention. John A. Sheehan's piece on Colonel Richard M. Cutts and Brigadier General Richard M. Cutts Jr, covers this dilemma and the intersection of ethics and personal invention.

With the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War moving at a steady clip, I found U.S. Army lieutenant colonel Michael Hunter's article on the *Mayaguez* incident and its relationship to the war in Indochina and South Vietnam refreshing, as this little-known incident is actually a bookend event that has come to signify the sacrifice and frustration of the multidecade-long conflict. Rounding out the journal's scholarly works is Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth W. Estes, USMC (Ret), and Romain Cansière's effort to correct the common misconceptions of Marine Corps tank policy and doctrine. The article is particularly timely as the Marine Corps is phasing out its tanks and tank battalions. If tanks one day return to service in the Marine Corps, this article might very well be

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

at the top of an officer or enlisted Marine's reading list to get it right. Finally, in the issue's In Memoriam section, Dr. Fred Allison, a former Marine aviator, pays tribute to one of the Corps' most accomplished and storied aviators and leaders, Lieutenant General Charles H. Pitman. An insightful book review essay and a broad selection of book reviews round out the issue.

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A Song with "Dash" and "Pep"

A HISTORY OF THE "MARINES' HYMN" TO 1919

by Lauren Bowers

Abstract: From its unknown nineteenth-century origins, the "Marines' Hymn" has grown from a collection of unregulated verses into a dignified anthem reflecting the proud history of the Corps. Focusing on the song's early history until the end of World War I, this article tells the story of that evolution. During this period, the hymn played an increasingly important role in official recruiting and publicity efforts, resulting in a growing popularity among the general public, disagreements about the need to standardize the lyrics, and the introduction of new formats and technologies to allow for wider accessibility. Together, these trends culminated in the authorization and copyright of an official version of the song in the summer of 1919. The "Marines' Hymn" is known worldwide as a reflection of Marine Corps experiences and values, and this article aims to bring some of its forgotten history and the contributions of its strongest advocates to the attention of a modern audience. **Keywords:** "Marines' Hymn," Publicity Bureau, *Recruiters' Bulletin*, Marines in World War I, Quantico, *Leatherneck* magazine, Marine Corps Band, Quantico Post Band, Major General George Barnett, Brigadier General Charles A. Doyen, Lieutenant William H. Santelmann, First Class Musician Arthur Tregina, First Sergeant L. Z. Phillips, copyright

pproved on 15 May 2019, the updated Marine Corps Order 5060.20, Marine Corps Drill and Ceremonies Manual, includes the following statement:

> It is a long standing tradition for Marines, past and present, who when they hear the Marines Hymn that they will face the direction of the music and stand at attention. It is now directed that Marines, present and who

have served honorably, who are not in a formation or part of an actual ceremony, or marching in a parade or review, who when they hear the playing of the Marines Hymn will stand at attention, face the music and sing the words to the Hymn.¹

This directive is the latest addition to the history of the "Marines' Hymn," which began in the nineteenth century as a collection of unregulated verses and slowly transformed into a dignified anthem reflecting the proud history of the U.S. Marine Corps. Untangling the details of that history is difficult, due to the large scale of the topic, the paucity of evidence from the song's early years, and the prevalence of myths and

Lauren Bowers holds a bachelor of arts in international affairs from the George Washington University in Washington, DC, and master's degrees from the University of York in England and Trinity College Dublin in Ireland. She conducted the research for this article while working as an intern in the Marine Corps History Division's Historical Resources Branch at Quantico, VA, in 2019, and gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the following individuals: Annette Amerman and Susan K. Brubaker, formerly of the History Division; Carrie Bowers of the National Museum of the Marine Corps; MSgt Kira Wharton of the Marine Band Library; and Riley Altizer of the Library of the Marine Corps. A note of personal appreciation is also extended to LtCol Richard A. Miller, USMC (Ret). https://doi.org/10.35318/mch.2020060201

¹Enclosure 2, chapter 3 in *Marine Corps Order 5060.20, Marine Corps Drill and Ceremonies Manual* (Washington, DC: Headquarters Marine Corps, 15 May 2019), 3-2.

misconceptions that have been endlessly repeated without proper scrutiny.

Using documents stored at the Marine Band Library in Washington, DC, and the Marine Corps History Division's Historical Resources Branch at Quantico, Virginia, as a foundation, this article tells the story of the "Marines' Hymn" from its early years until the end of World War I. During this period, the hymn moved from training camps and battlefields into more public spaces, where it was increasingly recognized and enjoyed outside the Marine Corps. This transition was driven in part by the Marine Corps Recruiting Publicity Bureau, which deliberately included the hymn in its recruiting efforts and encouraged the addition of new lyrics to reflect the experiences of Marines fighting in a world war.

The increased visibility of the hymn helped raise the public profile of the Marine Corps and led to the use of new technologies, such as the phonograph, to bring the spirit of a military band into private homes. It also led to criticism of the lyrics and differing opinions regarding the need to standardize the verses, culminating in the official authorization and copyright of the hymn in the summer of 1919. The "Marines' Hymn" is known worldwide as a reflection of Marine Corps experiences and values, and this article aims to bring some of its forgotten history to the attention of a modern audience.

Nineteenth-Century Beginnings

The exact origin of the "Marines' Hymn" is unknown, primarily due to a lack of relevant nineteenth-century sources. Our knowledge of the hymn's early years relies almost exclusively on personal reminiscences that were recorded years, and even decades, afterward. It is worth giving an overview of these accounts, to provide citations for some of the more well-known among them; however, unless additional evidence comes to light, historians should proceed with caution when discussing this part of the time line.

Based on the iconic first line, "From the Halls of Montezuma to the Shores of Tripoli," it is generally assumed that the hymn was written after the events of 13 September 1847, when Marines under the command of U.S. Army major general Winfield Scott helped capture Chapultepec Castle in Mexico City, Mexico. Indeed, the most pervasive claim about the origin of the hymn's first verse is that it was written in 1847 by an anonymous Marine, designated as either a private or an officer in various sources, who served as part of the invasion. Some accounts specify that the verse was scribbled at the Aztec Club, a social organization founded in October 1847 in Mexico City for officers serving in the Mexican-American War, but no other details about the alleged lyricist are given.² The lyric referencing "the Halls of Montezuma" likely dates to 1847 or later, but it is possible that other lyrics existed before this time. In any case, without additional information, this vague origin story cannot be viewed as definitive.

Another unconfirmed claim is that the hymn was played in Tokyo in 1853 by Marines who accompanied Commodore Matthew C. Perry on his first U.S. Navy mission to Japan.³ Ten years later, Army sergeant Gus Beurmann allegedly heard a party of men singing the hymn while he was on sentry duty in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Beurmann recounted this incident in a 1918 interview, which may be the origin of the oftrepeated claim that "a Marine of Civil War days" said the Hymn was popular at the time.⁴

The origins of the song's melody are somewhat easier to trace. The first-known investigation into the

² Loren T. Casey, "Sea Soldiers' Song is Mystery Ballad," *Everett (PA) Press*, 20 July 1934, 4; "Famous Marine Corps Hymn Is Sung Around the World," *Republican and Herald* (Pottsville, PA), 1 April 1937, 9; and Joel D. Thacker, *The Aztec Club of 1847* (Washington, DC: Headquarters Marine Corps, 1945), 4.

³ Robert W. Broeg, "Sing It to the Marines," *Saturday Evening Post*, 22 January 1944, 84; and "Marine Corps Hymn Over 100 Years Old: Written by Private," *Plain Speaker* (Hazleton, PA), 5 June 1952, 11. The Marine Corps History Division investigated this claim in 1976 and no supporting evidence was discovered. "Fact Sheet Q & A," unpublished paper, 1976, Hymn subject file, Historical Resources Branch, Marine Corps History Division (MCHD), Quantico, VA.

⁴ "Keeping Our Corps in the Limelight," *Recruiters' Bulletin* 4, no. 8 (June 1918): 15; and Hash Mark, "Whence Came the Marine's Hymn?," *Leatherneck*, 10 April 1926, 1. Editions of the *Recruiters' Bulletin* cited herein were accessed through the Marine Corps University Research Library's Special Collections. Editions of the *Quantico Leatherneck* and *Leatherneck* (the same publication, and until 1920 a newspaper, when it switched to a magazine format) cited herein were accessed at the Historical Resources Branch, MCHD.

history of the hymn was conducted in January 1916 by Colonel Walter F. Smith, second leader of the Marine Corps Band, and Major Albert McLemore of Headquarters Marine Corps. McLemore relayed that "in 1878, when [Major Richard Wallach] was in Paris, the aria to which the Marines' Hymn is now sung was a very popular one." Wallach had identified the melody as an aria from the comic opera *Geneviève de Brabant*, by Jacques Offenbach. Smith listened to the aria and agreed, despite some differences in the melody. John Philip Sousa, leader of the Marine Corps Band from 1880 to 1892, corroborated this assessment in 1929.⁵

A two-act version of *Geneviève de Brabant* premiered at the Théâtre des Bouffes Parisiens in Paris, France, on 19 November 1859. However, the song resembling the "Marines' Hymn," "Couplets des Deux Hommes d'Armes" (Duet for Two Men-at-arms), a lighthearted number sung by two lazy, corrupt gendarmes, was not included until the expanded threeact version premiered in Paris on 26 December 1867. An English version of the libretto was published the following year and the operetta premiered in New York City on 22 October 1868.⁶

The similarities between Offenbach's aria and the "Marines' Hymn" are obvious even to the untrained ear, which raises questions about the veracity of claims that the hymn existed before 1867, and if it did, what melody accompanied the lyrics. Another possible musical influence was suggested by Major McLemore: "I am informed by one of the members of the band, who has a Spanish wife, that the aria was one familiar to her childhood and it may, therefore, be a Spanish folk song."⁷ This letter gives no other specifics, and no such song has been subsequently identified, but the idea of an elusive Spanish folk song as the ori-

⁷McLemore to Smith, 7 January 1916.

gin of the hymn's melody persisted for many years.8 If such a song did exist, it is possible that Offenbach was familiar with it too, either from his travels around Europe or from his wife, Hérminie d'Alcain, daughter of a Spanish official, and that the melody became known to U.S. Marines after he incorporated it into the popular 1867 edition of Geneviève de Brabant. However, in 1950, Marine Corps archivist Joel Thacker investigated this theory and proposed an alternative provenance. Namely, he believed that the alleged folk song traveled directly from Spain to Mexico, where American Marines heard it in the 1840s and created their own lyrics soon after the Battle of Chapultepec, a full 20 years before Offenbach coincidentally used the same melody in his opera.9 Without further information, it is impossible to say which scenario is more credible or if there is truth behind either one.

Two personal accounts provide the most detailed information about the state of the "Marines' Hymn" at the end of the nineteenth century. The first was written by Assistant to the Commandant Brigadier General Ben H. Fuller in October 1928: "The year 1892 seems to be the farthest back [the "Marines' Hymn"] can be traced. In that year, on board the U.S.S. *Wabash* (1855), Lieutenant William Winder of the Navy used to sing the song in these words:

> From the Halls of Montezuma To the shores of Tripoli, We fight our country's battles On land and on the sea. Admiration of the nursemaids, We're the finest ever seen,

⁵A. L. McLemore to Walter F. Smith, 7 January 1916; Smith to McLemore, 10 January 1916; and John Philip Sousa to Wendell C. Neville, 21 December 1929, all Marines' Hymn file, U.S. Marine Band Library, Washington, DC.

⁶ Jacques Offenbach, *Geneviève de Brabant*, French text with English translation, libretto by Jaime and Tréfeu (Boston, MA: Oliver Ditson, 1868); and James J. Fuld, *The Book of World-Famous Music* (New York: Dover Publications, 2000), 351.

⁸ One of the earliest mentions of this theory is found in "Find the Marines' Hymn in an Old Opera Score," *Recruiters' Bulletin*, August 1919, 16. The suggestion reappears in many subsequent publications, including Casey, "Sea Soldiers' Song is Mystery Ballad"; "Marine Corps Hymn Centennial Week to be Observed," *Visalia (CA) Times-Delta*, 6 December 1947, 2; and William D. Parker, *A Concise History of the United States Marine Corps 1775-1969* (Washington, DC: Headquarters Marine Corps, 1970), 143.

⁹ Untitled article, Armed Forces Press Service, 3 September 1950, Hymn subject file, Historical Resources Branch, MCHD. Based on the condition of the photocopy in the working file, the author was unable to determine the title of this article or the name of the publication in which it may have appeared.

Though our fate is sometimes very, very hard, Who would not be a Marine.¹⁰

In the same memorandum, Fuller stated: "Changing the words 'nursemaids' to 'our messmates,' I carried the song to the Philippines in 1899, where various verses were added, principally, I think, by Colonel H. C. Davis."¹¹ The other account was written in 1930 by Lieutenant William H. Santelmann, leader of the Marine Corps Band from 1898 to 1927:

> Shortly after the return of the Marines from their campaign at the Philippine Insurrection, Lt. Wendell C. Neville (now Commandant, MajGen Neville) told me of an inspiring little tune which the Marines used to sing on their hikes in the Philippines [ca. after 1901]. Humming it to me, I set down the music and arranged it for the Marine Band so it could be played at public and private affairs and as it soon became popular, it was regularly used at the "Carabou" Dinners. I also arranged it as a two-step for the famous "Bachelors Cotillion" dances in Washington, and, in remembrance of the strenuous days during the Philippine Insurrection, the Marines adopted it as the "Hymn of the Marines," known as "From the Halls of Montezuma to the Shores of Tripoly [sic]."12

Based on these accounts, it is plausible that the hymn was somewhat widely known among Marines by the 1890s. Notably, Fuller's account asserts that the "Marines' Hymn" was developing organically, with different Marines composing new verses. Santelmann's

" Fuller memo to Lejeune.

account offers another important detail; it shows a deliberate attempt to move the hymn into a more public space, if only in the form of a two-step arrangement for the "Bachelors Cotillion." This widening accessibility of the hymn continued, and throughout the first decades of the twentieth century, the Marine Corps made use of its popularity for recruiting and publicity purposes and to reflect the Corps' changing identity.

A Corps d'elite, 1900–17

It is noteworthy that an early publication of the hymn's first verse appeared during the unification crisis of 1908–9.¹³ Beginning in the 1880s, U.S. Navy commander William F. Fullam, along with other like-minded naval officers, began to push for the removal of Marines from Navy ships.¹⁴ They persisted in their fight until the issue came to a head at the end of Theodore Roosevelt's presidency.

As Roosevelt contemplated the future of the Marine Corps, he was faced with an organization that was actively shaping its own public image and gaining political influence that many detractors considered to be disproportionate to its small size. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 969 on 12 November 1908, which removed the Marines from Navy ships.¹⁵ Opposition within the Marine Corps arose almost immediately, and the issue was further complicated when Army major general Leonard A. Wood suggested that the Marines be completely transferred to the Army.

During this crisis, a short article was published that raised questions about the legality of the restructuring proposals and quoted some reactions by current Marines. The article opened with a verse labeled "A Song of the Marines":

From the halls of Montezuma

¹⁰ Assistant to the Cmdt Ben H. Fuller, memorandum to MajGen Cmdt John A. Lejeune, 11 October 1928, Marines' Hymn file, U.S. Marine Band Library, hereafter Fuller memo to Lejeune.

¹² William H. Santelmann to J. Taylor Branson, 20 January 1930, as quoted in William F. Santelmann to David S. Barry, 8 October 1942, Hymn subject file, Historical Resources Branch, MCHD.

¹³ Robert D. Heinl Jr. claimed that "the earliest appearance of the words so far found in print is on an 1898 recruitment poster," but he provided no further details or citation, and no such poster was identified in the preparation for this article. Robert D. Heinl Jr., *Soldiers of the Sea: The United States Marine Corps, 1775-1962* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1962) 67.

¹⁴ Colin Colbourn, "Esprit de Marine Corps: The Making of the Modern Marine Corps through Public Relations, 1898–1945" (PhD diss., University of Southern Mississippi, 2018), 49–50.

¹⁵ Colbourn, "Esprit de Marine Corps," 49-50.

To the shores of Tripoli, We fight our country's battles By land as well as sea. From the Temple of the Dragon To the sunny Philippine, Though our lot be sometimes hardish, Who wouldn't be a marine?¹⁶

The inclusion of this verse is significant because of its early date and because of how it related to the issue at hand. In an article that raised questions about the very existence and future of the Marine Corps, this "Song of the Marines" represented the identity of the Marines and showed what could be at stake should the proposed changes take root. The controversy over Executive Order 969 led to hearings in both the House and Senate Naval Affairs Committees in late 1908 and early 1909, and when Congress passed the Naval Appropriations Bill on 1 March 1909, it returned Marines to the Fleet through an amendment reversing Executive Order 969.¹⁷

This incident occurred during an important transition period for the Marines. In his doctoral thesis examining Marine Corps public relations from 1898 to 1945, Colin Colbourn asserts that after the Spanish-American War and the Boxer Rebellion, the Marine Corps sought to rebrand itself as a corps d'elite, a flexible and exclusive force of seagoing soldiers. According to Colbourn, this marked the start of a publicity strategy designed to appeal to the general public and circumvent the military hierarchy's efforts to restructure or disband the Marines.¹⁸ To this end, a local recruiting publicity bureau was established in Chicago, Illinois, in 1907, followed by the creation of the national headquarters of the Marine Corps Recruiting Publicity Bureau in New York City in 1911.¹⁹ Its keystone publication was the Recruiters' Bulletin, which ran monthly from 1914 to 1922 and provided recruiters with a coordinated resource that focused on methods of promoting a positive image of the Corps within local communities as a way to appeal to potential recruits.²⁰

The Marine Corps Recruiting Publicity Bureau's efforts increased after the election of President Woodrow Wilson in 1912. Wilson's interventionist policies, particularly in the Caribbean, put the Marines at the forefront of his administration's goal of spreading democracy, order, and civility in the name of progressive diplomacy. Marine Corps recruiting efforts reflected this newfound role by highlighting the opportunities for travel and the chance to see immediate action.²¹ This also marked an upswing in the incorporation of the "Marines' Hymn" in publicity efforts. For instance, when Marines were deployed to Veracruz, Mexico, in April 1914, a press release noted:

The particular significance of the "marines' hymn" to the present activity of the Marine Corps in the operations at Vera Cruz [*sic*] was recalled by officers of the navy tonight. A reference in the hymn to the presence of the marines and of the Montezumas during the Mexican War made it very appropriate at this time.²²

Individual verses of the hymn were also printed in several Marine Corps recruiting pamphlets, including U.S. Marines—Duties, Experiences, Opportunities, Pay (1913 and 1915 editions) and The American Marine, 'Soldier of the Sea' (1913 edition).²³ In November 1914, the Recruiters' Bulletin announced the publication of a Publicity Bureau pamphlet entitled The Marines in Rhyme, Prose, and Cartoon. This compilation of cel-

¹⁶ "Problem of Marines: How They Regard Their Change in Service," *Aberdeen (SD) Daily News*, 11 November 1908, 7, Marines' Hymn file, U.S. Marine Band Library.

¹⁷ Colbourn, "Esprit de Marine Corps," 57–58.

¹⁸ Colbourn, "Esprit de Marine Corps," 41–43.

¹⁹ Heinl, Soldiers of the Sea, 186–87.

²⁰ Colbourn, "Esprit de Marine Corps," 9–10.

²¹ Colbourn, "Esprit de Marine Corps," 60.

²² "Marine Hymn Appropriate," *Evening Sun* (Baltimore, MD), 23 April 1914, 5; and " 'Marines' Hymn' Recalled: 'From the Halls of Montezuma to the Shores of Tripoli,' "*New York Times*, 24 April 1914, 3.

²³ L. P. Pinkston and H. C. Snyder, U.S. Marines: Duties, Experiences, Opportunities, Pay, 3d and 5th eds. (New York: Chasmar-Winchell Press, 1913, 1915); and The American Marine, "Soldier of the Sea": Extract from the Sunday Star, Washington D.C. December 7, 1913 (London: Forgotten Books, 2017), Hymn subject file, Historical Resources Branch, MCHD.

ebratory songs, poems, stories, and illustrations was lauded by the *Recruiters' Bulletin* as "a new departure in recruiting literature." It proved to be so popular that a second edition was soon printed to keep up with demand.²⁴ The cover of the first and second editions was beautifully decorated with color pictures of "two strapping clean faced Marines in Winter uniform": a sergeant standing at attention with rifle in hand and a member of the Bugle Corps. Notably, the "Marines' Hymn" was given the highest place of honor as the first piece in the pamphlet, appearing after a full-page portrait of Major General Commandant George Barnett:

> From the Halls of Montezuma To the shores of Tripoli, We fight our country's battles On the land as on the sea. Admiration of the nation We're the finest ever seen. And we glory in the title Of the United States Marine.

From the pest-hole of Cavite To the ditch at Panama, You will find them very needy Of marines—that's what we are. We're the watchdogs of a pile of coal, Or we dig a magazine. Though our job-lots they are manifold, Who would not be a Marine?

Our flag's unfurled to every breeze, From the dawn to setting sun. We have fought in every clime and place Where we could take a gun. In the snow of far off Northern Lands And in sunny tropic scenes, You will find us always on the job— The United States Marines. Here's health to you and to our corps Which we are proud to serve. In many a strife we have fought for life, But never lost our nerve. If the Army and the Navy Ever look on heaven's scenes, They will find the streets are guarded By United States Marines.²⁵

In publicizing the pamphlet, the *Recruiters' Bulletin* made special mention of the hymn, calling it "the most famous of all American battle songs" and "the song with more dash than any other possessed by any branch of the united service."²⁶ In a follow-up article a month later, the *Recruiters' Bulletin* noted that in a book that was excellently conceived overall, "the attention of the reader is quickly caught by the Marines' Hymn.... The last two verses of this song have enough merit to warrant many repetitions."²⁷

It is striking that this version of the hymn from 1914 is almost completely recognizable to modern eyes. The last two verses, in particular, are virtually unchanged in the current official version. Credit for some of these lyrics is often given to Major Henry C. Davis. In July 1915, the *Recruiters' Bulletin* identified him as the writer of the last two verses, and he was later credited in the above-mentioned memorandum from future Commandant Ben Fuller in 1928.²⁸ Davis, later promoted to colonel, was quoted as saying, "The Marines' Hymn is, of course, a more or less famous song historically.... The following two verses I wrote at Camp Meyer [Guantánamo Bay, Cuba] in 1911 when on an expedition."²⁹ Specifically, Davis claimed credit for penning the above verse regarding the "pest-hole

²⁴ "Recruit by Mail for Marine Corps," *Recruiters' Bulletin* 1, no. 1 (November 1914): 11.

²⁵ *The Marines in Rhyme, Prose, and Cartoon*, 2d ed. (New York: U.S. Marine Corps Recruiting Publicity Bureau, 1914–15), 4, Hymn subject file, Historical Resources Branch, MCHD.

²⁶ "Recruit by Mail for Marine Corps," *Recruiters' Bulletin* 1, no. 1 (November 1914): 11.

²⁷ "The Marines in Rhyme, Prose, and Cartoon," *Recruiters' Bulletin* 1, no. 2 (December 1914): 7.

 ²⁸ Editorial, *Recruiters' Bulletin* 2, no. 9 (July 1915): 8; and Fuller memo to Lejeune, 11 October 1928, Marines' Hymn file, U.S. Marine Band Library.
 ²⁹ The Book of Navy Songs (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1930), 126–27.



Courtesy of Sgt Erik D. Maddox, private collection Cover of the second edition of *The Marines in Rhyme, Prose, and Cartoon,* published by the Marine Corps Recruiting Publicity Bureau, 1915.

of Cavite" and another, equally irreverent, verse not included in *The Marines in Rhyme, Prose, and Cartoon*:

From the school of Application, To the shores of Subig [*sic*] Bay, We've avoided exertation [*sic*] In the most ingenious way. Admiration of our mattresses Is the finest thing we've seen, For it answers to the question, Why the Hell is a marine?³⁰

Given the conflicting evidence, the precise extent of his contribution is unclear. At best, Davis has been considered by the Marine Corps as just one of many contributors to the development of the hymn.

By 1915, the Marine Corps Band customarily ended its concerts with the "Marines' Hymn," sometimes followed by "The Star-Spangled Banner," and the time was ripe to publish a single official arrangement.³¹ In February 1915, Assistant Commandant Colonel John A. Lejeune wrote a memorandum acknowledging that Lieutenant Santelmann was creating a new arrangement of "the old Marines' Hymn" and stated that the Commandant wanted it to be sent to all the bands in the Marine Corps when published.³² The new instrumental arrangement was published that summer and credited to First Class Musician Edward M. Van Loock of the Marine Corps Band.³³

Unsurprisingly, the increased visibility of the hymn's lyrics and music sparked a deeper interest in its history and a closer consideration of the ramifications of tying it so closely to Marine Corps identity. As noted above, January 1916 marked the first known investigation into the musical origin of the hymn. That February, the *Recruiters' Bulletin* published an opinion piece by Captain Frank E. Evans that offered a scathing rebuke of the current state of the hymn and its potentially damaging effect on the reputation of the Corps:

> The Marine Corps is unique, in all of the services, in having a Corps song But it must be evident to the Corps that its song, The Halls of Montezuma, will fall into disrepute in the Corps unless measures are taken to standardize it. Each expedition has added either a new verse or a new rendition of some old verse. Verses have crept into the original song that either

³⁰ The Book of Navy Songs, 126–27; and "The Marines' Hymn," Marine Corp Gazette (September 1942): 27, 53, photocopy of article reproduction, marked "Reproduced at Government Expense," in files of the Marine Band Library, with the publication incorrectly identified as *Leatherneck* typed across the top of the page (further investigation discovered the article was actually published in the Marine Corps Gazette, as cited).

³⁴Transcriptions of programs for Marine Corps Band concerts at Marine Barracks, Washington, DC, 3 January 1915, 26 April 1915, 1 May 1915, 5 June 1915, and 9 June 1915, Hymn subject file, Historical Resources Branch, MCHD.

³² Assistant Cmdt John A. Lejeune, memo to Col McCawley, 12 February 1915, Hymn subject file, Historical Resources Branch, MCHD.

³³ William H. Santelmann to R. P. Pierce, 8 March 1915; and William H. Santelmann to unnamed music publisher, 30 March 1915, Hymn subject file, Historical Resources Branch, MCHD.

lack merit as verses or whose merit is tainted by undignified or bombastic wording. Such a line as "admiration of the nation" may appeal to a recruit or a newly caught second lieutenant, but their effect on the service at large is one of risibility. The spectacle of Marines guarding the streets of heaven might appeal to an original member of the Ford Peace excursion as a highly admirable employment of an armed force, but the irreverent are apt to guffaw at such a vision.³⁴

He proposed that all known versions of the song be submitted to a committee, such as the Board of Control of the Marine Corps Association, so that musical experts could recommend an appropriate official version. The result would be "a song purged of bombast, vulgarities and improbabilities, and one that the Corps can sing with its oldtime [*sic*] pride in the song. Their action would also act as an effective curb on further maltreatment of the Marine Corps song."³⁵

Although his language is extreme, Captain Evans was not alone in his concerns. As the "Marines' Hymn" was brought further into the public eye during the 1910s through recruiting materials and musical performances, and then through a world war, a dichotomy of attitudes emerged that would last for decades. On one side of the debate were those who sought to continue the tradition of regularly updating the hymn's lyrics to reflect the experiences of new Marines. On the other side were those like Evans, who called for a top-down standardization of the hymn that would reflect the Marine Corps' new phase of institutionalized professionalism.

"First to Fight" and Bois de Belleau, 1917–18

On 6 April 1917, Congress issued a joint resolution declaring war against the German Empire. Within days, Major General Commandant Barnett secured the Marine Corps' place in the newly formed American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) and began a national recruiting drive. Hoping to appeal to "red-blooded men of action," Barnett emphasized that "Marines are always called first when war is imminent, and they have shown the way to fighting men since 1798."36 This assertion was not new, but the mobilization of 1917 marked the start of the widespread use of the pithy slogan "First to Fight," which encapsulated its message. The slogan proved to be incredibly enticing to new recruits looking for immediate action. When the Recruiters' Bulletin conducted a survey in December 1917 among major newspaper publishers about the Marine Corps' wartime publicity efforts, many respondents specifically cited the "First to Fight" slogan as a primary reason for its success, with one editor from the New York Post stating that the slogan "is the very best recruiting appeal of the war."37

The "Marines' Hymn" was quickly incorporated into wartime publicity and explicitly connected to the "First to Fight" slogan. On 20 May 1917, the New York Times published an article subtitled "Europe to See Corps that Has Fought 'From the Halls of Montezuma to the Shores of Tripoli'," which introduced the public to the first wave of Marines sailing to France under the command of Colonel Charles A. Doyen, as a part of the fighting Army division under Major General John J. Pershing.³⁸ The article closed with four printed verses of "the world-famous fighting song of the American Marines." They were the same four verses previously printed in The Marines in Rhyme, Prose, and Cartoon, with one important exception. The fifth and sixth lines of the first verse were changed from "Admiration of the nation, we're the finest ever seen" to the now-familiar "First to fight for right and free-

³⁴ Frank E. Evans, " 'The Halls of Montezuma': Call For All Versions of Song," *Recruiters' Bulletin* 2, no. 4 (February 1916): 7.
³⁵ Evans, " 'The Halls of Montezuma'," 7.

[&]quot;Evans, The Halls of Montezuma, 7.

 ³⁶ "Major Gen. Barnett's Plea for Marine Corps Recruits," New York Times,
 4 April 1917; and "Begging for Marines," Chicago (IL) Tribune, 5 April 1917.
 ³⁷ Colbourn, "Esprit de Marine Corps," 90–91.

³⁸ "Fighting Not New to Doyen's Marines," *New York Times*, 20 May 1917, 2.

dom, and to keep our honor clean."³⁹ This new lyric is not credited to any specific person, but given the context in which it appears, possibly for the first time in print, it is conceivable that the change originated from within the Marine Corps Recruiting Publicity Bureau, as a strategic way of promoting the new slogan and ingraining it further into the overall identity of the Marine Corps.

Versions of the hymn containing the lyrics "Admiration of the nation, we're the finest ever seen" continued to be printed and recorded periodically until at least 1951, but the change to "First to fight for right and freedom" caught on quickly as the preferred version throughout World War I and beyond.⁴⁰ For instance, the change was incorporated into the third edition of *The Marines in Rhyme, Prose, and Cartoon*, printed about 1917, and in early printed sheet music editions of the hymn in December 1917 and August 1918, as discussed below.⁴¹

Another significant contribution from World War I was a verse commemorating the battles of the Château-Thierry campaign, including Belleau Wood, in the summer of 1918. The details of these brutal battles were widely reported and the August edition of the *Recruiters' Bulletin* included the following notice:

> When the French government renamed Belleau Wood in honor of the U.S. Marines, a private of Marines celebrated the event by scribbling a new verse for the "Marines' Hymn." Although the writer was killed a few days later, his comrades adopted his verse as a part of their battle song.

> > As we raised our flag at Tripoli And again at Mexico, So we took the Chateau-Thierry and

The forest of Belleau. When we hurled the Hun back from the Marne He said we fought like fiends; And the French rechristened Belleau Wood For United States Marines.⁴²

This verse was subsequently reprinted elsewhere, such as the November 1918 edition of the *Ladies Home Journal*, where it appeared as the third of four verses featured in a sheet music version of the hymn. In the accompanying article, Marines were referred to as "the singingest of all soldiers," whose "voice[s] in song [are] as familiar in the neighborhood of Chateau-Thierry as [their] rifle[s] became." The author also noted that the new verse about Belleau Wood gave the reader an idea of how up-to-date the song was kept.⁴³

Aside from the Belleau Wood verse and the change to "First to fight," most of the lyric suggestions from this time were probably not presented as serious or long-lasting revisions, but rather as light-hearted, ephemeral reflections of the experiences of the Marines who wrote them. For instance, journalist E. U. Stephens reported that a popular version of the hymn sung by Marines in the Fifth Regiment opened with "From the shores of dear old U.S.A. to the clime of sunny France, we have come to lick the Kaiser if we ever get the chance."44 Another suggestion relocated the famous final lines of the hymn: "If the French or British Soldiers, Ever look on Berlin's scenes, They will find the streets patrolled by United States Marines."45 More earnest lyrics were also suggested, including the following verse that was published in a St. Louis newspaper on 13 September 1918, and then reprinted a week later at the request of the Marine Corps Recruiting Publicity Bureau:

³⁹ "Fighting Not New to Doyen's Marines," 2.

⁴⁰ Two notable examples of "Admiration of the nation": *The Marines*' *Hymn*, Kate Smith and the Kate Smith Singers, orchestra under the direction of Jack Miller, recorded 12 February 1942, Columbia Records, 36540, 78 rpm; and *Halls of Montezuma*, directed by Lewis Milestone (Los Angeles, CA: Twentieth Century Fox, 1951).

⁴¹ *The Marines in Rhyme, Prose, and Cartoon*, 3d ed. (New York: U.S. Marine Corps Recruiting Publicity Bureau, 1917–18), Poems file, Historical Resources Branch, MCHD.

⁴² "Keeping Our Corps in the Limelight," *Recruiters' Bulletin* 4, no. 10 (August 1918): 14.

⁴³ "The Song of the Marines, Arranged by A. Tregina, United States Marine Band," *Ladies Home Journal*, November 1918, 87.

⁴⁴ "Keeping Our Corps in the Limelight," *Recruiters' Bulletin* 4, no. 6 (April 1918): 12.

⁴⁵ "Change Suggested for the Marine Hymn," *Quantico Leatherneck*, 6 March 1918, 6.

From the year of 1779 To 1917, We've fought our country's battles In every war between. And if we're called to cross the seas In this her latest strife, Each man will proudly face the foe And gladly give his life.⁴⁶

These amateur lyricists continued the tradition of updating the hymn with the times, and their efforts were bolstered by two additional factors. The first was the Publicity Bureau's support of such compositions, as seen through the printing of several new verses in various newspapers. Publicizing these individual contributions no doubt encouraged readers to pen even more verses, to memorialize their wartime experiences, and perhaps in hopes of seeing their own names in print.

The second factor in encouraging new additions was the repeated references to the hymn in articles describing the lives of wartime Marines. On 1 July 1917, the Washington, DC, Evening Star published an article about music that was popular among servicemembers. It made special note of the "Marines' Hymn," including printing the lyrics of the first verse and calling it "eminently a soldier's song" that was produced by war and customarily sung on formal occasions.⁴⁷ In a letter to the editor of a Vermont newspaper the following year, Second Lieutenant Merritt A. Edson described his training experiences at Quantico, Virginia, in September 1917, noting that "the Marine corps hymn gets just as much reverence as the National anthem, and I believe if a man refused to stand up at attention, or remove his hat while singing that song he would be tarred and feathered."48

Reports from Europe also mentioned the hymn. The romanticized image of Marines—"bronzed and weatherbeaten, heavy packs strapped over their shoulders, swing[ing] jauntily along"-singing and whistling the hymn as they marched through quaint French villages on their way to the front, was featured in more than one account.⁴⁹ The most frequently repeated anecdote of this type was first printed in Stars and Stripes in August 1918. The article recounts the story of "a wounded officer from among the gallant French lancers" who was recovering at an American field hospital when he inquired "about the dashing contingent that had fought at his regiment's left." The soldier reportedly said, "I believe they are your soldiers from Montezuma. At least when they advanced this morning they were all singing 'From the Halls of Montezuma to the Shores of Tripoli"."50 Whether or not these accounts are factually accurate is not the point. Rather, they are important in showing that the hymn was a regular feature of wartime publicity and likely inspired many people to embrace the song and make their own personal contributions to it.

Merry Christmas from Quantico and a Song with Plenty of "Pep," 1917–18 As the "Marines' Hymn" became more popular, the Corps found new ways to keep it in the public eye. In December 1917, the staff of the *Quantico Leatherneck* newspaper published a sheet music edition of the hymn, including four written verses and musical notation for piano and voice.⁵¹ The *Quantico Leatherneck*, predecessor of *Leatherneck* magazine, debuted in November 1917, shortly after Marine Barracks Quantico opened as an East Coast base for the much-needed training and organization of tactical units.⁵²

In its second edition, dated 24 November 1917, the newspaper printed the following announcement:

⁵² Heinl, Soldiers of the Sea, 192.

⁴⁶ "Marine Corps Hymn," *St. Louis (MO) Star and Times*, 13 September 1918, 8; and "Song of the Marines," *St. Louis (MO) Star and Times*, 19 September 1918, 20.

⁴⁷ S. H. Walker, "Favorite Music of Our Fighters on Land and Water," *Evening Star* (Washington, DC), 1 July 1917, 36. This article was also published in the *Recruiters' Bulletin* 3, no. 10 (August 1917): 6–8.

⁴⁸Letter from Lt Merritt Edson, Springfield (VT) Reporter, 1 August 1918, 6.

⁴⁹ "The Marines Make a Raid into No Man's Land—Story of the First Man Killed in Active Combat," *Burlington (VT) Free Press*, 15 August 1918, 13; and "How Marines Entered the Trenches," *Recruiters' Bulletin* 4, no. 7 (May 1918): 4.

⁵⁰ "Along the Fighting Front," *Stars and Stripes* (Paris, France), 16 August 1918, 8.

⁵¹*The Marines' Hymn*, rev. by Charles Doyen, arranged by Steve Halblaub (Quantico, VA: *Quantico Leatherneck*, 1917), Marines' Hymn file, U.S. Marine Band Library.



a courtesy to indicate his approval of the publication, or whether he personally revised the lyrics. The lyrics in this edition are identical to those printed in the aforementioned *New York Times* article from May 1917, so if the *Quantico Leatherneck* did mean to credit Doyen for a specific revision, it is possible that they were referring to the recent "First to fight" lyric change in the first verse. However, without additional evidence, it is not possible at this time to make a conclusive link between Doyen and this revision.

A third article, printed 22 December, announced that the sheet music had arrived at Quantico on 19 December, "and its appearance was a signal for an unprecedented welcome. Everyone fell on its neck, figuratively speaking, so glad were they to see it."56 This article also gave special acknowledgment to "Privates Goodwin, Alexander, and Halblaub," who "worked like Trojans" outside their normal routines to finish the edition. It ended by saying, "theirs will be the rewards hereafter," a note of high praise that would soon become a tragic reality for two of the edition's contributors.⁵⁷ Private Steve Halblaub, credited as the arranger of the sheet music, enlisted in the Marine Corps on 21 May 1917 at age 21 and joined the 80th Company, Sixth Regiment, at Quantico that August. The following year, he fought in the Battle of Belleau Wood, where he sustained a gunshot wound to his left shoulder on 8 June and died five days later.58 Only four months after, on 6 October, Brigadier General Doyen died at Quantico, a victim of the influenza pandemic.59

It is unclear how widely known the *Quantico Leatherneck* edition was at the time of its printing. An article in the *Recruiters' Bulletin* from June 1918



U.S. Marine Band Library

Cover of the "Marines' Hymn" sheet music for piano and voice, published by the *Quantico Leatherneck*, December 1917.

"The Marine Hymn is to be published with music, oh yes, with all its thrills, thru the aid of the Y.M.C.A. ... Postoffice [*sic*] clerks have been warned not to even try to remember the names of the girls back home when the rush comes thru the sale of these copies."⁵³ A follow-up article from 15 December made it clear that this edition was a special Christmas treat and specifically noted that the sheet music was at last being published due to high public demand: "It came about like this. The Leatherneck [*sic*] staff has been besieged with requests for the publication of the Marine Hymn. But space limits in this paper prohibited and still do. Still there was a necessity for it getting into print some way, and it appeared that the paper must do it."⁵⁴

⁵⁵ "Get the Tune Boy and Also Get the Step to the Hymn," 1.

⁵⁶ "Marine Hymn Given a Regular Welcome," *Quantico Leatherneck*, 22 December 1917, 1.

⁵⁷ "Marine Hymn Given a Regular Welcome," 1.

⁵⁸World War I casualty lists, Historical Resources Branch, MCHD.

⁵⁹ "Brig. Gen. C. A. Doyen Dies of Influenza," *New York Times*, 8 October 1918, 11.

⁵³ "Marine Hymn with Music Will Be Published Soon," *Quantico Leatherneck*, 24 November 1917, 1.

⁵⁴ "Get the Tune Boy and Also Get the Step to the Hymn," *Quantico Leatherneck*, 15 December 1917, 1.

stated, "The complete hymn (words and music) was published by a Chicago firm for a number of years. The plates were afterwards destroyed, and at present no copies of the song are for sale. Arrangements are now being made to again have the song published and distributed in folio form."⁶⁰ Aside from the reference to a mysterious Chicago edition (which has not been uncovered), this shows the Marine Corps Recruiting Publicity Bureau's lack of awareness of the December 1917 Quantico edition.

The bureau produced at least two sheet music editions in 1918. The cover of one, often incorrectly credited as being the first sheet music version of the hymn, reads: "Printed but not published by the U.S.M.C. Publicity Bureau, New York, NY, August 1, 1918."⁶¹ This was available as a stand-alone edition, but full images of this version were also reprinted in the 4 August 1918 "War Songs" edition of the *Boston Sunday Advertiser* to ensure wider accessibility.⁶²

Notably, this version only includes the three now-familiar verses and omits the "pest-hole of Cavite" verse. Credit for this vocal and piano arrangement was given to First Class Musician Arthur Tregina of the Marine Corps Band. Tregina later commented on the work in an interview with *Leatherneck* in 1933:

> Then they ordered me to arrange a proper and appropriate setting of the "Marines' Hymn." The music was taken from the opera "Genevieve de Brabant," by Offenbach. I merely harmonized it in an easy and playable manner for voice and piano. They have made it the official version at any rate, and it will keep the old Corps from entirely forgetting me when I retire.⁶³



U.S. Marine Band Library

Cover of the "Marines' Hymn" sheet music for piano and voice, printed by the Marine Corps Recruiting Publicity Bureau, 1 August 1918.

In September 1918, the *Recruiters' Bulletin* announced another upcoming sheet music publication by the Publicity Bureau, this time a "de luxe" edition, complete with a cover printed in four colors that featured two Marines flanking a monument listing important campaigns from the American Revolution to Château-Thierry.⁶⁴

This era also saw the advent of sound recordings of the hymn on phonograph. The significance of this new technology in publicizing the "Marines' Hymn" was eloquently described in a letter dated 17 May 1918 from Second Lieutenant Robert B. Stuart of the Tenth Regiment, Marine Barracks Quantico, to the Victor Talking Machine Company:

⁶⁰ "Marines' Hymn on Victor Records," *Recruiters' Bulletin* 4, no. 8 (June 1918): 24.

⁶¹ Arthur Tregina, *The Marines' Hymn* (New York: U.S. Marine Corps Publicity Bureau, 1918), Marines' Hymn file, U.S. Marine Band Library.⁶² "War Songs," *Boston (MA) Sunday Advertiser*, 4 August 1918, Marines' Hymn file, U.S. Marine Band Library.

⁶³ "Arthur Tregini [*sic*]," *Leatherneck*, October 1933, 33, Hymn subject file, Historical Resources Branch, MCHD.

⁶⁴ Sheet music cover illustration, "With the Globe, Eagle and Anchor," *Recruiters' Bulletin* 4, no. 11 (September 1918): 13.



Special Collections, Marine Corps University Research Library Illustration of the cover for a "de luxe" sheet music edition of the "Marines' Hymn" published by the Marine Corps Recruiting Publicity Bureau, featured in the September 1918 issue of *Recruiters' Bulletin*.

> I take the liberty of suggesting that you put "The Marines' Hymn," words and music, on a record. . . . Every Marine is taught and knows the words and music of this classic by heart. In their daily mass-singing, the Marines in training here stand, uncovered, and sing this—their song. The singing of it on hikes makes the last long mile the shortest mile. They are inspired by its singing in and back of the front line trenches in France. Its singing has fostered an additional esprit de corps

among the "Soldiers of the Sea". . . . To be typical the song should be sung with plenty of "pep," and not drawled out like a church hymn. The record should be, I should say, replete with martial airs and music. Possibly the insertion of the drum, fife and bugle effects from "Semper Fidelis" would add to its attractiveness. . . . In view of the fact that the strength of the Marine Corps has recently been increased to 75,500 men, a great part of whom must yet be recruited, the further fact that the new men will be required to learn "The Marines' Hymn," words and music, by heart; the fact that the Marines are now continually before the public eye, and the fact that the song is catchy, we think the public should know our hymn better and we know the Corps deserves and would appreciate this recognition.65

Stuart's appeal was one of many that did not go unheard. An item in the June 1918 *Recruiters' Bulletin* noted that requests for such a recording had been flooding in, including at the recent dedication ceremony of the auditorium at Quantico. When attendees were told by Lieutenant Santelmann that the song could only be played "on command," one mother of a Marine asked the Publicity Bureau to "suggest to the 'powers that be' that this 'command' be given and thereby give a great deal of pleasure to the folks at home, as well as the boys on leave." To meet this demand, the Victor Talking Machine Company produced phonograph records, released around 30 July 1918, featuring "Semper Fidelis" on one side and the "Marines' Hymn" on the other.⁶⁶

This mass production of sheet music and phonograph recordings of the hymn ushered in a new phase

⁶⁵ R. B. Stuart to Victor Talking Machine Company, 17 May 1918, Marines' Hymn file, U.S. Marine Band Library.

⁶⁶ "Marines' Hymn on Victor Records," 24.

of accessibility. Whereas Van Loock's 1915 arrangement was designed for impressive public performances by military bands, the piano and vocal arrangements by the *Quantico Leatherneck* and Arthur Tregina and the phonograph recordings of the Victor Talking Machine Company were meant for more intimate settings, such as private homes or small gatherings, and could be played at any time. They allowed for a more personal connection with the hymn, as a teaching tool for future recruits and a comfort to those anxiously awaiting news of their Marines overseas. The explicit labeling of some of these products as Christmas gifts or "de luxe" editions likely made them even more cherished.

Now that the "Marines' Hymn" could be played in every home, proponents of standardization were even more motivated to seek official approval of a single, dignified version. Authorizing such a version, and utilizing the popular sheet music and phonograph formats to promote it, would ensure that, in the aftermath of the Great War, only a limited number of deliberately selected verses, sung with their appropriate "pep" and "martial airs," would come to dominate the public's image of what the "Marines' Hymn" should be.

Transition to Peace and the Copyright of First Sergeant L. Z. Phillips, 1919

The first-known indication of a plan to standardize and copyright the "Marines' Hymn" in the postwar era is seen in a letter dated 18 June 1919 from the Quantico Post commander, Brigadier General John T. Myers, to Major General Commandant Barnett: "It is requested that the MajGen Commandant render a decision as to what is the official version of the Marine Hymn." Myers went on to credit a Dr. Darby of the YMCA and Sergeant L. Z. Phillips, the Quantico Post bandmaster, for spearheading the effort to publish a newly authorized version.⁶⁷

L. Z. Phillips was one of the key players in the history of the hymn during the interwar years, but the extent and impact of his contribution has been all but forgotten. When Phillips enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserve in Cleveland, Ohio, on 29 September 1917, he was not a typical recruit. Rather, he was a 50-year-old, gray-haired restaurateur who wore glasses and was missing the little finger on his left hand.⁶⁸ He was new to the Marine Corps, but he had previously served in the 16th Infantry Band of the U.S. Army from 1886 to 1890, and perhaps also in the Third Artillery Regiment from 1883 to 1885.⁶⁹

Phillips joined the Marine Corps during a targeted recruiting drive in Cleveland in September 1917 to enlist musicians for a Ninth Regiment Band at Quantico. First Class Musician Arthur Tregina of the Marine Corps Band led the drive and succeeded in enlisting talented musicians from Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia, "each one a native born American, clean of heart and strong of soul."⁷⁰ As someone who had led bands all his life, Phillips was chosen as bandmaster and enlisted in the Marine Corps as a first sergeant. He continued in this role until he was honorably discharged in May 1922.

As noted above, it is clear that by June 1919, Phillips was a driving force behind the publication of an official version of the hymn and the subsequent copyright. His exact motivations are not known, but he seems to have been well suited to the task. Not only did he have the professional credential as the Quan-

⁶⁷ Post Cmdr, Quantico, John T. Myers to the MajGen Cmdt, 18 June 1919, as quoted in a memo to Gen Lane, 2 April 1929, Hymn Subject File, Historical Resources Branch, MCHD. There is some confusion regarding Phillips's first and middle names, but the initials "L. Z." are used consistently throughout official documentation: L. Z. Phillips, USMC service record, Marines' Hymn file, U.S. Marine Band Library; certificate of marriage, LZ Phillips to Kate Keller, 6 February 1895, Lucas County, OH, Ancestry.com; and L Z Phillips, Grave 23151, Section 17, Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, VA.

⁶⁸ L. Z. Phillips, USMC service record.

⁶⁹ MajGen Cmdt, memo to the AdjGen of the Army, 12 December 1921, found in L. Z. Phillips's USMC service record.

⁷⁰ Arthur Tregina, "How the Popular Post Band Was Recruited and Formed," *Quantico Leatherneck*, 9 February 1918, 3.



Library of Congress

Cover of the "Marines' Hymn" sheet music for piano and voice, approved by MajGen Cmdt George Barnett (misspelled as "Bennett") and published by the *Leatherneck* soon after the official copyright registration of 19 August 1919.

tico Post bandmaster, he was also a songwriter and composer in his own right.⁷¹ As a restaurant owner in Cleveland, he was also an established businessman, which may have given him insight into the publicity potential of such an endeavor. His dedication to the project can be seen in the fact that he stated his intention to pursue the new publication "through patriotic motives" and initially proposed to finance it himself.⁷² However, Brigadier General Myers directed *Leatherneck* to provide the finances instead, with the idea that the newspaper would then "be entitled to the profits arising therefrom, and the money so accruing, would eventually be expended for the benefit of the enlisted

⁷² Post Cmdr, Quantico to the MajGen Cmdt, 18 June 1919.

men; the profits from the *Leatherneck* being periodically transferred to the camp welfare fund."⁷³

Major General Commandant Barnett approved an official version of the hymn on 30 June 1919.⁷⁴ Less than two months later, on 19 August 1919, a copyright for the "Marines' Hymn" was registered with the Library of Congress.⁷⁵ According to the copyright certificate, the song was registered in the name of the United States Marine Corps, Quantico, Virginia, for a term of 28 years. Credit for the "words and music" was given to L. Z. Phillips of the United States, but notably, in a different copy of the certificate, the word "compiled" is handwritten above this line, so it reads "words and music 'compiled' by L. Z. Phillips, Quantico, VA, 'The Leatherneck'."⁷⁶

A copy of sheet music housed at the Library of Congress, showing a brightly colored image of four Marines marching across a tropical setting, is almost certainly an example of the earliest edition of the newly authorized and copyrighted hymn from the summer of 1919.⁷⁷ It can be so precisely dated because in the bottom left corner is the inscription "Authorized and Approved by Major General Geo. Bennett," a clear misspelling of "Barnett." Barnett directed this misspelling to be corrected by *Leatherneck* in a memorandum to Myers dated 29 September 1919, making it unlikely that any editions printed after this date

⁷¹ Phillips is credited as the author of the popular songs "Dear Old Flag" and "Only One Face in Dreamland" and of several religious songs. "Our Post Band," *Leatherneck*, 21 August 1920, 1.

⁷³ Post Cmdr, Quantico to the MajGen Cmdt, 18 June 1919.

⁷⁴ Memo to Gen Lane, 2 April 1929; and Joel Thacker, memo to Administrative Officer, Historical Division, 8 December 1950, Hymn subject file, Historical Resources Branch, MCHD.

⁷⁵ L. Z. Phillips, "The Marine's Hymn," Certificate of Copyright Registration, Copyright Office of the U.S. Library of Congress, E 457132, 19 August 1919, Marines' Hymn file, U.S. Marine Band Library. The application was received by the Copyright Office on 18 August and registered the following day. The registration has been cited incorrectly in some sources as E 457152. The date of 1891 is frequently given as the year of the first copyright, but no supporting evidence for this claim has been found. It is possible that this date originated as a typo of "1919," since a full date is sometimes given as "19 August 1891."

⁷⁶L. Z. Phillips, "The Marine's Hymn," Certificate of Copyright Registration. Given the discrepancy, it is likely that the handwritten notation of "compiled" was added later by a cataloger at the Library of Congress.
⁷⁷ The Marines' Hymn (Quantico, VA: Leatherneck, 1919), box 54, M1646, LCCN 2014561867, Library of Congress.



would contain the same error.⁷⁸ A look inside reveals that this official version of the hymn was composed of the three now-familiar verses, including the "First to fight for right and freedom" lyric in the first verse, and the following verse honoring Belleau Wood included as the third verse:

> When we were called across the sea To stand for home and right, With the spirit of the brave and free We fought with all our might. When we helped to stop the German's drive They said we fought like fiends, And the French rechristened Belleau Wood, For United States Marines.⁷⁹

The author of this verse is not known for certain, but Phillips was likely the one who included it in the official authorization request to Barnett. According to the 18 June memorandum, Phillips proposed a new verse to take the place of "the third verse," likely referring to the increasingly impolitic "pest-hole of Cavite" verse from about 1911, which is not included in this version. Although the text of Phillips's proposed verse is not given in the memorandum, its position as the new third verse matches the placement of the Belleau Wood verse. Furthermore, when Phillips sent a letter to the Office of the Commandant years later outlining his role in the 1919 publication and copyright of the hymn, he claimed that "while bandmaster and song leader at Quantico he collected from various Marines fragments of verses and music of what they called the 'Halls of Montezuma,' and from this material composed a selection which he christened 'The Marines' Hymn,' a piano copy of which he later published and had copyrighted."80 Since the other three verses featured in the official 1919 version had already been in print several years before Phillips joined the Marines, this statement is clearly an exaggeration, but it may correctly allude to his contribution of the Belleau Wood verse. It is reasonable that Marines at Quantico were familiar with different verses about Belleau Wood, especially since one had been published in the Recruiters' Bulletin in August 1918, and that Phillips compiled his own variation based on the ones he had

⁷⁸ MajGen Cmdt George Barnett to Post Cmdr, Quantico, 29 September 1919, quoted in a memo to Gen Lane, 2 April 1929, Hymn subject file, Historical Resources Branch, MCHD.
⁷⁹ The Marines' Hymn.

 ⁸⁰ L. Z. Phillips to the Office of the Cmdt, July or August 1931, quoted in MajGen Cmdt (acting) A. A. Vandegrift to Herman Fuchs, Pathé News, 18 June 1941, Hymn subject file, Historical Resources Branch, MCHD.



Historical Resources Branch, Marine Corps History Division

The Quantico Post Band, without bandleader 1stSgt L. Z. Phillips, on 2 October 1919 in Indianapolis, IN, during the band's first major recruiting tour since the end of World War I. The photograph was, unfortunately, folded for storage.

heard and included it in the request for authorization to Barnett in June 1919.

The official inclusion of a verse about Belleau Wood in 1919 shows an important intersection between the conflicting attitudes toward the hymn at the time. Namely, including a verse that referenced events from only a year earlier validated the efforts of those who had continued to update the lyrics over the years to ensure the hymn would resonate with each new generation of Marines. However, it also meant that this verse had now become part of the ongoing push toward standardization, and the associated implication that the hymn was now "complete" and not open to further unauthorized contributions.

Coincidentally, on the same day the official "Marines' Hymn" was copyrighted, the Ninth and Tenth Regiment Bands of Quantico played in the Washington, DC, parade welcoming home the war heroes of the Marine Corps. The event was recorded by a band member in *Leatherneck*:

> We are camouflaged with the tin kellys [helmets], and for at least one day we made believe we had really been overseas. . . . It was a stirring sight to see those men who have done so much to

ward getting the Kaiser's goat get just the welcome that real men and brave deserve. Nothing is too good for them, and they know that us fellows who did not go were right behind them just as eager to go as they were.⁸¹

Under the leadership of Phillips, the Quantico Post Band went on to serve an important role in postwar recruitment. Starting with an extensive Midwest tour during 1–26 October 1919, the band used the popular music of the Marine Corps to "enlist Marines in foreign service."⁸² To commemorate this tour, a large photograph of the band was taken in Indianapolis, Indiana, on 2 October, in front of a bronze statue of President Benjamin Harrison in University Park, which is now part of the Indiana World War Memorial Plaza.⁸³ Unfortunately, Phillips did not participate in the tour and is not included in the photograph.

⁸¹ "Blues Notes of the 10th Reg. Band," *Leatherneck*, 22 August 1919, 5. ⁸² "Devil-Dogs Serenade Pittsburgh," *Leatherneck*, 10 October 1919, 1.

⁸³ "Marine Band Here Today," *Indianapolis (IN) Star*, 2 October 1919, 8. Special thanks to Kara Newcomer, formerly with the Historical Resources Branch, MCHD, for helping identify the location depicted in the image.

Muster rolls for the Quantico Barracks attachment show that Phillips remained at the base for the entire month of October, and a short item in *Leatherneck* from 7 November stated, "The boys are all glad to hear that Mrs. Phillips had a very successful operation and is on the road to a speedy recovery," suggesting that he stayed at Quantico to tend to his ailing wife.⁸⁴

Leatherneck recounted the eventful tour, during which the band was feted in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, by the actress Lillian Russell, who was an honorary colonel in the Marine Corps; performed at a ball game in St. Louis, Missouri, attended by Major General Lejeune; and performed to a crowd of 30,000 at Churchill Downs in Louisville, Kentucky. In Evansville, Indiana, their longest stop on the tour, "the Marine Band led the parade and showed the Army and Navy that when it came to music and marching there was nothing to it but the Marines."85 Interestingly, the guest of honor for the 22 October parade in Evansville was Major General Leonard Wood. The man who had made the unpopular suggestion of transferring the Marine Corps to the Army during the unification crisis a decade earlier was now witnessing a celebration of Marine Corps accomplishments performed by the Quantico Post Band, which undoubtedly included a rousing rendition of the newly official "Marines' Hymn."

Conclusion

The development of the "Marines' Hymn" during its early years, particularly the 1910s, set the stage for many issues that would continue for decades. The conflict between updating and standardizing the lyrics led to additional official revisions in 1929 and 1942, and many more unofficial suggestions. The increasing popularity of the hymn and its inextricable link to Marine Corps identity, due in part to the strategies of the Publicity Bureau during World War I, made the song a lightning rod at times: recognized and respected all over the world, but a target of ridicule during times of scandal.

The copyright of August 1919, in particular, had far-reaching legal implications for both the Marine Corps and L. Z. Phillips, resulting in ownership disputes in the 1930s and 1940s, and changes to official Marine Corps policy regarding the proper use of the hymn. However, in 1919 it seems to have gone virtually unnoticed. On 1 July 1919 (the day after Barnett officially approved the new version), a letter from Marine Corps Headquarters to the officer in charge of the Publicity Bureau suggested that the Recruiters' Bulletin publish an article about the hymn, after the revision and new publication of the song was complete.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, no such article appeared for the rest of the year. Likewise, Leatherneck advertised the sale of "Marines' Hymn" sheet music in late December 1919–January 1920, but these advertisements were very brief and did not mention that this edition featured the newly authorized version of the lyrics.⁸⁷

This lack of fanfare by two prominent Marine Corps publications indicates two things. First, the copyright was likely seen as a behind-the-scenes bureaucratic action that would affect very few people and not be newsworthy to the general public. Second, and most notably, the authorization of the official version did not introduce brand-new lyrics or musical interpretations to the hymn. Instead, it served as a stamp of approval of the verses already in circulation, some of them for many years, among Marines and the general public, which therefore needed no special media announcement. In other words, the authorized 1919 version of the "Marines' Hymn" may have finally achieved official standardization, but it did not originate from the top down; rather, it was an affirmation of the existing ideas and words that had become most popular, most resonant, and most representative of Marine Corps values during an era of tremendous change.

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⁸⁴ L. Z. Phillips, October 1919 Muster Roll, Barracks Detachment, Marine Barracks, Quantico, Historical Resources Branch, MCHD; and "Post Band Notes," *Leatherneck*, 7 November 1919, 2.

⁸⁵ "Quantico Band Has Successful Tour," *Leatherneck*, 31 October 1919, 3.

⁸⁶ David D. Porter, Headquarters USMC to Officer in Charge, Recruiting Publicity Bureau, 1 July 1919, Marines' Hymn file, U.S. Marine Band Library.

⁸⁷ Advertisements, *Leatherneck*, multiple editions, 5 December 1919–30 January 1920.



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"More Than Just Inventors"

RICHARD M. CUTTS, RICHARD M. CUTTS JR., AND THE ETHICAL CHALLENGE OF THE OFFICER-INVENTOR

by John A. Sheehan

Abstract: This article examines the ethical decisions of two enterprising interwar period Marine officers, Colonel Richard M. Cutts and Brigadier General Richard M. Cutts Jr. Known for their development of a muzzle device used on the Thompson submachine gun, the Cuttses have been treated casually by historians as innocuous inventors. This article reveals their crucial role in generating interest in their device and energetic advocacy for official adoption of the Thompson submachine gun. Drawing support from other officers in the Marine Corps and allies in manufacturing, they eagerly pursued widespread sales of their device. Pulled by conflicting demands as Marines, inventors, and business partners, this article contends that they engaged in activity that blurred private business matters with their professional duties as Marines. Examination of the Cuttses invites scholars and practitioners to contemplate the ethical challenges faced by Marines past and present. **Keywords**: ethics, professional ethics, technology, weapons procurement, Richard M. Cutts, Richard M. Cutts Jr., Cutts Compensator, Thompson submachine gun

hen asked in an interview about the Marine Corps' adoption of the Thompson submachine gun, Lieutenant General Lewis B. Puller recalled that "the man that gave it the biggest push . . . was Bleasdale, Colonel [Victor F.] Bleasdale" in Nicaragua.¹ Although acknowledging Bleasdale's role, General Puller failed to observe the surreptitious efforts of other Marines to induce the U.S. military into formal procurement of the Thompson gun. This article uses the personal papers of two inventors with a vested financial interest in sales of the Thompson gun, Colonel Richard M. Cutts and his son, Brigadier General Richard M. Cutts Jr., to explore their dogged campaign for its formal adoption. It contends that both men played a critical role in agitating for the weapon's procurement by the Marine Corps and other branches of Service through a self-described "planned campaign."² As a result of their efforts, they found themselves simultaneously occupying roles as father and son, inventors, business partners, and Marine officers. The pull of competing interests led both men into compromising ethical territory that blurred the lines between professional duties, private enterprise, and personal relationships. Examination of the Cuttses provides historians with a case study of how two Marine officers delineated their conflicting roles

John A. Sheehan received his bachelor of arts in history from the Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, VA, and his master of arts in history from George Mason University, Fairfax, VA. This article originated while conducting research on the Cuttses as a special assistant at the National Museum of the Marine Corps. The author would like to thank the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation for funding his work as a special assistant, the museum staff for their encouragement, and the journal's editors and anonymous reviewers, whose feedback greatly enhanced this article. Particular recognition is due to Al Houde, Kater Miller, and Bruce Allen of the museum's ordnance section for their support. https://doi.org/10.35318/mch.2020060202

¹Lewis B. Puller and William A. Lee, interview with John H. Magruder III, 25–26 September 1961, transcript (Oral History Section, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA), 89.

² Cutts to Cutts Jr., 6 January 1931, box 16, folder 146, Cutts Collection, Historical Resources Branch, Marine Corps History Division, hereafter Cutts Collection.



Cutts Collection, Historical Resources Branch, Marine Corps History Division (Cutts Collection), box 30, Historical Resources Branch, Marine Corps History Division

Blueprint for the Thompson submachine gun's Cutts Compensator.

and defined their ethical boundaries during the interwar years.³

On 20 July 1925, Richard Malcolm Cutts Jr. filed a patent for a device he described as a "climb arrester" for small arms. In use, the device was fitted onto the muzzle of a weapon. When the weapon fired, the device directed the gases produced by the burning propellant upward through ventilating ports. This was intended to drive the weapon down and counteract the tendency of small arms to rise when fired. The inventor, Cutts Jr., was not merely a casual tinkerer. He was a young Naval Academy graduate and newly commissioned Marine lieutenant. His patent was the culmination of extensive collaboration with his father and fellow Marine officer, Colonel Richard Malcolm Cutts. Their work together produced a second patent that built on the original concept of the climb arrester. Filed in 1926, the "anticlimb device" featured the addition of ports along the sides to divert propelling gases rearward. While the climb arrester sought to negate the rise of a weapon when fired, the second patent aimed to counteract both climb and recoil. Collectively, their attempts to compensate for muzzle climb and reduce recoil to manageable levels resulted in a series of devices known generically as *compensators*. Although adapted for different weapons during

³ Rather than arguing that the Cuttses acted ethically or unethically, this article seeks to historicize the notion of ethics and interprets these concepts as a constructed set of ideas.

their experiments, perhaps the most recognizable was the compensator designed for the .45-caliber Thompson submachine gun.⁴

Manufactured by Auto-Ordnance Corporation, the Thompson submachine gun was state of the art in the early 1920s. Still, the Thompson gun had drawbacks. When fired on fully automatic, the high rate of fire drove the muzzle up, making it difficult to fire with any degree of accuracy.⁵ Unless the Thompson gun could be controlled, future adoption of the weapon was questionable. The Cuttses recognized an opportunity to apply their newly patented device. They believed that muzzle climb could be reduced to a controllable level by equipping the Thompson gun with their compensator and that Marines armed with compensated Thompsons could deliver a high volume of fire against their opponents with greater precision. To Colonel Cutts and his son, the Thompson gun and the compensator were an inseparable unit.

Many histories casually mention the Cuttses' invention without further exploration or prefer to focus on the technological development of the Thompson gun itself. The means through which the Thompson gun was brought into and adopted by the Marine Corps has been largely overlooked. Similarly, the role of the compensator and those invested in its financial success in bringing about firing demonstrations, generating publicity, and developing a doctrinal framework in which the compensated Thompson could be employed has been neglected.⁶ While the device may seem a technological novelty or a minor improvement to an existing weapon, its inventors were active participants that shaped Marine Corps equipment procurement during the interwar years.

The Inventors

Colonel Richard Malcolm Cutts was born to Navy lieutenant commander Richard Malcolm Cutts on 13 November 1878. He did not adopt the use of the suffix *junior*, although he was the second in a line of three bearing the same name. Cutts initially served as an ensign in the Navy but received his commission in the Marine Corps in July 1899.⁷

Described by one historian as a "handsome, dynamic officer," Colonel Cutts served abroad extensively during his 35 years in uniform.⁸ His time in the Pacific included tours in the Philippines in 1903, Hawaii in 1915, and as the Fleet Marine officer of the Pacific Fleet from November 1916 to October 1918.⁹ Colonel Cutts commanded several units, including the Fourteenth Marine Regiment from 1918 to 1919

⁴R. M. Cutts Jr., Climb Arrester, U.S. Patent 1,605,393, filed 20 July 1925, issued 2 November 1926; and R. M. Cutts Jr., Anticlimb Device, U.S. Patent 1,636,357, filed 22 May 1926, issued 19 July 1927.

⁵ Col Cutts related to a colleague that he tested the Thompson while in command of the 10th Marines around 1920, but found its fire uncontrollable. Cutts to Col C. S. Hill, 25 February 1927, box 2, folder 6, Cutts Collection.

⁶ For histories of the Thompson that discuss the Cutts Compensator as used on the Thompson but neglect the Cuttses' role in pursuing adoption and the ethical dilemma that resulted, see Frank Iannamico, *American Thunder: Military Thompson Submachine Guns*, 3d ed. (Henderson, NV: Chipotle Publishing, 2015); Tracie L. Hill, *Thompson: The American Legend—The First Submachine Gun* (Cobourg, ON: Collector Grade Publications, 1996); and Bruce N. Canfield, *U.S. Infantry Weapons of World War II* (Lincoln, RI: Andrew Mowbray Publishers, 1994), 133–43. For brief histories of the Cutts Compensator, which similarly ignore the controversial conflict of interest, see Sarandis Papadopoulos, "Solving a Combat Problem at the Individual Level: The Cutts Compensator," *CHIPS*, 1 September 2017; and Richard M. Cutts Jr., "The Story of the Cutts Comp," *Guns*, November 1957, 25–55.

⁷ "Colonel Richard Malcolm Cutts Passes Away," *Marine Corps Gazette* 19, no. 4 (November 1934): 22; and "Colonel Richard Cutts, U. S. M. C., Dies at 56," *New York Times*, 25 November 1934.

⁸ Allan R. Millett, In Many a Strife: General Gerald C. Thomas and the U.S. Marine Corps, 1917-1956 (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2018), 103.
⁹ BGen Edwin Howard Simmons and Col Joseph H. Alexander, Through the Wheat: The U.S. Marines in World War I (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2008), 135; and Maj Edwin N. McClellan, The United States Marine Corps in the World War, updated and revised ed. (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps History Division, 2014), 103.



Cutts Collection, box 31, Historical Resources Branch, Marine Corps History Division Richard M. Cutts Jr. (left) and Richard M. Cutts (right) after a hunting trip.

and the Tenth Marine Regiment from 1919 to 1922.¹⁰ He may best be remembered as a Caribbean campaigner. From 1923 to 1924, he served in the Dominican Republic, creating the *Policia Nacional Domincana*. Colonel Cutts later took command of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade in Haiti before being assigned to the Naval War College.¹¹ While on the staff of the Naval War College, Colonel Cutts was scheduled to be placed on the retired list due to health issues. He died on 24 November 1934, one week before his retirement.¹²

His son, Richard M. Cutts Jr., the third and final Cutts to carry the name, was born on 9 January 1903.13 Cutts Jr. graduated from the Naval Academy in 1923; following in the footsteps of his father, he was commissioned in the Marine Corps. A skilled marksman, Cutts Jr. served with the Marine Corps Rifle Team and won the National Trophy Individual rifle match at Camp Perry, Ohio, in 1927.14 Following a tour as an aide in Franklin Delano Roosevelt's White House from 1932 to 1934, as a captain Cutts Jr. was stationed in China. During World War II, he requested combat duty and commanded the 2d Marine Regiment from September 1944 to October 1945. After the war's end, then-colonel Cutts Jr. led the regiment in the occupation of Nagasaki. He was promoted to brigadier general before his retirement in 1946 after 23 years of service. Brigadier General Cutts Jr. died 14 June 1973 at Bethesda Naval Hospital.¹⁵

To add confusion to the generational designations used by the Cuttses, sometime after the death of his father, Cutts Jr. stopped using a suffix. This extended from personal correspondence to legal documents. For the purposes of this article, the senior

¹⁰ LtCol Ronald J. Brown, *A Brief History of the 14th Marines* (Washington, DC: Headquarters Marine Corps, History and Museums Division, 1990), 87; and Maj David N. Buckner, *A Brief History of the 10th Marines* (Washington, DC: Headquarters Marine Corps, History and Museums Division, 1981), 123.

¹¹ Millett, *In Many a Strife*, 103–4; and Allan R. Millett, *Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps*, revised and expanded ed. (New York: Free Press, 1991), 205–6.

¹² "Colonel Richard Malcolm Cutts Passes Away," 22; and H. L. Roosevelt to Cutts, 1 March 1934, box 16, folder 145, Cutts Collection.

¹³ Richard Cutts, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs BIRLS Death File, 1850–2010, Ancestry.com, accessed 28 December 2018.

¹⁴Maj Robert E. Barde, *The History of Marine Corps Competitive Marksmanship* (Washington, DC: Marksmanship Branch, G-3 Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1961), 378, 447.

¹⁵ "Gen. R.M. Cutts, Ordnance Inventor," *Washington Post*, 16 June 1973, D5; "Brig. Gen. Richard Cutts Dead; Marine Invented a Rifle Device," *New York Times*, 16 June 1973, 30; Danny J. Crawford et al., *The 2d Marine Division and Its Regiments* (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 2001), 25; and Cutts Jr. to the Commandant of the Marine Corps, "Combat Duty, Request for," 29 June 1943, box 3, folder 14, Cutts Collection.

Marine Cutts will be referred to as Colonel Cutts and his son as Cutts Jr.¹⁶

The Device

The device that came to be known by its commercial trademark—Cutts Compensator—has an unclear origin. During the course of their lifetimes, Colonel Cutts and his son variously took credit and assigned different motives for the development of the compensator. This spawned several versions of its invention.

In July 1925, Cutts Jr. wrote to the secretary of the Navy regarding his patent application. After suggesting that his patent be treated as a military secret and kept in the "secret files of the Patent Office," he informed the secretary of the Navy that he alone invented the climb arrester "while attached to the Engineer Battalion, Marine Barracks, Quantico."17 In a later history of the compensator, then-retired Brigadier General Cutts Jr. wrote that he became "greatly interested in small arms" while competing with the Marine Corps Rifle Team. In this account, the idea for a compensator came to him while observing the M1918 Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR). He noted that the BAR's automatic fire could be controlled by "attaching heavy weights to its muzzle," but the added bulk made the "solution . . . undesirable." It was allegedly then that Cutts Jr. recognized the principles that could be used to negate the rise of a barrel during firing. Gases could be diverted as in a steam turbine. Perhaps embellishing his invention, he placed the compensator in the context of the jet age as the "forerunner of our present jet propulsion."¹⁸ In each of these accounts, Cutts Jr. presented himself as the sole inventor of the compensator.

Colonel Cutts also laid claim to the idea of a compensator device. Writing to his son in 1927, Colonel Cutts stated that he understood himself to be "the originator" of the compensator.¹⁹ He later placed the idea for a compensator in the context of the Marine Corps' amphibious mission. Colonel Cutts stated he had "been working on the equipment for the Marine force from a technical viewpoint for about 18 years." He stated that "the Compensator . . . was born because of the necessity for the increase of firepower of the infantryman, and defense of boats from airplane strafing."20 He reiterated this account in a 1933 report to the Commandant of the Marine Corps. Colonel Cutts reported that the compensator emerged from his studies "undertaken with the view of increasing the fire power of the Marine landing forces." The compensator was designed to provide a landing force with increased accuracy and controllable firepower; this would allow a small force to "get ashore . . . and secure the necessary penetration for a successful landing."21 While Cutts Jr. described his role as the originator of the compensator idea, Colonel Cutts claimed ownership by defining the broader application for the device.

At times, they explained the compensator as the product of a collaborative effort. Cutts Jr. wrote in 1929 that he and his father worked on the idea of a compensator since his graduation from the Naval Academy in 1923.²² In 1936, Cutts Jr. stated that work was done together as a "hobby" between father and

¹⁶ This can be seen most readily in patent applications. His final issued patent does not include "Jr." See R. M. Cutts, Choke Attachment for Shotguns, U.S. Patent 3,045,379, filed 25 May 1959, issued 24 July 1962. Additionally, their names have caused some confusion. For example, Moskin incorrectly attributes Col Cutts with having served as a White House aide and as a national-champion marksman. J. Robert Moskin, *The Story of the U.S. Marine Corps* (New York: Paddington Press, 1979), 197. For examples incorrectly listing both father and son as brigadier generals, see John G. Griffiths, "The Infamous Reising Gun Remembered," *Fortitudine*, Fall 1989, 17; and John G. Griffiths, "Reising Gun," in Henry I. Shaw Jr., *First Offensive: The Marine Campaign for Guadalcanal* (Washington, DC: Marine Corps Historical Center, 1992), 37.

¹⁷ Cutts Jr. to Secretary of the Navy, "Patent Application for Improvement on Fire Arms," July 1925, box 11, folder 89, Cutts Collection.

¹⁸ Cutts Jr., "The Cutts Compensator," box 29, folder 242, Cutts Collection. Cutts Jr. earlier contended that his invention was derived from the function of a steam turbine. See Cutts Jr. to Monroe Mayhoff, 17 November 1934, box 11, folder 88, Cutts Collection.

¹⁹ Cutts to Cutts Jr., 15 April 1927, box 3, folder 15, Cutts Collection.

 ²⁰ Cutts to Pickett, 23 April 1932, box 16, folder 148, Cutts Collection.
 ²¹ Cutts to the Major General Commandant, "Cuban Arms," 4 October 1933, box 16, folder 145, Cutts Collection.

²² Cutts Jr. to LtCmdr McFall, 2 December 1929, box 16, folder 147, Cutts Collection.

son on their own initiative despite "the fact that the Service had first claim on our time."²³

In all of the compensator origin stories, neither Cutts wavered from the device being their own idea, developed on their own time, and supported by their personal financial resources. "I might mention," Cutts Jr. wrote in 1934, that "we have spent thousands of dollars and many years in research work" to develop the compensator.²⁴ Variously referred to as the Cutts Compensator or just "the Comp," the compensator belonged to the Cuttses. Now invested in the success of the compensator as inventors and financiers, they sought to exploit the business potential of their device.

The Cutts Compensator

Despite an unclear origin, the compensator's introduction into the market began shortly after the first patent was filed. Profits were initially divided between three partners. In addition to father and son, another Marine officer joined their enterprise with an interest in its success. Victor F. Bleasdale, a Navy Cross recipient in World War I, collected a small share of the royalties of compensator sales.²⁵

A fourth member later joined the Cutts Compensator partnership. Philip P. Quayle, a physicist with the U.S. Bureau of Standards, acted as a "consulting engineer" for the Cuttses.²⁶ Quayle aided Colonel Cutts in the improvement of the compensator, partic-

ularly in the refinement of the compensator porting. Writing to his son several days before the patent for the anticlimb device was filed, Colonel Cutts credited Quayle, for as he wrote, "the new porting is Quayles idea." Clearly, he felt that Quayle was critical to the development of "the Comp" in general. Colonel Cutts stated that the "knowledge of effects and how to get them lies in Quayle and myself."27 In addition to developing new porting, Quayle used spark photography to capture the compensator in action and developed a test apparatus so that the effects of the compensator could be measured with scientific precision.²⁸ Like Bleasdale, he collected a small percentage of the royalties.²⁹ Quayle's scientific contributions led Colonel Cutts to write to the Commandant, securing a commission in the Volunteer Marine Corps Reserves for Quayle.30

The Cutts Compensator partners never manufactured their own compensators. Instead, they entered into contracts with manufacturers, such as Auto-Ordnance Corporation for military arms or Lyman for sporting arms.³¹ These companies were licensed to manufacture and sell Cutts Compensators. The Cutts

²³ Cutts Jr. to John W. Young, 10 July 1936, box 20, folder 175, Cutts Collection.

²⁴ Cutts Jr. to Monroe Mayhoff, 17 November 1934, box 11, folder 88, Cutts Collection.

²⁵ For information regarding Bleasdale's 10-percent royalty on the distribution of profits, see Memorandum, 5 December 1927, box 12, folder 107, Cutts Collection. Between 8 February 1928 and 5 September 1934, Victor Bleasdale was paid \$1,577 for royalties. See "Royalties Paid from February 8, 1928 to September 5, 1934," box 2, folder 7, Cutts Collection. Interestingly, this memorandum concerns "a device . . . being variously [referred] to as the C & B Device, anti-climb device, and Climb arrester." What role, if any, Bleasdale played in developing the device remains unclear. One must wonder if the C&B device referred to stood for "Cutts & Bleasdale." Memorandum, 1 July 1926, box 12, folder 107, Cutts Collection. For Bleasdale's Navy Cross, see "U.S. Marine Corps Navy Cross Recipients, World War I, 1917–1918," DOD Valor Website, accessed 28 December 2018.

²⁶ Cutts to Mrs. Mary Quayle, 10 August 1931, box 12, folder 106, Cutts Collection.

²⁷ This may refer generally to the porting found on the anticlimb device or a technical change to the porting on another variety of compensator. Col Cutts remained vague in his remarks. Cutts to Cutts Jr., 14 May 1926, box 3, folder 12, Cutts Collection.

²⁸ Cutts Jr., "The Cutts Compensator," box 29, folder 242, Cutts Collection; and Philip P. Quayle, "The Cutts Compensator," *Army Ordnance*, March–April 1927, 347–54. Quayle had earlier experimented with using spark photography and published his findings in June 1925. See Philip P. Quayle, "Spark Photography and Its Application to Some Problems in Ballistics," *Scientific Papers of the Bureau of Standards* 20, no. 508 (June 1925): 237–76, http://dx.doi.org/10.6028/nbsscipaper.192.

²⁹ Cutts to Cutts Jr., 14 May 1926, box 3, folder 12, Cutts Collection. For an example of a \$2,444 royalty payment made to Quayle's widow after his death, see "Royalties Paid from February 8, 1928 to September 5, 1934," box 2, folder 7, Cutts Collection.

³⁰ Cutts to the MajGen Commandant, "Reserve Commission of Mr. Philip P. Quayle," 26 May 1926, box 12, folder 106, Cutts Collection. At the time of his death on 21 February 1931, Capt Quayle was assigned to 9th Regiment, Central Reserve Area. See Company M, 9th Marine Regiment muster roll (MRoll), Central Reserve Area, 1 January 1931–30 June 1931, roll 0321, image 601, Ancestry.com.

³⁴ Following a series of additional patents, Cutts Compensator established a contract with Lyman to manufacture and sell shotgun compensators with changeable choke tubes. These were also generically known as Cutts Compensators and were commercially successful. However, they were intended for sporting use and are beyond the scope of this article.



Cutts Collection, box 30, Historical Resources Branch, Marine Corps History Division Taken by spark photography, this image shows gas escaping through the ventilating ports on the top of the compensator.

Compensator partners collected a royalty as negotiated in the contract for the sale of each compensator. As a result, none of the business partners engaged directly in the sale of firearms; rather, their interest was in motivating others to purchase compensators or guns with compensators attached.³²

Toward Universal Adoption

The Cuttses followed several lines of effort while marketing their compensator. First, they would need to develop compensators for firearms already in U.S. or foreign arsenals. The principles behind the compensator could be universally applied to any weapon that produced recoil and muzzle climb on firing. As Cutts Jr. explained, "the Comp fits on anything that shoots," giving the device a diverse market.³³

However, the Cuttses would have to tailor the design to match the recoil and climb produced by a specific model of firearm. This required intensive effort to develop, test, and refine the compensator paired with a weapon but ensured the widest availability to license the manufacture and sale of compensators. "What we want," Colonel Cutts wrote to his son in 1934, "is universal adoption" of the compensator.³⁴ Encouraging the military to purchase compensa-

³² Cutts Jr. to Chief of Ordnance, War Department, "Cutts Compensator," 14 March 1935, box 16, folder 145, Cutts Collection.

³³ Cutts Jr. to John Young, 10 July 1936, box 20, folder 175, Cutts Collection.

³⁴ Cutts to Cutts Jr., 19 April 1934, box 3, folder 13, Cutts Collection.

tors required them to demonstrate the value of the Cutts Compensator in cases where the military already had weapons to which they could be fitted. The father and son team developed compensators for a number of U.S. and foreign civilian and military arms ranging from small-caliber handguns to large-caliber artillery pieces.³⁵

In 1926, Colonel Cutts authorized the U.S. Navy Bureau of Ordnance to freely use the patents in developing compensators for .50-caliber machine guns, 37mm guns, and other large-caliber weapons. Colonel Cutts offered to assist in testing to "obtain the maximum of balance and efficiency."³⁶ Despite the bureau's experiments and extensive offers by Colonel Cutts to bring about further development, there was no adoption of Cutts Compensators for large-caliber weapons or cannon.

In addition to large-caliber weapons, the Cuttses tried to persuade the U.S. military to adopt the compensator for small arms already in their possession. The BAR had already been adopted by the Marines and was a prime candidate for a recoil-reducing device. In 1928, the Marine Corps Gazette reported that the Commandant of the Marine Corps, Major General Ben H. Fuller, authorized combat trials of 50 compensated BARs in Nicaragua with the 2d Marine Brigade.³⁷ Following the trials, Fuller approved the purchase of 500 compensators for the M1918 BAR in November 1930.³⁸ The purchase was delayed until funds could be appropriated, but the BAR compensators were never procured. A second board convened to reinvestigate the compensated BAR but recommended against its adoption. The test, conducted by Captain Merritt A. Edson in December 1931 and March 1932, compared a

civilian Colt Monitor automatic rifle (which was sold fitted with a Cutts Compensator), a standard M1918 BAR, and a modified compensated BAR. While earlier evaluations relied on what Colonel Cutts described as "hit factor," or the number of hits on target per firer per minute, Edson followed no such criteria.³⁹ He measured effectiveness through hits on target compared to the number of rounds fired. Edson's chosen testing criteria was a means of measuring accuracy. He recommended against adopting the compensator, reporting that it failed "to control the rifle to the extent that it will be accurate when fired automatically by the average enlisted man."⁴⁰ The board's determination proved a major setback.

In April 1932, Bleasdale met with Edson in what he described as "just a weapons talk between a couple gun men." He informed Colonel Cutts that Edson conceded that the compensator reduced recoil on the BAR, but that "the advantages of the Comp does not make up for its additional weight, [and] length." Crucially, Bleasdale related Edson's feelings that the "escape of gas and flame through the apertures in the sides" of the compensator had a "tendency to annoy the shooter and those alongside of him."41 Bleasdale's correspondence offers insight into the board's decision. By selecting a target range for the tests and positioning firers on line next to one another, the board created conditions to reject the compensated BAR. Cutts Jr. dismissed Edsons's tests, telling Bleasdale that if the compensators irritated a neighboring firer "then they are entirely too well bunched for combat conditions. . . . We know that all training is presumably for combat, so are we going to allow the tail to wag the dog? And consider that false conditions obtained on the rifle range have precedence?" Cutts Jr. asked.42

³⁵ The Cuttses developed compensators for a wide variety of arms domestically, ranging from a .38-caliber Smith and Wesson revolver to a 105mm howitzer, among a multitude of others. Cutts to Cutts Jr., 11 November 1931, box 3, folder 12, Cutts Collection; and Cutts to MajGen Clarence C. Williams, 20 October 1929, box 16, folder 146, Cutts Collection.

³⁶ Cutts to Chief of Bureau of Ordnance, "Fitting of Compensator to 50 Caliber Machine Gun, 37 mm guns, and Guns of Greater Caliber," 15 November 1926, box 16, folder 147, Cutts Collection.

³⁷ "Professional Notes," *Marine Corps Gazette* 13, no. 2 (June 1928): 147–56. ³⁸ MajGen Commandant to Cutts, "Cutts Compensator," 6 November 1930, box 16, folder 148, Cutts Collection.

³⁹ Cutts to the MajGen Commandant, "Cuban Arms," 4 October 1933, box 16, folder 145, Cutts Collection.

⁴⁰ For Edson's report, see reference (a) enclosed in Director, Division of Operations and Training to MajGen Commandant, "Report on Test of Colt 'Monitor' Automatic Machine Rifle, Caliber .30," 18 March 1932, box 16, folder 147, Cutts Collection.

⁴¹ Bleasdale to Cutts, 21 April 1932, box 12, folder 107, Cutts Collection. ⁴² Cutts Jr. to Bleasdale, 28 May 1932, box 12, folder 107, Cutts Collection.

Despite the board's recommendation, the Marine Corps appears to have continued exploring the compensated BAR. A letter from Bleasdale suggests further combat use in Nicaragua. In April 1932, Bleasdale related to Colonel Cutts that "Lieut[enant] Tavern had a night contact in Nic[aragua] and states that the flames shooting from the sides of the BAR Comps blinded his BAR men."⁴³ The compensator's recoil-reducing porting may have proved annoying during Edson's tests, but in combat it also was revealed as a liability at night as it directed the muzzle flash rearward.

Although formal evaluation stalled, Colonel Cutts felt that "if the Marcorps [*sic*] decides to put on the BAR Comp, that they can be made by Lyman cheaper than the N.G.F. [Naval Gun Factory] and that Phila can put them on." Although Colonel Cutts took the compensator's manufacturing costs into consideration, he advised his son to "suppress any apparent eagerness for personal profit, I know this mans [*sic*] army."⁴⁴ Fearful that revealing public enthusiasm for their compensator might compromise further interest, Colonel Cutts counselled his son to remain cautious regarding the compensated BAR.⁴⁵

Although the Cutts Compensator was included on the civilian BAR variant sold commercially by Colt as the Monitor, the compensated BAR was largely shelved as a project for the U.S. military. The Marine Corps revisited the compensated BAR during World War II on the recommendation of Cutts Jr., then a lieutenant colonel.⁴⁶ After trials in 1943, the Marine Corps Equipment Board recommended equipping the M1918A2 BAR with a Cutts Compensator. Despite the board's findings, it appears this recommendation was not carried out.⁴⁷

Like the BAR, the Lewis machine gun had already been adopted by the military and could be modified to fit a compensator. The Cuttses persuaded the Navy to assist in refining their compensator's design for the Lewis gun before beginning trials. Developed in part by the Bureau of Aeronautics, the compensated Lewis gun saw field trials and, according to Colonel Cutts, combat use in Nicaragua. Although it was tested by Navy and Marine aircraft squadrons on freemounted Lewis guns, neither organization chose to adopt the compensator.48 In 1933, Ross E. Rowell gave the compensated Lewis gun a favorable review, stating that in Marine Observation Squadrons VO-6M and VO-7M "all gunners report much better service" with it. Rowell endorsed the compensated Lewis gun as "much steadier and [a] better group is had with the compensator."49 Despite this endorsement, the Cuttses' efforts to stimulate adoption of a Lewis gun compensator failed.

In addition to supporting the adoption of compensators for weapons already in the U.S. inventory, the Cuttses explored compensator sales outside the

⁴³ Bleasdale to Cutts, 21 April 1932, box 12, folder 107, Cutts Collection. This may refer to J. J. Tavern, listed in a roster of officers sent to Nicaragua. See "News from Nicaragua," *Leatherneck*, October 1932, 22. To mitigate this issue, the Cuttses experimented with a shrouded compensator. Photographs of the flash-reducing shroud can be found in the Cutts Collection.

⁴⁴ Cutts to Cutts Jr., 3 October 1933, box 3, folder 13, Cutts Collection. ⁴⁵ A more complete discussion of the development of the compensated BAR and the Colt Monitor are beyond the scope of this article. For more on these weapons, see Cutts to Bleasdale, 25 March 1932, box 2, folder 7, Cutts Collection; Cutts Jr. to Young, 10 July 1936, box 20, folder 175, Cutts Collection; Cutts to the MajGen Commandant, "Cuban Arms," 4 October 1933, box 16, folder 145, Cutts Collection; and Cutts to Cutts Jr., 14 November 1930, box 3, folder 12, Cutts Collection.

⁴⁶ Cutts Jr. to the Commandant of the Marine Corps, "Compensators for Browning Automatic Rifle," 18 September 1943, box 16, folder 145, Cutts Collection.

⁴⁷ Minutes of Meeting of Marine Corps Equipment Board, 20 January 1944, box 16, folder 148, Cutts Collection.

⁴⁸ Chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics to the Chief of the Bureau of Ordnance, "Cutts' Compensator for Aircraft Machine Guns," 1 August 1927, box 16, folder 147, Cutts Collection; "Abstract from Target Report of V.S. Squadron 2-B," box 16, folder 147, Cutts Collection; and Cutts to the MajGen Commandant, "Cuban Arms," 4 October 1933, box 16, folder 145, Cutts Collection. An unsigned letter to Bleasdale states "on the steamer sailing from here about March 16th. will go fifty new Compensated Browning Automatics . . . as well as twenty Compensators for [Ross] Rowells Lewis aircraft guns." The letter was sent from Washington, DC, likely by Cutts Jr. while stationed there. See letter to Bleasdale, 27 February 1928, box 12, folder 107, Cutts Collection. Cutts Jr. felt the Navy's unfavorable remarks may have been the result of improper installation of the compensator. See Cutts Jr. to LtCmdr McFall, 2 December 1929, box 16, folder 147, Cutts Collection.

⁴⁹ Ross E. Rowell, "Weekly Operations News Letter, Week Ending 15 April, 1933," box folder 148, Cutts Collection.

United States. Intensive efforts to persuade the French to adopt a compensator for their automatic weapons failed. In the case of the Hotchkiss machine gun, the French determined that there was "no appreciable difference" when firing with a compensator.⁵⁰

The Cutts Compensator partners also brought on agents in hopes of arranging foreign licensing or sales. By 1937, they had filed and maintained patents for the compensator in Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Spain, Sweden, Czechoslovakia, and Switzerland.⁵¹ Dr. Fritz Neuhaus, formerly the general director of the Borsig locomotive manufacturing firm, worked as the agent of Cutts Compensator in Germany.⁵² In 1935, Alfred A. Neuwald was authorized to "represent the interests of Cutts Compensator" in multiple additional countries across central and eastern Europe. As the enlistment of sales agents demonstrates, the Cutts Compensator partners had global ambitions for their device.⁵³

Military Trials

Although trying to market compensators for a number of weapons already in American or foreign inventory, the Cuttses' primary effort was convincing the U.S. military to formally adopt the compensated Thompson submachine gun. This involved an aggressive campaign, much of which drifted between official channels and private business correspondence. A potentially compromising conflict of interest resulted for the Cutts Compensator partners as they worked toward adoption of the compensated Thompson in the Marine Corps and other Service branches.

Early on, Colonel Cutts adapted the compensator design to the Thompson gun and gave a firing demonstration to retired U.S. Army officer, inventor, and president of the Auto-Ordnance Corporation Colonel John Taliaferro Thompson. Colonels Thompson and Cutts quickly worked together so that Auto-Ordnance Corporation offered compensated Thompson submachine guns for sale.⁵⁴

Following armed robberies of mail-laden railcars in 1926, contingents of Marines served as mail guards. As they had done in 1921, the Marine Corps protected U.S. mail in transit. This assignment presented an unusual situation. The Thompson submachine gun had debuted on the commercial market in the early 1920s and had become the weapon of choice for many gangsters.55 The Marines, however, had no such weapons in their inventory. Fearing that gangsters armed with the rapid-fire Thompson guns might "outgun" the Marines, Leatherneck magazine reported that the postmaster general met with Colonels Thompson and Cutts in October 1926. Following a demonstration, the postmaster general reportedly ordered the purchase of 200 Thompsons equipped with Cutts Compensators for the Marines. This would ensure Marines acting as mail guards could at least equal any opponent in firepower.56

⁵⁰ Abner Y. Leech to Cutts Jr., 23 October 1935, box 6, folder 36, Cutts Collection. For further information on French trials, see Laurence V. Benet to A. Y. Leech Jr., 20 August 1935, box 6, folder 36, Cutts Collection; and Cutts Jr. to Laurence V. Benet, 19 September 1935, box 6, folder 36, Cutts Collection.

⁵¹ William Seaver to G. Oberdick, 1 May 1937, box 20, folder 175, Cutts Collection.

⁵² Hearings Before the Special Committee Investigating the Munitions Industry, U.S. Senate, 73d Cong., pursuant to S. Res. 206, pt. 13 (17 December 1934) (testimony of Lt Richard Malcolm Cutts on the relationship between War and Navy Departments and American Inventors), 3568–69, hereafter Cutts Testimony; Cutts Jr. to Walter B. Ryan, 21 February 1931, box 2, folder 7, Cutts Collection; and Mark Hewitson, Germany and the Modern World, 1880–1914 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 93.
⁵³ Neuwald was authorized in the following countries: Austria, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Hungary, and Italy. See Memorandum, 27 April 1935, box 11, folder 90, Cutts Collection.

⁵⁴ Cutts to Moorefield, 22 October 1926, box 2, folder 6, Cutts Collection; and "Preliminary Agreement between the Auto Ordnance Corporation of New York and Colonel R.M. Cutts U.S.M.C. Concerning the Use of the Cutts Compensator on Guns for the Auto Ordnance Corporation," 14 January 1927, box 2, folder 6, Cutts Collection.

⁵⁵ "Marine Corps Mail Guards Carry Improved Machine Gun," *Leatherneck*, December 1926, 44. For examples of law enforcement and gangster use of the Thompson, see Roger A. Cox, *The Thompson Submachine Gun* (Athens, GA: Law Enforcement Ordnance, 1982).

⁵⁶ "Marine Corps Mail Guards Carry Improved Machine Gun," *Leatherneck*, December 1926, 44; and Hill, *Thompson*, 89. The 1926 report of the secretary of the Navy states that "in addition to their usual arms and equipment," Marine mail guards "were provided with riot shotguns and a limited number of Thompson machine guns." *Annual Reports of the Navy Department for the Fiscal Year*, 1926 (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, Government Printing Office, 1927), 51. For information regarding Marine service as mail guards, see Merrill L. Bartlett, "John A. Lejeune, 1920–1929," in *Commandants of the Marine Corps*, ed. Allan R. Millet and Jack Shulimson (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2004), 202–8.



Cutts Collection, box 31, Historical Resources Branch, Marine Corps History Division

Testing the compensated Lewis machine gun.

It was an unusual situation for the Marines in several respects. The Marines found themselves equipped with a weapon prior to it having been formally evaluated or adopted. "No one sold the gun to [the] U.S.M.C.," Cutts Jr. wrote, "it was merely introduced."⁵⁷ As Colonel Cutts explained it, the Thompson had "no real official status" but had been "horned in" to service to meet a perceived mission need.⁵⁸ Outside the Marine Corps, the Thompson submachine gun was formally tested by several U.S. Army boards, but the boards had not approved the gun for adoption.⁵⁹ Rather than being equipped after the Army or Navy had already adopted a weapon, the Marine Corps found itself ahead of the other Services with the latest development in small arms.

While the gun served its purpose for the Marine mail guards, Colonel Cutts and his son wanted to "give the gun a trial on the trails" in Nicaragua.⁶⁰ They felt that combat testing rather than a range evaluation was the only means of demonstrating the full potential of

⁵⁷ Cutts Jr. to Ryan, 14 June 1935, box 2, folder 8, Cutts Collection.

⁵⁸ Cutts to Cutts Jr., 8 November 1929, folder 12, Cutts Collection.

⁵⁹ The Air Service tested the Thompson in 1921. See Hill, *Thompson*, 44–45. Similarly, Springfield Armory and the Infantry Board tested the Thompson in 1922; the Air Service conducted additional evaluations of the Thompson in 1924. See Iannamico, *American Thunder*, 14–20.

⁶⁰ Cutts Jr. to Ryan, 17 November 1932, box box 2, folder 7, Cutts Collection.

the compensated Thompson.⁶¹ To accomplish this, the Cuttses, in coordination with other parties, orchestrated a publicity campaign designed to inspire interest in the compensated Thompson and press for its adoption. In a telling letter from Cutts Jr. to the president of Auto-Ordnance, he boasted that they had utilized "an active agent" to advocate for the compensated Thompson and give firing demonstrations. After "an intensive effort" the agent was successful in bringing "the necessary high ranking officers around to his point of view." The agent involved was Victor Bleasdale, then a Marine captain and a partner in Cutts Compensator. "The playing up of the gun in the reports was not accidental," Cutts Jr. wrote. "True, the gun did its stuff—but so did the other weapons."62 By Cutts Jr.'s own account, Bleasdale's demonstrations and reporting played a crucial role in publicizing and highlighting the qualities of the compensated Thompson.

Bleasdale's involvement with the Thompson gun was more complicated than portrayed by Cutts Jr. Prior to the development of the Cutts Compensator, Bleasdale evaluated the Thompson gun. In March 1925, he recommended it for adoption as an auxiliary weapon for machine gun and artillery sections. He felt that the weapon's high rate of fire could be used to defend against rushing enemy forces. Bleasdale's support for the Thompson gun predated his partnership with the Cuttses in the Cutts Compensator business.⁶³

After joining the compensator partnership, Bleasdale maintained his support for the Thompson gun. In a 1928 report covering the Thompson's performance during the Nueva Segovia Expedition in Nicaragua, Bleasdale described the Thompson as "one of the most powerful weapons with which infantry

troops can be armed." He validated this claim based on the Thompson gun's large magazine capacity, stopping power, and high rate of fire. However, it was "the Cutts Compensator with which the Thompson is equipped" that made the "weapon easier to control . . . and which eliminates much of the erratic firing."⁶⁴ Bleasdale now expressed his view that the compensator was critical to making the capabilities of the Thompson functional in a combat environment. Its crucial role as represented in this report underscores Cutts Jr.'s later claim about "playing up" the Thompson. A subsequent article by Bleasdale in the Marine Corps Gazette recapped the Neuva Segovia operation. Bleasdale publicly reiterated his position, asserting that the compensator "enables the firer to get on his target and stay on it easier than when firing a Thompson without a Cutt's [sic] compensator."⁶⁵ Cutts Jr. presented a scenario in which the success of the compensated Thompson was largely orchestrated by Bleasdale, an invested member of the Cutts Compensator organization.

Bleasdale was not alone in pushing the compensated Thompson gun within military circles. Colonel Cutts engaged in this activity as well. Writing to Auto-Ordnance, Colonel Cutts reported that he had "worked" the compensated Thompson "into a report on advanced base work."66 For Colonel Cutts, the compensated Thompson gun often found itself within the context of advanced base doctrine and the unique mission of the Marine Corps. Writing from his post at the Naval War College, Colonel Cutts informed Bleasdale that "the Compensator business is based on the landing force and fire effect on seizing and capturing Advanced Bases, everything else is secondary." In addition to being a specially trained force, Colonel Cutts felt the Marine Corps must be a specially equipped one. Part of this equipment had to be capable of delivering the maximum possible firepower to ensure a successful landing against a defended shore-

⁶¹ Both Cuttses refuted unfavorable evaluations of the compensator as resulting from conditions imposed by range testing rather than combat trials. See Cutts Jr. to Bleasdale, 28 May 1932, box 12, folder 107, Cutts Collection; and Cutts to Pickett, 23 April 1932, box 16, folder 148, Cutts Collection. Col Cutts contended that the compensator for the M1903 Springfield rifle was designed for "field service effects and not the range." See Cutts, "Memorandum for Chief of Cavalry," 12 September 1927, box 16, folder 146, Cutts Collection.

⁶² Cutts Jr. to Ryan, 17 November 1932, box 2, folder 7, Cutts Collection.
⁶³ "Report on the Thompson Submachine Gun," 11 March 1925, Ordnance Section, 1925 Thompson Report folder, National Museum of the Marine Corps.

⁶⁴ Victor Bleasdale, "Thompson Submarine [*sic*] Guns," 18 January 1928, photocopy of report, box 12, folder 107, Cutts Collection.

⁶⁵ Capt Victor F. Bleasdale, "La Flor Engagement," *Marine Corps Gazette* 16, no. 4 (February 1932): 40.

⁶⁶ Cutts to Thompson, 28 April 1928, box 2, folder 6, Cutts Collection.
line.⁶⁷ "Unfortunately," Colonel Cutts agonized, "most of our training has been had on the Army basis . . . we do not visualize the use of special equipment for special Landing Force Operations."⁶⁸ To Colonel Cutts, the compensated Thompson offered a viable solution to the Marine Corps' firepower needs.

As the Marine Corps prepared a board to formally evaluate the compensated Thompson in 1929, Colonel Cutts remained stationed in Haiti. Because he was unable to attend the board, Cutts Jr. demonstrated the compensator and the gun. Writing from Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Colonel Cutts advised his son how to present the compensated Thompson before the Marine Corps Board. "You should place it in the fire fight at short range. . . . Your tone throughout should be field and battle conditions." In selling the role of the Thompson to the board, Colonel Cutts stressed to his son that he must "BLAME IT ALL on the conditions of a landing under fire, THE M.C. [Marine Corps] job by the WAR PLANS."⁶⁹ The compensated Thompson was to be exhibited in the format most favorable to a Marine Corps board. This was done by a Marine with financial interest in the adoption of the weapon rather than a civilian representative of Auto-Ordnance.

While Colonel Cutts advocated for the compensated Thompson's use during amphibious assaults, he contended it had other applications as well. It could be employed successfully in other combat environments including night fighting, patrolling, convoy operations, urban warfare, jungle warfare, and virtually every offensive or defensive environment imaginable. Additionally, Colonel Cutts argued that the Thompson gun could be used by forces other than the Marines that had special requirements. "Engineers, signal troops, etc.," cavalry, and artillery forces could all benefit from the high volume of fire the compact Thompson could provide.⁷⁰

With such wide applications in mind, Colonel Cutts employed various methods to ensure that the compensated Thompson was well-known to those inside and outside the Marine Corps. Subtly, he waged a publicity campaign in favor of the compensated Thompson. He used professional journals to ensure readers knew about the weapon.⁷¹ Colonel Cutts maintained a stock of Auto-Ordnance catalogs at the Naval War College to disseminate.⁷² Cutts Jr. encouraged Auto-Ordnance to advertise in the publications of the Marine Corps Association after he became the secretary-treasurer.73 Quayle published his findings on the Cutts Compensator in Army Ordnance.74 As previously discussed, Bleasdale praised the compensator in the Marine Corps Gazette. The Cutts Compensator partners leveraged professional journals and their positions to sway opinion in favor of the compensated Thompson.

Initially humanized as the "Thompson," the submachine gun's popular name changed for marketing purposes. Following a demonstration of the compensated Thompson for police officers at Camp Perry, Ohio, Colonel Thompson wrote to Colonel Cutts that the police officers started calling the gun the "Tommy." He felt that "this might be a good word for it among the Marines, as a simple name like that goes a good way to popularize a piece of equipment."⁷⁵ Even the popular sobriquet "Tommy gun" was recognized as

⁶⁷ Cutts to Bleasdale, 23 April 1932, box 12, folder 107, Cutts Collection; and "Memorandum. Concerning certain fire effects required by Naval Forces in Shore Operations," box 29, folder 242, Cutts Collection.

⁶⁸ Cutts to Pickett, 23 April 1923, box 16, folder 148, Cutts Collection.
⁶⁹ Cutts to Cutts Jr., 8 November 1929, box 3, folder 12, Cutts Collection.
⁷⁰ Cutts to Colonel C. S. Hill, 25 February 1927, box 2, folder 6, Cutts Collection. See also Cutts, "The Cavalry Fire Fight as Affected by the Cutts Compensator," box 29, folder 242, Cutts Collection.

⁷¹ Cutts also published in Marine Corps journals. See Col R. M. Cutts, "The Cutts Compensator," *Marine Corps Gazette* 11, no. 4 (December 1926): 249–51; and Col Richard M. Cutts, "The Cutts Compensator," *Leatherneck*, February 1929, 10–11. See also Philip P. Quayle, "The Cutts Compensator," *Leatherneck*, April 1927, 12–14. For a discussion of using the *Army and Navy Journal* to influence the Navy, see Cutts to Thompson, 31 March 1928, box 2, folder 6, Cutts Collection. Cutts also mentioned a recent publication of his in the *Cavalry Journal*. See Cutts to Thompson, 28 April 1928, box 2, folder 6, Cutts Collection.

⁷² Cutts Jr. to Ryan, 17 November 1932, box 2, folder 7, Cutts Collection. This issue surfaced during Cutts Jr.'s Senate testimony. See Cutts Testimony, 3547.

⁷³Cutts Jr. to Ryan, 8 April 1933, box 3, folder 12, Cutts Collection.

⁷⁴ Philip P. Quayle, "The Cutts Compensator," *Army Ordnance*, March-April 1927.

⁷⁵ Thompson to Cutts, 24 September 1929, box 2, folder 6, Cutts Collection.

an opportunity to increase the demand for the submachine gun among the Marines.⁷⁶

The psychological campaign extended into the U.S. Army's tests of the compensated Thompson. Prior to the start of the trials, Colonel Cutts wrote to Colonel Thompson instructing him on how to conduct the Army tests. Once the Army had been "engineered into a demonstration," the Marine Corps' use of the Thompson was to be downplayed or even ignored altogether. Colonel Cutts informed Colonel Thompson that the Army must "be permitted to discover . . . that the gun is eminently suited to their needs." Despite having been present with Colonel Thompson in the meeting with the postmaster general and numerous other demonstrations, Colonel Cutts chose not to attend the Army trials. He felt the Army evaluation should be conducted without a Marine present. "Face MUST be saved by original discovery," Cutts told Thompson, so that the Army was "permitted [to] rediscover" the Thompson on their own "and adopt it as their own child."77 Colonel Cutts later echoed this advice during the Cavalry Board's testing of the compensated Thompson. Writing to Walter Ryan, then the president of Auto-Ordnance, he explained that "the psychological idea is to permit the outfit to consider that they have developed the [Thompson] sub [machine gun] entirely on their own and to them belongs the persipicacity [sic] of discovering its great usefulness." Colonel Cutts remained sensitive to the human element present when testing and evaluating new technologies. His remarks to Colonel Thompson and Walter Ryan expose his insight into the potential influence his uniform could have in shaping a board's decision.78

Ultimately, the Navy ordered 500 Thompsons in 1928. Each of the U.S. Navy Model 1928 Thompsons came equipped with a Cutts Compensator. The Army proved slower to act, authorizing the compensated Model 1928 Thompson only for limited procurement following the Cavalry Board's trials. Despite the slow start, the compensated Thompson formally found its way into the hands of American servicemembers.⁷⁹

Writing to the president of Auto-Ordnance Corporation in 1932, Cutts Jr. summarized his role. "Now, I believe that you understand how our interests are linked with yours and that we are more than just inventors drawing a royalty," Cutts Jr. stated. Although they "could lie back and draw our royalty . . . without raising a finger," both Cuttses took a more active role in promoting the compensated Thompson submachine gun. Working from behind the scenes, Cutts Jr. felt they "really almost acted as directors in many ways" to bring about sales of the compensated Thompson.⁸⁰

Seeking Sales and Senate Scrutiny

As a result of their invention, Colonel Cutts and his son established connections to prominent salesmen, manufacturers, and distributors. Over the years, they coordinated to stimulate sales of compensated Thompsons. Moving beyond interests in Thompson guns alone, they tried to arrange, recommend, or act as intermediaries to orchestrate the sale of various weapons.

These relationships drew the attention of the Senate Special Committee Investigating the Munitions Industry. The committee formed in 1934 and was led by Senator Gerald P. Nye (R-ND). The Nye committee investigated allegations of war profiteering by munitions manufacturers and those in the arms industry. Strongly isolationist in its orientation, the committee inquired into munitions industry responsibility for American entry into World War I and investigated the sales practices of the arms industry.⁸¹

Cutts Compensator was summoned by the Nye committee to testify. As Colonel Cutts was then de-

 ⁷⁶ Elsewhere, Paul Fussell recognized the value attained by humanizing weapons. See Paul Fussell, Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 266–67.
 ⁷⁷ Cutts to Thompson, 3 October 1929, box 2, folder 6, Cutts Collection.
 ⁷⁸ Cutts to Ryan, 2 September 1931, box 2, folder 7, Cutts Collection.

⁷⁹ Hill, Thompson, 103, 195-96.

⁸⁰ Cutts Jr. to Ryan, 12 April 1932, box 2, folder 7, Cutts Collection.

⁸¹ Stuart D. Brandes, Warhogs: A History of War Profits in America (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997), 199–225; Paul A. C. Koistinen, "The 'Industrial-Military Complex' in Historical Perspective: The Inter-War Years," Journal of American History 56, no. 4 (March 1970): 819–39, https://doi.org/10.2307/1917520; and John Edward Wiltz, "The Nye Committee Revisited," Historian 23, no. 2 (February 1961): 211–33.

ceased, Cutts Jr. remained to testify regarding the partners' conduct. Questioned by Missouri senator Bennett Champ Clark, then-first lieutenant Cutts Jr. was scrutinized over his simultaneous role as inventor and Marine. Cutts Jr. readily defended his actions. Cutts Jr. informed the senator that following developmental work and the submission of their first patent, the Cutts Compensator inventors offered the patent to the Navy so that it could be "placed in the secret archives." This offer came at no cost and included no royalties or other compensation for the Cuttses. The Navy, however, expressed no interest in funding the development of their antirecoil or anticlimb device. That the Navy Department failed to fully exploit the willing contributions of those in uniformed service left Senator Clark little room to criticize Cutts Jr. as an inventor. The senator shifted his next line of questioning to the conflicted role of businessman and Marine.82

Senator Clark honed in on Cutts Jr.'s dual role, pointedly challenging him about his collection of royalties and involvement in promoting the compensated Thompson as a Marine officer. Cutts Jr. denied wrongdoing, asserting that no law or regulation prohibited an active duty officer from running a business. Clark challenged the partners' ability to separate their business from their professional duties. To illustrate the routine muddling of professional and private spheres, Clark noted during the inquiry the regular use of official Marine Corps letterhead in mail relating to Cutts Compensator business matters. Moving beyond the Cuttses, Clark confronted Cutts Jr. on Bleasdale's involvement with the Cutts Compensator business. He focused on Bleasdale's favorable reports about the compensated Thompson. Cutts Jr. evaded the issue by explaining that Bleasdale was a partner, not a sales agent. That Bleasdale collected a royalty was not lost on Clark, whatever position Bleasdale may have held.⁸³

Senator Clark also inquired about attempts to initiate sales of small arms abroad. Despite intensive

questioning, the committee was unable to uncover any successful sales in which Cutts Jr. or a partner in Cutts Compensator received a sales commission for weapons. Despite this, Clark determined that the partners at "the compensator company received the royalty from the Auto-Ordnance Company . . . which they, in turn, turned over to the partners of the [Cutts] compensator company." "The compensator," Clark felt, "was one additional step" to collect a commission on the sale of guns. Although Cutts Compensator never directly sold guns, its partners encouraged the sale of compensated guns. In advocating for sales, Clark insisted that they abused their roles as military officers. Clark implied that Cutts Jr.'s actions were those of an unscrupulous businessman who prioritized profit over his duties as a Marine.⁸⁴

In contrast, Cutts Jr. saw himself as not having crossed any ethical boundaries. In a letter penned following his Senate testimony, Cutts Jr. faulted the Nye committee because it "could not differentiate between guns and Compensators." In his view, the committee "tried to prove that we were peddling guns!"⁸⁵ As Cutts Jr. understood it, the Navy's dismissal of their design enabled him to engage in commercial sales. As a private enterprise, he did not perceive the coordination by Marine officers to encourage the adoption of the compensated Thompson as a conflict of interest. Nor did he see the promotion of foreign compensator sales as unethical. Despite Senator Clark's more solidly drawn boundary between private enterprise and professional duties, Cutts Jr. did not believe he or his fellow Marine officers had acted unethically.

Assessing the Cuttses

As Senator Clark alluded to, the Cutts Compensator partners could be seen as acting out of self-interest when they advocated adoption of the Thompson gun bearing their compensator. They may be viewed as entrepreneurial profit seekers who abused their positions for personal gain. In contrast, they could be

⁸² Cutts Testimony, 3544–45; and Cutts Jr. to Secretary of the Navy, "Patent Application for Improvement on Fire Arms," July 1925, box 11, folder 89, Cutts Collection.

⁸³Cutts Testimony, 3544–45.

⁸⁴ Cutts Testimony, 3543–76.

⁸⁵ Cutts Jr. to Ed [Crossman?], 4 March 1935, box 3, folder 14, Cutts Collection.



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MCA-MARINES.ORG/ BECOME-A-MEMBER viewed as innovators attempting to overcome bureaucratic inertia who believed that the compensator was a necessary piece of special equipment to ensure the success of an amphibious assault. In this case, were their actions those of dedicated professionals who tenaciously pursued what they believed to be best for the Corps? These nagging questions run through the complex narrative of the Cuttses and their invention.

While Cutts Jr. vehemently denied any attempts at "peddling guns," his correspondence indicates that he sought more than just the adoption of the Thompson in the United States or compensator sales in Europe. Frequently vague in his business dealings, Cutts Ir. often chose not to disclose the intended purchasers in sales he sought to orchestrate. In 1935, Cutts Ir. wrote to Walter Ryan regarding a manufacturing license in Poland, but he stated he was "not at liberty to disclose the names of the principals involved." Cutts Jr. asked that Ryan keep "the entire matter [in the] dark."86 In correspondence with John Young of Federal Laboratories, a supplier of Auto-Ordnancemanufactured Thompson guns, Cutts Jr. hinted at potential sales to a "Persian outfit." Deliberately secretive, with concerns about being double-crossed, Cutts Ir. felt that in either case "the path is left open to you, and you can land the deal with us in the background."87 Cutts Jr. alluded to arranging weapons sales to foreign buyers.

While unclear, Cutts Jr.'s correspondence includes letters that point to completed sales. In 1932, Cutts Jr. wrote to Young with a quote for refurbished 75-foot boats. The boats in question did not come equipped with guns. "If you so desire, I ca[n] arrange for these also. Perhaps you want each one fitted with a 37mm. and a .50 cal. machine gun?" Cutts Jr. wrote. To let Young know he could handle this sale, Cutts Jr. assured him, "We are in an excellent position to take care of you on this job, having just delivered two boats to another country farther away than Cuba."⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Cutts Jr. to Ryan, 3 April 1935, box 2, folder 8, Cutts Collection.

⁸⁷ Cutts Jr. to John W. Young, 31 December 1932, box 20, folder 175, Cutts Collection.

⁸⁸ Cutts Jr. to John W. Young, 7 March 1934, box 20, folder 175, Cutts Collection.

Despite the offer, Young declined because the price was too high. Yet, Cutts Jr.'s assurances indicate completed transactions. Whether he inflated his business experience or not, he intentionally portrayed himself and appeared as an active businessman with a global clientele.⁸⁹

Cutts Jr. also tried working his way into the "airplane bomb business" with Young. The proposition would mean "thousands of dollars for your company" and would "evolve into a beautiful working combination in S.A. [South America] to the practical exclusion of all European competition." Cutts Jr. explained to Young how he fit in: "I wished to be associated with you . . . [and] I can see many ways where this association would work to our mutual advantage." However, Cutts Jr. could not "accept a salary from your company due to the fact that I am in the Service . . . [but] the best solution seems to be a question of treasury stock."90 Although prohibited from accepting a direct monetary payment, Cutts Jr. was willing to work around this restriction to receive payment by other means.

The Cuttses, and by extension Bleasdale and Quayle, could easily be characterized as military officers exploiting their positions for personal financial gain. Cutts Jr.'s previously discussed correspondence with Federal Laboratories certainly points this way. However, further scrutiny provides a more complicated story and highlights for historians the ethical boundaries the Cuttses formed through their actions. As previously discussed, the initial patents were offered to the Navy but rejected. Colonel Cutts later freely authorized the use of his patents by the U.S. military for large-caliber weapons already in inventory. As these instances demonstrate, understanding the Cuttses requires greater nuance than merely depicting them as greedy profiteers.

Furthermore, malicious characterizations fail to perceive the limitations the Cuttses imposed on their business efforts. A terse exchange between father and



Color poster [513920], "Back the Attack!," World War II Posters, 1942–45, Records of the Office of Government Reports, 1932–47, RG 44, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD The Cutts Compensator became a recognizable feature on the Thompson submachine gun.

son highlights the ethical boundaries Colonel Cutts established. Writing to his father in October 1933, Cutts Jr. discussed the potential to compensate submachine guns for sale to Cuba. With sales of Thompsons from Auto-Ordnance below expectations, Cutts Jr. felt this would be "an excellent opportunity to place the compensator on the world market." Cuban sales could help to "hasten our other foreign developments" and bring the expected purchases they had not received from the U.S. military.⁹¹

Colonel Cutts quickly responded; he would not allow any sales to Cuba. "It does not make any difference son, what the foreign developments are in the

⁸⁹ John W. Young to Cutts Jr., 14 March 1934, box 20, folder 175, Cutts Collection.

⁹⁰ Cutts Jr. to John W. Young, 30 March 1934, box 20, folder 175, Cutts Collection.

⁹¹ Cutts Jr. to Cutts, 2 October 1933, box 3, folder 13, Cutts Collection.

Comp," he wrote. If sold to Cuba, the compensator would "deliberately raise the fire power of a possible opponent," Colonel Cutts contended. He emphatically declared that compensated guns "must NOT meet our forces in Cuba." Clearly, Colonel Cutts believed in the claims they made about their device. He viewed the compensator as highly effective and capable of greatly impacting the outcome of engagements. "Candidly," Cutts told his son, "I would expect to be court martialed, it is as bad as that." Colonel Cutts revealed his feelings that others might perceive their actions as unethical, if not outright illegal. He restrained his son by telling him not to "let us lose our perspectives." An ethical code, formed in practice by Colonel Cutts, provided the "balance" he had "been striving for" throughout their work. Pulled between the pursuits of businessmen and the responsibilities of Marine officers, Colonel Cutts felt he had found equilibrium between his contested roles. True, they sought the widespread adoption of the compensator, as evidenced by their activities within the Marine Corps and other branches of Service. They filed patents overseas, enlisted the aid of sales agents, and actively offered the compensator for testing to several foreign militaries. However, he would not allow their device to fall into the hands of those he believed may one day be enemies of the United States in exchange for profits. Here was the ethical boundary he formed. He would not allow his son to cross the line he created or tip the balance in favor of business pursuits.92

In mapping the Cuttses' ethics, the question of the effectiveness of the compensator necessarily arises. Many inventors eagerly marketed products of questionable utility to the U.S. military. However, the Cuttses should not be oversimplified as purveyors of a technological snake-oil cure for the ailments of automatic weapons. They went to extensive lengths to develop, test, and refine their compensators. The inclusion of Quayle in their partnership due to his scientific knowledge and his complex testing apparatus support this assertion. Colonel Cutts experimented extensively with the material for the compensator and its design, another indication that he did not consider the device cheap or superfluous.⁹³ As discussed previously, Colonel Cutts rebuked his son at the suggestion of Cuban sales. Here, the shared perception of the compensator as a decisive tool in military engagements is made clear. All evidence indicates they believed in the claims they made about their device.

Yet, the compensator found its way onto relatively few weapons despite the potential for widespread use. In *The Evolution of Technology*, George Basalla asserts that "when an invention is selected for development, we cannot assume that the initial choice is a unique and obvious one dictated by the nature of the artifact."⁹⁴ In the case of weapons development, the Thompson submachine gun could be perceived as the next logical step in weapons technology. However, this view ignores the critical role of Colonel Cutts and his son in agitating for the adoption of the Thompson gun. Nor should one assume that the Cutts Compensator inherently represented a technological improvement.⁹⁵

Evaluations of the compensator for the Lewis gun, BAR, and Thompson produced both favorable and unfavorable reviews. These evaluations expose that testing, whether in laboratories, on target ranges, or in combat, was a highly subjective enterprise. Underlying Edson's evaluation of the compensated BAR was a belief in the tactical primacy of accuracy over volume of fire. His evaluation criteria relied on hits per target rather than taking into account the duration of fire. Edson's report dismissed automatic fire

⁹² Cutts to Cutts Jr., 3 October 1933, box 3, folder 13, Cutts Collection.

⁹³ In a letter to Remington Arms Company, Col Cutts stated, "In all compensator work I prefer to use a special steel made by the Central Alloy Stell [*sic*] Co of Massillon Ohio. and this has been standardized with their assistance. It is a Chrome manganese Molybdendum alloy, and very machineable . . . [and] in its annealed state are ample for all small arms work." See Cutts to Remington Arms Company, 1 September 1927, box 6, folder 46, Cutts Collection.

⁹⁴ George Basalla, *The Evolution of Technology* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 141.

⁹⁵ Similarly, author C. J. Chivers rejects perceptions of "orderly deliberation" involved in weapons procurement. C. J. Chivers, *The Gun* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010), 296. Others have seen technological improvements as a hindrance to military adoption. John Ellis has argued that the conservative nature of militaries leads them to dismiss rather than adopt new technologies. John Ellis, *The Social History of the Machine Gun*, reprint (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).



Photo by SSgt W. Huntington, [175539297], Okinawa 658–143 Surrender, Photographs of World War II and Post World War II Marine Corps Activities, ca. 1939–ca. 1958, Records of the U.S. Marine Corps, RG 127, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC. Marines armed with compensated (left) and uncompensated (right) Thompson submachine guns guard Japanese prisoners on Okinawa, 3 September 1945.

because of inaccuracy and recommended that the BAR "should habitually be fired semi-automatically instead of full automatically."⁹⁶ This feedback contrasts sharply with the Cuttses' assertions about the increased "hit factor" provided by the compensator.

Bleasdale's reflections on the 1928 La Flor engagement reached a similar conclusion regarding the criticality of volume of fire. Bleasdale argued that "men must be taught to realize that 100 yards is the maximum battlefield range at which the average man armed with a shoulder weapon can deliberately aim and hit a man on the other side. . . . Even then the target must be motionless, large and distinct, with excellent visibility."⁹⁷ Thus, compensated automatic weapons provided a distinct tactical advantage due to their high volume of fire. The underlying disagreement between the Cuttses and Marines such as Edson point to the necessity of contextualization to understand the perpetuation or abandonment of a given military technology. In this case, a board's conclusions hinged on complex factors such as the construction of evaluation criteria, chosen testing conditions, and beliefs about the tactical role of a weapon. All of these rest outside a technical consideration of the compensator itself.

Although the compensator did not flourish as the Cuttses had hoped, the perceived utility of the device ensured imitators found their way onto other

⁹⁶ For Edson's report, see reference (a) enclosed in Director, Division of Operations and Training to MajGen Commandant, "Report on Test of Colt 'Monitor' Automatic Machine Rifle, Caliber .30."

⁹⁷ Bleasdale, "La Flor Engagement," 31.



Photo by Capt Horton, © IWM H 2645, War Office Second World War Official Collection, Imperial War Museums, London Prime Minister Winston Churchill examines the Cutts Compensator on a Thompson submachine gun, 31 July 1940.

weapons. In one case, the Harrington and Richardson Arms Company manufactured the Model 50 Reising submachine gun with a gas-directing muzzle device. Following a lawsuit filed by Auto-Ordnance in 1942, Harrington and Richardson denied infringement but settled with Cutts Jr. for \$17,500.⁹⁸ Whether necessary or superfluous in actuality, the presence of imitation compensators indicate that for some weapon developers, compensated guns were viewed as more desirable than uncompensated ones. Ultimately, the Cutts Compensator–equipped Thompson submachine gun saw widespread service, finding its way into the hands of U.S. servicemembers, law enforcement officers, and gangsters. Eventually, simplified models removed "the Comp" from the Thompson submachine gun. Although absent from later-model Thompson guns, through the Lend-Lease program and foreign sales, compensated Thompsons saw military use around the world. As a result, the Cuttses' energetic appeals for the compensated Thompson impacted more than the U.S. military. Their compensator became a conspicuous feature on one of the most recognizable American small arms.

Colonel Cutts and Brigadier General Cutts Jr. developed their device and saw it successfully integrated into service due to their efforts at popularizing the Thompson submachine gun and driving home the criti-

⁹⁸ "Re: Harrington & Richardson Compensator for Reising Gun," 28 May 1941, box 2, folder 9, Cutts Collection; Affidavit of William E. Seaver, Maguire Industries Inc. and Richard Cutts Jr. v. Harrington and Richardson Arms Company, box 19, folder 172, Cutts Collection; and Affidavit of Richard M. Cutts, Maguire Industries Inc. and Richard Cutts Jr. v. Harrington and Richardson Arms Company, box 19, folder 172, Cutts Collection.

cal necessity of the compensator. Both father and son, assisted by fellow officers, utilized their positions in the Marine Corps to further the adoption of the compensated Thompson gun within the U.S. military and collected on the royalties gained by sales of their compensators. Their extensive personal correspondence exposes their conflicted identities and highlights the critical role they played in pressing for procurement of a new weapon. It reveals the ethical boundaries they defined while balancing the simultaneous positions they held as Marines, inventors, and business partners. The story of the Cutts Compensator is one of inventive design, intelligent planning, and capable execution undergirded by an ethical code that frequently merged private enterprise and professional duties. Theirs is a case study that invites scholars to historicize professional ethics to better understand the Marine Corps' past.

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The U.S. Marine Corps' Tank Doctrine, 1920–50

by Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth W. Estes, USMC (Ret), with Romain Cansière

Abstract: Major Joseph DiDomenico's study of U.S. Army influence on U.S. Marine Corps tank doctrine appeared in the Summer 2018 issue of this journal, titled "The U.S. Army's Influence on Marine Corps Tank Doctrine." Mobilizing an impressive array of primary and secondary sources, DiDomenico laid considerable credit for the Corps' improvements to its nascent World War II tank and amphibious tractor doctrine on the Army's Armor School at Fort Knox as well as the improved Army doctrinal publications that had emerged by 1944. Major DiDomenico excoriated the Marine Corps' neglect of "critical vulnerabilities for armor supporting amphibious operations." The benchmark for Marine Corps tank doctrine's failures to "synthesize" Army tank doctrine for Marine Corps missions is unsurprisingly the Battle of Tarawa. According to DiDomenico, the failures registered at Tarawa "indicated an institutional ignorance in the operational art of combined arms." This article presents some common misconceptions of Marine Corps tank policy and doctrine and aims to correct those misconceptions.

Keywords: tanks, Battle of Tarawa, tank doctrine, tank policy, combined arms, armor

"Sometimes the absence of doctrine is doctrine."

–Eugenia C. Kiesling¹

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¹ Eugenia C. Kiesling, email to Kenneth W. Estes, 27 June 2019. Kiesling is a professor in the History Department of the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, NY, and is the author of *Arming against Hitler: France and the Limits of Military Planning*. ajor Joseph DiDomenico's study of U.S. Army influence on U.S. Marine Corps tank doctrine appeared in the Summer 2018 issue of this journal, titled "The U.S. Army's Influence on Marine Corps Tank Doctrine." Mobilizing an impressive array of primary and secondary sources, he laid considerable credit for the Corps' improvements to its nascent World War II tank and amphibious tractor doctrine on the Army's Armor School at Fort Knox, Kentucky, as well as the improved Army doctrinal publications that had emerged by 1944.

As far as the learning experiences accumulating to Marine Corps units during the initial years of operations in the Pacific Theater, Major DiDomenico excoriated the Marine Corps' neglect of "critical vulnerabilities for armor supporting amphibious operations. The Marine Corps focused primarily [during the interwar period] on developing amphibious doctrine to allow infantry to efficiently assault a beach and



Historical Resources Branch, Marine Corps History Division

The first armored fighting vehicle accepted into Marine Corps service was the King Armored Car produced by Armored Motor Car Company of Detroit, MI. Eight of these formed with the Armored Car Squadron, Headquarters, First Marine Regiment, at Philadelphia in 1918 with a few drivers and mechanics. The headquarters staff never advanced any concept for their operation and no evident doctrine emerged, but the assignment of the unit to the First Regiment indicated that the armored cars would serve in the defense of advanced naval bases. Later use focused on mobile patrolling in Haiti as the primary mission for the armored car.

thereby failed to synthesize the Army's tank doctrine and apply it to Marine Corps operations."²

The benchmark for Marine Corps tank doctrine's failures to "synthesize" Army tank doctrine for Marine Corps missions is unsurprisingly the Battle of Tarawa, "the first large-scale opposed landing of forces in the Pacific theater to test armor in opposed amphibious doctrine." According to DiDomenico, the failures registered at Tarawa "indicated an institutional ignorance in the operational art of combined arms."³

Herein lay some common misconceptions of Marine Corps tank policy and doctrine. The Marine Corps has operated tanks and other armored fighting vehicles from 1917 to the present day. It may seem curious to Army personnel, but there has never been a Marine Corps *armor* force in existence, except in the case of certain ad hoc efforts. In the Corps, one refers to tanks, amphibious assault vehicles, light armored vehicles, or armored cars, all operating variously with infantry, combat engineers, and artillery on the battlefield. In contrast to the evolution of armored doctrine in the Army, there are to date no Marine Corps armored infantry, armored engineers, armored cavalry, or self-propelled artillery, although the last oper-

² Maj Joseph DiDomenico, USA, "The U.S. Army's Influence on Marine Corps Tank Doctrine," *Marine Corps History* 4, no. 1 (Summer 2018): 41. ³ DiDomenico, "The U.S. Army's Influence on Marine Corps Tank Doctrine," 31–32.

ated from World War II to the 1980s as reinforcing artillery.

The Marine Corps' priorities concerning the development of amphibious warfare capabilities necessarily limited any evolution of armored forces of any description. Primarily, this characteristic stemmed from the nature of ship-to-shore landing operations and the characteristics of the shipping involved. One cannot underestimate and dismiss amphibious warfare doctrine as unrelated to Marine Corps tank doctrine, because nothing of the sort existed at the time. Careful reading of the sources also shows that Marine Corps procurement and doctrinal decision-making had little to do with the acquisition of Army tank technology and its manuals.

The Early Days

Although many Marine Corps officers serving in World War I with the 4th Brigade under the Army's 2d Division had some experience with French and U.S. Army tank support, the enduring interest in tanks within the Corps accompanied the Corps' new postwar mission of amphibious warfare, derived from the early Advanced Base Force of 1913. Only at this point did the Marine Corps begin to consider acquiring tanks and employing them to partly solve the landing force's most challenging issue at its weakest moment: mustering adequate firepower as landing craft closed the beach in the amphibious assault. The extensive naval campaign that brought amphibious assaults to bear would also require secure bases that would resist opposing operations of the same nature. Because Marine Corps leaders had experienced the employment of tanks by other land forces during the Great War, it became a common assumption that tanks would continue to support and defend infantry in the course of amphibious warfare.4

After a few officers and enlisted Marines received training at the Army Tank School at Camp Meade, Maryland, in 1922, a light tank platoon hastily assembled at Quantico, Virginia, in late 1923 for evaluation along with amphibious equipment in the Navy's winter maneuvers of 1924. By 5 December 1923, the light tank platoon, Marine Corps Expeditionary Force, formed at Quantico, initially consisting of 2 officers, 22 enlisted, and 3 M1917 6-ton tanks. The Army provided the tanks upon informal request by the secretary of the Navy.

The light tank platoon returned to Quantico after gaining experience from the Culebra maneuvers. Although it saw no more landing exercises, it participated in annual land maneuvers of the Expeditionary Force. It gained six more tanks from a formal loan agreement with the Army. Deployed to China in 1927, it saw little more than ceremonial use, returning the next year to be disbanded.⁵

On 7 December 1933, the Fleet Marine Force (FMF) replaced the old Marine Corps Expeditionary Force, reflecting the concentration on amphibious operations and forward naval base defense steadily evolving since World War I as Marine Corps policy.⁶ The new *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations* (1934) made noteworthy mention of light tanks, calling for landing them early in the amphibious assault. Unfortunately, the only available U.S. light tanks—Army M2A4s—already weighed in excess of 10 tons, while the cargo-handling booms of most Navy ships seldom exceeded a 5-ton limit. Accordingly, an early Marine Corps requirement focused on designs for a *very* light tank.⁷

Funds available for the new forces permitted only the Quantico-based 1st Marine Brigade to form up and receive all arms in its first three years. The 2d Marine Brigade, based at San Diego, Califor-

⁴ Tank instruction formed part of the curriculum of the first field officer's course conducted postwar at Quantico. "Professional Notes: Recruiting and Distribution of the Marine Corps," *Marine Corps Gazette* 5, no. 4 (December 1920): 410, as cited (incorrectly as "Marine Corps Schools") in Arthur E. Burns III, "The Origin and Development of U.S. Marine Corps Tank Units: 1923–1945" (student paper, Marine Corps Command and Staff College, Quantico, VA, 1977), 2.

⁵ Kenneth W. Estes, *Marines under Armor: The Marine Corps and the Armored Fighting Vehicle, 1916–2000* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2000), 5–8.

⁶ Allan R. Millett, Semper Fidelis (New York: Macmillan, 1980), 336; and LtCol Kenneth J. Clifford, Progress and Purpose: A Developmental History of the United States Marine Corps, 1900–1970 (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1973), 43–46. ⁷ Clifford, Progress and Purpose, 54.



Courtesy of the General George Patton Museum of Leadership, Fort Knox, KY

A 5-ton Marmon-Herrington CTL-3 of the 1st Tank Company, 1st Marine Brigade, backs off a Navy motor launch at Quantico, VA. The initial Marine Corps requirement that landing force equipment use large ships' boats—in the event landing craft were not available—drove the Corps to order this diminutive tankette as its first choice.

nia, remained only an infantry regiment. Thus, only one Marine Corps tank company featured in the 1934 planning. The Marine Corps Equipment Board (MCEB) approved in concept a 3-ton tank, armed with a 1.1-inch automatic gun, or a 37mm cannon and standard light machine guns. Vehicle armor would need to resist .50-caliber rounds and a 25- to 30-mph speed was specified. No such vehicles existed. Simply put, the ambitious specifications (i.e., a 37mm gun on a 3-ton chassis, with protection as specified) could not be accommodated.⁸

Serious decisions concerning the formation of the FMF contributed toward the creation of a Marine Corps tank arm in 1935. Despite having no tanks on hand, the Commandant gained approval for a Marine Corps officer to attend the Army's tank course, then taught at the Infantry School, Fort Benning, Georgia. Headquarters set this task for Captain (later brigadier general) Hartnoll J. Withers, a 1926 graduate of the Naval Academy who had enlisted in the Corps in 1920. His significant contributions to the Marine Corps tank arm marked him as a pioneer in the field.⁹ Most of the World War II tank battalion commanders in the Marine Corps trained at Fort Benning rather than the later Armor School at Fort Knox. Accordingly, they had little knowledge of later improvements in Army armor doctrine.

⁸ CMC to Cdr Special Service Squadron, USN, 19 June 1934, Record Group (RG) 127, Entry #18, box 76, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Washington, DC.

⁹ BGen Hartnoll J. Withers biographical file, Historical Resources Branch (HRB), Marine Corps History Division (HD), Quantico, VA; Army C/S letter to CNO, 18 July 1935, RG 127, Entry #18/57, NARA; and Message, Asst CMC to USS Chicago, 25 July 1935, RG 127, Entry #18/57, NARA.



Historical Resources Branch, Marine Corps History Division Another advantage of the CTL-3 brought up in sessions of the Marine Corps Equipment Board emphasized that two of them could be carried in the new Bureau of Ships medium landing craft compared to a single Army light tank.

On 29 November 1935, the Commandant General, Major General John H. Russell, ordered his Quartermaster to "initiate steps for the procurement of five (5) light fighting tanks." The Marine Corps thus accepted the tank as a significant component of its still-forming amphibious doctrine.¹⁰

The Marine Corps' light fighting tank of 1935 took form in the Marmon-Herrington combat tank, light, CTL-3, a two-person turretless tankette fitted with dual driving controls and three machine guns, weighing 9,500 pounds and capable of a 33-mph top speed on band tracks. Because of the inevitable teething problems of a new tank, the first five machines did not arrive at Quantico and the 1st Brigade until 22 February 1937. The 1st Tank Company stood up on 1 March 1937 and immediately prepared to deploy to the Caribbean for the Navy's Fleet Exercise No. 4 (FLEX4), scheduled for January and March 1938. Only a single Navy landing craft prototype was available, but once on shore, the platoon of CTL-3s attacked the beach defenses and in turn defeated the defender's reserve as it arrived in trucks. The observers agreed that the little CTL-3s had registered excellent potential in every phase of the exercise."

Deliveries of the CTL-series vehicles remained painfully slow and the MCEB began to investigate the suitability of Army-type tanks for the landing force missions. However, on 19 October 1938, the Headquarters Marine Corps staff reiterated the Commandant General's guidance that the Marine Corps only acquire the lightest possible tanks, especially given the dearth of landing craft in the fleet and the lingering requirement that all FMF equipment be capable of landing from 45- to 50-foot ships' boats of the fleet. Thus, despite the favorable demonstration of an Army M2A2 light tank and M1 combat car at Quantico, there was no relief in sight, although the Navy was known to plan landing craft carrying tanks in the 20-ton range.¹²

The 1st Tank Company, 1st Marine Brigade, participated in the 1939 Fleet Exercise No. 6 (FLEX6) with its two platoons of CTL-3 tankettes and a single Army M2A4 light tank, a new vehicle borrowed for the exercise from Aberdeen Proving Ground where an officer and five crew had become familiar with it. New landing craft models were available for testing and the CTL-3 and M2A4 vehicles all operated well from them, although the suspension of the latter proved vulnerable to salt water. The improved

¹⁰ CMC to the Quartermaster of the Marine Corps (QMMC), 29 November 1935, RG 127, Entry #140A/128, NARA.

[&]quot;Quartermaster (QM) Quantico letter to QMMC, 26 February 1937, RG 127, Entry #140A/128, NARA; and QM Quantico letter to CG, FMF, 20 February 1937, RG 127, Entry #140A/128, NARA, reporting acceptance of the CTL, factory numbers 1329–33 (Marine Corps numbers were T-1 through 5) for use by 1st Tank Company, 1st Marine Brigade, FMF, upon its formation. "Tanks in test run have demonstrated ability to: 1. Run a hundred and twenty-five miles without addition of gas, oil or water. 2. Make a complete three hundred and sixty degree turn in either direction within a circle of eighteen feet in diameter by turning on one locked track. 3. Bridge a trench fifty inches wide. 4. Negotiate a forty-eight inch vertical drop without turning over. 5. Negotiate a twenty-two inch vertical rise." CMC to CG Marine Barracks Quantico, 10 March 1937, RG 127, Entry #140A/128, NARA, directs installation of one Navy radio receiver, type RU in one of the CTL. Photographs of the period show only one tank per CTL-3 platoon fitted with a radio.

¹² CMC to President, MCEB, 19 October 1938, RG 127, Entry #E18/164, NARA.



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The obvious limitations of the CTL-3 led to the development of the companion medium version produced by the Marmon-Herrington Company as the CTM-3TBD. A turreted tank weighing more than 21,000 pounds, it used a diesel engine to attain a speed of 30 mph. The turret mounted a pair of .50-caliber Browning machine guns, the standard U.S. antitank weapon of the 1930s. With the three .30-caliber machine guns in the hull forward, the three-person crew seemed almost contradicted. In the end, only five were built for the Corps.

Marmon-Herringtons also performed well with a new 10.5-inch-wide band track.¹³

By now, the budget for the Marine Corps was increasing and Commandant General Thomas Holcomb decided to finish building up the first tank company. He anticipated that better light tanks were now available and instructed the MCEB to prepare specifications for a new order of 18–20 new tanks by mid-April 1940.¹⁴

On 3 April 1940, the board held its decision meeting to determine the future direction of the Marine Corps tank program, inviting representatives of the FMF commands to contribute. Despite the earlier decision of the board to increase permissible vehicle weight to 18,000 pounds with the discovery of improved handling equipment on board naval shipping, the members and visitors voted to buy improved Marmon-Herrington 12,500-pound tankettes (CTL-6) and a new, three-person turreted Marmon-Herrington combat tank, medium, the CTM-3TBD tank of 18,000

¹³ QMMC file on FLEX6, notes general satisfaction with tanks, especially the second series of five with its improved track, RG 127, Entry #140A, file 169-1, NARA. See also Burns, "The Origin and Development of U.S. Marine Corps Tank Units: 1923–1945," 32. Compare Frank O. Hough, Verle E. Ludwig, Henry I. Shaw, *Pearl Harbor to Guadalcanal: History of U.S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Historical Branch, G-3 Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1958), 23–32, and Clifford, *Progress and Purpose*, 52–53, on lighters, although both erroneously note that the Corps had "given up" on the Marmon-Herrington tank by 1939.

¹⁴ CMC to President, MCEB, 23 February 1940, RG 127, Entry #18/1229, NARA.

pounds. They rejected the current Army light tank of 24,000–25,000 pounds. The board also endorsed its earlier operational concept that provided for landing the smaller tank first to overcome the beach defenses in the assault phase, with the heavier, more capable medium tank reserved for operations inland. General Holcomb signed the order on 8 April.¹⁵

Continuing Experiences

To this point in 1940, no pronounced influence of Army doctrine or armor schools may be discerned in the Marine Corps' search for tanks suitable for its planned amphibious assault concepts. This is not surprising given the Army's own eclectic experiences prior to the creation of its Armored Force (10 July 1940), Armor School (1 October 1940), and units. Marine Corps officers still attended the Army's Tank Course, convened under the Infantry Branch at Fort Benning. Tanks ordered by the Marine Corps included no contemporary Army tanks until the secretary of the Navy formally requested 36 Army light tanks from the secretary of the Army on 8 July 1940.

Yet, the entire armored fighting vehicle strength of the Corps that same July consisted of the 3 officers and 46 enlisted Marines of the 1st Tank Company, 1st Marine Brigade, and their 10 CTL-3 series tankettes. The 2d Marine Brigade still had no tank company, yet the planning now focused on expanding these brigades to division strength, including their planned tank battalions. Clearly, the fledgling tank arm of the Marine Corps would have to accelerate its growth from the platoon-a-year rate it had thus far experienced.

What had happened? Peacetime planning had failed to keep up with world events. The Battle of France saw the Allied armies routed in Europe and the British Army withdrawn to the home islands. At the same time, Brigadier General Charles D. Barrett, the Commandant's chief planner, wrote him a disturbing memorandum on 24 June 1940. Barrett had guided the 1930s amphibious doctrine and now sounded an alarm for the tank program. At this time, the Corps had 35 Marmon-Herrington tanks in operation or on order. He asserted that the situation now required stronger and faster measures:

> Several factors have recently arisen which materially affect the policy of the Marine Corps with respect to tanks. First. The present war has demonstrated the great effectiveness of tanks, and the relative numbers of tanks to other arms has been greater than formerly thought desirable. Second . . . it seems probable that in a number of cases, that the FMF could land without opposition and would then be called upon to defend a relatively large area. In this event a fast striking force would constitute the best defense. Third. The possibility of being ordered on operations before new tanks can be built has been increased. In this case, Army tanks actually on hand would constitute the only supply. It is believed that Army tanks could be secured if the emergency were sufficiently great.¹⁶

Brigadier General Barrett called for the immediate transfer from the Army of five light tanks, sending two to each brigade for training and keeping a fifth tank as a spare. Commandant Holcomb approved the request, signaling the conversion of the Corps to Army sourcing. The Marmon-Herrington tanks, both turreted and tankette type, might have developed into successful vehicles, however, only acquisition through Army channels could provide the quantities of tanks now required for the rapid expansion of the FMF. Moreover, the Marine Corps now appeared in strategic plans of hemispheric defense, including action against the Vichy French bases in the Caribbean. In addition, a proposed landing in the Azores might find U.S. forces in contact with the German Army, which

¹⁵ Director Plans and Policy [P&P] to CMC, 8 April 1940, decision memorandum on number, types of tanks, RG 127, Entry #140B/154, NARA.

¹⁶ Director P&P Div to CMC, memorandum, 24 June 1940, RG 127, Entry #140B/154, NARA.



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In its haste to acquire light tanks from the Army to fill out the three divisional tank battalions ordered for 1941, the Corps picked up many diesel engine versions such as this M3A1, shown exiting a Navy LCM-2 craft at Camp New River, NC. Still painted in olive drab, the Army ordnance number can be seen on the hull side. The evident speed of the vehicle exiting the landing craft may be seen on the raised hull front and blurred track shoes and sprocket wheel, indicating a green tank or craft crew, or both. The Army had decided to ban most diesel tanks from overseas service as a logistic shortcut, leaving them easy acquisitions for the Corps.

had already defeated the collective forces of Poland, Norway, France, and Great Britain. Instead of the Pacific island naval campaign considered by Marine Corps planners since World War I, the Marine Corps might face the European blitzkrieg.¹⁷

Marine Corps decisions such as forming an organic tank battalion in each Marine Corps division, fielding unarmored amphibious tractor (amtrac) battalions for resupply of landing beaches, and adding an antitank battery of M₃ 75mm guns mounted on halftrack vehicles to each divisional special weapons battalion reflected no Army influence, concept, or doctrine. The Marine Corps Quartermasters viewed Army weapons developments with varied interest, but no transfer of doctrine took place when "Army technology [was] purchased by the Marine Corps Equipment Board in *1938* [*sic*]," as DiDomenico incorrectly wrote. He later clarified this statement: "In 1938, the Marine Corps Equipment Board met to discuss the fu-

¹⁷ CMC to QMMC, 2 July 1940, RG 127, Entry #140B/154, NARA, orders 5 light tanks M2A4 (\$165,000) and 31 light tank, combat, 13.5-ton (M3) (\$1,023,000); and Letter, Chief Bureau of Ordnance, Navy Dept 7, August 1940, RG 127, Entry #140B/154, NARA, notes that verbal orders of CMC on 31 July 1940 modified the above order to 36 M2A4 at \$1,188,000.



Historical Resources Branch, Marine Corps History Division

The varied tank models received by the first two tank battalions were sorted into companies. Here, on Guadalcanal, light tanks of Companies A and B of the 1st Tank Battalion exit a refueling point, likely on Henderson Field. The first and third vehicles are M2A4s of Company A, where that type had its sole combat use of more than 500 manufactured, and the middle tank is an M3 of Company B. Note the fixed machine guns in the right and left sponson boxes, for use by the driver, if needed, while operating at the same time the engine, transmission, and steering controls.

ture of Marine tanks. They concluded that the Marine Corps would purchase some tanks from the Army's arsenal of M2A4 light tanks and test their abilities during FLEX 6 in January 1940."¹⁸ However, as previously noted, the actual Navy request for 36 Army light tanks wasn't made until 8 July 1940. U.S. Army infantry divisions had no organic tank battalions in World War II, using instead a pool of field Army level tank battalions as required. The Army initially ordered amphibian tractors with armor, intending them to carry assault troops in amphibious landings. Yet, the major landings conducted in the North African and European campaigns made no use whatsoever of these versatile machines. The Army, not the Marine Corps, dubbed the cannon-armed and armored variants to be amphibious tanks (amtanks), capable of operations inland, whereas the Marine Corps intended their "ar-

¹⁸ DiDomenico, "The U.S. Army's Influence on Marine Corps Tank Doctrine," 24, emphasis added, 27–28. The authors would like to correct another inaccuracy in Maj DiDomenico's article: the invasion of Poland began on 1 September 1939, not "in 1940." DiDomenico, "The U.S. Army's Influence on Marine Corps Tank Doctrine," 25.

mored amphibians" to fight the beach defenses only until the tanks could be unloaded from landing craft.¹⁹

The new Army Armored Force doctrinal publications appeared in late 1942, with perhaps the most useful one, *Tank Platoon*, Armored Force Field Manual 17-30 (FM 17-30), disseminated last in October. These would not have reached units arriving in the South Pacific in the summer of 1942, least of all the A and B Companies of 1st Tank Battalion that landed on Guadalcanal on 7 August 1942.²⁰

The tank units of the Marine Corps accompanied their divisions into the Pacific War starting in 1942, except for Company B, 2d Tank Battalion, and Company C, 1st Tank Battalion, which attached to the 2d and 3d Marine Brigades, respectively, which garrisoned in Samoa in 1942–43. One must take care, however, not to infer too much from the initial operations of the tank battalions and companies of the 1st and 2d Marine Divisions in 1942–43. The tank companies had assembled rapidly after the battalions stood up in November and December 1941, but the battalions were heavily burdened with the flow of inexperienced troops and numerous tanks of different models and capabilities from Marine Corps depots. If that were not enough, the infantry units of the divisions had barely finished basic squad tactics training before shipping out on long voyages to the South Pacific, where they were to train for the expected 1943 Allied counteroffensives.²¹ Consequently, the rifle companies of these two Marine divisions had no experience of operating with tanks—and vice versa—when they disembarked on Guadalcanal in August 1942 and 4 January 1943, respectively. It was therefore unlikely that Guadalcanal "became the testing ground for Marine armored units of the 1st and 2d Tank Battalions."²² In fact, Companies A and B of 1st Tank Battalion remained on the vital Henderson Airfield as divisional reserve for the entire campaign. The battalion headquarters and its Company D remained in New Zealand for the entire campaign.²³

Improvisation Yields Results

In the absence of published doctrine, nothing prevented the units themselves from organizing tankinfantry tactics, techniques, and procedures throughout the Pacific Campaign. The Guadalcanal and Tanambogo (Solomon Islands) actions demonstrated that the light tanks had clear vulnerabilities in close action against the enemy and crews could not maneuver or see well in a jungle environment. They had, however, executed the landing doctrine of 1936-40, as presented in deliberations of the MCEB: landing and taking out (very few) beach defenses, then supporting further advances inland. Defensively, the tanks had constituted a counterattack force, as prescribed for base defense forces in the prewar exercises in the Caribbean. These did not occur frequently, however, since the infantry units held their lines well, and the few Japanese tanks used in the Guadalcanal campaign had been readily handled by the antitank guns of the division. The problem of tank-infantry cooperation had not been examined before the war and was now found totally wanting. For all the criticism of the light tank, the tanks could not operate reasonably well

¹⁹ Compare Harry Yeide, *The Infantry's Armor: The U.S. Army's Separate Tank Battalions in World War II* (Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole, 2010); and Maj John T. Collier, "Development of Tactical Doctrine for Employment of Amphibian Tanks," Headquarters 776th Amphibian Tank Battalion, 1944, World War II Operational Documents Collection, Armor School Research Library, Ike Skelton Combined Arms Research Digital Library.

²⁰ DiDomenico, "The U.S. Army's Influence on Marine Corps Tank Doctrine," 28. 1stLt Robert M. Neiman was *executive* officer of Company D, 1st Tank Battalion (not 2d Tank Battalion, as stated by DiDomenico), which did not organize at Camp Pendleton, as the 1st Marine Division was stationed on the East Coast until its deployment to the South Pacific. Neiman, as captain, later commanded Company C, 4th Tank Battalion, which stood up at Camp Pendleton on 8 June 1943, and he sent *some* officers and his maintenance officer to Fort Knox. Robert M. Neiman and Kenneth W. Estes, *Tanks on the Beaches: A Marine Tanker in the Pacific War* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2003), appendix 3, 195–96. Most enlisted Marine Corps tankers trained at California bases under Marine Corps instructors, a practice continuing to 1974.

²¹ Estes, Marines under Armor, 37–51.

²² DiDomenico, "The U.S. Army's Influence on Marine Corps Tank Doctrine," 29. At the Battle of the Tenaru River (not Ridge), the Marine Corps' M2A4 platoon from Company A, 1st Tank Battalion, fought unsupported to mop up Japanese remnants, after the infantry battalions had completed the encirclement of the Japanese. There was only one Marine Corps tank battalion at a time employed on Guadalcanal, as their parent divisions fought separate campaigns there.
²³ Neiman and Estes, *Tanks on the Beaches*, 47.

without trained infantry support in the confined terrain over which the 1st Marine Division had fought.

Neither the jungle nor the Japanese soldiers would disappear soon. Ironically, the continuing operations in the Solomon Islands saw the tank platoons of a few defense battalions first beginning the long and arduous process of developing tank-infantry tactics and equipment. The drive through the Central Solomons fell to the Army to execute, as the 2d Marine Division prepared for action in the Central Pacific. However, the Marine Corps defense battalions in the theater continued to provide antiaircraft and coastal defense functions for most island battles. After the fall of Wake Island, most defense battalions added an organic tank platoon of up to eight light tanks under their reorganization of 1942. In the Central Solomons, these tanks proved remarkably handy and essential to newly arrived Army forces fighting Japanese detachments defending their bases from roadblocks and bunker complexes.24

The campaign in the New Georgia Islands seized Munda Airfield, making full use of three defense battalion tank platoons. Later, when the 43d Infantry Division took casualties on nearby Arundel Island, with Japanese reinforcements arriving, the call for Marine Corps tanks again brought in the 9th, 10th, and 11th Defense Battalion tank platoons, then totaling 13 tanks ready, reporting on 16 September 1943. Their surprise attack the next day pushed the Japanese troops back, advancing 500 yards with Army infantry support. After losing two tanks to 37mm antitank guns, the accompanying infantry covered the retreat of the chastised crews. On 19 September, the remaining 11 tanks attacked in two lines in front of their supported infantrymen, using 37mm canister and machine gun fire to clear the way. The Japanese Army evacuated Arundel the next day.²⁵

These actions constituted essential operational experience for the Marine Corps tankers. They learned to improvise ways to operate light tanks in the jungle, trained with and coordinated tankinfantry tactics, and also began a long series of technical innovations that carried through the end of the Pacific War. Marines rigged field telephones on the rear of their tanks because the tank radios operated on different frequencies than infantry radios. On separate occasions, different organizations tried to mount the infantry flamethrower on the tank. These improvisations rarely succeeded but indicated desired technical improvements. The experiences they gained and improvisations they attempted in the field revealed the never-ending instincts among the crews to tinker with their machines.²⁶

Company B of the 1st Tank Battalion did not join its battalion at the 1st Marine Division's landing operations in New Britain. Instead, it reinforced the Army troops landing at Arawe, Papua New Guinea, on 12 January 1944. Supporting the 158th Infantry Regiment, the company provided tank platoons, leading the assaulting infantry companies into a typical 1,000-yard attack on 16 January. Here, the forces practiced the new close support tank-infantry techniques in use by the 1st Marine Division, wherein a rifle squad protected each tank in the advance. Although successful, the attacks proved once again that the light tank could not handle the main attack mission very well. They had difficulty pushing through undergrowth and knocking over trees. The 37mm tank cannon lacked explosive power and tankers mostly fired machine

²⁴ Marine Corps tank operations in New Georgia are best covered in Maj John N. Rentz, *Marines in the Central Solomons* (Washington, DC: Historical Branch, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1952), 77–131; and "Tank Platoon Defense Battalion," Table No. D-125, approved 7 May 1942, author's files.

²⁵ LtCol Frank O. Hough, Maj Verle E. Ludwig, Henry I. Shaw Jr., *Pearl Harbor to Guadalcanal: History of U.S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Historical Branch, G-3 Division, Head-quarters Marine Corps, 1958), 254–359.

²⁶ Burns, "The Origin and Development of U.S. Marine Corps Tank Units: 1923–1945," 53. These early innovative experiments with field telephones on tank fenders for tank-infantry communications by Marine Corps tankers were confused by Maj DiDomenico with Army experiments using the EE-8 field telephone, which was not available in Europe or the Pacific until post-summer 1944. This Marine Corps innovation predated that of the Army. DiDomenico, "The U.S. Army's Influence on Marine Corps Tank Doctrine," 30.

guns and 37mm canister to overwhelm the defenses with volume of fire. Here again, tankers experimented with the infantry flamethrower, using it successfully in mop-up operations. The tanks had again proved essential for offensive operations in close terrain, but even these new M5A1 Stuart light tanks fell short of the needs of the troops.²⁷

The Marine Corps tankers of the 1st and 2d Tank Battalions and the separate companies assigned to Samoan defense forces operated with the prewar equipment, tactics, and techniques. If these had proven inadequate for the tasks at hand, that experience remained no different than it had for most other military organizations when first encountering the novelties of combat in 1942–43. Their tracked vehicle brethren of the amtrac battalions also found the predictable limitations and teething problems of their equipment and organization. The question remained what the Marine Corps would do with the armored fighting vehicle based on the combat experiences of the Solomons and the defense of island bases to date.

Into the Cauldron

The later landings in the Solomon Islands and New Britain by the Marine Corps and Army divisions inaugurated close support tank-infantry teams as well as the valuable contributions of the amphibious vehicle, tracked (LVT) as a logistics carrier over the beaches and in marginal terrain inland. Because they were practically unopposed landings, further lessons became necessary to prove the light tank's marginal value as an infantry support combat vehicle. For the FMF, the necessary changes in doctrine and equipment would come out of the close encounter with disaster that the 2d Marine Division experienced at Tarawa. The fighting for that atoll demonstrated the standard required for the rest of the Pacific War as the Central Pacific drive began for the FMF forces. Marines understood that serious fighting would be required to take Betio, the major island of the Tarawa atoll. The aerial photographs revealed much of the enemy defenses, and few of the 2d Marine Division leaders thought that air and naval bombardments would facilitate an easy landing. For example, the threat of the few major-caliber shore batteries against the assault troop transports contributed to the decision to assault the island across beaches inside the lagoon, from transports anchored outside the atoll, requiring the landing craft and amtracs to cover a still-record 16 kilometers from ship to shore. In addition, the lagoon featured extensive reefs obstructing landing craft, plus a seawall immediately on shore behind which waited the surviving enemy and their weapons.²⁸

The 2d Amtrac Battalion still operated 75 wellworn LVT-1 amtracs taken with the division from Guadalcanal, plus 50 new LVT-2 models newly received after that campaign. The amtrackers worked hard in their New Caledonia base to install bolt-on improvised armor and an additional machine gun mount on the open cabs of the amtracs. Their success in operation remained vital to the assault phase and continued support. The division staff dedicated 84 of these vehicles to landing the first waves of assault infantry, fearing that the reefs would impede the Navy landing craft. This logistics vehicle would thus become a combat infantry carrier, carrying 18–20 troops in each, a doctrinal change specifically denied by the Marine Corps since their introduction.²⁹

With the specialized armored amtracs just arriving on the West Coast for the outfitting of three new battalions, none would be ready for the division's 20 November 1943 assault on Betio. However, a company of the 1st Corps Tank Battalion (Medium) reinforced the division. The key introduction of the Navy's landing ship, dock (LSD), provided the means to introduce the Army medium tank to the amphibious operation in World War II. The LSD served as a mobile drydock for carrying landing craft, mechanized (LCM-3) and

²⁷ Arthur B. Alphin, "A Bigger Hammer" (instructional manuscript, Fort Knox, Armor Center Monograph, May 1990), 155–57; and Henry I. Shaw Jr. and Maj Douglas T. Kane, *Isolation of Rabaul: History of U.S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II*, vol. 2 (Washington, DC: Historical Branch, G-3 Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1963), 392–93.

²⁸ Estes, Marines under Armor, 67–71.

²⁹ Maj Alfred Dunlop Bailey, Alligators, Buffaloes, and Bushmasters: The History of the Development of the LVT through World War II (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1986), 83–86.



Norm Hatch Collection, Nimitz Education and Research Center, National Museum of the Pacific War At Tarawa, communications between tank crew and infantry were rudimentary. Here, an infantryman (see inset in bottom left corner) uses his rifle butt to get the tanker's attention by knocking on the tank's pistol port. This photograph was taken on Red Beach Three and shows the last tank

their preloaded cargos of tanks, artillery, or other equipment ready to disgorge over its stern gate once the well deck flooded using the ships' internal ballast tanks. The Corps' new M4A2 Sherman medium tanks could be landed from their preloaded landing craft much faster than the M3 series light tanks could be craned from stowage holds of the assault shipping into their own landing craft. The first of these ships, USS *Ashland* (LSD-1), loaded the 14 M4A2 mediums of First Lieutenant Edward L. Bale's Company C, 1st Corps Tank Battalion (Medium), for the assault. Bale would take the M4 series medium tank into combat for the first time with the Marines.³⁰

The Corps' decision to acquire the M4 series medium tank stemmed not from any influence of Army

survivor of the 3d Platoon, Colorado.

doctrine but from a simple upscaling of the existing concept of employment of tanks in the landing force. Recall that the MCEB considered the light CTL-3 type tanks as suitable for the initial landing and defeat of the beach defenses, as they were understood in 1940, with the larger "medium" 9-ton Marmon-Herrington CTM-3 turreted tanks to be landed later to exploit the assault inland. Two years later, with the acquisition of larger and heavier Army light tanks and the Navy's procurement of landing craft to handle the new M4 series mediums, it became a simple matter in the Corps of scaling up its tandem tank doctrinal concept to use Army light and medium tanks. Given the competition for all the new production M4 mediums among the U.S. Army and Allied armies, the Marine Corps staff found that they could get the M4A2 variant earlier than any other model amid all this competition and

³⁰ Estes, Marines under Armor, 71.

recommended the procurement of 112 tanks, plus 56 replacement tanks, to meet the initial requirement for the two corps medium tank battalions scheduled to stand up in January and March 1943.³¹

Tarawa, 20–23 November 1943

Upon arrival in New Caledonia, Company C was ordered to support the assault of the 2d Marine Division on Betio in the Tarawa atoll. USS Ashland loaded the company on 3 November 1943 and sailed for the French New Hebrides, where two rehearsals took place. This was the first time Bale's company held exercises with infantry. The island selected for the exercises resembled Betio in no way: it was covered with dense tropical vegetation. When tanks were landed, the infantry had long moved forward and the thick jungle prevented any move inland by the tanks. As a result, tanks were landed and the tankers simply sat on the beach and waited to reembark. Medium tanks were scheduled to land at H+20 with the fifth wave. The Headquarters Section and the 1st Platoon were assigned to Red Beach One, the westernmost landing site, in support of the 3d Battalion, 2d Marines. The 2d Platoon was to land on Red Beach Two, in the center, in support of the 2d Battalion, 2d Marines, and the 3d Platoon was to land on Red Beach Three, on the east, in support of the 2d Battalion, 8th Marines. A single 2d Tank Battalion light tank platoon able to load its landing craft in time from transport holds was to disembark at H+26 on Red Beach One to provide direct support to 3d Battalion, 8th Marines.³²

D-day at Tarawa proved to be disastrous from the very beginning. Contrary to what planners had expected, the Japanese defenders and defenses had not been reduced by the preliminary ship and aircraft shelling. Worse, the uncoordinated phases of bombardment allowed the Japanese to reorient their forces on the lagoon side. The smoke raised by the shelling blinded gunfire support, which could not detect targets anymore. The resulting bomb and shell craters dotted the reef and shore and proved to be deadly traps to the supporting tanks.

Due to the low tide, LCMs were forced to deliver the tanks some 800–1,200 yards away from the assigned beaches. In crossing the reef, two tanks were lost to unseen holes despite the presence of guides in the water. Two more vehicles were lost that way while searching for an opening in the almost continuous seawall around the island. Tanks employed at Tarawa could have benefitted from deepwater fording kits. Unfortunately, the top-secret Army program developing such devices remained unknown to the Marine Corps until April 1943.³³

On all three beaches, once the tanks found a way to cross the log wall, they cruised the objective as previously ordered. As they moved inland unsupported, tanks fell victim to more shell holes and to intact Japanese defenses. Three tanks were knocked out by concealed Japanese 75mm guns and another by several 37mm antitank guns. One tank was a victim of a closein attack by Japanese infantry using magnetic mines. Bale's personal tank was hit in the gun tube by an enemy Type 95 tank. By the end of that day, only three tanks were operational-one with an incapacitated main gun and only two fully operational M4A2s.³⁴ The absence of a tank recovery vehicle prevented rapid use of the drowned vehicles on the reef.35 The light tanks fared no better. The tank lighters transporting the M3A1 light tanks of the 2d Tank Battalion were unable to land due both to the unsuitable landing site and to the sinking of four boats.³⁶

The next morning, one tank was extricated from a shell hole inland from Red Beach Two and an M4A2 suffering mechanical issues since the previous morning on Red Beach One was back into combat order,

³¹ P&P memoranda, 28 and 30 November 1942, RG 127, Entry #18/1228, NARA; and Ordnance Section, QMMC penciled memorandum, 13 January 1943, RG 127, Entry #18/1228, NARA.

³² Oscar E. Gilbert and Romain Cansiere, *Tanks in Hell: A Marine Corps Tank Company on Tarawa* (Havertown, PA: Casemate, 2015), 99–106.

³³P&P memorandum, 12 April 1943, RG 127, Entry #18/1226, NARA. The first use of such fording kits for the Army took place at Casablanca on 8 November 1942, and for the Marine Corps at Roi-Namur on 1 February 1944.

³⁴ Gilbert and Cansiere, *Tanks in Hell*, 151.

³⁵ The absence of a tank retriever was due to the lack of space aboard the LSD-1. Such logistics issues would occur until late 1944 at Peleliu.

³⁶ Oscar E. Gilbert, *Marine Tank Battles in the Pacific* (New York: Da Capo Press, 2001), 86.



National Archives and Records Administration

On D-day at Tarawa, the executive officer's tank, Commando, forged well ahead of infantry, but in absence of coordination it found itself isolated in a clearing and destroyed by several Japanese antitank guns. Miraculously, none of the crew was killed.

making a total of five operational Shermans. Though some previous mistakes were repeated that day, 21 November 1943 marked the birth of new tank-infantry techniques. In the first daylight hours, it was decided to send two tanks in the water to silence a Japanese strong point between Red Beach One and Two. Without guides or fording gear, both medium tanks converged toward the objective but were lost in underwater shell holes. Behind Red Beach One, Major Mike Ryan of 3d Battalion, 2d Marines, had requested naval gunfire support to pound the area behind Green Beach prior to a mop up operation he planned with Edward Bale, who later recalled, "[I] ran into an infantry company commander and we designed, in about sixty seconds, the tank-infantry tactics the Marine Corps would use the rest of WWII."³⁷

When Ryan judged the naval bombardment had lasted long enough to suppress enemy defenses, he ordered the destroyers to cease fire and launched his attack. At 1120, Ryan's infantry, led by Bale in his tank (dubbed China Gal), moved on a 100-yard-wide front to the south. The progress slowed to allow the infantry to check every emplacement and keep contact with

³⁷ Gilbert and Cansiere, *Tanks in Hell*, 160; and Gilbert, *Marine Tank Battles in the Pacific*, 49.

the tank. When a suspect position was encountered, Bale recounted, "[We] fired the tank gun into whatever entrance, or opening there was. The infantry would get as close to that enemy position as they could, so as soon as we fired they could throw in whatever they had [grenades, satchel charges, flames, etc.]." When the position had been cleaned, the advance resumed. To maintain liaison between the tank and the advancing infantry, "it was either some infantryman crawling up on the back of that tank and talking to me, or me getting out on the ground and talking to the infantry. It was about half and half." By 1235, Green Beach was declared secure. It allowed fresh troops from the 6th Marines to land without opposition. The 1st Battalion was sent into battle the next day and was highly instrumental in clearing the island's southern shore.³⁸

In the Red Beach Two sector, the day's objective for the 1st and 2d Battalion, 2d Marines, was to cut the island down its center. With the help of the last surviving tank in the area, named Conga, retrieved during the night, Marines would cross the dangerously exposed airfield to the southern shore. An infantry officer (whose identity remains obscure) ordered the tank crew to move ahead and silence the strong positions that could slow the process. But the tank commander, Private Donald Pearson, suggested that the tank and infantry progress as a team: "We go up with and keep 'em pinned down, you come up. You keep 'em pinned down and we go again."39 The unidentified officer agreed and the group reached the opposite side of the island before friendly mortar fire put a hasty end to the adventures of the Conga.

Red Beach Three

On Red Beach Three, 2d Battalion, 8th Marines, struggled to expand the beachhead and silence heavy Japanese strong positions south and east of the front line. That morning, a new tank commander, Second Lieutenant Louis Largey, took over the last M4A2 in the area, the Colorado. He hailed a reconnaissance man to guide the tank inland. Largey demonstrated what would later be emphasized in training and in the field by future tank-infantry teams: having the infantry team first sit in every crewmember's position in order to see what they were able to view in order to better spot the enemy or obstacles for them.⁴⁰ Though rudimentary, the techniques used by the reconnaissance guides to communicate targets (using a rifle to point out targets and hand signals for the range) to the tank crews worked well.

Later, the after action reports emphasized the urgent need to increase tank-infantry coordination and training. This was successfully undertaken when the divisions prepared for the next operations in the Marshall Islands and the Marianas. Bale later criticized the tank tactics taught at the Army tank school:

> But this madness of going out front and run around and cruising and all, that all got started with the Army . . . and it was picked up by Marine officers who went to school there. Cruising on the objective: That was the term that was used for running around on the objective. That was a tactic that the Army taught. I don't know whether it came from the horse cavalry running over a hill and riding around on the hilltop, or what the hell it came from! But that was the term. "Cruise on the objective."⁴¹

Wartime Evolutions Continue

Tarawa brought about the cancellation of the light tank in Marine Corps service and the decision to field the M4A2 medium tank as the sole standard issue tank. This action interrupted the ongoing procurement of hundreds of M5A1 light tanks, and only the 1st, 2d, and 4th Tank Battalions received an initial issue of them. The standardization of the medium tank within organic tank battalions lead to the dissolution of the 1st Corps Tank Battalion. Proper deepwater fording

³⁸Gilbert and Cansiere, Tanks in Hell, 160.

³⁹ Gilbert and Cansiere, Tanks in Hell, 163.

⁴⁰ Gilbert and Cansiere, *Tanks in Hell*, 165–69.

⁴¹ Ed Bale, interview with Oscar E. Gilbert and Romain Cansière, 25 July 2013.



National Archives and Records Administration

The tank-infantry telephone proved a major improvement in tank-infantry coordination. By mid-1944, all tank battalions had adopted the telephone to coordinate with infantry, now emphasizing the tank-infantry team. On Hawaii in 1945, a squad leader uses the tank-infantry telephone to communicate directions to the crew of a Company A, 4th Tank Battalion, vehicle that had previously served on Iwo Jima, now functioning as a training aid.

kits and waterproofing materials ensured safer and more rapid landing of the new tanks, now able to ford 7 feet of water. Eventually, newer Army Signal Corps radios solved the lack of communications with the infantry, further enhanced by tank-infantry telephones installed on the rear of the tanks. In tandem with the medium tank fielding, the Commandant, now General Alexander A. Vandegrift, approved a new battalion organization for April 1944 with fewer men and all medium tanks. The medium tank company would have 15 tanks, using five platoons of three each, and the tank battalion would field only three medium tank companies, with a battalion commander's tank bringing the total to 46.⁴²

The amphibious tractor was now armored and armed as an infantry assault vehicle, supported by the armored amphibians ordered in 1943 to equip the three battalions in the FMF that would lead the assault waves to the beach and assist tanks in defeating fixed defenses, using 37mm and short 75mm turret weapons. There was no attempt to organize for mounted warfare and the organization for the landing remained in effect until the assigned beachhead had been secured by the landing force. These changes, together with the standing operating procedures for tank-infantry coordination developed in similar but not identical fashion by each Marine division, virtually ensured no repetition of the worst Tarawa experiences for the rest of the war. No doctrinal publication emerged, because the standing operating procedures of each Marine division provided guidance and supplementary instructions to the Army's 1944 Armored Employment of Tanks with Infantry, FM 17-36, which

⁴² Estes, Marines under Armor, 76–80; and Victor J. Croizat, Across the Reef: The Amphibious Tracked Vehicle at War (London: Blandford Press, 1989), 67–68. This new organization was actually adopted after the Marianas operations by the units in the field.



Historical Resources Branch, Marine Corps History Division

A Marine Corps M4A1 medium tank of Company A, 1st Tank Battalion, breaks through the jungle growth at Cape Gloucester, leading the infantry into the airfield objective. The Corps' leadership realized the limitations of its light tank inventory, demonstrated by the Solomon Islands campaign, and ordered the eventual conversion to an all-medium tank battalion, accomplished by mid-1944. The M4 series medium tanks could handle best the varied terrain and increasingly well-built Japanese field fortifications that had so hampered the effective employment of the light tank. This tank company temporarily operated M4A1 mediums for that operation drawn from Army stocks in Australia.

alone found use in Marine Corps tank units. As would happen so many times in the Pacific War, no sooner had the Marine Corps oriented to a new set of operational challenges than the situation changed. From attacking isolated Japanese garrisons on atolls, the III and V Amphibious Corps now turned to confronting major units of the Japanese Army, defending large Pacific islands that presented all possible variations of terrain.⁴³ With the last armored vehicle battalions departing the United States in 1944, the Marine Corps moved its tank and amtrac schools to Camp Pendleton, California, along with their headquarters, the former Training Command, San Diego Area. The schools' new missions concentrated on replacement training. The amtrac schools had consolidated at Camp Pendleton in early 1944, except for the LVT maintenance courses continuing at the original amtrac school site at Dunedin, Florida. As the burden of forming the new battalions eased, specialty courses commenced: the tank dozer course (April 1944), the tank platoon

⁴³ Estes, Marines under Armor, 79, 103.



Historical Resources Branch, Marine Corps History Division

There was no effective amphibious tank of World War II, but the Marine Corps armored amphibian (called the amtank in Army service). Here, a six-person landing vehicle, tracked—an LVT(A)-4—demonstrates its agility in a seaway. It remained well-suited to lead troop-carrying LVTs to the water's edge, where it was best employed as supporting direct fire artillery rather than in close combat.

leader course of 70 days and 700 hours instruction (27 September 1944), and the armored amphibian gunnery course for the LVT(A)-4 (June 1944). The Commandant approved a tank noncommissioned officer (NCO) refresher course on 12 April 1945, paralleling an earlier order for the amtrac NCOs. Tank School gunnery changed the 75mm for the 105mm howitzer on the M4A3 in June 1945, at which point the Marine Corps achieved virtual independence from Army schools for its fighting vehicle troops.⁴⁴

Such was not the case for equipment procurement, however. The Army notified the Marine Corps in March 1944 that the M4A2 medium tank's days were numbered (production was terminated in May 1944). Only the Marine Corps, the Russian Army, and the Free French Forces predominantly used the

⁴⁴ The commanding general, San Diego area, reported the capacity of the Tank Operators Course as 850 on 24 November 1943. Files of the tracked vehicle schools, RG 127, Entry #18, boxes 532, 533, and 497, NARA.

diesel-powered Sherman tank, and the Army had standardized the M4A3, with its gasoline-fueled Ford GAA engine for its own mass production. At this point, only the M4A3 series received improved mechanical and engineering modifications in the Army system, leaving the Marine Corps medium tank fleet (more than 500 vehicles) approaching obsolescence. The situation continued to sour. The Army wanted to shift production on 1 July to the M4A3 with the highvelocity 76mm tank cannon, needed for defeating the latest German tanks. That measure posed a conflict to the Marine Corps tank ammunition supply then accumulating in the Pacific theater. The Marine Corps rejected the upgunned Sherman, as the current 75mm cannon ably destroyed all opposing Japanese tanks and remained valuable against field fortifications. The Commandant accordingly ordered replacement of all diesel M4A2s with the M4A3 (75mm) gasoline-engine medium tank to maintain up-to-date technical characteristics. But the problem then worsened. The Commandant's staff informed him that Army plans made initially for 1945 called for replacing the M4 with the new M26 medium tank, with its 90mm gun, as the standard production tank. M4A3 production would continue, but only with the new 105mm howitzer turret, intended as a close support tank for infantry.45

These apparent realities caused the Commandant to order the 105mm M4A3 tank in 1945. However, this proved premature, as production of the M4 series tank—mostly armed with the high velocity 76mm tank cannon—continued to the end of the war. As Allied forces gathered for the 1945 campaign for the Japanese home islands, the FMF Pacific headquarters sponsored a tank summit conference on Oahu, Hawaii, designed to review and assess the experiences to inform changes necessary for amphibious invasions yet to come. Designated the Conference on Tank Matters, it contained the potential for a wholesale reassessment of tank doctrine, tactics, and techniques. Since the early days of the MCEB meetings at Quantico, no formal guidance or doctrine had been



Historical Resources Branch, Marine Corps History Division The M4A2 medium tank with its twin diesel engines performed firstline duty in the Corps for the second half of the Pacific War. Here, a crew from Company C, 4th Tank Battalion, loads one of the company's two Japanese minitank war trophies taken at Roi-Namur for shipping to their interim base at Maui, HI, in early 1944.

agreed on Corps-wide, while a total of six tank battalions had stood up and fought several key actions during the 1942–45 Pacific campaign. Various combat experiences had produced divisional and lesser-level tactics, techniques, and procedures, but many of these had been devised ad hoc, with the minimal assistance of the Marine Corps Headquarters staff, which alone authorized the weapons and organizations that the FMF would use. For the first time since the war's beginning, Marine Corps leaders formally took stock of their armored fighting vehicles and assessed their tactical value and employment in the conditions of warfare they expected to find in 1945.⁴⁶

The tank matters conference began on 25 April 1945, attended by tank battalion representatives and staff and ordnance officers. While combat continued on Okinawa, they discussed a full catalog of topics. Most brought with them the written expectations and recommendations of their highest commanders up to Amphibious Corps level. One result was a new

⁴⁵ P&P decision memorandum, 16 September 1944, RG 127, Entry #18/2148, NARA.

⁴⁶ R. K. Schmidt memo for C/S, FMFPAC, Conference on Tank Matters, 3 May 1945, RG 127, Entry #46A/18, NARA, hereafter R. K. Schmidt conference memo; and CG FMFPAC, report of conference, 21 May 1945, RG 127, Entry #46A/18, NARA, hereafter CG FMFPAC conference report.



Historical Resources Branch, Marine Corps History Division

By 1944, each division of the Marine Corps had developed the tactics, techniques, and procedures for tank-infantry combat based on experiences and dedicated training. Here, tanks of 3d Tank Battalion roll out of their concealed positions on Guam and advance toward Japanese lines, linking with the infantry that had closed in while artillery support flailed the enemy positions.

standing operating procedure (SOP) manual for tankinfantry coordination, planned to *supplement* the Army's *Armored Employment of Tanks with Infantry*. The meeting also produced an improved tank battalion organization, with maintenance echelons shifted primarily to battalion headquarters. Each of the three tank companies would be increased to 17 tanks, comprising three platoons, each with 5 tanks. The proposed battalion also included a new 13-tank flamethrower tank company. The veteran tankers attending the conference forcefully urged the Corps to acquire the new Army heavy tank (the M26 Pershing), as it was well protected against the standard Japanese 47mm antitank gun and infantry close assaults with shaped charge demolitions. They also wanted its 90mm tank cannon, considered essential for cracking the enemy field fortifications expected in the future. Pending their procurement, they insisted that the current M4 series medium tanks be up-armored according to a standard design shared by all tank battalions, with the additional plating removable for fording rivers or crossing other poor terrain. The jointly staffed Chemical Warfare Service office on Hawaii demonstrated the new H-5 version of its flamethrower tank built on the M4 chassis, which retained the 75mm main gun and included improved flamethrower system capacity and range. Though it still lacked a 360-degree traverse for the converted turret, the H-5 was universally acclaimed.⁴⁷

The Marine Corps Headquarters staff rejected the conference recommendations. The procurement of flamethrower tanks remained a priority and the six tank battalions would receive the 105mm howitzer-armed M4A3 medium tank for the assault landings on Japan. As approved by the Commandant in May, the reorganization of the tank battalion added three flame tanks in each of its medium tank companies. While the new FMF SOP standardized tactics for Marine Corps tank units, each Marine divisional SOP embraced similar tactics, techniques, and procedures. It made standard a dispatching methodology by which tank control was centralized under the tank battalion once all the tanks had landed with the supported infantry regiments. This meant that day by day tank units would be assigned to infantry regiments according to tactical requirements signaled by the division staff. The new document cautioned that

> limited command facilities, maintenance and service equipment and inadequate personnel practically preclude the possibility of Marine Corps tank battalions engaging in armored attacks as such. Lack of facilities for moving large infantry units to close support of an armored attack further precludes this possibility, except in

⁴⁷ R. K. Schmidt conference memo; and CG FMFPAC conference report.



Historical Resources Branch, Marine Corps History Division The tanks pick up their close support teams of riflemen and lead the combined forces into the final assault, while eliminating any prepared positions or fieldworks by direct fire.

missions far in advance of supporting infantry.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Burns, "The Origin and Development of U.S. Marine Corps Tank Units: 1923-1945," 141; draft SOP, enclosed in CG FMFPAC, report of conference, 21 May 1945, RG 127, Entry #46A/18, NARA. Amazingly, Maj DiDomenico appears to have missed the rejection of the Tank Matters Conference findings and recommendations in their entirety by the staff of Headquarters Marine Corps. Equally, he missed the numerous objections by Amphibious Corps and division commanding generals over that course of events. Instead, he commented that "commanders were almost unanimous in accepting the revisions and updates to tank matters from the conference. Some comments called for slight changes in organization and communication, but the final revision provided the table of organization and SOP that would serve as the foundation of armor employment in amphibious operations for the next series of Marine doctrine." DiDomenico, "The U.S. Army's Influence on Marine Corps Tank Doctrine," 40. The circulation of the draft FMF document for tank-infantry coordination was, of course, not a matter of concern for Headquarters Marine Corps. But the Commandant's new table of organization for the tank battalion did not echo that of the conference proceedings or its indicated preference for acquiring the 90mm-gun M26 tank and the urgent requirement for upgrading the armor of the medium tanks. As noted below, the Commandant and the FMFPAC commander labored mightily to stifle the apparent revolt of the tank battalion commanders and their corps and division commanders over the continuing neglect of their wishes in 1945. Finally, Maj DiDomenico characterized the new FMF document for tank-infantry coordination as "the replacement for the Army's Employment of Tanks with Infantry, FM 17-36." DiDomenico, "The U.S. Army's Influence on Marine Corps Tank Doctrine," 40. That event only took place postwar with the issue of Amphibious Operations: Employment of Tanks, no. 18 (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps Schools, Marine Barracks, 1948).



Historical Resources Branch, Marine Corps History Division

The M4 series medium tank provided a decisive margin of superiority over most all Japanese weapons and tactics in the Pacific War. Its flamethrower variant had its debut in 1945 at Iwo Jima, shown here with Company C, 4th Tank Battalion. The flame tank version served in the Marine Corps postwar until 1959. The Sherman tank for many years provided an excellent balance of agility, firepower, and protection with adequate room for its five-person crew and ammunition.

In this way, the new Marine Corps tank doctrine devised by Headquarters, FMF Pacific, *limited* the tank battalion to infantry support missions.

This outcome of the conference produced strong responses from several of the commanders of the amphibious corps and Marine divisions that indicated increasing disgruntlement with the tank situation now imposed by higher headquarters. Major General Harry Schmidt, commander of V Corps, declared, "The number of special-purpose tanks has been inadequate. The recently developed flame thrower as a primary weapon in the tank proved indispensable in the Iwo Jima operation. . . . Furthermore the tank dozer also proved indispensable for opening routes so that flame thrower and assault tanks could get into firing positions." He recommended a tank battalion of 74 tanks total, including 12 flame and 15 dozer tanks. Schmidt also criticized the 105mm gun tank, saying it provided "neither an advantage of armor nor muzzle velocity and parallels the mission of the M7B1 [self-propelled 105mm howitzer] and LVTA's [armored amphibians] now available to divisions." His representatives at the



Historical Resources Branch, Marine Corps History Division The Marine Corps alone remained dedicated to employment of the flame tank after World War II, and its M67 series variant of the M48 medium tank served actively from 1955 to 1972.

Tank Matters Conference had made the case for the 90mm gun carried in the M26 heavy tank.⁴⁹

Despite these assertions, the Commandant held his ground, responding, "Tanks mounting highvelocity weapons as primary armament as requested in reference [requesting the M26] are not available. ... It is believed that if a requirement for a heavier tank such as the M26 is fore-seen [*sic*] for a particular operation, that representation could be made to the theater or other appropriate commander for the attachment of supporting Army units equipped with the desired weapons."⁵⁰

The directive scarcely settled the issues, especially in view of the arrival on Okinawa of Army M26s, after the fighting there was over. The FMF Pacific commander then found a compromise, when he advised his major commanders that sufficient M4A2 and M4A3 tanks with 75mm cannon remained in depots

⁴⁹ CG V Corps to CG, FMFPAC, 19 April 1945, RG 127, Entry #46A/18, NARA; and 24 June 1945, RG 127, Entry #46A/18, NARA.

⁵⁰ CMC letter to CG, FMFPAC, 18 June 1945, RG 127, Entry #46A/18, NARA.



Historical Resources Branch, Marine Corps History Division

The Marine Corps operated the only U.S. heavy tank from 1958 to 1972, the M103 series (M103A2 pictured). It functioned as a "destroyer tank" to be landed after the amphibious assault to eliminate resistance centers and armored counterattacks.

to equip the III and V Amphibious Corps for their next operations.⁵¹

In time, the rebellion deescalated, particularly when the commander of the 3d Marine Division informed the FMF Pacific commander that the 105mm gun tank was an acceptable replacement for the M4A2 tanks, provided they came with power turrets, gyrostabilizers and the new suspension systems of the late production Shermans.⁵²

Taking Stock: The Aftermath of the Great Pacific War, 1945–50

In the postwar years, a distinctive Marine Corps tank doctrine continued to emerge, and it took form at Quantico's Marine Corps Schools in the form of the amphibious operations instructional series publica-

⁵¹CG FMFPAC to CG III, V Corps, 13 July 1945, RG 127, Entry #46A/18, NARA. A cargo ship bearing an emergency Army shipment of 12 M26s arrived at Naha port and put the first of these tanks ashore via LCT craft on 30 July. Richard P. Hunnicutt, *Pershing: A History of the Medium Tank T20 Series* (Berkeley, CA: Feist Publications, 1971), 41–44.

⁵² 3d Marine Division, message to FMFPAC, 14 June 1945, RG 127, Entry #46A/18, NARA.

tion number 18 Amphibious Operations: Employment of Tanks (1948). Tanks would continue to play important roles in amphibious operations, but also in continuing operations ashore, as originally proposed by the MCEB in the late 1930s. The Marine Corps divisions had resources for a mechanized attack as well as a mobile antimechanized defense. The Army Field Manual 17 series references were recognized, but this time as supplementary to the 56-page Marine Corps doctrinal publication. This level of thinking also influenced the 1949 Armor Policy Board, which revived the MCEB doctrinal notion of distinct tanks for different phases of amphibious operations, defining a heavy tank requirement for equipping corps-level "force tank battalions" that would be landed after the divisional medium tanks operated ashore. This concept initiated the Marine Corps requirement for the T43 (or M103) heavy tank, produced in quantity for the Corps as the M103A1 and A2 heavy tanks, the sole heavy tank to reach sustained operational service in U.S. forces, in this case through 1974. Equally independent of Army practice was the Corps' insistence on retaining flame tanks in the divisional tank battalion such that its M48 Patton medium tank fleet of 1955-74 included M67 flame tank variants. The board rejected the Army light tank, which was never to return in Marine Corps service.53

Conclusion

Today, the Marine Corps tank force remains almost analogous to the Army's armor units, sharing the Army training establishment and procuring main battle tanks of almost identical characteristics. Marine Corps tank units and Army armor units worked together in both campaigns against the Iraqi Army in 1991 and 2003. However, the lessons of the Gulf Wars reside mainly in archives and with the collective but fading memories of the units themselves. Just as in 1945, one cannot speak of *armor* in the Marine Corps, just tank, amphibious assault vehicle, and light armored reconnaissance units, which may or may not be used in modern combined arms or low-level military operations with imagination and verve. Some Army doctrinal manuals continue in use although they often deal with several types of units and organizations not to be found in the Corps.

By 2000, one could discern a search by the Marine Corps for yet another light fighting tank called the Marine Expeditionary Family of Fighting Vehicles, or even a tankless fighting vehicle force, as demonstrated by statements of Commandants of the Marine Corps. General Robert H. Barrow refused to consider a tank purchase during his term of duty. General Alfred M. Gray Jr. and General Carl E. Mundy Jr. equivocated between preferences for armored cars to testifying before Congress that "borrowing" tank units from the Army rather than purchasing more tanks had greater merit.54 When General Charles C. Krulak retired in 1999, he stated that he would "eliminate the tank fleet found in the Marine Corps today if [I] could."55 The policy weakness for operating mechanized forces continues, as well as the emphasis on the smallest of units, especially with the reluctance to attempt costly mechanized and amphibious operations or exercises of any appreciable scale. Since 1937, the development and fielding of a technically and tactically superior fighting vehicle force, however small, has remained a marked Marine Corps objective. In the end, only the leaders of the Corps can take advantage of this reality, while it still exists. That said, the Corps leadership now appears to have lost its sense of need for armored combat vehicles. Tanks are being stripped from units

⁵³ Armor Policy Board, Report, 15 April 1949, RG 127, Entry #8113/38, NARA. The board also coined the term *destroyer tank* for the desired heavy tank, the T43.

⁵⁴ USMC Future Force, "MAGTF Expeditionary Family of Fighting Vehicles" briefing; Tank Section USMC Development Command 30 October 1998; LtGen Martin R. Steele, deputy chief of staff for Plans, Policy and Operations, interview with author, 1 May 1997; Stephen K. Scroggs, "M1A1 Tank Transfer," Congress and Military Policy Course 231 (U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA, 1998), 58–115; and Gen Mundy letter to Congressman Earl D. Hutto, 2 May 1944, author's files.

⁵⁵ "Special Report: The 32d Commandant's Senate Confirmation Hearing," *Marine Corps Gazette* 83, no. 7 (July 1999): 23–24. Compare with Cmdt Gen Louis H. Wilson Jr.'s statement: "Get a ROC [required operational capability] out on XM1 [tank] as soon as possible.... [T]he Marine Corps has paid lip service to Combined Arms Training too long and must take major efforts in Combined Arms Training." MajGen Keith Smith letter and Headquarters route sheet, 19 January 1975, RG 127 Entry #94-0085, NARA.

and personnel reassigned (*divested* is the current term) as this article goes to press, based on the current Commandant's sense that war gaming has proven them to be a legacy burden. Thus, a persistent quality in Marine decision-making inclusive of doctrine might be a

"closed system of institutional goals and values, with doubtful feedback loops, seldom extending to foreign practices; exogenous variables, such as army procurement practices, and a cult of personality."⁵⁶

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⁵⁶ Estes, Marines under Armor, 200–4; and Marine Administrative Message (MARADMIN) 302/20, Manpower Force Shaping in Support of Force Design Phase One (Washington, DC: Headquarters Marine Corps, 5 May 2020).
Defining a War: INDOCHINA, THE VIETNAM WAR, AND

THE MAYAGUEZ INCIDENT

by Lieutenant Colonel Michael Hunter, USA

Abstract: Only two weeks after the fall of Saigon in May 1975, Khmer Rouge forces seized the American merchant ship SS *Mayaguez* (1944) off the Cambodian coast, setting up a Marine rescue and recovery battle on the island of Koh Tang. This battle on 12–15 May 1975 was the final U.S. military episode amid the wider Second Indochina War. The term *Vietnam War* has impeded a proper understanding of the wider war in the American consciousness, leading many to disassociate the *Mayaguez* incident from the Vietnam War, though they belong within the same historical frame. This article seeks to provide a heretofore unseen historical argument connecting the *Mayaguez* incident to the wider war and to demonstrate that *Mayaguez* and Koh Tang veterans are Vietnam veterans, relying on primary sources from the Ford administration, the papers of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, and interviews with veterans.

Keywords: Vietnam, Cambodia, veterans, memory, *Mayaguez*, the Wall, Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Koh Tang, Koh Tang Mayaguez Veterans Organization, Gerald R. Ford, Henry A. Kissinger, James R. Schlesinger, U.S. Marine Corps, Admiral Noel A. M. Gayler

Sometimes regulation fails to match reality. "What are you wearing?!" the indignant colonel demanded while poking the lance corporal's chest. In the fall of 1975, young Timothy W. Trebil had a problem after arriving in Quantico, Virginia, from Okinawa for temporary duty—but it was not clear why as he stood locked at attention.

"Sir, the lance corporal is wearing his—"

"No. I'm talking about that *ribbon*!" It was Trebil's Purple Heart. He earned it earlier that May during the SS *Mayaguez* container ship rescue, only two weeks after South Vietnam's collapse. The Cambodian Khmer Rouge shot down Trebil's helicopter in May 1975 as it attempted to land assaulting U.S. Marines on Koh Tang Island, where the ship's crew was supposedly captive. With second- and third-degree burns, Trebil floated out to sea before being scooped up by a supporting U.S. Navy ship. The Purple Heart was the only ribbon he rated, a highly unusual circumstance for a junior enlisted Marine in 1975. After Trebil hastily spurted an explanation justifying his Purple Heart, the colonel redirected his fire at what was missing: "Nobody wears that ribbon by itself. Nobody rates just that ribbon wait here." He took Trebil's service record brief, the proof of his existence in the Corps, and stormed off to remedy the situation.¹

President Dwight D. Eisenhower authorized the National Defense Service Medal (NDSM) in Executive Order 10448 on 22 April 1953 as a blanket recognition medal for military personnel serving at a time of national emergency, though not necessarily in a combat zone.² According to the 1973 Paris Peace Accords, U.S.

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¹ Timothy Trebil, 2d Battalion, 9th Regiment veteran, interview with author, 10 November 2017, Arlington, VA, hereafter Trebil interview.

² Exec. Order No. 10448, 3 C.F.R., 1949–1953 Comp., 935.



Official U.S. Air Force photo 090424-F-1234P-028, courtesy of the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force Unidentified U.S. Marines run from a Sikorsky HH-53C Jolly Green Giant helicopter of the 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron during the assault on Koh Tang Island to rescue the U.S. merchant ship Mayaguez and its crew, 15 May 1975.

combat operations in Vietnam ended on 28 January 1973, but the Department of Defense (DOD) kept issuing the NDSM to servicemembers for the national emergency of the Vietnam War until 14 August 1974. Trebil joined the Marine Corps in September 1974, missing the regulatory cutoff date. The incongruity between Trebil's combat experience, exemplified by the Purple Heart, and the absence of other awards for wartime or emergency service troubled the colonel. Although existing regulations said Trebil had not served during a period of national emergency, the colonel reconciled the regulation's intent with Trebil's experience through an impromptu award ceremony at the Marine Corps Commandant's office. Now Trebil had two ribbons to his name: the Purple Heart and NDSM.³

Popular conception, national narratives, and wartime decoration regulations do not always match individual historical experiences. In addition to not warranting the NDSM, the fighting on and around Koh Tang—contested by the new revolutionary governments of Vietnam and Cambodia—from 12 to 15 May 1975 also failed to merit the green, yellow, or red Vietnam Service Medal (VSM). Perhaps the most iconic ribbon from the United States' nearly 20-year military effort in Indochina, the image of the VSM

³Trebil interview.



Official U.S. Air Force photo, courtesy of the National Museum of the United States Air Force

Container ship SS Mayaguez.

now adorns countless black Vietnam veteran hats, jackets, and memorials across the United States and serves as a prominent discriminator between those who fought in-country in Vietnam and those who did not.⁴

In a narrowly defined policy, service in the *Mayaguez* rescue operation alone did not warrant the VSM because combat operations ceased in 1973 and President Gerald Ford had officially proclaimed the Vietnam War over five days before the ship's seizure.⁵ More than 58,000 American servicemembers and hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese, Cambodians, Laotians, and others lost their lives during what the

United States calls the Vietnam War. But wars are rarely contained neatly within dates and borders, and the Vietnam War extended outside the geographical borders of Vietnam.

The battle on and around Koh Tang to rescue the *Mayaguez* and its crew on the border between Cambodia and Vietnam was the U.S. military's final episode amid a concurrent wider war for control of Indochina—known as the Second Indochina War. France's colonial exit from Indochina after the 1954 Geneva Conference triggered struggles for control across the region.⁶ The United States' main military effort in the Second Indochina War was the fighting in Vietnam, but the term *Vietnam War* has hindered a proper understanding of the wider war in the Ameri-

⁴ Legal and social questions regarding status as a *Vietnam veteran* or *Vietnam-era veteran* have abounded since at least 1974. For example, see Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act, H.R. 12649, 93d Cong. (1974).

⁵ Proclamation No. 4373, Fed. Reg. 20257 (7 May 1975).

⁶ Donald Kirk, Wider War: The Struggle for Cambodia, Thailand, and Laos (New York: Praeger, 1971), 3–15.



Official Department of Defense photo, courtesy of Historical Resources Branch, Marine Corps History Division A Marine and an Air Force pararescueman of the 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron (in wetsuit) run for an Air Force helicopter during an assault on Koh Tang Island to rescue the merchant ship SS *Mayaguez* and its crew, 15 May 1975.

can consciousness. Governments, institutions, and historians frame events for various reasons, among them political, bureaucratic, and a desire for coherence. The most valid reasons for placing the Vietnam War and the *Mayaguez* incident within the same frame are historical. U.S. military participation within Vietnamese and Cambodian territory in spring 1975 was participation in the same war, not separate conflicts. U.S. decision-makers and military leaders in the region understood this at the time and participants in the *Mayaguez* incident at various levels remembered and memorialized the connection in the following years.⁷ This article will first review the military and diplomatic events in South Vietnam and Cambodia during the winter and spring of 1975 and comment on existing interpretations. Next, the article will explain why some view the *Mayaguez* incident as distinct from the Vietnam War/Second Indochina War for political, bureaucratic, and social reasons before demonstrating historical and national memory linkages. This article

⁷ On the importance of historical memory, see David Thelen, "Memory and American History," *Journal of American History* 75, no. 4 (March 1989): 1117–29.



Official Department of Defense photo, by YN3 Michael Chan, courtesy of Historical Resources Branch, Marine Corps History Division A U.S. Marine from the escort ship USS Harold E. Holt (DE 1074) storm the merchant ship SS Mayaguez to recapture the ship and to rescue the captive crew. No one was aboard the ship and the crew were later returned by a fishing boat.

provides a heretofore unseen historical argument connecting the *Mayaguez* incident to the wider war and demonstrates that *Mayaguez* and Koh Tang veterans are Vietnam veterans.

Indochina, 1975

As the calendar turned from 1974 to 1975, the situation across Indochina—Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia—appeared grim for governments allied with the United States. Opposing regimes within each country, under the mantle of Communism (though not Moscow or Beijing stooges as many believed), made significant gains in their decades-long struggles for control of independent nation states derived from the former French Indochina. Two dominoes teetered by the end of March. In the face of the advancing Khmer Rouge, the United States evacuated personnel from Phnom Penh, Cambodia's capital, in Operation Eagle Pull on 12 April. Similarly, with North Vietnamese armored columns closing in, the United States evacuated Saigon in Operation Frequent Wind on 30 April. It seemed the last helicopter lift brought finality—bitter for many, inglorious at best—to nearly 20 years of American military presence in embattled Indochina.⁸

Twelve days after the rooftop dust settled in Saigon, and five days after President Ford officially ended the Vietnam era, Khmer Rouge soldiers captured the

⁸ David L. Anderson, *The Columbia Guide to the Vietnam War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 191.



Raymond Potter Collection, COLL/1088, Historical Resources Branch, Marine Corps History Division Maj Raymond Potter raising the American flag on the SS Mayaguez after its recapture by U.S. Marines.

Mayaguez and its 40-person crew.⁹ Ford again ordered U.S. forces to battle in Indochina. Portions of two U.S. Marine battalions, supported by Navy and Air Force elements, assaulted both the *Mayaguez* and Koh Tang Island in the early morning hours of 15 May 1975. Precombat intelligence reports judged Koh Tang to be lightly defended, yet a disciplined and heavily armed element of the Khmer Rouge numbering in the hundreds stiffly resisted. The Cambodians released the crew unharmed from another location back to U.S. ships shortly after the Marine insertion. The *Mayaguez* was unguarded. But tragically, by the time the Marines on the island received this report, several helicopters lay burning in the water and some Marines had already given their lives. The mission switched from rescue to withdrawal, but this proved difficult under heavy fire and with the now-limited number of helicopters available. As the withdrawal stretched into the hours of darkness, personnel accountability became more challenged. After 14 hours of ground combat and 41 servicemembers killed in action, U.S. forces recovered the *Mayaguez* and its entire crew. Given the intensity of the fighting and the difficult withdrawal conditions, many of the fallen remained on the island or in the surf. Hauntingly, three Marines may have been left on the island alive; they remain officially unaccounted for.¹⁰

Last Battle or First Post-Vietnam Battle?

The *Mayaguez* incident exists on a historical fault line: Was it part of the Vietnam War or a post-Vietnam operation? In general, scholars writing about the end of the Vietnam War conclude with the 30 April 1975 fall of Saigon and perhaps a mention of fleeing South Vietnamese boat people, but no mention of the *Mayaguez* capture. Meanwhile, several *Mayaguez* historians refer to the rescue operation as the "last battle" of Vietnam, but without providing any justification.

None of the academy's reputed comprehensive diplomatic histories of the Vietnam War conclude with the *Mayaguez* incident. George C. Herring discusses events in Laos and Cambodia after Saigon's fall but does not mention the incident; neither do Lewis Sorley, Michael Lind, or Robert McMahon. Editor David L. Anderson includes it in the *Columbia Guide to the Vietnam War* on an extended time line of U.S. involvement with Vietnam that stretches to U.S. diplomatic recognition of Vietnam in 1995, but without comment about its inclusion. However, Anderson does not mention it in *The Columbia History of the Vietnam War*, which includes a chapter by Kenton Clymer titled "Cambodia and Laos in the Vietnam War." Lien-Hang T. Nguyen's history of the war from Hanoi's per-

⁹ For brevity, the article refers to the totality of U.S. military actions around Koh Tang and the *Mayaguez* from 12–15 May 1975 as the "*Mayaguez* rescue operation," "the *Mayaguez*," the "*Mayaguez* incident," or "the incident" unless otherwise specified.

¹⁰ The decisions surrounding the fate of LCpl Joseph N. Hargrove, PFC Gary L. Hall, and Pvt Danny G. Marshall require greater attention, but that is not the focus of this article. See John F. Guilmartin Jr., *A Very Short War: The Mayaguez and the Battle of Koh Tang* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1995).

spective includes discussion of diplomatic squabbling between the North Vietnamese and Communist parties in Laos and Cambodia but overlooks the incident. Even Mark Atwood Lawrence's international history of the war, which includes discussion of the Khmer Rouge takeover in Cambodia, fails to mention it."

The *Mayaguez* incident is mentioned in histories of Henry Kissinger's tenure as the United States' premier foreign policy maker but never as an event with direct connection to Vietnam, despite the earlier distinction of being credited (alongside Richard Nixon) for expanding the war into Cambodia. Robert D. Schulzinger's and Jussi Hanhimäki's research into Kissinger imply the *Mayaguez* operation was simply a post-Vietnam opportunity for Ford and Kissinger to forcefully save face after Saigon's fall. Likewise, John Robert Greene's and Douglas Brinkley's Ford biographies liken the ship's capture to a post-Vietnam foreign policy challenge more akin to the 1968 North Korean USS *Pueblo* (AGER 2) seizure than with any direct linkage to Vietnam.¹²

There is also no consensus on the question in focused historical accounts of the incident. Several of these works place it outside the Vietnam War. *Time* journalist Roy Rowan's *The Four Days of Mayaguez* came off the presses two months after the events on Koh Tang, yet it speaks of the Vietnam War in the past tense. Christopher J. Lamb's 1989 work, *Belief Systems and Decision Making in the Mayaguez Crisis*, suggested Ford's military response had more to do with Northeast Asia and North Korean provocations than recent events in Southeast Asia. Lucien S. Vandenbroucke recognized the connection to broader Indochinese troubles but does not place it within the war as the United States' prior actions in Vietnam. James Wise and Scott Baron emphasized linkages to the *Pueblo* and modern piracy.¹³ Robert Mahoney splits the difference, referring to it as both "the last chapter of the United States' military involvement in Indochina" and "the first direct foreign challenge to American power since the end of the Vietnam War."¹⁴

Others characterize the incident clearly as Vietnam's last battle. George Dunham and David Quinlan, writing the Marine Corps' official history of the Vietnam War in 1990, included it as the final chapter. John Guilmartin, a pilot in one of the U.S. Air Force units that supported the operation from Thailand and later a distinguished historian, referred to it explicitly as the "last battle" of Vietnam. Both Guilmartin and Ralph Wetterhahn, the author of a more recent book titled Last Battle: The Mayaguez Incident and the End of the Vietnam War, neglected to justify their claims. Similarly, another former pilot, Ric Hunter, who flew a McDonnell Douglas F-4D Phantom aircraft as part of operations over Vietnam and in support of the Mayaguez, penned several journal articles within the past two decades making the connection. Most recently, Lamb opened his 2018 study of the incident's mission

[&]quot;George C. Herring, America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975, 4th ed. (New York: McGraw Hill, 2001), 340-42; Lewis Sorley, A Better War: The Unexamined Victories and Final Tragedy of America's Last Years in Vietnam (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1999); Michael Lind, Vietnam: The Necessary War-A Reinterpretation of America's Most Disastrous Military Conflict (New York: Free Press, 1999); Robert McMahon, Major Problems in the History of the Vietnam War: Documents and Essays (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2008), 437-540; Anderson, The Columbia Guide to the Vietnam War, 191; Anderson, ed., The Columbia History of the Vietnam War; Kenton Clymer, "Cambodia and Laos in the Vietnam War," in The Columbia History of the Vietnam War, ed. David L. Anderson, 357-81; Lien-Hang T. Nguyen, Hanoi's War: An International History of the War for Peace in Vietnam (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 300-4; and Mark Atwood Lawrence, The Vietnam War: An International History in Documents (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 173-74. ¹² Robert D. Schulzinger, Henry Kissinger: Doctor of Diplomacy (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 203-5; Jussi Hanhimäki, The Flawed Architect: Henry Kissinger and American Foreign Policy (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 398; John Robert Greene, The Presidency of Gerald R. Ford (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1994), 143-51; and Douglas Brinkley, Gerald R. Ford (New York: Times Books, 2007), 100-6.

¹³ Roy Rowan, *The Four Days of Mayaguez* (New York: Norton, 1975); Christopher Jon Lamb, *Belief Systems and Decision Making in the Mayaguez Crisis* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1989), 99; Lucien S. Vandenbroucke, *Perilous Options: Special Operations as an Instrument of U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 72–112; and James E. Wise Jr. and Scott Baron, *The 14-Hour War: Valor on Koh Tang and the Recapture of the SS* Mayaguez (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2011), ix–x. North Korea captured the USS *Pueblo* in 1968 and the ship remains in its possession. The *Mayaguez's* seizure made an immediately recognizable connection. See Mitchell B. Lerner, *The Pueblo Incident: A Spy Ship and the Failure of American Foreign Policy* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002).

¹⁴ Robert J. Mahoney, *The Mayaguez Incident: Testing America's Resolve in the Post-Vietnam Era* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2011), xiii–xiv.

command and civil-military relations aspects by also explicitly calling it the last battle.¹⁵

Policy, Bureaucracy, and Social Reasons to Separate the *Mayaguez* from Vietnam

Three significant factors hinder the connection between the *Mayaguez* operation and the Vietnam War from being more broadly recognized: the contemporary national policy context, bureaucratic inertia, and the protected social status of being a Vietnam veteran. Neither President Ford nor Congress had any policy desire to claim to be continuing the Vietnam War in May 1975. Likewise, the DOD resisted the connection in its award eligibility policy for the VSM. In addition, protection of the classification *Vietnam veteran* as a distinguished status caused some veterans to resist a wider interpretation of the war.

It is no revelation that U.S. public support for Vietnam combat waned in the 1970s.¹⁶ By 1972, President Richard Nixon yearned to be publicly recognized as a Vietnam peacemaker while Kissinger negotiated U.S. withdrawal. Privately, both men doubted South Vietnam's ability to withstand future North Vietnamese aggression and hoped at least a "decent interval" would pass after the January 1973 Peace Accord before South Vietnam succumbed.¹⁷ This transpired under the hanging pall of corruption during the Watergate investigation and Vice President Spiro Agnew's resignation in October 1973. Meanwhile, the House of Representatives and Senate overrode Nixon's veto to enact the War Powers Resolution in November 1973 and rein in perceived presidential war-making excesses.¹⁸ Gerald Ford, then House minority leader, entered within this setting, backing into the vice presidency in 1973 and later the presidency in August 1974.

Ford pledged to continue an American peace moment as war escalated across Indochina. Upon taking the presidential oath of office in August, he promised an "uninterrupted and sincere search for peace" while acknowledging his predecessor had "brought peace to millions."¹⁹ By the dawn of 1975, as North Vietnamese columns began the final decisive push south, the interval Ford inherited from Nixon was closing rapidly. As South Vietnamese resistance crumbled, Ford argued with Congress for funds but not troops. Historians can argue whether this advocacy was in earnest or part of the political blame game between the executive and legislative branches for South Vietnam's approaching defeat.²⁰ Privately, Ford and his advisors sought a way to frame the situation in a positive light.

Shedding the Vietnam War was desirable not only for political reasons but also for financial considerations. As early as January 1975, before South Vietnam's collapse was imminent or a foregone conclusion, Ford's domestic advisors debated when he should declare an official end date to the conflict to save money on costly wartime veterans' benefits. Although U.S. combat operations supposedly ceased in 1973, no counterpart proclamation to Lyndon B. Johnson's 1965 Executive Order No. 11216, which designated Vietnam as a combat zone, had been issued to end

¹⁵ "Recovery of the S.S. *Mayaguez*," in Maj George R. Dunham and Col David A. Quinlan, *U.S. Marines in Vietnam: The Bitter End*, 1973-1975 (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1990), 238–65; Guilmartin, *A Very Short War*, 28; Ralph Wetterhahn, *The Last Battle: The Mayaguez Incident and the End of the Vietnam War* (New York: Carroll and Graf Publishers, 2001); Ric Hunter, "SS *Mayaguez*: The Last Battle of Vietnam," *Flight Journal* 5, no. 2 (April 2000): 46–54; and Ric Hunter, "The Last Firefight: the Desperate and Confused Battle Triggered by the *Mayaguez* Incident was a Disturbing Finale to America's War in Southeast Asia," *Vietnam* 23, no. 2 (August 2010): 38–45; and Christopher J. Lamb, *The* Mayaguez *Crisis, Mission Command, and Civil-Military Relations* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2018), 1.

¹⁶ Lydia Saad, "Gallup Vault: Hawks vs. Doves on Vietnam," *Gallup News*, 24 May 2016.

¹⁷ Jeffrey Kimball, Nixon's Vietnam War (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1998); and Larry Berman, No Peace, No Honor: Nixon, Kissinger, and Betrayal in Vietnam (New York: Free Press, 2001).

¹⁸ War Powers Resolution, 50 U.S.C. § 1541 (1973).

¹⁹ "Gerald R. Ford, 38th President of the United States: 1974–1977. Remarks on Taking the Oath of Office, 9 August 1974," American Presidency Project (website), accessed 15 December 2017.

²⁰ Ford's press secretary, Ron Nessen, laid out the political calculus on the eve of Ford's address to a Joint Session of Congress, 10 April 1975. See "Memorandum for Donald Rumsfeld, from Ron Nessen," 8 April 1975, Vietnam General File, Richard Cheney digital collection, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library (GRFPL), Grand Rapids, MI, 31.

the war.²¹ Ford's domestic policy team weighed these considerations. Domestic advisor James M. Cannon's handwritten musing on a memorandum in January 1975 "April 1st good time to end the Vietnam War?" makes the point. As things looked worse for South Vietnam in early 1975, the driving considerations to disassociate from the war were political and financial.²²

As South Vietnam's collapse became imminent in April, Ford sought to inspire the American people with forward-looking platitudes while harkening back to a military moment that restored American pride. Rather than dwelling on the present-day defeat at a 23 April speech at Tulane University's New Orleans, Louisiana, campus, Ford recalled a proud moment in U.S. history. Before referring to Vietnam as a "war that is finished as far as America is concerned," he remembered the American victory in the 1815 Battle of New Orleans as a "national restorative to our pride" after having suffered "humiliation and a measure of defeat" when the British burned Washington, DC. Ironically, in the context of connecting the Mayaguez incident and Vietnam, Ford referred to the Battle of New Orleans as part of the War of 1812, although "the victory at New Orleans actually took place two weeks after the signing of the armistice in Europe. Thousands died although a peace had been negotiated. The combatants had not gotten the word," he noted. For reasons of policy, late April 1975 was equivalent to January 1815 for Ford: "In New Orleans, a great battle was fought after a war was over. In New Orleans tonight, we can begin a great national reconciliation."23 While recalling the past, Ford wanted the American public looking to the future.

Coincidentally, his battle for national reconciliation came just two weeks later with the seizure of the Mayaguez—a week after he closed the Vietnam era via presidential proclamation. Ford referred to the Cambodian seizure of the ship as a "clear act of piracy," not an act of war.²⁴ This characterization made a clean conceptual break with Vietnam and made any subsequent military action more acceptable to the public. He also considered it piracy for legal reasons. The War Powers Resolution rescinded presidential authority to send combat forces into Indochina without congressional authorization. Although he complied with some of the War Powers Resolution's terms by notifying Congress before ordering the Marine assault and rescue mission, Ford deftly argued his authority to use force to protect the private interests of American citizens from pirates at any time.25 U.S. military heroics that safely returned the crew and ship fulfilled Ford's national restorative wish. His Gallup approval ratings shot up 11 points, previously recalcitrant members of Congress heaped praise, and the once-morose public cheered.²⁶ Ford's characterization of events at the national executive level helped to establish the existing disjointed narrative about Vietnam and the Mayaguez.

As the White House and Congress debated how to end the war and whether to continue aid for Indochinese governments, the DOD adjusted military award policies to reflect the changing context. After the end of the Vietnam Ceasefire Campaign in January 1973, DOD stopped awarding the VSM, which had been awarded to eligible servicemembers with service in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos since 1965 (and retroactively to 1958).²⁷

For DOD, the *Mayaguez* operation occurred at the wrong time, in the wrong location, against the

²¹ "Lyndon B. Johnson, 36th President of the United States: 1963–1969. Executive Order 11216—Designation of Vietnam and Waters Adjacent Thereto as a Combat Zone for the Purposes of Section 112 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, 24 April 1965," American Presidency Project (website).

²² "Memo on Subject of Termination of Wartime Veterans Benefits," 27 January 1975, box 39, Veterans (1) folder, Jack Cannon digital collection, GRFPL, 28.

²³"Gerald R. Ford: Address at a Tulane University Convocation, 23 April 1975," American Presidency Project (website), accessed 16 December 2017.

²⁴ Memorandum, "NSC Meeting of May 12, 1975," box 1, NSC Meeting, 5/12/1975 folder, National Security Advisor's NSC Meetings file, 1974– 77, digital collections, GRFPL.

²⁵ Stephen Isaacs, "Authority Is Cited for Use of Force," Washington Post, 14 May 1975.

²⁶ See Jeffrey Jones, "Gerald Ford Retrospective," *Gallup News*, 29 December 2006; several articles in *Time*, U.S. edition, 26 May 1975; and several articles in *Newsweek*, U.S. edition, 26 May 1975.

²⁷ For example, see Vietnam War campaign dates in *Secretary of the Navy Instruction (SECNAVINST)* 1650.1H, Navy and Marine Corps Award Manual (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 22 August 2006), 8-20.

wrong enemy, and without connection to the military effort in Vietnam to be considered part of the Vietnam War. Neatly, the eligibility termination date for the VSM aligns with "the signing of the Paris Peace Accords which led to the cessation of military combat operations in Vietnam and ended direct U.S. military involvement in the Vietnam conflict," and after which in Vietnam there were "no combat operations or combat casualties."28 Because Cambodian Communists captured the Mayaguez, not Vietnamese, and because the rescue mission was interpreted as not being directed toward "support operations in Vietnam," DOD's position was that participating servicemembers were appropriately awarded the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (AFEM) for operations disconnected from a larger war instead of the VSM.²⁹

Resistance to connecting the *Mayaguez* with Vietnam also came from some Vietnam veterans. This phenomenon centers on whether a servicemember earned the distinctive title *Vietnam veteran* by serving in Vietnam (generally recognized through receipt of the VSM) or is a Vietnam-era veteran who happened to be in the Armed Services during the Vietnam War but never served in-country. The Vietnam War dominates popular memory of the U.S. military during the 1960s and early 1970s. Approximately 2.5 million American troops served somewhere in Southeast Asia during the war, but during the same time frame more than 2.5 million servicemembers never went to Southeast Asia.³⁰ Many Vietnam veterans, especially those claiming combat veteran status, vociferously defend the distinctive title.³¹

VSM-wearing veterans may recognize the Mayaguez's relation to the war as a battle experience in Indochina but discount it as part of the Vietnam War for different reasons than DOD. Length of tour matters for many Vietnam veterans when considering whether to confer veteran status on others: "The criteria for the Vietnam Service Medal and Vietnam Campaign Ribbon are very specific, and both require 30 or more days in-country unless captured, wounded or killed."32 Koh Tang may have been a 14-hour hell for the Marines on the beach, but it was a one-off mission, not a months- or yearslong deployment experience. Timothy Trebil, who was 19 years old when he earned the Purple Heart during the Mayageuz rescue, recalls being ostracized by older Vietnam veterans in the 1990s for wearing a Purple Heart cap; they wondered how someone who was noticeably younger but too old to be an Operation Desert Storm veteran could have possibly earned a Purple Heart during their military career.33 These political, legal, bureaucratic, and social reasons for separating the incident from Vietnam rely on the supposition that a war is over when an actor desires it to be over and neglect war's dialectic nature.

Widening the Frame: The *Mayaguez* Incident as "Last Battle"

The *Mayaguez* incident should be properly understood as the United States' last battle in the Vietnam War for broad geostrategic and specific local historic reasons. Geostrategically, the war the United States militarily entered in the 1950s, escalated in 1965, left in 1973, and reentered in 1975 was a wider Indochinese war at the confluence of European decolonization, the ideological East-versus-West Cold War, and intraregional conflicts for control of Indochina. The war did

²⁸ Combat casualty is a bureaucratic term that does not include, in this case, those American servicemembers who died as a direct result of enemy fire within the VSM's earlier geographic eligibility boundaries after January 1973. For example, Cpl Charles McMahon Jr. and LCpl Darwin L. Judge, who died from Viet Cong rocket attack while defending the American embassy in Saigon on 30 April 1975, were not eligible for the VSM.

²⁹ DOD Director of Officer and Enlisted Personnel Management (Military Personnel Policy) letter to Donald Raatz, 7 April 2017, shared with author by Donald Raatz, hereafter DOD Personnel Policy letter to Raatz. For DOD, the *Mayaguez* bears more connection to operations such as Urgent Fury in Grenada in 1983 or El Dorado Canyon in Libya in 1986 than to the Vietnam War.

³⁰ "U.S. Military Casualties—Vietnam Conflict Casualty Summary," Defense Casualty Analysis System, accessed 17 December 2017.

³¹ See Spc Johnny Velazquez, PhD, "Should Vietnam Era Vets be Addressed as 'Vietnam Vets'?," Rally Point message boards, 27 February 2015; and T. L. Johnson Jr., letter to the editor: "Johnson: There Is a Difference between 'Vietnam Vet' and 'Vietnam Era Vet'," *Amarillo (TX) Globe-News*, 27 April 2015.

³² Johnson, "Johnson: There Is a Difference between 'Vietnam Vet' and 'Vietnam Era Vet'."

³³ Trebil interview.

not end with the last American helicopter lifting off from a Saigon rooftop because it involved more than just U.S. support for South Vietnam. The incident is also directly historically connected to operations in Vietnam for specific local reasons: the *Mayaguez* carried sensitive equipment it had recently loaded in Saigon and some of the same U.S. forces participated in both the evacuation of Saigon and the ship rescue.

Vietnam is an inexact prefix and national mnemonic device for a war that touched all of Indochina. The reality that a clear majority of, though not all, U.S. troops who participated in this war did so from within Vietnamese borders creates the domestic misperception that the war was all about the survival of South Vietnam in the face of Vietnamese Communist aggression. The war predated U.S. involvement, and comprehending it requires an understanding of Indochina's experience with European colonization in the first half of the twentieth century, especially at the close of the Second World War.

This wider twentieth-century Indochina war bore resemblance to historical struggles for territorial control between ethnic Cambodian, Laotian, Vietnamese, and Thai peoples, but French removal after the 1954 Geneva Conference unleashed local power struggles anew within a postwar decolonization context.³⁴ Violent unrest in the wake of the Second World War was not unique to Indochina. Wars of independence from European colonial powers erupted across Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Independence often occurred in tandem with bloody war and did not mean new governments accepted the borders and sovereignty established in Geneva.³⁵

Events in Cambodia after 1954 are an exemplary case of the wider war that extends beyond U.S. involvement. The new Kingdom of Cambodia and its inconstant monarch Prince Norodom Sihanouk attempted to remain neutral in the part of the war represented by the North-South Vietnamese conflict. This reflected Cambodia's geographic position between the historically stronger powers of Vietnam and Thailand. Yet, during a period of supposed peace from 1954 until overt U.S. military intervention in Cambodia in 1970, Sihanouk's regime suffered a border invasion and occupation from Thai troops in the Dângrêk Mountains, large-scale occupation by North Vietnamese regular forces, armed incursions from South Vietnamese Communists, and growing threats from homegrown Cambodian Khmer Communists.³⁶ The 1970 coup that overthrew Sihanouk for Prime Minister Lon Nol, the later controversial U.S. "incursion," and Lon Nol's massacre of ethnic Vietnamese undoubtedly represented war in Cambodia, but describing the prior period as one of peace obscures the lived experience in many parts of the country.³⁷ The internal struggles for power and control between Communist parties in North Vietnam and Cambodia also conceptually link the Mayaguez incident and the Vietnam War.

The Cold War served as the overarching context for the Vietnam War in national understanding, and Communism was an important component of the wider war, but not in a rudimentary "Communism versus the Free World" sense. The component of Indochinese Communism that best connects the Mayaguez to Vietnam is the conflict between competing Communist factions. While for a time nominally aligned as Communists against U.S. imperialism, the Vietnamese Workers Party (VWP, or North Vietnamese Communist politburo) and the Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK, an umbrella organization that included the Khmer Rouge) competed for territorial control and ideological purity. National and local interests trumped their Communist connection. The CPK detested the VWP's blatant chauvinist attitude toward Khmer Communists. The VWP publicly supported Prince Sihanouk's claim to power after the coup that overthrew him against both the U.S.-backed Lon Nol government and Pol Pot's CPK. As an example of this animosity, after assuming control of the CPK in 1971, Pol Pot began the systematic killing of Vietnamese-

³⁴ Kirk, Wider War, 3–15.

³⁵ Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 87.

³⁶Kirk, Wider War, 41–67.

³⁷ Nguyen, Hanoi's War, 173-75.

trained Khmer Communists to purge his movement from any connection to Hanoi.³⁸

When U.S. forces responded to crises across the region in 1975, they participated in the same convulsive war, not separate conflicts. The Khmer Rouge defended Koh Tang heavily because they feared an invasion from their North Vietnamese "hereditary enemy."³⁹ Before and after the *Mayaguez* incident, the Poulo Wai Islands and Koh Tang were contested borderlands for the Khmer Rouge and the Vietnamese government in Hanoi to the point of armed conflict.⁴⁰

Moving down from the geostrategic, there are specific U.S. military factors that link the Mayaguez rescue and operations in Vietnam as two parts of a wider conflict. U.S. forces stationed in Southeast Asia for more than a decade operated and reacted to events across Indochina both during the bureaucratically restricted Vietnam War time frame and after. For U.S. Air Force units in Southeast Asia with a mission to keep the non-Communist dominoes from falling, the January 1973 Paris Peace Accord was more of an administrative stroke of the pen than a change from war to peace, because it only concerned Vietnam. This meant more sorties were available in Laos and Cambodia until their respective peace agreements could be reached. Thailand-based units continued flying combat missions over Laos until 17 April and Cambodia until 16 August 1973. In the last 160 days of bombing in Cambodia alone, the United States exceeded by 50 percent the total tonnage of conventional explosives used against Japan in the Second World War. But if peace supposedly reigned across Indochina, it resulted in the redeployment of only a few thousand Thailandbased servicemembers and about a hundred aircraft to the United States. Approximately 40,000 soldiers and

400 aircraft remained, including all the Boeing B-52 Stratofortress bombers.⁴¹

From August 1973 until early 1975, these units prepared to resume fighting. The war continued and looked dire for the U.S.-backed governments in Indochina, but the order for combat did not come. Instead, with Khmer Rouge forces closing on Phnom Penh in early April 1975, the Thailand-based aircraft launched Operation Eagle Pull to rescue embassy personnel and other U.S. citizens. Only two weeks later at the end of April, many of the same aircraft flew from Thailand to South Vietnam in a larger rescue effort, Operation Frequent Wind, as North Vietnamese forces closed on Saigon. When they landed back at Thai bases, such as U-Tapao, they shared runway space with fleeing South Vietnamese aircraft and personnel.⁴² Things appeared final in Cambodia and Laos, but these units still prepared for combat and reacted to events in the wider Second Indochina War. When they received the call for the Mayaguez, some of the same personnel, in the same units, from the same bases who earned the VSM for flying over Cambodia, Laos, or Vietnam flew back to Cambodia.43

Like Air Force units in Thailand, U.S. Marines stationed in Okinawa had long served as a reserve quick-response force for any crisis in Southeast Asia, the Korean Peninsula, or elsewhere in the Pacific. The 2d Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment—young Lance Corporal Timothy Trebil's outfit—assumed this duty in early 1975. Members of the battalion recall being flown out to train on naval vessels in preparation for the worst in Phnom Penh and Saigon. Because the evacuation situations were so chaotic, decisions about which parts of the battalion would participate in the operations were made in apparent haste and in a way

³⁸ Nguyen, *Hanoi's War*, 179–80.

³⁹ Pak Sok, questioning by Kong Sam On, transcript of trial proceeding, Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, Trial Chamber—Trial Day 351, Case No. 002/19-09-2007-ECCC/TC, 5 January 2016, 63–75, accessed 22 November 2020.

⁴⁰ Pak Sok, questioning by Victor Koppe, transcript of trial proceeding, Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, Trial Chamber—Trial Day 351, Case No. 002/19-09-2007-ECCC/TC, 5 January 2016, 37–41, accessed 22 November 2020.

⁴¹ Jeffrey D. Glasser, *The Secret Vietnam War: The United States Air Force in Thailand*, 1961–1975 (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1995), 196–98.

⁴² Glasser, *The Secret Vietnam War*, 204–8.

⁴³ For example, Hunter, "The Last Firefight," 38–45; Donald Raatz, U.S. Air Force AC-130 pilot who flew in support of Eagle Pull, Frequent Wind, and the *Mayaguez* rescue, telephone conversation with author, 16 October 2017; and George Bracken interview with Erin Matlack, 2001, Oral History, George Clooney Bracken Collection, AFC/2001/001/102068, Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.



Official Department of Defense photo, courtesy of Historical Resources Branch, Marine Corps History Division Aerial view of the Monivong Bridge showing numerous personnel and civilian vehicles, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 17 April 1975.

that seemed arbitrary to many of the young Marines. Handfuls of Marines from different companies and platoons flew in to participate while other elements flew back to Okinawa to remain on standby. The Marines of 2d Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment, who went to help with the Saigon evacuation returned to Okinawa around 7 May, only to be ordered back to combat a week later for the *Mayaguez* rescue. These Marines, many of them youthful first-term enlisted Marines like Trebil, knew North Vietnamese victory over the South was momentous, but the clear distinction between a war and an incident had yet to be drawn.⁴⁴ Shifting focus from the Marines to the *Mayaguez* reveals a connection to Saigon, as well.

DOD rejects claims to award the VSM to *Mayaguez* veterans partially because the operation did not "support operations in Vietnam," yet the ship's purpose at the time of capture was to retrograde equip-

⁴⁴ Timothy Trebil, interview with author, 10 November 2017; and James Prothro, interview with author, 10 November 2017.

ment from the evacuated Saigon.45 Several Mayaguez crew members sued both the United States and the ship's owner, Sea-Land Corporation, for multi million-dollar damages in the years following their return from captivity. Multiple suits against Sea-Land were filed in California admiralty courts and later consolidated under the case Rappenecker v. Sea-Land Service, Inc. The aggrieved former crew members contended that, through the actions of the ship's captain, Sea-Land "recklessly ventured into Cambodian waters" and "clearly invited the seizure and detention of the Mayaguez."46 Moreover, discovery through the trial process revealed interesting facts about the Mayaguez's sea route and assumptions about the content of its containers that are scarcely mentioned in accounts of the ship's purportedly innocent voyage through the Gulf of Thailand. These details suggest the Mayaguez served as the transport ship in the operation to remove top-secret intelligence-gathering equipment from the U.S. embassy in Saigon prior to evacuation.

The first revelation deals with the origin of the Mayaguez's voyage. Hong Kong is often cited as the ship's port of departure prior to capture, but less widely cited by historians is that the ship docked in Saigon to load equipment from the U.S. embassy before it traveled to Hong Kong. Only items of significant interest to the United States would be worth loading into containers in the face of an invading army. In fact, trial deposition revealed the "administrative" equipment was loaded under special circumstance with an embassy escort.⁴⁷ Also suggestive that some of the cargo loaded at Saigon was sensitive is the unusual fact that the ship's captain admitted under deposition that some of the cargo was secret and that he destroyed at least one secret code upon being captured.48 These details indicate that the Mayaguez was neither a typical container ship nor making a typical voyage.

Second, the ship's capture is often recounted as the aggressive seizure of an innocent vessel passing through international waters.⁴⁹ Trial discovery revealed the *Mayaguez* was less than 3 kilometers from the coast of Poulo Wai Island at the time of its capture—well within disputed territorial waters and nowhere near an international sea lane.⁵⁰ As claimed by the trial plaintiffs, this was at least "negligence, dereliction, and reckless misconduct," given the regional unrest at the time.⁵¹ One would assume if a ship did not want to be seized or was not involved in sea-based espionage of coastal territories that it would hedge away from hostile territory.

Third, after it was recovered, the ship made an unplanned stop to unload a handful of its 274 containers in Singapore before continuing to its planned destination of Sattahip, Thailand. Given the prior incident with the *Pueblo* spy ship, many in the global press speculated the *Mayaguez* had been conducting a similar operation. Sea-Land and the U.S. government invited the press to search the ship in Singapore, but no containers were opened. Later, on arrival in Thailand, the press investigated only 6 of the 274 containers.⁵² Even when pressured under litigation, the U.S. government failed to disclose the complete contents of the containers of the *Mayaguez* and many of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) files related to the rescue operation remain classified.

Removal of sensitive U.S. government equipment and military cargo before it fell into the hands of the North Vietnamese was in essence a retrograde operation—the movement of "equipment and materiel from a forward location . . . to another directed area of operations."⁵³ Contrary to the narrowly interpreted DOD policy, removal of this equipment from

⁴⁵ DOD Personnel Policy letter to Raatz.

⁴⁶ Jordan J. Paust, "More Revelations about *Mayaguez* (and Its Secret Cargo)," *Boston College International and Comparative Law Review* 4, no. 1 (May 1981): 66.

⁴⁷ Paust, "More Revelations about the *Mayaguez* (and Its Secret Cargo)," 72.

⁴⁸ Jordan J. Paust, "The Seizure and Recovery of the Mayaguez," *Yale Law Journal* 85, no. 6 (1976): 794.

⁴⁹None of the *Mayaguez* histories suggest espionage, but the trial discovery recorded by Paust identifies several unanswered questions about the ship's secret contents.

⁵⁰ Paust, "More Revelations about the *Mayaguez* (and Its Secret Cargo)," 69–70.

⁵¹ Paust, "More Revelations about the *Mayaguez* (and Its Secret Cargo)," 71.

⁵² Paust, "More Revelations about the *Mayaguez* (and Its Secret Cargo)," 73–74.

⁵³ DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2017), 201.

Vietnam supported U.S. interests in Vietnam, which by late April 1975 consisted of securing people and sensitive property. The ship's contents were at least among the most critical items to be retrograded in the final hours of the United States' Saigon embassy. U.S. decision-makers may have believed their involvement in the Second Indochina War was over as the ship sailed away from Vietnam, but the Khmer Rouge unexpectedly dragged the United States back into the war by seizing the ship.

Placing the Mayaguez incident within the American idea of the Vietnam War (the Second Indochina War) acknowledges that events within the region in late April and early May were seamless, fluid, and part of a wider war. Adopting this broader framework also acknowledges that war is a dialectical enterprise between multiple forces. It is complex, confusing, and not always logical. In the narrow view, since the ship's capture was not part of a larger effort represented by a chain of military orders, it can be discarded as a oneoff, a chance incident. This view misses the confluence of larger processes, including a long history of armed conflict in and around Cambodia and Laos, especially on the border regions, which characterized the long war in Indochina. This view also neglects the hard facts that the same U.S. forces operated between the two nations concurrently before and after the Paris Peace Accords and that the Mayaguez ship was retrograding equipment from Saigon at the time of its capture. Forces in combat with different sets of enemy forces, all involved in the same struggle, are still participating in the same war. By taking off the blinders emplaced by bureaucratic stricture—an overemphasis on dates and borders—one can view the Mayaguez rescue operation as the United States' last battle in its decades-long involvement in a long Indochina wara war we have called in shorthand the Vietnam War.

The Mayaguez Incident and Historical Memory

bodia and Vietnam. This perspective continued for some immediately after the *Mayaguez*'s capture and has since been supported publicly in various ways, some of them with national notoriety and U.S. government acknowledgement, and some of them even with sanction from the DOD.

While Ford and congressional leaders did not frame the Mayaguez incident publicly as part of the Vietnam War for policy reasons, they strongly promoted a connected understanding between events in Cambodia and Vietnam in the months before the incident. Congress provided millions of dollars in aid to South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos in the hopes of staving off Communist revolutions.54 As Congress debated further aid in early March, Senator Robert C. Byrd worried that "additional military support for either Cambodia or South Vietnam probably would fall into the hands of those we are now opposing." Ford's press secretary, Ron Nessen, advised the U.S. "should withdraw" from "Indochina"-not Vietnam-while proposing in a draft of Ford's joint address to Congress that in this war, "South Vietnam and Cambodia have fought bravely and long."55 When Ford delivered the address on 10 April, he remarked how "under five Presidents and 12 Congresses, the United States was engaged in Indochina. Millions of Americans served, thousands died, and many more were wounded, imprisoned, or lost."56 The events in Indochina were personally one war for Ford in this moment, although he had little desire to continue the conflict.

Admiral Noel Gayler, commander of U.S. Pacific Command from 1972 to 1976, recalled in his memoirs that one of the problems in fighting the Vietnam War was a misinterpretation of "what was really a quarrel basically over which Vietnamese sect was going

This understanding is not revisionist history in the sense no one understood it to be true at the time. In early 1975, but before the *Mayaguez* incident, the public recognized a connection between events in Cam-

⁵⁴ "Impact of Congressional Cuts in Administration Economic Aid Requests for Indochina," April 1975, box 13, General Subject file, "Vietnam-General" folder, digital collections, GRFPL.

⁵⁵ Ron Nessen, "Draft of Presidential Speech to Congress," 8 April 1975, box 13, General Subject file, "Vietnam-General" folder, digital collections, GRFPL.

⁵⁶"Gerald R. Ford, 38th President of the United States: 1974–1977—Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress Reporting on United States Foreign Policy, 10 April 1975," American Presidency Project (website), accessed 16 December 2017.

to control what had been French Indochina."⁵⁷ He also recalled that "after December '72 [and the Paris Peace Accord] . . . we still had a considerable logistic responsibility to the South Vietnamese and the Cambodians—and I made many visits both to Saigon and Phnom Penh, up into the hills and everywhere else—to see what was going on. Still, we had defacto conceded the war by then."⁵⁸ Combat being over on paper did not mean the war effort was over for Pacific Command.

The capriciousness that sent some Marines from 2d Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment, to Cambodia to support Operation Eagle Pull, to Saigon to support Operation Frequent Wind, and finally to the Gulf of Thailand to recover the Mayaguez made it difficult for some Marines and other servicemembers involved to distinguish how these happenings could be considered separate, unrelated events. After years of seeing video footage of American helicopters lifting evacuees off the rooftops in Saigon, the U.S. withdrawal is seared into the national memory as the final event of the war. For servicemembers in Southeast Asia at the time, the situation was much more fluid.59 As North Vietnam consolidated its victory in the south, Khmer Rouge on the borders and contested islands prepared for Vietnamese invasion, and thousands of refugee boats fled, U.S. military personnel in the region continued to prepare for the unexpected.

Among other U.S. naval vessels with similar stories, the experience of the sailors on the USS *Schofield* (FFG 3), a guided missile frigate, is instructive. On the same Western Pacific deployment from its California base in early 1975, *Schofield* floated up the Saigon River into Vietnam during South Vietnam's last few days, then assisted evacuees off the coast and escorted fleeing South Vietnamese vessels to Subic Bay, Philippines, before steaming back to the Gulf of Thailand to support the *Mayaguez* recovery operation.⁶⁰

Thailand-based servicemembers provide more evidence of this seamless connection. After landing and later recovering stranded Marines off Koh Tang's beach, members of the Air Force's 40th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron and 21st Special Operations Squadron returned to Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base. On 19 May, four days after the operation ended (which also happened to be Vietnamese Communist revolutionary Ho Chi Minh's birthday, though he had been dead for almost six years) some of the squadrons' enlisted servicemembers commemorated their rescue with a party. Makeshift signs included both the celebratory "U.S.S. [sic] Mayaguez Raiders" and the antagonistic "F---k Ho Chi Minh."61 For these airmen in Thailand, their operations against Communist forces in Southeast Asia-whether in Cambodia or Vietnam-were linked.

The connected context soon found itself in print. The Marine Corps Association's *Leatherneck* magazine dedicated its September 1975 issue to the "end of an era" with an image of the VSM adorning the cover. Inside, the edition featured articles about the Marine Corps' role in Operations Eagle Pull, Frequent Wind, and the *Mayaguez* rescue. At the time, none of these operations qualified Marines for the medal on the magazine's cover.⁶² More than members of the military held the *Mayaguez* incident as part of the Vietnam War in 1975.

The U.S. Senate passed Senate Resolution 171, "A Resolution to Pay Tribute to American Servicemen

⁵⁷ The Reminiscences of Admiral Noel A. M. Gayler, U.S. Navy (Ret.), interviewed by Paul Stillwell in December 1983 (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute Press, 2012), 289.

⁵⁸ The Reminiscences of Admiral Noel A. M. Gayler, U.S. Navy (Ret.), 296–97. ⁵⁹ Author interviewed or corresponded with nine *Mayaguez* veterans while researching this article: five Marines, two Navy, and two Air Force. They represent a mix of officer and enlisted. All spoke to the chaotic nature in the region as their units/vessels responded in various ways to events in Vietnam and Cambodia. The following four perspectives are representative: Timothy Trebil, 2d Battalion, 9th Regiment, veteran, interview with author, Arlington, VA, 10 November 2017; James Prothro, 2d Battalion, 9th Regiment, veteran, interview with author, Arlington, VA, 10 November 2017; Donald Raatz, USAF, Lockheed AC-130 pilot who flew in support of Eagle Pull, Frequent Wind, and the *Mayaguez* rescue, telephone conversation with author, 16 October 2017; and Scott Kelley, USN, veteran of the USS *Schofield*, email to author, 10 October 2017.

⁶⁰ 1975 USS Schofield FFG-3, HSL-33 DET-10, WESTPAC cruise book (San Diego, CA: Wallsworth Publishing, 1975), 50.

⁶¹ "40th ARRS and 21st SOS Celebrate Ho Chi Minh's Birthday May 19, 1975 NKP (No Audio)," YouTube, 15 October 2012, 8 mm camera video, 01:26.

⁶² *Leatherneck*, September 1975, Mayaguez file, folder 3 of 4, Historical Resources Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.

Who Fought in Southeast Asia and to Their Families," on 22 May 1975, which included the suggestive following statements: "Whereas, the participation of American troops in hostilities in Southeast Asia have been brought to an end," and "that the nation is eternally grateful to all those American servicemen who participated in the Southeast Asian conflict."⁶³ Veterans' family members also made this wider connection.

The most publicly notable recognition that the Mayaguez rescue operation concluded U.S. combat operations in the Vietnam War came in 1982 with the opening of the Vietnam War Memorial (The Wall). The 41 servicemembers who lost their lives in the operation are the last names etched into The Wall as casualties of the Vietnam War. This was neither a typo nor a casual oversight and includes some level of sanction from the DOD. The Wall, from conception to completion, was the effort of a group of veterans who fought in Vietnam and sought appropriate recognition for their generation's sacrifice. Former Army infantryman Jan C. Scruggs conceived the initial vision, and together with former Air Force intelligence officer Robert W. Doubek and the rest of the nonprofit Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) staff, carried the project to its place on the National Mall in Washington, DC.⁶⁴ The controversy surrounding The Wall's design is well known, but less so is the outpouring of petitions the VVMF received on behalf of grieving parents, spouses, and siblings trying to ensure their family member's name would be inscribed. Many Americans lost their lives on land in Indochina and offshore during U.S. involvement in the region. Many were deployed and still remain missing or unaccounted for. Most casualties came from hostile fire, but some came from accidents or natural causes-even homicide and suicide-and not all the fallen were servicemembers. In addition to the hundreds of letters received from military family members, the VVMF received impassioned pleas from the families of fallen State Department and CIA personnel, and even the family of a murdered Red Cross volunteer.⁶⁵

The VVMF needed a supportable set of criteria by which to judge these requests. Given their vision to honor fallen servicemembers, they respectfully informed petitioning nonmilitary family members that their loved one's sacrifices were included in The Wall's purpose to memorialize but would not be inscribed. Yet, this still left hundreds of requests from military families, such as a mother whose sailor son died on board a ship in the South China Sea while fighting raged in Vietnam.⁶⁶ To this mother, her son died in the Vietnam War, but not in the eyes of the VVMF. The group's board of directors decided to rely mostly on a listing of casualties in Southeast Asia compiled by the DOD, cross-checked against lists compiled by the individual Services, while also considering the executive order that classified Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia as combat zones. The casualty names from the Mayaguez operation appeared on Air Force and Marine Corps lists, but not on DOD's. VVMF considered the Mayaguez names along with other apparent outliers such as Air Force lieutenant colonel Clarence F. Blanton, who was killed atop a Laotian tactical air navigation radar site by North Vietnamese soldiers in 1968, and whose presence on the Air Force casualty list in 1982 represented the first time the U.S. government publicly acknowledged his death.⁶⁷ When 150,000 Americans dedicated The Wall on Veterans Day 1982, they saw the names of the 41 airmen, sailors, and Marines who died for the Mayaguez engraved as the last casualties of the Vietnam War.

The story told by the iconic U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial, or Iwo Jima Memorial, also considers the *Mayaguez* to be a part of the Vietnam War. The memorial managed by the Corps and the National Park

 ⁶³ A Resolution to Pay Tribute to American Servicemen Who Fought in Southeast Asia and to Their Families, S. Res. 171, 94th Cong. (1975).
⁶⁴ See Robert W. Doubek, *Creating the Vietnam Veterans Memorial: The Inside Story* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2015).

⁶⁵ See box 39, Records of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Manuscript Division Reading Room, Library of Congress.

⁶⁶ Frances Angerhofer letter to Hon Carlos Moorhead, congressman, 22d California District, 31 March 1982, box 39, Records of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Manuscript Reading Room, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

⁶⁷ See Doubek, *Creating the Vietnam Veterans Memorial*, 221; and Zeke Campfield, "El Reno Family Celebrates Return of Long-lost Husband, Father," *Oklahoman*, 14 September 2012.

Service lists the names and dates of the well-known wars and battles, but also lesser known engagements, in which U.S. Marines have fought. The listing for Vietnam gives the dates 1962–75. When a group of *Mayaguez* veterans queried the memorial's curator as to why the Koh Tang operation did not have its own inscription, he replied that the event is included in the Vietnam inscription.⁶⁸

Poignantly, and succinctly, Senator John S. Mc-Cain remembered what the *Mayaguez* incident represented when he traveled to the reestablished U.S. embassy in Phnom Penh to dedicate a memorial for the mission's fallen on Veterans Day 1996. McCain bluntly stated, "The *Mayaguez* fight, we know, was the last combat action of America's longest war. Of course, war continued in Indochina after May 1975. ... But for Americans, the *Mayaguez* should have been an end point, a final chapter." For many who served in it, the *Mayaguez* rescue operation did represent this conclusion.⁶⁹

Conclusion: Ribbons and War in Context

Mayaguez veterans formed a group in the 1990s, now known as the Koh Tang/Mayaguez Veterans Organization, to connect to their shared past and find resolution. The group's website is a place where *Mayaguez* veterans "as well as their friends, and families can find comfort and support to this oft-forgotten chapter in American history."⁷⁰ For the past 20 years, the group has advocated for recognition from the DOD to correct the "lingering slight that those who participated in the *Mayaguez* Operation have been denied the right to wear the VSM for over 40 years."⁷¹ Yet, more important to the group has been its quest to find closure for families and friends of the fallen through repatriation of their remains. Most, but not all, have been accounted for, and the group has yet to rest.

The Koh Tang/Mayaguez Veterans Organization is not the only group from the waning days of the conflict to push for DOD recognition as Vietnam veterans. Veterans who assisted in the evacuation of Saigon lobbied their members of Congress for recognition with the VSM in the early 2000s. The VSM's narrowly defined cutoff date remained aligned with the signing of the Paris Peace Accords on 28 January 1973. DOD resisted, but Congress resolved in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for fiscal year 2002 that the secretary of defense "should consider" awarding the VSM to those who evacuated Saigon.⁷² In the following year's defense authorization act, "should consider" became "shall award."73 Today, Operation Frequent Wind veterans in the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force are eligible to exchange their previously awarded Armed Forces Expeditionary Medals (AFEM) for the VSM. A wider view of the war won out.

Mayaguez veterans have made a similar case. House Resolution 1788, Recognizing Mayaguez Veterans Act, introduced in March 2017, resolved to allow *Mayaguez* veterans to exchange their AFEM awards for the VSM.⁷⁴ It was considered as part of the fiscal year 2018 NDAA, though not adopted as part of the bill's final passage. DOD resisted this wider view even though it included a prominent display of the *Mayaguez* operation in its own Vietnam War Commemoration corridor in the Pentagon, dedicated just a few months prior to the bill's introduction.⁷⁵

Compared to the wrangling over the VSM's restrictiveness, consider the ubiquitous Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary and Service Medals

⁶⁸ See Al Bailey, President's Page, letter to members (PDF), 26 October 2012, Koh Tang/ Mayaguez Veterans Organization website, 2, accessed 23 November 2020; and Dennis Green, Guest Book post, 27 April 2014, Koh Tang/ Mayaguez Veterans Organization website, accessed 23 November 2020, 43.

⁶⁹ John S. McCain, "McCain Address on Dedication of *Mayaguez* Memorial" (speech, U.S. Embassy, Cambodia, 11 November 1996), accessed via Koh Tang/Mayaguez Veterans Organization website.

⁷⁰ Homepage, Koh Tang/Mayaguez Veterans Organization website, accessed 10 February 2017.

⁷¹Donald Raatz, president's update, Koh Tang/Mayaguez Veterans Organization website, 8 February 2016.

⁷² Section 556 of the National Defense Authorization Act for 2002, Pub. L. No. 107-107 (2001).

⁷³ Section 542, Bob Stump National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2003, Pub. L. No. 107-314 (2002).

 ⁷⁴ Recognizing Mayaguez Veterans Act, H.R. 1788, 115th Cong. (2017).
⁷⁵ DOD, "Secretary Carter Opens Vietnam War Commemoration Pentagon Corridor Honoring Vietnam Veterans and Their Families," press release, 20 December 2016.

(GWOTEM and GWOTSM, respectively). Both medals were established by executive order on 12 March 2003, prior to Operation Iraqi Freedom and in the wake of the 11 September 2001 (9/11) attacks. The GWOTEM, the more restrictive medal, requires service in either combat or a designated hostile area in any of 54 specific geographic areas from the South China Sea, Middle East, Africa, Europe, and certain waterways in between. Even broader, any servicemember on active duty, anywhere in the world for more than 30 days since 9/11 receives the GWOTSM until a cutoff date to be determined.⁷⁶ Although there are political, legal, and bureaucratic reasons to do so, wars in reality are rarely circumscribed by political and geographic borders with tidy start and end dates. Timothy Trebil and all *Mayaguez* veterans earned the VSM in addition to the NDSM because the Vietnam War ended for the United States when the fighting stopped on Koh Tang in 1975.

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⁷⁶ Army Regulation 600-8-22, *Military Awards* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 25 June 2015), 30–36.

IN MEMORIAM Lieutenant General Charles H. Pitman

by Major Fred H. Allison, PhD, USMCR (Ret)

ieutenant General Charles H. Pitman passed away on 13 February 2020. He led Marine Aviation from 1988 to 1990 as deputy chief of staff for aviation under Commandant General Alfred M. Gray Jr. Pitman was an accomplished and pioneering helicopter pilot, but he also had considerable fixedwing flying experience. His defining mantra was "fly, fly, fly"—and he did, accumulating more than 12,000 hours of flight time during a career that included 575 carrier arrested landings. He was also an inspirational and influential commander. During his career, he commanded Headquarters and Maintenance Squadron 16, Marine Aircraft Group 36, and the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing (1st MAW). He also served in several important and unique staff positions.¹

General Pitman was born 20 October 1935. An orphan at birth, he was soon chosen and adopted by Anita Schnurr Pitman (née O'Brien) and Carol Latshaw Pitman (both deceased).² As a teenager in Wausau, Illinois, he worked at the local airport and watched Grumman F6F Hellcats take off and land.



Historical Resources Branch, Marine Corps History Division Charles H. Pitman as a lieutenant colonel.

This planted in him a desire to fly.³ He enlisted in the U.S. Navy in October 1952, and soon after switched to the Marine Corps and entered flight training as a

Dr. Fred Allison recently retired as the oral historian for the Marine Corps History Division, Marine Corps University. A retired Marine major and F-4 radar intercept officer, he coedited and compiled the History Division book *Pathbreakers: U.S. Marine African American Officers in Their Own Words* (2013) and updated the division's second edition of *History of Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 232* (2015). A Texas native, he earned a PhD in military history from Texas Tech University in Lubbock.

¹ "Charles H. Pitman, LTGEN, USMC (Ret.)," official biography, Early and Pioneer Naval Aviators Association (The Golden Eagles) website, accessed 26 September 2020, hereafter Pitman Golden Eagles biography. ² "Charles Henry Pitman: October 20, 1935–February 13, 2020," obituary, Montcastle Turch Funeral Home website, accessed 20 October 2020.

³LtGen Charles H. Pitman interview with Dr. Fred H. Allison, 1 October 2008, oral history transcript, Historical Resources Branch, Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA, 2–3, hereafter, Pitman oral history interview.

naval aviation cadet. He earned his gold wings in August 1955.⁴ His first operational squadron was Marine Helicopter Transport Squadron 363 (HMR-363) (now the Red Lions) flying Sikorsky HRS-1 helicopters. Deploying aboard the USS *Badoeng Strait* (CVE 116) in 1956 to the Pacific Proving Grounds, he observed 13 nuclear test blasts, including the first hydrogen bomb test at Bikini Atoll. For the latter blast, he flew into ground zero immediately following the blast to observe and report on damage done and radiation levels.⁵

His next duty station was at Marine Corps Auxiliary Air Station Mojave, California, where he was multitasked as the airfield operations officer, provost marshal, rescue pilot, and brig officer. During this assignment, he gained an affinity for law enforcement work and, indeed, after retirement, served as a police officer in Alexandria, Virginia.

He transitioned to jet aircraft in 1958 and trained as a photoreconnaissance pilot. He flew Vought RF-8 Crusaders and Douglas EF-10 Skyknights with Marine Photo Reconnaissance Squadrons (VMCJ) 1, 2, and 3 (1961–64) and flew intelligence collection missions near North Korea, Russia, Vietnam, Cuba, China, and the Dominican Republic.

Pitman served three combat tours in Vietnam. In 1963, he flew EF-10s with VMCJ-1. Promoted to major in 1966, he joined Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 265 (HMM-265) in Vietnam in December that year. He served as HMM-265's maintenance and operations officer. Piloting Boeing Vertol CH-46 Sea Knights, he flew assault support missions, troop inserts, and a number of precarious medical evacuations and emergency extract missions in heavy combat. During this tour, his helicopter was forced down by enemy fire five times. During his second Vietnam tour (1970–71), he commanded Headquarters and Maintenance Squadron 16 and flew a variety of different aircraft, again in heavy combat. During Operation Lam Son 719, he was downed for the seventh time, during which he was severely wounded by a 12.7mm round that shattered his leg.⁶

After evacuation and recovery, he was assigned to limited duty and placed in command of Marine Air Reserve Training Detachment, New Orleans, Louisiana. During this command, one of the most unusual events-and heroic actions-of his career occurred. On a rainy, foggy Sunday afternoon in January 1973, a sniper positioned on the rooftop of a Howard Johnson hotel terrorized downtown New Orleans. Pitman gathered a crew of Marines and flew a CH-46 up the Mississippi River from the Belle Chase base into New Orleans. The near-zero visibility and near-zero (very low) ceiling forced him to navigate by flying just feet above the river. Coordinating with the police, he flew his CH-46 with Marine and police shooters aboard, in darkness and clouds lower than the hotel's roof, to a hover position at the top of the hotel. From this gun platform, the Marine and police shooters traded shots with the sniper until he was eventually killed.7 This event exhibits Pitman's characteristic initiative to act when required. Because he had not received higher command authority prior to employing the military against civilian criminals, he was threatened with a court-martial, however, the higher-ups decided that the case was an emergency and therefore justified. General Pitman was never tried.⁸

After four years in staff positions at the Pentagon, General Pitman commanded Marine Aircraft Group 36 (MAG-36) in Okinawa from 1978 to 1979. He returned to the Pentagon and served on the chairman of the Joint Chiefs' special staff group. At this position, he advised the Joint Chiefs on the Middle East, Africa, the Atlantic Ocean area, and rapid deployment joint task force. In this posting, he became directly involved as an advisor in the president's bold, but failed, rescue mission of 53 Americans seized in the Iranian hostage crisis.⁹

⁹ Pitman Golden Eagles biography.

⁴ "Lieutenant General Charles H. Pitman, USMC (Ret.)," official U.S. Marine Corps biography, the Navy and Marine Association website, accessed 26 September 2020.

⁵ Pitman Golden Eagles biography; and Pitman oral history interview, 11–13.

⁶ Pitman Golden Eagles biography.

⁷ For the complete story, see Dr. Fred H. Allison, "Marine Aviator Helps Police Take Out an Urban Sniper," *Fortitudine* 37, no. 3 (2012): 21–22.

⁸ Ramon Antonio Vargas, "The Decorated Marine Pilot Whose Heroics Helped Stop the 1973 New Orleans Sniper Attack Has Died at 84," *Task and Purpose*, accessed 25 September 2020.

He next commanded Marine Aviation Training Support Group 21 (MATSG-21) in Pensacola, Florida, during which he received his first star. In 1982, he was assigned as the assistant chief of staff, C-5, Republic of Korea/U.S. Combined Forces Command in Seoul, South Korea. In 1984, he became the assistant commander for 3d Marine Aircraft Wing (3d MAW). Promoted to major general, Pitman returned to the Western Pacific in 1985 and assumed command of 1st MAW. After this tour, he was promoted to lieutenant general and became deputy commandant for aviation.10 Here, General Pitman continued the Marine Aviation modernization program that was started after Vietnam. During his watch, important and revolutionary changes were made to wing support groups and logistics functions. Additionally, he led the revival of the Bell Boeing MV-22 Osprey system program after it was cancelled in 1989 by Secretary of Defense Richard "Dick" Cheney. He also worked to see that the Marine Corps received the McDonnell Douglas F/A-18D Hornet strike fighter.11

General Pitman was an inspirational leader. He expressed his thoughts on leadership in an oral history interview: "I found that in combat you've got to lead. You've got to be out there. You've got to take the tough hops . . . [and] lead the flights." He observed also that Marines "want to get recognized, have you recognize that they're doing their part, whatever it is. . . . So, having been at the bottom of the pile for a little while, I knew what that took, and that's been my claim to fame is keep working like a son of a gun and treat everybody like they're important."¹²

He remained active in Marine Corps affairs after his retirement, serving as the national commander of the Marine Corps Aviation Association. He was also selected as a member of the prestigious Early and Pioneer Naval Aviators Association—more commonly known as the Golden Eagles.

General Pitman was awarded several personal decorations: the Silver Star Medal and the Defense Superior Service Medal with bronze oak leaf cluster in lieu of a second award; the Legion of Merit; four Distinguished Flying Crosses; a Bronze Star with Combat "V"; a Purple Heart; the Defense Meritorious Service Medal; the Air Medal with gold Numeral 3 and bronze Numeral 62; Navy Commendation with Combat "V"; the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with silver star; and the Korean Order of National Security Merit, Cheonsu Medal.¹³

General Pitman is survived by his wife, Shaunee, and four children. He was a devoted grandfather and great-grandfather.¹⁴ On being a Marine, he remarked, "I had no aspirations to be a general. I didn't mind being a general. I loved being a general, but getting promoted was never my goal. My goal was to be a Marine."¹⁵

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¹³ "Lieutenant General Charles H. Pitman, USMC (Ret.)."

¹⁴ "Charles Henry Pitman: October 20, 1935–February 13, 2020."

¹⁵ Pitman oral history interview, 4 December 2008, 14.

¹⁰ "Lieutenant General Charles H. Pitman, USMC (Ret.)."

¹¹ Pitman oral history interview, 9 January 2009, 1–18.

¹² Pitman oral history interview, 3 October 2008, 18.

REVIEW ESSAY "The Real War Will Never Get in the Books"

EVALUATING NEW U.S. CIVIL WAR PRIMARY SOURCES

Evan C. Rothera, PhD

- Prison Pens: Gender, Memory, and Imprisonment in the Writings of Mollie Scollay and Wash Nelson, 1863–1866. Edited by Timothy J. Williams and Evan A. Kutzler. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2018. Pp. 160. \$64.95 cloth; \$24.95 paper.)
- Dear Delia: The Civil War Letters of Captain Henry F. Young, Seventh Wisconsin Infantry. Edited by Micheal J. Larson and John David Smith. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2019. Pp. 366. \$29.95 cloth.)
- *"This Infernal War": The Civil War Letters of William and Jane Standard.* Edited by Timothy Mason Roberts. (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2019. Pp. 376. \$34.95 cloth and e-book.)
- The Greatest Trials I Ever Had: The Civil War Letters of Margaret and Thomas Cahill. Edited by Ryan W. Keating. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2017. Pp. 240. \$79.95 cloth; \$26.95 paper.)

Blue-Blooded Cavalryman: Captain William Brooke Rawle in the Army of the Potomac, May 1863–August 1865. Edited by J. Gregory Acken. (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2019. Pp. 352. \$49.95 cloth and e-book.)

Untouched by the Conflict: The Civil War Letters of Singleton Ashenfelter, Dickinson College. Edited by Jonathan W. White and Daniel Glenn. (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2019. Pp. 176. \$29.95 cloth and e-book.)

he poet Walt Whitman, in *Specimen Days in America*, famously commented, "The real war will never get in the books." Scholars have frequently cited this to emphasize Whitman's dislike of the "mushy influences of current times" and sentimentalism.¹ Whitman also observed, however, that his "main interest . . . [was] in the rank and file of thermies, both sides, and in those specimens amid the hospitals, and even the dead on the field."² The volumes in this review essay focus on soldiers and civilians in both Northern and Southern armies and societies during the American Civil War. Their stories demonstrate the truth of Whitman's assertion that "the real war" will never make it into books because there was no singular war. Soldiers and civilians experienced the Civil War in a number of contradictory

An East Texas Family's Civil War: The Letters of Nancy and William Whatley, May–December 1862. Edited by John T. Whatley. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2019. Pp. 192. \$36.95 cloth.).

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¹Walt Whitman, *Specimen Days in America* (London: Walter Scott, 1887), 125.

²Whitman, Specimen Days in America, 125.

ways and their complicated and varied stories caution against easy overgeneralizations.

An East Texas Family's Civil War showcases the 40 extant letters exchanged between Nancy Falkaday Watkins Whatley and William Jefferson Whatley from May to December 1862. This volume, edited by their descendant John T. Whatley, offers a compelling window into the struggles of a slave-holding family in Caledonia in Rusk County, Texas. As the editor observes, "after her husband's departure in 1862 as part of the Seventeenth Texas Cavalry, Nancy Whatley took on the management of a sizeable operation and the oversight of six or seven working slaves and their children in addition to full-time domestic responsibilities and the care of her four small children" (p. xxvi). These letters provide an important view into East Texas life during 1862 and "tell a complex and stirring story of a family and society in crisis" (p. xxxix).

The Whatley letters are especially useful in portraying William's reasons for fighting in the war. Ideological reasons motivated William to fight. For example, he asserted, "I expect to remain here and battle for my rights and go wherever the confederacy demands my services. I would very much like to be with you and my children but home is not home with me without my rights and liberty" (p. 5). This type of comment occurred again and again throughout the letters. However, William had a very limited conception of rights and liberties. In his letters, he often addressed the family's slaves. At times, he unrealistically expected them to be as committed to the rebel cause as he was. Furthermore, William interspersed pleas imploring his slaves to behave and help Nancy with thinly veiled threats. For example, "I want you to tell the Negroes that if they don't go a head with their work and do right and behave themselves while I am gone that I will certainly call them to an account when I come home, and I may be there before they look for me" (p. 51).3 Like other families separated by war, the Whatleys attempted to make financial decisions by correspondence and Nancy had to manage the household. Nancy's letters can be feisty, such as when she complained about a Mr. Martin who treated her badly and was "the only man I ever wanted you to thrash" (p. 61). The correspondence came to an abrupt end with Nancy's death on 26 December 1862. A letter from Nancy's father to William discussed her death, urged William to trust in God's mercy, and included a long discussion of his family and property. In other words, the dramatic appeared alongside the quotidian, a typical feature of the vast majority of letters written during the Civil War.

Prison Pens, like An East Texas Family's Civil War, focuses on the correspondence between two rebels: George Washington Nelson Jr. (Wash) and Mary Nelson Scollay (Mollie). Wash and Mollie were Virginians, so their war looked considerably different than that of the Whatleys in East Texas. Moreover, Wash was captured on 26 October 1863 and spent time in Johnson's Island Military Prison, Point Lookout Prison, Fort Delaware, prisons in South Carolina and Georgia, and Fort Delaware again. The collection contains 55 extant letters between Wash and Mollie as well as a memoir of Wash's prison experience written in 1866. Unlike the other collections featured in this review, the vast majority of these letters are deliberately short because prison censors limited the length of letters in and out of prisons. Mollie flew into a rage when a prison censor opened one of Wash's letters, noted Wash's request for longer letters, and warned her to keep them short. The note she left on the letter for posterity is telling: "You hateful dog! What business had you writing on my letter" (pp. 64–65).

These letters are useful because of how Wash wrote about prison life. He clearly drew strength from his correspondence with Mollie. For instance, he wrote: "I can hardly regret my imprisonment, because it has shown me, more thoroughly than perhaps I ever could have learned under other circumstances, how completely my heart is yours" (p. 79). As editors Timothy J. Williams and Evan A. Kutzler comment, reading the letters alongside Wash's memoir is revealing. The letters illustrate how much he relied on Mollie, whereas the memoir emphasizes evil Yankees inflict-

³ Quoted content from the letters contained in the reviewed work are as written in the original documents without correction for grammar, spelling, or punctuation.

ing terrible wrongs on Southern prisoners. The Whatley correspondence ended before President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, so while William and Nancy frequently discussed their slaves, they did not write about Black soldiers. Mollie, on the other hand, deeply lamented the abolitionist war waged by the Union. As she told Wash, "The Yankee's have enrolled in this country black as well as white. The enroling officer came here, but we told him that all of our Negro men had gone to the Yankee's except one" (p. 61) and "it was galling to the flesh I assure you, but this is only one of the numerous indignations, to which we are every day subjected; however we bear it all cheerfully as it is for the good of our Confederacy" (pp. 61–62).

Mollie commented, after the war had ended and Wash was on his way home, that she was glad their wedding was imminent because "this abominable practice of writing letters will then be stopped" (p. 117). Like many other people, both men and women, Mollie grew despondent when she did not get a letter. However, she did not want to continue writing letters indefinitely. This is an important reminder about sources. All the volumes surveyed in this review are the building blocks of historical narratives and scholars should be very glad indeed that people took the time to write, so that we, in turn, can write about the past.

The following three volumes present letters between husbands and wives on the Union side, but the letters differ dramatically. Dear Delia contains 155 letters written between Captain Henry Falls Young of the 7th Wisconsin Infantry, a regiment in the Army of the Potomac's famous Iron Brigade, his wife, Delia, and his father-in-law, Jared Warner. This collection offers an exceptionally fascinating window into the mind of one Midwesterner. As editors Micheal J. Larson and John David Smith observed, "The ideas and thoughts of Midwesterners-also then known as westerners-provide a regional perspective underrepresented in Civil War-era documentary editing projects and collections that focus on the Northern states" (p. xiv). Dear Delia performs a valuable service by making additional Midwestern voices available for scholarly conversations about the Civil War.

Young's attitudes about race merit exploration. For example, he wrote, on 31 December 1861, that "if this congress will keep quarling over [abolition], You nor I either will live to see this war settled. We are fighting for to crush out rebellion, not for the abolition of slavery. And every man of common sence knows that as the army advance, the slaves of every Rebble will be set free" (p. 32-33). In the text, Young used racial epithets to describe enslaved African Americans, but other comments he made suggest that his attitudes were more complicated. On 26 September 1862, for example, he noted that the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation "takes well with the Army here" (p. 105). His account of the 30 July 1864 Battle of the Crater, in which rebels massacred Black troops, placed some blame on the Black soldiers, but not in the same virulent and crude way other Union soldiers did.

Young sympathized with Republicans and noted increasing soldier disillusionment with the Democrats of the time. "The riots in Newyork and the action of their bogus Gov has opened the eyes of many of those that still cling to the the name of the party" (p. 184). He also indicted Copperheads (Peace Democrats) for chicanery, claiming, "the d-d copperheads will leave no stone unturned or log unroled. They will use every species of trickery to obtain some of the soldiers vote" (p. 184). As the presidential election approached, Young repeatedly emphasized that the Union Army favored Lincoln. Just as he condemned Copperheads, Young detested rebels. He deplored Union policy that forced soldiers to guard rebel property, while rebel guerrillas ambushed and killed Union soldiers. His frustration boiled over when he declared, "But thunder if I had the management of the war I would hang or shoot every Secesionest in this valley" (p. 72).

Young enlisted in 1861 and reenlisted in 1864. Due to the death of his daughter Laura in early November 1864, he felt the time had come to return home. Young's war ended on 3 December 1864 when he was discharged from the Army. Otherwise, he would undoubtedly have served until after the rebel surrender.

William and Jane Standard, of Fulton County, Illinois, the subjects of *"This Infernal War,"* were from the same geographic region as Henry Young: the Midwest. Nevertheless, their correspondence, a collection of more than 200 letters, could not be more different. Young was wholeheartedly committed to the war. William and Jane, on the other hand, were Copperheads. William did not enlist for ideological reasons. Rather, he needed money and probably enlisted to escape his creditors. Consequently, there is a profoundly different tone in the Standards' correspondence than in the Youngs'. Nevertheless, their letters, like the Youngs', provide more Midwestern voices for scholars to analyze.

As editor Timothy Mason Roberts contends, this collection "is rare among such collections of letters exchanged between American soldiers and their spouses in its expression of the complexity of their motives and experiences" (p. 1). Scholars have written about Copperhead soldiers, but the Standards offer hundreds of pages of rabid denunciations of the war, Lincoln, and Republicans. William's complaints about Lincoln and the war are legion. Sentiments such as "we are slaves to old Abe" (p. 23); "Lincoln neither pays us [n]or gives us full rations" (p. 60); and "he [Lincoln] intend[s] to kill off all the northern men and boys, and the entire population of the south to satisfy his own appetite to liberate the slaves of the South" (pp. 210-11) occurred frequently. Jane echoed these sentiments and frequently flew into a rage about Republicans. For instance, she commented, "Chase is a black Republican. I feel like kicking him sometimes" (p. 124). Jane and William assumed all Republicans were corrupt war profiteers who shirked their duty.

The Standards used racist language constantly, in contrast to Young, who used racial epithets infrequently. A short letter published in the *Fulton County Ledger*, likely written by William, contained 10 usages of a racial epithet and multiple instances of African Americans speaking in dialect. The editor of this collection even included a specific footnote indicating how noteworthy it was when William used "black" instead of a racial epithet.

William never shied away from taking food and supplies from civilians. His Copperhead leanings, in other words, did not stop him from foraging, and Roberts theorizes that William was one of General William T. Sherman's bummers. Jane encouraged William to desert on many occasions and, never particularly committed to the war, William flirted with the idea. In the end, though, he did not want to be thought a coward. Thus, even a shaky Copperhead could be brought to a sense of his duty, however reluctantly, by the thought of being shamed as a coward. William and Jane's carping and querulous letters enrich any study of the Civil War because they capture, in exquisite detail, the struggles of a Copperhead soldier and his equally vehement wife.

The Greatest Trials I Ever Had presents a selection of letters between Colonel Thomas Cahill of the 9th Connecticut Volunteers and his wife, Margaret Cahill. The Cahills were Irish Americans. Irish and German American soldiers represented a sizeable proportion of the Union Army, and this volume is an excellent addition to other accounts of Irish American soldiers and civilians. However, many people mocked and derided Irish and German American soldiers and civilians. Henry F. Young, for example, in the aftermath of the Battle of Gettysburg, wrote, "Of all the mean pickaunish [picayunish] low lifed cowardly devils I ever met the dutch farmers around Gettysburg will take the rag off the bush. They are not even fit to be classed with what is known as the dung hill breed" (p. 178). William Standard frequently made derisive comments about the Irish. People blamed German soldiers for the defeat at Chancellorsville in the spring of 1863 and the Irish soldiers for the New York City draft riots that summer. Dickinson College student Singleton Ashenfelter, analyzed later in this review, celebrated his 21st birthday by rejoicing, "I am an American Citizen; & feel big because of the proud consciousness that I have the ability to neutralize the vote of the most rampant copperhead, or [Irishman]" (p. 109). Racism and xenophobia were endemic in the nineteenth century United States, North and South, and the Cahills confronted anti-Irish prejudice.

Of the soldiers surveyed in this review, Thomas Cahill attained the highest rank. This gave both him and Margaret a different set of duties. Margaret facilitated the affairs of the regiment on the home front in many respects. Unlike Young, who served in the eastern theater, and Standard, who served in the western theater, Cahill served in both. Much of his service took place in and around New Orleans. While traveling to Louisiana, Cahill commented that he liked General John W. Phelps a great deal, but did not like his "infernal proclamation" (p. 28) regarding emancipation because he feared "it will make trouble here" (p. 29). At other times, Cahill sang a different tune. For instance, he wrote, "The rough Ninth have been trooping around the Splendid summer residences of the southern aristocracy built upon the meanest of all foundations: the unwilling labor of the Black" (p. 73). Like most of his contemporaries, Cahill used racial epithets to describe African Americans.

Most of the soldiers discussed in this review were enthusiastic about politics. Cahill, although clearly involved in Connecticut politics, had a different attitude. "I do not think the soldiers aught to vote," he wrote to Margaret. "If they vote against the governor they will catch the Rap. if they dont they will from the Demos. I should not want my men to vote" (p. 148). Cahill resigned his commission in October 1864 and could have returned to Connecticut to vote in the presidential election, but instead noted, "I have no desire to be there at the Presidential Election. I mean to dodge it if I can" (p. 215). Perhaps this was an expression of the disillusion that led him to resign his commission.

William Brooke Rawle's war began in May 1863, when he received a commission as a second lieutenant in the 3d Pennsylvania Cavalry. Thus, immediately after finishing his studies at the University of Pennsylvania, he skipped commencement to join the Army of the Potomac in time to participate in the Gettysburg campaign. Blue-Blooded Cavalryman contains 136 letters Rawle sent to his mother and sisters. As editor J. Gregory Acken notes, Rawle's education distinguished him because "just over 1 percent of college-aged males in the United States in the mid-nineteenth century were enrolled in institutions of higher learning" (p. 20). Rawle's class background—he came from an affluent family—also set him apart. Unlike other officers in this review-Young, for example-Rawle was a harsh taskmaster who discouraged fraternization between officers and soldiers. His discussion of soldier voting is instructive. As he noted, "The Regiment went for Mc-Clellan by about [an] 80[-vote] majority, I'm very sorry to say. All the officers however voted for Lincoln, which shows well for the discipline of the Regiment, that is, the officers and men never have the slightest familiarity between them" (p. 204).

Rawle's attitude toward the African Americans he interacted with on a day-to-day basis was largely contemptuous. He tended to use racial epithets more frequently than Young or Cahill but less frequently than Standard. Rawle did not make many comments about Black soldiers, but when he did, his tone was venomous. For example, when reporting on the Battle of the Crater, he asserted, "When the rebs rallied, the negroes, four times their number, tumbled back again in the most clumsy style imaginable, and ran like cowards" (p. 176). In the same paragraph Rawle used a racial epithet multiple times and derided Black soldiers as cowards. Henry F. Young found blame enough to go around at the crater, but Rawle put it all on the Black soldiers. When his regiment moved into a new camp previously occupied by Black soldiers, Rawle derided it as a "filthy hole" (p. 193). Rawle, Cahill, Standard, and Young demonstrate the many different manifestations of racism throughout the war and, moreover, highlight how Northern racism was not just a phenomenon limited to Midwesterners. Like Young, Cahill, and Standard, Rawle commented frequently on the presence of guerrillas. He detested their tactics and did not hesitate to advocate severe punishment. For instance, he wrote, "I had made up my mind to hang a 'bushwacker' up to a tree if I caught one" (p. 76). Although different than many of his fellow soldiers in terms of education and class background, Rawle shared many of their attitudes and biases, which makes this account an important and useful source.

The final volume in this review, *Untouched by War*, deals with a very different type of correspondence. The volume consists of letters sent by Dickinson College student Singleton Ashenfelter to his friend, Samuel Pennypacker (a future governor of Pennsylvania). Ashenfelter was one of millions of men of military age in the Northern states who chose not to enlist. In some respects, this volume seems to be an outlier in this review.

It does not deal with a soldier and his family and, to be frank, the war seems incidental in Ashenfelter's correspondence. However, these letters shed light on college life, masculinity, and male friendship in the nineteenth century. Millions of men chose not to fight, and their voices need to be included in the story of the real war. As editors Jonathan W. White and Daniel Glenn remark, the letters "offer a rich, introspective view into the experiences of a middle-class Northern white youth who experienced life on the home front during a period of incredible social transformation in the United States" (p. 12).



Federal History promotes an interdisciplinary approach in its efforts to advance knowledge of the history of the federal government as well as the professionals who produce historical work in government offices. It features scholarship on all aspects of the history and operations of the U.S. federal government, 1776 to the present.

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There are interesting analogues between the Ashenfelter/Pennypacker correspondence and soldier letters. The tone of Ashenfelter's letters was often gossipy, as were many soldier letters, particularly those of William Standard, who told Jane about soldiers cavorting with prostitutes. Ashenfelter kept track of the letters he sent and would not send one if he felt he was owed one. Soldiers threatened, sometimes jokingly, sometimes not, to stop writing if the people at home did not write. From the context, Pennypacker chided Ashenfelter about his flaws (drinking, in particular), a frequent occurrence in letters to and from soldiers. All this suggests the intensity of the Pennypacker/Ashenfelter friendship and reminds us how soldiers and civilians used letters to close distances between themselves and their family and friends.

Ashenfelter's letters contain incidental comments about the war. At one point, he stated that it would have been better for a friend "if he had never entered the army, but had kept on at school" (p. 25). He opined that Copperheads were traitors. In August 1864, he moaned, "The hovering of the Rebels among the Potomac causes a devilish disagreeable feeling" (pp. 72–73). Ashenfelter did not ignore the war and its consequences, but the war was a tiny thread in a much larger backdrop that framed his letters. Historians often mine these collections for comments about important events, but, critically, some people were not particularly interested in the important events that took place around them, or, at least, did not write about these events.

The volumes examined in this essay deal with many small quotidian matters, but also engage some of the major themes of the war, such as race, changing gender relations, the relationship between the home front and the battlefield, the politics of promotion, and irregular warfare. They demonstrate how millions of different stories and experiences composed Whitman's "real war." All seven volumes perform an important service in helping scholars enrich narratives of the American Civil War.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Braden Hall

The Cold War at Home and Abroad: Domestic Politics and US Foreign Policy Since 1945. Edited by Andrew L. Johns and Mitchell B. Lerner. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2018. Pp. 330. \$60.00 cloth.)

Creating a cohesive collection of other authors' works is a complex process, but one that editors Andrew L. Johns and Mitchell B. Lerner have successfully achieved with The Cold War at Home and Abroad. The book's essays, introduced by Johns and concluded by Lerner, are written by subject experts and scholars. Every essay covers a topic with a nexus that joins the national to the international and exhibits the multifaceted dilemmas of policy making. This not only leads to a comprehensive understanding of important political movements and their outcomes domestically and internationally during the Cold War but also opens up additional areas for future scholarship as many similarities to the present political climate emerge. According to Johns, the authors of the essays all meet the broad conditions of domestic politics identified by American foreign relations expert Jason Parker. "If 'domestic politics' are considered this way, in their fullest dimensions-not just elections and campaigns but political culture and rhetoric, public and partisan opinion, and state policy, -power, and -institutions—then these very much deserve a place in our analyses" (p. 5).

This expansive definition leads to several thought-provoking studies. "Peace through Austerity: The Reagan Defense Buildup in the 'Age of Inequality'" is one of these examinations. This essay suggests many foreign policies of Ronald W. Reagan's presidential administration were also a result of domestic needs and had unintended internal consequences for Reagan's supporters. Programs like the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) were heralded as a protection against Soviet aggression but were also praised for bringing economic benefits to American citizens despite mixed consequences. The inclusion of this essay is important. It covers a subject that is the epitome of the book's theme. The domestic effects of SDI are explored in depth by author Michael Brenes, who argues the developmental nature of the program caused the economic downturn of defense manufacturing, while improving the welfare of educated Americans who were qualified to develop the system. Citizens with jobs in the defense manufacturing sector were actually hurt by the end of Cold War policies, when federal defense spending began to decrease. Defense factories shut down, causing former employees to find less lucrative jobs in other industries. Brenes's essay balances its examination of Cold War policies and their impact on domestic life and examines the internal costs of what could easily be dismissed as international-only policies.

Another essay, "Religious Pluralism, Domestic Politics, and the Emerging Jewish-Evangelical Coalition on Israel, 1960–1980," explores the far-reaching outcomes of the religious political culture that instigated a Jewish-Evangelical coalition that has remained intact, despite fluctuating motivations, over the years. This relationship is unique because the two groups sit on opposing sides of the national political spectrum, yet are united on a single foreign policy issue. Even though the essay limits its scope to a 20-year period, the results of the movement can still be felt today. Author Daniel G. Hummel argues the seed of this coalition originally developed from the personal friendship between Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum and

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Reverend Billy Graham. Despite theological and political differences, the pair were strong supporters of the nation of Israel and were highly influential among their followers. Focusing on the core beliefs of their supporters, they worked to align "domestic political cooperation and US support for Israel" (p. 113). This domestic movement has evolved through the rhetoric and opinions of its leaders but remains united in its support of the nation of Israel. Hummel notes, "American politics has increasingly polarized into liberal and conservative camps since the late 1960s, which makes the success of a bipartisan, interreligious relationship all the more remarkable" (p. 118).

These are just two examples of the essays included in *The Cold War at Home and Abroad*. Johns and Lerner have combined a grand collection of essays that successfully demonstrate the range of influence domestic political factors had in the pursuit of Cold War international relations and vice versa. Each essay makes connections that have widespread consequences and include extensive sources and notes. Despite methodological and topical differences that vary between each essay, themes and similarities emerge while reading. The result is a testament to the editors' keen sense of judgment and commitment to the subject matter while preparing and editing the book. Though connected by politics, these studies offer insight to other fields, and pushes the study of politics to factor in other fields, such as culture; the transnational flow of ideas, religion, and business; and the global economy. These essays prove the topics are relevant to understanding the political ideas of the Cold War and their implications on the world today.

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Harold Allen Skinner Jr.

Brotherhood in Combat: How African Americans Found Equality in Korea and Vietnam. By Jeremy P. Maxwell. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2018. Pp. 224. \$29.95 cloth.)

The dust jacket for *Brotherhood in Combat* describes the book as "the first full length interdisciplinary study of the integration of the American military during the Korean and Vietnam Wars." Readers will find that claim misleading, as Jeremy P. Maxwell admits that his work "focus[es] on how black and white [male] soldiers [and Marines] found some semblance of equality through the shared experiences of battle" (p. 18). Despite the narrow scope of his research topic, Maxwell's book is well suited for readers desiring more knowledge on the subject of integration in the American armed forces.

Maxwell opens his book with an excellent historiographic survey before diving into his research questions. The central theme for the first several chapters relates how Black men sought military service as a means of individual advancement that could in time lead to institutional and social equality. The reformfrom-the-inside approach produced modest gains in status for African American men, and only after the attack on Pearl Harbor did the War Department feel compelled to create a limited number of segregated combat units. Despite the often excellent combat performance of all-Black combat units, senior Army leaders uniformly resisted further integration efforts. Only in the last months of the war in Europe were "5th platoons" of volunteer Black soldiers inserted into White infantry companies, a stopgap measure immediately halted after Victory in Europe Day.

Even after President Harry S. Truman's signing of Executive Order 9981 in a cynical effort to appease Black voters, senior Army and Marine leaders made no substantial effort to implement the directive. The situation changed in the summer of 1950, when acute personnel shortages led to the integration of Black replacements in formerly all-White units fighting in Korea. As the commander of the 9th Infantry described, "We would have been doing ourselves a disservice to permit [Black] soldiers to lie around in rear areas at the expense of the still further weakening of our [White] rifle companies" (p. 63). This favorable first experience of integration spread across the U.S. 8th Army despite stiff resistance from Lieutenant General Edward M. Almond, who cited his command of the segregated 92d Infantry Division as evidence that Black men made poor soldiers. Only when the progressively minded Lieutenant General Matthew B. Ridgway replaced Almond was integration made official within the 8th Army. Still, much institutional and personal racism remained in the rest of the Army, particularly in rear echelon units, as Maxwell provides in appalling detail in chapter 4.

In the latter part of the book, Maxwell details a generational shift in the outlook of young Black men in the late 1960s, many of whom rejected the attitudes of their elders toward military service. Even as the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts were enacted in the 1960s to reduce discriminatory barriers in society, young Black men were disproportionally affected by federal policies: "Why fight for the policies of the American government, when the American government would do little or nothing to promote equality

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at home?" (p. 110). Here, Maxwell addresses a common misperception about Black combat deaths in Vietnam, noting that before 1968, large numbers of Black men volunteered to earn extra pay and faster promotion, suffering disproportionately higher casualties as a result (p. 111). After 1968, the trend of volunteerism dropped off as the war became increasingly unpopular, and disproportionate numbers of poor Black men were drafted into service. Black draftees naturally reflected societal attitudes, which were sharpened when faced by institutional discrimination within the Army and Marine Corps.

However, by drawing on oral history recordings of Black Vietnam veterans, Maxwell noted how racial tensions disappeared when a unit was in combat: "After FNGs ([-----] New Guys) proved their worth and were recognized as men who would protect fellow unit members, relationships were formed that superseded the bond between members of their own family. ... Equality was a necessity for unit cohesiveness. ... All unit members had to protect one another in the field, definitely in firefights, but also in downtime as well" (p. 127). In the rear was a different story, as drugand beer-fueled racial tensions often boiled over into violence. Maxwell closes by noting how grassroots pragmatism seen in Korea and Vietnam ultimately made integration possible: "In combat units, however, racial problems were virtually nonexistent. Survival was the only thing that mattered, and that depended heavily on unit cohesion. Enemy bullets did not discriminate based on color; therefore, neither did black and white Soldiers and Marines" (pp. 157–58).

Maxwell supports his conclusions with research drawn from 58 archival and manuscript collections, 39 primary source books, and 12 oral histories from Black veterans, supported by information from a wide range of government publications and other secondary sources. A particular disappointment was the complete lack of photographs and tabular data tables to support the text. Despite his often excellent analysis, Maxwell's work is marred by errors of fact and editing that detract from the flow of the book. Maxwell erroneously calls the "pig," the Vietnam-era M60 .30 caliber (7.62mm) machine gun a .60 caliber weapon (p. 16). A discussion of segregated units during World War I erroneously states that the "93d Division receiv[ed] expedited training from the French military and was sent to the front to fill the gaps caused by a harshness of a trench war" (p. 26).¹ Another major error crops up when Maxwell avers, "Despite being recognized for gallantry by the French, none of the African American soldiers were cited by their own government or military" (p. 27).² Later on, Maxwell asserts, "The punishment meted out for soldiers of color-for infractions or perceived insubordination-had a long and troubled history in the U.S. military, with a disproportionate and harsh punitive record during the American Civil War onward" (p. 144). Perhaps so, yet Maxwell fails to back up his assertion with evidence. Despite these easily correctible errors, Maxwell's book is a worthwhile read, as it breaks new ground on the topic, and it should serve as a starting point for fresh scholarship on the integration of Black servicemembers in the American Armed Services.

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¹ 93d Division Summary of Operations in the World War (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, American Battle Monuments Commission, 1944), 5. The regiments of the provisional 93d Division were parceled out to the French Army, and "remained with French divisions until the close of hostilities. . . . The division staff was assigned other duties." ² Records of Combat Divisions 1918–1919, 93d Division HQ Decimal File 201.5-322.03, box 6, Record Group 120, National Archives and Records Administration. Records of the 371st Infantry indicate many men (including future Medal of Honor recipient Cpl Freddie Stowers) were recommended for American awards, with at least 8 (and perhaps as many as 18) Black enlisted men receiving the American Distinguished Service Cross. Also see Jami L. Bryan, "Fighting for Respect: African-American Soldiers in World War I," Army History Center of the Army Historical Foundation (website), for more information on American awards given to Black soldiers during World War I.

Keith D. Dickson, PhD

The Forgotten Front: The Eastern Theater of World War I, 1914–1915. Edited by Gerhard P. Gross. Translated by Janice W. Ancker. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2018. Pp. 404. \$80.00 cloth.)

This collection of essays was originally published in German in 2006 by the *Bundeswehr's* Military History Research Office, which is responsible for German military history and research and supports international scholarly projects on a number of topics. As part of the centennial observance of World War I, one of these projects has been an examination of the war, drawing on the efforts of a new generation of scholars to gain new insights and perspectives. This book is the result of the 46th International Conference of Military History examining the eastern front between 1914 and 1915. The Association of the United States Army, as part of its foreign military studies series, has made the findings of 19 scholars available to American readers.

In his introduction, editor Gerhard Gross outlines the major themes of the conference that the essays address. In examining only the first two years of the war, the authors sought to define how the war was both a direct experience as well as a learning experience for those on the front lines and on the home front. In addition, the authors examined this experience and the depiction of the war's reality "in museums, memory sites, and modern media" (p. 3).

The collection begins with the noted World War I scholar, Hew Strachan, who provides a summary of the strategic and operational considerations that shaped German planning. Even though Germany feared Russian power and perceived it as the greater threat, geography shaped the eventual operational decisions that made the eastern front secondary. With its vast open spaces, numerous rivers, nearly nonexistent roads, and a primitive railway network, a German major offensive in the east would accomplish very little. Instead, the decisive blow would fall on France. When the western front moved to stalemate in 1915, operational opportunities for maneuver and envelopment presented themselves on the eastern front. In 1915, Germany and Austria-Hungary won their most significant victories, yet, as Strachan indicates, the victories were indecisive because of the distances involved and the lack of logistics sustainment. The Germans, anticipating "the incipient clash between Teuton and Slav" (p. 18), misunderstood their experience on the eastern front in the Great War and would repeat their mistakes again on a far greater scale between 1941 and 1945.

Gross's essay examines the conduct of the war on the eastern front, and notes that the German general staff "confronted the Russian Army with a mixture of respect and disdain" (p. 37). This attitude within the German military was only reinforced in the aftermath of the Battle of Tannenberg and had a long-lasting effect on the public mind as well, which Gross indicates continued throughout the Second World War. Gross provides another interesting insight into German victories in the east in 1915. The experience on the western front had provided the German Army with valuable experience in the use of artillery supporting infantry attacks to create breakthroughs. Nevertheless, German tactical and operational successes did not bring about the defeat of Russia, forcing Germany to seek other nonmilitary means to bring Russia down.

Boris Khavkin takes the Russian perspective, observing that during 1914, the Russian Army exhibited a capability for conducting an operational-level counteroffensive employing two fronts simultaneously.

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These were truly titanic battles that resulted in a decision to achieve final victory on the eastern front in 1915. Both Germany and Russia sought to bring about the enemy's decisive defeat. Although Russia suffered significant battlefield losses and gave up enormous amounts of territory, Khavkin stresses the importance of the Russian contribution to the eventual victory of the Allies, noting that much of the military effort of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey was directed at Russia during the first two years of the war, giving France and Britain valuable breathing space. Günther Kronenbitter highlights the lack of strategic planning between Germany and Austria-Hungary that led to a dysfunctional command system and a lack of coordination that plagued both armies throughout the first two years of the war. He observes that "in the ensuing months on the eastern front, discussions between the allies concerning the command structure and mutual accusations of guilt and resentment were quite common" (p. 82). Kronenbitter concisely lays out an argument that much of the reason for the inability to achieve a decisive result against Russia on the eastern front can be found in the lack of cooperation between the general staffs of Germany and Austria-Hungary.

Piotr Szlanta offers the argument that Poland, as the battleground for much of the major battles on the eastern front, suffered under the occupation of all the major powers. However, this experience actually contributed to a postwar Polish nationalism and national identity that has survived to today. In his essay on Russian perceptions of the enemy, Hubertus F. Jahn notes that Russians prior to the war had a strong bias against Germany and its aggressive economic and military policies. Even though Russian artists and intellectuals admired and imitated German culture, they promoted a picture of the enemy based largely on stereotypes and caricatures of the kaiser, while also stressing Russian traditions and Slavophile heroes to build patriotic unity.

Peter Hoeres examines the role of direct and indirect experience on soldiers encountering both the vast spaces of Eastern Europe and the Russian peasant soldier. Although Russians were viewed as "something foreign and unknown" (p. 144), a perception that remained strong after the war, Hoeres argues that significant political and ethnic-racial discontinuities arose between the First and Second World Wars that shaped German attitudes and approaches on the eastern front in 1941.

Eva Horn's essay takes note of the lack of German literary works related to the eastern front. "Germany's war in the east, the occupation that followed, and the military administration of the territory of Ober Ost have been largely forgotten," what Horn calls a "blind spot" (p. 159). The traumatic experience of the battles on the western front, especially Verdun, became the defining experience of the Great War and had no counterpart on the eastern front. The war in the east was a completely conventional mobile war that took place across vast landscapes among an alien multiethnic population. In fact, Horn concludes, the battles of the eastern front actually presaged the Second World War battlefields more than the static, impersonal, and isolated battlefields of the western front.

Birgit Menzel observes in her essay on Russian wartime literature that the First World War is not a prominent theme, largely because the historical memory of the Russian intelligentsia was dominated by the October Revolution (p. 175). Her focus on Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's novel *August 1914* captures the military disasters of the first battles of the war as Russia's first encounter with modernity. The army, as a reflection of Russian society, was incapable of responding to the political, moral, economic, and strategic requirements of total war.

Igor Narskij examines the experience of the Russian soldier and counters Menzel's view by asserting that Russia's backwardness was not unique. The shock of modern war and the complexities of logistics and large-scale maneuver of mass armies hindered all the combatants, not just Russia. He argues that Russian soldiers in the first two years of the war were adequately supplied and the experience of military life actually "had a significant civilizing and disciplining effect" (p. 197). Narskij lays the blame of this collective amnesia on the Bolsheviks, who erased these facts and dismissed entirely the experiences of soldiers in what they called the "War of Imperialism."

Hans-Erich Volkmann, in his essay on the German military experience, stresses the alien world that German soldiers found themselves in. Imbued with a sense of moral, intellectual, and cultural superiority, German soldiers encountered a multinational, multiethnic, and multireligious population that resembled nothing most Germans had ever encountered before. Ironically, Volkmann notes that because the Jewish population had strong attachments to Germany, they were seen as conduits of German language and culture to the uncivilized Slavic east. The administration of the conquered territories of Ober Ost would be supported by "the eastern Jew" (p. 228). Volkmann observes that had the collective memory of the German experience on the eastern front during the First World War not been buried by the National Socialists, the conduct of the campaign against the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in 1941 would have been conducted far differently.

Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius traces the German administration of Ober Ost and compares it with the German occupation of the eastern territories called Ostland during the Second World War. Ober Ost represented an area the size of France, nearly completely devastated, with more than 3 million refugees. The German Army was faced with bringing order and control, while addressing the vast humanitarian disaster left in the wake of the war. Ober Ost became in short order a civilizing mission of victors intending to remain permanently. The collapse of Germany and the political and social turmoil that followed had a deep effect on German thinking that the National Socialists exploited, combining anti-Semitism with lebensraum, recapturing the lands to the east. Although Liulevicius does not see a direct connection, he does see that Germans in both wars "drew on the concept of culture as a means of bolstering the mission in the east" (p. 259). Yet, in the First World War, occupation was a civilizing mission; in the Second World War, occupation was racial destruction to preserve a master race.

War museums and exhibitions in Germany depicting the Russian enemy and the eastern front during the war are the subjects of Christine Beil's essay. These exhibitions served as propaganda to sustain the war effort and public morale. Captured equipment, uniforms, mock-ups of trenches, along with depictions of soldier life were intended to acquaint civilians with life on the front lines, and indirectly, the superiority of German culture against the barbarity of Slavs, who were portrayed as inferior, destructive, primitive, and lacking military skills. While these exhibits became less effective as the war wore on, Beil notes that these displays were repurposed in the interwar period to serve a new patriotism and nationalism.

Kristiane Janeke offers an interesting view of Russian memory and remembrance in her account of the Moscow City Fraternal Cemetery, founded in 1915 to commemorate the war dead of the Great War. Because Russia slid from war to revolution to civil war, the cemetery became the burial place for soldiers of various faiths, nationalities, and opposing sides. By the 1950s, the cemetery had been obliterated. This was largely because the war "belonged to the old system, the First World War had to be replaced in the collective memory" (p. 291). Since the end of the Soviet Union, there have been efforts to memorialize the grounds, but there is strong opposition to highlight Russia's participation in the war. Janeke demonstrates that Russians have yet to include the First World War as part of its collective memory.

Rainer Rother examines how the aftermath of the First World War spurred many nations to elevate a symbol to be honored as the Unknown Soldier. The ceremonies surrounding the formal burial of an Unknown Soldier allowed the nation to demonstrate its appreciation, but this unique ritual represented a rite of passage that transformed the body of the fallen soldier into a model soldier and ultimate hero who became the permanent symbol of the sacrifice of the Great War.

Gundula Bavendamm approaches the subject of collective memory related to the First World War through an examination of various war-related sites on the internet: "The manner in which the First World War is documented and discussed on the internet is a reflection of the current interest our society has in this subject" (pp. 326–27). Bavendamm examines primarily
English, French, and German sites and finds that they "appear to be primarily the domain of private associations and amateur historians" (p. 339). The German sites have little to offer. There is no Unknown Soldier and no monuments of remembrance, and thus, German cultural memory of the First World War is quite limited. British, French, and Australian sites reflect the importance the war has in the collective memory, where national monuments, memorials, and the presence of an Unknown Soldier serve to keep the tradition of remembrance alive. Indeed, the internet has become divided into nationally focused memorial domains, each separate and unique and dedicated to its own memory-truths of the Great War.

Rüdiger Bergien concludes this collection with an exploration of the relationship between the eastern front of the Great War with the war of annihilation and extermination that characterized the eastern front in 1941–45. "To what extent," Bergen asks, "can a link be found between experiences and continuities?" (p. 347). While the German military leadership in both wars displayed contempt for the enemy and maintained unrealistic assumptions of their inherent operational superiority, these attitudes did not translate into supporting a war of extermination. The atrocities perpetrated by both German and Russian troops in the early stages of the Great War were related to perceptions of the enemy, nationalism, and ideologies (p. 351) and reveal a continuity that was again manifested in the Second World War. Likewise, occupation and administration of territory has some superficial similarities, but does not indicate a clear continuity between 1917 and 1941. Understanding the unique national qualities of the conduct of war, he concludes, will go far in determining the extent of direct continuities from 1914 to 1918 and 1941 to 1945.

These essays are stimulating reading, providing a wealth of insights that contribute to a far better understanding of the historical roots of the fates of empires and nationalities in Eastern Europe in the twentieth century. How the Great War is remembered (or not remembered) by the former combatants provides a perspective that historians of modern war need to appreciate and understand. These essays heighten our appreciation that the future direction of Europe after 1919 was already in place as a result of the events on the eastern front between 1914 and 1915.

Annette Amerman

The Greatest of All Leathernecks: John Archer Lejeune and the Making of the Modern Marine Corps. By Joseph Arthur Simon. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2019. Pp. 360. \$44.95 cloth and e-book.)

With the publication of Joseph Arthur Simon's The Greatest of all Leathernecks: John Archer Lejeune and the Making of the Modern Marine Corps one might be inclined to think that the case for Lejeune's impact on the U.S. Marine Corps was well-ploughed territory for historians. Such was the case for this reviewer at the outset; however, not at the finish. Simon, a higher education administrator seemingly with no previously published historical work to his credit, opens by stating his reasoning for this latest biography of Lejeune: "Thus far, a comprehensive biography of this exceptional figure in the history of the corps has not been published" (p. xi). One can be forgiven for retorting with the fact that Merrill L. Bartlett published his own biography of Lejeune (Lejeune: A Marine's Life, 1867-1942) in 1996, which covered the salient facts of the former Commandant's life. Even Bartlett, however, "does not adequately cover Lejeune's years as commandant and underplays the importance of his hard work, vision, and perseverance that demonstrate his key influence in the development of amphibious doctrine" (p. 275n1).

Simon's biography is of standard form and style, written in chronological order and covering the major events of the Marine's life based on extensive research into Lejeune's personal papers; his family, friends, and fellow Marines; and the official records of the Marine Corps, Navy, and Army across numerous repositories. While the biography was published in 2019, Simon had actually conducted extensive research more than 50 years ago, at a time when he could and did correspond not only with Lejeune's family but also with Marines of prominence who personally knew Lejeune, such as Clifton B. Cates, Lemuel C. Shepherd, Gerald C. Thomas, and Alexander A. Vandegrift. However, for as much research as Simon conducted, it does not appear that he reviewed the personal papers of Smedley D. Butler or Thomas Holcomb (held in the Archives of the Marine Corps History Division at Quantico, Virginia), two very prominent Marines in Lejeune's career. The oversight of Butler's and Holcomb's papers comes back to haunt the author when he fails to explore the professional relationship between each of the Marines. Holcomb and Lejeune's relationship in the former's years as Assistant Commandant (chapter 5) and their service together in France in World War I (chapter 6) are both left unexplored. These omissions mildly weaken the final pages of chapter 10, where the author attempts to demonstrate the level of impact Lejeune had on Holcomb's commandancy (1936–43). Butler and Lejeune's relationship is also not fully explored or discussed, leaving the inexperienced reader left without a clear understanding of the level of friendship and professional rivalry that existed between the two. The Butler papers alone are a treasure trove of correspondence between the two Marines that could have added value and understanding to this work, providing needed context to their relationship. Despite all this, these omissions are minor distractions from the overall work.

While Simon covers Lejeune's ascendency to the commandancy in chapter 7, he does not delve far enough into the backroom deals, late-night dinner (council of war) parties, and political intrigue that swirled around the ouster of 12th Commandant Major General George Barnett and the final appointment of Lejeune as 13th Commandant. Additionally, Simon neglects the fact that Lejeune's confirmation as the top Marine languished, from summer of 1920 un-

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til summer of 1921, as the presidential administration changed hands. Bartlett's biography of Lejeune during this period outshines Simon's.

However, it is the timing of the publication that is most apt. With the recent redirection of roles and missions for the Marine Corps under General David H. Berger as Commandant, many of the events depicted in chapters 8, 9, and 10 should sound very familiar to today's Marines. Lejeune, like Berger today, inherited a Marine Corps rebounding from years of service with the Army, years of slow divergence from the Navy, a strained budget, and multiple additional missions imposed on it. Despite the successes in France, Lejeune's Corps was still saddled with missions of expeditionary duty in far-flung locales such as Nicaragua and Haiti. The small wars duty distracted from Lejeune's desire to more closely align with the Navy and perform service with the fleet. Chapter 9's coverage of Lejeune's modification of the advanced base force concept into the Marine Corps Expeditionary Force, the shift away from Army doctrine to amphibious warfare in education and practical experience, and his reorganization of Headquarters Marine Corps to meet the new requirements is timely and relevant to today's Corps. Simon deftly condenses vast amounts of information and events into three chapters that could easily be expanded into a stand-alone book.

As indicated earlier, Simon's failure to establish the close professional relationships between Lejeune and Butler, Holcomb, and others leaves chapter 10 a little flat. That said, the author does make a good case for a lasting Lejeune legacy in this concluding chapter, particularly with regard to Lejeune's continued engagement with Congress on behalf of the Corps after retirement on topics such as merit promotions for officers. Despite a full-time job as superintendent of Virginia Military Institute (VMI) and his health issues, Lejeune remained engaged and often corresponded directly with members of Congress on Marine Corps matters. Simon also documents Butler's attempts to disparage 16th Commandant Major General John Henry Russell Jr. in the eyes of Congress, prompted by Senator Hugo L. Black (D-AL), during testimony to the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs regarding his performance at Veracruz, Mexico, when the issue of merit promotions was being debated, an issue with which Butler disagreed immensely. Due to poor health, Lejeune could not appear before the committee to refute Butler's assertions as Russell requested of him, but Lejeune engaged in an exchange with Senator Black. Lejeune remained a staunch supporter of Russell, who supported many of the same reforms that Lejeune was unable to accomplish during his own commandancy.

This biography of Lejeune comes at a time of great organizational reflection on the roles, missions, and structure of the Marine Corps. It would be a valuable tool for many within Headquarters Marine Corps, serving as a reminder that history can be cyclical and that events of the past can often be helpful in shaping the future. While Simon's work seems to duplicate the efforts of authors before him, it is actually an excellent complement to these earlier works by providing a more complete picture of who Lejeune was and all that he accomplished in his nearly 40-year career. Simon captures the post–World War I Marine Corps well and provides the details of Lejeune's efforts to refocus the Corps toward greater symbiosis with the Navy and amphibious warfare, while redirecting the Corps' roles and mission away from Army methods of warfare.

William A. Taylor, PhD

Beyond the Quagmire: New Interpretations of the Vietnam War. Edited by Geoffrey W. Jensen and Matthew M. Stith. (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2019. Pp. 432. \$29.95 cloth.)

In Beyond the Quagmire, Geoffrey W. Jensen and Matthew M. Stith assemble an impressive group of 13 distinguished contributors to trace the prevailing literature on the Vietnam War across a broad range of topics and then enhance it by offering fresh conclusions and charting future directions. As the subtitle of this book indicates, the authors seek to outline the general contours of current scholarship on the Vietnam War, highlight existing conceptions and misperceptions, and push the field toward underappreciated aspects of this pivotal moment in twentieth-century history. This fine collection of insightful essays should prove useful for students and scholars interested in the Vietnam War, the limits of its historiography, and avenues for further research. This volume should also find a receptive audience among general readers looking for a concise synopsis of writing on the Vietnam War in an enjoyable, authoritative, and perceptive book.

Jensen and Stith, along with their contributors, strive to assail "the historical narrative of Vietnam as a quagmire" and "dislodge Vietnam War historiography from this morass by providing new ideas and directions about the politics, combatants, and memory of the war" (pp. 1–2). They succeed admirably at their purpose and demonstrate that the field needs to move past the standard depiction toward overlooked aspects of the war and explain why studying these novel themes matters. The contributors, each a recognized expert in their respective disciplines, assess the status of their topics, reveal limitations within them, and suggest fertile ground for additional study. The result is a rewarding overview of historiography on the Vietnam War with illumination of ways to both challenge and expand it. The collective outcome is that the reader not only benefits from a crisp articulation of Vietnam War literature but also from cutting-edge additions to it and provocative questions about where it might lead tomorrow.

All the respective essays are detailed, engaging, and astute. The authors based their chapters on extensive research in a wide array of primary sources, including presidential recordings, memoirs, congressional hearings, films, interviews, personal papers, speeches, oral histories, nongovernmental organization reports, and a host of records at multiple archives, both in the United States and Vietnam, as well as a spectrum of contemporary magazines and newspapers. Of particular note was the group's thorough and effective use of the Vietnam Center and Sam Johnson Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech University, which has become a leading repository for scholars seeking to document and examine the war. As an added benefit, the contributors situate all this rigorous research within secondary sources, including the most recent works on the Vietnam War as well as classics that have stood the test of time. Methodologically, this volume leverages an array of disciplines, incorporating interpretations from historians and veterans, as well as scholars examining literature, geography, music, and development, among others.

Jensen and Stith organized their book into three major parts comprising 14 chapters. The first section

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grapples with the complex politics of the Vietnam War, including chapters on Ngo Dinh Diem's efforts on rural development, the enduring impact of America's secret war in Laos, the centrality of geography to strategy and military operations, and student protest movements in the American South. The second portion examines combatants and their varied experiences during the war, including a reconsideration of President Lyndon B. Johnson and Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara's much maligned Project 100,000, the wide-ranging yet often neglected participation of women in the war's myriad dynamics, China's involvement in Vietnam and its profound implications for the broader Cold War, the changing roles of military advisors during this conflict, and the omnipresence and significance of the natural environment to those who fought in and against it. The third segment considers the war's tumultuous aftermath, specifically focusing on memory, including chapters on popular comic book series The 'Nam; the Nixon administration's efforts to seize patriotism, politicize it,

and thereby stifle dissent; the purposes, accomplishments, and shortcomings of Vietnam War memorials; and the ubiquitous and restorative nature of music, both during the war and throughout its lengthy and often painful reverberations.

Beyond the Quagmire is a remarkable achievement for which Jensen, Stith, and this eminent group of accomplished contributors should be most commended. Of particular value is this work's multidisciplinary approach, strength of research, and provocative call to extend scholarship on the Vietnam War past stock formulations. Beyond the Quagmire is a stimulating and innovative contribution to a more nuanced understanding of this pivotal conflict. In this exceptionally fine volume, Jensen, Stith, and their talented authors deftly illuminate innovative directions for forthcoming analysis. Their endeavors are an extraordinary collaboration that should be required reading for anyone interested in the Vietnam War, what we already know about it, and what we have yet to learn.

Michael Westermeier

Armies of Deliverance: A New History of the Civil War. By Elizabeth R. Varon. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019. Pp. 528. \$34.95 cloth; \$14.39 e-book.)

The American Civil War is well-travelled country for American military historians. Thankfully, Elizabeth R. Varon has broken new ground in her book *Armies of Deliverance: A New History of the Civil War*. This book is not, as the title might suggest, another rehash of the movements of armies across the vast American landscape but rather an examination of the motivations of two warring peoples and how they changed over the course of the conflict and contributed to one's ability to triumph over the other.

Varon's thesis revolves around the use of "deliverance language" by the leaders of both the Union and the Confederacy to mobilize their respective populations and maintain their impetus to war for four long years. She characterizes *deliverance* in the context of Civil War-era rhetoric as language that evokes either the image of a crusade to deliver the oppressed or an appeal to God to deliver a holy people from their enemies. It was important for political leaders to define war aims in a culturally acceptable light to mobilize the masses to war.

The Union was confronted with a vexing problem: how to unify a politically disparate population that had often diametrically opposed views regarding the South, the Union, and slavery. Varon states,

> Deliverance politics was thus an essential tool for building a coalition that was not only Northern but broadly Unionist: that coalition brought together Northerners in free states

(pro-war Republicans and Democrats, abolitionists white and black), loyalists in the contested slaveholding border states, and anti-Confederate Southerners (African Americans and a small but symbolically significant number of whites) in the seceded states (p. 13).

This broad coalition was finally united by the "theme of deliverance" that would bring the benefits of free society to the South by breaking the hold of the slaveholder elite over the mass of White and Black Southerners and at the same time destroying the institution of slavery (p. 13).

The Confederates, on the other hand, portrayed the need for the South to be delivered from radical Republican and abolitionist assaults on their established social order based on African American slavery. Confederate narratives portrayed Southerners as God's chosen people fighting a defensive war against evil and aggressive radical abolitionists leading duped or powerless poor factory men in an attempt to destroy the social and racial harmony established in the South through the institution of slavery (pp. 15–17). The Confederates thus cast themselves as defenders of right and their armies on a crusade to establish a new nation built in stark opposition against the imposition of radical change that would destroy the very fabric of their society. The image of a chosen people is reinforced through early Confederate victories against long odds, such as the Seven Days Battles, Second Manassas, and Fredericksburg in 1862.

As the war progressed, the soldiers and the communities that provided them began to grow tired under the constant grind of war. The Emancipation

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Proclamation was able to galvanize a broad portion of the Union Army, but more importantly it renewed support for the war among supporters of abolition on the home front. Varon observes that "the proclamation gave new momentum and direction to changes already under way and how its supporters drew strength from its spirit as well as its content" (p. 185). This new motivation for war had a powerful effect on the people and soldiers of the Union in that they recast themselves as liberators of the Southern oppressed through the explicit eradication of slavery. This self-conception as liberators would prove important during the grinding Union campaigns of 1864 such as Ulysses S. Grant's overland campaign and William T. Sherman's march to and siege of Atlanta.

The only fault with the book lies in its attempt to serve as both a vehicle for Varon's argument and a broad narrative of the Civil War. One small, admittedly nit-picky example is the narrative description of the Battle of Chancellorsville, 1–3 May 1863. Varon provides a concise but otherwise accurate description of the fighting through the second day of the battle. However, she then states, "Hooker himself was a casualty of the day's [2 May 1863] fighting, having suffered a concussion when the fragments of a wooden beam hit by a shell struck him in the head at Chancellor House, his command center" (p. 227). Major General Joseph Hooker in fact was concussed by an artillery shell hitting his command post at Chancellor House, but it occurred during the initial cannonade during the fighting at Hazel Grove on 3 May 1863 rather than the night of 2 May when Confederate lieutenant general Thomas J. Jackson was wounded. Though this might appear insignificant, General Hooker's concussion may have had a significant outcome on Union decision-making during the crucial third day of the battle and thus should be accurately presented as part of the narrative. While this mistake might raise the hackles of dedicated Civil War buffs, it does not detract from the overall argument of the book. However, this would not be an issue at all if the book did not try to provide a broad history of the war on top of the already compelling argument. For example, Apostles of Disunion: Southern Secession Commissioners and the Causes of the Civil War by Charles Dew (2001) is a very slim volume but presents a succinct and compelling argument regarding Southern motivation to secede from the Union.

Armies of Deliverance is an interesting take on American motivation to war during the midnineteenth century. Varon's arguments surrounding the Union "deliverance language" and how it changed as the war progressed is particularly interesting. Her concluding chapter that describes the final outcome as Northern resolve faltered during Reconstruction would prove a good jumping-off point for another book discussing Reconstruction using the same lens.

Frank L. Kalesnik, PhD

Admiral Gorshkov: The Man Who Challenged the U.S. Navy. By Norman Polmar, Thomas A. Brooks, and George E. Federoff. (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2019. Pp. 304. \$39.95 cloth.)

Admiral of the Fleet of the Soviet Union Sergei G. Gorshkov occupies a significant position in both naval and Russian history. Born in 1910, he lived through and participated in many important events in the twentieth century. Joining the Soviet Navy in 1927, he served with distinction in the Second World War, rising through the ranks to become head of the Soviet Navy from 1956 to 1985. Retiring in the year Mikhail Gorbachev became general secretary of the Communist Party, Gorshkov died in 1988, missing the collapse of the Soviet Union by only three years. During that time, he oversaw the transition of the navy from a force that operated primarily on the Red Army's Baltic and Black Sea flanks to one that, through a global presence, exerted Soviet influence worldwide.

The team of authors assembled to write this book is impressive. Norman Polmar is a respected naval analyst, whose many published works include the Naval Institute Press's *Guide to the Soviet Navy*. Retired rear admiral Thomas A. Brooks is a former director of naval intelligence, and George E. Federoff is the Office of Naval Intelligence's senior intelligence officer for Russian matters. While the authors' expertise is extensive, this biography is highly readable as well as very informative. Gorshkov's interesting life is described from his childhood to retirement, with the path of his career well placed within the context of both Russian history and international naval affairs. Several useful tables chart Gorshkov's transformation of the Soviet Navy, illustrating both the growth of the fleet and changes to its composition. One even lists American secretaries of the Navy and Chiefs of Naval Operations (CNO) during his tenure as head of the Soviet Navy. From 1956 to 1985, there were 13 secretaries and 8 chiefs, the CNO with the longest term of office being Admiral Arleigh A. Burke, who served from 1955 to 1961.

Marines will find the chapters on the Second World War particularly interesting, as they describe the numerous amphibious operations in the Black Sea region in which Gorshkov participated. In 1942, he received a personal telephone call from Joseph Stalin, offering him command of the 47th Army, which Gorshkov was currently leading in an acting capacity. While indicating his appreciation of the offer, he declined, as acceptance meant transferring to the Army. According to the authors, "Stalin replied, 'Well I understand you. I cannot blame you for your dedication to the navy,' and hung up" (p. 62). One wonders how the course of history might have changed had Gorshkov accepted Stalin's offer.

Despite his background in coastal operations, Gorshkov advocated the growth of a blue-water navy during his tenure as admiral of the fleet, and this included the expansion of Russia's marines, the Naval Infantry (Morskaya Pekhota). Disbanded in 1956, they were reestablished in 1964. A decade later, the size of the force grew to 12,000 troops in four regiments, with two in the Pacific and one each in the Baltic, Black Sea, and Northern fleets. Amphibious shipping and personnel carriers, as well as high speed air-cushion landing craft, also joined the fleets. The authors note: "Admiral Gorshkov's interest in the re-establishment of the Morskaya Pekhota was obviously personal and direct, in view of his own experience with wartime amphibious operations in the Black Sea and Sea of Azov and of the practical value of marines for the en-

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visioned expanded role of the Soviet Navy in the potential Third World "adventures' " (p. 137).

Other progress made under Gorshkov's leadership included the introduction of nuclear propulsion and weapons, to include submarine-launched intercontinental ballistic missiles, shipboard missiles for tactical use, an increase in aviation assets, and steps toward the development of aircraft carriers, initially as antisubmarine warfare platforms. Command and control of global naval forces was practiced in exercises such as Okean-75, conducted in April 1975, involving hundreds of surface ships, submarines, and aircraft deployed worldwide. While these developments certainly challenged the U.S. Navy, as the authors assert, particularly in the decade following the Vietnam conflict, the long-term establishment of the Soviet Navy as a global seapower proved unsustainable. The authors do not end their narrative with Gorshkov's retirement or the collapse of the Soviet Union, however. Continuing the story up to the present, they conclude: "Many of the points made by Admiral Gorshkov during his long tenure as commander-in-chief regarding the peacetime value of a strong navy find expression in the documents and statements of today's Russian leadership" (p. 216).

Perhaps Gorshkov's writing as a naval theorist represents his greatest legacy. Eleven articles originally published in the Soviet naval journal *Morskoy Sbornick* appeared in translation in the U.S. Naval Institute's *Proceedings*, and his magnum opus, *Seapower and the State*, led the *New York Times* to declare him "Admiral of the World Ocean" in 1977. An important historical figure by any standard, Gorshkov fully deserves this excellent biography. Those with an interest in history, international relations, and naval strategy will find *Admiral Gorshkov: The Man Who Challenged the U.S. Navy* excellent reading.

Biplanes at War: US Marine Corps Aviation in the Small Wars Era, 1915–1934. By Wray R. Johnson. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2019. Pp. 440. \$50.00 cloth.)

In *Biplanes at War*, historian Wray R. Johnson delivers a comprehensive study on an important and underrecognized period in the history of Marine Corps Aviation. A professor of military history at the U.S. Marine Corps University's School of Advanced Warfighting and a retired officer of the U.S. Air Force, Johnson's monograph reflects his rich experience in both military and civilian capacities.

Building from an introduction that covers both general aviation and Marine Corps history, Johnson moves toward his ultimate purpose: recognizing Marine Corps aviators for their remarkable achievements in the first few decades of the twentieth century. His resulting treatise, Biplanes at War, spans four weighty chapters that chronicle the evolution of Marine Corps aviation from its early origins to its (relative) 1930s maturity, as it supported American interventions in Haiti, Nicaragua, China, and the Dominican Republic. Along the way, Johnson provides substantial context for both the American occupations that put these Marine pilots into action and the shifts in U.S. policy that redirected the Marines' objectives and resources. He excels at placing his distinctly military topic within the political and social circumstances surrounding the interventions.

Johnson's study commences in Haiti, where he argues Marine squadrons "shaped the development of Marine Corps Aviation in relation to small wars and indeed to war in general" (p. 63). Readers hear of Captain Roy S. Geiger—future commander of the III Amphibious Corps and U.S. 10th Army during World War II—and his early escapades, which helped the Marine Corps develop its dive-bombing techniques. Although acknowledging that it was in fact the U.S. Army that first introduced dive bombing to the U.S. military, Johnson convincingly shows that it was in Hispaniola the Marines fully embraced and developed the concept.

In Nicaragua, the Marines continued to provide crucial close air support while further refining their tactics. Johnson shows clearly that the actions of Marine aviators forced insurgent leader César Augusto Sandino to adapt his fighting style. In the face of threatening Marine air power, Sandino and his fellow guerrillas embraced night movements, chose concealed footpaths over more visible routes, and camouflaged their encampments from Marine aerial spotting.

While describing the evolution of Marine dive bombing and close air support, Johnson also reveals the early roots of more mundane Marine aviation functions such as aerial delivery and observation. Following Nicaragua's 1931 earthquake, leatherneck pilots carried out airborne patrols to help assess and prioritize response efforts. Meanwhile, they delivered medical supplies to affected areas and executed regular relief flights from Managua to nearby airfields. In support of ongoing counterinsurgency efforts, aviators dropped ammunition, equipment, and rations to isolated Marine detachments fighting across rugged Nicaraguan terrain. Even in these early years, Marine Corps Aviation offered far more than bombs and strafing fire.

The Marine Corps' Aviation has never been independent; it was both designed and adapted to support Marines on the ground. Johnson excels at showing this early and consistent theme throughout *Biplanes at*

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War. Using the words of venerated Marine aviator Alfred A. Cunningham in 1920, Johnson shows the early and existential purpose of Marine air: "The only excuse for aviation in any service is its usefulness in assisting troops on the ground to successfully carry out their operations" (p. 82). Further along, Johnson cites none other than Marine legend Smedley D. Butler's statement that Marine Aviation "should be part of the brigade, 'body and soul' " (p. 166). These convictions, from two Marine icons, would indeed become established doctrine for the Marines and remain—even today—the undisputed purpose of the community.

The book is peppered throughout with fascinating anecdotes that reveal the Marines' penchant for adaptation. In this way, Johnson delivers on his promise to make the book "interesting, even entertaining" (p. x). In Haiti, resourceful pilots strapped patients to the wings of their aircraft to get their fellow Marines quick medical attention (in some instances, cutting evacuation time from three days by mule to two hours by plane). Readers also hear of jerry-rigged close air support techniques, such as when Marines used a canvas mail pouch as a bomb rack and the peep sight of an infantry rifle as an aiming device. With similar ingenuity, expeditionary pilots operating in subfreezing conditions in China learned to drain the fuel and oil from their engines overnight and heat them over open flames in the morning before starting their aircraft. Few challenges, it seemed, could stop Marine pilots from sustaining their fellow leathernecks aground.

From start to finish, Johnson's treatment is perceptive and comprehensive. He carefully breaks down the Marines' persistent challenges coordinating ground and air operations, yet finds time to draw in such fascinating topics as the development of Marine Corps aerial stunting. Lest the pilots get all the glory, Johnson provides a deserved nod to early Marine "maintainers," who turned the wrenches and kept the Corps' pilots aloft. Along the way, the book introduces flashy characters such as Lawson H. M. Sanderson, who volunteered for flight training because—quite honestly—"he preferred flying over walking" (p. 135). Through engrossing vignettes, Johnson consistently allows the central actors to describe and even analyze early Marine Corps Aviation in their own words.

Johnson recognizes Marine efforts to avoid civilian casualties as they supported American interventions from above. Nonetheless, he acknowledges the death and destruction that Marine Aviation contributed to, including, at times, the killing of unarmed civilians and even children. Regardless of the Marines' intent, such actions bred resentment toward both the American pilots and the U.S. occupations that they served. In examining these moments, Johnson provides significant conclusions about the difficulties and ambiguities of counterinsurgency warfare, made all the more difficult for Marine pilots flying several thousand feet above the battlefield. Across Johnson's study, Marine aviators acknowledge the limitations of air power, particularly in a counterinsurgency context.

Johnson's project—judged by its own aims—is a categorical success. *Biplanes at War* delivers both a sharp study of Marine Corps Aviation's early history and a profound analysis of the nature, capabilities, and limitations of air power in a counterinsurgency context. No doubt, the author's rich personal experience in special operations, foreign internal defense, and counterinsurgency warfare helps to construct such a piercing examination.

Biplanes at War is exhaustively researched and diligently documented (the notes section alone spans 102 pages). Johnson organizes the work simply and efficiently. The result is a well-structured and meticulous study that fulfills its charter. Though the casual reader may find his research and presentation dense at points (the mere number of aircraft models that Johnson references may prove dizzying for the layman), scholars of Marine Corps history and those interested in both air power and the history of flight will find much to value.

Biplanes at War: US Marine Corps Aviation in the Small Wars Era, 1915–1934. Wray R. Johnson. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2019. Pp. 440. \$50.00 cloth.)

University presses often publish very interesting, somewhat offbeat books that commercial houses will not. The interwar period of the 1920s–30s was a very active time where military aviation was concerned, in the development, research, and operational realms. Brief conflicts occurred throughout the world involving major powers such as Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and Japan, as well as the United States. The U.S. Marines fought in Central America for a long time in often bloody and unproductive battles. Rebel groups led by charismatic personalities, who rivaled later Axis leaders in their seeming lack of concern for humanity, were constantly in the field.

The Marines brought small numbers of early aircraft with them, including World War I-era British Airco DH-4 two-seat bombers and newer types by Curtiss and Vought, that brought modern warfare to the arena. The rebels hid from these new weapons, shooting from their protected thickets, sometimes hitting the wood-and-canvas biplanes, but letting their crews know they were not altogether free from the defenders' fire. It is the U.S. Marine Corps' use of aviation in small wars during this period that is the focus of Wray R. Johnson's *Biplanes at War*. The author is a retired professor of military history at the School of Advanced Warfighting at Marine Corps University, as well as a retired U.S. Air Force colonel with experience in special operations.

While certainly an unusual and worthwhile book, it is much too wordy. The author could have benefitted from an editor who realized the text needed trimming. This fault is particularly true of the unusually long section of endnotes that actually double the size of the book and could have been better placed at the end of each chapter or shortened and used as footnotes, making it less cumbersome for the reader to refer to the notes. It may have been an easier form for the author to write, but it is both annoying and more difficult for the reader to have to flip back and forth from one end of the book to the other, and it distracts from the reading of the main text. Many of the endnotes are biographies of particular personalities that, while of certain interest, often fill up more than a half page. Because of this style choice for the author's text notes, this reviewer found it difficult to concentrate on the reading; only the most dedicated reader and researcher will get through it all after devoting many hours of patient reading. The inclusion of a lengthy bibliography raises the question just exactly what of all these books, contacts, and other research sources did the author actually use.

Nevertheless, this book has the field to itself because, except for a few monographic treatments and very rare articles on Marine Aviation in the so-called Banana Wars after World War I, there is a lot of material here for those interested in this little-known subject. It is where several early Marine aviators from the Great War period who got Marine Aviation off the ground honed their specialty and were thus available when the Corps desperately needed them as senior leaders at Guadalcanal and afterward to develop what we know today as close air support and more.

There are a few interesting specific errors, one of which occurs in the text and in its related endnote. On

Cdr Peter B. Mersky, USNR (Ret), has been the editor of the "Professional Reading" column in *Naval Aviation News* since 1982 and was a writer and editor of *Approach*, the Navy and Marine Corps safety magazine, from 1984 to 2000. He is also the author of *U.S. Marine Corps Aviation Since 1912*, 4th ed. (2009); *Israeli Fighter Aces: The Definitive History* (1997); *F-8 Crusader Units of the Vietnam War* (1998, 2009); *F-8 Crusader vs MiG-17, Vietnam 1965-1972* (2014); and Whitey: The Story of Rear Admiral E. L. Feightner, a Navy Fighter Ace (2014).

page 99, the author discusses the development of battlefield extraction, certainly a subject well worth describing, particularly in view of its accelerated use during the Vietnam War. He mentions various types of French aircraft used in the 1925 campaign against the colorful Rif factions by French units. The endnote to this text on page 329, note 177, mentions a book or article by W. Breyton about French ambulance aircraft in Morocco in 1933, which also mentions aircraft types. These aircraft did not enter service until after the early Marine campaigns in Haiti. It is a very complicated subject to be sure. A lot of lessons should have been extracted by French and American politicians. There are some other niggling errors, such as often using a zero instead of a capital O in aircraft designations, which a knowledgeable editor would have corrected.

The two folios of photographs included in the book are very good; several show aircraft and personalities in different scenes and situations than are found in previously published accounts, from magazine articles to books. Colonel Wray's book is surely worth reading for those who want to see how it was at the beginning of Marine Aviation.

Jessica Colon

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

Implacable Foes: War in the Pacific, 1944–1945 chronologically follows the political, economic, strategic, and logistic components involved in the concluding operations of the Pacific War. Authors Waldo Heinrichs and Marc Gallicchio "weave together analysis of grand strategy with ground-level narrative" to deliver a remarkably sourced, comprehensive discussion of the crucial last years of World War II (p. 4).

The book is divided into two discussions. The first portion is dedicated to combat operations, planning, and logistics, while the second analyzes U.S. attitudes regarding the war, a postwar economy, and what it would mean to bring the troops home. Focusing largely on the Army's 1944 offensive strategy against a fortified Japanese defense that shifted inland from the beachhead, the American commanders believed that their strategy of island-hopping could provide necessary airfields to subsequently support their eventual attack of the Japanese home islands. At this stage of the campaign, America's unwillingness to sacrifice more on the home front toward an uncertain outcome was compounded by increased losses on the battlefront. Moreover, growing inter-Service rivalries and political turmoil are cited by the authors as compelling arguments for ending the war quickly. Their analysis focuses on many of the difficulties experienced in the field of battle, the climate characteristic of the Pacific theater, and an unremitting combat schedule.

From the onset, General Douglas MacArthur's life, leadership, and exploits from 1944 through 1945 weave throughout the text. MacArthur and Admiral Chester W. Nimitz's dual advance and its importance in breaking down the Japanese defenses is revealed early on, but MacArthur's dedication to liberating the Philippines and complicated working relationships cause unwanted strains on U.S. strategy in their movement toward Japan. MacArthur's fixation on the Philippines, his relations with the press, and his political interactions flow through each campaign, including Iwo Jima. The adversities caused and faced by MacArthur are an overarching theme within Implacable Foes, and much of the political and strategic decisions are directed back to his actions. Once he proves successful, the authors shift the focus to the planning of the invasions of Okinawa and the Japanese home islands and begin to focus more on the American public, the economy, and the reparations of the 1945 Potsdam Conference.

The narrative then transitions to the ramifications of a postwar economy, the Army's point system and shipping problems involved in reconversion, and the political outcomes of Potsdam. Anticipating unemployment and economic inflation, the American public grows skeptical. The Army is struggling with its redeployment strategy and grappling with decisions regarding the implementation of Operation Downfall or the possibility of an early Japanese surrender. Following the in-depth discussion of the Pacific campaigns, the authors reexamine speedy completion as the driving force behind the American commanders' decisions. They state that Truman and George C. Marshall understood that the atomic bomb provided the type of quick victory they sought due to the combined pressures of inexperienced troops, tired combat veterans, a relentless Japanese enemy, and an increasingly tired American public (p. 5). A portion of the study is dedicated to the repercussions of the Potsdam Con-

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ference, Japanese feelings regarding an absolute surrender, and the political and strategic struggle the Japanese were facing regarding personnel and civilian resilience. Here, the authors use intercepted Japanese messages and diplomatic summaries as well as the writings of Imperial Japanese Army officer Takushiro Hattori to illustrate the thoughts and sentiments of the Japanese during the last years of the war.

Heinrichs and Gallicchio provide an impressively sourced text covering a broad scope of topics within the designated theater and years. At times, the flow of facts and figures, combat operations, and economic struggles is intertwined with minute details (such as MacArthur's lineage or war correspondent Ernie Pyle's death at Ie Shima) and detracts from the overall focus of each campaign or chapter. The authors recognize the importance of the joint effort between Nimitz and MacArthur in destroying the Japanese forces, however, when it comes to examining Nimitz's contribution, the discussion is offbalance, often overlooking the admiral's vital role.

Implacable Foes: War in the Pacific, 1944–1945 provides a supplemental World War II history for the student and is a valuable addition to the literature for avid history readers. It not only provides a detailed explanation of each campaign in the Pacific but includes tidbits of information about a variety of topics not generally discussed when analyzing combat operations and strategy. While Heinrichs and Gallicchio concentrate on the sometimes-underrepresented Army operations in the Pacific theater, the overarching theme throughout the text is MacArthur's contribution to and hindrance of the Pacific operations. The book lacks any profound arguments or revelations about the war in the Pacific during 1944 and 1945, however, so readers wanting to understand the broader operational scope involving other Services will have to look elsewhere.

Risk Taker, Spy Maker: Tales of a CIA Case Officer. By Barry Michael Broman. (Havertown, PA: Casemate, 2020. Pp. 312. \$34.95 cloth.)

If not in style then certainly in tone, Barry Michael Broman's engrossing new book Risk Taker, Spy Maker evokes some of the great, mostly British, travel writing of the interwar years. Patrick Leigh Fermor immediately comes to mind as does Robert Bryon's The Road to Oxiana (1937). Like Fermor, Broman served during wartime and writes well and accurately of his time with the U.S. Marine Corps during the Vietnam era. Broman served as executive officer, Company H, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, in An Hao, Vietnam (this reviewer was a rifle platoon commander in Hotel Company for part of Broman's tenure as executive officer; after I was grievously wounded, Broman temporarily commanded the platoon). Under the split tour policy for officers-six months in the bush, six months on higher headquarters staff—Broman subsequently served in the G-5 civil affairs shop, 1st Marine Division (MarDiv). Upon termination of his tour with 1st MarDiv headquarters, he was assigned to Bangkok, Thailand, as a U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (USMACV), rest and recreation liaison officer.

"In 1962 my father was assigned as a civil engineer advisor to the Royal Thai Air Force (RTAF) To my surprise, Pappy offered to let me drop out of the University of Illinois, give up my scholarship, and live for one year in Thailand to give me some experience of the Far East. It didn't take me long to accept. It was a decision that changed my life" (p. 10). Broman's early exposure to and enthrallment with Southeast Asia, coupled with having been formatively reared in the United Kingdom, gave him the groundings in becoming the sophisticated and cosmopolitan gentleman clearly reflected in Risk Taker, Spy Maker. An early exposure to the art of photography remains a lifelong vocation splendidly reflected in a number of photographic books and in films. Returning from Bangkok, Broman matriculated at the University of Washington with a master's in Southeast Asian studies in 1969. Prior to reporting for duty in Vietnam in early 1969, he married the charming, talented Betty Jane Apilado, a recognized professional and linguist.

While Risk Taker, Spy Maker successfully unrolls chronologically, it refreshingly gives the reader the all-too-rare studied insight and subtle nuances of the myriad events and historical occurrences in which Broman was either a key player or a witness. Therein lies the strength and pertinency of Risk Taker, Spy Maker. "In 1971 with the Cold War in full spate, shooting wars under way in Vietnam and Cambodia, and Laos and Thailand threatened by Communists," (p. 79), Broman joined the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Wisely, the agency posted him to Southeast Asia, his first operational assignment being war-torn Cambodia. He barely escaped capture by the Khmer Rouge when they seized Phnom Penh in 1975. Twice chief of station (COS), Broman was involved in such diverse activities as supervising the international paramilitary operations against the fullscale invasion of Vietnamese forces into Cambodia in December 1978; counternarcotics operations in Burma (Myanmar); and, of course, the bread and butter of any good CIA operative, the recruitment of agents (he was

Col John C. McKay enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps in 1962. He deployed with combat elements during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, received a secretary of the Navy (from the ranks) appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy in 1964, served two tours in Vietnam as an infantry officer, and was twice wounded, losing an eye. He was a U.S. naval attaché to El Salvador during that country's civil war. An Olmsted Scholar (Spain), he holds master's degrees from Georgetown University and the National War College, both in Washington, DC. McKay provided sworn depositions during the Iran-Contra hearings and has commanded infantry units up to a Joint Task Force. Post-retirement assignments have included the Central Intelligence Agency, Department of State, and Drug Enforcement Administration. He is an adjunct professor at California State University, Sacramento.

good). Of the many attractions of this engaging book is Broman's deft interweaving of the perils and on-theedge challenges he experienced with entertaining, often quite amusing vignettes peopled with well-developed and colorful characters.

Arguably, the Vietnam imbroglio marked a watershed in post-World War II U.S. foreign policy. The Paris Peace Accords were agreed in January 1973. In June of that year, Congress passed legislation prohibiting further funding for operations in Southeast Asia, the same year that it passed (over presidential veto) the War Powers Resolution. Broman notes, "In March 1975, the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee of the US American [sic] House of Representatives voted 18-15 against providing further military aid to Cambodia. The Senate Democrats voted 38-5 to cut aid" (p. 113). On 13 April 1975, Congress refused President Gerald R. Ford's last-minute request to increase aid funds to South Vietnam. The country fell to North Vietnam weeks later. One of the sticky, unconscionable elements of the Vietnam legacy is "abandonment." One can neither deny nor discount the pronounced antiwar sentiment within the United States at the time. But, as today, an a priori reasoning about the consequences of our actions-the myth of monolithic Communism notwithstanding—might have provided a realpolitik approach tempered by the idealism for which the United States is extolled.

Broman is neither a fervent ideologue nor a routestep follower. He is a thinker, an assiduous analyst, and a fine writer. The objective treatment he extends to the tragic, embarrassing, blatant ignominy of the United States' overly expedient withdrawal from Southeast Asia shows that it should have served as a red-flag marker. History to date has demonstrated that the nullifying of Southeast Asia commitments was not an aberration. It should have served as a marker for the United States (i.e., the president, Congress, Department of State, Department of Defense, etc.) to step back, reevaluate, and institutionalize measures to minimize or prevent similar occurrences in the future. This did not happen. The United States instead trundled into the Middle East in March 2003, under even cloudier and more dubious pretexts than those given for Vietnam. The recent withdrawal of support to the Kurds, our dedicated, loyal (albeit erstwhile) allies in the fight against Islamic terrorism and depredation is just the most recent iteration of what was sadly wrought those many years ago in Southeast Asia. And it perpetuates itself. In the interim, the United States executed a national security policy in Central America, that is, the war in El Salvador and the subsequent support of the chimerical and misleadingly labeled "Freedom Fighters" (the contras), with little or no accountability. The much-ballyhooed congressional Joint Hearings on the Iran-Contra Investigation (before the House Select Committee to Investigate Covert Arms Transactions with Iran and the Senate Select Committee on Secret Military Assistance to Iran and the Nicaraguan Opposition) were a stab in the right direction but shortly devolved into a circus. Implicated principals were pardoned by President George H. W. Bush. The present hellish morass of Central America is but the direct result of the United States declaring victorywhich it was not-and expeditiously extracting itself from the social conflicts that arose with a vengeance in the 1960s. Today, the United States wrestles awkwardly and ineffectively with the flotsam and jetsam of those conflicts, namely, rampant regional corruption, illegal immigration, gang violence, and the ever-present plague of human and drug trafficking. By one accounting, the most dangerous city to live in the world today is San Pedro de Sula, Honduras.

Broman has very adroitly and in admirable language given the reader not only an exposure to international events, principally in Southeast Asia, but elsewhere as well, to which he has borne witness. That these events, from the Vietnam War to the present, were often misguided, usually forlorn, but almost always tragic and bloody, does not distract in the least from Risk Taker, Spy Maker. The great strength of the book is its author's ability to extract from these events the significance of how they have come to shape the United States' foreign and domestic policy. The United States emerged from World War II as both military and moral victor. Might the same be said of the Vietnam era forward? Risk Taker, Spy Maker gives one pause to consider the question while providing an intellectually thrilling read.

Robert D. Eldridge, PhD

Ioutou: Kokusaku ni Honrō Sareta 130 Nen (Iwo Jima: 130 Years at the Mercy of National Policy). By Ishihara Shun. (Tōkyō, Japan: Chūkō Shinsho, 2019. Pp. 221. ¥820 cloth.)

Ioutou, or (as it was more commonly known until 2007) Iwo Jima, represented one of the harshest battlegrounds in World War II, and as such, remains transfixed in the memories of both Americans and Japanese alike for the sacrifices made during the monthlong fight in early 1945.

It is also the subject of numerous military history books and memoirs. Some recent works include the translated memoirs of Horie Yoshitaka, who served on Lieutenant General Kuribayashi Tadao's staff, coedited by this reviewer and Iwo Jima veteran Charles Tatum, entitled *Fighting Spirit: The Memoirs of Major Yoshitaka Horie and the Battle of Iwo Jima* (2011), and this reviewer's own *Iwo Jima and the Bonin Islands in U.S.-Japan Relations: American Strategy, Japanese Territory, and the Islanders In-Between* (2014), which is the English version of the 2008 book published in Japanese.

The story of Iwo Jima as political and diplomatic history, however, is less known. This reviewer's aforementioned *Iwo Jima and the Bonin Islands* was probably the first to bring the full history—prewar, wartime, postwar, and today—to light. However, a much more detailed look at the 50-year period following reversion of the islands (on 26 June 1968) was necessary.

Ioutou, the subject of this review, was written by Ishihara Shun, currently a professor at Meiji Gakuin University in Tokyo specializing in sociology and history with a focus on island studies, in part to provide a more detailed look at Iwo Jima as a whole. He wanted to show that Iwo Jima was more than just a battle (p. vi), especially for its original residents, who remain unable to return to live on the island since being evacuated to mainland Japan in 1944 prior to the Battle of Iwo Jima (February–March 1945). This inability to return is one of the main subjects of chapter 6, the book's second-longest chapter. Another reason Ishihara, who was previously a visiting scholar at the University of California, Los Angeles, wrote this easily readable book was to place Iwo Jima in a larger international history of Japan's colonial expansion in the Pacific islands (p. vi).

It was in this latter context that this reviewer first met Ishihara at a multidisciplinary conference on Chichi Jima, one of Iwo Jima's two inhabited neighboring islands. Scholars and students came from many countries in the region, possessing different academic backgrounds and interests. The result was the edited book, *Ogasawaragaku Koto Hajime* (An Introduction to Ogasawara Studies, 2002).

Ishihara was a graduate student at the time with an intense interest and focus in the subject matter, and his passion for it remains as strong today as it was then. During the past decade-plus, he has published several Japanese-language books and articles related to Ogasawara and Iwo Jima. *Ioutou* draws from these previous works (pp. 209–10), including some articles rewritten for this book.

The book is organized into six chapters, not including the introduction, conclusion, and afterword. While it lacks an index, as many Japanese language books do, *loutou* does include a helpful eight-page bibliography. Because the book is written from a Japanese perspective for Japanese readers, all but four entries are Japanese-language sources. The book also includes 25 photos, including some taken by Ishihara during a

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visit to Iwo Jima or of interviews he conducted; six charts; and two maps.

loutou begins with a survey of the island group's history, which covers the period from the sixteenth century to approximately 1930, including the discovery of the island group, its inclusion as Japanese territory, and its settlement by Japanese citizens. Ishihara then follows this with a look at life on Iwo Jima as a plantation, focusing on the period the early 1930s to 1944 in chapter 2. This chapter will help those with an interest in the Battle of Iwo Jima who wish to fill in some of the sketchy history about the island before the battle that tends to dominate most books focused on the battle.

Chapter 3 examines the forced removal of islanders in 1944 and the mobilization of some of them for military detail. This chapter, too, will be of interest to those seeking to learn about the preparations for the battle from the Japanese side, and how noncombatants were relocated to other areas. Next, in chapter 4, the author looks at the Battle of Iwo Jima and the islanders, using the testimony of one of the residents, Sudō Akira. Those seeking to better understand the battle from the Japanese side will find this section of interest. The work then introduces the U.S. occupation period (1945–68) and the islanders' apparently permanent loss of their hometown in chapter 5.

Chapter 6 discusses the post-reversion period and the introduction of Japan Self-Defense Forces to the island; the modifications of the existing military facilities on the island and accommodation of Field Carrier Landing Practice by the U.S. Navy and other jets; training on the island; and the ongoing search for the remains of those lost in the battle. During completion of this review, the Japanese press reported that the Japan Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Labor, which oversees the search for remains, will include the use of DNA sampling for a part of its work on Iwo Jima. The government of Japan has been slow to adopt these methods over the years, preferring instead to simply locate and cremate. Thanks to greater efforts to cooperate and coordinate, led in part by the U.S. Department of Defense's POW/MIA Accounting Agency, the government of Japan is responding to the requests by families and former fellow soldiers and sailors by becoming more accurate and accountable; Japan passed new legislation in 2016 in this direction. The lack of funding and experts in Japan prevent the quick execution of the legislation, however.

Currently, *loutou* is only available in Japanese. Nearly 300 new titles are published every day in Japan, but almost all of them never reach foreign markets due to their not being available in English or other languages. This lack of access is a problem for non-Japanese language readers, but it also is a problem for Japan in that it is unable to share the products of its research labor, literature, or other writings abroad.

In any case, Professor Ishihara's book provides an important Japanese perspective on a topic that remains of great interest to us Americans, particularly with the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II having recently occurred in mid-August 2020.

Points of Honor: Short Stories of the Great War by a US Combat Marine. By Thomas Boyd, edited by Steven Trout. (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2018. Pp. 180. \$19.95 paperback and e-book.)

Originally published in 1925, Points of Honor is a compendium of 11 short stories based on the World War I experiences of the author, Thomas Boyd. Steven Trout, chair of the Department of English and codirector of the Center for the Study of War and Memory at the University of South Alabama, edits this reprint. Trout's 27-page introduction gives good background on Boyd and his writings. Boyd was born in Ohio in 1898, and soon after the U.S. declaration of war, he enlisted in the Marine Corps. As part of the celebrated 2d Marine Division, he was sent overseas fairly quickly and expected to see combat soon. But the Marines and soldiers spent their early time in France as labor troops. Boyd also ran afoul of military rules and was reduced in rank to private. He regained his rank, however, and served honorably afterward, even receiving a citation for bravery. Boyd came through the Battles of Belleau Wood, Soissons, and Saint-Mihiel physically unscathed, but at Blanc Mont he was gassed and evacuated. Boyd translated his experiences during these battles into the stories in Points of Honor, using them to express the feelings of dissatisfaction, dismay, and horror the battles inspired in him.

After the war, Boyd achieved some success and did well in literary circles. But plagued by "bad luck and bad decisions," he fell "into literary obscurity [and] never quite found his way in life" (p. x). Boyd wrote other novels, but his first, *Through the Wheat* (1923, based on his experiences in combat), and *Points* *of Honor* were his only true literary successes. Boyd died of a stroke in 1935.

In the second half of his introduction, Trout explains the significance and themes of each of the 11 stories. Wisely, he recommends that first-time readers of *Points of Honor* read the stories first, saving his commentary for last. It is best to approach the stories as the original readers did almost 100 years ago; each reader can form their own opinions about the stories before reading a scholar's viewpoint. Readers may disagree with Trout's analysis of one or more of the stories.

Boyd's stories describe situations that are authentic but by no means universal. The characters include fresh replacements, grizzled infantrymen, good leaders, officious officers, a stubborn civilian, and a broken-hearted French girl. Many of the officers we encounter in the stories are stereotyped. Lieutenant Wilfred Bird, in "Unadorned," is a good officer and leader until a misunderstanding breeds attitudes that lead to tragedy. Captain Arthur Balder, the martinet adjutant in "Sound Adjutant's Call," is petty and cruel-but he is not everything he seems to be. Captain Havermeyer in "The Long Shot" seems to forget the troops he led in combat when he returns to civilian life. And Major Shipley in "The Ribbon Counter" has a derogatory division-wide nickname: Dugout Dan. "All he knew about the front was what he saw from the bottom of a forty-foot hole" (p. 111).

Most of the stories involve disillusionment and infidelity (ironic, considering the motto of the Marine Corps); in many ways, it is reminiscent of John Dos Passos's 1921 novel, *Three Soldiers*. Not every veteran would have experienced the things Boyd writes about, nor would they have necessarily perceived them in the same way as Boyd. But most World War I veterans

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would have understood the situations. In "The Kentucky Boy," two recuperating soldiers go absent without leave from the hospital and dodge the universally hated military police as they try to rejoin their regiment on the front line. In "Responsibility," a green replacement tries too hard to fit in with his new squad. A careless remark made under the influence of alcohol draws unfitting punishment in "A Little Gall." In "The Long Shot," a story that speaks about problems faced by many veterans even today, a veteran returns to a thankful community, but he soon faces medical, employment, marital, and legal troubles that climax in a stark tragedy.

Even in the midst of infidelity and disillusionment, there are glimmers of bittersweet hope. A pathological liar and braggart tells a partial truth in "Rintintin," and a postwar search for missing Americans finally bears fruit thanks to a dogged Graves Registration official in "Uninvited." A cynical sergeant is decorated for bravery in "The Ribbon Counter." And in "Responsibility," we learn that even hardened combat veterans have a soft spot.

From the perspective of the historian seeking to learn what really happened, both memoirs and fiction are suspect. One must read carefully and deeply. To know to what degree a work of fiction reflects actual experience, one must understand the author's background and motives. Of course, from the perspective of the reader who wants entertainment, fiction provides a perfect venue, and these stories describe wartime experiences, albeit mostly of a noncombat nature. The book deserves its place as a classic of American World War I fiction, and Trout and the University of Alabama Press are to be commended for reprinting this book for a new generation of readers.

Leaving Mac Behind: The Lost Marines of Guadalcanal. By Geoffrey W. Roecker. (Brimscombe, UK: Fonthill Media, 2019. \$36.95 cloth.)

Author Geoffrey Roecker has written a book that contributes greatly to understanding the dire situation facing the United States in the Guadalcanal campaign of 1942–43. Roecker created the research initiative MissingMarines to highlight the stories of Marines whose remains were not recovered during the World War II era and to support missing in action recovery efforts. He is also an accomplished, awardwinning copywriter in Manhattan by day and spends his spare time researching and writing about this crucial subject.

In 1942, Imperial Japan was victorious in the early months of the Second World War after Pearl Harbor and the fall of the Philippines, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaya, Burma, and the Dutch East Indies. The majority of Australia's military forces fighting in North Africa felt unprotected and had to respond in the New Guinea island chain. The Southern Pacific sea lines of communication run past the Solomon Islands, which were long a UK and Australian sphere of influence. Japan had landed troops in this island chain and started building an airfield and base on the largest island of Guadalcanal. This would have effectively led to the extension of their air and naval forces' operational reach from the large base at Rabaul, New Guinea. The 1st Marine Division under Major General Alexander A. Vandegrift had been tasked with landing and seizing the island and airfield in August 1942. Maps and intelligence about Guadalcanal and the surrounding islands were poor until later linking up with W. F. Martin Clemens, a district officer and coastwatcher for the Royal Australian Navy on Guadalcanal and a volunteer in the British Solomon Islands Defence Force, and a group of native Solomon Islander scouts working with him.

Roecker does a superb job reviewing primary historical sources on what the fighting was like and how battle losses were documented. The policy on graves registration had not been explored much since the First World War. The United States' hold on the land, sea, and air around Guadalcanal was tenuous at best. The current doctrine of the time was to create local unit field cemeteries and to employ field burials when conditions did not allow the fighting unit to return with the remains of their fallen comrades. In the extremely humid and densely vegetated tropical terrain, immediate burial was preferred as remains quickly began to decompose. The problem with field burials was that the maps provided to the Marines at the beginning of the campaign were grossly inaccurate; often reports of field burial were either inaccurate or difficult to ascertain by landmark positions.

To add to the problems of mapmaking and intelligence, early on the division intelligence officer, G-2, Colonel Frank Bryan Goettge, led the ill-fated "Goettge patrol" outside friendly lines into what some think could have been a trap set by a Japanese prisoner. All but two of the patrol perished in the fight. A combat patrol was sent out to search for them but only dismembered remains were found and the area was deemed too dangerous to stay and conduct a hasty field burial. This is the first group of many that the author lists as missing Marines whose retrieval should be

Col William Preston McLaughlin is currently an adjunct professor at the Daniel Morgan Graduate School of Washington, DC, and served in the Marine Corps for 27-plus years. He holds three master's degrees and is a joint qualified officer graduate of the Joint and Combined Warfighting Course. McLaughlin was the 1998 recipient of the Dr. Elihu Rose Award for Teaching Excellence, and he has previously served as associate professor and acting chair of the National Security program on the faculty of MCU's Amphibious Warfare School, as program manager at the Krause Center for Leadership and Ethics, and as adjunct faculty at The Citadel.

pursued. Later in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, dental records, archaeological techniques, and the use of DNA in forensic science have led to some successful identification and repatriation of remains to the United States. The author also recounts the creation of the 1st Marine Division Cemetery on Guadalcanal, which eventually became the Army-Navy-Marine Corps Cemetery as the fight expanded and Guadalcanal eventually transitioned into a rear area naval/air and service of supply base. The Marines and sailors buried there were often visited by their comrades and their gravesites were given personal touches. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt once visited and was visibly moved by the cemetery's size and the care it was given.

Careful recording of burial or reinterment of field burials was crucial and was part of a policy to locate and return the remains of missing servicemembers to their families in the United States. A large postwar expedition by Army Graves Registration Service personnel relocated all of the remains from this large field cemetery to either the United States or to the "punchbowl" cemetery of the Pacific in Oahu, Hawaii. The field burials of patrol members such as the Marine Raiders and other units, as well as missing aircraft, proved the most elusive. Often the search teams had to relent and note the remains as unrecoverable.

Roecker started this book as he explored his own family's history in World War II. His depth of research is phenomenal and goes from wartime accounts to the present. He and his colleagues, including organizations like History Flight, have provided invaluable service to the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency. Handling losses that go back more than 75 years, this public-private partnership has been invaluable in keeping promises to never leave fallen comrades behind and to provide closure to the families of the missing. Roecker's description of the wartime expediencies of field cemeteries and burials show the stark contrast to the immensely detailed processes used by the military's Mortuary Affairs personnel today and the extraordinary means exerted to recover fallen or missing personnel from the conflict zones of the Global War on Terrorism. It emphasizes the severe conditions under which the Guadalcanal campaign was fought and what a close-run thing it was after Pearl Harbor.

It should also be noted that historians, along with scientific and archaeological personnel, bring key skills to the search and recovery process of missing personnel from earlier wars. Forensic capabilities working alongside detailed historical understanding are key force multipliers in these efforts and have led to a significantly higher success rate than in the past. The United States is fortunate to have had such heroes who fought on Guadalcanal, and this latest book is crucial in understanding how we can bring them home. Recovery operations occur across the Pacific and Asia, but also in Europe. A current field operation occurs on Betio (Tarawa), which is ongoing.

This book is highly recommended for the training of Marines and sailors in personnel accountability and mortuary affairs. It is also a key historical account in understanding sea denial and sea control in great power competition between the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Imperial Japan during World War II. It should be considered for use by the History Division at Marine Corps University for professional development and should be nominated for inclusion on the Commandant's Reading List.