



Spearhead NEWS

"Uncommon Valor was a Common Virtue"

OFFICIAL
PUBLICATION
of the
5TH MARINE
DIVISION
ASSOCIATION

**61ST ANNUAL REUNION - BILOXI, MISSISSIPPI
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IMPERIAL PALACE HOTEL & CASINO**

A 'Lion of Iwo Jima,' MajGen. Fred Haynes dies

By Ray Elliott

MajGen. Fred E. Haynes, USMC (Ret.), 89, died March 25 at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City after a brief hospitalization resulting from a lingering illness and poor health that had plagued him for several years.

After serving in the Marine Corps for nearly 35 years and three wars, Gen. Haynes continued his service to the country until shortly before his death. He had attended and participated in the 65th Anniversary of the Battle of Iwo Jima Reunion and Symposium in Arlington, Va., Feb. 18-21. Gen. Haynes founded the sponsoring organization, Iwo Jima Association of America (IJAA), to remember the Iwo Jima campaign and to honor the 6,821 Americans who died there and the more than 17,000 who were wounded in the 36-day battle near the end of World War II.

"Honoring those brave men who fought and died to secure a nearly impregnable island against a worthy foe was a duty I felt necessary to undertake," Gen. Haynes said about the veterans' reunion organization he formed as the Combat Veterans of Iwo Jima more than 20 years ago. "But we later realized that sailors, soldiers and airmen should also be recognized for their service on Iwo Jima and changed the name to the Iwo Jima Association of America."



MajGen. Fred E. Haynes founded the Iwo Jima Association of America and made several return trips to Iwo Jima for the Reunion of Honor ceremony.

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***Archived issues of Spearhead News are
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**Limited quantities of
reprints still available**

Do you remember your *Spearhead Magazines* from the 1940s? If you have misplaced any of your three copies and are interested in replacing them, we have just the solution for you. I have had copies made of all three issues, and you can still obtain copies if you want to replace the original ones. There are still a few sets left, and I do not intend to order more.

They are now in 8.5" x 11" format, printed on cardstock paper with a spiral binding and plastic covers. They will lay flat and are very easy to see and read. The copies are a great addition to your keepsakes and also a great gift for your children and grandchildren. Many of our members have bought copies for their loved ones.

This was the idea of Steve Vogelzang, nephew of Sam Zigtema, a member of the Pioneers, who wanted to honor his uncle. I agreed to take on the project, and all proceeds above the costs of printing and mailing will go to the Injured Marines Semper Fi Fund through the Ladies' Auxiliary. The auxiliary has been donating our funds to this group for several years because it helps our Marines.

Each copy is \$20, plus \$5 for mailing. (We can mail up to three copies for the \$5.) The copies available are #1 "**Camp Pendleton**"; #2 "**Iwo Jima**"; and #3 "**Occupation of Japan.**" If you're interested in obtaining copies please contact me.

- D.D. Dietz

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THE EDITOR'S DESK

By Ray Elliott



Two Marines reconnect after 65 years

Just before I left for the 65th Anniversary Iwo Jima Reunion and Symposium in Arlington, Va., in February, I received an e-mail from John Butler, son of LtCol. John Butler, commanding officer of 1/27 who was killed on Iwo Jima on March 5. Like many of you, John regularly sends stories my way that makes this job so interesting and worthwhile. This one was particularly intriguing.

It is a story of two Marines who had found each other after 65 years — both thinking the other hadn't made it off the island alive. Both were in John's father's First Battalion, 27th Marine Regiment, both in C Company, one a rifle platoon sergeant, the other a machine gun section leader in GySgt. John Basilone's platoon. One had been a Marine Raider, the other a Paramarine.

As a result of a chance encounter, the two buddies who shook hands when they loaded on their amtracs for the ride to Red Beach Two reconnected almost 65 years later. Clarence Rea, the rifle platoon sergeant, sent an e-mail and the photo on this page of the two and their three buddies who didn't make it. Clinton Watters, the machine gun section leader, was the other man.

"He was wounded early on," Rea wrote. "I received information that he had died from wounds. At a party in Los Angeles last Saturday night (Feb.13) for my grandson, my nephew walked up to me and said he had a chiropractor fishing friend in Orange Country whose name was (Mark) Watters. The friend mentioned that his dad had been on Iwo."

Rea's nephew (also Mark) recalled a photo his uncle had shown him of five Marines and recalled the name of Watters as one of the men. Mark Watters reportedly called his father in Medford, Ore., and asked him if he knew Clarence Rea. His dad apparently replied, "Yes. Where the heck is he?"

So during the party, the nephew tapped his uncle on the shoulder and handed him a small piece of paper

with Watters' e-mail, address and phone number and told him to call when he got home. Which he did on Monday morning.

"The tears rolled on this end," Rea wrote in an e-mail. "I could not believe this, and I still can hardly believe it. We talked for an hour and a half and have been in contact almost daily since. What a reunion. We are sending pictures back and forth. He is sending me a video he was given six years ago when he was in New Jersey to attend the Basilone Parade.

"I told him about the book, 'The Skipper and His Gyrenes,'" Rea continued, mentioning Gulf War Marine veteran Mark Flowers' historical monograph about the 1st Battalion, 27th Marines that Butler had sent about his father's battalion — Flowers' website (www.2gyrenes.org) is dedicated to World War II Marines.

Watters, who was Basilone's best man at his wedding to Marine Sgt. Lena Riggi before they left Camp Pendleton for Camp Tarawa on the island of

Continued on following page



(Photo courtesy of Clarence Rea)

This photo was taken in Honolulu prior to leaving for Iwo Jima. Back row, left to right: Sgt. Jack Wheeler (KIA), Sgt. Clinton Watters (WIA) and Sgt. Clarence Rea (WIA). Front row, left to right: GySgt. John Basilone (KIA) and Sgt. Edward Johnston (KIA).

THE EDITOR'S DESK

Continued from previous page

Hawaii, was originally with Basilone in 1/7 on Samoa but was in the hospital with jaundice when the battalion left for Guadalcanal. He was reassigned to the 2nd Marine Division and later hooked up with the 3rd Raider Battalion and fought on Bourganville before joining 1/27 for the Iwo Jima campaign.

"We (Watters and Rea) had been good friends and buddies all through the forming of the Fifth Marine Division at Camp Pendleton," Rea wrote. "Clint was wounded a few days before I was on Iwo Jima. He was taken to the hospital on Guam and then back to the States to a hospital on the East Coast.

"When I was wounded on March 3, I was taken to the hospital on Guam, too. I was there a little longer than usual — as you can imagine, casualties were being brought in very fast and moved out very fast — as I was arguing to save my arm, which was going to be amputated. It was here that I was told that Clint had died. I cannot remember if it was a nurse or a doctor who informed me."

From Guam, Rea was shipped to Aiea Heights Naval Hospital in Hawaii and then back to the States to Oak Knoll Naval Hospital in Oakland, Calif., where he had "experimental work done on (his) arm and saved it." Rea said he was in the hospital for a year and a half; Watters said he was in one for six months.

"All these years, I thought he had perished," Rea said. "I did not sleep most of last night (after they talked on the phone), I was so elated to know he was still with us. I will really believe it when I see him again."

And after they had reconnected, they began planning a reunion in Northern California for April 9 to see each other, but had to postpone it because of illness.

"I have written to Clarence suggesting we reschedule our reunion for April 30," Watters wrote in an e-mail. "This time I hope I do not spoil it."

The reunion did take place in Vacaville, Calif., and "what a wonderful reunion!" Rea later wrote. "We spoke of many of our old friends that we lost. After 65 years, we both look the same, although Clint is still the better looking Marine!"

Watters wrote in an e-mail to note "that it was almost 65 years to the day that we last greeted each other while boarding landing craft to land on Iwo on Feb. 19. Another item we have learned since getting back together is that we have the same birth dates, only a year apart. Clarence is the old man."

The reunion and knowledge that both are still alive has given them a renewed purpose. Since the reunion, Rea has written that he has found other members of C/1/27: William Harp, Adolph Brusa, Burt Rutan, Dick Hudman and Hugh Mobley.

"What a joy to re-connect."



Clinton Watters (left) and Clarence Rea reunite in Vacaville, Calif., after 65 years.

Monument on Mt. Suribachi gets restored

IWO JIMA, JAPAN — At the summit of Mount Suribachi, the peak where the iconic World War II flag-raising photograph was taken, is a monument to remember the more than 6,800 Americans killed during the bloody battle that took place here in 1945.

The U.S. Marine Corps monument has been littered and damaged by years of harsh weather, hundreds of mementos placed by visitors and an overall lack of upkeep.

Repairing this damage was the mission for 22 Marines from III Marine Expeditionary Force and Marine Corps Base who journeyed to the island Sept. 9 (2010).

The project included relocating hundreds of dog tags, name tapes and several other tokens that had been placed there by visitors over the years and pressure washing and stripping the paint from the monument, said MGySgt. Jerald R. Taylor, the III

MEG G-4 chief who spearheaded the mission.

“The Marines and sailors understood the importance of the task at hand, and they were all highly motivated to restore the solemnity of the monument,” he said.

“Although they endured high temperatures with minimal shade, I did not hear one of them ever complain.

“The Marines spent more than 12 hours sorting through the thousands of dog tags, untangling them with patience despite the hot sun burning down on them atop Mount Suribachi,” Taylor said.

SSgt. Will Stevens, a facilities maintenance program coordinator, said this task was very personal.

“My uncle fought on Iwo Jima during World War II, so coming back to the lands where so many men fought and died is an honor,” Stevens said.

As part of the recent tour of the Pacific region, U.S. Secretary of the

Navy Ray Mabus visited the island and remarked on the unsightly appearance of the monument.

That’s when leaders decided to set up the three-day project.

Cpl. Julie Martinez, a field radio operator with 7th Communication Battalion, III MEF, said she was proud to be among the few people selected to complete the restoration project.

“I am absolutely intrigued by the history of the Marine Corps, so it was absolutely worth every minute that we spent in the sweltering heat to preserve this site,” said the 22-year-old.

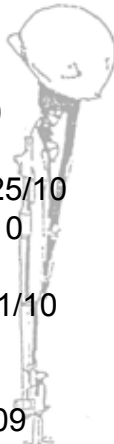
“I’m sure that myself as well as the rest of the Marines will forever remember the difference that we have made and the emotions that ran through us throughout the duration of the three days we stayed on Iwo Jima,” she said.

Reprinted with permission from “The Fighting Fourth Marine Division of WWII” newsletter.

FINAL MUSTER

(“Roll Call of the Reef”)

BRANCA, Joseph A. **K-4-13** 12/09/09
CONWELL, Robert **I-3-26** 11/01/09
HAYNES, Maj. Gen. Fred **HQ-28** 03/25/10
JOHNSON, James W. **E-2-27** 03/15/10
PUGH, Paul **D-2-26** 03/28/10
RICE, James Wesley **27 JT SIG** 30/11/10
SCHLEICHER, Roy **F-2-13** 02/19/10
TEIXEIRA, Leland R. **I-3-27** 09/05/00
WILLINGS, B.J. (Billy) **G-3-27** 12/20/09



Secretary’s Corner

Many of you have been sending your change-of-address in a timely manner. Thank you for doing so, as it saves us money and time.

We need someone to plan and hold a reunion in 2011, and to present this to our members at the business meeting next October. It would be nice to have one in the Midwest or West.

I have a couple of suggestions: Rapid City, S.D., would be a good location. There is a fine airport and many good spots to visit. Jackson Hole, Wyo., might be an OK site. California or Oregon might fit the bill. Just be sure there is an airport nearby.

– Ted Overgard
Secretary

GEN. FRED HAYNES

Continued from page 1

Under the general's guidance, the organization of which he long served as president has evolved to include all veterans of that iconic battle, their families, historians and other interested parties and seeks to educate future generations and keep the memory of Iwo Jima alive. The flag raising on Mt. Suribachi by the members of the 28th Marine Regiment of the Fifth Marine Division, with which the general served on Iwo Jima, burned the island battle into our collective memory and prompted then-Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal to declare that it would "guarantee a Marine Corps for the next 500 years."

Through the years, the general has helped perpetuate that guarantee, and he returned to Iwo Jima several times with Military Historical Tours (MTH) for what is known as the "Reunion of Honor" to commemorate the battle that also took the lives of 21,000 Japanese soldiers. Survivors and representatives of the Japanese government are included in those reunions, and Gen. Haynes and members of both organizations have been instrumental in reconciling the once-bitter enemies and strengthening the alliance.

With his extensive experience with prisoners of war, Gen. Haynes also advised presidential candidates and sitting presidents on the treatment of those captured during battle. He advocated humane treatment of all prisoners, not only because he believed "it was the moral thing to do," but also because it often provided valuable information for the United States and its allies at a time when the lives of servicemen and women depend upon it.

One of his often-told examples was about a French-speaking Japanese soldier on Iwo Jima who surrendered on March 14 while the battle was still raging, taking many lives on both sides. Japanese soldiers had been ordered to kill 10 Americans before they died and to never surrender. But this soldier chose surrender over death, was treated humanely by U.S. Marines and was taken to a French-speaking lieutenant (Lt. Fiorenzo V. Lopardo, H/3/28) who learned that the prisoner was an intelligence officer. Because of the humane treatment he received, the soldier provided valuable information about Japanese strategies and was eventually sent to Camp Hunt near Washington, D.C., for interrogation.

(The conclusion of the story of that prisoner, Taizo Sakai, was reported in the Spring 2009 *Spearhead* by the lieutenant's son, Steve Lopardo.)

Never forgetting that experience and the valuable information the Japanese soldier had provided, Gen. Haynes advocated that the Bush Administration humanely treat enemy combatants captured after the 9-11 attack on the United States and from the subsequent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. He also believed that the prisons in Guantanamo Bay and Eastern Europe should be closed and that the CIA and the American government should ban the surreptitious use of torture to gain information.

Two years ago, Henry Holt & Company published "The Lions of Iwo Jima," Gen. Haynes' first-hand account (with co-author James A. Warren) of the campaign, focusing on the 4,500 Marines of Combat Team 28 for which he "was tactical control officer of the landing team and later instrumental in forming tactics and strategy for the battle in the far north of the island."

Tom Brokaw, former NBC anchor and author of "The Greatest Generation," said of the book: "This riveting and memorable account of the horrors and heroics of Iwo Jima is much more than another war story. It is about courage, grief, sacrifice, and most of all, about honor."

Such words also describe the life of Gen. Fred Haynes.

"I would characterize Gen. Haynes as a gentleman warrior," said Col. Earl Piper, USMC (Ret.) who served under the general in Vietnam in 1966-67 when he was commanding officer of the Fifth Marine Regiment. "In a number of stressful situations, I observed his cool, unflappable demeanor; he always helped bring calm and confidence to the moment."

Col. Piper's father, Brig. Gen. Earl S. Piper, USMC (Ret.), served as G-4 of the Fifth Marine Division on Iwo Jima as a colonel and knew then-Capt. Haynes personally and wrote his son (Earl) that they had a "winner" after learning who was commanding officer of the regiment.

Gen. Haynes was born in Dallas, Texas, on Jan. 5, 1921, and graduated from Southern Methodist University in June 1941. After college, he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps Reserve and accepted a regular commission upon completion of the Reserve Officers' Class, Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Va., in August 1942. From then until February 1944, Lt. Haynes served as a platoon leader instructor. He was promoted to first lieutenant in February 1943 and to captain in March 1944.



MajGen. Haynes, senior United Nations command member of the Military Armistice Commission in Korea, passes in review as he prepares to leave Korea and become commanding general of the Third Marine Division on Okinawa in August 1973.

From Quantico, Capt. Haynes was transferred to Camp Pendleton, Calif., to join the newly formed Fifth Marine Division that shipped out to Camp Tarawa on the Big Island of Hawaii to train for Iwo Jima where he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V."

After Iwo Jima was secured in March 1945, he served in S-3 with both the First and Third Battalions, Sixth Marine Regiment, Second Marine Division until August 1946. He then returned to the United States and reported to Headquarters Marine Corps in Washington, D.C., to serve as Assistant G-2, Division of Plans and Policies until June 1949. A month later, he was promoted to major and continued on the track that eventually led him to become a general officer in the Marine Corps.

Leaving Washington, Maj. Haynes served a three-year tour of duty as associate professor of naval science at the University of Texas, Austin. It was during these years that he met and married the former Francis Lane of Ft. Worth, Texas, who preceded him in death. Their three children survive: Karen Francis Haynes and twin sons, Fred Elmore Haynes and William Lane Haynes and William.

In 1976, Haynes retired from the Marine Corps, married Bonnie Arnold and moved to New York City. She survives and was his constant companion in later years as he traveled to Iwo Jima and when he often spoke at various symposia and conferences at the IJAA, the National Press Club, the American Veterans Center, The National Museum of the Pacific War and numerous

other venues about the war in the Pacific in World War II and the Iwo Jima campaign.

During those years, Bonnie helped with the research and editing in producing "The Lions of Iwo Jima." She survives, as does stepdaughter Alexandra Samantha Tramont and grandchildren James and Kristen.

Following his tenure at the University of Texas, then-Maj. Haynes was sent to Amphibious Warfare School, Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Va., then to Japan in June 1953 where he served as Combat Intelligence Officer, G-2 section, Third Marine Division. Later, he was sent to Korea, where he served from March until September 1954 as

Executive Officer, Second Battalion, First Marine Regiment.

Back in the U.S., Haynes was assigned to Force Troops, Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic, and where he served as S-3 and S-4, Second Combat Battalion until November 1954. In December he was promoted to lieutenant colonel and attended the Foreign Service Institute in Washington, D.C., focusing on Turkish studies during 1957.

From December 1957 until May 1958, he served as Special Projects Officer, G-3 Division, Headquarters Marine Corps. Then he was transferred to Ankara, Turkey, to serve as Assistant Naval Attaché, Assistant Naval Attaché for Air, at the American Embassy. The 1960 revolution was taking place during those early days of the assignment, and LtCol. Haynes was the principal contact between the Embassy and the Turkish military.

Back in the States again, he went to the Air War College at Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama, then was assigned to Headquarters Marine Corps as Head of the Combat Intelligence Requirements and Readiness Branch, G-2 Division and was promoted to colonel.

From there the colonel served in the Pentagon until October 1966 when he was ordered to Vietnam where he served concurrently as Commanding Officer, Fifth Marines, and Chief of Staff, Task Force X-Ray, First Marine Division. He left Vietnam in December

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GEN. FRED HAYNES

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1967 and reported back to Headquarters Marine Corps in Washington to serve as Military Secretary to the Commandant of the Marine Corps.

Haynes was promoted to brigadier general in September 1968, served as Legislative Assistant to the Commandant of the Marine Corps, then was promoted to major general in September 1971 and was transferred to Camp Lejeune, N.C., where he served as Commanding General, Second Marine Division.

In January 1973, the general was assigned to the United Nations Command, Korea, and was transferred to Okinawa in August 1973 where he served as Commanding General, Third Marine Division. Then it was back to Camp Lejeune in September 1974 to assume duty as Commanding General, Marine Corps Base. In August 1975, he went back to Headquarters Marine Corps to assume duty as Deputy Chief of Staff for Research, Development and Studies. He remained in that billet until his retirement in 1976.

After a long and illustrious career and many successful assignments, the defining duty of Gen. Fred Haynes' life in the Marine Corps was the 36-day campaign on Iwo Jima. Despite his recent, deteriorating health, he had still planned to make one more trip to the island after the Feb. 18-21 reunion and symposium in Arlington. That trip was Feb. 26-March 5, and the

general and his wife were scheduled to go but had to cancel when he was hospitalized.

"Gen. Haynes was a fighting Marine," said Col. Warren Wiedhahn, USMC (Ret.), president and CEO of Military Historical Tours and coordinator and reunion chairman for IJAA. "He was the heart and soul of the Iwo Jima Association of America. He will be greatly missed, but his book, "The Lions of Iwo Jima," is perpetuating the legacy of all Iwo Jima veterans, living and dead."

NOTE: A complete list of MajGen. Fred E. Haynes' medals and decorations include the Legion of Merit with Combat "V" and gold stars in lieu of second through fourth awards, the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V," the Combat Action Ribbon, the Presidential Unit Citation with one bronze star, the Navy Unit Citation, the American Campaign Medal, and the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with one bronze star, the World War II Victory Medal, the Navy Occupation Service Medal with Asia clasp, the National Defense Service Medal with one bronze star, the Korean Service Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal with two bronze stars, the Republic of Vietnam Army Distinguished Service Order, the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm, the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry Unit Citation, the United Nations Service Medal, the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal and the Korean Order of National Security Merit.

LETTER

Millions of interesting stories yet to be told

Great job on the *Spearhead*. Seems like a lot of the guys are getting old enough to open up on some interesting stories. I think it is a great idea to publish them like you are doing. There must be 10 million stories from the wars, and only a relative few have been told.

I am 86 now, and it was a while back when I felt a need to write about my being on Iwo Jima. It is called "Footprints on the Sands of Combat." I was a Forward Observer on the 4th Battalion, L Battery, 13th Marines, 5th MarDiv and served with line troops for 24 days of the 28 days we were on the island. This story is not what I actually did during the battle, but my thoughts about seeing the terrible slaughter that was taking place right before my eyes. The story is only about six pages, single-spaced. I added a two-page chapter on my returning home after the war.

If you believe this is something you can use, I will send you a copy and you can do what you want with it. It is just another story among the millions that are out there. Let me know if you want it.

– Del Treichler
Muskego, WI

Editor's Note: *Our appreciation for the kind words. This story and the "10 million stories from the wars" are ones that need to be preserved for posterity. We will continue to print those stories, or parts of them, as long as we receive them. We have suggested publishing a book of such stories and a collection of Spearhead articles through the years to help preserve and perpetuate the legacy of the Fifth Marine Division and to honor the sacrifices and service of the Marines who comprised the division. To date that hasn't materialized.*

NEW MEMBERS: WELCOME ABOARD!

KERR, David J. **ASSOC** Bedford, TX
KERR, Gary S. **ASSOC** Richardson, TX
NIELSON, Milton H. **E-2-27** Blairsville, GA
TEIXEIRA, Iva Lea **MM** Paso Robles, CA

Annual-to-Life Members

BENJAMIN, Carlos L. **A-1-26** Pasco, WA
BERNSTEIN, Samuel **5TH PIONEER** Randolph, MA
DUNN, MGySgt. Robert J. **HQ-3-28** Hubert, NC
FOX, Billy J. **5TH JASCO** Texarkana, TX
GROPE, Matthew **5TH PIONEER** Youngstown, OH
JACKSON, Clyde W. **F-2-28** Dallas, TX
REDNOR, Joan **ASSOC** Deerfield Beach, FL
TREICHLER, Delbert **L-4-13** Meskego, WI

GySgt. John Basilone Award recipient announced for 2010

The recipient of the 2010 GySgt. John Basilone Award for Courage and Commitment is GySgt. Brian M. Blonder.

Blonder is a credit to the U.S. Marine Corps and to the United States of America. He was chosen because he has unfailingly exhibited the very same attributes that Marine Hero GySgt. John Basilone was famous for – love of Corps, courage beyond all expectation and commitment to putting his Marines first and foremost.

Feb. 19 is the anniversary of the Battle of Iwo Jima; it is also in many states, counties and cities across our country a day that has been proclaimed GySgt. John Basilone Day.

Please take a moment and remember the Marines of today who are far from home, and the Marines of yesterday who did not get to come home.

For more information on the award and scholarship, please visit the website at www.johnbasilonestampcampaign.com.

– Jordan Schneider
GySgt. John Basilone Award/Scholarship
571-259-4624

MORE REUNION ANNOUNCEMENTS

56th Annual Reunion

Third Marine Division Association

Aug. 3-8, 2010

Sheraton Charleston Airport Hotel
Charleston, SC
800-325-1900

\$109 a night, plus tax. Rate includes breakfast buffet and is available three days before and three days after reunion dates, based on availability.

Reservation deadline: July 1

18th Annual Reunion

Subic Bay Marines

Aug. 9-14, 2010

Fredericksburg Hospitality House Hotel
2801 Plank Road
Fredericksburg, VA

800-682-1049 (mention Subic Bay Marines)
Rooms are \$85 a night, plus tax. Rate good for three nights on either side.

Reservation deadline: July 15

Sangley Point Marines are members of the Subic Bay Marines Association and are welcome.

63rd Annual Reunion

The “Fighting Fourth” Marine Division Association

Aug. 24-29, 2010

The Westin Oaks
Houston, TX
888-627-8514

\$89 a night, plus tax. Rate available three days before and after reunion dates, based on availability.

Reservation deadline: July 22



John Basilone's last battle

The Medal of Honor recipient who died on Iwo Jima — and whose heroism is resurrected in 'The Pacific' — is recalled by a World War II comrade

By William Douglas Lansford

In late 1944, after two years in the Pacific as a Marine with Carlson's Raiders, I rotated stateside and received a 30-day furlough. I was supposed to rest, visit my family and enjoy life among civilians, but none of it really worked.

Unable to adjust to the complexities of wartime civilian life, I lied to my parents, saying my leave was up, and boarded a bus for Camp Pendleton with a week left of my furlough.

In Pendleton I reported and was assigned to Company C, 27th Regiment of the newly formed 5th Division, but being early, I was told I'd find the area deserted. They were right. The new barracks stood empty, the bunks had no mattresses, the rifle racks were bare, the empty halls echoing.

Outside again, I was surprised to see a young Marine smiling at me. He wore khaki, with sergeant's stripes, and in no way resembled the muscular giant depicted in oils on a recent cover of Collier's magazine. Actually, he looked much like any other Marine, but what caught my eye was the tiny blue ribbon spangled with white stars pinned over his other ribbons. It was, unmistakably, the Medal of Honor and the smiling guy was John Basilone.

Serving with Basilone was a brief but golden period of the war for me. He never barked like the other gunnery sergeants but ruled like a wiser, older brother looking after his younger siblings, with humor and a style all his own. Under the hot California sun, with our faces stuck in the dust of Camp Pendleton, he could pick up a draggy machine gun drill with "Awright, ya goldbricks. Ya cut the time on settin' them guns up or don't expect no liberty come Friday!" And we did it because we knew he was the best machine gunner in the Corps and we wanted to be like him.

Basilone did more than train the men. He taught our recruits the meaning of esprit de corps, and in those of us who had fought, he rekindled a willingness to fight again. His simplicity, his cheerfulness, his grasp of human nature — the charm and easy grace with which he carried his honors — gave us not only confidence

but pride. We were "Basilone's boys" and were envied for it throughout the division.

Our weekend hangout in L.A. was the Biltmore Hotel, where we took over an entire floor. Starting Friday evening, Basilone played and whooped it up with the rest of us until the last hours of Sunday night when we'd all crawl back to our transportation points and head for Camp Pendleton in a rush resembling a Roman chariot race, for at reveille on Monday, John expected us to toe the line, stone sober and ready for duty. We had chased girls and swilled rum and Coca-Cola all weekend, but until Friday it would be "Prepare for gun drill!", "Ready, Sarge" and "On this line, action!" with Basilone's keen eye on you making sure you didn't screw up.

Early that summer of 1944 the fun ended. Our division had been ordered to Hawaii. There we began practicing landings on "Island X." It was clear that we would soon be taking the fight to the enemy.

Some time back, I'd been promoted to sergeant and transferred to regimental headquarters as an intelligence noncom, so I was no longer one of Basilone's boys and I missed that. I visited Basilone in January 1945, only days before we were to ship out. I wanted to say goodbye to him and the guys, for we wouldn't be sailing together.

As I approached their tent area I could see the whole goofy crew giving one another haircuts with the company tools. John, his arms covered with hair, stood back surveying a perfectly grotesque job he'd just performed on another guy.

"Not bad," he said. "Mohawk style — oughta scare the hell outta some poor Jap."

"It scares me," I said, pulling off Basilone's cap. The handsome John was clipped bald as a brass ball.

He grinned. "What d'ya think?" Then, growing serious, "It'll be cleaner. There's no barber shops on Iwo Jima."

The words echoed in my ears long after I'd left him. Iwo Jima. So that was "Island X." Then I couldn't help thinking: Shortly before leaving Pendleton, John had married Sgt. Lena Riggi, a pretty female Marine.

So why wasn't he back in Pendleton? His answer had always been the same: "I'm staying with my boys. They need me." Perhaps it was the only answer that mattered.

On the morning of Feb. 19, 1945, we hit Red Beach on Iwo and started climbing its black sides under a storm of enemy mortars and artillery. Basilone had landed one wave earlier.

Having assaulted a pillbox on the beach, Basilone gathered several Marines and left them to hold while he went back for more men and weapons.

On his way, Basilone spotted three Sherman tanks struggling up the beach under heavy fire. Knowing their value for knocking out bunkers, Basilone began guiding the tanks and pointing out targets while completely exposed.

Once on high ground, Basilone resumed rounding up troops for the assault team he had started building. To do this he'd have to recross the steep volcanic beach where many Marines were still pinned down by the enemy's relentless shelling and well-camouflaged pillboxes.

It was almost noon, and throughout the battle Basilone had risked his life repeatedly. It seemed nothing could touch him.

Many men have said they saw John Basilone fall on the beach, which he did not. One said Basilone's legs were blown off by a mine. Several claim they heard Basilone's final words, and one said Basilone begged to be put out of his misery with his own pistol. It's all fiction.

The most credible eyewitness is Roy Elsner — the headquarters cook who had watched our machine-gun drills back in Pendleton and knew Basilone by sight. He said that when he and some buddies were hunting for their headquarters: "A few hundred yards from Motoyama Field No. 1 we heard an explosion, which caused us to look [toward the field]. We saw Basilone and the three guys who were with him fall."

Some time after noon I came across a group of blackened bodies on the edge of Motoyama Airfield No. 1. Company C was advancing half a mile ahead, sweeping the flat field clean, when one of the dead caught my eye. He was a thin, pallid kid. His helmet was half off, and he lay face up, arched over his combat pack, with his jacket torn back and his mouth open. I vaguely recognized someone I had known in that lean, lifeless face beneath its dusty stubble of hair.

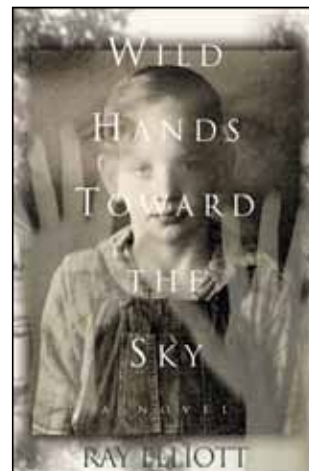
Someone said, "That's Basilone."

I walked around and asked, "Is this Basilone?"

A guy I knew said, "Yeah. He was briefing his guys when a mortar scored a direct hit. It killed them all."

I sat and studied the dead man closely, but I didn't touch him. The shell had landed at his feet, sending shrapnel into his groin, neck and left arm. He looked incredibly thin, like an undernourished kid, with his hands on his stomach as though it hurt. This was the hero of Guadalcanal, the joy of a nation, the pride of the Marines and my friend, John Basilone.

In the eighth of 10 episodes of HBO's series, "The Pacific," the death of Medal of Honor recipient John Basilone was depicted during the first day of fighting on Iwo Jima. William Lansford, a Marine and Los Angeles resident, also fought that day in Iwo Jima and recalls his friendship with the famous Marine gunnery sergeant and his last day. Originally published May 3, 2010. Reprinted with permission, Los Angeles Times.



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(Read about the project on the next page.)**

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JOHN BASILONE: LEGACY OF A HERO

GySgt. John Basilone, an Italian-American Marine from Raritan, N.J., known as “Manila John” for his boxing prowess while serving a hitch in the Army in the Philippines during the late 1930s, joined the Marine Corps in 1940 and received one of the first Medals of Honor awarded to a Marine for action on Guadalcanal. He is also one of the three Marines featured in the Stephen Spielberg-Tom Hanks HBO series, “The Pacific.”

Diane Hawkins, GySgt. Basilone’s niece, returned from Europe where she had lived for 15 years to help develop her uncle’s character for the series and was asked by members of the John Basilone Foundation to direct and produce a documentary. Diane and her family are thrilled with the choice of their uncle to be in “The Pacific.” They are all moved by it and overwhelmed to be seeing him depicted on TV.

With her experience and background as an actress, a filmmaker and a former journalist for the New York Daily News, and a good number of contacts with Marine veterans and other sources who have opened up to her through her relationship with her uncle, Diane has started filming and interviewing for the documentary.

To continue the work, the project is seeking additional funding for the production work, which is requiring modest, but considerable, travel.

“I am thoroughly enjoying and fully appreciating this personal journey of following in my uncle’s footsteps,” Diane says, “including a trip to Guam and Iwo Jima, where Uncle John served and died. The trip was an incredible and heartfelt experience, as was the opportunity to be with Iwo Jima veterans who survived that battle.”

The travel, filming and production costs necessary to take advantage of the small windows of amazing interview opportunities that continue to present themselves are beyond the initial, shoestring budget. Diane continues to do a big job with very few resources and a lot of kindness from strangers-turned-friends. But this is a passion that has also become a very spiritual way of discovering her uncle through those who loved and served with him, or simply admire and respect him.

The focus of the documentary has become the journey itself and how John Basilone’s legacy of courage, honor and sacrifice has affected her and her family, those who survived the war and younger generations who continue to be impacted by his example. Currently Diane is gathering archival footage,

obtaining new footage of current events across the country, and filming interviews with relevant sources. Time is running short in reaching the aging Iwo Jima veterans.

Diane recently attended the Roger Ebert Film Festival in Champaign, Ill., where she met Roger and Chaz Ebert and several filmmakers and continued to build buzz about the documentary — which was easier to do because of “The Pacific” series. She also attended the GI Film Festival in Washington and was invited to attend the Order Sons of Italy in America Gala with plans to film at the Marine Base in Quantico, where her uncle first trained as a Marine.

Then in early fall, John Basilone’s hometown (and Diane’s) of Raritan, N.J., hosts an annual parade in his honor, which enjoyed a resurgence in its 30-year history thanks to a very enterprising local third-grade class. Additional plans are to retrace John Basilone’s route to Hawaii, Guadalcanal, Australia and the Philippines. Travel and filming expenses to accomplish this stage of the production exceed the current means, and contributions are needed to move the project forward.

**Tax-deductible contributions may be sent to
The John Basilone Foundation, P.O. Box 6778, Hilton Head, S.C. 29938**

BOOK REVIEW

A Marine in World War II: From Notre Dame to Iwo Jima and Beyond

By Joyce Overgard
© Lois Hyndman, 287 pages



In 1943 while John Hyndman was in college, he joined the Marine Corps. Soon after, he was sent to Notre Dame University for additional courses. He wrote many letters home, and his mother saved all of them and dated the envelopes. John's letters gave very detailed information on everything from the classes he took at Notre Dame, Basic Training at Parris Island, through Infantry School and Officer Candidate School at Camp Lejeune. His writing is almost conversational, as if he is talking to the reader.

He received his commission on Sept. 30, 1944. He

was transferred to Camp Pendleton in California and soon thereafter to the Big Island, Hawaii, to join the Fifth Division. From there he was off to Iwo Jima. On Feb. 19, 1945, he was put in charge of unloading ships. After a few days he was assigned to a contingent fighting on the front lines. He received a very serious head wound on March 9 and was hospitalized for almost four months. In August a metal plate was placed in his head for protection. In April 1946, he was retired as a 2nd Lieutenant by an Act of Congress for disability.

John met Lois Williams at Wichita University, where she was a student and where he went to complete work on a degree in petroleum geology – which he had been doing prior to joining the Marine Corps. He and Lois were married in 1947. He worked in the petroleum industry for 42 years. John died in 1990, and his ashes were buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

John's mother passed all the letters to Lois, who organized and typed them. The result is this very interesting book, which is available for purchase. The 287 pages are 8.5" x 11" and include many pictures. You may order it for \$15, plus \$3 for postage, by sending a check to Lois Hyndman, 2626 Lockinvar Lane, Bryant, TX 77802.

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REGISTRATION FORM
FIFTH MARINE DIVISION ASSOCIATION 61ST REUNION
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 17 – THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2010

- Please enter how many attendees will be participating in each event and the total costs for each.
- Send a **check or money order** payable to:

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HOTEL INFO:
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\$79/night + tax
850 Bayview Ave., Biloxi, MS
(Ask to speak with Connie in reservations.)

- Phone orders and credit card orders will NOT BE ACCEPTED.
- Your cancelled check will serve as your confirmation.
- **All registration forms & payments must be received by mail on or before Oct. 1, 2010.** After that, registration will be accepted on a space-available basis only.
- We suggest that you make a copy of your completed form prior to mailing.
- Refunds of activities will depend on vendor policy and/or resale of tickets.
- Cancellation must be received by Oct. 1, 2010.
- **NOTE: NAME TAGS MUST BE WORN IN ORDER TO GET INTO ALL FUNCTIONS**

OCTOBER 1, 2010, IS THE CUT-OFF DATE

DATE	TIME	EVENT	PRICE PER PERSON	# OF PEOPLE	TOTAL
Sunday October 17		Registration - Members Only	\$15.00		\$15.00
		Ladies Auxiliary Dues – Optional	\$10.00		\$
		Hospitality Room Fee	\$25.00		\$
Monday October 18	9 a.m. - 5 p.m.	Registration			
Monday October 18	1:30 p.m.	Shrimping Trip	\$15.00		\$
Tuesday October 19	9:30 a.m.	Trip to Stennis Space Center (Need minimum of 30 sign-ups)	\$30.00		\$
Wednesday October 20	8:30 a.m.	Trip to Camp Shelby Armed Forces Museum (Need minimum of 35 sign-ups)	\$35.00		\$
Thursday October 21	Day at your leisure	Dinner at Casino Classic Buffet: Prime Rib, Chicken, Red Snapper	\$46.00		\$

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