



Spearhead NEWS

"Uncommon Valor was a Common Virtue"

OFFICIAL
PUBLICATION
of the
5TH MARINE
DIVISION
ASSOCIATION

**60TH ANNUAL REUNION - HOUSTON, TEXAS
SEPTEMBER 21 - 27, 2009
MARRIOTT NEAR HOBBY AIRPORT**

The search to better understand one's father

By Cole Whitney

Who is this guy? That was the question I asked myself about my father, Ross A. Whitney Jr. He passed away in 2003, but there were parts of him I tried to know, but never understood. Why had he never felt the need to know my children better and make the effort to see them? Why, after I visited him in Chicago and Naples, Fla., had he never reciprocated by visiting my home in Dallas? My brothers and sisters from his first marriage shared the same questions. Why did he abandon them through divorce? Children rightly expect their parents to be more giving of their time instead of money or things. Why was my father different from others in my circle of friends? The answer came in a "Letter from Aunt Mearle" in 1999.

I wrote my father's sister to understand him better. She said, "My brother went to war a shiny-faced boy and came home with the stench of death in his nostrils. I think he saw so much death that he lost respect for



Ross A. Whitney Jr. of E-2-27

life and himself, because life was so short for some of his buddies and friends ... it was in a foxhole on Iwo Jima that he figured there was no god to allow all this." I believe my father's emotional and spiritual wounds were worse than the Picric acid burns he suffered in combat.

Dad told me a few things about his combat experience on Iwo Jima and Occupation of Japan with E-2-27, but several letters and scrapbooks from Aunt Mearle and Grandmother Whitney opened a window to his soul. I jumped through this window to restore what the locusts of war had eaten. My father's experience on Iwo Jima cost him an emotional part of his soul he would need to relate to his wife and children on the deeper levels they would require. I was not going to let my children suffer the complete absence of a grandfather.

My objective over the last several years was to build a shadow box for my father's military awards to pass

Continued on page 6



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SPEARHEAD NEWS

*Published four times annually in the interest
of the 5th Marine Division Association*

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In This Issue:

To members of 5th Marine Division Association ... 2
The Editor's Desk 3
Letters 4
Haynes' book voted one of best in 2008 5
Another side of the story 12
Medal of Honor recipient dies 13
Secretary's Corner 13
Final Muster 13
LZ Margo – The dead went last 14
Remembering Margo 20
Son seeks to identify father he never knew 22
Response to magazine reprints 'favorable' 23
New Members 23
Book Review 24
Reunion Registration Form 25
Hotel Registration Form 26
Reunion Journal Advertising 27

**To All Members of the
Fifth Marine Division Association**

There will be an attempt at the Houston 2009 meeting to declare the 2008 Washington, D.C., meeting NULL & VOID by some members of the Board of Trustees. Please read the minutes of the Executive/Trustee Meeting and the General Business Meeting that follow, for your information.

You will find that in the Executive/Trustee Meeting, the dispensing of the Association funds of \$25,000 in the Injured Marine Semper Fi fund; \$20,000 for the Young Marine program; \$10,000 to the Waterhouse Museum and \$40,000 to the BAR on the Beach were approved by a 4 to 1 vote of the trustees. These items were submitted to the members at the business meeting and approved by a 2 to 1 vote.

The Wounded Marine Program may be submitted as an exception (and funds to be provided).

Regarding the BAR the Beach: I signed a contract with the sculptor, which Tom Tyre, our legal officer, prepared. I also had the document reviewed by attorney Edward Mabry, and he approved it.

After gathering all the information and data from John Huffines, Bert Clayton of the Ad Hoc Committee, the sculptor Robert Eccleston, and written approval of the Marine Museum to place the statue, everything was ready to proceed with the project. It was already approved by the minutes of the meetings, and as president, I executed the contract. This is the responsibility of the president to do so.

The Ad Hoc Committee headed by Bert Clayton advanced the \$40,000 due the sculptor to begin the project. Bert Clayton will bring you up to date on the progress of the project.

I would like each of you to become informed about what is going on with our Association so your vote will make your decision on what is best for the Association.

If you need additional information, you may call the following:

- Ivan Hammond (409) 770-4249
- Mike Dietz (608) 254-1976
- John Huffiness (972) 744-0191
- Warren Musch (217) 245-4186
- Ken Waterson (972) 524-7026
- Bert Clayton (870) 741-8940

Semper fi,
– Ivan Hammond, President

Continued on page 8

THE EDITOR'S DESK

By Ray Elliott



Illinois vets take Honor Flight to see WWII Memorial

Since the first Honor Flight flew World War II veterans to Washington, D.C., in 2005 to visit the World War II Memorial, regional hubs of the program have sprung up across the country, enabling hundreds of veterans to make the trip. I recently was privileged to accompany two World War II veterans to Washington with the Effingham, Ill., hub of the National Honor Flight program.

It was a whirlwind trip – there and back in 24 hours.

Urbana, Ill., resident and Navy veteran Charles “Chuck” Preston, 84, left home at 12:30 a.m. July 8 to join the group of 28 travelling veterans. Preston had been to Washington only once before.

“I was at Union Station in ’43 long enough to change trains on the way to Norfolk,” Preston said, chuckling. “Just a couple of hours.”

Champaign, Ill., native and Marine veteran Frank “Sam” Weldon, 83, had never been to our nation’s capital. He joined Preston and me a few minutes later on the way to a rendezvous point in Effingham and a 3:30 a.m. bus departure for the airport in St. Louis.

Preston served as a signalman on the destroyer, USS Fogg DE 57, that was torpedoed by the Germans in the Canary Islands in December 1944 and was then transferred to PC 494 in the Pacific to track Japanese submarines by sonar. Weldon had landed with the 4th Marine Division on Iwo Jima and spent all but a couple of the 36 days of the bloody campaign on the island.

On the bus ride to the airport, a documentary was shown about the memorial featuring notable WWII veterans – including the late Jay Rebstock, longtime 5th Marine Division Association member who served with E/2/27 on Iwo Jima – talking about their experiences, the significance of the war and the reasons to build a memorial for the most catastrophic of all 20th century events.

Police escorts, cheering passengers and onlookers, handshakes, hugs, words of thanks and even kisses from women throughout the day became the norm. At Reagan National Airport, the group walked quietly through cheering onlookers just inside the terminal, and then boarded a charter bus for Arlington Cemetery and the Changing of the Guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier for the first stop of the trip.

“They’re sharp – and young,” Weldon said of the

Army’s Third U.S. Infantry (the Old Guard) soldiers who guard the tomb 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

At the World War II Memorial, Weldon’s grandson, Eric Spitz, an Army veteran who lives and works in the D.C. area, met his grandfather and spent the rest of the afternoon with him. They walked together, along with very one else, around the circularly designed structure where you can look west to the Reflecting Pool and the Lincoln Memorial out over a wall of 4,000 gold stars that commemorate the more than 400,000 Americans who died in World War II.

“It’s too bad the memorial couldn’t have been here earlier so more veterans could have enjoyed and appreciated it,” Preston said as he gazed out from his wheelchair at the columns representing each state and American territory at the time of the war.

At the Marine Corps Memorial where the Iwo Jima flag-raising statue looms larger than life in one section of Arlington Cemetery, Weldon was the last one on the bus because he was surrounded by 15 or 20 people who learned he’d served on Iwo Jima and asked him questions, including whether he saw the flag go up on Mt. Suribachi that Feb. 23, 1945, morning.

“Hell, no, I didn’t see the flag go up,” he said. “We were too busy fighting for the airfield, but I heard on the radio that, ‘The flag’s up.’ I turned around and saw it then.”

Resting later in the shade at the apex of the Vietnam and Korean War Memorials with three other veterans, they talked about what a wonderful day it had been, both with the weather and finally getting to see the memorial in person. Preston smiled when a woman happened along, took his hand and said, “Thank you for what you did for our country,” and leaned down and kissed him on the cheek.

“It got to me,” Preston said later about all the gestures of appreciation. “When I got back and was discharged at Great Lakes, I came down to Urbana and never ran into anything like that.”

Weldon agreed. But he said things “emerged emotionally in kind of a flashback way” that “got to him” as he stood in the shadow of the Marine Corps Memorial. The questions about the flag raising brought back strong memories of buddies killed that day and the many others killed and maimed in the battle.

Back at the airport for a 7:15 p.m. flight back to St. Louis, employees of Baxter Healthcare of Deerfield, Ill., who were in town for a meeting, heard about the Effingham hub’s trip and made arrangements to be at the airport to help the group through security, hand out boarding passes and talk with the veterans until flight time.

At a little before 10 p.m. and a few miles outside of Effingham, four Legion Riders pulled onto Interstate 70 and provided a motorcycle escort into the town where a fire truck met the bus and led it to the Sacred Heart Grade School and a waiting crowd of more than 150 cheering people, saluting

Continued on page 5

Connection prompts more information on Camp Tarawa

Tad Comstock had a letter in the (Spring issue of *Spearhead News*). I contacted him and had a great conversation on his lifeguard days with the 5th here at Camp Tarawa. A very interesting guy, so thanks to you and the *Spearhead*, I have more information on old Camp Tarawa.

– Jim Browne

Camp Tarawa MCL Detachment #1255
Community Affairs Officer and Newsletter Editor
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Article featuring the 28th sparks memories

Thanks for all your effort in publishing the *Spearhead News*. I received my spring edition this morning. Great article by Steve Lopardo. I, too, was in H Co. 3rd Bn. 28th. I was wounded the night of the 22nd and left the island on the morning of the 23rd. I watched the flag going up from a stretcher on a Higgins boat. The Higgins boat was taking me to the hospital ship, *Solace*. The sight of the flag going up on the mountain, as I lay on the stretcher bobbing in the Pacific, is burned in my memory. Seeing the picture of our C.O. of H Co. and other officers of the 28th brought back memories.

Keep up the good work.

– John Rowan Douglas, H-3-28
Mobile, Ala.

Reader appreciates Lopardo story

Steve Lopardo's article, "The Conclusion of the Hunt for Taizo Sakai," (*Spearhead News*, Spring 2008) was fascinating reading. Thank you for printing it.

As a radioman forward observer with H-3-13 in support of the 28th Marines, I had a very personal interest in this story. I would like to express appreciation to Steve Lopardo.

Like thousands of others, I was not up on Mt. Surabachi; however, I saw the event through field glasses from Motayama #1. While there, I was helping to register our battery to support the planned northward push of the 28th Marines.

As Vonnegut's book showed, coherent remembrances of war are not possible. This is my view on the ever-present flag-raising controversy.

– Thomas W. Sullivan, H-3-13
Pleasanton, Calif.
sulltom1@finestplanet.com

Searching for Glamour Gal crew

I am searching for surviving members of the Glamour Gal crew of the 13th Marines at Iwo. My grandfather was Thomas Owen Bratcher, Pfc, USMC and a member of the Glamour Gal crew. A USMC film was made about the Glamour Gal, and it is posted on YouTube.

The Glamour Gal is being re-made by a museum in Southern California and will [have fired] her first shot in a ceremony on May 8, 2009, in Hot Springs, Ark. I have members of the crew as follows:

James S. McDermott, Capt., KIA at Iwo 1945

Joseph L. Pipes, Sgt., deceased 8 May 1989

William G. Smith, Cpl., status unknown

Richard J. Samulevich, Pfc., living

Norman B. Jefferson, Pfc., deceased 10 Nov. 1993

Fermin A. Martinez, Pvt., deceased 24 June 2001

Thomas D. Hanby, Pfc., deceased 24 Nov. 1981

Thomas O. Bratcher, Pfc., deceased 29 March 1998

William G. Kuhn, Pfc., status unknown

Chris Behnke, Pfc., status unknown

Everett J. Reynolds, Pfc., KIA at Iwo 1945

I think Samulevich is still alive, but I have not been able to reach him. I found his granddaughter on Facebook and told her what was going on, but I have not heard back from her.

The ceremony on May 8, 2009, in Hot Springs, Arkansas, [was] in honor of the men who crewed Glamour Gal and of the other Iwo veterans. A man who was 50 yards in front of Glamour Gal [was] going to lead the 105 mm Howitzer and fire the first shot. He said Glamour Gal helped save his life. Glamour Gal was credited with firing the first shots at Mt. Suribachi, per press releases that I have found.

The Hanby family and I have been in contact. I have searched up and down and all over the place, calling anyone who is anything related to the Marines to see if any of the crew were still alive and would have wanted to attend, or family members would have wanted to attend. I think it was a very special moment to honor the crew and all who served at Iwo.

I have talked to several former Marines and consider it an honor to be able to talk to them whether they remembered the crew or not. Thank you for your service to our country and thank you for your time!

– Angelia Bratcher Bess
berbratbess@blomand.net

Museum still fulfilling mission

When we decided to close the physical location of the Waterhouse Museum, we set up a search committee to find a new home for the collection – a facility designated as the conservator of the collection. Information packets were sent to all interested organizations, museums and agencies in both public and private sectors. To date, we have received some very serious proposals to ensure that the collection will be exhibited in perpetuity consistent with our original mission.

The search committee and members of the Waterhouse family are close to making the final decision as to the selection of the facility which will be chosen as the new home for the colonel's works of original art.

As soon as that decision is made, the administrators of the Waterhouse Museum will inform our loyal supporters about our status and also solicit donations to establish a fund which will be an additional means to support and maintain the collection in the facility awarded the custodialship.

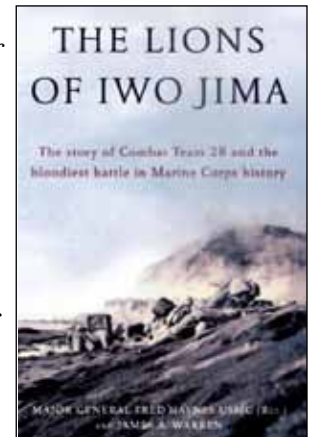
So, you see that we are working very hard to keep our mission alive, and we need all the financial and physical support we can get. We have an office in Toms River set up to handle "permission for use" requests, questions, and Web site sales. We plan on expanding our Web site extensively so that we can include background material about each work.

WE STILL DO EXIST as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, and WE ARE STILL FULFILLING OUR MISSION. We still depend on your support to keep this monumental endeavor alive! Thank you!

– Gunner Ed Sere, Executive Director
Waterhouse Museum
Toms River, NJ
waterhousemuseum@aol.com

Book voted one of best by U.S. Naval Institute

The Lions of Iwo Jima: The Story of Combat Team 28 and the Bloodiest Battle in the Marine Corps History, by Maj. Gen. Fred Haynes and James A. Warren, was voted one of the best Notable Naval books of 2008 in *Proceedings*, the U.S. Naval Institute publication.



Lions was reviewed in the Winter 2008 issue of *Spearhead News*. The *Proceedings* notice says the book is "not for the faint of heart, this is war at its most visceral. Haynes, a veteran of the carnage on Iwo as part of Combat Team 28, teams up with Warren, an accomplished military historian and writer, to create what *Booklist* calls an 'intense, moving account' in which 'the harsh face of war in the Pacific Theater has rarely been portrayed so effectively.'

"While the authors acknowledge some of the controversies surrounding the momentous battle, their focus remains on the warriors involved, even recognizing the courage and tenacity of the enemy soldiers. The first half of the book recounts details of the assault on the island, while the second half recalls the grueling, gruesome struggle against the island's defenders. The result is an appreciation of what the famous flag-raising photo atop Mount Suribachi really represents."

THE EDITOR'S DESK

Continued from page 3

veterans and a Color Guard lining the pathway into the building where the June 3 flight group of veterans were waiting for the start of the homecoming reception they'd missed when bad weather had delayed their flight home.

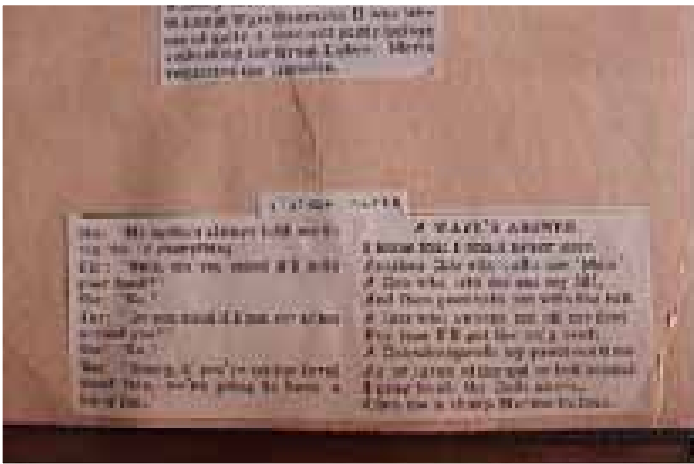
Sadly, one of the veterans on that flight had died just days after returning from his visit to see the memorial he and the 16 million other World War II veterans had earned for their part of preserving the freedoms we now enjoy.

"The trip and the memorial are very impressive," Weldon said back home almost 24 hours after he had left. "I wish everybody could go."

The Honor Flight program is worthwhile, and the memorial adds a piece of 20th century American history that had been missing from Washington and is a great tribute to those who served and to those who died. What a great legacy for posterity to visit and appreciate.

For more information about going on an Honor Flight as a veteran, a guardian or helping in any way, visit the national Web site at www.honorflight.org and find the hub closest to you.

on to my children. I wanted to find vintage pieces as close to original issue since my father only kept one or two items. I remember playing with an original Pacific Campaign ribbon with the bronze star device when I was a child and an EGA, but lost them long ago. Dad told me he left a gold inlay Saki set and Samurai sword from Japan on the train coming home to Chicago, which I would love to have now. Fortunately, my grandmother gave me his uniform and four scrapbooks she made from newspaper clippings over the period of the late 1930s to 1940s. Scrapbooks had pictures of my father and his sister during their years in the Marines and USN Waves (nurses).



The scrapbook of the author's grandmother, a USN Wave.

Many of you may appreciate the humor of a Wave from my grandmother's scrapbook. My father's sister and mother provided the clues in their gifts that I would need for my mission to pass on the memory of a man who taught me how to work hard, honor financial commitments, play golf and enjoy life, a man who gave me a college education and found the love of his children late in life. You may want to know the process I followed to honor my father so you can do the same. Assembling a memory from the scraps of your father's life can restore what the locusts have eaten.

The first step was a visit to the Department of the Navy (DON), Navy Personnel Command, National Personnel Records Center, to get my father's military records. You must be a next of kin or the veteran. Save yourself the trip to Missouri and visit the Web site at www.archives.gov/veterans/evetrecs. All the information necessary for a request is on this Web site. You will need to print a Standard Form (SF-180) from this Web site and submit to the address specified.

SF-180 has modern terms that do not apply to

veterans from WWII. For example, "DD-214" is a modern term. The term used in 1946 was "Report of Separation." "Official Military Personnel File" (OMPF) is another modern term. The term used in 1946 was "Service Record Book." Check all the items that apply, but here is a tip:

Write on the form, "Please send me COMPLETE Service Record Book, including medical records, duty assignments, campaigns, injury cards and personnel records." I know this seems redundant, but it helps.

If you don't have the veteran's serial number from Report of Separation or Honorable Discharge, provide as much detail as possible to help the records personnel find everything. They will do a detailed film search and send you another form.

The next form is a Signature Verification with a Service Request number. DON protects veteran records. You will need to prove next-of-kin status. Sign the form, keep a copy for your records and send the form back to DON. You will need the Service Request number to check on the status by letter, e-mail or phone.

You will receive a letter in several weeks or months notifying that records have been found and, you guessed it, another form: Order for Archival Record Reproduction Services. The total cost is \$50. Follow the instructions in the letter, submit the form and one or two months later, maybe several, you will get a gift of wonder and amazement. Your father's records will detail his life in the U.S. Marine Corps. You will have his awards, decorations and citations. You may receive more that you bargained for.

Be careful what you ask for, you may get it. In my case, a deeper understanding of my father was gained from review of his records, but the reading also elicited sadness, too. Dad's experience on Iwo taught me courage to face life's issues head on, but his records taught me commitment in serving others. He told me he was scared and wanted to run away, losing all his body fluids during the Japanese artillery bombardment received on Red 1 Beach. The training and devotion to his Marines kept him moving forward. This courage was made more remarkable when I found in the records that my father suffered an emotional loss two months before landing on Iwo Jima. His father divorced his severely ill mother, who became a dependent of my dad at the tender age of 19 years. Dad sent all of his Marine financial resources home and filed an allotment request with the DON to supplement shortfalls in alimony payments. The Marine Corps made special provisions to help her by approving the special allotment on Jan.

14, 1945, about one month before D-day on Iwo. This character of commitment made men like my father “the greatest generation.” It’s a dimension of valor Adm. Nimitz may not have recognized while speaking those immortal words written on the USMC memorial in Washington, D.C. I honor Dad’s life and that of your fathers’ with this article. May we all be better fathers for the sacrifice paid 64 years ago!

Additional Internet and book resources are provided below to gain greater insight to the man you call father:

1. USMC Historical Section

ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USMC/USMC-M-IwoJima

2. Yahoo group

groups.yahoo.com/group/fifthmarinedivisionww2

3. Iwo Jima, a look back

geocities.com/rbackstr2000

4. Book: “Complete Guide to United States Marine Corps Medals, badges and Insignia: World War II to Present” by James G. Thompson

5. U.S. Militaria Forum

usmilitariaforum.com/forums

Once you know your father’s unit, be sure to visit item number 3 above. You will need to know his company, battalion and regiment. E-2-27 is an example of the hierarchy – Company E, 2nd Battalion, 27th Regiment. References to 27th Marines or 27 RCT (Regimental Combat Team) means 27th Regiment. Download Google Earth to your personal computer along with the daily files. Google Earth is a map software program based on very accurate images of the earth with location codes. Iwo Jima operations during February and March 1945 have been plotted onto the grid from Google Earth using previously classified USMC After Action Reports at the battalion level. Some company level detail is provided, too. Annotations are provided for specified Marine locations to give the user a detailed explanation of events as you navigate through the terrain in simulated fashion on the computer. Or go to Iwo Jima on the Reunion of Honor trip with a 5th Marine Division vet.

Finally, the awards, decorations and citations you receive will mean little to you if you’re not a Marine. Items 4 and

5 tell you what the award means. Once you know the meaning and the style of award, you’re ready to get the real thing.

DON will send you the awards your father is officially entitled according to the SF-180 request, but I’ve discovered that many badges, rank, insignia and ribbons are not vintage items. I am fortunate to have pictures of my father with some of his original badges. Some current items are either modernized versions or reproductions of standard USMC 1937 Uniform Regulations. The U.S. Militaria Forum is a group of collectors and active military personnel of all branches who can help you restore your father’s awards to vintage status. You may not have the exact award issued to your father, but finding an award that matches the vintage is a treasure. You will need commitment to search pawn shops, flea markets, estate sales and eBay, but it’s worth it. You should understand the Marine virtue of commitment by now. You were raised by one. Or, you can check the pockets of your father’s old green uniform issued in 1943. That’s where I found my father’s original private first class and corporal rank chevrons – miraculous!

I placed a shadow box on my home office wall last year. My 13-year-old daughter looked up with admiration and smiled. Mission accomplished, Father. All is well. Carry on. God bless the United States Marine Corps and this great nation.



The author made a shadow box of his father’s badges and awards.

Constitution of 5th Marine Division Association

Preamble

We, former members of the 5th Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force and attached units, have established a permanent organization, in order that we may be of greater service to our country and to one another, to perpetuate the name, glory and spirit of the 5th Marine Division, and to preserve the friendships formed while serving with the 5th Marine Division.

Article I: Name

Section 1. Any person who has served honorably or who is now serving as a member of the Armed Forces of the United States, and who has been assigned or attached for duty in or with the 5th Marine Division or one of the component units hereof at any time from the date of its organization to the date when its last unit was inactivated, shall be eligible for membership in this Association.

Section 2. Any eligible person who, while serving with the 5th Marine Division, sustained any injury which caused them to be rated 80 percent or more disabled by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs shall be eligible for honorary lifetime active membership in this Association.

Section 3. Any interested person is eligible for Associate membership in the Association.

Section 4. Any person may be elected to honorary membership in this Association by a majority of members present in Convention, except that no person who is eligible for active membership may be elected to honorary membership in this Association.

Section 5. No person shall be eligible for membership in this Association who has lost or renounced his citizenship in the United States of America unless such citizenship shall have been legally restored. Proof of such restoration shall be submitted to the Association upon application for membership or renewal of membership in this Association.

Section 6. No person shall be eligible for membership in this Association who is a member of any group or organization which advocated the overthrow of the government of the United States by force or violence.

Section 7. The spouse of a deceased person eligible for membership under Section 1 hereof is eligible for Memorial membership in this Association.

Section 8. Each Active and Associate member shall be required to pay to the Association on June 1, annually, a per capita fee, the amount of which shall be determined at the annual Convention of the Association. No annual per capita fee is required of Lifetime, Memorial or Honorary members.

Section 9. A member shall be expelled for cause.

Article III: Officers

Section 1. The Association headquarters shall consist of the following elected officers:

1. President
2. Vice President
3. Sergeant-at-Arms
4. Trustees — Five

Section 2. The Executive Committee shall be comprised of the President, Vice President and the Trustees and shall manage and conduct the affairs of the Association pursuant to the provisions of this Constitution.

Section 3. The following officers shall be appointed by the President, as needed, subject to the approval of the Executive Committee:

1. Chaplain
2. Historian
3. Legal Officer
4. Marine Corps Council Representative
5. Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation Representative
6. Public Relations Officer
7. National Recruiter

Section 4. The office or the Secretary/Treasurer shall be appointed by the President with the approval of the Executive Committee. The Secretary/Treasurer shall serve until relieved by a majority vote of the Executive Committee.

Article IV: Election of Officers

Section 1. At each annual Convention, the following officers shall be elected:

1. President
2. Vice President
2. Sergeant-at-Arms
3. Trustees — One

Section 2. The terms of the President, Vice President and Sergeant-at-Arms shall continue until replaced at the next succeeding election. The terms for the Trustees shall be five years. At each succeeding Convention, one

Trustee shall be elected, relieving the Trustee who has served his five-year term in office.

Section 3. Vacancies occurring in an elected office shall be filled by appointment of the President.

Section 4. Nothing herein shall be construed as prohibiting any officer from holding more than one office or from succeeding himself in office.

Section 5. All elections shall be declared by a majority vote of those present in the Convention

Article V: Convention

The Association's Convention shall be held annually, or periodically, in such place and time as determined by the membership in Convention or, if necessary, by the Executive Committee.

Article VI: Revenues

Section 1. The revenue of the Association shall consist of and be derived from an annual fee to be paid by each Active member of the Association and from such other sources as may be approved by the Executive Committee. All funds, receipts and revenue of the Association shall be deposited promptly and in full by the Secretary/Treasurer. The Secretary/Treasurer will be the custodian of all Association funds and shall be responsible for the receipt, deposit, disbursement and accountability of such funds.

Section 2. All receipts shall be deposited in the bank intact; all disbursements shall be made by bank check, receipts from any source and disbursements of any purpose shall be properly supported by documentary evidence such as remittance data, receipted bills or commercial invoices. In the absence of such documents, the Secretary/Treasurer will render a certificate voucher setting forth the necessary information. All underlying documents supporting financial transactions and all adjustments shall be authenticated and approved by the Secretary/Treasurer. In case of disbursements, this will indicate a just bill for which the Association has received the goods and/or services described thereon.

Section 3. Disbursement from the General Fund will be made by the Secretary/Treasurer, including the necessary advance of cash for the annual Convention.

Section 4. The Treasurer shall be responsible to the Association that all assets received by him or committed to this charge are promptly recorded in the financial records and that all liabilities are disclosed therein. He shall cause current and adequate accounting

records to be maintained in such a manner as to present a full history of all financial transactions and to reflect the financial condition of the Association at all times.

Section 5. The accounts and records of the funds shall be audited by an independent agency at least annually and when the Secretary/Treasurer is relieved. Audit reports shall be submitted to the President of the Association.

Article VIII: Inactivation

Section 1. This Association may be inactivated upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee and a two-thirds vote of the active members at convention.

Section 2. Upon inactivation, the assets of the Association shall be transferred to the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation with the stipulation that the interest from such funds will be used to:

- Acquire the documents, books, pictures, artifacts, memorabilia and traditions of the 5th Marine Division.
- Encourage the collection, preservation and display of such historical artifacts by the Marine Corps museums under the cognizance of the History and Museum Division, Headquarters, United States Marine Corps.

Encourage all efforts to publicize the historical heritage of the 5th Marine Division through the support of research, studies and publications of value to the official Marine Corps historical program.

Approve at the annual reunion at Albuquerque, New Mexico, 18 July 1999.

Minutes of the 59th Annual Business Meeting of the 5th Marine Division Association Crystal City Marriott Hotel, Arlington, Va. Aug. 30, 2008 (pending approval)

The meeting was called to order by Ken Watterson at 10:35 a.m. The Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the USA followed.

Ken Watterson asked that the Secretary's minutes of the last meeting be read. Joyce Overgard read the minutes of the Aug. 25, 2007, Business Meeting, held at the North Hilton Hotel in Raleigh, N.C. They were approved as read. She then read the Treasurer's

Continued on next page

report, which showed a balance of \$172,606.26. Report accepted.

Ken Watterson explained that our funds will go to the Marine Museum when the Association is dissolved. He believes that as an Association, we should begin contributing funds to such groups as Semper Fi, Young Marines, the Charles Waterhouse Museum and the BAR on the Beach statue fund. However, he suggested that the motion made in Raleigh in 2007 that we contribute \$125,000 to the BAR statue, and which was defeated by the membership, be rescinded. Motion made, seconded and carried.

Ken Watterson proposed that we contribute \$25,000 to Semper Fi, \$20,000 to Young Marines, \$10,000 to the Waterhouse Museum and \$40,000 to the BAR statue. Donald Pero asked that we amend the motion to give an extra \$5,000 to the Waterhouse Museum because of what Waterhouse has done for us. The members are now asked to vote to contribute as follows: \$40,000 for the BAR statue, \$25,000 for Semper Fi, \$20,000 for Young Marines and \$15,000 to the Waterhouse Museum. Motion was seconded and approved.

Ken Watterson asked that the members approve his appointments of Phillip Wade as Sgt.-At-Arms and Frank Caldwell as our legal adviser. Voted and approved.

Ken Watterson said that the Secretary's salary had been increased from \$375 to \$500 per month at the 2007 meeting of the Board of Trustees. He asked that a vote of approval be given at this time. Approved.

He then said that at the 2008 Trustees meeting, an increase of \$100 per month was approved for the editor of the *Spearhead News*. Motion made and approval given.

Ted Overgard stated that the Secretary's job entails many hours of work each week and asked approval for the raise granted at the Trustees meeting yesterday. \$100 was approved unanimously.

Ted Overgard stated that our yearly membership fees are too low to keep up with the expenses. Each issue of *Spearhead News* costs approximately \$3,000 to print and mail. He has checked with the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Divisions as to their yearly dues. Two of those three charge \$25 per year, and the other one charges \$30. He suggested that we go from \$10 to \$25. Motion made, seconded and carried unanimously.

He then proposed that the Life membership fees be changed as follows: 80 years of age and over to \$50; 65 through 79 years of age to \$100; and under 65 to \$150.

Motion made, seconded and passed unanimously.

Ted also stated that he has discussed with Ray Elliott and Mike Dietz the idea of publishing four smaller and more timely issues of *Spearhead News* per year. Members accepted the idea.

Ken Watterson stated that a two-thirds vote is necessary to pass the next order of business. He suggests that we do more to make Vietnam veterans more a part of the Association by increasing the number of Trustees to six members with three from Iwo Jima and three from Vietnam. It was moved that there be a four/three split with four Trustees from the Iwo Jima group and three coming from the Vietnam group. It was seconded and passed by a vote of 60 YES and 32 NO votes

Ken Watterson asked for nominations of Trustees. The seven nominated and approved, one at a time, were Warren Musch, Mike Dietz, Tom Kalus and Ivan Hammond from the Iwo Jima group and Bill Martin, James Carner and Ken Watterson from the Vietnam group. Mike Dietz was elected Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

Jim Fado expressed concern about the comments being made about disbanding the Association. It was decided to continue yearly reunions. Tom Kalus spoke about the plaque at the Hawaiian Punch Bowl. The \$5,000 approved last year will not be called for until the design and language are finalized and other considerations, which are required, have been met.

Ivan Hammond was then called upon to inform us of some of the plans for the 2009 reunion in Houston. It will be held at the Bobby Marriott Hotel. Room prices will be \$79. Among the highlights will be visits to a battleship, a monument and the Space Center. Free parking will be available.

Mrs. (Thomas) Begay sang the Star-Spangled Banner and the Marine's Hymn in the Navajo language. Meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting Arlington, Va., 2008

The 59th annual meeting of the Board of Trustees of the 5th Marine Division Association was held at the Crystal City Marriott Hotel in Arlington, Va., Aug. 29, 2008.

Present were trustees Mike Dietz, Ivan Hammond, John Huffhines, Tom Klaus and Warren Musch,

Secretary Ted Overgard, Sgt. at Arms Phillip Wade, Editor Ray Elliott and Legal Adviser Frank Caldwell. Also sitting were Joyce Overgard, Jim Frado and Bert Clayton. Mike Dietz explained that this is and always has been a Trustees Meeting.

The meeting was called to order by Ken Watterson at 10:05 a.m. He stated that he had appointed Phillip Wade to replace Marshall Martin as Sgt.-at-Arms, and Frank Caldwell as legal adviser to replace Tom Tyre.

Miek Dietz then chaired the meeting. He stated that anyone can sit in on the meeting but may not speak.

Ken Watterson immediately stated that he believes we should consider dispensing some of the Association's funds to various groups. His suggestion is to give \$25,000 to the Injured Marines Semper Fi Fund; \$20,000 to the Young Marines Program; \$10,000 to the Waterhouse Museum; \$40,000 to BAR on the Beach Statue. A lively discussion followed.

Tom Kalus said that to give funds to the BAR statue, the membership would have to rescind the vote taken at the 2007 Business Meeting in which the BAR had been voted down 66 to 32. If this is rescinded, the membership can then act on the new proposal. Approved by a 4 to 1 vote of the Trustees.

Joyce Overgard read the minutes of the Aug. 25, 2007, meeting held at the North Hilton Hotel in Raleigh, N.C. It was accepted as read. She then read the Treasurer's report. Accepted as read.

Ted Overgard said that we offer three issues of *Spearhead News* a year. Each issue costs approximately \$3,000. Our dues at \$10 per year do not cover costs. He has checked the dues that three other divisions (1st, 3rd, 4th) charge. Two of the three charge \$25 and the other charges \$30. He suggested that we change from \$10 to \$25 per year. He then proposed that the Life membership fees be changed as follows: 80 years of age and over to \$50; 65 through 79 years to \$100; and under 65 years to \$150. The trustees unanimously approved bringing this subject to the membership.

Ted Overgard suggested that the Trustees consider having four issues of *Spearhead News* each year instead of the current three. They could have fewer pages and the news would be more timely. The board approved the suggestion and will have it brought before the membership.

Ted Overgard asked that the board increase the incomes of the Editor and Secretary by \$100 per month. Ken Watterson opposed the suggestion saying that these kinds of jobs should be voluntary. A lively discussion

ensued. The board approved of bringing this suggestion before the membership.

Returning to the subject of contribution to some related causes, Mike Dietz stated concern about proposing to the membership that they vote on contributing to four different groups as one bundled item rather than voting on each one individually. A lively discussion followed. Ken Watterson mentioned that Bert Clayton had raised \$38,000 for the BAR on the Beach statue. Bert then stated that the money is in a bank in Arkansas. Much discussion ensued relating how the funds would be turned over to the Association. No definitive decision was made.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:55 a.m.

President's Letter

May 21, 2009

Dear Mr. (Phillip) Wade,

We have received your certified letter of May 15, 2009. We accept your reason for reconsidering your resignation and hereby will reinstate you as Sergeant-at-Arms on this date of May 21, 2009.

Sincerely,
Ivan P. Hammond
President

Cc: Mike Dietz
Warren Musch
Tom Kalus
John Huffhines

"I love the Corps for those intangible possessions that cannot be issued: pride, honor, integrity and being able to carry on the traditions for generations of warriors past."

Cpl. Jeff Sornig, USMC
Navy Times, November 1994

Another side of the story

By Bert Clayton

After reading the first paragraph of the article on page 2 of the Spring 2009 issue of *Spearhead News*, I felt prompted to respond, paragraph by paragraph. But lest you have a tendency to fall asleep in reading my rant, the best is at the end, so stay tuned.

I urge our readers to dig out their Spring 2009 issue and follow along, item-by-item, with my responses. Let's clear the air.

"Drain our treasury"? How could a one-time \$40,000 contribution drain a treasury that contains well over \$175,000 in total assets?

Does President Hammond's position as 2009 reunion president forbid him from encouraging and supporting other unrelated projects in which he is interested unless he obtains approval from trustees?

Hmm! . . . The Association's \$100,000 CIT bond matures on Aug. 15 of this year. **Never** was it **ever** considered to request a premature or untimely withdrawal of \$40,000 from it. Thus, no \$20,000 penalty.

Delay, delay, delay, depending on the BAR on the Beach Project to die in the interim. (It won't.)

Our project is only in contention in the minds of a very small handful of members. Nearly 200 of our members have already contributed to it and most of those expressed their desire that the Association join us in that effort.

(#1) I'm puzzled. By "should be seriously reconsidered," does that mean reconsidered as to whether it should be provided to Young Marines or withheld?

(#2) The donation to Waterhouse should go directly to the colonel in recognition for his unselfish and dedicated service to our Corps (unmatched by anyone, anywhere) and not be intended for a defunct museum in perpetuity. Just write him a personal check. That's easy enough. Of course, if we diddle or dither endlessly, that could resolve the problem, too.

Rumors? Where in the world did that curious idea originate? Biloxi in 2010 and hosts wanted for 2011 and 2012! We agree entirely.

Scuttlebutt! ("O, what a tangled web we weave when first we practice to deceive!" — Shakespeare.) By all means, consider attending the reunions at Pendleton, but Priority One, attend our own.

Incidentally, what would our readers prefer to have

represent our 5th Division efforts on Iwo? A bronze plaque with Adm. Nimitz's "Among the Americans who served on Iwo Island, uncommon valor was a common virtue" or a three-dimensional statue of BAR on the Beach on a pedestal, looking down from 10 feet above the observers, long after we're all gone?

And as for those who are upset that the statue doesn't represent their own particular specialty, we could have Rob Eccleston, the sculptor, add a slide trombone at the figure's feet representing Field Music and/or pots and pans representing Cooks and Bakers. What other specialty did Rob overlook?

OK, now here's the good deal I promise you:

1. Let's say the Association goes niggardly on us and reneges on the voting members' near 2-to-1 approval for a \$40,000 donation to the BAR project. I'll write a check for that amount to Rob Eccleston when he lets me know when he and the foundry are ready to begin the metal work on the statue in August.

(Odd, where were the cries of "Outrage!" "Outrage!" when voting members at D.C. first motioned, voted, then approved — *without dispute* — to provide the \$40,000 to help finish BOTB? Oh, they surfaced three or four months later? Hmmm. Now I understand, I think. Have we become an organization that giveth with one hand then taketh away with the other? Why waste time attending business meetings if our approved decisions count for nothing?)

2. But let's say the Association has a not-too-late twinge of conscience and in an extreme burst of generosity comes through with the approved \$40,000 when the bond's maturity date of Aug. 15, 2009, arrives. In that case, I'll cover the cost of the pedestal, and we'll get this job behind us. (But under no circumstances will I allow my name to appear anywhere on either of the above projects. If they insist, they can use Chauncey Cochran's name.)

And feel free to contact me, too, if you have any comments: Bert Clayton, 1714 Deer Run Dr., Harrison, AR 72601; (870) 741-8940; or baclayt@cox.net.

"... but by far the most important was that practical sense of esprit de corps which, in the field, developed into the finest thing that arose out of the war – comradeship."

All Quiet on the Western Front
by Eric Maria Remarque

Last 5th Division MOH recipient from Iwo Jima Campaign dies

Last summer took Jack Lucas, Iwo Jima Medal of Honor recipient and the youngest Marine to receive the award. This year took George Edward Wahlen, another of the 27 Marines and sailors who received the medal for their actions on Iwo Jima and the last of 17 5th Division recipients.

In memoriam, his citation follows:

“For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving with the Second Battalion, Twenty-sixth Marines, Fifth Marine Division, during action against enemy Japanese forces on Iwo Jima in the Volcano Group on 3 March 1945. Painfully wounded in the bitter action on 26 February, Wahlen remained on the battlefield, advancing well forward of the front lines to aid a wounded Marine and carrying him back to safety despite a terrific concentration of fire.

“Tireless in his ministrations, he consistently disregarded all danger to attend his fighting comrades as they fell under the devastating rain of shrapnel and bullets, and rendered prompt assistance to various elements of his combat casualties, he defied the continuous pounding of heavy mortars and deadly fire of enemy rifles to care for the wounded, working rapidly in an area swept by constant fire and treating fourteen casualties before returning to his own platoon.

“Wounded again on 2 March, he gallantly refused evacuation, moving out with his company the following day in a furious assault across 600 yards of open terrain and repeatedly rendering medical aid while exposed to the blasting fury of powerful Japanese guns. Stouthearted and indomitable, he persevered in his determined efforts as his unit waged fierce battle and, unable to walk after sustaining a third agonizing wound, resolutely crawled 50 yards to administer first aid to still another fallen fighter. By his dauntless fortitude and valor, Wahlen served as a constant inspiration and continued vitally to the high morale of his company during critical phases of this strategically important engagement. His heroic spirit of self-sacrifice in the face of overwhelming enemy fire upheld the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.”

Secretary's Corner

Please tell us if you have moved. The U.S. Post Office does not forward third-class mail. We pay to take it back and again when we re-send it. Letting us know will save us money.

We are no longer involved with the Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation. If you wish to contribute or to learn about obtaining scholarship money, you must contact it directly. You can do so at this address and phone number:

MARINE CORPS SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION, INC.

P.O. BOX 3008

PRINCETON, NJ 08543-3008

TELEPHONE: (800) 292-7777

When a veteran member dies, do notify us as soon as you can. Include the date of death. We will print that information in the Spearhead News.

I have just learned that our 2010 Reunion will be held in Biloxi, Miss., on Oct. 18-22. More information on this will appear in the next Spearhead News.

We need a member or two to step forward and offer to run a reunion in 2011 and in 2012. Rapid City, S.D., would be a good location as members could visit Mount Rushmore and the monument of Chief Crazy Horse. Another possible site is Dickinson, N.D., from which one could visit the Theodore Roosevelt National Park and the site of Custer's Last Stand.

– Ted Overgard
Secretary

FINAL MUSTER ("Roll Call of the Reef")

BRADLEY, Msgr. PAUL F. **HQ-28** July 2005

ELLIOTT, James V. **HS-28** 7/5/07

JOHNSON, J.B. **C-1-13** 6/11/09

MAJERCZAK, Roman **F-2-27** 4/14/09

MASON, Leo B. **5TH TNK** 2/20/09

ROHLINGER, JOSEPH R. **C-1-27** 2/15/07

SNYDER, William F. **B-1-26** 5/3/09

VARGO, Peter J. **HQ-27** 4/19/09

WAHLEN, George E. **F-2-27** Medal of Honor 6/5/09

WHIPPLE, RUSSEL E. **HQ-3-26** 6/9/09



LZ Margo ... The Dead Went Last

***“They were typical grunts and corpsmen – normally unwashed, usually underfed, always overloaded and, more often than not, tired. ...”
A battalion operations officer reflects on one day in a very long war.***

By Maj. Gen. Jarvis D. Lynch, USMC (Retired)

The 2nd Battalion, 26th Marines rarely appears in the Marine Corps’ illustrious combat history. The battalion saw only brief service in World War II ... long enough to land in the assault wave at Iwo Jima (Note: On D+34 when the 26th Marines accomplished its final mission, there were 1,468 Marines left standing in its ranks. This was 45 percent of the regiment’s strength when it landed on D-Day – www.ww2gyrene.org.) Later, during the Vietnam War, it reappeared for a few years before its colors once again were returned to the museum curators.

Its daily Vietnam experience was usually far less stressful than the Iwo Jima operation, but Vietnam had its days – and when it did, the late 1960s Marine of 2/26 experienced the horrors of war at the same level of intensity faced by the generation that fought its way up the black-ash terraces beneath Mount Suribachi. This is the story of one of those days: 16 September 1968.

Late 1968 found the 3rd Marine Division serving in the extreme north of I Corps, the northernmost corps area in what was then the Republic of Vietnam, controlling 10 infantry battalions: those of its organic 3rd, 4th and 9th Marine Regiments, plus 2/26. The division’s operational concept – an effective one – was as easy to understand as it was difficult to execute. Relying on few fixed defensive positions and even fewer infantry units to defend them, the defense was offense. Battalions stayed in the bush for weeks on end covering North Vietnamese Army (NVA) infiltration routes and, in general, looking for trouble. They moved constantly, on foot or by helicopter, and when they encountered an NVA unit, all hell broke loose until it was destroyed.

Our battalion – I was the operations officer – celebrated the Fourth of July in an area near the coast called Leatherneck Square, where it was responsible for defending the square’s northern and western sides. In late July, the battalion was reinforced to conduct

amphibious assault operations and designated Battalion Landing Team (BLT) 2/26.

After training with the reinforcements, BLT 2/26 embarked in the ships of Amphibious Ready Group Alfa, including the famous World War II Essex-class carrier Princeton (LPH-5), now an amphibious assault ship. Initially, there was talk of landings just south of the Ben Hai River inside the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), but the pattern of NVA operations had shifted westward and the amphibious talk died out. An early-September landing well inland marked a temporary end to our amphibious experience and the beginning of service as one of the division’s maneuver battalions. Despite the change in mission, the battalion kept its reinforcements – among them a tank platoon, a 105-mm artillery battery and a 4.2-inch mortar battery.

Operational control shifted to the 3rd Marines, headquartered at Camp Carroll, but several days of aggressive patrolling yielded no enemy contacts. About 7 September, the BLT’s field elements were trucked to Camp Carroll and staged for two contingencies: a helicopter assault into Landing Zone (LZ) Margo, a barren hilltop just south of the DMZ, roughly 17 kilometers west-northwest of Camp Carroll – or a shift of operational control to the 4th Marines and a return to Khe Sanh, where the battalion had served throughout the early-1968 siege.

To the relief of those who had served at Khe Sanh, the Margo operation prevailed – an assault into the LZ followed by movement north to the high ground on the southern border of the DMZ, where the battalion was to turn east and sweep the high ground. The orders emphasized the need to take prisoners.

A typhoon brushed the coast, and although the tree-covered mountains inland showed no outward sign of the rains, movement became impossible. The war ground to a halt. Finally, the weather began clearing, and on 12 September, the commanding officer of the

supporting helicopter squadron flew in for the Zippo brief – a planning and coordination meeting attended by the battalions and squadron commanders plus their staffs.

Zippos were businesslike affairs. Lives were at stake and the assaulting battalion and supporting squadron had to reach complete agreement and understanding. On the plus side, Margo was easy to find because of its location on the north side of the Cam Lo River inside a distinctive kilometer-wide and more-than-kilometer-deep, U-shaped bend. Unfortunately, this plus was offset by several minuses – most of which stemmed from the tiresome but necessary subject of terrain.

Margo, which resembled a broken bowl, was smaller than the maps indicated. Using north as 12 o'clock, the rim from about 5 to 10 o'clock was the dominant piece of ground within the LZ. The southern side of the rim dropped sharply to the Cam Lo River, actually more stream than river at this point, while the interior slope provided good observation over landing zone and north toward the DMZ. A spring near the center of the zone fed a stream that had cut a deep draw, which meandered eastward and exited Margo between 2 and 4 o'clock. Margo's northern rim, from 10 to 2 o'clock, varied in height but was lower than the southern rim. Its exterior sloped sharply downward for a kilometer or so before reaching the steep approaches to the terrain fingers that led to the high ground in the DMZ. At its highest point, Margo was about 150 meters above sea level. The hills to the north were three to four times that height while the intervening terrain dropped to low point of about 50 meters.

It was rugged, forbidding country, made all the more so because – although Margo was clear – the heights and intervening valleys were covered with double- or triple-canopy forest.

The terrain inside the LZ made Margo a “one-bird zone” – helicopters had to land and unload one at a time. This was hardly unusual, but it slowed the rate of assault dramatically. Margo also was too small to accommodate the entire BLT. Since the intent was to retain only G Company, the BLT command group, and the 81-mm mortar, engineer and reconnaissance platoons in the zone for any length of time (a few days), the size of the LZ did not seem to be a major factor. Its rock-hard soil, however, was another problem. Digging in took time.

Finally, there was Margo's history. For a brief

period some months before, it had been used as an artillery fire support base – and the North Vietnamese were known to keep such positions under observation.

The terrain and history summed to the point that BLT 2/26 was landing, one aircraft at a time, into a zone that was:

- Too small to hold the entire BLT
 - Dominated by high ground to the north
 - Probably the subject of continuing NVA attention, at least to the point of registering mortar fires
- Not good ... but not unusual.

Friday the 13 of September 1968, a date not lost on many of the Marines, marked the beginning of several days of cloudless skies and comfortable temperatures. By 0700, a thousand or so Marines and corpsmen were waiting quietly in the Camp Carroll pick-up zone smoking, talking, thinking and maybe, especially in Golf Company – which was landing first – praying. They were grunts, a term coined in Vietnam. While it may have been a derisive term originally, the sting was long gone. With a certain pride, it is what they called themselves.

Believing that the chances of infection dramatically increased with the amount of clothing worn when wounded, they were deliberately underdressed. Boots, socks and trousers were the standard; no underwear and, quite often, no shirt during the day. Their faded helmet covers sported an elastic band around the outside intended to hold camouflage material when the wearer sought invisibility in the bush. More often, it held either a main battle dressing for use if the wearer's luck turned bad or, in the case of optimists, a bottle of mosquito repellent. The graffiti on most of the covers addressed a variety of subjects, but many tended toward the religious. David Douglas Duncan's striking photographs of 26th Regiment Marines at Khe Sanh captured the phenomenon.

They all wore flak jackets, never zipped because shell or grenade fragments taken in the wrong place could jam the zipper, making it difficult for the corpsmen to remove the jacket and treat a wounded man in the field.

The flak jackets, if anything, were dirtier than the helmet covers. Sweat-stained from long wear by a series of owners, they had the same faded color as the camouflage covers but their graffiti, for whatever reason, tended to more basic thoughts than those found on the helmets.

They carried a haversack holding a box of the venerable C-rations, a poncho, poncho liner, and most important of all, an extra two or three pair of socks. They carried extra radio batteries; mortar ammunition, even though they were not mortarmen; rocket launchers; grenades; at least four filled canteens; and as much extra rifle and machine gun ammunition as possible.

They were typical grunts and corpsmen, normally unwashed, usually underfed, always overloaded and more often than not, tired. The lucky ones, those who avoided disease, wounds or death, did not enjoy a hot meal or a cold shower for weeks on end.

Shortly before 0800, the CH-46s began landing in the pick-up zone with their distinctive, whomping blade sound – unforgettable for those who rode them into combat. As the first wave launched, the sounds of the artillery preparatory fires in the distance and the roar of the fast-movers orbiting overhead helped ease the tension.

The actual landing was anti-climatic. There was no opposition, but it still took a long time. Echo, Foxtrot and Hotel Companies quickly assembled and began moving north. Echo struck out for a finger on the right that led to the high ground, while Foxtrot and Golf headed up another finger on the left. Golf Company, the command post, the 81-mm mortar platoon and others established defensive positions in the LZ and began digging in. Friday the 13th passed quietly.

On Saturday, 14 September, the companies continued north at first light. While there were well-worn trails in the area and occasional sounds of movement ahead, there were no contacts. Even so, the companies called artillery and mortar fires on possible targets to keep the fire-support system active. About mid-day, Hotel Company's point, leading the movement up the left finger, saw movement ahead and signaled the company to move off the trail and wait. Their patience was rewarded as they watched a North Vietnamese soldier, weapon at sling arms, striding down the trail toward them.

The entire point was in an excellent ambush position and easily could have killed him. That they didn't was a testimony to discipline and the emphasis on taking prisoners. Waiting until the NVA soldier had passed, the point man re-entered the trail and, in Vietnamese, ordered him to halt – which he did promptly. The capture was reported to the company commander, relayed to battalion, and within a matter of minutes the

3rd Marines had learned of the potential guest speaker. Within the hour, the prisoner had been flown to Camp Carroll for interrogation.

Throughout the war, most higher headquarters consistently failed to pass timely intelligence information down to the battalion level where it could be acted upon. The 3rd Marines did not make that mistake. Just before sundown, 2/26 learned that the prisoner had intended to surrender because he had been at Khe Sanh when the Marines first arrived. Stating that he "had a love of life," he added that he wanted no more of anything remotely resembling that battle, a confrontation that clearly had a psychological hold on both sides. Of greater interest was his disclosure that the lead company on the northwest finger — Hotel Company — would be attacked at about 2000 that evening. All three companies were alerted.

Echo, Foxtrot and Hotel halted for the night and began registering artillery defensive fires. Hotel Company's artillery forward observer (FO), controlling a supporting 155-mm howitzer battery, had just started registering fires to cover a listening post located on the western side of the finger when the Marines manning the post reported hearing movement through the draw to their direct front. Since the registration rounds were on the way, they could only wait. Seconds later, as the roar of the explosions died away, the listening post reported screams and other sounds of panic. The FO immediately called "Fire for effect" and swept the draw with 155-mm rounds. Other than moans and the sound of some movement in the draw, the remainder of the night was quiet.

15 September dawned clear and cloudless. Visibility was so good that Marines could watch outgoing 81-mm mortar rounds until they reached their apogee. Again keeping the mortar and artillery fire-support systems active, E, F and H Companies resumed their slow and careful climb toward the high ground. Signs of enemy presence were plentiful but there was no contact.

The trouble started at noon, when a radio message from the 3rd Marines ordered the BLT to pull its companies back to the LZ and prepare to shift to the operational control of the 9th Marines. The message was cryptic – it had to be because none of the radio transmissions with any of the battalions in the 3rd Marine Division's area were secure. The encryption equipment of the day was too heavy to be carried in the

field and, in any case, seldom worked in the heat and humidity of the bush. Problems with getting shackle sheets (code) down to company level precluded the use of even that decades-old means of encryption. Everyone assumed that the North Vietnamese heard most of the radio traffic.

Communications security problems notwithstanding, the order was received with incredulity. There was little doubt that the NVA would follow the companies back to the landing zone and less doubt that mortar and perhaps infantry attacks would follow. The three rifle companies were told to halt and then to begin moving south to Margo; meanwhile, the order was strenuously argued. The regimental commander made it clear that the order stood – but it was clear that he agreed with the battalion’s tactical assessment of what lay in store. Obedience would have a price, that much was obvious. What was not obvious was how much.

After a few hours, the three companies were told to halt, reorient and return to the original northward advance. We had to know if the trailing-enemy theory was correct. The order did not specify how long to follow the reverse course, but did tell the company commanders something they already knew – to expect contact. It came quickly on both ridges as small NVA units were surprised to find the Marines heading north again. Breaking contact, the companies once more turned south toward Margo. So far as 2/26 was concerned, the point had been proven. We reported this to the 3rd Marines and forcefully recommended cancellation of the withdrawal order.

The reply was more enlightening than helpful. The battalion was told that its arguing and temporary resumption of the offensive had caused some difficulties (it wasn’t phrased quite that way) and that there would be a 24-hour postponement. Further, however, the entire battalion was to concentrate in LZ Margo south of the 61 grid line — an east-west map line that split the LZ – by a specified time early the next afternoon, 16 September. In the interim, the BLT was authorized to do whatever it thought best to prepare for the return to the LZ. The maneuver companies were turned north again; within minutes they bumped into NVA troops following them down the ridgelines.

The enlightening section of the order was the part about moving south of the 61 grid line. It made no sense because the area remaining in the LZ south of the grid line was too small to accommodate the BLT in anything

resembling tactical positions. Even worse, it did not permit a tactical defense of the LZ, especially against infantry attacks coming from the most logical direction – north. It was apparent that the order had emanated from a headquarters other than regiment or division, neither of which would have displayed that level of tactical ignorance. This, and the urgency associated with the 61 grid-line provision, led to the conclusion that an Arc Light – a high-altitude B-52 area bombing mission – was imminent.

To those steeped in the tradition of obedience to orders, it might seem strange, but the BTL now confronted a dilemma. If its tactical assessment was correct, the order returning the maneuver units to the LZ would result in some form of NVA attack; if, on the other hand, the Arc Light guess was right, there were other problems. The timing and target area were unknowns and, for security, would remain unknowns at the battalion level. Further, the tactically inane directive to move south of the 61 grid line indicated that the Arc Light was going in north of Margo – but close.

The dilemma was simple and stark: Comply with the order and risk NVA action – or move the companies toward Margo, retaining some semblance of tactical deployment north of the LZ, and risk the Arc Light. To those who have seen a proper Arc Light, the choice was easy. The companies were directed to hold in place and begin moving south to the LZ early the next morning. But as a concession to common sense, that portion of the order regarding the 61 grid line was interpreted rather loosely. We would defend Margo.

The weather on 16 September matched the brilliance of the days gone by. Today, the Vietnamese Bureau of Tourism would be touting the weather; on that day in 1968, however, it turned into a scene from hell.

Occasionally stopping to engage the NVA units following them, the three rifle companies slowly made their way back to Margo. Echo Company came in last. Commanded by Capt. John Cregan, now a Roman Catholic priest, the company began the climb up Margo’s northern slope about and by 1430 or so was beginning to take up its assigned defensive positions on the northern perimeter. Even after ignoring the order to stay south of the 61 grid line, there were too many troops in too small an area – and they had to contend with Margo’s hard ground. Digging in took more time.

Continued on next page

Early in the afternoon, there were ominous sightings of North Vietnamese soldiers with mortars fording the Cam Lo River west of Margo. Artillery fire was called, probably without effect. At the same time, there was a minor flurry of activity as the BLT shifted to the operational control of the 9th Marines and radio frequencies were changed and tested. That done, the chatter of the troops and clanging of their entrenching tools were the only sounds disturbing the quiet.

At 1500, Capt. Ken Dewey, an F-4 pilot serving as the battalion's air liaison officer, was looking north toward the left of the two hills that had been the original objectives when suddenly a mirror started flashing – followed immediately by the soft “thunking” sound of mortars firing in the distance. Within seconds, Margo was blanketed with exploding 82-mm rounds from several points on the compass, especially the northern arc. The battalion began its “time on the cross” – as the French put it in an earlier Indochina War.

The noise was deafening. Each explosion filled the surrounding air with black, stinking, greasy-tasting smoke. The mortarmen poured it on until 200 to 300 rounds had pummeled the Marines and corpsmen, a good percentage of whom had no protection beyond that of shallow fighting holes. As the fire eased, the LZ sprang to life and 1st Lt. Al Greene's 81-mm mortar platoon began counter-battery fires, an action that won them concentrated NVA attention.

Battalion machine gunners on Margo's southern rim saw some enemy mortarmen and began to engage at long range – attracting in turn their share of incoming. The exchange continued for a few more minutes until the mirror on the high ground flashed again. The incoming barrage slowed, then stopped – but the noise in the zone grew to deafening proportions as hundreds of rifles went into action. At first, it seemed as if the frustrated Marine riflemen were wasting ammunition on the out-of-range NVA mortarmen, but a radio query to 1st Lt. Bob Riordan, the Golf Company commander, revealed that from his position on the southern rim, North Vietnamese soldiers could be seen moving uphill to assault the LZ's northern side.

Then the rifle fire stopped abruptly and, within seconds, the southern rim and center of the LZ were alive with Marines running to the northern side. Their fires had been masked by those manning the northern slope defenses, and they were leaving their own positions to get into the fight. The enemy never had a chance. The

NVA commander who ordered the assault probably had fewer troops than he thought as a result of the previous contacts. In any case, the reaction of the defenders was too violent. No more than 20 minutes had elapsed. The cost to BLT 2/26 was more than 150 dead and wounded. The cost to the enemy was unknown.

At 1700, the mirror flashed again and the mortars went to work. Once more, rounds rained down on Margo – fewer this time and without an infantry attack – but the BLT's casualty list grew longer.

For the first time since the attacks began, medical evacuation of the wounded now seemed possible. It was likely that the NVA had expended most or all of their mortar ammunition and would not interfere with the helicopter evacuation.

The casualties had been separated by category ... emergency, priority, routine ... and the “permanent routine,” a euphemism for the dead that had crept into the radio operators' lexicon. We hoped to MedEvac at least the emergency and priority wounded before nightfall. Several CH-46As and gun ships arrived around 1830 and the laborious process of loading the casualties, one at a time, began as soon as the lead bird touched down.

As always, the strength and example can be found in the casualties. I saw Staff Sgt. Doner from the reconnaissance platoon, covered with blood, as he was being escorted to the MedEvac staging area. He was refusing to leave, insisting that he was O.K. I told him that he would leave.

Late in the afternoon of 16 September, I watched as an uninjured Marine rapidly searched the rows of wounded, clearly looking for a friend. Suddenly, a large arm reached out and waved. “There you are,” said the first as he took the wounded man's hand and squatted down to talk. They held hands until the MedEvac helicopters arrived.

The wounded Marine had been hit badly. I do not know if he survived. Nor do I know if his friend survived our subsequent encounters with the NVA. What I do know is that the wounded Marine was black and his buddy white. I remember thinking at the time how much better a people we would be if we were all like those two.

Realizing that there would be no other MedEvacs from Margo that night, the last pilot insisted in overloading his aircraft with wounded. Over his objections, the loading stopped and the pilot was

told to launch. He must have been good. If not good, he was lucky. The overloaded -46 resembled a giant praying mantis as it struggled into the air, tail down, nose swinging back and forth in a wide arc, as though searching for escape from a trap. Finally, he nursed it a few feet higher, leveled, and began slipping sideways, just above the trees, down the slope that formed Margo's northern rim. Again, the LZ filled with Marines running north; convinced that the -46 was about to crash, they were moving to assist survivors.

The helicopter disappeared from view behind trees and, an eternity later, came back into view, this time in full flight, nose-high on a southerly course, jettisoning fuel to lighten the load and clear the ridge to Margo's east. All movement stopped as everyone in the LZ watched the miracle claw its way over the ridgeline, taking the wounded to safely.

Quiet settled over Margo. As the troops returned to their positions, the silence was broken by a single "thunk" off to the north. This time there was only one round, but it landed precisely where the MedEvac birds had loaded. It was "Charlie," saying that he knew what had been done and could have stopped it anytime. He also was saying that he was a "pro." We knew that already.

The XXIV Corps Commanding General visited Margo the following morning. His worries about morale evaporated as he watched Marines improving their defensive positions. He then looked toward a large group of wounded waiting to be evacuated. In response to a question, he was told that they were the routine MedEvacs. Behind them were rows of poncho-covered objects. He looked at them, saying nothing, knowing what they were. Finally, a Marine broke the spell. "The dead go last, sir."

EPILOGUE

The Arc Light went in 5 or 6 kilometers north of Margo on the afternoon of 16 September. Maybe too much had happened or maybe there was an unusually high number of duds. Regardless, it was unimpressive. Paradoxically, it hurt 2/26 more than it hurt the enemy.

Early on 17 September, Golf, Foxtrot and Hotel Companies returned to the familiar trails, attacking north. Echo Company, having lost nearly 70 Marines in the mortar and infantry attacks, remained behind. The LZ was mortared twice that day, but there were few casualties. Margo's final toll probably will never be

known exactly. We evacuated more than 200 dead and wounded, some of whom doubtless died later. Before we left, we filled 18 helicopter external nets with packs, weapons and other equipment no longer needed.

Eventually, after another long period of torrential rains, the attacking companies reached the high ground, where Golf found a graveyard – 18 graves with markers aligned in rows – near where the mirror had flashed before the mortar attack. They excavated a few to confirm that it was a graveyard. They also traced the extensive writing on the markers and sent them to the rear for translation. The writings turned out to be a history of each of the casualties. We learned that we had gotten the NVA battalion commanding officer and much of his staff. The CO had been a soldier since joining the Viet Minh in the late 1940s; he was a professional. I think that whoever ordered all of the writing put on the markers did so, at least in part, so that we would not dig up their dead.

We stood by to attack to the west. It never happened. Near the end of September, the BTL moved by helicopter into another one-bird zone, this one in the DMZ just south of the Ben Hai River, nearly 15 kilometers north and east of Margo. In a series of assaults, BLT 2/26 routed an enemy force defending a headquarters complex and artillery positions. During the last assault, Marines of Echo and Hotel Companies were treated to the rare sight of North Vietnamese troops fleeing in panic.

The Marines and corpsmen of 2/26 formed a typical grunt battalion. They fought a dirty, unpopular war, and they did it well. They never said that they were the best. All they said was that, if they met somebody better, they hoped he was on their side.

Maj. Gen. Lynch, an infantry officer, was the operations officer (S-3) for BTL 2/26 during the action at Landing Zone Margo. He commanded the Marine Corps Recruit Depot and Eastern Recruiting Region, Parris Island, S.C., prior to his retirement. This article first appeared in Proceedings, an official publication of the U.S. Naval Institute, which gave permission to reprint the general's account of Landing Zone Margo.



Remembering Margo

By Gunner James F. Doner, USMC (Retired)

I got back to Vietnam in December 1967 and was assigned to the 3rd Force Reconnaissance Company at Dong Ha.

I started as a platoon sergeant but rapidly became the platoon commander. The experienced staff non-commissioned officers conducted all the training. During the 1968 Tet Offensive, I showed my young Marines their first North Vietnamese Army (NVA) soldier – and that the NVA were not invincible.

We had lots of leeway. All this was a long time before Margo, but it explains the special bond that I had with the platoon.

We were selected to go afloat with 2/26 – I wondered if I would keep the platoon. I begged, borrowed and stole new equipment at Quang Tri. We got a lot of help from 1st Lt. Carl Myllymaki III – killed 2 October 1968, the day before he was to go home.

Some of our original Marines were getting short, so we got less-experienced replacements – and then I turned over the platoon to Lt. Pat McDonald. He had grown up in Queens, New York, and I had grown up in Brooklyn. We could have used more time to train, but that was not to be. We landed north of Cua Viet River after the big fight at Dai Do, trying to develop the same kind of action to no avail.

We silently humped out in front on point or on the side as flank security. We ran some ambushes, but I don't recall any small-arms action until we made contact with some NBVA in a trash dump, and they paid dearly for their peanut butter.

We were almost the last to go into Margo. Maj. Lynch wanted us to run a patrol down the creek bed east of Margo, cross it and set up an observation post on top of a little knob overlooking the creek. The crossing turned out to be too risky for some of the newer Marines. We couldn't get across, and I missed being in command – I was very full of myself as a staff sergeant. We were in a 360-degree defense and the lieutenant and I were talking when someone heard or saw movement.

Using binoculars, I saw heavily camouflaged troops moving 200 to 300 yards south of us on our side of the creek; battalion called us in. The rumor was that we were going to get an Arc Light – a B-52 strike – on a bunker complex north of the LZ. We began to relax. We were setting up on the forward slope of a hill east of the LZ

when we learned that the Arc Light was on; the battalion was moving south of the 61 grid line to get clear. I decided we would dig in.

Echo Company was coming in up the steep slope line from a stream north of the LZ. Lt. Mac and I were discussing the next day's operation when something exploded at the base of our hill. I hadn't heard any tubes firing because a CH-46 re-supply was in progress and the LZ was noisy, but I knew what it was. Mac did, too. "Haven't you ever been mortared before?" We laughed. Then he realized it was a correction round, and I broke for the CP.

A little second lieutenant brought me up short. "Well, sergeant," he said, "if you think we're receiving mortar fire, work up a fire mission." Back down the hill, I estimated the range and, with my map in my hand and juggling in my mind the elements of a call for fire and a grid coordinate, I moved to where I could see Lt. Green and his 81s, set up on the south side of the LZ, I yelled, "Fire mission!" Green was up using a megaphone – which he had liberated from the ship – and the troops were moving in the gun pits when I heard the NVA mortars. "Oh, mother of God, they've got about 20 rounds in the air," I thought; there was a distinct break and it started again: "Bloop, bloop, bloop ..." – the second volley was on the way before the first impacted.

I stood there with my mouth open. The first rounds hit the 81s and blew hell out of them. The NVA knew exactly what they were doing. It was like the movies – people were flying through the air, mortar tubes were flying, the base plates were flying.

Whenever we were in contact, I seemed to move in slow motion, but I could see what had to be done. I turned to Cpl. Cox – a tall, raw-boned, smart point man who had been with us nine months – and said, "Cox, get the gun." Recon did not rate machine guns ... but pure recon had not been the name of the game for months; the game was contact. In essence, we had been running long-range combat patrols, and we had "requisitioned" some firepower from an Army unit that was a bit lackadaisical about weapons security. My Marines knew that I wanted a collapsing-stock M16. They brought me one – plus a lot more, including an M60 machine gun. We put it all to good use.

Lance Cpl. Locke, a former infantry machine gunner, had volunteered to carry the gun. He carried it

– loaded with 100 rounds – plus his own gear, plus 200 rounds in each one of the pockets of his ARVN rucksack. He was a horse. Platoon members carried another 100 rounds in their rucksacks. None of that crossed-bandoleer stuff, which is a sure sign of an undisciplined unit. We practiced throwing ammunition to the gunner while prone – we never stood up.

Years later, I learned when Cox asked for the gun, Locke said, “No way. He must mean he wants me.” It was taking too long, and I went up the hill. All this time, the NVA were mortaring the perimeter and working over Echo Company as it climbed the hill. Rounds were going off right in the middle of them – impacts on their helmets, their bodies, their flak jackets. It was gruesome. I grabbed Locke and ran him down to where we could get plunging fire on the reverse slope of the hill to our north.

I could see in my mind’s eye where the mortars had to be – in a linear position, along the reverse slope, and most likely staggered. I watched the tracers – we were having some effect but we didn’t have enough elevation on the gun. I grabbed the bipod legs and lifted the gun over my head, Locke sat and leaned back to sight while I moved the barrel where I wanted the fire to go, and told him, “12-round bursts, 12-round bursts!”

Whether the NVA didn’t like it, or it was just our turn, they stopped firing on the LZ and corrected over to us with about 25 rounds that knocked the hell out of the platoon and blew Locke and me down.

I woke up lying on my back. I had two arms and two legs and I could see – I felt I was ahead of the game until I saw blood pumping out of my biceps and I remembered the training film about arterial bleeding. Locke was unconscious when I rolled him over – the rounds had shredded his face. The gun was down in the mud and twisted. The mortars shifted back to the LZ and Echo Company. One of my kids saw me bleeding and yelled for a corpsman.

My own corpsman – a super new guy named David Eisenbraun, from Youngstown, Ohio – was at that moment giving his last. He was bandaging a Marine when he succumbed to his own wounds and died. Somehow another corpsman pulled me in a hole on top of Lt. Mac, knelt on my chest, and whipped out his tourniquet. I asked him to skip it because I was afraid I would lose my arm. He agreed to try a pressure bandage but said that if it didn’t work he was going to use the tourniquet. He put the bandage on and pulled it tight, tied it off, and a miracle happened – it clotted. He put more bandages on top of the first one. I never got to thank him – he just disappeared.

The mortars stopped as abruptly as they had started.

Lt. Mac and I looked at what we had left. It was just terrible. The corpsman wanted me to go to the aid station; as I struggled up, I heard a Staff NCO whom I knew screaming – he finally died.

I was bleeding from head to foot. I had fragments everywhere. The medical people only went after the really big chunks and took them out. When I have a chest X-ray, I wait for the reaction because they go nuts when they see the shrapnel – one piece resting on my larynx, another piece high in the chest, a couple down low in the chest, some down over my gut.

They were pulling guys into this makeshift field hospital on the reverse slope – I saw Maj. Lynch near there, on the radio running the CP. I had stopped bleeding and no one was paying any attention to me. I went back to the platoon and told what was left of the team leaders what needed to be done. They were in tears. We were feeling sorry for ourselves when here came some NVA, in a skirmish line, climbing out of the woods at the base of the hill!

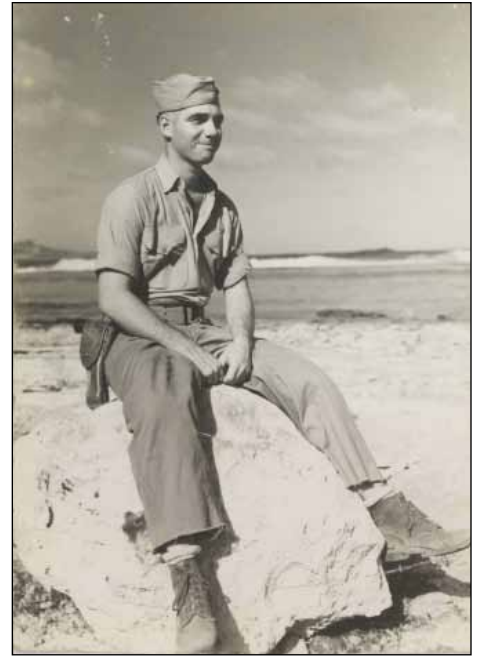
The troops got on line, and we threw some grenades at them. They didn’t seem as zealous as the guys we faced in 1966. In any event, they turned around and faded back into the trees. I don’t remember if we ever got a body count.

In the aftermath, Lt. Mac and I got back together. We discussed the platoon, said a few things that needed to be said to one another, and he walked me down to the LZ. We stood there among the wreckage – the LZ was pockmarked by mortar fire and strewn with bodies and equipment. I’ll never forget the casualties wrapped in ponchos, with boots sticking out. When we were forming, one of the Marines told me he volunteered because it was a small unit, and he wouldn’t have to see bodies stacked. I remembered this and yelled not to put them on top of one another.

Lt. Mac and I shared a can of beer that appeared somehow. I told a distraught Marine, “Marines don’t cry,” and got on the last helicopter. Two hours later, they repaired my arterial tear on the USS *Repose* and stitched me up.

But I have never been repaired, and I still think about what happened that day. Marines do cry.

Doner served three combat tours in Vietnam. This article first appeared in Proceedings, an official publication of the U.S. Naval Institute, which gave its permission to reprint the account of his experience on Landing Zone Margo.



Son seeks to identify Marine father he never knew

The Marine [pictured here] is my husband’s father – a father he never met and only learned of when he was 14, although his earliest memories are of holding and looking at the pictures, known only as “Mommy’s friend.” After learning at the age of 14, through a painful conversation with his mother that his stepfather was not his biological father, they never spoke of it again.

About seven years ago, several years after the passing of his mother, his stepfather showed my husband a picture album with three pictures, telling him, “This is your father.” Tragically, his stepfather was in the beginning stages of Alzheimer’s and could only tell my husband that his father’s name was “Robert” but never could remember, or would not say, his last name. We cared for his stepfather for four years until he passed, and the hope of identifying his father seemed to pass with him.

As more WWII veterans pass, my husband knows that the hope of identifying his father becomes dimmer. Recently, he has

begun contacting the children and grandchildren of veterans, hoping that one day they will see this Marine in their father or grandfather’s album and be able to provide some information. Despite the wonderful relationships he has developed with these fine human beings, he continues to search for his father’s identity. In some ways, my husband is everyone’s son and no one’s son. And we have grown to

feel that every WWII Marine could be our father, our grandfather.

Please help us by [sharing this message] ... so that it might reach the one person who knew and can identify my husband’s father. It only takes a minute and could finally put to rest his deep yearning for his dad. Thank you so much.

– Sherry Fortelny
Orange, Calif.

Bob Fortelny: fortelny1@aol.com



From ribbons pictured on his father’s uniform, Bob Fortelny knows he received the Purple Heart and served in the Asia/Pacific Campaign, 1941-45.

Response to *Spearhead* magazine reprints quite 'favorable'

Thanks to each of you who ordered the *Spearhead* magazines. Your response has been very favorable. One of the members ordered three sets as he said he was going to teach his grandchildren a bit of history. He also sent additional funds to be added to the Wounded Warriors proceeds.

If you have misplaced any of your original three copies of the *Spearhead* magazines and are interested in replacing them, we have more copies.

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 turned out beautifully, and everyone who has seen them is very happy with them.

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 Wounded Warriors through the Ladies' Auxiliary.

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 are interested in obtaining any of the copies please contact me.

– **D.D. Dietz**
(608) 254-1976
dddietz@aol.com



NEW MEMBERS: WELCOME ABOARD!

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Bring Cup, Plate & Spoon:

A teenager's story of being held in concentration camps in the Philippines during World War II

By Betsy Herold Heimke

River Road Press, 240 pages

This book is an account of the internment of civilians by the Japanese on the island of Luzon in the Philippines during World War II.

Elmer and Ethel Herold were raised in Wisconsin and in 1922 had gone to the Islands as teachers. After retirement, Elmer began working for a large logging and lumber company in the pine tree-clad hills of mile-high

Baguio. This lumber provided timber to shore up the shafts in nearby gold mines. Their two children, Billy and Betsy, were born in Baguio, 150 miles north of Manila.

Because Baguio was so far from Pearl Harbor, they were not expecting to be bombed. Shortly after Christmas in 1941, Betsy, 12, and her brother Billy, 14, went from being students at Episcopal Brent School in Baguio to being taught in prison camp schools. The camp was mostly made up of Americans, British and a sprinkling of Chinese and Dutch, always housed in military barracks. Among the captives were several doctors and nurses who provided medical care.

Betsy's book tells of many difficulties they endured. Food was usually scarce. They received only one Red Cross shipment: food stuffs and medicines. More importantly, the family remained together in the same camps. Common sense and American ingenuity

got them through frustration, deprivation, humiliation and starvation.

There were fewer than 500 prisoners in their camp; fewer than 20 died during the more than three years they were confined. But there were deaths from natural causes, a brain tumor, severe beatings and premature infant deaths.

On 28 December 1944, the camp prisoners were shipped in open Japanese trucks to Bilibid Prison, Manila, where they were liberated by the 37th Infantry Division on 4 February 1945. The devastation of Manila took place around them. Fortunately, no POW was killed.

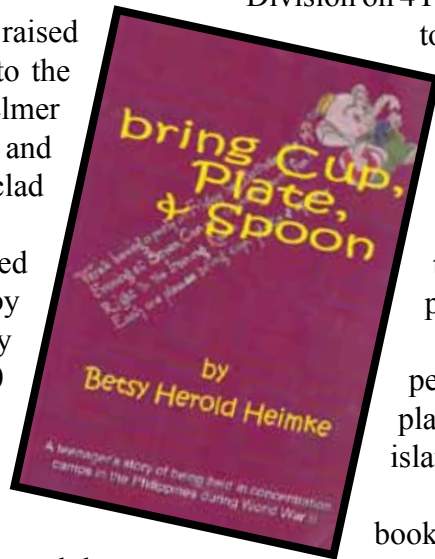
The title of the book refers to the fact that each person had only one cup, plate and spoon. When a birthday was observed, each guest was reminded to bring their three eating utensils to the party as there were no spares.

The book is a great read pertaining to the part the Japanese presence played in the lives of those who lived on the islands they invaded.

One reason I wanted to review the book is that Betsy's mother (Ethel Thomas Herold) and my mother (Pearl Keehner Hoffmeister) were born about a week apart in 1896. Those two grew up in our small town of Potosi, Wis., and were life-long bosom friends.

— **Joyce Hoffmeister Overgard**

Book orders are available by contacting the author, Betsy Herold Heimke, 13820 Metcalf Ave., Apt. 11320, Overland Park, KS 66223-7874. Cost is \$20, plus \$5 for shipping and handling.



“We all stood in complete silence. No one breathed.

The little kids were warned not to utter a sound.

Holding their bayoneted rifles, 18 guards noisily clanked down the steps.

**I was afraid that a wisecracking individual or a little kid
would break the silence.”**

**FIFTH MARINE DIVISION ASSOCIATION 60TH REUNION
 MONDAY SEPTEMBER 21 – SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 27, 2009
 REGISTRATION FORM**

Listed below are registration, tour and meal costs for the reunion.

- 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:
**FIFTH MARINE DIVISION ASSOCIATION
 C/O IVAN HAMMOND
 PO BOX 828
 SANTA FE, TX 77517
 (Phone: 409.925.3914 home - or – 409.770.4249 cell)**
- Phone or credit cards will NOT BE ACCEPTED.
- Your cancelled check will serve as your confirmation.
- **All registration forms & payments must be received by mail on or before August 1, 2009.** 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 September 1, 2009.
- **NOTE: NAME TAGS MUST BE WORN IN ORDER TO GET INTO ALL FUNCTIONS**

AUGUST 1, 2009 IS THE CUT-OFF DATE

DATE	TIME	EVENT	PRICE	# OF PEOPLE	TOTAL
Tuesday September 22		Registration - Members Only	\$15.00		\$15.00
		Ladies Auxiliary Dues – Optional	\$10.00		\$
		Hospitality Room Fee	\$25.00		\$
Wednesday September 23	9:30 a.m.	Tour USS Texas (Meal served)	\$41.00		\$
Thursday September 24	9 a.m.	Tour Johnson Space Center/Space Center Houston (Meal served)	\$35.00		\$
Friday September 25	9 a.m.	Tour Houston Museum of Natural Science (Meal served)	\$48.00		\$
Saturday September 26	7 p.m.	Dinner at Marriott Hobby Airport Please make your selection(s): Filet Mignon # _____ Chicken # _____	\$45.00		\$

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5th Marine Division Association

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Monday, September 21 -- Sunday, September 27, 2009

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5th Marine Division Association MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

All annual memberships expire on 31 December. Please renew on time.

New member () Renewal () Associate ()

Served with: _____
Co. Bn. Reg.

Name: _____
Street: _____
City: _____ State: _____
Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Mail to:
5th Marine Division Association
Ted Overgard, Secretary
P.O. Box 1775
Harrison, AR 72602-1775

Date of birth (for Life Membership): _____

Office Use Only

LGR		LF	
DB		NM	
CRD		FM	
ADS		NL	

Dues (please check):

- () Annual \$ 25.00
- () Lifetime \$ 150.00
age 64 and under
- () Lifetime \$ 100.00
age 65 through 79
- () Lifetime \$ 50.00
age 80 and over
- () General Fund \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

(Make checks payable to: 5th Marine Division Assn.)