



# Spearhead NEWS

"Uncommon Valor was a Common Virtue"

OFFICIAL  
PUBLICATION  
of the  
5TH MARINE  
DIVISION  
ASSOCIATION

**67TH ANNUAL REUNION - SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS  
OCTOBER 6 - 8, 2016  
HOLIDAY INN SAN ANTONIO-RIVERWALK**

## Hammond to host reunion in San Antonio

**By Ivan Hammond**

I was born on a 40-acre farm near a small Louisiana town on Aug. 12, 1925. The 1927 Mississippi River flood completely removed all our topsoil, leaving nothing but clay, so my father crossed the road, trading the farm for a McCormick-Deering tractor. P.B., my dad, had returned to the lumber and logging business.

When I was 8 years old, one of my jobs was shooting squirrels for the table with my .22 caliber rifle; another chore was bringing in firewood for cooking. At age 12, I began assembling radio kits, and this background would prove useful in the Marine Corps.

After finishing 11th grade in Morrow, La., I graduated at the age of 16. Leaving for Texas the next day, I was not to return for another four years.

In September 1942, a hometown friend and I enrolled in Army Signal Corps Radio School in San Antonio. I completed two segments of a three-phase program: constructing radios and transmitters, with three months of math and theory at the University of Texas. By August 1943, I turned 18; due to a Catch-22 situation, I was kicked out of the program for being too old. The third and final phase of the program would have been Radar School in Pittsburgh.

After moving to Houston, and knowing I would



**Ivan and Aline Hammond**

be drafted, I enlisted in the Marines, effective Oct. 26, 1943. Arriving in San Diego, I became a member of Platoon 1014. After graduating in early 1944, I went on a 10-day leave to Port Arthur, Texas, to visit my brothers and sisters. I spent three days with them, as I

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**THE SPEARHEAD NEWS**

*Published two times annually in the interest  
 of the Fifth Marine Division Association*

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**NOTES FROM THE SECRETARY**

The long-term benefit of keeping the Fifth Marine Division Association going to perpetuate the memory of the service and sacrifices of those who fought in World War II and Vietnam was never more evident than it was at the ceremony in Monticello, Fla., to correct the errors in the plaque and grave marker of “Boots” Thomas, one of the Marines who helped raise the first flag on Mount Suribachi on 23 February 1945.

What members of the Fifth Division accomplished will be remembered long after they are gone, and the freedom they paid for with their lives and their sacrifices will continue to provide a way of life humanity deserves.

One of the first steps in guaranteeing this remembrance was the Association’s resistance to “retiring” the organization and continuing to hold annual reunions—as it has each year since 1949, with the exception of 1950 when the scheduled reunion was cancelled because of the beginning of the Korean War. The second step has been to build the Camp Tarawa Museum, through the Camp Tarawa Foundation, at the site of the 28th Regiment’s Slop Chute at the edge of Waimea on the Big Island of Hawai’i.

The first step takes dedicated Association members. The second takes a dedicated citizenry, a collection of history and items from the men of the Fifth Division, their families, their history and the necessary money to build a Quonset hut on the Slop Chute slab that was left after the original hut was torn down because of its deteriorated condition.

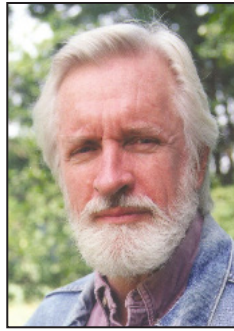
The dedication and commitment is here; some of the history and material has been collected, but much of it still resides with the survivors and their families; and the funds are being solicited and accepted through the Camp Tarawa Foundation. So please collect the things pertinent to the Division history and personal items you’d like to donate to the museum and send them to FMDA Vice President Kathy Painton (who is also on the Camp Tarawa Foundation board). You can contact her at [kathypainton@hotmail.com](mailto:kathypainton@hotmail.com) or 808-880-9880. Dig down in your pockets and ante up all you can to get the show on the road.

The FMDA has been granted 501(c)3 status by the IRS, so your contributions to this fund are completely tax deductible. With your help, the museum will become a reality within two years. The reunion in 2016 is in San Antonio, and in 2017 it *could be* on the Big Island

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## THE EDITOR'S DESK

By Ray Elliott



### ***New marker sets record straight at 'Boots' Thomas' gravesite***

For more than 65 years, the remains of Sgt Ernest I. “Boots” Thomas, Navy Cross recipient and one of the Marines who raised the first flag on Mount Suribachi, lay beneath a granite slab in Roseland Cemetery in his Monticello, Fla., hometown that said he was killed five days after the flag was raised when it was really eight. The bronze plaque at the head of his grave had errors, as well—the most noticeable one said the flag was raised on 24 February instead of 23 February.

Dr. James Sledge, a boyhood friend of Boots and a distant cousin of another Marine combat veteran, Eugene B. “Sledghammer” Sledge, author of *With the Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa*, said people were aware of the errors that were apparently made as a result of mistakes in the newspaper coverage at the time or some other misunderstanding and the cost of correcting the errors with a new plaque and grave marker was prohibitive.

Who knows? The fact is that the errors were there for years and were not corrected until this fall after it was brought to the attention of Fifth Marine Division Association President John Butler.

Kent Dozark, a history buff from Tampa, Fla., who has made “a point to visit as many of the graves of both the first and second flag-raisers as possible,” stopped by Roseland Cemetery in Monticello in 2012 on his way to the Civil War battlefield sites in Chickamauga and Chattanooga and noticed that the plaque with information about Boots was incorrect.

But it wasn't until the March 2015 “Reunion of Honor” on Iwo Jima when Dozark met Jennings Bunn of Live Oak, Fla., an hour east of Monticello, that they later decided together that the errors should be corrected. Bunn and his sister, Betty Kennedy, drove to Monticello last summer, and she noticed the error on the granite slab. Through a contact in Monticello,

Dozark found Dr. Sledge, who met them at the grave.

Kathy Tinsley, whose father was an Iwo Jima veteran and Silver Star recipient, and her friend Barbara Allen were on the 70th anniversary tour to Iwo Jima in March and had met Dozark and Bunn. Tinsley contacted reporter Kevin Clark of WCTV Eyewitness News in Tallahassee/Thomasville, Ga. Clark went to the gravesite that day and interviewed Sledge, Bunn and Kennedy.

So that got the ball rolling. The only thing left to do was find somebody to pick up the tab to correct the errors. Bunn contacted the Iwo Jima Association of America and Military Historical Tours. Eventually, the information ended up with Butler, whose father was also killed on Iwo Jima and was a Navy Cross recipient, with the suggestion that the Association correct the errors with a new plaque and granite slab. Butler agreed, even though the cost was going to total more than \$4,600.

“It is absolutely the right thing to do,” Butler said

*Continued on page 10*



**Dr. James Sledge was a boyhood friend of “Boots” Thomas and a distant cousin of another Marine combat veteran, author Eugene B. “Sledghammer” Sledge. (Photo by Ray Elliott)**

## The importance of legacy

I wanted to thank you very much for publishing my letter informing the members of the FMDA of my father's death (Eugene B. Kobel – 5THENGR) in February 2015. I received the Spring/Summer 2015 edition of *The Spearhead News* over the weekend and was so grateful when I saw my letter. I sent a copy to my siblings, which I know they will appreciate.

Your editor's note mentioned that one more copy of *Spearhead News* would be sent after the Final Muster notice is posted. You also mentioned something about enlisting families as legacy members. I know my father was a life member, but I would be interested in knowing how I might go about becoming a legacy member.

The Marines played such an important part in my father's life. A few years ago, we purchased an inscribed brick at the site of the Marine Corps Heritage Museum in honor of my father. I am hoping that I can one day visit the Museum in Quantico, Va., to see the brick for myself.

Thank you in advance for whatever assistance you can provide about legacy membership. I do have some photos from my father taken on Iwo Jima and will look to have copies made and sent to you at some point.

— Theresa M. Kobel  
New York, NY

**Editor's Note:** *Yes, we send one more Spearhead after posting a Final Muster. And it is imperative that we have children, grandchildren and relatives join the Association to keep it going. A membership application is on the last page of the newsletter. We appreciate your membership to keep the memory alive about what your father's generation did on Iwo Jima. Dues are paid annually, and life memberships are also available.*

## Recognizing one final muster

I received the recent edition of *The Spearhead News* and noted your Final Muster column. I have been handling the affairs of my uncle, who recently passed away. I am not clear as to the unit reference, for example: "C-1-26" listed after the name and before the date of death, but I would like to have him recognized in your next issue. Can you help me determine the correct unit reference? I have his discharge papers, but cannot find it noted.

My uncle, Richard F. Tosky, was a corporal when he was discharged in April 1946, after serving in the Pacific for two years. He fought in the battle on Iwo Jima. He passed away on May 13, 2015—two weeks shy of his 90th birthday.

I look forward to and appreciate your response.

— Don Tosby  
[dτοςby@msn.com](mailto:dτοςby@msn.com)

**Editor's Note:** *My condolences for the death of your uncle. He is listed in Final Muster in this issue. He was in I Company, 3rd Battalion, 13th Marine Regiment—I-3-13. We are trying to keep the Association going to preserve the memory of the members of the Division and what they did for our country, and would welcome you as a legacy member.*

## Remembering Rabbi Gittelsohn as a 'great advocate of peace'

I was enlisted assistant to CDR Warren F. Cuthriell, chaplain of the Fifth Marine Division. I was very interested in your *Spearhead* article since I knew Rabbi Gittelsohn well, as he was No. 2 chaplain to Cuthriell.

I was standing by during all of the brouhaha about who should give the cemetery eulogy on Iwo Jima. I have read Mandel's biography carefully, and from my recollection, he has given a very accurate and precise accounting of the events of that unhappy circumstance. I give Cuthriell a lot of credit for standing by the rabbi, when many underling chaplains were clamoring for his nonperformance.

Gittelsohn was a brilliant scholar and gifted speaker and writer. Before he delivered "The Purest Democracy," Chaplain Cuthriell had me type a copy from Gittelsohn's handwritten script. I felt then that it was a masterpiece that would long be remembered. (Don't know what happened to that copy.)

Chaplain Cuthriell was one of the finest Christian gentlemen I will ever know. We got along marvelously well during the some two years we were together. After the war, I visited him often at his home in La Jolla (Calif.). Rabbi Gittelsohn corresponded with me a few times, and I kept track of his many achievements. He was a great pacifist and advocate of peace. I don't think he ever got over the way he was treated by some of his fellow officers at that cemetery dedication.

Thanks for the great job you do as secretary.

— Kenneth J. Brown  
*kenandjean1950@gmail.com*

### **Special thanks to editor's guest columnist**

*To (Editor's Guest) Caitlin Elliott ...*

Dear Caitlin:

I am a 91-year-old WW II Marine and survivor of Iwo Jima. Thanks for inviting folks to remember us old vets via *Spearhead*! Good job! It means a great deal more than most realize just to get a handshake and a thanks, or perhaps just a nod from a stranger who passes by. It is people like you who make us feel that it really was worthwhile. I'm sure I'm just one of many who would like to give you a big thanks and say, "keep up the good work."

I liked what I read on an Honors Flight T-shirt recently: "If you can read this, thank a teacher. If you can read it in English, thank a veteran."

Amen.

— Ken Brown

### **Others proud of their Fifth Marine Division history, too**

I served with H Company, 2nd Battalion, 27th Marines, Fifth Marine Division, from February to September 1968. Since that time, the USMC changed my discharge papers to First Marine Division.

I became a life member of Fifth Marine Division Association, put a 5thMarDiv decal on my vehicle, and was very proud of serving in the Division. Within the last few years, I wondered if the Association had anything to do with switching the Fifth to the First. The latest issue mentions "legacy" members quite often. The only reference to Vietnam is on the nametag for the upcoming reunion. It also appears that if you weren't on Iwo or in Vietnam, forget it.

It seems to me that, years ago, the Association should probably have named itself the "Iwo Jima" Association. This would have opened it up to other units and branches (corpsmen, for example). It would also have increased the legacy pool. It would have saved me some money, but *The Spearhead News* is

worth it. I hope I'm wrong on all this. I also don't want any Iwo vet to think I'm cutting him down. I've read a lot of books on Iwo and have nothing but the highest respect for them.

— Dave Holmes  
*homer2@centurytel.net*

**Editor's Note:** *The 13th, 26th and 27th Marine Regiments served in Vietnam and were briefly attached at different times to the First and Third Marine Divisions. Vietnam veterans who served with the 13th, 26th or 27th are quite welcome to join the Association as full members. Legacy members are family members.*

### **Surviving spouses are welcome; keep the information coming**

I received the Spring/Summer issue of *Spearhead* and was happy to read that surviving spouses can continue receiving *Spearhead* after their husband's death. My spouse, John H. Kolecki, passed away Dec. 1, 2008, five days after I enrolled him as a life member. I didn't notify you because I wanted to continue receiving the *Spearhead*. I read it thoroughly and try to keep up with what's going on.

My husband was in the Fifth Marine Division (B-1-28) and fought on Iwo Jima. Many of his friends were lost in the battle, and thereafter when he returned to civilian life. He wrote three books after the age of 80, and in one he had a chapter on his Iwo Jima battle, which I put away to send to *Spearhead* some day, if you still want it.

I also have many *Spearhead* magazines, which I could send to you if you want them. I am 88 years old and who knows what will happen to them after my demise. Please let me know if you want them.

Presently, I am at my summer home near Parry Sound, Ontario, Canada, where I spend my summers. Going home in September, and will send this letter when I return home to the good old USA.

— Violet Kolecki  
North Tonawanda, NY

**Editor's Note:** *Thank you; we would very much like to receive the items you describe. Section 7 of Article*

*Continued on next page*

*II: Membership in the Constitution of the Fifth Marine Division Association approved at the annual reunion in Albuquerque, N.M., on 19 July 1999 states, "The spouse of a deceased person eligible for membership in the Association under Section 1 hereof is eligible for memorial membership in this Association." Memorial members like you have much to contribute with the book your husband wrote that included a chapter of his time on Iwo Jima, the newsletters you have offered to send, and memorabilia we plan to exhibit one day in the Fifth Marine Division Museum at Camp Tarawa on the Big Island of Hawai'i.*

### **Gittelsohn remembered as a 'kindly,' 'friendly' person**

I was happy and very interested in the splendid article about Rabbi Ronald Gittelsohn (LT USNR) in the Spring/Summer *Spearhead News*. He and I became good friends when we were at Camp Tarawa as he would visit tents in our area to visit our buddies who were of the Jewish faith. And during our time on Iwo, I observed him many times on the battlefield when he was performing his duties.

At one particular time on Iwo when I was treating a dying Marine, the Marine was able in a very faint voice to speak the word "Priest." I checked his dog tags, and it contained the letter "C" for Catholic. I spotted a person several yards away and crawled over to him. It happened to be Rabbi Gittelsohn. I asked him if he had seen Father Bradley (Catholic Chaplain, 28th Marines), as I had a badly wounded Catholic Marine who wanted Last Rites. To my surprise, as I am Catholic, he said he would take care of that and while he was doing so, the Marine died. I was told sometime later that our chaplains, although of various faiths, are trained to "pinch hit" for each other in circumstances such as these, and I was glad that Rabbi Gittelsohn was able to give solace to this dying Marine.

Rabbi Gittelsohn and I did stay in touch after the war by telephone and mail. In the last letter I had from him before his death, he was rabbi emeritus, Temple Israel, in Boston. After serving in WWII, he became known nationally and internationally as a Jewish scholar. His bio on Google is extensive and very interesting to read, just by entering the words, Rabbi Roland Gittelsohn. He was a very kindly and friendly person.

In the years since WWII, I have been pleasantly surprised when the main speaker—at several Veterans Days, Memorial Days and other similar ceremonies I have attended over the years—recited Rabbi Gittelsohn's speech of 21 March 1945 verbatim. The article stirred memory of another bad day on Iwo; there were no good days.

— Greg "Doc" Emery 2-28 and 5THMED Bn  
Boynton Beach, FL

**Editor's Note:** *Rabbi Gittelsohn's eulogy was read verbatim at the memorial service of the 66th annual reunion of the Fifth Marine Division Association at Virginia Beach, Va. in September. Former Spearhead editor Doc Emery wasn't able to attend, but he wrote Walter O'Malley (E-2-27) after he sent Doc a Reunion Journal (copies of which are still available for \$15).*

*Doc also commented that it was "too bad that only 17 survivors were in attendance. We can't expect the numbers to increase greatly, if at all; they will only diminish." He then asked if "anything was said at the business meeting about the possibility of 'retiring' the Association."*

*Which there wasn't. Quite the contrary, the Association under legacy members President John Butler and Vice President Kathleen Painton are leading the way to keep it alive and working to establish a museum at Camp Tarawa at the entrance to Parker Ranch and prepare for the 67th annual reunion in San Antonio, Texas, on Oct. 6-8, 2016.*

*"Two other Iwo survivors' organizations, of which I am a member, have done it," he wrote: "The New York Iwo Jima Survivors Association and the Connecticut Iwo Jima Survivors Association. The New York group tried to save itself by joining with members of the First Marine Division Association at its annual affair, but I don't believe it was too successful. The Connecticut group is calling it quits this fall, although hopefully, its name will live on through a foundation that's been established, and an organization composed of relatives of survivors and other people interested in the history of Iwo Jima who wish to join. In each case, their decision to pack it in was because of the difficulty in getting people willing to accept the responsibility and hard work it takes to arrange the reunion, when there are so few survivors left who are willing and able to attend."*

*Seventy-seven veterans of the Fourth Marine*

Division Association attended the Final Muster of that group on August 3-7 at Camp Lejuene. The Iwo Jima Association of America on the East Coast and the Iwo Jima Reunion Committee still plan to continue to host reunions and events in February next year. Military Historical Tours also is planning for the annual Reunion of Honor on Iwo Jima in March 2016.

### Rita Hayworth visits wounded

This is a bonus for you. When Bob (Robert T. McKay, 5THPION) was in the hospital after being wounded on Iwo Jima, Rita Hayworth visited them. He had no paper—just the enclosed card. (See his Imperial Domain of Golden Dragon for crossing the 180th Meridian at 2315, 31 January 1945, and Rita Hayworth's autograph.) She signed the back for him.

— Helen M. McKay  
Seminole, FL



**Editor's Note:** Mrs. McKay sent Bob's account of being wounded and his transfer back to the States, a number of photos and other written materials. We hope to receive similar contributions from others for the Camp Tarawa Museum on the Big Island of Hawai'i.

### Feeling pride with every issue

I would like to thank you for sending me *Spearhead*.

My husband, John F. Platek 5THPION (who died in 1999) was in the Fifth Marine Division and fought in the Battle of Iwo Jima. He was so very proud to have been a Marine.

When I get the *Spearhead News*, I feel that pride once again and appreciate the role of the U.S. Marine Corps in keeping our country safe.

— Emily Platek  
Kenmore, NY

### Enjoying Spearhead

I surely enjoy the *Spearhead News* for myself. I was assigned to C Company, 5th Pioneer Battalion. I am enclosing a newspaper clipping of me I hope you find interesting.

After Iwo, I stayed in the Marine Reserves and when the Korean War broke out, I was put in the 7th Marine Regiment in the First Marine Division, commanded by Col Homer L. Litzenberg Jr. (Navy Cross recipient in action against the Chinese at the Chosen Reservoir in Korea during November and December 1950). I was in the First Battalion commanded by LtCol Raymond C. Davis (Medal of Honor recipient in action against the Chinese at the Chosen reservoir in Korea in early December 1950). We had a bully of a time, as you can see in the enclosed article.

— Clarence A. Schutt Jr., 5THPION  
Hixon, TN

**Editor's Note:** The interview with you by Times Free Press columnist Mark Kennedy is indeed interesting. We don't have permission to reprint it, but anyone interested in reading it can see it at the following link: <http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/opinion/columns/story/2015/feb/26/war-stories-70-years-later/290336/>



## FINAL MUSTER ("Roll Call of the Reef")

ANTONELLIS, Donato **L-4-13** 4/2/2011  
BENARD, Jaques **VMO-5** 9/3/2009  
BENNETT, James R. **HQ-3-27** 6/14/2014  
BLUMENSTEIN, Herman **5THENGR** 3/23/2014  
BUCHANAN, James **E-2-28** 6/22/2015  
CALDWELL, COL Frank C. **F-2-26** 6/3/2015  
CHANDLER, Charles W. "Spud" **5THMED** 5/18/2015  
CUCCI, Anthony R. **C-1-26** 2/25/2015  
D'ABROSCA, Joseph C. **HQBN** 1/10/2015  
DAHL, Roger **HQ-2-26** 8/29/2010  
FAULKNER, William C. **C-1-28** 12/25/2014  
GIDLEY, Charles L. **HS-SIG-26** 6/4/2015  
GOERG, Herbert F. **WPNS-28** 2/8/2013  
JACOBS, Robert P. **HQ-13** 1/30/2015  
KLAMM, William F. **D-2-28** 1/20/2013  
KOLECKI, John H. **B-1-27** 12/31/2008  
KORSMEYER, Norman R. **D-2-26** 9/15/2015  
SPENCE, Victor **D-2-28** 7/18/2015  
TOSKY, Richard F. **I-3-13** 5/13/2015  
WADE, Philip E. **I-3-13** 6/15/2015  
WAGSTAFF, John **F-2-26** 2/2013  
WEBER, Robert C. **E-2-26** 12/1/2014  
WILLIAMS, John C. **C-1-28** 9/20/2014  
WILLIS, Ralph W. **A-5THPION** 4/15/2012  
WILSON JR., Ray E. **31STREP** 1/14/2014  
WORDEN, Jay T. **5THENGR** 4/20/2015



Send Final Muster notices (including name, unit and date of death) by email to [talespress@talespress.com](mailto:talespress@talespress.com), by USPS to Association Secretary Ray Elliott, 2609 N. High Cross Rd., Urbana, IL 61802, or by calling 217-384-5820.

## SECRETARY'S NOTES

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for the dedication of the museum and to take Kathy Painton's "Boots on the Ground" tour to visit where the men trained for the Battle of Iwo Jima.

I'm still hoping to gather copies of the *Spearhead News* for the archives and to put together a collection of articles into book form. Please send them to me at 2609 N. High Cross Road, Urbana, IL 61802-9643.

We also need new members and renewals for all members. Dues are to be paid at the beginning of each year, unless you are a life member, and notices are not sent out to save postage. You're on the honor system. *Spearhead News* continues to be sent to a member's address for one issue after a death has been reported, and widows become Memorial Members as per the Association's bylaws.

I've suggested a new membership designation for relatives of Iwo Jima and Vietnam veterans: Legacy Members. Please let me know if you are a relative of a veteran, so I can bring that to the board for approval. We'd like to know how many of you are relatives who would fit that designation.

We're looking forward to hearing from you with your input, your artifacts and your help in funding the museum.

— Ray Elliott, Secretary  
[talespress@talespress.com](mailto:talespress@talespress.com)

## ATTENTION!

### All Marines who trained at Camp Tarawa

Please send us your artifacts—photos, maps, souvenirs and, most of all, memories of your experiences while training at Camp Tarawa.

At the FMDA reunions, you reminisce about that "slice of life" preparing for battle; we want to collect those stories in writing, video or audio versions. Stories can begin at Camp Pendleton, include training at Camp Tarawa, the battle at Iwo Jima, or the return to Camp Tarawa. Now is the time to send in your personal experiences to help make the Camp Tarawa Museum truly memorable. Please document your story for posterity.

Kathy Painton, FMDA vice president and historian/archivist of the Camp Tarawa Detachment of the Marine Corps League, has already begun collecting items for the museum. Anyone having items to donate can contact her at 808-880-9880 or [kathypainton@hotmail.com](mailto:kathypainton@hotmail.com).



## REUNION HOST

Continued from page 1

was traveling on the Southern Pacific.

In less than 24 hours after returning to San Diego, I was headed back to Texas for Naval Radio School at Texas A&M University. Twenty-five of us graduated, with nine of us returning to Camp Miramar (Aviation), across from Camp Pendleton. Nine days later, a truck crossed the road from Pendleton, picked us up, and deposited us in front of the Fifth Joint Assault Co. For this nine-man group, our Marine aviation careers were over before they began—catch as catch can.

The JASCO had three groups. The first was shore fire control, with a naval gunnery officer attached, who called in ship gunfire on designated targets. The second was a 20-man communications team; there were 10 of these teams who had radiomen, messengers, switchboards and runners to deliver messages. The third was the 13 Air Liaison Teams. Our team was ALP No. 13 attached to the 3rd Battalion, 28th Regiment.

On Iwo Jima, I was a 19-year-old sergeant. Our team called in air requests to a support air controller (SAR network). There were 24 battalions on this network, plus the division and regimental teams.

It was very difficult to get into the radio net to initiate air strike requests—radio traffic was quite crowded. Our ALP called in air strikes on the base of Hot Rocks (Mt. Suribachi) late on D-Day. At 0800 of D+1, we called in an air strike on a machine gun nest 200 yards from Suribachi's base. Our last (66th) Reunion Journal has a photo of this air strike showing the last plane, known as "Tail End Charlie."

At 0830 of D+2, we called in a 40-plane strike on Mt. Suribachi's crater. Though this strike is mentioned in many books, it's never mentioned that the bombs were napalm. Numerous tunnels and openings were

networked throughout the entire 550 feet of Suribachi. The napalm permeated downward through the openings, consuming the oxygen in the air. Afterwards, a considerable reduction in Japanese activity was observed. In fact, very little Japanese activity continued on the next day, D+3. Col. Harry Liversedge said, "We will go on top tomorrow." The next day, D+4, is when the flags were raised; little did we know that the island battle would last more than 30 more days.

Upon returning to the Big Island, we began training for Operation Olympic, designed to simulate an invasion of Kyushu Island the following November. I thank the good Lord for Harry Truman, who had the resolve to use the atomic bombs that ultimately saved so many lives, both Japanese and American. I participated in the occupation of Japan, leaving the island in May 1946, and was discharged from San Diego on May 16, 1946.

In 1951, I graduated from the University of Houston with a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering. For 35 years afterwards, I worked for Union Carbide in Texas City, Texas, retiring in 1985 at age 60. In 1947, I had met Aline Bartosh, and we were married in February 1951. It was my last semester of school, and I carried 20 hours with five labs while holding a part-time job for \$1 an hour. Aline, who worked full-time as a nurse, typed all my lab reports to help me graduate. Together, we had five children, 10 grandchildren, two great-granddaughters (who live next door) and five great-grandsons. We have been blessed every day of our lives.

In my estimation, I live today because, for some unknown reason, the good Lord chose for me to live, while some of my buddies—who were much better than me—went on to heaven. Every day, without exception, my thoughts are of my fellow Marines and the sacrifices they made for our freedom.

### TENTATIVE 2016 REUNION SCHEDULE

Ivan and Bruce Hammond drove to Fredericksburg, Texas, on Oct. 30 through a torrential rain and visited the National Museum of the Pacific War and the Holiday Inn Market Square in San Antonio, which is five blocks from the river.

In Fredericksburg, they began the groundwork to get Gen Michael Hagee, USMC (Ret.), to be the guest speaker at the 2016 FMDA Reunion. While it is not certain that Gen Hagee will be available, they were asked to contact the general's office in April or May 2016.

Armed Forces Reunion has obtained a contract for

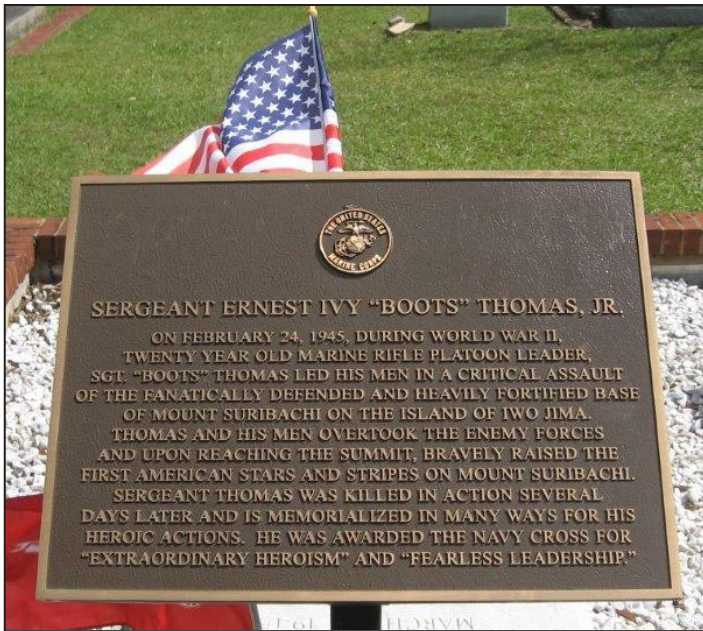
the FMDA with the Holiday Inn at Market Square on Oct. 6, 7 and 8, 2016. The tentative reunion schedule follows:

Thursday, Oct. 6 - Registration

Friday, Oct. 7 - Bus trip to the National Museum of the Pacific War, including the Chester Nimitz Museum in Fredericksburg

Saturday, Oct. 8 - Business meeting, memorial service and banquet

Details for registration, hotel reservations and advertising in the 67th Annual Reunion Journal will be in the Spring/Summer *Spearhead News*.



(Photo by Kent Dozark)



(Photo by Ray Elliott)

The old memorial plaque (left) at the gravesite of Sgt Ernest “Boots” Thomas in Roseland Cemetery, Monticello, Fla., indicates that the flag was raised on Mt. Suribachi on Feb. 24, 1945, when it was actually raised on Feb. 23. The Fifth Marine Division Association paid to have the plaque corrected for posterity and held a rededication ceremony Oct. 28 at the site.

## EDITOR'S DESK

*Continued from page 3*

at the time, adding that the Association would take the lead and would accept contributions, earmarked for the Sgt Boots Thomas granite slab and bronze plaque corrections. Contributions are still being accepted.

Along with changing the date on the slab and the words on the plaque, the Spearhead patch of the Fifth Marine Division was added. A restoration ceremony was held Oct. 28 at the gravesite.

Butler and his wife, Kathy, printed an impressive program featuring a photo of the young sergeant in uniform on the front, two photos of the Marines on Suribachi when the flag was raised, a biography of Boots and his Navy Cross citation.

More than 75 people attended the ceremony on a warm north Florida fall afternoon. Most people were from the area, but Tinsley and Allen came all the way from San Diego for the dedication.

Channel 6 was back, and the Tallahassee Democrat and Monticello's ECB Publishing all covered the ceremony. The Marine Corps League, Tallahassee Detachment, presented the Colors, the Pledge of Allegiance followed, after which Butler introduced notable people in attendance and called on speakers that included Monticello Mayor Tom Vogelgesang, Navy chaplain CAPT Leonard Dodson, USN (Ret.), and Dr. Sledge, who talked about his relationship with Thomas

while they were growing up and read from letters he had received from him.

Through the years, Sledge has spoken about his friend to students and groups whenever he had the opportunity and said he would continue telling people about his friend as long as possible and whenever possible.

“I moved across the street from Boots when I was about 10,” Sledge said. “We quickly became friends. We would spend Saturday nights listening to the radio to hear the Hit Parade. Then in the 11th grade, I moved to the Philippines for a year, but we wrote each other.”

In high school, Sledge said Thomas was vice president of his junior class and president of the senior class. After graduation, he went to Tri-State University, a private school in Indiana now known as Trine University, to study aeronautical engineering.”

“By the way,” Sledge said, laughing, “tuition was \$64 a quarter.”

Then the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor and Sledge said Thomas told him, “I can’t even study and want to join the Marine Corps.”

But he was colorblind and failed the vision test, and Sledge said Thomas “memorized the books and one day, he went down to take the test. He knew by the cover what the numbers were and passed the test.”

Six months after Pearl Harbor, Thomas went to Parris Island for boot camp. “Yesterday, we were up at 2 a.m. after a 10-mile hike,” Sledge read from a letter from Thomas, “and swimming in ice-filled water with

full equipment, dynamite exploding all around us. Then we were up again at 5 a.m. in the morning. We haven't gotten more than four hours sleep a night for the last two weeks. We are stepping up our training and being trained fast and rough, so we can go."

After graduating from boot camp, he was kept as a drill instructor at Parris Island where he was known as "Thomas the Tiger." But he wanted to go to combat and finally got his wish after the Fifth Marine Division was activated at Camp Pendleton on 11 November 1943. Thomas reported to Easy Company, Second Battalion, 28th Marine Regiment, went to Camp Tarawa on the Big Island of Hawai'i where the division trained for Iwo Jima and served with the company until he was killed by a sniper on March 3.

Dodson closed out the rededication ceremony with a benediction, Taps was played and the Marine Corps League retired the Colors after which the Monticello Chamber of Commerce hosted a reception that lasted three hours. Photos of the first flag-raising, a photo of Thomas' mother and his brother and sister when they were young, and a sketch of Thomas are on one side of the room reminding people of Boots Thomas and the sacrifice he made 70 years ago.

"I believe my purpose in life is to tell about the first flag-raising," Sledge said at the cemetery and again at the reception, "and Boots story so he can be remembered for generations to come."



FMDA Secretary Ray Elliott (from left), Treasurer Doug Meny, Dr. James Sledge and President John Butler all played a role in seeing history reflected accurately at "Boots" Thomas' grave.

**Contributions still much appreciated.  
Send to FMDA President John Butler; P.O. Box  
16004; Temple Terrace, FL 33687  
(Indicate it's for the Thomas plaque restoration)**

## Camp Tarawa Museum Update



The site of the original Slop Chute Quonset hut is the proposed location for the Camp Tarawa Museum on Parker Ranch property on the Big Island of Hawai'i.

Fifth Marine Division Association Vice President Kathleen Painton continues to work at getting an agreement with the Parker Ranch to establish the Camp Tarawa Museum for the Association. To that end, she recently conducted two "Boots on the Ground" tours of the Division training area, made a presentation for the Kona Historical Society and helped with the local Marine Corps Birthday Ball.

"We continue to work closely with Nahua Guilloz, corporate secretary and administrative executive at Parker Ranch," Painton said, "but we still need someone who can help us prepare a marketing plan for the project to present to the Parker Ranch trustees before a contractual agreement can be offered."

The Camp Tarawa Museum Committee and an advisory board have been established with participants offering their support and assistance with the project. The advisory board consists of Col Bill Rockey, Bonnie Haynes, Laura Leppert, State Sen. Gilbert Kahele and Momi MaNaughton.

The Museum Committee consists of Camp Tarawa Foundation board members, Nahua Guilloz, a Parker Ranch historian, Jimmie Watson and Florence Curnett. Donations of memorabilia, video and newspaper interviews from Iwo Jima veterans or their families are encouraged to be submitted for the museum archives. Contact Kathy Painton at [kathypainton@hotmail.com](mailto:kathypainton@hotmail.com) for more information.

# As their numbers dwindle, Iwo Jima veterans reunite in Virginia Beach

By Dianna Cahn

The Virginian-Pilot, Sept. 12, 2015

VIRGINIA BEACH—The ones here Friday were among the few who made it out in one piece.

Ask them why they survived one of the greatest battles of World War II when so many others didn't, and these 90-year-old men who spent most of their lives not talking about it invariably smile and shrug.

"I had a guardian angel on each shoulder," said Warren Musch of Jacksonville, Ill. "I am one of the few that walked on and off of that island without a scratch."

That island was Iwo Jima. U.S. Marines fought pitched battles for 36 brutal days in February and March 1945 to take that mountainous piece of terrain from the Japanese. Close to 6,000 Marines were killed, and another 20,000 were wounded.

In 1949, the Fifth Marine Division Association from Iwo Jima held its first reunion. Hundreds attended. This year, just 17 came. Some in wheelchairs, others still walking strong, they toured the Military Aviation Museum in Pungo and marveled over the fact that they survived the ordeal, now 70 years ago.

"My guardian angel was wiped out by the time I got off the island," said Martin Connor, 89, of New York state, his wife Janet by his side.

Connor was a rifleman, an 18-year-old private first class who had never been to war. He had spent a day in battle firing 60 mm mortar shells. When he was finally relieved at 11 p.m., he lay down in his foxhole to sleep.

Some time later, he woke up to someone challenging him. "Who goes there?" came a voice out of the dark.

Connor looked around. It was pitch black, and he was standing between foxholes. He'd been walking in his sleep.

Without thinking, he answered, "Is that you, Fred?"

Fred Beamer had transferred out of his unit a year earlier. Connor had no idea how he had identified his voice.

"Marty, I was ready to shoot," Beamer said. "I'd challenged you three times. You only answered one time."

Connor had been so exhausted, he'd nearly

sleepwalked right into warfare. It happened more often than not, he said. That's how hard the conditions were.

"Our eyes were so dry it hurt to touch the eyelids," he said. And in a picture of his unit after they got off the island, they looked like zombies. "Our tanks were empty."

The survivors say only three out of every 10 of them came back unharmed. Ivan Hammond, 90, from Santa Fe, Texas, was the guy who called in airstrikes. He was a forward observer who, on the second day of the incursion, directed planes against a Japanese machine gun preventing their advance onto Mount Suribachi, the high point of the island where Marines famously planted a U.S. flag.

"I always did believe I was going to make it," he said. "A lot of guys didn't think they would make it and, believe it or not, the good Lord took them.

"I didn't want to make that mistake."

Hammond, who was a sergeant, had "a lot of guardian angel moments."

One night, he went to the forward post from his unit's encampment to ask whether there would be air activity the next day. On his way back, he walked up a slight incline. When he reached the top, there was a Marine private first class cooking with a bright burning fire.

The flames silhouetted Hammond, and instantly bullets came flying, one singing the hair on the back of his neck. Two others whizzed right by him.

Then, the Japanese turned their guns on the pot, splattering hot chocolate. Hammond was fuming.

"I reamed him out with all kinds of choice words," he said. "I said, 'What the hell were you thinking?' Then I got on my knees and thanked the good Lord."

Hammond said he didn't talk about the war for 50 years. But in 1995, he went back to Iwo Jima for the 50th anniversary of the battle. Now he tells his children, "You are special because there is no reason I should be on this earth."

They didn't think about the danger, said Duane Tunnyhill of Omaha, Neb. Even after a grenade landed between his feet, sending shrapnel up his legs and back, Tunnyhill never thought he wouldn't make it home.

"I am very lucky they threw hand grenades because their hand grenades broke up into little pieces



Veterans gather for a group photo at the Military Aviation Museum during the 66th FMDA Reunion in Virginia Beach, Va. From left to right are: Bob Mueller, Duane Tunnyhill, Walter O'Malley, Al Pagoaga, Bill Madden, John Huffhines, John Coltrane (seated), George Cattelona, Monroe Ozment, Marty Connor, Ralph Simoneau, Warren Musch, Samuel Prestigiacommo, George Boutwell, Carl DeHaven and Ivan Hammond. Not pictured is Preble Staver. *(Photo by Ray Elliott)*

about the size of shotgun pellets,” he said. He was still digging pellets out of his legs three or four years later.

Even after a buddy of his was shot and killed next to him, his body flying down a cliff after being struck, Tunnyhill said, he always believed he would come out of it OK.

“We were kind of in a fog,” he said. “You were there to do something, so you were going to do it. We were not scared. We just got tired of it.”

George Cattelona of Raleigh, N.C., was an artillery sergeant. As a scout and a forward observer, he served on the front lines. He worked the battery for the first four days, but on day five, his men teamed up with a group from another battery to move up to the front and relieve a third one.

They were 16 men and two officers. On their first day at the front, a mortar shell landed smack in the middle of them. One man was killed, and 10 were wounded.

“Five of us walked away,” Cattelona said.

His canteen was sliced down the middle. He trashed it. His poncho, hanging from his back, had been aerated with shrapnel holes, right between his legs. He didn't have a scratch on him.

As they moved forward, they came upon a Marine

on the ground, his legs in the air. The top half of his body was missing, “like someone had cut him in two just at the gun belt,” Cattelona said.

“Our radio operator started freaking out. I had to yell at him. Then he came back to his senses,” Cattelona said, and the men continued forward.

The next day, a hand grenade landed beside him, and hot shrapnel penetrated Cattelona's left shoulder.

“It burned like the devil,” he said.

“Also, a small piece of shrapnel went into my helmet and turned my helmet completely around. Of course, I screamed like hell, then quieted down and continued what I needed to do before nightfall.”

Every three days, his team would drop back to the battery for down time, then come back up for another three-day forward stint. One time, a 320 mm Japanese mortar shell hit the ground just 20 feet from where he was sleeping with the gun crew. It shook the ground like an earthquake.

More rattling was learning that just the day before, the gun crew had moved its position. It would have been a direct hit a day earlier.

“Our guardian angels were with me on that,” he said.

*Continued on page 15*

# FMDA's 66th reunion deemed a great success

**By John Butler, President**

By any measure, this year's 66th reunion at Virginia Beach was a huge success. Though being only three days instead of five, it was a top-notch Fifth Marine Division family gathering. Many thanks are due to our hard-working reunion hosts, Monroe and Leliani Ozment.

From the opening day, we enjoyed a well-stocked hospitality room, with drinks, food and music. It was indeed the family room for the FMDA.

Excursion day was a novelty ride on an open-air double-deck bus to the Military Aviation Museum, where we saw vintage aircraft from the very first days of aviation through today and heard a retired Marine sing like Frank Sinatra during our lunch break. The scheduled Corsair flight was cancelled due to engine problems, but photos were taken of our Iwo survivors and the attendees gathered in front of it.

Seventeen Iwo Jima survivors, one Vietnam-era Marine and 62 family members, including the sons, daughters and sisters of Fifth Division Marines who were KIA during the battle of Iwo Jima and others with connection to the Division were at roll call for this

reunion. Because the ranks of our Iwo veterans have grown thinner with time, family members and others who have a kinship with the Fifth Marine Division now constitute the majority of reunion attendees.

Saturday was the final day of the reunion with the memorial service, general business meeting and final banquet. Nearly all hands were present at each event. Among the attendees was Marine veteran and Hawaii State Sen. Gil Kahele, who spoke to us briefly at the banquet and at the general meeting, where he was introduced. Sen. Kahele has committed to giving us assistance in the Camp Tarawa Museum project, being spearheaded by Association Vice President Kathy Painton, a legacy family member.

At the reunion's general meeting, the Association committed to continue annual reunions, the bi-annual publication of *Spearhead News* and to raise funds to build a small museum near the old Camp Tarawa site on the Big Island of Hawai'i. It was also announced that the Association had previously committed to restore the gravesite marker of Sgt Ernest "Boots" Thomas, a platoon sergeant in E-2-28 who was one of the first flag



1



2

raisers, and a PH Navy Cross recipient for his heroics before being KIA.

The dedication of the restored plaque and slab was held Oct. 28 in Monticello, Fla., and attended by FMDA officers John Butler, Ray Elliott and Doug Meny. (See The Editor's Desk column on page 3.)

Next year's reunion site was not determined until after the reunion, but a choice of two possible sites had been agreed to: New Orleans or San Antonio. Ivan Hammond committed to hosting the reunion if it were held in San Antonio, and that's now been confirmed.

At the banquet, which nearly 100 attended, we were addressed by BrigGen David Bellon, the commandant's representative; and by our own Col Bill Rockey, who shared special insights about his father, LtGen Keller Rockey, who commanded the Fifth Marine Division on Iwo Jima. It was moving to hear Col Rockey speak of his father on a personal basis.

As a postscript to our excellent reunion, a handful trekked to Quantico on Sunday to accompany John Huffhines and his wife, Mary, to visit the Bar on the Beach monument in Semper Fi Memorial Park at the Marine Corps Heritage Center. The trip included a group lunch at Tun Tavern and a long, pleasant day for everybody.



## IWO JIMA VETERANS

*Continued from page 13*

Cattelona spoke at length. He did it for a reason, he said.

For 50 years, like most of the men from what has become known as "the Greatest Generation," he didn't talk about his experiences. Now he goes to schools and civic associations and tells his story whenever he can.

"I always try to encourage fellas to talk about it," he said. "Do it for your children and grandchildren, so they know what you went through during World War II."

At the museum Friday, some veterans from later wars joined the Iwo Jima men. Walt Pullar, a Marine veteran of the Korean and Vietnam wars who retired as a colonel, said he doesn't mind when people say the previous generation was the greatest.

"They earned it," said Pullar, 85, who lives at the Atlantic Shores Retirement Community in Virginia Beach. "Especially the guys at Iwo Jima."

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1) Reunion host Monroe Ozment (E-2-28) and Sgt Jorge Brice hold the replica of the Fifth Division colors. 2) Leilani Ozment with Gil Kahele, a Marine veteran and state senator from the Big Island of Hawai'i. 3) Singer and Marine veteran Frank Cubillo serenades a volunteer dressed as Rosie the Riveter at the Military Aviation Museum. 4) Matt the Marine doll sales are an important FMDA fundraiser of the Women's Auxiliary. (Photos 1-3 by Kim McKeown; Photo 4 by Ray Elliott)

**SHARE/ORDER REUNION PHOTOS ONLINE AT:**  
<http://photos2.walgreens.com/walgreens/groups/IwoJima>

# Son shares stories of LtGen Rockey at reunion

By Ray Elliott

Anyone who served with the Fifth Marine Division on Iwo Jima knew LtGen Keller E. Rockey as the commanding general of the Division and the man who initiated the formation of the Fifth Marine Division Association in 1949. They knew about his service in the Marine Corps, too.

But Col William “Bill” Rockey, USMC (Ret.), also knew him as a father. At the 66th annual reunion of the Association, Bill described his father in a way most Marines wouldn’t have known about the man who led them in battle in 1945.

“He was the son of a Lutheran minister,” Bill said, “whose antecedents immigrated from Germany in the 19th century.”

Born in Columbia City, Ind., where his father preached at the Lutheran Church also at other churches in the area, Rockey was one of six children, five boys and one girl, who survived on the meager income of a minister.

“I believe this bred certain traits in my father as he grew up,” Bill said, “a respect for money and a frugal disposition, a sensitivity regarding any implied slight denigrating the social status of his family and its modest financial status, and a drive to excel above his peers. He also inherited, or learned, the typical Teutonic work ethic of industry and organization—hard work.”

Two of Rockey’s brothers served in the Navy after graduating from the Naval Academy. The youngest brother, who became an actor and musician, also served in the Navy during World War II in recreation and entertainment. Another brother, a Rhodes Scholar, was a war resister who went to Canada, but he had volunteered to drive an ambulance at the front during World War I. Nicknamed “Sunshine,” the little sister died at the age of 6 after contracting diphtheria.

“As she lay on her deathbed,” Bill said, “each of the boys was called into the bedroom to kiss her goodbye.

Today, such a disease would get a shot of antibiotic, but this was 1898 when there was no antibiotic, nor a clear understanding of disease contagion.”

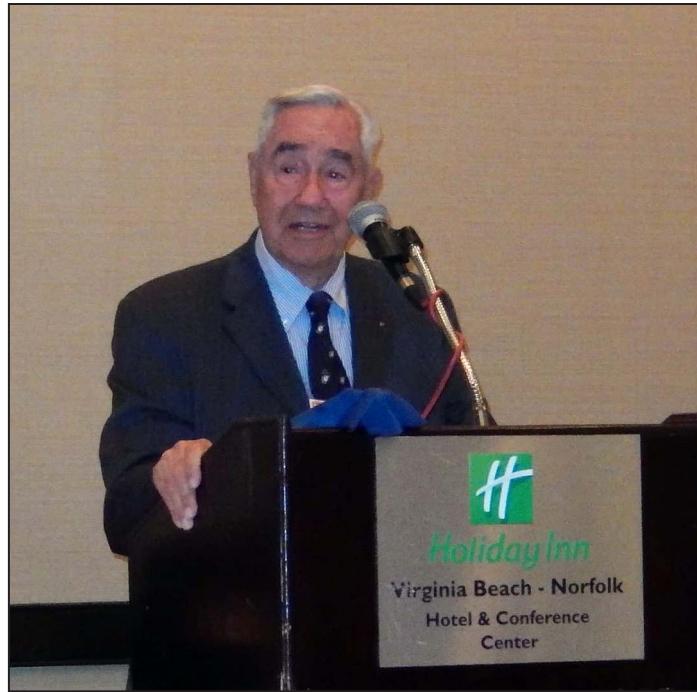
The family moved from town to town as the father accepted a pastorate in other churches as a method of “moving up” for him. While he was pastor of the Lutheran Church in Waynesboro, Pa., the future general attended Mercersburg Academy 20 miles away.

“In those days,” Bill said, “Mercersburg was considered a poor boy’s school, with the tuition within the range of a church pastor’s income. It was not Exeter or an Andover or Lawrenceville. He must have been an excellent student. He told me once when I came home with

a failing grade in the first semester of algebra that he never received any grade but 100 percent on his math tests at Mercersburg.”

Rockey graduated from Mercersburg in 1905, Bill said, then went on to Pennsylvania College at Gettysburg just down the road from Waynesboro and graduated in 1909. After graduation, he went to work with the railroad “computing the grades necessary on curves in the laying of the tracks.” Not long afterward, he went to Yale University and studied forestry for two years and obtained the equivalent of a master’s degree in forestry. From there, he worked in Wisconsin’s forest service “cruising timber, surveying, mapping and participating in the general work of a reconnaissance party.” Moving on from Wisconsin, the general took a position in Pennsylvania working with the commission for the control of the Chestnut tree blight.

In 1913, four years after graduating from Gettysburg, Rockey applied for a commission in the Marine Corps. That required a written examination soon after he had heard about the opportunity and had no time to adequately prepare. Nevertheless, he



Col Bill Rockey, USMC (Ret.)



passed the exam with a high mark, Bill said, and was invited to submit his application to the Marine Corps Commandant, MajGen William P. Biddle. The total strength of the Marine Corps at the time was 9,696, according to Bill, with 328 officers. The application process required numerous letters of recommendation.

“I have read a number of those letters,” Bill said, “coming from former employers, school masters, civic acquaintances, even a letter from Thomas R. Marshall, vice president of the United States. All, of course, were glowing in their recommendations.”

Rockey had two years of college mathematics, two of Latin, French, German and engineering, and three of English and chemistry while earning his bachelor’s of science degree. Bill reported that the dean at Gettysburg College said, “Keller had devoted the usual time to such studies as history, rhetoric, logic, Anglo-Saxon (study of Germanic people), mechanical drawing, political science, physics, astronomy, geology, botany, mineralogy, psychology, ethics, apologetics (study of Christian theology) and theism (belief in God).”

According to a letter from a Marine lieutenant who went on to the Marine Corps before Rockey, he was a “tennis champion for three years at Gettysburg, played second base on the baseball team, forward on the basketball team, and managed the football team for a year.”

In addition to appearing before the Marine Corps Headquarters Examining Board, the application process required a personal interview with the commandant in his office. Rockey was accepted and was commissioned on 18 November 1918, after which he was ordered to Norfolk, Va., for 18 months of training at the “School of Application.” Among his classmates were Alphonse Decarre, William M. Rupertus, Allen M. Turnage and James L. Underwood.

Bill said his father didn’t talk much about his life in the Marine Corps, but Bill got the impression that the life of an application school student at Norfolk was much livelier in 1913 than it was in 1950 when he went through Basic School at Quantico. He said his father once told him about a formal dinner at the school’s officers’ mess in Norfolk, when “one of the ladies had her face pushed into the mashed potato dish at the dinner table. Another young lady ended up hanging from the chandelier by her knees, skirt down around her head.”

In spite of these frivolous times, the Marine Corps still paid attention to the development of new officers. Each officer, Bill said, had to submit a monthly report on the state of his indebtedness to the commandant.

“I found a copy of Pop’s report dated April 5,

1915, two years after his commissioning, which said he still owed Jacob Reed (a uniform provider) \$480. That \$480 at today’s dollar value equals \$11,342!”

After completing the 18-month course, Rockey reported for duty on the battleship USS Nebraska then home-ported in Norfolk. He also served on the USS Nevada. During this time as a newly commissioned Marine officer, Rockey “managed to participate in the activities of the upper society of the Norfolk area.” Bill said his father met Frances, the stepdaughter of Dr. John Miller-Masury and a wealthy resident of Virginia Beach who lived in a house called “Lakeside” that still stands and is now on the National Register of Historic Places. After courting Frances for some time, Rockey proposed and she accepted.

Sometime in April 1916, Bill thinks, his father sent a message to the commandant requesting one month’s leave in order to marry Frances through the captain of the Nebraska. The leave was granted and arrangements for “an elaborate society wedding took place at Lakeside.” But at the same time, the Nebraska was ordered to sea due to the U.S. occupation of Santo Domingo.

“This resulted in the cancellation of Keller’s request for leave in order to marry,” Bill said, “and created some serious problems.”

Rockey was a brand new second lieutenant, and the commandant of the Marine Corps had just cancelled his leave request. But the wedding was set, invitations sent, contracts signed for the cake and all the arrangements had been made.

Bill said he had a copy of a Western Union telegram to the Hon. Josephus Daniels, secretary of the Navy, dated about May 15, which reads: “Won’t you please allow my fiancé Lieut Keller E. Rockey USMC ship Nebraska to take leave granted for May twenty-second? All arrangements made for wedding June first and his detachment is ordered to Santo Domingo today. Please do something.”

“Never let it be said that the Corps does not now, or never did, have heartfelt consideration for its Marines,” Bill said. “I have a copy of a telegram—now remember that the wedding day is set for June 1: ‘To Nebraska—Lieutenant Rockey authorized remain United States on leave until June first but must proceed at his own expense by first available transportation hereafter to rejoin the Nebraska.’ And to Frances: ‘Miss Frances M. Masury, Virginia Beach, Va., Lieutenant Rockey authorized remain United States until June first. George

*Continued on page 18*

## ROCKEY

Continued from page 17

Biddle, Major General Commandant.””

Bill said he thought it was a miracle that that bit of political influence didn't kill his father's career right there. Obviously, it didn't, but like other Marines of the time, Rockey both “witnessed and participated in monumental changes in the Marine Corps. The first of these changes came with the First World War. When Pop entered the Corps in 1913, total Marine Corps strength was 9,956. When WWI ended, total strength was 79,524, an increase of 799 percent. A total of 32,000 Marines served in France, and the Corps still had commitments in the Caribbean and China.”

Other changes included the acquisition of Camp Pendleton in March 1942, a dramatic increase in personnel during World War II, African-Americans enlisted, draftees were inducted, the Philadelphia Basic School disbanded, and OCC and PLC programs started at Quantico.

In January 1943, Rockey was ordered to Camp Pendleton to organize the Fifth Marine Division that eventually landed on Iwo Jima on Feb. 19, 1945. A little more than five years later, on Sept. 1, 1950, the general retired to Massachusetts and passed away on June 6, 1970, in Harwich, Mass., on Cape Cod. He is buried in Arlington Cemetery near the Rotunda and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

At Bill's swearing in at the Naval Academy at his graduation on June 2, 1950, he said his father told him two things: “Stay out of debt and obey orders.”

## A Poem

by Pfc Samuel Bernstein, 5thPION

Written 7 March 1945 to his parents from the  
Fifth Marine Division Cemetery on Iwo Jima

*Oh, I just saw a sight to see,  
A sight that will always live in me,  
And they were row on row,  
The graves of boys who gave their all.  
Here comes a cross and there a star,  
Try to see it 'cause there they are,  
A Catholic, Protestant, and a Jew,  
All American boys we once knew.  
And though you read, “So many thousands dead,”  
You know not what you really read  
'Cause only those are who see their graves  
Will ever know and be amazed.  
So to the ones who must receive  
A notice that they've been bereaved,  
The boys they died for Four Great Rights,  
We alive, for all time must keep them bright.  
And when it's over, God make it soon,  
Let's not forget ere we're doomed,  
That war is hell and pry we must  
To keep they peace they gave us.*

## Returned Japanese flag gives family some peace



At the March “Reunion of Honor” on Iwo Jima, Medal of Honor recipient Hershel “Woody” Williams returned a signed Japanese flag to naval radioman Tsuruji Akikusa. The original owner, CPO Yokichi Takimoto, died in the southern Philippines on Jolo Island on April 3, 1945—not on Iwo Jima as was originally thought.

“Reconciliation, forgiveness and healing were in abundance the day the flag was returned,” said author and translator Dan King, who has been involved in several flag returns. “The flag owner's two children, Osamu (75) and Hatsue (77), were stunned and overwhelmed with joy and gratitude at the return of the flag. They touched the blood-stained flag over and over in disbelief.”

In Japan later, Takimoto, Akikusa and King hold the flag for a photo (at left).

“It is a miracle that our father's spirit has finally come home,” Osamu said at the time, as he sniffed back the tears. “We can give him proper funeral rites in our family altar.”

# Perpetuating the legacy: The birth of Iwo Jima Monument West

By Laura Dietz

Founder, Iwo Jima Monument West

The restored Iwo Jima flag raising sculpture sat in an art warehouse near Danbury, Conn., in need of a permanent home. I envisioned this symbol of courage that has become an American icon perched on a hillside facing the Pacific. For those 450,000 Marines and Navy medical personnel who went through Camp Pendleton to the Pacific Theater, island to island, one sandy beach after another—what better symbol was there for “Operation Home of the Brave”?

This initiative aims to privately fund the purchase, transport, site construction and permanent care of an original Iwo Jima flag raising monument from the studio of sculptor Felix deWeldon, the originator of the model based on the famous Joe Rosenthal photograph of the second flag raising on Iwo Jima that recently became available.

To understand the story of the image that led to deWeldon’s sculptures and other replicas, I went to the History Division, Quantico, Va., and the National Archives and Research Administration (NARA).

As facts emerged, Rosenthal’s photograph took on new meaning. Rosenthal had fallen into the water when changing boats and one of his two cameras was soaked. The one he used to take the famous photo remained relatively dry. Then came the hike up Mt. Suribachi. Coming down the hill was Marine Corps photographer Lou Lowery, who told Rosenthal that he missed the flag raising but that it was a nice view up there.

Rosenthal went on ahead and



**Iwo Jima veterans are among those who gathered on May 22 near the proposed site at Camp Pendleton in California for one of the original Iwo Jima monuments created by sculptor Felix deWeldon.**

took the photo of the second flag raising. His film went to Guam, and the image was wired around the U.S. When deWeldon saw it, he immediately recognized its power and created the first rendering.

The famous photograph exhilarated a war-weary public at home, for whom the end of the war now seemed possible. This image established a relationship between the Marine Corps and the American people that has become a part of the nation’s psyche.

Now Americans have the opportunity to fill a decades-long void at Camp Pendleton by having its own Iwo Jima flag raising monument. The non-profit Iwo Jima Monument West has financed much of the advance work: base DPW, architects, lawyers, media, videographers, etc. All that is needed is \$10 million in hand or

pledged by year’s end to make this a reality within a year.

The land is already paid for and the design concept has been developed through a design competition with nationally recognized firms.

Its trip across the U.S. from New England will again prompt Americans to feel proud and will be a local recruiting office dream event at pre-designated stops.

Our Iwo Jima veterans are leaving us, but those who remain are “holding on” as Sgt Maj “Iron Mike” Mervosh stated in the Stars & Stripes last December. For them and the Marine Corps, make a personal commitment to contribute whatever works for you. All donor names will be listed at the memorial site. For more information, visit [www.marinesoniwojima.com](http://www.marinesoniwojima.com).

# First Iwo Jima reunion was transformative experience

**By Ray Elliott**

Not long after the 20th anniversary of the Battle of Iwo Jima, the Fifth Marine Division Association started planning to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the battle on the island.

In a July 29, 1969, letter to Association members, Reunion Chairman Charles E. Early (31st Replacement Battalion) and 1972 president sent a letter to members about the plans.

A news background sheet at the time noted: “Rarely have two groups of men been more dedicated to the destruction of the other than the Marines assaulting Iwo Jima and the Japanese defending it.”

Considering that the commander of the Japanese forces on Iwo Jima, Gen Tadamichi Kuribayashi, ordered each of his men to kill 10 Marines before they died, and that tenacious and gritty U.S. Marines landed on the island determined to take it, such a statement is undeniable.

But in 1965, one of those Marines, a private in a rifle company who was seriously wounded, “thought what a forcible statement for peace and friendship between nations could be made if survivors of these two groups could meet in friendship on the actual scene of their former conflict.”

And the plans began to take shape.

“Although the Association has been working on this for three years,” Early wrote in his 1969 letter, “because of the turnover of the island to the Japanese, final details have not yet been worked out.”

It wasn’t just the turnover of the island to the Japanese that had to be dealt with, however. To cut the costs down, the group had to either travel with a group or on a charter. Federal regulations apparently required that everybody on the charter be a member of the organization at least six months prior to the trip.

With the trip being planned for the 25th anniversary on Feb. 19, 1970, and going in and out of Japanese customs, leaving a week before seemed likely.

That meant that anybody interested in making the trip would have to have been a member of the FMDA as of Aug. 10, 1969, if they weren’t already paid-in-full

life members. Membership at the time was five dollars.

Over the next few months, plans were made and the trip became a reality for about 33 Iwo Jima veteran survivors and 17 of their wives. Some 24 Japanese survivors, three officials and four of the Japanese committee also made it to Iwo Jima for the joint commemoration. But it wasn’t easy.

“It seems likely Iwo Jima is the most difficult place to go in the world,” Early wrote. “We expected our first trip there to be difficult, but we certainly never expected the second one to be so much trouble.”

Early wrote that he had a 10-inch-high stack of files from trying to work out the details. He had corresponded with “everyone from the premier of Japan to the commanding officer of the Coast Guard detachment on Iwo and former privates of the Japanese Army.”

Technical and logistical problems included runway conditions, navigational aids, facilities for food on the island, unexploded ordinance and more. Elected representatives and even the State Department gave little help beyond contacting the Japanese to be able to travel to the island.

Not to be deterred, Early and members of the Association who wanted to go relied on the Marine Corps way that has always been its modus operandi: to improvise, adapt and overcome.

While there were initially plans to meet on the island with the Japanese soldiers and sailors who had fought there, it looked doubtful. There was “considerable pressure,” Early said, on the Japanese government “to force us to meet with a group comprised mostly of widows and orphans of the men killed.” While the group did have some soldiers and sailors, he said he had tried to make it clear that it would be awkward.

So plans were made to spend four or five days in Japan, then early on the morning of Feb. 19 to take a smaller plane to Iwo Jima for the day, fly back to Japan and then go to Hong Kong for another four or five days. The entire round trip from San Francisco was expected to cost between \$700-\$750.



**On Feb. 19, 1970, Americans and Japanese came together on Iwo Jima—the site of their former and ferocious conflict—to pay respects to the fallen on both sides and to further forge a new-found friendship grounded in peace.**

Despite the obstacles, the Marine and Japanese survivors of the battle met on Iwo Jima for the 25th anniversary of the deadly battle. Both groups traveled over the battlefield—sometimes together—and held a joint ceremony on Mount Suribachi. Both flags were raised simultaneously. A Christian chaplain and a Buddhist monk offered prayers.

Leaders from both groups made short speeches. Wreaths were laid by the Japanese on the Marine monument, and the Marines laid a wreath on the Japanese monument. Both nation's national anthems were sung, and taps was played.

Major U.S. television networks and a large Japanese television network covered the event. American and Japanese news services carried photographs and stories. No attempts by the Marines were made to celebrate a victory, but to pay respects to the dead of both nations. For those who attended, "it was universally agreed that it was one of the most meaningful experiences of their lives."

Back in Japan the next day, and despite the initial reluctance, the Marines hosted a luncheon for the

families of the Japanese who had been killed on Iwo Jima. Instead of the awkwardness they had feared, "the Marines thought it was a beautiful and moving experience."

The Marines had brought back swords, flags and other personal items, and attempts were made to locate the families to whom the items belonged. This was publicized throughout Japan and was well received. It was reported that one family had traveled all night by train to meet a Marine to make certain it was their soldier who had been killed so they could have a final service for him. The family had a "gift delivered to the Marine at the airport when they left Tokyo."

At the luncheon, the widow of Gen Kuribayashi welcomed the Marines to Japan on behalf of the other families and thanked them for their expressions of friendship. When she finished, the Marines, all but one of whom had been wounded, gave her a standing ovation. One Marine took Mrs. Kuribayashi's hand and kissed it.

*Continued on page 23*

# Waiting was finally over for this Cubs fan ... sort of

By Bill Madden, E-2-27

After Iwo Jima in 1945, I was recovering from bullet wounds at Great Lakes Naval Hospital near Chicago. It so happened that my favorite baseball team, the Chicago Cubs, was playing the Detroit Tigers in the World Series that year.

Everyone was appreciative of what the veterans had done at that time in World War II, including the management of the Cubs. They sent over free World Series tickets for use by wounded veterans in the hospital. This was a very generous thing for them to do, and all of us were extremely appreciative of their kind offer when we heard the news; however, the hospital management, in all its wisdom, decided to make the wounded veterans work for those tickets.

When told about this mandate, the veterans, including me, rebelled. We had just been through hell in combat and were trying to recover from our wounds when this decree came down on high at the naval military hospital. Many of the veterans were in casts or on crutches. I had a bullet go through my upper arm, hitting the ulner nerve and partially paralyzing my whole arm and hand.

My arm was in a splint and a sling. Others' wounds were much more serious. Still, I couldn't use the arm.

In order to get the tickets, we were told to scrape the crud off the baseboards in the halls, mop the floors, and do other maintenance jobs that should have been done by employees or Navy personnel.

We said, "Hell no! The Cubs hadn't put any strings on our receiving the tickets at all."

We were furious. Besides, many of the wounded wouldn't have been able to do those jobs.

Anyway, we said the Cubs would be in many World Series in our lifetime. I was just 90 miles away in South Bend, Ind., and would be able to get there easily.

Big mistake!

Years later, Bill Moor of the *South Bend Tribune* had heard this story when he was reporting on me for something else one time, and he related it to an intern at the *Tribune*, Jeff Agar. Jeff thought it would make a good story during the playoffs this year between the Cubs and the Mets, so he contacted me at St. Paul's Retirement Community, where I now reside. After talking to me, he wrote an article about my 1945 disappointment.

Six hundred miles away in Washington, D.C., David Walker saw the article. A Notre Dame graduate



Eighty-nine-year-old Cubs fan Bill Madden (left) and David Walker of the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes enjoy a beer at the Oct. 21 Cubs-Mets playoff game at Wrigley Field in Chicago.

like me, David is president of the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes.

This group provides much-needed help for veterans in the most basic ways, such as paying rent, putting food on the table and getting the lights turned back on, among other similar things. It's a wonderful service for veterans who have difficulties after returning from combat and have fallen on hard times. I hadn't heard of it before, but after hearing what they do for veterans, I immediately gave them a contribution and hope others reading this will do the same.

David called me and told me he was taking two Iraq and Afghanistan veterans to the fourth Cubs-Mets playoff game: Jorge, who lost a leg; and Dan, who lost an arm. Jorge is from Puerto Rico originally, and Dan lives near Chicago.

Dave said he had an extra ticket and would gladly take me to the game, too. Since I had turned down a ticket to the Cubs' Series in 1945, I accepted immediately.

We were taken to Chicago in a Lincoln Continental, given separate rooms in the Hilton Hotel, and then taken to see the Cubs-Mets game. We did not get to see a victory, but we did get to see the Cubs in a postseason game. The World Series will come later, if I live long enough. It was a great experience, and I'm truly grateful to David and the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes.

## FIRST REUNION

Continued from page 21

The Marines hosted a banquet that night for the Japanese survivors. With the language difference and only four of those present able to carry on a conversation in the others' language, it was expected to be a formal evening without any rapport. That was not the case.

Immediate rapport was established, with both sides pointing at maps, using sign language and interpreters to learn what others did in the battle, and even kidding back and forth. Names and addresses were exchanged by the end of the evening.

The next night, the Japanese hosted a cocktail party for the Marines. Survivors, bereaved families and officials of the Japanese government attended. On the final night, "Auld Lang Syne" was playing on the public address system: "Should auld acquaintance be forgot. ..." It was noted, "25 years ago on that very day, they had been using every nerve, every muscle and all of their spiritual strength to kill each other."

When the Fifth Marine Division Association met Maj Yoshitaka, "who was credited with convincing Gen Kuribayashi of the strategic concept for defending the island which was so devastatingly successful, he was

invited to speak and was elected an honorary member of the Association."

After the 1970 visit to the island commemorating the 25th anniversary, the Marines and the Japanese continued to keep in touch. When the Japanese come to the United States, it was reported that they often visited some of the Marines they met then, and one brought his entire family to the United States and stayed with one of his former enemies for a week."

Both sides and the media seemed to recognize that "nothing symbolizes quite so well the ending of hostilities between our two sides and the friendship which now exists as the relationship of those who contended against each other in this bloody battle."

*Hope springs eternal in the human breast;  
Man never is, but always to be blessed:  
The soul, uneasy and confined from home,  
Rests and expatiates in a life to come.*

— Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Man*

Information for this article was provided by Martin C. Connor, HQ-1-26, who was a part of the first reunion trip to Iwo Jima.

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# IWO JIMA ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

## 2016 IWO JIMA COMMEMORATION EVENTS

### 71ST ANNIVERSARY REUNION & SYMPOSIUM

FEBRUARY 17-21, 2016

ARLINGTON, WASHINGTON, DC & QUANTICO, VA

*Thursday, 18 February*

Opened to the public on 13 November 2008, the National Museum of the Marine Corps is a lasting tribute to U.S. Marines — past, present, and future. Situated on a 135-acre site adjacent to the Marine Corps base in Quantico, VA, the Museum's soaring design evokes the image of the flag-raisers of Iwo Jima and beckons visitors to its 118,000-square-foot structure. Enjoy lunch on your own in the Mess Hall or 18th Century Tun Tavern.



*Friday, 19 February*

On the day of the landing on Iwo Jima in 1945 the IJAA will participate with the Department of Defense (DoD) in honoring those brave Veterans of the Army, Navy and Marine Corps who participated in the epic battle of the Pacific War. We'll begin the day with a Memorial Service at Marine Barracks 8<sup>th</sup> & I to honor those who gave the ultimate sacrifice. We'll enjoy lunch at the Marine Barracks 8<sup>th</sup> & I. Following Lunch we will attend Wreath Laying Ceremonies at both the WWII Memorial and the Marine Corps War Memorial.



*Saturday, 20 February*

Today the IJAA will conduct our symposium on the battle with various important subjects relative to the battle. We have lunch with a Guest Speaker from HQMC. This evening we will celebrate the event with the Commemorative Banquet followed by dancing.



## 71ST IWO JIMA "REUNION OF HONOR" 14-21 MARCH 2016 GUAM & IWO JIMA

The Iwo Jima Association of America (IJAA) 71st "Reunion of Honor", coordinated by IJAA's travel partner Military Historical Tours will be headquartered at the Outrigger Resort Hotel on Guam's Tumon Bay. A chartered United Airline jet will take the veterans, their families, educators, and historians back to the "Black Sands" and the very moving joint commemoration ceremony for the campaigns fallen warriors. There will be an Iwo Jima Battle Symposium & Banquet on Guam before our return. Please join us on the "Black Sands" for a stirring reunion.

*Clockwise From Top Left: CMC GEN "JOE" DUNFORD & LTGEN "LARRY" SNOWDEN ON IWO THIS YEAR; "SAM" HOLIDAY, A 4TH MARDIV CODE TALKER BACK ON THE "BLACK SANDS"; WOODY WILLIAMS, MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENT (LEFT) DISPLAYS THE EAGLE, GLOBE & ANCHOR ON MT. SURIBACHI.*



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# WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

## ANNUAL MEMBERS

BEIERLE, MJ Branca - Midlothian, VA

DOZARK, Kent - Tampa, FL

MECHE, Russell P. - Rayne, LA

TINSLEY, Kathy - La Mesa, CA

## LIFE MEMBERS

BUNN II, Jennings - Live Oak, FL

CHAMBERS, Ray and Mary - Gibsonton, FL

KAHELE, Gilbert - Hilo, HI

RUSSELL, Maureen - Santa Fe, NM

STAVER, Preble - B-1-13 - Norfolk, VA

## MEMORIAL MEMBERS

BENNETT, Eleanor - Kansas City, MO

BLUMENSTEIN, Connie - Linesville, PA

CALDWELL, Peggy - Newport, RI

D'ABROSCA, Ann Marie - Narragansett, RI

DIETZ, Ilse - Sarasota, FL

GIDLEY, Betty - Corvallis, OR

KOLECKI, Violet - North Tonawanda, NY

### FIFTH MARINE DIVISION ASSOCIATION, INC.

#### Financial Statements As Of September 8, 2015 (Cash Basis)

	2015 YTD	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
<b>Statement of Income and Expense:</b>						
<b>INCOME</b>						
Dues & General Fund	7,530	3,534	2,343	2,600	3,709	6,096
Interest	-	-	-	-	-	209
Advertising	-	-	170	170	-	-
Reunion	-	16,317	7,099	-	1,782	5,403
<b>Operating Income</b>	<b>7,530</b>	<b>19,851</b>	<b>9,612</b>	<b>2,770</b>	<b>5,491</b>	<b>11,709</b>
Gain on sale of investment (gold) <sup>1</sup>	-	-	3,765	-	7,760	-
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>7,530</b>	<b>19,851</b>	<b>13,377</b>	<b>2,770</b>	<b>13,251</b>	<b>11,709</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>						
Spearhead Newsletter (Production & Distribution)	2,989	6,059	8,868	9,537	10,645	4,764
Administrative Services	8,000	11,000	8,625	6,682	9,314	14,051
Office & Other Expenses	547	1,744	558	587	856	1,429
Reunion	2,277	15,218	8,801	2,000	-	-
Boots Thomas Memorial (50% bal due)	2,338	-	-	-	-	-
Grants Paid - Camp Tarawa Foundation	-	-	-	-	-	10,000
Grants Paid - Injured Marine Semper FI Fund	-	-	-	-	-	25,000
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>16,152</b>	<b>34,021</b>	<b>26,853</b>	<b>18,806</b>	<b>20,815</b>	<b>50,480</b>
<b>TOTAL NET INCOME/(LOSS)</b>	<b>(8,622)</b>	<b>(14,170)</b>	<b>(13,475)</b>	<b>(16,036)</b>	<b>(7,563)</b>	<b>(38,772)</b>
<b>ASSETS (End of Calendar Year)</b>						
Bank Account	\$ 33,418	\$ 42,040	\$ 56,210	\$ 33,085	\$ 49,121	\$ 56,684
Investment - Gold (at cost)	-	-	-	36,600	36,600	36,600
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>33,418</b>	<b>42,040</b>	<b>56,210</b>	<b>69,685</b>	<b>85,721</b>	<b>93,284</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>						
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>NET WORTH</b>	<b>\$ 33,418</b>	<b>\$ 42,040</b>	<b>\$ 56,210</b>	<b>\$ 69,685</b>	<b>\$ 85,721</b>	<b>\$ 93,284</b>

<sup>1</sup>Gold proceeds sold on 8/16/2013 was \$40,365.

# Fifth Marine Division Association Business Meeting Minutes

September 2015

President John Butler called the meeting to order. Vice President Kathy Painton led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance. Introductions were made.

**Secretary's Report:** The reading of the minutes from the previous meeting was waived because they had already been published in the *Spearhead News*. A motion was made and passed unanimously to approve the minutes. Ray Elliott reported that the FMDA has approximately 1,000 members. Although members are passing, the surviving spouse automatically becomes a memorial member. He encouraged the continued signing up of children and grandchildren as legacy members to help the organization continue.

**Treasurer's Report:** Doug Meny distributed copies of his report, which included the financial statements of the last five years. He highlighted the donations in 2014, which were about \$3,500 year, compared to 2015's year-to-date total of about \$7,500 – which he attributed to renewed interest from children and other descendants, historians, etc. Recurring expenses revolve primarily around publishing the newsletter. He acknowledged Elliott's work as editor and with the FMDA, as a whole. Meny also noted that last year there was \$42,000 in the bank, and today there is \$33,000 and said the Association is doing OK. The change to 501(c)3 status would help foster more tax-deductible contributions than the current status. A motion was made and passed unanimously to accept the report.

**Non-Profit Status:** Meny gave a follow-up report on pursuing the 501(c)3 classification, as was reported at the last business meeting. Currently, donors to the FMDA are not eligible to have a tax benefit for their contributions. Meny described specific language that needs to be added to the FMDA's governing documents as required by the IRS. The addition must be approved by two-thirds of the members present at the business meeting, as per the bylaws. A motion was made and passed unanimously to approve the additional language in order to fulfill the requirements for 501(c)3 status.

**Museum at Camp Tarawa:** Hawaii State Senator and Marine veteran Gil Kahele is very supportive of the museum project and is assisting the FMDA to help get the museum established at Camp Tarawa on the Big Island of Hawai'i. He is also chairman of the Committee on Tourism and will be working to secure some funding from the state for the museum. He spoke with the CEO of Parker Ranch to obtain a site lease and will work with his colleagues in the state legislature to help the project succeed. Painton reported that negotiations with Parker Ranch are going well. The Quonset hut is being taken down because it is structurally unsound. The stenciled "28" has been saved, however, and it is in Painton's possession for future display. The hope is to erect the museum on the site of the Quonset hut. The Parker Ranch is now considering a lease arrangement. She has assembled a group of advisers to add credibility to the project. The next step is to create a marketing plan that demonstrates viability for the Parker Ranch representatives.

**Officers for 2016:** John Butler was the only nominee for president. Kathy Painton was nominated for vice president. The motions were made and passed unanimously. Ray Elliott was re-appointed as secretary and editor, and Doug Meny was re-appointed as treasurer. Monroe Ozment was nominated as Sergeant-at-Arms. That motion was made and passed unanimously. Bill Krulak was appointed chaplain.

**2016 Reunion:** Milwaukee had been considered as the location for the next reunion, but it is not an option at this time. Butler recommended the reunion be shorter in duration and in a central location with good transportation for those coming from any direction. Armed Forces Reunions was suggested as a possible organizer to consider for future reunion planning. Ivan Hammond volunteered to explore the possibility of San Antonio as a location.

**FMDA Website:** Meny and Elliott are exploring a plan for developing a website, which would promote the educational portion of the FMDA mission.

**"Boots" Thomas Memorial Plaque:** Butler described "Boots" Thomas' history on Iwo Jima as a young platoon leader who helped raise the first flag on Suribachi and was later killed in action. His grave marker in Monticello, Fla., contained several inaccuracies, and the FMDA has arranged for a new, corrected memorial to be installed.

**Iwo Jima Monument West:** Laura Dietz described a project to purchase and move an Iwo Jima monument—currently in storage in Connecticut that is a replica of a similar statue at the U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington County, Va.—to Camp Pendleton, Calif. Requests for proposals will soon be evaluated.

Meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by Ray Elliott, Secretary

# SAVE THE DATE

February 18<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016



## 71<sup>th</sup> Commemoration of the Battle on Iwo Jima Camp Pendleton, CA

Veterans of the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> Marine Division and Support Units of Navy, Coast Guard and Army, their families and friends and the public are cordially invited. This reunion continues to be the largest gathering of Iwo Jima veterans in the country.

In honor of the 71<sup>th</sup> anniversary, special events will be held at Camp Pendleton and other military installations in San Diego.

Memorial Service and Banquet will be held on Saturday February 20<sup>th</sup>.

For more details, visit [www.iwojimareunion.com](http://www.iwojimareunion.com)

\*\*Downloadable registration forms will be available online in November\*\*

To receive a registration packet by mail, contact Gail Chatfield at [gchatsan@gmail.com](mailto:gchatsan@gmail.com) or (858) 205-2600

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