



# Spearhead NEWS

"Uncommon Valor was a Common Virtue"

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION of the 5TH MARINE DIVISION ASSOCIATION

**68TH ANNUAL REUNION - KAILUA/KONA, HAWAI'I  
OCTOBER 17-24, 2017  
COURTYARD/MARRIOTT KING KAMEHAMEHA'S KONA BEACH HOTEL**

## VP Painton to host 2017 reunion in Hawaii

**By Kathy Painton**

My father, Pfc George Addison Dunn (F-2-28) was KIA on Iwo Jima shortly after landing on the island on Feb. 19, 1945, so I grew up with a void in my life because I never got to know my dad. I remember having a desire to go to Iwo Jima one day to walk on the beach where he died, but had little hope that it would ever become a reality.

My first encounter with Fifth Marine Division Iwo Jima veterans was at Camp Pendleton in 1995; however, it wasn't until 2004 when I discovered that I had retired on the same island where the Fifth Division trained prior to, and after, the battle on Iwo Jima that my interest in learning more about my father was renewed.

I joined the Camp Tarawa Detachment, MCL #1255 shortly after it was organized in 2006, and I actively began to pursue my quest to learn all I could about the men who trained with my dad for this horrendous battle.

In 2010, I joined the Fifth Marine Division Association as an associate member and have attended



FMDA Vice President Kathy Painton

every reunion since that time. I have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know many of the veterans, and am always eager to see them each year. In 2013, I was honored to be selected as the Association's first female vice president.

I am also a member of the Iwo Jima Association of America and have traveled to Iwo Jima four times. In 2012, I walked the beach where my father died and completed his mission by trudging to the summit of Mt. Suribachi.

Therefore, I am pleased to be entrusted with hosting the 68th Annual Reunion in Kailua/Kona, on the island of Hawai'i, from Oct. 17 - 24, 2017.

The selected hotel is the Courtyard/Marriott King Kamehameha's Kona Beach Hotel. It is located on Ali'i Drive and within walking distance of numerous restaurants, historical buildings and shops.

I have also been conducting complimentary "Boots on the Ground" tours of Camp Tarawa (in Waimea/Kamuela) and the surrounding area for veterans, historians and family members since 2010, and I look



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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**

As noted on the FMDA membership form on the back page of this and all past issues of *Spearhead News*, all annual memberships expire on 31 December. Since we don’t send out renewal notices, we depend upon everyone to renew by faith. Which doesn’t always work. In the past, we’ve continued to send issues to lapsed members for a while because we don’t want to lose you.

But after this issue, we plan to remove any annual members who haven’t renewed by the time the Spring/Summer 2017 issue comes out. We need you very much, so please renew promptly. Talk to others about joining, so the legacy of the Iwo Jima veterans and the Fifth Marine Division can live on through the Association.

Annual membership is only \$25. For those 64 and younger, a lifetime membership is \$150, age 65 through 79 is \$100 and age 80 and over is \$50. Your membership status is noted above your name on the newsletter’s mailing label.

It has been suggested that membership dues for FMDA be raised, but to date such an increase has not been approved. Several lifetime members have been sending additional contributions because they know printing and mailing costs have risen dramatically in the last few years. That is very helpful and much appreciated.

With that in mind, membership is dwindling with the aging Iwo Jima veteran and spouse population. That is to be expected. Unfortunately, we don’t always learn about those deaths to note in the Final Muster column until we send out *Spearhead* and get them returned and have to pay for their return. Many surviving relatives are not interested in continuing as memorial or legacy members.

Fortunately, there are those who stay with FMDA.

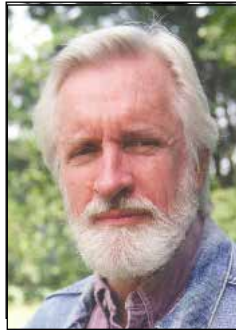
One outstanding example of that is Bonnie Arnold-Haynes, FMDA trustee, senior vice president of the Iwo Jima Association of America ([www.iwojimaassociation.org](http://www.iwojimaassociation.org)) and widow of the founding member of IJAA (formerly the Combat Veterans of Iwo Jima), MGen Fred Haynes (HQ-28). Bonnie works tirelessly with both organizations to perpetuate the memory and sacrifices of Iwo Jima veterans. These organizations need to work together.

Bonnie was a Spirit of ‘45 awardee at the 7th Annual Veterans Day Luncheon on Nov. 11 this year in

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## THE EDITOR'S DESK

By Ray Elliott



### ***Fairy tales, sea stories and other fiction***

After working on a manuscript about the evolution and de-evolution of a soldier that Guadalcanal veteran and author James Jones wrote about in “WWII,” I started hearing some tall tales about the experiences of some Vietnam veterans. It was disheartening, but Kaylie Jones, the author’s daughter who had encouraged me to start the book said that was part of the story.

Initially, I didn’t think so, but in light of the recent investigation about the misidentified flag raisers and the calls, emails and letters I’ve since received, I’m inclined to think it is the case.

While I was thinking about how to proceed with the manuscript, I spoke to Dick Wise, a member of our Richard L. Pittman Marine Corps League #1231, named after a local Iwo Jima veteran killed on Feb. 21, 1945, and buried in the Punchbowl Cemetery in Hawaii. Wise is a retired mustang, a warrant officer/captain and Vietnam veteran who served 30 years in the Marine Corps.

When I told him about the tall tales I was hearing, Wise smiled and asked me if I knew the difference between fairy tales and sea stories. As a Marine veteran and former English literature teacher, I told him I thought I did but asked him to tell me.

“Well, a fairy tale starts out, ‘Once upon a time’ and you know right away what you’re getting,” he said. “But a sea story starts out, ‘Now this is no shit, man,’ and it’s hard telling what kind of a story you will get.”

Which makes sense when you think about it. I knew Col David Severance, the E-2-28 commander of the company that included the men who raised the flag on Mount Suribachi, had a file of what he called “flag freak” stories. I’d heard some of them and have talked to the colonel about a few.

One such discounted tale involves a hole in the first flag, told by a Marine who said he woke on Suribachi one night, thought he heard a Japanese and cranked off

a round that put a hole in it. And there is a hole you can see when the flag is on display at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle, Va. in the Iwo Jima section. The small hole has been sewed, and I’ve heard that the consensus is that it was a 1/3”x1/2” rectangular tear caused by careless handling of the flag when it was placed out for display..

Another story published in the Orlando Sentinel on an anniversary of the flag-raising date in February quoted a man claiming he was on the 40-man patrol comprised primarily of E-2-28 Marines and helped raise the flag. Both Col Severance and Col Walt Ford, former editor of Leatherneck Magazine, disputed that. A couple of the Sentinel editors called me to verify whether the man’s story was true.

“I wasn’t there,” I said, “but the man was in the artillery, so I don’t think so.”

Another recently published story after the death of a Marine tanker said he’d told about being sent up the mountain to look for possible routes north for tanks. While he was on Mount Suribachi, he reportedly said he and “four other volunteers raised a little American flag on a piece of pipe” and was once heard telling someone “how he dug a foxhole on Mount Suribachi with a spoon.”

After the mistaken flag raiser story hit the media, the people who called or emailed and sent photos thought their relatives were really the misidentified flag raiser or were in the posed “gung-ho photo” taken after the second flag was raised. These Marines served honorably, most of them were killed on Iwo Jima or had died before their relatives had known them.

Paul Merriman, who gave a memorial talk this year at the San Antonio reunion as he did at the Houston reunion in 2009 (published in *Spearhead* after that reunion) learned of the stories and responded.

“When Col Severance was in Houston long ago for a local Marine meeting,” Merriman emailed, “he said if all the Marines were up on Mount Suribachi who said they were there, the island would have sunk into the ocean.”

I’d heard that several times.

“After the war,” Merriman continued, “we came back and mingled with all kinds of veterans with all kind of mostly true stories. We joked and teased, and we lied, mostly in fun.

*Continued on page 11*



After the 2015 reunion in Virginia Beach, Va., Fifth Marine Division Association Vice President Kathy Painton, left, helped arrange for a small group to visit the Bar on the Beach memorial at Quantico, including John Huffhines (HS-3-13), second from left, who was instrumental in having the structure built.

## REUNION HOST

*Continued from page 1*

forward to sharing these places with you during the reunion activities.

### Tentative Reunion Schedule

#### Tuesday, Oct. 17

Arrival at King Kamehameha Hotel; registration; Hospitality Room open 3-10 p.m.

#### Wednesday, Oct. 18

Day at your leisure; Kona walking tour option; Hospitality Room open noon-10 p.m.

#### Thursday, Oct. 19

Tour #1 – 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. – “Boots on the Ground” Tour of Camp Tarawa-related sites (Waimea, Parker Ranch, Camp Drewes); Hospitality Room open 5-10 p.m.

#### Friday, Oct. 20

Tour #2 – 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. – Hilo Tour with stops at Pohakuloa Training Area, Tsunami Museum, Hamakua Coast and Honoka’a; 5:30 p.m. – Prime Rib/Seafood Buffet Dinner at the hotel; Hospitality Room open 5-10 p.m.

#### Saturday, Oct. 21

Business Meeting/Memorial Service/Banquet; Hospitality Room open noon-5 p.m.

#### Sunday, Oct. 22

Day at your leisure; church services in Kona within walking distance of hotel; 5:30 p.m. – Island Breeze Luau at the hotel; Hospitality Room open noon-10 p.m.

#### Monday, Oct. 23

Tour #3 – 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. – Hawai’i Volcanoes National Park Tour with stops at St. Benedict’s Painted Church, the City of Refuge, Kilauea Military Camp

for lunch, the Volcano's Visitor Center and the Jaegar Museum.

**Tuesday, Oct. 24**  
Departures

### Reunion Cost Estimates

The projected cost for one person is estimated to be approximately \$2,500-\$3,000. Add (\$1,300 - \$1,700) for each additional person (up to 4) sharing the same room. This does not include other meals and personal discretionary spending.

*Airfare:* \$600-\$1,000 (price will vary based on departure city)

*Hotel:* \$1,000-\$1,500 (price will vary based on room location) for six nights lodging at the Courtyard/Marriott King Kamehameha Hotel in Kona

*Registration:* \$50

*Airport Shuttle:* \$50

*Tours:* \$100 each x 3 = \$300 (includes transportation and lunch/dinner as indicated)

*Luau:* \$100

*Prime Rib/Seafood Buffet:* \$60

*Banquet Dinner/Dancing:* \$60

The FMDA officers realize that airfare, hotel and other expenses will deter some from attending the reunion, so I am working diligently to find sponsors who will assist in defraying costs.

A very generous gentleman has offered to donate 500,000 airline miles to assist with veterans' transportation to Hawai'i Island. These miles will be allocated on a first come/first serve basis, so it is imperative that you contact me ASAP if you would like assistance with travel arrangements: [kathypainton@hotmail.com](mailto:kathypainton@hotmail.com).

It is a privilege to be the first female to host a reunion, and I have attempted to keep costs reasonable so the reunion will be affordable for everyone. I hope that you will want to make every effort to attend.

**Explore the designated 2017 reunion hotel:  
COURTYARD/MARRIOTT KING KAMEHAMEHA'S KONA BEACH HOTEL  
[www.konabeachhotel.com](http://www.konabeachhotel.com)**



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## SECRETARY'S NOTES

Continued from page 2

Dallas, Texas. President Laura Leppert of Daughters of World War II ([www.daughtewrsaofww2.org](http://www.daughtewrsaofww2.org)), daughter of a Marine Iwo Jima veteran, said, "Bonnie works as a volunteer and is a journalist and a historian who travels the country and to Iwo Jima to honor those who served this country to protect and preserve our freedoms."

Leppert initially founded DWWII to honor her father (George D. Broderick who served in A-1-26 with Medal of Honor recipient Jack Lucas. "And I serve on the board of IJAA, I joined the FMDA, I am involved with the Camp Tarawa museum project and escort Iwo Jima veterans with DWWII to the annual Reunion of Honor because of my father," she added.

Other relatives feel the same way. We often hear from those who have lost longtime spouses or those who served in other divisions on Iwo Jima and have been mainstays with their own associations:

Ralph Simoneau (D-2-27), longtime FMDA member who worked long and hard on the Association's bylaws, lost his wife, Perla, of 68 years on Oct. 3, 2016. Wives like Perla stood by their husbands virtually since the end of the war and helped them get along in life after the horrors of Iwo Jima.

Dale Quillen, a Nashville, Tenn., attorney who was still practicing law when he passed away at 91, was a dog handler in the Third Division. Dale joined the Marine Corps at 17, went ashore on Guam at 18 and landed on Iwo Jima at 19.

Clint Butler, son of Navy Cross recipient and 1/27 Commander LtCol John Butler who was killed on Iwo Jima, a Third Division veteran of Vietnam, met Dale on a tour to Iwo Jima when Clint and brother John went to Iwo Jima in 2005 and maintained contact through the years. Clint described Dale as "a colorful character."

"He was a criminal lawyer, by practice," Clint said, "not a *criminal* lawyer, as he would describe himself."

Another colorful character and Iwo Jima veteran, John Huffhines (HS-3-13) of Dallas, Texas, passed away Nov. 18. "I knew John nearly my whole life," said his wife Mary of the imposing man who stood 6'6". He, along with Ivan Hammond (who recently lost his wife of many years, Aline) and Bert Clayton (also deceased) were among the driving forces behind the BAR on the Beach statue located in Semper Fidelis Memorial Park that overlooks the National Museum of the Marine Corps at the Marine Corps Heritage Center in Triangle, Va., near the Marine Corps base at Quantico.

After the 66th annual reunion of the FMDA in Virginia Beach, Va., in 2015, President John Butler encouraged a group to make the trip to Triangle to visit the museum and see the BAR on the Beach memorial again.

These individuals, and many like them, are the ones who have kept the FMDA going for 67 years, and we welcome others who want to continue that legacy into the future. Semper fidelis.

— Ray Elliott, Secretary

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

AGENBROAD, Owen D. **F-2-27** 10/13/2016  
BENNETT, Andrew E. **B-1-26** 9/3/2016  
BROTZGE, Maurice **H-1-27** 5/16/2016  
BURT, Charles N. Jr. **5TH TANK** 5/18/2014  
CAHILL, John E. Jr. **5TH ENGR** 7/26/2016  
DANN, Arthur G. **I-3-28** 1/4/2016  
DAVIS, Caliph L. **5TH TANK** 6/25/2013  
DAVIS, Irvin **5TH PION** 10/14/2014  
DEVEREAUX, Max O. **B-5TH PION** 9/13/2015  
DIRCKSEN, Henry A. **5TH SERV** 3/16/2016  
HUFFHINES, John **HS-3-13** 11/18/2016  
KRUPPENBACHER, Wm. **E-2-26** 8/10/2003  
LAXTON, Carl E. **5TH PION** 10/2/2015  
MADDEN, William "Bill" **E-2-27** 11/1/2016  
MIALE, Frederick V. **5TH MED** 3/5/2015  
NUMMER, Richard W. **WPNS-28** 8/31/2016  
ODER, Leroy **F-2-27** 3/22/2015  
OVERGARD, Ted **HS-13** 6/15/2016  
OVERMYER, John C. **I-3-28** 8/16/2010  
PERDZOCK, Robert **WPNS-28** 11/19/2010  
PRATT, Earl M. **27TH REP** 1/17/2013  
RANKIN, Charles P. **HQ-3-28** 6/24/2011  
SAKALASKAS, Ernest T. **I-3-27** 8/8/2016  
SKINNER, John S. **WPNS-28** 1/21/2013  
VARNEY, Norman **5TH ENGR** 6/14/2015  
WILSON, William S. **I-3-28** 5/30/2016

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 217-840-2121.



# IWO VET

By Stephen Lopardo

Oh, Iwo Vet, I know your secret.

But it is no secret, because you told me. You told me because you trusted me, because I listened. That if someone had told you the day you crawled through the sand on that dirty little island, with your 19-year-old brothers, America's brothers and sons and fathers and husbands, your brothers, butchered right before your eyes, if someone had told you at the moment when your best friend died in your arms, that someday you would be grey and feeble, and lose your hair, and hearing, and your sight would slowly fade, and you would limp with a cane and no part of your body would be free of pain, and someday you would wither with the diseases of old age, then you would have laughed, laughed hysterically, and cried out loud with joy, and shouted ecstatic thanks to God, ecstatic at winning the lottery, the lottery of dying as an old man with grandchildren, because you were one of only 11, the 11 out of your company, of your 360 brothers, who would walk off that island.

No one was tougher than you and your brothers, but you cried twice in your life, cried at the end when you trudged through the cemetery below the volcano, cried again looking at its picture those many years later, the picture of your brothers' cemetery on the dirty little island, the ugly little island where your 360 brothers ran ashore, and bled white and then there were only 11 of you, the cemetery where your brothers lie who loved America, officers and men, negroes and whites, rich men and poor, who lie together, where Protestants, Catholics and Jews all lie together, a place where no man prefers another because of his faith or despises him because of his color and there are no prejudices or discrimination, for theirs is the highest and purest democracy.

You told me about the feeling after you left the island, you told me it was just the most beautiful feeling you ever felt, you wished you could have captured and held that feeling forever, the feeling among your brothers sailing back to Hawaii on that half-empty ship, because you knew, and they knew, that there was no doubt that any one of them would have given his life for you, for any one of you, instantly, freely and completely,

with no thought or hesitation, given his life for any of you, never to hold the girl he had pledged his future to, never to father her babies, never to have the joys and sorrows of life, given everything, instantly, all so you could have a tomorrow, even though he didn't know your name, because you were his brother Marine, and you knew, you knew with every breath you ever took that you would have done the same, that you would have given your life for him, for any one of them, you knew because when it had been your turn on the island you had never hesitated either, but the fate of the shrapnel picked another, and then another, and not you.

It was just the greatest feeling in the world, that bond, because you knew you would have sacrificed everything for any one of them, because any one of them would have sacrificed everything for you.

That feeling on that half-empty ship changed you forever, because you did capture that feeling, you did bottle it, all of you did, because you knew the secret, the secret that each day that followed was a gift, each moment after March 26, 1945, was a gift from God.

And that was the secret, that from then on everything was easy, and you never felt sorry for yourself, and never thought you were special, because you just did your part, and you saw what the others did, what your brothers gave, they gave more, they gave everything, so you never felt special, just humble, because to you they were greater, even though you never knew their names, just a bunch of kids, who stayed on the dirty little island, so you could leave it and go home with the secret, so you could have tomorrows.

You would have done it for any of them, but it was your brothers who did it for you, for you and your tomorrows.

You never felt special because it was your brothers who never came home who were special.

But we know you are special, you are the greatest generation, and you did capture the feeling on that half-empty ship, and every day after March 26 was a gift from God.

And that's your secret.

### Conflicting information

Checking the *Spearhead* book that has the KIA-WIA listed, it shows R.B. London was WIA. I was told he was killed. The photo I sent you here was taken in Hawaii before we shipped out.

— John B. Ritz (F-2-28)  
Shiner, TX



Pictured, left to right: R.B. London, John B. Ritz and Louis Charlo

### Despite loss and uneasiness, still hope for America

This country has been experiencing a loss for some time. The Greatest Generation, as Tom Brokaw called them, is leaving us. And in their place is a vacuum or at least a space unfilled. It's making us uneasy.

My parents, uncles, aunts and their friends of that great generation had something in common with your parents or grandparents or for some reader's great grandparents. They were grown-ups.

They had lived through the Great Depression and

World War II. Generalizations or stereotypes are almost always poor metaphors, but you know what I mean. The men and women of that generation were strong without having to tell you they were strong. Their strength was the foundation on which those of us who followed built our lives. They supported the post-World War II world and us.

They took on challenges with grit and determination and without fanfare. They knew it was hard to overcome obstacles and accepted that risk, pain and loss as the price you pay when you do what no one else will. They saw suffering up close and personal, but so had everyone else they knew. Telling everyone about their feelings wasn't going to make things easier, so they just kept their mouths shut and did what they had to do. When they succeeded, they retained their reticence because they knew how easily success can be ripped from our grasp.

Don't waste ... don't boast ... don't brag — grown-up principles from a grown-up generation.

They also knew the value of privacy and kept their personal lives away from the eyes of others. Some secrets can harm, but who among us would not appreciate knowing a little less about the sex lives of the rich and famous? Or some of our Facebook friends, for that matter?

As my parents' generation leaves us, I feel the absence of grown-ups at every level in our country. It doesn't matter how old someone is or the job they have, too many of us are whiners, complainers, braggarts, showoffs—what have you. People like that have always been with us, but we used to have grown-ups everywhere around us who reminded us by the example they set that such conduct was inappropriate and should be discouraged.

Why? Why not just let everyone give in to his or her worst, most childish instincts? A grown-up might tell you because it weakens you. It distracts you from what is important. A grown-up knows we need to be strong and focus on what may come, for when it is upon us, it may kill us if we are unprepared.

The common denominator of the Greatest Generation was the experience they shared with the vast majority of their countrymen and women during the Great Depression and World War II. They survived as a nation united in the face of adversity on a scale we can hardly comprehend today. Those who lived through that time never forgot how hard the Depression was or



how close we came to losing World War II. Deprivation, sacrifice, blood, sweat and tears caused them to put away childish things and bonded them with their fellow Americans.

Those bonds have all but disappeared today. The generations since have too often been divided by uncommon experiences across a spectrum of adversity. Yet a terrible tragedy such as 9/11 can still bring Americans together as a nation and remind us, albeit too briefly, that what doesn't kill us only makes us stronger.

We have a number of professions in this country that by their very nature require adult behavior: the military, police, firefighters, pilots, doctors, nurses, farmers, ranchers and a few others. Childish behavior in those lines of work can lead to injury or death. Those professions were once revered, and their practitioners were role models to the rest of us. Knowing there are consequences for what we can do can change our perspective pretty quick. When the whole country was a risk, that was a lesson everyone learned.

I remain uneasy with the passing of the greatest generation, but I continue to have great faith in this country and its people. No one told my parents' generation they were "great" before they were. They just grew up when they had to. So can we.

— LtCol J.T. Cummings Jr., USMC (Ret)

**Editor's Note:** Submitted by Janet Kalus, wife of past FMDA President LtCol Tom Kalus (5th Jasco), USMC (Ret.). Janet wrote, "Our son-in-law, a Vietnam veteran, shared his thoughts with us. His essay deserves to be published in the Spearhead News." We encourage LtCol Cummings to join the FMDA and help the Association continue to pursue its mission of perpetuating the legacy of the Marines and corpsmen of the Fifth Marine Division for posterity. Not only are members of the Greatest Generation leaving us, but many of the sons and daughters and other relatives lose their connection with the Association when their veteran passes away.

## Spearhead journals in demand

Thank you very much for the *Spearhead* journal. A veteran shared his original copy with me. I would love to have a copy, also, and have enclosed \$25 for the journal and shipping for Issue #2, Iwo Jima.

— Barbara Reid  
Winston-Salem, NC

**Editor's note:** The Iwo Jima issue continues to be the most sought-after journal. The first reprint sold out, and another set has been reprinted. See ad elsewhere in this issue.



## Sharing a photo from Iwo Jima

Not sure if you have ever seen this photo (above) taken on Iwo Jima, possibly March 3 or 4. Left to right: W.O. Gray, PMH 2nd Class Bill Wallace, Lt Jack Lummus (Medal of Honor recipient) and PLT Sgt Sam McNaughton.

The picture was taken with Bill Wallace's camera. Bill was our 3rd platoon corpsman, and I have quite a few photos taken with the same camera with the same results—the vertical lines?

Everyone had two canteens on their cartridge belt, but Bill had only one. In the other was his camera!

Lummus was wounded and died on March 8. On March 9 there were only four of the 50 men in our platoon who hadn't been killed or wounded.

— Walter P. O'Malley (E-2-27)  
Clinton, MA

## It's never too late to become a member

I wanted to send you a quick note about my dad, Eugene "Gene" Molek (5th ENGR). He is 90 years old and a very awesome dad, as well as a great patriot. He was a Navy corpsman in World War II assigned to the Fifth Marine Division, 28th Marines.

Dad was on Iwo Jima "when our flag went up and I cheered," as he likes to put it. He still has his original *Spearhead* book. Dad is very interested in reading

further issues of the newsletter, so I'm signing him up.

— Marge Molek-Otto  
Colorado Springs, CO

### **Former rifle platoon leader enjoys *Spearhead News***

I was commissioned with Jack Lauck (F-2-27) and Craig Leman (H-3-26) in 1944. We all survived the battle as rifle platoon leaders. Knew them well. Enjoy reading the newsletter. Keep up the good work.

— Louis R. Lepore (A-1-27)  
La Mesa, CA

### **Son takes an interest in museum**

My dad would be 96 this year. He passed away in 2002. My mom (Gladys) passed away last year (2015) in July, and apparently she was an associate member [A memorial member is the surviving spouse of a life member.] as I got the newsletter last winter when her mail was forwarded.

My dad, Frank Swartz, was an armorer and—best as I can tell—was in the Fifth Marine Division, Fifth Service Battalion, as part of an ordinance company from Feb. 19-28, 1945, as part of the assault troops of the Fifth Amphibious Corps. After that, he was deployed to Japan until early 1946.

I am happy to hear of the museum. I don't have much of my dad's stuff left at this point. I did sell his boots from Iwo on eBay a few years ago to a small museum somewhere in Ohio. Not sure if you've heard of it. How is the museum coming along?

— Adarsh Khausa  
Phoenix, AZ

*Editor's note: Welcome aboard and thanks for the contribution for the museum. It is moving along slowly but surely. With the reunion on the Big Island next year, we're hopeful that the area will be available for attendees to see. Artifacts are still being accepted.*

### **Niece proud of uncle, others**

I watched the documentary, "The Unknown Flag Raiser on Iwo Jima," on the Smithsonian Channel. I'm so happy that, after 70 years, history was corrected. I'm

proud to say my uncle, Pvt Fred A. Neil, was with the Fifth Division, 13th Marine Regiment, as a 19-year-old artilleryman at Iwo Jima. Sadly, he passed away more than seven years ago. I have some of his war keepsakes, including his *Spearhead* book. So proud of these men.

— Becky Cabrera  
Spring, TX

### **His recruiting sergeant wasn't good at predicting the future**

I recently attended a ceremony where several veterans were given a medal for their service during WWII. There were veterans from the Army, Army Air Corps, Navy and one Marine, me. Each man was given his chance to tell about his service.

When my name was called, I stood up in my dress blues and told them my story about having a hard time getting into the Marines. It happened that when I told the recruiting sergeant I wanted to join, he took one look at me and said the Marines want a few good men, that they did not want any little boys.

I was 5'7" and weighed 130 pounds, so he was right. I wasn't very big. But I said again I really wanted to join the Marines. He again gave me a dirty look and told me to go join the Boy Scouts.

I hung around all day, and he finally agreed that if I came back the next day, he would have the doctor examine me and if he couldn't find anything wrong, he would swear me in. So I went back the next day, and the doctor examined me and reported, "He's not very big, but there is nothing wrong."

The sergeant swore me in and told me, "You will regret this day as long as you live, and I don't think you will live very long." He was very wrong. I survived Iwo Jima and celebrated my 91st birthday on June 22.

— David L. Penrod (HQ-3-26)  
Beaver Creek, OH

### **Reunion attendee offers to share photos from events**

I took a lot of pictures at the reunion in San Antonio, went through them carefully and picked out the best of each event I photographed. I attempted to correct the lighting and then put them on a CD.

If anyone wants a copy, please email me at

[marrepresti@gmail.com](mailto:marrepresti@gmail.com) with a mailing address, and I will be happy to make a CD. This is the least I can do to contribute in some small way to a wonderful organization.

It was a very memorable event for me as I'm a serious history nerd and read all the time. However, it was different to be in the midst of men I consider heroes. It was a humbling experience to be in the presence of people who fought the war and realize how fortunate we are to live in the great land called America. I always felt that, but this experience made it so much more personal.

Sal (Prestigiaco, C-1-26) kept saying all the way home because he was so tired that this was his last reunion. However, when our son Giovanni picked us up and asked where the next one was, things changed. Giovanni was so excited and was already making plans. Sal was agreeing, despite his fatigue! All I could do was smile. I hope I will see you again next year, but it will depend on Sal's ability to go. Let's hope he can!

Again, it was a truly remarkable experience for me, and I'm so proud to have attended with Sal.

— Marre Prestigiaco  
Hemet, CA

## EDITOR'S DESK

*Continued from page 3*

“Where were you?” ‘I was here. ...’

“It was easy for any Iwo Marine to refer to the photo and say, ‘I was there.’ It saved telling your unit, days, duties, etc. I did this in the early days. Nobody cared anyway.

“For the families, it grew into a proud issue. And I think some Marines just let it grow. No harm. But I had to say, ‘Whoa, I *really* was not up there,’ and I will be respectful now to those looking for their relatives.”

The words of Dick Wise and Paul Merriman, together with that of Col Severance, ring true and brought to mind the time when I came home from the Marine Corps. I was having a beer in a local bar when a half-drunk kid who'd heard I had been in the Marine Corps kept pestering me and saying that he, too, was a Marine.

I finally asked him where he went to boot camp.

“I don't remember the name of the place,” he said. “It was some place in California.”

“Yeah, right,” I said.

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# Fifth Marine Division Association Annual Meeting Minutes

October 2016

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

**Secretary's Report:** Ray Elliott read the minutes from the previous meeting, which were published in *The Spearhead News*. A motion was made and passed unanimously for approval.

**Treasurer's Report:** Douglas Meny was unable to attend the meeting, but the financial report was distributed to those in attendance. (*See financial report on opposite page.*) President Butler characterized the overall report by saying the organization is “not rich, but sound.” A motion was made and passed unanimously to accept the report.

## New Business

**Announcements:** Laura Leppert informed the audience of an upcoming event in Dallas for Veterans Day, Nov. 11, in which all WWII veterans would be able to attend for free. FMDA Trustee Bonnie Arnold-Haynes was to be honored, as well.

**Officers:** The nominated slate of officers was approved for 2017: John Butler as president; Kathleen Painton as vice president; Ray Elliott as secretary; and Douglas Meny as treasurer.

**Trustees:** At the business meeting of the FMDA the day before, Bill Rockey was named a new trustee. Other trustees continuing their service are Warren Musch, Bob Mueller, Penny (DeFazio) Pauletto, Bruce Hammond and Bonnie Arnold-Haynes. Monroe Ozment continues as the sergeant-at-arms, and Billy Joe Cawthron is chaplain.

**FMDA Website:** President Butler reported that Eric Kroelle was no longer able to continue maintaining the organization's website. Craig Painton volunteered to help in this effort.

**Museum at Camp Tarawa:** Kathleen Painton reported that the project was moving slowly. Hawaii State Sen. Gil Kahele, who was also a good friend to the FMDA, passed away Jan. 26, 2016. His son, Kai, was appointed to fill his father's remaining term and vowed to continue supporting the project. Efforts are underway by Hawaii State Rep. Cindy Evans to negotiate an exchange of four acres of state land for four acres of Parker Ranch land. Also, the old and damaged Quonset hut was torn down, however, a portion of metal printed with “28”—for 28th Regiment—was saved for the museum.

**2017 Reunion:** A lively discussion took place regarding the 2017 reunion. President Butler supported the offer for Vice President Kathy Painton to host the reunion in Hawaii. He said the older veterans who have hosted reunions in their towns in the past had done “a great job,” but that it was becoming more difficult to coordinate such a large event. He thought a reunion in Hawaii would be a “grand hurrah” and that there could be rigorous efforts to fundraise to reduce the cost to attend.

Jimmie Watson had visited Hawaii, during which Vice President Painton showed her around the notable sites in the Fifth Marine Division's history. “She knows a lot,” Watson said. “People would enjoy it.”

Many different perspectives were voiced, expressing concern primarily about cost and accessibility for aging veterans and their family members and caregivers. Alternative suggestions included Camp Pendleton in California and the possibility of a joint reunion on the West Coast with the Iwo Jima Association of America, Philadelphia and Branson, Mo. Ultimately, the decision was left to the Iwo Jima veterans in the room, and the vote was unanimous to go to Hawaii, and FMDA members will work on subsidizing the costs through fundraising and sponsorships.

**Silent Auction:** Phyllis Schaefer and Penny Pauletto reminded the audience about the story of Matt the doll, which was used in the Women's Auxiliary fundraisers. Although the auxiliary has been dissolved, the silent auction of Matt the doll continued. The effort quickly raised more than \$1,100.

Meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by Ray Elliott, Secretary

FIFTH MARINE DIVISION ASSOCIATION, INC.

Financial Statements  
As Of September 30, 2016  
(Cash Basis)

Statement of Income and Expense:	2016 YTD	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
<b>INCOME</b>							
Donation Receipts	11,835	19,744	19,851	9,612	2,770	5,491	11,709
Gain on sale of Investment (gold) <sup>1</sup>	-	-	-	3,765	-	7,760	-
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>11,835</b>	<b>19,744</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) & Fund-Raising	3,604	5,394	6,059	8,868	9,537	10,645	4,764
Administrative Services	8,000	12,000	11,000	8,825	8,682	9,314	14,051
Office & Other Expenses	1,474	1,467	1,744	558	587	856	1,429
Reunion	-	7,080	15,218	8,801	2,000	-	-
Boots Thomas Memorial (see article in Spearhead)	189	4,849	-	-	-	-	-
Grants Paid - Camp Tarawa Foundation	-	-	-	-	-	-	10,000
Grants Paid - Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund	-	-	-	-	-	-	25,000
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>13,267</b>	<b>30,790</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>(1,432)</b>	<b>(11,046)</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	\$ 29,562	\$ 30,994	\$ 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>29,562</b>	<b>30,994</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>\$ 29,562</b>	<b>\$ 30,994</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.

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19 – 27 Apr WWI Turkey - Gallipoli Campaign Istanbul, Troy & ANZAC Day

29 Apr – 12 May VN 50<sup>th</sup> Anniv of Op Junction City I-II-III-IV Corps “Saigon to the DMZ”

**19 – 30 May 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of WWI French Battlefields – 1917 “The Yanks Are Coming!”**

27 May – 9 Jun WWII 73<sup>rd</sup> D-Day: Normandy

29 Jun – 9 Jul WWII Russia – Eastern Front 75<sup>th</sup> Anniv Kursk, Moscow, Stalingrad & Post Tour: St Petersburg

1 – 13 Jul VN 50th Anniversary of Operations Union III & Buffalo - I-Corps 1967

15 – 28 Jul VN 50th Anniv - “Delta to the DMZ”



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Veterans attending the FMDA's 67th reunion gather for a group photo during a visit to the National Museum of the Pacific War in Fredericksburg, Texas.

*(All photos by Leonardo Flores, unless otherwise noted)*

## 67th Annual Reunion was 'smashing'

**By John Butler**

In scratching around for one word to describe the 67th FMDA reunion, I had to go no further than an email from our own Col Bill Rockey, who described it as “smashing,” a Brit expression meaning outstanding and superb.

On Thursday, our arriving veterans and their families found the Hospitality Room stocked with drinks, snacks, sandwiches and good cheer—which continued throughout the entire three days until it was closed down on Saturday evening. A superb contribution to the good cheer we enjoyed every night were the delightful Phillips sisters: Liberty, Jubilee and Faith. Liberty and Jubilee graced last year's Virginia Beach reunion, but now they were joined by their younger sister, Faith, who sang for us. And how wonderfully she sang—with many of the songs from yesteryear when our Iwo vets were young and our nation vastly different than it is today.

A special thanks to Ivan Hammond and his daughters, Lynn and Claudia, who worked so hard to

give us so much in the hospitality room and elsewhere throughout the reunion. Assisting the Hammond sisters was younger brother Patrick, working hard in the background, and older brother Bruce, who edited an impressive 67th Reunion Journal that included a reproduced letter from President Ronald Reagan that acknowledged and honored the Association's 1986 reunion, also held in San Antonio. The journal also included President Reagan's remarks made personally in the East Room of the White House to attending Fifth Marine Division Iwo Jima vets on the 40th anniversary of D-Day. These were truly inspiring words from our nation's 40th president, who obviously knew something about the battle and the sacrifices made there.

On Friday we had an early-morning scenic bus ride to Fredericksburg, that unique German hometown of Adm Chester Nimitz and the site of the National Museum of the Pacific War honoring the soldiers, sailors and Marines who won that costly war against Japan.

On arrival at the museum, we were directed to

the memorial garden for a surprise dedication and presentation of a 5th Marine Division memorial plaque. The event was arranged by Laura Leppert with museum director and former CMC Gen Michael Hagee. It was a wonderful and moving experience for all of us to begin an event-filled day. Every parcel of the ceremony, capped by Bill Smallwood singing “God Bless America,” was soul-stirring.

From that event, we moved to the vast museum, seeing what we could until it was time for lunch at the unique and outstanding Auslanders Restaurant in the heart of Fredericksburg, where all of us enjoyed delicious German-style food, courtesy of an anonymous donor secured by Ivan Hammond prior to our reunion. After lunch, some of us returned to see what we could of the museum, while others visited the unique shops of downtown Fredericksburg before boarding the buses for our return to San Antonio.

Returning at 5:30 p.m., we soon gathered in the hospitality room for drinks, snacks, pizza and songs from Faith Phillips. Included with our snacks was olive-oil dip with cut Italian bread. This special olive oil, direct from Sicily, was provided by the Periano family in Tampa, who are great friends of our Fifth Division family.

One other activity that made the day for all of us was an unscheduled showing of the Smithsonian documentary film covering the flag-raising controversy,

which came about as a result of Eric Krelle’s Fifth Maine Division website, which posted the findings of an Irish historian with an interest in the battle of Iwo Jima. This person determined that John Bradley was not a part of the second flag raising as earlier believed. The documentary, directed by Matt Morgan, a retired Marine lieutenant colonel verified the conclusion posted on Krelle’s website. It verified and documented that the flag raiser in Bradley’s position was actually Pfc Harold Schultz, another member of the 40-man patrol tasked with scaling the mountain and raising a flag. Matt Morgan was unable to attend the reunion in person, so he appeared via Skype to answer questions from the audience. The technology for this feat was provided by Vanessa Faurie, Ray Elliott’s most-capable wife.

After an early breakfast Saturday, we gathered for a presentation of “Free to Be,” by Larry and Jennifer Tooker, founders of a 501(c)3 organization that provides patriotic programs to middle and high school assemblies across the nation. The presentation included a motivating film. Given that so many of our youth today have little appreciation for the how and why of the freedoms we enjoy as a nation, the Tookers’ program is needed and was appreciated by the early-morning audience of FMDA veterans and family members.

Following the “Free to Be” presentation, FMDA members gathered for the Annual Meeting, chaired by the president but conducted by the vice president.



The Hammond and Butler families, along with Kathy Painton, did a lot of the heavy-lifting in organizing the reunion. Pictured from left are Morey Butler, Ivan Hammond (5th JASCO), Bruce Hammond and John Butler.



**President John Butler (right) introduces special guest BGen Michael Fahey, Commanding General Forces, Headquarters Group, Marine Forces Reserves, based in New Orleans.**

The meeting produced a lively debate for the location of the next reunion, which was finally put to a vote by the veterans only, and it was unanimously agreed that the FMDA reunion for 2017 will be hosted by Kathy Painton and held on the big island of Hawaii where, hopefully, our Camp Tarawa museum will be dedicated. All the current officers were re-elected and Col Bill Rockey was appointed to the Board of Trustees. Concluding the meeting was the auction of Matt the Doll, our primo fundraiser, maintained and presented by Phyllis Schaefer and Penny Pauletto, which raised \$1,166. Thank you Phyllis, thank you Penny; and of



**John Coltrane (L-4-13) with, from left to right: Jimmie Dorsett, Ailene Coltrane and Valerie Dorsett**



**Craig Painton and his mother, FMDA Vice President Kathy Painton**



course, thank you, Matt.

After the Business Meeting, we remained in place for the Memorial Service with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Kathy Painton, a reading of the Roll Call by Ivan Hammond, a reading of Chaplain Gittleson's cemetery eulogy by Ray Elliott, and a stirring homily from our FMDA chaplain, Billy Cawthron. FMDA member and Iwo vet Paul Merriman then read his poetic writing honoring his buddy and our Iwo dead, which was also read at the 2009 reunion in Houston and published verbatim in the *Spearhead News*. We concluded with a Remembrance by name of family members lost in battle and buddies who never came home as remembered by our Iwo vets. This was followed by Carl DeHaven playing Taps on his harmonica.

After an afternoon of enjoying the hospitality room and a 4 p.m. Catholic Mass arranged by Ivan with a retired priest friend, we were ready for the Closing Banquet.

Preceded by a cash bar, the Banquet got underway at 1800 with presentation of Colors provided by the Fourth Marine Recon Battalion Reserve unit, which came to the rescue when the original Color Guard from the Marine Corps League announced it could not make

it. Luckily I, at Ivan's suggestion, called the number of my old unit when I was a reserve officer in 1966-67 and that I helped train on weekends in 1965-66 when I was on active duty in San Antonio. Contacting a corpsman petty officer on duty, I requested help and was told the unit's Color Guard had already committed to the First Marine Division banquet in a nearby hotel. The corpsman called the unit sergeant major, who rounded up enough men, including the outstanding duty corpsmen petty officer who made up our Banquet Color Guard.

Hats off to Marine Corps improvisation and to the docs we have known and to Kathy Painton for again leading all of us in the Pledge of Allegiance. Our Division Colors were not presented with the Colors, but were taped to the wall behind the head table for the entire banquet.



Newly appointed FMDA Trustee Bill Rockey (right), and his wife, Anna, take a photo with guest SgtMaj William Grigsbey.



Laura Leppert (left) and Bonnie Arnold-Haynes help unveil a plaque to commemorate the Fifth Marine Division in the Memorial Courtyard of the National Museum of the Pacific War.



**Al Pagoaga (E-2-27) with the talented Phillips women: Jubilee, Faith and Liberty**  
*(Photo by Vanessa Faurie)*



**FMDA Chaplain Billy Joe Cawthron (B-1-27), left, and Frank Jackson (HQ-3-27)**  
*(Photo by Vanessa Faurie)*



**From left: George Boutwell (5th MED), George Cattelona (L-4-13) and Carl DeHaven (5th MT)**

Except for some of the beginning introductions, our voice-handicapped president turned the banquet emcee assignment over to his capable brother, Morey, who kept events moving with humorous one-liners and a voice that banquet attendees could hear.

Billy Joe Cawthron, our chaplain, provided the invocation and closing benediction.

Our CNC representative was BGen Michael Fahey, Commanding General Forces, Headquarters Group, Marine Forces Reserves, located in New Orleans. Gen Fahey was accompanied by SgtMaj William Grigsbey. Gen Fahey expressed that it was a special honor to join us for the reunion, and surely it was an honor for us to have him as the commandant's representative. After the banquet, he and the sergeant major circulated and visited with our members.

Our keynote speaker and special guest was Dennis Blocker, a resident of San Antonio, whose grandfather was a crewman on one of the LCI's hit by Japanese shore batteries while screening the swimmers from the UDT teams during the pre D-Day reconnaissance. His grandfather never recovered from this experience and suffered from what we now know as PTSD. Sadly, his grandfather committed suicide, an event which deeply impacted Blocker and inspired him to contact and interview hundreds of LCI WWII veterans. His research also led to a book, "The Heart of Hell," which covers the LCI gunboat's trial by fire during the pre D-day recon operations. His riveting speech narrated the events, which have so inspired him to honor his grandfather and those who gave so much. Ivan Hammond made a superb choice in selecting Dan Blocker as our featured speaker.

Following Billy Joe's invocation, Carl DeHaven closed the event with his harmonica and the Marines hymn.

Faith Phillips provided post-banquet entertainment with nostalgic songs from the '40s. How wonderful they were, and has anyone heard them sung better than Faith did?

Sunday morning breakfast and farewells closed a most enjoyable and meaningful reunion. It was a reunion to remember and cherish for all who attended. Ivan and his family are to be thanked for this memorable reunion in San Antonio.

I agree with Col Bill Rockey: "It was smashing."

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*For those looking for photo memories: Leonardo Flores, a professional photographer, filmmaker and historian of the Fifth Marine Division, took photos at the reunion and posted them on a Dropbox. His blog site is "Marines in Forest Green."*

# *Iwo Jima veteran attends reunion thanks to generosity of many*

Hats off to American Airlines. Girard, Ohio's Ralph Griffiths (E-2-28) fought with the Fifth Marine Division and was wounded on Iwo Jima in March 1945. "Pewee," as he was known, was with two of his Easy Company, Second Battalion, 28th Marine Regiment buddies (who were among the second flag raisers on Mount Suribachi a few days earlier), when he was wounded and they were killed.

Now 91 years old, Griffiths has been battling colon cancer but was still be able to travel to the 67th reunion of the Fifth Marine Division Association on Oct. 6-8 in San Antonio, Texas. That's because American Airlines provided round-trip airfare from Cleveland for Griffiths and his wife, Florence. In addition, American Airlines provided a pilot and reserve Marine officer, LtCol Mitchell "Taco" Bell, to pick them up in Girard and escort them during their trip. Bell flew from Dallas to Pittsburgh, rented a car and drove to Girard to meet the Griffiths and returned to Pittsburgh for the flight to San Antonio.

Capt Jim Palmersheim, senior manager of veterans initiatives at American Airlines, arranged all the travel accommodations through a group previously known as Air Compassion for Veterans, which had provided air transportation for two Marine veterans wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan and their wives to travel from Balboa Naval Hospital in San Diego to the University of Illinois to check out the campus.

On the flight from Pittsburgh, Bell made an announcement to the passengers about Griffiths and his service on Iwo Jima. That was a surprise to the Griffiths.

"I appreciated everything American Airlines did," Griffiths said. "But I didn't expect that. I was a little embarrassed."



**Ralph Griffiths (left) and LtCol Mitchell Bell**

With the help of individual contributions, the FMDA covered the costs of the hotel, meals, registration, banquet tickets and tours for the Griffiths and Bell, picked them up at the airport in San Antonio and returned them for the trip home, again escorted by Bell before returned to his home in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

"It was about midnight when I finally made it home," Bell said later. "But it was an honor for me to get to escort the Griffiths to the reunion."

Contributions to support the effort were graciously provided by Paul Merriman, Morey Butler, Kathleen Painton,

Bonnie Arnold-Haynes, Laura Dietz, James Sledge, VFW Post 630 in Urbana, Ill., and VFW Post 4192 in Girard, Ohio.

Any remaining proceeds went into the FMDA general fund for the Association's efforts, which include correcting the errors and replacing the plaque and grave marker for one of the first flag raisers (also in Griffiths' company E-2-28), Ernest "Boots" Thomas in Monticello, Fla.; establishing an FMDA museum at Camp Tarawa, where the division trained on the Big Island of Hawai'i; and supporting other initiatives related to its mission, such as publishing *The Spearhead News* (see archived issues at [www.talespress.com](http://www.talespress.com)).

**— Ray Elliott, Secretary**

# Grandson shares powerful, but little-known, story of LCI-449 at Iwo Jima

**By Dennis Blocker**

You have no idea what an honor this is for me to be here with you tonight. World War II veterans have been my heroes my whole life. A movie had a lot to do with this. It started as a kid. The first movie I remember seeing was not “Mary Poppins” or “The Wizard of Oz,” but it was in fact a WWII movie, “Von Ryan’s Express” with Frank Sinatra. My mother bought me a VHS copy, and I literally wore it out.

My dad was career Air Force and a cop. Growing up in a military family and living all over the globe, I was imbued with a deep sense of love of country and pride in the military. Such a life, though, is tough on family relationships. However, my maternal grandparents, Clifford and Eleanor Lemke, were very present in our lives. My grandmother sent us cards for every important event in our lives, birthdays and holidays. She sent us letters, and she would make these amazing audiotapes in which she would sit at her coffee table and record herself talking to us. Those tapes meant the world to us kids.

In 1998, my grandmother contracted leukemia and shortly passed away. It was a devastating loss to our family, but no one felt it more acutely than my grandfather, for Grandma had been his rock.

On Aug. 11, 1999, my grandfather began his day just as he had his entire life. He awoke early before sunrise and grabbed the morning newspaper off the porch. He then had breakfast and a couple hot cups of coffee. That morning, however, he sat at the kitchen table to write a note to his daughter, Ellen, who lived nearby and who he knew would stop by after work to check on him. His note thanked her for being a wonderful daughter and for taking such good care of him. He then wrote a separate note with various phone numbers of family members. He took off his wedding band and placed it in a Zip-loc bag on the table. He undid the clasp on his wristwatch, removed it and placed it in the bag. He took out his wallet, removed the ID card and placed both objects in the bag.

My grandfather then walked over to the phone and dialed 911. When the operator said, “911 state your emergency,” the operator heard a loud “pop,” which was followed by a heavy “thud.” The operator later would

document that she could hear the sound of heavy breathing that ceased after about a minute. Police responded and found my grandfather lying on the floor of his pantry with a self-inflicted gunshot wound to his head. His loneliness, his grieving for the loss of his beloved wife and his constant night terrors were over at last.

This act spurred my mother to ask me to find out if his experiences in World War II had played a part in breaking him down to such a low point. My mother told of times when she was a kid hearing Grandpa shriek out in the middle of the night from terrible nightmares.

I agreed to find out what happened to him, but I really did not feel that I would discover anything. All I knew was that he had served in the Navy. Had he been in the Pacific? The Atlantic? Stateside? Had he been on a ship or was he assigned to a naval base? Who knew?

My mother reminded me that Grandpa had previously autographed a WWII book that rested on my bookshelf. You see, when I was a teenager I had a hobby of collecting the autographs of WWII veterans. Naturally, Grandpa was one of the signatures I coveted. So, I retrieved the book and promptly found the clue that would put everything in motion: “S1/c Cliff Lemke, LCI-449, 43-45.” Also, deep in the book was a map of the Pacific, and in it, Grandpa had circled some islands—places he had been: Guam and Iwo Jima.

I was stunned.

OK, but what was an LCI-449? Several factors came into play to reveal all of this to me, including a chance meeting with a national reunion of the LCI Association here in San Antonio. It was that reunion that led me to Bill Brinkley of North Carolina who had personally researched my grandfather’s LCI-449, which he told me had been involved with Underwater Demolition Teams performing recon missions in the invasions of Guam and Iwo Jima. Brinkley told me that he would send me a list of current members of the association who had been on the LCI-449.

I was ecstatic. I could not believe my fortune. Within a week I had a list of about 14 men who had been on the tiny gunboat with my grandfather. So, I began the phone calling, and within a short time, a story was beginning to take shape of a ship and crew who had constantly been within rifle range of the Japanese and who suffered



**Dennis Blocker of the National LCI Association describes how he uncovered his grandfather's story aboard LCI-449, which carried out recon missions in the invasions of Guam and Iwo Jima.** (Photo by Leonardo Flores)

terribly at Iwo Jima.

The calls I made from person to person varied quite a lot. One call went like this: “Hello sir, this is Dennis Blocker calling from San Antonio, Texas, and I was wondering if you had served with my grandfather aboard the LCI 449 during World War II?”

Bruce Hallett replied, “Yes ... yes, son I did ... just a minute. ...” I could hear the feint plastic “click” as the phone made contact with the ceramic tiles on the countertop and then, after a mere second or two, I could hear him vomiting into the sink. His wife, Phyllis, picked up the phone and asked me to call the following day. I thanked her but said that there was no way I was going to call again. She insisted that I do, saying, “Bruce really wants to talk with you.”

So the following morning, I called and we had an amazing conversation. In fact, it would be the first of dozens over the next several years. I quickly discovered why Bruce vomited. You see, on the morning of the Iwo Jima recon mission, he had received several wounds from flying shrapnel and was burned when his position took a direct hit on the bow by a large Japanese mortar. Later, waiting for his turn to be evacuated, he watched as sailors

who had boarded his ship to help clean up the mess were descending the steps from his ship's conning tower. These sailors were holding buckets, and these buckets were full of his shipmates who had died on the bridge. So, when I asked, “I was wondering if you had served on the LCI-449,” it took him back 60 years to that scene, and his body's immediate reaction and revulsion erupted and he vomited into the sink. I was beginning to understand why my grandfather screamed in the wee hours of the morning, racked with horrible night terrors.

My journey of discovery took me all over the United States, and I interviewed more than 300 people. The story I uncovered is now contained in the magnificent book, “The Heart of Hell,” written by Pulitzer Prize winner Mitch Weiss, whom I had approached with the story. It is a heart-pounding story and a must-read.

When I look out at you today, the Marine veterans of Iwo Jima, I cannot help but wonder if any of you knew that two days before you arrived at Iwo Jima, there was a group, LCI Group 8, with about 700 men performing recon of the invasion beaches. I wonder if you know that of this group of 12 gunboats that every single one of them was hit; and that of this group of 700 sailors, there were over 150 wounded and 54 killed. Did you know that of this small group, there was awarded the first Medal of Honor at Iwo Jima to the skipper of my grandfather's ship, LTJG Rufus G. Herring? Are you aware that there were 13 Navy Crosses awarded and dozens of Silver and Bronze Stars? This group remained on the firing line, though pummeled over and over again, intent on protecting the frogmen, all so that the Marines might have a chance of making it to the beach as safely as possible.

LCI Group 8 received the coveted Presidential Unit Citation for the stand it made that day, and no one knows it even happened. Has anyone in the room ever heard of this mission before? (No hands go up.) That's exactly right. No one knows, until now. There is not a single member of LCI Group 8 who would dare disparage a Marine who fought at Iwo Jima. The sailors talk in awe of the fight the Marines faced on that horrible island. They do hope, though, that the Marines will acknowledge the stand the sailors of LCI Group 8 made.

When I look back over the past 14 years that I devoted to research my grandfather's story, I can't help but reflect on all of the amazing folks I have met and all of the lives that have been changed with information that was revealed. Thank you for letting me share this story with you. It's an honor for me to be with you, and I thank you for what you all did to preserve freedom for me and my family.

# Wait of 71 years for an Iwo Jima veteran Cubs fan cut short

By Ray Elliott

As a lifetime St. Louis Cardinals fan, I never in my wildest dreams thought I would ever root for, or even hope for, the “Loveable Losers” to win a World Series. Like his father raised him, my father raised me to be a Cardinals fan, and I raised my son to be a Redbird fan, even though we lived in the Chicago suburbs most of his young life. Same with the girls, even though one of them still lives in the Chicago area and is married to a damn Yankee fan.

But then I met William Blaine “Bill” Madden in 2005 at a reunion of Iwo Jima veterans in New Orleans. I was looking for anybody who had served in A-1-28 with a neighbor and friend, Oral “Ben” Correll who had passed away nearly 30 years before.

I’d also thought about writing something about Iwo Jima but had no idea what I might write that hadn’t already been written and had gone to New Orleans with a half-cocked idea about writing a short story about two or three Iwo veterans in their late 70s in a life-and-death situation where they had to react as they had during the battle. I wandered around meeting people and looking for a better story.

One day I saw three men sitting off by themselves, talking quietly and stopped and introduced myself to Hank Hernandez, Al Pagoaga and Bill, all members of E-2-27 who had served together on Iwo Jima. They were polite and asked me what I was doing. I gave them a rather vague answer and talked with them a little before one of them asked if I was a writer. When I replied that I’d liked to think I was, Bill asked what I was writing. I demurred and said I wasn’t sure.

“If you want to talk to us,” Al, or Pog as he is called, said, “tell us what you’re writing. None of this crap you’re telling us.”

When I told them my idea, they all laughed and I asked what was so funny.

“Hell, we can’t even wipe our own butt,” Bill said.

I laughed and later met a larger group of the men from Easy Company as they talked and renewed the old ties of love and friendship that had been started when the Fifth Marine Division had formed at Camp Pendleton in 1944, continue in training for the Iwo Jima landing at Camp Tarawa on the Big island of Hawai’I and was cemented during the battle on the island and



Bill Madden  
(E-2-27)

continued throughout the years.

Bill was an English teacher, as I had been in high school, and had also taught in the university. He was also a poet and a life-long Chicago Cubs fan. We became good friends and he was the primary source for my historical novel, “Iwo Blasted Again” and gave me permission to use his poem of that name and to include it in the book. I dedicated the book to Bill.

Serving with Easy Company as Al’s assistant BAR man, Bill celebrated his 19th birthday on Feb. 18, 1945—the day before the Marines landed on the island—and was wounded in early March with a round in his arm and wrist that left his ulnar nerve partially paralyzed.

Transferred from Iwo Jima to the hospital on Guam, then to California and on to Great Lakes Naval Hospital to be near his northern Indiana home, the young veteran and Chicago Cubs fan was there during the 1945 World Series between the Cubs and the Detroit Tigers.

That was in the days just before the Billy Goat Curse came down on the heads of the Chicago Cubs after somebody wouldn’t allow avid Cubs fan, Greek immigrant and Billy Goat Tavern owner William “Billy Goat” Sianis to bring his pet goat, Murphy, along with him to Wrigley Field for the fourth game of the series. As he and the goat were being denied entrance, Sianis reportedly raised his hands in the air and put the curse on, saying, “The Cubs ain’t gonna win no more.”

Bill didn’t know about the curse at the time, but he told me the story for “Iwo Blasted Again.” The Tigers won the fourth game 4-1 and the fifth game 8-4. The Cubs bounced back to win the sixth game 8-7 to tie the series at three games apiece to set the stage for the seventh and deciding game of the ’45 World Series, much like the Cubs-Indians 2016 series.

In ’45 the Cubs offered a number of tickets to the wounded veterans in the hospital at Great Lakes. But Bill and many of the wounded men didn’t get to use them. Hospital officials announced that anyone taking advantage of the Cubs’ patriotic generosity would first have to go on working parties to scrub and mop floors to “earn” the tickets.

Like many of the men, Bill was recovering from his wound and refused.

“I lived 90 miles from Chicago,” Bill told me, “and at 19 I figured I’d have a lot of chances to see the Cubs in a World Series.”

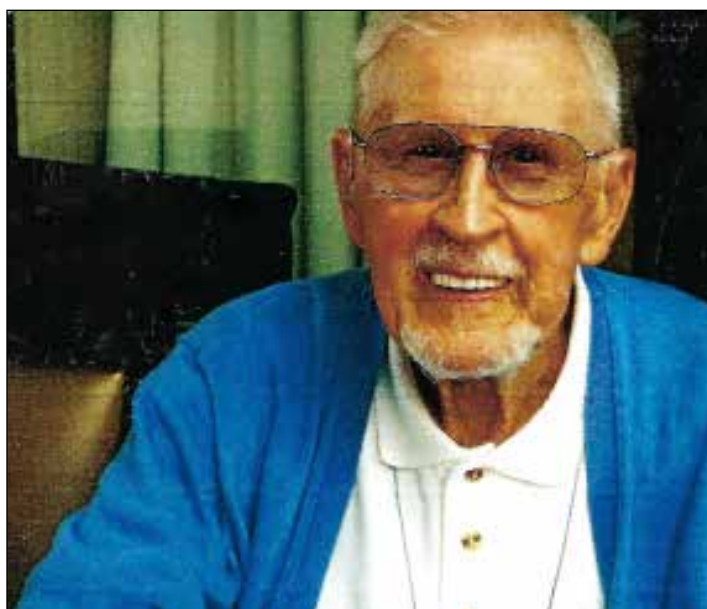
His high school sweetheart, Phyllis, to whom he had been married for 69 years died, and the “Loveable Losers” kept on losing. So by the time he was in his late ‘80s, he’d about given up and said he was going to quit watching or paying attention because they were never going to win.

Then things started changing for the Cubs. Last year a group called the Coalition to Salute America’s Heroes, which provides financial assistance to wounded combat veterans, offered him the opportunity to attend a playoff game, and he thought maybe he would finally make it to the series. Still didn’t happen—until this year.

On Oct. 24, I received the following email from Bill:

“Hooray, I’ve just been given a ticket to the first Cubs home game of the World Series! Dave Walker and I will be seated in Section 208, row 9, seats 9 and 10. Look for us. Dave Walker heads the veterans’ group, Coalition to Salute to America’s Heroes. I’m not a hero, but I’ll pretend to be in this case since I’ve waited since 1945 for this to happen but never thought it would. Go Cubs!”

Sadly, when Walker came to take Bill to the game, he became ill with a blocked colon and went to the hospital. Surgery was scheduled for Tuesday, Nov. 1. But with a weak heart and failing kidneys, the prospects were bleak.



Jim Madden wrote of his father: “His was a life well lived.”

On Wednesday, I received a message from Bill’s son, Jim: “Dad passed away last night with his four children holding his hand. He was in the prep room waiting for surgery but didn’t make it. I was able to read the Cubs newspaper articles to him about the last win (Game 5), which made him happy, but we regret he didn’t get to see another win. His was a life well lived.”

Indeed Bill’s life was well lived. He taught high school English for 34 years and had also taught classes at Purdue and Indiana universities. He was a great father, a poet, a teacher who could still recite verbatim some 20 poems and a good Marine. At 90 years old, he was still a great Cubs fan. I’d hoped he could hang in there for a World Series winner.

“That was the last thing on my bucket list,” he told me when the playoffs began and I told him I thought this was the year. “I hope so, but I’ve endured a lifetime of disappointment. This time I will wait and see.”

If only he’d have been able to wait just a couple more days.

## **WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS**

### **ANNUAL MEMBERS**

ALLEN, Barbara S. – Spring Valley, CA  
GORDEN, Pam – Pineville, LA  
HOLDSWORTH, William C. – Collegeville, PA  
KHALSA, Adarsh – Phoenix, AZ  
PITTMAN-WALLER, Mary Virginia – San Antonio, TX

### **LIFE MEMBERS**

COREY, Marla – Rancho Palos Verde, CA  
POWELL, John W. – Stafford, VA  
TORCHIA, John **I-3-28** – Pebble Beach, CA  
VOUROS, George J. **DD589** – Natick, MA

### **MEMORIAL MEMBERS**

DANN, Alice L. – San Antonio, TX  
HUFFHINES, Mary – Weatherford, TX  
MIALE, Dorothy – Port Charlotte, FL

*Thank you for helping to preserve  
and perpetuate the legacy of service and pride  
in the Fifth Marine Division Association.  
Please encourage others to join us!*

# Duty and Destiny

**By John Butler**

On March 12, 2005, my brother Clint and I joined 450 Americans and a delegation of Japanese survivors and family members to commemorate the sacrifices made at Iwo Jima, the Pacific battle waged from Feb. 19 to March 26, 1945.

Sixty-five American veterans of the battle, many in their 80s, represented the dwindling ranks of men who were lucky enough to walk off Iwo Jima alive.

My brother and I were among those who traveled to Iwo Jima to honor fathers and grandfathers who were killed in action there or have passed away since then. Others accompanied aging fathers and grandfathers on the pilgrimage.

I was 5 years old when my father and his men of the First Battalion, 27th Marines, departed San Diego for the Pacific war in August 1944. I stood by my pregnant mother, watching columns of Marines pass by, as Dad told us goodbye.

This was the last time I saw my father, but the image and life of LtCol John A. Butler—especially what he and his Marines did on Iwo Jima—became a huge part of my own life. It has always been the basis for my thoughts about Memorial Day.

In every society there are men—and now in America, women as well—who march to the sound of guns. In World War II, our “Greatest Generation” answered the call in vast numbers. They were for the most part citizen soldiers, but some were professional soldiers like my dad.

Hundreds of thousands paid the ultimate price. Yet, even in this great war, this was a very small percentage of our total population, and so many American families were not adversely affected.

My mother, who now rests with her husband in the Punchbowl military cemetery in Hawaii, never forgot an incident on the long train ride from California to Florida during the last days of the war. Widowed with four small children in tow, she encountered a lady who commented that she hated to see the war end because she and her husband were making so much money. My gallant mother did not reply.

As I grew up in Fort Myers, Fla., in the post-war years, I encountered no one among my schoolmates who had lost his dad in the war. I had a friend or two whose dads or uncles had served, but it wasn't until I entered the U.S. Naval Academy years later that I met others like me. These midshipmen had been awarded appointments as

sons of deceased veterans—a very distinct minority even among that group.

On the Iwo Jima trip that March, I met the Isack brothers from New Orleans, which was my father's hometown. Their grandfather was the same age as my father, 34, when he lost his life on Iwo Jima. The elder Isack was a true citizen soldier. A business executive with a wife and several children, he was exempt from the draft but still offered his service to the Marine Corps. He rejected an offer to remain in New Orleans as a recruiting officer and instead went overseas with the Fifth Marine Division.

He was wounded that first night on Red Beach, which took devastating Japanese mortar and artillery barrages from the northern heights and Mount Suribachi. He died aboard the hospital ship SS Samaritan shortly thereafter and was buried at sea.

Leonard and Fletcher Isack made the pilgrimage on behalf of their own recently deceased father, who like me, was 5 when his dad was killed. They brought their grandmother's ashes, which they placed in the sea offshore from Red Beach.

The Isack boys told me their father was 58 before he ever encountered another person who had lost his father in World War II.

My brother, Clint, and I were blessed because our mother never let the image of our father diminish in our lives. We learned much about him as a combat leader and a man of high character from meeting a number of the survivors of Iwo Jima.

One of these men was Col Gerald Russell, USMC (Ret.), whose unit had fought side by side with my dad's battalion for a large part of the campaign. Russell took charge of the Second Battalion, 27th Marines, when its commander was evacuated for wounds in the latter days of the fighting and later commanded the First Battalion.

Russell, amazingly fit and apparently the oldest attendee at 88, accompanied my brother as we toured the rugged Iwo Jima battlefield. (Col Russell died at 97 on Feb. 24, 2014.)

On Memorial Days and other days, I offer my prayers for those family members who have not returned from our foreign wars, most particularly those who served in Vietnam, who were ridiculed and criticized by some and ignored by many.

Today, in our global war on terror, even fewer of our citizens are called to arms, and little is asked of the rest of



us other than that we spend money to keep the economy going.

I offer a special prayer that we as a society never disconnect ourselves from those who protect us today and that we always remember their sacrifices, as well as the sons, daughters and other family members left behind.

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*A version of this piece was published in the Tampa, Fla., Tribune in 2005 after current FMDA President John Butler*

*returned to his home in Temple Terrace, Fla., from the trip to Iwo Jima with Military Historical Tours to remember and honor his father as he now does as Association president for veterans of the Fifth Marine Division. The sons of John Augustus Butler carried on their family's military tradition: John and Clint as Marines, and brother Morey as an Army pilot and ROTC instructor. All three served in Vietnam, as did their late sister Mary Jo's husband, who was an Army intelligence officer.*

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## **Honor to Those Who Have Died**

**By Billy Cawthron**

Romans 5:7: "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die."

This was not the case on Iwo. Every man that spent time on the line and was able to come off, did so because someone died for them. And even though (many of) you were not there, in reality, they also died for you.

You see, freedom is not free. Many have died for the freedom that you and I enjoy. You are here, even now, enjoying this wonderful country because many have died so that you could enjoy all that you have.

You may be thinking, *Many have died, but they did not intend to.* But in reality, they went willingly, knowing that many would not return.

Why would someone give their life for so many people they did not even know? Well, they do. I saw it every day on Iwo. They were willing to go forth, knowing that at the end of the day, many of them would no longer be there. Why would they do this? Perhaps you're thinking, *For the country*; or perhaps, *for the Corps*. No, they did it for the men they served with, for their comrades.

You cannot learn this from a training manual. It is not issued to you. It comes from the heart, for you know that the men you served with, those on your right and on your left, would do the same for you.

Let me give you just one illustration of what I mean. It was about the 10th day. We were pinned down, receiving heavy fire from a pillbox. It had been damaged, but they had placed two machine guns in this damaged pillbox. The fire was so heavy, the demolition team could not move into range to destroy the pillbox.

We were told to set up a gun and deliver fire so the demolition team could move closer. I moved forward with a gun and gunner. We were searching for a spot where we could set up the gun. Finally, he touched me on the shoulder and said, "On that knoll just ahead of us."

I said, "Yes, I see it." But the gun would be in the

open. No protection.

He said, "That's the only place."

I said, "Ok. I'll set up the gun, and you feed me the ammunition." He looked at me, and I will not repeat the exact words he said, but with anger, he said, "This is *my* gun, and *I* will set it up." He did. And over the next 5-10 minutes, he emptied two and a half boxes of ammunition on that pillbox. He enabled the demolition team to move up and reach it with a flamethrower. The pillbox was knocked out...but the gunner did not make it. He willingly stayed with the gun until the object was destroyed.

Did you ever stop to think just how much has been paid for your freedom? You say, "Yes, I know; they gave their life." But did you ever think what they really gave up?

Most of the men in our unit were between 18 and 20 years old. What did they give up? They never had the joy of a wife. How much they missed, not being loved and having one who loved them! To never have known the joy of a little boy or a little girl to put their arms around their neck and whisper in their ear, "I love you."

You see, they paid a great price for you...for you to be able to enjoy all there is in this wonderful country of ours.

I stood at the Fifth Division Cemetery on Iwo. The white crosses seemed to go as far as I could see. But I did not see the crosses. I saw faces. There was Joe. There was Mike. There was Spike. There was Ralph. And, oh, yeah. There was Pretty Boy, who bragged that if he got killed there would be girls all the way from San Diego to Detroit who would cry.

There were many faces whose names I could not recall. They went willingly, and they did not die in vain. They won the war, and they saved our freedom.

What about you and me? Will we keep alive what they paid such a great price for? Or will we let them be forgotten?

May the youth of today know the cost of their freedom. I pray we will never forget. We must do all that we can to see that their sacrifice is made known. My prayer and my hope is that they will never be forgotten.

# 75 years later, we still remember the ‘Boys of ’41’

By Ray Elliott

The Boys of ’41—the Pearl Harbor survivors—were given a rousing welcome and awe-inspiring honor for their service on “Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day,” held on Dec. 7 and throughout the week with ceremonies, interviews, parades and thank-yous on Oahu, Hawaii, by thousands of residents and people visiting for the occasion.

Sir Tim Rice, producer and lyricist for “From Here to Eternity: The Musical,” came from London with a touching number from the show, “The Boys of ’41,” performed by an exceptional group of 22 musicians at the Dec. 3 opening gala, “For Love of Country, Pass It On,” at the Pacific Aviation Museum Pearl Harbor on Ford Island:

*“There’s thunder in the morning  
There’s a menace in the skies  
There’s a slaughter in the sunlight  
A murderous disguise  
A cannon of destruction  
For ev’ry mother’s son  
Who now become the Boys of Forty One. ...”*

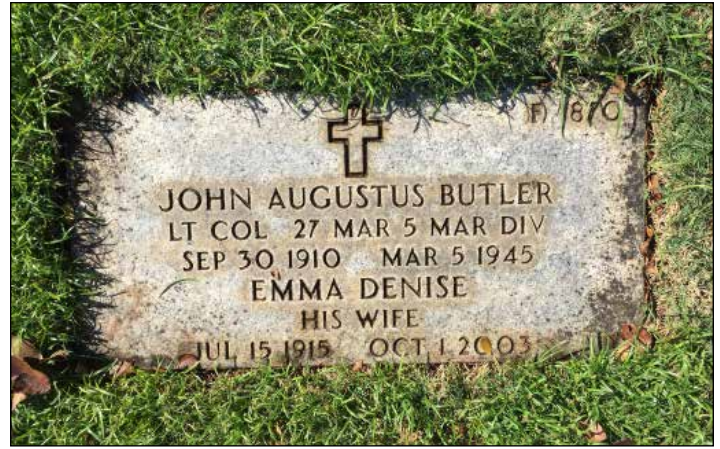
The theme of the Dec. 1-11 gathering for remembering the 75th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor was “Honoring the Past, Inspiring the Future.” One of the members of the Military Historical Tours group that was in Hawaii for a week of the commemoration was Oscar- and 16-time Emmy Award-winning television producer Arnold Shapiro. He said the only other event he could think of “that would be as meaningful as being at Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7 75 years later with others who were there, would be at Gettysburg 75 years later with others who were there the day Lincoln spoke. It was a special experience I’ll always remember.”

Ninety-five-year-old Pearl Harbor survivor Stanley Chlipala of Denver, who was on the destroyer USS Perry on Dec. 7, 1941, wasn’t at Gettysburg, but his daughter Elizabeth was quoted in the Honolulu Star-Advertiser saying that, as a young man, her father got to shake the hand of a Civil War veteran.

Shapiro’s and Chlipala’s comments put the occasion into perspective for the many young people who attended the events with their parents and grandparents.



The USS Arizona Memorial was the site of the Blackened Canteen Ceremony, which has become an inspiration for peaceful understanding and reconciliation. *(Photos courtesy of Ray Elliott)*



**Above: Dr. Hiroya Sugano (center) leads in pouring water over the USS Arizona as part of the Blackened Canteen Ceremony. At top right: LtCol John Augustus Butler and Emma Denise Butler, parents of FMDA President John Butler, are buried at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific. At lower right: Ray Elliott (right) meets Don Ollom (left), who happened to be a good friend of FMDA trustee Bob Mueller during the war.**

In a way, that was true for one member of the MHT tour group, Chief Warrant Officer Allan G. MacKay Jr., USNR (Ret.) and president of the Mt. Vernon, Wash., Pearl Harbor Survivors Association, North Cascade Chapter #5. MacKay was 2 1/2 years old and his mother and father, a Navy chief, lived in a four-plex on Ford Island near the battleship, USS Maryland, and outboard of the USS Oklahoma.

“Dad had gone to work at the Radio Communications Building near the airfield,” MacKay said. “Mom and I were sleeping when the attack began. We were awakened, and she yelled at a neighbor to see what was going on. My only memory is standing in bed, my hands on the windowsill and looking outside and seeing the whole world on fire and everything is in color. The nightmare is always the same. That is all I remember. My mother suffered ‘shell shock,’ what today we call PTSD, and couldn’t stand low-flying airplanes or watching war movies.

“When she ran for safety with me, she said she grabbed two bottles of milk and a blanket. Machine gun

bullets from the Japanese planes came through the walls and window, and a bullet went through her nightgown. She hid with me in a small concrete basement room, and bullets came in and ricocheted around us, burning her chest and her arm. She said we were found by a search party around three o’clock in the afternoon and taken to the Bachelor’s Officers Quarters.”

At the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, the Punchbowl, people visited the graves of relatives and friends. I stopped at the marker of LtCol John Augustus Butler, Navy Cross recipient and commander of First Battalion, 27th Regiment, Fifth Marine Division, and his wife, Emma Denise, parents of Marine veteran and current president of the Fifth Marine Division Association, John Butler. He was 5 years old when his father was killed.

On up the Punchbowl hill, I met four Rosie the Riveters: pipe welder Marian Wynn, draftsman Marian Sousa, and journeyman welders Kay Morrison and Agnes Moore. All worked at one of the Kaiser shipyards in Richmond, Calif., during the war. All were in their



**Four real-life Rosie the Riveters visited the Punchbowl—from left to right: pipe welder Marian Wynn, draftsman Marian Sousa, and journeyman welders Kay Morrison and Agnes Moore. All worked at one of the Kaiser shipyards in Richmond, Calif., during the war.**

90s, and all later rode down Kalakaua Avenue in the parade on the evening of Dec. 7, waving and beaming.

But just before boarding the shuttle at the bottom of the hill at the Punchbowl, the group spoke with a Pearl Harbor survivor, Don Ollom of Osakis, Minn. I heard someone say he was an Iwo Jima veteran and asked him what outfit he'd been in.

"D-2-28," he said.

"I know a man who was in D-2-28," I said. "Bob Mueller."

"No shit," he said. "You know Bob, the Mighty Mo? He was one of my best friends. We owned a car together. Where is he now? He was from Omaha, but I heard he moved to California 20 years ago."

I called Bob in California that evening and told him I'd met one of his buddies. Mueller had the same reaction, told me the same thing and said he hadn't seen Ollom since the war was over but would be in touch now.

Vietnam veteran helicopter pilot and Distinguished Flying Cross recipient John Powell, a longtime,

knowledgeable and personable director for MHT, also led the group on a tour of the USS Missouri, where the formal surrender was signed by the Japanese on Sept. 2, 1945.

On the morning of Dec. 6, we left the hotel at 5:15 a.m. for the USS Arizona to attend the Blackened Canteen Ceremony that memorializes a bombing raid over Shizuoka, Japan, on the night of June 20, 1945, when two Army Air Force B-29s from the 314th Bomb Wing collided and killed 23 crewmen.

In the same raid, more than 2,000 Shizuoka citizens also died. Dr. Hiroya Sugano, who was a child at the time, and his family lived through the raid. He and a man named, Fukumatsu Itoh, visited the crash site the next morning. Itoh pulled two airmen who were still alive out of the wreckage, but they soon died. Itoh also picked up a blackened canteen, which appeared to have the handprint of the man who had owned it.

Itoh, a devout Buddhist, buried the American crewmen alongside the residents who had also been killed. He was condemned by the local citizenry, but he

began conducting an annual ceremony to honor those who had died: A silent prayer was offered and bourbon whiskey was poured in the crash site memorial as an offering to the spirits of the fallen, both Japanese and American.

As an adult, Sugano eventually met Itoh and was greatly impressed and promised to carry on the tradition, which he has done since 1972. He has attended the Dec. 7 commemoration at Pearl Harbor for the last 25 years. The battered canteen has become an inspiration for peace as Sugano and others pour the bourbon from the battered canteen into the water over the sunken USS Arizona.

The next morning, the group again left the hotel at 5:15 a.m. and inched along toward Pearl Harbor after the shuttle hit the traffic and took an hour and a half to go the 12-15 miles to Kilo Pier, Joint Base Pearl Harbor Hickman, where the National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day Commemoration was held from 7:45-9:45 a.m. with nearly 4,000 people in attendance.

The impressive two-hour ceremony began with a moment of silence, during which the USS Halsey passed by the USS Arizona Memorial, followed by a missing-man flyover; the presentation of colors; the National Anthem and the Hawai'i Pono'i, the state song of Hawaii; a Hawaiian blessing; a prayer for peace; guest speakers; keynote speaker Adm Harry B. Harris Jr., Commander, U.S. Pacific Command; wreath presentations; benediction; a rifle salute by the Marine Corps; Echo Taps and postlude by the Pacific Fleet Band; a vintage plane fly-by; and a tugboat water tribute.

In his keynote speech, Adm Harris said, "You can bet that the men and women that we honor today—and those who died that fateful morning 75 years ago—never took a knee and never failed to stand whenever they heard our National Anthem played."



Ralph Griffiths (left) provided this photo to the Fifth Marine Division Association of himself, Jesse Boatright and Ira Hayes, all from E-2-28. Artifacts and memorabilia continue to be gratefully accepted for a Fifth Marine Division museum.

## Donate your artifacts to Camp Tarawa museum

As the groundwork continues toward establishing a Camp Tarawa Museum on Hawaii to preserve the history of the Fifth Marine Division, we continue to encourage members and families to donate photographs, artifacts, written or recorded stories and experiences, etc.

The collective story of the Fifth Marine Division is enhanced by everyone's individual stories, sharing glimpses of what life was like.

Donations of memorabilia, photos, recordings and interviews of Iwo Jima veterans may be submitted for the museum archives by contacting Kathy Painton at [kathypainton@hotmail.com](mailto:kathypainton@hotmail.com).



# IJAA explores status of future visits to Iwo Jima

**By Bonnie Arnold-Haynes**

June in Tokyo is blistering hot. The Japanese, more sensible than us, are all shielding the sun with umbrellas. And the business people cut back to shirts, no jackets or ties. There is air conditioning, but it is hard to stay in it because, like New York City, it is a place where you walk to the train, the taxi, the restaurant and back. Unless you are going to the Japanese Diet, where the stately and seasonless flow of formal government stays put for the summer.

Jerry Yellin and I were in Japan for the Blackened Canteen Ceremony and meetings on behalf of the Iwo Jima Association of America and the Fifth Marine Division Association.

Col Warren Wiedhahn, IJAA executive director, had submitted the formal embassy request for a meeting. But China and North Korea were shooting off missiles, and the situation was getting more tense by the minute. Yoshitaka Shindo is a member of the House of Representatives and one of the senior members of their Foreign Affairs Committee. Had he said no, it would not have been rude or unexpected. But he said yes.

Yoshitaka Shindo is also the grandson of Gen Tadamichi Kuribayashi, the commanding general of the garrison of Iwo Jima. I am the widow of MajGen Fred

Haynes, who as a young captain was the operations officer of the 28th Regiment, Fifth Marine Division, on Mt. Suribachi. Then-Capt Jerry Yellin is the P-51 combat pilot who flew the last fighter mission from Iwo Jima. This is an unlikely, but very deep and unique friendship.

Mrs. Kuribayashi, Shindo-san's grandmother, had the courage to come to the first Reunion of Honor and speak against war. It was very hard for me the first time I went back to Iwo Jima without my husband, who had lived a long life and died a natural death. How hard it must have been for her to set foot on the place where her husband had last lived and then died for his emperor and country. Mrs. Kuribayashi, like so many others, lost a husband; and her young children, like so many other children,

lost a loving father; and their country lost the war.

It was one of the deadliest battles of WWII. No one expected it to go on for 36 days. Gen Kuribayashi became a legend—an adversary that we wished never to encounter again, but one that was admired by many, including Fred Haynes.

And from all the shed blood and lost life on both sides, a small miracle happened: Japan and America became friends. Perhaps because the Marshall Plan respected the sovereignty of their emperor and their nation. Perhaps because we made better allies than



**IJAA's Bonnie Arnold-Haynes, an FMDA trustee, visits Yoshitaka Shindo (center), grandson of Gen Tadamichi Kuribayashi, along with Jerry Yellin.**

enemies in the changing world situation. Or perhaps because, once you left politics, every family who lost someone, regardless of side, felt the same loss and sympathy for other bereaved family members.

Fred Haynes felt—to use a Texas word—a real kinship to Gen Kuribayashi as a warrior, and then to Kuribayashi’s family. Fred was the oldest of five children, and his own father had died when he was 16. He watched Yoshitaka Shindo grow up and was proud that that Shindo-san was a leader who could and would carry on in the spirit of his grandfather for the sake of world peace.

On Shindo-san’s conference room shelf are many pictures of his family and people with whom he has met. There is a picture of him with Gen Larry Snowden when Prime Minister Abe spoke before Congress, and near that a picture of his grandfather. Until 10 years ago, no one in Japan talked about the war. Now, one of Shindo’s political platforms includes his grandfather. It says that he, Shindo-san, has the courage and DNA of a great war hero, and he will use it to protect Japan and the free world.

Shindo-san’s first question is about the health of Gen Snowden. As of this writing, we are all very happy Gen Snowden is doing so well and willing to come to D.C. anytime Shindo-san makes the trip to Washington, even if it is in a wheelchair.

But we are really here to talk about the Reunion of Honor. I thank for him for his ongoing help and support, and he thanks the Iwo Jima Association of America for its continued support. The looming question, of course, is what happens to the American families’ ability to return to Iwo Jima once the veterans are gone? Iwo-to is now a Japanese military outpost. Our military has access to it, but families, historians and tourists do not. There are no planes or ferries that you can jump on for a day trip. And once you get there, there are no docks, restaurants, tourist stores, bathrooms or beaches to use. The island has never been fully cleared for ordnance and is still an active volcano. And that worries families on both sides who want to return to honor their relatives.

But Yoshitaka Shindo does not share those fears. “As long as there are bereaved families, the trips to Iwo Jima will continue,” says Shindo-san with steadfast resolve. Shindo-san is determined to bring the remains of everyone home. He would like to see the island used for international peace meetings. But, in the U.S., as our veterans dwindle in numbers, the military support for these return visits has been cut yearly by our Congress.



**MajGen Fred Haynes (center) returned to Iwo Jima during a past Reunion of Honor ceremony. The Japanese contingent included Yoshitaka Shindo (far right).**

And our culture—while it is changing with the help of Woody Williams, the Gold Star Families group and others—has never put importance on meeting and satisfying the needs of “bereaved families.”

We have stripped our defense budgets, and one can foresee a day when Congress will not authorize any money at all to support a return to Iwo-to. It is, after all, a Japanese Island. But that is when we are even more thankful for the true friendship. We are now “bereaved families,” not “American bereaved families” and “Japanese bereaved families.” The idea that we will all return as one group, with the Japanese, is not out of the question, to me. We are all doing the same thing: We are mourning the dead and praying that their lives will continue to lead to peace for the world.



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