

FORTITUDE

VOLUME 35, NUMBER 2

2010



BULLETIN OF THE MARINE CORPS HISTORICAL PROGRAM

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A: Approved for public release, distribution is unlimited.

PCN 10401220100



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FORTITUDINE

Motto of the United States Marine Corps in the 1812 era

Historical Bulletin Vol. 35, No. 2

2010

*"We can only know who we are by being certain of
who we have been."*

Gen Leonard F. Chapman Jr.
24th Commandant of the Marine Corps

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About the Cover: An Afghan man and his son, with epilepsy, wait for medical care during Cooperative Medical Assistance in the village of Sperah, Afghanistan, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom on 9 December 2004.

Photo by Cpl Justin L. Schaeffer

Errata

In the *Fortitudine* issue Vol. 35, No. 1, in the story "Combat Artist: Chief Warrant Officer 2 Michael D. Fay," it was stated that Lance Corporal Nicholas G. Ciccone was assigned to K Company. Lance Corporal Ciccone was assigned to L Company. Thanks for the update from Ciccone's former Platoon Sergeant, CWO-3 John P. Galliker Jr.

This bulletin of the Marine Corps historical program is published for Marines, at the rate of one copy for every nine on active duty, to provide education and training in the uses of military and Marine Corps history. Other interested readers may purchase single copies or four-issue subscriptions from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office. The appropriate order form appears in this issue.

100th Anniversary of Marine Corps Aviation



Dr. Charles P. Neimeyer

For the past year and one-half, the History Division has been working on a multibook project that will commemorate the 100th anniversary of the founding of Marine Corps aviation. Marine Corps aviation began with the very first Marine Corps aviator, Lieutenant Alfred A. Cunningham. In May, 1912, Cunningham was officially designated naval aviator five—he was the fifth naval service officer, trained for aviation duty—but he was first to wear the uniform of a Marine.

Cunningham was soon joined by a fellow Marine, Lieutenant Bernard L. Smith. Smith was designated naval aviator six but was Marine aviator two. While the more famous Cunningham would rightfully be heralded in later years as the founding father of Marine Corps aviation, the significant contributions of Smith should be remembered as well. Movie-star handsome and possessing a gregarious personality, Smith's view on Marine Corps aviation differed from Cunningham's in one minor respect. While Cunningham proposed that the Corps focus on developing its aviation arm independent of the other services, Smith believed that both the Navy and Marine Corps needed to work on this emerging technology together. In many ways, history has proven both men correct.

Smith was not content to just focus on theory. In January 1914, he, along with Second Lieutenant William M. McIlvain (Marine aviator three) and 10 enlisted mechanics, took a Curtiss flying boat and participated in the January–February 1914 fleet exercises off Culebra, Puerto Rico. Smith and McIlvain took turns taking a number of Marine ground officers on flying tours over Culebra and vividly demonstrated the utility of aviation to them—with the most important element being the added benefit that “organic” air-

craft gave to the Marine landing force commander.

As war clouds loomed in Europe, the Commandant sent Smith to be an “aviation observer” in Paris. Smith gathered intelligence on the aviation methodology of the British, French, and Germans, and also collected information—he made a secret reconnaissance mission to Switzerland—on how these nations organized their air forces for combat over the Western Front. He even flew several combat missions over enemy lines with French aviation units. In 1917 and back in the United States, Smith helped to reorganize Marine Corps aviation. Largely due to Smith's recommendations, Marine Corps aviation was deployed in World War I and was a success under the command of Lieutenant Cunningham.

Cunningham's aviators, in just three months' time, conducted 57 air raids, shot down 12 enemy aircraft, and dropped 52,000 pounds of bombs. One of Cunningham's aviators, Second Lieutenant Ralph Talbot, and his rear machine gunner, Gunnery Sergeant Robert G. Robinson, after being attacked by 12 German fighters, succeeded in shooting down two of them even though Robinson was wounded multiple times. Both men became the first members of Marine Corps aviation to receive the Medal of Honor.

Perhaps Smith faded from view so quickly after the end of World War I because he resigned his commission in 1920. Fortunately for the Marine Corps, Cunningham remained in uniform and continued to help define the role of aviation for years to come. As a civilian, Smith became the superintendent and chief engineer for Pan American Airways in Key West, Florida. After a short flirtation with flying for the Navy as a reservist, Smith

was back in the Marine Corps fold by 1937 and became an advisor to the Commandant for the barrage balloon program on the eve of World War II. In February 1947, Smith was tragically killed when his automobile collided with a high-speed train in Coral Gables, Florida. Gone but not forgotten, Lieutenant Smith should be remembered as one of the Corps' founding fathers of aviation. While certainly not on the same level as the long serving “father of Marine Corps aviation,” Alfred Cunningham, Smith should be seen as a very close second for the right to this coveted moniker.

The centennial book project will be about Marine Corps aviators and aircraft, past and present. Founding pioneers like Alfred Cunningham, Bernard Smith, William McIlvain, Frank Evans, and Roy Geiger will be prominently featured throughout the commemorative books. I hope all readers will discover that today's Marine Corps aviation was born out of the pioneering efforts of the first Marine aviators.

Finally, this issue of *Fortitudine* features a story about one of the first operations for the Marine Corps in Afghanistan. Two History Division interns from the summer of 2009 and Dr. Nathan S. Lowrey, who wrote a soon-to-be-published monograph on Afghanistan, give us a peek into one of the early and quite successful operations called Operation Asbury Park. Battalion Landing Team 1/6 of the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit, along with components of the Afghan National Army and Afghan militiamen, deployed for 17 days in Zabol Province. The excellent pictures show the harsh environment that Marines confront during their missions in Operation Enduring Freedom.

□1775□

Task Force Genghis and Operation Asbury Park

by Erin F. Bergmeister and Dr. Nathan S. Lowrey
Intern and History Writer

In April 2004, Colonel Kenneth F. McKenzie arrived in southern Afghanistan with 2,400 sailors and Marines of the 22d Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU). Although only in country for several months, they played a critical role in Operation Enduring Freedom by spearheading Central Command's annual spring offensive, Operation Mountain Storm. Operating in the mountainous region north of Kandahar, their mission was to defeat the anti-Coalition forces, secure the major population centers, and support civil-military operations to facilitate United Nations-sponsored elections in October.

The 22d MEU accomplished its objectives through a three-phased strategy: it established Forward Operating Base Ripley in Tarin Kowt, the capital city of Oruzban Province; conducted company-sized cordon and search patrols along neighboring river valleys; and engaged the enemy in mountainous sanctuaries. The 22d MEU also registered countless voters, initiated over \$300,000 worth of civil affairs projects, killed more than 90 Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters, detained an additional 131 persons of interest, and confiscated multiple weapons and ammunition caches. At the conclusion of the operation, Lieutenant General David W. Barno, USA, head of Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan, remarked, "Never in the history of Operation Enduring Freedom has there been an offensive operation like the one the 22d MEU conducted. Never have we been this successful. You have made history here."

According to Colonel McKenzie, Operation Asbury Park was the "decisive operation of our deployment." A 17-day motorized search and attack patrol, it was certainly the most decisive event to occur during the third phase. The basic plan was to "find, fix, and finish the enemy," by deploying a convoy to traverse 140 kilometers of narrow dirt roads in rural Zabol Province.



Photo by GySgt Keith A. Milks

A convoy of Marine Corps' humvees from Battalion Landing Team, 1/6, navigated the rugged terrain of south-central Afghanistan during Operation Asbury Park.

While traveling along Route Spartan, Task Force Genghis would pursue al-Qaeda and Taliban forces believed to be operating near the six villages of Siah Chub Kalay, Khabargho, Hazarbus, Andar, Sandabus, and Dey Chopan. Although simple in concept, the operation required more detailed coordination than the preceding cordon and search missions near Tarin Kowt.

In addition to difficulties presented by the terrain, weather, and distance, the area had received little Coalition attention during the conflict, and numerous intelligence sources indicated that the enemy had consolidated on key terrain. Moreover, the Marines believed that the enemy had established ambush points, dug fortified positions, and were operating from active cave networks. Fortunately, thanks to a combination of signals intelligence, close air support, and the incorporation of indigenous forces, the operation achieved results that far exceeded the Marines' initial expectations.

Led by Lieutenant Colonel Asad A. Khan, commander of Battalion Landing Team 1/6, the patrol was comprised of 73 vehicles and 586 coalition personnel. In addition to the sailors and Marines, a small contingent of Afghan National Army soldiers and local militiamen were also included. The militia forces were first in the order of march, traveling in commercial sport utility vehicles. Advised by Chief Warrant Officer-2 Oscar P. Chaney, they provided the convoy's advance guard. A portion of the battalion's combined antiarmor platoon headed up the main body, mounted in humvees and armed with machine guns and guided missiles. Following the antiarmor vehicles were the battalion's command element, the provincial governor's force, and a small signals intelligence detachment. Captain Paul C. Merida followed with one weapons and two rifle platoons from Company C. Mounted in humvees, Merida's Marines were armed with small arms, machine guns, mortars,



Photo by GySgt Keith A. Milks

Under enemy rifle, machine gun, and rocket-propelled grenade fire, a Afghan militiaman and Marines from Battalion Landing Team, 1/6, advanced toward Taliban positions on a mountain near the village of Siah Chub Kalay, Afghanistan.

and rocket launchers. The remaining vehicles from the antiarmor platoon provided a rear guard.

Task Force Genghis spent the majority of 1 June gearing up and refueling at Forward Operating Base Payne, located south of the 22d MEU headquarters at Forward Operating Base Ripley. That evening the Marines visited a nearby Afghan militia compound where they linked up with local fighters who would accompany them during the impending patrol. The Americans and Afghans spent the evening, bonding with their new comrades, and building trust and confidence by sharing a meal and entertainment.

The patrol began moving toward Siah Chub Kalay the next morning. While preparing to establish a cordon around the village, the combined

force made its first contact with the enemy when 20 to 30 fighters entrenched in the surrounding mountainside began firing small arms at the Marines below. While the Afghan militiamen and antiarmor platoon Marines moved to the rear of the mountain, other Battalion Landing Team 1/6 elements dismounted and moved through a series of orchards to set up a base of fire at the foot of the mountain.

Meanwhile the Marines called for assistance from both fixed and rotary wing aircraft. In addition to Harrier jets, and Super Cobra and Huey helicopters from Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 266, led by Lieutenant Colonel Joel R. Powers, air assets also included Apache helicopters and a Thunderbolt. The pilots

bombed the top of the mountain where the fire was emanating from and the reverse slope where they expected the enemy to retreat. After halting the airstrike, Company C pushed up the forward slope, while the antiarmor platoon continued its way around to the back of the mountain. A search of the area recovered little evidence of the engagement. This was incredibly frustrating to the Marines, who were not yet familiar with the enemy's tendency to cover their tracks, extract their wounded, and hide their weapons. Still, it was a successful baptism of fire that set the tone for the days ahead. After the engagement, the patrol established a perimeter defense and halted for the evening.

The next morning, Task Force Genghis headed toward Khabargho,



located about an hour and one-half to the northeast. Upon arriving, the task force established a cordon around the village and began to methodically search each building and residential compound for suspicious personnel and contraband items. Shortly thereafter, an Apache helicopter, providing overhead cover, spotted a group of 15 to 30 individuals attempting to flee up a draw on the outskirts of the village. While the helicopter and Harrier jets engaged the group from the air, the

antiarmor platoon maneuvered to establish a blocking position near the northeast corner of the village; the antiarmor platoon then began firing at the retreating enemy with its machine guns and guided missiles.

Meanwhile, Company C had dismounted its vehicles and pursued the enemy on foot. As one platoon proceeded up the draw, it encountered a small enemy delaying force. During the ensuing firefight,

which involved the exchange of rifle and machine gun fire at close range, the Marines killed four enemy fighters and wounded another. Three Marines were also wounded, including Sergeant Anthony L. Viggiani, who had enveloped an enemy fighting position and killed its occupants with a grenade, earning the Navy Cross. Marines pursued the enemy into the valley until reaching a suspected cave complex, which two Lancers subsequently bombed.



Photo by GySgt Keith A. Milks

Sgt Ryan West (foreground) yelled at his Marines to take cover from enemy sniper fire during a firefight with Taliban insurgents on a mountain range near the village of Siab Chub Kalay, Afghanistan.

While the pursuit continued, other Marines remained in Khabargho to search the village. According to the Afghan militiamen, the town was home to a prominent Taliban leader. Although the villagers confirmed this information, they also said that the leader and his companions had left the previous night, heading toward the northeast. A search of the individual's home produced a number of useful documents. After a long day, resulting in 17 enemy killed in action, Task Force Genghis halted for the evening.

The next day, 4 June, the patrol resumed its patrol toward Hazarbutz. Almost immediately, the Marines began to intercept radio signals indicating that the enemy was watching their convoy. As they continued toward the day's objective, it became increasingly difficult to maneuver their vehicles. The terrain had gradually shifted from an open valley to a narrow passage bordered by steep slopes on either side.

Moreover, rock outcrops provided natural bunkers for the enemy to hide behind while firing down upon the patrol.

Chief Warrant Officer-2 Chaney, in the lead with his Afghan militiamen, halted the convoy as they neared a small crater left by the explosion of an improvised explosive device. Suspecting that there might be other devices in the area, he radioed for the ordnance disposal team to come forward. While Company C dismounted to provide security, the ordnance disposal team confirmed the presence of multiple explosive devices, linked together and rigged to go off just ahead of the patrol's intended path. The team detonated one of the devices in place in order to determine which frequency the enemy was using so they could jam the enemy's radio transmissions.

Shortly thereafter, the convoy safely reached Hazarbutz. Due to the large size of the town, Task Force Genghis decided to divide its cordon and search operations among four quad-

rants to the north, south, east, and west. Although several persons of interest lived in the town, an inspection of their homes revealed that the occupants had hurriedly departed before the patrol's arrival. Late in the day, the combined force began to receive small arms and machine gun fire from a ridgeline near the eastern quadrant. The Marines returned fire and requested close air support from the Harriers, which strafed and bombed the enemy positions. Eventually, a Specter gunship and Apache helicopters also joined in the attack, which resulted in approximately 10 enemy dead.

After staying in Hazarbutz for the night, Task Force Genghis decided to remain in the area for another day. The Marines established an aggressive patrol system and discovered an enemy assembly area where local sympathizers were preparing food for as many as 200 fighters. Meanwhile, patrolling to the north, Task Force Bushhog (22d MEU's

Maritime Special Purpose Force and an Afghan National Army platoon), led by Captain Jeffrey H. Buffa, had encountered an enemy force. They subsequently requested close air support and directed Thunderbolt aircraft onto the enemy positions.

On the morning of 6 June, Task Force Genghis resumed its patrol toward the village of Andar. The Marines had received information suggesting that the enemy intended to attack their convoy and spent the previous evening studying maps in an effort to identify possible ambush sites. Because they expected an attack, it was no surprise when a Cobra helicopter flying overhead spotted a suspicious group congregating in a draw just ahead of the convoy's route. Although the patrol halted, dismounted, and prepared to engage the enemy, the group turned out to be a collection of herdsmen, women, and children.

Thankful that they had not overreacted and attacked the civilians, the task force remounted and continued forward, intent on making up for lost time. As the task force approached a point where the road narrowed to a single vehicle's width, with a steep slope to the right and a 40-foot drop to the left, the enemy sprang its anticipated ambush. In the front of the convoy, Chief Warrant Officer-2 Chaney and the Afghan militiamen encountered more improvised explosive devices and received rocket-propelled grenade fire from their left and sporadic small arms fire from their right. In panic, the Afghan militiamen abandoned their seven sport utility vehicles in the middle of the road and sought shelter among the rocks.

Chaney realized that the Afghan vehicles had effectively blocked the convoy's route out of the kill zone. Thinking quickly, he recruited five Marines from the main body of the column, and they either drove the Afghan vehicles to the side of the road or pushed them over the embankment. The fast-acting Marines enabled the antiarmor teams to move forward and engage the enemy, while Company C dismounted and began

maneuvering against the enemy's flank. Although the enemy saw the danger and chose to retreat up a draw, a Cobra helicopter met them as they attempted to flee.

After regrouping and removing the explosive devices, the task force continued on to Andar. The convoy pulled through the village, although Company C moved forward on foot and conducted a more methodical search of the area. In response to rumors that a particular person of interest was hiding in the region, the Marines also inspected a nearby cave complex, which a Lancer bomber later destroyed. By nightfall, the patrol had killed at least three more insurgents and only three of the Afghan militiamen had been wounded during the day's fighting.

After spending the night in Andar, the task force continued to operate in the area for another day. They established checkpoints, conducted local patrols, resupplied the convoy, and worked on their vehicles. General

Olson and Colonel McKenzie also visited the Marines, praising their aggressiveness. One dismounted patrol became engaged in a firefight near the village, while further north Task Force Bushhog engaged another enemy force with small arms and close air support. Twice during the day, once prior to a helicopter resupply and then again after dusk, the task force directed close air support against possible enemy observation posts in the surrounding mountains. At the close of 7 June, the Marines had killed another 10 enemy fighters.

The following morning, the task force headed toward the village of Sandabuz. Although the day's original objective had been Ekarak, the Marines deemed the route too dangerous to travel and altered their destination. Approaching Sandabuz, they rounded a mountain and descended into a valley where the village was located. Shortly after dismounting from the vehicles, they began to receive small arms and machine gun fire from both

Guided by another Marine, a rifleman with Battalion Landing Team, 1/6, fired his light machine gun toward Taliban positions on a mountain near the village of Siab Chub Kalay, Afghanistan.

Photo by GySgt Keith A. Milks



flanks and their front. The Marines quickly realized that the enemy had established a triangular defense with fire points on the left and right sides of the pass and at the front of the town.

While the antiarmor platoon drove forward into the kill zone and began returning fire, the Afghan militiamen spread out to the left and Company C spread out to the right. Meanwhile, supporting aircraft maneuvered behind the mountain to block potential escape routes. Working together, the dismounted infantry and close air support cleared the high ground of enemy. After securing the area, the task force pressed forward to establish a cordon around the village and search its buildings. While moving through the town, they encountered more enemy, which resulted in a brief firefight and the detention of several individuals.

Rather than remaining in Sandabuz for the night—the task force’s usual practice—the patrol continued toward their final objective in Dey Chopan. While moving through a narrow mountain pass, the convoy came

under heavy small arms, machine gun, and rocket-propelled grenade fire. Having anticipated the attack, the dismounted infantry, working in concert with close air support, fought its way through the ambush and cleared the enemy positions. In its battle against approximately 70, dug-in and heavily-armed aggressors, Task Force Genghis killed 21 of the enemy, captured eight others, and only three Marines were wounded.

Task Force Genghis spent the night of 8 June just outside Dey Chopan. In preparation of seizing its final objective, the Marines requested a Specter gunship to attack suspected enemy observation posts and strong points in the vicinity. The next morning, following the arrival of Colonel McKenzie, the convoy made its way toward Dey Chopan. Shortly after entering the village, the Marines intercepted radio traffic suggesting the possibility of another ambush. Although they run multiple mobile and dismounted patrols throughout the area,

the enemy had wisely departed.

Task Force Genghis had originally anticipated spending two days in Dey Chopan, before traveling south to Kiljot along a more travelable route and quickly concluding the patrol. However, due to its remarkable success, higher headquarters extended the operation for seven days and directed the Marines to retrace their steps, adding a stop at the village of Weti. They completed the return trip at faster pace, encountering limited enemy contact on 13, 14, and 15 June. Although the enemy initiated contact in each of these cases, they had apparently lost their desire to fight and fled when met with superior firepower. Still, the task force killed four more enemy fighters and wounded another. Operation Asbury Park ended on 18 June, as the patrol returned to its base and the 22d MEU began a well-deserved operational pause. During eight separate engagements, Task Force Genghis had killed approximately 90 of the enemy and wounded nine others. □1775□

Battlefield Valor in Khabargho, Afghanistan

*Elizabeth J. Bubb and Dr. Nathan S. Lowrey
Intern and History Writer*

The 22d Marine Expeditionary Unit deployed to southern Afghanistan early in 2004. Its mission was to spearhead Central Command’s annual spring offensive by securing the rugged mountain region north of Kandahar. This sparsely populated area had received little attention from Coalition forces during the ongoing conflict and become a sanctuary for renegade al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters. The responsibility for defeating these enemies fell squarely upon the shoulders of Lieutenant Colonel Asad A. Khan and Battalion Landing Team 1/6, the expeditionary unit’s ground combat element. While the battalion carried out numerous operations during its four-month stint in Afghanistan, Operation Asbury Park was the most successful. During a two and one-half week-long search and attack patrol, sailors and Marines engaged al-Qaeda and the Taliban on eight separate occasions, killing or capturing approximately 90 enemy fighters. In one firefight, occurring in the village of Khabargho on 3 June, Sergeant Anthony L. Viggiani earned the Navy Cross by enveloping and eliminating an enemy fighting position that had pinned down one of his two fire teams.

Task Force Genghis, numbering more than 500 personnel, departed on 1 June. The patrol’s primary objective

was to travel 140-kilometers to the northeast, between Forward Operating Base Payne and Dey Chopan, searching six villages suspected of harboring enemy forces. In addition to a signals intelligence detachment, combined antiarmor platoon, and rifle company, a platoon of Afghan National Army soldiers and a contingent of local Afghan militiamen also accompanied the Marines. Overhead, aircraft from Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 266, the expeditionary unit’s air combat element, provided close air support.

After entering Khabargho on the third day of the patrol, Task Force Genghis cordoned off the village by blocking visible routes of escape and then began searching the residential area. Captain Paul C. Merida and Company C, with 2d and 3d Platoons leading, worked through the village from east to west. The Marines eventually reached the edge of an escarpment overlooking a broad valley and adjacent mountain. As the now-dispersed Marines viewed the scene, they spotted a group of 10 to 15 individuals running into the valley, approximately 1,500 meters to the north. At first, the Marines were unable to determine if the runners represented friendly Afghan militia or armed locals. Once the battalion’s air



Photo by GySgt Keith A. Milks

Marines, assigned to Battalion Landing Team, 1/6, searched the village of Khabargho, Afghanistan, for arms caches and Taliban insurgents during Operation Asbury Park.

officer sent out a section of Apache helicopters to investigate, however, the Marines determined that the group was armed and attempting to hide among the rocks.

After reporting the sighting to battalion headquarters, Captain Merida ordered 2d Platoon, which had been situated on the company's left flank and was closest to the enemy, to pursue. The three rifle squads ran forward; Sergeant Anthony L. Viggiani leading 1st Squad, Sergeant Ryan P. West leading 2d Squad, and Sergeant Brian R. Endicott leading 3d Squad. Before long, irregular terrain made communication between the small units and coordination of their movements difficult. Sergeant Viggiani recalled that "the radio transmissions were pretty jacked up . . . we had no idea where our second squad was, because of the mountains." First and 3d Squads continued north for approximately 2,000 meters, near where they had first spotted the fleeing enemy fighters, while the sound of machine gun fire emanated from 2d Squad's position.

By this time, 1st Squad had reached a draw on the western side of the valley, and Sergeant Viggiani slowed his Marines to proceed through the narrow passage in column. First Sergeant Earnest K. Hoopii intervened, however, directing him to split the squad into two fire teams; Corporal Mack, on the right, led 1st Team, and

Corporal Ciancivly Georges, on the left, led 2d Team. Sergeant Viggiani and First Sergeant Hoopii positioned themselves near the center of the squad. On the far side of a small mountain separating the two squads, Sergeant Endicott and 3d Squad moved down the eastern side of the valley. First Sergeant Hoopii recalled that "the terrain started to get more difficult as we went along. We were spread thin. There were a lot of huge rocks to hide in, under, around, behind of, on top of; it was just difficult." Meanwhile, one of the battalion's combined antiarmor teams had positioned itself on high ground to the rear and fired a guided missile over the rifle squad toward the enemy's positions.

As the two squads pushed forward, they received unexpected orders to halt. They were told to wait for the remainder of Company C to link up with them and for one of the Harriers to bomb the enemy positions—unfortunately, the 2,000-pound bomb failed to detonate. Anxious that the delay would enable the enemy to escape, First Sergeant Hoopii informed Captain Merida that he was continuing forward; the company commander radioed back that signals intelligence suggested the enemy was leaving a delaying force behind to impede the Marines' progress.

As First Sergeant Hoopii conveyed the warning to 1st

Squad, Corporal Georges' team spotted several armed fighters, engaged them in a short firefight, and wounded one of them. Following the exchange, Sergeant Viggiani first moved his squad forward and then directed Corporal Mack to position 1st Team on top of the mountain, where it could provide Corporal Georges' team with covering fire. Once 1st Team was situated, Viggiani climbed the steep embankment himself to check on 1st Team's positions. Two minutes later, Hoopii urgently radioed Viggiani from the draw: "Get down here now! We got a problem! Bring a frag!" It turned out that a concealed force of three enemy fighters had pinned down Corporal Georges' team with small arms fire, wounding two Marines in the process. Corporal Randy S. Wood was hit by a ricochet fragment below his left eye, while Lance Corporal James E. Gould received a bullet through his calf muscle. Although First Sergeant Hoopii attempted to entice the enemy to surrender, he received no response from the fighters.

Sergeant Viggiani, the only Marine on scene with fragmentation grenades, raced down the slope to First Sergeant Hoopii's location and asked, "Where they at?" Hoopii recalled, "I showed him where the gunfire was coming from and told him to use his grenade." After asking Hoopii to provide covering fire, Viggiani maneu-

vered among the rocks and around the enemy fighting position. He later described the action:

Move down. Grenade is already in my hand. Rifle is up. Trying to be quiet and trying to move so I can see if I can find a hole . . . There's a hole about maybe three feet in diameter, like if I didn't have any gear I could jump straight down into it. I saw like robes move. I fired a few shots in. He moved. I saw skin, like on his arm. I fired about three more shots. Prepped the grenade and took two steps and dove. It went off and **** flew everywhere.

The exploding grenade killed two of the enemy outright and wounded a third, who attempted to flee the scene. Corporal Georges quickly shot the escaping fighter, who attempted to crawl back to the cave before dying.

By this time, First Sergeant Hoopii and Corporal James R. McIlvaine, the platoon's forward observer, had moved to Sergeant Viggiani's position. As soon as the shooting stopped, Hoopii recalled that "we started to laugh, we high-fived each other." Their impromptu victory celebration was suddenly cut short, however, as another enemy fighter opened fire from a position on the western side

Barely visible among the rocks, Marines, assigned to the Battalion Landing Team, 1/6, deployed against entrenched Taliban fighters in a valley near the village of Khabargho, Afghanistan, during Operation Asbury Park.

Photo by GySgt Keith A. Milks





Photo by GySgt Keith A. Milks

An Apache helicopter flew close air support for a Marine as he searched for arms caches and insurgents near the village of Khabargho, Afghanistan.

of the draw. Viggiani explained: “We get pinned up against this rock . . . Me and him try to get as skinny as we can. We slam ourselves against these rocks. Rounds are skimming all over the place. I get fragmentation in my leg from a round skimming off a rock.” The two Marines returned fire and covered each other as they leapfrogged toward nearby rocks for shelter. Meanwhile, Corporal McIlvaine, situated higher on the eastern slope, had spotted and shot another enemy fighter further up the draw, who was taking aim with a rocket-propelled grenade. “He probably saved [our] life,” said Hoopii.

Further ahead, enemy fighters continued to resist the Afghan militia force, which had followed the fighters up the valley until the Apache helicopters flew in and neutralized them. “The Apaches saved [us] that day . . . they [were] awesome,” recalled Viggiani. Once the situation had calmed down, the Marines consolidated the wounded, collected the weapons, and assessed the situation. Captain Merida had arrived with the company headquarters element by this time, and he directed First

Sergeant Hoopii to evacuate the wounded and bring back more ammunition. Before long, however, they received word from battalion to halt their pursuit and return to the village. As the Marines withdrew, a second enemy fighter surrendered to the platoon, raising its total for the day to four enemy killed in action and three enemy captured, one of whom was wounded and died shortly thereafter.

Although the Marine infantry, Army aviation, and Afghan militia had succeeded in killing 14 enemy fighters during the battle, Sergeant Viggiani’s actions stood out from the rest. In recognition of “his outstanding display of decisive leadership, unlimited courage in the face of enemy fire, and utmost dedication to duty,” he received the nation’s second highest award for valor. Viggiani humbly remarked afterward that “it is a great honor to be awarded the Navy Cross, but I did what any other Marine would have done in that situation . . . everything is a team effort, it is no one individual’s actions that win battles.” □1775□

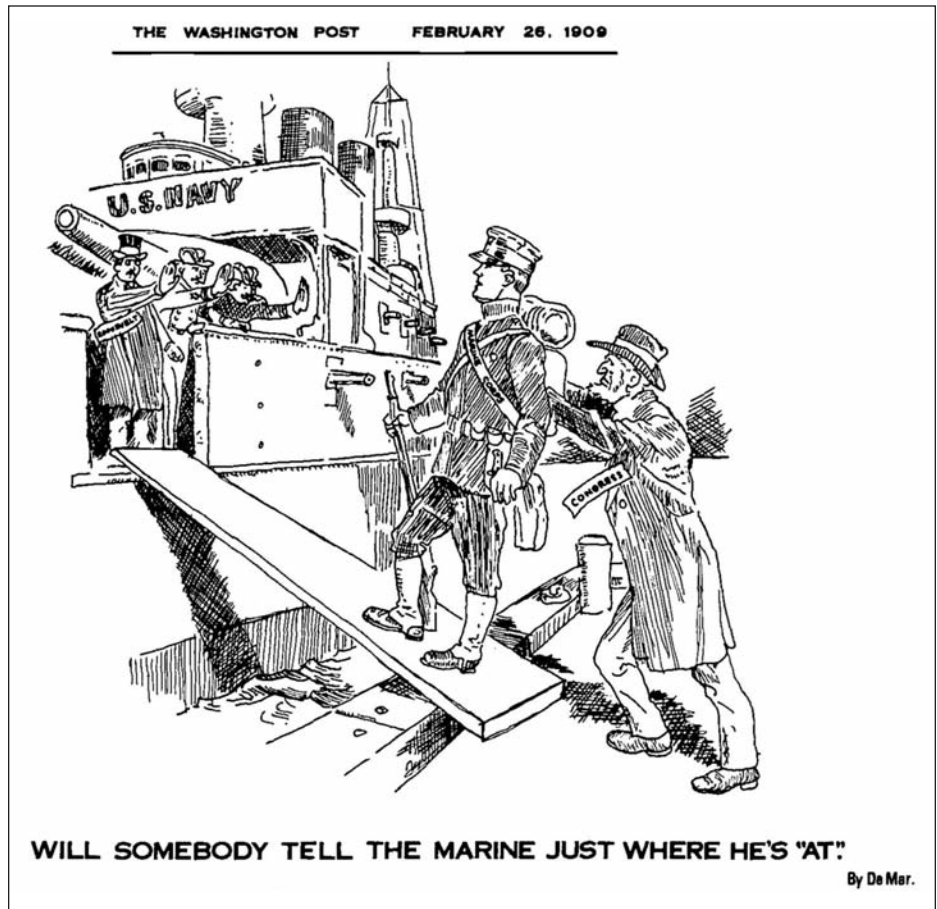
Roosevelt Removes the Marines

The U.S. Marine Corps has had its survival as an institution threatened often throughout its history. A little over one hundred years ago, the Corps survived one of its greatest threats, as it struggled to find a mission in the new, steam-powered Navy, which saw no need for Marines preventing mutinies or sharpshooting from tall masts. The threat came from President Theodore Roosevelt, perhaps the most progressive, energetic, and reform-minded man to hold office in the twentieth century. Roosevelt was a great supporter of the Navy, but he was committed to the modernization of the Navy. Navy reformers, who saw the Marine Corps as an anachronism, found in Roosevelt a sympathetic audience.

As the following excerpt describes, Roosevelt's attack on the Marine Corps strengthened the Corps in the end and helped transform the Marine Corps from an eighteenth century organization into the modern expeditionary and amphibious armed service it is today.

This excerpt is from Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth J. Clifford, *Progress and Purpose: A Developmental History of the United States Marine Corps 1900-1970*. For an electronic version of the book, see <<http://www.tecom.usmc.mil/hd/general/publications.htm>> under 1973.

The Marines did get some notoriety of sorts when the former Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Theodore Roosevelt, in his last year as President in 1908 caused the removal of Marines from naval vessels. Efforts to remove Marines from ships had been made by a group of naval officers from 1890-94, led by the Marine Corps antagonist, Captain William F. Fullam, USN. These early efforts were rejected by the Secretary of the Navy but were again brought up in 1908. This time the pleas fell on the sympathetic ears of the President who issued an Executive Order which defined the



duties of the U.S. Marine Corps and specifically left out duty on board naval vessels. Not only were the Marines withdrawn from ships, but, to rub it in, the Washington Post, in a feature article, declared that the Army was to get the Marines by transfer to the Army infantry. The newspaper stated:

Mr. Roosevelt had not only reached this conclusion, but has taken preliminary steps toward the practical development of the plan. He already has conferred with officers of the general staff, and also with General Leonard Wood, who is known to be close to him in military matters. General Wood and the members of the general staff are formulating a scheme outlining the Presidential ideas.

The Navy Department countered this rumor by submitting a detailed

statement to the House Naval Affairs Committee. It was made clear that "It is of the utmost importance that the Marine Corps remain absolutely under the control of the Navy Department and all war plans thus far laid down provide for the close cooperation of the Marine Corps with the Navy, afloat and ashore." The President of the General Board, Admiral Dewey, in a letter to the House Naval Affairs Committee, reiterated the importance of Marines within the Department of the Navy because of the need for an expeditionary force to assist the fleet in seizing and holding advanced bases. His high regard for Marines stemmed back to his Manila Bay victory when he asserted: "If there had been 5,000 Marines under my command at Manila Bay, the city would have surrendered to me on May 1, 1898, and could have been properly garrisoned. The Filipinos would have received us with open arms, and there

would have been no insurrection.”

It is interesting to note that this friend of the Marine Corps, Admiral Dewey, was in favor of the President’s Executive Order 969, but for different reasons; none were sinister. He said that “while the Marines will no longer form parts of the crews of the ships, the Navy is to have the services of this fine corps for the important and necessary duties laid down in that order.” Outwardly, it would appear that it was a family fight between the Navy and the Marine Corps. But of course it was not. It became quite political because it involved the actions of the President of the United States and his use of the Executive Order. The ramifications of the use of this order not only affected the Navy and Marine Corps but touched on prerogatives of Congress.

The right to issue such an order without special provision of law was assumed on the ground that the President as Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy could dispose of

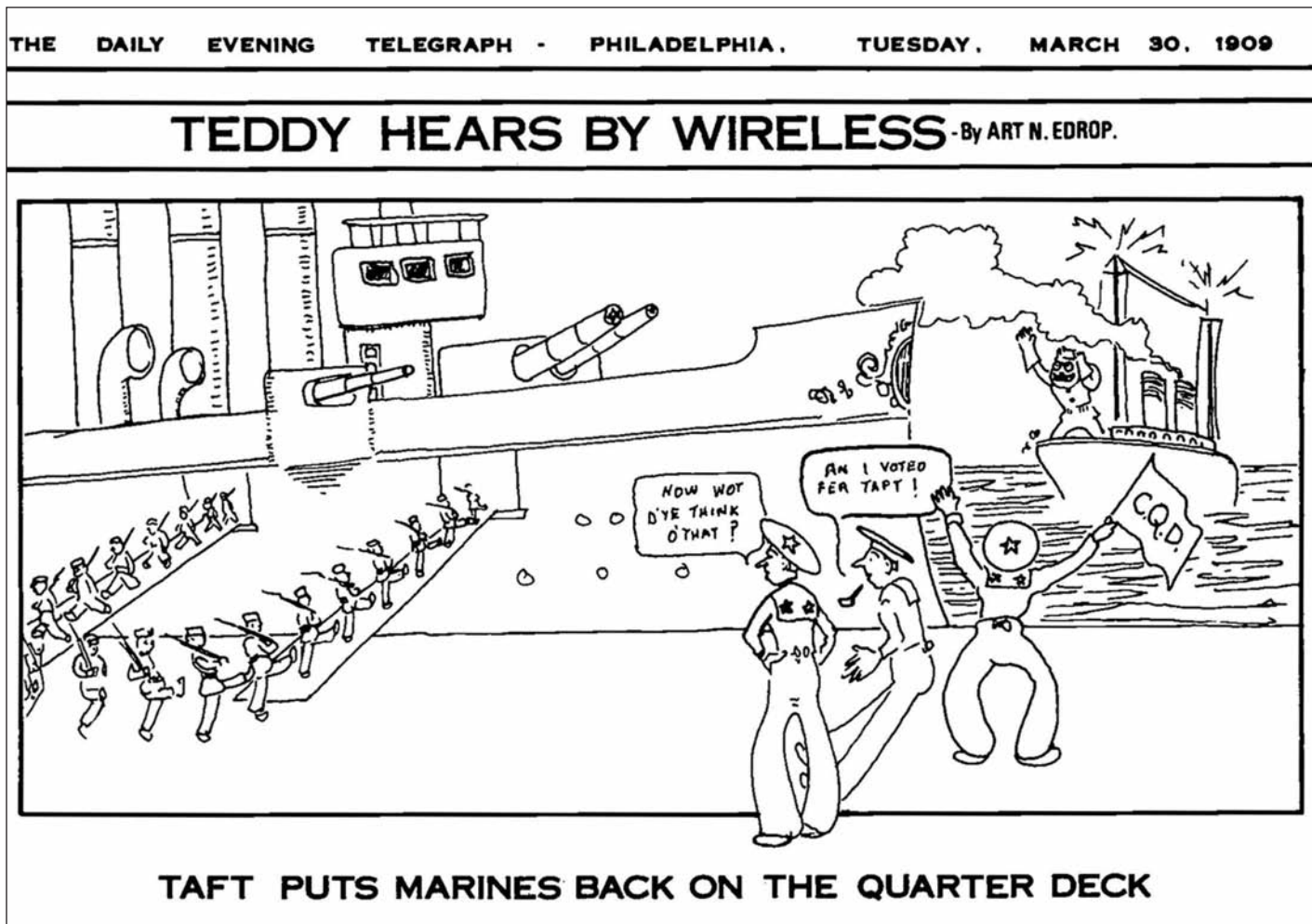
the naval forces according to his judgment. In a vote two months later, the Senate would dispel this view.

The controversy thus became a matter of principle involving Presidential powers vis-a-vis Congressional prerogatives. Some strong Congressional leaders upheld the President on the basis of separation of powers. Among the Senate luminaries supporting the President were William E. Borah, Robert M. LaFollette, and Henry Cabot Lodge.

The newspapers had to reorient the people who followed the controversy from November 1908 to March 1909. They had to identify exactly what Marines were and what they did. The public was learning, in popular newspaper fashion, that the Marines had been involved in the “Naval War” with Spain, that Marines served on most naval vessels, including the *Maine*, and thus participated in all the naval battles of the war. They learned that Marines were with Dewey at

Manila Bay and Sampson at Santiago. They learned that in addition to Teddy Roosevelt’s “Rough Riders,” there were Marines in Cuba who fought the Spaniards to capture Guantanamo Bay. They further learned that in addition to the U.S. Army in the Philippines and its occupation force, the Marines had, at the end of 1901, over 2,000 men in the Philippines. They became aware that Marines fought alongside of the Army against the insurrectionists. The public was reminded of Marines like Major Littleton W. T. Waller and places like Samar.

The intricate matter of restoring Marines to naval vessels was resolved in March 1909. Senator Eugene C. Hale, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs, tacked on to the Naval Appropriations Bill a proviso that eight percent of the enlisted men on board battleships be Marines. Notwithstanding the spirited defense of the President’s action, the Senate, by a vote of 51 to 12, adopted



the amendment restoring the Marine Corps to the ships of the Navy. Those voting in the negative were all Republicans and members of the President's party, the majority party. In the waning hours of his administration, in fact the day before he left office, President Roosevelt struck his colors, but only halfway. On 3 March 1909, he issued orders restoring the Marines to ships, but placing them under the orders of the captains of the vessels on which they were to serve.¹ The technicality was that under the old order of things Marines had had specific duties. One of these was to maintain certain guns of the secondary battery. Now the President's order placing them under the direction of the ship's captain made it possible to assign the Marines any sort of duty on board ship and conceivably remove them from all guns.

The General Board of the Navy could envision difficulties arising out of this portion of the order and con-

sequently recommended to the new Secretary of the Navy, George L. von Meyer, and the new President, William Howard Taft, that it be changed. So it was that on 26 March 1909, three weeks after Mr. Roosevelt had left office and sailed to Africa for a lion hunt, President Taft issued a memorandum from the White House:

Upon the recommendation of the General Board it was decided at the Cabinet meeting today that the amendments to the regulations adopted on 3 March in regard to the Marines should be revoked and the old regulations should be restored.

The Marine Corps and friends of the Marine Corps on the Naval Appropriations Committee had won out. Benjamin Standish Baker, a popular correspondent for the Boston Transcript, had written:

. . . it is common to hear officers both of the Army and of the

line of the Navy admit that when it comes to being in constant and effective touch with members of Congress, and thus securing desired legislation and favors, the Marine Corps is easily leader.

The point is that the controversy in 1908 was a blessing in disguise for the Marine Corps if not Theodore Roosevelt. If the action of the President diminished for the time being the duties of the Marine Corps by taking Marines off naval vessels, the resulting publicity reminded the American public, including the Congress, that there was such an organization called the Marine Corps which definitely shared the tasks of defense of the United States with the Army and Navy. □1775□

*Inauguration day for the incoming President of the United States was 4 March (in 1909), and it was not until the 20th Amendment was ratified in 1953 that it was changed to 20 January.

Wake Island Defense

*by Charles D. Melson
Chief Historian*

The 8 to 22 December 1941 defense of Wake Island provides an interesting example of Navy and Marine Corps cooperation before the advent of "jointness." Recognized for its strategic location, the U.S. Navy began to develop facilities including an airfield in January 1941. This work was undertaken by some 1,200 civilian contractors supervised by Mr. Daniel Teters. At the time, it was also an airport for the Pan American Airlines clippers. In August, the U.S. Marines of the 1st Defense Battalion under Major Lewis A. Hohn arrived to provide for surface and air defense with what would eventually total 450 men. As the clouds of war gathered, Commander Winfield S. Cunningham along with 67 officers and sailors arrived in November. Also present were five U.S. Army Air Corps communicators assisting bombers with radio communications. Final reinforcements arrived by carrier with Marine Fighting Squadron 211 led by Major Paul A. Putnam. This disparate group fought a sustained air

and surface battle for two weeks against Japanese air and naval forces. The gallant defense against impossible odds was with the cooperation of all involved from civilian contractors preparing defenses, the Pan Am clipper flying search patrols, and the

Marines providing air and surface fighting power. Though ending in defeat, it provided a model for success at Midway, Johnston, Palmyra, and American Samoa and highlighted the value of interservice, civil and military teamwork. □1775□



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Vietnam: Lost Victory?

by Lt David A. Melson
JAGC, USN

Prados, John. *Vietnam: The History of an Unwinnable War, 1945–1975*. Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2009.

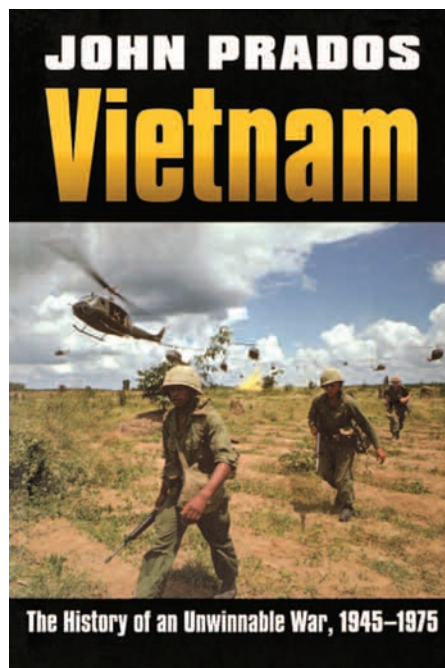
Attempting to explain the Vietnam War in totality is perhaps one of the most daunting challenges facing contemporary historians. John Prados' *Vietnam: The History of an Unwinnable War, 1945–1975* is the most recent entrant in this contentious field. It contains thorough research into the United States' political and military bureaucracies of the period. However, its primary conclusion that "people, legislatures, and media" should have directed U.S. involvement in Vietnam is weakened by questionable analogies to the 2003 invasion of Iraq and a lack of rigorous analysis. Marine Corps or U.S. Navy officers who read Prados' book will find many questions unanswered about both Vietnam and Iraq.

Intended to rebut claims that the United States could have "won" the Vietnam War under different leadership, Prados' book examines the strategic decisionmaking leading to and during the conflict. Prados' primary thesis is that the foreign policy decisions of Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon successively narrowed the options available to American decisionmakers, resulting in an inevitable "quagmire." He contends that this result might have been avoided had the various administrations engaged in a "general political debate." Various presidential-level decisions to intervene in Vietnam are compared with a growing "political consciousness" that Prados identifies as the origin of the antiwar movement.

The extensive examination of the antiwar movement derives, in part, from the book's origin as a history of that movement. Prados' appears to hold out the antiwar movement as the "general political debate" that he implies might have avoided further involvement in Vietnam. However, the effectiveness of

his implication is undermined by failing to explore, for example, the U.S. Constitution's apportionment of political power and other legal regimes structuring the United States national security apparatus.

The intense focus on American policy, persuasive or not, is not balanced with detailed examination of other aspects of the war. While the book reflects thorough research into the workings of the United States' government during several presidential administrations, it falls short of the "unified field" analysis described in the introduc-



tion. In particular the Vietnamese side of the war is inadequately described.

While Prados includes personal narratives from members of the antiwar movement and even the curious inclusion of his own recollections of the Vietnam era as a student, there is no discernable Vietnamese voice. Vietnamese social, religious, or ethnic aspects of the conflict remain unaddressed. Indeed, one might conclude that the Vietnam War was an American policy concern and not a civil war influenced by local nationalism and politics.

Most of the sources for the

Vietnamese perspective are histories written by Vietnamese leaders from both sides of the conflict over the last thirty years. Fewer recent sources are cited and, unlike American official sources, Vietnamese sources are usually accepted as genuine. The disparate treatment of sources results in an unbalanced narrative that over emphasizes the Vietnam War as an American political phenomena and not a civil war with international dimensions.

The choice of sources is a less critical shortcoming of Prados' book than the repeated comparisons of the Vietnam War to the 2003 invasion of Iraq and the subsequent conflict there. Many of the comparisons are conclusory, relying on speculative analogies or similarities in language used by policy makers. The use of the term "surge" is, for example, cited as a sign that leaders in both conflicts relied on similar decisionmaking processes to arrive at equivalent conclusions.

The Iraq War comparisons seem increasingly inapt as U.S. forces withdraw from Iraq. If nothing else, analogizing Iraq and Vietnam illustrates the danger of analyzing the "lessons of Vietnam" without adequately defining them or how they have continuing relevance to conflicts in entirely different geopolitical contexts. The research that supports Prados' conclusions about Vietnam does not support his claims about the current conflict in Iraq that has yet to conclude.

John Prados' *Vietnam: The History of an Unwinnable War, 1945–1975* while a product of admirably thorough research into U.S. policy, is not the definitive history of the Vietnam War. Anyone charged with directing future conflicts will not find an explanation of the "lessons of Vietnam," whatever they may be. However, it is worthwhile reading for those seeking a provocative account of the shortcomings of national decision-making processes or for those interested in the continuing debate over what meaning Americans wish to ascribe to the Vietnam War. □1775□

Major General Fred E. Haynes Colonel John P. Murtha Jr. Lieutenant Colonel John J. Guenther

by Annette D. Amerman
Reference Historian

Retired Major General Fred E. Haynes, 89, died 25 March 2010 in New York City. Born 5 January 1921, in Dallas, Texas, and educated at Southern Methodist University, General Haynes was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps Reserve in June 1942.

As a captain, Haynes was a veteran of the battle of Iwo Jima and, later in life, a founder of the Iwo Jima Association of America. After serving as an Associate Professor of Naval Science at the University of Texas, Haynes served in Korea in 1954 as the Executive Officer, 2d Battalion, 1st Marines. Before earning his Masters degree in International Affairs at George Washington University in 1963, Haynes attended the Air War College at Maxwell Air Force Base and served on the staff of the Secretary of Defense.

From 1966–67, he served as both Commanding Officer, 5th Marines, and as Chief of Staff, Task Force X-Ray, 1st Marine Division in Vietnam. As a general officer he served as legislative assistant to the Commandant of the Marine Corps and subsequently commanded the 2d Marine Division. In January 1973, Haynes was assigned as Senior Member, Military Armistice Commission, United Nations Command in Korea, before taking command of the 3d Marine Division. He retired from the Marine Corps with more than 40 years of service in 1977.

Based upon his extensive experience handling prisoners of war, General Haynes also advised presidential candidates and sitting presidents on the treatment of enemy combatants. He strongly advocated humane treatment of all prisoners, not only because he believed “it was the moral thing to do,” but also because humane treatment often provided valuable intelligence at a time when the lives of ser-

vicemen and women depended on it. General Haynes, along with co-author James A. Warren, wrote the World War II novel *The Lions of Iwo Jima*. It is a firsthand account of the 4,500 Marines from Combat Team 28, 5th Marine Division, during the battle for Iwo Jima in 1945. Just prior to his passing, General Haynes participated in the 65th anniversary of Iwo Jima Reunion and Symposium at the National Museum of the Marine Corps at Quantico, Virginia.

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

Colonel John P. Murtha Jr., the first Vietnam combat veteran elected to Congress, passed away 8 February 2010 at the age of 77. Born in New Martinsville, West Virginia, on 17 June 1932, Murtha was raised in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania.

After leaving Washington and Jefferson College in 1952, Murtha enlisted in the Marine Corps where he



Col Murtha receiving the Bronze Star.

earned the American Spirit Honor Medal. Rising through the ranks to become a drill instructor at Parris Island, he was selected for Officer Candidate School. While in command of the 34th Special Infantry Company, USMCR, in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, he completed his undergraduate education at the University of Pittsburgh in 1962.

With the war in Vietnam escalating, Murtha volunteered for active duty and service overseas. He was assigned as the S-2 Intelligence Officer in 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, during 1966–67. Wounded twice in a span of a month and one-half, Major Murtha was later awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Combat V for service during the period of 18 August 1966 to 1 July 1967. His citation reads in part that Murtha “displayed exceptional professional skill and resourcefulness in planning, organizing, and executing an extensive intelligence collection and reporting system within the regiment. Disregarding the dangers of hostile mines and sniper fire, he traveled

extensively throughout the” area to obtain valuable information and interview key persons.

Murtha continued to serve the Corps as a reserve officer—even after being elected a Congressman from Pennsylvania’s 12th District in 1974—until his retirement as a Colonel in 1990. Upon his retirement from the Corps, Murtha was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal for personally effecting “substantial, beneficial, and lasting changes to the Marine Corps Reserve.” Murtha continued serving in Congress until his death.

Commandant of the Marine Corps, General James T. Conway recalled first meeting the Congressman in 2006, when he told the general that “you can’t have everything, but tell me the two or three things you need and I’ll get it.” Conway said he figured having a fellow Marine in such a powerful position was a good thing—not knowing at the time that the Congressman often said something similar to other service chiefs. Throughout his service in Congress for 35 years, Murtha supported the military through positions on several defense related committees and as a member of Congressional delegations to Vietnam and the Soviet Union.

For his Marine Corps service, Murtha is entitled to the following military awards and decorations: Defense Service Medal, Bronze Star with Combat V, Purple Heart with one gold

star, Combat Action Ribbon, Presidential Unit Citation, Selected Marine Corps Reserve Medal, National Defense Service Medal with one bronze star, Vietnam Service Medal with two bronze stars, Armed Forces Reserve Medal with bronze hourglass, Republic of Vietnam Meritorious Unit Commendation (Gallantry Cross with palm and frame), Republic of Vietnam Meritorious Unit Commendation (Civil Action with palm and frame) and Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal.

Lieutenant Colonel John J. Guenther passed away on 29 October 2009 at his home in Arlington, Virginia. Colonel Guenther was 79. The Hazelton, Pennsylvania, native enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1948 and was a combat veteran of the Korean War, including the September 1950 landing at Inchon and the bitter fighting during November–December at the Chosin Reservoir. Colonel Guenther’s aptitude for the intelligence field was apparent early in his career, and he subsequently served at Guantanamo Bay during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, two tours of duty in Vietnam, and in East Germany during the 1970s. After retiring from active duty in 1979, Colonel Guenther became a senior intelligence officer in a civilian capacity for the Marine Corps. He rose to the position of Assistant Director of Marine Corps Intelligence before retiring in 1994. His many military awards included the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star with

Combat V, and two Joint Service Commendation Medals. Among his many civilian awards were the President Rank Award for Meritorious Senior Executives, the National Intelligence Distinguished Service Medal, and the Department of the Navy’s Superior Civilian Service Award. On 19 July 1996, the Marine Corps wing of the Navy and Marine Corps Intelligence Center at Dam Neck, Virginia, was dedicated as “Guenther Hall” in recognition of Colonel Guenther’s lifelong contributions to the Marine Corps intelligence field. His many professional associations included membership in the Association of Former Intelligence Officers, the Naval Intelligence Professionals, the Marine Corps Cryptologic Association, and the Marine Corps Intelligence Association. At the time of his passing, Colonel Guenther was working on a projected history of Marine Corps intelligence. His enthusiasm for this project was evident during research visits to the Marine Corps History Division where he took great enjoyment in sharing his knowledge of the historical evolution of Marine Corps intelligence. Despite obvious failing health, this proud and courteous warrior always managed a warm and engaging smile, and ever ready wit. He will be deeply missed by all of us who had the good fortune to have known this fine gentleman and Marine. □1775□

First to Write

U.S. Marines in Lebanon

Following World War II, the U.S. Marine Corps often found itself called to perform dangerous yet important missions that fell short of open warfare. Noncombatant evacuations were the most common, but Marines were often called to perform peacekeeping duties as well.

In August 1982, President Ronald W. Reagan ordered the 32d Marine Amphibious Unit to land in Beirut, Lebanon. Various Marine amphibious units would remain in Beirut until February 1984 in an attempt to bring peace and stability to the war-torn Mediterranean nation. On 23

October 1983, the 24th Marine Amphibious Unit was deployed at Beirut’s airport when a suicide bomber drove a truck full of explosives into the headquarters building of 1st Battalion, 8th Marines.

This excerpt is from Benis M. Frank, *U.S. Marines in Lebanon, 1982–1984*. For a PDF version of the book, see <<http://www.tecom.usmc.mil/hd/general/publications.htm>> under 1987.

The Bombing

Dawn broke over Beirut at 0524 local time on Sunday, 23 October 1983. The temperature was already a com-

fortable 77 degrees F, but perhaps a bit warm for 24th Marine Amphibious Unit (MAU) sentries posted around the perimeter of the MAU headquarters compound at Beirut International Airport. They were in full combat gear—helmets, upper body armor—and carried individual weapons. Since it was Sunday, the compound was relatively quiet for a modified holiday routine was in effect. Reveille would not go until 0630, and brunch would be served between 0800 and 1000. In the afternoon, there would be time to write letters, read, and perhaps toss a football about. In the afternoon there

might be a barbecue—hamburgers, hot dogs, and all the trimmings.

Relatively little traffic was observed in the early morning hours on the airport road which runs between Beirut and the airport terminal. This road is just west of and runs parallel to the MAU compound. The Marines had been warned to be alert for suspicious looking vehicles which might, in fact, be terrorist car bombs. And so Lance Corporal Eddie A. DiFranco, manning Post 6 (See Figure 1), one of the two posts in front of and south of the building housing the headquarters compound and attached elements of BLT 1/8 (Battalion Landing Team 1/8, built around the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines), closely watched a yellow Mercedes Benz stake-bed truck, which entered the parking lot south of his post. The truck circled the lot once, then departed, turning south at the gate and heading towards the terminal.

A little less than an hour later—it went down in the reports as 0622—DiFranco saw what appeared to be the same truck enter the same parking lot. This time, the vehicle accelerated to the west, circled the lot once, then headed toward the wire barricade separating the parking lot from the BLT building. Turning right, it ran over the wire barricade and sped between Posts 6 and 7 into the lobby of the building, where it detonated with the explosive force of more than 12,000 pounds of TNT.

Manning Post 7 was Lance Corporal Henry P. Linkkila, who heard the truck as it sped across the concertina fence. He inserted a magazine into his M-16 rifle. He chambered a round and shouldered his weapon, but could not fire. The truck had already entered the building.

Lance Corporal John W. Berthiaume was guarding Post 5, at the fence just below the southwest corner

of the BLT headquarters. He correctly guessed the truck's mission, but could not react in time either to fire at the truck or to take cover in his guard bunker. He was knocked to the ground by the explosion.

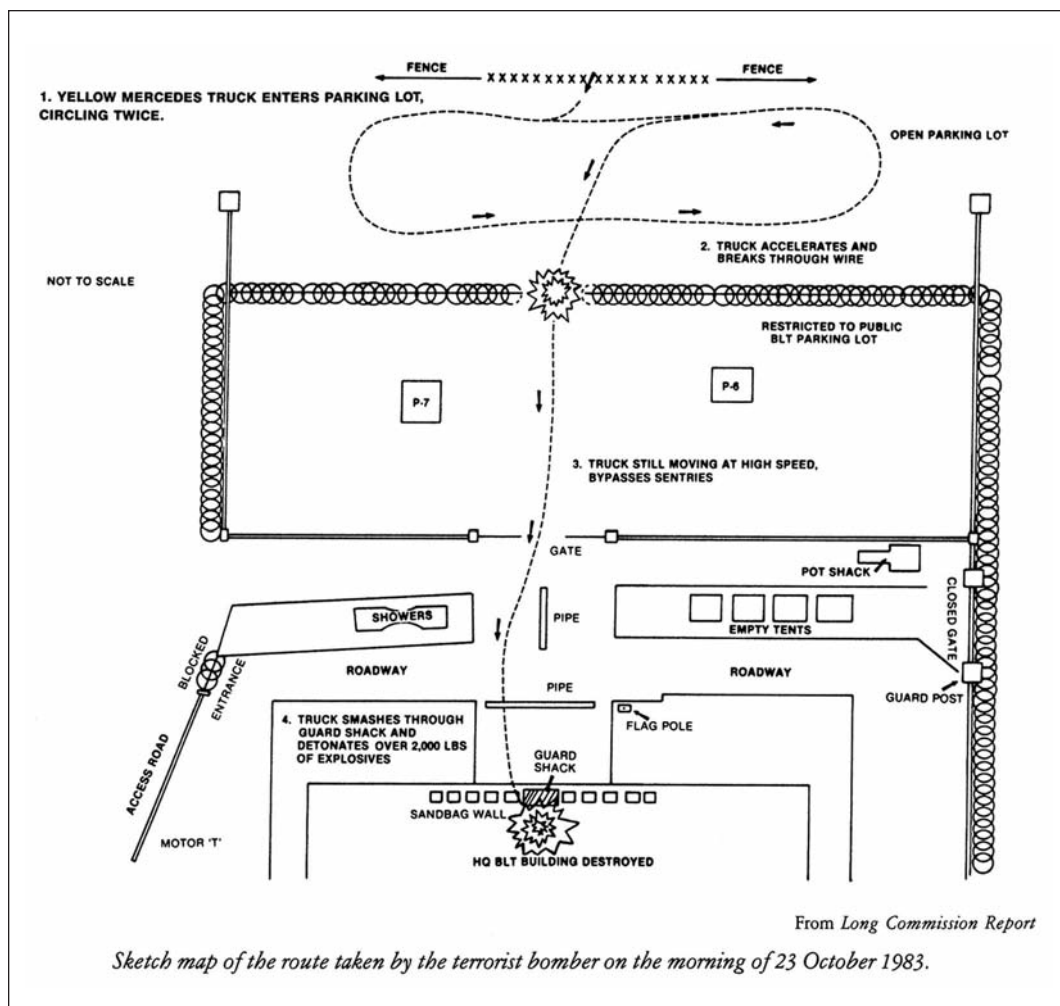
Sergeant of the Guard Stephen E. Russell was at the main entrance of the building at his post, a small sand-bagged structure that looked toward the back entrance to the building, when he heard the truck as the driver revved up its engine for the dash into the lobby. Russell turned to see the vehicle pass through the permanent fence encircling the compound, and head straight for his post. He wondered what the truck was doing inside the compound. Almost as quickly, he recognized that it was a threat. He ran from his guard shack across the lobby toward the rear entrance yelling, "Hit the deck! Hit the deck!" Glancing over his shoulder as he ran, he saw the truck smash through his guard shack. A second or two later the truck exploded, blowing him into the air

and out of the building. Severely injured, Russell regained consciousness and found himself in the road outside the BLT headquarters with debris from the explosion all around him.

It had finally happened. An explosive-laden truck had been driven into the lobby of a building billeting more than 300 men, and detonated. The explosion had collapsed the BLT building, reducing it to rubble in seconds.

When the last body had been retrieved from the ruins and the final death count had been tallied, it reached a total of 241 Americans. Of this number, 220 were Marines; the remainder, Navy medical personnel and soldiers assigned to the MAU. For the Marines, this was the highest loss of life in a single day since D Day on Iwo Jima in 1945.

The suicide attack by a single terrorist changed the course of American presence in Lebanon. □1775□



Peacekeeper Marines in 1983 Beirut Bombing

by LtCol Gregory C. McCarthy

Geraghty, Col Timothy J. *Peacekeepers at War: Beirut 1983—The Marine Commander Tells His Story*. Washington DC: Potomac Books Inc. 2009.

This book takes up one of the saddest and most difficult chapters in modern Marine Corps history, the Beirut deployment that yielded the 23 October 1983 bombing that killed 220 Marines and 21 other U.S. servicemen. It is a story that has not improved with time and one that the author struggles to address completely decades later. The foreword is written by General Alfred M. Gray, 2d Marine Division Commanding General, at the time of the bombing and future Commandant.

Colonel Geraghty was the commanding officer of the 24th Marine Amphibious Unit, which arrived in May 1983 and found a quickly deteriorating security situation. Marines were initially deployed as a multinational peacekeeping force (along with British, French, and Italian troops) after the June 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon to pursue the PLO. Shaky negotiations among Lebanon's warring factions (Sunni and Shiite Muslim, Maronite Christian), along with occupying neighboring states—Israel and Syria—proved an unstable mix that would make the peacekeepers' mission impossible. In what would be a haunting harbinger of future wars, the Marines were initially greeted as liberators, then targeted as occupiers, and viewed as taking sides in a civil war that was only about halfway through its 15-year course (1975–90).

Geraghty states on multiple occasions in the book that the uncoordinated Israeli withdrawal in September 1983 left a security vacuum on the adjacent high ground that was quickly filled by forces opposed to the Marine presence. He discusses escalating artillery exchanges and cites his successive weekly situation reports warning of a worsening security situation.

While this untenable situation would have challenged any commander,

the security situation still appears to have been severely mishandled. In retrospect, the April 1983 U.S. Embassy suicide bombing that killed more than 60 people should have been a warning that this horrific tactic was a "clear and present danger." Geraghty notes that Beirut was already known as the car bomb capital of the world.

Yet, the author defends his move to the airport barracks. While he says he was uncomfortable with the location, it was required to avoid shelling. He asserts that the security of Beirut International Airport was not his job, that he did not have the ability to control civilian traffic, and that the truck bomb was of such magnitude it did not matter precisely where it detonated. He even seems to defend the sentry's weapons not having magazines loaded. Colonel Geraghty had a stellar career but was caught flat-footed on that October morning.

The overriding issue relative to the barracks bombing is the commander's responsibility for security. Colonel Geraghty points out that he was not relieved for cause but remains bitter a quarter century later for criticism he received. He and the severely wounded battalion commander received career-ending nonpunitive letters of caution from Navy Secretary John F. Lehman Jr. However, it is worth contrasting this response to the swift sacking of several leaders in the negligent desert abandonment death of one Marine at Twentynine Palms three years later.

On the national command authority level, the author highlights the baffling breakdown between President Ronald W. Reagan and the late Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger over whether the U.S. would retaliate. Some senior Reagan administration officials were convinced that the President ordered a response and that the Secretary of Defense refused to carry it out. Weinberger later claimed lack of certainty about the sponsors of the

attack (Iranian-backed Hezbollah whose leaders now dominate the Iranian government today) which the author rightly dismisses.

In his foreword, General Gray complains that he could not brief the Long Commission, the Pentagon's official investigative body, about the after-action-review, but then he states uncritically that Commandant General P. X. Kelley accepted the commission's findings in their entirety. The commission completed their work in a brisk 45 days, and the entire senior chain of command accepted its conclusions.

Gray argues that Commandant Kelley's Senate Armed Services Committee testimony was compelling and holds up to this day. But James R. Locher, a committee staffer, contends in his book, *Victory on the Potomac: The Goldwater-Nichols Act Unifies the Pentagon* (Texas A&M University Military History Series: 2002), that Kelley's testimony was disastrous, damaging his well-earned goodwill and killing whatever chances he had for becoming Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

There is an excruciating discussion about a handful of Marines trapped in the rubble but unable to be removed. The author's and General Gray's efforts in the aftermath of the bombing were plainly superb, and the fact that the survivors' families view Colonel Geraghty positively speaks highly of his character.

The book is a somewhat dissatisfying and painful walk. The author correctly places the Marine barracks bombing as the beginning of suicidal Islamic jihad attacks on the West, acts of war that were not substantially responded to by multiple U.S. presidents until after 9/11. The senseless mass slaughter of peacekeepers was both shocking and portentous. Like Colonel Geraghty, the entire country has been unwillingly thrust into war against suicidal Islamists that shows no signs of abating. □1775□

Marine Historians Conduct Research at the National Personnel Records Center

by *Annette D. Amerman and Kara R. Newcomer*
Reference Historians

On any given day, the historians of the History Division's Reference Branch refer numerous people to the National Archives and Records Administration's National Personnel Records Center (Records Center) in St. Louis, Missouri, in order to obtain copies of individual military service records. Unfortunately, requests to the Records Center sometimes go unanswered for six months or longer, or the requestor may receive a response that the service record was lost in a fire that swept through the center in 1973. Unbeknownst to the majority of those waiting for copies of service records is that there are thousands of dedicated Records Center employees behind the scenes who struggle each day to meet the increasing demand for records from all branches of the armed forces.

In order to obtain a better understanding of how the Records Center works and to gather some information on several Marine Corps Medal of Honor recipients, two Reference Branch historians visited the Records Center in early April to meet with the three active duty Marines, stationed in the Marine Corps' Liaison Office, and the Records Center staff. The week-long visit was "eye-opening," informative, and productive, prompting the two of us to share our experience.

The Records Center is the repository of millions of military personnel and medical records of discharged and deceased veterans of all services during the 20th century as well as maintaining records of millions of civilian employees of the Federal government. The Records Center offices and records storage areas are located primarily in a five-story building on Page Avenue. The facility opened in 1955 and covers nearly five acres. Two storage areas of the complex run 900 feet end-to-end and have floor-to-ceiling shelving full of records. Each shelf

contains standard one cubic foot archive boxes, two deep, of military service or health records. The method for finding a specific record varies depending on the branch of service, time period, and/or technology that was in use at the time of the Records Center's acquisition of the record. For example, the service records for the Marine Corps are filed under the individual's service number, making this a vital piece of information that every requestor should include when submitting a request.

Standing inside the stacks of the fifth floor, which primarily houses Navy and Marine Corps records, was overwhelming and gave us an appreciation for just how daunting it is to locate the exact service record a requestor is seeking. Currently, the Records Center is experiencing a backlog of more than 90,000 requests—while seemingly staggering, a minimum of 30,000 requests must be maintained to keep the entire facility functioning and

employees gainfully employed.

Signs of the 1973 fire are readily visible throughout the facility, whether it is the singed or burned records themselves or the visible signs of the structural reworking of the drains on the roof. Contrary to popular belief, no Navy or Marine Corps service records were lost in the fire which destroyed the sixth floor of the building. With 80 percent of the Army's and Army Air Corps' service records lost in the fire, often Marines are mistakenly told their records were lost as well. Although highly frustrating, individuals receiving this response when requesting Marine records should call the customer service phone number included in their reply letter to request that a second attempt be made to locate the desired record.

With the 55 year old building's life coming to an end, a new, more capable facility is being built north of St. Louis and is expected to be open in the summer of 2011. The new facility

Historians Kara Newcomer and Annette Amerman take a moment with the Chief Warrent Officer and Sergeant of the Marine Liaison Office, National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, Missouri.



will incorporate the lessons learned from the 1973 fire and the decades of protracted and complicated searching. Environmental controls will slow the deterioration process, and records will be reorganized to make searching easier. As records pass 62 years of age, the storage area they are held in will transition into an archive area where more preservation measures will be implemented. The new facility will also consolidate the military service and medical records with the civilian personnel records, which are currently housed at various satellite sites around the St. Louis area. The new facility will offer greater convenience for those researching military and civilian ser-

vice records by having all records under one roof.

With the tours complete, we were quick to begin the process of reviewing and digitizing several records of Marine Medal of Honor recipients. The Marines of the Marine Liaison Office were especially kind and accommodating to us during this portion of our site visit. The Chief Warrant Officer in charge ensured that we were provided with ample work space that could accommodate our computer and scanning equipment, escorts to and from the researcher room as required, and more than enough material to keep us busy.

Maj Roy S. Geiger signs the Oath of Office in 1912 for Walter E. McCaughtry, who was an early enlisted aviator.



Little-known or forgotten pictures can sometimes be located in the service records. Shown here is Maj George C. Reid, Medal of Honor recipient, in full dress uniform in 1912.

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Capt

ACCEPTANCE

Marine Barracks, Quantico, Va.

30 March, 1921, 1921

Captain

SIR: I hereby accept the appointment as a ~~Second Lieutenant~~ in the United States Marine Corps, dated ~~21 March, 1921~~, 1921; with rank from ~~4 June, 1920, 1921~~, transmitted by letter of the Major General Commandant dated ~~March 22, 1921~~, 1921

Very respectfully,

Walter E. McCaughtry
Captain, ~~Second Lieutenant~~, U. S. Marine Corps.

TO THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY.

OATH OF OFFICE

Captain

Having been appointed a ~~Second Lieutenant~~ in the United States Marine Corps I, Walter E. McCaughtry, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter: So help me God.

Walter E. McCaughtry

Marine Flying Field, } ss:
Marine Barracks, Quantico, Va.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 30th day of March, 1921.

Roy S. Geiger
Roy S. Geiger,
Major, U. S. Marine Corps,
Commanding Marine Flying Field.

THE ANNEXED BLANKS ARE TO BE FILLED BY ALL OFFICERS SUBSCRIBING TO THE ABOVE OATH.

PLACE OF BIRTH.		STATE OR TERRITORY OF WHICH A CITIZEN.	DATE OF BIRTH.
CITY, PARISH, OR COUNTY.	STATE.		
Du Bois,	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania.	6 Dec. 1884.

While working in the Liaison Office, we were privy to the amount of work and level of dedication that each of the three Marines provide to Corps' veterans and family members each day. It was obvious that these Marines took pride in providing the very best service possible. While not directly involved in the Marine Corps historical program, they are helping to preserve Corps' history every day through their knowledge and professionalism. The civilians of the Records Center were also most accommodating, particularly considering that space in the researcher room was at a premium and would fill up quickly. They were professional, knowledgeable, and provided top-notch service to us. It was a pleasure working with such professionals as these.

The records we concentrated on during this visit should be readily recognized by Marines and historians: George C. Reid, John A. Hughes, Daniel J. Daly, Randolph C. Berkeley, Albertus W. Catlin, Eli T. Fryer, Walter N. Hill, and Wendell C. Neville. Each record was unique and often contained little-known information and long-forgotten images of the Marines.

With the diminutive size of the Marine Corps during the tenure of many of these Marines, it became commonplace to see the original signatures of other high profile Marines, secretaries of the Navy, and even future Presidents on the paperwork found within the service record books that were examined. Among the signatures we found were those of John A. Lejeune, Littleton Waller T. Waller, Dion Williams, Smedley D. Butler, Josephus Daniels, and Franklin D. and Theodore Roosevelt. Decades before computers, e-mail, or even routine long-distance telephone calls, handwritten, typewritten, and telegraphed requests for transfer, reimbursement, or notifications fill the records of these venerated Marines. Even more surprising to both us was the strange and random information that was also maintained, such as the 1925 request by Colonel Randolph C. Berkeley that the flock of chickens being housed in his Marine Corps' Norfolk home be removed—the Commandant agreed.

The biggest surprise was undoubtedly the condition of the records. Considering the age of many of the records that were reviewed, one might imagine that the paper was beyond legibility; however the documents inside the folders often were in remarkable shape. Because correspondence and penmanship was held in high regard in the days before typewriters, high quality bond paper was often used for the documents. Though the ink on the documents is often very acidic and has been known to “eat” through the paper, thankfully, this was not the case for the records we reviewed.

The materials collected by the historians will become a permanent part of the specific Marine's biographical file held in the Reference Branch. This will allow future historians to

fill in the missing pieces of the famous members of the Corps and add another dimension to the history of the Marine Corps operations in Haiti, Santo Domingo, China, and elsewhere during the early 1900s.

For those interested in visiting the facility or obtaining copies of service records, we recommend starting the process by reviewing the information on the Records Center located on their website at www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records. Remember, for Marines, it is very important to

identify the Marine's service number prior to contacting the Records Center. This important detail can be located on the veteran's separation documents and even on their “dog tags.” If you have neither of these items, you may wish to contact the county clerk in the Marine's home county, a potential gold mine for information, as many Marines after World War II would register their separation documents with those offices. Local newspaper archives may also yield unexpected information. □1775□

Two signatures of two of the “Giants of the Corps” are seen on this letter notifying 1stSgt Dan Daly of his transfer. Commandant John A. Lejeune's large signature dwarfs that of Medal of Honor recipient, Eli T. Fryer (at bottom).

