AMPHIBIOUS EXERCISE 1861

From 1858 to 1860, in what was known as the "War of the Reform," two factions struggled for control of Mexico. One side, headed by Benito Juarez, was liberal, republican, anti-clerical, and friendly to the United States. The other faction, supported by the landed aristocracy and church hierarchy, was conservative, and sympathetic toward several European Powers. The war was bitterly fought, and often foreign nationals suffered the same hardships and losses as its participants. Therefore, to protect American citizens and their property, President James Buchanan ordered the Home Squadron stationed off Veracruz.

By late December 1860, the Conservatives were decisively defeated and the Liberals took possession of Mexico City. The five ships of the Home Squadron, however, remained in place despite the fact that only five persons claimed to be United States citizens.

With the election of Abraham Lincoln in November 1860,South Carolina seceded from the Union; Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, and Louisiana soon followed. During his last months in office one of the most pressing problems faced by President Buchanan was the retention of Federal forts and property located in the seceding states. Of the forts on the Gulf coast, Fort Pickens in Pensacola Bay was the most important. Since it was strategically located, a decision was made to hold the fort. Thus in late December, Secretary of the Navy Isaac Toucey ordered the sloop St. Louis of the Home Squadron to proceed to Pensacola Bay and await further orders.

As the sloop prepared for sea in early January 1861, Capt Garrett J. Pendergrast,commander of the squadron,requested permission to use temporarily the island of Sacrificios off Veracruz as an area of quarantine for seamen with small-pox. On the 4th, the Mexican authorities in Veracruz granted his request. Three days later, on his own initiative, Capt Pendergrast conducted a combined naval/Marine amphibious landing exercise.

The following letter from Samuel Mercer, captain of the Powhatan and commander of the

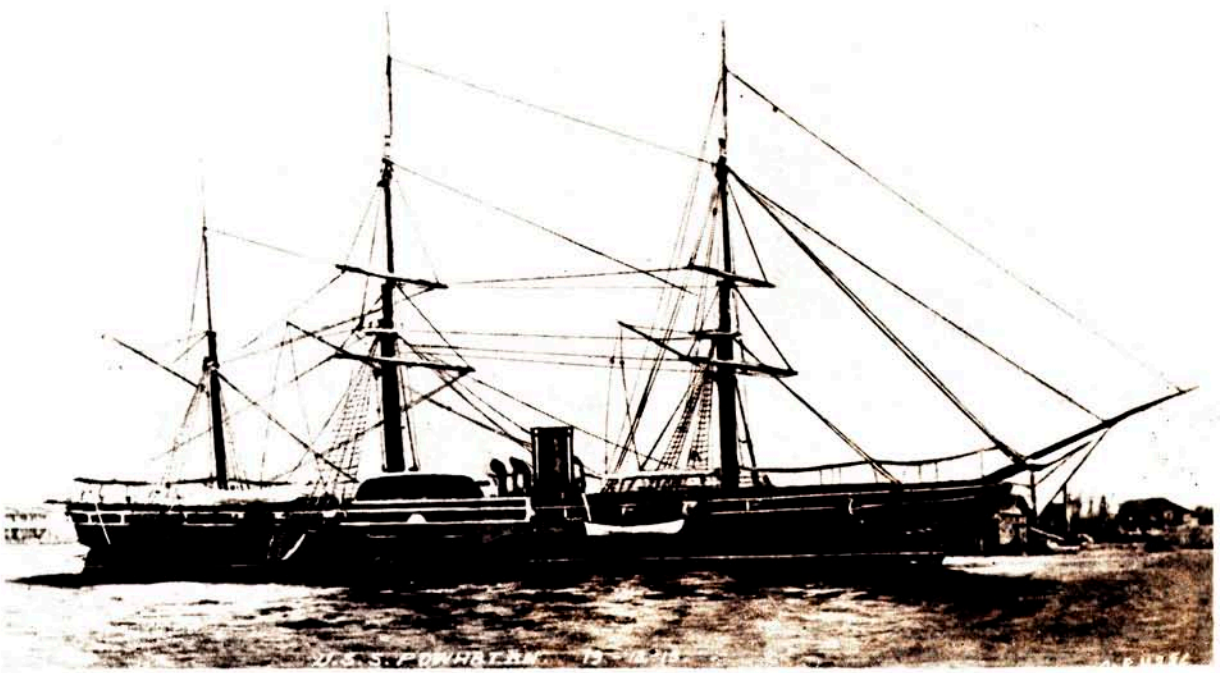
landing force, to Capt Pendergrast of 21 January describes the exercise:

> On the 6th inst about 9 P.M. You directed me to make arrangements for hoisting out the Boats of the Squadron on the following morning and having them armed and manned in readiness to land upon the Island of Sacrificios. Agreeably to this order on the morning of the 7th inst at 10 A.M. the boats of the Squadron, twenty one in number, armed and equipped started for the Island of Sacrificios, and were arranged in line of Battle opposite that island with their bows towards the island in the following order -Viz- The two Wheel House Boats of this Ship took the centre position in the front line -- Three Boats of the Cumberland immediately on the right of the Powhatans with their Howitzers -- Three Boats of the Sabine on the left of the Powhatans with their Howitzers -- The St Louis' launch on the right of the Cumberlands Howitzer Boats with her Howitzer, and the Pocahontis's [sic] Launch on the left of the Sabine's Howitzer Boats with her Howitzer.
>
> The Marines of the Squadron and the small arm men took up their positions in Boats from their respective Ships immediately in the rear of their respective Howitzer Boats -- After they were all arranged in the order here presented, at a preconcerted Signal from me, the Boats having Howitzers mounted upon them discharged their pieces twice -- whereupon the Boats with the Marines and small arm men dashed in and landed formed in line immediately and delivered two discharges of musketry -- when the Howitzer Boats pulled in and landed their Howitzers as fast as possible formed in line and fired each piece with a blank cartridge twice. After this the small arm men were exercised, and the Marines of the Squadron were maneuvered by their respective commanding officers. Battalion drill was not attempted for want of time and I believe because there had been no previous practice in that way. After remaining on the Island about an hour, in obedience to Signals from the Flag Ship, the Boats returned to their respective Ships, embarking in the reverse order of landing, the Howitzer Boats taking the

lead and firing their pieces twice each with blank cartridges after they were gotten on board, remounted and the Boats shoved off from the beach.

There was no timing of the landing of the Howitzers or of getting them on board again and remounting, but for a first attempt of the Kind I think the celerity with which all was performed, reflected much credit on all the Vessels -- Of course those ships longest in commission were most expert. But the Cumberland acquitted herself most creditably on this occasion considering the short period she has been in commission. The number of men landed from the Squadron was estimated at about 500--.

The exact purpose of the landing thus far remains unknown. It is most probable, however, that Pendergrast was aware of possible attempts to seize Federal forts throughout the south, and since the St. Louis and later the frigate Sabine (9 January 1861) were ordered to Pensacola, the landing exercise was conducted to prepare the fleet for a possible assault to protect Fort Pickens.



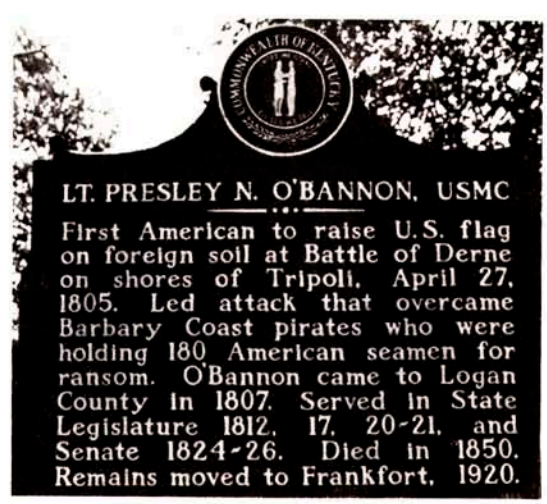
From the Shores of Tripoli to Frankfort, Kentucky

Thanks largely to the efforts of Col George M. Chinn, USMCR (Ret.) the grave site of Lt Presley N. O'Bannon is now distinguished by a State of Kentucky historical marker. The marker, which is of the same pattern as other State historical signs except that it is specially painted in scarlet and gold, was unveiled at a ceremony in Frankfort, Kentucky, on 4 May 1973.

Music for the dedication was provided by the 2d Marine Aircraft Wing band. Maj John D. Steel, OIC, Marine Recruiting Station, Louisville, Ky., introduced Col Chinn who in turn introduced BGen Edwin H. Simmons. The Director of Marine Corps History and Museums, representing the Commandant, commented on O'Bannon's life and characterized him as the "arch-typical Marine lieutenant."

As is well known, it was O'Bannon who with seven Marines marched from Egypt to Tripoli with William Eaton's polyglot "army" of some 500 Arabs and European mercenaries. In storming the fortified city of Derna on 27 April 1805, O'Bannon was the first to raise the U. S. flag over a captured fortress of the Old World, a feat commemorated in the opening lines of the Marine Hymn and by the Mameluke hilt of the Marine officer's sword.

The ceremony was well attended by members of the Presley O'Bannon Detachment, Marine Corps League, Louisville; senior officers of the Kentucky National guard; representatives of the Daughters of the American Revolution; Marines stationed in the Louisville-Frankfort area; and numerous retired and reserve Marines and their families.



O'Bannon returned from the Mediterranean to the United States

in the fall of 1805. Two years later he resigned from the Marine Corps and in 1809 moved to Kentucky where he lived a full life, active in state politics, until his death at age 74. Reportedly he designed his own gravestone which reads, rather inaccurately:

Lieut. Presley N. O'Banion
Departed this life
Sept. 12, 1850
Aged
74 Years
"The Hero of Derne"
Tripoli Northern Africa
April 27, 1805
As Captain of the
United States Marines
he was the first to plant
the American flag on
foreign soil.

O'Bannon was first buried in a small cemetery in Russellville, Ky. On 14 June 1920 the Daughters of the American Revolution transferred his remains to Kentucky's "Bivouac of the Dead," a State cemetery which also has the re-interred remains of Daniel Boone.

Col Chinn, the driving force in obtaining the new marker, is Director of the Kentucky Historical Society. An ordnance expert and distinguished historian, he is perhaps best known for his four-volume The Machine Gun, which is generally accepted as being the definitive study of the history, evolution, and development of repeating weapons.

DID YOU KNOW?

There are many stories surrounding the origin of the gun salute, but the following seems to be the one of the most commonly accepted. Its beginnings can be traced far back in history. Originally, it took a long time to reload a gun after it was fired. The gun salute by ships or shore batteries would render each defenseless for a while and the salute would be used to show good faith. The British first used a seven gun salute - seven being a lucky or mystical number. Later, since gun powder was more plentiful on shore, forts and batteries were permitted to out-salute ships 3 to 1 (thus the 21 gun salute). In 1875, the United States and Great Britain formally adopted 21 guns as an international salute. Odd numbers are always used for gun salutes because an even number used to mean the death of a captain, master, or master gunner during a voyage.

PEOPLE and PLACES

The second annual Army Museum Conference was held 1-3 May at Fort Sheridan, Illinois and raised the already high standard for meetings of this nature established last year. The conference addressed the common problems and possible solutions native to government museums and discussed at length such subjects as security, personnel, funding, and staff professionalism. Delegates to the conference included representatives of the Army museums, the National Park Service, the U. S. Navy Memorial Museum, the Smithsonian Institution, the Canadian War Museum, and the Marine Corps Museum. Mr. Jack B. Hilliard, Head Curator attended for the museum.

The Company of Military Historians held its annual meeting at the Sheraton Hotel in Philadelphia from 3-5 May 1973. Included in the program were talks on such diverse topics as the operations of special forces troops in Vietnam, the restoration of Ft. Mifflin, the military history of the Australian Army,and an evaluation of the military contributions of Kosciusko and Pulaski to the American cause in the Revolution. A display of the Marine Corps historical program products was provided for the meeting's exhibits and three of the Historical Division's members, Mr. Shaw, Mr. Donnelly, and Mr. Frank attended.

Every session of the Organization of American Historians meeting in Chicago from 12-14 April 1973 included military historical topics. A luncheon meeting of the American Military Institute featured an interesting paper by James Howes of the Office of the Chief of Military History on the development of the U. S. Army general staff prior to World War I. Mr. Shaw, who belongs to both organizations, attended for the Historical Division and subsequently headed up a division seminar which discussed both this meeting and the general format and worth to Marine Corps' historians of such professional gatherings.

Maj Jack K. Ringler left the Marine Corps after 21-plus years of commendable service. He served in the Division on two separate occasions and spent the latter half of his second tour as Assistant Deputy Director for Marine Corps Museums. After a brief ceremony at which he received the Commandant of the Marine Corps Certificate of Commendation, Maj Ringler left for retirement in his new home in Las Vegas, Nevada where he will teach history at the local community college.

CWO Dennis Egan, Administrative Officer for the Historical Division since December 1970, departed on 23 March for duty with the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing. Recent correspondence locates him in Nam Phong, Thailand very pleased with his assignment.

CWO Joseph R. Fitzgerald joined the Division on 12 March replacing CWO Egan as Administrative Officer. CWO Fitzgerald reported from a 3-year assignment with the 1st Infantry Training Regiment, later Infantry Training Detachment, at Marine Corps Base, Camp Lejeune.

SSgt Earl D. Shawley, NCOIC of the Marine Corps Museum ,retired 30 April and returned to his boyhood home in western Pennsylvania. He plans to enjoy a brief respite from the rigors of military life before entering civilian employment.

Sgt Jerry L. Jakes, illustrator for the Division since April 1971,transferred on 16 March for duty with Headquarters, FMFPac, Camp Smith, Hawaii, where he has been assigned to the Graphic Arts Section.

Cpl Robert D. Lambeseder joined the Division on 26 February as illustrator. Cpl Lambeseder reported in from the 3d Marine Division. While in transit he became eligible for promotion to his present rank and was promoted by BGen Simmons shortly after his arrival.

Cpl William Walker was meritoriously promoted from lance corporal to his present rank for his outstanding performance as one of the Museum's security guards.

Cpl Iona Pennick, a member of the museum's administrative staff, was discharged after four years service on 18 May 1973.

Miss Cynthia Brown, new to government service, joined the staff of the Reference Section on 16 April bringing that section to its full complement of personnel. Miss Brown is a native of Lowell, Massachusetts.

Help!

The Historical Division no longer has any stocks of Volume I (Pearl Harbor to Guadalcanal) of the History of U. S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II or of Volumes I (The Pusan Perimeter), II (The Inchon-Seoul Operation), and III (The Chosin Reservoir Campaign) of U. S. Marine Operations in Korea, 1950-1953. There is a pressing need to reconstitute a number of complete sets. Individuals or commanding officers who have unused or duplicate copies of these volumes are requested to return them to the Historical Division (Code HD), Headquarters, U. S. Marine Corps, Washington, D. C. 20380.

MARINE ART at IOWA STATE

A highly effective exhibit of Marine Corps art relating to the Vietnam War was held at the Iowa State University in observance of a week dedicated to "Perspectives On War" from 29 January through 3 February. SSgt James Fairfax, a former combat artist and presently assigned to the Procurement Branch, HQMC accompanied the exhibit to assist participants in fully appreciating the nature and meaning of the Marine Corps displays. Sgt Fairfax and the exhibit were very well received by the university community and the local public to the extent that the university continued the exhibit for an additional 10 days and hopes to see it back again next year. The majority of the art work displayed depicted the background, land, and the people involved in the War in Vietnam; however, a representative selection illustrating Marine Corps training and peacetime activities was also included.

Sgt Fairfax explains exhibit

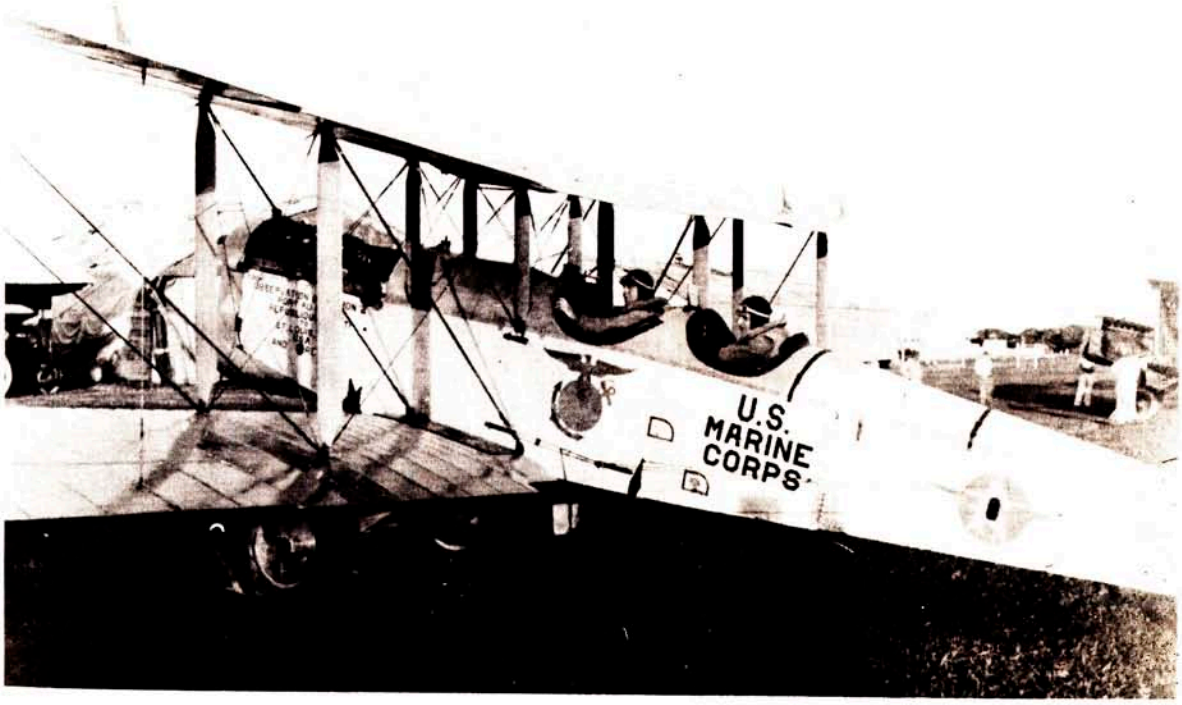
Of particular interest to the viewing public was a series of paintings by Vietnamese children who were supplied the necessary art materials and given free reign to express themselves. The final products of their efforts ranged widely in context and attitude.

the small society **by Brickman**

THE DH-4 IN THE MARINE CORPS

In the morning sky over Ocotal, Nicaragua on 16 July 1927, Lt Hayne D. Boyden and MG Michael Wodarczyk flew their DeHavilland bombers on a routine patrol. The two Marine aviators who had taken off earlier from their base at Managua soon discovered that in the village below them, a joint Marine-Nicaraguan Guardia patrol was severely beset by Sandinista bandits. The bandit attack which had begun the previous night was threatening to overrun the Marine position. The two Marine aircraft made repeated strafing runs over the attackers and then returned to Managua, 125 miles distant, to report. Shortly after they arrived, Maj Ross Rowell led a five-plane flight of the ubiquitous DHs to the rescue. Rowell had previously trained his pilots in dive bombing techniques, which he had adapted from early Army and British experiments, and upon arriving at Ocotal "led off the attack and dived out of column from 1500 feet, pulling out at about 600 feet...." Releasing their bombs on the unwary bandits, the Marines returned again and again to strafe and bomb until the attackers were dispersed. This represented what probably was the first organized dive bombing attack to have been carried out in support of ground troops. It was altogether fitting that the DH was the aircraft which was the experimental workhorse in this significant moment in Marine aviation, since it was the machine in which Marine aviators first engaged an enemy in air combat.

A DH-4 in Haiti modified for long distance flying

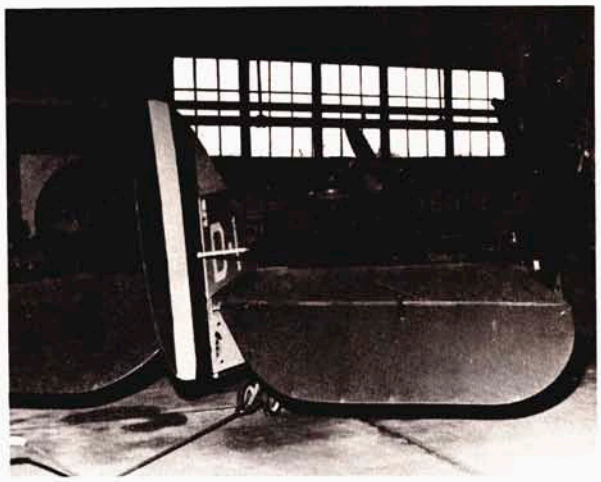


The DH-4 was a product of the intense progress in aircraft technology which accompanied the First World War. It was the first British aircraft designed from scratch as a high-speed day bomber. The DH was immediately successful despite several designed-in defects and so versatile that engines of increasing horsepower were successively installed until the 400-horsepower American-built Liberty was powering a machine originally built for a 160-horsepower British engine. Thus, when the United States began shopping for an already proven aircraft to manufacture as a means of quickly upgrading its under-developed air service, the DH was one of four designs selected. It was the only American-manufactured warplane to reach combat in Europe and among the fighting units which received the DH was the First Marine Aviation Force, the Day Wing of a joint Navy/Marine Corps effort designated the Northern Bombing Group. Since the American-built DHs did not arrive in France until sometime after the aircrews, a number of DH-4s and DH-9s (a less successful modification of the DH-4) were borrowed from the British to equip the fledgling force. Lt Ralph Talbot and his observer/gunner, Cpl Robert G. Robinson, in one of the DH-4s took part in the first all-Marine air combat mission, a bombing raid on Thielt. For their heroism in engaging a superior German force both were awarded the Medal of Honor, the only instances of the nation's highest decoration to be given to Marine aviators during the First World War.

After the war the DH became basic equipment for Marine air squadrons. As late as 1926 nearly half the inventory of Marine Corps aircraft consisted of DH-4s or 02Bs, a Boeing-built derivation.

In addition to being used in an embryonic close support role as in Nicaragua, the DH was modified to serve in a host of tasks, including courier and ambulance. Also the craft's rugged reliability encouraged its use in long-distance flights and a number of record-setting hops were made including what in 1924 was the longest organized U. S. military flight -- an over 10,000-mile jaunt from Haiti to San Francisco and return. In December 1927, high performance 02Us, the first of Chance-Vought's Corsairs, were received by the Marines in Nicaragua to replace their well-used DHs, but it took

The Museum's DH-4



about two years for the last of the versatile DeHavillands finally to be retired by the Corps. A full decade of service had been rendered by the DH in an era when the aviation technology routinely made quantum jumps in the state of the art. Never the recipient of a "nickname" the DH was nevertheless much loved, much cursed, and in every way a fitting pioneer of today's Marine Aviation.

The Marine Corps Museum's DH-4 was virtually re-created from scratch to provide a representative specimen of this important aircraft. A true DH-4, the craft has the oak frame and plywood fuselage covering of the machines flown by the First Marine Aviation Force in World War I. Later editions, some of the Boeing-built 02Bs which are on display in other museums in the United States, had welded steel tube fuselage frames and were covered with metal. The Museum's specimen is finished in the markings of the aircraft flown by Lt Talbot and Cpl Robinson on their raid on Thielt and incorporates the first aviation insignia used to identify Marine Corps aircraft. At the time of this writing, no wings have been constructed but the fuselage is complete with Liberty engine, instruments, and scarff ring. In future years it is hoped a suitable space will be obtained to exhibit the Museum's collection of historic aircraft and the DH-4 will receive a most honored place.

HOW TO OBTAIN MARINE CORPS HISTORICAL PUBLICATIONS

The Historical Division prepares and publishes a variety of publications including operational histories, unit histories, chronologies, bibliographies, and reference pamphlets on a diversity of subjects relating to Marine Corps history. The Marine Corps Art Section also publishes a limited number of lithographs.

Case-bound books are generally printed in limited numbers by the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 and are available for public sale as long as copies remain in stock. Most of the others can be obtained gratis from the Historical Division.

To obtain a list of available publications and instructions for ordering copies, address a request to the Director of Marine Corps History and Museums, Headquarters, U. S. Marine Corps, Washington, D. C. 20380.

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