

FORTITUDINE

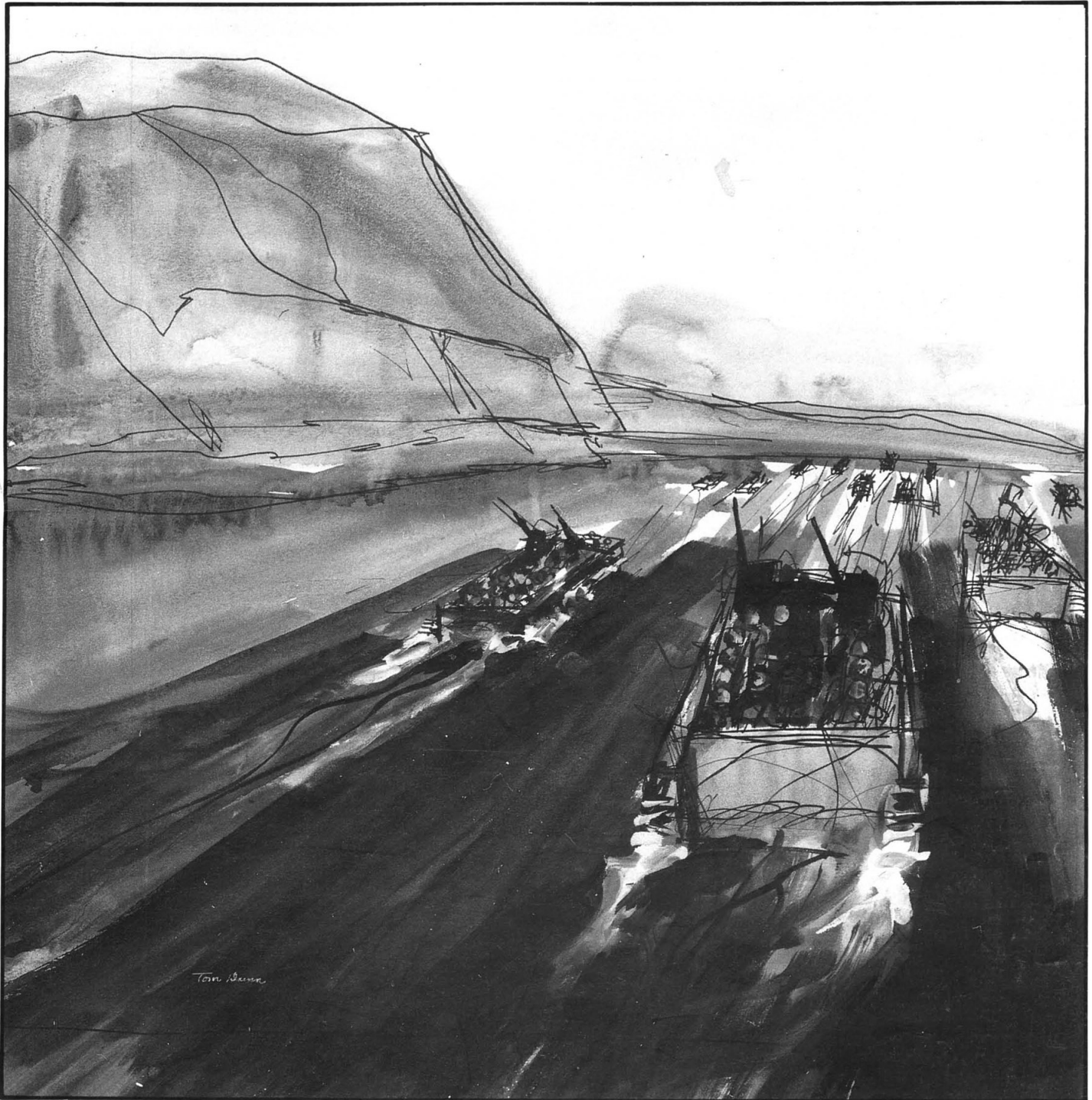
BULLETIN OF THE MARINE CORPS HISTORICAL PROGRAM

HISTORICAL BULLETIN VOLUME XXVI

WINTER 1996-1997

NUMBER 3

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TO ANOTHER MARINE



'ALLIGATOR MACHINES AND MARINES' SUBJECTS OF NEW LVT MUSEUM AT CAMP DEL MAR . . . TRIBUTE TO A SCHOLARLY AND GENTLEMANLY MARINE, MAJOR GENERAL JOHN P. CONDON . . . NEW BATTLE HONORS ADDED TO 'IWO JIMA MEMORIAL' . . . GEN BARNETT'S MEDALS, SOME NOW HARD TO FIND, GO TO MUSEUM

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PCN 10401220100



HISTORY AND MUSEUMS DIVISION

Marine Corps Historical Center
Building 58, Washington Navy Yard
901 M Street, Southeast
Washington, D.C. 20374-5040
Telephone: (202) 433-3838, 433-3840, 433-3841

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Mr. Robert E. Struder
Senior Editor/Editor, Fortitudine

FORTITUDINE

Motto of the United States Marine Corps in the 1812 era.

Historical Bulletin Volume XXVI

Winter 1996-1997

No. 3

This quarterly 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.

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ABOUT THE COVER

"Alligator Landing Craft" loaded with assault Marines move toward a Pacific island beach in this pen-and-ink drawing with watercolor wash by combat artist Tom Dunn, completed in the late 1940s. "Alligator Machines and Marines" are the subjects of the new World War II and Korean War IVT Museum, created by the Assault Amphibian School Battalion at Camp Del Mar at Camp Pendleton, California. Historian Charles R. Smith describes this new museum facility and its complement of fully restored Landing Vehicles, Tracked, in a feature beginning on page 12. Elsewhere in the issue, Chief Historian Benis M. Frank recommends that Marine veterans get busy writing the histories of their battalion- and company-level units, before these memories pass into oblivion, in the article beginning on page 14.

Fortitudine is produced in the Editing and Design Section of the History and Museums Division. The text for *Fortitudine* is set in 10-point and 8-point Garamond typeface. Headlines are in 18-point or 24-point Garamond. The bulletin is printed on 70-pound, matte-coated paper by offset lithography.

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.



Benis M. Frank

An Eagle is Downed: Major General John P. Condon

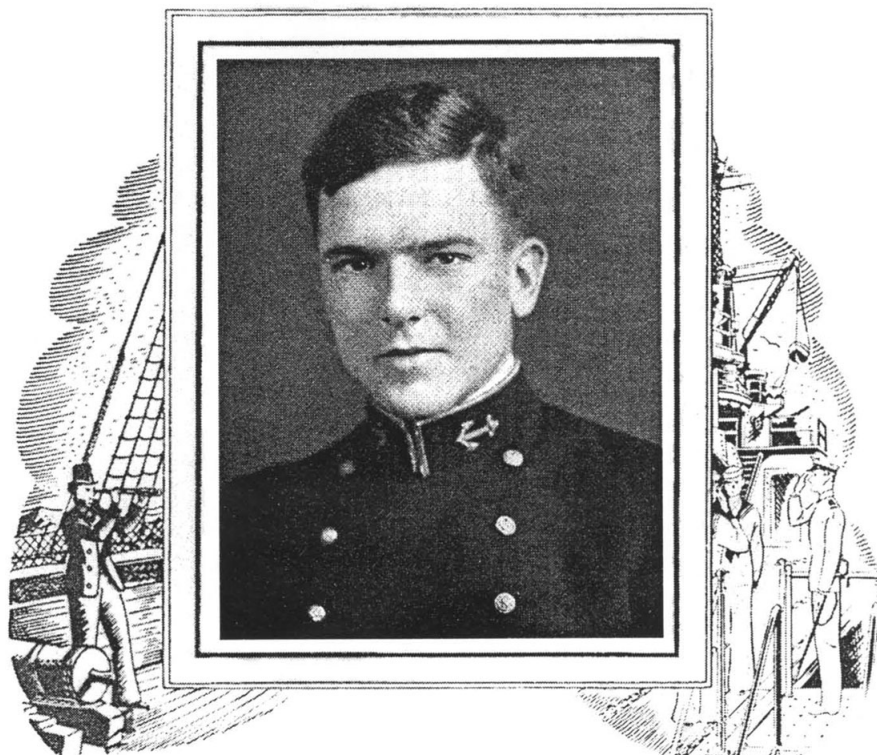
RETIRED VETERAN Marine aviator Maj-Gen John Pomeroy Condon died of an aneurysm and lymphoma at his home in Alexandria, Virginia, on 26 December 1966, just six days after his 85th birthday.

Gen Condon was a native of the upper peninsula of Michigan, where it was often said that "Summer was on Tuesday this year." He became interested in the United States Naval Academy early as a result of knowing of the experiences of other young men of the area who were attending. He first went to Severn School, in Severn, Maryland, a famed preparatory school which graduated many candidates for entry into either the United States Military or United States Naval Academy.

Easily passing the entrance examinations, Condon entered the Naval Academy in June 1930 with the rest of the Class of 1934. He said, in his oral history, that the most influential factor in his choice to become a Marine was the presence of his roommate, Philip H. Torrey, Jr., son of Marine MajGen Philip H. "Philip the Hard" Torrey. Of his classmates, those who opted to become Marines were Victor H. "Brute" Krulak, Frank Tharin, Harold O. "Hap" Deakin, Ralph "Rollo" Rottet, and Henry W. "Bill" Buse, among others. All of these men eventually became general officers.

GEN CONDON HAD very warm memories of his time at the Academy, and often agonized about the hard times that it has come upon as a result of the recent flurry of unfavorable publicity about certain incidents occurring there. In his years, he was the captain of the lacrosse team, and, in fact, was elected to the All-American lacrosse team.

Following graduation and commissioning, as were all new second lieutenants, Gen Condon was assigned to Basic School, which, at the time, was located in the Philadelphia Navy Yard. His was a remarkably small class of 35 boot lieutenants, in fact the last small Basic School class in modern history. His first assignment was



JOHN POMEROY CONDON
"Johnny" "Chippewa" "Ogpa"
HOUGHTON, MICH.

FROM the icy land of furs, copper and Paul Bunyan phantasmagoria comes the black haired John Pomeroy Condon. Deserting his tribesmen, he donned his snowshoes and set out on the long trek to the Naval College.

A versatile athlete, he has reached the acme of his desire, that of captaining the lacrosse team. The beautiful legged Apollo can be seen any afternoon, mesmerized by the copper faced god, Lacrosse, grunting, sweating and pirouetting with a grace which would have inspired the envy of the Chippewa who must have been his very close neighbors.

Coming from the *Ancien Nobless* of the Upper Peninsula he has the persuasive charm of a Chesterfield which gives him ready access to the hearts of Gynocracy the world over. Of late he has become more or less monogynous, but, as far as we know, he has not yet been bound by the *vinculum matrimonii*.

Aside from all the verbage, Johnny has the respect, admiration and friendship of his classmates. He is a true friend and has a smile for everyone. *Honi soit qui mal lui pense.*

Lacrosse 4, 3, 2, 1. "N" 3, 2, 1. Captain 1. Football 4.
G. P. O.



in the USS *Pennsylvania*, to the Marine detachment commanded by Capt Emery Ellsworth "Swede" Larson, who was well known for his exploits as both football coach and player on the famous Quantico teams of the early 1930s. Gen Condon really wanted to go into flight training, and, in fact, had orders to Pensacola for the February 1935 class. Capt Larson talked him out of accepting them because he felt that young Lt Condon should experience duty with the ground forces before learning to fly. After his cruise in the *Pennsylvania*, in June 1936 he was assigned to command the machine gun platoon of Company H, 2d Battalion, 6th Marines. His decision regarding his future was quickly made, for as he recalls in his taped memoirs:

After a few mornings of turning out for troop and inspection with my . . . platoon and, instead of finding four [machine gun] carts and about 30 to 40 Marines, I'd find one cart and three Marines. I found out that the rest of them were out cutting grass, doing odd jobs or picking up papers around the base and what not, a continuous thing. I said, 'I think I've had enough of this,' so I reinstated my request for flight training and I was ordered to Pensacola in October [1936], following my July reporting to the 6th Marines.

It was while he was undergoing flight training that he met Jane Anson, who belonged to a prominent Pensacola family and who not too much later became his wife. Gen Condon recalled that he enjoyed his flight training and, in retrospect, felt it made "for a very well rounded appreciation and understanding of current aircraft and air power . . ." and also was a generalized approach which introduced the student aviator to his new environment.

UPON COMPLETION of his flight training in December 1937, he was designated a naval aviator and assigned to Marine Fighting Squadron 1 (VMF-1) at Quantico. He remained with the squadron until shortly before the attack on Pearl Harbor. As he recalled, while at Quantico he flew with some rather notable Marine pilots, among them " 'Paddy Mac' McKittrick and Oscar Brice," both of whom



2dLt Condon had his photograph taken during flight training in January 1937 at the Pensacola, Florida, Naval Air Station.

served as general officers in World War II. As a new member of the squadron, he continued his training, including instruction in fighter plane tactics. He had to go through a whole series of checks under the scrutiny of some of the more experienced pilots in the squadron. Before the United States entered World War II, he was a considerably seasoned Marine pilot who had

On Guadalcanal in 1943, LtCol Condon, operations officer, Fighter Command, seated center, talked with, from left, LtCol L. S. Moore, executive officer, MAG-12; Col E.L. Pugh, commander, Fighter Command; and assistant operations officer LtCol J. W. Sapp.



flown most of the aircraft in the Corps' inventory at the time. In June 1941 he was transferred to VMF-121 and assigned duties as squadron executive officer.

SHORTLY AFTER THE Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the squadron was transferred to San Diego, and in March 1942, Condon was transferred to Marine Aircraft Group (MAG) 12, as group operations officer. In January 1943, the group went forward to Noumea and then up to Efate in the New Hebrides. When his group commander, Col Ed Pugh, was ordered up to Guadalcanal to relieve Col Sam Jack, the fighter commander of Aircraft, Solomons (AirSols), Condon went along also to be the operations officer.

On 16 April, RAdm Marc Mitscher, Commander of AirSols, received a highly classified message signed by Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox. It was based on translated radio intercepts of Japanese transmissions and stated that Adm Isoroku Yamamoto, the architect of the Pearl Harbor attack and senior Japanese naval officer, was to make an inspection tour of Japanese bases in the Rabaul-Bougainville-Kahili area. The message contained his exact schedule. The AirSols

command interpreted Knox's message as directing them to intercept Yamamoto's plane and shoot it down.

AS GEN CONDON recalled in an interview some years later:

Colonel Pugh and I were called into Rear Admiral Marc Mitscher's ComAirSols headquarters on the 16th We sat down with Admiral Mitscher We discussed the message . . . and who was involved. We read the detail of the message to the minute, where Yamamoto would be and at what time, where he would board a boat to make the run to the seaplane base, when he would come back to fly over to Kahili for the return to Rabaul. It was very detailed, and we talked about how best to do the job. Well, in the course of the conversation and the discussion, it became pretty clear that we had no aircraft that had the range to do that except the P-38s

. . . it was P-38s that we needed, and additional long-range tanks, extra drop tanks, to make that long, low altitude mission It was to be out of sight of land, down on the deck, which was a hell of a long way to go, at one hundred feet max over the water. That's about close to a two-hour flight without ever getting above a hundred feet

Those parameters of the mission were already discussed, including the need for radio silence, the need to avoid any possible detection from observers on islands, either visually or by radar. These requirements were now mentioned, and then, based on the intercept schedule, the discussion went into where the highest probability of success would be achieved. When he was landing at Ballale, with all its AAA? When he was in the boat enroute to the seaplane base? . . . And [it was] felt that the time it would take to go from Ballale over to the sea plane base on Shortland would allow for some flexibility. In other words, if you were two minutes late in making the air intercept, you weren't going to see him, he would be gone.

In the final analysis, it was decided that Maj John Mitchell, USAAC, who was to

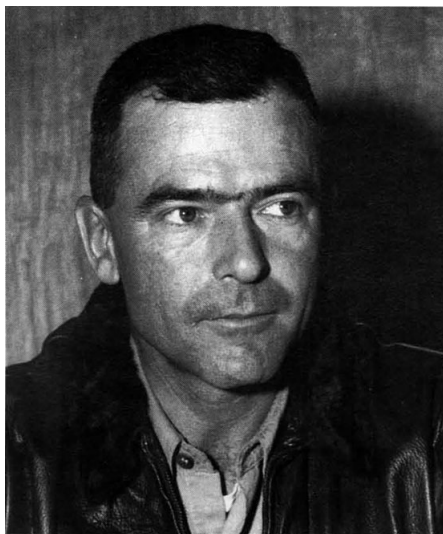
command the flight, should decide how the intercept was to be made, and he said, "I like the air intercept because, although the probabilities might be fairly low at that distance . . . if it's made, it's a *sure* thing . . . if we shoot that plane down, nobody is going to survive.

Condon went back to the AirSols Fighter Command headquarters, and:

We had a table there with a chart of the area, and we went over the parameters of the mission as laid down by the admiral: No closer than 20 miles to any land until Bougainville, and the need for precisely maintaining the courses, speeds, times, and legs that were prescribed, because otherwise there would be no intercept

By that time it was late in the afternoon on the 17th, and I sat down at that table and plotted with parallel rules and so forth, the true course and true air speeds that had to be maintained to work the intercept selected, all based on Yamamoto's schedule We had to make some assumptions, and an important one involved the Japanese penchant for precise performance, punctuality, etc. . . . They were not going to be one second off the timed schedule. And furthermore, I felt that they would do the same with the airplanes. We thought the bomber . . . would be all shined up and waxed up and everything, and so I even added five knots to what

Col Condon, in warm leather flight jacket, was an aircraft group commander in Korea when this photo was taken in 1952.



we normally gave them as a cruising speed.

THE FINAL RESULT of this mission was that the P-38s intercepted Adm Yamamoto's flight exactly as planned and shot his bomber down, which caused a morale crisis in Japan when news of his death was released to the Japanese people. Based on the planning for the mission, a task in which then-Maj Condon was a major player, the assignment was successfully carried out by Army Air Corps pilots flying twin-engine P-38s. Because of his role as AirSols operations officer and planner for this mission, for many years Gen Condon was considered the "duty expert."

LtCol Condon accompanied the AirSols command in the invasion of Bougainville on 1 November 1943. The missions of AirSols were to supervise the building of the Piva strips and to direct the operations of Allied aircraft which rose from the new airfield to strike Rabaul, the heart of enemy strength in the area. In January 1944, Condon returned to the States for assignment as executive officer of Marine Base Defense Aircraft Group 45 on the west coast, at Miramar, California. In October he was reassigned as executive officer of Marine Aircraft Support Group 48, which was tasked with training and qualifying Marine squadrons for service on board escort carriers to fill the Navy's need for additional carrier-borne planes in the final days of the war.

Gen Condon returned to the Pacific to join MAG-33 on Okinawa as executive officer, and later joined MAG-14 as commander. During the occupation of Japan, he served as executive officer of MAG-31 at Yokosuka. In the period 1946-1948, he was assigned in Washington to the staff of the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Air (Military Requirements), and back he went to duty with Marine Corps air. In the post-WWII period, he commanded several groups and squadrons. One of these was VMF-311, the first Marine jet squadron "stood up." Gen Condon stated in his memoirs that he was given this squadron because he had been instrumental in getting jet aircraft for the Corps when serving in the office of DCNO (Air). He went to the Air War College, Maxwell Air Force Base in 1949 and, following graduation, was assigned back to Washington for duty in the Weapons Systems

Evaluation Group in the office of the Secretary of Defense.

IN 1952, COL CONDON went to war once more when he took command of MAG-33 at Pohang in Korea. After six months, he was given command of MAG-12, which had the last of the Corsairs and ADs in the Corps. Following his return to the United States in early 1953, he was assigned to Headquarters Marine Corps to sit on a board to examine the structure of Marine Corps aviation. In August he went down to Quantico, to the Marine Corps Education Center, where he was one of three aviation colonels in a group of 10 colonels working on Marine Corps problems associated with the advent of nuclear warfare. After a year in the First Advanced Research Group, Col Condon was assigned in 1954 as the chief of staff of the Education Center, and in 1956 as chief of staff of the 2d Marine Corps Aircraft Wing at Cherry Point. Two years later, promoted to brigadier general, he went to Paris, France, to become Assistant J-3 on the staff of the U.S. European Command.

Following his tour in Europe, in 1961 Gen Condon was assigned as Commanding General, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, in Iwakuni, Japan. At the same time, he wore two other hats: Commander, Task Force 79

(Seventh Fleet), and Commander, Joint Task Force 116 (CinCPac). He was given his second star as a major general in 1961, and was ordered back to the States to command the 3d MAW in July 1962. He retired in 1962, after more than 28 years of active service.

In his retirement, he spent 14 years with North American Aviation and Rockwell International as a program manager and executive at the division and corporate levels. During this time, he acquired a master of science degree in business at the University of California, Irvine, and in 1975, a doctorate in administration from the same institution. He retired from Rockwell in 1976, and moved to Alexandria, Virginia, where he resided until his death.

HE BECAME ACTIVE in the affairs of the Marine Corps Historical Foundation from its beginning, serving as a member of the board and as president. His leadership during its formative years did much to shape its subsequent course and direction. Shortly before his death he delivered a completed history of Marine aviation on carriers in World War II for publication by the Naval Institute Press.

At its annual meeting in November 1996, Gen Condon was awarded the Marine Corps Historical Foundation's Heritage Award in recognition of "his ac-

complishments in the Marine Corps, his lifetime interest in Marine Corps history, and his services to the Foundation. In all things, John Condon epitomizes the ideal of officer, gentleman, and scholar." Gen Condon was too ill to accept the award at the meeting, so the Foundation President, retired LtGen Philip D. Shutler, visited him at home to present the well-deserved honor.

For a decade or more, Gen Condon was working on his carrier history and also a history of Marine Corps aviation in a carrel around the corner from my office. He knew all of the Center's staff personally and by name, and was generally accepted as an ex-officio staff member. Every day that he was in the Center, he would join me in a cup of coffee for far-ranging discussions of the current and past Marine Corps, of Marine Corps personalities we both knew (and not necessarily loved, although he was gentler than I), the news of the day, and politics. It is very difficult to accept that he will no longer do this. I will miss him.

A funeral mass attended by the Commandant and numerous other dignitaries was celebrated for him at the Naval Academy chapel, and he was interred in the Naval Academy cemetery with full military honors on 31 December 1996. □1775□

A career highlight occurs on 7 August 1961 at Iwakuni, Japan, as 1st Marine Aircraft Wing commander Condon's new two-star

insignia are pinned on by, from left, Marine Corps IG BGen T. F. Riley and assistant wing commander BGen R. L. Kline.



New Battle Honors Added to Marine Corps Memorial

by Col Michael F. Monigan, USMC
Acting Director

FOR ONLY THE third time since its dedication in 1954, additional battle honors have been added to the Marine Corps War Memorial, better known as the Iwo Jima Monument, near Arlington National Cemetery. The Persian Gulf, Panama, and Somalia have taken their places of honor in chronological order on the second band of the frieze, expertly carved and gilded by Mr. Thomas H. "Tom" Winkler of Wheat Ridge, Colorado.

The original band of battle honors, which was chiseled into the black granite base prior to installation, starts with the REVOLUTIONARY WAR and ends with KOREA in an unbroken line, spanning the entire frieze. In 1974, prior to the end of the conflict, VIETNAM was added, without dates, commencing a second band on the north facade of the granite frieze. This placement was intentional, so as to avoid the front three panels of the Memorial and therefore maintain the integrity of Dr. Felix DeWeldon's original concept. This second band was added to further in 1986 and contains honors for LEBANON 1958, placed before VIETNAM; the dates were added to VIETNAM, 1962-1975; and DOMINICAN REPUBLIC 1965, LEBANON 1981-1984,



The inscription for the peacekeeping mission in Somalia, 1992-1994, incised by stonecarver Tom Winkler, is so far the sole battle honor on the second band of its panel.

and GRENADA 1983 also were added.

The most recent battle honors were appropriately completed in time for the annual wreath-laying ceremony which was conducted this year on the morning of 9 November 1996. The emblazoned sequence of the second band now reads: LEBANON 1958 * VIETNAM 1962-1975 * DOMINICAN REPUBLIC 1965 * LEBANON 1981-1984 * GRENADA 1983 * PERSIAN GULF 1987-1991 * PANAMA 1988-1990 * SOMALIA 1992-1994.

Rumor has it that this update all started with a question posed to the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC), General

Charles C. Krulak, by a Marine sentry. "Sir, when will we put the Persian Gulf War on the Iwo Jima Memorial?" Whatever the genesis, General Krulak decided it was time and set in motion the process which culminated in the addition of the new inscriptions. The Marine Corps War Memorial is, of course, a national monument and as such, does not belong to the Marine Corps. Ownership of the Memorial was relinquished to the National Park Service for perpetual care by the now-defunct Marine Corps War Memorial Foundation. This Foundation had raised the original \$850,000 to create this national treasure and the organization disbanded shortly after the dedication ceremony. Since federal funds cannot be expended to embellish or add to an existing national monument, a funding source had to be identified. The Marine Corps Historical Foundation was briefed on what the Marine Corps intended to do and quickly volunteered to underwrite the project.

New inscriptions for the Persian Gulf War, 1987-1991, and the intervention in Panama, 1988-1990, close out the second band of inscriptions on one panel of the base.



THE REQUEST TO add the three battle honors which were approved by CMC was forwarded to the National Park Service (NPS) on 9 April 1996. What followed was a series of meetings, deliberations, and decisions made by the Marine Corps, the National Park Service, and the Commission of Fine Arts, in concert, on how to proceed. Several crucial conferences ensued. The proposed updates required more space than that which was available on the panel containing the last entry, GRENADA 1983. One of the key artistic



Thomas H. Winkler of Wheat Ridge, Colorado, added the new inscriptions while attending to questions from tourists.

decisions made called for the additional honors to be broken apart. GULF WAR and PANAMA would close out the panel containing GRENADA, the rear dedication panel would be skipped, and SOMALIA would be added to the follow-on panel, continuing the line of the band. Ultimately, the Marine Corps was issued a work permit by the NPS on 9 October 1996 to commence work. This permit was made possible by the personal involvement and indispensable assistance of Mr. Gary Pollock, Mr. Creg Howland, and Mr. Glen Demar of the National Park Service and Mr. Thomas Atherton, Secretary of the Commission of Fine Arts.

Simultaneously, the Marine Corps Historical Foundation initiated a fund drive and solicited bids from three prominent architectural sculptors. Mr. Winkler was selected for the commission and was notified of this action by the Director Emeritus, BGen Edwin H. Simmons, USMC (Ret), on 14 August 1996. Mr. Winkler came to Washington, D.C. in early October to take a rubbing of the existing battle honors and to meet with the officers of the National Park Service and Mr. Atherton. Upon his return to Colorado, he submitted scale-drawings of the

proposed addition which were hung in place on the memorial and approved unanimously.

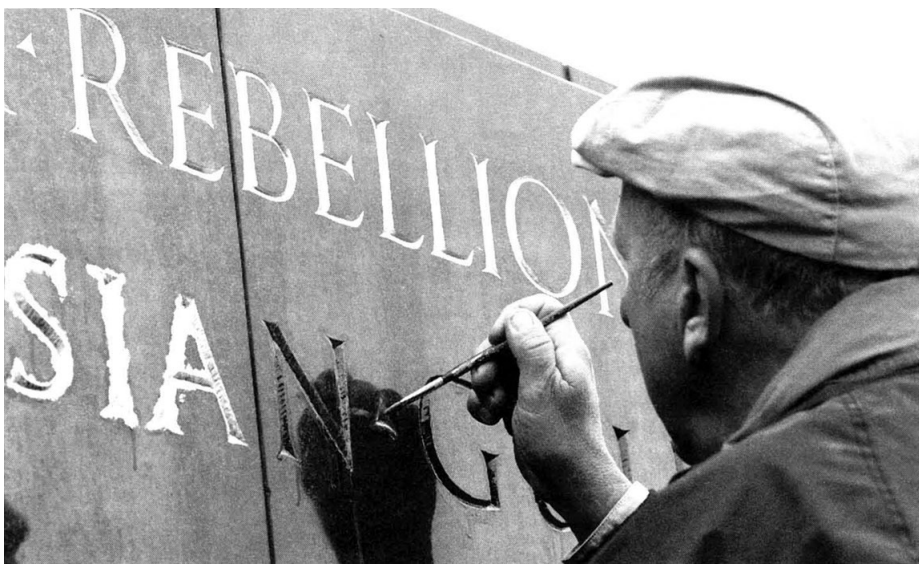
TOM WINKLER, the stonecarver, is a powerful man, his burly frame hinting at his profession. He returned to Washington and took up residence in Arlington on 16 October 1996. With little fanfare, he commenced work immediately. This no-nonsense but affable gentleman spent long hours each day at the Memorial and it became apparent that this was not the first major undertaking for the Coloradan. His precision hand-chiseling quickly brought to life the inscriptions in beautifully shaped letters, numerals, and devices meticulously incised into the smooth granite surface. The constant interruptions from tourists, curious about his work, never flustered him.

The majestic scale of sculptor Felix de Weldon's conception of the Iwo Jima flagraising is made apparent by contrast to the size of stonecarver Winkler, at work atop his scaffold.



He obviously enjoyed the interaction with the never-ending flow of visitors, his outgoing personality and easygoing nature accommodating all. He became, in fact, an ambassador for the Marine Corps and bonded easily with the sense of pride and respect all Marines feel for our Memorial. Mr. Winkler fastidiously completed all work on Sunday, 3 November 1996 and final acceptance being approved, he returned home the next day to continue work on a project for the University of Denver.

The criteria established for battle honors submitted to the Commandant of the Marine Corps for ultimate approval are: the operation must be a definable military action, participation must be recognized by the award of an expeditionary streamer or appropriate campaign streamer, and that Marine fatalities resulted at the hands of



Winkler prepares the gilding for the new inscriptions, all three of which were supported by the Marine Corps Historical Foundation. The Foundation has created a fund for which donations are welcome to finance this and future updates to the memorial.

a hostile force while engaged in this action. The prominent, wreath-decorated dedication reads, "IN HONOR AND

MEMORY OF THE MEN OF THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS WHO HAVE GIVEN THEIR LIVES TO THEIR

COUNTRY SINCE 10 NOVEMBER 1775." The Commandant stated it best on the clear and bright morning of 9 November 1996, as he addressed the large turnout of Marines, distinguished guests, and spectators: "Today we engraved three new battle honors onto this symbol of uncommon valor and common virtue—Persian Gulf 1987-1991, Just Cause 1988-1990, and Somalia 1992-1994. In doing so, we are reminded that yet another generation of Marines have engraved, by their sacrifice, their commitment to this great Nation of ours. It is those Marines and the ones who went before, that we honor today."

The Marine Corps Historical Foundation is accepting donations for this and future updates to the Marine Corps War Memorial. Those who care to help should send their contributions to: War Memorial, Marine Corps Historical Foundation, P.O. Box 420, Quantico, Virginia 22134-0420. □1775□

High-Tech Shelving Expands Space for Reference Section's Burgeoning Files

*by Danny J. Crawford
Head, Reference Section*

A MAJOR, TWO-MONTH renovation project designed to increase the file storage capacity of the Reference Section greatly, while at the same time improving the appearance of its work spaces, was completed in November 1996.

Since the opening of the Marine Corps Historical Center nearly two decades ago, in spring 1977, the section's files have grown dramatically to the point where their cabinets were filled to capacity and the number of cabinets had doubled, with space for no more. These five groups of files—subject, unit, biographical, geographic, and photographic files—are the "life's blood" of the Reference Section, enabling the historians to respond to nearly 8,000 requests each year. New files are added each week on all sorts of topics relating to Marine Corps history, but the space available in the Historical Center is more or less fixed.

A solution came in the form of a "modular mechanical assist aisle saver system," or high-density moveable shelving, that would allow for a 40-50 percent expansion of the files. Work began in late September with the first challenge being to move 50 loaded five-drawer file cabi-

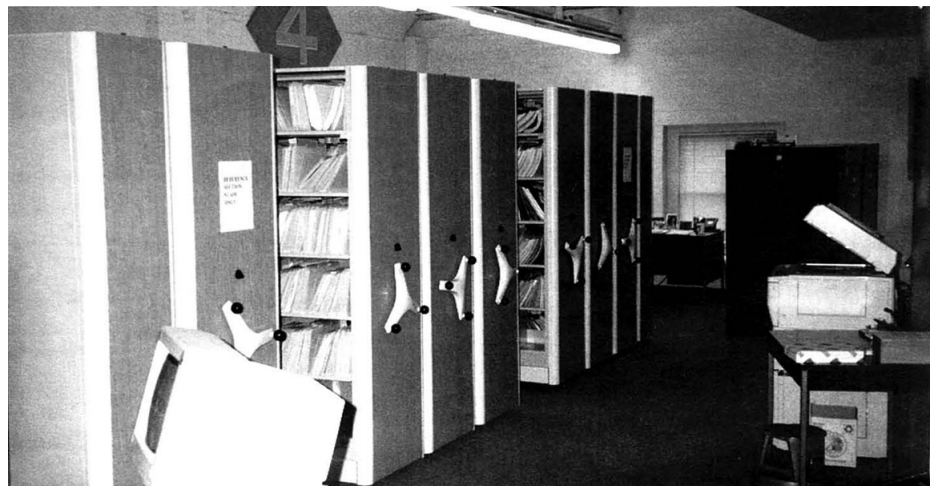
nets out of the section into the adjacent multi-purpose room so that the new shelving could be installed. Aside from the sheer magnitude of moving all these materials, which would be accomplished with the excellent support of the Center's enlisted Marines, the challenge was to keep these files organized and accessible so that the staff could continue to respond to the requests that pour into the section each workday.

WITH THE FILE cabinets moved out, installation of the moveable shelving commenced, and within a week, the reference staff was beginning the time-

The "modular mechanical assist aisle saver system" is a boon to reference historians, who respond to nearly 8,000 public requests for detailed information each year.

consuming task of bringing the contents of 50 file cabinets back into the section and into the new shelving. As historians split their time between phone calls and visiting researchers, and their filing tasks, they awaited the final stage of the renovation process—the installation of new carpet. In late October, nearly all of the remaining furniture was moved out to allow installation of the carpet.

Similar plans are in the works for renovation of the Archives Section and its Personal Papers Unit during the next two years, as part of the overall plan to continue to modernize and refurbish the Marine Corps Historical Center. □1775□



12th Commandant's Medals Provide Puzzles for Staff

by Kenneth L. Smith-Christmas
Curator of Material History

OF THE MORE THAN 4,000 medals in the Marine Corps Museum's collection of decorations and medals, the most noteworthy are those awarded to Marines who had a significant impact on the history of the Marine Corps. Among them are such Marines as SgtMaj Dan Daly, remembered for their acts of selfless valor, and former Commandants and other senior officers who shaped the destiny of the Corps. In this latter category are the medals of MajGenComdt George Barnett, which were donated to the Museum this past summer by his step-grandson, George Barnett Gordon.

Gen Barnett's tenure as Commandant is clearly one of the most important periods in the history of the Corps during this century. Commissioned into the Marine Corps upon his graduation from the Naval Academy in 1881, Barnett served a series of sea-going tours, interspersed with the usual barracks and special duty tours, through the Spanish-American War, during which he landed in Cuba with Col Robert W. Huntington's Battalion. Prior to being selected as the 12th Commandant of the Marine Corps in 1914, he spent three years on expeditionary duty in Cuba and, most importantly, organized and commanded the First Advanced Base Brigade at Philadelphia's League Island Naval Shipyard.

WITHIN THREE MONTHS of assuming the post of Commandant, Gen Barnett organized and dispatched a brigade of Marines to support the U.S. Navy's seizure of the Mexican port of Vera Cruz, an act directed by President Woodrow Wilson to halt arms shipments to the Mexican rebels. In the next year, Marines came ashore at Port au Prince, Haiti, in what would become a 19-year occupation, while next door, in the Dominican Republic, Marines landed the following year and occupied that country until 1924.

However, the greatest test of the Marine Corps during this period was America's entry into the war which had been raging in Europe for the previous two and one-half years. In 1917, the strength of the Ma-



Gen Barnett's medals include, from left, Navy Distinguished Service Medal, "Sampson" West Indies Medal with the four bars, and Navy West Indies Campaign Medal.

rine Corps stood at little more than 18,000 officers and men, but would expand to more than three times that number by the Armistice. Two brigades of Marines were sent to France, with one of them covering itself with glory at the battles of Belleau Wood, Soissons, Saint Mihiel, Blanc Mont, and the Argonne Forest. More Marines were guarding the oil fields in Texas and naval bases around the country, and providing garrisons in Cuba, Haiti, China, and the Dominican Republic, as well as serving with the fleet. The large Marine base at Quantico, Virginia, was purchased and the recruit depot (also acquired under Gen Barnett's tenure) at Parris Island, South Carolina, was expanded.

In spite of his many achievements and although widely regarded as a popular and competent officer, Gen Barnett was relieved as Commandant in a controversial move by the Secretary of the Navy two years after the end of World War I, and was assigned to be the first Commander of the Department of the Pacific until his retirement in 1923. Gen Barnett died in 1930.

Gen Barnett's medals were given to his step-grandson when his widow, Mrs. Lelia Barnett, passed away. When the medals arrived at the Museum, there were several questions raised by the staff concerning the condition and configuration of the medals. In the first place, most of the medals were either suspended from the wrong ribbons, or were turned backwards from the attaching clasps. Secondly, the ribbon with the rarely seen West

Indies medal was different from that shown in Gen Barnett's official portrait. This handsome oil painting which had been executed in 1917, was the genesis of the History and Museums Division's series of Commandants' portraits (see "The Commandants' Portraits", *Fortitudine*, Winter 1994-1995). Mr. Gordon had no idea why the medals were incorrectly mounted and stated that they were in that condition when they came into his possession. The staff conducted research on the medals and was able to reconfigure them properly. The question on the difference in the ribbon colors was solved when the staff found that the ribbon on the West Indies campaign medal had, as had both the Army and Navy versions of the Spanish Campaign medal, changed from red and yellow (as seen in his portrait) to blue and yellow in 1913. Gen Barnett appears to have had this medal re-ribboned after World War I when he had the group remounted to include his World War I medals.

THE HIGHEST DECORATION in the group is the Navy Distinguished Service Medal, which was presented to Gen Barnett for his outstanding service during World War I. (The French government also conferred a Legion of Honor medal on Gen Barnett, but, sadly, this medal is not included in the group.) Included in the grouping is his World War I Victory Medal with a "France" clasp (he visited the front during the war) and the Maltese cross which was worn on the ribbon bar to represent the "France" clasp.

In addition to these are his medal for service during the Cuban Pacification (Serial Number 335) and his Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal (Serial Number 4486), with a numeral "4" on the ribbon. Both of these medals have the serial numbers impressed on their rims. The general's Navy/Marine Corps West Indies 1898 Campaign medal (Serial Number 9) with its blue and yellow ribbon, of course, is also included.

This scarce medal was among the first series of campaign "badges" awarded to American servicemen shortly after the turn

of the century, and confusion soon arose over its use. The medal was given to those Marines and sailors who had served on board ship in the West Indies, but it was later discontinued because it could not be worn with the Naval Campaign-West Indies "Sampson" medal which had been authorized as early as 1901, and most of the participants were eligible for both medals. In order to rectify this situation and to regularize the issuance of medals among the services, the Navy/Marine Corps counterpart to the Army's Spanish Campaign medal was authorized for issue

to all combatants serving in any of the theaters during the Spanish-American War.

The prize of this medals group is the "Sampson" West Indies medal with both its "USS *New Orleans*" bar and the three "Santiago" bars shown suspended on the medal in Gen Barnett's portrait. The edge of the medal is marked "1st Lieut George Barnett USMC" in capital letters. All of the medals, with the exception of the Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal, are mounted together and arrived in a vintage leather case. □1775□

Contract to Purchase Slave Among Commandant's 200-Year-Old Papers

by Amy Cantin Cohen
Personal Papers Unit

THE MARINE CORPS' Personal Papers Archive is generally comprised of primary source materials that give a first-hand perspective on historical Marines and Marine operations. Typically these are one person's view of events in which they participated or which they witnessed, documented in various forms: diaries, letters, manuscripts, and photographs. Most focus on wartime situations.

The Archives' LtColComdt Franklin Wharton Collection in some ways is an exception. Within it there are no journals or diaries describing daily events, and there are no letters written home to his family. It is an unusual collection, but it does contain documents which are primary sources. One of these gives perspective on American society of the nineteenth century: it is a slave sale contract, dated 1814.

On 5 May 1814, the 3d Commandant of the Marine Corps purchased a "negro man" named Natt for the amount of \$450 from Alexander H. Boteten. The transaction occurred in the tenth year of Wharton's 14 as Commandant (1804-1818). Within the contract, Boteten stipulates that the man can be Wharton's property "for twelve years and no longer." After that, he "is and shall be free." It is probable that Boteten had an agreement with the man and was thereby ensuring that the arrangement would be honored over time.

IN THE MULTIRACIAL, multicultural America of today it is astounding to learn that Wharton owned slaves, and more so to read that he purchased a slave

while serving as Commandant of the Marine Corps, the first to occupy the Commandant's House. However, in the context of the times it is not really so surprising. Two hundred years ago, many high-ranking officials of the United States Government were members of affluent families, a great number of which were slave holders. Then, by some accounts, Wharton's own family was the wealthiest in Philadelphia. His brother Robert was the mayor of Philadelphia for 15 terms, his brother Samuel was a prosperous merchant, his brother Joseph was a well-known author, and his cousin Thomas was gover-

nor of Pennsylvania.

Looking upon the society of the period, it seems almost to be expected that Wharton, as other men of substantial wealth, owned slaves. Perhaps his decision in that regard was more of a reflection of his society than a dark act which overshadows his talents and abilities, the success of his tenure as Commandant, or the early growth of the Marine Corps as an institution. Indeed, one of the insights gained from using the Archives is to find that all Marines in some way, for good or ill, reflect the civilian society from which they come. □1775□

Handwritten in Georgetown in the District of Columbia in May 1814, the sale contract stipulates that after a full term of 12 years the man Natt "is and shall be free."

LVT Museum Preserves Pendleton's Amphibian Heritage

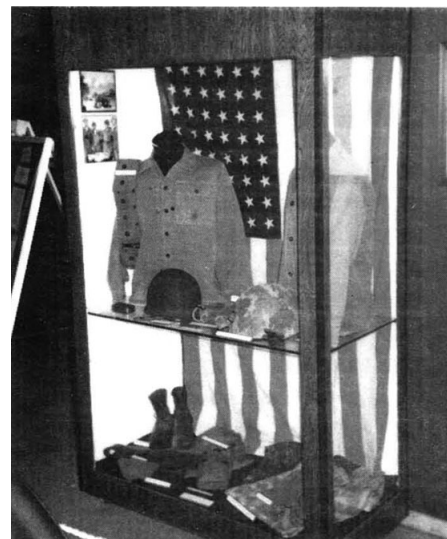
by Charles R. Smith
Historian

A WORLD WAR II-era Quonset hut built in 1944—originally used for tracked vehicle maintenance—is home to seven meticulously restored period amphibian tractors and armored amphibians used by the Marine Corps during the Pacific War, and later in Korea. The Assault Amphibian School Battalion officially dedicated the World War II and Korean War LVT (Landing Vehicle, Tracked) Museum at Camp Del Mar, MCB Camp Pendleton, California, last spring.

Although the museum focuses on the restored LVT 1, LVT 2, LVT 3, LVT 3 (C), LVT 4, LVT (A) 1, and LVT (A) 5 (modified) amphibians, it also features two rebuilt LVT engines (the massive radial Continental and V-8 Cadillac), uniforms and equipment displays, photographs, and artwork. Interpretive displays trace the development, operational employment, and impact of these “Alligator Machines and Marines” on the conduct of amphibious and ground combat operations and the history of the Corps.

For more than 50 years, assault amphibian vehicles used in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam sat in an outdoor lot on the corner of Vandegrift Boulevard and Rattlesnake Canyon Road at MCB Camp Pendleton. Over the years, exposure to the sun, rain, and salt air took its toll. Several years ago, the decision was made that those vehicles of historical importance to the Marine Corps would be maintained at Camp Pendleton, while the remaining, largely prototype, vehicles would be sent to the Marine Corps Logistics Base at Barstow, California, for safeguard and perhaps future restoration.

FOR THOSE VEHICLES remaining at Camp Pendleton, something needed to be done. Thoughts of preservation soon evolved into ideas for creating an amphibian tractor museum. Previous attempts to preserve and display the amphibians had run out. *Envisioned as an unarmored cargo-carrying vehicle, the Museum's LVT 1 was one of the first production models delivered to the Marine Corps. The vehicle would see service on Guadalcanal, Bougainville, Tarawa, and Cape Gloucester during World War II.*



Among the LVTs, the Museum also offers amtrackers' uniforms and memorabilia.



On display in the Del Mar Quonset hut are the World War II-era LVT (A) 1, above, and the Korean War-vintage LVT 3 (C), below.

