FORTITUDINE

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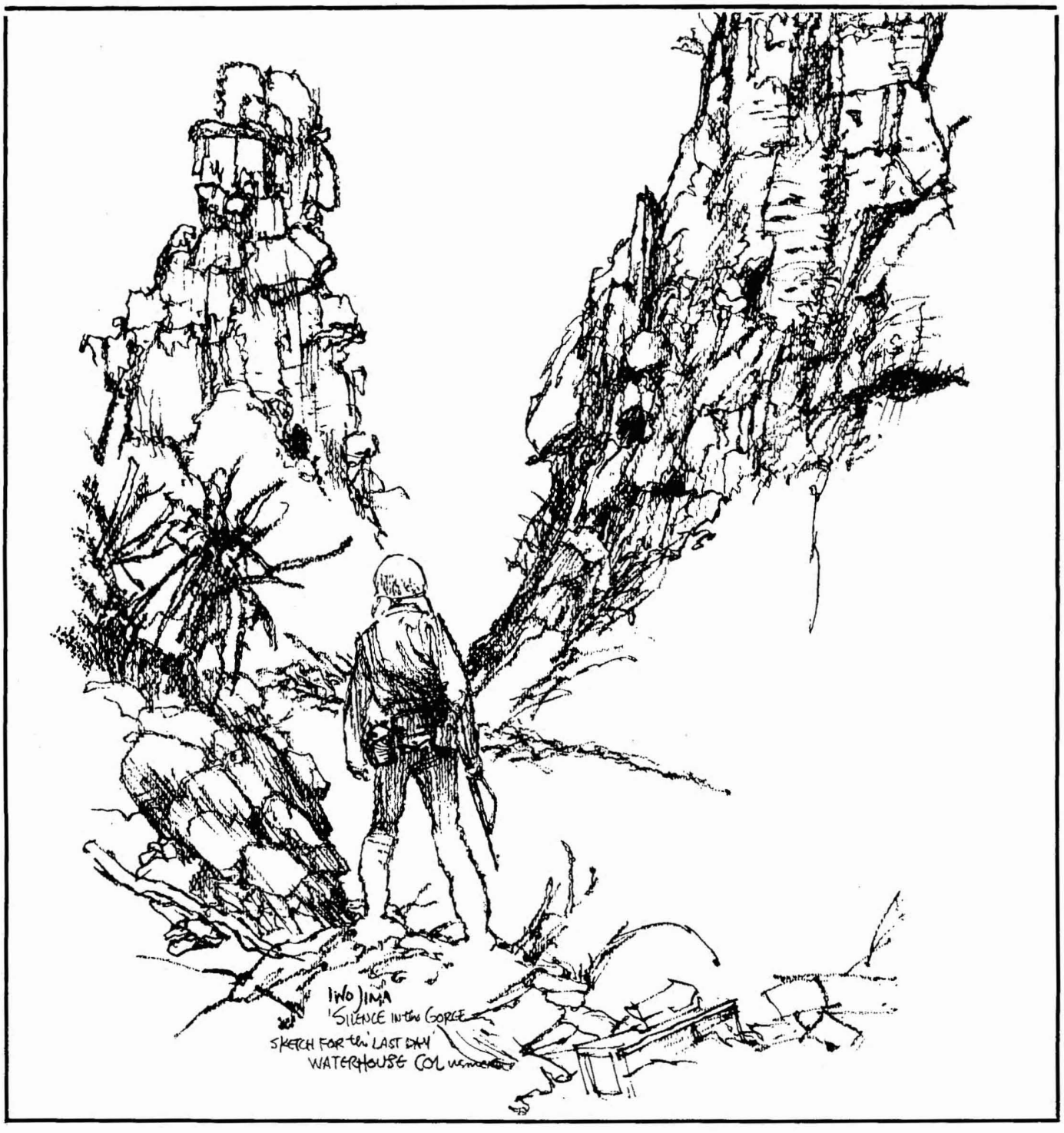

WILLIAM BROYLES' EVENTFUL RETURN TO VIETNAM . . . ARCHIBALD HENDERSON'S LONG FORGOTTEN BOAT CLOAK . . . THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE IWO JIMA LANDING MEMORIALIZED BOTH HERE AND THERE . . . APPRECIATIONS OF GENERALS CUSHMAN AND WELLER . . . FLIGHT LINES: DOUGLAS SBD-5 DAUNTLESS

FORTITUDINE

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

Volume XIV **Winter 1984-1985** **No. 3**

This quarterly newsletter of the Marine Corps historical program is published for the Corps and for friends of Marine Corps history in accordance with Department of the Navy Publications and Printing Regulations NAVEXOS P-35. Individuals and institutions desiring *Fortitudine* on a complimentary regular basis are invited to apply to: History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps (Code HDS-1), Washington, D.C. 20380.

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THE COVER

Col Charles H. Waterhouse, USMCR, is artist-in-residence at the Marine Corps Historical Center. Of this sketch from his latest Iwo Jima sketchbook, made during a visit this year, he writes, "The word was passed: It was over at last. Unbelieving Marines ventured into the open, inviting fire. None came. Orders to police up the area of usable weapons, ammo, and equipment. Load some trucks and move out. My platoon leader, Lt Hammond, walks into the gorge for last-minute checks and looks. Trucks and Marines take off in cloud of dust, leaving a suddenly terrified Marine and his carbine surrounded by the ominous silence of countless black and threatening holes. A pause, then dash into the filtering dust and safety."

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Director's Page

BGen Simmons

Back to Vietnam

Some of us at the Marine Corps Historical Center had the rare opportunity on 11 December of hearing the performance of the U.S. armed forces in Vietnam critiqued from the other side. What we heard was not particularly flattering. The intermediary was William D. Broyles, Jr., who had just returned from a four-week solitary tour of Vietnam, North and South.

Bill had been my aide during the summer of 1970 when I was the assistant division commander of the 1st Marine Division. I had inherited him from my predecessor, BGen William F. Doehler, but I couldn't have chosen better. He had been a platoon leader for the first half of his Vietnam tour with 1st Battalion, 26th Marines, before coming to division headquarters on Hill 327 outside Da Nang. His academic background impressed me. After graduating from Rice in 1966 with a degree in history, Bill had gone to Oxford where he studied politics, philosophy, and economics and received a second B.A. and an M.A.

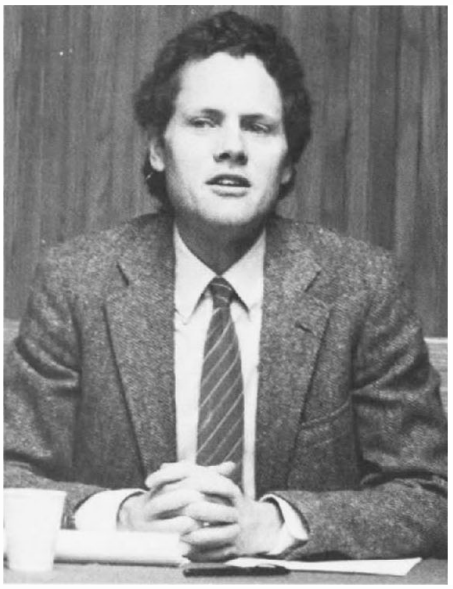
He left me in the fall of 1970 to teach at the Naval Academy. I had hoped that this experience would turn him into a career officer, but somehow Annapolis didn't have quite the effect on him I had hoped it would. After teaching philosophy there for a year, he left active duty and returned to Texas. After working in the Houston public school system for a time, he became a founder, mainspring, and eventual editor-in-chief of the highly successful *Texas Monthly*. About two years ago he left Texas to become editor of *Newsweek*. We got in touch again at the time of the dedication of the Vietnam Memorial which we saw differently.

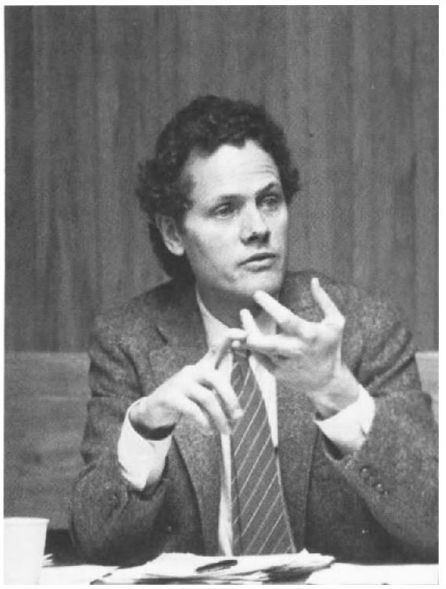
He is now free-lancing. He called me in late November to tell me he had been back to Vietnam and was writing an article (which will be the cover story of the April issue) for *Atlantic Monthly*. He wanted to exchange views and I invited him down to the Center to talk not only with me but with our Vietnam history writers and one or two others. He came down from New York, as I said earlier, on 11 December and we gathered in the conference room to hear what he had to say.

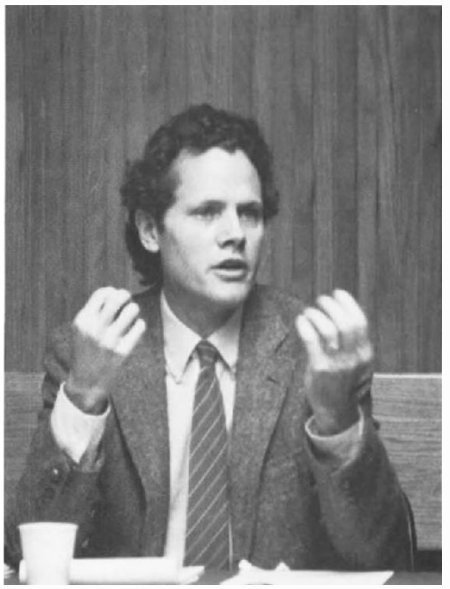
He told us he had gone into Vietnam on 28 September and came out on 25 October. His two weeks in the North were spent mostly in and around Hanoi, with side trips to the Red River delta, to Nam Dinh, target of heavy bombing, and to Ha Tuyen, a mountainous province that borders China. The rest of the time was spent all over South Vietnam, driving from the DMZ to the delta and talking to a lot of people. Mostly he was accompanied by a single escort.

Two things impressed him most vividly.

Former Newsweek *editor William D. Broyles, Jr., left, is welcomed to the Historical Center by BGen Simmons*







The first was that once the Vietnamese people learned that he was an American, not a Russian, he was received with a surprising degree of warmth and even affection.

The second thing was that almost all signs of the war had been obliterated from the landscape, whether in the streets of Hanoi or in the countryside, North and South. He drove around Hanoi for an hour and a half looking in vain for evidence of the bombing, before visiting the famous Bach Mai hospital which was hit by mistake in the 1972 raids. The hospital has been completely rebuilt. The staff still displays pictures of Jane Fonda to visitors. One doctor had vivid stories to tell about the bombing:

> We had to break through the rubble and uncover the entrances with our bare hands to get the wounded out. Power was out and the storeroom where we kept our anti-biotics and bandages was destroyed. It took almost two weeks to extricate all the dead and the smell of bodies filled the hospital. . . . But war is war. So we rebuilt the hospital but the shelter is still filled with rubble and water. After the Paris agreement, Kissinger came here and promised us three million dollars to rebuild the hospital, but we never got it.

Bill found that to the northerners the war in the South had been something far away; the air war was their war. To them, the B-52 symbolizes America's technological superiority. The most popular exhibit in their military museum is the wreckage of a B-52 shot down by their MIG-21s.

"Kids in the military museum," said Bill, "were looking at the pieces of the downed B-52 like they were seeing a great mythological beast that had been slain."

In heavily bombed Nam Dinh, the People's Committee had kept careful records which they brought out in folders to read to the visiting American. They had divided the air war into two periods: the Lyndon B. Johnson period and the Richard M. Nixon period. A woman opened the file on the LBJ period and read:

> During this period Nam Dinh, was bombed 189 times, including 82 night raids. Sixty percent of the houses were destroyed . . .

Flying south into Da Nang took him over some of the toughest areas of I Corps—Go Noi Island, the Que Sons, An Hoa, and the Arizona Territory—ground over which we had flown together so often in 1970, and now he saw only rice paddies, peaceful villages, little kids going to school, and boys on water buffalo. Close into Da Nang all the installations at Red Beach and Marble Mountain were gone. All that remained was red earth and, when he got to see the old sites more closely, an occasional bit of barbed wire.

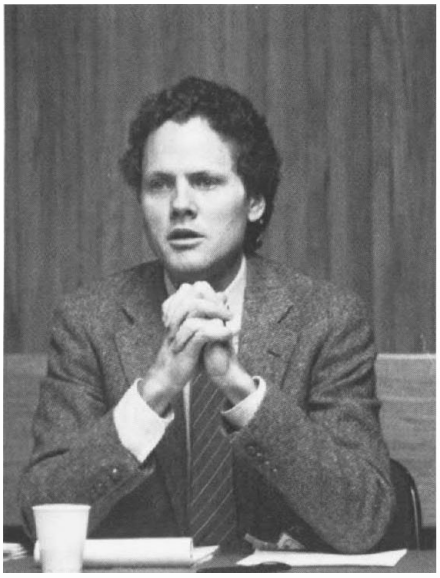
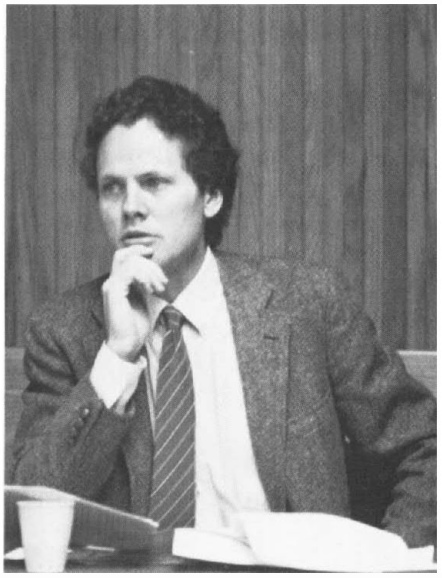
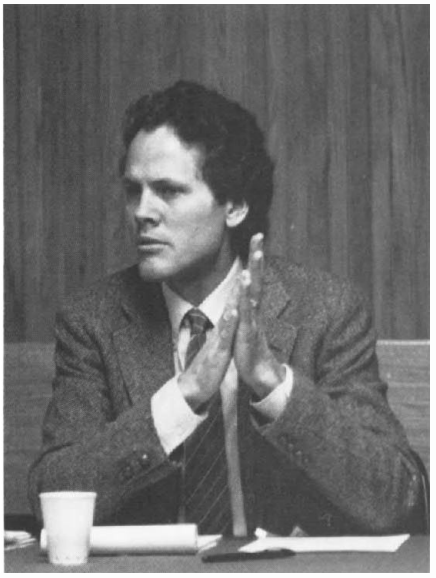
He was struck by the incredible quiet at the Da Nang airfield, once one of the busiest in the world and now down to about two flights a day. Where our helicopters and jets had wound up in a nearly unbearably noisy cacaphony, the hangars stood empty in near-absolute silence.

In Hanoi he asked General Man, editor of the *The Military Daily*, how the North Vietnamese had set out to fight the Americans at the beginning of the war. Man answered:

> From the beginning we concluded that we could not defeat the American Army by military means alone. You were too strong. But we knew we had one great advantage. Our whole nation fought. We were united. You were not. That was your weakness and our goal was to attack that weakness however we could.

Man said that they regarded their forces as "seamless," from armed regular soldier down to unarmed peasant. In a paraphrase of Ho Chi Minh, he said:

> Our regular forces compared to yours were small, but everyone could fight with whatever he had. If we had a gun, we'd take a gun; if we didn't have a gun, we took a sword; if we didn't have a sword, we took a knife; if it wasn't a knife, it was a stick. We took whatever we had and fought the aggressor. You were the aggressor. There were tens of thousands of American and

puppet troops there when we seldom had more than one regiment of the regular forces. Why couldn't you defeat us? Because we had tens of thousands of others—scouts, spies, political cadre.

He asked Bill how many troops the Americans would have needed to attack Da Nang airbase and destroy the aircraft there.

"The way you fought," said Man, answering his own question, "You would need several divisions. We did it with precisely 30 men. It was a new kind of war we invented, and it was possible only because we had the support of the people."

Bill next talked with Colonel Bui Tin, who had been at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, had gone down the Ho Chi Minh trail in 1963, and had received General "Big" Minh's surrender at the Presidential Palace in 1975. He told Bill that the Americans had shown three basic weaknesses:

—The first was our one-year rotation policy. No sooner did a soldier begin to learn the country than he was sent home.

—The second was our trying to win the hearts and minds of people while at the same time trying to kill them with bombs.

—The third was our choice of an ally. Ninety percent of the puppet government was corrupt; the remaining ten percent was not enough.

Bill also met with General Hoang, who is now the chief historian of the Vietnamese Army. During the U.S. Army's first big battle, Ia Drang (which the Vietnamese call Plei Me), Hoang had been aide-de-camp to the North Vietnamese commander (a different General Man). The U.S. Army viewed Ia Drang as a great victory, one that introduced a new type of air assault warfare that proved effective against NVA regular forces. How did the North Vietnamese view it? Hoang had this to say:

When you sent the 1st Cavalry to attack us at Plei Me, it gave us headaches trying to figure out what to do. General Man and I would stay awake in our shelter trying to figure out how to fight you. We were very close to the front and several times the American troops came very near us. With your helicopters you could strike deep into our rear without warning. That was very effective. We had to organize our rear to make it as prepared to fight as our frontline troops.

Aware that we considered Ia Drang a great success, the North Vietnamese watched our confidence in our firepower and helicopter mobility grow steadily into a fire support base mentality. They could count on our offensive operations never going beyond the artillery fan. General Hoang remembered with relish:

Our mobility was only our feet, so we had to lure your troops into areas where their helicopters and artillery would be of no use. And we tried to turn those advantages [against you] to make you so dependent on them that you would never develop the ability to meet us on our own terms, on foot, lightly armed, in the jungle. You seldom knew where we were, and you seldom had a clear goal for your operations. So your great advantages ended up being wasted and you spent so much of your firepower on empty jungle.

Or as Bui Tin put it:

We learned to build special shelters; how to decoy artillery and airplanes; how to tie you to your fire bases and your helicopters, so that they worked against you. We were at home in the jungle and you wanted only to get back to your bases to shower and get a letter from home.

Another general with whom Bill talked was General Tuan who had commanded the 2d Viet Cong Division, a frequent adversary of the Marines. In addition to staying outside our artillery fan, said Tuan, the NVA and VC could also neutralize our great advantage in firepower by fighting at very close ranges, a tactic they called "grabbing them by the belt" and which he illustrated by grabbing Bill by the belt. [It

Peter Braestrup, editor of the Woodrow Wilson Quarterly, *was among the group of 14 expert questioners at the interview.*

is a tactic that every Marine who was ever caught in a baited helicopter landing zone will remember.] Tuan also said:

> By the fall of 1967 . . . we concluded that you'd done your best, but that you'd still not reversed the balance of force on the battlefield. The strategic position had not changed. So we decided to carry out one decisive battle, to force the issue.

What followed, of course, was the 1968 Tet offensive of which the attack against Khe Sanh formed a part. Was Khe Sanh a main objective or a diversion? It is a question we have long debated. General Man had this to say:

> Westmoreland thought Khe Sanh was Dien Bien Phu. Dien Bien Phu was a strategic battle for us. We mobilized everything for it. We at last had a chance to have a favorable balance of forces against the French. We never had that at Khe Sanh. The situation would not allow it. We wanted to bring your forces away from the cities to decoy them to the frontier [to enable us] to prepare for our great Tet offensive.

Of the Tet offensive, Man said:

> We mounted the offensive to show that you could not defeat us as you had planned. Of course, we suffered great losses, but the losses were acceptable to the success.

Bui Tin also shrugged off their losses:

> We had hundreds of thousands killed. We would have sacrificed one to two million more, if necessary.

Bill asked a number of persons to identify the worst period of the war. General Tuan's answer was particularly striking:

> After Tet 1968, the early years of Vietnamization—particularly 1969 and 1970—were very difficult for us. The fighting was very fierce. We were often hungry. I was a division commander [2d Viet Cong Division] and I went hungry for days. We had no rice to eat. It was very, very bad. We realized that we had to hang on during this terrible period until the expected reaction in America took its course, and American troops were pulled out. Then our final victory was assured, even though it might be years in coming.

Most of Bill's questions concerning MIAs and POWs were shrugged off. The matter of recovering the remains of American servicemen did, however, gain him an interesting comment from a Vietnamese official:

> Look, put yourself in our place. You've been to all these cemeteries. Every village has a cemetery. Now, we lost hundreds of thousands of men in the war. But all of our fighters are buried in the South, away from their home villages. They are not in those graves in their village cemeteries. We don't know where the graves of half of them are. How can we go out and tell our people to find the bodies of Americans when they can't find the bodies of their own sons and fathers? How can we tell them that it's more important to look for Americans?

The last word should probably go to General Tuan:

> We did not have to beat you the way the Allies beat the Nazis. Our goal was only for you to withdraw so we could settle our affairs. That was our goal and we achieved it.

Persons Attending the William Broyles Discussion

BGen Edwin H. Simmons, Director of Marine Corps History and Museums
Col John G. Miller, Deputy Director for Marine Corps History
Mr. Henry I. Shaw, Jr., Chief Historian
Mr. Benis M. Frank, Head, Oral History Section
Mr. Jack Shulimson, Senior Vietnam Historian
LtCol Wayne A. Babb, Vietnam Historical Writer
Maj Frank M. Batha, Vietnam Aviation Historical Writer
Maj George R. Dunham, Vietnam Historical Writer
Dr. V. Keith Fleming, Vietnam Historian
Mr. Charles R. Smith, Vietnam Historian

Dr. Jeffrey J. Clarke, Vietnam Historian, U.S. Army Center of Military History
Dr. Wayne W. Thompson, Vietnam Historian, Office of Air Force History
Mr. Bernard F. Cavalcante, Reference Specialist, Naval Historical Center
Mr. Peter Braestrup, Editor, *Woodrow Wilson Quarterly*

Copies of the full transcript of the discussion with Mr. William D. Broyles, as transcribed and edited by Col John G. Miller, are available on request.

Readers Always Write

NO 1,000-POUNDERS ON F4Fs

Your page on the F4F-4 [*Fortitudine*, Fall 1984] brought back memories. . . . My acquaintance with these airplanes began in 1945 at NATTC, Norman, Oklahoma (the AMM School, Class "A"), where we had both FM-1s and FM-2s as learning aids. From the students' point of view, these were chiefly memorable for the miserable Breeze cartridge starter, a diabolical device of which the blow-out disc (the safety feature) had to be disabled . . . in order for the gas pressure to be retained sufficiently to turn the engine over on a cold morning . . . which is to say, to make it work you had to make it unsafe. To unload a hangfire was to bet your hand (as a number of one-armed sailors could confirm).

Under "Technical Data" . . . the figure for rate-of-climb looks like a calculation from a "Time-to-Climb" table (like 6 minutes to 10,000 ft), which for a loaded F4F-4 (especially with those bloody-awful tanks) is probably about right. . . . My only quibble here is that initial climb rate is not the same as altitude divided by time-to-climb. . . .

My BIG question-mark, though, is reserved for those "Two 1000-lb bombs" . . . . The little-bitty rack was sized for a 60-gallon drop-tank and was (as I recall) limited to 400 lbs suspended. I never mounted the tanks, but I did leave the racks on because they were useful for dispensing such goodies as life-rafts. . . . But *1000 lbs? No way*!

John M. Verdi
Colonel, USMCR (Ret)
Northport, Alabama

EDITOR'S NOTE: Col Verdi is right on both counts. We did not wish to use an initial rate of climb for our data, therefore the F4F-4's rate of climb was determined from calculations using the aircraft's time to climb from sea level to 20,000 feet at normal power. The armaments load should have shown two 100-pound vice two 1,000-pound bombs.

FROM A VALUED READER

It has been a source of great pleasure to thumb through [*Fortitudine*] and read many of the articles and comments which stirred memories of my long association with our distinguished Marines.

The issue just received telling of ships named for some of our Medal of Honor Marines [Fall 1984] is priceless to me.

Mrs. Arthur Blakeney
Washington, D.C.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The writer, Jane Blakeney, was for more than 30 years a staff member and head of the Decorations and Medals Branch at Headquarters Marine Corps. Mrs. Blakeney is the author of Heroes of the U.S. Marine Corps, 1861-1955, *an authoritative reference work published in 1957 from notes and files compiled since 1924, and one which is still in daily use at the Historical Center.*

1ST DIV VETS' VIEWS ASKED

As some of your readers know, my first book, *Battle for Hue: Tet 1968* (Presidio Press, 1983), was based on interviews with 35 Vietnam veterans. For my second book, I had the opportunity to interview 90 Viet vets . . . . I'm presently starting a third proposed book on Vietnam. I hope to chronicle the activities of the 1st Marine Division and Americal Division in the Arizona Valley-Que Son Mountains-Hiep Duc Valley area, from 7 June-7 September 1969. . . . Units involved included . . . 1/5, 2/5, 1/7, and 2/7; 1st Reconnaissance Battalion; 1st Marine Aircraft Wing. . . .

I would greatly appreciate hearing from any vets of these operations as soon as possible, so we can arrange an interview . . . . Call or write: Keith William Nolan, 220 Kingsville Court, Webster Groves, Missouri 63119; (314) 961-7577.

Keith William Nolan
Webster Groves, Missouri

Recent Books of Historical Interest

Some recent books of professional interest to Marines, available from local bookstores and libraries, have been added to the library of the Marine Corps Historical Center. Among them are:

Bantam War Books Series. Reprints and reissues in paperback of selected volumes covering World War II. A new title is published every month with approximately 24 titles in print at any one time. Titles thus far in the series include Robert Sherrod's *Tawara*, D.A. Burgett's *As Eagles Screamed*, and C.A. Lockwood's *Sink 'Em All*. Many titles are printed in specially illustrated editions. Most titles $2.95 to $3.95.

The Banana Wars; An Inner History of American Empire, 1900-1934. Lester D. Langley. University Press of Kentucky. 251 pp., 1983. This work covers American diplomatic and military involvement in the Caribbean from 1898 until 1934, when the last Marines left Haiti. $26.00

June 1944. H. P. Willmott. Blandford Press. 224 pp., 1984. The author has provided a record and intepretation of the war in Europe and the Far East during the course of a single month. *June 1944* sets the events in context providing both an account and an analysis of events in relation to the political decisions that preceded them and the repercussions that followed them. The book has three parts: first, the northwest Europe and Mediterranean theaters; second, events on the Eastern front; third, the Asian mainland and the western Pacific. In his analysis, the author states that the importance of this month lies in the fact that its combined events ushered in the final phase of World War II. Also he believes the month was witness to a new international system based on the realities of Soviet and American power. $16.95.

The Glory of the Solomons. Edwin P. Hoyt. Stein and Day. 348 pp., 1983. The story of the World War II South Pacific campaign for the Solomon Islands including New Georgia, Kula Gulf, Vella Lavella, Bougainville, New Britain, the Green Islands, and the Battle of Bismarck Sea. This was written by the author of *Guadalcanal; The Battle of Leyte Gulf; Blue Skies and Blood: the Battle of Coral Sea*. $19.95

Acquisitions

Presidential inaugurations are affairs planned with the meticulous detail of military operations. One aspect that cannot be preplanned, as recently seen, is that of Inauguration Day weather.

Such was the case with the Inauguration of President William Henry Harrison, the ninth President of the United States. Inauguration Day, 4 March 1841, was cold and windswept. The President, delivering his inaugural address without benefit of a hat, developed a cold. In the first frantic weeks of his administration, the cold would develop into pneumonia, leading to his untimely death within a month.

After a ceremony held in the East Room of the White House the lead-lined coffin was held in Washington awaiting the return of spring in order that the body could be removed to its final resting place. This would be at North Bend, Ohio, at the Harrison family home.

In preparation of moving the deceased, Secretary of the Navy George E. Badger ordered Col Cmdt Archibald Henderson to "detail a guard of men to be placed in charge of a commissioned officer of Marines for the purpose of accompanying the remains of the late President to the City of Cincinnati. . . ." Henderson responded the next day, 26 June 1841, ". . . Being personally acquainted with some of the committee, and under the supposition that an officer of respectable grade and age would be appropriate for the duty, I have thought it advisable to proceed myself to this service."

Thus, Col Cmdt Henderson, leading a detail of eight enlisted Marines, began the journey to Cincinnati, and on to North Bend for the interment. The funeral services took place on Wednesday, 7 July of that year.

Near Williamstown, Virginia (now West Virginia), lived the brother and nephew of Col Comdt Henderson. Family legend has it that he visited these homes only once. The only trip that far west that Henderson is known to have taken was as commander of the funeral escort. It is thus surmised that some objects which were owned by Henderson now in possession of the decendants, were left there during this historic journey.

The present family home, called Henderson Hall, proudly maintained a blue boat cloak and a sea chest of the Marine Corps' fifth commandant. During a recent visit to the original, two-story brick home, Curator Richard Long was given the blue boat cloak as a permanent donation to the collection of the Marine Corps Museum.

The cloak is made of a finely woven blue cloth, with a standing collar, shoulder-length cape, and a lining of heavy green wool. The Museum's curatorial staff, in consultation with clothing historians from around the country, have identified the garment as

The 19th century boat cloak donated to the Museum is in good shape considering its age, and professional conservation work is scheduled to stabilize its condition. Both the blue cloth body of the cloak and its heavy green wool lining have faded from chemical reactions of the dyes used. The standing collar and shoulder-length cape were features of garments of the period.