

When first established, the field could only be reached from the main post by boat, or a long drive out to the Washington-Richmond highway, down to Boswell's Corner, and into the flying field on the road to Widewater. In an emergency, small supplies were trucked to the edge of the swamp and then hand-carried across the Chopawamsic Creek on the R.F. & P. railroad trestle. By 1921, a long wooden automobile and pedestrain trestle had been built parallel to the railroad. This trestle also carried a six-inch water line from the post water supply to the flying field.

As with all early aviation, there was the normal high accident rate and on 9 June 1921, 2dLt Walter V. Brown, the Commanding Officer of Flight "F," was killed in the crash of his DeHavilland DH-4B. Lt Brown crashed in the Potomac River near Colonial Beach while on the way to a bombing exercise. His observer, GySgt Alvin R. Bugbee, was injured in the crash but survived.

According to an old newspaper account, five DeHavilland aircraft left Quantico early in the morning for a trip to the mouth of the Potomac. On the return trip fog was encountered and the aircraft broke formation. All except Brown's machine reached the field safely.

Brown was perhaps the most outstanding athlete in the Marine Corps at that time. He played football at the University of Wisconsin and Washington State University before entering the service in June 1917. He played quarterback on the famous Mare Island service team which captured the championship of the west that year. Brown himself accounted for more than half the season's total team scoring, and on the West Coast was accepted as the finest quarterback in or out of the service.

Brown was a sergeant when sent to M.I.T. ground school to study aviation in 1918. From there he was sent to the Marine Flying Field in Miami, Florida, where he received his commission as second lieutenant (provisional) on 10 January 1919. He was soon recognized as one of the ablest fliers in the Marine Corps.

Brown joined the 1st Brigade Marines in Haiti in March 1919 for aviation duty. In September 1919, he accepted an appointment as a temporary second lieutenant in the Marine Corps. He was detached from duty in Haiti in January 1920 and joined the Marine Barracks, Quantico on 10 March 1920. On 22 March 1921, Brown was appointed a permanent second lieutenant with a date of rank of 4 June 1920.

While at Quantico, Brown participated in all sports. He was largely responsible for the Marine-Navy game at Annapolis

being tied at the 3d quarter, and in the final period of the game, he ran eighty yards for the winning touchdown. He played second base on the Quantico baseball team, having played previously for the Mare Island team. On one occasion he gathered together a Marine team to play the famous Duffy Lewis' All-Stars on tour from the major leagues, and won the contest. He was also a contestant in the Pulitzer Air Races at Garden City, Long Island in November 1920.

Also stationed at the Marine Flying Field was a Capt John A. Minnis, who had served in Santo Domingo and France prior to becoming naval aviator. Though in aviation only a short while, Capt Minnis became the Executive Officer of the Marine Flying Field. During night flying exercises on 23 September 1921, in connection with the searchlight unit, Capt Minnis failed to pull out of a dive and crashed in the water near the mouth of Quantico Creek.

These two aviators, Brown and Minnis, were so well liked and held in such high esteem by all, that the field was officially named "Brown Field" and the bridge across the swamp was named "Minnis Bridge."

On the afternoon of 7 May 1922, the field was formally dedicated in a ceremony attended by the Major General Commandant, John A. Lejeune, MajGen Smedley D. Butler, MajGen Roy S. Geiger, Mrs. J. A. Minnis, and Mrs. C. M. Brown, the mother of Lt Brown. All the troops of the post were in attendance. Two concrete markers with bronze tablets, which had been purchased by the aviation personnel, were unveiled during the ceremonies.

The entire field was dedicated as Brown Field, but was known locally as Field 1 and Field 2. With the advent of faster and heavier aircraft at the end of the 20s, it was obvious that the existing field would soon be inadequate. With today's earth moving equipment, we could cut away the high ground west of the tracks to expand, but in the 20s and early 30s, the capabilities for moving large masses of earth did not exist in the form to make such an undertaking economically practical. Dredging, however, did appear to be a feasible solution, so work was started in 1930 to cut away the end of the peninsula forming Field 1 and to fill Chopawamsic Creek. This required the relocation of Hangars 1, 2, and 3, to the west side of the tracks, where they stand today, the demolition of three staff NCO houses, the balloon hangar, and the club house. The creek line was changed with the present channel being cut through the high ground of Field 1.

During the course of this construction, the original Minnis Bridge was destroyed. The causeway was replaced by a roadway nearer the railroad tracks on new fill, and a new wooden bridge

built on the site of the present concrete structure over the creek. The road junction, where the two concrete monuments were located, was cut away in making the new creek channel. When the monuments were destroyed, two senior NCOs salvaged the plaques and kept them through the years until they were donated to the Marine Corps Museum in 1962.

All that remains of Brown Field 1 is the narrow strip of land south of the creek and east of the railroad tracks. The rest being cut away to make Turner Field, named after another well known Marine Corps aviator killed in an accident. Brown Field 2 remains as all the cleared area south of the creek and west of the tracks and as far south as the fence along the road to Rectory, Virginia and now occupied by OCS, the new Post Brig, and the Museums Branch Aviation Unit, in Hangars 1 and 2.

Brown Field is long from being forgotten by interested aviation historians. There is a proposal to build a Marine Corps Museum Aviation Annex on a site west of what is now the OCS parade ground. It would be fitting that a Marine Aviation Museum be on the first authorized Marine Corps flying field.

The two bronze plaques of Brown and Minnis, thoughtfully salvaged by the two historically minded sergeants, are held by the Museum and will someday be mounted near their original spot, this time, it is hoped, more permanently. Clyde W. Gillespie



Brown Field after construction was begun on Turner Field, center right. This picture was taken in 1935.

The Marine Expeditionary Medal

The Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal was authorized in 1929 to add to the scarlet and gold ribbon prescribed in 1919. By World War II, 52 expeditions entitled their participants to wear the medal. It was awarded the defenders of Wake Island and more recently for the 1962 Thailand landings and to those in certain units in the Cuban area in 1961-1962.

Various medals and badges commemorating service in certain wars and campaigns had been authorized in the years prior to World War I, but Marines who had participated in expeditions had not received any recognition for their actions. In 1919 this was rectified by Marine Corps Order No. 33 which authorized the Marine Corps Expeditionary Ribbon for the "numerous expeditions in which the Marine Corps has participated and for which service no campaign badge has been awarded."

Sixteen expeditions to six countries were listed in the order -- beginning with Panama in 1902 and ending with Cuba in 1917. The ribbon indicated that the wearer had participated in one of the expeditions. If the Marine was involved in more than one, the additional expeditions were shown by placing a metal numeral in the center of the ribbon representing the total number of expeditions.

By 1921 the list of expeditions had increased to 37 and included campaigns as far back as the landing in Hawaii in 1874 when Marines and sailors went ashore to preserve order and protect American lives. Major General Commandant John A. Lejeune requested that commanding officers participating in expeditions or landings in foreign countries report this to Headquarters to see if such an event should be added to the list of operations.

It was not until 1929 that an expeditionary medal, in addition to the ribbon, was authorized for Marines. A further change was adopted in 1931. Two or more expeditions were represented on the medal or ribbon by bronze stars rather than numerals -- one star for each additional campaign.

Further campaigns were added throughout the 1930s. Following the outbreak of World War II another operation was added to the 52 already in existence. The defenders on Wake were honored for their heroic defense of the island by receiving the Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal with a silver "W" on the suspension ribbon.

An attempt was made in the 1950s to phase out this medal and replace it with the Navy Expeditionary Medal. Fortunately, al-

though this plan had already been approved by the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, the Commandant, General Randolph McC. Pate, decided to retain the Marines' expeditionary medal.

The Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal was first authorized in the 1950s and has also been awarded to Marines on expeditionary duty and landings in foreign countries. Marines who landed in Lebanon and the Dominican Republic were awarded this medal rather than the Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal.

At the present time there are 55 expeditions represented by the expeditionary medal. Since 1941 the medal has only been awarded twice, for the landings in Thailand in 1962 and the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1961-1962. Although Marines have participated in expeditions since that time another medal, the Meritorious Unit Commendation Medal, seems to gradually be replacing it.

The ribbon of the Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal has a scarlet center, flanked by gold, with narrow scarlet edges. The obverse shows a Marine with full pack charging with fixed bayonet. Wave scrolls at the base indicate the naval nature of the Marines' duties, and the word "Expeditions" is written above the figure of the Marine. The reverse (which is the same as the Dominican Campaign Medal) has an eagle perched on a branch and an anchor between the words, "For Service." Inscribed across the top are the words "United States Marine Corps."

Gabrielle M. Neufeld



Obverse



Reverse

Historians of the Corps

Clyde Hill Metcalf, the scion of an old New England family with roots in Dedham, Massachusetts, and historian of the Marine Corps, was born on 23 March 1886 at Greenville, Illinois. Much of his boyhood life was spent at Fort Collins, Colorado.

He graduated from the University of Arkansas in 1911 and took graduate courses at the University of Chicago for a year. He returned to Arkansas as an instructor of German at the University of Arkansas followed by a position as principal of the Wilmot, Arkansas High School.

On 7 November 1912 he accepted a commission as second lieutenant in the Marine Corps and reported to the Marine Officers' School at Norfolk, Virginia, on 10 December.

His historical activities in the Corps were interspersed among normal assignments which included duty on Guam, service in France with the AEF, duty at Quantico with an interruption for sea duty on board USS *Maryland*, service at Parris Island, and then duty in Nicaragua around 1930.

On 6 February 1935, Metcalf entered upon duty as Officer-in-Charge of the Historical Section. His major project was the writing of a new history of the Marine Corps. The last history worthy of the name was that written by Maj Richard S. Collum years before. Metcalf characterized it as "very unsatisfactory to us" since "most of the history of the Marine Corps has transpired since Collum wrote his book. It is not much help to us now." The international role of the United States as exemplified by the Spanish-American War, the Boxer Rebellion, World War I, and the numerous Latin American interventions had occurred since Collum's history.

The decision was made also to abandon efforts to complete the multi-volume work initiated by Edwin N. McClellan. It was Metcalf's feeling that a multi-volume history would not be read and that what was sorely needed was a single volume shorter history.

To prepare himself better for his task, Metcalf enrolled in



the local George Washington University, specializing in foreign relations and in methods of historical research. He received his graduate degree in history in February 1936. After three and a half years with two assistants to help him, Metcalf completed his history just prior to the completion of his tour of duty on 31 December 1938. The volume was actually published on 27 February 1939 by G. P. Putnam's Sons.

Metcalf analyzed his own book in a letter to retired Commandant John A. Lejeune on 19 October 1938:

I have been given sufficient liberty in the matter as to permit me to write a book that is not a "polly-anna" affair.

I believe that the Marine Corps and its officers have made mistakes, when they were obvious or the acts were universally condemned by contemporaries the only thing to do in my opinion is to admit the mistake and attempt to place the blame for them.

... I have acted under the assumption that if future generations are to profit by our experiences they must know about our shortcomings and failures as well as our fine qualities and successes.

His "Preface" explains how Marines were used as an instrument of American foreign policy but always under the closest supervision of the President, the State Department, or the Navy Department. In retrospect, he explains and justifies the part played by the Corps in a quiet reply to the public charges made by retired Marine MajGen Smedley D. Butler.

The book was published without footnotes or bibliography which has limited its use by historians in recent years. Material of this nature was prepared and kept in the office, but efforts in 1950 to locate it among the morass of government storage files were unsuccessful.

Commandant Thomas Holcomb officially complimented and commended Metcalf "upon the accomplishment of an unusual duty unusually well performed."

Following his assignment with the Historical Section, Metcalf (now a lieutenant colonel) was sent to the Naval War College as a Senior Course student. After his graduation, he was assigned to Quantico.

The Commandant was apparently loath to lose Col Metcalf's expertise in the historical field as he was named as Curator

of the Museum in Circular Letter No. 391 of 2 October 1940 which established the Marine Corps Museum in the new Recreation Building at Quantico. The letter explained the choice of Quantico for its location "until further developments indicate that it would have a larger usefulness elsewhere."

Metcalf remained at Quantico as Officer-in-Charge of the Museum (as an additional duty) until 30 September 1942 when he was detached for duty at Headquarters.

Among the early items received by the Museum was the Marine exhibit from the San Francisco World's Fair including every type of machine gun ever used by Marines as well as captured German and Austrian guns. Another welcomed item was the State of Virginia's presentation sword to Presley N. O'Bannon.

On 4 October 1942, Col Metcalf (promoted effective 29 April 1942) was again assigned as Officer-in-Charge of the Historical Section. Here he faced a new problem -- that of history in the making.

Metcalf set up a program of war diaries and established a system for maintaining the war records of the Corps. All war diaries and special action reports were initially stored and catalogued in the Secret Files section at Headquarters, but early in 1944 the Commandant authorized the Historical Division to assemble all important operational material in a fireproof vault.

He interpreted his task as the accumulation of all documents of historical importance and to setting up a flow of routine and special reports which together would form an authoritative and official history of the Marine Corps in World War II. He felt that when insufficient data was received and could not be obtained by correspondence, the Marine Corps Historian could send an officer to obtain the desired data. This procedure was approved by Commandant A. A. Vandegrift in April 1944. Under Col John Potts, one of Metcalf's successors, four officers and two enlisted men serving as historical observers were sent to Saipan, Tinian, Guam, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa.

In addition to his duties in the Historical Section, Metcalf served as editor of the *Marine Corps Gazette* from March 1943 through May 1944, transforming the magazine from a quarterly to a monthly. This post, along with the job of Secretary-Treasurer of the Marine Corps Association, seems to have been a peripheral duty of the Officer-in-Charge of the Historical Section (or Division, as the title changed).

On military history in general, Metcalf believed the study

would be given a fresh impetus if PhD students in our universities were enabled to choose military topics for their theses.

Following a tour of duty in the Pacific Area during World War II, Metcalf returned to the United States, retiring in April 1946 after more than 33 years service in the Marine Corps. He died 19 December 1962 at Sarasota, Florida, at the age of 76. Burial was in the Arlington National Cemetery.

He is survived by his widow, Mrs. Lochie D. Metcalf, a daughter, Mrs. Donald C. (Julia M.) Kline, a granddaughter, Mrs. Walter (Dale) Birket, and a grandson, Jon Robert Kline.

Ralph W. Donnelly

In the article "Historians of the Corps" which appeared in the Fall issue of *Fortitudine*, mention was made of a facsimile reprint edition of LtCol Edwin N. McClellan's *The United States Marine Corps in the World War*. Copies of the reprint edition may be obtained by writing to the Director of Marine Corps History and Museums, Headquarters, U. S. Marine Corps, Washington, D. C. 20380. Also available is a listing of the more than 100 articles by the late LtCol Edwin N. McClellan, also mentioned in the article.

THE SQUADRON HISTORY PROGRAM

The first of the aviation unit histories completed under the new "buddy" program will be available in the near future. The honor goes to Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 162, commanded by Maj Ralph B. Orey at MCAS(H), New River, N.C. Research and writing were completed by squadron historian Capt Joseph J. O'Donnell during a period of temporary duty with the Historical Branch.

The program is designed to prepare brief histories of aviation units with the squadron providing the writer-researcher and the Historical Branch providing the archives, reference material, and editorial assistance. Several additional units have expressed interest in the program and it is expected that these historians will be assigned to temporary duty to research their squadron's records at the Historical Branch.



Capt "Jim" O'Donnell working with Capt Mary Edmonds

Flags and Plaques Donated

The homemade American flag raised on Wolmi-do Island in Incheon harbor by Company G, 3d Battalion, 5th Marines has been given to the Museum by then-LtCol Robert D. Taplett, the battalion commander. Company G was commanded by Capt Robert D. Bohn, now Commanding General, MCB, Camp Lejeune. Knowing that the hill on Wolmi-do was their objective, a flag to raise on it was sought during the sea voyage to Incheon. No flag was available so a 48-star flag was stenciled on a 32 by 48-inch piece of muslin aboard the APD USS *Bass*. A 3 by 5-inch piece of surgical tape is affixed to the flag bearing the following inscription: "This flag was raised on Wolmi-Do Island, September 15, 1950, at 0636. Third Battalion Fifth Marines, landed on Wolmi-Do at 0603 and secured fighting at 1034." Beneath this by the same pen and hand is: "Flag carried by Ray Tiegs, S-1 Clerk." Names of six other Marines from H&S, Weapons, G, and I Companies also appear.

The 1st Marine Aircraft Wing colors used by Task Force Delta during the period it was based at Nam Phong, Thailand were forwarded to the Museum by Col W. Wessel, USMC, of the U. S. Support Activities Group.

Another flag added to the Museum's collection was donated by the widow of the late MajGen Charles F. Widdecke, USMC. It was the last major general's flag to fly over a Marine division headquarters in Vietnam. MajGen Widdecke commanded the 1st Marine Division in Vietnam from April 1970-April 1971.

From still another war, Mrs. Jacob Durmer, Bethesda, Md., has donated to the Museum in her husband's name, a Japanese flag taken from the helmet of a Japanese KIA. The flag is inscribed "2nd. Bn. - 1st. Marines Guadalcanal, New Britain," and bears the signatures of the members of the battalion, including those Marines killed in action.

Our request in the Fall issue of *Fortitudine* for unit plaques has borne fruit. We have received the following plaques:

Royal Air Force and Royal Air Force Fighter Command
which were presented to MACS-3
HMH-463 Heavy Helicopter Squadron
2d ROK Marine Brigade
Detachment Francais Changhai
Naval Mobile Construction Battalion ONE

We look forward to receiving more.

People and Places

In December BGen Edwin H. Simmons gave a presentation on Marine Capt Archibald Gillespie's activities in the 19th century West and the Mexican War to the Potomac Corral of the Westerners, meeting at the Cosmos Club in Washington. He was also a member of the National Awards Jury of the Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge, Pa., and will return to Pennsylvania on February 18 for the annual awards presentation. On that same trip he will participate in a weekend session at Fort Mifflin, near Philadelphia, giving a presentation on "The Defenses of the Delaware During the Revolutionary War" to the Shackamaxon Society, sponsors of the Fort Mifflin preservation program, and the local department of the Council on Abandoned Military Posts (CAMP).

The Deputy Director for Marine Corps History, Col Herbert M. Hart, has traveled to the West twice in recent months to represent the program. During a combined duty-leave period in the fall, he spoke in El Paso to a combined group of several historical societies then went on to Silver City, N.M. to speak at a Military History Day. He then moved to Ft. Worth, Texas where he chaired a session on military history at the annual conference of the Western History Association. In January he presented a paper on the federal policies and legislation regarding historic preservation to the Society for Historical Archaeology meeting in Berkeley, California. Later he spoke to a meeting of the Fort Point and Army Museum Association at the Presidio of San Francisco.

Two of the Division's historians, Mr. Henry I. Shaw, Jr. and Mr. Jack Shulimson, attended the American Historical Association's annual meeting in San Francisco from 27-30 December 1973. Mr. Shulimson also used the occasion to inspect and inventory the FMFPac records in the Federal Records Center at San Bruno.

Mr. Benis M. Frank, head of the Oral History Unit, attended the 8th Annual Colloquium of the Oral History Association at West Point, 3-5 November 1973, where he chaired a panel on "Taped Interviews and Military History." He also was a member of a panel, "Interviews and the Documenting of Vietnam Combat Operations," chaired by Dr. Forrest C. Pogue and consisting of representatives of the other Service historical agencies and newsmen Ward Just and Peter Arnett.

The History and Museums Division can claim an assist for the cause of good relations among historians. Mr. Richard R. Smith and Miss Barbara Renish, who worked as a summer intern in the Reference Section, were married on 29 December 1973.

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