

# STRIKING SIXTH

1st Provisional Marine Brigade Newsletter



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Laura Lacey, Bill Most, Herbert Kinney, Neal McCallum, Joe Kite, Harry McKnight, Bennett Bard, Paul Judd, State Delegate Pat Young



Reunion Hostess Patty Payne



Marine Corps Band at 8th & I



DC Rigby with color guard

## ★ Star Spangled Reunion! ★

In Baltimore in 1814, Francis Scott Key was inspired to pen the words to our national anthem. Two hundred years later, members of the Sixth Marine Division Association descended on the city and were inspired to eat, drink, laugh, cry, sightsee, remember and, of course, party! Thanks to hostess Patty Payne, it was a blast! See pages 2-9 for more photos and info.



Joan Willauer, Bill Most, Ross Laporte, DC Rigby, Oscar Soifer, Paul Judd, and Herbert Kinney at the WWII Memorial

OUR DEBT TO THE HEROIC MEN AND VALIANT WOMEN IN THE SERVICE OF OUR COUNTRY CAN NEVER BE REPAID. THEY HAVE EARNED OUR UNDYING GRATITUDE. AMERICA WILL NEVER FORGET THEIR SACRIFICES.  
PRESIDENT HARRY S. TRUMAN

**Inside This Issue:**

- 2018 Reunion Photos.....2-8
- 2018 Reunion Donors, Attendees.....9
- Ray Merrell.....10-11
- Seabees on Guadalcanal.....12-13
- Francis Crilley.....14-16
- In Flanders Fields.....16
- TAPS.....17
- John Foley.....17
- Chaplain, President & Editor.....18
- Officer & Unit Director Listing.....19
- Membership Info and Donors.....20
- Membership Application.....21
- Historian's Corner.....22
- 2019 Reunion — Philadelphia.....23

# ★ 2018 Reunion ★

## Honor Thy Father

Before Jim McGuigan (29th Mar-3-G) passed away in 2015, he asked his daughter Patty to continue attending the Sixth Marine Division Association's annual reunions. She has attended faithfully ever since, and now she's gone one better — she's hosted a successful reunion! We know her father would be extremely proud.

It was a special time! The sun shone, the temperatures were pleasant and the humidity was low. Definitely not the norm for Baltimore in August. It really felt like God was smiling down on us.

You'll find lots of pictures on the next several pages. Thanks to Lucy DeVito, Tiffany Leggett, Jim Rigby, Pfuong Riles, and Sharon Woodside for sharing their photos with us.



above: WWII Memorial

left: remembering Jim McGuigan (29th Mar-3-G), father of reunion hostess Patty Payne.



Christine & Frank McBride



They're at it again!  
Joe Kite and Sharon Woodhouse



Connie Houseweart, Sharon Woodhouse



Dale Marsh, Bennett Bard

tourists thank Oscar Soifer for his service at the WWII Memorial



Waiting for the parade to begin at 8th and I. Commandant's house in background.



Inner Harbor Cruise on the Baltimore Spirit

# ★ 2018 Reunion ★

Our first opportunity to socialize was at the meet and greet on Tuesday night. As always, it was fun to reconnect with old friends and make new ones.

State Delegate Pat Young read a proclamation from the state of Maryland. It's so nice to see those in government remember and appreciate what the Sixth Marine Division did for our country.

Laura Lacey gave a spirited presentation about the Sixth Division and Okinawa, followed by a Q&A. How often do you get to hear an expert Sixth Division historian talk about Okinawa in the company of Marines who fought in the battle and offered their perspective. It was riveting! Thanks to Laura and all who participated.



Everyone tries to be like Rick! left: Bob McGowan emulates Rick's excellent taste in shirts; right: Lucy DeVito adopts Rick's stylish sanitation look.

Stephanie Marsh, DC Rigby



Joan Willauer, Mary Walker, Karen Kelly



Jim Rigby, David Hilner



Laura Lacey gives a talk about Okinawa & the Sixth Division



Lucy DeVito, Harry & Barb McKnight



Connie Houseweart, Rick Willauer



in memory of Sam Petriello



listening to Laura Lacey



Patty would like to recognize and thank the late Harry Sandlaufer, who helped her plan the reunion and provided valuable advice and moral support prior to his death.

# ★ 2018 Reunion ★



Fun on the bus!  
left: Dolores Bertram, Janet Russell, Christine & Frank McBride;  
right: Paul & Shirley Judd



Joe L. Kite and Joe W. Kite



Bob McGowan, Mary Walker, Sharon Woodhouse, Herbert Kinney



Doreen Walker, Flo Dornan



Carroll McGowan, Shelly Speicher



Lisa Benedetti, Melinda Benedetti, Sharon Woodhouse, Lucy DeVito



David Hilner & Bob McGowan dining at the commissary



Gregg Woodhouse, Lucy DeVito



Shirley Judd, Tiffany Leggett, Paul Judd



Lisa Benedetti, DC Rigby, Anita Benedetti



Janet Russell, Kay Newill, Dolores Bertram, Barb McKnight, Harry McKnight, Herbert Kinney, Bennett Bard, Joan Willauer, Paul Judd, Shirley Judd, Bill Most, Mary Walker, Pfuong Riles, Neal McCallum and Flo Dornan with Chesapeake Bay Bridge in background



Patty Payne, Lisa Benedetti



Rick Willauer

Striking Sixth

★ 2018 Reunion ★



Jimmy, Bob, Dolores & Bobby Bertram



Lynn Warren, Herbert Kinney



Ross Laporte, Lucy DeVito



Bob McGowan, Jim Monbeck



Paul Judd (above), Oscar Soifer, Neal McCallum and Ross Laporte (below) at Commandant's reception for Sixth Division Vets



Harry McKnight, DC Rigby, Herbert Kinney, Paul Judd, Neal McCallum, Bill Most



Madeline Parker, Mary Walker, Janet Russell & Lynn Warren at the commissary



Tiffany Leggett, Sharon Woodhouse, Louise Lutts

We covered a lot of ground over the course of three days. Our travels took us to the Maryland Museum of Military History, an Inner Harbor cruise, the National Cryptologic Museum, lunch on the Eastern Shore (donated by the McGuigan family), the World War II Memorial, the Iwo Jima Memorial, and the Marine Barracks at 8th and I. Phew!

At 8th and I, we split into two groups. The Sixth Division Marines went with Connie and Sharon to a special reception at the Commandant's house. Unfortunately, the Commandant was not home that day, but there were plenty of top brass to talk to our guys. Meanwhile, the rest of us mere mortals dined in the commissary.

What a thrill — and honor — to visit the World War II Memorial with the Sixth Division Marines! But when it comes to thrills, nothing could top seeing the Marine Corps Band and Silent Drill Team perform under the stars. So inspiring!

What a fun surprise to see Chesty 14, the Marine Corps' English bulldog mascot who had retired that very morning, trot out onto the field with his successor, Chesty 15.

And here's something else: We watched the full moon rise slowly over the barracks during the performance.

I told you God was smiling on us!

# ★ 2018 Reunion ★



Memorial Service



Color Guard from 8th and I



youngest Marine and oldest Marine — Joe Kite — at the Service



Kay Newill, Mary Abbott, Louise Lutts, Helen Simmons



Louise Lutts, Gregg Woodhouse, Tiffany Leggett



Chris Shaffer, Jordan Wolfe, Michelle Wolfe, Joe Petriello, Danny Petriello, Jeanne Lasorda, Mark Lasorda, Shelly Speicher, Louise Lutts, Katie Lutts, Emily Lutts, Christine McBride, Frank McBride



seated: Herbert Kinney, Bill Most, Harry McKnight, DC Rigby, Paul Judd, Neal McCallum, Ross Laporte, Oscar Soifer, Joe W. Kite

standing: Madeline Parker, Judy Khoury, Barb McKnight, Jim Rigby, Shirley Judd, Pfuong Riles, Ida Keane, Bruce Soifer, Claire Soifer, Robert Robinson, Joe L. Kite, Sean Remington, Theresa Robinson

The Memorial Service is an important tradition with the Association, and this year it was extra special thanks to the color guard was from 8th and I! Truly the cream of the crop. What an honor to meet these young men.

Special thanks to Chaplain Harry McKnight for reading the names of the departed and Unit Director Neal McCallum for ringing the bell.

**Connie Houseweart presents Bill Most with a beautiful quilt made by the ladies of Quilts for Heroes located in Edgewood, MD. They made quilts for each of the Sixth Division Marines in attendance. Thank you, Quilts for Heroes!**



# ★ 2018 Reunion ★



Katie Lutts, Sharon Woodhouse, Kay Newill, Mary Abbott, Louise Lutts, Tiffany Woodhouse, Helen Simmons, Emily Lutts



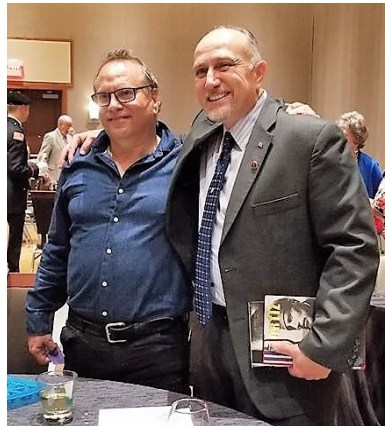
Jim Monbeck, Neal McCallum



Doreen Walker, Lucy DeVito, Flo Dornan



Anita Benedetti, David Hilner, Melinda Benedetti, Sharon Woodhouse, Lisa Benedetti



Buzz Bissinger, Jose Padilla



Bruce, Claire & Oscar Soifer



Janet Russell, Mary Brauer, Karen Kelly

This year's Grand Banquet offered something new — a trivia contest! It was fun for everyone, even those of us who didn't know what vegetables are in V8 juice. Watercress???

(However, we do know our Disney princesses!)

First Sergeant Jose Padilla USMC (Ret) gave a stirring talk and encouraged us to continue the important work of the Association and keep the memory of the Sixth alive.



Grand Banquet

★ 2018 Reunion ★



Pfuong Riles, Sharon Woodhouse, Nina Cassity



Janet Russell, Ed Willauer, Tiffany Leggett



Judy Khoury, Kristi Tredway



Flo Dornan, Laura Lacey



Bill Most, DC Rigby



Herbert Kinney, Madeline Parker, Lynn Warren



Tiffany Leggett, Katie Lutts, David Hilner, Connie Houseweart



Pfuong Riles and Carroll McGowan are photo-bombed by Mary Brauer



Missing Man Table



Buzz Bissinger, Louise Lutts, Katie Lutts, Kay Newill



Joan Willauer, Neal McCallum



Pfuong Riles, Neal McCallum

No amusing dance photos this year. (We surely missed our favorite twinkle toes, William and Kikue Cloud!) But in the absence of dancing, everyone got out of their seats to mingle. And, as you can see, pose for pictures! It was a wonderful evening and the perfect ending to a fun-filled reunion.

~CHM



Patty made beautiful shadow boxes for each of the Sixth Division Marines that attended the Reunion

Ross Laporte, Ida Keane, Patty Payne





## 2018 Reunion Attendees

Mary Abbott & Helen Simmons  
Bennett & Keith Bard  
Anita, Lisa & Melinda Benedetti  
Dolores, Amanda, Bob, Bobby,  
Connie & Jimmy Bertram  
Buzz Bissinger  
Randy, Nina & Ethan Cassity  
Luciana DeVito  
Florence Dornan &  
Doreen Walker  
Connie Houseweart &  
David Hilner  
Paul & Shirley Judd  
Karen Kelly  
Herbert Kinney &  
Madeline Parker  
Laura & Keith Lacey  
Ross Laporte & Ida Keane

Joseph W. Kite Jr., Joseph L.  
Kite, David & Patricia Robinson,  
Robert & Theresa Robinson, and  
Sean Remington  
Louise, Emily & Katie Lutts  
Stephanie & Dale Marsh  
Kenneth & Gillian Martin  
Frank & Christine McBride  
Neal McCallum & Phuong Riles  
Bob & Carroll McGowan  
Jim & Theresa McGuigan  
Kate McGuigan &  
Thomas Montalbano  
Liam McGuigan  
Harry & Barbara McKnight  
Jim Monbeck  
Bill Most, Judy Khoury &  
Kristi Tredway

Kay Newill  
Jose Padilla (speaker)  
Patty, Jim & Patrick Payne  
DC & Jim Rigby  
Janet Russell  
Oscar, Claire & Bruce Soifer  
Shelly Speicher  
Mary Walker & Lynn Warren  
Joan, Ed & Rick Willauer and  
Mary & Parker Brauer  
Sharon & Gregg Woodhouse and  
Tiffany Leggett  
Connor Wright (bugler)

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## 2018 Reunion Donors — Thank You!

Jack Ault  
Anita, Lisa & Melinda Benedetti  
Dolores Bertram  
Pam Bloustine  
Wendy Boone  
Mary & Parker Brauer  
Connie Houseweart &  
David Hilner  
Karen Kelly  
Joe Kite  
Stephanie & Dale Marsh  
Kenneth & Gillian Martin  
Bob & Carroll McGowan  
Kay Newill  
Janet Russell  
Shelly Speicher  
Sharon & Gregg Woodhouse

## Special Thanks to the McGuigans!

A very special thank you to the members of the McGuigan family who gave so generously to make our reunion a success:

Jim & Theresa McGuigan  
Kate McGuigan &  
Tom Montalbano  
Patty Payne

Their donations included a delicious lunch on the Chesapeake Bay and an open bar at the banquet Saturday night.

In addition, Patty made beautiful shadow boxes for the 6th veterans and puzzles of prior reunion pictures. The puzzles were a lot of fun in the hospitality suite and were later auctioned.

## More Thanks (What a Giving Group!)

A big thank you to Connie Houseweart, Dave Hilner, Sharon & Gregg Woodhouse, Lisa, Anita & Melinda Benedetti, and Jim Monbeck for arriving early and helping Patty set up the hospitality suite, register guests, etc. We also thank Mary & Parker Brauer for their help with clean up.

**We know — and regret — that this list is not complete and that we are missing many who donated auction items, cash, etc., along with those who purchased auction items.**

**We thank you all so much! And we apologize for any omissions.**

# In 1942 Ray Merrell Chooses Wearing Shoes Over Making Them

by Jeremy P. Amick, *News Tribune*, September 4, 2018

As a young man coming of age in the community of Marshall, Missouri, Ray Merrell went to work at a local shoe factory following his graduation from high school in 1941. With World War II continuing to expand and at the same time growing tired of his job, Merrell and a few of his friends enlisted in the Marine Corps — a decision that would soon place him in a newly formed amphibious assault group.

"There were three or four of us that thought we'd rather wear the shoes than make them," Merrell jokingly explained. "We all decided to join the Marines because we had been reading what they had been accomplishing (in combat) on Guadalcanal."

A 19-year-old Merrell signed his enlistment papers in November 1942 and was on his way to San Diego for several weeks of basic training. From there, he received additional infantry training at nearby Camp Elliott, a section of which was at the time referred to as "Green Farm."

"While we were on patrol at Green Farm, one of our lieutenants began hollering for us to stop while we were crawling down a hillside," the veteran recalled. "There was a rattlesnake in a culvert near one of the Marines and the lieutenant pulled out his pistol and shot it."

The final days of his training in the mountains of southern California arrived in early March 1943, at which time he and a number of his fellow Marines traveled to the harbor in San Diego to board the USS Mount Vernon — an ocean liner purchased by the Navy and used as a troop transport during World War II.

Arriving in New Caledonia, a French territory in the South Pacific, the Marines began practicing amphibious operations. While there, they



Ray and Helen Merrell

were approached by a colonel seeking volunteers interested in becoming part of a new group called "Marine Raiders."

Considered the earliest U.S. Special Forces operation formed in WWII, the Marine Raiders were to serve as an elite light infantry force that could make amphibious landings behind enemy lines. Igniting his interest, Merrell volunteered and soon passed the physical required to qualify as a Raider.

"We continued to train for several months in New Caledonia doing night hikes, training in jungle operations, setting up defenses and practicing amphibious assaults," Merrell explained. "When we first started training, I was given a Tommy gun, but before we went into action, I became a BAR (Browning Automatic Rifle chambered for the .30-06 cartridge) man."

A member of a 10-man squad, Merrell saw action in early November 1943 when deployed behind enemy lines in Bougainville — the largest

*(continued on next page)*

# Ray Merrell

*(continued from prior page)*

of the Solomon Islands. It was here they remained for several weeks establishing beachheads and relieving troops on the front lines. Next came Guadalcanal, where the Raiders were disbanded and he was transferred to the 4th Marine Regiment, training as assistant gunner on a 37mm antitank gun.

In June 1944, he boarded the USS Ormsby, destined for the invasion of Guam; however, because of intense fighting with Japanese forces at nearby Saipan, he remained aboard ship for 47 days. Approaching Guam by landing craft on July 21, 1944, they became stuck on coral reefs and had to drag their 37mm guns to shore through waist-high water.

"It was pretty intense fighting there and I ended up in the hospital for three or four days from dysentery," Merrell explained. "When the island was finally secured sometime in August, that's when we were sent to Guadalcanal to train for the invasion of Okinawa."

Arriving at Okinawa on Easter Sunday (April 1, 1945), Merrell explained that a "fake landing" was made to the south in an effort to distract the Japanese forces while the actual landing, of which he was part, took place at a location further north.

"We were pretty lucky when he got to Okinawa and landed with little opposition," he said. "However, we stirred up the Japanese over the next day or so."

For the next three months, he and his fellow Marines fought to secure the island and participated in a number of "mopping up" patrols. On July 6, 1945, after weeks of fighting and having lost several friends in combat, he boarded a landing craft bound for Guam and additional training.

Boarding the USS Grimes on Aug. 15, 1945, Merrell was with a group destined to participate in the invasion of the Japanese mainland, but while he was on the ship, they learned the war in the Pacific had ended. He and many of his fellow Marines were eventually sent to Japan as part of the occupational forces, where he remained until being sent back to the states in November 1945.

Merrell received his discharge from the Marines on Dec. 11, 1945, after having spent 33 months overseas. He returned to Missouri and the following year married his fiancée, Helen, with whom he had communicated during his entire period of service.

After the war, the combat veteran worked at a local locker plant, was a manager for an MFA location, managed the meat department at a supermarket in Liberty and sold real estate for a number of years. The father of two children, Merrell affirms his service with the Marines was not only a maturing period, but also an opportunity to build a number of enduring friendships.

"I aged and grew up pretty quick after being sent overseas," Merrell said. "For many years, a lot of the guys I served with in the Marine Raiders got together for reunions throughout the country but I think I am the only one now left from my squad."

With a grin, he concluded, "Helen saved all of the letters I wrote home to her during the war and still has them. The ones she wrote to me," he paused, "are all gone because they got wet when I was huddled in foxholes overseas."

# Seabees on Guadalcanal

By Joseph P. Blundon (CEC, USNR)

*The first contingent of the 6th Seabee Battalion landed at Guadalcanal in August 1942. It consisted of 387 men and 5 officers and was led by Commander Joseph P. Blundon (CEC, USNR). Below is his story.*

On the afternoon of August 20, 1942, I arrived in a PBY off Lunga Point and promptly reported to General A. A. Vandegrift. The Marines had been on Guadalcanal thirteen days, and they had a tiny beach-head around Henderson Field.

I guess I was the first Seabee to go under fire. While I was reporting to General Vandegrift, the Japanese bombers came over and I hit my first foxhole. A few days later my Sixth Seabee Battalion arrived, and we assumed full responsibility for the completion and maintenance of Henderson Field. The Japs had cleared an area 300 by 5600 feet, but it was by no means finished.

The Japs were shelling the field with Howitzers, as well as bombing it night and day, and it was our job to keep the holes filled up while we finished the grading, laid Marston mat, built hardstands and revetments, and helped solve the fuel and ammunition problems. We had very little equipment.

General Vandegrift assigned us a section of the beach to defend against the Japanese landings, and we figured we could defend the beach and still do the job at Henderson Field. We realized at the outset that the battle was going to turn on how fast we filled up holes and how fast we could develop that field.

When the Japanese bombers approached, our fighters took off, the bombers blasted the airstrips, and then if we couldn't fill up those holes before our planes ran out of fuel, the planes would have to attempt to land anyway, and they would crash. I saw seven of our fighters crack up in one bitter after-

pitched our camp at the edge of the field to save time. We dug our foxholes right up alongside the landing area. We found that a 500 pound bomb would tear up 1600 square feet of Marston Mat, so we placed packages of this quantity of mat along the strip, like extra rails along a railroad. We figured out how much sand and gravel was required to fill the average bomb or shell crater, and we loaded these measured amounts on trucks and placed the trucks under cover at strategic points. We had compressors and pneumatic hammers to pack the fill into the craters. We organized human assembly lines for passing up the pierced plank and laying it.

Then when the Japanese bombers approached, every Seabee including even our cooks, manned his repair station.

Our crater crews were lying in the foxholes right at the edge of the strip. The moment the bombers had passed over,

these men bolted out of the holes and raced for the craters. Every man had to keep his eye peeled for Japanese strafing planes, and when the Japanese



Henderson Field, Guadalcanal

noon. From "our" point of view the battle of Guadalcanal was a race between the Japanese artillery and the air force and the Sixth Seabee Battalion.

We played our cards fast. We

*(continued on next page)*

# Seabees on Guadalcanal

*(continued from prior page)*

dived in, our men dived for the close-at-hand foxholes.

We found that 100 Seabees could repair the damage of a 500-pound bomb hit on an airstrip in forty minutes. In twenty-four hours on October 13 and 14, fifty-three bomb and shells hit the Henderson airstrip. During one hour on the 14th we filled thirteen bomb craters while our planes circled overhead waiting to land. In the period from September 1, to November 18, we had 140 Japanese raids in which the strip was hit at least once.

Our worst moments were when the Japanese bomb or shell failed to explode when it hit. It still tore up our mat, and it had to come out. When you see men choke down their fear and dive



Henderson Field, Guadalcanal — Marston Mat damaged by Japanese bombs, 1942

in after an unexploded bomb so that our planes can land safely, a lump comes in your throat and you know why America wins wars.

Shell craters are more dangerous to work on than bomb craters. You have a feeling that no two bombs ever hit in the same place, but this isn't true of

shells. A Japanese five-inch gun lobs a shell over on your airstrip and blasts a helluva hole. What are you going to do? You know, just as the Japanese artillery man knows, that if he leaves his gun in the same position and fires another shell, the second shell will hit in almost the same spot as the first one. So a good old Japanese trick was to give us enough time to start repairing

the hole and then fire the second shell. All you can do is depend on hearing that second shell coming and hope you can scramble far enough away before it explodes. But this is a gamble which is frowned upon by life insurance companies.

There are only two kinds of people that understand Marines: Marines and the enemy. Everyone else has a second-hand opinion.

- Gen. William Thornson, U.S. Army



For over 221 years our Corps has done two things for this great Nation. We make Marines, and we win battles.

- Gen. Charles C. Krulak, USMC

# Francis Crilley, KIA on Okinawa

by Darrell Ehrlick, *Billings Gazette*, December 29, 2016

Three days after his 19th birthday, Francis Crilley was killed in the Battle of Sugar Loaf Hill on Okinawa. The date was May 20, 1945.

Francis Crilley was raised in Mauch Chunk, Pa., now named Jim Thorpe. His brother-in-law, Stewart Miller, spent the majority of his life in Billings. Miller wrote home to his wife while serving in World War II that he visited her brother's grave, located in a graveyard lined with white crosses in Okinawa.

Fran Snyder of Laurel has kept her father's letters and some of the material about the uncle she never knew but whom she was named for.

This is the story of one Marine who came home in 1949 in a coffin to be buried in Long Island National Cemetery.

## Arrival Overseas

December 27, 1944

Hello Elinor,

... I want to thank you for the very nice letter you sent me. Also for the card. I'm glad you liked the bracelet I gave you, they have beads around here, but the natives like to become rich on everything they sell you. They are far from stupid when it comes to money.

... Well Elinor, I hope you had a nice Christmas. They made a tree over here out of coconut palms and decorated it with red and green tin cans. It at least gave us the idea of a tree anyway. Sorry I can't hurry home, but with plenty of luck, I may be able to get there by next Christmas. I hope so anyway!

Must sign off now as it is getting dark. I hope you do good in school and all the family is well. So long and take it easy.

Francis

## Killed in Action

WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM

June 4, 1945

Mrs. Harriet N. Crilley, Mother

Deeply regret to inform you that your son private first class Francis Crilley USMCR was killed in action 20 May 1945 at Okinawa Island Ryuku Islands in the performance of his duty and service of his country. When information is received regarding burial you will be notified. To prevent possible aid to our enemies do not divulge the name of his ship or station. Please accept my heartfelt sympathy.

A A Vandegrift

General USMC Commandant of The Marine Corps  
10:10 PM

## Met His Death Bravely

July 17, 1945

Chaplain's Office, 4th Marines 6th Marine Division

Dear Mrs. Crilley:

I trust you will understand and excuse this long delay in writing to you about your son, Francis. The campaign was a long one and our regiment a busy one throughout. I understand your grief and I pray that these few words may bring you some degree of comfort in your sorrow.

Your son met his death very bravely during the fierce struggle on Sugar Loaf Hill. At night, his company was under an enemy counter attack. A boy called for help in the next foxhole. Francis left his position to go to his aid, thus exposing himself to rifle fire. He was killed instantly, while in the act of helping a fallen comrade.

Like all of his comrades killed in action, he was buried with full Catholic ceremonies in the Sixth Marine Division Cemetery on the island of Okinawa. It is beautiful, overlooking the East China Sea. The graves are marked with white crosses and the names of the men are inscribed. A full military and memorial ceremony was held on July 4th to honor these men who were so brave.

Francis was a splendid Catholic boy. He attended mass and Holy Communion regularly before the operation and at every opportunity he had during it. I know that he was well prepared and the reward of his sacrifice is great.

His officers and all his buddies praised him highly and liked him very much. He was always friendly, cheerful, did his work well and was an example of a good Catholic and a good Marine.

*(continued on next page)*

# Francis Crilley

*(continued from prior page)*

I offered the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for him and shall continue to offer Requiem Masses for him. I shall remember too, in my prayers, you and his loved ones that God may strengthen and comfort you under this burden of sorrow.

The officers and men of our regiment join me in expressing our deepest sympathy.

Sincerely,  
William F. O'Neill, Chaplain

## A Darn Good Man

Francis's brother, Hadley, who was part of the Omaha Beach invasion, wrote to the Marines in Okinawa, wanting to know how his brother had died. On July 17, 1945, the same day as Father O'Neill had written Harriet Crilley, Sidney S. Secrist wrote to Hayden Crilley:

Dear Hayden:

Our commanding officer has passed your letter to me as I am one of the few left out of the old Third Platoon which, by the way, happened to be Frank's platoon. He was a Browning Automatic Rifle man in my squad and I might add a darn good man.

As to how he was killed, Frank was shot through the heart on the reverse slope of "Sugar Loaf Hill" which you no doubt know to be one of the most bitterly contested pieces of terrain on Okinawa.

It was about midnight of May 20 or 21st when we caught our infiltration attack from Jap troops, which we had bypassed earlier that day. It was during this attack that Frank left his foxhole for more ammo and grenades from the platoon.

When he returned, he found two of the enemy in his foxhole. His foxhole buddy Clarence Grey had been wounded shortly before Frank had returned. Frank opened up about four feet from his hole, killing one of the enemy. The other one got him. We got the Jap.

Frank was a quiet and very well liked fellow by everyone who knew him. Frank was the type of man who we will never get a replacement for.

He was buried in the Sixth Division Cemetery alongside many more of our boys. The cemetery was dedicated with full military honors on July 4, 1945. I had the privilege of being there and I also saw Frank's grave.

Hoping this letter has given you all the information you desired.

## Okinawa Burial

A few months later, Stewart Miller, Crilley's brother-in-law, visited the grave and wrote home:

A week ago yesterday, I had the opportunity to go ashore at Okinawa ... While I was there I had one thing uppermost in mind — that was to go to Frank's grave. I was really surprised to see the lovely place the Marines put up in memory of all our boys who died in that battle. We had a few pictures taken and hope to show them to you all someday.

For the few days while in Yokohama, we had liberty and that gave me a good chance to look that place over, and it's just one helluva mess. Saw plenty of worthwhile things, and I guess plenty that I or plenty other fellows won't forget too soon. Someday I hope to tell you all about them.

## Return Home

WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM  
February 16, 1949

Mrs. Harriet N. Crilley:

Please be advised remains of the late PFC Francis Crilley are en route to the United States. Our records indicate you wish remains buried in Long Island National Cemetery, Farmingdale, New York. We cannot give a definite delivery date but superintendent of national cemetery will notify you by telegram giving date and hour funeral services will be held in sufficient time to permit your attendance at your own expense. It is expected that an interval from five days to four weeks will elapse before funeral can take place. Military escort will accompany remains to national cemetery. Payment of seventy-five dollars interment expense allowance is not repeat is not authorized in cases where burial is in a national cemetery. Appropriate joint military honors and religious services will be provided at graveside by veterans organization or naval personnel. Please confirm above delivery instructions within forty-eight hours of receipt of this message or submit new delivery instructions by telegram collect to distribution center one New York Port of Embarkation. We regret it will be impossible to comply at government expense with changes in delivery instructions received after expiration of the forty-eight hours. Include full name of deceased in reply telegram.

G.H. Bare  
Colonel Quartermaster U.S. Marine Corps  
2:42 PM

*(continued on next page)*

# Francis Crilley

*(continued from prior page)*

## Honored Burial

WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM  
March 17, 1949

Harriet N. Crilley:

Funeral services for the late PFC (Private First-Class) Francis Crilley scheduled for 10:30 A.M. sharp 5 April 1949 at Long Island National Cemetery, Pinelawn Long Island. Please advise religion. Please reply by telegram collect advising whether you will attend or not. There is no authorization for payment for travel at government expense to attend funeral services in national cemetery. Flowers permitted.

Metzler, Supt.  
6:00 PM



Francis Crilley

# Veteran's Day 2018

## 100th anniversary of the end of World War I

Remembering with love and gratitude  
all those who have served our country



## In Flanders Fields

*by John McCrae, 1915*

In Flanders fields the poppies grow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.





# TAPS

All of us in the Sixth Marine Division Association extend our sympathy to the family and friends of those listed below. May they rest in peace.

Buckley, Aaron E.	6 <sup>th</sup> Marine Division	00/00/2010
Burns, Karl	29 <sup>th</sup> Mar-2-D	10/23/2017
Casper, Richard G.	22 <sup>nd</sup> Mar-2-G	09/17/2017
Clark, Earl A.	29 <sup>th</sup> Mar-1-B	10/12/2017
Cochrane, Charles R.	6 <sup>th</sup> Marine Division	05/11/1981
Croisetiére, Louis P.	4 <sup>th</sup> Mar-1-A	09/21/2018
Crumbie, Margaret	wife of Watson Crumbie	07/20/2018
Drennan, Raymond J.	6 <sup>th</sup> Marine Division	09/14/2017
Etter, Jackson O.	22 <sup>nd</sup> Mar-2-E	06/11/2018
Foley, John J.	4 <sup>th</sup> Mar-3-K	08/14/2018
Gardner, Burnise T.	4 <sup>th</sup> Mar-3-L	06/29/2018
Healy, Joseph	6 <sup>th</sup> Marine Division	10/05/2017
Hulek, William	29 <sup>th</sup> Mar-2-F	09/10/2017
Leier, Richard	22 <sup>nd</sup> Mar-WPNS	09/20/2017
Marshall, William W. Jr.	29 <sup>th</sup> Mar-3-H	09/21/2018
Mathews, Roy B.	29 <sup>th</sup> Marines, Medic	06/30/2018
McBride, Frank A.	HQ Bn-HQ	01/21/1985
Mulligan, Herman	22 <sup>nd</sup> Mar-3-L	05/30/1945
Regal, Samuel F.	4 <sup>th</sup> Amphib Tractor Bn	07/14/2018
Scofield, Robert	6 <sup>th</sup> Marine Division	08/10/2017
Siegel, Harry	29 <sup>th</sup> Mar-3-1	08/16/2018
Trumbo, Paul	22 <sup>nd</sup> Mar-1-A	unknown
Yonan, Joseph Sr.	22 <sup>nd</sup> Mar-3-K	10/24/2017

**Reporting Deaths**

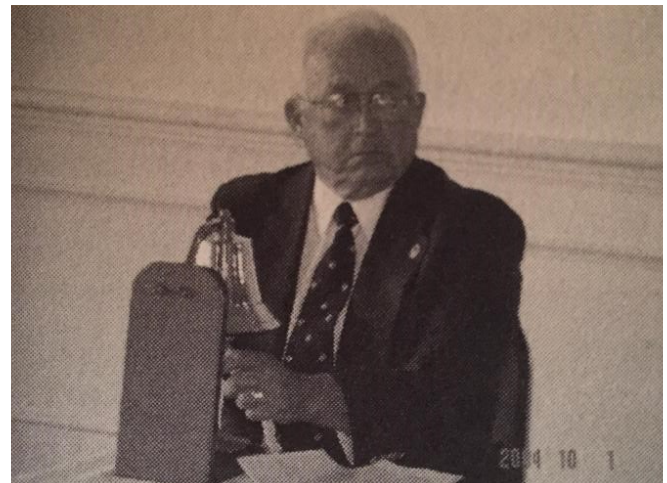
Deaths should be reported ASAP to:  
**Flo Dornan, Membership Manager**  
 (817) 275-1552  
 sxthmardiv@sbcglobal.net

AND

**Harry McKnight, Chaplain**  
 (614) 866-3456  
 harrym1677@icloud.com

## Past President John Foley, RIP

We are saddened to report that John Foley, Past President of the Association, passed away on August 14, just a week before the annual reunion in Baltimore, which he had planned to attend. John had not been to a reunion for the past several years, but he planned several of the Association’s reunions in years past. Although we don’t have formal records, we feel certain he holds the record for planning the most reunions! We remember and thank John for his many contributions to the Association. Rest in peace, Marine.



John Foley rings the bell at the Memorial Service during a Reunion earlier this century

## Chaplain's Report



I am feeling better. [Harry was briefly hospitalized last month.] It is nice having My son Tim as a consulting MD.

My spiritual message is, "It is most important to keep the commandments, and not only read the scriptures, but study them.

In Exodus we read, "In the days of Peleg, the world was divided." We can see how as we look at a global map. And before the Savior returns, it will be renewed or returned as it was.

Your friendly Chaplain,  
Harry McKnight

---

## Message from the President



WOW! Another amazing reunion in the books. I would like to thank Patty Payne for all of her efforts and hard work. What an awesome time I had. The activities were spectacular. I am sure everyone enjoyed themselves and had an awesome time. I especially love making new friends and renewing near and dear friendships. I can hardly wait for the next reunion being held in Philadelphia. That should be fun. Until then stay safe and stay healthy. Until we meet again.....

Connie

## From the Editor



I write this note on the Marine Corps Birthday, and naturally I am thinking of my Sixth Division friends. I

hope you were able to celebrate in style.

Speaking of celebrations, I had a fantastic time in Baltimore! I am so grateful to Patty Payne for all the work she did, including using her creative talents to make shadow boxes for our Sixth Division Marines and puzzles of past reunion photos.

Seeing the Silent Drill Team and Marine Corps Band at 8th and I has been on my bucket list for years. How thrilling to check that off while enjoying the company of the Sixth Marine Division Association. I love being around you guys!

I'm already looking forward to our 2019 Reunion in Philadelphia, which is, as you know, the birthplace of the Marine Corps. Perhaps less noteworthy, Philadelphia is also the birthplace of my parents and

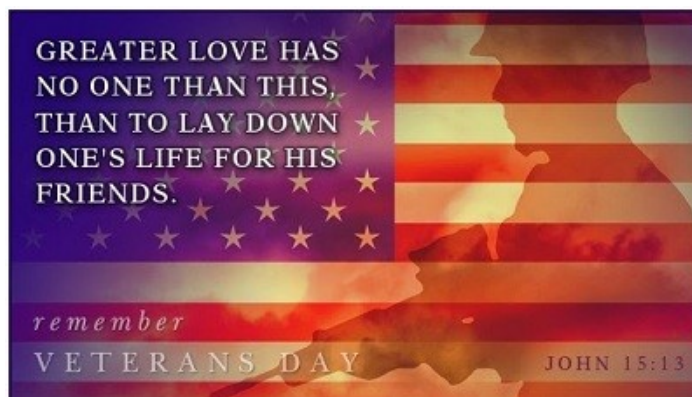
grandparents. It's a city I know quite well, having been there countless times. There's a lot to see, great places to eat, and it's jam-packed with American history. I can't wait!

Many thanks to Buzz Bissinger for volunteering to host. As you will see on page 23, we don't have the hotel or dates nailed down yet, but Buzz has been hard at work. He's enlisted Comcast to help, and they are going to subsidize some of the costs! Comcast is the #1 corporate supporter of veterans in our country, and they are honored to have us visit their headquarters city. I'm certain this will be a memorable reunion!

Please check our website ([sixthmarinedivision.com](http://sixthmarinedivision.com)) over the next month for the announcement of the hotel and dates.

Then look for all the details and a complete schedule in our next newsletter, coming out in March/April next year.

~ Carroll McGowan





# SIXTH MARINE DIVISION ASSOCIATION 2018-2019

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4th Marines	George Scott
15th Marines	Vacant
22nd Marines	D.C. Rigby
29th Marines	Neal McCallum
6th Motor Trans Battalion	Vacant
6th Medical Battalion	Oscar Soifer
6th Engineering Battalion	Vacant
6th Tank Battalion	Sal Mistretta
6th Pioneer Battalion	Vacant
6th Headquarters Battalion	Joe W. Kite
6th Recon Company	Joe Singleton
6th JASCO	George McAfee
1st Amphibs	Vacant

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sxthmardiv@sbcglobal.net

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## Striking Sixth Newsletter

This newsletter is an official publication of the Sixth Marine Division Association and is published three times each year for members of the Association.

**The subscription rate is \$10 per calendar year.**

Subscription checks — as well as dues, donations, address changes, death notices, and record changes — should be mailed to:

Florence R. Dornan  
704 Cooper Court  
Arlington, TX 76011

**Please make checks payable to:**  
Sixth Marine Division Assn.

For more information, please contact Flo at:  
(817) 275-1552 or sxthmardiv@sbcglobal.net

**It's time to pay for your  
2019 newsletter subscription!  
Send your check for \$10 to  
Flo Dornan by 12/31 to continue  
receiving the Striking Sixth in 2019.**

**Letters to the editor, materials for publication, suggestions, and feedback can be sent to:**  
Carroll McGowan, chm1423@aol.com, 1423 Pueblo Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15228, (412) 341-9219

## Message from the Membership Manager



We are coming to the end of another year, and soon we will be busy with our families enjoying the holidays. **Be sure to make a note on your things-to-do list to send a check for the 2019 newsletter.**

A Happy, Healthy wish for the coming New Year to you all!

Respectfully submitted,  
Flo Dornan  
(817) 275-1552  
sxthmardiv@sbcglobal.net

## Membership Status

as of October 26, 2018

Regular Members	1,011
Associate Members	634
Lineal Descendants Members	143
Honorary Members	10
<b>TOTAL MEMBERSHIP</b>	<b>1,798</b>

## Newsletter Subscribers

as of October 26, 2018

Paid for 2018	44
Paid for 2019-2027	101
Honorary Members	10
<b>TOTAL SUBSCRIBERS</b>	<b>155</b>

## New Members

Harry G. Bissinger, ID #6253  
Associate LD Life Member  
Son of Gerry Bissinger (4<sup>th</sup> Mar-1-C)  
Phone 215-290-5370  
[Buzzy4@gmail.com](mailto:Buzzy4@gmail.com)

Jacob Z. Gissendanner, ID #6255  
Associate LD Life Member  
Great Nephew of Julian A. Gissendanner  
(4<sup>th</sup> Mar-2-E)  
P.O. Box 293  
Sugar Grove, NC 28679  
Phone 813-293-0140  
[jake@hamburgersushi.com](mailto:jake@hamburgersushi.com)

John R. Labonte, ID #6257  
Associate LD Life Member  
Son of Joseph M. Labonte  
408 Bastrop Drive  
Allen, TX 75013-4763  
214-532-8427  
[trigu-john@gmail.com](mailto:trigu-john@gmail.com)

Louise M. Lutts, ID #6254  
Associate LD Life Member  
Daughter of David A. Mears (29<sup>th</sup> Mar-2-D)  
21 River Road  
Haverhill, MA 01830-1832  
Phone 207-251-0571  
[louiselutts@comcast.net](mailto:louiselutts@comcast.net)

## Donations -- Thank You!

### General Fund

Estella Arnold  
Harry G. Bissinger \*  
Morris Danzig  
J. Gissendanner  
Karen I. Kelly\*  
John R. Labonte\*  
Louise M. Lutts  
William Maskal  
Arno Schroeder

### Newsletter Fund

Louise M. Lutts

### Website Fund

J. Gissendanner  
Louise M. Lutts

\*Above and beyond

## How to Become a Member

An Application for Membership is on the next page, and can also be found on our website — [sixthmarinedivision.com](http://sixthmarinedivision.com).

Complete the application and mail it with your check to our Membership Manager, Flo Dornan.

# Membership Application / Change of Address Form

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ MI \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_ Apt \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip+4 \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Company \_\_\_\_\_ Battalion \_\_\_\_\_ Regiment \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

If this is a change of address, enter your 4 digit ID#, which is on the left, right above your name, on the mailing label \_\_\_\_\_

Old Street Address \_\_\_\_\_ Apt \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip+4 \_\_\_\_\_

If you are applying for membership as an Associate Member, provide name of relative who served with the Sixth Marine Division:

Relative's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

His unit within the Division, if known \_\_\_\_\_

Annual dues (\$10 per year).....Check if Member \_\_\_\_\_ or Associate Member \_\_\_\_\_ .....Amount due: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Life Membership (\$75).....Check if Member \_\_\_\_\_ or Associate Member \_\_\_\_\_ .....Amount due: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## Newsletter Subscriptions

Subscription to the Striking Sixth Newsletter of the Sixth Marine Division (\$10 per year).....Amount due: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Annual dues and subscriptions to the newsletter are based on a calendar year.

Additional copies of the newsletter are \$3.50.

## Donations

General Operating Fund Contribution.....Donation: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Newsletter Fund Contribution.....Donation: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Website Fund Contribution.....Donation: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Memorial Marker Fund Contribution.....Donation: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

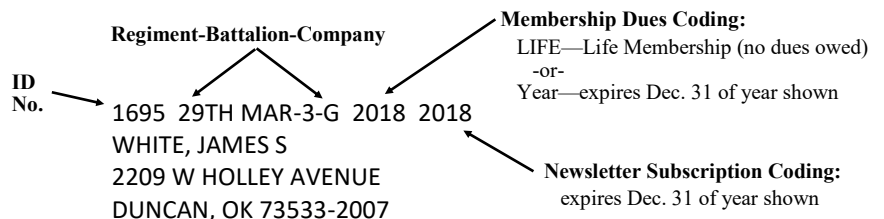
**Make check payable to Sixth Marine Division Assn.** Total Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to: Florence R. Dornan, Membership Manager, 704 Cooper Court, Arlington, TX 76011**

E-mail: [sxthmardiv@sbcglobal.net](mailto:sxthmardiv@sbcglobal.net) Phone: (817) 275-1552

**Please remember: Membership dues are separate from Newsletter subscriptions. To continue receiving the Newsletter, you must pay for a subscription each year, even if you are a Life Member of the Association.** Check the back of the newsletter to see when your current membership and newsletter subscription expires. See coding instructions below.

**Check your address on the back cover to see if your membership and newsletter are paid up to date.**  
 If there is no barcode on your label, your address is not correct according to the USPS. Please contact your Post Office.



# From the Historian's Corner

## THE BEGINNING OF THE MARINE CORPS

Today the words *Marine Corps* conjure up images of bravery, special uniforms, and a well-established American institution that has fought in countless military engagements from the beginning of the country's history. The Corps is part of America's lore and something every Marine is proud of, no matter how long or when he/she served.

Prior to the American colonies' revolt, the British already had Marines (established in 1664) as part of the Royal Navy. Therefore, the concept of "soldiers of the sea" was already in place, and America adopted it during the rebellion. In fact, the Continental Marines, though foes of their British counterpart, adopted many of their military customs and tactics.

Today about fifty nations have "Marine Corps" in some form, and it is a proud world-wide brotherhood.

Yet several times in the history of America, the Marine Corps' very existence has been in question. The first was soon after their first call to service, at the end of the Revolutionary War.

As the American Revolution began, General George Washington knew that he was going to need a navy, and in fact he hoped to help pay for the war with booty from captured British ships. Although any standing military was abhorrent to Congress, a permanent national navy was obviously needed, as well as ma-

rines to keep both the enemy and rowdy sailors in line. On Nov. 10, 1775, the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia passed a resolution calling for the formation of two battalions of Marines to serve for the duration of the war. Later that month on November twenty-eighth, Captain Samuel Nicholas, was commissioned as the first Marine officer.

Although the two battalions were never formed, about 100 seamen were recruited and arrived in Philadelphia by Dec. 5. As recruitment continued, their numbers increased. After their establishment, the Continental Marines commissioned their first uniform. It was a short green coat with white trim facings. This color helped differentiate them from other American units, as well as the "red coats." The uniform also had a high leather collar to protect against cutlass sword slashes. This collar is why Marines today are called "Leathernecks" It harkens back to their naval roots at a time when swords were a common weapon.

The Marines were divided into four companies and began service primarily in the infant navy. Often this early combat was aboard ships and was often hand-to-hand or sword-to-sword.

The Marines conducted their first amphibious landing a week after their establishment, seizing gunpower at Fort Nassau in the



Laura Lacey

Bahamas.

Throughout the Revolutionary War, about 2,200 officers and enlisted men participated as Marines. They fought in many different places and proved themselves, although often in an amateurish "citizen soldier" fashion. They were a pretty rough lot; traditions, customs and regalia were yet to come.

After the war, the newly-born nation reverted to its fear of standing armies, and it did not have the money to support one. Thus, the Marines were disbanded, and they disappeared for ten years. However, as has been the case throughout America's history, they would be called on again.

Next issue: Tun Tavern

### Sources:

Millett, Alan R. *Semper Fidelis: The History of the Marine Corps*, McMillian Publishing, 1980

Moskin, J. Robert, *The U.S. Marine Corps Story*, McGraw-Hill Book Co. 1977

<https://www.veteranaid.org/blog/2016/04/04/the-origin-of-the-marine-corps/>



Philadelphia skyline

## Planning Underway for 2019 Reunion!

We don't have all the reunion details yet, but the news we have is fantastic!

We'll be staying in downtown Philadelphia, within minutes of Philadelphia's top sites in the historic core.

Are you thinking what we we're thinking? — Those downtown hotels are expensive! Don't you need to take out a loan to pay for parking??! Well, yes, but that didn't stop Buzz Bissinger!

He desperately wanted us to be downtown, so he went to Comcast, the country's leading corporation in support of veterans, and asked for help.

**Comcast's response? They are thrilled and honored we are having our reunion in their headquarters city, and they have agreed to sponsor our reunion and help subsidize the costs!**

As the 33<sup>rd</sup> largest company in the country, Comcast has clout. And they know how to put on an event. They are actively working with Buzz to identify the ideal hotel and plan the activities.

**Buzz expects to select the hotel and dates (sometime in August or September) by year-end. All of the details will be in the spring Striking Sixth. But don't wait until then – check our website ([sixthmarinedivision.com](http://sixthmarinedivision.com)) for the announcement of the hotel and dates so you can get them on your calendar.**

Thanks to Comcast's help, this promises to be a reunion for the ages!

With a hotel downtown, transportation will be minimal, so we can see the sites, while allowing ample free time — for shopping, exploring, socializing, and napping.

Some of the ideas Buzz is exploring include:

- Guided tour of Philadelphia
- Private tours of Independence Hall, the Liberty Bell, the National Constitution Center, and the new Revolutionary War Museum
- Opening night all-Philly dinner with hoagies, cheesesteaks, soft pretzels and Tastykakes
- Dinner underneath Washington's tent at the Revolutionary War Museum
- South Philly night with some of the best Italian food in the country at authentic restaurants
- Lunch at the amazing Reading Terminal Market

Hope you can join us. It's going to be historic!!!

**Keep checking the Sixth Marine Division website over the next month for the reunion dates and hotel. Then look for all the details in the spring Striking Sixth, due out in March/April.**



Buzz Bissinger, 2019 Reunion host



Liberty Bell



Independence Hall



Philadelphia City Hall

# Sixth Marine Division Association

704 Cooper Court, Arlington, TX 76011



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**Striking Sixth Newsletter**

**Fall 2018**

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

# PHILADELPHIA



**Birthplace of the US Marine Corps  
and site of the**

**2019 Sixth Marine Division Association Reunion**

*See page 23 for more information*