

STRIKING SIXTH

1st Provisional Marine Brigade Newsletter



Vol. 46 No. 3

www.sixthmarinedivision.com

Fall 2021

50th and Final Reunion — a Fitting Finish!



While we are sad to see the reunions come to an end, we are happy to report the 50th and final reunion was a fabulous finale. And that's no small achievement in the midst of a pandemic. We were blessed with the attendance of eight Sixth Division veterans. Their presence alone assured it would be an enjoyable and meaningful event.

Fall 2021

From the opening get-together where Laura Lacey talked about the history of the Division to viewing the original colors at the Marine Corps Museum to the final toast from the Last Man Bottle, it was a fantastic time!

above: Neal McCallum, Ken Wells, Leonard Turner, Harry McKnight, DC Rigby, Ross Laporte & Watson Crumble with reps from Stafford County, VA (Lester Penny arrived later in the week.)

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50th Reunion — Fun & Fellowship

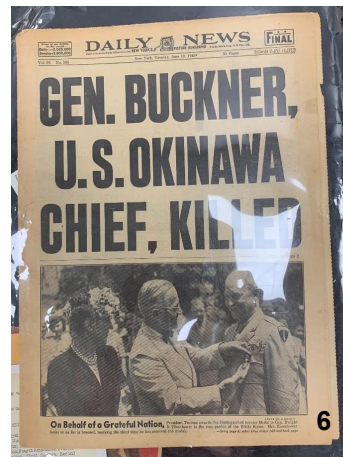


- 1) Sixth Division Marines with Band of Brothers USMC Motorcycle Riding Club who came to meet and honor the veterans
- 2) Dolores, Ken & Barb Bertram
- 3) Cake donated by Fredericksburg Visitor Bureau
- 4) Hospitality room

- 5) Stafford County presents a proclamation honoring the Sixth Marine Division to President Connie Houseweart at the Meet & Greet.



50th Reunion — Fun & Fellowship



- 1) Laura Lacey gives a talk on the history of the Sixth Marine Division.
- 2) Nancy Jo & Vincent McCombs
- 3) Harry McKnight, Ross Laporte
- 4) Bob McGowan & Joshua Hendricks examine items brought by docents from the Marine Corps Museum.
- 5) Leonard Turner, Bob McCalmont
- 6) An original 1945 newspaper, one of many WWII and old reunion items put on display by reunion attendees
- 7) Hospitality room

50th Reunion — Fun & Fellowship



- 1) Sharon Woodhouse, Janet Russell, Louise Lutts & Connie Houseweart go out for dinner.
- 2) Ross Laporte & Ida Keane talk to a docent from the Marine Corps Museum.
- 3) Stacy Duffy, Watson Crumbie
- 4) Laura Lacey & Neal McCallum discuss Okinawa artifacts.

- 5) Carroll McGowan, Helen Simmons
- 6) Barbara McKnight, Helen Simmons, Stephanie Walsh
- 7) Members of the Marine Corps Jazz Band entertain us Thursday evening.
- 8) Tom Keane, Leona Lassard, Ross Laporte, Lisa Benedetti

50th Reunion — Fun & Fellowship



- 1) Ken Wells, Ross Hood, Leonard Turner
- 2) Anita Benedetti, Watson Crumble, Melinda Benedetti
- 3) Karen Turner, Sharon Woodhouse, Natalie & Ken Wells, Mary Beth Tierney
- 4) Louise Lutts, Pfuong Riles
- 5) Bruce Soifer

National Veteran's Historical Archives Inc. Interviews Veterans

We were delighted to welcome Don McAllister and Hershel McCorkle of NVHA to our 50th reunion. They offered a valuable gift to the Sixth Division Marines: a recorded interview about their life and military service.

NVHA is a non-profit that was established to collect and preserve the entire life histories of our nation's veterans. Unlike most veteran interviews, NVHA's interviews include the veteran's family history, as well as their military

experience. The veterans receive a free DVD of their interview, which is a wonderful gift for the veteran and his family. All at no charge.

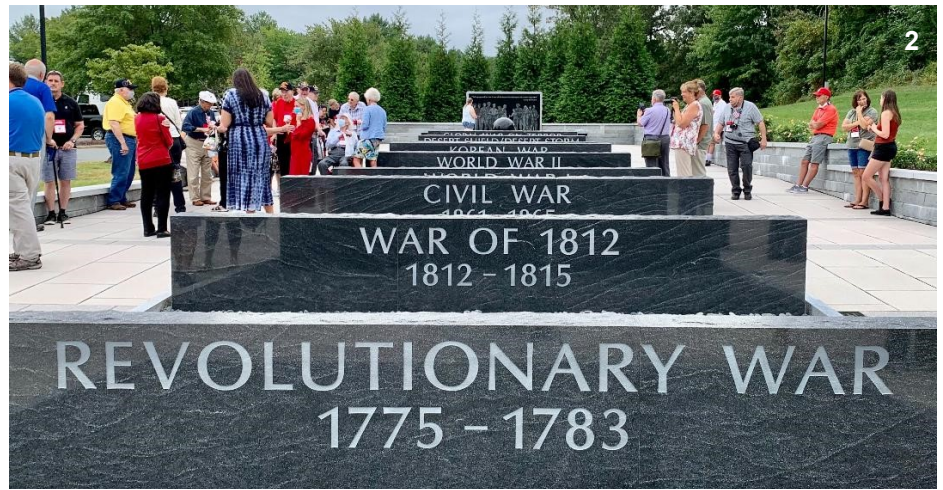
Please contact NVHA at: nvha01@hotmail.com or **765-643-9043** if you know a veteran who would like to be interviewed. For more information, go to: nvharchive.org. You'll find a list of the veterans they have interviewed to date, including

many from the Sixth Marine Division.



Hershel McCorkle & Don McAllister

50th Reunion — Field Trips



- 1) Bob Patterson, Ross Hood
- 2) Stafford County Armed Services Memorial
- 3) Harry McKnight
- 4) DC Rigby
- 5) Joe & Julia Clark, Holly Kite, Gillian Martin
- 6) Kenmore Plantation
- 7) Holly Kite, Sharon Woodhouse, Janet Russell, Barbara Kite

50th Reunion — Field Trips



1

From Guadalcanal to Quantico

The Sixth Marine Division's flag was first unfurled on Guadalcanal when the Division was formed in 1944. We're not sure what path it took to get to the Marine Corps Recruit Depot Museum (MCRDM) in San Diego, but that's where Watson Crumbie found it decades later, hanging in a back hallway.

When the National Museum of the Marine Corps opened in 2006, virtually everyone thought that's where the colors belonged. But getting them there was no simple feat. Many people tried, but they ran into endless road-blocks and red tape.

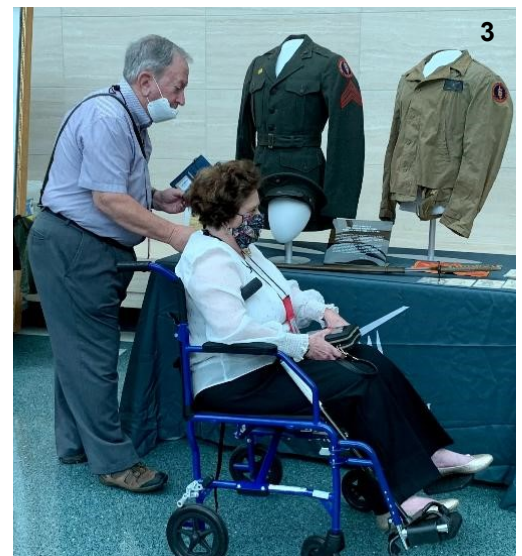
Then in early 2020, our Historian, Laura Lacey, took on

the challenge. Anyone who knows Laura knows she is persistent. With a capital P. She does not give up! Even a worldwide pandemic did not stop her. Many people helped (they are too numerous to mention) but in the end it was Laura's persistence that brought the colors to the museum where they belong. Thank you, Laura!

The colors were on display when we visited the museum on September 16. They are now being examined for possible restoration, and then they will be reframed. Once that task is complete, we are hopeful they will be displayed permanently at the museum.



2



3

1) DC Rigby, Ross Laporte, Watson Crumbie, Ken Wells, Neal McCallum, Leonard Turner & Harry McKnight with the Division colors.

2) Leonard Turner, Bob Patterson

3) Bob & Jane McCalmont examine some of the special objects put on display for our visit.

50th Reunion — Field Trips



1) Deputy Director Dave Vickers welcomes our group to the National Museum of the Marine Corps.

2) Sharon Woodhouse, Janet Russell



Dream Come True for Watson Crumbie

On May 3, 2017, the Jangjin (Chosin) Few Battle Monument was dedicated at the Marine Corps Museum in Quantico, VA. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Marine Corps General Joe Dunford spoke at the dedication. But another VIP was not there. Watson Crumbie, who fought with the Sixth Division on Okinawa and the First Division at the Chosin Reservoir in Korea chaired the project to build the monument. He was unable to attend the dedication due to health problems. After devoting five years to the project, you can imagine Watson's disappointment at never getting to see the monument he worked so hard to bring about.

That all changed in September when Watson's daughter Belva Aydelotte and her husband Robert offered to drive Watson to the reunion. It took three days each way to allow Watson to get out of the car and move his legs frequently. But the long drive was worth it when Watson got to see the Division colors at the museum AND the Jangjin (Chosin) Few Monument whose creation he spearheaded.

Watson was thrilled to share the moment with Belva, Robert, his granddaughter Stacy, and her husband, Greg.

Note: The monument is located on the memorial walkway behind the museum.



Robert & Belva Aydelotte, Watson Crumbie, Stacy & Greg Duffy

50th Reunion — Looking to the Future

Reunion Treasures Find Good Homes

If you've been to a reunion, you remember seeing the banners, the Pacific map, the regimental flags, and the bell that's rung at the Memorial Service. If you've been to multiple reunions, you've probably gotten pretty attached to these items. What were to do with them after the final reunion? It was a question no one wanted to think about.

With the help of Sallie Shepherd, General Lemuel Shepherd's granddaughter, President Connie Houseweart connected with the Assault Amphibious School at Camp Pendleton, who agreed to accept and display the big Pacific map and the division flag that was created for the reunions. They were even willing to pay for shipping.

Unfortunately, we could not find a home for the remaining items. Museums were not interested. Ultimately, we decided to hold a silent auction at the Grand Banquet and use the proceeds to continue publishing the newsletter. It was a great success! We raised a lot of money, and several people are very happy with their reunion souvenirs.



Fall 2021



Ken Wells, Neal McCallum, Lester Penny, Harry McKnight, Leonard Turner, DC Rigby & Watson Crumbie pose before the Pacific map for the last time. They each signed the map.

Striking Sixth & Website Will Go On

At the annual meeting, the membership voted to dissolve the Sixth Marine Division Association. Why?

The Association was created by the Sixth Division Marines for the purpose of holding annual reunions and keeping in touch via the *Striking Sixth* newsletter. With the reunions coming to an end, there will be no opportunity to hold annual meetings. So we pretty much had to dissolve the Association at our final meeting.

But not immediately. We are committed to publishing the newsletter as long as there are Sixth Division Marines to read it. We voted to keep enough funds on hand to continue the newsletter and to dissolve the Association *only after* the funds are gone.

More importantly, we want to assure you we are not forgetting the legacy of the Sixth. Our most important goal is preserving the memory of what you accomplished. We pledge to continue to enhance and maintain the website so younger generations can learn what the Sixth Marine Division did to safeguard our freedom. We will also promote the Division and the website on Facebook.

While it is sad the reunions will be no more, the work of promoting and preserving the history of the Sixth Division will continue. That is our promise to you.

Reunion Planning Committee: Jim Monbeck, Sharon Woodhouse, Laura Lacey, Carroll & Bob McGowan, Lisa Benedetti, Connie Houseweart. Not pictured: Patty Payne.

50th Reunion — Farewell & RIP



- 1) Bell ringer Neal McCallum at the Memorial Service
- 2) Pledge of Allegiance
- 3) Connie Houseweart, Gillian Martin
- 4) Larry & Sally Slomka, Sheila & Larry Eason
- 5) Connie Houseweart gives a rose to Mary Bennett in recognition of her father Fred Bennett's passing earlier this year.



50th Reunion — Farewell & RIP



- 1) DC Rigby is greeted by the Color Guard.
- 2) Color Guard
- 3) A member of the Color guard shakes hands with Ken Wells.
- 4) Brett, Patti & Franklin Margaron. Patti's uncle Bob Bauman played in the Mosquito Bowl and was killed on Okinawa. He will be featured in Buzz Bissinger's book.
- 5) Members of the Marine Corps Jazz Band
- 6) Color Guard



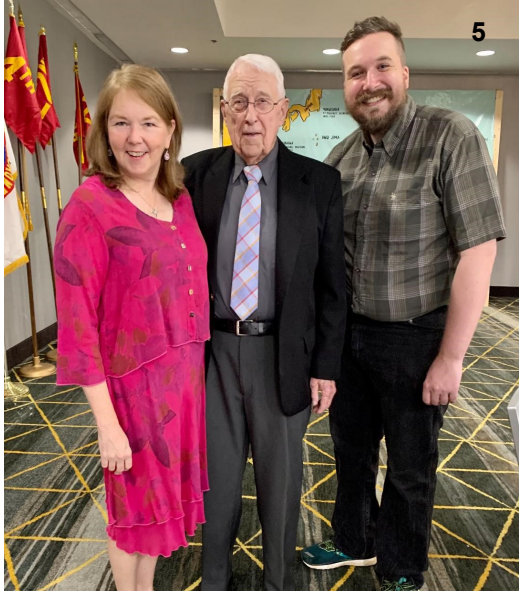
50th Reunion — Festive Finale



- 1) Rick, Dolores & Jack Bertram
- 2) Tim, Karen, Barbara, Liz, Tom & Harry McKnight
- 3) Speaker Robert Murray, Laura Lacey, Ryan Lacey
- 4) Connie Houseweart, Louise Lutts, David Hilner, Janet Russell, Sharon Woodhouse
- 5) Lisa Benedetti, Anita Benedetti, Lynn Warren, Mary Walker, Kathy Schadt, Melinda Benedetti

Special thanks to Kate McGuigan and Tom Montalbano for donating the open bar at the Grand Banquet!

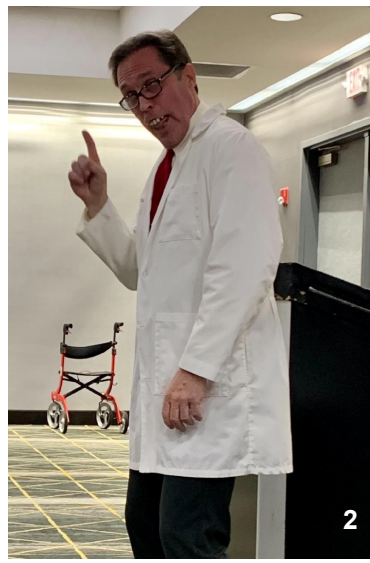
50th Reunion — Festive Finale



- 1) Larry & Sally Slomka
- 2) Stephen & Joyce Burroughs
- 3) MC Bob McGowan
- 4) Connie Houseweart, Buzz Bissinger
- 5) Mary Beth Tierney, Lester Penny & his grandson
- 6) Mary & Parker Brauer, Pfuong Riles
- 7) Mary Bennett, Quinten Bennett
- 8) Frank & Christine McBride

Since they were unable to attend the reunion, Tiffany & Adam Leggett purchased special gifts for the Veterans which were presented at the banquet..

50th Reunion — Festive Finale



Best Defense Foundation

It was a privilege to have Joe Conway of the Best Defense Foundation at our reunion. Best Defense is a non-profit organization run entirely by volunteers that helps military veterans and their families. Their mission: Taking Care of the Ones Who Took Care of Us.



Leonard Turner, Joe Conway

Since its founding in 2018 by NFL veteran Donnie Edwards, Best Defense has taken more than 100 veterans back to the battlefields where they served, at zero expense to the veteran. They ensure that all WWII veterans who want a measure of closure or the recognition they so richly deserve have an opportunity to return to their battlefield at no cost.

Another mission of Best Defense is to educate future generations about the heroism and sacrifices of our military. They have created a video archive of interviews with more than 200 World War II veterans to date.

To learn more about the Best Defense Foundation and the valuable work they do, please go to: bestdefensefoundation.org.



- 1) Natalie & Ken Wells
- 2) Tim McKnight as Julius Kelp, the Nutty Professor
- 3) Melanie & Jim Rigby
- 4) Pfung Riles & Neal McCallum
- 5) Keith & Pat Gibson
- 6) Janet Russell reacts to finding out Mary Brauer purchased the Memorial Service bell in the silent auction for her.



50th Reunion — Festive Finale



- 1) Kathy Schadt, Carol Otto
- 2) Sandy & Scott Williams
- 3) Sharon Woodhouse, Dolores Bertram
- 4) Bill & Jean Steed, Leonard Turner
- 5) Jane & Bob McCalmont
- 6) speaker Robert Murray, Laura & Keith Lacey
- 7) Holly Kite, Thomas Woodward, Barbara & Joe Kite
- 8) Bob McGowan, Jim Monbeck

50th Reunion — Faithful to Your Legacy

Major Robert Murray's Address

Good evening to the Marines, families, and distinguished visitors. Thank you to Dr. Laura Lacey for her dedication to the Marine Corps and most especially for doggedly capturing the history of the Sixth Marine Division. We are blessed to have such talented and gracious women to ensure future generations can read your stories and your endeavors.

Laura's oldest son Sean and I attended the same college and commissioned together. Laura is a huge part of my Marine origin story; she lit a spark in me for Marine Corps history and cultivated my deep love for our Corps. And so, your stories and experiences continue to educate young officers and Marines.

I feel deeply honored to speak tonight and to share this moment with you. I am humbled to be in the presence of such great men; you are all giants of the Marine Corps. Through your hard-fought campaigns and battles, you laid the foundation of our modern Marine Culture, and it is up to the current generation to live up to your example and commitment to our Country and our Corps.

I have heard some of you are concerned about the twilight of the reunions and being forgotten. I assure you that we will carry your torch and carry on your legacy.

I first read about the Sixth Marine Division in 2005 in Laura's book "Stay off the Skyline," and I re-read it recently to prepare for tonight. I am struck with similarities in our Marine Culture despite the passage of time. Today's Marine Corps is the best America has to offer—we are still the youngest service, the fittest service, and the proudest service. This is a testament to your legacy; our pride stems from your service and sacrifice.

Some things have changed. The average Marine during World War II was 19 years old, Caucasian, 5'9" and about 140 pounds, and came from the rural south or urban north. Some finished high school; some didn't. The Marines of today are nearly all high school graduates. They come from all across the US. Women proudly and capably serve in all jobs and billets throughout our Corps. Also, I should mention that the option of jail or the Corps is no longer allowed. Simply put, our Marines are fit, smart, and very well-trained. Despite these minor differences, our young Marines are more similar to you than different—a rifle platoon down to the fire team of Marines is still the scrappiest, most competitive, and most lethal unit on planet earth.

In the words of Cpl James Day, Wpns 22, "When you take a look at that little corporal and what

he's done, he's probably had one school his entire life and that's Marine Corps Boot Camp, which is the finest school, in the finest organization in the world. [In combat] a corporal has more responsibility than a division commander. The corporal has the responsibility to see his fire team through tomorrow." This responsibility endures. The NCO corps and its sacred task to train, mentor, and safeguard their Marines lives on.

I love hearing and reading your stories on the competitive nature of Marines – this absolutely remains unchanged. Recently I attended a boot camp graduation at MCRD San Diego. Our Marines are still taught they are the most elite and attend the most difficult and physically demanding boot camp. This is a fact. Seeing the newly minted Marines march with precision and pride across the Grinder will give you goose bumps and fill you with pride—it is the best America has to offer.

These young men (and young women) have taken a challenge to live up to our values of Honor, Courage, and Commitment. I think Ernie Pyle would conclude today's Marines are still young, sentimental, and compassionate. In the words of General Mattis, we are no better friend, no worse enemy.

While our modern combat experience is nothing compared to

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50th Reunion — Faithful to Your Legacy

Major Murray

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Okinawa or the Pacific campaigns, Marines still have a knack at finding mischief and having fun despite circumstances. The “grab-ass” of your day, I am sure, reflects similarly to our own grab-ass. Most of my combat deployments have been in hot, dusty or cold, dusty places. My Afghanistan deployment was typical for my generation. It was long, dusty, really cold then really hot, and a hard deployment. We did not have as rough of a time as some battalions in terms of casualties, but we all lost around 30-40 pounds from the heat and constant patrolling.

Once we got close to the end of our time, cold beer in Kazakhstan was the constant topic among my Marines. Guys were scheming on how to get more than their two beer rations, or to save up their two so they could have four in one day. Then, somehow, a rumor began circulating that we wouldn't be able to drink. As you can imagine, my guys became a mix of angry and sad. I had to find out if it was true. The “word” was the Marines wouldn't be able to drink beer when we rotated back through Kazakhstan. But it was only Marines, supposedly the other services could still have beer.

My CO came out to visit with the replacement battalion commander a few days following the

rumor's arrival. I asked, and my CO broke it to me gently on patrol: We wouldn't be able to enjoy a well-deserved libation. Why did it change? The base in Kazakhstan was run by the Air Force, and the non-Marine units that came in/out of it were all POGs [Person Other than Grunt] and were not in front-line combat areas. The Marine Corps flew all its combat units through this base; we were all in combat areas. As you can imagine, the competitive nature of the Marines would not allow this fact to go unnoticed by any and all airmen or soldiers, officer or enlisted. It was a Marine's duty to point out this shortcoming. Well, when you add alcohol to the mix, bravado and tempers flared. So many fights were breaking out – well, really so many airmen and soldiers were losing fights – that the natural thing to do was not allow the Marines to drink.

Over the next few days, we held out hope the policy would change, but it didn't. We were not allowed to drink beer at the local MWR [Morale, Welfare, and Recreation], but the Army and the other services were allowed to drink. I sadly report that we were not as proficient as some of y'all at stealing booze; at least I wasn't aware of my Marines' success. However, it didn't solve the issue of fights. Even without booze, our Marines and Docs held true to their duty of reminding all these other folks that we were the real deal, elite



Major Robert Murray

and hardened. Many more Marine victories were had.

Our families had beer ready for us when we got home. The real reason we weren't allowed to drink is because a unit that rotated back before us supposedly started a big bar brawl, and we were winning too many fights among the soldiers and airmen.

I hope my message has resonated with you. You are all heroes and mountains of Men to me. I assure you that we will do our best to uphold the legacy and culture you fought to give us. The Marines of today will uphold Honor, Courage, and Commitment. Our mission is to ensure our service does justice to the legacy of all Veterans of the Second World War, and most especially the legacy of the Sixth Marine Division.

It has been my honor speaking to you tonight. God Bless you all and Semper Fidelis.

50th Reunion — Family & Friends

Reunion Attendees

Anita, Lisa & Melinda Benedetti	Keith & Laura Lacey	Bob Patterson
Mary Bennett	Ryan Lacey	Lester Penney & grandson
Quinten Bennett	Ross Laporte	DC Rigby
Dolores Bertram	Ida & Tom Keane	Jim & Melanie Rigby
Jack Bertram	Leona Lassard	Janet Russell
Barb & Ken Bertram	Louise (Lulu) Lutts	Craig Salvatore
Rick Bertram	Brett & Patti Margaron	Kathy Schadt
Buzz Bissinger	Franklin Margaron	Helen Simmons
Mary & Parker Brauer	Gillian Martin	Stephanie Simmons Walsh
Joyce & Stephen Burroughs	Don McAllister	Larry & Sally Slomka
Joe & Julia Clark	Christine & Frank McBride	Bruce Soifer
Joe Conway	Neal McCallum & Phuong Riles	Bill & Jean Steed
Watson Crumbie	Bob & Jane McCalmont	Mary Beth Tierney
Belva & Robert Aydelotte	Nancy Jo & Vincent McCombs	Leonard Turner
Greg & Stacy Duffy	Hershel McCorkle	Karen Turner
Larry & Sheila Eason	Bob & Carroll McGowan	Mary Walker
Keith & Pat Gibson	Barbara & Harry McKnight	Lynne Warren
Joshua Hendricks	Karen & Tim McKnight	Ken & Natalie Wells
Ross Hood	Liz & Tom McKnight	Sandy & Scott Williams
Connie Houseweart & David Hilner	Jim Monbeck	Sharon Woodhouse
Barbara & Joe Kite	Robert Murray (speaker)	Thomas Woodward
Holly Kite	Carol Otto	

Reunion Donations — Thank You!

Anita, Lisa & Melinda Benedetti	Jane & Bob McCalmont
Dolores Bertram	Kate McGuigan & Tom Montalbano
Mary Brauer	Jim Monbeck
Natalie Eustace-Wells	Phuong Riles
Fredericksburg Visitor Bureau	Janet Russell
Dennis Hellberg (Band of Brothers)	Kathy Schadt
David Hilner	Helen Simmons
Connie Houseweart	Stafford County
Joe Kite	Mary Beth Tierney
Laura Lacey	Andrew Traynor (MC Museum docent)
Ed Latendresse (Band of Brothers)	Karen & Leonard Turner
Adam & Tiffany Leggett	Sloane & Scott Whitaker
Don McAllister	Sharon Woodhouse



This beautiful quilt was made for the auction by Janet Russell. She has donated many quilts over the years, and they always generate fierce bidding.

We know — and regret — we are missing many who donated auction items, cash, etc., along with those who so generously purchased auction items.

We thank you all and apologize for any omissions.

50th Reunion — Finding Closure

Craig Salvatore never met his uncle. On June 9, 1945, Pvt. Melford McDermott died on Okinawa at the age of 19.

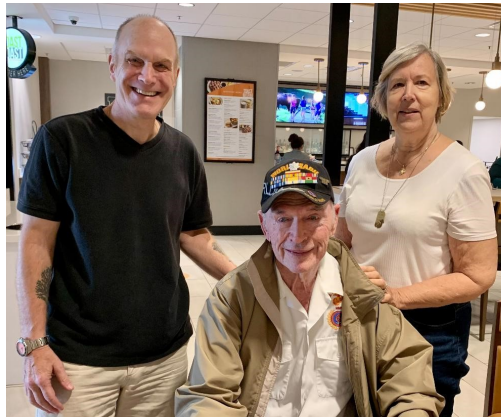
Craig's mother was Melford's sister. His father was Melford's best friend. They and Melford's older brother Alton (a Sgt. Major in the Army and a veteran of World War II, Korea, and Vietnam) kept Melford's memory alive by telling stories of his life. All Melford ever wanted was to be a Marine, and he was so proud to wear the uniform. The stories about Melford were very personal to Craig, especially because he looked just like him as a child.

When he got older, Craig began researching Melford and the battle of Okinawa. He would visit his grave and send flowers multiple times a year. When Craig had a son of his own, he shared the stories of Melford he had heard as a child.

Shortly before he died, Alton gave Craig Melford's shotgun, which he had purchased as a teenager. On Memorial Day 2021, Craig pulled out Melford's shotgun, and he and his then 25-year old son shared stories of Melford.

Later that night, Craig received a text message with a link from his son, followed by a phone call telling Craig to open the link right away.

The link took Craig to a story written by Harry McKnight about how he had lost some of his best friends on Okinawa.*



Craig Salvatore, Harry & Barbara McKnight

One of those friends was Melford McDermott who had been beside Harry when he was fatally shot. Until that moment, Craig did not know how his uncle died.

With more research, Craig discovered Harry was still alive. He found his email address and wrote to him. Harry's wife Barbara responded and told him about the upcoming reunion in September. They continued to correspond, and in July, Craig called Harry on his 95th birthday. He told him he was coming to the reunion.

Craig finally met Harry in Fredericksburg at the Memorial Service. He told Harry the first thing he wanted to do was hug him.

Harry smiled, opened his arms, and they embraced. Then they shared stories about Melford.

Craig had an interesting story of his own to share. Back in 2001, he worked on the 96th floor of Two World Trade Center. On September 11, 2001, just minutes before he was to enter the building, he saw a plane fly over his head and crash into the tower. He was late for work that day because his son had resisted going to kindergarten, and he missed his train. Craig was spared, but he lost 98 friends and co-workers that day.

Craig had a wonderful time at the reunion. He enjoyed meeting Harry, Barbara, and the other Marines and sharing stories with them. Sometime in the near future, he and his life-partner Pam plan to visit the McKnights in Columbus.

Craig says finding Harry was a blessing from God, and it brought closure to the pain he and his family felt for so many years. It was an honor and a comfort to learn Harry cared so much for his uncle.

**The story "The 29th Marines Take a Beating but Prevail" can be found on sixthmarinedivision.com under Stories, then Stories by 6th Div Marines.*



Craig's memorial to his Uncle Alton (left) & Uncle Melford (right)

Greetings from Okinawa

Good Morning Ms. Woodhouse. It is 2105 Japan time, 9 September 2021, as I write this note.

I have been in the Marine Corps for 28+ years, but there have only been three Marine divisions, and one reserve division during my time.

I currently live in Okinawa and am with the III Marine Expeditionary Force, 7th Communication Battalion. I have been reading "Okinawa The Last Battle" by Roy E. Appleman in order to learn about the fierce battle and how the Sixth Marine Division was responsible for 75% of the captured territory. I have been on several battle site tours and enjoy learning about the horrendous sacrifice made by both Marines and Army soldiers who pushed the Japanese off the island in June 1945. Unfortunately every photo or film clip taken during the battle looks very different from how things are now.

I have been to the top of Sugar Loaf Hill, and it now has a large water tank up there. It's covered by thick vegetation and surrounded by businesses and busy roadways. To the east the Tomori Lion still stands, virtually unchanged despite the years that have passed. However, green plant life has taken over and changed the look of the hill.



Tomori Lion, Sugar Loaf Hill, June 1945



Tomori Lion, August 2021



John Ferguson on Sugar Loaf Hill, 2021

A few weeks ago, I took a trip to see the hill and lion. As I observed the terrain, I tried to imagine how different things looked in 1945 as the battle wound down. Attached are images taken of the lion in June 1945 and August 2021. The lion has changed little. I had a retired Marine Major snap my photo, while I held on to his dogs.

There are still many Marines here, and most are very interested in how WWII Marines made their way across this island 76 years ago.

The Marines with Sixth Division accomplished an unthinkable feat many years ago. This afternoon, I was doing some research on the Sixth Marine Division and attempting to pinpoint the location of the graveyard that was used during the battle as a temporary burial site for fallen Marines of the Sixth Division. In the process, I happened upon your website announcing the 50th Reunion of the Sixth Marine Division next week. I would love to attend and meet some of those Marines and family members, but the long distance prevents my doing so.

Still I look forward to visiting your website again, as well as your Facebook page. I would be interested in corresponding with any Marines that were part of

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the Sixth Marine Division and especially those who were here on Okinawa in 1945.

At the very least, I wish to congratulate the Marines of the Sixth Marine Division on their 50th reunion and express my sincere appreciation for their service and success.

Thank you for coordinating this event, and keeping Marines connected, regardless of the distance, campaign or time.

Semper Fi, Sixth Marine Division!

Very Respectfully,
John A. Ferguson
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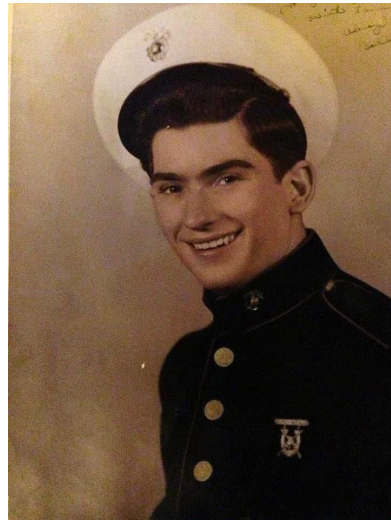


James Bob ("JR") Gibson

I was wondering if any of the Marines still with us remember James Bob "JR" Gibson who was on Okinawa with the Sixth Marine Division. He was my grandfather and he passed a couple of years back. He always had great stories and fond memories of his brothers from overseas.

My brother and I are the only ones left and we are in our 40s.

My dad had a copy of the history of the Sixth Division book, but I haven't seen it in years. I remember my grandfather showing me the book and pointing to a photo of him singing to his brothers in arms while overseas.



James Bob "JR" Gibson

Any help would be greatly appreciated.

I would love to hear from anyone who may have known him. Unfortunately, I do not know his regiment, battalion or company.

Charlie Gibson
513-502-7279
Thepewprofessional@gmail.com



Elmer Patterson

My uncle, Elmer Patterson, was killed in action on 17 May 1945 at Sugar Loaf Hill. I was born 11 years after his death. Elmer never married and had no children.

My goal is to locate a Marine who knew my uncle.

I am a life member of the Association and attended a reunion in Quantico. I plan to attend the reunion in Fredericksburg.

If you knew my uncle or have any information about him, please contact me by phone, email, or mail.

Yours in a Common Cause,
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warmspringspastor@gmail.com



Message from Prior Printer

Watson, At the final reunion of Sixth Marine Division Association, please let them know that I was honored to prepare and publish the Striking Sixth newsletter back in the early 2000s.

I have published the stories of all six Marine divisions over the past 31 years and, if I live long enough, I may put out a compendium of events, stories, etc. from all six Marine divisions.

The Sixth would certainly be a major contributor to that effort.

Thank you.
Jerry Wadley
Finisterre Publishing



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.

John A. Albanese	15th Mar-3-H	10/27/21
Robert Banks	22nd Mar-2-HQ	10/25/19
Clinton Barker	22nd Mar-1-C	07/17/20
Roland Belanger	9th Amphib-B	02/05/21
Howard Bonham	22nd Mar-Motor Transport	11/14/11
Phillip Bremser	29th Mar-2-E	04/08/20
Henry O. Casteel	22nd Mar-1-B&E	12/06/20
Douglas R. Copeland	22nd Mar-2-E	07/26/19
Joseph W. Cunningham	6th Marine Division	unknown
Marino Cuzzo	22nd Mar-HQ	03/01/19
Ralph Deagetis	29th Mar-2-D	07/26/19
Lewis C. Driskill	6th Medical-BN-H&S	03/13/19
Floyd W. Eason Sr.	6th Marine Division	05/26/79
Arthur F. Ender	22nd Mar-3-HQ	05/04/19
T.J. Eversole	15th Mar-1-HQ	08/04/20
George J. Foble, Jr.	15th Mar-2-F	11/12/19
Albert H. Folsom	6th Jasco	02/25/21
Frank J. Freer	15th Mar-3-G (Corpsman)	02/14/21
Frank E. Friudenburg	22nd Mar-1-B	11/08/19
Carlton J. Gaffney	15th Mar-2-D	08/31/20
John N. Grace Jr.	6th Recon Co.	09/16/19
Walter H. Grisevich	5th Field Depot	02/19/20
David P. Guido	22nd Mar-2-E	01/26/20
Louis T. Guthrie	4th Marines	02/26/20
Clifford B. Hamm	5th Prov Rocket	08/05/19
James V. Hanley	22nd Mar-3-I	08/11/21
Allen Scott Harris	29th Mar-3-G	06/14/21
Calvin E. Higgins	22nd Mar-3-K	04/21/21
Rosemary Holton	wife of Robert Holton	04/04/19
Matthew V. Hynes	6th Serv Bn	04/05/19
Kenneth L. Johnson	4th Mar-Artillery	01/06/21
William Y. Johnston	6th Mar Div-HQ-G1	02/09/20
John B. Kerr	3rd Amphib Corps	11/14/04
Charles Kneller	29th Mar-2-E	02/18/20
John Knerr	4th Mar-2-G	04/18/21
Charles F. Kohler	22nd Mar-3-I	01/08/19
Eugene E. Kresge	15th Marines	01/19/20
Robert P. Kuhn	15th Mar-HQ	08/10/19



TAPS (continued)

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.

John S. Lawrence	22nd Mar-2-F	09/11/19
Dallas G. Lemaire	15th Mar-2-F	12/08/19
Charles Lemming	6th Tank Bn	11/23/20
Frank Liberatore	4th Mar-3-L	03/06/20
Richard Dewitt Lynch	22nd Mar-2-HQ	09/13/20
John Peter Marquez	29th Mar-1-A	07/30/20
Kenneth E. Martin	22nd-Mar-1-B	06/02/21
Robert L. Martin	29th Mar-2-F	02/24/19
Vincent J. Mattera	29th Mar-3-I	03/07/21
Albert F. McClements, Jr.	29th Mar-Wpns	01/29/19
Henry J. McGee	15th Mar-H&S	07/13/19
Joseph McGreevy	29th Mar-1-C	06/18/19
Ray Merrell	4th Mar-2-H	09/09/19
Charles C. M. Miller	96th CB	07/16/21
Stanton M. Montague	22nd Mar-Signal Co	07/16/21
Robert F. Neuman	29th Mar-3-I	01/21/20
Jack Norwood	22nd Mar-2-E	10/10/19
Genaro J. Nuzzo	29th Mar-2-HQ	09/29/20
Jack Pankratz	6th Marine Division	04/26/19
Ernest R. Parry	4th Mar-2-HQ	04/27/19
Frederick G. Pears	29th Mar-3-I (Corpsman)	08/15/19
Anthony Pegnataro	29th Mar-2-HQ	04/27/20
Augustin Perez, Jr.	29th Mar-3-I	03/14/21
Gus Perez	6th Marine Division	04/14/21
Wesley R. Powers	29th Mar-1-A	01/10/21
Archie B. Rackerby	4th Mar-3-K	03/09/19
Roy Roadifer	29th Marines	12/08/20
William F. Robertson	15th Mar-2-E	10/28/20
Wayne F. Rowe	22nd Mar-2-F	11/26/19
Jesse Norman Sanders, Sr.	6th Mar Div (Corpsman)	08/23/21
Edward A. Savaria	4th Mar-2-F	01/2019
Andrew B. Scamoni	4th Mar-1-A	01/19/21
Ken W. Schloerke	6th Medical Bn	06/27/20
Harry Schueschner	29th Mar-2nd Bn	11/06/20
George A. Scott	4th Mar-2-E	04/15/19
Patricia Ann Scott	wife of George A. Scott	11/26/12
Courtland B. Smith	29th Mar-3-G	08/08/20
Richard A. Sopp, Jr.	22nd Mar-Wpns	10/13/19

Reporting Deaths

Please report deaths as soon as possible to:

Patty Payne
 Membership Chair
 (410) 978-2979
 pjpayne1984@verizon.net

AND

Harry McKnight
 Chaplain
 (614) 866-3456
 barbandht6321@aol.com



TAPS (continued)

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.

Allen W. Steimling	9th Mar-H&S	02/01/19
James E. Strange	29th Mar-3-I	02/11/20
Sanford E. Twitchell	4th Mar-2-G	05/05/21
Francis D. Tyson	1st Prov Mar Brig	01/20/21
Raul Valle	6th Pioneer Bn/ 22nd Mar-2-F	04/28/20
Rudolph F. Vojnar	22nd Mar-2-F	09/29/20
Irving Weiner	6th Medical Bn-H&S	04/02/21
John W. Wells	29th Marines	06/06/21
Walter D. White	22nd Mar-3-I	02/07/21
Richard H. Willer	15th Mar-3-I	06/12/21
Ted H. Willhite	4th Mar-3-I	05/28/19
Robert E. Williams	22nd Mar-2-E	03/05/19
Tim G. Workman	4th Mar-1-HQ	07/14/19
Harold E. Youngren	6th Jasco	10/27/02
Joseph E. Zaytoun	Service Troops	06/02/21

Chaplain's Report



I would like to keep the "Taps" information going. So please send me the names of deceased Sixth Division Marines and their spouses and any family members who are members of the Association, along with the date of their demise. I would like to send condolence letters to the families.

Thanks for another great reunion. It was special to meet so many new faces of relatives of Marines who have passed on. Like so many others, Barbara and I will miss these "official" reunions, but no one says we still can't plan informal get togethers and have fun.

I had the pleasure of meeting Craig Salvatore who is the nephew of one of the Marines in my machine gun platoon — Melford Jim McDermott, who died beside me. Craig was late to work on September 11 because he took his son to kindergarten class and just missed getting to his office on the 96th floor of "The Second Tower." I think his uncle was watching over him.

I would like to thank Joshua Hendricks, a very special border security guard, who attended his first reunion and took good care of us.

And a huge thanks to Bob and Jane McCalmont for the special taxi service to and from the hotel and for spending an extra day to deliver us. They also helped keep Barbara sane when she realized she had sent my wallet and ID home with our son. They even offered to drive us home to Columbus if we couldn't get on the plane! Such special people.

Your friendly Chaplain,
Harry McKnight

Donations - Thank You!

Matthew Lang
Sallie Shepherd

New Members

Sallie Shepherd
4907 Duncroft Court
Glen Allen, VA 23060

Message from the President



The last and final reunion has been recorded in the history of the Sixth Marine Division Association. What a success it was! There was a tremendous amount of recognition for our Heroes.

I would like to give a special and heartfelt Thank You to our Historian Laura Lacey for her 150% effort in arranging many of the special events, such as the Colors at Marine Corps Museum, publicity from news and radio stations, and more. Also, a special Thank You to the Board for all of their hard work behind the scenes. I could go on and on, but I might run out of space.

As many of you know — or may not know — we had to dispose of the “treasures” of the Association. I know you all remember General Lemuel Shepherd. His granddaughter Sallie Shepherd was instrumental in finding a home for the Pacific map and division flag. I made arrangements to ship both to the Assault Amphibious School at Camp Pendleton where I was promised it would be on display 365 days a year. I am excited that “new trainees” will be able to learn where their predecessors were in World War II.

I want to express my gratitude to the Sixth Marine Division Association for allowing me to be your President. It has been a rewarding experience and very much a labor of love. It has always been a

personal mission of mine to perpetuate the legacy of the Sixth Marine Division.

I have acquired so many adoptive dads since I lost mine in 2006, along with many, many brothers and sisters. One day perhaps our paths will cross again. Until then, be safe and healthy.

Who’s to say that we can’t get together again? I would very much welcome that!

Semper Fi,
Connie

**Newsletter dues for 2022
are due now!
(see renewal info below)**

The subscription rate is \$10 per calendar year.

Subscription checks & donations should be mailed to:

Patty Payne
439 Chalfonte Drive
Catonsville, MD 21228

Please make checks payable to:
Sixth Marine Division Assn.

For more information, please contact Patty at:
(410) 978-2979 or pjpayne1984@verizon.net

From the Editor



I am happy report I had such a great time at the reunion, I almost forgot to be sad it was the last one. I am so grateful I was able to attend ten straight reunions and meet so many Sixth Division veterans and their families. To be able to express my appreciation for all you did to preserve our freedom is a blessing I will never forget.

I am so grateful to the veterans who were able to attend. I know it wasn’t easy, especially during a

pandemic. For those veterans who were unable to be there, I want you to understand that when we toasted and applauded the Sixth Division Marines in our midst, we were toasting and applauding every one of you too. We were also remembering those who are no longer with us, especially the ones who never came home from the war.

We will never forget what you did, and we pledge to keep your memory alive.

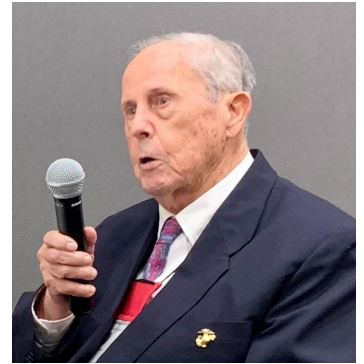
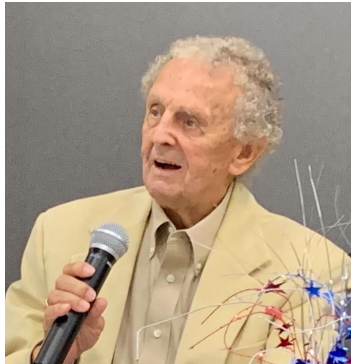
With great respect and affection,
Carroll McGowan

50th Reunion — Final Remarks

Last Words

Each Marine was asked to give their final remarks at the end of the banquet. They were humble and eloquent, as always. We thank all of the Marines of the Sixth Division for enriching our lives with their presence over the years. We will hold you in our hearts forever.

"It was a privilege and an honor to have served in the Marine Corps during the Pacific war. We did what the American people expected us to do, and I think we did it well. It was a fight for our freedom and liberty that we still value so highly." — Neal McCallum



top: Harry McKnight, Lester Penny, DC Rigby; bottom: Watson Crumby, Leonard Turner, Ken Wells, Neal McCallum (Ross Laporte was unable to stay for the banquet.)

First Marine Division Plans Last of the First Salute

Recently we learned that the Sixth Marine Division is not the only Marine division with a special bottle of liquor. In 1944, 14 First Marine Division survivors of the 1942 Battle of Guadalcanal (a battle that earned the Division the Presidential Unit Citation) set aside a bottle of 1920s-era Joseph Etournaud & Company Extra Grand Fine Champagne 1st Grand Cru Cognac. (We don't know anything about fine liquor, but we know that any booze with that many words in the title must be good stuff!) These Marines resolved that the bottle would be opened by the last survivor of the Marines and sailors who served in combat with the First Marine Division during World War II.

This year, the First Marine Division decided to retire the bottle while some of the division's WWII veterans can still be publicly honored. As of mid-October, they had located seven of their WWII veterans and invited them to attend what they are calling the Last of the First salute. Those veterans will toast the Marines with whom they served at a Marine Corps Birthday Celebration on November 6 in Carlsbad, CA.

We salute the WWII veterans of the First Marine Division and hope they had a wonderful birthday celebration!

(Note: November 10, 2021 is the 246th birthday of the Marine Corps.)

50th Reunion — the Final Toast



The Last Man Bottle

In the spring 2021 Striking Sixth, we told you the story of the Sixth Marine Division's Last Man Bottle. It had been auctioned off each year during the annual reunions from 1990 until it disappeared in 2006. Early this year, Watson Crumbie found the bottle at VMI, the alma mater of General Lemuel Shepherd.

Knowing this was to be our last reunion, Watson asked Colonel Keith Gibson, Director of the VMI Museum System, if he would bring the bottle to Fredericksburg for the reunion. Colonel Gibson generously agreed to do this, but he let us know the bottle could not be opened because they feared it would be badly damaged. This was a big disappointment.

However, during the reunion, Colonel Gibson informed us that while he was packing the bottle, he noticed the top was leaking very slightly. Under the circumstances, he concluded that it would be possible – and appropriate – for the veterans to drink from the bottle.

And so the 50th and Final Reunion ended with the Sixth Division Marines toasting all of the members of the Sixth Division with a shot from the Last Man Bottle. And with a standing ovation from the dinner guests. It was magic!

"It was a memorable and inspiring event to be with you all — the essence of what makes our country great." — Colonel Keith Gibson



"Never did I give a thought to being one of the last known survivors to drink a final toast to all the Marines who served in the Sixth Marine Division. I will always savor the taste of the scotch, as well as the moment." — Watson Crumbie



- 1) Colonel Keith Gibson
- 2) Colonel Gibson pours shots for the veterans
- 3) Watson Crumbie, Ken Wells, Neal McCallum

- 4) Watson Crumbie
- 5) Lester Penny signs the back of the bottle's oak case

The vets drank from Marine Corps shot glasses donated by Sloane and Scott Whitaker in honor of their father Dick Whitaker and all the men of the Sixth Marine Division.

Sixth Marine Division Association

439 Chalfonte Drive, Catonsville, MD 21228



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Striking Sixth Newsletter

Fall 2021

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50th Reunion — Fashion Flair



We applaud Leonard Turner and his daughter Karen for their superb wardrobe coordination, and we thank them for the bounteous pizza lunch they donated at the reunion!