

Spring 2024

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## Eldon Cedergreen (6th Tank Bn-B) Gets a Surprise on His 99th Birthday!

99 is a pretty big deal when it comes to birthdays. So naturally, Eldon Cede green's family wanted to make his 99th birthday special. They asked his neighbor, fellow Marine and Vietnam Veteran Michael Madden, if he could help.



Eldon Cedergreen in his new hat

Poking around on the internet, Michael found our website. He reached out to Connie Houseweart and Carroll McGowan, hoping they could get Sixth Division Marines to send birthday cards to Eldon. They in turn surveyed the Association's Board of Directors for ideas. They spread the word about Eldon's birthday and solicited birthday greetings on Facebook.

Treasurer Sharon Woodhouse had the best idea of all. She noticed that Eldon lived just ten

minutes from her house, so she volunteered to give her birthday greeting to Eldon in person!

Eldon's family put up a birthday display in the reception area of the retirement home where he lives. It was there that Sharon surprised him with a Sixth Marine Division hat and back issues of the Striking Sixth. As you can see from the pictures here, he wears his new hat well!

Eldon and Sharon had a lot to talk about. Sharon told him all about the Association and our reunions. He especially loved seeing a picture of his fellow Marines in front of the Pacific map at the final reunion.

Eldon talked a little about his time with the Sixth. His first overseas deployment was to Guadalcanal, where he and his fellow tankers trained for the next invasion, which they later



learned was to be on Okinawa. He was there for the entire battle, followed by peacekeeping duty in China.

One of Eldon's most rewarding memories was finding a way around Sugar Loaf Hill in his Sherman tank so they could fire on enemy positions from the rear. This made life easier for his fellow Marines on the front of the hill.

Eldon, we thank you and wish you a happy and healthy year ahead!



Michael Madden, Sharon Woodhouse and Eldon Cedergreen



## At the End of His Life, Jack Lawson Tells His Story PART TWO

*This story was taken from talks Cpl. Lawson had with his great-niece, Katie Mae (Kay) Taylor, who wrote them down in a book of memories for his family. His son, Andy Lawson, compiled the World War II portions and sent them to us. The Fall 2023 Striking Sixth, which ran Part One of this story, inadvertently left out the role Kay played in recording Cpl. Lawson's memories. We thank her and Andy for sharing this story with us.*

### Okinawa Landing

This was the largest landing operation of the whole Pacific War. On the sea four days from Okinawa, platoon leaders got us together with a map and showed us what the island looked like. Everybody had been speculating, and we thought it was going to be Formosa.

When I get to thinking things are tough, I think back to that morning of April 1, 1945 and it is not yet good daylight. We can see Okinawa in the distance, and we know we will soon be landing there. We don't know exactly what is out there, but we are sure it is going to be unpleasant. The evening before, worship services had been conducted and everyone attended. It was a solemn occasion. Services by Catholic and Protestant chaplains with holy sacrament, prayers, etc.

When our platoon was called for, we climbed over the rail and down the cargo nets into the boats below. We were loaded



Cpl Jack Lawson

down with packs, rifles, ammo and gear. If you were to fall down, you might drown.

Anyone who says he was not scared at that time would be a liar. But to show fear was something that no one did. We knew we must go.

When we reached our rendezvous zone, I had never seen so many ships of all sizes and shapes. Land was visible in the distance, and battleships and cruisers were firing what seemed like thousands of rounds of ammunition onto the beaches. Several Jap kamikazes were diving toward our ships. Most were destroyed, but I saw one make a direct hit and the ship seemed to explode into a huge fireball. It was spectacular, but scary.

When our outfit came ashore that first day, there were Marines and artillery and all kinds of equipment seemingly everywhere. We dug in and spent that first day and night between the beach and Jap airfield. The Japs let us in because they were dug into the mountains and caves.

Only about 200 yards inland the

Marines took control of Yontan Airfield, which was practically in front of us. We saw an enemy plane land. He didn't know we had taken it over. He stepped out of the plane, and a machine gun cut him in two.

That first night was a frightening time. That whole night the sky was lit by flares, tracer bullets and continual anti-aircraft fire. We were under attack from Jap kamikazes, but they were mostly attacking ships and landing craft. The Navy lost more men — about 5,000 — than at any other time. I watched some of them explode.

A favorite Japanese tactic was to attack at night, storming in and making a lot of noise. I was an assistant gunner on a three-man team feeding bandoleers of ammunition for the triggerman. The third guy is doing the best he can keeping the ammunition coming and keeping it from tangling. One night the battle lasted almost all night. The next morning, we counted 30 dead enemy soldiers within yards of us. You're sitting there, and here they come. It's a moment when you don't have time to be scared. I don't like to talk about it.

One of my very best buddies was the recipient of the Bronze Star for killing more than 30 Japanese who were trying to penetrate our position that night in the north of Okinawa. I have a picture of him and me together when we were in China. It was a

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# At the End of His Life, Jack Lawson Tells His Story PART TWO

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special relationship we had. Difficult or impossible to explain. You just had to be there. When people have life and death experiences together, it is a bonding of brotherhood like no other.

## Reflections on the Battle

I will always remember those times. I learned lessons about life and death, which have sustained me many times. God has a plan for me, I truly believe. I hope and pray I have kept my end of the bargain.

I have seen lots of so-called war movies on TV. Some things are realistic, but most are not. *Saving Private Ryan* has been touted to be the most real movie, and maybe it is in some ways. But I didn't see any trucks loaded with

dead bodies like they were so many bags of fertilizer, and I didn't see any people wading through mud up past their knees trying to drag guns and ammo along.

Some things I saw and experienced are hard to believe they ever happened, even now. Almost three months of sleeping on wet ground with only a poncho for cover. Three months without a hot meal or regular food, only field rations, boiled coffee, and cigarettes. Often, you

had to fan the flies with one hand while eating with the other.

No matter where you were, there was always a chance of mortar or artillery fire, or maybe a sniper might pick you out.

Several incidents occurred on Okinawa. Two of my buddies and I pulled a Marine pilot from a crashed fighter plane. He was dazed but otherwise not badly injured. The Japanese would

ranking officers. We all had the same objective...to get out of the way!!

Many of my buddies were either killed or wounded. A very close friend, Kenny Laswell, was severely wounded by a land mine and evacuated. I never heard from him again. Eight of us shared the same tent for seven months on Guadalcanal. Three of the eight were killed in action – Joe Boudrea, Bill Baker and Tom White. That's how close it got to me.

One time I only survived because a mortar shell was a dud and failed to explode. Another time a sniper just missed me. Someone got him before he could fire off any more rounds. A higher power had to have an angel dancing on my shoulder, because there were other close calls.

Television or the movies cannot or does not capture the carnage as it really was. Dead Japanese and Okinawan citizens were not an uncommon sight. We closed up the entrance to many caves because the people in them refused to come out and surrender, especially near the end. One large cave that we closed near Naha had over one hundred people inside. Interpreters con-



Jack Lawson and buddies, Tsingtao, China, 1946

probably have sent a patrol for him had we not done so.

One time I was pinned down by sniper fire for several minutes until someone nearby spotted the sniper and knocked him from his perch.

Another time while under attack from Japanese mortars and artillery fire while helping construct a bridge so tanks could move forward, I jumped into a hole for cover and landed practically on top of a bunch of high-

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# At the End of His Life, Jack Lawson Tells His Story PART TWO

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firmed this; the occupants chose to die rather than come out.

My company was combat engineers and not infantry, but the danger was always there nonetheless. Sometimes I think even more so, if that was possible. Many times we had tanks and mobile guns waiting while we hastily constructed a bridge or swept for mines.

## **The Virgin's Cave**

What I have to say here was prompted by a Japanese road map circa 1964. What caught my attention was note #3 on the map called "The Virgin's Cave." I am sure I remember this cave very well, and I take issue with what is written there. I do not believe it to be a true account of what happened there. This is very troubling to me. I realize this was some 55 years ago (at the time of writing) but I remember it quite well. It did not happen this way.

I was a member of the squad of Marines, maybe 7 to 10 of us, who sealed this cave. I am sure we did not kill 122 young high school girls and teachers and nurses. My conscience is hurting now to think we were accused of this. I am sure I (and we) contributed to the demise of many Japanese and probably many civilians. But we were not in the business of killing young civilian girls and women.



Virgin's Cave, 1945 above and 1965 below



Let me tell you how and why I still remember this particular cave so well. We were at the end of the Okinawa campaign, and everyone knew it because the Japs were running out of real estate. What was left of them was pinned up at the south end of the island. They were desperate, some were committing suicide, and many were hiding in caves and had to be burned out with flame throwers or sealed up

with demolition charges if they refused to surrender. Very few of them surrendered.

We were taking very few chances. I think everyone knew it would soon be over so we were very cautious not to get ourselves killed in the process. The infantry guys were doing most of the mopping up, but the larger caves were left to the engineers to pile in extra TNT and push dirt and rocks into the mouth to make sure they were sealed.

The Virgin Cave was the largest one any of us had seen, and I am sure it is the same one the map is referring to. The location checks out. Anyway, there was an interpreter there that had a conversation with some people inside. The information, as I recall, was that they were Japanese and they were

refusing to come out and surrender. I remember he said there were more than one hundred in there. I am sure we would have followed orders anyway, but nothing was said about any young girls and nurses. Our officers, NCOs or PFCs would never have ordered these kind of people to be killed. We were having civilians come through our lines every day and they were all

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# At the End of His Life, Jack Lawson Tells His Story PART TWO

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treated humanely and given food and medical attention. The mouth of the cave was so large that a large truck or tractor could easily have driven into it. So it could have easily had more than 100 Japanese soldiers inside. And there were certainly no Japanese sentries guarding the entrance. They would have been taken out by the infantry guys. TNT satchel charges would not have been enough to close this one. So we got the job.

As I remember, there were lots of recovered Japanese landmines and mortar shells near here so we proceeded to bring them in, and along with well-placed TNT charges, it was closed. A bulldozer was brought in to push extra dirt in and the job was completed. I think it would be nearly impossible for there to have been any survivors. (The note on the map says there were two.) The concussion was so great it would have killed anyone inside. I was only part of a small group who did this nasty job. I certainly hope and pray there were no young innocent girls in there. I don't believe there were.

## Memories

I hear many men talk of their war experience. A lot of it doesn't sound quite right, and I



Jack Lawson and buddies, Tsingtao, China, 1946

don't care to listen. Even though I have seen hundreds of dead and wounded and been exposed to enemy gunfire, I do not often mention it. It was not pleasant. I had three men I was very close to killed, and several others were wounded and evacuated. We were like brothers. Maybe closer. The memories are still with me. Even now I wake up at night and much of it returns. It was especially bad for the first year after my discharge. Those hundreds of dead Marines are very real. I must never forget them. I came out alive and not even wounded. I wonder why. I must keep the memory of them alive within me always.

I have never seen or heard war described accurately. I don't believe it to be possible. I saw and experienced things that haunt me even to this day. Many men I knew and had been closer to than brothers were killed or wounded. You see and experi-

ence these things and you go on. You wonder if it will ever end or if you will die first, but it did end. After 82 days it was over.

A few more days and we went aboard an LST for the trip to Guam. Before leaving, we attended a dedication and memorial service where all our dead friends and comrades were buried. As I

walked through the many thousands of crosses, I thanked God I had survived. I still ask myself the question: "Why them and not me?" There is a question of guilt. I guess God intended it to be that way. There had been plenty of times where it could have been me. No human being has the answer to any of that. Certainly those who have experienced war do not.

## A Night to Remember

I am thinking about one night while on Okinawa in 1945. There was nothing particularly memorable about it unless it would be that our company was "pulled back" a short distance from where most of the action was. We were in reserve and did not expect to move up for a couple more days. There was plenty going on not too far away. I can remember a couple of "screaming meemies." They hardly ever hit anything. They

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were crude Japanese rockets, and the sound they made was almost blood curdling. Machine gun fire and artillery fire could be heard from time to time and flares could be seen lighting up the darkness. We knew we were safe unless a stray mortar or artillery round were to land nearby.

Although there were sentries posted and would be throughout the night, most of us just sat in small groups drinking coffee and smoking cigarettes. After we had cleaned and oiled our weapons and equipment, there was nothing left to do other than sleep. I remember I was with a few close buddies and our conversation became very solemn and serious. It slowly evolved into somewhat of a religious experience. Now I don't suppose any of us had been

very devout in our religious beliefs, but the events of that battle we had been experiencing changed our thoughts and made us more aware of how close to death we might be. I'm sure there were Jews and some Catholic boys in our group, but that was not mentioned. We were all the same. None of us knew if we were going to come through this war and go home alive.

I don't remember who said what or that it even mattered. It was a moving experience. I remember we sang a few hymns that most of us knew. Now you know that I cannot sing, but for some unknown reason my voice was different and sounded quite good. We started singing "The Old Rugged Cross," and everyone but me stopped singing. I continued to sing and every

word just seemed to come to me. As I now recall, they were impressed with my singing. And now I say so was I. I have no other explanation other than to say that it was almost like an out of body experience.

I think we were all moved by the events of that evening. I'm sure the Spirit of God was there, and we all were comforted by it. Things such as this are unexplainable but very real.



## Sixth Marine Division Grave Markers Still Available

Many years ago, the Association had grave markers created for Sixth Division Marines who wanted to place them on their grave stones. There are a limited number still available: We have 7 of the large round brass markers and 10 of the small rectangular markers. It is first come, first served, so if you want one, don't delay. Once they are gone, we won't get more.

If you would like one of these grave markers or if you have any questions, please contact

Bob McGowan at:  
412-580-7473 or  
chmcg11@aol.com.



small grave marker,  
1 1/8 x 1 1/2 inches



large grave marker, 6 inches in diameter



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15th Marines	Vacant
22nd Marines	D.C. Rigby
29th Marines	Neal McCallum
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6th Medical Battalion	Vacant
6th Engineering Battalion	Vacant
6th Tank Battalion	Vacant
6th Pioneer Battalion	Vacant
6th Headquarters Battalion	Vacant
6th Recon Company	Vacant
6th JASCO	Vacant
1st Amphibs	Vacant

### Striking Sixth Newsletter

This newsletter is an official publication of the Sixth Marine Division Association and is published three times each year: March, July and November.

**Subscriptions are \$10 per calendar year.**

**Subscription checks, address changes, donations and death notices should be mailed or emailed to:**

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## Editor's Note



Is there anyone who hasn't heard about Taylor Swift's Eras Tour? The one with average ticket prices

north of \$1,000. Yikes! Who pays that amount for concert tickets? Even if you have Swiftie granddaughters. (Sorry, girls, we don't have that kind of money.)

Fortunately, you don't have to spend a fortune to hear good music in person. Concerts by the United States Marine Band are free! So you can imagine how excited Bob and I were when we found out they were

playing in Pittsburgh last November. In the high school our sons attended, just a mile from our house!

The concert was terrific. As you would expect, the band played John Philip Sousa marches and the songs of the U.S. Armed Forces. (No surprise — "From the Halls of Montezuma" was the best!) We also heard songs from classic operas and contemporary pieces, as well as voice and instrumental solos. They are extremely talented musicians. We loved it!

The band tours a different section of the country each fall. See the back cover for more on where they are playing next.

~Carroll McGowan

## Donations - Thank You!

### GENERAL FUND

Eloise Fairburn in memory of Glynn Fairburn (4th Mar-1-HQ)

Joy Fischer

Paul Kirst

Jonathan Lynch

S. Louise Ratliff

Michael Senko

Sallie Shepherd

Mrs. Lee Roy Wainwright in memory of Lee Roy Wainwright (4th Mar-3-G)

## A Note from VMI Scholarship Winner Cameron Boxley

I was born on August 23, 2001 in Richmond, Virginia, though my childhood was spent in Montpelier, Virginia. It was there that I learned to ride four-wheelers and dirt bikes, hunt, fish, and do other outdoor activities. Outside of Montpelier, I discovered a love for snowboarding and backpacking. I also developed a passion for doing things with my hands by working with my father in the garage. We did everything from fixing engines to woodworking.

Once I got to high school, I decided to join the JROTC program. I made this decision because I was always fascinated by the military and the adventurous lifestyle it provides, and the JROTC program seemed like a good way to get there. By the time I was a senior, I knew I wanted to join the Marine Corps. Through the stories I read and



the conversations I had with Marines, I could tell that the Marine Corps was different than any other branch of the U.S. military. Whether they are wearing a uniform or plain clothing, you can always spot Marines because of the way they carry themselves. I was aware that the expectations of the Marine Corps are high, but I saw this as a challenge.

I saw the same level of expectations placed on Cadets when I visited VMI. Between the single sanction honor code and the challenges of the Ratline, I could tell how unique VMI is. I love to do a lot of different activities, so I was also drawn in by the number of clubs offered by the school.

What kept me pursuing the Marine Corps was the amazing leadership of the NROTC program at VMI. The previous unit Commander, Col (ret.) Streeter, is one of the best leaders I have ever been under. His enthusiasm and compassion for his students were unparalleled. On top of this, I developed close friendships with the other Marine option NROTC students.

Editor's Note: Cadet Boxley was one of two winners of the 2023 Gen. Lemuel C. Shepherd Award at VMI.



# 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.**

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Abbott	Mary	wife of Frederick W. Abbott	12/17/23
April	Shirley	wife of Reuben April	08/21/11
Becker	Kenneth	1st Military Police Bn	10/30/00
Bergeron	Adrian W.	6th JASCO	03/03/02
Boatman	Ray	15th Mar-2-H&S	04/04/10
Borgerding	Robert H.	29th Mar-1-C	09/14/04
Bradt	George M.	2nd Separate Tank Co	05/24/04
Brown	Richard	29th Mar-1-C	03/24/04
Cadden	John P.	22nd Mar-1-B	11/08/13
Carvlin	Jay V.	6th Mar Div-HQ	12/2003
Courtage	Vernard E.	4th Mar-3-I	01/16/08
Cross	Lavonne E.	wife of Irvin L. Cross	09/11/04
Damiano	Armond P.	1st Arm Amphib	01/10/09
Damiano	Yolanda	wife of Armond P. Damiano	07/07/07
Danner	Harry G.	4th Mar 1-C (Comm)	unknown
Darragh	Assunta	wife of Joseph F. Darragh	08/24/09
Davis	Donald E.	6th Pioneer Bn	10/28/11
Duggan	Betty	wife of Herbert D. Duggan	03/03/13
Duggan	Herbert D.	22nd Mar-3-Eng	unknown
Farrell	George H. Jr.	22nd Marines	07/25/92
Feldman	Frederick	29th Mar-1-HQ	08/05/01
Fisher	Paul E.	29th Mar-2-D	09/14/11
Harvey	Edmund P.	4th Mar/22nd Mar	05/02/10
Harwood	James P.	4th Mar-1-HQ	05/04/12
Harwood	Mildred	wife of James P. Harwood	01/03/09
Hasekian	Dorothy	wife of Harry Hasekian	12/08/08
Hasekian	Harry	15th Mar-3-G	06/12/11
Hays	Thomas J.	22nd Mar-3-HQ&K	03/07/10
Hermanies	John H.	29th Mar-3-I	03/16/13
Hernandez	Elisa	wife of Ignacio S. Hernandez	12/29/07
Hernandez	Ignacio S.	4th Mar-3-K	unknown
Hill	Ethel	wife of Floyd M. (Stoney) Hill	03/23/13
Hilliard	Joyce	wife of Richard A. Hilliard	08/11/13
Hoeymans	F. Raymond	22nd Mar-3-L	01/11/08
Jergovic	Rudolph F.	29th Mar-1-A	unknown
Keeley	Mary	wife of John M. Keeley	08/19/09
Kenzy	Leon B.	22nd Mar-HQ	02/29/08
Kenzy	Margaret	wife of Leon B. Kenzy	12/19/10
King	Edward O. Jr	9th 155 Gun Bn	01/01/92
Manson	Ronald A.	29th Mar-1-C	01/14/07
Masten	Esther	wife of Theodore R. Masten Jr.	07/15/07
Masten	Theodore R. Jr.	22nd Mar-1-B	03/03/11





# 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.**

Mathews	James D.	22nd Mar-3-L	02/10/08
McKinnon	Patricia	wife of Pat McKinnon	05/19/03
Micheline	Stella	wife of Syrus R. Micheline	12/26/14
Moore	Charles C. Jr.	4th Mar-3-K	10/31/07
Moore	Mary	wife of Charles C. Moore Jr.	12/25/12
Moran	Jack B.	6th Pioneers	05/14/11
Morris	Eunice	wife of James T. Morris	04/10/13
Morris	James T.	22nd Mar-1-A	unknown
Mull	Norman L.	22nd Mar-Wpns	04/04/03
Nugent	Henry C. Sr.	6th Tank Bn-B	03/17/05
Oertel	Billie	wife of Irving F. Oertel	2003
Oertel	Irving F.	22nd Mar-2-G	09/16/15
Orgovan	John G.	4th Marines	12/25/01
Ornas	Albert J	60MM Mtr-F Co	02/12/10
Passman	Bernard G.	4th Mar-3-HQ	04/10/15
Passman	Harriet	wife of Bernard G. Passman	08/08/03
Pepper	Robert G.	15th Mar-4-H&S	02/2004
Perzchowski	John S.	22nd Mar-2-E	unknown
Perzchowski	Veronica	wife of John S. Perzchowski	12/10/11
Pesely	Edward H.	22nd Mar-2-F	07/06/10
Rabb	Kenneth	29th Mar-1-C	11/11/23
Reppenhagen	Delphine	wife of Arthur C. Reppenhagen	07/05/13
Roberts	Robert T.	29th Mar-1-A	04/30/12
Rotton	Luther C. Jr.	22nd Mar-1-B	unknown
Rotton	Maxine	wife of Luther C. Rotton Jr.	04/08/05
Schacknow	Harry B.	2nd Pack Howitzer Bn	04/03/13
Spaulding	Roger	4th Mar-2-G	05/29/11
Stevenson	Phyllis	wife of William V. Stevenson	11/30/14
Stevenson	William V.	29th Mar-2-F	04/04/01
Stines	Charles E.	22nd Mar-Wpns	07/27/11
Taff	Jayne	wife of Walter E. Taff	01/2008
Teague	Reginald	4th Mar-3-HQ	08/30/13
Tenuta	John H.	22nd Mar-3-I	05/12/01
Valle	Olivia	wife of Raul Valle	02/20/21
Vinciotti	Julia	wife of Constantine Vinciotti	05/03/04
Wagner	Frank A.	29th Mar-1A	07/25/10
Watson	Floyd L.	22nd Mar-3-M	05/12/07
West	E. H.	22nd Mar-H&S	06/19/09
Wills	Ernest J.	6th Recon Co	06/19/06
Wills	Margaret	wife of Ernest J. Wills	07/14/12
Woodard	William Daniel	29th Marines	07/11/11

## Reporting Deaths

**Please report deaths as soon as possible to:**

**Patty Payne**

**Membership Chair**

**(410) 978-2979**

**pjpayne1984@verizon.net**

# Association Asks the National Museum of the Marine Corps to Expand Coverage of the Battle of Okinawa

The National Museum of the Marine Corps is widely recognized for telling the story of the U.S. Marines with the utmost pride and respect. It is entertaining, thought-provoking and inspirational. Members of the Sixth Marine Division will sing its praises, but they will also tell you the Battle of Okinawa deserves better coverage.

Members of the Sixth Marine Division Association have expressed this concern to the Museum numerous times in the past decade. The Board recognized that 2023 was the ideal time to make another push. The Museum has been undergoing an expansion in preparation for the 250th anniversary of the Corps in 2025, and the Division has received excellent publicity from Buzz Bissinger's *Mosquito Bowl*, which was recognized last spring with an award from the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation, which oversees the Museum.

Neal McCallum (29th Mar-2-F) and Bob McGowan (Association Judge Advocate) had an opportunity to speak to MajGen James Lukeman USMC (Ret), President and CEO of the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation, at the awards ceremony for the *Mosquito Bowl*, and they followed this up with a letter making the case for more coverage of Okinawa. The text of the letter is below. The second page had a few ideas about how this might be done, including a larger map and a video presentation.

MajGen Lukeman responded via email. He thanked Neal and Bob for their ideas on how to "better recognize one of the most important battles in the history of our Corps!" He passed their ideas onto the Museum Director and said he hoped to see some of them incorporated in the Museum.

We promise to keep you updated.

Dear Major General Lukeman:

Thank you for taking the time to speak with us when we attended the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation's Annual Awards Dinner in April. It was a wonderful event. Thank you also for your warm welcome to the Sixth Marine Division Association when we visited the National Museum of the Marine Corps during our last annual reunion in 2021. We were all thrilled to see our Battle Colors displayed for the first time since World War II.

The NMMC is a magnificent tribute to our Corps history. Our only concern is that the Battle of Okinawa is underrepresented, which is disappointing considering its significance. Some pertinent facts about the battle:

- It was the largest combined land, sea, and air invasion in history.
- 100,000 US troops were engaged, including three USMC Divisions.
- The 82-day battle covered a 700-mile arc and involved 1,000,000 people.
- Kamikazes sunk 34 ships and damaged 368 ships.
- The extreme number of casualties, including civilians, directly influenced the decision to drop two atomic bombs on Japan.

It is our hope that as the NMMC enters the Final Phase of its expansion and prepares for the 250th anniversary, more emphasis be placed on the Battle of Okinawa in keeping with its place as the final battle of the Pacific Campaign. Enclosed are some of our initial thoughts on what could be included in an expanded Okinawa exhibit.

We salute all Marines serving today and note they defend our nation with the same tenacity as in World War II.

With warm regards and best wishes to our Corps,



**Robert Earl Madlem  
(6th Jasco)**

I would like to connect with anyone who might have known my father. His name is Robert Earl Madlem, and he was a Corporal with the 6th Jasco in World War II. I believe he was also with the 22nd Marines, although I am not positive about this. As far as I know, he served on Guam, Bougainville, Guadalcanal, and Okinawa.

My father had red hair and was from Elkhart, Indiana. He would have been 99 years old this year. The last Marine I had contact with that knew him was Jack Hoag.

Thank you,  
Philip Peter Madlem  
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Lucena City 4301 Philippines



Robert Earl Madlem



## Sixth Marine Division Bulletin, China Edition 10/25/45

I came across some of my grandfather's memories that were passed on to me by my aunt. I thought you might be interested.

My grandfather's name is John Belonick; he was in 15th Mar-3-H. I'm very proud of him. It has become my project to map his path and present it to the family. Like most, he never talked about it. I'm fortunate my grandmother saved his Raider patch; the other ones are gone. I had my aunt request his medals.

Ironically, I found out his two brothers were pilots over Europe. Here I was firmly focused

on the Pacific, while a whole other part of family history was over in Europe.

Thank you for putting the newsletter out. It really sparked my ability to track stuff down.

Tim Moore

Editor's note: Tim sent us a Sixth Marine Division Bulletin, China Edition dated October 25, 1945. We enjoyed reading it and thank Tim for sharing it with us.

See below for a transcript of one of the stories in the Bulletin.

Look for more stories from the Bulletin in future newsletters.

## TRUMAN ASKS FOR UNIVERSAL MILITARY TRAINING BEFORE JOINT SESSION

WASHINGTON — President Truman addressing a joint session of Congress recommended a universal military program calling for one year of military training for every young American male in order to provide a reserve of manpower to preserve the peace.

Mr. Truman told the legislators the great difference between having universal training and having no training is that in the time of emergency those who would be selected for actual military service would already have been basically trained.

He said "that difference may be a year's time, but that difference may be a margin between survival and destruction of this great nation."

The President recommended that each young man should enter training "either at 18 or upon his graduation from high school; but in any event before his 20th birthday."

Mr. Truman said that although the United States will use all its moral

influence to maintain peace, the nation must face the fact that "Peace must be built on power as well as good will and good deeds."

Expressing complete confidence in the future of the United Nations, the President said:

"Our determination to remain a powerful force denotes no lack of faith in the United Nations' organization. On the contrary, with all the might we have, we intend to back our obligations and commitments under the United Nations' Charter. Indeed, sincerity of our intentions to support the organization will be judged partly by our willingness to maintain power with which to assist other peace-loving nations to enforce its authority. It is only by strength that we can impress this fact upon the future aggressors that will tolerate no threat to peace or liberty. To maintain power, we must act now."

# MAIL CALL



## Kenneth Rabb (29th Mar-1-C)

It is with great sorrow that I write to inform the Association of the death of my father, Kenneth Rabb. He was a member of the Sixth Marine Division, and he was a long-standing member of the Association.

Our family sincerely appreciates the many hours our dad spent reading and talking about the memories prompted by the Sixth Marine Division Association.

Thank you so much,  
Iris Rabb Lawing



Kenneth Rabb



## China Bank Note Signed by Sixth Division Marine

I was researching the Sixth Marine Division because of a bank note from China signed by a member of the Division while in Tsingtao, China on October 22, 1945. His name appears to be Harold D. Boots. I was wondering if the banknote would be of interest to anyone.

Mike Nash

Editor's Note: If anyone knows Harold Boots or is interested in the banknote, please contact Carroll McGowan ([chm1423@aol.com](mailto:chm1423@aol.com)) or Connie Houseweart ([almostnuts@comcast.net](mailto:almostnuts@comcast.net)).

Spring 2024

## Joel E. Grantham

Hello! My great grandpa was Joe Ercel Grantham, and he was a member of the Sixth Marine Division. I'm trying to find anyone who would have stories of his time in the Marine Corps or pictures of him from that time.

Thanks!  
Dakota Curfman  
[dakota.curfman@gmail.com](mailto:dakota.curfman@gmail.com)



Joel E. Grantham



## William Daniel Woodard (29th Marines, Bomb Disposal)

I was wondering if anyone remembers my grandfather, William Daniel Woodard from reunions. He told me he went to one — it would have been before he passed in 2011. He was in the 1st Bomb Disposal Company, 29th Marines.

Ethan Collinsworth  
410-474-7925



William Daniel Woodard



Please send your newsletter dues for 2024 if you have not already done so. See page 8 for more info.



China Banknote



# MAIL CALL



## 50th Anniversary Trip to Okinawa

I had the honor of being one of the guides during the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Okinawa. I am a former Marine who volunteered to assist during the week the Marines were there, and I had a bus full of Sixth Division Marines and their family members. The best guys I ever met.

Not sure if anyone who reads this was there on my bus or not... They might recall that the Japanese security guards would not let us in the "front gate," so I cut a hole in the fence at the back of Sugar Loaf. The area was a former US Military housing area. We all climbed the hill, and we carried two guys in wheel chairs. Bill Pierce was in that group and became a good friend.

Semper Fi,  
John Marklewitz  
[jwmwitz@aol.com](mailto:jwmwitz@aol.com)  
704-576-4816



below: Sixth Division Marines climb up Sugar Loaf Hill in 1995



above: Marines on the beach they landed on on April 1, 1945



left: 2 Sixth Division Marines digging soil from the top of Sugar Loaf Hill

## Okinawa 50th Anniversary Trip



above: Sixth Marine Division Marines on top of Sugar Loaf Hill

## Charles Setzer (29th Mar-3-H) Revisits Cave on Okinawa

My Dad, Charles W. Setzer, was in the 29<sup>th</sup> Marines, 3rd Battalion, H Company. Bradley Safreed was his best buddy. Another buddy was Vic Ponteri or Panteri.

My Dad went on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary trip in 1995 and had his picture taken in the cave

where he and Safreed and another guy holed up. I thought you might like to see that picture.

Lynn Setzer

right: Charles W. Setzer crouches in the Okinawa cave he occupied during the battle





# Sixth Marine Division Association

439 Chalfonte Drive, Catonsville, MD 21228



**Striking Sixth Newsletter**

**Spring 2024**

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## The United States Marine Band: Then and Now

Established in 1798, the United States Marine Band is the oldest military band in the country. We feel sure they are also the best! We hope you get a chance to hear them for yourself. In fall 2024, the band will be touring across the middle of the

country, including the following states: CO, ID, IL, IN, KS, KY, MD, MO, OR, UT, WA and WV.

Cities and dates will be released in late summer. Look for the schedule at: <https://www.marineband.marin.es.mil/Tour/>



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