

Oklahoma, the Sequel, Gets Rave Reviews!

Who says the sequel is never as good as the original? Not us! Find out why — and see more photos — on pages 2-9 and 27.



top left: reunion host family — Ed Willauer, Mary Brauer, Joan Willauer, Susan Rueth, Rick Willauer; top right: color guard at Memorial Service; above left: the youngest and oldest Marines — LCpl Kevin Flores and Marty Gromley; center: reunion host Pam Bloustine; above right: Don Honis rings the bell at the Memorial Service

Fall 2016

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left, front row:
Don Honis, Wil-
liam Most, Joe
Kite, Harry
McKnight, Marty
Gromley, Harry
Grover, Paul
Judd, George
McAfee, John
Whalen
second row:
Sam Petriello,
Neal McCallum,
William Cloud,
Harry Sandlau-
fer, D.C. Rigby,
Ken Wells, Wal-
ter Crumbie,
Clyde Baulch
third row: color
guard

2016 Reunion

The 2016 Reunion was awesome — well-planned, well-executed, and just plain fun! Many thanks to Pam Bloustine and Joan Willauer and their team for all their hard work! And thanks to the people of Oklahoma, who as near as we could tell, are all unfailingly friendly and helpful.

Where to begin? From the very moving Murrah Building Bombing Museum & Memorial to the National Weather Center (tornados are us!), from the historical artifacts at the 45th Infantry Museum to the dinosaur bones at the Sam Noble History Museum, from the talented (and amazing!) young ventriloquist Darci Farmer to the great country sound of Gypsy Twang, the entertainment was superb. Yeah, we had a lot to do!

We had a lot to eat too, including the Welcome to Oklahoma Meet & Greet hors d'oeuvres and the Breaking Bread Together buffet dinner. And let's not forget the free breakfast at the hotel each morning. And free happy hour! (Some of us made that work for dinner once or twice.)

The annual meeting was longer than we'd like, but you gotta do it. Fortunately, it was followed by the always entertaining auction. Thanks to Sharon Woodhouse, our renowned auctioneer, and to all



above, front row: Flo Dornan, Pfuong Riles, Natalie Wells, Lilly Whalen, Kathy Schadt, Joan Willauer, Margaret Crumbie
back row: Dale Marsh, Pauline Roberts, Shirley Judd, Mary Walker, Barbara McKnight, Janet Russell, Mary Jane Most

the donors and bidders.

The central event of the reunion, the Memorial Service, gave us an opportunity to mourn — and remember — those we've lost.

And finally, the Grand Banquet was a fitting end to our week. Maj Gen John Admire gave a stirring tribute to our Marines [see text on pages 6-9], and the Oklahoma Seniors' Cabaret showed us you're never too old to have fun.

Was it really that great or are we just getting carried away with superlatives?

It was REALLY THAT GREAT.

2016 Reunion



ever the good sport, Rick Willauer engages with an admirer; ventriloquist Gary Owen is on the right



Harry Sandlaufer, Patricia Payne



love birds Barbara & Harry McKnight



Randy & Mark Cassity



ventriloquist Darci Farmer



the always affable — and popular! — Joe Kite with Sharon Woodhouse (left & center) and Sylvia Cox (right)



top: Robert, Annette, John,
Lilly & Edward Whalen
above: William & Mary Jane
Most;
right above: Karen & Harold
Crumbie, Gary & Jeanine
Michaelson, Margaret &
Watson Crumbie
right: newlyweds Adam &
Tiffany Leggett

top: Ken & Natalie Wells
above: Jane & Bob McCalmont
below: Barbara, Joe W. & Joe L. Kite



2016 Reunion



above: Don Honis, Heidi & Adam Calhoun

above: Larry Slomka, Harry Grover, Sally Slomka



above: Paul Judd, Joan Willauer

right: Sharon Woodhouse, Pfuong Riles

below: David Hilner, Patricia Payne



above: Sylvia Cox, Karen Kelly

right: Sharon Woodhouse, Connie Housewart, Marty Gromley



2016 Reunion



above: Shirley Judd, Janet Russell, Mary Jane Most



above: Toni Baulch, D.C. Rigby, Clyde Baulch, William Cloud, Dale Marsh

right: Jim McAfee, Bob McGowan, George McAfee



Remarks by Major General John Admire USMC (Retired)

Sixth Marine Division Reunion

27 August 2016, Norman, Oklahoma

Introduction

Thank you for the invitation and opportunity to share thoughts with you this evening. I'm truly humbled and honored to be in your presence tonight. As a young Marine who joined our Corps in 1965, Marines of the Second World War's Pacific Island Campaign were my heroes. You established the reputation for combat courage that became the hallmark of excellence that to this day distinguishes our Marine Corps. You epitomize all that is honorable about our Corps.

This is why I'm proud to share tonight with you. Yet, I have to admit I'm a little nervous too. The Sixth Marine Division's iconic battle was the Battle of Okinawa. What I know of the battle I know from history books. What you know, however, is what you know from fighting it. It was your personal and professional actions in the battle that define it for you. Therefore, I should be listening and learning from you this evening because you fought it and you won it. It was your indomitable spirit, your will, and your resolve that contributed to victory on Okinawa.

Since you know the battle better than anyone, tonight it may be best for us to share thoughts most Marines have shared in combat. The thoughts are universal ones and apply to most wars and most of us. It's what connects you with Marines of today. You are a part of today's Corps.

Battle of Okinawa Historical Facts

You gentlemen know the history and statistics of the Battle of Okinawa better than anyone. You fought them; you lived them; and too many of your comrades died them. But let's briefly summarize them to place them in perspective for those who know it only from its history.

The United States Marine Corps began the arduous Second World War campaign to secure victory in the Pacific at Guadalcanal. Year by year, island by island, the battles for Tarawa, Saipan, Iwo Jima, and others became more and more deadly and destructive. Then came the most deadly and destructive battle of the Pacific—The Battle of Okinawa.

The fight was tenacious and a battle of unprecedented scale.



The Battle of Okinawa was the largest amphibious operation in the Pacific Theater during World War II. It also resulted in the highest casualties. It became known as the "Typhoon of Steel" because of its brutality and lethality, as almost a quarter of a million combatants and non-combatants were killed or wounded in the battle; 250,000 casualties of war.

While the Japanese defenders on Okinawa fought bitterly and brutally, the Marines of the First and Sixth Marine Divisions, as well as Army and coalition forces, attacked and advanced against incredible withering and relentless enemy fires. The proportion of Japanese artillery, rocket, and mortar fires to attacking infantry was the highest encountered in the Pacific War. It truly was a "Typhoon of Steel."

The Marines advanced rapidly at first. The Japanese strategy was to avoid engagements on the beaches and to defend in depth in the inland's interior of razor sharp volcanic ridges and tangled jungles. Later, the Marine attack slowed due to ferocious and suicidal resistance. In time, the advance was measured neither by miles nor yards nor feet. Instead, the advance was measured by mere inches. Torturous Japanese fires blasted and bombarded virtually every inch of the terrain of your relentless attack.

Ultimately, the Sixth Marine Division and accompanying forces secured a tenaciously fought victory in a gruesome battle. Initially, however, you knew none of the historical facts or statistics of the battle. You came to know them the hard way: by living them, by fighting them, and by dying for them. The battle became one of incredible brutality and ruthlessness. It terrorized and dehumanized its combatants, and it became painfully cruel to all,

(continued on next page)

Remarks by Maj Gen Admire

(continued from prior page)

especially the Okinawan people. It was war at its worst; it was courage at its best. While these are the historical facts of the war, it's probably the battle's thoughts and emotions that you remember most.

Battle of Okinawa Thoughts and Emotions

The emotions for those in war and combat are somewhat universal. While I'm generalizing and estimating your thoughts and emotions, I'm confident many of them pertain to you, as well as those on today's battlefields. They're part of what warriors in combat endure. They're what you endured on Okinawa.

D-Day for the Battle of Okinawa was 1 April 1945. It was Easter Sunday; it was Resurrection Day. It was ominous that it was Easter and Resurrection Day, but none of you yet knew how fierce and desperate the battle would be. Initially, Okinawa was over the ocean horizon; but it was a dark beacon beckoning you into the firestorm and inferno the battle would become. Its soaring heat would first embrace you and then engulf you, while searing and scaring your hearts and souls with indescribable suffering. Although some of you were hardened to war, for others it was your first combat experience. Regardless, Okinawa became the blacksmith's forge in which you were melted, sledgehammered, and reshaped, but only after enduring its intense heat, its typhoon of steel, and its relentless bludgeoning, melding, and painful blows. You could never have known it then, but you learned it later. You entered Okinawa as one person; you exited as another. You were reborn; you were resurrected...but first a part of you had to die because death was a part of Okinawa.

As you sailed from various ports of debarkation toward Okinawa you had time to think of a world and situation far different from any you had ever known. War's not necessarily what you wanted to be doing right then, right damn anytime, but you did what you believed in and you believed in freedom and America. You were responding to Japanese Imperialism, German Nazism, and Italian Fascism as well as Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor and German and Italian invasions in Europe and

Africa. Our enemies were fighting to deny freedoms; you were fighting to protect them.

While the theories and strategies of war are exceedingly complex, for those of you fighting the war there was one simple theory, one basic strategy. Your theory and your strategy was to survive. You came to understand that war is easy or simple in theory or in books, but it's just hard as hell and damn complicated on the battlefield. You became hardened to the bitter realities of war in your epic battle for survival.

In your war, on Okinawa, the killing was foreign and alien to all you'd ever known and done in the past...foreign and alien to all you'd ever known or done in the past...but it quickly became all you knew and all you did. You had to learn to live with it or it would kill you. You had virtually no options. Options in war are few. Sympathy is fleeting. Death is forever.

You killed to survive and live. You learned to kill real fast or you'd be dead real fast. It's just the way the war was for you. Life came at you hard and fast on Okinawa...death came harder and faster. Death was always lurking in the deep and dark and dangerous ridges and jungle shadows. It was always present. Always!! Death and danger were inescapable.

Day after day, engagement after engagement, you were bloodied and bruised, but your hearts and souls willed you to overcome searing and scaring tragedies. You fought for your unit, you fought for freedom, and you fought for your fellow Marines. But mostly you fought to survive. You learned there were no good days in war or Okinawa, except for the days you survived. You fought for the survival of your unit, your fellow Marines, and yourselves.

Surviving the war was your constant struggle, but death and heartbreak too often overwhelmed you. War's violence and force and power surrounded you. Death and danger stalked you. While the killings dehumanized you, war's fear terrorized you. You learned that war was painfully cruel, but you learned to survive. You fought and survived one day only to have to fight and survive the next day and the next and the next. It's what you did. You fought and you survived. You learned that nothing was easy in war or combat on Okinawa; except dy-

(continued on next page)

Remarks by Maj Gen Admire

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ing. You learned everything is hard in war, especially living.

While you learned that to live, others may die, you came to accept that. War did that to you. It was just Okinawa. It's just the way it was. It was just war. Too often you lay in the dark, silent, fear, and waited. You waited to kill while you prayed silently to live. The practical reality for you, however, was simply to kill to live, to fight to survive. It was a helluva life, but it was better than death.

Although to non-combatants it may seem contradictory, you knew that the best survivors were the best killers. To survive in battle you learned to kill the enemy fast; to survive in war you learned to kill more enemy faster; more killing and faster killing helped you survive. Again, it was a helluva way to live, but it was a helluva lot better than dying.

While everyday on Okinawa seemed a lifetime, some days seemed like days or months of lifetimes. You prayed you had more lifetimes than you had days on Okinawa. Okinawa was eighty-two days of lifetimes.

Okinawa Family

The tragedy of your battles and killings, your miseries and sacrifices, are overwhelming memories. It's been over seventy years since you fought in the brutality that came to be known as the Battle of Okinawa, but what you probably remember most are the incredible friendships that have endured to this day. While you were challenged by violent horrific tragedies on Okinawa, the battle's triumphs for you are the caring and compassionate friendships you have in common and that you're sharing with one another this evening. The battle's friendships are its triumph for you.

Initially, you sensed your diversity, yet focused on your similarities. You came from the east and west coasts, the north and south. You came from cities, towns, rural areas, and farms. You were from the mountains and the valleys; the prairies and the plains; the river deltas and dry deserts. You came from anywhere and everywhere and somewhere to end up nowhere — on Okinawa. Okinawa was the nowhere you never imagined yourselves.

Some of you were Catholics, some Protestants, others Jewish; some maybe believers, some possibly

atheists. Your ethnic and cultural diversities were equally diverse. But race and religion were far less important to you than your faith and belief in one another.

You joined the Marines or Navy for various reasons. Some of you joined for unabashed patriotism; others because it was a family tradition. Some of you may have joined because the courts dictated jail or

the military; others to escape a bad situation at home. Maybe a girlfriend jilted you or a teacher flunked you or a boss fired you. Perhaps some of you were simply seeking the ultimate fight and adventure. Whatever the reasons, Okinawa became the ultimate fight.

You may never have been friends back home in your schools, clubs, or streets, or in any other such capacity, if by some ironic twist you would have ever been in such a situation. On Okinawa, in the hot scorching cauldron of combat, however, while you were the epitome of diversity, you formed a common bond and became one. You became, in fact, much more than one, you became family. You became the Sixth Marine Division. That's why you're here tonight. You're here because you care about one another; you're brothers in arms; you're family. Tonight you're home with your Division family and you're very grateful to be here with family and brothers.

(continued on next page)



Sam Petriello, Maj Gen Admire, Joe Petriello

Remarks by Maj Gen Admire

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Summary

In summary, the Battle of Okinawa was the largest and most deadly and most costly battle of the Pacific Campaign in World War II. As combatants in the battle, you remember its killing and dying, its courage and compassion, its heartbreak and hurt. While confident in victory, you suspected the costs would be high. The world was appalled, however, that the costs in human tragedy and human death and human sacrifice were so incredibly high. The severity of the battle, the astonishing costs, contributed to the eventual atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

While the bombings were devastating, they resulted in fewer casualties than those estimated if an invasion of the Japanese homeland had been required. Japan's fanatical and suicidal resistance revealed its disregard for human life. Therefore, the United States was virtually forced to employ devastating weapons to actually save lives and conclude the devastating war. The Battle Okinawa thus became the last epic battle of World War II and contributed to restoring peace and freedom following years of war.

In conclusion, as long as there is a United States of America, there will be a United States Marine Corps. Yet, perhaps, maybe, possibly, we could reverse that sentiment and allege that as long as there is a Marine Corps there will be a United States. Your heroic actions on Okinawa and the actions of Marines in countless wars and battles have established the United States Marine Corps as one of the most respected and honored militaries in history. Thanks to you, Marines have become the guardians of our nation and its freedoms.

This is why we honor you tonight. We will remain a free nation as long as we have those willing to serve and to sacrifice for our nation and its freedoms. It's our love for freedom that overcomes our hate for war. A grateful nation will forever salute you and remember you.

Semper Fi to you as Marines and Sailors and Families and Friends of the Sixth Marine Division.

Jack Nuckols Gives Talk

from an article by Mark Maynard in The Daily Independent on 6 Sept. 2016

ASHLAND, KY Jack Nuckols (22nd Mar-3-K), a Marine who was involved in the last major battle of World War II, will share his experiences with the Military History Roundtable group on Thursday at the Highlands Museum.

Nuckols, an Ashland native, was part of the Battle for Okinawa. He said he was "well-versed on the battle. I've read it, studied it and been in it." His son will be showing some slides of the area as well.

Nuckols, 90, was drafted in 1944 and went to Louisville to go into the Navy. The draft board asked for six volunteers to go to the Marine Corp and Nuckols held up his hand.

"I saw those dress blues and ribbons and thought 'This is the way to fight!'" he said. "I was in for two years. It made a man out of me."

Nuckols has been a frequent visitor to the Military History Roundtable groups. He has spoken about his experiences in the past and the memories of those days remain strong.

Nuckols has stayed involved by volunteering in the local Marine Corp League. He is the judge advocate and a past commandant of the organization.

"We do a lot of good work for Marines and other veterans," Nuckols said.

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Note: Donations for the 2016 Reunion will be published in the Spring newsletter.



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**A new Membership Directory in
electronic format will be available
in the first quarter.**

See page 24 for more info.

Striking Sixth Newsletter

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

The subscription rate is \$10 per calendar year. Membership applications, dues, donations, address changes, death notices, and record changes should be mailed with an application (see page 25) to:

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It's time to pay your 2017 dues!

**If you want to continue receiving the
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to Flo Dornan, address at right.**

Letters to the editor, materials for publication, suggestions, and feedback can be sent to:

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Message from the President



Another year has gone by and a very successful reunion is behind us. My thanks to our hosts Joan Willauer, her family, and Pam Bloustine. What an awesome time was had by all. I for one was kept quite busy trying to attend all of the awesome activities that were planned. Great job! Can't wait to see what is in store for us next year in Phoenix, AZ hosted by the Steeds.

The most memorable part of the reunion and the hardest for me is the Memorial Service. I listen to the bell ring. I listen to each and every name of those that have gone before us. And I see the expressions on your faces indicating that you seem to be feeling the loss that I too take very personally. We cry together, we remember together, and we share together.

As I sit and reflect on the last year with this awesome group of people called the Sixth Marine Division Association, I am very honored to have been and be your President. I have made it my personal mission to perpetuate the memory of the Sixth, and I know there are others that will join me in saying that is their mission also.

With that being said, I look forward to seeing you all next year in Arizona. God Bless you all.

~ Connie Houseweart

Chaplain's Report



Hi. It's that time again, and we want to thank Pam and Joan for all the good work. All went well. The breakfast bar was super; no complaints there. Bus trips were fun. We are looking forward to Arizona next year.

Sad note: Jerry Glick, who organized the trip through the German Village at our Columbus reunion, died last November. He was a good, long-time teaching buddy.

As your Chaplain, I can see our country is in deep trouble. And my advice is still the same: Keep the commandments. Each

commandment has a blessing associated with it. The Savior says, "If ye love me, keep my commandments. If ye do this, ye will prosper in the land; if not, ye have no promise." No matter how bad things get, God is in charge. I have had this thought: Hurricane Matthew was a warning. Read Matthew 24. It's all about what is going on in our world.

Say your prayers each day, help someone who is in need, and don't say or do dumb things.

And please let me know if one of our Marines or wives is sick or in a nursing home.

May the good Lord bless you all through these trying days.

~ Harry McKnight

From the Editor



I don't want to pat myself on the back (at least not too hard), but I predicted a great reunion in Oklahoma, and that's what we got. Okay, it didn't take a brilliant mind to foresee a good time in Oklahoma. After all, everyone raved about the last Oklahoma reunion. Well, Pam and Joan came through again! I want to personally thank them and their team for proving that the sequel can be just as good as the original.

Now I'm going to go out on a limb again and predict another great reunion in Phoenix next year. Jean and Bill Steed are

old hands at reunions too (though this is their first time hosting the Sixth Marine Division Reunion). And they are both Marines. What else do you need to know??!

We hope to see more of you from the southwest next year. And for those of you who live far afield, the hotel is only 15-20 minutes from the airport.

Why are we doing it in August, when it might be just a tad hot (like 100°)? Because that's when you get the great hotel deals. Trust me, the AC will be running, and if it's anything like Oklahoma, better pack a few sweaters!

~Carroll McGowan

RIP Percy Whitney



Percy Whitney with daughter, Cheryl Wyman, 4 July 2016

Hello Jim [Monbeck],

This is my Father and I celebrating the Fourth of July. He is wearing his Sixth Division Marine Corps hat and shirt that you ordered for him. I am wearing my sequined flag shirt on a beautiful morning.

My Father died in peace on July 7. He will have a flag draped casket and a marble foot stone with his rank and US Marine Corps service on it. He was so proud of his service and the Sixth Marines.

I found the buttons from his uniform in the drawer of his mother's old Singer Treadle Sewing Machine and still have them. They were a generation who did not waste things.

Thanks to you for helping to remember him in the Striking Sixth. His first two issues had his picture in them! If you were to meet he would say Semper Fi. Thanks to you for your help and friendship to me.

Fondly,
Cheryl Wyman



Finding Jim Drake's Diary

Attention: Flo Dornan

My father, James E. "Jim" Drake passed away May 22, 2016 at age 91. He trained in San Diego and Camp Pendleton and served as a Marine Raider from 12 June 1943 to 5 December 1945. According to military records, he was with 4th Regiment in the Liberation of Guam and the Sixth Marine Division in the Battle of Sugar Loaf Hill.

My father did not talk a lot about the war. I took him to Washington DC in 2005 and heard a little bit. I was told about Father Redmond and saw where he was buried in Arlington National Cemetery. I heard a few stories about buddies Sammie Nolen, Ski, Rig, and others. He told me about meeting Ernie Pyle on Okinawa. When we went to the WWII Memorial, he just sat in the Pacific section with tears in his eyes. I did not know then what he was thinking and remembering.

The past few months I have been reading articles and books he made notes in. So many books about the Marines in the Pacific. He saved many of his Marine newsletters including the Raider Patch and the Striking Sixth. I am going through all of them; it brings me closer to him.

I am humbled and forever moved. I'm not sure when, but I have decided to go to Guam and Okinawa. I want to see and experience where my father spent two years of his young life. He did not get to go back, so I will go for him.



Jim Drake

I was blessed to find a small diary he kept with him — a very small book with many stories. I did not know how many soldiers died in the Pacific. I

did not know how many Marine Raiders sacrificed their lives. I did not know that my father had malaria. I did not know he was hit by shrapnel on Guam. I often wondered what that scar was on his leg. I did not know he and Rig found a young boy in a cave on Guam and helped him find his aunt and uncle.

He wrote about the people on Guam and Okinawa. About the landscape and plants...including all the Latin names. He and Rig, Ski and Grumbos found a Jap cave with sake and a Victrola and Japanese records. That was an interesting night — good thing the Japs did not attack in the wee hours. Stories about snakes, mosquitos, rain, more rain, and foxholes full of water. Clothing in threads — they were called the Raggedy Ass Marines? A lot of times not much food or water. Seems many times our Marines were on their own. I am so thankful he made it home.

I will close with a couple of his last diary entries...

"Sugar Loaf — a little hill paved with bodies. We've had 137% casualties. Don't see how in the hell we will get thru this bloody damn mess. If they would only let us sleep, damn japs. Blowing

bugles all night. Bombs, guns, screaming banzai charge. This night was frightful. And a herd of rats...rats are coming from everywhere. We were here as volunteers. Took supplies, ammo, grenades and flamethrowers up and carried wounded back. Only weapons we had were what we picked up along the way. Rig and myself don't see how we got out of there alive. Bodies everywhere. Some hell of a hill Sugar Loaf. So damn tired and dirty."

"Went to the front again today. Hamilton, D.R., Stapp and Billie were killed while carrying stuff up. Grumbos and Leake were wounded. Grumbos had his leg blown off. Rig and myself carried him out. God he lost a lot of blood. I hope he makes it. Rig hit one of the japs right in the ass with a flamethrower. What a horrible way to die. Things are quiet for the time. Found where I was hit in leg...just the meat. So many bodies. My buddies, so many of our Marines. How much longer will this go on?"

I can only imagine what our Marines went through. Reading the books and my father's diary just rips my heart. I am so grateful for the Marines. I did not know what they did for us so we could be free.

Remember Jim Drake in your thoughts and prayers. He will be missed so much. Husband, Father, Son, Brother, Friend and Marine Raider.

Semper Fi, Daddy.

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Discovering the Colors

Hello Sixth Marine Division board members!

My grandfather, Robert Oran Myers (4th Mar-3), and my grandma recently passed away three weeks apart. As I was doing research to write the obituaries, I found this association! I only wish my grandpa knew about this. I have since visited the MCRD Museum in San Diego where the Sixth Marine Division flag is beautifully presented. The only way I knew it was



Ashley Virgilio (center) with parents Joy & Richard Fischer in front of the Sixth Division colors at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot Museum in San Diego

there was by reading your newsletter. Thank you for that!

My husband is active duty Navy and we have been fortunate to be stationed here for the last five plus years. We got in contact with the historian at the MCRD museum and she showed us the flag, books, articles, and more! The museum is amazing. My mom and dad visited us here in San Diego in February and I took them to the MCRD museum to see the flag. Thank you for writing about the flag, and for all of your hard work in preserving stories, history, our military

veterans, families, and more.

Seeing the flag immediately made me feel connected to such an important part of our American history, the Sixth Marine Division, and my grandpa. He and many of the Sixth Marine Division veterans once trained on the grounds of MCRD, and I know they would be proud to see that history has been preserved at MCRD. My grandpa told me before he passed, "My spirit will always live on with you... Don't let anyone fool you." He is right.

The flag is just one way that his spirit lives on with me. This association is another.

I highly encourage families to get in contact with the Patriot Guard Riders if a family veteran passes. We did, and they were outstanding! They escorted us from my grandparents' home to the Northern California Veterans Cemetery when we had the joint funeral for my grandparents. They were beyond our expectations and we received more items and

support!

Thank you for all that every member does!

Ashley Virgilio



Robert Oran Myers during WWII

Tsingtao Thanksgiving Menu

I am attaching an original 1945 Thanksgiving dinner menu from Tsingtao, China. [right] The menu contains signatures and hometowns of 6th MarDiv Engineer and Pioneer Bn members, November 1945. I am thinking that the Engineer battalion attached to 6th Division was part of the 6th Engineer Reg't?

Robert Sproul, whom I am researching, was an Operating Engineer in Delaware after he got out of the Marines. I hope to get a copy of his DD214 soon, which will get me moving in the right direction. We are losing our WWII Gyrenes too fast.

Garent Gunther

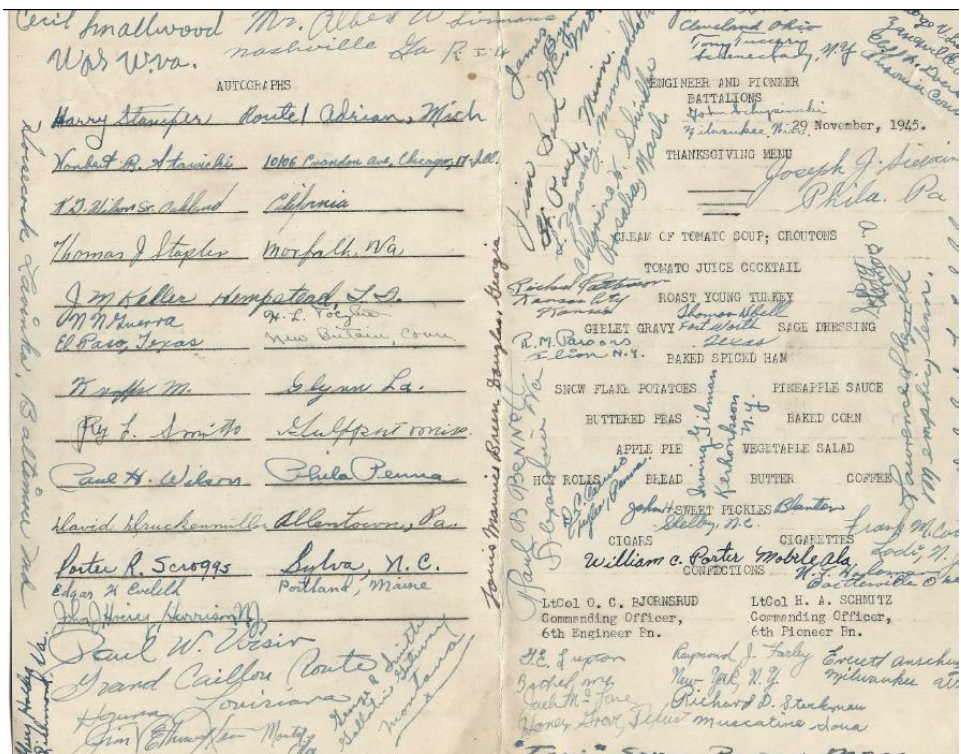
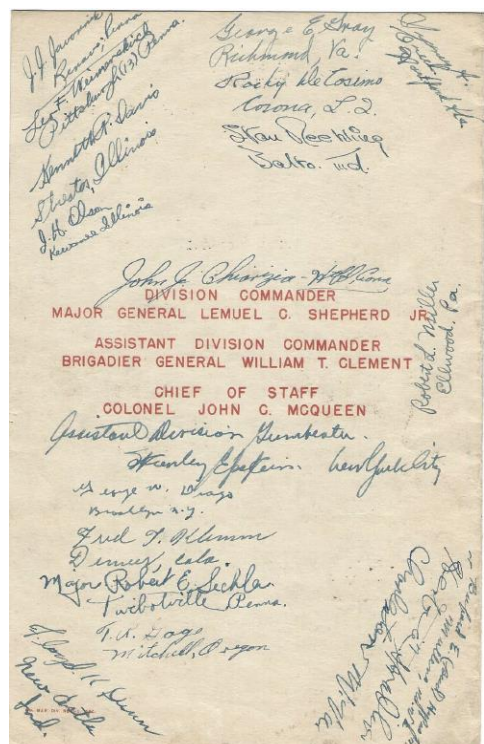
cassadycup@yahoo.com



He Fought with the Toughest

This is to belatedly notify you of my father Randall Cassity's death on 5 May 2010. He enlisted in the US Marines a couple months after Pearl Harbor. He joined the Marines because in his words, they were "the toughest," and he wanted to fight with the toughest.

He was proud of the US Marines and proud of the Sixth. We could not say for sure that his Marine Corps experience was the defining aspect of his life, but every one who knew him well knew he had been in the Sixth Marine Division. Maybe the bumper sticker on the car was the first hint, or maybe it was his character and class act. As for the US Marines, other than being man-for-man the finest and proudest fighting force in the world, the



virtues of loyalty, dependability and service are what seem to be the US Marines at their best. And if that's the code...well,

he certainly lived it every day. Best regards and Semper Fi, Randall Q. Cassity II

Tragic Civilian Suicide

While patrolling in North Okinawa, we ran into two Okinawan women garbed in light purple uniforms. We had the impression they were nurses. The Japanese soldiers had warned the civilians that if Marines captured them, we would torture and kill them. Much to our sorrow, the nurses believed that fallacy, and they were terrified.

One of them pulled out a hand grenade, activated it, hugged her companion, and killed them both.

The nurses had a fair amount of Japanese bills on them, which were torn apart. I managed to salvage some, as well as a what appears to be a war bond. [right]

Semper Fi,
John A. Albanese



Ladies Auxiliary Report

LADIES VOTE TO DISBAND AFTER YEARS OF LOYAL SERVICE TO MARINES



Thanks to Pam and Joan and all their helpers for a great reunion in Oklahoma this past August. It was so nice to see some people we had not seen for a while, but we missed others who have been with us in the past.

I am looking forward to the 2017 Reunion being hosted by Jean and Bill Steed in Scottsdale, Arizona. It should be a great time with more of you from the western part of the USA attending. It will be warm of course, but everywhere has air conditioning these days and we will be inside so the temperature outside will not matter. Interesting fact for those who do not know the Steeds: They are both retired Marine officers. Many years ago, Jean suggested having a lineal descendants group as a way for her to honor her father who was a Sixth Division Marine. It would be wonderful if more descendants would attend the 2017 Reunion to show Jean how much her idea has inspired them to support their father or grandfather. If your Sixth Marine can travel, ask him if you can take him to the reunion.

In the Spring 2016 edition of this newsletter, I shared information from the 2015 Ladies Auxiliary meeting, during which we discussed a proposal by our treasurer Pauline Roberts to transfer the Ladies Auxiliary funds to the Sixth Marine Division Association. We also discussed a proposal to dis-

band the Ladies Auxiliary. Ultimately, we decided to table these proposals until 2016 to give us time to review our bylaws and seek feedback from members who were not at the meeting. Later, at the 2015 Annual Meeting, the Sixth Marine Division Association voted to amend their bylaws to include wives and widows as members. (Lineal descendants were already members of the Association.)

During the 2016 Ladies meeting in Oklahoma, after the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer, I read an old letter explaining the purpose of the Ladies Auxiliary. We then had an interesting and extended discussion about disbanding the Ladies Auxiliary. We had great input from the wives and widows who have been a part of the Auxiliary for many years. The general consensus was that since the wives and widows are now full members of the Association, we no longer need the Ladies Auxiliary. We voted unanimously to disband the Ladies Auxiliary and donate the money in our treasury to the Sixth Marine Division Association. We also agreed to continue the tradition of ladies luncheons to honor the women who have contributed so much to the Ladies Auxiliary over the years. We all look forward to gathering and sharing stories and friendships at future reunions.

Sincerely and Semper Fi,
Barbara McKnight
Last Ladies Auxiliary President

Harry Sandlaufer Remembers Okinawa

by Harry Trumbore, *The Item of Millburn and Short Hills*, 26 May 2016.

Okinawa was one of the bloodiest, most desperate battles of the Pacific Theater in World War II as the Japanese defended their last major island stronghold. Harry Sandlaufer was there.

A 20-year old second lieutenant in charge of an 81-millimeter mortar platoon, Sandlaufer and his men were part of three Marine and four Army divisions transported in the spring of 1945 to Okinawa by an armada of 1,700 ships. After several days of shelling, the troops hit the beach on April 1, Easter Sunday, prepared for stiff resistance.

“Yet when we got in there, they were all in caves, caves like cities,” Sandlaufer recalled for *The Item*. The Japanese had concentrated their artillery on the island to protect their airports, and, Sandlaufer said, “every inch was zeroed in.” When 150,000 men and their equipment were ashore, the barrage, the real battle, began.

“One hundred-fifty thousand men didn’t have the slightest clue what was happening,” he said.

Sandlaufer said the goal was to seize the airports. The Marines started south.

“We were supposed to do it in three days,” he said. “We did it in one day.”

Sandlaufer’s mortars were effective at a mile and a half, he said, but could lay down fire over the heads of their own troops as close as 200 yards.

Sandlaufer, who was promoted to first lieutenant under fire, and his men found themselves in a

deadly battle for an unassuming rise of land called Sugarloaf Hill, an anchor to the heavily defended Naha-Shuri line.

“The hill was teeming with Japanese,” he said. The battle saw-sawed between the combatants for eight or nine days.

“The Marines made 11 attempts to take the hill, but didn’t have sufficient men to hold it. As fast as we laid (communication) lines, the lines would be chopped up.”

After his observation team was decimated by Japanese artillery, Sandlaufer went forward to spot Japanese machine gun emplacements and direct mortar fire in support of the advancing Americans. For this, he was awarded the Bronze Star. His citation notes he “remained in the Forward Observation Post for three days under continual observation of the hostile forces which subjected his post to heavy mortar and machine gun fire.”

After taking the hill, Sandlaufer remembers being high enough to see the ships out at sea enduring relentless *kamikaze* attacks.

In all, Sandlaufer and his men fought every day of the 82 day-long battle. They were transferred to Guam where they learned of the atomic bomb attacks that ended the war. For their role in the battle for Okinawa, the Sixth Marine Division was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation.

He returned home, worked for awhile for the Veterans Administration, then started his own fuel oil company. In 1947, he married his wife, Elaine, and the couple moved to the township in the 1980s. Elaine Sandlaufer passed away in 2005.



Harry Sandlaufer instructs Marines in how to operate an 81-millimeter mortar at Camp LeJeune in 1944

Today, at 94, Sandlaufer is still energetic and grateful for having had “a charmed life.” He goes to the gym and is still involved with the oil company he founded. He has attended reunions of his Marine comrades, but said out of hundreds who used to attend, the number at the Columbus event in 2015 was down to 13.

History is important to Sandlaufer, and he proudly noted the irony that his father, a tailor who emigrated from Russia in 1911, carried a saber scar on his skull. He got it fighting the Japanese in 1905.

As a member of the Livingston Chapter of Jewish War Veterans, Sandlaufer will be Grand Marshall of that municipality’s Memorial Day Parade.



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.

CASSITY, Randall Q.	4 th Mar-2-E	05/05/2016
CHRISTOPHER, Calvin	29 th Mar-2-E	07/31/2016
COLE, Rita	Widow of Andy Cole	Unknown
DEEMER, Clarence F.	4 th Mar-2--F	04/15/2016
DRAKE, James E.	4 th Mar-1-A	05/22/2016
ECKLUND, John	29 th Mar-3-HQ	07/04/2016
EIDE, Orville T. "Red"	6th Tank Bn-A	06/13/2016
ENGLER, George	15 th Mar-3	06/11/2011
FINN, Joseph F. Sr.	22 nd Mar-Wpns	07/10/2016
HEADLEE, James	6 th Marine Division	08/11/2016
HIOTT, Virginia	Wife of Joseph Hiott	07/05/2016
HOLT, Samuel P.	4 th Mar-2-G	05/14/2016
HOUSTON, Kiyoka	Wife of Robert Houston	05/10/2015
MAGNOTTI, Harry J.	6th Engineer Bn	04/26/2012
MAY, Joan	Wife of James H. May	Unknown
MYLOD, Philip J.	29 th Mar-3-I	08/05/2014
RAPP, Albert J.	22 nd Mar-3-HQ	10/24/2016
RICE, William D.	6 th Pioneer-B	10/23/2015
ROBERTSON, Charles	22 nd Mar-Wpns	Unknown
SUMMERFORD, Major	29 th Mar-3-I	11/02/2012
SUMMERSGILL, Bill	22 nd Mar-3-C	08/16/2016
TERRY, Harold M.	22 nd Mar-C	02/05/2016
VALKENAAR, Donald	6 th JASCO	07/02/2016
VOJNAR, Grace	Wife of Rudy Vojnar	08/01/2016
VOLPONE, Donald J.	29 th Marines	08/09/2016
WHITE, Verna L.,	Wife of James S. White	10/26/2016
WHITNEY, Percy T.	6 th Marine Division	07/07/2016

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@aol.com

RIP Orville "Red" Eide

Born on 4 September 1921, Red Eide died on 13 June 2016 in St. Louis Park, MN. He is survived by three children, five grandchildren, and four great grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife, Joyce.

Red enlisted in the Marines in August 1942 and attended boot camp in San Diego. The following year, he shipped overseas where he participated in landings on Bougainville, Emirau, Guam, and Okinawa.

He returned to the U.S. in August 1945 and married Joyce in September. He began working for S&L department stores later that year, and in 1986 he retired as Senior Vice President after holding several management positions.

Red was a member of the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Vets, Sixth Marine Division Association, Marine Corps Tankers Association, Masonic Lodge, and Elks #2221. He enjoyed hunting, fishing, golfing, playing cards, and spending time with his family.

My Time as a Marine — Korea

FIFTH OF A SERIES BY WATSON CRUMBIE (29th MAR-1-C)

The cold war in the late 1940's was so hot it looked as if we would go to war with Russia, and I did not want to go to war with Russia as an "Infantry Assault Demolitionist." So I enlisted for four years as a reservist with the 14th Marine 155mm Howitzer Battalion at Dallas NAS in Grand Prairie, Texas to get my MOS (Military Occupation Specialty) changed to Artillery. We trained one or two weekends each month at the Dallas Naval Air Station.

Russia Invades Korea

Korea had been divided after World War II. North of the 38th parallel was communist North Korea, and south of the 38th parallel was South Korea, a democracy. On 25 June 1950, a very strong Russian-trained North Korean army invaded South Korea. It was equipped with a large number of T-34 tanks the Russians had used in World War II to defeat the Germans.

The United Nations met in emergency session to consider sending aid to South Korea. Russia could and would have vetoed the proposal, but Russia was boycotting the UN and the resolution passed. The United States immediately sent air power and occupation troops from Japan, but we were unprepared to fight against such a powerful army. Our WWII Sherman tanks were no match for the Russian tanks that had defeated the German Panzers, and our WWII bazookas were ineffective against them. It appeared that all of

South Korea would be captured by the North Korean Army.

Short Honeymoon

Marines from every station in the world, as well as all reserves, were called to active duty. I received my orders to report to duty in ten days. I had been dating Belva Clare Hope for several months while she was in training as a cadet nurse at Methodist Hospital in Dallas. We decided to get married, and after a brief ten-day honeymoon, I reported for duty knowing almost certainly that I would be sent to Korea.

I left Dallas by troop train on 31 July 1950 and arrived at Camp Pendleton, CA where we were told there would be no liberty. We had two weeks to form what would become the 1st Marine Division. Reveille was at 0500 (5:00 AM), and our day lasted until 1800 (6:00 PM) in time for our evening meal. Taps was at 10:00 PM.

The division was formed in record time and set sail for Japan, stopping in Osaka to reload for combat. While in Osaka, a typhoon with winds of 110 miles per hour struck, and the plaster from the ceiling of our building began falling. We put on our helmets and waited it out.

Love Birds

We were given a liberty, during which Jim Johnson, George Bell and I — after a few drinks — bought a pair of love birds. After all, we were in Love battery and we needed a mascot. I remember

it began to rain and Jim bargained with a Japanese woman for her umbrella. I can still visualize it today: three not so sober Marine Sergeants staggering through the front gate of our camp with one holding the bamboo bird cage and two trying to hold an umbrella over the cage to keep the birds dry.

Artillery

I was assigned as a crew chief of a 155mm howitzer, which was the largest in a Marine division arsenal. There were three batteries of six guns; each battery supported one of the three infantry regiments as needed. A 155mm projectile weighed one hundred pounds and was approximately six inches in diameter and eighteen inches long with fuse. It had a maximum range of nine miles. It used several types of fuses, but the most effective against personnel was the proximity fuse, which sent a radio signal. When it neared a target, the signal bounced back activating the fuse and causing the shell to explode about forty feet in the air, showering hundreds of shards of jagged steel down upon the enemy. Artillery is the most effective weapon in conventional warfare.

The UN forces were driven into a small perimeter at the southern tip of the Korean peninsula. The order was given to "Stand or Die." Meanwhile, we had formed an invasion force consisting of the 1st Marine Division and the 7th Army Division for an am-

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My Time as a Marine

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phibious landing behind enemy lines. I was destined to be a part of that invasion force. Our Howitzers were loaded aboard LST number QO72, a WWII LST (Landing Ship Tank), and we set sail for Korea.

I went from civilian to combat in six weeks.

Marines Shine Again

On 15 September 1950, I landed with the 1st Marine Division at Inchon, Korea, which is west of the capital city of Seoul, with some of the highest tides in the world. High tide could be 30 feet at night and by 10:00 the next morning it became a mud flat extending hundreds of yards. At first light I watched the battleships; planes and rocket ships bombarded the island of Wolmi-do in preparation for the invasion. Wolmi-do was separated from the port of Inchon by a causeway. The first waves of Marines were circling in their boats waiting for the bombardment to lift at 0800 when they were to go ashore. The Marines would be on their own, and it was imperative that they hold until the evening tide came in.

I had my doubts that one Marine Division and one Army division could successfully land behind enemy lines and defeat the North Korean Army. The Chief of Staffs also had their doubts, but General McArthur convinced them it could be done.

After a successful landing and the capture of Wolmi-do, General McArthur, observing from his flagship, made the comment,

“Marines have never shined so brilliantly.” This saved the Marine Corps, as the Secretary of Defense was planning to eliminate the Corps.

While waiting for evening tide to



Marines on Wolmi-do Island, 1950

go ashore, I remember wondering if the letter I was writing would be my last. We would be facing some of the best tanks in the world.

We did not go ashore until 10:00 the following evening. We could not emplace in the dark, but by early light we were in place and firing. The love birds were our first casualties; the concussion from the guns was too much for them. We awarded them each a Purple Heart and one battle star.

For some Marine reservists, it was the first time to see a howitzer fire. We were ill prepared. One young reservist, who had not gone through boot camp, was assigned to the tanks. He asked, “How do I get into it?”

Fortunately, General McArthur was right: landing at such an unlikely place for an invasion caught the North Koreans by surprise. By cutting across the

middle of the peninsula it cut the North Korean army's supply lines and changed the tide of the war.

Fire Missions

Our forward observer reported the results of most fire missions. We had placed direct hits on a train, three enemy tanks, a truck convoy, and enemy troops. Later we seldom knew our targets, except when we were using air bursts when we knew our targets were troops. As we advanced, we could see the devastation caused by artillery.

Occasionally we received counter battery fire from enemy artillery, but we had a crude method by today's standards of locating the source and eliminating it. We only lost one gun from enemy artillery, and that was after I had left the war.

Our tanks were the new M26 Pershing tanks, which were superior to the Russian T-34 tanks. In addition, a new more powerful bazooka had been rushed to production. The new bazooka was used for the first time to knock out four Russian T-34 tanks on the road heading to Inchon from Seoul. In a matter of days Seoul was captured. I had now changed my mind about who would be the victor in this battle.

We entered Seoul in the middle of the night, but we could see by the light of a full moon the devastation and rubble. We could also see the royal palace where General McArthur officially returned South Korea to its presi-

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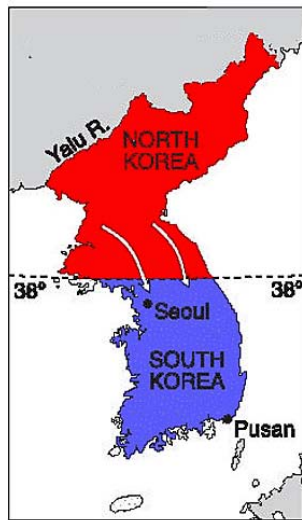
My Time as a Marine

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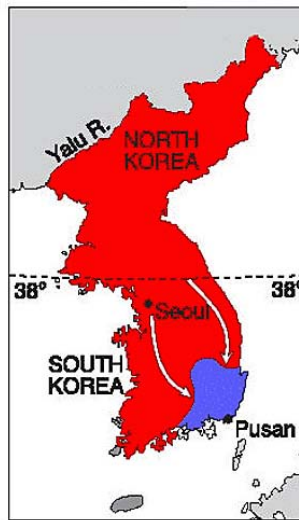
dent, Sigmund Rhee, on 25 September, three months to the day from when North Korea invaded South Korea. When the North Korean Army found that they were isolated in South Korea, they abandoned their equipment and made their way back to North Korea.

Pursuit

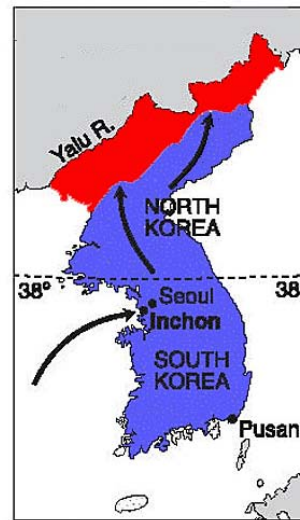
With the defeat of the North Korean Army, General MacArthur requested permission from the United Nations to pursue the Korean Army into North Korea and unite the two Koreas into one nation. Permission was granted, and UN forces crossed the 38th parallel into North Korea. The 38th parallel had been the dividing line between the two nations. I had earned my third battle star and was about to go after a fourth. Saipan was my first, Okinawa was my second, and Inchon was the third. We embarked aboard the QO75 at Inchon to make an amphibious landing at the important oil port of Wonsan on the East coast about half way up North Korea to cut off the retreating North Koreans. We found we could not land because the Russians had mined the harbor so heavily that it took our mine sweepers ten days to clear it at the loss of, I believe, three mine sweepers.



June 25, 1950



Sept. 14, 1950



Nov. 25, 1950

Unable to land, we sailed up and down the coast for ten days waiting for the harbor to be cleared. It was called Operation Yo-Yo. We virtually ran out of food, and because water was rationed, we were served one cup of black coffee three times a day. It was then that I learned to drink my coffee black.

When we finally landed, it was the most embarrassing moment in Marine Corps history. The Marines were greeted not by the enemy, but by Bob Hope!

We were issued long underwear, wool shirts and trousers, a fur lined vest, water-resistant outer trousers, heavy mittens with a thumb and trigger finger, a fur lined parka, two pairs of socks, rubber boots called shoepacs that had a thick felt insole to absorb perspiration, and a down sleeping bag.

The 1st Marine Division advanced from Wonsan to the port of Hamhung, then inland to within thirty miles of Manchuria up a primitive mountain road

into the mountains on the east side of the Taebeck Mountain range that divides North Korea. Almost all of Korea was now under control of United Nations forces.

“Volunteers”

The 7th Marine Regiment had been attacked by a Chinese

division that was decimated by the Marines. The Chinese General had observed the battle with field glasses, as he was actually testing the Marines ability to fight. Prisoners taken from three divisions made Marine General O.P. Smith realize they were not “volunteers,” as MacArthur’s headquarters in Japan had characterized them. But then the Chinese disappeared. General MacArthur announced that we would be home for Christmas!

China had warned the United Nations to stop fifty miles south of the Yalu River, the border between Manchuria and North Korea. MacArthur assured President Truman that the Chinese would not enter the war, and he ignored the Chinese warning. Our Army Generals arrived at the Yalu, and in a ritual act of defiance urinated into the river in plain sight of the Chinese and Russians watching from across the frozen river. What the generals did not know is that hun-

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My Time as a Marine

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dreds of thousands of Chinese had already walked undetected across the frozen Yalu River into North Korea.

Marine General Smith openly refused to obey orders to drive hell-bent to the Yalu River, and he ordered an airstrip be built at Hagaru-ri, as well as stockpiling ammunition and supplies. He ordered his regiments to proceed with caution. He wrote the Commandant of the Marine Corps about his concerns with the Army's failure to recognize the evidence of a strong Chinese presence.

While on a patrol searching for Chinese "volunteers," we were in a column going up a hill when a doe came over the crest running parallel to the column. A dozen Marines opened up with automatic weapons, but in their haste forgot to lead the Doe. On our way down, we encountered a company of Marines. They had heard the firing and asked if we had been in a firefight. When we explained, the Captain asked, "Where is the deer?" Upon learning we had missed, he said, "It's a dammed good thing you did not run into any Chinese!"

Blocks of ice began flowing down the Imjin River, and on Thanksgiving Day it was zero degrees. Our Thanksgiving dinner froze before we could eat it. I had not had a shower in two months, so I decided that despite the cold I would jump into the fast flowing water and rinse off. I hardly stayed long enough to get wet.

Changjin Reservoir

We moved up onto a 4,000-foot plateau in the Taebeck Mountains over a narrow primitive mountain road, through the village of Koto-ri to Hagaru-ri. Here the road divided to each side of a reservoir named Changjin that became known as "Chosin," the Japanese pronunciation.

The 7th Marines went west over a 5,000-foot mountain pass named Toktong to the west side of the reservoir to a village named Yudam-ni. The 5th Marines proceeded to the east side of the reservoir. The division was now strung out over a distance of 75 miles from the seaport of Hungnam and 30 miles from Manchuria. Separated and scattered into small groups, the 1st Marine Division was now in the position the Chinese had been waiting for.

However, an unexpected event happened: 3,000 soldiers from the 7th Army Division arrived on 27 November to relieve the 5th Marine Regiment, which then managed to join the 7th Marine Regiment on the west side of the reservoir just hours before the Chinese planed attack. This was a move the Chinese had not anticipated and one that probably contributed to our survival. The 5th and 7th Regiments, together with the 4th Battalion of the 11th Regiment artillery, was now a stronger force on the west side.

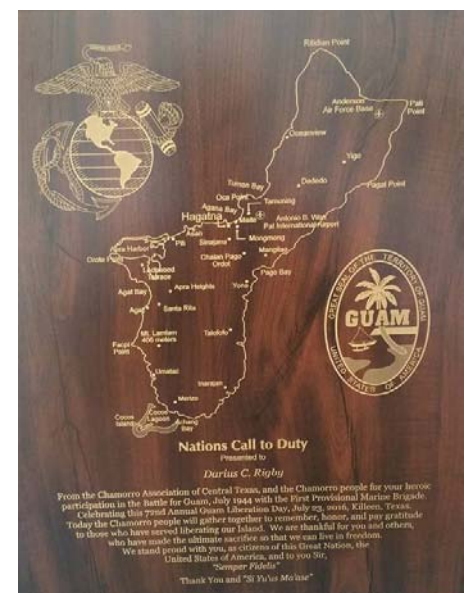
Next: Battle of Chosin Reservoir

D.C. Rigby Honored During Guam Liberation Day Celebration

Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Japanese captured the island of Guam on 10 December 1941. It was finally liberated in August 1944 by U.S. forces including the 3rd Marine Division, the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade and the 77th Infantry Division. One of the liberators was Sixth Division Marine D.C. Rigby (22nd Mar-3-HQ & 1st Prov).

Every summer the liberation of Guam is celebrated in cities all over the country. At the 2015 Liberation Day celebration in San Antonio, Texas, D.C. Rigby was the only liberator in attendance. He was invited to attend the celebration again in 2016, this time as guest of honor. During the festivities, he was presented with the plaque shown below. Also in attendance were six natives of the island who survived the battle.

Congratulations, D.C.!



From the Historian's Corner

WAS SUGAR LOAF NECESSARY?

In May 1945, the Sixth Marine Division suffered over 2,000 casualties on a small hill — Hill 52, nick-named Sugar Loaf. The hill would be assaulted eleven times; some companies would be literally wiped out twice. I once asked Dick Whitaker (29th Mar-2-F) how he could go up that hill knowing what had happened to those who had proceeded him? His answer was that he was taught to follow orders. They did what they were told; their training had become instinctual. The frontal assault of Sugar Loaf was very controversial at the time. Was the loss of life worth folding the Shuri Line?

The Japanese military had been unsure of where the Allies might land and had moved troops from Okinawa to Formosa. This condemned Japan's Thirty-Second Army to fight a defensive battle. The Japanese were on Okinawa to win, but as a delaying force. General Mitsuru Ushijima and his Thirty-Second Army were there to buy time while mainland Japan readied itself for an invasion. Or to make the Allied Forces so weary of war that perhaps it would cause a stalemate.

Rather than meeting the Tenth Army at the beachhead as they had in previous encounters, the Japanese moved to the Shuri-Yonburu line. This high ridge essentially cut the island in two just north of Naha on the eastern side of the island. Its center was the pride of the Okinawans, Shuri Castle. The Thirty-Second Army's goal was to inflict as much damage from that spot as possible. From the walls of Shuri Castle, the Thirty-Second Army's headquarters, Ushijima and his staff watched the Americans land. They positioned their many guns, the Japanese soldiers dug interconnecting tunnels, and they waited. For Ushijima, it was a war of attrition. He had to use his men effectively, knowing that they were all going to die. So he established strong defensive lines — a dreadful plan for the Tenth Army, who was planning a frontal assault.

When the Marines landed on Okinawa in April 1945, they understood their job was to take Okinawa, in particular the northern end of the island. They quickly advanced and twenty days later the First and Sixth Marine Divisions secured the northern half of the island. However, word began

to filter back that events were not going smoothly in the south. The Army had mired down after running into stiff opposition north of Naha at a hill known as Kakazu. One of the Army units, the 27th, already had a reputation for having performed poorly in previous island fighting. Now the Marines felt they were being ordered to bail them out.

At first General Buckner wanted to use the Marines piece meal in the south — this did not sit well. Hearing about a possible split, First Marine Division Commander, General Pedro del Valle became furious. "They can have my division," he complained to General Roy Geiger, "but not piece-meal." Del Valle had other concerns. Marine Corps tankers and infantry trained together as teams. The First Marine Division had perfected tank-infantry offensive attacks in the crucible of Peleliu. Committing the tanks to the Army without their trained infantry squads could prove to be a disaster, and he was not willing to risk it. Generals Roy Geiger and O.P. Smith made it clear to Buckner that using the Marine divisions in that manner was not a good option, and Buckner conceded. The Marines headed out, and the First eventually broke through at Kakazu.

In April, General Alexander Vandegrift, Marine Corps Commandant, visited Okinawa and discussed an amphibious assault on the southern end of the island, rather than Buckner's plan of continued frontal assault. This has become a major point of debate in the battle's history. The debate revolves around the contention that a southern assault would have been less costly. It would have involved using the Marines, including the Second Division that was in reserve, to conduct an amphibious landing on the Minatoga Beaches. This was at a time when the concept of frontal assaults seemed to be falling out of favor. The heavy losses in battles such as Pickett's Charge during the Civil



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Historian's Corner

(continued from previous page)

War and the meat grinder of the Western front in World War I had taught warfighters that modern killing machines made frontal assaults a costly endeavor. However, for Buckner, although a decent tactician, “grinding forward with the relentless use of superior firepower” suited him better.

Military leadership finally agreed that Okinawan terrain made other options less feasible, and they concluded that frontal assaults and grind-the-enemy-down tactics were just about the only way to dislodge, destroy, and defeat the Japanese. Still, the continued bloody fighting along the Shuri front remained in the forefront of Buckner's attention. His plan prevailed, and at the end of April, the Marines began replacing the Army on the front lines. They were about to run head on into the Shuri-Yonaburu Line. As casualties grew alarmingly, Buckner decided to concentrate all his resources on a single front. On 27 April he assigned the First Marine Division to XXIV Corps. During the next three days, the division moved south to relieve the shot-up 27th Infantry Division on the western (right) flank of the lines. The Sixth Marine Division received a warning order to prepare for a similar displacement to the south. The long battle for Okinawa's southern highlands was shifting into high gear.

A problem for the Tenth Army was the rain, which by 9 May had begun in earnest. Everything became muddy. Moving supplies and equipment proved almost impossible and often had to be accomplished hand-over-hand. Asa Kawa River seemed to be the biggest obstacle between the Sixth Marine Division and Naha, the capital of Okinawa. The river would be breeched by the 22nd Regiment a yard at a time. Then all that stood between the division and Naha were three ‘insignificant’ hills: Half Moon, Horseshoe and Sugar Loaf.

May 12-18 would be filled with some of the most savage fighting in Marine Corps lore. The Shuri Line cut the island in half east to west. It consisted of mutually supported defensive positions, including mortar, artillery, machine guns, and interconnected tunnel complexes. These tunnels, an

estimated sixty miles of interconnected passageways, made movement and flanking maneuvers easy for the Japanese. In addition, the Marines ran into what they referred to as “spider holes.” Flush with the ground and covered with brush or dirt, these hideaways kept the men constantly vigilant about what might be behind them. The Marines had found the flank of Ushijima's Shuri Line of defense, and the Japanese were unwilling to give it up without a tremendous payment.

Finally, under the cover of darkness during a rainstorm, the remnants of Japan's Thirty-Second Army headed further south. Here they prepared for a final stand on the southern tip of Okinawa. As Colonel Hiromichi Yahara says in *The Battle of Okinawa*, “The beautiful countryside of the Amekudai plateau, where in times past I enjoyed riding with General Ushijima, was now steeped in the blood of thousands of soldiers — Japanese and American.” The Marines of the Sixth were left at Sugar Loaf to recover their dead and wounded and then move on for the next confrontation.



Sugar Loaf Hill

So, could lives have been saved in the Battle of Sugar Loaf? Anyone who has seen the height of the rock crevices on the southern side of the island and the tremendous Japanese artillery emplacements there would probably agree that a southern landing would have been even more costly than Sugar Loaf. However, it is important to remember that the Japanese aim on Okinawa was to make it costly for the Allies. Frontal assaults or amphibious landings — the final battle of the war was meant to be baptism in blood for the Sixth.

Sugar Loaf had to be taken. Folding the Shuri Line meant the beginning of the end for the Thirty-Second Army.

New Electronic Membership Directory Coming Next Year!

The last Membership Directory was published in 2008, and we are frequently asked about creating a new one. However, it's an expensive proposition to get a directory printed and mailed, not to mention it's a herculean effort.

Along comes Joe L. Kite (son of Joe W. Kite, 29th Mar-HQ) with an idea. (We love ideas!) Joe suggested creating an updated directory in electronic format that can be emailed to members. And — this is the best part! — he volunteered to create and distribute it.

We know all our members don't do e-mail, but we think this is a practical and cost-effective solution that will work for most. Our hope is that those who don't use e-mail or computers have a family member or friend who can get the directory and print it out for them.

How to Get the New Directory

Unfortunately, we don't have good e-mail addresses for most of our members. **If you want to receive the new directory, you must send your e-mail address to Joe Kite at:**

JKL1621@juno.com

If you want someone else to receive the directory for you, please send his/her name and e-mail to Joe.

The Directory should be available sometime in the first quarter. It is for members only.

Thanks, Joe!

p.s. It would also be a good time to let Flo Dornan know if any of your contact information has changed.

2016-2017 Sixth Marine Division Scholarship Recipients

Student	School	Marine Grandparent
Kimberly Bianco	James Madison University	Corporal Angelo Bianco USMC
Nicholas Dagrosa	George Mason University	Private First Class Harry Heath USMC
Melissa Maskal	Pennsylvania State University	Corporal Wilbur Maskal USMC
John F. Siebert	Texas A&M University	Lt. Colonel Kenneth Siebert USMC (Ret.)

We regret to announce that Sixth Marine Division Scholarships will be discontinued as funds have run out.

Applications will NOT be accepted for the 2017-2018 school year.

Message from the Membership Mgr.



Kudos to Joan Willauer and Pam Bloustine for the absolutely wonderful reunion in Norman, OK. I was able to attend this year, and I am

grateful that I could renew old friendships and make new ones, as well as enjoy all the activities offered to us.

I want ALL members to look at their mailing labels, and if the last digits above your name don't say 2017, 2018 or beyond, you will not get a newsletter next year. Please sit down right now and write a check for your

subscription — \$10 for one year or \$20 for two! You can pay as many years in advance as you wish. I have had too many members call me and bemoan that they have not received a copy of the newsletter for a long time. When I look at their record, I find they were not up to date with their subscriptions. We can only send the Striking Sixth to those who are paid up. Also, if you move, it is important that you send me your new address because the Post Office will not forward the newsletters.

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

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: \$ _____

Membership Directory Contribution.....Donation: \$ _____

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

Make check payable to The Sixth Marine Division Association

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

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

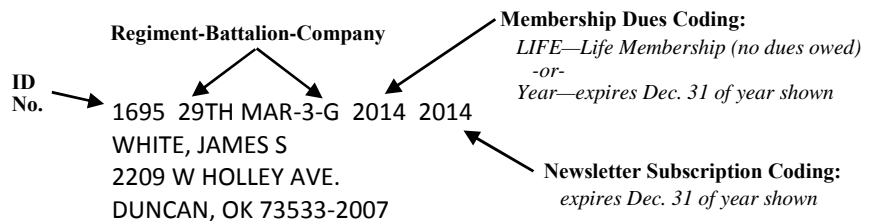
E-mail: Sxthmardiv@sbcglobal.net Phone: (817) 275-1552

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.



Hope to See You at the 2017 Reunion!!!

Embassy Suites Phoenix - Scottsdale ~ August 15-20

We'll have much more information, including the full schedule, costs, and nearby attractions in the Spring edition of the Striking Sixth and on our website. In the meantime, please feel free to call Jean Steed (480-518-0077) or Bill Steed (480-518-0088) if you have any questions.

THE HOTEL

- Free cook-to-order and buffet breakfast each morning
- Free two-hour evening reception with drinks and snacks
- On site restaurant serving lunch and dinner
- Room service
- Outdoor pool
- Fitness center
- Adjacent 18-hole golf course with driving range and putting green (discount for hotel guests)
- Shuttle to restaurants and shopping within a one-mile radius
- Free self parking
- 15 miles from the Phoenix Sky Harbor Int'l Airport

THE SUITES

- \$91 rate (\$102.44 with tax) for two-room suite with one king or two double beds
- Limited number of wheel chair accessible rooms
- All suites include:
 - * Separate living area with queen sleeper sofa and armchair
 - * Small kitchenette with refrigerator, microwave and wet bar
 - * Private balcony with seating
 - * Two large-screen TVs
 - * In-room safe
 - * Free WiFi
- Special room rates are available 3 days before and 3 days after reunion dates

NEARBY ATTRACTIONS

- Paradise Valley Mall with shops, theatres and dining (1 block from hotel)
- Piestewa Peak (formerly Squaw Peak) Park hiking trails (3.5 miles from hotel)
- Old Town Scottsdale with shops, restaurants, bars, art galleries and more (6 miles from hotel)
- Musical Instrument Museum (best in the world! 6 miles from the hotel)
- Camelback Mountain hiking trails (6 miles from hotel)
- Phoenix city center (14 miles from hotel)

FURTHER AWAY — BUT WORTH THE DRIVE!

- Beautiful Sedona with it's angular formations, high mesas and rocky cliffs (128 miles or 2-hour drive from hotel)
- The incomparable Grand Canyon (224 miles or 3.5-hour drive from the hotel)

We suggest adding at least 2-3 days to your trip for visiting Sedona or the Grand Canyon. Please note: Due to their higher elevation, they are not as hot as Phoenix, even in August.



typical suite at the Embassy Suites Phoenix - Scottsdale

2016 Reunion



above: Memorial Service program

left top: George McAfee with members of the color guard

left: Neal McCallum, Pam Bloustine, Maj Gen Admire

right: Harry Grover

below right: Paul Judd, Connie Houseweart & Neal McCallum with roses for the Marine victims of the Oklahoma City bombing



above: Carolyn Risher, Gail Engler, Mary Walker, Pauline Roberts, Joan Willauer, Flo Dornan, Kathy Schadt



above: Randy & Mark Cassity, Gail Engler, Gregg & Sharon Woodhouse, Tiffany & Adam Leggett, Jane & Bob McCalmont

Sixth Marine Division Association

704 Cooper Court, Arlington, TX 76011



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Striking Sixth Newsletter

Fall 2016

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Start Planning for Next Year's Reunion! Embassy Suites Phoenix - Scottsdale August 15-20, 2017

Mark your calendars for the next Sixth Marine Division Reunion, to be hosted by Bill and Jean Steed (pictured with Pam Bloustine at left). With two Marines in charge again, it looks like we're in good hands!

See page 26 for more information.

