

The General I Knew

by Jack Hoag (6th Jasco)

Wyatt Hoag, son of the late Jack Hoag (who made the oak case for the Last Man Bottle), sent this article about General Shepherd to Watson Crumbie (29th Mar-1-C) last year.

I first became acquainted with General Shepherd when he was a bird colonel. He taught me that a Marine did not salute an officer with a pipe in his mouth. That was at Camp Elliott in the summer of 1942.

I walked along with his 9th Marines from Elliott to Pendleton. We traveled the back way along Highway 395. Colonel Shepherd led his regiment walking along with his cane. During our five-minute break, which we took every hour, the Colonel would walk back along the line checking on his boys.

In January 1943, the 9th Marines, one battalion of the 19th Marines, C Battery, 3rd Special Weapons Battalion, and the 26th Seabees boarded the Mt Vernon, the largest troop ship on the Pacific. There were 2,900 troops aboard. Every day I would observe the Colonel, accompanied by a Navy officer, tour the ship. They would walk the decks and the Colonel would stop and talk to enlisted men. They toured the mess hall and talked to the troops there. They were even seen down in the troop's quarters.

In New Zealand we walked. We walked fifteen miles one Sunday morning to get in shape for the next day's 20-mile hike to a New Zealand rifle range to sight in our new rifles. Next was a forty-five mile walk, fifteen miles a day for three days. After a two-week break, we did a similar exercise – twenty miles a day for three days. The Colonel lived on the same rations we did, but he didn't carry a pack. He walked back through the ranks at every hour break.

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Portrait of General Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr. sent to us by his granddaughter, Sallie Shepherd. It once hung in her parent's home and now resides in the Admissions Office at VMI. Note 6th Division flag.

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Reunion Artifacts Are Displayed in New Homes!

We thank everyone listed below who submitted a winning bid for the reunion items that were auctioned at the 2021 Reunion in Fredericksburg!

US Marine Corps flag — Mary & Parker Brauer

1st Provisional Marine banner — Anita, Melinda & Lisa Benedetti

4th Regiment flag — Leonard & Karen Turner

15th Regiment flag — Sharon Woodhouse

22nd Regiment flag — Ryan Lacey

29th Regiment flag — Craig Salvatore

Memorial Service bell — purchased by Mary & Parker Brauer and given to Janet Russell

Annual Reunion banner — Bob & Jane McCalmont

Okinawa the Last Battle banner — Ross Hood

Heroes of Okinawa banner — Sharon Woodhouse

1st Provisional Marine banner — Anita,
Melinda & Lisa Benedetti

15th Regiment flag — Sharon Woodhouse

29th Regiment flag — Craig Salvatore

Annual Reunion banner — Bob & Jane McCalmont

Heroes of Okinawa banner — Sharon Woodhouse



The Memorial Service bell has a special place in the home of Janet Russell. It is surrounded by other cherished items from her husband Bob's service with the Marine Corps. The picture of him was painted by his friend and fellow Sixth Division veteran, the late Bryce Hill Jr.



Sharon Woodhouse hung the 15th Regiment flag and Heroes of Okinawa banner in her garage, so they are the first thing she sees when she comes home.



Jane McCalmont stands proudly beside the Annual Reunion banner, which has a place of honor in her home beside husband Bob's U.S. Army flag.

The General I Knew *(continued from front cover)*

Before we left New Zealand, the 3rd Special Weapons Battalion put on a demonstration of our new weapons for the Division brass. This included "A" Battery, with their new 40mm AA guns and directors, "B" Battery with their new 90mm AA guns and the Marine Corps' new Radar director, and "C" and "D" Batteries with their half tracks equipped with 75mm guns.

I was stationed about 50 yards to the rear manning the radio in communication with the base camp and the plane that would be pulling the target for the AA guns. With me was the German shepherd that the 1st platoon of "A" battery had acquired for a mascot. The exercise started with General Barrett making a speech. Every time he started to talk the dog would howl. The Colonel came to the station and said, "Son, I learned a long time ago that if you want something done, go to the man in charge. Keep the dog quiet; it's embarrassing the General." The Colonel walked away, and I took off my belt and muzzled the dog.

A week after the weapons demonstration, the 9th Marines took their famous 60-mile walking tour of New Zealand. Walking on the decomposed granite roads, the dog wore the pads off his four feet. The dog was destroyed.

The 3rd Division left New Zealand and set up camp on Guadalcanal in July 1943. The Colonel was promoted to Brigadier General and was transferred to the

1st Marine Division. General Shepherd took command of the newly formed 1st Provisional Marine Brigade on Guadalcanal in April 1944. I became a part of the 4th Marines, which became part of the brigade. We knew that the General was on board because activities were in high gear. On May 25, we boarded ship and headed for the invasion of Guam.

We landed on Guam 21 July 1944. On 29 July, at the site of the Marine Barracks, Orote Peninsula, I heard the General say, "On these hallowed grounds, you officers and men of the First Marine Brigade have avenged the loss of our comrades who were overcome by a numerically superior enemy three days after Pearl Harbor. Under our flag this island again stands ready to fulfill its destiny as an American fortress in the Pacific."

On August 3, 1944, the Brigade was ordered north to join up with the 3rd Marine Division. Our predicted eight-mile walk turned out to be eighteen. We dug in that evening on top of the mesa just north of where the Guam International Airport is now. The radios were set up, and I was boiling a can of green tea that I had picked up at the Jap supply depot. Chaplain McCorkill, Brigade Chaplain, asked me if I had any "bung-fodder." He said that he and the General had the "trots." I gave him my spare packet of rationed toilet paper. In a short while, the General returned what was

left. I told him to keep it as I had plenty. He then asked me what I was boiling, and I told him, "Green tea, sir. Want a cup?" He said that he hadn't had any decent tea since we left New Zealand. I filled up a canteen cup and gave him half of my brick of green tea. The General thanked me and said something about green tea being medicinal.

Several days after 10 August 1944, the Marine Cemetery on Guam was dedicated. A Lieutenant Dillenbeck asked me to accompany him to the dedication and operate the PA system. I was setting up the gear when the Brigade staff along with Adm. Nimitz, Lt. Gen H. M. Smith, Commandant Lt. Gen. Vandergift, Maj. Gen Geiger, and Admiral Spruance arrived. The General walked over to me and said, "The tea worked. Where is your dog?" I didn't have time to answer; he was being pushed along with all the brass.

My next encounter with the General was at the 1976 Sixth Marine Division Association reunion at San Diego. The General was sitting in a chair, and when the crowd around him cleared, I asked if he still had the cane that he walked with all over New Zealand. He told me the cane was at Quantico, and he told me about being wounded during WW I. A French doctor wanted to amputate his leg, but a German POW doctor saved it and gave him the cane. It seems that the French doctor told the young

(continued on next page)

The General I Knew *(continued from prior page)*

Lieutenant Shepherd that a true patriot should be willing to give a limb in the service of his country. He also told me the Seabees in New Zealand replaced the worn out tip of the cane with a Monel metal tip. Then the General surprised me by asking, "What ever happened to your dog?" I told him about destroying the dog, and he replied, "What a shame."

During the last four years of General Lemuel C. Shepherd's tour of duty on this earth – before he took command of the Heavenly Guard Company – two or three of us Sixth Division vets would visit him at his La Jolla home. We made it a point to visit him on his birthday and the Marine Corps birthday. And then there were times in between. On special occasions we would take him his favorite cake — German chocolate — and his favorite drink — scotch.

It was during these visits that I was able to get answers to questions that had been bothering me since the war years. The General was so gracious and answered like I was one of his staff, not a PFC.

For instance, I asked the General whose idea it was to use "R" rations (rice, raisins and salt-pork) on the New Zealand marches? He said, "It was General Barrett, a mighty fine man, my mentor. General Barrett said, 'If the Japs can live on a hand full of rice, so can my Marines.'"

At our visit to celebrate the General's birthday in February 1988, the General wanted to know what I was doing to keep busy. I mentioned that in April I would be cruising down the Amazon. He wanted to know why and when and ordered me to report to him as soon as I got home.

I did as ordered. The General and I sat side by side on a bench,

During these visits I learned when the General acquired his love for German chocolate cake. It was while he was stationed in Koblenz, Germany during occupation duty after WW I. Then Captain Shepherd was billeted above a bakery where he had his first taste of German chocolate cake. While he was stationed in Koblenz, the baker never wanted for cocoa or flour.

In 1954, Commandant Shepherd made a tour of the consulates in Europe. When he was near Koblenz, he told his driver about the room he had over the bakery, and he decided to see if the building was still standing. He directed the driver to the street and where he thought was the place. The General pointed to a bakery across the street and told the driver that he thought that was the bakery. While he was pointing, a man nearing fifty wearing a white apron walked across the street and said in broken English, "Captain Shepherd?" The man was the baker's ten-year-old son when Captain Shepherd occupied the room above the bakery.

Why did the General, a native of Virginia (the home of American whiskey), prefer scotch to sour mash whiskey? It seems that a classmate and cadet at VMI acquired a bottle of whiskey, and the two of them drank themselves sick. For a long time after,



Generals Simon Bolivar Buckner Jr., Lemuel C. Shepherd Jr., and William T. Clement on Okinawa, May 22, 1945

and he critiqued me. He asked me a lot of questions about Manaus, Brazil and what shape the opera house was in. He told me that he was the only Commandant of the Marine Corps who had visited every place where a Marine was stationed.

(continued on next page)

The General I Knew *(continued from prior page)*

the smell of whiskey turned his stomach. He was introduced to scotch while in France during WW I, and it didn't make him sick.

The General spoke highly of the German people, but not so of the French. His feeling about the Japanese was just a bit below the French. During one of our visits, Len Cotten told the General he was being pressured to return his war trophy flag to Japan. He asked the General for guidance. The General's answer was, "Len, tell them to go to hell."

The General's eye sight disintegrated in his last years to a point where he could only distinguish between bright light and total darkness.

My son, an Army officer, expressed several times a desire to meet and shake the hand of this general I was always talking about. The occasion presented itself in May 1989. The General had been ill, and his February 10 birthday party was postponed until May. My son was available to accompany us to La Jolla. When I introduced him to the General, the General said, "You must be a military man. I can see your shiny buttons." The General talked to my son

for several minutes. He wanted to know where he went to school, when he was commissioned, what his command was, etc. After we arrived home my son said, "Pop, no wonder you admire General Shepherd. He talked to me like I was a part of his staff. I should have gone Marine instead of Army."

Len Cotten, Ken Davis, others, and I celebrated the Marine Corps birthday with our General and his dear lady on Friday, 10 November 1989. As usual we took a bottle of champagne, the General's favorite German chocolate cake, and a bottle of scotch for his decanter.

Jim Day, being second in command, asked the General if he would do the honors of toasting the Corps, our Nation, the President, and the Commandant.

We who were there will never forget the General's lady sitting next to the General, who reached over, squeezed the General's leg, and said, "You must toast the division."

The General cut the cake with a K-Bar. We were all served and after some small talk and sea stories, we policed the area and bid adieu to the General, his lady, and his son, Colonel Shep-

herd ("Bo"). At that time, the General insisted that we take the bottle of scotch with us and give the boys a drink.

Two days after the birthday party, our General's lady entered the hospital where she spent her final days.

What became of the bottle? It became the "LAST MAN'S BOTTLE," a gift from our General, and it is auctioned off at every reunion. The proceeds are designated for the VMI General Shepherd Fund.

The General was shown the "LAST MAN'S BOTTLE" in its oak protective container at his 94th and last birthday on this earth in February 1990. The General loosened his earthly ties on August 6, 1990, just 45 years after the dropping of the first "A" bomb on Japan. The General's passing affected me more than the death of my own father. I've questioned myself about this many times. The only answer I can come up with is that we were comrades in arms and fought the same war. We had both heard the sounds of battle, the cry of the wounded, and the silence of death.

I will never forget my GENERAL.

Hear General Shepherd's Speech to the Troops before the Battle of Okinawa

It's on our website — www.sixthmarinedivision.com. (Under History, click on Battle of Okinawa.) Whether you're hearing it again or for the first time, we think it will give you goosebumps.

Thanks to Sallie Shepherd (General Shepherd's granddaughter) for sending us the audio file, and thanks to Robert Aydelotte (Watson Crumbie's son-in-law) for posting it on our website.



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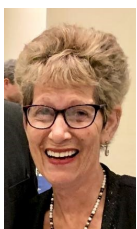
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Message from the President



Hope this finds everyone well and extremely healthy. I love love love when we can communicate via the newsletter.

As you may or may not remember, all of the Sixth Marine Division Association "belongings" were auctioned or donated to very good homes. [See page 2 for more info.]

One item in particular I felt very responsible for. That, my friends, was the Pacific Battle Map. Sallie Shepherd and I managed to find an extremely good

home for it. Our contacts were Major Daniel Petronzio and Master Gunnery Sgt. Lockwood. Major Petronzio is displaying the map 365 days a year at the Assault Amphibian School, Camp Pendleton, CA. [See picture on back cover.] To quote Major Petronzio, "All is ready for visitors, and the map will be there to educate and tell those boys' stories for years."

Please keep communicating on our Facebook page and the Forum. We love hearing from you. God Bless you all.

Semper Fi,
Connie

Chaplain's Report



In December, Neal McCallum, Ken Wells and I joined 60 other World War II Veterans on a trip to Oahu to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbor. The trip was organized by the Best Defense

Foundation, which was founded by retired NFL player Donnie Edwards to honor his grandfather, a survivor of Pearl Harbor.

All of the Veterans were flown by American Airlines to Dallas, Texas on December 2 where we received shirts, a baseball cap, and a jacket with our name, military branch, and WW II Veteran embroidered on it. We were treated to a delicious banquet planned by Robert Irvine who hosts *Restaurant: Impossible* on the Food Network.

The next morning we headed for the airport escorted by at least six police cars and 40 motorcycles. There we were greeted by cheering, waving crowds. On the plane, we dined on more first class meals planned by Robert Irvine.

On Saturday, we took a boat trip around Ford Island and Pearl Harbor where we saw the Arizona Memorial and the USS Missouri. That night we attended a party in a hanger on Ford Island.

After an optional church service Sunday morning, we headed out to the USS Missouri where we had another wonderful meal planned by Robert Irvine. Afterwards, the US Navy Band played for us.

On Monday we visited Kaneohe Marine Base

where our son Tom was based for four years. We had lunch in the mess hall with the active-duty Marines, then visited the schools on base where we shared stories with the students.

Tuesday, December 7 was the BIG day. We arrived on Pearl Harbor at 6:15 AM. As the Navy band played, we could see the Arizona Memorial and USS Missouri in the harbor. We watched the sun come up, and at 7:55 Taps was played. I think everyone in attendance got chills thinking about what happened at that very time 80 years before.

A nice program followed Taps. We were given a US flag with a note as to the time it had flown over the Arizona that morning. How very special that flag is to me. That evening we were part of a parade followed by dinner and entertainment.

On our final day in Oahu we visited the National Cemetery of the Pacific (the Punchbowl) for a short and moving program to honor those who died during the war. Some were able to visit the gravesites of buddies who gave their all for their country. I have at least four friends who are buried there. After an emotional morning we went back to the hotel to pack and get ready to head home. At the airport, we were entertained by hula dancers, including Miss Hawaii. All the entertainers were happy to pose for photos with us.

I hope we represented the other Marines of the Sixth Division with honor. God Bless you all and keep praying for Peace in the World.

Your friendly Chaplain,
Harry McKnight

From the Historian's Corner

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MARINE CORPS UPDATES

Status of the Colors

For those who made it to the reunion, I hope you enjoyed friendship, fond memories, and pride in **your** flag. I hope you also left understanding that your Corps is in good hands.

Recently, I spoke with Owen Connor, one of the curators at the National Museum of the Marine Corps, about our colors. In the limited time they have spent with the Sixth Marine Division flag, they have determined it is in very good shape. I say limited

time because the curatorial staff has been in the process of moving to a new location. Once they settle into their new space, they will complete restoration of the flag and begin getting it ready for display.

Donating Items to the Marine Corps Museum

I also spoke to Mr. Conner about donations to the museum. If you have items you think the National Museum of the Marine Corps might be interested in — especially items unique to the Sixth



Association Historian Laura Lacey

Marine Division — email Owen Conner at owen.conner@usmcu.edu. He is a great resource. Below is the process for making donations to the Museum.

Guidance from the Marine Corps Museum on Donating Objects

We appreciate your interest in the National Museum of the Marine Corps. Our mission is to collect, preserve, and exhibit objects related to the history of the Marine Corps.

If you are interested in making a donation of objects or archival material, we ask that you contact the appropriate curator or archivist. You may use the staff listing on the museum's website to locate the appropriate staff member to handle your request.* If you are unsure of who to contact, please email the Registrar, who will ensure that you are connected with the appropriate person.

Object donations are handled by the curatorial staff. If you would like to make an object donation, we ask that you submit an inventory and photographs of the objects you wish to donate along with a completed Donor and User Information Form.** We also ask

that you provide the service history of the Marine that utilized the objects. If you have photographs of the Marine in service, as well as any background history on the objects themselves, please provide as much information as possible. The more photographs and background you are able to provide, the better we are able to assess the donation.

Archival donations are handled by the USMC Archives and Special Collections at the Gray Research Center. An archivist will be happy to assist you with this type of material, and will be able to explain their donation procedures in detail.

If the curator decides that they would like the objects shipped to the museum, the Office of the Registrar will contact you directly. The Registrar will provide you with a Temporary Custody Receipt and an address to ship the object.

Please do not send any objects or archival material without consulting the appropriate staff member first. All donations must be accompanied by a signed Temporary Custody Receipt.

Thank you for considering us as a repository for your keepsakes. We look forward to hearing from you.

*The Museum's Staff Listing

can be found at:
www.usmcmuseum.com.
Click on THE MUSEUM, then STAFF DIRECTORY. The curatorial staff is in the third column.

**Donor and Information Form

can be found on the Sixth Marine Division website at:
www.sixthmarinedivision.com
On the home page under FAQs, click on Where Can I Donate Artifacts from the Sixth Division Marines? The link to the form is in the first column.

MAIL CALL



RIP Richard Stucker (29th Mar-3-I)

I am the son of Corporal Richard Stucker who fought at the battle of Sugar Loaf Hill. He was in I Company, 3rd Bn, 29th Marines, 6th Division and was wounded twice during the battle. He was

a member of the greatest generation and my hero.

Would you please list him on the Taps site. He passed 9/2/2012.

I am enclosing two pictures [see below]. The first was taken on Guadalcanal where my father trained for 18 months before

Okinawa. The second picture is of some 29th Marines in a tank, I'm not sure where.

My brother, sister, and I wish to thank you.

Bob Stucker
bobstucker@gmail.com



Cpl Richard Stucker — second from right, top row



Cpl Richard Stucker — sitting in front of the Marine standing in the back

Looking for Info on Michael M. Butler (22nd Mar-2-E), KIA Okinawa

As a Marine Corps Vietnam vet, I am a regular reader of Leatherneck. I was particularly moved by the January 2022 article on the reunion of 6th MarDiv in Fredericksburg, VA. I shared this info with my son-in-law RJ Butler who is a Navy veteran of the Kosovo and Afghanistan campaigns and an Army veteran of Iraq. His Great Uncle Michael M. Butler was KIA on Okinawa. We would like to find out if any 6th MarDiv veterans may have known him. Or perhaps veterans' descendants may have in-

formation. We would like to find out as much as we can about his service and supreme sacrifice.



Michael ("Mick") Butler

PFC Michael M. Butler served in Company E, 2nd Battalion, 22 Marine Regiment, 6th Marine Division, FMF. His service number was 10543. He was wounded April 12, 1945 in action on Okinawa (possibly Sugar Loaf Hill) and died May 19, 1945 on the

island. His next of kin was his sister Miss Helen Butler who lived in Troy, NY where PFC Butler was born and raised. His body was eventually returned to Troy for re-burial. He had been a boxer in the Troy/Albany area and was known as Mick Butler. Attached please find his photo [see left].

Any assistance will be greatly appreciated.

Thank you and Semper Fi!

Bill Payne, Sergeant of Marines,
Vietnam 7/69 to 7/70
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Looking for Info on Bernard J. ("Bernie" or "Bud") Holmquist

By chance I came upon the story by Don Sexton (4th Mar-3-L) about his trip to Tsingtao, China in 2012 on your website.

I believe my dad was part of the Sixth Marine Division. He fought in Okinawa, and after the war ended, he was transferred to Tsingtao. His name is Bernard J. Holmquist, aka "Bernie" or "Bud." He passed away in 1988.

During his time in Tsingtao, my father met my mother, Doris Rinnell, a Chinese-born Swede and the only blue-eyed blonde to be found. She was the daughter of Swedish missionaries and spoke fluent Mandarin, Swedish, English, and some German.

Mom was a young student nurse at Faberkrankenhaus in Tsingtao. Fresh from the war, hundreds of the Marines would attend church up on the hill at the big church called Christ Church where my mom often played the piano. There Dad helped start Youth for Christ (YFC) for the Marines.

My grandparents and great-grandparents and their families lived in China as Swedish Baptist missionaries from 1894 until 1951. My grandfather was imprisoned in Tsingtao that year during the cultural revolution. After several months under house arrest, he was finally able to rejoin his family in Sweden.

My mom and dad were married in 1949, and my mom came to

the states as a war bride after completing nurses training in Sweden.

Many years later, after China reopened, my family was able to re-establish contact with many dear friends they made in China. They even visited them in Tsingtao and Kioachen several times. I was able to visit with my mom and younger brother in 2011. An amazing trip!!

My dad longed to return to China, but sadly he wasn't able to. However, he did write to some of the Chinese friends he met as a young Marine. I was given a Chinese name, although I am 100% Swedish. My dad really cared for the Chinese people.

My mom is still alive, age 93, and lives in Bakersfield, CA with my younger sister.

It would be nice to know if any Marines from the Sixth Division remember my dad.

Thank you for your work in keeping the history of these men and women alive.

With kind regards,
Meilynn Holmquist Smith
meilynn@rinquist.com



Pharmacist Mate Bob Witmer

My father, Pharmacist Mate Bob Witmer, was not a religious man, but he went to church every Easter to reflect on his experience in

Okinawa. He received the Purple Heart after being seriously wounded during a rescue mission around April 17, 1945. Apparently, his recommendation for the Silver Star got lost in the "fog of war." He died in 1996 at the age of 75.

The enclosed picture [see below] was taken somewhere in the Pacific where my father and his Marine buddies were headed to the last great battle, Okinawa.

Mike Witmer



Bob Witmer, upper left, before the Battle of Okinawa

MAIL CALL



Sgt. Samuel Wiener

My father, Sgt. Samuel Wiener, was in the Sixth Marine Division. He was a combat photographer, and we once had many hundreds of 8x10 photos, but I no longer have them. I do have a few bits of memorabilia, including a memo General Lemuel Shepherd sent to my father after the battle of Okinawa. Attached is a photo of it [see right].

Best wishes to the Association and any survivors and family members.

Thanks for your hard work honoring that generation,
Mark Wiener



Corporal Alden C. Curtin

I am a lineal descendent and life-time member of the Sixth Marine Division Association. I was raised by my maternal grandfather, Corporal Alden C. Curtin, who was my legal guardian. My grandfather meant so much to me, and I love our Marines! "Always faithful" is very special to me.

I'm sending you just a few of grandad's photos from Okinawa and Tsingtao and perhaps other locations [see right].

Thank you all for your service.
Best wishes in 2022!

Warm regards,
Christine H. Jeans



memo from General Shepherd to Sgt. Samuel Wiener after Okinawa battle



right and below:
photos of Corporal
Alden C. Curtin



Fort Snelling Memorial Rifle Squad Honors John McCulloch (22nd Mar-2-HQ)

by his son-in-law, Craig Larsen

I would like to share the wonderful experience our family had with the interment of my father-in-law, John McCulloch (22nd Mar-2-HQ), in June 2021 thanks to the exemplary efforts of the Fort Snelling Memorial Rifle Squad.

John passed away on December 31, 2020. He served in the Marines from June 1943 until February 1946. He was a member of the 6th Division, 22nd Regiment, 2nd Battalion, HQ Company. John participated in the retaking of Guam and the battle of Okinawa where he fought in the area of Sugar Loaf Hill. After the war came to an end, John was stationed in Tsingtao, China.

During his time with the Marines, John never made any headlines or got any individual awards or medals. Like most of the members of our armed forces during World War II, he — as he would describe it — simply did what needed to be done, nothing special. That said, we are all very proud of John's service to his country, and we all wanted to gather for a final tribute to John.

Attended by most of the family members who survive John (wife Ellen, three children and spouses, and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren), he was interred at Fort Snelling National Cemetery in Minneapolis, Minnesota with full military honors. We were all so pleased by how well this ceremony was done.

We all gathered in our vehicles in a queueing area at the cemetery, and at the designated time our convoy was escorted to a small shelter for the ceremony. As we gathered in the shelter, the Rifle Squad was at attention with the flags of the United States and all the service branches on display and the Marines' Hymn playing. The urn with John's ashes was carried in and placed on a table in the center of the shelter. Next, the rifle squad fired three volleys and then the bugler played taps.

Finally, a member of the squad carried in the folded American flag and presented it to my mother-in-law and on behalf of the country offered appreciation for John's service. We then had time for our pastor to speak. At the finish, a member of the squad gave us an envelope with some of the shells from the rifle volley.

We were extremely impressed by how well the squad performed. The squad members are all veterans and volunteers who are amazingly dedicated to properly honoring their fellow veterans. They might not be as finely tuned as they were in their active duty days, but they were certainly just as determined.

The Fort Snelling Memorial Rifle Squad was formed in 1979 and has been present for more than 80,000 funerals at Fort Snelling National Cemetery. In more than 40 years, they have never missed a day, with the exception of a shutdown of several months during the peak of Covid. They have been present in all extremes of our Minnesota weather — from 100 degree summer days to wind chill temperatures of -35 degrees, including rainstorms and blizzards.

The Fort Snelling Rifle Squad was founded by George Weiss, Jr., a Marine veteran who served at the end of World War II. For his services to our nation's veterans, George was awarded the Presidential Citizens Medal in 2010. George was quoted as saying "As long as the Memorial Rifle Squad is here, no veteran will be forgotten."

This squad was the first of its kind in the nation. Similar rifle squads have since been formed at many of the nation's military cemeteries following this model.

I sincerely hope that all of our military veterans, when they pass away, will be honored in the same way that John was.

Coming Soon! *The Mosquito Bowl* by Buzz Bissinger

Scheduled for release on September 13, 2022, it's now available for preorder on Amazon and Barnes & Noble.



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.

Benny S. Cowboy	22nd Mar-3-C (code talker)	11/02/21
Barney R. Cox	29th Mar-2-HQ	02/24/22
Rapheal V. Fowkes	6th Marine Division	11/18/92
Joseph Iafrate	29th Mar-1-C	01/11/18
Robert E. Keith	6th Motor Transp. Bn.	03/29/11
William W. Maskal	15th Mar-3-G	01/27/22
John W. Orsock	29th Mar-1-C	unknown
Pauline Roberts	wife of Richard Roberts	12/08/21
Richard Stucker	29th Mar-3-I	09/02/12
Edward W. Sukowatey	29th Mar-1-C	12/17/17
Frank J. Ulrich	4th Marines	10/29/14
Forrest E. Walling Jr.	15th Mar-3-H&S	02/02/09
Woodrow J. Zegers	29th Mar-3-G	10/08/09

Reporting Deaths

Please report deaths as soon as possible to:

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

AND

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

Editor's Note



Winters can be pretty dreary in Pittsburgh, and I confess to getting a bit down at times. However, hearing from many of you in the 6th Marine Division family has cheered me up enormously.

Throughout this edition you will find photos, articles and notifications that I've received from friends of the 6th Marine Division. I thank you all for sharing your photos and information with me. As Connie said in her message on page 7, we love hearing from you!

Connie, Bob Zimmerman, and I have been posting photos and other material on our Facebook page. Along with our website, it's a great way to keep the memory of the 6th Division alive. If you're on Facebook, check us out!

Stay in touch,
Carroll

Discover Final Resting Place for 6th Division Marines Who Died in WW II

Thanks to Bob McCalmont for telling us about a website called Find a Grave that lists the burial locations for 1,937 Sixth Division Marines who made the ultimate sacrifice during the war.

In addition to the cemetery, it lists the birthdate and date of death of the Marine and the location of the plot. For many of the Marines, it also includes information on where the Marine was killed, family members, and photos of the Marine, family members and gravesite. Pictured below is one example.

Below is the URL for the Sixth Marine Division listing:

<https://www.findagrave.com/virtual-cemetery/251491>



Donations — Thank You!

General Operating Fund

Eloise Fairburn
Jonathan Lynch
Robert Pringle
Arno Schroeder



Leatherneck Publishes Story on Sixth Marine Division Reunion!

The January issue of Leatherneck magazine included one of our favorite stories ever — a six-page article about our fiftieth and final reunion in Fredericksburg last September. We hope you saw it! If you missed it, you can find it on our website: www.sixthmarinedivision.com. Look under 6th Div Assn, then Reunions, then 2021 Reunion. Thanks to Lisa Benedetti for creating the pdf file.

Watson Crumie tells us that after the article was published, he heard from Col. Keith Gibson, Director of the VMI Museum System and the man who brought the Last Man Bottle to the reunion. He was extremely pleased to be there with us and to ensure the Sixth Division Marines were able to drink a final toast from the bottle. He has placed a copy of the article next to the Last Man Bottle as part of the permanent exhibit at VMI.

Arno Schroeder (29th Mar-2-F) Celebrates 97th Birthday!

Black Hills Pioneer, February 10, 2022 (sent to us by John Ratonski)

SPEARFISH, SD — On January 30, World War II Marine combat veteran Arno Schroeder was surprised when he arrived at the Mountain View Baptist Church.

Karla Scovell, director of the High Plains Western Heritage Center, had sent a request for a couple of American Legion Riders to help Schroeder upon arrival at the church. The Black Hills Chapter of the American Legion Riders provided an Honor Flag Line and coordinated a Marine escort. The Riders and American Legion Post 164 members (Marines Jack French and Jeff Merchant) escorted him, and they all sang happy birthday for his 97th birthday. They visited and heard many stories over cake and coffee before the church service. Scovell also organized a luncheon following the service. Schroeder served with the 6th Marine Division during the battle of Okinawa and served in combat during the assault on the Shuri Line and Sugar Loaf Hill. After the battle, his unit went to Guam, then to Northern China. He returned to San Diego and was honorably discharged once he recovered from his injuries. Schroeder went to work as a banker and lived in Sioux Falls. He vacationed in Spearfish and loved to come to the Hills to hunt and fish. When he retired from banking, he made Spearfish his permanent home.



members of the Black Hills Chapter of The American Legion Riders, with Jeff Merchant, Arno Schroeder, and Jack French during a celebration in honor of Schroeder

Trip of a Lifetime for Three Sixth Division Marines

In December 2021, Neal McCallum, Harry and Barb McKnight, and Ken and Natalie Wells said “Aloha” to Hawaii when they joined 60 other World War II Veterans on a week-long trip to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor. Sponsored by the Best Defense Foundation, the trip was an opportunity to thank these Veterans for their service to our country.

After gathering in Dallas, the Veterans were flown to Hawaii where they were escorted in style from one memorable event to another. They were enthusiastically welcomed wherever they went. The trip culminated with a moving ceremony at Pearl Harbor on the morning of December 7. That afternoon they were the guests of honor in the Pearl Harbor Memorial Parade. Before departing the next day, the Veterans attended an emotional ceremony at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, aka the Punchbowl, where they were able to visit the gravesites of friends who never made it home.

For more on the trip, see Harry McKnight’s Chaplain’s Report on page 7.



- 1) Ken Wells goes Hawaiian
- 2) Harry McKnight looks out over the Punchbowl
- 3) Neal McCallum enjoys the jubilant crowd at the Pearl Harbor Memorial Parade
- 4) Harry McKnight with Donnie Edwards, founder of Best Defense Foundation



Sixth Marine Division Association

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Striking Sixth Newsletter

Spring 2022

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Pacific Map Has a Permanent Home in Camp Pendleton!



Everyone's favorite reunion banner is now on display at the USMC's Assault Amphibian School in Camp Pendleton, CA.