

January 2023



The Spearhead News

Official Newsletter of the Fifth Marine Division Association
Website - <https://5thmarinedivision.org>
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PLANNING FOR THE 73RD REUNION IS UNDERWAY!

SAVE THE DATE

THE 1ST WEEK IN OCTOBER 2023 – WEDNESDAY THE 4TH TO SUNDAY THE 8TH
IN SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS



The Legacy and Meaning of FMDA Reunions

By Morey Butler

73 years of reunions! Folks, that's a lot of years. Can you imagine what all these get-togethers have meant to the Marines that fate had blessed so long ago? Sharing their Iwo experiences helped dull the pangs of survivor guilt and tempered the horrors they endured. Banding together to honor the memory and sacrifice of their brothers has been a steady drumbeat for a long, long time.

Many have gone on to their final reward and are on eternal guard duty, but there are still a number of tough old Iwo Marines answering muster at the reunions. That stalwart legacy is also reflected in the family members, friends, and fellow military veterans who attend to carry on the honorable FMDA Reunion tradition.

R&R has always been an important aspect of military operations, and so it is at our FMDA reunions. The hospitality room is the comfort den, offering outstanding respite from the day's activities. Those with a thirst for grape squeezings or barley and hops go without want. Other mundane liquids are also available, and refreshments are readily consumed throughout the evening hours. These amenities lay the foundation for truly memorable and pleasurable relationships to be renewed or begun anew. Camaraderie runs rampant and is very healthy.

Combat on Iwo remains the yardstick by which all Marines measure themselves when the going gets tough. That is one hell of a tribute to these great Marines of long ago. Their grit will forever be the standard of Marines today, tomorrow, and in the future. ❖



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 Vice Pres - Bill Baumann - ecvbilly@yahoo.com

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Treasurer	Doug Meny
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TRIBUTE OF HONOR
FIFTH MARINE DIVISION ASSOCIATION
MEMORIAL DONATION



Honor the memory of someone special through a Memorial Donation to the Fifth Marine Division Association General Fund. The names of Memorial Honorees will be published in a future edition of *The Spearhead News*.

Please prepare this form, along with your donation of any amount, payable to FMDA, and mail to
FMDA, P.O. Box 728
Weatherford, Texas, 76086

FMDA is a 501c3, not-for-profit organization. An acknowledgment of your gift will be sent to you at your address listed below.

Please check here if you would like an additional letter sent to the Honoree or his family without the dollar amount included. Please provide that address on the back of this copied form.

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Name _____

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War served _____

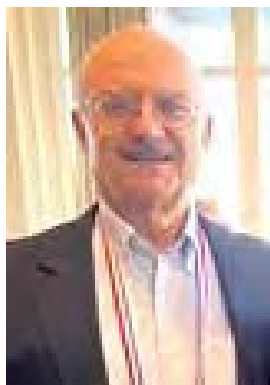
Unit _____

KIA date or DOD if applicable _____

Relationship to veteran _____

Amount of donation _____

Message from President Skip Werthmuller



I remain extremely honored to be a member of the 5th Marine Division Association (FMDA) and remain devoted to honoring all 5th Marine Division Marines who fought, died or were wounded on Iwo Jima. They provide a heroic legacy for all Marines and fellow citizens of honor, bravery and the will to succeed. Their sacrifice has enabled the success of our great country.

I wish everyone a Very Happy 2023 and hope you are all able to attend our next reunion 4-8 October 2023 in San Antonio Texas, home of the Alamo, the well-known River Walk, and much Texas and U.S. history.

Included in this issue is an article by one of our life members, LTC John Powell, a Vietnam War veteran. In it, he reminds us of the purpose of military associations ... Legacy ... Remembrance ... and Fellowship and Camaraderie. We are all bound by the desire to keep alive the honored memory of heroic sacrifice by Iwo Jima veterans and by the never to be forgotten legacy they provide us.

I have been invited to Iwo Jima Association of America Board (IJAA) board meetings and look forward to attending their upcoming annual Iwo Jima reunion 16-18 February in Northern Virginia near Washington DC. Several FMDA members plan to attend and all are invited and encouraged to attend. IJAA members also plan to attend our reunion in San Antonio in October 2023.

I also look forward to my second trip to Iwo Jima in March 2023 for the 78th Reunion of Honor. Our Vice President, Bill Baumann, and I look forward to continue supporting and expanding the heroic legacy of the 5th Marine Division and to ensuring a successful FMDA reunion in San Antonio, Texas. ❖

Skip Werthmuller, Captain, USN (ret)



The next issue of the *Spearhead News* will be published in July 2023 and will include the registration form and more details of the 73rd FMDA reunion.

The reunion is planned for October 4th through 8th in San Antonio, Texas. Mark your calendars and plan to be there.

The hotel location is the historic Menger in downtown, across from The Alamo and the Riverwalk. The airport is an easy commute of only eight miles from our event hotel. Reunion Chairman Tom Huffhines has secured a large meeting space to be used for Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday as our Hospitality Room. All Saturday events: the Memorial Service, Business Meeting, Raffle, and Banquet will be in a larger room next door. No bus trip tours are planned but an optional tour of the Alamo, within easy walking distance, is scheduled. San Antonio, like San Diego, is a military-friendly town. We are already being welcomed.

This should be another outstanding reunion. The FMDA officers and Board of Directors invite and encourage all members to attend!

FMDA MEMBERSHIP GOING FORWARD

by LTC USA John Powell (Ret)

Military Associations are founded for several purposes. They include:

1. Fellowship and Comraderies: Nothing is better than a group of old veterans swapping stories and tales, some of which may even be true.
2. Remembrance: It is important to remember and memorialize those who have gone before us.
3. Legacy: The legacy of any association will stay alive only as long as there are those who work to keep the legacy alive. Otherwise, the valor, deeds and sacrifice of these veterans will be lost and no one will ever know the history, stories, and valor of those involved.

How do you keep Associations alive and functioning? The answer is simple: recruit new members.

Excluding whole groups of people as members or leaders is the quickest way to end the life of that Association. There are no more WWII veterans out there to recruit, so to remain viable, you must recruit those from subsequent wars, family members, historians, and others.

I am a member of two other organizations, one of which will sadly in the not too distant future be disbanded and forgotten. Next year I will become the president of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots' Association. It is bittersweet because the association voted to be a last man standing organization. As we pass, our sacrifice, valor, and service will be lost in time and will only be a footnote in our nation's history. Simply put, we will have no legacy.

On the other hand, I am a member of the 1st Cavalry Association. It was originally all WWII people, but they had the foresight to add the Korean War Vets, the Vietnam Vets, and the Gulf and Afghanistan Vets. They also include family members, active duty personnel, and others. The result is a strong association whose legacy will remain alive as long as the U.S. is in existence.

The choice is simple for FMDA... It must follow in the path taken by other military associations such as the 1st Cavalry. While we have a number of Iwo Jima veterans who are active and healthy, none of them have expressed an interest in the extra work and time required to take on FMDA leadership roles at this point in their lives.

Don't let the Association die, and lose the Fifth Division legacy. Add new members, even if they are not WWII veterans. I personally want to keep alive the memories and the heritage.



As both an Army guy and a Vietnam veteran, I am proud to be a Life member of the Fifth Marine Division Association.

How many of you have ever recruited a new member? Maybe membership should be a primary goal to keep the 5th Marine Division Association vital and the story of Iwo Jima not forgotten.

I intend to get one new member this month....I challenge you to do the same. ❖

TRIBUTE OF HONOR MEMORIAL HONOREES



Young Historians

Andrew Da, Michael Naya, Andrew Booher,
Zachary Wood

*(Honored in appreciation for keeping the history of
the 5thMarDiv alive, by John Butler)*



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**Charity Navigator 4-Star rating for ten consecutive years:
an achievement attained by only 2% of charities**

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nonprofits to receive this highest rating**

The United States Marine Corps
Combat Correspondents Association's
drive to name a U.S. Navy Warship
the USS Joe Rosenthal continues

Sign the petition at www.USSJoe.org



*Joe Rosenthal portrait as Merchant Marine
Warrant Photographer during WWII (before AP)*

On D+4, February 23, 1945, during the Battle of Iwo Jima, Joe Rosenthal snapped 5th Division Marines raising the flag on Mt. Suribachi. It became the most recognized and galvanizing battle photo of World War II.

Today, Joe's photo still symbolizes the U.S. Marine Corps and has become a timeless symbol of valor and unity. The photo lifted the morale of the American People who were suffering from war fatigue. By virtue of his photo's role in raising \$26.3 billion for the 7th War Loan Drive, Rosenthal contributed more to the war effort than nearly any other American civilian.

Joe was on the frontlines with the Marines during four amphibious landings in the Pacific and photographed combat action shoulder to shoulder with them. In honoring him by naming a U.S. Navy Warship the USS Joe Rosenthal, the Navy and the nation will be remembering and honoring all the Marines who fought on Iwo Jima in 1945, and all Americans who have served this country and those who serve it today.

Welcome New Members!

Life Memberships

Dennis Sturtevant, El Paso, TX
Michael Von Derahe, Warren, OR
Steve Spiller, Redlands, CA
Dr. Jon David Brown, Rexburg, ID

Annual Memberships

Rich Nauman, Tampa, FL

STRONG MEMBERSHIP = STRONG FMCA

Annual memberships are due for renewal by Dec. 31 each year. If you have not renewed your membership, please send in your \$25 dues today.

•

Double your impact by finding a new member to join, too!

Use the Membership Form on the back page of this issue.

TRIBUTE OF HONOR MEMORIAL HONOREE



TOM GRAVES

USMC Combat Correspondents Association

For his dedication & perseverance
in the drive to have a Navy warship named for
Joe Rosenthal. Only God and Secretary of the
Navy know why this richly deserved honor is
so long overdue

(Honored by the 5th Marine Division Assoc.)



The Christmas I Remember Best

By Pvt Kenneth Brown, Written in Sasebo, Japan, December 25, 1945



This inspirational account of true events has been published in 51 languages, an additional 39 digitally, and verbally recounted internationally in about 90 languages and dialects.

The masterpiece was read to the entire membership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in a special worldwide Christmas message delivered in December 1995, and again in 2004, reaching millions. A copy of this document is located in the Library of Congress in various publications.

I watched him turn from the street and climb the path leading to our shelter. He was groping, hesitating. As he came near he folded his umbrella and stood quietly a long moment. His thin coat soon dampened from the cold rain that was falling from the same sky that had brought death to nearly half his townspeople three short months before. I concluded that it must take some special courage to confront one's conquerors without invitation. It was little wonder that he hesitated.

His polite bow was no bow of submission. Rather his squared shoulders and lifted head let me feel as if I were looking up to him even though I towered over him a foot or so. I recall being disturbed that I hadn't yet become used to the near sightless eyes of those who had looked heavenward that morning when the bomb dropped. If one looked deeply enough, one could almost see the reflection of a searing, blinding flash in those eyes.

Dignity commands respect in all quarters and I respectfully asked if I could be of service. His clear English told me that his educational pursuits had taken him beyond the home islands. He introduced himself as Professor Iida. The title fitted him well. "I am Christian," he said, "I am told this is the head minister's office. Are you Christian? It is good to

talk with a follower of Christ, there are so few Christian Japanese."

I took him to the inner office of the division chaplain and waited while the two men conversed. Professor Iida stated his request briefly. He was a teacher of music in a Christian girl's college until it was closed by imperial command. Afterwards he had been imprisoned because of his professed Christianity. After being released he had returned to Nagasaki and continued his music instruction in his home even though it was forbidden. He had been able to continue a small chorus and would be pleased if it could be arranged that they sing a Christmas concert for the American Marines.

"We know something of your American Christmases," he said. "We should like to do something to make your Christmas in Japan more enjoyable."

As his assistant, I felt sure the Chaplain would give a negative reply. Our unit was one of hardened fighters, four years away from home, who had fought the enemy from Tarawa to Iwo Jima. Their hatred of the enemy had hardly had time to cool. A troupe of girls appearing before them on stage, perhaps daughters or sisters of the ones who had

killed their buddies, might provoke an incident humiliating to the occupation authorities. Yet there was something about the man that bespoke sincere desire to do good deeds so that his request could hardly be denied.

Permission was granted. The concert would be Christmas Eve.

The rain had stopped and calm settled over the atomic bowl, reminiscent of the calm that night long ago. The concert was well attended; there was nothing else to do. The theater, now turned amphitheater, had been cleared of its fallen roof and the men were sitting on the jagged walls. The usual momentary hush fell over the audience as the performers filed on stage. As the music began the hush swelled to complete silence that strangely lasted the hour.

The first thing we noticed was that they were singing in English and we became aware that they didn't understand the words but had memorized them for our benefit. Professor Iida had taught his students well, they sang beautifully. We sat enthralled as if a choir from heaven were singing for us. Of course, it was wonderful to hear those familiar carols again, yet it wasn't so much what they said as the way they sang, as if Christ were being born anew that night.

The closing number was a solo, an aria from The Messiah. The girl sang with all the conviction of one who knew that Jesus was indeed the Savior of mankind and it brought tears. After that there was a full minute of silence followed by sustained applause as the small group took bow after bow.

Later that night I helped Professor Iida take down the trimmings. I could not resist asking some questions that propriety forbade but curiosity demanded. I just had to know.

"How did your group manage to survive the bomb?" I asked.

"This is only half my group," he said softly, but seemed unoffended at my recalling his grief so that I felt I could ask more.

"And what of the families of these?"

"They nearly all lost one or more members. Some are orphans."

"What about the soloist? She must have the soul of an angel the way she sang."

"Her mother, two of her brothers were taken. Yes, she did sing well; I am so proud of her. She is my daughter, you know."

The next day was Christmas, the one I remember best. For that day I knew that Christianity had not failed in spite of people's unwillingness to live His teachings. I had seen hatred give way to service, pain to rejoicing, sorrow to forgiveness. This was possible because a babe had been born in a manger who later taught love of God and fellowmen. We had brought them the greatest grief and yet we were their Christian brothers and as such they were willing to forget their grief and unite with us in singing "Peace on earth, good will to all men."

The words of Miss Iida's song testimony would not be stilled, "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." They seemed to echo and re-echo over the half-dead city that day.

That day also I knew that there was a greater power on earth than the atomic bomb. ❖



TRIBUTE OF HONOR MEMORIAL HONOREE



KENNETH BROWN

HQBN 5thMarDiv – Chaplain's Assistant
Iwo Jima Survivor

**With appreciation and thanks for writing
"Pvt Brown's Diary," your story of life as a Marine,
written with deep insight and prodigious observation.**

(Honored by John & Kath Butler)



Honoring Bonds Formed in Combat: Gerald Averill

by Valerie Leman, daughter of Craig B. Leman (H-3-26)

In his later years, Craig B. Leman (USMCR H-3-26; 1923-2014) corresponded with many individuals who wanted to know more about their Marine relatives who had also fought in the Battle of Iwo Jima. One such letter he wrote in 2013 was to Bill Cona, a relative of 1st Lt USMCR Angelo Mario (Charlie) Cona, who was KIA on Iwo Jima early in the battle. As a replacement 2d Lt., Leman had gone to the front line 10 days into the battle to take over Cona's slot in the 1st platoon. Both Cona and the executive officer of Leman's company, Gerald P. Averill, had originally served in a Marine parachute unit in the Solomon Islands in 1943, before joining the Fifth Division. They were among the elite survivors of parachute units who were used as cadre for the new infantry divisions.

While second-in-command of H Company on Iwo, Averill was shot through the thigh, two days before Leman joined that company. Leman did not meet Averill, a good friend of Cona's, until Leman and Averill were hospitalized on Guam to recover from combat wounds. In his 2011 memoir "A Marine Goes to War in the Battle of Iwo Jima", Leman described how he and Averill first encountered one another: "It was not a happy occasion. Averill came up to me and said, 'I heard you say you are from H Company; I never saw you before.' I replied, 'I joined it March 3 to replace Charlie Cona.' He shot back, 'NOBODY can replace Cona.' After that our relationship improved, very gradually."



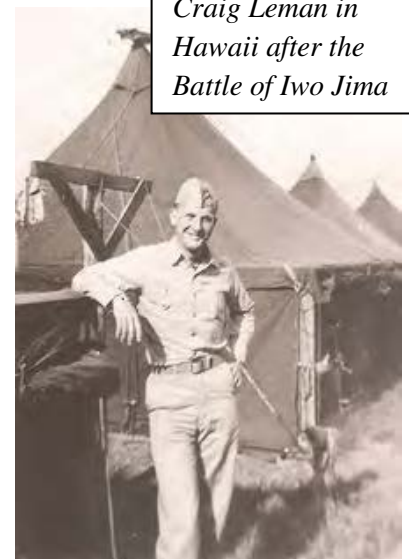
1st Lt Angelo "Charlie" Cona

Upon their return to the Big Island of Hawaii in the middle of April 1945, Leman, Averill and the others rode in trucks across the island, passing Bordelon Airfield, named in honor of the only enlisted Marine to receive the Medal of Honor at Tarawa. Leman remembered, "There were just a few of us in the cold wind-swept camp. We hiked around a bit in the pastures to try to get back in shape, read a lot, and slept a lot. The remnants of the Division came back from Iwo about a week later, and I was delighted to recognize some of the men I had fought with. As we met other people from our platoon (who vouched for Leman's combat experience), Ave mellowed, and we decided to share a tent with Tex Beckett, a parachutist from Texas who had survived a knee mortar blast on Iwo and now was leading the assault squad of flamethrowers and demolitions experts."



Leman described the setting at Camp Tarawa, "Our regimental area had rows of pyramidal tents. Our latrines were fairly large framed structures with cold water showers nearby. We had outdoor movies nearly every night, with newsreels usually over two months old. We slept on cots with blankets but no sheets. There was an officers' mess with good food. However Averill and I ate only supper there. We had a can of pineapple juice for breakfast and skipped lunch altogether. We wrote letters home nearly every night, turned in by 9:30 and got up by bugle call at 5:45 for calisthenics and a run before breakfast. Most of the officers met for drinks late in the afternoon, but Averill and I avoided this, although we belonged to the wine mess so we could give our monthly allotment of hard liquor to our men who were allowed to buy beer but not hard liquor."

Craig Leman in Hawaii after the Battle of Iwo Jima



Training at Camp Tarawa became much more intense as they prepared for the planned invasion of Japan. Although Averill was still limping from the thigh wound he sustained on Iwo, he made a practice of helping others during the training. As Leman described one day's work there, "the exhausted, demoralized survivors and the new, soft partially trained replacements were sent out on a long forced march with full packs under the broiling Hawaiian sun. Averill ranged up and down the column, frequently relieving a distressed marcher of his 8-pound rifle to give him a break; at one point, Ave was carrying three rifles." Leman had the highest respect for Averill's character and abilities, saying about that experience, "He was just like that."



Craig Leman, bottom right, with buddies



In 2013, Leman wrote to Cona's relative that he had learned a lot about Cona not only from the men in his platoon, but also from Averill's book, Mustang: A Combat Marine (Presidio Press 1987). Leman and Averill were friends for life, visiting each other when they could. Averill retired as a Lt. Colonel after a distinguished career, including a hitch during the Korean War. He trained Hmong forces in Laos as a CIA agent during the Vietnam War. These friends named their sons for each other. Sadly, Craig Averill was killed in Vietnam, and Craig Averill Leman died of cancer in 1998.



Craig Averill Leman & Gerald Averill, 1993

In the correspondence between Leman and Cona's relative, Leman referred him to a website then run by Joe Pagac, a 21 year old corporal in Cona's platoon. A former Paramarine, Pagac had already survived tough fighting on Bougainville Island and the Solomon Islands. He was born in the former country of Czechoslovakia (now the Czech Republic and Slovakia) in 1923, and was 10 when his family emigrated to Chicago. He entered the Marine Corps in 1943. His best buddy was Cpl. Harlon Block, the Marine on the far right of the photo of the famous flag-raising atop Mount Suribachi. Block, 21, was killed eight days after the photo was taken. Pagac survived Iwo Jima and forever dealt with his shrapnel head wounds and scars of war, living until age 89. His obituary characterizes Pagac as "a battle-scarred former Marine who spent some of his last years transporting patients to Bay Pines VA Medical Center." His wife said he had terrible PTSD at nighttime. "It was as if he were going after somebody." A longtime friend and Marine who was wounded in Vietnam, understands. "You don't sleep the same. It changes you," he said. "There is no way it can't change you. When somebody goes through something like that at a really young age, you give up your youth. You're never young again."

In conclusion, in his 2013 message to Bill Cona, Leman mentioned that it was John Butler who put them in touch, remarking, "John Butler is a good man. His dad was CO of the outfit (1st Battalion, 27th Marines) I was attached to for the landing on Red Beach 2; he was a splendid officer and was killed on March 5." Semper Fidelis. ❖

How I got my call sign

“Mad Mex”

(aka LtCol Raul Sifuentes, USMC (Ret))



A bit of a background is called for here....

Aviator call-signs were initiated some time back, long before the Top Gun movie ever hit the public. Some say the aviation call-signs originated in the fighter community as a more facile way to communicate between pilots. For example, it is much easier, if one is engaged in operations (especially in combat or an emergency), to call your wingman using a two or three syllable call-sign (Shooter), rather than a longer squadron-assigned call sign (Yankee Foxtrot 03”).

Call-signs are traditionally given as a matter of course early in one’s career. Normally, one does not choose one’s own call sign, but it is “bestowed” upon you, quite often as a result of some action, personality trait or flaw, or other characteristic. Back in the day, during squadron Friday night Happy-Hours, a special “court” was held to bestow one’s call sign. Other times, it was simply bestowed off-handedly from a remark.

Unfortunately, those days of social camaraderie and opportunities to release pressure, bond with your squadron-mates, share professional anecdotes, and pass on leadership traits in a relaxed and informal setting from a high-stress profession are no longer politically correct. The death knell of the Warrior Class was sounded some 40 years ago...but I digress...

All Marines are green. If one is thin-skinned, the military is not the place for you, especially in Naval Aviation, which of course, Marine Aviation is part. For the most part, the call-sign was one indication of being included into your unit as part of the brotherhood in a profession

of combat arms. Moreover, the call-signs could very well be ethnically-toned, derived from physical characteristic, personality trait, observed action, etc. Zorro, Guts, Too-Tall, Stash, Brow, Crash, Not-so, Sunshine, Chuckie, etc. are but a few. Such as they are, many beg the explanation of their origin, which most are happy to share. At any rate, the call-sign bestowed on me was “The Mad Mex”. I have carried it proudly since 1967.

The call sign originated from a what initially would have been a very boring ho-hum mission of our battle-worn, lightly-armed, outdated UH-34 piston-driven helicopter assigned to act as escort to an equally lightly-armed UH-1E carrying a number of General Officers who would receive briefings from various strategic bases, such as Dong Ha, Cam Lo, Firebases, Khe-Sanh, etc.

I had been in-country for several months, and though a junior officer, I was not only an aircraft commander, but also designated as a flight leader. In other words, I was qualified to fly and lead missions anywhere, anytime in Viet Nam. For this day, my mission was to escort the “Huey Slick”. In the event it went down for any reason, I was available to transport all, including the Generals, to safety.

This particular mission, I believe, occurred in the early 1967 time-frame. The mission originated in Viet Nam I-Corps and called for a number of stops eventually up to the DMZ then to Khe Sanh and return to base. The Section Leader of our 2 aircraft was a senior officer, reportedly new in-country. The “Huey” was from another squadron. Our UH-34 was a very “mature” aircraft assigned as there were a limited number of “Huey’s” available, so the escort mission was assigned to our squadron. I believe I was a 1st Lt at the time.

We departed home base for the scheduled stops ending at the DMZ. Prior to departing this fire-base at the DMZ, we were briefed there would be a “sav-a-plane” issued just prior to our departure. A Sav-a-plane is a notification to all aircraft operating in the area of an artillery fire-mission originating from point A (firebase) to point B (Target); cautioning all aircraft to NOT FLY between the Point A to Point B lest it ruin your day and all who are in your aircraft. Since the origin of the fire mission was the DMZ and the destination of the rounds fired was in North Vietnam, I was unconcerned, as I had no intention of flying into North Vietnam enemy

territory chasing General Officers in a lightly armed, slow-moving helicopter at low altitude...The briefing emphasized, immediate takeoff, turn 180 degrees fly south of the firebase and head southwest toward Khe Sanh, our next destination.

Immediately upon takeoff, the lead Huey headed straight north, low level crossing the DMZ into North VietNam. In the most professional manner, to a senior officer, using proper radio procedure, I advised lead aircraft to turn 180 degrees as soon as possible. The response was silence.... and a left turn toward the sav-a-plane. I could see the active fire mission. The good news is: we were at low level, slow speed under the arc of the fire mission, the bad news was: we were at low level, slow speed in North Vietnam. And it was understood the fire mission was not for practice...

My second transmission was a repeat of my first...again, no response.... Shortly thereafter my third transmission was at a high pitch in my voice with considerable angst and volume, breaking proper communication security advising we were in NORTH VIETNAM, enemy territory, beneath a fire mission, head west, south west NOW!

The Huey turned as advised and headed for Khe Sanh. Upon landing and shutting down aircraft at Khe Sanh, I was dressed down by the Huey aircraft Commander for my disrespect to a senior officer, lack of proper radio procedure and committing a radio security violation (Bead-window). I did not respond. The General Officers appeared non-plussed over the event. We returned to our home base. The Huey returned to its home base.

Before shutting my aircraft down on the flight line I was advised to report to the Squadron Commanding Officer immediately. Our Commander was one of the toughest Marines I know, cynical, professional and fair. He was a good leader who flew missions and did everything he asked his pilots to do. Evidently, I had been put on report before we landed our flight. Reporting in to the CO with my co-pilot, I was asked about the recent mission, given the phone call he had just received from senior HQ concerning my actions and behavior. I quietly explained the situation at the DMZ, I confessed to improper radio procedure and bead-window on my third transmission. I advised I had not responded to my dressing down at Khe Sanh. My co-pilot and crew confirmed my story. We never saw the senior officer from the other squadron again. I believe he was transferred elsewhere forthwith.



So, what has this to do with my call-sign? Our squadron had a traditional Kangaroo Court every Friday after flight operations. At this time all foibles, screw-ups, notable happenings, etc. were closely examined. At this "Court", presided by the Operations Officer, all were found guilty of their "crimes". A rebuttal or defense could be heard, but the verdict of "Guilty" was always given BEFORE the defense or rebuttal. Whereupon the guilty party had to pay a "fine" to the squadron social fund, dedicated to funding the courtroom's social activities and beverages.

In my case I was found guilty of all crimes. In this case there was proof-positive. One of my squadron-mates had my "actual" and bona-fide transmissions to the lead Huey advising him to turn out of harm's way and head for Khe Sanh. In actuality, my squadron mate had made a tape-recording of someone (another squadron mate) with a very bad Mexican accent yelling cuss words in Spanish to the effect "Hey stupid! Turn around, you're in North Vietnam, you're going to get us all killed", followed by more irate and X-rated words,etc., etc. Whereupon, someone in the back yelled...Damn! That sounds like one Mad Mexican!! And the rest is history...

No names or dates to back this up... just a memory of another time, another place, with men whom you risked your life with, and for...and led by leaders who cared for their men above all else. ❖

Semper Fi.

Mad Mex sends...

The Difference between the 5th Marine Division & the 5th Marines



The **5th Marine Division** was a United States Marine Corps ground combat division which **was officially activated January 1944** at Camp Pendleton, California, during World War II. The 5th Division saw its first combat action during the Battle of Iwo Jima in 1945 where it sustained the highest number of casualties of the three Marine divisions of the V Amphibious Corps (invasion force). The 5th Division was to be part of the planned invasion of the Japan homeland and served Occupation duty after Japan's surrender.

The Division was **deactivated in February 1946 but later reactivated in 1966 for the Vietnam War**. The three infantry Regiments in the 5th Marine Division were the 26th, 27th, and 28th Marines and the artillery Regiment was the 13th Marines. **The 5th Division was again deactivated in 1969.**



The **5th Marines (the 5th Marine Regiment)** is an active infantry Regiment of the United States Marine Corps based at Camp Pendleton, California. It is the most highly decorated regiment in the Marine Corps and **falls under the command of the 1st Marine Division**. Currently the three infantry Regiments of the 1st Marine Division are the 1st, 5th, and 7th Marines, and the artillery Regiment is the 11th Marines. The 5th Marines is one of two USMC regiments authorized to wear the French Fourragère for actions during World War I at the Battle of Belleau Wood.

In WWI, the 5th Marine Regiment, along with the 6th Marine Regiment formed the 4th Marine Brigade as part of the 2nd American Army Division, commanded by General John Archer Lejeune.

Cherokee Indian Warrior: Robert Stevenson Youngdeer Marine Raider & ParaMarine *by Jennings Bunn*

As a 1st Marine Raider, he deployed to the Pacific Theater, where he fought on Tulagi and was shot in the face by a sniper during the Battle of Bloody Ridge on Guadalcanal. Severely wounded, he was evacuated to New Zealand. After miraculously healing in the hospital he returned to duty and participated in the Okinawa campaign. Chief Youngdeer had so much respect for his Raider commander, Colonel Edson, that he named a son Merritt Edson after him.

Following his military service, Youngdeer served in BIA Law Enforcement on eight Indian Reservations. He was the Principle Chief of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, and was voted to the Highest Cherokee Honor by the Tribal Council. He orchestrated a United Tribal Council of the eastern and western band of Cherokee. It was held at Red Clay State Historic Area in Tennessee and was the first Council in 147 years since the "Removal".



The late Chief Robert S. Youngdeer is shown saluting the flag during the playing of the National Anthem at a Memorial Day observance event, hosted by American Legion Post 143.

TRIBUTE OF HONOR MEMORIAL HONOREE



ROBERT S. YOUNGDEER

U.S. Marine Corps 1940-1948

1stBN 5thMarines Dog Company Guantanamo;
Edson's Raiders Guadalcanal;
Okinawa campaign; Marine Parachute BN

U.S. Army 1948-1960

82nd Airborne; Certified Jumpmaster

(Honored by Jennings Bunn, friend)

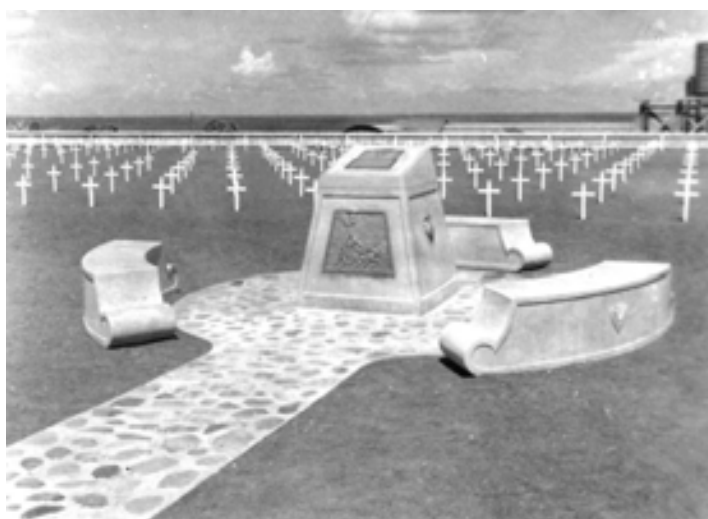


5th Division Cemetery on Iwo Jima *by Ken Brown, Pvt. Brown's Diary*



The day before we left the island a dedication service was held for the 5th Marine Division cemetery. The cemetery had been laid out in the shape of a huge Christian cross and with the hundreds of individual small white crosses and Stars of David marking the separate graves, it was as beautiful as a cemetery could be. The Chaplains delivered some very moving addresses and prayers which were followed by some remarks by a couple of Generals. A flag was raised, a volley salute fired, and taps played. I suppose most of us that had survived came to the services. Everybody had lost close friends and it was a pretty sad affair as final respects were paid comrades left behind. ...As I thought of the many other good fellows that I had known who were buried there in that cross-shaped cemetery with its seemingly endless rows of white crosses, I wished that everyone who had ever thought of war had been there and felt as I did. I think that would have been the end of it...❖

Each Marine division had its own cemetery on Iwo Jima. All were closed in 1947, with American remains returned stateside to be interned at Military Cemeteries around the country or on family plots in the Marines' hometowns. Many also were laid to rest in the Punch bowl, built in the crater of an extinct volcano on Oahu, Hawaii; a few were taken to Arlington National Cemetery in D.C. ❖



(Above: 5th Division cemetery memorial built by Seabees)

TRIBUTE OF HONOR



MEMORIAL HONOREE LTC TOM M. TROTTI

The Citadel
The Military College of South Carolina
Top Leader Award
Commander 3/26 5th Marine Division
KIA Iwo Jima
(Honored by Skip Werthmuller)



A Sixth Sense, Serendipity and Just Plain Luck

More Unique Adventures of My Father, Captain Charles Menzies, USMC - Part 2 - by Robin Bentzen

My father, my Hero, was blessed with a long and fascinating life filled with unique adventures and wonderful experiences. It was a real treat to hear Dad share those exceptional times in his life, especially those that were connected to his Marine Corps Life. His melodious voice was very soothing and it would put you at ease while you sat spellbound as he shared his more exceptional adventures and experiences. Here are a few more morsels that are worthy of note.



Eighth Air Force in Savannah.

His favorite activity was taking on the mantle of "Mission Commander" in the museum's Mission Experience - a multi-sensory immersion exhibit where visitors, as the flight crew, "fly" a bombing mission over Nazi Germany. He was perfect in this role. He thoroughly enjoyed meeting the visitors [aka "the flight crew"] in the airfield's quonset hut and conduct the "mission's briefing" with the "crew" before takeoff. He was the "Token Marine" at the Mighty Eighth and was in his true element as he guided countless visitors - young and old - down the path of history. He was instrumental in procuring the B-17 Bomber for restoration and education at the museum and was intimately involved in fundraising over his tenure there. He saw a very important need and he (as well as my mom) dedicated many years to achieving the goals of creating a very successful museum and perpetuating the selfless and fantastic efforts of his generation. He forever embodied the typical Marine - always meeting the challenge: *"If you want 'it' done right, just send in the Marine!"* ❖

From 1981 through 2008 my father lived in Savannah, GA. He attended the annual Marine Corps Ball and was always involved in its event planning. He wanted to continue to spread the word and educate the younger generations of what his, the Greatest Generation, did during World War II and the Korean War. As a licensed pilot since the age of 16 and having flown during WWII, he felt that his skills, experiences and knowledge of world history with a focus in the early to mid-20th Century would best be utilized by his becoming a docent at the National Museum of the Mighty



As a lifetime member of the Fifth Marine Division Association and a combat veteran of the Battle for Iwo Jima, Dad was invited to the commissioning of the USS Iwo Jima at the Naval Air Station in Pensacola, Florida in June 2001. But due to surgery, he was unable to attend. Flash forward to Summer 2005. That summer my parents were vacationing in Portland, Maine over the Fourth of July weekend. Late afternoon on the Fourth of July, my parents drove to the waterfront to check out the docks and they observed an aircraft carrier docking in the distance. Lo and behold, it was the USS Iwo Jima. Hoping to be permitted to go aboard for a few minutes the next day, they arrived at the boarding area to find that only family members of the crew would be permitted onboard the next day. "Oh, well," he resigned. "Even though I may never be aboard it, at least I have seen the ship up close."

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Later that evening while they were enjoying their lobster dinner, seven naval officers from the USS Iwo Jima in their dress whites entered the restaurant and were seated right next to my parents. As my parents were preparing to leave, my father said, in a good-natured way, "Gentlemen, please take good care of my ship." Curious, the officers asked him what he meant. Dad identified himself and explained that he was one of the "uninvited guests" on the island of Iwo Jima in 1945. And that while he had been invited to the ship's commissioning four years prior, he was unable to attend.

That unmistakable bond of brotherhood between military personnel past and present was instantly forged. The ranking officer of the group cordially invited my parents to come aboard and visit the ship the very next day. My father was thrilled to accept. When my parents arrived the next morning, a parking space was reserved for them and they were personally escorted onto the ship. As a gesture of kind consideration, my parents were given a tour of the ship by Command Master Chief James Cox. Dad explained to me that a command master chief of a naval warship is the senior noncommissioned officer on board, a position with extensive responsibility and considerable authority. Dad was very impressed with all hands, recalling that the morale and spirit of the crew seemed to be of the highest caliber.

Master Chief Cox maintained an impressive museum of the 1945 Iwo Jima Campaign onboard and every crewmember was thoroughly indoctrinated of the battle details where "Uncommon valor was a common virtue". Although the ship's company consisted of sailors in navy blue and leathernecks in marine camo, Dad noticed no spirit of separation between members of the two service branches onboard. It was one impressive ship. At the completion of my parents' tour and visit, Dad had every confidence that this excellent crew would indeed "take good care of his ship." *[My Thanks to Ron Lauretti for his article on Dad's visit to the USS Iwo Jima]. ❖*

In 2009 Dad participated in the Honor Flight Program and flew with his fellow WWII veterans from Nashville, TN to Washington, DC where they were duly honored and treated as our nation's heroes of The Greatest Generation. After a pre-departure "water salute" over their plane piloted by volunteers, they arrived in DC and were escorted around the capitol to view firsthand the amazing WWII and Korean War Memorials. While the WWII memorial was impressive, the Korean War Memorial was emotional -- very. It was personal; it tugged at your very core. It left you silent... still... in awe... and overwhelmed with memories.



Next on the itinerary, was a visit to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery. As my dad was wearing his Marine Corps hat, a gentleman in civilian clothes approached my dad addressing him with "Semper Fi". My father responded in kind. The gentleman then introduced himself as a current Marine Corps Captain and asked if my father was a Marine. My father answered that he was a former Marine Corps Captain himself and explained that he was a guest of the Honor Flight Network who was visiting from Nashville that day. This younger Marine explained that he was home in between tours and that when he is home, he always pays a visit to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier to find peace and strength, and to offer his respect.

So, Dad and this younger Marine spent about an hour proudly sharing information as to where and when they served, in what units they served, who they served under, etc. They shared their thoughts on what it was like preparing and serving in battle and with their respective generations; how their experiences were similar and how they were different. It was fortunate for both of these men that this was a "good day" for them and their memories - a good day to share, for so often that is not the case. These two Marines, the older and the younger, found a new level of support and respect - from one Marine to another, from the "Greatest Generation" to the "Current Generation".



Only fellow combat Marines can truly appreciate and respect each other's trauma, experiences and sacrifices. And after the sharing, a fresher and stronger level of reconfirmation of the past and the resultant peace, in part, atones for their efforts. But, at least for a short period of time, they can sleep better at night knowing that what they did and continue to do is appreciated and have made and continues to make a difference for the Greater Good. My family and I are so proud of my Dad. He did what had to be done - for others.

It was a spectacular, albeit emotional day for my father and I am so thankful that he had this rare opportunity. But the best was still yet to come. At the end of this wonderful hour, the younger Marine Captain said "Well, welcome to Washington" and handed something to my father. He said that his commanding officer had commissioned 100 commemorative medals to be awarded to his men in H&S Weapons Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines for their valor in battles in and around Ramadi, Iraq. This Marine wanted my father to have his medal as a Token of Thanks. When my father refused to accept this, the Marine said "Please consider it an honor - from one Marine to another. If it were not for Marines like you doing what you did, we Marines would not be so inspired to do what we need to do now. Thank you."



What a life my father lived. Thank you for letting me share some of his more unique and exceptional adventures. By word and by deed he taught me love, honesty, integrity and honor. He constantly showed me that there is always a solution to be found, that I could do whatever I wanted to do with my life, and to never stop reaching for the stars in the pursuit of all my dreams and endeavors. Every facet of my life is a learning experience and I should make the most out of them all --- adapt, improvise, overcome. Failure is never an option. He was a Marine, through and through, and he *loved* being so. He was a gem. He was unique. He will be so terribly missed. But he will always be remembered. ❖

Iwo Jima veterans on Guam in 2000

Some Third Division Marines during a Military Historical Tour Reunion of Honor. These IJAA sponsored reunions were first held in 1985. Fifteen years earlier, in 1970, the first peacetime joint U.S./ Japanese ceremony on Iwo Jima was held, sponsored by the Fifth Marine Division Association. It was attended by the Rev Wachi, who later founded the Iwo Jima Association of Japan, as well as by many other dignitaries from both countries. Although fully covered by the media at the time, knowledge of this seminal event is just now resurfacing. ❖

L to R, Charlie Morris, Richard Washburn, John Cummings, Gene Bell, John Farritor, General Snowden, Donald Mates and Harry Woods on Guam.



The owner of Shiloh Tours & Museum in Shiloh, TN, was a friend of FMDA's Richard Washburn. Alongside all the Civil War Memorabilia is the above display made and donated by Washburn.

The rocks surrounding the replica of the flag raising statue are from the island of Iwo Jima, as are the bottles of sand to the left. The sand to the right is from Green Beach on Guam.

Like the WWII battle that took place over eight decades later, the Battle of Shiloh was known for its staggering number of casualties. Almost 24,000 Confederate and Union soldiers were killed or wounded in the April 1862 battle. ❖

Young Historians Program of the D-Day Squadron



Michael T. Naya, Jr. was made an honorary member of the 5th Marine Division Association in 2020 at the age of eighteen. Michael has been actively interviewing surviving veterans of World War II and since 2016 has interviewed over 150. Aside from being an honorary member of the 5th Marine Division Association he is also a founding member of the Young Historians Program of the D-Day Squadron. The goal of the Young Historians is to educate children, teenagers, and young adults on the history of World War II through surviving veterans, aircraft, and educational outreach programs. Most notably, the D-Day Squadron was responsible for the transportation of fifteen fully restored C-47's to Normandy, France, for the 75th anniversary of the D-Day Invasion.

Michael was introduced to Andrew Booher who is also an honorary member of the 5th Marine Division Association. Shortly after their introduction Michael informed Andrew of the YHP and as a result Andrew jumped on the opportunity to join. Andrew, now twenty-three years old and a resident of Ewart, Michigan, graduated from Michigan State University in May, 2022 with a degree in Agribusiness Management. He now works for the Stine Seed Company and is employed by the Michigan Farm Bureau. Currently, Andrew is working on a story about Lt. Robert Schuelzky who was KIA on Iwo Jima, Iwo Jima Flag Raiser Harlon Block, and seven football teammates who enlisted in the Marines together.



In addition to Andrew Booher, Michael was introduced to Andrew Da, also an honorary member of FMDA. Andrew, a resident of Bothell, Washington has been actively involved in the 5th Marine Division Association since 2019. As a student in Middle School, Andrew wrote an essay on the Iwo Jima Flag Raising. He interviewed 5th Division veterans including Warren Musch, Ivan Hammond, and Alvin Orsland. His essay won the State of Washington first place and was the second place National Winner in the Junior Division of the National History Day Awards.

Through both the Young Historians Program and the 5th Marine Division Association these three young men will continue to carry on the legacy of the Greatest Generation. Through their interviews, research, and friendship we can ensure that the memory of World War II will never be forgotten.



If anybody would like to get in touch with the YHP they should reach out to Michael Naya at mnayajr@aol.com. In addition to being a founding member of the YHP Michael is current historian for the USS Yorktown (CV-5) Club and Archivist for the Sons and Daughters of Pearl Harbor Survivors. ❖

Also, watch "Into Flight Once More" narrated by Gary Sinise. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BebSvwLfjkg>)

With Bayonets Fixed: Khe Sanh -30 March 1968

*by LtCol Kenneth Pipes, USMC (Ret)
Article republished with permission from
Marine Corps Gazette)*

One of the most sobering experiences in life is the responsibility of leading young Marines into the teeth of the enemy knowing that some of them will not come out of it alive. It takes courage, faith, an indomitable spirit, and an unflinching trust in the capabilities of the men entrusted to your care. Fighting at Khe Sanh, Republic of Vietnam in 1967-68 was an ongoing, brutal fight to the death between Marines and soldiers of the North Vietnamese Army. This entry in the 'Sting of Battle' series takes us through a particularly poignant episode of combat as seen through the eyes of a young Marine rifle company commander.

On 30 March 1968, Company B, 1st Battalion, 26th Marines (B/1/26) proceeded from the perimeter of the Khe Sanh Combat Base to their pre-designated line of departure located near forward units of the North Vietnamese (NVA's) 8th Battalion, 66th Regiment, 304th (Hanoi) Iron Division. Poised against each other in the coming attack were lineal descendants of one of the most famous divisions involved in the siege against the French at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 and elements of the 26th Marines—one of three Marine regiments of the 5th Marine Division that led the assault against Japan's island fortress of Iwo Jima in February-March 1945.

The attack—scheduled for first light—was delayed by heavy ground fog that obscured the entire objective area. As the blinding fog began to lift, our Marines, with bayonets fixed, crossed the line of departure outside the wire at the Khe Sanh Combat Base.

Immediately upon commencing the assault, the two lead platoons came under extremely heavy mortar, rocket propelled grenade, automatic weapons, and small arms fire from the 8th NVA Battalion who occupied extensive, well-constructed, mutually supporting bunkers and trench systems.

Under the umbrella of withering fire from nine batteries of Marine and Army artillery that pummeled the flanks of the objective area and created a rolling barrage 50 to 70 meters in front of the two attack platoons, the Marines began breaching the NVA positions. The fight for fire superiority hung in the balance until the attached flame section and combat engineer detachment entered the fray. As their predecessors did on Iwo Jima, these units, covered and assisted by Marine riflemen, began to

blind, blast, and burn their way into the NVA fortifications.

For the next 4 hours the Marines of Company B—some of whom had undergone 70-plus days and nights of continuing, killing bombardment by NVA heavy artillery, rocket, mortar, and concentrated sniper fire—gained some measure of retribution as they routed the NVA soldiers from their fiercely defended positions. Within the breached positions our Marine riflemen were literally walking over the dead and dying NVA defenders.

From the moment of close contact until some 4 hours later when we received the order to withdraw back into the combat base, the fight was hand to hand, bayonet to bayonet, knife to knife, grenade against grenade, and rifleman against rifleman, with the trump card as always—Marines using flamethrowers and combat engineers employing demolitions!

It may seem to some readers that this was just another example of a typical seasoned Marine combat unit doing its job -- just another typical day at the office. It wasn't. A significant point must be made here! The rifle company that attacked the NVA that Saturday morning was not the same company that had moved from Hill 881 South 3 months earlier to participate in a battalion sweep toward the Laotian border, and then moved into the perimeter of the Khe Sanh Combat Base. The continuous enemy bombardment while we were in the combat base had hurt B/1/26 more than any other similarly sized defending unit was exacerbated by the tragic loss of most of the entire platoon on 25 February resulting from an ambush by a reinforced company from the 8th NVA Battalion. (My comment: the NVA were so impressed by the aggressiveness and bravery displayed by the doomed platoon that they did not disfigure or disturb their bodies or equipment, according to reports at that time.)

Most of the Marines in Company B on 30 March had joined during the siege as replacements after the siege had begun. These young men had traveled a hard road including boot camp, skills training at the Infantry Training Regiment, Staging Battalion at Camp Pendleton, a flight to Vietnam, reporting in to the 26th Marines, exiting the aircraft at the Khe Sanh Combat Base under fire, reporting for assignment to 1st Battalion, and finally—still under fire—joining Company B. To a rifleman, they had no combat experience at the fire team, squad, platoon, or company level.

As it has always been in combat, if it had not been for the leveling skills of a handful of short-timer leaders—privates first class and corporals—led by an experienced

company executive officer, company gunnery sergeant, and outstanding platoon commanders-the execution of this company-sized raid on 30 March 1968 would never have moved beyond our frontline trenches.

As noted by the commanding officer of 1/26 and the S-3 (operations officer) who planned the company raid, "The members of Co B performed individually and collectively in a manner normally expected only of seasoned and combat experienced Marines." I believe that their brilliant feat can only be attributed to their deep and over-riding desire to avenge the prior loss of Marines of their company- most of whom they never knew or met! To them and them alone goes the credit for executing arguably the first successful company-sized offensive assault outside the wire since the ambush of their mates on 25 February-and making it such a success!

These Marines totally decimated the 8th NVA Battalion, including the enemy battalion commander and his staff. In so doing, the Marines of Company B killed at least 115 NVA officers and soldiers and wounded an untold number of their survivors, according to information later passed to the company that had been intercepted from monitored enemy radio traffic!

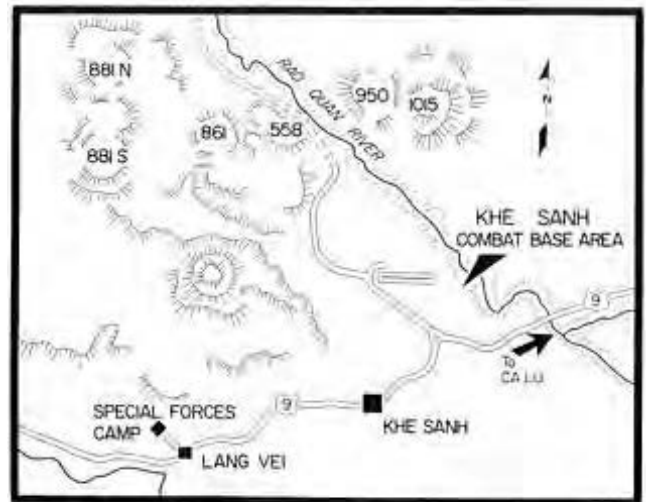
Still later, Marines from B /1/26-none above the rank of corporal-who had participated in the raid, were awarded two Navy Crosse, nine Silver Stars, eight Bronze Stars, and two Navy Commendation Medals with Combat "V" for valor for individual acts of courage, gallantry, and heroism! Additionally, over 100 Purple Hearts were presented, with several of these Marines earning their awards for receiving a second and third wound.

Just like their predecessors from Iwo Jima--to a man---the Marines of Company B remain intensely proud of their 26th Marine heritage! We will always feel that we who were privileged to serve with Bravo's young, inexperienced, Marine infantrymen that fateful Saturday morning were truly in the company of men who were, are, and will always be "The Immortals."!

Subsequent to the fighting on 30 March 1968, the company was the recipient of the following from the commanding general of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam:

"Officers and men of B/1/26 USMC deserve highest praise for aggressive patrol action north of Khe Sanh on 30 March.

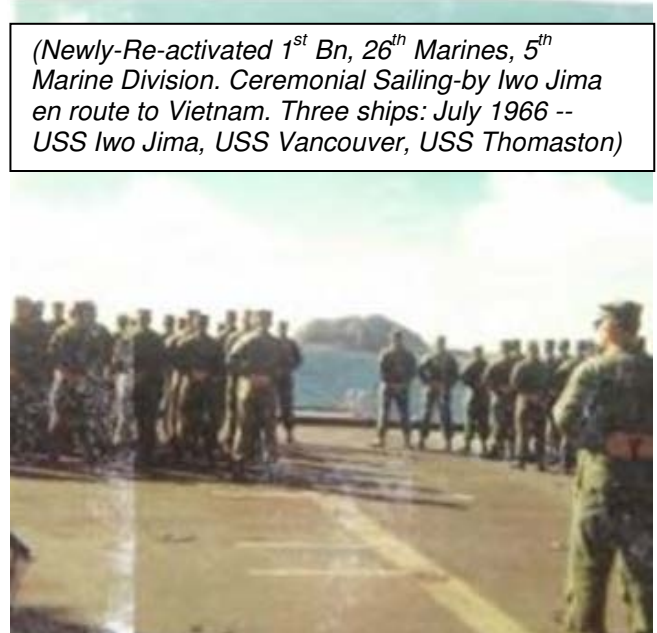
"Heavy casualties inflicted on bunkers and entrenched enemy forces indicate typical Marine esprit de corps and professionalism. Well done!" ♦



(Newly-Re-activated 1st Bn, 26th Marines, 5th Marine Division. Ceremonial Sailing-by Iwo Jima en route to Vietnam. Three ships: July 1966 -- USS Iwo Jima, USS Vancouver, USS Thomaston)



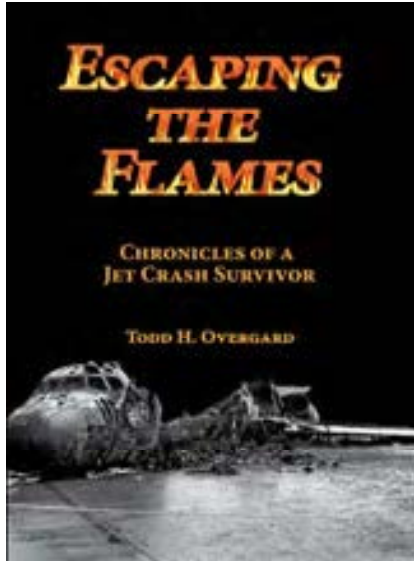
The "Old Rugged Cross" on top of Hill 861, planted by Chaplain (LCDR) Meschke of 1st BN, 26th Marines, in memory of the Marines who lost their lives in the battle



MEMBERS' BOOK REVIEWS

ESCAPING THE FLAMES: CHRONICLES OF A JET CRASH SURVIVOR

By TODD OVERGARD



In the fall of 2017, I made the decision to write the book that I had been thinking about for more than 40 years. The book was spurred by a pivotal incident in my life, a fatal airplane crash, where we struck another plane upon takeoff, then crashed and burned. I was lucky to get out. The book eventually morphed into my autobiography “Escaping the Flames: Chronicles of a Jet Crash Survivor” which is available on Amazon. Surprisingly, there are correlations between my book and FMDA member experiences. My book describes many near-death experiences, some of which were caused self-imposed activities and others by pure happenstance.

My father, Ted Overgard, was an Iwo Jima survivor. So, both of us had survived unique and dangerous events. As the book became an autobiography, I provided some of my dad’s history and time on Iwo Jima. In high school in Wisconsin, he played sports and even boxed in his senior year where he was undefeated. He joined the Marines at age 17, having skipped a grade and was sent to Camp Pendleton in Southern California.

“During basic training, he not only shot “expert”, but was the best shot of the five platoons that had tested at the same time. After completion of basic training, Dad was asked to go to a 15-week radio/telephone school in San Diego. He did well enough to then be sent to Omaha, Nebraska for a 14-week advanced radio/telephone training school.” That was how he ended up as a radio/telephone man when he shipped out to Camp Tarawa on the Big Island of Hawaii. In early 1945, he and his fellow Fifth Marines boarded ships for Iwo Jima.

“He had a last-minute assignment change as a radio/telephone man for the 13th Artillery Regiment and landed on day two, February 20. This was another factor which probably saved his life. The battle was so horrific that his memory shut down in order to protect him. The battle was severely traumatizing.

“Dad ended up near one of the two completed landing strips not too far from Mt. Suribachi. He tells the story of being ordered to fix what was an apparent broken radio line. The radio/telephone lines ran from the artillery location near the runways to the front lines where fighting was the fiercest. The center of the island, where the wires ran, was relatively flat and open. This open space was several miles long. These radio/telephone lines were on the surface and were being cut daily. I assume this was due to mortar fire, hand grenades, or other explosive weapons. Only Dad and one other radio operator were authorized to do these repairs. A bodyguard was sent out with Dad for protection while he was doing the repairs. Dad was to follow the radio line until he could find the break and repair it.

“Passing through open territory was never safe. Although this was behind the front lines, the network of tunnels built by the Japanese allowed them to pop up at various locations behind these front lines. This made the task especially dangerous. On one occasion, Dad and his bodyguard went out to find the break. His memory of what occurred next was filled in by other Marines that watched his progress. Two of the Marines back at the artillery location could see Dad and his fellow Marine out on the flat open space. They told Dad later that shots rang out and Dad’s bodyguard fell. Dad immediately rolled and came up with his rifle ready to fire from the prone position. There were six Japanese that moved in toward the downed Americans. Dad fired back and over the next 15 minutes, he would shoot at them as they came out of their tunnel exit points trying to finish off the Marines. The two fellow Marines who saw the whole thing go down tried to get to Dad. By the time they got there, they had watched Dad take out all of the Japanese. These men did not know who Dad was until after the battle ended. When they found out, they told him what they had seen. That was pretty amazing and another example of my dad’s escaping death!

Dad had other close calls such as escaping from a rip tide after being pulled about a half mile out to sea. When I was 7 in the late 1950s, my dad, my uncle, and I were caught in a lightning storm on the Mississippi River. We were in a small metal boat and lightning was striking stumps in the river all around us every 2 to 3 seconds for several minutes. We couldn’t get out of there quickly because the visibility was only a few feet due to the heavy

rain, until a lightning strike would light things up for an instant. Dad told me that the incident was more frightening than Iwo Jima, but I don't believe that since he clearly didn't remember the most horrific parts of his experience on the island.

My book goes on to describe many such incidents where I have survived dangerous situations. The plane crash was my summit of fear. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is something that many veterans can relate to. I call it the "lightning bolt of terror that sears a person to their very core". In my case, I suffered from nightmares for about 6 months. It also took about a dozen years to be able to fly comfortably. To this day, stories of other plane crash survivors can bring me right back into the enormity of the plane crash. I am sure that my dad's loss of memories on Iwo Jima was a PTSD response.

So, my book does cover subjects that may be easy for FDMA members to relate to. I write about many of my dad's war experiences in my book, but you can also find them on YouTube where my dad did a presentation to his assisted living community in 2013. Just bring up YouTube at www.youtube.com and then search for Ted Overgard.

My book was published in 2019 with a second edition in 2021 and is available on Amazon as a paperback or as an eBook. I am contemplating a third edition and hoping to have an audiobook version available for sale in the near future. I am honored to present the story of my survival of a plane crash and the very unusual events that happened to me both before and after the crash. ❖



Four Legged Heroes: the Mama Magina Books



by Mary Virginia McCormick Pittman presents three incredible stories that will transport you into a world of canine courage, endurance, and fortitude, which can be called nothing less than miraculous. Including the true story of an Arctic "mushing" experience, this book will create new fans of the husky. Their demonstration of courage and bravery beyond imagination can only be attributed to the genetically imbued spirit of the wolf. The story of the 1925 Iditarod, Race of Mercy, is told in a unique and vivid way.

All three stories in the book are adventurous, heartwarming, and never to be forgotten. Read Mary Virginia's own adventure with mushing! She wrote the book to..."stimulate creativity, innovation, and imagination in a child's mind! And to inspire children to 'be your own hero' by absorbing noble character traits that will bring success and self-fulfillment" The book includes vocabulary and character building exercise.

{Right: "Texas Star on Broadway" displayed on the digital billboard at Times

Square, New York City May 24th -June 22nd 2022. NABE (National Association of Book Entrepreneurs) advertised MVP's book which had won the Pinnacle Book Achievement Award in its category)

Pittman is a wildlife photojournalist and lecturer as well as an international conservation researcher. She has traveled the Arctic on scientific expeditions and also the savannahs of Kenya, as well as other locations, to advocate for animal rights. ❖



Four Chaplains' Day

Four Chaplains Day is to be observed annually on February 3 in America by the unanimous resolution of the U.S. Congress. It is a day to remember when one of the most remarkable and inspiring acts of heroism in the history of warfare took place in World War II. It is a day to honor the heroism of the Four Chaplains, who selflessly gave their lives "that others may live." As a former soldier who owed his life to them has said: "Their heroism is beyond belief. That is one of the reasons why we must tell the world what they did."



On February 3, 1943, the *Dorchester*, a converted luxury cruise ship, was transporting Army troops to Greenland, escorted by three Coast Guard Cutters and accompanied by two slow moving freighters. On board were some 900 troops, and four chaplains, of diverse religions and

backgrounds, but of a commitment to serve God, country, and all the troops, regardless of their religious beliefs, or non-belief. The four Chaplains are: George Fox (Methodist), John Washington (Roman Catholic), Rabbi Alexander Goode (Jewish), and Clark Poling (Dutch Reformed).

At approximately 12:55 a.m., in the dead of a freezing night, the *Dorchester* was hit by a torpedo fired by German U-boat 233 in an area so infested with German submarines it was known as "Torpedo Junction." The blast ripped a hole in the ship from below the waterline to the top deck. The engine room was instantly flooded. Crewmen, who were not scalded to death by steam escaping from broken pipes and the ship's boiler, were drowned. Hundreds of troops in the flooded lower compartments were drowned, or washed out to the frigid waters. In less than a minute, the *Dorchester* lost way, and listed on a 30-degree angle. Troops on deck searched for life jackets in panic, clung to rails, saw overloaded life boats overturn in the turgid water, and leaped overboard as a last desperate hope for life.

Of the 900 troops and crew on board, two-thirds ultimately died. *Dorchester* survivors told of the wild pandemonium on board when it was hit and began sinking. Many men had not slept in their clothes and life vests as ordered because of the heat in the crowded

quarters below. There was panic, fear, terror; death was no abstraction but real, immediate, seemingly inescapable.

The four Chaplains acted together to try bring some order to the chaos, to calm the panic of the troops, to alleviate their fear and terror, to pray with and for them, to help save their lives. The Chaplains passed out life jackets, helping those too panicked to put them on correctly, until the awful moment when there were no more life jackets to be given out.

It was then that a most remarkable act of heroism, courage, faith, and love took place: Each of the four Chaplains took off his life jacket, and, knowing that act made death certain, put his life jacket on a soldier who didn't have one, refusing to listen to any protest that they should not make such a sacrifice. They continued to help the troops until the last moment. Then, as the ship sank into the raging sea, the four Chaplains linked hands and arms, and could be seen and heard by the survivors praying together, singing hymns, joined together in faith, love, and unity, as they sacrificed their lives so "*that others might live.*"

The few survivors testified to the selfless act of the four Chaplains: "*The ship started sinking and as I left the ship, I looked back and saw the chaplains with their hands clasped, praying for the boys. They never made any attempt to save themselves, but they did try to save the others. I think their names should be on the list of "The Greatest Heroes' of this war,"* said Grady Clark.

"*I saw all four chaplains take off their life belts and give them to soldiers who had none. The last I saw of them they were still praying, talking, and preaching to the soldiers,"* attested survivor Thomas W. Myers Jr.

"*It is impressed clearly in my mind that these chaplains demonstrated unsurpassed courage and heroism when they willingly gave their life belts to four enlisted men, who, because of the utter confusion and disorder, had become hysterical,"* testified John Garey.

These testimonies, taken from author Dan Kurzman's book *No Greater Glory: The Four Immortal Chaplains and the Sinking of the Dorchester in World War II*, are but some of the sworn statements of survivors to Congress, which awarded the Four Chaplains an unprecedented "Congressional Medal of Valor" in 1961. Earlier, in 1944, they were awarded Purple Hearts and the Distinguished Service Cross. They did not receive the Medal of Honor because of restrictions which limits that award to combatants.



In 2004, delegates to The American Legion National Convention representing 2.7-million wartime veterans, voted to support making an exception and awarding the Medal of Honor to the Four Chaplains. At the dedication of the Chapel of the Four Chaplains in 1951, then-President Harry S. Truman said their sacrifice reflected the fact that *"the unity of our country is a unity under God."* *"This interfaith shrine will stand through long generations to teach Americans that as men can die heroically as brothers so should they live together in mutual faith and good will,"* President Truman said. May the God the Four Chaplains served bless and keep them; and may the nation they so heroically served always remember and honor them. ❖

**TRIBUTE OF HONOR
MEMORIAL HONOREE**



PFC ROBERT L. ORZECOWSKI
H&S Co, 3rd BN, 26th Marines
Iwo Jima Survivor

(Honored by Robert D.Orzechowski, son)



**TRIBUTE OF HONOR
MEMORIAL HONOREE**



PFC MILTON NIELSON
E-2-27

Iwo Jima Survivor

(Honored by Janice Pouncey, Daughter)



**TRIBUTE OF HONOR
MEMORIAL HONOREE**



PFC THOMAS BEGAY
Navajo Code Talker – Iwo Survivor
H&S Co 27th Marines 5th Signal Co
Chosin Reservoir - Army 7th Infantry Division

(Honored by FMDA Officers & Directors)



**TRIBUTE OF HONOR
MEMORIAL HONOREE**



LtCol JOHN A. BUTLER
CO 1/27 5th MarDiv
KIA March 5, 1945

(Honored by Morey, Clint, & John Butler, sons)





Warren Musch RIP - October 25, 1921 –July 27, 2022

FMDA members Penny Paulette, Debbi Fowler, Bob and Carmie Fletcher and Phyllis and Jack Schaffer attended the two day full Military Memorial Services for the Association’s long time member and leader, Warren Musch. The WWII Marine who had served as an Intelligence Officer on Iwo Jima had remained in touch with his brothers-in-arms as a member of the Fifth Marine Division Association, and had been a past president and reunion host, treasurer, board member, and active member until he was no longer able to travel. At that time, friends visited Mr Musch in Illinois, at his beloved Breezy Hill Farm, and later at an assisted living home in Springfield, most recently for his 100 ½ birthday. *(photo above right) (At left: Musch with son Randal)*



The Marine Corps League and the Masons attended the Memorial Services in ten fold to celebrate the life of this community leader who had received recognition for his pioneering No-Till farming methods, taught Biological Science and Math at a local Junior High, and was active in the First Presbyterian Church and Masonic Lodge, and Kiwanis Club. ❖

Don Basilone 1930- 2022 - Semper Fidelis, Marine.



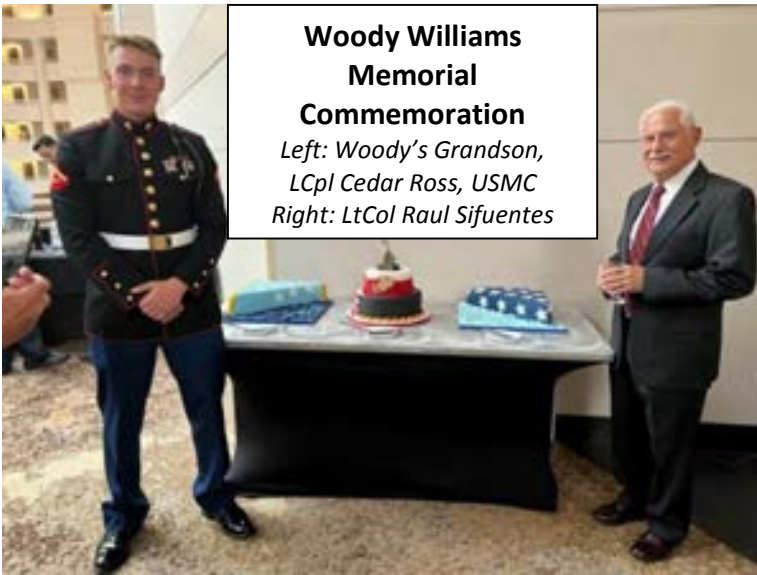
Don Basilone, brother of Medal of Honor recipient John Basilone, passed away on August 13, 2022 at age 92. He was the youngest of the ten Basilone children, and had himself joined the Marine Corps in 1948, serving overseas during the Korean War.



In June Mr. Basilone had attended the christening of the U.S.S. John Basilone (DDG 122), an Arleigh Burke class 509-foot guided-missile destroyer. where he met the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, Sergeant Major Black. *(pictured above at right; above left: Don Basilone with Bonnie Haynes and John Butler at the 2014 FMDA Reunion in Tampa, FL)*

Don Basilone’s brother, Gunnery Sgt. John Basilone. was awarded the Medal of Honor for heroism while defending Henderson Field against a fierce assault by a 3,000-strong Japanese force during the Battle of Guadalcanal in 1942. The New Jersey resident returned home to a hero’s welcome and was sent on a War Bond tour. But he asked to rejoin his troops and was killed on D-Day of the invasion of Iwo Jima in February 1945. He was awarded the Navy Cross posthumously for heroism that day.

Don Basilone and others at the christening ceremony spoke of John Basilone's patriotism, dedication, and bravery. That included his insistence on returning to combat instead of staying safe for the remainder of the war. “He really wanted to go back,” Donald Basilone said in a statement read by his niece. ❖



Woody Williams Memorial Commemoration

Left: Woody's Grandson, LCpl Cedar Ross, USMC
Right: LtCol Raul Sifuentes

By Art Sifuentes

On July 14, 2022, Senator Tom Cotton from Arkansas hosted the Iwo Jima Association of America to view Woody William’s casket lying in state at the Capitol. Although invited attendance was initially limited, IJAA was fully represented by President/CEO-MajGen David Bice; Director, Laura Leppert; Secretary, Linda Griffin; and Executive Director, LtCol Raul A. Sifuentes.

Present during the viewing was Ms. Becky Mackie, Executive VP and COO of the National WWII Museum. Brent Casey, Director of the Woody Williams Foundation, and Woody’s Grandson, LCpl Cedar Ross, USMC, were also in attendance; both are scheduled to participate in the 2023 Reunion of Honor on Iwo Jima.❖



Marines and Flamethrowers and “Zippo” Tank

During the “island hopping” campaigns, Marines were notorious for their use of flamethrowers and napalm. Napalm wasn’t used solely as an incendiary dropped from airplanes. It was also used in the flamethrowers because it had 10 times the duration of other gelled fuels and three times the range. Speaking to the weapon’s effectiveness: “It saved lives

because it did not require men to go into caves, which were all booby trapped and promised certain death to all who entered.” Although they were incredibly effective in combat, flamethrower operators were a huge target to the Japanese and suffered a 92 percent casualty rate. ❖

To the Marines on the ground, the Sherman M4A3 medium tank equipped with the Navy Mark I flame thrower seemed to be the most valuable weapon employed in the battle of Iwo Jima. The division's final action report stated that the flame tank was "the one weapon that caused the Japs to leave their caves and rock crevices and run." Unfortunately, the modification team had only sufficient time and components to modify eight tanks with a Mark 1 flame system; four each went to the 4th & 5th Tank Battalions on Iwo Jima.



(Col Joseph Alexander “Marines in Seizure of Iwo”) ❖

Last Muster: Never To Be Forgotten



NAME	UNIT	CITY	DOD
John DeGANNARO	H-13	Altoona, PA	8-13-2022
Raymond A. HOLZWART	Corsair pilot -3 rd Marine Air Wing, Group 31	St Pete, FL	12-4-2021
Marvin D. VERONEE	US Navy Gunfire liaison officer - USS Doyen	Johns Island, SC	8-7-2018
Charles E. RUFF	A-1-28	OregonHouse, CA	10-19-2012
Louis P. PARE	5 th Service	Brewer, ME	12-24-2012
Russell E. JUECK	HQ-1-13 (Staff Sgt)	Upland, CA	4-13-2005
Richard J. GALVIN	HS-2-13	Carol Stream, IL	11-30-2019

A Quilt In Tribute to Al Nelson



Author Mark Carlson's book *Flying on Film* chronicles the 100 year history of aviation in the movies. Airplanes and motion pictures were born within a year of one another. While Hollywood's actors and directors learned the art of making movies, the aircraft industry and pilots learned how to conquer the sky; airplane movies helped sell box office tickets, and the movies helped promote aviation. In peace and war, the airplanes and motion pictures have become a part of American culture.



The US Military cooperated fully with the motion picture industry in films such as *Flying Leathernecks*. Filmed entirely on location at Camp Pendleton and El Toro Marine bases in California, the film also makes great usage of color wartime footage. Tons of sand and ground coral were used to cover the Camp Pendleton runways alongside a complete 1942-era airfield set. To further disguise the arid southern California region, hundreds of palm trees and jungle foliage were planted around the location. More than forty Marine fighters from two training squadrons were brought in from El Toro Marine Air Base in Lake Forest, California. Marines from Pendleton provided technical advice and extras for the film.

(Above right: 3-War career Marine Tanker Al Nelson with John Wayne on the set of Flying Leathernecks. During filming, Wayne liked to hang out with the enlisted troops, and after each day's work, Nelson was assigned to drive him to the NCO club. Although Wayne grew up in Southern California, he was born in Iowa. He and Nelson, an Iowa native, formed a bond while filming. Nelson was onboard to drive tanks on the set.)

After his retirement, having been widowed, in later life Nelson moved into the Burlington home of his daughter Cheryl Kozak. He had become a member of the Hamilton-Walter Marine Corp League Detachment 616, and was also a longtime member of the 5th Marine Division Association.

This past May, his daughter Cheryl made a quilt for a FMDA Reunion fund-raiser. The quilt brought in \$500 in raffle tickets. Half of the raised money was donated to each of the Marine organizations in memory of her Dad. Kozak said, "Dad would have been very proud to help both his beloved groups."

(Right: League Commandant Todd Lange accepting a donation from Cheryl Kozak and Cindy Fitch, daughters of Al Nelson.) ❖



FMDA Reunion quilt raffle drawing winner Terri Huffhines(l) with Cheryl Kozak (r)

What Makes a Quilt So Special? "Surely, when the final stitch is entered and the needle laid to rest, only a quilter can know the feeling of pride soaring within her soul. She has the contentment of knowing that a long, hard journey has come to an end. She has conquered a challenge, and through her own patience and endurance, has created a loving work of art. It may well live on long after she has finished her walk upon this earth. Perhaps what makes a quilt so special, is the pride a quilter knows... that deep in her heart she knows... some distant future generation might gaze upon her quilt, or touch its fragile threads, and still feel the love and care that she has sewn in every stitch." ❖
(by Debbie Anderson Searles)

THE FOLLOWING SEVEN PAGES
(pages 27-33) include more photos
from our memorable 72nd Annual FMDA Reunion
in San Diego, California, May 11-15, 2022.

Opportunity To Get Together At Heart of Reunion

It seems if you just bring everyone together in one place and provide a big enough hospitality room, you will have a successful Fifth Marine Division Association reunion. After all, the opportunity to get together, swap stories, reminisce, share a meal, make new connections, and honor heroes and patriots now gone is really at the heart of each year's gathering.

by Vanessa Faurie



Below: Kathy Tinsley leading Auction; Above: Ken Brown with Ivan Hammond; Right: Skip Werthmuller with Juan Montano; Below right: Leighton Willhite at Recruit Depot





Clockwise from top left:
Wiley Verstappen with Dorothy Jillson; Elliott and Barbara Harris; Julie Licari with Tessa; Bill Baumann; Marshmallow roast on Mission Bay Beach; Lynn Payton and Claudia Hammond at Mopar Ranch





l to r-top to bottom: Brillo Licari; Nora Gardiner with Cheryl Mach; Bruno Gardiner; Steve Lopardo with Ivan Hammond; John Butler with Patrick Scott; Color Guard; Tom Huffhines





Top left: Todd Overgard with Glenn and Rita Christiansen; Jimmie Watson with Wiley Verstappen on Beach;
 Below: Col Anthony, Zach Wood, and Sgt Major Boutwell; Karen Campbell with Kathy Painton at registration desk.



TRIBUTE OF HONOR
 MEMORIAL HONOREE

The BUTLER FAMILY
 For their dedication to FMDA
 (Honored by Valerie Leman, friend)


The Sweethearts of Swing

The best Andrews Sisters Tribute around

May 14, 2022
The 72nd Annual FMDA Reunion
San Diego, California

The Sweethearts of Swing are a talented trio of singers who have captured note for note the unique style and harmonies of America's most popular female singing group, *The Andrews Sisters*.

They brought the familiar songs from the era of the wartime years in true USO Show fashion. Entertaining with direct contact with the audience, they genuinely had a great time on stage and interacting with our Iwo Jima vets.

The event was brought to FMDA's Saturday night banquet through the generosity of Ron Verstappen. ❖



Sample Song List

- Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy
- Oh Johnny, Oh Johnny
- Bei Mir Bist Du Shoen
- Apple Blossom Time
- Straighten Up and Fly Right
- Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree
- Rum and Coca-Cola
- Hold Tight
- Accentuate the Positive
- Chatanooga Choo Choo
- Beat Me Daddy
- Shoo Shoo Baby
- Lullaby of Broadway



Left to right, top to bottom
"Andrew Sisters" with Ken
Brown, George Boutwell,
Charles Cram, Ivan
Hammond





Top, left to right, "Andrew Sisters" with Al Jennings, George Puterbaugh Bottom, "Andrew Sisters" with Carlo Romano; Kathy Tinsley dancing with Al Jennings



Member News & Notices



FMDA member Edward Mahoney Recognized at Congressional Veteran Commendation Ceremony

In October 2022, Ed Mahoney, of Sun City Center, was chosen as one of the 2022 Honorees residing in Florida's 16th Congressional District to be acknowledged for their exceptional military and community service. His two sons, one of whom was an Army Vietnam veteran, the other a former Marine and ATF agent, came to see their father honored.

Mahoney served in the 3rd Marine Division, 9th Regiment, 3rd BN, Weapons Company 37mm Anti-tank guns, and fought on Bougainville, Guam, and Iwo Jima.



(Above & right: Ed Mahoney with Congressman Buchanan)

Family of Dr Craig Leman Sends Flag to Obon Society for Repatriation.

Valerie Leman displays a beautifully scripted Japanese Battle Flag that her father, Dr Craig B. Leman, brought back from the Pacific Theater. The beautiful Japanese script is the following poem rather than the usual best wishes from family members to the soldier (Poem below is abridged)

(below: Valerie Leman, daughter of Lt Craig Leman, 27th Replacement Draft, Platoon Leader H-3-26)

故郷の空 昔とは
The sky over my homeland in old times
雪の奈久 晴れて
No snow was there and it was sunny
日の下 of the しるし
Impressions under the Sun
二千六百年
The Imperial year of 2600 (1940)
月移山影改
The moon transfers shadows of mountains afresh
春来晓季
When Spring comes, it is season of dawn
夏(風来集青
When Summer wind comes, all the greens come up together
秋涼黄菊発
Autumn is cool as it brings yellow chrysanthemum
冬寒白雪飛
Winter is cold as white snow flies



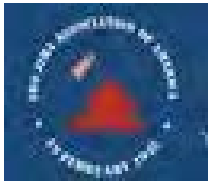
Happy 247th Birthday, 2022, to the U.S. Marine Corps Throughout the world on 10 November, Marines celebrate the birth of their Corps and its proud and illustrious history. On that date in 1775, the Continental Marines were established. But it was not until 1921 that the 13th Commandant, Gen. John A. Lejeune, issued an Order making the celebration official. The order summarized the history, mission, and tradition of the Corps. It further directed that all Marines each year on 10 November honor the founding of the Marine Corps. Soon after, Marine commands began to not only honor the birthday, but celebrate it with luncheons, balls, and cake cuttings.

Ray Elliott's 'Wild Hands' named VFW magazine Staff Pick



Check out the November/December 2022 issue of VFW magazine and its well-read Book Corner section on page 46. This issue's Staff Pick is Ray Elliott's novel, "Wild Hands Toward the Sky." The feature highlights a photo of the cover and a brief synopsis of the book. The longtime national magazine published by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States with a circulation of 1.3 million regularly shares select books from authors who are VFW members. The subject matter must relate to the military or veterans.

Wild Hands Toward the Sky was Elliott's first novel and is set during and after World War II in the rural Midwest. A young boy whose father has been killed in the war is drawn to the other men around his home who returned from battle. Through spending time and talking with them, as well as his stoic-but-kind uncle who was pressured to remain working on the homefront to support the war effort, he learns their hard-earned lessons about life, responsibility, duty and honor. ❖



Iwo Jima Association of America (IJAA) Symposium

All members of the Fifth Marine Division Association are invited to attend the 78th Anniversary of the Battle for Iwo Jima at the Crystal City Hilton Hotel in Arlington, VA, on 16–18 February, 2023. (see <https://www.iwojimaassociation.org>)

The Iwo Jima Association of America (IJAA) is dedicated to preserving and perpetuating the history of the battle for Iwo Jima and other Pacific Islands. IJAA sponsors two educational and historical symposiums, in the Washington DC locale and on the island of Guam. The symposium on Guam includes the "Reunion of Honor" memorial service on Iwo Jima, jointly held with the Iwo Jima Association of Japan (IJAJ). (For information on the February meeting in D.C., Contact Art Sifuentes, IJAA Executive Director, rsifuentes@iwojimaassociation.org or cell (703) 963-6895



A Special Salute to Mary Virginia Pittman-Waller

Thanks for all the ongoing boots-on-the-ground assistance in San Antonio, helping plan for the upcoming October Reunion!!!

A seventh generation Texas American, Mary Virginia is deeply involved with military organizations of all branches. She joined the Fifth Marine Division Association and attended our reunion in San Antonio in 2016. She is a member of the Battle of the Bulge Association, to remember and honor her own late father, Dr. James E. McCormick Pittman of Utopia, Texas, who served as a US Army (Colonel) medical officer during the Normandy Invasion and the Battle of the Bulge. She is also a National Director of the Navy League of the United States and Navy League Austin and is involved with bringing young Navy Cadets together with men from the Greatest Generation.

Mary Virginia works as a wounded warrior medical advocate, and in 2006 she organized "MVP's Welcome Home Wounded Warriors Initiative USA" to honor and help the Warrior Transition Battalion soldiers and Marines with severe cases of PTSD and TBI. MVP's mission is to serve wounded warriors from the hospital bed forward, to defy depression and reconnect their productive lives back into American society. ❖

↔ 2023 Reunion Help ↔

The San Antonio Reunion Committee is asking members to send any donations of Marine Corps or WWII themed items for the Saturday post-Business Meeting Raffle/Auction to FMDA, PO Box 728, Weatherford, TX 76086. Or bring them with you to Texas in October. As she did in last year's San Diego reunion, Kathy Tinsley will organize and conduct the Raffle. (619)770-0257 – finally@cox.net



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FIFTH MARINE DIVISION ASSOCIATION
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 WEATHERFORD, TEXAS 76086
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All donations are tax deductible - 501(c)3 non-profit & all-volunteer organization



5th Marine Division Association - Membership and Donation Form

Mail to: 5th Marine Division Association, P.O. Box 728, Weatherford, TX 76086

New Annual or Life Membership **OR** **Renewal** of Annual Membership (*Annual dues are through Dec 31st*)

Name: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Email _____

Dues (please check):

- () Annual\$ 25
- () New Lifetime (Age 64 & under)... \$150
- () New Lifetime (Age 65-79)\$100
- () New Lifetime (Age 80 & over).....\$ 50

Donation:

() General Fund\$ _____

TOTAL\$ _____

(Please make checks payable to FMDA)

US Marine **Other Service** **Iwo Vet** **Vietnam Vet** **Other War Vet** _____

Division _____ Regiment _____ Battalion _____ Company _____ Platoon _____

Legacy Name & rank of your Veteran _____

Vet's Div. _____ Reg. _____ Bn. _____ Co. _____ Plt _____ Your Relationship _____

Associate (*Historian or other interested person who is not a veteran or related to a veteran*)