



POST SOLANT AMITY

And the Members of "G" Company, 2nd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment



Volume 4, Issue 2

June 2006

Reflection provides little relief and a lingering question *Trevor Davies*



Shortly after receiving our charter for the New England Chapter of the Second Marine Division Association, Bob Roberts informed us that

the National Staff would like to hold a National Convention here in Massachusetts within the next three years as of then. This was then 1993. Neither Marty Flaherty, Bob "Whiskey" Wuschke or myself had ever undertaken anything of this magnitude and we then realized that we had our work cut out for us.

After being contacted by the national organization and advised of their request, we took this information to the floor of our next meeting and quickly put together a convention committee which sent us all scurrying in different directions, as we all had chores to follow up on. After a year of many committee meetings and making contacts with different hotels, etc., we finally informed

National that we had settled on The Sheraton of Danvers in Danvers, MA. National then sent a forward party ahead to meet up with us and to look over the hotel, secure room rates, tours and day trips, etc. Everything was fine with them and they locked on for the Second Marine Division Association National Convention to be held on September 14, 15, 16 and 17 of 1997. Everyone was happy.

Convention time rolled around and a great time was had by all hands and their ladies. Many trips and tours were taken, lots of Boston baked beans were consumed along with New England clam chowder, lobsters, fish and chips, fried clams, scrod and codfish.

And, what a cross section of Marine veterans were at the convention! We met Marines from every state in the union. Veterans from WWII to the, then, more recent Persian Gulf War. It was a great time, to say the very least, and they were a really great bunch of Marines.

During the convention, Bob Roberts latched onto "Whiskey" and me. Thereafter, we became a

threesome at all functions. Bob liked what our chapter had accomplished in the short time since it had been formed and chartered. He had mentioned this fact to the National Staff on more than one occasion. It was during this time that I had the opportunity to get with Bob alone for some private conversations.

For example, sitting with Bob out in the smoking area of the hotel, I asked him when he was the Sergeant Major for the 2nd Marine Division. He responded by saying that he had been the Division Sergeant Major from 1960-1963 and asked what outfit I was with and I told him I was with G/2/6. Immediately, we then got down to the real business of my interest in his time at Lejeune when I asked him if he remembered Solant Amity I cruise.

He remembered it well and ex-



plained that there were many more Solant cruises after ours. I told Bob that I did not give a rats butt about other episodes ONLY that of Solant Amity I. He smiled and asked me to fire away with my questions. And I did.

I first asked Bob what was the real purpose of Solant Amity I and our [G/2/6] being there. He replied that it was but a Good-Will-People-to-People affair with the intent of showing the flag to the emerging democratic nations of Africa. Impatient with hearing but still more PR stuff, I could no longer contain myself and, mustering about as much political demeanor as I'm commonly recognized as possessing, replied, "Come on Bob, cut the shit and tell me the real reason." He

said he could not divulge much of anything because the information about Solant Amity and much else of the period was still classified TOP SECRET.

I was stunned speechless and recognizing my shock, Bob continued by saying, "Trev, I will say this, you guys were not the only Marines in the area at that time and yours were not the only Navy vessels in the area at that time, either. There were many, many more." With that, and being still near speechless, I thanked Bob for his straight forwardness and we went on enjoying the convention without my ever bringing up the subject again.

Later, I asked "Whiskey" what he thought of Bob's information and was told that I should just let the issue go, "as that time frame was at the height of the Cold War and some things were never going to be released to the general public." However, to this day, I still can't let it go.

More recently, Ed Shea and I discussed the issues related to the period and our involvement in Solant I. Ed suggested that every text of USMC and military history of the last 50 years, in general, virtually ignores (Continued on page 3, column 1)



Grant the wish of a child with a life-threatening medical conditions. Donate to your local chapter of the Make-a-Wish Foundation.

"WITH THE OLD BREED" at Peleliu and Okinawa

Written by Eugene B. Sledge, first for Presidio Press in 1981, copies are now available from Oxford University Press, New York and otherwise via the internet in paperback.

No less a renowned historian and prolific writer than John Keegan wrote of Eugene Sledge's personal account of sacrifice by so many and survival of so few members of Company K, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines. "Among the thousands of soldiers' stories, I am haunted by but one from the Pacific...[Sledge's presentation is] one of the most arresting documents in war literature."

Derived from notes, the accumulation and saving of which being a direct violation of wartime protocol, it was originally conceived with the intention of providing a memoir for his family, that they might grasp some small measure of what his war had been like. Much later, his wife suggested its publication.

He begins, as most writers of the Marine "experience," with boot camp, proceeds then to his infantry training, assignment to K-3-5, and his first contact on the island of Pavuvu [an incredibly horrific combined R&R/training facility deserving, not receiving, a chap-

ter of its own] with troops fresh out of their wartime experience at Cape Gloucester. Thereafter, his literary efforts concentrate on the battles for Peleliu and Okinawa.

What distinguishes his efforts is a concerted effort to concentrate on, not himself and his personal lot but, the plight of the average infantrymen amidst the carnage and "waste" about him:

(Continued. on page 2, column 4)

Trivia Question 1: How did the notorious Marine Corps K-Bar [Kabar] fighting knife derive its name? (See Answer 1, page 4)

Viegues and Pre-Solant Inter-squad Competition

by George Bittoll



You all remember that speck of an island to the east of Puerto Rico that we spent so much time running about on. An abysmal place: hot, humid, with hilly terrain covered with near impenetrable stalks of stuff we called “kunai grass” — the passage up-and-through which made breathing difficult to impossible — and so thick with mosquitoes our cots required netting and “tent city” frequent DDT fog dispersals. With the sides rolled up to provide ventilation, the *now* recognized carcinogen filled our entire living area.

Each of our frequent three month stints in the Caribbean required a BLT to spend a few weeks there to refresh and hone its killing skills.

For most of the first week, your tail would simply drag. Water discipline was tough going. Humping your stuff over hill and dale took a lot out of you, even before you started what might be a full training day of assault practices.

I carried a BAR when in “H” Company during my first half of controlled input. And, it was in early Spring of 1960 that we — the fresh meat — of 2-6 made our first contact with the land of “nada but field mess, live fire problems and late night runs for puntang, on the hill-sides outside Isabella Segunda.”

I hadn't yet developed water discipline. My stamina levels left much to be desired. And, I hurt...a lot. During one absurd assault effort to climb what seemed to be an impossibly HIGH hill, I'd found that when pushing through the tall grass there appeared to be no air. Dehydrated, bone weary and truly dragging I would take two steps and slide at least one backward, all the while trying mightily to suck some air into my lungs. All about me, Marines were struggling with the difficult reality of our situation but kept moving.

With whatever energy remained, we slugged ever-upward toward the “enemy:” the damn hilltop. We'd grab our weapons by the stock and barrel, palms outboard, and raising them over our heads fling the things against the kunai grass,

pushing it away and down. The twenty pounds of my BAR had a distinct advantage here over the trifling weight of a nine pound M1. The grass flattened just enough, so you could advance.

What seemed like twenty years later, we climbed atop the ridge to claim our small victory over nature. Exhausted, it was easy to overlook what it would have been like trying to do battle with a well entrenched and rested enemy at that point, a “something” not really uncommon during combat in any war.

Anyway, it was Viegues where, prior to our setting sail for South America and Africa on Solant Amity I, the Corps saw fit to sharpen the fighting edge of the G-2-6 sword by providing a lot of live fire problems and inter-squad competitions. One in particular comes to mind.

Perhaps you can recall those live-fire and maneuver envelopment exercises we commonly went through. Well, one hot and dusty thirty minute walk from tent city, there was a site set aside for just that purpose. It had two ridge-lines, sitting about three hundred yards apart and parallel to one-another. Between those ridges, the land dipped into a nearly flat but thirty foot depression. Targets were set upon the more distant ridge, a base of rifle and/or BAR fire was exacted upon a presumed emplaced “enemy” while a squad or more troops ran, perpendicular to the line of fire along a well traveled track port or starboard of the down range ridge. When enough manpower accumulated adjacent to the ridge, the troops put about 10 yards between them, hung left (or right) and proceeded in a skirmish line across the knoll. Those laying down the base fire were then expected to direct their rounds to the area forward of the advancing troops.

Well, as life, Solant I and a few folks not paying as close attention to events as they should have been, the Third Squad at the instigation of **Bill Frenz** chose to ignore the standard approach. Instead, led by either Corporal **Greco** or **Cretora**, it was decided to take a different approach. One fraught with catastrophic potential.

The objective of the tactic was to provide a more rapid advance, tak-

(Cont. on page 4, column 3)

“Stuff” on a Shingle (S.O.S.)

(...OLD BREED from pg 1)

So, do you remember your first contact with the fabled S.O.S.? Was it Parris Island or did you “hold out” until your reached Lejeune or perhaps we aboard one of the many ships we shared? And, would you like to be re-introduced or share the delight with family and friends? Thanks to Charlie LaMarr, you can .

Here is the original recipe that Marines have thrived on for more than 200 years. Tried once, you're ever-more addicted.

Gather the following ingredients:

- 1 1/2 pounds lean hamburger
- 2 tablespoons butter/margarine
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 2 tablespoons granulated garlic
- 4 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire
- 2 cups of milk
- Salt and pepper to taste

Brown the meat, then add the margarine/butter stirring the mix thoroughly. Throw in the chopped onions and simmer all until the onions are translucent. [Good Gawd, I'm already drooling.]

Now, add the flour and cook for two to three minutes. Add the garlic, soy and Worcestershire sauces, again mixing thoroughly. Finally, add the milk and stir until all thickens: “VOILA!!!,” you have an USMC treat that can be spread on biscuits, hash browns or toast.

Bon appetite, Marines.

Trivia Question 2: The expression “start with as clean slate” means to forget past actions or mistakes and make a fresh start. From what was the expression derived? (See Answer 2 on page 4)

A blood-soaked dressing was on the side of the dead man's neck. “What a pitiful waste,” I thought. “he can't be a day over seventeen.” I thanked God his mother couldn't see him. The Corpsman held the dead Marine's chin tenderly between the thumb and forefingers of his left hand and made the sign of the cross with his right hand. Tears streamed down his dusty, tanned, grief-contorted face while he sobbed quietly.

Sledge remains but a sensitive observer of the circumstances he shared with those around him. Circumstance, he points out, not to be seen and felt even a few hundred yards behind the front lines. “Circumstances” requiring the light of disclosure and, the endurance of which, forever warranting the respect of people such as you and I.

There is much to be gleaned from his work. But, perhaps, the most frightening point of all is that he was, at seventeen, anyone of us. Indeed, he and we, in our own time, were almost anyone one of our children or grand-children of today or great-great-grand-children of tomorrow

Drawn to the flames of adventure, excitement, revenge for an event like 911, patriotism in general or to escape little more than abject poverty the youth of every nation will, until mankind ceases to exist, find itself enduring...somewhere...the plight of Eugene. B Sledge in 1944-45.



Trivia Question 3: Who was it that said “The bended knee is not a tradition of our Corps.”? (See answer 3 on page 4)

Reflections and Questions (Con’t)

anything between 1958 and 1965. Indeed, one text, Ed insisted, even passed over the Cuban Missile Crisis as being a significant event. Figure that one out!

Still, as WE lived through this period, WE know things the grand authors have overlooked or chosen to ignore. First, “Controlled Input” was designed to see to it that Marine infantry units...all of them...had a 50% cadre force with not less than 15 months of training. We, at Lejeune, were among the first of the lot. However, when putting “G” together for the Solant I episode, the 2nd Battalion was approaching that point when half of our hot and honed instrument of death was to be replaced with Parris Island cannon-fodder. We, part of the Battalion’s cadre element, would have assisted in making them the next cadre force. Instead, more than 100 personnel were swept from adjoining units and made part of “G” Company. Thus, the effectiveness of those other units were reduced by as much as 15%, while WE became the most experienced company in the Battalion. Why? Why would the Corps make such a dramatic exception to the “controlled input” standard? Were our, what proved to be only, two landing presentations that much more demonstrably perfect than would have been the case with a few novices in our midst? I think not.

And all that training on Viegues? What was that all about? Hell, we had been there a number of times in the preceding 15 months. But the training had NEVER been as extensive or quite as intensive as we experienced before leaving for the alleged “Good Will” Cruise to Africa. Nope. Nary a single “Bang, bang you’re dead!” was ever expressed. Everything was done with live ammunition and...to which my ruptured eardrums may attest...explosives.

Even before leaving CONUS, there was rubber boat training at Onslow Beach and the absurdity of “jump training” off of three foot high platforms. All of these events and more leave me perplexed and wondering.

I wonder why, while on the USS Gearing in the Congo basin, we “sat on” submerged Russian subs for days after catching them in the middle of a refueling operation. I wonder what the hell they were doing there. I remember my being damned nervous sitting on those subs and asking myself why the tanker, with supply lines still hanging from its sides, would not answer our semaphore messages.

We’re told: “Reflection is good for the soul.” Well, I need to add “if it provides answers or greater understanding.” That seems not to be the case vis-à-vis my Solant Amity I experience and our time together.

Our Solant Amity was a really GREAT cruise. Yet, one day, before the grim reaper grabs us, perhaps we will learn why we were where we were AND what we MIGHT have been called upon to do in Africa besides “cruise, baby, cruise.”

Trivia Question 4: Much has been made of the heralded exploits of Carlson’s Raiders. But who, in fact, was the CO of the First Raider Battalion? (See answer 4 on page 4)

How KA-BAR Knives Are Made

Making a quality KA-BAR product requires the talent of craftspeople performing dozens of processes with precision and skill. Each knife requires specific manufacturing processes to ensure corrosion resistance, strength, edge holding ability, and an out-of-the-box razor sharp cutting edge. Some of those manufacturing processes are highlighted here:



With a 100 ton press, nearly 9,000 blades a day can be *blanked-out*.

These are then tang stamped to identify the product manufacturer, the country in which it was made, and an item number.

Next they are heat treated in a belt oven, in what is the first of a three step process required in making the stainless steel blades. First, they run through a 70 foot conveyor oven that takes approximately 1 hour to cycle.

The second step requires that they be cryogenically frozen to -120° F to optimize blade performance.

Finally, the blades are tempered for approximately 7 hours in a walk-in oven which enhances steel toughness.



KA - BAR knives feature flat or hollow ground blades. Flat grinds are best for jobs with which there will be great lateral stress. Hollow grinds provide a fine, extremely sharp edge perfect for more delicate tasks.



The novel oval-shaped leather handle is accomplished by compressing leather washers, shaping, coloring and then fastening them on with a pinned-on butt cap.

The butt cap or pommel is attached to the handle of a knife with a steel pin. The pin is inserted into the butt cap, driven part way through the tang, then ground off and painted.



Each KA-BAR knife is subject to a multiple step inspection process before being released for shipping.



The roots of Ka-Bar Cutlery Corporation go back one hundred years!!! After numerous changes in structure, product line and

identity the Ka-Bar product line and assets were sold to Alcas Corporation of Olean, New York in 1996.

In was in 1942 that, soon after the start of WWII, the Union Cutlery Company submitted a Ka-Bar branded knife to the Marine Corps for issue to fighting personnel. Although the original design presented was not up to par, in 1945 the Corps accepted a reworked design and began issuing it as their standard fighting/utility knife.

Then, in 1952, with the Ka-Bar having achieved such a high level of WWII fame, the directors of the company chose to change the corporate name to Ka-Bar Cutlery, Inc., dropping the Union Cutlery name entirely.

Go Ka-Bar.

The Makin Raid

On August 17-18, 1942, a force of 221 Marines from the 2nd Raider Battalion, named “Carlson’s Raiders” for its commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Evans F. Carlson, landed from submarines Nautilus and Argonaut on Butaritari Island, Makin Atoll.

Nobody knew it at the time, but nine Marines had been left behind...tragically left behind and later captured when the rest of the Carlson force withdrew under most difficult circumstances. They were captured later by Japanese reinforcements which mounted out of a nearby island garrison on 18 and 20 August, and a larger group which arrived at Makin on a ship the following day. These Japanese reported that they found 21 Marine bodies, 5 rubber boats, 15 machine guns, 3 rifles, 24 automatic rifles, 350 grenades, and a few other things.”

Initially, the Marines received satisfactory care at the hands of their captors on Makin, and humane treatment continued for nearly a month after they had been moved to Kwajalein.

However, early in October, 1942 Vice Admiral Koso Abe, Marshall Islands Commander, was advised that he need not send these prisoners to Tokyo and that he was to dispose of them as he saw fit.

Abe ordered the Marines beheaded. A native witnessed the executions, and based on his and other testimony in war crimes trials after the war, Abe was convicted of atrocities and hanged at Guam.

Captain Yoshio Obara, Kwajalein Commander who had been ordered to arrange the executions, was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment, and Lieutenant Hisakichi Naiki, also involved in the affair, was sentenced to 5 years in prison.

The submarine Nautilus survived the war while Argonaut was sunk with all hands on January 10, 1943. An Army aircraft witnessed her battle with three destroyers. They saw her bow break water after a severe depth charge attack and receive unrelenting gun fire until she sank with all 105 men and officers.

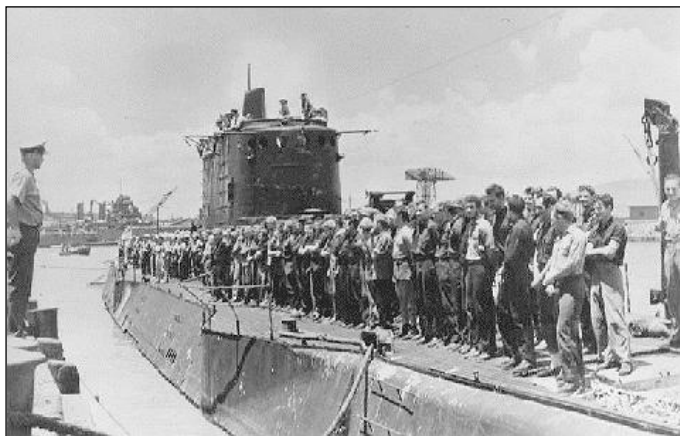
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See the whole story at
SolantAmity.com

The First Marines to Land in Monrovia

HEROES RETURN --Marine raiders line the deck of the U.S. Submarine, from which they conducted their surprise raid on Makin Island, as the ship pulls into Pearl Harbor. Submarine officers who took part in the attack look down from the conning tower as they come into the harbor to receive the "well done" accolade from their Commander-in-chief in the Pacific, Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, USN.



USMC 2nd Raider Battalion, is shown standing on the deck of the USS Argonaut SS 166, returning from their mission to the Gilbert Islands. The Argonaut was later sunk with all hands on January 10, 1943.

What our members been doing since last we published:

Bill Frentz has long been ill. Though weak and nearly always tired now, he continues to resist the most devastating effects of cancer. I ask that you pray for the man.

George Bitsoli expounds on but one of Bill's yesteryear exploits beginning on page two, in an article entitled *Inter-Squad Competition*.

A big public "THANK YOU" to members **George Bitsoli** and **Trevor Davies** for their contributions to this issue.

Ed Hart sailed not once but twice from Jacksonville, FL to Rock Hall, MD bringing first his older boat and then his newer treasure north for the summer and fall.

George Astorga, a former member of Weapon's Platoon [most of whom we've yet to hear from],

more recently came aboard. George and his family live in Cutler Bay, FL. His biography and more, both from and about George can be found on the website.

Your editor, **Ed Shea**, was late in publishing this issue of the Post Solant Amity because he and a FDNY buddy sailed from Port Everglades, FL to Northport Long Island, New York in a 37' Pacific Seacraft sailboat. Two thirds of the journey was done along the coast, as opposed to remaining in the Intra-coastal Waterway.

The cost: fifteen pounds of blubber in nineteen days. I can now attest to the fact that two of the fastest ways to loose weight are: 1) get a divorce and 2) sail 1500 miles on shipping-lane-crossing-over-nighters with a crew of but

(Inter-Squad Competition—con't)
ing advantage of the land's lay.

Gary Fusco and I, along with a third BAR-man, were to *erase* the targets down-range, while **Bill Frentz** leading an assault team set out on the usual approach along that "well traveled path;" exclaiming to the BAR team as he did so "When the time comes, make DAMN sure you fire OVER us."

Then, perhaps mid-way to the ridge-line, Bill and his entourage cut across the open terrain UNDER our barrage of .30 caliber rounds, took up fire positions and laid down rifle fire onto the ridge while the automatic weapons "masters" moved up, joined them and advanced together on the ridge in a frontal assault.

Gawd, we were good! The "enemy" never saw it coming. Caught 'em with their pants down and shot their "paper butts" to shreds.

And, as nothing had been said to Staff NCOs or the Officers about our intentions, they were surprised as well. Yet, not so surprised or disgruntled as to deny our clear superiority: Third Squad won the competition. Ooorah!!

Though, the purists, tactical experts and most certainly a training officer might have found fault with our technique, it worked. And, more than forty years later, it still gives me pleasure to think so.

Trivia Question 5: There were four Raider Battalions. Who commanded the Fourth Raider Battalion? (See Answer 5 on page 4.)

two. Semper fi.

Answers to Trivia Questions:

1) The first USMC Ka-Bar [Kabar] was named and manufactured by the Union Cutlery Company in 1942 and revised in 1945. Its reputation became so respected, the company changed its name to Ka-Bar in 1952. (See how they are made on page 3 of this issue; 2) At one time, a shipboard slate was used to record information for a helm's watch. At the end of the watch, the data was recorded in the deck-log and the slate was "wiped clean" for the next watch; 3) General Alexander A. Vandergrift, USMC, when before the Naval Affairs Committee, 5May46; 4) Lieutenant Colonel. Merritt Edson [Carlson had the 2nd Raider Battalion]; 5) Lieutenant Colonel James Roosevelt, son of the then wartime President.

How to survive a heart attack when alone!!!

I hope you never have to experience this but, if you do, knowing what is to follow could save your own life.

Sometime in your life after boot camp, you may have taken a First Aid or dedicated CPR course. Thus, you've learned the signs of a looming heart attack and what you must do to reduce the likelihood of its' lethality...on someone else.

Well, as many people are alone when they suffer a heart attack and without help of the kind you are prepared to provide, the person whose heart is beating improperly and who begins to feel faint has only about 10 seconds left before losing consciousness.

However, these victims...including yourself...are not entirely without recourse and can help themselves by vigorously coughing over and over again. That's right: vigorous coughing

A deep breath should be taken before each cough, and the cough must be both solar-plexus-deep and prolonged, with an effort equivalent to that required to draw sputum from deep inside ones chest. [Can you remember what you've had to do to clear out your lungs during a nasty chest cold? Do it.]

So, first, a DEEP breath. Then, a VIGOROUS cough, repeated about every two seconds without let-up until help arrives OR until the heart is felt to be beating normally again. If the latter occurs, continue to seek medical assistance.

The DEEP breathing bring volumes of required oxygen into the lungs. Then, as one VIGOROUSLY coughs, the movement squeezes the heart, forcing the blood and the oxygen it is carrying through the circulatory system and the body's oxygen dependent tissue.

The squeezing pressure on the heart also helps it regain normal rhythm. In this way, heart attack victims can get to a hospital. Tell as many other people as possible about this. It could save their lives.

Mailed as a black on white copy, a colorized version can be found at our website.

I hope you've enjoyed this issue. Send in your stories by e-or-snail mail to make for an even better one, next time. Ed Shea