



POST SOLANT AMITY

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



Volume 1, Issue 2

December 2003

Fun, Games and Near Death Experiences

At times, we're preoccupied with the past. While driving, flying, fishing whatever; we'll have flashbacks of small to grander things from yesteryear. Mostly pleasant. But, not always.

For example, I've often thought of a landing operation where I'd just climbed down a cargo net to the deck of an LSVP, grabbed the bottom of the net and, while pulling upon it to maintain tension, a wave lifted the boat about six feet. Horrified, I watched Ron Smith and two others still on the cargo net disappear from view as the LC slammed VERY hard against the ship's hull. For sure, I'd thought, when the boat again lowered and the net reappeared, three very damaged Marines would fall to the deck of the LSVP. Instead and miraculously, they escaped injury.

I remember, too, a live fire problem in Viegues that taught me that I was no longer an invincible teenager. As my squad flanked one of those rolling hills, the 2nd and 3rd squads fired at the full width of its exposed military crest. When some rounds went too far to starboard, past our ears and



Elements of G-2-6 provide a demonstration landing on a Monrovia, Liberia beach on 5 January 1961. For at least one Marine, it was just a bit too realistic.

kicked up soil behind us: mortality loomed.

Looking at old photos can get the juices flowing, as well. For example, consider Charlie Wilson's remarks about the Monrovia Landing:

"The photo of the landing in Liberia shook something loose from my memory bank.

During the landing I was to be

the satchel charge man and had been assured by SSgt. Williams of the 2nd Engineering Battalion that there was nothing to worry about because he was the one to set the charge off from inside the bunker.

Well, as I ran up to the machine gun, placed the charge in front of the bunker, took seven measured steps to the right front of the bunker...a 1/4 pound of TNT blew me 'up and away.'

A corpsmen quickly put me on a litter, then onto a helo which returned me to the ship."

However, Charlie did find an upside to his experience, adding, *"Though, my ears STILL ring. I remember being the first one back to the ship, cleaned up and waiting for you guys and a much deserved liberty."*

Good times, were they? Yes. But hardly without risk, despite there being no official war, police action or tyrants worthy of our nation's attention.

Man vs. Myth: Dade

Golf Company's Weapons Platoon Technical Sergeant Dade, perhaps more commonly remembered as "Gunny" Dade, remains something more of a myth than the man our research has uncovered.

Most recall little more than his reputation for being a bit strange, having been a Raider and bearing an alleged saber wound. From the inquires we made and based in great part from statements made by 1st Platoon's T/Sgt Pelky to Charlie Wilson, the following conclusions about Dade are drawn.

He came, like so many Marines both before and since, from an impoverished and likely dysfunctional background and lived a particularly frugal existence even within the Corps, suffering the reputation for NEVER leaving the barracks, drinking or spending his monies on undeserving women. The penny pinching it seems was because of a lifelong desire to pursue an extended and presumed expensive education in Britain! His objective: a second career, teaching.

He was regarded by enlisted and officer's alike as being very intelligent. His quarters contained texts recognized as "literature" and not the usual fair found in the hands of us *Misguided Children*.

He took a great deal of pride in his having been a Marine Raider and carefully maintained an ascot in his footlocker that bore the skull and stars on a blue (Cont: pg 2, col 1)

MERRY CHRISTMAS, MARINES!!!

Latest and Last Leon Uris novel is no "Battle Cry"

Following the June death of Leon Uris, there was much made of his latest and last release, *O'Hara's Choice*. Available in September, if you've not read it, you've missed little.

Since publishing "Battle Cry" in 1953, Uris continued to turn out commercially successful novels. Most became similarly successful movies as well, for both big and little screens. Among them: *Mila 18*, *Exodus*, *Topaz* and *QB-VII*.

Touted as "a love story involving Marine Corps history," *O'Hara's Choice* falls short of being much of a love story, skims over vast

portions of the near one-hundred year historically stressful period for the Corps, and gives short shrift to the complex nature of political forces that would have disbanded the Marine Corps entirely in the late 1800s.

O'Hara, is a post-Civil War Marine private and self-educated son of a deceased and both highly decorated and renowned Sergeant Major. Desired and ardently sought after by the daughter of a wealthy Chesapeake merchant, he finds himself moving through the ranks of Corporal to Lieutenant to Captain at virtually warp speed and the keystone to ensuring the

Corps' continued survival and the development of the amphibious landing techniques of WWII.

Torn between devotion to Corps and country and his "feelings" for the willful, intelligent, powerful and ahead-of-her time late model Industrial Revolution feminist, Amanda, O'Hara must ultimately make a choice between them.

Despite providing dysfunctional family histories, a bit of anti-Semitism, anti-papacy and lesbianism, an unexpected late model Industrial Revolution feminist, Amanda, O'Hara must ultimately make a choice between them. Despite providing dysfunctional family histories, a bit of anti-Semitism, anti-papacy and lesbianism, an unexpected late model Industrial Revolution feminist, Amanda, O'Hara must ultimately make a choice between them.

Solant Amity — G-2 6 Association
19 Orchard Avenue
Saint James, New York 11780
631-766-2500

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The First Marines in Monrovia

Hawaii's Big Island Wasn't Always a Vacation Spot

Today, most Pacific islands are thought of as vacation bonanzas, including former hellholes like Saipan. Few recognize even Hawaii wasn't always a big deal. In 1942 you could, for five cents, obtain a locker and swimsuit, more privacy than one could imagine on a area only 1/3 its present width and NEVER see a woman at Waikiki Beach.

Indeed, Hawaii's WWII *Big Island* was little more than two mountains, sugarcane fields, poverty and a large cattle ranch replete with Hawaiian cowboys. Situated in the northwest region of Hawaii, the Parker Ranch occupies 175,000 acres of cattle grazing land and provides up to 35,000 Angus and Charolais cattle to world markets. At its heart sits Waimea with an elevation of 2670 feet and an average temperature

of 64°F, where forces of the United States were gathered and trained in preparation for ending WWII.

In March '42, the Army built what was to be a vast camp on 50,000 acres of the ranch, much of it on the most inhospitable areas of the complex. Though quickly providing essential infrastructure, thereafter, construction slowed to a snail's pace. And, despite ever accumulating USMC battle weary and replacement forces, Camp Waimea still lacked sorely needed tents and Quonset huts into late December of 1943, when the *survivors* of Tarawa arrived.

With the wounded taken to Oahu, with few exceptions, the balance of the 2nd Marine Division proceeded by ship from the very atoll beaches of Betio to Hilo, located on the north-central coast of Hawaii. Their transit had been ardu-

ous and offered little sleep in the crowded transports. Most had stripped themselves of their utilities, that smelled still of Tarawa's 6,000 dead. Thus, they disembarked at Hilo exhausted and without packs, equipment or uniforms. Trucks and narrow gauge railcars carried them the remaining 65 miles to Waimea's—given the tropical horrors of Tarawa—"chilly" environment.

There, a shopkeeper remembers



staring in awe at one of the new and quite young arrivals standing before him in a t-shirt and rearpocketless, torn and dirty dungarees saying, "I need clothes." The gaunt Marine and hundreds like him then bought out the store's supply of clothes and blankets. Those to follow were not so fortunate. And, still worse, when reaching the base—later renamed Camp Tarawa—they found un-pitched tents stacked in a field, little drinking water, no blankets, no sleeping bags nor, not uncharacteristically, a *Welcome Marine Infantry* sign.

After months of chilling temperature, ice cold showers from melt-

ing mountain snow, the replenishment of manpower and materials, training began in the Hamakua cane fields and black sand beaches of Maui's Maalaea Bay, in preparation for battle on *Island X*. By May '44 and *ready*, the troops of the 2ndMarDiv boarded ships and were back into the fray that was WWII.

Three months later, the 5th MarDiv arrived. Some say they seemed to be "younger and more prone to laugh," than the Tarawa Marines. By then, townsfolk had established hamburger stands and newspaper kiosks. Life, if not training conditions, had become more bearable. Socialization improved. One gal, at the time, remembers speaking to a young man thought to be a local Parker Ranch cowboy and learns to her surprise that the Marine was an American Indian. That was 1944 multiculturalism, at its best.

The troops scaled mountains with names like Pu'u Ula'ula and Buster Brown. They carried out live fire problems on the lava desert outskirts of town and left Hawaii by Christmas of '44.

The 2nd Marines Division had gone on to Saipan, Tinian, Guam and finally the killing fields of Okinawa. The 5th Division? Well, it and that American Indian, Ira Hayes, had but one more battle to confront before war's end: Iwo Jima.

Camp Tarawa closed in 1947.

Dade - Continued from page 1 -

background logo. Yet, despite his regard for the ascot, he had a obvious disdain for wearing rated ribbons and medals, to the consternation of officers...all the way to at least regimental command.

According to "informed sources," Dade's obsession with NOT wearing his medals, including at least one Silver Star, stemmed from his earlier days in the Corps. For, as a youthful mutt with a reputation for daring-do and the medals to prove it, he was regularly hauled in by MPs, who presumed his array of fruit salad was unwarranted. So, he stopped wearing them, long before coming to the 6th Marines.

The man was a study in contradictions. While apparently proud of his past and of the Corps, he could one moment be a stickler for tradition and rank's privileges and

then, the very next moment, violate direct orders.

When the squad leaders of the 1st Platoon were provided single cots, Dade railed at their advantage and, at times when the squad leaders were not around, on three separate occasions, he arranged for the single bunks to be returned to their original bunk-bed status!

Now, contrast that behavior with his failure to wear his ribbons for even IG inspections and, on another occasion when everyone was directed to wear newly approved "Satene" fabric uniforms, Dade showed up at the company's very next formation in a pair of "never before seen, thoroughly bleached out, WWII issued herringbone 'knee pocket' trousers." Oh, yah and Ooorah!

He just reveled in busting the *man's* shoes, on a regular basis, and otherwise getting away with a variety of petulant behaviors.

So, hopefully, we've managed to provide something of a personality profile and limited history of the man that was "Gunny" Dade. And, until we hear from the source himself or others still closer to the man than any we've spoken too, this will remain the definitive study. Though, there remains but one more thing. That scar he bore. The one on the side of his closely cropped head? Well, the complete story explains, at last, how he managed to survive the episode.

Yes, he did engage in a hand-to-sword conflict with a Japanese major, who did take a swipe at his head with that infamous sword. Dade's response? Well, understandably *upset*, he enthusiastically strangled the man to death.

(*Your comments and any more information you might provide are solicited. Just send it in.*)

Our "pirate at heart," **Ed Hart**, has left Havre De Grace, MD aboard his freshly appointed ketch for points south. His initial route, along the Intracoastal Waterway, has an open-ended itinerary, though Ed toys with the idea of scooting off the coast to drop anchor at the now unused beaches off Viegues. Man, talk about recapturing a moment!

God speed, fair winds and warm weather to you, Marine.

Merry Christmas, Marines!

Additional copies of the newsletter can be obtained at our website, where on page one you will find a link to a downloadable version. I hope you've enjoyed this second effort. Please, send in your stories by e-or-snail mail to make for an even better next issue.

Semper Fi;
Ed Shea