



POST SOLANT AMITY

With Former Members of "G" Company, 2nd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment



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New Look Marines *by James Brady*

Media critics ask, and justifiably so, why no one in Washington ever bothered to learn anything about its history, culture and society, or even read some T.E. Lawrence, before we invaded the old Mesopotamia (now Iraq) back in the spring of 2003? Well, someone's finally boning up on the place, not some egg-head think tank. But the U.S. Marine Corps.

The popular image of the Marines is that of guys who run toward the guns, kick butt and get the job done, both in "good" wars like World War II and "lousy" wars like Iraq and Vietnam. Marines are rarely accused of being the deepest of thinkers. Thus, while condescending, maybe a modern image should be crafted.

I was in Quantico in mid-07 for a reunion of Marine officers who graduated from the Basic School in 1951. The Basic School, then and now, is where newly commissioned Marine second lieutenants are taught the fundamentals of their trade in a course that lasts six months. It's tough physi-

cally, rather demanding mentally and pumps out about 1,700 young officers, men and women, per year to be sent off to the infantry, artillery, tanks, engineering, communications and other specialties, eventually to combat and the wars.

But now there's an exciting, perhaps brilliant, program that's been added to the curriculum of each Basic School class. Ret. Brig. Gen. George Bartlett, a "mustang" from one of those '51 Basic classes, told me about it. Bartlett, a one-time sergeant, served in World War II, Korea and Vietnam and he put me in touch with one of those men who run this Marine Corps' "new look."

They're part of the Marine Corps Training and Education Command, situated in a nondescript industrial building on a back street in Quantico. And it was there that I spoke with Deputy Director, Barak A. Salmoni, Ph.D.

According to him, the thing began in August 2005, and since then

Trivia Question 1: Where, on the east coast, is the Museum for the Congressional Medal of Honor located? [See page 4, answer 1]

every lieutenant going through the Basic School takes a course called Advanced Operational Cultural Learning. Salmoni says they've divided the world into a number of areas "likely to engage in anything short of high-density combat." Young officers are asked to choose three regions of interest to them and then the Marine Corps assigns them a single region or sub-region.

From that point on, throughout their career, he or she will be required to continue survey studies and still deeper instruction about the region, its culture, languages, religious factions and history.

First lieutenants and captains, will move through CDs and DVDs to more intense learning processes. For captains and majors, the language requirements will be ramped up. And as majors and lieutenant colonels, the language capacity will be tested and taught even more rigorously.

By the fall of '07, the program will extend beyond the officers. Sergeants upon re-enlistment, will be assigned a region and begin taking the same instruction as captains and majors. "Five years down the road," says Dr. Salmoni "a Marine battalion will have a commanding officer and a gunnery sergeant

Trivia Question 2: When was legislation enacted to prohibit the unauthorized manufacture of the Congressional MOH? [See page 4, answer 2]

who've both mastered skills" useful in a given area.

According to Salmoni: "Africa is huge, with several sub-regions. Then there's Western Asia, South Asia, Southwest Asia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines."

Though the program is Barak Salmoni's *vision*, its head is a retired colonel, Jeffrey Bearor. He and Salmoni "started this thing together."

Was Barak a Marine himself? "No," he said, "though I grew up at 29 Palms (a California base), I had glaucoma and the Marines didn't take me. So, I took sloppy seconds and got myself a Ph.D." Then, returning to the larger subject at hand, "We're building the courses now," said Salmoni. "But you have to wonder: If we already had a military force that knew something about the tribal and religious feuds, the history and language, the Sunni-Shiite hatreds and just how nervous the presence of Kurds make neighboring Turkey, perhaps our Iraq adventure would not be so screwed up. [Editor's Note: *But a year later and not the "prescribed" five, we're doin' just fine, sans text books and linguini linguists. Haruumph!!!*]



MERRY CHRISTMAS MARINES

I'll bet you didn't know that...

The first military decoration formally authorized by the American government to be worn as a badge of honor, the Medal of Honor, was created by an act of Congress in December 1861. However, Senator J. W Grimes of Iowa, the chairman of the Senate Naval Committee, proposed that the medal, similar to the Victoria Cross of England and the Iron Cross of Germany, be given to naval personnel for acts of bravery in action. His bill was passed by both Houses of Congress and approved by Presi-

dent Lincoln on 12Dec61. And further, it established a Medal of Honor for only **enlisted men** of the United States Navy and Marine Corps.

Two months later, Senator Wilson of Massachusetts introduced a Senate resolution extending eligibility to enlisted men of the U.S. Army and making eligibility retroactive to the beginning of the Civil War. Then, on 3March63, army **officers** were made eligible through another act of Congress. Naval and marine officers were not included until 1915!!!

According to the act establishing the army medal, the award was to be given to those members of the armed forces who *shall distinguish themselves by their gallantry in action, and other soldier-like qualities*. Because of the vague wording and because the United States gave no other medal to its armed services, the Medal of Honor was awarded liberally during the Civil War to about 1,200 men.

But, in 1916, Congress reconsidered the rules for eligibility thereafter requiring that a serviceman come into actual contact with an enemy and perform



bravely at the risk of his own life above and beyond the call of duty. Congress also created a board of five retired generals to review all previous award recipients for eligibility and found that about 911—most Civil War veterans—did not meet the new standards and thus struck them from the list.



Bush at dress rehearsal for upcoming Obama inauguration.

Outnumbered 10:1, Marines make them pay dearly.

Looks like 250 terrorists picked the wrong day to screw with 30 U.S. Marines in Afghanistan. Frankly, is there *ever* a good day to screw with the Marines?

In the city of Shewan, approximately 250 insurgents ambushed 30 Marines and paid a heavy price for it. . . .

“The day started out with a 10-kilometer patrol with elements mounted and dismounted, so by the time we got to Shewan, we were pretty beat,” said a designated marksman who requested to remain unidentified. “Our vehicles came under a barrage of enemy RPGs (rocket propelled grenades) and machine gun fire. One of our ‘humvees’ was disabled from RPG fire, and the Marines inside dismounted and laid down suppression fire so they could evacuate a Marine who was knocked unconscious from the blast.”

The vicious attack that left the humvee destroyed and several of the Marines pinned down in the kill zone sparked an intense eight-hour battle as the platoon desperately fought to recover their comrades. After recovering the Marines trapped in the kill zone, another platoon sergeant personally led numerous attacks on enemy fortified positions while the platoon fought house to house and trench to trench in order to clear through the enemy

Trivia Question 3: How many double recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor have there been? [See page 4, answer 3]

ambush site.

“The biggest thing to take from that day is what Marines can accomplish when they’re given the opportunity to fight,” the sniper said. “A small group of Marines met a numerically superior force and embarrassed them in their own backyard. The insurgents told the townspeople that they were stronger than the Americans, and that day we showed them they were wrong.”

And of all mistakes the terrorists made that day, the worst one was picking the patrol with this guy in it.

During the battle, the designated marksman single handedly thwarted a company-sized enemy RPG and machinegun ambush by reportedly killing 20 enemy fighters with his devastatingly accurate precision fire. He selflessly exposed himself time and again to intense enemy fire during a critical point in the eight-hour battle for Shewan in order to kill any enemy combatants who attempted to engage or maneuver on the Marines in the kill zone. What made his actions even more impressive was the fact that he didn’t miss any shots, despite the enemies’ rounds impacting within a foot of his fighting position.

“I was in my own little world,” the young corporal said. “I wasn’t even aware of a lot of the rounds impacting near my position, because I was concentrating so hard on making sure my rounds were on target.”

The most amazing thing about the battle: Not a single Marine was seriously hurt.

Veterans and troops not in uniform can now salute

WASHINGTON, Nov. 7, 2008 - Federal law allows U.S. veterans and military personnel not in uniform to render a hand salute during the playing of the national anthem.

“The military salute is a unique gesture of respect that marks those who have served in our nation’s armed forces,” Veterans Affairs Secretary Dr. James B. Peake said. “This provision allows the application of that honor in all events involving our nation’s flag.”

Trivia Question 4: Since inception, has a woman ever been awarded the MOH? [See page 4, answer 4]

The provision builds on a change that went into effect last year. That change authorized veterans and military personnel not in uniform to render the military-style hand salute during the raising, lowering or passing of the flag.

Traditionally, veterans’ service organizations rendered the hand salute during the national anthem and at events involving the national flag while wearing their organization’s headgear. Otherwise, as with all other Americans, the etiquette is to place the right hand over the heart.

The most recent change was part of the 2009 Defense Authorization Act, which President Bush signed Oct. 14.

Sen. Jim Inhofe of Oklahoma who sponsored both pieces of legislation had the following to say: “The salute is a form of honor and respect, representing pride in one’s military service. Veterans and service members continue representing the military services even when not in uniform. The U.S. Code is now consistent for veterans and all service members in regards to the symbolic gesture of the military salute.” [American Forces Press]

Caribe Hilton, San Juan, PR 1959



“Who was that Marine?”

On Nov. 15, 2003, an 85-year-old retired Marine Corps colonel died of congestive heart failure at his home in La Quinta, CA, southeast of Palm Springs.

Well, you may or not recall that in the “Summer of ‘42” the Navy put a few thousand Marines...our man among them... on a surprisingly quiet Guadalcanal beach as Halsey had things to do elsewhere.

It was a few weeks later, on 25Oct41, that our then platoon sergeant and 33 riflemen set about emplacing four water-cooled machine guns in defense of Henderson Field and provided an unlikely answer to the riddle: How may Marines does it take to hold a hill against well motivated attackers?

By morning’s light, the Japanese Army’s 29th Infantry Regiment had sustained 553 KIA-MIA and 479 wounded of its 2,554 man force; while their 16th regiment buried 975 of their number.

Among the 90 American dead and seriously wounded that night were all the men of our sergeant’s platoon. Every one. As, throughout the night, he’d moved up and down the line, pulling his dead and wounded back into their foxholes and firing a few bursts from each of the four Brownings, convincing the Japanese forces down the hill that the positions were still manned.

The citation for his Medal of

Solant Amity Website Activity: January-November 2008

Month 2008	Unique visitors	Number of visits	Pages	Hits
January	909	1176	2277	24028
February	824	1060	2371	22390
March	1201	1477	3325	26272
April	1323	1563	2883	25794
May	1048	1310	2570	21248
June	1082	1431	3103	26246
July	1199	1554	2576	26386
August	1092	1437	2626	26614
September	1139	1526	3128	29480
October	1228	1574	2844	31701
November	1250	1591	3088	35483
Total	12295	15699	30791	295642

Honor described what our guy did next: *"picking up the last of the 40-pound, belt-fed Brownings he proceeded to do something for which the weapon was never designed. [He proceeded] down the hill toward the last Japanese survivors with the belt-fed gun cradled under his arm, firing as he went."*

Neither he nor his weapon failed and, in the morning, the battalion XO, Major Odell Conoley, was the first to discover the answer to our riddle. It sat upright, behind a machine gun, with bodies piled like cordwood all around: One hill: one Marine.

But, today, who remembers how closely-run a thing it was: that night on that ridge with a single Marine in the autumn of 1942?

Subsequently receiving a battle-field commission and promoted to Captain by Feb45, he left the Corps in May46. In Jul50, he returned and was promoted to major within six months. He, thereafter, served in many capacities over the next decade before retiring...for the last time...in '59 and receiving a post retirement promotion to Colonel.

For a variety of reasons, he was to never again see combat. However and ironically, at a time in American history when heroism had become a perceived passé concept, something strange occurred that was to make him an icon never imagined and, equally so, not well recognized.

In the mid-90's, the Hasbro Toy Company contacted our Marine jungle warrior asking permission to put the retired colonel's face on some kid's doll, he laughed and thought it a prank and someone's idea of a joke.

Well, it was not a prank and Hasbro was quite serious about the venture. So, in 1998, an agreement was reached and Sergeant-to-Colonel Mitchell Page became the "face" of an American Action Hero. His mug, was to adorn that little Marine they call "G.I. Joe."

Trivia Question 5: Since its inception, how many Congressional Medals of Honor have been awarded? [See page 4, answer 5]

FIRE DEPARTMENT CITY OF NEW YORK Supplement No. 16 to Department Order No. 24 of March 11, 2008.

2.1.1 As a result of an inquiry made by the Department's E.E.O. office, the use of numbers to identify units is banned along with nicknames, effective this date. A minority assigned to a high numbered Engine Company may feel inferior to a white firefighter assigned to a lower-numbered engine company. Accordingly, all units shall paint over all references to the old numbering system, forthwith. Company Commanders shall forward a letterhead report to the Chief of Operations upon completion.

Additionally, in order to reduce the likelihood that the image of firefighters might be tarnished and seen as a group that is, in some way, 'uncouth" or prone to violence, the term firefighters will be banished, as was previously done to the title fireMAN. Henceforth, all references to persons responding to emergency calls shall use the term Fire PERSONNEL.

Finally, references to rank are eliminated. As the previous system had its base in military structure, the violence associated with the military is not an image with which the administration wishes to convey or associate itself. Therefore, the Fire Commissioner shall henceforth be called the First Unified Commander of Knowledge and Opportunism, or F.U.C.K.O. The head of all uniformed personnel, formerly called the Chief of Department will now be titled Director of Interpreting Correctness and Knowledge, or D.I.C.K. Consequently, all reports forwarded to headquarters shall use the correct title when referring to the top officials. Failed compliance will result in re-indoctrination and shock therapy modeled after recognized North Korean and Iranian techniques, in order to maintain the agenda of both F.U.C.K.O. and the D.I.C.K to increase cultural diversity in the FDNY.

This Supplement shall be read at each Roll Call for the next five (5) consecutive days.

By Order of:

Nicholas Scoppetta, F.U.C.K.O.

Salvatore J. Cassano, D.I.C.K



"Yes," she said, "size does matter...."

Trivia Question 6: Since its inception, how many Native Americans have received the Medal of Honor? [See page 4.]

Search for Tarawa Marines
Pensacola, FL 26Nov08 - Clayton Johnson never met his uncle, James Johnson, who died on Tarawa when 17. More than 990 U.S. Marines and 680 sailors died and another 2,300 were wounded in the three-day battle in 1943. But Johnson's quest to find the remains of his uncle and hundreds of other buried anonymously after the battle could lead to the largest ID of American war dead in history.

However, as a former special forces veteran of the Vietnam War, Johnson's interest transcends any personal concern for closure. "There aren't any open wounds for me that need fixing," he said. "My problem is that people seem not to care about much of anything. And I want them to think. I want them to really look at things like this."

Researchers are using ground-penetrating radar, tediously reviewing documents and interviewing hundreds of people to find the 139 graves.

"However, convincing evidence must be provided before excavation occurs on a spot that only MIGHT yield remains," said a spokesman for the Pentagon's Prisoner of War and Missing in Action Office. But, he continued, "They'll excavate a small test site first to ensure the archaeological integrity of any site isn't spoiled."

The names of the many fallen were lost, as efforts to build desperately needed landing strips on the tiny atoll took precedence over all else. Then, the graves were relocated. And there was little focus on identifying those who died until '45, when an Army officer was tasked with unraveling the administrative horror. Within the documents, "You could sense his frustrations," said one researcher.

Stateside, families at the time would receive telegrams like; "On account of existing conditions the body, if recovered, cannot be returned at present. If further details are received you will be informed."

Uhhh, not surprisingly, most have died waiting. [AP - 2008]

SKIPPERS PUB

FOOD & SPIRITS

Enlightening Odds and Ends for your reading pleasure:

Major Ken “The Skipper” Skipper (Ret.) continues to improve and is now playing golf again. Not so often as he might like, but *more*.

He also explained that not long ago, Lt. Thomson’s wife contacted him with some questions about the Lieutenant’s time with us and Solant Amity. It seems that his grandchildren want to know more about him and our website is going to provide that information by way of the numerous photos and articles about the cruise and the capture of the Santa Maria.

Isn’t that great?!!

Arthur J Busbee of the 3rd Platoon has been “found” in Reynolds, GA. It took five years but we finally “got ‘em.”

A biography and contact information will in time be furnished on the website. The efforts to find “Buzz” were prompted by a lead furnished by Bill Driggins. Within an hour, AJ was on our radar and locked.

In time, we may find or account for all of our members.

Delwin “Bill” Bailey of the 3rd Platoon is doing fair-to-midlin’ well in his new home. It’s less than a hundred yards, he tells me, from the old one.

He doesn’t do much traveling and can be reached by phone most all the time. He’ll be mailing his Christmas cards soon but sends out an early “Merry Christmas!” to all.

Bill Driggins of the 3rd Platoon and his wife Elaine are well, though suffering the recent loss of their dog due to illness.

Bill wishes all a Merry Christmas and expressed the hope that more of us would reach out to

Trivia Question 7: For what commendable act did Colonel, then Captain, John Ripley receive the Navy Cross? [Answer to the right.]

others of our flock, as he thinks of those times and we chosen few quite often.

Jim McCarthy of the 3rd Platoon, per my phone conversations with his wife Ann and son Steven, has pulmonary fibrosis. He had a lung transplant a few months back and began experiencing problems about two months ago, requiring more intensive care and medical supervision in a hospital.

Jim is now home and enjoying his home cooked food. He’s ambulatory, yet still requires various meds and oxygen support. And will for a while.

He’ll need about a week to recuperate before being anything approximating himself. So, if you’re planning on making a phone call, wait until next week to do so.

His wife, Ann, thanks all for their interest in Jim’s condition.

If you wish to send a get well card, his address is:

2917 Walnut Hill Street
Philadelphia, PA 19152

“Albie” Sears of the 1st Platoon and Lei-Lani are well and he wishes ya’ll a very Merry Christmas.

It’s my hope that he and I will get together for “tea” sometime before Christmas, here on Long Island.

As a “10th Degree Black-Belt-Racanteur,” Albie kept me entranced with story after story of his truck driving travels and travails. His last, by phone-call’s end, dealt with his near “Deliverance II” experience in the backwoods of Kentucky.

The man should write a book.

Charlie Wilson of the 2nd Platoon wishes all a Merry Christmas and provides a suggested “topping-off” of the political season.

“Consider this occurring a week before the ‘09 inauguration: Bush resigns leaving Cheney the Presi-

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See the whole story at
SolantAmity.com

The First of the Corps to Land in Monrovia

dency. Then, Cheney appoints Condoleezza Rice as Vice President. Then, the coup de grace: Cheney resigns and makes Rice both the first black and woe-man President. Oooops! Sheer thunder-stealing genius.

Col. John Ripley USMC (Ret), 69, of Annapolis, a long revered Vietnam warrior and dedicated supporter of all things “Marine” died Oct. 28th of natural causes at his home.



He was born 29Jun39 and raised in Radford, VA.

He’s survived by his wife Moline; three sons, Stephen,

Thomas and John; one daughter, Mary and eight grandchildren.

More recent information can be found at www.mc-lef.org and an extensive biography about the

Trivia Answers:

1. The museum is located on the hanger deck of the U.S.S. Yorktown nestled in the harbor of Charleston, S.C.
2. 1923
3. There have been nineteen double recipients of the MOH.
4. Yes. Mary Walker for service at Bull Run 21 July 1861.
5. There have 3,467 Medals of Honor issued.
6. Twenty-two Native-Americans have received the MOH.
7. Ripley spent five hours under near-constant rifle, machine gun and mortar fire while attaching 500 pounds of explosive to the Dong Ha Bridge, during the ‘72 Vietnam Easter Offensive.

man was published in the Mar05 issue of the Post Solant Amity newsletter.

The members of our association owe a personal debt to the Colonel for it was he, through our former 1st Platoon member and retired Staff Sergeant Ed Hart, that we were able to obtain a complete roster of G-2-6’s membership at the time of Solant Amity I.

May his soul rest in peace.

Lastly, I ask that you take a few moments out of your busy holiday efforts and call a former member of G-2-6.

You’ve got all their phone numbers, so reach out and give ‘em a big Semper fi.

Holder — Medal of Honor



Mitchell Page

Mailed as a black on white copy, a colorized version can be found at our website, where on page one you will find a link to a downloadable version.

I hope you’ve enjoyed this latest effort. Send us your stories by e-or-snail mail to make for an even better next issue.

*Merry Christmas and Semper fi;
Ed Shea*