



POST SOLANT AMITY

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



Volume 8, Issue 4
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Salty Language

[These are the space constrained thoughts of author Marine Col. James W. Hammond, Jr. (Ret).]

In the old Corps, the first time a boot referred to a vertical partition as a "wall" or said he'd spilled something on the "floor," he incurred the wrath of the drill instructor. The DI would smash his swagger stick on the top of the boot's helmet and provide—LOUDLY—enduring advice, "That is a bulkhead [or deck.] If you draw the pay, you should speak the language!"

As *Soldiers of the Sea* our conversation should be sprinkled with nautical expressions. The late Marine Colonel John Thompson Jr., in his introduction to his "Fix Bayonets" article for *The Leatherneck*, described the men of the 4th Marine Brigade about to see action at Belleau Wood in June 1918: "And there were also a number of diverse people who ran curiously to type, with their drilled shoulders, dark near bone-deep sunburn and intolerant scorn of

nearly everything on earth. Their speech was flavored with Navy words. Words culled from the folk who live on the seas and in ports where our war-ships go."

He was describing Marines who, like all professionals, have a language peculiar unto themselves.

Languages evolve. And, as we go to still more different and distant climes, still more words creep in. Some don't survive. Marines still go to the head to "pump bilges" but there was a generation who went to the benjo for the same reason. Then there's the story of the Marine in an Athens bar ordering a beer: "Garcon! Iddy-wa, una botella de cerveza bitte."

Over the years, however, I have detected not just a lessening of the use of nautical terms in the naval services but an almost complete lack of them. It is more than 25 years ago since my son came home from the Naval Academy for Plebe Christmas. He'd been raised on terms like deck, bulkhead, overhead, ladder, galley

Trivia Question 1: What was used, without assurance, to purify water in the field? [See page 4, answer 1]

and the like. He'd called his Boy Scout equipment 782 gear, but he no longer used those terms as they weren't in use at the Academy.

In time, I spent a dozen years in Annapolis on the Alumni Association of my alma mater. I grew appalled at the lubberly-ness of the staff, faculty and midshipmen

I am not concerned with Navy though, rather our Corps. And I'm thinking now of a terse gunny's reply to the lady who upon learning the *quatrefoil* on Officers' covers stems from days when Marines in the *fighting tops* could identify their officers on deck by the chalked cross on their caps and did not fire on them. "But what of the Navy Officers?" she had asked.

"Who cared?" snapped the gunny.

Language is both spoken and written. "The Marines' Hymn" says, "We are proud to claim the title of United States Marines." There are Army officers and soldiers, Navy officers and sailors, Air Force officers and airmen, but WE are ALL Marines.

Trivia Question 2: What was the PRC-6 portable radio nicknamed? [See page 4, answer 2]

That is why Marine is always written with a capital "M."

We must be careful not to allow our culture to be corrupted by the words of other services. The Army says 1600 hours. We say 1600. It is a small but subtle difference. Years ago, an over zealous *police sergeant* painted on the deck in front of a regimental headquarters building:

"NO PARKING AFTER 1600 HOURS."

The CG came by and, seeing the offending sign, dashed into headquarters, burst into the office of the CO and began holding *school-of-the-boat*—basic seafaring instruction—on the colonel.

He said, "In the Army, it's 1600 hours; in the Navy, it's 8 bells; in the Air Force, I think it's 'when Mickey's big hand is on 12 and his little hand is on 4,' but in the Corps, **in the Corps**, it is 1600. Get that abomination corrected immediately!"

Most Marines knew the motto of our Corps before they went to boot camp. It likely attracted them. It is *Semper Fidelis*—always faithful. Shortened to *Semper Fi*, it is a bond of respectful recognition between and among Marines. One Marine greets another with it. When they

(Continued page 2, column 2)



MERRY CHRISTMAS MARINES

Strange Secret of Brit's Secret Intelligence Service [SIS]

Professor Keith Jeffery of Queen's University, in Belfast, Ireland was given access to forty years of England's accumulated MI6's files. The result: A rather revealing 800 page text entitled *MI6: The History of the Secret Intelligence Service 1909-1949*.

According to a diary written during the First World War by Walter Kirke, SIS spooks working under the command of its first chief referred to as "C," Mansfield Cumming, were in urgent need of finding an effective and readily available

means for writing secret messages. The system used at the time became visible if exposed to iodine vapor and was clearly not something you want to have happen in the midst of all the not so secret killing of 1915.

After some time and a great deal of research at London University, an alternative was eventually found that was not discernible by any of the usual methods of detection. One staff member close to Cumming, Frank Stagg, said he would never forget his bosses' delight at learning the *ink*...unlike its predecessor...was

commonly available and visible only when exposed to ultraviolet light. Something that today we see commonly used on television's CSI series.

Stagg noted: "We thought we'd solved a great problem."

However, it wasn't long after the finding that the agent making the discovery became the butt of numerous department jokes and was soon transferred, while at least one agent had to be reminded with tongue-in-cheek to ensure the freshness of the supply as it, according to message recipients, "acquired an unusual

smell."

Should you have not already guessed it, the ink was semen!

However, not explained in the lengthy tome and two things over which you *might* like to ponder:

1. What were female agents to do about ensuring an adequate and ready source of *ink* for their "top secret" correspondences? And
2. Was the ironic use of "C," as in "C-man," a reference to the first director of SIS, Mansfield CUMMING, unintentionally yet comically related to the agency's use of semen as an *ink*?



21Dec45 – Sergeant Lena Basilone christens the USS Basilone (DD-824)

“Keep marchin,’ Colonel.”

Battalion 2-6 had been secretly designated to be the “Ready Battalion,” at a time when an attempted communist coup in Santo Domingo was anticipated. Unaware of the pending assignment, the Battalion’s CO had made extensive plans for a 100 plus mile, *unit conditioning*, march from Lejeune to Fort Bragg.

Unable to yet divulge the “Ready Battalion” designation, the Division CO advised LtCol Bohn that he was “not in favor of the march.” Astounded, the Battalion Commander leapt into a defense of the every advantage to proceeding with the venture and to outline the extent of detail gone into its planning. Gen. Simpson, *seemingly* swayed by the Colonel’s enthusiasm, acceded to his wishes and approved the march. And, the 1st of the 6th was assigned as “Ready Battalion.”

Two days into the march, the crisis in the Dominican Republic erupted. LtCol Bohn, then and every two hours thereafter via radio, asked General Simpson if 2-6 should return to Lejeune. “No, continue to march,” came the redundant replay.

And so it was that one man’s *assumed* persuasive techniques eliminated the 2nd Battalion’s chances for action in Santo Domingo.



Trivia Question 3: What does the five star cluster represent in both the 1st and 2nd Marine Division insignias? [See page 4, answer 3]

(Language—continued from page 1)

part company, each says to the other, “Semper Fi.” Informal memos or e-mails between Marines usually are signed “Semper Fi” or just S/F. On the other hand, used by Marines to members of the other services or civilians, “Semper Fi, Mac,” said with a sneer has a less than polite connotation.

Some of our words and phrases have found their way into common American usage. “Gizmo” for example. Some are of foreign origin. *Gung-ho* from China. *Boondocks* is Philippine, from the Tagalog “bundok,” referencing their mountain jungles. *Honcho* is from Korea and Japan.

Another word that is sacred to our Corps is “Doc.” At one time, I had a battalion surgeon who expressed a need to have Marines address him as “Doctor.” I told him he was not ready to be addressed as “Doc” inasmuch as the title is the highest honor a Marine can bestow upon a “squid.”

While a landlubber may refer to a ship as “it,” a true soldier of the sea knows that a ship is a “she.” And it is inappropriate to precede the name of a ship with a definite article. Referring to *the* Lexington is as improper as referring to me as *the* Hammond. She is Lexington, independent of its use by professional editors and writers who are not naval professionals. Lastly, with regard to ships, one serves *in* and not *on* a ship.

How did this departure from salty language occur? Earlier, I alluded to my impressions of the change observed at the Naval Academy where the emphasis had become one of turning out graduates who could go on for advanced degrees: “Techies.” And their bastardization of both English and naval jargon followed. This was compounded by flooding the faculty with academics holding advanced degrees from campuses of the '60s. A group of civilians which not only avoided being part of the naval culture but one which pretty much disparaged it. If those at the top don't lead the way, it is a military axiom that those below won't follow.

But how then did the decline creep into our Corps? After all,

(Continued on page 3, column 4)

Recognize the product and use?



Marine Corporal Honored

A guided missile destroyer was commissioned on November 13th, in Port Everglades. It bears the name of a Marine Corporal from Scio, New York.

On April 14, 2004, the Corporal was manning a checkpoint in Karabilah, Iraq. An insurgent leapt from a car and began choking him. During the ensuing scuffle two members of his squad came to his assistance. Reportedly, the last words from the Corporal were, “No, No! Watch his hands!” At that point, the insurgent dropped a grenade in their midst. The Corporal thereupon deliberately positioned his Kevlar helmet and his person atop the explosive device.

The blast seriously wounded all 3 Marines. Days later, 22 year old Corporal Jason L. Dunham died at Bethesda Naval Hospital from wounds received in the incident.

In making the ultimate sacrifice, he saved the lives of his fellow Marines. For his heroic actions Corporal Dunham has been awarded the **Medal of Honor**.

“Who was that Marine?”

Born on October 1, 1921 in White Plains, New York he was educated in Connecticut. A pre-law student at Yale and member of Skull & Crossbones Club, he graduated with a BA. He joined the Marines in '44. When discharged, he studied acting under the G.I. bill.

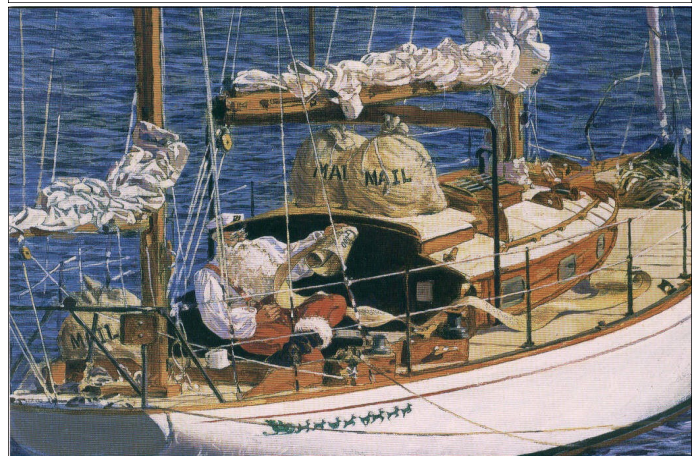
Kudos came often and swiftly. By '48, his performance as Sgt. Evans in *Command Decision* garnered the stage acting trifecta: Tony, Donaldson and Theatre World awards. In '50, he won a Golden Globe and an Oscar nominated for his performance as Platoon Sergeant Kinney in *Battleground*, a fictional account of the 101st Airborne at Bastogne.

His face and style filled theaters and TV screens across America for six decades: *The Asphalt Jungle* and *Them*; various episodes of *The Twilight Zone* and *Ben Casey*. His Broadway portrayals of Will Rogers, Harry Truman and Teddy Roosevelt in the 70's lent still more to his reputation, the last of which getting him a second Oscar nomination. In the 90's, he drew still more accolades for his efforts in *The Shawshank Redemption* as an ill-fated prison parolee and, later, an Emmy for a recurring role on TV's *The Practice*.

Yet, you may remember him first and foremost as MSgt. “Mac” in *Battle Cry*, the movie rendition of the book of the same name by Leon Uris and based on his experiences with the 2nd Battalion, 6th Marines of WWII.

Remember him? No? See page four, Marine!

Drop us a line and we'll pass it on, Marine.



Trivia Question 4: Only one Marine **Commandant** has ever led an Army Division. Who, what unit and when? [See page 4, answer 4]



Division Insignias

Authorized 15Mar43, the shoulder sleeve insignia [aka: Battle Blaze] of the 1st MarDiv was designed by LtCol Merrill Twining, in February 1943. The blue diamond bears the stars of the Southern Cross and a red numeral one in the middle, denoting the division's first action on Guadalcanal.

A Teacher's Lament

I was testing children in my Dublin Sunday school class to see if they understood the concept of getting to heaven. I asked them, "If I sold my house and my car, had a big garage sale and gave all my money to the church, would that get me into heaven?"

"NO!" the children exclaimed.

"If I cleaned the church every day, mowed the garden, and kept everything tidy, would that get me into heaven?"

Again, the answer was "NO!"

By now, I was starting to smile. "Well then," I said, "if I was kind to animals and gave sweets to all the children, and loved my husband, would that get me into heaven?"

Again, there came a clearly declarative "NO!"

At this point, I was just bursting

ease. All the while he sang, "From the Halls of Montezuma, To the Shores of Tripoli."

Next day: A team of surgeons performed a frontal lobotomy on the man. Again, they took him to the river and said "paddle."

The corporal jumped in, took a second to find his seat, and started paddling with some difficulty. Again he sang, with a bit more effort this time, "For Da Hails of Monte puma, to 'e hall inn monopoly." BUT, he made it up river and completed the task.

Amazed at both the Marine's endurance and determination, it was decided to push the envelope one more time. Surgeons removed the rest of the Marine's brain. Stunned, they watched as a man without a brain and any way to think logically drove himself to the river! There, he fell out of the car and began singing "Off we go, into the wild blue yonder...." ☺

Trivia Question 6: Who succeeded LG Buckner (USA) on Okinawa? [See page 4, answer 6]

(Language—cont'd from page 2)

drill instructors still impose upon recruits the important use of nautical terms, though with a less physically emphatic way than yesteryear.

Well, for one thing, more Marines are married these days, and live ashore. Their use of salty language is one of the first casualties. They want to be "cool." Nautical talk is not cool. Computer talk and jive talk are.

How can we restore this eroding tradition? At the top: Senior officers should use salty language, then, by example, so too should staff NCOs.

Yet, clearly, you can't "direct order" tradition. It must have solid roots to survive. Marines



The 2nd MarDiv had a similar battle blaze with a red snake in the shape of a "2" reading GUADALCANAL. By late 1943, it was changed to the now more recognized version of a hand holding a torch amidst a red field, surrounded by the Southern Cross constellation as a reference to "The Canal."

Some Guadalcanal vets wore the patch on their right shoulder to distinguish themselves from unit replacements that had not fought.

Marines were issued two of them for their jackets. And, their use was officially discontinued in 1947.

Trivia Question 5: During the 1945 battle for Okinawa, the CO of the 10th Army was killed by artillery fire on 18 June. He was the highest ranking officer of U.S forces to be killed during WWII. What was his name? [See page 4, answer 5.]

with pride for the lot of them. And, with just a tinge of exasperation in my voice, I asked them finally "Well, how then can I get into heaven?"

That's when one of them with a measure of exuberance reserved for six-year olds shouted "Mrs. Flynn, YUV GOATTA BE FOOKN' DEAD."

Tis' a curious race, the Irish.

Back in the day

In 1947, the government experimented with a Marine's ability to complete a mission after suffering a serious head injury.

They took a well trained, physically-fit, hard-charging corporal and told him to paddle a canoe up river. The corporal jumped in the canoe and started paddling with

Love that word-smith stuff?

- A man's home is his castle, in a manor of speaking.
- Dijon vu: Same mustard as before.
- Practice safe eating, always use condiments.
- Shotgun wedding is a case of wife or death
- A man needs a mistress just to break the monogamy.
- A hangover is the wrath of grapes.
- Having reached that birthday threshold, Mary stood and announced to a room full of friends "I don't know how I'll take to being called a full-time *sixty-niner*."

should want to show that they are a different breed and be willing to demonstrate their uniqueness at every opportunity whether among other Marines or among civilians. That's what personal pride in being a Marine is ALL about.

(Continued on page 4, column 4)

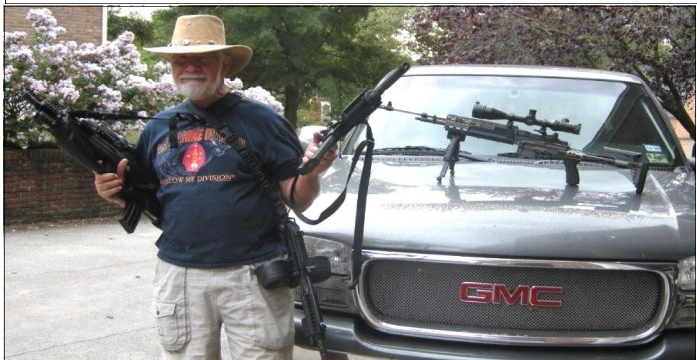


Original 2nd MarDiv Battle Blaze

SKIPPER'S PUB

FOOD & SPIRITS

Enlightening Odds and Ends for your reading pleasure:



Well equipped briny bearded bush buckeroo Dave "Bravado" Beraudo stands astride his mandatory proof of the puddin' macho pick-up. Oh, yaa!

Delwin "Bill" Bailey, 3rd Platoon, remains fine in Florida. He's hoping to soon learn just how effective an eye operation endured earlier this year will be in restoring even some of his vision. And, in what is now recognized as typically polite "Bill" Bailey form, he apologizes for not getting his usual array of cards out to the membership and asks that we publish his "very best wishes for all in the New Year and the merriest of Christmases." [Aye, aye!]

Dave Beraudo, 3rd Platoon, and his wife **Deborah** did a more than 4,100 mile round-about of the United States earlier this year. And, practiced light travelers that they are, Dave has learned there's always room for one more gun in the car. ☺

Having received an I-pad for Fathers Day, Dave has grown to "love it, especially when Deb and I are on the road. Anywhere we get ATT phone cell service we can log in on to the internet."

Trevor Davies, 3rd Platoon, has kicked a life-long smoking habit and feels the better for it. He and **Ruth** are well. And, in addition to saying "Merry Christmas to all" Trevor wants to remind those effected to file for a VA disability pension when appropriate. [Access to the

Trivia Question 7: From what term was the word "boondock" derived? [Answer 7, to the right.]

VA eligibility list is posted on our website's "Links & Things" hot-link.]

Amadio DiBounoventura, 3rd Platoon, is well and announces that he recently moved [address in "Personnel" mailing roster] and wishes all a Merry Christmas and a GREAT New Year.

Ed Hart, 1st Platoon, continues to inspire. In June, he single-handedly crossed aboard his sailboat **Hooligan** to Bermuda, stayed for a bit more than a week, returning to the Chesapeake region of CONUS. [Damn, he's good.]

Ron Parrott, Weapons Platoon and our "honest to God, Padre" is retiring from the ministry, returning CONUS for some necessary medical care in January. He wishes all a "Merry Christmas!!!"

Though God will surely be with him, a few prayers from the rest of us "ain't gonna' hurt."

And from **Ed Shea**, 3rd Platoon:

At this time, I want to provide a really big "Thank you" to those providing the material for this issue of the newsletter. The noteworthy include, in mostly alphabetical order: **George Bitsoli**, 3rd Platoon; **Dave Beraudo**, 3rd Platoon; **Bob Chichester**, 1st Platoon; **Rocco Minocone**, Weapons Platoon; frequent contributor **Don "Dick" Dickerson**, former DI and retired Major USMC; **Tom Poole**, our former dentist on the Hermitage; **Joe Teklits**, 3rd Platoon and

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The First of the Corps to Land in Monrovia

both lastly and again, the most prolific and unheralded author of all: **Anonymous**.

To those having provided *stuff* not yet used, I thank you and will in time "get 'er done."

Then, I would be remiss in not pointing out that this year we lost another of our members to cancer:

Jerry T. Crawford who died on 21Jul10. Think of him on occasion. May his soul rest in peace.

Members are asked to *please* remain in touch with the editor. Confidential membership rosters are quarterly distributed and require an updating of email/home addresses and phone numbers

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 them a big Semper fi.

(Language—continued from page 3)

Five decades ago, a mix of ten junior officers of different branches were detailed to the Cherry Blossom Pageant in DC, as escorts for young women representing their various states. The Marine officers assigned were virtual strangers to one another.

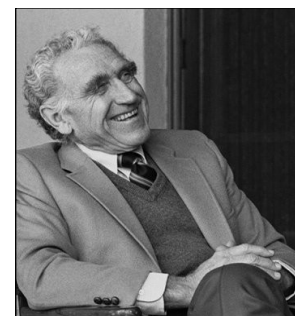
At the end of the ceremonies, the band struck up a medley of service tunes, the last being that of the Marine Corps. Upon the first note of "The Marines' Hymn," the ten Marine lieutenants scattered among the audience were on their feet, twenty heels *a-clicking* as one. At which point, an officer from another branch paid them a compliment. In a stage whisper, audible to all, he murmured, "Those S.O.B.s!"

That's what it's all about:

Pride in your Corps. So, "Draw the pay; speak the language" and Semper Fi.

Trivia Answers:

1. Halazone: Six of the chlorine compound tablets per liter. Tablet shelf life: Three days!
2. Prick six.
3. The Southern Cross constellation AND that both the 1st & 2nd Divisions fought on Guadalcanal.
4. Then BGen. John Archer. Lejeune (USMC), led the Army's 2nd Division, WWI.
5. LGen. Simon Bolivar Buckner, Jr.(USA)
6. Then, MGen. Roy Stanley Geiger (USMC) who was subsequently relieved by LGen. Joseph "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell (USA).
7. From "bundok" of the most common language spoken in the Philippines: Tagalog.



Actor: James Whitmore

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