



# Spearhead NEWS

"Uncommon Valor was a Common Virtue"

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION of the 5TH MARINE DIVISION ASSOCIATION

**64TH ANNUAL REUNION - SAN DIEGO, CALIF.  
SEPTEMBER 9 -13, 2013  
HANDLERY HOTEL AND RESORT**

## New president Bill Behana takes the helm

William A. "Bill" Behana, USMC M/Sgt Ret., was elected president of the Fifth Marine Division Association during the August 2012 Reunion. He was with HS/28 in the Fifth at Iwo Jima, positioned at the bottom of Suribachi when the flag was raised there. During the time he was with the occupation forces in Japan, he received his Judo Black Belt at the Kodokan.

He stayed in the Corps for 27 years, including tours in Korea and Vietnam, before retiring in 1971.

Stateside, he earned a master's degree at San Diego State University in physical education. Bill taught defensive tactics in the Law Enforcement Academy and women's self-defense in the P.E. programs at community colleges. He later became a security supervisor at Grossmont College and retired from there in 1990.

Since then, he has volunteered as a sheriff's reserve



New Fifth Marine Division Association President William A. "Bill" Behana, USMC M/Sgt Ret., right, and his wife, Nory, live in El Cajon, Calif.

deputy and is currently serving as treasurer for his local Elks lodge.

Bill and Nory met playing tennis and have been married for 36 years. They have two grown children, Annalisa and Brett, and grandchildren Emily, Mason and Connor – all of whom live in San Diego County.

Nory runs a foster care education program at Grossmont College and teaches classes in child and family development at San Diego State University.

The couple live in El Cajon, Calif.

"I'm excited about the reunion being in San Diego next year," Bill said. "We've got a great program put together, and we look forward to welcoming everyone."

See more information about the 64th Annual Reunion on page 8. Bill hopes to have an indication of how many plan to attend, in order to finalize some of the arrangements.



**TONY DE SANTIS**  
Secretary  
Fifth Marine Division Assn.

2560 Gulf to Bay Blvd., Ste 200  
Clearwater, FL 33765  
Tel.: (727) 791-4020  
Email: fifthmda@gmail.com

**SPEARHEAD NEWS**

*Published four times annually in the interest  
of the 5th Marine Division Association*

**EDITOR**

Ray Elliott  
2609 N. High Cross Road, Urbana, IL 61802  
(217) 384-5820; [talespress@talespress.com](mailto:talespress@talespress.com)

**FOUNDING PRESIDENT**

Gen. Keller E. Rockey

President ..... Bill Behana  
Vice President ..... Bob Mueller  
Secretary ..... Tony De Santis  
Treasurer ..... Monroe Ozment  
Legal Officer ..... (Vacant)  
Sgt-at-Arms ..... Eugene Blase  
Chaplain ..... Billy Joe Cawthron  
Trustees ..... Tony De Santis,  
Ivan Hammond, Warren Musch,  
Penny (DeFazio) Pauletto and Guy "Al" Stratton

***In This Issue:***

The Final Inspection ..... 2  
The Editor's Desk ..... 3  
Letters ..... 4  
Last hospital corpsman of Company I ..... 5  
Another flag returns to Japan ..... 6  
Secretary's Corner ..... 7  
64th Annual Reunion ..... 8  
Reno Reunion recap ..... 10  
Final Muster ..... 12  
Ladies Auxiliary ..... 12  
Navajo Code Talker Day ..... 13  
New Members ..... 13  
Daughter searches for information on father ..... 14  
Book Review ..... 15

**Archived issues of Spearhead News are  
available to view at [www.talesspress.com](http://www.talesspress.com)**

# The Final Inspection

**Author Unknown**

(Submitted by Billy Joe Cawthron, Chaplain)

The Marine stood and faced God,  
Which must always come to pass.  
He hoped his shoes were shining  
Just as brightly as his brass.

“Step forward now, Marine;  
How shall I deal with you?  
Have you always turned the other cheek?  
To My Church have you been true?”

The Marine squared his shoulders and said,  
“No, Lord, I guess I ain't,  
Because those of us who carry guns  
Can't always be a saint.

“I've had to work most Sundays,  
And at times my talk was tough.  
And sometimes I've been violent,  
Because the world is awfully rough.

“But I never took a penny  
That wasn't mine to keep,  
Though I worked a lot of overtime  
When the bills got just too steep.

“And I never passed a cry for help,  
Though at times I shook with fear.  
And sometimes, God, forgive me,  
I've wept unmanly tears.

“I know I don't deserve a place  
Among the people here.  
They never wanted me around,  
Except to calm their fears.

“If You've a place for me here, Lord,  
It needn't be so grand.  
I've never expected or had too much;  
But if You don't, I'll understand.”

There was silence all around the throne  
Where the saints had often trod,  
As the Marine waited quietly  
For the judgment of his God.

“Step forward now, you Marine;  
You've borne your burdens well.  
Walk peacefully on Heaven's streets;  
You've done your time in Hell.”

## THE EDITOR'S DESK

By Ray Elliott



### Sometimes Marines go off to war and come home in a body bag; sometime they never come home

After David W. Skibbe had finished NROTC training in 1969 and was commissioned a second lieutenant of Marines, he was graduated from the University of Illinois and then completed training at The Basic School in Quantico before being sent off to Vietnam.

His fiancée, Georgine Tortorella, also graduated from the university and started teaching high school English. They expected to be married when Lt Skibbe served his time in the Marine Corps and came home to the Midwest to work at a career in forestry, his college major.

Those plans went awry soon after Lt Skibbe spent six months in-country with 2/26, a battalion of the Fifth Marine Division which had fought on Iwo Jima during World War II and was reactivated during Vietnam when both the 26th and 27th regiments fought there.

Lt Skibbe became one of 67 University of Illinois graduates who fought in Vietnam and were killed in action. Not only was the lieutenant killed, but his body was never recovered and brought home.

With 2/26 being rotated out of country, Skibbe opted to join the First Reconnaissance Battalion of the First Marine Division because of his relationship with 2/26 CO LtCol Bill Drumright. According to a fellow lieutenant and author, Dan Kellum, who spent years researching what happened to his friend for a book he was writing, "David and the colonel had a special bond as he had saved the colonel's life when a flatbed rail car on which they were riding and a locomotive were blown off the railroad tracks above Da Nang. David pulled the colonel out from under the locomotive before it could crush him."

The colonel reportedly wanted Lt Skibbe to rotate because "he had seen enough of the war with 2/26." But a push was made to send all of First Recon's seven-

man teams to the bush to flush out a big operation of the enemy. Skibbe managed to join the last team sent out to the Que Son Mountains south of Da Nang deep in an enemy-controlled area on March 2, 1970.

In a furious firefight in Quang Nam Province about 10 miles northwest of the city of An Hoa, Lt Skibbe took a round in the leg and ankle. Two helicopters had arrived and were able to hover above the treetops, 75-100 feet above the ground, to extract the wounded and the outmanned team. But Skibbe wouldn't take the medevac initially because another man was wounded more severely, and the lieutenant insisted that that Marine be evacuated first.

The corpsman described Skibbe's wound as a "penetrating wound of the lower right leg, breaking the fibula 2" above the ankle leaving an open fracture. Hemorrhage was moderate and eased after a pressure battle dressing was applied." The broken leg was immobilized by the application of "a splint constructed from a small tree limb."

Skibbe continued directing his men and was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross for his leadership. A hoist cable with a jungle penetrator to extract the more seriously wounded Marine was lowered. Then the cable was lowered again to retrieve Lt Skibbe.

The Marines on the ground lost sight of him when he was 30-40 feet in the air and cleared the trees. But when he got about 20 feet from the door of the helicopter, 80-100 feet above the ground, the cable snapped and Skibbe fell to the ground.

Confusion followed. The pilot radioed to the Marines on the ground to see if Skibbe was okay. Apparently thinking Skibbe was in the chopper, the radioman replied, "Yes, he's okay." The pilot interpreted that to mean that they had located him and he was okay. Ladders were lowered for the rest of the team, and the choppers left for An Hoa.

It was there that both the helicopter crew and the team realized that Skibbe was not in the aircraft. Both helicopters went back to the area and an attempt was made to insert Capt Lavoy D. McVey to search for Skibbe. Another cable snapped and McVey also fell to the ground, presumably to his death.

Because of the enemy position, their numbers and dense jungle, it was decided not to attempt another insertion and risk more loss of life. And it was believed that both men sustained fatal injuries in the falls. No sign of either man was ever found in later searches.

*Continued on page 9*

## Stories prompt more returns of Japanese flags

We enjoyed the article in the Summer 2012 *Spearhead News* regarding the return of souvenirs.

My husband, PFC Wayne H. Higgs (A-1-28), was given the [pictured below] Japanese flag by Pvt. Fred F. Mayhon, now deceased. They were both in the Fifth Marine Division that landed on Iwo Jima. Fred had brought the flag home as a souvenir.

We would be pleased if it could be returned to the Japanese family, if possible.

Thank you for the fine work you are doing with the *Spearhead News*. We pass them on to David Ash, who was a corpsman Iwo Jima.

– Lillian Higgs  
Clovis, N.M.



## Foundation sponsored making of documentary during trip to Iwo Jima

I was one of 10 veterans accompanied by eight Ohio State University history majors and two professors sponsored by The Greatest Generation Foundation on a trip back to Guam, Saipan, Tinian and Iwo Jima this year. I briefly saw [Ray Elliott] there on Iwo Jima and have seen [him] in some video shots that were taken.

The foundation sent a film crew with us to make a 55-minute documentary. It was made in three parts

and was aired on NBC Channel 9, Denver, Colo., on May 26, Memorial Day weekend, and is still up on its website. [It is] called “8 SQ Miles” — a very good video and dialogue with pictures from the battle and interviews of several of us during the return. Three were Navy, and seven of us Marines.

One of the Marines was “Iron” Mike Mervosh. His final assignment was the Fleet Marine Force Pacific Sergeant Major. His rank as of Feb. 14, 1958, as a sergeant major made him the most senior enlisted man of all the Marine forces. He retired Sept. 1, 1977, after 35 years.

The students had [Marine Capt] Dale Dye, USMC Ret., as an “instructor of battles” as we traversed our six-plus days of Guam, Saipan, Tinian and then Iwo Jima battlefields. Dale Dye is a well-known author and provider of information and training for actors depicting Marines in HBO’s “The Pacific.”

It was a fantastic experience for me. Because I was only in the Iwo Jima battle, I downloaded material on all the other battles [in order] to be better informed, knowing we were to visit all these battle sites. Several of the other Marines and one Navy member were in the other three battles we covered, and several other landings on other smaller islands we did not cover.

On June 16 in Waterloo, Iowa, at the Sullivan Brothers Grout Museum, my Ohio State University student, Caitlin Bentley, flew in from Ohio. She and I did three shows that day to pack in over 100 people per show in a tiny theater meant to seat 70! Our museum staff provided the video presentation; we did the vocal to the pictures.

Since the 50th anniversary in 1995, I have spoken about WWII and Iwo Jima to several thousand students, service club members and other organizations. My real reason for accepting the free trip by the foundation was because there were young college history students present. It was a very fulfilling trip for me because of this.

Thank you for all the great work you have been doing with your job as editor of *Spearhead*. I hope to see you at upcoming events, such as the Iwo Jima Survivors Reunion and Symposium next year.

– David C. Greene  
“Scribe” for the Comm Platoon,  
HQ Co., 3rd Btln., 5th Div.  
Waterloo, Iowa

## Silver Legacy Resort says ‘thank you’

Dear LtCol Thomas Kalus,

On behalf of our staff and management, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for choosing the Silver Legacy Resort Casino for your recent event.

We continually strive to provide the highest quality accommodations and service to our valued guests. Your comments will help ensure the maintenance of our high standards.

We enjoyed working with your group, and I hope we will have the pleasure of welcoming you again soon.

– Lisa Wasserman

Director of Catering & Convention Services

and

Carol Creekman

National Sales Manager

Silver Legacy Resort Casino

Reno, Nev.

## The Last Hospital Corpsman of Company I

Submitted by Noah Switzer

At 17, Noah Switzer had no way of knowing he would be the last hospital corpsman left from Company I, 3rd Battalion, 28th Regiment, 5th Marine Division. As a young man looking to enlist and fight for his country, Switzer was optimistic about his future and confident in his decision to enlist in the Navy.

“If I’m going, the next bus that comes I’m jumping on,” Switzer said to himself. And when the next bus came by, he jumped on to begin his journey. Switzer’s story starts simply enough with a young man on his way to a Navy recruitment office. He had no idea of the journey he was about to embark on.

Training began at Great Lakes, and from there Switzer went on through Hospital Corps School and was transferred to Portsmouth, Va., where he worked in the Naval Hospital. After some time at the hospital and a stint parachute training in California, Switzer was sent to Camp Elliott for field medical school and eventually was placed with the Fifth Marine Division at Camp Pendleton. Although he had previously met only one man during training at Portsmouth being placed in Company I, it was there on Iwo Jima where seven men would form a bond that would last a lifetime.

What was supposed to last three days on Iwo Jima turned into 36. As the Marines hit the beach, it was chaos. The smoke made seeing nearly impossible, and gunshots rang out all over the place. There are some things a person never forgets, Switzer said, such as the first time he encountered a buried Japanese soldier.

“I was over to the side when all of a sudden men started digging this Japanese soldier out of the sand. He was covered up completely except for his eyeballs. The soldiers hid under the sand and in caves. You never knew where you’d find one.”

As the number of wounded increased, Switzer and his fellow corpsmen went to work.

“I jumped down there and gave him a shot of morphine; cut his clothes off as best I could to get to the wounds he had,” Switzer said. “Patched him up as much as I could, then got him on a litter back to the aid station and then to the hospital.”

Every day was like this – a constant repetition of assessing and treating wounds, doing the best these hospital corpsmen could do while the Marines pushed north. Hospital corpsmen weren’t any more safe than the Marines. Switzer recalled a time when a group of 320 mm, Type 98 mortars, known by the nickname “ghost rockets,” went off above him, causing him to lose his hearing for a period of time.

Their experiences from training to war forged a bond among Switzer, Hubert J. Bitter, William Blazek, John C. Overmyer, John Torchia, Dave Traina and James Zima that outlasted their time in the Navy.

As the last surviving hospital corpsman of Company I, 3rd Battalion, 28th Regiment, 5th Marine Division, Noah Switzer looks back on his time in the Navy with pride and a special fondness for the six other men who started out strangers and became good friends.

---

*Noah Switzer lives in Taylor Mill, Ky.*

# Another flag returns to Japan

Thought you might like to know the story behind the Japanese flag I brought home from the war. The enclosed picture was taken April 1945 in front of a tent at Camp Tarawa. Our barber, Sullivan, took the snapshot. I looked pretty peaked, as I had malaria. Here is the story:

On March 24, 1945, I was sent to a box canyon at Kitano Point, Iwo Jima, to direct tank fire for the purpose of closing tunnels and cave entrances. On the way, I encountered two Japs, one with a helmet and rifle with bayonet. The other wore a cap and had no weapon other than his saber in its scabbard. Both men came around from behind a rock approximately 30 feet in front of me. I took the saber and hid it in the rocks. I also took the silk flag off the Jap with the saber and a cotton flag off of the one with the rifle. When I came back to this area on March 26, the bodies and saber were gone.

On March 25, I met three tanks, one of which was the "Iron Coffin." I had directed tank fire with the "Iron Coffin" before. We fired 81 high-explosive rounds and closed all but one tunnel. The tanks were low on fuel and out of ammo, so we could not return until the following day, March 26.

The night of March 25, three of us set up in front of the tunnel. We took the Japs as they came out at night, one at a time. On March 26, I returned to the south end of the island where I visited the Fifth Division Cemetery, then boarded the APA John Land and left Iwo for Hawaii.

Last year, I decided to return the silk flag to a family member of the Japanese soldier who carried it on Iwo. My son, Steve, lives in California and has a number of Japanese-American friends. They, in turn, have family of friends in Japan. To make a long story short, in 2011, the flag was carried to Japan. Although the tsunami slowed things up, a family member was located.

The letters [that follow] tell the rest of the story. Miko Makino is the wife of a Japanese senator (who represents Kyushu). Her father died at 91 in 2011 and is buried in California. During WWII, he trained kamikaze pilots before coming to the U.S. after the war. Miko [was] coming to visit his grave in March [2012]. Steve and Miko plan[ned] a dinner get-together [in Salinas, Calif.]. End of story to date.

– Charles M. Adams, F-2-26  
Fayette, Mo.



Charles M. Adams, F-2-26, at Camp Tarawa, Hilo, Hawai'i, April 1945, pictured with the flag that was returned.

## *Emails between Steve Adams and Miko Makino*

Dear Mr. Adams:

I hope that this finds you and your father well. I just received a letter from the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare in regard to the Japanese flag. They have been able to locate a son living in the Saitama area (close to Tokyo). I will be sending the flag to the Ministry, and they will return it to the son. When I made the application, it was made very clear that the flag would be returned through the Ministry, and communications with the family would be left up to the wishes of the family. I am very happy that this flag will finally be laid to rest with the original owner. Should they decide to contact me, do I have your permission to give them your information?

War is such a tragic event for all concerned. The men in charge and governments are not always in the right, but the motives of the men who fight are noble and

pure. Thank you for understanding that and returning a memory for the family.

Sincerely,  
Miko Makino

Dear Miko Makino:

Thank you so much for the wonderful news (about the flag being returned). My father greatly appreciates the efforts everyone made to return the flag. I am glad the flag is being returned through the Ministry, as they know the proper way to return the flag. Please give the son our contact information, if that is his desire. We appreciate the effort Sam and Melissa made to take the flag back to Japan.

Sincerely,  
Steve Adams

### ***Translation of flag***

*Provided by the Department of the Army, Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, and completed by faculty member Ms. Ayumni M. Rice of DLIFLC Asian School*

“May luck in battle last forever” or “Fortune in War forever” for (probably) Mr. YUASA, Nobuhiko. All other words in kanji are names.

### ***Explanation of the situation***

This is a national flag of Japan. Probably Mr. YUASA, Nobuhiko was about to be sent to a battlefield, and people around him held a send-off party/ceremony for him. People wrote down their names on the flag and gave it to him. It is to encourage him and wish him luck in the battle. In this case, people around him, such as family, friends, relatives, probably schoolmates and teachers, wrote their names on the flag, wishing him luck in battle.

The person who received it went off to a battlefield with it, probably in his inside pocket, carefully. Probably he took it out of the pocket and looked at it when he felt lonely or weak, and encouraged himself, thinking of the people in his hometown and Japan.

As a Japanese culture, we often write our names and/or lines/words on a big card and give it to the person who is leaving for somewhere else, due to house moving, being transferred, going abroad to study, etc., for his/her good memories and to encourage him/her. The person will remember us and will be encouraged by seeing our names.

## **Secretary's Corner**

The Fifth Marine Division Association had another successful reunion in Reno, Nev. Attendees kept the hospitality room busy with everyone reconnecting. As always, it was good to see members who have missed a few reunions, while remembering those who could not make the reunion this year. Bill Behana, our president and host of the 2013 reunion, is ready to go. Bill has some preliminary plans laid out that should ensure a successful and fun reunion next year. Can't wait until September 2013 and see what Bill pulls together. I hope to see many of you in San Diego.

Anyone want to host the 2014 reunion? We don't have a site selected yet. I have heard a whisper or two from members who might want to host; however, those were only inquires – not commitments. As we contemplate the 2014 location, a few members on the East Coast have asked that we consider a Midwest or East Coast site after two years out West. So if you think you have a great location, let's talk about it. Also, Associate Members, please feel free to volunteer to host us in 2014. Finally, if any of you are interested but don't want the responsibility, we can line up a committee to handle the logistics for the reunion. Looking forward to hearing from you with suggestions of where we can meet in 2014.

Should you call my office, which is perfectly fine, you might be talking with my secretary, Judy. In August, her grandson headed to boot camp at Parris Island, S.C. From what she hears, he is making it. She is very proud of him; so please feel free to ask Judy about her grandson.

### ***Membership Information and Dues***

Please review your mailing label to ensure we have the correct Company and most accurate address listed for you. Also, feel free to update us with your phone number or email address. In addition to mailing these changes in, you can also call me (or my assistant, Judy) at 727-791-4020, or email [fifthmda@gmail.com](mailto:fifthmda@gmail.com) to update this information.

You can also tell if you are current with your dues or not. Above your name on the label, you will see a date, if you are not a Life or Memorial member. If the date shown is not 12/31/2012 or beyond, you need to send in dues as soon as you can. If you wish to drop your membership, please let us know.

— **Tony De Santis**  
**Secretary**

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**Fifth Marine Division Association 64<sup>th</sup> Annual Reunion**  
**Monday, Sept. 9, to Friday, Sept. 13, 2013**  
**San Diego, Calif.**

*Handlery Hotel and Resort*



*The Handlery Hotel and Resort is located in the heart of Mission Valley in San Diego. It is minutes from the World Famous San Diego Zoo, Sea World, downtown, Old Town and many beautiful beaches. The hotel has a complimentary shuttle to local attractions. There is free parking at the hotel.*

*The plan is to have a tour of the USS Midway that is docked in San Diego Harbor with visits to local Marine Corps facilities as well. Hotel parking is free. The rooms are set at \$109 per night. There is a pool, heated Jacuzzi, restaurant in the hotel, fitness center, easy walking between rooms and events and a Business Center with computer services.*

Go to the hotel website to see photos and learn more: <http://sd.handlery.com/>

**Your Host: Bill Behana, 2131 Paseo Grande, El Cajon, CA 92019 619-444-9181 or cell: 619-729-1968. Note to the Peanut Farmer (you know who you are): Please don't forget your promise to send a case of peanuts for the Hospitality Room. Thanks in advance!**

*We need to get a ballpark figure of those who plan to attend to make arrangements for activities. Please fill out, clip and mail to:*

**Bill Behana, 2131 Paseo Grande, El Cajon, CA 92019**

**YES, AS OF NOW, I PLAN TO ATTEND THE**

**Fifth Marine Division Association 64<sup>th</sup> Annual Reunion**

**Monday, Sept. 9, to Friday, Sept. 13, 2013**

**San Diego, Calif.**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Number in party** \_\_\_\_\_



## THE EDITOR'S DESK

Continued from page 3

Back home, about all Georgine and Lt Skibbe's parents knew that he was missing in action in South Vietnam. LtCol Drumright reported this to Skibbe's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Skibbe in a letter dated March 27, 1970.

A subsequent letter to the Skibbes from the colonel described the later attempt to find both Marines, the lack of success and that two men had observed David's body hitting the ground. A letter to Georgine from the Assistant Secretary of the Navy added little to what the colonel had written, repeating that the "fall and impact was observed by an experienced parachute jumper and a doctor. Both of these men stated that David did not move at all after impact with the ground, and from experience, both of them believe that an unobstructed fall from that height would render survival too improbable to be logically considered."

"The story as to his demise never sounded right to me," Georgine said recently, "even after several years of my trying to get answers from the White House. About a decade ago, I received a letter from Dan Kellum, who had devoted himself to researching and commemorating the lives of Marines whose stories needed to be properly told. "So after almost 40 years, he contacted me and told me how a Vietnamese local had found David Skibbe, and on his person found a picture of David and me. That was so heart-wrenching. This prompted an even further probing by Dan and is included in the book that has that picture and David's story in it.

"The stress of re-acquainting myself with this situation has taken a toll once again as I was in contact with Dan for some time as he wrote this book."

---

Books I and II, American Heroes: Grunts, Pilots & "Docs" by Dan Kellum with Lt David Skibbe's story, and that of several others, can be ordered from [www.michaeldankellum.com](http://www.michaeldankellum.com)

### Navy Cross Citation

The President of the United States of America takes pride in presenting the Navy Cross (Posthumously) to Second Lieutenant David William Skibbe, United States Marine Corps Reserve, for extraordinary heroism while serving as a Platoon Commander with Company C, First Reconnaissance Battalion, FIRST Marine Division (Reinforced), Fleet Marine Force, in connection with combat operations against the enemy in the Republic of Vietnam. On 2 March 1970, while Second Lieutenant Skibbe was leading a patrol deep in enemy-controlled territory, the team came under a heavy volume of fire from a large hostile force. During the initial moments of the engagement, Second Lieutenant Skibbe observed a wounded man fall in a forward position, and unhesitatingly placed himself between the casualty and enemy soldiers to deliver intense covering fire which forced the enemy momentarily to break contact and enabled the Marines to move the wounded man to a more secure location. While the radio operator was requesting fixed-wing air support, the enemy launched a ground assault in an attempt to overrun the Marine position. Despite the hostile rounds impacting around him, Second Lieutenant Skibbe exposed himself to the enemy fire to direct the defensive activities of his men and, while thus engaged, was severely wounded in the ankle.



Although suffering intense pain and unable to walk, he nevertheless skillfully directed the bombing and strafing runs of supporting aircraft with such accuracy that the hostile soldiers broke contact and retreated, thereby enabling a medical evacuation helicopter to come to a safe hover overhead. As Second Lieutenant Skibbe was being hoisted toward the aircraft, the hoist apparatus sustained a malfunction, and he was mortally injured when he fell to the ground. His heroic and determined actions throughout this mission contributed significantly to the defeat of the numerically superior enemy force. By his courage, valiant leadership, and unwavering devotion to duty in the face of grave personal danger, Second Lieutenant Skibbe upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and of the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life in the service of his country.

General Orders: Authority: Navy Department Board of Decorations and Medals  
Action Date: March 2, 1970  
Service: Marine Corps  
Rank: Second Lieutenant  
Company: Company C  
Battalion: 1st Reconnaissance Battalion  
Division: 1st Marine Division (Rein.) FMF

# Reno Reunion Recap

By Kathy Painton

*Daughter of Pfc George Addison Dunn (F-2-28), KIA Iwo Jima*

The recent reunion in Reno, Nev., was another success, thanks to the efforts of LtCol Tom Kalus and Dr. Janet Kalus, who organized and hosted the event. Ivan and Aline Hammond were two of the many attendees who offered their assistance in helping the reunion to run smoothly. Ivan handled the hospitality room's open bar; and Aline coordinated the Ladies Auxiliary Silent Auction.

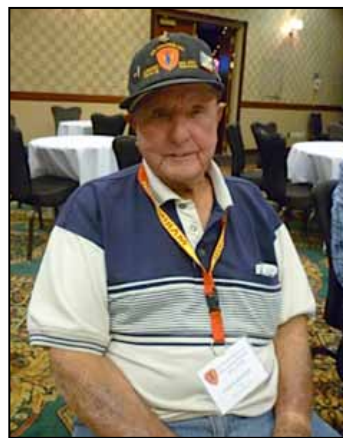
Attending these reunions is always a rewarding experience, and I thoroughly enjoyed having an opportunity to meet with several of the men who shared their memories of training at Camp Tarawa during WWII. I am already looking forward to meeting with these men, and others, at the 5th Marine Division Association Reunion next year.

The following are a few of the memories I've compiled from interviews with some of the men who attended the reunion:

## *Memories of Training at Camp Tarawa*

Al Eutsey and Aaron Shelly from C-1-28 identified themselves in the Charlie's Pride picture that their company had taken with Roscoe, the 28th Marines' mascot, sitting on the hood of the jeep. They remembered that Roscoe made a lot of noise at night. Francis "Jack" Jackson (JASCO) added that some of the Marines kept dogs as pets, and Roscoe chased a few of the dogs through the camp when he got loose one day. He just wanted to "play," but the dogs didn't know that, and they had no desire to romp around with the lion. Jack said that when the Marines left Hawaii, the dogs had to be euthanized because they were beginning to run in packs.

Another veteran, June Haigh, (I-3-28), brought several photographs that were taken at Camp Tarawa. I asked him to have his photographs scanned and send me copies for the Camp Tarawa Detachment archives. One



**Above: The ceiling in the dome at the Silver Legacy Casino welcomes the FMDA. Left: Al Eutsey (C-1-28). Right: Aaron 'AJ' Shelly (C-1-28).**

photo showed the door that he and his tent mates made for their tent. June told me that the Marines were issued white skivvies, but the government decided to have the men dye them green to provide more of a "camouflage look" that wouldn't show the dirt as much as the white skivvies did. One day an announcement was made over the loud speakers that the men were to dye all their skivvies in large barrels and there were to be "No Hold Backs." By noon, there were green skivvies hanging out to dry all over the camp. June has kept two of his "green" t-shirts after all these years.

Bill Gropp was a replacement in Signal Company and worked with some of the Navajo Code Talkers. He said that one of them used "tweezers" to "shave" with because he had so little facial hair he didn't need a razor. He recalled the morning the men were served real eggs, "over easy," instead of the powdered eggs they usually had at breakfast. That was quite a feast for the guys. He also remembered that several of the Marines were bitten by scorpions when they were out at night.



Above: Jerry Hanson (not a 5th Marine Division vet) and Francis “Jack” Jackson (JASCO). Below: Tom Kalus, his wife, Janet, and their son, James. Lt. Col Kalus and his wife were in charge of the

Paul Murphy (G-3-27) remembered seeing snow on Mauna Kea. He said that during their training, the dust was so bad the men were issued goggles to protect their eyes.

The Camp Tarawa Detachment would appreciate receiving copies of any memories or pictures that readers of the *Spearhead* may have pertaining to training at Camp Tarawa. Please contact Kathy Painton at (808) 880-9880 for more information on our efforts to preserve the historical significance of Camp Tarawa during WWII.

Last year, I suggested that the 2013 reunion be held on the Big Island, but I abandoned that idea due to the difficulty many of the veterans would face in traveling to Hawaii. As an alternative, the Camp Tarawa Detachment docents are offering a complimentary “Boots on the Ground” tour to anyone who wants to visit the Big Island of Hawaii on a family vacation. For more information on the “Boots on the Ground” tours, please check out our website: [camptarawamcl.com](http://camptarawamcl.com).

## Camp Tarawa Marine Corps League Detachment #1255

The Camp Tarawa Detachment #1255 received its charter from the Marine Corps League on Oct. 5, 2006. The detachment’s main mission is to keep alive the history of the 55,000 Marines and Navy corpsmen who from December 1943 through August 1945, trained at Camp Tarawa. The Second Marine Division arrived on Dec. 3, 1943, to recover from the Battle of Tarawa and to prepare assaults on Saipan, Tinian and Okinawa. The Fifth Marine Division began to arrive in late summer 1944 and trained at Camp Tarawa for the Iwo Jima Campaign and the Occupation of Japan.

### The Camp Tarawa Museum

The detachment’s goal is to educate Hawaii’s Island visitors and the local population about this very important period in our nation’s history. It is the memory of these men who sacrificed so much for their generation and generations to come, to the people of Waimea who befriended these men, and to the owner of the Parker Ranch who made the land available to the United States government, that the efforts to build the camp Tarawa Museum are dedicated.

### The Boots on the Ground Tours

The Camp Tarawa detachment docents offer a complimentary three-hour (56 mile) tour of Camp Tarawa sites within the town of Waimea and the surrounding Waikoloa Manuever Area. If you are ever on the Big Island and would like to schedule a tour, contact Jim Browne 808 883-0069 or Kathy Painton 808 880-9880.

### The Foundation

The Camp Tarawa Foundation is incorporated in the State of Hawaii as a 501(c)3 non-profit foundation. It was formed in 2008 to facilitate the building of the Camp Tarawa Museum. If you know of anyone who would be willing to support the efforts to build The Camp Tarawa Museum, pass this information on through printout or forward by email. All donations, large or small, to help fund the construction of the museum will be greatly appreciated. You may make tax-deductible contributions to: The Camp Tarawa Foundation, P.O. Box 385551, Waikoloa, HI 96738

*For more information on the Camp Tarawa Detachment, visit the website at [www.camptarawamcl.com](http://www.camptarawamcl.com) or contact Jim Browne, Chairman/Camp Tarawa Museum Committee, at 808-883-0069 or [barefoot@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:barefoot@hawaii.rr.com).*



## FINAL MUSTER

(“Roll Call of the Reef”)



AUTREY, George B. **HQBN** 04/30/10  
 BERGSTEIN, Milton **E-2-28** 02/14/12  
 BROUSSARD Sr., Edward J. **G-3-26** 04/19/11  
 BRUSA Jr., Adolph B. **C-1-27** Unknown  
 CROUCH, Carl E. **HQ-1-26** 11/27/12  
 CUNNINGHAM, Lester B. **H-3-13** 03/10/12  
 DROBNICK, Albert J. **HQBN** 11/02/12  
 FOX, John T. **H-3-27** 09/03/11  
 GUNTER Jr., Lonnie **E-2-27** 07/01/12  
 HALEY, Thomas W. **HQ-1-28** Unknown  
 HERRINGTON, Earl W. **HS-13** 02/28/11  
 HEUVEL, Henry L. **5THJASCO** 10/5/11  
 HOPKINS, George H. **5THJASCO** 12/20/10  
 JARVIS Jr., George J. **5THENGR** 05/12/12  
 KELLY, Jr. Howard A. **5THENGR** 06/3/12  
 KIES, Jerome J. **HS-27** 06/3/11  
 MARENNA, Vincent **5THENGR** 11/05/12  
 MORRIS, Marshall **HQ-3-26** 11/13/12  
 MICKEY, Donald D. **E-2-28** Unknown  
 NEILSON, Keith H. **E-2-27** 04/30/12  
 OWEN, James R. **5THENGR** 06/17/12  
 PLATT, Laban H. **M-4-13** 09/14/11  
 PLUMMER, L. Wesley **H-3-28** 07/20/12  
 RICHMOND, Donald J. **5THJASCO** 12/24/11  
 RUFF, Charles E. **A-1-28** 10/19/12  
 SUTTON Jr., George W. **5TH DIV** 04/10/12  
 ULRICH, James S. **5THENGR** 2009  
 WEGENER, Harold E. **H-3-28** 11/17/11  
 WILSON, James D. **HQ-3-26** 04/20/12

---

**Editor's Note: Please send Final Muster notices (including name, unit and date of death) by email to Spearhead Editor at [talespress@talespress.com](mailto:talespress@talespress.com), by USPS to Spearhead Editor, 2609 North High Cross Road, Urbana, IL 61802 or by calling 217-384-5820.**



## Volunteers sought for Ladies Auxiliary

As the President's wife, custom dictated that I was to be head of the Ladies Auxiliary meeting. The meeting, scheduled for 10 a.m., began at 10:25 on Tuesday, 28 August. It was concluded that a \$15 donation/so-called dues was needed in order to vote.

During the meeting, a request was made to publish the Ladies Auxiliary Constitution that the secretary, Penny Pauletto, stated she had "somewhere." It was also suggested a Treasurer's Report be published for the ladies' edification. Because Penny is the Secretary/Treasurer "because no one wanted to volunteer for one or the other," perhaps at the San Diego reunion we can have volunteers for one or the other. The auxiliary welcomed several members who seemed eager to help the organization.

In charge of the "silent auction," the Ladies Auxiliary owes a big *mahalo* to Florence Curnutt for her extensive donation to the auction. Also, Cindy Touchstone deserves applause for the many hours she spent tending bar, as well as helping with the auction. At the end of the auction, Aline Hammond reported that the silent auction reaped \$506 that would be sent to the Wounded Warriors Fund.

Reminder: Bring as many items as you can to the reunion next year in San Diego for the silent auction.

Phyllis Schaefer, in charge of the Marine doll for several past years, handed him over to Cindy Touchstone after the auction that netted \$400 for the Auxiliary treasury.

Karen Campbell spoke about her father, Matthew Cozzi, hoping at sometime to reach someone who had known him.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

– Dr. Janet Kalus

SAVE THE DATE

~

**3RD REUNION OF THE  
 USS IWO JIMA  
 LPH2/LHD7  
 OCTOBER 2 - 6, 2013**



Photo courtesy of Jose Padro

## National Navajo Code Talker Day

Twenty-one Navajo Code Talkers (right) who served in the Marine Corps during World War II attended the 30th National Navajo Code Talker Day on Aug. 14, 2012, at Window Rock, Ariz.

The event was held at the Navajo Veteran's Memorial Park and was sponsored by the Navajo Code Talkers Association. Marine MajGen James A. Kessler was the keynote speaker, and Arizona governor Janice K. Brewer (pictured above



with Iwo Jima veteran Gene Bell) was also in attendance. Some 150 Young Marines, including Young Marine of the Year SgtMaj McCall Behringer, served as escorts for the Code Talkers. At top right is Peter McDonald Sr., president of the Navajo Code Talkers Association, with Bell, who provided this information. Bell is also a board member of the Iwo Jima Association of America and met with Gov. Brewer on its behalf.

## WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

BROSNAN, Jackie **ASSOC**  
 CAMPBELL, Karen **ASSOC**  
 CAMPBELL, Lesley **26TH**  
 HOWEL, George **HS-I-27**  
 JACKSON, Francis **HQ-3-27**  
 PACK, Dale **HS-2-26**  
 STALLINGS, Michael **ASSOC**

**Life Members:**  
 BROSNAN, Jack **B-1-27**  
 GADFORD, Thomas **H-3-13**  
 GIRASUOLO, Samuel **8TH FLD DEP**  
 GODREY, Richard **E-2-28**  
 JACOME, Alden **A-5-26**  
 MAXWELL, James **HS-MOTOR**  
 McCLAIN, Stanley **HQ-3-27**

# Daughter of WWII Marine searches for information about her father

By Ray Elliott

Like an ever-increasing number of children, grandchildren and other relatives of Iwo Jima veterans, Karen Cozzi Campbell, Oswego, Ill., is on a mission to learn more about her father who died at 32 in an industrial accident in Chicago where he worked as a electrician when she was not yet 9 years old.

Karen called several months ago seeking an outlet to publicize her quest, joined the Fifth Marine Division Association and attended the reunion in Reno in August. A group of these legacy offspring, some of them whose fathers were killed in the war when they were even younger than Karen come to these reunions across the country and to the Iwo Jima Association of America's Iwo Jima Reunion and Symposium in Washington, D.C., each February. And they travel back to the battlefields in the Pacific looking for a connection.

Matthew "Al" Cozzi, son of an Italian immigrant, grew up in an orphanage after age 10 when his mother and oldest sister died in a Chicago house fire. With no help to care for him and his younger siblings while their father worked, they were sent to St. Mary's Orphanage in Des Plaines.

Shortly after his 18th birthday, Cozzi enlisted in the Marine Corps on Nov. 21, 1942. From there, Karen and her husband, Harold, a Marine Vietnam veteran and a retired teacher like his wife, began tracking her father's World War II record, using the military records from the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis.

They learned that her father had gone to boot camp in San Diego and volunteered for the paramarines, where he was assigned to B CO, First Paramarine Training Btn. From there, he went to New Caledonia in July and August with the Second Paramarine Battalion of the First Marine Regiment.

He served on the week-long diversionary raid on Choiseul in the fall of 1943 to cover the Bougainville invasion, again with the Second Paramarine Battalion, led by LtCol Victor Krulak, who later became a general and also served in Korea and Vietnam before retiring in June 1968. Cozzi went on to Bougainville with L CO, Third Parachute Btn, First Marine Parachute Reg., First Marine Division until the middle of January 1944.

He then went back to Hawaii and on to the States where he joined B-1-28 and then to Camp Tarawa on the Big Island of Hawai'i and trained for the invasion of Iwo Jima, where he landed in the first wave on Feb. 19, 1945, and was badly wounded the first day by rounds from a machine gun.

After being wounded, Cozzi was taken aboard a hospital ship and eventually returned to the States aboard the aircraft carrier USS Lexington to the Naval Hospital in Bremington,



Matthew "Al" Cozzi

Wash. From there, he went to Great Lakes Naval Station, where he was discharged as a corporal in October 1945.

And that's it in a nutshell of what Karen and Harold Campbell have been able to learn about her father's service in World War II. She keeps a scrapbook of documents detailing his life in the service, but has little other information.

"My mother (Renell) said he never talked to her about his time in the Marines," Karen said. "'Some day, Re,'" she told me he said, "'I'll tell you.' But he never did. And I was much too young when he was killed for him to tell me."

Before the couple started searching for documents and photos of her father, Karen had only one photo of him. After visiting the record center in St. Louis where they obtained his records, they found a photo of him when he joined the Marine Corps at 18 years old. She didn't even have his ribbons and medals, which her mother had given to her brother, that were lost in a home burglary.

"We were able to get new medals and even later obtained a Purple Heart," Karen said. "We put everything together in a shadow box and gave that to my mother for Christmas."

At this point, Karen intends to continue searching for information about her father by attending reunions and hopes to find someone who served with him.

"If you know any information about Al Cozzi, please contact his daughter, Karen Cozzi Campbell, 71 Lombardy Lane, Oswego, IL 60543. Home: (630) 554-1602; cell: (630) 244-8816," is listed on the flyers Karen hands out and leaves for anyone who may have known her father. You can also email her at [halandkarencampbell@yahoo.com](mailto:halandkarencampbell@yahoo.com).

# The Last Zero Fighter — Firsthand Accounts from WWII Japanese Naval Pilots

By Dan King

Pacific Press, 292 Pages

This is a book about the lives and experiences of the Japanese pilots who fought as hard for their country as the Allied forces against whom they fought did for their countries. And it's one you won't want to miss to see how similar to our own warriors were the fighting men on the other side of the battle in World War II.

Among the accolades by the men who fought on both sides in the war and by the historians who now study it, LtGen Lawrence "Larry" Snowden, USMC (Ret.), company commander of F/2/26 on Iwo Jima, writes about the book: "We Americans do not hold a monopoly on courage and sacrifice. Our former adversaries, the Japanese, also displayed these qualities in their commitment to their nation. Dan King has interviewed Japanese pilots and obtained their experiences in their own language.

"Valuable to understanding the Japanese people who are now one of our closest and valuable allies in an area where we have vital economic and national security interests. I encourage everyone who wishes to learn more about the WWII Pacific theater to read this book."

Others echo Gen Snowden, who later served as Chief of Staff, U.S. Forces Japan, and was instrumental in securing permission to hold the annual "Reunion of Honor" on Iwo Jima each March. The 91-year-old general continues to help maintain those visits, travels to Iwo Jima with Military Historical Tours and plans to go again on the March 2013 tour.

The author himself is quite knowledgeable and interested in the Japanese history and culture. Dan King earned a bachelor's degree in Japanese, then spent 10 years living in the country. Not a veteran himself, he grew up with a father who spent two and a half years in a POW camp during the Korean War and has traveled extensively to battlefields in the Pacific theater of war.

He traveled to many of the WWII battle sites in search of firsthand knowledge of what the veterans experienced

at Iwo Jima, Saipan, Guam, Rabaul, Singapore, Tinian, Peleliu, Midway, Wake Island, Peleliu, Ponape, Yap, Guadalcanal, Rabaul, Okinawa, Nanking and many other places. During the past 30 years, King has interviewed 97 WWII Japanese army and navy veterans and met more than 250 of them.

With that background, he worked as a tech/language adviser on several movies and documentaries about the Pacific War, including *Windtalkers*, *The Last Samurai*, *Flags of our Fathers*, *Only the Brave*, HBO's *The Pacific*, *Wake Island*, *Alamo of the Pacific* and others. And for this book, King traveled over a period of five years to and from Japan to interview and document firsthand accounts of WWII Japanese naval aviators in their own language.

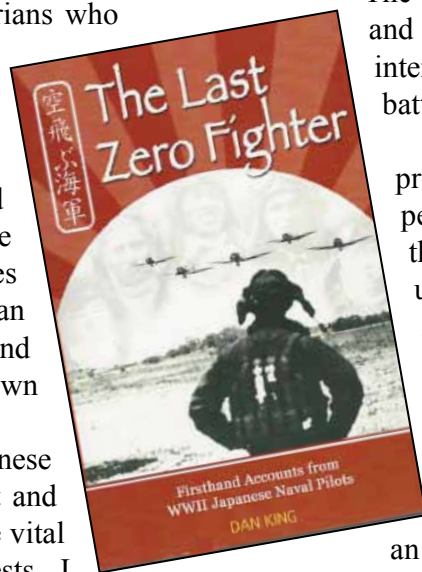
The book includes 79 pictures and drawings and is divided into five chapters, based on interviews with five veterans of the pivotal battles of the Pacific War.

An ambitious, strenuous and challenging project. But King delivers a very insightful perspective to audiences on both sides of the war. Many of the accounts had been untold, overlooked or misunderstood by Americans because of "the language barrier that exists due to the complex nature of the Japanese written and spoken language," King says.

Besides the personal experiences of the five veteran pilots, the book includes an introduction to the Japanese pilot training for both enlisted and officers. The men explain how they joined the navy for patriotism, adventure and a sense of duty – just as their American counterparts, what they thought about the war and the planes they flew and how they felt about friends dying and what they thought about their former enemies.

What is quite clear is that these men are not much different than their adversaries during the war and long afterward. Tomokazu Kasai says he still has nightmares. "I have the same dream of a Hellcat on my tail, and I can't shake it. We must never forget the lessons we learned. We have the duty to pass them on. War is ugly, senseless and cruel. We must never forget."

Toshimitsu Imaizumi echoed Kasai's thoughts: "War brings pain, suffering and heartache. Old men start wars, young men fight them."



The book is \$24.95 and is available online at Amazon and Barnes & Noble or directly from the author for a signed copy at [www.historicalconsulting.com/index.html](http://www.historicalconsulting.com/index.html).

# FIFTH MARINE DIVISION ASSOCIATION

Tony De Santis, Secretary  
2560 Gulf to Bay Blvd., Ste 200  
Clearwater, FL 33765

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
FAYETTEVILLE, AR  
PERMIT NO. 1

Forwarding Service Requested

## 5th Marine Division Association MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

All annual memberships expire on 31 December. Please renew on time.

New member ( ) Renewal ( ) Associate ( )

Served with: \_\_\_\_\_  
Co. Bn. Reg.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to:  
Fifth Marine Division Association  
Tony De Santis, Secretary  
2560 Gulf to Bay Blvd., Ste 200  
Clearwater, FL 33765  
or email [fifthmda@gmail.com](mailto:fifthmda@gmail.com)

Date of birth (for Life Membership): \_\_\_\_\_

### Office Use Only

LGR		LF	
DB		NM	
CRD		FM	
ADS		NL	

### Dues (please check):

- ( ) Annual ..... \$ 25.00
- ( ) Lifetime ..... \$ 150.00  
*age 64 and under*
- ( ) Lifetime ..... \$ 100.00  
*age 65 through 79*
- ( ) Lifetime ..... \$ 50.00  
*age 80 and over*
- ( ) General Fund ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL** ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*(Make checks payable to: 5th Marine Division Assn.)*