

The 2/4 Association



Sea Horse

Third Quarter, 2003

The Newsletter of the Second Battalion, Fourth Marines Association

In this issue

- * President's message . . . page 1
- * In memoriam . . . page 1
- * Clayton Logan Walton . . . page 2
- * Reunion 2003 . . . page 2
- * 2/4 reunion photo, with some IDs and a little commentary from Becky Valdez . . . page 4
- * Getting ready for the 2004 reunion . . . page 4
- * Chu Lai to the DMZ with the Magnificent Bastards, May 2-16, 2004 . . . page 5
- * Some troops dig into their pockets to get the best gear . . . page 6
- * Corps joins special ops ranks . . . page 7
- * In Holy City, things are going right . . . page 8
- * Jim Mazy and his magnificent crashing computer . . . page 11
- * Help the editor—inform and entertain your buddies . . . page 11

President's message

Dear Friends, Members, Marines and Corpsmen,

Lessons learned—Almost everything in life is capable of teaching something to the person who experiences it. I've learned in the past few weeks to listen to those who just may know a little more about things than I do. Due to unforeseen circumstances that I had no control over, my son and I had to cancel our plans to attend the 2003 reunion cruise that just completed. Three days prior to the ship setting sail, my elderly father-in-law was rushed to the hospital in what we, the family, took as the last step prior to seeing the funeral director. He recuperated just fine and we will just sit and see what his 99th year brings. The lesson learned from this was to follow the advice of our travel agent and keep the trip cancellation insurance that was erroneously purchased for our passage and billed to our credit cards. When I received our trip documents, I noticed that each of us was charged for

said cancellation insurance. I immediately called Becky Valdez raising cane because I was adamant about paying for something I didn't want. Being the good travel agent that she is, she first tried to talk this stubborn old Marine into keeping it but I was strong and told her no way. She was able to cancel the coverage and credit the cost back to our credit cards. Lesson learned was to listen to someone who knows a little more about things than I do. I would probably have had my insurance checks for the cancelled trip by now.

Lesson two—For two weeks prior to going on this cruise, I kept putting off calling our friend Logan Walton. I talked to him a little earlier in July when he was sick from eating too much of a good (yet bad for him) thing for someone with his known medical conditions. Every time I thought of it I kept telling myself that I would just call him tomorrow. Lesson learned—do not put off reaching out to someone while you're thinking of him or her. Logan is gone from us and, just like the old saying goes, tomorrow never comes. I missed my chance to talk to my friend again, and I feel bad that I did not get to say good-bye. The next time you're thinking of someone, act upon that thought, contact them...it may be your last chance, ever.

Semper Fidelis...Jim Mazy

Second Battalion, 4th Marines—the Best in the Corps

“Unfortunately, America usually only remembers its veterans when they're needed.”

In memoriam

* Clayton Logan Walton, August 1, 2003. He was the Association President from July 1998 - June 2000.

* *Col Brian D. Moore, August 29, 2003. He was the CO of Fox Company 2/4 in 1965. Cards and letters can be sent to his wife at Rosemary (Stormy) Moore, 21 Moongale Drive, Carlisle PA 17013-2116 (717 243-7143).*

✦ ✦ ✦

Clayton Logan Walton

UNADILLA [August 3, 2003] - Clayton Logan Walton, 55, of 669 First Street, died Friday at his residence. Memorial services will be held at 2 p.m., Tuesday at Snow United Methodist Church, Dooly County, with full military honors. The Rev. Tom Teate will officiate and members of the U. S. Marine Corps League, Det. 970 are asked to sit as a group during the service. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the U. S. Marine Corps Reserve "Toys for Tots" Foundation, c/o Phil M. McGoldrick, 746 Cherry Street, Macon, GA 31201.

Mr. Walton, son of the late Reba Bowen Walton, was a native of Unadilla. He was a U. S. Marine Corps vet-

eran and served during the Vietnam War. Mr. Walton received the Bronze Star with a Combat V for his service in that war and was a member of the U. S. Marine Corps League, Det. 970. Mr. Walton was retired from the Montezuma Police Department with twenty-five years in law enforcement.

Survivors include wife, Sandra S. Walton of Unadilla; two daughters, Stacy Spell of Lake Park and Teri McClintic of Perry; his son, Chris Walton of Wauchula, FL; his father, Clayton Walton of Unadilla; his sister, Connie Cook of Cochran; and six grandchildren.

* * *

The above article is reprinted from the MaconTelegraph.com web <<http://www.macon.com>>, August 3, 2003.

Reunion 2003

Submitted by Jack Petrowsky, August 27, 2003.

My wife Peggy and I were fortunate to attend the 2003 reunion onboard the cruise ship Jubilee out of Galveston, Texas. As all of the past reunions, this one was great. Peggy and I would like to congratulate and

thank those who spent all the time preparing and planning.

There were old faces and new faces and others like myself who had just been through major illnesses and/or surgery and young ones and old ones; but we were all family. Granted we did not visit a military installation or have a noted guest speaker; but we spent time together. And we ate and ate and ate. Only two elected officers were present, Kareem (vice-president) and myself (secretary) and of course our chaplain Frank Valdez. There were shows and games on the cruise. I spent a fortune on artwork at an onboard auction and my brother-in-law and Peggy's sister who joined us won \$8000 at the casino. Chaplain Frank did a great job at the karaoke mike in the lounge. Mike (brother-in-law) also prepared a DVD depicting Marines in many fronts from WW2 to Iraqi Freedom. He spent a lot of time working on it and many of the members enjoyed watching it—even though he was career Air Force. Thanks, brother.

2002 - 2004 2/4 Association Officers

President	Jim Mazy, 6122 Shasta Street, Englewood, FL 34224-8161. Phone: 941 474-9431. E-mail: <President@2ndbn4thmarine.com>.
Vice President	Yahya A.A. Kariem, 7717 Reed Street, Jacksonville, FL 32208. Phone: 904 764-2241. E-mail: <ykariem50@aol.com>.
Secretary	Jack Petrowsky, P.O. Box 7214, Las Cruces, NM 88006-7214. Phone: 505 382-0759. E-mail: <jackny@webtv.net>.
Treasurer	John "Pete" Townley, Jr., 1522 Bent Trail CT, Sugarland, TX 77479-6943. Phone: 281 937-9692. E-mail: <petetownley@msn.com>.
Board of Directors	Logan Walton.
	Tim Doble, 9395 Birch Lane, Lakeville, MN 55044. Phone: 952 461-2996. E-mail: <tjdoble@spacestar.com>.
Chaplain	Frank Valdez, 8221 East Birch Tree Lane, Anaheim Hills, CA 92808. Phone: 714 821-2846. E-mail: <valcone@hotmail.com>.
Historian	Col J.W. Hammond, Jr., USMC (Ret), 330 East Riverview Circle, Reno, NV 89509-1118. Phone: 702 322-3237.
Membership	Robert Bliss, 43 Meads Mountain Road, Woodstock, NY 12498. Phone: 845 679-5909. E-mail: <Membership@2ndbn4thmarine.com>.
Newsletter Editor	Ken Simpson, 303 Willowen Drive, Rochester, NY 14609-3235. Phone: 716 482-0717. E-Mail: <Editor@2ndbn4thmarine.com>. Web page: < http://home.rochester.rr.com/kensimpson/ >.
PX Sales Manager	Jack Petrowsky, P.O. Box 7214, Las Cruces, NM 88006-7214. Phone: 505 382-0759. E-mail: <jackny@webtv.net>.
Roster Manager	Jim Mazy, 6122 Shasta Street, Englewood, FL 34224-8161. Phone: 941 474-9431. E-mail: <Marine-2-4@comcast.net>.
Webmaster	Jim Mazy, 6122 Shasta Street, Englewood, FL 34224-8161. Phone: 941 474-9431. E-mail: <Webmaster@2ndbn4thmarine.com>.
Health & Welfare Officer	Steven O'Shields, 3151 Lake Forest Drive, Apt #86, Augusta, GA 30909. Phone: 706 729-0043. E-mail: <chesty84@usmc.net>. Web page: < http://www.geocities.com.chesty84 >.

The 2/4 Association *Sea Horse* is published quarterly, and is the official newsletter of the Second Battalion, Fourth Marines Association, Inc.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention the distinct effect that was evident (to me at least) by the apparent snub by many of the founding fathers and "original" members of our organization. I had heard that some were upset because of the supposed lack of communication concerning details about the cruise. Come on guys, we are not teenagers anymore! One of the items discussed at the general meeting was the need for better communication between us. I realize that as we get older we are prone to get more illnesses that will have an effect on our ability to travel and get around, but I find it very difficult to believe that all of you were sick, lame or lazy at the same time. I would like to quote from a Sea Horse article 4th Quarter 2002 with reference to our organization:

"We are not about Vietnam. We are not about Desert Storm. We are not about any specific period of conflict nor are we about any particular period of peacetime service. We are about BROTHERHOOD, a brotherhood that can only be felt as a lump in the back of your throat or the pit of your belly every time you hear the National Anthem or The Marines' Hymn."

Let us not let petty differences divide the great thing we have with our organization. Let us realize that this reunion meant so much that Sandy Walton did not notify us of Logan's passing until **after** the reunion so as not to spoil it for those that attended. Let us remember Logan now and plan to put next year's reunion on the calendar. **NOW.**

A vote taken during the general meeting has set the upcoming reunions as:

- 2004: Benld, Illinois
- 2005: California, hosted by Frank and Becky Valdez
- 2006: Quantico area, hosted by James Rogers
- 2007: Southwest (TX/NM), hosted by Jack and Peggy Petrowsky

To all those brothers and sisters who attended the reunion, **THANK YOU** for making it for us another great time together.

2/4 Association PX Merchandise	
General Items	Price
"Gone but not forgotten." 16" x 20" print of artwork by Chris Thibodeau; original created as a Christmas present to his father James Thibodeau (Hotel, '64/'65). Price includes shipping. (See 2/4 Association web < http://www.2ndbn4thmarine.com/thibodeau_art.htm >for details.)	\$25.00
Mugs and tumblers by Tervis. Super insulated with an embroidered 2/4 patch encapsulated between two pieces of crystal clear acrylic plastic. Price includes shipping. (See 2/4 Association web < http://www.2ndbn4thmarine.com/px_items_disc.htm > for details.)	
12 oz Rocks Glass: Each - \$13.35; Set of 2 - \$23.75; Set of 4 - \$41.55	
16 oz Tumbler: Each - \$14.35; Set of 2 - \$25.75; Set of 4 - \$45.55	
17 oz Mug w/handle: Each - \$16.35; Set of 2 - \$29.75; Set of 4 - \$52.55	
Polo shirt. Red, maroon, white, or blue with "2 nd Bn, 4 th Marines" embroidered on the front.	\$25.00
T-shirt. Various colors with full-color 2/4 logo decal on the front. (Call or e-mail for available colors.)	\$15.00
Caps. White with black bill. Embroidered with "2 nd Bn, 4 th Marines, Magnificent Bastards." Navy blue or Marine Corps red. "USMC" embroidered on the front; "2 nd Bn, 4 th Marines" embroidered on the back.	\$18.50
Golf towel. White with red 2/4 logo.	\$6.50
Logo. Stitched patch, 3 1/2" x 4", multicolored.	\$5.00
Logo pin. For lapel or cap. (Call or e-mail for price and availability.)	
Mouse pad. Red and white 2/4 logo.	\$6.50
Apron. With pocket, for home and shop use - red with white 2/4 logo.	\$8.00
Thermal travel mug. Champagne with black Marine Corps emblem and 2/4 logo.	\$5.50
Coffee mug. Black with white 2/4 logo and Marine Corps emblem.	\$5.50
Videos	Price
Dai Do Documentary. (Call or e-mail for price and availability.)	
2001 Reunion. Includes visits to The Wall, Iwo Jima Memorial, etc.	\$10.00
Books	Price
Look for a new selection of books in the next Sea Horse.	
Ordering Instructions: Please add \$1.50 per item for shipping and allow 4-6 weeks. Make your check or money order payable to "2/4 Association." Some items may be out of stock and, therefore, will not be shipped immediately. Call or e-mail Jack Petrowsky first for information. Send your order to: 2/4 Association PX c/o Jack Petrowsky PO Box 7214 Las Cruces, NM 88006-7214	

Semper Fi

Jack "Ski"
H Co 2/4, 1967-1968



2/4 reunion photo, with some IDs and a little commentary from Becky Valdez

Becky says, "Bottom row, left to right—Ed Garr, Randy Kington, Ray Wyatt, Morgan White (first timer), and Jack Petrowsky. Next two rows combined—I don't know the name of the man in the white shirt or the man next to him in the red shirt. Third man from the left is Fred Williamson, Can't tell who the man hiding next to him is. Tan suit with red tie is Jim Laskley—another first timer. Then Dave Pippin, George Welling, Manny Travassos. There is another man in a white hat behind Manny, name unknown. Next two men unknown, then Gary Brown, Robert Santos, Yahya Kariem, Robert Stipes, Frank Valdez, J. Hilton and Clyde Gahman. Bill Johnson was in the picture somewhere. Also, John Hollars, Ed Brummett, Jim Black, Fred Price, Al Pittman, and Ted Gray.

"Bill Johnson brought his brother Ken who was retired Air Force. Their mother passed away during the cruise. Also Genny Dawkins came in honor of her late husband Ed Dawkins. Peggy Petrowsky brought her sister and brother-in-law Dottie and Mike Michel. Mike brought a wonderful video of Vietnam-era footage that he had made and played it during our hosted cocktail party. FYI, he also won nine grand in the casino.

"Al Pittman was one of the chosen few to play on stage in a game show. When they asked him who he was with, he replied that he was "single" and had come alone! He failed to mention that he was with several 2/4 Marines, but it turned out in his favor when he scored a date with a beautiful "single" woman.

"Jack and Peggy Petrowsky tripped the lights in the dance club until the wee hours and Frank Valdez had his time on the Karaoke stage.

"The rest I can't tell because I'm sworn to secrecy."

(Editor's note: Thanks, Becky, for all the work trying to get me the photo and for providing us a little scoop on what really happened.)

Getting ready for the 2004 reunion

Submitted by Jim Mazy, August 28, 2003.

The 2004 reunion of the Second Battalion, Fourth Marines Association, Inc. is presently in the advanced planning stage.

It will be held in Benld, Illinois, which is a small town situated just off of Interstate 55, about 35 miles from St. Louis. The festivities are scheduled to coincide with the town's centennial celebration, and the dates are set for

Labor Day weekend September 2 through 5, breaking up on Monday September 6, 2004.

This will be the second 2/4 reunion that Benld has hosted for 2/4. I guess we didn't destroy the town last time the Marines landed. For those who do not know, Benld is the town where SgtMaj John "Big John" Malnar grew up.

All information will be disclosed in the next issue of *Sea Horse*, but prior to that it will be on the 2/4 web site <<http://www.2ndbn4thmarine.com>> as soon as it becomes available. For those of you who do not have

computer access, hook up with a friend, neighbor, or your local library and check in on the site often. It is the easiest and fastest way to keep the information flowing.

Chu Lai to the DMZ with the Magnificent Bastards, May 2-16, 2004

Submitted by Ed Garr. (Editor's note: The following was provided by Ed to let us all know about the upcoming tour to Vietnam that he is directing. I've made only a few editing changes, for which he will probably forgive me.)

Tour Guest: Major General Jim Livingston, MOH, USMC Ret

Tour Host: Brigadier General Gary Brown, USMC Ret

Tour Director: Capt. Ed Garr, USMC Ret

Itinerary

2 May, Sunday, Day One: Depart Los Angeles late in the evening for the connection to Hong Kong. The flight arrives in the early morning (FI CX 881).

3 May, Monday: Lose this day due to crossing the International Date Line.

4 May, Tuesday, Day Two: Arrive Ha Noi, after a short layover in Hong Kong. Proceed to the Galaxy Hotel. There will be a short afternoon tour of the city with as many sites as time permits. Open house with the Marine Security Detachment of the U.S. Embassy in Ha Noi.

Lunch and dinner at the Galaxy Hotel.

5 May, Wednesday, Day Three: Depart Ha Noi early in the morning for our flight to Danang. Proceed to the Bamboo Green Central Hotel. Lunch at the Kim Do, one of Danang's oldest restaurants. There will be a short city tour to include Marble Mountain and the new China Beach. Remainder of the day is for rest and relaxation.

Breakfast, lunch, and dinner at the Bamboo Green Central Hotel.

6 May, Thursday, Day Four: Early morning departure to the area of the Rocket Belt west of Danang. to include Dodge City, Hill 55, the Vu Gia ñ Tu Bon River Basin, Go Noi Island, Liberty Bridge, the Arizona Territory, and the An Hoa Combat Base. Other sites as requested and as time allows. A full day in the field.

Breakfast and lunch at the Bamboo Green Central Hotel. Dinner on your own at any of Danang's many fine restaurants.

7 May, Friday, Day Five: On this thirty-ninth anniversary of the Chu Lai landing we proceed to the Chu Lai area with stops at Hill 69 and Hill 43. We will view

the area of the landing and the Catfish outposts. There will be a brief commentary of the landing from Hill 43. We then continue south to the Starlite operational area and, after a briefing, we proceed west to the Texas battle sites. Another full day in the field.

Breakfast, lunch, and dinner at the My Tra Hotel.

8 May, Saturday, Day Six: We continue south to the area where the largest amphibious operation of the war was conducted: Operation Double Eagle. We visit Duc Pho, Nui Dau, and many of the battle sites that straddle Route One. We proceed back to Danang with stops at Tam Hiep, LZ Baldy, and Dien Ban.

Breakfast, lunch, and dinner at the Bamboo Green Central Hotel.



Bamboo Green Central Hotel

The Bamboo Green Central Hotel, 158 Phan Chau Trinh Street, Danang City, Vietnam.

9 May, Sunday, Day Seven: We depart Danang early in the morning for Hue with stops as needed at Red Beach, Nam O, Hai Van Pass, and Lanc Co. Upon arrival in Hue, we check into the Huong Giang Hotel. This hotel was the former ARVN BOQ during the battle of Hue. We immediately commence a city walking tour south of the Perfume River. We follow in trace of 2/5 and 1/1 area of operations to retake the city during the Tet Offensive of 1968. Sites covered will be the Phu Cam Canal, the Sold Shell Station, MACV compound, Hue University, and many other sites that remain. The afternoon is free for R&R at the hotel pool.

Breakfast and lunch at the Huong Giang Hotel. Dinner cruise on the Perfume River.

10 May, Monday, Day Eight: A leisurely day of retracing 1/5's actions to retake the Dong Ba market area and the Citadel. This will be a walking tour of the battle of the phase lines, the airstrip and the Forbidden City within the walls of the Citadel. After lunch in the city there will be plenty of time to explore Hue on your own, shop on Le Loi Street or R&R at the hotel pool.

Breakfast and lunch at the Huong Giang Hotel. Dinner on your own.

11 May, Tuesday, Day Nine: Early morning departure for Quang Tri Province. Along the way we will pass the Ai Tu Airstrip (Quang Tri City) and sites important to the 1972 Easter Offensive. We check into the Hieu Giang Hotel, then proceed west on Route Nine to Camp Carroll, The Rock Pile, Razor Back, Khe Gia Bridge, Khe Sanh, and, if time permits, Lang Vei and the Lao border. We return late that evening.

Breakfast and lunch at the Hieu Giang Hotel. Dinner at the Tan Chau. If they are available, we will be joined by former local members of the Viet Cong regiment that operated up and down the Cua Viet River.

12 May, Wednesday, Day Ten: A full day in the field going west on Route Nine to Leatherneck Square and including Cam Lo, the Washout, Con Tien, Gio Linh, and the Peace Bridge. We continue farther north to the Vinh Moc Tunnel complex. Upon return to Dong Ha, we stop at the Cua Tung beach for swim call.

Breakfast and lunch at the Hieu Giang Hotel. Dinner at the Tan Chau.

13 May, Thursday, Day Eleven: We check out of the Hieu Giang Hotel and return to Danang with stops and lunch in Hue. We arrive in Danang and check into the Bamboo Green Central Hotel.

Breakfast and lunch at the Bamboo Green Central Hotel. Dinner on your own.

14 May, Friday, Day Twelve: This day is basically a free day to shop and relax or prepare for the trip home. Optional touring of sites not covered, special requests, or additional time at sites already visited.

Tour group may choose this day for additional time at Hoi An, Marble Mountain, or to explore Danang on your own. Day tours can be arranged cheaply at additional cost for each tour option.

Breakfast and lunch at the Bamboo Green Central Hotel. In the evening, a special farewell dinner at one of Danang's famous restaurants, Apsara.

15 May, Saturday, Day Thirteen: Return to Ha Noi on the early morning flight and overnight at the Galaxy Hotel. After lunch we will go to the Joint Task Force Full Accounting Headquarters for a briefing on current activities.

Breakfast, lunch, and dinner on your own at the Galaxy Hotel.

16 May, Sunday, Day Fourteen: We depart Ha Noi for Hong Kong. After a short layover, we board our

Cathay Pacific flight CX 882 for Los Angeles, arriving the same day we left.

- **Price: \$2745.00**
- **Single Supplement: \$455.00**
- **Danang Extension Post Tour: \$726.00 (2003 Prices)**

* * *

For further details and really accurate information on the tour, you can e-mail Ed Garr at <Captgarr@aol.com>.

Some troops dig into their pockets to get the best gear

By Mark Oliva, Stars and Stripes. European edition, Sunday, July 13, 2003.

Some of the best gear soldiers and Marines used in Iraq was paid for out of their own pockets.

That's according to recent after-action reports published by the Army's Special Operations Battle Lab and a Marine Corps Systems Command Team. Researchers from both services interviewed soldiers and Marines in locations across Iraq to learn what worked well and what needs more work.

Simple things such as uniforms and boots issued by Uncle Sam weren't up to snuff, the troops reported. Turns out some of the best gear they had, they bought themselves.

Rifle slings

The over-the-shoulder look for rifles wasn't good enough for U.S. troops. The two-point configuration, in which the sling connects at the butt stock and just forward of the hand guards, didn't allow for easy access to a weapon when it was needed most.

The three-point sling, however, connects the rifle to the soldier by connecting to the butt stock, the receiver and close to the sights. The configuration allows the rifle to hang free when not in use and the slings don't entangle when the weapon is raised to fire.

Some Marine and Army units purchased "three-point" slings with unit funds. In other units, soldiers and Marines often ponied up the money to get their own.

"Soldiers are purchasing their own slings because the issued variant does not provide the flexibility or comfort they require," the Army report stated. It added that soldiers felt the three-point slings "allowed the weapon to be slung on their back or hung on their chest so they could respond to contact faster."

The Marine report said Marines requested a three-point sling "be issued with each M-16A2."

Holsters

Dissatisfaction with the current M-9 9 mm holster was so strong that the Army report said plainly, "The issued 9 mm holster is not used."

The leather shoulder holsters didn't hold up well in the sandblasted Iraqi environment. An alternative holster clipped on a load-bearing vest didn't fare much better.

"If the 9 mm is your personal weapon, you don't want to have to always wear your LBV in order to have your weapon with you," the report said.

The alternative most troops preferred came in the form of "drop holsters," bought with personal funds from commercial outlets. Marines paid up to \$65 for holsters that looped to the belt and strapped around the leg from companies such as Special Operations Equipment.

Marines also bought "phone-cord" style lanyards—cords designed to keep the pistol connected to the body.

Global positioning systems

Soldiers and Marines alike preferred commercial global positioning systems to the military's precision light-weight GPS receiver.

"As widely known, many soldiers purchase their own GPS systems rather than use the PLGR," the Army report said. The Marine report showed that entire units bought smaller commercial GPS units for their Marines. "The commercial market produced small, lighter and more easily used GPS," it said.

Uniforms

Soldiers wanted their desert-camouflaged uniforms with pockets on the sleeves, much like the new Marine Corps' digital Marine Pattern uniform.

"Soldiers realize they will wear the IBA (Interceptor Body Armor) in almost all environments from now on," the report stated. "The pockets on the front of the DCU are all but useless."

To solve the pocket problem, many soldiers took matters into their own hands.

"Many soldiers have already had a tailor sew pockets on their sleeves," the Army report stated.

Soldiers even suggested a similar move for trouser pockets—moving them to the front of the leg—because gas masks block pockets on the thighs.

Boots

Soldiers complained the desert combat boots' soles were too soft and held in too much moisture. They said the soles were "easily damaged by the terrain."

Some soldiers had their boots resoled with commercial Vibram, with mixed success. But they also found the boots lacked ventilation, preferring a boot with holes, such as the jungle boot, to allow moisture to

escape. Soldiers also said the desert boots were too tight.

"Many soldiers did not use the bottom set of lace holes to reduce pressure on the top of their feet," the Army report stated.

Although the Marine Corps didn't field comments about the boots issued to Marines, the Army report noted "the Marine Corps Desert Boot has a very good reputation."

* * *

The above article is reprinted from the Stars and Stripes web <<http://www.stripesonline.com/index.asp>>, July 13, 2003.

Corps joins special ops ranks

Submitted by: MCB Camp Pendleton. Story Identification Number: 2003627141329. Story by Cpl. Jeremy M. Vought.

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. (June 20, 2003) -- Marines have always been known as the few and the proud. But on Friday, the Marine Corps took its first steps toward assembling a group of warriors even fewer and prouder as part of the U.S. Special Operations Command.

Operating under the name Detachment One, this elite 86-man unit "if it passes muster" will be in a league of its own alongside the Navy Seals, Army Green Berets and Rangers, and the Air Force's Special Operation Command. The commando unit, housed at the Camp Del Mar Boat Basin, will consist of a headquarters, reconnaissance, intelligence and fire-support elements organized, trained and equipped to carry out special reconnaissance, direct-action, limited foreign internal defense and coalition support missions, much like their sister special operations forces. Although the missions are similar throughout the armed forces, Detachment One will take advantage of Marine-specific strengths in task organization, small-unit leadership and the application of combined arms, officials said.

Last fall, top Pentagon officials began pouring through more than 500 record books, ultimately hand-picking 81 Marines and five Navy corpsmen to form the detachment. The unit consists of seasoned sergeants, staff non-commissioned officers and officers. Lt. Col. Robert J. Coates, a highly regarded infantry officer with a reconnaissance background, will command Detachment One.

"This is a phenomenal group of Marines," said Lt. Col. Giles Kyser, head of the Marine Air Ground Task Force special operations section of Plans, Policy and Operations at Headquarters Marine Corps. "This is the pinnacle of their military professions."

When the Pentagon formed the U.S. Special Operations Command in 1987, the Marine Corps chose to

march to the beat of its own drum, developing a training program to make their amphibious Marine Expeditionary Units "special operations capable." After six months of rigorous training, those units are tested on each MEU-specific mission to earn their "SOC" qualification months before their six-month deployment, certifying them for roughly two dozen specialized missions, including embassy evacuations, airfield seizures and downed pilot rescues within six hours of notice.



Staff Sgt Andrew T. Kingdon with Marine Corps Detachment One

Staff Sgt Andrew T. Kingdon, a reconnaissance scout with the newly formed Marine Corps Detachment One - the Corps' new special operations unit built on the heritage and traditions of the Marine Raiders of World War II - demonstrates the use of a laser marker and designator for laser guided bombs to Chuck Meacham, president of the Marine Raiders Association. Detachment One activated June 20 and is headquartered at the Camp Del Mar boat basin. Photo by: Cpl. Jeremy M Vought.

But ultimately, the need for a smaller, more permanent special force in the spirit of the World War II Raiders gave birth to Detachment One.

The Raiders were banded together to seize key hills and beaches in guerrilla-style strikes against Japanese forces. Disbanded two years after they were created, the Raiders wrote an important page in the history of what are now known as Special Operations forces.

Members of the Raiders were on hand for Friday's activation ceremony. "I'm ecstatic that we are living and watching the rebirth of the Marine Raiders," said Chuck Meacham, president of the Marine Raiders Association, proudly sporting the Raiders skull insignia.

Detachment One has begun its rigorous training regime and will be "closely watched and evaluated along the way," said Kyser.

"In this profession, second place is last place, so we are going to make sure we do it right," he said.

After the evaluation period, Detachment One will fall under Naval Special Warfare Squadron One. The detachment is expected to begin training with a Navy SEAL team in October and subsequently deploy in April.

After the ceremony, family members and visitors got hands-on with the specialized gear Detachment One will use.

Members say they can't wait to get cracking on their new assignment.

"When I got the call and found I was chosen to be a part of Detachment One, I was so excited to get on the ground and start running," said Sgt. Branden W. Barnett, a topographic intelligence analyst. "I'm striving to give the detachment the real time intel they will need."

* * *

The above article is reprinted from the Marine Corps web <<http://www.usmc.mil/marinelink/mcn2000.nsf/main5/D0A4816A648EE2D885256D5200641CA4?opendocument>>, June 27, 2003.

In Holy City, things are going right

U.S. Forces and Iraqis work together in Shiite stronghold of Karbala

By Anthony Shadid, Washington Post Foreign Service. Wednesday, June 11, 2003; Page A01.

KARBALA, Iraq—Hundreds of demonstrators surged through streets snarled with traffic. They coursed past the gold-leaf dome of one of Shiite Islam's most sacred shrines, past grimy walls plastered with portraits of young men killed by Saddam Hussein's government and past the hovels of pilgrims.

Through a rickety bullhorn came chants demanding that U.S. forces occupying Karbala pay the salaries of soldiers in the disbanded Iraqi army and pensions to veterans.

But the protest Monday was perhaps most remarkable for what was missing. Not once was there a chant denouncing the U.S. occupation, a staple of demonstrations elsewhere in Iraq. A request by U.S. troops for the crowd to make way for military vehicles prompted protesters to shout: "Get back! Get back!" The crowd hurriedly did.

In a city so sacred that its soil is used to make the stones on which Shiites bow their heads in prayer, the American occupation of Karbala—1,110 U.S. troops in a city of 500,000—has emerged as a rare example of a postwar experience gone right.

In gestures large and small—from reopening an amusement park with free admission to restoring electricity to twice its prewar level, from stopping looting with a rapidly reconstituted police force, to a conscious

effort to respect religious sensitivities—Karbala seems to have avoided the bitterness and disenchantment that has enveloped Baghdad and other cities.

“It’s not Fort Apache,” said Marine Lt. Col. Michael Belcher, the city’s senior American officer and a native of Temple Hills, Md.

Yet problems remain, and deep-seated fears linger over the future, many residents say. Complaints are rife over what many still perceive as too little security. The local government and police are seen as too weak, even corrupt. Clerics, some more militant than others, angrily trade rumors that U.S. servicemen drink alcohol, leer at women and distribute pornography.

Lurking underneath is a fear that once the Americans leave, even uniformly Shiite cities like Karbala will erupt in bloodletting as scores are settled from three decades of Hussein’s rule and dozens of factions—many armed and claiming religious sanction—slug it out for supremacy.

“I’m one of the citizens who rejects the idea that the Americans leave,” said Awad Rubai, a father of six with no income, who stood at the protest thumbing a well-worn string of yellow worry beads. “Revenge is in the air. There would be chaos. There would be anarchy. There would be trouble. Iraq would become a bloody theater.”



Soccer in Karbala

Lance Cpl. Daniel Mattern plays with a group of Iraqi children during a soccer game between an Iraqi police team and U.S. Marines. (Michael Robinson-chavez—The Washington Post)

Here, the chief of the two-month occupation is Belcher, a hard-driving Marine with a crew cut and a sunburned, bulldog face. In other cities, such as Fallujah, where soldiers are fighting a smoldering guerrilla war, the U.S. military presence has proved provocative. In Karbala, Belcher, 42, is treated as a mix of ambassa-

dor and potentate, and he touts as a model the ability of his staff to engage the city council and police with the tacit blessing of key clerics. Karbala is one of the few cities where government employees—28,000 municipal workers and 31,000 retirees—were paid without interruption. To get the money for the salaries, troops had to escort a bank manager to neighboring Hilla to get approval from his supervisor to open his doors.

Blackouts are limited to a few hours a day, better than any time since the 1991 Persian Gulf War. Water filters were brought in to improve quality, a long-standing problem. And the city government distributed rations at the end of April.

In the dreary classrooms of the school that serves as Belcher’s base, he chats with his staff about “micro-enterprise lending”—loans to help Iraqis start small businesses—as well as providing Internet access and upgraded equipment to the local television station.

“If all you have is a hammer,” he said, “every problem looks like a nail.”

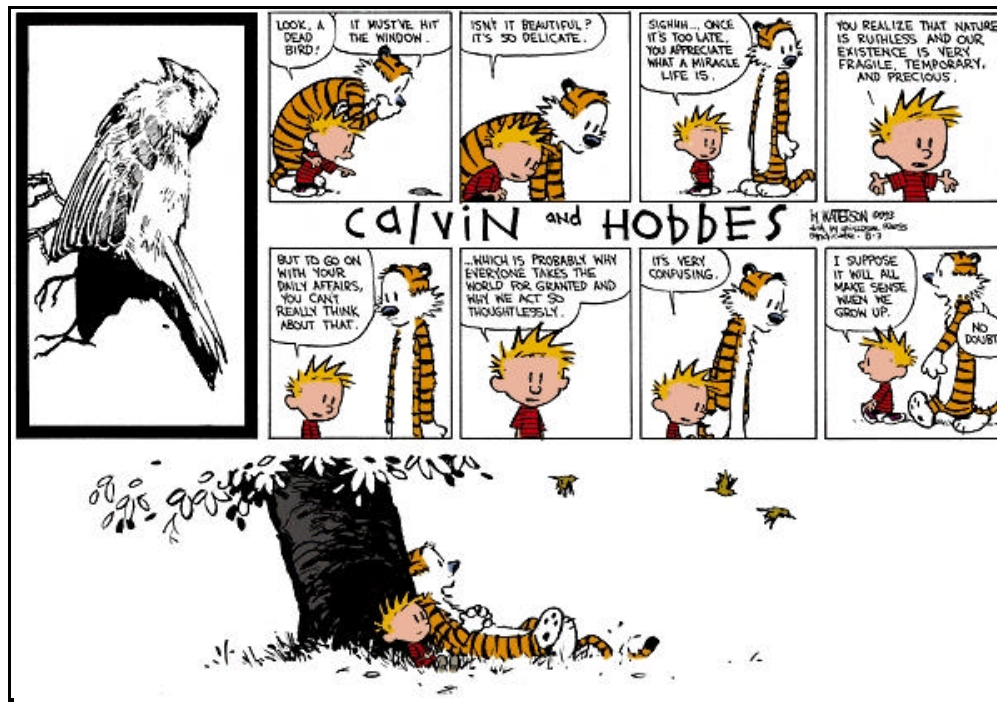
At a soccer game on Saturday, just before dusk subdued the summer heat, the Iraqi police team took on U.S. Marines in newly purchased uniforms of blue and red. Belcher sat next to the police chief, Col. Abbas Hassani. Expletives poured from the American sidelines as the Marines rooted for an outgunned team that ended up losing to the Iraqis, 8-3. But it was all civility in the stands.

Belcher and Hassani called each other “general,” even though both are colonels. Before the match, Hassani recounted, Belcher asked whether his men’s shorts were modest enough. “They’re the same as ours!” a surprised Hassani exclaimed.

Unlike towns in restive regions north and west of Baghdad, U.S. troops in Karbala have yet to come under fire. They have entered fewer than 10 houses here to search for weapons. They patrol without flak jackets in an effort to make their presence less formidable. They try to stay at least 100 yards from the city’s two shrines—one housing the remains of Imam Hussein, a grandson of the prophet Muhammad whose death in battle in 680 defines the spiritual narrative of Shiite belief, the other the remains of his half-brother Abbas, celebrated as a symbol of Arab heroism.

The shadow cast by those shrines orders life in Karbala, 50 miles south of Baghdad. At night, devotional chants waft across the shrines’ grounds, where pilgrims too poor to stay in hotels lie on sheets or straw mats. Crowds meander past rickety stands and small shops that stay open until 11 p.m., selling worry beads, prayer stones, tapes of religious sermons and portraits of Imam Hussein.

For many, Abdel-Mahdi Salami is the city’s spiritual authority. He is the deputy of Grand Ayatollah Ali Sis-



Calvin and Hobbes, by Bill Watterson. Reprinted from the uComics.com web <<http://www.ucomics.com/calvinandhobbes/>>, August 1, 2003.

tani, the ranking cleric at the Shiite seminary in Najaf, 50 miles south of Karbala. In contrast to some more activist clerics, Sistani eschews a role in government for the clergy, a message welcomed by U.S. officials here. He has suggested in edicts that politics is beneath clerics' spiritual calling.

Salami—with his thick-framed glasses and a beard streaked with gray—has followed that injunction. By all accounts, he wields great authority and enjoys popularity from the hectic, even anarchic days after the fall of Hussein's government on April 9 when he and 25 other clerics stepped in to run the government. He refuses to meet with the Americans, conveying his wishes through the city council, and Belcher credits him as instrumental in enabling his forces to work with the council.

Outside the worn metal door of Salami's office, down a dirt path bisected by a trickle of sewage, Sistani's edicts are posted. One urges residents of Karbala to adhere only to clergy representing Sistani and three other senior ayatollahs in Najaf.

Another urges all residents to return any stolen property to the local government. "Keeping this property is forbidden," it reads. In past weeks, Sistani has urged clerics—divided as they are—to remain outside the government and has warned against revenge killings.

But in a hint of the ambivalence of the clergy toward the U.S. occupation—a mix of cooperation and suspicion—Salami said he worried about the corruption that

he said he was witnessing in Karbala. Drugs are becoming more prevalent, some sold near the shines, "immoral" compact discs are for sale and U.S. troops are searching women and spreading pornography, he said. He was particularly angry that a U.S. detachment remained stationed at Karbala University, which both male and female students attend.

Like other clerics, Salami said Hassani's new police force was not up to the task of bringing moral order to Karbala. And he bristled at a decision by the

military and the city council last month to disband a volunteer force that he said was enforcing Islamic values. Belcher, Hassani and other city officials contended it was little more than a criminal gang engaged in theft, kidnapping and extortion.

Sitting against a green banner that lists Shiite saints, Salami said he appreciated what Belcher has brought. But he had yet to make peace with the occupation, near shrines so sacred. "We wish there was no American presence inside the city," he said.

Khalil Kadhimi, 34, a cleric who heads a rival, more activist faction, was less circumspect. Confident of his faction's support, he wants an election—an idea that the head of the city council, Ali Kamouna, has discouraged for now.

"You can't say the Americans are directly responsible, but because they prevent us from taking control, they encourage the spread of this corruption," said Kadhimi, who hears as many 15 cases a day as the judge of an Islamic court. "Politics," he added, "cannot be separated from religion."

Kamouna, a soft-spoken man of 32 who sits at a tidy table with a placard that reads "governor," said he worries about the Americans' departure, possibly as soon as this summer. The grandson of a governor appointed by the British in 1918, he lists the 23-member city council's accomplishments with U.S. assistance—from distributing rations to repairing electricity. But he said he

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remains suspicious of clerics like Kadhimi and fears that when the Americans leave, armed groups will wreck the calm Karbala has enjoyed.

"It would be dangerous for them to leave," Kamouna said, as a crowd waited outside his office with requests ranging from settling property disputes to bringing in more traffic police to controlling unruly streets. "It would be like Lebanon if they left. It would be massacres."

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The above article is reprinted from the Washington Post web
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Jim Mazy and his magnificent crashing computer

A plea from Jim Mazy, August 27, 2003.

Computers are like homes in that you really don't own them—they own you. For the past couple of months, it's taken all I could muster to keep my WindowsME from leaping out of its home under my desk and chewing my innards out. So I can feel Jim's pain when he tells me about how his computer has been crashing down around his knees.

Seriously. Jim needs your help. Look what he sent me on August 26: "Ken—As of 2:30 this morning I was able to put the outer shell back on my computer tower. Had to install three new hard drives 2-80's and 1-120GB. I had to build a special mounting rack just to hold them all and just about had to transfer data file by file from one drive to the other. I think I've got most of it licked now...the one BIG problem is that I lost every e-mail in my inbox that was received from 2/14/2003 through 8/15/2003."

Here's what he needs. If you submitted an e-mail to Jim through the 2/4 Association web site from August 1 through August 15, 2003, and it has not been answered, please resend it. The same pertains to any e-mail you sent directly to him from around Valentine's Day.

Help the editor—inform and entertain your buddies

Ken Sympson, August 29, 2003.

I've been lucky to get some good input from the membership over the past year or so that it has been my privilege to edit the Sea Horse. But it gets a little tough sometimes, and I need your help. Two things.

First, I need your feedback on what I'm doing right and what I'm doing wrong. Content, layout, ease or difficulty in reading the material—let me know what you think. In each issue, I've tried to include columns that I found interesting and that I thought you would also appreciate. I do a lot of reading, so I may come across some articles that you missed. If you don't like my taste, tell me. And tell me what you would prefer.

Second, remember that it's not a one man show. All of you have stories that would be of interest to the membership. And you have photos of today and yesterday, from wartime and peacetime. If you would like to have your favorite photo appear in the Sea Horse, you can send me a digital file by e-mail or you can send me a print (I'll scan it and return it to you, if you wish).

You can reach me by e-mail at <ksympson@rochester.rr.com>. Or you can send real mail to:

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	____ 65 and over: \$75 (lump sum or three payments of \$25.00 each)
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