



Retired LtCol Richard L. "Bill" Cody painted "Happy Hour" to portray the esprit de corps he experienced during his 30-year career as a Marine, from PFC to lieutenant colonel, which included raising a few pewter mugs, paying for rounds of drinks when he lost at "liar dice," and building camaraderie with fellow Marines as they trained and fought together.

## "Here's Health to You and to Our Corps, Which We Are Proud to Serve"

By Mary D. Karcher

*"I like the fact that the Marines came into being in a bar, Tun Tavern, and that Marines still gather in pubs, bars and slopchutes to share sea stories and hot scoop."*

—Col James M. Lowe, USMC (Ret)  
Co C, TBS Mess Night Speech, Sept. 29, 2004

Marine camaraderie is legendary and often admired by sister services. Marines want to be among other Marines, whether currently on active duty or veterans of the Corps. Those who have served in the Marine Corps seek each other out, no matter where they are. It's easy to recognize them. Look for the lapel pins on suits, the hats they wear, the stickers on their cars, the flags flying at

their houses. There is a certain pride that comes from being one of the few. A pride that seems to shout, "I'm privileged to have served among such people."

They gather to raise a glass to the Corps and those who fill its ranks. They talk about their Marine Corps experience and comment on the accomplishments of those who preceded or followed them. Often it is these times of informal gathering that



**“The one thing all Marines do, no matter what their MOS [military occupational specialty] is, they make history. That’s what we do; that’s our stock and trade.”**

**—Maj Richard T. Spooner, USMC (Ret)**

can be quite instructive for both junior and senior, active and veteran Marines. But all in all, they just love to be with Marines.

Active-duty Marines gather through unit events, mess nights or at Friday night happy hours in clubs aboard base. Veteran Marines often are attracted to establishments where other Marines gather. There are many Marine-affiliated organizations and associations, such as the Marine Corps League, Marine For Life, Young Marines, Toys for Tots, various unit organizations—such as the First Marine Division Association—and of course, our very own Marine Corps Association. All of these offer Marines opportunities to be with fellow Marines.

#### **Of Tradition and History**

Legend has it that the Corps first recruited Marines at Tun Tavern in Philadelphia. The tavern itself has long since been paved over by a major highway, but Marines still inquire about the building. In fact, the National Museum of the Marine Corps created a tavern that replicates a 1775-era establishment, complete with a mural of colonials whose faces bear a remarkable resemblance to famous Marines throughout history. Would that we could all raise a toast in such fine company!

Every Nov. 10, Marines gather to acknowledge that 1775 birth of the Corps, the purpose of such an event clearly stated by Major General John A. Lejeune’s Birthday Message from November 1921: “Since that date many thousand men have borne the name ‘Marine.’ In memory of them it is fitting that we who are Marines should commemorate the birthday of our corps by calling to mind the glories of its long and illustrious history.”

Wherever Marines are, even in the midst of war, they always manage to celebrate this important day with fellow Marines. Retired Lieutenant Colonel Richard L. “Bill” Cody tells of being in Vietnam in November 1968:

“The company had just finished participating in Operations Maui Peak and Meade River. We were given a little slack by being assigned outpost duty along the road between Liberty Bridge and the An Hoa Combat Base.

“On 7 Nov., I received orders from the

battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Dan Daley. It was back to work. ‘Alpha’ Company was to begin a company-size combat patrol the next day. Before we headed out the following morning, the colonel met us on the road with an LVT full of hot chow—steaks, Birthday cake and other goodies. I set out security (we were in bad guys’ country) and rotated platoons through the feast. It was pouring down rain. The food was served on paper plates, which quickly turned into mush from the rain. We ate it—paper plates, steaks, cake, all merged into one contiguous, gooey, sticky mess. It was fantastic!”

Cody and his company joined that long and illustrious history, making history themselves as they remembered those who fought in earlier eras.

History is a strong unifying bond among the generations of leathernecks. From the first days of boot camp or Officer Candidates School, Marines are taught about the achievements of those who preceded them, and all Marines use these accomplishments as a touchstone for their own performance.

“Our history binds us together because the Marine Corps, different from the other



**This sign hangs outside a tavern at the National Museum of the Marine Corps designed to replicate Tun Tavern, the legendary 1775 Marine recruiting site in Philadelphia.**

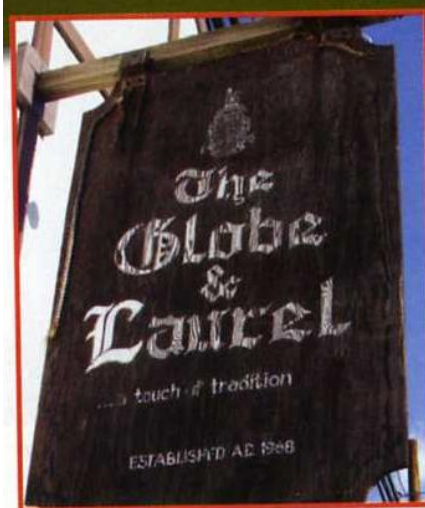
services, teaches our history to our young Marines. ... The one thing all Marines do, no matter what their MOS [military occupational specialty] is, they make history. That’s what we do; that’s our stock and trade. A pilot, rifleman, artilleryman, clerk typist—all of them Marines—collectively make history. Therefore, our history must be very important to us,” said retired Major Richard T. “Rick” Spooner, proprietor of the The Globe & Laurel, a popular eating establishment outside Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va.’s main gate.

Spooner is as much a reason for Marines knowing history and strengthening their camaraderie through good conversation, food and drink as any Marine Corps institution. For nearly 40 years Rick and his wife, Gloria, have greeted all ranks and generations of Marines, including mem-



**Navy chaplains supporting Third Marine Division, CDR Hubbell, CHC, USN (left), and CAPT Henry T. Lavin, CHC, USN, enjoy some rare downtime in a makeshift club in Phu Bai, Vietnam, during December 1966. There, Hubbell’s “double for Hubbell” request brought laughs all around.**





MARY D. WARDNER

This sign is the proverbial welcome mat for all Marines in the Quantico area who enjoy the restaurant's great food, camaraderie and "touch of tradition"—Marine Corps tradition, that is.

bers of foreign Marine Corps attending school at the nearby base. The cozy rooms of the restaurant are decorated with a wide variety of Marine Corps memorabilia—all of it worthy of starting conversations between neighboring tables.

Historian and retired Colonel Joseph H. "Joe" Alexander proclaimed, "If Quantico is indeed the 'Crossroads of the Corps,' The Globe & Laurel has been for many decades the major watering hole at the intersection. Here you can encounter Marines of every stripe and age, from today's veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan to the Old Breed from Korea and World War II—plus law enforcement officers from a hundred different communities. No other single establishment brings so many random leathernecks and other professionals together with such benign affinity. The place is always abuzz with living history."

As Maj Spooner explained, "The old-timers ... may be alone for a few minutes, but as soon as I perceive another Marine around, a younger Marine, I'll talk to one and then the other, and pretty soon they'll be talking to each other and they always wind up being friends. Different parts of the country, different generations, but they're Marines. They share that." There are no strangers in The Globe & Laurel, at least not for long.

As the Spooners are forced to relocate to make way for progress and the widening of U.S. Route 1, their resolve is strong. "We've got to stay open for the Marines. I owe it to them. The Marine Corps has been my life—on active duty and retirement. So I can't just fold up; that would not be Marine-like," the major said. And those who seek that special Marine Corps bond will follow the Spooners as they meet the challenges on a new front.

### Meeting at "The Club"

In earlier days, leathernecks met their fellow Marines at the social clubs available to them on base: the noncommissioned officers' club, the staff noncommissioned officers' club, and the officers' club. Each of these offered the various ranks a place to relax and share the events of the day. Marines often held bosses' nights and staff NCO appreciation nights to share a bond amongst the enlisted and officer leadership.

In those days fewer Marines were married, and the base was where they worked, lived and socialized. Besides, their paychecks afforded little beyond the recreation offered by the base establishments.

Retired Major Douglas Duncan recalled that when General Anthony C. Zinni was the commanding officer of Ninth Marine Regiment, he conducted a mandatory officers' call at the officers' club each week. According to Duncan, the general, always with a beer in hand, conducted an informal class on a controversial topic and posed rhetorical questions, which resulted in meaningful brainstorming.

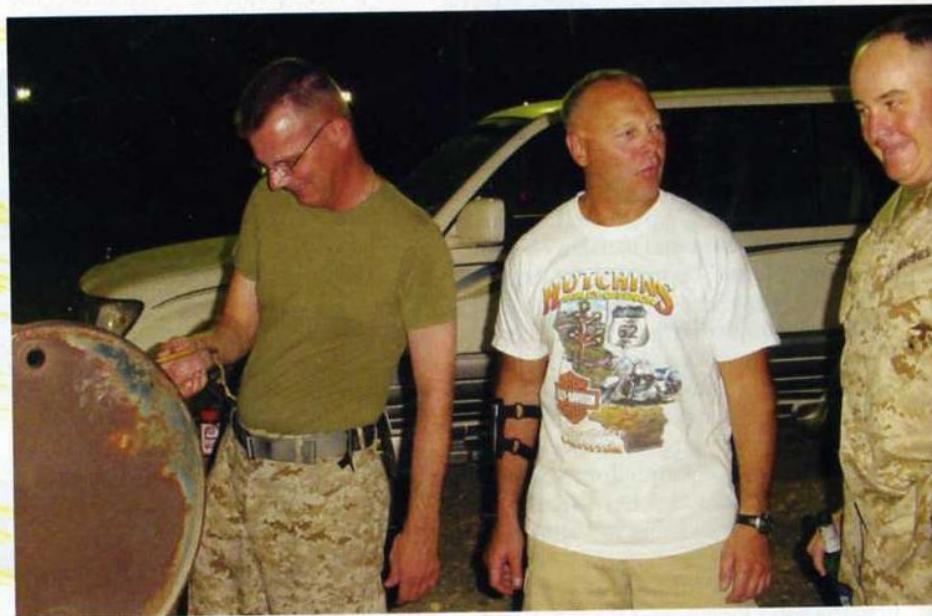
Gen Zinni remembers those evenings, explaining that at that time it was common to hold officers or staff NCO school in a social setting where people were more relaxed and could participate more freely in discussions that were a part of their education. Map exercises, guest lecturers, or a continuation of the day's subjects were presented. Sergeants major conducted such opportunities for teaching as well with the NCOs and SNCOs.

In that atmosphere, junior Marines were comfortable expressing their views. And the learning went both ways, up and down the chain of command.

"I learned a lot by hearing the lieutenants express their views, and the questions obviously make you think about their points of view," Gen Zinni said. "In my mind, it was a way of conveying to them in an atmosphere that makes them more receptive, how I think as the commander. ... You have to know how your commander thinks, and this was an opportunity to not only hear that, but question and engage and draw out so that you knew how that commander focused and thought about things."

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**—Col Joseph H. Alexander, USMC (Ret)**



Col Robin G. Gentry e-mailed this photo of MGySgt Christopher Chop, Maj Jay Rogers and LtCol William "Dave" McSorley (with a nonalcoholic beer) outside the "Leatherneck Tavern," basically camouflage netting strung between shipping containers in the middle of a forward maintenance staging area at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. Gentry points out that the tavern offers Marines a place to "relax, listen, teach and learn." (Photo by SSgt Steven O'Guinn)





ity Guard leathernecks kick back with their driver at the Marine House patio in Algiers, Algeria: (from left) Sgt Sean P. Michael, driver Mohamed "Tongo" Brent B. Chittum, Sgt Josh J. Lassiter and GySgt Andy B. Anderson. Friendships formed at such remote locations staffed by just a few fellow Marines fetime.

also have fond memories of red visits to clubs on overseas ording to historian and retired Camp, "Normally when deard ship, everyone had a faring hole and headed for it as e gangway dropped. I remembi Point Officers' Club [in the s] was a favorite. The beer was e scenery was fantastic." since there are more married ind dual-income families, as ore social options for families s, Marine Corps clubs have serving Marines both socially sionally. While no longer the n for social events, "Marine s have recently taken a look at and how they can contribute to and retention within the Corps ng increased mission-essential said Nancy Pasternack, cateromotional events specialist ne Corps Community Services, is offering a place for personal

and family readiness programs as well as hosting professional military education events.

The clubs have worked hard to provide the events and activities that attract Marines. Popular clubs such as Heroz at MCB Camp Lejeune, N.C., and Kahuna's at MCB Hawaii have a lively sports bar atmosphere with pool, darts, trivia nights, live music, flat-screen televisions and, of course, good food. Iron Mike's SNCO lounge at MCB Camp Pendleton, Calif., attracts active-duty leathernecks and retirees in the Southern California area.

Clubs near major training areas such as The Warrior Club at Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif., and the Sonoran Pueblo Club at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Ariz., attract Marines during their off-duty time. Marines enjoy overseas clubs such as Club Iwakuni at MCAS Iwakuni, Japan; the Globe and Anchor at MCB Camp Smedley D. Butler, Okinawa, Japan; and The Palms at Camp Hansen, Okinawa.

### Downtime: Sparse Surroundings, Priceless Conversation

Some of the most poignant descriptions of sharing off-duty time with fellow Marines came from those impromptu places created just for a break from an overseas mission. From humble to highly crafted, these spots bring a little relief from demanding duty and make for life-long memories for leathernecks.

"Marines will almost always build a makeshift smoking deck/lounge area outside of the unit office/work area, normally under camouflage netting with sandbags all around," said Col Glenn T. Starnes, the director of the MAGTF Staff Training Program.

"The deck is normally wood or old aircraft pallets that went missing from the airfield. The furniture is nothing more than homemade tables and chairs made of spare wood from packing crates or what the Seabees and engineers left laying around. While a small boom box will be present, invariably someone will break out a gui-



## A Mighty Pen: Poet Composes Marines' Thoughts

A frequent contributor to our "Gyrene Gyngles" section, Korean War veteran Bob Gannon was inspired to write poetry after a fellow Marine gave him a volume of poetry on the day he left the Corps. Gannon said, "In time poetry became the medium through which I could honor my vow to speak for, and pay tribute to, my fellow Marines. Thank you, Corporal James H. Edwards, USMC. I still have your book." And many thousand Marines thank you, too, Bob Gannon, for so deftly turning a few words into the thoughts in Marines' hearts.

### CORPORAL BILL

I put my greens in storage  
For how was I to know  
That though you think you've left it,  
The Corps just won't let go.

I switched my blues for civvies  
For who'd have thought it true  
That when you finish up a hitch,  
The Corps' not through with you.

Years have flown since I last served,  
But here's a funny thing,  
A bugle note still sings to me;  
There's an emblem on my ring.

And I am not the only one.  
Sometimes I meet another.  
I read the pride his eyes can't hide  
And recognize a brother.

Or if I meet a young Marine,  
Before the day is done  
He's sitting in my living room  
And I have gained a son.

And then the years just slip away  
'Til once more I am young.  
For though we serve at different times,  
We speak a common tongue.

It's true that things were sometimes  
tough,  
But I will tell you, friend,  
That if I had another chance,  
I'd go right back again.

For it's a simple fact of life  
That I and others know.  
When you've won the globe and anchor,  
The Corps won't let you go.

R. A. Gannon

tar and possibly a banjo and harmonica.

"On my last deployment we had a senior staff NCO who would break out his fiddle. Cigars are passed around. Coffee, soft drinks and nonalcoholic beer along with chips, pretzels and peanuts are almost always present."

As a Marine liaison at the American Military Hospital in Balad, Iraq, Corporal Matthew Smith extols the importance of his coffee mess as a way to unwind and pass essential information between shifts:

"Our coffee pot pulls double duty here in the hospital. It serves us well through the night as we work to track patients and download them from helos. It also helps my supervisor and me out, too, in another way. We work two shifts so that there is always someone here. When either of us comes in to work, we grab our first cup of joe and sit out in the smoke pit so that we can pass any information that needs passed from the shift, just joke around, or talk about a particularly bad thing that happened on our shift. It also keeps us warm out there since it's pretty cold right now."

Coffee was a similar respite for former Staff Sergeant Robert A. Hall, who served as a corporal in charge of a radio relay shot from a bunker on the north perimeter to the Marine outpost on Hill 950 in Khe Sanh, Vietnam, in 1967:

"My section chief, Sergeant Jack Beerup, ... used to come down at night to check in and have some espresso, or what we called espresso. We'd use a 12-ounce juice can and make a mug by adding a handle from the wire around C-rat car-

**"Jack and I and one or two members of my team would discuss the issues of the day, the course of the war and the girls we'd left behind."—SSgt Robert A. Hall**

tons, wrapped with electrical tape. We'd heat water in it over a stove made from a cracker can with a heat tab inside. When it was steaming, we'd add four or five packets of C-ration coffee. No sugar or cream—we were Marines! It took two airmen and a sailor to stir the concoction.

"Over this strong and manly brew, Jack and I and one or two members of my team would discuss the issues of the day, the course of the war and the girls we'd left behind. Lance Corporal Ronnie Keogh would often be playing the Righteous Brothers over one of the unused channels on the radio from his RR [radio relay] shot to Khe Sanh Ville from the tower near the command bunker. It was a relief

from the tedium of the day."

Retired First Lieutenant Gerald F. "Jerry" Merna described the "oasis" created in a hut near Phu Bai in Vietnam where Marines would "relax and unwind, listen to each other's woes and joys, discuss any unclassified matters, play some pinochle, share letters and family pictures, both laugh and lament our time there counting the days until we'd each rotate home, commiserate, talk about our jobs, our troops, the war, rumors, scuttlebutt and all the things Marines would discuss anywhere, but this in a war environment. ... I have never forgotten those chats, that closeness to my fellow Marines, the uplift I got from them."

### Marine House: The Place to Go On Foreign Shores

While many Marines may identify with stories such as these, the small community of Marines who has served as Marine security guards posted around the world have a unique experience in bonding with fellow Marines while on MSG duty. According to Marine veteran and *Leatherneck* contributing editor Ed Vasgerdsian, these Marines depend on one another for camaraderie, especially in the more remote countries.

Due to security measures, many locations offer few social opportunities for Marines and embassy personnel. Traditionally, the Marine House is a safe social gathering place for Marines, embassy personnel and locals. Marines often host parties for the community and use the proceeds for their Marine Corps Ball.

Those who have served in the MSG community often join the Marine Embassy Guard Association. As a member of the organization, Vasgerdsian said when he talks to the 20-year-old Marines currently serving as guards, he has as much in common with them as when he served years ago. The mission erases the years that have passed.

### Corps Connections in Anyplace, USA

Many Marines still meet regularly with fellow Marines after they leave the Corps. Marine veteran Evarist LeMay tells of the Breakfast Brigade, which meets every Friday at Johnny D's Restaurant in Newburgh, N.Y., and recently raised money



for Eddie Ryan, a Marine wounded in Iraq. Joe Lisi, a former corporal, reservist and retired New York Police Department captain, tells about a group called ROMEO Unit #2 (Retired Old Marines Eating Out), an offshoot of an advisory council started by Major Pietro Scarselli when he was the commanding officer of Marine Corps Recruiting Station, New York.

In Gettysburg, Pa., former Cpl Seamus Garrahy provides a battlefield professional military education event for more than 2,000 Marines a year. The Marines bivouac in Garrahy's backyard, located where Confederate General James Longstreet turned around 17,000 troops on the second day of the Battle of Gettysburg. For \$19 per head, Garrahy said that Marines receive "all the steaks, beans, bread and beer" they can consume, and "after chow there is a bonfire in the yard for sitting around and telling bad jokes, swapping lies and trading Marine Corps lore."

Retired Sergeant Major Kevin Bennett still meets weekly with Marines in the Quantico area, at both a local joint called Paddy's Steakhouse and at the base SNCO club. He said his heart and desire is where the "grunts" are. He converses with the young lieutenants from The Basic School and other young Marines who he says are writing their own history, including his Marine son. For those who have seen war, SgtMaj Bennett said, talking is a healing process, and the only ones who understand are those who have gone through it. Lessons are shared from generation to generation.

The special camaraderie among Marines contributes to their fighting spirit and efficiency. They learn not only through the schools and missions they experience, but also through what Gen Lejeune called "the eternal spirit, which has animated our Corps from generation to generation." May that spirit live in the conversations of all the Marines around the globe who have a few minutes to share a little something and to wet their whistles with their fellow Marines.

*Author's note: Special thanks to those who contributed stories of Marine camaraderie. I regret we could not print them all. My appreciation goes to Bill Cody for his painting of "Happy Hour," and to the Marines at Expeditionary Warfare School. Both portray the spirit of joy and friendship conjured up by the Tun Tavern image of the Corps and inspired this article.*



Leathernecks from F/2/1 of the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit play horseshoes at their forward operating base in Hit, Iraq, during mid-December 2005. The unit's much-deserved rest came after two back-to-back operations: Iron Hammer and Steel Curtain. Horseshoe pitching has been a pastime of military units for centuries—soldiers used to throw mule shoes in Union camps during the Civil War. (CWO-2 Michael D. Fay, USMCR photo courtesy of the National Museum of the Marine Corps)