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Human Resources
(1967-2001)



U. S. Marine Corps
27 Sept 1961 – 26 June 1964
Corporal E-4
MOS: 0141, Administrative Man

1st Battalion, 5th Marines, Camp Pendleton, California
13 February 1962 – June 1962
Trained in the states to prepare to go to Okinawa for additional training before serving with the 7th Fleet as Ready Battalion Landing Team.

In June 1962 we sailed out of San Diego, California for Okinawa with a wonderful eleven-day visit to Hawaii on the way. On June 30, 1962, my birthday, we crossed the International Date Line and I've always wondered if I could say I am one year younger because I missed my birthday that year. When we arrived in Okinawa we were assigned temporary quarters because the unit we were replacing had returned late from duty in Thailand/Laos and had not moved out of the barracks to return to the states yet. Once settled in we became:

3rd Battalion, 9th Marines, Okinawa
July 1962- August 1963

On a night in October of 1962 I was on duty in Battalion Headquarters all night. Early in the morning we received orders to prepare to "mount out" because we might be called to duty in the Cuban Missile Crisis. Although I had been up all night I had to take charge of stocking our field desks and otherwise preparing the S-1 office for embarkation. As I was standing up and backing away from the field desk after loading it I bumped into someone who was passing behind me. I turned around and realized I had just about knocked a general down. I panicked as I recalled in boot camp that you just never touched an officer, but the General (Masters, if I recall correctly) simply said, "Don't worry about me Marine, you've got more important work to do." Whew! The battalion packed its gear and sea bags then loaded onto vehicles to await orders to drive to port to board ships. We sat in the hot sun napping, playing cards, and otherwise killing time most of the day until late in the afternoon we were advised to stand down, unload and unpack as we would not be mounting out.



My unit, the 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines served 13 weeks with the 7th Fleet as ready landing force. During that period we considered ourselves "cannon fodder" as first responders until additional troops and equipment could be brought in for any

conflict that needed U. S. intervention. When we sailed out of Okinawa heading for the South China Sea I was responsible for typing the embarkation roster, which was a very important document that the Colonel had to submit to higher authority post haste. In those days we typed stencils with old manual typewriters (round keys) and ran the reports on mimeograph machines. The roster included well over 1000 marines and I found that I could only enter the information for two or three marines before having to go spread eagle on the floor to avoid heaving. The reason being that the seas were very heavy and that soon after we left Okinawa all ships in the area received an SOS from a Chinese merchant ship that was sinking. Its cargo had shifted in the rough seas. As we happened to be the fastest ship in our group they turned up the screws and we speeded ahead to be part of the rescue. The combination of speed and rough seas caused me to have my first prolonged experience with seasickness. Every few minutes the battalion adjutant would send a runner down to see how I was doing because the Colonel was getting anxious. I managed to finish the embarkation roster in time to avoid getting brig time. By the time we arrived on the scene of the Chinese vessel it was just barely afloat but other ships had arrived before us and had rescued most, if not all, of the crew. I was well enough by then to go topside and see the sinking Chinese vessel all lit up by our floodlights.

On the eve before Easter Sunday 1963, I had overnight duty in Battalion Headquarters at Subic Bay in the Philippines where our battle group was enjoying a brief port visit. As you might imagine, those far from home and not on duty before a significant family holiday were treating their homesickness in the establishments in Olongapo, just outside the gate. In the middle of the night we received "mount out orders" and MPs and otherwise sober sailors and marines went out into Olongapo to alert the forces to return to base and prepare for mount out. I don't recall the exact time, but sometime on Easter Sunday, with many hangovers amongst the force, we managed to get our battle group on its way amid rumors that we were heading for Laos where the 3/9 unit we had replaced had been as the Pathet Loa were continuing to commit atrocities. About a day out to sea we heard that our orders had been changed, because, and I am unable to verify the truth in this, an officer aboard the LSD (Landing Ship Dock) that was carrying our tanks and other armored vehicles had accidently blown out the ballast tanks resulting in the submerging of all of the vehicles in salt water. Rumor has it that the weapon sights would have been so damaged as to make the weapons unserviceable and a decision was made that we could not be put in harms way without any heavy weapons to support us. To the extent that any of this is true I always wanted to find that officer and give him a hug for some of us in that battle group might not otherwise be around today.

Some of those who had gone off base before Easter had gone out of Olongapo to a small village to witness villagers whipping themselves and volunteering to be hung on a cross, it apparently was an honor to be the "chosen" one. This excursion took place in spite of strong advice that if you left the main thoroughfare of Olongapo you were taking your life into your own hands, as was proven once when the head of a serviceman was received in a box by the base commander, or so the story goes…possibly made up to guide us and if so, it sure worked for me.

2nd Battalion, 1st Marines, Camp Pendleton, California

We returned to Camp Pendleton, California from Okinawa aboard a ship (Military Ship Transportation Services – MSTS) that was transporting military dependents. Officers could mix with them but enlisted personnel could only go up to the main deck to get air and sun. Of course while there we all looked in to see the dependents and the officers fraternizing over nice meals served on white linens, dancing, etc. But, the enlisted were second-class citizens and could not interact with them. However, we could interrupt their view!



We had sleeping racks in the hold of the ship and ate on metal trays several levels below deck. But, just seeing these dependents having a good time cheered us as we thought about what awaited us when we arrived back in the states.

I became bored with my military job as the end of my enlistment was soon coming, so when I learned that you could get out early to attend College I filed for an early separation from duty in accordance with MCO 1920.4F to be effective June 26, 1964 and applied to and was accepted by SUNY Geneseo. As a veteran I qualified for the new GI bill. While I had been relieved of active duty by my entering College it was treated like a leave and my discharge was not effective until September 13, 1967 following the passage of Gulf of Tonkin Resolution that set the beginning date for service for people to be considered Viet Nam Era Veterans as August 5, 1964.

I walked out the gate at Camp Pendleton, California on June 26, 1964. I stopped at home to drop off my military gear and change clothes before heading to Geneseo to register for

summer school on Monday, June 29 and begin classes on June 30, 1964, my birthday, and, I've really never left SUNY since that date.

My life could have been a lot different had I not taken advantage of the early-out-for-college provision because the exit gate was closed and some enlistments extended after the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, and the unit I was in was one of the first to be committed to Viet Nam. While I believe my early exit from active duty to attend college placed me in recall status, I was fortunate that my commencement of the college experience was not interrupted.

[Additional information from an Internet search: **1960's through 1970's**
In May 1962, the 3D Marine Expeditionary Brigade was formed from 3rd Marine Division personnel and began landing 3000 Marines as a show of force in Udorn, Thailand during Operation Millpond to limit Communist influence in pro-West Thailand. Shortly after 3D MEB responded to the Pathet Lao Army in Laos during the Laotian Crisis, from May-August 1962. The Brigade was part of a force sent to limit Communist influence in Laos. The MEB forces included the 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines HMR-261 and VMA-332. The show of force was over by August and the MEB was reabsorbed into the 3rd Marine Division.]

{Note, the 3/9 reference above is the unit my unit replaced and although it is believed that my unit was headed to Laos on Easter Sunday 1963, we were not committed but instead did show-of-force maneuvers by sailing the fleet in nearby international waters.}