

HAPPY 239TH, MARINES!

ONCE A MARINE, ALWAYS A MARINE

NOVEMBER DECEMBER 2014

SEMPER PARATI

The Magazine of the Marine Corps League

MODERN DAY MARINE EXPO

AMID MAJOR CHANGES THE CORPS
REMAINS STEADFAST AND READY

NEW HAND AT THE HELM

**GENERAL JOSEPH F. DUNFORD JR.
BECOMES THE 36TH CMC**

**'ALMOST HEAVEN':
MCL CONVENTION**

The Corps Rocks The Emerald City



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Founded in 1923 by Lieutenant General John A. Lejeune, the Marine Corps League is the only federally chartered Marine Corps-related veterans organization in the United States.

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ABOUT THE COVER

GENERAL JAMES F. AMOS EXCHANGES THE BATTLE COLORS OF THE MARINE CORPS WITH COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS GENERAL JOSEPH DUNFORD BEFORE AN AUDIENCE OF SERVICE MEMBERS DURING THE COMMANDANT PASSAGE OF COMMAND CEREMONY AT MARINE BARRACKS WASHINGTON, ON 17 OCTOBER 2014. AFTER 44 YEARS OF HONORABLE SERVICE TO THE CORPS, GENERAL AMOS PASSED HIS RANK OF COMMANDANT TO GENERAL DUNFORD.
CPL. CLAYTON FILIPOWICZ



'As Many and As Quickly As Possible'

By Yukari Akatsuka, Secretary General Kuentai-USA

This is my story of a transformational journey to repatriate the WWII Marines and soldiers' remains in the Pacific Theater. These events have profoundly changed my life forever, as well as the lives of others.

As a Japanese National living in my native Japan, I had not previously had occasion to attend any overseas interments. But this year, I have already had the privilege of attending three separate interments of U.S. military service veterans in the United States.

The third of October 2014 has become one of the most important days in my life and will be part of my being forever: It was the day U.S. Army Pfc. Richard Bean was interred at Manassas, VA.

Another poignant experience was the 25 February 2014 interment of our beloved Kuentai-USA advisor, Brigadier General Vincent "Ben" Blaz, USMC (Ret.), a former member of Congress. Brigadier General Blaz unselfishly gave our organization much-needed, valuable counsel on forming Kuentai-USA to repatriate Japanese and American WWII MIAs in the Pacific theater.

The General's dedication, passion and commitment, most surely garnered from his distinguished Marine Corps service, shone brightly during his service to Kuentai-USA. As much as any civilian could ever grasp, I now have begun to comprehend the overpowering and deep significance of 'Semper Fidelis.'

The third interment I attended was on 25 April 2014 for WWII Marine William Carneal from Paducah, KY, who was returned 70 years after his death. Regrettably, we missed a fourth interment for another Army Soldier on 2 September—Pfc. Bernard Gavrin—because we were on Saipan continuing the field investigation, searching for the rest of the missing

veterans who died on the same day and in the same battle as Carneal, Bean and Gavrin.

My journey began in July 2013, when I first had the opportunity to participate in a Japanese government-sponsored mission to seek and repatriate WWII Japanese remains on Saipan. By providence, however, the first remains I saw were not Japanese, but rather of an American, Pfc. Bean.

Candidly, it was immaterial to me whether the remains were American or Japanese. I was just so stunned to see the human remains exposed from the clay soil and how the earth coldly concealed the identity from the outside world. Who are these warriors who sacrificed all?

Many thoughts raced through my mind, including the lack of closure for those families for over 70 years. I could not begin to imagine what it must be like to cope with such a family void over those long decades.

Because the remains were found with a pair of dog tags, I quickly realized that he was not an "unknown" who died here," but was U.S. Soldier Richard Bean, who had fought on this far-flung island and was left

missing and nameless for 70 years. Thus the interment of Pfc. Bean in Quantico National Cemetery gave me selfishly needed personal closure, while simultaneously thrusting open the gates to a pathway for a new transformational journey.

Carneal, Bean and Gavrin are only three of thousands more MIAs on Saipan and elsewhere. According to the Department of Defense POW/MIA Personnel Office, 73,637 U.S. WWII personnel are still MIA, and 35,000 are still recoverable. Like the Marine Corps League and other VSO organizations, Kuentai-USA resolutely believes *all* MIAs must be returned.

There are also two additional Marines missing in the vicinity of this battlefield section, so our mission needs to move as quickly as possible before the remains are completely decomposed into the soil and become unrecoverable. Saipan is no longer a sleepy island atoll but a booming Pacific tourist



(Top) The remains of a Japanese soldier found in the mass grave under about 7 inches of soil. (Bottom) The team uncovers remains during the last field excavation in September 2014.



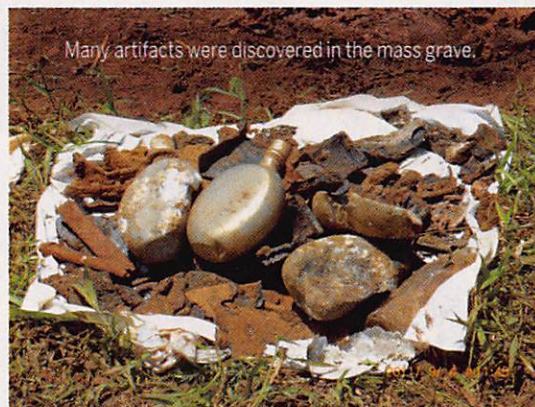
As Many and As Quickly As Possible

destination with ever-expanding new construction projects threatening the hallowed resting place of both our countries' unknown fallen warriors.

Our work to recover all the MIAs receives *no* funding from the U.S. or Japanese governments. Rather, it is

funded through donations and is privately managed and organized. Therefore, the budgetary limitations are always a large impediment to maximizing our efforts.

Our mission is very humble and simple: We should not leave those fallen courageous warriors nameless and unaccounted for on the battlefield regardless of their nationality. Hence our organization's motto, "As many and as quickly as possible." The more than 40,000 U.S. Marines, Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen, as well as over 1.3 million Japanese Soldiers who fought for their countries and made the supreme sacrifice in the Pacific Theater should be returned by the hand of people living today.



Many artifacts were discovered in the mass grave.



(L-R) Brigadier General Vicente, former Senators in the Guam Legislature Larry and Carmen Kasperbauer, Kuntai-USA Secretary General Yukari Akatsuka, and Kuntai-USA Chairman Usan Kurata.

The only way this mission can move forward is with the support of individuals who believe this mission is important. If you do believe the successful identification and military interment of veterans Carneal, Bean, Gavrin and others is important to the nation, please join us and volunteer. Your support of this journey would be greatly appreciated. Please visit our website kuntai-usa.com.



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Were it not for the Marine Corps, DR. BRUCE HEILMAN believes he would still be milking cows in Kentucky. From high school drop-out to Chancellor of the University of Richmond—his proudest accomplishment still is making buck sergeant in the Marine Corps during WWII. He displays his loyalty to the Corps on his gleaming Harley-Davidson Patriot Edition bike—a Marine Corps emblem is permanently affixed to the gas tank and on his leather jacket. "We must preserve our Corps' heritage, which is why I included the Foundation in my estate plan. Each of us can honor the legacy of Marines and provide future support for the National Museum of the Marine Corps".

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