

# The Spot Report

Journal of the Marine Corps Interrogator Translator Teams Association



Volume VII, Issue 2

Winter 2009-10

## OPERATION URGENT FURY



Cpl Joey Oliveras (2<sup>nd</sup> ITU), Cpl (FNU) Mikola (2<sup>nd</sup> ITU), GySgt C. E. Blanz (1<sup>st</sup> ITU), and Sgt Paul Hernandez (2<sup>nd</sup> ITU) at the airfield on Grenada show off a "liberated" bottle of Cuban rum. (Operation Urgent Fury – 1983)

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Visit the MCITTA website at: [www.mcitta.org](http://www.mcitta.org)

# The Spot Report

The MCITTA News Journal

Volume VIII, Issue 2– Winter 2009-10

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## Letters to the Editor are invited.

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## From the COB

The seventh annual Gathering is over and declared by all hands to have been well done, enjoyable and an unqualified success. This in no small part is because of the efforts of our host and hostess, Jim and Lynne Riemer, and the able assistance of any and all they asked to help—good food, well planned venues and good friends. As with each Gathering there were a couple of new attendees to experience the camaraderie.

This Gathering was a transitional year for MCITTA. It is hoped the change will satisfy our functional and administrative needs for continued success. The members present at our business meeting elected to transition from an elected slate of governing officers to the establishment of a Board of Directors. The Board comprises six members and they are: the Chairman of the Board, Harry Todd; Vice Chairman of the Board, Vince Burdelski; Chief Financial Officer, Jack Parker; three board members, Administrative Executive Assistant, Felix Conde and members Mike Bianchino and Howard Kahn. All those individuals previously appointed to functionary positions such as Historian, Officer of Service, Service Officer and the various committee Chairmen shall retain their duties, positions and authority and serving under the aegis and pleasure of the Board.

The transition continued with a unanimous decision to electronically publish our Spot Report. This was based upon mere economics and the added flexibility to include a myriad of items electronically that are cost prohibitive in a hard copy. I ask all hands receiving this media to update their regular USPS address and e-mail addresses. I ask and encourage every member to forward this data to the appropriate place, so designated herein and via other requests forwarded to members. This plea for currency follows a one time letter already forwarded and a plea within these pages. Following the issue of this final plea for updated information all items will be electronically transmitted. It was further decided to keep members more informed via the issuance of E-Bulletins.

The business meeting participants unanimously agreed to take on the considerable challenge of raising sufficient funds to make the monument previously announced in the Summer 2009 *Spot Report* a reality. Further and detailed information

regards this effort will be published as received. A committee consisting of Vince Burdelski, Jim Haskins, Mitch Paradis and Harry Todd was established to monitor and guide this effort to fruition. Our accepted goal is to raise \$35,000.00 as quickly as possible to make this dream come true. Guidelines on methods of seeking funding have been forwarded in order that any and all who get out and seek funding will act in a uniform manner and not be at cross purposes with the efforts of others. It is not an impossibility to raise this amount of money rapidly.

Of paramount importance is our 2010 Gathering. It was determined we would hold the Gathering in October 2010 (no specific dates yet) in Tampa Bay, Florida. Due to circumstances beyond our immediate control we decided to establish an alternative location of San Antonio, Texas. Notification will be made prior to the end of December 2009 via E-Bulletin and on the web page whether we will be Gathering in Florida or in Texas. One of the more unique proposals put forth for 2011 was one that we unite our Gathering with the Marine Corps Ball. Work toward that effort is being explored by a couple of excited members. This was felt to be a brilliant idea that would allow everyone to combine two wonderful events into one occasion. Further information will be published as discovered.

Several items that require action were not brought to fore because of time constraint but will be addressed via Board function and the information will be disseminated as appropriate. The Board Members and I are dedicated to the success of MCITTA and I am once again pleased if not without trepidation to be trusted with the leadership and management of our organization. I ask for your cooperation to the same degree that I had for my first term as the Team Commander. I said then and still believe our success rests on the membership even if the responsibility falls in the lap of the one leading.

The Board Members and I look forward to making MCITTA an organization to which you can be proud to be a member.

*Semper Fidelis,*

**Harry J. Todd**

*Chairman of the Board*

From the Chairman of the Board, Harry J. Todd

I want to begin this article in the same fashion as I began one in 2007 with a heartfelt, "THANK YOU" one and all for the support you have freely provided. You have solidified MCITTA's success by these actions.

With progress, MCITTA has not rested on satisfaction with the status quo. Your leadership has seen the benefits of reorganization and has moved forward toward the future with the establishment of a Board of Directors. This concept will allow for more efficient and flexible management of the Association. The Constitution and By-Laws have been corrected and are available for preview on our web site ([mcitta.org](http://mcitta.org)). The website itself has been reworked and has a new feature with a password-protected link for private correspondence exclusively among the members.

As an organization, MCITTA has opted to "*Honor Those Who Have Honored Us*" by unanimously accepting the challenge of erecting a monument in Semper Fidelis Park at the Marine Corps Museum in Quantico, VA. This monument not only honors the nine practitioners of the art of interrogation lost to the rigors of combat it also honors our lost MOS. The monument once erected will make MCITTA unique among all intelligence organizations. Phase II (soliciting funds) is in full swing. Our CFO reports donations are arriving slowly but steady. I am encouraged this project was so willingly adopted. I have no concern it will not succeed. Our membership is sufficient to retrieve the \$35,000 to \$40,000 dollars necessary to make this a reality.

The one area everyone is most interested in is our Gathering for 2010. It will be held in Tampa Bay, Florida between 17 and 23 in October. From the initial reports it promises to rank very high on the enjoyable scale. Details will be made available as they are known via the E-Bulletin.

We remain solvent if not wealthy. Our coffers are not empty but as usual along with your generosity will remain full enough for a safety cushion if needed. The one area along with the funding of the monument we need to address is corporate sponsorship. At present only one such entity has been procured and the economy has forced that business to casualty status.

We have an ongoing problem with maintaining current contact data and the recent plea to our membership to make their contact info current has been successful. But I remind you all if you have not addressed this matter please do so. This becomes all the more important as MCITTA is shifting to an all-electronic means of communication. Again I thank you all for your diligence in this matter.

I want to ask everyone to visit our website and link to the History site posted by our Historian. Our one purpose as stated in our mission statement was the writing of our Unit History. Without your active participation your place in the annals of the Marine Corps will not be known except by those who revise history as they think it should be. Do not leave your story to others to write as a contrived account. Be bold and address it from a standpoint of personal experience. It will not be quick or at all easy but it will be correct and contribute to the whole.

To everyone who participated in the link to my survey in the 04-09 E-Bulletin, I offer my thanks and report that the responses contributed to an answer reflective of the majority has been sent to the leadership of MCIA. We may expect to see a greater degree of cooperation in the future.

Lastly I want to remind everyone in 2010 we will be in Tampa Bay. Paul (Hippolito) Hernandez and his volunteer committee are looking forward to a great turnout. Plan now to enjoy what you all have come to expect.

As a reminder you do not have to be an author to submit articles for your Spot Report. The more articles the more interesting and flexible the Spot Report will be.

Be mindful because of the reorganization, the Board of Directors will be looking for members to step up and fill the positions on the Board every year. Don't shy away, take control and seize the opportunity to lead and contribute. In so doing also know the support of the members will make the time served enjoyable and practically painless. The Association is behind you all the way.



**Board of Directors – 2009**

Howard Kahn; Felix Conde; Mike Bianchino; Harry Todd (Chairman); Vince Burdelski

## OPERATION URGENT FURY – Island of Grenada-1983

An anecdotal and personal report By: **Jose (Joey) Oliveras, USMC (Ret)**  
**2nd ITU, 2nd Marine Division**

*Operation Urgent Fury* was a US-led invasion of Grenada, triggered by a military coup, which ousted a brief revolutionary government. The invasion, which commenced at 0500 on 25 October 1983, was the first major operation by the US military since the Vietnam War.

Designated Joint Task Force 120, the US force included elements of each military service and multiple special operations units. The invading forces encountered about 1,500 Grenadian soldiers and about 700 Cubans. Also present were 60 advisors from the Soviet Union, North Korea, East Germany, Bulgaria, and Libya. Some of the “construction workers” were actually a detachment of Cuban Military Special Forces and combat engineers.

Fighting continued for several days and nearly eight thousand soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines participated in Urgent Fury along with 353 Caribbean allies of the **Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)**. US forces sustained 19 killed and 116 wounded; Cuban forces sustained 25 killed, 59 wounded and 638 combatants captured. Grenadian forces casualties were 45 killed and 358 wounded; at least 24 civilians were killed.

Following the US victory, Grenada’s Governor-General announced the resumption of the constitution and appointed a new government. US forces remained in Grenada after combat operations finished in December. Elements remaining included military police, Special Forces, and a specialized intelligence detachment.

Today, October 25 is a national holiday in Grenada, called Thanksgiving Day, to commemorate this event.



As every good sea story begins, “This is **A**no \_ \_ \_ \_!” On Sunday, October 25, 1983, the news of the attack at the Beirut Marine HQ was flashing across television sets since early that morning. Just like every Marine at Camp Lejeune, I was glued to the set watching those images of carnage and thinking, “Payback is going to be a mother.....”

The following morning I reported to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Interrogation Translation Unit operating under Headquarters Company, HQBn, 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Division lead by MajGen Al Gray. The unit was under the control of the Division ACofS G-2, LtCol DelGrosso and the G-2 Chief was MGySgt George Simpson. The ITU OIC was Capt Homero Lopez and the NCOIC was MGySgt Beatty. I had just arrived the previous Saturday after driving from Ft. Huachuca, AZ along with Sgt Hipolito (Paul) Hernandez. We had just completed the Army Interrogation course and I was returning to Camp Lejeune and the 2<sup>nd</sup> ITU where I had been OJT prior to school.

During the check-in process from TAD, the mood at the Division and in the whole camp was somber, but, at the same time, fast in tempo. I remember an interview by a local

TV station with General Gray. They asked him questions regarding what was the mood of the Marines under his command at the present moment, since the press had reported the Marines were “sitting ducks” previously. General Gray responded, “I have a truck load of volunteers eager to go.” And, by God, yes, he did have them, and I wanted to be one of those!

That Monday evening, while at my resident and while watching the news at 1800, the phone rang. It was MGySgt Beatty and the conversation went exactly as follows:

“Cpl Oliveras this Master Gunnery Sergeant Beatty speaking. Get in your 782-Gear and be here by 2100. Who else lives around you?”

“Sgt Paul Hernandez and SSgt Nelson Del Valle, Top”, I replied.

“Get Del Valle over here, too, by 2100. Anything else you can think of?”

“Top, we just arrived and are still in the process of checking-in. We have not been able to get to the armory, yet, and were required to turn in our .45’s because we were TAD for more than 30 days...”

“That has been taken care of,” Top interrupted. “What else?”

“Top, also, we were required to turn in our flack jackets and we have not received the new ones, yet.”

“It has also been taken care of; anything else?”

“Not that I can think of.... That’s all, Top.”

“OK. See you at 2100 with Del Valle.”

At this time the “Pucker-Factor” was Zero. Sweet Mother of Jesus, I’m on my way! I told my wife (first of three), who was also a Marine, to get all my 782-Gear and uniforms into the living room so I could pack; meanwhile, I was on my way to advise Del Valle to be ready. I found Nelson in the driveway at his residence, getting ready to go to the movies with his family. I called him aside and relayed Top’s message. I quickly retrograded from the area because I did not want to hear from my fellow islander, his Puerto Rican wife, that I just spoiled their evening.

By the time I returned to my residence, Sgt Paul Hernandez and his wife were there. They just happened to come by to invite my wife and me for dinner. I explained to Paul the phone call I had just received and my instructions. He helped me pack my gear

and helped to raid my kitchen cabinets for canned goods. We packed everything in his car, as he had volunteered to take Nelson and me to the base, so as to leave our POV's with our wives. What I really believe is that he wanted to find out why he was not part of the movement— of course.

Upon arrival at the ITU at 2056, I was immediately sent to the motor pool for the team jeep and the air alert trailer from supply. (The Unit kept two trailers at the ready with mount-out gear.) As I returned, I saw SSgt Charlie Light who just got back from Beirut a couple of months before after being injured at the embassy bombing. As he was leaving the area with the other jeep I yelled at him, "See you in Beirut!" to which he replied, "No, you're going to Grenada!" Gra...wha?? What the.....?

As I entered the building, I passed the OIC/NCOIC offices where I gave thumbs up to Top Beatty regarding the jeep, to which he acknowledged with, "Oliveras, do you speak Cuban?" I answered, "Sí, Jefe" while looking at Capt Lopez and WO Alvarez. The Top dismissed me with a wave and I proceeded to the 10<sup>th</sup> ITT, the Spanish and Portuguese language team. There, I found GySgt Winfrey, the Team Commander, passing the word to SSgt Del Valle, Sgt Hernandez, and Cpl Mikola.

I mentioned to the Gunny what SSgt Light yelled at me, and Top Beatty's language question. Gunny then said that the Air Alert Battalion, along with the French and Arabic speakers were on their way to Lebanon, but we were going to Grenada, an island of the Lesser Antilles, where some Cubans were making some trouble. Well... time to repack and take out the cold weather gear and break out the jungle boots.

Next day, Tuesday, we were flown in General Gray's "Huey" from behind Division HQs to the New River Air Station, while WO Alvarez and Capt Lopez along with GySgt Wible were talking to General Gray, along with LtCol Del Grosso and MGySgt Simpson. I was tasked with loading the packs aboard the helo. As I reaching for a pack, another came flying at me and almost knocked me down. It was the pack of no other than General Gray himself. I was given the "suicide seat" on the port side and as we were taking off, General Gray stood at attention, looked directly into my eyes and saluted me! (Pucker Factor Zero, again.)

We boarded a C-130 at New River, loaded with replacements for the two Cobra

gunships that were shot down in Grenada, which was unknown to us at the time. After a JATO take-off, we were on our way to our first combat as interrogators.

Approaching the island, the plane flew tactical approach and we were given 20, 10, and 5-minute warnings, accordingly. On the first warning from the Crew Chief, a captain from the helo wing opened an ammo can and proceeded to issue bandoleers of 5.56 rounds to the mechanics and boxes of .38 rounds to the pilots. It was then it dawned on me that we were not issued any ammo back in Lejeune. I gestured to the captain if he had any .45 ammo to which he gestured back, NO! I looked at WO Alvarez and GySgts Wible and Winfrey and received the same answer— NO! I'm about to land in a combat zone and even the air wing mechanics have ammo while I have only canned goods to throw— Pucker Factor ZERO Minus 1!

As the plane landed and taxied, we exited and converged on a dirt mound not too distant from the C-130. The crew got those helos out in record time and the plane was already taxiing to take off before we were finished catching our breath.

WO Alvarez found some Army troops who were nearby and asked where the nearest headquarters was located. The soldier turned around and pointed to the far end of the runway and said, "You see that blue light waaaaay over there? That's the nearest HQ that I know of."



Cpl Joey Oliveras displays a captured AK-47 while enjoying a "liberated" Cuban cigar. The fortunes of war.

WO Alvarez then turned to me, "Cpl Oliveras, go there and tell them— 'The Marines have landed—' and find out where the interrogation compound is located." I reminded him that "I/We" had no ammo, and per the Army trooper, shooting was still going on around the perimeter (as if we had not already arrived at that conclusion due to the

sounds of rifle and machine gun fire.) I also reminded him the C-130 had no suppressive noise gear and I was sure whoever was out there knew we had landed. His answer was, "Do the best you can" to which I answered, "Request permission to drop my pack so I can RUN faster from here to "waaaaay" over there, Sir." (Pucker Factor Zero -2.) The Gunner agreed and SSgt Del Valle requested to accompany me. As we began our "run" I said, "I guess we'll have to use our .45s as a boomerang." Nelson dropped his pack, and we took off. The relative speed of our "commute" increased every time we heard shots to the point that the heels of our boots were hitting the back of our helmets, which tends to happen while running and trying to shove your ass inside your steel pot. (Pucker Factor Zero -3.)

Upon reaching the Army headquarters, we encountered an Army Colonel and I smartly regurgitated WO Alvarez's message. The Colonel said the POW compound was on the hill overlooking the airfield but he had no one to escort us, and the area between the airfield and the compound was not secure. He also advised that if we could get the rest of our team to our present location (which happened to be the terminal of the airport the Cubans were building), we could hold up for the night and he would provide an escort the following morning.

SSgt Del Valle and I were debating when and how to go back to Mr. Alvarez's location when I spotted an Army truck traveling in the direction we just came from, "waaaaay" over there. I flagged down the truck and the driver said he was delivering ammo to the soldiers at that location. I asked if he could make contact with the Marines there and give them a lift back to the terminal headquarters and to bring our packs with them. He agreed.

As we say the truck departing, the Pucker Factor was returning to normal. We actually felt good about ourselves and I remembered I still had a bag of French Fries in my cargo pocket since lunch back at Camp Lejeune when we were told to move out. Nelson and I found an area and sat down on some boxes and more or less relaxed while eating cold fries when it started to drizzle. We got our ponchos from our butt packs while Nelson came out with a pack of Kool cigarettes that we lit under our ponchos. We were really relaxing with our Kools and cold fries while keeping an eye out for the returning truck with the rest of our team.

*(Continued on Next Page)*

## URGENT FURY

(Continued from page 5)

As we were enjoying our smokes, a soldier approached and told us to not smoke. I replied our glowing cigarettes were masked by the poncho and that we were Marines and to bug off. He said OK and as he was leaving he said it wasn't the light that was of concern, it was where we were sitting. I shoved my head under my poncho and flicked my Zippo and was able to read the stencil on the crate we were sitting on: "EXPLOSIVES — No Open Flame — Handle with Care" (We're back again to Pucker Factor Zero.)

Soon the truck returned (Thanks Army) with the remainder of the team, my pack, and all my "goodies"— all was well, again. We spent the night in relative security. Next morning the Colonel came by and introduced himself to WO Alvarez. Part of their conversation centered on the fact we came with only the gear on our backs and had no vehicles. The colonel said, "Anything out there that doesn't say '82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne' and you know how to start it and drive it is yours; this is no man's land." WO Alvarez once again turned to me and said, "Oliveras get us some wheels. Del Valle, help him."

We were then loaded into three Army jeeps and taken to the POW compound. The camp OIC, an Army CWO who received us with lots of enthusiasm. Following his operation brief, I was reminded, along with Del Valle, to secure some transportation, rations and ammo. As we departed, and making sure I was out of earshot, I said to Nelson, "Man, this guy thinks just because we are Puerto Rican we can just steal a vehicle in the middle of a combat zone and s\_ \_ \_ some ammo and rations at the same time." Nelson answered with a "Hummm!" so we proceeded to walk back to the airport terminal area where I had "observed/targeted" a white jeep earlier that morning

with a logo in Spanish on the doors.

We located the jeep parked between some cargo pallets. There were some U.S. Air Force personnel working nearby with their backs to the jeep. In my pocket I found a piece of wire along with my pocket knife and was making the wire ready to be used to start the vehicle when I noticed three things:



Cuban Terminal at the airfield in Grenada.



Detainee and POW Compound



Cuban beans and rice in the compound

1. The logo on the door read "*Departamento de Trabajo*" (Department of Works) obviously from the Cubans, which reminded

me of the Colonel's admonition, "...if it doesn't say 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne..."; 2. The steering wheel was on the right side; and, 3. The keys were in the ignition!

We got in and I drove in reverse while popping the clutch in order to clear the area quickly. As we drove off, Nelson looked at the Air Force personnel and said, "They're waving." I answered, "Well, wave back."

We had wheels. Now we needed some chow and ammo— so, on our way we drove to the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division ammo depot and asked if they had any .45 cal ammo? Well, they had everything from a .38 caliber all the way up to 155 Howitzer shells, but not a single round of .45!

We then drove by the rations issue point and instead of asking for the 24 meals Mr. Alvarez directed, I asked for 12 cases of C-Rations. All that the Army supply guy wanted was a signature— no problem. Now we headed for the POL, gassed up our new jeep, and got an extra five gallons in the Jerry can we found along the way next to some cammie netting, which was on top of our White Rover that by now was looking very "tactical" with a shovel and pick on the hood, which we found near an Army 81 mm Mortar position. (The occupants were looking the wrong way. Gear adrift—it must be a gift!) The fuel depot trooper only wanted a signature, so once again "*Pvt McCately*" signed the logbook.

After our productive acquisition run, we returned to the POW camp thinking about the medals we were sure we had already earned just on this run alone!

Three days later, GySgt Blanz and SSgt Cancino arrived from the Camp Pendleton Spanish Team. Gunny Blanz was a classmate just a week prior at Ft. Huachuca and SSgt Cancino was a "role player" instructor at the same time.

The following day, Sgt Hernandez arrived from Lejeune with "needed equipment" that MGySgt Beatty thought we might need.

The "specialized" equipment consisted of one manual typewriter and a case of typing

>>

>> paper. Not one pack of smokes or any “pogey” bait— with the exception of three cheeseburgers Hernandez brought along for the flight.

While at the POW compound, the Army CWO, really liked the way we worked so gave us the most difficult prisoner, not only Cuban but Grenadans as well. Instead of doing one-on-one interrogations, Nelson and myself read the EEI’s and PIR’s posted daily and with the permission of the Camp OIC, went inside the wire and had lunch with the detainees. This was such a sacrifice for us since we had to eat Cuban food of yellow rice, black beans, and slow roasted pork, instead of our C-Rations. (Right!)

Soon, a request came from the Army for two Marine Interrogators to be attached to an Army infantry battalion. During those days, the Army didn’t practice the concept of mobile interrogator teams operating to an infantry battalion. SSgt Cancino, a Vietnam vet, and I volunteered and were selected. (Another “Rican” team.) This time GySgt

Blanz gave me his M-16 to take along. We spent the next two weeks attached to the 504<sup>th</sup> Parachute Infantry Brigade and did quite a bit of tactical interrogations and screened all civilian “walk-ins”.

There are too many stories of that assignment to be mentioned here. We flew back by helo the same day we were scheduled to take the “freedom bird” back to the States. Arriving at Point Salenes, where the airport was, I presented two AK-47’s we captured to the 1<sup>st</sup> ITU and the 2<sup>nd</sup> ITU for display as war souvenirs. WO Alvarez told me that I was going to be meritoriously promoted to Sergeant. (My promotion did not materialize until three years later.)

We left the island and arrived at Pope AFB co-located to Ft. Bragg, NC at about zero-dark-thirty. WO Alvarez said he was calling for a helicopter to pick us up. Next day after breakfast, and after we had spent the night at the Pope AFB terminal cafeteria drinking beer waiting for the “helo”, two vans showed up and took us back to Lejeune.

After all was said and done we did realize that, yes, we were the first Marine Corps Interrogators assigned in direct support to combat operations since the Vietnam War. And I guess that’s not bad for a 21-year old Marine Corporal that graduated Interrogation School five days before being deployed to put into practice that newly acquired set of skills. I was a Combat Veteran Marine Interrogator!

#### **RATIONE AUT VI**

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> ITU Marine Interrogators:**

WO Alvarez    Sgt Del Valle  
GySgt Wible    Sgt Hernandez  
GySgt Winfrey    Cpl Olivera  
SSgt Manlove    Cpl Mikola

#### **1<sup>st</sup> ITU Marine Interrogators:**

GySgt Blanz  
SSgt Cancino

## ***Donations***

### **LEGACY PLEDGES**

#### **Platinum Level**

**Al & Becky Kent – In Memoriam for SSgt John Schindler**

**Jeff & Regina (Jinx) Smith – In Honor of All Veterans**

#### **Gold Level**

**Mitch & Joan Paradis – In Memoriam: BGen Pete Rowe and CWO Pete Caudillo**

**Mike & Mary Ellen Bianchino – In Memoriam for All Fallen Interrogators**

**Oliver J. Hickok – In Memoriam of Chuck Chlarson**

**Howard & Jenny Young**

**Jim & Victoria Haskins**

**Jack & Janelle Parker**

**Jim & Lynne Riemer**

**Luke & Kathy Thoma**

**Harry & Lois Todd**

**Daniel Z. Boyd**

**Felix Conde**

**Vincent Burdelski**

#### **Silver Level**

**Jim & Sherrie Massie – In Memoriam of Chuck Chlarson**

**Howie & Mary Ann Kahn**

**Harold & Judy Weist**

**Jim & Barbara Tortorici**

#### **Bronze Level**

**Silas Downs – In Memoriam of SSgt Ronald J. Garcia**

**Peter Halle**

**William Harrison**

**The Fund Drive for 2009 realized \$3320.00 in support for the administration and continuation of your MCITTA. Special appreciation and thanks are extended to the members who contributed at the levels indicated above. Support for the Association can be made at any time by contacting the MCITTA Treasurer, Jack Parker at: [usmcjack2@comcast.net](mailto:usmcjack2@comcast.net)**

# Our Monument

## Honoring Those Who Honor You

As the Association Chairman and the Chair of the Monument Fund Raising Committee I am making this plea. According to the records we number approximately 260 association members. I am certain that each and every one of us can afford a mere .31 cents per day over the course of a year. This is a pittance when considered against the whole. That would amount to a little more than \$100.00 per member to see this project to a successful conclusion. In fact if we bear down the majority of the amount needed could be collected prior to our

Tampa Gathering and have the Monument in place in 2011.

Be part of a project even if you cannot attend our Annual Gatherings. Contribute the \$100.00 and show your Marine colors of Fraternity and Commitment. This is your project and should be the result of your efforts. This is your opportunity to be unique within the Intelligence community. Now is the time to show our solidarity. Do not sit back and allow a few to bear the brunt of this burden. Collectively we can make this happen and "The Few, The Proud, The Marines" should be all

From **Harry J. Todd, USMC (Ret)**  
*Chairman of the Board of Directors*

inclusive or it loses its meaning. Just because you may have hung up your uniform for the last time there is no reason to forsake our motto "SEMPER FIDELIS".

Many have contributed and done so at a greater level than the \$100.00 I am asking for here. To those members I say, Thank You. If you feel you cannot donate the entire amount all at one time, spread it out over the year. If even that is difficult, at least contribute what you deem to be appropriate.



– On the obelisk a gilded EGA superimposed on a laurel wreath. Icons of the CITT, ITT, and ITP/ITU with the USMC Core Values. On the black marble the inscription: "Dedicated to the Honor and Service of Marine Combat Interrogators and Interpreters of Enemy Prisoners of War in Combat Support to the Fleet Marine Forces" followed by the war eras, Vietnam, Lebanon, Gulf War, Iraq. The MCITTA logo with a dedication inscription. On the base is the division patches of the division supported by Marine Interrogators.



– On the reverse side of the obelisk is a portrait of a kneeling Marine with rifle and pack in memoriam along with the dedication: "We are their witness; for without a witness they shall be forgotten." On the black marble is the list of "Our Fallen Brothers" from Vietnam, Lebanon to the Iraq War with a Gold Star followed by the words of Abraham Lincoln from the Gettysburg Address: "...from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion..."



# Fundraising

Fund raising is both rewarding as it is challenging. It is indeed emotionally satisfying to raise funds for a worthy cause. Sometimes no matter how good the intentions, funds can be exceptionally tight and contacts need the help of informed individuals to support organizational causes.

Fund raising strategy varies. Putting the best possible effort in the cause is instrumental to its success. Strategies range from simple to complicated. However, it is best to always apply the simplest techniques to provide the best returns. Fundraisers should be kept simple but that does not mean it is a simple matter. Strategies chosen vary and depend on the cause supported by any organization. These can run from high-tech fund raising or as MCITTA does it via the organizational members to conventional and profitable efforts via auctions, party, dance, festivals or other similar events. Given our organizational unity many of these are not viable. A few, such as 50/50 raffles at onetime events and direct contribution via letters or a donation box are well worth the effort. Donation boxes should be small and when strategically located in the community with permission can be a source of steady if not substantial return. These are a great way to get donations with minimal effort. They should be professional looking and have their intended purpose clearly attached. One of the very best ways is direct contact with fraternal or social groups who have an affinity with the military. Give a short but concise presentation and solicit their support. One other way may be letter campaign to selected philanthropic individuals in the community. One is limited only by ones imagination.

When your organization elects a strategy as MCITTA has done there must be an agreement to terms and objectives set to paper for the proper management of the activity. This has been done via mail to members to ensure the fundraiser is clearly presented for those participating, as more people tend to be remarkably generous when they know what the cause is all about and believe in that cause. To be successful in any endeavor we need to overcome many common mistakes and direct volunteers to be mindful of such

things that spell a doomed effort prior to start. These pitfalls include but are not limited to any or all of the following; a lack of planning, lack of direction, lack of preparation, lack of communication, lack of publicity, bad timing, poor or no rewards and worst of all unmotivated personnel.

As a non-profit meeting once a year as opposed to once a month, fundraising is very challenging. To keep things rolling a good plan is necessary. Keep in mind MCITTA must rely on the generosity of others or our membership to achieve our target goals. Without the generous contributions of people, non-profits will not stay in operation very long. In determining stated goals you will be guided accordingly as to what you need to do and the time or cost needed to accomplish that goal. For MCITTA this is essential. If the correct type approach is addressed there is no reason why fundraising activity should continue an extended time. Time does not equal increased revenue; well planned and properly executed activity does equal profit.

Recognition also needs to be addressed. Everyone needs a pat on the back now and then. A simple "Thank You" is good enough for some. For others, a certificate, or some form of public notice is more appropriate. Some people give solely to be congratulated. So the wise thing to do is to congratulate them and do so in a public and in a timely manner. Although members don't expect to be rewarded, they too appreciate a token of thanks. MCITTA already has the Distinguished Volunteer lapel pin in place for members. We should not make the mistake of offering a reward to everyone just for participating. Don't offer rewards from the expected profits however, donors should be awarded some visible token such as a letter of Thanks. These can be simply provided by each member or from a central source such as our Finance Officer. The idea is to be tasteful and properly recognize the donor. One other factor is 'peer pressure'. If worked subtly via letters well written to businesses or corporations may encourage the donors or friends to -keep up with the Jones. Philanthropy occurs when the donor and fundraiser share a sense of mutual goals- a sense that something good

has taken place- not simply a tax deduction or some such other reward offered.

Donations occur when we make the donor feel the decision to give is justified by the merits of the project and that MCITTA will use the gift as promised. A major consideration in fund raising is to know your group. This more than anything will influence success. Fundraisers need to advertise and solicit active and drop out members, friends and family, social and fraternal organizations, business and corporate entities and canvas local and other areas for support.

Before MCITTA can reap any benefit of this type campaign the members must be of an equal mindset for the accepted project. We must advise any contacts of any and all great things MCITTA does, the rapport of full disclosure must be maintained. Then, once motivation is established, members need a strategy and tools to execute the plan. This motivation can be advertised and presented directly to contacts. The beneficiary messages delivered need to be consistent and reflect MCITTA's goals and strategy for utilizing said monies. Any pleas made to contacts should be developed with a compelling call to action for them to contribute. It should have details of the value that MCITTA provides and thus a need for the donation. The message should be concise and include instructions on where these donations can be made.

Naturally, when asking for someone's money we should respect their situation. I suggest members be firm in their requests, not asking for exorbitant amounts but perhaps specific amounts within the donors range and provide a means for contacts to opt out. Let's get out there and bring this project to fruition. Its success will be your legacy to the public and for future Marines.

Harry Todd  
Chairman of the Board  
MCITTA



*"We will remember them..."*

## *In Memoriam*

The names of this Marine Interrogator will be inscribed in the Last Man Log and remembered at the next MCITTA annual Memorial Services.



**LtCol John J. Guenther, USMC (Ret)** passed away on 29 October 2009 at this home in Arlington, VA with his wife of 57 years, Gerrie, by his side. A memorial mass was held on November 4 prior to his internment at Arlington National Ceremony on January 14, 2010 with full military honors.

Mike Decker, who relieved John at USMC HQ commented on a long and distinguished career this way: "John Guenther enlisted in the Marine Corps in January 1948. In September 1950 Corporal Guenther landed at Inchon with the Seventh Marines. In November and December, Sergeant Guenther was in the S-2 during and in the Chosin Reservoir battle."

"He served other challenging/tough tours in Cuba, Vietnam, and East Germany. He was a great Marine who embodied the full measure and meaning of Semper Fidelis. John served more than thirty years in the Marine Corps and, upon retirement, continued to serve in a civilian capacity, rising to the civilian equivalent of BGen and serving as the Assistant Director of Marine Corps Intelligence."

Based on his service to the Marine Corps across six decades, which included active duty and service as the senior USMC civilian, he is credited widely as the father of modern Marine Intelligence.

On hearing the sad news, Captain Joe Mazzafrò commented: "John Guenther was a friend and mentor to many of us. There are all too few of our...heroes left. Semper Fi."

John's article on Strategic Surprise and the North Korean and Chinese invasions during that war appeared in the Fall 2008 NIP Quarterly.

The Marine Corps and MCITTA have lost a loyal and dedicated member and a very good friend. John recently completed and submitted to Marine Corps Headquarters a thorough history of Marine Corps intelligence, a project that he has worked on for the past several years. He will be missed by his many friends of the MCITTA.

## *Lest We Forget...*

Last October 24, 2009, I was honored to be in attendance at the commissioning of the USS *Makin Island* (LHD-8) in San Diego. My uncle, Captain Gerald P. Holtom, was the only officer killed in action on the Makin Island Raid. He served as the Intelligence/Language officer for Col Evans Carlson and the 2nd Raider Battalion.

As Primary Next of Kin for my uncle, I personally received his flag at the ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery on August 17, 2001. I donated the shadow box containing that flag and my uncle's medals, including honors for his actions during the attack on Pearl Harbor, to the ship.

Attached are photographs of me with Silke Hagee, sponsor of the ship, and retired Commandant Michael Hagee, in front of the shadow box in Carlson's Cafe aboard ship.

*Tom Holtom*

**Photo Below:** Tom Holtom poses with Mrs. Silke Hagee and former CMC, Gen Michael Hagee in front of the shadow box honoring Capt Gerald Holtom. At left is the logo of LHD-8.



# Current Notes of Interest...

## Exciting New Web Links

By popular request and for those members so desiring to keep current with the private affairs of the Association we have a new password protected link on our web. Since October our Web Master, Jeff Smith, has been diligently working on this for us.

I am proud to announce it is fully operational and will contain information not of a public nature. To access the site just click on the link providing access to this area, follow directions, receive from our webmaster a user name and personal password, and you are ready to take advantage of this link. Check such things as our financial reports and the progress of the Monument Fund.

Also find a revised and new History link. I encourage everyone to access and review this site. Without your input our history will not be known. Should you see areas, inconsistencies or data needing correction do not hesitate to notify our Webmaster at [GunnyJay@sssnet.com](mailto:GunnyJay@sssnet.com). Jeff has also been working to improve our web site and would appreciate any suggestions on ways to make the site appealing and professional.

## Thank You

To All Association Members,

I take this opportunity to offer my many Thanks and a hearty well done to all those who took the opportunity to communicate and respond to the survey in E-Bulletin 04-09. The deadline was met and thanks to your well thought out responses, an answer has been formulated and forwarded to the MCIA. I appreciate any and all cooperation from our membership. MCITTA survives via your participation and operates for you. Once again THANK YOU for your support.

Chairman of the Board,

Harry Todd

## A Special Note for our Members

First off let me say Happy New Year to all. Seeing as how we are all getting "Older" I think this may be something we can all benefit from— VA *Longterm Care*; also referred to as the *VA Aid and Attendance Pension*. For more information, go to this website: <http://newsok.com/article/3344150>

An easier to understand site which may be more helpful is at: [www.veteranaid.org/index.php](http://www.veteranaid.org/index.php)

This is supposedly the most overlooked program available to us. It can be used for in home care, also. I have a friend who qualified his parents for the program when they entered an assisted living facility. The key not to have more than \$80,000 in assets beyond your house and car. There is no 'look back period'.

Howard Young

## URGENT NOTICE!

DUE TO BUDGETARY CUTS WE WILL NO LONGER BE PRINTING PAPER COPIES OF *THE SPOT REPORT*. OUR PUBLICATION WILL BE AVAILABLE ONLINE AT: [www.mcitta.org](http://www.mcitta.org)

WE ARE ASKING IF YOU DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO A COMPUTER NOTIFY US SO WE CAN MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR YOU TO RECEIVE A PAPER COPY, BUT YOU MUST NOTIFY US; OTHERWISE, WE WILL NOT SEND YOU THE NEXT ISSUE OF *THE SPOT REPORT*.

SO PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO NOTIFY US OF YOUR REQUIREMENTS.

THANKS!

## Special Announcement

This will be our last paper edition of *The Spot Report*. It was determined by unanimous vote at the San Diego Gathering to discontinue publishing a "hard copy" version of our newsletter. The newsletter will be posted to our website and an E-Bulletin will be sent out in HTML format with special links to stories and articles in the journal. A simple "click" will access the newsletter and the desired article. *The Spot Report* will continue to be provided on the website on a semiannual basis, or as items of special interest are provided to the editor.

For those members who do not have computer access to the MCITTA website at [www.mcitta.org](http://www.mcitta.org), you are requested to notify Felix Conde by phone at (210) 253-9148 to continue to receive a paper version of *The Spot*. We do not wish for anyone to be excluded from receiving current information about your Association.

For those who have email and web access, please ensure your email address is current by dropping a note to Felix at: [fcondejr@aol.com](mailto:fcondejr@aol.com) It is most important we maintain a current and up to date contact with you as the E-Bulletin will become the Associations primary means of communication in the future.

Finally, after establishing *The Spot Report* and acting as its sole editor for the past eight years, Mitch Paradis would like to step down. We are seeking a volunteer who will take over these responsibilities as well as providing the E-Bulletin on a regular basis. Your enthusiastic support in continuing a viable means of communication is most important. Mitch will be available to provide guidance and assistance until the transition is completed.

Please help by contacting Harry at: [FIsfrtrs@comcast.net](mailto:FIsfrtrs@comcast.net).

## Call for Articles!

*The Spot Report* and your MCITTA continues to need your support through your contribution of articles of an historical nature that define the history and legacy of the Marine Interrogators and Translator, with emphasis on the development and expansion of the 0250/0251 MOS field from the ITTs through the incorporation of the HUMINT skill set into the current MOS designator. All material, official reports, anecdotal accounts, and/or researched documentary narratives are most welcome. We especially seek material from the period when the Marine Interrogator MOS was active from its inception in 1958 to its close in 2002.

## MCITTA 7th Annual Gathering –



In early October a small group of the faithful once again arrived at the designated location to start another week of camaraderie and fun. Several members arrived a day or two early to get a head start on sightseeing and offerings of San Diego. With everyone on board waiting a wonderful fun filled week things started the evening prior to scheduled events. Nearly everyone descended upon a local eatery for an evening of getting reacquainted and caught up with events over the past year.

With the greetings of fellow Marines and friends lasting long into the evening the folks adjourned and were ready bright and early for scheduled events the next day. First thing Tuesday, guided by the capable hands of Jim and Lynne Riemer, our group boarded the Old Town Trolley, “The MCITTA Charter”, and set off for our very personal and private extended tour. Hosted by a most congenial and appreciative guide the excursion allowed us a peek into the environs of San Diego’s past and present. Traveling to historic as well as commercial centers, some of the group opted to step off and explore on their own. A great orientation and start to a great event for our 7th Annual Gathering.

Returning at midday, to Holiday Inn San Diego Bayside the group had a short time to recharge until getting together for the evening at the Team Commander’s Reception. As always this event was much anticipated and the buffet style casual eating arrangement was one of the highlights. Heavy hors d’oeuvres accompanied by a succulent steamship round of beef with open bar allowed for the air to become saturated with tales of past escapades. Adher-

ing to a loosely established protocol everyone finally settled down to listen as our Team Chief, Felix Conde, described the meaning of our Last Man Standing display, as we paid tribute to our brothers lost since meeting last. Solemnity concluded, Team Commander, Jim Haskins, ably assisted by Past Team Commander, Harry Todd, began honoring those worthy group members with the awards approved by our Awards Committee. Many of our members proudly accepted the recognition and some not present were also honored. The highlight of this evening was



the presentation of a pair of hand carved wood ducks mounted upon a piece of driftwood to Lynne for her involvement over the

past year to make this year's Gathering the success it was. This gift was particularly meaningful for her as she not only collects decoys and carved wildlife but because she is familiar with this local art form from the East Coast. The carvings were old, beautifully rendered, rustic and their exact history is lost. Unlike previous years we were not required by time constraint to depart and the camaraderie lasted late into the evening.

Wednesday morning practically with the sun the Annual Business meeting convened (meeting minutes may be found on MCITTA's website, [www.mcitta.org](http://www.mcitta.org)). The paramount item on the agenda was the survival of MCITTA. Discussions and suggestions for success finally resulted in deciding to restructure our command staff from a slate of elected officers to that of an established Board of Officers. Once that was settled the discussion turned toward the selection of a Gathering site for 2011. While no positive site was selected there are two very positive prospects needing to be fully checked out. (The 2011 Gathering location will be announced at a future date.)



With business concluded the group mustered aboard transportation to tour

the USS Midway moored in San Diego Harbor and now serving as a monument and museum. USS Midway served for over 50 years and contains from the flight deck to the depth of her internal bowels over 60 exhibits dedicated to the sailors and Marines of her company during the active duty years. The tour was electronically self-guided allowing a leisurely three hours to absorb her valiant history. There were available guided tours for small groups by docents who had actually served aboard this magnificent ship.

Following the Midway tour, we felt the call of the sea and eagerly boarded the Hornblower Cruise boat for a two hour tour of San Diego Harbor while the strains of "Gilligan's Island" theme could be heard among the group members. The deluxe tour covered



the Coronado Bay with exhibits of square-riggers and a Man of War; as we passed under the Coronado Bridge with the spectacular view the world's largest wooden structured hotel, the Hotel Del Coronado, and the various homes of the rich and famous. We then entered the largest U. S. Navy port on the west coast with its many classes of active duty Naval ships home ported in San Diego. On our return we witnessed Seal Teams and helicopter training operations in the Bay. Traveling west, we sailed past Shelter Islands towards Point Loma as we watched harbor seals haul out for sun-bathing, raced two America's cup yachts as they tacked and plied the waters in the harbor in practice runs, sailed past Point Loma Subbase to the most western point of the United States under the Cabrillo Monument and the Point Loma Lighthouse.

The evening meal was an on your own affair within the confines of Seaport Village a 14 acre waterfront shopping dining and entertainment complex mimicking a seaside setting reminiscent of centuries ago—the perfect end to a splendid day discovering this magnificent city by the bay.

The following morning a valiant group of golfers departed for the first *Jim Riemer Classic Golf Tournament* at the Sail Ho golf course located on the former U. S. Navy Recruit Training Base. For those staying back the day was equally busy. After breakfast some returned to revisit sites not fully appreciated previously and to take advantage of the opportunity to satisfy a shopping urge for mementoes. By 1200 the golfers returned declaring their outing a complete success and everyone gathered in the Hospitality Suite for a catered lunch before we adjourned to the hotel's mini golf course and shuttle-board area for a



bit of intra-organizational competition. Following our afternoon *Jim Riemer Mini-Classic* we regrouped in the Hospitality Suite for beverages and to recognize those who excelled on the field and rewarded with trophies and medallions to mark their prowess. Vince Burdelski and Mitch Paradis were the first winners of the *Jim Riemer Golf Classic* permanent and rotating trophy. As it turned out, everyone received an award of one level or another. A great event, enjoyed by all and eager to have the *Jim*

*Riemer Classic* repeated for many years to come. Later we all convened at the Red Sail Restaurant for a late dinner and to enjoy a complimentary beverage provided by Luke Thoma who was unable to make the Gathering for health reasons, but was certainly there in spirit. All hands toasted Luke for his generosity and his dedicated enthusiasm for the MCITTA.

For many, Friday was a day of reminiscing as we departed for the MCRD San Diego and a nostalgic trip to the roots of our recruit days to share a graduation of another generation of Marines. Before we assembled on the "Grinder" we held a moment of solemnity in the Base Chapel for the Annual Memorial Services to honor those Marine Interrogators we have lost in battle. Always a special moment of our Annual Gathering, we took a moment to remember our fallen brothers and honor their bravery.



Following the Memorial Services we were treated to the welcoming activities by MCRD San Diego staff for visiting parents and the introduction to our distinguished group to Bella Wood, a beautiful young “lady”, well a beautiful 18-month-old English bulldog mascot in training. Like all new recruits, she has thus far learned to salute on command and was learning to deal with crowds on this day. Bella was a great hit and loved posing for the camera.



The 500 plus strong recruit company, I company, 3rd Battalion, Recruit Training Regiment mustered on the grinder anxious to finally be called MARINE. Ceremonies were crisp and we of the “old breed” were thankful to know our Corps will continue to be a viable force guarding

our country’s future. After graduation the group had a couple hours of “Base liberty” to shop, eat and sight see.

Following a fine day at MCRD, San Diego, we returned to the hotel and assembled at 1800 for a social hour prior to our Annual Banquet. With no special guest speaker, Harry Todd seized the moment to speak of the organizational restructuring, how it will function and the situation with the 2011 Gathering venue. Harry got carried away with his enthusiasm and went on and on until his wife gave him the zip-it signal after 35 to 40 minutes. With Harry finally reigned in, the meal was served and, once again, we enjoyed an evening of good friends, laughter and the dulcet tones of Mike Bianchino as he serenaded us in his own inimitable style. As always, we appreciate Mike’s contribution to the overall success of our many Gatherings. This year we were pleasantly surprised as Vince Burdelski joined Mike behind the microphone and really knocked out several tunes with a voice equal to Michael Buble— well, not quite but it was pleasantly unexpected, nonethe-

less. All had a grand time but alas all good things must end and so it was as the last day came to a close.

After a very full week, breakfast for the early risers was replete with good-byes and good health sentiments. As folks departed the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Gathering slowly came to a successful conclusion. No one was disappointed by the events so well organized by Jim and Lynne Riemer and to them, we profess our many, many thanks. We all appreciate the time and effort not to mention hard work and headaches they put forth to bring off yet another successful Gathering.



As we close this chapter, we look forward to seeing everyone next year. For more pictures of our great San Diego Gathering, go to our website at [www.mcitta.org](http://www.mcitta.org). See you in Tampa!

Report by Harry Todd  
Photos courtesy of Felix Conde;  
Howard Young; and Mitch Paradis



*The Ladies*



*The Guys*

## MCITTA 8th Annual Gathering –



It's time to consider planning to attend the 2010 Gathering. Thanks to our representative hosts and Association members in Tampa Bay, Paul Hernandez, Kris Hankinson and Richard Quinones we will enjoy the distractions of that lovely city for our 2010 Gathering to be held tentatively between 17 and 23 October. Mark your calendars now and plan to have a wonderful time with friends and associates. Check our website for additional information as it becomes available.

*Chairman of the Board  
Harry Todd*

The new Tampa Riverwalk is a continuous pedestrian walkway extending from the Channelside area to Tampa Heights along the east side of the Hillsborough River. It incorporates pedestrian amenities, art and interpretive elements, retail and restaurant uses, parks and open space, and other urban amenities. See more at: [www.tampagov.net/dept\\_riverwalk](http://www.tampagov.net/dept_riverwalk)



Below: **Centro Ybor**– The colorful and enticing Cuban center with a spectacular view of the city skyline above.



You want Florida– you want Tampa Bay! A single day's itinerary might include breakfast at a waterside cafe, a visit to Busch Gardens Africa, the Florida Aquarium, a streetcar ride to Channelside Bay Plaza for shopping, topped off with a stay at the beautiful Sheraton Tampa Riverwalk Hotel. Then on to historic Ybor City where the Cuban sandwiches are hot and crisp, the cigars are hand-rolled, and the colorful streets are lined with fun. The sugar white, sandy beaches are a must.

**>> The Tampa Gathering is sure to be unique. Plan on it! <<**



*Tampa at sunrise*



### The Brotherhood

*I now know why men who have been to war yearn to reunite. Not to tell stories or look at old pictures. Not to laugh or weep. Comrades gather because they long to be with the men who once acted at their best; men who suffered and sacrificed, who were stripped of their humanity. I did not pick these men. They were delivered by fate and the military. But I know them in a way I know no other men. I have never given anyone such trust. They were willing to guard something more precious than my life. They would have carried my reputation, the memory of me. It was part of the bargain we all made, the reason we were so willing to die for one another. As long as I have my memory, I will think of them all, every day. Such good men.*

—Paraphrased from "These Good Men" by Michael Norman

