



The First Marine Division served across the Pacific from first to last in the Second World War. The images below show some of the experiences that Marines of The Old Breed lived through in their wartime years.

Click on any of the links to visit a specific section on this page.

[Pre-war era](#)

[Cape Gloucester – 1943-44](#) [Post-war era](#)

[Embarkation for the South Pacific – 1942](#)

[Pavuvu – 1944](#)

[Guadalcanal – 1942](#)

[Peleliu – 1944](#)

[Australia – 1943](#)

[Okinawa – 1945](#)

PRE-WAR ERA

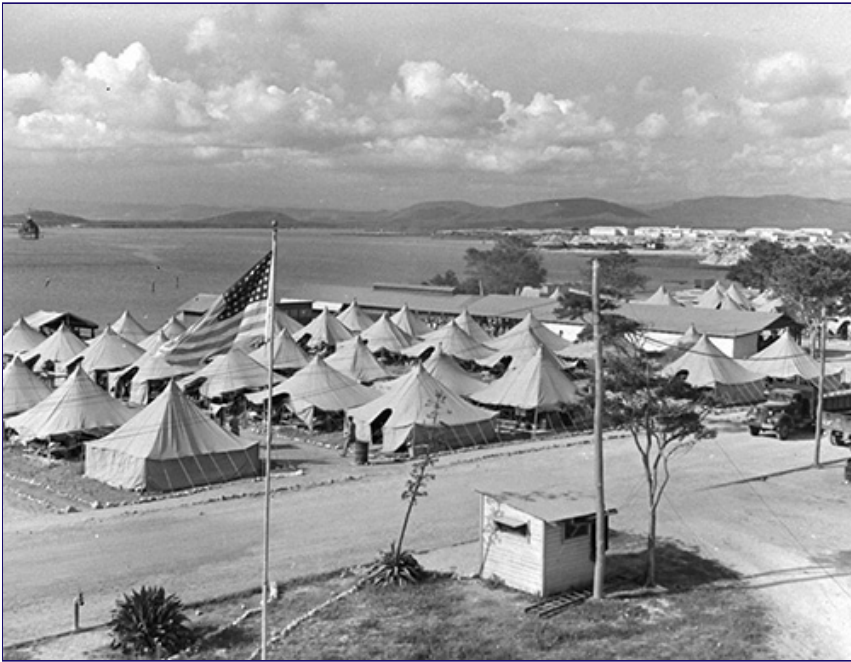
Guantanamo Bay, Cuba – 1941.
Clad much as their forebearers in



World War I, these 1st MarDiv Leathernecks practice an amphibious problem from a US Navy motor whaleboat. *Life Magazine*



Guantanamo Bay, Cuba – 1941. [MajGen Holland M. Smith](#), who served as the first division commander of the Old Breed. Gen Smith was one of the key Marines in the development and execution of amphibious warfare in the Second World War II. *Life Magazine*



Guantanamo Bay, Cuba – 1941. Part of the divisional cantonment area. Many of the Gyrenes in the 1st MarDiv never set foot in a building while deployed overseas in the war years. *Life Magazine*



New River, N. C, 1941. Off the coast of Onslow Beach, a US Navy tank lighter transports a light tank of the [3rd Tank Co.](#) This unit served as the nucleus for the 1st Tank Bn when it was activated at New River on 1 November 1941. *Life Magazine*

[TOP OF PAGE](#)

EMBARKATION FOR THE SOUTH PACIFIC

May 1942 - Norfolk, Virginia.
Marines of the 1st MarDiv board



their transport prior to sailing for New Zealand. They are wearing [service dress greens](#) with [field transport packs](#). *Still image from USMC motion picture film*



En route to New Zealand, a Marine takes time to read a book on the rail of his transport. *Still image from USMC motion picture film*



Aboard their transport bound for New Zealand, Marines try to make do under very cramped conditions. *Still image from USMC motion picture film*



Aboard their transport bound for New Zealand, these Marines wear their overcoats to ward off the North Pacific cold. *Still image from USMC motion picture film*



14 June 1942, Wellington Harbor, New Zealand. A newly-arrived Leatherneck smiles for the camera. *Still image from USMC motion picture film*



14 June 1942, Wellington Harbor, New Zealand. A Marine gets his first taste of fresh milk delivered to the dock by a milk wagon. *Still image from USMC motion picture film*



14 June 1942, Wellington Harbor, New Zealand. Infantrymen of the 5th Marines march off the docks to board the train for their camp. The lieutenant in the right foreground carries a map case and binoculars. *Still image from USMC motion picture film*



This 1st MarDiv Marine appears to have lost no time getting directions from a Wellington police officer. June 1942. *Still image from USMC motion picture film*

14 June 1942, As a 1st MarDiv unit marches out to its camp,



children line the road cheering.
Still image from USMC motion picture film



14 June 1942, At Camp Paekakariki outside of Wellington, Marines of the 1st MarDiv find their bunks under the watchful eye of their [platoon sergeant](#). The Marine standing in the door is a [BAR man](#) and his NCO carries a [Reising submachine gun](#). The division only stayed in New Zealand for a very short time. *Still image from USMC motion picture film*

14 June 1942, A platoon sergeant forms his Marines at their new



camp outside of Wellington, New Zealand. *Still image from USMC motion picture film*



June 1942, NCO's of the 5th Marine Regiment reading [The Dominion Post](#). The Fifth was a storied regiment with combat service in France during World War I. The corporal at right displays the French Fourragere, worn by all hands in the regiment. *Still image from USMC motion picture film*

14 June 1942, Wellington Harbor, New Zealand. MajGen A. A.



Vandegrift, CG, 1st MarDiv, (wearing overcoat) and BrigGen William Rupertus, ADC, 1st MarDiv, (foreground) debark from the [USS Wakefield](#) (AP-21). *Still image from USMC motion picture film*



14 June 1942, Wellington Harbor, New Zealand. MajGen Vandegrift (wearing overcoat), and BrigGen Rupertus (center), confer dockside after debarkation.

In the background at right is LtCol John D. Macklin, an officer in the D-4 section. He was later assigned as the divisional Ordnance Officer.

Still image from USMC motion picture film

14 June 1942, Wellington Harbor, New Zealand. MajGen Vandegrift and BrigGen Rupertus confer



dockside after debarkation.

In mid-frame looking left is Col William C. James, Divisional Chief of Staff.

Still image from USMC motion picture film



14 June 1942, Wellington Harbor, New Zealand. Troops of the 1st MarDiv debark from their transport after over a month at sea. Most of them wear the [winter service uniform](#) and they are still equipped with the [M1903 rifle](#).
Still image from USMC motion picture film

14 June 1942, Wellington Harbor,



New Zealand. The 1st MarDiv Band debarks from the ship. *Still image from USMC motion picture film*



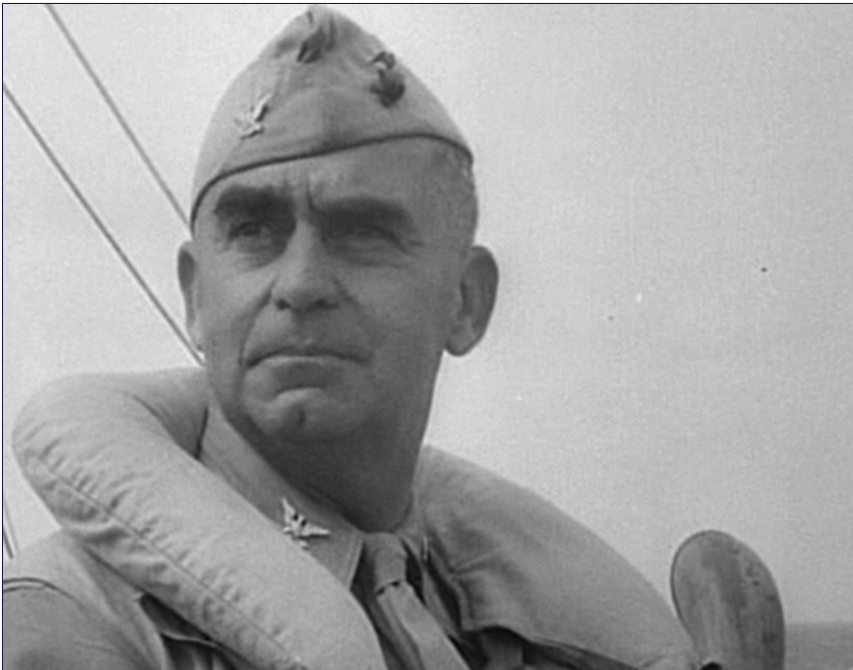
July 1942, Wellington Harbor, New Zealand. The division received little warning prior to loading for Guadalcanal. As they did the time- and labor-intensive of combat loading, the dock workers in Wellington were on strike. It was felt that an appeal to the workers might be reported to the Japanese, thereby disrupting the plans for invasion of the Solomon. *Still image from USMC motion picture film*

[TOP OF PAGE](#)

GUADALCANAL – 1942



En route to Guadalcanal aboard a US Navy transport, a 1st MarDiv [mortar squad](#) works on crew drills with their tube. *Still image from USMC motion picture film*



June 1942 - Aboard *USS Wakefield (AP-21)*, Col Pedro Del Valle, Commanding officer of the 11th Marine Regiment, scans the ocean. Col DelValle spent the entire war in the Pacific, and went on to command the First Marine Division on Okinawa. He retired as a LtGen in 1948 and passed away 1978. *Still image from USMC motion picture film*

In convoy heading for the Solomons, [USS Gregory \(APD-3\)](#) steams past a transport carrying rifle company of the 1st Raider Battalion to its D-Day target, Tulagi Island. Landing craft are



visible aft on the ship hung on their davits.

Gregory was a high speed transport designed to insert Raider units to their objectives. This gallant and beloved ship was sunk with the loss of eleven crewmen on 5 September 1942. *Still image from USMC motion picture film*



Aboard *USS McCawley* (APA-4) enroute to Guadalcanal, MajGen Vandegrift confers with key members of his staff. L-R: MajGen Vandegrift, LtCol Gerald Thomas (D-3), LtCol Randolph McC. Pate (D-4), LtCol Frank Goettge (D-2), Col William James (CoS). *USMC Photo*

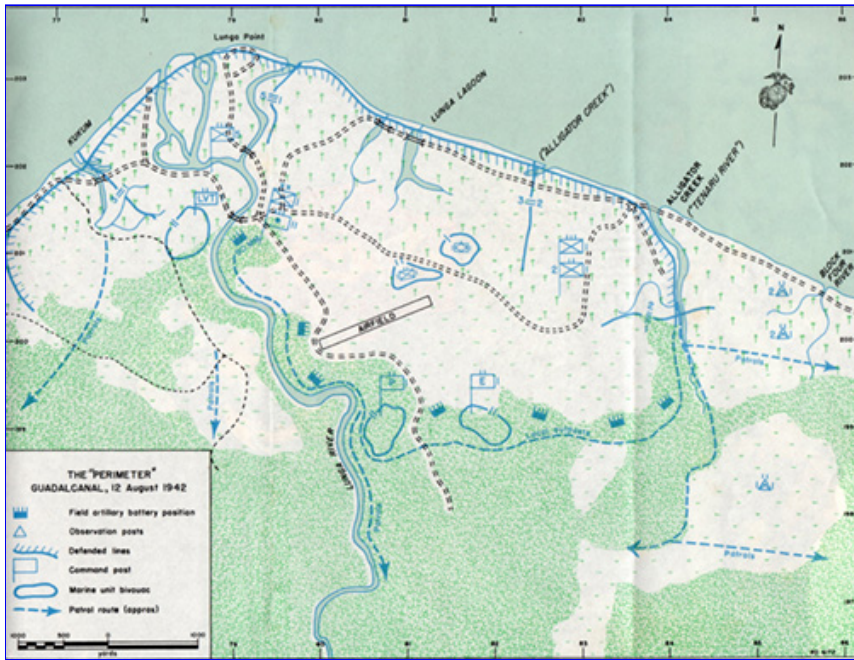
En route to Guadalcanal, a Marine looks out across the Pacific Ocean.



We can only guess at what he was thinking. He carries and [M1 carbine](#) slung over his left shoulder. *Still image from USMC motion picture film*



A leatherneck stands by on D-Day on his transport for debarking to the Lunga beachhead. He carried a [slung Thompson submachine gun](#). *Still image from USMC motion picture film*



[Map of the Lunga beachhead area on Guadalcanal](#) showing major terrain features. *USMC*



Off the Lunga Beachhead on 7 August 1942, an LVT-1 of the 1st Amphibian Tractor Bn heads back to the ship after dropping a load of supplies. *Still image from USMC motion picture film*

On D-Day at Guadalcanal, 7 August 1942, an LCP from [USS](#)



[Neville \(AP-16\)](#) transports a load of Marines to the beachhead. Still image from USMC motion picture film



On the Guadalcanal beachhead, a [heavy machine gun squad](#) digs in as an LVT-1 drives past in the background. Still image from USMC motion picture film



Instructions to a Patrol by Capt Donald L. Dickson, USMCR. USMC Combat Art Collection



Guadalcanal, August 1942 - A 75mm pack howitzer section of the 11th Marines occupies a former Japanese emplacement in the Lunga perimeter. *USMC Photo*



August 1942 – MajGen Vandegrift (center) and Col William C. James, Divisional Chief of Staff, render honors at the flag raising ceremony on recently captured Henderson Field. *Still image from USMC motion picture film*



21 August 1942 – Fallen Japanese soldiers of the Ichiki Detachment, which attacked the Division's eastern flank on the preceding night. In what came to be known as the [Battle of the Tenaru](#), some 900 enemy troops, commanded by [Col Kiyonao Ichiki](#), attempted to breach the defenses of 2nd Bn, First Marines. Over 800 Japanese corpses were counted after the battle. Col Ichiki died during the assault, and his remains were never located. *USMC Photo*



A Corpsman on Guadalcanal treats an Japanese POW for fungal infections. This must have been early in the campaign since the doc is still wearing a Red Cross armband. Corpsman stopped using this insignia because the Japanese used the red cross as an aiming reference. *Still image from USMC motion picture film*



A Pharmacist's Mate at Charlie Med (Company C, 1st Medical Battalion) opens the door of probably the only refrigerator in the First Marine Division in the Guadalcanal perimeter.

This was a gasoline-powered unit used for storage of perishable medicines and vaccines. *Still image from USMC motion picture film*



Major General Alexander A. Vandegrift, USMC, Medal of Honor, Guadalcanal by Col Charles Waterhouse, USMCR (ret). USMC Art Collection



During a visit to Guadalcanal on 1 October 1942, Adm Chester Nimitz, CINCPAC, decorates Col Merritt 'Red Mike' Edson with the Navy Cross for heroism in action while in command of the 1st Raider Battalion in the assault on Tulagi from 7-9 August 1942. Still image from USMC motion picture film

Lt Col Lewis B. Puller marches at



the head of 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, during the campaign for Guadalcanal, 1942. Puller earned the third of his five Navy Crosses while commanding 1/7 on the 'canal, and he was wounded in action there. *Still image from USMC motion picture film*



A unit of the [1st Tank Bn](#) prepares to move out on Guadalcanal. In the front and rear are M2A4 light tanks. The second tank is an M3. Coordination between tankers and infantry Marines was not a given in this campaign and it was very much a process of trial and error. *USMC Photo*



Cpl Brandon Nadeau, Co B, 1st Bn, 7th Marines. This Devil Dog hailed from Waterville, NY, and was [killed in action](#) on Guadalcanal, 25 October 1942. Cpl Nadeau was one of 1,206 Marines and 36 [FMF medical personnel](#) who died in the fighting on Guadalcanal. *Photo courtesy of [Heroes Forever.nl](#)*



Marines just off the Guadalcanal perimeter line-up for hot chow. For most of its time on the Canal, the First Marine Division encountered shortages of rations, forcing the Marines to subsist on a near-starvation diet. It took the Division nearly a year to recover for Guadalcanal. *Still image from USMC motion picture film*



Marines test-fire a captured Japanese heavy machine gun on Guadalcanal. *Still image from USMC motion picture film*



A Marine says goodbye to his buddy at the Divisional cemetery on Guadalcanal. 4,063 Marines were killed or wounded on the Canal between August 1942-February 1943, as were 113 attached Navy personnel. *Life Magazine*

Los Angeles - Late-1943. [Cpl Edward Melnitsky](#) of Newton,



Mass., enjoys a drink with a pretty companion.

Melnitsky served with 2nd Battalion, Fifth Marines and won the Navy Cross for heroism in action on Guadalcanal. During the Battle of the Matanikau River on 8 October 1942, Melnitsky and another Marine braved heavy enemy fire to rescue their severely wounded battalion commander, Maj David S. McDougal. Cpl Melnitsky was himself struck by three enemy machine gun rounds in this action. *USMC Photo*

Pvt Al Schmid of Burholme, Penna., is awarded the Navy Cross by Col A. E. Russell at Marine Barracks, Washington, DC. Schmid earned his award



while serving as a [heavy machine gunner](#) with H 2/1 on Guadalcanal. On the night of 21 August 1942, his unit was attacked by the Japanese Ichiki Detachment. Although blinded in the action, Schmid courageously manned his gun and was instrumental in breaking up the enemy assaults. Schmid died in 1982 and is interred in [Arlington National Cemetery](#). *USMC Photo*

[PltSgt John M. Basilone](#) as he appeared during the 3rd War Loan tour. in 1943. Basilone – arguably the most recognizable Gyrene in the Division – became the face of the Marine Corps to the public during the war. Basilone earned his Medal of Honor while serving with D 1/7 during the [Battle of Henderson Field](#) on the night of 24-25 October 1942.

After finishing the bond tour, Basilone requested another



combat assignment and he was transferred to C 1/27, 5th MarDiv. He was killed in action on D-Day at Iwo Jima, 19 February 1945. For his heroism under that day under nearly unsurmountable odds, he was awarded a posthumous Navy Cross. Basilone was the only enlisted Marine since World War II to earn both of our Nation's highest awards. *USMC Photo*

View a [YouTube video of then-PltSgt Basilone](#) speaking with Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia of New York City.

[TOP OF PAGE](#)

AUSTRALIA – 1943



A 1st MarDiv honor guard in Melbourne, Australia, 1943. These Marines are wearing the Australian Army battledress blouse issued by the division Quartermaster when units arrived in Australia following the Guadalcanal campaign. *Australian War Memorial*



A posed shot of 1st MarDiv troops reading their mail, Melbourne, Australia, 1943. *Australian War Memorial*

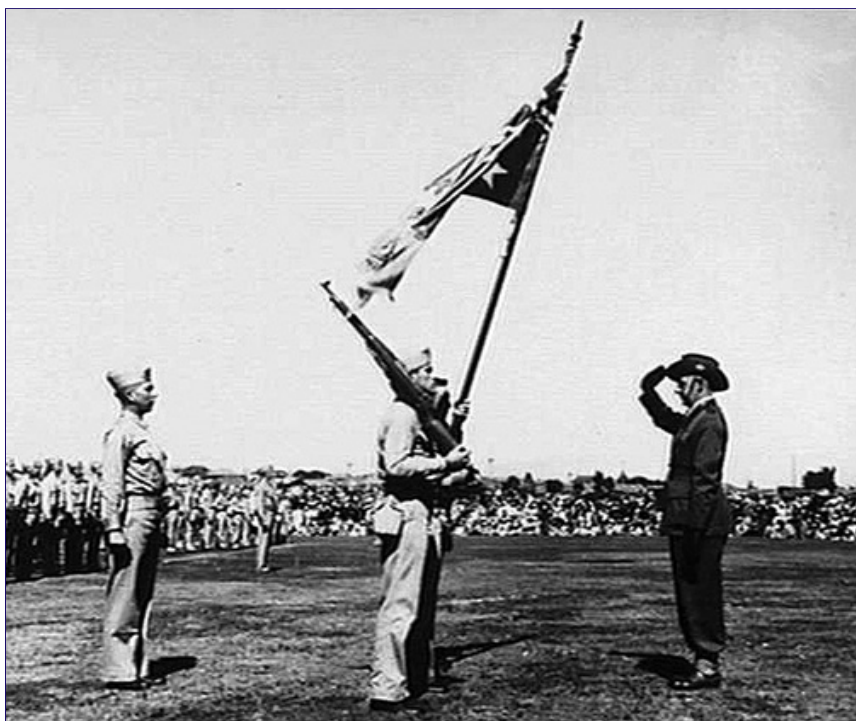


[1st Special Weapons Bn 75mm Gun Motor Carriages](#) take part in the Divisional parade in Melbourne on 22 February 1943. The entire Divisional participated in this parade, which was the largest military ceremony ever held in Melbourne. *Australian War Memorial*

22 February 1943 – Preceded by the Divisional staff, the First



Marine Band marches through Melbourne, followed by one of the Division's infantry regiments.
Australian War Memorial



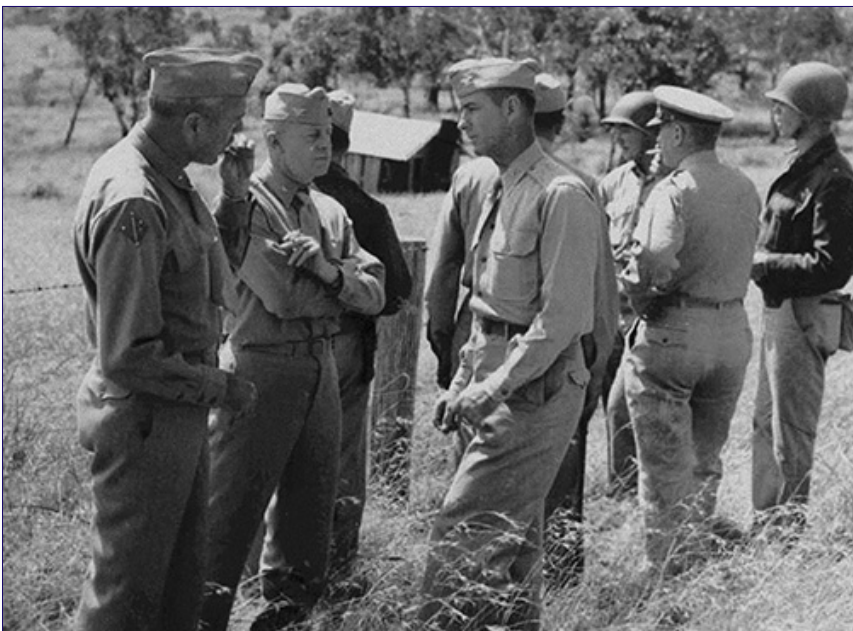
17 March 1943 – The city of Caulfield presented the Division with an Australian flag in appreciation of the Guadalcanal campaign. Here, an Australian soldier salutes after presenting the flag to a Marine color guard. Caulfield is located about 7 miles southeast of Melbourne's city center.
Australian War Memorial



Australia – 1943. BrigGen William Rupertus, Division ADC, inspects a newly issued M5A1 light tank of the 1st Tank Bn.
USMC Photo



18 May 1943. Leathernecks of the Seventh Marines render honors at a Divisional awards ceremony.
Australian War Memorial



BrigGen Rupertus and Col Merritt 'Red Mike' Edson confer with an army officer during an inspection of the Division by the Sixth Army.
Marine Corps Archives

[TOP OF PAGE](#)

CAPE GLOUCESTER – 1943-44



Cape Sudest on the island of New Guinea, 24 December 1944. Troops of the Seventh Marines march to their LSTs prior to embarking for Cape Gloucester. Cape Sudest is located in Oro Province, Papua New Guinea. During the war, it served as a major US staging and logistics base. *USMC Photo*



Cape Gloucester, 26 December 1944. Troops of the 1st MarDiv come ashore at Borgen Bay. Note the solid wall of jungle extending right to the beach. *USMC Photo*

A 6 x 6 truck of 3rd Bn, 17th Marines, plows through the



morass of a trail on Cape Gloucester, 1944. *Australian War Memorial*



The phrase, "Things are tough all over" was nowhere truer than at Cape Gloucester. This is a portion of the divisional command post. *USMC Photo*

BrigGen Lemuel Shepherd,
Assistant Division Commander, at



the Divisional command post on Cape Gloucester. *Marine Corps Archives*



New Britain, January 1944 - A patrol in the Natamo area searches for signs of the enemy. A few minutes after this photo, the patrol was ambushed by a Japanese machine gun, killing two Marines and wounding several others. *USMC Photo*



An [Able Company, 1st Tanks](#) crew attempts self-recovery on a mud-soaked jungle trail on New Britain. *Still image from USMC motion picture film*



New Britain. The face of the 1st Marine Division. After weeks of combat, Marines were exhausted. Cape Gloucester is one of the wettest locales on earth, and this Leatherneck clearly shows the jungle's toll on his face. *Still image from USMC motion picture film*



New Britain. The face of the 1st Marine Division. This young Devil Dog wears a poncho over his equipment and weapon. The poncho was a hot, heavy garment that caused as many problems as it solved for Marines in combat. *Still image from USMC motion picture film*

New Britain. The face of the 1st Marine Division. It was impossible to stay clean under frontline conditions. At Cape



Gloucester, even the simplest cuts and scrapes became infected and countless Marines developed fungal infections that were frequently very difficult to resolve. *Still image from USMC motion picture film*



New Britain, January 1944 – The crew of a [75mm GMC](#) in Wpns Co, 1st Marines, scans the jungle for signs of the enemy. While the Marines behind the gun shield search to the front, the machine gunner keeps watch for snipers in the tops of the canopy. *USMC Photo*

[Col Lewis B. Puller](#), CO, 1st Marines, and [Capt Joseph E.](#)



[Buckley](#), CO, Wpns Co, 7th Marines, receive their Navy Crosses earned at Cape Gloucester. *Marine Corps Archives*

[TOP OF PAGE](#)

PAVUVU – 1944



1944, Pavuvu Island. Infantry Marines practice debarking from their amphibian tractor in training for the Peleliu campaign. *USMC Photo*

June 1944 – Pavuvu Island.



Officers of 3/5 pose for a group photo after the campaign on New Britain. L-R: Capt Joseph F. Bishop, Jr. , Capt Robert B. Neville (Item Co.), Capt Charles P. McAuliffe, Jr. (Mike Co.), Maj Walter S. McIlhenny, (Bn CO), Capt Andrew Haldane (King Co.), Capt John A. Crown. *USMC Photo*



1944, Pavuvu Island. A flamethrower team in training prior to an operation. The operator carries an [M1 flamethrower](#). *USMC Photo*



1944, Pavuvu Island. A flamethrower team runs through a training problem. *USMC Photo*



1944, Pavuvu Island. The crew of a [37mm antitank gun](#) unloads their piece from a DUKW amphibian truck during the pre-operational training for the Peleliu campaign. *USMC Photo*



August 1944 – A Bird Dog observation plane carrying Bob Hope arrives at the airstrip on Pavuvu. *Still image from USMC motion picture film*



August 1944 – [Bob Hope](#) shakes hands with the 1st MarDiv CG, MajGen William Rupertus. *Still image from USMC motion picture film*

August 1944, [Jerry Colonna](#) entertains troops of the 1st



MarDiv at Pavuvu. Colonna was Bob Hope's sidekick for many years and went on many USO tours. *Still image from USMC motion picture film*

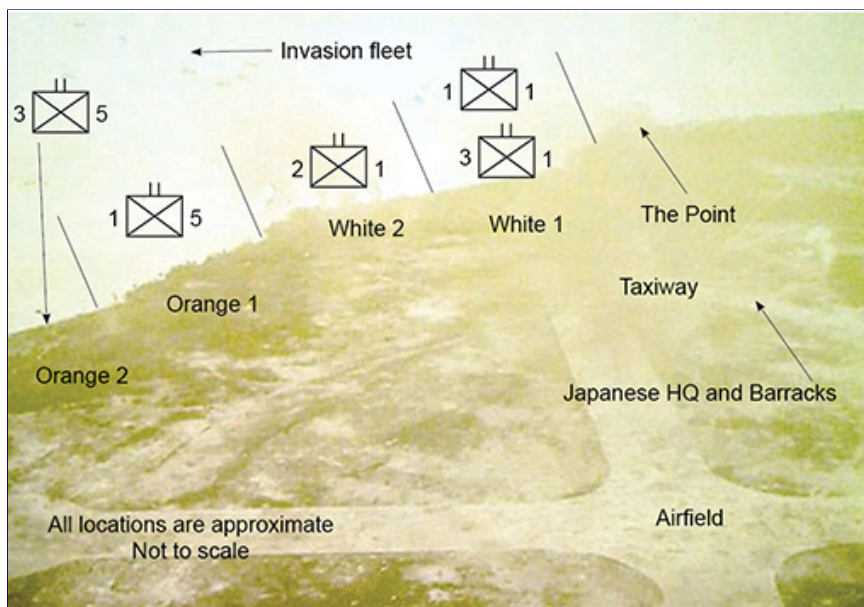


A small part of the crowd of 1st MarDiv Marines at the Bob Hope USO show on Pavuvu, August 1944. Many of the Marines who attended this event remembered it as one of their fondest memories of the war years. *Still image from USMC motion picture film*

[TOP OF PAGE](#)

PELELIU – 1944

This aerial photo looking generally northwest was taken on



15 September 1944 and shows the Divisional landing beaches on Peleliu, probably not long after H-Hour. Smoke rises skyward from the beach head and a pall of dust and smoke hangs over the island. I have inserted the approximate locations of beaches, and assault units in the sector visible in the photo. *US Navy Photo*



A tankdozer of Co A, 1st Tank Bn, clears rubble on the beach on Peleliu. [1st Tanks was equipped with M4A2 medium tanks](#) in this campaign. *Still image from USMC motion picture film*



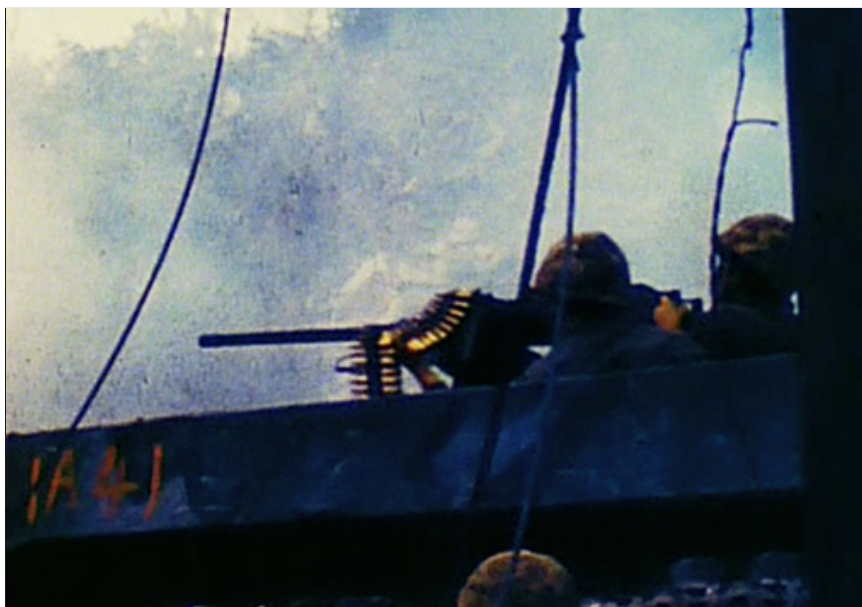
Compassion amidst the hell of Peleliu. A Marine gives his wounded buddy a drink from his canteen. This photo defines the brotherhood of the Corps. *USMC Photo*



A 1st MarDiv bazooka man fires his [M1A1 rocket launcher](#) during the campaign for Peleliu. The bazooka was an effective weapon for destroying Japanese armor and defensive complexes. *Still image from USMC motion picture film*



16th Field Depot Marines stand-by for movement orders off the Peleliu beach head. This unit was made up of the 7th Marine Ammunition Co, and the 11th Marine Depot Co. These Marines were attached to the Service Group, 1st MarDiv for operations on Peleliu. *USMC Photo*



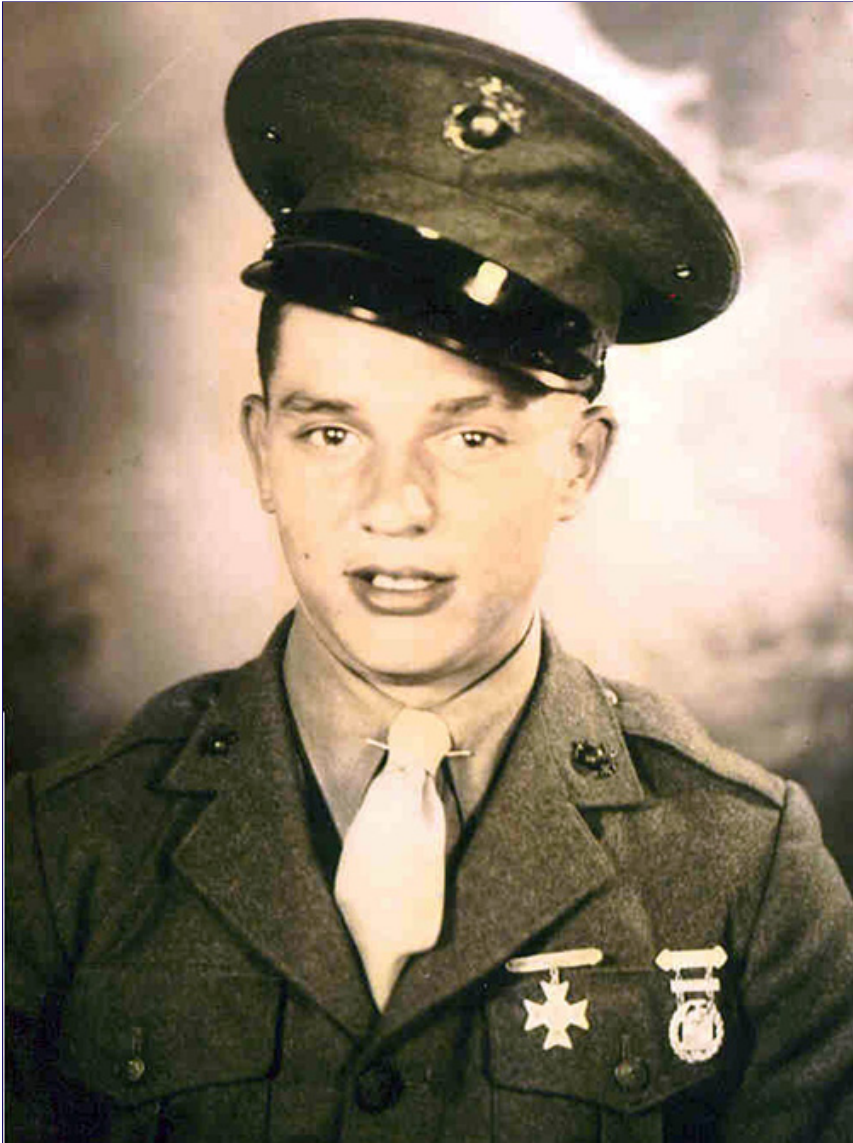
An amphibian tractor crew engages enemy targets with their [.50 caliber machine gun](#) during combat in the Umurbrogal. 1st Amtracs, 6th Amtracs, and a detachment from the 8th Amtracs all served with the Division on Peleliu. *Still image from USMC motion picture film*



Peleliu, 1944 - Troops of the 1st MarDiv march northward during the latter stages of the campaign.
USMC Photo



A 1st MarDiv flamethrower operator employs his weapon during the campaign for Peleliu. He carries the [M1-1 flamethrower](#).
Still image from USMC motion picture film



Pfc Michael Lazaro of Chicago, Ill. Michael joined the Marine Corps in February 1943. He served with Co C, 1st Battalion, Seventh Marines, at Cape Gloucester. After that campaign he was assigned to H & S Co, 1st Pioneer Battalion. Michael was killed in action during the campaign for Peleliu on 15 October 1944. His remains were never recovered and he is still listed as missing. Pfc Michael Lazaro was one of the 1,252 Marines who lost their lives on Peleliu. [*Photo and information from the Lazaro family website*](#)

A Marine kneels at the grave of SgtMaj Lawrence J. Letellier on



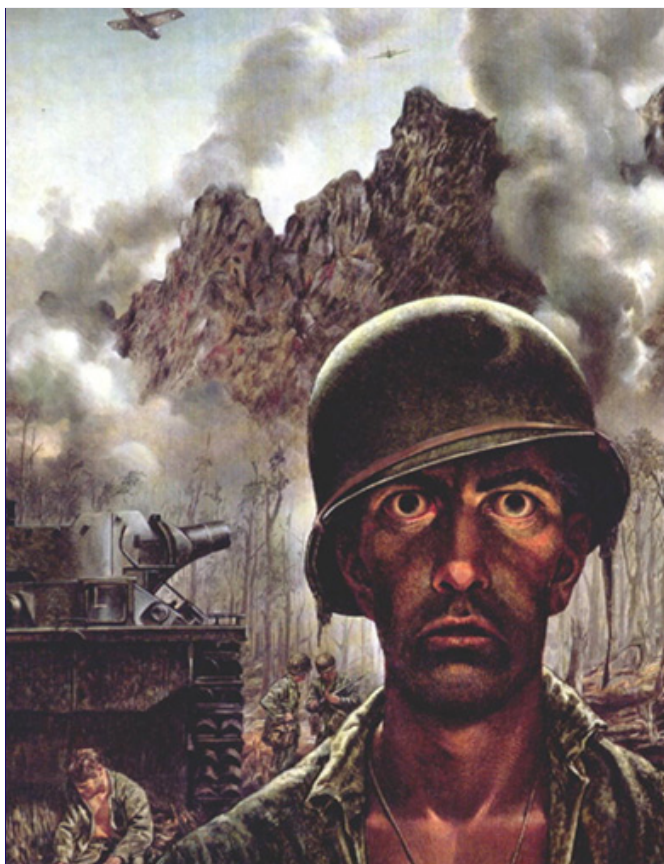
Peleliu. The SgtMaj served with HQ Co, 2nd Bn, 5th Marines and was killed in action by a Japanese mortar explosion on D-Day, 15 September 1944. He was one of the 1,361 Marines and FMF medical personnel who died in the assault on Peleliu. *USMC Photo*



Dedication ceremony after the battle of the Armed Forces cemetery on Peleliu. *USMC Photo*



The Price, by Tom Lea, depicting a wounded Marine of the 1st MarDiv during the D-Day assault on Peleliu. About this painting, Lea later wrote: "Lying in terror looking longingly up the slope to better cover, I saw a wounded man near me, staggering in the direction of the LVTs. His face was half bloody pulp and the mangled shreds of what was left of an arm hung down like a stick, as he bent over in the stumbling, shock-crazy walk. The half of his face that was still human had the most terrifying look of abject patience I have ever seen. He fell behind me, in a red puddle on the white sand." *U. S. Army Art Collection*



Down From Bloody Nose Ridge, by Tom Lea, depicting a combat-fatigued Marine of the 1st MarDiv on Peleliu. In the background is the Umurbrogal complex. Lea wrote of this subject: "As we passed sick bay, still in the shell hole, it was crowded with wounded, and somehow hushed in the evening light. I noticed a tattered Marine standing quietly by a corpsman, staring stiffly at nothing. His mind had crumbled in battle, his jaw hung, and his eyes were like two black empty holes in his head. Down by the beach again, we walked silently as we passed the long line of dead Marines under the tarpaulins." *U. S. Army Art Collection*



Sundown at Peleliu by Tom Lea.
U. S. Army Art Collection



War is Fighting and Fighting is Killing, by Tom Lea. U. S. Army Art Collection

[TOP OF PAGE](#)

OKINAWA – 1945



1 April 1945, L-Day on Okinawa. An infantry Marine moves across the beach under cover of an LVT(A)-4 amphibian tank. *Still image from USMC motion picture film*



1945-Marines in combat on southern Okinawa. The First and Sixth Marine Divisions fought in this, the last campaign of the war. The island's rugged terrain posed an extreme challenge that required the utmost in courage and tactics. *USMC Photo*

1945-Marines in combat on southern Okinawa. These men



move out under fire toward their objective. The [rifle squad](#) was the building block of Marine tactical operations. *USMC Photo*



Pfc Marion A. Westbrook, K 3/5, peers into a Japanese emplacement on Okinawa. From Baton Rouge, La., Marion was drafted into the Marine Corps in September 1943.

Pfc Westbrook was killed in action on 2 May 1945 during the Fifth Marines' assault against Japanese defenders of the Awacha Draw, about 2,000 yards northeast of Shuri.

Marion died at the age of nineteen years and is interred in Baton Rouge. *USMC Photo*

Okinawa – 10 May 1945. [Pfc Paul E. Ison](#), L 3/5, 1st MarDiv, dashes across open ground in Death Valley. On this date, 3/5 was



attached to the 7th Marines.

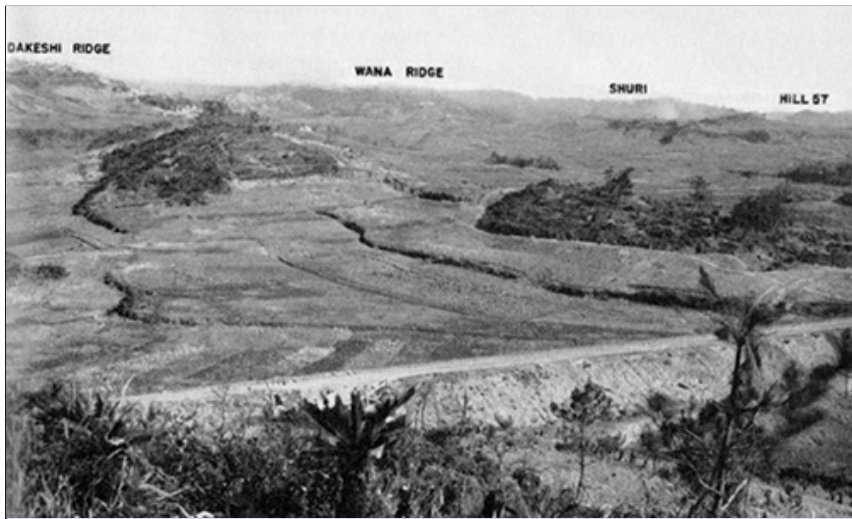
According to the information supplied to the press with this photo, "The Marines sustained more than one hundred twenty-five casualties in eight hours while crossing this valley on Okinawa." *USMC Photo*



Okinawa – 10 May 1945. Infantry Marines of B 1/7 advance across Death Valley on the approach to Dakeshi Ridge. Dakeshi is the terrain feature visible in the background with smoke rounds impacting.

There is some confusion as to where exactly Death Valley was located. In *The Old Breed*, page 386, this terrain feature is described as a draw leading up to Dakeshi Ridge. *USMC Photo*

Okinawa – This terrain study, looking generally southeast, shows the battlegrounds of the 1st MarDiv during the attacks to



[breach the enemy-held Shuri Line.](#) The terrain feature identified here as Hill 57 is also called Hill 55 in some sources. *USMC Photo*



16 May 1945 – During the assault on Wana Ridge, Infantry Marines of F 2/1 push forward under heavy enemy fire. Wana Ridge was a heavily defended Japanese redoubt in the Shuri Line.

The Marines in this photo are Pfc Davis Hargreaves (left) and Pfc Gabriel Chavarria (right), both with F 2/1. *USMC Photo*



Okinawa – 1945. A Marine pauses during an assault against enemy positions. He presents a very different appearance from the Old Breed Leathernecks of 1941. But his courage and fortitude are the same. *Still image from USMC motion picture film*



1945 – Marines in combat on southern Okinawa. A [.30-caliber light machine gun](#) lays down fire support for an infantry attack. These automatic weapons were crucial elements in the rifle company's operations. *USMC Photo*



Fenton (kneeling) at the funeral for his son Michael, an infantryman in B 1/5 who was killed in action on 7 May 1945. At the time, Col Fenton was the Engineer Officer for the 1st MarDiv. Col Fenton's other son was also career Marine, as was his grandson. Col Fenton later said the other men who died on Okinawa weren't so fortunate as Mike, who ["at least had his father there to pray over his body at the end."](#) *Life Magazine*



Okinawa – 30 May 1945. LtCol Richard P. Ross, Executive Officer, First Marines, plants the divisional colors atop the blasted ruins of Shuri castle. This flag had already flown at Cape Gloucester and Peleliu.

That morning, MajGen DelValle, 1st MarDiv CG, sent a team from G-2 forward to search in the ruins for the former headquarters of the Japanese 32nd Army, which had just retreated from Shuri. He sent the divisional colors with orders to post them on Shuri Castle.

Although the main body of enemy troops had already pulled out, sniper fire continued to target Marines as LtCol Ross posted the colors. *USMC Photo*

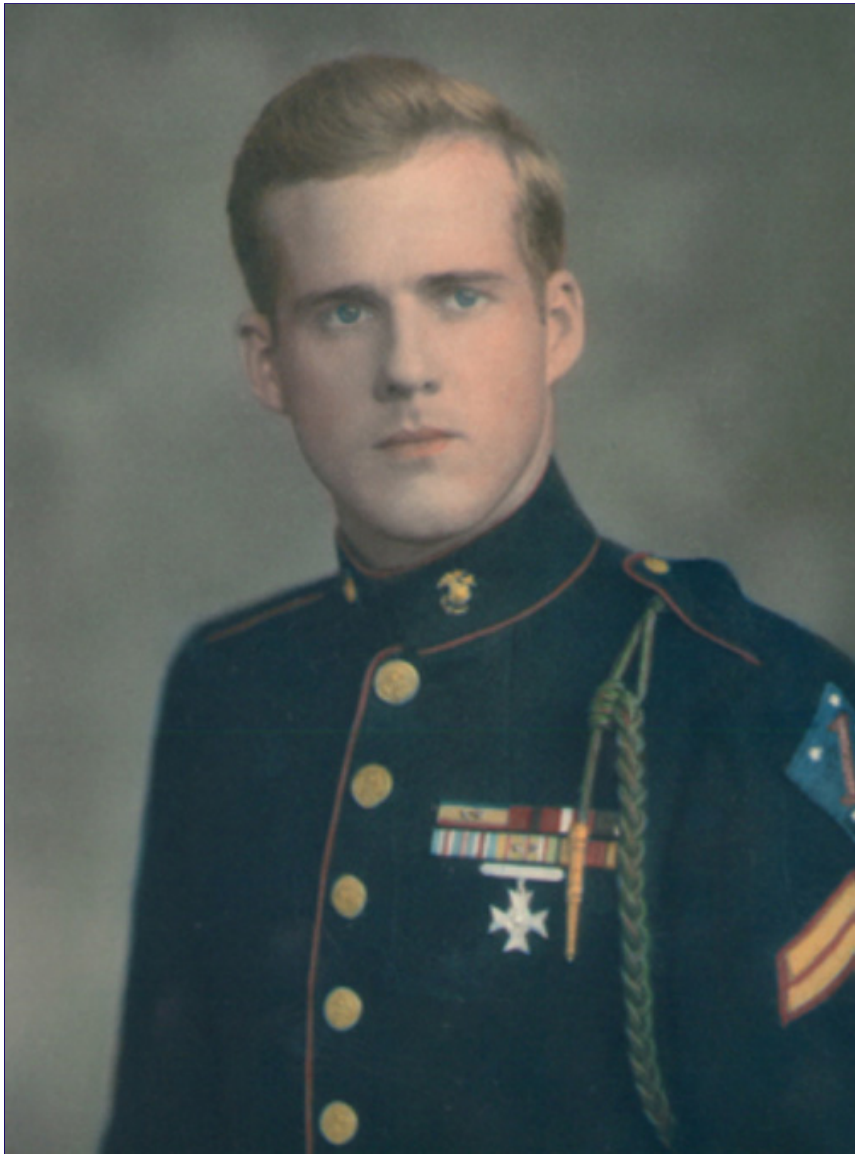


Okinawa – June 1945. MajGen Pedro DelValle, CG, 1st MarDiv (left), and BrigGen Louis R. Jones, ADC, 1st MarDiv, observe operations in the Kunishi Ridge area. *USMC Photo*

[TOP OF PAGE](#)

THE POST-WAR ERA

Cpl Eugene B. Sledge of Mobile, Alabama in a fine studio portrait taken upon his return from World War II in 1946. Sledge served as a mortarman with Co K, 3rd Bn, Fifth Marines in the campaigns for Peleliu and Okinawa. After VJ-



Day, he deployed to China for occupation duty. He was the author of the memoir, *[With the Old Breed at Peleliu and Okinawa](#)*, which has been widely acclaimed as one of the best personal narratives to come out of the wartime experience. Cpl Sledge passed away from cancer in 2001. *[Photo courtesy of the Sledge family](#)*



The War Hero by Norman Rockwell. 1945. *National Museum of the Marine Corps*



Derek, a Doberman Pinscher belonging to the Dunn family of Cambridge, Mass., poses with a group of Marines – including a 1st MarDiv veteran – at radio station WHDH in Boston – 1945. Derek served in the Corps as a messenger from 1943-46 and his handler was Pfc Henry E. Marsili.

During his service, Derek was promoted to corporal. Although it is not certain, I believe he served with the 4th Marine War Dog Platoon in combat on Okinawa. This unit was assigned to the Division on Peleliu and Okinawa. After discharge, he lived with Marine veteran George Baker in Boston. Derek passed away in 1952. *Marine Corps Archives*



[TOP OF PAGE](#)

[1ST MARINE DIVISION INDEX](#)

[WORLD WAR II GYRENE HOME](#)

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