

A Matter of Honor

By Dick Culver

This is one that could pass for a tall tale, but alas 'tis true... The following machinations essentially destroyed my personal belief in the behavior of senior officers of Marines as a genre, but in the cold light of dawn, I should have realized that even senior officers are but members of the human race, and so I should have expected neither more nor less from them than any other group of humankind. I had been raised to believe that Marines serving as field grade officers of our Corps¹, put their trousers on both



Lieutenant Dick Culver and Sergeant Duane E. Crawford in an R4Q Aircraft (C-119) preparing for a Parachute Jump into Pickle Meadows, circa January 1961

legs simultaneously, could leap over tall buildings at a single bound, and were saviors and defenders of truth, justice and the American way. The ultimate realization is that all men, even those serving in the higher ranks of our officer Corps, were but human beings with all the frailties and failings that go therewith.

This sea story had its origins in the latter part of 1960, through the early part of 1961, and began for this old Marine as a summons into the Pathfinder Platoon Commander's Office of the old First Force Reconnaissance Company.

Our Pathfinder Platoon Commander at the time was a very savvy old time Marine, a veteran of an underage enlistment in the Merchant Marine during WWII and upon coming of legal age, an enlistment in the U.S. Marine Corps. Our Skipper was a Captain named Dale Davis, one of the true gentlemen of our Corps. His greeting upon my entrance into his inner sanctum was roughly as follows:

"Lieutenant, I want you to go up to the Headquarters Battalion Office tomorrow to represent Sergeant Crawford for his office hours."

"Really Captain, what on earth is Crawford² getting Office Hours for?"

“Culver, do you remember when Sergeant Crawford ran into the ditch up on Wire Mountain Hill some time back?”

“Yes sir I do, but that was cleared up by Lt. Simmon’s *Naval Supplement Investigation*³, totally clearing Crawford of any wrong doing, and giving him a clean bill of health as I recall!”

“You’re right Culver, but for some reason, Lt. Col. Tyrant⁴, the Headquarters Battalion CO⁵ doesn’t seem to think so! He wants to personally talk to Sergeant Crawford about it! It’s probably just some misunderstanding, but at any rate you and Crawford are to be up at the Battalion Headquarters at 0800 tomorrow morning in the Uniform of the Day.”

“Aye-aye sir, it’s probably just some legal glitch, but we’ll be there at the appointed hour!”

I called Crawford in and told him of the impending visit to see Lt. Col. Tyrant, and to make sure he looked especially spiffy (this wasn’t a problem with Crawford, as he *always* looked especially spiffy). Crawford didn’t say anything at that particular moment, but gave me a strange look, as if he had some inkling of what was about to happen. Little did I know!

Sergeant Crawford and I appeared at the appointed hour and checked in with the Battalion Adjutant, an old time Captain named Lee who had been commissioned 3 separate times in the Corps. His first was during the Korean War as a temporary officer. Following Korea, he reverted to Warrant Officer, but he was finally selected as a Limited Duty Officer and was due to retire in about 30-days. Captain Lee, was known throughout the Corps as “*Light Horse Harry Lee*” due to the fact that when not undergoing inspection he was known to wear Cordovan⁶ Colored Wellington Style Boots (as opposed to the standard low cut dress shoes) with his uniform. Needless to say, Light Horse Harry Lee was a real character, and a legend in his own time. Captain Lee, like Captain Davis was a savvy old salt with lots of experience under his belt. He was to give me some sage advice that very morning, although I didn’t fully appreciate until the weeks that followed.

We went into Col. Tyrant’s office and came to the obligatory two paces in front of his desk at attention. The Colonel greeted Crawford as if the two had served together during some previous tour. The two potential protagonists seemed to get along well, and spoke of a couple of previous mutual experiences. I began to figure that this was simply “an old home week” gathering and began to relax.

Suddenly the Colonel’s demeanor changed and he took on a serious tone.

“Sergeant Crawford, I see here that you crashed your automobile into the ditch on the way down Wire Mountain Hill at 0200 upon returning from leave.”

Crawford attempted to explain that his family out in Iowa had requested his assistance, and after he had taken care of the family problems he had driven straight through to get back to Pendleton to save as much leave as possible. Sergeant Crawford (as a Sergeant E-5) was billeted in Staff NCO Quarters on the enlisted side of the Wire Mountain Hill, the other side being occupied by junior officers.

“Sergeant Crawford said, “yes sir, it was late when I got home, and the wife and I went down and had a cup of coffee, came home, and hit the rack. I got a bit of sleep and suddenly woke up realizing that since my Company Headquarters was located at Camp Del Mar (just a couple of miles from the Wire Mountain housing), and that it being Friday night, if I got my leave orders back to the Company prior to 0600 I could save a day’s leave. I jumped in the car, started down the hill, but still suffering from lack of sleep, I fell asleep and went into the ditch, and hit my head on the windshield.”

“Crawford, that shows extremely poor judgment, and you should have realized you were in no shape to drive! Therefore, I am reducing you to the rank of Corporal, and you will have your base driving privileges taken away from you! That’s all! Sergeant Major march Corporal Crawford out of here!”

Whew! Had I judged wrong! The entire conversation had gone from friendly to ugly with a seeming snap of the fingers. Colonel Tyrant obviously had some sort of ax to grind! I stood in front of the Colonel’s desk in a state of total shock – I can only imagine how Crawford felt! I continued to stand at attention in front of Colonel Tyrant’s desk, probably with my mouth hanging open.

Colonel Tyrant looked at me and asked what the trouble seemed to be?

Once the realities of Crawford’s sentence dawned on me, I couldn’t resist pointing out that in my opinion Sergeant Crawford had been given a military punishment for what I viewed as a civilian offense at best. Colonel Tyrant began to heat up a bit and attempted to justify his decision.

“Lieutenant, what Corporal Crawford did (correcting my reference to Sergeant Crawford) was extremely dangerous and ill-considered. He needs a lesson in conduct and judgment! My decision stands! Dismissed!” Almost as an afterthought, he added “what if your children had been playing out there when this happened?”

“Colonel, first of all, I don’t have any children, and if I did, I’ll guarantee they wouldn’t be playing on the hill at 0200 in the morning!”

“Culver, you’ve missed my point, dismissed!”

I took two paces to the rear, did an about face and headed for the Adjutant’s Office with the observation (in language that was quite possibly a bit loud), “Crawford, we’re gonna’ appeal this!”

As I went into Captain Lee’s office, he motioned me over with a head nod.

“Culver, I really appreciate a young officer who takes care of his troops, but take my advice and let this one drop! There’s lots more going on here than you can imagine! I only have 30-days left to retire, and if you screw that up with legal appeals that will require my presence, I’ll hunt you down and make you an extremely unhappy individual!”

“Captain Lee, Crawford just got royally screwed in there, I intend to take this all the way to the Commanding General if necessary!”

Captain Lee covered his eyes with one hand with his elbow on the desk, shaking his head in disbelief that I hadn't heard him properly, or didn't understand that I was playing with dynamite here! How right he was, but when the facts finally came out, he obviously couldn't have verbalized it within earshot of Colonel Tyrant!

Camp Pendleton is located on many "mini-hill masses" with different headquarters on each one. When I left the Colonel's office I took Corporal Crawford back to the Recon Company area. During his entire ride back, Crawford told me that when he was recovering from the crash into the ditch, he had several visitors to his hospital ward that informed him that "they" were out to get him (Crawford). I mentioned that I had no idea who "they" were, nor why anyone would be out to "get" a Sergeant of Marines?... Crawford apparently thought that I knew the entire story, but at that moment in time I didn't have a clue! The thought or inference that a Lt. Colonel would be out to "get" a Sergeant was incomprehensible! As it turned out, Sergeant (now Corporal) Crawford was right, and I was the one who was clueless... That was to change in the days to come. But Colonel Tyrant had made one fatal mistake, he had made it a "*matter of honor*"...

Subsequently I made a visit to the Division Legal Officer, a Bird Colonel who acted as the Commanding General's advisor on legal matters. I had met this gentleman before when I received an award for coming in first place during the Platoon Leader's Class, and the Colonel had apparently been stationed at Quantico at the time. The legal offices weren't overwhelmed with business in those days (things have changed a bit nowadays I understand, but then...) ⁷ The Division Legal Officer made me feel right at home, enquired as to my family and current assignment, and finally asked what he could do for me?

I explained what had happened in the Headquarters Battalion Commander's Office and asked what his personal opinion was on the matter. He smiled slightly, but noted that the Commanding General would make the final decision if we wished to appeal the punishment. He personally demurred and noted that it wouldn't be his personal decision. I schmoozed him a bit and said something to the effect that while what he said was of course true, didn't the Division Commander usually take the Division Legal Officer's advice on the disposition of such matters? The Colonel puffed up his chest slightly and stated that yes, quite often the Division Commander could be swayed a bit by the Division Legal Officer's advice. I thanked him for his time and advice and headed back to the Company Headquarters.

I sent for Crawford and noted that he was still wearing sergeant's chevrons. I didn't immediately chide him for his oversight, rationalizing that normally an individual's punishment didn't take place until the appeal process was finished (that isn't how it's done in the military of course, but I too was for not rushing the cadence until I could get what I considered to be a great wrong, righted). I did mention to Crawford that it would probably be well to have at least one shirt with the appropriate chevrons in the event of a visit by visiting and interested brass.

Sergeant (Corporal) Crawford continued to maintain that "they" were out to get him, and for the life of me I couldn't imagine who in the hell (of any great rank) would be out to "get" a young Buck Sergeant... After about a week of this sparring around, I finally got an almost unbelievable story out of Crawford, that was so "off the wall" I had trouble believing that such could be true in my sacred Marine Corps.

THE STORY UNFOLDS:

It seems that the whole thing started with a young Staff Sergeant (serving in the earlier E-5 pay grade) assigned as one of the photographers for the *Camp Pendleton Scout Base Paper*. As I have pointed out earlier, pay scales weren't exactly exorbitant in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and every penny counted. Enlisted and even many junior officer's wives washed and pressed the cotton uniforms to save a few pennies⁸. The two income family hadn't become widespread at the time, and if anyone got an extra job, it was usually the young enlisted troop himself who had some sort of fill-in job of after duty hours employment. In a detachment this was a possibility, but in a working, and potentially deployable Infantry Division, it was neither practical nor common. In this case however, the Camp Pendleton Scout's photographer's wife got herself a job as a waitress in the Staff NCO Club aboard the Base.

It wasn't too unusual to have an occasional "Bosses Night" at the Staff Club and it seems that our story had its start at just such a party. Apparently the Staff Sergeant's wife was decent looking, and was something of a charmer as are many who make a living as a waitress. While waiting upon, the Division Chief of Staff (a full bird Colonel and the Division Commander's right hand man) was somewhat charmed by the attention the Staff Sergeant's wife was paying to him. The story goes that he (the Chief) patted the young lady on the posterior a couple of time in fun and it went downhill from there. The young wife was also charmed that a senior officer would notice her, and my guess is that the Chief of Staff (a Colonel we'll call Gigolowitz – not his real name) was in what has become known as a "mid-life crisis." He was apparently equally charmed that a comely young lady was paying attention to a middle aged guy whose lusty life as a young officer was still within his memory banks. For whatever reason, a very spirited physical relationship ensued and the Colonel was apparently "*intercourseing (a verb) his brains out*", aided and willingly abetted by a very charmed and apparently equally horny young wife.

Colonel Gigolowitz started showing up at noon time in his Marine Corps staff car at the Staff Sergeant's. Quarters in Wire Mountain. The Colonel would then leave his personal (Marine) driver to watch the lady's children, while he and the young lady went out to sew their wild oats! Big problem as someone found out about their rather public dalliances and tipped off the Staff Sergeant. The Staff Sergeant obtained the services of the best lawyer in the Oceanside Area, a certain former Marine Officer named Dobney, (who himself had been the Division Legal Officer during the Korean War). The word was, whoever employed Dobney first, usually won his or her case. The Staff Sergeant won the race, filed for divorce and asked for custody of the children. Much to the surprise of many at the time, the Staff Sergeant was successful in his bid for the rug rats, and the outraged wife (outraged wife? Holy Catfish Batman!) went running to Colonel Gigolowitz and informed him that if she didn't get custody of the kids, she was going to tell the whole world that the Chief of Staff of the 1st Marine Division had been screwing her brains out.

At this point, Colonel Gigolowitz panicked and had his driver transferred to the Marine Detachment in Adak, Alaska on one day's notice, and went looking for any other witnesses who might blow the whistle on his noontime trysts.

Here's where Sergeant Crawford got roped into the three-ring circus. The outraged Staff Sergeant (being well acquainted with the troops in the Force Reconnaissance Company

since they made great photographic subjects when no other late breaking news was on the griddle), remembered that Sergeant Crawford lived directly across the street from his (the Staff Sergeant's) quarters, and often went home for lunch to save a few pennies. A conference with Crawford gleaned the fact that our hero often watched the Colonel leaving his driver as the baby sitter when he took off with the Staff Sergeant's wife! The die was cast. Crawford was apparently approached by lawyer Dobney, who secured confirmation that Colonel Gigolowitz was actually (or certainly apparently) having an affair with the Staff Sergeant's wife.

The Colonel's driver was a no sweat proposition as it wasn't likely that he would be called back from Adak for a child custody hearing, but Crawford was an exemplary Marine whose testimony could well be a deciding factor. A close scrutiny of Crawford's record brought forth the infamous crash into the ditch, for which he had hitherto received no punishment! Hummm... Well, if the Battalion Commander (Lt. Colonel Tyrant) who was technically Crawford's boss in terms of legal actions, didn't go along with the results of the Naval Supplement Investigation held by Lt. Simmons, Crawford could still be punished for his actions, thus sullyng his hitherto unblemished record, thus casting some doubt as to Crawford's veracity in testifying against the Colonel. Since Colonel Tyrant and Colonel Gigolowitz were in the same car pool, a plot was hatched to make Crawford into a disciplinary case, and hence not a reliable witness!

In the meantime, the Staff Sergeant had gotten two sympathetic NCOs from the First Force Recon Company to do a night time surveillance on the Staff Sergeant's wife's after hours activities. These two stalwart NCOs, both trained reconnaissance Marines, were a certain Sergeant Roy Fryman, and a Sergeant Sam Moyer⁹. It would seem that the thoroughness of the two well regarded Reconnaissance NCOs drove the final nail in Colonel Gigolowitz's figurative coffin, and cast grave aspersions on the fitness of the Staff Sergeant's wife as a fit mother.

Rumor control at the time said that Colonel Gigolowitz had either been selected for promotion to the rank of General, or was at least being considered for such. Needless to say, the Colonel was one worried puppy at this time, and was no doubt, considering the error of his ways. Sometimes a robust sexual relationship with a younger woman will come back and bite you on the fanny.

BACK TO THE SAGA OF SERGEANT/CORPORAL CRAWFORD:

The story had gotten out by now, and to say I was outraged by the conduct of a senior officer (or officers) towards one of my best NCOs would have been an understatement. I went to see Captain Davis for guidance and advice. A young disillusioned First Lieutenant simply didn't have a clue as to how to proceed other than to go directly to the Division Legal Officer; after all, such conduct was not expected from your senior officers. When I laid the story out for Captain Davis, he alternately grabbed his midsection as if in pain, and then put his hand on his head. He reminded me that Colonel Gigolowitz was a decorated Artillery Officer from Korea, and he (Captain Davis) almost couldn't grasp the enormity of what I was saying. After just a few moments of consideration, Captain Davis leaned back in his chair and said "Culver, go see the Division Legal Officer and tell him what's happened! If I didn't think Captain Davis was one of the all time great officers before this encounter, his advice cemented a respect for him that lasts to this day!

My second meeting with the Division Legal Officer was considerably less cordial than my first. The Colonel looked at me in disbelief, and couldn't seem to grasp that I was accusing the Chief of Staff of dishonorable conduct. My conversation after the explanation was as follows:

"Culver, exactly what do you want me to do about this?"

What did I want him to do about this? I thought I must be hearing wrong. I wanted him to do what any outraged senior officer in a position of authority should do! What did I want him to do? Holy Catfish Batman!

"Sir, quite frankly I don't care if Colonel Gigolowitz wants to amuse himself sexually with goats! All I want is for Crawford to get his chevrons back! I am NOT after the Chief of Staff, all I want is justice!"

"Culver, if I were to recommend giving Crawford his stripes back, it would be very embarrassing for Colonel Gigolowitz!"

"Sir, it's not going to be nearly as embarrassing as it will be if Crawford *doesn't* get 'em back!"

"Culver, are you telling me that you would side with an enlisted man against a senior member of our Officer Corps?"

"Sir, my Dad who served as a Marine in both World Wars, told me when I was a kid that if a young officer doesn't take care of his troops, no one else will! Sir *it's a matter of honor!*"

"Very well Culver, have Crawford up here in the uniform of the day tomorrow morning at 0800!," the Colonel said with thinly disguised displeasure evidenced in both his voice and attitude.

"Aye aye sir, Crawford will be at the appointed place of duty in the uniform of the day!"

With that I took two paces to the rear, executed an about face and left the Colonel's office, now a totally disillusioned individual who had been raised in and around the Corps!

Upon my return to Captain Davis' Office, I gave him a rundown of the proceedings and received a look that somewhat salvaged my destroyed image of my chosen profession. His sage advice let me know that not everyone is John Wayne, John Basilone, or Chesty Puller. I was raised by a damn fine Marine Officer and was obviously currently serving with some of the best.

THE DISPOSITION OF THE CASE:

Crawford was indeed restored to his previous rank, but the chicken \$hi+ bastard's personal attempt to salvage some face, by simply "suspending the bust" as opposed to an outright vacating of the previous sentence, thus correcting an obvious miscarriage of justice.

Once the facts became known by the Commanding General, Colonel Gigolowitz retired on one day's notice and did not make General Officer.

Sergeant Crawford's mood improved materially and he continued to serve as one of our most effective NCOs.

Colonel Tyrant, Colonel Gigolowitz's partner in crime, was never disciplined as far as I know, since it would have been very difficult to prove that he was a co-conspirator in the case. However as I was to find out, there is something that comes very close to being a "*Colonel's Cabal*" in which they take care of their own. Outraged Colonels have very long memories and make evil enemies.

Not too long after these proceedings, the Company was preparing for the Commanding General's Inspection. Due to the large proportion of Lieutenants in relation to the number of troops (14 officers for 147 enlisted), the back rank of the formation was made up of highly polished and pressed junior officers attempting to make a good impression on the inspecting officer, who in this case happened to be the now infamous Colonel Tryant. As he came in front of each Lieutenant, he did a left face, inspected our foot wear, and correctness of our uniforms. He would use one finger to poke your web magazine pouch (to ensure that they contained the obligatory magazines), ask some pertinent military questions, and usually smiling would go to the next officer in line. When he did his left face in front of me, he already had his finger poised to poke my magazine pouch. He looked up, saw who it was, and abruptly turned without a word or a "magazine pouch poke", and went to the next Lieutenant in line. By now I knew that I was in deep doo-doo.

My punishment? I was short toured in the Force Recon Company, sent to a "transplacing battalion¹⁰" in the 5th Marine Regiment, and subsequently sent to Okinawa for my indiscretions. My transfer was not instantaneous making it very difficult to prove it hadn't happened in the normal course of military assignments. The transfer had its chilling effect however, on anyone who would "diddle" with those in positions of power. If I had *hated* it in the old Recon Company, the punishment might well have been to have left me there indefinitely. We in the old First Force Reconnaissance Company, considered ourselves to be the ultimate warriors, and I personally had no desire to leave (in my opinion) the primo company of the Corps.

The Company Commanding Officer at the time of the "Crawford incident", was a certain Major "Blunt" that most considered to be a functioning (if well meaning) tool. He was a Naval Academy Graduate and football player who had been assigned a primary Motor Transport MOS out of his graduating Academy class. In those days, only the least capable of officers were assigned to Motor Transport (unless you were an LDO with much MT experience).

Major Blunt's father had apparently been a Bird Colonel who had been close friends with Colonel Gigolowitz, and in fact had acted as Gigolowitz's "*Rabbi*" (Marine slang for "*mentor*") during his early career. Rumor control had it that his familial ties had secured Blunt's appointment to one of the real plums of command within the Corps in those days. The appointment had apparently been in the nature of a returned favor to Colonel Hunt's father who had taken care of Gigolowitz in his youth.

Our previous CO was Major John D. Counselman, a fine officer and Navy Cross winner in the battle for Seoul, Korea following the Inchon landing. His replacement was a klutz of the first order, and we all wondered how he got there. Major Counselman is reputed to have visited Major Blunt's Commanding Officer at the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion. Upon asking

what sort of officer we were getting, Major Counselman was told “*our loss is your loss*”! Hummm... The fact that Major Blunt was replaced soon after Colonel Gigolowitz’s retirement was certainly suggestive. His replacement was a veteran of the Paramarines in WWII, a Major named McAllister. Blunt’s replacement was a winner. I never heard of, or saw Colonel Gigolowitz’s favorite klutz again.

Captain Davis, a fine officer, was rather suddenly transferred to the 1st Marine Air Wing in Japan to perform tasks that could have been taken care of by someone much less capable. As I said, Colonels make evil enemies and have long memories. Much to my delight, I had occasion to serve with Captain Davis (then Major Davis) again in the 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion some years later when he was serving as our Executive Officer and I had the Operations Shop.

Would I do anything differently if I had it to do over again? Not a chance, taking care of your troops is a sacred trust, and if you were willing to prostitute your values for personal gain, you were not worthy of being a Marine Officer. I have no regrets.

AND A FINAL POSTSCRIPT:

When assigned to Vietnam, Crawford performed brilliantly as I had always suspected he would. He received a battlefield commission and indeed the next time I saw him, he was being used in some of the TV Recruiting Ads wearing his Dress Blues as a Marine Lieutenant... Crawford went on to retire as a Major, a well deserved kudo for a fine Marine. I last saw Duane E. Crawford as a retired Major at the Force Reconnaissance Association Reunion in Washington D.C. in 1987 when I was returning from training the Saudi Arabian “Camelnecks” as a civilian contractor.

Odin sometimes has a strange sense of humor, and often takes care of puppies and old time Marines... I’ve always wondered what happened to Colonel Gigolowitz?

Semper Fi,

Dick

End Notes:

¹ In Military Terminology, most especially the Army and the Marine Corps, various rank equivalents are divided into 1) Company Grade Officers CWO-2 through Captain, 2) Field Grade Officers, Majors through Colonel, and General Officers (self explanatory). There are some small disagreements as to whether Company Grade Officers actually start with WO-1, but actually a WO is not technically a commissioned officer although they are afforded all the privileges of a commissioned officer. Most, but not all Warrant Officers are specialists, although some do in fact carry Infantry Military Occupational Specialty designators. Full Colonels however carry an MOS that is peculiar to the rank of Colonel, which essentially allows them to serve in any military branch regardless of prior experience, much like the rank of Sergeant Major in the enlisted grades. For instance, a Full Colonel (sometimes referred to as a “Bird Colonel” due to the eagle representing his rank), can technically be assigned as an Infantry Regimental Commander, even if his prior experience is in the Artillery (this is *not* usually done however), but individuals filling such billets as the “Division Chief of Staff” might well have served as a “Cannon-Cocker” (Artilleryman), as was the case in this particular Sea Story.

² Sergeant Crawford was one of my most squared away NCOs. He was a Sergeant (E-5) in a day and time when they were phasing in the (then) new 9-tiered rank system. Formerly, the rank of Sergeant had been in the 4th Pay Grade, but had been upgraded to the 5th Pay Grade when the rank of Lance Corporal had been inserted between Private First Class and Corporal. Most of the old time Sergeants were still serving in the 4th Pay Grade, and it was unusual to have an (E-5) Sergeant in the organization. The older (E-4) Sergeants were allowed to continue to serve as Sergeants, but there was a built in time limit for retaining your rank if you were not reselected for Sergeant in the new 5th Pay Grade. Sergeant Crawford had been serving in the supply MOS previously, but had wanted to get back into the Infantry MOS (Military Occupational Specialty), so essentially took what amounted to an extra year in grade to change back into the Infantry field. He was selected for the rank of Sergeant in the 5th Pay Grade, essentially identifying him as an exceptional NCO. The rank system continued to operate in a quasi-chaotic fashion for several years, with the new (E-5) Sergeants rating the same housing as the older (E-5) Staff Sergeants, and having the same club privileges. To say that things were a bit crazy in the rank system for a couple of years would have been an understatement. Sergeant Crawford had also been the individual assigned as our (Company) instructor during what was termed “Junior Jump School” – a program designed to test human endurance and make the actual Airborne School at Fort Benning seem like a Sunday School Picnic. Sergeant Crawford did his job very well indeed (although strangling him a time or two came to mind), making Ft. Benning a breeze!

³ The “*Naval Supplement Investigation*” was short for *Naval Supplement Investigation for the Articles of War for the Navy*, commonly known as “*The Rocks and Shoals*” in the vernacular. It was changed to a “JAG” (Judge Advocate General) Investigation a short time later when the services consolidated their legal proceedings under what has become known as the JAG Manual.

⁴ Lt.Col. “Tyrant” and Colonel “Gigolowitz” (central to our story) are not their real names of course, but have a similarity in sound if you knew the individuals involved. The same proviso holds for Major “Blunt”, apparently one of Colonel Gigolowitz’s favorites, stemming from Gigolowitz’s association with Major Blunt’s father some years previously.

⁵ The arrangement for the 1st Force Reconnaissance Company in the Marine Corps Table of Organization was a bit convoluted at the time. Technically, the Force Recon Company belonged to Fleet Marine Force Pacific (FMF Pac) that hung its hat in Hawaii at the time, since 1st Force did virtually all of its tactical operating in support of the 1st Marine Division. The Company’s physical location had been at Camp Del Mar in the Camp Pendleton Complex of outlying camps. To manage our (local) administrative (and legal) functions, we were assigned to operate under Headquarters Battalion of the 1st Marine Division which was also the holder of all the record books for the entire 1st Marine Division Staff (including the Commanding General, the Chief of Staff and all the G-Sections that technically ran the Division) – Headquarters Battalion of the 1st Marine Division. was for all intents and purposes an administrative organization utilized to juggle the paperwork for the Division Headquarters, and such attachments as the 1st Force Reconnaissance Company that technically belonged to FMF Pacific.

⁶ Marine Corps dress shoes were cordovan colored as were our combat boots until the reign of Robert S. McNamara as the Secretary of Defense. In a move designed to standardize the uniform requirements for all services, he decreed that all shoes and boots WOULD be black, along with the belts, and the Marine Corps peculiar design of our Utility Uniform (the old timers still called ‘em dungarees from our long association with the Navy), but they [officially] became designated “*Utilities*” in the early 1960s. McNamara did away with our Utility design and required that we (both the Army and Marine Corps) wear the same field uniform. We fought him on changing our belts to black, and finally won that one keeping our khaki colored belts, although we had to go to the Army belt width. We also managed to keep the Marine Corps belt buckle design, and our own design of Utility Covers for the field uniforms. We counted ourselves lucky to salvage anything from the designer of the Edsel Automobile and the individual who decreed that we would adopt the M16 Rifle. I would personally have bitten the bullet on the belt color to keep the M14 Rifle however.

⁷ In the day and time prior to the establishment of a permanent and professional JAG organization within the Marine Corps, lawyers admitted to the Bar were not legal necessities, and many a court’s martial was conducted utilizing “appointed” junior officers from a/the battalion acting as trial and defense council. Today’s “legal beagles” would have a hemorrhage if they could have witnessed some of our earlier proceedings. Generally speaking, the system worked well, but occasionally things went to \$hi+, and this was one of those times. Justice however, usually prevailed in the end, as it eventually did in this misbegotten mess.

⁸ For example, at that time a 2nd Lieutenant with no prior service drew the munificent sum of \$222.22 per month (plus a housing allowance which was sacrificed if you lived in government quarters), in addition each individual drew \$47.88 per month subsistence for groceries. Saving money was a very realistic endeavor for the youngsters of the day.

⁹ Sergeant Fryman later won the Navy Cross in Vietnam, and was killed on his second tour in-country. Sam Moyer later retired after a long career, culminating as a Sergeant Major of Marines. I am still dusting the ashes of my occasional (some say permanent) cigar in a brass ashtray Sam had acquired during one of his assignments to the Korea. He got in return, a “Monkey-Pod” set of Jump Wings I acquired when doing a tour in the Philippines.

¹⁰ In those days, the Battalions on Okinawa were replaced by Battalions in the States by a method referred to as “transplacement”. An existing Battalion would be sent to the Third Division taking up a new Regimental Designation. In this case, the 2nd Battalion of the 5th Marine Regiment went to Okinawa to become the 2nd Battalion of the 9th Regiment. Unit integrity was maintained, and only the names were changed to protect the innocent (as they used to say in the TV series, “Dragnet”).