

The Wings of an Angel?

(A Study in Combat Superstition...)

By Dick Culver

Have you ever wondered whether survival in combat is a thing of chance, luck or having an angel in your pocket? Does the average trooper have superstitious leanings (lucky numbers, wearing the same pair of socks, shirt or whatever?) ...much as sports figures are said to wear for luck. I certainly can't answer for anyone else, but I too had my superstitions and lucky charms. One in particular comes to mind and brings on a smile or two as I look back over the years. It had to do with a certain pair of Navy/Marine Corps Jump Wings...

Background

By the Summer of 1963, the Marine Corps added a new set of jump wings to identify individuals with extensive (or at least more) experience than simply completing the basic airborne course. Both the Army and the Marines had their basic wings as awarded upon completion of Airborne school, and indeed we in the Marines wore the same original silver wings as those awarded at Fort Benning (or Lakehurst, N.J. or even Camp Lejeune for you really old timers) regardless of how many jumps you had made, be it 5 or 1000!



**Basic Army/USMC
Parachute Badge**

Once the Army jumpers had completed additional jumps, along with other required training and experience, they were awarded a set of more prestigious wings, such as their "Senior Jump Wings" or "Master Jump Wings". The Senior Wings had a star above the basic wings (the basic version(s) were sometimes referred to as "blood wings" or even "lead wings" due to their silver color [although in the old days they really were made of sterling silver]). I don't remember the exact qualifications for the Army's Senior or Master Wings, but as I recall, in terms of additional jumps, the Senior Wings required at least 30 total jumps (5 at Airborne School plus an additional 25 jumps, along with some night and equipment jumps), and the Master Wings, a total of 65 jumps in addition to the other requirements including jumpmaster training¹.

In the old days a Marine was only allowed to attend Airborne School if (*and ONLY if*) they were scheduled to fill a paid jump billet upon completion of the school – *no one* was allowed to go to Airborne School simply as a quota filler as they were later. Needless to say we were quite proud of our wings, and perhaps strutted a bit more than necessary to display our "gaudy ornaments" as a measure of our manly prowess! In addition to those actually filling paid jump billets, WWII Paramarines² were allowed to wear their wings, as were any who had been members of the Force Reconnaissance Companies, Air Delivery units (since the Parachute Riggers [parachute-packers] had to be qualified jumpers to pack the parachutes for the air-delivery mission), and members of ANGLCO (Air and Naval Gunfire Company folks who directed airstrikes and naval gunfire missions for the forward units – one of their methods of insertion to a hot situation was considered to be by parachute). The point being that very few individuals were allowed to wear the illusive jump wings in the old days.

The Army allowed their airborne qualified lads to wear their wings on their fatigues (dungarees or utilities for you Marines), but alas in the old days we were only allowed to wear our wings on our dress shirts or uniform blouses. We Marines were a bit jealous to say the least, and often in the field I noticed some of our old timers wore their wings on their dungaree covers just above the sweat-band, but not where they might be seen by the hierarchy of course!

The Corps Acquires New Wings

The Corps, not to be outdone, eventually decided to come up with a pair of distinctive wings to indicate additional experience for those in the Naval Service. This became the now familiar gold Navy/Marine Corps Jump Wings looking much like the Naval Pilot's Wings with the exception of a parachute replacing the shield and the anchor worn by the pilots. When these first appeared in the



**Navy/Marine Corps
Parachute Wings**

summer of 1963, they were hard to come by for those of us then assigned to units away from the FMF (Fleet Marine Forces). I was assigned to the Reserve Branch in the 8th Marine Corps Reserve and Recruitment District (later to be re-designated the 8th Marine Corps District). Now the 8th District was located in New Orleans, far from a PX Facility where the newly designed wings might be purchased. I was inwardly extremely jealous of those out in the fleet who had access to such gaudy uniform adornment, but kept my frustrations to myself! We did have a Force Reconnaissance Reserve Unit located in Albuquerque, New Mexico (*5th Force by designation*) however, and I wrangled myself a set of permissive jump orders that allowed me to make jumps with the reserve unit when I was in the area inspecting their training activities. One nicety of this arrangement was that the 1st Force Company would send experienced jumpers out to assist in the Reserve Unit's parachute operations. Needless to say, I would usually work my inspection schedule around to take advantage of the chance for additional jumps, and get a chance to spin sea stories with some of my old buddies from the Company.

One of my old friends from the Force Recon Days was a gent named Jack Phillips who just happened to be one of the training group assisting with the parachute operations during one of my visits to Albuquerque. I gave Jack the appropriate amount of "jing"³ to purchase me a set of the "handy-dandy" new sets of jump wings, but before we parted company on that trip, Jack took the wings off his shirt and made a present of them to watah⁴. I was in 7th Heaven. Sigh... Now I could go back and flash my new hardware around the office with a bit more swagger in my step. I immediately started shining the new wings which weren't really gold of course, but rather gold *anodized* (actually plated) brass which took a fine shine with a little elbow grease and a quarter inch drill motor and a buffing wheel! Shortly the shroud lines of the parachute canopy began to blur into a smear, much as had my old silver wings. I made sure that mine looked appropriately salty as if I had acquired 'em years before (an impossibility, considering they were the latest version and only lately approved of course).

Leaving the 8th District in 1965, I found myself assigned to the 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion at Camp Lejeune, as the Company Commander of A Company, shortly acquiring a new executive officer, Skip Hartnett, destined (or doomed?) to serve with me over the years in a number of different guises including running firearms courses for the Idaho State POST (Police Officers Standards and Training), Academy and then for a trek to Saudi Arabia to train

the Saudi Arabian “*Camelnecks*”⁵, followed by a second trip to “*The Land of the Eternal Dune*” to train the Saudi Arabian Air Defense Force. Needless to say, over the years, he has become one of my closest friends, but such was not initially the case.

Skip had come back to 2nd Recon from the Basic Officer’s School at Quantico, but one of the most unusual things was he had left *for* OCS *from* the 2nd Recon Battalion – an almost unheard of situation. After a stint at the Citadel, Skip had decided to enlist in the Marines, and as a young Recon trooper had attended SCUBA School, but not Airborne School as there were no jump billets in the Reconnaissance Battalions in the early days. What’s worse was that it would be a few years before the Navy and Marine Corps would come up with the “Scuba Bubble” than indicated your skills as a diver. It hardly seemed fair as (in my opinion) SCUBA Diving is more hazardous than Parachute Jumping. The real pain in their fannies was however, that those of us with parachute wings considered ourselves ever so much more “qualified” than those who had no items of uniform adornment. I noticed Skip drooling over my somewhat salty jump wings from time to time.

A Change in Regulations

During this time period, the regulations changed and you were allowed to attend the Army Airborne School as a quota filler, assuming you could pass the appropriate Physical Fitness Test for the school, and could find some unit with assigned quotas. In 1966, I was moved from Alpha Company of 2nd Recon, to run the Operations Shop (S-3) due to an extreme shortage of personnel. The S-3 was normally a Major’s billet, but the entire 2nd Marine Division was short of personnel and except for operational commitments (Mediterranean and Caribbean Cruises for the FMF Units), we were almost treated as a replacement pool for Vietnam bound personnel. Now this had possibilities as I inherited a number of billets for jump school, and of course as honor would have it, I sent my old XO, Skip Hartnett, to Fort Benning to finally get his much sought after jump wings.

One item that underwent much arm wrestling was the authority to award the gold Navy/Marine Corps Wings, as the regulations read that in order for you to rate wearing the *gold* wings, you had to have been assigned to a *jump organization*, and had to have been in a jump billet drawing jump pay! Many of those who had taken advantage of the newly loosened up regulations on attending Airborne School, got in the necessary additional parachute jumps while operating on “permissive orders” but were not in truth, operational Marine Corps Jumpers. At least initially, all those who got the necessary additional jumps, “awarded *themselves*” the Navy/Marine Corps Wings without appropriate authorization. This was a big no-no, but some of those doing so were rather senior individuals and very few of the old timers were senior enough to object.

Hartnett was not so hampered however, as shortly after returning to the 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion from Ft. Benning, the newly formed 3rd Force Recon Company was started/relocated at Camp Geiger in the Camp Lejeune, N.C. base complex, and Skip was one of those tapped to flesh out the newly formed organization. The original 3rd Force had been a Reserve Company located in Mobile, Alabama, but the operational necessities of Vietnam changed things around a bit. Skip now had his wings, but unfortunately I also lost a fine officer! He got his necessary additional jumps in short order and finally had his much coveted gold wings.

Since the subject of this Sea Story is really about superstition and good luck charms, the plot will thicken shortly!

Wings Approved for Wear on Utilities

In this same general time-frame, the Marine Corps finally relaxed their objection to Airborne Qualified Marines wearing jump wings on their Utility Uniform. Qualified individuals could pin their jump insignia on their dungaree jackets 1/2" above the name stamped above the left breast pocket ...this however initially became a bone of contention amongst the more senior officers who were not airborne qualified. They thought that it was not only unnecessary, but somewhat Army“esque” (not to mention that *THEY* didn't have a set to wear), and often refused to let the Airborne qualified individuals pin on their wings on their utilities. We cursed to ourselves, but bit our tongues, as enraging your skipper was not considered a good maneuver career-wise if you catch my drift.

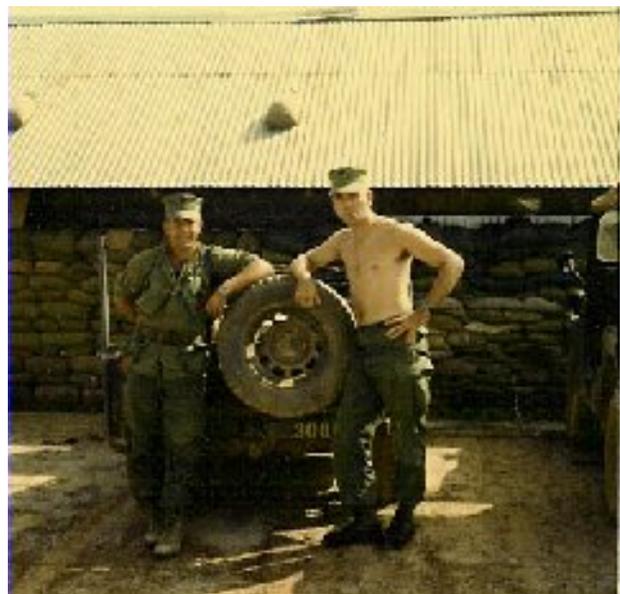
I was initially was assigned to join the 1st Battalion, 4th Marines in Vietnam at the request of my old Battalion Commander, Lt. Col. Black Jack Westerman from 2nd Recon. I was thrilled. Alas my dreams of mighty deeds were dashed as 1/4 had just been rotated back to Okinawa to refit, participate in Raid Training, breaking in newly assigned personnel, and then form Special Landing Force (SLF) Bravo. When I arrived on the Rock⁶ I was called into the Headquarters of the 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade (9th MAB was the controlling Headquarters for FMF activities and training, activities on Okinawa) ...alas, my Reconnaissance background caught up with me once again.

The Captain then serving simultaneously as the Commanding Officer of A Company, 5th Reconnaissance Battalion, and the OIC of the 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade (9th MAB) Raid School had put in 6-months in the billet, and was *working his bolt* to head for South East Asia. The CO of the 9th MAB was an old time Colonel by the name of J.J. Padley, and he saw a way of solving several of his problems at once. He put the old CO of A Company/OIC of the Raid School into my billet in 1/4, and slid me into his now vacated slot in 5th Recon. From the Colonel's viewpoint, it made great sense, but I was inwardly seething! I had *NOT* volunteered to go to Vietnam only to wind up on Okie running a dadgummed school. What's worse, Colonel Padley was one of the old timers who did *NOT* approve of wearing wings on a utility/dungaree shirt. Now I was doubly un-amused if you catch my drift. Arrgggg...

The Spring Hill Fights on 881 and 861 changed the rules of the game, and a number of us who had been stuck on Okie were suddenly viewed as a marvelous pool of replacements for the casualties incurred at Khe Sanh.

A Change of Assignments

I was suddenly thrown into the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, and due to some immediate additional casualties on operation Hickory I became an “instant” Rifle Company Commander – my fondest wish actually, but our Battalion Commander, Lt. Col. “Pappy” De Long was an almost immediate casualty, and his



Dick Culver and Skip Hartnett in Dong Ha (June 1967) following “Operation Hickory” in front of 3rd Force Recon CP

XO, “Moose” Beard took over the Battalion,

a job he was to keep for almost 9-months. The Moose (well named for his size) was an old timer having served as a Corporal in WWII and was said to have done a hitch as a Professional Football Player following the hostilities. While certainly competent, he too was one of those who had a real hang-up with wings on utility shirts. While initially it burned my tailfeathers, a bit of time under fire convinced me that wearing *anything* shiny on your uniform tended to attract hostile fire. Maybe the old boy had a point! ...certainly in the field.

A Liaison with Skip Hartnett

Coming back from the DMZ following "Operation Hickory", brought our Battalion through Dong Ha, the new base of operations of the 3rd Force Reconnaissance Company, recently deployed from Camp Pendleton. I had a great reunion with Skip Hartnett (my old XO from the 2nd Recon Battalion) and learned that he had somehow misplaced his gold wings. Since I was not allowed to wear mine, I offered to loan Skip my "sacred" and highly polished gold wings he had drooled over a couple of years before.

Fate Lends a Hand

Several months later I learned that my old friend Jack Phillips had bought the farm. I had thought of Jack as being indestructible, and was most saddened to hear of his demise. I thought back to the time he had taken his personal wings off his shirt and given 'em to me when I was doing what I considered penance during my assignment to the 8th District in New Orleans. A wild thought suddenly occurred to me, and I suddenly had a "*fur-raising*" thought. What if those wings had some sort of good luck charm mystically attached, and perhaps Jack having giving them to me in some way sealed his fate? Uppsssss... Horrors! Now I *know* such things have no validity, but as I mentioned at the start of this story, everyone has some sort of superstitious leanings, even if you don't admit it to yourself! Big problem! Even though I wasn't allowed to *wear* the damned things, perhaps just the possession of my old wings might be the difference between life and death? Naw... But still??? The question suddenly became, how was I to get 'em back without letting my superstitious cat out of the bag? Hummm...

Culver Reclaims His Wings...

Now Skip and I would occasionally cross paths between operations, and the next time, I cooked up a story of our newly expected Battalion CO not having any hang-ups about Marines wearing jump wings on their utilities. During my next liaison with Skip, I gave him my well thought out excuse and reclaimed my property, albeit with a bit of grumbling from my old buddy. I went away and wiped a mental bead of sweat off my brow.

Obviously my superstitions weren't well founded as both Skip and I survived our time in country, but it wasn't until several years later I spilled the beans as to my suspicions. Hartnett looked at me with a furrowed brow, and said something extremely ugly about some character who would rob his best friend of a means of survival. We had a good laugh about it in later years, but I have to admit at the time I breathed a sigh of relief.

Does anyone else have similar mental hang-ups? Well, ya' never know, but then it never hurts to be careful, eh what? Heh, heh, heh...

And Now the Rest of the Story

Originally the story ended here, but sending the original version around came up with an unexpected twist... as the old commentator used to say, *“here’s the rest of the story”*.

Due to an inadvertent glitch in assigning individuals to Airborne School, an Inspector Instructor (here mercifully to remain unnamed), who later became my company commander in Golf Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment in 1961, had been serving as the Inspector Instructor of a Reserve Air Delivery Company, and under the early regulations wrangled himself a billet to Airborne School at Ft. Benning.

Andy was an old time Marine Corps Gunnery Sergeant who had been commissioned at the tail end of the Korean War. He was a good officer, but had developed a penchant for an occasional over indulgence with the “grape” on occasion! Andy apparently participated in an impromptu party at Benning the night prior to having the Airborne PFT test administered the following morning. He had (shall we say) over-imbibed of the “grape” at the local Officer’s Club not realizing the all important test was to follow at o’dark thirty in the AM. I’m not too sure Andy even realized *where* he was when the test was given and let’s just say he did not perform at the peak of his abilities. Andy went home with his tail between his legs, and the Corps swore that this was an occurrence not to be repeated! Hence was formed what came to be known as *“Junior Jump School”*, a rather *“tongue-in-cheek designation”* for what came to be a relatively grueling test of one’s desire to “abuse himself” in front of his Army contemporaries to demonstrate the inherent superiority of the average Marine attending Airborne School over his/their Army counterpart(s)!

As with most courses designed to demonstrate a Marine’s superiority over his Army contemporaries, this damned course was designed to be a bit of “overkill”... We ran for hours on end on the beach in the surf, and jumped from the tailgate of rolling 6 X 6 Trucks to simulate parachute landing falls in a 25-knot ground wind. All training and physical exercises were carried to the extreme to ensure your “splash” into the Ft. Benning environs being something like a “boy scout” being plunged into a “brownie” troop. This physical abuse went on for varying periods of time depending on the sadistic tendencies of the particular NCO assigned to run “Junior Jump”... To say we were ready for Ft. Benning by the time we left for Columbus, Georgia was an understatement!

I went through the school in the early summer of 1960 following Jungle Warfare School in Panama. We had a rather salty crew in the group including an old friend and fellow 1st Lieutenant, named Jeremey W. Coon who had attended the Marine Officer’s Basic School with me, and one of the real old time Amphibious Reconnaissance Marines, Gunnery Sergeant Bobby J. Patterson. Patterson had spent many years in the old Amphibious Reconnaissance Platoons, and had been assigned to the Amphib Recon Platoon of the then newly formed Force Reconnaissance Company upon the dissolution of the old “Test Unit 1”.

As a bit of background, as originally formed, the Force Recon Company had three platoons, (1) the Parachute Reconnaissance Platoon, (2) the Amphibious Reconnaissance Platoon (not initially to be Parachute Qualified, and thus not eligible to attend Airborne School), and (3) the Parachute Pathfinder Platoon. As the kinks were worked out of the initial Table of Organization, the powers-that-be listened to the tooth gnashing of the Amphibious Reconnaissance folks who were more than a little unhappy about not being eligible to win or wear the much desired parachute wings, nor to draw jump pay. As mentioned above, SCUBA divers were only eligible to receive deep sea divers pay (based on actual time under water), and there were no silver diving bubbles available to adorn their uniforms.

The new reorganization of the company consolidated all the reconnaissance folks under one roof, and thus allowing all the Recon People eligible to go to Airborne School and draw jump pay. The slight inner-platoon friction that had originally resulted in the company subsided, and Bobby J. Patterson finally got his chance to go to Benning! One other notable young Staff Sergeant in our Junior Jump School Class was named Shelton Eakin. Eakin, on his first night jump back from Benning, caught the suspension lines of a young jumper whose parachute had failed to fully deploy, and held his canopy until the lad could deploy his reserve. For his quick thinking and most probably saving the bacon of the young jumper, S/Sgt. Eakin was awarded the Navy-Marine Corps Medal. Eakin later became the Color Sergeant of the Marine Corps and was picked up in the commissioning program for Vietnam, alas, destined to be killed when he led his team off a helicopter insert only to step on a booby-trapped 250-lb. bomb ending a most promising career.

Jerry Coon was recently transferred from the 7th Marine Regiment to 1st Force. In the late 1950s and early 1960, all young officers had to have attained the exalted rank of 1st Lieutenant to be assigned to the Force Reconnaissance Company. Jerry came highly recommended and had an excellent record as a platoon commander in the 7th Regiment.

Jerry and I had gone through Basic Officers School together, and I personally knew him to be an officer of superior abilities. The NCOIC assigned to conduct this exercise in "Marine abuse" was a Sergeant named Duane E. Crawford, who would later receive a battlefield commission in Vietnam and retire as a Major. We wound up our "Junior Jump Training" knowing we were in superior physical shape and were raring to go demonstrate our skills.

All of a sudden, things went askew. In a skull session at Division Training; the Division Hierarchy made what I considered to be a conceptual mistake. The decision came down that anyone with over a year in the Division following his graduation from Airborne School, was deemed not to be in a position to give the 1st Division a fair shake utilizing his new found skills! Huh? This put Jerry in an awkward position as he had been in the division several months prior to my arrival (I had been held over at Quantico to shoot on the Base Rifle Team and act as a OCS Platoon Commander. The final decision would allow me to go to Benning, but prevent Jerry from attending! Needless to say, Jerry was ONE dissatisfied individual, and in my opinion, rightfully so! His alternate assignment was to be sent the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, which we of First Force considered being assigned to Kindergarten after participation in the big leagues!... In the early days (late 1950s and early 1960s) the Recon Battalion (at least on the West Coast) was considered the equivalent of being demoted to Grade School after performing satisfactorily as a High School Senior. In our juvenile minds, it was a comedown of major proportions! Many individuals so affected, decided to "hang-it-up" following this ill thought out reshuffling of highly qualified personnel.

Jerry went over to the Recon Battalion with a minimum amount of gnashing of teeth, but he was far from satisfied. Even after the original unwelcome transfer, Jerry put in for a Regular Marine Corps Commission when he was transferred to the Recon Battalion, on the advice of Captain Dale Davis (the Operations officer of 1st Force) with the probability that such a request might well get him transferred back to the Force Company, and an assignment to Airborne School. In the interim, Jerry got assigned to SCUBA School in Coronado from the 1st Recon Battalion, along with our mutual friend Jack Phillips (an ex-enlisted Marine, and Naval Academy Graduate). Jerry did extremely well at Coronado, and in fact became the Honor Man of the School, with Jack coming in a close second.

The Recon Battalion Commander along with the Division Headquarters was thrilled, as not only did Jerry come in first in the class, but his appointment to a Regular Marine Corps Commission arrived essentially simultaneously. The Commanding General planned a gala ceremony, but Jerry after much thought decided not to accept a regular commission or stay in the Marines. The General was much taken aback. "But why *NOT* Lt. Coon, you have an exemplary record – what changed your mind?" Jerry told the General that if all the decisions affecting his future career were going to be based on arbitrary and not well thought out career moves rather than meaningful decisions, he felt that perhaps his initial decision to make the Marine Corps a Career was a mistake.

Jerry had put in for graduate school at Northwestern after he had been turned down for Airborne School, and had been accepted. Jerry had made up his mind, and the fact that the Corps had changed theirs, while something of a temptation, did not deter his change in plans. The General and his staff offered Jerry virtually every temptation in the book including a change of their decision to send him to Ft. Benning. When that didn't work, they offered to make him the XO of the Marine Detachment on the Cruiser St. Paul, (Flagship of the Pacific Fleet at the time as I recall), send him to Aerial Observer's School and pay him flight pay and station him and his wife in Japan... Had I tried such a ploy, they'd have no doubt told me not to let the door knob hit me in the fanny on the way out (heh, heh, heh...).

Unfortunately for the Corps, Jerry went his own way (in my opinion, the Corp's loss), but he stayed in the reserve program and got to Airborne School through the reserves. We kept touch with each other, and when I retired, I went to work for Jerry in the Coal Fields over in Eastern Kentucky during the energy crisis of the late 1970s, but that's another story, perhaps better told later under the title of "*Hollar Tales*" (really exciting during the "coal, MOB, and union wars" – there was no "f++k, fight, or go for your gun" – they shot from ambush or simply blew your fanny away!) – Hummm...

I sent the original version of this one to Jerry, not realizing that he and Jack Phillips had attended Scuba School together, and their families had formed a rather close relationship. Jerry sent me back a rather sad ending to the entire story. I will quote (without permission) some of Jerry's letter (omitting a few "*ahem*" more explicit parts).

The following input is from Jerry...

I met Jack when I was transferred to 1st Recon. Bn. and we were both sent to SCUBA school at Coronado. He was a former Sgt., then went to the Naval Academy and all of that (here I am omitting some of Jack's "exploits" with the feminine gender). I met Jack when I was transferred to 1st Recon. Bn. We would go lobster "filching" with some of the traps in the bay, and he (Jack) would come over to Carolyn's (Jerry's wife at the time) and my house in Wire Mountain for a Friday feast. I heard later that Jack was

"ordered to defend the low ground in Viet Nam by a not so bright Lieutenant Colonel, who wanted the map to look pretty. Jack died as a result. I also heard that that particular officer had his clock cleaned in Quantico at the Officer's club by another officer who knew and loved Jack as anyone who knew him did. End of story. I visited Jack and Pat Duffy in DC (Arlington) last summer. I cried and my daughters let me be for awhile.

Great input and a finality put to an old friend. Jerry's an old softie of course. Would I have cried? Naw, not a chance... Yeah, right!

One of our other old comrades in 1st Force mentioned above had been my favorite Irishman, Patrick E. Duffy, a stalwart if diminutive member of the old Pathfinder Platoon hailing from Mobile, Alabama. Pat (appropriately enough had been born on the 17th of March, making him the pluperfect Irishman). There are lots of Duffy stories, and since it's coming up on the 17th, I'd say I owe him at least one! Pat too had finally drawn the "*dead man's hand*" in the card deck and bought it while sitting on a sand bag revetment during an artillery barrage while serving as the S-3 of an Infantry Battalion up close to the DMZ. As luck would have it, a small splinter of metal missed the top of his vest and gone in under his helmet, ending the career of one of our more colorful Marines. So here's "*Sayonara*" to two great Marines and good friends, "till we meet again..."

Semper Fidelis,

Dick

End Notes:

¹ Yes, I know there is a provision in the regulations for awarding the basic parachute wings for a single “Combat Jump”, stemming from the Normandy Jump into France when it was rumored that over 50% of the Airborne Troops had never made a single jump due to the weather conditions in England prior to the 6th of June. The replacements for the 82nd and 101st Airborne had completed ground training, but had never actually jumped. I had a Marine Sergeant Major named *R. O. Jones* who legitimately wore the basic silver wings, having been pushed out of an aircraft for the first time over Burma as an armorer for the OSS. As far as I know, “*R. O.*” never made another jump. Bear in mind, this is only authorized for “**combat jumps**” and the last time I looked, this was still one of the valid reasons for awarding jump wings. Maybe someone up there knows something I don’t?

² The term “**Paramarine**” is actually something of a misnomer and was never an official USMC designation as historical “purists” will tell you. “Paramarine” however, has become a commonly used term to identify members of the WWII Parachute Units, and was quite commonly used when the Parachute Companies, Battalions, and Regiments, were operational during the War.

³ “**Jing**” is simply a slang term for “coin of the Realm”

⁴ “**Watash**” is an old “*Far East*” term meaning “me” or the guy who’s spinning the yarn, or telling the story.

⁵ “**Camelneck**” was our bastardization of the American Terminology, “Leatherneck” for Marine – in terms of the Saudis, this was a real misnomer!

⁶ The “**Rock**” was slang for Okinawa.